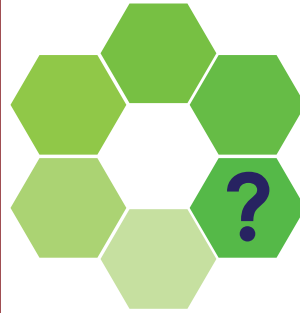


46 chapters
in the UK and Ireland
have a charity member



67%
of the referrals
you receive



will come
from your
Power Team



In 2009,
23 chapters
each passed
at least
£1 million
worth of
completed
business

1,837 BNI
training sessions
were held in 2009



65,003
visitors came
along to BNI
meetings
last year

There are 29
nations with a
GDP less than
the value of BNI
referrals in 2009!



BNI®

SUCCESSNET

- **What makes a great businessperson?**
Words of quiet wisdom
from Nick Hewer
- **The road to more and better referrals**
- **Go for green with the 2010 Power Team Drive**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ■ Top tips on the art of selling ■ A snapshot of BNI Polska



Sowing the seeds of success

Time to look back at past achievements, and forward to exciting new opportunities...

Whatever the doom and gloom in the press and media, you probably won't be surprised to know that BNI members enjoyed a record year in 2009, with more business passed than ever before. In BNI UK & Ireland, business levels rose by 17.5%. In particular, the increased focus on building Power Teams meant that members became far more effective at generating referrals.

BNI is always keen to keep fresh and current, and so 2009 saw *SuccessNet* take on a whole new look and format. The magazine aims to be a truly valuable addition to every BNI member's toolkit, with a constant supply of new ideas and initiatives to help improve your networking skills and grow your chapter.

In addition, the BNI YouTweet Challenge not only tested and celebrated the creativity of chapters all over the UK and Ireland but also helped them raise their profiles and grow their membership. The 25 top entries (definitely worth a good look!) can be viewed on the BNI Europe webpage. The judges are reviewing the entries and will shortly tweet the results as well as posting them on www.bni.eu/bniyoutweet.

We're confident that 2010 will see the continued benefits of Power Teams as they develop and refine good practice. Furthermore, in line with BNI's mission to help members get more from their membership, our online platform BNI Connect will be available shortly, making it even easier to tap into the power of our 125,000-strong global network. And since not everyone is an avid technophile, we'll make sure that more training is available to enable all members to get the best value from their online networking as well as their more traditional face-to-face meetings.

Happy networking!

Charlie Lawson and Tim Cook - National Directors, BNI UK & Ireland



04 lead interview

In an exclusive interview for *SuccessNet*, Nick Hewer talks about qualities, challenges and dreadful canapés

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Right hand man

Over the past five years, Nick Hewer has become a familiar face in everyone's living rooms. He's famed as a trusted, incisive voice at Lord ('Sir Alan') Sugar's shoulder on the hugely popular BBC series, *The Apprentice* - and an increasingly good reason to watch every episode in fine detail! Before all this, Nick developed his own distinguished business track record. *SuccessNet* proudly presents an exclusive interview with this insightful and modest business sage.

You built up an impressive PR business of your own - the kind of business to which many BNI members aspire. What do you think is the most important quality in building a successful business?

This question is often posed in relation to Lord Sugar's ability to build diverse and successful businesses. I can tell you that apart from his naturally quick mind, Lord Sugar's great strengths are tremendous focus and a deep understanding of business. But focus is the key thing: nothing will distract him. He will drill down into the key points, examine them and exploit them to the full. Focus makes great businesspeople.

How important has networking been in building your business and career?

Strangely (particularly as I was in the marketing and PR field), I was bad at networking - but very good at retaining relationships, which of course is potentially detrimental in maintaining a profitable business. A longstanding business relationship often makes it harder to raise fees in line with inflation or increased workload. So I'm very pleased to have acted for companies such as Securicor for more than 30 years, Alan Sugar and Amstrad for over 25 years and a number of other companies besides, all of which raised their fees as circumstances demanded. But networking was not my greatest strength by any means. My company handled PR for The Marketing Society, whose members surely comprised the most fertile new business ground that one can imagine! Yet, whether because of lack of confidence or natural inhibition, I didn't plough that particular furrow as often as I could have done.

Do you think that *Givers Gain* works in very large organisations like Sir Alan's?

I think *Givers Gain* is most appropriate in small, entrepreneurial companies - but I could be wrong. I can imagine that *Givers Gain* in a huge company might be construed as scratching one another's backs; decisions might be perceived as dependent on reasons other than price and past performance. However, the great benefit of *Givers Gain* in any size of company means that BNI members will always be top of mind as business partners with a chance of quoting or inclusion in a tender process. To be included is the first huge hurdle in any business relationship.

In your work with *The Apprentice* candidates you see many different approaches, styles and methods of doing business. Can you tell us about an example of impressive entrepreneurial skill that you've witnessed on the show?

The opportunities for brilliance on *The Apprentice* are limited by the terrible pressures under which the candidates are working. It's very, very tough in there. But in last year's series, eventual winner Yasmina shed an entrepreneurial ray of light in the city catering task. She was determined to make a huge margin by serving terrible, cut-price canapés to a city law firm. She made a 300% margin which won her the task. She didn't care that there would never be any repeat business, because that wasn't her objective.

In 2008 you drove your 20 year-old Renault 4L in the Mongol Rally, to raise funds for the charity *Hope and Homes for Children*. Why choose a project like this in preference to a sleek, comfy car and less perilous terrain?

The Mongol Rally appealed to me because it's perhaps the ultimate driving challenge, not only in terms of distance (in my case, 9,500 miles over 50 days) but also because the car must be less than 1000cc and at least 10 years old. I made it more difficult for myself, mainly by going alone and being 64 years old at the time. Those factors combined to create a particularly tough challenge - one which I enjoyed enormously but which also came perilously close to finishing early on several occasions! *Hope and Homes for Children* was one of the Rally's nominated charities and I've now become a patron, supporting their extraordinary work in Rwanda, Ukraine, Romania and Sierra Leone. As one would expect in these tough economic times, all charities are hurting, none more than the small ones like *Hope and Homes for Children*: I hope to do more fundraising for them.

And finally... The economic climate continues to challenge both wit and wisdom. What should small business owners prioritise in order to survive and thrive?

Small business owners should concentrate absolutely on survival, because anybody who gets through this will be stronger for it at the end. Cash management is crucial, but never to the detriment of one's suppliers because they too may be small businesses who need to survive. We should all play it straight. Focus, again, is absolutely key. And there's one other thing. We often run our small businesses as if our take-home pay is sacrosanct, and it's not. If your small business is in terrible trouble, see what cuts you can make in your pay, your car, allowances and expenses. If the business shrinks, you should shrink too. It's more important to survive than have an expensive holiday every year.

Learn more about Nick's charity, *Hope and Homes for Children* at www.hopeandhomes.org

CHAPTER AND VERSE

WHAT'S NEW AND HAPPENING IN CHAPTERS THROUGHOUT THE UK AND IRELAND

MY BNI FERRARI

How does BNI feature in your business? This is how Julie Mole of Gade Valley Chapter (Hemel Hempstead) presented her view in a rather creative Education slot...

When we join BNI we make an investment of our time, our commitment and our money. We're investing in a worldwide marketing organisation that offers us the opportunity to grow our businesses through *Givers Gain*. We're investing in a structure, training and a support system that gives us outstanding opportunities to grow that investment and win better business.

Do we agree that BNI is the Number One networking organisation in the world? Yes! And if BNI were a car, would we agree that it would probably be a Ferrari - Numero Uno? I think that's another 'Yes! Okay, so let's think about this. You have invested in a Ferrari...

Now ask yourself these questions:

Are you going to keep your Ferrari under wraps in your garage and look at it just once a week? Keep it a secret and not tell anyone? Run it on cheap fuel, neglect its maintenance requirements and leave it to rust? I think not!

Having invested in Numero Uno, you'll want to show off your investment, tell everyone what a great performer it is, polish and maintain it to ensure you achieve the best performance from it and use it well! You'll use premium fuel, have it regularly serviced by experts, learn and make adjustments to ensure you get maximum performance and the best results. Right?

So if your Ferrari is your BNI membership...

The fuel is your weekly meeting: miss this and you miss out on the basics. Without fuel your membership won't work. If you think of BNI only when you walk into your meeting and forget it when you leave, you are neglecting your investment.

Would you let an inexperienced apprentice work on your supercar or would you expect a fully trained mechanic to get the best results for you? BNI training workshops are all part of your essential maintenance programme, helping you to get the best value from your investment

by enhancing your performance within BNI. In addition, the BNI network extends way beyond your chapter and training sessions are a great way of tapping into the wider BNI community.

Winners need well-planned pit stops, so make time for them: arrive early, leave late and have regular 1-1s. Nurture your relationships with fellow members and give clear, informative, interesting presentations every week. Bring visitors and referrals and never forget the fundamental truth that *Givers Gain*.

If you fail with the basics, you make it harder for your members to refer you. And without regular maintenance your performance will not achieve the results you want. After all, you can go round the race track as fast as you like but if you run out of fuel, miss vital information or fail to make adjustments so your engine explodes, you've wasted your time and money.

You have made the investment in your BNI membership. Don't wait for it to work for you: look after your investment, grab it with both hands and work for it!

Enjoy your BNI journey. It may be scary in the beginning and you may spin off the track occasionally, but by investing your time and effort and with the support of your chapter, you can go from pit stop to pole position. This is YOUR Ferrari: make the most of your investment - maintain it, show it off, drive it and enjoy its success!

Julie Mole: www.bluemolepromotional.co.uk



ON THE DOUBLE

Ever feel that some 60 second presentations sound a little same-ish? There's little value in hearing the same old messages week after week and good chapters make a point of encouraging varied, interesting presentations that grab attention and deliver strong messages.

At Connexions Chapter (Radlett), the Leadership Team decided on a 60-second-based strategy for pepping up both referral quality and insight into member businesses. They announced a special Pairings Day and asked the members to produce a 120 second presentation in partnership with another member. Individuals could choose who to double up with but provided each presentation called for clear, specific referrals, there was plenty of scope for creativity in both pairings and content!

In the three weeks before Pairings Day, there was an upsurge in 1-1 meetings and everyone dug deep into what made their partner's business tick. When the day arrived, the presentations slot had people listening and noting down referral requests as never before! The Connexions Oscar for the Best Presentation of the Day went to an unlikely pair - Dawn Wright, a gardener and Geoff Dennis, a wills and probate solicitor. Armed with a mock coffin and a pile of leaves, they explained how important it was to make a will - and to make sure you're buried in a well-tended cemetery!

"As well as achieving our referral and 1-1 objectives, the Pairings Day was fun, creative and very memorable," says chapter member Danny Bermant. "We learned so much more about all our chapter colleagues!"

Danny Bermant: info@brainstormdesignltd.com



HIGH NOON (AT THE CRACK OF DAWN)

Like the legendary saddles, referrals are blazing over in Lancashire's Wild West. Oracle Chapter (Chorley) raised the business bar to new heights after three members dared each other to a 'referral shoot-out'.

When Mark (Bald Eagle) Southworth counted 40 referrals exchanged at their chapter meeting, he threw down a challenge to fellow bounty hunters Stewart (Two Guns) Procter and Rob (Babyface) Abbott. "Let's make it the big five-oh next week," he said. "In fact, let's get competitive. I bet I can bring more quality referrals than you!" Rob and Stewart also vowed they'd manage more than their opponents, and the scene was set for a showdown.

"I got my mum, auntie and the rest of the family on the case," says Mark. "Emails flew and the phone lines were buzzing all week. We also texted each other right up to midnight the night before to keep up the motivation and energy!"

Friday morning dawned and a tense chapter assembled to hear that the three gunslingers had generated a total of 58 referrals. Mark earned the shoot-out crown with a personal total of 22 - but all three were applauded as heroes.

Chapter Director Colin Sneath commented, "The emails flew back and forth all week and by the morning of the meeting there was a real sense of anticipation. It wasn't just about quantity: every referral passed was a genuine, warmed-up opportunity to do business. It just shows what we can achieve with a bit of competitive spirit! Plus, they inspired their chapter colleagues too: we passed a stunning total of 90 referrals that week."

Colin Sneath: colin.sneath@stage9marketing.com



SNOW EXCUSE NOT TO NETWORK

January's heavy snowfalls and treacherous ice caused rare cancellations of BNI meetings up and down the country. However, some chapters refused to let the elements ruin good business and found alternative ways to get together.

Fortress Chapter (Co Durham) set up an 'email meeting', with 60 seconds and referrals flying through the ether.

High Flyers (Leeds) asked neighbouring Network Central Chapter's Tim Sedgwick of Talk Straight to help them organise a meeting by conference call. A total of 26 members participated in the chapter's tele-meeting from the warmth of their own homes!

Defying the southern blizzards, Victory Chapter (Crawley) conducted their regular meeting online with the help of video and web conferencing specialists MegaMeeting UK Ltd. Stuart Salisbury helped his fellow members to use their computers, microphones and cameras to conduct a virtual meeting at which 60 seconds were delivered and referrals passed. An interactive messaging board was used for exchanging questions, answers and referral details.

There may well be other chapters who beat the weather and enjoyed innovative meetings. For those who didn't, perhaps these ideas will help you prepare for next time!

Jayson Gurney (Fortress):
jayson@soho-it-solutions.co.uk

Robert Cresswell (High Flyers):
robert.cresswell@paramountifa.co.uk

Stuart Salisbury (Victory):
sbs@megameeting.co.uk



TOUR DE BNI

We all meet regularly with our chapter colleagues, but how well do we use the wider BNI community and network with members in neighbouring chapters? Andy Morris of Bristol's St Swithin's Chapter was keen to get up close and personal with hundreds of local members – and faced up to a tough physical trial at the same time.

As the chilly December weather set in, Andy set out – with a vengeance. He planned to visit all 10 BNI chapters in Bristol in four days, delivering a 60 second presentation in each one. He challenged himself to get to every meeting under his own steam.

For three days, he ran a total of 38 miles from meeting to meeting and made it to eight of the chapters. On the fourth day, his trusty bike proved essential in order to cover the 25 miles to visit Hammond and Severn View Chapters.

Andy's military background no doubt came in useful on this daunting physical challenge, during which he burned up over 7,000 calories, ran for 6 hrs 3 mins and cycled for 2 hrs 26 mins. "The first day proved to be the hardest leg when I ran 4.5 miles to Hadlee Chapter and a further 8.5 miles to Walker Chapter, negotiating busy traffic, pedestrians and cyclists," he reflects.

Andy's challenge raised money for his favourite charities and he was delighted at the warm welcome he received from the Bristol BNI community. "There's much to be gained from meeting up with your BNI neighbours," says Andy. "However I'd suggest that attending training workshops and cross-chapter events might be a less taxing way of doing it!"

Andy Morris: andy.morris@cleanbristol.com



TRADE SECRETS?

When Bradford Business Bantams were planning a Visitor Day, Chapter Director Hannah Cummins invited the Lord Mayor of Bradford along to see how local BNI members build their businesses. Hannah also asked the Lord Mayor if he would prepare a short speech about business in the city.

His valuable words should be a wake-up call to all those who think that everyone in business knows about BNI. He said he was amazed and delighted to witness this productive business networking organisation in action. He applauded the commitment to mutual member support for individual aims and aspirations, particularly in a world which more commonly shouts 'What's in it for me?' In fact, he saw BNI as Bradford's best kept business secret and pledged to do all he could to support the group.

Have your local civic and business leaders heard about your chapter? Perhaps you should invite them to a meeting. As daily networkers, they may wish to encourage other business owners to explore the potential of the 'How can I help you?' approach and point others in the direction of your chapter.

Hannah Cummins: cumminsprinters1909@yahoo.co.uk



The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress with Chapter Director Hannah Cummins and BNI Director Rick Armstrong

THE WONDER OF BNI



One warm summer evening in June, Vic King, MD of Kingfisher Blinds and a member of BNI Ashford Eureka Chapter, took his wife Marion out for a special meal to celebrate 35 years of wedded bliss.

As they sat chatting, something was puzzling Marion. "I'm really enjoying our evening," she said, "but I wondered why we didn't go instead to your BNI colleague's restaurant, World's Wonder?" Vic agreed that he'd love to have supported his chapter colleague John Roberts. However, despite its excellent cuisine, the World's Wonder's tired décor meant that it wasn't the most romantic setting for a celebration dinner. Vic explained that John knew his venue lacked the X Factor, but that the impact of the recession meant he simply didn't have the funds for the work it needed.

Marion thought for a moment. "Well," she said, "You belong to BNI and keep talking about *Givers Gain*. Why don't you DO something about it?"

Why indeed? At his next BNI meeting Vic called together a group of members who he believed could help and they hatched a plan. In just a few short weeks, this willing band of givers had rebuilt and redecorated the bar and restaurant, complete with new carpets and curtains.

John was speechless with emotion at the stunning outcome – and most of all at the kindness and generosity of his BNI colleagues, who had given all their time and materials free of charge.

News of the pub's transformation soon reached PR specialist and BNI colleague Clive Lawrence, who arranged for the BBC to film the new-look venue. Local media also took an interest, and soon afterwards the World's Wonder Restaurant was shortlisted in the Kent Restaurant Awards 'Gastro Pub' category.

"Vic and my chapter colleagues have gone way beyond what's normally understood by *Givers Gain*," says John. "I'm overwhelmed and really look forward to returning all these amazing favours."

As for Vic, he's now looking into opening up a new business – in pub refurbishment!

Vic King: info@kingfisherblinds.com

From: Visitor - Rose Osbourne

To: Nick Cunningham

Referral: Extension to one of the Martha Trust residential homes

Value: £300,000

Value those visitors

Visitors add value to chapter meetings in a host of different ways. For Nick Cunningham, a plumbing and heating engineer from Sandwich and Deal Chapter, a visitor brought business worth many thousands of pounds both for his own organisation and for others in the chapter – and resulted in a new member too.

“It’s important to treat every referral as if it were as hot as you could possibly wish”

The visitor, Rose Osbourne, represented Martha Trust, a charity which is supported by the chapter and provides care and services for people with profound disabilities. Intrigued at the 60 second presentations, Rose asked whether any members would like to tender for work on a new extension to one of the Trust’s residential homes. Nick leapt at the chance and also brought in a friend, Andy Sutton, an electrician.

When the Trust’s construction contractor awarded both Nick and Andy the work, Andy was so impressed that he joined Nick’s chapter immediately! What’s more, the Sussex contractor was absolutely delighted.

Nick’s company has since fulfilled more than £300,000 worth of further contracts for them, including work at Dover Castle’s new Visitor Centre, a sixth form college and a nursing home extension. He has also been able to grow his business and take on more staff, one of whom has joined another chapter. In addition, that one visitor referral has generated more than £60,000 for Nick’s chapter colleagues.

“I’m thrilled at the way this referral developed,” says Nick. “I believe that apart from doing your best to invite and impress visitors, it’s also important to treat every referral as if it were as hot as you could possibly wish. That way, you act on it immediately and treat it with the respect it deserves.”

Nick Cunningham:
enquiries@nickcunningham-plumbing.co.uk

The greatest referral I ever had...

SuccessNet would love to hear about the greatest referrals you’ve ever received. They may be referrals with a particularly high value. Or perhaps the story of how they happened or what they led to is particularly interesting. Here are three terrific examples of BNI referrals at their best...

Love thy neighbour

There’s a lot to be said for nurturing an active BNI network beyond your own chapter.

Had Daniel Caplan, Chapter Director of Bentley Chapter (Stanmore) and MD of New i.d Interiors not kept in close touch with Steve Crawford of Enterprise Chapter (Watford), he’d have missed out on the biggest single referral of his life.

Steve (of utility broker Focus Group) introduced Daniel to an estate agent who had let 57 brand new Canary Wharf apartments to a global accommodation company. The apartments needed fully fitting out with everything from soft furnishings and beds to kitchen equipment, TVs and sound systems. For Daniel, this was an ideal referral that turned into a dream contract worth around £350,000.

“This was a fantastic referral and proof that *Givers Gain!*” says Daniel. “I’m delighted to work hard on behalf of my BNI colleagues: the benefits always come back to you in the end. I’d recommend meeting up with members beyond your own chapter, for example by getting to BNI training and other events; they’re great ways of building strong relationships with the bigger BNI community.”

Daniel Caplan: danny@new-id.co.uk

From: Steve Crawford

To: Daniel Caplan

Referral: Fully fitting 57 apartments

Value: £350,000

From: Steve Worrall

To: Lloyd Ansermoz

Referral: Cleaning services

Value: £330,000

Viking conquests

In just eight months, Viking Chapter (Widnes) has recorded over £927,000 of business exchanged – a remarkable achievement for a chapter that only launched in May 2009! Its rapid success is in no small part down to the efforts of its first Chapter Director, Lloyd Ansermoz, whose chapter colleagues are delighted that Lloyd himself has benefitted greatly from the chapter’s excellent performance.

In a 60 second presentation, Lloyd specifically asked for referrals into companies based at the Daresbury Business Park. As so often happens when presentations are clear and precise, the request was answered – in style! Steve Worrall of EBL (builders) arranged for Lloyd to visit a potential client, a substantial company dealing in green technology and automation. In fact Lloyd’s company, In Depth Managed Services, were already talking to a contact at the prospect’s premises, but without success. What they really needed was to talk to a senior decision maker – and Steve’s referral did the job perfectly, putting Lloyd in front of their National Buyer and Facilities Managers.

“Prepare every second of your 60 seconds... Clarify what you want and what you don’t want: it really does work”

It was perfect timing: the prospect wanted cleaning services for their Daresbury Head Office, a Cambridge office and two sites in Yorkshire. In Depth tendered against the current incumbent and three other companies – and won the business. On Christmas Eve 2009, the In Depth teams set to work on the £330,000, three-year contract for office and window cleaning and washroom management.

“Prepare every second of your 60 seconds,” recommends Lloyd. “Clarify what you want and what you don’t want: it really does work. Thank you Steve and BNI for such fantastic support!”

Lloyd Ansermoz: lansermoz@indepth-cleaning.co.uk

How to get more (and better) referrals

There are lots of things we can all do to get more referrals - and better ones too. Ewan Sturman, BNI Executive Director for Cheshire and North Wales, shares a couple of sure-fire tips to get you thinking...

1. Business is great!

What's the first thing most of us say when we meet other businesspeople? "How's business?" You've probably already done it today, maybe several times! And what do most of us reply? "Business is great!" - or something along those lines.

As BNI members, we commit to display a positive and supportive attitude with BNI members. So we say business is great. Well, maybe you're having the best business year or month ever. And after all, many people do like to deal with winners. But hold on a moment: what might "Business is great!" mean to others?

I know what I think when someone tells me that business is great. Either:

- Well done, you're a BNI member and I am thrilled to bits for you. Or
- I wish I was as busy as you, you lucky [person]!

But what I am definitely NOT thinking is "Terrific. Now how can I find you more business?"

Of course, I'm not suggesting you plead for more-business-right-now-or-the-family-will-be-forced-to-eat-the-dog. But you DO need to be adding some very important guidance that will help sustain your success. Something like, "Business is great thanks, but an introduction to Joe Black at OneStar would really be good for me." Or "Business is great but we always welcome new clients. Do you know any solicitors or accountants I could talk to?" Saying ONLY that business is great could actually close down a valuable referral opportunity. Don't let that happen. Stay positive - and go the extra step that'll keep bringing you the referrals you really want.

2. How much?

Have you ever bought anything without knowing how much it cost? Probably only on rare occasions. However we often expect people to refer us to clients, friends and family without knowing the charges for our products or services. It's not WHAT you charge that stops you getting more referrals. It's that people don't KNOW what you charge.

A BNI member who's a software developer told me he wasn't getting many referrals. I suggested that it was because people thought he was expensive. When I asked how much it would cost to do a simple program for a car service reminder scheme he said, "About £500". I then asked five people at the meeting how much they'd expect to pay for such a program. The LOWEST guess was £10,000. The software developer had given the false impression that his services were very costly. Do you think it was easy for his chapter colleagues to find referrals for someone who they thought would cost 20 times his actual price? It's not what you charge that stops you getting referrals; it's that people form their own perceptions about what you charge - and it's up to you to make sure their perceptions match reality!

Ewan Sturman: ewan@profectworld.co.uk

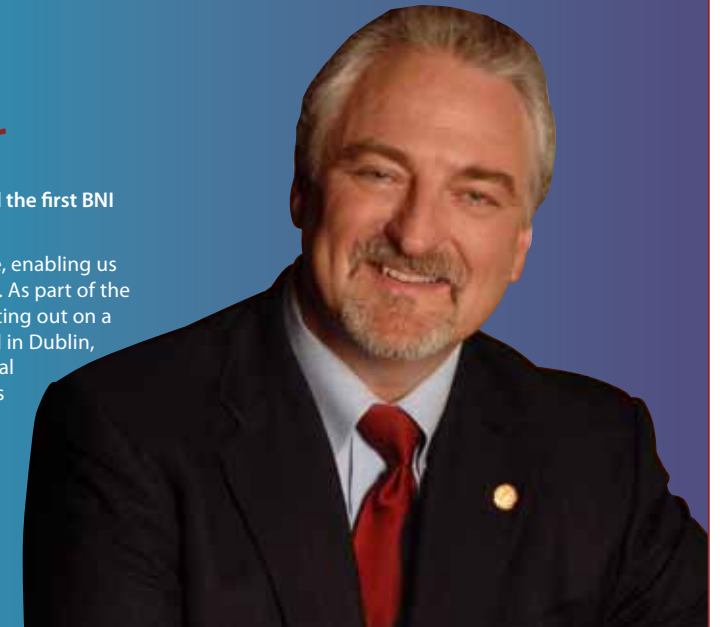
These two ideas are just two of fifteen little gems that you can obtain on CD or as a download at www.ianandewan.co.uk

Network like a pro with Dr Ivan Misner

It's now 25 years since Dr Ivan Misner founded the first BNI chapter in California.

Since then of course BNI has spread worldwide, enabling us to link up with fellow members in 43 countries. As part of the silver anniversary celebrations Dr Misner is setting out on a European tour, with four major events planned in Dublin, Glasgow, London and Amsterdam. These special gatherings will feature a galaxy of top speakers and Dr Misner will reflect on the content of his latest book to teach members how to *Network Like A Pro*. Of course, the events will also provide the perfect forums for networking with BNI members from far and near.

Find out more at www.bni.eu/DrMisner



Keeping you posted...

For the last couple of years we've been pleased to avoid raising membership dues. However we'll need to make a small increase in dues later on in 2010.

Full details will be announced in the next edition of *SuccessNet*.



Going for Green The 2010 Power Team Drive

As more and more chapters are discovering, bigger and stronger Power Teams deliver amazing business results.

Win £1,000 in cash for your chapter!

Whatever colour your chapter's Traffic Lights ranking right now, strengthening your Power Teams is the most effective way to go for green - and stay there! So this year, why not take up the 2010 Power Team Drive? As well as increasing your referrals and business exchanged, you'll also stand to win £1,000 in cash for your chapter! All you need to do is to recruit six new members across your Power Teams between March 29th and May 28th 2010. It's that simple.

Look out for the Power Team Drive flyers or go to www.bni.eu/uk/powerteamdrive for more information.

GET IN TOUCH

Here's your chance to share ideas, views and information with the BNI community across the UK and Ireland. Simply send a letter or email to the *SuccessNet* office and we'll publish a selection in every edition.

You can say what you think: constructive criticism is just as valuable as a well-founded compliment. Or perhaps you have a suggestion that's worked for you or your chapter – something that could work for other members too?

What's more, there's an iPod shuffle for the Star Letter, so let's get those emails and letters flowing.

Email: successnet@jmhcopy.co.uk **Post:** SuccessNet, BNI House, Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1BS

■ As a fairly new member of my chapter, I had already begun to learn about the tremendous importance of visitors in creating healthy chapters. Although I'd need a while to understand more about my fellow members' businesses before I could bring in lots of referrals, I was sure that I could bring in some visitors.

I set myself a target of posting out five visitor invitation letters on my company letterhead each week. Would my strategy work, I wondered?

In fact, it began to work immediately and I secured a visitor for the next meeting – great! What's more, one of the businesses I'd written to spotted my company logo and wanted me to quote on a piece of business for them. Had I not mailed the company for BNI, I'd certainly never have won that new business.

So, my message to you is this: BNI is all about marketing your business, so use BNI as a great excuse and send out as many invitation letters as you can! Every one of those letterhead invites may result in a visitor for your chapter and could also bring in business for you. You have nothing to lose and all to gain (and you never know, you might even earn yourself a BNI Gold Club badge!).

Tom Sebastiano

BNI Business Class (Teddington)

■ When our latest leadership team took office, they circulated a questionnaire to members asking for feedback on what they liked or disliked about the chapter and how we might improve things at both individual and chapter levels.

Members replied that they wanted more – and better quality – referrals. They also commented that some members did not always concentrate fully on the 60 second presentations. It seemed to the leadership team that these two factors were closely linked: if members weren't listening closely to learn more about their colleagues and what business they wanted, then referral quality and volume was bound to suffer.

We set up a brief 60 second quiz which now concludes the 60 second section at every meeting. It's very simple: the Chapter Director asks a couple of questions along the lines of: "Ben, please remind the group what companies Nicola wants to talk to this week", or "Mark, what was the offer that Earl particularly wanted us to keep in mind?"

There's no hiding place – anyone might be chosen! And guess what? This very quick, simple strategy has really made a positive change. Our referral rate and quality have improved and people are delivering much better presentations as they now try to be very clear and specific about what they do.

We recommend other chapters give it a go!

Kathryn Saggars

Chariots BNI
(St Albans)

■ Mr Visitor came along to a chapter meeting one day to find out what BNI was all about. As soon as he arrived a member called Mr Important descended upon him in a quiet corner. Mr Important was a Terribly Important Businessman and began to tell the visitor what a Terribly Important Businessman's Company could sell to him. Mr Visitor politely said that he didn't actually need Mr Important's services just now. Mr Important was mighty miffed and left Mr Visitor on his own.

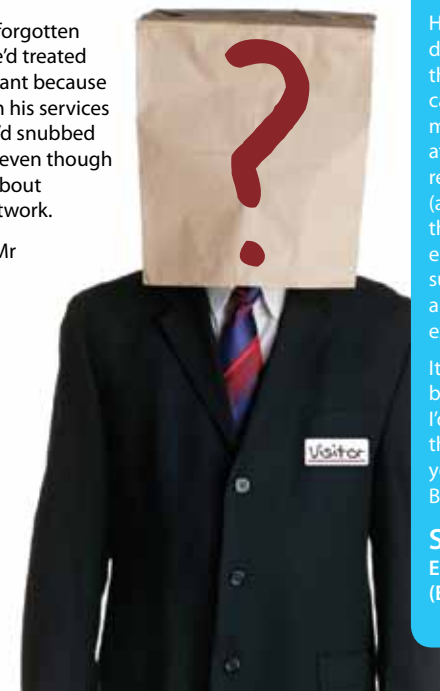
Later, during his 60 second presentation, Mr Important talked about his Important Company and described a number of Very Important Clients. He added that this week he wanted an introduction to his dream referral, Mr Big. None of the members knew Mr Big. However Mr Visitor did. Mr Visitor not only knew Mr Big but they were close friends who lived next door to each other and their children played together every day.

Mr Important had forgotten that *Givers Gain*. He'd treated Mr Visitor as irrelevant because he couldn't sell him his services there and then. He'd snubbed a valuable contact even though he knew nothing about Mr Visitor or his network.

Do you think that Mr Important got that introduction to his dream referral?

John Hart
Area Director,
Yorkshire North
and West

PS. This is a true story – though the names have been changed to save embarrassment!



■ On Friday January 15th, Trevelyan Chapter welcomed a particularly familiar visitor to the weekly meeting. Former Chapter Director Sarah Raad left the chapter in 2009 to have her baby son Jake, hoping to return when her maternity leave ends.

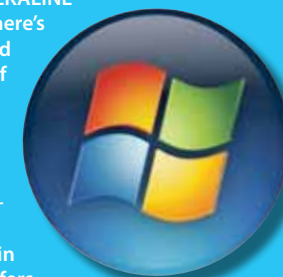
When it came to her turn to speak in 'the most important part of the meeting' Sarah said, "I just want you to know that not being here doesn't mean you're not in my mind. I still keep seeking out referrals for people I know, like and trust." Sarah then produced 16 referrals gathered by her and her husband Dominic who run Tent Marketing in Gateshead.

Is this a record?

Michael Beaney
Trevelyan BNI (Newcastle)

STAR LETTER

■ I joined BNI when I launched my design and marketing business ALKALiNE over four years ago. There's not a doubt in my mind that joining was one of my best ever business decisions. Since then, I've benefitted enormously from the training and the week-by-week education, guidance and growth in confidence that BNI offers.



Had it not been for this personal and professional development I'm certain that I would not have been the focus of a recent case study and marketing campaign by IT giant Microsoft. A fellow chapter member had told me about an exhibition to be held at Edgbaston cricket ground. I went along and met representatives from Microsoft. Instead of trying to sell (as I would have done in my pre-BNI days) I talked with them to find out what they wanted to achieve with their email campaign software and how I might be able to support that. The approach obviously impressed them and ALKALiNE Design & Marketing now has national exposure via the Microsoft campaign.

It's a tremendously exciting step change for my business and BNI was instrumental in making it happen. I'd urge every member to use their BNI membership to the max: it can take you to places you never imagined you'd reach – so make the most of every BNI opportunity that you can!

Simon Washbrook
Eaton Chapter
(Edgbaston)





Sell well

Antonio Falco has been helping and advising businesses for some years and it's his belief that selling is the lifeblood of a business.

Cash may be king, but you've got to sell to produce that cash...

In recent times I've heard so-called 'advisors' (none of them BNI members, of course) talk about the 'accidental salesman'. This is complete phooey – and it's plain misleading too: sales should not happen accidentally. Accidental selling leads to accidentally going bust! To sell effectively you have to have some structure, some knowledge and some ability.

Sales is the art of exchanging your product or service for someone's money. It's up to you to find out enough about your prospective customer, their needs, wants and problems, so you can make that exchange happen. The premise might be simple, but the journey towards a sale can be complex, challenging, fun, heartbreaking and incredibly rewarding for both parties.

Selling is not about 'the gift of the gab' and is not just a job that you can 'wing' your way through. It's about listening and understanding what your customer needs.

In a climate where our business practice and ethics will often be scrutinised, be sure to build your business on honesty and integrity, with products and services that offer real solutions and value to people and businesses.

The panel on the right presents my top tips for better selling. Take a step in the right direction and see your sales surge!

Word of Mouth

Every edition of *SuccessNet* now features a topical article written by a member. Each Word of Mouth article aims to share the great reserves of knowledge and good practice that abound in our organisation.

Here, Antonio Falco, a member of Elmbridge Chapter (Walton-on-Thames) tackles his favourite topic of sales and selling.

Antonio Falco is a business and motivational speaker and business advisor.

For details of his Biz Clinic and other services see www.antoniofalco.com

Six steps to achieving greater sales:

- 1. Understand what you're selling**
Make sure you understand clearly WHAT your product or service is and WHO you believe would like to buy it. (I know that you think you know the answer to both, but just check).
- 2. Compile a short, bullet-point plan**
If it's War and Peace, no one will ever read it (least of all you), so be concise. Your plan should include the customers you want, their business size, location, industry sector and the name and role of the decision maker. It must also list your targets: what do you aim to achieve this year? And what will you do to make that happen?
- 3. Take action!**
Planning is nothing without action. You could start with a short letter or email introducing your company, giving two or three key reasons why the reader needs to find out more.
- 4. Make the follow-up call**
There are a number of rules when making the follow-up call (I've written a paper on this and you're welcome to email for a copy). Focus on WHY you are calling. If you want to make an appointment, ask for it clearly.
- 5. The appointment**
Make sure you're smartly dressed, arrive 15 minutes early and compose yourself. Have ready a list of questions that will tell you whether your product can solve your prospect's problem. Make sure you find out if they have a budget and who makes the decision.
- 6. Follow up**
Whether it's a BNI meeting, an appointment or a chance encounter, ALWAYS follow up. Build a database of your contacts and keep in touch with them regularly.

This is just a small step into the wonderful world of sales and there is a great deal more to explore. The key is to apply yourself and to practise: sell well and your business will grow.

Here's more news of what chapters are up to across the UK & Ireland...

Got news to share? Why not tell *SuccessNet* and put your chapter on the map?

On the day after Ireland's December Budget, **Atlantic Chapter (Westport)** held a Budget Breakfast. The chapter's accountant David O'Sullivan gave a presentation to members and around 20 visitors, of whom several later joined the chapter.

In **Liverpool Eagles**, **Dean Scrutton** recently passed the chapter's **10,000th referral to Mark Ward**. Launched in May 2002, the Eagles have been named as Merseyside's Chapter of the Year 2009.

After several thwarted attempts at finding the right venue, new chapter **Estuary (Dublin)** came across an ideal location, Roganstown Golf and Country Club. Better still, the Club's owner Ian McGuinness, decided to join the group – a great way of ensuring a secure, well-serviced chapter!

Relaunched with a new top table, fresh venue and a revised meeting day, **BNI Diamond (Horley)** zoomed from position **576 to 75** in the national Traffic Light tables in just 5 months.

Perth's Fair City Chapter welcomed 50 eligible visitors at their February Visitor Day with a special surprise. A giant cheque was handed over to the Leadership Team, representing the **£1.1 million** worth of business exchanged in the chapter during 2009.

After just 37 weeks of membership of Scarborough Crescent Chapter, **Ralph Shalom** of estate agents Bairstow Eves has brought in **315 referrals worth £502,475 in business** done so far.

Golden Triangle Chapter (Walshford) is celebrating a massive **75% rise in business exchanged during 2009** compared with the previous year. A Visitor Day and a new Trades Power Team were important contributors to this golden success.

Despite heavy snowfalls, members of **Herts of Oak Chapter (Stevenage)** made it to their last meeting before Christmas. They not only passed plenty of referrals, they also **cooked their own breakfast** as the catering staff hadn't managed to get through the snow!

When local MP **Charles Hendry** visited **Uckfield Chapter**, they decided to pay a return visit and to hold the first ever full chapter meeting in the **Houses of Parliament!** A Thames cruise gave time for plenty of 1-1s and a successful networking day was enjoyed by all.

Pole Position

POLSKA



One of the more recent nations to join the global BNI community is Poland, a country eager to connect and trade with Europe and the wider world. So what's the story on networking in BNI Polska?

New horizons

Poland's entry into the EU in 2004 saw the start of a major uplift in trade for this central European republic as Polish business looked beyond its own borders. The launch of BNI Polska in 2006 reflects a growing entrepreneurial focus and the current total of 17 chapters looks set to mushroom to nearly 30 by the end of 2010. There are established and emerging chapters across the country, from Warsaw to Wroclaw and Krakow to Koszalin.

Grzegorz Turniak, who leads this rapid growth says, "We've established that there's a tremendous appetite for referral marketing here and most importantly, members are seeing great results. Even in the most far-flung regions of Poland, people are getting really excited about what BNI can do for their businesses."

The international stage

With so many Polish people living and working in the UK, there is now a great opportunity for networking between the two countries. Established Polish members of BNI UK are seeing the appeal of expanding their UK businesses back into Poland, or re-establishing themselves in the Polish market through BNI if they return there to live. With the support of Michael Clay (Vice Chairman of the British-Polish Chamber of Commerce), Ewa Milaszewska-Choina is developing BNI International, an English-speaking chapter in Warsaw which she hopes will extend trade links between Poland and the rest of the world. She says, "As a people we are not comfortable in discussing money openly, so measuring success through 'Thank you for the business' can be a problem. However we need to adapt and move on. I think that BNI has a role in educating Polish entrepreneurs to think and act more 'internationally'."



Variety is the spice of life...

As in many UK & Ireland chapters, many Polish accountants, financial advisors and web designers enjoy the benefits of BNI membership. However it may come as a surprise that there's not a single plumber or painter and decorator in BNI Polska! Nevertheless, there are some rare categories amongst the ranks. For instance, who occupies the Museum category in your chapter? No-one? You're missing a trick... a member in Torun Chapter represents his Live Gingerbread Museum – a working bakery producing traditional (and edible!) gingerbread artwork. Other unusual categories include Robotised Workstations and Body Fashion!

Interested in learning more or making contact with BNI Polska? Email Grzegorz Turniak: turniak@bnipolska.pl