

Talkin' Coop, Thursday 16th July 2009.

Format: Open Space Technology.

Theme: DFC Products, Premises and Policies.

Facilitator: Dave Dunn.

Participants

Elizabeth Bourke, Anna Felton, Heidi Bedell, Paruic Cannon, John O'Donoghue, Bill Fine, Dot Fine, Owenroe Lemass, Joe Dunne, Leah Kelly, Aodhagan O'Broin, Jaan Van Der Ven, John De Courcy, Marita Finnegan, Giacomo Bazzo and Steve Àmpadu.

Recipes for *The Co-op Cook Book*

Summer Chickpea Salad (Elizabeth Bourke), Mini Pizzas (Anna Felton) and Cassava Pancakes (Heidi Bedell).

Topics offered

DFC as a Co-op

- Question: Is the DFC a true Co-operative (as in a community)?
- Question: Is the Co-op for members or for the public.

DFC products: Prices and Range

- Suggestion: do some external marketing of The Co-op as a supplier of gluten free products for celiacs.
- Suggestion: More baby products, please
- Suggestion: More refill options, please (on popular cleaning products beyond washing up liquid).
- To increase purchasing power direct from suppliers (perhaps bypassing distributors) could The Co-op team up with other natural/eco stores?
- Suggestion: Give preference shelf space to Irish and organic products.
- Suggestion: Show the % mark-up on wholesales cost price for all products at dry goods store (as well as price and country of origin).
- Suggestion: Offer a bigger discount to members on Thursdays (perhaps 4%) to incentise further shopping at The Co-op on that day.

Premises

Short, medium and long term plans for our current space. Future plans for premises, here or elsewhere.

- Suggestion: Get “No parking” and double yellow lines at the loading and delivery area.
- Suggestion: Ensure compliance with health and safety regulations.
- Suggestion: Develop bulk dispensing
- Suggestion: Explore further the venue hire potential which can give a financial return as well as offering new services and opportunities to the membership.
- Suggestion: Could we review and evaluate the last two years of being here at the Co-op (what metrics would be used to measure this evaluation)?
- Query: the venue hire to other third party events hosted at THE CO-OP. Is this a direction we wish to go?
 - Note: Short-term and medium-term: hiring space to kindred organisations, projects and events is necessary financially.
 - Note: Medium-term: we will continue to have the capacity to hire space during times when the DFC is not trading.
 - Long-term, query: when, under the current premises plan, our landlord offers to re-site us in a purpose built market hall, will we be subject to only carrying on market activities (and more specifically, food markets)?

DFC Membership benefits – financial and services offered.

- Note: Currently there exists a 2% on DFC dry goods for members.
- Chicken and Egg: a healthy financial situation is required in order to expand the range of services and products.
- Is it possible to offer some kind of childcare facilities during trading hours? (Possibly by allocating an appropriate space where parents can cooperatively share the work of looking after playing children / playgroup session).
- Is it possible to create a published directory of DFC members advertising their professional skills and interest for business purposes (similar to a green pages)?

The Financial Health of the DFC

Eco packaging

Other

- Does The Co-op endorse the Spirit of Ireland project? – If so, is it possible to add links on DFC website to the project? Could some from Spirit of Ireland be invited in to speak to the DFC membership?