

**J**ohn Donne is one of the most famous love poets of the sixteenth century. In later life he became Dean of St Paul's Cathedral and said in a sermon: "No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main."

John Donne knew from personal experience the risks associated with working in isolation.

If 2020 taught us anything, it is that human beings are intrinsically relational. We need people in our lives to flourish – our families, friends and networks. It's well documented that isolation and unemployment adversely affect our mental health.

**“IT WILL BE OUR AIM TO ENCOURAGE AND CREATE A RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE BRIGHTON CHAPTER FOR THOSE BUSINESS LEADERS WHO ARE NEW TO BITA.”**

Says Paul Edmonds, the founding chairperson of BITA's Brighton Chapter

Our businesses need to grow to sustain us and secure our future. We know businesses do not grow by themselves, they grow because of teams that collaborate to bring commitment and innovation.

**If you work alone, networking is even more important**

Paul Whitnell, the President of BITA, said: "I think the best way to network is to do two things; listen and understand. You don't need to show everyone your business cards, you need to show them your personality."

It's important to identify shared interests and find commonality with everyone you meet: "Whatever happens you need to make sure that there is a relationship first, and a solid grounding, before you even think about talking business."

When we're networking correctly, we don't simply hand over a business card and connect on LinkedIn. We create long-term relationships with mutual benefits. It takes eleven touch points or points of contact before most people do business.

As Simon Sinek said, when you meet people networking, don't just explain what you do, explain why you do it

and you will find like-minded people with shared values.

Once we have made the initial introductions, we need to nurture these relationships and look for opportunities to help others as well as trying to grow our own business. This is what makes BITA different. We are 'the people who know people that help people.'

Networking during the pandemic has opened up a wealth of online possibilities. BITA will continue to offer virtual networking and seminars as the restrictions ease. It means if there is no chapter nearby or if virtual engagement is simply more convenient, you won't miss out.

We're convinced the future is bright as we gradually emerge from lockdown. What better place to meet people than on the Sussex coast when we launch our new Brighton Chapter?

**“NO MAN IS AN ISLAND...”**