

Retail Opportunities In Social Firm Replication

Key Points Arising From the Workshop Tuesday 28th June 2005

Café Nova Interchange

- 1) The original aim of Café Nova Interchange was to create a sustainable Social Enterprise, getting away from the nightmare of grant funding.
- 2) The four key phases were outlined, from the start with a focus group to the end with a profitable Social Firm.
- 3) A good lesson to learn is not to try to achieve too many things at once.
- 4) Location of the café is a key to success.
- 5) The future plan is to consolidate the enterprise, continuing to make profit and pilot a Café Nova Interchange replication. In the long term the aim is to provide opportunities for disabled people through partnerships and work on best practice training.

The Soap Co.

- 1) The Soap Co. is one of the franchises in the Building on the Best franchising and replication programme run by Social Firms UK.
- 2) The location of a Soap Co. shop is essential as the products are pitched as gifts in tourist areas. Premises must be in tourist areas and easily accessible on the tourist track; down a back alley out of town will not be successful.
- 3) A business head is essential in running a Soap Co. franchise as profit must be made quickly to ensure the business is sustainable.
- 4) Retail or manufacturing experience is essential to run a Soap Co.
- 5) There are a range of employment opportunities within both the retail and manufacturing area of the business.
- 6) What makes the Soap Co. different is all the products are handmade and are hand finished in the shop, in view of the customer. This gives a point of interest for a customer and they can engage with the shop staff and it allows people to select products and have them made up into personal gift packs. Various stamps are in the shop, too, so products are personalised for the tourist area and products can also be personalised with name stamps.
- 7) The aim is for all the products to be natural in the future.

Wholefood Planet

- 1) A Wholefood Planet franchise, based on Daily Bread in Cambridge and Northampton, involves a single site with a warehouse for storage, packing and mixing, a shop and a café. The advantage of all business activities being on a single site is it encourages people to move outside their comfort zone, develop skills in a variety of areas and build self confidence.
- 2) It is a great time for this franchise as there is currently a national focus on healthy eating, with many funding streams focusing on healthy eating.
- 3) Wholefood Planet caters for a wide range of special dietary requirements and provides interesting and tasty products, which are otherwise unavailable for certain diets.
- 4) Research at Daily Bread has shown that new customers always return and people with specific dietary requirements love Daily Bread, so much so that people who move away from the area request delivery of products, which has opened up further opportunities for employees to accommodate a delivery service.
- 5) Location is key. It needs to be an accessible site as people visit with cars and buy in bulk, so on an edge of a town is ideal. It also needs to be accessible for lorries delivering products.
- 6) 80% of products come from 20 suppliers and the other 20% is made up of local products. Wholefood Planet's can tailor their products to accommodate local needs, for example one store sells CDs from local musicians. All products are high quality and ethically sourced and all suppliers are checked and organic certificates are required.
- 7) Training encompasses extensive knowledge of all products, cooking, recipes and mixing. This encourages employees to engage with customers and ensures customers can always talk to someone with knowledge of all products.
- 8) Wholefood Planet ticks all the boxes as it covers ethical trading, healthy eating, opportunities for disabled people and environmental consideration.
- 9) It is a real learning experience for customers and with the addition of a café it is also a great social place for people.