



**Greater East Tamaki
Business Association Inc.**

GETBA Focus Group Feedback May 2010

1. Introduction

The Greater East Tamaki Business Association (GETBA) was incorporated in 1994 and as of late 2009 represents almost 4000 business and property owners in East Tamaki.

The East Tamaki area is one of the largest and fastest growing commercial and industrial areas in New Zealand, contributing:

- \$3.4 billion to the NZ economy annually
- \$15 million in rates annually
- 31,000 jobs projected to rise to 50,000 within 5 years

GETBA's role as a Business Improvement District is to promote the area, advocate for business and property owners in the development of the area, and attract new business and employment into the area.

With the step up from a voluntary subscription based organisation of some 600 businesses to a target rated membership organisation of almost 4000 businesses and property owners, it is recognised that there is a need to develop a higher level of infrastructure and professionalism and broader range of offerings.

2. Purpose

The purpose of holding the Focus Groups was a) to ascertain from members the current level of awareness and perceptions of the Association, and b) to get their input into the future shape of GETBA, including their suggestions as to additional services and activities that would be of value to East Tamaki businesses moving forward.

3. Methodology

15 business decision-makers representing a cross section of sectors and size participated in two Focus Groups in late April. Some volunteered and others were approached.

An external facilitator was retained to ensure impartiality and objectivity. The GM met with the facilitator several times to determine the process and the areas where feedback should be sought. While structured questions were prepared the process was an organic one so as to allow the free flow of information. All areas sought were in fact covered.

NB that the feedback given reflects the perceptions of those contributing and is not necessarily right. However their perceptions are their reality and so need to be considered.

4. Feedback

4.1 What do they know about GETBA? What has greatest recognition factor for them?

- Crime prevention is highly visible: security email alerts have been effective in reducing crime in the area
- Regular breakfasts – awareness high but too much of a ‘meeting’ format – would like more time to network and also would welcome events at other times of the day
- Feel is some apathy on the part of members – and that a large business association needs to differentiate itself from a small business association by broadening its activities to reach a wider membership base
- Perception that the organisation is a bit old fashioned – reinforced by the website and breakfast ‘meeting’
- 1 hadn’t been to GETBA breakfasts and was somewhat sceptical of GETBA’s ongoing value since the BID decision as had perceived that GETBA was now a council run organisation especially with 2-3 reps on the Committee.

4.2 Key issues facing their business in next 12-18 months.

- Difficulty getting staff – including both skilled and unskilled staff (F&P Healthcare have 100 vacancies at any one time)
- Transport issues – including improved public transport and alternatives to public transport (Pasifika employees tend not to catch buses) such as safe cycling, mini buses, ride sharing, meeting shifts, points of origin, and connections with other public transport such as trains
- Transport – congestion on arterial and feeder roads barrier to efficient movement of trucks, couriers etc. Highbrook Drive is used by domestic travellers not just business – has economic impact and also leads to bad behaviour
- Traffic flows – poor traffic light controls restrict flow; also trucks using roads as turning and loading bays
- Security/safety walking to and from work to buses
- Graffiti (specifically Botany South)
- Compliance costs – Council, MAF, local body costs
- Economic uncertainty - gst increase impact on pricing/sales
- More interest in owner occupier borrowings shown in last 3 months but difficulties leasing – proliferation of >1000sqm properties for lease
- Recycling – Council don’t provide this service for businesses (F&P can’t dispose of glass – not enough for commercial removal; others take recycling rubbish home)
- Lack of accommodation for business travellers from out of the area
- Lack of large modern meeting venues
- Possible negative perception of the area from outside the area

4.3 What can GETBA do to help?

- Crime prevention – already doing good job – take to next step – CCTV? Better use/dissemination of existing crime prevention resources?
- Regional co-ordination of transport management across East Tamaki
- Resource as to where to go for local govt compliance – conduit, plus forum on website for questions as to others’ experiences and who can help, trouble shooter role for GETBA (Enterprising Manukau’s Terry Monaghan no longer undertaking this role)
- Advocacy - continue re rates and other charges (appreciated waste water lobbying achievement for smes)
- Promotion of the area as a place to do business – to attract new businesses and landlords into the area (attract from Penrose, Mt Wellington); provide info pack for new businesses to the area
- Promotion of businesses to wider catchment than just East Tamaki – residential as well. Would pay \$100-\$150 for enhanced listing with link to own website and email address.

- Website as a resource – drive people (local and wider) to the website; design usability important; eg re transport – info re public transport from A to B (like MAXX)
- Market East Tamaki as a great place to do business and a great place to work – sell to outside the area – lift the image (perception) so as to bring new business into the area
- Raise awareness and image with branding, lobbying and promotion eg Goodman website and newsletter
- Align with key players in the area such as Goodman
- Encourage doing business locally
- Important to move with technology - eg all members on a Local Area Network (LAN) eg Smales Farm – though is smaller so easier to do
- Collective business support and collective business voice important in new political environment
- Broaden activities and provide more opportunities for networking - get a speaker for a seminar for members to learn how to maximise networking opportunities
- Put more focus on ‘people’ rather than a total business focus

4.4 The GETBA website

- Half have visited but not regularly – 2 follow links from emails; 1 checks security alerts
- Currently dated and generally not user friendly
- Should be a resource for doing business locally (advertise it beyond GETBA boundaries)
- Jobs Board would be useful
- Like the Bulletin Board idea plus forums incl From the Chair
- If need password protection make it easy – individual auto memory or generic
- Directory listings are confusing – need searchable Directory with links to companies own website
- Some are against advanced/paid listings – feel the Directory shouldn’t be a money making tool and that searches should be ‘fair’ rather than advanced listings coming up first
- Why would you use the GETBA directory when you can use google and FINDA when looking for a local business? Must have equal SEO capability
- Marketing internationally – pull vs push; why come to East Tamaki? (Whenuapai example)
- Marketing and brand awareness important
- Should be a conduit for useful business support – links to other websites/source – to help businesses reach their business goals
- Should have up to date information re what’s going on in the area – links – don’t duplicate
- Something similar to the ‘Ask for feedback’ section on local authority issues in the Herald
- Early advice as to resource consents
- Links to economic commentaries etc
- Social Media suggested – eg Facebook, Linked In, Twitter

4.5 Communication with members

- Email communication preferable but not too often – current volume fine
- Email more often but be briefer – the post breakfast emails are too long and don’t get to read to the end
- Weekly or monthly email round-up/newsletter suggested, by segment and linked to website
- Alternative to email alerts when new info added to website - red flag on new items on the home page (works only if people go the website daily as a matter of course which some said they wouldn’t)
- Texting for event reminders and alerts – opt in only and not at night
- Prefer email communication – not keen on texts
- Encourage forwarding emails to others with opt in feature to expand participation
- Short emails/newsletters preferred with links to GETBA website or Council and other relevant resources

4.6 GETBA events

- Not much time to network at breakfasts currently – also venue not conducive to mingling
- Like variety of events to choose from
- More opportunities to network
- Bayleys interested in hosting a Business Showcase
- Timing – 3.00-5.00 better time for most than early morning or lunch (most start work early)
- Timing – vary the times of day –including lunches
- Variety of speakers – OHS, literacy/numeracy case study, not too many political, maximising IT communications
- Speakers don't have to be high profile, can be local, must be relevant; want informative speakers on what's going on in the local area; also like success stories
- Re payment – comfortable with user pays concept – attendance will be dependent upon perceived value/ROI
- Charge for events as people value what they pay for
- Pay one membership fee which includes x number of breakfasts/events
- Venue – happy to go outside the area for larger events
- Celsius not a good venue – pillar etc. Possible venues - Salvation Army Hall in Baverstock Place, Howick Country Lodge, Pakuranga Country Club; adapt vacant buildings

4.7 Upskilling

- The medium to larger organisations have internal training systems or providers such as EMA, Bright Star and don't see a role here for GETBA; SMEs – GETBA a conduit role
- As a rule GETBA shouldn't be delivering training but be a conduit eg literacy and numeracy
- Would like more seminars like the Focus09 seminar delivered by Richard Poole

4.8 Interest Groups/working groups

- Like the resolve and dissolve concept re issues based groups
- Also like interest area focus as opposed to issues driven, where may only have a couple of activities in a year
- Possible groups/areas:
 - Marketing/promoting the area outside the area
 - Local government compliance
 - Waste minimisation
 - Transport/travel planning (HSTTP exists)
 - Property
 - HR (sme focus)
- Preference for 'issue' basis
- Social responsibility – youth development suggested but not supported generally as more of a nice to have rather than a must have (core business?)
- Possible 'great place to work' opportunity to involve companies in sponsored youth or employee sports activities
- Idea for a GETBA World Cup corporate touch rugby tournament in Feb 2011

4.9 Sponsorship

- Support sponsorship tagged to specific events/ activities
- Generally don't support the GETBA partners concept – question perception of kickbacks; exclusivity not fair to competitors

5. Conclusions and recommendations.

The feedback reflects particularly the high perceived value of the crime prevention programme and the overall respect with which the association is held by businesses in the area.

It also reflects a lack of awareness on the part of some participants of activities that are already being undertaken but which don't have the same visibility ('trouble shooting' on behalf of members with Manukau City Council for example).

The feedback affirms several areas for development which have already been identified, including the need for GETBA to:

5.1 Develop a more contemporary, go-ahead image.

Underway with the re-brand, upgrade of the website and adaptations/improvements to the regular breakfast meeting.

5.2 Raise the visibility with members of other GETBA activities and benefits in addition to crime prevention.

Underway with strategy to market/promote our services and achievements better via CRM system, upgraded website, and marketing avenues including newsletter (electronic and hard copy).

5.3 Enable greater participation opportunities for, and communication with, more people within member businesses.

The CRM system will assist with this by allowing for unlimited contacts (within reason), segmenting the membership and maximising the use of member data.

5.4 Provide a greater variety of functions, speakers and services to reach a broader cross section of the membership.

Underway with new events/seminars and web upgrade with additional services that will be available via the web.

5.5 Provide more opportunities for businesses to network.

Underway with existing and new events.

5.6 Market East Tamaki outside the area as a great place to locate to and to do business with.

Recommend a working group to assist with this. (Bayleys keen to be involved and offer their marketing services).

5.7 Encourage East Tamaki businesses to do business locally where possible.

Will be part of the upgraded website.

5.8 Move with technology.

Underway with CRM system, website upgrade and planned Focus on Technology seminar day along the lines of Focus09.

5.9 Be a conduit for business resources, information on developments planned for the area, and local government compliance.

Underway with links planned via the website.

6. New areas raised for consideration:

Sector based interest groups such as Property and HR for SMEs.

7. Other feedback of interest:

That GETBA should not be in the business of making money but that members are comfortable with the concept of user-pays.

Preference for email communication in bite sized chunks with links to the website for more detail.

The priority issue of co-ordinated transport management across East Tamaki was confirmed.

NB that not every item of feedback/suggestions have been incorporated into the conclusions, but all are being given due consideration.

Jane Tongatule
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Greater East Tamaki Business Association