



Visitor Day Etiquette

The BNI Oregon & SW Washington Director Team has been doing Joint and Single Chapter Visitors Days to help their members develop long-term referral sources for several years. Chapter members who get behind the process and support the effort will see their membership grow by anywhere from 4 to 17 members in one day; the average is 8.

Here are some guidelines, for members, to make the event a stellar one.

Two BNI Directors will run the event for you.

You may not know one (or possibly both) of the 2 directors, but their goal is to:

1. Tell the visitors what BNI is.
2. Show them how it works.
3. Show them how they can lock out the competition with the application. (i.e. encourage them to apply for membership!) This means more members in your chapter to pass referrals to and get business from.

What to do to make event day stress-free:

1. Get there EARLY. 6:00 am to 6:15 am is the best.

Why? Because the room could be set up wrong, and the more bodies we have to move tables and chairs, the better. (This has happened more than once!) Also, the director can give their assignments earlier. There are a lot of people that will be needed to help out. Don't be offended if the directors seem to be taking charge and asking for quick assistance in getting things accomplished. There is a lot of coordinating that goes on at this time, and done fast.

People will be needed as: greeters, guides to the registration table, the registration table, directing toward the name badge table (across the room), working the name badge table, and "minglers." Also there will be two requested to show how to pass referrals (tier 1 and tier 2) during the meeting, and also two to give testimonials (on how being a part of BNI has affected their business).

2. You will want to gab with your friends; keep it brief and focus on the guests.
3. Make the guests the star. Let them do the talking, and hook them up with someone in their contact sphere if you can. You can talk about yourself when they join your chapter.
4. Sit with the guests, not more than a couple members of your chapter. Keep it to 1-2 members per chapter, at each table if possible.
5. Be quiet once the directors start the presentation.
6. Remember: EVERYONE PAYS at a Visitors Day. When you invite the guests, you will be letting them know what they will pay. Members will also pay at the door. There are reasons for this:
 - a. **We have to be able to pay for the venue and food.** In the case of the venues, we (BNI staff) go out and get contracts in place to pay for the Visitors Day venues and catering; this includes making a down payment to reserve the location. A simple continental breakfast is provided to attendees at the events. The way we PAY FOR the room and the food is through the fee.
 - b. **When visitors pay the fee to attend, they are demonstrating that they see the "value" of being introduced to a system that will help them gain new business by referral.** One question that successful chapters ask themselves is, "would we rather have someone attend our Visitor Day that wants to get a free breakfast, or would we rather have someone attend our Visitors Day that wants to learn how to do business with us?" The meeting has value. The charge is not a secret; it's on the invitation letter! *Side note: the fee is not the issue with chapters that make this work; the issue is "do members get behind the process of inviting; do they see the value in having more visitors who are*

interested in doing business?", if members are proud of what they have (a strong BNI referral network), they will MAKE THIS WORK!" One chapter two years ago, in Michigan, decided to pay for guests. There were 5 guests in attendance; no applications were submitted. NOT charging the fee actually detracted from the message members wanted to send ... the message being, "we want to do business with other strong business professionals, if you want to learn how to do business as we do, by referral, then we invite you to attend." Final thought (why to NOT pay for guests): to some extent payment of the meeting shows commitment and we want people who understand the value of BNI to attend and make application.

The most important one!

7. DO NOT MOVE OR SPEAK during the "close" or when the director is going over how to fill out the application, step by step. Potential members may be still deciding if they want to spend the money and they should not have distractions during this time. If you need to use the restroom, go and then stay in the hallway until the application review is done. You can get more food and coffee later.
8. If you are the President, the director will call you up and ask you to talk about two things: 1) day/time your chapter meets and 2) chapter/room fees. Keep it brief and don't forget to thank your guests for being there!
9. Enjoy yourself. You've worked hard to get to this day and now you'll have new members to add to your referral network. Breathe a sign of relief!