

Setting up the BID partnership

Developing an identity for the BID

Why an identity is needed

It is important to develop a corporate identity or brand for the BID so that all communication is easily identified as coming from the BID and businesses can recognise projects which have been delivered by the BID.

The identity or brand is made up of the logo or graphics which are used to convey the name of the BID organisation and any associated print styles and colours which are used in publications.

BID identity issues

A BID partnership needs to decide if it will include the term BID in its title. Recent research undertaken by the Times Square Business Improvement District revealed that a very small percentage of local workers and businesses were familiar with the precise concept of a BID. Research by Paddington BID mirrored this result, so it may be important to include the term BID to build awareness in the run up to the vote. However, BID partnerships may take the view that this is an unnecessary complication and choose to use a more commonly understood phrase.

A distinction may need to be drawn between the corporate identity of the BID and the area identity, depending on the nature of BID partnership and its role. The branding of an area by a BID can potentially conflict with attempts by the local authority to retain ownership of it. Creating a more generic logo for the public face of the BID can help to ease this tension.

Once the BID identity has been established ideally it should not be changed as this will cause confusion, and may negate the work done previously to develop awareness of the Partnership. Changing the identity is a relatively expensive exercise in terms of design costs and producing new stationery, promotional material etc. Careful consideration needs to be given to the pros and cons before proceeding, and having decided to change, all material must be changed at once to prevent further confusion.

BID logo design

Any BID considering developing a brand identity should be aware of the following:

- The logo should be suitable for reproduction in a wide variety of different sizes and on a variety of different media, from letterheads to posters, banners, websites, street furniture, signage, hanging baskets, cleaning carts, team clothing and waste bins
- Designs that use a lot of different colours are generally more expensive to reproduce and more difficult to maintain colour consistency. Similarly, designs that have large expanses of one colour will make any colour variation more noticeable
- Ideally the logo should be instantly recognisable and convey what the BID does. Complex or fussy designs should be avoided as should clever logos which require people to work out what they mean
- Logos should be used consistently, it is best to develop a [style guide](#) which specifies exactly how the logo will be used in different circumstances to ensure consistency



Briefing a designer to develop a BID logo

A [sample design brief](#) for Paddington BID is available. The following elements should be covered in a design brief:

- Explanation of what BIDs are and what they do
- Explanation of the particular issues the BID is aiming to tackle
- Identification of the target audience – the primary audience will be BID decision makers and voters, then other members of the local community and the media
- What the target audience should feel about the brand e.g.
 - Recognition
 - Association and ownership
 - Pride
- Where the brand is to be used e.g. print, website, clothing, equipment
- If this is a brand for the area or for the BID partnership
- Any specific constraints which are going to affect the brand, like the need to show other brands alongside or any adjacent area branding it may need to sit with or stand out from.

Website design

Why have a website?

A website is a cost effective way of establishing a presence for the BID partnership and providing up to date information on the partnership's activities to businesses and key stakeholders in the area. However, the overall effectiveness of having a website will depend on the nature of businesses in the area and the extent to which they are internet users.

Businesses are unlikely to hold onto numerous hardcopy publications but if they are given one flyer or business card showing the web address they can access information as and when required.

A BID partnership website can also give information to other BID organisations, academics and others interested in the BID. As some of the first partnerships to test the BID concept, the Circle BIDs found that having a website cut down on the time taken supplying information to other organisations.

What information should be displayed

The experience of the The Circle Initiative BIDs suggests that the following information should be included on a BID website:

- 'Contact us' page with details of the BID staff members. This section should include the BID partnership office address, a location map for the office, BID staff email addresses and contact numbers. Including photos of the staff team will aid recognition and help to build credibility with local businesses. It is also a good idea to include an online form which can be submitted directly to the BID partnership, so that specific queries can be directed to the appropriate individual



- Details of the BID partnership board, who the members are and any theme groups that have been set up
- Testimonials from key respected business leaders or stakeholders, explaining why they are keen on establishing a BID in the area ([see example Bankside](#))
- Area directory – a section which provides details of all the organisations within the BID area, usually by sector, and the goods or services they provide to encourage local procurement and trading within the area. This part of the website will take time to populate but it is a very good demonstration of the advantage of involvement with the BID partnership
- Regular updates on the BID partnership's activities and other issues of interest to local businesses like major planning applications or new businesses moving into the area. It is vital that this information is kept rigorously up to date or it will quickly be discredited, in view of this it is better if updates can be implemented in house
- Links to other successful BIDs and BID information websites like www.londonbids.org and www.ukbids.org will help to build credibility and increase the understanding businesses have of BIDs
- Look to include a language support option when developing a BID in an area where there are high concentrations of businesses and business leaders from differing ethnic backgrounds.
- Include as much visual content, photos maps and diagrams, as possible to back up text and make the website look interesting.
- BID development process section that provides details of the BID proposal and ballot timetable, etc.

Do's and Don'ts on website design

When designing a website or briefing a website designer the following issues should be considered:

- Keep the same format from page to page, ensuring the style and colours complement the BID logo branding
- Select standard text fonts
- Try to find a balance between a dull but quick text focused website and a visually interesting design which is slow to download. Avoid complex and clever graphics which require specific software or take too long to download – don't assume people have broadband
- Build in time for testing before the website goes live
- When deciding a BID name it should be as unique as possible while closely associated with the area e.g. BetterBankside, so that it will be easily picked up by search engines. It is also important to find out if the web page address is available. This is a particular issue because a large number of domain names containing 'BID' have been registered (but not yet used) by online gaming organisations. If businesses and other key stakeholders can remember the web address without writing it down the website is likely to obtain more hits. Where possible register a domain name ending .co.uk or .org as these are more likely to be attempted when a potential visitor has forgotten the exact address.
- Use the opening page as a contents page, preferably with expanding menus to allow easy direct access to specific sections. Don't overload the first page with too much information – people do not enjoy excessive scrolling on an opening page.
- Ensure any links work and are accurate.
- Ensure that the website is easy to update in house or very simply out of house. This can be time consuming but is an important service to businesses. Ideally it should be possible to build deadlines into the content



management system (CMS) so that when events etc. have taken place they are automatically removed from the website. Set strict deadlines each month for information coming from third parties like businesses wanting to be added to the website directory.

The evidence from Circle

Brand Identity

The Circle pilots have been through a variety of name and brand identity changes through their development.

Area	Better Bankside	The Holborn Partnership	Heart of London	PBID	WQBA
Original identity	Bankside Local Management Board	Holborn Business Partnership	The Coventry Street Association	Paddington Circle	Lower Marsh and The Cut Business Improvement Partnership
Subsequent identity	Better Bankside	4Holborn	Piccadilly Circus Partnership		Circle Waterloo
BID Company Identity	Better Bankside	The Holborn Partnership	Heart of London Business Alliance	Paddington BID	WQBA

Better Bankside's identity focuses on the aspirations of the BID, rather than its processes. This name allows for a focus on the overall local area management of the BID patch. Their branding and campaign material received a major industry award.

Heart of London – Originally called the Coventry Street Association and later Piccadilly Circus Partnership and final identity was launched a year before the BID went live. Two logos have been adopted:

- Place branding – Heart of London – from Circus to Square to enable the BID area to realise its status as a global tourist landmark
- Corporate logo – Heart of London Business Alliance

The Holborn Partnership – An area branding project was instigated by the success of an Innovation Event held in partnership with Central Saint Martin's College in June 2005 when local business representatives took part in a range of seminars looking at the way in which Holborn is perceived. The seminars highlighted a common concern which was that Holborn suffered from negative perceptions that haven't kept up with the pace of change in the area. The new brand, developed following consultation with local occupiers, statutory providers, students and residents is primarily a tool to assist us in raising awareness about the richness of the area, but it also made sense for the BID company identity to be aligned with it as well. The previous identity 4Holborn was launched a year before the BID went live. It



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was based on the four promises of the BID campaign 'safer, cleaner, coordinated and connected' and the 'Yes4Holborn' campaign slogan. The new and the old logos worked together; they were in the same colour and typeface so the transition was not confusing. Holborn have found that the orange colour of their branding is instantly recognisable and has become synonymous with the BID, although it can make sourcing uniforms difficult.

Paddington BID – the BID perception analysis revealed that only 14% of those surveyed understood the concept of a BID, whilst 67% were aware of Paddington Circle. The BID partnership felt that it was important to have the word BID in the corporate identity in order to build awareness of BIDs during the campaign period; and that the BID partnership needed to move away from the name Paddington Circle which was strongly associated with The Circle Initiative and SRB funding and meant little to the local business community.

Waterloo Quarter – two identity changes were necessary, the first because the name was too unwieldy, and the second to break loose from associations with the SRB funded Circle branding. The whole Board was involved in the third re-branding process, working with branding consultants. The brief was to produce a new logo that promoted a single identity for an area, to which there is a strong emotional attachment, but which is physically confusing, and to ensure the new identity would still be appropriate in 10 years when, hopefully, the BID had made significant changes. The new identity was designed to encapsulate the hidden, quirky nature of the area.

Website

Better Bankside www.betterbankside.co.uk The website was developed as the main conduit for communication with the membership and beyond. This was supplemented by a regular e-brief supported by software which monitors penetration usage and interest

Heart of London operates two websites :

- Corporate website www.heartoflondonbid.co.uk – explains the BID and what it does and provides details the businesses in the area
- Consumer website www.heartoflondon.info – promotes the area and all the businesses in the area, (directing onto their websites) and details film premieres. This has a different Heart of London logo. When the hit rates achieve an appropriate level Heart of London will sell advertising space on this website

These websites can be updated in-house (images and text) ensuring that they remain up to date.

The Holborn Partnership website is currently being redesigned to fit with the launch of their new logo, the domain name will also alter to reflect this, however to avoid confusion the previous website www.inholborn.org will automatically forward the viewer to the new domain name. The previous website was designed in house and although staff with these skills were not deliberately selected, having this expertise in house proved cost effective and ensured that the website was updated regularly. The initial web design took approximately two weeks for one member of staff.



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Paddington BID www.paddingtonbid.co.uk the website markets the Paddington area and its businesses through an extensive lifestyle listings section. It also provides links to other BID information websites. The website is targeted at BID levy payers, BID peers, agencies and visitors to the area searching listings. Having a varied audience can lead to difficulties in terms of deciding the prominence that specific issues or events are given on the website. Paddington currently pays for monitoring of website visits, the information recorded helps highlight which pages are most visited and, where possible, which organisation has visited.

Waterloo Quarter www.waterlooquarter.org the website promotes the BID area and its local businesses and aims to attract workers, residents and visitors throughout the Waterloo area and the South Bank to spend more of their time and money in Waterloo Quarter.

