



Substitute Guidelines

Often, we find ourselves unable to attend our weekly BNI meeting. When it is unplanned and last-minute, it requires that we take an absence. When it is **planned**, it is important to send a sub in your place. Subs add value to your chapter and your membership. Every substitute brings their network into the room, and every substitute is also a potential customer for every member in your chapter, as well as a potential applicant.

It is important that you consider who you will send to the meeting in your place. There are a variety of people who can serve as substitutes: those who can make you look good to your fellow members, who can participate in your meeting when they are there, and who can represent you and your business in a professional manner.

There are also substitutes that do not work in a BNI Chapter.

1. Any person who holds a classification that is open in your chapter and therefore could apply for membership in your chapter. If they choose not to apply, **they are limited to 2 visits, just as visitors are.** They are not welcome to become "regular subs" in any chapter.
2. An Ex-BNI member who has been removed from the chapter either by the Membership Committee or the Franchise Owner, for Complaints or Code of Ethics Violations, may not substitute.
3. **Any member or ex-member who is in a classification that is filled in your chapter may not sub.** This violates the exclusivity of a fellow member's classification and limits their ability to request referrals freely. BNI allows only one person per classification, so you, the member, can feel free to ask for referrals without competition in the room.
4. **Active members may only substitute in a given chapter 2 times per year, regardless of how many times they may be asked to substitute; this would also count as a chapter visit for them.** **The Membership Committee has full authority to enforce this with its members.**

Chapters may not ask Visitors and Guests to substitute for members. This destroys credibility for BNI and the Chapter.

Substitutes must be properly prepared for the meeting with the members, the Weekly Presentation, and "I Have" prepared in advance. If a substitute does not show up or is late, the member is marked absent or late. Substitutes are there to represent the business of the member they are subbing for, so they should be prepared to do so. Members should make sure that the substitutes' meal fees are covered in advance.

Substitutes are not there to represent their own business and should not do so. They can network before and after the meeting and discuss their businesses, or book one-to-ones with people they meet. Invite your substitute to attend the meeting with you, introduce them to your fellow members, and show them how they can pass referrals to others in the room. This will allow them to feel more comfortable when they substitute for you.

Remember that it is important for you to be in the room with your fellow members, so use your substitute judiciously.