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BNI WCF Sparks New Trend in Business Networking

We've all experienced it in the business world - you join a business networking group or participate in a networking session and come out disappointed because your business seems to be no further ahead than when you joined the organization. However, this is not the case with BNI - and they have the results to prove it.

TAMPA, FL (June 6, 2011) --There is a misconception among many businesses regarding the concept of business networking. There is also a wide variation in the quality of business networking groups and what their members gain from them. "Business Network International in the Tampa area is all about the 4 M's of BNI - "Members Making More Money". Bottom line, professionals join BNI in pursuit of increasing sales and attracting new clients via referrals into their business," says Tom Fleming, Executive Director of [Business Network International West Central Florida](#) and Director of Training at the Referral Institute in Tampa, FL. "BNI is an organization of professionals to sell through, not an organization of professionals to sell to". Last year, Business Network International helped businesses generate over \$2.6 billion dollars worth of business for members by passing 6.2 million referrals in 5,500 chapters in 43 countries. This year, 40 BNI chapters in the West Central Florida region are on track to pass \$50 million worth of business to each other.

The notion of business networking has been misconstrued by business professionals. Many of them are under the impression that business networking is all about making a sale or direct prospecting, meaning shaking hands and passing out business cards. Instead it is a roundabout way to revenue growth. In his blog, Dr. Ivan Misner, Founder and Chairman of BNI and NY Times bestselling author says, "If you are going to networking events hoping to sell something, you're dreaming! Don't confuse direct selling with networking. Effective networking is about developing relationships.

Dr. Misner says, "You go because networking is more about farming than it is about hunting. It's about developing relationships with other business professionals. Sometimes you go to a networking event to increase your visibility, sometimes you go to establish further credibility with people you



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know, and sometimes you may even go to meet a *long-time referral partner* and do some business. In any case, the true master networkers know that networking events are about moving through the VCP Process™ and not about closing deals.”

This philosophy, along with givers gain®, is the foundation on which BNI was built and establishes a new trend in business networking. Not only does BNI provide unique opportunities for networking, it also offers state-of-the-art training and education on the proper ways to use business networking to increase revenue and grow a client base.

Tom Fleming has expanded on this tradition by growing the number of chapters of BNI West Central Florida. Fleming purchased BNI West Central Florida from the former owner in late 2002 and arrived in the area to live in Jan 2003. When he arrived there was one chapter with 13 members. The Region has recently grown to over 40 chapters with just under 1600 members. To manage this expansive growth the BNIWCF team has gone from having 2 support people on the team to just under 40.

BNI sets a new trend in business networking by having a demanding acceptance process which includes the completion of an application, inclusive of references which are followed up on.

There is also an interview process for incoming candidates because BNI believes that it is important for members in a chapter to surround themselves with the best of the best. After all, members are putting their reputations on the line when they make referrals to their best client or to a friend or family member.

What makes BNI and BNI WCF unique is that each chapter has only one member representative from each industry which shuts out any competition and allows for effective business networking. If business professionals want to join BNI WCF they are encouraged to start a local chapter to help businesses in their geographical area grow their business through referral based marketing.

Those that take on leadership roles potentially enjoy making more money, having more fun, and have the advantages of personal development which is all rooted in higher Visibility, Credibility, and Profitability i.e., the VCP Process™, amongst their members and the region. BNI WCF members can also participate in state-of-the-art training in business networking at the Referral Institute in Tampa where Tom Fleming is the Director of Training.



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Not many businesses can say that they have a one-stop location for business networking, professional advancement through training, and sharing of ideas. Most people simply turn to a friend or spend a great deal of time trying to find the answer on the Internet. BNI WCF allows businesses to grow despite the economy while saving time and lowering costs on advertising that may or may not work.

About Tom Fleming and Business Network International:

BNI is the largest business networking organization in the world and offers members and prospective members the opportunity to share business referrals or initiate a local chapter of BNI.

Tom Fleming is the Executive Director for BNI in West Central Florida and the Referral Institute. When Tom acquired the region, BNI WCF had one chapter with 13 members. The region now has over 40 chapters with 1600 members passing \$50,000,000 in business to each other in the past year alone.

Tom is sought out as a local, national and international speaker on the subjects of marketing businesses by referral and organizational development. He is also a contributing author in two best-selling books on referral based marketing and has been recorded on many educational CD's produced from his speaking engagements. Prior to beginning his career as an entrepreneur, Tom worked for various Fortune 500 firms, earned an MBA from Babson College and a Bachelor's Degree in business from Boston University.

Visit BNI West Central Florida at www.bniwcf.com.

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