



# Consultancy Project.

## Promotional Campaign for Headington.

Commissioned by: Headington Community Development  
Group.

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## **Executive Summary.**

The aim of the report is to produce a promotional campaign for the local shopping centre of Headington, targeting current residents, potential visitors and investors.

We want to raise and maintain the awareness outside and inside the town to provide a pleasant shopping environment as well as to add an element of destination marketing, as a means of attracting footfall.

Our objectives are to:

- ❑ Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Headington.
- ❑ Create a plan to attract new customers and retain existing customers.
- ❑ Recommend promotional direction for retailers.
- ❑ Promote Headington's attractions and benefits to raise awareness.

We used primary and secondary data source to produce the following recommendations:

- ❑ Differentiate.
- ❑ Atmosphere.
- ❑ Information Points.
- ❑ Awareness of Websites.
- ❑ Seasonal Events.
- ❑ Altering Retailers Mix.
- ❑ Partnerships.

We have also estimated the cost of implementing these recommendations and methods of measuring their success.

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## **1. Introduction.**

In February 2002, the retail field of the School of Business at Oxford Brookes University and Oxford City Council commissioned a study of Headington with the aim of providing promotional ideas to increase awareness and usage of the area. This report outlines our key objectives, the approach taken, analysis of the data found and the resulting conclusions and recommendations.

### **1.1. Aim.**

To produce a promotional campaign for the local shopping centre of Headington, targeting current residents, potential visitors and investors. We want to raise and maintain the awareness of the town to provide a pleasant shopping environment as well as to add an element of destination marketing, as a means of attracting footfall. Finally, we hope to make Headington the heart of the community for shopping, recreation and entertainment. Research is needed as stakeholders want to identify the problems within the area and produce solutions.

### **1.2. Objectives.**

- ❑ Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Headington.
- ❑ Create a plan to attract new customers and retain existing customers.
- ❑ Recommend promotional direction for retailers.
- ❑ Promote Headington's attractions and benefits to raise awareness.

Tomalin (1994) states that a new role must be found for town centres if they are to play a significant part in people's lives. Solutions need to address emerging consumer priorities, patterns of behaviour, culture, accessibility and environmental issues. It has to include the preferences of all users. Towns are different in

structure, location and function; we must discover what sets Headington apart from other towns (Tomalin, 1994).

## **2. Background.**

Headington's function has been identified as:

'Serving the local population with a variety of services and convenience shopping'

Headington had a population of 9700 in 1998 ([www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)), which is 7% of Oxford's population (144100). Although Headington has many health and education institutes within its boundaries, we decided to focus our attention only on the London road area of Headington. This was determined after an initial walk around the surrounding area and finding that most of the retail activity resided there. Attention needs to go here first and then further studies could be conducted on areas like John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford Brookes University, Old Headington, the shell garage area and up towards the A40. Our defined area is shown on the map in appendix 10.4.

Our main topics were the adequacy of Headington's shops and access to them, potential conflicts between different groups of people (like drivers, cyclists and pedestrians) and the image of the area as perceived by its users.

From the Visions Report (1999) we found that people thought of Headington as a pleasant place but it had no strong character of its own. This can affect the viability of the shops themselves and they would benefit if Headington was seen to have a unique selling proposition or vision to distinguish it as a special place.

Pal (1997) identifies three different environments that can be used to develop an effective impact matrix. These environments are: physical, social and economic. We have identified Headington as having a narrow market and differentiation strategy. Headington can also be described as an over stored market area, where

capacity to retail exceeds capacity to consume. This presents problems of attracting new retailers as there are excess needs that need to be met (Lewison, 1997).

In appendix 10.8 we have highlighted how well Headington presents it's self against national averages of council effectiveness, crime, educational performance and transport.

In this study we are addressing the ways in which marketing can be used to improve the vitality and viability of the centre. Every town centre needs a plan, with a clear strategy and vision. The vision is created in consultation with town centre businesses and users; it focuses on five key elements; environment, access, economy, policing and *promotion* (Tomalin, 1994). For a vision to be achieved there needs to be clear co-operation between the public and private sectors (Pal, 1997). Half way through this report the assistant Town Centre Manager for Oxford moved to another job and this position has not currently been filled. This creates a problem, as there is no one to implement our recommendations at senior level.

### **3. Methodology.**

The approach to the project has been to achieve interaction between the council and the local people who continually use the Headington shopping area. Wide ranges of resources were used including primary and secondary sources. We identified what it was that we wanted to measure and ensure that it was done in a 'smart' way – specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and timed (Naylor, 2000).

#### **3.1 Secondary Data Sources.**

We decided to conduct our secondary research first so that we knew what was occurring in the external environment in terms of legislation and the environment. This way we could ensure that our survey contained all the information that we needed and no follow up interviews would be necessary. Many journals and government reports identified a trend where the government is promoting town development with its PPG6 and PPG13, encouraging investment and reducing non-essential car travel (Tomalin, 1994). The research also helped us make our recommendations creditable.

#### **3.2 Primary Data Sources.**

Preliminary survey work involved a scan of the area. We went and explored what we thought would be areas that the average consumer would access when in Headington. This looked at issues of traffic and understanding of local linkages from other destinations. We investigated local issues by attending a committee meeting with Headington's Development group and looked at the Oxford Times. We also took photographs of the current promotion (see appendix 10.5) and a general observation of the flow of people and activities they undertook.

From the outset, it was apparent that other groups were engaged in work with Headington, like the Hospital and University. We attempted to incorporate their roles into our promotions as much as possible. We were able to have constant contact with our sponsor via emails and apart from a small change in management we kept in touch regularly.

We then carried out some market research as to reduce the risk of making recommendations by providing information that can form part or the entire basis of decision-making (Proctor, 2000). Its even more important in a rapidly changing environment like high street shopping. We used a personal interview with a structured questionnaire (see appendix 10.2). The advantages of using a personal interview are the low cost, easy, fast, little of the interview's time is wasted, procedures are standardized and specific, possible use of visual or audio materials and these all amount to efficiency. The visual props are an advantage as we had to illustrate existing promotion (see appendix 10.5). However there is a threat of bias if the interviewer does not have proper instruction to follow and an introductory script. People may also be in a hurry and not interested, therefore giving a high refusal rate from around 5% to 30% (Proctor, 2000). We solved this by making many of the questions closed with tick box options or scales, as this was quicker and more convenient for the respondents, as we did not interrupt their shopping.

We chose our target population to be anyone in Headington, no matter what their purpose there was. We knew that the local population represented most of the users so we examined profiles from ACORN summaries. These are groups reflecting

neighbourhoods with similar characteristics; people who live in similar residential areas tend to buy similar products. We used quota sampling (groups divided by socio-demographic with non-probability selection in each group) and decided on percentages for gender and ages: 50% of people asked were over 50 years old. To avoid the bias that quota sampling presents, whereby the interviewers usually choose who they ask, so quotas are fill, every fifth person was approached.

We strategically placed ourselves to cover the major thoroughfares, for example at the traffic lights, around bus stops and benches. The survey was conducted at different times throughout the week, as we were aware that different consumer groups use the Headington facilities at different occasions. Saturday was an important day to collect data, as it is the busiest retailing day of the week, so we did two different times. The weather could have affected our response rate but luckily, we chose days when the weather was fine. We carried out a pilot of twelve people, in three different age groups, to determine any misunderstanding of flaws.

Ethical concerns are growing widely when market research is carried out. However because we are in a public place we do not constitute as invading people privacy. We do however have to ensure confidentiality, avoid deception and misrepresentation (Kent, 1999). Interviewers were able to reassure respondents of confidentiality by referring to the Data Protection Legislation 1998 and all respondents had the right to refuse, without being pressurized. There are no adverse effects from participating like follow up sales information by mail.

Each question relates to our objectives so we could gather enough information to solve the problem of Headington attracting new people and retaining their existing visitors.

We were going to ask retailers the questions listed in appendix 10.6, however we had agreed to cause as little disruption as possible and after the low response gained from another group working on a consultancy project in Headington, we thought that we had adequate information from our secondary sources.

We tried to set up a focus group with Headington's residential committee to gather their responses to our ideas. We had found that many OAP's were fairly unresponsive or satisfied with the facilities so we wanted to collect information that is more useful but unfortunately, due to the Jubilee planning occurring at the same time as this report it was difficult to find time.

#### **4. Consumer Section.**

The definition of customers is broad, so we have used the classifications from Pal (1997): “users or external customers who tend to be framed as shoppers, although retailers are counted in this category as well”. Consumers have a clear idea of their needs and the means to exercise choice. They therefore create competition between retailers, towns versus towns and towns versus out-of-town retailing. The biggest threat is neglecting the retailing activity and allowing an unattractive offering to develop.

From the ACORN profiles Headington fits into category 16. This is called the “well off town and city areas”. These are very high status, high spending urban neighbourhoods containing highly educated, affluent professional people. Examples of similar areas are Barnet and Kingston upon Thames. There is a high level of buying a home with a mortgage and a high number of 2+car ownership. The unemployment level is low.

Shoppers are motivated according to Maslow’s needs (McGoldrick, 2002). The physiological needs refer to safety, for example the goods and services that allow consumers to function in day-to-day life. Social needs are the products that satisfy functional needs like membership of a group. Symbolic needs are products or patronage to particular stores. They serve as symbols of success, achievement, status or power. Hedonic needs are the sensory benefits, like taste, smell, sound and visual imageries. Cognitive needs are the need to know, provoking the use of books, news programmes and Internet searching. Experiential needs are needs for consumption or patronage because of how it makes consumers feel, producing

desired emotions or moods. We wanted to find out satisfaction levels, as happy and keen users might be more encouraged to spend more time and money locally (Mintel, 2000).

Mintel (2000) has also predicted a trend towards more personal, 'for me' products as an expenditure category including more non-retail items like entertainment. People want to be individuals; they will seek different items to decorate/furnish their homes and local shops do not offer the variety needed to stand out from others. Headington offers some specialist shops, like Ann Nolan.

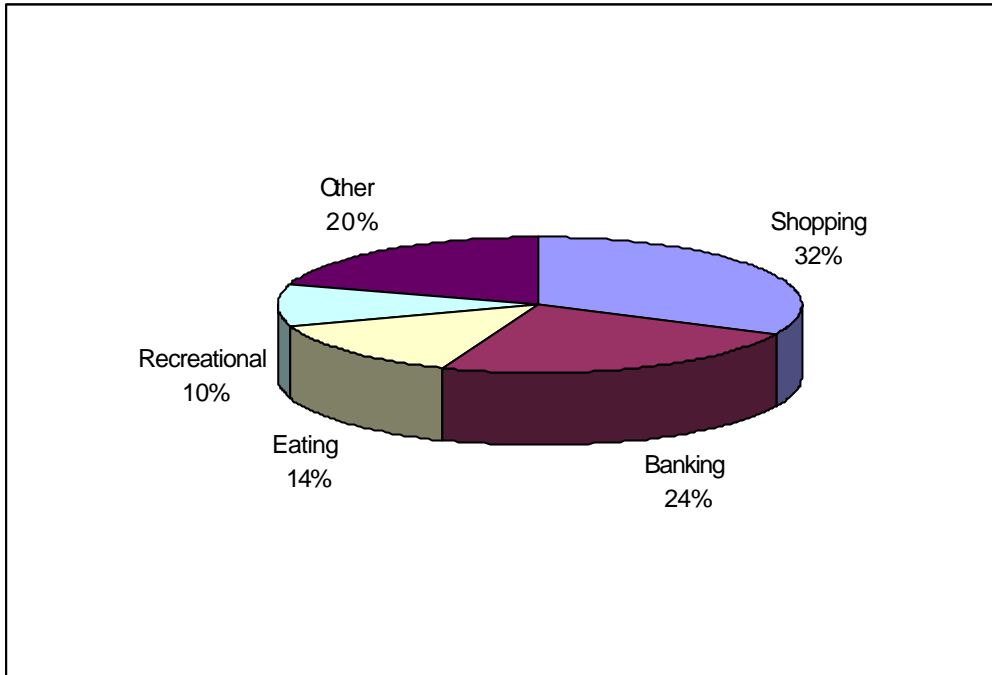
Headington needs to look at relationship marketing, whereby it retains its current users and builds loyalty (see appendix 10.7, for relationship formation). According to East (1997), the reasons for loyalty are laziness, out of habit, saving time, avoiding risk, convenience, to fill satisfaction and sometimes there is no choice. Loyalty schemes are build on service and quality so we identified how these issues were perceived.

## **5. Analysis.**

The prospect for shopping in Headington doesn't look bright. Between 1995 and 2000, the people visiting local parades dropped by 2% (Mintel, 2000). Of the people that used the local parade, they also have to go to another shopping location to fulfil all of their needs. Many customers have become increasingly used to enjoying the shopping experience in large out-of-town settings and they may be reluctant to return exclusively to more traditional high street shopping (Jones, 2000). This is why Headington needs to give rationale for customers to travel there to shop.

From Mintel (2000) we were aware of the trends that much of the space in centres is taken up by A3 users, like pubs and restaurants. Mintel (2000) also stated that 45% of adults asked said their main reason for using the local parade is for the services and not the shopping. However, from the results of our personal interviews (see appendix 10.2), we found that the main reason why people go to Headington is to do their shopping (32%). Headington also offers a wide and large variety of banks (6.2% of the outlets in Headington are for financial services and banks compared to the average of 3.4% (CCN Goad Ltd, 1995)), and this was the second reason with (24%) followed by the 'other' option (20%, which mainly accounted for working).

### **Graph 1. The Reasons for using Headington.**

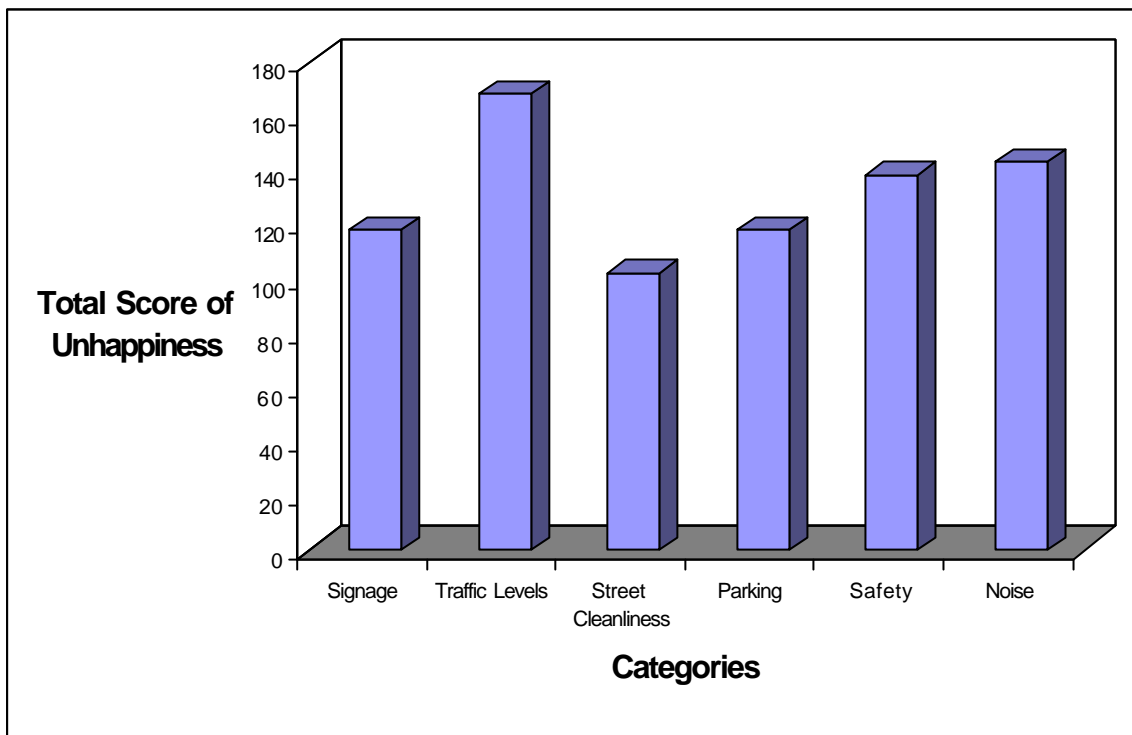


As the figures from our primary data are fairly close we will look more at services, as forecast show services will rise. Civic and social reasons also take precedence over shopping. Of those that shopped 33% use it for standby items, so Headington does not need large clothing chains it needs small grocery stores and hardware shops, which is what is located. One of the weaknesses of local shopping centres is the lack of choice (see appendix 10.3). However, local parades will continue to be convenience orientated, so this does not matter too much. There are a number of vacant shopping sites in Headington. We wanted to find out from consumers what they would wanted in these places and so asked them in our primary research.

One positive trend for Headington is the aging population (Mintel, 2000). These consumers are less likely to travel.

Our interviews indicated that people were least happy with the traffic levels (average of 3.36), noise levels came second (average 2.86) and in third was safety at road crossing (average 2.76).

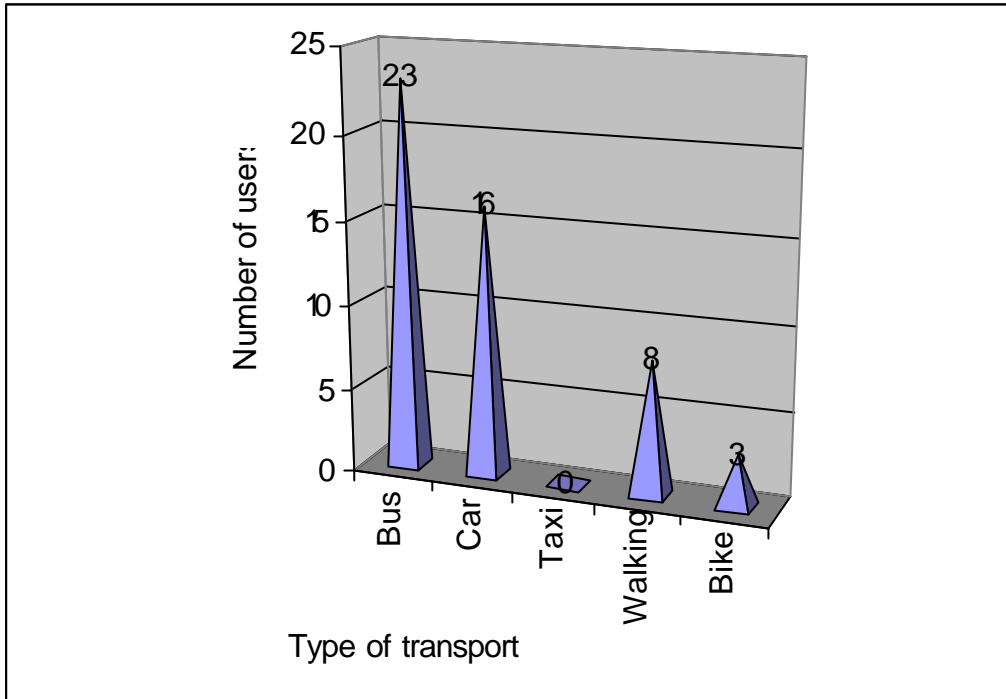
**Graph 2. Satisfaction levels of factors within Headington.**



It is clear to see from these results that the major issue with Headington is traffic.

However, this does not mean that accessibility is poor. Buses run regularly with parking and taxis lanes. The majority of people get to Headington via the bus (46%), followed by the car (32%) and walking with 16%. As most people get into Headington via the bus, we wanted to find out whether or not a bus ticket/pass to get a discount in shops in Headington would make them use the bus more often, 62% of people said it would, however we were asking people already in Headington.

**Graph 3. Methods of transport into Headington.**



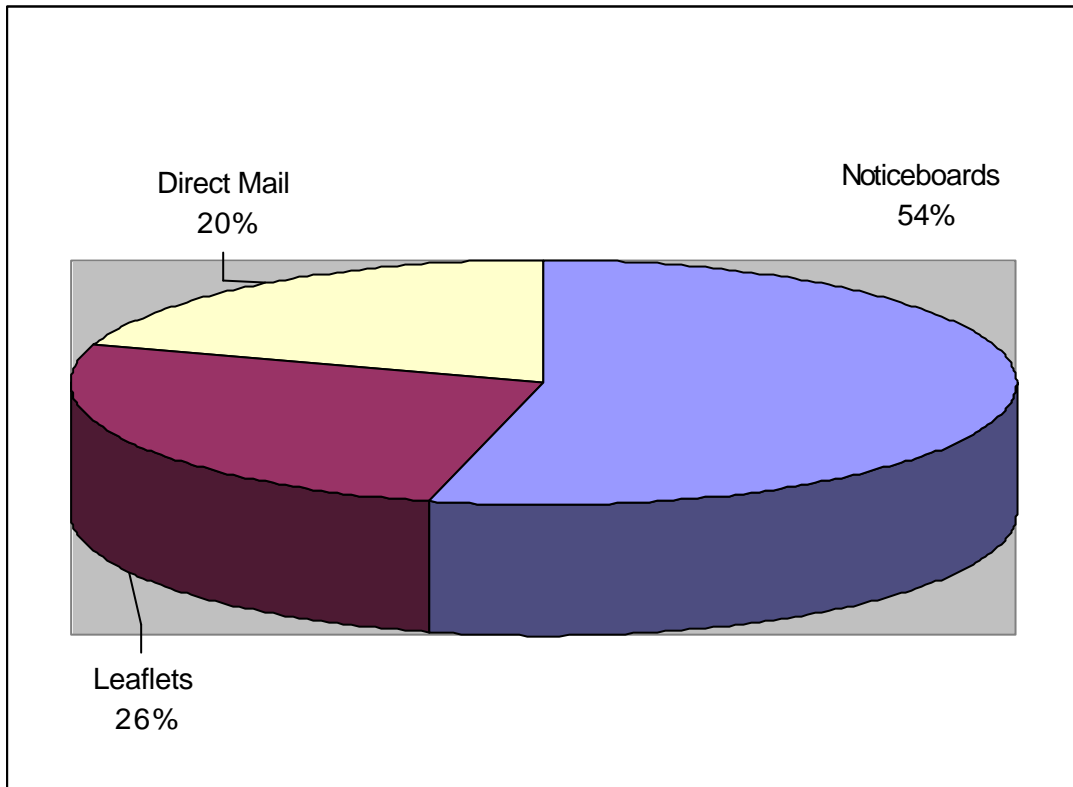
Finally we tried to find out whether or not Headington met their needs, 60% said their needs were met.

A problem is that convenience hours have been eroded by superstores trading for longer periods. However, a powerful advantage is the proximity of Headington to residential areas when it comes to retailing distress purchases. Customers are however looking for more services like telephone orders for customer collection and ordering points for online shopping.

Pressure on limiting car use also affects the usage of Headington. People may be reluctant to go to a local parade and just restrict travelling to a one time a week main shop and get everything (Mintel, 2000).

When we looked at how well the current promotion that exists in Headington worked 54% of the respondents knew of a notice board and said that this was the best form of communicating. Leaflets came second with 26% followed by direct mail with 20%.

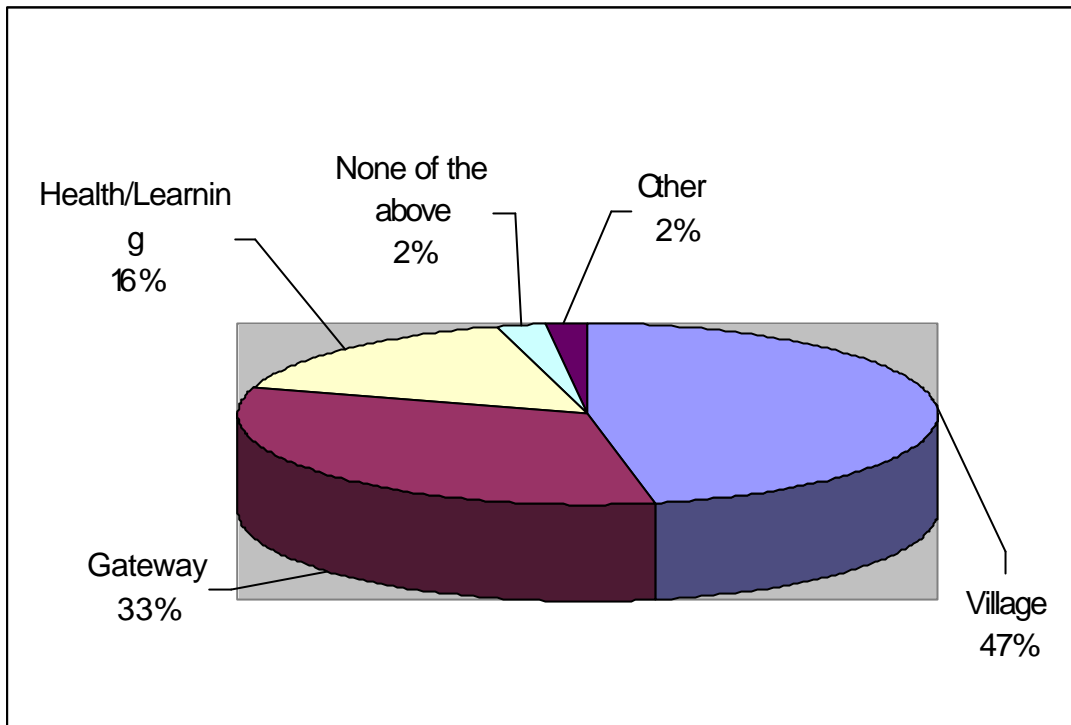
**Graph 4. Popularity for methods of communication.**



We also wanted to find ways of retaining customers so we suggested a loyalty scheme combining different shops and restaurants. However when asked if it would attract them more to Headington 56% said no.

The final question tries to get an impression of what image people wanted Headington to have. 46% wanted it to be viewed as a village, 32% said they wanted it to be seen as a gateway to Oxford, 16% wanted it to be seen as a centre for health and learning, with remaining were unsure.

**Graph 5. Visions for Headington.**



From secondary research (Visions Report) we discovered the main issues that Headington's consumers had underlying concerns about. Some of these were the perception of the area's image, the importance of shop fronts to the Headington's image, a desire for more trees and a 'green' image, a liking for more pavement activity like tables outside cafes, buses blocking the view of shops, the importance of seating and pavement activity, the possibility of starting up a loyalty scheme for Headington shops and short term shopper parking. A few of these suggestions were further investigated in our report.

## **6. Recommendations.**

Our proposals are classified in short term and long term. Most town centre management initiatives in the UK are short term because money is limited and sponsors are thin on the ground (Tomalin, 1994). Some of our suggestions are priorities that we believe are necessary to retain the existing customers. It is clear that doing nothing is not an option as there are too many choices of shopping locations facing shoppers. Both the public and private sectors need to be behind promotions to maximize the chances of success. People need to take a proactive approach and add value to the offering through a strategic direction. They have to be receptive to innovation.

We believe that promotion cannot just be for retailing. We want to promote the entertainment side so that people are encouraged to spend more time in Headington and therefore more money with the retailers. However, Mintel (2000) does advise that there is little doubt that without the core retail offer the parade will be less attractive. The anchor stores, like Boots, Somerfield and Co-op form this core retail offering.

In regards to marketing, town centre management teams are often faced with the challenge of making 'something out of nothing', and certain mixes of retailers and physical environments are far from ideal. Winners are towns that can mobilize both public and private sector to present the location in the best light. Headington therefore needs to gain the support of retailers, local businesses and the public sector. The illustration in appendix 10.9 shows how our recommendations could be implemented (ATCM, 1997).

## **6.1 Short Term.**

### **6.1.1 Differentiate.**

Headington needs to differentiate itself in its own right and then it can reach a wider catchments area. Consumers must have a rationale for traveling to the location.

The failures of competing locations provide a ready source of opportunity on which to base differentiation and marketing communications. For example, Cowley is hard to park in. It also has a crowded feel, with lots of nightclubs, students and homeless people bringing down the image. Whereas Headington can portray itself as a quality, well respected place with plenty of room and high levels of safety. As many consumers use Headington for convenience Headington has to cater for this need. By allowing trolleys to go to car parks this improves the chances of a weekly shop being conducted in Headington rather than out of town (Tomalin 1994).

### **6.1.2 Atmosphere.**

Atmosphere can be the basis of a successful proposition. It can be readily influenced and controlled, and it helps to give the right impression. It starts with issues like cleanliness, seating, good public toilets, and a green environment. Plants and hanging baskets add colour, but are only available in the summer, so possible interesting shop fronts could substitute in the winter. The most popular image in our research findings was the 'village vision'. Therefore, after creating colour and greenery, lighting and paving would be possible future investments.

By investing in Headington, it shows that someone cares about the appearance of the parade. That is important, as it gives across a responsible and concerned

feeling. People will respect the environment if local businesses and council are seen to be putting something back into the place. Any developments should be communicated and progress updates issued to keep the public aware (Jones, 2000).

Vacant stores present a huge opportunity for promotion and creating a good image for Headington. The exterior image of shops is the first impressions to potential customers and they need to be visible and compatible with the surroundings (Lewison, 1997). The architecture of buildings can be used as a promotional tool. Currently people are unhappy with the co-op site, the post office, and the snooker hall, but were happy with Café Noir (Visions Report). It is understandable that chains need to keep their corporate identity with all their stores, so this is an issue that unfortunately cannot be resolved. Any place's identity is constructed in people's minds. No matter what outside experts think the identity of a place ought to be, it will not stick unless it builds on the ways in which people want to see Headington.

As Headington is one of the first towns that visitors to Oxford see, this provides huge potential. Currently there is a bit of a 'blurred' boundary between the town and the city. Some kind of landmark, other than the Oxford sign would give across a better image. The roundabout for the ring road and the A40 is an ideal site. For Headington to have it's own individual sign like the one Oxford has costs approx. £420.

### **6.1.3 Information Points.**

In an article by Pal (1997), he found that although many of the town centre management schemes were set up to improve the vitality and assist the promotion of

the town centre, the co-ordination of existing resources was the main aim of all the schemes. In appendix 10.5 there is evidence of the promotional activities that Headington currently undertake. These are positive but do have weaknesses, mainly in their accessibility. The Bury Knowles park sign is also very out of date. A short-term suggestion is to paint the notice boards a more eye-catching colour.

A leaflet with a map would encourage exploration. Strong landmarks should be painted or lit up in some way to let people know it is of interest. These could be distributed from the local post office. We tried to identify a point of difference on which to base special events and promotions as a means of raising a locations profile. For Headington we feel that this would be the variety of restaurants in Headington, and this links to the Mintel findings of a growth area in service provision. Using heritage is also a big issue, and Headington can provide this with 33 listed buildings and structures, including St Andrews Church. However little awareness exists so a possible tour card or information board taking people around the area is an idea. This could be given out on the Oxford tube and attract the tourist market to get off at Headington. A competition could also exist whereby a completed tour card receives a small token prize. Residents would be able to share their memories of old Headington and this keeps them interested in their immediate environment (see above). Another main attraction is the 'shark in the roof'; there is not enough information on this.

#### **6.1.4 Awareness of Websites.**

There are many Internet sites that give information about Headington's benefits, however hardly any of these are advertised so awareness is very low. We suggest

promoting these through notices on the current notice boards as this was found to be the most effective method of communication. It could also be within the leaflets (see above) and of the carrier bags of retailers. There could also be links with Oxford's marketing, like adverts within their leaflets.

## **6.2 Long Term.**

Getting people involved in shaping the way their town looks is a good way of getting momentum and support. After dealing with cleanliness, safety and security, attention needs to go towards traffic management, parking provisions and public transport management. However, these take a long time to address and again require co-operation from all parties involved.

### **6.2.1 Seasonal Events.**

Seasonal events and themed activities give focus and provide a large scope for opportunity. These can create a community feel and give the town some pride and status. We suggest that after some trials two main events, one in the spring and one in the autumn be established so that they become annual calendar occasions. Word of mouth will be the promotional tool for these events, as people will talk about its success and enjoyment. Feedback can also be collected at these opportunities. As Bury Knowles Park is situated in Headington, this proves the ideal setting for large-scale activities. The library could also hold special events like craft fairs as these appeal particular to the aging population (Intel, 2000). There are also many schools so a possibility of family activities.

### **6.2.2 Altering Retailers Mix.**

Retailers have to deal with changing lifestyles (Mintel, 2000). Local retailing opportunities are seen as those who offer a niche that mainstream multiples are ignoring or not performing well at. Retailers have to look at value added, as they cannot compete on volume and cost. Most of the retailers in Headington have an advantage of getting to know their customer base intimately, which helps contribute to loyalty and retention.

Some other opportunities for retailers are getting involved with the Internet and providing a home delivery service. However, retailers need to promote their strengths to get customers in the first place. Retailers can offer value for all needs or develop a specialism, setting them apart with a distinctive range. This gives a product development strategy whereby new products are brought into existing markets (Ansoff's Product-market Matrix), this is high risk. For specialist shops to work enough footfall is needed. With Headington having a large amount of traffic passing through it, this should not be a problem.

Craft and hobby shops are likely to be a source for new retailers (Mintel, 2000). They are run by enthusiastic people and tend to be out of the immediate city centre because of lower levels of rent. These could form exhibitions and fairs in the park (see above). Many of the suggestions from customers of new shops involved clothing and shoes, however Mintel (2000) states that comparison shopping on the local parade will weaken, especially clothing and footwear, as local centres simply don't provide the choice people demand.

Unfortunately, local management teams have no control over the retail offer or retail mix but they can enhance the offer through seasonal events and themed activities to give focus to a location, see above (Mintel, 2000). A long-term recommendation is to attract the right retail mix into Headington. This can cause problems with planners and sometimes cause conflict of views. New shops seem unlikely to set up in Headington without efforts being made in other ways to encourage people to visit the shopping area and break the current spiral of decline. If a 'hit list' was drawn up of retailers currently unrepresentative in Headington and promotional material created like demographics, costs, accessibility, current retail activity etc, this would give an opportunity to develop the mix (Warnaby, 2001). When retailers evaluate sites, they look at the interception of customers, cumulative attraction and the compatibility (Lewison, 1997). They have to be sure that there are suitable labour skills with reliable and responsive staff (Gilbert, 1999). As it's a long-term investment new retailers have to see value for their investment, we want Headington to become a 'gravity area' for retailers.

### **6.2.3 Partnerships.**

In the future Headington could look at expanding its current relations with other business and institutions. Although Headington is situated on a main road with several main bus routes along it, there is a problem of not being able to remount the tube to get into the main city centre after getting off it. Therefore, a possible partnership with stagecoach or the Oxford bus company would allow this recommendation to be more plausible and tourists would have the opportunity to look around the town and then catch the bus to their final destination. Our primary

research also showed that more people would be interested in using the bus if their ticket allowed them to receive discount from retailers.

A partnership with the Hospitals in Headington provides huge potential of new customers. Headington has a florist and grocery, which caters for the needs of hospital visitors. However as stated at the beginning we focused on the retail activity of Headington.

### **6.3. Financial Analysis**

Altering perceptions takes time and money and in order to have a lasting effect medium to long term funding needs to be provided. As this promotional research study has had no funding, and we have not been told what kind of funding it will receive in the future, it has been very difficult to assess and formulate a financial analysis report for the Headington Community Development Group (HCDG).

Clearly in order to carry any of our proposals forward, financial analysis is necessary, and if the HCDG wishes to use this study, they will have to pursue investors to get the required funding. In order to receive support we have give estimated costs for our main recommendations:

- The Village theme or creating atmosphere involves the purchase of paints and greenery. Further possible investment could be in lighting and paving = 20% of the budget.
- Information points require the printing of the leaflets = 10% of the budget.
- Seasonal Events will also bring a lot more people to the area. Therefore, it has 70% of the budget.

We were able to find out that per 1000 A5 full colour leaflets the cost is £220 (BRAD, 2002) and as this represents 10% of the budget we need a total budget of £2200.

This is small compared to the investments made for Oxford, Boots the Chemist Plc have funded a lot of money (over £5000) into Oxford and as they are one of Headington's anchor stores they would probably like to see some of this money spent on promoting Headington.

To justify the investment specific information needs to be gathered. Both 'vertical' and 'horizontal' analysis is necessary (Ellis, 1993). Vertical looks at: costs as a percentage and a ratio. Factors like stock turn, sales per sq. metre and, ROCE are all essential, to get a clear picture of the retailers and the promoters financial viability for backing such a grand scheme. Horizontal looks at: time as a series.

Comparisons between this years and last years funding of promotion and retailers support for promotion, as well as retailers successes and failures in sales, ROCE.

Once such analysis is complete, then the 'Group' can start to look at budgeting for a promotional campaign for Headington's renewal. Such a budget must have clear guidelines:

- It must plan how much income is to be generated and / or
- Expenditure to be incurred, and
- Capital to be employed; staff, equipment, land, locations, retailers
- In order to attain a given objective: To promote Headington's retail sector and town centre as a new and thriving 'village'!

Various approaches to Budgeting include: Top Down – direct orders from the management;

Bottom Up – involving everyone; A Combination of the previous two; and Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) – ‘If it isn’t important, a budget isn’t issued.’ For Headington a ZBB approach is probably the best because the promotional campaign does not involve a large number of employees or management.

The best way to encourage investment into the schemes suggested is to show an input and output perspective. The inputs are the funding, professional expertise and existing buildings and land. Then the output in the services delivered, retained customers and new customers (Pal, 1997).

## **7. Feedback.**

Monitoring and measuring is critical to know how successful our ideas have been. One good suggestion is to have a customer service phone introduced so that town centre businesses and users can alert the council to particular problems in the area (Tomalin, 1994). Performance indicators are usually good to use in these cases (Pal, 1997). This allows successes to be pointed out and be able to gain funding from other retailers and investors. One of the most accurate ways to measure schemes in against competing towns. Pal (1997) used the Hillier Parker rankings, where the most successful towns move higher up the rankings.

To measure the success of the recommendations the following can be carried out after they have been implemented:

- Footfall recorded around the town once every year.
- Retailer's profits and performance.
- Loyalty cards for the independent retailers will give EPOS (electronic point of sale) information on the frequency of purchase and the value.
- A follow up customer survey or focus group will be able to explain the information given thorough loyalty cards.
- Customer compliant forms.
- Number of leaflets used and tour cards filled out.
- Number of cars using the car parks.
- Number of visitors on the websites.
- Crime levels.

## **8. Conclusion.**

Headington seems to have adequate facilities for the type of consumers that use the facility. However there is little community feel or a vision of what Headington stands for.

To complete this report we had to make some assumptions, as there were restrictions. A vital restriction was a financial analysis. Headington is part of Oxford city's budget and never really receives anything for marketing. It was impossible to find the data for every retailer within the area and we tried to compare the money allocated and spent by other similar sized town centres, as Headington but unfortunately, that information was not available either. Therefore, we suggested ways of monitoring investments and the costs of some of our recommendations. There were also areas in Headington where there was great potential for use of promotional activities, like the football stadium but we concentrated on retailing.

**A town can only be as effective as its key retailers are and even good marketing fails if the mix is not right and standards amongst traders fails to satisfy customers expectations and needs.**

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## **10. Appendix**

10.1 Action plan.

10.2 Questionnaire Results.

10.3 SWOT Analysis.

10.4 Map of Area studied.

10.5 Photographs of existing promotion.

10.6 Questions that we were to ask retailers.

10.7 Loyalty Relationships (East, 1997).

10.8 Information on Headington.

10.9 Implementation of Recommendations (ATCM, 1997).

## 10.2 Questionnaire Results.

We have tabulated the results from our consumer survey. Not all the results could be tabulated, as they were open-ended questions, e.g. occupation. The second row shows how many respondents answered that question, while the third shows that as a percentage.

1. Male / Female?

Male	Female
25	25
50%	50%

2.  
Age  
group?

0-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
3	14	9	10	7	7
6%	28%	18%	20%	14%	14%

3. Main purpose for visiting Headington?

Shopping	Banking	Eating Out	Recreational	Other
16	12	7	5	10
32%	24%	14%	10%	20%

4. How satisfied are you with these factors? (We had a weighted system 1= very good, 5= very bad. We added all the scores together; therefore the highest scoring factor is the worst. The average section shows the average score between 1 and 5)

Signage	Traffic	Cleanliness	Parking	Safety	Noise
118	168	102	118	138	143
Avg 2.36	Avg 3.36	Avg 2.04	Avg 2.36	Avg 2.76	Avg 2.86

5. Were you aware of the notice board?

Yes	No
27	23
54%	46%

6. Which is the most effective form of communication?

Notice board	Leaflet	Direct Mail
27	13	10
54%	26%	20%

7. Would a loyalty scheme, combining shops and restaurants attract you more to Headington?

Yes	No
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22	28
44%	56%

8. What type of retailer would you like to see in a vacant site?

Food	Jewellery	Recreational	Clothing	Household Goods	Other
12	1	7	20	5	5
24%	2%	14%	40%	10%	10%

9. Which method of transport is the best way to get into Headington?

Bus	Car	Taxi	Walking	Bike
23	16	0	8	3
46%	32%	0%	16%	6%

10. If you could use a bus ticket/pass to get a discount in the shops would you use the bus more?

Yes	No
31	19
62%	38%

11. Overall, does Headington meet your needs?

Yes	No
30	20
60%	40%

12. Which of the following visions would you like Headington to be promoted as?

Village	Gateway to Oxford	Centre for Health and Learning	None of the above	Other
23	16	8	2	1
46%	32%	16%	4%	2%

### **10.3. SWOT Analysis.**

By completing a SWOT analysis of Headington, it identifies the strengths and weaknesses, so a more proactive approach can be produced and the strengths can be promoted to bring more trade to Headington.

#### **4.1 Strengths.**

- o Banking services
- o Restaurants, Takeaway food establishments & Public Houses
- o Specialist Retailers
- o Public Transport
- o Plenty of road crossings
- o Signage
- o Cleanliness
- o Benches
- o Public Toilets
- o Disabled facilities
- o Environmental feel with Bury Knowles Park
- o Current promotion with notice board
- o Heritage
- o Library
- o Accommodation – B&B, Guest houses
- o Family run businesses
- o Hospitals and Oxford Brookes University provide good employment
- o Weaknesses of competitors
- o The close proximity to Oxford

#### **4.2 Weaknesses.**

- o Noise
- o Air pollution
- o Traffic Levels
- o No short time parking for convenience shopping
- o Above average crime levels
- o No train station
- o Lack of Choice, in retailers
- o Poor shop fronts and displays
- o Vacant Shops
- o No venue for evening entertainment
- o Lack of general awareness of events and offerings
- o Unsafe feeling
- o Poorly visible notice board
- o Road signs weren't very visible
- o Lack of room to expand
- o Land near Co-op
- o Lack of assistance
- o Strength of competitors
- o The close proximity to Oxford

#### **4.3 Opportunities.**

- o Better economy, greater disposable income with people being better off
- o Shopping can be a social activity with it becoming part of leisure time
- o Local chiropractor makes people walk around

- o Growing aging population
- o Facilities for hospital visitors, with florist and green grocer
- o Creating vision and atmosphere to give a community feel
- o Seasonal events for the local community
- o Use of land near Co-op
- o Discount scheme for public transport users and shops or restaurants
- o Large university located nearby

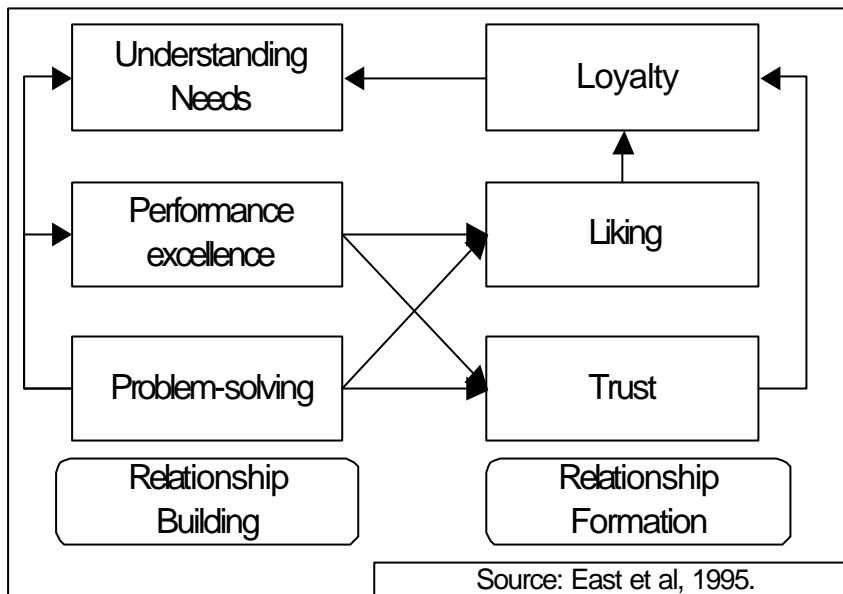
#### **4.4 Threats.**

- o Out of town developments.
- o Competition from neighbouring towns.
- o Not being proactive enough
- o Increase in rents/taxes, so fewer businesses are attracted and its more difficult to start up
- o The planning process
- o Cuts in local budget spending

### **10.6 Questions that we were to ask retailers, linked to performance indicators.**

1. Is the store more dependent on local residents, students, or all categories of the public, in terms of sales? (Dependability)
2. Do you stock and promote products that are for a wider market other than those products that are usually in demand? (Flexibility)
3. Do your offers reflect the target market you are focusing on, or do you have a range of target groups, and therefore prices and promotions? (Cost)
4. Do you offer different levels of quality for different types of consumers? (Quality)
5. Do you train staff to treat types of consumers differently? (Staffing)
6. Have you tried to compete with competition in any way? For example, longer opening hours. (Flexibility)
7. Do you offer any special services, like Internet shopping and delivery service that would set you apart from other retailers?

### 10.7 Loyalty Relationships (East et al, 1995)



### **10.8 Information on Headington.**

Acorn (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods) profiles give a good comparison of Headington compared to other town of it's size. Another useful indication of the type of area is how effective the council is.

Council	Oxford	National Average
Missed collections per 100,000 bins	25	317
% Street lights not working	0.8	1.1
No. of playground per 1000	5.9	2.5

The figures in the table above show that the Oxford City Council is very effective, both streetlights and missed collections are below the national average. They have more parks than the national average. Headington fits into the council tax band D. Education is another tool used to give an indication of what type of area it is, especially exam results.

	Oxfordshire	English Average
GCSE results	86%	52.30%
Authorised Absence	3.70%	7.40%
Unauthorised Absence	N/A	1.30%

From these results it is clear to see that the results are a lot higher than the national average. This gives the impression of a top education authority, and schools that

teach well. A low level of absence backs up this point. Crime and policing statistics are also used to assess the area.

Police Authority	Thames Valley	National average
Total crimes per 1000 population	92	90.13
Number of officers per 1000 population	1.74	2.13

Looking at these results it seems that Headington has an above average crime level. The main reason for this is probably because they have a lower level of police officers than the national average. The one very obvious feature about Headington is that it has excellent transport links. It is based on the A40, running from Oxford to the M40. The nearest train station is in Oxford (2.6 miles away) and the nearest coach station is also in Oxford (2.3 miles away). Due to its proximity to the M40 it has excellent transport links with London. The nearest airport is located in Luton (36 miles away). The overview of Headington is that it appears to be an above average, small town that has excellent transport links.

## **10.9 Implementation of Recommendations (ATCM, 1997).**