



**COMPLETELY.**  
PROPERTY MARKETING SPECIALISTS

FOR PUBLICATION

## COMPLETELY RETAIL MARKETPLACE

ONE DAY.  
ONE MARKET.  
UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES.

DBA DEA Awards 2014

*Project*

Completely Retail Marketplace

*Category*

Museums, galleries, events and  
visitor attractions

*Client*

The Completely Group  
(formerly Squeeze Design Limited)

*Design Consultancy*

The Completely Group  
(formerly Squeeze Design Limited)

*Date*

June 2013





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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In just 18 months The Completely Group has evolved from a design company specialising in property marketing, to the UK's leading specialist property marketing company.

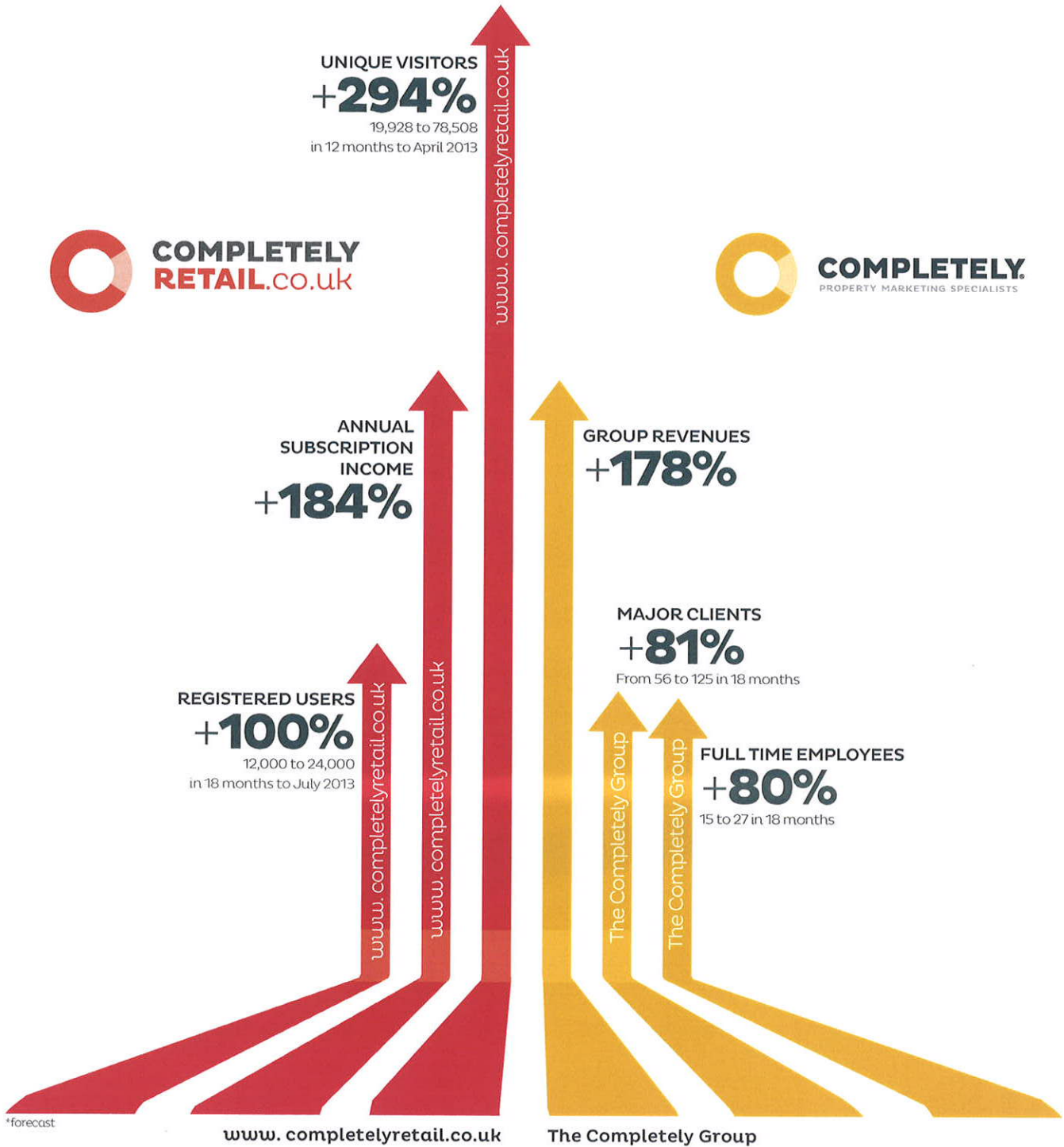
How have we done it? We've scrutinised the design and format of the incumbent providers of marketing collateral, property databases, listing sites and networking events. We've listened to our clients, and to the needs of the market, and we believe we've produced some truly innovative products and services.

The trigger point of this evolution was an event that we initially held in 2012 to help promote our retail property listings site, CompletelyRetail.co.uk. The design and format of the Marketplace event has proved extremely effective for our clients, so much so that we are now holding two sell-out events a year, and expanding the business into other property sectors.

The positive effect on The Completely Group's reputation has been amazing, with huge increases in revenues from the listings business, which inevitably helps to keep the core design business buoyant. We have an expanding list of regular clients, which reads like a Who's Who of the commercial property world.

In short, by applying good people, market knowledge and our own effective design, we've evolved from a company that was barely surviving, into a flourishing and rapidly expanding business.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



\*forecast

www.completelyretail.co.uk

The Completely Group

### 3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

continued

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## OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

Following our creative brainstorm, our management and creative teams worked collaboratively to define the brief and devise an event that would offer a point of difference from the competition in the retail property sector.

The event concept, branding, promotional materials and execution had clear and measurable objectives to deliver on, leading up to and following the event in April 2012.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- To increase traffic to [CompletelyRetail.co.uk](http://CompletelyRetail.co.uk) by 25%
- To increase revenue from [CompletelyRetail.co.uk](http://CompletelyRetail.co.uk) by 20%
- Increase awareness of The Completely Group
- Increase turnover of The Completely Group

### 3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

continued

## DESCRIPTION

From its creation in 2001, Squeeze Design (now The Completely Group) has focused on operating within the retail property sector providing major retail property agents and landlords with the tools to take their vacant premises to market.

Squeeze enjoyed relative success leading up to the recession in 2008, which hit both turnover and staff numbers dramatically. Whilst looking to mitigate the risk of the downturn impacting on Squeeze's core business, and after continual consultation with our clients, we recognised a requirement for a specialist retail listings property website. A site where agents and landlords could advertise all types of retail property to all types of customers on a national basis.

In 2009 after consultation with Shop Agents Society, the national industry body, we launched CompletelyRetail.co.uk, the only comprehensive and free-to-view database of every major retail scheme in the UK. This site not only satisfied our clients' demands, but allowed us to rationalise the numerous databases we ran for existing clients' websites and create a technically advanced repository of the visual assets and data we had amassed on hundreds of retail schemes.

Visitor numbers to the site climbed steadily to around 30,000 monthly visits in early 2012, but there was an acknowledgement within the company that the site could generate far greater visitor numbers, regular annual subscriptions and generate more of the core brochure and microsite work the company was founded on.

Through a process of market research and creative brainstorming we concluded that hosting a deal-focused networking event for both existing and prospective clients would provide a much needed arena for the retail property market to do business, whilst raising the profile of CompletelyRetail.co.uk and Squeeze Design.

On 1st May 2012 we held the inaugural Completely Retail Marketplace event. 650 retailers, agents and landlords descended on Old Spitalfields Market in London. The event was hailed as a huge success, visits to CompletelyRetail.co.uk tripled within six months, and subsequently Squeeze Design has seen a period of unprecedented growth.

The strength of the Completely brand is such that we have renamed the company to The Completely Group.

#### Evolution of our brands

**squeeze**<sup>®</sup>



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**COMPLETELY**  
**RETAIL**  
marketplace

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**COMPLETELY**  
**RETAIL & Leisure**  
marketplace



### 3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

continued

## OVERVIEW OF MARKET

Due to the sheer wealth and investment within the commercial property sector events are traditionally quite lavish affairs.

Indeed, Europe's largest property event, MIPIM week in Cannes, France, rumoured to sell more champagne than the famous film festival.

For the UK retail property market, The British Council of Shopping Centres (BCSC) run their annual Conference and Showcase every autumn. This was the only major annual event that brought together the retail property community for three days in large venues in cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. The major companies had expensive exhibition stands, and in its heyday, pre-2008, up to 3,000 delegates would attend, and some companies spent six figures on their attendance.

In 2008 the recession hit the property market hard. Ever since, property professionals have had to work twice as hard, for half the fees. Marketing and exhibition budgets were slashed. The media focus was on dying high streets, the barometer of the UK economy, the 'nation of shop keepers'.

Despite market conditions BCSC continued to charge excessive prices, raising their delegate fees on numerous occasions over the last five years. This caused widespread animosity towards them and their event. The overall perception was that they were 'out of touch' with the market.

Late in 2011 we contacted sixty of our clients through an email survey to ascertain the key factors that would make an alternative retail property event attractive and viable.

**52%** wanted a single-day event.

**80%** suggested holding the event between February and April.

**74%** expressed a preference for an event in the South East.

**54%** stated that London was the best location.

**45%** felt that existing events did not offer value for money.

**55%** said there was a need for a more targeted event.

**90%** said they would be interested in an alternative event.

**70%** wanted an event without seminars and conferences.

**90%** rated business/networking as important.

One of the most challenging parts of the project was being our own client. The team had to be objective and opinionated, demanding and facilitating, all at the same time.

*Dom Millar, Managing Director, The Completely Group*

### 3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

continued

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## PROJECT LAUNCH DATE

Research showed that April / May was the preferred time of year for the event. Deals could be negotiated and happen in time for the shops to be fitted out and opened for the following Christmas, the retail industry's busiest period.

## SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET

Our mission was to put the event on for the good of our clients, and to promote the CompletelyRetail.co.uk brand, even if we made a small loss. We purposefully kept the event professional but with no frills and budgeted to break even with a half full event (32 stands). Internally we were working on an costs-only budget of £40,000 which was roughly 800 hours. As the success of our initial event became apparent, we actually incurred over 1,100 hours worth of work or £55,000.

### 3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

continued

## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

### Marketplace overview

In order to distinguish our event from the competition and respond to our research we created an event unlike anything that had been seen previously in the property sector. The concept was to base the event on a working market.

Traditionally a market is local, convenient and accessible, and at the same time offering a variety of fresh produce at a great price. We believed this analogy accurately reflected the values we were aiming to achieve. A place where the focus was on transactions not distractions.

Our identity for the Marketplace emulated our overarching brands making it easy to identify the connection with [CompletelyRetail.co.uk](http://CompletelyRetail.co.uk).

The imagery focused on an extreme close up of maize, something you would find at a country fair and brought a distinct feel to the event by creating colourful, intriguing, adaptable and memorable textures.

The venue, Old Spitalfields Market, was chosen because of its central location, as well as perfectly fitting in with our marketplace theme.

Stands are 'one size fits all', mimicking a marketplace stall. Custom built literature stands were themed on fruit pallets. Our original concepts included using the metal framed market stalls at Old Spitalfields Market, and even covering the floor with straw. However the stalls proved impractical for meetings, and we decided not to overdo the rustic look in favour of a more professional look and feel.





3. PROJECT OVERVIEW  
continued

OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

Continued



## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

### Continued

#### Attracting delegates

One of our many challenges was to overcome objections to a new event entering an established market. Although our research suggested there was interest and requirement, there was a reluctance to commit to attending and a fear of being associated with a failure.

We recognised that enticing expanding retail brands to attend the event was the key to attracting agents and landlords, so we invited retailers to attend the event free of charge.

#### Deals focused

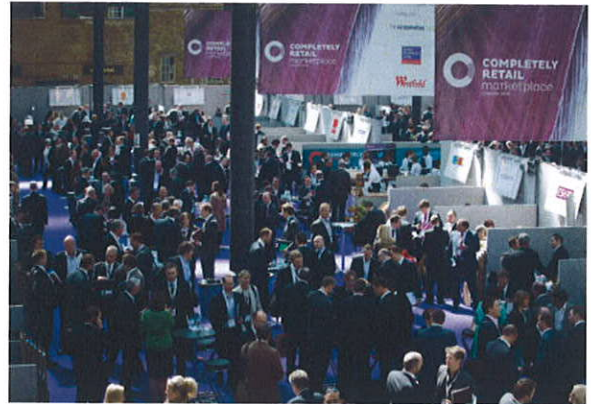
Only agents, landlords and retailers were allowed to attend. Third party consultants like solicitors, architects, property management companies, even marketing companies weren't invited to attend. This strict vetting costs a significant amount in lost revenue, but is vitally important to maintain the deals focus of the event.

#### Cost effective and sustainable

When considering our options for exhibition stands we opted for an easy-to-install shell scheme that is quick to construct saving on labour costs and venue time. The use of sustainable materials was vital in the construction of the event, important to both us as an organisation, and to our clients. All graphics and even the electrics are attached with Velcro, and are re-used. The carpet is re-used at another event before finally being turned into pellets for recycling in the plastics industry.

#### Hassle free

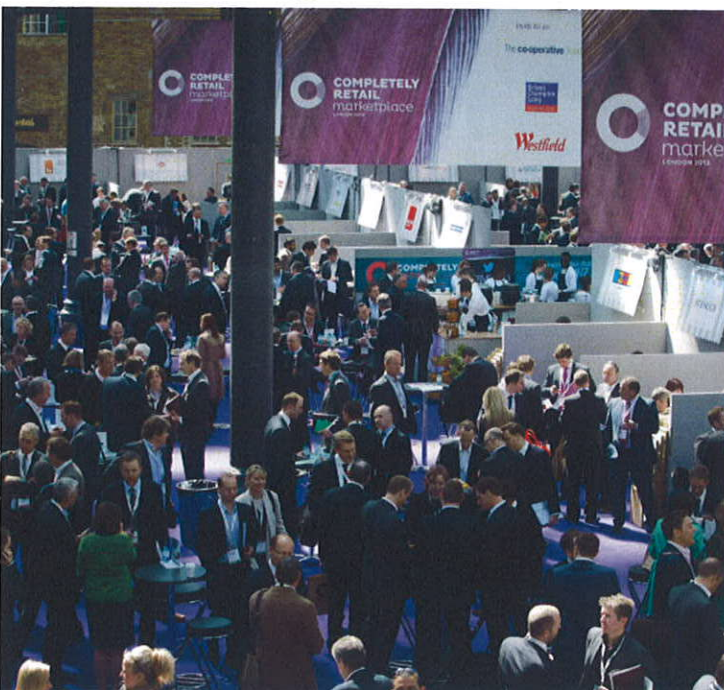
We provide branding, graphics and furniture, so attendees just need to turn up on the day. We also provide free WiFi and power, normally expensive extras at events.





## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

Continued

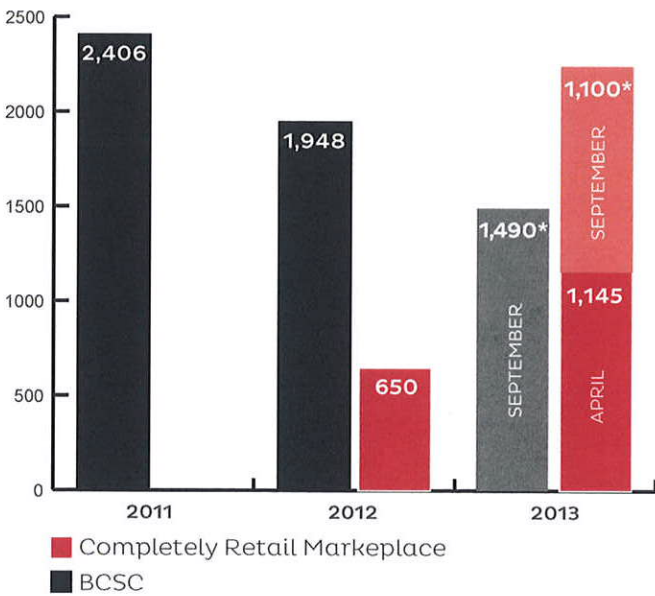


## SUMMARY OF RESULTS



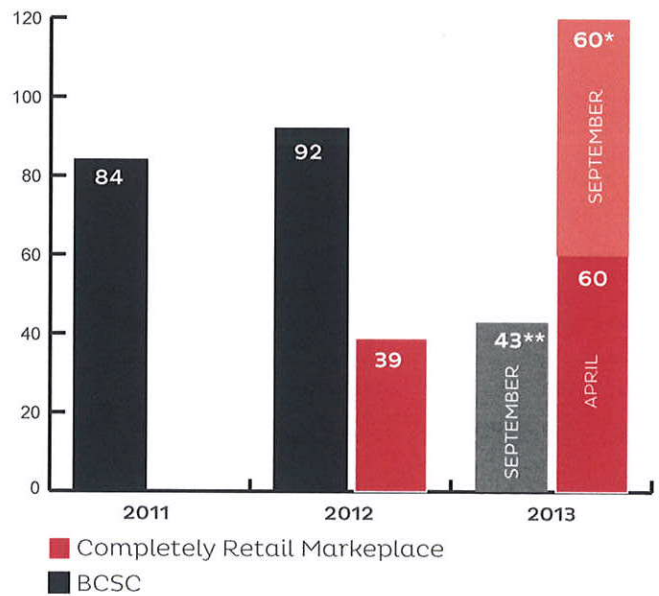
### Completely Retail Marketplace Versus BCSC

Delegates 2011 to 2013



\* Forecasted \*\* As of July 2013

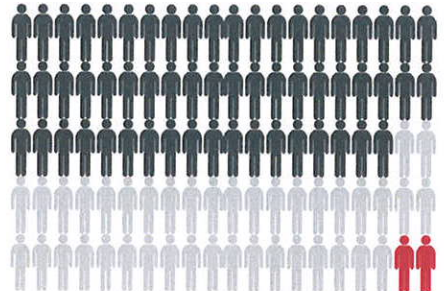
Exhibitors 2011 to 2013



### DELEGATES THAT DID BUSINESS

**98%**

In an exit pole 58% of delegates said they had done business, 40% probably will do business as a result of the event.





## 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Continued

# IMPACT ON THE MARKET: EVENTS

### REDUCTIONS IN PRODUCTION COSTS

- Delegate prices are at least 35% cheaper compared to BSCS's 2012 prices
- Exhibitors' costs have at least halved compared to the smallest stand at BCSC.

### CHANGE IN SPENDING PATTERNS OF TARGET MARKET

Our clients have changed marketing budgets in order to attend / exhibit at our events, and advertise on our listing websites.

All companies are spending less on, or not attending BCSC. BCSC have changed their format and reduced their 2013 prices dramatically to compete with Completely Retail Marketplace

### IMPROVED CONVERSION RATES

From the financial year of 2011/12 to 2013/14 there is a predicted increase of revenue in the order of 184% over the two years.

84% of people said they would attend an Autumn event and this is certainly being reflected in exhibition stand bookings which as of the start of July stand at 58 of a capacity of 60.

### PRODUCTION OF LEASING MARKETING MATERIAL PRIOR TO THE EVENTS

Being one of the largest providers of marketing material in the retail property sector, historically our busiest time has been the months leading up to the BCSC Conference & Showcase in the Autumn.

By providing the market with a second and third major annual event our studio is busier and revenues have increased accordingly.

### IF WE HADN'T HAD THE EVENT?

The Completely Group would probably still be called Squeeze, still be 15 people, at most, and like a lot of our direct competitors would be just about breaking even. CompletelyRetail.co.uk would have probably seen a modest increase in sales. There would still be a misunderstanding of our overall offerings.

BCSC would still be charging excessively, they would have had their conference in Glasgow this year rather than moving to London Olympia to compete with us. Like previous years many senior people in the industry would attend BCSC, but the rank and file would either not make the journey, or would set themselves up in coffee bars or hotels close to the venue without paying to attend the Conference or Showcase. This has been a common occurrence in previous years, but now Marketplace gives the industry a cost effective alternative, twice a year.

Convenient location, the low entry cost is welcome in these times of austerity, the fact that all the stands are the same size and design keeps the cost down for everyone exhibiting.

Peter Sharpe - John Lewis

I found it very useful this year. Lots of agents and good number of retailers there. Will be attending next year.

Sharon Bloodworth, Grosvenor

Yet again another great format and easily accessible. Very useful.

Warren Thompson, JD Sports

It was a great day – focused, efficient and upbeat.

Lucy Mitchell, New River Retail

Well done to you and your team for an excellent second event. Very positive feedback from everybody we spoke to and a really good number of attendees.

Dan Simms, Briant Champion Long

#### 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Continued

## IMPACT ON THE MARKET: WEBSITE

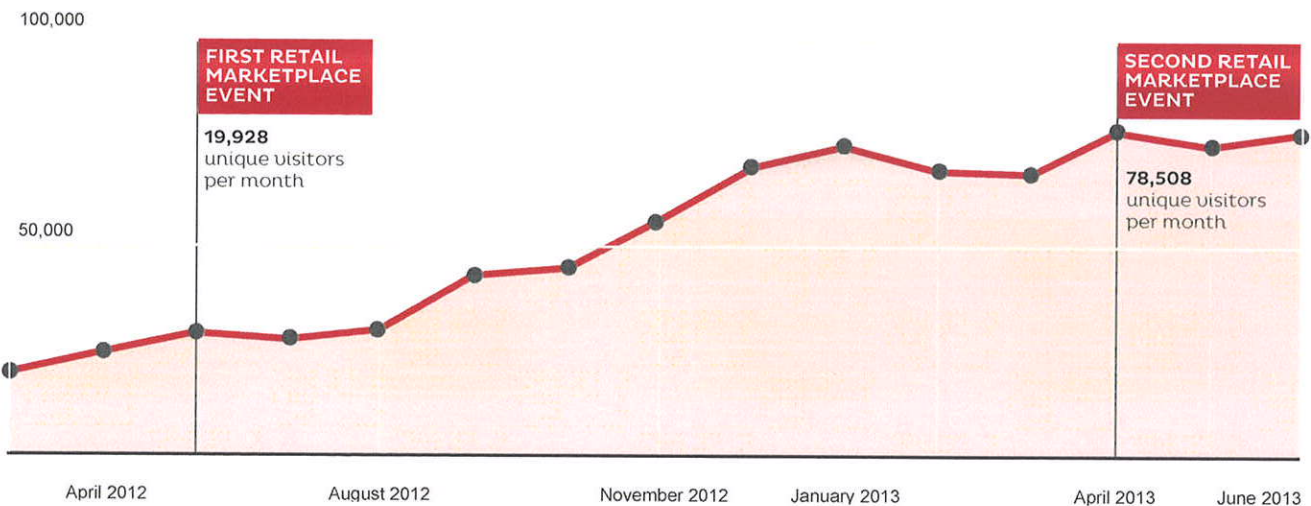
Since the initial event our market share within the retail property listings market with CompletelyRetail.co.uk has increased from 95% to 320% more traffic than our number one competitor. This places CompletelyRetail.co.uk, as the dominant retail listings website within the UK.

At the same time all our Google AdWord spend has been suspended, highlighting the increased brand awareness as all traffic is organically driven.

Traffic to CompletelyRetail.co.uk also increased due to some SEO improvements that were undertaken by a specialist external company, which was funded by revenue from the first retail event.



March 2012 to June 2013 ● Unique visitors





#### 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Continued

## IMPACT ON THE COMPLETELY GROUP

### Diversification and expansion

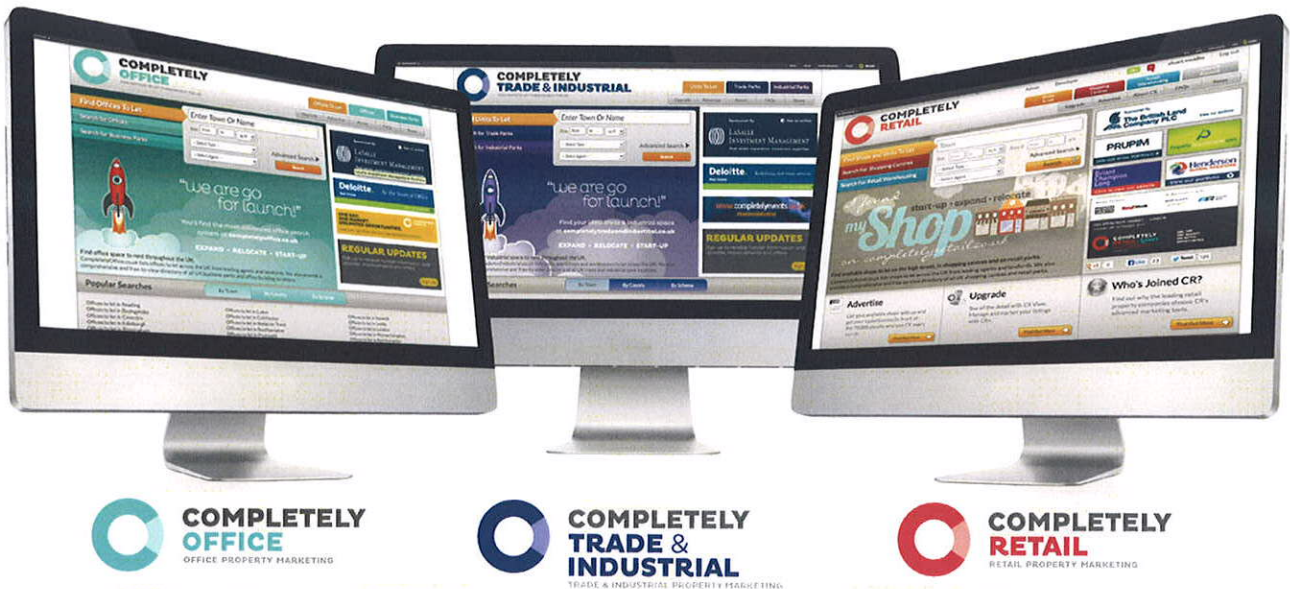
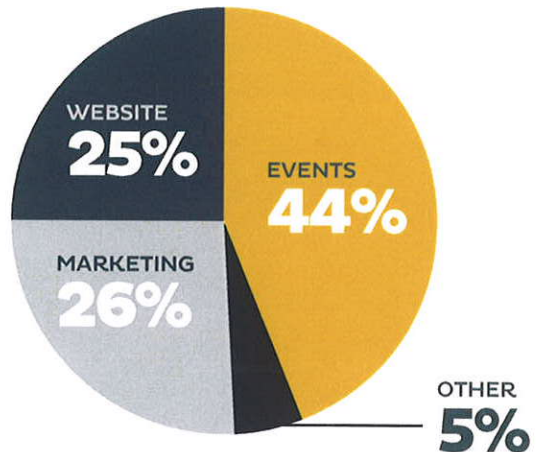
Our retail event is now selling out twice a year and we are applying the same successful approach to the Trade & Industrial and Office sectors with listings websites, marketing material and events. Our expansion and success in 2013 has allowed us to consider expansion into the European market and we are currently in talks with a potential international partner.

### Staff

The team has increased in the past 18 months from 15 to 27 full time staff members – an 80% increase. Similarly over this period we have seen a marked improvement in the quality of applicants for jobs.

- New, dedicated events team
- Creation of a new data management department
- Expansion of all departments
- Acquisition of residential property focused creative agency, Soda Creative
- Expansion into different commercial property sectors: Trade & Industrial, Office and Residential

THE COMPLETELY GROUP  
INCOME SOURCE 2013



## 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Continued

### IMPACT ON THE COMPLETELY GROUP

continued

#### Aquisitions

In January 2013 The Completely Group purchased Soda Creative, a residential focused design agency, expanding our offer, resources and client base.

#### Diversification and expansion

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#### Expansion of client base

The events have been pivotal in helping us expand the number of major clients from 69 in March 2012 to 125 in June 2013, a rise of 81% in 15 months. Some of these clients are purely exhibitors, but more than half of these been converted into new sales or are live prospects for our other services. The purchase of Soda Creative accounts for seven of these new clients.

\* Major clients are defined as those spending at least £5,000 in the preceding 12 months.

Client list: <http://completelygroup.com/clients.html>





## 5. OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Continued

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### OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

We have formed media partnerships with all the major industry titles.

- May 2012: **Retail Week**
- April 2013: Retail Week / **Property Week**
- September 2013: Retail Week / **Estates Gazette**

These media partnerships, which include press ads, email campaigns, banner advertising etc. These arrangements have helped us reach occupiers, landlords and major owners and developers.

Spikes in web traffic and registrations have helped us monitor and hone campaigns. These campaigns will, inevitably have had a knock on effect on brand awareness and raising the profile of our other services.

The CompletelyRetail website had accumulated a database of over 18,000 (now over 24,000) active retailers, agents and landlords who receive a weekly 'InTouch' newsletter of the most recent retail listings. A crucial part to the success of the event was targeting these retailer delegates through email marketing campaigns.

According to our exit surveys, 92% of people said that we got the amount of pre-event promotional material they received 'just right'.

## 5. OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Continued

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## RESOURCES

### Videos

**Completely Trade & Industrial Marketplace 2013:** <https://vimeo.com/68302719>

**Completely Retail Marketplace 2013:** <https://vimeo.com/68302719>

**Completely Retail Marketplace 2012:** <https://vimeo.com/41507873>

### Photos

**Completely Retail Marketplace 2013:**

<http://www.crmarketplace.co.uk/gallery-april-2013/index.html>

**Completely Retail Marketplace 2012:**

<http://www.crmarketplace.co.uk/gallery-may-2012/index.html>

**Completely Trade & Industrial Marketplace:** [http://](http://tradeandindustrial.completelyevents.co.uk/gallery/index.html)

[tradeandindustrial.completelyevents.co.uk/gallery/index.html](http://tradeandindustrial.completelyevents.co.uk/gallery/index.html)

### Websites

[www.completelyretail.co.uk](http://www.completelyretail.co.uk)

[www.completelyoffice.co.uk](http://www.completelyoffice.co.uk)

[www.completelytradeandindustrial.co.uk](http://www.completelytradeandindustrial.co.uk)

[www.completelyevents.co.uk](http://www.completelyevents.co.uk)

[www.crmarketplace.co.uk](http://www.crmarketplace.co.uk)

[tradeandindustrial.completelyevents.co.uk](http://tradeandindustrial.completelyevents.co.uk)

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

- Google Analytics
- SEO comparison data supplied by WMG, 2012-2013
- The Completely Group, company accounts
- Email Survey of 60 retail property professionals, 2011
- Customer Perception survey, conducted by M&N Communication, October 2011
- Exit survey of 50 delegates, Completely Retail Marketplace, April 30th 2013