

SUCCESS TO A TEE!

While everyone in business strives to achieve long-term wealth and security, electronics security specialist Mark Lane has 'made it' in the most unlikely of circumstances – by accepting an invitation to take part in a BNI golf tournament knowing he couldn't play golf!

After more than ten years of working "24 hours a day, seven days a week" to build up his Watford-based company, 3D Security Systems Ltd, Mark has just sold a majority stake to a multi-millionaire entrepreneur for "a very attractive sum", bought a smart new country home for his family and expects what

– without taking a single swing

was a modest five-man business just two months ago to become a major national concern within five years, employing hundreds of people.

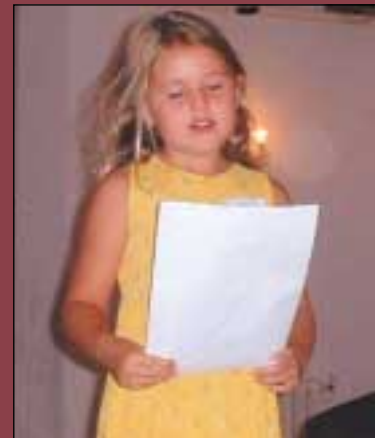
But none of this would have happened had it not been for his determination to use the networking opportunity of a BNI golf day 12 months ago, even though he couldn't play golf. "As a member of Edgware Chapter, I readily agreed to buy a ticket for BNI's regional golf tournament, thinking that if I could find someone to play for me, I could caddy for them and still network.

"I approached long-time business associate Mark Buckland, who I know enjoys a game of golf. He agreed to take my place and we had an enjoyable day," said Mark.

It is what happened next that was to change Mark Lane's fortunes. "After the presentations, I sat with my namesake in the bar reflecting on our lives. Mark (Buckland) told me how much he envied me having my own business and not being accountable to others. In turn I complained about the long hours, the lack of time with my family, no holidays and the insecurity of self-employment.

"I then told him: 'If I could sell out tomorrow for the right price, or find a substantial business partner to take the load off my shoulders, I'd jump at the chance...', to which he replied: 'I think I know someone who would be interested.'"

TURN TO BACK PAGE



Wot's this? Kids in BNI?

"My name is Abigail Milner and I'm seven years old. I know that when my Dad comes to these breakfast meetings, he talks a load of rubbish, so I thought it would be better if I came here and told you what he does...."

What were Abigail – and a dozen other youngsters – really doing at a recent chapter meeting on Merseyside? Turn to page 13 to find out!

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BLACK TIE WINNER: Our picture shows James (left) with Tanya and Richard Collis, from the award sponsors GlaxoSmithKline

Young innovator

A 22-year-old member of Stansted Chapter, has won the first Essex Young Business Innovation Award, just two years after he and his step-brother Ian Robson acquired a stand design company based in Elsenham.

James Crawford, Sales and Marketing Director for Universal Displays, was presented with the award by BBC TV's Business Breakfast presenter Tanya Beckett at a black tie gala dinner last month, following the company's success in developing both niche and mass markets nationwide.

Any advance on 20 referrals?



• Alan Porter and his 20 referrals.

WILL-WRITER Alan Porter has established himself as a record 'writer' of business referrals in the West Country – just weeks after becoming a member of BNI.

Within a month of joining the new **Drake Chapter**, Plymouth, Alan stunned his colleagues by handing around the breakfast table not five referrals, nor ten, nor 15, but 17 solid pieces of prospective business!

Two weeks later, he went one better – or three, to be precise – passing a staggering 20 referrals to his wide-eyed colleagues, and prompting Chapter Director Paul Barton to invite Alan to share his secret by using the following week's education slot to show everyone how he manages to produce so many.

In fact, Alan's referral success is based on a development of a practice that all members should use when they visit cus-

tomers – or receive clients in their own workplace: he shows them his BNI card holder and asks whether he can talk about some of the 'excellent' business contacts he has in BNI.

"But the process actually starts before then," Alan said.

"From the moment I arrive at a client's home or office, I try to observe as much as possible about the way they live, work and run their lives, so that by the end of my meeting I can have a fairly good guess about the kinds of products and services they might be looking for.

"For instance, if I turn up at someone's home knowing they've only recently moved in, or I've noticed some tiles coming off the roof, when I've concluded my business, I'll suggest that they might be looking for a decorator or a tiler.

Alan sees up to half a dozen new clients each week and, because he takes the time to get to know them – and identify other services they might want – he often picks up several referrals for his chapter colleagues.

"As I talk to someone, I might learn that they've just inherited from a will or recently retired in which case I'll suggest a visit from my chapter's independent financial adviser, or if they complain about their mortgage rate being uncompetitive, I offer to put them in touch with the group's mortgage specialist.

"Last week I made one home visit to someone who needed a lot of domestic help but didn't know who to approach.

"Because I could put forward the names of business contacts I trust, I was able to offer help in half a dozen areas, all of which became solid referrals.

"It is all about building trust, and because I am invited into their homes on such a personal matter as writing their wills, people feel they can trust me – and the people I recommend," Alan added. "I am always very careful to follow up my subsequent referrals to make sure that both parties are happy."

• Alan Porter is Managing Director of The Will Centre at 59 Hyde Park Road, Plymouth, PL3 4JN. He can be contacted on 01752 251792.

Tuning in to BNI

RADIO stations throughout Britain are tuning in to BNI as the ideal wavelength to find new business customers.

Across the UK, independent local radio (ILR) stations have placed advertising executives in a dozen BNI chapters, and the results are so successful that more hard-pressed stations are copying the trend, to strengthen relationships with their business communities.

Wyvern FM, part of the GWR group that owns more than 40 radio stations across southern and central England, is typical of the new BNI-ILR partnership.

Covering both urban and rural communities in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Wyvern FM has already reaped more than £20,000 worth of additional advertising revenues since one of its sales executives, Liz Shuttleworth joined Worcester 1 Chapter eight months ago.

Liz said: "I heard about the organisation from a friend in the Hereford Chapter and from the first visit to my local BNI group in Worcester.

"I thought it was a great way to build business relationships. In fact BNI has proved to be fantastic – so much so that when a second chapter recently opened in Worcester, we had no hesitation in

placing one of my sales colleagues, Sarah Dallow, in that group.

"Now, we're about to join a third BNI group in Kidderminster, and I'm sure we will look at any other relevant chapters that are opened in Wyvern's territory.

"It's very obvious that other ILR stations are getting the BNI message too, because when I attended a recent conference I was surprised to discover colleagues from other stations within the GWR Group had also joined their local BNI chapters – from Essex to Devon," Liz added.

With tough competition for advertising revenue among the broadcast, print and electronic media, Liz said that BNI's business referral philosophy provided a distinct advantage.

"With everyone chasing the same advertisers, what could be better than receiving personal referrals through BNI colleagues you know and trust?"

In turn, I believe we have shown how effective local radio advertising can be, by producing some very successful campaigns for a number of businesses referred by my chapter colleagues."

• Liz Shuttleworth can be reached on 01905 612212 or 07866 376786.



300 bands of merry men!

The Sheriff of Nottingham would no doubt have taxed everyone, Robin Hood would have welcomed its Giver's Gain philosophy – and Friar Tuck would have loved the full English breakfasts.

But all would undoubtedly have been impressed with the launch of BNI's 300th chapter this summer located, fittingly, on the edge of Sherwood Forest.

The three-month-old **Nottingham One Chapter**, which meets at the Moat House Hotel on Mansfield Road, within an arrow's arc of Robin Hood's medieval business base, is also the first group to open in the county, paving the way for BNI's expansion in one of the few areas where it is not already a well-known name in business circles.

Following Nottingham One's first visitor day at the end of last month, the group is continuing to grow and, says its first Chapter Director Shaun O'Reilly, the referrals are flowing. "We took very little time to launch our group and if this is indicative of the way BNI is greeted elsewhere in the county, BNI will soon be a household name in Nottinghamshire."

Further groups are already being developed in Nottingham and at Grantham in Lincolnshire.

Elsewhere in the UK and Ireland, BNI is continuing to take business communities by storm, with over 20 new chapters launched during July and August, including several in new territories such as the West Country.

National Director Martin Lawson said: "Nearly five years ago, when we launched the first UK chapter, we set ourselves the challenging target of opening groups in all of Britain's main business centres within five years.

"With a few weeks to spare, we've achieved that goal. We have thriving chapters in nearly every part of the UK and Ireland and in the few regions where we are still to make our presence felt, I'm confident we'll be there soon.

"Back in late 1996, we thought 5,000 members would be a reasonable five-year target, but we already have over 7,000 well before our fifth anniversary."

Amongst the other recently launched chapters are: Ashby de la Zouch (Leics), Ayr, Barnsley, Battersea (London), Battle (Sussex), Bournemouth, Bradford, Brands Hatch (Kent), Derby, Exeter, Harrogate, Newbury, Plymouth, Sheffield (Forest), Torquay, Towcester (Northants), Tower Hill (London), Widnes, Wolverhampton and York.



• Nottingham's first Chapter Director Shaun O'Reilly (centre) talks to members.

We need your feedback

FOR THE past four years, *SuccessNet* has endeavoured to keep all members educated and informed about BNI's latest networking methods, while bringing you news, views and pictures of the organisation's rapid growth, and highlighting many of your business success stories.

The newsletter is distributed free to all members on a quarterly basis and now we'd like to know what you think about *SuccessNet*.

In particular we want to know what aspects you like or dislike, and what (if any) new content you'd like to see. To encourage your response, we've placed a *SuccessNet* questionnaire on

BNI's UK website which you can access at www.bni-europe.com/uk by clicking 'SuccessNet' on the home page. We designed the questionnaire to make it quick and easy for you to complete online – simply ticking boxes with a space for any comments.

If *SuccessNet* is to give you what you want, then we need to hear from as large a proportion of the membership as possible.

To encourage your prompt response (by Monday, 26th November), we'll select five respondents at random to receive a copy of Dr Ivan Misner's book 'Masters of Networking', or a selection of BNI merchandise.

All signed up in Leeds

WHILE most members content themselves by wearing the standard lapel pin to indicate their involvement with BNI, those in **Leeds Armouries Chapter** have gone one better to advertise their business networking allegiance.

Thanks to an offer they couldn't refuse from Chapter Director and sign-maker Jayne Pickard, all 28 of her colleagues in the Leeds group now proudly promote their BNI membership to their respective customers with the help of attractive signs mounted in prominent positions on their business premises, declaring 'A member of Business Network International.'

Jayne and her partner Gary, who set up the first UK branch of Sign-A-

Rama, recently scooped a prestigious award for the second year running, when the Leeds franchise was awarded the Group's 'Overall Achievement Award' for reaching the highest sales targets and providing high-quality, dedicated training and support service to 30 other franchisees.

She said everyone was delighted with their signs, which had already received positive comments and enquiries from members' customers and suppliers.

"As additional people join the Chapter, they will also be offered their own signs. It's a great way to promote our BNI membership."

• Jayne Pickard can be contacted on 0113 231 0099.

Lawsons' Lore

BNI National Directors MARTIN & GILLIAN LAWSON write...

As we draw near to BNI's fifth anniversary in the UK and Ireland, it seems appropriate not only to acknowledge the progress we have made, but to look at the challenges that await us over the next five years as we seek to maintain our growth and further enhance our service to members.

With more than 320 chapters, we know the 'Giver's Gain' philosophy has flourished in the UK and Ireland as much as in other countries around the world. So where should we be focusing our efforts in the months ahead, as we consolidate our position as the most successful business referral organisation in the world?

The answer, surely, lies in the continued business education and training we offer all members, equipping them to take advantage of every new business opportunity that comes their way, and showing them how to get the most out of BNI.

Nowhere is this better indicated than in *SuccessNet*. Take Joe Sandercock's appraisal (this page) of the key role of visitor hosts.

When we join BNI, we naturally focus our efforts on fellow members, but this is just one means of giving and receiving business.

Be honest, how many address the other ways – seeing equal business opportunities in the members' substitute programme, and realising that every visitor to our chapter is a prospective customer?

Joe's message is clear: choose visitor hosts with care, and make sure that every member greets guests with a smile, showing genuine interest in their business. Ignore your visitors, and you devalue your membership.

Similarly, Nigel Vandyk's review (Page 12) of the psychology we should adopt when meeting with chapter colleagues or prospective clients, is strikingly obvious. Yet how many of us follow the simple steps he suggests – setting aside our own blinkered mindset, and seeing new business opportunities from other people's perspectives?

Some of us may think we're too old or too wise to try new ways of doing business. Continue to think like that, and opportunities will pass you by. No-one is too old to adopt new business ideas, nor is it ever too late to improve our collective approach to business, by ensuring all of our chapter colleagues regard education and training as seriously as they treat the increasing referrals that will flow from it.




ARE YOU

There's an old saying up north that 'there's nowt so queer as folk'. What it means, quite simply, is that each and every one of us is different and, just when you think you've met every possible type of individual, another comes along to disprove it.

In my long experiences of being a visitor host that quirky saying seems to be consistently relevant.

Why? Because the first and foremost key to fulfilling this role is that you have got to be a 'people' person who actually enjoys meeting new and very different individuals, and is genuinely interested in learning something about them.

And whether we like to admit it or not, sometimes we choose the wrong people for this key job.

Many of us will have visited other chapters where, for one reason or another, we have not been welcomed properly or made to feel at home.

In such cases, my guess is that it is nearly always because the appointed visitor hosts don't really enjoy their task, seeing their role as a duty rather than a pleasure.

In my case, having spent most of my life in management, where meeting and dealing with people from all walks of life was a large part of daily routine, I have been very happy to be a visitor host

because I really like meeting people and getting to know them.

Consequently, my first message to all new leadership teams (and chapter members) is: make sure that those you choose to be your visitor hosts are people that you know enjoy meeting others, and can be relied upon to have a smile on their faces and a welcoming word when greeting your visitors.

First impressions count when someone has got up at six in the morning to attend a meeting where, probably the only person they know is the member who invited them, and then, maybe only as a recent acquaintance.

So, having given your visitor(s) a friendly welcome, your next task – after completing the necessary signing in formalities and ensuring they have been given a clearly labelled visitors badge is to introduce them, one at a time, to the Chapter Director and, if possible, the leadership team.

Don't forget that you should have taken at least two business cards from each of your visitors and, on the back of one of these, written the name of the member who invited the visitor. This will enable the Director to make specific reference to the relevant members when introducing each of his/her guests.

Either before or after you've introduced the visitor to your chapter director, you will need to give him or her a flavour of how the meeting is conducted.

On the gold standard

ANOTHER 15 members have joined BNI's elite Gold Badge Club in recent weeks – including three from a single chapter!

Retiring Chapter Director Paul Clarke together with Jane Kenyon and Adrian Crank (all members of **Knutsford**, Cheshire) were presented with their Gold Club badges by Executive Director Tony Coxhill, who also attended **Wrexham** to award Gold Club status to Peter Dorricott.

In the Midlands, Simon Greenfield from Birmingham's **Moseley Chapter** and Julie Cole (**Edgbaston**) have joined the Gold Badge Club as have Robert Ashworth and Nicky Crisp, both members of **Maldon**,

and Barry Cohen from **Redbridge**.

And, earlier this month, James Cruickshank, BNI's Executive Director for East Anglia presented badges to Paul Donno (**Long Melford**), Gary Watson (**Haverhill**), Chris Twinn (**Bury St Edmunds**) and Andrew Watton (**Norwich**).

Meanwhile two other chapter directors have also received gold badges. Graham Struthers, immediate past Chapter Director of **Stirling**, received his from National Director Gillian Lawson during the recently held Scottish Conference at Knockhill, while the other went to Richard Lemberger, **Warwick Chapter**.



A PEOPLE PERSON?

Visitors are just as much the lifeblood of any BNI group as its members. Without the stimulation of new faces, even the best performing chapters will lose their edge and stagnate over a period of time. Yet, for a number of chapters, meeting, greeting and nurturing our visitors seems to be, at best, a hit-or-miss affair when, in fact, it is one of the most important tasks for every group. JOE SANDERCOCK has been a visitor host in Pinner Chapter for over two years. In this article he addresses some fundamental aspects of this key role, and suggests that chapters which fail to make their visitors welcome will fail to reach their potential.

In particular, you should explain how every member and visitor is given 60 seconds in which to introduce themselves and promote their business – and don't forget to remind them (humorously) of the way that the one-minute time limit is strictly enforced!

I find it helps visitors to run through a typical shortlist of points that they might want to bring out in their 60-second slot, because the last thing they want is to feel nervous about standing up and addressing the chapter.

As well as telling them about their informercial opportunity, they also need to know that towards the end of the meeting, during the exchange of members' referrals, they'll be invited to comment briefly on their perception of the meeting, and even offer a referral to any relevant member if they feel sufficiently confident and willing to do so!

So far so good, but before you introduce any visitor to the Chapter Director, there's one other important point: if they haven't already been allocated a seat at breakfast next to the member who invited them, remember to show them the reserved seat where they'll sit.

You might think that your job is now done, but it isn't.

Before the meeting is called to order, it is crucial that you ensure your guest has been properly introduced to as many members as possible in the time available, for good reason.

If a visitor has been introduced to say, only one other member and he or she doesn't feel any warmth towards that individual, the guest may depart the meeting believing that BNI is not for them.

But, if you've been able to introduce your visitors to several different members, the chances are that they will feel comfortable with at least one of their newly made acquaintances, and leave with far more positive feelings. Meanwhile, every member needs to be aware

of their visitors, and make a point of personally introducing themselves.

After all, a new face at the breakfast table is potential new business for any and every member, and a prospective customer, friend, business colleague and problem solver for each of them.

At the end of the meeting, the visitor host has a further task – that of visitor orientation – which needs to be carried out in a relaxed, sensitive and focused way. The aim of this is to inform visitors of the commitment involved in membership, and to form a view about their suitability as a potential member.

You need to obtain honest feedback from each visitor, be able to answer any questions raised, assess his or her likely commitment to the chapter, and of course, provide them with one of the BNI's excellent new visitor welcome packs, ensuring it contains all the essential literature and application form.

And don't forget to ask each visitor to complete the simple evaluation form before they leave. Sometimes a visitor will be so enthusiastic they'll want to join immediately but, even if you feel they are right for BNI and your group, and there is a suitable vacancy, you need to point out that all applications have to be determined by the membership committee, who will take up references in the process.

Whether or not a guest completes an application form before leaving the meeting, your final task with each new visitor is to telephone him or her within two days to obtain a more reflective feedback of their views and intentions, and, if there are mutually positive feelings, to encourage the visitor to complete the application formalities before the vacant category has been filled by a competitor.

In short, the bottom line for every visitor host – before, during and after each meeting – is to act as BNI's front-line ambassador, extending a welcome that is warm and professional, and following through to ensure that, if the visitor is right for your chapter, your chapter has presented the right impression to its visitor. If it has, he or she will soon be a member!

• Joe Sandercock spent 32 years with BP, latterly as an overseas general manager. He now runs a business and management consultancy in Northwood and is an independent distributor for Telecom Plus. He can be contacted on 01923 827987.

The training of the 3,000

IMAGINE you have a new workforce of 3,000. All of them need to be trained – in different roles and different aspects of the job – and you have less than a month to do it.

Sounds a tough assignment? Well, it's one that BNI's national and regional directors face twice a year.

That's because one of the essentials for maintaining the crucial 'buzz' and momentum in every chapter is the appointment of all-new leadership teams, visitor hosts and membership committees every six months.

On average, that means nine new appointments in each of the 320-plus chapters in the UK and Ireland – every single one of which has to be preceded by appropriate training!

"Of course it's a tough challenge," said National Director Martin Lawson,

"but the provision of more than 8,000 hours worth of training to nearly 3,000 members involved is also one of the most significant things we do.

"For instance, each of the 960 members appointed as chapter director, membership co-ordinator or secretary/treasurer undergoes five hours training in his or her own region, while another 900 visitor hosts and approximately the same number of membership committee members all receive at least two hours training."

While the training varies according to the roles, it all covers not only BNI's standard policies and procedures but also topics related to successful business marketing, generating and passing referrals, and getting the most out of BNI membership.



Since the decision 18 months ago to appoint education co-ordinators in every BNI chapter, the education slot has become one of the most eagerly awaited parts of the breakfast agenda. Thanks to the creative and frequently witty contributions of co-ordinators, the weekly three-to-five minute education session is now an important mechanism for imparting business tips and training techniques to members.

With so many valuable ideas for building better business now a routine part of every meeting, we felt it was time for the best of them to be shared with all BNI members. In this, the first of what we hope will be a regular column for sharing education-based issues, NIGEL VANDYK (past education co-ordinator of Barnet Chapter) suggests we should become a 'jack of all trades' to gain a better understanding of our colleagues' businesses.

Be a Jack of all Trades if you want to succeed

When I was first asked to fill my chapter's educational slot, I began to ask myself: "What is education, and is there a difference between education and training?"

According to comedian, author and modern-day philosopher Stephen Fry: "Training is what you do to a pear tree when you want it to grow against a wall. Education is what you give children to enable them to be free from the prejudices and moral bankruptcies of their elders."

In other words, education requires you to look at the world with new eyes, not those of your parents, relatives or peers, using your senses to make your own judgements.

At school, we are taught science, history and art, but how many of us become scientists, historians or artists? Very few.

So, are we taught these subjects just to keep us occupied, or is it perhaps that, by learning a little about these subjects we can learn to look at the world through different eyes?

Looking at a rural scene, for example, the scientist may examine the type of vegetation and be able to relate it to the rainfall in the area, the historian will consider what battles were fought on that ground, and what had been there previously, and the artist will look at it for its beauty and range of colours.

So how does this relate to BNI?



RELAX! James Cruickshank, Executive Director for East Anglia hasn't cloned himself. He is just making a point about the need to see new business opportunities through different eyes, rather than from one person's perspective.

Every week we have a chance to be educated by looking at the world through the eyes of 20, 30 or more colleagues, each of whom has a different perspective on a variety of everyday business, domestic or social issues.

Take the example of a newly-purchased house. The solicitor in your chapter will look at the conveyancing of the property, joint ownership, freehold or leasehold, asking if the occupants have made their wills?

Your domestic appliance retailer will look at how the house functions, and how he can help the occupants cook, wash their clothes and entertain themselves. Meanwhile, your group's carpenter will look to see the property's potential for fitted cupboards, wardrobes and doors.

Similarly, electricians, plumbers and carpet fitters will look at the same

thing through different eyes. And there lies a key to how we relate to each other. When we meet someone at their place of work or go to their house, we need to be all the people I have mentioned, rolled into one.

We do not need to be skilled in any of these trades or professions, but we need to see the person, and his or her friends, relations and property through the eyes of a solicitor, carpenter, financial adviser, decorator, surveyor and more.

Taking this broader view, we can also see that sometimes, one need masks another.

So, when asked "do you know a good decorator who can paper over this crack in the wall?", with your new 'education' you can reply: "Yes I do, but it might be a better idea to get a surveyor to look at the crack – and I know just the person."

By following the educated route, we do not have to be a trained decorator, electrician, surveyor or solicitor. We just need to think like one and be ready with our conversation starters to get people talking.

All of which suggests that the mark of an educated BNI member is to be educated in at least two dozen trades and professions, and wear as many different hats when you go to your chapter's breakfast each week.

• Nigel Vandyk runs Academy Training, a computer training and database consultancy in Finchley. He can be contacted on 020 8349 4705.



TELL WOULD-BE suppliers you'll see them at BNI, says Jeanette Howse (Abingdon Chapter)

As the immediate past Chapter Director of Abingdon, I think I found a novel way to bring guests along to meetings and keep things fresh.

We have had some successful visitors days and turned quite a few guests into members, but many of our core members have been in the chapter for two years now and have started to exhaust some of their business contacts, so I felt it was important to bring new faces on board.

I work at Didcot Railway Centre which is a busy tourist attraction with a small staff, and it is almost impossible for would-be suppliers and customers to get a meeting with me.

So instead of trying to squeeze them into my already overcrowded daily work schedule, I tell them that I go to breakfast early on a Wednesday morning and that if they would like to join me there, I would be happy to talk to them.

I also tell them that there may be others among my colleagues at the meeting who are interested in their services, and this has resulted in several people coming to meetings.

By encouraging all my BNI colleagues to do likewise with the numerous cold-callers, reps and suppliers who turn up at their offices without an appointment, I am hoping we will see more and more new faces turning up at our breakfast meetings in the months to come – and that can only mean more members."

• *Jeanette Howse is the Marketing Executive for Didcot Railway Centre, telephone 01235 817200.*

WISH, DREAM and expect more than others, says Paul Barton (Drake Chapter, Plymouth)

Asked to describe how sports champions reach their pinnacle, golfing supremo Jack Nicklaus said: 'Champions are made by wishing for

What makes YOUR group special

CONTINUING our new regular feature, this issue's column highlights the views of individual chapter directors on what makes their group 'special', and discovers some 'secrets' for boosting membership numbers. Although there is only one optimum way of running a chapter – and that is the BNI way – each of the 300-plus UK and Irish chapters has its own individual character, based not least on the way in which chapter directors and their members inject their personality into the weekly agendas. Here, directors offer their ideas on best practice and their solutions to the occasional problems that can arise.



• *Paul Barton*

more than others think is safe to wish, dreaming for more than others think is practical, and expecting more than others think is possible.'

In many ways that sums up my own personal philosophy and, in practical terms, BNI has been born in Plymouth out of the wishes, dreams and aspirations of a core group of like minded business people.

While BNI's leaders have created the optimum framework in which members can do good business, and devised effective strategies and procedures to achieve the best results, it is down to individual members of any group to want to succeed by going that extra mile.

The same individual commitment, effort and determination that brought you into BNI, needs to be increased and maintained as each of us works for our chapter colleagues, wishing, dreaming and expecting to do better business than anyone else.

So, while our adherence to 'working the BNI system' is clearly the most important rule, we should all continue to wish, dream and expect the best. Since we launched Drake Chapter less than three months ago, membership and referrals have grown steadily, and I believe a key factor has been our collective desire to achieve what others think may not be possible."

• *Paul Barton is a consultant for Telos UK and can be contacted on Tel/Fax: 07092 181372 or by e-mail at: paul.barton@bni-devonandcornwall.com*

PROVIDING A stable, welcoming environment is the aim, says Peter Hutchison (West Hampstead Chapter)

There's a hidden challenge in being director of a BNI chapter. How do you follow the fixed BNI meeting agenda, providing members with the structure that is so important to success, and at the same time bring your own style and approach to the role?

At the end of each six month term the Chapter is usually ready for someone different in the 'lead chair'.

A new director rejuvenates the group, injecting freshness into the approach. However, any group also needs stability and uniformity, particularly where trust and relationship-building are all important.

I am just coming out of two successive terms as Director of West Hampstead Chapter. Two terms, you ask?

When the leadership team changeover came up in March this year, our chapter had just gone through a great deal of change; there had been a few resignations and a few new members had just joined.

Most of the longer-established members had already served on the leadership team, so BNI's regional director agreed that, to provide stability to the group, the present team should continue to lead the chapter.

It was an important step for our group. The ongoing team meant continuity, which created a more settled feeling at meetings.

This stable and welcoming feeling for visitors and guests directly led to our good success in building the group's membership and, from this crop of new members we now have a fresh incoming leadership team who are committed and keen.

However, I believe the ultimate aim of every BNI group should be to provide a stable and consistent environment for members, so that business relationships can be nurtured and grow."

Peter Hutchison runs Inspire Creative at 194-196 Finchley Rd, London NW3 6BX. Telephone 020 7794 2444; Fax 020 7435 3382



FIELD TRIP: Newbury Chapter met at the local agricultural show.

Meeting in a muddy field

Members of Newbury Chapter in Berkshire say they've achieved a 'first' – holding a breakfast meeting in the middle of a muddy field!

While there may not have been unanimous enthusiasm when colleague Lynn Malcher first suggested treating members to a breath of fresh air for her ten-minute presentation, everyone agreed afterwards it had been good fun.

Lynn, boss of Creative Bathrooms, was already planning her stand at Newbury Agricultural Show when she realised it would make a perfect – and highly unusual – venue for her scheduled BNI presentation, since all her equipment would be there on display for her colleagues.

Which is how, at 6.30 one morning last month, members and guests could be seen traipsing across a muddy paddock to enjoy croissants and Bucks Fizz in the middle of a field, much to the bemusement of fellow exhibitors.

No silver cutlery on this occasion, just paper plates and plastic cutlery to save washing up!

Executive Director Gavin Bain was so impressed with Lynn's initiative that he braved the elements to attend, and awarded her a Notable Networker badge.

Lynn finds BNI is perfect for her family business. "I seem to get a referral nearly every week," she said. "BNI is infectious, and once you've got the bug it spreads like wildfire!"

• Lynn can be contacted on 01635 200044.

Boosting performance

THANKS to Barclays Bank, BNI members from several London chapters have received a low-cost introduction to the latest techniques in personal development training.

The one-day 'Peak Performance' workshops were organised for Barclay's customers by Dawn Thurston, team leader of the bank's Small Business & Start-up Knightsbridge Group.

However, her branch colleague John Gates, Business Manager of the bank's Mid Corporate Team, decided that members of BNI's Knightsbridge Chapter (of which he is Director) and other London chapters would benefit from the subsidised workshops.

Using recently developed techniques known as neuro-linguistic programming, Steve Lawlor, one of the UK's leading performance coaches helped members understand the attributes and techniques that make top business performers.

"The workshops were brilliant," said Melanie Curle, BNI Assistant Director for London North Central, "Around 30 BNI members attended and found them very rewarding.

For further information contact Melanie on 020 8279 2525.

BREAKFAST

Or wherever it

In the wonderful world of BNI there's plenty of room for personality and individual character to shine through – nowhere more so than in the choice of venues used by chapters.

SuccessNet thought it was time to take a look at some of the more unusual homes that members have found for what is their most important meal of the week and, from a 'Tigers' Den' to a war museum, a film studio to a church crypt, we weren't disappointed...

The first year has been a roaring success for the **Leicester Tigers Chapter** who meet in the Captain's Bar at the Leicester Tigers stadium.

To celebrate their first anniversary, which coincided with the end of the rugby season – and the Tigers winning hat trick of the Tetley Bitter Cup, the Zurich European Cup and the Championship Trophy – BNI members had their photo taken with the team trophies.

The local press published the picture and as a result the chapter attracted three new members.

Mixing with stars of a different kind are the nomads of the **Cheltenham Chapter**.

Having sampled a selection of

breakfast tables for months, they have automatic location – O dios.

"Our members idly," said Member Lindsay Mason, "come many new o

"We currently 1 soon to be 36. An the right location can really go forv

Meanwhile, BN sion in Leeds will fighting over spac Royal Armouries already plays hos a week.

Between them, Tuesday, Wednes day Chapters boar bership of around say that being sur war memorabilia mood to do good

Started by Hen Armouries collec expanded over th Family and is now collection in the v of the newest and museums in Euro

"In addition to ters' breakfast me holds training ses



SCALING NEW HEIGHTS: Birmingham's Victoria Chapter Face climbing and abseiling centre.

EAST AT TIFFANY'S

is you eat yours

for the past four
e finally hit on a dra-
Cheltenham Film Stu-

hip is growing rap-
ership Co-ordinator,
and with that have
challenges.

ave 32 members,
and now we've found
for our chapter, we
ward."

IT's continued expan-
l soon have members
ce at the city's historic
Museum – which
t to BNI on four days

Leeds Armouries
day, Thursday and Fri-
st a combined mem-
d 140, and members
rounded by ancient
puts them in fighting
business.

ry VIII, the
tion has been
e years by the Royal
v the oldest museum
world, located in one
d most attractive
ope.

hosting four chap-
eetings, BNI also
sions and social



Chapter meets at the Rock

events in the galleries, so it is obvi-
ously one of our more important cus-
tomers," said Jim Vincent, Royal
Armouries' Managing Director.

"My only concern is where we're
going to accommodate further chap-
ters once BNI has opened a fifth
Armouries Chapter.

"Happily, the relationship with BNI
is a two-way thing because the
Armouries is bringing a lot of business
to members.

"I just wish BNI had been around
years ago, because it has completely
changed my approach to the business
world," Jim added.

While Leeds members keep their
feet on the ground for breakfast, those
in Birmingham's **Victoria Chapter**
are scaling new heights – quite literally.

The chapter meets at one of the
city's more unusual venues, The Rock
Face climbing and abseiling centre
where, if members fancy working off a
few calories after breakfast, they can
receive expert tuition and practical
experience traversing the centre's
man-made cliffs and crevices, or learn
the basics of caving and pot-holing.

The leadership team aims to have 30
members by the end of the year and,
said Secretary Sue Byrne of BDO Stoy
Hayward, "let's face it, we've got the
perfect setting in which to reach new
heights. It must be one of the most
unlikely BNI venues in the country."

So, if you want to do a spot of busi-
ness climbing call Sue on 0121 644
3818, or e-mail her at:
sue.byrne@bdo.co.uk

Other unusual venues to come to
SuccessNet's attention include the
Royal Torbay Yacht Club (**Torquay
Chapter**) and St James's Church crypt
(**Clerkenwell Chapter**, London).

If you don't meet in a hotel or
restaurant, a golf or cricket club –
sorry, all are common venues – then
we'd like to hear where you eat your
BNI breakfast.

If it's somewhere offbeat, we'll be
happy to feature it in future issues of
SuccessNet, so let's see if we can find
BNI's MOST unlikely UK or Irish
venue.

If you think your chapter might
qualify, call us on 0208 541 0600, or e-
mail successnet@write-angle.co.uk



• The delightful breakfast setting provided by Phoenix Catering.

Robert's five-star treat

WHEN it came to his turn for a
ten-minute presentation to col-
leagues in Collingtree
(Northants) Chapter, caterer
Robert Alvarez was deter-
mined to make the most of the
promotional opportunity.

So, rather than try to explain
the workings of his business
during a normal breakfast
meeting in the Chapter's usual
venue – Collingtree Park Golf
Club Hotel – Robert decided to
invite all 28 members and 11
guests around to his Towces-
ter-based Phoenix Catering
company, so they could get a
taste for the real thing!

"Since members only get the
chance to give a detailed pres-
entation to their colleagues
two or three times a year, I
wanted to make sure that
mine would be both memo-
rable and interesting enough

to inspire my fellow chapter
members to go out and get me
lots of referrals," he said.

"I wasn't sure if everyone
would make the longer jour-
ney to Towcester, but in the
event it was a great success.

"I think everyone enjoyed
the change of scenery for a
chapter meeting, and hope-
fully they found my breakfast
at least as appetising as the
one at our usual venue. I did-
n't get any complaints!"

New Chapter Director Colin
Brett said: "I don't know if it
was because Robert is a
caterer, but no-one wanted to
miss this event. He laid on a
terrific spread, did a great
presentation and left everyone
feeling very positive about his
business."

• Robert Alvarez can be con-
tacted on 01327 860860.



WINNERS: Leicester Tigers Chapter meets in the stadium of the all-conquering Leicester Tigers rugby club.



Treble tops for MK ladies

Having one Business-woman of the Year in your chapter is quite an achievement, but members at Milton Keynes really have something to shout about – because they've got three!

Lisa Adamson, General Manager of Gemini Agency, won a 'larger business' award and Chapter Director Angela Rhodes, Head of Crispin Rhodes Human Resources Consultancy, won the 'newcomer' award.

Meanwhile, Chris McDonnell, who owns The Flower Shop at Woburn, was earlier awarded the prize for the 'small business' category.

Each year the Women In Enterprise organisation makes 12 awards to high achieving businesswomen in the North Bucks and Milton Keynes area, with local companies sponsoring the prizes. Angela, for example, was awarded £1,000 of free radio advertising for her company with FM 103 Horizon.

"We were all quite surprised to have won the awards," said Angela.

"We're great friends and I handle the recruitment for both Lisa and Chris, but it was pure coincidence that we all won prizes in the same award scheme."



TRIPLE SUCCESS: From left, Lisa Adamson, Chris McDonnell and Angela Rhodes.

Kilted in Canada

WHEN SCOTSMAN Steve McFadyen, new Chapter Director of Glasgow **Uddingston**, paid a visit to Quebec's West One Chapter – 3,000 miles from home – the last thing he expected to see was someone wearing a kilt!

In fact, the attire was simply a thoughtful welcome gesture by West One member, photographer Dave Ingles, whose Scottish origins had been awakened by word of Steve's visit.

"The kilt only comes out on very rare and special occasions," said Dave, "but I thought it would make Steve feel right at home."

It wasn't the only kind gesture for painter and decorator Steve who, on returning to his hotel after the meeting, found a gift basket from his Canadian chapter colleagues awaiting him.

"I was really touched," he said. "I'd made the trip to see the Canadian Grand Prix but decided I really should visit one of BNI's chapters to see how they operate and compare the differences. "As it turned out, I learned quite a lot from them."

Five-star night

As *SuccessNet* went to press, Scottish members were looking forward to their first national dinner and awards ceremony in Glasgow, at the Hilton's prestigious five-star banqueting venue.

Devised by Glasgow's **Victoria Chapter** member, Don Spence, of Spence Allan Associates, the aim of the event is to reward members who have made the greatest overall contribution to their chapter.

• **For more information (and tickets) contact Don Spence on 0141 332 4445.**

Walking through fire

AS EVERY BNI member knows, self-belief is a key ingredient to business success, but for members of Chester Chapter the virtue takes on extra importance next month when they walk through fire at the request of Chapter Director Kathy Fellows.

Six brave members of the 33-strong Chester group are among a dozen local business people who have already signed up for the sponsored walk with a difference – across burning coals – to raise money for the cancer charity, Tenovus.

Kathy hopes to have at least 50 volunteers by the time the event takes place, on Friday, 2nd November.

Kathy, the charity's north-west regional organiser, said: "I've told them they won't get burnt as long as they have an absolute belief in their ability to walk on fire.

"Problems only arise if people have doubts when they're half way across, but I'm sure BNI members are far too sensible to have such misgivings!"

Anyone in the vicinity of ASDA's car park at Queensferry can watch Kathy's victims put through their paces from 6pm onwards, after receiving 'appropriate training' during the afternoon.

"Everyone who makes it to the other side will receive a certificate commemorating their achievement," she added.

Kathy is still looking for modest sponsorship and would like to hear from any businesses interested in supporting this fundraising effort – the latest in a long line of daring initiatives that have included sponsored parachute and bungee jumping, abseiling, head shaving and male striptease.

• You can contact Kathy Fellows on 01244.541869 or e-mail her at kftenovus@aol.com



It's a shocking business

Electrician Paul House was in for quite a shock after posting a promotional leaflet for his fledgling business through the door of Cheltenham Chapter member, Jason Jackson.

Having been sponsored by The Prince's Trust to set up his own business earlier this year, Paul would have been happy just to get a simple job from Jason, but what he actually got was an introduction to BNI and a consequent trebling of his workload in just three months!

Jason, a partner in the architects practice Jackson Associates, responded to Paul's speculative mailshot by inviting him to attend a chapter meeting.

To be or not to B(NI)

BNI workshops for Midlands members have had a distinctly Shakespearean flavour in recent weeks thanks to the inspirational setting of the Royal Shakespeare Company's Summer House in Stratford-on-Avon.

Eight workshops, open to BNI members, friends and the public, featured a range of business topics from public speaking to selling and communications skills and, as well as offering a wealth of valuable practical advice, the events also provided an ideal setting for networking opportunities between members.

Organiser David Bullock, Executive Director for South West Midlands, said they had been well supported by members from a number of chapters across the region.

"Everyone learnt something from the workshops, and I know a lot of business was conducted before and after each session, especially at our BNI regional seminar which closed the workshop series earlier this month," he added.

So popular was the RSC's Summer House venue among members that David is already making plans to run further workshops at the same location next year.

Paul immediately saw the potential benefits and signed up in June, since when he's not looked back.

"Even with the help of The Trust, it was very hard when I started trading," said Paul.

"At the time I was introduced to BNI through Jason, I desperately needed a lot more work. I had about three small jobs a week, and was finding it very difficult to make contacts. BNI was the ideal answer."

Paul's instant business success through BNI membership has now set the scene for more permanent and wider-ranging links between BNI and The Prince's Trust.

He explained: "My business mentor from the Trust is so impressed with

what BNI has done for me that he is recommending formal links are established between BNI and The Trust, so that other people like me can be put in touch with BNI when they start out in business."

Paul is so pleased with BNI that he personally wrote to The Trust's Founder and Patron, Prince Charles, inviting him to a recent Visitors' Day.

"Unfortunately he was unable to attend, but he did send a letter of apology, offering his best wishes to BNI. I hope one day he will be able to visit our chapter."

• If you'd like to know more about Paul's electrical services, or his sponsorship by The Prince's Trust, contact him on 07799 545494.

A year and £100,000 on



WHEN you've just generated a healthy £100,000 worth of additional business for each other, you're entitled to feel pleased – which is why members of Wilmslow Chapter took time out to mark their first year, with a celebration at the Festival Hall in Alderley Edge, Cheshire.

More than 100 people – members and guests – were entertained by local radio personalities Andy Clewes and Terry Nash (from Silk FM), and the event proved the ideal opportunity for chapter member John Airey to demonstrate the quality of his new AB Katering Company, which provided a splendid buffet.

John said: "Within two months of our launching the business, we'd received referrals from chapter colleagues worth more than £5,000 and, with so much new

business passed across the table in the first 12 months, most of my BNI colleagues will have felt similar benefits."

John is pictured (far left) at his chapter's first anniversary party, with (from left to right), Nick Kerney, 'Meatloaf' (radio personality Terry Nash), Chapter Director Annabel Sutton, Ian Edward-Day and regional executive director Tony Coxhill. And the motor bike?

"That's to show how far we've come in a year – and how fast we intend to progress over the next 12 months," said Annabel.

The Chapter meets at the Belfry Hotel on Tuesday mornings.

• Anyone interested in joining should contact Kevin Betts on 0161 904 7910 or Julie Price on 0161 482 8004.



Love conquers all in BNI

Everyone knows that BNI is good for your business, but did you know it can also touch the most unlikely parts of your life – like finding you a marriage partner!

SuccessNet is delighted to announce another love-match forged over the BNI breakfast table, with the engagement of Sandra Kanser (**Cheltenham Chapter**) to Mike Clarke, a member of neighbouring **Cheltenham Two**. The couple are pictured above right.

It all began when Sandra arrived from Australia two years ago, never having heard of BNI, let alone knowing it was to change her life and find her a husband.

Sandra set up her own marketing company and was introduced to BNI by Diana Beaver, a neuro-linguistic programmer and member of the Cheltenham Chapter.



“I was really impressed with the professionalism and focus of BNI. At first I was worried that it might turn out to be just a social gathering, but the commitment to the referral system was wonderful,” said Sandra.

“That is what persuaded me to join. I found BNI particularly helpful for women on their own because it’s easy to be taken advantage of in the business world.

“But with BNI, I knew that whatever services I needed, the job would be professional

and cost effective.” Meanwhile, her future husband Mike was living in Yorkshire and suffering the worries of a declining business, when he received a call from an old friend, John Lyth – also a member of Cheltenham Chapter – who invited Mike to help him develop his plumbing business, which was in overload thanks to BNI referrals.

Mike decided the future looked brighter in Cheltenham so he moved south, joining forces with John to set up H2O (Heating to Order), specialising in bathroom installations.

At the same time John introduced Mike to BNI, taking him to chapter meetings where he met Sandra.

Because John had already taken the plumber’s chair, Mike joined neighbouring Cheltenham Two Chapter but met up with Sandra through joint chapter events.

It wasn’t long before love

blossomed and the couple set up home together.

“We are both amazed at how much BNI has changed our lives,” said Sandra.

“It has given us an excellent social life, both our businesses are now highly successful – about 80 per cent of my customers and about 70 per cent of Mike’s clients come from BNI referrals – and of course, it has brought us together. Mike proposed a few weeks ago and he could not wait to announce our engagement at the next chapter meeting.

“Everything we have, we owe to BNI, and we are so grateful for what it has given us – a love life, a social life and a great business life.

“But I have to admit that, while I had great faith in BNI’s ability to help my business, I never thought the organisation would find me a husband!”

• **Sandra can be contacted on 01242 620403.**

Revving it up at Knockhill

WHEN you choose a top motor racing circuit as the venue for your business conference, the results are obviously going to be high octane – especially if you throw in some top quality racing for your delegates!

And that’s how it was when BNI members from north and south of the border lined up on the starting grid for a high-powered Scottish National Conference at Knockhill Circuit last month.

More than 120 members took part in the morning’s mini-conference – whose guest speakers included UK National Directors, Martin and Gillian Lawson.

After lunch, it was time for sport as delegates networked on and off the track, testing their skills on Knockhill’s racing and rally circuits before reaching the day’s highlight – the BNI/Royal Bank of Scotland Go-Kart Grand Prix – a two-hour endurance race involving members who had pre-qualified to represent their regions, based on their chapter performance during August.

Standing head and shoulders above their team-mates were six top pre-qualifiers – Graham Struthers (**Stirling**



Vic Biccocchi (second left) and Ron Hain at the Scottish conference, flanked by BNI National Directors Gillian and Martin Lawson.

Chapter), Mark Thirgood (**Edinburgh West**), Stephen MacFadyen (**Uddingston**), Stewart Webb (**Kirkcaldy**), Sharon Crombie (**Balgeddie**) and Peter Gilson (**Tayside**).

Ron Hain, BNI’s Scotland North Director said it was significant that ten senior area managers from the Royal Bank of Scotland’s business banking

division chose to attend the conference.

“The Bank has shown an increasing interest in BNI over the past year or so, and we were delighted that Vic Biccocchi, Regional Business Banking Manager, brought along his top team,” he said.

• **For information about BNI’s growth in the Scotland North region, contact Ron Hain on 01577 861415.**



No kidding! This is a BNI meeting



If you'd been present at a certain chapter meeting in Liverpool recently, you might have thought BNI had taken to providing creche facilities as more than a dozen children aged between seven and 15 sat around the breakfast table.

In fact, the next generation of the city's **Indigo Chapter** were in attendance to prove they could do just as well in business as mum and dad, by taking over the meeting and presenting the 60-second infomercials on behalf of their parents!

Practising their entry into the adult business world, a pint-sized banker, jeweller, courier, locksmith, gardener,

second-hand computer dealer and other assorted traders took the stage for what proved to be an entertaining and memorable session.

A few of the youngsters were so enjoying the occasion that they agreed to act as substitutes, making two and even three separate presentations for missing members.

Inevitably, humour was high on the agenda, typified by seven-year-old Abigail Milner who introduced her father's company, 'Waste' (Management), by claiming her dad was rubbish, "or at least, he talks a lot of rubbish, because that's what mum says!" she said.

"But, when he talks rubbish at work, it's different because it's his job, and the more rubbish he talks, maybe the

more pocket money I'll get."

Special certificates had been prepared for the children, who finally sat down to enjoy a champagne breakfast in honour of Paul Harrington's retirement as Chapter Director.

In the true spirit of the event, some chapter members arrived for breakfast sporting school uniforms and play-ground toys – and one of them, Dave Codling ('Dicky-bow Dave') from the neighbouring **Beta Chapter** used a water pistol as an effective means of calling time on members who strayed beyond their allocated 60 seconds.

Indigo Chapter's 'Child-fest' was the brainchild of Membership Co-ordinator Les Tarbuck who told *SuccessNet*: "Sitting listening to the 60 second infomercials week after week, I felt some of them were getting a little too technical and perhaps a bit tired as well. I thought that by bringing in the children, we'd get back to basics and cut out most of the jargon.

"Happily, it worked a treat. The kids kept the messages short, simple and in many cases highly amusing – which left us with a lasting impression of the businesses they were representing."

Executive Director Terry Hamill said: "We're an imaginative lot on Merseyside and like to do things differently if we can. This initiative proved so popular that a repeat performance is being considered."



•Hannah Atherton delivers the message, watched by her dad Peter.

The art of networking

FOUR members of the **Leeds Armouries (Friday) Chapter** have been involved in a major £1.6m arts centre project nominated for a prestigious national award.

The stunning designs that transformed Scunthorpe's 19th century St John's Church into a dramatic new art gallery were the work of Ian Tod, a partner in Leeds-based Allen Tod Architects, and his revitalised building now hosts national events.

Ian enlisted fellow members, Jayne Pickard, from Sign-A-Rama,

to create a stylish plaque, photographer Chris North to create a lasting pictorial record of the project and Sharon Cain at Quest PR to handle public relations for its official opening and public launch.

"It was a dynamic and successful partnership, and it highlights how well strategic alliances work in BNI," said Ian. "We all enjoyed working together, and the results have been very successful."

• Ian Tod can be contacted on 0113 244 9973.



•The Duchess of Gloucester at the opening of the new arts centre in Scunthorpe.

Personality types and BNI membership

by Pam Austin
and Andy Hoare
of Corby Chapter

According to national statistics, over 60 per cent of the population could be described as being predominantly easy-going, controlled, and undemonstrative.

However, in a small survey carried out among members of BNI's Corby, Wellingborough and Kettering chapters less than 20 per cent display these characteristics as the most dominant feature of their personality.

This raises some interesting implications for BNI leadership teams.

Today's system of personality profiling is based on four main characteristics (called identifiers), which, at their simplest level, are:

THE HIGH D personality – competitive, loves a challenge and likes to be in charge, but can be impatient.

THE HIGH I TYPE – outgoing, persuasive and principally interested in people, but can be shallow.

THE HIGH S PERSONALITY – amiable, easy going and relaxed. This type makes a good team worker, but can be possessive.

THE HIGH C TYPE – loyal, sensitive and analytical, preferring stability and order. Can be indecisive.

To see the effect of a combination, imagine a High D/Low C profile. He or she would be a highly ambitious individual, with a non-compliant attitude to keeping to the rules, indicating a real maverick personality!

Turning to the recent analysis we conducted among 44 BNI members in three chapters, it was fascinating to find that High I's predominated, accounting for 20 members. Next came High D personalities (14 indi-

WHILE BNI provides an excellent platform from which we can promote and expand our businesses, every new member quickly learns that the value of membership extends far beyond the weekly breakfast meetings. Nowhere is its influence more important than in the widespread training and educational facilities BNI offers all members – resources that are directly aimed at enhancing our business skills and knowledge.

To maximise the opportunities BNI provides, we first need to consider how our individual personalities influence business success, recognise (and manage) our respective strengths and weaknesses, and understand how to relate to – and interact with – clients and colleagues whose personalities are different to ours.

Here, BNI members with expertise in these areas, show how we all fit one of four distinct personality profiles, and examine the significance of different personalities in the context of BNI membership and business.

viduals), with six High Ss, followed closely by five High Cs.

This is a very different mix to that found among the UK national population as a whole, as we can see from the table at the foot of this page.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, our survey revealed many more Drivers, Influencers and Compliant among BNI members than exist in the UK population, but nowhere near as many Steadys as one might have expected.

So what are the implications of these findings for BNI chapters?

Firstly, it would seem sensible to consider the mix of personalities when it comes to selecting a leadership team. A team will be more effective if it includes a broad range of the strengths, and 'cover' for the weaknesses, of the personalities involved.

So, a team made up entirely of High Ds and Is might be fun, dynamic, and sociable but, on the other hand, the agenda could soon fall by the wayside as members got carried off on a tide of enthusiasm.

Administration can be tedious to High Ds or Is, so recruiting a High S

or a High C member to join a predominantly DI leadership team would back up their drive with attention to detail and essential listening skills.

But, given that High S or C types are less likely to put themselves forward for leadership (and that there may be far fewer S and C types available, if our sample survey is typical of BNI membership) perhaps the answer is to get one of the High Is to encourage S or C-type volunteers, before the next High D takes up the challenge!

In the end it is a question of balance. A leadership team needs all types to function well. Their ability to inspire others makes D/Is ideal directors, while the secretary's job demands attention to detail – qualities frequently found in the S or C profile.

Meanwhile, Is or Ss make good membership co-ordinators and visitor hosts, with their people skills and social acumen.

This means that to achieve optimum performance, a chapter needs to avoid leadership teams made up entirely of one personality type. Instead, each BNI group should ideally reflect the full 'DISC' spectrum of personalities to be best placed for success.

Pam Austin (High DS) manages press campaigns. She is currently Visitor Host at Corby Chapter and can be contacted on 01858 535466.

Andy Hoare (High ID) is a behavioural specialist. He became Chapter Director at Corby this month.

Type	In BNI sample group	Among UK population
Drivers	32%	15%
Influencers	44%	20%
Steadys	13%	60%
Compliant	11%	5%

By **Mort Murphy**
Executive Director,
Ireland (South and West)

Each person is unique. Each has differences in style, need and expectation. In these differences lies great strength. Understand them, and you will have greater insight into human communication. Fail to understand them, and often the result is conflict.

Insight into communications helps us to understand our own personality, others' personalities and importantly how we can best communicate with others using that understanding.

BNI's Irish members who attended the recent national conference at Galway, and members from the Cork area, benefited from two excellent 'Insights into Communications' presentations given by Johnny Miller and Margaret Hartigan of the Prosper Group. They showed how to understand different types of personality, how each 'type' receives communications from the others and how our own perceptions 'colour' the message.

While we are all individuals, nearly everyone falls into one of just four 'personality energy' categories – denoted by colours to which is added a specific adjective, giving us:

FIERY RED

SUNSHINE YELLOW

EARTH GREEN

COOL BLUE

At both presentations, members were asked to self-select their own personality type, based on their answers to a series of psychological profiling questions.

Then, a large bag of baseball caps was produced with everyone invited to select a red, yellow, green or blue cap according to their personality type.

With the audience split into four groups of same-colour hats, we all started correlating hat colour to the wearers, and people's traits were beginning to add up.

The descriptions indicated by the different colour groups seemed to fit our existing views of each person and things began to make more sense as we started to appreciate how each personality type fitted the individual.

Each group was then given the same problem to tackle, and asked to develop a plan for solving it. Now here is the really uncanny thing. Although a few of us had attended both presentations, the participants – 45 at each event – were all different and yet the

WHAT YOUR COLOUR SAYS ABOUT YOU



• **Mort Murphy**

results were exactly the same. Two different audiences carrying out the same task but in both cases the groups kept to their 'colour' energy and personality type.

THE REDS felt it was their job to be in charge, leaving everyone else to do the work.

THE YELLOWS made sure the project had lots of fun and enjoyment.

THE GREENS wanted to ensure everyone was looked after and that no one was left out.

THE BLUES drew up a well-thought plan, focusing on structure.

On its own, each group believed it had the right approach, but looking at the others it soon became obvious that different mindsets had a lot to offer.

It was here that our presenters asked us to take on board those personality differences and use the strengths of each to create team work, rather than letting conflict and frustration get in the way.

For everyone present, the sessions were a real eye-opener. Where before we saw hassle and conflict in dealing with certain people with different personality traits, we now saw opportunity.

Finally, when asked how they would want people to communicate to them, with regard to their personality, the answers from each group confirmed

what we'd learnt about each other.

THE FIERY REDS declared: "Move straight to what you want, and don't spend all day getting to the point. Give us things to do now."

THE SUNSHINE YELLOWS said: "Accept our help, but don't bore us with tedious detail. Build variation and energy into your approach."

THE EARTH GREENS wanted collaboration: "Ask us how we would feel about the matter. Don't seek our opinion, then ignore it. Give us time to consider the effects of any actions."

THE COOL BLUES wanted an analytical approach: "Ask what we think, but don't rush us for an answer. Present clear data to support your points. Encourage us to use structure and a time frame."

So what conclusions can we draw? We all depend on getting along with each other to achieve our aims in life, nowhere more so than in business where we need good relationships with clients, suppliers and colleagues, including of course, other members of our chapter whose understanding of us is so important.

Understanding our own personality type and our approach to communicating with others with different personality types, means we can adapt our style and presentation to fit theirs – leading to more effective communications and a happier business life for us all.

• **Mort Murphy can be contacted on (00) 353 21 466 7878. Margaret Hartigan (a member of Cork Central Chapter) can be reached on (00) 353 87 226 4444.**



SUCCESS TO A TEE!

FROM PAGE 1

Several months went by and Mark dismissed the late-night chat. But then, this summer, he received a call – from the ‘someone’ who was very interested, and who wanted to meet immediately.

“Two months ago, we did the deal,” he told *SuccessNet*, “and my feet haven’t touched the ground since. In eight weeks we’ve doubled the size of the company, established a new head office and sales centre in Bedford, and intend to open at least 15 new branches around the country within five years.

“We’re expanding so quickly that if I could find ten electronics engineers tomorrow, I’d employ them all. If any-



Mark and his family.

one had told me this was going to happen just four months ago, I wouldn’t have believed them. Then, my wife Julie and I were struggling to keep the business moving forward while coping with a young family. It’s fair to say life was quite hard. We hadn’t even managed a holiday since 1995,” said Mark.

But today things are very different. “Accepting the invitation to that golf tournament changed my life. After more than ten difficult years, we have a bright, exciting future, and it’s all thanks to BNI for giving me the best game of golf I never played.”

Not surprisingly, Mark has now taken up golf in a big way and moved into a dream home backing onto his new club.

“I can walk down the garden to the clubhouse but I might be better spending time on the fairways. Who knows what new business I might pick up?”

• You can contact Mark on 07831 209392.



Charlie's Angels!

MEET BNI’s equivalent of Charlie’s Angels – the dynamic all-female new leadership team in Daven-try Chapter.

With a reputation for being heavily male-orientated, members were delighted to support an all-female top table for only the second time in the UK/Ireland.

Photographer Dawn Brannigan (above centre) was elected Chapter Director, with Sam Clarke of Total Event Solutions (left), as Membership Co-ordinator, and Lucy Powell (right), an account executive with insurance brokers F G Watts & Partners, Secretary/Treasurer.

“We’re hoping to be just as dynamic as Charlie’s Angels and make a big impact!” Dawn added.

Rescuing rare breeds centre

MEMBERS of Tenterden Chapter, Kent have stepped in to try and save a local ‘rare breeds’ animal centre that has been forced to close as a result of the foot and mouth outbreak.

Earlier this month members held a dinner-dance to raise funds for the farm, which is run by disabled people.

Oliver Johnston, a chapter member and owner of the Little Silver Country Hotel, said: “When we heard it had been closed, we felt very upset because we know how much it means to those involved.”

• To make a donation, contact Oliver on 01233 850321.

Early birdies

More than 60 members, and as many friends and business associates from north of the border, enjoyed an idyllic day of golf and networking on St Andrews famous Dukes Course earlier this month at BNI’s Scottish National Golf Tournament.

Some 30 teams of four took part in the event, which was followed by a dinner and prize-giving, sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland. BNI’s Scotland North Regional Director Ron Hain (pictured below right with Royal Bank Area Manager Philip Bolland) said: “It was a great day both for playing golf and doing business.”



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

EXECUTIVE EDITOR:
Gillian Lawson, BNI National Director

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

DESIGN & LAYOUT: Ken Sheldon, The Media Team. Tel: 01579-350 579

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