

Goals for the Incoming President of the DRBF

by Nicholas Gould

I am very much looking forward to becoming the President of the DRBF in May 2021, after serving my first 12 months as the President Elect. The last 12 months have been difficult for businesses, individuals and institutions as we have all had to adapt to living with Covid and develop new remote working skills. The impact on our social lives as well as our need to meet people has been dramatic. In addition, we have been unable to hold conferences, and although the DRBF now runs an excellent webinar series I for one certainly miss the networking and exchange of ideas in the coffee breaks as much as listening to the speakers. I think we have all realised how important those events are in order to discuss and debate ideas not just in the coffee breaks but also over a drink, lunch or dinner.

I suspect that much of the rest of 2021 will be the same. Perhaps during this year it will be possible to hold more events and hopefully in 2022 we will return to some form of new normality. Possibly a blend of webinars and conferences with hybrid events combining delegates who attend the venue and those of watch the live stream.

I think it is important that I try to identify some goals to aim for during my term as DRBF President. I think these can be put quite simply as focussing on knowledge sharing and international networking. First, in relation to knowledge sharing, I proposed last year that the DRBF began a series of quality online published papers. The DRBF online paper series has now been launched, and I welcome anyone to submit a quality paper for publication. For details please look at the DRBF website; <https://www.drb.org/>

Secondly, also focusing on knowledge sharing, I would like to develop DRBF guidance and best practice guidance notes for topical DB related matters of practice. For example, at the moment some guidance could be issued in relation to virtual hearings, and also how to conduct site meetings virtually. This avoids the need to worry about trying to update the DRBF manual regularly. Guidance should be approved by the executive board and is therefore quite different from a published paper.

Thirdly, I would like to maximise the excellent work that has already been carried out in relation to webinars, web-based learning and networking. I think there will always now be a place for webinars that provide our members throughout the world to be able to participate in online learning from wherever they are regardless of the time zone. This of course has the benefit of saving not just travel time but reducing our carbon footprint.

Fourthly, I would like to expand our reach not just regionally but in each country by asking existing members to encourage new members to join. I feel that the benefits of the DRBF webinars can now more easily reach individuals in almost any location around the world, and I hope that through greater connectivity we can also expand individual members networking throughout the DRBF with like-minded individuals.

Finally, I am looking forward to seeing many of you either at one of our webinar events, or hopefully in the not too distant future, at one of our conferences. Once it becomes safely permissible to hold events we will begin to do so. I think that many of us are missing not just the education aspect of these events, but also the social interactions. I hope that I am able to see many of you before the end of my presidency in 2022.

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