



# IT'S RAINING REFERRALS FOR FIRM THAT SAID "NO"

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One meeting, 700 referrals

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Merseyside brings joy to Kenya

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## Stone has something to shout about

When Staffordshire's Stone Chapter recently passed its 1000th referral, it was a milestone worth shouting about – so members promptly threw open the windows at their meeting venue, The Stone House Hotel, and bellowed their news to the world!

Chapter Director Dennis Connolly said: "With membership on the up and weekly referrals nudging the 40 mark, we're looking forward to hitting the second thousand more quickly."

Not to be outdone, there was also

plenty of early morning cheer in the Midlands, as the early birds of Kenilworth Chapter caught their 4,000th 'worm' – a referral from Southam dentist Lis Cox to the group's car leasing specialist Jerry Fuller containing an order for a new car.

A bell was rung to herald the landmark referral for a chapter renowned for its friendliness and lively proceedings, just one reason why Lis gives up her only potential lie-in of the week to attend. "I come here on my day off because every other day I have to leave too early for work. Despite that, it really is worth it," she commented.



SHOUTING IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS? Well, almost! Members of Stone Chapter chose to announce their business milestone to the world region in Scotland

## One person, one meeting, 700 referrals!

Meet Susan Godding, BNI's new referral supremo. While many chapters have members who regularly pass a dozen or more slips over the breakfast table, down in the previously quiet Cotswold market town of Tetbury, they're still reeling after Susan handed out almost 700 referrals to lucky chapter colleagues at a single meeting!

Her actual morning's work was 696 firm enquiries for the services of her Tetbury Chapter colleagues – enabling her colleagues to proudly claim the title of 'top (business) guns' after seeing well over 700 referrals passed around the table at just one breakfast.

How did she do it? Susan runs a picturesque conference and events centre called the Great Tythe Barn - a popular venue for weddings. She recently staged a Bridal Fair to promote the venue, and saw its business potential for other members of her chapter who provide wedding-related services.

She told SuccessNet: "The event attracted many hundreds of people, and as they arrived

we asked them if they would be interested in talking to other suppliers who could help make their wedding day a memorable occasion. More than 200 couples were happy to sign our register, asking to be put in touch with my fellow BNI members.

"When we planned the event, I was determined to ensure that I would only offer referrals from people genuinely in the market for the specific services offered by my chapter colleagues, so we spent considerable time making sure they represented solid referrals with a real prospect of becoming business."

Four of her Tetbury Chapter colleagues received the majority of her referrals deluge. The lucky quartet were florist Pete Latham, health and wellbeing consultant Roy Huggins, wedding-day memorabilia specialist Phil Bates and Greg Power, an independent financial adviser specialising in insurance cover for big events.

Susan, an original member of the year-old chapter, took over as new Chapter Director this month, and is keen to acknowledge that she has also received some valuable business through BNI colleagues. "Most incoming referrals are going to be substantial because they will involve us staging a major event, so it's a case of quality not quantity, but I am very happy with our BNI involvement. It has opened a lot of doors."



WOT-A-LOT-WE'VE-GOT! New Tetbury Chapter Director Susan Godding sets the standard by passing a staggering 696 business referrals at a single breakfast meeting.

Contact Susan  
on 01666 502 475



NEVER MIND THE WAISTLINE, FEEL THE BUSINESS BREADTH! Roy Broad has plenty to smile about over his weekly breakfasts.

## Roy's golden breakfast

Telford Chapter's Roy Broad is growing proof that eating a hearty breakfast can increase your wealth as well as your waistline. A director of Telford-based Network PR and BNI member for three years, his networking skills recently earned him Gold Club membership – well worth the extra inch or two, he reckons.

"I know I could choose the healthy breakfast option, but I look forward to my cooked breakfast every Friday. It puts me in the right mood to exchange lots of business referrals with my colleagues. I've eaten well over 150 bumper breakfasts since joining BNI but, if it's added a good few pounds to my frame, it's added far more to my business!"

Other recent black badge recipients include Diana Beaver (Cheltenham), Keith Evans (Conwy, Denbighshire), Eddie Gallagher (Alpha, Glasgow), Sid Grant (Glenrothes) and Andy Self from the Caterham (Surrey) Chapter.

## NEW YORK, HERE WE COME!

Look out, New York. Here we come – in the grandest possible style, aboard Cunard's magnificent new 150,000-ton flagship, the Queen Mary 2, as she makes only her second Transatlantic voyage to the Big Apple!

As SuccessNet went to press, the names of 11 lucky BNI members were drawn for the week-long trip of a lifetime – winners of the biggest and best-ever prize awarded for success in the UK and Ireland chapter development drive which ended last month.

News of the regional draws spread quickly and, while everyone who qualified to go into a draw naturally hoped to be a winner, there were unrestrained congratulations for the victors who, with their partners, are now preparing for a taste of the high life on board the world's newest, most luxurious liner.

As the £500-million QM2 slips anchors at Southampton's Ocean Terminal on May Day and glides majestically down Southampton



Water, BNI's luckiest 11 will settle into their premium balcony cabins and a champagne lifestyle for six glorious days and nights.

The fortunate individuals are: James Bell (Eardwulf, Carlisle), Lynn Darker (Kaizen, Sheffield), Val Gunning (West Mendip, Wells), Pete Jones (Brighton), Ian Macfarlane (Abbey, Paisley), Duncan Nield (Llandudno), Colin Sadler (Falcons, Newcastle), Jeremy Taylor (Worthing), David Vizard (Enterprise, Watford), Lesley Woolhouse (Coventry), and Karen Wright (St. Georges, Whitstable).

In total, no less than 65 UK and Irish chap-

ters qualified for the draw by bringing in six or more new members during the eight-week initiative, and four chapters in particular achieved outstanding results. Thanks largely to a hugely successful visitors' day in late January, Sheffield's Steel City Chapter became the first group in the country to qualify, and finished by attracting a record 14 new members – as well as referring three further applicants to neighbouring chapters!

Equally successful were members of Oswald Chapter in Durham, who also gained 14 members, taking the group to its optimum 40-strong capacity while, close behind were Paisley's Abbey Chapter with 11 new faces and another Sheffield chapter, Kaizen with 10. The outright regional winner by a considerable margin was Sussex with eight qualifying chapters, while Durham & Cumbria, and Kent saw five of their groups reach the draw.

National Director Gillian Lawson said: "Of course there will be disappointed members whose names weren't on the winners list, but they too are winners because, by helping to grow their chapters, they will all gain more business." (See Lawson's Lore, page 4).

## Fred sails to the rescue of 'sagging' Scottish islanders

When you work in the highlands of Scotland, you expect to travel if you want business. But when furniture upholsterer and repairer Fred Sutherland took a trip to the remote Outer Hebridean island of Lewis, even he was surprised by the outcome!

A member of BNI's northernmost UK group, the Highland Chapter based in Inverness, Fred loaded up his 'Saggy Bottoms' company van and boarded the Ullapool ferry for the long crossing to Stornoway, where he parked outside his customer's house for just four hours. That was time enough however, to create a

flurry of phone calls back to his shop in Invergordon, near Inverness – all from islanders on Lewis wanting him to repair their furniture.

Fred said: "I was flabbergasted when I got back home next day and my wife told me she'd received nine calls that afternoon from Lewis, especially since my old van didn't even have our phone number on it. Passers by who spotted my van must have gone to some trouble to locate my business on the mainland. It just shows the power of the saggy bottom van!"

On Fred's return to his Inverness Chapter the following week (itself a 120-mile round trip), fellow member Alistair Stewart presented the 10-minute slot about his washroom product company, Nor-Chem Supplies and, by pure co-incidence asked the group: "Can anyone give me any referrals in the Hebrides for washroom and sanitary services?"

Quick-witted Fred described his recent trip to Lewis, told Alistair that he was sure he could help him and, to the group's amusement, suggested they join forces to be known as the Saggy & Soggy Bottom Partners.

"Joking apart, we're hoping it will lead to joint collaboration," said Fred. "Alistair's problem is that trying to supply his products to far-flung Scottish islands is time-consuming and expensive, so we're discussing a venture where I may be able to help deliver to his island customers during my frequent trips."

In fact, while taking a three-hour ferry crossing to repair a sofa might seem an unlikely way to do business for many of us, for Fred it's a way of life as he travels to Scotland's distant outposts, applying his traditional craftsman's skills to antique and valuable furniture in castles and stately homes for a distinguished list of clients. "I can't stay chatting to you now," he added. "I'm just off to catch the boat to Mull, and if I miss it, my customer will have to live with her saggy bottom for another week."

Hence the striking name of his business which his wife Mo insisted they use, after Fred returned from a job a few years ago and described how he thought he'd upset an elderly female client by telling her: "It's obvious what the problem is...you've got a saggy bottom." No offence had been caused – but the remark led to a name change, since when the business has not looked back.

**You can contact Fred on 01349 854065 and Alistair on 01667 462500.**



NOTHING SAGGY ABOUT US! Saggy Bottom's travelling upholsterer Fred Sutherland pictured (right) with BNI Highland Chapter colleague, Soggy Bottom's Alistair Stewart.

## Lawsons' Lore

Gillian and Martin Lawson  
National Directors of BNI, write:

From time to time during BNI's remarkable seven year growth across the UK, Ireland and more recently, mainland Europe, it has been appropriate to comment on the organisation's expansion - not least as major milestones have been approached, and passed.

So it is again this month, as we recognise the results of a very successful chapter development drive which has seen more than 1,000 new members embrace the Givers Gain philosophy, and watch with growing satisfaction, the increasing number of chapters reaching their optimum 40-member capacity.

These achievements are important for two reasons. Firstly they confirm that BNI is indisputably, Europe's leading business networking organisation, with many more members than any other and, crucially, a growth rate that continues to be the pride of its Founder and the envy of would-be imitators.

Secondly, and even more pertinent, these successes provide the assurance that when a member joins BNI and embraces its objectives, he or she can look forward with some certainty to improved business profitability, the acquisition of new business and personal skills, and lasting friendships. Joining BNI is not a short-term business fix, but a long-term commitment to mutual support for (and from) your chapter colleagues, and the global BNI community.

In this issue of SuccessNet, we congratulate the winners of 2004 chapter development drive who will shortly participate in an unforgettable voyage on the magnificent new Queen Mary 2. To the many qualifying chapters and members who were unsuccessful in the prize draw, we say: don't be too disappointed, because everyone who brought new faces into their chapters will benefit directly. By adding just three, four or five extra members to your ranks, you have guaranteed that your group will be more vibrant and successful in the months ahead and that is the surest route to boosting your vital referrals.

For a number of chapters, the development drive has seen them reach their 40-member watershed and this too is the best possible news for existing members. It is a simple equation: the larger your chapter, the greater are its dynamics, and the more successful are all its members. That can't be a bad consolation prize, can it!? Well done to everyone who took part.



## Three more hit 40 not out

**DURHAM** It can sometimes take time for a chapter to grow to its optimum 40-strong membership, but Durham's Oswald Chapter has passed the target less than a year after its very first meeting took place in semi-darkness, quite literally!

Oswald's inaugural breakfast session in March last year (conducted by candlelight after a major power failure) attracted 40 people - half of them visitors and, following

a hugely successful visitors' day held at the beginning of February this year when 11 of the 55 guests applied for membership, the group soared over the 40 threshold.

Chapter Director Bryan Hoare said: "Our early success is due to the leadership team being totally focused, setting clear goals and getting all the members to sign up to them. Last autumn we agreed our priority was to become 40-strong, and the fact that we have achieved this so quickly is a reflection of the whole chapter's commitment."

**SHREWSBURY** It may have taken Shrewsbury Chapter four years to reach the same milestone, but that hardly matters to members who are now far more interested in the fact that, expanding their group from 30 to 40-strong as a result of a recent visitors' day, has nearly doubled the volume of referrals generated each week.

Welcoming its newest members Angela Smallwood of Tophat Foods and Marg Fayle of M & A Healthcare, Chapter Director Malcolm Taylor said: "Reaching 40 members is a real milestone and is largely due to the success of our visitor event which attracted 65 guests, and resulted in 10 new members joining us.

Assistant Director Allison Timmins was so pleased with Shrewsbury's success that she baked a cake complete with candles to celebrate the arrival of the 40th new member.



BNI Shrewsbury members celebrate their 40th! Pictured L to R: Keith Higgins, Angela Smallwood, Marg Fayle, Mark Jennings, Keith Winter, Chapter Director Malcolm Taylor, Keith Smith, Keri Jennings and Sarah Atherton, with Allison Timmins.

**CHELTENHAM** A New Year change of venue was the catalyst for Cheltenham Chapter's revitalisation which has seen the group become the first in the region to reach the 40-member landmark just weeks after moving its breakfast meetings to the town's Thistle Hotel.

Chapter Director Caroline Bevan says their success is due to the group's energy levels, and added: "We simply follow BNI's

agenda, carry out the Givers Gain philosophy, and of course, we play some great games to keep us on our toes. It is working very well, because the chapter now regularly passes over 100 referrals each week and attracts very healthy numbers of visitors. They are always impressed, except when they realise they can't join because their category slot is already filled!"

Catering member Ailsa Fleming provided mini cakes for everyone to mark the occasion.

## Merseyside members bring joy to Kenya

### Nine chapters fund schooling for 100 kids

Every morning at 6.30am, a curious trail of 50 or more waif-like children would leave their village mud huts on the shores of the Indian Ocean to walk barefoot in rags more than five miles to the nearest makeshift schoolhouse.

When they arrived, there was no friendly face to greet them, their entrance to the spartan classroom was barred, and anyone who managed to sneak past the security guard was promptly ejected. Instead, they stood or sat all day long in the scorching heat, enviously looking at the lucky ones whose families had scraped together enough money to give them this simple education, praying it would one day offer a foothold to a better world, far beyond their present boundaries.

Welcome to Kikambala, an ordinary Kenyan village whose inhabitants' daily struggle for survival far below the poverty line is a different, alien civilisation, worlds apart from western culture. And so it might have remained, had it not been for the initial curiosity, and then compassion, of BNI Merseyside's Assistant Director John Haynes whose first safari holiday to Mombassa four years ago was to change his life – and that of hundreds of Africans.

Last month John and his partner Linda made their fourth return trip: a mercy mission to deliver funds, clothing, books and stationery donated by members of nine Liverpool chapters, touched by John's heartrending account of the hardship faced by the young villagers.

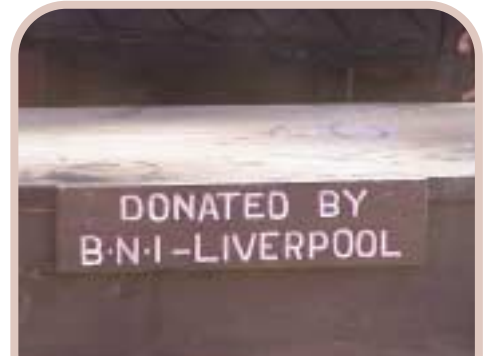
"I'd mentioned the children's plight to a number of members and one of them, Eagle Chapter's Alvin Connor gave up a month last

summer to raise funds by taking part in the world's toughest physical contest – The Iron Man Challenge. Just days before I set off this time, I realised others might wish to contribute. I only had time to talk to a few chapters, but the response was amazing. Everyone wanted to help, some by paying for the schooling of one or more youngsters, others by donating clothes, books and personal items," said John.

When the couple arrived in Kenya, they presented more than 500,000 schillings (over £4,000) to village chiefs, along with all the other gifts. "They were overcome with joy. It immediately met the full costs of a year's education for 86 children – some of them 12-year olds who had never set foot inside a classroom – and news spread so fast that by the time they'd acquired their new uniforms, text books, shoes, satchels, and paid for their own personal wooden desks (all mandatory before they could attend), we'd been visited by the High Commissioner and the Chief of Police, and interviewed on the national TV news."

The generosity of Merseyside members received such wide coverage that business interests in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, started to visit the village, wanting to know about BNI and how they could join. "It's early days, but we discovered a surprising demand for BNI in Kenya, and this could be the springboard to launching the first chapters there," he said.

John's mental snapshots of villagers' life make for profound thought. Unable to place most of the children in school, he set up a classroom on the beach and started teaching the eager youngsters. Dangling the reward of a plastic football (the village's only ball had disin-



THE PLAQUE THAT SAYS IT ALL: The Kenyans' thanks to BNI Merseyside members.

tegrated two years ago and the boys improvised using a bunch of rags) he asked them to return next day, to share their dreams about where they hoped to be in five years time.

"A group of a dozen told me they'd formed themselves into an acrobatic team using the only resources they had – themselves. They were desperate to show off their skills, and said their dream was for local hotels to hire them as an entertainment act, hopefully giving them enough money to feed their families."

But his most poignant memories involved the children's response to simple generosity. He added: "On the first morning they were allowed to attend school, I watched them leave on their five-mile trek and could not understand why they were all proudly carrying boxes under their arms. When they arrived, I found out. None of them had owned a pair of shoes before and they didn't want to spoil their new footwear by wearing it on the long walk. They only reluctantly did so when the teacher said they could not enter the school in bare feet."

He added: "On our final day, we visited the school. The children held up posters thanking BNI, and sang us 'thank-you' songs in Swahili. We only understood the references to 'BNI', but it was a moving experience. Seeing them so happy to receive a whole year's education for just £50 each, it was impossible not to contrast their thirst for knowledge with the negative attitude of so many youngsters back in the UK."

"These kids had no food, no running water, no electricity, and no roads or transport. They weren't interested in any of the 'luxury' items we'd given them. All they wanted was the chance to learn, and the joy in their faces when they realised they would be able to go to school for the first time, was a picture I wished I could have shared with all my BNI colleagues."

**If you'd like to know why Liverpool's Culture, Eagle, Echo, Lima, Midas, Omega, Phoenix, Premier and Scorpio chapters all rushed to help call John on 0151 292 3818.**



THE SMILES SAY IT ALL: Beaming faces all round as these Kenyan youngsters look forward to attending school for the very first time thanks to the compassion of John Haynes (pictured top centre with partner Linda), and the generosity of nine Merseyside chapters.

## Mark's 'orr-some' mirror image referral

Stained glass designer Mark Orr was so pleased with the Budweiser mirror he had produced for Brian Kelly, the owner of his local Papa Bz Bar in Kilmarnock, that he felt sure the lager giant would like to see similar works of his glass art featured in their other Scottish outlets.

However, reaching the right contact in the huge Anheuser-Busch Corporation would be no easy task – or so he thought. In fact, Mark needed only to enlist the help of his Kappa Chapter colleagues to land the perfect referral: a personal meeting with Budweiser's local manager which has led to a major regional contract and the potential for his company, Davian Designs, to supply stained glass mirrors for hundreds of Budweiser outlets throughout the UK.

Mark told SuccessNet: "I knew how important it was to be specific when asking for referrals, so I asked my Chapter colleagues to find me the name of the brewer's

local representative. My dream was to supply some of their local pubs, restaurants and hotels with our unique hand-crafted mirrors.

"Later the same day, fellow chapter member Robert Morton of Stainbusters (UK) Ltd spotted a Budweiser van outside a local pub. As he was writing a note to leave on the windscreen, the driver appeared and Robert asked him for the name and number of his sales boss."

Following Robert's quick-thinking referral, Mark subsequently invited Anheuser-Busch's Mark Violet, to inspect his work, and his namesake was so impressed with its quality that he immediately commissioned Davian Designs to produce mirrors and stained glass for all their outlets in Ayrshire,

Dumfries and Galloway.

"Even better, he e-mailed his colleagues throughout the UK, recommending them to look at our products," Mark added. "This opportunity is awesome. The contract will take me all over Scotland and then, hopefully, result in our mirrors appearing in their outlets throughout the UK. I have never come across such an effective organisation as BNI."

Contact Mark on 01563 550 091



REFLECTING ON SUCCESS? Stained glass designer Mark Orr (centre) pictured with Budweiser regional sales manager Mark Violet (right) and Kilmarnock bar owner Brian Kelly.

## Ultimate dedication from mum-to-be

They say a good networker never stops looking for opportunities, but Cheltenham Chapter's Sandra Clarke has just brought new meaning to the expression – by finding a referral for a chapter colleague while flat on her back giving birth to her first child!

A marketing and branding consultant, Sandra went into labour for a home delivery, just as husband Mike was getting ready to leave for the chapter's regular Friday

morning breakfast. "In the middle of my contractions, I was talking to the midwife about the homeopathic products I was using to help me through labour.

"She expressed a lot of interest and wanted to know how it might help other women, so I gave her the name of our chapter's homeopath Trish Moroney and Mike passed my referral to Trish at the following week's meeting. She is now preparing a training programme for my midwife and I hope it will lead to some beneficial, long-term business. Using homeopathy was a huge help to me throughout my pregnancy and even during the initial recovery phase. It would be marvellous if it could now help other mums-to-be," Sandra added.

Trish commented: "One of our products is a homeopathic birthing pack and I complement this with a treatment programme tailored specifically to the requirements of the individual. Sandra wanted to work for as long as possible throughout her pregnancy, so she was given products to make this easier for her. But I never expected her to still be working on BNI business right through her labour!"

Contact Sandra on 01242 620 403.

## Pole-axed by risqué referral?

It would never feature in any league of big value referrals, nor would it even gain an honourable mention, based on prestige or potential, but for sheer originality....well, how many other referrals has your chapter received to construct the 'pole' around which scantily-clad girls dance provocatively in a private members' club?

Even the sleepest eyes shot open at a recent Lichfield Chapter meeting, when exhibitions manufacturer Wayne Ball was handed the year's most unusual referral – to build the pole for the trendy Forge Bar in Cannock.

Wayne, a director of Icon Exhibitions and Display of Great Wyrley, said: "Initially, all they wanted from us was a pole, but they were so pleased with the speed of our response, and the standard of workmanship, that they then gave us the contract to do all of the bar's refurbishment work."

Chapter Director Peter Robinson said: "Even at 7.15 in the morning, the mention of pole dancing is guaranteed to generate a reaction. Every member managed to think of a way to be of assistance to the bar concerned."

Contact Wayne on 01922 413 336.



A LABOURED REFERRAL? Not a bit of it! Cheltenham's Sandra Clarke with husband Mike and baby Stella.

## Passionate in Bristol...



*WHAT A VIEW! Severn View Chapter Director Julian Lewis (centre) highlights the value of BNI to Bristol businesses, flanked by Natasha Wheeler (left) from Dunkley & Co. and Sue Marshall from Crown Recruitment.*

**Wantonly flaunting themselves in front of the Bristol media, Severn View Chapter's ongoing courtship of fortune and fame continued relentlessly last Valentine's Day. But, with good reason, because the group's financial figures speak volumes about their success, and the fruits of their passion for networking are plain to see.**

Since the Chapter's launch barely two years ago, its membership profile has come to include a healthy spectrum of local businesses – from individual entrepreneurs to internationally renowned organisations – a number of which have gained extra contracts worth over £30,000 a year from their BNI colleagues.

"We all share a passion for success, no matter what the shape or size of our businesses," said Chapter Director Julian Lewis, regional director for Konica Minolta Business Solutions. "St Valentine's Day gave us the perfect vehicle for drawing attention to our enviable figures,

so nobody minded standing in a field at seven o'clock on a cold February morning for the benefit of local newspaper photographers."

To back up the event's glamorous imagery, the media were given some impressive statistics of members' success. "We are passionate about match-making between local companies, introducing businesses that can supply and work with each other. With our recent publicity, we've again shown how passionate and proactive we are about BNI," Julian added.

**Contact Julian on 01454 619 999.**

## ...and in Cork!

**Meanwhile, across the Irish Sea, BNI members have also been successfully attracting the media's attention.**

The Cork Chapter was featured on TV3's national evening news slot, including interviews with two members - Tim O'Brien of Renaissance Fine Coffees and PJ O'Leary of PJ O'Driscoll and Sons, while Killarney Chapter's Joanne O'Regan from JLT Tiles appeared with Mort Murphy, Executive Director (Ireland South West) in a feature on BNI's increasing popularity among the Irish business community, which was given a superb seven-minute slot on AM, TV3's big-audience breakfast programme.

Cork Chapter's PR consultant Niamh Shanahan of The Pepper Group, played a key role in achieving the coverage, in addition to which her efforts also saw Irish trade publications taking considerable interest, and several publishing substantial articles.

**Contact Niamh on 00 353 21 463 0496.**

## Latest chapters

Among the latest chapters launched in 2004 are: Achievers (Wigan), Border Castles (Montgomery), Cheshire Oaks (Ellesmere Port), Harald (Stockton-on-Tees), Kilkenny, Lynx (West Manchester), Olaf (Barrow-in-Furness), Riverside (South West London), Sedgemoor (Somerset), Swadlincote (Derbyshire), Trueman (Bristol), Waterfront (Swansea), Wellington (Colindale), Wimborne (Dorset), Goldenkey (Leiden in The Netherlands), Lion (Berlin), and the first chapter in Italy, Lainate (Milan).

## Bracknell's 'Biggles' comes to the rescue!

When you've got a new chapter to launch in the depths of Hampshire at breakfast time and you're needed for a major TV interview at lunchtime in the middle of France, there's only one solution: call on your very own 'Biggles' to get you there in the nick of time.

Helpfully, for BNI's Home Counties West Executive Director Gavin Bain, the answer to his travel crisis lay close at hand, since 'Biggles' – or rather, pilot Mike Berry – is a member of the Bracknell Chapter, and had given Gavin an open invitation to use the services of his CCF Couriers firm if ever he needed to move something quickly!

"When he learnt my TV interview in Versailles clashed with the

launch of our own Wimbourne Chapter, Mike was only too pleased to help. He knew I could never get from Hampshire to Versailles in time, using scheduled flights," said Gavin.

Immediately after Wimbourne's breakfast launch, Gavin was driven to Bournemouth's Herne Airport where Mike was waiting in his single-engine Piper Comanche plane, and

calmly announced gale-force winds over the Channel, so the ride would get "a bit lumpy."

After a very bumpy flight, Mike touched down at a private airfield near Versailles – giving Gavin ample time to prepare for a successful TV session, and barely three hours later they were airborne again on an equally turbulent return flight, before a relieved Gavin was back on terra firma.

Mike said: "I was delighted to help out, although I was a bit concerned about the adverse weather conditions. But, despite the bouncy ride, I think Gavin secretly enjoyed the experience."

**Contact Mike Berry on 01344 307 007**



## In Brief

### Profitable Fridays

There's nothing like spelling out the value of your BNI seat to stimulate membership applications from local businesses, as Cork City Friday Chapter has discovered.

Members felt they would make a greater impact on visitors if they could announce their Chapter's own revenue totals in addition to other statistics at the weekly meetings, so everyone was asked to put a figure on their BNI-derived income for last year. Within two weeks all 25 members had responded and the total was €600,000, an average of €24,000 (just over £16,000) per member!

Chapter Director Anne Pettit added: "We now have a strong focus for our goal setting, and aim to get close to, or even pass the 1million mark by the end of this year. Being able to quote the total amount of business we've done over the past year has given us an edge, and this shows in the quality of new membership applications we are receiving."

### Boost for NSPCC



All dressed up and raring to go! York Knavesmire Chapter's members had plenty to smile about, after their Valentine's Ball raised £5000 for the NSPCC.

They wanted to help the charity because BNI colleague John Inman is a fund-raiser for the NSPCC, and his contacts with a wealth of high profile business leaders in the Yorkshire region have made an important contribution to the chapter's high referral levels.

John said: "Fund-raising is a profession these days and this type of event showed how enthusiastic members can be."

BNI's unique word-of-mouth marketing system can work for every chapter worldwide, providing members stick to its tried and tested systems. But, for an increasing number of chapters, while individual referrals remain their lifeblood, business synergies between member companies are becoming the norm. Here, SuccessNet features several new joint business ventures that have stemmed from members pooling their expertise...



THE FINCHLEY HUB: (from left to right) are Barry Lester, Tracey Anthony-Winter and Arnold De Vries

## Tally Ho! We've built ourselves a HUB

**Three enterprising members of the Tally Ho Chapter in Finchley, have taken the BNI networking ethos one step further by joining forces to form a 'HUB' company - Helping Urban Business Ltd - which after only a few months is making a significant impact on the North London retail scene.**

While continuing to run their own successful firms, knowledge broker Tracey Anthony-Winter, accountant Arnold de Vries and designer/copy-

writer Barry Lester have pooled their complementary talents to develop a business partnership that works across all aspects of government funded projects, to create a catalyst for action in the region's business and community sectors.

HUB soon won its first contract, a research and capacity building project for the London Borough of Barnet to examine optimum solutions for improving the retail environment, and customer experience, in Golders Green - a thriving shopping centre threatened by the development of nearby retail parks.

Barry told SuccessNet: "This particular project is being funded by the London Development Agency, and we hope it may be the forerunner to similar contracts for HUB in the coming months. Our key aim is to work with local organisations - and later individual businesses - to help promote their local economies and environments, with the assistance of government and European grants where appropriate. A great deal more could be done to help local companies and we hope to make a difference."

One of HUB's initiatives arising from its first project, is the formation of a business club for Golders Green firms and retailers which it is hoped will provide a focus for ongoing partnership activities to improve the area, in conjunction with the local authority and other business groups.

**Anyone interested in learning more about HUB's work should contact Tracey Anthony-Winter on 020 8959 0976, Barry Lester on 020 8952 6544. or visit the website at:**

**[www.helpingurbanbusiness.com](http://www.helpingurbanbusiness.com)**

## Mutual Help in Fife

Proving that the sum of the parts can be greater than the whole, two small Fife recruitment firms have teamed up to become a greater force in the region, following a chance visit of Dunfermline Chapter's Avril Dewar to nearby Kirkcaldy Chapter.

During her visit Avril, who runs Ross Campbell Recruitment in Dunfermline, was introduced to her counterpart in the Kirkcaldy Chapter, Jayne Johnson from Rally Recruitment, and the two quickly realised they shared the same approach to business, agreed there were possible synergies, and decided to maximise their combined potential by establishing a new partnership, that would be complementary to their separate businesses.

Rally @ Ross Campbell was duly launched, and Avril said: "I could not have started up a new division on my own, but when I met Jayne, we both felt that by pooling our knowledge and resources, expansion would be the natural outcome."

**Contact Avril on 01383 736 163.**



## Member Collaboration is the Key

### Organic referral brings healthy business

When Cork Chapter's Niamh Shanahan introduced Cork City Chapter's Conor Hyde to an organic soup company over 12 months ago, neither of them had any idea that it would become such a healthy referral, nor the start of a profitable working relationship between their two businesses.

Niamh had met Pat McGrath of Organic Harvest some months earlier, but at that time she felt her PR services were not going to be of any benefit to the company until they enhanced their product packaging and distribution systems.

Having recognised Conor's strengths as a food marketing specialist, she persuaded Pat that it would be a good idea to meet, and he was soon invited to act as the company's marketing director, with the brief to help develop new product lines.



ORGANIC TEAMWORK: Niamh and Conor

His success enabled Niamh to offer new proposals to the company, and she is now delivering great results on the PR and media side.

**Contact Conor on +353 (0)21 485 9776 or Niamh on +353 (0)21 4630 496.**

### Capital show from capital's photographers

An exhibition showing the work of three talented London BNI photographers has been wowing audiences at Fulham's Wine Gallery – thanks to the initiative of a fourth 'Capital' member.



'From the Slip to the Wall' featured the creative inspirations of Mark Thomas (Aldwych Chapter), Patrick Gorman (Sterling/Liverpool St) and Carlos Dominguez (Victoria), pictured (right to left) with artist and curator, Chelsea Chapter's Pete Mountford (far left) who staged the exhibition with organiser Jane Stothert (centre) from Art 3.

Pete said: "I got to know the photographers through BNI, and was so impressed by their talent that I suggested they show their work together. It may seem odd for an artist to attend a business club, but all of us accept commissions and are interested in creative interaction with businesses."

**You can contact Peter on 020 8546 3858 . If you'd like a glimpse of what you missed, go to: [www.colourmount.com/wgshowphotobni](http://www.colourmount.com/wgshowphotobni)**

### Sponsorship boosts East Midlands networking

A dozen chapters from Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire recently staged a regional networking event with a difference – staging it with the help of travel industry sponsors.

The idea came out of a discussion within Nottingham's Trent Chapter to find new opportunities for stimulating closer working relationships – and referral exchange – between BNI's East Midlands chapters, and travel specialist Andrew Soltysik from New Style Travel suggested they make use of sponsorship offers from some of his industry contacts.

As a result, Trent Chapter ran the region's first

multi-chapter networking event at Nottingham's Gateway Hotel, with sponsors Superbreaks, Planet Holidays and Holiday Options sharing most of the costs. Around 60 members from 12 chapters attended, as well as two dozen guests.

"The response was very positive," said Trent's retiring Chapter Director David Ogden. "It was a successful first step towards developing a stronger BNI community in the East Midlands region. One of our aims is to promote inter-chapter working on a regional basis, both to raise BNI's profile within our business communities, and to grow our chapters."

**Contact David Ogden on 0115 982 0911.**

### Business quizzed over charity!

Members of the Rochester Chapter in Kent have raised nearly £600 for a local charity, - Demelza House Children's Hospice – by organising a sponsored general knowledge quiz.

Chapter Director Ian Morgan handed over the cheque to Lynn Collier, Demelza's area fund-raising manager, and commented: "With such a wide range of trades and professions in our chapter, our collective knowledge on all manner of subjects was perfect for this kind of event. It was also a great way of demonstrating the power of working together."

### Lander's team boosts Blue Fish expansion



Blue Fish Promotions, one of the South West's leading business promotions companies has just got bigger, thanks to its membership of BNI's Lander Chapter in St. Austell.

The company has appointed Marc Penn and Jon Paul Pritchard to its management team following a period of unprecedented success and founder Matt Franks (pictured centre with his new colleagues) praised BNI for playing a major role in its business growth. Blue Fish provides local, regional and blue chip companies with a wide range of business and promotional items, including bespoke, high quality corporate gifts.

## The future's looking good for Chester!

They may never replace psychometric testing, tough interviews or even the common CV, but two unusual professional services – reading your business fortunes in the stars, and analysing the character and personality of potential business colleagues – are now being offered to members in at least two BNI chapters. SuccessNet has been finding out more...

It's hardly the most traditional way to celebrate a birthday, but when Chester Chapter reached its fourth anniversary earlier this

year, members marked the occasion by having the group's astrology chart drawn up by trained astrologer Anna Tyrrell.

Anna, who uses her skills to benefit business ventures as well as individuals, revealed the Chapter's fortunes after delivering one of the most unusual 10-minute presentations her colleagues had seen. "A birth chart gives a very accurate character analysis and can be used for an event or a group as well as an individual. It can also be used to predict the future – and happily the future looks good for BNI in Chester," she said.

"It is likely that the group will jump in at the deep end later this year – but whatever this refers to, it is interesting that our chapter is a Capricorn – the Zodiac sign commonly associated with self-made business people."



SIGNS OF SUCCESS FOR CHESTER: Astrologer Anna Tyrrell hands her forecast to Chester's Chapter Director Simon Yates

When she is not reading the stars, Anna turns her hand to other skills including healing, counselling and stress management. "I guess these are a little more mainstream but, having undertaken expert training in astrology, it is a serious subject that can help people in their businesses as well as their personal lives," she added.

Contact Anna on 01829 741885.

## Watch your handwriting! It might give the game away.

How many BNI groups can boast a graphologist (handwriting analyst) in their ranks? Bedford Chapter's Joyce Parkinson is an expert in identifying a person's character from a single piece of handwriting – so much so that after demonstrating her skills by accurately assessing some of her colleagues' hidden traits, initial scepticism has given way to remarkable faith in her abilities.

Now, after just six months in BNI, her business is taking off through the referrals she receives each week. "Graphology can be equally useful in both business and personal life, and I've explained to my chapter that any size of business can benefit from analysis of an individual's handwriting.

"It can help determine whether someone will fit in with the rest of the team, or the culture of the company, while as individuals

we can use graphology to help make important decisions such as which career path to follow," Joyce told SuccessNet. "It is applied to many areas of work such as personal development, relationship compatibility, counselling, health, detection of drugs and alcohol abuse and of course, by the police."



THE RIGHT IDEA? Writing analyst Joyce Parkinson says her new business is growing nicely thanks to BNI.

A person's handwriting is as unique as their fingerprints. It is widely accepted that people can be 'read' by their body language and, in the same way, our handwriting is an expressive and silent gesture. Graphology is a science and I follow precise rules to measure movements such as size, slant and pressure, which allow me to construct an accurate profile of the individual. The skill is in judging what is applicable to build a detailed picture. It offers unique insight into their personality – often not obvious to the outside world or even family and friends."

Chapter colleague Martin Steele of Aurora Lighting who commissioned Joyce's skills said: "Her analysis was superb, if a little unnerving, My friends and family thought it was a remarkable representation of me."

Contact Joyce on 01234 347 086.

## BNI makes Pam's hopes and dreams come true

Like many others contemplating a business venture, photographer Pam Ainsley made BNI membership one of her top priorities as soon as she'd launched her new career.

Having received a Northern Arts Award for business development, Pam was finally able to turn what had been her long-term hobby into a professional venture, by opening Hopes and Dreams Photography just over 12 months ago. At the same time, she joined Middlesbrough's Egbert Chapter and, such has been the support of fellow members that her business is already well on the path to stability and success.

She said: "I have been overwhelmed by the response from my BNI

colleagues who have helped find work for me. I've gained referrals for new business in various parts of the UK and was recently given a delightful wedding assignment in Kent. Another referral enabled me to supply a selection of images to one of Middlesbrough's largest office developments."

Pam spent years training and studying before establishing her photographic business but all her hard work is now paying dividends and hers is one of only three initiatives nominated for the region's New Business Awards, from scores of applications.

Contact Pam on 07947 174 551.

## Polished performances win Silver Sausage

**What do you do when a few members have lost their enthusiasm for delivering sparkling 60-second presentations, and referrals have started to dip? Why, you offer them the ultimate appetizer of course – a silver sausage on a silver fork!**

That's the tasty recipe delivered by West Mendip (Wells) Chapter's leadership team, with the aim of improving the impact of members' one-minute infomercials, and since its arrival a few weeks ago, it has proved a huge success.

Chapter Director Trevor Lever explained how something that began as a joke has now become one of the most prized events in the

Chapter's weekly programme. "At the time, the quality of breakfasts served at our meeting venue left something to be desired, and the sausages in particular were not very impressive so, in order to add fun and at the same time improve everyone's one minute presentations we introduced the Silver Sausage Award.

"I asked one of our members, Julian Wittleton who is a metal fabricator, to design and produce a suitable trophy in the shape of a fork with a silver sausage on it, another member Paul Dinsdale producing the plaque and The White Hart Silver Sausage Award was born. We started awarding it each week to the member who gave the most improved one minute infomercial and it instantly became the object of desire, with all members – even our most polished performers – trying hard to demonstrate improvements so they could hold onto it for the week.

"The results have been astonishing as members strive to win the sausage. Not only has the standard of presentations improved hugely, but we are now doing more business as a direct result," Trevor added. "Initially we were worried that we might offend our hotel venue, but no-one seems to mind."



News of their 'Big Banger' Award has spread quickly to neighbouring chapters in Avon and two groups have already asked Julian to produce comparable trophies for their use. He revealed: "I'm currently making another silver sausage – it's actually stainless steel – for Bristol's Grace Chapter, and I've had one or two other enquiries."

Trevor added: "Our 60-second presentations are literally getting better and better every week and each winner gets to choose the best performance the following week and to award the trophy. The humble sausage has never been so popular at The White Hart!"

**Contact Trevor on 01749 840 689.**



*FEELING PECKISH? West Mendip's Ross Williams (pictured right) gets an extra sausage at her breakfast meeting - presented by Chapter Director Trevor Lever.*

## Oldham & Little Aston bank their first millions

**If members of Oldham Chapter started 2004 with a bang – notching up the first £1 million worth of business done over the past two years – they're determined to finish the year with even greater impact!**

The group introduced the white card scheme nearly two years ago to track the amount of business passed between members and the actual value of every referral, and Membership Co-ordinator David Whittingham said: "It has worked very well, allowing us to know exactly what business our members are generating."

Chapter Director Siobhan Hunter added: "There is a terrific camaraderie in our group and we achieved our goal of £1 million sooner than expected. In February alone, we referred nearly £70,000 worth of new business, so if we keep that up for the rest of the year we could almost hit our second million in just twelve months."

Less than 100 miles down the M6, members of the Little Aston Chapter near Sutton Coldfield have just reached the same major milestone. During the last 12 months, the Chapter's current members, many of whom are relative newcomers to BNI, passed more than 900 referrals, representing just over £1 million-worth of new business, and with new referrals averaging £70,000 a month, Chapter Director Suzanne Bridges says their future is looking good.

The Little Aston group's success is the more remarkable because over half its members are sole traders and micro businesses, but many have complementary businesses such as interior design, carpet fitting and corporate furnishings, and the Chapter has also seen new joint ventures created

between members – the latest of which is a collaboration between its mortgage adviser and the boss of a lettings agency, to help homeowners raise collateral from their existing property to invest in the 'buy to let' market.

**For more Oldham information, Contact Siobhan Hunter on 01484 844 235 and for Little Aston updates, call 07966 045 974.**



*FEELING PECKISH? West Mendip's Ross Williams (pictured right) gets an extra sausage at her breakfast meeting - presented by Chapter Director Trevor Lever.*

## Don't waste the week's best opportunities

Too many BNI members fail to recognise the importance and value of visitors at their weekly breakfast meetings – quite probably because a high proportion are uncomfortable when faced with meeting people they don't know, says James Cruickshank, Executive Director for BNI's East Anglia region. Here he offers some timely advice about the resulting wasted opportunities.

Networking has sometimes been described as "a room full of enthusiastic business people frantically trying to sell to an unsuspecting market". Networking in its truest form, however, is all about meeting new people and building new relationships.

At the end of chapter meetings, I frequently hear members say: "Well, I must get back and do some work", and then watch as they rush out of the room, oblivious to the fact that they are leaving behind visitors, with whom they could have struck up lasting acquaintances, leading no doubt to increased business for all parties concerned.

A typical chapter will play host to around 20 guests a month on average – giving its members 240 new contacts a year. Ask yourself: How much would it cost in time and money to meet these business people personally in any other way and, even if you could, how effective would those meetings be, without the structured and professional environment that your BNI chapter provides?

The truth is that we often throw away these opportunities to meet prospective new business contacts, despite acknowledging (by joining BNI) that networking can be the most important activity in our working week. Of course it is necessary to attend to the administration of our businesses, but preoccupying ourselves with the paperwork can, and often does, kill off a developing business before it has had time to grow.

In the last 12 months there has been a huge increase in bankruptcies and no doubt costs have been blamed for this worrying trend. However, the truth is that a lack of new customers will often have played its part as well and, if we're honest, a recurring reason for this is that a large percentage of business people are uncomfortable in situations where they are faced with meeting people they do not know.

If you recognise this common human trait, then learning the art of networking will grow your business faster and more effectively than any other form of activity and

fortunately, help is at hand in the shape of BNI. It offers you an ongoing, reliable and hugely cost-effective source of finding quality new business referrals.

Much of what we learn at our weekly breakfast meetings, through members' training workshops and reading books on 'word-of-mouth marketing', prepares us for networking more confidently and effectively throughout the rest of the working week and, if practised on a regular basis, it can transform the way we conduct our business.

The more we practise the art of meeting new people the easier it gets, the wider our contacts circle grows, and the more business we generate.

So when you are next tempted to race out of the door as soon as your breakfast meeting comes to an end - pause, and think what you may be about to lose. Make a point of meeting every visitor in the room, before you leave. Obtain their business card, and even invite yourself to see where they work, so that you can learn more about what they do. The time spent will bring rewards far and beyond that which you expect.

The opportunities are endless - but beware. If you tell your fellow members what you are up to, they may just start doing it as well. So keep this little tip to yourself!!!

Contact James on 01732 822 343



## Three keys to a



Cambridge's Emmanuel Chapter was launched just nine months ago but is already one of the region's most vibrant groups. Here, Chapter Director Geoff Bowen

shares his group's recipe for success:

With a good balance of members from both large and small companies, the key to our growth is the same now as it was at our launch. To create a successful chapter, you must first empower its individuals with sufficient knowledge, skills and motivation, so that they know what is expected of them – and what they can expect from membership.

That's why, as part of their learning curve, all our new members are required to attend an orientation evening, a presentation skills workshop and a referrals workshop, so they can learn how to contribute to the group they have joined. We know that success depends on our members' ability to consistently attract guests and pass good quality referrals. When you join a chapter, you make a commitment to these objectives.

Inevitably, some members perform better than others, so the effective management of the chapter requires the leadership team and membership committee to review each person's performance on a regular basis, providing ongoing feedback and coaching where necessary. For example, a member who finds it hard to give referrals should be teamed up with colleagues who find it easy. Similarly, if he or she struggles to find suitable guests, team that person up with someone who doesn't.

It is therefore important for the chapter to have a strategy in place so that any individual shortfalls can be identified and put right before the integrity of the group is affected. And as we've seen, this particularly applies to inviting guests, passing referrals and ensuring that absent members send a substitute. It's worth discussing these in more detail.

### Inviting Guests:

Attending a BNI workshop is the obvious starting point, and of course, you should ask successful chapter colleagues to coach you. It's not difficult, once you adopt some simple rules. Running a vehicle rental company I find it easy to identify prospects by their occupation and personality. I ask a question such as: 'How's business?' If they say: 'I could always do with more' I then ask them: 'Are you serious about getting more business? I'm meeting with some local business people on Thursday, so why not come along? Would you like to pass out 40 business cards and tell them about your business?'

## stronger chapter

More often than not they'll be interested, so fill out an invitation card and give it to them. No further explanation is necessary. Your guest will have plenty of opportunity to see if he or she likes BNI on the day. Practice your 'inviting' skills and you'll soon find it comes as second nature.

### Referrals:

Once again, the starting point for learning how to find and pass good referrals should be your attendance at a BNI referrals workshops. Such sessions are not just for new members; many come back time and again, always picking up new ideas.

Make sure you always carry a business card folder containing all your chapter colleagues' cards and review this every week so you know who's in there! Quality referrals are the lifeblood of all chapters. Quite often I see referral slips being filled out during the meeting in response to someone's presentation that morning, which is fine if they've sought a specific referral that morning which you can provide. But don't routinely leave your referrals until the meeting; think about them every day.

Identify ways to LINK your contacts with members of your group. You can easily find links for many of your colleagues' businesses by getting together and working out referral connections to each other's businesses during one-to-one meetings, which you should also use to look for indirect links in order to get yourself referrals.

### Substitution:

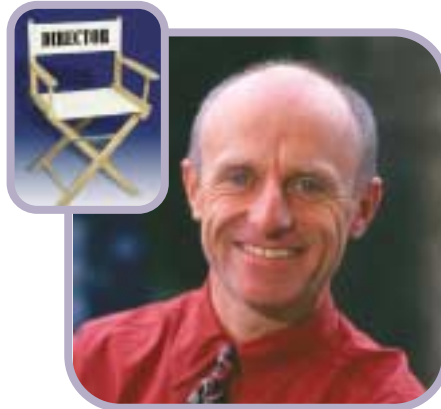
When any member is going to be absent, he or she must find a substitute. Otherwise a meeting that regularly numbers 40 can shrink dramatically without warning. How would you feel if this were the day you were presenting your 10-minute slot or you had a guest attending whom you'd been trying to entice along for six months. Absence without substitution is simply not on, and offenders must be made to understand why. Persistent offenders show no commitment to their chapter, lower the morale for everyone and their actions jeopardise the chapter's entire success. In such cases, replace them with someone who will be teachable and show full commitment to the chapter's success!

Follow these key points to keep your chapter in good shape, with a vibrant leadership team and dedicated members. Regular mentoring of new members and help for those who need encouragement is essential to increase their understanding of what makes a chapter successful.

Success breeds success! Don't accept anything that falls short of this aspiration. Work on developing the skills of your chapter continuously, to ensure its long-term prosperity.

Contact Geoff Bowen on 01223 412 655.

## Success – At what cost?



### By Philip Hopkins, Former Chapter Director of Leeds North

Being a member of a successful chapter should be good fun – and financially rewarding – even if you do have to get up at an ungodly hour at least once a week!

However, take away all the camaraderie and polite visitor comments, and we know the unspoken thought of every potential recruit is the same: 'Will it work for me and how much business will I get?'

There's no simple answer because it depends on how committed you are. No one has ever sold a golden goose and, if you think dozens of referrals will simply present themselves at the weekly meeting without any input on your part, then think again.

I have been in BNI for four years but have not remained a member for benevolent reasons, nor simply because I enjoy the interaction with like-minded colleagues. I've stayed because BNI has worked for me, and I have the figures to prove it!

In my first year of membership from April 2000 until the following March, BNI produced £9,165.34 worth of new business for me but, as my understanding of the referral system grew, so too did my BNI income. The next year it rose by 391% (compared to year one) bringing in over £45,000 and the following 12 months saw it rise a further 6% to bring in an extra £48,000.

In the current year, I've averaged monthly income of almost £3,400, so once again I expect to finish my financial year with over £40,000-worth of extra business obtained through BNI referrals.

But anyone who thinks all this turnover simply landed at my doorstep, doesn't understand business – or BNI! There's a truism on this fair planet of ours that says you

get out of something what you put in. In Yorkshire – roughly translated – it equates to working your bo\*\*\*\*\*s off!

In the case of BNI membership, the 'give' has involved my becoming Chapter Director and then Membership Co-ordinator, while I've been my Chapter's Education Co-ordinator more times than I care to remember, as well as a Visitor Host.

Throughout my four years in BNI, I have introduced a number of new members, consistently turned up on time for meetings and, hopefully, built up the respect of those around me. No, I'm not looking for a badge of honour – merely trying to illustrate what the word 'give' means in BNI.

It means more than simply filling in a referral form or presenting your sixty-second slot each week. It's about filling in your referral forms the night before, giving detailed thought to your sixty seconds before you arrive for breakfast, listening attentively to what your colleagues have to say and what they want, and generally adding value to the whole process.

BNI is a two way street and, in case it has become a loop tape that you no longer hear, its philosophy is 'Giver's Gain'. That means you have to get stuck in!

How many of you reading this article have done nothing but turn up for your weekly meeting? Have you ever taken responsibility for a Chapter 'job', or are you muted to silence every time someone calls for a volunteer? Make the commitment, and remember, the grasping hand is never full; only the open hand that wants to give, can ever have goodies upon it!

One final thought! As I write this article I am due to fly to Tunisia in just a couple of hours. It therefore took some commitment on my part to sit down and pen these words. That's what I mean by 'giving'. Now I hope that someone will 'take' something from this missive – so that they can experience the power and value of Giver's Gain!

And my gain? Well, for starters, there's the £140,000 worth of business I have received through BNI in less than four years, but I've also vastly broadened my business and social contact circles, acquired new business skills and had my horizons lifted by associating with other enterprising and committed BNI colleagues.

Contact Phil on 0113 250 0071

## Referral King Kailesh holds onto his crown

Members of Norwich City Chapter have an extra challenge these days: how to knock their colleague Kailesh Devlukia off his perch as the group's top referral giver.

Every month since last September, computer training specialist Kailesh has been presented with a chapter certificate for passing the highest number of referrals each month – averaging 22 in each four week period, and even when he took a holiday in February he still emerged top referral dog – causing particular embarrassment to his fellow members.

One of them, copywriter Trevor Gray said: "Over this period several members have mounted a challenge by coming along to a meeting with six or seven referrals, but Kailesh is a stayer and ultimately nobody has been able to equal his record of 134 referrals in just six months."

Kailesh puts much of his success down to his job, running Tribal Training, a Microsoft Office computer training company, providing courses tailored to each client's specific needs. "When I'm in the classroom, I leave my BNI business card holder out front with a big

sticker on it, saying 'Read Me'. I also ask if anybody needs any of the services offered by my colleague's businesses," he explained.

"Nine times out of ten somebody will say they need the services of one or more of my BNI colleagues, so I then say: 'OK - here's their card; I'll get them to give you a call.' My card book goes everywhere with me, and it's just a matter of keeping my eyes and ears open."

A member of the Norwich group for two years, Kailesh has also shown his commitment to BNI by becoming a BNI Ambassador for Norfolk, attending at least one other chapter breakfast each week in addition to his own.

**You can contact Kailesh on 07813 696 572.**



**NETWORKING KING:** Kailesh Devlukia with some of his notable networker awards

## Chris gives up £200,000 a year to join BNI!

**In the generally lucrative world of independent financial advisers, there were few better performers than Chris Hughes. Despite his tender years, he'd been one of the Bradford & Bingley's top IFAs for three years running, earning almost £200,000 in his last year with the company.**

Sufficient for most people, you might think. But not for Chris – especially when he found that his real talent lay not in offering financial advice, but in motivating those around him to maximise their own business potential. "The strange thing is that I'd always felt pulled in that direction, but it wasn't until I'd used my skills to help some IFA colleagues, that I knew I was in the wrong job," he told SuccessNet.

"They'd asked me to show them how to improve their business potential by working on their inter-personal qualities. When they all came back and told me how much better they were performing and how I'd helped boost their earnings dramatically, I told myself that if I could do it for them, I could be doing it for others too – and find it more rewarding."

By a stroke of good fortune, Chris happened to be standing near a cashier in Bradford & Bingley's Carlisle branch when a customer mentioned the arrival of a new business networking organisation in the town, called BNI. "It struck me that if I wanted to embark on a new career as a motivational

speaker, I couldn't find a more appropriate business organisation to join.

"When I told BNI that I was an IFA, they told me: 'Sorry, but our IFA chair is taken.' I said I didn't want to join as an IFA, but as a motivational speaker, and that's how my new career was launched, as a founder member of the Edwin Chapter. It took me a few weeks to build up the trust of my colleagues and explain exactly how they could use my skills - but since then, I haven't looked back," he said.

Something of an understatement. Through his chapter colleagues, Chris has tied up big-contracts with corporate businesses ranging from Barclays to BT and major local authorities, and he has numerous personal clients including top athletes and captains of industry. "With a single exception, all of my first year's business has come directly from BNI referrals, and even the exception came via a BNI contact."

While his new venture has not yet quite provided the same income stream he previously enjoyed, he's certain it won't be long coming. "It was a bit of a risk giving up a well-paid job, but after only 12 months of working for myself, I'm on course to better my income. More importantly, I'm doing something I love."

Thanks to BNI, I'm able to put my skills to good use, my business is growing and I've never felt more fulfilled. There's no limit to what I can achieve." Not bad for someone who only celebrated his 25th birthday a few weeks ago!

**Contact Chris on 01228 540 347.**



**HIGHLY MOTIVATED:** Carlisle member Chris Hughes says that giving up his £200,000 IFA job was the best thing he's done!

## Bonanza for man who said 'No'

When independent financial adviser Arwyn Bailey was invited to the first-ever BNI meeting in Britain, he was dissuaded by business colleagues who said it would never work. And, as a one-man business, he saw no immediate benefit to justify even the modest cost of joining the embryonic organisation.

That was back in late 1996 when he decided not to accept the invitation and missed the chance to join BNI's very first UK chapter in Harrow, now called Chapter One. Instead he carried on running his solo IFA business, with his dreams of growth and expansion remaining just that.

But lady luck was to strike him twice. Two years later, by which time BNI had already consolidated its reputation as a dynamic business-winner with over 100 UK chapters, the IFA seat in the Harrow Chapter became unexpectedly

vacant and Arwyn was again invited along. "This time I was determined not to make the same mistake, especially when I found two other financial advisers had also been invited. As soon as it ended, I filled in my application and was fortunately accepted into the Harrow chapter," he recalled.

Just how fortunate he was, can be seen



EVERY ONE A WINNER! Harrow IFA Arwyn Bailey (top centre) and some of his winning team mark their success in a symbolic snow storm of referral slips.

## Dead caring in Fife

Although few of their grieving clients may notice it, there is an item of 'jewellery' that funeral directors Callum and Sandy Robertson always wear, even when dressed in sombre morning suits to perform funeral services: you've guessed – their BNI badges.

Brothers Callum and Sandy are among a very small number of professional funeral directors in BNI and, since Callum first joined Fife's Kirkcaldy Chapter just over three years ago he, and more recently Sandy, have been able to take the mystique out of their business, gradually making their chapter colleagues more 'relaxed' in talking about death.

"We always try to make our presentations interesting, choosing an aspect of the business that people find difficult to discuss, and then taking away the mystery. You need a strong sense of humour in our business, and I hope we've been able to convey this to colleagues," said Callum. "It's not hard to talk about our work when you love it as much as we do."

If the level of new business the brothers have attracted through BNI is anything to go by, they've certainly got their message across! Callum added: "We've been surprised at how well the business has grown since I joined BNI. We weren't sure it would be right for our line of work, but the more insight we've been able to give our colleagues, the more referrals we've had. Nothing depends more on word-of-mouth referrals than the funeral business."

Such has been their business growth that Sandy has now taken over their Kirkcaldy

Chapter seat, enabling Callum to expand the business into nearby Dunfermline where his first priority was to join the town's BNI chapter.

Between them, the brothers have over 25 years in the business and both are qualified embalmers, as well as being expert hairstylists and make up artists. "People don't have any understanding of how much is involved in providing a funeral service. I think we've opened a few people's eyes and minds," said Callum.

Since joining BNI, Callum and Sandy always proudly wear their BNI badges, no matter where they are asked to perform funeral services.

"You'll even find us wearing them while we play golf or go fishing. The only exception is when we water-ski!" he added. **Contact the Robertsons on 01592 595 000.**



THE CARING APPROACH: Callum Robertson (left) with his brother Sandy.

from some simple statistics about his business which has been transformed in little more than four years into one of North-West London's busiest independent financial consultancies, employing three senior IFAs and 10 staff! And he is happy to acknowledge it's all happened because he joined BNI.

"Hard work alone would not have been enough, but thanks to all the referrals I have received from chapter colleagues, I've had no option but to continually expand, recruiting more and more staff – not through the local job centre or adverts in situations vacant columns, but from trusted contacts developed within my chapter," he said.

Arwyn's business, Fiscal Perspectives is now a limited company, recently relocated in new and larger premises. He added: "Our expansion is directly attributable to my chapter colleagues. Quality referrals are like gold dust in my industry, yet BNI is a gold mine of excellent business leads. I can say with certainty that my business would not be close to where it is today, had I not joined BNI."

The personal benefits of membership were demonstrated to Arwyn soon after he joined. "I developed a form of cancer that needed surgery, but despite my being quite ill and new to BNI, the chapter supported me in many different ways." In return, he has played a key role in the Chapter's continued success, holding several posts including that of chapter director.

His one regret is that he did not join BNI sooner. "If only I had attended that inaugural meeting, my company would be two years further ahead in its growth. My advice to all small businesses is simple: 'If you want to think big, then join BNI. Most businesses cannot fail to benefit from membership,'" he added.

**Contact Arwyn on 0870 794 2090.**

## Hull snapper gets Royal dinner date – and a commission

It's not every day you get asked to dine with royalty – let alone gain a prestigious commission from the same event, but that was the recent good fortune of Hull Friday Chapter photographer, Debbie Wilkinson.

Having been invited to attend The Prince's Trust Yorkshire & Humber Charity Dinner at the Hull City's KC Stadium, Debbie not only enjoyed the privilege of dining with the Prince, but was also commissioned by the Trust to be its exclusive photographer for the occasion – an honour that had special significance for her.

In the early 1990s when Debbie had just started out in business, it was The Prince's Trust that gave her the business help and support

she needed to become a successful photographer. Over the intervening years, Debbie has retained strong links with The Trust and earned herself an enviable local reputation for exciting, creative images.

She said: "The dinner raised over £45,000 to help the work of The Trust, which is aiming to raise £5million over the next five years to further its excellent record of achievement in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Debbie mingled with prominent business leaders and celebrities to create a lasting and impressive photographic record of the evening's fun and enthusiasm.



ROYAL CONNECTIONS IN HULL: Photographer Debbie Wilkinson (left) puts herself in front of the camera for once, to meet Prince Charles.

## ...while Tony snaps up a Crown Prince in London!



ROYAL SNAPPER: Bromley's Tony Isbitt prepares for his princely assignment.

Quick thinking by his regional director recently landed an unusual referral for photographer Tony Isbitt, a member of Bromley Chapter in Kent, and saved the day for the organisers of a prestigious national event.

Shortly before Crown Prince Dr Otto von Habsburg, the last uncrowned prince of Austria, was due to deliver the Leslie Prince Memorial lecture on the future of Europe to The Royal College of Physicians earlier this year, Harold Steuer, Regional Director for London South East, who had been invited to attend, casually enquired if a photographer had been booked for the event.

"I knew that the ambassadors of several coun-

tries would be attending and photographs seemed to be essential, but it turned out that this had been completely overlooked and I was asked if I knew any good photographer. I immediately thought of Tony Isbitt and put him in touch with the event organiser, who gratefully booked his services," said Harold.

The results so pleased the Royal College that they promptly re-engaged Tony and asked him to quote for other forthcoming events. "It was a referral out of the blue, and quite unusual – but best of all, it looks as if it will result in regular business," said Tony who was a member of BNI's Sevenoaks group for 18 months before joining his home town chapter.

Unusually, Tony came to photography relatively late - having had a varied career as a long distance lorry driver and a qualified radio and TV engineer. He started his current business 20 years ago and qualified as a Master Photographer a few years later, specialising in both conventional and digital photography, where his existing knowledge of electronics is now being put to good use in the 'new' world of digital imaging.

Contact Tony on 020 8460 5710.

### CHAPTER & VERSE



BY PAUL HARDMAN . www.hartoons.co.uk . tel: 01704 543 981



SuccessNet is published quarterly and distributed free of charge by BNI to all members. We are delighted that with each successive edition, we receive more and more of your emails, letters and calls, asking us to include your news or picture item in the newsletter.

However, the advent of electronic mail is causing us a real headache, because more than half the emails we receive don't contain any contact details, other than the sender's email address. Since not everyone checks their email accounts frequently, this leads to considerable delays and extra work in following up your submissions.

## 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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