

Women in Business



The fun way to earn a living

MENTION an Ann Summers party and the image that springs to mind is of a group of slightly hysterical women passing around merchandise of the saucy kind.

But this view is resolutely dispelled by a Warrington woman who earned rapid promotion as an Ann Summers manager and party organiser.

Julie Steele, who was a guest at her first Ann Summers party last July, joined the company shortly afterwards and within six months was promoted to unit manager with her own company car.

Julie said: "Party organisers would never, never embarrass anyone. You get to know when to keep it low key. There is no hard sell; it's very enjoyable for everyone. We play party games and show the merchandise but there is no pressure on anyone."

"I didn't think I would have the confidence to do this work. But it's great fun, a very social job and I have met a lot of new friends."

"I have done a lot of jobs but this is the one where I have really felt recognised and rewarded for what I do."

As well as managing a team of girls, Julie organises between one and four parties a week all over the north west from Blackpool to Crewe, Manchester to Liverpool and lots of places in between.

Women want an Ann Summers party for all sorts of reasons – a girlie night in, a hen party or special birthday treat.

The parties take place in private homes or in function rooms in pubs or hotels.

The guests include women of all ages from 18 to 70, but there is a strict 'no men allowed' rule.

Items on sale include lingerie, toys and dressing up outfits.

The older ladies tend to buy gifts such as stockings and pyjamas for the bride-to-be.

Julie, a former hairdresser also has a stand at bridal fairs showing items such as bridal and honeymoon lingerie.

As well as the traditional Ann Summers parties, a slightly different approach is used at Freedom Parties for single and divorced women.

All the party organisers have been trained to measure women for bra sizes in the comfort of their own homes – a service much appreciated by those who

find it difficult to get to large department stores.

Julie who is married with three children and lives in Appleton Thorn, is self-employed like all the party organisers and earns her income through commission on sales and discounts from the company.

There is a well-defined promotion ladder with all organisers being offered the opportunity to develop their careers, although some prefer to stay in their current role.

Julie said: "This is a great job for people who want a second income or just earn extra money. I took on the job because I wanted to earn a decent wage and to look after my children during the day."

"The work is flexible, you can work your own hours to suit your lifestyle. It's enjoyable, sociable and you meet a lot of new friends as well as having the backing and support of a big company behind you."

Ann Summers is always looking for new party organisers.

If you are interested, call Julie on 01925 600224 or 07776 318413, or email octopussyjulie@aol.com



Ann Summers unit manager Julie Steele with her company car

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