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World Business Newspaper

Plus Michael Portillo on the Tories, donors and dinners **Comment**

WEEKEND

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Business gains from networks

Members of business networking groups appear to be getting better at generating profitable leads for each other.

Business Network International saw a 45 per cent increase in invoiced business over two years as a result of its structured lead sharing meetings while its membership numbers remained largely unchanged.

The additional £269m of business generated was the

largest increase in invoiced referrals the organisation had recorded in 16 years of operations in the UK.

Charles Lawson, BNI's UK national director, said the figures showed that people joining these groups were taking them far more seriously.

He also admitted that social networking services, such as Twitter and LinkedIn, were enabling people to be a lot more effective at maintaining relationships.