

# Social Firms And The Service Sector

## Key Points Arising From the Workshop

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Facilitated by Gerry Higgins, SFUK

Speakers: Keith Bates on Aquamacs  
Kevin Robbie on 6 St Mary's Place  
Steve Ralf on Impressions  
Eric Munro (RBS) on Competition in the marketplace

We heard brief presentations on Aquamacs, 6 St Mary's Place, Impressions, and the nature of competition in the marketplace, followed by discussion.

### KEY POINTS ARISING:-

Location is fundamental to many businesses in the service sector; both 6 St Mary's Place (Stockbridge) and Impressions (the 'piazza' in Margate) have thrived partly as a result of being well located.

Customer service is also core to businesses in the service sector. Whilst this can be somewhat intangible, listening to customer feedback and providing a welcoming atmosphere both supported 6 St. Mary's Place in winning their Thistle Award. "It's the little things".

Targeted Marketing is an invaluable approach for businesses in the service sector; Aquamacs, Impressions and 6 St Mary's Place all advocate intelligent targeted marketing. e.g. St Mary's Place targeting travelling businesswomen, Impressions targeting gaps in the local market when other restaurants do not open, and servicing the local airport with a breakfast service, and Aquamacs targeting corporate and public institutions e.g. hospitals and hotels.

Leading the Market can bolster a business' chances of success in the service sector. (See the Rogers' Adoption-Innovation curve as featured in Gerry Higgins' Plenary session 10am Tuesday). The '1<sup>st</sup> Mover advantage' allows a new business to establish its market share early, and makes it harder for competitors to enter the market. Of course that doesn't mean they won't try!

Which is why a U.S.P. (unique selling point) is also an important element when building business in the service sector. One example of this is the observation that only grocers stores who developed a u.s.p. survived the 'clone town' phenomenon, and that even the larger supermarkets have learned from this and adapted with the introduction of stores like Tesco metro and Sainsbury's local.

