

NEW SPIRIT AMONG ASHBOURNE RETAILERS

ALMOST THIRTY PEOPLE attended a series of specialist workshops run by Main Marketing for the Ashbourne Partnership in October. Traders from a range of local businesses in the historic Derbyshire market town met on four consecutive Tuesday evenings to learn practical tips and techniques to help grow their business.

Retailers, high street businesses and service providers were all unanimous in their appreciation of the course and the value of it to their business.



CONSISTENT REACTION

"So much practical advice, all delivered in a very relaxed, friendly and professional way" was a consistent reaction from the Ashbourne delegates.

"Many businesses are owner-run so this was an ideal course for them" commented **JOHN HARRISON** of **ACORN COUNTRY STORES**, who is also Director of the Ashbourne Partnership.



"It was a good learning environment, it gave me focus in certain areas and I appreciated the opportunity to network with other traders" said **Annie Maudling**, Director of **On a Wick** and **A Prayer in Tissington**.

That reaction was echoed by **Pauline Johnson** of **The Bear Patch**: "I found it very useful to share experiences with others" and summed up by **Su Powell** of **Pachacuti**: "It hit the mark for me."



THE RANGE OF BUSINESSES who attended was quite diverse and included a physiotherapist, antique dealer, candlemaker, shoe shop, wine merchant, children's wear designer, veterinary practice, bistro, Fair Trade clothing and holiday accommodation providers.

The course materials and individual workbooks were very popular with all the delegates as handy reminders and ideal training material for other staff.

Marketing specialist **DIANE JACKSON**, Managing Director of **MAIN MARKETING & PR LTD**, designed the Level 1 Workshops to give business a boost: "We focus on the many ways you can deliver excellent customer care, from how your premises look, how your goods or services are displayed and communicated, to affordable ways to promote your business and generate more sales. It's not just theory, it's very much practical and effective help and we're always delighted to hear such positive feedback."

MANY AREAS OF THE COUNTRY

These and other similar workshops are run by Main Marketing in many areas of the country. The Ashbourne Partnership, already underway with a Reward Card scheme in the area, were keen to continue to support local businesses by arranging this programme with funding from Rural Pathfinder.

Two common themes came from the delegates: that there is a much more heightened awareness of customer care and that other businesses are considered fellow traders rather than competitors. It seems there's a new spirit in Ashbourne and long may it last!