

Episode 14 - Ivan Misner

Narrator: Welcome to the Unfair Advantage Project - unique perspectives practical insights and unexpected discoveries directly focused on giving you the unfair advantage. Introducing your hosts Nadia Hughes and Terence Toh.

Terence: Welcome to the Unfair Advantage Project. I'm Terence Toh, the founder and managing director of StrategiQ Corporation and I'll be one of your hosts today. And we've got Nadia as well.

Nadia: And I'm Nadia Hughes. I'm from Smart Business Solutions and I'm so happy to be here.

Terence: Yeah and today we're extremely excited because we have a remote connection with someone who had a great impact on both of our lives and is actually a big part of the reason that we've actually started these podcasts and created something that's managed to connect Nadia and I together to be able to create this podcasts and is the founder of BNI. He is has been referred to as the father of modern networking, the author of a book.

Nadia: He doesn't want to be called grandpa so be careful.

Terence: Not the grandfather.

Ivan: Despite all the grey hair, not grandfather of modern network.

Terence: You know and I guess the list goes on and on and on but we really appreciate your time today Ivan Misner.

Ivan: Terence and Nadia thank you so much for inviting me. I really appreciate it and I look forward to chatting with you guys.

Terence: Yeah.

Nadia: Okay that's good.

Ivan: That was good. That was really good.

Nadia: Ivan I'm going to ask, first of all you do have a Russian name Ivan. How did it happen to you?

Ivan: Know, I asked my dad that coz my father was Ivan Richard Misner the senior. And so I asked him in and he really didn't know. You know my lineage is not Russian but it was just the name that my grandparents liked and they named my father Ivan and I'm Ivan Misner the second and my son is Ivan Misner the third.

Nadia: Oh dear, you do have some problems with.

Ivan: With Russians. Yeah yeah

Nadia: So that's what first thing I wanted to see was any connections, any Russian connections there because I can talk to your people, you can talk to my people. And it all can happened but you are not Russian so.

Ivan: I'm not. I'm so sorry. I have a good friend who's from the Ukraine. Yakov Smirnoff. You know Yakov? He's a comedian in the United States, great comedian his good friend. But that's the closest thing I am to Russian.

Nadia: That's okay. If I give you a facade. What i'm going today, I'm going to express my gratitude to you. Actually, but initially that is the way I started was BNI. First of all. Please explain to our listeners what BNI stands for really.

Ivan: BNI stands for Business Network International, it's a referral marketing organization. We have eight thousand five hundred and fifty chapters in more than 70 countries around the world. We get together every week and we pass each other referrals, that's where BNI is all about is helping people increase each other's business through referrals or through word of mouth.

Nadia: And that's exactly what I read online. When I was offered by my business partner to go and check out one of the local BNI chapters. We are located in Australia and in Melbourne in particular and one of the chapters is Frankston flyer's. That's one which I start talking, it's the chapter at the time when I was attending was very small. And when I came in my first impression I actually felt uncomfortable I felt like I ended some kind of cow with all those screaming. Yes, they were all screaming GIVE US games, some stupid words and I'm sitting there. It was lunchtime, I eat my lunch and from time to time just a rise of my head of going. What's going on. Is it some kind of cow church where am I at five minutes ago. All those people get reasonable business people I wish I had this freedom that he chats with them before we started this formal session and when formal session began it was a bit surreal. I felt misplaced a bit and then I expressed my skepsis after the session and I said this and well I don't think it's quite for me it looks very very cliky very cult like and I said it's very effective. Just give it a goes, drop your skepsis and just work with us do whatever we do. We will educate you, coz everybody's supportive and they really wanted me. Mind you the chapter was very small and of a desperate needing people so they were extremely invited and I persevered and it started. It took me six months to establish myself and get a credibility doesn't haven't been something people do not give you referrals especially in Australia unless they trust you and I am accountant I have to earn this trust by referring first. And that's how it started. Now my question to you is how did you come up with this concept?

Ivan: It's a great question, but let me share with you the cult comment because I love that, that when people used to say to me that BNI feels like a cult. It would just make me so mad. But I loved that question though. Here's my answer to the cult question or to cult comment. If BNI were cult everyone would do what I tell them to do and they don't. I try to get them to do what I tell them but they don't do it. So it's not a cult. I tell you why it feels like a cult to some people they're confusing culture with cult. Culture is a form of the word cult, and BNI has an amazing culture and that culture is based on this philosophy of giver's gain. This idea that if I help you, you help me and we'll all do better as a result of it. And to most business people that feels weird. So what, we don't do business like that. You know we think of especially you know, BNI started in the United States when you think of an American company do you think of cooperation, collaboration, givers gain. No, you think of dog eat dog. I want to put that other guy out of business. You know, you're fired. That's what you think of when you think of American business. With BNI, we have a culture of collaboration and giver's game

and so it's not a cult it's a culture and it's a very healthy culture based on helping one another. To answer your question, I started BNI to help other people and myself as a business consultant, build our business through referrals by building relationships with other business professions and that's why I started BNI.

Nadia: And what initially they told me from BNI. Now it's the biggest attraction. I did not like the fact that I have to be so accountable and I had KPI's to meet and it's constantly monotone and we have quite strict people who is looking after these aspects. But now I just think that's what makes this is what the secret of success. It's actually ability to stand up and report on your successful initiative you have taken during the week and during the month makes you feel great.

Ivan: So one of the strengths of a network is that most of the members are friends. One of the weaknesses of the network is that most of the members are friends and friends don't like to hold friends accountable. So the problem is that if you don't have some level of accountability becomes a social group and BNI is not a social group. I mean social groups are fine but that's not what BNI, as BNI is a referral organizations. It's like ice hockey. You don't have a lot of ice hockey in Australia I know, but ice hockey without rules would be boxing on ice. You need to have rules.

Terence: It's not far off with rules is it?

Ivan: That's right you gotta have the rules. So without the rules it becomes chaos. And so what you're talking about Nadia is having accountability and rules as a way of accomplishing what you want to accomplish in business. And I found out early in BNI's history, that you have to have some accountability and rules in order to be successful.

Nadia: It took me a while to understand your philosophy and then I'd done it parallel. So what you have spoken about. There's dog eats dog or survival of the fittest or Adams theory. Your economic theory based of more like on John Nash's game theory. It's where people through collaboration, cooperation allow each other achieve goals faster and it has been.

Ivan: Way way wait hang on Nadia. I want you to finish, but let me just say you're one of the first people I've talked to that made the connection to John Nash's theory about collaboration so I'm impressed you're good.

Nadia: I am good.

Ivan: Very few people have made that their connection.

Nadia: You know you can use in your tutorial episodes from Beautiful Mind movie. When he's standing there in the bar scene and they all going for the blonde. I don't know whether you remember or not.

Ivan: I remember.

Nadia: John Nash's just decided to create, this is when the theory has been created. If each one of us help each other to get a brunette each one of us will get laid. That's crazy theory, but if every single one of us will go for blonde. Each one of us will block each other.

Ivan: Yeah.

Nadia: And this is where the strength of these theories. So, in my practice in working with Terence and everything I apply this collaboration. Terence has great words he calls it leveraging of strengths of each other and I would like to hear it.

Ivan: Can I just say for the record that I might not talk about it in terms of getting lucky or not but I love.

Nadia: Don't be boring. Be open.

Ivan: No, no I'm a business guy I probably should. I have.

Nadia: You know how much business people make sex sells.

Ivan: But I Love the way, I Love the way you're looking at it.

Terence: Yeah. It did.

Nadia: Am I too much for you?

Terence: No no no. It definitely works that the whole concept definitely work. So, I'm interested in kind of how you initially came up with the concept of BNI, you know where it came from and the purpose for you obviously purpose is a big driver. Creating anything as big as BNI has become. So, where did that come from for you?

Ivan: Well, I mean I started BNI because I was looking for referrals from my consulting practice and I put together people who I trusted and they trusted me and I hoped they would refer me. I was willing to refer them. I mean I'd like to tell you I had this vision of an international organization but the truth is I just wanted some referrals and I put these people together to do that. What I discovered was that most businesses were desperate for referrals and very quickly we opened up a lot of chapters of BNI and within the first year I realized that I had struck a chord in the business community. Business people wanted referrals and they didn't know how to network. And so what I try to do with BNI was teach people how to network in a very structured environment that had accountability and rules like Nadia mentioned so that we could build our business through referrals. And like I said we now have over 8,500 groups worldwide. It's gone beyond my wildest imagination in that first year but probably about a year into it. I realize this could be much bigger than I thought.

Terence: You said that. It wasn't this massive vision to begin with and I think.

Ivan: No.

Terence: That as someone starting up in a business or an entrepreneur who's trying to get somewhere, they kind of all most think that vision has to be huge to be able to achieve anything. And I love the fact that you just kind of it sounds like you've gone one step at a time and just created this thing as you said it's grown to be a lot bigger than you. Probably a lot bigger than anybody and it's just that ground for me.

Ivan: So can I just say that I think that the big vision is a good idea but you don't have to have the big big big vision to start with. I had a vision that was pretty small at the beginning it was what I needed to get referrals and I wanted to help my friends get referrals. But then when that worked so well I realized well wait a minute that could be bigger. That could be bigger and about a year into it I thought Oh my goodness this could be really really really be big. And then I realized it could be huge and that's important for the average person because you don't have to just find the next great idea that will change the world. You can just find a simple idea that changes your community and from that you can change the world.

Terence: And I would say, solves the problem.

Ivan: Yeah, always got to solve a problem if that doesn't solve problems. People won't be propelled to go to what. Certainly in BNI they're propelled to go to work because they're looking for business.

Terence: First and foremost you solve the problem for you and then you realize that lots of other people around you needed exactly the same solution.

Nadia: That's where replications started, because it's just universal law of solving for problem is. So it's a bunch of desperados for referrals go on and starts spreading everywhere around the world, but it's actually very effective without any further comments. I want to ask about you're a chef. You've got the kitchen, you cooked the recipe for a successful enterprise you created worldwide. I just want to know, how does it look from financial point of view? I'm an accountant myself. I want to know how the referrals come people join in. How does BNI makes money as an organisation not us as the participants in the level of where it's designed whom would designed for. But as you guys organisers how does it look as a business model?

Ivan: Sure, when I started BNI and I realised that we were going to have many many groups. One of the considerations that I had was do we take a percentage. So if you make a thousand dollars to get a hundred dollars, do we get a percentage. Or do we just take a flat fee to put together the program and I really felt that I didn't want to do a percentage thing because it would take more money from members if it were, BNI really worked. It would take more money from members and it'd be harder to manage and so we just had a flat fee and so to participate and BNI there's a membership fee and it varies a little bit from country to country but you know it is in the hundreds of dollars and that's for one year and that's everything and we take no commission no royalties no anything so whatever money you make as a business person is 100 percent all yours and I'm happy that we mind you I would have made a lot more money if we'd had taken a percentage because last year we passed nine point one million referrals we generated thirteen point one billion U.S. dollars worth of business for our members around the world. So if we would have just taken 10 percent we'd have one billion dollars in revenues and we don't. But honestly, I'm glad we didn't do a percentage. I'm glad we did a flat membership fee so that everything a member makes is theirs.

Nadia: You have to say it now because you can't change it.

Ivan: Yeah, I can't change it now. No no.

Nadia: No, you can't. It is successful why it's very encouraging because you do pay your flat fee and it's up to you decide how much this fee will return you back that's best part about it.

Terence: I'm interested. So we're talking about the way you've structured BNI and a lot's of thing but I'm kind of interested in the obstacles that you struck along the way. What was some of the biggest obstacles that you found to creating BNI along the way?

Ivan: Well they varied over time. The first obstacle was getting everyone to row in the same direction with the same idea and the same mission vision following the same process. So getting everybody on board for the same thing was the first obstacle. And that meant we had to write everything down. We had to create systems and processes. And there's a great book that I highly recommend I've recommended it for 30 years and it's the E myth by Michael Gerber. I read the E myth 30 years ago and really maybe thirty one or thirty two years ago and really based a lot of what I did with BNI based on the concepts of the E myth and I'm so honored to say that over time Michael has become a friend of mine and I know Michael well. And you know go read his book if you want to scale your business into a big organisation. Read the E myth. That's what I did and it talks really about writing everything down. And he even says in there, write everything down as though you're gonna franchise your business even if you have no plans on franchising your business. And I had no plans on franchising BNI. But after I had done it, it was so obvious. I ended up franchising BNI, BNI as a franchise organization. And a lot of this because of Michael Gerber's so that's a book I highly recommend to your listener.

Nadia: Yes.

Ivan: It stands for the Entrepreneurial Myth. In case, you haven't read it yet.

Nadia: I have read this book and I read his other way specifically targeting certain professions E Myth for dentist, E Myth for accountants. It was actually, it's one of the best books I have read that to begin with.

Ivan: I think he's coming out with a book and the E Myth for accountants another one in a couple of months. So look for that. I've been invited to the roll out of it next month.

Nadia: Yeah. You said, you are a good friend of his?

Ivan: He's a good friend. I love Michael, if you look at my blog you'll see there's several video blogs with Michael and I.

Nadia: How close you are? Would you be able to ask him to come to our podcast?

Ivan: Yes.

Nadia: That's wonderful, then you are very close.

Ivan: Yeah yeah, absolutely. And he'd probably be willing to do it.

Nadia: Oh my goodness, how can I get it as well?

Terence: We would love to interview him.

Ivan: You email me and I'll make the introduction.

Nadia: Oh my goodness I just, best day.

Terence: That's networking at it's best.

Nadia: I had why Ivan and he is going to put as one.

Terence: I know Nadia. So, I know exactly where she was going with that one.

Ivan: That's great. You tell Michael what I said about him. I love Michael Gerber and I am in to a very large part the success of my company is because of him and his ideas.

Terence: I think that his ideas have affected a lot of people around the world in a very positive life for sure.

Nadia: It's first book in English. I was reading in regards to business development.

Terence: Yeah. So let's talk about the obstacle, you spoke about I would call it alignment you know getting everybody aligned in the same direction. As you said it's a culture you're trying to create a culture and it's not a cult. We can just go and say you will do what.

Ivan: I wish, but it's no.

Terence: It would be nice if it was that easy. How did you find a solution? Because there are lots of people you know whether it be people that they work with, whether it be a team, whether it be their clients their customers there would be a lots of people who seek a solution to alignment and you've managed to align. I think it is it 200000 members now something like that.

Ivan: 240376 as of yesterday I get a daily report on how many members we have.

Terence: That's crazy. So what is your solution to that?

Ivan: Well, so most of your listeners or viewers are small business people right?

Terence and Nadia: Yes.

Nadia: Correct.

Ivan: The first thing I would say to them is you're never too small and probably never too big to start. But particularly never too small so even if you're small business, you need to start thinking about this and what people start talking about is how do you create culture. At the end of the process. Let me give you the beginning of the process. I believe that it's about traditions. Traditions create core values. Core values create culture. That's the process. It goes from traditions to core values to culture. So the first thing you want to do as any business is you want to look at what are the healthy traditions of my business that are making me successful. What pieces of my business are working. Those are the traditions.

Nadia: Can you exemplify what tradition is as?

Ivan: Yeah, so there's a great book I'll recommend another book. This one is called Inside the Magic Kingdom. Inside the Magic Kingdom, it's a great book and it talks about the value of traditions. And traditions are the things that a company does or an organization does that makes them successful. For example in BNI, Nadia you mentioned accountability. That's one of our traditions. If there's not accountability it's a coffee klatch it's a social group. So you have to have accountability lifelong learning. That's another one, giver's game. You would you also mention, the idea of giving business to people that's our principle core value. Other core values include recognition, relationships is all about relationships. These are the core values. All of these things came about by following our traditions. And we looked at our traditions and we said what are we doing that's working? And from these traditions we then created our core values. So, if you're in business and you don't know what your core values are, look at your traditions. The healthy traditions are what's creating your core values. Your core values create your culture. Now what you as a business person need to do is sit back and think about something above that and that is your vision and mission. So, your vision and mission comes from you as the business owner but the traditions, the core values and the culture come from that process of the traditions. So, your your vision is the big statement. Where do you want to be? It's a statement where you may never actually achieve it but that's your long term goal and BNI are vision statement is changing the way the world does business. Wow, that's big. We may never get it, but it's something we can always work for. Our mission is to help people increase each other's business through a structured positive supportive referral marketing program. So that's a very specific tactic on how we're going to achieve that vision. So your vision your mission your traditions create your culture which will create your core values all of that create your culture. So you've got a culture lesson in two minutes or less. I hope that helps.

Nadia: It does helps. It reemphasizes about tradition and bizarre this rituals. That's what gave me a sense of being in a cult. But later when it's I grew accustomed to it and it's that you're gaining some meaning behind these words because I start living it. That's exactly the point in this group it's very democratic. There is nobody's too small or too big for me to help them. I look at them as a people. If I don't get an instant gain from them or they're not coming because my clients. It's not a loss for me. I don't know. There's nothing has happen. I just knows that here there I was in a position of a very privileged position to help people. I was in a position to connect to someone so close. And that's why one on one BNI work really well for me because I make time. That's what happens in BNI. Terence and I met together and initially wasn't much connections that happen and i just looked at him oh, another business coach.

Terence: That is a very funny story.

Nadia: I actually don't like business coach as a tool. They just got such a dodgy reputation on us. On another this airy fairy guy. So he tried to contact me and tried to get on one on one. And I was finding every single excuse under the sun why I couldn't. Until we did get together and we start talking, but what I do. I Honor the one on one as I allocate very special time for it. And I think I am spending time I have to go very deep and this my purpose after one on one is to know these people, person enough to make my conclusion was that I want to work with him or not and whether I like him as a person or not. That's my personality, I teach you to one on one and that's what happened. We did talk.

Terence: It was a very funny story because Nadia basically didn't want to talk to me. We end up doing a one to one and.

Ivan: One to one, yeah.

Terence: We had, you know I kind of walked in there thinking this will be over in half an hour cause she'll kick me out. And so two hours later we knew a lot about each other. We had a lot in common and it was very unexpected to connect that well and that quickly.

Nadia: And Terence last phrase was when she was living the boardroom. I never talk so deep when I first time I met a person. I never waste my time if I do allocate it, I will go really for all.

Ivan: The one on ones are very important in building relationships with the people in BNI or outside.

Nadia: And these podcasts result this meaningful one to one?

Terence: One to one. Yeah. So, I just want to go back to something that you said and I kind of the way that I phrase it is more of what works. You know you talk about traditions and I love coming back to that. Sometimes you just need to be reminded of business being about doing more of the stuff that actually works because and BNI actually works, right? So if you're involved with a network like BNI that actually works. You need to do more of it. So I've found that you know I love doing digital marketing and things like that. I do a lot more networking now as a result of BNI so I just kind of.

Ivan: Well, let me let me touch upon something there and because what you're talking about is one of the biggest mistakes that most businesses make. If you want to be successful in business today. Whether you are on BNI or not. You want to be successful? You have to do six things a thousand times not a thousand things six times. And there are so many businesses that are constantly chasing these bright shiny objects. I used to have a bright shiny object here. Oh yeah. Here we go, here it is. There's so many businesses there after chasing these bright shiny objects. Ooh, Let's try this idea and they go and do something new and it doesn't work and they don't understand why they're not successful. You want to be successful in business. You're listening to this, do six things a thousand times not a thousand things. Now the question is what six things? First of all it doesn't have to be six it could be five. It could be seven because a handful of things. What things will you do the things that interviews like this tell you to do. You go to mentors, you go to people who you trust in person or virtual mentors. This program is like a virtual mentor. And so if you trust or Terence and Nadia are recommending to you then you listen to things that they're talking about and you do a handful of these things and you do them over and over and over again rather than bouncing around trying out a whole bunch of different ideas. I cut you off. Nadia what you're going to say?

Nadia: I forgot, I suffered from dementia. Basically, what I did want to say is if you will now coach a small business you grab the small business and they going through first of all they unconsciously incompetent. Obviously when they enter the business side, they join BNI quite often it's the most common case scenarios they not established businesses. There's somebody who is trying to find their fit. What would be six things you would tell them to do which would guarantee there success?

Ivan: I couldn't tell you that, because every business is different. And by the way not every business that joins BNI is new. We have many businesses that have been around for a long time but they're all different. It would be like you going to a medical doctor and saying tell me the most important things I need to do.

Nadia: Okay.

Ivan: The doctor would say well wait a minute I haven't done any blood tests. I haven't had to do anything I don't know anything about you. So it really depends on the person and where they're at as to what things I would tell them. But there are certain things in BNI that I would recommend and you talk about one of them and that's the one on ones. You want to build your business quickly in BNI, do one on ones with people so you know how to refer them.

Terence: And it just comes back to life one on one actually not just business one on one build relationships.

Ivan: Yeah.

Terence: We talk about B to B we talk about B to C and we don't talk about H to H hate human to human relationship. It'll generate referral business it will generate so many benefits potentially down the track that you can't even probably begin to fathom in the beginning.

Ivan: You're right. One of the books I wrote has a weird title but it's a fun book it's called Business Networking and Sex Not What You Think.

Nadia: What kind of book titled is that? That you have to explain.

Ivan: Nadia, I know you would ask.

Terence: I just want to mention that we said sex on this. Well now, more or times but we've mentioned it twice already.

Nadia: Because sex sells.

Ivan: Sex sells. But this is a book about the difference between men and women.

Nadia: Gender.

Ivan: It's sex in terms of gender.

Nadia: Yes.

Ivan: It was a controversial title but not a controversial book. You know the difference between men and women and how they network and what we discovered was there. By the way we surveyed 12000 people for this.

Nadia: How many men, how many women?

Ivan: It was almost 50/50. It was like 51 percent men 49 percent women.

Nadia: Typical.

Ivan: It was almost exactly 50/50. And we found that women on average, generated more business through referrals than men and they actually did it in less time. And one of the things we found is that

women were more likely to be relational in their networking than men. And men tended to be more transactional in their networking than women. That is men were like gone right for the sale. Hi my name's Ivan, let's do business. Now, not every man not every woman but when you have 12000 people you get trends. We got the trends . Until we've found that women were more relational than men. Now here's the interesting point. We took gender out of it and we just looked at relational versus transactional which is kind of Terence what you were saying. We looked at relational versus transactional and we found that men and women who were relational in the way they network that is they wanted to focus on building a relationship did better than men and women who were transactional that is let's just do business and that was a really powerful thing to learn and we have hard data to prove it. It's in the book Business Networking and Sex Not What You Think.

Nadia: How do you know what I think?

Ivan: Read it Nadia you will laugh so hard. So I wrote it with two other people.

Nadia: Well I have to now I have no choice but to read it.

Ivan: You got to check it out. So I was the survey says guy I was talking about data and Frank de Raphaely my co-author he was the he says. Have you ever heard he says she says so he was the he says and he talks about all the data from the male perspective and Hazel Walker talked about all the data from the female perspective. I'm telling you, it's probably the funniest business book you'll ever read.

Nadia: Well yeah women at these visits because generally speaking women are generally speaking. We, that's how you build a relationship through talking not just to open your wallet and let's do business.

Ivan: I like that phrase I'm gonna borrow it. That's good.

Terence: That's right.

Nadia: It's not mine even. I picked it up that up from some joke book.

Ivan: Okay good.

Nadia: Yeah. Anyway, do you actually hitting a really, really interesting point for me. This relationship is transactional when I migrated from Russia to Australia. I did know just Australians they're more transactionals than the Russians. In Russia you have to have connections you have to be positioning yourself with right people first. And this relationship will build, you will build a persona together, you will attend concerts, you will do a lot of things so extracurricular activities before people even consider doing business with you. And of course you have to drink together and you have drink till you land the business.

Ivan: Land is water now and I'm sorry.

Nadia: In a cellar that's kind of drinking session you have to have. And this is what binds people together and then they only then go in the business. When I came to Australia it's become very evident to me very different culture but then they said you know you think we are transactional you should

say Americans. Americans are completely transactional. You Ivan, you have chapters across the globe. Do you see this difference transactional relationship in regards to different cultures? Which cultures do you think more relationship based?

Ivan: So look there are. Every country has a different culture. Here's the thing. I think that we as human beings have more in common than we think that they are. We have more similarities than dissimilarities and I would argue that there is a culture of entrepreneurship and that culture of entrepreneurship transcends many cultural differences that we have as humans that is there is no culture. There's no entrepreneurial nation in the world that I have gone to that didn't believe in trust as a key to doing business. Every entrepreneurial nation I've been in trust was critical. You have to build trust first and when you build trust then you do referrals. And so every nation that we've gone into and we're in 73 countries in BNI. It's all about building trust first and then you through that trust build a relationship and through that you give referrals and so I think there's a culture of entrepreneurship that transcends cultural differences worldwide.

Terence: So what do you say to somebody who goes to a networking event of any kind, specifically to create transactions specifically to get quick business?

Ivan: Love that. So in the same book Business That We're getting Sex Not What You Think. We talk about this, we call it premature solicitation.

Nadia: Oh, God I said ejaculation.

Ivan: No no. Oh my god, you're not supposed to say that.

Nadia: You just framed me to do it. It was just, door open for that Ivan

Ivan: Nobody has ever ever in all the interviews I've ever done nobody has ever said that. Nobody has ever said that.

Nadia: Should I apologize?

Terence: I think I've lost where we were

Ivan: No no that's that's good. So the idea.

Nadia: But work principle is the same you don't do it before the partners ready.

Ivan: What lead you to that point where you think about it but you don't actually say it. But what you said it and the point that I'm trying to make without being x rated.

Terence: Yeah.

Ivan: Is that people use networking as a face to face cold calling opportunity. Hi my name's Ivan let's do business. And they go straight to doing business instead of straight to building a relationship. And that's the premature solicitation. They're asking to do business before there's any relationship. And I've met people they've said to me Hi my name is so-and-so. You know let's get you know could you refer me to sell it to this person online. I'm sorry my name's Ivan. What was your name? I don't even

know you. You want me to refer you. I, no. And so you know that Direct Sales concept doesn't work and Nadia I love you that you are the first person in all these years that actually said it.

Nadia: It has to be Russian. These type of networking what you just have describe. I never been on speed dating myself but I assume that in the movies. And my thing was always it probably is a worst version of human interaction ever and people try to find a relationship they longing for something and they trying to find in this type of transactional will. And when I went to a couple of local networks they are not BNI. This what really really turned me off. I was standing there and feeling like I'm having this nightmare of speed dating and people exchanging straight away giving me cards I have to give them these. And they even have one minute exchanging information around and cards and everything. I had very bad flavor in my mouth from this exercise and that's why I decided to drop those networks where I felt like it and just focus on one so I focused on BNI. And I have a couple of other social little bit more relaxed former where I am attending exactly for that reason is.

Ivan: Yeah, that's a great way of putting it Nadia I appreciate it. And you're right, I agree.

Nadia: And that's basically what I actually, Ivan you surprised me because I have not pictured you this way. I listened to your podcast with you. I read books with you.

Nadia: That's a good book.

Nadia: Yes I know. And this one we just look at them and obviously it is something new. You're talking about. I'm trying to pay attention to you. And you come across as very robust but a little bit more serious than what I, having right now on podcast. I didn't expect to have such a human to human interaction with you so I kind of enjoying talking to you and that you are very very human. So I think the secret behind your success is this ability to relax it out as a human being and just talk heart to heart. And that's what one of you probably strikes him as it people learn these skills.

Ivan: Well there is a lot there. At first let me say, thank you. I really appreciate you saying what you said. I looked I think you know sometimes it's very easy with success to have it all go to your head. I think a humble person doesn't think less of themselves. They just think of themselves less. And so it's really just about building relationships with people and not taking yourself too terribly serious. Can other people do this? Yeah, absolutely anybody can do this. I think what happens is if people just take themselves too serious and they take their success too seriously. Just before we started here I had a somebody who I met at a conference he was in town I invited him over and we were talking about the fact that I must have done 30 or 40 videos, short videos with people at this conference. He was like that was so generous of you. I said to him this was just an hour and I said to him yeah not really not so much. I'm successful because these people follow what I talk about. I could be digging ditches, you know I could be putting a brick walls. I get to talk for a living. How cool is that. It's very easy. This is easy work. It took hard work to get here but this is the easy part. And I think anybody that achieve success has I believe an obligation to give back to people and share what works for them.

Nadia: You're welcome. When you're back in the days when you just started this entrepreneurial path. What would you do differently result knowledge you have gained now? What was first mistake you think you acknowledge. Obviously you own your mistake and you grateful for it but if you will to start again.

Ivan: I've been asked that question a number of times. There's a great television show in the United States. I don't know if you have it there in Australia. It's called Myth Busters. There's this fantastic expression that one of them uses. He says I reject your reality and I substitute my own. So I'm going to say that here question, Nadia. I reject that reality and here's why because none of us can do things over, ever. Are there things I did wrong along the way? Oh my goodness there's so many things I did wrong, I couldn't even count. We don't have enough time. I did a lot of things wrong. Here's the message I would give particularly to new businesses. Is get as much information as you can about whatever problem you have and make the best decision you can make based on the information you have and your values. What I have found is that when people get off track with their values when their personal values that say I should do this. But this is a great business opportunity I'm going to do this. That's when things really go wrong. So live your values and make the best decisions you can make. I've made so many bonehead stupid decisions in my career, I couldn't count them. I rarely crossed my values. I can't think of a time that I crossed my values and so learn from those stupid mistakes you make and don't make it again the next time. And that's what I would tell anyone who says you know what bad mistakes what you do or what have you learnt from it? I would say, you learn from whatever bad mistakes you make. Don't ever crush your values and don't look back because we all do stupid things. I had somebody say to me many many years ago he said don't worry about doing something stupid in business you will. Just fix it as soon as you can. You've got to recognize it quickly and fix it quickly and if you do that you're doing the best you can. The great advice that I got. I live by it. Hope that makes sense.

Terence: And it kind of comes back to it maybe the obstacle is the way and actually mistakes can create a pathway to success.

Ivan: Oh, I just wrote an article on this.

Terence: Aah.

Ivan: It's called What's in the way becomes the way.

Terence:] Yeah.

Ivan: And I'll tell you where it's a great article. I was talking to my wife about it and she said you going to write this and I did. I kept getting these report cards when I was in elementary school. You know I was nine ten eleven twelve years old. These report cards would go to my mother and they'd say Ivan is a good student but he talks too much in class. I got this all the time. Ivan talks too much in class. All my teachers, now my mom was awesome I love my mom. My mom passed away a few years ago. She's amazing mother and she would sit down with me and say honey. Don't talk so much. You toned it down a little bit but she never drummed that out of me. Never. So she talked to me but she didn't drummed it out of me. Well what was in my way has become my way. I speak for a living. I talk to small groups. I talk to middle size groups. I talk to big groups. I talk to gigantic groups. I talk on radio. I talk on webinars, like this. I talk to everybody and I get paid stupid money. I get paid big money, to talk. So what was in my way as a child that had been drummed out of me and I became so concerned about speaking. I would have never achieved what I wanted to achieve and many times in our lives the things that are the roadblock in front of us become the direction that we go in. And I think that is such a great and important lesson. If you want to read I did a blog on this go to ivanmisner.com and look up, I think the blog is I talked too much in class. I think that's the title.

Terence: That's great.

Nadia: That's something about me, I used to be kicked out of the class for a poor discipline but they have to get me back because I was also a high achiever. So this about,

Ivan: Nadia, I'm shocked about that. I'm totally shocked.

Nadia: I will start laughing and I couldn't stop, it's my problem I was almost kicked out.

Terence: Yeah. So, look we've covered some really great stuff here. I've really been enjoying the conversation. I'm interested in what would be your best tips. Let's say for somebody who's about to go on walk into a you know into a networking meeting, probably a bunch of strangers people have never met in your opinion what's the best approach?

Ivan: So to me the best thing is really to act like interviewer and to me the best networker has two ears and one mouth and uses them both proportion. What happens often, is that people think that an extrovert is a great networker and I'm here to tell you that extroverts are not necessarily great networkers. Why? Because they talk and talk and talk and what's their favorite subject?

Terence: Them.

Nadia: Me.

Ivan: Themselves. A great networkers, like the two of you. You're interviewing me. You ask me questions and you let me just go on. You let me talk.

Nadia: Sometimes.

Ivan: That's what makes a great networker. And so I would argue that if you go into a networking event for the first time and especially if you're an introvert and you're nervous that you don't think you're good at networking you're probably great at networking because introverts tend to be great listeners. So just ask questions. Now if you're an extrovert, what you need to do is learn how to shut up and ask questions and then listen and be genuinely interested in those answers and follow that direction. Now is everyone you talked to are going to be I don't know, the Dalai Lama. No. But you know you will be amazed at how many interesting people you meet as you talk and ask questions. And so that's what I would say you go to networking events keep an open mind listen and you'll have an opportunity to talk. Prepare a little bit about what you're going to say be able to talk about your business in a minute or less 30 seconds or less so that people can learn what you do as well.

Terence: Could we add be prepared to provide value?

Ivan: Yeah, always. As a matter of fact that I do a presentation called networking up networking with people above your weight class people who you think are more successful than you and one of the most important things to do is to add value. Don't sell to them. I call it sales to rats. People just can't stop themselves. They just try to sell, it is like you know buy this product or service and then their favorite phrases. It never hurts to ask, right? Wrong. It hurts to ask, if you ask for business before there's a relationship. So, when you want to do is add value you and you add value by finding out what the most important thing in that person's life is right then and see if there's anything you can do

to at least incrementally add value to that issue that they've got and if you can do that then you're beginning to build a relationship which will then lead to building up your business.

Nadia: You're talking about breaking up which means that those people more successful than let's say I am and have to be cards a way to get ready to those already successful people. I still have to find a way to give rather than taken.

Ivan: Yes.

Nadia: How do you do when it's more successful people are they?

Ivan: Ok,so I'll give you the call. This is my best example ever. For me personally. I've had an opportunity a couple of times to go to Necker Island and I spent a week with Richard Branson.

Nadia: Great.

Ivan: You know, he knows who I am. He's a good man. I really respect him a lot and he's very successful. I've been to his island twice. I've met him probably six or seven times. And one time I met him and I really wanted to do. I wanted to interview him on my blog. I know I knew I'd teach people don't do this don't go to somebody say hey Richard would you be on my show please. You know when you're networking up people are always asking.

Nadia: Ivan, I just done it. I just contact him through the linkedIn and said could you please be on my podcast? I just done this mistake.

Ivan: Good luck with that. He won't respond. I'm sorry but he probably won't because he's is really really busy. But here's the thing when you're always asking people to do something who are very successful they're always been asked particularly to buy something. Being on a show is not so bad. A lot of people would do that. But buying something or looking at your proposal. Oh my goodness, do you know how many pitches I get and I'm nowhere near as financially successful as Branson he must get'em constantly. And so the mistake we make is we try to sell to people who are very successful. So what here's what I did with Branson. I wanted him to do a video for my blog. And so when I went to Necker Island the last time which was a few years ago. I did an Internet search to see what it was going to most and one of the things he was working on was called the B team the business we were business were put back into the community. It's about People Planet Profit in that order. And I love that concept. And so I was talking to him on the island and I said Hey Richard tell me about the B team. Sounds pretty exciting guys. He lit up. He just lit up and he went on and on talking about the B team. Rather than say, hey Rich would you do an interview with me on it. I said How can I help you. Get the message out about the beating. And he said I don't know. You run a network. Can you get that out to people. Yeah, absolutely. I do a blog regularly would you like to do something with me on the blog and he said: Yeah that would be great. Let's do that. And guess what we did, did a video blog, ivanmisner.com you just do a search on Richard Branson and you'll see the blog. It was windy we had to do subtitles so you could read what we were talking about. In some cases but we did this blog. It was something that I wanted to do, but I didn't want to go to him. I was networking up. I didn't want to say, Hey Richard would you do this for me? Instead, I said: How can I help you? This helped him and at the same time it was something I wanted to do. It's a win win. That's the way you network up.

Terence: That is fantastic advice.

Nadia: I just sitting there absolutely mesmerized and i'm sitting and dreaming thinking that's why Ivan so successful because he things like that.

Ivan: And because I screwed up so much along the way I figured it out.

Nadia: Well so have I.

Terence: One of my favorite sayings is value creates value.

Ivan: Yeah and very true.

Terence: That's inspiring. That's a great story.

Nadia: I love it.

Terence: I think. I mean look just really mindful of the fact Ivan's spent some really good quality time with us shared some great information with us. And Ivan we really love to thank you for spending the time and actually just agree to be on the podcast with us. So thanks a lot. Is there anything else that you would like to share to begin with and actually do that quickly first.

Ivan: Well I thank you, I appreciate that. First of all, thank you for inviting me. You guys are a blast. A lot of fun. I don't have a lot of fun on all my interviews I have a lot of fun on this one. You guys were fantastic. You know if you're interested in my information ivanmisner.com is my website and of course bni.com if you're interested in going to get information about BNI. If I were to leave you with one last message it would be this, that networking is more about farming than it is about hunting. It's about cultivating relationships with other business professionals. It's not a get rich quick scheme. It's a way to build a solid foundation for a long term successful business. That's what I teach in BNI and that's why I think BNI today is the largest referral marketing organization in the world because we focus on building relationships and Nadia, Terence thank you so much for having me on your show.

Terence: Thanks a lot Ivan dear.

Nadia: That was really fun. I didn't expect that from you both a surprise.

Terence: I don't think anyone expected you either.

Nadia: What do you mean?

Terence: That was great.

Nadia: I will recover, it's okay.

Terence: No no, we will recover. Nadia has thick skin she's alright. Yeah, Ivan really like thanks for doing the interview and everything really appreciate it. I'll get in contact again by email or whatever.

Ivan: Yeah, You have my email address. Yeah.

Terence: Yeah absolutely.

Nadia: I have a very practical question. When we told our BNI members that we're going to podcast this Ivan Misner all of this like what. How, what are you doing? How did it happen?

Ivan: Did you tell them?

Nadia: Yes.

Terence: I haven't told many people.

Nadia: I ruined your surprise. They basically ask me one funny thing they said, can you ask him if you can put your podcast on his CEU points they ask me about CEU points. So they could listen and get this educational thing.

Terence: Does it count as to CEU.

Nadia: Yes, that's what.

Ivan: You tell them I said. Yes it counts as a CEU.

Nadia: That's it. So, you've done it. We have to record it and let's go us on front of our podcast.

Ivan: No no, it does not.

Ivan: Yeah, absolutely it's a CEU. This is definitely a CEU. Now I think for every 20 minutes you get one CEU, check. So I think it would actually be 3 CEU's but don't hold me to that.

Terence: No, I won't hold you to that.

Ivan: I believe though it would be 3 CEU's and yeah I count it.

Terence: Yeah.

Nadia: We broke quite a few rules on this podcast which BNI's very strict system it's setup it's first of all we... Yeah I did, as if I only half broken a few rules.

Ivan: Well the premature solicitation thing maybe, that cross the line. I've been doing this that material for 8 years and nobody is actually said what it is.

Terence: Like you said to be.

Ivan: Nadia you're hysterical. So I gonna ask you guys don't get mad at me are you guys like a couple?

Terence: No, no we're not actually. So now we would get mad at you.

Nadia: Terence got five kids with his beautiful wife May and I.

Ivan: How many kids do you have?

Nadia: Four. I've got four.

Ivan: Oh my God, so you have like nine kids between you.

Nadia: I'm separated.

Terence: Wait, we met each other. How long ago was 8 months ago.

Nadia: Yep.

Terence: Yeah, so not that long ago. Nadia didn't even want to talk to me at the time because a business coach keeping away.

Ivan: I met my wife in BNI she was a president of a chapter. It was the best referral I ever got. We've now been married 29 years almost 30 years.

Terence: It's a great story.

Nadia: That's great story but no we are not a couple in this sense we are coupled up for podcast purpose.

Ivan: You are professional partners. Yes, good.

Terence: Yeah I think we bounce of each other quite well but.

Ivan: Yeah, you guys work together, very well.

Nadia: Professionalism goes out of the door when I open my mouth so I better listen.

Ivan: Okay, your business partners.

Nadia: Yes.

Terence: That's been fantastic. Ivan, we should let you go because I'm sure you've got lots of hopefully got another glass of wine to drink or something like that.

Ivan: I'm sure I do. I'm a member of an organization called the Transformational Leadership Council run by Jack Canfield who is Rob Chicken Soup for the soul. One of the members of TLC is going to be here probably in about 15 minutes. They're staying here at my house for the next three years. I want to see them but look when this goes out. E-mail me forwarded to my social media guy and he'll put it on all of our social media.

Nadia: Thank you so much.

Terence: Really appreciate it.

Ivan: It was my pleasure and I'm happy to do this anytime. I have a new book coming out in November.

Terence: Oh, yeah.

Nadia: We schedule podcast, will you do it again?

Terence: Well, we should read your book first.

Ivan: Wait, let me think. Yeah. The book is awesome.

Terence: Okay.

Ivan: It's I did a BNI version but this is the public version it's called Who's in your room?

Terence: Who's in your room? Okay.

Nadia: What does this book is about?

Ivan: Okay, i'll give you two minute overview. Are you ready?

Nadia: Yes.

Ivan: Imagine that you live your entire life in one room. In that one room, has one door and that one door is an enter only door so that everyone who comes into your life is there, forever. You can never get them out. Now this is a metaphor. But if it were true would you be more selective about the people that you let into your life?

Nadia: Yes.

Terence: Yeah.

Ivan: Everybody says yes.

Terence: Yeah.

Ivan: So why aren't we? So what the book is about, is about being more selective about who you let into your room or into your life and how you're more selective. And how do you deal with the people who are in your room in your life? And oh by the way I would argue that it's not a metaphor, that it's real because even if you get them out of your physical presence they are always in your head. They may be out of your life but they're in your head and if they're in your head they're in your room. And that's what the book is about. It's the first self-help or self development book I've ever done. I think it'll be my best selling book and it's perfect for BNI because it's about who do you let in to your chapter. It's a fits perfectly for BNI. But it is a general book. It'll be out in October or November, so if you reach out to me next month we could set up something for October or November the book will be out on Amazon by November for sure.

Terence: Can I just say that really resonates with me. I've been doing that for a while and I actually I guess I deliberately only seek positive relationships. So anything like negative I just push aside and I actually don't write them.

Nadia: I'm in the room the door is lock you can't get out.

Terence: You're okay.

Ivan: You write about that into what we talk about in the book is you have to go get good with your values you have to know what your personal values are and you have to select people and what we talk about is creating a doorman. It's a metaphorical doorman. It's your conscious and subconscious mind that says no you're not coming in and no you're staying out on the patio. You're not going to come into the room and we talk about how to create a doormat and be good with your values and then how to deal with the people who you let into your room when you didn't know any better. It's a really good book. I really love it and I'll be out to share.

Terence: Yeah. Would you like us to preceed that? Would you like us to mention it?

Nadia: How can we help you?

Ivan: Very good question. Thank you. I'd love to do an interview in November.

Terence: Okay. Alright cool.

Nadia: So, it's wonderful.

Ivan: Because the book will be up by November.

Nadia: Australians read a lot so it's probably a good podcast.

Ivan: Perfect and I'm pretty sure it'll be available in Australia because it's being printed in Thailand and the United States. So it's going to be.

Terence: If it's on Amazon.

Ivan: It will be on Amazon for sure.

Nadia: Are you ever in Australia do you ever come to Australia?

Ivan: Yeah I've been there for five times.

Nadia: When are you going to come next?

Ivan: I have no idea. It's not on my schedule at this time. I'm booked two years out. Australia is not on my schedule. I am going to be in Thailand in November. Come to Thailand, come to our big international convention. If you come to our big international convention you can interview people from all over the world we have 2000 people there from BNI.

Terence: That's this November?

Ivan: This November.

Terence: Okay.

Ivan: If you want information. Oh my goodness, I'm looking at I got eight or ten deer and two wild turkey right here.

Nadia: Can I see?

Ivan: Not easily, let me see. I don't know if you can see. I don't know if it goes far enough.

Terence: Yeah, I can see.

Ivan: Can you see the view at.

Terence: Yeah I can see.

Nadia: It is something. See if it would be Australia it would be Kangaroos there.

Terence: Oh wow, yes.

Ivan: That deer and turkey.

Nadia: Oh, wow. In Australia we have hopping kangaroos.

Terence: Sounds like a pretty serious meal going on there.

Ivan: Yes, well and yet yesterday in that exact same place I had a coral snake.

Nadia: Wow. What coral snake is it?

Ivan: Highly poisonous. Go to my Facebook page and you'll see I caught it and released it. So if you go to [ivanmisner.bnifounder](#) on Facebook you'll see, I caught the coral snake there really really poisonous somebody even wrote on my page. If I catch a couple more venomous snakes I'll be an honorary Australian.

Terence: We've got plenty of them here. That's for sure.

Ivan: Plenty of them there. This was good talking to you guys. I'm happy to do it any time you reach out to Dina my assistant and she'll set up another interview. I'd love to do it in November.

Terence: Yeah fantastic that sounds like a great idea.

Nadia: Have fun.

Ivan: Great take care. Bye.

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