



# SuccessNet

INSIDE THIS ISSUE >

P4

10,000 referrals?  
It's a piece  
of cake!

P7

The fastest BNI  
logo in the UK !

P8&9

Man of the people,  
Man of the world

P15

This town is big  
enough for the  
both of us...

ISSUE 35 | SUMMER 2005

EDUCATION *and* INFORMATION BULLETIN *for* BNI MEMBERS

A large crowd of people is shown in the background, many wearing name tags. In the foreground, a man with a goatee, wearing a dark suit, a light pink shirt, and a dark tie, is gesturing with his right hand raised. The overall scene suggests a large-scale event or conference.

# FANTASTIC!

## London event reveals BNI's true value

P3 > They came, they saw... they conquered

# LAWSONS' LORE

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then our cover photo (from last month's London Members' Day) needs no comment – other than, perhaps, to marvel at how far our organisation has come in eight years, and reflect on its huge success.

BNI stalwarts who recall our first UK members event in 1998, will remember how excited we were to attract around 90 entrepreneurs to a day of intensive workshops and presentations. And rightly so because, from the start, BNI captured the imagination of the business community.

Fast forward seven amazing years, and those who were fortunate to participate in our recent Members' Day, will understand its significance, not simply for the obvious benefits - acquiring new knowledge, gaining valuable contacts or lining up potential new contracts – but for visibly reaffirming the growing stature that BNI commands in the world of business.

Why is it that we could easily have filled a larger venue than Westminster's QEII Conference Centre? Why is it that among the 750 lucky delegates, at least two thirds declared they would win new business through their attendance that day? And why is it that BNI boasts amongst its ranks, not just SME's but some of the UK's largest institutions – like the sponsors of this event, NatWest Bank? Coincidence? Of course not!

BNI continues to expand rapidly for the same reason it was created 20 years ago by Dr. Ivan Misner, namely to help people benefit from its unique system of word-of-mouth business networking. That's why, each month we see scores of new chapters launched across the globe. Not because of slick advertising or PR spin, but simply because good news travels fast - spread naturally, by word of mouth... •

## The Secret of Success

As the author of seven best-selling books on word-of-mouth marketing and business networking, and in constant demand on TV, radio and at business seminars around the world, BNI's Founder Dr Ivan Misner is never short of material for keynote addresses.

In London, he based his theme on the principles of effective networking described in his book 'Masters of Success', setting out the values every member needs to adopt to succeed in business.

He told delegates: "You need passion in business – a determination to win – and, from the outset you must have clear goals, since you will never reach a target you haven't yet set. You will also have to turn adversity into opportunities. When things go wrong, look for solutions, learning from mistakes and growing stronger."

Reminding members that "the secret of success without hard work is still a secret", Dr Misner added: "You will never be a champion of your business unless you learn the fundamentals. In BNI these include having the right attitude, delivering excellent 60-second presentations, attending training workshops, and working hard to grow relationships."

He added: "Successful networking is not about what you know or even who you know, but how well you know them, which means building business relationships based on trust. Do this, and no matter what business you are in, you can speak the language of referrals." •



BIG IMPRESSION: Trainer Andy Bounds proved a big hit

They arrived from all over the world on London's hottest day of the year, eager not only to hear the wisdom of top BNI directors, but also to do business – lots of it – with other networking enthusiasts.

With all 750 seats pre-sold and a waiting list of over 100 members, the NatWest-sponsored London Members' Day created the largest gathering of its type in BNI's 20-year history, as delegates gathered at Westminster's prestigious Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, to be treated to half a dozen high-powered workshops – launched by a memorable hour-long keynote address from Founder and CEO Dr Ivan Misner.

While the formal sessions provided valuable insights into acquiring new business skills, with delegates introduced to a host of networking techniques ranging from the latest proven systems for generating solid referrals

to simple hints and tips, of equal importance was the unique chance to make new contacts and forge embryonic business relationships with hundreds of like-minded BNI colleagues.

Six hours later, before they departed home to all points of the UK (not to mention Australia, Sri Lanka, Barbados and countries in mainland Europe!), the packed conference hall was invited to indicate – by a show of hands – how many were going away with genuine potential new business.

Two thirds of the audience – around 500 members – eagerly thrust their hands into the air, signalling the results of a hectic but profitable two-and-a-half hours of intensive one-to-one's with new faces in breakout sessions, when colour-coded badges helped everyone find their most promising new contacts by grouping synergic businesses into six well-defined power circles.

Time will tell how much new business was generated in that single session, but no-one doubted it would be substantial, not least after the results of a delegates' survey during the day. Every participant had been invited to write down (confidentially) on cards, the current monetary value of their BNI membership. The outcome? Among just the 50% who were happy to divulge the amount of business they'd gained across their respective BNI breakfast tables, the figure was a staggering £15.2 million!

Earlier, the day had started with a passionate assurance from NatWest's Head of Productivity for Business Banking, Jim Edgar, that the Bank was wholly committed to BNI's Givers Gain philosophy, so much so that its management had recently launched a strategic document – 'To BNI or not to BNI' – aimed at

# LONDON MEMBERS' DAY

Mark Sullivan

MEETING OF MINDS: NatWest's Head of Productivity for Business Banking Jim Edgar (left) with BNI Founder and CEO Dr Ivan Misner at the London Members' Day.



# THEY CAME, THEY SAW... THEY CONQUERED!

encouraging all of its branches to place a senior manager in the local BNI chapter.

As the events main sponsor, he said NatWest was determined to fill every available banking seat in every UK chapter, and promised, tongue-in-cheek: "You might think it is difficult to trust a banker in just a couple of months, but we will be absolutely resolute in training and educating our managers not just about the benefits of joining BNI, but about becoming better, effective referrers."

Dr Misner's keynote presentation (see 'The Secret of Success') was followed by other

powerful workshops from BNI directors Andrew Hall ('How to achieve BNI success in seven days'), Terry Hamill ('Ten Key Success Factors') and Andy Bounds who delivered a thought-provoking presentation on how members can gain more business from their 60-second infomercials.

In a racy half-hour spot, National Directors Martin and Gillian Lawson presented delegates with 30 specific initiatives – each taking just 30 minutes to perform – that could boost their own, and their chapter's achievements, and the day ended in a quick-

fire "Ask the Founder" session, allowing Dr Misner to wax lyrical in responding to some serious, and not so serious, members' questions.

"It was a remarkable day, one that lived up to its promise in every way" said Gillian Lawson. "The business temperature inside soon exceeded the heatwave outside, and nobody could have left empty handed. While the majority clearly went away with a lot of potential new business, everyone made valuable contacts, and gained a great deal of extra business knowledge." •

## HAILED AS BIGGEST AND BEST EVER

# BNI nets big catch for Richard

**P**otteries chartered accountant and keen angler Richard Nadin not only netted one of his best-ever business deals through a BNI referral – he also landed a specialist fishing rod from a grateful customer!

A partner with Newcastle-based accountants Dean Statham, Richard played a leading role in helping local entrepreneur Steve Shutler sell his multi-million pound company to one of Europe's largest laboratory and consultancy companies for "a significant sum".

To mark the smooth disposal of his business, Steve who launched his business just 17 years ago as a 'man



with a van' sole trader, presented Richard (Pictured left) with a 16ft salmon rod, "for his good advice."

The men were introduced through one of Richard's Britannia Chapter colleagues in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Richard commented: "BNI has been our single most successful channel for acquiring new clients over many years, and the Shutler deal was one of my biggest ever pieces of business. It was the perfect way to hand over my BNI seat to one of my colleagues Peter Brown, pending my imminent retirement!" •

Contact Richard on 01782 614618



## OSWALD'S SUCCESS IS IN THE NET

**M**embers of Durham's Oswald Chapter have taken Givers Gain into the world of amateur sport, by sponsoring a local schoolboys' football team. Despite doing well in their league, members of Riverside's squad felt impoverished turning out against other

school teams, because they didn't have a proper football strip. Andrea Machin, Membership Co-ordinator said: "We're going from strength to strength and wanted to share our success by investing something back into the local community." •

**L**et them eat cake . . . because they certainly deserve it!! Members of Scotland's very first BNI chapter – Glasgow Alpha – are pictured with a celebratory cake in the shape of a giant referral slip, after passing their 10,000th referral a few weeks ago.

The 30-strong group notched up its milestone referral exactly seven years after becoming Scotland's founding chapter, during which time members have found a remarkable £3 million worth of business for each other.

Chapter Director Euan MacLeod, a business manager with the Royal Bank of Scotland said: "Our members are dedicated to providing quality business referrals and we are immensely proud of what we have achieved over the years.

"It was a landmark moment when the 10,000th referral was passed at a recent meeting and the group continues to go

from strength to strength, with positions in Alpha Chapter still eagerly sought after by would-be members."

While they may have earned their huge cake, health-conscious members decided it would be appreciated even more by the residents of Craigpark Home for children with special needs. "The Home is a really deserving local charity, and I'm sure the youngsters made short work of their treat," Euan added. •



# 10,000

## REFERRALS? IT'S A PIECE OF CAKE!

# POPULAR GALWAY FOUNDER DIES

**P**ádraic Ó Concheanainn, a founder member of Galway's An Gaillimhe Chapter died suddenly on 24th May at the age of 56. He leaves a wife and three children.

Pádraic attended the Chapter's very first open visitors meeting in March 1999, and had been an outstanding chapter member, playing a full part in its leadership as Secretary/Treasurer and Chapter Director.

His greatest pride – aside from his family - was the way he built and developed his contract furnishing company, Socos Teoranta, and he was

the first to acknowledge the part that BNI played in this success.

Chapter Director, Gerard Hosty said: "He became a good business colleague and a wonderful friend. He always found good referrals and was quick to acknowledge and thank us for the referrals he received. He looked to us for help and advice when he needed it, and he was there to offer help when we asked. We are the richer for having known Pádraic and we will miss him sorely. ●

*'Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.' "*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WHERE THERE'S A WILL....THERE'S BNI

A fast-growing Scottish company has urged all of its consultants to take out membership of BNI.

Bosses at Legal Services Scotland (LSS), which specialises in will-writing, trusts, inheritance tax and estate planning, made the decision after observing soaring sales figures from their agents who had already joined.

LSS Director Scott Ettershank said: "We track all sales figures and it was noticeable that consultants in BNI chapters right across the country had significantly higher returns, making it clear that BNI's superb networking system was not just working, but a major key in the success of our company.

"It doesn't take rocket science to conclude that BNI is an ideal vehicle for our consultants, so we are encouraging all of them to join a local chapter. It gives a tremendous boost to the business."

David Russell, an LSS consultant in Edinburgh's Dunedin Chapter said: "BNI has made a substantial impact and 50 per cent of my portfolio has come through chapter referrals. The networking opportunities it opens up are invaluable." ●

Contact Scott Ettershank on 01382 774332.

### HARROGATE INITIATIVE PULLS IN THE VISITORS

Members of Harrogate's Thursday Chapter are reeling over their own success after launching a newsletter that has boosted interest in BNI. Since introducing its monthly bulletin last autumn, the group has identified a 50% increase in visitor conversions to membership.

Membership Co-ordinator Stewart Harrison said: "As well as keeping members informed, it promotes their services to visitors and the wider business community. We know from the feedback, that having our own bulletin is proving a useful tool in gaining new members." ●



## A WELL EARNED REST

**C**olchester Centurion Chapter's Robin Webb receives well-deserved treatment for his aching limbs from chapter colleague, qualified therapist/masseuse Julie Alderton, after completing one of the most gruelling physical events in the UK – a 12-day coast-to-coast charity trek across 200 miles of Scotland's most mountainous terrain.

Robin, Managing Director of Colchester consulting engineers RWCL, who raised £1,500 for the city's St Helena Hospice, thanks to sponsorship by

members of both his own and Colchester's Castle Chapters, said: "I did my best to train for it, but there are no mountains in Essex so the best I could do was walk up and down Balkern Hill – our highest point – for two months."

Julie commented: "This event would have challenged a fit young man, but for a middle-aged man who'd undergone major heart surgery barely two years ago, Robin's achievement was remarkable." ●

Contact Robin Webb on 01206 860900

# BREAKFAST BONANZA

## CHOCOHOLIC SUCCESS AT HALESOWEN

Recruiting a PR consultant to your group can produce some unlikely results, as members of the Halesowen Chapter in the West Midlands are discovering - like competing fiercely every week for a small bar of chocolate!

It's not that they're dissatisfied with their regular BNI breakfast, but just one of the new initiatives introduced by PR Consultant Christine Ransome-Wallis after being invited to become the group's 'communications guru'. Keen to make an early impression, Christine's

letters for new members and visitors, and a weekly news round-up summarising the breakfast meeting with reminders about forthcoming events and developments. "It jogs peoples' memories, updates anyone who couldn't be there, and ensures any issues are sorted out quickly. The result is a more inclusive, interactive chapter."

But her most popular innovation has been the weekly 'chockie award', presented to the member delivering the best 60-second presentation. "After watching two superb infomercials which



**CHOCOHOLICS GALORE:** Halesowen Chapter members toast their increasing success now that they are competing for a chocolate bar award each week – the brainwave of PR member Christine Ransome-Wallis (wearing pink top).

initial success was to get photos and stories of the chapter's first anniversary published in the local papers, raising awareness of BNI in the community.

Next came a review of how the leadership team kept in contact with the members. She said: "Everyone has access to computers, so we asked our IT supremo James Cash to develop an email system that automatically circulates members' mail instantly, so now they don't just meet on a Tuesday morning; they have 24/7 contact with each other."

Christine also produces welcome

made such a refreshing difference, I decided to introduce a weekly prize of a chocolate bar for the best one. I found some confectionery, appropriately called 'Excellence' and 'Finest', and the response has been amazing.

"Since we started this, the standard of 60-second slots just gets better each week, making it more interesting for members and a great show for visitors. You wouldn't believe how much effort everyone makes to come up with something different each week – and all for a bar of chocolate," she added •



**WE HAVE A NETWORK!** Andy Kusytsch (left) and Gerry Allan discuss the Griffin project at The Broadfield Hotel

## ROCHDALE HOTELIER GETS CONNECTED – BNI STYLE!

For independent Lancashire hotelier Andy Kusytsch, the decision to invite a local BNI chapter to meet in his conference room has proved to be a winner.

Andy was not a member of Rochdale Chapter when he offered them facilities at his Broadfield Hotel but, after watching members in action, he soon saw the benefits of networking with local businesses and joined – striking up an alliance with IT provider, Gerry Allan of Flexsys (UK) Ltd.

The result is the development of one of the most innovative and cost-effective internet services for hotel guests anywhere, providing instant online access using either a wired or wireless connection from every bedroom.

He said: "We are constantly looking for ways to stay ahead of the big chain hotels, so I was very interested in Gerry's proposals. Now, guests don't even need their own laptop with them, since we will loan one to them."

Meanwhile, as a result of the co-operation between Flexsys, The Broadfield and Patrick Jones of Nexsoft (the hotel's computer software provider), Patrick is also joining BNI •

Contact Andy Kusytsch on 01706 644085 and Gerry Allan on 0845 6442245



# WHAT A DIFFERENCE A MONTH MAKES

While most new business ideas take months to reach fruition, founder Kenilworth Chapter Director Michael Farmer has taken an innovative desk system from concept to market launch in just 35 days – thanks to help from no less than 16 BNI members!

Within weeks of coming up with the idea for VersaDesk™, he'd set up the whole business and produced a prototype for marketing. "The only reason it happened so fast was because I could call on the services of so many members I trust, who quickly got me up and running," said Michael (pictured right with some of the members who helped him).

Members of Black Pear (Bromsgrove), Cheltenham, George Eliot (Nuneaton), John O' Gaunt (Kenilworth), LionHead Alpha (Binley Woods) and Phoenix (Rugby) chapters provided the various services for Michael's venture •



You may have to look twice to see it, but eagle-eyed members who follow motor racing should spot the fastest BNI logo in the UK this summer, as Inverness Highland Chapter's Dave Newsham flashes across your TV screens.

Dave, Managing Director of one of Scotland's major drinks

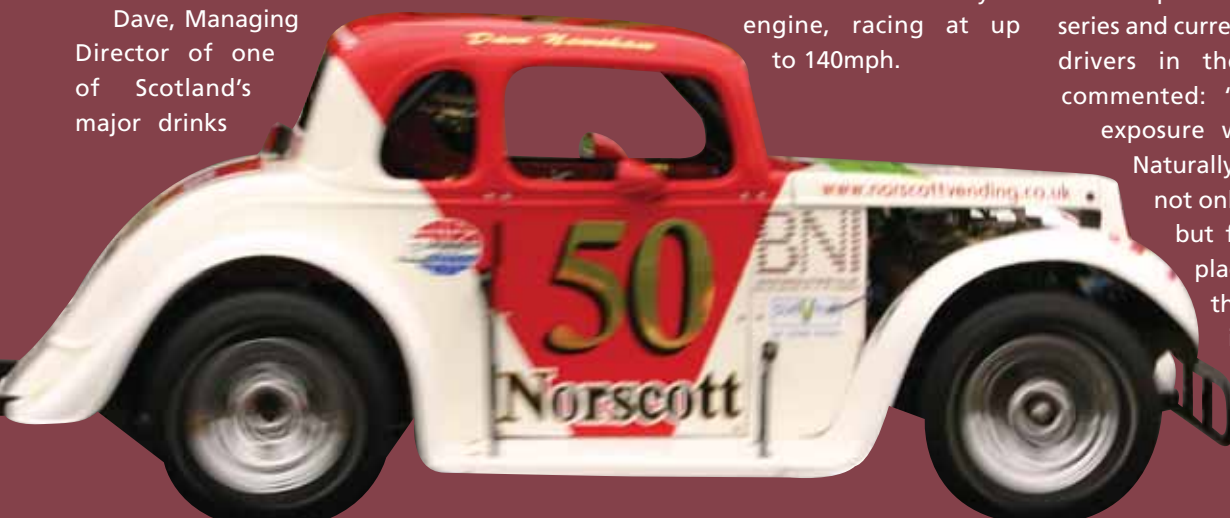
## THE FASTEST BNI LOGO IN THE UK !

and snack machine companies, Norscott Vending Services Limited, is competing in the Legends British Championship, and his 14 races at top tracks like Brands Hatch and Donington, are being televised by Sky Sports. The 'Legends' series is arguably the most exciting of all motor sports, featuring classic US-built veteran sports cars all using the same 1250cc Yamaha motor cycle engine, racing at up to 140mph.

Not one to miss an opportunity, when Iain Whyte, BNI's Executive Director for Scotland South and East heard about Dave's TV appearances, he immediately decided to sponsor his championship season, and get BNI's logo onto the side of Dave's 1934 Ford Coupe car!

As SuccessNet went to press, Dave had completed six rounds of the British series and currently stands fifth out of 28 drivers in the points table. Iain commented: "The potential for BNI exposure was too good to miss. Naturally we all hope that Dave not only completes every round, but finishes well in the final placings, before going on to the World Championships in San Francisco." •

Contact Dave on 01463 711471



# Edwin makes it happen for Carlisle's 'Sister Act'

When you've done everything you set out to achieve in your corporate career, you've recently got divorced and have no ties, what do you do? Why, have some 'fun' by starting your own company, of course. And when your sister is in exactly the same position – well, there's only one thing for it: go into business together!

This unusual scenario has proved a winning formula for Debra and Beverley O'Connor who have taken Carlisle's business community by storm, thanks largely to what Debra says has been her single most important business decision – joining the town's Edwin Chapter.

The sisters gave up their high-flying jobs last year to launch the new company, AdIT Business Support Centres Ltd, providing tailor-made business support and consultancy services, and versatile serviced office facilities in central Carlisle.

Despite their combined experience, Debra acknowledged that had she not joined BNI, their venture would have taken much longer to get off the ground. "Getting involved with BNI just as we were setting up the business enabled us to tap into the expertise of many chapter colleagues, and we've received huge benefits and referrals from BNI members across the whole of Cumbria," she said.

"One of the extra advantages of using the trusted services of BNI members, is having the exceptional personal support that comes with it. This has been tremendous in building the relationships we needed as a new business. Our first year with BNI has been fantastic with a good percentage of our business - worth up to £12,000 - coming from some brilliant referrals," said Debra, the Chapter's Membership Co-ordinator • For further information, call Debra on 01228 517710 or email: [debra.oconnor@aditcentres.com](mailto:debra.oconnor@aditcentres.com)

HOW DOES SOMEONE GET TO RUN A WORLDWIDE ORGANISATION? IS IT DIFFICULT, OR IS IT ACTUALLY FUN? AND WHAT MAKES SUCH A PERSON TICK – PROFESSIONALLY, AND PERSONALLY? SUCCESSNET'S EDITOR MALCOLM GROSVENOR CAUGHT UP WITH BNI'S FOUNDER AND CEO DR IVAN MISNER AT THE RECENT LONDON MEMBERS' DAY, AND PUT HIM ON THE SPOT.

Ed: You created your unique word-of-mouth marketing concept 20 years ago when, as a management consultant you lost your major client. Had that event never arisen, do you think BNI would exist today?

Misner: I guess the simple answer is 'No', but as with all things in life, necessity is the mother of invention. Fortunately, most of my business already came from speaking engagements or referrals through existing clients. That gave me the idea to create a system to guarantee me new referrals, rather than finding ad hoc business – and 'The Network' (the forerunner to BNI) was born.

Ed: Nobody could have built such a large and dynamic organisation without some challenges, especially in the early years. Did you have to make personal sacrifices, or ever wonder if the increasing demands of a growing BNI, were worth it?

Misner: Within four years, I'd grown BNI to nearly 80 chapters across four U.S. states and I reached a crossroads. There weren't enough hours in the day to run my consultancy as well as personally manage a fast expanding BNI. The decision was surprisingly easy: I chose the latter, knowing I could touch and improve the lives of hundreds of people, rather than help just a few consultancy clients.

Sure, during those formative years when I was filling every role from CEO to janitor, it was tough, but always stimulating and rewarding. Very early in BNI's history, I got my best ever referral when I met my wife, Elisabeth, who was then a chapter director. Twenty years on, I've learnt to bring balance into my life, so much so, I'm taking my first ever two-month vacation this summer. If I'm honest, that's due to my 12 year old son Trey who complained that he didn't see enough of me, and told me that after 20 years of running BNI, I should be able to have time off. So yes, it's always demanding, but I wouldn't change any of it.

Ed: You've achieved every goal you set out to achieve for BNI back in the 1980s. What is it that continues to motivate you when, presumably, you could retire a wealthy man tomorrow and never have to think about the organisation again?

Misner: (Laughs) I don't think I could quite retire tomorrow, but more importantly, I don't

want to. I have an exciting 10 year plan for BNI and I want to be part of it. My aim is to relinquish the CEO's chair in due course, handing over day-to-day operations to a successor, allowing me to move into a more ambassadorial role as president or chairman, where I can take a broader perspective on our progress.

Ed: You often refer to the fact that word-of-mouth marketing is never taught in university and business management courses, despite it being the most effective method. Do you have any plans for the BNI 'system' to gain recognition in the wider business community?

Misner: Training on networking, or winning business by referral, is never going to happen in our colleges where most professors are academics with no experience of the commercial world. You'll never hear them talk about closing a deal. However, while BNI is not a training organisation, we are developing strategic alliances with some of the very first commercial companies to start networking training. Here in the UK, you have the new Referral Institute initiative, and I hope such bodies will be using BNI materials and expertise in teaching word-of-mouth marketing to aspiring business entrepreneurs. An additional spin-off is that I anticipate a significant number of their trainees will join BNI chapters around the UK.

Ed: Given the organisation's success at many different levels, what single aspect of BNI 'in action', gives you the greatest personal buzz? And do you still get the same sense of satisfaction when you hear about the latest member's success story?

Misner: The fact that despite being a truly worldwide organisation, we are constantly



# MAN OF THE PEOPLE MAN OF THE WORLD

evolving, improving and performing better, is hugely rewarding. While Givers Gain works the same way in every country with a free market economy, subtle differences in business etiquette mean that original ideas are always emerging – and we will continue to tweak our system to accommodate good new practices. On a personal level, I still get a big buzz when I meet up with a member whom I saw maybe three or four years earlier, to find they've put BNI's philosophy into practice and become hugely successful!

**Ed:** Do you ever worry that with BNI's phenomenal growth, the organisation may grow so large, it becomes impossible to maintain the quality of training and leadership?

**Misner:** The bigger we become, the greater the need for management integrity – but this is a journey not a destination, and new solutions emerge all the time. For instance, a key project right now is the merger of all our different directors' training manuals around the world, to create a definitive global manual that will meet everyone's needs. It is a big challenge to maintain a single, tangible organisational culture when we're in 23 countries, but we are determined to do so – and strengthen it.

**Ed:** With 76,000 members worldwide, BNI has struck a major chord among the global business community, but can membership benefit everyone? Don't you need a gregarious personality or have to be a natural networker, to make BNI work for you?

**Misner:** BNI is not for everyone. I want chapters to be selective in picking people who will work hard to succeed, and desire is the key. Give me anyone with just 50% ability but

100% desire to win, and BNI can help them become successful. And yes, even wallflowers can flourish in BNI, because they are among friends, and we will make them more confident and professional.

**Ed:** You've suggested BNI will have 15,000 chapters and 300,000 members "within the foreseeable future". Will the time come when you want to 'cap' BNI's expansion?

**Misner:** BNI has grown by looking for the right people, not places. We will continue to go wherever business people want to embrace Givers Gain, but we would never try to establish ourselves in a specific location 'just to be there'. We don't need to. In the USA alone, there is capacity for 12,000 BNI chapters and currently we have just 3,000 – so BNI will still be growing long after I've departed.

**Ed:** In 10 years time when you're still a young 60 year old and decide to take a back seat, do you hope one of your children may succeed you in running BNI?

**Misner:** Only if one of them really wanted to and even then, not as CEO. I'd like them to pursue whatever vocation truly motivates them. My daughter Cassie is already a talented artist, while my older daughter Ashley will probably head towards a career in visual communications.

**Ed:** When the world comes to write your epitaph, how would you like to be remembered as the creator of the world's largest and most successful networking organisation?

**Misner:** Gosh, what a question! I suppose, something like: "He believed in Givers Gain, and he walked the talk. ●"

Adopting the BNI principle of never letting an opportunity slip, has led Walpole (Ealing) Chapter Director Mark Foster to open a major 'one-stop shop' service for organisations wanting to improve disabled access to their businesses.

And, in true givers gain spirit, the launch of Lifestyle Access & Mobility Ltd was a team effort by more than a dozen members of several chapters who helped carry out the refurbishment and launch of its new Acton offices, training facilities and showroom in record-breaking time.

The company was born after Mark got chatting to a breakfast visitor, Errol Charles. A subsequent one-to-one revealed that Mark's disability access auditing consultancy business dovetailed perfectly with Errol's company, which specialised in the provision of disability equipment to the professional and healthcare sectors.

"When we discovered our visions were complementary, we decided to combine our businesses," said Mark. "Having found the ideal premises, large enough to offer a wide range of mobility products as well as our training and auditing services, it was so much easier being able to call on the expertise of BNI members to help us realise our plans.

"We used eight of my own chapter colleagues, and half a dozen from other chapters who between them got us operational in just eight weeks!" ●

Contact Mark Foster on 020 8752 9660

## Team effort in West London

**PERFECT PARTNERSHIP:** Partners Mark Foster (centre) and Errol Charles (left) with Retail Director Adil Dean, outside their new LifeStyle showrooms and headquarters in Acton.



# FANTASTIC AWARD WINNERS

## REIGATE'S NELLY IS ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



When a gathering of London's brightest female entrepreneurs raised a glass of champagne to their business success at a London awards event, it was Reigate Chapter's Nelly Berova who had most reason to celebrate.

As director and founder of Croydon design company Art Division, Nelly beat 120 other entrants to take home the prestigious award for Entrepreneur of the Year in the recent 'Her Business Project' Awards.

At her next chapter meeting, Nelly was eager to share her success with colleagues. She told them: "BNI is the best place to be when you're setting up a business. There's no doubt that if we hadn't joined, our company would not be here today. When we started we did not know where to go for support or potential clients, but someone mentioned BNI and we haven't looked back. Around 40% of my business comes through BNI referrals." ●

Contact Nelly on 0870 710 7691.



**XTREME SUCCESS:** Graeme Duncan, Xtreme's Director with TV political commentator John Sergeant (left) receives his national award from Andrew McGregor of BT Business.

Life just goes on getting better for Aberdeen Alpha Chapter's Graeme Duncan, whose Xtreme Business Solutions company was recently named as the UK's 'Most Promising New Business' at the British Chambers of Commerce Awards.

Not yet two years old, Xtreme won

## ALPHA MAN WINS PREMIER AWARD

Grampian Enterprise North East's 'Young Business of the Year' award last summer, and the company's expertise in the design and installation of cabling, fibre optic and network hardware products, has seen dramatic expansion with new branches in Dunfermline, Glasgow and Warsaw.

In its first year, Xtreme secured contracts worth £200,000, much of it coming from BNI referrals and Graeme said: "I'm extremely proud of what we have achieved, not least with the help of my BNI colleagues." ●



For the second year running, a member of Lancashire's Atlas Chapter has received a top industry award – and BNI takes much of the credit.

Ed Mawdsley, managing director of Boo Mortgages received the runner-up award in "What Mortgage" magazine's 'Advisor of

## HOORAY – IT'S BOO AGAIN!

the Year' category, and he is in no doubt BNI's influence on his business has helped him become an award winner.

"Through our membership we've learned the importance of word-of-mouth marketing, and how a reputation can grow. We've had many referrals from colleagues and worked hard to apply BNI's code of ethics. This award is proof we are succeeding." ●

Contact Ed Mawdsley on 01704 500727.



Think of the removals industry, says Rod Seeland of Stockport Hatters Chapter, and most people picture dusty old men in brown overalls, or brawny youths muttering as they break another item.

## MOVING FEAST FOR HATTERS' MEMBER?

However, such impressions have no place in Rod's company, BCL, which has scooped the industry's Oscar as 'Commercial Mover of the Year' and is forging a new image for the business – partly thanks to BNI.

Rod said: "I've been so impressed by the pro-active attitude of members that it has created a new way of thinking in BCL. BNI's ethos has become a strong part of our development, helping us focus on ways to improve our customer care and service." ●

Contact Rod on 0161 888 3398.



**ALL SMILES FOR TAKE OFF:** Cill Dara's leadership team are pictured at the Chapter's recent launch. From left to right: Kieran Horgan (Education Co-ordinator), Brenda Farrell (Secretary/Treasurer), Dermot Fitzgerald (Membership Co-ordinator) and Kathryn Byrne, the inaugural Chapter Director.

## CILL DARA BRINGS BIZ BUZZ TO KILDARE

**B**arely two months old, and the Cill Dara Chapter has brought a new business buzz to Naas, the fast-growing county town of Kildare, says inaugural chapter director Kathryn Byrne.

Famous across the world for its horse racing (three of Ireland's most famous courses are close by) and the home of the Irish National Stud, Naas is now also a burgeoning business centre – reflected in Cill Dara's growth to 23 members after just two meetings in the town's Osprey Hotel.

Kathryn, who runs Limelight Communications, said: "We are delighted with the chapter's early success. BNI is a great motivator and after just a few weeks, the buzz and enthusiasm at our meetings is fantastic. It's noticeable that long after our formal agenda is over, members stay on, developing new business synergies and generating business for each other".

Among other recently launched UK and Irish chapters are:

- Business4U (Southgate, London)
- Cookson (South Shields)
- Dorchester (Dorset)
- Emerald (Milton Keynes)
- James Cook (Guisborough)
- Letterkenny (Londonderry)

- Mavericks (Liverpool)
- Menapia (Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford)
- Meridian (Chingford)
- Moonrakers (Middleton, Manchester)
- Phoenix (South Kensington)
- Premiere (Rickmansworth)
- Setanta, Celbridge (Co. Kildare)

In mainland Europe, 18 chapters have been launched since the last SuccessNet.

In Germany:

- Fuchs (Berlin)
- Schiller (Mannheim)
- Goethe (Darmstadt)
- Nibelungen (Bonn)
- Dolomit & Citrin (Munich)
- Cube & Jump (Stuttgart)

In the Netherlands:

- Ibis (Rotterdam)
- Aquamarijn & Topaas (Amsterdam)

In Switzerland:

- Blüemlisalp (Thun)
- Berner Rose (Berne)
- Pilatus & Sursee (Lucerne)

In Italy:

- Boccaccio & Michelangelo (Milan)

In Spain:

- Picasso (Puerto Banus) •



**W**hen you've got a professional entertainer in your midst, you can expect some fun and games – which is why our photos show members of Harlequin (Richmond) Chapter in unfamiliar guises.

Happily, all were willing participants in a series of charity event challenges (based on the TV 'Generation Game' show) that ranged from balloon modelling to pantomime horse racing.

Organised and hosted by the chapter's entertainments specialist Paul



Farris – with contributions from several chapter colleagues - the evening raised over £4,000 from an auction of prizes donated by members, for the Shooting Star Childrens' Hospice and Research into Eating Disorders.

Paul said: "It was a fantastic night of high spirits, fun and of course, some great networking!" •

Contact Paul Farris on 0208 334 9905

# HARLEQUINS PLAY THE GENERATION GAME



# train & gain

Getting the most from membership is something every member seeks – through diligent application of the Givers Gain philosophy, attending training workshops and, of course, constantly looking for good referrals to pass to chapter colleagues. But sometimes we miss the most obvious answers. In these two complementary articles, James Sanderson, Executive Director for London South-Central offers some valuable advice...

## BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED, BUT BNI GIVES YOU EVERYTHING ELSE!

People often ask me for a simple, definitive description of BNI and I tell them that it is a Degree Course in Personal Marketing. What someone can learn by becoming a member of BNI is truly unique and cannot be gained anywhere else – not from any school, course or university, anywhere.

The simple proof of its value, even to those with a limited understanding of its benefits, can be seen in the fact that so many visitors to chapter meetings quickly take the attitude that they can't afford not to become a member. But, exactly what sort of benefits are we talking about? More business of course, but in a recent members' survey, the other major benefits of membership were highlighted:

- It introduces you to excellent suppliers
- It teaches you how to present your business in a clear, appealing way that others can easily understand
- It helps you to develop many new contacts
- It provides a ready supply of new customers
- It forces you to make time for marketing your business
- It offers a support network of businesses colleagues ready to offer feedback and free advice
- It opens the door to establishing yourself in a group of businesses with whom you are likely to have a close working relationship
- It gives you a focused 90 minutes each week to concentrate on developing your business
- It presents you with the opportunity to



**JAMES SANDERSON:** Author of this issue's two training articles.

- build your business in a particular town or region
- It speeds the development of your business
- It teaches you better communication skills - ideal for one-to-one interaction
- It gives you the most powerful marketing programme to advance your business through Givers Gain
- It keeps you ahead of the competition
- It gives you access to some of the most advanced coaching and training resources through BNI skills workshops and other educational events

The implication from all this is that by simply becoming a member, the most extraordinary transformation will take place in your business and you will rapidly scale the dizzying heights of success and achievement.

Unfortunately this is not necessarily true. BNI is not a guaranteed success programme for all, because not everyone knows how to work it to their best advantage.

Why not? Well, using our organisation's title as an appropriate analogy, it could be apt to say that the letters of BNI stand for 'Batteries Not Included'. Like even the best-oiled machine, BNI still needs power to operate it, and that impetus and energy can only be provided by each individual member of your chapter.

Visiting many different chapters both in the UK and abroad, I have observed a huge variety in the experiences – and levels of success - of different members, but most staggering of all has been the realisation that different people who essentially do exactly the same job as one another, can achieve vastly different results. How can that be?

I always believe that success leaves clues, and the best way to become successful in anything is to find someone who is already successful in that particular field, and try to do exactly what they do.

Don't be clever and try to reinvent the wheel. Don't add or even subtract from what they are doing, just observe and follow their practices to the tee and you should achieve exactly the same results. If it sounds too simple - and almost like cheating - don't be put off! In reality it is by far the most successful approach and one that, after all, is simply a variation of any skills training programme: look, learn, copy, practise and profit!

But above all else, seize the benefits of membership to gain your Degree in Personal Marketing - with a Distinction. It is the most valuable qualification that you could achieve for your business. •

# THE BNI HOUR OF POWER

In my eight years as a BNI Director I have observed that the secret to BNI is not what happens in our meetings each week, but what happens away from the meeting, during the rest of the week. Similarly, I have noted that the most successful members are those who are most active outside the meeting.

The weekly chapter breakfast is not, and should not be the focus of your BNI week. Instead, it should represent the culmination of all of the activity that has taken place during the week and, in my view, if there has been very little BNI activity during your week, then the meeting is likely to be a waste of time. A lot of words may be exchanged, but really it's just going through the motions.

So, how can a member be most effective in pursuing BNI activities during the week, particularly when the demands of his or her own business may be most pressing? The answer is by employing a strict regime of time management and devoting a very specific window of focus to BNI each week. We call this the "BNI Hour of Power" and the results it can produce can be truly extraordinary.

My chapter leadership teams encourage members to set aside one hour a week in which they focus solely on BNI activity. Think about it: if you stopped everything in your day and decided just to focus on BNI for one hour, what would you do? Would you be at a loss to fill the time? Or would you have a number of different activities that you could immediately pursue to give you a tremendous impetus in developing business for chapter colleagues, whilst also giving your own business a major boost at the same time?

Let's break the "Hour of Power" down into three distinct and easily identifiable groups of activity:

## 1. Focus on generating referrals:

- work on referrals for the previous week's 10-minute speaker
- review each members' "most-wanted" referral from the previous week. (This ensures that you are

carefully recording what each of your colleagues are looking for at each meeting)

- follow up on possible referrals, to turn them into certainties
- review your contacts list to see what introductions can be made for fellow members
- review your diary of upcoming customer/client meetings to see what opportunities there might be to introduce other members' businesses or services at each meeting

## 2. Focus on inviting visitors:

- follow up previously invited visitors to see if they are ready to join
- review the list of trade/professional categories that your chapter most wants to fill, and update your own customer and contacts lists to see if you can identify suitable visitors
- make invitation calls
- send invitation cards and emails confirming venue details for visitors
- make reminder follow-up calls to visitors the day before the meeting

## 3. Focus on your one-to-ones:

- plan, diarise and prepare for your one-to-one meetings with other members
- follow up on actions arising from previous one-to-one meetings

We have found that the Hour of Power can transform any member's experience within BNI, almost instantaneously increasing the value of business generated and received by over ten-fold.

None of the benefits of BNI membership are guaranteed, just as success in life is never a matter of luck. It is always the result of working and developing a carefully honed and fine-tuned system of success. What is your system for success in BNI?

Applying and incorporating the Hour of Power into your weekly schedule will take you a long way towards receiving the best possible return on your membership. Adopt it, and see the benefits flow! ●

A new initiative has been mounted to ensure that all BNI members can access consistently high-quality training in different parts of the country.

To achieve and maintain uniform standards of training throughout the UK and Ireland, the organisation has invested in specialist expertise to help develop training tools for use by BNI directors in any part of the country, enabling them to run skills training workshops to a high professional standard.

National Director Martin Lawson said: "The majority of BNI's directors have already attended training courses to learn how to present effective workshops for members on referral skills, presentation skills and networking skills but, in addition, every director now has access to our new 'Train the Trainer' packages developed specifically for these three workshops."

## TRAINING THE TRAINERS

"Our goal is to give every member access to at least one workshop on one of these topics every month. All the evidence shows that the more members of a chapter who attend these workshops, the more referrals per member are passed in the chapter on an ongoing basis."

He added: "BNI is widely recognised as one of the most effective providers of personal and business skills training, but with our rapid growth came the challenge of ensuring consistently high training standards across every region. Every member should now be able to obtain the appropriate skills training they want, at a local level."

So, if your own region is not yet offering regular skills workshops on these topics, you should be lobbying your local BNI director to provide them as soon as possible. ●



# Bigger, better Members' Manual launched

A comprehensive new Member Success Training Manual has been introduced for the UK and Ireland, reflecting BNI's growing sophistication not only as the world's leading business referral organisation, but also as a leading business skills training and educational body.

Since BNI's launch in the UK nearly nine years ago, all new members have been given an orientation guide, setting out its philosophy and procedures, as well as identifying a growing range of personal business development opportunities for members through training workshops, members' days and special events.

Now, BNI has replaced this with a fully-revised Member Success Training Manual,

designed to ensure all new members get the best possible start, as well as providing a fresh approach to gaining enhanced business and chapter development skills for existing members.

Unlike its predecessor, the new manual has three specific parts covering advanced business skills (offered through presentation, networking and referral skills training workshops), materials to maximise the success of chapter visitor and launch days, and a totally fresh approach to member success training.

With every new member automatically undertaking a minimum of two to three hours personal orientation training by their regional director, the latter 50-page section addresses their personal business goals from BNI membership, and guides them through the culture of the organisation, showing how to use its networking tools and pass referrals.

Further sections illustrate how to present their businesses effectively, build positive relations with BNI colleagues, contribute positively to their chapter, acquire better business skills and tap into BNI's huge educational resources. Throughout the orientation training section, key answers are left incomplete to encourage the member to reflect on the important messages of the training session, and provide appropriate responses.

Gillian Lawson, National Director says the manual will give new members a clear insight into the way BNI works and show how to benefit from membership in the shortest possible time. "We constantly improve the range of support services offered to members and the new manual reflects the greater professionalism and expertise now available to everyone."

Copies of the manual will also be given to existing members who re-attend an orientation session. ●

## HATS ON FOR ARMOURIES MEMBERS

If you think that head-turning hats are the sole realm of Royal Ascot's Ladies Day, you obviously haven't visited Leeds' Royal Armouries Thursday Chapter, where florist-extraordinary John Vaughan is proving popular with female colleagues.

In fact it's definitely 'hats on, please' around the weekly breakfast table, since John started wowing the ladies by turning up with a range of exquisite hats from delicate diamond tiaras to hand-stitched, highly colourful creations - made from duck feathers, fresh blooms and silk flowers.

In just four years John's Sheffield-based business has become a fashion cult, winning major awards for his dramatic floral arrangements that have graced Royal garden parties, high society and business functions, as well as unique hand-crafted hats, aimed at lucky brides and bridesmaids.

Chapter Director Jacqui Saxon said: "John's creative skills with flowers and other

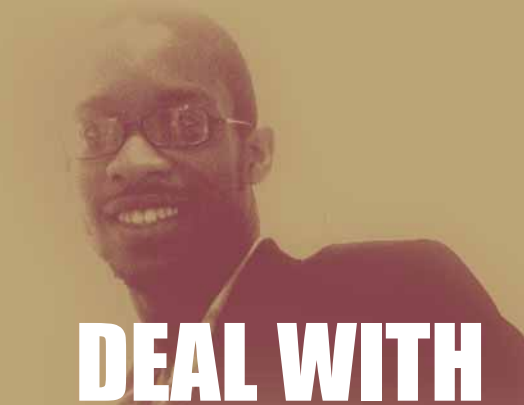


**FANCIFUL FLORIST?** Not likely, but despite his sombre pose, John Vaughan's unique millinery creations have been exciting the ladies in Leeds' Royal Armouries Thursday Chapter.

materials are amazing and his hat designs have caught the imaginations of our ladies, who are more than happy to model his latest creations during our breakfasts. They add a wonderful splash of colour to the dullest morning and have become the talk of the chapter."

Getting noticed is nothing new to the Thursday Chapter. She added: "We were first in Yorkshire to reach 40 members, and many members have received notable-networking awards or industry awards for their achievements." ●

Contact John Vaughan on 0114 2342277.



## DEAL WITH CHAPTER 'ISSUES' QUICKLY

Says Martin Roach, Chapter Director of Hammersmith, London

In my four years of watching leadership teams come and go, I've noticed that the group always runs at its smoothest when problems are dealt with quickly and effectively. So, when I took over the chair I was determined to resolve any 'member issues' as a priority.

We expect members to follow BNI's philosophy and procedures, so it is incumbent on the leadership to help them, by removing the cause of potential conflicts. For instance, if someone is sending a substitute too often, or a substitute poses a conflict of interest, I don't wait until someone complains. Instead, I'll get on the phone and sort out the issue. Similarly, if a member isn't pulling their weight, I address it before it starts to disrupt the group.

Each week I make lots of phone calls to members to make sure everyone is staying focused, but also because I want everyone to feel involved.

We believe that 'involvement' is the other key to success. Members need to do more than just turn up for the meeting, so we ensure that everyone has a specific role – over and above the usual positions – to improve the chapter, such as developing contact spheres, identifying potential visitors, or encouraging members to participate in training workshops. Giving people responsibility is a great way to keep them motivated. ●

Martin is a director with epitype. Contact him on 020 8987 8700



# FROM THE CHAIR

## This town IS big enough for the both of us...

Says Jude Glide, Taunton County Chapter's first Director

When I moved to Taunton last year and joined the County Chapter core group, there was more than a little scepticism from founder members about whether the modest county town was big enough to support a second BNI chapter.

When we launched last November, I was privileged to become its first Chapter Director and now, at the end of my stint I'm delighted to report on the great start we've enjoyed. Enthusiasm for BNI's fantastic personal development programme has been a key factor whereby, without realising it, everyone involved has grown personally as well as in business.

However, we also decided to have lots of fun while growing our businesses, so at Christmas everyone wore reindeer antlers during their one-minute presentations, and in February we set our presentations in a teacher/classroom scenario, where we each had to address 'the class'. I wasn't sure the idea would work, but it proved to be one of our best breakfasts to date! Similarly, on Red Nose Day, members delivered their infomercials wearing a Red Nose, creating some hilarious moments.

As a professional coach/trainer, my job is to inspire people, and my role as Chapter Director gave me the platform to motivate members, encouraging them to think (and sometimes step) outside the box. I hope I succeeded



because they are a very inspirational, loyal group with a great team spirit, and we give each other lots of business and personal support. Even newcomers are confident to start their own one-to-one's within weeks of joining, and now I've moved into the role of educational co-ordinator, power circles are next on the agenda.

County Chapter can now blow its own trumpet, having passed well over £50,000 worth of business in our first few months. Not bad for a small Somerset town that already had a well-established BNI group (Deane Chapter)! ●

Jude Glide (pictured above) runs Focus On Living. Contact her on 07759 263842



# Killarney members invited to adopt a sheep

In a BNI world full of unusual requests for referrals, few can match the call that goes out from Anne Nieuwenhuizen, a member of the Killarney Chapter in County Kerry.

Among the more regular contacts sought by her chapter colleagues each week, Anne urges her fellow members to find people willing to adopt one of the 1,000 sheep and 600 lambs grazing happily

on the mountainous terrain of her farm at Moll's Gap, Kenmare - and give it a name.

She developed the idea for Adopt-a-Sheep with partner John Kissane (the couple are pictured below left) as part of an ambitious venture to attract tourists to their working farm. Visitors can enjoy sheepdog and sheep-shearing demonstrations, take part in educational walks and treasure trails, stroke the pet lambs and, if they're so inclined, adopt one for just €45 a year.

Netherlands-born Anne said: "Our goal is to preserve the Irish heritage of sheep in the mountains. People can pay an entrance fee to visit our farm but if they adopt a sheep they can come along free and enjoy lots of privileges. Some of my BNI colleagues were initially bemused by the idea, but I'm pleased to say two members have already adopted their own lambs, and paid them a visit." •

If you want to know more (you don't have to live in Ireland to adopt a sheep), visit [www.adopt-a-sheep.ie](http://www.adopt-a-sheep.ie) or contact Anne on +353 64 34791



getting in touch...

## UK National Office

Business Network International plc,  
BNI House, Church Street,  
Rickmansworth WD3 1BS

Tel +44 (0)1923 891 999

Fax +44 (0)1923 891 998

Email [bniuk@eurobni.com](mailto:bniuk@eurobni.com)

Executive Editor: Gillian Lawson,  
BNI National Director

Editor: Malcolm Grosvenor  
Grosvenor Associates, New House,  
Palmer Crescent, Kingston Upon Thames KT1 2QT  
Tel: 020 8541 0600 Fax: 020 8241 7163  
Email: [successnet@grosvenorassociates.com](mailto:successnet@grosvenorassociates.com)

Design and Production: Origin 1  
52 Wenta Business Centre, Colne Way,  
Watford WD24 7ND  
Tel: 01923 246116 Fax: 01923 246113  
Email: [info@origin-1.co.uk](mailto:info@origin-1.co.uk)

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

Photography: Pictures on cover, pages 2 & 12,  
courtesy of Andy Barnes, Tel: 07956 609124

[www.bni-europe.com](http://www.bni-europe.com)

# OUR LATEST TOP TWENTY!

Top of BNI's black badge 'hit parade' this quarter are a husband and wife team from Suffolk, a new member from South Kensington, and an Avon chapter director.

Danny Davey and his wife Cheryl (Ipswich's Cobbold Chapter), joined the Gold Club together, while Sarah Ferguson received her black badge for sponsoring six members of Kensington's Phoenix Chapter before it even launched! Meanwhile, Clevedon's Heyhoe Chapter Director James Pike not only introduced seven new members, but also brought most visitors, and gave most referrals!

Other new Gold Club members are: Rob Copeland (Robert Burns Chapter, Ayr), Caroline Bevan and Kirsty Merriman (Cheltenham), Charles Gallagher (Nexus, Eaglesham), Mark Gask (Echo, Inverurie), Violet Harrison (Falcons, Newcastle), Steve Root (Garden of England, Faversham), Brian Herdman (Halesowen), Norman Campbell and Alison Hatrick (James Watt Chapter, Greenock), Clive Catton (Lindvm, Lincoln), Ian Oakley (Mole Valley, Leatherhead), Rory Buchanan (Newry), Andy Bullard (Phoenix, Rugby), Julie Hunter (Scarborough), Michele Cole and Karen Wright (St.Georges, Whitstable), and Jim Gore (Woking). •

## you and SuccessNet...

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 items in the newsletter – but please remember we don't have space for them all!

If you have an item you'd like us to consider for inclusion, please email it to: [successnet@grosvenorassociates.com](mailto:successnet@grosvenorassociates.com) - making sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and address as well. •