

SuccessNet

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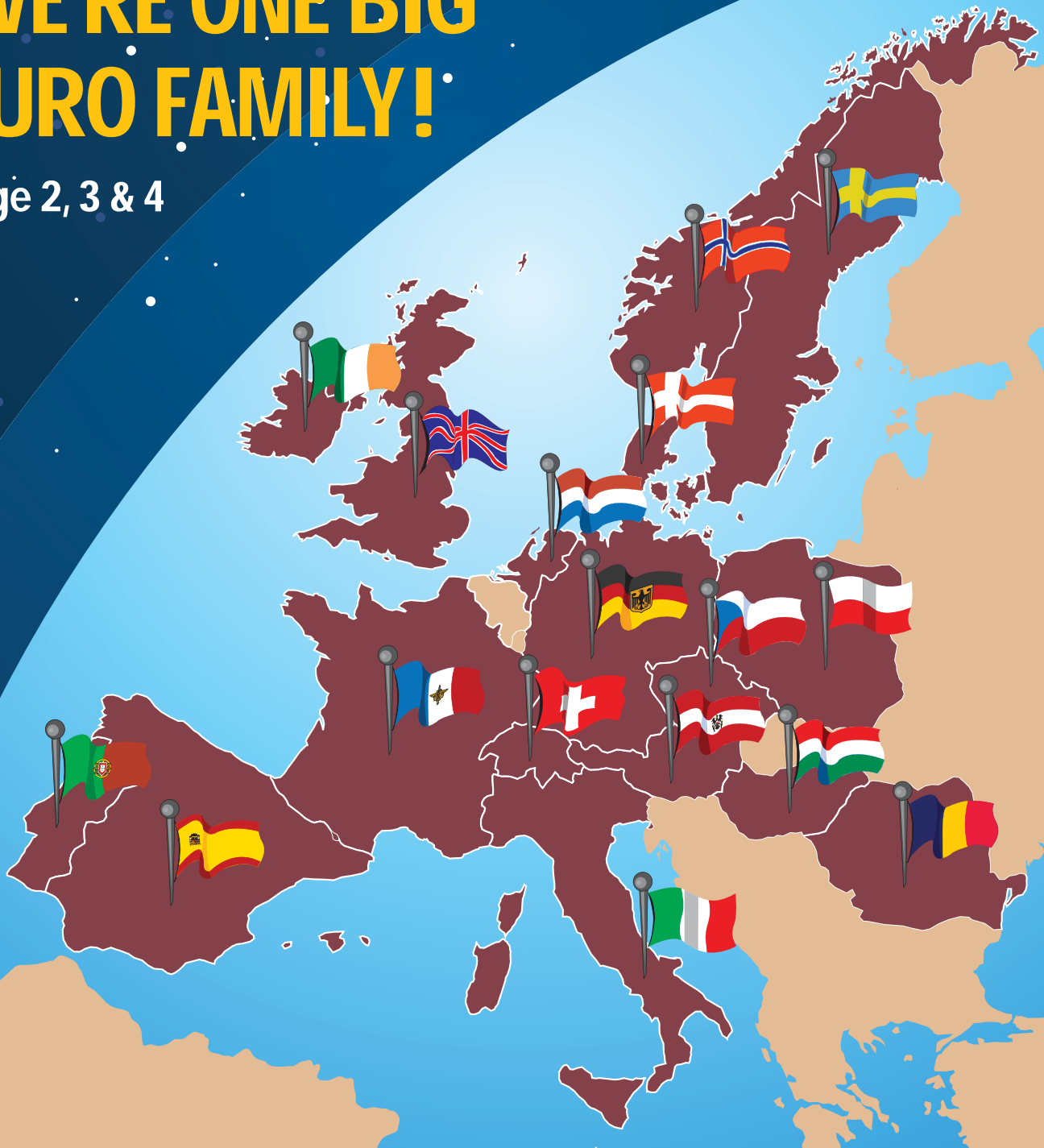
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EDUCATION *and* INFORMATION BULLETIN for BNI MEMBERS

WHILE GLOBAL EXPANSION CONTINUES

WE'RE ONE BIG EURO FAMILY!

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LAWSON'S LORE

100,000 MEMBERS AND NEARLY 5,000 CHAP

While a cursory glance through the pages of SuccessNet reaffirms BNI's transition to the level of maturity that befits the world's largest, most successful business referral organisation, the sheer scale of our activities across the whole of Europe may still come as something of a surprise to many readers.

Although BNI's continued expansion 'at home' has been well publicised, what may not be so readily apparent is that we currently have more than 830 chapters with over 18,000 members in 15 European countries stretching from Scandinavia and the Baltics to the Mediterranean. And, with further countries including Hungary and the Czech Republic preparing to launch their first chapters, adding to inaugural groups in Poland and Romania over the past year, the spread of BNI and the Giver's Gain philosophy can only become ever more impressive in the months ahead.

Our fast-growing pan-European family is just one good reason why, if you haven't yet visited BNI's new website (www.bni.eu), you could do worse than spend half an hour updating your knowledge of the organisation's extensive presence across mainland Europe, as well as checking out the range of new and improved members' services now freely available through our website. (See facing page for full details).

Add to this the recent introduction of regular podcasts (www.bnipodcast.com) by our founder, Dr Ivan Misner, (providing invaluable training and resource material for education co-ordinators on ways to enhance members' business skills and the value of their BNI membership), together with the ever-growing success of our hugely popular 'Members Days', and it is easy to see how both the personal and financial benefits of belonging to BNI are expanding all the time.

Small wonder then, that these pages highlight such a colourful spectrum of individual member's achievements, from the passing of increasingly valuable and enterprising referrals to acknowledging the business successes that have resulted from the wealth of education and learning they have gained from their membership.

But rest assured, no matter how large the organisation becomes, we will never lose the personal touch. BNI is what it is because of the way that every member of our 'family' has been nurtured to learn and adopt BNI's methods of doing better business. It means that today's newcomers to any chapter will find themselves joining a sophisticated organisation that offers them not only extensive business resources but also a degree of support, help and advice they will not find anywhere else. And all we ask in return is that they embrace the Giver's Gain philosophy. ●

Anyone who has attended a presentation by BNI's Founder and Chairman, Dr Ivan Misner, instantly knows why he is called the 'father of modern networking'. As the definitive authority on word-of-mouth marketing, his unrivalled know-how about gaining more business is worth its weight in gold.

Now BNI's 100,000 members worldwide can enjoy direct access to bite-sized nuggets of Dr Misner's vast store of knowledge through a regular official BNI Podcast – comprising 10-minute audio discussions with the organisation's Founder and other BNI networking heavyweights, including the UK's national director Gillian Lawson who is among those being lined up to participate in forthcoming broadcasts.

Launched just a few weeks ago and aimed especially at chapter education co-ordinators, the podcasts feature Dr. Misner discussing the hottest topics of business interest, offering valuable techniques and strategies for overcoming specific business problems and inviting questions and feedback from members in 37 countries around the world.

Podcast topics offer a wealth of new

material and fresh ideas for education co-ordinators, some of whom have already played parts of individual broadcasts as part of their education slots at the weekly meetings - with the aim of encouraging all members to listen to them via their desktop or laptop computers, at a time that best suits them. Podcasts from previous weeks are retained for open access, and you can also read (and print) the complete transcripts for each week's topic.

Dr Misner told SuccessNet: "One of my aims in introducing the podcasts was to flatten out the BNI hierarchy by talking directly to our members worldwide. Over the coming months, the podcasts will present a wealth of materials to members, and I hope we'll be able to offer solutions to the vast majority of business issues that they raise. But above all, it's a great way to share our knowledge and experiences for the benefit of all BNI members, and help them get maximum value from their BNI membership. ●

You can subscribe to the podcasts free of charge, by registering either via the i-tunes music store website or by going directly to: www.bnipodcast.com

Introducing the BNI Podcast

Harriers go flying to reach 1,000 mark



Barely 15 months after its launch, The Harriers Chapter in Alton, Hampshire has flown past a major milestone – with members passing over 1,000 referrals worth an estimated £335,000!

The group celebrated the referral landmark in early June, prompting Chapter Director Andrew Flower to comment: "We are extremely proud that in little over a year, our members have found over 1,000 good business referrals for each other."

Andrew, owner of Collective Legal Solutions added: "Our next step is to grow the chapter's membership with the aim of producing even more referrals each week, and hitting the 2,000

milestone by the time we mark our second anniversary. We're a very diverse group of professions and trades and this has created a very buoyant, lively chapter."

As SuccessNet went to press, the Harriers were staging a visitors day but Andrew urged any local entrepreneur interested in sharing their success to go along to any breakfast meeting, held at Alton's Grange Hotel every Tuesday morning. ●

Contact Andrew on 01256 461488 or visit the chapter's website at: www.bni-alton.co.uk for more information.

Mark Gillman

WELCOME TO BNI'S ALL-NEW WEBSITE!

If you haven't already discovered it, stop what you're doing, go to your nearest website browser, click on www.bni.eu - select your chosen country, and be impressed!

Yes, BNI has a sparkling all-new website for members (and prospective members) in the UK, Ireland and more than a dozen mainland European countries - one that's not just more attractive and easier to use, but far more useful, thanks to a number of new interactive features and facilities.

Likely to be one of the new website's most popular features is 'Network Central', an extensive and constantly updated pan-European directory of members' businesses, enabling anyone to instantly access the services of BNI colleagues and locate a specific business category or individual company by name in any town or region in any country where BNI is active. It means, for example, that the member of a London chapter urgently requiring the services of a solicitor based in Glasgow can immediately find all BNI solicitors in the area within just a few seconds.

Better still, Network Central provides for every member to register his or her specific business services within its directory so that - using the above example - someone looking for a commercial lawyer in Glasgow, would be able to compare the entries of different BNI solicitors in the city to find the one offering the most appropriate expertise. There is also a vCard facility, enabling you to import their contact details and business description directly into (Microsoft) Outlook.

Similarly, the 'chapter finder' is faster and easier, enabling members and visitors to quickly locate any of the 830-plus European chapters and get information about local regional BNI directors. The same facility can be used by potential members to find chapters in any geographical area that have vacancies for their business categories.

Other key improvements to the website,

designed to be more search-engine friendly right down to chapter level, include:

- A revised Members section, containing latest information about new workshops, member days, Podcasts and other BNI activities.
- The option - likely to be in considerable demand - for individual BNI regions to create their own sub sites featuring local chapter news, continuously-changing random Network Central members' details on the front (regional) page, and the next training event - all utilising the same smart design features as the main website.
- A highly visual display showing the geographical locations of all BNI chapters in the given area (of any particular search), with direct links to Google maps.
- A sophisticated 'SuccessNet' archive, allowing you to download PDF versions of past issues of the BNI newsletter, as well as find any specific article to read, print out or email.



The new website was created by web designer Duncan Webster (BNI's executive director for Northants and Leicestershire) and his team. He said: "I consider it an honour and privilege to be involved with a project of this scale for BNI and its members, and I'm very proud of the solution we have created."

National Director Gillian Lawson said: "Our original European website had evolved over several years as a widely-used information tool for members, but it was time for a fresh approach. Its successor is more user-friendly and inter-active, and members will find it ideal for locating and contacting colleagues offering specific business services, developing synergistic alliances, and accessing the comprehensive range of education and training materials BNI provides for members." ●

Stan's the man to fix long-distance leak

BNI's new website had barely become reality before it was pressed into action by Kent member, Evelyn Tanner, in coming to the rescue of her ageing mother-in-law 300 miles away in Plymouth.

A member of Viking Chapter in Broadstairs, and sales and marketing manager at St. Augustine's Conference Centre in Westgate on Sea, Evelyn was enjoying a quiet Sunday at

home when her 86-year old mother-in-law phoned to say her bathroom had sprung a leak.

Not relishing the prospect of a 600-mile round trip to Plymouth to deal with the problem, Evelyn went onto BNI's website and within minutes had located the ideal BNI colleague in Plymouth's Drake Chapter - Stan Mair from Handy-Do, professional handyman services - to solve the problem.

"A quick explanatory phone call to Stan not only saw him repair the offending leak within hours, but when we said Mum lived on her own, he very kindly offered to revisit her later to make sure everything was OK. His service was fantastic and saved us a lot of worry," said a relieved Evelyn. ●

Contact Evelyn on 0800 389 4001.

NEWS

They came from far and wide. From Perth to Plymouth, from Sri Lanka to South Africa. But, while their backgrounds and businesses may have been poles apart, they all went away with one common feeling: This was THE best ever Members' Day.

Southampton's magnificent De Vere Grand Harbour Hotel was the appropriate backdrop for Members' Day 2007 and nearly 500 BNI delegates who packed its main conference centre were not to be disappointed – treated to a day of powerful keynote presentations and motivational sessions from the organisation's most experienced and colourful leaders.

Topping the bill was BNI's Chairman and Founder Dr Ivan Misner, widely regarded as 'the father of modern networking', whose ice-breaking, no-holds-barred "Ask the Founder" Q & A session, contained a wealth of hints, tips and advice to enhance both the individual's membership of BNI and

delegates' abilities to grow their businesses through word-of-mouth marketing.

Dr Misner, author of numerous top-selling business marketing and networking books, then delivered one of the day's keynote sessions – "Truth or Delusion?" – based on his latest publication of the same name, offering many new insights into BNI's proven marketing strategies which many delegates will use in their respective chapters' education slots in the coming months.

Among the event's other highlights was the motivational presentation from one of BNI's most entertaining and knowledgeable directors, Frank De Raffe who is among New York's best known business management trainers, running high powered marketing courses for some of the Big Apple's most promising young executives, as well as being BNI's Executive Director for the prime Hudson Valley region.

His talk, "How to dominate your market place" had delegates' spellbound, lacing his

dynamic presentation on business-building ideas with a host of witty anecdotes and personal experiences.

Between the half dozen major presentations, several 'break-out' networking sessions had been set aside for delegates to meet and develop potential business with other members. With previous members' days having generated as much as £100,000 worth of validated new business for individual delegates, this year's event was estimated to have produced potential business for members worth several millions of pounds, emanating from referrals passed on the day.

The event, sponsored by NatWest, was accurately summed up by Milton Keynes' Diamond Chapter (CHECK) member, David Morris who said: "I left at the end of the day with so many good ideas to put into practice, so many new opportunities to explore, and enough inspiration and motivation on board to last me for months." ●

Southampton 07: "Best ever" say members

LIMO LUXURY FOR ANDOVER'S CONFERENCE PARTY



Eager networkers flocked from all parts of the UK to this year's European Members' Day in Southampton – but none did it in greater style than a trio of colleagues from Andover's Anton Chapter, who arrived sipping champagne in a 27-foot long Lincoln Towncar limousine!

The idea to make the 120-mile round trip in sheer luxury came from the immediate past chapter director Ben Walton one of whose businesses – Ben's Limos – hires out luxury transport and chauffeurs, and when he broached the idea with fellow Anton members, Internet consultant Ray Vernon and blacksmith Martyn Dean, they were hardly going to turn down the proposal!

In fact as the only one of the trio insured to drive the huge limousine, Ben reckons he drew the short straw because while he had to keep his eyes on the road – and negotiate a very tricky entrance into the grounds of Southampton's De Vere Hotel – Ray and Martyn sat back drinking champagne and

watching the latest James Bond movie, 'Casino Royale' on the limo's big screen

Ben, who says at least 20% of his new business in the past four years has come through BNI referrals, added: "The Lincoln usually carries eight passengers in comfort, so Ray and Martyn must have felt like film stars having the entire compartment to themselves. But we made quite an entrance to the conference and, as our photo shows, even BNI's founder, Dr Ivan Misner was sufficiently impressed to take a good look around the vehicle."

Ben described the event as "a most fantastic day" and said it had provided delegates with a goldmine of business nuggets. "I'm now my chapter's education co-ordinator, and from Dr Misner's presentation alone on 'Truth or Delusion', I've got more than enough material to fill every slot for the next six months." ●

Contact Ben on 01264 352684.

Members Day delivers chance of a lifetime for Tracy



For one relative newcomer to BNI's ranks, this year's Yorkshire Region's Members' Day had a particularly rewarding outcome. Recruitment consultant Tracy Bowler from Doncaster's Dynamite Chapter made the short trip to the nearby Wakefield event because she was eager to enhance her business skills – but found herself winning a 6,000-mile round trip to New York to study under one of BNI's leading business gurus Frank De Raffele.

Tracy Bowler, who only joined BNI in January this year – at the same time she launched her own consultancy, Future Associates – confessed to being "bowled over" by the impact of Frank's keynote speech to members, but that was nothing to her delight when her business card was picked out of the hat at the end of his presentation, earning her a free place on one of Frank's renowned business management training courses held in the Big Apple.

She told SuccessNet: "I'd been to a number of BNI meetings in the past so I was fully aware of the benefits of joining such a phenomenal networking organisation, but I obviously hadn't attended a national members' conference before and felt I'd learn something from listening to inspirational speakers and networking with like-minded entrepreneurs.

"At the end of Frank's powerful session, he'd provided me with more than enough material to fill every slot as my chapter's education co-ordinator and this was reward alone for attending, but the icing on the cake was when he pulled out my business card and announced I'd won this fabulous prize. I've never won a thing in my life, so this was a very positive omen. I am passionate about my business and felt someone was looking down on me saying: 'This is your time. Make the most of it!'"

Meanwhile, a similar prize offered by Frank De Raffele at the Members' Day event in Southampton (see opposite page for more details) was won by David Morris of Kendlebell, a member of the Diamond Chapter in Milton Keynes. ●

Contact Tracy on 01302 710681 or 07973 257524

What was about to become a very 'bad hair day' for Conwy & Denbighshire Chapter member Teresa Carnall recently, was turned into a roaring success thanks to the help of her local BNI director and the application of a little Giver's Gain philosophy.

Teresa's firm, TBC Marketing, had organised a grand launch to publicise the opening of an ultra-modern hairdressers in Bangor, North Wales, but with just days to go, the two well-known Welsh actresses she'd persuaded to open the salon both pulled out to attend the funeral of much-loved Welsh television director, Dafydd Arthur Williams.

She said: "It was a huge blow. I'd got all the regional media keen to cover the story and HTV had promised to film the event for the evening news! Now, I'd not only lost my star openers, but most of the Welsh media would be at the funeral instead."

Teresa hit the phones to find a stand-in celebrity, but everyone she called was also attending the funeral. Thumbing through her contacts list for the last time, she realised there was one person she hadn't tried who knew just about everyone who was anyone in North Wales – BNI's regional director, Ewan Sturman.



He said: "I received a frantic phone call from Teresa on Thursday evening asking if I could help her out. I had a few thoughts and by the following morning we'd organised for two of North Wales' most popular radio DJs - Kev Bach and Zowie Williams from Champion 103 - to officially open the salon, even doing a live link from the premises. Teresa was more than a little relieved!"

Teresa added: "Thanks to Ewan, not only was a potential PR disaster averted but the day was a roaring success. We ended up with more radio coverage than we could ever have hoped for, and attracted more people than we'd anticipated, generating £800 for charity. I hate to think what might have happened without the power of the BNI network." ●

Contact Teresa on 01492 540423 or at: teresa@tbcmarketing.co.uk

BNI saves a 'bad hair day' in Bangor

NEWS IN BRIEF

YORK'S KNAVES HAVE A BALL - AND PASS THEIR TARGET

Members of York's Knavesmire Chapter have proved themselves the kings and queens of fund-raising for charity, after staging and hosting a glittering charity ball – and passing their ambitious £10,000 target for NSPCC projects and services in the Yorkshire area.

The Ball was held at York Racecourse where guests enjoyed a reception, four-course dinner and dancing to live music, while a giant-sized Scalextric, a huge chocolate fountain and a host of games and activities all organised by chapter members, also kept revellers in the party spirit. Katie Bland, NSPCC corporate appeals manager said: "It was a fantastic event. Every penny raised will help make a difference to the life of a child in the region. The chapter is to be congratulated." ●

LAWRENCE PREPARES FOR EPIC 2,500 MILE RIDE

Few busy company bosses would allow a fund-raising initiative to disturb their summer holidays but in Gateshead, husband-and-wife BNI members Nicola and Lawrence Laidlow are giving up the whole of August to raise £1 million for the NSPCC.

A former director of George Chapter, Nicola is organising the complex logistics while Lawrence will be astride his Harley Davidson motor bike, aiming to circumnavigate Britain's 2,450 mile coastline in under four weeks, stopping off in towns and cities to support local fund-raising events.

Lawrence, the Managing Director of Intelligent Access Systems, still hopes to hear from members based on and close to the UK coastline who are willing to help with fund-raising and offers of free overnight accommodation. He said: "It's going to be a long ride, requiring a huge amount of sponsorship and goodwill if I'm to get close to my £1 million target. My own chapter is very supportive, but I need to hear from other BNI groups who can help me along the route." ●

If you can help, call Lawrence on 07725 841 617 or write to: lawrence.laidlow@homecall.co.uk

REFERRALS ARE US!



A referral from hell? Not for Anthony!

mentalism and street hypnosis - which means temporarily bending people's minds out of shape, but until I joined BNI this was very much a sideline - even though I'd always wanted to make performing more central to my career."

Little did he know what was about to happen on his first visit to the Premier Chapter when, after introducing his unusual skills, he was given a referral that proved to be "absolute gold" for his fledgling vocation as a stage performer. "As a visitor, I thought I'd be lucky to get a modest referral to someone who wanted to lose weight or stop smoking but instead, Kerry Bailey - Derby University's Events Manager - referred me to the Head of the Students Union who was planning an major awards dinner for all the university's clubs and societies. I met him and promptly got the gig to open the evening's entertainment with a full on hypnosis show," said Anthony, pictured (above) at work.

"That referral - my first in BNI - was worth its weight in gold, giving me the opportunity to break into the notoriously difficult university performing circuit, and play to a large audience in a quality venue where I could make full use of lighting, sound and effects."

Ironically, Anthony's first big show might have backfired had it not been for his undoubted stage skills. "I'd planned a highbrow presentation revealing the mysteries of the human mind but when over 300 rowdy, drunken students started shouting and booing at me within minutes of starting, I abandoned my plans in favour of something much more basic and tasteless.

"It ended up with the Union's macho Vice President believing his name was Jenny, one of the university's rugby team convinced he was a lesbian trapped in a man's body and the audience baying for the Head of the Cheerleaders to kick me where it hurts! Fortunately I'd hypnotised her into believing I was surrounded by an invisible forcefield, so she bounced off it and fell over. And they all loved it," he added. "This first referral paid for my BNI seat before my application had been processed, but even better, it has opened a vital door for me as I look to changing course. Thanks to BNI and this break, I'm already discussing ideas with a major TV production company." •

Contact Anthony on 07970 175104 or visit his website at: www.anthonijacquain.com

His application for membership had not even been processed before hypnotist Anthony Jacquin was given what most of us would regard as the referral from hell: an invitation to single-handedly entertain an audience of 315 drunken, rowdy students for a whole hour!

Anthony is one of a select group of professionals who use hypnotherapy to treat clients' fears, phobias and psychological disorders and, when he decided to join Derby's Premier Chapter two months ago, it was with the aim of boosting his therapy and hypnosis training courses following a move north from London.

He told SuccessNet: "My day job comprises one-to-one sessions of solution focussed therapy, bending my clients' minds back into shape by showing them how to rapidly change the way they think, feel and respond in any area of their life, and training courses in hypnosis and hypnotherapy. I also enjoy performing a kind of magic known as

What goes around, comes around....

There's an old saying that if you don't ask, you don't get....one reason why you won't find Middlesex will writer Rosalind Austin holding back when it comes to seizing every opportunity.

As a relatively new member of one of BNI's oldest UK chapters, Concord in Rickmansworth, Ros surprised her colleagues when, at a recent breakfast meeting, instead of asking for referrals for her will-writing and estate planning services, she followed up an email she'd sent around to all her BNI colleagues and

announced: "Today I'm looking for a referral to someone who will buy my BMW 5-series car within a week!"

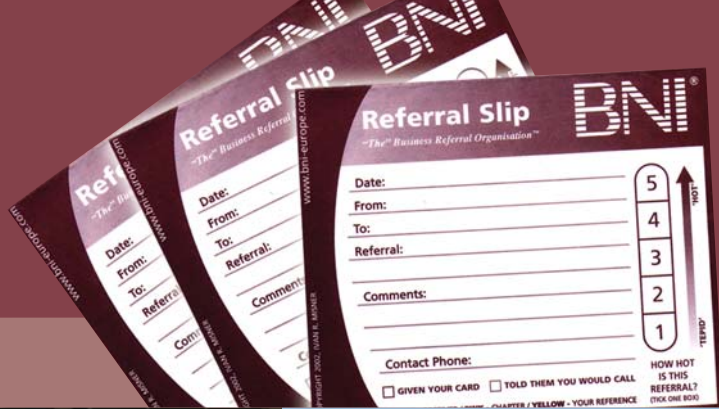
She added: "I know it's a long shot but I'm taking delivery of my new car next week and I haven't got room for both of them, so can anyone help?"

Ros was astute enough to know that with over 40 Concord colleagues eager to rise to the challenge, something might just happen. And it did. Fellow Concord member, Terry Calder from Carwrights Garage in Northwood mentioned it to his

business partner, Nigel Loli, who was acting as a substitute at the following Wednesday meeting of neighbouring Enterprise Chapter when, by a quirk of co-incidence a new member stood up and said he was looking for a second-hand BMW 520 - the very model Ros wanted to sell.

She said: "It was the luckiest break, but the moral is that it pays to network with BNI colleagues not just in your own chapter, but those in adjacent chapters. In my case it paid off in more ways than one because I'd resigned myself to trading in my old car for below its market value, but in the end I received £1,000 more than I'd expected - and had the money within a week of asking for this unusual referral." •

Ros can be contacted on 01923 836252 or at: ros@mywills.net



KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY: Members of Hove's Albion Chapter pictured outside their venue.



KEY REFERRAL IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

Pressed by his Albion Chapter colleagues to come up with a specific referral request during his 60-second slot, just one company came to mind for Andrew Leader.

Each day on the way into his Hove, Sussex office, Andrew would walk past the imposing premises of Palmer & Harvey, one of the South Coast's major logistics groups, and as the boss of local water cooler suppliers, Aqualeader, he knew it would be a fantastic client to win.

Andrew duly announced that he'd love to get a referral into such a prestigious company and, while he admitted it was a long shot, he kept his fingers crossed. Initially there were no referrals for Andrew but then, as the last member to be called, builder Tony Morris stood up and said: "I am bit embarrassed about this,

but that referral you want . . . well, the person you need to speak to is my Dad!"

Afterwards, Tony said: "Andrew and I have been members of Hove Albion Chapter for three years, but it never crossed my mind to make the introduction to the company where my Dad was in charge of all maintenance and supplies, until he specifically asked for that referral. His timing was perfect because my father was retiring just a few weeks later and, if he hadn't asked when he did, my contact would have been lost."

A delighted Andrew commented: "I never thought I'd get any response, let alone get the ideal referral into a major company. I went to see Tony's father right away and, as luck had it, he'd been reviewing the group's water cooler suppliers. Needless to say, Palmer and Harvey are now ideal clients for us and have become a great addition to our client list."

Meanwhile Tony is also pretty pleased with his Albion colleagues, having already picked up more than £100,000 worth of building contracts in the first half of this year directly through BNI. "The amount of business we receive via my chapter colleagues is absolutely great, and it's getting better all the time," he added. ●

Andrew can be contacted on 01273 299685 and Tony on 01273 559 530.

Leeds' top networker says "thanks, BNI"

BNI membership has given Shipley-based IT solutions specialist Charles Wilson plenty to smile about in the past three years. And after being recently voted 'Leeds' Best Networker of the Year' by the city's Chamber of Commerce, he was happy to acknowledge the award was largely thanks to BNI!

"I now belong to half a dozen business networking groups in Yorkshire, but three years ago it was a different story. BNI was the first such organisation I joined and frankly it has taught me more about business than any other," said Charles, a member of Leeds Moortown Chapter.

"The Chamber of Commerce award came as a complete surprise during one of their lunchtime networking functions, but without my three years experience in BNI, it would never have happened. I have learnt so much and this knowledge has been just as valuable as all the new business gained through chapter colleagues."

As business development director for Altrigen Solutions, Charles knows the value of word-of-mouth referrals which, he says, generated 25% of all their new business in the past 12 months. "Last year the net worth of BNI referrals was around £120,000 and this year I'm hoping it will be at least £150,000. But this is just the ultimate bonus, because BNI has already given me so much more in terms of personal development, business support and new friends." ●

Contact Charles on 07970 867107.

BIG referral slip creates BIG impact



Printer David Wimblett has used his own business resources to increase the value of referrals in his Twickenham Chapter – by creating a giant-sized referral slip that highlights the average annual value of BNI membership.

Initially used in the education slot at his own Business Class Chapter – where it immediately helped stimulate the level of referrals to generate £17,000-worth of new business in just six weeks – David then decided to test its effect in other chapters he supports, including Tudor Chapter at Teddington, and the new Iolanthe group in Isleworth, both of which reported similar effects.

"A bold, eye-catching visual is likely to impress visitors and members, and it's also a great way to highlight the average value of a seat around any BNI breakfast table, encouraging members to step up their referral activity," said David.

Our picture, courtesy of Martine La Roche Photography, shows David (left) pointing out the giant slip's benefits to Business Class Chapter Director, Karl Marie, and he now hopes that other chapters will see its potential, which could just be good for his south London printing business. ●

If you are interested, contact David on 07836 378170.



FALCONS HEALTH

4,000 not out – but where are all the trades?

One of the UK's most northerly chapters has just marked its fifth anniversary by passing its 4,000th referral. But while you might think the members of Aberdeen's Alpha Chapter would be reasonably happy with their landmark achievement, there's one thing missing from their ranks which they feel would make their good chapter great: more tradespeople!

"Our group comprises nearly all professional people," said Chapter Director John Wingate, an architectural designer. "We get on very well and generate a lively business atmosphere at meetings, but we're missing out by not having enough artisans, craftsmen and tradespeople around our breakfast table.

"It seems we're victims of Aberdeen's booming economy which has seen massive house building and renovation programmes over the past couple of years, providing so

much work for the city's trades that they don't need to find any more. It's good for them, but not so good for us," he added.

Not that Alpha's members (pictured above) were going to let it spoil their fifth birthday celebrations, which saw them enjoy a champagne breakfast, rounded off with big slices of birthday cake.

While it may have difficulty attracting trades, Alpha has no problem retaining members, a number of whom were there at its launch back in 2002. "Their experience and knowledge is a great help in maintaining the chapter's dynamics," John added. "And it shows we must be doing most things right, because they still want to take pro-active, high-profile roles." ●

If you know any trades who'd be interested in joining Alpha, contact John on 01467 641670.

While BNI rightly allows only one team of closely-related specialists to have formed themselves into a

Members of a six-strong 'health and wellness' group within Newcastle upon Tyne's Falcons Chapter have discovered the powerful individual and collective benefits of offering complementary services, after meeting each other for the first time through BNI.

The perfect example of a BNI 'power circle', the cluster's growing success is not only attracting many thousands of pounds worth of new business for its members, but creating a noticeable presence on Tyneside – an area not renowned for the health consciousness of its citizens.

The group's elder stateswoman is Nikken franchisee Susan Lawrence who, as a Falcons' founder and its first 'healthy living' ambassador with her company, LifeCycle, was determined to raise the profile of alternative health therapists by introducing other specialists to the group. A qualified nurse, she said: "I'd become frustrated by only ever helping people who were already ill. I wanted to reach them before they got sick and show them how they could avoid poor health.

"This meant re-educating people, so I knew the best way to get my message across to colleagues and the public, was to get other health and wellness experts to join the chapter, offering related services."

And that is exactly what Susan achieved. The first healthy addition to Falcons was Linda Turnbull, who had left a career in accountancy to practice a range of hands-on health therapies including shiatsu, reflexology and aromatherapy, from her smart Zen Health & Wellness Centre in Gosforth, Newcastle. She was followed by motivational speaker, life coach and trainer Jayne Goldstone – another to quickly recognise the added value of building a specialist team in the chapter.

The trio's next 'signing' was personal fitness trainer Sue Clark who had also thrown over a very different career in marketing. She said: "I'd previously visited another chapter but when I attended Falcons, I felt this great synergy with other healthcare members and knew we could all help each other."

Sue added: "Word-of-mouth referrals are the mainstay of my work because whenever a client starts to look and feel better, all their friends want to know how it's happened. Each of us in the health cluster meets clients whom we recognise would gain greater benefit if they received one or more of the complementary services offered by a

And, Hull fizzes past 3,000!



With referrals averaging 20 a week, members of Hull's Wilberforce Chapter could be excused for wanting to toast the passing of their 3,000th referral with a little more fizz than the usual cup of coffee.

So they cracked open the bubbly and all put their business cards into a hat before inviting the chapter's top referral giver, IFA Shane Beardsley, to draw the winner for a bottle of champagne to celebrate the occasion - won by IT trainer Pascal Dannerolle.

Fittingly, the milestone was reached on the same day that Wilberforce inducted two new members to the group, photographer

Andrew Crozier and LocalLife website boss Tony Rose, bringing the chapter to a healthy 30-strong members, most of whom are pictured above.

Chapter Director Clare Crowther said: "This is one of the most fertile periods in our four year history as we increase both the number of members and the referrals we're passing each week – demonstrated by the fact that some of our more prolific members, like osteopath Robert Wadsworth, have each been giving up to four referrals per meeting." ●

If you'd like to share in Wilberforce's success, call Clare on 01482 669314.

S FORM A VERY HY DUSTER!

ne person from any trade or profession to join its groups, a
sts in one of the North-East's longest-established chapters
very healthy – and profitable – cluster.

colleague, so we pass a lot of referrals between us."

Jayne then introduced homeopath and kinesiologist Ruth Sadler, who had also trained as a nurse before deciding homeopathy offered a more rewarding career. Ruth said: "One of the best things BNI taught me was that I needed to explain what I did far more simply, if I was to get the help of my chapter colleagues.

"Now I receive many more referrals, but even better is that by working as a close-knit team, we can offer the optimum solutions for people's physical or emotional problems. This might involve just one of us, but often the answer comes from a mix of two or three colleagues' expertise," she added.

Last but by no means least to join the cluster was Gateshead health analyst Mark Tough whose business, LifepHorce, specialises

in analysing blood, saliva and tissue samples to assess a client's overall health. He said: "I haven't looked back since meeting Linda Turnbull and learning about the Falcons' health team. When I visited the group, I found a very special energy and enthusiasm, and knew I had to get involved. It's great having trusted colleagues to whom I can refer my clients."

Immediate past chapter director Jayne Goldstone summed it up: "BNI has long recognised the extra value that power circles bring to any chapter. What makes ours special is that, by combining our knowledge, we are helping to make a difference to people's lives in the North-East. What better reward can there be?" ●

For more information, contact Jayne on 01661 821886.

WE HAVE A CLUSTER! Falcons' healthy sextet are (from left to right): Linda Turnbull, Ruth Sadler, Mark Tough, Jane Goldstone and Sue Clark, with its elder stateswoman, Susan Lawrence, kneeling.



Weathbuilders live up to their name!

They may not be millionaires just yet, but members of Wealthbuilders Chapter are entitled to be thinking in seven-figure numbers following a remarkable few weeks for the Wakefield group.

Hard on the heels of a unique 'double', when he handed £1M referrals to two of his colleagues, new Chapter Director Neil Glover found himself taking over the chair just days after members had reached a collective milestone, having passed referrals worth more than £1 million since they started using the 'Show Me The Money Box' system three years ago.

Retiring Chapter Director Nadine Hill said: "With our term nearly over, my Leadership Team got quite excited as the 'Show Me The Money' slips took the total ever closer to £1M, but it was only at our penultimate meeting that a slip came in to confirm we'd reached the magical seven figure level. We have some stunning 'givers' in our chapter and this proves that givers really do gain!"

The achievement marked the end of an exceptional period for the chapter which saw more 'Notable Networker' certificates presented to top performers than at any time previously. It also meant the departing leadership team's final week was cause for a real celebration, with BNI Executive Director Niri Patel joining members for an impromptu breakfast party complete with balloons, streamers, party hats and, as our picture shows, a specially commissioned cake!

For Neil Glover, the leadership handover could not have been better timed since the chapter's referrals performance had just been heralded by a stunning personal double when he handed £1 million referrals to the group's plumber Ian Godber and its electrician Andy Hilton. He said: "My firm, N.G. Décor is on the approved contractors list with local authorities, and I knew the council was planning a huge maintenance programme for its housing stock.

"Having established that they needed high quality plumbing and electrical contractors, I was very happy to recommend Ian and Andy, and the result was two referrals that should be worth at least £1million each to them over the next five years!" ●

Contact Neil on 01226 385390.

Bonding – with a difference – through BNI's network

BNI's unrivalled business network has saved the day for a specialist Yorkshire furniture maker whose prestigious contract to fit out the flagship office for a national travel agency group almost came unstuck – quite literally!

Greenwood & Wood, the Wakefield-based designers and manufacturers of specialist business furniture, had begun refitting the high profile premises in London when its craftsmen discovered a problem in trying to bond the client-specified acrylic panels to solid painted surfaces and, despite the company's extensive knowledge of materials, no obvious solution could be found.

Mike Miller, the firm's business development manager said: "This was an important contract but we found ourselves working with a new material imported from

Australia that was unfamiliar to us and we just had to find a reliable method of bonding.

"We worked through all the usual channels to get a solution, but drew a blank, so after one of my Network Central Chapter meetings in Leeds, I talked to the group's sign maker, Michael Jackson from Scriptus, who always seemed to have the answers to every problem. This time, even he was unable to help but he pointed me in the direction of another BNI member, Richard Grant in the neighbouring Leeds Raw Power Chapter, whose company, Kukoon, had experience of working with this material and he was able to give me the solution. The result was a resounding success."

The story even had a further positive twist when, after Mike and Richard had met and shared business experiences, Kukoon asked Greenwood & Wood to quote for

implementing some of its own projects. Mike added: "This was a splendid example of networking at its best - an unexpected problem solved by creative networking.

"We often assume that the real benefits of BNI membership are winning new business or learning new business skills, but sometimes it's the unexpected benefits that are the most valuable, as happened here when members from different trades integrated their skills and shared experiences to create solutions. The knowledge and contacts in the extended BNI family are invaluable, but the benefit of finding new partnerships to work on projects is potentially still undervalued. This really was a win-win for everyone involved." •

Contact Mike on 07810 794092 or at: mike.miller@greenwoodandwood.co.uk. Richard can be contacted on 07723 390906.

A TRIUMPH

BNI helps fathom the perfect



Cheshire husband-and-wife team, Nathan and Laura Evans were not content with their successful computer repair and trouble-shooting business in south Manchester. They had visions of turning their one-shop venture, FathomIT, into a national franchise of premium-rated High Street businesses. The only question was 'How'?

Nathan had seen his Timperley business grow by leaps and bounds since joining BNI's Sale Chapter six years ago, but it was only when he suggested Laura join the neighbouring Bowden Chapter at Altrincham that their franchising plans started to grow. Laura said: "I'd worked behind the scenes in the business, but it was my joining BNI that made us decide the time was right for me to pilot an offshoot. We felt if I could make the same formula work, with little IT knowledge and expertise, we could be onto a winner."

After a crash course in solving computer problems, Laura opened for business in Altrincham and quickly made it another success story. "That proved we could replicate the formula, but before we invested heavily in a national roll-out, we thought we needed to achieve the same results with an independent franchisee, unconnected with us," she added.

Enter print cartridge supplier Mike Bailey, one of Laura's chapter colleagues who had already been supplying the FathomIT shops with computer peripherals for some time – while quietly assessing the potential for his greater involvement. Laura said: "Mike was one of many BNI colleagues to offer us fantastic encouragement and, because of our existing business relationship, we invited him for dinner one evening and discussed the possibility of his becoming our first independent franchisee."

The rest is history – crammed into a few short, exciting weeks. Mike jumped at the chance to become FathomIT's first franchisee, and found ideal premises in the affluent Cheshire town of Knutsford where the business's clean-cut image instantly appealed to home computer users and small companies whose occasional requirements did not merit their having a costly maintenance contract.

"After just three months, the venture is already well-established and the ideal extension of my existing business. In three years with BNI, 40% of my business has come through the chapter and I'm hoping this wonderful level of support will further increase now I'm offering a lot more," said

BNI gets Julie's baby business mobile



Have you ever wondered who looks after all the babies and toddlers when busy mothers and working wives can't? Well Llandudno Chapter's Julie Williams has – and created a unique solution that she is about to franchise across the UK and overseas, with the help of her BNI colleagues.

Julie runs The Mobile Creche Company whose childcare services are already widely used throughout the UK by individuals, companies and even organisers of national political party conferences. Now, little more than two years after joining BNI, her dream of turning her business into an international franchise is coming true – thanks to her network of fellow BNI professionals.

As its name indicates, Julie's company delivers a totally mobile solution to temporary local childcare problems – providing experienced carers at functions ranging from weddings to conferences and training seminars. It was launched a few months before she joined BNI and, by keeping overheads to a minimum, she was quickly able to expand the business, first across North Wales and then into major conurbations across the UK.

"The trouble was that while mobility is our strength, we take all the resources we need to the venue, so the further afield we were travelling, the greater the logistical problems.

Franchising was the answer, but it seemed such a big leap forward that I wasn't sure how to go about it," said Julie, pictured (left) in the driving seat.

Then she discovered one of the major benefits of BNI membership – being part of a multi-skilled group of business professionals and specialist tradesmen. She said: "I'd regarded franchising as a daunting task, but thanks to a huge amount of help from BNI colleagues in my own and neighbouring chapters, I've been able to get the business up and running far more easily than I expected. We recently launched the first franchise in Manchester and I expect others to quickly follow in the UK and in North America.

"At one time or another I've used the services of almost everyone in my Chapter as well as other specialists they've put me in touch with, so I've no hesitation in saying they have turned my dreams into reality," Julie added. "For me, the best thing about BNI is being able to tap into the network of trusted professionals in every chapter. Without them, I wouldn't have come so far so quickly."

Meanwhile, she's now given a referral to the only chapter colleague with whom she hadn't already done business. "I've just used our travel agent to book myself a well-earned rest!" she laughed. ●

Contact Julie on 0800 298 5109 or visit www.mobilecreche.biz.

F TEAMWORK

franchise

Mike (pictured left) with Laura.

Laura and Nathan have now started marketing the FathomIT franchise via their own website (www.fathomit.co.uk) and she admitted: "We couldn't have done this without BNI. Networking is the vital ingredient and, being members of different chapters has given us access to a lot of potential customers. Even better has been the brilliant support we've received from so many BNI colleagues – many of them now friends – who have given us the confidence to grow rapidly. We owe nearly everything to BNI."

Initially the couple intend to issue a dozen franchises in the North-West, following which more will be released across the UK. "We've broken the mould in terms of what people expect from local computer fixers. Instead of finding a ramshackle, disorganised shop run by one or two 'techie nerds', they discover a smart, efficient operation giving them confidence, whether they're bringing their computers to us to be fixed, or we're visiting their homes. We've already had dozens of enquiries from would-be franchisees," she added. ●

Contact Laura on 07976 894419 or Mike on 01565 650022.

North Staffs members breathe life into charity

When almost every penny of your income is allocated to helping sufferers with serious breathing difficulties, even the modest annual cost of BNI's membership has to be weighed up carefully, no matter how valuable it has proved to be.

But for Gill Walters, the Appeals Co-ordinator for the Stoke-on-Trent-based 'Breath of Life' charity, thanks to the generosity of her Network North Staffs Chapter colleagues she hasn't had to make that decision – because they've clubbed together to meet her subscription fees for the third year running!

The nine-year-old charity raises funds for, and awareness of respiratory problems – the region's single biggest killer – and Gill is confident that with her further 12 months membership guaranteed, she will be able to raise the £20,000 needed to build a specialist respiratory bay in the Accident and Emergency Unit of University Hospital of North Staffordshire.

She said: "Although more people die of

respiratory problems in North Staffordshire than anything else, we have to rely on donations from local people and businesses to keep going, so my membership of BNI has been incredibly useful in giving us access to a wider pool of donors and supporters. I am delighted and very grateful to have been given another year in this wonderful chapter."

Chapter Director Richard Green added: "We know it is a highly unusual thing to do but, as well as working to boost each other's business profits, members are committed to contributing to the broader community by supporting local charities, and with this in mind we were pleased to renew Gill's membership. Both she and the charity make a fantastic contribution to BNI, and this enables us to give back to the community."

In addition to her paid-for membership, Gill has also received BNI support through sponsored events including last month's 'Potters 'Arf Marathon' which saw several chapter members taking part to net hundreds of pounds for Breath of Life. ●



train & gain

MAKING YOUR CHAPTER SIZZLE THROUGH SUMMER!



by Steve Lawson, Executive Director for NW Toronto, Ontario

I often hear members complain that things get really slow in their chapter during the summer. When asked why, they invariably answer: "because everybody goes on holiday, and people aren't thinking about work." Yet some of my own chapters achieve their best membership growth in the summer months, with others enjoying the highest number of referrals in the entire year. What do these chapters know that others don't?

The answer is twofold. Firstly, they know we don't all go on holiday at the same time, and secondly, they recognise that members still have to pay all their bills during the summer, just like any other time of the year, which means they know it's important to continue generating referrals for each other all year round. So what can you do to keep the momentum going in your chapter, either by generating great levels of referrals or growing your membership to create more referrals?

Let's start with generating more referrals. Getting extra business from chapter colleagues is not really that difficult.

It depends on good relationships between members and, in my experience, the single most effective thing you can do to generate more real business is to hold more one-to-one meetings. Ivan Misner says you should hold a 'one-to-one' with a member of your chapter every week of the year and, when you have gone around everyone, you start again and keep going!

I once met a BNI member who had been in his chapter for eight years. During all that time, he said, except when he was out of town, not a week had passed when he didn't have a one-to-one meeting with a chapter colleague. And, on the rare occasions he was too busy to attend a meeting, he would call

one of the members and ask for a 15-minute 'one-to-one' session with them on the phone instead. When I asked him the value of referrals in his chapter, I was amazed when he said that because most of his BNI colleagues did the same as him, their average referral value had climbed to over £5,000 a referral!

Why not find ways to stimulate your chapter members to do more one-to-ones in the summer months?

For example, hold a competition to see who can do the most one-to-ones in July and August, with the winner getting a nice prize paid from the chapter kitty. You could even make it mandatory for everybody to do one a week during the summer period and of course, you could also focus on power-team one-to-ones during the summer.

Here's one successful idea I use in all my chapters at the start of every summer. At the first meeting in July, instead of having the usual 10-minute speaker, we get all chapters to do a 'One-to-one Scramble', when lots of extra referral slips are put out on the tables and members are given 10 minutes to go around the room setting up as many one-to-ones as they can. They have to set a date, place and time, and they fill in a referral slip for each one they've set up. At the end of the meeting, the door prize goes to whoever arranged the most sessions!

Exercises like this are a good investment in your chapter's future, and over the following few months you are likely to see a significant increase in real business being done between members.

Meanwhile, how about growing your chapter numbers during the summer, because this will also lead to more business being passed. Forget traditional visitors days and instead, do some unusual and fun things to get

visitors to your chapter! Here are a few ideas you might try.

What about a 'Junk Mail Visitors Day?' For one month, every member keeps the junk mail - post or emails - (s)he receives each day. Sort through it, and keep only the ones from people who might be interested in joining your chapter. At the start of the following month, members bring in their 'qualified' junk mail, all of which is put into a basket. Now everyone draws out three pieces, and invites a representative from that company to come to the next visitor's day. Don't forget, these are companies and individuals who have already spent time and money advertising for more business, so many of them will be interested in attending.

You can also invite visitors not because you think they might join, but because they may become clients either for you or another member. A really good idea is to hold an "Invite your next-door neighbour" visitor's day. It doesn't matter who your neighbour is or what they do; you will probably have an existing relationship with them, and they will most likely come if you ask them. Every single one who attends is a potential client for every chapter member, and of course, they will also know other people in their contact circles who may be interested in doing business with us, or even becoming members.

So think outside the box, put your heads together in the membership committee, and refuse to accept slow summer months in your chapter. There's a lot of business out there, and lots of people with needs that we can service, whatever month it is. Make a decision that your chapter will sizzle all year round!

Until he recently retired, Steve Lawson was BNI's European Training Director for 11 years - during which time he flew 888,000 miles around the world to train BNI's directors. He remains an executive director for a large area of Toronto, Canada. ●

THE ULTIMATE 10-MINUTE PRESENTATION!



With over 90,000 members worldwide doing it each week, you might think it would be impossible to come up with an original BNI breakfast presentation. But you'd be wrong!

Northern Ireland businessman Stephen McClenaghan believes his colleagues in Belfast's bustling Waterfront Chapter have



just witnessed a BNI world 'first', when he brought business partner and girlfriend Rosie Johnston's 10-minute presentation to a very unexpected conclusion - with a shock marriage proposal.

Rosie represents the couple's concierge service, Ambridge Executive, at Waterfront's meetings where Stephen often accompanies her as a visitor, so when towards the end of her recent 10-minute slot he suddenly interrupted her talk, members thought he was just reminding her about something - only to gasp in amazement when he produced a diamond platinum engagement ring, bent on one knee and asked for her hand in marriage.

As more than 40 members and visitors held their breath, Rosie accepted his surprise proposal and, having been tipped off by Stephen beforehand, the management of Malone Lodge Hotel - the chapter's venue - provided a champagne reception for the happy couple (pictured left) and their Waterfront colleagues

Stephen said: "I thought I was taking quite a risk by asking Rosie to marry me in such 'public' circumstances, so it was a relief when she said 'yes'. BNI has become a very important part of our business and we've made many friends here, so when the time came to put our company in the spotlight, it seemed the right moment to declare my personal as well as business plans!"

Rosie added: "We'd prepared the 10-minute presentation together so when Stephen started whispering in my ear while I was still talking, I thought I must have missed a key point. When I realised what was happening, I didn't know how to react - but it was a wonderful gesture that made me very happy. I'd no idea he was planning something so dramatic!"

She said the choice of a chapter breakfast for such a momentous event was fitting. "Joining BNI was the best business decision we ever made. It's entirely thanks to the incredible support, guidance and encouragement from BNI colleagues that we've been able to re-brand and develop our chauffeured transport business to offer a huge range of additional executive services. As a result the business has moved up to a different league."

Chapter Director Hugh Burgess commented: "Our meetings are renowned for being lively and offbeat, but Stephen's proposal is certainly not something that's going to happen very often."

As SuccessNet went to print, the happy couple were being married at a church ceremony - naturally attended by nearly all of their Waterfront colleagues. ●

Contact Stephen and Rosie on 028 9048 8678.

Twinning session lead to very public proposal

Marriage proposals take place in every conceivable place - but when Bournemouth Bay's Chapter Director Allan Tofield decided it was time to make an honourable woman of his long-term fiancée, he still managed to shock everyone, including his BNI colleagues!

Allan's unscheduled announcement came at the end of his chapter's three-day visit to the Picasso Chapter in Puerto Banus on Spain's Andalucian coast, when Bay members together with wives and partners were enjoying a farewell dinner organised by their Spanish hosts to mark the conclusion of a successful first-ever 'twinning exchange' between the chapters.

"Perhaps it was the convivial atmosphere or maybe the sangria, but as I stood up to make a short speech of thanks to our Picasso colleagues for giving us a wonderful time, I glanced at Izzie - my fiancée - and suddenly decided to propose to her. So I concluded my remarks by telling everyone I'd forgotten to mention something important in my 60-second slot at Picasso's meeting that morning, and said: 'If anyone can give me a referral to a lady called Isobel Ann Powers, please tell her I would very much like to marry her...'"

After a moment's stunned silence, the crowded room erupted with cheers, as one of Allan's own Bournemouth Bay colleagues scribbled out the referral, 'introduced' him to Isobel and invited the happy couple to embrace. "She'd been dropping a few hints that it was time I thought about marriage, and it just came to me in a flash that she might be reassured about my intentions if I proposed to her in front of all our BNI colleagues," Allan added.

It was a fitting highlight to what Bay members described as a magnificent introduction to their twinning arrangement. Allan said: "The fantastic thing about BNI is that you can meet new colleagues from different chapters in different countries and yet feel instantly at ease talking to them. From the moment we arrived it was like greeting old friends with many shared interests."

The Picasso chapter is one of several established in the Andalucian business community by Tony Patching before he returned to the UK. Now a Bay Chapter member, Tony was among its Spanish



delegation and commented: "Aside from the social aspects, members of both chapters are confident new business will emerge from this twinning, especially since it's only a two-hour flight from Bournemouth Airport. Several Bay members passed referrals to Picasso colleagues before we left."

Bournemouth members are now planning to host a return visit by a Picasso delegation this autumn. ●

Contact Allan on 07970 746969.



FROM THE CHAIR

Converting visitors into Members By Ian Cooper, Islington Chapter Director, North London

I'd like to challenge a few myths about converting visitors into members. It's not about high numbers of visitors, but the right number of the right visitors. It's not about visitor days, but 'visitor management'. It's not about selling the concept of membership, but showing the value of joining YOUR group. And, it's not about visitor hosts or leadership teams, but a question of all members buying into their responsibilities to grow the chapter.

These conclusions are based on my recent experiences of trying to grow my Islington chapter which didn't go too well at first. We've had loads of visitors - 17 at a recent visitor's day - but all that effort gained us just one new member and to my mind, this was a wasted opportunity and not a fair return for the members who invited them. It made me reflect on how we can all improve in this key area, by focusing on our Attitude, Approach & Action.

Attitude:

Many of us need to change the way we perceive visitors and visitors days, and this starts by not regarding our guests as visitors. Visitors come to your house on a Sunday afternoon to drink tea and eat cucumber sandwiches, or bring you flowers when you're sick - and then they go home.

The invitees who arrive bleary-eyed at our early morning meetings are potential customers and hopefully, future colleagues and advocates for our businesses - as we will be for theirs. Our task is to demonstrate this, making them see the benefits of our working together. So let's start by treating them as people with whom we'd like to do business, rather than casual visitors who are just passing through.

Approach:

Many years ago I read Neil Rackham's book, 'Making Major Sales', which spawned a sales training and management phenomenon by showing how to make major sales of any product in any market or environment. But, what made it work wasn't clever sales techniques. It was the recognition that in order to make any sale, you first need to build a relationship with the customer. And it showed that long-term relationships are the best of all.

So how do we develop relationships with prospective members? There are a number of stages to developing a long-term relationship, and that means not rushing things. You don't meet someone, decide you like them, buy a house and move in together all on the same morning - and expect things to work out fine. Yet, isn't that sometimes what we ask our visitors to do?

Action:

Instead, I'd suggest the following exercise in relationship building. The first time a prospective member usually hears about BNI is when we talk to them in glowing terms about our chapter. Now there's lots of advice in our manuals about how to introduce the BNI concept to someone, but something as simple as talking about the great bunch of people who are constantly looking out for business on our behalf, coupled with the suggestion that maybe they'd like to come along and see for themselves, works well for me.

When a prospect agrees to attend a specific breakfast, the inviting member gives their details to a nominated person in the Leadership Team at least 48 hours before the meeting, who collates the visitors' list for that week. Numbers should be limited to what your chapter can manage effectively - even if this means having just two or three guests. The nominee then contacts Leadership Team colleagues to brief them on the visitors and agree who will

call each one the day before the meeting. The call should be brief and friendly, like this:

"Hello [Laura], I'm [Tom Brown], Director of BNI's [Anytown] chapter. [John Smith] tells me he's invited you to our breakfast tomorrow so I thought I'd give you a ring and tell you we're looking forward to seeing you. Try to get there by 7.00 so you can meet a few people before we start the business agenda... OK, that's great Laura, I look forward to meeting you tomorrow."

Choose your own words, but understand that the purpose is to start a relationship. Until you called her, the only person Laura knew in BNI was John. Now she knows you're also aware she's attending and hopefully impressed that you've taken the trouble to call. It's also useful because, if she was wavering, she'll now be letting two people down.

At breakfast, once your visitor hosts have greeted Laura, they introduce her to the member who rang her the previous day - confirming that someone other than John is going to talk to her. That person shows her where to sit and offers her a drink before passing her to the next member. At this stage John should do little more than say 'hello' and thank her for coming. The priority is to show that other members are interested in her.

Taking the time to speak to prospective members and asking about their intentions, reinforces the belief that joining is normal. To this end, make sure that visitor orientation is done properly and visitor packs are ready, along with someone who can talk to guests succinctly about the commitment required before dealing with the application process.

After the meeting, the Leadership Team should decide who will make the follow-up call(s) next day to Laura (and every other visitor), which should go like this:

"Hello Laura, it's [Tom Brown]. We met yesterday at BNI. It was good to see you. What did you think of the meeting? Assuming a positive response, you would add: "Now you've had chance to think about it, are there any questions you'd like to ask me? Dependent on her response, you might say..." "Great, so we'll look forward to seeing you next week with your completed application and payment, unless you'd prefer to post it to me today?" Or, if she's not ready to make the commitment: "... OK, so why not come along again (next week) and see the results of how we work for each other's businesses."

In any event, ring her the day before your next meeting. If she was going to join, this reinforces her decision. If she planned a second visit, you're confirming this is OK and, if she wasn't inclined to come again, your call encourages her to change her mind.

Attitude, Approach and Action. It might seem a lot, but that's why every member must be involved - since everyone will benefit from increased membership. ●



Ian Cooper runs Eyedeecee Management. Contact him on 020 8365 8183

Making a Mint in Dublin!



When your brand new chapter is based just a stone's throw from the National Mint, you're not only rather obliged to adopt its name, but also compelled to start making plenty of money pretty quickly!

Hence members of the aptly named Mint Chapter in the Sandyford suburb of Dublin, hit on a unique way to remind themselves about why they turn up at the Stillorgan Park Hotel every Friday – by producing a 'Real Money' Award which they present to the week's best 60-second presenter.

The Award is actually a set of newly minted Euro coins – produced in Sandyford – beautifully mounted and framed by John O'Reilly of Signs Express, to be passed on to the best speaker at each breakfast meeting.

Chapter Director Philip Thompson said:

"The Real Money Award is rather special, and the first time it was won – by Conor Smith from Snap Printing – we weren't sure whether he'd actually come back the following week to hand it on! We've had a great start, and even ignoring the National Mint's proximity, there's no shortage of money in this part of south Dublin with new retail and residential centres being built alongside the thriving industrial estate. We've been fortunate to attract some top calibre business professionals and created a very lively group." Mint Chapter's founder members are pictured above.

He added: "We've still got plenty of available categories to fill, so I'm hoping to hear from more business people who'd like to join us, make money and get minted!" Interested? Call Philip at REMAX Exclusive on +353 (0)1 50 60 700 or +353 (0)87 27 99 131. ●

Kingstown loses "life and soul"

– but gains new name

Hull's Kingstown Chapter has changed its name following the unexpected death of one of its longest-serving members, Steve Bevan who died last month following a massive heart attack.

Steve passed away less than 12 hours before he would have attended the group's regular Friday morning breakfast meeting and, as BNI colleagues struggled to come to terms with the news, there was a spontaneous and unanimous groundswell of support for re-naming the chapter in his honour.

Chapter Director John Mitchell said: "Steve was the life and soul of every gathering he graced, and a really outgoing, gregarious member of Kingstown who always played a high-profile part in our activities. We were all stunned when it was announced that he'd died the previous evening and there was an immediate, genuine desire among members to do something that would recognise the huge contribution he'd made



to the group over more than five years.

"Since joining the chapter within weeks of its launch in 2002, he had held several leadership team posts including chapter director and membership coordinator and was very well-known across the city's BNI community. Renaming ourselves the Bevan Chapter was the very least we could do."

Nearly all of Steve's chapter colleagues, together with many from Hull's two other BNI groups, Wilberforce and Central, attended his funeral and thanksgiving service, following which – as a staunch Hull Kingston Rovers rugby league supporter – his ashes were scattered on the pitch at Rovers' Craven Park Stadium. A qualified accountant, Steve was practice manager of Payne and Payne, the prominent Hull-based firm of solicitors. He leaves a wife Barbara, and three children.

National Director Gillian Lawson, who had been working with Steve during his BNI director training only the previous week, commented: "He really was one of the nicest people I have ever met. He lit up the room with his smile and genuinely put everyone's needs before his own. Steve was very special and we feel so much for his family. He will be an enormous loss." ●



Capital members produce a double winner!

ABNI 'career change' coach is celebrating after steering one of her clients to an incredible victory in ITV's recent "Best of Britons Awards".

Rachel Brushfield, who runs Energise Brand Communications, and has been a member of central London's Capital Chapter for six years, helped frustrated advertising executive Duncan Goose to discover he wanted to leave the rat race and work for the world's less privileged. It was a decision that led to previously 'unknown' Duncan winning ITV's prestigious national award for campaigning, placing him alongside famous winners including Helen Mirren and David Beckham.

Duncan launched a mineral water called One Water (www.we-are-one.org.uk) with all the profits going to charity to buy 'Playpumps' for African villages on which children play, their rotational energy drawing water from the ground and providing it on tap for villagers who otherwise have to walk for up to five hours to the nearest well.

Before success took off, Duncan visited

Capital Chapter where Rachel introduced him to colleagues Chris Catchpole - who did the creative work for the brand - and Sam Grant, whose virtual PA service provided vital back-up for Duncan's embryonic business. Other Capital Chapter members are now giving their own time to help Duncan find more High Street outlets for his no-profit water.

He said: "Rachel helped me find what I really wanted to do. She has been instrumental in keeping me on track, championing me and helping me believe that my vision was possible, as well as identifying ways around the inevitable obstacles that have been in my path. She is responsible for all this - a coach to end all coaches."

Rachel added: "Duncan is a hugely modest and inspiring person. My role was merely to be the catalyst for what proved to be a double winner - helping him find his true vocation and seeing this lead to such a worthy outcome." ●

Contact Rachel on 0845 22 55 010 or at: rachel@energisingconnector.co.uk

Natalie gets designs on her big black badge!



Top graphic designer Natalie Piper is renowned for her creative enterprise and efficiency – but she still surprised her own chapter colleagues by becoming the first BNI member in London's south-east region to earn membership of BNI's elite Gold Club in double-quick time.

It took her less than a year to introduce 17 visitors, six of whom joined the group to gain her a coveted Black Badge, and such was her achievement that colleagues asked the chapter's printer, Tony Gallagher from TRS Graphics, to produce a huge black badge, presented to Natalie in a surprise ceremony when – as our photo shows – it almost dwarfed her slender frame!

Canadian-born Natalie is continuing to lead from the front as Chapter Director, having passed a magnificent 150-plus referrals and received over 120 in under two years. Her current BNI goal is to help Foundation reach the optimum 40-member mark – a task that should prove well within her capabilities since the group already stands at 38 members, passing around 300 referrals a month.

Kevin Horlock, BNI's regional director commented: "To sponsor one new member is a significant contribution to your chapter, and to

sponsor six is an magnificent achievement – but to achieve that in just 11 months is quite outstanding. Natalie's colleagues owe her a huge debt of gratitude."

Natalie is one of 23 new additions to the Gold Club whose other entrants are: Tina Adams (Dove Valley Chapter, Staffs), Mark Deighton (White Rose, Harrogate), Ian Dunstan (Isca, Exeter), Pritesh Ganatra (Kettering), Carol Ann Houghton (Venture, Lauder, Scotland Borders), Vince Jordan (Bevan, Bridgend), Simon Joss (Alpha, Aberdeen), Carole Lerway (Severn View, Bristol), Peter Major (Alpha, Aberdeen), Graham Massey (Circus, Bath), Susan Meldon (Isca, Exeter), Maggie Robinson (Loughborough), Nick Sladek (Parade, Bath), Heather Sonnet (Lark Valley, Bury St Edmunds), David Taylor (Hercules, Salmesbury, Lancs), Nicola Taylor (Invincible, Preston), Chris Twinn (Lark Valley, Bury St Edmunds), Jerry Walsingham (Abbey, Bath), Terry Ward (Diamonds, Doncaster), Andrew Wells (Llandudno), John West (Alpha, Aberdeen) and Michael Williams (Sedgemoor, Bridgwater). ●

Contact Natalie at Art Division on 020 8915 0156.

Surrey members get a 'joint' with breakfast

Min Tandridge, Surrey were recently given an extra course with their breakfast – a spot of impromptu pipe soldering!

The group's heating engineer David Dunnigan, who runs Croydon-based Thermofix, made creative use of his 10-minute slot by asking colleagues to accompany him to the chilly car park of the chapter's golf club venue, where he proceeded to give them some hands-on training in his skills.

After demonstrating how to solder a joint, he further surprised his audience by passing around industrial gloves and glasses and inviting everyone to have a go. "It's more difficult than it looks," said David, "but I think our solicitor, Robert Williams

and accountant Daniel Glover may have missed their true calling – even if Robert did roast his silk tie beyond rescue and almost set fire to my table!"

Membership coordinator, website developer Julia Parsons commented: "Finding a new angle on your profession, or a new way to inform chapter colleagues about what you do can be as difficult as making the actual presentation, but David's creative demonstration was both educational and very memorable. However, after my first attempts at soldering, I think I'll stick to website designing." ●

Contact David on 01883 624059 or 07855 842372.



WHAT A JOINT!
Paramount Chapter's accountant Daniel Glover tries his hand at soldering a pipe joint.



Flying start for Fairways

No wonder members of Cumbernauld's Fairways Chapter look happy: they've just become the first winners of a new 'Chapter of the Month' competition, an initiative being run in the south and east Scotland region. The contest was created by BNI director Iain Whyte to encourage leadership teams and members to improve their performance, especially the quality and volume of referrals, and conversion of visitors to members. Fairways members received £150 to be used for educational materials or chapter promotion, and a cup which they will hold until the next winner is announced. Chapter director Kevin Norris said: "Our referral levels, visitor numbers and membership are all up since we started paying better attention to the basics. We've got a fantastic team spirit and I'm sure we'll continue to attract more members into our vacant categories." The chapter meets on Friday mornings at Dullatur Golf Club. Contact Kevin on 07939.305449. ●

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