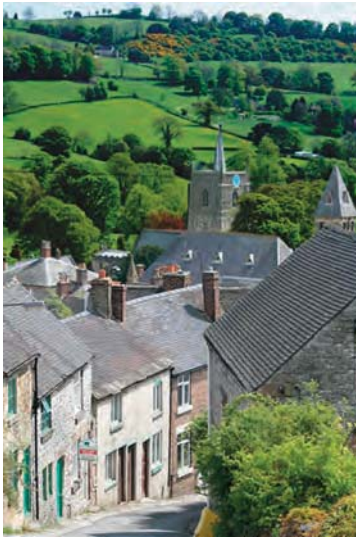


The Shop Doctor injects new life into retailers



It seems that life won't be the same from now on for some retailers in Belper after attending a series of workshops by the Shop Doctor.

Retail marketing specialist Diane Jackson recently completed presenting four surgeries for independent businesses in Ashbourne, Belper and Wirksworth on different aspects of marketing – and delegates are delighted at the inspiration and help they received.

The delegates were unanimous that they had received great practical help, learned so many new things, refreshed old facts – and some were inspired to take drastic action and form a traders association.

Down to earth and practical

Sally Arden from Belper Gas Showrooms

said, "The course was absolutely brilliant. It was really, really well presented: informal, welcoming, friendly and absolutely perfect for a small business. I've been on some really boring courses before. This was first class. Not full of jargon or "blue sky moment" phrases – just simple, easy to understand, down to earth and practical. For me as an experienced business person it brought a lot to mind that had been buried there and not acted upon."



Putting Belper on the map

Now taking the chair of the newly formed Traders Association, Sally explained, "All the Belper traders who attended the course have now joined forces and formed our own trade association. We're complete novices in this but Diane has inspired us and been an excellent mentor and sounding board. We now have 24 members in just 4 weeks and have presented to the town council. We're producing a brochure with offers in it from different traders and the Peak District tourist board are looking to include us in their welcome material. We are going to get Belper on the map and that can only be a good thing for the town and the businesses here."

Yvonne Clayton who runs the Belper repair and alterations service

echoed Sally's reaction. "It was so good to meet other local traders there because it created the opportunity for us to talk together. We've since been in regular contact and pass each other business referrals."

The best ever month's trading

"I'm comparatively new to running a business and it's been fantastic for me" Yvonne added. "The course gave me ideas and I've opened a new part to the business since. I had had it in mind but Diane gave me the confidence to go ahead and do it. I've re-done a leaflet and it has brought in many more new customers. I've had a really, really good month's trading since the course – the best ever and I put that down to what I learned in those sessions."

The programme from the popular series "Retail Survival" and "The Shop Doctors" was devised by retailing specialists Main Marketing & PR Limited and presented by MD Diane Jackson.

Speaking from her office in Stockport, 'Doctor' Di said, "In all honesty, feedback is usually very positive from our workshops. It's good to know that we can contribute to the improvement of people's business and give them ideas that will make a difference to them. Belper delegates have gone one step further and have been galvanised into action – not just for their own businesses, but for the whole town. I'd like to think the prognosis for Belper is really good. They're seeing the bigger picture and that's what I call injecting new life."

New eyes

Wirksworth retailer **Gail Spolton from Traid Links**, was among a high number of delegates who appreciated a lot of the tips and advice on visual merchandising: "I now come into the shop with new eyes every day and check the window, the layout and so on."



New Business

Helen Williams is just setting up her new business Stepping Stones, selling children's shoes in Ashbourne "I thought the course was very good; I found it extremely useful. It touched on so many areas that gave me ideas and contacts. I got such good practical help. I'm usually very picky about things like this, so when I say it's good, it is!"

FREE Workshops in 2009

Diane was invited by Derbyshire County Council to run a series of FREE marketing workshops or 'surgeries' to independent retailers across many parts of Derbyshire throughout most of 2009 and this is the fourth in a series of seven. Aimed at supporting local businesses and creating prosperous towns, the programme is part of Derbyshire County Council's Market Towns Initiative, funded by the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership (DDEP). Anyone requiring further information about the rest of this, or another series, should ring 0845 129 9948.



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Jan Leybourne, whose business 'Aspects of London' is based in Matlock said she found the course really useful with pertinent information and backup.

Jan went on to comment: "The book is good too. The course was very inspiring and it will definitely help me to further develop my business."

"The info on websites was particularly useful - I now know how to prepare properly and handle the responses etc. I'm also doing more long term projections and planning. I'm certainly optimistic about the future of my business, though it is tough out there. I enjoyed the networking opportunity too. Brilliant."

Jan travels widely and photographs interesting shop-fronts and doorways to make designs which promote the towns on posters and cards. Featured above is Jan's card design of Buxton. For more information contact Jan Leybourne: janleybourne@uwclub.net.