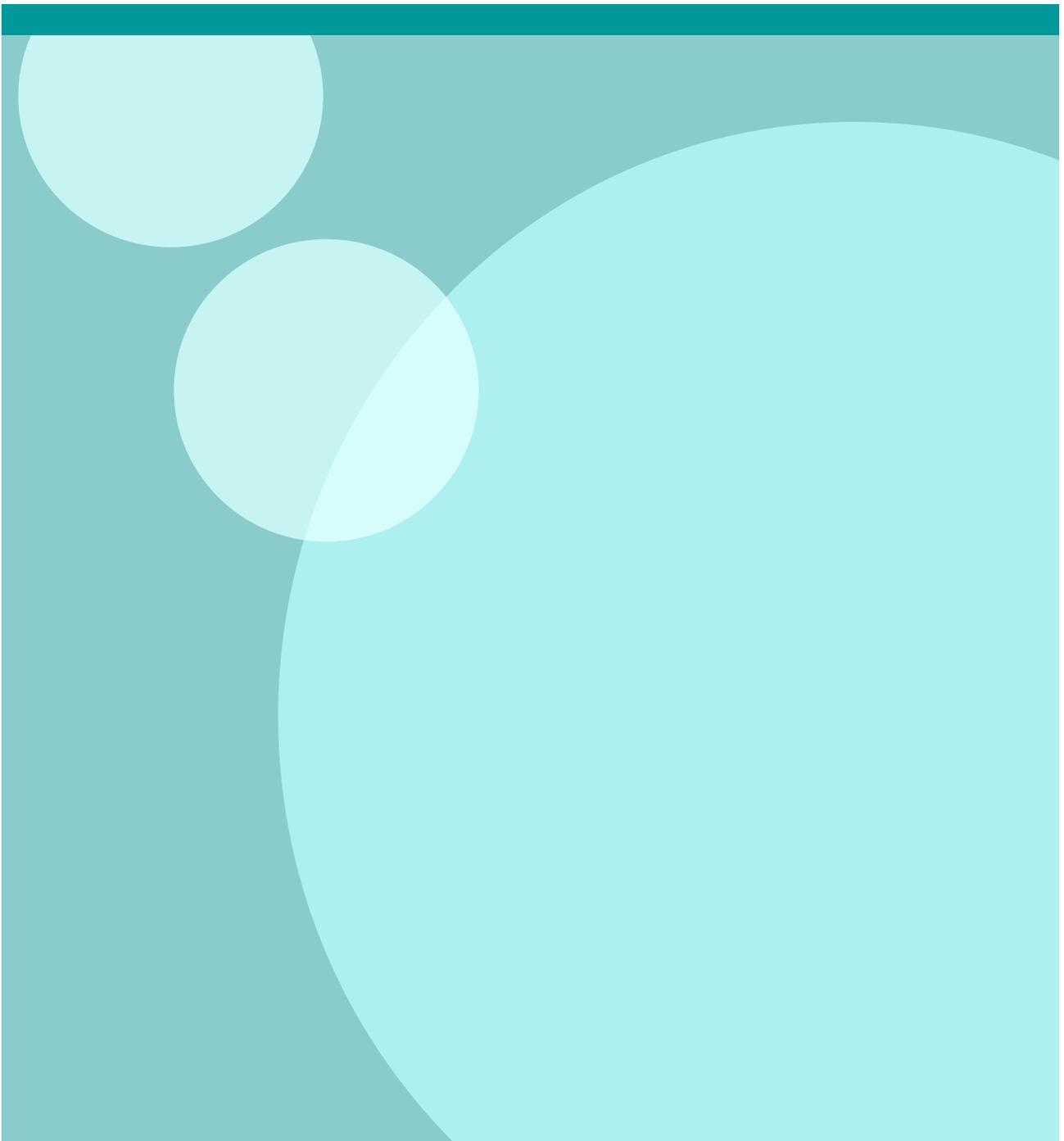




Retail Markets  
**A good practice guide**







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September 2010

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The markets industry and the Government have come together to identify ways in which markets can be supported. This is important because a successful market has much to offer the local community – economically; socially and environmentally.

The CLG Select Committee Report on retail markets<sup>1</sup> recognised the need to share good practice, and recommended that the industry look in particular at how they can provide further good practice guidance and support. This document seeks to highlight areas of good practice and signpost users to sources of more detailed information.

This document is also the sister document of a report on different ways to manage markets (available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/publications/all/>) and is also relevant to a series of training modules for market traders, to be launched in October 2010, further details of which will be available at [www.nmtf.co.uk](http://www.nmtf.co.uk).

## Introduction

Markets are the birthplace of towns and cities across the world. Starting in some cases as crossroads where travellers would barter their goods and chattels for food and products they were the catalyst for the development of hamlets into villages, villages into towns and towns into cities. Haymarket; Grassmarket; Market Rasen; Market Street – the history of the market is woven into the very fabric of English society.

The retail industry also has its roots in markets. In 1894 a young Russian migrant joined forces with a local bookkeeper in the north of England. By opening a string of Penny Bazaar stalls in markets (the first in Leeds Market in 1904), the global retail giant Marks and Spencer was born.

Markets are important. They bring vibrancy and character to the town centre, often becoming tourist attractions in their own right (think Camden Town). They offer opportunities to support local and national objectives in a range of areas: economic; social; healthy eating; environmental; localism and supporting the development of the Big Society.

The high street is a very competitive environment. For any retailer, including markets, to survive they have to ensure they are providing what the customer wants. In addition to regularly reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of its operation, it is also important for retailers to look for innovation and good practice from others around them.

<sup>1</sup> *Market Failure?: Can the traditional market survive?*, July 2009

# Engaging key partners

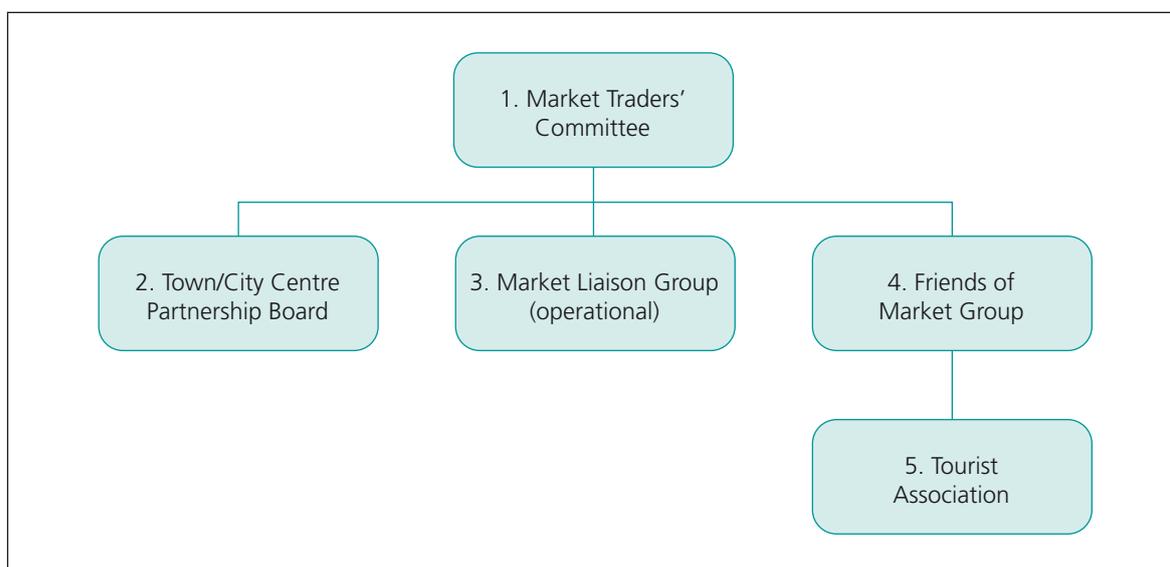
*Markets 21*<sup>2</sup> (a review of the UK's retail and wholesale markets) identified partnership working as one of the critical success factors in successful and sustainable markets. This is regardless of the type of operational management model in place.

One way of delivering effective partnership working is through the creation of a 'market forum'. The following example is based on the successful models currently operated in Nuneaton, Bedworth and Darlington markets.

These towns have very similar town centre boards. The membership of the boards consists of a wide range of organisations and the boards support engagement between the public and private sector with decisions being made on town centre strategies.

The boards include market operators, the voluntary sector, transport providers, educational establishments, the police, local residents, retailers and businesses. The town centre manager normally acts as the facilitator for the boards.

The following chart shows the link between the various groups and partnerships:



Each of these groups is now considered in a little more detail.

## Market traders committee

- This could be a National Market Traders' Federation (NMTF) branch or the local traders group. The traders elect their committee and nominate trader representatives on other forums. Normally only one position would be available on the town centre partnership board.

<sup>2</sup> The Retail Markets Alliance, November 2009.

### **Town centre partnership board**

- All key partners in the town centre are represented.
- Strategic decisions are taken.
- Public/private sectors meet in partnership.
- Sub-groups can be formed with various responsibilities such as marketing, safety, access, promotions etc.
- Action plan produced and implemented.
- Marketing and promotion co-ordinated on a whole town basis.
- Markets 'champion' identified.

### **Markets liaison group**

- This is an operational meeting between the market traders and the market operators and covers issues in relation to the everyday running of the market.
- It is useful if at one of those meetings a councillor attends (even if the market is not run by the local authority).
- These should occur at least quarterly.
- Identification of training needs and arranging at least one trading seminar a year with input from experienced traders and retailers.
- It is important that the markets aesthetically fits into its location – that the level of presentation matches the general streetscape and that its physical function does not interrupt access by others e.g. for set-up/de-rig and the loading of goods onto stalls.

### **Friends of market group**

- This consists of interested members of the public with only one nominated trader.
- They can be of any age but it is best to get a good cross-section from young to old.
- These will champion the market.
- Can be used as a resource for events, surveys, information and promotional material.
- Can also provide the customer's perspective.
- Need to consider where the information is drawn from and disseminated to.

### Local tourist association

- Membership can assist in promotion of markets.
- Can assist in additional marketing opportunities, especially through linked websites.

In the case of Nuneaton this joint approach has resulted in:

- Marketing the town centre as a single brand, incorporating the market, retailers and other visitor attractions.
- As a member of the town centres management board, the market is actively involved with the town's retail crime initiative, which has attained the Safer Business Award for the town.
- The results from the 2009 town centre survey show that 97 per cent of respondents thought the market was important to the town. The survey also showed that 82 per cent of respondents regularly shopped on the market. Perception of its appearance rose sharply when new stalls were introduced. Visitors from outside Nuneaton have risen from 23 per cent (2005) to 33 per cent (2009), mainly due to the market. The market has contributed to improving the retail offer in the town, with footfall figures substantially up on market days.
- The town is now attracting visitors from outside its catchment area, including regular coach trips from Lincolnshire to visit the market.

And in Darlington:

- Active participation by market traders in the consultations on a multi-million pound scheme to transform the town centre has resulted in the re-alignment of the outdoor markets, ensuring they are at the heart of the town centre.
- The markets actively participate in the partnership on a range of issues such as transport, safety and events, and contribute to the action plan.
- There is improved communication between the markets and major retailers in the town.
- The town centre board recently commissioned a report into the covered market, which in addition to identifying shopper profiles showed a satisfaction rating of 63 per cent.

# Supporting micro-businesses

The markets industry currently supports over 100,000 jobs in the UK through the hard work of over 45,000 businesses<sup>3</sup>. But the industry has the potential to deliver more. Critical to the success of markets within a local authority context is the ability to use surpluses (where gained) to reinvest back into all aspects of the business. To date, only Bradford Council has authorised this approach and has, to date, consequently reaped the benefit of £3.7m being invested in maintenance and enhancement of the market buildings and plans to develop the 'Local Produce and Fine Food Festival Markets' across the area in the future.

A benefit of the industry is that it allows easy access to the world of business and commerce. The link between markets and mainstream retail is also significant as traders move from an open market stall to become shop owners employing staff in the high street or a shopping centre.

When they are well managed, markets create real opportunities for people with ideas to take a chance and produce something new. Marks and Spencer, Tesco and Morrisons are now household names – but they started on markets.

Other examples of increasing awareness and supporting new and existing businesses can be seen by the following examples:

## Make Your Mark

Enterprise UK, the national campaign to unlock the UK's enterprise potential, working in partnership with the Retail Market Alliance, launched Make Your Mark in the Markets in 2008 with the aim of giving budding entrepreneurs with an innovative idea the opportunity to trade for free within their local market.

The national competition offers significant prizes:

- Six months free trading.
- £1,000 to support the business.
- Free marketing and advertising for the business, through all partners involved.
- Opportunity to network with other entrepreneurs and share ideas.
- Free NMTF membership, which includes public liability insurance and
- Free business starter pack, which includes top tips from Matthew Crawford (winner of the first Make Your Mark in the Markets), funding advice, business advice and much more.

Market managers can participate by offering trading space on their markets to competitors. The free publicity arising from the competition, both for the winners and

<sup>3</sup> The Retail Markets Alliance, November 2009.

their markets, is significant. More information is available on the following website, including details of the 2010 winners:

<http://www.gew.org.uk/markets>

## The National Market Traders Federation

The Federation is currently in discussion with a German company to bring the European Street Market concept to the UK. In addition to manufacturing trading vans and trailers, the company also provides specialist support, market training and a trading pitch/itinerary for new businesses. If successful, NABMA members will be able to offer graduates of the process suitable pitches at their markets.

[www.borco.de/e-index.htm](http://www.borco.de/e-index.htm)

## Acton

Acton Market, developed and managed by Action Acton, a registered charity, Development Trust, and social enterprise provides opportunities for those new to market trading to gain experience and confidence in all aspects of running a business through a community market model, market trader training and hands-on support and advice offered to traders.

[www.actonmarket.com/Market%20Traders%20Training.asp?t=t&pid=168&nid=164](http://www.actonmarket.com/Market%20Traders%20Training.asp?t=t&pid=168&nid=164)

## Swadlincote

A new market trader start-up programme has been developed in a partnership between South Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire County Council, Business Link and Geraud Markets UK. Entrepreneurs get free advice, support and planning, and discounts on rents. Further information is available from: [economic.development@south-derbys.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@south-derbys.gov.uk)

# Supporting communities

*"The community of the market gives off an effervescence that captures the spirit of the town. Without the market, the town would lose something vital."*

Mayor of Nuneaton and Bedworth.

Localism is all about pushing power away from central Government down through local Government and into the hands of communities themselves.

## Heywood's 'Magic' Market!

Heywood Market is a good example of localism made real. In 2001, the future looked bleak – the market had lost £70,000 in its last trading year and was threatened with closure by the local council. In response, the market traders joined forces with the local community and the local authority to set up a community trust to bid for the management of the market. Heywood's 'Magic' (Market Action Group In the Community) Market was born. Since then the market has gone from strength to strength with over 90 per cent of stalls occupied.

This is an approach which other smaller markets may wish to consider. Further details can be found in the report on Market Management models (available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/publications/all/>)

## Wakefield Market

The newly re-opened Wakefield market food hall contains a fully equipped demonstration stall. The Demonstration Station is a partnership project between Wakefield Council, NHS Wakefield District and The Joint Public Health Unit.

Open from Monday to Saturday the stall will be hosting a varied calendar of events:

- Cooking demonstrations.
- Tasting sessions.
- Exercise activities.
- Healthy choices.
- Advice on growing your own food ... and cooking it!
- Activities to complement the specialist market days and city centre events.
- Special events for schools and community groups.



Image provided by Krys Zasada, Nabma

[www.wakefield.gov.uk/CultureAndLeisure/Markets/Wakefield/demostation/default.htm](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/CultureAndLeisure/Markets/Wakefield/demostation/default.htm)

## Bradford Markets service

Bradford Council introduced a 'Step Up Market Challenge', aimed at young people aged between five and 19 years old. Their goal was to develop business ideas, present plans at area level, work with mentors to develop products, with the winners ultimately selling their products on market stalls in Bradford City Centre.

The final event took place on Saturday 26 June 2010 with 31 teams from 26 schools and youth groups selling their products to customers. The project has been so successful that it will be repeated in 2011.

For more information visit [www.bradfordmarkets.com](http://www.bradfordmarkets.com) or ring the markets team on 01274 438848

## Bury St Edmunds

**Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre** is a market within the heart of the community. The town gets behind the whole event with churches providing rest areas and refreshments, schools and college pupils stewarding and performing, charities helping with everything from designing posters to providing Santa's grotto. The main stage area is full of local talent that includes church choirs, local schools from primary school age to college students and local bands in the west Suffolk area.

The Young Enterprise students have a section of the market selling products designed and made by themselves – these students get the chance to sample a large event and are involved in the set-up and break down – great experience for teenagers at 6.00am on a November morning!

The event is worth over £500,000 to the local economy with many businesses reporting record takings during the three days.

There is a tourism angle as well. The Market is a great way of showcasing the town with over 170 coaches attending from around the country. One of the most popular comments on the questionnaire is 'lovely town, friendly people – will be back!'

## Country Markets

Markets provide added value to the shops of towns and villages and, where mobile, can be the highlight of the week in rural and urban areas where the retail offer is limited.

Country markets operating in local and church halls, schools and community centres often have another local group working alongside them. For example, a local church group providing refreshments for the public in the same hall, or officers from a nearby police station using the market venue for a police surgery where they are able to reach local people on an informal basis.

## Leicestershire Food Links

Markets also offer access to fresh food, fruit and vegetables and can help to educate children about the benefits such produce can bring.

**Leicestershire Food Links** is a member of the National Farmers Retail and Markets Association. Leicestershire Food Links operate Farmers' markets in and around the Leicestershire area. However, to widen awareness and children's education they have been visiting inner city schools. The main aim being to encourage and support the children in the work that they have already started relating to seasonal local production and to encourage family participation. The school already has a vegetable garden and greenhouse at their disposal. An outdoor market stall was commissioned for a themed monthly display of the children's work alongside activities and information on local producers and seasonal production. Each monthly stall would draw its inspiration from a seasonal theme or religious festival. The school is highly multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-faith, so there are many to choose from. The objectives were to enhance understanding of seasonality and sourcing of food of all kinds and to develop an appreciation of sustainability for children, parents and visitors to the school.

# Marketing and PR

A general lack of funding to support the marketing and promotion of markets is a key feature of the industry. Innovative approaches have been taken by a number of operators. Examples are as follows:

## Television marketing campaigns

Warrington markets pioneered the use of local, relatively low-cost TV advertising to promote their markets. In 2009, a number of markets in the North West of England, pooled their resources and produced a TV advertising campaign, promoting the markets across the region.



Image provided by Warrington Market

## Kirklees

In June 2010, Kirklees Council launched the 'Live Love Local' campaign to raise awareness of local food on sale at the markets through a specially designed logo.

The logo will be used by all market traders who sell produce which meets either of the following criteria:

- Fresh food grown or raised within 40 miles of the market at which the food is being sold (fresh fish can be from up to 100 miles).
- Secondary produce such as pies, cakes, and jams which are produced locally using mainly ingredients grown or raised within 40 miles of the market.

The launch generated free local and national press coverage.

[www.kirklees.gov.uk/news/onlinenews/newsdesk/fullstory.aspx?id=2374](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/news/onlinenews/newsdesk/fullstory.aspx?id=2374)

## Websites

Accessing information on the web is commonplace. There are, however, some markets and managers that do not have a web presence/access. Equally, some websites are poorly designed and maintained. The following links give some examples of easy to use and informative websites, which can be set up and maintained at relatively low cost.

[www.manchestermarkets.co.uk](http://www.manchestermarkets.co.uk)

[www.riversidemarket.org.uk](http://www.riversidemarket.org.uk)

[www.southlakeland.gov.uk/services/community/markets.aspx](http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/services/community/markets.aspx)

## Layout and design

First impressions count for a lot, particularly in retailing. Some markets pay close attention to the 'offer' that first greets prospective customers, others do not. Which of these markets would entice you to look a little closer?



Image provided by Nick Rhodes, Leicester Market



Image provided by Krysztof Zasada, Nabma

Whether indoor or outdoor, it is worth approaching the market from the perspective of the potential customer and considering the following questions:

- What is the first product range that the shopper sees?
- Is there an active trading frontage to greet the shopper?
- Is there any signage or welcome material visible?
- How easily can the shopper enter the market?
- How easily can the shopper pass through the market?
- What is the relationship between accessing the market and accessing surrounding retail units?

## Systems and procedures

Regardless of the type of market or market operator, there is a need for effective systems and procedures. The challenge is to ensure that these are not overly bureaucratic, such that they hinder rather than support the efficient management of markets.

A good practice checklist is available from the NABMA website:

[www.nabma.co.uk](http://www.nabma.co.uk)

Providing examples and templates for each of them is beyond the scope of this document. However, they will be developed and made available on the Retail Markets Alliance website, [www.retailmarketsalliance.org](http://www.retailmarketsalliance.org), over the next six months.

# Conclusion

Today's market offers economic opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs; a place for the community to meet and enjoy, and an industry at the forefront of environmental good practice.

With the support of the community and council, it is clear that retail markets have an important part to play in today's society.

Markets around the country have found innovative ways of improving their performance to make them more relevant and attractive to their customers and the local community. By sharing that good practice, others can learn and adapt the changes to their own circumstance, to the benefit of their markets.

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