



Beyond the Vote

With over 70 successful BID ballots there is a great deal of experience and expertise available on BID development and the ballot process.

Much is made, quite rightly of engaging with businesses to identify deliverable projects which will have a tangible impact on the trading environment and ensure businesses vote yes. But securing the vote is just the start of the process and delivering the business plan brings a whole new set of challenges.

BIDs are designed to do "exactly what it says on the tin" or exactly what it says in the business plan. The fact that a BID has identified what businesses want, secured a vote and set up an independent organisation does not ensure results. Like any successful business, establishing the right structures and team, managing the finances and producing products that deliver the results customers want will.

The organisational change to a limited company is far greater than registering the company and producing a set of accounts. BID companies will be operating on a commercial basis, negotiating contracts, making investment decisions and managing staff. Careful thought will need to be given to the impact of decisions and what is right for the business and its members. A properly functioning Board with directors who understand the business and are able to invest the time in the decision making process and a BID team who can provide the information to inform those decisions will be essential.

BID companies will need to ensure that their finances stack up and that their ability to deliver is not hampered by issues such as non levy contributions which operate on different timescales or criteria. Well thought out investment plans will ensure that full use can be made of any additional contributions in the overall spending plan. Projects will need to be fully costed and any changes debated and agreed as issues arise.

Flexibility is essential in any business as it allows the business to respond to prevailing circumstances. However, flexibility must be coupled with integrity to the process. Businesses will have been presented with an election manifesto which champions business control, specific projects and results. Although greater flexibility to adapt projects may come in the future this is a concept in its infancy and trust and integrity can only be built up over time.

The BIDs model provides the resources to allow partnerships to create businesses that can operate at a professional level. Many BIDs are utilising their new found resources and status to punch way beyond their weight delivering projects both big and small which are highly visible, drive footfall up and costs down and raise the profile of the area.

Ask any of them to talk you through their structure, finances or current projects and you will see just how much is crammed into one tin.

Jacquie Reilly
BIDs Director

National BIDs Advisory Service launches Ten Step Guide

The **Ten Step Guide to Creating an Effective Partnership and Developing a BID** outlines the key stages for partnership and BID development and is based on the training and practical support provided to the locations participating in the East Midlands BIDs Academy.

The Academy was funded by emda and delivered by the National BIDs Advisory Service, with practical support provided by The Mosaic Partnership. This unique one year programme worked with six locations developing BID proposals and nine locations building partnership capacity and business engagement. The Academy has provided each of the partnerships with a Mosaic Information Management System using the system to collate and analyse information on over 5500 businesses, delivered over 30 events provided BID Feasibility Studies and BID development support and seen four locations secure a mandate to deliver a BID, bringing an additional £4million of investment into the East Midlands.



The Essential Guide to BIDs – 18 September 2008, London

Based on the Ten Step Guide, this half day seminar will provide you with the information you need when considering a BID.

The last two seminars sold out, so book now to secure your place!

<http://www.atcm.org/events>

ATCM / UKBIDs Members £120 + VAT,
Non members £150 + VAT.

Bristol Broadmead BID – Paving their way to success

Bristol Broadmead BID secured a mandate from local businesses in June 2005. The development of the Broadmead BID was driven by the imminent arrival of Cabot Circus, a £500m retail-led, mixed-use, development, on the eastern edge of Broadmead, opening in autumn 2008 (www.cabotcircus.com). Talking BIDs talks to John Hirst, Broadmead Manager, to find out how they took on this challenge.

Cabot Circus will transform the city, creating a four storey flagship House of Fraser, Harvey Nicholls and more than 113 new shops, along with three stylish new shopping streets, vibrant public areas and a dramatic and innovative glass roof structure.

Broadmead was in danger of becoming the poor relation. Built in the early 1950s, it was tired and outdated, functional but unattractive and unappealing to a large group of Bristol residents. It was clear to everyone that the area needed to be improved to avoid being left behind when Cabot Circus opened but initially no-one was prepared to make a financial commitment.

With BID legislation introduced in 2004, a BID seemed an ideal mechanism by which to bring the stakeholders together to improve Broadmead. A BID team was set up and undertook a wide consultation with local businesses. The need for a new environment was high on everyone's list. It was decided that the BID would focus on this one fundamental objective and that their task would be to get this sorted in time for the opening of Cabot Circus.

With a BID levy of around £1million over a three year period the BID team set about the challenge of using this to lever in sufficient funding to refresh existing streets and create a link to Cabot Circus which would provide a quality environment including uniform street design and signage. The BID put their case to developers, property owners, Bristol City Council and their RDA.

John explains,

“The BID plan comprised two stages: Stage 1 involved installing new street furniture in the streets on the periphery of the pedestrianised area; Stage-2 is the major part of the BID where we introduce the new street scene in the whole of the pedestrianised part of Broadmead. It was a great plan but our challenge was to get support from local businesses through the BID and use this to lever in the money we needed to bring the master plan together”

By November 2006 the BID was able to go ahead with stage one and by the end of 2007 a fund of almost £7million had been raised with every £1 of levy payers money being matched by over £5.50 in voluntary contributions.

As a result of this the Broadmead BID will deliver a completely transformed area including new paving, landscaping, bicycle racks, litter bins, bollards and high-quality pavement shops along with new public spaces all linking Broadmead seamlessly to Cabot Circus.

There is no doubt that this has been a huge challenge and the focus and drive of the BID team has ensured the engagement of retailers, property owners, developers and public agencies but could this have been done without the BID? “No way!” says John “The BID was the first money in the pot and was used as leverage to secure the rest of the funds. Without the BID this project could not have gone ahead.”

Broadmead is now moving towards the end of the 3 year BID and will be preparing a renewal in the very new future.



BedfordBID – Driving sales directly to Bedford businesses

BedfordBID was one of the first BIDs in the country and has just completed its third year, winning a number of awards along the way. Mo Aswat, Director of BedfordBID and the Mosaic Partnership, shares his experiences in ensuring that the BID continues to deliver innovative projects to stay ahead of the game and more importantly the competition.

“BIDs are still a relatively new concept and we need to ensure businesses see the relevance of the BID to their business as well as experiencing tangible results” says Mo. During its first two years, BedfordBID has built up a strong and well recognised marketing and promotion campaigns but the company felt that billboards, paper ads and radio slots only did part of the job. “Particularly in these tough times we felt that business needed to see a more direct link between the BedfordBID, the marketing work and themselves” explains Mo. The BID Board looked at ways in which it could refocus its marketing spend and below we feature two of its major successes, the BedfordBID Voucher Scheme which has sales of over £100,000 p.a. and its dining week promotion ‘Indulge in Bedford’.



A Marks & Spencer voucher will always be welcomed in a store in most high streets. You can also get an agency to develop vouchers for you, which takes the hassle away from the retailer but they will take a cut of the face value. A BedfordBID voucher gives the small, independent business the same chance to redeem that voucher as the big boys – and with no hidden charges. People buy a £10 BedfordBID voucher and spend £10 in a local shop or restaurant equalling £10 in the till for the business.

Having started life as vouchers to be given away occasionally for prize draws and competitions, the company quickly realised the BedfordBID vouchers potential. It drew up plans to make them available generally to members of the public but more importantly to target large local employers and persuade them to swap their existing generic vouchers for BedfordBID ones.

The BIDs biggest single success to date has been to persuade Bedford College with 14,000 students and 600 employees to swap its £50,000 a year spend on national gift cards to BedfordBID vouchers –

putting money back in to the local economy. Combined with sales to other employers and £8,000 a quarter sales to members of the public, the voucher scheme sales now top £100,000 annually and the aim is to increase this to £250,000 by March 2010. The production and administration costs are met by the BID.

Ian Pryce, Chief Executive of Bedford College told Talking BIDs “This is a great idea and it makes sense that we support our local economy in this way”.



In order to get more businesses to redeem the vouchers, BedfordBID used a novel idea to market them. Rather than just writing letters and sending out literature it ‘stealth marketed’ by producing £2,500 worth of dummy vouchers and sent them out in the hands of trained personnel who attempted to spend them in non participating businesses. This generated a huge amount of interest from businesses asking how they could get involved. Currently almost all retailers (over 150), including most High Street names accept the vouchers in Bedford Town Centre.

Mo Aswat enthuses “The response to it has been great; businesses love it – especially the smaller ones who miss out on the national multi-outlet voucher opportunities.

He adds “ Customers like them because they know that giving a BedfordBID voucher means the recipient can get exactly what they want – a beauty treatment, a meal, a college course, a part for their motorbike... As a result new customers are coming into the town and regular customers are visiting new outlets.”

BedfordBID manages the whole process from having the security protected vouchers printed, to liaising with the Tourist Office and signing up retailers and businesses. All the outlets have to do is accept the vouchers like cash, contact the BID office and they are refunded in full.

Another innovative promotion, delivering proven benefits for businesses was the dining week promotion ‘Indulge in Bedford. Ten selected restaurants agreed to offer specially created signature dishes at lunchtimes and evenings for a week.

The BedfordBID supported with a huge marketing campaign including a high quality ‘coffee table’ brochure distributed to over 60,000 households, a month long radio campaign with five 30 second ads every day, full page press advertisements, flyers to businesses and general PR. They particularly wanted to target the office market and members of the public who might otherwise not think of Bedford as a place to eat.

The campaign was hugely successful with over 1500 people using the promotion that week. The website recorded 10,000 extra hits during the event, 55% of people that used the promotion were first timers and most importantly the average spend in businesses was £27 per person bring in over £40,000 for participating businesses. The Indulge in Bedford week culminated in a Gala Dinner attended by a celebrity chef, top London chefs and 170 people raising over £12,500 for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Bedford businesses are now signing up to BID promotions in droves. The latest activity Drive Time in Bedford promotes a different independent retailer each week with slots available for 50 retailers and 117 wanting to get involved and plans are already underway for the summer promotion ‘Beautiful in Bedford’ which will support the Hair and Beauty sector, encouraging people to get ready for the holidays.

“We concentrate very specifically on real business building promotions which translate into bottom line for the entrepreneurs who make up the business sector. They are not easy to win over and want to see the impact on their till takings – they are not interested in Government slogans and words like ‘initiatives’ they want to see what they are getting back for the money they pay in.” says Mo.

The BIDs marketing and promotion work is driving sales directly to businesses and by the end of the BID term they expect to have driven over £500,000 additional sales into Bedford businesses. Perhaps more importantly BedfordBID has made a real connection with Bedford businesses proving their relevance and delivering tangible results each and every day



Retail Birmingham – Doing it in style

In April this year 10,000 people visited Birmingham City Centres Style in the City, footfall in the city centre doubled and press, radio, TV and even Hello Magazine covered the event. Talking BIDs find out how Birmingham Retail BID pulled this off just 18 months after securing their BID.

Birmingham City Centre Partnership had long harboured aspirations to establish Birmingham City Centre as the home of style. In 2005 the City Centre Partnership established the style brand with a fashion show at the Council House. They knew this could go along way with the right event company and enough funding but the City Centre Partnership did not have the resources for this.

Having successfully supported the development of the Birmingham Broad Street BID in the leisure quarter of the city they turned their attention on the retail area of the city. If they secured a BID could they continue the development of the "style" brand?

"The cost of the event was only fundable through the BID. But we were sure this event was right for Birmingham City, raising its profile, increasing footfall and drawing in businesses that had previously not engaged with the City Centre Partnership.

Says Nigel Godfrey, BID Manager, Retail Birmingham. With a mandate from businesses and sustainable funding in their pocket, the BID Team set about finding partners to turn their aspirations into reality. They were able to persuade Brand Events who organise the successful "Taste of Birmingham" and other similar events to organise Style in the City and the plans were underway.

Having come up with the idea and the brand, Retail Birmingham developed a Style website and Style awards with Style in the City as the major fashion event and worked with their partners to deliver the event.

To make Style in the city happen, Retail Birmingham invested a six figure sum in the event, with the total budget after sponsorship finishing up at over six times our original investment and PR totalling over £1 million. Nigel Godfrey explains "Without this major investment from Retail Birmingham, the event would not have got off the ground. Once our contribution was agreed, various local and national sponsors came forward and the budget came together."

From the 3rd to 6th April, Kelly Osbourne and Trinny and Susannah presented 4 shows a day, all of which were full including standing room at the back. Parts of the City Centre saw over double its usual footfall and over £4million of PR and advertising were produced all with the Retail Birmingham branding taking centre stage.

Kevin Breese, General Manager of Harvey Nichols told Talking BIDs "There is no doubt by bringing a new national event to Birmingham that Harvey Nichols benefited greatly. With over 10,000 women shopping in the city during the weekend, the footfall in certain areas of the city increased dramatically. We can't wait until 2009.

So what next for Retail Birmingham, the Style Awards take place in October this year with 14 categories and another Style in the City Centre next year?

"Yes, feedback from businesses was great!" enthuses Nigel. "Businesses that were involved want to be involved next year but want to make it bigger and better. Businesses that weren't involved now wish they had been and want to do so next year."



UKBIDs – National BIDs Advisory Service

Contact details:

If you have any questions please call our information line on **020 7227 3468**

or via email:

info@ukbids.org

Jacquie Reilly – BIDs Director
email: **Jacquie.reilly@atcm.org**