

CREDIT CRUNCH... HOW CAN WE HELP?

With the CBI claiming this is the toughest economic year since 1992 and with the number of businesses suffering in the current economic climate rising, don't forget Bforb has a proven track record of helping businesses through such times.

We all know business networking has never been so important and is a much more cost-effective method of marketing but many businesses are looking at cost-saving initiatives and generally the first to be hit is marketing.



Businesses however need to continue to have a "voice" in the marketplace to ensure they are top of their game and top of mind when the country comes through this crisis so if any of your members seem despondent about their membership or aren't attending your groups on a regular basis, now is the time to remind them that a business referral generates 80% more business than a cold call and of the following specific benefits of being a Bforb member;

- Allows them to create new business contacts without impinging on their working day
- It's a structured and supportive networking environment
- It promotes the sharing of collective business experience and knowledge
- It's an important and invaluable way to attract new clients, suppliers and strategic alliances to offer a broader and more dynamic service
- It's made up of like-minded people that really want to make a difference to each other's business. This in effect gives businesses an additional sales force and marketing voice as Bforb members go about their own business while actively looking for opportunities to pass on each other's details to potential clients.
- It's worth on average an additional £25,000 of business to its members!

Bforb offers business people an opportunity to be one very big and smart step ahead of their competitors so make sure your members are really benefiting.

BforB™ GOES LIVE

Yes we've gone live and had a promotional DVD produced which talks about the benefits of Bforb™.

The DVD is being used for franchisee recruitment but is also available to all our franchisees for promotional purposes.

You should all have had a copy by email and can burn this on to DVD to send to members. If you haven't received the email, please send us an email to let us know.

DID YOU KNOW?

"You can propose a change on any of our existing designs, letter templates, variation of meeting formats by using the "Bright Ideas Form" within Section C, Page 65, Process of Initiating Change in the Operations Manual.

Welcome!

We are delighted to announce the expansion of BforB with three new Franchisee's joining the team.

Alan Ward will cover Sheffield, **Janet Malphus** in Peterborough and **Rob Webb** will assume the role for Manchester City Centre.

We welcome each of you on board and look forward to hearing how your groups are succeeding.



SPOTLIGHT ON FRANCHISEES



Congratulations to our three top franchisees. Stuart Prentice of Prentice Communications in Wakefield has been voted by Head Office as the "Franchisee of the Month" for the last month! During this time, Stuart has been consistently in the top three for Highest Membership and Highest Turnover as well as being up to date with all required paperwork, returns calls when contacted and follows up the leads passed through immediately with update reports. Congratulations to Stuart.



We'd also like to congratulate Nick Starbuck of Limelight Networks in Surrey and Ryan Tobias of Ryto Services in Bedford, who top the polls on turnover and number of members in the last quarter.



Our recent report on web generated leads was extremely encouraging. 323 membership enquiries have been forwarded to relevant franchisees from head office, which if all converted to members is worth a staggering £128,554.

As the summer holidays are usually a quieter time for business, we look forward to seeing a fresh impetus for all of you once September starts. But look out for our article on page x on how you can help your members beat the credit crunch which we hope will be of interest.

Franchise Network News



TOP LINE INDUSTRY COMMENT

One good thing I find excellent about being well connected in the business arena, apart from generating referred business, is picking up one or two good business tips that might be the only missing elements that can stop businesses from succeeding or save a company from failing! It is a fact that nearly 5 small business go out of business before their third year anniversary. This is not mainly because of shortage of customers but mostly lack of required skills from the part of the business owner to pull the business together during tough and complicated stages.

I'd like to share my helpful 7 tips to increase your customer base. These are all tips useful to assist the growth of your business. If you are already doing them, it's good to know that you are not alone as we have implemented these processes and know they work. If you have done them before, this might be just a reminder that maybe it's time to do it again? And if you have not done them, maybe now is the time to try.

SEVEN WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR CUSTOMER BASE

1. More Leads – there are number of methods to create more leads from direct mail to a telemarketing campaign, paid advertising and free publicity. All should produce more prospects for you to sell your sales story to.

2. Increase Conversions - Develop your skills by working on your conversion scripts while with prospective customers, get better at what you do. Check that the customers you have are likely to want to buy from you, try to upgrade or attract better prospects.

3. Reduce Customer Loss – Don't let your existing customer slip away to your competitors, statistics show for every 5% increase in customer retention a business can enjoy 30 to 40% increase in profits over a 12 to 18

month period. Most business lose approximately 20% of customers per year, leaving you with 80%, a slight increase to 85% should bring in the increased profit mentioned earlier. Remember that it costs approximately 6 times more to generate new customers than it does to keep an existing one, it's also easier to sell to existing customers.

4. Get Referrals – We all know about this one! Getting new customers through referrals is probably the most cost effective method to business growth. Referrals from your good customers will make it so much easier because they become "warm contacts", also cutting out the valuable time taken to generate the credibility required to do business.

5. Develop a Reward Programme – Provide a procedure to enable clients to take time out to tell others about doing business with you, simple but effective items like product or services you provide which can be reduced or free. This also creates interest in your product portfolio, or simple things like gift vouchers, local passes to cinemas or products of another Business For Breakfast forum member. (ie. Beauty treatments, spa or aromatherapies etc.)

6. Rejuvenate Past Customers – Contact and visit former customers who have slipped through the net. In simple terms they may have succumbed to offers from other suppliers then stayed purely for no other reason than you didn't chase or contact. It would be easier to sell to someone you did business with in the past who has experienced a working relationship with your company than starting from scratch with someone new.

7. Piggy Back Principle – Develop a strategy to find companies who already operate in the market you would like to enter. By establishing joint ventures you could create additional business by arranging reciprocal arrangements benefiting both suppliers and end users.

THE POWER OF PUBLIC RELATIONS



In the meantime, Kara has outlined a basic introduction to the principles of PR which includes some helpful hints and tips to help you maximise your coverage in the media;

Where to start?

The first step of any PR campaign is to remember that your plans need to be long term to keep the awareness high of your group, so make a note of key dates for possible news stories throughout the year. It is easy though to be thrown off course by an attractive opportunity that might well not reach any of your key audiences, so check before you do anything that it fits with your objectives

Press Releases

Press releases are a successful PR tool for delivering information, using the media to get your message across to your target audience. But you need to have a story that is newsworthy.

So what is news? News is something quirky, a human-interest angle or business success stories. News does not have to be recent – if it has never been published before it is “news”. Nevertheless, one does have to be aware of old news; a newspaper will seldom report an event that happened days ago. Simple it may sound, but without a story of interest to newspaper readers and radio listeners, journalists won’t be interested. And remember something that may seem of vital importance to you and your colleagues may not be of the slightest interest to the world at large.

Who to target?

The media is made up of different types of printed, broadcast and online publications. Be honest about your release when compiling its distribution list. Is it of interest to regional press or just a local story of interest to the local community? When issuing releases to your local media, don’t overlook your local radio station as they are always on the lookout for interesting stories.

Check you are sending the release to the right person by looking through the publications you’re targeting as editors and journalists change jobs regularly. All publications feature their address, telephone

For any business involved in today’s competitive world, Public Relations (PR) is essential for building and protecting a company’s image and reputation.

PR means different things to different people. It is about developing and maintaining good relationships and attitudes with people connected directly or indirectly with your business.

PR is not a form of advertising and is in fact a much bigger activity than advertising. PR embraces everyone and everything, whereas advertising is limited to special selling and buying tasks such as promoting goods, buying supplies or recruiting staff. PR is essentially about supplying information on your company or product to educate and inform the people you and your business has contact with.

Bforb™‘aa has employed Kara Rose PR, a full service public relations consultancy specialising in the consumer and business to business markets, to handle our corporate PR on a national level. Kara Rose PR is undertaking a campaign to raise awareness of the Bforb™‘aa brand and the opportunities and benefits of becoming a franchisee.

With national based clients, Kara Rose PR offers the full range of PR services and is able to assist our franchisees on a local and regional level for an additional fee. If you would be interested in learning more, please contact Kara Rose at Kara Rose PR on 07985 166480.

number, email address and contact names usually within the first two pages. If in doubt about who to send the release to, address it to the news editor.

Deadlines

Press releases often don’t get coverage because they miss the deadlines, which depend on the type of publication;

- Is it daily, weekly, twice weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually?
- The number of editions is also important. Morning papers print from 10pm till 4am, evening papers start printing from 9.30am for the lunchtime edition.
- Most local weekly newspapers and freesheets go to print on a Tuesday, so ideally need stories on a Thursday or Friday.
- Monthly business magazines have a deadline of at least six weeks in advance of publication.
- Radio stations like their “news” items by 7.00am at the very latest. Radio stations have a high number of listeners during drive time to and from work so you need to make sure you capitalise on this.

Photography

If you want to send a photograph to the media, you must make sure it’s not too big to email – if you “crash” the journalist’s email he won’t use your story however good it is! The maximum size you should send is 2MB.

Make sure your email includes a caption for the photograph, with the names matching the people on the picture, giving titles and a clear indication of who everyone is from left to right.

Don’t send a photograph to a radio station!



BforB™ COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

In the last newsletter, we said we would keep you updated on the findings of the communications audit and I’d like to share with you the top line findings, as well as some of the solutions we will be implementing.

Background

We asked our franchisees how they first heard about Bforb™‘aa and were amazed that half said it was through the internet. This just goes to show the power of the web and we are mindful that our website needs to be kept up to date and contain more news from franchisees.

Last year Bforb™ committed itself, to the benefit of all franchisees and members, to radically overhaul its website. Not only is this a huge cost undertaking for the business, but it has taken a lot longer to get completed than we all first thought and hoped! The CRM side of the website is still being developed as it is important the site’s functionality is correct, hence the reason why we are using the system mainly for invoicing etc. We are hopeful that this element will be completed in early September and would like to thank you all for bearing with us on this.

Marketing

The majority of franchisees are undertaking their own marketing activity which was good to hear and to know that mailshots, targeting electronic networking sites and even attending other networking events in their area are proving very beneficial. Marketing is an important element of developing a successful business, so please ensure it is on your agenda. However, we encourage everyone to register all Bforb web site addresses to Business for Breakfast™ Ltd and follow brand guidelines (example Bforb cappuccino logo, Bforb colour and registered in all Business for Breakfast™ word or logo used).

Brand awareness is crucial for the continued success of Bforb™‘aa so please do ensure you are following the brand guidelines set out in the Ops Manual and in your franchise agreement. These clearly set out use of the logo, what stock photography is available for you to use and other promotional / marketing elements that you can order direct at the supplier, for example pens and mugs. We will though be including this on the refresher training programme – more about this under training.

Training

A few of the respondents felt the initial training of a week was too long coupled with the fact that it is detailed and contains a lot of information to remember in one go! We have therefore taken on board a very experienced and enthusiastic trainer who will greatly assist our new franchisees. He is currently implementing powerpoint presentations, videos and practical elements into the existing programme to make it less arduous but still factual, pertinent and highly relevant.

We have also introduced Boot Camp training sessions which are part funded by Bforb™‘aa. These started in July and will greatly assist franchisees who wanted to be mentored for the first 12 months to help them generate more ideas and help you grow your business faster and stronger. The Boot Camp covers a diverse range of areas and skills including how to train, additional marketing tips and even advice on how to grow and launch more forums from an industry expert whose expertise has proven that one franchisee can run 26 forums successfully.



We will also be introducing voluntary refresher training courses and/or development programmes throughout the year for our existing franchisees which will include practical training on selling skills, Web based CRM System and its capabilities amongst other topics, which we hope you will find beneficial.

We are aware that to many the Ops Manual is a daunting read! It does though contain invaluable information and hints and tips. We will though be assessing the Ops Manual and looking at the viability of dividing it into separate modules which will be easier to read and enable you to find the information you want straight away.

Having a separate highlighted topic on issues with advice and how to deal with them was requested by a few franchisees. All the tips and advice are in the Franchise Section for franchisee issues and in the Exec Team section for membership issues.

Merchandise

We apologise if franchisees feel there is a long delay when ordering products / merchandise. However, because some of our suppliers have set a time-frame, we have to adhere to this which means that often a request for product or merchandise with a quick turnaround can not be met. For instance our business card wallets require three weeks and our business card pins, four weeks. Ideally, we ask if you can give us a minimum of 2 weeks when ordering (unless of course it’s for the two mentioned above), so please do bear this in mind when asking for products. You can order corporate gifts from a new supplier – please contact Head Office for details on this.

Share Best Practice

There was a call for there to be more sharing of best practice between franchisees which we are more than happy to encourage. We used to produce a magazine entitled BusinessNet which was our newsletter for franchisees to exchange information but sadly over time it proved difficult to obtain the information required to publish it. However, we will be introducing a regular feature in this newsletter offering franchisees the opportunity to “share best practice”. If you have an interesting story, a successful marketing campaign, member successes, top tips, case study or even a news item, please can you forward it to Mel at, so it can be included in a future issue.

Awards

The feedback on the Awards was positive and we are glad those that attended enjoyed the evening and for some, they found it a good networking opportunity.

There were a few comments about holding the event in a more central location. While we take on board your thoughts, this is definitely something we will address over time but it will be dependent on increasing the number of franchisees outside of the North West, so if you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a franchisee in other areas of the UK, please see the map/list below and let us know. There will also be some minor changes to the Award nominations – so watch this space for more information in a future issue.

Again, we’d like to thank everyone who responded as your help and input has been invaluable.