

# TOURISM NOW



## WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Skål International celebrates  
International Women's Day

 **SKÅL**  
INTERNATIONAL  
Connecting Tourism Globally

# EXEMPLARY

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# SKÅLLEAGUE

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## THE SCHOOL OF ROME



### PAOLO BARTOLOZZI

Skål International Roma  
President

Managing Skål  
International Europe  
IT Team

I joined Skål International in 2009 at the Skål International stand in WTM London. Little did I know that it would be the beginning of an incredible journey, with fantastic new friends and challenges.

Initially, Skål International was a great way to get special rates when traveling for my IT company. Then, Presidents Augusto Minei and Antonio Percario drew me into the club's management, initially asking for help with the Skål International Roma website. I did not realize that those were my first steps in the 'School of Rome'.

In February 2020, I was elected President after three years as Skål International Roma Online Communication & IT Director and Web Administrator for Skål International Italia.

### VISION - BEFORE

Skål International Roma started in 2016 a 'New Deal' to meet new

demands and contrast the membership decline. President Percario wanted to build a giant, international, and highly respected Skål International club in Rome. The slogan "think global, act local" was our guideline. Four simple words completely changed the approach to club management and ended a self-referential feeling in Skål International Roma.

Skål International Roma opened to the outside world, not limiting to Skål International Members only. We became brand ambassadors for institutions and Tourism events. We formed a think tank as the first step of the Academy Foundation. We opened the club in Pompei. We established strong connections with other associations, and together, we converse with institutions. We held in Rome the signature of one of the founding documents of Skål International Europe during the 70th-

anniversary celebration. The Skål International logo is now commonly present on the Italian tourist press.

Then came Covid-19... and suddenly Skål International, an association based on strong interpersonal relations, became a galaxy of dispersed and isolated individuals.

### VISION - AFTER

Hard lock-down started in March 2020. I saw my industry collapse. Club membership shrunk dramatically during my first months as President.

Still, the only sustainable long-term vision for a healthy club is... big, international, and well respected. This determined our first goal: return quickly to pre-COVID-19 Membership.

Our Members' joint statement, "value for money", provided the direction to go, and we learned from surveys that both Skålleagues and colleagues asked for new international relations.

**STRATEGY**

The Board assessed the situation to give “value for money,” re-establish regular communications, develop the club’s operational capability, face financial obligations, continue with club digitalization, and prepare for recovery. We granted loyal and early paying Members discounts on renewals.

To provide international relations – and attract new members with similar needs – the Board determined that the best opportunities were offered by Skål International Europe and its brand new B2B platform.

The Board decided to capitalize on the inactivity of other associations to attract new members, provide a unique ‘house’, or facilitate the setup of new clubs (Skål International Calabria will open soon, working on two more).

**TACTICS**

We provided the Board with online productivity tools and procedures to guarantee the functioning of the club. In parallel, we activated new channels to communicate efficiently with Members.

The Academy think tank immediately produced two surveys, measuring feelings and desiderata of our Membership. During all the crisis, it continued to support the Board with data and qualified advice.

We campaigned to enroll Presidents of other associations, strengthening bonds. In 2021 the Presidents of FIAVET Italia (TO and TA) and ADUTEI (International Tourism Boards), GIST (Tourism press), ADA Lazio (Hotel Managers), and Federalberghi Lazio (Hotels) joined Skål International Roma.

We accepted to be more opportunistic, favoring activities with short-term planning.

**SOME RESULTS AND STORIES OF HOPE****MEMBERSHIP**

Skål International Roma lost 58% of Membership in 2020 for Covid-19, going from 135 members in December 2019 to 57 in the darkest moment of 2020. March 2021, we are back to 101 Members (+73%) and will soon hit the target of pre-COVID-19 Membership.

**SERVICES TO MEMBERS**

The digitalization of procedures made the club a fast-delivering machine, providing the demanded services with limited resources. In nine months, we organized 38 events, including webinars, meetings, research, and publications (one per week).

**VOICE IN INSTITUTIONS**

The policy of collaboration with other associations brought Skål International Roma to the Italian Senate. A new law on Tourism Professions is possibly in its final approval process. This law would embed Skål International’s ideas.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Through Skål International Europe, we deliver new continental horizons to existing and new members.

**BRANDING**

We generate flows of information to the public and the press at every event. The Skål International brand is associated with a dynamic organization addressing a wide variety of topics.

 **THE SCHOOL OF ROME**

So, what about the **School of Rome**. In Rome, we have a ‘system’ where all members are invited to join the team to run the club. Of course, not all respond.

Once a new member joins the team, he/she is immediately involved in projects and operations, getting specific training when needed. Everybody has exposure to each club procedure creating the basis of team member inter-changeability.

This is a method to make a group of volunteers work together efficiently, encourage responsible free initiative, and support weaknesses with redundancy.

Soon our trainees become trainers. They open new teams bringing new life to the club, more content, and attraction for new members.