

A close-up portrait of a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera.

BNI[®] SUCCESSNET

- **Want to raise your game?**
Inspiration and insight from communication expert, Andy Bounds
- **Technosceptic?**
You too can reap the benefits of social media!
- **Power Team successes**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE ■ 2020 Vision ■ Guten tag, BNI Germany!



Here comes the sun...

As midsummer days and the tempting scents of barbecues give us all that little extra *joie de vivre*, we hope that this edition of *SuccessNet* finds you, your chapters and businesses, happy and healthy.



One of the key things that always makes a chapter happier is when they are doing more business. With this in mind, at our recent European Directors' Conference we shared our vision of becoming a £1 billion referral business by 2020. The principle aim is to boost the businesses of every BNI member across the UK and Ireland by increasing the size of the BNI community: the more members, the greater the potential for more business.

In the shorter term, we're delighted to hear of all the new connections and business that members nationwide are generating using the Power Team Focus that launched in May. The Focus has already raised visitor numbers. Perhaps more importantly, it's given those visitors a clearly planned and valuable insight into the real power of BNI networking by connecting them from the start with those members who share with them the greatest business synergy – their potential Power Team. If your chapter has a great story about how you've benefitted from the Power Team Focus, *SuccessNet* would like to hear it!

We know that as well as meeting face to face, some Power Teams are also using online tools to do business. Indeed with many members from around the world logging in to BNI Connect, your Power Team can connect with the global BNI community. Make sure you make the most of this valuable tool of membership.

Have a great summer!

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

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SuccessNet explores Germany!

OK, there's no question: it was Dr Ivan Misner who brought BNI to life. But he's not the only one from German-speaking stock. Networking itself has its roots in good old Germany.

It's true! As early as the 12th century, entrepreneurs in what is now known as Germany formed themselves into federations – industrial associations that worked cooperatively to support and improve their businesses. However it was centuries later – in September 2003, in fact – when networking BNI-style arrived in Germany. After visiting chapters in England and the USA, Dr Thomas Jäger and Gunther Verleger knew they had found something special that could help businesses in their own country to flourish. Jäger founded the first chapter in Berlin and Verleger launched the second in Stuttgart just 24 hours later. Today, there are around 5,260 members in the 194 German chapters.

A keen member of Berlin's Baer Chapter for nearly eight years, tax consultant Irmgard Silnizki is the longest-serving BNI member in continental Europe. She joined in September 2003 – the very first member of BNI Germany.

Given that almost 90% of the world's literature on tax law has been written in and for Germany, it's no surprise that Irmgard's work tends to focus on practical tax knowledge and guidance across many sectors.

Harald Lais (National Director) reflects, "We Germans consider our national psyche to be ideally suited to BNI membership: reliability, thoroughness and persistence are the traditional German virtues that help us achieve some great results! For example, as at June 1st 2011, Leinweber Chapter's 44 members have so far this year brought 166 visitors and exchanged 741 referrals amounting to a cool €628,821 in business done." Über networking!

That national disposition has also led to some stunning referrals in recent years. Stefan Kaus (Partner Director, Munich Area) recalls one of BNI Germany's most substantial referrals ever...

Lars Kinast, a tiler from the Munich Dolomit Chapter, passed a referral to his builder colleague, requesting some fairly small-scale refurbishments to a house. However the customer was so delighted with the work done that two years later he gave the builder a contract to build a private residence for a former Russian dignitary – a referral which turned into more than €20 million!

Want to connect with BNI Germany? Search for your preferred city on www.bni.de, contact Stefan Kaus at ska@myrmex-pr.de, or check out your German BNI colleagues via BNI Connect.



Every year, 100 BNI Munich region members take part in the Bavarian Oktoberfest which honours the Bavarian kings.

Quick facts

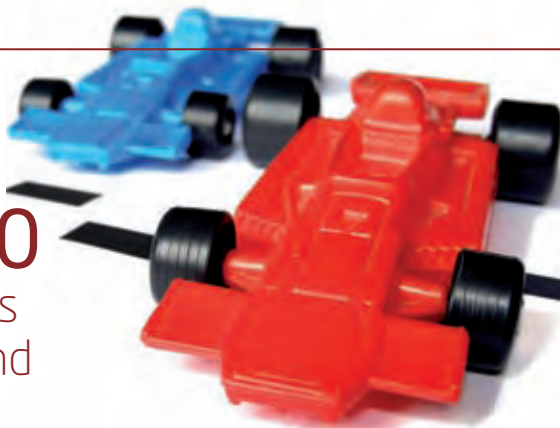
- Germany is a democratic federal republic comprising **16 states**. Its population **exceeds 82 million** - giving plenty of networking opportunities
- When answering the phone, a German will not normally say 'Hello' (or even 'Guten Tag'). Instead, they'll give their **surname**.

You'd need

52,230

referral slips
to go around
Silverstone
race track

(that's 1 month's worth of referrals passed).



**GOOD TO
MEET YOU!**

2,531 VISITOR
HOSTS LEAD
THE WELCOME
IN OUR
CHAPTERS.



20,000 copies of
SuccessNet are distributed
across the UK and Ireland.

BNI[®] UK & Ireland's
largest chapter
is Oracle
(Lancashire),
with 52 members. Grow
your **Power Team** and
build **your** chapter.



*There are now
41 lunchtime
BNI chapters.
Who's up for
networking
at noon?*

Summer blooms...

There are 85 gardeners
and 99 florists amongst
our ranks.





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Welcome to BNI Germany





Andy Bounds: ***Walking the talk***

Andy Bounds has a long association with BNI for the best of reasons: his membership of BNI helped grow his start-up communications company into an international success! His relationship with BNI still continues today and he regularly gives his time to address BNI conferences and members' days. *SuccessNet* asked Andy for his views on a number of important business issues. Here's what he told us...

You have a busy international career helping businesses to secure better results by improving their communication. Where do businesses most commonly fail in communicating with others?

One key problem is that people don't ask enough questions before they speak. That means they *guess* what the other person wants to know – and if you head off in the wrong direction, you're going to end up in the wrong place!

Whatever the communication (whether it's a meeting or a presentation, a website or a BNI 1-1), unless you learn what your target audience want to find out, you run the risk of boring them or giving them irrelevant information. Ask good questions and you'll give them just what they need: it's faster, more pleasant... and best of all, much more likely to work!

You've used your very effective communication skills to build a successful career, but for most people, public speaking remains the Number One fear! What's the best way of overcoming this particular demon?

I have three main tips here.

The first follows the point above: know that you'll interest your audience before you open your mouth, by asking them beforehand what they want to know.

Secondly, visualise the presentation going well. Don't harbour thoughts like "I hope I won't be boring". Instead, believe they'll love it! Think things like, "This will help them do X even better", or "This fact will interest the people in my chapter".

Finally, practise: the more you present in different settings, the more comfortable you'll find it. I do this stuff for a living, but I still spend *at least* 30 minutes writing and practising for every 60 seconds I deliver.

You have had seven years of BNI membership. What was the most important lesson you learned from your time in BNI?

BNI is without question the best thing our business has ever done. Because of its positive influence on me, I feel it's still part of me.

One of the most important lessons I learned was that a referral should benefit everyone – the referrer, the receiver and the customer. A referral from a member to a poor quality supplier can damage reputations and trust, but a quality referral is a fantastic gift – for all three parties!

How far does *Givers Gain*®, continue to influence your business?

It's hugely important. We always like to give first. In fact, as a company, we feel uncomfortable if others have given first – it's like we 'owe' them something and feel this desperate need to 'give' back!

We think of our contacts and us as being equal partners, giving and gaining in similar measure. It's critical to give to these relationships, but vital to gain from them too. Our motto is Win-Win: if both we and our customers continue to win, we'll keep trying and they'll keep buying!

To what extent has networking contributed to your own business success?

Networking is the cornerstone of our business. We don't use brochures, advertising, seminars or PR. Our business is built entirely on networking – mainly with those we already know (existing contacts are way more important than strangers). This means keeping in close touch with colleagues, friends, suppliers, and customers. For example, when we complete a job (let's say it's for Bob), we make a note in the diary to call Bob one, two and three months afterwards. We'll ask Bob how he is; tell him how much we enjoyed doing that job for him and ask how it helped him and his business. We keep in touch and let Bob know he matters. We get a lot of business from these Bob-calls; Bob either buys more stuff or recommends us to others.

Many people fail to appreciate the potential significance of a referral. What is the single most important referral you've had in the development of your business, and how proactive were you in realising that referral?

The most important (in fact, life-changing) referral I ever had arose when I was pretty new to public speaking. The referral began with a recommendation from a trusted BNI colleague who advised me to attend a Professional Speaking Association event.

As a novice speaker, I was pretty nervous about mingling with all these experts, but I went. I met a respected author there called Paul McGee. We got to know, like and trust each other as colleagues and friends; and later, when I had a book I wanted to publish, he referred me to his publisher. He promised they'd do a great job for me – and they did! It was a brilliant referral and my book, *The Jelly Effect*, became a business best seller.

Had I been proactive? Yes, VERY! I'd attended BNI, tapped in to my network, listened hard to those I trusted, and followed up on their advice and the referral itself. I went to what was – at that time – a scary meeting on my own. I worked hard to ensure everyone who'd helped me was kept fully informed about how things were going. And I also worked extremely hard to give back to both of them many times over. Cherish those referrals: you never know where they might lead!

Andy's book, *The Jelly Effect*, ISBN 978-0857080462 (£8.99) is available at all good booksellers. You can also check out www.andybounds.com for lots of free ideas and advice.

CHAPTER AND VERSE

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

TEAM BUILDERS

Jonathan Leach, a building consultant at Faversham's Garden of England Chapter, is a firm believer in the remarkable potential of Power Teams.

It was an estate agent in his own chapter who alerted him to the opportunity to buy a particularly promising site. Once the site was acquired, Jonathan set about calling in Power Team colleagues from his own and four other Kent chapters to participate in the £1.2 million project.

"Being able to rely on the integrity and reliability of my Power Team colleagues makes a major project like this so much simpler and smoother," says Jonathan. "BNI colleagues on the team included a scaffolder, SAP calculations consultant (for energy ratings), electrical wholesaler, interior designer, marketing consultant, and flooring specialist. The estate agent, solicitor and mortgage broker are managing the selling and purchasing processes, and we'll call in our removals company when buyers are ready to move in. We'll even have our own flower arranger to provide a complimentary bouquet when the new homeowners arrive!"

Inevitably, some non-BNI suppliers have also been involved in the project, giving Jonathan and his team colleagues the chance to explain and demonstrate to them the value of the BNI Power Team approach. As a result, the project is also generating new visitors to the five chapters involved.

"This project has been a resounding success," says Jonathan, "and I'm proud that our extensive, cross-chapter Power Team has been such an important contributor. So far, the work has brought around £73,000 for fellow team members but there's more to come. In addition, our team now has the opportunity to tender for three more big projects, two of which are from BNI referrals. We're also keen to expand the Power Team with new members."

The moral is simple. Make the most of the Power Team Focus: together, the opportunities for quality BNI professionals are boundless!

Jonathan Leach - jonathan@jleachassociates.co.uk



PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT

For some new BNI members it takes a few weeks or months to get into the swing of things - but not new BNI Cheshire Oaks member, Stuart Peters of Deedale Financial Services, who definitely hit the ground running.

Having looked for a Mortgage Broker seat, Stuart was delighted when BNI director Paul Murray told him about a vacancy at Cheshire Oaks Chapter. He met with Paul to complete his application and submit his fees, and during this interview the seeds of a quite remarkable achievement were sown.

Looking through Paul's BNI business card holder, Stuart realised that he knew someone who needed the services of the chapter's plasterer and electrician. And when Paul outlined the group's five most wanted categories, Stuart knew that he could invite a painter & decorator to share his first meeting.

Paul also emphasised the importance of attending the Member Success Programme (MSP) and promised to book Stuart into a session as soon as he was inducted.

Everything went to plan. Stuart's application was accepted by Cheshire Oaks. Then, at his first chapter meeting and accompanied by his visitor, Stuart was inducted as a brand new member. He presented five referrals to chapter colleagues including the energy assessor, Bob Wilson, who had already completed a project for one of Stuart's clients. To cap it all, the client had emailed Stuart to thank him for finding such an outstanding energy assessor and Stuart was able to read out a glowing testimonial.

Five referrals, one visitor, one testimonial and training booked at his first chapter meeting was Stuart's 'full house'. In fact, it grew into a 'royal flush' as he also *received* a referral for a mortgage from one of the delegates at the training event!

Stuart Peters - stuart@deedale.co.uk



Many chapters underestimate the importance of inviting visitors to their weekly meetings and focus strongly on referrals. Yet visitors bring new connections and potential business to every chapter – and the Visitor Hosts are pivotal in giving them a great BNI welcome.

Mary Foyle, a member of the Cork City Chapter, is a Travel Counsellor who has achieved 'Gold' status as one of the top performers in her company. She credits her BNI membership with a large proportion of her sales.

In the past two years, Mary has completed two separate six-month periods as Visitor Host. She makes sure that visitors feel welcome and are never left standing alone. In true *Givers Gain*® style, this not only helps

the visitors but also benefits Mary. She recalls, "Last summer, a visitor asked me to organise a Canadian touring holiday. On her return, she recommended me to a friend who was taking a group to Canada: that trip is now booked and the business credited to our chapter. In the last three weeks, I have received one enquiry from a visitor's sister about her forthcoming honeymoon and one for the family trip of a lifetime from another visitor. All in all, my 'Thank You For the Business' from our visitors since Christmas now totals €55,000."

BNI director Sandra Hart adds, "After the warm welcome, Mary also impresses visitors with a bright, cheerful and memorable 60 seconds every single week. Her passion for her job shines through when she speaks about it. By making a great impression on visitors, she not only builds her chapter but grows her own business too. She also works hard with her Power Team, and last year gained €100,000 from the honeymoon holidays referred to her by Cork City's photographer. She's a great example of a great Visitor Host, good BNI practice and the enormous power of *Givers Gain*®."

Mary Foyle - Mary.foyle@travelcounsellors.com

CREATIVITY COUNTS

When it comes to creativity, nothing hits the mark quite like BNI members keen to grow and support their chapters!

The *SuccessNet* team has recently heard about three new initiatives that should inspire members across the world to boost their networking practice and skills.

When June Elliott, a graphic designer from Priory Chapter (Tynemouth), started creating bespoke wraps for business laptops and phones, she realised that the wraps would be a great way of generating interest in BNI. Sat in hotel or client reception areas, her liveried laptop often attracts enquiries from inquisitive passers-by. "At client meetings, I make a point of turning off my phone and placing it face down on the table to show the BNI logo. My clients often ask what BNI is and hey presto, I have a visitor!" says June.



Nick Yiannoullou of BNI Vision (Enfield) couldn't decide on the colours and design for his new business doormats, so his chapter colleague Tony Blyth of Flooring Solutions came up with a novel idea for generating referrals and visitors... Now, Nick's BNI liveried doormat is a silent salesman, triggering interest and opening up brilliant referral opportunities with every customer who opens his door!

And how many of us struggle to use every precious second of our BNI presentations? Rantmedia's new, free mobile timer app is now being developed with Ivan Misner's blessing as a useful new tool for members. The app can be set to time a 60 second or Ten Minute Presentation and gives a professional, visual countdown for even the most technosceptic member! It's simple to use and helps members to make the most of every second so they can finish with a flourish – on time! Search for BNI in the app store.



If you have innovative ideas that will help other members, why not share them through *SuccessNet*?

June Elliott - art@juneelliottdesign.co.uk

Tony Blyth - info@flooring-solutions.co.uk

Anton Faulconbridge - anton.faulconbridge@rantmedia.com

BNI® *DIY SOS*

Ever seen the BBC TV programme, DIY SOS? Well, here's how the BNI network sprang into action and showed its true colours by helping to fulfil the dreams of one very stressed family.

One morning, when BNI member Jill Booth was driving into work, she heard a radio announcement that the BBC needed tradespeople for a DIY SOS programme being filmed in Stoke. "I couldn't stop the car fast enough!" recalls Jill. "I called the producer right away and assured her I could find her some top tradespeople in BNI!"

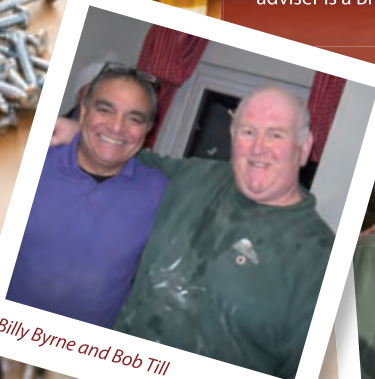
Two of the tradesmen who were able to drop everything and run that day were Bob Till, a kitchen fitter from Stone Chapter and Victor Woolley, a joiner from Britannia Chapter. When they arrived on-site, they learned that the project aimed to help a family refurbish their dreadfully dilapidated home. The house had been bought just before dad, Hayden Spice, was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and having lost his job due to his illness he had no money to rebuild the family's derelict home. Along with a large team of willing contributors Bob and Victor got to work and over a period of 10 days, the house was underpinned, partially rebuilt, extended and then decorated throughout.

One particular day, the programme makers urgently needed plasterers, so Bob rang a BNI colleague and rallied a whole team of reputable plasterers: that's quality networking! Bob says, "It was a joy to be involved and I'm grateful for the experience. My BNI badge attracted a number of enquiries from my fellow workers who had never heard of BNI before. I also discovered that the programme's health and safety adviser is a BNI member in London!"

Jill concludes, "This was a fantastic example of the tremendous effectiveness of BNI networking. Let's hope the national exposure will have shown others what BNI and *Givers Gain*® is all about!"

Bob Till -
btimprovements@aol.com

*This edition of
DIY SOS was first
screened on 27th
April on BBC One.*



Billy Byrne and Bob Till



Bob Till and Nick Knowles



AN EARLY START...

We're all keen to grow our chapters, and the BNI community is always eager to welcome and support everyone driven by *Givers Gain*®



Sally Latimer-Boyce joined Wellingborough Chapter as a founder member in April 2000 and watched SerendipiTi, her IT services company, growing steadily with the new business generated. However, within a few months she discovered that she was expecting her first child.

Sally says, "I really appreciated the help and support of my chapter colleagues at the time. They knew that I felt it important to maintain my contributions at meetings rather than apply for medical leave, and they were prepared to accept me introducing a sub to represent my business for five weeks around the time that James was born."

With the support of her husband, her mum and BNI colleagues, Sally returned to the BNI table soon after her little boy's arrival. Now a happy 10-year-old, James has grown up knowing that BNI meetings and membership feature strongly

in his mum's life. He understands what it's all about and why she's out at the crack of dawn every Friday morning.

Sally says, "For more than 10 years, BNI has been instrumental in building SerendipiTi and therefore in supporting our family. Over the years James has had lots of fun helping me prepare my Ten Minute Presentations. He says that when he's grown up, he wants to be a super-smart scientist who finds all his best business as a member of BNI!"

So when potential visitors suggest that family commitments might stand in the way of BNI membership, it's worth considering that in a supportive business community, it's often perfectly possible to find ways of successfully combining family duties, chapter commitments and a thriving, referral-driven business.

Sally Latimer-Boyce - Sally@serendipiti.co.uk

2020 VISION

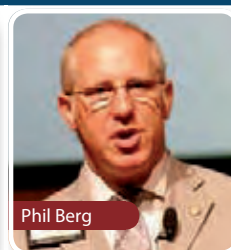
At the recent European Directors' Conference, we shared our vision of becoming a £1 billion referral business by 2020. The principle aim is to boost the businesses of every BNI member across the UK and Ireland by increasing the size of the BNI community: the more members, the greater the potential for more business.

By increasing the size of your chapter, you'll inevitably raise referral opportunities and we'd like to set a new average referral rate of 1.5 referrals per member, per week. So use every opportunity to share and develop good practice – education slots, training opportunities and, of course, your copy of SuccessNet – and you'll see your numbers, referrals and ROI rise. Let's all head for that £1 billion total for 2020!

Assistant National Director appointments



Mike Holman



Phil Berg

We're very pleased to announce the appointment of two Assistant National Directors in BNI UK and Ireland. As from 1st October, Mike Holman (Executive Director for Lancashire and South Pennines) will take responsibility for UK North and Ireland, and Phil Berg (Executive Director for London NE and Managing Area Director for Herts & Beds and London NW) will look after UK South. Mike and Phil have years of experience as BNI members and directors, as well as a great deal of valuable insight, motivation and vision.

They will work with your local BNI directors helping you to grow stronger, more successful chapters, enabling you to gain more business from your membership.

BNI in the news

BNI has recently received a surge of very valuable press coverage across national, regional and local publications. The media have recognised BNI as an institution and as a leading authority on business networking. Indeed, the *Sunday Telegraph* most recently described our breakfast meetings as 'legendary'. This accolade holds incredible PR value but above all, demonstrates our credibility.

We have had stories in the *Financial Times*, *Daily Mail* to *Yorkshire Post* and *Jewish Chronicle*, among many other publications. If you have a story which clearly demonstrates your success with BNI, David Stoch, BNI's press officer, would be happy to hear from you.

David Stoch - david@meerkatpr.co.uk



From: Daniel Scharvona

To: Howard Gold

Referral: Major building project

Value: More than £230,000

Super-powered construction

While working on a house refurbishment in Watford, Howard Gold of HPS (UK) Ltd, a building contractor, worked with quantity surveyors, Trogal Griffin Associates. Soon afterwards, Daniel Scharvona of Trogal Griffin was invited to Howard's BNI Fortune Chapter by loss assessor, Sam Dony, and joined the group.

Before long, Daniel had the opportunity to involve Howard in a tender. This demanded considerable confidence as the job was a substantial one, involving around five months' work. The two men had known each other only a short time, but the earlier work with Howard had shown Daniel that he did a good job. His company's attitude, on-site practice and documentation were just what Daniel needed.

"Most of all," says Daniel, "Howard's reputation among his chapter colleagues spoke volumes. He's liked and trusted by fellow members who had known him for far longer than me, and this gave me confidence in offering Howard the chance to get involved in the project."

When the property owners interviewed the tendering companies, they awarded the £230,000+ building contract to HPS. It's worth adding that a number of other Fortune colleagues were also involved in this project, not least because the chapter has a huge and proactive Property Services Power Team of 25!

"The Power Team is both a business generator and fantastic resource for me," says Daniel. "As a quantity surveyor, I need architects, building inspectors, structural engineers, electricians and so on all the time. It makes referring easy and helps my business too."

Howard too is delighted to be part of such a substantial and successful Power Team. "I'm grateful to Daniel, to BNI and to my Power Team for this fantastic referral," he says. "I'm certain that we'll go on helping each other and growing our businesses together with respect and confidence."

Howard Gold - admin.hpsuk@gmail.com

The greatest referral I ever had...

What goes a

Never underestimate the value of the wider BNI community – or the significance of quality visitors (you just never know what or who your visitors are looking for). Those are the core messages that shine out from a fantastic referral story from Yorkshire.



When Erica Wright of Vinci Construction UK, a national construction and facilities company, explained in her visitor presentation to the Professionals Chapter that she was looking for local contractors with whom to place business, the group knew that they had an ideal contact for her. Steve Smith of Concura, from neighbouring Soaraways Chapter, specialises in creating bespoke commercial kitchens. More importantly, he's known by BNI colleagues in his region as a true giver with an outstanding professional reputation. David Hogg, the Professionals' Chapter Director, observes, "Steve is an exceptional BNI member who doesn't just look for work for members of his own group but for trusted BNI colleagues everywhere. His *Givers Gain*® philosophy spreads much further than many other members."

It was therefore the Professionals' pleasure to explain to Erica that their colleague Steve Smith could help her. She readily agreed to accept his call.

Finding out about great referral stories is both uplifting and educational. Who do you know who has given or received a fantastic referral? It might have generated high value business, or perhaps we can all learn from the way it came about. In a truly great referral (like these three), everyone wins...

round...

From: Professionals Chapter

To: Steve Smith

Referral: Kitchen installation

Value: More than £100,000



In fact, Concura was already bidding to Vinci for a large Sheffield school project. However Steve had no direct contacts with the key procurement players and the site-level contacts were leaning heavily towards another supplier.

Steve explains, "Our call to Erica was based on the commercial value of appointing Concura as a local, recommended contractor: price wasn't even discussed! One hour after the call, Vinci invited me to present to them on-site. We were awarded a contract for more than £100K – a fabulous outcome for which I'm indebted to the Professionals' generous thinking – and to their excellent visitor."

The Professionals see it a little differently. David observes, "It's Steve's *Givers Gain*® attitude that has fostered reciprocal referrals from other groups and led to this great piece of business for him. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy."

David Hogg - david@isproperties.co.uk

From: Chris Flanagan

To: Darragh Kerrigan

Referral: Marketing and graphic design for Subway

Value: €30,000

Getting to know you

As graphic designer Darragh Kerrigan strolled down the street in Sligo one day, his eye was drawn to the advertising graphics at the Subway food outlet. He felt sure he could make a big difference to the food bar's image with better and more eye-catching signage.

Darragh was already talking to a fellow BNI Yeats member Chris Flanagan about doing some graphic work for his business which was located above the Subway outlet. What he didn't know was that Chris owned several Subway stores including the one below Darragh's office, and was involved with national marketing and promotion of Subway in Ireland! As they met for a 1-1 in Chris's office, Darragh said to his colleague, "Subway's advertising graphics for their advertising are very poor, don't you think?" He was therefore somewhat surprised when Chris replied, "Well, I happen to own the Subway below this office and I'm responsible for marketing and advertising for the Subway franchise in Ireland! I'd like you to come along and to pitch your ideas to the Subway board."

Darragh was thrilled at the opportunity and headed to Dublin the following week to present his ideas for a fresh Subway advertising strategy. After a successful pitch he now works with them on Subway campaigns throughout Ireland, and his recent 'Feast in a Box' campaign was so successful it's been rolled out internationally. This referral has already generated €30,000 of business and an ongoing contract for Darragh Kerrigan Creative. Additionally the campaign has also increased revenue at Chris's Subway outlet.



It just shows... you may think you know your chapter colleagues, but you need to make sure you know them in depth. Listening to their weekly 60 seconds simply isn't enough: book some 1-1s today and see what you can discover!

Darragh Kerrigan - info@darraghkerrigancreative.ie



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

■ About a year ago, I passed a first party referral to my fellow BNI group member Danny Blakey from D Blakey Joinery to redesign our living room.

He did a superb job and then regularly used photos of the room in his promotional material.

A few months after that, he asked me if he could bring to my house a prospect who wanted to see Danny's handiwork. During the visit, the prospect and I struck up a conversation. It emerged that she was a business owner and needed help with her accounts and business growth planning. I could see that she was an ideal client for my firm and I was convinced that we could really help her.

But there was a catch: I would need to contact her husband to discuss this – and he was "very busy". Since the first rule of sales is never to lose control of the sales process, I promptly asked for his mobile number. The following day, I advised Danny to pass this to me as a referral since the lead would not have happened if he hadn't introduced us. Then I called the mobile number. And again. And again. In fact, over a four month period, I left 17 messages (now that's what I call persistence!)

Finally, out of the blue, the guy called me to arrange a meeting with me the next day.

To cut to the chase, the business became my client, bringing in fees of around £8,000. And all because a BNI colleague used his network well to showcase his own excellent work – a valuable strategy for others, I suggest! It's also taught me that persistence pays off.

Russell Smith

Carrwood Park Pioneers, Leeds

■ After nearly 25 years in corporate IT, I was ready for a change. Having held a number of roles in my career, from salesman to board director, I believed I had the skills I'd need to start up my own company. Then people started to talk to me about the importance of local networking and I realised there was much I still needed to learn!

Fortunately for me, I was introduced to BNI early on in my new start-up career. After an invitation to visit BNI Tudor, I realised I'd hit on something rather special. I applied, and soon became a member.

Looking back over two great years of membership (and learning a lot about good networking!) I can see that there are three key benefits to BNI membership – and that it's not all about the money.

There's the tremendous buzz of being involved with a roomful of enthusiastic, motivated entrepreneurs week by week, and the wealth of experience, support and friendship that they're always willing to share with you.

There's the terrific professional and personal development journey you make at chapter meetings, BNI training, socials and members' events.

Of course, the key reason we become members is to grow our businesses – and BNI has been great at helping me with that. BNI colleagues in my chapter and others have brought me 75% of my business over the last two years. That's an amazing return on investment!

It's the combination of all three benefits that makes BNI such an exceptional community. Thanks to that community, my business is thriving and I'm a happy networker!

Tony O'Connell

Tudor Chapter, Teddington

■ Before we met at BNI just over a year ago, Mark McCallister and I didn't know each other. Now, thanks to our membership and effective 1-1s, we have a thriving new online company that runs alongside our existing businesses.

After a couple of detailed 1-1 meetings, Mark (a flooring specialist) asked if I'd be interested in working with him to sell flat-pack furniture online. The unique selling point in his business plan was the offer of added value services such as furniture assembly and the responsible disposal of packaging.

As an online marketing specialist, I really liked the idea and did some research myself to see how we might best move forward. I found that there was already competition, but with Mark's USP and my online marketing knowledge we knew we could provide customers with something special.

Of course, I could have simply built a site for Mark, showed him how to add products and just walked away, but we believed we could combine our different skillsets and make a better business together.

BNI has been an excellent source of advice from the start, with a business adviser, start-ups expert and an accountant all involved. Plus we benefit enormously from the generous support and ideas of many other BNI colleagues from our own chapter and across the region who are always so ready to help us.

My tip? Be sure to keep up a constant stream of 1-1s: they are always important and sometimes they are life-changing!

Andrew Kane
Connect Chapter, Bangor

You too could be the writer of a Star Letter and win a cool iPod Shuffle.



STAR LETTER

■ In January 2010 I decided the time had come to move out of the daily grind of employment and fulfil my ambition to set up my own business as a bookkeeper. For a while I managed to get by but I knew I'd need to find more and better business if I was to succeed. Then something amazing happened.

Audrey Davies of Poole's Harbour Chapter told me about a remarkable business meeting I could visit to meet her team of positive, professional colleagues.

When I walked into the room, the group's energy level filled me with such excitement that I couldn't wait to be part of it. However, having young children made early morning attendance difficult. Thankfully, my 'other half', Matt Goodrum, became my hero: he adapted his work routine so that I could get to the meetings and that was when my world changed – big time!

Initially, I worried about how I'd find referrals for my colleagues but by making sure I did a 1-1 each week I soon found that became easy. Likewise, my colleagues were bringing me more and more great referrals and my business was growing significantly. Within a month, Matt left his job to help cope with the company's increasing IT demands.

The workload continued to swell, keeping both of us so busy that at the end of 2010 we moved the business from our home base into serviced offices. We have now employed two staff members and we're looking for a third – as well as larger offices to accommodate us all!

What can I say? 90% of all our business is generated from the BNI network. Thank you BNI – you've revolutionised our lives.

Tina Edwards,
Harbour Chapter, Poole

■ When James McBrearty (the Twittering Tax Man) and I connected on Ecademy we discovered that we were both members of BNI. As a BNI director, James also helps members in our region to make the best use of social media.

This morning, James left home at 5am to visit my M20 Ashford Chapter (where I'm the Education Coordinator and a Membership Committee member) for our weekly meeting. He delivered a director's presentation to help us all to promote our businesses and our chapter via social media sites. Some of our members are fully up to speed with the latest social media but most are not, so while some were enlightened, others were sceptical.

However, the presentation immediately resulted in the re-launch of our Property Power Team (PPT). All 10 PPT members are now signed up to Twitter. They are getting their names and businesses 'out there', promoting each other, passing referrals, connecting daily and building up their SM profiles.

None of this would have happened if James and I had not met via Ecademy, so it's yet another example of how Ecademy brings proactive people together and helps things to happen.

If we can do it, so can you. Happy referring!

John Murray
BNI M20 Ashford



HOW TO WORK THE **VCP®** PROCESS **ONLINE** IN JUST **15** MINUTES PER DAY

Word of mouth

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

Top tips for BNI Connect and social media by BNI directors Samantha Rathling, Jeremy Freeman and Francis West.

BNI gives us the perfect setting for implementing the VCP® process (Visibility + Credibility = Profitability). Reliable meeting attendance, sound presentations and effective networking build your visibility (V) and your words, actions, attitude and contribution determine your credibility (C). Raise your V and C and your profitability (P) soars. So how does this apply to your online networking efforts? In fact, because you don't always have the opportunity for face to face meetings, VCP® becomes even *more* important in building valuable online relationships.

The most popular global online networks for BNI members are LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and now, BNI Connect. Try out the following top tips and you'll enjoy fantastic value from your online networking.

Tip 1: How can you help?

To get real, measurable value from your online networks it's crucial to think first about your customers' needs. How can you help them make a real difference? By giving them something really useful you're adding value to your customers' lives: it might be a customer service channel, a place to find exclusive offers or a resource for great information.

Tip 2: Build a 100% complete profile

The most important tip of all is – get visible! Start by creating online profiles for you and your business. BNI Connect allows you to upload your photograph, company logo, a full description of your business, your GAINS profile (see www.entrepreneur.com), biography sheet, the referrals you're looking for and keywords relevant to your business. Amongst the 130,000 BNI members across the world, there are likely to be those looking for someone who does what you do in your country. If your profile is not 100% complete you won't be found and you'll miss out on referral opportunities. Your profile is completely free on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter too: make good use of it!

Tip 3: Post recommendations online

Did you receive a written testimonial this week? (If not, and you've earned it, ask for one!) Why keep testimonials within the four walls of your BNI meeting? Take pride in your testimonial: show it off to your wider business network by asking your fellow members to share it on LinkedIn and your Facebook page.

Tip 4: Be specific online too!

Want to be a hero to your fellow members? Listen to the members who ask for someone very specific: note down the details and when you get back to your desk, enter the target's name on LinkedIn. Don't be surprised to find out that the target is already connected to you through someone you know well... Ask your contact if they could introduce you. Following that introduction, you can work your magic and try to secure that referral!

Tip 5: *Givers Gain*® online

One of the best ways to give to others online is to profile other BNI members through your online networks. For example, you can share fellow members' great presentations using Slideshare (www.slideshare.net). Your status update might read, "I attended a fantastic presentation this morning by Joe Bloggs of ABC Cleaning Services. I was so impressed with his business I wanted to share it with you. If you need a commercial cleaning contractor, contact me for a personal introduction to Joe." It's powerful stuff! Connecting others and looking out for those who may be good for those in your network can significantly increase your ability to give online AND raise your visibility and credibility. Online and traditional networking work hand in hand. In particular, BNI Connect will transform the way that BNI members do business and by learning how to leverage your online networks alongside your face to face networks you'll rise above your competition. Embrace social media, get visible, build credibility and you will create profitability online.

Samantha Rathling - sam@bni.ie, Jeremy Freeman - jeremy@bamps.com & Francis West - Francis.W@westtek.co.uk

We're mapping the BNI news around the UK & Ireland!

Want to share your news?
Let *SuccessNet* know
and we'll put the top
stories on the map!

Ask **David Watt** of **Echo Chapter** (Inverurie) about rapid ROI in BNI... After just six weeks of membership and his MSP training he received a perfect, cross-chapter referral which turned into £24,000 of business.

Joe Makepeace, **Tower Chapter's** (Blackpool) asset financier, not only provided **Invincible Chapter's** Roger Procter with a vehicle finance deal, he also came to his rescue by loaning his own dinner suit for a black tie event that weekend. BNI service – going the extra mile!

Civil engineer **Chris Condon** needed to find a source of new business. He joined **BNI Solstice** (Navan) and before long, received a road building referral for €250,000. Great networking, amazing results!

Fred Foster, who makes bespoke cards and wedding stationery, enquired on the BNI Europe website one evening, then attended, applied and joined **Basildon Chapter** the following day. More high-speed than stationary...?

Ashley Bayliss joined **BNI Wulfrun Chapter** (Wolverhampton) six years ago with his new print company. At the ripe old age of 40, his membership has generated business so successfully that he's taken (very) early retirement! (Unwilling to leave BNI however, he now represents Utility Warehouse.)

Carl Widger of **Kincora BNI** in Killaloe tweeted a local blogger, Lisa McGee, and suggested she might come along to meet his business group. She agreed, visited and completed her application. Get tweeting for visitors today!

Lino Carlino, a founder member of the 8-year-old **Great Western Chapter** and the giver of the group's very first referral, recently hit another historic target by also presenting the 10,000th referral.

Head for another fabulous networking opportunity at this year's **London Members' Day** on 28th October at the Russell Hotel, Bloomsbury. Book your place at: www.bni.eu/membersday2011