



Helping Sunseeker prosper

A client case study



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The Sunseeker London Group story – harnessing the power of our international network

Longstanding UHY London client, Sunseeker London Group, is a phenomenal story of growth and prosperity. Following a leap of faith by its founders, David Lewis and Christopher Head, the business is now the largest distributor of Sunseeker boats worldwide, year on year selling over half of the Sunseeker production. When setting up Sunseeker Group London, lifelong business partners David and Christopher were in no doubt that their plans to dominate the European sales market would be a success. They weren't wrong.

Turning passion into action

The Sunseeker Yachts brand was started in the late sixties by brothers Robert and John Braithwaite in Poole, Dorset. Twenty years later, David Lewis, then a young marine expert working for his father's marine company in Wanstead, and his engineer colleague, Christopher Head, fell in love with the brand. Turning their passion into action, in 1993 David and Christopher formed the Sunseeker London Group as an independent organisation for the sale of Sunseeker boats.

Growth at the heart of the business

Today David and Christopher remain Managing Director and Group Sales Director respectively. 30 years since the creation of Sunseeker London Group, the business now comprises 39 offices in over 20 countries. With growth at the heart of the business, the founders have developed a strategy which is underpinned by three core principles that are key to the company's success; to expand into new territories, to build its online brokerage platform and to control the stock of boats in the supply chain.

From their headquarters in Mayfair, Sunseeker London sells to an international clientele across the world and are the official and leading distributor for new and pre-owned luxury Sunseeker motor yachts, ranging from 38ft to 161ft. Despite the pandemic having a significant impact on operations, including the temporary shutdown of shipyard production in the UK and the cancellation of major UK and international boat shows, the group continues to perform exceptionally well, employing over 100 people and recording a turnover of over £173m in their latest set of accounts.

Demanding more than just an accountant

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Operating across borders, Sunseeker London is a complex business demanding more than just accountancy skill from an audit partner. In Managing Director, David's words "We always strive to look at things differently and we need our accountancy partners to share that same ethos. We are providing yachts for the super-rich and every stage of the buying process must be streamlined. There are many different transactions to manage in the specification and sale of a boat and these can happen in different countries and with different supply businesses."

Fortunately, UHY partner, Vinod Vadgama, relishes the challenge of supporting a complex international businesses like Sunseeker London, and recognises that a deep commercial understanding of their process is essential to success.

Unlocking global opportunity

As the exclusive distributor for Sunseeker products in the UK and major parts of Europe and Northern Africa, Sunseeker London owns the rights to the whole of the Mediterranean Seas. This means clients can buy a boat in Germany, keep it in Spain and then sail to Egypt for their holiday. Sunseeker is unique in having offices in all territories, helping the business stay ahead of its competitors. Clients benefit from a centralised support network and a team of engineers that can fly out at a drop of a hat to customers Europe-wide, ensuring that Sunseeker London maintains its award-winning customer service.

The group also has a number of subsidiaries in their territories, to provide selling opportunities and after-sales support. "This is seamless, and very reassuring for our clients," says David. "It has really helped us to build the business and is mirrored by the consistency of approach we receive from UHY. We could not manage a business like ours without the support of people like Vinod Vadgama."

Harnessing the power of the UHY international network

Over recent years, Sunseeker London has expanded its reach to various territories. We have been able to introduce them to our member firms across the UHY international network, which consists of offices in 330 business centres in over 100 countries, to help the group to set up various regions. In Spain, for example, member firm UHY Fay & Co now audits the subsidiary accounts in accordance with the legal regulations in Spain, as well as providing our London office with consolidation reports complying with international auditing standards.

Being part UHY international has also allowed Vinod and his team to draw on local knowledge from UHY member firms, including in Croatia, Germany, Portugal and Spain, where Sunseeker London's subsidiaries require particular advice. In each country the marine, legal and tax laws vary and can change often so our London UHY team ensure they stay close to Sunseeker's development plans and speak regularly to our international colleagues to ensure we are able to act as a sounding board for Sunseeker London and provide advice to help them succeed.

What makes the relationship so strong is that it is built on trust. "There's a lot of trust here," says David. "We needed to trust our London based UHY team to help us seamlessly build up relationships over time with other UHY member firms in other countries as our development required. At the same time, it was important to us that we could always look at our global accountancy and auditing through one team at our central offices here in London. UHY Hacker Young offers us a cohesive service wherever in the world we need to draw expertise and support from."

Thanks to David and Christopher's confidence in UHY's delivery and commercial input, in London and abroad, the Sunseeker London team can put aside financial management concerns and focus instead on the Sunseeker brand.

The magic beyond the boat

David, Christopher and the Sunseeker London team have been instrumental in bringing the Sunseeker brand to where it is today. This has been recognised for the past 14 years by Sunseeker International awarding the Sunseeker London Group 'Overall Distributor of the year' for their 'Best in the world customer service'.

"Sunseeker is an international brand at the level of Bentley, Ferrari or a top hotel group like the Ritz," says David. "To reinforce this, we need to give our clients experiences that money cannot buy, so we recognise that what we do around our commercial offer is critical. It is not enough just to provide a fabulous product – we must add even more magic to the customer experience that goes beyond the boat."

With undiluted passion, Sunseeker is much more than just a brand of boat. It is a lifestyle and a family. And as Sunseeker London's advisers, we have been delighted to support David, Christopher and their team on their phenomenal journey of growth and prosperity to date. In Vinod's words, "The team at Sunseeker London Group is extremely passionate, driven and focused which makes them a pleasure to work with."

“UHY have a genuine interest in our business and a willingness to work quickly and precisely and on point. The international scale of UHY has given us a one-stop shop accountancy service, which suits our global company very well.”

**David Lewis, Managing Director,
Sunseeker**



The next step

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www.uhy-uk.com

Key contacts



Vinod Vadgama
Partner

v.vadgama@uhy-uk.com

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