

BNI[®] SuccessNet

EDUCATION & INFORMATION BULLETIN FOR BNI MEMBERS

EUROPEAN EDITION

WINTER 2004



**Sail in luxury on
board the newest,
fastest, largest
ocean liner
in the world**

**Balcony stateroom
cabins reserved for
winning members**

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WIN A DREAM VOYAGE TO NEW YORK ON THE QM2

BNI mourns the loss of Ron Hain

It is with huge sadness that SuccessNet reports the sudden death of Scotland North Executive Director Ron Hain – one of the organisation's best-loved directors.

Ron died in hospital at the age of 48 just three weeks before Christmas, after suffering a major stroke. He leaves a widow Sue and four children, but is also mourned by his extended 'family' of BNI directors worldwide and the 400 members in his region's 16 chapters, to many of whom he was a mentor, personal adviser, friend and father figure.

Although Ron had been an executive director for less than three years, he had made a substantial impression on his fellow directors, to the extent that he was chosen to be the opening keynote speaker at the BNI 2002 International Conference in Hollywood when, dressed in kilt and full Scottish regalia, he delivered a memorable workshop that is still a topic of conversation more than a year later.

Having graduated from Aberdeen University, Ron became marketing manager for Nike, before creating his own successful PR and marketing business, Prism, based in Milnathort, Kinross. A polished and highly respected marketing professional, Ron joined BNI some five years ago as a member of the Dunfermline Chapter in Fife where, from the outset, it was obvious his intellect, motivation and energy would see him take on ever-greater challenges.

In 2000 he became regional director for Scotland North and, in less than three years,

grew his region to be one of the most vibrant in the UK, so it was no surprise when he was invited to host BNI's European Conference at his beloved St. Andrews Bay Golf Resort last year.

Gillian and Martin Lawson, BNI's UK national directors described Ron as a genuinely remarkable man, with many personal and business qualities. "He was a high-octane performer and very knowledgeable, yet he was also humble – a great family man, and in business, a role model for BNI members," they said.

"He had high business standards and expected the same of those around him, but he was always ready to offer advice and practical help. He packed a huge amount into his life, not least his passion for sport and his favourite pastime, golf, and few could match him for his commitment and enthusiasm in motivating others. He was always working, always trying to boost his BNI members and he never said 'no' to those



ENJOYING THE OPEN AIR: Ron pictured last year in his region in Scotland

who sought his help. Whatever the problem or the need, Ron was always there with the right solution."

A number of Ron's closest friends and colleagues, attended the family funeral service just before Christmas, paying their respects to a man who, by common consent, was one of the organisation's leading lights.

Gillian added: "Above all else, Ron was the best possible example of BNI's gives gain philosophy. He was a genuine free-giving spirit, always ready and willing to help other people. Within BNI, it was the norm to see Ron give up his own time to travel hundreds – and sometimes thousands of miles – to help fellow directors deal with issues in other regions.

"He had nothing to gain personally from making such major commitments, but he did it just the same. It is sadly ironic, but entirely typical of the man that, just five days before he suffered his stroke, he was on the west coast of America, helping to boost BNI's development in Seattle, Washington, and working with BNI members to maximise their business potential.

"Wherever he went, he was respected and admired, such was the impact he made on people. He touched so many, and he will be greatly missed."

As SuccessNet went to press, plans were being finalised for the staging of a 'Celebration of Ron Hain's Life' to take place at his beloved St. Andrews Bay Golf Resort on Saturday, 24th January. All BNI directors and members who knew Ron are invited and further details will be circulated during January.



RON HAIN: "He will be greatly missed by everyone in BNI"

ARE YOU READY TO EXPERIENCE THE LIFE OF LUXURY?

The new QM2 awaits winners of 2004 Chapter Building Drive

Imagine gliding majestically past the Statue of Liberty into Manhattan on board the world's newest, largest and most luxurious ocean liner, after spending five days and six nights of opulent living as you sail across the Atlantic on Cunard's spectacular new flagship – the 150,000-ton Queen Mary 2. That is the magnificent May Day prize awaiting you and your partner, if you are one of the winners of BNI's 2004 Chapter Building Drive which swings into action this month.

PRIZE DRAW RULES:

The following simple rules must be followed to enter the prize draw:

1. The Chapter Development Drive starts on Monday 26th January and ends on Friday 19th March 2004. Only applications dated between these dates will be eligible, and the date on the new member's application form will be deemed their official joining date.
2. The sponsor's name must be clearly shown on each new member's application form, which must be submitted to the Chapter's local BNI Director no later than Friday 26th March 2004 to qualify for the prize draw.
3. Any BNI member who sponsors a new member during the qualifying period will go into the draw, provided his or her Chapter has qualified by bringing in six or more new members during the same period. If a Chapter does not achieve this target, individual sponsors will not be eligible for the draw.
4. A member of a qualifying chapter will receive one entry to the draw for each new member sponsored into his or her own chapter between the qualifying dates. One winner will be chosen from every six* qualifying chapters.
5. All prizes are for two people (i.e. the BNI member and partner) and must be taken on the specified voyage, departing on Saturday 1st May 2004 from Southampton. The prizes are non-transferable.
6. Winning tickets will be drawn in the week commencing Monday 29th March, and winners will be notified no later than Friday 2nd April. If any notified winner is unable to participate in the voyage on 1st May 2004, an alternative winner will be drawn from the other qualifying sponsors in their chapter.

* In the event that more chapters qualify than there are cabins available, the ratio will be adjusted slightly.

The prize does not include:

- Transport to Southampton docks
- Transport from London (Heathrow) or Manchester airports.
- Bar bills, gratuities to crew members and discretionary spending on board QM2.
- Transfer from New York to Kennedy airport UNLESS you are returning on the day the ship arrives in New York.

Sponsor one or more new members between 26th January and 19th March and, if your chapter recruits six or more new members during that eight-week period, your name will go into the draw to select the lucky participants who will be heading for New York aboard the £500 million QM2, just two weeks after she makes her inaugural transatlantic crossing.

Sounds too good to be true? You'd better believe it. For every six qualifying chapters (see prize draw rules (left), one happy BNI member and partner will be embarking on the QM2 at Southampton on Saturday, 1st May, ready to indulge in nearly a week of pure luxury as the grandest liner ever built makes only her second voyage to the Big Apple.

The new Chapter Building Drive has been designed to give the most successful sponsors the best chance of winning. This is because, once a chapter has qualified by signing up six or more newcomers during the two-month period, members receive one entry in the draw for each individual they have sponsored. So the more new members anyone brings into their chapter, the more chances he or she has to gain a QM2 place.

Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director said: "We have allocated one premium balcony cabin to every six qualifying chapters*, which means that a member who sponsors a single new member could have a 1-in-36 chance of winning a place, while if the same individual brought in three new members, he or she could have-

VOYAGE OF FANTASY

As a prize winner you will:

- Sail on the world's greatest liner, making only its second voyage from Southampton to New York.
- Spend five full days and six magical nights on your transatlantic voyage, enjoying unrivalled luxury, five-star cuisine and a galaxy of social, cultural, sporting and nightlife activities.
- Have the option to stay for one or more nights in the Big Apple (at your own expense), taking in top attractions.
- Fly back to Manchester or London on a date to suit you.

up to a 1-in-12 chance to head off to New York."

Once the liner has docked in Manhattan on Friday morning, 7th May, winners have the choice of flying back to the UK the same day, or staying on indefinitely in New York to take in some of the Big Apple's countless attractions. Naturally, the cost of return flights is included in the prize, but winners who decide to remain in New York, stay on at their own expense.

Gillian added: "This is the best prize ever offered to BNI members anywhere in the world, but even those who don't win will gain, because we know that larger chapters means more business generated for each of their members."



RESERVE YOUR QM2 DATES IN YOUR DIARY NOW: Winners will travel to New York from the 1st to the 7th May 2004 inclusive

THE QM2 – SIMPLY THE BEST!

Everything about Cunard's new QM2 flagship is represented by superlatives:

- A length nearly 150 feet greater (at 1,132 feet) than the Eiffel Tower is tall.
- A height of 236 feet – which is more than the length of Cunard's first ship, Britannia.
- A passenger complement of 2,600 and a crew of 1,250.
- Gas turbine & diesel electric engines developing 157,000 horsepower – equivalent to more than 300 of the most powerful Ferraris (the 575 Maranello) ever built.
- 14 decks of amenities including 5 swimming pools, 14 bars, 10 restaurants, a health spa resort and planetarium, the largest ballroom at sea, and 300 works of art worth over £3m.

Lawsons' Lore

**Gillian and Martin Lawson
National Directors of BNI, write:**

The start of a new year is traditionally a time for all of us as business people to reflect on the past 12 months, both in terms of our achievements and progress against the goals that we set for our businesses twelve months ago. We hope that all BNI members can look back on 2003 with satisfaction in this respect.

It is also a time for setting new goals for ourselves, our businesses and our chapters. With more and more chapters passing very significantly increased amounts of business as they grow above 30 members, it should be the goal of every chapter to achieve their full potential as soon as possible – so why not shoot for 40 in 2004?

To encourage every chapter to do so we are promoting what will undoubtedly be our most successful Chapter Building Drive ever, with the most coveted prize for winners that we have ever offered – a balcony cabin for two on the world's newest, largest and most luxurious liner, the Queen Mary 2 as she makes only her second transatlantic voyage to New York, with return by air.

The odds of winning are stacked in every member's favour, with a winner chosen from every six qualifying chapters! But much more importantly, every chapter that enters the Drive will be a winner – as more members in a chapter means more business for everyone.

So it makes sense for every chapter to set ambitious goals for the year and to use the Chapter Building Drive to kick-start their progress towards meeting those goals.

Good luck to you all!

Martin Lawson

BNI's oldest private detective?

While most of us have swapped our careers for a life of leisure long before we reach 70, Peter Heims still works a seven day week at the tender age of 74, and is proud of his reputation as Britain's oldest practicing private detective.

And, as if that's not challenge enough – he's also one of BNI's most entertaining members, quite literally, regaling his colleagues in Leatherhead Chapter with countless stories of a lifetime spent tackling espionage, counterfeiting, fraudsters, and assorted bad guys!

Peter is one of BNI's true characters. A former paratrooper, he was too short to join the police force when he was demobbed, "so I chose the next best thing and became a private investigator, but even that wasn't easy. I touted my skills around many private investigation firms before I found one that would give me a chance. Within two years, I'd bought out the company," he said.

The rest of Peter's life has an almost fictional air about it. Over a period of more than 50 years, there is little he hasn't seen or done – from countering industrial espionage and investigating fraud and other crimes around the world, to tracing elusive debtors and missing persons. And, having reached the pinnacle of his profession (he is a past president of all his professional bodies, author of books on counter-espionage and an expert speaker at international forums), Peter is now in demand as a colourful after-dinner speaker.



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: Leatherhead's Peter Heims has caught more villains than anyone else.

These days, while he focuses on less energetic projects closer to home, primarily debt collection and tracing missing persons, he intends to continue working full time until he no longer enjoys what he does. "But how can I not enjoy it? It's just like real life cops and robbers. I am the good guy and all those debtors and fraudsters are the bad guys. I still get a buzz out of catching them."

While he has all the work he can handle even without BNI, Peter is delighted with his membership. "I was always in my Cobham office by seven in the morning, so now once a week I stop by my Chapter for breakfast on the way to work. At the start, my BNI colleagues didn't know how they were going to find me referrals but almost everyone in business encounters bad debts, so now I get plenty of those referrals. In turn I keep my chapter chums happy with my referrals and silly stories."

Contact Peter Heims on 01932 864822

Ray's 25-not-out tops Gold Club charts

It's quite an achievement when any member is awarded his or her black badge for introducing six new members to BNI, but Ashford (Kent) Chapter's Ray Johnson has passed that milestone more than four times over!

Insurance consultant Ray has introduced no fewer than 25 new faces to BNI in just five years, and SuccessNet wonders how many other members – if any – can beat his total.

Ray joined BNI's Folkestone Chapter in 1998 and was twice its Chapter Director, bringing in 20 new members over a four year period. "Sadly, despite my best efforts that chapter was disbanded so I joined the new Ashford

Chapter just over a year ago, since when I've introduced five new members," said Ray. "It's not difficult to get guests along to the meetings. The secret is being aware of every opportunity that arises to invite people."

SuccessNet has also learned of seven other black badge recipients in the past few weeks. They are Chris Barbour (Bolton Chapter), Roy Broad (Telford Chapter), Alan Brown (Knivesmire Chapter, York), Rory Buchanan (Newry Chapter, Northern Ireland); Anne Ogilvie-Wheeler (Poole Chapter), Kim Sharman (Andover Chapter), and David Walker (Glasgow's Phoenix Chapter).



WHAT A LOT HE GOT: Ray Johnson (centre) has plenty to smile about after receiving his Gold Club membership for recruiting 25 members to BNI.

TWO MAJOR MILESTONES MARK OUR 7TH ANNIVERSARY

Sussex's 500 members

Sussex has become the first BNI region in the UK to attract more than 500 members. From the launch of its first chapter at Eastbourne in May 1998, local business has taken to BNI's givers gain philosophy like a duck to water, with the result that there are now 21 chapters in East and West Sussex with an average of 24 members per chapter.

A key factor in BNI's continuing south coast growth is that in Sussex no BNI group is allowed to fall by the wayside, even if it has lost its direction. "We have learnt that there is nothing we cannot put right," said Executive Director Andrew Hall. "If a chapter follows BNI's procedures, it cannot fail, so we know that if any group starts to struggle, it must be because we have stopped doing things the right way. With some usually simple adjustments, we soon put the chapter back on course again."

Lest anyone doubts the Sussex way of revitalising a group that has temporarily lost its way, Andrew points to the recent experience of Brighton's Albion Chapter. "For a number of reasons – personality clashes and slack adherence to procedures – the group slumped to an all-time low. Working closely together as a team, and having renewed its commitment to BNI procedures, the Chapter quickly regenerated itself and is today one of the largest, most vibrant in the region – so much so, that it recently received the coveted Founders Award for outstanding performance from Dr Ivan Misner," he said.

Looking ahead to BNI's next five years in Sussex, Andrew said there was no reason why the number of chapters could not be doubled. "We will open new groups wherever there is a demand, and this usually follows our development of a successful chapter, when would-be members find themselves 'locked out' by the one-trade, one-member rule.

"You can bet it won't be long before more chapters are up and running in towns like Hailsham and East Grinstead where we have no BNI representation."

And Graham makes it 10,000!



MAKING HISTORY: NatWest Business Development Manager, Graham Rogers (centre) with Martin Levison, BNI Regional Director (left) and Martin Bugg, NatWest Regional Business Manager after becoming BNI's 10,000th UK member.

Meet banker Graham Rogers, who was named as BNI's 10,000th UK member as SuccessNet went to press just before Christmas.

The Business Development Manager for NatWest Bank based in High Wycombe, Graham had no idea that he was about to feature in the annals of BNI's history when he applied to join the town's new Swan Chapter a few weeks earlier, only being told of his membership milestone after his application was accepted.

Not that there was ever any doubt about Graham's suitability for BNI – because he'd previously been a committed and highly productive member of BNI's very first UK chapter in Harrow, reluctantly forced to relinquish his seat when the Bank transferred him to High Wycombe last May.

"Having experienced the benefits of BNI membership for several years, I was obviously very disappointed when I had to give up my chair at Harrow Chapter to someone else, so it was great news when I learned that

a new group was being developed in High Wycombe. I applied to join immediately.

"The organisation has been very good for many of my NatWest and Royal Bank of Scotland colleagues around the UK and I am delighted to be back in the BNI family. Discovering I was the 10,000th member of BNI in the UK has made a happy occasion even more pleasant," said Graham.

Martin Lawson, BNI's National Director said: "When we introduced the concept of giver's gain to British business exactly seven years ago, we believed it would be as well received here as it had been in North America, where it is now 20 years old. What we did not know is that BNI would grow far more quickly in the UK and Ireland than it has in a dozen other countries around the world, and that is very gratifying."

He said that recent research carried out among North West chapters had confirmed that the average annual value of BNI membership in well-established chapters was £26,000 while even in newer chapters with a stable membership, a typical member's seat around his chapter's breakfast table was worth over £20,000. "Of course, for many members, the rewards are substantially greater but even these figures show BNI's value – before we even considering the huge impact BNI makes in terms of the business, educational and personal development training resources it offers to every member."

You can contact Graham Rogers on 07909 894191



BRILLIANT BRIGHTON: Members of Brighton Albion Chapter celebrate a dramatic revival to full capacity.

Tom's great at night-working

Try as they might, Tom Harrison's colleagues couldn't persuade him to join their Liverpool BNI chapter. He loved his bed too much and refused to face those early morning starts!

So when one of his clients, Indigo Chapter Director Richard Spencer, finally persuaded him to grasp the nettle and give it a go, fellow members didn't even bat an eyelid when he turned up to one of his first meetings in pyjamas and a dressing gown!

"It's true I hate getting up so early to go to the meetings," admitted Tom, a Liverpool insurance broker. "That's why BNI colleagues Karl Hamell and Chris Tratt, who work in my branch, never managed to get me along despite very persistent efforts."

"When Richard finally pushed me into it, I must have been one of the most reluctant guests ever to attend a BNI breakfast meeting. But, he was right because, once I was there I liked it so much I had little hesitation in joining," Tom added. "I'd never been one for very early starts, but from the moment I saw how much business is done through BNI, my bed seemed a bit less important."

In fact, Tom's appearance in pyjamas and dressing gown shortly after joining the Indigo Chapter had nothing to do with him over-sleeping. "The pyjamas were actually intended to emphasise the advantages of doing business with my company, Ajax Insurance, and making my memory hook 'you can sleep at night with Ajax' more memorable! I hope it made a good impression."



PYJAMA GAME? No, it's just Liverpool Indigo's insurance broker Tom Harrison making a memorable impression.



TEAM EFFORT: John Rayment (second left) taking delivery of his Smart car, watched by chapter colleagues

Northwood's milestone referral

One of BNI's oldest UK chapters reached a major milestone at the end of last year when its 10,000th referral was passed across the table.

Northwood Chapter was only the second BNI group to be launched in the UK, just 24 hours after the opening of Harrow Chapter in December 1996.

Michael Baxter, a maintenance consultant passed the landmark referral to solicitor Howard Smith for some residential conveyance contracts. "It wasn't the biggest referral I've ever had from BNI," commented Howard, "but it was certainly a major event in our chapter's history and we're now looking forward to the next 10,000!"

Howard can be contacted on: 0208 864 0722

John makes a smart move!

When you work in Oxford - a city not noted for making journeys easy - you need to think smart. And, if you're a BNI member, you also know how to maximise every opportunity to promote your business.

So, when John Rayment of Accounting By Computer, invested in a Smart car to get him around, he enlisted the help of several BNI colleagues in Oxford Chapter to ensure his business would also be noticed while he was on the move!

"I travel about a lot and always need to park

in tight spaces, so a Smart Car seemed the way to go, especially when I knew I could call on BNI members to provide me with a colourfully designed vehicle that would be noticed and hopefully attract more business," he said.

Five BNI colleagues helped put the resulting 'mobile advertisement' on the road! Laurie Gray arranged the contract hire, Peter Lawrence, the Managing Director of Oxford Designers & Illustrators created the signs which were produced by Malcolm Ware's Sign-A-Rama, James Hawkins photographed the 'unveiling' and Antony David of Spriggs David Marketing arranged local press publicity.

John can be contacted on: 01280 848637

Members solve Yeovil 'murder'



I'M YOUR NEW DOOR HOST: Well, for one night at least, as Yeovil and Wells members have murder on their minds.

Members of the Yeovil and Wells Chapters got together recently for a spooky 'whodunnit' night at Yeovil's Ash House Country Hotel, listening in 'horror' as clues were unfolded to reveal a cold-blooded murder had been committed while they'd been eating dinner!

"We decided a murder-mystery evening would make an interesting chapter get-together," said Rob Smith, who organised the event. "The 'suspects' were all professional actors, and provided us with great entertainment."

Life Coach Jude Glide had obviously trained her table in the art of crime detection, since they were awarded the bottle of champagne for being first to guess who committed the crime!

Members cotton onto Donna's virtual services



GROWING FAST: thanks to all her colleagues' referrals – but Stone Chapter's Donna Cotton rarely meets her new customers!

Virtual secretary Donna Cotton is finding that her services are becoming virtually indispensable – even though she hasn't ever met many of the customers referred to her by her BNI colleagues.

A member of Stone Chapter in Staffordshire, Donna is delighted with the response from her chapter and happy to admit that while she is looking for more clients from all over the UK, she doesn't get to meet the majority of them!

"We provide a professional telephone answering service for our customers when they are out and about, using their own company name," said Donna, who runs DD services from Stoke-on-Trent. "They simply transfer their number to my service when their office is unattended, and thanks to some clever electronics, my staff can then answer their calls. It's far more efficient and user-friendly than waiting for a dodgy answering machine message."

She added: "It must be pretty unusual in BNI for a member to win new business without meeting the clients, but because we provide a simple and effective service nationwide, my customers are happy to enjoy the benefits to their businesses without necessarily coming face to face with us."

Donna says it's a virtual certainty she can help most small to medium sized businesses. **For a chat with the real Donna, call her on 01782 824411**

Stafford sings for its education!

Stafford Chapter members have found themselves regularly exercising their vocal chords at weekly meetings, ever since Jonathon Mosley introduced a new style of education programme!

As Education Co-ordinator, Jonathan decided it was time to liven up the weekly education slot so he designed a 'wheel of knowledge', with each segment revealing different aspects of BNI training. But there was a catch: to get the wheel spinning; members had to sing a Jonathan-composed ditty!

"I wanted to make the education slot fun but it needed a serious note, so I designed the wheel of knowledge and got my colleagues singing, and then followed up with a topic that would hit home. I also produced an advent calendar – with each date offering a different business education theme – and before we identified the topic, my colleagues had to sing a variation of 'The 12 days of Christmas' classic. I don't think some of them have forgiven me!"

Jonathan can be contacted on 01785 227 227

Say it with Wordz

Members of Stirling Chapter have no excuses if they fail to make the most of their 10 minute presentations and 60-second infomercials, thanks to the presence in their midst of Gillian McNeish, one of the few freelance writers in BNI.

Finding herself unable to continue working as a medical secretary following an accident, Gillian decided to use her writing skills to set up her own company, Wordz, specialising in speeches and presentations. Once in business, her first priority was to join BNI in the hope that it would increase her business – and, after 18 months, she's not been disappointed.

"I didn't really expect much from BNI," said Gillian, "but I was pleasantly surprised. After listening to some of my new colleagues' presentations, it was clear that quite a few were having difficulty putting their messages across effectively. There was often too much waffling and at the end of the 10 minutes we sometimes weren't any the wiser about what their businesses involved, or how we could help."

"So I started offering a combined speech-writing and speechmaking service for them, firstly giving them the right words and then showing them how to make more memorable presentations. It has turned out to be a huge success," she added. "Presentations in the Chapter are now of a much higher standard and more than a few colleagues say that their confidence has increased dramatically."

Gillian McNeish can be contacted on 01259 725226

Gone to the dogs!

Members of North Bristol based Severn View Chapter are pictured outside Swindon's Greyhound Stadium, after going

to the dogs in their quest to make even more money. Tracy Graham, Membership Co-ordinator said: "Bringing members together informally and building business relationships in a relaxed atmosphere is important for the group's continuing success. Our night at the dog's was a great excuse to have fun together, even though some of us lost more money than we won!"

The event was organised by chapter members Heather Parsons and Christy Tollast from the PR & event management company, eventframework.



In Brief

A wild bit of BNI co-operation!

When **Stone Chapter** member Emma Hall (pictured below, left) needed to empower her 220-strong UK-wide Aloe Vera products team, she turned to colleague, business coach Tony Burgess of ARC Training to deliver the goods.

A third chapter colleague, Marie Von Wurzbach of the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust came up with an inspiring rural venue, and the event photography was handled by another Stone member, John Fisher.

Emma can be contacted on 01785 286140



Hull members well con-tent!

More than 80 members and guests from three Hull chapters have pitched together under canvas to raise £1,300 for children's charity, KIDS.

The 'Event in a Tent' was organised by Helen Downs from the **Hull Friday Chapter**, who seized an eleventh hour offer to use a large marquee at a local pub. "I had a lot of help from members of the city's Tuesday and Wednesday chapters and we soon provided a singer, a disco, laid on a meal, an auction and dancing," said Helen, pictured below.

The money raised will go towards providing a nursery for mothers of children with learning difficulties.

Call Helen on 01482 219561



Town Crier makes mark

BNI Rochester member Steve Root thinks he's found the perfect substitute. When overseas business recently forced him to miss a chapter meeting, he was determined not to let his colourful 60-second infomercials skip even a week, so he paid the local Town Crier to take his place at the breakfast table!

Steve said: "I get more referrals by ensuring my presentation is the most memorable of the morning and I always know when I've delivered a good one because people will talk about it, often months later."

"I'd been looking at the possibility of bringing in the Town Crier for a couple of years, but this was the first time I'd had a reason not to be at my chapter meeting. Ken Tappenden, our Town Crier was delighted when I invited him to take my place."

Steve's reputation for memorable presentations led to his receiving a 'notable networker' badge from Dr Ivan Misner, after BNI's Founder witnessed one of his 60-second deliveries during a visit to the Chapter.

You can contact Steve Root on 01227 751130



FRIGHTENING? Hardly! Two of Islington's least scary witches smile for the camera

Witch chapter was that?

If you thought some BNI colleagues could look pretty ghastly at 6.45 in the morning, you should have seen members of London's Islington Chapter when they decided to become ghouls and skeletons, witches and wizards for the night – staging a belated Halloween networking and chapter building party. Around 30 guests were wooed during the ghoulish celebrations and despite the ghastly appearance of some members, organiser Joanne Silverstein was confident the event would lead to the Chapter gaining several new, more human faces.

THE THINGS YOU



LOUNGING AROUND – but for a good, purpose, is Kidderminster BNI Chapter Director Louise Jew and her colleagues have just proved!

Want to do bus

When you want to draw attention to BNI's style of networking, lounge around on the breakfast table wearing your best silk pyjamas. It works – as Kidderminster Chapter Director Louise Jew and her colleagues have just proved!

Wanting to issue a unique "wake up" call to businesses in the Wyre Forest district of Worcestershire and raise BNI's profile, members of the Chapter's leadership team arrived for a routine pre-Christmas meeting in their pyjamas – arousing much merriment among colleagues and considerable interest in the local business community.

"We knew it would provide an unusual photo-shoot opportunity and thanks to our Chapter photographer Chris Bridgewater, the resulting press release and photographs gained good coverage in our local weekly paper, the Kidderminster Shuttle, and in the regional Express & Star evening newspaper," said Louise.

"We challenged local businesses to wake up to the benefits of getting up at the crack of dawn and attending BNI breakfasts, where they would find fellow members acting as an extended sales force for them, and it certainly had an impact."

"The press coverage led directly to extra visitors the following week, with several others phoning and emailing for further information, which we hope will lead to even more visitors over the coming weeks."

WILL DO TO GET YOUR CHAPTER NOTICED!



Director Louise Jew (front) with (from left) Membership Co-ordinator Education Co-ordinator Loretta Digger.

Pudsy puts Egbert on TV

Members of Middlesbrough's Egbert Chapter, looking resplendent in plastic bowler hats, found themselves on TV after raising £650 for the recent BBC Children in Need Appeal. Pictured below handing their cheque to Pudsy, the Appeal's mascot are (from left to right): Treasurer Neil Hodgson, Pam Ainsley, Regional Director Tony Sillers, Sue Dixon, Membership Co-ordinator Julie Nattrass and Chapter Director Ian Moreton. Holding the cheque are Sarah and James Nattrass aged 5 and 8.

The money came from a members' auction held during one of their breakfast meetings which, together with 'fines' for using selected forbidden words during their 60-second slots, did the business – providing an entertaining and profitable way of helping the Appeal.

Anyone interested in joining Egbert Chapter is welcome to contact Ian on 07711 689333



Business with us?

And of course, our choice of bed-time attire led to a very lively meeting," she added.

For further information contact Louise Jew on 01384 872776 or 07974 102381

Cannock's 'Angels' hammer message home

Bewildered passers by stared in amazement as this intrepid BNI trio, calling themselves 'Cannock's Angels' took to the town's streets a few weeks ago, brandishing spanners, hammers, saws and chisels!

In a hands-on bid, quite literally, to attract more craftsmen and tradespeople into the

Cannock chapter, members Bryn Jones, Phil Bradford and Maureen Crumblehome, (pictured below), armed themselves with the tools of their sought-after trades and toured the town centre's streets in search of prospective colleagues.

"We've got a healthy chapter membership from all the usual professions but not a single tradesman," said Bryn. "There's a high demand for electricians, builders, plumbers and decorators but no-one to receive all the referrals we want to hand out! So we decided to 'grasp the metal' and go out and get them, by doing a mail-shot to selected trades in Cannock and then by accosting passers-by!"

Cannock's imminent Visitors' Day will be proof of their success, although they have already received a good response from their mail-shot as well as coverage of their street tactics in the local press!

Contact Bryn on 01785 612184



Bethan gets high-MINDED...

North Wales beautician Bethan Jones has been aiming high recently, scaling the heights of both her 'local' Snowdon and Peru's rather more fearsome Machu Picchu - all for a very worthwhile cause. With the help of fellow members of **Rossett Chapter** near Wrexham and Prestatyn's **Mostyn Chapter**, she has raised over £3,500 for mental health charity, MIND.

"Phil Cox from the Mostyn group helped me organise a sponsored fancy dress walk up Snowdon a few months ago, and Graeme Allsop, my chapter's caterer, supplied lunch for us to eat at the top," she said.

"Then members of my chapter sponsored me to take part in a 5-day trek across the Andes in Peru. It was a wonderful experience," Bethan added.

...and Andrew scales heights

Meanwhile, **Bournemouth Chapter's** Andrew Beard is used to scaling the heights as an accomplished mountaineer, but when he recently tackled the 14,000 feet Gran Paradiso in the Alps, he had more than the usual incentive to reach the top.

Sponsored by his chapter colleagues, Andrew was raising money for the Tenovus Cancer Charity's £1million Diamond Appeal to double the capacity of cancer services at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital.

Andrew is a Business Development Manager for First Capital Finance and joined BNI just six months ago, but he's already delighted with his membership. "It is proving to be good for business," he said.

Contact Andrew on 01202 512233

Optimising the BNI Opportunity

**Do you want a successful Chapter?
Do you want plenty of referral business?
Of course you do, but how do we
achieve these goals?**

I am often asked: 'What sort of business does well in BNI?' The truth is that all businesses offering a service or product *can* do well, since success, or the lack of it, is more down to the individual's attitude rather than the service or product they offer.

There are three key points that I believe help members to *optimise the BNI opportunity*. As an individual the most important thing is to be an ACE! That is to say, you need to come with the right Attitude, have Commitment to the process and have bags of Enthusiasm.

The right attitude means greeting all of your fellow members with warmth and sincerity every time you meet. It means listening to them and finding out what it is that they are looking for. It means making the effort to educate them as to what business you want.

Having **commitment** means arriving on time, being there weekly, and sending a substitute if you can't! It means keeping appointments and doing 'one to ones' with fellow members, and providing the best service or product without fail to them and to their contacts. In other words, you must honour the referrals you get. It means coming to the training workshops and perhaps most of all, *asking what you can do for your fellow members*. You will get referrals if you take this approach.

Being enthusiastic is vital – by the bucketful! If you can't be enthusiastic about what you do, how can you expect your BNI colleagues to be enthusiastic and remember what you do? And how can you find referrals for them, if you don't share their enthusiasm? *A sale is not about the transfer of products or services from one person to another, but the transfer of enthusiasm for the product or service from one to another!*



**By Tony Sillars, Executive Director for
Durham and Cumbria**

So, what else can you do to optimise the BNI opportunity? Two obvious answers are your 60-second infomercials and the 10 minute presentation. One thing many people fail to do is to be *specific* about what they are looking for. Everyone wants MORE business and MORE customers, but you need to name the companies you would like to work for, and better still, name people within those companies you want to speak to. *Being specific really works!*

BNI's philosophy is 'Givers Gain', for which I recently read a great description. It said: '*(This ethos means) pursuing business for your fellow members with the same gusto as you would pursue business for yourself*'. So leave behind your old attitudes of guarding your contacts, and share them. Referrals are all around you but, before joining BNI you had no reason to take advantage. Now you do! You know that if you give, a fellow member will give back to you.

So much for optimising the opportunities as an individual. But what can you do as a chapter, as a team? In my book, 'Team' stands for:

Together **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore.

As with all organisations, the challenge is to get everyone moving in the same direction at the same time! One of the biggest differences can be made by members collectively setting targets for their chapter. There is no better goal than having a full chapter – that is, 40 members – because throughout BNI it has been proven that larger chapters do disproportionately more business than the smaller ones. So, while a chapter of 20 people might expect to pass around 70 referrals a month, a 40-strong group will pass up to 400 referrals in the same time!

To achieve this full chapter, it is essential not only to invite visitors every week, but also to follow up their visits with courtesy phone calls to thank them for coming and ask if they have any questions. The chapters who are most successful in converting visitors to members, all have very good follow up procedures. **Does your chapter?** If not, introduce a follow-up system as a *chapter code*.

'The right attitude means greeting all of your fellow members with warmth & sincerity every time you meet.'

Finally, as a group, you need to identify those categories missing from your chapter, and invite individuals or businesses to fill them because then, every member of the group will receive direct benefits. In doing so, remember that potential guests may not be able to come the first week you invite them, but they will turn up eventually. A 'no thanks' is actually a holding action, meaning the timing is not right or something is preventing the invitee from attending at that time. So, invite them again in a few weeks or months.

BNI offers a structure and discipline to word-of-mouth marketing which makes the giving and receiving of quality referrals a real likelihood. Members who really work at developing their skills and contacts within BNI – both as individuals and collectively, really are **'optimising the BNI opportunity'**.



'Being very enthusiastic is crucial'

says Tony Sillars

Sticking to the rules brings lasting rewards



**Says Jeff Matthews,
Director of Leeds
Armouries Thursday
Chapter**

Nearly two years ago, the Armouries Thursday Chapter in Leeds was one of the first BNI groups in the UK to reach 40 members. Today the "full house" signs are up again as the group heads towards its self-imposed limit of 45 but, in between times, our crown slipped as members started to leave, and others were asked to improve their efforts – a message that was not always appreciated.

I'd like to think the Chapter's successful regeneration is the direct result of some specific and perhaps innovative steps that its leadership team has taken in recent months, together with our determination to stick firmly to BNI's rules and procedures, resisting the temptation to interpret them as we

might have wanted.

Having gone through a necessary shake-up earlier this year when we asked all members to review their commitment to BNI, and redouble their efforts to make our chapter the best in Yorkshire, we addressed what we regarded as the greatest single weakness: that of nurturing new members through an effective learning process, helping them to become happy and effective, rather than seeing them wither and eventually drop out.

To co-ordinate this programme of support for new members, we turned to one of the Chapter's longest serving and most capable members Jim Vincent who has made a huge success of his new mentoring role, showing newcomers how to find – as well as receive – referrals, how to win the confidence of their chapter colleagues, and generally get the most from their membership as quickly as possible. Because he is also our Training Co-ordinator, Jim ensures that all newcomers participate in BNI's new member training sessions, but most important, he is always there to provide help and advice whenever it is needed.

At the same time, we recognised that new and experienced members alike needed ongoing business education to get the best from BNI, so we made sure that our education slot was seen as the most important part of the weekly agenda. Under the guidance of our Educational Co-ordinator Erika Ritchie, we generate plenty of good ideas for members by positioning the significance of BNI procedures, and then looking at specific issues such as how to improve third party referrals, quality presentations and develop relationships through one-to-ones.

Of course, before Jim or Erika could fulfil

their roles, it was crucial to bring in new members, which meant we had to ensure our meetings attracted a steady stream of visitors and that a significant number of these would want to join the chapter. We decided the role of visitor host was so important that we appointed four members as visitor hosts, dividing the functions between them and giving one host – Tony Pratt – specific responsibility for 'de-briefing' all our visitors at the end of each meeting.

His job is to find out whether meetings have met the expectations of visitors, answer their questions and make sure they leave with a very positive feeling about BNI. The fact that since I became Chapter Director three months ago, at least half of all our visitors have become members shows just how well he performs this task.

There is one other reason for our resurgence: we stick to BNI's tried and trusted procedures. Every member of the leadership team knows his or her duties and, because they have been well trained, they carry them out in exemplary fashion. Similarly, we maintain a good discipline and members who occasionally stray out of line are reminded of their obligations. It rarely causes difficulty, but we would rather lose and replace someone who is not committed, than risk damaging the group's collective motivation.

The result is a highly focused group who come together each week to do good business, and who achieve good levels of business because things run smoothly. If something isn't working properly we know immediately how to fix it – and so far, the results are very satisfactory.

Jeff Matthews is the Regional Business Relationship and Sales Manager for Abbey in Yorkshire. He can be contacted on 01924 865573 or 07899 064328



STANDING TALL: Members of the highly successful Armouries Thursday Chapter in Leeds show their strength in maintaining full capacity

Reyna gets new lease of life with BNI!

Bristol entrepreneur, Reyna Knight is living proof that you're never too old to start up a new business venture, especially when there's BNI to spice it up!

Sixty-seven year old Reyna, a member of Bristol's Hadlee Chapter, recently embarked on a new business venture marketing Forever Living Products, after disposing of her training and sugar-craft businesses because the regulations governing them became too demanding.

"While I was on the training course for my new business, I heard about BNI from a col-

league who was in the process of joining, so I decided to find out more about the organisation. I went to a meeting and became a founder member of the new Hadlee Chapter. At first I was dubious about finding referrals but in practice it hasn't been a problem and it gives me a real boost when I can pass on business to others."

Reyna is so enjoying her new lease of business life that she had a special T-shirt printed to celebrate her 67th birthday with chapter colleagues. **Contact Reyna on 01275 849997**



Door Prizes (with a difference)

From Glasgow with love....

What do a fake James Bond and a real live rooster have in common?

You may well wonder – but both were given recently as great examples of imaginative door prizes...

When commercial investigator Charlie Robertson walked through the door to his very first meeting of the Glasgow's Evolution chapter he could never have expected to be walking out an hour and a half later with a life-sized Pierce Brosnan!

He received the unusual cardboard cut-out of the latest James Bond actor as a door prize from Royal Bank of Scotland mortgage advisor James Frew who, it seems, is fanatical about James Bond. "I was quite surprised when they

announced that I had won something on my first day in BNI, and expected a small wrapped gift of some sort. I was staggered when James produced Pierce Brosnan, but he was right when he said it made an unusual prize!"

"What he couldn't have known is just what a boost it would be to my business. Pierce's gun-touting cut-out has guarded my office ever since that day, and he has proved an amazing entree for me to talk about BNI with my clients," said Charlie. In fact, so good has Pierce been in helping to bring in referrals, that he won Charlie the Notable Networker prize for 12 referrals in a month!

"I just can't express how fantastic BNI is," said Charlie, "It's changed my life, I've become more outgoing, more confident and I enjoy



THE NAME IS BOND: Well, it's Charlie Robertson actually, with my new mate Pierce Brosnan.

my life and work much more now. I can honestly say that in business terms, BNI (or maybe it was Pierce!) has swept me off my feet!"

...and from Holland, a real live two-legged prize

They may still be relatively new to the BNI ways of successful breakfast meetings, but the Dutch Alphen aan den Rijn Haecinia Chapter will take some beating when it comes to the originality of its door prizes – which reached new highs just before Christmas when a real live crowing rooster with particularly healthy lungs was passed across the table!

The expression on recipient Henk Schiermeier's face suggests that his initial reaction was "What on earth am I to do with this?" and he could be forgiven for thinking he should have perhaps waited a week before passing on his referrals – but he quickly regained composure to welcome the gift from colleague André Troost of Troost Business Theater at the end of André's 10-minute presentation.

"André kept us all hanging on his every word with a fascinating account of his business, with every second of his performance masterfully used to maximum effect. It was an



A BIRD IN THE HAND: Is a bit of a surprise, says Henk Schiermeier (right) as he collects his door prize from André Troost.

inspiring lesson for everyone, and I guess it should have come as no great surprise that he should crown it with an inspired door prize," said Henk.

"We all wondered what was going on when André walked to the door and grabbed something from behind it. There was a great deal of laughter and a standing ovation when he presented me with a very lively, lustily crowing rooster in a beautiful cage," he added.

André told SuccessNet: "My gesture symbolised the fact that you have to do something noticeable to be remembered, but it also perfectly fitted my memory hook, which is "You have to crow to be heard!"

More mirth followed as Henk left the breakfast meeting clutching his business card holder in one hand and the tirelessly crowing rooster in the other, but the bird's bemused recipient was to have the last laugh.

After taking the rooster to a local farm where it was happily introduced to its 34 new wives, Henk kept the rooster's fate a secret from his chapter colleagues.

The following week he delivered André a short testimonial - "There is no better fowler than Troost Business Theater" before handing him the seemingly empty cage. On the cage floor was a plate containing a few feathers and a couple of chicken bones gnawed clean. "One day I'll tell André what happened, but not just yet!" he said.

...but, Maidstone duo get best prize of all

Whilst not strictly receiving it as a door prize, Maidstone Chapter's Brian Relf and Chris Jenner weren't complaining – too much – after being elected as "official tasters" of some fine Irish whiskies, immediately after they'd paid a jet-setting visit to Ireland's Cork Chapter.

The lucky pair were given the post-breakfast 'prize' during a tour of Cork's Jameson whisky distillery, sampling the malts on behalf of their chapter colleagues who had been unable to make the

trip. At least, that was their excuse. "It was a terrible job, but somebody had to do it!" said Brian.

The distillery tour was part of a three-day visit to Cork by 10 members of the Kent chapter – arranged between Health & Safety consultants Peter Hopkins from BNI's Maidstone group and Dan Cronin in Cork. It was the first time an English chapter has visited the Republic and the event was so successful that the Cork Chapter now plans a return visit to Maidstone in the Spring.



A TOUGH JOB: But someone has to taste all this whisky, say Maidstone's Brian Relf and Chris Jenner

Carlisle slow? No, it's fastest in the land!

Some chapters grow to their optimum 40-member size within a year. A few have managed it in just six months. But in Carlisle, members of the town's Edwin Chapter, passed that milestone in less than two weeks – and have remained there ever since!

To mark their unprecedented success, members of the Chapter were presented with a top award at BNI's International Conference held in Los Angeles, for becoming the UK's fastest-ever chapter to reach 40 members. It was received on the group's behalf by Durham and Cumbria Executive Director Tony Sillars who described Edwin Chapter's achievement as "fantastic."

From the moment BNI arrived in England's northernmost city, it was always going to be special, as Chapter Director Gary Pollard explained. "People used to say that because of its remote location, Carlisle was

three years behind the rest of the country, but we're proving that local business people are as pro-active as anyone.

"We had over 140 people attend the Chapter's launch in May by which time we already had 21 members and visitors were so impressed with what they saw, we doubled our membership to 42 in just 10 days. It was incredible having over 40 members



GROWING QUICKLY: That's Edwin Chapter

attend just our third breakfast meeting, and it's a reflection of the strong personalities and dynamism within the group, that we haven't dropped below the 40 mark in our first eight months," he added. "We're now looking for just a few new faces to keep the group vibrant, and we'll feel very comfortable with around 45 members."

Keeping Edwin Chapter members very much on their toes is Carlisle's second BNI group, the Eardwulf Chapter, launched less than two months ago but already up to 30 members. Commenting on their healthy rivalry, Tony Sillars said: "Both are doing extremely well – Edwin passed their 1,000th referral in less than five months – but more significantly, BNI has very quickly established a strong reputation in Cumbria."

You can contact Gary Pollard on 01228 515515

Alice shares her Wonderland with BNI

As a visitor to the nearby Conwy and Denbighshire Chapter, estate agent Malcolm Roberts was suitably impressed when he witnessed a £2 million deal being forged over the breakfast table – so much so that he was determined to found a new chapter just up the road in Llandudno.

Less than a year later Malcolm has spearheaded the successful launch of BNI's seventh North Wales chapter, becoming Chapter Director of Llandudno which attracted over 100 local businesses to its recent launch in the town's Gogarth Abbey Hotel the original home of Alice in Wonderland – now renamed Penmorfa Hotel.

As befits a major event in the home of Lewis Carroll's fantasy world, the launch breakfast came complete with a huge Alice-style teapot accompanied, of course, by a sleepy dormouse provided by hotel owner Shelton Fernando.

Malcolm, from Accent Properties estate agents said: "It was especially pleasing that Llandudno completed BNI's first 'Magnificent 7' chapters in North Wales, all established within two years.

"The organisation has been very well received in this region and business is booming. Even before our launch, we had signed up a rich seam of talented core group members, and we were deluged with people wanting to join us at our launch."

Room for business in Knutsford

What happens if your traditionally successful chapter hits a plateau, and the buzz disappears from the breakfast table? Why, you attract new members of course – and perhaps a new venue too! That's proved the double recipe for revival in Knutsford where, after two years of great performance, the Cheshire chapter lost some of its fizz early last year.

To kick-start its revival, a successful Visitors' Day was staged, from which five new members were recruited, one of whom, Tracy Barton – owner of Knutsford's ROOM lounge bar and restaurant – was quick to see the potential of hosting the group's weekly meetings.

The group transferred to ROOM four months ago, since then when it has not looked back, as the smiles in our photo confirms. The Chapter's referral rate is also soaring – not least thanks to Tracy who, in her first two months gave business to nearly two-thirds of her BNI colleagues, earning a 'notable networker' award.



Rugby's Phoenix rises from the ashes!

When your meeting venue burns down just two working days before you're due to arrive for the weekly BNI breakfast, what do you do? Why, network of course!

That was the first thing on Trevor Wood's mind, after he listened in disbelief to the news on

his local radio that that the town's Whitefields Hotel, home to his Phoenix Chapter, had been razed to the ground overnight. "We obviously couldn't meet there the following Tuesday, so Membership Co-ordinator Paul Turner and I contacted everyone by e-mail, asking for new venue suggestions," said Chapter Director Trevor (pictured centre). Fortunately, help was soon at hand, when Brownsover Hall, a hotel and conference centre offered suitable facilities.



Whether it's rubbing shoulders with rugby world cup winner Jonny Wilkinson, spotting international stars at Hampden Park, the home of Scottish football, or mingling with lesser sports celebrities around the UK, BNI members are increasingly doing business at some of the country's top sporting venues. Here, SuccessNet catches up with just a few of the latest chapters to discover the hidden benefits of mixing business with professional sport.



FEEL THE PRIDE: Members of Evolution Chapter in their magnificent new Hampden park venue

Living alongside Hampden's heroes...

True to its challenging name, Glasgow's Evolution Chapter has come of age, relocating from its comfortable but nondescript meeting place in a back-street suburban hotel, to a glamorous new venue in the palatial and dizzy heights of Hampden Park, the prestigious home of Scottish football.

And, like Scotland's national football team which is undergoing something of a renaissance, members of Evolution Chapter reckon they are now well placed to go from strength to strength in their new home. "What true Scot could resist the allure of doing business in the cherished and hallowed venue where the likes of Dennis Law and Kenny Dalglish once wore the blue shirt of their home nation in the glory days?" asked Evolution's Tracy Butler.

"Having blown the whistle on our former venue, we are really delighted to be here at Hampden. The entire chapter has had a lift from our new surroundings and we really do expect this venue to be a great incentive as we go on our latest membership drive. We soon expect to report that the boys (and girls) done good!"

For further information contact Secretary Treasurer, Charlie Smith on 0141-334 3632 or Chapter Director Klaas Dykstra on 01355 276 662.

BNI Scrums down with sporting best

Flying high with the Falcons...

In the world of rugby union, they don't come much bigger these days than the Newcastle Falcons, whose fly half Jonny Wilkinson is now a household name following his last minute winning drop goal against Australia in the recent World Cup Final.

And in the world of BNI, breakfast venues don't come much bigger than the corporate hospitality suite at the Falcons' prestigious Kingston Park Stadium, already home to two of BNI's north-east groups – Collingwood and the aptly-named Falcons Chapter – and the venue for a number of BNI's major regional networking events.

Since the opening of the Falcons' West Stand, Kingston Park has become one of the North-East's premier corporate hospitality locations, and its Premier Club – the first of its kind in rugby – now regularly hosts business meetings and conventions, the first of which was a BNI open day held last autumn, attracting over 150 business people from Teesside, Durham, Cumbria, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

"It is a superb venue for doing business,

and we have been impressed by the level of professionalism the Club has toward its corporate clients and our members," said Lynley Robb, BNI's Northumbria Executive Director. "We are always looking for interesting locations for our business events and we felt the ethos exuded by the rugby club through its facilities and sporting prowess made it an ideal place to bring the region's business people together."

BNI's relationship with the Falcons is however a two-way affair. Lynley added: "Our members are keen to help community projects run by the rugby club, and after our networking event in the autumn we were able to present a cheque for £1,000 to the Club's Community Manager Mark Foster and its Director of Rugby, Rob Andrew, money that will be used to develop the sport throughout the area."

John Parkinson, Chief Executive of Newcastle Falcons said: "We are delighted with our relationship with BNI, and grateful for their support."

"We want respected organisations to choose Kingston Park and I'm sure our highly prestigious surroundings help transfer the atmosphere of on-the-pitch sporting success to any networking or corporate meeting."



THANKS VERY MUCH: Newcastle Falcon's Director of Rugby Rob Andrew (right) receives a cheque from BNI directors Ian and Lynley Robb (left).

...Or simply doing business – Posh-style!

Football stadiums have long been an attractive business location, even for those without the slightest interest in our national sport, and members of Peterborough's Posh Chapter are no exception, having flourished since re-naming themselves and moving to their permanent base at London Road, the well-equipped home of Second Division Peterborough "Posh" United.

Chapter Director Gary Barker said: "It has proved a popular choice. "We meet in the Club's executive suite and while it may not

be quite up to Old Trafford standards, it's still a very productive environment."

Meanwhile, just across the county border, the Leicester Tigers Chapter found their move to Leicester Rugby Club, home of rugby's famous Leicester Tigers, an equally winning formula, while in neighbouring Nottinghamshire, members of Nottingham Forest Chapter haven't looked back since they set up shop in the impressive City Ground, home of football's First Division Nottingham Forest.

Oh, what a perfect presentation

How many people does a BNI member need to present a 60-second slot? One? Two? Surely not more? In the case of Norwich City Chapter accountant Ian Fitch, the answer is into double figures!

With the help of 15 chosen colleagues from around the table, Ian, an accountant with Larking Gowen, recently delivered his one minute infomercial based on a perfect rendition of "Oh What a Perfect Day" – altering the words to reflect his company's expertise in agricultural accountancy.

In fact, Ian's infomercials have become something of a local BNI legend in his three years as a member, although he admits they seem to have less and less to do with accountancy and more to do with the performing arts!

Ian told Successnet: "After joining BNI I soon realised that what really gets the message across is not talking about accountancy, which is boring, but leaving people with something to remember me by!"

For his 'piece de resistance' (the 10-minute presentation) Ian had another trick up his sleeve – staging a 'Mastermind'-style show where he played the role of quizmaster, and selected members were quizzed on their general knowledge of BNI procedures, while being allocated accountancy as their (non) 'chosen' subject – giving Ian the opportunity to provide some witty answers about his expertise.

Fellow member Trevor Gray commented: "Ian won't mind me saying he's not the world's



ALL TOGETHER NOW: Accountant Ian Fitch (second left) prepares his Norwich City colleagues for another rousing session.

greatest singer, but after he'd sung his 60-second infomercial on several occasions, cleverly re-writing songs and serenading the ladies present, it became such a chapter 'special' that I mocked up an 'Ian Fitch's Greatest Hits' CD, complete with label and full cover, and presented it to him during a meeting!"

Ian can be contacted on: 01603 624181

Another 30 chapters launched

BNI completed its 7th year of UK and Ireland expansion with another wave of chapter launches from Devon to Dundee.

In the South West Midlands three new chapters were opened within a single week to herald the latest stream of 30 launches, most notable for BNI's consolidation in the North-East where a further four groups have opened their doors.

New UK chapters include: Banbury, Botham (Weston-super-Mare), Capital (Edinburgh), Castle Point (Leigh-on-Sea), Concorde (Bletchingley), Crawford (Sunderland), Discovery (Dundee), Eardwulf (Carlisle), Heathside (Golders Green), Hercules (Preston), Herts of Oak (Codicote, Herts), Ida (Cockermouth), Jetstream (Stockport), Lowry (Manchester), Lowry (Sunderland), Magna Carta (Bury St. Edmunds), Mid Wiltshire, Parade (Bath), Potteries (Newcastle-under-Lyne), Premier (Liverpool), Rougemont (Exeter), Sterling (Liverpool Street, London), Stourbridge, Swan (High Wycombe), Wednesday Chapter (York) and West Swindon.

Meanwhile, BNI's European expansion continues in Germany and the Netherlands with the launch just before Christmas of two new groups – Tiger Chapter in Berlin (the second to open in the German capital) and the Sapphire Chapter in central Amsterdam.

One-to-one goes a long way!

All members appreciate the value of one-to-one meetings away from their chapters for developing relationships with colleagues, but three Belfast City Chapter members were prepared to go more than the extra mile to make sure theirs was successful!

As well as sharing high business values, fruit and vegetable wholesaler Steven Thompson, accountant Jim McCormick and security consultant Kostas Goumas have long held another common interest – a passion for football. So when Northern Ireland played Greece in last autumn's European Cup quali-

fiers, the opportunity to mix business with pleasure proved just too strong for this intrepid trio – who justified a 3,000-mile round trip to Athens by staging a serious "one-to-two" business meeting in the Greek capital.

Steven, who arranged the trip, said: "Kostas has lived in Ireland for over 20 years, but his native home is Athens, so Jim and I thought the trip would be a great way to get to know more about him and his business, and develop our working relationships. We actually learnt so much more about Kostas's background by meeting his family and old friends."

Call Steven Thompson on 07710 976929

Members fuse in James Watt Chapter

Sparks were flying at a recent meeting of Greenock's James Watt Chapter in celebration of a new business venture formed between two of its members.

Electrician Joe Wilkin and property maintenance consultant Don Morrison, were both sole

traders who had known each other for years, but it wasn't until they joined BNI that they realised just how much more successful they would be if they joined forces!

"We used to work together, but I left to set up as an electrician and Don set up a property maintenance business a few years later. We often worked together on jobs and when Don decided to join BNI, he suggested I join as well," he added.

"As a result we found ourselves working together even more and getting much busier, so we decided to pool our resources and set up a new company, called Customhouse UK. We would never have embarked on this joint venture had it not been for BNI!"

Call Customhouse on 01475 719457



JOINT VENTURE: Greenock's Don Morrison (right) and Joe Wilkin, are reaping the rewards of their new business partnership

Scotland's Spectacular Gala Evening

As glitzy and glamorous as the BAFTA Awards, the BNI Scotland Awards Dinner, held at Glasgow's Marriott Hotel, attracted a record number of more than 350 members and guests from all over Scotland.

Sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland, it is one of BNI's major annual events in the UK, with all Scottish members eligible to win prestigious awards. This time, 28 delighted members received accolades, after coming top in a secret ballot, involving

votes cast by all BNI members in Scotland.

"The highlight of the evening had to be Gordon Merrylees' speech," said Don Spence, the Gala's Master of Ceremonies. "Gordon is the Royal Bank's Senior Regional Manager in Glasgow and I was surprised to learn that this was one of his first speeches to such a large audience. He was a real natural and had the audience in stitches with his humour, delivering a powerful message about the Bank's relationship with BNI."

Other guest speakers included former British Motor Rally Champion, Penny

Mallory and former Governor of Barlinnie Prison, Robbie Glen. BNI National Director Gillian Lawson opened the golden envelopes to reveal the winning names, and Marion Gray, RBS Head of Business Banking and Anita Hunt, RBS Regional Managing Director in Scotland, presented the awards.

Don added: "The event gets better every year!" And, to prove the point, the executive directors of Scotland's three regions were presented with a special award at the recent International Directors' Conference, for staging BNI's best regional event of 2003.

Julian's 1000th sign of success!



SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Julian Elwood has 1,000 reasons (almost) to be pleased he joined BNI.

As Julian Elwood signed off his 1000th job barely two years after starting his own business, he said a big 'thank you' to BNI!

Julian had given up a good job in marketing and a nice home in Berkshire to return to his native town of Ipswich, where he was convinced he could put his marketing skills to better use by working for himself. But, despite great support from his wife Paula and the usual flush of optimism that accompanies most new ventures, his new company Sign Dynamics had a slow start – even though Julian remained convinced that the 'man and a van' sign industry would benefit from his more sophisticated computer graphics technology

and a professional approach to customer service that had been lacking in the sector.

"Fortunately, a couple of months after setting up in business, I joined Ipswich's Wolsey Chapter, and that represented a turning point," he said. "I'd come across BNI in my previous job and was aware of the benefits of networking. My new BNI colleagues helped me achieve my goals much more quickly than I'd expected, and just as important, they were a great support to me during the early period when things weren't going quite so well."

Two years on, and Sign Dynamics has just completed its 1000th job with an eye-catching Smart Car livery for a children's nursery. Julian added: "Things are getting better all the time. Last year we won the Anglian Business Awards Start Up Business of the Year and that had a very positive knock-on effect. This year is proving to be even better and I'd reckon at least 20% of our business comes through BNI."

"We've built a great team, our turnover has doubled, the company has transformed from a fledgling enterprise to an established firm and now we're looking forward to an even more dynamic future," he added. "Much of that can be directly attributed to BNI."

Contact Julian on 01473 747510

CHAPTER & VERSE



BY PAUL HARDMAN, OSCAR CHAPTER FOR PORTFOLIO RING 01 704 543 981



SuccessNet is published quarterly and distributed free of charge by BNI to all members. We are delighted that with each successive edition, we receive more and more of your emails, letters and calls, asking us to include your news or picture item in the newsletter.

However, the advent of electronic mail is causing us a real headache, because more than half the emails we receive don't contain any contact details, other than the sender's email address. Since not everyone checks their email accounts frequently, this leads to considerable delays and extra work in following up your submissions.

You & SuccessNet

If you want your item to be considered for inclusion in SuccessNet, make sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and your address! But note that, faced with up to 200 editorial contributions per issue, we cannot squeeze all of them into our 16-page publication. Some stories may be held over for a later edition, but it means some of your contributions may never see the light of day. Please don't be deterred from sending in your news and views because we DO want to hear from you.

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