

### **Chris Clancy, Tittertons Butchers, Cheadle.**

For last few years we have mailed order forms in mid-November to customers to ensure that we get their Christmas orders. After the Workshops in October 2001, we picked up the tip about using something eye catching and sent out the mailing in red envelopes. This increased the response by 40% and it didn't cost us a penny more to do.

### **Lynn Oldham, Oldham's Pet Store, Edgeley.**

I've been in business as a pet shop in Edgeley for 27 years, and I found the Workshops reminded me to do things that over the years I'd forgotten about.

We regularly put items for sale out side the shop such as rabbit hutches, bird cages etc, but we had fallen into the habit of not pricing them. Once we started putting price tickets on them, sales dramatically increased. All it took was a bit of time to remember to do it.

I would just add that the Workshop meetings galvanised people together who wouldn't necessarily have spoken to each other; and Gordon Jones' easy-going presentation style and caring attitude bonded us together and made it easier for us to work together as a group on joint promotions afterwards.

### **John French, Positive Publishing, Cheadle**

I'm not a retailer, but I am a small business and I came along to the workshops to see if there was anything I could learn. One of the things that stuck in my mind was that retailers often overlook the power of direct mail and direct communication with their customers.

On the few occasions when I have received a phone call or a letter from a local shop I frequent, I have always looked forward to what they might be saying to me, and I have noticed that the offers are considerably better than the larger retailers.

### **Michael Turner, Michael Turner Portraits, Cheadle**

We liked the idea of gathering feedback from customers using a questionnaire, so after customers have had a portrait we send them a questionnaire asking about the photo-session, about their portraits, about the framing and about our service. We get some very useful information back which has enabled us to make improvements to the way we operate.

Another thing we liked was the idea of saying 'Thank You' to high value customers, so we now take one of their photos and make into a notecard and reproduce a dozen of them with matching envelopes as a give-away. Customers use them to send out to their friends or relatives, and they contain a subtle reference to our company. This way we are pleasing our customer but also spreading the word about our services.

### **Stephen Berger, Harry Bergers Drycleaners, Cheadle**

We had just started to use direct mail as a way to communicate with our customers, and I would say that has really helped us to turn our business around. It is not enough to open your doors for business, you have to communicate regularly with your customers to keep them loyal. I would say to any business – start collecting the names and addresses of your customers immediately, then use them to write to your customer with special offers or new stock offerings.

One thing we picked up from the Workshops was about how to word an advert – the example about the Pet Shop ad brought it home to us that we were probably guilty of placing that type of advert. So this year we completely changed our advert in the Yellow Pages, it cost us about £1,500, but it has paid for itself in 2 months in increased business.

18 months ago if anyone asked me what business I was in I would say 'I'm in dry-cleaning' now I say I'm in the business of marketing dry-cleaning, a subtle change but one with profound implications for my business.

### **Monkhouses Outfitters & Bergers Drycleaners –**

teamed up with joint offer – buy school blazers and get dry cleaning done at a discount. Stephen Berger wants to increase the number of similar alliances in 2003.

### **Veronica Ryan, Freelance Hairdresser, Cheadle Hulme**

The Workshops helped me look at areas that I would have overlooked, like how to portray myself professionally – and pricing, making sure I charge what I'm worth. They got me motivated and helped my confidence.

One thing I have decided is that because I don't actually have a shop, that my car is my shop window, so from now on it will always be shining clean outside and neat and tidy inside.

By the way Gordon was brilliant – I really enjoyed coming each week even though it was an early start.

### **Tom McCormack, The Firegrate, Cheadle Hulme**

I went away with a whole list of things to implement and I'm still working my way through. Things like:

- Opening on Sundays because that is when my customers want to buy
- Having an exterior sign saying all the things we sell, because it is much more than just fire surrounds
- Making sure there are prices on all items in the showroom, we get sloppy about that
- Giving a small gift to customers who send along a friend, a lot of our business comes from referrals, so it would be good to acknowledge it.
- A welcome mat and a thank you for calling in sign
- Anything else – we've tried that this week and sold coal paint and fenders, watch this space for more!!

I also think the opportunity to meet other businesses was very important, plus the workshops are entertaining which made them a pleasure to attend. All-in-all a great package if you pardon the pun.

### **Stuart A Scott, East Lancs Tile Centre, Blackburn**

After the very first session I could see that there were things that we were overlooking to do for our customers. We have now

- added our opening hours to let customers know when our store is open for trading
- put up new signs indicating our large car parking areas, which is a real bonus for customers convenience
- all staff now wear name tags, because we don't wear uniforms it was sometimes difficult for customers to identify members of staff
- a thank-you, please call again sign for customers, to show we appreciate them shopping in our store
- and we are about to undertake a customer satisfaction survey for account customers which will be sent out with an incentive for them to complete and return.

The course taught me to look at my business through my customers' eyes.

### **Sue Bague, Newsview Newsagents, Darwen Street, Blackburn**

I learned the magic 'two little words' that have dramatically increased my turnover. The average customer spend in my shop is £5, by using this new tip I picked up at the Workshops the average spend is now £7 which is an amazing 40% increase, and with a bit more practice I am sure I can even improve on that!

### **Cliff White, Technology Partners & Games Express, Underbanks, Stockport**

"We all think we know how to market our businesses, but sometimes we need to re-visit the basics to remind us what we've forgotten to ensure we are getting it right more of the time."

### **Craig Wright, Harmony Décor, Marple, Stockport**

"It's nice to see the Council doing something practical to help independent businesses."

### **Judith Copp, Kitchen Save, Romiley, Stockport**

"The Workshops have certainly changed our perception of marketing and now we have set about improving our efforts at minimal cost."

**Morag Taylor, The Lunch Club, Marple Village, Stockport**

“The tips we learnt from the Workshop are being put into practice everyday, and as a result we feel more confident in our capability to further enhance our business.”

**Lynne Nixon of the Garstang Chamber of Trade who co-hosted the Retail Survival Course with Wyre Borough Council said**

“Members keep on praising the practicality and relevancy of Workshops and are delighted that they had an opportunity to get to know one another during the course of the four sessions. The spin-off benefits of the networking has helped strengthen the retail group as a whole.”

**Tariq Mahmood, Arien Distribution, John Street, Rochdale**

“Diane told us two simple words to use to increase sales - well, I have started using them and it really does work. The workshops programme was brilliant, marvellous ... a real eye-opener.”

**Karen and Dr. Dos Adele, Bios Naturecure Clinic, Darwen Street, Blackburn**

“Just the kind of information and help we have needed for a long time but been unable to find until now. We can't wait to get started on our new marketing ideas”.

**Feedback from a Glossop retailer**

“It taught us to use a fresh pair of eyes and look at the business as though you were a customer. Talking to other retailers and meeting them helped. It has rejuvenated new ideas and we were able to talk to an expert for free.”

**Graeme Vout, District Centre Manager, Stockport MBC**

“The pilot proved so successful that we had no doubts about adopting the Workshop programme throughout the whole Authority.”

**Councillor Mark Hunter, Stockport MBC**

“As Leader of the Council for SMBC I am delighted to see the Council Officers receiving rare praise for an initiative which has given real benefit back to local traders and created significant goodwill for the local authority as a whole.”