

CARMARTHEN CHAMBER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

FORWARD PLANNING WORKSHOP
WEDNESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths...</p> <p>... of the Chamber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Small business support • Backing for each other • Networking opportunities • Collaboration • Listen to each other • Links with Council • Two centre managers working together with smaller retailers <p>...of running a Carmarthenshire business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealth (of the town) • Community spirit • Diverse variety of traders 	<p>Weaknesses...</p> <p>... of the Chamber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same people doing things all the time – need for more people to volunteer • Not progressive enough – not evolving – “old people, old ways” • All talk and no action... • Agenda control (lack of) <p>...of running a Carmarthenshire business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Empty shops • Support – planning applications turned down • Cohesion between trades (lack of)
<p>Opportunities...</p> <p>... for the Chamber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs more fire! • Encourage new members • Knowledge sharing within the Chamber • Business links • Financial backing <p>...for running a Carmarthenshire business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage element – storyboards around the town • Nott square – no traffic – what else? Market traders... • Financial backing 	<p>Threats...</p> <p>... to the Chamber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy • Reactive, not proactive – more future planning • Incorrect perception of the Chamber <p>...to running a Carmarthenshire business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in national HQ numbers • Large corporate businesses • Redundancies – Co-operative Bank • Council limiting development – rates • Joining the counties

Task A – Mission Statement

Context – using the results of the SWOT analysis, and some exemplar mission statements, this group began to develop a mission statement for the Chamber.

A mission statement is an opportunity to define an organisation's goals, ethics, culture and the 'norms' for decision making.

Outcome:

1. Provide networking for the exchange of business opportunities
2. Maintain links with local and regional organisations
3. Maximise marketing and tourism to relevant audiences
4. Develop and maintain communication at all times

Task B – Skill Sharing

Context – we established that within the Chamber we have a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience in a huge range of both Trade and Commerce environments.

Group B considered how best the Chamber could utilise this wealth of resources.

Outcome:

- Mentoring
 - New starters (enthusiasm)
 - Admin/marketing
 - Advice
 - Listening – help from Chamber – help each business
 - Major chains could provide mentoring to smaller businesses
- Pool of resources – available to members
 - Premises
 - Staff – for cover – especially difficult if a sole trader is unwell – pay them the rate related to the person they are replacing (not always at minimum wage)
- Chamber officers mentoring Chamber members – thinking about taking on roles in the future
- Working together by area – for example, Blue Street/Nott square – could produce flyers
- Communication – virtual notice boards
- Chamber can help ensure events visit all areas
- Workshops – facilitating from within
 - Social media for advertising
 - SAGE/Word/Excel
 - Using a computer
 - Managing accounts
- Carmarthen Journal – regular column for Chamber
- Alleyway Murals (could involve students from Coleg Sir Gar or schools)
- Members suggesting agendas at the end of meetings

Task C – Events

Context – group C discussed some of the future events the Chamber could consider – this could include involvement in external events, as well as events organised entirely by the Chamber. Suggested events up for discussion included seminars, training, recruitment, networking, trade...

Outcome:

The Chamber has successfully been involved with the Coracle Run, but is not committed to any future events. Could offer local events a “collective voice”. Discussed possibility of regular column in Carmarthen Journal, branding of the Chamber and possibility of Events Committee, or coordinator. The group also discussed benefits of joining with other organisations to share insurance costs – or taking out annual event insurance.

Possible future events:

- Arts / music festival
- Evening arts festival – closing the street
- Party atmosphere
- History tours – prominent
- Map out tunnels in Carmarthen

Task D – Possible advantages to ‘working groups’ within the Chamber

Context – a working group may be defined as “a committee of group appointed to study and report on a particular question and make recommendations based on its findings”. It may advantageous for the Chamber to consider implementing working groups, either as a one-off or on a more regular basis. This group considered some of the pros and cons of this possibility.

Outcome:

What advantages could ‘working groups’ bring to the Chamber?

- Different opinions
 - Ages
 - Skills
 - Variety

What disadvantages could ‘working groups’ bring to the Chamber?

- Too many opinions
- Poor decision making

What, if anything, does the Chamber need to change?

- Day and time
- Encourage youth and students
- Encourage cultures

Who is best placed to make these changes?

- Someone who is respected, a natural leader