

Community Capacity Building - Including people with communication disabilities

Cerebral Palsy Australia Conference - Queensland 2007

Project Aims

To promote inclusion for people with communication difficulties at a shopping centre in a suburb of Melbourne -
Centro Box Hill

Communication difficulties may occur for many reasons

- Complex Communication Needs (CCN)
- Difficulties with English - culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- Substance abuse

Project Stages...

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4?

Stage 1

- Partial funding from City of Whitehorse Community Grant 2004/2005
- Supported by partnerships
 -

Aims

- **To increase the awareness of service providers**
- **To identify service providers' concerns**
- **To identify simple strategies**

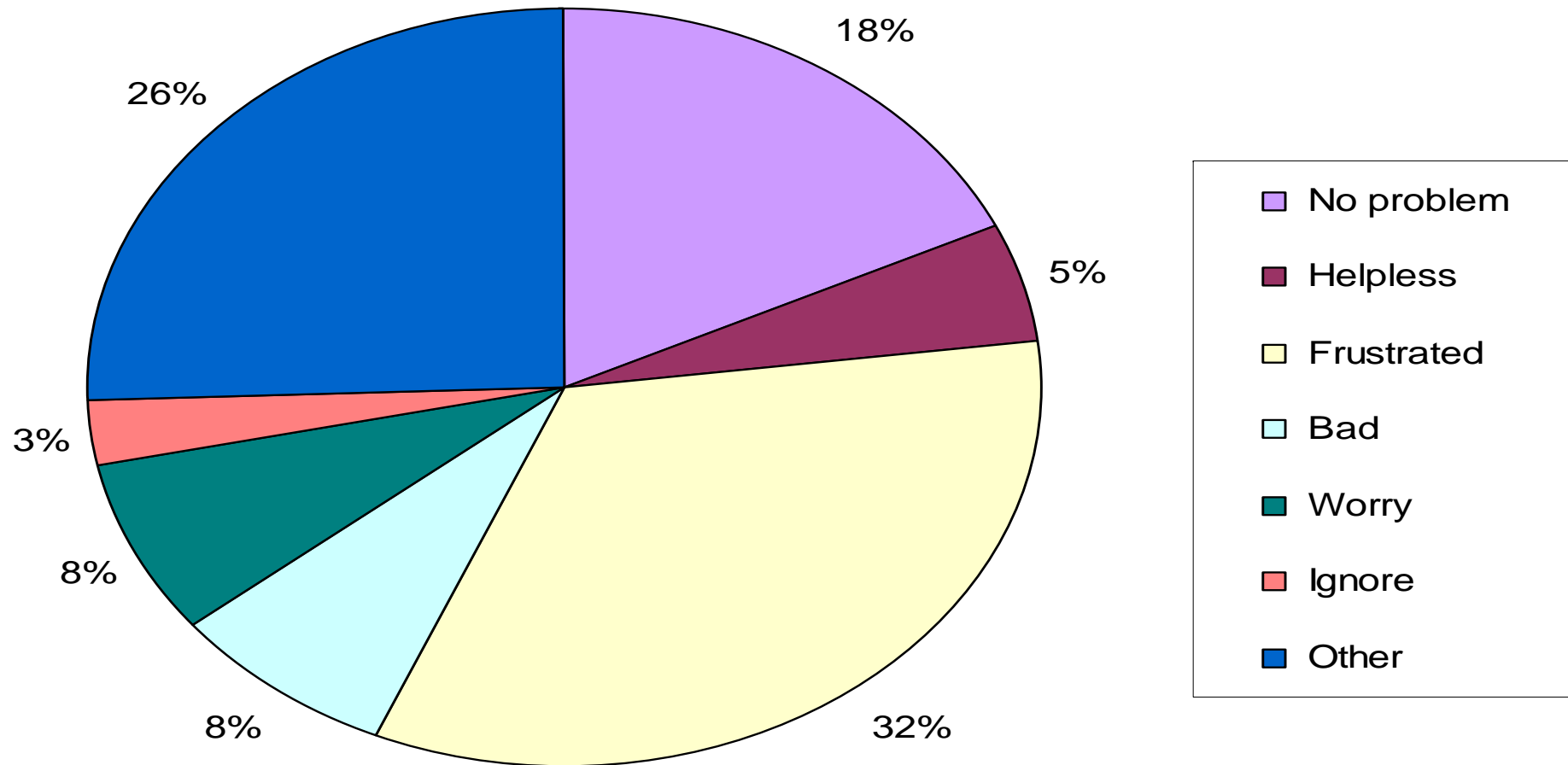
Implementation

- Scope (Vic) Ltd. Ethics Advisory Committee
- Information flyers and survey (available in English and Chinese Mandarin)

The survey included the Box Hill Police, Connex Box Hill Station staff and Centro Box Hill Security and Cleaning staff

Outcomes of Survey

Figure 1. How do you feel when you can't communicate with a customer?



Strategies already being used

- Gesture
- Pointing
- Body language
- Visual signs
- Writing things down
- Having other staff or customers translate
- Showing objects
- Using pictures from a store catalogue

Some ideas...

- Provide education for service providers
- Offer training sessions

Stage 2

- Partial funding by City of Whitehorse Community Grant 2005/2006
- Supported by partnerships with:
 - Centro Box Hill
 - Chinese Community Social Services Centre
 - VITS

Aims

- Develop a **generic communication board** for all stores
- Develop **6 service-specific** communication aids, eg. boards, key rings
- **Increase community awareness** about strategies that enable successful communication

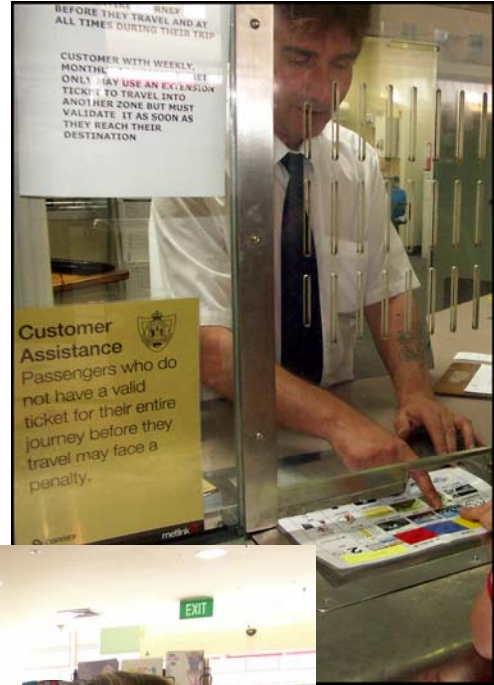
Partners

- Coffee/icecream/drinks shop
- Bookstore
- Chemist
- Connex - train station
- Security staff
- Cleaning staff

Developing specific aids

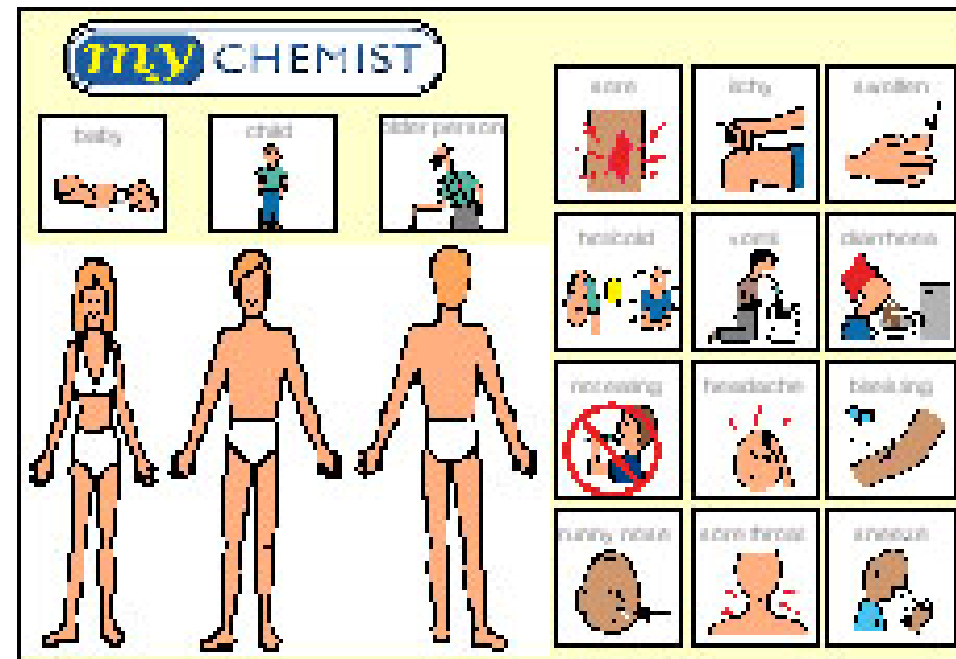
- Drafted boards/keyrings with service staff
- CARM
- Translated
- Trial - retailers and services, local adult day services
- Changes made





Developing aids

- Ongoing support and training (informal)
- Generic aid developed

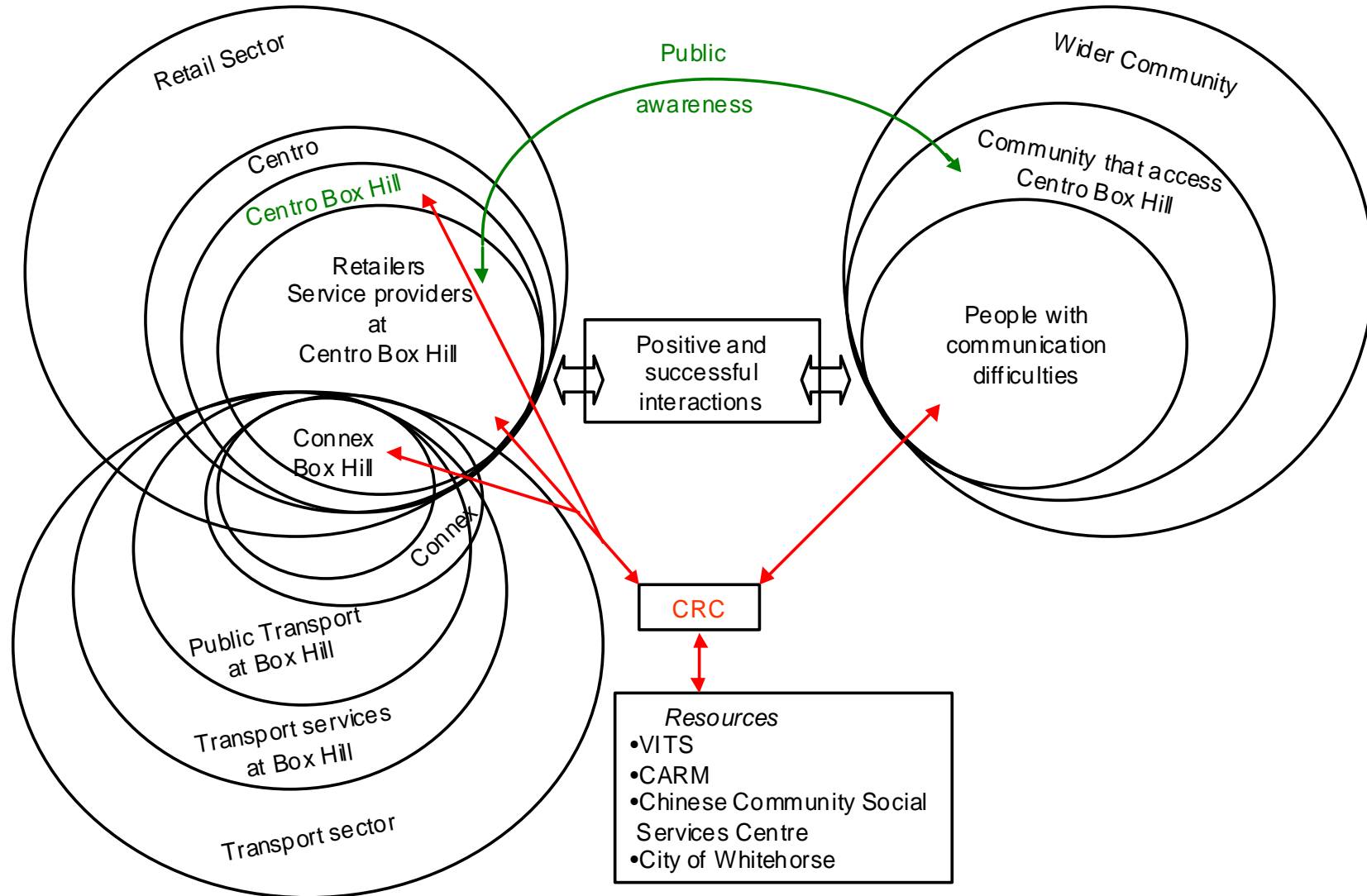


Important partnerships

- Centro Box Hill organised a launch
- Their vision: to make the initiative centre wide
- Counter adverts, signage, plasma screen advertising



Phase 2



Evaluation - stores with generic boards

Completed with assistance of La Trobe University
Speech Pathology Students

- **73 %** of the stores surveyed were aware of the project
- **80.8%** knew about the boards
- **80.8%** had the boards
- **9.6%** had it displayed

Evaluation - stores with generic boards

- **3.8%** found customers asked to use the board
- **11.5%** needed to use the board themselves
- **3.8%** had incidence of customers bringing their own communication aid

Evaluation - Specific Stores

Angus and Robertson, Happy Bar, My Chemist

- All aware of the project, knew about the boards and had the boards
- 2 had it displayed
- 1 found customers initiated use
- 2 stores initiated use
- 2 stores had customers bring their own communication aid

Some Interpretation of the survey results

- Some retailers thought the communication boards were only for **customers from CALD backgrounds** not disability.
- Shops had **difficulty displaying the boards within reach** of customers

Some Interpretation of the survey results

- **Retailers** themselves were more likely to **initiate use of the board** than customers
- **Staff use strategies/techniques** that are shown on the boards, eg. writing, pointing.

Some comments received

- It's good for **community awareness**. People ask us about the sign and then staff show them the board
- People with disabilities are regular customers so **staff are familiar** with them. Customers generally point to communicate.

Sustainability

- People with communication difficulties need to know about the project.
- Develop new partnerships with services that can support this process (Eastern Region Communication Service & MetroAccess Worker, City of Whitehorse)
- Centro Box Hill to sustain awareness through their usual activities, eg. newsletters, awards

Stage 3

- Partial funding by City of Whitehorse Community Grant 2006/2007
- Supported by partnerships with:
 - Centro Box Hill
 - CARM
 - Local, adult disability day services

Aims

- To develop 10 new service specific communication aids
- To sustain momentum re: awareness

Aims

- People with CCN and their support people will know about the project and can access Centro Box Hill services
- Support people will know how to assist people to access the communication supports available

People with CCN will...

- Identify services they would like to access
- Play a major role in trial phase of service specific communication aids
- Assist with education and training of service providers
- Assist with public awareness strategies e.g photo shoot, articles for newsletters etc

Partners - phase 3

- Safeway
- Chemist
- Coffee shop
- Sports Store
- Bendigo Bank
- Centro Reception
- Connex - train station
- Centro Security

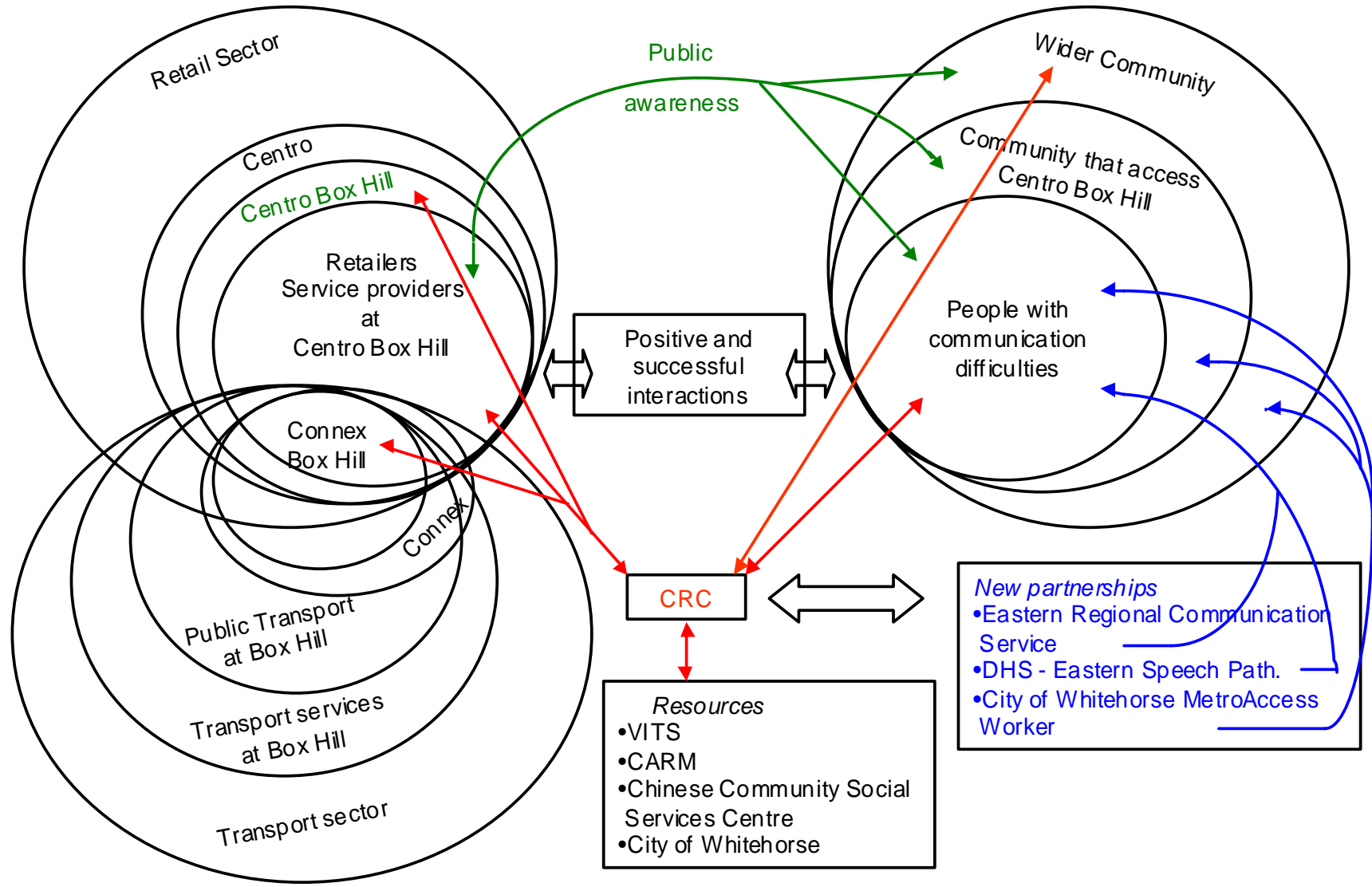
Steering Committee

CRC: Coordinate Project, develop communication strategies/aids

Other members:

- ⇒ Public Awareness campaigns within Centro Box Hill
- ⇒ Dissemination of information to DHS
- ⇒ Information on strategic networks
- ⇒ Supporting Adults with CCN and their staff
- ⇒ Trialing, providing individualised and training materials, role modelling, etc

Phase 3



Where to from here?

- Evaluation of Stage 3
- Sustainability
- Stage 4 ??? - funds, partnerships, manpower

Learnings...

- Include a risk assessment, realistic costing, man power and dedicated time in **project plan**
- There is a need for **training and support** for services in Centro
- Impacts of **staff absence/leave**
- **Follow-up** to maintain momentum... including strategic visits, purchases or coffee!
- **Steering Committee**

Learnings...

- Understand **retail culture**
- **Boards in word format** to enable them to be translated
- **Position boards** for access
- **Acknowledgement** of Mayer-Johnson (Boardmaker)
- Acknowledgement of authors -copywrite
- Issues of **branding and style guides**

Ongoing Questions...

- Is developing communication boards the first step for achieving the aims of the project?
- Could we support/expand on what stores already have? E.g. signs, catalogues
- How many tips - is 10 too many?
- What are potential barriers? We are working in new and unfamiliar territory!!

Contact us

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