

BKR INTERNATIONAL: ENGAGEMENT WITH A PERSONAL APPROACH

In a Talking Heads interview, *Zoya Malik* spoke to BKR International's worldwide CEO, *Tim Morris*, and incoming worldwide chair *Graeme Boake* about their plans for the future

Zoya Malik: *Tim, how did BKR international come to elect Graeme Boake as worldwide chair?*

Tim Morris: Graeme has been an active member of the BKR worldwide (WW) and EMEA regional boards for around six years. He was elected to the role of vice-chair of the WW board for a two-year term at our AGM in Shanghai in 2018. He took over as chair in October 2020.

ZM: *How do you expect him to support you and the executive office?*

TM: Graeme provides clear direction and is always available to discuss matters.

ZM: *What strengths does he bring to the board?*

TM: A deep knowledge of the profession and of BKR. As his firm is a long-standing member of BKR, he knows what the association needs to do for its members.

ZM: *How closely will you work with the board to face the challenges posed by Covid-19? What guidance will you look for?*

TM: The CEO has always worked closely with the WW board regardless of Covid. Given the direction of the WW board for regions to continue providing remote support to the members, they have confirmed the CEO's role in co-ordinating the regional executive directors in devising their programmes and sharing best practice.

Given BKR's family nature, it is a great pleasure to work for Graeme who has been a great support in my previous role as EMEA executive director. I look forward to working with him to take the association forward.



Tim Morris,
BKR International

ZM: *Graeme, what makes BKR International's mission powerful?*

Graeme Boake: Our mission is: 'To assist our independent members to grow and strengthen their practices by providing resources on an international scale to service them, their clients and potential clients, including forums to learn, tools and services to assist in their practices, promotion of their firm and other opportunities to improve their business.'

Our commitment is to assist members to improve their business, and this is vital for all our members. All our members are independent firms with their own needs and requirements in their own markets, and our regional structures really help members to develop their business.

ZM: *What strengths are you bringing to fit in with the current board?*

GB: Having been a member of BKR for 24 years, I have a good understanding of the association personally, and I have built many personal relationships with our members and board members from across the globe.

Boake Inc., where I am currently CEO in Johannesburg, has also actively participated in BKR regional and worldwide conferences over these years. As BKR is owned and run by our members, I am ideally placed to take the association forward.

ZM: *What is your immediate business focus in 2021?*

GB: Helping members get over the effects of Covid-19. We must not lose sight of the fact that this is a global pandemic, and different jurisdictions will move forward at different



Graeme Boake,
BKR International

rates and in different ways. We are also extremely keen to meet in person as soon as the situation allows us to do safely.

ZM: *What is your experience in crisis management and reputational risk?*

GB: BKR International member firms are not only selected for their local influence, expertise and international capability, but they must also demonstrate that they have met the standards of their local jurisdiction, as well as undergo a thorough review by BKR's regional and worldwide boards.

Many of Boake Inc.'s clients and several BKR members are experiencing challenging times during the pandemic, and through hard work and ongoing communications with clients and members we are finding ways to support each other during these times.

Reputational risk can be managed by truly instilling our mission and vision with our members, and ensuring that all new members buy into and will adhere to our mission and vision. I will ensure that all members adhere to the standards of membership and governance, and I will also prioritise risk mitigation during my tenure.

ZM: *How will you advise BKR to face challenges arising from Covid 19?*

GB: As one of the top 10 global accounting associations, BKR International represents the combined strength of more than 160 independent accounting and business advisory firms in over 500 offices and 80 countries. The strength of BKR is our

members and the experiences that we collectively share. Members have been able to meet often in the past on a face-to-face basis, and more recently have been connecting on virtual platforms, and have been making the most of the service lines that are successful to help members gain momentum and ultimately return to profitability or maintain profitability.

Our three regions, together with support from BKR worldwide, are getting in touch with our members on a regular basis to assist them with topical matters and providing forums to be in touch with each other.

We hope that our members will be able to meet in person as soon as the situation allows us to do so safely. Until then, we will uphold our regular engagements where we will continue to leverage our combined strengths as well as ensure that BKR imparts the requisite skills and services to members. ■