

## ART attendees tackle 3 Naples stores with retail makeover exercise

BY JENNY HEINZEN YORK

AT THE MAY Accessories Resource Team conference, attendees took part in Naples Rejuvenated, an exercise working with three local stores to rework their displays and develop a marketing plan for each.

The participating stores were Peach Tree Designs, BJ Kileys at Home and Garden District.

Retail expert and consultant Barbara Crowhurst kicked off the session with her presentation Retail Makeover — Store Design and Product Placement. In this session, Crowhurst went over the importance of retail store design, products and product placement, and how these impact sales. She went on to oversee the Naples Rejuvenated activity.

Here's the take on the whole event, as seen by Stacie Carroll, manager of Peach Tree Designs.

*When I was first approached to participate, I was very intrigued and curious. So, I conducted my own research by contacting the Charleston, S.C., retailers who participated in last year's conference,*

Top: Garden District's wall was transformed by a simple rearrangement of products from other locations in the store, making an impactful and colorful statement to greet customers.

Bottom: At Peach Tree Designs, the merchandising team created a two-sided display by using a bamboo wall screen. The design is fresh and maximizes the store's floor space.



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and I got a mixed review. When I called Sharon Davis to ask some questions and get her insight, she encouraged me to attend the conference as well as the marketing groups' presentations following Friday afternoon's workshop, something the Charleston retailers did not do. With that, we offered our space.

When the conference week-end arrived, I attended Barbara Crowhurst's talk on Retail Makeover — Store Design and Product Placement and gathered a wealth of professional ideas and advice. I immediately implemented her recommendation to un-clutter the sales counter and make enough room in front for my customers to feel relaxed. I also installed shelving on either side

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of the counter to place impulse purchases.

The merchandising team came out to my shop on Friday afternoon and spent four hours re-dressing one whole room that I designed. It was hard to stay away and not peek at their progress, but I let them do their thing.

When all was said and done, my staff and I were more than pleasantly surprised, we were stunned! I like to think we do a great job at putting together vignettes, but it's amazing what a fresh eye can bring.

They constructed a two-sided display in the middle of the room by using one of my bamboo wall screens as a divider, something I would have never thought to do. One of the displays in the window was coordinated using some of my raw, natural wood furniture and mirrors with sea blue and white accents. A really fresh, clean approach and perfect for our coastal area.

Back at the conference, I attended the marketing team's presentation, and was again pleasantly surprised. They did a

fantastic job of analyzing areas of my business that could use improvement and offering ideas that I could implement to increase sales. We've been lucky to have a steady growth over the years, but with these economic times you really need to think outside of the box. After the conference, they were kind enough to e-mail me the full presentation.

Overall, I was extremely pleased with the whole experi-

ence. Everyone I met was enthusiastic, generous and full of new ideas. I basically received a free consultation from industry insiders and professionals, all for a few hours of fun chaos in a corner of my store during my off-season. I would do it again in a heartbeat!

Crowhurst told Home Accents Today that in her years as a retail consultant, she had never seen such an enthusiastic group.

"This group of individuals — there was a passion that I've never seen before," she said. "What lucky stores to get seasoned retail industry professionals to work on their stores."

Crowhurst also worked with the marketing teams as they developed their strategic plans for each store. "The marketing plan — I don't know that you could put a price on it," she said. "They were using the concepts that I

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