

This is Julie Futch, cool businesswoman networking in her Corby Chapter. But this redhead has a hot-blooded side not seen before by her BNI colleagues. You can see Julie out of her business clothes on page 3



Lothian make front page news! Every BNI member wants to get his business onto the front page of SuccessNet, but two members of West Lothian Chapter have gone one better. For the full story, turn to page 2.



It ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it!
P14 & 15

MASTER'S FIVE POINT PLAN FOR NETWORKING SUCCESS

BNI's 8,000-strong UK & Ireland membership has been offered a simple five-point programme to help them become experts in business networking, by the world's undisputed Master of Networking, BNI's Founder and Chief Executive Dr Ivan Misner.

Dr Misner first delivered his 'MasterPlan' last month when, in a keynote address to over 400 enthusiastic members at London's Commonwealth Conference Centre, he told them: "When anyone joins BNI, they have access to all the support and resources they need to succeed in business. If they subsequently fail, it will almost certainly be because they weren't prepared to look, listen and learn..."

His hour-long address, the highlight of a flying visit to the UK en route to his Californian home from attending the BNI conference in Scandinavia, is summarised on page 6 and manages to condense much of the content of Dr Misner's definitive books on business networking and marketing, to five key practical initiatives for gaining new business through word-of-mouth referrals.

"The gap between business success and failure is usually small. BNI more than fills that void – but you have to be ready to close it, by opening yourself up to new challenges and opportunities," he told a captivated audience, before concluding with a frank question-and-answer session and a book-signing session which saw several hundred autographed copies sold in less than an hour.

Barely 12 hours later, Dr Misner was in Rickmansworth, North-West London to formally open BNI's dedicated National Office, by cutting a ribbon across the doorway of the newly named BNI House.

"After five years of continuous and rapid

growth across the UK and Ireland, we were reaching the stage where – unless we found a larger, self-contained office building – we could not have maintained the high standards of service and support we provide to our members," said National Director Gillian Lawson. "It's a huge relief that we now have the space and facilities we need to support BNI's further development, not least of which are the dedicated training and educational resources we are providing for our members."

BNI's new national office address is: BNI House, Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1BS. The new telephone number is 01923 891 999 and the fax line is 01923 891 998. The web address remains unchanged at www.bni-europe.com

Before departing for California, Dr Misner found time to be the surprise guest of honour at two North London chapters – Harrow and Watford - to whom he presented Founder's Awards in recognition of their continuing success as flagship BNI groups.



BNI Founder Dr. Ivan Misner opens our new National Office.

Hundreds attend BNI's 5th annual conference

Hundreds of BNI members and guests attended the prestigious 5th BNI Conference last month, held in the historic Essex coastal town of Maldon.

Delegates - mainly from East Anglia, London and the Home Counties, but some from much further afield - took part in a busy day of workshops, directors' presentations and networking events at the Five Lakes Hotel, Golf & Country Club. The event was described as a considerable success by National Director Gillian Lawson.

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Sarah Owen (pictured centre) has plenty to smile about



Sarah opens BNI batting with a record

BNI's first chapter in England's 'mid-west' has created a unique and remarkable record – reaching its capacity 40-strong membership at the launch meeting!

Under the guidance of corporate development consultant Sarah Owen who started the Bristol Grace core group in January, grew it to 21 members within four weeks and launched another month later, the Chapter attracted more than 100 businesspeople to its inaugural visitors' day – with 20 of the visitors immediately applying to join.

"We've actually levelled out at 42 members with a growing waiting list," said Sarah, who is also the group's first Chapter Director, "but my aim is to open at least two more

chapters in central Bristol during the next two or three months which will relieve the pressure on Bristol Grace Chapter from would-be members. The response from the city's business community has been fantastic."

The arrival of BNI in Bristol is equally remarkable, since Sarah was actually introduced – by chance – to BNI whilst visiting Plymouth on business last summer. She was invited along to a visitors' day at Plymouth's Drake Chapter and was so impressed that she asked Executive Director Guy Griffiths to sign her up on the spot.

"When he found out that I lived in Bristol, he sensibly advised me that a two and a half

hour trip for a weekly breakfast meeting would be no fun during the winter months – and suggested I join a group in my own area. When I told him there wasn't one, he said the simplest solution would be to start my own BNI chapter in the city. After attending a three day training course and with help and advice from BNI's National Directors, that is what I did – little realising that our launch would set a record," said Sarah who works for Momentum Financial Services.

Bristol's first chapter – like its successors – takes its name from famous British cricketers, reflecting Sarah's lifelong involvement in the sport. Her father, Bill Higginson was a professional cricketer with Middlesex and Surrey and her grandfather was a professional footballer. "We've always been a sports-mad family, but cricket is the first love – so our next chapter will be called Bristol May followed by Bristol Compton."

Bristol Grace, which meets on Friday mornings at the city's Jurys Doyle Hotel, is one of four West Country chapters opened this year. The others are Bradford upon Avon, Severn View at Almondsbury on the outskirts of Bristol, and Taunton.

National Director Gillian Lawson said: "We have a growing presence in central southern England, and in Devon and Cornwall, but until recently, BNI was not represented in what I call England's mid-west – Somerset and Avon. In particular, we're delighted to have gained a strong early foothold in Bristol, one of the few major UK cities that was without a BNI chapter."

Other chapters recently opened include: Angus, Atlas (Lancashire), Cathedral (Exeter), Chislehurst, Covent Garden, Dalhouse, Dartford, Diamonds (Doncaster), Falkirk, Grantham, Hendon, Inspires (Chesterfield), Kappa (Merseyside), Knavesmire, Leeds Central, Mid Suffolk, Mid Ulster, Mitcham, Orwell (Ipswich), Rochdale, Rossett (Wrexham), Rickmansworth and Wickford.

BNI + C of C spells harmony

When West Lothian Chapter member Mark Thirgood invited the Chief Executive of the region's Chamber of Commerce to attend BNI's Scotland Awards Dinner, he had little idea it would lead to close collaboration between the complementary organisations – and even less that he would finish up on the front cover of the Chamber's magazine!

Yet, as a result of his initiative, West Lothian's two dynamic business groups have forged such healthy links that Chapter members recently held one of their weekly meetings at the Chamber's meeting venue, before inviting Chamber members to participate in breakfast networking, BNI-style.

Meanwhile, the Chamber's Chief Executive, Stuart Diffin was so impressed with the achievements of BNI members, highlighted at the inaugural Scottish Awards Dinner, that he devoted the entire front page of 'Connections' (the Chamber's quarterly magazine) to the winning of 'Networker of the Year' awards by Mark, and fellow Chapter member Carlene Von Doring.

Mark, an independent financial adviser, is a member of both business organisations and believes their functions and activities are entirely

complementary. He said: "BNI encourages its members to belong to other business networking groups, so I thought it was natural to invite the Chamber's Chief Executive to our national awards dinner. It was a very upbeat evening, and I think Stuart liked what he saw.

"Even so, neither Carlene nor I expected any publicity in the Chamber's magazine, let alone being given the whole of the front cover. It was great coverage for BNI," Mark added.

Carlene, who runs the sales department of Clifford Mobile, is also a member of West Lothian's Chamber of Commerce, and thinks their growing collaboration can only be good for members in both groups. "There are already signs that the growing relationship between BNI and the Chamber will boost business opportunities."

Linda Maclean, BNI's Executive Director for South & East Scotland welcomed the developing ties with the Chamber. "Quite a few BNI members in this part of Scotland also belong to their local Chamber and we are happy to encourage a cross-flow of ideas and collaboration. We were also delighted with the publicity gained by Mark and Carlene, which has brought us quite a few new enquiries."

After the Busby Babes, introducing BNI's Babes

BNI members know all about being good team players – but over the past couple of football seasons, the phrase has taken on a hugely greater significance for the members of the Tameside Chapter in East Manchester – following their sponsorship of a rather special junior soccer team.

Inspired by the soccer coaching achievements of one of its members, Denis Davies, a part-time coach with the revered Manchester City Youth Academy, and with amateur league club Fletcher Moss FC, the Tameside Chapter last year sponsored Fletcher Moss's Under-8's seven-a-side team which went on to win every match they played.

"That was a fantastic outcome," said Denis, who somehow manages to juggle the running of his Ideal Home Design and Consultancy business with his two coaching posts and BNI activities. "Last year's Under 8's team were brilliant, not least because the majority came from under-privileged

or deprived backgrounds, but what made it really special was when Manchester City scouts snatched four of them, and Manchester United took the other three for trials.

"To have your entire team of eight-year-olds signed up with two of the greatest footballing institutions in the country was great publicity for the lads – and very good for my BNI chapter," Denis added.

Flushed with their high-profile sponsorship success, Tameside Chapter members decided to go one better this season, by sponsoring Fletcher Moss FC's full Under-14's squad, including provision of new kit sporting the BNI logo. Again, the team has won every match this season, finished top of their league and reached the Lancashire Cup Final and the County's League Cup final.

"The team's free-scoring record has attracted a lot of interest," said Denis. "Manchester City, Bolton and Burnley are considering giving trials to a number of our players. I guess some of my chapter colleagues already see themselves as would-be soccer managers, mixing with the big boys in soccer."

Who knows, from there to greater fame may only be a short step away? Even Sir Matt Busby's babes had to start somewhere!

Julie's presentations with a difference!

Yes! This is Julie Futer – but not as her colleagues in BNI's Corby Chapter know her. The cool businesswoman pictured on the front cover is seen here rehearsing for the comedy, 'Lock Up Your Daughters', which has just completed a successful run at Bedford's Sharnbrook Mill

Theatre, playing to packed houses.

"My amateur stage career took off by accident eight years ago," she told SuccessNet. "A work colleague told me he was going to audition for Jesus Christ Superstar. I was at a loose end at the time, so asked if I could go along too - I had an idea I might make third spear on the left or something. At the last minute, a bit tongue in cheek, I decided to audition for the part of Mary Magdalene - and was chosen from 21 women who also auditioned for the part."

Since then, she has played Lady Jacqueline in 'Me and My Girl', Tzeitel in 'Fiddler on the Roof' and Dionne in 'Hair'. Julie describes 'Lock up your daughters' - the bawdy comedy by Laurie Johnson, Lionel Bart and Bernard Miles - as "all corsets, cleavage, and innuendo – but great fun for the cast."

Julie, who runs her own recruitment consultancy, PHI Recruitment Services, says that despite her leading roles in amateur dramatics, BNI has been invaluable in helping her develop her presentation skills.

"Many people might think that someone used to performing in front of large audiences would be very comfortable talking to smaller groups of business people, but the two environments are totally different. BNI has played a significant part in helping me acquire additional business skills and the confidence to project my own company," said Julie.

She can be contacted on 01933 399 803.



A g-r-o-w-i-n-g Canterbury Tale

News of what must surely be a record for the number of referrals passed at a single meeting recently landed on the Editor's desk at SuccessNet.

It came from Andy Wiggins, past Chapter Director of Canterbury who proudly announced that at one of the group's meetings in March, members exchanged no fewer than 212 referrals – an average of more than five each!

"Before anyone tries to suggest this is a tall story – a modern 'Canterbury Tale' – I can confirm that we audited every referral, checking any that appeared to be suspect and discounting them if

they were in any way questionable.

"The fact is that our record number of referrals came during a period when we were regularly passing over 100 referrals a week, and we have certainly not been saving up leads for any particular week," said Andy. "It shows in clear, measurable terms just what can be achieved through effort and commitment to each other, and I have little doubt this landmark restores us to our claimed place as one of THE premier chapters in the country, if not the world."

Well done Canterbury Chapter. We wonder how long your record will stand.

Lawson's Lore

If there is one reason for BNI's dramatic growth and sustained success in the UK and Ireland, it is the quality of the education and training offered to all our members. Good news indeed, coming in the year when BNI's worldwide mission statement is "Education = Excellence." But, we're about to make a good thing even better.

Having run a wide range of courses and workshops for our members in North-West London over the past four years, we have found a strong correlation between the performance of a chapter – particularly the number of referrals passed – and the number of its members who have attended training workshops. Quite simply, the more training that members have undergone, the more effective is their Chapter – and the greater the ensuing business opportunities.

While some BNI members will be familiar with the twice-yearly intensive training provided to chapter leadership teams, fewer may be aware that BNI offers a growing curriculum of education and training – all of it tailored to strengthen the practical skills and business expertise of our members. The bottom line for all our education and training programmes is to teach everyone in BNI how to network more effectively – and run their businesses more successfully.

However, until recently, the ease of access to such training and the range of educational resources open to an individual member, has varied depending on where he or she lives or works across the country. While some BNI regions have offered good training facilities to members, others have been slower to establish appropriate education and training structures.

That is why, following our recent directors' conference at which there was consensus that training and education must remain our priority, we are rapidly moving towards the adoption of national (UK and Ireland) standards for the training of members so that, in the near future, whether you live in Perth or Plymouth, Galway or Glasgow, you will be guaranteed the same high standards of business education and training.

As national directors, we are delighted that BNI's growth in the UK and Ireland has been faster and stronger than anywhere else in the world. Our intention in the coming months is to broaden the scope of our training, and increase both access to it, and the frequency of the courses and workshops available.

The proof that BNI members derive huge benefits from our emphasis on making individuals more effective and persuasive networkers, is there for all to see. Throughout the country, there are countless big business successes – each of them the direct result of BNI membership.

So our message to every member is simply this: Take full advantage of the training facilities offered – because only when you do, will you maximise your business opportunities, and your membership of BNI!

Gillian & Martin

Introducing the York member who tells everyone:

"I will find you some new business"

When it comes to finding good referrals for colleagues in his York Chapter, independent mortgage advisor Chris Williams just will not accept defeat – going to great lengths to ensure he understands the sort of business they want.

Chris was one of the founders of the York group when it launched a year ago and, although he says he has given and received some great referrals, he realised earlier this year that there were some members who'd given him referrals, but for whom he had not yet found a way to reciprocate.

"I was determined to get referrals for these people, I asked them to describe their key business strengths and to be really specific about what kind of new business they were looking for," Chris added. "Usually, as they were talking to me, a name would come mind and I could tell them: 'Great, I know someone who can use your services. I'll tell them about how you've helped me and recommend you.'"

By taking such direct action, within days Chris was able to recommend a builder for a loft conversion, a computer engineer for a new office system and a computer specialist to carry out an upgrade – and, in the process, start 'repaying'

chapter colleagues who had previously referred him to new business.

"It's just a matter of getting the mind focused, stepping outside our comfort zones and taking the trouble to get specific about the needs of our chapter colleagues. It means extra effort – but the rewards are worth it," said Chris.

Not content in going that extra mile for colleagues in his own chapter, Chris also does what few other members may have considered: he encourages his own business contacts all over the country to find out more about BNI, by visiting their local chapter.

"I have business associates all over the UK and, whenever I feel someone may be the right kind of person for BNI, I check the BNI website and pass on the names and contact details of their nearest chapter – suggesting that if they go along, they'll probably want to join up right away."

In recent months, Chris has directed a carpet cleaner associate in Trowbridge to the neighbouring Bradford-upon-Avon chapter, and sent an event organiser in Weston super Mare to a newly formed group in the region. "As well as giving them the relevant chapter details and contacts, I also send my business contacts a copy of SuccessNet, since this is a fantastic way of giving extra credibility to a personal recommendation."

Chris Williams can be contacted on 01653 690 903.

Well Stone me.... we're on the radio!

Members of Stone Chapter have seen their businesses given a boost by Britain's newest independent local radio station and, in return may have helped it to win its broadcasting franchise.

The Chapter's members so impressed Martin Shaw, Station Manager-delegate of Stone FM, with their 60-second infomercials when he attended a breakfast meeting, that he decided to dedicate precious airtime to promote the business services of each member – free of charge!

"The arrangements were made just prior to Stone FM going on air for a month's trial session," said Chapter Director, Tony Burgess. "Every member was given a one-minute slot to promote his or her business, each of which was preceded by an introduction to BNI, detailing where our meetings are held and our business philosophy. The radio station even used a bell to time the 60-second sessions!"

He added: "Radio is a great medium for getting your message across and, even though the new station was only in its pilot broadcasting



stage, plenty of people must have heard the BNI infomercials because a number of members received solid enquiries as a result."

Members are now putting their weight behind Stone FM's franchise application and, if successful, Tony predicts a close and mutually beneficial relationship between BNI and the station. "As well as creating awareness of individual business services and BNI, the radio slots gave members rare experience of writing and presenting their own radio commercials – even more daunting than preparing their 60-second slots at the weekly meeting. Happily, Stone FM gave them plenty of advice and encouragement," Tony added.

Bradley signs 'em up in Oldham

BNI has been grabbing more attention than usual on the streets of Oldham recently – ever since it became the unusual subject of a large billboard hoarding in the town centre.

Yet the inspiration for BNI's first-ever UK poster site promotion goes back to last year's remarkable 5-1 defeat of Germany by England – an event that set Bradley Tupman, Manager of

Sign and Image, thinking about the great teamwork of his colleagues in the Oldham Premier Chapter.

As a result, he masterminded this eye-catching billboard poster (pictured left) and just happened to have his shop's hoarding site vacant to accommodate his new creation. Titled "Premier Business Referrals League – To achieve your goals call....." it depicts an oversized BNI football team, with

each player's strip featuring the name of one of the Chapter's businesses, and several shirts left blank to encourage new local businesses to sign up. The poster concludes: "BNI kicks off every Wednesday at 7.00am."

Bradley told SuccessNet: "Our shop's own hoarding always attracts a lot of attention from passing traffic to and from neighbouring Saddleworth. We usually have our own advertising on this site, but it seemed like a great location for a BNI poster and everyone in the Chapter was very enthusiastic when I suggested it. The BNI soccer poster stayed for at least 10 weeks earlier this year during which time it attracted quite a few enquiries."

He has plans for a different BNI poster later this year, so keep your eyes open!

Bradley Tupman can be contacted on 0161 626 4000



Persistence Pays

BNI members Simon Webb and Anthony Pilkington are finally doing business together, after experiencing the value of that old phrase: "Never give up!"

Simon, Malvern Hills membership co-ordinator, met Cheltenham 1 Chapter member Anthony on several occasions during inter-chapter events. While both felt they could do useful business together, it took several meetings before they got down to basics during a visit to Worcester 1 Chapter.

As head of BookCheck, which provides professional book-keeping services, Anthony had identified a need for some telemarketing to attract major new clients to his business. Simon, Managing Director of Integrated Telemarketing Ltd, believed he had the solutions to Anthony's requirements and had sent him a brochure outlining his marketing services.

Anthony wasn't ready to proceed at the time and temporarily forgot about Simon's offer. Then, a few weeks later when he felt the time was right, he couldn't find the brochure or Simon's details, so he had to resort to Yellow Pages to track him down and set up the meeting that was to lead to a lucrative business relationship.

"Soon after Simon's company started its telemarketing campaign for us, we gained a contract with what is now our second biggest client," said Anthony. "We have also picked up another major client – a good sized local hotel, so we're delighted with the way things are going."

Simon has enjoyed working with BookCheck and said: "They are an interesting client – and only five days of telemarketing has resulted in considerable success for them. But this is only the start. The real benefits of our work will come from rolling out a project like this over a year, or more."

The moral of this story? If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again.

Anthony can be reached on 0800 026 6522



Anthony Pilkington (left) & Simon Webb with Malvern Hills Director Danusia Malina - Derben



Mark Kerr receives his trophy from Carol Vordemann

Bravo's Brainiest!

New chapter director of Merseyside Bravo Chapter Mark Kerr faced some good-natured ribbing from members when he conducted his first breakfast meetings last month – after being named Britain's Brainiest Estate Agent in front of millions of TV viewers!

Mark, a partner of Liverpool's Ellis Kerr Estate Agents, went through some grueling pre-selection rounds before finally emerging triumphant winner of the ITV game show hosted by Carol Vordemann.

ITV has run a series of quiz shows to find the brainiest occupant of various trades and professions including teacher, taxi driver and nurse. The programme which pitted property agents against each other was shown in February – closely watched by Mark's colleagues in Liverpool's Bravo Chapter.

"Several friends and colleagues persuaded me to enter the TV competition," said Mark, "so I thought I'd give it a go. After answering general knowledge questions at home, followed by a telephone interview with more questions, the top 25 contestants were invited to an audition and a dozen of us were selected to appear on the show, filmed at Elstree Studios.

"My chosen subject in the final was 'The Beatles' and I was amazed to win," said Mark. "My prize was a glass trophy and two kisses from Carol Vordemann!"

Mark joined BNI just over a year ago and finds it great for his business. "It has given me a far wider range of contacts and I've received lots of referrals – as well as being able to give plenty to my colleagues," he said. "Of course I don't really believe I'm the brainiest estate agent in Britain, but it's fun to be given such a title."

Mark can be contacted on 07775 502 473

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS

UK members offered keys to business growth

The five key steps to becoming a 'Master of Networking' were offered to BNI's UK and Irish members last month, by one of the great Masters of Networking, BNI's Founder and Chief Executive Dr Ivan Misner.

In a keynote address to over 400 members at London's Commonwealth Conference Centre, Dr Misner, came close to achieving his mission impossible: reducing the content of his latest definitive reference text book on why networking is the most effective business marketing tool, to a handful of crucial tips. SuccessNet Editor Malcolm Grosvenor was among those privileged to hear his presentation, which – in heavily précised form – is summarised here.

Dr Misner's five steps to becoming a master of networking are:

1. Learn from the past in order to improve your individual future.

"What is the point of gaining knowledge if we fail to apply it to bettering ourselves?" asked Dr Misner. "And, what possible benefit do we derive from making mistakes, if we do not learn from them, and ensure we avoid them in future? Everyone in business makes mistakes – but successful business people learn to turn failure into achievement. It is how we approach our futures that will decide whether we become masters of networking."

2. Recognise that while each of us is different – we have the same needs and frailties!

"Everyone likes to believe they are totally different from anyone else – and the same applies in business, where we all want to believe we have something unique to offer the world. In fact, while quite obviously we all have distinctive characteristics, we share many of the same human frailties when it comes to developing ourselves and our businesses," he said. "One example of this is what I call the 'weird difference rationale', in which we give ourselves all kinds of excuses for not attempting things we don't know very well – preferring to stick to familiar paths."

"This is equally true of BNI members who,

as entrepreneurs, don't like to be told what to do, or how to do it in business – even when faced with new challenges and unfamiliar territory. Happily, BNI allows people to retain and promote their differences within their chapters, while following a standard set of principles which – if we accept them – will help us succeed. The important thing to remember is that our similarities transcend our differences."

3. Put yourself in play.

"It may sound obvious, but you're not going to make the most of the countless business opportunities that come your way, unless you first make a point of actively 'putting yourself in play' – showing everyone around you in



the business community that you are receptive and open to their ideas and proposals," said Dr Misner.

"Business success is not just about offering the right product or service at the right cost, it's about showing others that you are approachable, keen to listen to their views, and enthusiastic about forming long-term business relationships with them. To do this, you first have to connect with people, which means being able and willing to talk to people at all levels – in order to access new ideas and opportunities.

BNI's Founder added: "If you find it hard to be outgoing and naturally gregarious, then take advantage of the numerous educational and training facilities available to you through BNI, all designed to enhance your business and inter-personal skills."

4. Business networking is about farming – not about hunting.

"Some people still join BNI expecting the organisation to give them major business gains while making almost no effort to culti-

vate their relationships with chapter colleagues," said Dr Misner. "That is why we constantly remind everyone that BNI membership is about careful farming, and not about hunting.

"It never ceases to surprise me in today's competitive world, that there are still people who think they can win long-term customers by aggressively hunting their business.

"BNI members recognise that there is a time – confidence curve to gaining new business through referrals in the chapter, and that as they come to be trusted by their colleagues, so they will cement long-term relationships.

"In simple terms, a new member needs to have visibility and then credibility before he or she can expect profitability, and that's what we mean about 'farming' – the process of cultivating relationships to produce the best possible crop of referrals," he added.

5. Build your own success team.

BNI's Founder cited the true story of former Olympic and World Cup alpine skier Nancy Holland as he finally urged all BNI members to 'build a success team' around their business enterprise.

He said: "Nancy is now a leading businesswoman, but she acknowledges that networking was the vital factor behind both her success as a skier and in business.

"To become a world-class skier, she first had to develop a close-knit support network involving her coaches, sponsors, chaperones and parents, who opened doors for her by networking their own contacts.

"Later, when she launched her own business, she had to shift gear and assemble a support network in which she was more of a co-equal participant, asking old friends and associates for help in building her new career. She admits it was a struggle at first but says it became a whole lot easier once she discovered she was able to help them in return."

Dr Misner added: "In either case, the secret of networking mastery is to develop contacts who can help you accomplish your goals and help correct any mistakes you make. We all need help to reach our goals, and networking is the key to finding and providing that help."

Concluding his address, Dr Misner added: "When you join BNI, you are not just buying membership of another business organisation; you are joining a worldwide team of like-minded individuals who can provide you with all the help, support and guidance you need to be successful."

Afterwards, Dr Misner answered members' questions and signed copies of his books – including his latest, "Masters of Networking."

Taking the fear out of public speaking

Deprived of his sword, the gladiator faced the mighty lion across the coliseum, and with it certain death. But as the lion charged, the gladiator whispered in his ear.....and the beast relented. Aghast, the Emperor enquired how this man had managed to save his life? The Gladiator replied with a smile - "I simply pointed out that of course, after his dinner, the victor would be asked to say a few words!"

There is nothing quite so frightening as being asked to speak in public. Yet the rewards in social and particularly in business life from being able to communicate freely in public to as large an audience as possible are immense. Recently, my business partner Robert French and I began working to establish BNI in Malaysia. On our first trip, we decided to assess the local competition and found ourselves at the BNC (Business Networking Club). There were 48 business owners and proprietors in the room and a microphone was offered to anybody who wanted to promote his business.

Just two people stood up to take advantage of the opportunity – Robert and I.

They say that the key to a great golf game is to take a lesson BEFORE you ever swing a club, and thereafter to practice, practice, practice.

Public speaking is very similar. BNI gives you the opportunity for untold practice. Here, I would offer you the lessons I have learned, in the hope that they will help you always give a great presentation.

The Speech Itself.

Public speaking, like any concert or play, is a live performance, and to engross and hold your audiences attention, you need to have a "live" feel. The audience should never quite relax, never be quite sure where you will go next. For every speech, I start by gathering all of the points I wish to get across, and placing them in logical order. But this is only the beginning, and from this point on, all my work is aimed at carrying my audience with me so that they will soak up the information and be inspired to put it into action.

For every point, there is a story to back it up. Often stories can be drawn from direct experience in your company, but the most powerful stories often have no direct relationship to your topic, but are drawn from the well of your life and experience. For example if I am trying to explain that you can never be too prepared I might use a story like this:

"Rolls Royce was recently sold for \$479 million to Volkswagen. I have no doubt that

**by Andrew Hall,
Executive Director
Sussex, Surrey, Northants & Leicester,
Staffs & Shropshire**

Volkswagen did their due diligence and considered themselves well prepared. But it was around two weeks later that news started to filter out that while they had bought the factory and while they had bought the cars, they had failed to acquire the most valuable part of all - the name. So from here onwards, Volkswagen will have to make Bentleys. you can never be too prepared!!"

Interesting stories like this hold an audience, so that an important issue that might otherwise have gone unnoticed or ignored, will have been absorbed by everyone in the room.

The Delivery

Relevant stories help to give your speech a vibrant feel, but the key to carrying an audience with you throughout a 10, 20 or 60 minute presentation is to be found in the very delivery of the material itself. Textbook advice on speechmaking usually confines itself to "Keep your head high and look them straight in the eye" - but a great delivery involves much more.

Preparation allows you to take the greatest single step towards giving your speech a truly "live" feel – leaving your notes behind. Only now will your presentation take on the true conversational style that is so enthralling. Your audience will hang on your every word as you produce interesting stories, props, and ideas, all relevant and logically placed, but seemingly coming "straight from the hip."

In my view, it follows that there is no place in a live talk for the standard "Powerpoint presentation." Powerpoint is a prop and should be used as such, brought out only if it can dramatically bolster your message with an unforgettable picture or chart.

Indeed, a confident delivery will include a copious amount of relevant props – props that interest and props that give credibility to you or your business. We can all remember as children visiting a local magic show and being enthralled as the magician enchanted us with trick after trick. The words helped, but it was the props that ensured our eyes never strayed from his act.

The magician also knew the power of interacting with his audience, and you should do so too. Nothing galvanizes attention quite like

the knowledge that at any moment you could be in the spotlight, and your "live" performance should bring with it that energy.

Avoiding the Big Freeze

'Who am I? Why am I here?' These were the only words that no lesser man than Admiral Stockdale could conjure up when famously 'freezing' during the US Vice presidential debate in 1992 in front of 100 million American viewers

Fear of the Big Freeze is the one thing that keeps most business people rooted to their seats when the opportunity to shine in a presentation presents itself. Yet I have found a few little tricks that will keep you in control.

As always, preparation is the key. If things are going to go wrong, they will do so right from the start. Do not ever get up to speak if you have not already stood on the spot from where you will present. It is amazing how disorienting it can be to leap up from the audience and turn to face them when you blood is running fast. Muhammad Ali accredits many of his first round knockouts to the freezing of his opponents, scared not of him but bewildered by the environment.

Knowing that it is the opening minutes that are the dangerous ones, have your first three minutes taped – rehearsed to the point where you can deliver them whatever your state of mind. And should you ever get stuck, have an story or joke ready to fill in the few seconds you need for your brain to return to your aid. Ali shows us the way here. He trained himself to recognise when he had been knocked cold and actually went into an "autopilot" routine that allowed him to remain standing and protect himself while his brain recovered. If Ali could cover up being knocked senseless with the whole world watching, we in our speeches can surely conceal a lapse of memory.

And Finally!

If there is a secret to successful presenting, it lies in full preparation. One of my abiding memories of school is of a maths lesson where I was just quietly drifting away, gazing out of the window, only to be rudely awakened by the teacher demanding the answer from me to a question I had not heard. For a long time I blamed myself for my poor concentration. But today, I have the consolation that my teacher simply did not know how to hold his audience.

BNI's Relatively Amazing

When Newbury Chapter member Lynn Malcher decided to attend a BNI workshop seminar 50 miles away in Hemel Hempstead, she had no idea of the mystical forces at work in BNI that day, nor how they were about to reunite her with a long lost relative!

During the seminar, Lynn had a "strange feeling" about a member from Henley Chapter and felt inexplicably drawn to her. On introducing herself, Lynn was surprised to find that her new acquaintance, Ann Carroll, had the same surname as her own maiden name.

"We talked for some time and I explained to Ann how, when I first saw her, I'd felt there was some connection between us. Ann decided it would be a good idea for me to talk to her husband – she was his second wife – thinking there was a chance he and I might be related," said Lynn.

"When I got home that evening, I phoned him and discovered to my amazement that he was my second cousin, Clifford, who'd emigrated to Australia many years ago." Lynn met Clifford soon afterwards and was able to put him in touch with several other family members whom he had never expected to see again. "I'm still amazed at how this has come about," said Lynn. "I think it's wonderful that BNI was responsible for re-uniting us after such a long time."

Meanwhile, BNI is also responsible for an equally unlikely long-distance family reunion involving Edgware Chapter member Alan Gold. He was staying with his daughter in Israel over the New Year period, when one of his friends, Jeremy Wallach, invited him to fill the 10-minute presentation slot at his Chapter in Ra'anana, near Tel Aviv.

"I'd introduced Jeremy to BNI soon after its launch in Israel, and he was keen for his members to get an international perspective on BNI. On the way to the meeting, Jeremy asked if I had heard of someone called Matty Eines – a member in his Chapter – and I told him I had a cousin of that name, but I'd lost touch with him over 20 years ago.

"I couldn't believe my eyes when we pulled into the car park and I found it was the same Matty, now a chartered accountant and also Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter. We had an emotional reunion, followed by a very happy family evening a couple of days later. Now my children, always eager for family contact, have new cousins to keep in touch with. This was a most welcome piece of added value from BNI," said Alan.

Lynn can be reached on 01635 200 044, while Alan can be contacted on 020 8909 2244

Put it in writing!

When you next give a testimonial for one of your chapter colleagues, why not put it in writing? That's the very sensible suggestion from marketing consultancy boss, T.J. Toma who told SuccessNet: "Everyone treasures quality testimonials, because they are a precious commodity when promoting your business. I'd like to see BNI encourage written testimonials which could be presented during the meeting, perhaps in a plastic wallet with duplicate copies, enabling the recipient to use them in marketing his or her services. T.J., a member of Stockport 2 Chapter added: "It would take little extra effort, but could be worth a great deal more than a mere verbal compliment during the chapter meeting." We agree.

MOUNTAIN



Sam's going to the top – she hopes!

Intrepid Northamptonshire businesswoman Samantha Clarke (pictured above) is preparing to trek through the highest mountains in Spain – including the 11,500 feet Mulhacen in the Sierra Nevada – to raise money for one of her favourite charities, Barnardos.

And the even better news for Sam is that with more than four months to go before she departs for Trek Andalucia 2002 in October, she has already achieved her original sponsorship target of £1,000, and hopes to double this during the summer, thanks largely to her colleagues in BNI's Daventry Chapter.

"The support they have given me is fantastic," said Sam, who runs Daventry-based Total Event Solutions. "So many colleagues have offered their time and donations including Richard Burkimsher, Ann Goodman-Smith, and Dawn Brannigan. I've even received help from a member of another BNI group, Peter Jones of the Collingtree Chapter in Northants."

To top it all, prospective BNI member Russell Waters, the General Manager of the Hellidon Lakes Hotel has given Sam six months free membership of their newly refurbished gym, even putting together a personal training plan to ensure she is fully fit for the ascent!

Samantha Clarke can be contacted on 0870 751 8805 or 07714 237 347.

BNI members seem to have head for heights – especially when embarking on ambitious charity. Barely an issue of SuccessNet without at least one intrepid member trekking or climbing boots. It takes four such feats to recount the very tired limbs....

The world's highest

Unless someone knows of a way to have passed a referral, we believe the photo below is the highest referral.

BNI husband and wife, Samantha Clarke, members of the Northamptonshire and Daventry Chapters respectively, are preparing to trek to the Base Camp – some 17,500 feet high.

All three were there on a fund-raising trek for Hope for the World, a charity that builds homes for people who have lost their homes through natural disaster or war. The trek, which followed the climb to the summit, followed the climb to the summit, followed the climb to the summit.

Paul, a director of Corporate Communications, were constant new challenges at night down to minus amounts of air to breathe. At base camp, there is only 5% of the oxygen normally available when living at sea level.

Amanda, who is used to an executive coaching business, said: "As if the altitude, the physical exertion weren't enough."



MADNESS?

more than the average ally when it comes to mountain treks for charity. SuccessNet appears without member donning his or her s, and this time, we have – involving six pairs of

ghest referral

wo astronauts in BNI who hile circling the Earth, ow confirms the world's

team Amanda and Paul Rossett and Knutsford ctured giving a referral to n Bailey at Mount Everest t above sea level!

a gruelling three-week nd Homes for Children, a for children around the uses and families through ek, involving considerable ic route taken by those rld's highest mountain.

Chester-based Promote told SuccessNet: "There es included temperatures 15C and ever reducing we got higher. Nearing % of the oxygen we nor- ose to sea level."

aling the heights running ness, Optimum Training, treme cold and the phys- getting used to the local



And you thought all accountants were just the same?

HATS OFF to high flyer David Watson from Corby chapter who single-handedly raised almost £10,500 for the British Heart Foundation by recently completing a 100 kilometre trek to the top of the 12,100 feet Korchen Peak in the Himalayas. A partner in the Kettering offices of chartered accountants Grant Thornton, David is pictured (below) on Fishtail Mountain, Nepal during his fund-raising trip.

He can be contacted on 07971 177 746



diet of daily garlic vegetable curries was an interesting experience. If you couldn't stomach the continual diet of curry, which also meant sampling the local toilet facilities (or rather the lack of them) on a frequent basis, then the only alternative was surviving on Pringles and Mars Bars!

Now safely back home, having jointly (with the 35 other trekkers) helped to raise over £100,000 for charity, the world's highest BNI referral team is looking for a company to sponsor their colourful talk about the fund-raising trip.

Anyone interested should call Amanda on 0800 731 7472 or Paul on 01244 401 811

Simon's Vietnam adventure

Ashby-de-la-Zouch member Simon Bozeat can be forgiven for missing a couple of recent chapter meetings: he's recently completed a 300-mile charity cycle ride up and down the mountains and valleys of Vietnam!

Management consultant Simon took on the challenge to raise money for the mental health charity, MIND, along with 85 others from across the UK who between them raised an astonishing £200,000.

"Vietnam is an astonishing country full of contrasts, especially its unpredictable weather. But the most enduring memory was a refreshing head long dive into the South China Sea after a 100k ride that started at 6am and took in some of the most breathtaking scenery I've experienced," he said.

Simon Bozeat can be contacted on 01684 567 500

Here we go – Tokyo!

"A-h, so! Velly funny. You ty'ing to take mickey out of honorable Yapanese custom?" In fact, far from being offended, members of Liverpool's Midas Chapter were highly amused when asked to wear Japanese bandanas at a recent meeting – for the best of business reasons, naturally.

Midas member Steve Andrew and his business colleague Frazer Herald, from the nearby Ellesmere Port Chapter joined forces to give a 10-minute presentation on their company, Document Office Services Ltd, whose sales incentive to top performers is a trip to the World Cup in Tokyo this summer.

"We thought that asking everyone to wear bandanas, would add to the flavour of the occasion," said Frazer.

Frazer and Steve still have to make up some ground if they hope to be on the plane to Tokyo this June.

So, keep your eyes on the ball, Midas and Ellesmere Port members, and get more business coming in for Steve and Frazer. Who knows, they might even bring you authentic bandanas back from Japan – if you help them get there!

Steve & Frazer can be contacted on 0151 356 8800



Referrals in flow at Godalming – quite literally!

It must be one of BNI's most picturesque venues – and it's certainly the wettest! Which is why, whenever it rains heavily the night before a meeting, members of Godalming Chapter add a pair of Wellington boots to their early-morning kit list.

Since launching 18 months ago, the Chapter has met in the Farncombe Boathouse on the bank of the flood-prone River Wey and, while members wouldn't trade their scenic location for the usual hotel, they've grown wise to planning for the odd watery BNI breakfast after a heavy downpour.

Retiring Chapter Director John Roberts from AKP Financial Services said: "Locals know that the River Wey can overflow its banks during prolonged wet weather, but the boathouse location is so pleasant for most of the year that we don't mind if we are occasionally under a bit of water."

Does your Chapter meet in an unusual venue – or perhaps you've held one or more breakfast meetings in unlikely locations? If so, tell us about it, and we'll feature your Chapter in SuccessNet.



Stars in Their BN – Eyes!

While the Brits were collecting their BAFTAs and Hollywood was preening itself for the annual Oscars, BNI members across North West London were celebrating their own star performances a few weeks ago, at the region's first annual awards dinner.

Some 200 members and guests from 24 chapters dined and danced at the Bell House Hotel, Beaconsfield last month and watched their top performers collect appropriately star-shaped trophies for notable networking and exceptional referrals during the last year. This included a posthumous Notable Networker award to Richard Jennings, Barnet's much loved scrapmetal merchant.

Each participating chapter had nominated a star performer and notable networker of the year from their members and our congratulations go to all 48 nominees who received awards. But the real stars were Enfield Chapter's Norma Morris, who took the Notable Networker of the Year trophy and Stanmore

Chapter's Andrew Rhodes, who won the Notable Referral of the Year award.

In the weeks leading up to the dinner, each of the region's chapters had been asked to choose one member to take part in a 'Showdown Contest' to find the best 60-second presenter. In the end it was no contest with dentist Anthony Rosenfeld, Stanmore Chapter, (pictured below) from the Rose Garden Dental Practice in Kingsbury, North



Anthony Rosenfeld can be contacted on 020 8204 5000

London getting the unanimous vote for first prize, ahead of runner-up Ian McMellin, Surveyor, Watford Chapter.

Anthony is a dentist with a difference. He asked his audience how many of them wished they were somewhere else when they sat in their dentist's chair, and then, donning virtual reality glasses, he promised them:

"Using these, you can be anywhere you'd like to be! My patients take in a movie, enjoy a video travelogue or watch their favourite TV quiz show. Mrs Davis watched Goran Ivanisevic win Wimbledon while having a filling, and Mr Griffiths laughed through two episodes of Fawlty Towers during his root canal treatment. If you only have the crack on your dentist's ceiling to look at, perhaps you need to be somewhere else!"

"The event was a great success, despite some guests inadvertently setting off the fire alarms by blowing out all the candles on their table. But not even half an hour outside in the cold dampened our spirits. We'll definitely be back next year!" said National Director Gillian Lawson.

Striking gold north of the border!

Scottish members have struck gold ten times over in recent months, equalling their Sassenach colleagues when it comes to qualifying for membership of BNI's prestigious Gold Club.

Of the 20 new members who gained gold badges in the first few months of this year, no less than half came from chapters north of the border.

The new Scottish Gold Club entrants are: Catherine Begg, Edinburgh West; Chris Chirnside, Edinburgh Pentlands; Richmond Clelland, Strathkelvin; Susanna Freedman, Edinburgh Pentlands; Tom London, Edinburgh Central; Stephen McFadyen, Uddingston; Kevin Roach, Falkirk; Mark Thirgood, West Lothian; Jim Vetrino, Edinburgh Central and Martin Walker, Strathkelvin Chapter.

The 'top ten' from south of the border are: Tracy Barlow, Oldham 1; Nick Gordon, Sutton; Phil Hopkins, Leeds North (Tuesday); Bob Marks, Leeds Armouries (Tuesday); Steve Morris, Wakefield Sandal; Snehal Rabheru, Stockport Hatters; Jenni Rankin, Wakefield Sandal; Colin Stone, (Holborn); Ewan Sturman, Echo and Jeremy Way of Croydon Chapter. Sutton Chapter Director Nick Gordon received his badge after signing up no less than 11 visitors as members at a single meeting.

We hear about many new Gold Badge recipients, but there are some whose achievements are not recognised. So, don't forget to tell us when any member(s) of your Chapter are awarded Gold Club status.

Dave's a real 'tough guy'

No wonder BNI member Dave Griffiths is wearing a proud smile... So would most men after being presented with a 'Tough Guy' Medal for endurance in the field! For David however, completing the exhausting 'Tough Guy Challenge 2002' had an even more rewarding outcome; with sponsorship from his Warrington Chapter colleagues, his feat helped raise more than £1,000 for the Breast Cancer Campaign.

Dave and six friends (one of whose wife was a victim of breast cancer) took part in the gruelling cross-country challenge in the Staffordshire hills. His team won the right to start near the front in next year's event – and their 'Tough Guy' medals – by finishing the course in under four hours.

Thirty-one year old Dave, a director of Sharples Office Automation Group with members in Warrington, Chester, Stockport and Manchester chapters, reckons that BNI has been great for their

photo-copying and printing equipment business, and he praised chapter colleagues for their charity sponsorship which helped him raise £400 of the team's £1,000-plus. "It was tough going but I am proud we managed to complete the course in good time. We've already got the application forms in for next year's event."

David can be reached on 07775 841 925 or 01772 458 811.



Tough guy Dave Griffiths displays his medal

Substitute For A Racing Cert!

Gary Rokenson, the financial advisor in BNI's Aldwych Chapter, central London, would never fail to mention during his 60-second slot that, more than anything else, he wanted to meet Formula One's latest driving sensation, Jensen Button.

It was a weekly plea which seemed destined to fall on deaf ears – not least those of fellow member Josephine Bacon, who understandably thought that running a busy translation company, would never lead to a contact with the Grand Prix star.

But in BNI, you never know what's just around the corner, and Josephine was about to find out when she volunteered to substitute for a colleague

at a meeting of the nearby Aldgate Chapter.

A visitor that week was Charlotte Provan of PRI, who manages Neil Dorran, a Formula Four driver. On the remote off-chance, Josephine asked Charlotte if she knew Jensen Button. "I don't, but Neil's father and Jensen's father know each other well," replied Charlotte. "I'll put you in touch!"

Which is how, the following morning at her own Chapter meeting, Josephine was able to proudly stand up and bring a happy closure to Gary's forlorn weekly appeal. "I really thought I would be the last person in the world to make Gary's dream referral come true," she said.

Double Scoop for Kent members

Two BNI members from Kent have notched up a notable double at the prestigious Institute of Videography (IOV) Awards 2002, both gaining prizes in the new media category of the competition, which attracted entries



from over 2,000 videographers worldwide.

Peter Snell, a member of Rochester Chapter, submitted a fully authored DVD promoting the wedding videos made by his company, PJS Productions, and he plans to use his resulting outright victory to launch a new multi-camera wedding movie service. "Customers will get feature film style DVDs, including many of the bonus features associated with Hollywood products," he said.

PJS also produces specialist medical videos, one of which is now being studied by surgeons worldwide who want to adopt the specific UK-pioneered medical techniques.

Peter is pictured with Tom Sowler and Norma Medlock of Samron Technologies, (sponsors of the New Media awards), mean-

while Mike Hughes, from Westerham Chapter received his third place award for an interactive training CD "Drink and Drug Free," produced by his company, PIC Productions for Coca Cola's UK operation, CCE. Mike won the prestigious Coca-Cola account through a Chapter referral.

"CCE has a very high reputation to maintain and wants all its employees to be fully aware of the company's tough but fair policy on alcohol and drugs abuse," said Mike.

"Its executives originally wanted a video but I suggested interactive CD, so we could combine video footage with overhead projectors and documents to provide a comprehensive and consistent message to be relayed to staff at all levels of the company."

Peter can be contacted on 01634 723 838 and Mike can be reached on 01959 576 255

Flower Power rules in Ipswich

Many chapters boast a florist among their membership, but how many of them have had their breakfast meetings turned into something resembling a florist's shop – all to make maximum impact during the 10-minute presentation spot?

Ipswich florist Rob Dunger was determined to make his major promotional slot memorable, taking along three of his team of florists with bucketfuls of flowers and all the paraphernalia needed to show his colleagues in Wolsey Chapter, that flower arranging and bouquet-making is a highly skilled art.

In a take off of the popular 'Ready Steady Cook' TV series, eager BNI volunteers tangled themselves in a colourful array of roses, sunflowers, lilies and carnations as they helped Rob's professionals from Tower Florists assemble two magnificent hand-

tied bouquets, guided with a brief explanation of the techniques from Rob.

Stephanie Earthroll from In View Publicity and NatWest bank manager Nigel Parsons produced two beautiful bouquets (with a little assistance), and Stephanie was awarded hers as the door prize, with the other auctioned to an appreciative fellow member.

"Ordering flowers should be a magical experience," said Rob. "Neither the customer nor the recipient need know what work goes into creating their order, but BNI members should know as much as they can about my business before acting as my ambassadors! That's why I decided to take my shop to the meeting, and introduce colleagues to the backroom skills we use."

Rob Dunger can be contacted on 01473 230 436.



All Credit to BNI

Hundreds of students are to be given the chance to gain the Institute of Credit Management qualification, thanks to a new alliance forged 'out of the blue' between two members of Liverpool's Alpha Chapter.

The breakthrough came after Lynne Mills of Credit Management & Training Services picked up on a point made by Andy Bounds of ATC (NW) Ltd during one of his weekly 60-second infomercials earlier this year. ATC are accountancy training specialists and Andy had mentioned the professional accountancy exam courses that they run throughout their twelve offices across the country.

Lynne, who specialises in debt-related training courses, but had no professional training body for the large number of Institute of Credit Management students in the North-West, asked Andy if he would be interested in developing an appropriate course with the ICM.

"Within five weeks the Institute had given their clearance for the courses to go ahead," said Lynne. "I can't believe it's all happened so fast. ATC's reputation is exceptional, so we are expecting excellent results. Within about 18 months we should have around 100 students on the course, and what makes it particularly attractive is that ATC is the only organisation offering weekend training for these students. The courses should be worth in the region of £15,000 to ATC in the first year, rising to around £50,000 p.a."

Andy Bounds can be contacted on 0151 708 8852, while Lynne Mills is on 0151 632 2038.



Delivering BNI's message across Strathclyde

While all members are encouraged to wear their lapel pins with pride as they go about their business, Glasgow carpet fitter Gary Scott has gone one better

and splashed his BNI membership all over his big white van!

Although Gary joined the Strathkelvin Chapter barely 12 months ago, he is an ardent



advocate for BNI which, he says, already accounts for up to 15% of his booming business, Carpet Fitting Services.

"I'd only been in the Chapter a few weeks when I decided that belonging to such a well-established professional organisation would add value and credibility to my own business – so I commissioned fellow member Pauline Hainey of Signarama to put BNI's logo and contact details on the sides of my van."

Gary added: "There are lots of cowboy carpet fitters driving around in rusty old vans. Being able to put BNI's name and website on my vehicle makes it stand out from the rest. Quite a few people have stopped me to ask what BNI does – as a result of which I've invited them along to

my chapter and seen a few of them join over the past year."

In the true spirit of Givers Gain, Gary has also acted as a substitute for business colleagues in other Strathclyde chapters, and on one such occasion – when he visited the Falkirk group – his commitment was repaid with an immediate £17,000 contract.

Linda Maclean, Executive Director for Scotland South and East, said: "I am very pleased for Gary who epitomises the BNI philosophy, giving many good referrals and gaining solid business in return."

The Strathkelvin Chapter meets every Friday at Smiths Hotel, Kirkintilloch, near Glasgow.

Gary can be contacted on 0141 563 1825 or 07050 054 104.

Going that extra mile - or 550!

While many BNI members take it upon themselves to visit and support other chapters, few if any can match the commitment of Brands Hatch Chapter's Anne Thomson.

She has just made an extraordinary 1,100-mile round-trip 'pilgrimage' from Kent to Inverness - to support the launch of Scotland's new Highland chapter.

An ex-pat Invernessian, Anne was attending last year's South-East Region Members Day at the Brands Hatch Racing Circuit, when she couldn't fail to notice Ron Hain (BNI's Executive Director for Scotland North) proudly sporting a kilt and sporran. She made a bee-line for him to ask what he was doing so far south of the border and, having been told he was there to support colleagues in southern England, she promised Ron she would fly to Scotland when BNI launched its first chapter in her home city.

Ron rewarded Anne's commitment with a Notable Networkers Badge, which will be presented to her next month in her Brands Hatch Chapter.

You can contact Anne Thomson on 01474 703586

Morris Men surprise their Stratford colleagues

Like it or loathe it, there's nothing quite like a spot of Morris dancing to set you talking for the day – so when Stratford - upon - Avon Chapter's leadership team decided to liven up proceedings, they knew they could rely on the unusual (and



little known) talents of two members.

Consequently, telemarketing specialist Nigel Dunn had a few surprises in store for unsuspecting colleagues when he came to deliver his recent 10-minute presentation. With members expecting him to talk about his business, Stour Valley Marketing, Nigel emerged from the wings in full regalia to promote not his business but his hobbies – as a member of the Ilmington Morris Men, and folk singing.

As startled colleagues listened to him playing some of the traditional musical instruments used in morris dancing – a lagerphone, Irish bodhran and a melodeon – a second 'unknown' Morris dancing

member of the Chapter, Malcolm Smith suddenly reappeared in costume to dance a classical Morris jig to Nigel's accompaniment.

"I'm sure few if any other BNI chapters have one Morris dancer, let alone two, but it's pure coincidence that both Nigel and myself belong to different Morris Men groups," said Malcolm, who when he is not running an American holiday homes franchise, is the Squire of the local Shakespeare Morris Men.

"I think the unexpected light-heartedness helped lift proceedings on a dull and wet morning, and hopefully set the Chapter up nicely for doing more serious business in the months ahead," Malcolm added. Well, it beats a talk on telemarketing, any day!

Nigel can be contacted on 07740 805 286, and Malcolm on 01789 842 96.

Nick recruits an annual £3.25m referral

Sutton Chapter recruitment specialist Nick Gordon isn't just exceptional when finding new members for his group; he's equally successful when it comes to finding business for his own company – so much so that he's just converted a £3.25m referral!

Fellow member, Ian Siddle had been impressed when Nick's company, Southern Recruitment

Ltd found some drivers for his own removals and storage business, so he introduced him to the new personnel director of Alders, the Croydon-based chain of department stores.

"Alders head office has a requirement for around 100 temporary staff a day, spread over a nine month period, mainly involving drivers, warehouse staff and fork-lift operators,"

said Nick.

"They usually spend about £3.25m a year on temporary staff, and we've already turned over a quarter of a million on their behalf, even though they are only just getting into their busy season. It looks as if things are driving along quite nicely," he added.

You can contact Nick Gordon on 0208 689 9999.



Optician's 'cure' for dyslexic homeopath leads to new treatment for eye patients

A word-blind homeopath has had her lifelong dyslexia "cured" by the eye specialist in her chapter and, in an amazing demonstration of Givers Gain in action, she is now dramatically improving the 'untreatable' eye problems of his patients.

Linda Lacome-Shaw joined the Muswell Hill Chapter just over a year ago and has been delighted with its networking opportunities – but what she hadn't expected was to find the answer to her own dyslexia – in the form of Rob Lamont, an optometrist at the local opticians, Panoptica.

Like most dyslexics, Linda had always found reading, writing and

maths difficult. After getting to know Rob at chapter meetings, she was encouraged to learn that he specialised in treating dyslexia and colour blindness, through the use of coloured lenses.

"After several hours of tests, he was able to prescribe glasses for me which have brought a huge improvement to my reading and writing abilities. If only I'd had the glasses when I was a child it would have made my school life much easier," said Linda, who now refers her appropriate patients to Rob, not only for dyslexia treatment, but also colour blindness.

However, solving Linda's problems was just the start of what has

become a rewarding cross-flow of patient-referrals between her and Rob. She said: "As a result of Rob helping me, I was able to show him how my specialty – homeopathy – could help relieve many eye conditions, including chronic blepharitis – a painful inflammation of the eyelids – for which there is no mainstream medical solution."

Rob told SuccessNet: "Until I met Linda, I didn't really think there was anything that anyone could do to help my patients with chronic eye conditions like blepharitis, but she persuaded me to send one or two of them along to her. One lady who had suffered with severe eye pain for over 40 years, showed a

huge improvement within weeks of Linda starting to treat her."

"Everyone who joins BNI hopes it will help them expand their businesses, but what has happened here is far more significant because, thanks to BNI providing the infrastructure, experts in different fields of medicine are able to share information, from which alternative treatments can be developed. It is very exciting," Rob added.

You can contact Linda Lacome-Shaw at Homeopathy for Help on 020 8883 2052 or 020 7935 0023, and Rob Lamont at Panoptica Opticians on 020 8444 9008.

Ace pilot Mary Munley



Well, What did you expect?

Winning a flying lesson is a pretty good door prize in itself – but when Newmarket Chapter founder member Sarah Charters turned up at her local airfield, she couldn't believe that colleague Mary Munley had 'arranged' for the plane to have 'BNI-F' as its call sign!

Said Sarah: "I've always wanted to fly, but when Mary offered the flying lesson as a door prize at a meeting of our Newmarket Chapter, I never thought I'd be lucky enough to win it. I couldn't

believe it when the aircraft she'd chosen for the lesson had such an appropriate call sign. It was a fantastic hour or two, and has made me even more determined to learn to fly."

Mary, a marketing consultant and accomplished pilot, admitted: "I'd like to say I fixed it as far as the aircraft's call sign was concerned, but I have to admit it was purely coincidental. However, it added to the occasion."

Mary can be contacted on 07941 322 741

Kisses all round at Valentine's Day move



Valentine's Day may be long distant, but for members of Wilmslow Chapter, this year's event will be remembered longer than most – since it marked their move to a new venue, the Stanneylands Hotel, sealed with the sounds of noisy kissing! For once, the usual breakfast noises were drowned by the sounds of repeated kissing – thanks to an initiative from Sue Fernandez, whose company (Bossco Office Supplies) had produced a special mouse-mat for each of her BNI colleagues, that made a 'kissing sound' at the touch of a button.

Stirred by so much early-morning camaraderie, some female members then treated Chapter Director Chris Slater, to an impromptu Valentine's Day kiss when, by complete coincidence, Chapter photographer Peter Fletcher was on hand to capture the moment!

Bolton honours high performers

Six members of Bolton's two chapters have received 'top performer' awards from Executive Director Rod Sloane, presented at their first joint dinner and awards ceremony.

Bolton Chapter's David Haywood said: "The previous year we held a dinner for our own chapter but felt it would be more fun this time to double the numbers by inviting our neighbouring Bolton Metro Chapter. More than 80 people attended and we had a superb evening."

Prior to the event, members of both chapters had voted to find their best overall performers of the year and they, together with the members of each chapter who had passed the most referrals and brought the most visitors in the year, all received awards on the night.

When it comes to making memorable 10-minute presentations, members appreciate the value of that old adage: 'Tell me and I'll listen; show me and I'll remember, but involve me and I'll understand.'

Rob Duce and Geoff Appleton are Liverpool business associates who have proved that involving chapter colleagues in their 10-minute slots can reap dividends – and that it's not really what you say or do that counts, it's the way that you do it!

On average, each member has the chance to give a ten-minute presentation every six months and it's undoubtedly the best opportunity you'll have to put your message across and make a lasting impression on fellow members and guests.

Whatever you do, or say, during those 10 minutes will either be

remembered for a long time afterwards and bring its own rewards, or be forgotten long before the end of the meeting – having proved a waste of time and effort. So it's worth putting in the maximum amount of thought and planning to ensure that everyone who leaves the meeting goes away with you on their minds.

Rob Duce, better known as "The Sushi Man" runs the sushi-making company, Sushi San, and when his turn came to address colleagues in Liverpool's Delta Chapter recently, he decided the best way to initiate everyone into the Japanese equivalent of fast-food, was to let members try their hand at making sushi, in a 'Generation Game'-style contest.

Having brought all the ingredients with him - seaweed, rice, fillings, cucumber, fish and crabsticks - Rob first gave a demonstration of how it was done, before inviting 'volunteers' John Cook and Terry Hamill to see who could produce the best sushi, assisted by teams of

members, all attired in mob caps to stress the necessity for hygiene.

Rob, who reckons he averages around £10,000 a week turnover, and supplies sushi to major national customers including ASDA – which came from a BNI referral – and Budgens, added: "If you don't understand how something is done, then being shown – rather than just told – makes everything so clear. It also allows you to inject an element of humour and fun,

and people always remember something which made them laugh," Rob added.

While you may feel that sushi-making is so unusual it's bound to make a fascinating presentation, the same cannot be said for painting and decorating which, let's face it, hardly enthuses most people.

So when Geoff Appleton, painter and decorator from Liverpool's Jupiter Chapter, was given a few weeks notice of his 10-

'Sushi man' Rob Duce prepares to introduce colleagues to Japanese fast food.



Eight good reasons for joining & staying with BNI

John Leach is a Past Director of Leeds Armouries (Thursday) Chapter, whose numbers he helped swell to 40-plus during his time in office last year. A typically forthright Yorkshireman, he has some clear ideas on how BNI works for its members – and about why every member should value his or her place at the weekly breakfast table. Here, he summarises that value in eight simple reasons for joining and staying with BNI....

Why do we join BNI? And, having become members of the world's largest business networking organisation, what is it about BNI that makes us stay, year after year?

The fact that relatively few members willingly relinquish their chapter chairs suggests that BNI's overriding philosophy of 'Givers Gain' was spot on when introduced to the world by Dr Ivan Misner in 1985, and it remains the driving force behind everything else we do in BNI.

So this gives us the first good reason for joining, and remaining with BNI, but it also made

me think about some other equally persuasive reasons for membership. I've managed to condense what I regard as the main benefits into eight key reasons. See what you think:

1. Referrals

This is why we all come to BNI meetings - to give and receive business.

2. Trust

Because we meet regularly, we are able to build the trust & confidence in the services and products which our fellow members provide. We are also accountable to each other.

3. Service and business contacts

We come into contact with not only members of our group, but members of other groups and the guests we all bring from time to time.

4. Education

Through the education slot and BNI's many training courses we learn about networking. We also learn about each other's businesses, and the highs and lows they encounter.

5. Support

Through BNI we are all able to support each

other. The contacts which we are given are generally prepared through BNI. The organisation opens doors that many of us may have been trying unsuccessfully to enter for years.

6. Camaraderie

Social contact, humour, regular meeting, building of relationships and friendships all assist in strengthening the chapter, and its individual members, helping us to obtain more referrals.

7. Confidence

We all develop confidence in each other by receiving good quality feedback from satisfied clients and customers.

8. Presentations

Through the 60 second presentation slot we firstly improve our presentation skills about our business and secondly, learn to understand our business better so that we can present and explain it more effectively to others.

I'm sure that within my own chapter alone, my colleagues could find another eight, 16 or 24 good reasons for BNI membership, but these must surely rank as some of the most important.

it's the way you do it!

Collingtree gets "fab" website

Geoff Appleton built the wall to demonstrate his decorating skills



minute slot, he was so worried about putting his colleagues to sleep around the breakfast table, that he consulted Rob for advice on finding a lively format.

"I was quite anxious about it. There isn't much to talk about in my trade, and I didn't want to bore everybody," said Geoff, "Rob suggested that rather than just stand and talk, I should do something practical to demonstrate my skills in a more memorable way. I came up with the idea of showing every-

one the right way, and the wrong way to decorate a wall. The only problem was the lack of a spare wall at our chapter venue."

Which is where it starts to get clever. Not to be beaten, Geoff built a portable wooden wall just for the occasion, complete with a door casing and a plug socket, which he wheeled into the meeting before members started to arrive, and shrouded under the wraps to raise anticipation.

"The rest was fairly easy," Geoff

admitted. "I encouraged members to get up close so they could see what I was doing, and then I demonstrated the art of cutting paper, pasting and hanging, using a plumb-line and how to go round door casings and plugs, which is the hardest part. The result was amazing – everybody realised I knew my job, and what my job involved. It gave them more confidence in me and as a result I've started to get a lot more referrals."

There are many original and interesting ways of presenting your trade and profession, some of which have been reported in past editions of Successnet, and one or two more of which are featured in this issue. So the moral is: don't start thinking about your talk the night before - think ahead and plan to give your audience something really different that they can take home with them.

You can contact Rob Duce on 07932 160 293, and Geoff Appleton on 07774 895 325

Northampton's Collingtree Chapter has launched its own website which it hopes will attract more members to BNI from the local business community. Designed by Duncan Webster of 1PCS, it has been described by Chapter Director Julie Holdom as "fabulous, offering potential members the ultimate guide to BNI."

She added: "It's highly professional, very informative and will certainly give visitors a good impression of what we do at BNI, and the many benefits of being a member."

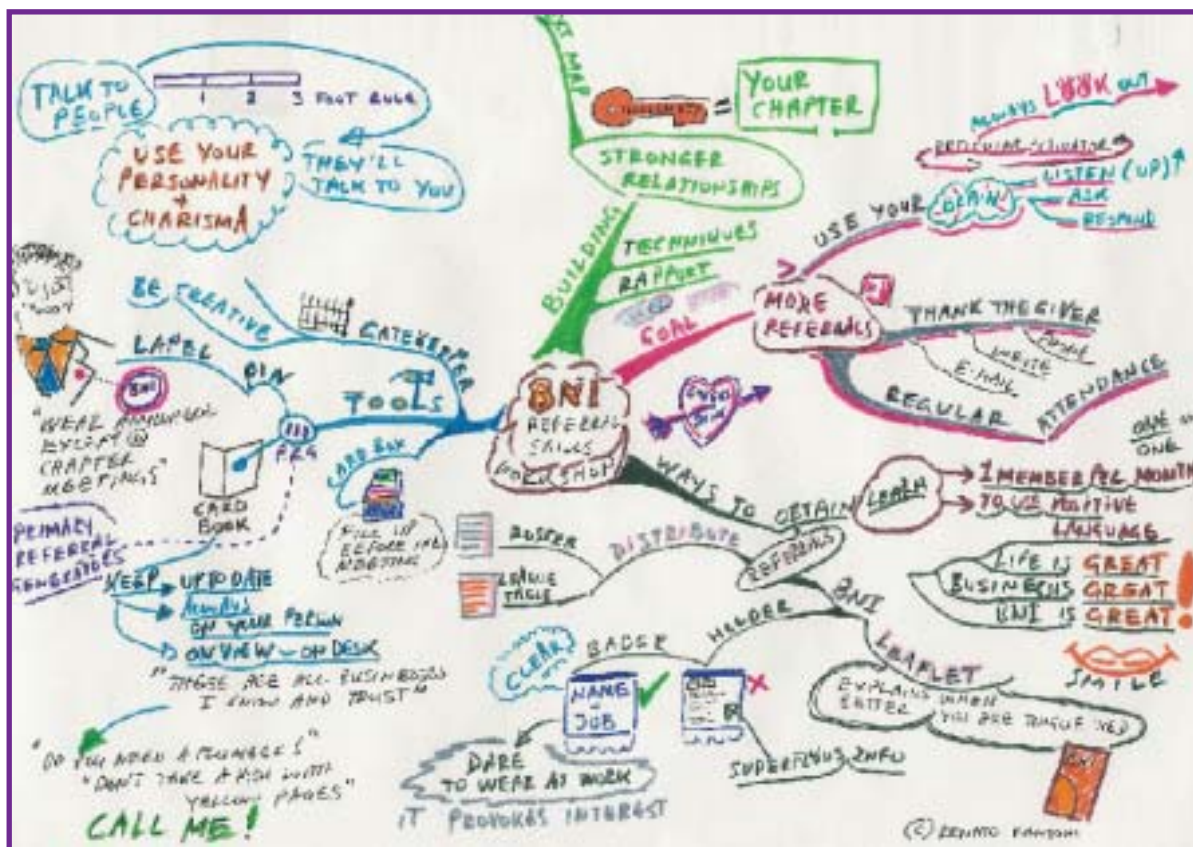
The new website address is: www.bninorthampton.co.uk

For more details call Peter Jones on 07870 687 992.



Want a better business? Then get better trained with BNI....

Renarto Fantoni, Chapter Director of Barnet produced this Mind-Map of some of the many useful things he learnt at the Referrals Workshop



From sceptic to crusader

Many would-be BNI members find themselves unable to join their local chapter because their 'chair' has already been filled by someone else in the same trade or profession. Then, their only option is to look to another chapter. Or is it? In this article, designer Tim Price explains how he and another printer/designer turned potential conflict into constructive business.



Maurice Rapson (left) now works closely with Tim Price

Architect Bill's 'house of referrals'

East Manchester architect Bill Jennings is out to beat his own newly-established record for the most referrals passed by a single member at one meeting. Fellow members of Tameside Chapter watched in amazement as he handed out not 10, nor 20, but a staggering 31 referrals – earning himself a coveted Blue Badge.

Bill readily acknowledged a stroke of good fortune in obtaining most of the referrals from a single source. "My company, Jennings Design Associates had designed a housing estate, and for some reason the estate agents only put our name on the advertising hoardings as the contact for would-be purchasers of the houses and flats when they went up for sale," he said.

"Consequently I was inundated with enquiries from prospective purchasers, so naturally, when I'd discussed their requirements, I also asked whether they needed a mortgage or a solicitor, a decorator or someone to fit new appliances. As a result I ended up

with about 25 referrals during one week and, added to the five or six I normally come up with, I went along to breakfast with a healthy total of 31."

Having been a member of BNI for just a year, Bill is quick to point out that it's not all one-way traffic. "My colleagues quickly learnt what sort of referrals I am looking for and it's good to know they're looking out to help my business every week.

"I like the fact that everyone is there with one aim in mind – to help everybody else. It's also reassuring to know I can rely on my fellow members to provide me with good services when I need them."

Alistair MacDonald, Executive Director for South Pennines is highly impressed by Bill's achievements. "He's a tremendous networker. I gave him the blue badge for his 31 referrals in one week, most of which came to fruition within a very short time."

Contact Bill Jennings on 0161 336 5011

When I was introduced to the concept of BNI some 18 months ago, I have to admit I was sceptical. Apart from finding the prospect of standing up and talking about my business a little daunting, I thought I would find it hard to produce a regular amount of referrals for fellow members.

But, having been too complacent for too long, and allowed my Godalming-based design business to become far too reliant on one large London customer, I needed to do something to find more clients – and more local ones. So with the attitude nothing ventured, nothing gained, I went along to visit my local Godalming chapter which had only recently been formed.

I could immediately see the benefits. They seemed like a nice bunch and it was exciting to see those referrals being handed out. But there was a sticking point. I was there spouting on about design and print and one of the existing members, Maurice Rapson of Downland Reprographics stood up and did exactly the same. Here we had a potential conflict. Should I just walk away, or could it be resolved?

Fortunately, after the meeting, it was explained to me that chapters look to find separate businesses to fill the design and printing positions, and that there should be no problem with my sitting alongside Maurice. We agreed that I would solely represent design, and put my printwork over to Downland wherever possible, with Maurice promoting only his print services,

and putting some design work over to my company, The Right Impression.

I have to admit though that there were doubts on both sides as to whether it would work. Neither of us could be sure about the quality of each other's work, or whether each other's pricing structures would be competitive enough to vie with our existing suppliers. Looking back now over the past few months neither of us need have worried.

The business relationship between the two companies has really thrived through BNI, to the point where the other members think we're joined at the hip. They call us the 'mutual appreciation society' but it's a mutual appreciation that has been mutually earned. Downland turned out to be just the kind of printer I had been looking for – reliable, flexible and competitive with a real desire to offer some of the best customer service that I had yet experienced. In return they have supplied The Right Impression with a steady flow of work.

In BNI, they say you have to tell other members exactly what business you want, and that way you'll get it. I wanted to get more local business, and here we are, just over a year since I joined Godalming Chapter, and I've cut the days I spend in London to just a few a month. Thanks to BNI we're getting there. I like Thursday mornings!

Contact Tim Price at The Right Impression on 01483 418763, and Maurice Rapson at Downland Reprographics 01243 576 576.

Your SuccessNet Team

SuccessNet is published quarterly and distributed free of charge by BNI plc to all members. Additional copies can be obtained by writing to or calling the BNI National Office at: BNI House, Church Street, Rickmansworth WD3 1BS, UK Tel: +44 (0) 1923- 891999 Fax: +44 (0) 1923- 891998 Email: bniuk@bni.com www.bni-europe.com

Executive Editor: Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director

Design and Artwork: Damon Segal, Action Graphic International, Tel: 020 8954 1813 Email: design@agi.co.uk

Editor: Malcolm Grosvenor, WriteAngle Communications, New House, Palmer Crescent, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2QT Tel: 020 8541 600 Fax: 020 8546 1611 Email: successnet@write-angle.co.uk

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

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