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Top business brains offer masterclass to Yorkshire retailers

An exclusive retail masterclass with tips for everyone from pop up shop owners to multinationals and everyone in between is being held at The Ridings Shopping Centre in Wakefield.

The event is being led by retail guru Kate Hardcastle and is the first in a series being held across Yorkshire. Kate has secured appearances from award winning business leaders who will share the secrets of their success.

As well as listening to tips and tricks from Kate herself, the audience will hear from TV star turned business innovator Carole Smillie. The actress, model and presenter will reveal how a family sleep-over gave her an idea that turned into an award-winning product and business.

Hugely accomplished CEO of Timpsons, John Timpson CBE will give a speech that draws on his extensive experience from a 1980s management buyout to the diversification that has helped make his business the success it is today.

Sir Gary Verity, Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire, will also be speaking at the event. Sir Gary has been honoured by the British and French governments for his contribution to tourism and cycling after bringing the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart to Yorkshire and launching the annual legacy race, the Tour de Yorkshire.

Prior to his involvement with tourism, Sir Gary built a reputation for turning around failing businesses. During his 18 years with Royal Insurance he turned four years of losses into profit at Bradford and Bingley and also rebranded Prontaprint and Kall Kwik. He is also the former managing director of Johnsons Cleaners UK.

After the speeches audience members will get the chance to put their questions to the expert panel and the final part of the event will be a networking opportunity with drinks and canapes provided by The Ridings & New River Retail.

The free masterclass is on the 6th September 2017 from 6pm.

Kate Hardcastle said: *“The Retail Masterclass Series will bring national names to our county, to talk directly to business owners about their experience, learnings and*

failings - and again this is being achieved as a free to access event. It is a delight to support Welcome to Yorkshire members and guests with my knowledge, network and experience as an expert on all things customer.

The Ridings' Regional Centre Director Lee Appleton said: *"We're delighted to be hosting the Retail Masterclass with Welcome to Yorkshire and look forward to showcasing new areas of our multi-million pound refurbishment. It's an honour for both The Ridings and Wakefield to be selected as the first venue for such a prestigious event, with a fantastic range of acclaimed speakers and guests."*

Sir Gary Verity, Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire said: *"The retail sector is always changing and evolving and there's no better way to stay ahead of the curve than some tips from the top. We know Yorkshire businesses of all sizes will hugely benefit from the experience on offer at this fantastic free event."*

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Images attached: Kate Hardcastle, John Timpson CBE, Carol Smillie, Sir Gary Verity

Editors' Notes:

About John Timpson CBE:

John is the CEO of Timpson UK and also a Daily Telegraph columnist and Radio 4 Broadcaster. He is the winner of Retail Week's Outstanding Contribution to Retail for 2017.

John led a successful management buyout of Timpsons in 1983, after the firm which was founded by his great grandfather in the 1860s was taken over in 1973. In 1987 he sold the shoe shops and concentrated on building the repairing and key cutting business, which has since diversified into engraving, watch repairs, dry cleaning and photo processing. Timpson now has over 1600 branches nationwide, including the Max Spielmann and Snappy Snaps brands. The group has a turnover of over £200m and profits of over £25m.

About Carol Smillie:

Carol has been a household name for more than two decades after working as an actress, model and TV presenter on shows like 'Wheel of Fortune', 'Changing Rooms', and 'Holiday' before hosting her very own morning chat show 'Smillie's People'.

She made the transition into business in 2012 after founding the revolutionary product DiaryDoll with business partner and friend Annabel Croft, an ex-international tennis player. The range of specialist women's underwear subsequently went on to win a JLP Business Innovation Award.

About Kate Hardcastle and the Retail Masterclass Series:

Kate is the founder of business consultancy Insight with Passion and appears on TV and radio as The Customer Whisperer. She is often referred to as the "Queen of customer service" as it is central to her belief of how the retail sector can engage with consumers.

Kate is a regular contributor and industry commentator for Sky News, the BBC and many specialist trade publications. She is also an RSPCA patron, founder and chairwoman of The Charity Dreamgirls. As an award-winning consultant and entrepreneur Kate is frequently invited to speak at international events for the retail, travel, spa and interiors industries.

The Retail Masterclass Series is part of the Insight with Passion Access for All initiative - which sees them donate 20% of their time and expertise back to the community. Kate has worked with Welcome to Yorkshire for 5 years helping over 1000 local businesses with advice and support to improve their business with customer service training, retail techniques and understanding of the latest trends and developments at accessible and free seminars all around the region."

About Sir Gary Verity:

Since his appointment as Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire in 2008 Sir Gary Verity has raised the profile of Yorkshire at a regional, national and international level. He led the winning bid to bring the Grand Départ of the Tour de France - the world's largest annual sporting event - to Yorkshire in 2014, generating £102 million of economic benefit. This has been followed up by the annual Tour de Yorkshire race, broadcast in 180 countries worldwide.

Sir Gary has an excellent track record in brand building and managing complex businesses. He built a reputation for turning around failing businesses during his 18 years with Royal Insurance. In Bradford and Bingley's retail property services sector, he quickly turned four years of losses into profit. He rebranded Prontaprint and Kall Kwik, and is the former managing director of Johnsons Cleaners UK.

A passionate Yorkshireman, Sir Gary is also an award-winning Dales sheep farmer and lives on a working farm near Leyburn.

About Welcome to Yorkshire:

- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is the official destination management organisation for Yorkshire, working to grow the county's visitor economy.
- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is a not-for-profit membership organisation, funded in part by grants, sponsorship and Welcome to Yorkshire members. All money raised is reinvested directly back into promoting Yorkshire.
- Key facts include:
 - Tourism in Yorkshire is worth £7 billion annually
 - The county's tourism and hospitality industry employs almost a quarter of a million people

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