



Watch for Those Red Flags!

Be aware of “danger signals” that will alert you to issues that arise in your chapter before they become serious problems. Some of these red flags are little ones and some are really serious. You need to catch the little ones before they become serious ones. Be on the lookout for the following red flags. Know how to act when you see these problems:

Red Flags

1. Members and visitors not wearing a name badge
2. An impression of boredom in members during the Sales Manager Moments
3. Cliques developing, with the same people always talking and sitting together
4. Members saying “I pass” at referral/testimonial time or fudging testimonials when they don’t have anything to share
5. Members frequently coming in late
6. Absences without substitutes (within the allowable limit)
7. The Membership Committee decides to selectively apply BNI policy
8. The members, as a group, all agree to not send out the warning letters for absences
9. The agenda is changed to suit the members
10. The Membership Committee is reluctant to let go of any members because they are all friends
11. Dramatic decrease in referrals passed
12. Few visitors; Few or none of the visitors who do come apply for membership
13. The chapter is more concerned with their relationships with each other than with what is best for the chapter in terms of generating referrals. They are no longer focused on doing business; they are now social get-togethers each week.

The DOWNWARD Spiral Results

- Because you have so many people absent, the referrals decrease dramatically.
- Because there are no referrals being passed, the members lose their excitement at the meetings.
- With no excitement at the meetings, visitors who do attend do not see something that they want to get involved with ... so the membership does not grow and referrals continue to decrease.
- Because the Membership Committee will not let go of poor members (aka “their friends”), you are left with a small chapter with a high number of non-contributing members, which makes the referrals drop even further.
- The few good members in the chapter will now get disenchanted and will not renew when they’re up for renewal; so the chapter becomes even smaller with an even greater proportion of non-producing members.
- The chapter now finds that it is almost impossible to replace the members that it has lost and the membership dwindles down even further.
- If the members steadfastly refuse to use the BNI system that they chose as part of their marketing plan, the director is obligated to present some final options:
 - Restart the chapter with the dedicated members who are committed to passing quality referrals with quality business professionals, focusing solely on rebuilding their referral network before beginning to pass referrals again. Members must re-apply and be accepted by the ad hoc Membership Committee.
 - Close the chapter and place the remaining members in good standing in existing chapters with an opening. Members must also go through the application approval process with the new Membership Committee.

To be a BNI Chapter, members must follow the BNI Policies and Code of Ethics and meet certain standards. Chapters are not allowed to just follow the policies they like—it is all or nothing. If the chapter is following the policies, but not generating referrals (almost impossible, but it can happen) the Director may encourage a thorough re-education process to get the chapter back on track. Only if a chapter is in serious violation of BNI Policies or Code of Ethics, or if the chapter is setting an extremely poor example of BNI and not representative of a high-quality referral network using the BNI system, will a Director immediately shut down a chapter. BNI wants to maintain its positive reputation in the marketplace!

The UPWARD Spiral Results

- Members are enthusiastic and participate.
- The meetings are run by the book, and the Membership Committee applies the policies without exceptions.
- Visitors see a structured organized meeting with supportive, excited members. They want to get involved!
- The chapter grows, so more referrals are passed and more visitors are invited.
- The chapter grows more, so more professions are represented and members find it easier to bring weekly referrals.
- There is now so much business being passed around the table each week that nobody wants to miss a meeting.
- The members have now realized how valuable their membership is and they will not jeopardize it by being absent without a substitute or not participating.
- The group has become focused primarily on business, and all the members know it—everybody renews upon renewal dates, and there are very few openings in the group. It becomes self-sustaining.

Try to get all your chapter members into the upward spiral ... it is a lot more fun than the “downward spiral!” Teach your chapter members how to look for those red flags and how to act on them right away.