



SuccessNet

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EDUCATION *and* INFORMATION BULLETIN *for* BNI MEMBERS

ALL ABOARD

For our best ever winners' prizes

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LAWSONS' LORE

As an increasingly influential organisation, we take pride in offering our members not only exceptional business benefits, but also some attractive personal opportunities.

However, even measured against our own series of fantastic 'firsts', we think the rewards on offer to every BNI member who takes part in the latest chapter building drive, are just about as good as it gets!

On these pages, you'll find full details of this exciting initiative, explaining how you can earn a great chance to participate in a 'trip of a lifetime' – cosseted in splendour for almost a week on board the world's biggest, most luxurious liner, Cunard's QM2 flagship, before spending two or more days and nights in a top New York hotel, with helicopter and boat sightseeing tours around Manhattan.

It's a prize anyone would love to win and, by helping your chapter bring in at least six new members during the eight-week qualifying period, you'll give yourself an excellent chance to be among our lucky winners.

But even if you are not one of the star prize recipients, you can still be a winner because we're giving away two-night breaks for two in a wide choice of four-star hotels, to every member who personally introduces two or more new members.

And of course, every single member whose group expands as a result of the chapter building drive, has the benefit of knowing they can expect to do more and better business through their enlarged chapter – because throughout the world, BNI statistics show that the bigger the chapter, the more business it conducts. Good luck to you all! •



GET READY CHANCE OF

CUNARD'S QM2 FLAGSHIP BECKONS FOR WINNERS OF CHAPTER BUILDING DRIVE

LAST YEAR, BNI MADE THE DREAMS OF MANY MEMBERS AND THEIR PARTNERS COME TRUE WHEN THEY INDULGED IN NEARLY A WEEK OF OPULENT LIVING ON BOARD THE WORLD'S NEWEST, LARGEST, MOST LUXURIOUS OCEAN LINER, CUNARD'S SPECTACULAR 150,000-TON QUEEN MARY 2.

The transatlantic voyage to New York was, by unanimous decree, a truly spectacular prize for the winners of our last winners' prize draw so, when your national directors sat down to plan this autumn's new chapter building drive, they knew it would take some beating. But, top it they have!

Consequently, the magnificent springtime reward awaiting you and your partner, if you are one of the winners of the imminent 2005 membership drive, is an even bigger and better prize that will include:

- Five glorious days and six magical nights of total luxury aboard the QM2 on its voyage from Southampton to New York.
- Two days and nights stay in Manhattan's Sheraton Towers Hotel.
- A helicopter tour down the Hudson River to the Statue of Liberty.
- A three-hour sightseeing cruise around Manhattan, and ferry tickets to both Liberty and Ellis Islands.

- All New York transfers; meals and entertainments on the QM2; and direct return flights to the UK (London or Manchester).

Sponsor one or more new members between Monday, 17th October and Friday, 9th December and, provided your chapter recruits six or more new members during that eight-week period, your name will go into the draw for the lucky winners who will be New York-bound next May aboard Cunard's £500 million flagship. For every six qualifying chapters (see prize draw rules below), one BNI member and partner will be embarking on the QM2 at Southampton on Monday, 29th May next year, ready to indulge in a week of total luxury as the grandest liner ever built sails gracefully to America.

The latest chapter building drive has again been designed to give the most successful 'recruiters' the best chance of winning. This is because, once a Chapter has qualified by signing up six or more newcomers during the two-month period, members will receive one

PRIZE DRAW RULES:

The following simple rules must be followed to qualify for entry in the prize draw:

1) The membership drive starts on Monday, 17th October and ends on Friday, 9th December 2005. Only applications dated between these dates will be eligible, and the date on the new member's application form will be deemed their official joining date.

2) Any member who sponsors a new member during this period will go into the draw, provided his or her Chapter qualifies by collectively bringing in six or more new members.

3) If your Chapter fails to achieve this minimum target, you will not be eligible for the QM2/New York draw, but you will win a two-night break in a top UK hotel of your choice if you have personally

FOR YOUR A LIFETIME!

entry in the draw for each individual they have recruited. So, the more new members anyone brings into their own Chapter, the more chances he or she has to win the most lavish prize ever offered by BNI.

National Director Gillian Lawson said members had good odds for gaining a place on the QM2. "We've allocated one premium (outside) balcony cabin to every six qualifying chapters, which means a member who sponsors a single new member could have a very attractive one-in-36 chance of winning a transatlantic trip but, if the same individual brings three new members into their group, he or she might find themselves with an amazingly good one-in-12 chance to head off to the Big Apple. However, everyone who brings in two or more new members will be a winner, regardless of whether their chapter qualifies, because they'll receive a two-night

break at a top UK hotel of their choice." (See side panel – Everyone can be a winner!)

While the bumper prize comes to an end on 6th June, individual winners can choose to stay on longer in New York at their own expense, in which case they should notify BNI head office as soon as winners are announced, so that the return flight date(s) can be amended.

Gillian added: "Yet again we've managed to raise the bar by creating the best prize ever offered to BNI members anywhere in the world. Even those who don't win either the New York trip or a hotel break will still have gained, by helping to increase the size of their chapters, which will mean more business generated for everyone." •

Why not reserve these dates – Monday, 29th May to Tuesday, 6th June 2006 – in your diary now.



introduced two or more new members during the qualifying period.

4) All new members must have paid their £100 BNI registration fee. Members who re-join with a certificate of credit are not counted as a new member.

5) A member of a qualifying chapter will receive one entry to the draw for each new member he or she sponsors between the dates shown. One prizewinner will be chosen from every six qualifying chapters.

6) The sponsor's name must be

clearly shown on the new member's application form.

7) All prizes are for two people (ie. the BNI member and a partner) and must be taken on the specified dates, Monday, 29th May until Tuesday, 6th June 2006. Prizes are non-transferable.

8) The winning members' tickets will be drawn by BNI's regional directors at regional training events early in the new year. All winners can expect to learn of their good fortune by the middle of January. •

EVERYONE CAN BE A WINNER!

We would love it if you could all win the trip of a lifetime to New York but, there's great news even for those of you not drawn for the QM2 cruise. That's because everyone who successfully recruits two or more new members during the chapter building drive, will automatically win a two-night break of their choice, in one of dozens of four-star hotels around the UK – irrespective of whether their chapter reaches the minimum qualifying target of six new members. Not a bad reward for helping to make your chapter even stronger!

THE QM2 – THE BEST, MOST LUXURIOUS LINER IN THE WORLD

Everything about Cunard's QM2 flagship is represented by superlatives. Its statistics include:

- It is nearly 150 longer (at 1,132 feet) than the Eiffel Tower is tall.
- A height of 236 feet – which is more than the length of Cunard's first ship, Britannia.
- A passenger complement of 2,600 and a crew of 1,250.
- Gas turbine & diesel electric engines developing 157,000 horsepower – equivalent to more than 300 of the most powerful Ferraris ever built.
- 14 decks of amenities including 5 swimming pools, 14 bars, 10 restaurants, two golf simulators, a large health spa resort and planetarium, the largest ballroom at sea, and 300 works of art together worth over £3m.



COSMIC PERFORMANCE FROM LORRAINE?

Lifestyle management consultant Lorraine Wragg was among 300 people who took part in the recent charity walk around London's Hyde Park to raise money for the Children of St Mary's Hospital Intensive Care Unit (COSMIC).

The walk raised nearly £40,000 for the hospital's paediatric intensive care unit in Paddington, where all its children are critically ill and in need of life support, and Lorraine's personal efforts – thanks to generous sponsorship from members of her Grand Union Chapter, and neighbouring West Hampstead Chapter – contributed over £300. •



Peeling off for Primrose in Bromsgrove

Bromsgrove's Black Pear Chapter fundraiser Lorraine Hart can never be accused of missing an opportunity to net cash for the town's Primrose Hospice. So when she floated her latest money-spinning idea to chapter members, no-one batted an eyelid – even if a few eyebrows were raised!

After hearing how a London hospice had made over £20,000 by persuading members of local clubs and business groups to pose nude for a fund-raising calendar, Lorraine decided to emulate their success with her own 'Calendar Girls (and Boys)' venture.

Lorraine gained clearance from her Board of Trustees and then approached two of her chapter colleagues, photographer Andrew James, and printer/designer Ralph Webb for their help. She told SuccessNet: "Andrew agreed to do all the photography free of charge, and Ralph offered to produce the first 1,000 calendars at no cost to the Hospice. In no time, I'd found enough local clubs and organisations willing to persuade their members to strip off for

charity, and we're all delighted with the results. It shows the power of BNI members working together."

The calendar, aptly called 'Peeling off for Primrose' is being launched by Lorraine, Andrew and Ralph next month, when Tricia Stewart, one of the original WI 'Calendar Girls' (played by Helen Mirren in the subsequent hit film), will be guest speaker at a charity luncheon.

Meanwhile the 2006 calendars are now available so, for a suggested donation of £3.50, you can share the treats captured by Black Pear's trio. •

Contact Lorraine on 01527 875444 or go to: www.primrosehospice.org



NEW LAUNCHES REACH THE 'PLATINUM' STANDARD

NEWS IN BRIEF



As BNI continues to expand its presence not just in the UK and Ireland, but increasingly across mainland Europe, a significant feature is the size and quality of its new chapter launches.

Our photographs show the recent launch of the new Platinum Chapter, which took place in front of nearly 100 guests and members at its Twickenham 'home' – the Amida Racquets and Fitness Spa – and the group expects to pass its first 25-member target within weeks.

Other recent UK launches include: Eldon (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Farnborough (Hampshire), Kett

(Wymondham, Norfolk), Liverhulme (Wirral), Robinson (London Bridge, London), Royal Ascot (Berkshire), Soaraways (Sheffield), Success (Harrow), Thatcham (Berkshire), Turner (Morpeth, Northumbria) and Varsity (Edgbaston, Birmingham).

Meanwhile, Germany saw the launch of five more groups – Eiche (Karlsruhe), Elefant (Berlin), Epidot (Munich), Rheingold (Bonn) and Ritter (Heidelberg) – while France witnessed the opening of two more Paris chapters, Opéra and Rembrandt, and in the Netherlands, the Ara Chapter became the latest addition in Rotterdam. •



COULD YOU BE BETTER ORGANISED?

Did you know that you can now buy a growing range of useful BNI products online, to help you and your chapter stay well organised?

Phillips Plastics Ltd, a member of Concord Chapter, Northwood, supplies a variety of member and chapter aids ranging from an all-new chapter members' card display unit (housing up to 40 portrait or landscape-shaped business cards) and leaflet dispensers, to 60-second 'prompt' placards and binders for your testimonials and back issues of SuccessNet.

Director Peter Phillips said: "The company has just created an online sales facility enabling leadership teams or individual members to purchase BNI products online, and have them delivered within days. We're adding products all the time, with the aim of making it easier for members to organise their BNI activities."

You can view the product range by going to www.phillipsdirect.co.uk and clicking on 'BNI Products'.

NINE MORE STRIKE GOLD

Nine more members have struck 'gold' – joining BNI's prestigious Gold Club in the past few weeks. They include husband and wife team, Danny & Cheryl Davey, from Ipswich's Cobbold Chapter, who received their black badges from area director Tim Gale.

Other recipients are Noel Austin (from Oxford's Milton Chapter), Matthew Bentley (Wokingham), Mike Boyle (Basingstoke Chapter), Simon Davey and Jason Smith (both from Long Eaton's J25 Chapter), Bruce Royston-Smith (Capital Chapter, Winchester), and David Vizard from Enterprise Chapter in Rickmansworth, Herts. Congratulations to all!

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF IN SHAPE OF £2 MILLION REFERRAL

A north-west London IFA is reaping the rewards for a chapter colleague's persistence, after netting a referral to manage the £2.5million portfolio of a retired businessman.

Arwyn Bailey, a director of Harrow-based Fiscal Perspectives Limited, was originally introduced to the businessman several years ago, by his Chapter One (Harrow) insurance broker Steve Dolden, as a result of which his firm provided pensions advice to the company's workforce.

"In the back of my mind I knew the businessman was thinking about retirement and the disposal of his substantial company assets, but it wasn't until Steve Dolden prompted me to get back in touch with him

earlier this year, that things started to happen.

"Steve then re-introduced me to the client and the result was an invitation to advise on and manage a £2.5m investment portfolio. I am indebted to Steve for his persistence in continuing to look for business opportunities from the same client long after he gave me the first referral. As a modest IFA firm, this represents very big business to us, and must surely be an early nomination for BNI's annual regional award for the most valuable referral." •

Contact Arwyn on 0871 2000 242 or by email at: arwyn.bailey@ifafiscal.co.uk

BREAKFAST BONANZA

BATTLE SONG?

Members of Battle Chapter think they can claim a first! They now have a chapter song!

It was one of many bonuses to emerge from the Chapter's recent team-building initiative with a difference – in the form of a pantomime! In just four hours, intrepid members created, rehearsed and performed "Binderella", directed by the



IN GOOD VOICE: Members of Battle Chapter.

chapter's Peter Willson and Graham Lee who came up with the idea as an alternative method of corporate bonding.

The workshop was designed to boost members' confidence, improve presentation skills and provide opportunities for problem solving. Membership Co-ordinator Sabina Brown said: "It was certainly better than building rafts, and the other usual corporate team-building activities. The Battle Song was one of the panto's musical numbers, penned by three members, Bridget Highwood, Helen Franks and Peter Willson, and set to the tune of 'Oh I do like to be beside the seaside'. We rather like the result," she said.

Knowing our readers would be keen to test BNI's new battle song, Sabina was happy to let us reproduce the lyrics:

Oh I do like to get up
in the morning,
Oh I do like to come to BNI,
Oh I do like to come and
bring a friend along,
Where we all join ranks and
sing this chapter song.
Oh I do like to get
some strong referrals,
Oh I do like to practice
"Givers Gain",
Oh there's lots of pals inside
I would like to be beside
To get the door prize
At BNI!

She added: "If anyone is too shy to have a go, they're more than welcome to pay a visit and hear us sing!" •

For more information contact Graham Lee on 07973 940617

MAD 'HATTERS' IN NORTH STAFFS?

Injecting fun and a light-hearted approach into the serious business of finding new clients has led to members of Network North Staffs Chapter passing a hatful of referrals.

The Stoke-on-Trent based chapter has a reputation for enjoying its weekly BNI meetings, which is why members recently let success go to their heads by turning up for breakfast wearing wacky headgear to illustrate their occupations.

Quantity surveyor and Chapter Director John Finney set the standard by arriving in builder's hard hat and fluorescent jacket, international property consultant Tony Raybould sported a loud sun hat and shades, while Breath of Life fundraiser Gill Walters chose a mad scientist's wig to illustrate her Charity's research work into breathing and chest problems. Others chose everything from bowlers and beach hats to exotic floral creations.

John commented: "We are always open to new ideas that make meetings more welcoming to visitors, and enable us to start the day with a smile. I think our good referrals rate is partly the result of making the meetings enjoyable."

As SuccessNet went to print, members were preparing their contributions for an 'Elvis Day', when everyone will be expected to make some witty and apposite reference to Elvis Presley during their 60-second slots. Our 'mole' suggests that one or two members will be going much further – perhaps even dressing like 'the king' of rock 'n roll.' •

Contact John Finney on 01782 614171 or by email at: john.finney@hollandfinney.co.uk



COLOURFUL COLLECTION: Members of North Staffs Chapter.



RARING TO GO: Paul Hollamby (left) with Spitfire Chapter Director Ian Walker

Spitfire members enjoy life in the fast lane

Members of a North Staffordshire chapter found themselves in the fast lane when they abandoned their usual meeting venue to sample breakfast networking in a fleet of brand new cars.

Instead of sitting down to coffee and croissants in the meeting room of Newcastle-under-Lyne's Stop Inn, members of Potteries Spitfire Chapter enthusiastically jumped into the cars provided by colleague Paul Hollamby, from the Holdcroft Honda dealership, and networked in small clusters. After a few minutes in each car they rotated to ensure they liaised with everyone in the 25-strong group.

Paul said: "It was my turn to give a 10-minute presentation, and I wanted to do something a bit different by showing members the latest range of vehicles we have on offer. It seemed the best way to do this was to bring our different cars to the meeting so everyone could see what I was talking about. When I suggested we could hold the entire breakfast meeting in the cars, most people were

delighted to sit in shiny new vehicles, rather than our usual room."

Chapter Director Ian Walker said: "We have always adhered strictly to BNI's meeting agenda, but I allowed our group to take a different approach for one week only, since Paul's request was so unusual. It was a great idea because we still managed to conduct a successful meeting and pass good referrals, while allowing him to showcase his cars. Members responded well to the novel circumstances and thankfully, nobody spilt their coffee or left toast crumbs on the car seats."

He added: "We know that members who use visual props for their presentations generate more business because colleagues find it easier to relate to their products and services. It also makes it easier to identify referral opportunities." •

Contact Paul Hollamby
on 01782 271084

BARBICAN CHAPTER GO (IN) TO THE MOVIES

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then Barbican Chapter in the City of London has an abundance of riches – thanks to a new promotional video made by three members of its leadership team.

Wanting to raise the chapter's profile, members decided to use the skills within the group – an obvious choice given that Secretary-Treasurer Julian Grant makes corporate videos, Chapter Director Eamonn Collins markets Internet video software, and Membership Co-ordinator John Aylott is a website design and communications specialist.

The result is a six-minute video extolling the virtues of BNI, featuring several of Barbican's own members talking about membership benefits. "We show the film as part of our visitors days, and guests have said it adds a great deal to their initial impressions," said Eamonn. "Using online testimonials from members has also helped our recruitment drive." •

You can view Barbican's video at:
www.grantaided.eyetservices.com/
Contact Eamonn Collins
on 07818 433056

BARBICAN MOVIE: Chapter Director Eamon Collins and Secretary/Treasurer Julian Grant view their new BNI video – now impressing visitors to the London chapter.



Yes, we all know the golden rules when it comes to inviting visitors to our chapters! Don't 'sell' BNI, highlight the business benefits, adopt a warm and friendly tone when extending your invitations, and so on...

But is that all? Because if it is, why do significant numbers of members struggle to find good visitors, when others seem to have no difficulty bringing guests along on an almost weekly basis? The answer is that while there are no hidden secrets to attracting more visitors, you need to adopt the right blend of confidence, a positive attitude, sincerity, creativity, commitment – and timing!

These are all qualities you'll find in accountant Denis Fuller, a founder



DENIS FULLER: Founder member of the Magna Carta Chapter in Runnymede (Pictured left).

member of the Magna Carta Chapter in Runnymede. In the past 12 months, Denis has dazzled colleagues by introducing no fewer than 53 visitors to his chapter, nine of whom have since become members. "There really is no special formula, but it's important not to try to sell the BNI concept. I merely tell potential guests that I'd like to introduce them to a group of colleagues who may be able to offer them new business, knowing they'll soon discover the opportunities for themselves.

"Don't push it if they're not positive"

"The other vital aspect is to follow up every visitor after they've attended a meeting. This is usually when you find out if they're keen and, more importantly, if they are right for membership. If you don't get the feeling they would make a really positive contribution to your chapter, then don't push it. It's far better to let them go, than encourage the wrong sort of person to join," Denis added.

VISITORS

Visitors are the lifeblood of BNI. They bring a new dimension and opportunities. And of course, many go on to become BNI members, and as we were once visitors ourselves, SuccessNet thought it was timely to refer the 'right' visitors to our chapters. Here, we are grateful to some of our

"Inviting a rival focuses the mind"

Andover Chapter's photographer, David Burlison has been similarly prolific, bringing 45 visitors to his group over the last year. "I tell my invitees as little as possible about BNI, because I want them to see the benefits for themselves. So I just ask them if they'd like more business and suggest they bring lots of their business cards along to the breakfast meeting, with no obligation or pressure to take their interest any further," he said.

"Once someone has attended as my guest, I always contact them a day or two later. If they are undecided but seem right for the chapter, I might tell them that if they don't apply for membership, we will be offering their particular seat to a competitor, because we have business we want to refer. This happened recently, when the boss of a



DAVID BURLISON: Photographer from Andover Chapter

local double glazing company couldn't decide whether to join us. I told him, quite truthfully, that I'd be inviting his major rival to breakfast the following week, and he joined immediately. More importantly, he is now very pleased he made the decision."

"Internet helps me find visitors"

Dublin-based website developer Alan Bell has brought 43 visitors to his City West Chapter in 12 months, and regards the Internet as his most powerful tool in finding visitors. "I often chat on the phone with clients



ALAN BELL: Website Developer from City West Chapter

or prospective clients while they are looking at my website, and this gives me a chance to highlight BNI's benefits and invite them along to a meeting. It helps that a lot of my own business comes through BNI referrals, so I can give them personal examples of how membership has helped me.

"I also receive a huge amount of junk post and email every day from people, some of whom might be just right for BNI – so I always look through every communication to see if it's worth a follow-up call. If I think it is, I'll call the sender, tell him or her that BNI is where our company gets most of its business and say we're looking to fill their business category. After I've verbally invited them, I always fill out a postcard invitation and mail it the same day. This makes a big difference, and every

S GALORE!

and vitality to our chapters. They often bring significant business adding strength to the groups they join. Remembering that most of reflect on our relationship with the guests we invite, and how we attract our most prolific 'inviters' for sharing their approach to the task.

member should carry a supply of these cards. Turning email and junk mail enquiries into positive invitations seems to work very well."

"I turn unsolicited calls into visitors"

Derbyshire telecommunications provider Jason Smith, a member of Long Eaton's J25 Chapter, takes a similar approach to the many calls he receives daily from sales and service representatives. "When they've finished telling me about their business, I ask them if they'd like even more, and invite them to my chapter. It obviously works because I've brought along 35 guests in the past year, seven of whom have joined – and my first new member has already earned his black badge!" said Jason. "I don't need to persuade anyone to be my guest, because everyone in business would like more, and the concept sells itself. The majority of my visitors are very pleased with what they see."

"Attitude is everything – so be selective"

Genuine passion and enthusiasm for BNI's networking system is another principle shared by many of our top inviters, like food supplements specialist Paul Barton, a founder member of Plymouth's Drake Chapter, who has introduced 41 visitors in 12 months, a quarter of whom have joined his or neighbouring groups. He said: "I have lots of customers and mention BNI to all of them. People see the passion and commitment I have for it, and I tell them our meetings are just the same – full of drive and energy.

"It is for this reason that I'm selective

about who I invite along, and whether I want a particular person in my chapter. Attitude is everything and if I don't think someone is sufficiently committed or keen, we don't want their application. When I follow up my visitors, I ask them lots of questions



PAUL BARTON: Founder member of Plymouth's Drake Chapter.

to ascertain if they are really serious about wanting to join because, while we like to have fun, we know that referring and gaining business is a serious thing."

"Enthusiasm and energy impress visitors most"

"His comments were echoed by Rod Major, Exeter Isca's outgoing Chapter Director who said that just by introducing the subject of BNI and chatting about its benefits was enough to whet most peoples' appetites. Rod has brought 35 guests to Isca during the year – more than a third of whom have subsequently joined. He said: "The main factor is enthusiasm. I'm enthusiastic when I talk about BNI, enthusiastic when I introduce visitors to my chapter,

and just the same when I contact them afterwards. My group is also well set up to receive guests with excellent visitor



ROD MAJOR: Chapter Director of Exeter Isca's

hosts and follow-up system, but above all, we never let the group's energy levels drop – and I think that's what impresses visitors most."

"Just keep your eyes and your ears open"

One of the best 'conversion' rates has been achieved by Harlequin Chapter's Alan Clarke. Having brought 39 guests to his Richmond-upon-Thames chapter – of whom 15 are now members – he recently helped to launch Twickenham's Platinum Chapter for whom he found no less than 22 members! Despite being a professional recruitment consultant, Alan reckons it takes no special skills to find visitors. He said: "Wherever I am, I keep my eyes and ears open and, if I meet someone I think would be good for BNI, I invite them to a meeting. I make it clear I'm not asking them to join BNI because I know the 'right' people will want to join anyway."

"Dangling the carrot of opportunity"

Cheltenham Spa's senior visitor host, Stuart Rostron, an expert in wills and trust planning neatly summed it up. He's introduced 40 visitors in the last 12 months and said: "When I approach prospective visitors, I see myself as dangling the carrot of opportunity for them to win more business. I liken BNI to the ripple effect that occurs when you throw a pebble into a pond. Once you've made the initial impact, the opportunities just keep growing wider and wider. They seem to like that idea." •

Focus On North East

STEVE CASHES IN ON CHANCE INVITATION

Steve Moore wasn't at all keen when asked to accompany his father on a fact-finding visit to Tyneside's Falcon's Chapter one cold winter's morning last year.

"I'd never heard of BNI and frankly I was sceptical about what any new business marketing organisation could do for us, after I'd just wasted a great deal of money on advertising with no results," said Steve, a Newcastle-based portable appliance tester. "But Wally, my Dad, had been invited as a guest and didn't want to go along on his own, so I reluctantly agreed."

Barely 18 months later, Steve is still smiling about his decision not just to go to the breakfast meeting – but to join BNI! His previously modest business, Cleo Direct Ltd, has now been transformed into a huge success thanks to the volume and quality of referrals he's received from other members and he has just landed his best-ever contract – worth at least £100,000 a year – through a referral from chapter colleague, Clive Van der Veld.

"We are still relatively small," said Steve, "but our growth rate since I discovered BNI has been phenomenal. Within six weeks of joining, we'd more than recovered the cost of membership and the vast majority – around 90% – of our £180,000 turnover in the past year has come from BNI referrals, not including Clive's referral which has been the biggest and best yet, because it has led to a national six-figure contract which should be ongoing, year after year. We're now currently recruiting five more staff to handle the growing volume of work generated by BNI referrals.

He added: "I don't even want to think about where the business would still be, had I not agreed to

accompany my Dad that day. Even when I got back to the office after that introductory meeting, I remember telling my fellow director Terry Bennett that I wasn't convinced it would work for us, but that we had to give BNI a try, since none of our other marketing initiatives had produced results. I'm just so pleased my father invited me, especially since I invariably come away from my weekly meetings with potential new business. It has made an amazing difference," added Steve (pictured below).



Ironically, Steve's dramatic gains were not shared by his father. "Dad runs his own satellite TV business and after visiting BNI he decided not to join. He hasn't mentioned it, but I think he's regretted his decision a few times, seeing how successful I've become with BNI's help." •

Contact Steve Moore on 0191 268 8060 or via his website at: www.cleodirect.co.uk

Keeping it in the family

Mortgage broker Paul Hampton knows a good thing when he sees it. That's why he's encouraging every colleague in his Gateshead practice to join one of the region's BNI chapters – after acknowledging that his own membership nets him a cool £40,000 worth of profits a year.

Paul has been a member of the Collingwood Chapter in Newcastle-upon-Tyne for almost three years. "It didn't take me long to see the business benefits, which is why I've already persuaded three of my fellow brokers – Ian Knowles, Ken Robson and David Gray – to find a vacancy with other BNI groups. I've found that to get the best out of membership requires constant effort, but it is well



A FAMILY AFFAIR: (From left to right) David Gray, Paul Hampton and Ian Knowles.

worth it. BNI is a great vehicle for business, but it's not chauffeur driven; you have to

drive it yourself and stay clearly focused on the right course," he said.

Paul is one of a dozen brokers who run Aidan Mortgages and he hopes further colleagues will join BNI in the coming months. "Of course you have to work at it, building goodwill and trust with your chapter colleagues, but after three years I wouldn't remotely consider giving up my BNI seat. It's just too valuable, and it's also a very enjoyable way of finding new business. We have a lot of fun at our meetings and the camaraderie is just what you need to spark another successful week." •

Contact Paul Hampton on 0191 478 8404



SPARKS FLY AS ROB'S CAREER IS RE-BORN

The stark reality of redundancy has been the catalyst to drive more than a few people to BNI's doors, but rarely can losing your job have produced the silver lining that has seen Tyneside electrician Rob Appleby 're-born' at the age of 50.

Two years ago after being made redundant from the job he'd held for over 30 years, Rob was urged by friends and family to launch his own electrical maintenance firm and, after long deliberations, he decided to 'risk' his redundancy money on a business start-up.

"I started looking into the best ways of promoting my new business and soon found that advertising was both very expensive and likely to be hit-and-miss. Fortunately I then came across a software solutions company (Transcendit) who set up a website for me but, more importantly said I should have a look at a networking organisation called BNI, which they belonged to," said Rob. "I was invited along to the Bulman Chapter in Jesmond by Transcendit's Tom Tinsley, and joined two weeks later."

Rob admits he was sceptical at first, but the referrals soon started to flow and he regularly received glowing testimonials from new BNI colleagues who were delighted with the quality of his workmanship. Now, just 15 months later, around 95% of all his business comes through BNI referrals and such is the growing volume of work that he does not need to advertise at all.

"Everyone setting up a new business thinks they have to advertise, but I can rely totally on BNI through which we are constantly growing, to the extent that I'm planning to take on an apprentice and possibly further staff. Quite simply, my business is now totally referral based, and BNI is vital to my success. That's why I've secured my long-term membership by renewing for two years," said Rob (pictured above).

"Joining BNI is the best business decision I've ever made and, quite apart from all the referrals, it offers excellent training and a great social environment. If I could have started my own business with BNI 20 years ago, I would have done so without hesitation," he added. •

Contact Rob at Appleby's Electrical on 0191 251 3914

Personal fitness coach Shaun Charters openly admits he can occasionally be a bit of a pessimist, not least when it comes to looking at new opportunities.

After an army career as a soldier, he established Body Mechanics to offer his considerable physical training knowledge

BNI'S A WINNER – EVEN FOR CYNICAL SHAUN

to individuals wanting to get back into shape, and stay healthy.

"Although a lot of my work comes from personal referrals, I wasn't at all convinced when I first heard about BNI through one of my clients - who then repeatedly nagged me to go along to a

meeting, just to see what I thought," he said. "After my first visit to the Turner Chapter in Morpeth I still didn't think it would work for me, but I went back for a second time and I guess the enthusiasm of members must have got through to me, because I decided to apply for membership."

That was just seven months ago but already Shaun knows he made the right decision. "I recouped my membership fees with the very first referral I received, and since then I've gained around half a dozen further clients through my chapter colleagues. BNI now produces about 10% of my business, which is far better than I expected after such a short time. I was initially very sceptical but I'm pleased my client was so insistent I should give it a try." •

Contact Shaun on 07970 205585

JULIE SETS THE GRADE IN GADE VALLEY!

It's a case of 10 out of 10 for Gade Valley's Julie Mole, who has just signed up her 10th new member to the Hemel Hempstead chapter in as many months!

Julie, who runs Reedlink, a print & promotional goods supplier, has introduced a life coach, two different types of IT specialist, an IFA, a plumber, an estate agent and a solicitor, not to mention a car sales company, a blinds and curtain supplier, a transport/delivery company and a promotional staff company. No surprise then to discover that she was awarded her black badge barely two months after the chapter's launch last summer.

How does she do it? "When I meet a new business contact I explain about the virtues of BNI, tell them how successful it has been for Reedlink, and how it has helped my own self-development. I am largely office based, but I deal with people from every type of trade and profession and, having been in sales for most of my life, I find it very easy and natural to talk to others about something as positive as BNI.

"Since our chapter was launched less than 18 months ago, I've brought around 18 visitors, so I guess my conversion rate is pretty good. But BNI takes the credit for that, not me. I always make it clear to my visitors what will be expected of them if they join – from bringing their own visitors to finding good referrals for colleagues – but when they've witnessed one or two meetings and seen the benefits of membership, most of them are keen to join."

Julie has attended every BNI training workshop at least twice and says they have enhanced the skills she uses in everyday life, as well as in her chapter. She added: "BNI membership represents phenomenal value. It has led to my meeting some fantastic people, many of whom have become close friends, as well as bringing me plenty of business. In my first 12 months, Reedlink has received referrals resulting in over £35,000 of orders." •

Contact Julie Mole on 01923 291925



Five years ago, Chris Owen bought himself a photographic shop, thinking it would realise his dream of making a fortune. Instead, it almost made him bankrupt. Fortunately he also made two much better decisions. He joined the Royal Armouries (Thursday) Chapter in Leeds, and he read the best-selling business book – ‘The E-Myth Mastery’ by business visionary Michael Gerber.

This year, having adopted the BNI system and followed Gerber’s philosophy that to be truly successful “you have to work on the business, rather than in the business”, Chris Owen has a fast-growing property portfolio worth over £2.5 million, acquired with the profits from his transformed business.

HOW TO BECOME A MILLIONAIRE: LEADS TO HOST UNIQUE BNI EVENT

On Thursday, 24th November, he will join forces with Michael Gerber and BNI directors Niri Patel and Andy Bounds at The Royal Armouries, to host a unique programme designed to show 500 lucky BNI members how they can achieve similarly rapid success.

Chris added: “I am deeply indebted to BNI for my own success, and believe this will be an awesome day. When you consider that in Yorkshire alone, SME business failures within the first five years stand at 76%, it is easy to see why we need all the help and advice we can get.” •

The event is likely to sell out quickly, so if you want to be among the fortunate 500 delegates, call the special BNI ticket line on 0113 220 1906. Tickets will be allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis.



train & gain

IT'S THE PEOPLE THAT MATTER

By Allison Timmins, Executive Director, Staffordshire & Shropshire

Forging good relationships in our business life is becoming more important than ever before. In the future, relationships will be the cornerstone to building stronger foundations for every business. In BNI, our core referrals philosophy is centred on building mutually beneficial relationships to develop a strong contact network – a process that takes time, commitment and a little energy!

BNI Directors are often asked: “What is the secret to keeping a chapter buoyant and successful”? – especially when chapters feel they are lacking something, the membership is static and referrals are inconsistent. The answer is that while there are many factors that keep chapters on the success trail, in BNI’s Staffordshire and Shropshire region at least, we believe that the key to any chapter’s ongoing success is its people.

Finding the right members has to be one of the most important keys in building and growing chapters. It is no myth that like-minded people attract each other, and that attitude is everything. Enthusiasm is infectious and makes others curious about who we are and what we do. Because it radiates positivity, others will want to support and help those that act in this way. Equally, by making us happier, it helps us attract more of what we desire in terms of our goals and aspirations. And of course, it is fundamental to the Givers Gain philosophy to share enthusiasm about someone else’s business.

When chapters have like-minded enthusiastic members displaying a positive attitude, the chapter will naturally attract more members, and foster the development of magnetic relationships. These chapters can expect to see more one-

to-one meetings, higher referral rates, and tangible displays of mutually supportive behaviour, resulting in higher energy meetings. This makes them more dynamic with a real synergy and a good balance of fun and professionalism, fostering a proactive chapter keen to grow its membership and get more business for each other.

While larger chapters will often create maximum synergy between members, smaller groups can be equally vibrant, when members look forward to (and plan for) their next meeting, ensuring that substitution is minimal, the chapter leader recognition slot is a highlight of the month, and the 10-minute speaker brings the thoughtful gift that makes them an even more exceptional member. In such dynamic chapters, renewing members do not question the benefits of membership, which continue to grow from what we call “the committed core”.

Attendance at BNI training workshops is the other key, and when a chapter attends together as a team, experience has shown that referrals go up by as much as a 100%. Meanwhile, enthusiasm and positivity should become your group’s culture. If someone leaves, replacing that person with an equally high (or even higher) calibre member will result in a more balanced chapter. Bringing in new members who want to see others become successful, will only breed success.

So, if you want your chapters to be vibrant, attractive and enthusiastic, start and finish with the right people, because it really is the people that matter, and members who make all the difference! •

Allison can be contacted on 07950 993380

Definitely the business for 'Not the Norm' Michelle



Back in late 2002, Michelle Douglas was invited along to a BNI meeting in Darlington. She liked what she saw – but it took her until January this year to join the town's Blackwell Chapter.

Why? Because her jewellery design and production business was barely into profits, and she knew the £500 joining fees could buy her vital money-making stock! And of course, there were doubts about whether she was really geared up for any significant increase in business. Happily, her long wait has now paid dividends and, after just a few months membership, Michelle has more than recouped her initial outlay.

The former Chicago businesswoman moved to County Durham after marrying a Geordie and, after settling in Darlington, decided to re-launch her business, 'Not the Norm', designing and hand-crafting bespoke jewellery for the UK market. "I found that advertising was expensive and did not work very well, so I turned to more direct contact with potential customers, taking a stall in a local shopping mall and attending craft fairs - but I knew the answer lay in networking and word-of-mouth referrals," she said.

"Around Christmas time in 2002 I was invited to a BNI meeting by a businesswoman I'd met through another networking group, and I immediately liked what I saw. Unfortunately my business wasn't producing enough surplus at that time for me to risk spending even a modest sum on membership, so I decided to budget with the aim of joining as soon as possible."

It took Michelle two more years before she felt confident to submit her application and take up her seat in the Blackwell Chapter. "It is early days, but I'd

recouped my outlay within three months and I've already found the benefits of membership extend beyond simply receiving new business referrals.

"For instance, through my BNI contacts, I'm now teaching jewellery design to young people at a local authority-funded centre, while I'm also invited to many more events where I can promote my products," she added: "Since joining BNI, I haven't looked back. I have a lot more orders and I'm developing new business relationships all the time. It is the ideal networking structure for me." •

Contact Michelle at her studio on 01325 480028 or visit her website at: www.notthenorm.com



IT'S MEDIA A-GO-GO IN HEYHOE!



Close collaboration between colleagues in south Bristol's Heyhoe Chapter, is resulting in some impressive media coverage for members of the 11-month old group.

First to make the headlines this summer were chapter members Paul and Alice Cox, pictured above with Shadow Home Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP who opened their new Kingston Garage premises in Kingston Seymour, North Somerset – resulting in a large, full colour feature in the local media.

And close on their heels is Heyhoe's wedding and events planner, Amber Hunter who is set to go one better by starring in a new TV reality programme that follows her and one of her client

brides-to-be through the sometimes stressful process of planning and staging the 'perfect' wedding. The Discovery Channel production will be shown early next year.

By co-incidence Amber – wearing her event co-ordinator's hat – also supplied the catering for the new garage launch, when PR activity was provided by fellow BNI member, Philip Fowles of Write for You PR & Marketing, and the photography was handled by Heyhoe's resident 'snapper' Nicky Brown. However, despite their combined expertise, the launch nearly didn't happen. With over 100 guests including many BNI members awaiting their VIP's arrival, news came through that Liam Fox was stuck in a motorway jam and wouldn't make it!

Fortunately, as a local councillor, Philip Fowles had Liam's carphone number and persuaded him to persevere through the traffic even if he arrived late. Amber went into overdrive in the kitchen as the event was turned on its head with lunch brought forward

to give the MP extra time to arrive.

Happily, Amber's own business slogan – 'We turn a memorable event into an unforgettable one' – came true, with the elevated level of press interest leading to substantially increased trade for Paul and Alice's garage business.

Meanwhile Amber (pictured below) is hoping her imminent TV role will boost the wedding planning side of her business. She added: "In just eight months, BNI has proved very good for me with events referrals, but I really enjoy the wedding side and hope the publicity will bring me some more brides-to-be." •



Contact Paul and Alice Cox on 01934 838397 and Amber Hunter on 01275 856142

Premier member in best of health!

Liverpool Premier Chapter member Business Marketing Limited is enjoying a healthy boom in business, thanks to gaining a lucrative £100,000-plus contract from a BNI colleague's referral.

BML has been a Premier member for three years, and won various smaller pieces of business through chapter referrals, but the six-figure contract with private healthcare company Direct Health 2000 which recently opened a new clinic and regional office in the city, is by far its best networking achievement so far.

Managing Director Ray Leary says his company's success is all due to the power of the BNI referral system and its networking structure. He said: "This particular referral from a chapter colleague, Humphrey Claxton, quickly led to a meeting with the client. The resulting contract, covering all aspects of marketing support, has enabled us to take on additional staff and move to larger premises.

"That in itself is fantastic, but the requirements of the contract mean we have also been able to refer some of the work to other BNI members, like David Vickers, a specialist designer in the



IN THE BEST OF HEALTH: Business Marketing managing director Ray Leary with DH2000's Chief Executive Sarah Dean outside the healthcare company's smart Rodney Street clinic in Liverpool.

nearby Warrington Chapter. We've even been able to put our new client in touch with BNI chapters in London whose members may be able to gain similar business from them."

Sarah Dean, Chief Executive of Direct Health 2000 praised Ray's team and said: "Since appointing them earlier this year we have received very positive input, with valuable advice and planning. We would already recommend them to any

company looking for a committed, focused and driven marketing team."

Ray added: "We work closely with BNI colleagues and always try to incorporate their services into our clients' projects, promoting the ethos of Givers Gain." •

Contact Ray Leary on 01928 511377 or email: enquiries@businessmarketingltd.com

REFERRALS FLY IN NEW TUDOR CHAPTER



TUDOR'S 'KING' OF REFERRALS: Don Lynch of Remax One in Hampton Hill.

Many BNI groups get off to a flying start, but few can have notched up so many referrals so quickly as the six month old Tudor Chapter in Hampton Hill, Middlesex, where incoming Chapter Director Don Lynch has been setting exacting standards.

A director of local Remax One estate agents, Don handed out 153 referrals in the chapter's first five months, and at one meeting passed 21 referrals to no fewer than 14 members.

Tudor's notable networker says listening is the key. "I always listen and find out what people need, then try to help them," said Don. "Friends, clients and workmates are aware that I know many people, so they tend to ask me for recommendations. I get calls from complete strangers saying they've heard I might know someone who can help them – even if it doesn't benefit my business!"

Don is equally delighted that other chapter members are enjoying similar success – like independent financial adviser Dave Tilley and mortgage adviser Ian Green, who set up their businesses last year. The two men met as Tudor core group members late last

year and quickly started exchanging referrals. By the time the chapter launched in April, Ian had moved into Dave's offices and both promptly doubled their referral rate, boosting income.

Ian commented: "We now offer a more comprehensive service and our alliance has enabled our chapter colleagues to increase the number of referrals we receive."

Dave added: "Some IFAs avoid referring business to mortgage brokers, but the alliance with Ian has streamlined what we can offer, and working from the same office has led to more business for us both." •

Contact Don on 07815 744806, Ian on 07970 661249 and Dave on 020 8893 4242

SEEING DOUBLE: Ian (left) and Dave now pass twice as many referrals.





Like many young businesses, Jim Wood's commercial cleaning company in north Manchester had a limited marketing and advertising budget. So much so that, when he first heard about BNI, he felt sure it could help him produce the new business that no amount of cold calling or Yellow Pages advertising would achieve.

And, just a few months after becoming a member of Middleton's recently formed Moonrakers Chapter, Jim's instincts have proved right, with a staggering 70% of his business this year coming directly from chapter referrals – just one of which, to provide cleaning services for a major retail property company - accounts for

MOONRAKERS ARE MONEY MAKERS FOR JIM

at least five per cent of his annual turnover.

Jim is Managing Director of two-year old RFI Cleaning Services Ltd and he had been looking for a formula to grow his business in the right way. "I realised the value of building a client base around trust and word of mouth, rather than playing the numbers game through cold calling and when I was invited to join BNI, I knew it was the opportunity I'd been searching for.

"Not only does it already bring me most of my new business, but the excellent support training I've received has enabled me to pass on invaluable tips and advice to my management team and staff," he added.

Jim, who was recently appointed Chapter Director added: "Joining the Moonrakers has been a great experience and I'm delighted with the number of excellent referrals we generate for each other." •

Contact Jim on 07957 801510



FROM THE CHAIR

Choose the right home – and be inspired!

Says Tom Phillips, Chapter Director of Putney Riverside

When we launched Putney's new Riverside Chapter nearly two years ago, our 'home' was, not surprisingly, on the riverside. We quickly grew to 20-plus members and became successful, doing lots of business in a lively, dynamic meeting environment, looking out over the River Thames.

Then something happened. We changed venue to a local hotel, where we found ourselves in a windowless basement meeting room. Looking back on it, I have to admit our surroundings were rather gloomy and airless, and it seems no co-incidence that within weeks we started losing members. Even amongst those who remained, the levels of enthusiasm and commitment seemed to wane.

The leadership team talked to our local BNI director about giving Riverside a fresh start. By chance, we met at a delightful restaurant in the heart of Putney overlooking the Thames, to discuss how best to revitalise the group. Then one by one, we all realised the same thing: that being in an attractive environment, overlooking trees and the water was an obvious starting point and, that where we were sitting, would make an ideal location.

We enquired about the restaurant's availability, were offered a great deal, moved almost immediately and haven't



looked back since. Membership has grown back, our visitor number are growing, the enthusiasm is tangible, and everyone knows what is expected of them, both during meetings and during the rest of the week. We've even got one of our members, Chris Maynard, co-ordinating and monitoring all the one-to-ones that take place between meetings, as part of our drive to boost referrals and improve the chapter's overall performance.

Riverside Chapter is now back where it belongs, on the riverside – where we even get a bonus: a choice of at least a dozen different breakfasts. How inspiring is that!?

Tom Phillips runs Patman, a portable appliance testing business. Contact him on 07729 313921



POLE POSITION: BNI members doing battle during South Yorkshire's karting event.

SHEFFIELD'S NETWORKERS TAKE POLE POSITION

It was a case of 'networkers, start your engines!' when Clare Froggatt of Sheffield's Professionals Chapter recently organised a hugely popular inter-chapter go-karting event.

Eight teams comprising members from the Professionals, Steel City, Sheffield Soaraways, Doncaster Diamonds and Rotherham Phoenix chapters, fought a fiercely contested race, with the final glory going to Steel City's B team (as overall winners), and David Rist, an IFA in the Professionals chapter winning the award for the fastest lap – not just for the event, but in the history of the venue!

Chapter Director Jane Phillips said: "While the chatter of networking was drowned out by the noise of engines, our post-race meal provided plenty of opportunity for making new contacts and developing old ones." •

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SARAH SPORTS BNI'S NEW FASTEST LOGO!

In the last issue of SuccessNet, we thought we'd found you the fastest BNI logo in the UK – when Inverness Highland Chapter members sponsored their racing driver colleague Dave Newsham as he battled to win the Legends British Championship.

But step forward Kettering solicitor Sarah Franklin who, even before taking to the grid in the first round of the televised 2005 AVO Ginetta Championship, reckons the BNI logos



on her racing car are now the fastest in Britain.

With Sarah racing at her Corby Chapter's local circuit - Rockingham - last month, Andy Mackenzie, the Chapter Director of Corby BNI saw this as a great opportunity to get some local exposure, not least because as the only woman competing in the championship, Sarah naturally gets a lot of media attention!

The whole Chapter agreed and, together with Duncan Webster, the Executive Director for the Northampton and Leicester Region, sponsored their girl racer for the Rockingham event. Sarah commented: "Corby Chapter is a really dynamic and pro-active group, and it was great to get everyone's support and be able to promote BNI on my race car." •

If you like what you read – call them!

Here in the BNI SuccessNet office, we try to make the content of your quarterly newsletter as varied and interesting as possible – bringing you stories, news and training articles from all over the UK and Ireland.

In every issue, you'll find most of the stories contain a telephone number, email or website address for the person(s) featured in them, and we provide this information for a simple reason – to enable readers who are

interested in any particular story (or a product or service described in an article), to make direct contact with the member(s) concerned.

So, if you think you could benefit from their services, or perhaps refer potential business to them, why not get in touch with the relevant person, tell him or her you've read about them in SuccessNet, and broaden your contact network even further. Similarly, if you receive new business through a SuccessNet reader enquiry, we'd love to hear about it! •

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 – making sure you include your phone numbers (office and mobile) and address as well. •

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