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## Why Referral Based Marketing is on an Upward Trend

*Studies have shown the average consumer is exposed to up to 1000 advertising messages within a 24-hour period. But in midst of all the clutter, word-of-mouth marketing is fast becoming THE avenue of choice.*

TAMPA, FL (July 18, 2011) -- Advertising and promotions are everywhere – newspapers, the Internet, email inboxes, billboards, digital signage, television, video games, and just about anywhere else. Tom Fleming, Executive Director of [Business Network International West Central Florida](#) (BNI WCF) and Director of Training at the Referral Institute in Tampa, FL, says “High trust and long sales cycle type industries rely on a relationship sale to increase their revenue and client base. These are industries such as financial planners, realtors, insurance agents, doctors, coaches, and other professions that rely on referrals to grow their business.” By helping its members increase their revenues on an average of \$33,000.00 more per year, more and more relationship-based businesses are turning to BNI’s word-of-mouth marketing system.

Referral based marketing or word of mouth marketing as it is also called, is one of the oldest marketing methods for growing a business however, it is not about shaking hands and handing out business cards anymore.

Instead, companies benefit through the process of developing proper relationships which are vital to boosting business. It is not just about the money, but also the network of people business professionals get involved with and the ideas they get for growing their own business as well. Social media marketing increases reach but word of mouth marketing builds close trustworthy relationships for companies looking to prosper without financial burden. The bottom line is, people do business and refer business to individuals they know like and trust.

Dr. Ivan Misner, Founder and Chairman of Business Networking International, started the Referral Institute by developing material that would



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help business professionals to apply exclusive processes on referral based marketing. Dr. Misner is known as the “Father of Networking” and NY Times bestselling author of books on business networking. His books led him to create the Certified Networker which is a 12-module training program through the Referral Institute which provides business professionals with the foundation they need to create an effective referral marketing plan for their business.

Dr. Misner partnered with Mike Macedonio who expanded the Referral Institute by opening 40 franchises in 8 countries in a little over two years and it was all accomplished by 100 percent referrals. Tom Fleming has helped to grow the franchise in the Tampa region as Director of Training at the Referral Institute in Tampa. He has also been working to grow the number of chapters of Business Networking International in the West Central Florida region to provide Referral Institute graduates with distinct networking opportunities.

BNI member and Referral Institute graduate Peter Cowan of Real Time Learning, states that he received business twice the value of his initial investment in the Referral Institute program within four weeks.

The Referral Institute drives economic success through industry diversification and has become the world’s leading referral training organization. Entrepreneur.com has listed the Referral Institute in their annual top 500 franchises for the past three consecutive years. Learn more about the Referral Institute in this [video](#).

### **About Tom Fleming and BNI:**

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



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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](http://www.bniwcf.com).

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