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Membership Improvement & Growth

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Acronyms:

- ▀ "BSHAA" refers to The British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists
- ▀ "HAE" refers to Hall Associates Europe LLP

Background

- ▶ BSHAA is an established Professional Body, but attrition rates cancel out recruitment rates at present and membership levels are at best static (and could well decline in the face of ongoing economic pressures).
- ▶ BSHAA clearly faces a challenge in attracting fresh member populations and addressing membership losses, particularly in the prevailing economic climate.
- ▶ However, this is not a unique problem and most Professional Bodies are in a similar situation at the present time.
- ▶ Looking ahead, all membership organisations will need to employ “best practice” recruitment, retention and engagement techniques to:
 - ▶ Build and maintain effective membership levels.
 - ▶ Offer an effective and realistic membership value proposition.
 - ▶ Adapt to inevitably different future membership profiles.
 - ▶ Manage risk and cost
- ▶ In addition, the extra risks to retention posed by the economic downturn require new measures and historical performance cycles are not future guarantees.
- ▶ If we look behind the overall BSHAA membership equation, recruitment is arguably the most immediate challenge.
- ▶ Retention performance, at approx 90%, is broadly average when contrasted against other membership bodies contemporary to BSHAA.
- ▶ Conversely, recruitment (at around 9%) is below par in comparable benchmarking terms and we also know that BSHAA is underperforming in relation to market penetration.
- ▶ However, the underlying question is – will current retention trends continue, or is BSHAA simply lagging the downturn seen elsewhere?

Background Continued

- ▶ We know from experience that the articulation of benefits and how members perceive the value of their membership is extremely important at the present time.
- ▶ BSHAA lists some powerful and highly relevant membership benefits, but the message is not necessarily getting across to members and prospective members (students are a good case in point), at least based upon membership levels.
- ▶ As with all membership bodies, BSHAA represents a diverse spread of members, often with quite different wants and needs.
- ▶ They will hear a generic message differently and respond in different ways - they require a more personalised approach
- ▶ For any membership body, deeper understanding of what their members (particularly the more passive groupings who are not so closely engaged), and potential members really want is key to future recruitment, retention, and growth strategies.
- ▶ Gaining intelligence on the opinions and needs of the passive majority will enable the alignment of benefits to key member groupings, as well as potential member markets.
- ▶ This appears to us to be a particularly important issue for BSHAA, as the “value” element of the value proposition should speak for itself, but clearly doesn’t in all cases.
- ▶ Subscription levels are quite high in both practical and benchmarking terms, but the benefit and service package is equally strong, particularly the “Find a Dispenser” offering, and the business generation opportunities it should offer.
- ▶ Based upon experience elsewhere, these factors indicate:
 - ▶ A low level of awareness of the benefits available.
 - ▶ Probably a low level of benefit take up.
 - ▶ Joining and staying decisions are being made arbitrarily.

Way Forward

- ▶ BSHAA is well aware of the issues set out on the previous pages, is intent upon taking positive action to address them, and has initiatives in hand.
- ▶ HAE has significant experience in the membership arena, and proven capabilities to both support and accelerate these initiatives.
- ▶ BSHAA is looking at a long term programme of change, and HAE can help to both launch and successfully embed the programme.
- ▶ The start point would be a low cost pilot project, designed to garner empirical feedback, inform future thinking, and make a rapid impact on membership ratios.
- ▶ Surfacing intelligence on the opinions and needs of the passive majority will enable the alignment of benefits to match member expectations, and reach new member markets.
- ▶ The pilot will comprise research and telephone based consultation with representative samples of the entire BSHAA stakeholder community.
- ▶ This will include members, ex members and prospective members, and will be designed to inform the development of a fresh recruitment and membership engagement model .
- ▶ As a pragmatic means of gaining insight into “lost” member opinions, and potentially create quick win membership growth, we will talk to those who have voted with their feet, and carry out a specific lapsed member research and re-instatement campaign.
- ▶ Recruiting, or regaining members is of course only worthwhile if they stay for at least several years and do not lapse at the end of year one.
- ▶ Engagement is one, albeit critical, aspect of the member relationship; the other is internal processes that touch the member.
- ▶ We therefore suggest a review of existing processes and ways of working conducted in tandem with a lapsed member campaign and general fact finding exercise.

Way Forward Continued

- Membership related processes and ways of working are key drivers of retention performance in themselves, and play a major part in enhancing, or destroying, the member experience.
- The renewal cycle is a good example, where generic member feedback tells us that many members who lapse do so because of the passive “one size fits all” nature of the process (and perhaps the overall membership experience), rather than actual dissatisfaction.
- We believe that pro-active, personalised member engagement would work well for BSHAA, and that adopting this approach would help drive recruitment as well as accelerate renewal.
- That said, the Association is a very lean organisation, and current membership processes already consume a significant amount of valuable resource.
- Happily, experience tells us that the new processes and ways of working required to achieve sustainable growth also have the potential to reduce overall admin resource, needs and costs.
- It may be that some functions could or should be handled externally, and we will jointly look at the business cases as appropriate.
- However, the key objective of the pilot will be to identify, develop, and model processes, tools and techniques that will enable BSHAA to operate more efficiently and “do more with what you have”.

Our Proposal

We propose to carry out an initial project phase, designed to launch and underpin a programme of change for BSHAA, the key objectives will be.

- Learning more about what past, present and future members really want from BSHAA.
- Enhancing member engagement and related processes to improve retention performance.
- Developing new ways of expressing the real value of being a member and the relevant techniques for growing membership.
- Piloting and testing these techniques to gain some quick (but durable) wins and prove the case for change.

Informed by this empirical evidence, BSHAA can then go on to:

- Reposition, if and as necessary.
- Ensure that the benefit and service package fits with member expectations.
- Implement the required change and plan confidently for the future.

During the course of the project, we will also:

- Segment and profile BSHAA lapsed members using our specific tools and techniques.
- Draft appropriate "survey" questions for your input and agreement.
- Capture detailed records of discussions and feedback.
- Benchmark and assess lapsed member perceptions of BSHAA value and relevance (we will compare and contrast lapsed member feedback with that derived from other clients.
- Analyse and interpret the results of our research.

Our Proposal 2

The scope of the project will be:

1. Review and refinement of existing member related processes and ways of working.
2. A telephone based member, ex-member and prospective member research and survey exercise, comprising:
 - a. A lapsed member research and re-instatement campaign.
 - b. A welcome call pilot exercise – personalised contact with 1st year members.
 - c. Dialogue with representative sample of longer serving members
 - d. A new member referral pilot – seeking referrals from past and current members.
3. Analysis and interpretation of member and ex-member feedback.
4. Benchmarking and assessment of member perceptions of BSHAA value and relevance.
5. The translation of results into practical improvement action plans.
6. The design of new renewal processes and approach as required, ready for implementation

The third party nature of our involvement will not be apparent to the lapsed members involved and we will act as part of the BSHAA team throughout. All member contact would be designed to:

- Gain fresh intelligence on opinions, attitudes and behaviour.
- Stimulate renewal and re-instatement.
- Generate cash from recovery of subscription income.
- Inform future membership strategy and approach.
- Provide feedback to process redesign.

▀ Costs, Timing and Credentials

- ▀ Our total, fixed fee for carrying out the project as described will be £4,000.00.
- ▀ The project will be of approximately 8 to 10 weeks duration. Actual timings will be influenced by the availability and quality of the data you can provide, especially the accuracy of telephone numbers and other contact details.
- ▀ The key objective and deliverable from the proposal to improve recruitment and retention performance and achieve long term, sustainable net growth for BSHAA.
- ▀ However, we appreciate that you have tight budgetary considerations and will also want to look at the immediate financial equation.
- ▀ Based upon our experience of carrying out similar programmes for other clients, we expect at least a proportion of our fixed fee to be offset by the gains BSHAA realises from recovery of subscription income from lapsed member re-instatement and the recruitment of new members.
- ▀ Whilst we cannot guarantee precise outcomes, the overall net cost of the work would certainly be less than the gross figure proposed above.
- ▀ To position the cost/benefit equation in very basic terms; if the sum of our work was to either bring in, or prevent the loss of, just a dozen or so members – the project would generate over £2,000.00 in itself.
- ▀ All fees quoted are plus any out of pocket expenses if incurred (travel and accommodation only, all other costs such as telephone calls etc are included in our fee), and VAT.
- ▀ Recognising that you may wish to share this document with colleagues who may not be familiar with our work, credentials and an extract from our client list follow.

▀ About Us

We are specialists with 10 years of proven, demonstrable success. During that time, we have worked with more than 120 membership bodies, and have unique knowledge and experience of how to help organisations like these to achieve their strategic objectives.

We have an intimate understanding of the sector and know how to bring about effective and durable change. We work in partnership with our clients to introduce best practice, strengthen recruitment and retention performance, engage more effectively with their members, and to continually enhance the attractiveness and relevance of the benefits and services they offer.

Our clients represent a wide range of professions and disciplines and therefore a diverse mix of market conditions and challenges. We have worked extensively with numerous organisations contemporary to BSHAA, and an extract from our current client list follows (testimonials from a variety of clients are also available on our website: www.hallassociates.com)

In addition to the knowledge bank evolved from the hundreds of projects we have carried out, we conduct regular research into member and non-member benefit perceptions, benefit value, fee structures, economic and demographic trends, and therefore hold a significant amount of data which both supports and enhances the results of our work.

It might also be useful to confirm that all of our projects and engagements are conducted by our own highly experienced staff. We do not outsource or sub contract any activities as we have all of the necessary skills in-house.



Client Extract

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Institute of Physics
BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT
Institution of Structural Engineers
Institution of Engineering Designers
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology
Institute of Physics in Engineering and Medicine
IOM³ The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining
Ergonomics Society
Chartered Institute of Public Relations
Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Chartered Management Institute
Chartered Quality Institute
International Institute of Risk and Safety Management
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
Institute for the Management of Information Systems
Institute of Credit Management
Institute of Fundraising
ifs School of Finance
Institute of Hospitality
Institute for Learning
Institute of Business Advisers
Institute of Water
Energy Institute
Institute of the Motor Industry
Institute of Advanced Motorists
Institute of Refrigeration
Association of Insurance and Risk Managers
Association of Building engineers
Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers
Operational Research Society
Marketing Society
Business Continuity Institute
Institution of Incorporated Engineers
Sainsbury Management Fellows' Society
Public Sector People Managers' Association
National Association of Estate Agents
International Bar Association
Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys
Organisation of Professionals in Regulatory Affairs
INSOL International
National Association of Licensed Paralegals
Freight Transport Association
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Agents Association
Employment Related Services Association
National Merchant Buying Society
National association of Pension Funds
British Print Industries Federation
UK Warehousing Association
Property Care Association
Institute of Wood Science
British Woodworking Federation
Motor Schools Association of Great Britain
National Association of Master Bakers
British Institute of Cleaning Science
British Association of Landscaping Industries
Association of Convenience Stores

Royal institute of British Architects
Royal Society of Arts
Royal Institution
Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies
International Institute for Strategic Studies
Royal Meteorological Society
Royal College of Nursing
Royal Society of Medicine
Royal Pharmaceutical Society
Society and College of Radiographers
British Psychological Society
British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies
British Institute of Radiology
College of Optometrists
Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists
Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists
British Osteopathic Association
Nutrition Society
Federation of Holistic Therapists
Institute for Complementary and Natural Medicine
Institute of Clinical research
Association of Medical Secretaries & Practice Managers
Association of Professional Ambulance Personnel
British Veterinary Association
British Sociological Association
British Learning Association
National Association of Head Teachers
National Society for Education in Art and Design
National Association for the Teaching of English
National Association of Teachers of Religious Education
Design and Technology Association
Association for Science Education
Association for Physical education
Association for Citizenship Teaching
Historical Association
Institute of Conservation
Society of Archivists
National Council on Archives
Archives and Records Association
Diabetes UK
Brathay Trust
Disabled Motoring UK
Countryside Alliance
Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
Worcestershire Wildlife Trust
British Association for Shooting and Conservation
National Rifle Association
Angling Trust
Kennett and Avon Canal Trust
Foundation and Friends of Kew Gardens
Royal Forestry Society
Westonbirt Arboretum
Herb Society
English Folk Dance and Song Society
Friends of the Imperial War Museum
Sunbeam Tiger Owners Club
Society for All Artists