
BID Feel Alive survey 2011

Feedback on the BID funded city centre magazine

Corporate Research

on behalf of City Centre manager,

Coventry Business Improvement District

November 2011



Introduction

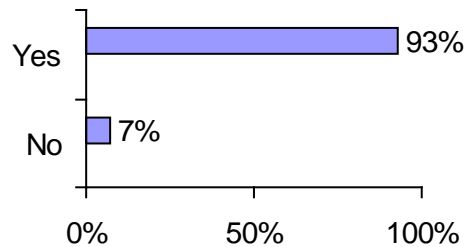
Feel Alive, the Coventry City Centre promotional magazine, is funded by the Coventry Business Improvement District (BID). The BID management team conducted a survey of members during November 2011 to find out their views on the magazine, identify areas for improvement and explore ideas for the future direction of city centre marketing. BID liaison executives visited members at their premises to distribute and collect questionnaires and the BID newsletter also invited levy-payers to take part, publishing a link to an online version of the survey.

In total, 119 of the 500 members sent a response and findings of the survey are presented here.

Results

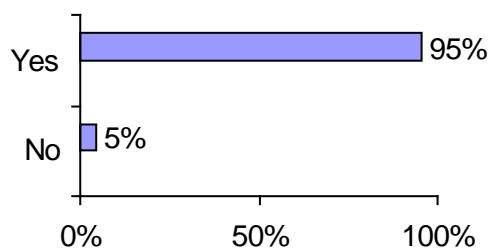
Only a small minority of respondents (7%) were unaware of Feel Alive magazine prior to the survey.

Are you already aware of the BID funded Feel Alive magazine which is used to market the city centre/promote local businesses?



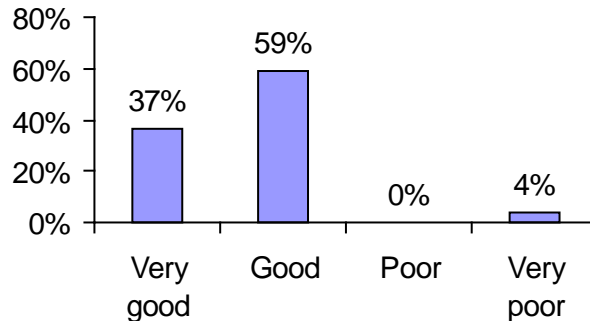
The majority of those who were aware of the magazine had read it (95%).

If aware of Feel Alive magazine, have you ever read a copy?



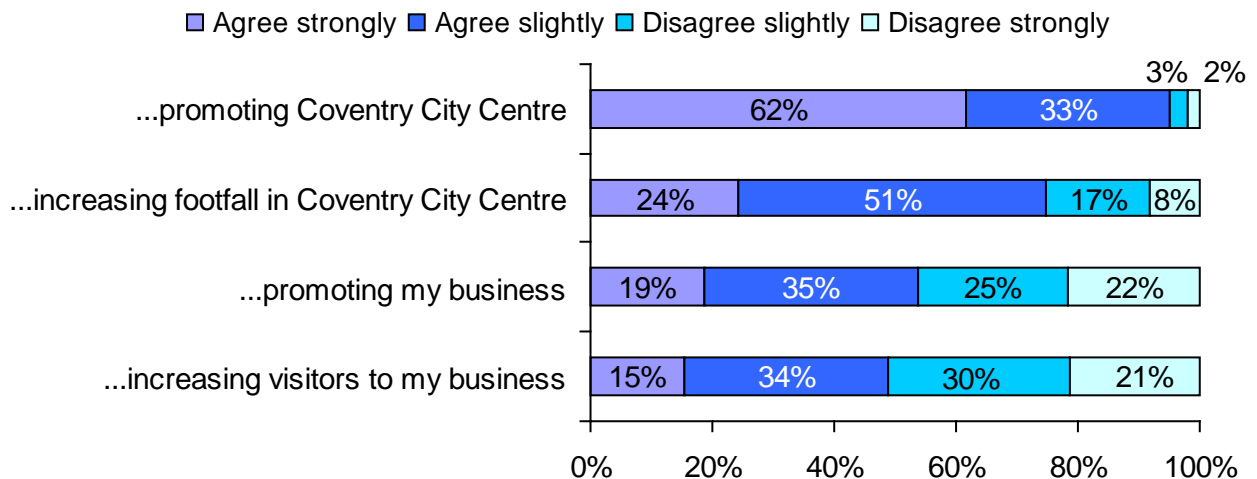
Opinion of Feel Alive magazine was generally favourable with 96% of readers rating it as either good or very good.

How do you rate the overall quality of the magazine?



Respondents were given several statements relating to the aims of Feel Alive magazine. Asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement, readers were more inclined to agree that the magazine provides benefits for Coventry City Centre as a whole rather than for their individual business. 95% agreed (62% of them strongly) that the magazine is an effective means of promoting the city centre and three quarters believed it helps to increase city centre footfall. In comparison, 54% agreed that the magazine effectively promoted their business and 49% agreed that it increased customer numbers.

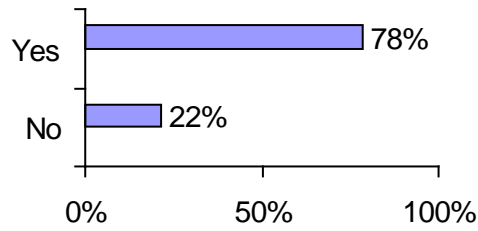
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? "Feel Alive magazine is an effective means of..."



Readers were invited to comment on what aspects of Feel Alive they liked and disliked and how they thought the magazine could be improved. Content and presentation of the magazine were the most liked aspects while unequal promotion of businesses and costs elicited the most negative comments. Respondents' suggestions for improvement to the magazine ranged from ideas for content and distribution to requests for greater equality and consultation. Full comments are given in the appendices.

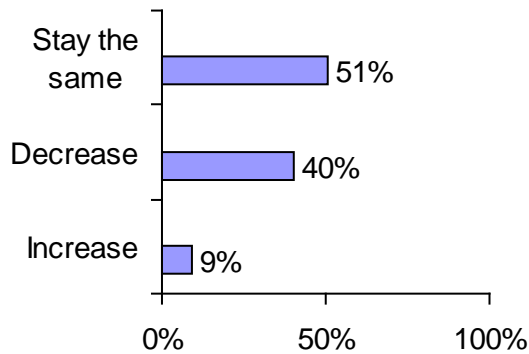
Asked for their opinion as to whether Feel Alive magazine should continue to be funded by the BID, 78% were in agreement.

Do you think Coventry BID should continue to fund Feel Alive magazine?



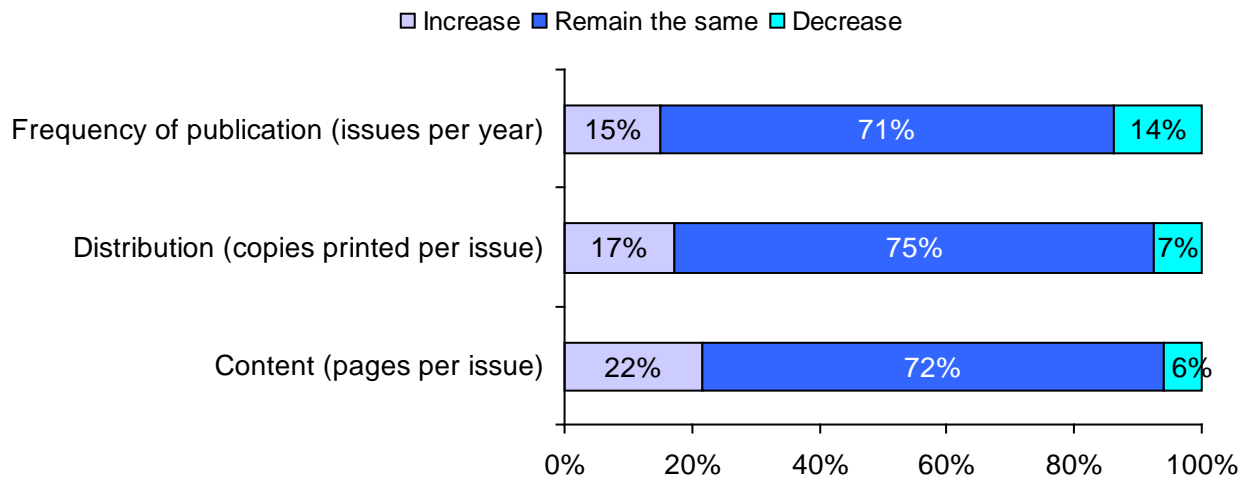
Those who agreed BID funding should continue were given an indication of the costs involved in printing, designing and distributing Feel Alive and asked whether they would like to see an increase or reduction in the amount spent on producing Feel Alive. Just over half of those happy for the BID to fund the magazine said the amount spent should stay the same but 40% wanted to see a decrease in funding. Just 9% believed spending on production of the magazine should increase.

If you agree BID funding should continue, should the amount spent on Feel Alive change?



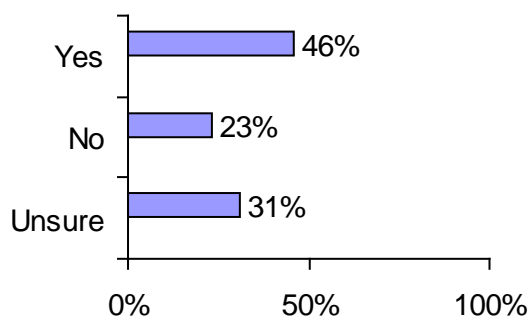
The group in agreement with continued BID funding were further questioned regarding what changes they would make to Feel Alive. The majority view was for all aspects to remain the same, with at least 71% indicating that they were happy with the current frequency, distribution and content of the magazine. Greater proportions wanted to increase distribution and content of the magazine than wanted to decrease them but those who wanted to change the frequency of publication in some way were more evenly split, with 15% wanting more issues per year and 14% saying there should be fewer. Other suggestions given included focussing more on the online version of the magazine, reducing printing costs, moving away from such a glossy finish and reducing the size from A4 to A5 (see appendix 4).

Changes you would like to see related to production of the magazine



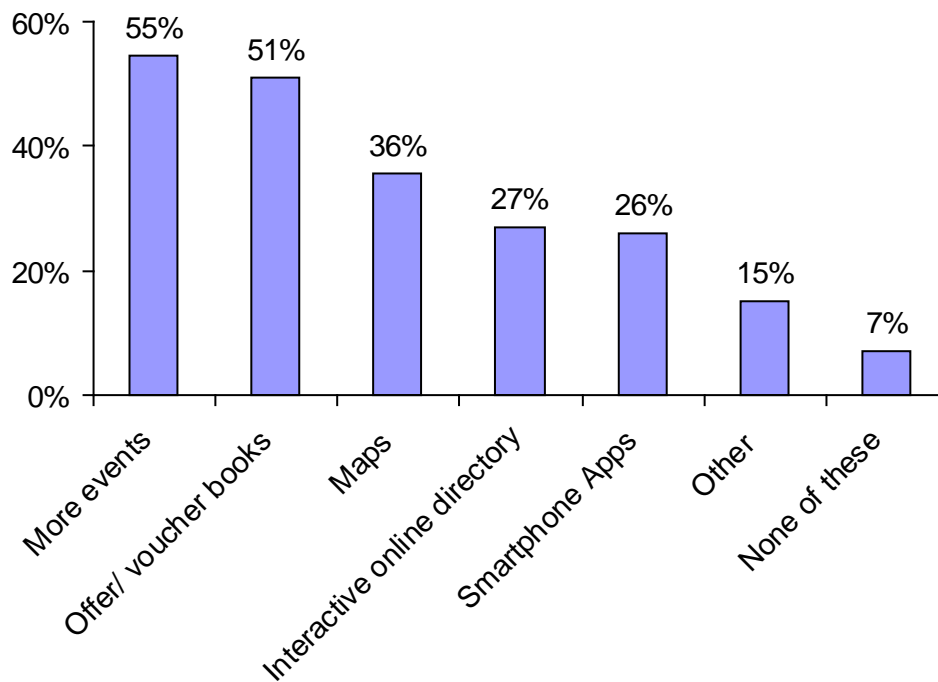
Respondents were informed that one possibility being considered is attracting wider advertising to cover part or all of the £40,000 cost of printing, designing and distributing each issue of Feel Alive magazine. This would mean opening up the magazine to advertisers of services/ products from beyond the city centre (potentially citywide, regional and/or national businesses) but any money saved could then be spent on other activities to promote Coventry City Centre. Respondents were asked whether they would be in favour of pursuing this suggestion and 46% said that they were. 23% did not agree but the remaining 31% were unsure.

In favour of pursuing wider advertising?



Asked what alternative forms of promotion the BID should consider funding, respondents were most in favour of staging more city centre events to encourage visitors into Coventry City Centre (55%). Over half thought that offer/ voucher books would be a good use of funds and 36% voted for a range of maps to locate shopping, eating/ drinking out etc. A website with an interactive shopping directory and Smartphone Apps were favoured by 27% and 26% respectively. Other responses included television and radio advertising, offering reduced/ free parking, improving the visual appeal of the centre and focussing on inward investment (responses are shown in appendix 5).

If the BID was to look at allocating funds to alternative methods of promoting the city centre, where do you think the money would best be spent?



Finally, respondents were offered the opportunity to give any other comments about Feel Alive magazine and BID funding. 22% of those who completed the survey made some comment; there were a mixture of comments from those in favour of and those against the magazine as well as those questioning whether publications are the most appropriate use of BID funds. Full responses are given in appendix 6.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Is there anything in particular that you like about Feel Alive magazine?

Content

- All topics Seasonal
- Clothes section
- Clothes/Fashion pages
- Competitions
- Discount vouchers in certain shops and cafes great idea. What's going on in the lead up to xmas, opening and closing times
- Events and upcoming events to increase footfall in the city
- Fashion pages, competitions
- Features on small local businesses. Updates on events
- Features, local issues, new products, events
- Free Vouchers, Information for Christmas times.
- Future events
- Good source of information
- Handy & Useful Information regarding the centre Interesting news and info
- I like the news and fashion part of the magazine.
- Information of what's going on in the city centre. Offers
- Informative about future events
- It gives dates for the shops opening at xmas and what going on in the city
- It looks and is a very interesting read. And reading about shops + bars is useful
- The content in the magazine is quite informative
- The focus on independent stores is great
- The magazine is informative and provides up to date information about local businesses.
- The vouchers to promote the store
- The winter edition showed centre opening times & other retailers initiatives
- Very informative, tells me things such as new businesses, special offers, as I do not have time to go into the centre very often.
- We like the idea of all the vouchers printed in the magazine giving people money off etc. Also the opening hours printed inside.
- When my business is in it. Find out what other businesses are doing, a bit of what's going on around the city centre. Short articles.
- Wide range of articles

Presentation

- Colourful, vibrant, encourages reader
- Glossy look
- Glossy Professional look
- I think the magazine has a good feel to it and presents a professional image which I believe is important for a free magazine as generally these just get thrown in the bin. Feel Alive however comes across as a good publication though and so is more likely to get greater readership.
- It is a good quality magazine
- Looks professional like an actual glossy magazine
- Nice quality (poor content)
- Paper quality

Content & Presentation

- Bright and glossy, Lots of info
- Nice Layout - Good to promote independent Stores/Cafe
- Quality I like
'Independents day' spread - people need to see choice/quality/variety
I like the focus on someone local / Celebrity
- Quality of the printed item
Mix of news/advertising
- Shiny, lots of pics
Good news articles on new shops
- The quality of the magazine is very good and well presented. It looks professional, appealing and entices you to read it. There is always a good mix of information ranging from large city wide issues/events right down to individual businesses.
- The quality well presented (I read it as a resident) what's going on features etc.
- Very glossy and high quality, nice articles
- Very professional, good trends and articles
- Visually it is great and has a good motive of content
The voucher/coupon page has been popular
- Well laid out, vibrant, full of useful information as to what's happening in the city centre

Other like

- How can I get my business in the magazine?
- I have a lot to thank Feel A Live Magazine as when I first started my business it was this magazine that helped me to get customers into the shop. The Editor at the time was very supportive, I feel this is the only City Centre magazines that allows people to know what is happening in the city centre, e.g. new openings, offers from the different shops in town etc.
- It's free
- It's free!!
Wide circulation and appears to be read by a wide section of the community
Layouts are usually pretty effective
- You need to get contact details correct

No likes

- No
- NO This magazine is pointless I have never spoken to anyone who bothers to read it.
- None
- Not really
- Not really Its ok

Appendix 2. Is there anything in particular that you dislike about Feel Alive magazine?

Inequality in coverage

- Always feature the same High street brands
- Doesn't showcase all shops in Coventry - more big name stores
- I feel it needs to promote new businesses and relocating businesses more
- It does not promote all businesses
- My business cannot be advertised in this magazine. It does nothing to increase footfall
- One downside is the reliance on big name companies to fill up the magazine with ads.
- Only covers major shops. Never charity
- That we haven't been mentioned inside or even asked if we would like to be inside.
- The clothing section only ever concentrates on high street stores
- We are never featured in it. (how rude)
- When my business is not in it. No directory of businesses. It's supposed to attract people into the city centre, but there is nothing to show what variety of shops there are.

Costs

- Cost of advertising - although we have been given good deals, it is still quite a lot of money to purchase a 1/2 page ad.
- Costly advertising. Appears to feature the larger department stores in the city rather than the smaller independents
- Small businesses like myself do not have the budget to advertise in the magazine.
- The whole concept, it is an expensive item to the bid.
- Total waste of £120,000 aims at no particular [... rest unreadable...]

Other dislike

- Accuracy of info
- In a time of huge amounts of junk mail, I question its effectiveness
- Needs clear message of why changes to centre. What the future holds
- No actual reading content, poor distribution and no-one has ever heard of it.
- Not really, Lots of ads
- Peculiar smell of printed pages.
- Too many adverts not enough articles

No dislikes

- No (x7)
- No not anything I can see
- Not really
- Nothing
- Nothing I dislike about magazine
Cover doesn't do much for me this time but I guess possibly every lady would like it.
(Personal dislike is I'm not a part of it.)

Appendix 3. Suggestions for how the magazine might be improved

Content

- A bit more about What's On I think would give readers more of an incentive to read it. Maybe also a few more articles - they can be smaller, they don't need to take a double spread
- A monthly focus or visitor guide
Comprehensive store listing
Page 3?
- If we could link up in some form of a competition
If you would like book reviews
- I would like to see it do a feature on all of the different shopping areas - grouped together to show what shops are in each area, i.e. 'Grey Friars Walk' 'West Orchards' etc.
- If it has the look of a glossy lifestyle weekly, make the content match. Aim it at the market it is intended for & better distribution
- Informing readers of promotions in various stores promos/offers etc.
- It would be useful if it had a index of all businesses in the centre
- More informative articles
- More puzzles more pictures

Distribution

- I am not aware of the circulation but it should be delivered to homes not just in Coventry but other CV codes to encourage customers from other towns surrounding Coventry, It should not be kept a secret that Coventry have some spectacularly good shops and shopping centre. Do not preach to the converted but preach to the unconverted.
- I think perhaps the magazine should be just made available online and a link emailed out to people or put in the Telegraph/Local media then make sure there is an incentive in place for people to view the magazine online. There should also be some copies of the magazine distributed in the surrounding areas of Coventry to try and bring new business in.
- It would be good to have a small quantity of magazines in store to promote businesses with customers
- Magazine should be more widely distributed
- Wider distribution/print numbers

Equality of promotion

- I think overall it's pretty good! You cover all aspects, maybe more on independents would be good. And the location of them i.e. the fact they're not in the city centre
- Promote every business evenly as some get a lot more promotion than others.
- There should be more adverts for the independents as these are the outlets that give the towns their originality.
- Where one company is used to do a whole page or two for e.g. Summer fashion, why not try and split this amongst independents as well as the large chains? Every city has chain stores. The magazine needs to push the differentiation like independents, events etc.

More consultation

- Greater consultation with businesses before printing, so we can inform regarding forthcoming offers / promotions
- More input from local managers - what styles actually sell in Coventry
- Work closer with featured stores to ensure accuracy of info

Free/ subsidised advertising

- BID members should advertise for free (not sure if they do)
- Free advertising
- Should consider subsidies for independents in Coventry to make advertising rates a more realistic cost.

Other suggestion

- By featuring my business in it regularly
- Feel Alive would only be worthwhile if it did not cost the BID precious funding of a (£140.000) There would be far less expensive and more proactive ways to promote Coventry.
- Make it more to the general public WRT businesses
- Perhaps not such a glossy magazine and focus more on the businesses in the town.
- Promote new look centre heavily. Promote how city will look in spring sell advantages. Need to win back footfall lost due to building work and changes to bus routes.
- Yes. Publish on internet let people download if they wish and spend the publishing money more wisely

Appendix 4. Other changes relating to production of the magazine

- As far as printing costs I have a contact who is a print broker and I believe he could get a better price for printing if you wanted to save some money.
- Considering the poverty within the city centre this is too much to spend, maybe only do once a year
- Distribution of a publication is very important, hence the distribution of the publication should increase and the quality of the paper should be less, as glossy paper must be very expensive. The new Fargo project is starting - maybe get them to share the cost, in that way Far Gosford Street can be advertised as an up coming shopping area,
- Make available online and publicize more about its online availability. Looking at the cost per issue it would be interesting to know how much is contributed through paid advertising.
- More adverts from independents
- More consultation with businesses to inform of promotions
- More local feel with great presentation
- Not such a glossy magazine
- Thinner pages. Some mono pages (black & white). Smaller A5 size for handbags etc. Deliver to households.

Appendix 5. Other alternatives

- Radio, Christmas TV advert
- TV advertising
- TV/ radio
- Cheap parking throughout Town and free on Sundays
- On street parking, better businesses
- Reduce car parking charges
- Use to promote city at weekends.
Free or low cost parking Sat/Sun
- Carrier Bags with Coventry Print.
- Changing the posters around the town with the correct business details
- Improving Hertford Street - the roof and pavement are disgusting. The concrete buildings need painting in other areas of the city.
- Window displays in empty shops i.e. promo windows.
- Attracting higher quality retailers
- Trying to encourage big retail names, ask them what would it take for them to come to Coventry
- As this publication is owned by the council in effect, if you decide to get rid of the publication (which I do not think you should) then more money should be invested in advertising smaller independent shops in the town, also areas such as Sherbourne Arcade, Lower Precinct, City Arcade should be focused on as people that live in Coventry do not know these areas exist, especially Sherbourne Arcade
- Customers just want the best deal - 2012 will be the toughest challenge we have had to date in the city
- Marketing to improve mentality about what Coventry has to offer.
- These have done before, but a central site to bring these all together and promote this one source may help

Appendix 6. Any other comments?

- Feel money could be spent on things a lot more important
- Great magazine but, in this climate, the money could be used more wisely
- I do like the magazine but it comes at too high a price. I read it but it does not make me visit the shops more.
- I get no funding as a store (for me personal level)
Pay more towards BIDs to give more space in magazine
I have forwarded to H/O but I know it wont go any further (sadly)
- I have personally seen the magazine only once when delivered to my home address in Whitley, but we have never had one delivered to my workplace which if BID is paying for it we should surely at least be given a copy!
- I object wholeheartedly to paying the BID. My company and industry now has ever decreasing footfall due to online advertising. I am not in the slightest bit interested in something which purports to increase numbers in the city centre.
- I think £40,000 is a ridiculous amount to spend on a magazine, could be much better spent in a different area.
- I think it is not working for our businesses, footfall and shop occupancy are still low.

- I think that all funding should be spent on making the area more attractive - especially by improving cleanliness - rather than publications.
- I think we need to define what the BID money is and should be spent on, after we know what the Council are responsible for maybe we could then look at the whole thing objectively. At the moment most of the £500.000 [sic] doesn't make much difference to Coventry.
- I would be interested in having this store's stock featured in the magazine, however our enquiries suggested that the cost would be prohibitive. What are the possibilities for featuring in the magazine?
- In regards to the magazines it's hard to think about the costs and where the money can go. There is potential to look at the size or quality to save money but it is an appealing magazine. The one thing that could really do with focus is the city's image. People have a negative towards Coventry and that needs to change
- It is absolutely fantastic, free to the public magazine
- It's very good
- Make it look more classy inside. Perhaps take ideas from stylish magazine which is also free mag.
- Much improved since council has taken over, more friendly and professional and the Ambassadors really make it feel like BID is really supporting our business.
- No!! Could give us a mention for cheap quality cards
- Once we had re-established our connection with the marketing team we were really pleased with the help we received to promote our business. As large companies move into the city we would welcome opportunities to advertise our business to them, e.g. Employee offers etc. I believe CV One were going to organise something like this but even though we showed interest in getting involved, we never heard anymore.
- Should highlight more on Coventry new businesses.
- Thanks for your continued support
- The magazine is totally irrelevant to my business
- The product needs more exposure and distribution
- This magazine should continue, as this is the only way people /customers know what is happening in the city centre, small Businesses like mine need this publication, as it is hard with recession.
Use less expensive paper and increase the distribution.
- Unless the magazine is improved, its a waste of money- especially if apps is an option

If you need this report in another format or language please contact us:

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Coventry City Council