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SuccessNet

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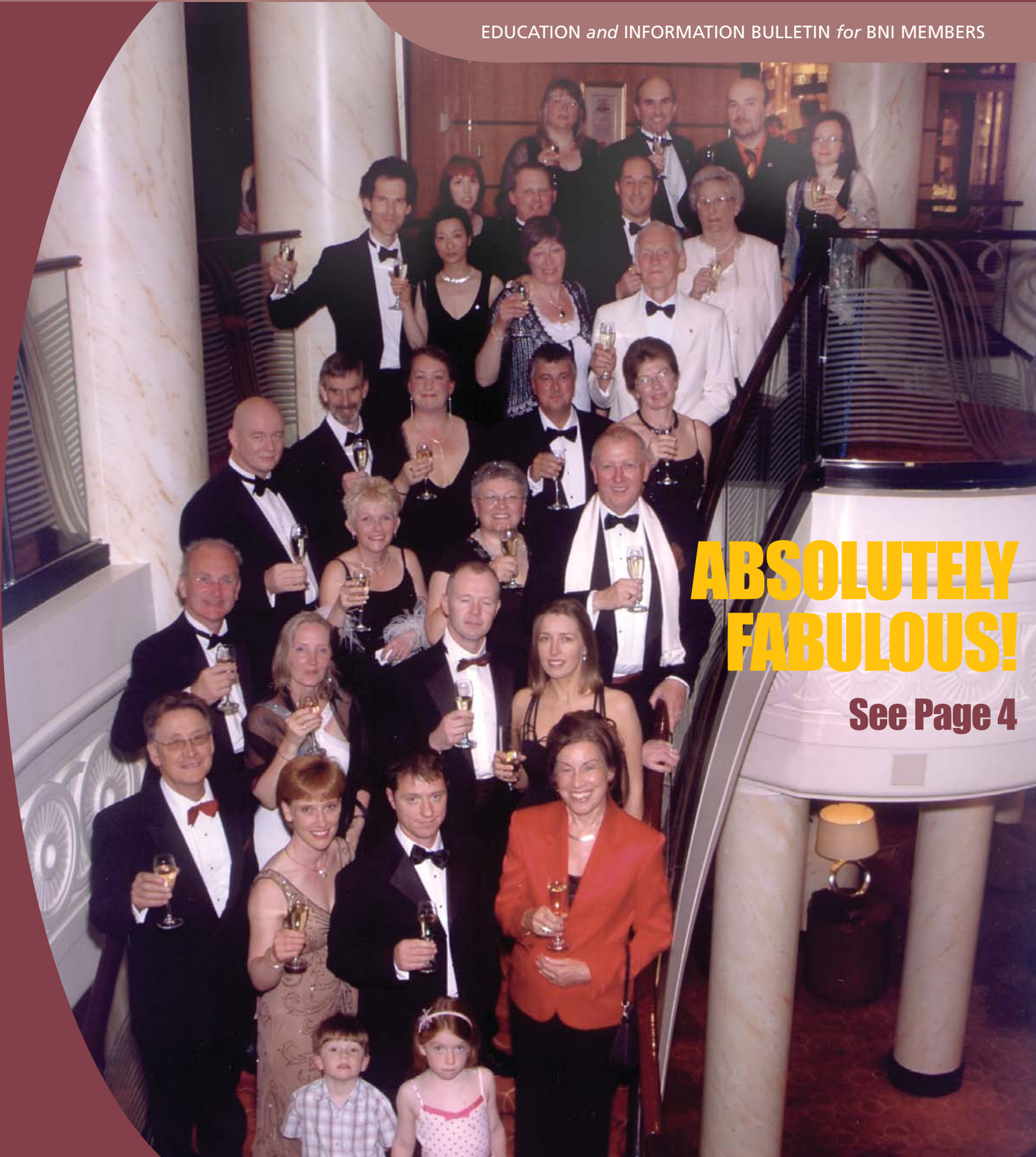
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ISSUE 39 | SUMMER 2006

EDUCATION *and* INFORMATION BULLETIN for BNI MEMBERS



**ABSOLUTELY
FABULOUS!**

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GIVERS GAIN SPREADS AROUND THE WORLD

We all know about BNI's incredible growth across the UK and Ireland, but did you know that the organisation founded in California by an enterprising businessman 21 years ago, now has chapters in no fewer than 29 countries around the world?

The two most recent additions are Taiwan and Poland, both of which saw their first chapters launched earlier this year, while other countries to welcome BNI business over the past 12 months include China, Portugal and the United Arab Emirates. Meanwhile, it is hoped that the first BNI chapters will be launched in Japan, Sri Lanka and Thailand before the end of this year.

With an increasing number of members now seeking to visit one or more local chapters during their overseas business trips and even vacations, we thought it was timely to remind everyone of all the countries where you can now find BNI chapters. They are: UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Portugal, Spain, Poland, Israel, Italy, USA, Canada, Suriname, Barbados, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Taiwan, UAE, Zimbabwe, South Africa and India.

UK national director Gillian Lawson commented: "When BNI Founder Dr Ivan Misner launched his first chapter back in 1985, he had no idea that barely two decades later, his unique brand of one-to-one business networking would stretch right around the globe. In Europe alone, BNI is now a significant part of business life in a dozen countries, and the list is growing every year as more and more businessmen and women recognise the very special benefits of word-of-mouth marketing."



ALEX CROSSES ATLANTIC



ALL SMILES: Noele and Jason Kliewer with baby Grace finally got the house of their dreams in Florida - thanks to Harrow Success Chapter's Alex Brooks.

When you're having trouble finding a mortgage to buy your new home, it's helpful to have a brother who is a professional mortgage advisor - even if his business is based 3,500 miles away!

Happily, distance didn't stop Harrow's Success Chapter mortgage broker Alex Brooks from finding the solution for his sister Noele and her American husband Jason, when they were in danger of being unable to buy their perfect new home on Florida's Gulf Coast - although it took an astute piece of international networking using his BNI skills and contacts to make it happen.

Noele had met and married investment banker Jason in London but they'd always planned to move back to his native Florida. After the birth of their baby daughter Grace, the couple packed their bags and returned to Tampa in April, soon finding their ideal home. But, just when everything



In what is believed to be a BNI 'first' in international networking, a Leeds chapter has twinned with another 4,500 miles away in the Indian provincial capital of Mumbai (formerly Bombay) - and after just a few weeks, members are busy conducting one-to-one's over the internet, prior to identifying new business opportunities for each other.

At the outset, members of Leeds' Network Central Chapter and Mumbai's Premier Chapter established links with their business category counterparts, before developing an email version of the tried-and-tested 10-point 'one-to-one' agenda, enabling members in both groups to obtain considerable detail about their counterparts before actually speaking to them.

Network Central's legal specialist Rick Armstrong said: "Although a number of UK chapters have developed informal links and exchanged visits with overseas groups, we think this is the first time two BNI

chapters in different countries have officially twinned."

Rick (pictured below, right) added: "Initially, one or two members were unsure what benefits could be gained from twinning with a chapter so far away, but in BNI, asking for a benefit is a rhetorical question...it's called Givers Gain! Simply by saying 'how can we help each other?' we already benefit. Our contact spheres are growing, both chapters are enjoying mutual support and we can clearly see a time coming when we shall be writing referral business between India and England."

His views were endorsed by Network Central Chapter Director David Roberts who commented: "Getting involved with a chapter in another country offers many ways to establish working relationships and the means to greatly extend our respective networks through twinning! The Premier Chapter Director Faheem Agboatwala and myself are keeping each other updated with the way our chapters are run, swapping ideas about training, and supporting each other in the true spirit of Givers Gain."

Not to be out-manoeuvred, Jane Phillips (pictured above left), Chapter Director of Sheffield's Olympians Chapter has also just twinned her group with another Mumbai chapter (Alpha), using contacts she made at recent BNI training event. She said: "In the coming weeks members of both

groups will be exchanging details and looking at how they can establish direct one-to-one links. With collaboration between Indian and UK businesses increasing all the time, we are hoping it won't be long before we produce some tangible results."

The twinning initiative has the backing of Yorkshire's Executive Director Niri Patel, who wants more members to look beyond their own chapter and get a taste of BNI's worldwide influence. He said: "This adds another dimension to the BNI picture. In a global economy, business opportunities go far beyond the boundaries of our own chapters. The only real limit to business growth is our own imagination and the drive to see it through." ●

Contact Rick Armstrong at McKay Law on 0845 123 5571 and Jane Phillips at Red Cherry PR & Communications on 0114 227 0021



TO FIX BNI MORTGAGE FOR SISTER

seemed rosy, they hit a problem. Despite his professional status, Jason's personal bank - whom he'd assumed would give him a good deal - were unable to offer a competitive mortgage.

Enter Alex, a broker with Rutherford & Co in Rickmansworth who, fortuitously, had just flown out to help his sister's family move into their new home - "except that when I arrived, their plans were in turmoil because of the mortgage problem and they were having to stay with his parents," he said.

"Then, while I was listening to Jason arguing with his bank manager about the high interest rates they wanted to charge, and saw their disappointment as they talked about downsizing to buy a much cheaper property, a thought struck me: What was the point of my being part of the world's best networking organisation if I didn't use its resources at a time like this?"

Alex removed himself to a quiet room, logged onto the internet and, through BNI's international Website, quickly found contact details for Tampa Bay's Area Director Elizabeth Joseph. He called her to ask for recommendations about local BNI mortgage brokers, lenders and property surveyors, she put him in touch with Steve Booth, Chapter Director of the nearby Oldsmar Chapter - and the rest just fell into place.

It turned out that Steve was a property surveyor who readily agreed to survey Noele and Jason's would-be home, while his chapter colleague, Chad Snyder was a mortgage broker with United BanCorp who soon found the couple an excellent mortgage at a much lower cost. Alex added: "They worked really fast and by the time I flew home, everything had been sorted. Needless to say, Noele and Jason are very happy - and Jason is

looking to join BNI."

Meanwhile, Alex is already planning his next visit to Florida when he intends to visit the Oldsmar Chapter with Jason to personally thank members for their help - and collect all their business cards for his sister, giving her access to a host of quality BNI tradesmen and professionals. ●

Contact Alex on 01923 726993



'THE FIXER': Harrow's Alex Brooks.

LAWSON'S LORE

The world is becoming a smaller place for everyone, and no-one is affected more than today's businessman and woman for whom the combination of advancing technology and increasing global competition, means that we have to be more knowledgeable, more flexible and more responsive than ever before to win the business we want.

In this context, membership of BNI offers more than just a domestic business framework within which you give and receive excellent referrals. No organisation has moved more effectively to ensure its members have international access to the same range of business benefits, wherever you are.

With chapters in no fewer than 29 countries spread across four continents, BNI now offers a truly worldwide network of reliable business contacts, comprising fellow BNI members whose products and services you can rely on, however far you travel. Not sure how this can help you? Then turn to pages 2 & 3 and read how Harrow mortgage broker Alex Brooks used BNI's international resources to find and arrange a fantastic property deal for his sister's family, living 3,500 miles away in Florida, when their own banks could not help them.

Another of our UK members, Wakefield business support specialist Nadine Hill was even further from home - nearly 11,000 miles away in Melbourne when she invited herself along to a regional 'Aussie Big Breakfast' (see page 7) through which she has made a host of new contacts, with some of whom she is already developing business alliances.

If you still doubt the need to be aware of overseas opportunities, as well as competition, go back to page 3 and see why members of two Yorkshire chapters are currently investing their time and energy to develop twinning arrangements with BNI groups 4,500 miles away in the Indian provincial capital of Mumbai. They share the growing sense that the world is becoming one big marketplace, and they want to be in the vanguard of capitalising on new business openings.

Every year BNI is increasing its global coverage, bringing greater potential benefits to all members. So, having equipped yourselves with solid business and personal skills through our training workshops, don't you owe it to yourself to turn those strengths into more business - by utilising the international resources at your disposal? Go on, try it! ●

Mark Egan



CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION: Wendy and Robert Patterson with their children at the BNI reception on the QM2.

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS

SENSATIONAL! Fantastic! Terrific! Brilliant! Just some of the superlatives flowing from our chapter development prize draw winners, at the end of their awe-inspiring week aboard Cunard's flagship, the QM2.

Eleven lucky BNI members along with husbands, wives and partners spent six days crossing the Atlantic to New York followed by two days in the Big Apple where they enjoyed ferry trips to Ellis and Liberty Islands, a sightseeing cruise and an unforgettable helicopter trip over Manhattan's skyscrapers.

Aside from BNI's champagne reception, hosted by national directors Gillian and Martin Lawson, everyone whiled away the days and the nights as they pleased - enjoying the liner's endless stream of facilities, attractions and events. What did they make of it all?

Folkestone Bank Manager **Roger Howes** from Sandwich's '**Business Leaders of Tomorrow**' Chapter said: "With wall-to-wall entertainment, round-the-clock food and drink, and so many amazing facilities, we were shattered after two days - just trying to see and do everything! The secret is to pace yourself."

Business coach **Steve Evans** from **Bromley's Churchill Chapter** was determined to live every minute to its maximum. Despite the handicap of blindness, he ran out of time before he and his wife Catherine had completed their itinerary around the yoga and drama classes, ballroom dancing, gym, pools, health spa, guest lectures, planetarium and numerous shows. He said: "The experience was simply brilliant."

Peter Ingall from **Harrogate's Strayside Chapter**, spent the first 24 hours pinching himself to prove it was real,

after finding himself on the trip only because the original winner, chapter colleague John Proud was unable to go. "It was a magnificent week, and a dream come true for my wife Gill who'd always wanted to go on a cruise. The trouble is she now wants me to book another one."

Richmond upon Thames **Harlequin Chapter** member, accountant **Wendy Patterson**, who shared the trip with husband Robert and their two young children said: "Words can't describe the week because it was just incredible. The QM2 was so relaxing - in total contrast to the buzz of New York. My son and I were dreading the helicopter trip, but in the event we loved every second."

David Parton from **Newark's Fosseway Chapter** said: "I've stayed in some of the world's most luxurious hotels but the QM2 beats the lot. The trip was sensational, but in truth every single BNI member was a winner, because we will all enjoy the long-term benefits of having a larger, more stimulating chapter, generating more business for everyone. That's the best prize of all."

Other winners on the voyage were: **David Robinson** (from **Beacon Chapter**, Great Barr, Birmingham), **Graham Lane** (**Chariots**, St Albans, Herts), **Mark Haywood** (**Falcons**, Altrincham), **Gregor Nau** (**Ferret**, Munich), **Rob Crawford** (**Falcons**, Newcastle upon Tyne), and **Paul Voltzenlogel** (from Brighton's **Pavilion Chapter**). ●

TWO HIGHLAND MEMBERS ARE FINALISTS IN NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Two member companies from BNI's most northerly outpost - the Highland Chapter in Inverness - have reached the finals of the 2006 National Business Awards for Scotland.

Law firm Harper Macleod LLP has been nominated for The AXA Small to Medium Sized Business of the Year Award and Highland Business Research (HBR) has been short-listed as a finalist in the ATOS Origin Award for E-enablement.

HBR Director Vicky Brock said: "We are delighted to have reached the finals. After

just two years in business, this is a significant achievement. It is also fantastic that our fellow chapter member, Christopher Kerr from Harper Macleod, has also reached the finals. We both joined BNI at the same time and some of the success we have achieved to date is a reflection of the energy and opportunities created by BNI."

The annual event aims to recognise and reward excellence, best practice, and innovation throughout the Scottish business community, and the finals will take place this September in Glasgow. ●

COLLINGWOOD FIELDS ITS WORLD CUP TEAM

By the time you read this, England's World Cup fate will have been decided - but just a month ago members of Newcastle upon Tyne's soccer-loving Collingwood Chapter decided to pay their own send-off tribute to Beckham and the boys, by staging a specially themed 'world cup' meeting.

Members were asked to come along wearing their England soccer shirts and scarves, while the leadership team decked out their breakfast venue with St George flags, bunting and football memorabilia, in readiness for everyone's 60-second presentations all of which were required to have a soccer theme or draw on footballing analogies.

Mortgage Consultant Paul Hampton,

WE ARE WINNERS!: Members of Newcastle's Collingwood Chapter dress to give the England soccer team a colourful send off.

the Chapter Secretary/Treasurer and arguably its biggest soccer fan, said: "We were really pleased everyone joined in the spirit of the occasion. It shows what a strong and unified team we are, when even the Scottish contingent in our chapter took part in the tribute to the England team."

Chapter Director Andrea Machin added: "Like most chapters, we've had some ups and downs but everyone has worked very hard over the last six months to focus on a strong team spirit. Morale is really high and as a result, we have attracted 10 new members. It is a sign of all-round team effort that we also have one of the best referral rates in our region. As one successful team to another, we wanted to wish the England team all the best, with our fingers, toes and referrals slips all crossed." ●



NEWS IN BRIEF

YORKSHIRE TAKE GOLD IN LATEST TOP 10

Perhaps it's something special in the Yorkshire air, but four of the latest 10 entrants to the prestigious Gold Badge Club are all from constituent parts of the white rose county.

Our newest black badge recipients, all of whom have introduced at least six new members to BNI, are George Anderson (Jorvick Lions Chapter in York), Carl Barton (Premiere Armouries, Leeds), Jim Booth (Viking, Ireland North East), Colin Fricker (Borders, Wincanton, Somerset), Peter Macko (Llandudno), Tony Moran (Airdale, West Yorkshire), Sue Richardson (Vale of Evesham), Jacqui Saxon (Royal Armouries, Leeds), Peter Virgo (Gade Valley, Hemel Hempstead), and Derek Woodroffe (J25 Chapter, Long Eaton, Notts). ●

Congratulations to each of them!



ANOTHER NORMAN CONQUEST?

Just like their historical namesakes, the Normans came, saw and finally conquered when 19 East Anglian chapters took part in their region's recent annual ten-pin bowling challenge and networking night.

More than 180 members turned what is normally a subdued Friday evening at Norwich's Number 10 Bowling Club, into a noisy, enthusiastic and highly competitive environment and, after more than two hours of close-fought bowling, one of the 'home' chapters, Norwich Normans, emerged as winners, snatching the much-coveted cup away from last year's winners, Ipswich's Orwell Chapter.

Our picture above shows members of the winning Normans team led by captain, Dan Kelly who commented: "Every year this event attracts more and more members, who enjoy the benefits of some great networking opportunities as much as they do the fun and entertainment." ●

BREAKFAST BONANZA

HADLEIGH KICKS OFF WITH BIG BUSINESS...

Hertfordshire's new Hadleigh Chapter at Potters Bar has enjoyed the perfect start - with a founder member revealing to launch-day visitors that he'd turned a great referral into big business.

Visitor host Seymour Forsyth announced that his company, D&T Electronics, picked up a £50,000-plus contract to install state-of-the-art audiovisual, lighting and door entry systems in a Belgravia house, and said: "As a result, we're also hoping to work on other projects with the associated contractors. It is a fantastic start to our BNI life."

His referral came from Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Helen Wellby who is its first member to receive a notable networker award. Our picture (below) shows Helen (of Heatwave Heating & Plumbing) being presented with the award by Chapter Director Victor Goring (right), as Seymour looks on. ●

Contact Seymour on 0870 241 5891



...other recent chapter launches include:

Barnsley Tykes Chapter, Borders (Wincanton), Champions (Crowborough, Sussex), Crawford (Coatbridge), Dove Valley (Uttoxeter), Links (Harpenden, Herts), Magnum (Irvine), Network Exchange (Leeds), Olympic (Birmingham), Paramount (Tandridge, Surrey), Plains (Nottingham), Resolute (Pembroke), Rossendale (Lancashire), Totton (Hampshire), Viking (Dublin), Winners (Wakefield), and Wulfrun Chapter (Wolverhampton).

Netherlands

De Vos (Rotterdam), Martini (Groningen), Mercules (Houten, Utrecht) and Parel (Amsterdam ZO)

Switzerland

Ahorn (Langenthal, Bern)

Germany

Beine (Berlin North), Caspar (Cologne), Fontayne (Speyer, Mannheim Darmstadt), Gerber (Heddesheim, Heidelberg), Granat (Munchen), Habicht (Berlin South), Heine (Mannheim), Iridium (Munchen), Karneol (Stamberg), Larimar (Stamberg), Melchior (Cologne) and Nephrit (Raubling)



Spice Girls re-unite to create a perfect Concord

While a number of chapters are constantly looking out for more female members, at Northwood in Middlesex, the feminine touch is so powerful that the new all-women leadership team has felt bold enough to give itself a distinctive collective theme - the reunited Spice Girls!

The amusing initiative arose when chartered accountant Michelle Fisher of Sobell Rhodes was invited to become Chapter Director of Concord Chapter, giving her the opportunity to realise a long-held ambition of having an all-female leadership team.

She told SuccessNet: "We have a lot of dedicated female members who contribute so much to the chapter, so I jumped at the chance to show the men in our group how well we could run things!

That's when I decided to introduce a novel theme for the new team, so since April, Concord has been run by our own version of The Spice Girls. Each member of the leadership team has her own Spice Girls nickname and our breakfasts always

end with a Spice Girls "joke of the week", which adds to the meetings' sense of fun."

Michelle was quick to add that despite the apparent frivolity, Concord members remained very focused on their business agenda and their number of referrals has remained amongst the highest in the North-West London region. She added: "After all, with the Spice Girls in charge, members are quite specific about the referrals they're after - always telling the group 'what they want, what they really, really want!'

Pictured above (from left to right) are 'Teacher Spice' (education co-ordinator Diane Mark), 'Money Spice' (secretary/treasurer Marcia Danton-Rees), 'Senior Spice' (Chapter Director Michelle Fisher), 'M.C. Spice' (membership co-ordinator Sandy Taylor) and 'Social Spice', (the chapter's events co-ordinator Helen Agnew). ●

Contact Michelle on 020 8866 2151



How far would you go to enjoy the camaraderie of a BNI breakfast? Twenty miles, 50, or more? Well Nadine Hill, a member of Wakefield's Wealthbuilders Chapter, recently travelled 10,526 miles to the other side of the world to join an 'Aussie Big Breakfast' - and she says it was worth every penny!

To be strictly accurate, Nadine did not go all the way to Melbourne, in southern Australia just for the breakfast; she was there as part of a family holiday - but decided she could not miss the chance to attend the region's annual 'Big Breakfast' involving 600 members from all of the city's chapters.

Nadine, whose company provides business support services, said: "As a virtual PA I can help businesses anywhere in the world and, because BNI has been such a big

part of my success in the UK, I couldn't holiday in Australia without going to a breakfast meeting. It was just co-incidence that I was lucky enough to be able to network at such a big event."

She was greeted by Melbourne Executive Director, David Byers who introduced her to a virtual transcription company in New Zealand with whom she is now building a business alliance. "Through just one meeting in Australia, I've gained useful contacts with people from all over the globe. That is the power of BNI - making the world a smaller place in which to do business." ●

Contact Nadine on 01924 898616 or visit her website at www.thedreampa.co.uk



MAKING NEW FRIENDS: Nadine Hill of The Dream PA (centre) with Sjaak Kusters of Joy Voice Recording Studios (left) and Laurel Parkinson of FX Web Creations (right) at Melbourne's BNI Big Breakfast

From Yorkshire to Melbourne - For Breakfast!

STEEL CITY'S FIRST MILLION: THAT'LL DO NICELY!

Members of Sheffield's Steel City Chapter have marked five years of successful networking by announcing that they've generated over £1 million of authenticated new business for each other - as well as passing their 6,000th referral milestone!

One of the region's top-performing chapters, and nudging the optimum 40-strong membership, its immediate past chapter director Pete Turner (pictured below, holding the champagne bottle), put their success down to "a fantastic group of business professionals who are very supportive of each other."

Under Pete's direction, Steel City saw a significant growth in its size as a result of some successful visitor days, but its leadership team has also taken an innovative approach to building strong relationships within the group, one aspect of which saw 20 members take part in a



DON'T LOOK DOWN:
Steel City's Pete Turner on her descent.

charity abseiling challenge, suspended from the Millersdale Viaduct in Derbyshire - 100 feet above the River Wye!

That event was organised by Steel City's Glyn Brown whose company, Challenge the Peak, provides development training and team building for commercial organisations. He said: "Members raised over £2,000 for charity, but the event also strengthened the bonds between them since they had to assist and rely on each other during the abseil. It was a truly adrenaline-fuelled event." ●

Contact Glyn Brown on 01709 328828 or at: glyn@challengethepeak.com



Like a number of first-time visitors to a chapter meeting, insurance broker Mike Clark was more than a little uncertain of what BNI could offer him, either personally or in business terms. "To be honest, I didn't fully understand it's philosophy in those early days and the thought of trying to do early morning business was quite daunting."

MORPETH MIKE SOON LOSES HIS SCEPTICISM

Nonetheless, Mike joined the Turner Chapter in Morpeth, Northumberland and quickly discovered that this was not the breakfast club he'd imagined it to be. "I was not only surprised to see how serious members were about finding business for each other, but I also found myself learning a great deal and growing in confidence, by attending various training workshops."

So much so, that despite being part of a very young and developing chapter, Mike has already received referrals generating an extra £10,000 of revenue for his business, representing repeat annual contracts. "All I can say is a big 'thanks' to BNI and my chapter colleagues for giving me such amazing support. My scepticism disappeared very quickly." ●

Contact Mike on 01670 521533

WINNING QUARTET TAKE THE HONOURS

WINNER: THE MIDLANDS Brian Herdman (Halesowen Chapter)

As the Practice Manager for a major Birmingham law firm, Brian Herdman has long known that going the extra mile to make a good job better, and attention to detail, are two of the keys to long-term business success. They are also two of the attributes he brought with him when he joined BNI seven years ago - and just part of the reason why he was nominated for an award by colleagues in his current Halesowen Chapter.

Now the group's Education Co-ordinator (having twice been chapter director), Brian's commitment to improving the business knowledge, training and personal

development of his fellow members is widely known in BNI's Black Country territory.

Regional Director Martin Bailey said: "Good members make good chapters and one of Brian's achievements has been to enhance the business skills and professionalism of his colleagues, always encouraging them to better themselves. He also researches his weekly educational slots in great detail to maximise their impact, he personally brings an average of one visitor to every meeting (10 of whom have become members) and, despite being a very busy man, he is always willing to put time aside to help other members flourish. I wish we had a Brian Herdman in every chapter."

While Halesowen Chapter is by no means one of the largest BNI groups, Brian insists that it's quality not quantity that counts when the weekly referral slips are exchanged. He said: "We are very careful to authenticate our referrals and, as I often tell newer members, the financial value of the initial referral is secondary to the lasting relationships and bigger benefits that often evolve from it. One such referral I received was for drafting contracts and worth around £2,000, but it was the start of a relationship that has since generated at least £150,000 worth of business for us."

No wonder that Brian's firm, Young & Lee Solicitors, is one of the region's fastest growing law practices - and no surprise either, that no fewer than six of Brian's business colleagues are members of other West Midlands chapters. "We're in BNI for the long term because it is the best networking organisation for us, and I thoroughly enjoy everything about membership," he added. ●

Contact Brian on 0121 633 3233 or at: brian@younglee.co.uk

BRIAN HERDMAN: On a business development trip to Bulgaria.



Meet BNI's newest shining 'stars' - four of our highest achievers proud to announce have become only the second recipients of offering deserved recognition to those who have demonstrated unstinting commitment to their chapter. In each 2006 issue more Members of the Quarter, but for now, give a bow to Damian Lambkin, Julie Muldoon and David Wimblett, each

WINNER: WEST & SOUTH-WEST Damian Lambkin (Lander Chapter, Truro)

Damian Lambkin is happy to acknowledge that joining BNI saved not only his business but also his optimistic outlook on life, following a horrendous car crash less than two years ago.

Struggling to recover, Damian considered selling his successful retail computer, IT



support and recycling business - but then a chance meeting with an old school chum and BNI member, Toby Parkins, turned his life around.

"He told me not to do anything daft and insisted I come to his next meeting of Lander Chapter in Truro where he is now Chapter Director. Toby told me that if I joined, it would give me the support I needed at a low point in my life. I accepted his invitation and haven't looked back," he recalled.

Less than a year later, Damian and his business - Re-Use IT - are doing famously, with the company gaining half its fast-increasing turnover from BNI referrals, and enjoying its reputation for being the region's only authorised, highly enterprising outlet for the recycling and disposal of electronic waste.

ing men and women whom we are
our Member of the Quarter Awards -
strated great performances and an
of SuccessNet, we will announce four
our latest superstars - Brian Herdman,
of whose success is highlighted here...

While his Falmouth retail business - "It's a Computer Shop!" - is, by his own admission, like an old-fashioned Deep South barber shop with customers staying for hours to chat about computer issues, the recycling division is leading the way in educating businesses about their obligations under the new RoHS Directive for the disposal of electrical and electronic waste - and delivering remarkable benefits to schoolchildren in third world countries.

He said: "We repair as much of the equipment as possible and every few months, we ship out a container-load of reconditioned computers and peripherals to Kenya where they go straight to schools. We also have a partnership with a London charity to send equipment to schools in Cambodia. We guarantee everything for three years and provide it free of charge. I call it 'our big £1 million smile' every time a shipment goes off."

Naturally, the same ethos dictates Damian's approach within BNI. In just 10 months, he has passed 160 referrals to colleagues, receiving 80 in return. "I find it quite easy to create new opportunities for colleagues. I list all of their products and services on the back of my invoices, and I often get people phoning or coming to the shop wanting their help rather than mine!"

It's largely thanks to Damian's tireless enthusiasm (and the number of visitors he's introduced) that Lander has doubled in size - earning him a second notable networker award!●

WINNER:
SCOTLAND & THE NORTH

Julie Muldoon
(Magnum Chapter, Irvine)

She may be a newcomer to BNI, but Ayrshire travel agent Julie Muldoon has wasted no time in learning how 'Givers Gain' can make a huge difference to a fledgling business.

Julie is a franchisee with Travel Counsellors, the UK's largest independent travel company with an enviable reputation for the quality of its customer service and, less than six months after helping to launch the

new Magnum Chapter in Irvine, she is not only the most prolific giver of referrals, but also receives more than 25% of her new business through chapter colleagues.

"I've worked in the travel trade for 26 years and won major customer service awards, but I always wanted to run my own agency so I opened for business last November and immediately looked around to join a networking organisation.

"I was lucky to be in at the very start of BNI's Magnum Chapter and, as Membership Co-ordinator I'm delighted that we've created an enthusiastic, determined group. I'm constantly looking for eligible visitors to bring along to meetings and very confident that we'll grow rapidly."



She added: "BNI has been largely responsible for my early success - a fact that has been noticed by several of my fellow franchisees who've asked me how I have done so well, so quickly.

When I told them about BNI, they wanted to know more, so I directed them to their nearest chapters and urged them to join. A few weeks ago the Paisley franchisee, Murray Bailey, became a member of his local group and now a Berkshire colleague has joined Newbury Chapter."

Julie wastes no opportunity to champion BNI, which has its own message board on Travel Counsellors' website, and she also was featured on the company's TV network after one of her BNI colleagues wrote to her Managing Director, praising the standard of business service he'd received. "I tell all my fellow franchisees that the single biggest benefit they can provide for their business is to join BNI. It's the perfect networking organisation," she added.●

Contact Julie on 0845 058 7221

WINNER:
LONDON & SOUTH-EAST
David Wimblett
(Business Class Chapter,
Twickenham)

If you were stopped by a stranger in the street and invited to a breakfast business meeting the following week, how would you react? Significantly, many of those approached by David Wimblett, respond positively and become visitors to his Business Class Chapter in Twickenham.

As Chapter Director, it's just part of David's strategy for ensuring the group is able to welcome guests every week, and he commented: "Visitors are the lifeblood of any chapter, so I carry a supply of invitation cards and letters wherever I go.

"If I see someone in the street or a shop

whom I think has potential, I'll introduce myself, mention BNI and if they're interested, give them a formal invitation. Just yesterday I handed one to a decorator who I passed while walking to the bank. You'd be amazed how many do eventually come along. The key is to invite people from business categories not represented in your chapter."

David also turns his daily junk email to his chapter's advantage. "Obviously, I filter out the rubbish but in an average week, I'll email 20 invitations to people whose initial contact with me was via junk mail. It's surprising how many do respond - even three months later - and come to one of our meetings," he added.

He issues invitations seven days in advance to give people enough time to attend the following week's meeting, and added: "I encourage all my BNI colleagues to do the same, and the result is a system that ensures we receive a manageable number of new faces every week, allowing us to devote proper attention to each visitor."

Hardly surprising then that in the past six months, David has personally introduced 43 visitors, and long ago received his black badge. But membership has also brought him business and personal rewards. One of three directors with Hammond Vivian Printers in Richmond-upon-Thames who belong to BNI, he says chapter referrals created £90,000 worth of business last year and have substantially expanded his business network.



"BNI has also had a rewarding impact on me personally," he said. "I'd always shied away from facing a large audience, so I forced myself to join the leadership team knowing I'd have to develop my confidence and learn to address a business meeting. I attended BNI workshops, discovered a lot about myself and conquered my fears. Now, after years of pressure from my wife Fiona to get involved in her operatic productions, I've just directed a performance of 'Iolanthe' - bossing a cast of 40 singers and actors. Not bad for someone who's never sung, acted or directed anything!"●

Contact David on 020 8876 6600

WHO SAYS NETWORKING DOESN'T WORK?

There's an old saying that if you don't ask, you'll never know. Fortunately, all BNI members are trained to ask questions as they look for potential referrals - which is why one Leeds-based financial services and factoring company recently landed a significant and unexpected piece of business.

It came about when Moortown Chapter's commercial vehicle leasing specialist Ann Baker of Company Vehicle Solutions, was chatting to one of her clients, a large heating control systems company, and noticed their invoicing was handled by a well-known UK factoring agency. Aware that one of her neighbouring chapter colleagues worked in the same financial sector, she asked if they were happy with their existing provider, and got a resounding 'No!'.
 "Having confirmed the client would be happy to talk to my Network Central Chapter colleague, Danny Weaver, who is regional manager for Cattles Invoice Finance, I gave Danny the referral and by the following working day, he'd got an

appointment and gained their business," said Ann.

Danny said: "The problem was that their previous factoring company was ill-equipped to deal with the contractual nature of their clients' debts and was consequently hindering their cash flow and growth. We were able to resolve this and, during the interview it also emerged that we had a mutual network of contacts - which obviously helped."

The result was a contract for Danny due to produce around £60,000 over the next three years, prompting him to add: "It shows what can happen when people make that extra effort. We won this deal because Ann took the trouble to ask questions on our behalf, and we responded to her client's needs speedily and with an understanding of their needs. It was a classic example of how BNI members work so well for each other."●

Contact Danny Weaver on 0870 701 6860 and Ann Baker on 0845 644 1964

Join us - as long as you join BNI too!

The boss of a Bristol-based human resources company is creating a nationwide network of HR professionals - and ensuring they meet her demanding professional standards by insisting they join a local BNI chapter.

Sue Tumelty founded The HR Dept two and a half years ago and already has regional offices in Manchester, Milton Keynes, Leamington, Croydon and Luton, with at least one senior consultant from each office placed in a BNI chapter.

The immediate past Chapter Director of Bristol's Bradman Chapter, Sue told SuccessNet: "Because I believe BNI membership offers so many business benefits, especially when you're expanding into unfamiliar territory, I insist that all our new associates sign up to BNI in their areas."

"It is a great way of getting to know the local business community and our associates are finding BNI every bit as valuable as I did when I started, so much so that where they can't easily find a chapter, they're keen to help create a new one. For example, Tracey Horner, who recently launched our Leamington branch, has been instrumental in forming a new BNI core group."●

Contact Sue on 0870 240 1919

NORWICH CASTLE FLIRTS WITH CATHEDRAL

Nearly five years after having to change their chapter's name on the eve of its launch, members of Norwich's Castle Chapter are once more thinking about switching back to their preferred title - Norwich Cathedral - as part of a plan to relocate the group.

The proposal came about when the leadership team acknowledged the chapter needed a new home after members complained about the worsening quality of the breakfasts and amenities at their present hotel venue.

By pure co-incidence, their search for a better 'home' led them back to Norwich Cathedral, whose own facilities for hosting events have been given a boost with the recent opening of a new refectory and the imminent development of a conference centre.

Chapter Director Jacqui Welham said: "We were so fed up with our existing venue that when the Dean of the Cathedral invited us to hold a meeting in the refectory, we leapt at the chance and it was such a big improvement that we've been back there once or twice since, with a view to moving to the Cathedral on a

permanent basis. If we do, then it will make sense to rename ourselves Cathedral Chapter, but these are decisions that need careful thought."

Ironically, it was left to SuccessNet to tell Jacqui how close the Castle Chapter had come to being named Cathedral, back in 2001. Then, its core group members unanimously chose 'Cathedral', because they hoped the new BNI group would soon become as prominent as the city's imposing landmark. But, just days before the launch,

a misunderstanding over the wording in a letter inviting local businesses to the event - and the subsequent intervention of the Cathedral Dean - led to a hasty re-think and the choice of 'Castle' as a suitable alternative. Watch this space for further news!●

Contact Jacqui on 01603 812812

CHANGING VENUES?: Norwich Castle Chapter members pictured during one of their breakfast visits to the city's Cathedral.



JAYNE FINDS HERSELF - MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Her close colleagues jest that if you don't feel inspired to do better after just a few minutes of talking with Jayne Goldstone, then you're probably already dead, or at least, lost the will to live.

Such is the irrepressible energy and optimism that flows from this 46 years young life coach and motivational speaker that she is already reported to have radically enhanced the lives of several of her Newcastle upon Tyne Falcons Chapter colleagues, and is now about to spread her 'gospel for living' to members throughout the North East as newly appointed BNI Ambassador for the region.

Her business - Making a Difference - could not be more aptly titled, but ironically, the fact that she has become one of the UK's best-known and most successful practitioners in her field owes as much to her own challenging upbringing as it does to the dramatic changes that have taken place in her life since she decided to discover herself 12 years ago.

Born and raised in London, she had (in her own words) a "very difficult" childhood, with an unhappy family life, a constant struggle through the education system until she was expelled from school as a failure with no qualifications and, unsurprisingly, a succession of menial dead-end jobs. But it took two failed marriages by the age of 35, to make Jayne take stock and begin the search for her real self through the world of personal development.

"I was going nowhere, with low self-esteem and no confidence. I knew I had to grasp the nettle and take hold of my own life. Fortunately, as I started to discover who I was and stretch myself for the first time, I found my 'Geordie Boy', a wonderful man whom I met through an internet dating website. We married and three months later moved to Newcastle from London."

It proved the crucial turning point. A conversation with a loyal friend (Nick Simmonds, a BNI member and also a life coach), first convinced Jayne that she was a natural communicator who would make the ideal life coach, and then persuaded her to gain formal coaching qualifications before introducing her to BNI. "He told me it would meet both my wish to make new friends and provide all the contacts I needed for my embryonic life coaching business - and it was great advice."



In the past two years Jayne hasn't looked back. In addition to running an ever busier coaching and personal development practice for both individuals and groups (recently gaining her first corporate client), she has a regular column in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle - one of which she devoted to the benefits of BNI membership. She is also a frequent guest on radio chatting about health and lifestyle issues and recently appeared

on Trevor McDonald's top-rated 'Tonight' TV programme.

As her reputation grew, so too did the requests for her to appear on ever-larger public and corporate platforms as a motivational and keynote speaker - although she admits she was scared stiff before her first TV appearance and still sometimes gets butterflies before delivering her weekly 60-second chapter presentations!

Today she estimates that two-thirds of all her new business comes from BNI-based referrals, either directly from her Falcons colleagues, or increasingly from third party referrals passed on by grateful clients. In addition to having clients scattered across the UK, Jayne's talents have also provided her with work in the USA, Spain and France but, whatever the territory, she always encourages her clients to find out about BNI and wherever possible, join their nearest chapter.

She added: "In so many ways, BNI's givers gain philosophy mirrors my own business ethos," she added. "It's about building lasting relationships, and it has been the perfect networking group for me, leading to so many wonderful personal and business friendships. That's why it is a key part of my life, why I wear my BNI badges with pride and will sing its praises to everyone I meet."

Naturally, Jayne is discreet about her professional success, but said: "Having found myself, I am finally doing something I love. When I think of how unhappy or dissatisfied some people are when they first come to me, and then later I see how much they have changed for the better, of course it's rewarding. But the biggest motivation for helping others discover their true potential, is that I don't want anyone to feel as bad as I used to feel for a large part of my life."

She added: "If I could fulfill one wish, it would be to touch millions of people and show them how they could improve their lives." Until then, as a BNI Ambassador, she will content herself with touching the lives of hundreds of members and visitors in chapters throughout the North East. ●

Contact Jayne on 01661 821886

YOUTHFUL APPROACH RINGS THE CHANGES

Network North Staffs Chapter has appointed one of the UK's youngest chapter directors, after deciding the Stoke-on-Trent group would benefit from an injection of youthful exuberance at its meetings.

Now 28-year-old marketing and PR consultant Richard Swancott is putting his colleagues' faith to the test, introducing a range of creative initiatives to their weekly breakfasts including an Elvis Day (members will be asked to

sing their presentations) and a Mime Day when they'll have to use visual communication only to convey their referral hopes!

Richard, who has already introduced changes, like starting each meeting with the rousing 'A-Team' theme tune, commented: "No-one need fear embarrassment or think we're not sticking to the agenda, but there was scope to add some fun. My aim has been to make the meetings more enjoyable. I want members to look forward to our Tuesday

breakfasts as one of the week's highlights."

Network North Staffs' previous chapter director, Gill Walters said: "Many chapters tend to appoint one of their most experienced members to lead the group, but we were keen to inject some youthful enthusiasm. Some business breakfasts have the image of being stuffy, so we were determined to give ours a lively reputation." ●

Contact Richard on 01782 275706



train&gain



SHOW US THE MONEY

Says Charlie Lawson, Area Director for London South-East

Last year in the UK, BNI members passed over half a million referrals leading to more than £170 million worth of business. Sound familiar? It should do: your chapter director announces the figure at the start of each weekly meeting. But have you ever wondered what that £170 million means for your own chapter, and more importantly, for you as an individual member?

Every week we see lots of referrals being passed in our chapters, all of them opportunities for business. But that's what referrals are - only opportunities. We still have to sell ourselves and our services to win the business. So, while the number of

referrals is important, their outcome is even more so, and I believe it is essential to check the actual value of the resulting business.

BNI has created a fantastic way to do this! It is called the 'Show Me the Money Box' and is designed to allow members to thank their colleagues for referrals that have turned into business. The box can be passed round the breakfast table every week, enabling members to fill in the name of the person who passed them a referral, and state what it was worth to them in turnover terms.

One of my groups, the Foundation Chapter in Croydon were amazed when they tried this. In the first month that

members used the box, the invoiced value of referrals totalled £158,000! But the chapter believes the true amount of business passed is considerably greater, because it was felt that many members had not included all business they received from smaller or spin-off referrals.

They also told me that everyone was surprised both by the value of referrals and by the fact that members who weren't renowned for passing a high number of referrals were the ones who had passed the highest value business. Now, the chapter has started to award notable networker awards each month to those members who feature prominently in the Show Me the Money Box - another good way to avoid giving the award to the same people every month.

If you haven't yet tried it, why not introduce a Show Me the Money Box in your chapter? You'll probably be surprised by what you discover! But before you do, here's a few hints on how you can get the best use from it:

- Make sure your chapter passes it around the table at the same time as the business card box.
- Encourage your fellow members to fill in a card to thank colleagues for every single piece of business referred.
- Keep track of the totals: assign one member of the chapter to do this (perhaps, but not necessarily, the Membership Co-ordinator)
- Deliver the results really positively (during the Membership Co-ordinator's report or Announcements section) i.e. 'This is the incredible amount of business passed in our chapter this week/month!'
- Use the findings to recognise your fellow chapter members as Notable Networkers.

Imagine a visitor hearing that 'We passed £25,486 worth of business last week' rather than 'We passed 57 referrals last week'. Which sounds better? And which is more likely to make a visitor want to join your chapter?●



WINNING BUSINESS WITH 'THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE'

By Jeremy Thorowgood,
Executive Director for
Home Counties West

The Golden Triangle is a model, which, for me, encapsulates everything we do in BNI to be successful in winning new customers. I always visualise this Triangle when I am talking to members or networking with the business public, and I thought it might help you to build the network that will become your referral source for years to come. You can place all your BNI activities around the Golden Triangle (see diagram):

RELATIONSHIP A

Essentially you first build a relationship (farming) with your chapter colleagues (represented by the bottom line of triangle) - a continuous process of identifying contacts either for potential new clients, or good referrals sources. The objective is to establish

a powerful introduction to a Potential New Client (PNC) that WILL turn into business. Building this relationship in your chapter includes regular one-to-one meetings when you will tell your colleagues how brilliant you are and what introductions you want, and of course, by being an enthusiastic contributor in every way you can (yes, building your own profile is part of your contribution).

RELATIONSHIP B

A well-constructed "relationship A" should tell the introducer exactly which of their contacts it is worthwhile endorsing you to, and how to enthuse about you and your services so that the potential new client will be eager to meet you (I highly recommend that you attend a BNI Presentation Skills workshop to maximise your own potential).

RELATIONSHIP C

In BNI, we describe a properly made introduction as a 'referral' and this means that the potential new client is expecting your call, with eager anticipation. So by the time you receive the referral, your reputation should be established and the job easy to win, with a minimum of selling required.

BUILDING YOUR REFERRAL BASE

The process identified by the Golden Triangle makes it much easier for us to get more people from the business community to

come and join our efforts in building up a referral base. The "givers gain" conversation you can have in a one-to-one with a fellow member should not be much different to that when talking with any business person or visitor to your chapter, producing questions such as:

"What sort of business are you in?"

"Of your current client categories, which would you say works best for you?"

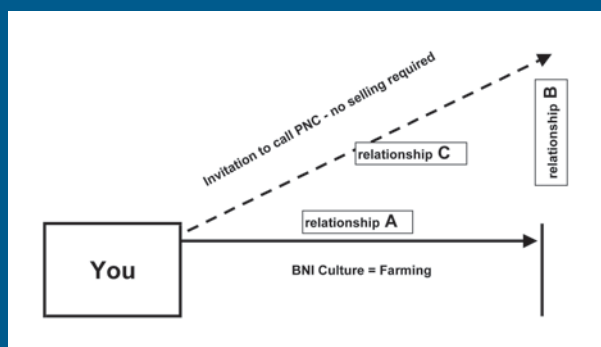
"What sort of person or business would you like to have as new clients?"

(If business clients sought) "Are you able to name any companies that you would like to have introductions to?"

(If private clients sought) "Which related businesses or professions would make useful introductions for you?" (For example, an accountant has clients that could be helped by a financial advisor).

"My colleagues and I are constantly exploring our contacts to find suitable introductions for each other, and this could help build your business. Would you be interested to meet them?"

Do you see why the BNI culture of farming, rather than hunting, is so important? I like this process: it is a great way to make new contacts, help the business community, and infinitely expand your own potential client base. So if you have found 'networking' difficult, visualise the Golden Triangle. I think it will help you. Good luck in building a Golden future.●



WINCHESTER DUO AIM TO PLUG INTERNET GAP

Disappointed by the poor quality of many internet support services for UK business, two founder members of Winchester's Capital Chapter have pooled their expertise to launch a venture aimed at providing "intelligently managed website and email hosting", and a range of other market-leading online services.

Brightspice Limited grew out of post-breakfast conversations between Simon May and Phill Bernier who, on the face of it, could have been seen as competitors, both working in the internet industry. However, while Simon uses his hi-tech computer networking expertise to help those in non-technical businesses, Phill's company combines advanced web design and specialist marketing to take clients' internet presence to new levels.

Simon commented: "We realised that although our core businesses are very different, many of the services we offer were either the same or overlapped. It seemed obvious to combine our skills to develop high-quality, bespoke solutions for our collective clients.

"Already it seems an ideal fit, yet

only a year ago Phill and I didn't know each other. That's a huge endorsement for BNI - and a great example of the hidden benefits of membership. BNI has fostered many strong business alliances between members but it's unusual for such a young chapter as ours to spawn a fully-fledged company," he added.●

Contact Simon on 01962 850221, Phill on 0845 612 1199 or visit their website: www.brightspice.com



PRINTER PAUL WINS TOP ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

Eighteen months after saving a long-established Devon print and design company from closure by buying it, Paul Hall from Torquay Brunel Chapter has won two top awards for his efforts to create Britain's first truly environment-friendly print business.

Paul and Jo, his wife and business partner, received the county's Environmental Performance Award and the overall Devon Environmental Business Initiative Award, in recognition of their implementing a range of environmental improvements at Totnes-based Colour Works Print & Design.

Paul joined Colour Works in 2003 and, when the business was threatened with closure the following year, after the sale of one of its major customers, he and Jo bought the company, since when they have fast tracked its environmental approach using paper stock from sustainable resources, vegetable-based inks, reducing chemical usage and recycling by-products.●

Contact Paul on 01803 867418

Wouldn't it be wonderful if, as a small start-up venture, you could find yourself a personal mentor who not only helped you avoid the usual pitfalls but also worked hard to find you new business?

Yes, of course BNI membership fulfils at least one of these roles, but those starting many embryonic businesses will either not have heard of BNI or, wrongly assume they can't afford to join.

Enter Gaynor Booth, who with BNI's help launched Derby-based Office Professionals just over two years ago (providing a range of bookkeeping and administration services for SMEs), and has now just set up the ultimate business support venture - Office Hotdesk - designed to help small businesses look more professional and expand by offering them a staffed and fully-equipped shared office facility,

She said: "I'd been an enthusiastic member of the Derby One Chapter on behalf of a previous employer, so when I set up on my own, BNI membership was a 'must' to get my company off to a flying start. In my first 12 months, 99% of all my business came through chapter colleagues.

"Having personally benefited so much from BNI, I was determined to offer a two-way referral service as part of my package deal for start-up businesses. My aim is to give them an early boost, so I will be referring them to BNI members whenever they need quality goods and services, and using my own networks to find potential business referrals for them. That way, I'll show them how the givers gain philosophy works, and of course, I'll be encouraging them to join a local chapter."

Contact Gaynor
on 0845 009 0488

TOASTING SUCCESS: Gaynor Booth at the launch of Office Hotdesk



FROM THE CHAIR

Do it by the book - OUR book!

Says Robert Nunn, Bedford Enterprise Chapter Director



If anyone thinks they can just walk into BNI and become a member, then they certainly haven't been near Bedford's Enterprise Chapter - where we actively discourage most would-be members in order to attract only the highest calibre candidates whom we believe will add to our dynamic group.

This is not elitism, but rather a determination to invest in the people we believe will help take the chapter to even greater success as a hard-working, high-performing and enjoyable business group, which members treat as if it is their own business.

That is why the most important asset in our chapter is education. Every member has been taught to understand and adopt a business concept called 'Lifetime Value of (your) Customer' (LVC) which is so important that our Membership Co-ordinator Stephen Spencer and I have produced a booklet - the Guide to growing your Chapter - explaining how it works, and why it will transform attitudes towards giving and receiving referrals.

Using the LVC assessment you can establish the real value of your customers, without which you cannot recognise the true value of referrals you receive, nor appreciate the real ethos of Givers Gain. Quite simply, you take the average transaction value of any particular customer, multiply it by the number of transactions in one year and then multiply it again by the number of years you expect to retain that customer.

By doing this, you discover that instead of viewing a single referral as producing say, a £50 profit from just the first transaction, the real lifetime value of your customer is likely to be worth 30, 40 or 50 fold this figure over the period you will be doing business together.

Better still, when you understand the lifetime value of your customers, you can

ascertain the true value of a referral, simply by knowing your conversion rate. In my own business, I receive on average 10 referrals a month and we turn 58% of those into real business. Since I know that the lifetime value of my average customer is £1,620, then by converting 58% of my BNI referrals, it means that every referral slip passed to me is worth £939.60. Relating this to the average 120 referrals I receive over a 12-month period, it means the real profit value of my chapter seat is a magnificent £112,752!!

Imagine the impact of understanding the true value of a chapter seat when you think about givers gain. We have 35 superb members each generating almost three referrals a week, all for solid business, and we've found that instilling this ethos into the chapter makes it easy to get more visitors, more referrals and more business.

For us, every meeting is a focused visitors day when every member invites three or four people from the top trades and professions that are not represented in our chapter. The result is that we know at least three or four visitors will finish up competing for one of the few remaining places around our table.

Which brings me back to my starting point. Even with excellent people clamouring to join us, we try to dissuade them by highlighting the effort and commitment required for membership. This way, when we do admit a newcomer, we're fairly certain (s)he is going to add real value.

By choosing the right people, members deliver week in, week out and our meetings are very stimulating. And, while we always reward top performers, we don't need to because they all want to be winners. ●

Robert is managing director of specialist telecommunications company, emedia Telecom based in Bedford. He can be contacted on 01234 223371



Tim Mycock is not your average guy. At 14 he joined Warwickshire as a promising cricketer. At 17 he gained his driving licence and private pilot's licence in the same week and was then voted the UK's Young Achiever of the Year. And, by the time he was 21, he'd gained a 'Desmond' at university, travelled the world in RAF formation and aerobatics teams, and won a high-flying job with Pareto Law, Britain's leading graduate assessment, placement and training organisation.

So, at the tender age of 23, what should the next step be for a man who'd already packed more into two decades than many do in their lifetime? Why, become a member of BNI of course, and begin to acquire the wealth of business knowledge that he says he will need to achieve his ultimate goal: taking on Richard Branson as one of the world's top entrepreneurs!

Tim is brutally frank about the fact that because of his remarkable

progress, it's been impossible to gain the inter-personal and business skills that only come with experience, learning from 'older' heads around him. He said: "I joined BNI nine months ago for very different reasons to most people, seeing it as the ideal learning tool.

"Despite my early success, I am commercially naïve and wanted to learn about how business is conducted in the big city from BNI colleagues who have already honed their skills. I figured that if anyone knew the rules of the game it would be members of the St.Paul's Chapter right in the heart of the City of London - and so far I've not been wrong, because they've taught me a great deal."

Curiously for someone with such self-assurance, Tim's real concern during his first few weeks of membership was whether he'd be taken seriously by older colleagues in the chapter. "I was determined to play a full part but wondered if members would think I was too young to risk

forging new business relationships with me. Happily that wasn't the case and in just a few months I've received referrals worth around £40,000 - as well as giving plenty in return."

In fact, such is the respect he commands for his enthusiasm and effectiveness, that he was elected membership co-ordinator three months ago and now has one eye on making it to the chapter director's chair in the foreseeable future. "It was an honour to be offered the post after such a short time, but I feel I've already benefited from BNI and learnt a lot in the last few months.

"One of my BNI goals was to mix with people from many different sectors of business and industry, because as an account manager at Pareto Law I deal almost exclusively with the country's best graduates. I love my work but it's important to know how to react with business people across the spectrum and that's where BNI is so good," he added.

Tim attributes part of his drive and ambition to the death of his father when he was just 13. "I had to become the man of the house, so the need to succeed at an early age was ingrained in me. After an offer to fly for British Airways was dashed by the events of 9/11, I knew I'd have to pursue my career in London. Fortunately I've been lucky." As Tim probably knows already through his BNI training, you make your own luck in today's business world. Something he appears more than capable of doing! •

Contact Tim on 020 8600 6913 or at: tmycock@paretolaw.co.uk

KINGS OF THE CASTLE?

As Colchester Castle Chapter's retiring leadership team came to step down during the Spring, they could have easily be forgiven for considering themselves 'kings of the castle', after literally doubling the group's membership in five months!

When new Chapter Director Roger Heard took over the reins last autumn, with Secretary/Treasurer Terry Fry and Membership Co-ordinator Mark Gooch, membership stood at a hard-working but modest 21. "We decided our target would be to make it the best and biggest chapter in Essex before our six months was up," said Roger.

"We weren't sure it was possible but we achieved it within five months and only needed to hold one visitors day towards

the end of our term, bringing the chapter to a very buoyant 41 members."

Roger said their success was based on sticking to the BNI agenda, setting goals and teamwork. He added: "We ran the chapter like we run our own businesses, fixing goals we were determined to meet. We all knew what a large chapter could do for members, not least by increasing the referrals, and we all wanted a piece of that bigger business."

"Members of the leadership team were in constant dialogue with each other, discussing ideas for making the chapter stronger and taking hard decisions when necessary. We also made sure we stuck to BNI's rules because, if you don't, it is all too easy to forget essential items in the agenda."

Terry Fry said that from the outset, they had recognised the need to increase the chapter's energy levels and enterprise, and members had responded well. "Nearly everyone brought along quality visitors many of whom subsequently joined, and we now have a dynamic group whose high energy levels are always the talking point among visitors," he said.

The group's newfound momentum was duly rewarded when BNI director Robert French visited Colchester Castle to present the chapter with a prestigious Founder's Award and give members a case of champagne for becoming the first Essex chapter to gain a 40-strong membership. •

Contact Roger on 07764 223240

Hot topic for Battle members



When members of West Sussex's Battle Chapter get referrals that are too hot to handle, there's one colleague who'll always be glad to receive them - fire prevention and safety specialist Simon Mitchell.

To prove the point, when Simon delivered his 10-minute presentation he literally made it a steamy performance, after leading his colleagues into the car park of their chapter's hotel venue to set off more than 20 fire extinguishers at once!

Simon, who runs AM Fire was keen to warn members about new fire safety regulations coming into force this year, and what better way than to include a demonstration of how (and how not) to

use a modern fire extinguisher when tackling a blaze.

He said: "In the event of a fire, every second is vital and not knowing how to activate an extinguisher could mean the difference between life and death. Nothing beats hands on practical training, but few people have ever had to use one and even fewer know what to do.

"A recent survey showed that 80% of all fires are put out by using fire extinguishers. That's why I wanted to give my colleagues the chance to practise so they'd have the confidence to use one in an emergency," he added.

Battle's membership co-ordinator Sabina Brown said: "Everyone wondered where Simon was taking us when he ordered us outside for his talk, but it was a very useful exercise and a memorable 10 minute presentation. He already gives and receives many referrals but after this, I suspect he'll be getting even more." ●

Contact Simon on 01424 848220

...but, some like it even hotter!



Walton (Acton Trussell, Stafford) and Dove (Uttoxeter) chapters participated in the firewalking session organised by Stone member, business coaching consultant Tony Burgess, to discover what can be achieved with the right mindset and preparation.

Tony, who runs The Academy of High Achievers, said: "We prepare everyone thoroughly, to help them understand how much control they have over their attitude and thinking. Firewalking is a highly symbolic act, and it makes people realise how much they can achieve. If they can walk on fire, they can do anything. Our aim was to show members just how much positive thinking can benefit their lives and businesses." ●

Fearless members of three Staffordshire chapters recently pushed their mental reserves to the limit at an unusual confidence-building workshop - by walking over red-hot coals!

The bravehearts from the Stone, Izaac

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SUCCESSNET MOVE OVER! WE'VE GOT OUR OWN NEWSLETTER

With a graphic designer, a copywriter and PR consultant in their ranks, members of Ealing's Walpole Chapter had all the necessary expertise when they decided to launch their own newsletter.

The monthly publication (emailed to all members) has several purposes: to give added value to the 10-minute speakers, boost members' motivation and provide an extra publicity tool in promoting the chapter to visitors and the local business community.

"The idea is to help everyone maximise their membership benefits by ensuring they are kept updated about chapter priorities and activities," said former Chapter Director Shainul Kassam under whose leadership it was launched. "But another important aim is to increase referral rates by giving our ten-minute speakers the chance to reiterate their key messages in writing, and highlight the best referrals each month."

Ruth Rollason designs the newsletter and copywriter Cathy Howells is jointly responsible with TV producer and PR executive Lindsay Grist, for its editorial content. ●

Contact Lindsay Grist on 020 8932 6800



you and SuccessNet...

SuccessNet is published quarterly and distributed free of charge by BNI to all members. We are delighted that with each successive edition, we receive more and more of your emails, letters and calls, asking us to include your news or picture items in the newsletter - but please remember we don't have space for them all!

If you have an item you'd like us to consider for inclusion, please email it to: successnet@grosvenorassociates.com - making sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and address as well. ●