



## Real Member Stories Flooring Specialist



**I'm in my sixth year with BNI and it has changed my life and saved my business...**

**Case Study: Alan Charlton of AJC FLOORING**

Carpet fitter Alan Charlton is in no doubt that BNI saved his business, AJC Flooring, and in turn changed his life. Now the firm is represented in two Reading Chapters of BNI. Alan reveals how the networking organisation proved so transformational:

"I'm in my sixth year with BNI and it is fair to say that it has changed my life and saved my business. I'd never heard of it when the builder at BNI Central, the chapter I joined, invited me along.

"It was a challenging time to be honest, I'd not long started my own business and I didn't have two pennies to rub together, so I thought I had nothing to lose. Tracy Averies, the builder who invited me, paid for my breakfast and then one of the members gave me a referral at that first meeting for £680 for kitchen flooring – it was a no-brainer really and that covered my application.

"Honestly, it saved my business and changed my life. We couldn't afford the mortgage so were renting our house out and living with the in-laws – things were that bad!

"Now, I would say, I do have a couple of big commercial jobs I do outside BNI that bring in the money, but job wise, referrals are 80 percent of my business.

"Six years ago, the first time I saw BNI in action, it was fantastic! I bought into it straight away. The people in the room, I think it was a group of about seventeen, eighteen by then, in BNI Central, were just so helpful. I think maybe some of them could sense that business wise I didn't know everything. They were happy to refer to me almost immediately on the back of the first referral. I got a fantastic testimonial for my work, and I thought: "Wow! This is fantastic." I'd never had a testimonial in my life.

"That was the first step and it changed my business forever really. Referrals came thick and fast and after what I had been through over the previous eighteen months, it was like Christmas and birthday every day of the week! To be fair and to be honest not much has changed. It's still going from strength to strength. You also get repeat business from some referrals.



### “I invoice at least £40k a year from my BNI referrals”

“I knew how to lay floor though and it turned out members at my chapter knew lots of people who needed carpet. As you do a good job it leads to more referrals.

“You also learn about business, I’d never thought of working with estate agents and letting agents before I joined BNI, now I absolutely love them as they are always buying new carpets and flooring, whether to help a house sell, because someone has just moved in, or when tenancies end.

“I find referrals too, I’ve got a massive network of people that I know just from the football coaching I’ve done and I have always told people how BNI saved my business so they know I have access to lots of great services they need.

“My son is now a member of another chapter in Reading; BNI Inspire is much smaller than BNI Central, but is the same size my chapter was when I joined and they promised it would grow and we have over 50 members now.

“If a carpet fitter has the same opportunity to join a chapter of BNI I would say: “Do it! Absolutely do it! It is absolutely fantastic and your business will be too.” It is only right though if you are serious about growing your business, rather than filling your diary for a bit; if you’re not serious, not professional, then don’t bother.

Seriously though, if you want to grow your business and be successful and have people in the room that care about your business, to advise you on your business like they have mine then absolutely go for it because it will be the best thing you've ever done.

“Apart from BNI and an £80 sticker I put on my van, I don’t do any advertising and I invoice at least £40,000 a year from my BNI referrals.”

#### Contact Alan Charlton

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### Find your local BNI meeting...

To find your local BNI meeting please visit [www.bni.co.uk](http://www.bni.co.uk) and enter your postcode.

BNI is the most successful business networking referral organisation in the world. We have thousands of members in the UK and Ireland, passing hundreds of thousands of referrals worth over millions of pounds every year!

