

A smiling man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light pink striped shirt, is holding a bright yellow soccer ball with both hands. He is looking directly at the camera with a friendly expression.

BNI[®] SUCCESSNET

■ ON TARGET

Les Ferdinand MBE on pressure, presenting and passion

■ RAISE YOUR NETWORKING GAME

News, tips and inspiration to help you make more money

■ BETTER MARKETING

Insights from the Father of Networking, Dr Ivan Misner



Welcome to your Winter 2011 *SuccessNet*, the home of Premier League networking!

This autumn we're delighted to feature *SuccessNet's* exclusive interview with the legendary Premier League footballer, 'Sir Les' Ferdinand, MBE, now striker coach at Spurs FC and heavily involved in developing charitable enterprises. Even if you've never kicked a football, this highly successful sportsman, leader, mentor and motivator has much to teach us all.

For some chapters, October marked the start of a new Leadership Team's term. But whether they are settling into their new roles or already experienced in their task, your teams will be adding their enthusiasm and ideas to your chapter meetings week after week. Please support your top table teams and together you'll reap the business rewards. As we approach the Christmas and New Year holiday season, why not keep the business energy and spirits high by running a BNI Game in your chapter? Ask your BNI director for tips and advice on how to achieve valuable and lasting results.

It barely seems possible, but the 15th anniversary of BNI in the UK is very nearly here. We're proud and pleased that BNI UK & Ireland members have made a massive £2 billion from their membership since our launch in December 1996. The first £1 billion took 10 years to achieve, but the phenomenal growth of our BNI community has secured a further £1 billion in the last five years. Amazing, but true! Everything starts with one small step and from that first chapter in Pinner the BNI journey has brought the enormous benefits of *Givers Gain*® to members across our two nations. Indeed our vision of BNI in 2020 is an organisation whose members benefit by a total of £1 billion every year!

Wishing you a happy, healthy and goal-achieving winter,

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

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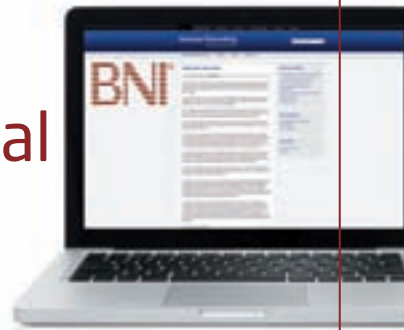
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Les Ferdinand: *Net work...*

Throughout his playing career as a star Premiership striker and later, a BBC Sport regular, Les Ferdinand MBE has always been admired for his skill and dedication. Now a respected striker coach with Spurs FC, the man known affectionately as 'Sir Les' also invests his energy and commitment in developing several charitable enterprises close to his heart. A keen networker, Les kindly gave his time to talk to us at *SuccessNet*...

As a star striker for several Premiership clubs, the pressure on you to 'get it right on the day' must have been immense. What helped you to handle that pressure and how has the experience benefitted you in your subsequent career?

I believed that handling it meant I needed to be really good at what I did: I trained really hard and carefully analysed the opposition. When you feel good and confident in what you do it takes some of the pressure away. It allowed me to look forward to performing well rather than feeling pressured. I suppose that for me, my biggest high-pressure moment came when I went from QPR to Newcastle. Everyone was saying, "A £6 million fee – that's huge money!", and it could have been really scary. But I reminded myself that it wasn't me who demanded that fee. All I had to do was get to work on the football field and do what I do best. I think that proved to me that I can do whatever I want to as long as I put the time in and work hard.

As BNI members we're driven by the philosophy of *Givers Gain*®. Does this philosophy ever apply in the world of top-level sport?

Yes, it certainly does. In any team sport you have to give and receive – it's essential. If I kept the ball to myself every time I picked it up, then others wouldn't give me opportunities on the ball either. I know that to get the best from my team we all need to help others along. It works both on and off the field – there's a lot of generosity between players. They'll swap information and ideas about skills, techniques, training and so on. At higher levels too, the approach still applies. In the past I did quite a lot for the FA: I'd attend functions when they asked me to, help with their initiatives and so on and now, years down the line, I'm doing my coaching badges and the FA is bending over backwards to help me. It's not about giving because you expect to receive, but yes, givers definitely gain!

One of your current roles is as forwards coach for the Tottenham Hotspur first team. What three attributes do you rate as the most important in motivating, organising and leading a team?

I'd say credibility, humility and confidence. It's vital to have the right knowledge and understanding of your own role and the team's, so when I speak to strikers I have to know exactly what their role demands: credibility is vital. Confidence in what you say and do is a must. If you have confidence, you can inspire it in others. I need humility too, though. Just because I've been there and done it doesn't

mean I'm better than someone else. I have to understand others' individual skills and suggest ways forward, even if they're not routes I'd have used myself.

Being a coach must demand a host of presentation skills, whether in the classroom or on the training field. What are your top tips for effective presentations?

First of all it's about thorough preparation. For example, I'll go to every game and watch each striker's performance like a hawk! Then I'll watch the playbacks and reaffirm it for myself. Only then can I go to the players and present to them. It's no good just saying things – you need good evidence to show them, so you can help them learn positively and thoroughly. Secondly, it's always best when you talk from the heart. If you have real passion for what you do, people will tune into that and get involved in what you are saying.

You are a passionate supporter of Cancer Research UK and have been instrumental in developing social enterprises such as Team48 Motorsport and, more recently, Search for a Star – St Lucia. How far do networking skills help you in your work to help and encourage others?

It's vitally important that I network with likeminded others in order to get my charity initiatives off the ground. For example, I've long wanted to do something in St Lucia, from where my family originates. People have been trying to develop football there for a long time, without much success. Through networking, I've met a guy who runs an academy in London for underprivileged children and wanted to help St Lucia too. We met and talked about our shared hopes and ideas. By pooling our contacts in Nike and other businesses we knew, we got kits, footballs, and everything we needed to get the Search for a Star show on the road. As a result, we're now hoping to bring back some young St Lucian players to the UK to train at Tottenham. Without our Spurs and industry networks, we couldn't have done it.

Goals have always featured large in your life! What's your next big goal and how could BNI members help you to achieve it?

Lately, I've been actively supporting work on prostate cancer. A family member was diagnosed with the disease and I want to do what I can for the Prostate Cancer Charity. I'm hoping to put on some golfing events as fundraisers and if anyone's up for helping that would be great!

Want to help fight prostate cancer? Visit www.prostate-cancer.org.uk

CHAPTER AND VERSE

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

THE ULTIMATE PROP

Ten Minute Presentations can be engaging, intriguing, informative... and just sometimes, they can be spectacular!

One morning in September, garden designer Dominick Cullinane was at Cork City Chapter's venue extra bright and early to prepare for his Ten Minutes – and how!

This was to be no simple narrative of what Dominick does, how he does it and who for. At the crack of dawn, Dominick was wheeling in turf, plants, trees, shrubs, garden furniture and even a hanging fire-basket – in short a complete, beautifully designed garden which sprang to life in the chapter's meeting room! The breathtaking scene was the perfect setting for Dominick to deliver a truly exceptional Ten Minute Presentation that would remain with its audience for a very long time. "The atmosphere in the room was electric!" says fellow member Sean Ware, who writes the chapter's blog. "We not only learned a great deal, we were delighted at the thought and respect his effort showed for his fellow members."

Just to make sure that his colleagues had all the information and evidence they needed, Dominick concluded his presentation by giving everyone a video showreel of his work.

The business benefits of this inspiring presentation were immediate, as Dominick received a substantial order for a pub roof garden in the referral round and it seems certain that such effort and care will continue to reap well-deserved rewards.

Samantha Rathling, Cork City's BNI director, added, "Dominick completely blew everyone away with his commitment, passion and preparation. I arrived at 6.10am and he had already been there for over an hour with a team of four, getting the garden ready. Many long-term members commented that it was the best Ten Minute Presentation they had ever seen, and I agree. Dominick's dream is to exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show, so if you are reading this and can help him to achieve that dream through a connection, I know he would be deeply appreciative".



Dominick Cullinane - info@dominickcullinanelandscapes.com

HITTING THE JACKPOT

When Clare Cooper of Ashford Eureka BNI delivered her Ten Minute Presentation about the paradise-island properties she had for sale, everyone was probably imagining the pleasures of relaxing in the luxury of the Caribbean sunshine.

Although referring high-end properties for sale thousands of miles from home is hardly easy, Clare's chapter colleagues had done a great job for her over the two-and-a-half years of her membership. As a result her company, Crystal Sands, had turned over a massive £12 million in property sales during that period. A true fan of *Givers Gain*®, she was keen to thank them – in style!

When her door prize draw took place, winner Daryl Carter had no idea that this was no ordinary door prize. Clare explains, "What better way to say 'Thank you' than to allow one of my BNI 'sales team' to check out my products for himself!" Daryl's prize was a week's all-expenses paid trip to Buccament Bay, a beautiful resort on the southwest coast of St Vincent.



It's fair to say that Daryl was speechless when he learned his good fortune, but very soon he and his family were on their way to their exotic destination. "It was simply amazing!" enthuses Daryl. "After arriving in St Lucia, we boarded our 4-seater plane to St Vincent and then by boat

to our resort. We were greeted with a steel band, ice-cold towels and cocktails, and taken to our luxury apartment with its stunning sea view. We had everything we could possibly want – a plunge pool on our balcony, fabulous food and helpful, friendly service every step of the way. The location that Clare had taught us about at BNI was just as magical as she'd described! It was an incredibly generous prize and I can't thank Clare and Crystal Sands enough."

Clare is delighted that it all went so well. "However much I describe the locations, it's always more powerful if others experience it first-hand," she reflects. "Daryl's a terrific BNI giver and I can't think of anyone better to have received a special prize".

Clare Cooper - clare@crystalsandsinvestments.co.uk

THE POWER OF THE PIN



Following a serious accident at a local business premises, many companies in the Galway area began to understand that good health and safety advice on strategy and insurance were essential for the protection of their staff, their customers and their businesses.

One such firm was keen to update its health and safety systems and invited four local specialists to present their businesses and provide quotes. Liam Higgins of CARA Risk Management and a member of Galway's Tribesman Chapter, was one of the invitees. However, when the Managing Director welcomed the four tenderers, he noticed Liam's BNI lapel pin and called him in immediately. He told him, "I know BNI, I like BNI, and I trust BNI!" – a conviction that without any doubt gave him the edge over his competition. Needless to say, Liam won the job.

Indeed, that wasn't the only business that Liam secured that day with the help of his BNI pin. The Managing Director explained that he also ran two other outlets across the country which also needed Liam's consultancy. Liam went home with all three pieces of valuable business (together worth more than €6,000) and suitably proud of his BNI credibility.

Liam believes that the BNI lapel pin is a very powerful (and often underused) business generator. He says, "When someone who knows about BNI sees you wearing the BNI lapel pin, they know three things:

1. where you are one morning every week between 06:30 and 09:30
2. that you subscribe to the philosophy of *Givers Gain*® and the BNI Code of Ethics
3. that you are vetted each week by your peers who decide whether or not to refer you based on how well you fulfilled your last referral. Passing that weekly test confirms that you are indeed a valuable supplier to any business."

Liam Higgins - liam_higgins@o2.ie

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

When Simon Tabaczynski joined Bolton Central Chapter in May, his fellow members could never have imagined what an impact he would make. Within the first three months he had attended *five training sessions*, presented *111 referrals*, brought *seven visitors* and notched up *over £10k in business* given to his chapter colleagues!

Having subbed at BNI meetings in the past, Simon understood exactly what *Givers Gain*® was all about. As a newcomer to the group he knew numerous potential visitors and set about inviting them straight away. "The BNI skills workshops taught me that lots of guests mean new business opportunities for everyone – visitors and members alike," he reflects. "Our chapter has members with fabulous track records in inviting great visitors and I took my inspiration from them. They taught me to look simply for good people with whom we could exchange contacts and do business. So now I'm fearless: if they're good, I'll invite them – people who ring me trying to sell stuff, folks I meet at the pub... you name it!"

Simon applies the same confidence to finding referrals. "I saw a guy in Asda today wearing the logo of a local electrician. I simply asked where he got his supplies – and guess what, I got a referral for our electrical wholesaler!"

It's perhaps not surprising that Simon has been asked to take on the mantle of Chapter Director from Ray Holding at the next transition. "I can't wait," he says. "It's a fantastic opportunity. Ray has done an amazing job in driving chapter growth and I hope to build on his great work," says Simon. "Having risen in the national Traffic Lights from red (ranked 470) to green (ranked 11) in five months, we're happy to discuss the route we've taken with other chapters wanting to grow and prosper too."

Simon's rapid success in both generating and receiving business is a great example to us all on how to derive the greatest value from your BNI membership – and it's all a question of **attitude**.

Simon Tabaczynski
simon@theconnectgroup.net

Simon's Top Tips for Success

- 1 Throw yourself into everything BNI offers – training, chapter roles, 1-1s and so on: you'll get so much more from the experience!
- 2 Arrive early (before 06:30) at meetings: early birds catch the very best worms!
- 3 You're permanently surrounded by potential referrals. Just ask – who cares if they say no?
- 4 **EVERYONE** can bring visitors. Don't focus on finding potential members – simply invite good people.

THE FORTUNES OF *Fortune*

Two years ago, NW London's Fortune Chapter had just 19 members. But this chapter had big ideas, and the leadership team understood that the larger the chapter and the better the members, the wealthier they'd all become.

With the support and guidance of BNI director, Jeremy Freeman, Fortune set about building in earnest. Visitors were central to the development plan and members were asked to invite at least 40 guests to a Visitor Day event. It was vital that every single member bought into the need and strategy for growth. Two members preferred not to participate in inviting visitors so their categories were opened, taking membership down to 17. However, from more than 80 visitors attending the Visitor Day, four excellent new members were carefully selected to join the group.

"Our success story is really about cultural change," says Jeremy. "Every member has to see themselves as accountable for the group's success. We work hard to make the visitor experience the best it can be. The chapter appoints a Follow Up Coordinator who ensures that someone liaises with every visitor in the days after the meeting, and members constantly invite more good

visitors to come and see what we offer. We build strong Power Teams and meet regularly for 1-1s to strengthen relationships and generate referrals. Crucially, we politely refuse any applicants who don't truly embrace the *Givers Gain*® culture."

To help develop skills across the chapter, training sessions are block-booked. In addition, every member (including the Mentor Coordinator) has a mentor and each mentor supports five other members.

The results speak for themselves. Fortune is now the UK & Ireland's largest chapter with 58 members and over £1.1 million in business exchanged this year, including £800,000 in the last four months. The aim for 2012 is a £3 million total and each of the 60+ members in the green on the Member Traffic Lights. Watch this space!

Jeremy Freeman - jeremy.freeman@bamps.com

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE CHAPTER?

Just 11 months after launching, Tyne Bridge Chapter hit the magic £1 million mark in business referred by the members. The group, already numbering 34, took a clear, focused approach right from the start.

Inaugural Chapter Director Graeme Cumberland explains, "BNI has a proven record of over 25 years, so why mess with the rules? They work – that's what we buy into! Our chapter has flourished very quickly, but it's not magic: we just keep it simple."

Here are some of Tyne Bridge's best tips for growing a thriving chapter...

PREPARATION Prepare your 60 seconds: it's a valuable advert that you've paid for! And never waste that time by saying, "It's my Ten Minutes so I'll sit down for now!" What message does that actually convey?

ATTENDANCE Your chapter meeting is your weekly sales meeting. Be there – always! Have two or three people primed to sub for you just in case: if one-man bands can manage this, anyone can!

ATTITUDE Enjoy the meeting, contribute and be cheery. Don't use the early hour as an excuse for being lazy and unprepared. There's often someone who likes to moan. Avoid them. They contribute very little to the chapter.

TRAINING Attend training as often as you can: you will learn and network all in one go.

CONTRIBUTIONS Always bring something special to the meeting. Imagine it's a BBQ: do you want to be the one who brings the cheap and nasty sausages or the carefully constructed kebabs and homemade quiche? A little effort goes a long way.

FINDING REFERRALS Ask friends, family and contacts if they'd like an introduction to a reliable accountant, roofer, etc. If they already have one, explain you know one if they should ever be let down or need a second opinion. Create a duplicate card file for reliable friends and family who 'get' BNI: ask that the referral always comes through you.

FEEDBACK Be grateful for the good referrals you receive: update the giver on progress and give them the praise and recognition they deserve. Even poor feedback can be given constructively.

Graeme Cumberland - graeme@metro-mortgages.com



Your Winter 2011 edition of *Successnet* brings you a generous double helping of training topics from two highly respected networkers, Peter Sylvester and Andy Lopata. Read, enjoy and take action!

First up, Peter Sylvester, Executive Director for BNI in SW Midlands, invites you to drop into a post-chapter meeting 1-1...

Dirk I had several referrals today, but they are never any good. It's a waste of my time.

Bob Your time's important, then?

Dirk Absolutely! I'm lucky to find the time to come to the meetings. Straight after this, I'm seeing a company about more cold-calling.

Bob So you're already busy chasing business, and you want to do even more cold-calling to get even more busy?

Dirk Absolutely! The quality of referrals that I get from my chapter is very poor, you know.

Bob smiles and shakes his head.

Bob The way I see it, there are 10 steps in any sales process.

1 —————> 10

Step 1 is where you don't know who you want to speak to, and you don't know where they are. Step 10 is where the money is in the bank, and the cheque has not bounced!

Dirk And that's why I say in my 60 seconds that I'll accept business from anybody, anywhere.

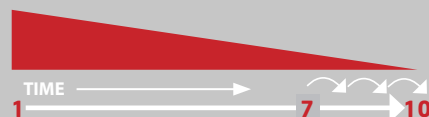
Bob But think for a moment: if you take the time to train your colleagues to bring you 'Step 7' referrals, fantastic things begin to happen.

1 —————> 7 —————> 10

TRAIN people to bring you 'Step 7' referrals and all YOU have to do is quote them (Step 8), provide the goods (Step 9) and collect the money (Step 10).

Dirk TRAINING? But that's even more time I don't have. I'm far too busy for that!

Bob Just look at the amount of time you spend doing cold-calling. The graph for the amount of time spent looks something like this...



However, train your referral partners and Power Team to bring you only 'Step 7' referrals, and you vastly reduce the time you spend finding new customers. The graph now looks like this...



Just see how much time you've saved! And the QUALITY of the customers will be far better, so you won't have 'risky' clients to manage.

Dirk stared at the graph, slurped his coffee, and then looked at his watch nervously.

Dirk Oh my God – I'm going to have to go. I have to get across town for my next appointment in 20 minutes.

Bob But I thought we'd booked a one hour 1-1 session, so that I could learn more about how to find you 'Step 7' referrals?

Dirk Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry, but I am going to have to do that another day. Too busy at the moment. Got to find more clients...

And with that, he was gone.

So the 1-1 was shorter than expected and highlighted perfectly that although BNI provides all the tools and connections for a profitable business, some people still insist on using manpower rather than brainpower!



Andy Lopata's new book, *Recommended: How to sell through networking and referrals*, is an essential guide to effective networking for

any BNI member. In this extract from the book, Andy discusses how trust is built and, in particular, the importance of your personal brand.

First impressions

Your appearance has a major impact on whether or not people are likely to trust you. Angela Marshall, an expert in managing your appearance and author of *Being Truly You* believes that how you look is vital.

"Having the right image is very important as it affects how people perceive you," she told me. "How you present yourself, whether it is face to face with your grooming and the way you dress to how you communicate when you speak to people either on the telephone or when you directly meet them is very influential. Looking good, being polite and courteous, having positive body language and good communication skills are key to having a positive personal image."

It's not just your appearance that impacts on the trust that people will place in you though. Personal Branding expert Lesley Everett, author of *Walking Tall*, believes that your core values will play a vital role.

"If we build our personal brand consciously and effectively in line with our authentic core then we can more effectively be consistent with how we project it," said Lesley. "If we're viewed as authentic and consistent then others trust us more – it's as simple as that."

Recommended is available at a discount for BNI members from www.recommendedthebook.com/bni

BLOG WITH BNI®



There's a wealth of ways in which social media can help you build your business, grow your chapters, develop your knowledge and skills and generally get the best from your BNI membership. At National Office we're committed to developing effective social media tools for our members and we're now proud to launch a high quality, information-packed blog aimed at helping members to win more referral business. Check out this exciting business tool at www.business-networking.co.uk. As the Number One trusted source of guidance for business networking, BNI brings you blog contributions by acknowledged experts such as Andy Lopata, Guy Clapperton, Dinah Liversidge, Heather Townsend, Penny Power and Rob Brown. We're delighted that these celebrated names are writing for us and working with our own BNI experts to create a fantastic new resource for members.

Do you have a success story to blog? Feedback to share? If so, please send it to Ruth Hambleton (ruth@eurobni.com) here at National Office.

For more great social media opportunities, check out www.bnipodcast.com and follow us on Twitter @BNI_National.

New Member Pack

In case you've not yet seen them, we wanted to spread the word about the new-style New Member Packs now available. Each pack contains a number of excellent resources that will help new members to get great results from their membership even more speedily. For example, in addition to all the customary contents you'll also find a mentor booklet and a set of 20 invitation postcards to help new members with their first four weeks' contributions.

For old and new members alike, we're confident that the improved, Filofax-format packs are a valuable development, providing a safe place to store your badge and pin (so you never head for a meeting without them!) and most of all acting as a referral generator that can travel with you wherever you go. If you would like to purchase a pack, please speak to your local BNI director.



From: Julie Calleux

To: Kumar Bhimjiyani

Referral: IT support

Value: More than £92,000

Perfect Partnerships

BNI provides an ideal structure within which many strategic partnerships can form and flourish. One such partnership arose from an excellent referral in the lunchtime BNI Commonwealth Chapter in London North Central.

Losing one's job is unsettling and stressful, so it's not surprising that Julie Calleux, an employment lawyer with Employease, generally develops very strong and trusting relationships with her clients. One such client was Jim, for whom she'd negotiated a six-figure deal when his contract as a finance company's IT director was terminated. As with all her ex-clients, Julie added Jim to her LinkedIn network. But her BNI thinking soon began to generate even more significant results...

Soon after Jim's settlement was paid, Julie saw on LinkedIn that he had set up as a consultant advising on IT strategy. She rang Jim to congratulate him and he told her that one of his clients wanted to outsource their IT support. Julie immediately thought of her chapter colleague, IT support specialist Kumar Bhimjiyani of Hiteishee Ltd. Knowing that a visit to her chapter could benefit both Jim and Kumar, she invited Jim along and introduced them to each other as her respected colleagues.

Kumar recalls, "I was so pleased when Julie brought a reputable IT consultancy firm to our chapter. I've been building strategic relationships with smaller companies for years and this one looked really useful. Jim and I got on well and I arranged a 1-1 with him right away."

Jim introduced Hiteishee to his client (a prestigious London magazine publisher) along with three other shortlisted companies and Kumar's company won the £30,000 contract. What's more, once Hiteishee had taught their new client about good BNI networking, the publisher referred them to their own clients in South London. As a result, Julie's original referral generated £92,000 from three companies in just three months!

Kumar says, "BNI gives the perfect framework for developing the long lasting and mutually beneficial relationships Hiteishee really values. Huge thanks to Julie for this fantastic referral!"

Julie Calleux - jcalleux@employease.co.uk

The greatest referral I ever had...

Olympic gold

Last October, BNI director Ewan Sturman was approached by Tim McLachlan to help him find the right designer to create a new brand. Tim is a director of 21st Century Legacy, a charity overseeing the educational heritage of the 2012 Olympic Games. He wanted to re-brand the charity's core programme, *Be the Best You Can Be!*

The programme was created by Les Duggan and the charity's founder, Sir David Hemery CBE, the celebrated Olympic gold medallist and Vice Chairman of the British Olympic Association. With the help of Olympian role models, the programme challenges and supports young people to raise their expectations and achieve their goals across the curriculum. The re-brand needed to improve the programme's reach and engagement with schools and their pupils across the UK.

As a BNI director, Ewan is in touch with numerous excellent designers, and following a 1-1 with Tom Gagen of Suburbia Design some months before, he knew that Tom had particular expertise in designing materials for children. He wholeheartedly referred Tim to Suburbia.

Tom, a member of Llangollen's Dee Valley Chapter, refined the charity's logo and created the starburst concept that now appears on the many *Be the Best You Can Be!* products he has supplied to them. The list includes workbooks, DVDs, exhibition stands, brochures, USB sticks and other items – a total of 30 projects in just one year.

Tim McLachlan is delighted with Suburbia Design's work and has already nominated the company for the Daily Post Achievement Wales Awards in both the Community and Small Business categories. "What a tremendous journey this has been!" he enthuses, "I send work Tom's way every week. Our greatest project to date is the starburst and packaging he did for the Royal Mint medallions which are awarded to the youngsters who complete the programme. These unique and significant mementos will live on long into the future."

Tom Gagen - thomas@suburbiadesign.co.uk

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...

From: Ewan Sturman

To: Tom Gagen

Referral: Olympic charity re-brand

Value: Around £50,000



From: Martin Havenhand

To: Dave Manley

Referral: Supply of office products

Value: £60,000 per year

Best practice, great business

As the new Darrington Chapter began to grow, member Jess Barnes invited Dave Manley of Universal Office Products to visit. Dave's brother and business partner was already a member in Steel City Chapter so Dave knew that BNI was successfully expanding their client list.

As the meeting closed, member Martin Havenhand approached Dave and the pair began to discuss their businesses. Dave learned that Martin worked for a large utilities company and the two talked about how they could help each other find their ideal referrals.

A few days later, Dave received a phone call. It was from Martin: he happened to know the Group Procurement Manager of one of Yorkshire's largest companies, and his contact wanted to meet Dave to discuss their office supplies requirements.

Dave responded immediately, arranging a prompt appointment and making sure that he knew everything he could about his potential client company before the meeting. Dave reflects, "The first meeting went well and discussions continued for some months (by which time I'd taken over my brother's membership at Steel City) but it was worth every bit of effort and attention to detail! Ten months down the line we were given the contract to supply the entire group, a referral that amounts to around £60,000 per year."

Dave adds, "We're delighted with this cross-chapter referral and committed to doing an outstanding job for our client. My motto for referral success? It's what our BNI directors Niri Patel and Byron McPherson are always telling us: *Best practice works and wins business!*"

Dave Manley -
davemanley@uop.co.uk



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

STAR LETTER

■ I'm a member and Chapter Director of BNI Claddagh. As part of a recent company restructure my role as a hotel general manager was made redundant.

Given that the hotel had been more successful under my control than at any time in its history, this sudden news was not only distressing but surprising too. However, sitting around feeling bad wasn't going to help me at all and with the encouragement of my BNI colleagues, my wife and I decided to build a new business. EzSales combines our skills and experience to offer search engine optimisation, online marketing and business development services.

Fellow members have generously given their time, advice and expertise to help us create our new company. Their remarkable belief, friendship and support have given us the encouragement and motivation to move forwards and I can't thank them enough. Indeed, in a time that's been one of the darkest in my career, the genuine goodwill of the BNI community has shone like a beacon for me: it's truly

humbling, and shows that BNI is about so much more than business transactions.

Without BNI Claddagh, I'd still be trailing round Galway hotels looking for work. As it is, my wife and I are embarking on a new path (and a new BNI category!) that's heading for balance and happiness. Thank you, BNI!

Geoff Kinsella
Claddagh Chapter, Galway



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

■ I'm lucky enough to have a villa in Florida, which we recently visited for a holiday. A keen advocate of BNI, I was intrigued to find out more about BNI USA-style so I emailed one of the local chapters.

I wasn't sure how they'd feel about hosting an English observer but I shouldn't have doubted them... Half an hour after sending my email I received the most enthusiastic and excited reply from Patricia Lichtle, Winter Haven Chapter's Director. She said they'd be thrilled to welcome me and she'd tell her chapter immediately about their foreign guest!

My wife was keen to attend the meeting with me and we were greeted like long-lost friends. It was fascinating to observe that in many ways it was just like being with my own chapter – there was a similar mix of warm, sincere and delightful characters, though it's true that the Hawaiian shirts differed from our own dress code!

We had a wonderful morning. I was invited to present my 60 seconds and I'm delighted to say that we found numerous great business opportunities to share. As part of a British villa-owning community, I know how hard it can be to find reliable tradespeople and professionals to ensure that our properties are well maintained. Joining the Floridian BNI community solved the problem beautifully! I now have a great network of BNI Florida members to help me with my own property, and I'm the first point of contact when any of my villa-owning contacts need a roofer, a landscaper, new carpets, and so on.

We generally return to Florida every six months and I won't miss out on meeting up with my colleagues from Winter Haven Chapter next time I'm there.

Ralph Moody Trevelyan Chapter, Newcastle

Never forget that BNI is a worldwide organisation – and if you can't physically meet your global colleagues, link up with them on BNI Connect! Ed.

■ In the Herts and Beds region we've proved over the last few months that the 'Power of One' and 'Steady with Quality' are vital keys to growing a successful chapter.

First it's a matter of using the Chapter and Member Traffic Lights to identify which areas your chapter is struggling with. The easiest way to make a rapid and significant difference is to study the Member Traffic Lights and appoint committee members to speak to each individual about one key thing they can do to raise their game – and of course their ROI. This might be as simple as bringing a testimonial or attending a training workshop. As each member improves so there's a knock-on effect on the Chapter Traffic Lights too.

At chapter level, discuss at the Membership Committee meeting the one key thing that needs improving that month.

■ Ten years ago, my ten friends and I decided to cement our long friendship with a girlie weekend away together, and to preserve the event in print we hired a photographer to create a fun 'Calendar Girls' memento for us all!

A decade later, we're still great friends and wanted to repeat our girlie weekend with a trip to the Kent coast together. This time however, finding a great photographer has been so much easier! Having set up a lifestyle management business, Partners in Time, I've now been a member of BNI Putney Riverside for four years. We have a marvellous photographer there, Marte Rekaa Lundby of MLR Photo, but she was already commissioned for the dates we needed.

So what to do? Well, it was obvious. I simply used the BNI UK website to look at BNI chapters close to where we would be staying and found Samantha Jones from Samantha Jones Photography, a member of the BNI chapter in Faversham. She was the perfect candidate: enthusiastic, creative and fun!

The point is, BNI isn't just useful for growing your business and making great contacts locally. It's so much more. It's an easy route to finding the right sort of people anywhere in the country: I was pretty confident that any photographer who'd taken the step to join BNI would be the kind of photographer I'd be happy to work with. It's good to know I was right.

Peta Cottee BNI Putney Riverside

Don't forget that there's an easy and FREE way to advertise your business on the BNI UK website's 'Network Central' directory. Visit www.bni.eu/networkcentral.

For example, because conversion was a problem for my chapter, we brought in another BNI director who is brilliant at conversion to run a visitor orientation session so the visitor hosts could see what he did. The improvements were immediate – and for the last three months our numbers have increased steadily.

Rather than bamboozling everyone with too much in one go, this steady monthly focus on 'one key element' produces powerful results. The themes of 'Steady with Quality' and the 'Power of One' have moved us out of the red and 2nd from bottom in the region to green and 3rd from top within the last three months – and we're still improving!

Gina Wadsworth BNI Regional Director, Herts and Beds

MARKETING MATTERS



Word of Mouth

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

In a recent personal interview with BNI's Founder and Chairman, Dr Ivan Misner, Amanda Daniels of Liverpool's Alpha Chapter got the Father of Networking's lowdown on some key marketing guidelines...

How did you feel about marketing when you first started up your companies? Was it something you were confident about from the start?

Definitely not! My degrees were in Political Science and in Organisational Behaviour. I had very little marketing experience until I went to work for a transportation company in Southern California and within the space of a few weeks had to turn my hand to purchasing and then to marketing! My marketing experience was trial by fire and reading. I just started reading books on marketing and learned as I went, and it was that experience that gave me enough knowledge to do some marketing on my own when I later set out as a business consultant.

Getting your name and your brand out there is very important to all businesses, so what would your top marketing tip be?

Well I think it's really about building the brand, either the brand of the company or of the individual, depending on the kind of business that you're in. Name recognition – that's the biggest challenge, especially for small companies. It's not the same for everybody, because every business is a little different and people's skill sets are different. For me it was about writing. Before the internet I was trying to get articles in newspapers and magazines. Now it's much, much easier. In this age of blogs and social media, even small companies have a global reach. The problem is all the white noise that's out there: with so many people wanting a piece of the action you have to be able to stand out. So for me the top marketing tip would be write, write, write. Become an expert in your field so people want to follow you, because when they follow you, they're more likely to do business with you.

Are there different rules for developing business relationships online?

The foundation of networking applies both on- and offline: it's what I call the 'VCP Process' (Visibility, Credibility and Profitability). It's a chronological process. You have to progress from one step to the next. It starts with visibility (people know who you are and what you do) then credibility (people know who you are and what you do and they know you're good at it) and finally profitability (people know who you are and what you do, they know you're good at it and they are willing to pass you business on an ongoing and reciprocal basis). When people try to jump ahead in that process, networking goes sour. They meet you and say "Hi Ivan, I'm Amanda: it would be great if you could refer business to me." But there's no relationship. They try to jump over visibility and credibility and get straight to profitability and it won't work! I call this premature solicitation (you don't want to say that fast) and it happens more online than face-to-face. So it's important to understand and harness the VCP Process to build your business whether online or offline.

Relationships are key to all businesses. What's your top tip for dealing with people in business?

One of the things I recommend for maintaining relationships is to use 'touch points' – ways of staying in regular contact with people. It's easier than ever these days, with email, Facebook, Twitter and so on. And nothing is more effective than a personal, handwritten note, as long as you *do it!* So find your touch points, stay in touch with others as much as you possibly can, because when you stay in their minds they will remember you when they need your products or services.

By Amanda Daniels - info@koogar.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!

Pegasus Chapter's Max Robinson delivered a highly effective Education slot in the form of a courtroom drama in which 'The Accused' were members who seriously underuse their BNI investment by doing too few 1-1s! Why not share news of YOUR innovative Ed slots?

Referrals were rare for **Dominic McNulty** of **Mayo Chapter** so he booked onto a Member Success Programme and a skills workshop and realised he'd been wasting his weekly presentations. Just a week after revamping his 60 seconds he received 17 referrals!

In July, the BBC's DIY SOS star Billy Byrne helped **Hatfield's Verulam Chapter** celebrate 10 years of chapter success and a total of £4 million in business exchanged.

For their summer BBQ, **Killarney Chapter** called on a local expert to teach them to fish for their supper. Networking, sharing skills and referrals and having fun: never underestimate the power of great BNI social events.

Builder **Geoff Buckland** of Weymouth's high-flying **Olympia Chapter** offered to help prepare for the launch of the new Dorchester lunchtime chapter. Imagine his surprise when he left the meeting with a referral which turned into £95k!

Four years ago accountant **Richard Fitton** of **BNI Two Valleys** was referred to two small sole traders who soon became clients. Since then the two micro businesses have merged, taken on further partners and are now part-owned by a multinational group who have already given Richard business. From small acorns, great oaks grow...

At the **BNI West Yorkshire BBQ**, BNI director **Rick Armstrong** launched BNI Networking Nectar, a new beer created especially to promote and celebrate the best and most sociable networking organisation in the world!

When **BNI Chipping's** estate agent **Bruce Maunder-Taylor** referred 44 of his portfolio of managing agents to Mark Lipman of Full Power Utilities, Bruce's contacts were so delighted with the results that he recommended Mark to the rest of his portfolio, adding at least £30,000 to the chapter's business total.

At a recent meeting, the Thank You for The Business box revealed that two terrific referrals worth £32,000 and £19,500 had lifted **BNI Junction's** business total above the £2 million mark. Brilliant! Be sure to record every piece of business, large and small: every pound counts.

SuccessNet explores BNI® SWEDEN

For this edition of *SuccessNet* we head to Sweden, one of the world's most northerly nations, which in the 20th century used its extensive forestry, ore and hydro-electric power resources to transform itself from a modest agricultural nation into a prosperous industrial giant and home of great brands like Ikea, Skype and Spotify.

In 1999, Gunnar Selheden spotted a newspaper ad that caught his interest. It talked of taking a *Givers Gain*® approach to growing businesses – something that appealed to Gunnar's positive and entrepreneurial spirit. Soon afterwards, James Sanderson of BNI UK flew to Sweden to meet Gunnar. Arriving in a severe winter storm, the plane was unable to land in Gothenburg and had to fly to Jönköping, a three-hour car ride from the meeting scheduled for that evening. With his return flight booked for 0700h the following morning, James arrived in Gothenburg at midnight, and the two men sat down to discuss their plans through the early hours. Perhaps this was the ideal preparation for Gunnar as he set about developing new early-morning BNI business meetings across Sweden!

Before too long, Gunnar had completed his BNI director training, visited Dr Ivan Misner in California and established his first Swedish BNI chapter. Now, this beautiful country has 110 BNI chapters and 2,220 members across 16 regions, and it's growing fast.

Gunnar comments, "The interest in networking and referral marketing in Sweden has grown extensively since BNI was established here. Numerous new networking

organisations are now popping up: there are lots of events where you can meet others, listen to a presentation and swap business cards, and there's nothing wrong with that. However, most business people in Sweden today know that it's BNI you turn to if you really want to do business."

BNI's reputation in Sweden was illustrated earlier this year when the organisation was the primary speaker at one of the country's largest business events, the Mercuri Sales Lab 2011. The theme this year was 'networking' and as the leading player in the field, BNI presented a session and ran activities throughout the day.

One of BNI Sweden's recent initiatives is its annual 'Networker of the Year' award which is presented to an exemplar of *Givers Gain*® networking at a major Stockholm business event in November. The event is open to both members and non-members of BNI alike and the award is judged by a panel of respected Swedish business leaders. The competition is growing in prestige and reputation and nominations have flooded in faster than ever this year.

IT'S A FACT!

- Sweden has a population of 9.3 million
- The unit of currency in Sweden is the krona (1 krona = 100 öre = around 10p)
- Sweden's most northerly chapter, Kiruna, lies within the Arctic Circle
- BNI Sweden members breakfast on cereals, yogurts, dark bread, cheese and ham, washed down with strong coffee or tea.

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