

How To Build Momentum with Quick Wins

One thing you'll learn fast is that your town team needs to be credible.

You need to build confidence and momentum. Get the reputation for being "all talk, no action" and you'll find it harder and harder to win support.

Luckily, there's a no secret to being a super-powered town team. You just need to act. Get some runs on the board quickly, and you won't look back!

All well and good, you say. But what do quick wins look like? Read the guide below and you'll soon be a quick win expert.

1. Be decisive

Hit the ground running with definite decisions. If you are going to have a social event, for example, work out who is doing what, have the person or subcommittee set deadlines to the necessary steps, such as booking the venue, sending out invitations, sorting out the catering etc. Break it down and make it simple. And share the load.

Refining your decisions like this may seem like a small thing, but it's *the* difference between the best town teams and those that struggle.

2. Don't be too ambitious early on

Don't eat the elephant all in one go! One bite at a time. You don't need to run a huge festival in your first three months, or turn around the economic fortunes of your main street overnight, to be credible.

Start small, simple and cheap instead. Host a "Get to Know You" BBQ or a community busy bee. Knock on some doors and introduce yourselves to the traders. That's how you get rolling.

Use our *How to Prioritise Your Actions* guide to narrow down your list of ideas. Then get cracking on the best ones!

3. Embrace the lack of money

For the love of Pete, don't fall into the trap of canning your ideas because you haven't got the cash!

If you're creative, you can slash the cost of your projects. You can even cut costs AND build community at the same time!

There are some ideas on the next page of how you can turn things around.

Example 1

Host a community barbeque to introduce your town team and mission.

You can reasonably expect 200 people. Your challenge? You have \$200.

The Conventional Approach	The Creative Approach
<p>a) Book community hall. Pay. There goes your \$200!</p> <p>b) Arrange large quantities of sausages, buns, salads, drinks etc. Panic about prospect of not having enough. Panic at thought of ungainly surplus. Sigh, because you already blew your budget on the venue.</p> <p>c) Freak out at quote from popular DJ with professional sound system. Or don't, because you already spent your money on the venue. Prepare to listen to 96FM on your granddad's wireless instead.</p> <p>d) Marvel at your non-existent advertising budget. Contemplate making a few Facebook posts.</p> <p>e) Cancel the event because you don't have the money anyway.</p>	<p>a) Hold BBQ in local park instead. Use hay bales / witches hats / pot plants to further define the BBQ area. Or talk a trader into "lending" your team a space!</p> <p>b) Chat to a local business owner. Explain the plan, and the benefits of this opportunity for them. Work out a payment plan for food, to begin when the town team starts collecting money from the memberships that will surely accrue over the next 12 months. Hang the donors' signs / hand out their flyers all over the event. Thank them with a megaphone at the height of the gig.</p> <p>c) Announce there will be a contest for best dish. Ask attendees to supplement the BBQ by bringing their favourite dishes to share. Have someone dress up in silly "taster's outfit" (eg lab coat, chef's uniform ...), take names, label dishes, encourage conversation, and announce the winners. Soon you'll have a bank of names, plenty of food, and everyone'll be having a blast!</p> <p>d) Tell everyone you're short of funds because you're not the US military, and you're running on a shoestring budget for the good of the community. Ask for a gold coin donation.</p> <p>e) Forget the DJ! Dust off your old stereo. Or line up some young musicians who'd like the exposure!</p> <p>f) Promote through your networks, social media, community radio, school newsletters, shop fronts.</p>

Example 2

Your team identifies the need for a bike rack on a section of paving near a cluster of cafes. The location is perfect.

Your challenge: you don't have a cent, and the cafes don't want to pay for something the other businesses will benefit from.

The Conventional Approach

- a) Spend months lobbying the council for a new bike rack. Deal with 4 or five officers, none of whom is prepared to take responsibility for your query until forced by a manager. Wait many more months for the officers to finish a business case and present the idea to council.
- b) Facepalm as councillors get sidetracked by petty politics, long-running personal feuds and a host of irrelevant options. Cede the final choice of product to officers, who are usually obliged to pick the cheapest model. Cry at the final result, ugly and installed 12 months late in a spot that serves no-one.
- (a lightly tongue-in-cheek example. Surely this never happens ...)

The Creative Approach

- a) Ask each café for one wooden pallet. Bring some old paint from your shed to a town team meeting.
- b) Paint the pallets while you're having a glass of wine afterwards
Hint: bring a few brushes and put the rest of the team to work.
- c) Give the pallets back to the traders and tell them they now have their own bike racks. High five each other and perhaps arrange for more wine.

We're sure you get the drift now. There's so much that you can do for free, or for practically nothing. Practise by choosing a space, nominating a budget and then brainstorming. Put your thinking caps on and go for it!

4. Focus on what you can do

Pick your battles. Sometimes you shouldn't even start. You not only won't win big battles, you'll lose time and money that could've been spent more productively.

Here's the way the Beaufort Street Network in Western Australia did just that. We focus on what we can do, not what we can't do.

Can Do	Can't Do Much About
Set the vision and goals for the street	The number of cars on Beaufort Street
Work with local governments and other groups to deliver the vision	High rents for local businesses
Promote and market local businesses and the street generally	Local businesses closing
Advocate for the street and persuade decision-makers	Business competition
Provide things for people to do on the street	The threat of online retail
Create great places for people	Shopping centres getting much bigger
Promote the Beaufort Street Precinct	The mix of shops and businesses on the street

Doesn't this table set it out nicely? Straight away, so many expectations are cleared up. Five minutes of work here has saved piles of cash and countless hours.

5. "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" Placemaking

It'll be tempting to arrange fancy masterplans or design expensive interventions. After all, you want to make a difference, and those plans are a good way of showing it, right? No! Not yet, anyway.

The trick here is to forget about expensive stuff like that for now. Masterplans in particular cost tens of thousands of dollars, take years to implement, and focus on hardware like paving and bins anyway, which often don't help bring people to your area.

We suggest you start with short-term, low-cost, scalable projects instead. Our friends at the Project for Public Places call this principle "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper." If your idea works, great! You've brought people together, shown them the possibilities, and got something for the masterplan later. (Or you can just keep going with it!) If the idea flops, no problem! Just move on to the next one.

There are so many ways to get started that we can hardly begin to list them. But for those of you unfamiliar with the concept of placemaking, here's the tip of the iceberg:

Bring Some Chairs Outside on to the Street

Cost = \$0



Photo credit: Vic Park Collective town team

Get Creative

Cost = Some googly eyes



Release the Chalk!

Cost = not much



Photo credit: Leederville Connect town team

Check out these websites for more inspiration.

<http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/guides/tactical-urbanism-volume-4/>

<https://www.pps.org/article/lighter-quicker-cheaper>

<https://www.strongtowns.org/>

<http://betterblock.org/>