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BNI Expands to West Central Florida Region

Business professionals are learning the power of referral based marketing while saving time and making money despite the economy.

TAMPA, FL (September 19, 2011) – “Business Network International (BNI) provides business professionals with a great opportunity to make money”, says Tom Fleming, Executive Director of BNI West Central Florida and Director of Training at the Referral Institute in Tampa. BNI is currently the largest networking organization in the world and offers members the opportunity to share ideas, contacts, and most importantly, *business referrals*. Last year alone, BNI generated 6.5 million referrals resulting in \$2.8 billion dollars worth of business for its members.

Tom Fleming is currently working to bring exclusive opportunities for business professionals in the Tampa region by growing the number of chapters of BNI West Central Florida. He purchased the region from the former owner in late 2002 and arrived in the area to live (from Boston) in January 2003. When he arrived he had 1 chapter with 13 members. BNI WCF now has around 40 chapters with just under 1600 members. To manage this expansive growth they have gone from having 2 support people on the BNI WCF team to just under 50.

How BNI works:

- BNI is all about teaching business professionals how to leverage the power of referral based or word of mouth marketing to achieve higher visibility, credibility, and profitability despite economic conditions. BNI also offers state-of-the-art training in referral marketing through the Referral Institute.
- BNI chapters throughout the world allow only one individual from each industry to join a chapter which locks out the competition. Prospective members are also encouraged to start their own chapter of BNI.
- BNI provides business professionals with access to the best people in their chosen industry. Members carry copies of businesses cards



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around and when they meet someone new who is looking for a particular product or service they pass the business card along and recommend other members of [BNI](#). This is based on the concept of "Givers Gain" or simply, "what goes around comes around."

- [BNI WCF](#) also includes 7 different training programs built around the art of growing your business by referral. 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. As a result of surveys, each participant responds to when they graduate, members of this program expect to generate an incremental \$10-50K in business just over the next year as a direct result of what they have learned.

The Tampa Tribune says, "[BNI] is a way for people to give referrals to each other. A fifteen member BNI chapter generates 45 to 50 monthly business referrals for members. With 30 members the number triples."

According to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "BNI has taken an old concept word-of-mouth networking and formalized it...BNI members carry one another's business card so they have phone numbers handy anytime they meet someone needing a product or service available through another member."

As a result of Mr. Fleming's efforts to grow BNI WCF and offer exclusive training through the [Referral Institute](#) in Tampa, BNI WCF has been able to provide its own economic stimulus package for the West Central Florida region by offering a one-stop solution for professionals to grow their business by as much as 20, 30, and 50 percent or as much as 100 percent. This is a valuable contribution to the Florida economy during a difficult downturn.

Dr. Ivan Misner is the Founder and Chairman of BNI and a New York Times best-selling author on business networking.

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.



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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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