



## Real Member Stories Beauty Salon



**BNI follows an agenda which  
has been proven for 35 years...**

**Case Study: Tony Virgo-Harris of Virgo Beauty Ltd**

Tony Virgo-Harris and his wife Sarah run Virgo Beauty Limited, an award-winning beauty salon in the heart of Goring village. Started as a mobile beauty business in 1992, the business has grown into a thriving salon, with six full time therapists and a receptionist, and Tony overseeing brand awareness and promotions. We spoke to Tony about the impact BNI has had on the growth of their family run business:

“I first got involved in BNI when the regional Director Consultant decided that this area needed a chapter and invited me along to another meeting to see what it was all about. I’ll admit that at first, I was reticent about networking, due to past, pressurising experiences, but I saw the potential that the BNI structure and system offered, and how each group had a personality of its own.

“Being part of the core group for a new chapter really appealed to me, and as a result, I became VP – Vice President - of the new ‘Streatley Champions’, of which I’m now President. Our group is very relaxed and amiable, and whilst we do of course follow the format and have the core BNI beliefs, we pride ourselves on creating a welcoming environment that people join because they truly understand the benefits and want to be part of it.

“When I first joined BNI I had another business, but for the last 6 months I’ve taken a seat at the beauty salon, and BNI has provided a fantastic opportunity for us to advocate our business. We’ve always had a strong local reputation but having 20 people in a room who are spreading the word and embody the same high standard we set for ourselves – it’s like having a professional marketing team working for us!

“The part of BNI I enjoy most is sitting down and having a conversation with peers and business owners with the same mindset. For me that’s what matters – the support. If I’m having a bad week, I know I can pick up the phone to colleagues I can rely on to share my problems, but also, importantly to celebrate my wins!

“In my first year with BNI, I set myself a goal to generate £20,000 of business through referrals, and if I’d achieved that I would have been really happy. As it happened, I exceeded that goal by around £6,000! In my second year, as part of a different kind of business, my goals were slightly different, and yet my annual subscription has already been paid back three times over.

### “BNI has provided a fantastic opportunity for us to advocate our business”

“What I would say to others in the health and wellness industry is that BNI is a great opportunity for you to open up your shop window to a much broader audience. The other business owners in the room will not only become colleagues but potential customers too, and loyal advocates of your brand. That’s essential when you sell an experience or luxury services because word of mouth matters so much. We regularly get referrals 2 or 3 steps down the line from people in the room at BNI, because people tell their friends about their great experiences, so the potential reach is huge!

“And the reach doesn’t stop at your chapter either; one of the unique benefits of BNI is their bespoke mobile app, which really sets the bar for interactivity and accessibility. The app allows you to pass on referrals, thank someone for business and register 121s with other members, as well as connecting you with huge, international network of business owners in every field. So, if you need a reliable referral, and there’s no one in your chapter, you can find the contacts in your broader BNI network. The power of that is huge and something other networking groups can’t offer, and that’s because of the huge investment BNI has made in their technology and systems.

“In my opinion, what ultimately separates BNI from other networking groups is that BNI follows an agenda which has been proven for 35 years; but within that structure they still allow you to be an individual. I regularly visit other chapters and the wonderful thing is that whilst each chapter follows the same format, they’re run by very different individuals, so every meeting feels unique. BNI is a very recognisable brand, which is important and lends credibility to your business by being part of it.”

#### Contact Tony Virgo-Harris

Call: 01491 874202

Email: [tvh750@btinternet.com](mailto:tvh750@btinternet.com)

Visit: [www.virgobeauty.co.uk](http://www.virgobeauty.co.uk)

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