



# Givers Gain<sup>®</sup> Monthly

## From Our Executive Director

*If January is the month of change, February is the month of lasting change. January is for dreamers...  
February is for doers. – Marc Parent*

**W**ELCOME TO FEBRUARY BNI VERMONT! Lots of snow, a bit of a cold snap, and the sun is creeping higher as our daylight hours get longer. I don't know about you, but plans for the warmer weather are already starting to form in my head!

This month finds your BNI Vermont Team working towards our annual recognition of BNI Vermont members. It is a joy to take the time to recognize Vermont's highest achievers! This year's event will stay virtual to keep everyone safe, and we'll be moving it to [Topia.io/BNI](https://topia.io/BNI) so that all attendees can easily interact with whomever they like. Several of you have asked about moving this celebration to a later date so that we can celebrate in person, and we want to share with you that this isn't an option due to the size of the BNI Vermont Team hosting this event. There are too many large projects throughout the rest of the year for the team to handle the celebration on top of other projects.

We are also pursuing the addition of a workshop called the **Proactive Referral Workshop** for you and your chapter. I was invited to partake of this workshop thanks to BNI Washington DC, and was very impressed by the accessibility and application of the content so that members can give and receive more from their memberships.

We'll be working over the coming weeks to train a team of BNI Vermont members to offer this workshop to you, your chapter, or even at the regional level. Stay tuned!

Thank you for being a part of our BNI Vermont family and enjoy the rest of your February and Happy Networking!



**Vickie Wacek**  
BNI Vermont  
Executive Director

## Monthly Networking Tip: Why? – The Referral Reality Check

[Watch video on YouTube](#)

One of my favorite things about BNI is that there's a story behind everything. Whether we're talking about Continuing Education Units, the Renewal Membership Evaluation form, or anything else we do in BNI, there's a story that birthed the activity. So today I want to share the story behind the **Referral Reality Check**.



The Referral Reality Check was introduced into BNI back in the early 1990's thanks to a remarkable Visitor Host Team. This team was really focused on EVE – Exceptional Visitor Experience. One thing that all exceptional Visitor Host Teams understand is that when visiting our chapters, our visitors

have an experience that is very unique from what we as members experience. They don't have the relationships and comradery that we have, so they are not focused on 'farming' a relationship. Instead, they are focused on the WIIFN – What's In It For Me. Decades back, this Visitor Host Team realized that it was important for visitors to see the referrals that we generate (specifically what is announced during the "I Have..." or "Referrals and Testimonials" portion of our meetings) result in new clients. When the Referral Reality Check is done well, it shows our visitors and substitutes that our group is getting results. And when done with attention to how you and your fellow members are sharing your results, it helps visitors see the benefit of applying for an interview with your chapter. The Referrals Reality Check is mostly for visitors, and also holds an important role in our **Core Value of Accountability**.

When it's your turn to present the Referral Reality Check, really tell a story. Bring this referral to life so that your visitors see the power of your chapter, and your members see the joy you experience in working with the referrals that you give and receive.

- Vickie Wacek, Executive Director, BNI Vermont

## Monthly Zoom Tip: The Black Screen of Death

[Watch video on YouTube](#)

I've come to love and hate this saying in Zoom; *The Black Screen of Death*. I love it because I find it funny in its over dramatization and applicability, and I hate it because of its direct and negative impact on my experience working with so many Vermont professionals.

If you've been on a video call, you've experienced one or more people clicking out of their video throughout the meeting. Of course they have their reasons (bad connection, children, pets, or they simply don't want to see their own video), yet those reasons are rarely shared to create transparency. And if the reason was shared, it was shared once, 3 months ago, but never mentioned again, resulting in visitors having no idea why you never show up to the meeting.

The purpose of these networking tips is to help you find joy and success in your networking efforts! So today's tip is about the importance of having your video on at all times during any video meeting you attend. And when life makes it difficult to attend via video, try out these ideas to help you:

- Bad internet connection? Drive to your local library and access their wifi from your car!
- Kids being rambunctious? Try the previous idea, or schedule your meetings and childcare so that they overlap.
- Don't want to watch yourself on video? Right-click on your video image and choose the Hide Self View option. That will allow everyone to see you without you having to see yourself.

The key here is to take your video meetings seriously. Recognize the repeated negative impacts that you send when you turn off your video. And let's see a drastic and positive impact on your networking with your attentive, smiling face via video!

- Vickie Wacek, Executive Director, BNI Vermont

# Continuing Education

## BNI Resources

Have you ever been interested in accessing the BNI Logo? Maybe you missed a recent BNI Webinar to help you learn how to use BNI Connect? What if you would prefer the Givers Gain book you received in the Members Success Program, in audio format? Visit [Support.BNIConnect.com](http://Support.BNIConnect.com) Why not take a few minutes right now to check out what this site has in store for you!

## Member Success Program

The BNI **Member Success Program** is an online course for all new members to support their first 60 days of membership. Its accessibility through [BNIUniversity.com](http://BNIUniversity.com) means that the entire course can be accomplished via the BNI University App on your phone, as well as through the website. Because the workshop is virtual, it can be tackled at a pace that fits each new member (as long as it's completed within 60 days). **Cost:** Covered by annual membership dues.

For those of you that have completed the online BNI Member Success Program, we highly recommend that you follow it up with the **New Member Skills Workshop**. In this workshop you will gain real-life skills to build your business through BNI, including honing your Weekly Presentations and Feature Presentations, learning best practices for 1-2-1's, and discovering ways to effectively use your Contact Spheres. **Cost:** Covered by annual membership dues.

**Chapter Success Programs** are offered individually for each chapter so that all members can easily access the program annually as part of their membership. Each Chapter Success Program is geared to the needs and interests of each chapter and evolves from year-to-year. Check with your Leadership Team for the date of your next Chapter Success Program! **Cost:** Covered by annual membership dues.

The **Advanced Member Success Program** is advanced training available twice a year (May and November) for members looking to take their networking skills to a much higher level. It's recommended for members with 6 months or more of membership and features 5 workshops offered over 5 consecutive days. The program is not offered per workshop and can only be purchased and participated in full. **Cost:** \$250.00. To set up a payment plan for the workshop, contact Vickie Wacek at [Vickie@BNIVermont.com](mailto:Vickie@BNIVermont.com)

### 2021 New Member Skills Workshops

**March 29** · 4:00 – 6:00 pm

**May 31** · 4:00 – 6:00 pm

**July 26** · 4:00 – 6:00 pm

### Advanced Member Success Program Monday – Friday, May 24 – May 28, 2021

1:00 – 3:00 pm via Zoom

#### Location for all Workshops:

Virtually hosted until further notice

## Podcasts

### Remember to log your CEUs on BNI Connect:

1 Podcast = 1 CEU

### BNI Headquarters & Dr. Ivan Misner, Ph.D.

Each Wednesday, BNI Founder, Dr. Ivan Misner posts a Podcast featuring tips on Word-of-Mouth Networking.

**January 13:** [Episode 689:](#) The Only Difference Between Online and Offline is the Spelling

**January 20:** [Episode 690:](#) Networking Strategies for Introverts

**January 27:** [Episode 691:](#) Giving is Transformational

**February 3:** [Episode 692:](#) Just Ask

**February 10:** [Episode 693:](#) Givers Gain® and Storytelling

### Additional Podcasts

BNI New Hampshire Executive Director, Tim Roberts, has been presenting his own BNI based podcasts for a couple years. Check out the **BNI & The Power of One** and **Success Through Referrals** Podcasts by visiting your podcast provider, such as Stitcher, Castbox, Spotify, and more.



**Elizabeth Davidson**

*BNI VT  
Ambassador*

## **An Exceptional Community**

*By Elizabeth Davidson, BNI VT Ambassador*

A typical thing to hear as you are becoming a member of BNI is that the first year is the hardest. You're building relationships, people are getting to know your business, and if you get any referrals they will likely be from your chapter members. For me, my first year was better than that. Referrals came quickly and I found my chapter was trustworthy and easy to refer to. Now, completing my fifth year of membership I've found that each year brings new insights, a big one being that BNI is so much more than referrals. What it is really about is community. This year has been a tough one for community. The main theme of isolation has strained business health and emotional health for almost all of us. For those who don't have BNI in their lives I can only imagine it's been worse. My little corner of BNI may be more innovative and compassionate than other corners, but what I've seen is BNI building community even more than before. The quick transition to zoom left most of us with little or no break in our BNI meetings. The lack of in person time motivated creativity on how to stay connected (adding less formal lunch meetings and cocktail hours). The shifts in our individual businesses inspired our members to innovate on solutions so we could all stay in business. The transitions and adaptations made were well supported. My business made a huge adaptation this year. When suddenly, as a chiropractor, I couldn't put my hands on people, my shift was suggested by one of my fellow members and supported by the rest. I'm now thriving in my new business that has a national reach while teaching classes that build community around improving health from home. I also watched a cake maker who was suddenly unable to make cakes adapt her business to include online baking and cooking classes. These classes are accessible for all ages, and a way to bring families and communities together in a fun way. I am sure there are many similar stories and I would love to hear them!

With BNI being online, distance has shrunk. We can now access meetings all over the world, set up 1-2-1s with anyone, and build relationships everywhere. Plus, it's super easy to invite visitors with no logistics except some functioning internet. The value of BNI is so great, especially proven this year, and sharing the opportunity is a gift to anyone willing to accept it. BNI is truly global now and it's exciting to build BNI community in addition to the local community we have always been committed to. I've attended all of our state-wide meetings, plus meetings around the US and Canada.

I'm grateful for the continuity and consistency BNI has provided, for the innovation and support my BNI community continues to give, and for the community we continue to build. BNI, which is its members, has really stepped up to the plate this year and changed the way the world does business.

## **About the Author**

### **Queen City BNI**

Meets Wednesdays, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Queen City BNI Virtual Meeting Room

**Current Roles:** Ambassador with BNI Vermont,  
Membership Committee with Queen City BNI

**Past Roles:** Vice President, Education Coordinator, Visitor Host

# Events

## New Chapters Forming!

**Bennington**

**Brattleboro**

**Grand Isle**

**Manchester**

**Rutland**

**St. Johnsbury**

**Stowe** – Contact Heather with interested professionals!

**Waitsfield**

**Woodstock** – Contact Erin with interested professionals!

### Contact Chapter Launch Directors

**Heather Belanger** 802-233-9737, Heather@BNIVermont.com

**Erin Perrin** 802-871-5965, Erin@BNIVermont.com

**Vickie Wacek** 802-557-0111, Vickie@BNIVermont.com

## Event Calendar

Join BNI members from across the state and the world for webinars, trainings and networking events to enrich your BNI experience by boosting your visibility and perspective!

[www.BNIVermont.com/Events.php](http://www.BNIVermont.com/Events.php)

### FEBRUARY

**2/22 National Speed Networking**

12:00 – 1:00 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**2/23 What is BNI? Interest Meeting**

Curious about BNI? Come learn what we are all about!

11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**2/23 The Business Experience Series – What Do You Do? (Elevator Pitches)**

3:00 – 5:00 pm, Virtual Zoom Meeting Room

### MARCH

**3/9 What is BNI? Interest Meeting**

Curious about BNI? Come learn what we are all about!

11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/10 Wealth Builders BNI Chapter Success Program**

10:30 am – 1:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/11 Crossroads BNI Chapter Success Program**

10:30 am – 1:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/15 Middlebury BNI Chapter Success Program**

10:30 am – 1:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/22 National Speed Networking**

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/23 What is BNI? Interest Meeting**

Curious about BNI? Come learn what we are all about!

11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/25 Unlocking the Secrets of the Power of One Report**

3:00 – 5:00 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**3/29 New Member Skills Workshop**

4:00 – 6:00 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

### APRIL

**4/2 8<sup>th</sup> Annual BNI Vermont Awards Banquet - Virtual**

We announce our 2020 Rockstar Members

5:30 – 8:30 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**4/7 Queen City BNI Chapter Success Program**

8:00 – 11:00 am, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

**4/13 Prestige BNI Chapter Success Program**

10:00 am – 1:00 pm, Zoom Virtual Meeting Room

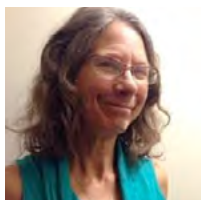
[Register for Events](#)



# Member Recognition

## BNI Member Profile of the Week

Each week we feature one BNI Vermont Member on all of our social media outlets. If you would like to be considered for this opportunity, be sure to visit [www.BNIConnect.com](http://www.BNIConnect.com) and update your User Profile in full, including your headshot, company logo, business description, T.O.P.S. Profile and G.A.I.N.S. Profile.



**Barbara Alpert**  
*Health Coach*  
**Shabda Wellness**  
Crossroads BNI, Berlin



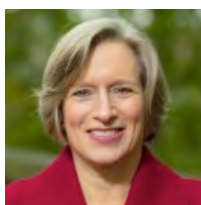
**Jackie Budgor**  
*Residential Cleaning*  
**Blue Lotus Cleaning**  
Champlain Valley BNI, South Burlington



**Julia Wilk**  
*Web Design*  
**Word + Web**  
Heart of Vermont BNI, Montpelier



**Michael Hughart**  
*Commercial Insurance*  
**Kinney Insurance**  
Integrity BNI, Essex



**Sue Hoxie**  
*Marketing*  
**Maple Run Marketing**  
Middlebury BNI, Middlebury



January 2021 Champlain Connections BNI Chapter Membership Success Program attendees.

# Member Recognition

## Monthly Member Traffic Lights Report PERFECT SCORES OF 100!

**Mollie Lannen**

CW Print & Design, Queen City BNI

**Gina Buchanan**

Buchanan Virtual Office LLC, The Masters BNI

**Julia Wilk**

Word & Web, Heart of Vermont BNI

**Timothy Monty**

Financial Professional Associates, Integrity BNI

**John Borch**

Real Property Management Sterling, Wealth Builders BNI

**John Jacob**

Lendio, Wealth Builders BNI

**Justin Loati**

La Panciata, Crossroads BNI

**Tracy Stolese**

Shelburne Gift Company, The Masters BNI

## Chapters In The Green - January 2021

### CONGRATULATIONS TO Champlain Connections BNI, Burlington SCORE OF 85 - Highest in Chapter's History

To access your Chapter's Traffic Lights Report, go to:  
BNICconnect.com -> Reports -> Chapter -> Chapter Traffic Lights

## 6 Months Perfect Attendance

**Aaron Barton**

Extensity Creative, Champlain Connections BNI

**Adam Ashe**

Ashe Insurance, Champlain Connections BNI

**Alan Kinney**

Kinney Insurance, Prestige BNI

**Alex Duval**

Wendell's Furniture, The Masters BNI

**Alice Lissarrague**

Lissarrague College Guidance, Shelburne BNI

**Allison Bogan**

Precision Chiropractic, Shelburne BNI

**Amy Crawford**

Clover Ridge Media, Integrity BNI

**Barbara Alpert**

Shabda Wellness, Crossroads BNI

**Bob Boucher**

Dependable Cleaning, Middlebury BNI

**Brian Miller**

Green Mountain Resolution, Integrity BNI

**Caroline Matte**

Freelance Graphic Design, Champlain Connections BNI

**Caroline S. Earle**

Earle & Freeman PLC, Crossroads BNI

**Catherine Moller**

Sidepony Boutique, Champlain Connections BNI

**Christine Golden**

Golden Consulting LLC, Champlain Connections BNI

**Corey Hevrin**

The Vermont Agency, Champlain Connections BNI

**David Hills**

Waypoint Management Services, Middlebury BNI

**Erik Kolomaznik**

CK Financial, Shelburne BNI

# 6 Months Perfect Attendance (cont.)

**Erin Perrin**

Academy Mortgage Corporation, Queen City BNI

**Geoff Garrow**

Symmytree LLC, The Masters BNI

**Gillian Franks**

Feldenkrais with Gillian Franks, Shelburne BNI

**Gina Buchanan**

Buchanan Virtual Office LLC, The Masters BNI

**Jackie Budgor**

Blue Lotus Cleaning, Champlain Valley BNI

**Jay Vallieres**

Movement Mortgage, Champlain Connections BNI

**Jessica Hall**

Inspire Physical Therapy, Champlain Connections BNI

**Jessica Hubis**

Missing Piece Bakery, Prestige BNI

**John Borch**

Real Property Management Sterling, Wealth Builders BNI

**Julia Wilk**

Work & Web Design, Heart of Vermont BNI

**Julie Goodall**

Genesis Consulting, Shelburne BNI

**Justin Loati**

La Panciata, Crossroads BNI

**Kate O'Malley**

Juice Plus+, The Masters BNI

**Kate Tucker**

Hall Communications, Queen City BNI

**Kylie Billings**

Professional Financial Associates, LLC, Integrity BNI

**Larry Gilbert**

Vermont Security, Heart of Vermont BNI

**Larry Hawley**

The Vermont Agency, Prosperity BNI

**Lisa Taft Sylvester**

Interrobang Design Collaborative, Inc., Queen City BNI

**Mary Catherine Jones**

Voice Over Vermont, Champlain Connections BNI

**Matt Stevers**

White Oak Construction, Middlebury BNI

**Michael Sealy**

BTV Creative, Champlain Valley BNI

**Nicholas Roop**

Commonwealth Financial Group, Prosperity BNI

**Paul Richardson**

StoryWorkz Photography, Crossroads BNI

**Reed Prescott III**

Prescott Galleries @ Verde Mountain, Middlebury BNI

**Richard Fox**

Law Office of Richard J. Fox PLLC, Champlain Connections BNI

**Robert Caneco**

Robert A Caneco R.A., Champlain Valley BNI

**Robert Diaco**

Sign-A-Rama, Wealth Builders BNI

**Scott Weigand**

Brave Coffee and Tea, Crossroads BNI

**Sharon Grimes**

Sharon Grimes Accounting, LLC, Heart of Vermont BNI

**Steve Hartmann**

Affiliated Associates, The Masters BNI

**Terry Wetmore**

Liberty Mutual, Integrity BNI

**Timothy Monty**

Professional Financial Associates, LLC, Integrity BNI

**Tracy Stolese**

Shelburne Gift Company, The Masters BNI

**Alison Pigeon**

Branding Solutions, Queen City BNI



# 6 Months Perfect Attendance (cont.)

**Gayle Grim**

Chellis Insurance Inc, Shelburne BNI

**Katie Paquette**

Moments by Kate, Wealth Builders BNI

**Mike Quinlan**

Clover Ridge Media, Middlebury BNI

**Natanya Lara**

Natanya Lara Energy Healer, Shelburne BNI

**Randolph Rowland**

Teamwork LLC, Shelburne BNI

**Robin Freeman**

Earle & Freeman PLC, Heart of Vermont BNI

**Tom Fagan**

Carpenter & Costin, Middlebury BNI

**Aubrey Carpentier**

JoAnn's Uniforms & Embroidery Works, The Masters BNI

**Kristy Benoit**

Balance to Thrive in Wellness, LLC, The Masters BNI

**Jack Kell**

Kell & Company Real Estate, The Masters BNI

## New Members – January 2021

**Deb Chisholm**

Deb Chisholm Coaching, Champlain Connections BNI

**Rebekah Owens**

Tiny Home Helper, Crossroads BNI

**Alyssa Deutsch**

Vermont Mortgage Company, The Masters BNI

**Amanda Starr**

Amanda Starr Photography, Integrity BNI

**Georgia Dennis-DeVries**

Blue Sky Counseling LLC, Wealth Builders BNI

**Rich Jones**

Rich Jones State Farm, Heart of Vermont BNI

## Renewed Members – January 2021

**Paul Richardson**

Storyworkz, Crossroads BNI

**Marc Wiener**

Wiener & Slater Law Offices, PLLC, The Masters BNI

**Soren Pfeffer**

Central Vermont Real Estate, Heart of Vermont BNI

**David Gold**

Edward Jones, Crossroads BNI

**Daren Austin**

Working Fields, Crossroads BNI

**Richard Nelson**

Peachtree Builders Inc., Queen City BNI

**Janina Kotulich**

Red Poppy Cakery, Queen City BNI

**Jodi Lawaich**

The Write Stuff VT, Queen City BNI

**David Rose**

Rose Computers, Champlain Connections BNI

**Jessica Hall**

Inspire Physical Therapy, Champlain Connections BNI

**Madigan Rollins**

Synergy Home Care, Shelburne BNI

**Charlie Goodman**

Goodman Construction, Crossroads BNI

**Marie Shepherd**

Keller Williams Realty, Crossroads BNI

# Member Recognition

## Welcome to the BNI Vermont Team



**Jodi Lawaich**, owner of **The Write Stuff VT** and member of **Queen City BNI** has recently joined the BNI Vermont Team as our Regional Social Media Coordinator! Jodi will be overseeing BNI Vermont's numerous social media platforms so Vermont professionals and their businesses can gain more visibility through our 1,000+ social media followers.

Jodi just celebrated her second year of BNI membership, holding the Webmaster role in her chapter and maintaining her reign as the member with the highest average of 1-2-1's over her entire membership! We are very proud to have Jodi's expertise on the BNI Vermont Team to create an even greater impact for all BNI Vermont Members!

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## How Do You Givers Gain®?

BNI Vermont is always interested in working with motivated Vermont professionals to continue the important role of supporting Vermont businesses through referrals! If you are interested in learning more about becoming a part of the BNI Vermont Team as an Ambassador, Coordinator Specialist, or Director Consultant, contact Executive Director, Vickie Wacek, at [Vickie@BNIVermont.com](mailto:Vickie@BNIVermont.com).



*January 2021 New Member Skills Workshop Attendees.*

## Important Links

[www.BNIVermont.com](http://www.BNIVermont.com)

[www.BNI.com](http://www.BNI.com)

## BNI Chapter Facebook Pages

Take a moment to “LIKE” other chapter’s Facebook pages to keep up to date on information and events across the region!

**Champlain Connections BNI**

**Champlain Valley BNI**

**Crossroads BNI**

**Heart of Vermont BNI**

**Integrity BNI**

**Middlebury BNI**

**Prestige BNI**

**Prosperity BNI**

**Queen City BNI**

**The Masters BNI**

**Shelburne BNI**

**Wealth Builders BNI**



## **BNI Vermont**

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[www.BNIVermont.com](http://www.BNIVermont.com)

# **BNI**

*Changing the Way the World Does Business®*