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BNI Teaches "Recession Proof" Networking Tools

BNI places a new twist on an old method of referral marketing and helps businesses to thrive despite the economy.

TAMPA, FL (August 8, 2011) -- Business owners in West Central Florida are learning a new recession proof method for getting referrals thanks to the ingenuity of Tom Fleming, Executive Director of Business Network International West Central Florida (BNI WCF) and Director of Training at the Referral Institute in Tampa. The unique system that BNI WCF provides for its members is similar to a business networking opportunity group but instead of running one, BNI WCF runs 40 that are smaller and more intense with each chapter only allowing one person per industry. This eliminates the competition and provides for very effective referral based marketing.

BNI WCF is what is known as a "strong contact networking organization" which means that only one person per profession is allowed to join a BNI WCF chapter. If there is no availability in a current chapter of BNI WCF, business professionals such as financial planners, insurance agents, realtors, mortgage originators, and more start their own chapter. These are industries that are heavily reliant on quality referrals and personal relationships for them are the key to business growth. Those that take a lead in starting a chapter achieve higher visibility, credibility, and profitability among their members and the region.

When Tom Fleming first purchased the BNI region of West Central Florida it consisted of one chapter with 13 members. BNI WCF now has around 40 chapters with just under 1600 members. To manage this expansive growth BNI WCF has gone from having 2 support people on the team to just under 50.

BNI WCF also includes 7 different training programs built around the art of growing your business by referral of which 2 of the 7 are "Referral Institute Programs". 1 of the 2 Referral Institute programs is a 12 week college level

course that supports people with developing and implementing a referral based marketing strategy for one's business.

In a recent publication by Dr. Ivan Misner, Founder of BNI and NY Times Bestselling Author on Referral Marketing, advises business owners to remain focused on solutions instead of getting caught up in the recession. Dr., Misner says that recessions will come and go and the people who look for opportunities when times are tough will not only survive—they will thrive. He has seen this over and over again and teaches business professional how to refuse to participate in a recession.

Dr Misner says, "Now, more than ever, a powerful personal network can carry you through difficult times. Business will go on. In times like this, people want to do business with people they trust more than ever. The relationships you have with the people in your network can make the difference in your business. You cannot change the economy. The economy is going to be what the economy is going to be. You cannot change your competition. Your competition is going to do what your competition is going to do. But you can change your response to the economy. You can change your response to your competition."

Making money while saving time in the process are a few of the benefits that members receive when they join BNI WCF. BNI West Central Florida also helps business professionals increase sales and build a loyal client base through word of mouth marketing, personal development training, and distinguished training for referral marketing through the Referral Institute.

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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