

The resourceful supermarket

supermarkets encouraging a productive community

Background

Supermarkets: indispensable time-savers for modern living or destroyers of urban and rural communities and the local businesses at their heart?

The convenience they represent often means that citizens do not know how food – or all the other goods available in supermarkets – is sourced and made. Driving consumer dependency, they could be viewed as responsible for the culinary de-skilling of the population and contributing to a lack of resilience.

Whatever way you cut it though, supermarkets are here to stay and, for many people, busy lives would be made more difficult without them.

Nonetheless, in town centres and rural areas, there is a sense of the loss of a focal point for community life and a place for meaningful interaction between people across the community spectrum.

In a climate of mistrust of large corporations, how could supermarkets demonstrate commitment to their locality and create bonds of reciprocity between themselves, their customers and the greater community? Given supermarkets' power over our shopping and eating habits and decisions, how might that influence be harnessed to help people and communities help themselves? Rather than fostering a dependency in which the customer is weak and small traders excluded, how might supermarkets take a lead in engendering a locally focused sense of community resourcefulness and self-reliance?

Brief

Design and develop a new service through which a supermarket engages on a local level with its customers and others in the community, using the power of its brand and influence to increase the resourcefulness of the local community and individuals.

Develop a brand and campaign for your service idea once it is established, that can promote it locally but also be scaled up and rolled out more widely.

What might such a service look like?

Food is the core commodity of supermarkets, and could be the focus, with the aim of encouraging a healthier, more confident or more ethical relationship between customers and what they purchase and eat.

Look at what already exists – from recipe cards to home cooked meal ideas on a limited budget and fronted by a celebrity chef – but these are remote and do not place locality and community at their core.

Food is the most obvious focus but you will have other ideas for the basis of the service. Whatever it is, it does need to engage with the community on a local level and propose a sufficiently sustainable model that could be scaled up.

Some thoughts to feed into the development of your thinking

- who are the everyday experts in the community: local businesses; restaurants/chefs; florists; electricians; who are others?
- what about local institutions: local schools, colleges, universities; the WI; religious groups?
- who are the skilled amateurs among the customers? What can be shared?
- how might this service also speak to cross cultural and cross generational agendas?

Good service design creates the conditions for people to connect successfully with others and with organisations, so as to promote real and positive change in everyday life. This brief is an opportunity to do that and to develop your understanding of your unique role in bringing a design perspective to community projects through working with people and organisations.

Submission details

The process through which you engage, involve and work with the various community stakeholders will be critical to the success of your project so ensure you find a way of recording and presenting the benefits of this work in creative ways like storyboards, photographs, diagrams or films.

When presenting flat work you should use A3 lightweight boards (max. 5).

You should also include a typewritten report (no more than 500 words).

All work submitted should carry an RSA label on the back.

Schedule

Dates for submission of entry forms, fees and work

Thursday 19 November 2009

Deadline for Entry Form(s)/Fee(s) for all projects

(including *Directions Plus*)

Entry Forms/Fees should be sent under separate cover

– **not** with your entry – to:

RSA Design Directions Registrations
8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
UK

Monday 16 November
– Friday 11 December 2009

Submission period for all project entries

(except *Design Directions Plus**)

Entries will be accepted at Brooks Transport Services Ltd on any weekday within the dates stated between 08:00-18:00, excluding weekends and bank holidays. Entries arriving after 18:00 on Friday 11 December 2009 may not be accepted

Please remember that all entries should be sent or delivered to:

Brooks Transport Services Ltd
Unit 2/15
Second Avenue
Bluebridge Industrial Estate
Halstead
Essex CO9 2SU
UK

All Entry Forms/Fees should be sent or delivered to:

RSA Design Directions Registrations
8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
UK

**Design Directions Plus* – Submission date for entries for these projects is:
Friday 8 January 2010