



Regenerating & Supported by the Parishes of:
Arlecdon & Frisington, Cleator Moor,
Ennerdale & Kinniside, Lamplugh and Weddicar



Business Forum

Minutes of meeting 22nd April 2009

Meeting commenced: 1300hrs

Apologies: Richard Mulholland (Chairman)

Present: Sarah Mitchell (Regen North East Copeland [RNEC]), Alan Hurton (RNEC), Don Graham (Chamber of Commerce), Christine Vincent-Briggs (Cumbria Chamber of Commerce), Tim Ellis (Walker Ellis Associates), Melanie Wheatley (Walker Ellis Associates), Keith Irving (West Cumbria Society for the Blind), George Jackson (Enterprise Environment Services LTD), B.Chilton (Sellafield Ltd), Trish Cairns (WISE), Peter Sharkey (WISE), John Barany (The Learning Planet), Nicky Barany (The Learning Planet), David Gregory (Educommdirect LTD), Steve Murphy (Easby Orwell).

Introduction: Sarah Mitchell greeted and welcomed everybody to the meeting, thanking them for attending and explained that the Chairman Richard Mulholland was presently out of the country and had forwarded his apologies; Sarah was standing as chair for the meeting.

Sarah give feedback from the last meeting regarding the parking issue around the town square explaining that with the expansion of the Phoenix Enterprise Centre and the inflow of businesses and staff a great restriction had been caused on available parking spaces. This is very positive for the Town and it's businesses, which are benefitting from the increased traffic, but work is in hand to alleviate this pressure on space and to seek out and utilise additional parking areas.

Don Graham (Chamber of Commerce) was introduced and asked to give an update from the Chamber. A Presentation Award Ceremony for the Profiting Through Skills Awards – Excellence in Cumbria is to be held on the 14th May at Rheged. The time for nominations however had now closed. Richard Farleigh from Dragons Den is the main speaker. Details of how to obtain tickets are on the chamber website. www.cumbriachamber.co.uk

On the 14th of May at the Rum Story Whitehaven, The Chamber is holding a Networking Speed Five meeting where businesses have the opportunity to make a new business contact every 5 minutes through a networking format.

Finally through the Business Link information is available on how to obtain a £500 grant towards training or coaching owner/managers of small businesses. No match funding is required and if you are prepared to invest £500 yourself you can get an extra £1,000. So effectively by investing £500 you could draw down £2,000 from the business link.

Information for this is available on the Business Link website.

www.businesslink.gov.uk/northwest

Regen NE Copeland Updates:

Sarah gave an update regarding ongoing projects on and around Cleator Moor. The main point of interest was a recent meeting held with the new owners of Leconfield Industrial Estate. The owners are aware that they possess a potential asset that is greatly under-utilised at the moment. As the scheme develops the Forum will be kept up to date with the site proposals.

We have been working with a group of local producers from Ennerdale. They are looking to get together and pool some of their resources whether it is the local beer or the local honey or even the walking trips and guided trips so that they can offer products from Ennerdale Valley. The National Trust is also involved with the group through the Wild Ennerdale project and this is also an angle that would allow other businesses in the area to get involved alongside them.

Sarah highlighted the web site; www.necopeland.co.uk. This is regularly updated now and is going from strength to strength. Updates from local parishes and businesses in the area are complimenting the site and if anybody wants to advertise this can be done by contacting Alan or Sarah at RNEC on 01946 816708.

Sarah introduced Tim and Melanie from Walker Ellis Associates Ltd and thanked them for attending. They had come along to the meeting and had provided a display showing one of the many styles of advertising available. Tim and Melanie were available for discussion after the meeting. If, for other meetings, other businesses wished to bring along products or literature to advertise their business then to feel free to do so.

Steve Murphy, Easby Orwell

Sarah introduced Steve Murphy (Easby Orwell) who would like to discuss marketing and advertising, the benefits of promoting your business and the pitfalls to be aware of.

Steve introduced himself and gave a brief history of how he came to be in the business of advertising and marketing. He explained that he had worked throughout the country from

as far north as Inverness and Aberdeen down to the south coast at Portsmouth and Plymouth as well as working in Europe in the Algarve. He had been involved in all aspects of advertising from walking the streets handing out leaflets and fliers through to T.V. adverts within large commercial stores. Advertising is a minefield and although there are many benefits to be gained, there are equally as many pitfalls and hidden dangers to be wary of. There are also many unscrupulous advertising agents who are more than happy to rip off the unprepared, naïve and unsure.

Marketing and Advertising

Steve made the point that leaflets are a brilliant, cheap and effective way of advertising. He argued that having your own leaflets gives you the opportunity to target a given audience. You are in total control of that targeting and providing you have done your home work, the marketing and your time will not have been wasted. Leaflets are also a good measure of the success, or likely success, of your product or business. It will be very obvious very quickly if the leaflets have worked. Depending upon the business you are advertising; depends upon the area or places to display your leaflets. A certain degree of thought needs to be put into the distribution of your product. It is a waste of time, effort and your money to put the leaflets in the wrong places or having them distributed willy-nilly without a thought or consideration to a targeted audience.

Steve highlighted that one of the things that people don't realise is that they can get free coverage by using the local press. If you have a new business or a new business idea or concept, or you have a good story centred on or around your business then you can use the press to highlight this. A good way of doing this is to write the story yourself and send it into the press along with photos or other images. In many cases your article will be used as it is without any alterations depending on available space in the edition.

Websites are a more modern form of advertising. There are many people available to set up and run websites for you. In Steve's experience, many businesses set up their own websites using graphics and artwork available on the web.

Whatever form of advertising is used Steve illustrated how it pays to be creative. The more creative and the more eye catching the advert or catch phrase is, then the more memorable it is likely to become. Thinking outside of the box and creative thinking is not a concept that many people have time to give to in these trying times. Starting up a business or indeed keeping a business moving often takes up most of their time. Again there are people in the advertising business that do have the time and the ability and the where with all too think outside the box. They use their talent and their ability to take your product or business and market them to a different level.

An essential part of advertising and marketing your business is evaluating your customer base. It is too easy to be drawn into placing adverts into large glossy magazines and

national circulars but if your customer base is close to home then no advantage can be gained by advertising far and wide and the cost implication could be vast. With many businesses, 70% of their custom will come from within a 7 mile radius of their premises. So Steve suggested a good way to gain an idea of customer base area would be to sit down with a map of the area and work outwards from your premises. If your product is farther reaching then extend the area on the map. Concentrating on your immediate customer base initially will help to set your business off and get it established. Often people fall into the trap of over estimating their catchment area spending time, effort and money needlessly when a little forethought and planning was all that was needed.

Steve made the point that advertising and marketing come in many forms, either self-generated, or, as is more often the case it is preceded by a call from an advertising company or salesman. There are a vast number of very good companies to be used, but how are you to know which is which. If you are aware of their advertising method i.e. local booklet or print, or they have come recommended then there is little or no problem. If however it is a cold call situation then don't be afraid to ask to see a copy of their product or a reference, ask for a phone number you can contact to verify their claims. Always look at the overall picture and don't be afraid to question their word. Ask yourself three simple questions;

- Is the advertising going to the right place?
- Am I hitting the right target?
- Is it going to benefit my business?

If the answer is no, then don't do it. If you can't see the benefits don't use it, even if it is relatively cheap.

Steve acknowledged that the cost of advertising is a worrying factor, especially at this time. Often when broken down the price of advertising appears to be a bargain. i.e. you are told the advert will cost £5 per week. But it is for two years. That then becomes £520 for the term. If the advert fails or is wrongly presented and you get little or no return for your money then it has been wasted. Don't be afraid to question. Don't be afraid to say "No".

He also believes that once you have found your successful form of advertising or found a model that works, then adopt the old adage, "if it ain't broke, then don't fix it". Why mess with something that is working utilise what you have, if need be replicate it to expand your business. All of the big firms work along these lines. They have found a product that works and simply taken that idea or format to other locations and simply copied it. There is many a rich man out there having used that principle.

Sarah thanked Steve for his very enjoyable and informative presentation on behalf of the Forum. There was no other business.