

LOCAL RETAIL AND ACTIVATION STRATEGY



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF
COLLABORATION

IS YOUR PRECINCT
FLOURISHING?



Importance of collaboration

Joining forces with like-minded
businesses with diverse skills can set
a platform to drive improvement.

This section will provide your precinct with the tools you need
to set up a business group based on shared values.

PLACEMAKING:
FROM TRANSACTION
TO INTERACTION

PROMOTING YOUR
PRECINCT

KEEPING
ON TRACK

Why form a local business group?

In a shopping centre, the centre management team is focused on maximising performance of individual retailers through collective systematic monitoring and improvements to the centre.

By forming a local business group, you can drive continuous improvement to **your** precinct and achieve higher standards of place management and customer satisfaction.

With a strong partnership model and using 'tricks of the trade' from shopping centre management, the positive attributes of retail precincts – open air, character, visibility and uniqueness can deliver an outstanding experience.

- ✓ Achieve more together
- ✓ Stimulate ideas and strategies
- ✓ Share the load
- ✓ Pool funding
- ✓ Coordinate events
- ✓ Engage the community
- ✓ Boost referrals
- ✓ More visits, more revenue

Partnership maturity model

There are a range of best-practice organisational structures for local business groups from informal collectives to fully functional business improvement district (BID) models adopted interstate and overseas.

We have summarised these below.

The kickstarter

Somebody needs to go first!

The kickstarter is a local business champion who wants the precinct to perform better. This toolkit will help them develop an idea for change and tips for taking this to other business owners in the precinct.

The collective

Congratulations you've got other businesses on board – you've got yourself a 'collective'.

The collective can use this toolkit to plan, implement and monitor the success of local initiatives.

The association

As the collective grows it may want to take on more challenging projects that require greater financial investment and time commitments.

At this point you might want to think about formalising the organisational structure to take on bigger responsibilities that require legal protection.

CASE STUDY

The collective

Chevron Island Business and Residents Association (CIBRA) is led by a committee of local business and community members.

The group is funded by a small annual fee per business and resident, as well as sponsorship from local developers who recognise the value of a vibrant precinct to residential sale prices.

CIBRA is focused on delivering achievable projects that can drive visitation to the precinct within a broader vision of creating an arts and creative corridor between Surfers Paradise and the HOTA complex in the Gold Coast.

They have championed lighting improvements to the local park to enable its use for outdoor cinema events, which have in turn benefited the evening economy.

As a facilitator and enabler, they recognise the importance of having a 'champion' to drive action and the need to build relationships between retailers and the community.

CASE STUDY

The association

The Ponsonby Business Association was established in 2011 in Auckland as a formalised business improvement district.

With more than 400 members, key factors in their success include:

- the need to establish an effective organisational structure (in part in response to the legislative and administrative requirements of the BID model)
- fund and delivery of successful placemaking initiatives
- develop a strong brand presence and marketing approach to run in parallel
- leveraging success to create fear of missing out (FOMO) for businesses and customers alike, so that Ponsonby is perceived as the place to be.

Shared values

A commitment to shared values will help guide collective decision making and actions.

Do the businesses in your precinct share a commitment to achieving excellence?

Great customer service



Putting customer experience at the core of every decision.

Retail is detail



All parts matter whether it be customer service, an inviting atmosphere, cleanliness or marketing and promotion.

Take a step back and look at your precinct through the eyes of your customers.

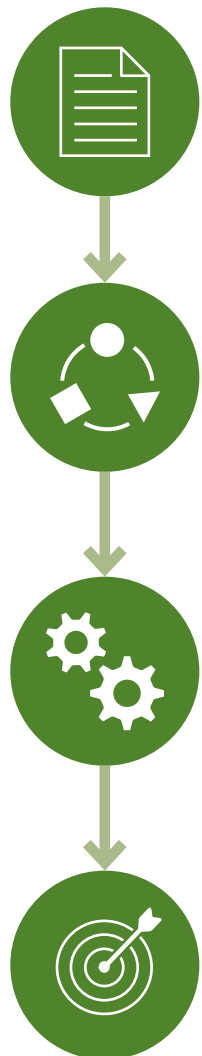
Continuous improvement



A commitment to evolving the operating model over time to respond to customer needs, balancing the needs of individual businesses with the good of the precinct.

How to form a local business group

Congratulations – you are the kickstarter and you are on a mission to boost performance through collaboration! Use these tips to get started.



Come with a plan

You've identified that there is a need and an opportunity to boost precinct performance. Be sure to write down the challenges and opportunities that you have identified so that these can be shared. Use our 'know your area' and 'health check assessments' to provide an evidence base to share with others.

Be inclusive

Diversity of ideas is the key to success. Reach out to all the businesses in your precinct and seek their involvement. You might start with informal meetings to address issues as they arise (e.g. responding to a competing development proposal). To drive outcomes, think about opportunities for regular meetings with an agenda and minutes to get things done.

Collaborate

There is likely to be a diverse range of skills, opinions and willingness to participate among businesses. Sharing knowledge and information is an important first step. This might be about opportunities you've seen elsewhere or challenges you've seen in the market. Matching people's skills and aspirations to the tasks you are collectively seeking to achieve is essential.

Set targets

Be clear about what the precinct wants to achieve collectively. If the target is increased sales revenue, identify clear, measurable steps to achieving this. Set targets around group participation, e.g. frequency of meetings and communications, schedule of key events, growth targets and use the toolkit to stay on track.

Skills mapping

Now that you have decided to start a local business group, no matter if it's informal or formal, you need to get together with your members and work out who is best placed to do what.



Key skills



Priorities



Availabilities



Gaps

Avoid being led by the loudest personality.

A crucial element of a successful business partnership is to identify groups that have shared interests and can work collectively. This can be based on skills or complementary businesses (e.g. all fashion retailers).

Think about the skills you *have* and the skills you *need*.

These may include:

- organising/time management
- research ability
- motivational skills
- teamwork
- fundraising
- creative thinking
- networking (and networks)
- specific technical skills (accounting, marketing, design).

Successful business partnerships – key lessons

Whether you are a kickstarter or a mature association, the fundamentals for success (and challenges) are consistent.

We have interviewed a range of practitioners from small start-up groups to major shopping centre managers.

Their hints and tips for successful place management are set out below.

Building partnerships

- **Introduce yourself** to your neighbours and don't think of them as competitors – the best ideas grow organically at first.
- **Talking to retailers** and understanding their needs is critical.
- **Be curious.**
- Provide and receive **continual feedback** to/from stakeholders.
- **Focus on detail.** Get right down into the detail of how and why problems are occurring in the precinct.
- Act like a 'dating service' between retailers to **build trust, shared initiatives and referrals** – people remember when you do something for them.
- **Use the power of FOMO** (fear of missing out) to make businesses want to be part of the organisation and to make people want to visit the precinct.

Customers and community

- **A customer-centric approach** is the number one priority at every step.
- **Focus on the local community** as well as businesses in the precinct – they are your customer.
- **Think about your precinct within its suburb context.** What makes it unique? Tell its story to create a memorable place.
- **Curate a place for people** – make people love where they are.
- Successful retailers **adjust to demographic changes** in their market over time.
- Think how you can **make your customer's day better.**
- **Get schools, community groups and mothers groups involved.** They have rich ideas about what different elements of the community are looking for. Think about giving them a one-page research brief.
- Use local charities to run a **"this precinct gives back"** campaign.

Resourcing

- **Find a champion** who believes in the vision to drive the initiative.
- As you start to scale up, a **dedicated coordinator/manager role** is essential as the group's aspirations expand. Members are often big on ideas, but short on time!
- The ability to **levy funds from businesses/property owners** is critical. Can you charge a membership fee, seek external sponsorship or agree on a basis for a recurring levy?

Marketing and events

- Marketing a relatable identity is key (this can be place-based or thematic).
- A strong brand identity is easiest to achieve around a destinational/leisure retail mix.
- Be an active social media user – it is cost-effective marketing.
- Your precinct is your number one marketing tool.
- Know who you are targeting. Who is your customer, what are they interested in?
- Set a bold vision and work to achieve it.
- Events don't need to be on an epic scale – start small and build up. Make sure that they are fun and memorable.
- Events should drive footfall and spend. Make sure this is your top priority when thinking about hosting an event.
- Explore ways to utilise public spaces. For instance, an open-air cinema in adjacent parklands can drive evening visitation.

Using data

- Find ways to use data to understand customer preferences.
- Make participation in events dependent on providing data e.g. plan a street trading day and ask retailers to provide their percentage change in sales data from the previous week. You can then use this to demonstrate the success of the event.
- Use Google Analytics to see how individual retailers are rated for customer service.
- Develop a website and apps to showcase your precinct.
- Use WhatsApp (or other channels) to share data. For example, live messaging to identify shoplifters can assist crime reduction and foster a collaborative approach.

Innovative ideas

- Compared to managed shopping centres, local precinct property owners have the ability to accept lower rents and are therefore able to experiment with uses.
- Consider internships for event management students.
- Partner with local developers to provide sponsorship. A vibrant precinct is good for residential sale prices.
- Find a social media influencer that works to your scale and market.
- Coffee shops are the modern meeting place. A good coffee shop can be an anchor for a 'sticky place'.
- Offer to work with agents and property owners to help find tenants that meet the ideal tenancy mix for the precinct.

Overcoming challenges

- Some property owners can be resistant to paying levies or participating. You need to show them evidence of the benefits. Use the examples in this toolkit and others, and make sure to track and monitor the benefits of participation (use our health check assessment as a basis for monitoring).
- Every business is on its own journey. Find the one thing that makes them think 'we' and not 'me'. The trick is to bring businesses together in conversation so they can find common ground.
- Start-ups could consider recruiting volunteers initially to focus on one key project.
- Fight the battles you can win – don't try and do everything, be strategic.
- Avoid being led by the person who shouts loudest. Work out what people skills and shared interests are and work collectively. Make goals depersonalised – 'we' not 'I'. Identify groups that work well together, this could be locationally, skills-based, similar or complementary businesses.
- Business expectations get bigger each year and business views can be short term (e.g. if they had a bad week they can have a pessimistic outlook). Track and use sales and spending data to understand the true picture behind sentiment.

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Techniques for collaboration

As a kickstarter in your precinct, you have recognised there is a need for a partnership to improve your precinct's performance.

Some techniques for collaborating with other businesses in your precinct and transition to a collective include the following:

- **developing a vision and outcome** that you want to see in your precinct
- **networking and selling the vision** to other businesses in your precinct to ensure commitment and ownership
- **building and maintaining trust** for the business group. This can occur through regular interaction and informal catch ups with other businesses
- start creating a clear plan of attack, by aligning goals and values through an **action plan**. A shared vision and values between businesses is crucial to successful collaboration
- determining the **specific roles and responsibilities** within the collective
- staying on track by scheduling **regular meetings** and relevant agenda items.

What are the priority actions for me as a kickstarter?

Write down your initial ideas here.

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Collaboration tips

Here are some tips for effective collaboration.

Build and maintain trust at the outset

- Having informal catch ups with your local businesses to build trust.
- Establishing internal communication through a Facebook group, group chats and/or regular check-ins.
- Sharing knowledge through these communication networks.

Action planning and group roles

- It is important to be inclusive and ensuring input of everyone involved is valued.
- Finding the right people with a specific skill set and passion. This includes:
 - a champion/natural leader who knows how to bring people together
 - a person who can manage all the logistics with attention to detail
 - a business guru. These people often have business smarts and a financial understanding
 - someone who is creative and has a good eye for design and placemaking
 - a spokesperson for the group. This person is usually good at networking, has connections to the right people and can make everyone feel welcomed.
- Use meeting minutes and agendas to ensure everything is documented and to keep track of your progress.

USEFUL TEMPLATES

- Creating a vision
- Meeting agenda
- Meeting minutes
- Action plan

Notes

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Creating a vision

A vision statement is a short statement to define the core ideas shaping and directing your organisation or group.

It's a description of the long-term changes you want to achieve. By writing a vision statement, you are outlining the place where your organisation is headed and defining what the place will look like.

The statement will help members to focus and prioritise actions to achieve goals.

Tips for writing a vision statement include:

- project into the future
- dream big and focus on success
- use the present tense
- keep it simple – don't use jargon
- make it inspiring
- align it with business values and goals.

What is the vision for our precinct?

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Meeting agenda

A feature of a good business group is holding regular meetings. These could be weekly, monthly or quarterly.

This template will help you organise and run a successful meeting.

Subject

Date

Time

Location

Attendees

Apologies

Item No.	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility
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TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Meeting minutes

In addition to having an agenda, meeting minutes are an essential item for getting results.

This template will help you organise and successfully run meetings.

Meeting purpose

Date and time

Location

Attendees

Apologies

Item No.	Meeting/action	Responsibility	Due date
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TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Action plan

An action plan is a checklist for the steps or tasks you need to complete in order to achieve the goals you have set.

The benefits of an action plan include the following:

- it gives you a clear **direction**. As an action plan highlights exactly what steps to be taken and when they should be completed, you will know exactly what you need to do
- having your goals written down and planned out in steps will give you a reason to **stay motivated and committed** throughout the project
- with an action plan, you can **track progress** toward your goal
- since you are listing all the steps you need to complete in your action plan, it will help you **prioritise tasks** based on effort and impact.

This template will help you map out actions to achieve in your precinct based on:

- **vision statement** – the core ideas shaping and directing your partnership
- **objectives** – what are you trying to achieve
- **key issue/focus** – what do you want to do improve
- **actions** – a measurable action for each key issue or focus area.

Notes

TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Action plan

 A plan for action for the _____ Shopping Precinct

Group members

Vision

Objective

Key issue/focus

Objective

Actions

Responsibility

Timing

Costs

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