



Real Member Stories

Chiropractor



BNI helped me get the business away from ‘me’ and into the clinic ...”

Case Study: Sandie Thorkeldson of Afon House

A chiropractor with 15 years’ membership of BNI explains how the networking organization allowed her to transform her business and really focus on the clients she wanted and how it proved a game changer when the recession hit. Dr. Sandie Thorkeldson, known in BNI Berkshire and Wiltshire as the ‘cracking good chiropractor’ takes up the story:

“Before BNI I’d never looked at the business any other way apart from responding to people who phoned for treatment. Of course, when you start up in business your phone never stops ringing but it’s not customers. It is people looking to sell advertising! You had to be in the Yellow Pages for people to find you. It was tough. Then an invitation to BNI comes along and I thought, ‘this could work’.

“My journey has been because of BNI, so over fifteen years I have created a good way towards where I want to be because of BNI; I’ve learnt a lot and one of the things I did get from BNI was excellent business trainer, a great business coach and who I’ve had for years now. He was in my first chapter.

“BNI helped me get the business away from ‘me’ and into the clinic because I could go and network but then anybody I talked to, wanted to see me. Anybody who works with me then doesn’t get any business, so I end up busy and they’re sat twirling their thumbs. BNI taught me how to sell the business rather than selling myself.

“BNI offers training and all that sort of thing, and it makes you plan. If you’ve got to go to a meeting and say this is what I’m looking for, you’ve got to know what you’re looking for. In BNI you’ve got to learn who you’re looking for and it absolutely it teaches you that, so you know, and it makes you then you can plan the future.

“When I started I got referrals quite quickly, the usual thing you start treating people around the table. They want to know before they send anybody in to be murdered by me they will come in themselves to make sure that I’m not going to rip their head off or their arms off or whatever, and then once they’ve got a little bit more confidence in what I do then they’ll send other people in, but yes it was quite quick.

“Around 20-25% of our patients are came via BNI”

“When the recession hit, I changed my focus completely and while we had a lot of people who played golf and people who did horse riding, on the TV they showed people in the Bahamas playing polo. All the people have disappeared off to the West Indies it was saying, taken all the money with them.

“I went to BNI and I and I said: ‘I'm looking for polo players,’ and one of the visitors said: ‘oh, one of the ladies I talked to at the school gate, her husband has some polo ponies and her husband and sons play polo.’ I asked: ‘well can I have an introduction?’

From there and we ended up being practice chiropractors on the world beach polo and got a contact into our local polo club and then you get all the contacts that go with all the people who play polo.

“People have lot of money invested, so they want to be fit enough to play, they don't want that sitting there and not being able to play and get a lot of shoulder injuries and that sort of stuff. It's like golf on horseback back and it's very much a contact sport.

“Anybody and everybody can get clients in networking at BNI, but you've got to be to prepare to play the game. Learn the game, play the game, make it work for you. It's a system, so you just play the system, there's no shame in playing the system with BNI. That's what makes it work, whether you are a chiropractor or a plumber.

“Honestly, it is difficult to say how much business comes from BNI, because these days we have so many patients who are our friends and family of BNI members from a decade ago. But I wouldn't be at all surprised if it is something like 20-25 per cent of our patients are originally via BNI.”

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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!