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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BNI Names Heather McLeod as Chief Marketing Officer, Further Expanding C-Suite Strength in 2025**

*With the appointment of Heather McLeod as Chief Marketing Officer, BNI continues to build its executive leadership team alongside recent addition of Andrew Bender as Chief Financial Officer and Dave Collins' Promotion to Chief Operating Officer.*

**Charlotte, N.C., October 21, 2025** – BNI today announced that Heather McLeod has been named Chief Marketing Officer, effective immediately, reporting directly to BNI CEO Mary Kennedy Thompson.

In her role as CMO, McLeod will lead BNI's marketing strategy and execution of initiatives across the organization, bringing extensive experience in franchise growth and brand development. McLeod's entry onto the team marks an important shift to greater focus on marketing as an organization to build BNI brand awareness, drive franchise development activity, enhance support to franchise owners, and more.

"We are thrilled to welcome Heather as BNI's Chief Marketing Officer," said Mary Kennedy Thompson, CEO, BNI. "Her expertise in marketing and franchise growth will be instrumental as we continue to strengthen our brand and support our Members around the globe. I've worked with Heather before, and her skill set is exactly what we need in this role."

McLeod is a recognized thought leader in marketing and franchise ownership. Prior to joining BNI, she was Operating Partner at Trive Capital, focusing on revenue growth strategies for portfolio companies. She previously served as Chief Growth Officer at Authority Brands, leading marketing, sales, and contact center teams across 16 brands and 1,600+ locations. Early in her career, McLeod held marketing roles at Neighborly, including Director of Marketing, where she collaborated with BNI CEO Mary Kennedy Thompson during Thompson's tenure as COO of Neighborly.

"I'm thrilled to join BNI as Chief Marketing Officer and to support an organization built on the philosophy of Givers Gain<sup>®</sup>," said McLeod. "My passion has always been helping





businesses grow through meaningful connections, and I look forward to working with our franchise owners and Members to strengthen the BNI brand and drive success across the globe.”

McLeod’s appointment follows other key executive additions in 2025, further strengthening BNI’s leadership team:

### **Andrew Bender: Chief Financial Officer**

Andrew Bender joined BNI as Chief Financial Officer in April to guide the company’s growth with financial discipline and strategic planning. Previously, he served as CFO at Training the Street and iBTR, among other senior financial roles. Bender’s leadership has been key in implementing financial strategies that support BNI’s long-term growth.

“Adding Andrew to the team enables us to create meaningful partnerships between our financial team and our operators to supercharge our growth,” Thompson adds. “Andrew has significant experience partnering with private equity teams to best allocate resources and create strong strategies for high growth.”

### **Dave Collins: Chief Operating Officer**

Dave Collins joined BNI in 2023 as Senior Vice President of Global Markets, later becoming President of Global Markets before stepping into his current role of Chief Operating Officer in early 2025. With 20 years of experience in franchising, including serving as COO of a global real estate franchise, Collins has been instrumental in driving operational excellence at BNI.

“Building a world-class executive team has been a top priority,” added Thompson. “With Heather, Andrew, and Dave, we’re well positioned to lead BNI into its next chapter of growth and innovation.”

### **About BNI**

BNI® (Business Network International) is the world’s largest and most successful business networking organization. Today, BNI has over 345,000 Member-businesses participating in over 11,400 BNI Chapters that meet in-person, online, or in a hybrid format each week in 76 countries around the globe. Since its inception in 1985, BNI has proudly helped over 2.3 million businesses generate a collective \$235 billion USD in revenue\*.

*The information is based on BNI Member self-reported data as of September 25, 2025, and represents the collective results from BNI Members worldwide since its inception January 8, 1985. Errors in the self-reporting data or in subsequent analysis are possible. Therefore, the information herein should only be viewed as of a representative nature.*