

## **Copy for press release, Flintshire May 2009**

### **The Shop Doctors came to town**

Over 60 independent retailers from seven of Flintshire's main towns recently attended a programme of free workshops from the popular series "The Shop Doctors" devised by Main Marketing & PR Limited of Marple, Cheshire.

Funded by Flintshire County Council, the objective of the workshops was to equip independent local retailers with basic marketing skills in order for them to attract more business and maximise turnover. Branded as "The Shop Doctors", three experts from Main Marketing aimed to put back the health and vitality into the county's independent shops through a series of surgeries. Judging by the reaction from the delegates and council alike, the Shop Doctors certainly prescribed the right things.

Gaenor Roberts, who owns three branches of Tlws Jewellers in North Wales, has already tasted success having been awarded Business Woman of the Year in 2008. Her reaction to The Shop Doctors was very positive: "The course made you think and question what you do. It was informal, well presented and we were given lots of good handouts and useful references to other material. Over the years I've attended many other courses and I used to be in training too; I wouldn't change anything about this course."

The programme consisted of four one-hour long 'surgeries' on different facets of marketing: injecting great customer service ideas into business, improving knowledge and use of the web, advertising and promotions and visual merchandising.

Phil Jones, a partner in the Bistre Farm Shop in Buckley was most enthusiastic. "These workshops by Main Marketing are where independent retailers need to be. It's a really good use of time and I can certainly see the value of this programme for small businesses. I picked up lots of good ideas and was also reminded about things I'd forgotten to do. Retailers can assume their customers will come back but the course taught us that you can't rely on that – there's always more you can do to inspire your customers."

Stephen Hughes, a director of Peter Hughes footwear in Holywell added, "It's good that local authorities are showing an interest in high streets by running this course."

### **Help from the experts**

A large number of delegates took advantage of the offer to have a one-to-one session with one of three experts from Main Marketing, either Managing Director Di Jackson the marketing specialist, a visual merchandising expert or an internet advisor. The opportunity to discuss their individual concerns with an acknowledged expert was an outright success.

The owner of Nicola Joanne Florist in Queensferry was delighted: "We're optimistic that our business will flourish. We've got the seeds for growth – we just need the time to get on with things. We had a brilliant 1-1 session with Di Jackson the marketing expert. She gave us a fantastic idea that we're very excited about and are going to implement straight away."

The reaction of Ruthin retailer Zoe from Spavens Sweet Shop was clear, "It was so good to talk with people who weren't trying to sell you something. They were there to give you advice, not make a sale and we all really appreciated that. It was great to get objective and expert viewpoints on my own business."

### **Ideas on how to move the business forward**

Gardener Charlotte Jones said "The course got us off on the right foot as we were considering some changes but weren't totally sure. We've now got ideas on how to move the business forward and we're all enthused and inspired to get cracking."

Deeside Aerials owner Gareth Jones told Main Marketing "You were quite right to stress that we should be aware of what your business can achieve and how you can make it grow. You gave me the confidence I needed to move my business forward."

Any Project Officer or council executive wanting The Shop Doctors to help independent traders in their area should contact 'Doctor' Di Jackson at Main Marketing on 0845 129 9948 or Email her at [dj@main-marketing.co.uk](mailto:dj@main-marketing.co.uk).

**Diane Jackson** is the founder of Main Marketing & PR Ltd and is an acknowledged retail marketing specialist.

She first created Retail Survival Courses in 2001, as an integral part of the District Centres Regeneration Strategy for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. In 2002 she won a Stockport Junior Chamber of Commerce 'Entrepreneur of the Year' Award in recognition of her work with retailers. In 2003 Diane was supported by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council to offer the Retail Survival Programme to other local authorities as an example of 'best practice of business support for small independent retailers'. For more details on other initiatives for regenerating areas, contact her via the website at [www.retailsurvival.co.uk](http://www.retailsurvival.co.uk).