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## **Why Word of Mouth Marketing Is Vital to Business Success**

*According to Consumer Reports the average consumer is bombarded with up to 1000 advertisements on a daily basis. These numbers on the conservative side are causing businesses to rely more on word of mouth marketing to obtain loyal customers.*

TAMPA, FL (March 14, 2010) -- In the new economy, businesses have to work harder to garner the attention of their target market. As a result, many are opting to use word of mouth marketing by participating in business networking groups, such as [Business Network International West Central Florida \(BNI WCF\)](#). BNI WCF helps businesses to accomplish this on a large scale by providing unique networking opportunities as well as state-of-the-art training in business networking via the Referral Institute. This is especially important for professions relying heavily on referrals, such as chiropractors, realtors, and event planners.

"Each BNI WCF chapter and its members are in the business of promoting the products and services of their fellow members," says Tom Fleming, Executive Director of BNI WCF and Director of the Referral Institute in Tampa. The chapters consist only of the top people in their chosen industry that are results oriented, accountable, and passionate about what they do. BNI WCF has impacted the local community with \$4 million dollars' worth of business passed per month to its members over the last year by staying focused on what's possible and generating massive results through referral based marketing.

According to Fleming, word of mouth marketing is important because the Return on Investment is high and it works. Word of mouth depends on developing relationships with other professionals and clients who can refer qualified prospects who are ready to make a purchase.

Recent studies conducted by sources in the digital signage industry have shown that consumers become immune to commercial messages after being exposed to hundreds of messages on a daily basis. The messages are on the



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Internet, the car radio, the forgettable ad in the newspaper, billboards, and even in public restrooms.

Calfee and Ringold found in public opinion polls that approximately two-thirds of consumers say that they doubt what they read in media advertising. A recent case study on the effectiveness of the product placement process showed that skeptical consumers had weaker brand beliefs and immunity to advertising and were less receptive to information-based media. Yet globally, businesses spend billions of dollars annually trying to get their products in front of the right audience.

So how is word of mouth marketing breaking through the skepticism and helping businesses to grow in a less than desirable economy? When you look at it from the angle of referral based marketing, people are more likely to listen to a trusted friend if they refer a product than if they read product claims through conventional advertising methods. Businesses create word of mouth strategies of significant magnitude so they get massive results despite economic conditions. One of the ways they achieve this is through business networking.

If it's true that people do business with those they know, like and trust, then when business goes away (due to the economy) it's the people with a network that win.

### **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 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.



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