



John Baker

**Oxford Retail Masters
Forum
Scholarship winner 2011**

John Baker is the owner of bookshop, Chapter One in Woodley, Reading. Since attending the Forum he has focused on bringing the business into the modern age to attract new and younger customers.

He said: "I was particularly looking forward to gaining a deeper insight into e-commerce at the Forum, as I was aware this is an area with huge potential for us.

"The Forum really helped me clarify my ideas for a new website for children, which will mean our knowledge of children's books can be used to attract a larger audience. Back at work, we have already drawn up a business plan and got a designer on board.

"We have also branched into using social networking tools and are building up a following on Twitter."

As well as new ideas, the Forum reiterated to John the importance of knowing his customers and responding to what they want.

He said: "We are talking to our customers and looking at what they buy. We have already learnt there is room to expand into educational toys and games and people really enjoy the events and author signings we arrange."

After the four day course, John came away buoyed about his business and the challenges ahead.

"In this challenging market we must change and be innovative but at the same time retain our core values. The course showed me that whilst independents cannot necessarily compete on price, other factors, such as personal service, expertise and being part of the local community, can influence where people shop. As an independent we must seek to exploit our advantages in these areas, which is exactly what we are doing in the shop."