



**ATCM**

Association of  
TOWN CENTRE  
MANAGEMENT

*A New Town Centre  
Manager's Survival Kit*

**An induction guide to your  
first 100 days in office**

# *A New Town Centre Manager's Survival Kit*

**An induction guide to your  
first 100 days in office**



*An ATCM publication in conjunction with Boots The Chemists*

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## *Introduction*

Congratulations! You've just been appointed the new Town Centre Manager for Utopia ville but already:

- A multitude of competing pressure groups are vying for your time.
- The in-tray in your desk is over-flowing.
- The expectations on you seem enormous.

If you can find *20 minutes* to browse through this informal guide to key early priorities then you should emerge with the confidence to formally launch your initiative and the credibility to move forward with wide ranging support.

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## ***Making Contact***

It will be essential at an early stage to meet with the key players who are actively involved in town centre issues.

In particular, focus on the decision makers and takers throughout the various sectors, who are in a position of authority and whom you can influence to 'make things happen'.

Remember that some of the contacts will not know who you are or why you are there and may even feel threatened.

*Your aim during the meetings therefore will be to:*

- Establish rapport.
- Explain about Town Centre Management (TCM): the organisation, remit and early plans.
- Understand the role of the contact within the local decision-making process.
- Find out what's going on already with regard to existing projects.
- Prioritise in your own mind the importance of particular individuals and groups.

*and most importantly:*

- Establish the *needs* of the contact (ask open questions e.g. 'what is important to you in the town centre?').
- *Listen, clarify and record* these needs (they will be used later in the Business Plan).
- Seek commitment from the contact with regard to the concept of Town Centre Management; particularly from the local authority leader and chief executive as this may be used in future meetings with other local authority personnel!

*Finally,*

- Tentatively (and if the meeting has gone well!) begin to discuss the resource implications of mutual areas of importance. You will probably revisit these contacts to discuss their opportunity to assist in funding future projects.
- You should also contact and join the national Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM). This will enable you to spend time with peer town centre managers from other towns in your region which will prove invaluable in learning the 'tricks of the trade'

The ATCM may be able to advise on key national private sector company contacts that you may wish to meet and elicit support from.

### ***Action***

**Set up one to one meetings with all the key decision takers in your Town Centre (see Appendix I)**

**Join the Association of Town Centre Management (see Appendix 7)**

**Make contact with and visit neighbouring town Centre Managers**

## *Clarify your role and agree your performance targets*

As modern Town Centres are so complex and because many issues will be directed towards you, it is in your interest to agree your personal objectives to help focus your efforts (and to defend yourself against any criticism for not being involved in someone's 'pet' project).

You should seek to agree a list of key responsibilities and personal objectives (see Appendix 2). The Steering Group should nominate two senior managers (one public, one private sector) to meet with you and agree your performance against the objectives every six months.

You may also need to define your role with regard to your range of responsibilities and your freedom to act.

*For each key responsibility you may wish to agree with the Steering Group whether:-*

- Town Centre Manager has total *authority* and responsibility to take action or delegate.
- Town Centre Manager should make *recommendations* to the Steering Group before acting.
- Town Centre Manager to carry out the *intentions* of the Steering Group.
- Town Centre Manager is responsible for monitoring or *observing* an activity but not taking direct action.

### *Action*

**Request that the town Centre Steering Group nominates two representatives (one public and one private sector) to work with you to produce your performance criteria and to be responsible for your performance review (see Appendix 2)**

## Setting up shop...or office!

Depending on the stage of development of the TCM initiative at your time of joining you should have been allocated office space of sorts(!) but you may wish to review your options of office location before your initial site becomes too permanent!

*There are several essential points to note when looking to site your office:*

- The office must be located centrally, within the town centre.
- The office should be easily accessible for your contacts and customers (not at the end of a myriad of town hall corridors!) or have a good quality reception service.
- The office should have the facility to enable closed door meetings; confidentiality and credibility are important.
- Consider the option of accepting office space as an 'in-kind' contribution, be it from the local authority, shopping centre landlord or an individual business. This can result in substantial savings to your overheads and easy access to contacts and information.
- Be aware of the political sensitivities of locating within the local authority or a business' premises: if your office location is considered too political, opt for an independent office location.
- Consider whether you would want to have a shop unit as your office. The benefits of this are:
  - high visibility
  - ease of access
  - readily available window display space for PR use.

*However, you may find the shop option:*

- more costly; requiring higher staffing levels and leading to a greater amount of your time being spent on re-active TCM issues.

You should also insist on *secretarial support* for the initiative.

### Action

**Consider your needs in terms of office space and location and enquire what facilities are available in the public sector to best match your needs, within you budget.**

At the very best you will need clerical support for typing, setting up and monitoring the budget and filing (if direct funding is not available these services may be provided 'in kind'). All the better, however, if funds permit, to recruit an Assistant Town Centre Manager. This person should be skilled in office administration but also possess the ability and desire to 'grow the role' to:-

- Manage the office in your absence.
- Represent the TCM initiative at meetings.
- Undertake project work.

*Office equipment is also important. Besides office furniture you should also acquire:*

- A telephone answer machine and/or mobile phone.
- A PC (with graphics facility for leaflets, etc.) and printer.
- A fax machine.
- A photocopier (or access to).



## Get the facts!

Fundamentally before you can focus on the town centre's role in the future you will need to know where the town centre currently lies both in relation to competing centres and its position in the retail hierarchy: in other words, its true market position.

*There are several ways of obtaining information and hard data relating to the town centre:*

- Seek out all existing *market research and consultancy* work data: the planning, economic development and chief executives' departments of the local authority are likely to keep reference libraries of files of past market research, demographic census data and local plan information relating to the retail hierarchy and growth projections for the town centre. You should also request to be copied on town centre planning applications. Local media companies and local commercial agents may also keep market research data relating to the town's catchment population.
- To understand the basic make-up of the town centre and review what projects have already taken place, a *health check* should be undertaken. This should be a simple, practical but comprehensive assessment of the town centre including a basic town centre profile and qualitative assessment of accessibility, the environment and services. For further information and a town profile and assessment checklist refer to Volume 2 of the 'About Town' publication, available from the Association of Town Centre Management (see Appendix 7).
- You should also consider undertaking a *SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)* analysis to identify the deficiencies and threats to the town so that the good points and opportunities can be listed for action.

Typically a forum of interested local people will split into three or four groups to discuss key local issues using the SWOT technique and then a spokesperson for each will report back to the overall group on their findings. Apart from identifying people's concerns and aspirations, this is a valuable means of getting people from different backgrounds (and different interests) to come together and agree priorities. SWOT sessions are an excellent method of team-building. See Appendix 3 for a list of common themes resulting from a SWOT analysis.

- You should also undertake *customer market research* to gain an understanding of your customer needs and current views on both what is attractive and importantly, what is keeping your potential customers away from the town centre. You may need to involve professional market research companies but, for a start-up market research project of about £5,000, you should be able to begin to understand your customer 'wants' in terms of retail aspirations, preferred modes of transport and quality of service provision. Lower cost options include conducting the research through the local newspaper or with help from a local college. See Appendix 4 for an example of a 'start-up' market research project.

## Action

Review what information already exists about the town centre and prepare projects for further research and data collection.

- More detailed research can then also be considered:

- **Major Landlord Interviews**

Working with local authority planners and commercial agents, use a town centre map to block out key landlord investments and conduct interviews to determine their future investment plans for your town.

- **Tenant Survey**

Undertake meetings with the key retail multiples senior management and with major space occupiers to determine their future location and space requirements.

- **Competing Centres**

Visit competing centres and review the impact of existing and new retail developments. Ascertain the impact of these developments in trade and job loss on your town centre.

- **Analysis of current retail offer**

*Enlist consultants to draw up a schedule of:*

- existing retail provision
- missing retail provision
- requirements of expanding retailers.
- space availability to match these requirements.

## *Establishing a communications strategy*

When you are establishing your TCM initiative, communicating the objectives and the benefits of the campaign will be vital to your success. Careful cultivation of your local media will form a powerful tool in exciting people's interest and enlisting their support and commitment.

Editorial coverage in particular will carry more weight than advertising because it is seen as third party endorsement and is, of course, free!

The local authority PR department will be able to advise on PR issues but you should set up your own communications strategy which might encompass the following points:-

### *Action*

**Write up your communications strategy at an early stage including the key points detailed herein.**

#### **Establish and maintain key contacts**

As part of your early programme of meeting key contacts, make sure that the most senior managers from the local media (newspapers, radio(s) and television companies) are included. Seek to establish rapport, ask about priority stories and request a contact sheet of names of reporters specialising in town centre issues. Organise to be interviewed by local reporters and prepare a summary of your plans and projects to gain their interest. You might also mention the date of the launch of your TCM initiative (see Chapter 9).

A listing of contacts at specialist, national press publication offices such as Retail Week and Planning Week would also prove useful.

#### **Create the TCM initiative corporate logo**

To project the corporate image of your TCM initiative, you should arrange for a unique logo to be designed. This should be distinctive, eye catching and different to the local authority logo (depending on your degree of independence). This logo should then be used not only on your stationery, but stamped on every project that you undertake: this will pay dividends as more people are made aware of your efforts and involvement in improving the town.

#### **Press Release**

Draw up a timetable of activities and consequent dates in order that you can issue a press release relating to those projects. The press release should be short and snappy and cover the who?, what?, where?, why? and when? of the project. You may also add a comment and your contact name should be detailed.

Remember your story should be: new, true, have local consequence and preferably involve human interest. See Appendix 5 for a sample Press Release.

To save time, see if you can gain access to a multi-address fax machine, programme in all the local media addresses and simply press a single button to send your press release.

**Photocall**

You may wish to include in your press release the details of a photo opportunity. It is also a good idea to telephone the picture desk of the local newspaper to check that the opportunity is in the diary and a photographer is available. You may also seek to get local councillors in the frame and thereby associated with the initiative.

**Weekly Column**

Consider requesting a weekly or monthly column in your local newspaper to cover town centre issues, but remember you will have to keep the information interesting, every week. Similarly, you may also be able to put 'copy' into local authority publications and national trade journals such as 'Forum', the ATCM newsletter.

**Newsletter**

It will also be useful to set up your own communications tool by way of a newsletter every quarter. This can be delivered free to town centre businesses and/or customers. You should aim to create a quality newsletter but tabloid, or bullet point, in style; people will not read too many words but will remember photographs or sketches.

## *Early wins*

A good Town Centre Manager is like a juggler; whilst you are initially balancing the tasks of establishing contacts, setting up office and undertaking research, you should also be delivering tangible projects on the ground.

As you will not have agreed all the priorities during the first three months and to avoid becoming swamped in 101 projects and ideas, it is essential to score some early, visible wins to show that you've arrived in town!

### ***Some key points to remember...***

- Early wins should be highly visible, tangible projects probably linked to the environment.
- They should be quick fix but long lasting.
- They should be low cost, innovative and if possible, sponsored by a local business!
- The projects need not be high priority.
- You should maximise the PR from the win; issue a press release, associate the TCM initiative with the project and apply your logo to the initiative.

### ***and some examples...***

- Erect new 'Welcome to the Town Centre' boards at reception points: bus stations, car parks, etc.
- Establish a car park security ring round system with matching signboards.
- Set up a retail shopwatch scheme and link it to the CCTV system (if in place).
- 'Window dress' vacant retail units with displays from charitable organisations who should pay a small window cleaning fee to keep the unit clean.
- Establish a considerate contractor scheme to ensure shopfitters and builders abide by their responsibilities.
- Encourage market traders to improve their stalls perhaps by way of corporate colours in tarpaulin, paint and parasols.
- Co-ordinate Christmas opening times with the retailers during the summer and then write to all the service operators, police, traffic wardens, public transport operators, cleansing, etc., detailing the times to assist them in planning their services.
- Create a new shopping guide for the town centre.

## *Action*

**Take time out to consider 3 key visible, achievable projects. Agree the projects with the TCM forum, deliver them and derive positive PR coverage from them.**

## *The Business Plan*

The Business Plan is your strategic document in which you set out what you aim to achieve. Depending on local terminology you may need to call it by a different name such as Action Plan or Revitalisation Strategy.

Whilst you may not be able to complete your Business Plan in the first three months in office, you should begin the task of data collection for the plan and consider the framework of it.

### **Sources of information for the plan**

*It will be useful initially to 'Keep your ear to the ground' and record ideas from various sources:*

- During meetings with key contacts, ask open questions and listen and record what issues and projects they feel are important.
- Undertake your own *walkabouts* and *appraise current customer services*.
- Analyse the information from *market research*, *SWOT* analysis and health check to generate issues and projects.
- Consider holding an issues '*brainstorm*' session with a mixture of public and private sector contacts.
- Review *consultancy research* already undertaken on the town centre.
- Look at the *competition* and adapt successful projects from elsewhere in the country to your own circumstances.

### **Organisation of the plan**

It may be useful to ask yourself why you are producing the Plan and who your target audience is.

This will vary for each location but you must not lose the opportunity to use the plan as a means to generate further financial support from the public and private sectors.

*Generally there will be certain key ingredients called for:-*

- Take into account both political and business needs.
- Make the plan interesting but concise and factual.
- Include financial information detailing the core funding and menu of project funding opportunities.
- Include photographs or images to enliven the plan.
- Ensure that the plan is realistic and achievable.
- Allow for updates.

## *Action*

**Create a TCM sub-group to co-ordinate, review and write up the Business Plan.**

- Consider the duration; 3-5 years is the norm.
- Provide an executive summary.

### **And what of the cost?**

You should spend sufficient money to create a professional Business Plan. Remember it is your message to your customers and it will be used as a tool to generate funding. You need to speculate to accumulate!

### **Content of the plan**

*The better quality comprehensive Business Plans include the following four components:*

- A *vision* for the town centre which is both consensus building and which people can relate to. This should be your broad, core aim e.g. 'to work in partnership to improve the economy and the environment'.
- A *strategy of key objectives* which should be in priority order. The objectives will cover themes including access, environment, marketing, crime, inward investment, training, organisation, etc., e.g. promote the town centre as a shopping, tourism and leisure and business centre to relevant target audiences.
- A listing of projects related to each key objective and with a cost, target date and associated sponsor. These projects should be prioritised by the Town Centre Steering Group; each member can vote each project out of 5 and then the 'votes' can be collated to give a score and indication of priority for each project.

*e.g. project to train the car park attendants in customer care:*

Cost	£3,000
Date	July 1998
Sponsor	Local Electricity plc.

These projects will provide the 'menu' for private companies to cherry pick and support either through direct financial contributions or through 'in kind' sponsorship by way of secondments, for example.

- A listing of *Key Performance Indicators* to monitor the plan. It is important not to confuse the efficiency of carrying out the projects with the effectiveness of the performance of the town centre. A listing of indicators is provided in Appendix 6 and these should be chosen in relation to local circumstances.

It may also be worthwhile reading trade press to look for national surveys of town centre performance which are undertaken periodically by retail and town planning consultancies.

## *The Town Centre Management launch*

You've made it to your 100th day in office and you (and the initiative) are to be formally launched!

Below is a checklist to remind you of the objectives, administration detail and extent of the launch.

### **Why are you doing this?**

- To publicly announce the TCM Business Plan.
- To attract greater resource/sponsorship.
- To gain more publicity.

### **When should you do it?**

- About 3 months into the role.

### **Where should it be?**

- The top local venue. This could be the main civic building. However, if it is important that you are seen to be independent of the local authority, then a more neutral choice could be the function room of the main hotel.

### **How should you do it?**

- As this is your main public debut, you will want to create a *professional appearance* and therefore you should:
  - start *planning* the launch early.
  - enlist *administrative support* to carry out the launch.
- The *type of event* should be agreed through the TCM Forum.

The most popular and successful format is a lunchtime event comprising 2 or 3 guest speakers followed by a sit down or buffet lunch. Other possibilities include a full day conference including workshops or an evening or breakfast launch event.

- Clearly *timing* is important: most local business people are very busy and can only spare an hour or two during the day and may be unavailable outside working hours. Consult your own TCM Forum to agree the best times.
- Offering *refreshments* is essential; like it or not, it will ensure you attract more attendees, particularly at lunch time!

## *Action*

**Start planning your launch day early; set up a sub-group of the TCM Forum, including the launch day programme.**



- Ideally you should aim for 3 *guest speakers*, each speaking for no more than 5-10 minutes. To create a balance you may choose two local key speakers to represent the public and private sectors e.g. leader of the council and chair of the retail association. The third speaker may be a knowledgeable national commentator e.g. from the Board of the Association of Town Centre Management or from a national commercial company.
- The content of the presentations, which you should co-ordinate, should be kept simple but may include: – an overview of the vision of the TCM partnership.

### **1. Public Sector**

- a. Commitment to TCM principles by local government.
- b. Examples of schemes to date and planned.
- c. Support for partnership idea.

### **2. Private Sector**

- a. An indication of the priorities of the TCM partnership.
- b. Some detailed examples of the projects and examples of ways to get involved.  
and
- c. Importantly, a clear indication that the partnership will only succeed with resource contributions from all the public and private partners. (This message is best presented by the private sector speaker).

### **3. National Speaker**

- a. Overview of national trends.
- b. The challenges that face town centres.
- c. The way forward – TCM (before/after slide presentation) – any speaker.

To strengthen these *visually* any of the speakers may incorporate a brief slide presentation.

- You should also consider a *launch document* which will be a précis of the draft business plan and include the objectives, priorities and partnership details. This may take the form of a pamphlet or a concise invite letter. Either format must include a proforma to encourage the attendees to sign up and commit resource to the initiative and a comments form for attendees to highlight key town centre issues.
- The members of the TCM Forum should also be tasked with persuading 4 targeted attendees each to join the initiative and sign the above proforma.

- The *PR Strategy* for the day should be clear; you are unveiling the *new*, exciting TCM partnership plans and the media should not miss them! You may wish to draw on specific examples of new projects from the Business Plan and you should also allow for early morning interviews on the launch day.
- It would be helpful if your administrative back-up has some experience in public events (perhaps a secondee from the Council PR Department). As well as other tasks, they should send out the invites and proformas, chase up responses, type up and hand out badges, list attendees on the day and circulate the launch document to those who cannot attend on the day.

**Who should you invite?**

All the people on your 'Establish contacts' check list plus any others that have expressed an interest in the initiative.

In particular you may target the decision takers in the top 50 local companies. A list of these should be held by the local authority economic development department.

## *Appendices*

Appendix 1 – **Key contacts to be made**

Appendix 2 – **The Performance Review**

Appendix 3 – **Common Themes from a SWOT Analysis**

Appendix 4 – **Start-up Market Research Project**

Appendix 5 – **Sample Press Release**

Appendix 6 – **Key Performance Indicators**

Appendix 7 – **Further advice on Town Centre  
Management**







	Tel No.	Achieved
Market Traders Association		
<b>4. Commercial</b>		
Major landlords of shopping centres, office developments, etc.		
Location managers of large town centre office based service companies e.g. Insurance companies, I.T. companies.		
Area/regional bank/financial services managers		
Directors of public transport companies		
Directors of local media companies; press, radio		

	Tel No.	Achieved
Directors of utilities companies		

**5. Leisure/Cultural**

General managers of larger hotels.		

Leisure Centre managers		

Theatre managers		
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**6. General**

Chief Executive of Chamber of Commerce		

Chief Executive of TEC/LEC		

Representatives of groups and organisations e.g. Civic Society, disabled, LVA.		



	Tel No.	Achieved
<b>7. Community Groups</b>		
Service clubs e.g. Rotary/Round Table		
<b>8. Other</b>		
Residents Associations		
Local TCMs		

# Performance Review

## Aims and Objectives

- Encouraging Manager/Subordinate dialogue

Simply providing a formal occasion for the two parties to discuss performance is a way of encouraging more control between them.

- Formal Assessment of Performance

## Basic Concepts

Essentially, the performance review process can be broken down into 2 main discussions;

- Agreeing objectives.
- Reviewing performance.

In order to ensure that each part of the performance review process is conducted effectively, it is important to understand the basic concepts and practical stages which underpin the process.

## Key Responsibilities and Objectives

Key Responsibilities and Objectives are the cornerstones of the performance review.

Key responsibilities are fixed and define the outputs of the job in global terms. Objectives are different in that they will vary from year to year depending upon the particular situation.

Definitions of key responsibilities and objectives are given as follows:

### Key Responsibilities

Key responsibilities show the context of a job. They define the purpose of the job, show how it fits into the organisation and identify the areas in which it is expected to perform. They are not specific to the individual (as objectives are); they clarify the boundaries of a job.

- Together, they define the whole job (and are identical for the same kind of job).
- They are ongoing (unchanging, unless the job changes fundamentally).
- They are about results (not activities, duties or functions).
- They are critical; most jobs will have between five and eight.

Five key responsibilities have been defined for Town Centre Managers. However, it is recognised that some local authorities will use a separate set of key responsibilities which reflect their specific priorities etc. In the example performance review form these are listed in the left-hand

column. It can be seen that the key responsibilities are reasonably broad statements clearly defining the Town Centre Manager job. The key responsibilities provide a standard definition and focus for the job.

### **Objectives**

While key responsibilities are fixed, objectives will need to be agreed between individual job holders and the management committee on a year to year basis.

Below are key points to remember about objectives.

- They are unique to a specific job.
- They relate to a time and a context (are about this year's business plan).
- Achievement, or failure to achieve, is easily recognised.
- They show how an individual intends to fulfil a key responsibility in practice this year.
- They inform rather than control the way in which a key responsibility is carried out and assessed.

It is important that objectives are framed so there is no ambiguity about whether or not they have been achieved. It should still be possible to agree in advance what the criteria for success will be and to make a reasoned assessment of whether or not the objective has been met.

### **Agreeing Responsibilities and Objectives**

Agreeing the responsibilities and objectives for the proceeding year is an essential part of the performance review process. It should be remembered that this is not simply an 'administrative' exercise. If the review is to fulfil all of its aims it will require a thorough discussion of the challenges and opportunities for the next year. Above all it should be a motivational experience for the job holder providing a renewed impetus and focus on the agreed objectives.

Whilst the process of writing and negotiating objectives will vary depending upon people's own style there are a number of basic 'rules' which should guide the process.

### **Dialogue and Negotiation (a two-way process)**

The setting up of objectives should be a result of a full and open discussion between the Town Centre Manager and the line manager. The creation of a performance review is a 2-way interactive process.

### **The Nature of Objectives**

There is a need to ensure that objectives are realistic and achievable. Virtually all good objectives satisfy the 'SMART' acronym.

Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timed.

It is useful to evaluate the proposed objectives against these standards. The setting of SMART objectives reduces much debate and ambiguity when it comes to the review.

### **The Number of Objectives**

It is difficult to prescribe exactly how many objectives should be set. However, it is important to note that setting too many objectives reduces focus and may distract the job holders from the most important objectives for that year. The number of objectives will vary but, as a guide about 3 objectives per key responsibility should be set.

### **Reviewing the Performance**

The establishing of objectives is of little value to an organisation unless the parties involved hold themselves to account for their successful fulfilment. This is where the review fits in.

*It has the following main purposes:-*

- To review past performance against objectives.
- Possibly to influence decisions on salary increases (this, however, must clearly be agreed by the Town Centre Forum).
- To stimulate thinking about the priorities of future objectives.
- To identify training requirements.

For the assessment to be successful it should:

- Be against understood and previously agreed criteria.
- Involve the job holder and the manager being open and candid, both in the setting of objectives and in examining the reasons for the eventual outcome.
- Result in agreement between the two parties involved as to the overall assessment.
- Ideally it should be more than just a once a year discussion. There should be no assessment surprises at the end of the year. To ensure this the use of interim reviews are strongly recommended, preferably every 3 months.

Assessment against agreed performance fulfils these criteria.

At the end of the year performance has to be evaluated. There are a number of steps which need to be taken during the performance review:

### **Preparation**

The importance of the review discussion means that it should not be entered into lightly. Both the appraising manager and the Town Centre Manager will need to spend time in the weeks and days prior to the review discussion considering performance and the degrees of achievement.

### **Focus on Key Responsibilities**

Through discussing each objective the appraising manager should make an objective judgement of whether or not each key responsibility has been satisfied. The assessment (Met, Exceeded, Fell Short) should be made in the assessment column against each key responsibility.

### **Overall Assessment**

Once each key responsibility has been assessed it is possible to decide the degree to which the job holder has performed overall. There are three categories:

Met, Exceeded and Fell Short.

*Definitions of these are given as follows:*

#### **Met Responsibilities**

The definition of 'met responsibilities' is that the job holder met the requirements of each of the agreed key responsibilities. An informed judgement will be required based primarily upon the extent to which objectives were achieved under each key responsibility. Some of the objectives may have been achieved, some exceeded and a few may not have been achieved; some may have turned out to be no longer relevant in the changed circumstances of the year. Indeed, the objectives may even have been changed in the course of reviews during the year. However, in the view of the assessing manager, enough needs to have been done to meet the challenge of each key responsibility.

#### **Exceeded Responsibilities**

The job holder involved met all and clearly exceeded a majority of the key responsibilities. This means, broadly, that more objectives were achieved than planned or that those which were achieved were better than planned in volume, quality or impact. As the performance review is a reflection of the business plan, it must be clear that an outstanding contribution has been made.

#### **Fell Short of Responsibilities**

The job holder failed to satisfy the manager that performance was met in at least one of the key responsibilities. This rule is important because it goes to the core of the concept of the 'whole job'. This does not necessarily mean every single objective has to be achieved. But, if a responsibility is sufficiently important to be identified as key, then it must be met. Otherwise, it would mean that some responsibilities are not worth concentrating attention on. This could distort managers' attention away from areas of critical importance including, possibly, some with important medium term or strategic implications.

## Example performance review form

 NAME: **A. N. Other**

 JOB TITLE: **Town Centre Manager (Anytown)**

Key Responsibilities	Assessment*	Objectives	Notes
To enhance communication between providers and users of town centre services. Co-ordinate efforts, resource and interests of all stakeholders to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre		Attend all meetings of Chamber of Commerce.	
		Quality and speed of response for requests for help and information to follow recognised local good practice.	
		Establish a town centre 'forum' to allow canvassing of views and to disseminate information on town centre initiatives.	
		Produce a regular, quarterly newsletter detailing town centres issues and activities. Co-ordinate distribution to...	
		Maintain close and effective liaison with local media.	
Create an agreed Business Plan		Establish priority of initiatives on the basis of routine market research.	
		Maintain a constant review of competitive threats and review these monthly with Local Authority Steering Group.	
Undertake and assist with specific initiatives to improve, cultivate and develop the attractiveness, accessibility and security of the town centre. Monitor Local Authority service delivery.		Establish CCTV network by end July 1996.	
		Conduct feasibility study for harbour area restoration project. Report on funding costs and private sector interests by July 1995.	
Assist and become involved in liaison with potential investors and developers.		Liaise with XYZ plc, provide support and link with council on their likely relocation.	
Promote the public perception of the town as a place to shop, visit, live or invest.		Identify publicity priorities with Steering Group by July 1995. Agree actions and implement by December 1995.	
		Co-ordinate all marketing and promotional activity relating to the town centre.	

### The above key responsibilities and objectives were discussed and agreed on:

Job Holder: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessing Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Overall Assessment</b>	Met	Exceeded	Fell Short
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The above assessment was made and discussed on: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Holder : \_\_\_\_\_

Assessing Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Noted by Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please mark (M = Met/E = Exceeded/S = Fell Short) as appropriate in the Assessment column against each Key Responsibility

## *Common Themes from a SWOT analysis*

Below is a checklist of common issues arising within SWOT (brainstorming sessions)

- Routes in (and out) of town.
- Signing from outside the town up to the town centre.
- Cost of car parking
- Ease of car parking
- Public transport availability
- Bus stops (shelters) and facilities
- Railways (shelters) and facilities
- Environment quality – materials, design, appearance
- Maintenance
- Mix of shopping
- Other facilities
- Public toilets
- Extended opening hours/Sundays
- Evening economy
- Cleanliness
- Security
- Facilities and access for the disabled, etc.

A single SWOT session, say of around 2 hours is likely to be insufficient, so plan additional meetings to refine SWOT results and categorise the issues. A later session should enable you to create an agenda for town centre improvements.

## *Start-up market research project*

*The aim of market research is to identify:*

Who uses the town, when and why.

Why people don't use the town.

This will require questioning users (street interviews) and non users (home, telephone or postal interviews).

*The questions that you may want answers to could include:*

Where do you live?

What is your age, gender, occupation?

How often do you use the town centre?

What facilities / shops do you visit in the town centre?

How do you travel to the centre?

Where else do you shop and how often?

Why do you shop elsewhere?

Why do you shop in this town centre?

What are the advantages / disadvantages of this town?

Where do you shop for food?

Where do you shop for clothes?

Where do you shop for D.I.Y.?

How important are certain issues to them (e.g. particular ranges of shops and services, access, car parking, pedestrianisation, toilets, disabled access, street entertainments, eating places, night time events, cleanliness, security, markets,...) and how does your town rate on this list?



## Sample Press Release

# PRESS Release

6th December 1994

Date of Issue:

## **NOTTINGHAM**

CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

EXCHANGE BUILDINGS NORTH  
SMITHY ROW  
NOTTINGHAM NG1 2BS

TEL: (0602) 350860  
FAX: (0602) 410333

### FESTIVE RAYS FROM ON HIGH

- A giant 25 meter high Christmas tree is about to illuminate the sky and look down on festive late night city centre shoppers this Wednesday 14th December from 6pm onwards and next late night shopping Wednesday, 21st December.
- The novel scheme, thought to be the first of its kind in Nottingham, involves lighting up selected windows in the 1960's skyscraper Market Square House, owned by UK Estates PLC., at the bottom of the Market Square. 15 rolls of 11 meter black cartridge paper and 18 rolls of double-sided tape were needed to create the festive effect.
- Claire Thomas from managing agent De Morgan & Company comments, "We are currently about to refurbish several of the floors of the building and when approached by City Centre Management were delighted to offer to sponsor the illumination costing £300 to bring some novel Christmas cheer to city centre shoppers."
- For further information and to arrange a photo opportunity, contact City Centre Management (Martin Garratt or Hannah Baldwin) on Nottingham 350860 or Claire Thomas on 071 930 3222.

**IMPROVING** the city centre experience

**ENCOURAGING** partnership between the public and private sectors

**SUPPORTING** the development of the city centre

CITY CENTRE MANAGER · MARTIN T. GARRATT

## *Key performance indicators*

### **1. Real Sales Growth**

To protect confidentiality, sales figures from 6 or more stores can be recorded monthly as percentages and then aggregated to provide a town centre position which can be compared over time.

### **2. Productivity (Turnover per sq. ft)**

Can only be obtained from the private sector confidentially as with real sales. This information, however, could be obtained annually.

### **3. Footfall**

To be measured at the same time from the same location regularly – say every three months. Weather or other factors may influence some of these counts. The importance, however, is the trend. High footfall locations should be used; the counts need only be for one or two hours and can be carried out with minimum cost.

### **4. Car Parking Usage**

Readily obtainable from private sector operators or the local authority. On-street car parking can be difficult but represents generally a quite small proportion of total available space. Information should be linked to overall capacity. Patterns and trends could indicate a pricing regime or security/quality problem. Again benchmarking against a competing centre would be valuable.

### **5. Public Transport Usage**

Can be obtained through agreement with private operators. Trends compared with car parking usage will confirm whether or not efficiency, quality and public perceptions of value are issues.

### **6. Retail Yields**

Considered by many to be a better way to judge how a town centre is perceived commercially than rental levels. They reflect a combination of rent and capital value of the property. They are included in the government's planning guidance note recommending them as an indicator of viability. They are produced by the valuation office and again can be a useful comparison with similar or neighbouring centres.

### **7. Rental Growth and Levels**

Income generation from property investment is becoming seen as a critical overall measure and is the combination of a number of other factors. A slightly increasing growth in rental levels suggests a buoyant town centre.

### **8. Office Rents and Vacant Space**

Another useful indicator. Again rental levels can be obtained from the Valuation Office or local commercial agent.

### **9. Vacancies Ad Premises for Sale**

The number of vacant units are frequently used by local authorities to measure health. Confirmation in addition of premises or leases for disposal is also extremely important. Many do not have 'for sale' boards visible to protect consumer and employee confidence.

The number of short term lettings is also relevant for, e.g. charity shops. Again confirmation of a problem in the disposal of a lease.

### **10. Retail Investment**

Refurbishment, sales floor reduction or relocation is an indicator of trading performance and an indicator of how the town is perceived externally.

The Building Control Department of a local authority will have information relating to consents for refurbishment.

### **11. Employment Statistics**

Estimated and produced annually from County Authorities. Need to be broken down to male, female, part and full time.

### **12. Crime Statistics**

Can be obtained from the police. Intervals six monthly or annually.

## ***Further advice on Town Centre Management***

The Association of Town Centre Management : 0171 222 0120

Boots The Chemists – Town Centre Management Department : 0115 959 1231

**The Association of Town Centre Management supports the town centre management movement by supplying an invaluable range of resources to assist all of our members in their TCM objectives:**

**REPRESENTATION** – promoting members' interests in relevant matters of public policy at a national level.

**COMMUNICATION** – conferences, seminars, workshops and a regular newsletter, as well as regional forums and seminars.

**INFORMATION** – a library of articles, references, and copies of business and action plans; professional advice; and a helpline.

**TRAINING** – formal and informal programmes which concentrate on advancing techniques for effective town centre management – organised both nationally and by regional groups – and supported by the professional skills of significant academic institutions.

**RESEARCH** – research projects are regularly commissioned by ATCM to advance thinking and produce practical guidance in key areas of town centre management; we also respond to the research needs of other relevant organisations.

**CONTACT** – encouraging a flow of ideas between TCM groups in the UK, Europe and America through our growing network of members and their contacts.

**SUPPORT SERVICES** – expert assistance at a local level to initiate and grow town centre management schemes.



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