

# Membership goes into overdrive!

**B**NI's first ever UK and Irish membership drive has been an overwhelming success, with some chapters increasing their membership numbers by 25 per cent or more in just two months!

Around 30 chapters fulfilled the minimum qualification requirement of bringing six new members into their groups, with the result that eight lucky BNI members and their partners had an extra special reason to celebrate over Christmas

– the news that their recruitment efforts had won them a four-day action packed trip to San Francisco this spring.

They were the winners of the membership prize draw which took place in different parts of the UK and Ireland just before Christmas – with one successful participant per four qualifying chapters.

Among those heading for California and the Golden Gate this April will be Nigel Dixon, an estate agent from the **Witney** Chapter, who was drawn out of the hat in the draw among qualifying chapters in the Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Central London regions.

Executive Director Laura Hurren, who co-ordinated the local draw, said the response from chapters had far exceeded expectations.

“Of course we're pleased with the results, but the real winners here are the chapters who took part so enthusiastically, because by adding to the size of their groups they have ensured that more referrals and more business will pass between members at future meetings.

“BNI research over many years proves that the level of business conducted through a chapter increases at a disproportionately faster rate as the group's membership grows,” she said.

National Director Gillian Lawson said the membership drive had transformed some chapters, adding: “All the reports back from chapters confirm it's been a huge success, not only in attracting more members, but in focusing everyone's minds on why we meet every week – to exchange new business opportunities and help each other's businesses to grow.”

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## Amber gives Cliff the green light!

In an organisation famous for its introductions, Rochester Chapter has come up with one that will take some beating – the engagement of members Amber Richardson and Cliff Oulds.

Amber, who works for System Technology, Medway, and Cliff – a signwriter with Avenue Signs in nearby Walderslade, joined BNI at the same time but were introduced by different colleagues and had not met before.

“We got to know each other through our respective roles within our group,” said Amber. “I was administration co-ordinator and Cliff was one of the visitor hosts, so I suppose we had more reasons than most to chat to each other. Our friendship grew and I think we both knew it was going to become something special.”

Cliff said: “BNI had already helped our respective companies generate around £70,000 worth of new business, which far exceeds our expectations, but neither of us ever thought the organisation would be responsible for changing our lives dramatically.”



Meanwhile, Amber's memory hook, ‘Canon can, Amber can – you and Amber can’, has taken on a whole new meaning in the Chapter since the couple announced their engagement.

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# Help is close at hand for Educational Co-ordinators

Last autumn's introduction of a permanent learning slot in the weekly chapter agenda – while deemed a considerable success – has resulted in the first 'wave' of educational co-ordinators having to tread unfamiliar

ground, with a number of them requesting guidance on appropriate topics and reference sources.

SuccessNet is therefore delighted to announce that, with immediate effect, our educational co-ordinators have access to a valuable 'topics library' with all of the necessary reference sources

having been carefully researched and catalogued by Ray Finn, an Assistant Director for Kent.

Ray took up the considerable challenge of sifting through a vast range of reference books, manuals, teaching videos and audio tapes, in order to produce a very useful schedule of suitable topics for the co-ordinators who manage the weekly training item. Because we feel Ray's 'menu' of sample presentation topics is so important to boosting the business marketing skills of members, we have reproduced his first schedule in full – and commend it to every educational co-ordinator.

"Naturally, most of the background data has come from various BNI publications and other information sources, but Ray's efforts will save co-ordinators many, many hours of work in researching different aspects of referral marketing, by highlighting at a glance the most important aspects," said national director Martin Lawson.

The source material (books, tapes and literature) should be readily available to each chapter's educational co-ordinator but, if anyone is missing key reference material, he or she should contact their local BNI director and the relevant items will be provided immediately.

Martin added: "The topics list is not intended to be definitive, but it certainly covers many of the basics and a lot more besides. BNI has always regarded education as a cornerstone of its business philosophy and I believe most members will gain considerably from these weekly learning sessions, which should be easier to plan and facilitate thanks to Ray's excellent work."

## SAMPLE PRESENTATION TOPICS for the EDUCATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

10 Min Presentation  
60 Sec Presentation  
Absence, Attendance, Timekeeping  
Agenda  
Attitude, Attitude, Attitude  
BNI Lapel Pin and Badge  
Card File  
Chapter Director  
Chapter Growth  
Communication Skills  
Contact Spheres \*p58  
Educational Co-ordinator  
Everyone's a Visitor Host  
Gatekeeper \*p177  
Hand-to-Hand WOMBAT \*p45  
Hand-to-Hand WOMBAT Plan \*p209  
History of BNI  
How to give "Good Referrals"  
Ivan R Misner PhD \*p16  
LCD \*p149  
Making Your Company a Hub Firm \*p63  
Marketing the Chapter

Mastering the Mixer \*p155  
Membership Committee  
Membership Coordinator  
Memory Hooks \*p146, #, +  
Need a Plumber?  
Networking Aerobics \*p172  
Open Networking  
Referral Boomerang \*p177  
Referrals \*p187  
Six Kinds of Networks \*p69  
Spin-Off Referrals \*p115  
Substitution Programmes  
Testimonials \*p187  
Three Laws of Notable Networking \*p121  
Time = Money \*p114  
Treasurer  
Visitor Hosts  
Visitors  
W-O-M Factor \*p27  
W-O-M Grid \*p49  
Word-of-Mouth Paradigm \*p201  
Workshops & Seminars

## USEFUL REFERENCES

The World's Best Known Marketing Secret \*(2nd edition) )  
Business by Referral # ) by Ivan R Misner Ph.D.  
Seven Second Marketing + )  
Any publication on Communication Skills  
Any publication on Motivation  
Any publication on Personal Development  
BNI audio tapes - from BNI Director  
Orientation tape - in New Member Pack  
"BNI Boosters" (Audio & Video tapes) - available soon from Resource Centre on the BNI website which is found at www.bni-europe.com

Monthly on-line chats with BNI members and directors around the world: register with the BNI Yahoo Chat Room. Second Monday of every month 9.00 - 10.00 p.m. See bulletin boards (Yahoo Chat Room and Members Area on BNI website) for advance notice of Chat Room topics.

# Membership goes into overdrive

FROM PAGE 1

Other BNI members who are on the way to San Francisco are John Tomsett, a printer from the **Huntingdon** Chapter, Elizabeth Hodgson, an insurance broker (**Brighton**), Tony Stuart, a printer consumables supplier (**Royal Spa**, Leamington) and Mel Rosenthal, the dentist director of **Bolton** Chapter. They will be joined by two further winners from the Ireland West region whose names are being drawn during January.

There have been many special highlights of the campaign – too many to mention them all individually – but among the chapter success stories are:

• **UXBRIDGE:** where office supplies specialist Dominic Leese brought in five new members to his chapter, single-handedly, promptly earning himself membership of the gold badge club.

• **AN GALLIMH, COUNTY GALWAY:** where, barely six months after the Chapter's launch, its members attracted a very lucky 13 new recruits during the eight-week campaign (which Executive Director Mort Murphy believes is largely due to its female leadership, first under Therese Norton and currently, Aine Walshe).

• **HARROW:** where amongst the most successful recruiters was BNI's very first

member in the UK, Alan Solomons, who by happy coincidence won the North West London region prize.

Meanwhile, the lucky eight winners and partners depart for San Francisco on 6th April, where they will stay at the renowned Hyatt Hotel on Fisherman's Wharf and take a six hour luxury sight-seeing tour of the city, culminating in an hour-long helicopter trip over San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate!

To them, and to everyone else who took part in the drive, SuccessNet adds its own congratulations. Well done!

# Lawsons' Lore

BNI National Directors MARTIN & GILLIAN LAWSON write...

Most of us make resolutions at this time of year. A new year is a time for change, a time for reflection and of course, a time for renewal. And with the advent not just of another year but of a new millennium, it is likely that many people will be reviewing all aspects of their lives – personal, domestic and, of course, business.

Our millennium message can therefore be brief because we imagine most of you will have already considered what fresh ideas, new plans and greater commitment you will be applying to your own businesses in 2000, and to your chapter colleagues.

Whatever else you do, we hope you and your fellow members will lay plans – with attainable goals – for strengthening your chapter, thereby enhancing the business opportunities that will flow for everyone in the coming months.

There is absolutely no doubt that the larger your chapter, the more referrals will flow, and the more new business you and other members will gain. So, attracting more 'potential customers' to your chapter, should be paramount in your planning.

And yes, we prefer to regard the visitors that we bring along to breakfast, as potential customers – because, in truth, that is what they are.

When you are considering who might be suitable people to invite, ask yourself two questions: "Could they benefit from having more people looking for new business on their behalf?" And, "Could I and my BNI colleagues feel happy giving him or her our business referrals?"

It took two years to establish the first 80 chapters in the UK and Ireland. Last year we more than doubled this number and are well on the way to 200 chapters early in the year 2000. There is an obvious reason for this rapid expansion: BNI works for its members! But don't forget – you must also work for your BNI chapter, and your colleagues. Have a very good Millennium Year.

# Memory hooks with originality

**L**ove 'em or hate 'em, there's no point denying that BNI's 'Memory Hooks' work – when members make the effort to be original and creative.

Time and again, *SuccessNet* hears about significant referrals that have come about because a member recalled a colleague's memory hook – which is why we feel the time is right to announce a Millennium Memory Hook Contest – with the single best submission received each quarter during 2000, winning a bottle of champagne for its creator.

Gillian Lawson, National Director said: "Good memory hooks are a useful part of BNI's business approach.

"It is important to remind chapter colleagues about your products and services and this simple device – if used creatively – ensures people remember your business even when you are not there."

Meanwhile, working at improving your memory – as well as memorable hooks – will pay dividends in your business life, according to world memory champion Dominic O'Brien whose powers of recollection certainly ensured members of the new Solihull Chapter wouldn't forget him!

Dominic was invited along to the Chapter's pre-launch meeting a few

weeks ago by a long time friend, BNI regional director Ian Halsall, who thought it would be a good idea for members to understand the value of a good memory in business.

And he didn't disappoint – recalling the exact positions of a full deck of well-shuffled playing cards, and then memorising 60 numbers written at random in a grid format, before being blindfolded and reciting them in reverse order.

He's held his title for six years and now earned himself a place among the greats in the Millennium issue of the Guinness Book of Records.

Ian commented: "He shared some excellent hints and tips on how to use the memory more effectively for remembering basic business information like telephone numbers, dates, events and peoples names – skills that are valuable to BNI members."

But, back to that competition. We want to receive your 'hooks' now, so get thinking and start scribbling.

We'll announce the first winner in our next (spring) issue.

Just send your contribution(s) to Executive Editor Gillian Lawson at BNI's head office, Gate End, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 3QG, fax it to 01923 827813 or e-mail it to: [bninet@aol.com](mailto:bninet@aol.com). ■



PAYING DIVIDENDS: Dominic O'Brien demonstrates his memory skills to members of the Solihull Chapter.

# Eleven more go for gold

**Y**ou don't have to be a larger than life character to do well in BNI.

One of the organisation's best individual success stories in Ireland involves Limerick businessman Liam Garvey who, in the words of his local BNI director Eddie O'Shaughnessey "is one of our greatest unsung heroes."

Liam, a member of Limerick's **Treaty** Chapter, is known by his colleagues as a quiet, unassuming businessman who runs a confidential shredding service, but to his Chapter's leadership team he is indispensable, having been one of the most successful members in developing the chapter, passing referrals and sponsoring new recruits.

So it was fitting that Liam should be presented with his 'black badge' membership of the Gold Club by National Directors, Martin and Gillian Lawson during their recent visit to Ireland.

Black badges are only awarded to individuals who have attracted at least six new members and adopted BNI's core 'Giver's Gain' philosophy to grow and enhance their chapter's performance.

Other Irish members to received the coveted award in recent months are:

Jonathan Waterman, a printer from **Cork City** Chapter (who, at the tender age of 20 is believed to be the youngest BNI black badge holder in the UK and Ireland); Declan O'Neill, Financial Adviser, **West Cork**; John Maher



*IRISH GOLD: Martin Lawson, right, presents Liam Garvey with his award, with John Shaw and Eddie O'Shaughnessey looking on.*

Loughnan, Auctioneer, **Cork Central**; Michael Leyden, Mortgage Broker, **Abbey**; Ronan Rooney, Auctioneer, **Galway** and Mort Murphy, Executive Director, **East Cork**.

Back on the 'mainland', the UK's four latest Black Badge recipients are Nigel Loli (**Harrow**), Iain Fairweather (**Thame**), Verity Foote (**Witney**) and Dominic Leese (**Uxbridge**).

*SuccessNet* adds its congratulations to everyone who has struck gold. ■

## Livingston, we presume, leads the way

Linda Maclean, Scotland North Regional Director anticipates an upbeat start to the new millennium because, she says, the Scottish spirit is very receptive to the BNI ethic – manifested in the way that one successful chapter, Livingston, is doing business.

"While every new chapter tries hard to follow the principles of BNI by giving good referrals, subscribing to 'Givers Gain' and supporting our fellow members, Livingston reflects all that is good about the organisation," she said.

She puts this down to:

- the leadership of the chapter is enthusiastic, keen to learn and very 'teachable'
- members share this enthusiasm and are constantly looking to help each other
- everyone follows BNI's procedures to the letter – resulting in perfect networking.

Linda said: "The results speak for themselves. Since Livingston was launched barely two months ago, membership has more than doubled from 16 to 36, and the members pass good quality referrals to each other.

"By early in the new year I expect the group to be over-subscribed." ■

## Up with the lark at Hampstead

BNI members may be used to getting up early to get to breakfast meetings, but members of **Hampstead** Chapter are also having to get used to exercising their voices in the early morning too!

Marie Hayward (right), a communications specialist, put colleagues through their paces with a vocal and physical warm up during her recent ten-minute presentation and says fellow members should practise voice training as part of their early morning routine.

"Vocal work of this nature has long been a tradition in empowering Japanese business people first thing in the morning," says Marie, who has strong belief in the phrase 'You are your voice' and starts her day with physical and breathing exercises to promote confidence and well-being.

A former Norfolk county and junior Wimbledon tennis player, opera singer Marie reminds her BNI colleagues: "Your voice is your calling card, and the most important tool of your trade."

Marie has found BNI very helpful for her business and is more than happy to sing its praises! ■



# Promote your business on the Web – free!

**W**here have all our budding Internet performers gone? Back in October we offered you and your business a free month's exposure on the worldwide web – if yours was the best 60-second 'commercial' we received.

But, though it's hard to believe, only a handful of you responded – possibly we think, because we asked for submissions to be sent in on audio cassettes.

So this time we're going to make it even easier for you to promote your services to a global audience: if you don't have access to a tape recorder, you can

simply fax, post or e-mail your written one-minute presentation to us, and we'll do the rest!

"Around BNI breakfast tables every morning from Galway to Glasgow, we know that members are working hard to improve their 60-second commercials – in many cases earning quite a reputation for colourful performances," said National Director Gillian Lawson.

"Naturally, we'd like to find the very best presentations for BNI's website, which should encourage others to be more adventurous."

So, if you're proud of your new one-minute promotion, then send it (on either a standard audio cassette, or by

one of the methods described above) to reach BNI's national office at Gate End, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 3QG no later than the 25th of the month. Mark your entry: '60 second competition'.

A listening panel will select the most appealing and persuasive commercial received, prior to transferring it onto the BNI website, where it will stay until replaced by next month's winning entry.

Gillian added: "As we visit chapters all over the UK and Ireland, we hear many superb presentations and often wish they could have a wider audience.

"Now, the best ones can, giving their creators free Internet marketing for a whole month on a major website." ■

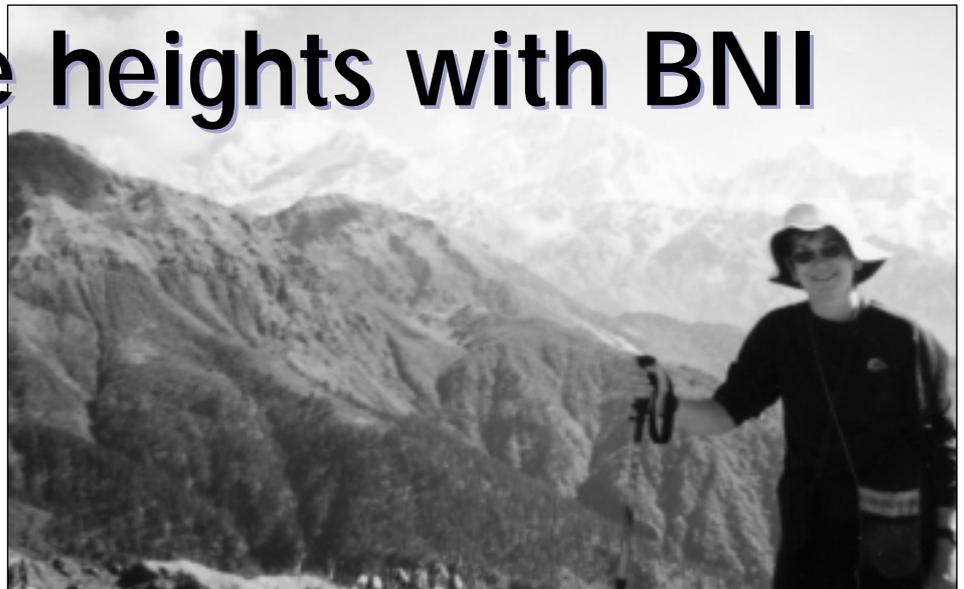
## Scaling the heights with BNI

**A**romatherapist Alison Wragg quite literally reached new heights with the help of her BNI colleagues – and the experience has prompted her to take an entirely new direction!

Last year she persuaded members in her Fleet Chapter to sponsor her on a seven day trek in the Himalayas to raise money for SENSE, the National Deaf, Blind and Rubella Association.

But, while Alison, pictured during her trek, certainly climbed high – raising £2,000 for the charity – the experience also had one unexpected effect: making her decide she wanted a further change of direction – this time in the business sense – as soon as she returned home to Hampshire. And, for the second time in six months, she has been able to achieve her new goal directly through BNI.

This month she is setting aside her therapy oils and starting work as



General Manager for the Regency Collection – a supplier of promotional merchandise – with Chapter colleague Viv Blumfield, a challenge she is really looking forward to.

Anna told *SuccessNet* about some enduring memories of her trek across the

Himalayas. "There were 16 of us, ranging in age from 25 to 55, from all backgrounds. We began in rain and low cloud, climbed up into brilliant sunshine and blue skies, and further up through jungle and rhododendron forests, high above the tree-line and into snow.

"My best memories include watching the sun gradually light up the huge peaks of Machupuchare and Annapurna above our camp at 5.30 in the morning; hysteria in 'leech city,' getting across a swinging rope bridge without crying, walking hand in hand with village children, and an early morning rickshaw race back from a bar to our hotel in Katmandu, just before our return home," she added.

In delivering her 'hugest thanks' to BNI colleagues who supported her trip, Anna also gave a word of warning: "I've got several other charity events planned this year, including the London Marathon and the 'Tough Guy' challenge at the end of January – a combination of gruelling assault courses and a wet and muddy cross country run of 12 miles. So, I'll be wanting your help again..." ■

## More chapters open up in more regions

Another 25 chapters have been opened around the UK and in Ireland during the past three months – bringing the total to over 170 since BNI was launched in the UK three years ago.

Many of the newest groups are located in parts of England where, until now, BNI has not been well represented, including the West, East and South-West Midlands, while other new UK territories for BNI – such as the Hereford and Worcestershire area – will also be getting their first chapters in the near future.

Joint National Director Gillian Lawson said: "It is especially pleasing to see BNI firmly establishing itself in more

of our major towns and cities – such as Edinburgh, Birmingham, Leicester, and Northampton – where it is clearly desirable to have a presence."

Chapters opened since 1st October:

**ENGLAND: Basildon, Birmingham Corporation Street, Buckingham, Bury St. Edmunds, Caterham, Croydon 2, Dorking, Farnham, Gloucester, Leicester, Northampton, North Oxford, Solihull Central, South Cheshire, Stafford, Stansted, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford.**

**IRELAND: Fitzwilliam 2, Killarney, Merrion Row and Sligo.**

**SCOTLAND: Edinburgh Central, Giffnock and Livingston.** ■

# Richard's referral is the perfect therapy!

**Y**ou wouldn't expect a website designer to need an emotional release therapy counsellor – but Internet specialist Richard Budd is glad he paid attention to therapist Annie Davies's weekly 60-second presentations to the Warwick Chapter.

During the course of setting up a website for a London-based consultancy company, Richard discovered that one of its staff had been forced to abandon a coaching session after his trainee had become distressed – and the coach had

no idea how to handle the situation.

But Richard had the answer at his fingertips – his BNI contacts book!

He remembered the range of counselling skills explained each week by chapter colleague Annie during her one-minute 'commercials' – and he felt well placed not only to offer her services, but also to summarise how best she might be able to help solve his client's dilemma.

The resulting referral to Annie was so successful that, after visiting the consultancy twice, she was invited to consider joining their staff on a full time basis!

"This sort of opportunity was beyond



*EMOTIONAL THERAPIST: Annie Davies.*

my wildest expectations when I joined BNI," said Annie, who became Chapter Director last autumn.

"I offer a very different kind of emotional therapy whose benefits are difficult to convey through normal marketing like brochures or advertising.

"That's why I focused on trying to put across what I do in my weekly 60-second presentations. I had been told it's often the most unexpected situations that triggers BNI leads, and this is exactly what happened here."

David Bullock, BNI Executive Director said: "Annie's story illustrates the benefits of using your 60-second slots wisely – and of listening carefully as colleagues describe their businesses.

He said such referrals increased the credibility of both parties involved. ■

## 150th goes to Corporation Street

BNI's 150th UK/Irish chapter was launched recently, in memorable fashion, when more than 120 visitors turned up for the kick off of Birmingham's CORPORATION STREET Chapter. At only their second meeting, chapter members exchanged a very healthy 60 referrals and, after just three months the group has an established base of 27 members.

"It is going very well," said regional director Ian Halsall. "To use a Tony Blair-ism, you could say that they hit the ground running, and continue to run." The Chapter hosts its first visitors' day on 18th January, and Ian is expecting another big turn out. ■

## Sweet referral

**Stirling** Chapter member Ian Ferguson played Santa last month to colleague Louise Scott when he brought her a valuable early Christmas present – a referral for her to provide his customers with Christmas hampers. Louise owns Scot's Delicatessen, which she describes as an adult sweet shop, and had whetted the appetites of Ian and other chapter members during the year with samples, and some much talked about cheese and wine tasting events. ■

## IT teamwork

Referrals come in all shapes and sizes and, just occasionally, they can be too big to handle – as IT specialist Bill Mills discovered when referred for a major computing assignment through his **Coatbridge** Chapter. As a sole trader, Bill knew he'd be unable to handle the workload and tight deadlines but canny Scots never turn down business and, after discussing the problem with his chapter colleagues, he was put in touch with other chapters' IT specialists who were able to support him. The result? A job well done through BNI teamwork! ■

# Susanne gets a little help from her friends...

Susanne Austin is one of nature's fighters. Just as well, because her current venture – helping the Cotswold's farming and rural industries to diversify and boost the local economy – has been struggling to get off the ground, even though it has won the widespread admiration of agricultural and political leaders.

From the ashes of a failed economic initiative, Susanne single-handedly launched a new marketing co-operative – The Cotswold Food Group – believing local producers would seize the opportunity to boost their businesses, and their incomes.

She organised stands at agricultural shows, visited rural industries to offer promotion and sales advice, and lobbied politicians and big business for help.

"It didn't come," said Susanne. "So I've had to fund myself and the Group for the last year, using all my savings.

"I couldn't believe that a serious initiative which has the obvious potential to create many new jobs in the Cotswolds

and vastly improve the region's economy, would fall on such deaf ears."

Fortunately, Susanne had recognised the extensive networking role she would have to play, so she joined BNI's Cirencester Chapter a few months ago, to boost her business contacts since when, in a remarkable demonstration of 'Giver's Gain', colleagues in both the **Cirencester** and **Cheltenham** chapters have helped keep her afloat.

"They have been wonderful, providing me with practical help and services for nothing. I have been given free banking, legal and accountancy services, printing of stationery and many members have given their time to staff exhibition stands or assist with administrative tasks.

"I don't know how I would have coped without their help. They've given me so much moral and business support."

**Anyone who thinks they can help Susanne find sponsorship, should contact her on 01865 742793.** ■

# Six chapters receive coveted award

What do Canterbury and Colchester, Clerkenwell and Cheltenham all have in common? Yes, we know they all start with the letter 'C' but they share something far more important – the honour of being among just six UK chapters to receive BNI's coveted Founder's Award in 1999!

Along with two other top performing chapters – Stanmore and Braintree – they join a small elite of BNI chapters worldwide, whose overall success has

earned them the personal endorsement of BNI Founder Dr Ivan Misner.

His Award is given in recognition of a group's achievements in meeting BNI's core objectives – whether in terms of bringing in new members, achieving consistently high referral levels or simply being a highly motivated and successful chapter.

For members of the Canterbury Chapter there was an extra cause for celebration when they gathered for their

pre-Christmas social event to be presented with the region's first ever Founder's Award by Executive Director Robert French. The Chapter had also just passed a significant milestone in its short history.

Since its launch in June 1997, the group has notched up a remarkable 5,000-plus referrals, 2,000 of these coming during 1999 – with a staggering 460 leads being passed around the breakfast table in November alone! ■



## Reminder of 'Siege of Colchester'

Colchester Chapter Director James Finch could not keep his town's proud heritage a secret from BNI founder Dr Ivan Misner, when the pair met during last autumn's directors' conference in Los Angeles.

Knowing the Californian conference was taking place on the 351st anniversary of the end of the Siege of Colchester, when the royalist garrison town loyal to King Charles surrendered to the Roundheads, James had taken with him a framed map depicting the town's history, which he presented to Dr

Misner (pictured left), watched by South Essex Assistant Director Robert Leak and Essex Executive Director Robert French.

Naturally the occasion provided James with the opportunity to deliver an apposite message to BNI's Founder. "I told him Colchester was again under siege, this time from BNI, but that unlike the town suffering at the hands of the Roundheads, the only changes we'd be making would be good ones for the local business economy. ■

## Chris gives BNI some real bite

**A** Itrincham Chapter Director Chris Barrow is definitely getting his teeth into BNI – and helping to give BNI considerably more bite in North West and Midlands – thanks to his work with the regions' dentists!

So far he's introduced around 20 dentists to BNI, including **Bolton** chapter director, Melvyn Rosenthal, Anthony Fagg (**Stafford** chapter), Peter Reece (**Burton-on-Trent**), and in his own chapter, membership co-ordinator Wendy Smythe.

Chris is a business coach and by pure coincidence he's ended up specialising in dentistry, though he has no special experience in that direction.

"I was a financial advisor originally," he explained. "Then in 1990 I became a business coach, which largely involves showing professional people how to increase and generate profitability.

"I do a lot of public speaking and had occasion to meet quite a few dentists. I knew that NHS cutbacks in the early '90s had forced them to take account of marketing and practice management to redress their reducing profitability and, during the course of my presentations I got to know what they wanted in terms of new business marketing.

"I felt that BNI was the perfect environment for their first steps into the marketing world, since it starts with networking, so I've been recommending it very highly to them."

Chris has lost count of the actual number of dentists he's introduced to BNI but he's still looking for more. "There's a new chapter opening in **Macclesfield** soon, so my next task will be finding a dentist for them," he added. ■

## Belfast plans Millennium double

Belfast could achieve a notable 'double' early this month, when Northern Ireland's first BNI chapter opens in the city: its leadership team hopes they'll also become the first UK/Ireland chapter to launch in the new Millennium!

James McCrossan, Northern Ireland's Regional Director says that the group is making great progress with an excellent combination of core members, including an accountant, a financial advisor, promotional and advertising consultants and a management consultant from the University of Ulster.

Evan Morton, advertising and media consultant, has used his expertise to

arrange publicity for the new group in the Belfast Telegraph.

Executive Director for Ireland South and West, Mort Murphy has visited the new group several times and told *SuccessNet*: "Belfast is a beautiful city and I would recommend it to anyone.

"It is great news that BNI has arrived in Northern Ireland and I'm sure it won't be long before they have a number of chapters up and running."

Anyone interested in being part of BNI's Northern Ireland activities can contact James McCrossan on 02882 661092. ■

# The mysteries of computing made easier for members

**A**s nearly everyone who has to use them will admit, computers – and computer software – still retain the power to drive grown men (and women) to a rage, and sometimes worse...

But for nearly 100 members of BNI chapters across South London, Surrey

and West Sussex, at least some of their prejudices towards computing were recently dispersed, thanks to a unique training taster evening sponsored by a member company of Sutton Chapter.

BNI participants were treated to a 'computers made easy' presentation by Luciana Avanzi and Pauline Cave of Clarity Training, who provided an intro-

duction (with tips, short-cuts and helpful techniques) to some of the most common software applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook.

Members were also given sample sets of quick reference cards, designed by Clarity, aimed at providing quick fix solutions to many frequent computing problems.

Luciana said the idea for a joint chapter session came from her listening to many members' complaints about their computers, most of which she believed could be overcome by simple training.

"While most of us have computers and bundles of software, few people have ever received any formal training, so it's not surprising they become frustrated when things don't work out.

"Our aim was to make members aware of how training can help but, at the same time, give them some useful practical hints.

"It went very well and as a result, we have been asked to provide formal training for a number of BNI clients."

Luciana's advice should be worth heeding. Although her company is only two years old, it has a 'blue chip' client base (BT, Kelloggs and MCI WorldCom) and aims to double its turnover year on year – not least with the help of BNI colleagues.

She added: "We joined BNI because of its synergy with the way we attract most business – from personal contacts and referrals.

"We are following up referrals to some interesting companies, so the immediate future is looking promising."

## Right time for a chat

If you haven't yet dropped in on BNI's Yahoo chat room, then now's the perfect time to make a New Year's resolution to do so – not least because the monthly Internet sessions are packed with the best tips and ideas from around the world on how to improve your business performance.

The sessions, hosted by UK national directors Martin and Gillian Lawson, and joined by other BNI members and directors from around the world, take place on the second Monday evening of every month at 9pm.

Each one focuses on a different business or BNI topic and features a guest speaker with special expertise in the subject. Topics for the first three months of 2000 are:

- Monday, 10th January:  
'Effective Membership Committees'
  - Monday, 14th February:  
'Great Meeting Stimulants'
  - Monday, 13th March:  
'Ideas for Joint Chapter Activities'
- "It is an ideal forum for exchanging

practical business information and, as BNI expands into more and more countries, the value of these international Internet discussions keeps increasing," said Martin.

"Chat Room regulars say they constantly learn new business techniques from other entrepreneurs around the world.

"It is also a valuable source of ideas and information for every chapter educational co-ordinator."

The easy way to enter the Chat Room is through BNI's own website ([www.bni-europe.com](http://www.bni-europe.com)) where you will find it as an option after clicking over the UK on the country-finder map.

However, you must first register as a member at the BNI Yahoo chat room, prior to joining your first chat session.

If you would like *SuccessNet* to e-mail you a 'point and click' URL to get you registered quickly, then simply e-mail your request to [bninet@aol.com](mailto:bninet@aol.com).

## How to absorb first subscription increase in over three years

BNI membership subscriptions in the UK and Ireland go up from this April – the first rise in more than three years – although members can absorb its modest impact by opting for one of two new payment methods.

Irrespective of your renewal date, you can pay your annual fees before April at the current rate, and enjoy a further 12 months membership from the time your current subscription expires.

Alternatively, by paying a biennial fee of £500 (IR£600 in Ireland) when your subscription falls due after 1st April, you can obtain a further two years membership at the current rate.

National Director Martin Lawson said: "We have managed to avoid increasing subscriptions since we launched BNI in the UK back in 1996, but our costs have risen considerably since then and we cannot defer a modest fee increase any longer.

"However, we wanted to give mem-

bers the chance of absorbing the initial increase, so I hope our alternative payment methods will appeal.

"In some cases it will mean members enjoying an unchanged fee for five years or more."

From 1st April, subscription fees will be as follows:

Category	UK chapters £ sterling	Irish chapters £ Irish
12 months subscription	280	340
Biennial (2 years) subscription	500	600
Registration fee (on joining)	60	70

# New Irish Board breaks with tradition

**A** new Irish Board of Advisors has unexpectedly been created – because there were too many good BNI candidates to fill a single position!

It started when Mort Murphy, South-West Ireland's Executive Director, was invited to nominate one member to represent South West Ireland on BNI's International Board of Advisors.

But it wasn't that easy. Mort couldn't decide which of three excellent candidates to choose, so he consulted National Directors, Martin and Gillian Lawson – but they were equally ambivalent – so they consulted Dr Ivan Misner, Founder and Chief Executive who would surely be able to provide the answer.

But he couldn't make up his mind either!

The problem was that each of the three short-listed candidates – Richard O'Brien, Paudie O'Mahony and Vincent Scanlan – all from **Cork City** Chapter, was more than worthy of a position on the International Board, which advises BNI's head office on policy and development issues.

Then Mort had a brainwave! What if they were allowed to nominate all three who would serve on the Board for a year at a time, in rotation?

The idea was accepted by the national directors and Ivan, who were so impressed by the calibre of all the candidates that they suggested utilising the trio's talents by forming an Irish Board of Advisors with Richard, Paudie and Vincent becoming its first three members.

In due course the Irish Board will comprise representatives from chapters throughout a unified Ireland, and work to integrate members from the Dublin and Northern Ireland regions will begin this month.

Gillian Lawson commented: "Right from the launch of the Cork chapter we were most impressed with Richard, Paudie and Vincent and believed they would go far in BNI. I am delighted to see them recognised in this most innovative way." ■



*IRISH BOARD MEMBERS: The first three Board members, from left, Vincent Scanlan, Richard O'Brien and Paudie O'Mahony are pictured with Mort Murphy, seated.*

## Is this a referral record?

Pat Finnerty, the Director of **GALWAY** Chapter amazed fellow members at a pre-Christmas meeting of his group, when he shared out a staggering 36 referrals amongst his colleagues.

"Obviously, it's not something I can do every week," said Pat, "but by listening very carefully to the kinds of referrals my Chapter colleagues want, and keeping my ear to the ground, I don't find it too difficult to generate potential business." ■

*SuccessNet* reckons Pat's feat is not only a new referral record for Ireland, but most probably a record among all BNI's UK and Irish chapters. Unless, of course, YOU know differently!

Meanwhile, just down the road in the **TREATY** Chapter, Auctioneer, John Shaw passed 12 referrals at a recent meeting, helping the group notch up more than 60 referrals over a single breakfast. It has also passed the 30-member mark, just nine months after its formation. ■

## BNI bonus for the Barnet girls from Fame

Fun, camaraderie and the sharing of business problems are the successful ingredients of **Barnet** Chapter in North London, says one of its newer members, Joyce Palmer – and she should know, after gaining a remarkable £150,000 worth of business from her new BNI colleagues in just six weeks!

Joyce, an Assistant Director of Fame

Recruitment Consultants in Golders Green said: "As soon as I was introduced to BNI, my instinct was that the organisation was right for us – but I never thought it would lead to so much business, so quickly," she said.

"We have always sought to make our business different by offering a highly personalised service to clients and build-

ing up excellent personal contacts. I'd like to think that's why my BNI colleagues have been so active for us."

Joyce now wants her colleagues to join other BNI groups in London, adding: "I've been lucky in being introduced to a cheerful and lively chapter. We are hoping to find some other chapters where the dynamics are just as vibrant." ■

# UK directors at forefront

**F**ormer Ealing Chapter member, Graham Southwell knows a good thing when he sees it. So, when he emigrated to New Zealand in 1998, it didn't take him long to 'import' the BNI success story, setting up his first chapter within a year of after setting foot on Kiwi soil.

Today, less than 12 months later, Graham (pictured right) has nine chapters up and running, and a dozen more in the pipeline for planned launches during the coming year.

Given his early successes with the Ealing Chapter, it should perhaps come as no surprise that the former West London chartered surveyor has broken into New Zealand's business community so rapidly.

A core member of the Ealing group when it launched in February 1997, Graham quickly became BNI's first UK 'gold badge' recipient, having recruited no less than nine new members even before the chapter opened!

He said: "By chance I'd been invited to the launch meeting of the first UK chapter at Harrow and at the end of the meeting I spoke to Martin Lawson, the national director, and said I'd be inter-



As BNI continues its rapid global expansion, UK directors and members have been playing a leading role in helping the organisation establish itself in new territories – as far apart as Sweden and Singapore, South Africa and New Zealand. On *SuccessNet's* first 'international page', we bring you news of BNI's overseas expansion, and highlight the globe-trotting activities of UK-trained directors and chapter members...

## Ex-Ealing member recruits Kiwis

ested in joining BNI when he launched a group closer to my home and business.

"Within eight weeks we'd started the

Ealing Chapter. Exactly a year on, following a family decision to emigrate, I turned up for my last chapter meeting in Ealing and, again by pure co-incidence, in walked Martin Lawson with BNI's founder, Dr Ivan Misner.

When they heard I was leaving for New Zealand, Ivan put me in touch with Australia's national director Ian Pendlebury and the rest is history. I launched my first Kiwi chapter early in 1999 and have added around one a month ever since," Graham added.

As BNI's first executive director in New Zealand, Graham has big plans for the organisation's growth on both the country's north and south islands.

"At present, because I live in Auckland, all of the chapters have been developed around here on North Island where we have 200 members.

"During the next few months I intend to take BNI to Wellington and the rest of North Island and then I can look at South Island. I am determined it won't be long before BNI has a significant presence across much of the country."

Meanwhile, his Ealing colleagues will be given a first hand progress report when Graham returns to the West London chapter this spring during his first trip back to the UK since emigrating.

"I'm sure it will be a nostalgic occasion, but I'm looking forward to seeing how the chapter has developed since I left."

## Mike gets the bug and takes it back to South Africa

A funny thing happened to Mike Levine during a holiday visit to the UK: he caught the BNI bug and took it back to South Africa, where it is now happily infecting hundreds of businessmen and women in the Cape province!

It was nearly two years ago when Mike spent a couple of weeks at the home of his old South African chum, Cliff Horowitz, who now runs a successful electricians' business in Northwood.

One evening during his stay, Mike recalls: "Cliff suddenly announced that I should get an early night because the following morning he was taking me to a business breakfast. I protested and said I hadn't travelled 5,000 miles to get up at 6am for a business meeting.

"In fact I was pretty fed up at the prospect," Mike told *SuccessNet*.

But once he sat down to breakfast with Cliff's colleagues in the Northwood Chapter, something unexpected happened. The meeting was fun, lots of new referrals were passed around, members were enthusiastic – and Mike was hooked!

"I just couldn't believe what I was seeing," he said. "I'd had to be dragged along but within 20 minutes of my first BNI meeting I was not only converted, I was wondering how on earth I'd be able to set up something similar when I returned to Cape Town.

"It was an incredible experience – one of those rare occasions when you know something is about to change your life."

Within three weeks Mike had undergone intensive training to prepare himself for the challenge ahead, becoming BNI's first national director in South Africa in the summer of 1998.

"Four months later, I launched South Africa's first BNI chapter at Newlands, Cape Town and we haven't looked back since," Mike added. "I now have nine chapters up and running in the Cape province and in the coming year I plan to expand BNI into other coastal areas including Port Elizabeth and Durban."

So, congratulations Mike – and well done Cliff, without whose persuasion and persistence, BNI might still not have arrived in South Africa! ■

# of BNI's global expansion

## David slings his hook into Singapore

Going back to his family's roots in Singapore took on an unexpected business flavour for South-West Midlands Executive Director David Bullock, when he discovered the country's first BNI chapter – appropriately named Genesis – was about to be launched during his visit.

"I couldn't resist finding out more and I think the newly installed national directors Sim Chow Boon and Mervin Yeo were very pleased when I made contact with them," he recalled. In the event I was able to offer them quite a bit of practical advice on getting the first chapter off the ground, as well as providing guidance on their development plans – based on my own BNI experiences in the UK.

"That was back in September, but we have kept in touch since then and I have told them I'm available at the end of a telephone if they want any further help.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how they grow BNI in Singapore over the coming year," David added.

For both David and two members of his family who were born in Singapore, returning to the Far East proved a nostalgic trip down memory lane.

A former director of Lever then based in Jakarta, Indonesia, David saw two of his children born and grow up in Singapore before he returned to the UK with them.

"That was over 20 years ago, and the kids hadn't been back to their birthplace since we left. It was fascinating re-tracing their early lives." ■

## Starting the BNI ball rolling in Scandinavia

In the true spirit of 'Givers' Gain', two of BNI's South-East Executive Directors have been helping to launch the organisation in Scandinavia.

Gordon Wilkie and James Sanderson, whose usual territory is London South Central and Surrey, have spent the past 12 months applying their leadership skills to setting up inaugural chapters in Sweden, working closely with newly appointed National Directors Gunnar and Annett Selheden in Gottenburg.

"We made several consultancy trips to Gottenburg last year and Gunnar has started very strongly – opening three chapters with a total of 100 members in the last three months of 1999, and plan-

ning to launch another two this month," said Gordon. "They are very enthusiastic about BNI."

James and Gordon are now helping Gunnar and Annett to find potential BNI partners in other Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Norway, Finland, Greenland and Iceland – and are confident that BNI will be represented in two or three additional Scandinavian countries before the year is out.

In the meantime, members of West and South-West London chapters be warned: when they next visit your group, don't be surprised if they address you in foreign tongues! ■



IN AT THE START: David Bullock meets national directors Sim Chow Boon and Mervin Yeo at the Singapore launch.

## From South-East to Far East for globe-trotting duo

The world is shrinking rapidly for globe-trotting Executive Director Robert French who, in addition to his extensive BNI operations in the UK, has been busy helping to establish the organisation in Malaysia.

BNI will be marking the early days of the new Millennium with the launch of its first Malaysian chapter in Kuala Lumpur when, sharing the moment will be Robert and his UK Co-Executive Director Andrew Hall who have

together acquired Malaya's national franchise.

While, at face value, it might seem strange for two of our directors to be launching BNI on the far side of the world, Robert says it is the perfect country for development.

"The business, legal, political and philosophical similarities between Malaysia and the UK are remarkable, and the fact that it is an English-speaking Commonwealth country makes it the perfect gateway into Asia for BNI," he told *SuccessNet*.

"In many ways, helping to launch BNI chapters in Kuala Lumpur is just like developing core groups in Colchester or Canterbury.

"The commercial culture is very entrepreneurial with a high proportion of self-employment and small businesses.

"Malaysia also has excellent trading links with China and Japan, and it would be wonderful to take the BNI ethos into those communities," Robert added.

"The Far East economy is the most exciting and potentially the largest in the world, so BNI's arrival just in time for the new Millennium is ideal."

UK National Director Martin Lawson believes BNI's remarkable progress across Britain and Ireland is a key factor in the organisation's overseas expansion under UK-trained directors.

"Not only is this a very good advertisement for the way we do things here, but it also confirms that the BNI business philosophy can work anywhere." ■

# Clearing the AIR

by Ian Pendlebury

National Director, Australia

**W**hile there are many facets to maximising a member's participation in BNI, I believe there are three which should be regarded as fundamentals. I call them the AIR components.

## A – Attend:

This is the most basic ingredient to success in your chapter. Absent members send clear messages to the rest of the chapter, the first of which is that the absentee has missed an appointment with all his BNI colleagues who have made the effort to attend.

This in turn prompts questions like: 'How reliable is this person?' 'Am I confident referring my best client to him/her?' 'Will this person let my client down, which will reflect badly on me?'

Other messages suggest that the absent member is not interested in learning more about his/her colleagues' businesses and it follows that he or she is not all that concerned about finding referrals for them either.

No wonder members who are absent without substitutes, get fewer referrals.

Compelling statistics show that reducing absenteeism substantially increases both membership and referral volumes. If your chapter lacks on attendance, it is having a negative effect on the members.

## I – Invite:

All chapters, but particularly the newer and small ones, need to have visitors if they are to grow and be effective.

Time and again I have found that the most successful chapters are those that

In his capacity as a national director, Ian Pendlebury visits many chapters and meets numerous members. One of the most frequently questions he is asked is: "Why is *that* chapter growing at a much faster rate – and generating so many more referrals – than ours?" The answer, he says, is that the chapters enjoying the most success are the ones whose membership has consistently adopted the right approach towards participation in BNI. Here, he tells how every chapter can be successful.

focused on growth before they thought too much about referring business.

A meeting without visitors is a missed opportunity, and we should have visitors at each and every meeting. I think some members get a little 'hung up' with the idea that inviting visitors represents a type of recruiting process with which they are not comfortable.

But visitors decide to join BNI on the basis of their experience at the meeting. Inviting visitors is not about 'selling' BNI. A simple invitation to a business breakfast is usually the right approach, and the only one needed.

And remember this: by inviting visitors, you are offering them a potentially lucrative commercial opportunity – and doing them a considerable favour by introducing them to that opportunity.

## R – Refer:

Referrals really start to flow when a chapter is properly built and, obviously, the collective contact sphere of, say 35 members, is a lot easier to source referrals than from one of only 15. But having a large chapter doesn't automatically mean that referrals will simply 'fall out of the sky'.

Finding referrals for others takes some effort. Do you really understand what to look for? And, are you genuinely making an effort on behalf of your fellow members?

You have a responsibility to learn about their businesses and what constitutes a good referral for them.

At the same time, you must train and educate your BNI colleagues about your own business and the kind of referrals you need.

If you haven't done this through your weekly 60-second slots, your ten-minute presentations and appointment cards, then you shouldn't be surprised if referrals are not coming your way.

\* \* \*

Your local BNI director has a number of audio tapes than can assist you in learning how to generate referrals, and the same materials are available in the UK, from your BNI national office.

Your director can also run a workshop on the topic at your chapter meeting, or provide some one-to-one instruction with you, if you wish.

Good chapters are full of committed people who understand each other's business needs and aspirations. They have taken the time to get to know their fellow members well, and accept that this is a long-term process. While immediate results in BNI can be, and often are, seen – the business done over the longer term by those who have embraced the 'Giver's Gain' philosophy, is something that continues to surprise. ■

## Briefly...

### 6,000 milestone

Little more than three years after its launch, **Tunbridge Wells** Chapter is due to pass another milestone within the next few weeks – when it reaches its 6,000th referral! As *SuccessNet* went to press, members were only 200 or so short of the mark which they expect to reach in January. ■

### US twinning

BNI's 'rock of Essex', as **Chelmsford** Chapter is known, is to twin with its namesake chapter in Massachusetts, USA, as a prelude to an exchange of members and business information. Executive Director Robert French warns: "Our cousins could be in for a serious challenge, since our Chelmsford chapter don't do things by halves." ■

### Personal ton-up

**Braintree** members intend to give their Colchester neighbours a run for their money in terms of the number of referrals generated during 2000. Although launched barely six months ago, one member – Les Ely – has already notched up a personal total of over 100 referrals (including 30 over a single breakfast), while several others are also nearing the century mark. ■

### Launch lock-out

At the recent launch of **Stansted** Chapter, no less than 50 per cent of all visitors attending the kick off handed in application forms, giving James Finch and his team the pleasant task of having to find seats for the 'lock-outs' in other chapters. ■

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