

Open Wide!
What ever you need to communicate to BNI and business colleagues, you'll do it better with Olwyn Jack's help.
See Page 10



Our exciting new WebRing will hugely enhance the business potential of every member, creating a borderless BNI web community across Europe. You can join it now.

See Page 5 for full detail



Plus:

• Women, women every where! Over half of the Cambridge Trinity Chapter are females. Find out why.

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• Double trouble in Yorkshire? Hardly!

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• I'll hook'em you cook'em!

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THE 2002 CHAPTER BUILDING DRIVE

WE'RE MAKING MOVIES!

And you're all invited to be stars

Lights, Camera, Action...BNI is making movies – and every member is invited to become a star, at the same time helping your chapter to become permanently stronger and more successful.

During October and November all UK & Ireland members are being encouraged to build better business for themselves by building bigger chapters, for which the reward is a unique chance to take part in "Film 2002 – BNI The Movie".

To participate in "Film 2002", which will see every qualifying chapter given the fantastic opportunity to make and retain its own high-quality promotional video, all that chapters have to do is attract six or more new members over the designated nine-week period – from 1st October until 30th November.

Every successful group will then be invited to choose six of its members to join a regional teambuilding 'fun day' when, under the expert guidance of professional film makers, they will have fun, scripting, casting, directing and producing their own movie – creating a marketing video, for their chapter's exclusive use.

To give the chapter development drive even more

appeal, each regional film-making event will culminate in members judging each other's completed videos to choose a single "BNI...The Movie" which will go forward to be judged against other regional winners in a BNI version of 'The Oscars' by BNI's Founder Dr Ivan Misner.

National Director Martin Lawson says the initiative offers every chapter a "win, win opportunity" and he expects a very significant number of chapters to qualify for the valuable prize of creating their own movies.

"Whatever the current size of your Chapter, gaining six or more new members will hugely benefit your group, adding valuable new business categories to make you more effective, or simply replacing ineffective contributions.

"We all know that bigger chapters make the referral process so much easier, but 'big for big's sake' is not the way ahead. The aim of this chapter development initiative is to create bigger, better chapters driven by effective teamwork which will then generate even better business. It is all about growth together with teamwork, and local directors will be stressing this twin approach throughout the two month campaign," Martin added.

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BEAT THAT! Six-week Sam Segal with his first referral slip

First referral for six-week old Sam!

"Who says I'm too young to be giving my first business referral!?" So says (or might have said) BNI's youngest honorary member, baby Sam Segal whose first referral was handed by Dad to NatWest's Hemel Hempstead business manager David Elinor at a meeting of the Watford Chapter last month.

Sam's proud father, Damon Segal said: "I wanted him to open his first bank account as soon as possible. He was just six weeks old when we passed the referral to David, so he didn't have time to spend his birthday gifts which are now safely tucked away in the bank."

A HOLY TRINITY IN CAMBRIDGE?

There is something quite unusual about Cambridge's newest BNI chapter: half of its members are female and, with the exception of its Director, women dominate its leadership team.

Assistant Director Tim Gale alerted SuccessNet to the pleasing but rare phenomenon in the city's fledgling Trinity Chapter which, only a month after its launch in July, boasted 29 members – of whom 15 are female. He said: "It may not quite be the holy trinity, but it's a near perfect alliance in terms of its membership."

Membership Co-ordinator Claire Bunting said: "I'm not sure why women are so well represented in this chapter, but it may be something to do with the fact that in Cambridge a high percentage of smaller, entrepreneurial businesses are run by women. It has certainly given the new group a wonderful balance in terms of personality, and I'm sure better business will flow from it as a result. "Women bring a very different approach to

business. Where most men go for a direct approach and the hard sell, I think many women look for more rounded solutions to solving problems. BNI's Givers Gain philosophy is ideal for female members," added Claire, who runs a graphic design and media studio.

Her views were echoed by the Chapter's Education Co-ordinator Caroline Munson who, as a professional life coach, understands the psychology of business and the different strategies employed by men and women in pursuing new business. "Times have changed in the workplace over the past couple of decades, which means that traditional roles have also changed. I am quite sure our male BNI colleagues feel no threat from us.

"The days when men saw women in the workplace as unwelcome rivals have long gone. We don't see ourselves as 'women in business' with a point to prove; we are simply in business to make a living and hopefully enjoy it along the way."

Chapter Director David Stout is delighted to preside over such a



A PERFECT BALANCE: Members of Cambridge's Trinity Chapter

well-balanced group. "Our chapter buzzes with energy and enthusiasm and our ladies are very creative, especially in their 60-second presentations, making a highly effective contribution. Last month, both our leading provider of referrals and the person who brought the most visitors, were female members. Apart from myself, the leadership team is all-female and everything runs smoothly. I wouldn't change a thing."

Nor would the other men,

according to Caroline. "I've heard it said from more than one or two sources, that the men in our chapter look forward to their breakfasts in the company of so many females. It seems to be a case of the more, the merrier," she added. "Certainly, visitors to our chapter are immediately struck by our fantastic camaraderie."

If you know anyone who is interested in joining any of BNI's East Anglia chapters, call Tim Gale on 0808 144 0176



Pinner right on the pin to win

You could tell where members of Pinner Chapter had spent much of their time over the preceding months – on the golf course!

Such was the ease of their Chapter's victory in the fourth annual BNI golf day for northern home counties members, with Pinner cruising to take the team trophy, while their star player, Joe Sandercock easily emerged as the day's individual winner. Our photograph shows Joe (left) holding the trophy, alongside

team colleagues Jason Jefferys and Ian Hamblen.

More than 60 golfers from a dozen chapters took part in the event, held at Shendish Manor Golf Course, Hemel Hempstead. "It was a great day's sport and a huge amount of business networking took place, but obviously Pinner's members have too much time on their hands," said Executive Director Gillian Lawson. All the holes were sponsored by BNI members and suppliers.

Jeffrey's shop-full of referrals – literally!

While some members have to work quite hard to find good referrals for their colleagues every week, Stanmore Chapter's Jeffrey Permutt has no such difficulty: the referrals walk into his shop every day!

"A few weeks ago, I managed to hand out 30 strong referrals at a single meeting, but most weeks I expect to give at least ten or more," said Jeffrey, who runs the family household linens store, Ramels in Golders Green, and is a major supplier of towels, tablecloths and linen to hotels, restaurants and offices.

In fact, after only eight months of membership, he reckons he must have passed well over 200 solid referrals, and his weekly average is increasing. Why? Because Jeffrey is an ardent enthusiast of BNI's business training workshops and says he always picks up at least one valuable business idea from each session.

"At one workshop, I heard about

a member who kept a big sign in his outer office promoting his membership of BNI, and inviting his visitors to talk to him if they needed any of the services offered by his chapter colleagues, whose business cards were displayed on the board," he said.

"Since I have a busy High Street shop, I thought I should do the same – so I adapted my daughter's notice board, produced a simple description of what BNI is all about, pinned my chapter colleague's cards to the board and put it up next to the cash till where all my customers see it."

Jeffrey added: "Since the board went up four months ago, the referrals have flowed in – to the point where quite a few people who now come through my door, don't want to buy any of my goods – they just come to see if the service they need is on my board!"

Jeffrey Permutt can be contacted on 020 8209 1114.

BNI & THE ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GROUP A GREAT PARTNERSHIP? YOU CAN BANK ON IT!

While nearly all of the major banks are represented in BNI chapters throughout the UK and Ireland, one in particular stands out for its enthusiastic membership of BNI, and the success it is deriving from placing business managers in as many chapters as possible. SuccessNet Editor Malcolm Grosvenor talked to JASON OAKLEY, Head of Business Network Support at The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, about the significance of the long-term partnership being forged between the two organisations.

If anyone still thinks that BNI is a networking organisation purely for small to medium sized businesses, then they should talk to Jason Oakley, the Head of Business Network Support at the Royal Bank of Scotland – one of the UK's largest and most successful financial institutions following its acquisition of NatWest two years ago.

Today, the Royal Bank of Scotland Group (RBSG) has its business managers in 100 of BNI's current 380 UK and Irish chapters – far more than any other High Street bank – and such have been the benefits to the Royal Bank over the past couple of years that Oakley now describes the placing of more Group business managers in new BNI chapters as "one of my continuing challenges."

Those benefits obviously include the gaining of new business customers and increased profits, but it is the more altruistic values of BNI membership that Oakley is keen to promote, both inside the RBS Group and externally. "Obviously we are in business to have sustainable income growth, and being a member of a BNI chapter has clear advantages for our business managers. As the only representative from the banking profession, it ensures we can give and receive quality referral business before our competitors are even out of bed."

"But involvement in BNI also helps broaden our community involvement, bringing our managers even closer to the communities of which they are an integral part and increasing their network of contacts. The Group is committed to community banking – to the extent that our business managers are guaranteed in their roles for four years and based in the communities they serve," said Oakley.

"This is especially significant at a time when many of our competitors are forcibly transferring their customers onto cheaper call-centre based banking. We firmly believe that accessible, personal

relationships are a key to doing good business and providing a high standard of customer service, and our involvement in BNI complements this.

"Personal relationships are at the core of our philosophy. We see the importance of offering our customers multi-channel delivery (of services) via the phone and the Internet, as being complementary to, rather than an alternative to face-to-face relationships. Most business is founded on trust that can only be built up by developing a personal relationship, and this is why our BNI membership is so valuable," he added.

With its continually growing commitment to BNI, the Royal Bank of Scotland Group naturally monitors the results of its managers' participation in chapters across the UK, holding a central database of all its BNI members and sharing best practice through its internal communication channels.

"We know that individuals such as Tom Parry (Merseyside Alpha Chapter) and Frank Livingston (Edinburgh West) have been particularly successful in developing business through BNI and other Royal Bank managers, like Norman Jack in Stirling and Vic Bicocchi have developed particularly fruitful relationships," said Oakley. "We are keen to highlight these individuals to encourage BNI membership across the UK and also to share best practice."

An 'added value' benefit for RBS Group managers is BNI's comprehensive range of business training courses which include personal development, presentational skills, making and giving referrals, and business marketing and networking.

Jason Oakley said BNI was already playing a valuable role in helping develop networking and presentations skills amongst the Group's business relationship managers. "I believe we can gain a lot from the networking skills learned through our association with BNI. To this end we are keen to encourage our new business managers to join local chapters.

"Feedback has been broadly very positive, but we accept that BNI is not for everyone. That is why we see it as essential to get the right person for each BNI chapter, so that both BNI and The Royal Bank benefit. We do not want a banker leaving a chapter after a few weeks because it's not for them. We would rather identify the right

individual before they join. At BNI's national conference this year, I asked everyone to tell me what a perfect banker looks like. We took all their comments and now have the "recipe for a perfect banker" which we are communicating across our network to make sure we get the right participants for both organisations," he added.

The Royal Bank recognises that its widespread BNI membership requires considerable personal commitment on the part of individual managers, but Oakley is in no doubt that the benefits are worth the effort. "Again, this centres on our getting the right people into chapters, who accept it takes time to nurture and develop relationships. However this investment really reaps benefits and business managers can see this from both a business development and networking perspective. Developing relationships is not going to be an overnight success but we think it is worth it.

"We are proud to have more bankers in BNI chapters than any other High Street bank, and our partnership over the past two years has led to a number of very successful RBS Group bankers in BNI. The challenge now is to increase our numbers in BNI and translate the successes enjoyed by individual managers to all our members," said Oakley.

Sponsorship and patronage of various BNI national and regional members' events by the Royal Bank of Scotland, has been a welcome feature of the developing business partnership.

In addition to supporting a number of BNI's regional networking and sporting events, the Royal Bank of Scotland was the major sponsor of this summer's highly successful National Conference held in Maldon, Essex, and it has already announced its sponsorship of BNI's forthcoming Scottish Awards Night to be held at Glasgow's Moat House Hotel on 24th October.

Martin Lawson said: "We obviously value the added credibility and support that widespread Royal Bank involvement gives us, but it is very much a relationship with two-way advantages and the Bank would not be making it a priority for their new business managers to join our chapters, unless the rewards were tangible. It is a very satisfactory partnership and we look forward to many more RBS Group business managers joining BNI."



WORKING TOGETHER: Jason Oakley with BNI's National Director Gillian Lawson at this year's National Conference in Maldon, Essex

Lawsons' Lore

In its formative years, the key factor for any business is growth. Once it has achieved its initial target for expansion however, the crucial drivers switch from growth to quality, consistency and sustainability.

For our first five years in the UK and Ireland, we concentrated on growth, because the fastest way to build BNI as a strong and viable force was to ensure that we gained a presence in as many towns, cities and communities as showed an interest in our organisation. Our success is now apparent for all to see – nearly 400 chapters, well over 8,000 members and there is barely any part of Britain where we are not yet represented.

So now it is appropriate to turn our attention to new priorities, tackling those organisational issues which will ensure that BNI is not just the largest business networking institution in the UK and Ireland, but also make certain that our name is a byword for excellence in all that we do. One of the most effective ways is by building and maintaining strong chapters.

BNI exists to help its members grow their businesses by winning new business through referrals. Long experience has shown us that the number of quality referrals rises at a disproportionately higher rate as the number of members increases in any given chapter. It is easy to see how much more, and better business our larger chapters can sustain.

But there are other major benefits to growing our chapter memberships: a bigger group will always generate greater momentum and create a more positive, productive environment for its members, than is possible in smaller chapters. It also places a greater focus on training and education, both collectively (as a chapter) and individually as members, because each member of the larger group wants to maximise his or her business skills to get the most out of BNI.

This 'chapter building' is therefore vital for everyone in BNI, because it is in everyone's interests to be part of a strong and vibrant group, performing to its optimum level. Think of the value of your BNI chair as you would think of your company shares: YOU have the power to increase the performance of your chair (shares) by helping to build a stronger chapter (company) knowing it will guarantee you better dividends. Surely, isn't that why you belong to BNI?

Over the coming two months, our Chapter Development Drive gives us all a wonderful opportunity to help ourselves, by building our chapters, a growing number of which have already reached their optimum 40-strong membership with brilliant business results. If you need any further persuasion in emulating these groups – just talk to their members and see what a strong, consolidated chapter can do. Then you'll want to do the same!

Gillian & Martin

Zimbabwe loss is UK's gain – thanks to BNI

When Zimbabwean businessman John Harris arrived in Britain last year, having fled his native country to protect his wife and two small children from Mugabe's terror regime, he knew nobody and wondered how he was ever going to build a new home and a life for his family.

Today, just 15 months after landing at Heathrow Airport with all that he owned crammed into a few suitcases, John is the UK head of the world's largest personal development franchise business – an achievement made possible only because he joined BNI's Didcot Chapter within weeks of coming to the UK.

"When I arrived in Oxfordshire from Zimbabwe I knew no-one. I'd been a franchisee for SMI (Success Motivation International) in Africa, and my aim was to launch and grow the business in Britain, one of the few countries in the world where SMI had no presence.

"The trouble was knowing how and where to start establishing new business contacts. First I joined the local chamber of commerce but I found their networking events didn't produce the results I was looking for. However, I did meet a chap who stood out from all the suits because he was wearing a tee-shirt with 'The Missing Link' emblazoned across his chest.

"He told me this was a different sort of networking group and encouraged me to go along



GROWING FAST! The UK - SMI team, from left to right Udo Stadtsbüchler, Kirsten Goodman, Catherine Carthy & John Harris

to one of their evening meetings which I did. Again, while it didn't give me the business contacts I wanted, someone in the group suggested that what I obviously needed was to get myself along to a BNI meeting. I quickly discovered that the nearest BNI chapter was at Didcot, invited myself along to their very next meeting – and haven't looked back since.

"Just like SMI's programmes for personal development, BNI meetings have a proven structure, a follow-up process and a measurable, proven track record which I can relate to. When I saw the members referring so much business to each other I was very enthusiastic and applied to join on the spot. It seemed a fantastic networking organisation," he said

In his first year 12 months John says BNI referrals accounted for 42% of his business income, worth more than £34,000. But that's just the start. Once he had established his own solid client base – many clients coming through BNI referrals – John and his wife Ellie quickly used BNI's network to find new franchisees.

"We now have four other franchise partners all of whom are BNI members, including three who are chapter directors at Wimbledon, Bracknell and Abingdon. I cannot speak too highly of BNI, without which our business could not have taken off like it has," he added.

So confident is he of BNI, that he has set an ambitious target to place SMI franchisees in at least 50% of all BNI's UK chapters by 2010. "I believe that by networking through BNI, we will have at least 200 franchisees across Britain within eight years and be market leaders in the UK's personal development industry – something I never dreamed would be possible before I heard about BNI," said John, who is now General Director of SMI-UK. "There can't be a better business networking organisation than BNI"

If you are interested in SMI's franchise opportunities, contact John Harris on 01865 875 330 or 07866 610 613.

UK expansion continues

BNI's growth throughout the UK and Ireland is continuing apace, with up to 18 chapters a month having been opened this year – as many as have sometimes been launched in a similar period across the entire USA.

Among the new groups launched during the summer were: Aberdeen Bravo, Andover, Bristol May, Cambridge Trinity, Camden (London), Cannock, Didsbury (Manchester), Grantham, Great Yarmouth, Huddersfield, Hull Friday, King's Lynn, Lindum (Notts & Lincs), Newark, Plymouth Armada, Radlett (Herts), Sandown, Scarborough Tuesday, Tarporley (Cheshire), Trent (Nottingham), Uttoxeter and Wetherby Wednesday.

It's unique. It's exciting. And it's ready to give a major business boost to all members...

Welcome to www.BNIWebRing.com™



Nearly 9,000 BNI members in the UK and Ireland, and ultimately thousands more across Europe, could soon be doing substantial business with each other, thanks to the arrival of the BNI WebRing – a unique new Internet-based service which, for the first time, will create a truly borderless BNI web community, opening up a host of major new networking opportunities.

By joining www.BNIWebRing.com, chapters from Inverness and Galway to Truro and Canterbury can, with immediate effect enable their members to directly communicate with colleagues in any BNI chapter, pass eReferrals™ across regions or even country borders, and obtain up-to-the-minute details about members' businesses and leadership teams in any other chapter, at the click of a button.

The designers of BNI's WebRing, AGI Agencies has, in little more than four months, achieved the near impossible by producing for BNI a comprehensive, fast and sophisticated Internet business service for members that is amazingly easy to use.

National Director Gillian Lawson said "We

Among the many exciting features of the BNI WebRing are:

- the ability for anyone – BNI member or not – to obtain the details of any member and his/her services by chapter, country, business category, key word, company or member name. In practice, it means any member can locate just about any product or service within the BNI business community.
- the opportunity for any BNI member to send an eReferral™ to a member of any other chapter in the UK, Ireland or Europe, if a product or service is not available through his or her own chapter
- the chance for chapter leadership teams to obtain instant print-outs of constantly-updated lists of their members and services, and link their own chapter's website to the international BNI web community.
- the benefit to individual members of being able to advertise their own business's website to thousands of BNI members across the UK (and in due course Europe) for less than £5 a year!
- the simplicity of any member being able to easily change and update his or her business details on the WebRing within minutes – allowing members to promote new services or special offers to a Europe-wide business community.

wanted it to be understood and accessible to members without any computer or Internet knowledge, and we hope we've succeeded. Every BNI member should be able to use it with ease, and gain major benefits from it."

She said that in one giant leap, the WebRing had escalated all the benefits of belonging to BNI into what will become Europe-wide opportunities.

"As BNI has grown and matured, it has been increasingly obvious that individual members both wanted and needed to do business with colleagues in different chapters, usually because they were seeking access to a product or service not represented in their own chapter, or because they wanted to refer valuable business to a BNI member, rather than see it go to waste," she said.

"The WebRing will enable any and every BNI member to have access to a vast data base of information about the services, products and members of chapters across the UK and Ireland, and later throughout Europe, and then give them instant and direct access to the relevant member or chapter.

"Perhaps equally significant is the fact that while key benefits of the WebRing – such as the ability to send cross-chapter eReferrals – will be accessible only to BNI members, the basic informa-

tion about members' services and chapter membership will be available to anyone with access to the Internet," she added. "this means that chapters which join the WebRing will be providing invaluable marketing and promotional exposure for their members' businesses to potentially millions of customers worldwide."

The only proviso for individual members entering their details and sending/receiving eReferrals via the WebRing, is that his or her chapter must have subscribed to this new BNI service. However, with the annual fee standing at a mere £135 per chapter, the vast majority of UK and Irish chapters are expected to join within the next few months. As BNI expands into Europe, all new chapters will automatically be invited to participate.

Gillian Lawson added: "It is important for chapters to understand that the new WebRing does not interfere with or negate existing chapter websites, but rather it complements them by providing instant links to their own sites while opening up a truly vast customer base to their members. It really does offer members the best of all worlds, and we are very excited by its business potential."

Despite its "openness" in offering members' services to the world, the WebRing provides total security to chapter leadership teams and members in terms of preventing unauthorised tampering with personal information. "Every chapter will designate its own WebRing administrator, and have its own confidential access codes and password. It means that chapters and members have total control over what they promote to the BNI web community – and the wider world," said Gillian.

To learn more about this key BNI development, which is being closely monitored by Founder Dr Ivan Misner with a view to taking it worldwide, just go to: www.BNIWebRing.com and explore the site with ease. When you're convinced about its many benefits, you can register your chapter through the website – and start reaping the rewards!

BNI Founder "sees" UK's success

History was made at West Yorkshire's Members Conference this summer when 250 delegates took part in the first ever live video link-up with BNI's Founder Dr Ivan Misner – sitting in his California office nearly 6,000 miles away!

The keynote speech delivered by Dr Misner, followed by a lively question-and-answer session, was one of the event's highlights, made possible by the pioneering computer technology skills of Leeds-based Eye-D-Me, whose multi-site webcam software has opened up a new world of live video links over the Internet, offering a low-

cost alternative to tele-video conferencing.

Niri Patel, BNI's Executive Director for North & West Yorkshire said: "The link-up worked extremely well and made a big impression on delegates. The feel-good factor in chapters after the conference was very high, and members obviously enjoyed being able to listen and talk to Ivan Misner – especially since he delivered his presentation on how to be a 'Master of Networking' which Yorkshire members had missed when he gave the same address in London earlier this year."

Edinburgh's best says: "Give up my BNI seat? You must be joking!"



SITTING PRETTY: Kathryn Gardner (front centre) with her team (from left to right) Kate Lewis, Leanne Newel, Sarah and Joanne Currie

When more than half of all your new business comes through one specific route, you're hardly likely to change the formula - even when you've become one of the leading businesses in your sector.

That's exactly how it is with Office Personnel, Edinburgh's most successful office and sales staff recruitment consultancy which is currently celebrating its 15th birthday with record growth - much of which stems directly from the fact that its consultants are active members in all four of the city's BNI chapters.

The company has already been hailed as one of the industry's triumphs,

having steadily increased its turnover and clients over the years and today Office Personnel has a 1500-strong client base, which includes many of the country's most prestigious institutions, including The Scottish Parliament and The Royal Bank of Scotland.

Managing Director Kathryn Gardner, is happy to acknowledge that the day she was invited to visit the Edinburgh West Chapter two years ago, was the day her already growing recruitment business really started to take off.

"I was impressed with BNI from that first visit and joined immediately, before moving to the Edinburgh South Chapter where I have just completed a stint as Secretary/Treasurer. One of my consultant colleagues, Leanne Newell joined the city's Pentlands Chapter of which she has been Director for the past six months, while another of our consultants, Kate Lewis has just completed six months as Education Co-ordinator of Edinburgh Central Chapter. A fourth member of our team, senior consultant Joanne Currie has been the Membership Co-ordinator of Edinburgh West Chapter over the past six months.

"Obviously with our participation in four different chapters, BNI is a big time and energy commitment, but I would never relinquish my seat to a competitor, and I know my fellow consultants feel the same way. It's obviously working because over half of all our new business now comes to us through BNI, and we're now getting 'second tier' referrals - from the contacts of BNI colleagues," said Kathryn.

"We believe that networking plays a very important part in developing new business for small to medium sized organisations, and BNI has been very helpful for Office Personnel, more than doubling the amount of business we previously attracted."

You can contact Kathryn, Leanne, Kate or Joanne at Office Personnel on 0131 226 4242.

Successful signs as BNI heads far north

Even the most optimistic local businessman would concede that trade can be slow at times in Britain's northernmost city of Inverness, where the pace of life is refreshingly more relaxed than in most other parts of the UK.

But that was before the recent arrival of BNI in the Scottish Highlands - an event that has awoken a flurry of activity among its business community.

Launched in late April, BNI's Highland Chapter had more than doubled in size by its second meeting and today it has 33 members who, in their first three months developed nearly £100,000-worth of confirmed business for each other.

Typical of the Chapter's individual success stories is the Chapter's Founder Treasurer/Secretary Alec Mant whose sign-making company, Signs Express in Inverness has lit up with BNI's arrival.

"In less than six months, BNI has already given me more than £6,000 worth of new business. With a single exception, I have received quality referrals at every meeting since the chapter was launched, and the weekly breakfast meeting is already one of the most important events in my working week. From the outset BNI has livened things up," said Alec

To contact Alec Mant, call 01463 712191.

BNI helps Marilynne clean up after major business loss

AWARD-WINNING businesswomen Marilynne White has seen her cleaning business mop up the opposition following the collapse of a major contract - and it's all thanks to BNI.

The future looked bleak for her long-established Bathgate-based Harwoods Cleaning Contractors when electronics giant NEC shut its multi-million plant in nearby Livingston, causing



BACK ON TOP: That's Bathgate's Marilynne White

Marilynne to lose nearly half of her £1million turnover, but the former West Lothian Businesswoman of the Year was determined to bounce back, firstly diversifying from her specialised cleaning in the food, electronics and pharmaceutical industries, and then by joining the West Lothian Chapter of BNI.

"I'd heard about BNI and thought it might help me claw back some of my lost income. What I didn't realise, is just how beneficial membership would be in a very short space of time.

"After only a few months in BNI, I've gained a consistent £15,000 of business a month from our very busy West Lothian Chapter, as well winning one-off contracts through chapter members worth around £6,000 a month. These have been spread across the Lothians which speaks volumes for BNI's Givers Gain philosophy", said Marilynne.

In fact, her membership was more than repaid within two weeks of her joining the Chapter, when a fellow member handed her a referral for £4,000 of immediate business.

Marilynne White can be contacted on 01506 633 584



Pete makes a clean sweep across UK!

In an organisation brim-full of characters, few can lay claim to local fame more than 'Pete the Sweep' – Harrogate Chapter's very own professional chimney sweep, who is about to do for the time-honoured Victorian trade what Pizza Hut has done for the humble flat-bread and topping!

Pete – real name Mark Leicester, (pictured left) – is preparing to turn what was until recently a one-man business into a nationwide franchise, recruiting hundreds of chimney sweepers to rid us of sooty deposits from John o' Groats to Land's End. Within two years, he intends to have at least 100 'Pete the Sweep' operators – all of them members of their local BNI groups.

And, if you think we're joking, you only had to be at the recent Great Yorkshire Show (Britain's largest agricultural and countryside event) where Pete, sorry Mark, stole the limelight not only from his BNI colleagues but also from show celebrities, to see that he means business in a big way.

Dressed in Victorian top hat and tails and armed with a full set of rods, Mark was the centre of the media and the crowd's attentions, as he toured the showground on his bicycle kissing the ladies and distributing his calling cards. "The response he drew was phenomenal," said Harrogate Chapter Director Bob Spinks. "We'd decided to take a stand at the show and all members of the chapter joined in to mount a powerful presence, but there was only one star and that was Pete the Sweep."

What makes Mark's enterprise all the more surprising is that until two years ago he was the full-time owner and operations director of a Harrogate nursing home. "Then one day, the town's original 'Pete the Sweep' came to clean our chimneys and I got talking to him about his business," said Mark.

"He told me he was retiring shortly and then there would be no more Pete the Sweep. As soon as he'd left I told my wife: 'When he retires, I'm going to buy that business and take it national.' She probably thought I was mad at the time,

but 18 months later it's growing so quickly we can barely keep pace."

Thirty-nine year old Mark says he has BNI to thank for helping his new venture expand so rapidly. "I've been in my chapter for just a year but already it's my biggest customer, in terms of all the referrals I've received – some of which, like the Ministry of Defence, have given us a lot of work."

In an age of ever tougher business competition, he concedes that chimney sweeping is delightfully under resourced. "Our growth potential is massive. Thanks to BNI, I have doubled the size of my staff from five to 10, but we'll need even more to meet our increasing workload. I've even had to bring the original Pete the Sweep out of retirement to help us on a part-time basis."

With demand soaring for a declining number of chimney sweeps ("we do mainly commercial work – but you'd be surprised how many people still want their domestic chimneys cleaning"), Mark is certain it won't be long before his colourful, highly distinctive brand is a household name in towns and cities throughout the UK. "In Yorkshire, we already have a 'Pete the Sweep' fan club. The kids go round wearing our badges, and they always wave to us as our vans go by," he said.

If the Great Yorkshire Show helped to brush up Mark's profile, it didn't do any harm to other chapter members, as Bob Spinks told SuccessNet. "I think almost every member gained some business from their attendance, and we have attracted half a dozen new members to our own or neighbouring chapters. Other people are still visiting us so we're hopeful our membership will further increase."

You can contact Mark 'Pete the Sweep' Leicester on 01423 889 125

BNI fixes business for Gina – 3,000 miles from home

When your work is based in Keighley, Yorkshire, but you want to develop a similar business venture 3,000 miles away in New York, what do you do? Well, if you're a BNI member, the answer is simple: get yourself invited to some chapter breakfast meetings in the Big Apple!

That is exactly what alternative health and stress expert Gina Lazenby did last month, when she and her business partner, Shannon O'Flaherty gave themselves just one week in New York to find enough potential clients to warrant establishing a new outlet in the city.

"New York is a very big city and

with only seven days to find the right people for our business, the question was where to start. Then I had this brainwave to find out where BNI met in Manhattan and get us invited to the nearest chapter. I emailed the regional director, told him I was from an award-winning UK chapter and straight away he arranged for me to attend New York's best chapter the next morning," said Gina, a member of the Leeds (David Lloyd) Chapter.

"They gave me a great welcome and afterwards I had several one-to-one sessions with members who were interested in my business plans.

"Having got the taste for instant business contacts, I asked to visit another New York chapter the next day. From that meeting, we got a further appointments with interested parties. BNI really made our week in the States and we're now making final plans to go back in a few weeks – but this time, thanks to BNI's network, I will have a pocketful of 30 or more contacts, all of whom are interested in our business," she added.

Contact Gina on 01535 637 788



HOME AGAIN: Gina (left) with Shannon

Members help Howard prepare for Savoy date

A few weeks ago, insurance underwriting agent Howard Cooke delivered a memorable address to 400 of his most eminent peers at London's Savoy Hotel.

So what, you might ask. After all, as newly installed National Chairman of the Corporation of Insurance, Financial and Mortgage Advisers, Howard was only doing the job for which he was elected.

But his colleagues in BNI's Maidstone Chapter know differently - seeing how high a mountain Howard has climbed to overcome a life-long mechanical speech impediment which, until recently, would have made his Savoy presentation an impossible aspiration.

However, what not even his fellow chapter members necessarily know, is that it is they who have helped Howard tackle and over-

come his speech problems - just by being themselves!

"Since I was a boy I have had what can only be termed as a mechanical difficulty with my speech, which prevented me from vocalising certain words or phrases. It meant I either had to find other easier words in their place, or learn to restructure my sentences in a cumbersome way which some people must have found odd.

"Joining BNI has largely changed this by forcing me to address such difficulties. Knowing that I had to get to my feet every week and talk intelligently to 30 or 40 business colleagues, with very little time to put over my key points, meant I had to cope with my speech problem, especially when they made me Membership Co-Ordinator," he told SuccessNet.

"Maidstone Chapter is full of quick-witted, boisterous and articulate members, and I knew that if I



could rise to the challenge of holding my own in their company, I would be able to handle most situations. Having to prepare my 10-minute presentation was initially very hard work but, thanks to the weekly breakfast repartee with my BNI colleagues, I've gradually become more relaxed about my speaking, to the point where I felt surprisingly confident delivering my major address at the Savoy."

Howard readily acknowledged that before joining BNI more than five years ago, he would never have put himself in the frame to become chairman of a national institution. "I could not have contemplated addressing such a large audience

without the rough and tumble I've gone through at BNI meetings."

He thanked his chapter colleagues for their key role in his achievement. "I told myself 'you've got to think fast on your feet and express yourself clearly if you're going to survive among this lot' - and it seems to have worked. They may not know it, but helping me deal with what had been a long-term speech impediment, has been as great a value as the additional business I've picked up from BNI members. That is why I am so pleased to have gained this unexpected benefit of membership."

You can contact Howard Cooke on 01622 685 999.

David finds new geriatric past-time



LOOKING GOOD: David Johnson (far left) with his Newark Chapter colleagues

At 68 years of age, most people would think they'd worked enough and be looking forward to retirement, doing all the things they'd not had time to do before.

But, having retired from the pub trade in Kent and then moved to the Vale of Beaver in the East Midlands, David Johnson quickly discovered that village life was altogether too quiet, and he missed the cut and thrust of business networking that he'd enjoyed throughout his life.

"I got so restless that I spoke to one of my former business chums in Kent and he had no hesitation in telling me that I should join BNI. He pointed me towards my nearest chapter which was then being developed in Newark and told me I wouldn't regret becoming a founder member," David told SuccessNet. "I'd already set myself up as a distributor for healthcare and lifestyle products to give myself something to do, so joining a net-

working body seemed a good idea."

Indeed it was - because after just six months, membership of the Newark Chapter has not only given him a significant amount of business for his healthcare products, but also introduced him to an ever-growing list of business and social contacts. "When my wife Liz and I moved to the Nottinghamshire countryside we knew nobody.

"Now we get invited to a lot of social events and functions through my BNI colleagues and, as someone who enjoys people and networking, this is the best part of being in BNI. If I'm honest, I don't need to be involved with BNI - I could quite comfortably manage on the income from my pensions - but having got back into the cut and thrust of business networking, I have no intention of taking it easy," David added.

"I'm committed 100 per cent to BNI's philosophy and, if I can make a few bob along the way, while helping my younger colleagues to devel-

op their businesses, that's a bonus!"

Since joining BNI in April, David has supplied a dozen magnetic Bioflow wrist bands to his Chapter colleagues and their families, offering all his customers a full refund if their health and energy doesn't quickly improve. "I know that I have helped a lot of people to improve their quality of life through these devices, just as BNI has vastly enhanced my life."

Meanwhile, the Newark Chapter is also being enhanced with every passing month. Chapter Director Steve Nice is delighted with its the first six months and predicts the 20-strong group will go from strength to strength, having relocated to the town's Northgate Business Centre where, says another member, Jeremy Blatherwick, "we will continue to maintain an element of fun. We make sure that every meeting is entertaining and enlightening."

Contact David Johnson on 01636 525 181 or 07786 363 066.

Double trouble for BNI? Hardly!

They say that twins are just double trouble, but for Yorkshire brothers and business partners Darren and Stuart Jones nothing could be further from the truth – especially where BNI is concerned.

Darren and Stuart have been members of BNI for a year, with Stuart joining on the spot after being invited to the Bradford (Wednesday) Chapter by his accountant Roland Clark of Grant Thornton, and Darren joining the neighbouring Leeds David Lloyd (Thursday) Chapter a few days later.

By co-incidence, both have been the membership co-ordinators of their respective chapters for the last six months, as a result of which there has been intense but friendly rivalry to make their group more successful than the other.

Stuart said: "We both want to have the bigger, more successful

chapter with more quality referrals each week and more and more local businesses joining, and the brotherly competition makes us work harder to try and achieve this. Perhaps it's no surprise but after six months, we're running neck and neck, with both chapters doing well."

The Jones brothers now wonder if they are the only twins in BNI's UK membership, having already ascertained that they are the only twins in the UK who run a new media agency – the fast-growing inphi.net based in Bradford with an impressive list of clients from Yorkshire and beyond.

Darren, who is the younger brother by five minutes, added: "We value BNI very highly and take it very seriously and for both of us to

be membership co-ordinators of two different chapters is a great achievement. BNI has been instrumental in the growth of our company and for both of us to be Membership co-ordinators of two different chapters is a statement of our commitment. We've probably gained around £20,000 worth of extra business through BNI membership during our first 12 months but, more importantly, we've developed a very valuable contacts list that we wouldn't have otherwise

have had the chance to develop."

The twins have used their new media expertise to build websites for both chapters utilising BNI's corporate branding and adding their own touches to promote the business interests of chapter colleagues.

You can check out their efforts at www.bcbni.co.uk (for the Bradford Chapter) and at www.dlbni.co.uk for the Leeds David Lloyd (Thursday) Chapter.

Darren and Stuart can be contacted on 01274 841 412/3.



DOUBLE TOPS! Darren Jones (left) with his twin Stuart

Tony's mercy mission to Sahara

Five years ago, when he was a UN advisor, Tony Davies was asked to spend two weeks in the Western Sahara to report on the plight of its nomadic people who had lost everything in their struggle against Morocco. Their courage so moved him that instead of spending a few days to compile his report, he stayed there nearly a year.

Now a Cheshire businessman and member of BNI's Lymm Chapter, Tony has just returned to the Sahara – this time as part of a 30-vehicle charity convoy carrying humanitarian aid for the Saharawan refugees who, since being driven from their homeland 27 years ago, have survived in desert tents, enduring scorching days, freezing nights and sandstorms.

"I had always wanted to return, and the opportunity came when my partner Jane Kenyon invited me along to a social event at her Knutsford Chapter and I was introduced to Steve Gronback, whose wife was also a BNI member. When I told Steve about my wish to help the refugees in the desert, he said he would like to accompany me. From there, the idea snowballed and, with the help of many members of both chapters and the local newspaper, we were able to team up with a convoy organised by The Rainbow Rovers Charity," said Tony.

Driving a vehicle donated by Wincanton Transport, crammed full with medical supplies, school provisions, clothes, bedding, tools, vehicle spares and even 300 BNI tee-Shirts, Tony's epic 3,000 mile journey took 10 days before they reach the refugee camps.

He added: "Quite a few people in the convoy

suffered from heat exhaustion, dehydration and fatigue but the welcome we received made any discomfort irrelevant. The refugees had waited in blistering heat for over seven hours to meet us, and they all wanted to touch us because they were so happy. The convoy was a sign of hope to them, an indication that the West has not forgotten them."

Tony and Steve spent three days in the camps delivering the aid to hospitals, schools and families, leaving every item they took with them, including all the vehicles, before returning to the UK by air. "We arrived home with only the clothes on our back but a fulfilling sense of purpose having delivered aid directly into the hands of a group of proud, but dispossessed people.

The two men are already planning to join the next Saharawan convoy due to leave UK next October. If anyone is interested in joining them on their next trip, or would like to donate supplies or a vehicle, **call Tony on 01565 650 589**



TOGETHER AGAIN: Tony Davis (bottom centre) with some of the Saharawan refugees

BNI and Chamber combine forces to boost Killarney

The Killarney Chapter of BNI and the local Chamber of Commerce have combined forces to stage the first of a series of joint networking events, aimed at pooling their expertise to boost the area's business community.

Both organisations are keen to enhance the local economy and felt that by working together they could achieve even more for Killarney.

BNI member Joanne O'Regan who organised the event said: "The Chamber often lobbies the Government on issues that affect the local economy, while BNI encourages individual business people to work with and for each other. We felt that by getting them to work together, huge synergies could be achieved to help the local business community."

More than 100 BNI and Chamber members attended the first joint networking meeting, at which the guest speaker was Brian McCarthy, founder of FEXCO, an Irish-based international financial services company.

Joanne added: "It was very successful. We now intend to run more joint events.

Contact Joanne O'Regan at JLT Tiles on +353 (0)64 39222.

Forget the rain in Spain, but.... IS YOUR VOICE MAINLY PLAIN?

by **Olwyn Jack**
Voice Trainer, Tayside Chapter

As a relative newcomer to BNI, I have enjoyed various training sessions but, while I have listened, looked and read extensively, nowhere have I found any reference to the importance of the sound of the voice in business presentations. This is one of the most neglected areas of human communication, yet we've all experienced the disappointment of being turned off an interesting subject by a speaker's monotonous tone.

Let it not be thought that a practical business community has no need of the art of good speaking. Verbal persuasion of one's fellow men is as much the concern of the tradesman or the salesman as it is of the politician or statesman. I am sure everyone would endorse this statement.

But what do we mean by good speaking? Well surely it means speaking that can be **HEARD**, **UNDERSTOOD**, "**FELT**" by the listener and is **STRESS FREE** for the speaker.

If you were asked to run a marathon in a few months time, you would know you had to train for the event, enabling your body to reach peak condition in order to endure the stresses placed on it, to prevent injury and so that your muscles worked efficiently to propel your body to its destination. Yet how many of you stand up each week to give your presentation without thinking about **HOW** you will do it?

It is not enough to have the right words. They need to be delivered with impact. This is where voice training is beneficial. Speech is air propelled and shaped by muscular action. The better prepared the muscles, the more efficiently they work - resulting in improved voice production.

Speech training begins with posture and

In the last issue, Executive Director Andrew Hall told us how to take the fear out of public speaking. His words of wisdom aroused considerable interest, not least from professional voice trainer Olwyn Jack, a member of Tayside Chapter. Such is the synergy between the art of public speaking and effective vocal presentation, that SuccessNet invited Olwyn to provide this follow up training article. Her simple, easy-to-follow guidelines could help make your weekly presentations instantly more effective....

relaxation, so try this basic exercise: Place your feet about a shoulder's width apart, toes pointing slightly outwards. Weight should be evenly distributed on three points - the pads behind the toes and the heel pad. Now, lengthen your spine by imagining it is a fountain surging into the air. Feel the energy rising and the head balanced like a ping-pong ball on top. Your chin should be parallel to the floor - neither tucked into the chest nor pointed into the air, while your arms should hang loosely by the sides. You are now in the best position for good breathing.

Try saying my name is (Joe Bloggs), which should take 2 seconds. Say it in the position indicated above - and then try it sitting, standing rigidly to attention, slumped forward, chin tucked in, chin pointed up, head tilted to one side etc. Notice how the sound of your voice changes depending on your posture, and how the best sound is produced when your posture is relaxed.



EXPRESS YOURSELF: And be heard!

The next point to consider is good breathing. Use central breathing from the diaphragm so that words can be projected to the furthest listener without shouting - which is exhausting, bad for the voice and unpleasant for the audience.

Being heard is also about good diction - finishing off words crisply and not letting the word die away especially at the end of a sentence. We also "hear" with our eyes. Don't look down at notes. People don't mind if you have them but they don't want a view of your scalp. Hold them up and to the side where you can see them easily but your mouth is not obstructed and your audience can interpret your facial expression.

Help your audience to follow your ideas by choosing an appropriate pace. This includes speed of words (no more than 150 per minute) and pause. Your audience needs time to digest your information. Give them this. A pause always seems longer to the speaker than to the listener.

Emphasise important words and, like an old fashioned telegram, imagine every word costs money - so be thrifty. Point up a word by making it different from its neighbours. Make it louder, softer, faster, slower, pause just before it or just after it. Use inflection.

You also want to enthuse your audience. Here is where artistry comes in. Pitch, tone, modulation all help to communicate your feelings and arouse a reaction in your audience.

And how can you control your nerves? Concentrate on your message and what you want the audience to retain. Don't draw attention to yourself by making your audience strain to hear you. Audiences want to relax. They do not want extra work. They are there to hear your message - not to feel ill at ease because your mind is partly distracted by wondering what they are thinking about you. So, stand well, let the breath flow into your lungs as you look round at your audience, smile and see your audience relax and settle back. You will soon find you can enjoy it too.

Olwyn Jack can be contacted at Words in Action on 01382 350239



VOICE AEROBICS? Olwyn Jack (right) puts a group through their vocal exercises



Rochdale's Chapter Director gets 'stoned'!

Rochdale's first Chapter Director John Kay can afford a wry smile as he takes his seat to run the weekly breakfast proceedings. For, directly above his chair, his name is carved into the elaborate stonework.

The Chapter has been granted permission to meet in the grand reception room of the town's most impressive building, the neogothic town hall, and when members arrived for their first meeting earlier this year they were amused to find this permanent reference to their first Director (see picture above).

"I'd like to suggest it's there because the borough council is so keen to support BNI, but while that's true, the fact is that my namesake featured in the stonework is THE John Kay, inventor of the Flying Shuttle which transformed the productivity of Lancashire's cotton mills during the Industrial Revolution," said John. "I have no such claims to fame."

Perhaps inspired by their auspicious surroundings, members have passed nearly 1,000 referrals worth £200,000 in their first eight months! Keep that up John, and who knows, a second John Kay might one day see his name adorning the Town Hall's gallery of famous Rochdale sons!

Meanwhile as well as having his own prestigious inscription, John has been mixing in royal circles.

As the Senior Partner of Rochdale's oldest legal practice, Molesworths Bright Clegg Solicitors, he recently co-hosted a visit to Rochdale by HRH Sophie, Countess of Wessex whose great, great grandfather John Molesworth founded the business in 1840. Her Royal Highness was keen to learn how it had grown and changed over the last 162 years and, after meeting its partners and staff, she was presented with a new booklet, 'The Molesworths of Rochdale', produced by the firm.



ROYAL VISITOR: Chapter director John Kay welcomes the Countess of Wessex

Just doing it gives JDi 220 referrals in 6 months

When your company's initials mean "Just Do It", well, you've just got to get out there and do the business.

That's exactly what Duncan Richardson did earlier this year when, after being invited to attend a visitors' day of London's Hammersmith Chapter, he instantly recognised that BNI could give his company the new business boost it wanted, and immediately applied to join.

And, after little more than six months as a member of the Chapter, the Managing Director of JDi Integrated Advertising Ltd is happy to admit that his company has won record levels of business through BNI's unique approach to networking. "JDi stands for 'Just do it', the company's maxim for our 'can do' approach.

"When I heard about BNI, it seemed to offer the perfect solution to help us win new business," said Duncan. "Since my first meeting in February, we have generated over 220

new referrals - worth many thousands of pounds - in the property, construction and consumer sectors where we have a strong track record.

"BNI has been a tremendous success for JDi, encouraging our whole team to think differently when looking for and approaching new business. Friday has now become new business day for the company, and starting it off with a BNI breakfast has led to excellent results!" he said.

Joining BNI has even provided JDi with one of its newest members of staff, account manager Kristen Soper. "Kristen had only been in the UK a few weeks when she came along to a chapter meeting. We talked and I felt she was just the kind of person we needed to help us manage the extra business we were gaining through BNI. So far, things are working just fine."

Contact Duncan Richardson on 020 8563 1414

BNI's instant £400,000 deal for Scarborough brothers

With at least half a dozen thriving business interests in their home town, you might have thought that Sherburn, Scarborough brothers Alex and Adam Jowett barely needed the additional thrust of BNI membership.

As founders and directors of the Blue Chip Group of Companies, covering computing, office supplies, sign manufacturing, printing, Internet training and shredding machine repairs, they've been running successful businesses since their teens - and they're still only 34 and 30 years old respectively!

But business is business, and when Alex was approached by Scarborough businesswoman Catherine Turner to become a core member of a new BNI group in the town, he didn't hesitate to say 'yes' - little knowing that it would lead to a £400,000 property deal just a few weeks later.

Both Alex and Adam became founder members of the Scarborough Chapter, Alex representing their computer company while Adam promoted the Group's office supplies business, and they'd only been to two or three meetings when they got talking to another

founder member, Royal Bank of Scotland Manager Peter Kirk, about their 'hobby' - buying properties to rent.

"We'd already bought about 25 properties but had our eyes on five others in the area which we could get at the right price. I'd talked with my own bank about buying them, but the interest rate they offered was disappointingly high. Then I came across Peter and he immediately offered me a much better rate. Within a couple of weeks we'd done the deal - all thanks to BNI."

Alex had no hesitation about joining the new chapter - of which he is its first Membership Co-Ordinator - because although they were already well connected in local business circles, he believes you can never know too many people in your local community. "That's what happened with our latest property deal. If we hadn't joined BNI we'd never have met Peter Kirk and may never have done the deal. It's early days for our chapter, but already I can see new business opportunities - and that's what it's all about," he added.

Contact Alex or Adam on 01944 710 600.

BNI takes chill out of cold calling

Traditionally, direct selling in Ireland has been all about cold calling – telephoning or knocking on the door of a complete stranger. But Mark Gannon, a consultant with Cinergi, the discount telecoms company, has just changed the rules in a spectacularly rewarding way – thanks to BNI!

Mark has won Cinergi's Annual Award for his outstanding direct sales results as a national consultant which saw him gain 100 new customers, without any cancellations, in just six months.

What sets him apart from the rest is that he achieved this without make a single cold call – and all because the first thing he did on arriving in Ireland from Australia was to join the Cork City Chapter of BNI.

Commenting on his success, Mark said: "My award confirms that BNI is the ultimate tool in business marketing. When I set foot in Ireland, I really didn't know a soul. I knew I had to work

smarter, not harder if I was to succeed. I'd heard about the excellent networking opportunities provided by BNI, so I immediately joined and made a conscious decision to give it the same effort and respect that I was giving Cinergi.

"Referrals from BNI have accounted for 80% of the business I have generated, which means that although I've won the Cinergi Direct Selling Association award, because of BNI I've never had to do a cold call, or "door knock" once. How about that for the power of BNI!"

Mark is now going on to the Direct Sales Association of Ireland's (DSAI) National Award ceremony in October. The DSAI was formed in 1981 to bring together ethical companies in direct selling in order to promote the highest standards of trading practice and consumer practice, and Mark added: "If BNI keeps helping me produce results like this, who knows how far I can go."



PLENTY TO SMILE ABOUT! - Cork City's Mark Gannon

Mark Gannon can be contacted on +353 (0)21 4365 645 or +353 85 7188 184.

Scots quartet provide regal service for Royal event

When the venue for your high-profile lunch and awards ceremony is the Queen's official Edinburgh residence, and the Duke of Edinburgh is heading a star-studded guest list, you want to make sure that your event organisation leaves nothing to chance. So who do you call on? Why, BNI members of course.

The glittering event to celebrate innovation in Scotland, was hosted by Edinburgh Technopole, a £100million science and technology park, whose directors were determined to provide a regal service to match their royal setting, the Palace of Holyrood House. So their first call was to leading Scottish events company, Tsunami Events Management, headed by Susanna Freedman, a member of the city's Pentlands Chapter.

It marked a significant first for Susanna, who also runs a successful design company specialising in brand communication and company identities. "It was our first event management project involving a member of the Royal Family and the associated protocol. We were involved from the initial stages with concept, location planning, marquee and lighting design and catering, and this enabled us to call on the expertise of other members of my chapter."

Susanna recruited Arts and Media Catering to provide a magnificent lunch, while another BNI member, Phillip Cosby of Bairds wine merchants, provided the drinks and Murray Shipton from british-flowers.com was called in to create floral designs for the occasion.

She said: "Our task was to ensure that the

event ran like clockwork – one reason why we turned to fellow BNI members – and it underlined the effectiveness of business networking, demonstrating the value of BNI membership. It was hugely successful as a result of which we've now been engaged to manage another four events for Technopole."

The event also delighted Arts and Media partner Chris Chirside who said: "There were 350 people at the awards lunch and the guest list read like a Who's Who. It was a delight to be involved and following its success we've been engaged to do several more functions. Quite apart from the networking and contacts you build up through BNI membership, our two-year investment of £600 has already netted us around £25,000 of business. I defy anybody to say that's not a good return on a minimal investment. Believe me, BNI works."

Susanna can be contacted at Tsunami Events on 0131 622.0122



Susanna with BNI colleagues (left to right) Mervin Baird, Murray Shipton and Chris Chirside

John's profitable designs on BNI

It's the kind of return any speculator would be proud of: Invest less than £400 in BNI at the start of this year and, by August your money has earned you nearly £200,000!

That's the reward for architect John Hardie who has received an average of more than £30,000 worth of new business every month since he joined Liverpool's Delta Chapter in February.

"Obviously the referrals don't just arrive without my working hard to explain to my chapter colleagues exactly the type of business I'm looking for, but there's no doubting the business benefits of BNI membership," said John.

"We've won design jobs for flat developments, houses, schools and offices through referrals across the breakfast table and after just six months, I'm starting to receive second generation referrals from people outside the chapter who first heard about us from fellow BNI members. That is particularly encouraging, as is the wealth of professional and craftsmen's expertise within my group.

"In my profession there is a constant need to find quality suppliers, construction companies and other trades people, and through BNI I have established a sizeable group of skill resources that I can call on, including members of several chapters, knowing they won't let me down," he said.

John, a partner in the Southport-based Restoration Design Partnership added: "I believed BNI could make the sales side of my job considerably easier. After six months, I've learnt that this is only one of the advantages of membership, and I have every reason to think the benefits will increase the longer we are here."

If you'd like to know more about John's design practice, call him on 01704 501 007

East Anglia members raise £3,000 to fight cancer



Boat trips, flying lessons and even an introductory trampolining course were just some of the unusual rewards on offer when the Bury St. Edmunds Chapter held a slave auction during the summer to raise money for a national cancer charity.

The idea came from retiring Chapter Director Rob Masson after the group had heard about the vital work undertaken by CLIC (Cancer & Leukaemia in Childhood) from its area fundraising manager Michelle Gray, a chapter member. In East Anglia, CLIC funds five homecare nurses, a play specialist and offers a variety of care and research grants as well as crisis breaks for carers. Its aim is to provide specialist

care, treatment, research and support for children diagnosed with cancer.

The auction, held at Tattersalls, Newmarket, was supported by more than 100 members of several BNI chapters and raised a remarkable £3,186 – presented to Michelle (right foreground in photo) at the next meeting by Chapter Director Wendy Woodward watched, from left to right, by Mark Byford (Membership Committee), Rob Masson (retiring Chapter Director), Jennifer Limniotis (Membership Co-Ordinator) and Chris Twinn (Membership Committee).

For information about CLIC's work, call Michelle Gray on 01359.231072.

A leisurely way to celebrate £300K

Members of the Haverhill Chapter, Suffolk have celebrated the passing of over £300,000 worth of referrals by giving up the cosy warmth of their usual golf club venue, to hold the landmark breakfast meeting in the unlikely surroundings of a leisure equipment company.

After spending the first two years of their existence at Haverhill Golf Club, it initially came as a shock to some members when their leadership team announced its intention to mark the achievement by staging the Chapter's weekly meeting at the offices and warehouse of M&M Leisure – amid caravans, marquees, garden furniture and even a working barbecue.

There was however method in the seeming madness as Chapter Director, architect Paul Mitchell explained. "We felt this approach was quite innovative and it fitted the occasion. We wanted to celebrate our success by reinforcing the message to all members that

visiting at least one chapter member weekly in his or her own business environment is a pre-requisite for notable networking."

Graham Bashford of M & M Leisure added: "We were pleased to host our BNI colleagues and it offered an exceptional opportunity to show them around the sales area, which of course we reinforced through our 10-minute talk. As a founder member of the Haverhill Chapter, we know the importance of meeting BNI colleagues outside the formal weekly meeting, and we felt honoured we were chosen to host this meeting."

Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Graham Slade commented: "We are all hugely excited at having passed this milestone and proud to have been part of the success of the Haverhill chapter. If we maintain the momentum we've shown over the first two years, it won't be long before we're choosing another unusual venue to mark £500,000-worth of referrals."

Contact Tim Radford on 01440 707922



1,000 up – and going strong

It may not be a BNI record, but members of Derby Chapter reckon that when it comes to quality referrals, the first 1,000 they have passed between them will take some beating!

By happy co-incidence, members celebrated the passing of their 1,000th referral on their Chapter's first anniversary and Director Robert Heed said: "We believe in quality rather than quantity and carefully check to ensure that the referrals passed each week really do turn into solid business."

Som-Fin fishy with Artichoke

Artichoke Design partner and Birmingham Victoria Chapter member Richard Morris traded in his artwork for a bit of shark-work this summer to help the Cancer Research At Birmingham (CRAB) appeal.

Consequently, Artichoke was on the menu for the eight-foot long Sand Tiger sharks as Richard put his best flipper forward and swam freely with the big fish for over an hour at the Blue Planet Aquarium in Ellesmere Port. He was joined by seven other brave volunteers who risked life and limbs to raise over £3,000 for the charity. Needless to say, the event – organised by fellow BNI member David Hyner of Stretch Development – went swimmingly, although some felt it had taken fund-raising to new depths.



HAPPY IN HAVERHILL: Members of the Suffolk Chapter celebrate passing £300,000 worth of business

How to Hook 'em....

Have you noticed the ability some people have for working a room? They seem to reach every corner, greet every person, and contribute to every discussion, effortlessly.

More than a talent, networking is a skill, and skills can be learned as much as they can be taught! When it comes to building your career or business, the value of networking is largely undisputed. Every meeting and social event gives you the chance to meet people, build your reputation and expand your client base.

So let's imagine you've entered a room and have 20 minutes to 'work it' before the meeting is called to order. What should you do? The best networkers I have observed follow a carefully planned routine, involving the following steps, which I recommend to anyone serious about getting value from networking opportunities:

- Review your purpose for attending the function.
- Check you have plenty of business cards. Review your fifteen second commercial - the few words that summarises what you do and the benefits you offer clients. It may also include a memory hook.
- Arrive early enough to participate in the networking portion of the meeting.
- Find the membership co-ordinator, introduce yourself and describe what you do. Ask for information about the organisation. Request introductions to people whom the co-ordinator or chairman recommends you meet.
- Ask to meet the speaker for the day. This person is often quite influential and may be feeling as lost as you are.
- Select a table that will put you in a good position to see the speaker. Reserve a seat for yourself and one to two others.

By Niri Patel, Executive Director, West & North Yorkshire



- Look for a member or visitor whom you wish to meet. If you know the person with whom your target is talking, approach that person. This should trigger an introduction.
- If you are unable to find someone on your target list, look for an individual you already know who is conversing with someone you do NOT know. Go and say hello. This should also trigger an introduction.
- Ask the person to whom you have just been introduced what they do (See panel below).
- Look for opportunities to find out more about the business needs of your new acquaintance.
- Once you have exchanged cards and requested an opportunity to meet, find a reason to move on. Get something to drink or say hello

One-to-one networking might be the oldest and one of the easiest means of developing your business, but many people – including BNI members – still find it difficult to 'connect' with strangers at networking events, and miss out on significant opportunities. Similarly, even when we've engaged our targets, it's all too easy to lose them because we go about the business courtship in the wrong way. In these two complementary articles, BNI Executive Directors Niri Patel and Terry Hamill suggest that by following some simple rules, anyone can make the right contacts and maximise their new business opportunities.

to a client. And repeat the process.

Don't spend the entire networking time with one person (unless this was your sole purpose for attending the meeting). Instead, identify one or two individuals that you would like to have at your table and offer them the seats that you saved.

Once at your table, stand up, shake hands and introduce yourself, using your name and company name. Then introduce the individuals you invited to join you at the table.

Exchange business cards with as many of the individuals at your table as possible.

After the function, follow up with contacts you wish to pursue further and arrange a time to get together.

Giving your conversation substance

Part of making the right impression with a new business contact, is sharing your thoughts and ideas during the conversation. Use any industry knowledge to find out if the person to whom you are talking is facing challenges similar to those faced by others in their industry, or to elicit an opinion on something you have read or heard.

Ascertain the person's company from his or her name badge, and search your memory for information you have heard or read about the company (articles, ads etc.). Expressing your knowledge helps build credibility and creates the impression you have something valuable to offer.

Use general networking questions – such as the examples below – to demonstrate your interest and sustain the conversation:

"What do you do? How long have you done it? What do you enjoy most about your work? What types of individuals or companies do you typically work with? Why do people come to you? What kinds of problems do you solve? How or where do you find most of your business? In what geographical areas does your company operate? What is currently happening at your company?"

You can be quite personal in trying to learn more about the person(s) you are interested in, such as:

"Oh, so you're with (Smith & Jones). I've heard great things about your company. How long have you been with them? It looks as though we assist many of the same companies. I'd like to learn more about what you do so that if one of my clients should need resources such as those you offer, I'll know who to call. Would you be interested in getting together for lunch? I'd enjoy the opportunity to learn more about your business."

And, once you feel confident enough about offering your views about the contact(s) business, you may suggest the following:

"You mentioned earlier that your company is going through phenomenal growth. I've done a great deal of work with firms like yours. I have a couple of ideas that might help you with some of the challenges you are facing. Would you like to get together sometime when I'd be happy to share my ideas with you?"

There are some obvious questions to ask people you've already met: "Last time we spoke, you mentioned you were facing a challenge in [recruiting the right calibre staff]. How did that turn out for you? What new things are happening with your firm? How are you gearing up to respond to these developments?"

Finally, share a client success story and ask if the person has faced a similar challenge: "Did you see the article on [John Brown's fantastic business turnaround] that was in the paper last week? What did you think of that £5 million order they got? Is that the kind of business you want?"

....and, How to cook 'em!

It's one thing to feel confident going into any networking environment – but quite another to ensure that you make best use of each opportunity. Don't do what I did earlier this year when I almost lost a very large contract through my own lack of thought and follow up.

Having learnt my lesson, I sat down to list the things that any good networker should do (and, in some case, not do) both when meeting new contacts and then following them up. The following steps could make a huge difference to the future business you are able to 'cook' – just by improving your approach and your actions:

Step 1: When you meet any new contact, keep your mind open to the possibilities. A little lateral thinking helps in these situations, but recognise that it may take some time to be able to relate the right synergy to a person. The best way is to file your contacts in a system such as Microsoft Outlook or ACT, categorising them into different trades and professions, and putting key words in their notes such as 'Looking for a referral into...(Tesco)' for example.

Step 2: When at busy networking events it is almost impossible to remember all of your new contacts, so it helps if you ask them if they would mind your writing a personal reminder on the back of their business card, as to how they can help you. This is a double whammy since the person feels that you are listening, and that there will be some follow up in their favour.

Step 3: Don't try to sell your products or services! We all hate it when we think someone is pushing us to buy something from them right away, but even in BNI meetings some members are too pushy. So be succinct and be yourself. You'll feel more comfortable when you're not trying to sell to others, but helping them instead. Remember the advice of BNI Founder Dr Ivan Misner who says: "How can I help you?" is the least used phrase in networking. It should be among the most used! [See panel alongside: "The right attitude goes a long way."]

Step 4: Always follow up your face-to-face

By Terry Hamill, Executive Director, Merseyside & Lanks

contacts. In this context, one of my own Liverpool Alpha members, Lynne Mills of Credit Management & Training Services, is simply the best. Without exception, she sends a letter or an e-mail after every new introduction, with a run down of any action points discussed. Lynne also makes great efforts to find extra information about those she has met – so she can further personalise her follow up note, which contains no suggestion of a sale. This sends a signal to the recipient's subconscious to remember her as a true follower of the 'givers gain' philosophy.

Step 5: Well connected? When you feel confident in a person's services or product, this is the time to start introducing them to your business contacts, making sure he or she understands that the purpose of the meeting is not to sell to them, but to find out more about their business. Introducing people in this way really shows confidence by both parties. The bottom line is that you never know what will happen when you put the right people together....

Step 6: Set time aside each week to call your active contacts, but don't call unless you have something useful to say, or to ask them. It is always rewarding, for example, when a member

The right attitude goes a long way....

Attitude is the key factor in a good networker, and one worth bearing in mind at all times – because it is so easy to forget the basics and lose out on new contact opportunities. So:

- Never bitch or whinge about others.
- Shake hands and look your contacts straight in the eyes; feel confident & smile.
- Dress to make you feel confident.
- Remember names and the content of past meetings (write them down if necessary).
- Spend quality time with people. Listen more than you talk and the meeting should go in your favour.
- Make sure you draw people who are near you, into conversations: this helps as a good 'get out' clause just in case you are being hard sold to.
- Respond positively to any comments made, even if you strongly disagree; it's usually better to let a negative person hang themselves.

phones a fellow member to ask for more details about his/her 60 second infomercial that morning. This shows commitment to the chapter.

Step 7: The most important thing to think about is when you get a referral you act on it immediately. If you cannot do anything with the referral at that moment let the person know when you can and communicate this to the person who is waiting for the call. You risk losing your credibility if you do not follow up on the business. You never can assume that a referral is too small to follow through with.

All this may sound like the norm, but I have looked closely at those members who have achieved huge income from BNI and they put each of the above steps into practice brilliantly. When it comes to priorities, is it better to be efficient or effective? The answer is to be effective, asking yourself if you are doing the right things, and doing things right. Good luck in raising the bar.

Good? They'd better be....!

At around the time you'll be reading this, you will have noticed your chapter leadership team and all your 'officers' have changed – but do you have any idea of the vast amount of work that has taken place over the past few weeks to train them?

With more than 380 chapters in the UK and Ireland, each of which has 10 new officers, that's equivalent to

having a total brand new workforce of approaching 4,000 staff, all of whom have had to be trained in different roles and different aspects of the job over the past month.

"Changing the entire nationwide leadership of BNI's chapters twice a year might sound daunting, but experience shows it is vital to maintain the critical 'buzz' and momentum in every

chapter. It is one of the most significant things we do," said National Director Martin Lawson. "However, as we grow larger, so does the volume of training and the time it requires."

A quick glance at the statistics involved shows why. In every chapter, the incoming director, secretary/treasurer and membership co-ordinator each receive five hours of intensive training – that's a total of 5,600 man hours. Then in each chapter, the three

visitor hosts, three membership committee members and the education co-ordinator all receive up to two hours training before moving into their new roles – equivalent to another 4,000-plus man hours of learning.

The training covers all BNI's standard policies and procedures, and a variety of topics related to delivering the BNI 'product' effectively, ensuring members get the best chance of maximising new business opportunities.

Scotland hosts biggest ever BNI golfing event at 'The Home of Golf'

More than 300 members and guests attended this year's Scottish National "Masters of Networking" Golf Challenge & Networking Day held on the two the magnificent St. Andrews Bay Resort courses earlier this month – making it probably the largest BNI golfing event ever staged, anywhere!

With no less than 52 four-ball teams participating in a Texas Scramble, organisers had the sole use of both Torrance and Devlin courses and, with near perfect weather conditions, the quality of play was exceptionally high, according to event organiser, Executive Director Ron Hain who said: "Without doubt it was one of BNI's best ever social and networking events, and a huge success for members, clients and our sponsors, the Royal Bank of Scotland whose support has been fantastic."

The day's overall winning team (on the Devlin Course) was Aberdeen's Alpha Chapter, captained by Chapter Director Steve Judge, with Brian Kiloh, Mark Strachan and Andrew Smith, whose performance won them the overall BNI Golf Trophy. Runners-up were the Falkirk Chapter whose team – Kevin Roach, Peter McTeer, Jim Smith and Rob Mongavain – gave them a close run on the Torrance Course.

Meanwhile, inside the sumptuous hotel and conference centre, more than 25 BNI member companies participated in a networking exhibition attended by around 100 members and guests – some having travelled from as far afield as Inverness and Scotland's west coast.

WE'RE MAKING MOVIES! (From front page)

One of those behind the Film 2002" initiative is Ron Hain, Executive Director for Scotland North who says BNI's budding film producers and would-be movie stars should start planning their promotional videos well ahead of the regional movie-making events.

"There will be considerable kudos attached to winning each regional film-making challenge, and the overall winning chapter will see its ultimate 'BNI...The Movie' being lauded in our very own Oscars ceremony, featured in both national and international conferences. But, the lasting legacy for every qualifying chapter, will be better business," said Ron

Qualifying is easy!

The chance to enter a team in the regional competition to make your own promotional movie is something every chapter will want to grasp, especially since the only requirement for qualification is to attract a minimum of six new members over the next two months – a modest target, but one that will bring better business results for all members.

Here are the simple rules and conditions for participation:

1. Every UK and Irish chapter which signs up a minimum of six new members between 1st October and 30th November 2002, will qualify to participate in "Film 2002". (The date on the yellow forms will determine which applications qualify during this period).
2. Qualifying chapters will then choose a six-strong team to make their movie at one of a series of regional fun-day challenge and teambuilding events to be held during February and March 2003.
3. The number of regional events will depend on the number of qualifying chapters, but each will culminate in one chapter's movie being chosen by all participants as the best regional entry.
4. Every participating chapter will be given a copy of its completed promotional video to retain and use exclusively as a marketing tool.
5. Regional winners will go forward to be judged by BNI's Founder Dr Ivan Misner, who will announce his final 'BNI...The Movie' choice next Spring, and award an Oscar-style trophy to the winning chapter.

A raffle and auction (prizes included a flag from this year's US Masters signed by Bernhard Langer, and a splendid 'Wilson Deep Red' driver donated by Byron Casper) raised well over £1,000 for the Billy Casper Youth Foundation, and will be used to take a terminally ill young golfing enthusiast to meet his idol, Tiger Woods at the Ryder Cup.

A CD featuring full video coverage of the event is available for only £10 (£2 of which goes to charity) and can be ordered by e-mail at: Ron@bni.com



MORE THAN JUST GOLF: Members had plenty of time for business networking

Kidderminster's Activity Challenge!

Teams from chapters throughout the UK are invited to take part in "The BNI Inter Chapter Activity Challenge" in mid October, described as a fantastic opportunity for business networking and team building by its creator, Kidderminster Chapter's Christine Barr.

The daylong event will take place at Top Barn Farm in Holt, Worcestershire on Friday, 18th October when participants will be challenged to solve the 'Holt Mystery' – a task that will involve solving a variety of clues and completing activity tasks including hovercrafting, quad biking, archery, raft-building and watersports.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact Christine Barr on 01905 770 281 or 07759 372 353.

You & SuccessNet

As BNI – and SuccessNet – has grown, so too have the number of editorial contributions we receive. Today, typically, we receive up to 200 separate contributions per issue and clearly, not all of them can be squeezed into our 16-page publication. Some suggestions and stories that won't date too quickly, may be held over for a later edition, but it still means a significant proportion of your contributions may never see the light of day. PLEASE appreciate that this is a positive indication of BNI's progress and maturity and, rather than be deterred from sending in your chapter's future news, views and articles, why not be even more creative and newsworthy with your submissions? We DO need to hear from you, but don't be upset if we can't include your item(s).

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Executive Editor: Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director

Editor: Malcolm Grosvenor, WriteAngle Communications, New House, Palmer Crescent, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2QT Tel: 020 8541 0600 Fax: 020 8546 1611 Email: successnet@write-angle.co.uk

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

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