



REFERRALS UNLIMITED

Inter-chapter competition is hotting up to generate the most referrals from a single meeting!

But with it comes a warning from the director of one of last year's most successful UK chapter (Stanmore) who said: "It's quality, not quantity that counts – and I urge every chapter to police its referral activity."

No sooner had we reported a Home Counties West record of 79 referrals (*SuccessNet*, Winter) achieved by Milton Keynes Chapter than we received a call from Milton Keynes' newer Silbury Chapter, to say that they'd just passed a record 84 referrals at their meeting.

But, never mind the width – feel the quality

Silbury Chapter Director Sharon Moulton said: "There is naturally a friendly rivalry with our neighbouring Milton Keynes group and we were all happy to beat our 'senior' group. I am sure we will do even better."

In fact, it took Silbury's members less than a month after Sharon's prophetic phone call to pass their own new record when – in the presence of an amazing 42 guests and Executive Director Gavin

Bain – they exchanged 87 referrals! But, not to be outdone, Milton Keynes came back straight away, recording a superb 106 referrals.

While such figures are impressive, they cannot be taken at face value to indicate a successful chapter, says one former chapter director Philip Berg, whose Stanmore group last year converted to real business, more referrals than any other UK chapter.

Philip told *SuccessNet*: "We read with interest about Milton Keynes' claimed referrals record and, while I believe there are quite a few chapters passing this level of referrals (my Stanmore group exchanged 94 only a couple of weeks ago), far more significant is how many of the referrals passed around the breakfast table, turn into extra business."

He added: "At Stanmore we take a tough line on poor quality or low value referrals, and we carefully police every single lead to maintain standards.

"Perhaps unusually, members

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Any body for BNI?

Members of Bolton Chapter were treated to a surprise striptease at a recent breakfast, when solicitor, Michael Morgan abandoned his shirt and lay down on a couch, awaiting the attentions of BNI colleague Karen Willcock.

But it wasn't as provocative as it sounds. Michael was merely assisting physiotherapist Karen with her ten-minute presentation – she needed his body to demonstrate a micro manipulator, which treats back pain through a bionic handset.

Karen's expertise obviously made itself felt, since several members appeared to suddenly develop an assortment of aches and pains, offering to replace Michael on her treatment table and receive therapy.

A chartered physiotherapist and acupuncturist, Karen is the Principal of Bolton Therapy Centre, specialists in physiotherapy and other complementary remedies.

She told *SuccessNet*: "I like to talk about a different aspect of our treatments each week and, since I'd previously mentioned the PAM machine as



BIONIC TREATMENT: Karen and her back pain machine.

a revolutionary treatment for back pain, I decided to use my presentation to demonstrate it – with Michael's help!

"It was definitely worth the effort since it resulted in six referrals that morning and another four over the following weeks."

Karen can be contacted at the Bolton Therapy Centre on 01204 38617.

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Two for the road beats Jane's target

As a founder member of Worcester Chapter, launched at the end of January, car sales business development manager Jane Lewis set herself a simple target – sell one or two additional vehicles in the next 12 months, and membership will have been worthwhile...

But things didn't quite go to plan. At her first chapter meeting, Jane's initial 60-second introduction drew keen interest and within one month of the group's launch, she'd already sold her first two 'extra' cars to chapter colleagues.

Jane, who works for Listers Audi in Worcester told *SuccessNet*: "I really did not expect such an immediate response to my joining BNI.

"I'd decided to join the organisation simply to enhance my circle of business contacts in the area so, when I was given two firm referrals for new cars within the first few weeks, I was pleasantly surprised."

Her first two BNI customers were Jo Oddie, an IT Training Adviser for Able Information who bought an A4 180 Sport saloon, closely followed by Hilary Marchant, Director of Health and Safety with the L. Gardner Group, who chose an A4 19TdiSE Avant.

Jane added: "I realise I'm not going to sell a car to every chapter member – but having already achieved my original annual target in a matter of weeks, I am



DRIVING FORCE: Jane (centre) with her first two happy BNI customers and their cars, Jo Oddie (left) and Hilary Marchant.

very optimistic that further sales from their contacts will follow."

For Hilary, changing her car for a more comfortable model was a spur decision when she found herself sitting next to Jane at a chapter meeting.

"I just told her: 'I'm terribly busy and don't have time for all the usual show-

room hassle and negotiations. Just fix it for me'.

"To my delight, that's exactly what Jane did and it was the easiest change of car I've ever had. Nothing I asked for was too much, and best of all, I didn't have to deal with the usual patronising remarks women get from male car salesmen."

In memoriam

By Gillian Lawson, Executive Director
London North West Region

Martin and I would like to pay a personal tribute to two much-loved members in the Region who, sadly, are no longer with us.

Firstly, Giles Van Colle, who was the optometrist in the Edgware Chapter. Many of you will have been shocked to read in the press of his tragic murder in November last year. Our hearts go out to his parents – his father, Irwin, is the printer and member of the leadership team at Northwood – and to the rest of his family as they try and come to terms with this devastating loss.

Giles was a young and enthusiastic professional who is much missed by his

fellow members. In addition to his professional work, Giles had been involved in helping young people develop a sense of responsibility to the communities in which they live and the Giles Van Colle Memorial Foundation has been set up to continue this work.

Members wishing to make a donation to the Foundation's valuable work should contact Irwin Van Colle for details. (020-8908 0728).

We also record our devastation at the loss of Richard Jennings from the Barnet Chapter. Richard died very suddenly at the beginning of March, having been in great form and excellent health.

He was one of the most charismatic and popular members of his chapter

and he leaves a legacy of fun and goodwill. Indeed, he was famous for his lively and witty presentations.

Richard was just about to take up the position of Chapter Director – something he was very proud to be doing, despite his mistaken belief that he did not have the necessary credibility, being a scrap metal merchant. He is also much missed by his chapter colleagues. Again, our thoughts and prayers are with his daughter and family.

We would like to dedicate this issue of *SuccessNet* to the memory of these two dear members whose considerable contributions to BNI and their fellow members have been terminated so tragically.



Referrals record

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aren't frightened to tell their colleagues if they've received a duff referral and we've developed our own way of acknowledging both good and bad at our meetings.

"While I'm delighted to see other groups exchanging high volume referrals, there is a constant need to make sure that big referrals add up to big business."

Echoing Philip's sound advice, National Director Gillian Lawson said: "Of course everyone is happy when a particular group has passed a record number of referrals, but these new business prospects need to be solid. Quality is the all important ingredient, and I hope every chapter will keep this as its top priority."

Gill joins the Board

BNI's International Board of Advisors has a new colleague, hair stylist Gill Carrie from Dunfermline Chapter.

Regarded by Regional Director Ron Hain as 'the best ambassador we could have, and an outstanding example of Givers Gain', Gill became Scotland's first representative on the Board at the start of this year.

Scottish members wanting to present thoughts and ideas to the Board can call Gill on (01383 741110/625792) or perhaps be even more sure of her attention by booking one of her shiatsu massages or hairstyles at Find Hairdressing, Dunfermline.

Six-figure referral forces resignation!

Mark Keatley-Palmer has just become a member of BNI – three years after his first meeting at Tunbridge Wells Chapter!

That might seem strange, but in the three years since he joined BNI, he's been almost everything but just a member.

He originally joined BNI as a founder and membership co-ordinator of the Tunbridge Chapter and soon took on the role as a BNI ambassador for Kent, following which he became Assistant Director for West Kent.

But now Mark has been forced to resign that position for the best possible reason: he's been given a six-figure referral, passed to him by a former chapter member, Trevor Page, Manager of the Royal Bank of Scotland's Tunbridge branch.

"So now I'm just a member," says Mark, who was a full time designer before throwing himself full time into BNI's development.

"Trevor introduced me to Andrew Palmer who was producing a magazine for the British Institute of Innkeeping.

"He was fed up with the design and wanted a totally new

approach to it, and the challenge was too big to turn down."

The first issue of the new look magazine, which also produced another successful referral for Mark's chapter colleague Reg Davies, who won the printing contract, launches this month to the pub, hotel and catering trade.

"I felt I had to resign because I would not have been able to give BNI my full attention, but I'm still a member and nothing will persuade me to give that up," Mark added.

"After all, without BNI my company could never have reached the level of business it has now reached, thanks to a long history of very worthwhile referrals."



Barbican birthday

'Relaxation for celebration' was the theme when central London's Barbican Chapter held its first birthday party – with the group's own natural therapist, Neil Tofield, called on to instil a warm sense of well-being and re-energise his colleagues for the ensuing agenda.

Neil had been urged to offer colleagues and guests a sample of his therapy techniques as a treat to accompany the traditional birthday cake.

But, he thought it would be more interesting to get everyone involved and let them try it out on each other. It didn't take long for everyone to learn some basic techniques, as our picture below shows.

Heading for the bright lights city

A group of lucky BNI members will this month be told: Congratulations, you've won a trip to Nevada, taking in the bright lights of Las Vegas and a breathtaking flight over the Grand Canyon.

As *SuccessNet* went to press, the results of BNI's second UK and Ireland membership drive competition were coming in from chapters, more than 30 of which are expected to have qualified for the draw by attracting six or more new members during the two-month recruitment campaign.

Gillian Lawson, National Director said: "It is too early to give any accurate indication as to how many chapters have qualified – and therefore how many individual members names will go into the draw – but all the indications are that the membership

drive has been every bit as successful as the first one, held 18 months ago.

"A member from any qualifying chapter who has sponsored just one new member could have a one-in-24 chance of being a winner, but if he or she has sponsored two or more new members their chances of joining the Las Vegas party will be dramatically increased," she added.

With one winning ticket (for a member and partner) allocated to every four qualifying chapters, regional draws to select the lucky participants are currently taking place and all winners will be notified through their chapters no later than Friday, 20th April, giving them a month to prepare for their trip of a lifetime.

Lawsons' Lore

BNI National Directors MARTIN & GILLIAN LAWSON write...

Sometimes we all need a gentle reminder in order to get us back on track when we've forgotten some basic practice or procedure. And occasionally we also need reminding about how to make the best of our opportunities when, with the passage of time, over-familiarity breeds complacency.

So it is with the way that members gain new business from their BNI membership. It seems that while every member knows they can be given weekly referrals from their chapter colleagues, relatively few appear to know, or have remembered, that within its rules BNI encourages all members to seek new business opportunities from two other key sources – visitors to the chapter, and substitutes who stand in for absent colleagues.

While we should rightly be wary of passing referrals to visitors who may make only one appearance at our breakfast meeting (let them join first and teach us why we can trust them), we should be actively promoting our own businesses and products to our visitors. For all we know, they may already be looking for exactly what we offer.

This is especially important given the growing emphasis that we – and chapter leadership teams – are placing on the need to attract great numbers of visitors to our meetings. Today's visitors may well be tomorrow's BNI colleagues but, even if they don't come back, we might at least be doing business with them.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about a chapter which brought over 30 visitors to a single meeting and, while this may be unusual, we are pleased to acknowledge that more and more chapters are attracting higher visitor numbers on a regular basis.

So it makes sense for every member to view each and every visitor as a potential new client or customer – and to make sure that before they leave the meeting, you have introduced yourself to them, and offered to visit them in the near future.

When you meet your chapter colleagues week after week, it is very easy to develop a tunnel vision, in which you see only the same faces around the table with whom you hope to do business.

So, at your next meeting, why not make a point of searching out the visitors and/or the substitutes for colleagues, who may be ready to use your products or services – and who may well have something to offer you! Better still, support your colleagues by regularly bringing visitors who will be potential new customers for them.




270 – and still growing fast

BNI's rapid expansion across the UK and Ireland continues, with the opening of almost ten new chapters a month and a total of over 270 groups now up and running as **SuccessNet** went to press.

Since we last reported, nearly 50 new chapters have been opened, from Dublin to Docklands, and Belfast to Bognor Regis, and this rate of growth is expected to continue in the coming months.

National Director Martin Lawson said: "What is especially pleasing is that we're now opening our first chapters in the few remaining areas of the UK and Ireland where we haven't previously had a presence, such as South Wales and the South-West of England.

"I am very confident that by the end of this year we will be able to describe ourselves as the only nationwide business referral organisation, because we will be represented in nearly every major centre of population in the UK & Ireland."

The 47 new chapters opened since late last year are:

Bedford, Belfast Central, Bognor, Bolton Metro, Brooklands Sale (Manchester), Bury, Cannock, Chelsea, Docklands (London), Dublin (Liffey), East Bedfordshire, Edgbaston (Birmingham), Gants Hill, Gloucester & Tewkesbury, Godalming, Ham and High (London), Kettering, Leeds (Apperley Bridge), Leeds Armouries (Friday), Leeds Armouries (Wednesday), Little Aston, Long Melford, Loughborough, Merseyside Bravo, Merseyside Indigo, Mid Hertfordshire, Muswell Hill (London), Newhaven, Newmarket, North Down, Northwich, Oswestry, Rugeley, Sandwyf, Shannonside, Sheffield Thursday, Solihull Touchwood, Southampton, Stockport 2, Sutton Coldfield, Tenterden, Trafford Park, Twickenham, Welwyn Garden City, Wimbledon, Woking and Worcester.

3,000-mile referral for gift specialist

Leicestershire-based gifts and hamper specialist Tony Morley (pictured right) has just fulfilled his Chapter's most long-distance referral – from a BNI assistant director over 3,000 miles away in Canada!

It came from David Hunt who helps run BNI's chapter in Edmonton, Alberta, and wanted to give his father a surprise gift for his 90th birthday.

But, with dad still living in the family home at Bottesford, near Grantham, David thought the best way to find the right gift supplier would be through BNI.

So David first contacted former colleague Steve Jennings, Area Director for Northants and Leicestershire, who put him in touch with Tony's Forest Wine & Hamper Company in Coalville.

Tony, a member of Leicester Oadby Chapter, was happy to put together the precise list of contents for the birthday hamper.



"It was a delightful referral," said Tony, who is about to become his chapter's next director. "David had asked for the gift basket to include wine, chocolates, bottles of liqueurs and the latest copy of the Reader's Digest!"

"David did me a favour too," commented Tony. "He made me realise there is a market for an international gift basket service. I'm working on that idea now."



Seventh heaven in Ulster

It's all systems go in Northern Ireland, where BNI was opening its sixth and seventh chapters in little more than a year, as *SuccessNet* went to press.

With no less than four chapters up and running in Belfast – Lagan Valley, City, Central and most recently Waterfront – Executive Director James McCrossan chose Holywood (just east of the city's boundaries on Belfast Lough) as the venue for his fifth BNI group, being launched in mid-April.

Meanwhile, fresh from his success in

launching the City of Derry Chapter barely two months ago, younger brother Donal, an Assistant Director, had chosen the same week to launch his area's second chapter at Coleraine, 50 miles north of Belfast on County Antrim's coastline.

James told *SuccessNet*: "It's perhaps understandable for business people in the Province to sometimes feel a little cut off from their colleagues on the UK mainland, so I'm delighted that we've been successful in spreading BNI's business networking philosophy among our own communities.

"Considering we launched our first chapter barely 15 months ago, and we

already have 130 businesses represented in our first five chapters, I think we're doing pretty well.

"Our first chapter at Lagan Valley is doing particularly well, with a near capacity 36 members who work hard for each other.

"At one meeting last month they passed 90 good referrals," he said.

James added: "With our two new groups, it won't be long before we've got 200 members, but there's no doubt that BNI has already started to make its mark in the Belfast area where it is becoming known to the business community and the media," he said.

'Flesh flowers' are all the rage!

Most of us tend to think of a florist's shop as being a fairly traditional and conservative enterprise, but one Suffolk horticulturist is treating his customers to a different view, with a little help from the new Director of his **Ipswich Chapter**.

It all started when Rob Dunger of Tower Florists began giving an occasional lift to his friend, Phil Goldsworthy – a member of a male strip group – in his Interflora van, and noted the enthusiasm it seemed to generate amongst some of his customers.

When Interflora found out about it, to Rob's considerable surprise, they commended the initiative as a great publicity stunt.

So, with the help of new Ipswich Chapter Director Roger Barcham, of Buttermarket Photographic Studios, Rob has now set up a new Interflora service – using Phil to deliver flowers and a sexy kissagram at the same time.

Together Rob and Roger have designed and printed posters advertising the new service, the response to which has been overwhelming.

"We've had a fantastic response," said Rob, "with bookings coming in from all over the UK and even Ireland. News of Phil's floral delivery service seems to have spread like wildfire, but I'm also advertising Phil's striptease act in the shop for anyone who wants to see rather more than we let him display during our deliveries."

Now Rob has a rather unusual treat in store for fellow chapter members. Phil has become so impressed with BNI that he has agreed to go along as a guest – and perform a 'full monty' strip as his 60-second presentation!



BNI arrives in Canary Wharf

London Docklands Chapter, launched three months ago, is aiming as high as the skyscraper office blocks that surround it – having already attracted the first of what it hopes will be many referrals and visitors from the business Mecca – Canary Wharf.

Based close to the new business centre, Xel, it's the perfect location for BNI. "We currently have 21 members and are still growing steadily," said

Chapter Director Lee Manning from Raffingers Accountants.

"We have generated £60,000 of extra business from referrals so far and since we were only launched in the New Year, that's really promising."

In contrast to the 'doomed Dome' which they can see from their meeting place, BNI is flourishing and promises to become one of London's most dynamic chapters.



Around the Chapters

Novel way of finding new members

With BNI's national membership drive about to yield its lucky winners for a trip to Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon, one member of Gloucester Chapter has come up with a novel way of reminding his colleagues of vacant positions in their group.

Philip Swinford, who runs a marketing business in Gloucester, was reflecting on how he might highlight trades and professions to target in a new members' drive when he hit upon the solution of word association.

This is what he created: "At BNI Gloucester we have a place for a fishmonger, a hole for a boring contractor and a chair for a furniture manufacturer. We have space for an astronaut, room for an interior designer and SCOPE for a charity organiser.

"On the clinical side, we have a gap for an orthodontist, a spot for a skincare consultant and even a position for a Kama Sutra publisher. We're also scratching around to find a dermatologist and we'll go out on a limb to recruit a prosthesis manufacturer.

"We foresee good things for an astrologer, we have an opening for a pot-holer, we'd love to sign a Czech, and there's a strong probability that we'd accept a statistician.

"Meanwhile, we'll try to rustle up a shepherd and poach a gamekeeper from the Chamber of Commerce. We also quite fancy a pigeon breeder and, finally, we're digging around for an archaeologist and sadly missing an undertaker. However, we have no vacancies for guesthouse owners!"

So, there you have it, Gloucester members! Now see how quickly you can fill Philip's vacancy list!

Trio join Black Badge Club

Black badge membership is both sought after and much valued by members – yet a surprising number of new recipients fail to come to the attention of *SuccessNet*, which likes to publicise new members of the 'Black Badge Club' in every issue.

So, while there are probably a few dozen members out there who've quietly joined BNI's exclusive club, news has reached us of just three new black badge members.

They are: Michael Brunert and Michael Czornenkyj, both from the West Manchester Chapter, and Michael Markham of the Collingtree Chapter, Northamptonshire, who all receive our congratulations.

It's all change for leadership

As you read this issue you'll have noticed that your own chapter's leadership teams and officers have just changed – marking one of the two occasions every year when BNI completely renews itself.

But what you probably don't know is that behind this biannual transformation, lies thousands of hours of intensive training conducted over many weeks by BNI's regional directors, needed to ensure that when the new teams take over, everyone feels the benefit.

With some 2,200 'officers' (chapter director, membership co-ordinator, secretary/treasurer, committee members and visitor hosts) providing the driving force among 270 chapters, it adds up the requirement for over 6,000 man hours of individual training, all of which is squeezed into a single month just prior to the new leadership teams taking over on the 1st April and 1st October each year.

National Director Martin Lawson said BNI was unique

among business networking groups in totally changing its chapter leadership teams every six months.

"We do so for one good reason – to maintain the dynamism and energy in every group. A huge amount of hard work goes into running a chapter and we think it is only fair to give its officers a well-earned rest after six months.

"While there is no doubting that some chapter directors and other officers could maintain their high levels of commitment for 12 months, we believe that changing the leadership teams at half yearly intervals keeps everyone fresh and on their toes, even if it means a tremendous amount of work for regional directors in training new teams twice a year," he said.

Expressing BNI's gratitude to the outgoing leadership teams, Martin added: "The training isn't wasted when chapter officers step down. What they have learnt in terms of running their chapters effectively will still be relevant when they return to the 'back benches' where they will continue to play an important role in supporting the new leadership teams."

Business Card Bingo brings a full house to Sandbach

Members from chapters in the North Wales and Cheshire region recently joined forces for their first joint networking event – producing an entertaining day and no small amount of new business!

The inter-chapter session – the first of many regionally-based networking events to be held this year – took place at the Chimney House Hotel, Sandbach, and opened with 85 members chasing each other around in a hectic game of Business Card Bingo, eventually won by South Cheshire Chapter Director, Penny Edge from Page Training.

Introductions out of the way, Executive Director Tony Coxhill led a discussion on how to get

quality referrals and improve visitor rates, followed by Area Director Martin Bailey, who had some helpful tips for making the most of members' 60-second presentations.

The event ended with an open networking session, during which one member received a referral for £15,000 to supply photo-copying equipment, and many others cemented new relationships.

Tony Coxhill was pleased with the level and enthusiasm of members' participation: "Considering it was the first time we had brought all the region's chapters together, it was extremely successful.

"We aim to repeat the event on a three-monthly basis in Knutsford."



Red noses abound in Glasgow

With the runaway success of national Red Nose Day, *SuccessNet* put out its feelers to see if any chapter had entered into the spirit of the event – and happily found a whole chapter-ful of red noses north of the border.

Members of Strathkelvin Chapter, near Glasgow, must have had difficulty keeping their faces straight as, one by one, they made their 60-second presentations at their meeting on Red Nose Day – each sporting a Comic Relief trademark conk for which they had made suitably large donations!

In the event, they raised over £200 on the day for Comic Relief, which increased to £250 by the next meeting.

Chapter Director Martin Walker said: "The boxes containing the red noses turned into money boxes, which members took away to fill with further contributions.

"It was a fun event for all of us – and we made sure it grabbed the attention of the local press."



KING CONKS: Members of Strathkelvin Chapter doing their bit for Comic Relief.

Wanted by the men of Victoria: some women!

Glasgow Victoria Chapter has a unique status amongst BNI's 270 UK and Irish chapters – which its leadership team is doing its utmost to lose!

Ironically, the only thing feminine about the chapter is its name, and now its all-male membership has decided it's

time they attracted at least a sprinkling of the fairer sex to make the group's composition more representative of the city's business community.

Chapter Director Don Spence can't understand why the group has failed to win over Glasgow's businesswomen.

"Trying to be objective, I reckon we've a reasonably handsome mix of men that should tempt some women to join us, but so far none of the female visitors brought to our meetings has decided to stay.

The city's Victoria Chapter meets every Friday at the King's Park Hotel in

Rotherglen, and Don added: "We're a lively bunch inside the chapter and quite adventurous outside, too.

"In the next few weeks we'll be crawling over gullies in the Scottish Highlands as part of an action day, but this kind of thing would be far more fun with a few ladies taking part.

"We desperately need the female touch to redress the present macho image of the chapter, and I'll be delighted to hear from anyone who can help us," he added.

If you're female and you can help contact Don Spence now on 0141-332 4445.

Up with the birdie!

New BNI members on Scotland's Fife coast reckon they can't fail in launching the Original Links Chapter at the home of golf.

As *SuccessNet* went to press, the chapter was driving towards its launch from the stunning base of the New Links Clubhouse at St Andrews – home to some of the world's greatest tournaments over the years.

BNI Regional Director for Scotland North, Ron Hain said: "Members will gaze out upon the hallowed fairways of the Old Course whilst enjoying their BNI networking in relative luxury, before teeing off with some open air networking immediately afterwards!"

Ron confirmed that discussions are being held to negotiate playing privileges for BNI Members visiting St. Andrews!



ALL MALE: Don Spence with his chapter colleagues.

Making a memorable memory hook

Whether you realise it or not, you already know a lot about memory hooks. You've been using them, consciously or unconsciously, since you were small.

What was your best friend's nickname in the fifth form? Where were you living when the Beatles' 'Can't Buy Me Love' was at the top of the charts? And who do you think of whenever you hear someone say: "Ehhh – what's up, Doc?"

Mere fragments of phrases, jokes, songs and rhymes remind us of people, places and events we have not seen or experienced in years, and they stay with us all our lives.

The key word in 'memory hook' is memory. If it's going to work, and pop into the prospect's mind whenever the need for your product or service arises, it has to be easy to remember. The best way is to make it vivid and short.

SEE IT, HEAR IT, FEEL IT

A good memory hook often appeals to the basic senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. When meeting people, or presenting your product or service using marketing materials, you should invoke the senses as strongly as possible – in a pleasurable way, of course.

One obvious example of this is the memory hook used by a travel agency, that conjures up the memory of a popular, much-loved song: 'Come Fly (away) With Me'. Most people of a certain age will immediately be reminded of Sinatra's hit of several decades back. With the exception of smells, nothing cranks up a pleasure trip into nostalgia like the fond memory of an old song.

MAKE 'EM LAUGH

Another sense often invoked in the best memory hooks, may be the most important one of all: the sense of humour. When you want to catch and hold someone's attention, tickling his funny bone is the surest way of being remembered. In fact, one thing that most memory hooks seem to have in common is that they are funny.

Making people laugh is one of the fastest ways of breaking down the barriers between strangers, and of winning

In recent issues, *SuccessNet* has stressed the importance of devising, and using, a good memory hook – a simple statement that leaves a concise impression of your business in the minds of chapter colleagues long after they've left the weekly breakfast. Enter DR IVAN MISNER (pictured right), BNI's Founder and Chief Executive who probably knows more about memory hooks than anyone else. This article is reprinted from his latest book, 'Masters of Networking'.



so much the better, as in this example: **When your water pipes have burst and your kitchen's in a mess, dial Mick on 0800 654321 at Ace Plumbing SOS.**

Other memory hooks work by taking a familiar saying and re-phrasing it, usually with humour, in a way that the reader or listener will recognise. But you have to be careful, since some authors, especially songwriters, are quite militant about copyright infringement.

THE OLD 'DOUBLE REVERSE'

One of the most powerful language devices is a statement in which the second part either re-phrases or reverses the first. The original meaning may be reinforced, slightly altered, or turned around entirely, leading to intriguing mental juxtapositions. For instance:

A business without a sign, is a sign of no business (used by a sign making company); **If your hair is not becoming to you, you should be coming to me** (used by a hair stylist).

These approaches should give you an idea of some of the tools and resources you can use to construct your own memory hook. Some memory hooks may use a combination of these techniques.

USING A MEMORY HOOK

The best memory hook is one that you can use in many different contexts. It should work in a pure word-of-mouth setting, such as when you are attending a networking meeting.

It should work on your business card, on your letterhead, your calendars, your give-away pens, your print advertisements – and, at the top of the expense scale – your broadcast adverts too.

Whether it's mass advertising or one-to-one face-to-face, you want people to think of you, and you alone, when they see, hear or remember your hook. Think about it – and then work on yours!

the prospect's good will. Puns are a form of humour that everyone groans at, but then tries to remember to pass on.

The power of the pun comes from the element of surprise; your listener, or reader, thinks you're saying one thing, but suddenly discovers that you're saying something else, because you've either distorted the word or re-defined it.

Here are some examples of memory hooks that use puns or word play:

We check your shorts – an electrician offers; **We're dyeing to save you money** – says a company that can change the colours of carpets; **Be true to your teeth, or they will be false to you** – warns a dentist.

For pure name recognition, some of the best puns are made on a company's or an individual's name:

Bob Howe, a mortgage lender tells his chapter colleagues: **Know Howe to get your next loan**, while staff at Truecolour Print & Graphics use their company name in their invitation to customers: **Let us help you show your true colours.**

VERSE – OR WORSE

Using verse is a sure way to catch someone's interest. Before most people could read, storytellers passed down tribal legends in verse form to make them easier to remember. The tradition lingers. Most people can recite from memory a few lines of poetry or verse, and anyone who can read is instinctively drawn to words that rhyme. So, if you can use your name as part of the rhyme,



Snapping up the business

A Leamington Chapter photographer has seen his work grace the pages of one of the Midlands' most exclusive lifestyle magazines – thanks to help from a PR consultant in the neighbouring Kenilworth Chapter.

Andrew Sheppard, Manager of Avon Studios featured in a double page spread in Warwickshire and Worcestershire Life this month – after enthusiastic campaigning for his innovative lifestyle photography by Salisbury Communications partner Helen Salisbury, a founder member of Kenilworth Chapter.

It was the second breakthrough for Andrew, who was recently voted top Portrait Photographer in the Fujifilm Wedding and Portrait Awards, beating off competition from more than 1,000 other entrants, to go through to the annual finals

to be staged at London's BAFTA Centre in May, an event attended by many big name photographers.

Since meeting Helen at the Leamington Chapter launch meeting nearly three years ago, Andrew has seen his work featured on TV and in the press nationally and regionally – and he is increasingly in demand from national glossy magazines to undertake special photo commissions.

He attributes his increasing success largely to the fact that she has been getting his face in the press at every opportunity. "People now think of Avon Studios as the photographic studio in Coventry and Warwickshire," said Andrew. "Not only are we seeing a rise in the number of enquiries and bookings, but we are also receiving more interest from young people wanting to train with us."

For more information call Andrew Sheppard on 01789 470663 or Helen Salisbury at Salisbury Communications on 01926 859829.



TEAMWORK: Andrew Sheppard with the photo which won him a coveted national award.

One referral sows the seeds...

What seemed like a simple and modest referral at a meeting of his Hastings Chapter, has led to design director Alan Foster winning five new long term clients for his company and the prospect of even more business in the months ahead.

While often talked about, the BNI 'cascade effect' has become profitable reality for Alan, a director of Hastings-based AST Design & Advertising Ltd, as his company's services have been recommended from one happy client to another, leading to immediate additional business of over £30,000 and the hope of even greater returns from further 'spin off' referrals.

A core group member of the Hastings Chapter launched 15 months ago, Alan said he joined BNI for 'the long haul', looking for a small number of quality referrals, rather than quantity.

"Given my area of business, I never expected to receive a flow of referrals at every meeting, knowing that one or two of the right kind would more than justify membership," he said.

One of the right kind came last year when Alan was invited to produce a new corporate identity for a small local promotions company, PromoSeeds. "I didn't know it at the time, but it was to create a cascade of new business opportunities."

Promoseeds were so delighted with his company's performance that they immediately gave him further exhibition and corporate brochure work and recommended Alan to a much larger Hastings company, Judges Postcards, which commissioned AST to undertake leaflet and direct mail design and production.

"The managing director at Judges then referred me to their printers,

Chandlers of Bexhill, where we were again invited to carry out corporate brochure work, and the printers then introduced me to a further two new clients earlier this year, a film company based at Ealing Studios for whom we are producing brochures and direct mailings, and a new leisure centre in Kent which has asked us to design all its corporate materials," said Alan.

He added: "It's not the immediate value of the new business that matters so much as the fact that through one small but excellent referral several months ago, we have now gained five new clients, hopefully for the long term."

If you'd like to see why AST's work is attracting a growing number of satisfied customers, call Alan Foster on 01424 814111.



Around the Chapters

Peter networks worldwide

While most members naturally look for business from their local area, one Tunbridge Wells Chapter member has found BNI opening up a range of worldwide business opportunities to support his Kent-based corporate entertainments and outdoor pursuits company.

Peter Reeves runs Arena Pursuits near Bewl Water on the Kent-Sussex border but, with bookings largely weather dependent, he has taken to networking and marketing overseas during the quiet winter period.

Last year he visited three continents – Australia, America and Africa – always making his first point of

contact local BNI chapter(s) and, as a result of the friendships he struck up in South Africa, he has just returned from a very successful second visit to Cape Town where he established a complementary business venture that he believes will ideally suit his Arena clients during the UK winter.

The new venture came about through a re-union with Mike Levine, BNI's national director in South Africa, who invited him to attend a meeting of the City Bowl Chapter in central Cape Town.

Having given his 60-second presentation, Peter was referred by Anton Goldman to Philip Botha of

Aquatrials who runs several water-based activities such as white water river rafting and sea rafting.

From their initial meeting, Peter and Philip have put together some unusual five-day activity holiday packages, combining the attraction of water sports, outdoor pursuits, some of the best restaurants in the Cape and visiting the wine-lands, Table Mountain and shopping.

"South Africa has everything our clients are looking for in a winter break, including overnight flights, similar time zones, quality accommodation and events, beautiful scenery and, of course, sunshine!" said Peter.

Chichester chalk up £320,000 in a year

It's celebration time for members of Chichester Chapter who, since their launch 12 months ago, have generated nearly £320,000 worth of business for each other.

Chapter Director Tim Morton said: "We may not be the largest chapter around, but our members are very focused on why we meet up every week, and the standard of referrals is consistently high.

"Our first year performance has produced an average of over £15,000 worth of additional business for every member which, given their outlay of just £340 at the start, means that most of them will have benefited considerably from joining BNI."

Members are pictured outside their base, the Ship Hotel in Chichester, showing off their rather large cheque, held by Tim who runs Morton's Fork Catering Company.

Here at *SuccessNet*, we think Chichester members have done rather well in their first 12 months, but

have they set a record for the value of total referrals in their first year?

Bearing in mind the caution expressed in this issue's front page story, if your chapter thinks it's in the running for our 'Business Value of the Year' contest, then do tell us what you've achieved, and we'll feature your performance in *SuccessNet*.

But, a word of warning: You need to be sure that all the referrals you count, have been transformed into quantifiable new business – rather than remained merely as hopeful gestures. So, get checking and tell us about your performance.



SHIP SHAPE: Chichester Chapter and their grand total.

PM declines Clacton's invitation

Some members pull out all the stops when it comes to holding a visitors' day – even if it doesn't always pay off!

When Clacton & District Chapter planned their recent visitors' day, Graham Keeble from Sound & Vision Electronics decided to aim high. He guessed that with the General Election looming in May a certain Mr Blair might be on the look out for referrals – so he sent him an invitation.

Sadly, all he got back was a polite refusal from the PM's office, saying that unfortunately Mr Blair was otherwise engaged that day. He did however pass on his best wishes to all concerned for an "enjoyable and successful occasion."

Which indeed it was, when in spite of absent 'friends,' 35 other guests turned out for the special breakfast meeting, with several expected to join BNI as *SuccessNet* went to press.



Keeping Thomas on right track

"WHO are you?" asked Thomas rather rudely, as he saw the new Fat Controller coming towards him along the platform.

"I'm your new Fat Controller for the day," said Abingdon Chapter Director Chris McCarthy, "so you'd better watch your manners, or I'll have you shunted into a siding and you'll miss all the fun..."

Duly reproached, Thomas agreed to behave himself, and as a result, Didcot Railway Centre's famous 'Day out with Thomas and friends' went ahead without a hitch last month, providing an action-packed family event for hundreds of railway enthusiasts from all over the country.

Chris (pictured right) looking every bit as grand as the Rev W. Awdry's original Fat Controller) agreed to take charge on one of three consecutive Thomas the Tank Engine open days after the usual Fat Controller, Rod Thomas, had to drop out.

He responded to an appeal to the previous week's chapter meeting by fellow member Jeanette Howse who, as a part-time official of the Great Western Society, based at Didcot, thought Chris's big personality made him the ideal stand-in.

"I persuaded another member – Sarah Hawthorn of Creations – to cut his hair in the Fat Controller's unique shape, while a third BNI colleague, Aileen Waller of Minns Upholstery, made his distinctive yellow waistcoat," said Jeanette. "A fourth member, photographer Robert James, was on hand to capture Chris's performance."

Chris, who works for a national security installations company, said: "I didn't know the first thing about running a railway, but I soon got into the stride of things and I must have done something right because they've asked me to go back in the autumn."

"It was a very enjoyable day and I am glad BNI was seen coming to the rescue of a deserving local charity."



Conferences take on a regional flavour

BNI members throughout the UK and Ireland will this year be able to attend one or more major inter-chapter networking events without having to travel hundreds of miles to do so!

For the past three years, BNI's national directors have held a one-day national members' conference at a single venue.

But, as the organisation has grown, expanding into new and sometimes more distant parts of Britain, so pressure has grown for the national conference to be 'regionalised', giving all members the same benefits.

Martin Lawson, National Director said: "Holding a single event was fine when most members came from the South East, but it is far from convenient if you live in Ireland, Scotland or the North of England, as an increasing proportion of our members do.

"So this year we asked each region to organise its own members' conference, offering the same mix of workshops, presentations and networking – but much closer to home."

One of the first of the regional conferences will take place at the Hilton Hotel, Manchester Airport on Saturday, 12th May.

The day's theme is 'Masters of Networking – How to get more benefit by being in a top BNI chapter', and tickets (costing £10) can be purchased from the regional directors. The conference is being sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Meanwhile, some of BNI's regions in the South East are also preparing for their regional networking conference to be held at Brands Hatch Racing Circuit, West Kingsdown on Saturday, 28th April. Tickets costing £25 (including lunch and refreshments) are available from directors.

Coping with g-r-o-w-i-n-g pains

BNI members from Stratford Upon Avon staged a conference and surgery for small businesses planning to expand and employ more than five staff.

Called 'Growing without Growing Pains', the conference featured a series of presentations outlining the issues facing growing businesses..

BNI members organised the conference because they felt there were numerous

courses and events for start-up businesses – but very little for young expanding companies. The event was organised by Liz Bennett, of Habilis Ltd. who spoke on health and safety and risk management.

Other speakers were accountant Chris Wells, financial advisor Rob Simpson, business banking manager Roger Scott, and Malcolm Davis who spoke on e-commerce and the internet.

Visitors are vital

By **GILLIAN LAWSON**
National Director

A rather disturbing comment from a Chapter Director was relayed to us the other week.

Approached by his regional BNI director to plan visitor days and other activities for the current national membership drive, his surprising response was: "We're not planning a visitor day. We don't need any more members..."

When we enquired of his chapter's membership, we learned that it had consolidated around the 30-mark: not bad, but certainly no justification for ignoring the membership drive – and even less reason for being complacent about the need to attract visitors to as many chapter meetings as possible, regardless of existing member numbers.

Clearly, this particular chapter director did not know or had perhaps forgotten – that the amount of business conducted at meetings increases quite dramatically, and disproportionately, in relation to growing membership.

In his case, had he and his leadership team colleagues responded to the membership drive by attracting ten more members (a 33 per cent increase), they could have expected an increase of at least 50 per cent in the level of ongoing chapter business.

Repeated studies of the relationship between membership numbers and

referrals passed, has proved that relatively modest increases in member numbers produces considerable and sustained additional business for the chapter and, using this particular instance as an example, what leadership team would consciously turn down the chance to increase their chapter's weekly referrals by at least 50 per cent?

But it would be wrong to single out this one misguided director for failing to understand the importance of attracting constant visitors to his chapter because, it seems, a significant number of our UK and Ireland chapters may have equally failed to appreciate the key role that visitors play – or should play – in our weekly meetings.

Quite simply, whether your chapter has 20,30 or more members, you need a constant stream of visitors through your doors each week, not just in the obvious hope that some will join your group but, far more pertinently, because each and every new visitor to your group is a potential customer for each and every existing member.

Some members seem to think that the only way they are allowed to receive new business in BNI, is from their fellow chapter members.

Whilst in reality, this may be the source of most of their new referrals, they are completely ignoring two other key areas for gaining additional business – namely the substitutes who stand in for other members and likewise the visitors who are invited to see whether

the BNI philosophy is right for them.

Whether or not a visitor comes back or joins the chapter, his or her attendance at your meeting represents a unique opportunity to introduce yourself to a new potential customer – and there lies the rub: stop regarding visitors to your chapter meetings purely as guests, and view them as customers.

Not only do such visitors represent an obvious 'captive audience' for members, but they are likely to feel positive towards BNI members whom they meet in a friendly business environment – and therefore more ready to consider new business approaches.

In an ideal world, every single visitor should receive follow-up telephone calls from every member of the chapter, asking if he or she found their attendance stimulating and useful, and if they would like to meet to discuss possible mutual business opportunities.

Of course, it would be excellent if the visitor then decided to join your chapter, but even without this, your reward for showing interest may be far greater than you imagined.

So the message should be loud and clear to all BNI members: visitors are important because, as well as bringing freshness and vitality to your chapter, and being potential BNI colleagues, they are also your would-be customers.

How best to ensure they feel welcome and wanted is another issue – and one we'll address in the next (July) issue of *SuccessNet*.

Don't miss chat room sessions

You've had a long hard day, you've just finished your evening meal and all you really want is to relax in front of the TV. Okay, we'll let you – but on one condition: NOT on the second Monday of the month!

That's when BNI's monthly worldwide business learning sessions go live on the Internet – offering the opportunity to gain valuable free knowledge from the experts on how to attract more customers and grow profits.

Gillian Lawson, UK National Director, said: "The Internet chat groups provide participants with invaluable business advice. We can all learn more about marketing and business development, so the chance to get advice from the experts is surely worth an hour of anyone's time."

The sessions take place on the second Monday of the month at 9pm. Subjects for the next three chat room sessions are:

Monday, 14th May: Networking with other chapters

Monday, 11th June: Finding more customers

Monday, 9th July: Is the membership committee serving your chapter well?

To access the BNI chat room, go to www.bni-europe.com, and click on the 'chat' icon that appears at the top of the page. Remember, you need to pre-register before logging on for the first time in the BNI Yahoo chat room.

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Tel: +44 (0)1923-826 181;
Fax: +44 (0)1923-827 813;
E-mail: bninet@aol.com.
BNI web site: www.bni-europe.com.

EXECUTIVE EDITOR:
Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director

EDITOR: Malcolm Grosvenor, WriteAngle Communications, New House, Palmer Crescent, Kingston Upon Thames KT1 2QT
Tel: 020 8541 0600; Fax: 020 8546 1611;
E-mail: successnet@write-angle.co.uk

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