

**NEWS RELEASE from**

**devon renaissance**  
working for rural prosperity



**14 January 2008**

**Torrige businesses urged to tackle acute skills problems**

Skillstarters for Torrige, a project which provides skills training for small and medium-sized businesses in the town, is urging businesses to sign up for training by March. Skillstarters for Torrige helps businesses review their training needs, provide the training and demonstrates the business benefits of improved skills. Courses available include website design and optimisation, and sales and marketing training.

One business which has benefited from the training is The Driveway Doctor in Torrige, Rick Dale said: "Skillstarters has been invaluable in helping me to increase production, it has been a real benefit to my business and I would recommend the training to other small businesses in the area."

Caroline Webber of Skillstarters says that the project has already helped a wide range of businesses, including public houses, a beauty therapist, a photographic company and a carpet cleaning business. "The training is an important step to improving productivity and so impacting upon the wider issues of poor productivity and low incomes." The project which is being funded by Devon Renaissance, the rural regeneration partnership organisation for the county, aims to address the acute skills problems that exist in Torrige. In particular businesses with fewer than 10 employees who have not previously been involved with formal skills training.

Simon Mallet from Devon Renaissance said: "Improving business skills is an important part of our work and is vital to the prosperity of rural Devon. We have targeted Torrige because of the area faces acute economic problems."

Businesses interested in finding out more about the Skillstarters project, particularly if they are unsure if they are eligible, should contact Caroline Webber on 07814 253322

Ends

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

Devon Renaissance is the rural regeneration partnership organisation for the county. It is a not for profit partnership of the private sector, local authorities and community-based organisations. The organisation is funded by the South West Regional Development Agency, Devon County Council, and North Devon, Torrige, West Devon, South Hams, East Devon and Teignbridge district and borough councils. Devon Renaissance provides grant funding and works with projects to help create prosperity and jobs and improve access to services in rural areas. It has funding of £7 million over three years which is estimated to be worth £25 million to the Devon economy with match funding.

[www.ruraldevon.org](http://www.ruraldevon.org)

Release issued by pr dogs limited, public relations consultants, on behalf of Devon Renaissance. For further information contact John Taynton of pr dogs on 01822 600100 or 07843 436526 (mobile) or email [john.taynton@prdogs.com](mailto:john.taynton@prdogs.com)