

Emma James



Please give details of all diving industry related interests, whether remunerated or not, and any other potential conflicts of interest

PADI PRO member (Divemaster) - not active/remunerated

What do you think are the key challenges facing BSAC, and what should we be doing to address them?

Recreational diving doesn't have to be an expensive leisure activity, but often is. The pandemic, subsequent inflation, economic hardship, and declining membership presents BSAC with an increased challenge competing for people's time and disposable income. For many, the benefits of a BSAC membership are weighed up against bigger global competitors and this, combined with sometimes limited access to and availability of good crews and dive sites contributes to the challenges to overcome.

As a recent BSAC member (with 10 years PADI diving with which to compare), I in fact see the challenges, coupled with the new BSAC strategy, as great opportunities. Joining BSAC has opened my eyes to its uniqueness: encompassing quality of training (and the subsequent level, safety, and ability of BSAC trained divers), the beautiful underwater environment and the need for us to protect it. I can only believe that other divers, or potential divers, would feel the same way.

To address the challenges, I see reversal of the declining membership as a priority. Conducting a study comparing the motivation of current members with any differences in the motivation of potential members would help to identify how well marketing of BSAC is connecting with the two desired audiences. Prioritising effective communication with a new generation of divers (both in the UK and internationally) would contribute to reverse membership declines.

From my own experience, I know that BSAC are communicating with new members requesting feedback on their first year's membership. This is perfect timing, enables an easy dialogue of general feedback and suggestions which will contribute to retaining new membership. Following up on early dialogue and providing evidence of suggestions taken on board will strengthen any bonds established. On-going retention of membership, managed at club level, could be additionally supported at a national (and international) level to ensure members get more out of their BSAC related activities.

Many divers, resident in the UK have learnt to dive overseas and consider British water diving hard-core, cold, scary and 'nothing to see there!' On return from an overseas holiday, those divers disengage from the diving community and either never dive again, or, at best, wait for their next warm water holiday to jump in again. If BSAC were to be the original training body overseas, there would be more chance of embracing those members to help them to develop a longer-term involvement with diving, the underwater world, and a commitment to the protection of that environment. With increased international partnerships, BSAC could increase awareness and memberships starting from outside of the UK and bring them home.

Please describe how you would contribute to any / all of these areas

With over 25 years professional background in International Publishing and Licensing at a senior executive level, I would bring experience in and could contribute to

- international marketing, PR, media, comms,
- reputation and brand development,
- international business development,
- partnering and international relationship management,
- experience from another diving training agency.

At Dorling Kindersley Publishing (an imprint of Penguin Random House publishers), for twelve years (from 2010 to 2021) I led the international business and team. We developed and managed several hundred international partnerships, and the DK content is translated in over 60 languages.

As a well-established British club, BSAC has tremendous opportunity to grow the brand and reputation internationally, potentially through licensed partnerships. BSAC's strategic commitment to quality and consistency of training would appeal to an international audience and a long-term strategy of increasing brand awareness and what makes BSAC stand apart from the alternatives could be

adopted to create a solid foundation from which to grow memberships in the long-term.

During my tenure as Director of International Publishing & Licensing at DK, I proposed and led the strategy to establish the use of the DK brand on licensed publishing internationally. Together with targeted trade and consumer marketing, this had the effect of growing brand recognition and an appreciation of what the brand represented in terms of quality and therefore consumer expectation. This paved the way to strengthening foundations and opportunities for ever-more successful international partnerships in subsequent years. Through the DK publishing, we were also licensed partners to several much bigger global brands, (such as Disney, LEGO, BMA, Red Cross, Smithsonian, RHS) and protecting and growing those brands and associations within their given parameters internationally through books was also part of my remit.

These are all possibilities to consider for BSAC.

I have 10 years' diving experience, certifying with PADI both in the UK and overseas, to a level of PADI Divemaster. The training I received provided me with tools I needed to safely enjoy and begin to understand the underwater world. I would bring to BSAC not only my recent experience of working as a PADI Divemaster but also ideas for eLearning, experience of broad educational content, and approach to marine conservation awareness.

Whilst you haven't mentioned it in your list of areas of knowledge you are seeking, because of the nature of the publishing in which I am involved, I have in-depth knowledge and understanding of curating and publishing high-quality educational materials. This is fundamental in attracting international partnerships and part of what would make BSAC appeal as a high-quality trainer and community link to the marine environment, accessible to all.

Personal statement

I am a specialist in international illustrated reference book publishing and have worked at a senior executive level for the last twelve years. Learning to dive 10 years ago ignited an enthusiasm for the underwater world and a desire to learn more about marine conservation - hence my ambition to bring my transferable skills to BSAC as an ordinary council member.

Key skills that I can draw upon from my international publishing career include market investigation, business opportunity research and an intuitive grasp of market and brand development opportunities. I am task, results, and customer oriented and

understand and appreciate diverse global cultures. I am naturally curious and am known for developing strong, positive, and enduring business relations.

Working in an international environment for over 30 years, I am happiest when with people of diverse nationalities and cultures and I speak and write fluent Spanish and good French having lived, studied, and worked in Spain, Colombia, and France. English is my native language. I have travelled to and concluded business negotiations with partners in over 50 countries around the world.

My business achievements include the leadership of an international business P&L turning over approximately £50M with a team of 70 people responsible for licensing and trade sales, marketing, and operations based in London and internationally. For three years, I was on the board of directors of a Portuguese joint venture company. I successfully proposed, planned, and launched a Spanish language publishing programme for distribution in Spain, Latin America, and the USA; negotiated the set up and funding of an office and team in Tokyo for exclusive Japanese representation and set the groundwork and strategy that grew the Chinese team and business from turning over £200K to £25M over a period of 8 years. I established the framework for brand usage internationally and spearheaded the negotiations with licensed partners around the world. Once the brand and reputation were established, it was possible to implement a joined-up international marketing strategy with measurable objectives.

Throughout my publishing career I have benefited from additional executive education at Harvard Business School (Managing Strategy for Action) and London based training including High Performance Management, People Management, Finance & Budget Management.

Further career and education information can be found on my LinkedIn profile page: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/emma-james-0aa60b41/>