

# SuccessNet

An education and information bulletin from Business Network International

Autumn 1998

## A thousand thanks to all

**A**s new leadership teams take over in all chapters this month, BNI's directors can reflect on an amazing summer of progress during which the organisation's UK and Irish membership soared past the 1,000-mark, with the first BNI groups opening in Ireland, Scotland and several 'new' regions in England.

National directors Martin and Gillian Lawson say BNI's excellent consolidation and membership growth has only been achieved by the quality and commitment of the chapters' outgoing leadership teams who, said Gillian, "deserve the highest praise for their efforts."

Unusually for a major international organisation, BNI changes its entire 'middle management' – the chapter officers, membership committees and visitor hosts – every six months but, as Gillian explained, there is very good reason for doing so.

"Because BNI is such a busy, vibrant body, its leadership teams make valuable contributions in terms of personal effort and energy.

"That's why we feel that after six months they will have earned a rest, able to hand over to a fresh team."

The policy of replacing more than half a dozen top positions in every chapter twice a year makes huge demands on BNI's national and regional executive directors who spend

much of March and September each year, training the newly designated leadership teams before they take office in April and October.

Gillian said: "Personal and business development are key elements in BNI's philosophy.

"Each year the organisation invests many thousands of hours preparing members of the new teams for office, and it takes considerable pride in the quality of the training provided.

"This aspect of BNI's work is very much a team effort, with all of our executive and regional directors devoting many hours in the preparation and training of the next group of chapter leaders."

Martin Lawson added: "The only difference between our strongest chapters and those not doing quite so well, lies in the strength and character of their respective leadership teams.

"BNI has expanded rapidly, and individual members have seen their business grow, largely because it goes to substantial efforts to train and provide ongoing support for its leadership teams who, in turn, devote considerable energy to growing and sustaining their chapters."

He said: "The retiring leadership teams have done a truly fantastic job in helping their chapters grow so quickly across many parts of the UK and we all owe them a big debt of thanks.

"But BNI never stands still and the message to the new teams – and to every chapter member – is that you now have the chance to retain the best achievements of your outgoing team, while focusing on any areas which could benefit from being strengthened."

## Giver's Gain confidence booster

Electrical contractor Jason Quinlan has discovered many benefits from joining the Cork Central Chapter of BNI, but one of his most important gains is an increase in personal confidence which he says, has resulted in a big boost to his business.

Initially he was put off joining BNI by the early morning start to the breakfast meetings.

"The concept sounded great," he said, "but I kept dismissing it because it was just too early for me. Fortunately, the business colleague kept insisting that I should go along.

"Eventually, I attended my first meeting and, before it was even finished, I'd decided I wanted to become a member."

Jason added: "Since joining BNI my company has grown from a one-man band to a four-man organisa-

tion and that's entirely due to BNI, partly because of the many new contacts I have made, but also because it has given me increased self-confidence."

"I am now able to stand up and talk in front of strangers, converse with people at all levels and present the benefits of my own services and those of my BNI colleagues, to my many customers. I have no doubt that my business growth is directly related to the growth in my own confidence."

Among the excellent referrals received by Jason at his business breakfasts are a prospective £40,000 contract and the invitation to tender for a £20,000 job.

In return, Jason has quickly gained a reputation for being a 'notable networker' because of the number of referrals he provides.

"It hasn't taken long to feel the real benefits of BNI's 'Giver's Gain' philosophy," he added.

## Proof that BNI helps Allsorts



*Brian 'Bertie' Bassett never fails to amuse his colleagues in the Royal Leamington Spa chapter when he gets out the props for his one-minute presentation. With a little imagination, Bassett's Liquorice Allsorts are transformed into high-rise blocks, compact industrial units and houses with pillared entrances – illustrating the wide range of projects undertaken by Brian's architectural practice.*

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*Charity begins with BNI – See Back Page*



DESIGN FLAIR: Sara Selwood, design consultant, and Jo Tempest-York.

## Jo wakes up to the BNI potential

**W**INDSOR interior designer Jo Tempest-York has found BNI a real eye-opener since attending her first business breakfast.

Jo, who owns Decorating Den Interiors,

### Coming soon, to a town like yours...

**B**NI's rapid expansion programme across the South East is continuing apace during the autumn, with the region's business people enthusiastically supporting the development of several new chapters.

Among the new chapters being formed as *SuccessNet* went to press are: Brentwood in Essex, (under the direction of Assistant Director James Cruikshank), Crawley in Sussex, (led by BNI Executive Director Andrew Hall), and Paddock Wood in Kent, and Colchester in Essex, both supported by the Executive Director Robert French.

Meanwhile BNI's Assistant Director in Kent, Roger Hobcraft, is currently bringing together interested parties for the creation of a Dover/Deal Chapter on the Kent coast.

If anyone has colleagues or contacts in any of these places whom they think would be interested in joining one of the new groups, please contact BNI's regional office in Kent on 0800 018 1950.

does most of her work late in the day and well into the evening.

"Working long hours, it was a big decision for me to attend an early breakfast meeting each week," she admitted, "but with the level of extra business it has produced it's been well worth getting up for!"

And, after winning several significant contracts through referrals at her Windsor Chapter, Jo is now urging other business leaders to wake up, literally, to BNI's potential.

Her best lead so far came from chartered surveyor Stephen Williams, who this month took over as Windsor's Chapter Director.

Jo explained: "A couple of months ago, I won a £6,500 contract to do all the interior design work on a show house, after Stephen introduced me to a local builder working on some new homes. It's going extremely well.

"Having got to know the builder, I'm also confident of gaining further work on their future developments. Stephen's referral has led to a lot of incremental business."

Her design flair has also been used by four other members of her chapter to enhance the appearance of their own homes.

But, in keeping with BNI's fundamental principle of 'givers gain', Jo has also managed to help other members in her chapter.

She said: "David Distin, of Maidenhead builders H C Distin Ltd, is my lead contractor for building services.

"As a result of one referral from me, he is now quoting for a job to totally refurbish part of a hotel in Paddington."

As she reaps the benefits of BNI membership, Jo added: "I find it is great for my business, not only for receiving referrals but also for finding any contractors that I might need.

"In my business I'm always looking for window restorers, decorators, landscape gardeners and other craftspeople.

"My clients require all sorts of services, and BNI is the ideal answer for me."

## The write way to look at business

**S**URELY you're giving nothing away simply by signing your name? Wrong. Because if Edgware Chapter member Allan Conway sees just your signature, in no time he will be reading you like a book!

Allan is one of Europe's leading practitioners of graphology – the art of assessing peoples' personalities through their handwriting – and, having joined the Edgware Chapter as a core member almost a year ago, his business is booming thanks to BNI.

"There's been an amazing chain reaction from being in the BNI which has got me a great deal of business," he says.

"It's not so much the diversity of the professions at the meetings, but the fact that everyone involved in BNI passes the word.

"It comes back to the organisation's fundamental principle of 'givers gain' which, in my case, is certainly coming true."

Allan, who is writing his second book on the subject and whose clients range from plumbers to prime ministers, added: "The results of my joining BNI are quite extraordinary.

"My business has really taken off, partly, I suspect, because people think graphology is similar to astrology or reading tarot cards, which have a popular image."

Some Chapter colleagues already benefit from his expertise by using him to 'vet' potential employees.

"I find answers to questions that interviewers will fail to find," he said, "such as whether the candidate has the ability to work well with other people or perhaps whether they have a medical problem."

Allan said he could also detect major illnesses such as multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's Disease and claims he could save the National Health Service millions of pounds!

He added: "Some of the members have used my services on a personal basis, while others have used my skills to help their companies."

He is regularly interviewed on TV and radio and recently gave his 500th lecture in six years.

Allan has also unwittingly helped Andrea Lawson, the daughter of BNI's national directors, to win a scholarship to university after her entrance project – involving an interview with him – gained her top marks!

Allan has raised more than £30,000 for more than 70 charities through his talks.

"I'm very charity minded. I've worked for them all my life and graphology is my way of raising money," he said.

# Robert flies 2,000 miles – to pick up a hot referral!

**B**NI's success in spreading its wings around the world was demonstrated in extraordinary fashion recently in a chance meeting between two UK members at a foreign airport.

It provided Robert French, BNI's executive director in Kent, with one of his best leads to date – while he was en-route to join a BNI fact-finding mission in Malaysia.

## International roles for Jack and Ralph

THE South West Midlands and London regions have been honoured with the appointment of two former chapter officers to BNI's International Board of Advisors.

The Board, which comprises non-executive members from all over the world, meets to consult on matters of BNI procedure and to stimulate membership in individual countries.

Ralph Cowles, who helped form the Warwick and Leamington Chapter's and became its first director, was given the good news by BNI founder Dr Ivan Misner in a personal telephone call from California.

A delighted Ralph, who runs a document storage business in Leamington, said: "I naturally feel very honoured. I have enjoyed being a chapter member from the time it was set up.

"My remit is to advise BNI's leadership in America of anything that might interest them regarding membership and the expansion of the organisation."

He added: "I was originally asked by David Bullock, BNI's regional director in our area, if he could put my name forward for the position, and of course I said 'yes', although I never thought anything would come of it."

David Bullock said: "These are very special honours for their respective regions. They will provide a useful additional point of contact for other chapters in the area, and ensure that the views of BNI's growing UK membership are heard."

Performing a similar global role is Jack Stroh, until last month the Membership Co-ordinator for Edgware Chapter, Central London. Jack joined the International Board in the early summer, since when he's already been called on to provide a UK dimension to several key BNI policy decisions.



Ralph Cowles.

Robert described the moment at Larnaca airport in Cyprus: "In appalling heat at one o'clock in the morning I was approached by a fellow traveller who had spotted my BNI lapel badge. He wanted to know which chapter I belonged to.

"After explaining that I was a BNI director, we ended up on the same bus, being dropped off at the same hotel!"

Robert learned after further discussion at the pool the next day that his BNI travelling companion was Andrew Liyanage of South Ealing Chapter, who was only too happy to pass on what Robert called "my best referral on a fact-finding mission to Kuala Lumpur" – an introduction to one of Malaysia's foremost neurosurgeons Dr Bala Ratnam.

Later on his trip – to gauge BNI's potential in Asia, and in a Third World economy – Robert was able to meet Dr Ratnam at a din-

ner at the prestigious Selangor Club, attended by some of the country's top movers and shakers.

Unfortunately, while the mission might have been a personal success for Robert, it revealed that the timing is not right for BNI to move into the Far East business markets.

He explained: "My conclusion is that such a plan is not viable at the moment due to the region's current economic situation, although Malaysia's Tiger economy is developing very quickly.

"We must not be naive and think everything in the Far East is still rosy, because it certainly is not. They have some major financial problems."

However Robert was happy to thank Andrew for a great referral!

*Robert's cream of the crop – Page 7*

## Rural rewards in the East Midlands

**T**HE BNI carrot could become an even more attractive dish for rural business people than has already proved to be the case for their urban colleagues.

That is the view of Juliet Motley-Wilcock, newly-appointed Regional Director for the East Midlands, whose area ranges from the city of Nottingham to the market town of Newark and the small cathedral city of Lincoln.

Pointing out the logistical complications of getting rural-based business people together from miles around, she said: "I think BNI is even more necessary in rural areas than in heavily populated areas.

"From experience, I have found that people who live and work in large cities often believe they already have enough business contacts.

"I feel that in the more sparsely populated rural areas, which are usually more community-minded, BNI is really taking off.

"It's in these sort of places that people are already recommending others to join.

There's a different business way of life here, which a networking organisation like BNI complements well."

Indeed, the very nature of rural business life provides some extra opportunities for people to get acquainted with BNI.

Juliet added: "Already we have members collecting each other to take to breakfast meetings.

"For example one person who didn't drive,



NEW IN NEWARK: Kicking off the new chapter in Newark.

Picture courtesy Newark Advertiser

introduced his lift to BNI, who subsequently joined the chapter. So that worked very well."

When Juliet is not busy developing BNI chapters across her patch, she works as a Business Mentor with the Prince's Youth Trust, helping young entrepreneurs start up and then maintain new businesses.

She hopes eventually that some of these will also want to join the BNI.

## Around the Chapters

# Lawson's Lore

BNI National Director  
MARTIN LAWSON writes...

**S**o another financial giant goes crash in the Far East, and the ripples are felt 8,000 miles away in the UK, fuelling rumours in the City and stock markets around the world that we could be on the way towards a new recession.

Given the complex global inter-dependencies created by today's international money brokers, it is of course no surprise that a fluctuation in the economic fortunes of one leading nation should impact on others.

But stop for a moment to consider why world markets can be destabilised so easily, and you'll nearly always find a common factor: business confidence, or the lack of it.

Recent British Chancellors, including Nigel Lawson and Norman Lamont, discovered to their – and the country's cost – just how transient business confidence can be, and how dramatically it can affect businesses.

Today, if the financial pundits continue to talk down the global economy, we might ironically see Gordon Brown discovering the same harsh reality about the fickleness of collective business faith.

We in BNI see manifestations of precisely the same 'confidence' effect, in the way that individual chapters and chapter members perform month by month.

Happily, because the development of mutual support between members is a cornerstone of BNI's philosophy, it is reassuring to see the vast majority of our chapters (and their individual members) demonstrating high levels of business success.

Significantly however, on those rare occasions when a chapter temporarily loses its impetus, or its members see their business referrals begin to slide, the 'problem' will normally be associated with a dip in collective confidence – the solution to which is nearly always the same: a renewal of energy, commitment and yes, effort.

I am not suggesting that a serious downturn in the world's economic health could be stemmed solely by greater effort, or that the Japan Leasing Corporation (which went down with debts of £10 billion) would have survived had its staff been more committed.

But I do believe that business charity begins at home. Every one of us in business must show enthusiasm and determination to succeed, just as we must all be positive about our own business services, and confident in using the services of colleagues.

We joined BNI because we believe in helping each other by living the 'Givers' Gain' philosophy, to be even more successful.

Individually, we cannot halt a global recession but together, we can readily demonstrate the business power of mutual help and support. That starts and finishes by maintaining confidence in our own business abilities, and sustaining the energy we put into our weekly BNI meetings. And, it works!

*Martin Lawson*



BLAZING A TRAIL: West One Chapter at the world trade and cultural fair in Lisbon.

## 'West One' do Lisbon business

**A**nglo-Portuguese business relations received a helping hand during a visit to Lisbon by members of London's West One Chapter.

Some 30 members from the central London group were given a warm welcome by their Portuguese business counterparts and, despite the physical distance between them, several referrals were exchanged to cement new relationships.

The trip was organised by outgoing BNI Chapter Director, Joe Branco, who makes regular business visits to Portugal on behalf of his company, Almar Travel.

BNI's Assistant Director for the area, Tony Hill, said: "We really went out there to visit Expo '98, the world trade and cultural fair being held in Lisbon, but we also had business lunches arranged. We had a wonderful visit, and had a great time."

The trip was of special benefit to the Chapter's Administration Co-ordinator Stuart Mills, of Stuart's Yachts, who said: "I met a contact out there who provided me with some excellent marketing pointers."

"He helped me get my thinking right with regard to my marketing approach which I'll now be putting into practice."

Plans for a return visit to Portugal next year are already being made by Chapter members, but first they're working on an event closer to home – this year's Chapter Christmas Party, to which West One has extended an invitation to all other BNI members. If you're interested, call Charles Goldman on (0171) 487 3998.

## Busy in Barnet

BARNET business people aim to make it three in a row for BNI in North West London by emulating the success of sister chapters at Stanmore and Pinner, launched in the summer.

With a dozen members in Barnet's core group already, London North West's Assistant Director Stephanie Kosky expects the chapter to be up and running by mid-October.

She said: "We have a dedicated core group who are committed to making the launch day an enormous success. We are anticipating up to 100 people will attend."

When launched, the chapter will meet every Friday morning at the Palazzo Restaurant in the Old Town Hall, 32 Station Road, New Barnet.

## Stirring in the West

Something is stirring down in deepest Wiltshire, not to mention Somerset and Dorset as well! And it's called BNI.

Following the recent appointment of Iain Murray as BNI's regional director for what is one of England's most attractive areas, he is now busy working on the development of core groups in Swindon and Chippenham which he hopes to launch by the end of October.

Anyone who has good business contacts in these towns whom they feel might be keen to join one of these new BNI chapters, can contact Iain on 01373 826876.

## Brighton launch nets bumper £30,000 order

There's no better way to tee off a new BNI group than the passing of some good new business referrals – which is precisely what happened when the new Brighton Chapter recently held its launch meeting at West Hove Golf Club.

Core group members did what Sussex Executive Director Andrew Hall described as "a large slice of business" at their first breakfast session, with one referral resulting in an immediate £30,000 order!

Under the leadership of Chapter Director Stewart Hunt, supported by Colin Meagher (Membership Co-ordinator) and Peter Logan (Administration), the Brighton group aims to reach its 40-strong capacity by Christmas.

If you know any Brighton business people who could benefit from BNI membership, Andrew would like to hear from you on 01435 867412.

# New Dartford Chapter in full sail

**A**hoy there shipmates – the Dartford Chapter is now in full sail, with 25 members having joined the group in its first eight weeks.

Launched at the end of July, the Chapter has even supplied a couple of 'members' to help start a neighbouring core group.

With well over 100 new business referrals passed across the breakfast table in the first two months alone, Chapter Director Jeremy Marsh has good reason to feel pleased, not least because, of the potential £120,000 worth of business generated to date, more than £40,000 has already been transacted – indicating a brisk approach to consolidating leads.

Jeremy reckons that Dartford is already one of BNI's friendliest chapters, with members having struck up an excellent – and instant – camaraderie, helped by the fact that many of them worked with or knew each other in business before joining BNI.

"This friendship is the foundation for our getting to know each others' businesses, and this in turn is being assisted by using a record system created by Russell Cole, our Member Co-ordinator, to log external get-togethers between individual members," he said.

"So far these meetings have averaged ten a week, complemented by the use of factory visits to familiarise members with the services of bigger organisations which other members belong to," added Jeremy, a financial advisor and head of investment and financial services for a firm of solicitors.

"Our members represent an excellent cross-section of the business community, and I think we are progressing very well."

Jeremy said that while they treated each meeting's agenda and BNI's rules very seriously, "everything else must have a dash of fun. For example if a member is so much as a second late arriving, we all chorus '£1 fine' and the person pays up willingly.

"The money we raise is paying for items like the money box and a 'time out' bell, with the rest going towards a night out for the group."

Such is the Chapter's networking success that it has presented officers with one minor problem: being regularly kicked out of the venue because they've overstayed their welcome.

"We all do so much networking after the formal agenda has ended, that we're often still going at 10 o' clock. It has caused a few ruffled feathers but in reality it's a very nice problem to have," he said.

With its own web-site (which can be accessed at: [dartfordbni@hotmail.com](mailto:dartfordbni@hotmail.com)) members have already used their Internet presence to good effect, spreading their networking efforts across the Atlantic, where they have already made contact with BNI chapters in St. Louis, a city with no less than 32 separate chapters, San Francisco, Canada and Germany.

Jeremy and his colleagues extend a warm invitation to any other BNI member (or would-be visitor) to attend Dartford's meetings, or propose joint chapter activities.

He can be contacted on (01372) 729555, Fax: (01372) 742101 or by e-mail at: [jez@sfm.win-uk.net](mailto:jez@sfm.win-uk.net).

## Pic to come

CAPTION: GOES HERE.

### ...while Thanet also makes a splash

**T**here are similar smiles just down the road in Thanet, where another newly-formed Kent chapter doubled its core launch group after just one meeting.

Ten core group members and more than 60 other local business people attended the launch, prompting BNI's Assistant Director in Kent, Roger Hobcraft to comment: "We've had a very impressive take-up rate and doubled our core group as a result of that first meeting, with others still coming back to have another look.

"I'm optimistic we'll grow quickly." Thanet's Chapter Director is Peter Rodd of Boys and Maughan Solicitors.

### All is rosy in the garden of England

BUSINESS is looking rosy in the 'garden of England' as Kent's Rochester Chapter continues to cultivate high numbers of referrals.

## That was the launch that was...

JUST weeks after a huge summer launch, BNI's Guildford Chapter is sending shockwaves to business people throughout the county.

Guildford's launch was one of BNI's largest ever, attended by more than 130 potential members, and progress has been so good that Assistant Director Mark Texidor hopes to see an established membership of at least 30 by December.

Chapter Director Chris Woolley, of chartered accountants Smith & Williamson, is similarly upbeat. He said: "A number of members are discussing joint business ventures which is a very exciting prospect, and shows how well they are networking already."

In its first three months, the town's 28 members have unearthed an incredible 450 genuine new referrals, averaging over 35 each week.

BNI Executive Director Robert French said: "This achievement is superb and compares with the best that any similar new chapter has managed anywhere in the world.

"It just shows what can be done if a group of like-minded local business people put maximum effort into helping each other."

Research has shown that, on average, each BNI member wins around £15,000 worth of extra business a year as a result of his or her membership, and those doing better business in the Rochester group include an aerial fitter, a solicitor, accountant, printer, computer specialist and a firm of electrical engineers.

Betty Harrison, Rochester's BNI membership co-ordinator, said the members' achievement showed that business on the Medway was in good shape.

"We couldn't have generated all this business for each other if there was none to be had," she pointed out.

"But you have to know where to look and our members certainly do!"

For further information about BNI's activities in Kent call BNI's regional office on 0800 018 1950.

Mark Texidor is already working on setting up a second chapter in the town, such is the active interest being shown in BNI.

In addition, preliminary information meetings have been set up in nearby Woking and Chertsey, and Mark has plans to develop further chapters in Esher and Farnham.

The Guildford Chapter meets at Clandon Regis Golf Club on Wednesday mornings, where members have the added attraction of a ten per cent discount on green fees, and corporate golf days with their hosts.

Anyone interested in joining the Chapter should contact Tina Kemp on 01483 544121 or e-mail her at: [tkemp@121eurotech.com](mailto:tkemp@121eurotech.com).

## Around the Chapters

# Net-working in Cyberspace? It's the business!

**B**NI is taking a giant leap into the next millennium – speeding onto the information super-highway with the introduction of its first UK chapter websites on the Internet!

*SuccessNet* has learned of at least three enterprising chapters – Leatherhead, Epsom and Dartford – whose members have utilised their own 'in chapter' Internet expertise to develop websites promoting both BNI and the business services of individual members.

Several other groups are understood to be building similar websites and, with BNI having recently backed the development of an Internet pilot project covering its huge North American chapter network, the challenge in the coming months will be to integrate these separate initiatives to create a high quality corporate culture for BNI on the worldwide web.

One of the most ambitious of BNI's UK websites involves Leatherhead Chapter in Surrey, whose members' business details can now be accessed across the world, thanks to Internet experts, Stuart Grove and Hungarian Ferenc Schustek, directors of local computer software solutions firm, Brainstorm Systems Ltd.

With their experience in this field, Ferenc claimed it was straightforward to put the Chapter's website together. He said: "The key was deciding the structure, but it seems only natural that an organisation like BNI should be on the Internet.

"Within the near future I think it will be very unusual for a significant business not to have some sort of representation on the Web.

"This new site will benefit all the Chapter's members at home, and abroad, because we are listing their business details in full.

"The aim is to make it easier for would be customers to identify and access specific business services. It will be like a mini Yellow Pages."

Meanwhile, just a few miles away, the Epsom Chapter has also recently come 'on-line', thanks to the work of Piers Nicholson whose company, Internetworks Ltd has undertaken a similar exercise.

During the coming months, Epsom and Leatherhead chapters will be exploring ways of incorporating their details under a single 'umbrella' site.

Leatherhead and Epsom Chapters can be reached on the Internet at: [www.bni-uk.com](http://www.bni-uk.com).



HOME PAGE: Leatherhead Chapter's Internet home page.

## Why BNI is the 'bees knees' for Hugh

**E**stablishing BNI's first Scottish chapter – in the heart of Glasgow – has brought an unexpected bonus to regional director Hugh Lee, who has been freed from 25 years of pain thanks to the healing powers of one of his new members.

Since he was 19 years old, Hugh had suffered what he described as 'a terrible burning pain' in the muscle just above his knee, exacerbated by any period of standing still.

But, after meeting Glasgow core group member Mary Black – and through her discovering the Japanese healing art of Reiki – Hugh has been cured of his debilitating condition.

Hugh, who is Regional Director for Scotland West Central said: "When I first met Mary, who joined us as one of the core members of the Glasgow Alpha Chapter, I never dreamed it would lead to the end of my knee problems.

"She was introduced to me as a teacher of Reiki, a form of natural 'hands on' healing. Shortly afterwards, I visited her practice, simply to get to know her business a little better," Hugh added.

"Receiving any kind of treatment was the last thing on my mind. But we got talking and she said the best way to understand what she did was to experience it at first hand."

"She asked me if I'd had any long term health problems. I mentioned the chronic pains in my knee and she thought she could help.

"I found out that she was also a practitioner



BNI BONUS: Hugh Lee.

of the Bowen Technique, a self healing system of muscle and tissue therapy, and that she heals people suffering anxiety or stress, or those with physical ailments, such as back pain."

Hugh said he had previously been seen by many medical consultants without any satisfactory results and added: "I'm 44 this year and have lived with the burning pain for 25 years so when Mary offered help I couldn't refuse."

He described how, after barely an hour of treatment that was "so gentle I fell asleep in the middle of it", he got up, went home and only two or three days later realised that, for the first time in many years he was pain free.

"Mary has given me a dose of peace. She is a quite amazing lady, and very professional. I really couldn't believe the pains had gone."

Hugh added: "BNI is an extremely altruistic organisation which exists to help people grow their business. It is about helping each other, and if that extends to help at a personal level, then that's fine."

Meanwhile, Hugh is busy building on the early success of Glasgow Alpha Chapter by developing a second group south of the Clyde. Anyone interested in joining the new core group, due to meet on Thursday mornings at Browns Health & Leisure Club in Coplaw Street, can call Hugh on 0410 768337.

## Cork chapters join in fun

Midsummer Madness was provided in abundance by Cork City Chapter recently, which is growing from strength to strength under the guidance of Chapter Director, Richard O'Brien.

Joining in the revelry of the first event at Oysterhaven Watersports Adventure Centre were members from Central and East Cork Chapters, who battled against each other on rafts, slippery poles and canoeing in the sea.

A great time was had by all, and the event was soon followed up with another, slightly more serious outing to Waterock Golf Club.

Teams comprised a golfer, a non-golfer and a nearly-golfer. The day's competition was fol-

lowed by beer, chips and 'network singing' into the early hours.

Members of the East Cork Chapter have passed on their appreciation for the invitation and are threatening to return the compliment in the not too distant future!

On a more serious note, Richard reports that City Chapter is thriving, with 750 referrals likely to be passed in their first six month term, including one to Paul James of ASA Marketing who received over £10,000 in orders on launch day.

Richard has just handed over his position to Solicitor Paudie Mahony, who became Chapter Director at the start of October.

## Focus On... Kent and the South East

# Robert's cream of the crop

**R**obert French almost rejected BNI, believing he needed the commitment of taking on a regional role for a new organisation, like a hole in the head.

Today, as BNI's Executive Director for Kent, Sussex and Essex, he cannot believe the phenomenal results he is achieving in developing one of BNI's most successful regions which, he says, has transformed his outlook on business life.

Since May last year, when he put his fruit farming activities out to pasture and opened BNI's first Kent chapter in Canterbury, French has not looked back.

He is now responsible for chapters spanning three counties – opening his first Essex group in Chelmsford just a couple of weeks ago – and has a further five chapters currently under development, all due to be launched during the next few weeks.

"My plan was to have at least 20 by the end of this year, and I should do rather better than that."

While BNI's progress in this 'garden of England' has been dramatic, what has been equally significant is the quality of French's chapters – and their memberships – several of which have become model groups whose success has been studied by other newer or less effective chapters.

Wherever you look across his expanding parish, French has instilled his special performance formula among both leadership teams and members, with the result that his chapters invariably boast the highest number of leads passed, the largest numbers of visitors, the lowest levels of absenteeism and, most obviously of all, the greatest show of enthusiasm for achieving BNI's objectives. It all comes down to two basic things – a belief that the BNI philosophy works, and an enthusiastic determination to make it work for you.

"Very little in business life comes easy, and the success of BNI chapters in the South East has come from the combined commitment of many individuals together with an almost ruthless determination on my part to produce high-performing chapters, giving members the best possible chance to win new business," said French, whose bullish, no-nonsense style has earned him the various epithets of Headmaster, Dictator and Field Marshall from different chapters.

"I'm not in this business to be loved. I want my BNI region to be the best, so I will encourage, cajole and nag chapter leaders and members to do things properly until they do."

"If referrals in a certain chapter have started to fall away, I'll go in and quickly find out why."

"Then I'll arrange for team leaders and members to have specific training – visiting other more productive chapters if necessary to see how it should be done."

French takes no prisoners. "Anyone who has made the commitment to get out of bed before six in the morning to attend weekly chapter meetings should want to know how best to maximise his or her attendance by delivering punchy one-minute presentations, cultivating a good rapport with other members and identifying the right kind of leads for a colleague. My role is to ensure they *do* know."

"If something in the mix is not working, we deal with it right away."

"Sometimes that might mean losing one or two members who've not been making sufficient contribution and finding better replace-



EXPANDING: Robert French.

For most of his life, Robert French has been a farmer and, as everyone knows, farmers work every hour of the day.

But 12 months after going into 'semi retirement' when he became one of BNI's first UK regional directors, Robert says he has never worked harder, or longer, in his life.

His runaway achievements in business networking however, means that far from retreating back to the farm, Robert is expanding his BNI patch and relishing the experience.

After a fortnight of trying, 'SuccessNet' caught up with him in Maidstone, in an attempt to discover the secret of this human whirlwind's success...

## But this patch is far tougher than farming

ments. I don't regard such losses as a bad thing, but rather as losing dead wood from the tree which can then grow a new, stronger root."

Horticultural analogies from this extrovert farmer should perhaps come as no surprise.

He likens much of BNI's development to crop cultivation and says there are similarities: "Creating vibrant, successful chapters is exactly like farming."

"Before you can reap the rewards, you have to sow and then carefully nurture your initial investment."

"That requires dedication, effort and staying power – which is why I always tell new would-be members: 'if you don't feel able to commit to getting up early and playing a full, active part in chapter meetings, don't bother joining'."

Clearly, however, the majority of French's expanding army of business acquaintances are persuaded that his way works – and can work for them.

One significant ingredient in his formulae is the staging of various joint training and social events for all the chapters in a particular part of his territory.

Earlier this year, when he felt certain chapters could do with a fresh injection of enthusiasm, he organised a social gathering, a key aim of which was to transfer practical ideas and 'energy' from members of the most successful groups to less dynamic chapters.

For example, he recently worked with Peter Reeves, from the Tunbridge Wells Chapter, to stage a hugely popular outdoor pursuits challenge day (*featured in the last issue of SuccessNet*) designed to boost teamwork and inter-chapter camaraderie. And, almost every

week, he provides training, education and information workshops for individual members and officers, helping them to get the most from BNI membership.

With two assistant directors supporting him in Kent, a co-executive director in Sussex and a fourth being sought to help develop Essex, French hopes to spend more of his time working on the training and personal development side of BNI, while his colleagues travel the South-East opening up new chapters.

"I wouldn't pretend it's all been easy, because it has been very hard work, far tougher than farming. I reckon I've covered 40,000 miles in my first 12 months as regional director and only a fool would say he enjoys getting out of bed at four or five o'clock in the morning on four or five days a week, to attend chapters in far flung corners of a very large patch!"

"I'm not complaining. I knew what I was in for when Gavin Bain (Berkshire's executive director) invited me to my first BNI breakfast, asking me to meet him 60 miles away on the M40 at six in the morning."

"Over the following month, I travelled from deepest Kent to Hertfordshire nearly every day to attend early-morning meetings and, on the day I was due to become a regional director, I was so shattered I'd almost decided not to go ahead," French added.

"But I did, and it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Meeting so many new business people, and being able to help them realise their potential, has been an enlightening and rewarding experience."

## PRINCIPLE 4: – The intensity of your activity (action)

In the last issue of SuccessNet, we discussed the 90-day mentality used in business marketing.

I'd now like to present a different approach using a 90-day time frame to help you master this 'activity principle' to best advantage.

If you can use this time frame for reference to specific cycles, it will be easier to understand where I want your thinking pattern to go.

In the business world we all allocate the time we feel is appropriate to build enough momentum to achieve our aim, such as running a successful advertising campaign or whatever the project is going to be.

If you apply this to becoming the best possible networker, you will find it is much easier to do several sprints over a specific time frame than trying to run the marathon right from the start. To be effective, you have to have multiple exposures rather than singular efforts, and this can only be as effective as the size and strength of Your Network.

On the premise that many hands make light work, it makes sense that your action should be massive in its scope, with a 90-day goal for expanding your business during this period.

Each new year sees every business person start from the same 'ground zero' point, and what you do from say, January through to March sets in motion what takes place in the next quarter and so on.

One important point you may not always recognise is that your (marketing) activity will have outside sources of interference which you must be prepared to counter.

We've all been offered excuses for why things didn't go to plan, from blaming it on the weather to the interference of summer vacations. "Everyone is on holiday, so I can't get anything done!"

Be certain about one thing when it comes to the intensity of your activity or, in plain words, the action you take: Remember that 'all excuses are equal.' Accountability and responsibility will always begin with you. The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, and the consistency of your effort.

That first step is called Action. Having an effective mode of operation will be more successful over time than making excuses for the lack of effective planning.

A good analogy for remembering this is: "Planting seeds in the springtime avoids having to beg for food in the autumn." Intensify your activity and you will multiply your harvest.

## PRINCIPLE 5 – Your results

The key phrase to describe your accomplishment is: 'Your Results'. Did your results meet or exceed your expectations, or do you need to regroup and try again?

One important point is that results should always be considered as a work in progress,

# Introducing the BNI Charitable Foundation

With the rapid expansion of BNI's network across the world, the organisation has created its own international charitable foundation, with the sole aim of helping some of the many communities in which it operates.

A non-profit making body, the BNI Foundation supports nominated charitable causes anywhere in the world, and BNI's International Board of Advisors (comprising members of chapters around the world) has initially selected education and children to be the theme for the Foundation.

While the Foundation's advisors determine which charities should benefit from 'corporate' funds, any BNI region or chapter which makes a minimum donation of £150 can request that its donation is given to a specific charity of its choice, provided the charity meets the Foundation's basic guidelines.

Individual regions or chapters can participate

# Networking skills

## Part 2: Time and planning

**Most BNI members quickly discover the major benefits of joining an organisation whose principal aims are the mutual growth of business and profitability, and the fostering of personal and professional development.**

**A key part of BNI's philosophy is training and education, helping members achieve their own business goals by creating the right business environment and providing expert advice through various seminars, courses, workshops and specialist books which all help us to market our businesses more effectively.**

**In this second part of his article on Networking Skills, MIKE SMITH, BNI's Co-Executive Director for Missouri, USA, shares his views about the efficient use of time and planning to achieve the best results from any marketing and networking activity...**

not the final end to your task. Remember, we are sharing with you ideas to becoming a MASTER, and in all endeavours you must always focus on the final results, with the keen eye of an apprentice working to become a journeyman and finally accomplishing the ultimate title of Master of the task. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Am I receiving back more in value than I have paid out monetarily?
- Are my results adequate enough to satisfy and strengthen my belief system?
- Have I devoted the necessary time to achieve my results?

Your final results will be in direct proportion to your belief system, your commitment, the ultimate goal you set and the action you take. One of my favourite quotes on which to conclude this principle comes from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said: 'Always begin with the end in mind.'

## PRINCIPLE 6 – Your personal growth

It is appropriate to end this article with the word growth, or 'increase' because the desire to increase is inherent in all of nature. It is the fundamental impulse of the universe.

So, if you really want to become a 'Master of Networking', it is important to recognise and understand this principle as much, if not more so than all the other principles combined.

BNI's mission is to help all members increase their business through a structured, positive and professional 'word-of-mouth' approach that enables them to develop long term, meaningful relationships with quality business professionals.

This philosophy is as true today as it was in 1985 when Dr Ivan R. Misner founded this organisation. So, here are some pointers you might want to consider on your journey to becoming a Master of Networking:

- Increase your Awareness
- Increase your Business
- Increase your Exposure
- Increase your Personal Network
- Increase your Networking Skills
- Increase your Possibilities
- Increase your Knowledge of Referral Marketing
- Increase your Public Speaking Skills
- Increase the Membership of your Organisation
- Increase your Service

## PRINCIPLE 7 – Your influence

Jim Rohn has been called 'The Master of Success', so I thought it only fitting to end with one of his quotes: "You must constantly ask yourself these questions: Who am I around? What are they doing to me? What have they got me reading? What have they got me saying? Where do they have me going? What do they have me thinking? What do they have me becoming? Then ask yourself the big question: Is that okay?"

You will become the sum total of everyone and everything that influences you over the course of your lifetime.

All these things will help to mold and develop your influence in achieving your end results. Time only helps to promote or expose you.

As you practice and apply these principles to become the best networker you can be, you can either become the architect of your own future or you can live in the model someone else builds for you.

Since the future is where you will be spending the rest of your life, it makes sense to invest your time wisely.

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION: Malcolm Grosvenor (tel: 0181-541 1121)

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