

I am Mark Keatley-Palmer, an Executive Director in the world's largest business networking group – Business Networking International (BNI).

I first met Alan Jackson over twenty years ago when we were both Members and Director Consultants in the organisation. In 2013 I acquired BNI Sussex East, West & the Isle of Wight. At the time Alan was the BNI Sussex Director of Training and I was extremely happy when he agreed to continuing in the role.

In the next five years at our monthly BNI Member trainings, all of which I attended, I was privileged to witness the ease with which Alan delivered this most important of training to the room.

His audience of both new & seasoned BNI Members comprised all ages, experience and backgrounds – from plumbers to business consultants; financial advisors to graphic designers; chiropractors to printers; and every other profession in between.

His skill was to weave the training and his own experiences into each section in such a way that the message was totally clear. He maintained the balance between pace and clarity with consummate ease and professionalism. The stories he used to illustrate a particular topic were well chosen, on point and always clarified the message in such a way as to hold the attention of the participants for the three hours of the training.

Alan was happy to return to a particular topic and receive any questions, often sharing a fresh story to help clarify the message for the audience. In the breakout sessions that formed part of the training, he had a knack of knowing who was struggling, to put them at ease and to help them to perfect their skills without demeaning them. He possesses infinite patience and charm.

In the time he held the role I would estimate that Alan trained well over 1500 new BNI Members at nearly 1000 hours of training.

In addition to this monthly training, Alan also managed the bi-annual Leadership Training with well over 120 BNI Members in the room – he wore the hat of both trainer and MC a role that required him to manage every Member delivering their short presentation at pace and without exceeding their allotted time – when required he managed the time-greedy Member with his usual charm and patience.

When Alan approached me to explain that he was reducing his time in BNI, I was extremely sad to lose such a skilled presenter. My door was left open to him returning and I am delighted that he chose to do so last year. In his current role he is supporting one of my business groups, where he can bring his wealth of knowledge, his understanding and willingness to share to a new generation of BNI members in Sussex.

He was and happily remains a valuable and welcome addition to my team; as he would be to any lucky enough to have him.