

BNI®

SuccessNet

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A new milestone has been reached in BNI's dramatic eight-year expansion across the UK and Ireland, with the late-November launch of our 500th chapter - the appropriately named Vision Chapter in Palmers Green, North London.

500notout

London's Vision Chapter marks a milestone

Vision's arrival in the northern suburbs of the capital may not have been the biggest or the grandest event in BNI's remarkable UK history, but its initial 26 members are determined to make an early impact on the local business community, befitting their chapter's landmark status.

Inaugural Chapter Director, independent financial adviser Gordon Craft said: "We only learned after our launch meeting that we had become BNI's 500th chapter in the UK and Ireland, but if ever a new group needed an extra incentive to get off to a good start, we've now got it! We're confident that BNI is going to make a big impression in this part of London, and it's no co-incidence that another core group - Business 4 U - is already meeting at the same venue which will soon give Palmers Green its second chapter."

Since launching its very first chapter - just a few miles across north-west London at Pinner - in December 1996,



BNI has grown at a phenomenal rate, averaging more than five new groups every month, and establishing a strong presence in nearly every part of the UK and Ireland.

Today, BNI's UK/Ireland membership stands at almost 12,000, reaffirming its position as by far the largest business networking organisation both in Britain and throughout the world. The picture is the same in mainland Europe, with scores of new chapters being opened in towns and cities stretching from Scandanavia to Southern Spain.

Typical of BNI's expansion even across Britain's more 'remote' regions, is its consolidation on Scotland's east coast, where the modestly populated city of Dundee (which funded Ernest Shackleton's epic Antarctic voyage in RS Discovery), recently launched its third BNI

chapter in three years. Advance Chapter meets at The Queen's Hotel, following hard on the heels of its first group, Tayside, and the aptly-titled Discovery Chapter, now in its second year.

Among the other chapters launched during the past few weeks are: Apollo (Lytham St. Anne's), Burton (Neath/Port Talbot), Castle (Scotland), County (Taunton), Dove (East Staffs), Eden (Penrith), Flagship (Manchester), Fusion (Manchester), Gold Cup (Cheltenham), Heyhoe (Clevedon), Hogarth Chapter (Chiswick), Kingsley (S.W. Ireland), Premier (Sussex), Ringwood (Hants), Riverside (Liverpool), Ruby (High Wycombe), Sandwich (Kent), Sheppard (Bristol), Sittingbourne (Kent), and Wye Valley (S.W. Midlands). New mainland Europe chapters include: Jaguar and Panther Chapters (both Berlin), Rembrandt (Frankfurt), Morgenstund (Bonn-Aachen) and Mozart (Vienna). •



you and SuccessNet...

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 items in the newsletter - but please remember we don't have space for them all!

If you wish to contact us by email regarding an item to be considered for inclusion in SuccessNet, make sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and your address. •

NEWS



Big breakfast admission? Bring a silly hat!



One hundred members from nine chapters around the western home counties turned out for the region's annual 'Big Breakfast' held at Windsor Race Course just before Christmas, when they exchanged potential referrals worth over £1.25 million!

The inter-chapter networking event is so popular that there is not even time for participants to present their 60-second infomercials. Instead, each attendee is allowed only to tell his or her Big Breakfast colleagues: "My dream referral would be an introduction to".

And the silly hats? Everyone attending is told they must wear a purpose-made hat

depicting the trade or profession they are representing, so that others will at least know who to look for in the fervent post-breakfast networking melee. Windsor Chapter's mortgage broker Luke Bevan and Wokingham's lifestyle management consultant Julie Binding shared first prize for the best headwear creations, each receiving a bottle of champagne. ●



Nine more members have joined BNI's elite Gold Club, after introducing at least six new members to their respective chapters. They are: Katherine Long (Arrow Chapter), Reg Toy (Bracknell), Caroline Bevan and Brian Fothergill (Cheltenham), Berkeley Harris (Forest, Nottingham), Robert Murdy (Ilkeston), Shaun Lewis (Invincible, Preston), Philip Hutchinson (Kettering), and Judith Kiely of Quinnell (Cardiff) Chapter. Meanwhile colleagues of existing black badge holder, financial planner Howard Ellett from Oswestry's Marches Chapter, are wondering whether to give him a second matching badge, following his success in recruiting a further six new members during 2004! ●

CIVIC RECEPTION FOR LINCOLN MEMBERS

Everyone knows that BNI membership offers numerous benefits, but it can also produce some interesting surprises, as members of Lincoln's Bailgate Chapter recently discovered when they became the first BNI UK group to be given a civic reception!

Their invitation to attend the luncheon at the city's historic Stonebow came from no lesser dignitary than His Right Worshipful the Mayor of Lincoln, Councillor Eddie Strengiel who, despite the demands of his high office and his own business, has remained an active BNI member, attending all of Bailgate's breakfast meetings.

A founder member and former chapter director, Eddie decided to invite all his BNI colleagues for a civic lunch in recognition of their continued support for his business, Phoenix Independent Financial Services – not

A MAYORAL AFFAIR (Left): Members of Lincoln's Bailgate Chapter at their civic reception hosted by colleague Eddie Strengiel – the city's incumbent Mayor.



least during his mayoral year when they helped keep his business buoyant while he attended to civic duties.

The Chapter's photographer Dave Parker of Odyssey Photographic was on hand to capture the memorable event, which included a guided tour and lunch supplemented with wines donated by Lincoln's twin town of Neustadt in Germany. Dave said: "The Mayor gave us a fantastic day. It was also the first time many members had ever been inside the wonderful Guildhall building right in the heart of our city." ●

Contact Dave Parker on 07949 988171 or 01522 568904

NEWS IN BRIEF

TA(S)TE OF SUCCESS PUTS ROY IN LINE FOR A BAFTA

One of BNI's most enterprising London multimedia specialists, Roy Clark (pictured below), a member of the six-month-old Brunel Chapter in Farringdon, has been shortlisted for a BAFTA Award after producing a website for the Tate Gallery that provides would-be artists and creatives throughout the world with a unique introductory learning course to modern and contemporary art.



EURO CONFERENCE MEMBERS' DAY

This year's European Conference Members' Day takes place in Bristol on 15th April. If you're looking to strike up strategic alliances with other members, book your places quickly.

MIKE 'SIGNS' UP FOR TOP RUGBY CLUB



It took Lytham St. Anne's member Mike Dawson just a few weeks to 'sign up' for one of the North-West's top rugby clubs, after his new Apollo Chapter made its home at the clubhouse.

Lancashire's newest chapter is based at Fylde Rugby Club in Lytham where 22 'players' launched their BNI careers less

than three months ago, all eager to pass, receive and tackle business for each other. And, while the team's workrate is already producing some promising results, for local sign-maker Mike, his new business has struck a winning streak – converting a rich supply of referrals!

Mike's new venture, Dawson Signs & Co, had barely got off the ground when he became one of Apollo's founder members but he says that from a standing start, BNI has accelerated his company beyond his highest expectations. "In the last two months, my business has exploded, mainly as a result of the referrals and introductions I've received through the chapter."

Fittingly, one of his first conversions was from a referral to produce all the advertising signage for the chapter's host rugby club. "It was great to be

given the contract by Fylde Rugby Club, and through the Club, I have gained introductions to many other division one and two clubs across the county, giving my business a boost and also enabling me to repay my chapter colleagues with some quality referrals."

Mike is pictured (right) with Fylde's fly-half and captain Mike Scott, the 30-year old English Counties player who is now being sponsored by Apollo members. Chapter Director John Murphy commented: "Who knows, if we keep up our initial pace, we may be able to sponsor the whole team next year!"

Visitor Host Gerry Townson said: "It's a young team but the spirit is tremendous and we will be starting the new year with close on 30 members. We're looking forward to a prosperous season." ●

Contact Gerry on 0808 100 3666

BREAKFAST BONANZA



Raw Power, the Leeds-based Royal Armouries Wednesday Chapter enlisted the help of Guy Fawkes and other 'sinister' characters to ensure their early November breakfast meeting went off with an even bigger bang than usual.

Chapter Director Trevor Hunter had asked all members to incorporate a Guy Fawkes or Halloween theme into their 60-second infomercials and, leading from the front, he arrived in full Guy Fawkes costume and script littered with Jacobean epithets.

Recognising that his plot had been rumbled, Trevor wisely decided to dispose of his accompanying 'barrel of gunpowder' (looking suspiciously like a five-litre barrel of a well known lager) as a door prize, cheerfully received by Andy MacDonald. ♦

Contact Trevor on 0113 393 0707

Our picture shows (from left to right) Mike Kennedy, Una Doyle, and Peter Selby, who were all notable contributors to the occasion, with Trevor in his Guy Fawkes outfit. He added: "Members of Raw Power believe in living up to our name, and we'll have fun all the way to plotting even more referrals!"

RAW POWER

**has fun on the way to
more referrals!**

Visitors Day

In BNI, you just never know what might happen...

It was the end of the working week and for north London designer Gerry Elliott, trying to find someone to bring to his chapter's Visitor's Day wasn't his highest priority. Having exhausted his personal contacts, he turned to the Yellow Pages and thought: "What sort of person will take a call from a designer on a Friday afternoon? Printers will, because they'll think I've got work for them...."



It took Gerry just six 'cold' calls before he hit an unexpected jackpot. "I noticed a local number and rang it, to find the printer was located just yards away from my studio in Golders Green."

What happened next, led not only to the printer – Mike Levine of Freedman Brothers – becoming the newest member of Gerry's Camden Chapter, but also sowed the seeds for a highly profitable alliance between the neighbouring businessmen.

Mike (pictured left) invited Gerry (right) around, and showed him work he'd been doing for a large client, the Hoar Cross Hall/Eden Day Spa Group. Mike acknowledged that while his print production was second-to-none, he was finding it difficult to come up with more ambitious designs and marketing services.

As a talented designer, Gerry knew he could provide the right creative solutions, so he persuaded Mike to let him develop some concepts and take him along on his next client visit. "Mike

introduced me as part of his team and, after looking at my proposals, they wanted the lot," said Gerry.

Barely seven months later, that single piece of business has been worth £20,000 to Gerry and led to additional projects including a new website, and business for other chapter members, photographer Tom Langford and web developer Phillip Franklin. For Mike, meeting Gerry has helped him secure an important client, and led to him receiving BNI referrals valued at £40,000.

"It's strange how things turn out," said Gerry. "I joined BNI a couple of years ago and it has been amazing. In my first year, I received £70,000 worth of referrals and over the last 12 months I've gained £80,000 through my chapter. Three-quarters of our clients have come from BNI. I won't think twice again about inviting total strangers to a meeting. You just never know what might happen...." ♦

Contact Gerry on 020 8201 8020 and Mike on 020 8458 3220

LAWSONS' LORE

Five hundred chapters strong and another milestone passed! In just eight years, BNI has taken the UK and Ireland by storm, establishing itself as Europe's most potent business networking organisation, and growing bigger and stronger every month.

While 12,000 members can't be wrong, we know that size isn't everything, and simply having chapters throughout the UK and Ireland is not, in itself, proof of our success. For that, we have to look deeper, but the real indicators of our incredible progress are not hard to find: more groups reaching target membership, more members participating in our training workshops and of course, an ever-greater volume of business being passed across breakfast tables. These are the statistics that matter.

"...BNI has transformed the business fortunes – and often the lives – of its members"

Browse through the pages of any SuccessNet, and you will come across numerous examples of how BNI has transformed the business fortunes – and often the lives – of its members. Time and time again, we hear and read of members who originally harboured reservations about the Giver's Gain philosophy but who soon found BNI membership was dramatically improving their business skills and giving them an advantage over their competitors, resulting in personal and financial gain.

While none of this is a surprise to those of us who have witnessed the power of BNI over a longer period, it offers continuing reassurance to members that BNI not only provides a superb foundation for growing almost any business, but is undoubtedly the best value-for-money investment you can make. ●

Martha Cullen

COLLEAGUES GIVE WENDY A TOTAL BUSINESS MAKEOVER

When Wendy Johnson wanted to re-focus her secretarial business to attract different clients, she naturally turned to her Cheltenham Chapter colleagues for help.

A BNI member for nearly two years, Wendy wanted to reduce the number of referrals her business, Total Secretarial Solutions, was receiving for telesales work and instead, gain business that would use her typing, administration, software training, presentation and event management skills.

"To do that I needed to make sure potential clients knew what my business was good at, so where better to look than the services of my fellow BNI members. I wanted words for my website, pictures and publicity. It was fantastic because the people who could do all this for me were at my BNI meetings every Friday," she said.

Tim Ferguson of Marketing Words worked with Wendy to make sure that everyone who logs onto her website now knows exactly what she does, and

photographer Kirsty Limburn of Fingerprint Photography created some very different pictures (one of which is shown here). "She suggested a juggling picture because I am always working on different projects. I was a bit sceptical at first but everyone who has seen the shots thinks they are marvellous," said Wendy.

Meanwhile Ray Clancy of Gotcha PR who is publicising her business, commented: "Wendy has done everything right. She knows what clients she wants, she knows she has to tell people what she does and she now has some fantastic promotional materials that will help set her aside from her competitors."

Among other BNI members to get involved were Rapid-Print who produced Wendy's new business cards and Beaverpark who provided all her stationery. "It is great that all my chapter colleagues now know exactly what referrals I'm looking for, because many of them have been directly involved in my total makeover," Wendy added. ●

Contact Wendy on 01242 862321

getting in touch...

UK National Office

Business Network International plc,
BNI House, Church Street,
Rickmansworth WD3 1BS

Tel +44 (0)1923 891 999

Fax +44 (0)1923 891 998

Email bniuk@eurobni.com

Executive Editor: Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director

Editor: Malcolm Grosvenor
WriteAngle Communications, New House, Palmer Crescent,
Kingston Upon Thames KT1 2QT

Tel: 020 8541 0600 Fax: 020 8546 1611

Email: successnet@write-angle.co.uk

Design and Production: Origin 1
52 Wenta Business Centre, Colne Way,
Watford WD24 7ND

Tel: 01923 246116 Fax: 01923 246113

Email: info@origin-1.co.uk

Printed by: Tony Bakin, Alpine Press, Tel: 01923 269777

www.bni-europe.com



fastest weekly meeting on record

Cheers, to the Spirit of Business!

It's official! The Spirit of Business Chapter in Loughton, Essex have run the fastest weekly meeting on record, albeit while members were in decidedly festive mood!

To meet the challenge, the Chapter swapped its usual breakfast session for a Christmas lunch, greeting everyone with bucks fizz, party hats and Christmas crackers before launching into a non-stop round of 60-second slots from all members and guests.

"It was a great idea and worked well, but no-one should get the idea that we weren't serious about maintaining our usual high business standards. We still passed nearly 50 referrals and there was a very

businesslike approach to the normal agenda – even if we did complete it in less than an hour. We know from the subsequent business generated that our record-setting meeting did not lessen the standard of the referrals," said Chapter Director John Gardner, pictured above with his members.

In fact the five-year old chapter celebrated another 'first' a few weeks earlier, passing its 10,000th business referral between members, whose total value exceeds £1million. Members showed their altruistic side by staging a breakfast quiz to raise a further £750 for local charity, First Step. ●

Contact
Christine Baker
on 020 8508 1270

CHAPTER ONE MAKE SPARKS FLY FOR ELECTRICIAN



Five years ago, Harrow electrician Raza Kirmani was making a very modest living, his one-man business turning over just

£25,000 a year. So, he joined BNI's Chapter One, hoping to boost his income with a few referrals to fit extra lights and power points.

Today, Raza's company has expanded so rapidly that, in his own words, "it has become too big to remain just an electrical installations firm." So this month, Raza is relinquishing his 'Mr Sparks' chair – swapping it for a new one as the Chapter's property refurbishment and project management consultant.

"The truth is that thanks almost entirely to the referrals and the contacts I have made through BNI, we have become victims of our own success. I now have a strong team of skilled staff but we were increasingly finding clients also wanted us to do their plumbing, carpentry and building alterations work, and

time and again our electrical work was being hampered because we couldn't find the right craftsmen to do the associated jobs.

"We enjoy a first class reputation among our clients, and they were instrumental in persuading us to develop the business into a full-service property company," Raza added.

Within three years of joining BNI, Raza's turnover had almost quadrupled, but since re-branding his company, it has become a much bigger business. Would he still find time to attend chapter meetings? "Absolutely! I can't imagine being involved in any commercial venture without BNI. Membership is a vital ingredient in developing any new business." ●

Contact Raza on 020 8966 9279

Nationwide franchise urges BNI membership

A major nationwide organisation is urging all of its franchise holders to join BNI, after seeing the instant success that membership has delivered for its master franchisee in Scotland.

Chris Bunch, the immediate past Secretary/Treasurer of Edinburgh West Chapter recently decided to switch his membership classification from promoting office furnishings to marketing Protex, the world's most advanced vehicle puncture repair system – since when his business fortunes have taken off thanks to a flood of referrals from BNI colleagues.

So buoyant has his new venture become, Chris now believes BNI could be the key to success for most franchised businesses, and he wasted no time encouraging his Protex bosses to recommend all their franchisees to join a local BNI chapter. When they heard Chris attribute his immediate and impressive results to networking through BNI, they were happy to take his advice.

Chris told SuccessNet: "I had been involved with BNI for around a year

promoting my business interiors firm and, if I'm honest, it didn't really help me much. But from the moment I introduced my new puncture repair franchise to chapter colleagues, there has been a remarkable increase in the amount of referrals I receive.

"I have now learnt how BNI works and just how good its networking system is for franchised businesses. That's why Protex nationally is urging all its franchise holders to join. The structured networking approach is certainly paying off for me and I'm sure it will be just as successful for other franchisees."

The Edinburgh entrepreneur who recently gained national headlines with his new venture added: "Every time I demonstrate the new system at BNI meetings with my mobile rig, colleagues are enthused by the benefits, and I tell them that a puncture need never again make them miss a BNI breakfast, an urgent business delivery or a vital meeting!" •

Call Chris Bunch on 0845 130 1902



A major concern for most newcomers to BNI is how they will find good referrals. And, if they're running a solo business, their anxiety is even greater.

But, Aberdeen Bravo Chapter's Hazel Arnold has spent two years destroying the myth that sole traders struggle to find the right referrals. She joined BNI to promote her property development and refurbishment business, since when she has passed more than 100 quality referrals.

Hazel dispels the referrals myth

She said: "The keys are recognising that everyone you meet is a potential business associate for one of your chapter colleagues if not for yourself, listening carefully, and being aware of people's needs. The benefits are two-way, because clients and contacts are delighted when I refer them to someone they know I trust, and my chapter colleagues acknowledge that I will only pass them sound referrals."

Membership Co-ordinator Alan Moir commented: "Hazel quickly took on board the old adage that we have two ears and one mouth and should use them proportionately. She is a shining example to every sole trader of how to succeed in BNI." •

Contact Hazel on 01224 312100

CHAPTER

SOUTH COTSWOLDS TAKES OFF

For most of us, the excitement begins after we arrive for our BNI breakfast session, but since moving to the clubhouse of a busy airfield, members of South Cotswold Chapter are finding the 'buzz' starts during the drive to their weekly meetings.

"Our early morning drive to BNI breakfasts now entails members negotiating sections of a live runway at Kemble Airfield, to reach our venue at AV8!! If there were prizes for getting the highest adrenaline rush prior to a meeting I think we'd definitely win," said Chapter Director Susan Hogan. "We now find ourselves giving our 60

HAVE YOU FOUND A BNI 12

Like all good ideas, it was born out of common sense, if not necessity. And, like all bright ideas, it has captured the imaginations of everyone it has touched.

What is it? Why, 'BNI 12' of course – an extra, monthly dynamic networking session that starts on the dot of midday, lasts no more than two hours and, wait for it, is producing fantastic business for members in

those parts of the UK where it has been trialled over the past 18 months.

The brainchild of Merseyside Executive Director Terry Hamill, BNI 12 has three attractions:

- It provides the perfect forum for members from different chapters in a given area to network – especially useful for members who want to find a business not represented in their group.
- It creates a less demanding, more relaxing opportunity for visitors to learn about BNI – away from the structured formalities that guide chapter meetings.
- It appeals to members and visitors who feel more alive to doing business over lunchtime.

Terry said: "BNI 12 works brilliantly, not as an alternative to chapter meetings but as an additional platform for networking. This is not a soft option for lazy members who don't like getting out of bed. At our sessions, nobody is allowed to eat or sit down, and everyone must follow an agreed procedure.

"It starts with each participant asking another member or visitor who they are and what they do, before moving straight to 'How can I help you get more business?' It's all about Giver's Gain, and the sessions are brisk, energetic and businesslike. People go there to make new contacts and forge new relationships," he added.

West Country chapters have also been feeling the force of BNI 12 since Area Director Sarah Owen adopted the initiative. Unlike Merseyside, the venue is kept secret until 10 days before each event. "We've found it keeps everyone on their toes and keen to be involved," said Sarah. "We don't allow gate-crashers. Everyone who attends has been invited or told us they want to be there."

If your region has not yet discovered the networking power of BNI 12, ask your chapter's leadership team to request a pilot session in your area. You may miss out on lunch – but you could leave with something far more valuable! •



CHECK!



second slots accompanied by amazing aeronautical displays."

However the excitement is also matched inside the meeting room where at the chapter's recent visitors day, guests were treated to the sight of notable networker Susan Godding passing an amazing 115 referrals. "Being

so close to the action certainly adds something to our meetings, and we hope it will help us attract even more members from Cirencester, Malmesbury and Stroud." •

Contact Susan Hogan
on 01285 712260 or at:
susan@hoganmarketing.co.uk

Flagship's pest-free zone

When Manchester's new Flagship Chapter came to search for its first home, members little realised that one of their number – pest control specialist Gregg Derbyshire – would insist on giving any BNI venue his seal of approval.

"It's not that Gregg is fussy, just that he has been behind the scenes of so many hotels and restaurants, and he wasn't going to let members meet in anything less than a healthy environment," said Chapter Director, Stuart Goodier.

Happily, several venues met his demanding criteria, and Flagship Chapter was duly launched at the Freemasons Hall in the city centre. •

Contact Gregg on 07815 877317

While everyone in BNI aims high, a dozen members of Halifax's Two Valleys Chapter are so confident of their future success they've just held a unique 'dress rehearsal' for their intended business achievements in five years time.

They were among 45 'high flyers' who took part in a "Celebrating Success 2009" dinner, staged by Chapter member Judith Wright, after completing one of her consultancy's performance fulfilment courses.

Well, what will you be doing in 2009?



TURNING DREAMS INTO REALITY:
Two Rivers member Maggie Wilson with husband Neil at the 'Celebrating Success 2009' Dinner.

Dressed for, and acting out the roles they want to have acquired by the turn of the decade, guests arrived in limousines, some wearing haute couture costumes, and bringing with them the trappings of the success they aim to have achieved by 2009. Would-be authors brought copies of their 'books', others had photographs of the villas and apartments they plan to have bought in five years time, and some produced pictures of animals and family additions they expect to have.

As the event's creator, Judith had naturally awarded herself the title of 'Business Woman of the Year 2009'. She said: "The aim was to let people's dreams become reality for the night, focusing their minds on the future. Judging by the number of phone calls I received afterwards, it had the desired effect. Several have since told me they are taking practical steps to achieving their goals."

Two Valleys member Maggie Wilson said: "Living out my dream to run my clothing business from Spain by 2009 has given me the belief to know I can achieve it. I'm now taking action to make my dream become reality." •

Contact Judith Wright on 01422 375034.

When colour management specialist Jon Marks attended a meeting of his Hampstead & Highgate Chapter 18 months ago, he had no idea his modest business was about to be turned upside down by that week's ten-minute speaker.

Today, after a remarkable year of growth, he is about to become one of the biggest players in his specialist field – and says he owes his thriving new business venture entirely to BNI, and chapter colleague Andrew Fall from WordsAndPeople.com, whose presentation was to prove so dramatic.

Jon had been working in colour management for some time, ensuring the colour accuracy of equipment such as digital cameras and printers, but he was looking for a way to radically expand his business and reach consumer markets. "Andrew's presentation that day was about creating an 'e-commerce' (online) business," said Jon. "Listening to him, I realised this was exactly what I needed for my business, so I asked Andrew to discuss the possibilities."

At that initial meeting, Jon and Andrew developed the basic concept for what was to become 'Colourtools.com, an online shopping facility for a whole range of colour products. "I had expected it to offer no more than 40 product lines, but as we started building the site this figure grew and grew and, by the time we launched the site, there were 150 product lines on offer," he added.

BNI BUILDS JON'S BUSINESS IN 10 MINUTES

Original expectations for colourtools.com were very modest, Jon recalled. "I thought it would take many weeks before anyone even found the site, but to my astonishment, within four days of launch, colourtools.com was leading the search engine listings and my first sales started coming in immediately. In fact, the search engines were finding colourtools.com so effectively that within six months, the site was getting over 20,000 visits a month."

Colourtools.com recently marked its first birthday by entering its next phase of development, involving a complete re-design of the site with a further 100 products, automated mailing lists and online credit facilities.

One year on, Jon still thinks back to that 10 minute presentation. "I'd returned from holiday the day before and was so jet-lagged I nearly arranged for a substitute to stand in for me. If I hadn't gone along and heard Andrew's presentation, it may never have occurred to me to go down this route – a direction that has transformed my business." •

Contact Jon Marks on 020 8449 0090
and Andrew Fall on 020 8207 6864

A ROSY FUTURE (Right):
Jon Marks and Andrew Fall are pictured on the colourtools.com stand at a recent trade exhibition.



Super chef Paul Linden is used to serving up tasty dishes – but one recent ‘order’ took even him by surprise.

A member of Stanmore’s Bentley Chapter, Paul decided to attend the region’s Members’ Day at Heathrow, wearing his chef’s hat and whites, hoping it would stand him out from the business suits and skirts. And he was right!

“Within half an hour of my arrival during the open networking session, at least eight members approached me – one of them, Ingrid von Bratt from Ealing Chapter, with a referral worth £7,500 to provide a four-course dinner for 250 people at a charity event in March. In total, I gained referrals worth £8,000 in that half hour alone. It was quite amazing.”

In fact, since he joined BNI just eight months ago, colleagues have cooked up a lot more referrals for Paul’s company, Dining in Style. “I’ve now received business totalling over £16,000, so I’m very happy. I’d hoped that wearing my chef’s uniform at the networking day would create some interest, but the outcome surprised even me.” •

Contact Paul on 020 8866 7856
and see his mouthwatering dishes
at: www.dininginstyle.co.uk

**MEMBERS DAY
COOKS
UP**

**TASTY REFERRAL
FOR SUPER CHEF**



NO TIME TO LOSE! (Above): Juliet Price, Rebecca Godfrey and Stuart Harland taking BNI business in their stride, Beatles-style!

CROSSING THE FRONTIERS OF BUSINESS NETWORKING

Colchester human resources firm, Park City Consulting, doesn’t believe in doing things by halves: it has just seen two more of its management team appointed as BNI chapter directors, following hard on the heels of its consultancy boss Juliet Price who held the same office two years ago!

Business Development Manager Rebecca Godfrey is now Chapter Director of Colchester One, where Juliet served her term at the top in 2002, while Operations Manager Stuart Harland has taken the chair at Bury St Edmunds’ Gung Ho Chapter.

“We’re Gung Ho by name and Gung Ho by nature - enthusiastic, keen and eager to do business,” said Stuart, who has found the BNI approach to be a very effective way of generating new opportunities for his firm.

Rebecca added: “BNI has helped us grow our own business significantly, which is why Juliet, our Managing Director, had no hesitation in supporting our commitment to chairing our respective chapters.”

Juliet, a founder member of the Colchester One group five years ago told SuccessNet: “I am very proud of the contribution that both Stuart and Rebecca are making to the local business community. Being a chapter director is a big commitment but I know from personal experience they will find it very rewarding.”

Colchester One meets for breakfast on Thursday mornings at the Rose and Crown Hotel, while Gung Ho members meet at The Lucky Break, the Old Maltings on Friday mornings. •

For further information, contact Rebecca or Stuart at Park City Consulting on 01206 212150



train&gain

MAKING IT WORK: DOING THE BASIC THINGS WELL

By **Rick Armstrong**, Chapter Director of
Network Central at Headingley, Leeds

Referral Slip
"The" Business Referral Organisation™

BNI

Date: *the universe*
From: *the giver*
To: *the most amazing*
Referral: *contract*
Comments: *contract*

Contact Phone: _____

☐ GIVEN YOUR CARD ☐ TOLD THEM YOU WOULD CALL

WHITE - RECEIVER / PINK - CHAPTER / YELLOW - YOUR REFERENCE

HOW HOT IS THIS REFERRAL? (TICK ONE BOX)

5 ☒ 4 3 2 1

HOT TIPID

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For me this concept is translated simply in BNI's core principle of Giver's Gain, and I think a lot members go wrong, either because they operate with the words the wrong way around or they think they can miss out the word 'giver' completely, and skip straight to the gain.

In my time with BNI, I have visited many

successful chapters and seen how its core philosophy works, when applied properly. However, I have also seen how it can go wrong, visiting chapters where things are clearly not quite right.

This is nearly always because, while it should be easy for members to adapt to BNI's philosophy, some simply don't get it. Occasionally, it's because they are ignoring key details, but in the main it comes down to attitude. If you think you can do great things you probably will; if you think you

can't, guess what, you probably won't. The attitude to adopt, both inside and out of BNI, must be one of 'Think I can, and do'.

So, how do we help chapter leadership teams tackle such fundamental issues? Surely we do it by seeking out those whose networking skills are already high and encourage them into leadership, identifying core players who possess the BNI spirit and for whom support and guidance is all they need to succeed, and locating the weaker members - setting them on solid foundations so they will see how simple it is to achieve their aspirations.

However, it is also important to identify those who will never get the message. Sometimes for the good of the whole group, you have to acknowledge that an individual is pulling the chapter down and get them out. I don't say this lightly but if necessary, I do not hesitate in removing a member.

Show your chapter that it is a privilege to be accepted to join. In their desire to increase numbers, some leadership teams demean the group by allowing the wrong people in, then wonder why other members

In his best-selling book, *The Celestine Prophecy*, American author James Redfield describes a concept for life. Encapsulated in a basic premise, he suggests that when you give without the requirement of a return, the Universe rewards you in ways unimaginable. The trick is to give and leave it up to the receiver (ultimately, the Universe) to decide how, when and if the act of giving will be repaid. Expect nothing; get access to the Universe, wow!

leave. If those same leadership teams were recruiting for their own business, would they take the first person who applied? Of course not; they'd want the best person they could find, and go to great lengths to interview as many candidates as possible.

Every member knows that attracting visitors is important, but just because a visitor completes an application form, it should not follow that they will automatically become a member. We should only want the best visitors to join us.

“If you think you can do great things you probably will; if you think you can't, guess what, you probably won't.”

Leadership teams must recognise they have just 24 weeks to make a difference but, judging by some of the comments I hear, it's easy to see why grand ideas quickly become weekly mediocrity. *'Listen, it's easy, you just read the script'... We did 12 referrals this week (with 21 members) so give yourselves a round of applause'....'The membership co-ordinator's forgotten his report but he can use last week's - they won't notice',* are just three such remarks I've recently come across.

After 20 years of development, we do not have to reinvent the BNI wheel, simply strive to improve it, ensuring members understand and follow the guidance given, and receive the support to succeed.

I believe tremendous things will happen in the world of BNI over the next two years. We should see membership pass 100,000. Forty-plus member chapters will become the norm in many regions, and chapters will have the chance to increase business not just locally, but internationally through twinning.

In my own chapter, we have introduced a new role, that of Internet Coordinator to promote the chapter on the web and, in the foreseeable future I hope to see networking and presentational skills training becoming obligatory, not optional, for all members within the six months of joining.

Members need to be proud of BNI. They belong to the largest referral organisation in the world because it works. Our task is to protect this heritage and build on it. For leadership teams, this means having a sound strategy, employing the right tactics and doing the basic things well. ●

Rick Armstrong is Practice Director of Leeds-based law firm McKay & Partners. Contact him on 0845 123 5571

TRAINING! WHO NEEDS IT?

As I was going about my work four years ago I overheard my client talking to a colleague about BNI. I clicked on the web site and the rest is history. I had always imagined that I found BNI but, actually, it found me. I loved my work but I needed a network and one phone call was all it took to link me to a new chapter in Angus which was preparing to launch.

This new chapter would never have got off the ground without the synergy provided by the late Ron Hain and the energy of my fellow founder members. It is now a vibrant energetic chapter but none of it would have happened without the willingness of its members to learn, and to keep learning more effective ways of building their own businesses, by helping to build the businesses of their BNI colleagues.

A commitment to life-long learning was something crystallised for me by my own life coach Jo Middlemiss. Her belief that AWARENESS is the key to building not only your life, but your business and relationships led me on the journey to personal fulfilment and self discovery.

“I loved my work but I needed a network and one phone call was all it took to link me to a new chapter.”

With that in mind, I now have a complete belief that we can never know it all. However, research has shown that our 'finite' brains are pretty much hard-wired to saying "No". So, when I'm inviting BNI members to take part in exclusive and innovative training, I like to pose questions that will appeal to this natural instinct.

- Would you like your competitors to do much better than you?
- Would you like to miss a fantastic opportunity to build and grow your business?
- Would you think of avoiding the chance to nurture your best customer/client?
- Would you throw away the free training, which in the market place would cost in excess of £1,000 per annum?

BNI members who are not experiencing success could well ask themselves a few tough questions:

- Do you really know how to find great, quality referrals?
- Do you honestly know how to conduct an effective one-to-one?
- Are you completely confident about creating and delivering your 60-second and 10-minute presentations?
- Do you play your full part as a member of the visitor team, membership committee, or leadership team?
- Are you a skilful inviter of visitors?

And finally can you think of a single good reason not to take up the opportunities offered you through the BNI training package?

Training. Who needs it? We all do! ●

Iain Whyte Executive Director, Scotland South & East and Scotland North



More and more BNI members are winning awards from their own professional and industry peers, by proving themselves to be among the best in their respective trades and professions. Without exception, they attribute at least some of their success to BNI membership – either because of the extra business it has brought them, or the additional business skills it has given them. Here SuccessNet focuses on some of Yorkshire's award-winning members....

QUEST FOR SUCCESS PAYS OFF

Showing you don't need to be based in a big city to win top awards, a few miles away in Harrogate, Tuesday Chapter member Quest Public Relations has been hailed as the 'Best Small Team' at the Institute of Public Relations' annual Yorkshire & Lincolnshire PRide awards.

Quest has been a member of BNI for over four years, through Managing Director (and former Sky TV and BBC reporter) Sharon Cain, who has grown the company at the rate of 30% a year since 1999 and now leads a five-strong team, supported by freelance journalists.

Steve Hare, BNI Harrogate member and the consultancy's Commercial Director said: "We are delighted to have won this award, partly thanks to BNI, which has provided us with some great referrals over the years."

Chapter Director Bob Siddle said Quest had been a great supporter of BNI and helped to raise its regional profile. "We are delighted that their successes have been acknowledged by gaining a top honour in these prestigious awards." •

Contact Hayley Brice on 01423 564192

Top team celebrates great news: Quest's award-winning team (from left) Steve Hare, Sharon Cain, Kathryn Chitty, Hayley Bryce and Carla Marshall.



FRIDAYS MAGNIFICENT

No wonder they're punching the air in delight: these seven members of the high-octane Royal Armouries Friday Chapter in Leeds have all recently collected awards for being the best in their own industry during 2004, bringing an added buzz to the group's meetings.

The Friday group's winning team, assembled especially for SuccessNet, are (from left to right): Bobby Patel of Prashad Restaurant and Caterers (who won Yorkshire Forward Chef of the Year), Dean Spencer from IT firm Expert Systems (regional finalist in Shell's Livewire Awards), Colin Steele from website designers E-connected (runner-up in Young Incubation Company of West Yorkshire), and Philip Connew of Layton Blackham insurance brokers who won three awards – Best Broker for Innovation, Best Use of Technology and 41st fastest growing company in the UK.

In the centre of our photograph is Chapter Director Sarah Byrne, whose own event management company, Mosaic Events was regional finalist in

Shell's 'Livewire' awards for the best new business of the year - and has been nominated for similar honours in the Yorkshire Evening Press' regional business awards – while to her right are John Graves of Sign-a-rama in Leeds (overall achievement award for UK Signarama franchisees for fourth year running), and Peter Morse (who won the award for the highest growth rate of any Kalkwik franchise).

All seven attribute much of their respective achievements to the additional business, support and training they've gained from BNI, as Sarah Byrne pointed out. "It is not just the extra business members receive through their chapter, that give them the edge in their own market sectors.

"I started my own business a year ago and joined BNI a couple of weeks later. Of course I've benefited from the referrals, but what has been equally valuable to me in the first year of business, is the confidence and energy I've gained from being part of a dynamic networking group. The business skills training and moral support that members receive is fantastic, especially when you are new into business," she said.

"My personal development through BNI has undoubtedly boosted my ability to challenge for industry awards. It offers a fantastic support system for people just starting up in business." •

Contact Sarah on 01904 611953 or 07730 597744



FROM THE CHAIR

Telford Chapter has marked its fifth anniversary by gaining an added sense of dynamism with a move into a smart new venue – the town's prestigious Whitehouse Hotel. Significant? Our members know it is.

We are going from strength to strength, largely for two reasons: we know that to achieve our optimum performance, we must have the right people in our group, and we need to create a very good first impression among our visitors, for which having the right venue is a must.

The fact that Telford has retained some of its founder members is an important factor in our success, but with 27 members



STACK DAYS

Choose the right people and the right venue

says Steve Parker, Chapter Director of Telford

– currently passing an average of just under 30 referrals a week – we know there is room for further progress, and that is why one of our priorities is attracting more visitors, using BNI's 'Stack Day' system.

We know from experience that inviting three or more people from the same trade or profession to the same meeting really works in growing our membership. The fear of losing out to their rivals on a new business opportunity is enough to persuade many of the invitees to apply for membership very quickly. But the real value of this approach is that it gives us the ability to carefully select the most appropriate members for our group – people whom we are confident will make an important and lasting contribution.

When filling vacant categories, it makes all the difference when you are able to choose between potential new members rather than simply accepting a one-off application because you have a vacancy. And of course, where we find more than one suitable candidate applying for the same category,

there is the bonus of our finding potential new members for sister chapters in the region.

While having the right members may be the single most important ingredient, Telford Chapter believes that choosing the right 'home' is more significant than many realise. Our new venue has dramatically changed the dynamics of our meetings. Our hotel breakfast room looks directly out over Telford AFC's impressive stadium but on darker mornings, many visitors are not aware of it.

"As the sun rises it is great to see the impact such an imposing vista has on people's faces, and be reminded of the 'feel-good' factor that the group enjoys with its wonderful setting. Making a strong 'first impression' with our visitors has become a big advantage in attracting potential members and our venue helps to create that all-important feeling of professionalism.

If we continue to choose the best new members and enjoy the right location, our next five years will be even better than the first. ●

My latest 'Top 10' tips (in ascending order of importance) gives you the key personal attributes you need for really positive word-of-mouth networking:

10 INITIATIVE – starting something is important, but you must complete it to earn people's respect.

9 ENTHUSIASM – enthusiasm is said to be self-confidence in action. It comes before success. Enthusiastic energy is one of the most sought-after traits.

8 FEEDBACK – the people in your life want to know what you think. Negative feedback delivered with kindness, will be welcomed; positive feedback will be cherished.

7 SINCERITY – and make the decision to be caring, responsive, and open, and the effort to follow up on these virtues.

6 GRATITUDE – all of us appreciate gratitude, whether it is expressed by a smile, a few words, or a handwritten 'thank you' note.

5 RESPECT – you say a lot about yourself by the way you treat others, and by taking pride in your appearance.

4 DEMEANOUR – your demeanour (ability to smile, get along with people, show enthusiasm) is all important.

3 ETHICS AND HONESTY – if people feel they can trust you, everything else fades in importance.

2 PUNCTUALITY – being on time is a promise we should keep. Even if you are only a little late, others may be resentful and feel they are not important to you – not a good basis for a relationship.

1 KEEPING PROMISES – the primary reason why relationships fail is when one side believes a promise has not been kept. For any relationship to succeed, establish the expectations of others, and either meet them or change the expectations.

TOP TEN

ways to boost your WOM success!

Telford Chapter meets on Friday mornings at the Whitehouse Hotel. Steve Parker is the Studio Manager for Taws Printers Ltd and can be contacted on 01952 281281

Steve Lawson BNI UK Training Director

North-West members conquer fears for kids of courage

BNI members from chapters across the North West and North Wales have been pushing themselves to the limit to help children suffering from life-limiting illnesses.

Now, thanks to their efforts, Claire House Children's Hospice at Bebington on the Wirral is better off by £100,000, money that will go towards the cost of building a respite care annexe for teenagers.

While many BNI groups have a fund-raiser, Claire House has five of its staff in chapters with the result that scores of members have given up their time to stage and participate in sponsored activities - from mountaineering to sports events.



ON TOP OF THE WORLD?
Not quite, but Warrington Chapter's Linda Crowder overcame her fear of heights to climb to the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge for charity.

In the past year alone, Linda Crowder (Warrington Chapter) overcame her fear of heights and climbed to the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge raising £1400, Jacqueline Taylor and Bruce Gorniak (also Warrington), abseiled down Devils Gorge in North Wales helping to bring in over £12,000, while Midas (Liverpool) member Ken Ormrod and Paul Thelwell (Ellesmere Port) trekked to the Base Camp of Mount Everest helping to raise £60,000 for Claire House.

Meanwhile Culture Chapter's John Hughes and Chester's Adrian Lomas raised £3,000 by running in the London Marathon, Midas's Steve Murray staged a comedy night that collected over £5000, his chapter colleague Steve Andrews raised £6,500 from a five-a-side football tournament, and half a dozen chapters entered teams in Claire House's 'It's a Knockout' tournament, producing £14,000.

Warrington Chapter's Claire House Fundraiser John Maddock said: "We do well in BNI, because we are totally focused and members understand what we need. As well as raising £100,00 for us, it has brought us many new supporters." ●

Contact John on 0151 343 0883

CHAPTER & VERSE

BY PAUL HARDMAN . www.hartoons.co.uk . tel: 01704 543 981



Aldwych members take to skies to beat winter blues

With a chill in the air and grey mornings becoming the norm, members of central London's Aldwych Chapter members found an ideal tonic for the winter blues – swapping their weekly breakfast meeting at a central London hotel for a BNI business lunch in Dublin's fair city.

Chapter Secretary Joanne McCollin told SuccessNet: "The idea came about because

we thought members would benefit by building a greater rapport with each other outside the formality of our usual breakfast meetings. We found a cheap flight deal to Dublin and decided a day trip was feasible."

Chapter Director Anthony Impey said: "It wasn't a frivolous trip. We felt that a day out would be an excellent way to get to know each other on an informal level. As

Renew early and avoid the rise

New membership fees:

The annual membership fee from 1st April will be £400 but, by taking advantage of an early renewal option you can peg your subscription charges at their current rates for a further one or two years. From the same date, the joining fee for new members will be £100.

Irrespective of when your next annual fees are due, by renewing for one or two years at any time up to 31st March, you will avoid the price rise. And, if you opt to renew for two years at a cost of just £500 – a substantial saving of £300 – you will benefit from the same low subscription rate enjoyed by BNI's very first UK members eight years ago! For both one and two-year early renewals, this low-cost membership takes effect from the date your existing subscription falls due – even if it is still several months away.

After 1st April, members will still be able to save by taking out a two-year subscription at a cost of £720, equivalent to a 10% discount.

National Director Martin Lawson said: "The huge growth in the organisation's size and overheads coupled with our provision of a far greater range of training courses, events and workshops for members, makes a subscription increase inevitable, but we have been able to cushion its effects very substantially by offering a two-year renewal package that represents a saving of nearly 40% on the new annual cost of membership. This will be the last time we can offer a deal equivalent to 1996 prices." ●

well as offering a break from a day at the office, it helped consolidate our business relationships and build referrals. There's no doubt we have returned with more enthusiasm as a group – benefiting the Chapter with more lively, yet focused meetings." ●

Contact Joanne McCollin on 020 8852 9448