

£6M IN REFERRALS Before Chapter is Launched!

One of BNI's newest groups – the Ilkley Chapter in North Yorkshire – has just set an incredible record, generating more than £6 MILLION worth of new business BEFORE it was even launched!



JUMPING FOR JOY: John Middleton (left) with Rita Palfreyman and Chapter Director Carl Hopkins celebrate £6M worth of business in Ilkley.

The achievement, believed to be unique in BNI's worldwide history, has been verified by BNI's Executive Director in Yorkshire, Niri Patel, who told SuccessNet: "It sounds almost unbelievable, but Ilkley's core group of 21 founder members have produced more business in just five weeks before they launched, than many chapters achieve over several years."

Both Niri and Assistant Director John Middleton, who worked closely with the group during its short pre-launch phase, have attributed its instant accomplishment to two key factors: the dynamic business nature of the core group members, and their willingness to learn from the experiences of other BNI chapters in the region.

John, who is a founder member of the region's largest and until now, best performing chapter, Leeds North, said the new Ilkley Chapter had been fortunate in attracting high-powered businessmen and women who between them had excellent contacts, not least in the region's legal, financial and property development sectors. The new chapter meets on Thursday mornings at Ilkley's Craiglunds Hotel.

"While there was instant synergy

between most members, what made this work so quickly was their enthusiasm to learn about and adopt the BNI business networking philosophy. It was remarkable to see how rapidly they took to the Givers Gain ethos and how everyone was determined from the outset to get it right and become successful – to the point where the group even voted to exclude two would-be members whom they did not feel would do the chapter justice."

Ilkley's first Chapter Director, business adviser Carl Hopkins is one of the members closely involved in a number of substantial property and development deals which, by launch day had produced contracted referrals amounting to £6.2 million – with a further £9 million worth of new business expected to be completed very shortly.

He said: "It would be easy to suggest that because our new chapter has some well-connected and dynamic individuals, we would have done the same business without BNI, but that would not be true. It has taken BNI to bring these individuals together and it is only as a result of the chemistry between us, that much of the business has been transacted so quickly and easily."

"Without BNI, a number of the deals I was seeking to progress would have taken far more work and time to pull off. The fantastic thing about joining this Chapter is that it has seemed like second nature, so easy and yet so rewarding."

Carl Hopkins said the Chapter's solicitors, Zermansky & Partners (represented by Rita Palfreyman), its IFA David Sweetman from Towry Law and its IT training specialist Jason Richards had all been involved in major pre-launch referrals, and he was sure the initial momentum would be maintained. "We're already discussing other big contracts and I know it won't be long before we've trebled our initial £6 million worth of referrals, especially since we are determined to grow the chapter to at least its 40-strong capacity within a matter of weeks. We are not going to hang around when so much business is at stake."

Contact Carl Hopkins on 07801 027 694

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BNI-As others see us

“Party poppers, bells and beepers... but Business Network International works!

By Jenny Chapman, Business Editor

THERE are few people so dead set on selling their services to one another that they are prepared to get up at 5.30am to do so. Consequently, I have to admit I thought the Granta Chapter of BNI were going to be a bit too keen.

Party poppers, bells and beepers; the expected hyperbole – “I clean carpets and rugs and leather in people’s homes, and my service is the best there is north of the Cape of Good Hope and south of Reykjavik”.

Others decided their particular offering was similarly special. One woman insisted she was the best kind of accountant because “I like doing sums”. Then a hairdresser stood up holding a brush as a make-shift ‘mike’ and sung “You’ll never walk alone”, but inserting “You’ll never have a bad hair day again.”

The Chapter has been going four years and generated several hundreds of thousands of pounds of business referrals.

That is the thing about BNI ... it works.

It can be as naff as it likes - but nobody minds because the members are coining it in by being the early birds. The idea is that everyone finds business referrals for each other – there were 60 members and guests breakfasting the morning I went – and while there is plenty of showing off, it is all a great deal of fun for such an ungodly hour.

Everyone sits in as much of a circle as the room can manage, a bit like the UN. There is one representative for each occupation and in turn they all talk about their own business, for just 60 seconds, hence the bells and whistles for instant impact and attention.

But it is not like a Tupperware party, with everyone buying off each other. BNI is about referrals, knowing somebody who knows somebody else who is looking for a new car, security system, or a new image.

BNI IS big business, and it is worldwide, but the most successful “chapter” (as they call themselves) in Europe is Granta in Cambridge. In fact it is so popular that two

When you can boast of being the largest BNI chapter in the world (and one of the most successful), it goes without saying that you’re going to be noticed! So, when members of Cambridge’s Granta Chapter recently welcomed their 50th member – in the shape of health and safety consultant Karina Kshoptman – they probably guessed their achieve-

ments would soon be recognised.

Business Editor Jenny Chapman from the Cambridge Evening News asked to visit one of the Chapter’s meetings to see for herself why more and more local business people were taking to business networking, BNI-style. Here, with grateful thanks, SuccessNet reproduces an abridged version of Jenny’s article.



The 50-strong chapter Granta Chapter is one of few exceptions to the “40-maximum” chapter capacity which BNI has calculated is the optimum number for a BNI group. “In most cases, we would discourage any chapter from growing its membership beyond 40, but where this happens, it is vital that the leadership team have additional checks and balances in place to ensure that everyone continues to enjoy the full benefits of BNI,” said National Director Gillian Lawson. “In Granta’s case, they’ve achieved this.”

further chapters have had to be formed in the city to cope with demand.

Two members who have done business together then perform a double-act: “My bank tried to stitch me up on insurance, but Howard didn’t.” For those looking further afield, the travel consultant has a special offer on African safaris in June – a fortnight for £399 all in. The photographer holds up an aerial picture of Cambridge, and next to him is a man with a pair of innersoles and some sort of gadget to do with fuel consumption. Ten per cent off each, and the connection can be left to the imagination.

The man sitting next to me says he has had £6,000 worth of business out of the chapter since he joined three months ago. Somebody else knows a member in Bury St Edmunds who has had a quarter of million pounds worth in two years. Ink cartridges. So that’s where the money is.

Worldwide, BNI generated £600 million worth of business last year, £116 million of it in the UK. Last October was the best month for the Granta Chapter – 444 refer-

als. The average annual value of BNI membership is £26,000.

You quickly get into the spirit. I was itching to get up and speak, a casual mention along the lines that the Cambridge Evening News has the best business pages north of the Cape of Good Hope ...

The weekly breakfast meetings take place before the rest of the world has woken up and, while the idea is to spread the word far and wide, members seem to like doing business with each other. “Once you get into the networking frame of mind ...” starts Geoff Cawte, who has a software development company at Girton. ‘Once you get into the networking frame of mind you know you are in Cambridge’, I tell myself, as I leave to begin a new day’s work.

I thought BNI was going to be tedious and full of people calling themselves consultants because they had run out of other things to do, but it was not like that.

In fact, it was the best breakfast meeting I have been to - north of the Cape of Good Hope and south of ...

BNI (stickers) keep it together in Dakar Rally

Take two adventurers, put them in a clapped-out 30 year old family saloon, enter them in a re-run of the world’s toughest motor rally, and you’re entitled to think it can only end one way – disastrously!

So it might well have done, had it not been for a few rolls of BNI stickers which came to the rescue of Trowbridge Chapter members Paul ‘Oz’ Osborne and Greg McBride, by holding together the wings of their dilapidated Hillman Hunter as it bounced its way across the Sahara Desert and 4,000 miles of the world’s most unfor-

giving terrain. The pair were competing in the not-so-famous Plymouth-Dakar Rally - a poor man’s version of the infamous Paris to Dakar Rally – in which all contestants had to take part in cars costing no more than £100, and on which no more than £15 had been spent on repairs and modifications.

“Our BNI executive director Gavin Bain donated £50,” said Paul, boss of H2O Management Consultancy, “and this almost funded our purchase of the Hillman which we rescued from someone’s back yard.” Meanwhile their travel costs were met by members of Bath, Bristol and Trowbridge chapters who raised over £500 for the trip.



KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER! You may find it hard to believe, but this 30 year old Hillman Hunter, crewed by BNI members, made it across the Sahara en route to completing a re-run of the world’s toughest Dakar Rally - with more than a little help from BNI stickers!

Despite numerous scrapes, a lost exhaust pipe, one wing falling off, a split in the fuel tank and discarded windscreen wipers, the duo arrived in Dakar just three weeks after leaving Plymouth. “It was amazing the car ever made it,” said Paul, “We’d put lots of BNI stickers along the worst cracks on the wings and they held them together for most of the journey. One wing did eventually fall off but the stickers kept the other intact! We were amazed the car was still running when we reached the desert.”

The money they raised was donated to the Royal United Hospital Appeal, including a £50 donation from BNI executive director Sarah Owen who followed their adventure on TV. Just as Successnet went to press the pair were revving up their engines again for a 2,000 mile rally to Palermo - this time on pizza delivery bikes! “We’ve got plenty of BNI stickers all over them – and spares too!” laughed Paul.

Paul can be contacted on: 01225 462013 and Greg on 01225 488942

BNI “toast” for Tracy.

When photographer Mark Theisinger was given the challenge of capturing his new BNI director on film to accompany press material announcing her appointment, he knew he had to use his loaf.



Mark, a member of Cannock Chapter in Staffordshire wanted an image that would portray BNI’s early-morning meeting time – so he chose a piece of toast, and it worked wonders!

Within days of being issued to the media by Mark’s chapter colleague, Linda Jones from Passionate Media Relations, the Birmingham Post newspaper used the picture of Staffs and Shropshire Area Director Tracy Pound twice, first as a “teaser” on the back page, and then to accompany the lead story on the marketing page.

Linda said: “They say a picture is worth a thousand words. In this case it was definitely true. Mark did a brilliant job as the resulting coverage showed.”

Contact Mark Theisinger on 07976 918112 and Linda Jones on 01922 415537.

From Carlisle to Cowes!

Another busy quarter has seen a further two dozen BNI groups launched in the UK, among them ‘firsts’ for both ends of England - on the Isle of Wight (whose inaugural chapter is at Ryde) and in the far north of the country, at Carlisle, where members of the new Edwin Chapter are aiming to quickly spread word of BNI’s arrival.

Other recently established groups include: Delta (Aberdeen), Echo (Aberdeen), Alfreton (Derbyshire), Atlantis (Blackpool), Bailgate (Lincoln), Hove City (Brighton), Bromley, Abbey (Bury St. Edmunds), Chancery (Fleet Street, London), City (Brighton), Egbert (Middlesborough), Frome, Gateway (Tooting Broadway), Hadlee (Almondsbury, Avon), NBD (Keresley, Coventry), Notting Hill (London), Olympus (Preston), Oswald (Durham), Reading Central, Shoreditch Triangle and Wandsworth (London).

Lawsons' Lore

Gillian and Martin Lawson, National Directors of BNI, write:

Continuing with our worldwide theme for 2003: "BNI – More than a Meeting", the topics for July, August and September are Professionalism, Knowledge and Resources. On page 10, these key issues are addressed in more detail, but we might all reflect on the following summaries:

Professionalism: In order for our fellow members to refer us with confidence, we need to display professionalism in every aspect of our chapter conduct. This starts when we walk in the door. Are we appropriately dressed to create the right impression? Does our preparation for our own 60 second or 10 minute presentation reflect a professional approach to dealing with their important contacts? Do we demonstrate professionalism by how we add value more effectively than our competitors? Until your fellow members are assured on all of these issues they are unlikely to refer to you the serious business that you are looking for.

Knowledge: One of the great advantages of belonging to BNI is the breadth of knowledge and experience that exists collectively within the membership of every chapter. Whatever challenges we may be facing in our own businesses, there are always others who have the specialised knowledge or who have found the solution before us, and who are more than willing to share their knowledge with fellow members as part of their commitment to 'Givers Gain'. BNI also runs many workshops to help members gain the skills needed to find business for others, and to get them to find the right type of referrals for you.

Resources: Beyond the help that is obviously available from your fellow members, BNI provides two other resources of great value to every BNI member. First is the website (bni-europe.com), which gives details of forthcoming training and networking events, and offers free promotion of any member's business. If you are not already making use of it, go to "Network Central" in the "Members' Area" and key in a description of your business right away! The BNI Webring (BNIWebring.com) is also an invaluable resource for members to promote their businesses to members of other chapters that do not have your services available within their membership.

Phil gets stuck into BNI!

When Executive Director Terry Hamill named Indigo Chapter's Phil Brumfitt, as Merseyside's 2002 Member of the Year, he likened him to a stick of rock: "Cut him into slices, and you'll find BNI in every piece....That's the degree of commitment he has made."

So, taking the analogy to heart, Phil, whose Birkenhead-based Windsors Catering Equipment business has soared since he joined BNI three years ago, decided to live up to Terry's compliment by having hundreds of sticks of peppermint rock manufactured with the words 'Windsors', 'Phil' and BNI running through them – which he then distributed among members attending this year's European Conference at St Andrews Bay.

"I'd been invited to give a short presentation on how well my business had done since I joined BNI," said Phil, "and I thought that since Terry's remarks appeared to have stuck, I might as well produce the rock as a reminder for those who didn't know me."

Phil added: "During the past 12

months we've won around £1,500,000 worth of new business through BNI referrals, including a new two-year contract with a nationwide pub group, which we expect to be worth nearly £400,000 a year. My £320 annual BNI membership is the best investment I have ever made!"

He added: "We are now looking to employ a Project Manager, and the first thing I will insist on is that he is happy to get up very early one day a week to attend another BNI chapter!"

Contact Phil on: 0151 666 1077



ROCK SOLID: That's how fellow members regard top performing Indigo Chapter's Phil Brumfitt

BNI sets Paul up for life

Most members are happy enough that BNI consistently improves their business profitability – but for security consultant Paul Hawkins, joining the Canterbury Chapter has given him more than he could ever have dreamed was possible.

As well as being persuaded by chapter colleagues to set up his own already lucrative business, BNI has also introduced Paul to the woman of his dreams – with whom he is now expecting his first child!

"Since I joined BNI three years ago, it has changed my life in every way," he told SuccessNet. "Thanks largely to the encouragement and support of my BNI colleagues I now have a thriving business with a staff of 11 and a projected turnover of £500,000 this year, in addition to which I've also found my partner and I'm looking forward to the birth of our baby this October."

When Paul joined BNI he was working for a national security company but he quickly realised that with the substantial

support and practical help of fellow chapter members, he was perfectly placed to fulfil a long-term ambition to start his own business. Shortly afterwards, he launched APT UK Ltd and in no time at all, the referrals started to flow. "I got tremendous help from my colleagues. It seemed they were all looking out for business opportunities for me."

A few months later the Chapter's dentist Lawrence Green suggested Paul bought well-known local locksmith company, Howfield Security when it went up for sale, and with the help of a small firms guarantee loan from the Government set up by the Chapter's accountant Philip Gambrell and solicitor Ken Garbett, Paul finally acquired Howfield, opening up a major new market.

Meanwhile, he'd also got lucky in love – meeting and then settling down with Alison Kelly, the boss of Boiler Know-How, whom he first met when she was a visitor to his chapter, which she later joined.

Contact Paul on 01227 458999.

It's all in the name!...

OK. So you think that your chapter is the bees knees, quite simply the best in your area. But, is it distinctive? How many other BNI members – let alone non-member businesses – in your region will have heard of your particular chapter by name? And, by default, how well do you feel BNI is known in your town?

While many members may believe the name of their chapter is hardly important as long as the group is a vibrant and successful, the fact is that having a memorable name for your group not only provides members with a very useful promotional

tool, but it also offers significant additional business opportunities – both in terms of new member recruitment and recognition.

For these and practical administrative reasons, BNI has just announced a new worldwide policy requiring all chapters to adopt a unique personalised name, in addition to any town or geographical name they may already have taken.

National Director Gillian Lawson said: "When BNI was a relatively small organisation in Britain, it did not matter what our chapters were called but, as we have grown rapidly to well over 400 groups in Ireland and the UK, it is increasingly important that we are able to easily identify each chapter.

This is especially the case where several similarly-named chapters already meet in the same town or city suburb.

"We don't want existing chapters to have to change their names for the sake of it, but where for instance, you have four different groups each calling themselves Leeds Armouries Chapter, differentiated only by the day of the week on which they meet, we'd prefer to see each group choose a distinctive and appropriate name," she added.

"In some regions, chapters take on the names of local famous sons or daughters, in others it might be mythological gods, and some come up with purely abstract titles or acronyms."

... as they've shown with 'Gung Ho!'

In recent issues, Successnet has reported some rather unusual chapter names, such as the CAN-DO Chapter (which you may remember is the perfectly-suited acronym for the Chesterfield And North Derbyshire Opportunities Chapter), and now we can reveal why members of the Bury St. Edmunds Chapter have changed their name to the Gung-Ho Chapter.

Their problems began with the arrival earlier this year of a second BNI group in the Suffolk city calling itself the Bury St. Edmunds Abbey Chapter. Not wishing to be upstaged or out-named, members of the original group decided they too should have a unique

title; the only difficulty was finding something suitable.

At the time, the Chapter's Educational Coordinator Steve Bryan, was reading members a short section every week from a particular book, Gung Ho! "It's a simple story about work," said Steve. "By using analogies of the forest and the animals that live there, it shows that work can be ever more productive – and fun. I felt that many of the lessons were directly applicable to BNI – making work worthwhile, working to a plan, and rewarding success with praise, as well as cash."

The Chapter's new name was determined by a members' election and the decision was unanimous – Gung Ho! Chapter was born. "It does take a bit of explaining," said Steve "but all of the members have taken it on board enthusiastically."

£3M in three years for Chester

One million pounds worth of business a year? That'll do nicely, say the members of Chester Chapter, who celebrated their third anniversary with the news that they'd just completed their first £3 million worth of referrals!

The group, which meets at the city's Blossoms Hotel, has seen its members gain average additional business worth £40,000 a year, and Chapter Director Adrian Lomas (pictured with birthday cake) said: "Chester has been a runaway success from day one. Every member has won business simply by applying BNI's tried and tested philosophy."

Adrian, Managing Director of Blue Leaf Communications near Tarporley, duly arrived for his group's third birthday meeting clutching a specially made cake. "I thought our third birthday was an ideal occasion to celebrate our success. In fact we had three million happy

returns of the day," he added.

Just one of Chester's typical referral successes was the recent winning of a six-figure painting contract by GPS Decorators. It came from Richard Marshall of RCL Building Contracts after he'd listened to GPS boss Tom Jones deliver his 10-minute presentation and realised he was just right to handle a major job for one of his key clients.

For further information, contact Adrian Lomas on 01829 260 600.



Pests beware!

Pest control specialist Derek Goodwin has an almost fool-proof way of keeping the referrals flowing from chapters around Fife: he offers to bring along 'live samples' of his favourite pests to pass around the breakfast table!

He said: "Most of my BNI colleagues plead with me not to take any live samples along to meetings, especially not when it's my turn to give a 10-minute presentation." And, after just nine months, his unwellcome gesture appears to be doing him very nicely, as he picks up a wide variety of new contracts.

Derek, whose Active Pest Control is based in Kinross, has been pleasantly surprised at the level of interest since joining Dunfermline Chapter last October, not least with one contract alone that guarantees him £1,200 a month income.

"I've been able to gain larger contracts than I ever got prior to joining BNI, and I put this down to the varied professions and trades represented in each chapter, and their wide range of contacts," said Derek.

So, 'For pests big or small, give Derek a call' on 01577 862035.

Gloucestershire members rally to save village shop

Members of three Gloucestershire chapters have just pooled their business resources and expertise for a most unusual cause - to save a local village shop.

The Temple Guiting Trade Fair was held in the Town Hall, organised by Cheltenham Chapter member Diana Beaver, as a networking and fund-raising event to provide much-needed new refrigeration units for her village's local shop, which had been struggling to survive and seemed destined for closure.

Some nine members of the Cheltenham, Cheltenham Spa and

Gloucester & Tewkesbury Chapters took part, and the event also attracted other local business people, of which at least two are now considering joining BNI.

"The traditional village shop has long been under economic pressure, especially in rural areas," said Diana. "I was delighted to see many fellow members supporting my local shop and taking stalls at the trade fair, which another BNI colleague, Susan Lindley of APT Marketing Solutions, publicised very successfully. Our Cheltenham Chapter is just like one big family and it's wonderful to see the level

of support that members give each other."

Chapter Director Brian Fothergill, whose Coffee Academy provided refreshments for the event added: "It was very satisfying to see members coming together as a group to promote BNI, as well as a good cause. I'm confident that a number of non-member local businesses that took part in this event will now be considering BNI membership."

Diana Beaver can be contacted on 01451 850 863.



BEHIND BARS: Solicitor John Kay and his Rochdale Chapter colleagues find themselves in the cells - but all in a good cause.

It's a fair cop!

As a prominent solicitor in the town, the last place Rochdale Chapter member John Kay ever expected to find himself was in the local 'nick' facing the prospect of a day behind bars if he couldn't raise the bail money for his release!

John had just arrived at his office - Molesworth Bright Clegg Solicitors, when a poker-faced police constable handcuffed him and led him off to cells at the Town Hall.

"Before I knew it, I was behind bars!" said John, "although it was not unexpected. I and seven colleagues (pictured above) were taking part in a fund-raising stunt for the Mayor's Cancer Relief Charity and the Rochdale Springhill Hospice. Once I'd been arrested, the constabulary let me keep my mobile phone to contact BNI colleagues who very generously put up £600 to get me out."

John can be contacted on: 01706 356666

Bryn's close shave makes a dream come true

Who says attending BNI meetings can't be hair-razing? Cannock Chapter's Bryn Jones found it was exactly that when he agreed to boost a children's charity.

Bryn, who runs BJT Associates, took drastic action in aid of Wolverhampton's Purple Dreams - which helps to bring true the dreams of seriously and often terminally ill children.

In front of all his chapter colleagues at the end of their meeting, Bryn bravely had his hair shaved off by Membership Co-ordinator Louise de Waal of Wolverhampton-based Baobab Travel.

Chapter members had been gently

ribbing Bryn about the state of his hair so early in the morning - and when the group was visited by Purple Dreams fundraiser Alison Couchman, Bryn saw the perfect solution. He said: "When Alison came along to tell us about the work of Purple Dreams, I announced I would have my head shaved, just as long as my BNI colleagues put their hands in their pockets for this great cause."

Alison said: "I know a lot of people find it a hair-raising experience to get up to do business at six in the morning, but Bryn's actions raised a fabulous amount."

Contact Bryn on 01785 612184.



IT'S A CLOSE SHAVE: Cannock's Bryn Jones gets shorn by Louise de Waal (left) and Alison Couchman, watched by his chapter colleagues

Howard finds the perfect fit in BNI

Shirt-maker Howard Marco may only have joined London's Edgware Chapter a few months ago, but already he cannot wait for the next visitors day! That's because his first taste of a visitors day, held within a few weeks of his joining BNI, resulted in a substantial demand for his bespoke shirts - not least from two well-built visitors whom he was sandwiched between during the meeting.

"I was sitting next to a chauffeur and a toastmaster who, when they heard what I did, challenged me to supply shirts that would fit them. They both needed a 19.5 inch collar size, which you won't find in any High Street stores," explained Howard. "so, they were quite surprised when I said I had several shirts of that size in stock. Then they bet me that I couldn't produce any collarless shirts, and were even more amazed when I pulled out my brochure containing various collarless shirts in their size!"

Since that meeting, Howard has been supplying tailor-made shirts to both men and several of their work associates, including 'large' night club doormen, bringing him a steady monthly income of several hundreds of pounds, on top of other regular referrals he already receives from chapter colleagues.

After learning the trade working in a gents' outfitters, Howard launched his own business, Court Case, in January specialising in tailored



shirts for the legal profession. "A friend of mine, Rebecca Michael, had been hounding me to join BNI for ages," said Howard, "but I never had the time. When I set up on my own, I no longer had an excuse so I went along as her guest to the Clerkenwell Chapter, liked what I saw and decided to join the Edgware group."

"It took only a few meetings to realise it was the best thing I could possibly have done. Within weeks, BNI referrals accounted for about 50% of my business, so it has already more than measured up to my expectations. It's a great way to get started in business, and I just can't wait for our next visitors day because the spirit of Giver's Gain applies just as much to guests as it does to members."

Contact Howard on 0208 958 8522

"Connexions" leads to a blinding alliance!



SEEING THE LIGHT: Blinds specialist Steve Ensor (left) and window expert Brian Coburn will both profit from their chance meeting

Two Home Counties members have struck up an instant 'blinding alliance' after meeting by chance at one of BNI's new member orientation meetings in May.

Steve Ensor and Brian Coburn were both feeling their way as BNI new boys when, during the orientation meeting, participants were told to take a few minutes to talk to each other and introduce their businesses.

Steve, who had just joined Radlett's Connexions Chapter said: "I started talking to Brian and we immediately found a common interest. Brian's company, Value Windows, makes and installs high-quality windows and my company,

New City Blinds, designs, supplies and fits a wide range of blinds for every kind of window."

Brian, who'd joined the Uxbridge chapter a month earlier, then invited Steve to his Ruislip showroom. "Brian had put a lot of effort into his displays," said Steve, "but our chance meeting gave me the perfect opportunity to market our products and enhance Brian's windows at the same time. Even though we've only been members for a few months, things are heading in the right direction for both of us. I'm sure it is going to be a 'blinding' alliance," he added.

Steve can be contacted on 01923 245900 and Brian on 020 8423 0654.

Ideal fit for couple in Bath?

Many people measure the value of their BNI membership in terms of the referrals they receive and the extra business revenue these generate, but work psychologist David Matthews, a member of the Bath Abbey Chapter, has used a rather different yardstick to measure his recent success.

When he joined BNI last December David set himself a target to start to receiving referrals by May this year - and perhaps only two or three a year. However the unexpected happened, and David got something totally different within four months of joining!

"Quite separate from BNI, I gained the opportunity to pitch for a prestigious account with Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council for the NHS," said David, "but I knew I wouldn't be able to handle it on my own and the

colleagues I would previously have used did not have the right background and were located some distance away.

"Then I thought about one of my new BNI chapter colleagues Nicola Player, who is also a psychologist, living and working locally and with nursing experience. In fact she was the perfect partner for the account. She agreed to join me on the pitch and I knew that her qualifications had added considerable credence to it," he added.

David won the contract and was duly able to pass a referral to Nicola for £25,000 and, thanks to her involvement, he gained £32,000 worth of work. He said: "We may well work together again in the future, so it goes to show that it's not only referrals that count. What happened to me won't be included in our Chapter's monthly statistics, but it was certainly as valuable as a referral!"

Contact David on 01225 336531 and Nicola on 01749 850244.

In Brief

Calming effect on 'best chapter

Since Barbara Poisson joined 'The Best' Chapter in Barnsley, she has brought a calming effect to its meetings. Barbara is probably the only BNI member of her kind in the country. She grows fields of lavender which she uses for her business making all types of products from wedding favours to corporate gifts.

Shaken not stirred

If James Bond is looking for Moneypenni, he need look no further because she has recently joined the Kaizen Chapter in Sheffield. Lynn Darker provides business support services to the busy executive through her business Moneypenni Ltd. Her e-mail is mypa007@hotmail.com.

Pound coin sold for £40 in Chester

When you belong to BNI, you can do anything – well almost! Members of Chester Chapter certainly can – including turning an ordinary pound coin into £40 for local cancer charity, Tenovus. The coin was one item in an auction that raised £700.

100th marks 4th with huge 3rd

Dublin's Fitzwilliam Chapter - the 100th chapter in Britain and Ireland when it was launched – has just celebrated its fourth anniversary by rewarding one of its founder members, quantity surveyor Andrew O'Kelly with his third major referral worth €150,000. Andrew works on large projects, but having netted fees amounting to €450,000 from just three referrals he quipped: "That's why I still get up early every Friday morning!



A TRIP TO REMEMBER: Cath Cropper says her "amazing prize" was entirely due to the efforts of her chapter colleagues.

Cath's a VIP – thanks to BNI!

What does it take to win the title of "Local Community hero"? Why BNI, of course. Cath Cropper, from Liverpool's Midas Chapter not only gained this title, but also enjoyed lavish VIP treatment recently during a extravaganza trip to London – her reward for winning new customers in HSBC's 'Let's Celebrate Success' award scheme.

But, said the Senior Customer Services Officer at the bank's Liverpool City branch, "my award was really won for me by all my BNI colleagues.

"The weekly BNI meeting is the only opportunity I get to market HSBC's services," Cath told Successnet. "My day-to-day job doesn't give me the time to look for new business but, thanks to the help of BNI colleagues, I was able to introduce more than 20 new customers. I just wish the rest of the Chapter could have shared my prize!"

Contact Cath on 0151 801 2068.

Referrals? You'd be amazed where they come from...

Diane says: 'Hello, hello, hello' to BNI business

A former woman police sergeant has left the thin blue line to pound a new beat in the business world – with more than a little inside help from BNI.

Sergeant Diane Pringle has, as they say in the Force, gone 'State 8', quitting to set up her own promotional products and clothing company of the same name, based in Sunniside. Now, instead of pursuing villains around Northumbria, Diane is chasing contracts on her new beat, in and around the Team Valley.

Ironically, Diane had been desperate to join BNI since she launched her new venture two years ago but, until recently, the Northeast was one of the few remaining uncharted UK waters for BNI. However, since the first signs of a new Ridley Chapter in Gateshead, Diane has been an ever-present founder member.

She said: "Since joining BNI, we now have a steady supply of fresh referrals every month, and I have been able to use the services of colleagues to help us develop our business. In just the first few weeks we'd recovered our BNI membership fees many times over, with the first of potentially many orders. Already as a result of the business we receive from BNI, we've reduced our spending on advertising, realising that the power of referred business is much stronger than advertising."

After 10 years with Northumbria Police, Diane says she has had no regrets about making such a bold career change. She also acknowledges that State 8's expansion would have been slower without BNI.

"Being able to call on the tried and tested services of so many different trades and professionals has been very helpful – and of course getting some high quality referrals has been fantastic. We're near to closing a very good deal that came from a referral, which will mean around 25% of our business has come through BNI colleagues."

Contact Diane on 0191 488 9903 or 07968 123 864.



Fellas beware!

Here's a word of warning to all you fellas in BNI chapters in Leeds: keep a watchful eye on your female colleagues, because Successnet is aware of a campaign to even up your numbers!

Code-named "Bring me Sunshine", it is being spearheaded by Leeds North Chapter member Sue Davison who, backed by an enterprising group of supporters, is using every opportunity to introduce more women into male dominated chapters.

What's more, SuccessNet has it on good authority that some of the men are even aiding and abetting Sue and her group in their endeavours!

Sue, boss of ETC Training and Development Services, told Successnet, "When I joined BNI, there were only four females, including me, in the Leeds North Chapter and it struck me that this wasn't very representative of the Leeds business community. I was determined to do everything in my power to increase the fairer sex presence."

She is quickly succeeding. Debbie Bissett, one

of Sue's campaign team, has recently been appointed Chapter Director of Hollins Hall Chapter, and Emma Helliwell became a member of Leeds North, where another 'recruit', Cathy Poole, is now on the Chapter's leadership team.

"I suppose you could liken us to a sort of Morecambe and Wise group of happy troupers, which is why I adopted the 'Bring Me Sunshine' theme to brighten our chapter meetings and create more business opportunities for women in the area.

"Women provide a more balanced view of the business market-place and have a different perspective on business relationships, and it's important to see both sides of the coin," she added.

Happily, Sue's mission is an equal hit with all her male chapter colleagues. "I think they quite like having more females around. I've certainly not heard of anyone complaining about the influx of women!" said Sue, pictured below with her 'girls'.

Contact Sue on 0113 268 3180



Marilynne's lucky strike!



SILVER & BRONZE MEDAL WINNER: West Lothian's 10-pin bowling champion Marilynne White with chapter colleagues

Marilynne White has been bowled over by the generosity of colleagues in West Lothian Chapter who recently sponsored her to compete in the Triple Crown Ten Pin Bowling Championships in Jersey.

It was the first time that Marilynne had been picked to represent Scotland in the famous eight-nation competition - but she had no spare cash to pay for the trip. "There were two of us from West Lothian picked for the team," said Marilynne, "but we needed around £600 to fund the trip.

So she pinned her BNI colleagues down to a fund-raising fun-night which raised exactly the right amount of money, with a £200 donation from Falkirk Chapter's Frank Byrne even providing for the odd little luxury!

Contact Marilynne on 01506 633 584.

In Brief

Members Days

Calling all members in West Scotland, the North Midlands and North Wales – here are a couple of dates for your diaries you won't want to miss. Regional Members Days take place in Ayr on 16th July starting at 6.00pm (for Scots members) and at Wychwood Park on 27th September for North Wales and North Midlands members.

BNI? Never heard of it...

Mark Adams had never heard of BNI until he came to refurbish the offices of his Raunds, Northamptonshire, estate agency. "The shopfitter I'd chosen recommended one of his BNI colleagues to me as the ideal person to re-design our corporate image and print our stationery. "Their services were so fantastic that I had to go and see what BNI was all about, so I visited the Corby Chapter - and immediately I knew I had to join," said Mark.

Shout about BNI's benefits

Steve Murray, Chapter Director of Midas Chapter on Merseyside says his BNI colleagues should start blowing their trumpets about the non-financial benefits of membership. "Of course I've received some business, but nothing excessive.

"However, I get a lot more from BNI than just new business, such as new friends, improved public speaking and networking skills, meeting other decision-makers to discuss ideas and problems, and the confidence that any fellow members I choose as a supplier to my business, will do a good job. Maybe we should be shouting rather louder about these benefits also?!"

BNI-MORE THAN A MEETING!



Professionalism:

By James Cruickshank

Many professionals, having once acquired the relevant qualifications for their job, assume there is nothing left to learn about the subject of professionalism. Over a period of time I have come to realise just how misguided this thinking can be.

The key was to change the way I viewed running my business. It really was quite simple. If I could take the basic principles of BNI and apply them to my business, I too could become more "professional" and would not need a string of letters after my name. The letters B.N.I would be more than adequate. But what were these basic principles that would impact on my business?

The issues of timekeeping, presentation skills, smartness, consistency and promptness of reply, can be covered another day, but the first aspect of BNI that made a difference to my business was how the system taught me to focus on what I should be doing, rather than waste time on trivia.

I had noticed that truly professional business people, tended to get straight to the point, and knew where they were going. More importantly, they appeared to have more time to focus.

BNI affords us all the opportunity to practice this art each week, but how many actually give this a moment's thought? For example, do you 'plan' ahead for the networking period of a BNI meeting, or do you sneak in on the dot of 7.00am in the hope that you will not be noticed? Similarly, are you focussing on the business you want, or are you simply advertising what you do? If so, that's another opportunity missed.

And, are you focusing on what to achieve from a one-to-one meeting, an aspect that is becoming increasingly more important within BNI? Focussing on this aspect can seriously improve your chances of acquiring new business.

Before you know it, you are acting more professionally, and guess what? Others notice.

Continuing our interpretation of BNI's international theme for the year, "BNI – More than a Meeting", we review three more of the 12 crucial keys of membership, each designed to help everyone get the most out of their business networking. Here, James Cruickshank, Executive Director for East Anglia, discusses professionalism, David Bullock, ED for the South West Midlands, highlights the significance of knowledge, while Steve Jennings, ED for Notts and Lincolnshire, addresses the value of having the right Resources.

Knowledge:

By David Bullock

It is often said that, "Knowledge is Power". Others argue that, "Knowledge is Potential Power". However you look at it, knowledge is vital if we are to grow and succeed in both life and BNI.

If we are to help our chapter colleagues and bring them great referrals, we need to get to know them and acquire a working knowledge of their business. Equally if they are to help us they need to have a good knowledge of what we can offer and the kind of referrals we are looking for. So how do we gain and impart that knowledge?

The starting point for all of us is the 60-second "infomercial". Here a little thought and advance planning goes a long way! The good ones appear to be effortless, delivered by confident speakers who cover all the key points.

The Members Manual contains some excellent, user-friendly advice. The best speakers always give their presentation plenty of thought, plan it out and practice. The test question is, "Will this 60second infomercial increase members' knowledge of what I do, and the clients I would like them to refer?" If it doesn't, it's a waste of time.

However, the infomercial really does no more than intrigue the beholder and invite more serious attention. The way to acquire the more detailed knowledge you need to practice "giver's gain" is the 'Dance Card'. This is the proven way to get to know another member and to acquire the essential knowledge of their business so that you have the confidence to recommend them to others. And, guess what? Doing dance cards can be rather fun! They do involve some decision making, but they can be the most illuminating way of acquiring that vital knowledge.

The strange thing is that when you ask someone to do a dance card so that you can get to know them better and understand what they do, they reciprocate and want to do the same for you.

Resources:

By Steve Jennings

What resources do you have? The obvious answer is fellow members. They find the opportunities for business. But, let's remind ourselves of some of the other BNI resources available.

It starts with the "tools of our trade" - your card file, lapel badge, name badge and orientation CD (the member's pack). All of these can help you find referrals and visitors.

Then comes training. Initially, there is new member orientation, including a reference manual, giving everyone the essential information to get started. Further training comes at regional workshops, networking events, and Members' Days in prominent locations around the country.

We have three web sites, all there to help members. The two prime sites www.bni.com and www.bni-europe.com contain information to help members network more effectively. The latter includes Network Central, a free forum for members to advertise their businesses. A more sophisticated international site for promoting business is at www.bniwebing.com. Take a look at them soon; you'll be surprised just how much useful and practical information they contain.

Next there are our publications. As well as the quarterly newsletter, SuccessNet, every chapter should have copies of the four Ivan Misner books which contain a wealth of information on how to get more business through word of mouth referral. These books are for members to read, not just as reference material for Educational Co-ordinators.

Last on my list are the BNI Directors. They all have a wealth of experience, available for members to tap into - so don't be shy in asking!

All of the resources listed above are available to members as your right - they come with your membership. Don't short change yourself, take full advantage of what is on offer. That is what the most successful members are doing!

Car chat revs up potential £1m deal

They say that talk is cheap, but the results can sometimes be worth a small fortune, as Great Yarmouth Chapter members Anne Clarke and Bob McKibbin discovered when a light-hearted chat during a car ride turned into a potential £1m deal!



DEALS ON WHEELS: Great Yarmouth vehicle specialist Anne Clarke may soon have a million reasons to be grateful to chapter colleague Bob McKibbin

Bob, who runs McKibbin Management Consultants, was travelling with an old colleague from a car insurance company with whom he used to do business. "We were discussing the high cost of providing courtesy cars in the insurance industry," said Bob, "when I suddenly remembered one of my fellow members, Anne Clarke who runs Thrifty Car Rental. I told him that she would probably be able to reduce his costs and also provide him with an excellent service as well."

After passing the referral to a delighted

Anne, a meeting was arranged which resulted in her netting a contract worth £100,000 a year for her own franchise. "But hopefully that's just the start because since Thrifty is a franchised business, the deal is almost certain to be expanded nationwide, which will make it worth at least £1m annually to our organisation," she said.

Anne added: "I'm absolutely delighted. It's given me a tremendous boost both personally and on a business level, and it just goes to show how a chance remark can have major implications. Neither Bob nor I initially realised how valuable his car ride would prove to be!"

Anne Clarke can be contacted on 01603 666300 and Bob McKibbin on 01508 470823

White van man is top BNI fan

No wonder John Lomax looks pleased with life as he demonstrates how many BNI members you can cram into a Transit van: they've just shown him how many Transit vans they can sell for him - and it's a lot!

John is Commercial Vehicles Sales Manager for OMC Ford in Oldham and he's just celebrated the end of a third remarkable year in BNI by congratulating his colleagues in Stockport Hatters Chapter for delivering an average of £500,000 worth of extra business to him every year!

Not bad for a man who claims that giving

and receiving good referrals isn't even the best part of BNI! "Before I joined BNI, I was hopeless at public speaking, but the training I've since received and the weekly opportunity to polish my speaking skills have been invaluable, "I'm a better man by far for having joined BNI and I am truly grateful for what it has done for me. The power of membership is fantastic, and I'm naturally delighted that BNI referrals now represent my third largest customer! I sell 250 vans a year, 30 of them through BNI."

Contact John on 0161 287 4141.



EVERY ONE A WINNER! John Lomax (centre) and just some of his Chapter colleagues who have brought him an additional £500,000 worth of business every year since he joined BNI. (Photo taken by Chapter Photographer John Cooper, partner in IKON Partnership).



SPEEDY REFERRALS: Mike Williams has gained a lot more than he expected since he joined Olympus Chapter last year.

Mike gears up for some great deals

Lancashire car leasing and finance specialist Mike Williams is motoring ahead of his competitors thanks to a veritable fleet of strong referrals from BNI. A visitor host of the Olympus Chapter in Leyland, he joined BNI last November, expecting no more than a handful of referrals in his first year.

However, in just over half that time he has netted an amazing 40 referrals, boosting his annual turnover by £200,000 and, even by BNI standards, the latest from telecommunications adviser Ian Hilton was a bit special.

Mike said: "Ian told me of a company director who was looking for three cars. The result was an order for two top of the range Mercedes and an Audi Cabriolet worth over £85,000. It shows that BNI leaves every other networking group standing."

Mike can be reached on 01257 249222.

'Get The Power of One Per Cent' - say's Laura Hurren Executive Director (London Central)

'He's done it again!', my son exclaimed almost in disbelief as Michael Schumacher stood on the winner's podium and raised the trophy above his head. It certainly made me think of the millions of pounds that are poured into the Formula One world circuit by the likes of Ferrari, Mercedes, Jaguar, Williams and BMW - all vying for the little bit extra that will make them top dog.

What is it that differentiates the teams? They all have the money to build newer and better cars, yet Michael Schumacher and Ferrari seemingly get to the front with ease - and then stay there. Why?

Michael Schumacher's difference is his ability to drive consistently quicker than anyone else. Not just one lap to win pole position for the race day, but on race day, nearly every lap. His passing techniques contribute to this consistency, while his whole race team contribute with shorter pit stops and reliable equipment.

But for all this, just how much quicker is he than the rest? Well, his lap times are now barely 0.02 of a second faster than some other drivers, and some teams are within 0.05 seconds of Ferrari's

target pit-stop time. So, 0.02 of a second is how much better Mr Schumacher is over his rivals. Not much, BUT the difference IS significant when ALL facets of his game are consistently enhanced by just 1 per cent - or, as we've seen, sometimes even less.

He has won more races in Formula One than anyone else, and often wins races by a country mile, just by being that little bit better all the time. It's not about being 1% better today than yesterday. It's about being 1% better consistently in a number of things that add up to a far bigger winning margin by the end of the day.

And so it is with BNI. If you want to improve your results, you have to raise the bar in all aspects of your performance, in order to create the winning formula that brings the results you want.

No-one makes the top on their own

Michael Schumacher hasn't made it by himself. He's had a team around him and each member of that team plays an important part to ensure his success. Your Success Team, are the people who care about you and your business. Each member in your chapter is part of your team, so:

- Surround yourself with positive people going in the same direction
- Build strong bonds with fellow members
- Educate, communicate, motivate your team
- Build strategic alliances
- Invite influential visitors within the business community
- Have 1-2-1's with members, especially those outside of your immediate business sphere

Sweating the small stuff

The Mayor of New York prior to 9/11 was criticized for the money and time spent on 'details' for the city's emergency services, yet when disaster struck, the city was more prepared and able to cope because the details were in order. In BNI we do lots of little things which may seem unimportant yet when done together make a big difference to the overall result. So, make sure that:

- You wear your badge to every meeting
- The 'sign-in' table is set up correctly
- The Visitor Hosts are in place & remain active throughout the meeting
- Members sit next to visitors
- Card box and referral slips are on the table
- The Chapter Director has all visitors' cards

- with the inviter's name written on the back
- Visitor packs are given out & visitor orientations take place at the end of the meeting.

Spectator or Player

Watching a Grand Prix is exciting, so imagine what it must be like to be a part of the winning team. Sometimes, in life, it is easier to blend in with the crowd rather than stepping outside of our comfort zones, especially when it comes to the meetings. Yet, unsurprisingly, the members who get the most out of BNI are the ones that put the most in. You can do this by:

- Playing a role, however small, at each meeting. Get involved in running the chapter
- Knowing your objective(s) at each week's meeting, and preparing your presentations in advance
- Bringing a referral or a visitor every week
- Giving great testimonials to colleagues

90 minutes vs. 24 / 7

There isn't a sports person in the world who reaches the top without putting in the hours, outside of the game they play. This reminds me of something that happened when I first became a Director. A member asked how much time they should spend on BNI. A very successful BNI member jumped up and answered 24/7. I thought about this for a while and realised that being a member for 90 minutes a week isn't enough; you have to adopt a 24/7 mentality and put the hours in, if you want the best results. Try the following, and see what happens:

- Diarise BNI for your contribution at the meeting i.e. visitors and referrals
- Diarise BNI for your participation at the meeting i.e. your two presentations
- Go the extra mile - create your strategy to introduce fellow members to your contacts
- Diarise at least one structured 1-2-1 meeting every week, repeat & monitor results

More than a strategy; a way of life.

I remember having to persuade a member to write 40 letters for a visitor's day, which he reluctantly agreed to do, and yet was astounded by the results. The invitations resulted in a few visitors at the meeting, but also the biggest contract he had won to date from someone who never joined BNI but needed his specific services. Inviting visitors is not a gruelling task but a way of life for the member concerned. So, try strategising your BNI participation:

- Become the hub of your colleagues' and their clients' needs; become a gatekeeper
- Adopt the attitude: 'What can I do for you?'
- Have a clear focus about what you do
- Develop good communication skills
- Develop your listening skills
- Have fun, enjoy yourself

All this may sound like hard work. Thinking about your BNI contributions from nine to five, at least five days a week *is* hard work but, get this right and you'll never have to work hard again. Achieving that one per cent improvement in every aspect of your business and BNI life, will raise your game considerably.

Raise your sights, and raise your game!

Exploding the Myths of 'Why BNI Won't Work for Me'

'Conceive, Believe, Achieve', said Napoleon Hill in the brilliant little book 'Think, and Grow Rich!' While there may be many other similarly succinct pieces of advice to businessmen and women throughout history, this is as good a model as I know of for developing your business by referral, through the BNI system.

'Conception' starts with your first exposure to BNI: "Wow, there is a better way to grow my business." In truth, the concept sells itself, but for many, it can be a long wait for 'achievement' to occur. The key to success is 'belief' and once you find that, you will not only unlock real success - business rather than referrals, profitability rather than revenue - but you will inspire others to do likewise.

For me, that thunder flash of inspiration is the very essence of BNI, whether it comes to you through education and training, or through the inspirational behaviour of colleagues. Let me share with you three simple examples of individual inspiration from some of my members, which have helped me to expand my vision by exploding a few myths of non-participation.

Case 1: The Single Parent Myth: It's All in the Mind.

How many times have you met a single parent, whom you know would benefit hugely from BNI membership, but who 'just can't make the time commitment'?

Cue Elaine Colliar, an incredibly active member and a past Secretary/Treasurer of the Original Links Chapter in St Andrews. You

cannot fail to take inspiration from her story. She is 32 year old, has a two-year old son, she is dyslexic and dysphasic, but has a sense of personal belief that would literally blow your mind! As four times winner of the World Mind Mapping 'Grand Master' title, against all odds, Elaine is a revelation of inspiration and, through her business - Building Success - she is the epitome of Givers Gain success.

It is tough enough, you might think, to meet the commitment to your own chapter every week, but in the true spirit of Givers Gain, she recently undertook a 'grand tour' of our Scotland North Region, offering dynamic education sessions to all our chapters. Elaine said: "My mission is to bust through the comfortable and cosy atmosphere of doing business within the four walls of your chapter all the time!" And the moral? Building success is a state of mind for all BNI members.



SHINING EXAMPLE: That's 'mind-mapping' world champion Elaine Colliar, who now uses her skills to help BNI colleagues

Case 2: "I just don't have time to make BNI really work!"

Cue Stirling BNI member Val Stewart of Survair Services, who lit-up her Chapter's third anniversary with this revelation:

"I joined BNI three years ago, because I liked the concept and believed in networking. I was a regular attendee, always had a smile on my face and, at the end of year one when I looked back I had achieved £12.5k in referrals. I thought it was a pretty good return, but I knew I was still just a '90-minute' member, turning up for meetings

each week but doing nothing beyond that.

"So in my second year I decided to get more involved, joining the leadership team and attending training workshops. At the end of that year I had achieved £45k in referral business. Now the penny dropped. If I could achieve £45k a year from showing a bit of commitment, how much more could I achieve if I really put word-of-mouth marketing at the heart of my business plan?"

In year three, that became my goal. I

Case 3: 'BNI is only for small companies!'

I recently received a letter from Gordon Hay, Business Development Manager for Morrison Construction one of Scotland's largest construction companies, who joined our Highland Chapter just under 12 months ago. It started with what many might regard as the predictable reservation, but went on to express great satisfaction with the company's involvement in BNI:

Gordon said: "Prior to joining, we were uncertain as to the potential business which might pass our way through BNI given the scale of our company. I am pleased to advise you that our concerns were unfounded. It is evident that within BNI tremendous opportunities do exist beyond one's own chapter."

Inspired by Gordon's comments, I introduced him to one of our surveyor members in St Andrews Chapter and they played together in our National Golf Event last year. A couple of meetings later and Morrison's were able to network their way onto the short-list for a £2.5 million hospital improvement project in Tayside!

We talk of BNI being all about BFOs (blinding flashes of the obvious) and it is.

But it is also about blinding flashes of inspiration from individual members, which light up the path towards success. So find your own inspirations by raising your sights to the true opportunities of BNI - in your Chapter, in your Region, and worldwide. There is no such thing as 'extraordinary people' - just ordinary people doing extra-ordinary things! So, explode the myths, and raise your game!

started to maximise my visibility and credibility in BNI. The result? In the first nine months of year three, my direct referral based turnover grew to £190k - and I had further referred projects out to quotation, to the value of another £250,000! My obvious and simple conclusion is that you only get out what you put in and my only hope is that you won't take as long as I did to see the light!" she told delighted Chapter colleagues.

Introducing Bryan Adams' backing group – BNI!

When you're staging a concert involving one of the world's most revered rock stars, you need the best backing group you can lay your hands on. Faced with just that challenge, Severn View Chapter member Trevor Merrett knew instantly where to find that group - in BNI!

Trevor is a Press Officer for the Variety Club of Great Britain and, after receiving countless financial appeals to help the region's sick and disabled children, he and the Club's Vice Chairman Claire Beck approached Bryan Adams who agreed to headline a fund-raising concert. All the proceeds would be donated to the South West's disadvantaged children.

"When Bryan Adams said 'yes' it was

great news, but just the start of our real work. Such a huge concert demands a tremendous amount of energy and resources to provide the infrastructure and all the necessary supporting services," said



THE BEST BACKING GROUP IN THE WORLD? Members of Severn View Chapter made the Bryan Adams Concert possible

Trevor. "Dealing with someone as big as Bryan Adams, you can't afford any mistakes. Everything has to be the best and everything has to be absolutely right.

"That's where BNI became the obvious choice as organisational 'backing band' for the event. Everything I needed to organise the concert was available through chapter members, who duly acted as a 'one-stop-shop' for probably the biggest rock event Bristol had ever staged."

The concert took place a few weeks ago at Bristol City's Ashton Gate football stadium, attended by 19,000 fans. "When all the accounting is done, I hope it will have raised a huge sum to help as many children as possible," said Trevor

The All-seeing BNEye!

Merseysider Andy Bounds has discovered a new dimension to BNI: his fellow members know him much better than he knows himself!

Liverpool Alpha's Chapter Director was quite content in his job as a training consultant with the national group ATC. He was doing well, enjoyed his work, and was happy with the remuneration. And that's the way it would probably have stayed, had it not been for his BNI colleagues, who knew he would do even better running his own business.

"It's true I had some quite unusual teaching techniques," said Andy, "and when I became Chapter Director, these came to the fore in our breakfast meetings. It became the norm for colleagues to come up and say to me: 'You ought to be running your own show, Andy. You'd make a real success of it.'"

"I started to think my colleagues were right, and the more I thought about it, the more convinced I became. When they realised I was coming round to their way of thinking, they increased the pressure still further and incredibly, all sorts of offers came flooding in from members who wanted to help me!"

And so it was that with a lot of help from his friends, Andy launched his new training company, Abnormal Results Ltd just a few weeks ago. Already, the future looks good for Andy, even though he deliberately asked his chapter colleagues not to seek business contacts for him while he worked his notice with ATC.

"They're a great bunch, and the moment they knew I'd started out on my



CHANGE FOR THE BETTER: Andy Bounds has not looked back in business since he joined Liverpool's Alpha Chapter.

own, they put me in touch with the Princes Trust and Liverpool Law Society, both of which are likely to figure amongst my first new contracts," said Andy.

"This support is fantastic, but what really amazes me is that you can build up such a close relationship with colleagues through the BNI philosophy that they end up knowing you better than you know yourself! Not only could I not have set up on my own without BNI - I would never have even thought about it!"

Andy Bounds can be contacted on 07734 388 606.

Gold No.3 for Shrewsbury

If the number of 'black badge' holders is an indication of a Chapter's progress, then Shrewsbury is heading for the front, with a third member joining BNI's Gold Club.

Tony Allwood, of the Practical Internet Company, received his black badge a few weeks ago, to join colleagues Shaun Dixon and Mark Jennings who had already achieved the BNI 'gold standard'.

Meanwhile, congratulations also go to a further eight members who have joined the Club in recent weeks. They are: Jim Vincent (Leeds Armouries Thursday Chapter), Clare Curley (Mid Herts), Kay Morrice (Ridley, Gateshead), Richard Palmer (Chelmsford Meadows), Grahame Anderson (Alpha, Glasgow), Angela Lawson (Huddersfield), David Raybould (North Staffs) and John Bevan (Tamworth).



TRIPLE GOLD: High flying members of Shrewsbury Chapter proudly display their Gold Badge Club membership.

Brothers get their share of BNI!

Two brothers who run a leading Yorkshire chain of jewellers have produced a unique BNI 'first' in the UK by becoming the only brothers to be simultaneously elected as chapter directors!

David Share runs the Share Group's retail outlet in Leeds and was recently appointed director of Leeds Moortown Chapter while his younger brother Richard, who manages the Barnsley shop became Director of the Leeds North (Tuesday) Chapter.

"It's a great honour to become a chapter director but for two of us to be taking up the position at the same time is fantastic. The situation has brought us considerable publicity from the media," said Richard.

"We've been involved in BNI for over two years and it's been wonderful for our personal development as well as improving the quality of suppliers we now have and increasing our customer base."

The duo may have directorships in common, but they have quite different priorities for their respective chapters. David's main objective is to increase his group's membership which currently stands at 30, while Richard is aiming to improve the quality of referrals among his 44-strong membership.

Hoping to share in the pair's success, colleague Martin McSorley who works in the Leeds shop added his own jewel to the Share brothers' double crowning. "While we were toasting our double appointments, Martin walked in and told us that he had been made Education Co-ordinator at the Leeds Thursday Chapter, so that completed a rare BNI hat-trick!" Richard told SuccessNet.

Contact Richard and David on 01226 205 318



SHARING IN SUCCESS?: Yorkshire jewellers Richard Share (left) and David (centre) believe they may be the first brothers to hold the post of chapter director simultaneously. Looking on is business colleague Martin McSorley.

Obituary- Catherine Duggan

One of Killarney Chapter's best-loved founder members, travel agent Catherine Duggan (owner of South-West Travel) has died after losing her battle with cancer. Chapter colleague and friend, Eamon Mulvihill asked SuccessNet to remember her with this moving tribute.

"Throughout life we all face difficult times, none more so than the loss of someone close to us. This Spring we all faced such a time, when we had to bid farewell to our friend and colleague Catherine. Even though her death was expected, it still took us all by surprise. Somehow it was inconceivable that this woman who had triumphed over so much during her too-brief a life could ever leave us. As a friend she was loyal and honest, as a business colleague she was truthful and fair, and as a human being she was just one big heart.

Catherine was an example to us all, her belief and faith was unmovable, and she was willing and able to face whatever came her way. Her determination to see things through to the end and get things done no matter what the obstacle, made her a true leader in the community. As a friend, colleague, daughter, wife and mother she will be missed," said Eamon. SuccessNet also extends its sincere condolences to the families and relatives of two of BNI's London members who passed away recently. Rekha Mahal was a popular member of the Ealing Chapter, while Dave Saunders was an Area Director for London North Central.

Like father, like son

they have in common, because Charlie and Joe work for the same organisation - Telecomplus plc (a utilities warehouse), as independent distributors who provide discounted phone network services, and cheap electricity and gas.

"Charlie regards this job as his 'pension', but I'm sure he prefers his other jobs, as a scuba diving instructor and wine seller!" commented Joe.

"Dad recommended me to BNI when I first started working with Telecomplus," said Charlie. "He reckoned I'd find a good network of business advisers and he was quite right. It really helped me in setting up on my own, when I needed accountants, bankers and solicitors."

For both Joe and Charlie, having the help of nearly 40 BNI colleagues looking out for new business, has also enabled them to adopt a



slightly more relaxed outlook on life. Joe, for example, has become a competent golfer, with a handicap of 19, although he still carries his practice putter and a few balls wherever he goes - even on visits to BNI HQ. He added: "BNI has become quite a family affair for us, generating a lot of business and proving that the philosophy of Giver's Gain really does work."

Joe can be contacted on 01923 827 987 and Charlie on 01752 665 613.



While more than a few BNI chapters have seen family 'pairings' - members who are husband and wife, brothers, father and daughter - we're inclined to think that Joe and Charlie Sandercock are the first father and son team to have been directors of different chapters.

Just as Joe finished his term as Chapter Director of Three Valleys Chapter, Pinner in October last year, Charlie took over the chair of Plymouth's Drake Chapter. But, that's not all

Scarborough fair? You bet!

They said it would be a flop. They said BNI would never work in seasonal seaside resort. They couldn't have been more wrong! Scarborough Chapter celebrates its first anniversary this month having generated more than £1.2 million worth of new business among its modest membership.

The Chapter passed the £1million referral mark in March - just eight months after its launch - and, as SuccessNet went to press, members had notched up just over £1.2 million in business passed across the breakfast table - with a further four meetings to go before their first birthday.

The Chapter also revealed another dra-

matic figure: the average value of a member's chair during its first year was a staggering £60,000 - more than twice the national average.

Chapter Director Philip O'Brien told SuccessNet: "There were more than a few doubters when we first suggested a BNI chapter for Scarborough, because the town stands out on its own and, like many seaside resorts, much of the business here is seasonal. We were fortunate in attracting a

great team of members from the start who gelled really well, but the real key to our success has been simply following BNI's philosophy and procedures to the letter."



SCARBOROUGH SMILES: Chapter members celebrate winning two top awards - Best New Chapter and Most Business per Member - at the recent Yorkshire Members' Day.



BEST OF FRIENDS: Chris Liles with Tigger

In-cup-acitated Norwich

When Chris Liles was Education Coordinator for the Norwich City Chapter, his enthusiasm earned him the nickname of Tigger - the cuddly tiger epitomised by a certain breakfast cereal. Chris responded by buying a toy Tigger who was passed, for the duration of the meeting, to the member who produced the best 60 second presentation.

Sadly, time and rough treatment have taken their toll, and Tigger can no longer sit up on his own without being stuffed inside a coffee cup. However, despite his failing health, he maintains a 100% attendance record - and he hasn't even sent along a substitute.

Double 'Oscar' performances

Member of Cheshire's Wilmslow Chapter, provided award winning star performances to win the northern finals of BNI's "Making Movies" chapter building award - after tearing up the script with just 30 minutes shooting time left!

Up against 10 other qualifying teams, Chapter Director Paul Smith and his fellow thespians - Kerry & Arthur Blake, Rose Schreiber, Keith Jones, Eric Appleby and Kevin Betts - spent most of the day at Old Trafford Football Ground, developing a film script brief they'd been offered on arrival, involving dance, mime and singing.

"But having chosen the idea and spent virtually all the day working on it, we decided with 30 minutes to go that it wasn't good enough, so we scrapped the plot and decided on a "Cooking with BNI" parody theme. We recorded it in just one take and instantly knew it was a winner!" said Paul.

The award-winning video won a standing ovation when it was played to the full Wilmslow membership at the next breakfast meeting. Meanwhile in the southern regional finals, the Oscar went to the members of Winchester Chapter, with neighbours Fareham giving them a close run.



You & SuccessNet

If you want your item to be considered for inclusion in SuccessNet, make sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and your address! But note that, faced with up to 200 editorial contributions per issue, we cannot squeeze all of them into our 16-page publication. Some stories may be held over for a later edition, but it means some of your contributions may never see the light of day. Please don't be deterred from sending in your news and views because we DO want to hear from you.

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