

Warren Izzett



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

None

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

As we should all be aware, BSAC has suffered a long-term decline in membership. When I joined in 1998 there were around 45,000 members. The last figures available, from the 2022 AGM minutes, showed membership of 22,047. A huge fall of over 50%. The UK economy is now formally in recession and with rising inflation there will clearly be pressure on expenditure on leisure activities such as diving. It will therefore be challenging for membership to return to the immediate pre-Covid level of around 25,000. Since membership fees account for the vast majority of BSAC's income, the key challenge is in fact financial. Whilst BSAC must strive to reverse the downward membership trend, the organisation also needs to mitigate the impact of lower membership by diversifying its sources of income.

One potential source of increased revenue is from BSAC's international activities. The organisation has franchising arrangements in three countries and has income from around 40 affiliated dive centres abroad. BSAC has existing franchise agreements in Japan and South Korea and recently started working with a new franchise partner in Egypt, which is very encouraging. International revenue currently represents a small part of total income, but I believe that with increased focus on this area there is potential for growth. Additional markets should be identified, where a less commercially focused style of dive training would be appreciated. BSAC should not try to compete directly against PADI and other international training agencies, but a niche market approach can work.

Falling membership, the current economic situation and the hangover from the Pandemic have all had a major impact on BSAC branches. Long-standing members may have left, leaving less experience available to run clubs. Lack of revenue from diving activities and increased costs of maintaining equipment and boats, which were barely used for two years, have an ongoing impact on branches. BSAC needs to find ways to be more pro-active in its support to branches. There are good branch resources on BSAC.com but some more personal advice, perhaps via the regional teams, is necessary.

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

BSAC is seeking to recruit Council members with international business development expertise. My thirty-six-year career has been entirely devoted to developing and managing international business for several companies. In my current role with the Lenbrook Group, a Canadian manufacturer of home audio equipment, I manage the company's business for the NAD Electronics and Bluesound hi-fi brands in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. This involves setting up and managing distributors or other partners in each country and ensuring that they carry out the necessary activities in their territory including marketing, development of sales channels, product training and technical support. This experience is directly applicable to developing new business channels for BSAC and working through third parties to deliver results.

In 1995 I was part of the international team at Psion PLC which was recognised with the Queens Award for Export Achievement. I was Export Sales Manager at Tannoy Loudspeakers for several years (90% of its business was overseas at the time) and Regional Director, Northern Europe for drinks brand Drambuie.

International business development for these companies goes hand in hand with brand development and I have solid practical experience of conventional advertising, PR, trade marketing and brand marketing through third parties.

As a side project a few years ago, I worked as a consultant for Scottish Development International (SDA), the Scottish Government agency responsible for nurturing Export business development. This involved advising small to medium sized companies on developing international business strategies and recommending candidates for grant funding. From this I gained experience of working in a consultative capacity, which I feel would be useful for the BSAC council role, as well as practical experience of Export grant funding.

Otherwise, I have been involved in various aspects general management of several sizeable organisations with experience of sales and marketing planning, budgeting,

credit management and product development and localisation for international markets.

I hold an MBA from Strathclyde Graduate Business School and the Diploma of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Personal statement

I have been a BSAC member and a member of South Queensferry branch in Edinburgh since 1998. I have served at different times as branch chair, DO, treasurer and membership secretary. I was also on the South Scotland team as SDCO from 2005-2007. I'm a First Class Diver, Advanced Instructor and Mixed Gas Rebreather Diver (Mod 3).

Through the BSAC community I've made many friends and learned many life lessons such as always having a plan B and how to work together to achieve a common goal. Becoming an instructor with BSAC really helped developed my presentation and communications skills, which had a very positive impact on my professional life. I would be honoured to join the BSAC Council and feel it's the right time for me to put something back. My business and diving experience will both help me contribute towards shaping the future of the organisation. I would be committed to devoting a significant amount of time to the role. As a long-serving branch officer, I would particularly like to help represent the position of BSAC branches at Council level.