

BNI®

SUCCESSNET

Surf's up!

- We find out about BNI 'down under'
- Penny Power explains why online social networking is all about relationships, not technology
- Showcase your chapter to the world with BNI's hot new competition

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ■ Make time for time management ■ My greatest ever referral



Autumn is here! – and with it, a fresh edition of SuccessNet



So enjoy a well-earned coffee break to delve into this veritable harvest of news, ideas and insights to help drive your businesses and chapters to the next level.

We suggest you head first for the fascinating interview with Penny Power on page 4. Too many of us steer clear of online networking because we think it'll be too technical or time-consuming. But Penny sheds new light on how networking online can develop your business and your BNI chapter beyond your wildest dreams. Plus there's a great opportunity to use online media in our fantastic new BNI competition. Sign up, and you'll not only get your chapter noticed more widely than ever before, you could also win one of our valuable prizes!

Offline there's still so much we can all do to get the best value from BNI membership, and you'll find a wealth of helpful ideas inside these pages. The benefits of effective Power Teams are becoming clearer by the week. Some chapters have really got a grip on the concept, whilst others have a longer journey ahead. Robert French's article on page 12 offers innovative advice on building stronger, more productive Power Teams. What's more, there are stories of remarkable achievements and initiatives going on in chapters all over the UK and Ireland – and some news from our fellow members in Oz too.

It's all designed to give you the valuable ideas, support and feedback on what works for others and how you can share in their success. So make sure you let us know if we're doing it right. Like SuccessNet? Got a gripe? A constructive comment? Don't keep it to yourself. Get in touch with the editorial team below and let us know. Who knows, you may even win our Star Letter prize!

Meanwhile, have a great autumn!

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

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04 lead interview

Penny Power connects with us in the second in our series of interviews with business leaders

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Power Partners

Eleven years ago Penny Power and her husband Thomas pioneered online social networking when they founded Ecademy. This global network now connects more than half a million members in over 200 countries. With a shared emphasis on building sound business relationships, BNI and Ecademy have a natural alliance and many BNI members already know the value of Ecademy membership.

SuccessNet is proud to present a thought-provoking interview with the Ecademy founder...

What do you say to those who think that online networking is time-consuming fun for techies?

How will business be done in the future? Via online communities: it's happening now! Our children are already online creatures – they'll never operate in the same way that we do. If they want to know something they ask their online network! Yes, of course you need a little time to learn to use the technology to your advantage. But once you've cracked it, online networking and blogging is **HUGELY** productive and time-efficient – an amazing tool for building businesses. For example, entering a blog forum is like walking into a huge meeting where every little group of people talking has a speech bubble over their heads – "We're talking tax"; "The recovery is here" or "Merlot vs. Shiraz"! There's no time wasted – you simply choose which conversations you want to join in and off you go. By the way, make sure your chapter is involved in the BNI YouTweet initiative (see page 13) which could attract an abundance of visitors to your chapters and other opportunities! I wonder what the 'speech bubble' of each chapter's conversation will be?

Will there always be a place for face-to-face networking?

Yes, absolutely. Nothing will replace the intimacy of personal contact. For example, in my book, *Know Me, Like Me, Follow Me* I explain how 21st century business depends on human relationships and that technology is simply a powerful relationship enabler. Online networking allows you to select and learn about new contacts and reach the 'Know me' stage very quickly. Ecademy runs many face-to-face events every week. They're attended by people who have connected online and then develop the 'Liking and Following'

Your '50 words' on Ecademy include 'a favour a day'. Can you explain what you mean by this?

For me, successful business is about good relationships with other people. If you live in a me-centred world, you stop listening and adapting. Our daily lives are always busy, but my 'favour a day' motto makes sure that my day isn't just about me. Your favour might be for someone in a supermarket queue, or at the office – or it might be a helpful message on a blog. Reaching out to others has got me through some really tough times. It's rather like *Givers Gain* really – look outwards instead of focusing on yourself and you'll reap the benefits.

relationships in a variety of ways – online, by phone, in BNI meetings, at the pub... and so on.

How is Ecademy different from other online networking sites?

All the sites have their place. Facebook is ideal for friends and families to swap photos and messages. Sites like LinkedIn are more like business directories that tell others 'This is what I do'. However Ecademy is a social business network, with an emphasis on being social in a business world. People can see from an Ecademy profile how you might help them – whether that's advice with home, health, business or some other matter.

Is Ecademy used differently by men & women?

At the moment, 70% of our members are male. Despite the achievements of modern women, I think the traditional female concerns about technology – and probably about online 'predators' too – still prevent many women from using online networking opportunities. However I think as they understand the potential, more will come on board. Women are great networkers and value the support that the Ecademy community offers. Ecademy sprang from a very caring, supportive ethos: Ecademy men 'get' that approach and see its tremendous benefits, so they stay and become great members.

How can Ecademy help a BNI member to contribute more effectively to their chapter each week?

As your global network grows and your contacts learn to like and follow you, you'll be seen as someone who others can turn to if they need advice or a service, so it's great for generating referrals. Plus, Ecademy is a great way of growing chapters. You can attract interest by blogging or use the map function which shows the location of other Ecademy members in your area. If they're not already in your chapter, invite them along! Plus it's much easier to connect two people via Ecademy than it is to mess around with sending contact details, testimonials and so on: just introduce them to each other's Ecademy profiles and you've helped them start the Know Me, Like Me, Follow Me process!

What's your biggest wish for business in 2010?

My wish is that businesses grow and adapt to an online world. It's essential to understand that the change is upon us now – it's not something of the future. You have to take a leap of faith: let go of the fear and master the technology. It's simply a tool that can link you to real, living, breathing people across the world who will become your followers and advocates helping to grow your financial and emotional wealth.

Penny Power penny.power@ecademy.com

Twitter @pennypower

Penny's new book, 'Know Me, Like Me, Follow Me' is available now at www.amazon.co.uk

CHAPTER AND VERSE

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

BANK JOB

When the members of Plymouth's Drake Chapter moved venues, they never imagined that their chapter meeting would involve breaking into a bank...

The members duly arrived bright and early at Bar HaHa (formerly the offices of Barclays Bank), their ranks swelled by 11 enthusiastic visitors. However they met the bar's puzzled staff on the pavement facing firmly locked doors.

The keyholder was nowhere to be found, and with its strong, secure construction the former bank building offered no alternative access via windows, drainpipes or other doors. But BNI members are nothing if not resourceful. They realised that they might just be able to 'post' someone lithe and slim through the oversized letterbox! With little discussion, Karen, a new member of the bar's staff was nominated for the job.

The members lifted the young, blonde Swede and popped her through the letterbox. One swift Fosbury Flop later, she landed inside and unlocked the doors.

The chef led the rush inside and headed off to prepare breakfast. Eventually a bleary-eyed manager appeared, apologising profusely that a power cut meant that his morning wake-up alarm hadn't worked.

A rather more normal BNI meeting could then begin – although the group had already managed some animated networking on the pavement! And unless we hear to the contrary, we reckon that having to post a live, blonde Swedish lady through a letterbox is probably the most unusual start ever to a BNI meeting... any challengers out there?

Mike Elleston: mike@andwords.com



TRADING UP

Most trade professionals will say that no job is too big or small. But for many, competing with the big main contractors is simply not feasible. Three years ago, when kitchen designer Marc Stokes-Denson joined the BNI Professionals Chapter in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, he was the only tradesperson in the group. Spurred on by the world-renowned author, speaker and BNI Director Frank De Raffe's comment that more tradespeople should join BNI, Marc went on a mission to increase the group's Trades Power Team.

Marc said, "It was not just about getting more tradespeople as members. It was my vision to form a really strong Power Team – a kind of 'trades supergroup' that would strengthen our appeal to main contractors when bidding for one-off house builds."

And that's exactly what's happening right now. The Professionals' Trades Power Team is currently pitching for the complete refurbishment (worth more than £500K) of a high specification barn conversion. They've even recruited the help of tradespeople in nearby chapters. By joining forces the team can now compete for work normally secured by a main contractor. Marc comments, "This is only the beginning of a new way of working."

Meanwhile Marc's still on the hunt. A good decorator is just one of the many professionals on the Power Team's wish list. He would also like to hear from tradespeople in other chapters who might have one of the missing skills needed to help with future bids.

Marc Stokes-Denson: madeforyou@afittingcompany.co.uk



REFERRAL QUEEN

Many chapters set one referral per week as a minimum requirement. But there are some members who set their sights way above this target and achieve exceptional results.



One such member is Michelle Fisher, Concord BNI's chartered accountant from Sobell Rhodes. A member of her chapter since February 2004, Michelle has recently received a chapter award for her 1000th referral – that's approximately 3.5 referrals for every single week of her membership. What's more, Michelle's grand total of referrals has generated more than £100,000 worth of business for her chapter colleagues.

Michelle's Top Tips for generating referrals

1. Partnership pays

At Sobell Rhodes we encourage our clients to cross-refer, helping them to generate new business. This approach fits in perfectly with BNI and allows great opportunities for referring trusted chapter colleagues to clients who need their help. (In fact my partner Andrew Rhodes has just passed his 1000th referral in Bentley Chapter!) It works for us – and it would work for many other companies too.

2. Be a good listener

Wherever you are and whoever you're with – friends, family, contacts, clients, clubs – listen out to see how and where your chapter colleagues could solve a problem for others.

3. Think BNI!

The *Givers Gain* ethic is a great code for life. Referrals for fellow members are all around you: stay alert and you'll spot them!

Michelle Fisher: m.fisher@sobellrhodes.co.uk

Kathleen Waller, BNI Director for London North West says, "It's worth appreciating that at the commonly cited target rate of one referral per week it would take more than 19 years to achieve what Michelle has done during her membership! Michelle is an outstanding member who lives and breathes Givers Gain. She thoroughly deserves not only the award from her chapter but the excellent return that she enjoys from her BNI membership."

HIGH FLYER

When James Crawford started a new carpet cleaning business he went along to a local business enterprise meeting in his home town of Newport, Wales. He was looking for advice and ideas – but in fact he scooped rather more.

James met Richard Gough, a member of the (then) newly formed Edwards Chapter of BNI. Richard (owner of web design company Emerald Media) not only worked with James to launch Crawfords' new website but also invited James along to visit the chapter. Both actions were instrumental in moving James's business from start-up to supercharged!



James's well-optimised website soon attracted the attention of a client bigger than James could have imagined: British Airways spotted Crawfords on Google and called to ask him if he could help with cleaning the carpets on their long-haul aircraft at Cardiff airport.

For a new business, the prospect could have been daunting. However, having joined the Edwards Chapter, James had access to the immediate support he needed to clinch the contract. IT specialists Green Sky played a key role by helping James to produce a top quality PowerPoint presentation for BA bosses in London.

The presentation went perfectly and James won a six-figure contract. Now, the Welsh Assembly want to use his case study to prove that with the right products, services and support, small companies have every chance of securing contracts with the big players.

"BNI is about far more than referrals," says James. "I'm in no doubt that the support of my BNI chapter has made all the difference to the rapid success of Crawfords. We're now talking to other airports about our services so there's more to come – and more business for chapter members too!"

James Crawford:
info@crawfordscleaningservices.co.uk

SIGN OF THE TEAMS

There's no doubt about it, Power Teams can fast-track BNI chapters to smarter, more effective business. Now, chapters are developing the concept in various ways to get the best possible returns.

At Royal Spa Chapter in Tunbridge Wells, Power Teams have a strong visual presence that's attracting lots of attention.

Until six months ago, the chapter was struggling to find and convert visitors. Then Paul Jenkins, the chapter's banker, championed the Power Team initiative and appointed Team Leaders to mobilise and coordinate action. Gradually, the teams – and of course, the chapter – began to grow.

Royal Spa's latest innovation is the Power Team banner, an attractive pop-up stand designed and created by the chapter's graphic designer Martin Webber and large format printer Justin Veasey. The banner stands by the welcome table and displays the Power Teams, their members and the vacant categories within each team. It's a clear, up-to-date visual prompt for members and visitors alike, highlighting not only the products and services available within the chapter but also the categories still to be filled. It helps everyone to understand how Power Teams can generate more business and keeps the most wanted categories fresh in their minds. Visitors have already been spotted studying the banner and discussing contacts who might like to visit the chapter!

Chapter Director Lynne Gadsden comments, "We now have 32 members and more qualified visitors coming along all the time. We're very proud of the progress we've made this year and I'm grateful to everyone – particularly our generous creatives – who have done so much to help us achieve it. We hope the idea will help others – so if you want to know more about the banner, please get in touch."

Lynne Gadsden:
LynneGadsden@
thinkpositive.co.uk



MEET THE MINISTER



A senior Cabinet Minister has seen for himself how members of BNI are overcoming the credit crunch and generating business success.

Members of the Cookson Chapter (South Shields) welcomed VIP visitor David Miliband to their chapter meeting bright and early one Friday morning. Mr Miliband, who is not only the Foreign Secretary but also the chapter's local MP, used his allocated 60 seconds to praise local businesses for their positivity and entrepreneurial spirit in the challenging economic climate.

Although business in the Northumbria region has been hit hard, Chapter Director Carl Mowatt explained to the Minister that the Chapter had grown significantly stronger in recent months with a steady rise in membership and a marked increase in referrals.

"Everyone in the Chapter feels the benefit of *Givers Gain*," said Carl. "Being part of BNI creates real business opportunities and relationships that help us to counteract the effects of the recession. We're honoured that Mr Miliband has taken the time to learn more about how and why our approach works so well."

After the meeting, David Miliband commented, "I was delighted to meet members of Cookson BNI in South Shields and it was good to hear first-hand what they think the government is doing well and what could be done better. I was impressed by the dedication of all members of BNI to support each other."

Carl Mowatt: carl@agrafica.co.uk

THE NAME'S ROYALE...

There's been a lot going on at Leeds Royale Chapter over the last year.

Twelve months ago when the chapter (then Leeds Royal Armouries) moved to the exotic Alea Casino, the 13 members decided that they had to make further big changes if the chapter was to survive and thrive. They looked around for inspiration and found it just along the M62 at Beverley Chapter, which had also found itself languishing at the bottom of the national stack just months before. Now however, Beverley BNI was riding high. Incoming Royale Chapter Director John Edler met with Beverley's leadership team who gave him a simple message: get the basics right, stick to the script, and it will work!



Rashmi Dube (Liquid Recovery) passes Leeds Royale's 7000th referral to David Jones (Printing.com)

The team wasted no time in following up on Beverley Chapter's advice. One key change was that every member made a firm commitment to contribute at least one referral each week and to bring one visitor every month. "There were no ifs or buts," says John, "It was a matter of teamwork – and not letting down your colleagues around the table."

The referral rate began to rise and visitors enjoyed VIP status. They were welcomed warmly and responded enthusiastically to the excellent referral activity in the room. By April 2009 the chapter numbered 20 members. Since then the group has enjoyed a 'virtuous circle' of new members, new energy, a great venue, lots of visitors and referrals and plenty of business done. The chapter also believes that bringing new members into the leadership and support teams is instrumental in keeping the buzz alive. At the time of writing, the latest meeting saw 31 members, 48 referrals, 11 visitors and 3 pending applications. Fantastic!

Want to take your chapter from black or red to green in the Traffic Lights table? "Make the commitments crystal clear and keep to them", says John. "It works for Beverley Chapter, it works for us and it will work for your chapter too. It takes team effort to achieve this but when everyone plays by the rules, everybody benefits!"

John Edler: johnedlerphotography@googlemail.com



From: Sheila Armstrong

To: Trevor Smith

Referral: You really should visit a BNI chapter

Value: £500,000

For Trevor Smith of Maidstone's Invicta Chapter, the greatest referral he ever had was when Sheila Armstrong recommended that he visit BNI.

In just 30 months, he has completed nearly £500,000 worth of sales arising from BNI referrals – that's more than £16,500 every month!

As well as developing close working relationships with his chapter colleagues, Trevor makes particular efforts to connect with the wider BNI community by attending training and conference events both in the UK and abroad. The results of such high quality networking speak for themselves. In 2009 he has doubled his annual turnover, and with the support of his BNI colleagues both inside and beyond his chapter he expects to double it again in 2010.

 I'm so thankful that Sheila involved me in the first place: I now have BNI friends and advocates around the world. What better referral could there be than an invitation to a BNI meeting?

"Once you understand the *Givers Gain* philosophy, things really start to happen," says Trevor.

"I'm grateful to BNI Directors Ian Morgan and Dinah Liversidge for imprinting it into me so completely that I can make a real difference as a member – and now as a director too. I'm so thankful that Sheila involved me in the first place: I now have BNI friends and advocates around the world. What better referral could there be than an invitation to a BNI meeting?"

Trevor Smith: trevor.smith@travelcounsellors.com

The greatest referral I ever had...

From acorn to oak

Given the right growing conditions, a single referral often develops into something much larger.

Architectural design company JAMstudio, owned by husband and wife team John Wingate and Marie-Louise Dunk, has seen a good referral turn into a great one, bringing in huge returns and a major award to boot!

The initial referral to John of Aberdeen's Alpha Chapter came from Sharon Park. She wanted JAMstudio to talk to her husband Kevin (also a BNI member) about a feasibility study for a housing development. The JAMstudio team was appointed, and Kevin was delighted with the work done. In fact one of his co-directors was so impressed he invited JAMstudio to help out with an urgent refurbishment project at the Harvest Community Church facility in Peterhead.

JAMstudio accepted the challenge. To help stretch the community's limited budget, the team gave a significant amount of their time free of charge. They took control of the design and construction of the much-needed centre, which now offers valuable accommodation for all kinds of community groups and activities.

Little did they think that nine months later, their work on the centre would see them receiving the award for Socially Responsible Company of the Year from TV presenter Ben Fogle at the Northern Star Business Awards ceremony. In addition, the project led to further commissions worth over £150,000!

Marie-Louise (also a BNI member at Inverurie Echo Chapter) comments, "It's a reminder of how a good BNI referral can help move your business a very long way. That one original referral has not only led to a higher company profile but also some excellent new business worth a hundred times the original project's value. That's definitely a great referral!"

Marie-Louise Dunk: ml@jamstudio.uk.com

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



From: Sharon Park

To: John Wingate

Referral: Feasibility study for a housing development

Value: £150,000

From: Russell Treasure

To: Sam Allcock

Referral: Online marketing for Birmingham's News Team International

Value: £40,000

Earlier this year Custard Media of Olympus Chapter (Preston) won a contract for £4,000 which then turned into a project worth £27,000 – and now looks set to open up new work worth more than £40,000!

It began when former Chapter Director Russell Treasure was chatting with his client at Towergate plc about BNI. When Russell mentioned online marketing, his client explained that a friend of his at Birmingham's News Team International was meeting several big agencies to discuss exactly that. Russell pointed out that his BNI colleagues at Custard Media had a great track record in web marketing and asked if he'd get them an introduction. Russell's client clinched the opportunity for Custard Media to pitch, and they successfully won the business.

“This was a fantastic referral from Russell. It shows how he trusted us enough to promote us to others almost as if we were his own business. It's that depth of understanding and confidence that BNI allows you to develop.”

After a successful campaign that established News Team International's trust in their ability to deliver, the online media company was then given further projects and still more are planned.

Sam Allcock of Custard Media advises, “This was a fantastic referral from Russell. It shows how he trusted us enough to promote us to others almost as if we were his own business. It's that depth of understanding and confidence that BNI allows you to develop. We're both grateful and delighted.”

Sam Allcock: sam@custardmedia.co.uk

Powering up the Power Teams

Robert French, who is the Executive Director for three regions in the South East and has helped develop BNI in four other countries across the world gives powerful, practical advice that will take your Power Teams to the next level.

We're all learning about how easy it is to grow your chapter these days: all you have to do is introduce some Power Teams and watch the business boom!

If that's the case, then why did only a tiny 12% of UK and Ireland chapters qualify for the generous incentive in our recent Power Team Drive?

Maybe it's not quite so simple. Maybe there's much more to building and using Power Teams than just divvying up members into groups and hoping for change. Well, I'm convinced that there is: but all it needs is a bit more careful thought, insight and good old focused ACTION!

Here's how to make your Power Teams – and your chapters – surge ahead.

Appoint a prime mover

Get your chapter to appoint a Power Team Chairperson (or PT Chair for short). It's their responsibility to lead and coordinate Power Team activity.

Structuring the teams

1. Members should decide which team they will be in, provided they choose within the scope of their category.
2. Each member can be in only one Power Team.
3. If a team has only one or two members, it's not a problem – it's an opportunity. **BUILD THAT TEAM!** (The PT Chair and PT leaders should attend small PT Meetings until the team has three or more members.)

Real teamwork

It's no good being a team in name only: teams need to meet and work together if they are to succeed. Chapters should set a PT Meeting agenda and the teams should meet **REGULARLY**. Twilight meetings in the local pub are ideal for most business people. Only current members and invited visitors should attend PT Meetings. The first meeting should focus not just on the categories but the **NAMES** of specific people they want in their team. These people should then be invited to the next PT Meeting. After that they'll be pleading to come along to the chapter meeting too!

Be accountable

Attendance is critical to PT Meetings: absentees mean Low Power Team Meetings – and team cohesion will die. The PT Chair should report weekly to the chapter meeting on a regular basis as part of the Membership Committee Report.

EFFECTIVE POWER TEAMS - KEY BENEFITS

- Improved knowledge and understanding of each other's businesses means referral value increases.
- Well-chosen visitors make better members.
- Carefully targeted visitors build strong Power Teams, large, effective chapters and huge seat values!

My thanks to Invicta (Maidstone), Ashford (Kent) and Inspire (Kuala Lumpur) for their pioneering Power Team work and for helping me understand the issues. They number 40, 41 and 51 members – largely due to their Power Team activity. RF

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YouTweet Challenge



As every BNI member knows, one of the keys to the success of any BNI Chapter is that people in your area get to find out about it. So we've sought the advice of experts in social networking, online video and Twitter, and we're launching the BNI YouTweet Challenge.

What's it all about? In a nutshell, you get together with other chapter members and make a video about your chapter. It can be as creative as you like – but the key point is to promote your chapter. You then upload it to YouTube and promote it via Twitter and other social networks. Don't worry if you're not familiar with these tools, as help is at hand!

Full details of the competition and resources available are on our website at: www.bni.eu/BNIYouTweet

There are great prizes up for grabs, including year-long membership to Ecademy.com for your entire chapter, a cash prize of £1,000, a Results Team consultancy prize worth £3,000 and a yourBusinessChannel promotional video prize worth £3,500. All in all, that's over £10,000 worth of prizes. But the ultimate prize is that this challenge will help you raise the profile of your chapter and learn more about best practice in social media.

Judging the competition will be Penny Power, founder of Ecademy.com and author of *Know Me, Like Me, Follow Me* (a must-read if you want to understand social networking for business), Mark Shaw – leading UK 'Twitter for business' expert, and Mark Sinclair, founder of yourBusinessChannel – a great resource of top-shelf business advice online. These three judges have a wealth of experience, and will also be blogging advice and updates throughout the competition.

Get involved, get shooting and good luck!

There are great prizes up for grabs, including year-long membership to Ecademy.com for your entire chapter, a cash prize of £1,000, a Results Team consultancy prize worth £3,000 and a yourBusinessChannel promotional video prize worth £3,500.

GET IN TOUCH

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

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

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

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

■ I'd like to nominate Andrew Gardiner of the Beatson House Restaurant as the donor of the most memorable door prize ever!

During his ten minute presentation, Andrew taught Barnsley Cannons Chapter about his restaurant's modern British style. He also explained how he buys his fresh seafood direct from the fishing boat skippers in Whitby harbour.

When the door prize winner was selected my name came up – and I was the lucky recipient of a large, beautifully wrapped box. I was intrigued, and on looking inside I had something of a surprise: a huge, live lobster was staring back at me!

This wonderfully creative prize made absolutely certain that everyone in the room would remember the restaurant's fine, fresh food – the perfect aide-memoire to round off a great presentation.

There's a postscript of course... Cute as he was, I have to confess that the lobster was delicious!

Colette Lowe
Barnsley Cannons Chapter



■ A few months ago I met a number of members from Golders Green-based Fortune Chapter at a BNI training event. We later arranged further meetings to learn more about each other.

My business (Airwoolf Ltd) specialises in air conditioning systems and when financial advisor Aspire wanted to install air conditioning at their offices, Fortune's Andrea Rappoport kindly recommended me. Andrea also carefully followed up her referral by fully briefing Aspire's owner Jeff Maze about Airwoolf and by providing him with testimonials on our work.

During the installation work, Jeff and I got to know each other better and we discovered a shared passion for golf. I was delighted when Jeff then invited me to a Charity Golf Day that he was organising. I happily went along to the event but never imagined the outcome – I actually won the golf competition! And my good fortune continued: I also won First Prize in the charity raffle... not the usual bottle of Scotch or even a fancy hamper, but a brand new car!

It all goes to show that working with BNI's wider community (perhaps by attending training or building relationships beyond your own chapter) can lead to more than just great referrals. We all shared good times and good business, and I was thrilled to boost the charity's golf day proceeds with a chunk of the winnings.

Givers Gain: everyone wins!

Adam Woolf
Edwarebury Chapter (Bushey)

■ Soon after joining BNI I attended the South East Members' Day at Brands Hatch and heard Penny Power talking about the importance of online social networking.

Since then I have adopted online networking as part of my business as well as using it to generate visitors for the Epsom BNI chapter.

Using Penny Power's 'Know Me, Like Me, Follow Me' approach I've built up many connections on various social networking sites such as Ecademy. I've also found that BNI skills (e.g. being very specific about what we do and what type of client or visitor we want) are very useful in empowering your online networking results. I now have over 18,000 connections on the web, and more than 8,000 on Twitter, giving potential exposure to millions of valuable contacts. In fact I'm now nicknamed the Twittering Tax Man! With this many potential followers it's much easier to find visitors. Yet 12 months ago I didn't know what Ecademy and Twitter were.

The results of my 21st century networking adventures have been impressive (both for my business and my chapter), and I've received the Notable Networker award five months in a row for bringing visitors to the chapter – largely thanks to online social networking.

One of the key benefits of online networking is its longevity. Whereas other contact methods are time-limited, online posts are there forever. Seth Godin describes this as the 'Long Tail' – a reputation built over time. My blogs, several referring to BNI, are permanently online and will continue to bring connections and visitors months or even years after they were posted.

Master online networking and the potential for you and your chapter is unlimited!

James McBrearty
Epsom Chapter

■ Aaron Fulton of Pickfords Removals and storage sent this note to our leadership team at Concorde Chapter, Belfast. This has to be the perfect substitute!

Hi guys

I have a family wedding this week so I can't be at Thursday's chapter meeting. My colleague Keith L. will be in there in my place.

By the way, Keith is building an extension onto his house so he needs an architect, a surveyor and a solicitor. When it's built he'll need an alarm system, an interior designer and artwork to put on the new walls along with family photographs. The new office in the extension will need kitting out with IT, and he wants a new, Google-friendly website and fresh stationery. There will also be a room dedicated to his favourite comic hero – so that'll need some creative graphic displays.

Keith is also looking for a new car with GPS to look good on the drive outside the new building. Plus he might need another job to pay for the extension or maybe a good deal on a remortgage. Otherwise he'll need someone to help him invest the money he's got left.

Once he's paid for all this he will definitely require a business coach to maximise sales and profitability and someone to make sure there's no bad debt sitting on his books. All he needs now is somebody to do the moving.

Be nice to him!

Aaron Fulton
Concorde Chapter (Belfast)

STAR LETTER

■ Members may like to hear about BNI Saltway's latest *Givers Gain* initiative.



We recently held a seminar offering advice and information on surviving the economic climate to Worcestershire business owners. The evening training event gave Saltway members the opportunity to present on a variety of topics, including personal and business finance, making the most of your existing IT investment, getting value for money from creative suppliers and cost-effective marketing options.

As well as offering valuable tips to the local business community, the evening was a brilliant way of explaining what BNI and our chapter are all about. This is a small town where business networking is not particularly well established, so the event was particularly valuable in raising our profile and building our credibility in the area. We attracted an enthusiastic audience and are working on converting some of our delegates into new members.

Perhaps other chapters may like to use the same idea to give and gain in their local communities?

Rachael Sturley
Saltway
(Droitwich Spa)



Word of Mouth

Each new edition of SuccessNet will feature a topical article written by a member for fellow BNlers. If you'd like to contribute to 'Word of Mouth' in future editions, contact the editor at successnet@jmhcopy.co.uk.

How good are you at making use of your time? Rob P Brown, a member of Olympians Chapter (Sheffield), suggests that a few changes could inject extra hours back into your busy week...



Time to take control

Are you sitting comfortably? I want to start with a story – one with a very important message.

A university professor is lecturing his students. On the top of his desk he places a large goldfish bowl and two cans of beer. From underneath the desk he produces a jar of golf balls which he pours into the goldfish bowl until they reach the top. "Is the bowl full?" he asks the students. "Yes," they reply. The professor then produces a jar of small pebbles and pours them into the bowl, shaking it so the pebbles fall into the gaps between the golf balls. "Is the bowl full?" he asks. "Definitely," they say.

From below the desk he draws a jar of sand and pours this in too. The sand trickles into the tiny gaps between the pebbles. "Is it full now?" "It is!" they say, and he agrees.

"Here's my point," says the learned professor. "This goldfish bowl is like your life. The golf balls represent the things most important to you – your health and your loved ones. The pebbles are the next most important things – your work, places, possessions and so on. The sand represents the trivia that don't really matter. If you start by filling your life with the sand, there's no room for the golf balls or the pebbles. So always start with the golf balls.

A student calls from the back, "What's the beer for?" The professor pours the contents of both cans into the fishbowl. "However full your life is" he says, "there's always time for a beer."

I'd like to suggest that the term 'time management' is a misnomer. None of us has the ability to manage time. What we can do is to manage what we do in the time we have available.

However, there is no single time management solution that fits all: we'll each manage our time differently. So the individual is always my starting point. I use three key psychometric tools to help people identify:

- how they learn most effectively
- how they manage conflict
- the behaviours they resort to under pressure.

This knowledge is key to understanding how each of us manages our time. Consider your own lifestyle: think about the time you waste in each of these three areas and how you could spend that time more efficiently.

Time is the only commodity shared by each of us on planet Earth. It is very precious – so don't waste a second!

Rob P Brown

www.robpbrown.co.uk

Rob P Brown's top time management tips

The following tips are some of the best ideas drawn from a number of sources...

1. Do a BANJO every day (Bang A Nasty Job Off)

You know those jobs: they sit on your desk and fester. Get rid of one each day first thing and see how your energy rises.

2. On one day each week, aim to do twice as much as you planned

It's easy to get into a mindset that says "Oh, these three jobs always take a day". Double your expectations and watch what happens. Remember not to beat yourself up if you don't achieve it all – just try, and you'll see the difference.

3. There's no excuse: meetings should not overrun

If your meetings constantly take too long, either shorten the agenda, allow more time or take a course in running meetings.

4. Always wear a watch (unless you're on holiday)

It might sound basic, but without a reference point for time you don't stand a chance of managing what you do in the time available.



We've been busy mapping chapter activity across the UK and Ireland...

Got some news? Why not write to *SuccessNet* and let us know?

Referrals to four trades professionals from Fairways Chapter (Cumbernauld) helped Edinburgh Airport fly through EasyJet and Flybe's rigorous health and safety tests. **Total referral value - a cool £80k.**

Over 90 businesses from **12 chapters swapped breakfast for a BNI BBQ** in a regional get-together on Newcastle's quayside.

All 40 members of top-performing **York chapter Knavesmire** are celebrating, having raised the **£25,000** they needed to sponsor their member charity Variety Club's latest Sunshine Coach.

Chapter Director Gavin Priest left his holiday caravan and **drove 140 miles to lead his Wrexham Chapter** meeting despite a 'sore ankle' from a power-kiting fall. Days later his injury was diagnosed as a bad break that needed surgery. Commitment or what!

In London, father and son Peter and Edward Marno have not only become two of **newly-launched Velocity Chapter's** founder members, but they've also taken positions on its inaugural Membership Committee.

Is this a record? 13 members of Limerick's Treaty Chapter are actively involved in the successful running of MaryK's Childcare and Montessori in Doora, Co. Clare, providing services from insurance and pensions to fire safety and office furniture.

Due to commuting distances London chapters often struggle to make events viable. But, **seven chapters did get together for Islington's Network & Bowling Evening.**

Cheltenham Spa Chapter hits the local press when **members clock up their 10,000th piece of business in eight years**

When **Naresh Gupta** of Isis (Ealing) Chapter needed help to refurbish his Wembley property, he **commissioned five of his chapter colleagues** to help. Total business value: around £11,500. What a team!

Portsmouth Nelson Chapter's **Barry Gorman**, described as having "a great big heart and a fabulous attitude" **wins his Black Badge in just four weeks.** (Black Badges are awarded to members who have personally sponsored six new members.)

When Sussex resident Chris Eve was given two months' notice on his rented flat, a local **BNI chapter, Advantage** (Hailsham), stepped in to help. They arranged conveyancing, a mortgage, heating and repair works and got him moved with a whole week to spare!

Everybody needs good BNI

Neighbours

When we're dozing under our duvets in the UK and Ireland, fellow BNI members on the other side of the world are heading for their chapter meetings. In this issue we discover what it's like to be part of BNI Australia.

Facts and figures

BNI launched in Australia in 1997. Twelve years on, two members of a founding chapter, Hornsby, are still around the table each week. There are now 195 Australian chapters with 4,340 members nationwide. (That may not seem like a large number compared with our UK & Ireland membership of 15,000, but at 21 million, the total population of this vast continent is of course far smaller than our own.)

Two chapters, BNI Alliance and BNI Winning Edge, recently exceeded the 50-member mark within hours of each other. Alliance consistently averages over 1.5 referrals per week and welcomes an average of 2.67 qualified visitors to each meeting.

What's hot in Oz

BNI Directors in Australia tell us that excellence in training and new member mentoring is high on their national agenda and that this reflects in a very high member retention rate. There's also a strong emphasis on qualified visitor recruitment, and a strong support programme for directors which is particularly important for sharing good practice between far-flung chapters.

Despite national economic growth of just 0.6%, BNI Australia's success is rapidly growing. Sadly, there are no takers as yet for the category of crocodile wrestler or boomerang maker, but many chapters have a specialist in awnings and blinds as keeping out the blazing Aussie sun is a common problem!

Giving a XXXX

Ever struggled to find a sub? Over here we tend to be rather lazy about finding the right subs and simply ask someone from another local chapter. However in Australia members need to be rather more creative about finding someone to stand in for them since the nearest chapter may be thousands of kilometres away! For example, one city chapter, Geraldton, WA, is at least five hours' journey from its nearest neighbour in Perth. That means that members turn to clients, suppliers, friends, family and other contacts as subs – and by doing so they make their chapter networks a whole lot wider. A useful tip for us maybe...?

quick stats

- BNI Australia launched in 1997
- There are now 195 Australian chapters
- BNI Australia has 4,340 members nationwide
- Two chapters have over 50 members



22%

of BNI members are female



2 CABINET
MINISTERS
HAVE VISITED
BNI[®]
MEETINGS
THIS YEAR



1,896 new
Leadership
Team members
took over the
running of
chapters from
1st October



The number of cups
of coffee consumed
by members during
meetings each month:



203,000
REFERRAL SLIPS
HAVE BEEN USED
FOR THINGS OTHER
THAN PASSING REFERRALS
IN THE LAST YEAR....

**BNI has been on
this side of the
Atlantic for 13 years**