

Shop Doctor's practical advice really works

This was the reaction from one of the many independent retailers who recently attended a series of workshops run by the Shop Doctor, Diane Jackson in North East Derbyshire. Jeremy Flint from H Flint & Son in Shirebrook was delighted with his Shop Doctor experience. "What I used to really just throw money at, suddenly has become cost-effective. The advertising and marketing strategies she suggested have worked! It just shows when you get an expert involved, it works. The Shop Doctor should be compulsory for every retailer!"

The Shop Doctor, retail marketing specialist Diane Jackson, was invited by Derbyshire County Council to stage a series of workshops for independent retailers across the county, as part of their Market Towns Initiative, funded by the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership (DDEP). Aimed at supporting local businesses and creating prosperous towns, this latest free event was held in the Blue Bell pub in Bolsover and was attended by retailers in Shirebrook, Bolsover and South Normanton.

'Doctor' Di who is the Managing Director of Main Marketing & PR Limited, devised the programme for independent business owners. The 'surgeries' or workshops cover different facets of retail marketing, including cost-effective advertising and promotions activity, visual merchandising techniques - and share how small businesses can also apply the customer psychology that retail giants use.

In an independent survey carried out after the workshops, Shirebrook's Fran Myatt who runs Cafe Frannys said "The whole thing was great. Diane got many good points across; it was an excellent refresher and a nice opportunity to make you re-think. It was also useful to meet and talk with other traders. I have certainly made some changes since the course." Like Fran, many delegates were established retailers with many years' experience, but, as George Frost, owner of George's Fashions in Bolsover commented, that's all the more reason to hear what the Shop Doctor has to say.

"The longer you've been in business, the more likely you are to become complacent" he suggested. "In this day and age it's vital that you use every trick in the book to survive and thrive and that's how the course helped me. I came away with ideas, refreshed knowledge and new enthusiasm."

Mark Beaumont owner of Carpet Paradise in South Normanton, echoed George's reaction. "I thought the course was great – very informative and relevant; a bit of a refresher in some ways, but very useful to hear. It's one thing knowing it, but actually doing it is the key and the Shop Doctor prompted me into doing things."

As one Shirebrook retailer observed, "So many shops are dirty or unkempt, with damaged windows or really poor window displays, that they'll never do any business. But what's more, they can ruin a whole town. They need the Shop Doctor to sort them out."

Further workshops in other parts of Derbyshire – and in other parts of the UK – are also scheduled. For more information about the rest of this series in Derbyshire, or other similar programmes, contact The Shop Doctor on 0845 129 9948 or by Email to shopdoctor@retailsurvival.co.uk.