SCUBA DIVING INDUSTRY

APRIL 2025
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SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

SAFETY
THE RECOMPRESSION CHAMBER CRISIS

TRAVEL
CORNWALL U.K.
CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

RETAILING
TRAVEL INSURANCE FOR RETAILERS

BUSINESS EDU
BUILDING A STRONGER CUSTOMER BASE, HOW TO WRITE GOOD HOOKS

Photo by Mark B. Hatter, Airport Strip Cagayancillo Island, Located between the Visayas and Tubbataha, Philippines.

TRENDS IN DIVE RETAILING, TRAVEL & TRAINING

All Aggressor Roads lead to



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To Sri Lanka's wild,
To where the whale shark's dance
and the leopard's roar.

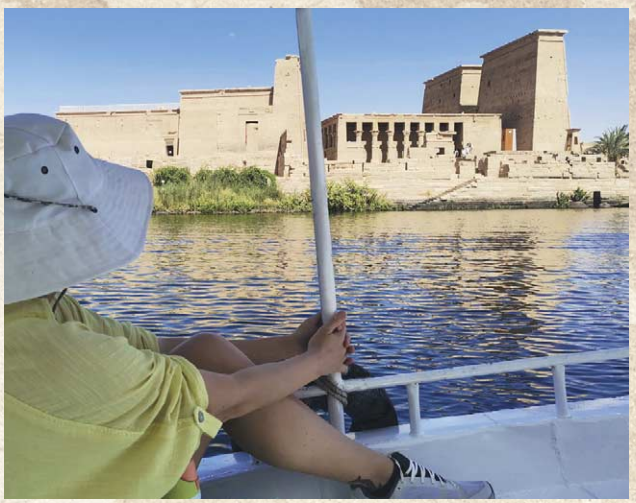




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"Take Me Far, Aggressor Roads."

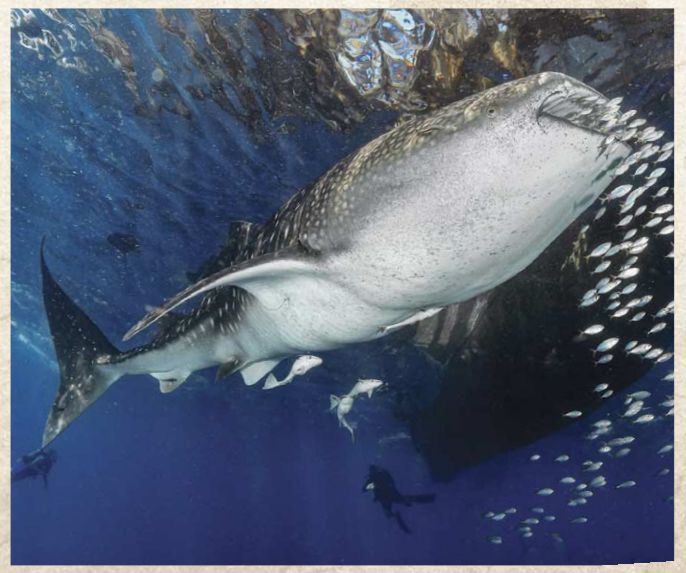
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CONTENTS

PAGE 5
FROM THE PUBLISHER
200 Days to the DEMA Show... Do You Have a Roadmap for Success?

PAGE 7
SAFETY
Dan Orr: The Crisis Continues in Emergency Hyperbaric Treatment Availability

PAGE 11
RETAILING
Shelli Hendricks, Ph.D.: Three Strategic Tips for Building A Stronger Customer Base

PAGE 12
ECO PRO
Alex Brylske, Ph.D.: A Diver's Guide to Responsible Seafood

PAGE 14
BUSINESS EDU
Wayne B. Brown: Turning Problems into Opportunities

PAGE 17
PHOTO PRO
Amos Nachoum: Behind The Lens: Capturing the Great White Shark Breach

PAGE 18
BUSINESS EDU
Al Hornsby: Direct Supervision – When Definitions Really Matter

PAGE 20
BUSINESS EDU
Cathryn Castle Garcia: Using a Strong Hook to Stop the Scroll

PAGE 24
TRAVEL
Carlos Lander: Cartagena, Colombia – A Timeless Blend of History and Coastal Splendor

PAGE 26
RETAILING
Jeff Cinciripino: Travel Insurance - A Win-Win for Your Customers and Your Dive Shop

PAGE 29
BUSINESS EDU
William Cline: 5 Ways Resorts Can Attract Dive Travel Sellers

PAGE 33
TRAVEL
Peter Symes: Geopolitics - The Water's Still Fine in Europe

PAGE 36
TRAVEL
Gil Zeimer: Part III: How to "Blue" Your Business Beyond Green Eco Resorts

Cover Photo by Mark B. Hatter: This spectacular wall is located between the Visayas and Tubbataha. The Philippines Aggressor stops at Cagayancillo Island so divers have another full day of diving on the transition. The location boasts excellent visibility and lots of triangle butterflyfish. Nikon D850 in a SEACAM housing, 13mm Lense Nikonos RS, ISO: 200, F-18, 1/100, Twin Ikelight DS230 Strobes. Diver is Kevin Kurtz. Special thanks to Mark & Aggressor Phillipines.

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

2 & 3 Aggressor Adventures
6 Diver's Alert Network (DAN)
7 ScubaRadio
10 Aggressor Adventures
14 Make A Difference Contest
15 Neal Watson's Bimini Scuba
16 Stream2Sea Reef Safe Products
16 Sea Experience, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
18 DRYFOB Key Containers
19 ScubaWeather.com
19 Barefoot Cay Resort, Roatan
21 Blue Force Fleet Liveaboards
22 Take Our Subscriber Survey & Win
23 Clear Story Coach
23 Reef Smart Guides
25 Sau Bay Resort & Spa, Fiji
27 All Star Liveaboards
28 SeaCure Custom Mouthpieces
30 Wayne B. Brown Book
31 Scuba Do Rag Diver's Apparel
32 Books by Dan Orr/Best Publishing
32 Big Animals Global Expeditions
33 X-Ray Magazine
34 & 35 DIVO By Scubatech
38 The Scuba Show, Long Beach, CA
39 Explorer Ventures Liveaboards
BACK COVER DEMA
41 Level Up Podcast
42 Article Index



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Sharm El Sheikh, Red Sea, Egypt. Photo Credit: John Walker

200 DAYS TO THE 2025 DEMA SHOW... DO YOU HAVE A ROADMAP FOR SUCCESS?

As you read this, we're roughly 200 days away from the DEMA show - do you have a **strategic plan** to maximize your investment?

Studies from the Center for Exhibition Industry Research reveal that exhibitors who initiate their promotion over six months before an event typically experience **30–50% more booth traffic** and higher-quality meetings, leading to increased post-show sales. Similarly, insights from Salesforce.com's Dreamforce team reinforce that early planning significantly boosts exhibitor success. As they put it, **"When they owned the pre-show conversation, they owned the floor."**

Here's a condensed **roadmap** to ensure your success at **DEMA**:

- **Phase 1 (200–150 Days Before)**: Launch your strategic marketing foundation. Secure a media plan with *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine*, design print ads that tease your presence, and consider our sponsored email campaigns.
- **Phase 2 (150–60 Days Before)**: Generate pre-show buzz. Highlight your brand's value proposition clearly, introduce booth specifics, and utilize targeted ads with calls to action, such as QR codes for lead generation and online meeting scheduling.
- **Phase 3 (60–0 Days Before)**: Final marketing push. Promote exclusive booth-only specials and testimonials. Upgrade your ad presence for maximum impact.
- **Phase 4 (Showtime)**: Execute with precision. Drive booth traffic through ads and real-time social media coordination. Mention your ads prominently at your booth to reinforce your marketing efforts.
- **Phase 5 (0–30 Days After)**: Follow-up effectively. Recap show highlights and maintain momentum through ads, QR-linked resources, case studies, and podcast appearances. Especially in our November and December issues.

Start your planning now as **owning the conversation early is the key** to maximizing your success at DEMA.

Reach out to myself, Britain, Gavin (Asia) or Carlos (Latin America) and let us show you a roadmap for success to the 2025 DEMA Show in Orlando, FL!



William Cline, Publisher

email William | email Britain | email Gavin | email Carlos

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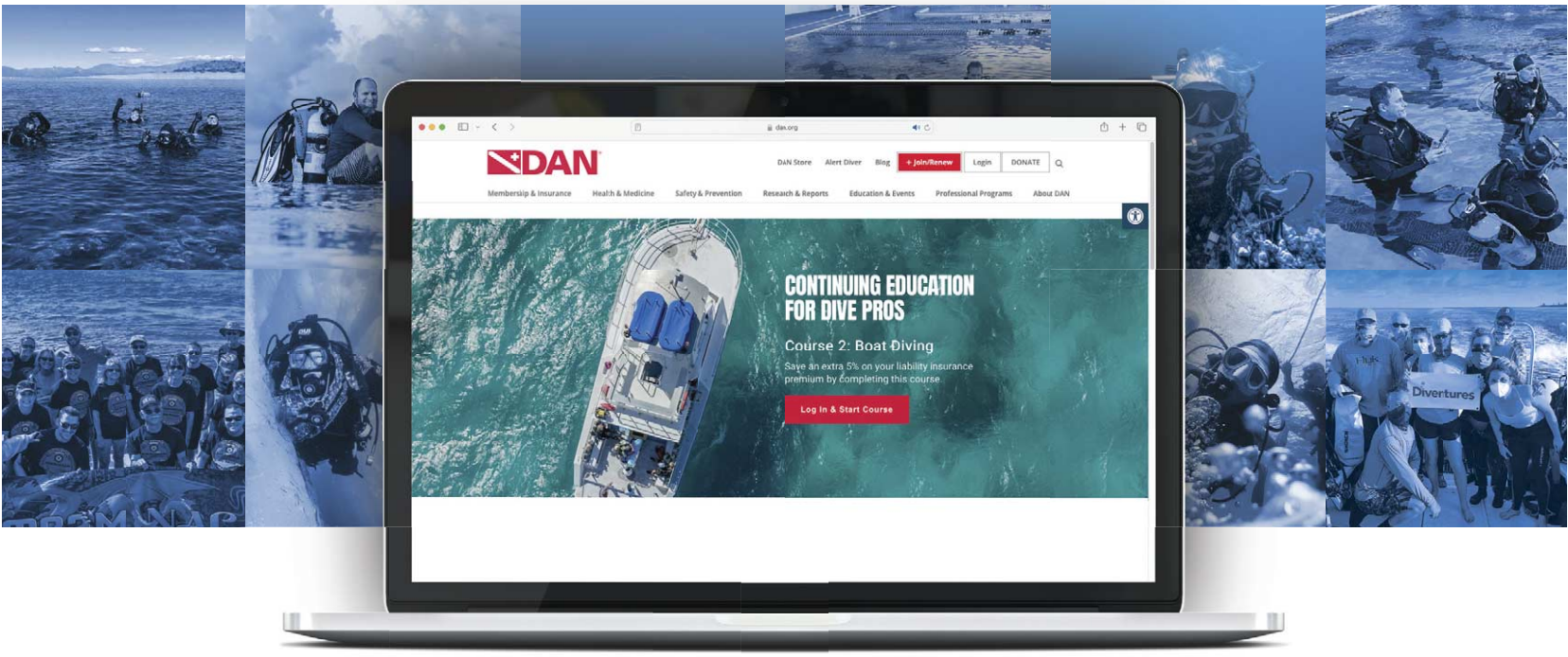
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SAFETY

The Crisis Continues in Emergency Hyperbaric Treatment Availability

– by Dan Orr, President, Dan Orr Consulting



A variation of the following article was originally published in two other media sources with the goal of alerting the recreational diving community to an issue that can certainly have serious implications for the safety and well-being of those wishing to enjoy dive locations that rely on medical facilities in the U.S. Unfortunately, since this issue was brought to the attention of the diving and medical communities, there has been no improvement in this situation that could have potentially, catastrophic implications for those injured in a diving accident. In fact, there are now even fewer hyperbaric facilities available 24/7.

There are millions of recreational scuba divers in the U.S. and hundreds of thousands of traveling divers from countries around the world making tens of millions of enjoyable recreational dives each year in unique dive locations all over America. In the unlikely event that any of these divers would suffer a pressure-related diving injury, they trust that the U.S. medical system will provide state-of-the-art care for their injuries, especially in an emergency situation. As these divers are preparing to enjoy a pleasurable dive in some of the world's most popular dive locations in this country, little do they know that if a pressure-related injury were to occur while diving that would necessitate treatment in a hyperbaric chamber, they may experience a delay in treatment that could adversely impact their chances for a successful and residual-free outcome.



© Stephen Frink

Unknown to most divers, there is a steadily decreasing number of hyperbaric treatment facilities in the U.S. willing and able to treat them, even in a life-threatening emergency, for decompression sickness or arterial gas embolism. This situation places all divers at a much greater risk than any of us have realized.

For example, in May of 2020, a recreational diver made a dive off the coast of Pensacola, Florida. After surfacing, he experienced serious neurological symptoms that were indicative of a pressure-related diving injury. Divers in that area were aware that there were five hyperbaric treatment facilities in the Pensacola area. These facilities had been providing hyperbaric oxygen therapy for a variety of non-diving medical conditions, but the divers were totally unaware that not one of these facilities would provide the emergency care this severely injured diver badly needed. Instead of being treated at one of these treatment facilities only minutes away, this diver had to be transported to a treatment facility in Mobile, Alabama, which was willing to treat injured divers 24/7.

The reality is that this facility in Mobile, Alabama, was one of the very few treatment facilities in the U.S. that had continued to offer emergency care for injured divers 24/7. The most recent information regarding this facility indicates that, unfortunately, it is no longer available on a 24/7 emergent basis for the Gulf Coast diving community.

The injured diver in this example was fortunately treated successfully with no residual symptoms, despite the treatment delay. As accident data from Divers Alert Network (DAN) has shown, treatment delay, such as occurred during this diver's care, is one of the most significant risk factors for a negative outcome when treating divers with decompression sickness or arterial gas embolism.

This reduced capability to provide emergency treatment for diving accidents also impacts local fire and police forces, many of which have diving rescue teams; federal law enforcement agencies; fish and wildlife services; park services; and other state and federal agencies with dive teams, as well as military divers conducting training operations in areas away from the location of their unit chamber.

There are approximately 1,300 hyperbaric treatment facilities (each of which has one or more hyperbaric chambers) that currently provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy in the United States. As recently as two decades ago, the large majority of hyperbaric treatment facilities were available to pro-



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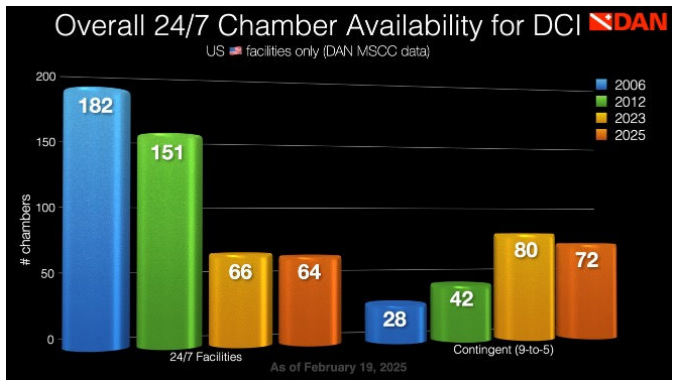
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vide emergency treatment on a 24/7 basis. Today, however, few of these facilities offer emergency treatment 24/7, and some of those facilities do so only intermittently. Non-diving patients being treated for wound healing therapy dominate hyperbaric chamber usage.

The Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) identifies hyperbaric facilities based upon the level of care that can be provided. For example, Level One facilities have a hyperbaric program that offers a full scope of services for the hyperbaric patient. They are typically hospital-based facilities that cover all recognized indications, including 11 emergency life- or limb-threatening injuries, and are available for treatment of the emergent patient 24/7. Level Two facilities have a hyperbaric program that provides a reduced scope of service for the hyperbaric patient (does not treat emergency patients). They are typically in hospital settings and not available 24/7. These programs provide high quality care to outpatients Monday through Friday and are not equipped or staffed for emergency indications. Level Three facilities have a hyperbaric program that offers appropriate hyperbaric therapy in the non-affiliated setting (non-hospital-based nor affiliated with a hospital). Level Four facilities are in international locations.



The above graph, provided by Dr. Matias Nochetto, VP of Medical Services at DAN, demonstrates the change in hyperbaric chambers available 24/7 and those only available from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM between 2006 and 2025. Even fewer 24/7 facilities may be available if the diving injury requires more complicated treatment modalities, such as the need for a ventilator.

The graphic on the opposite page was provided by John Peters, Executive Director of the UHMS and identifies the UHMS-accredited Level One Hyperbaric Facilities in the U.S.

According to Dr. Matias Nochetto, DAN VP of Medical Services, DAN does not limit its Recompression Chamber Network (RCN) to UHMS-accredited facilities, nor to hospital-based ones (see chart above). The primary focus of the RCN database is facilities that are willing and able to treat divers; whether they do any other Hyperbaric Oxygen (HBO) indications is secondary to them. In addition, about 80% of the chambers in the RCN are not in the US, and very few international chambers seek UHMS accreditation. DAN has its own recompression facility classification system, where it factors in technical capabilities, operational capabilities, placement, availability, and communication with DAN. Two notable examples of such facilities are Catalina and Pacific Grove (CA, USA).

As a business enterprise, the scheduled wound healing therapy model is much more profitable than emergency hyperbaric treatment for pressure-related diving injuries. In the past, hospitals and other hyperbaric treatment facilities underwrote the additional costs associated with providing 24/7 access to emergency hyperbaric treatment as a public service for those who required it. Now, because of the negative economic impact, concerns for staffing and training considerations, and the potential for legal liability, most hyperbaric treatment facilities have ceased to provide 24/7 access to emergency hyperbaric treatment.

For the recreational diving community, this is a critical safety issue. Recreational divers are regularly diving in locations where they believe emergency hyperbaric treatment will be available at nearby treatment facilities that have, in the past, been available to treat injured divers when they needed it most. Unfortunately, this may not be the case at all and, if injured, they may have to endure long delays in treatment as they must be transported to a distant treatment facility willing and able to provide the emergency care they need.

From a diver safety perspective, there is an urgent need to correct this decreasing availability in the U.S. healthcare system and make emergency hyperbaric treatment available to those who require it. This may be especially true as divers are increasingly attracted to artificial reef shipwrecks in deeper water off the Gulf Coast of northern Florida.

The UHMS has been working to address this situation within the U.S. healthcare system by alerting governmental organizations. In a letter to the editor of the Journal of Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine on 22 August 2020, Doctors Frank Butler and Richard Moon described the decreasing availability of emergency access to hyperbaric oxygen therapy in many U.S. areas. This lack of treatment capability presents significant challenges to providing optimal care for divers who suffer decompression sickness or arterial gas embolism.

Options for addressing this critical issue include:

1) Direct federal or state grants to hyperbaric treatment facilities that offer emergency hyperbaric treatment.

2) Indemnification from legal liability for hyperbaric treatment facilities and medical providers who provide emergency hyperbaric treatment to divers and other non-diving patients who require it.

3) Recognition of the public service performed by the hyperbaric treatment facilities that offer emergency hyperbaric treatment when indicated.

4) Favorable consideration with respect to Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance reimbursements to hyperbaric treatment facilities and medical providers that offer emergency hyperbaric treatment when indicated, including carve-outs to inpatient DRG (diagnosis-related group) payments.

5) Incentives for military hyperbaric facilities to provide emergency hyperbaric treatment to civilian patients through emphasis on the training benefit to military providers that this accomplishes; third-party reimbursement for emergency hyperbaric treatment provided to civilian patients by military hyperbaric facilities; and indemnification of the military facility from lawsuits resulting from this public service activity.



The graphic above was provided by John Peters, Executive Director of the UHMS and identifies the UHMS-accredited Level One Hyperbaric Facilities in the U.S.

In addition, there should be federal support for non-profit organizations, such as DAN, that are willing to operate around the clock assisting any patient who needs emergency hyperbaric treatment by identifying the nearest hyperbaric treatment facility that is capable of providing this treatment and helping to arrange transportation to it. Since chamber availability may vary based on ongoing hyperbaric oxygen treatments, staffing issues, and chamber maintenance operations, the ability to quickly determine which hyperbaric treatment facility is the most appropriate for a particular emergency patient in a specific geographic area is critical to optimal care. It should likewise be a national healthcare priority to ensure that there is adequate funding for fellowship education in hyperbaric medicine so that appropriately trained physicians will be reliably available to oversee the hyperbaric treatment provided by these hyperbaric treatment facilities.

So, what is a concerned and safety-conscious diver to do? First, it is important to be a member of DAN to support the emergency medical services they provide. And always have the DAN Emergency Hotline number in your emergency assistance/action plan. If a pressure-related emergency were to occur, DAN can assist in getting you to the most appropriate, available treatment facility with as little delay as possible. Remember that the treatment facility you may be referred to may not be local to your dive location, but DAN is aware of the locations of all treatment facilities available to treat injured divers 24/7.

Divers can also determine if treatment facilities at or near their favorite dive location are, indeed, available on a 24/7 basis and, if not, encourage the local diving community to put pressure on that facility to be available when needed. This may require the local community to reach out to the treatment facility to express their concern and, possibly, offer support in the form of fundraisers or other activities that could help. In some areas of the U.S., the local diving community has sponsored "Divers Days" to raise awareness and funds to support local treatment facilities. There are organizations, such as DAN, and individuals who will gladly volunteer their time and resources to help such a worthy cause.

Like any other risk in diver safety, we must identify and find ways to mitigate that risk. We now know that the decreasing availability of treatment facilities willing or able to provide emergency hyperbaric treatment when we need it most increases our risk as divers. We must mobilize and mitigate that risk by working with local, state, and national officials to let once-available treatment facilities know of our concern and work with them to find ways to reduce that risk through cooperative and supportive measures. *References: Butler, F. Capt. (ret). Personal communication. Buzzacott, P. A Report on 2016 Diving Fatalities, Injuries and Incidents. DAN 2018 Annual Diving Report. Divers Alert Network. 2018. Clarke, D. Divers Losing Access to Emergency Care. Alert Diver. Winter 2012. Denoble, P. A Report on 2017 Diving Fatalities, Injuries and Incidents. DAN 2019 Annual Diving Report. Divers Alert Network. 2019. Divers Alert Network. Health & Medicine, Health Resources, Diseases & Conditions, Decompression Illness. Gabriel, M. Lack of hyperbaric chambers in Pensacola continues to put divers' lives at risk, expert says. Pensacola News Journal. March 14, 2018. Garcia, J. Personal communication. Orr, D. A Crisis Lurking Below the Surface Emergency Hyperbaric Treatment Availability. DiveNewsWire. August 24, 2021. Peters, J. Executive Director, Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society. Personal communication.*

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RETAILING

Three Strategic Tips for Building A Stronger Customer Base

– by Shelli Hendricks, Ph.D., President, Blue Horizon Solutions



Is your dive business struggling to make enough profit to pay the bills? Living paycheck to paycheck can be quite frustrating. Perhaps you started a dive business so you could pursue your dream while earning money at the same time. If so, then you know that it isn't always easy to get a business to bring in the profits you'd like.

However, if you're willing to work hard and have a good plan, there's no limit to how far you can take your dive business. Luckily, there are many ways to increase your current cash flow and free you from the threat of financial disaster.

Consider these strategies to increase your cash flow:

1. **Collect feedback.** Many business owners forget the importance of soliciting feedback from their customers. There are several effective ways to find out what your customers think about your products and services.

- Ask customers to fill out a quick survey or questionnaire to rate various aspects of your business. These surveys can provide an excellent glimpse into your customers' point of view. There are many different websites that enable you to create simple surveys. Look online to find one that meets your needs.
- Follow up with your customers with a phone call or email asking for comments about your products or services. Inquire about which aspects they are satisfied with and which need some work. Don't miss the opportunity to ask them to post a review online for your business.
- Talk to your clients in person and ask them how they feel about their experiences with your business. Then, be sure to implement the recommendations that work for your business. Be sure to give credit to your customers for their suggestions.
- Remember, word of mouth is one of the best ways to advertise your business. If you have a bunch of satisfied customers, they'll tell their friends and family about their positive experience and you'll get more business. What kind of incentives can you offer customers who refer your business?

2. **Get rid of products that don't sell.** It's likely that you offer your customers a wide variety of products, but only a few of these products bring you maximum profit.

- Sometimes a large inventory can work against your business. Having too many options may actually confuse or overwhelm customers, leading them to avoid buying altogether when they're overwhelmed with options.
- Instead of offering more products that likely won't be sold, discontinue the less attractive products and offer more items or services related to your best-sellers. This is an excellent way to boost sales while reducing upkeep and inventory costs. Not sure what customers want? Ask them.

3. **Pursue unique marketing strategies.** If your business is experiencing a steep drop in sales, there must be a reason. It could be that your marketing techniques are simply not as effective as you thought. Consider alternative marketing techniques.

- Think about marketing your business online. It's becoming easier with each passing day and more people are prone to search the internet for better deals. Businesses that have online order options are often much more successful. It's a perfect way to increase cash flow.
- Consider partnering with other related businesses in your community for co-branded events and activities. Demo Days or Scuba Fairs can create a fun energy for the entire dive community in your area. In addition, this collaborative strategy creates a multiplier effect for all of the involved businesses.
- Get the word out. Take advantage of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to promote your business.
- Radio advertisements, commercials, billboards, and flyers all increase the visibility of your business. Sometimes, door-to-door marketing is just as effective.

> **"Remember, word of mouth is one of the best ways to advertise your business. If you have a bunch of satisfied customers, they'll tell their friends and family about their positive experience and you'll get more business."**

By using these strategies, you can boost sales and increase the revenue of your business. Once these strategies have been implemented, there will be no need to worry about how you're going to pay the next bill. You'll finally have the money to live the life that you've dreamed of. It just requires determination, persistence, creativity, and an open mind to make your business successful. Test different strategies and stick to the ones that work best for you. Your efforts will be worth it once you see those increased profits.

email Shelli

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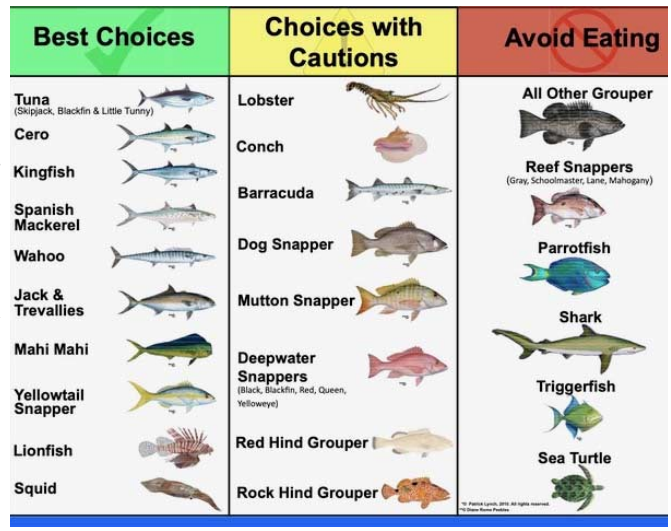
A Diver's Guide to Responsible Seafood

– by Alex Brylske, Ph.D., President, Ocean Education International, LLC



I wrote a short article last year titled *"Don't Be the Grouper Sandwich Guy,"* explaining how those who consider themselves environmentalists can unknowingly make bad choices when visiting seafood restaurants. It sparked significant interest from readers who wanted to learn more about why responsible seafood consumers should avoid eating specific kinds of coral reef fish. Here, I'll explore the issue more thoroughly.

To begin, the most critical concept in understanding coral reef fisheries is their extreme vulnerability to overfishing. In fact, in the regions where coral reef fisheries are managed–and in many places, they receive no management at all–they are almost all overfished. As one eminent coral reef ecologist, Dr. Callum Roberts, attests, "By virtue of their complexity, reef fisheries are the most difficult in the world to manage."



At first glance, that may seem counterintuitive because, after all, coral reefs are the most productive ecosystems on the planet. However, they are also examples of "high gross/low net" ecosystems. In other words, while coral reefs can produce an enormous amount of biomass, there is little left to export out of the system because the reef has so many mouths to feed. The analogy I use is that coral reefs are analogous to an enormous restaurant. Each day, it generates incredible quantities of food, but it also provides meals for all the staff and their families three times a day. As a result, there's little left over for the customers.

It is now abundantly clear from research that overfishing is one of the most severe threats to these delicate environments, mainly when fishers target fish species that play essential roles in maintaining ecological balance. Therefore, responsible seafood consumers committed to conserving coral reefs must be mindful of which species they consume. So, by avoiding fish that serve crucial ecological functions—both high-level predators and herbivorous species—we can help sustain reef ecosystems for future generations.

Top-Down Vs. Bottom-Up: To understand the ecological role fish play on coral reefs, you must consider both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. The top-down view involves high-level predators, such as groupers and snappers, vital to a reef's structure and stability. These species regulate prey populations and prevent an overabundance of smaller species, which can lead to ecological imbalance. Experience has proven that removing too many apex predators can trigger a "trophic cascade" of adverse effects, disrupting the entire food web.

For instance, large predators such as groupers and snappers help regulate the populations of mid-level predators, including smaller reef fish and invertebrates. Without these natural checks, these populations can explode, increasing predation on juvenile herbivores. This depletion, in turn, diminishes their ability to control algal growth, allowing algae to overgrow and smother coral reefs.

Overfishing of top predators also disrupts the reproductive dynamics of reef species. Many high-level predators grow slowly and reproduce infrequently, making them particularly vulnerable to population declines. When these species are overfished, their populations struggle to recover, further destabilizing the ecosystem. For example, ask yourself, "How often do I see large groupers when I dive?" Take it from someone with almost six decades of experience diving coral reefs; they once were very common.

There is also another lesser-known consequence of the elimination or decreasing numbers of top predators. Aside from their role in culling sick and less fit individuals, groupers and large snappers play a key role in maintaining community health through their behavior, and have adverse consequences when they are no longer present or reduced in number. Top predators create what ecologists refer to as the "landscape of fear." This phenomenon became evident with the drastic ecological alteration of Yellowstone National Park following the introduction of wolves in the 1990s. Since then, similar results have been observed in ma-

rine ecosystems worldwide, and the conclusion is clear—that behavioral modification driven by anti-predatory behavior is critical to ecosystem health.

Viewing the system from the bottom up, herbivorous fishes, such as parrotfish, surgeonfish, and some damselfish play an equally crucial role in maintaining healthy coral reefs. These species help control algae, preventing them from overgrowing and outcompeting corals for space and sunlight. Coral reefs rely on a delicate balance between coral growth and algal presence, and herbivores act as natural gardeners, keeping this equilibrium in check.

Parrotfish, for instance, graze on algae-covered reef surfaces, facilitating coral recruitment and preventing algae from smothering young coral polyps. Without adequate herbivory, coral reefs can shift into algal-dominated states, diminishing biodiversity and degrading habitat quality. This shift can seriously impact the entire reef ecosystem, affecting virtually all the species that rely on healthy corals for food and shelter.

Despite their ecological importance, herbivorous fish are often targeted for food, particularly in areas where parrotfish are unprotected and seafood is a dietary staple. When parrotfish and other herbivores are harvested in large quantities, algal overgrowth increases, making reefs more susceptible to bleaching, disease, and storm damage. Therefore, avoiding the consumption of these species is crucial for conserving coral reefs.

Making a Difference: The scuba diving community and marine tourism industry are uniquely positioned to promote awareness of responsible seafood choices among tourists in tropical locations. Their direct engagement with coral reef ecosystems enables them to educate visitors about protecting marine life, including responsible seafood consumption. Here's how people can make a meaningful impact:

1. Education Through Dive Briefings and Tours

- Dive operators can incorporate conservation messaging into their pre-dive briefings, emphasizing the importance of key species such as parrotfish and groupers in reef health.
- Guides can explain how overfishing affects the reefs that divers visit, encouraging responsible seafood choices when they patronize local restaurants while on holiday.
- Infographics and signage can help divers recognize species they should avoid eating.

2. Collaboration with Restaurants and Local Businesses

- Dive shops and tourism operators can partner with local restaurants to promote sustainable seafood options.
- "Reef-safe" certification programs can be developed where restaurants commit to not serving ecologically important species.
- Dive centers can display lists of recommended restaurants that follow sustainable seafood guidelines.

3. Eco-Friendly Dining Guides and Social Media Campaigns

- Marine tourism organizations can create and distribute sustainable seafood dining guides tailored to their locations, such as the Bay Islands Seafood Guide.
- Social media influencers and dive community vloggers can share responsible seafood tips and highlight businesses prioritizing sustainability.
- Encouraging tourists to create social media posts about their responsible choices.

4. Incentivizing Responsible Choices

- Dive shops can offer discounts or incentives for divers who dine at sustainable seafood restaurants.
- Restaurants that avoid key reef species could be featured in promotional materials from dive centers and tourism boards. (Some restaurants now refuse to put snapper or grouper on their menu, opting instead for pelagic species.)

5. Hosting Events and Workshops

- Organizing seafood awareness events, such as "lionfish tastings" to promote eating invasive species.
- Presentations by marine experts can engage tourists in a fun and engaging way.
- Hosting documentary screenings about reef conservation can further encourage responsible seafood choices.

The scuba diving community and marine tourism industry can significantly impact seafood consumption habits by leveraging their influence and direct interaction with tourists. Raising awareness and providing practical solutions will help protect coral reef ecosystems while ensuring that tourists make responsible dining choices. By making informed decisions about what we eat, we can help provide the resilience and biodiversity of these underwater ecosystems for generations to come.

Alex's links

BUSINESS EDU

Turning Problems into Opportunities

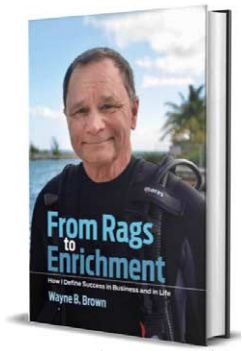
– by Wayne B. Brown, author "From Rags to Enrichment" & CEO, Aggressor Adventures



I get asked A LOT how I deal with all the stress that must come with owning Aggressor Adventures, particularly since it's a global enterprise that operates 24/7. My answer might seem oversimplified, but I have always tried to approach it with the attitude that there are never problems, only opportunities. Adopting this leadership style is important for those at the top, but it's just as important for everyone owning or running a business, because it sets an example that stressing over an issue never solves it. Hysteria is contagious. So is an attitude of calm.

I always focus on what we must do to resolve a particular issue. Once that's done, I step back and review the entire event with my team. I always ask two questions: how did it happen, and what can we do in the future to prevent it from occurring again? The goal is to learn from the situation, make changes and improvements where they're needed, and then move on to the larger goal of continuing to grow the business.

Of course, there are days when I cannot believe how many "opportunities" happen all at once!



Wayne's New Book

Every business owner's brain needs a break from the 24/7 hamster wheel of managing daily tasks and churning out new ideas. Some people might "veg out" by binge-watching a Netflix series or lounging by a pool or at the beach. That kind of relaxation—lying still and not moving—would feel like torture to me. I need to keep active in order to clear my mind. For a recharge, I turn to personal projects like working on our motorhome or clearing land and building a fence on our property. Any project that gets me moving and requires 100 percent of my focus is like a reset button that will help me clear my mind. When I return to the office after these projects, I feel as refreshed as taking an entire week off. Of course, "off" is a misnomer. With worldwide internet and cell connectivity, an entrepreneur is never truly "off" work.

I don't view this as a negative. I think it's in the DNA of entrepreneurs and leaders to want to keep their finger on the pulse of the business. I feel grateful that my wife, Dana, understands this and is always supportive of my business check-ins, whether by email or phone, even when we are on vacation. Once, on a motorhome trip, we stopped in a small town just to wander the streets and duck into the local shops. Upon entering a shop, my cell phone rang and I saw it was a business call. I answered and motioned to Dana that I'd be outside. As I headed for the door, the shop owner commented to Dana that maybe I needed to learn to take a break from my business. Dana, without hesitation, said, "He is making us money, leave him alone."

Most of my business's worldwide adventures begin and end on a Saturday, so that's also when the likelihood of problems arising is greatest. While I have an amazing, dedicated team in place to resolve issues, there are plenty of Saturdays when I get a call from a member of my operations team, alerting me to an issue or asking for guidance. If they're calling me, I know it's because they need my help. I never sigh or think, "Well, shit, there goes my Saturday," before answering. And I sure as hell don't get angry about them calling me. They're doing the right thing by reaching out. If they're calling me, it means I have an opportunity to help serve our guests and make sure they enjoy the adventure they paid for.

Having the right mindset allows business owners and leaders to deal with everything big and small that comes with the territory. Focusing on the opportunity to enhance your business model is the only way to ensure success for you…and your customers.

email Wayne

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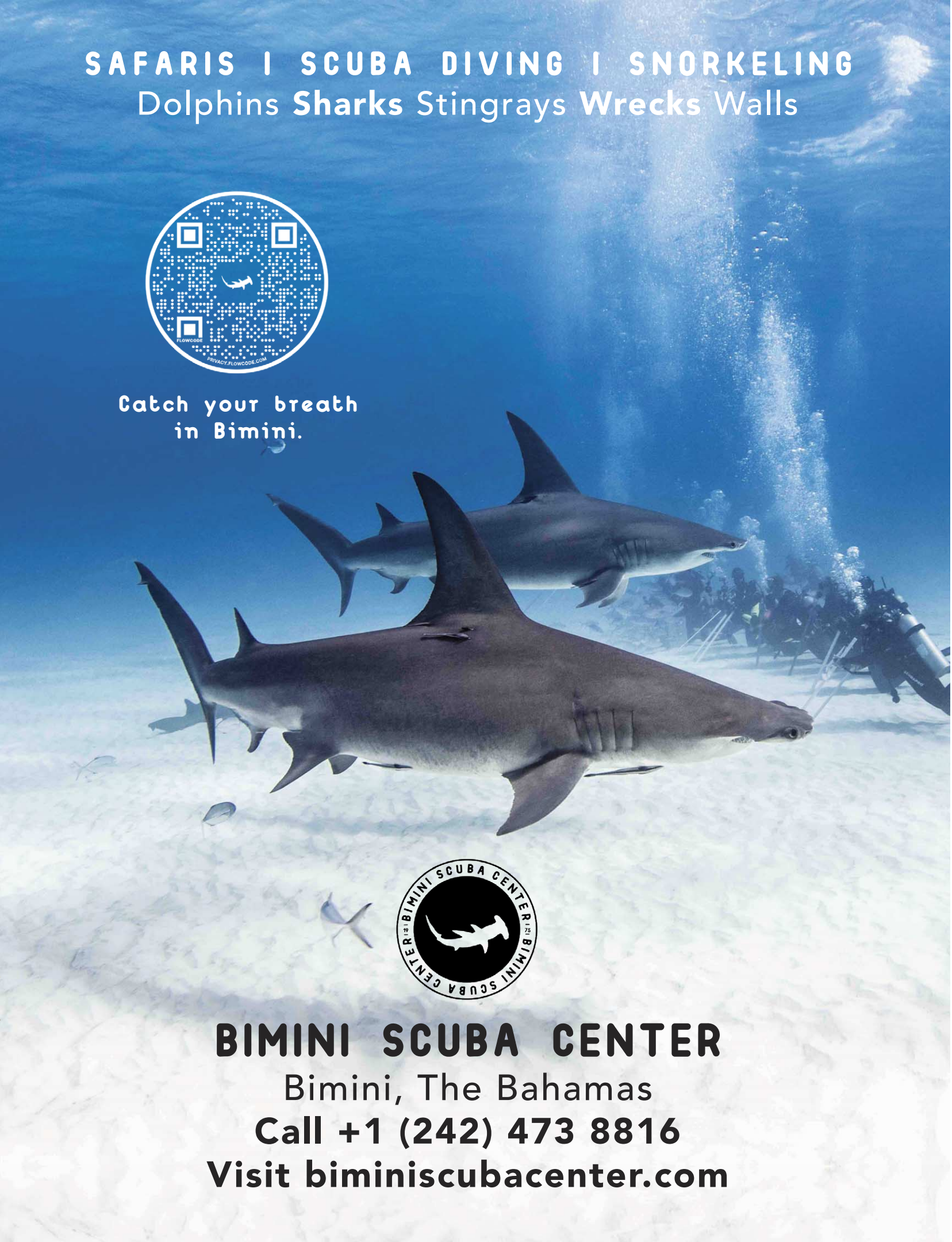
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PHOTO PRO

Behind The Lens: Capturing the Great White Shark Breach

– Photos and text by Amos Nachoum, Big Animals Global Expeditions



In July 1995, I embarked on an expedition to photograph the elusive and majestic Great White sharks in South Africa. My research revealed that these apex predators often hunt seals during the early morning and late afternoon.

With this knowledge, I led a team to document Great White behavior both underwater and above the surface.

Each morning, before the first light of dawn, we set out to sea, cruising slowly at three knots around Seal Island. Our mission was to observe these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat. This time of year saw a boom in the seal population on the island, as many young were born. The adult seals would venture into the ocean at dawn, feeding to sustain their offspring. However, they did so with great caution, knowing that sharks lurked beneath the surface.



One morning, as we watched a group of seals hesitating at the water's edge, it became clear that they were aware of the predators below. The seals couldn't see the sharks in the pre-dawn darkness, but the sharks could easily spot the seals' silhouettes above. Finally, one brave seal made the first leap into the water, and the others followed quickly, swimming fast into the deeper waters. Suddenly, there was a splash to our left, followed by another- sharks were already on the hunt, and it was only 6:20 a.m.

Over the next three days, my guests and I spent the early hours hoping to capture the spectacular sight of a full breach on film. But predicting when and where a shark would breach proved to be nearly impossible. The unpredictability of these powerful creatures made it a daunting challenge.

Our skipper, however, devised a clever plan to increase our chances. He fashioned a dummy seal from rubber and towed it behind the vessel, 20 feet out, on a thin fishing line. The idea was simple: lure a shark to take the bait, breach after the decoy, without causing harm to the shark jaws and hopefully catch the moment mid-air on camera.

For hours, we sat on the vessel's platform, scanning the water and focusing intently on the dummy seal being towed behind us. We repeated this process for two hours each morning and two hours each afternoon - the prime times when shark predation occurred. The sun's shallow angle over the water during these hours allowed sharks to spot seals above while keeping themselves hidden below.

I must admit, I missed several spectacular breaches during those days. Each missed opportunity only fueled my determination. By the third day, I began thinking about how I could capture a different shot, something unique. I realized that most photographs of breaching sharks were taken with the camera held horizontally. But sharks don't breach horizontally - they breach vertically. So, I decided to focus on capturing the action in a vertical format.

This decision added a new layer of difficulty. Shooting vertically meant I had only 24mm of frame space compared to 35mm in the horizontal format. I had to be extremely precise and fast. Consider this: a Great White Shark can breach the water at speeds of up to 40 km/h (25 mph), launching several meters into the air. Now, imagine trying to capture that from a moving, shaking vessel, while holding the camera vertically. It was demanding, to say the least. I had to block out all discomfort - the pain in my muscles, the fumes, the ocean spray - and focus entirely on the viewfinder.

There were no tools, no tricks, to tell me when the shark would breach. It required only stamina, concentration, passion, patience, and a willingness to take risks. In the end, this approach paid off, and I managed to capture that elusive, powerful moment: a Great White Shark leaping out of the water in a stunning vertical breach, perfectly framed within the narrow confines of the shot. It was an image that reflected not only the raw power of the shark but also the intense effort and commitment it took to document such a fleeting, magnificent sight. *Nikon F4, 70 - 200mm. Provia film puhed to 200 ISO, f- 8.0 at 1/400 sec*

contact Amos

TRAINING

Direct Supervision – When Definitions Really Matter

– by Al Hornsby, owner, Al Hornsby Productions, Singapore
Al is regarded as one of the industry's most experienced risk management litigation executives.



While industry standards and the individual standards of the various dive training organizations are very clear (and virtually identical) when it comes to the needs/requirements for direct supervision, it is surprising the number of serious accidents and fatalities that have occurred during dives when direct supervision was clearly required but wasn't being provided. What isn't so surprising is the number of expensive lawsuits that have resulted – especially when involving non –certified divers during various forms of introductory scuba dives.

> **Industry standards are straightforward and clear: There is ZERO TOLERANCE on Direct Student Supervision**

As a concept and definition, direct supervision is actually quite simple, and industry standards are straightforward and clear: *Direct Supervision. Visual observation and evaluation of student skill performance and student diving activities by an instructor or certified assistant. Direct supervision requires personal observation and evaluation of the performance of the skills required for certification. During underwater skill performance and evaluation, direct supervision requires the student to be accompanied underwater.*

Unfortunately, a number of fatalities and serious injuries in diving have occurred on dives requiring direct supervision, yet the divers were without such proximity and the watchful eye of a qualified dive professional. What hasn't been so surprising, however, when the facts were considered, was that these serious accidents might occur in the first place, and the probability that lawsuits soon resulted. And when the cases are reviewed, it also is not surprising that defense of the dive professionals and businesses involved was extremely difficult, and that large settlements or judgements all too often resulted.

Especially with introductory scuba participants, studies and records show clearly that the overall safety record is very good, with such dives actually having among the lowest probabilities of serious accidents and fatalities (less than certified divers, in fact). However, when intro divers are left alone, the picture can change – the records are clear that too many fatalities among introductory divers have occurred without the required supervision of a dive professional, and the likelihood of resultant litigation has been extremely high – with defenses difficult in such situations.

Even should an incident involve a surprise medical event, with the dive professional close to the victim, saving the diver may be possible through quick action – taking him or her to the surface where appropriate medical response could be initiated. And even if the victim does not survive the medical issue, potential litigation defense would likely be centered around the unforeseeable medical problem, with the instructor having done the best he or she could under the difficult circumstances…

On the other hand, if the instructor was not directly supervising, the instructor's defense would be seriously compromised, with a debate among the medical experts brought in most likely to ensue as to whether the fatality was from a medical cause or from drowning while incapacitated.

Beyond this, however, is the sad occurrence of people coming to us to experience the wonder and excitement of the incredible world we have discovered and made our own, and being short changed by a lack of proper supervision. This is a standard that offers zero tolerance – nothing less.

email Al



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BUSINESS EDU

To Stop the Scroll - Use a Strong Hook to Create Marketing Messages that "Click"

– by Cathryn Castle Garcia, Owner, ClearStoryCoach.com, The Azores
Cathryn Castle Garcia is a writer, business strategist, & co-owner of C2G2Productions.com, a multimedia production company.



3, 2, 1. That's it. You've got about three seconds to capture a potential customer's attention. If you include video, you might gain another few seconds before your post gets lost in the scroll. Social media users create an estimated 1.1 billion pieces of content daily. This is why your tiny grain of sand on a vast stretch of beach – your brand's marketing message – must sparkle and shine so it stands out. In addition to captivating visual elements, your social media posts and email blasts need to lead with attention-grabbing headlines that will stop the scroll. Simply put, you need a strong hook.

What's a Hook?

A marketing hook is a compelling element within your marketing message, usually the title or main text, that captures attention. It must generate interest and make potential customers pause and engage with your brand. The most effective posts communicate their core message or hook at first glance. Remember, you've got three seconds.

How Do Hooks Work?

We humans are fascinating creatures. Our complicated brains boil everything down to support our most basic instincts – to survive and thrive. What does this mean to marketing? Every social media click we make is a direct result of a psychological stimulus that triggers the limbic system of our brain, the region that controls emotions, behavior, and survival instinct. The limbic system plays a big role in our purchasing decisions, which are rooted in how we want to feel – which is always "better" – healthier, more attractive, wealthier, smarter, and so on. If my articles only ever teach you one thing, let it be this: an effective marketing message must in some way answer the question, "How will you make my life better?" The job of marketing is to hook into our customers' emotions. We've got to grab their hearts by the throats and give a gentle squeeze – because once they open their hearts, they open their wallets.

"A marketing hook is a compelling element within your marketing message, usually the title or main text, that captures attention. It must generate interest and make potential customers pause and engage with your brand."

Attention-Getting Hooks

The good news is you don't need a psychology degree to write compelling marketing copy. Try using one or more of these hooks that are proven to provoke the brain's limbic system and capture your customers' attention.

Curiosity. Curiosity creates an information gap that psychologically compels people. Our brains are hardwired to find answers, to solve problems, to seek closure. Examples of hooks that stimulate curiosity and compel your customers to pause and click include:

- "This one simple trick will make [x] easier."
- "Learn the hidden benefit of [x] our customers rave about."
- "Discover the real reason we sell out of [product/trip/course] within minutes."
- "Want improved air consumption? Try this habit hack."

Authority. Expert validation is a shortcut to trustworthiness. Get your customers to accept and trust you, and they'll feel comfortable doing business with you. Key elements of authority hooks include specifying expertise or relevance; suggesting the information challenges conventional wisdom; focusing on actionable items rather than theory. Examples of authority hooks include:

- "Our pros share the mistakes you must avoid."
- "We know what to look for – and what to avoid – when choosing a liveaboard."
- "Learn proven tips for better buoyancy control."
- "Marine biologist shares the truth about sharks."

Urgency. Time-bound opportunities trigger the brain's limbic system to send out a scarcity warning which prompts a call to action. Sending your customers a time-sensitive message with a specific deadline is a compelling hook. It's a classic, but it works. Examples include:

- "Time's running out. Buy now."









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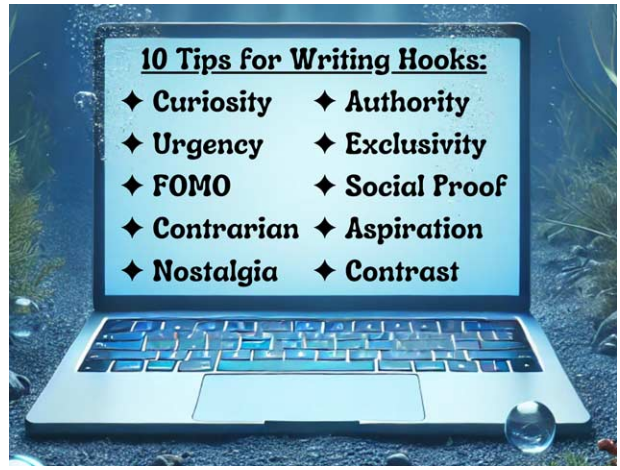
Maldives BLUE FORCE 3

www.blueforcefleet.com

- "Limited time offer. Call us today."
- "Early Bird Discount ends soon."
- "Act fast or you'll miss this exclusive offer."

Exclusivity. If it's rare, we want it. If the club has a barrier to entry, we want in. That's just how we roll. To use exclusivity to your advantage, create desire through limited access or special status, or the opportunity to possess something few others can. Here are examples:

- "By invitation only! Apply to join one of our exclusive adventures."
- "Want in on our 'Secret Location' Scuba Trips? Click to learn more."
- "Only 2% of divers have ever visited this secret destination."
- "This [x] is reserved exclusively for our best customers."



FOMO - Fear Of Missing Out. Your customers want to be the cool kids, so lightly triggering their innate social anxiety can work to your advantage. This hook's a little tricky, because you want to encourage them to do business with you without bullying them into it. The phrase, "Get in, loser…" only works in the movies. Instead, try these examples:

- "Join our VIP Club for insider-only access to [x]."
- "Come find out the secret tricks tech divers use to [x]."
- "Our Flash Sale on [x] ends in 12 hours, so get in on it now."
- "If you don't have [x] you're missing out. Stop by the dive center to learn more."

Social Proof. Leveraging trends lets your customers know you've got the newest/coolest/best whatevers in town. Effective social proof hooks highlight current trends and tend to use specific numbers rather than vague statements. They often incorporate urgency alongside the social proof. Here are a few examples of social proof:

- "More than 1 million divers worldwide use this [x]."
- "Over 50,000 new divers have purchased this [x] in the last 12 months."
- "This hot new [x] is nearly impossible to get – but we have it in stock."
- "Why 100 percent of our trips to [x] sell out within one week."

Contrarian. This hook challenges established thinking, making it particularly effective for engaged audiences seeking new approaches. The most effective contrarian hooks don't just challenge a widely accepted belief or practice; they also promise a better alternative. Inviting your customers to challenge what they know can be a great hook for selling courses. Try using contrarian hooks like these:

- "Forget what you learned about dive planning. This new dive computer will rock your world."
- "You will never enter the water again without this [x]."
- "Stop [x]. This scuba class will change the way you dive."
- "[Destination X] is so 1990s. [X] is the hottest new dive destination on the planet."

Aspiration. This hook connects your product or services with your ideal customer's hopes and dreams. Your marketing message invites them to image how much better life will



be once they do business with you. This is a slam-dunk hook for the scuba industry. Examples include:

- "Live the life you've always dreamed of. Try scuba diving today."
- "Join us on the exotic vacation of your dreams."
- "Don't postpone joy. Dive into adventure with us."
- "Want your kids out of the house this summer? Sign them up for our scuba camp."

Nostalgia. This hook works best on a more mature demographic, say the 40-70+ range, so it's another one that's a good choice for the scuba industry. The key is to spark happy memories of a time when your customer was younger and more carefree. Examples include:

- "Feel like a kid again. Sign up for a weekend trip to the beach."
- "Remember summertime pool parties? They're back, with a cool new twist."
- "Summer, 1995. 'Gangster's Paradise' was the hit song. Summer, 2025. We've got your 'Diver's Paradise' right here. Come check out our new scuba playlist."

Contrast. Here, we're talking simple before/after messaging. Your hook needs to invite your customer to imagine what their life will look like once they learn to dive, buy the gear, take the trip, etc. By targeting their pain points – stress, boredom, need for a vacation, etc. – you promote the solution you provide. For example:

- "Gravity got you down? Come defy gravity in our learn-to-dive program."
- "Ready for something new? You can be a diver in [x] days. Sign up now."
- "Stop dreaming and start living the dream. Our scuba instructors will show you how."
- "Picture yourself enjoying a tropical island paradise. We have trips departing soon."

Remember, your marketing message must answer the question, "How will you make my life better?" Trigger the limbic system with captivating hooks and you're more likely to turn social media scrolls into sales. Show me your hooks. I'd love to see what you've come up with, so please email me at hello@clearstorycoach.com.

email Cathryn

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TRAVEL

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia – A Timeless Blend of History and Coastal Splendor

– by Carlos Lander, Caracas, Venezuela

Carlos is a self-taught amateur archaeologist, author, programmer, and statistician with over 25 years diving experience.



Planning Your Group Trip

History blends interesting geographical sites, exploration, piracy, and ambitions; Cartagena de Indias highlights these attributes like no other in the New World.

Cartagena is filled with fascinating history and controversial figures that, for some, are heroes and, for others, villains - like the Englishman Sir Francis Drake, who raided the city in 1586. As mentioned, it has a captivating history due to its location in the Caribbean. It was one of the principal ports on the route to the West Indies for all kinds of goods, but it was well-known as a collection center for gold, silver, and emeralds. It served as a crucial entry point for European goods and enslaved Africans, playing a central role in the empire's economic and social systems.

Cartagena was founded in 1533 by the Spanish commander Pedro Heredia. Due to his wealth and reputation, Cartagena was a constant target of pirates from England, France, and the Netherlands.

This strategic importance made the city a cultural epicenter for the Spanish Empire. The tourist can step into the past by visiting stunning architecture within the Walled City, including Las Murallas, El Castillo de San Felipe de Barajas, several churches and sanctuaries, such as Saint Peter Claver, squares, and balconies. The city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Today, Cartagena is a fascinating blend of traditions. A unique fusion of European, African, and indigenous cultures that gives birth to distinctive expressions of art, music, and spirituality.

Although Cartagena is a coastal city, diving in Cartagena is a journey through history. A 45-minute boat ride takes you to Rosario Island and Isla Barú, where you can explore well-preserved coral reefs, lobster, crabs, turtles, and fish that navigate between shipwrecks and corals. Cartagena's submerged heritage includes underwater sites like *Salmedina*, just 20 minutes away by boat, where you can find anchors and cannons from sunken galleons.

Another example of a sunken ship is *Pedro Heredia,* the biggest wreck in the zone, which lies at a depth of 40 meters. Another exceptional experience is the Pavitos Islands cliff. This site features gentle slopes that drop to 40 meters. It boasts populations of barrel sponges, whip corals, and a wide variety of reef fish. It is also ideal for drift diving.

One unique trait to diving these islands are the very primitive nature of development. Many small islands have little to no development, and a few offer open air, waterside cafes. These islands are truely lost in time and reminiscent of remote Fijian islands, but a mear couple of hours from Miami!



Amazing Historic Wrecks off Cartagena



With an extensive list of dive spots among Barú, Salmedina, Tierra Bomba, and Rosario Island, the best way to visit all these places is by contacting a dive center. *Cartagena Divers* is one of the best, offering diving and other land and beach sports activities like kitesurfing, kayaking, or visiting the aviary. They ensure a seamless and enjoyable experience for all travelers.

There is a wide range of hotels and prices. Still, these are the best: Casa del Puerto Hostel & Suites, Hotel El Marqués De Manga, Casa La Condesa, Holiday Inn Express, Cartagena Manga by IHG, Casa Ramona, Casa Román, and Hotel Bahía. All of these hotels have a strong relationship with dive centers.

Starting at US$100 per night, promotions for large groups may be available depending on the season, with an average

daily cost of US$50 for meals, transportation, and miscellaneous.

Expense:

Cartagena is very reasonable in Caribbean-terms for diving costs. The cost of a 2-tank boat dive from *Cartagena Divers* is US$100 per diver, and their boats can accomodate 12 divers. Dive centers generally offer a 10% commission plus one comp space for a group of 11 divers.


Crystal-Clear Waters of the Rosarios Islands

How to get there:

Several airlines fly from the USA to Colombia, including JetBlue, Copa Airlines, LATAM Airlines, Delta Airlines, and Spirit Airlines. With this range of options, you have a choice of a few departure cities: Miami, Fort Lauderdale, New York, Orlando, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. Some offer direct routes, while others, you need to make connections, potentially to Miami or Panama City. Cartagena has an international airport, Rafael Núñez, that offers many services for travelers. Generally, travelers don't need a visa for short stays, but you need an onward ticket and a valid passport.

The cost of a flight from Miami to Cartagena is approximately US$100, while it is around US$400 from Washington. The flight duration varies based on the city of departure. For instance, the flight from Miami to Cartagena takes roughly 3 hours, whereas it takes about 7 hours from Washington.

Conclusion:

As with all destinations in the Caribbean, it is good practice to plan and contact a dive center in the region, like *Cartagena Divers*. The best season to visit and dive there is from around December to around April, the dry season. Remember that all coasts suffer from run-off from rivers that create sediments along the coast.

Cartagena has a Colonial Historic charm like no other, is accessible from the US, and has a vibrant culture, atmosphere, and cuisine. Overall, it is a top-notch destination for divers who want to mix land activities with a superb diving destination. It's a win-win for all your senses!

Publishers note: Carlos is our newest ad sales rep, covering Latin America and other Spanish-speaking territories!

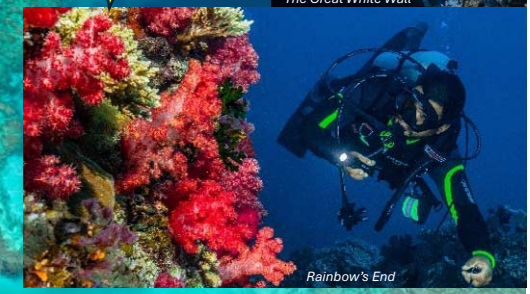
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RETAILING

Travel Insurance - A Win-Win for Your Customers and Your Dive Shop

– by Jeff Cinciripino, JeffCinciripino.com, Former Owner of Scuba Shack, Rocky Hill, CT



A couple of years ago we were about to embark on a long-awaited dive trip. Everyone was excited about heading to this warm water destination. Less than a week before our departure, we received a call from one of our guests letting us know that they were unable to make the trip. There were some serious and legitimate reasons why they had to cancel. Unfortunately, they did not have travel insurance for what would have been a covered circumstance. Their investment was not protected. Dive shops are in a unique position to educate their customers on the benefits of travel insurance, offer them access to these insurance products, and generate additional revenue. A definite win-win for the customer and the dive shop.

> **"Another misconception is that having both medical coverage and trip investment protection is cost prohibitive, especially for older divers."**

Many divers have long understood the value of getting dive accident insurance, and most look to Divers Alert Network to purchase their yearly plan. As dive professionals, we have ensured that our scuba divers recognize there are inherent risks in diving and that normal medical insurance will not provide the fiscal protection should they require medical attention while diving. Dive accident insurance, however, should not be confused with travel insurance. Dive retailers should understand the difference and be versed in the basics of travel insurance to ensure that their clients are fully aware of how they can protect themselves financially should they experience covered issues before and while on a dive trip. By understanding and offering these insurance products as an affiliate, the shop can also receive a commission on the sale.



First, let's start with two different travel insurance products: annual plans and individual trip policies. While both offer travel protection, including medical coverage, there are some differences in what and how much of the trip is covered. Brandon Hughbanks, lead agent at Travel Insurance Center in Omaha, indicated that annual plans are well suited for individuals who are doing multiple trips to domestic locations, where the policy contains basic wording with basic benefits. Shelli Wright from Divers Alert Network advises that individuals take a good look at the differences between an annual plan and an individual trip policy by running different scenarios on their website tool. For more expensive trips that are in more remote areas of the world, an individual policy for that trip may be the best option.

Unlike DAN dive accident insurance, individuals do not need to be a DAN member to purchase insurance. Shelli advises that travelers should get their policy as soon as they book their trip. And while you can acquire travel insurance up to one day prior to your departure, Brandon suggests that you obtain coverage 21 days before the trip commences. For trip cancellation or interruption to be covered, a policy must be in effect prior to a named storm, either a hurricane or typhoon. This can be tricky, so the advice of getting a policy in place early is advisable to avoid any pre-existing exclusions.

Another misconception is that having both medical coverage and trip investment protection is cost prohibitive, especially for older divers. In discussing with Brandon, he indicated that this was not the case. As a rule of thumb, travel insurance without medical coverage is normally about ten to twelve percent of the trip cost. As we worked through a scenario, a policy including medical and evacuation coverage was significantly less than that percentage. Shelli also discussed how both the DAN dive accident insurance and travel insurance would complement one another for additional protection.

It is easy to offer travel insurance to clients by having affiliate links on your website. For DAN, a free business membership is necessary. Business members can set up a custom link for referral rewards, download a banner from that web page, embed their custom link in the banner, and use these banners in emails, QR codes, newsletters, and on their website to earn referral rewards. Dive shops can also establish an affiliation with the Travel Insurance Center by signing up on their website using the travel agent option. Once approved, custom links can be set up for referrals that will earn commissions.

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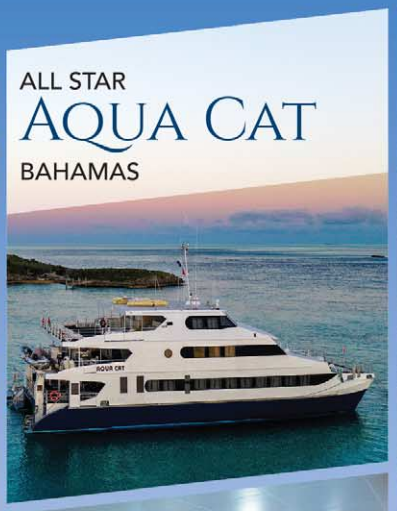
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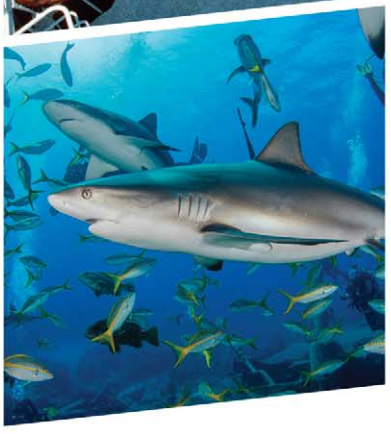


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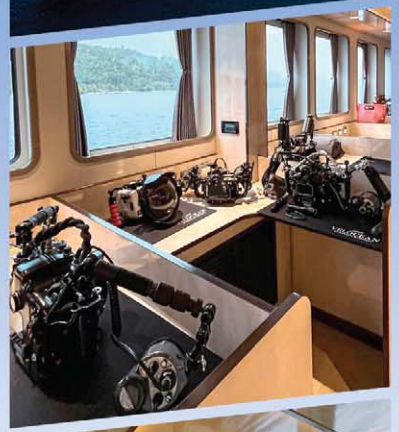






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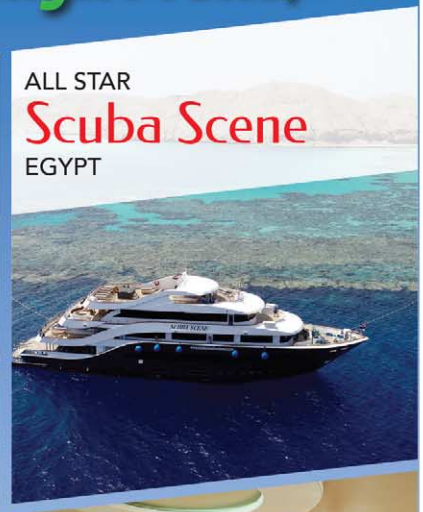


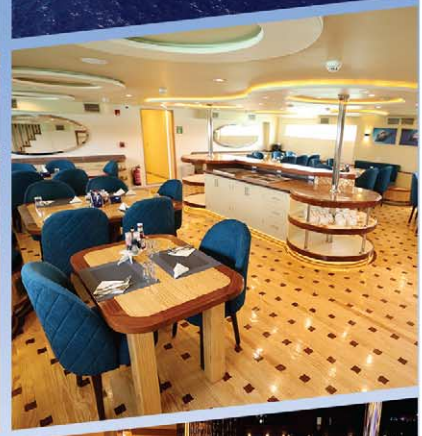






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RETAILING continued

Insurance products are sometimes difficult to understand, and that is why organizations like DAN and agencies such as Travel Insurance Center offer guidance. For example, when a shop holds a travel night, they can invite a travel insurance specialist to attend the session to describe the various aspects of these policies. Additionally, having a travel insurance specialist present at a staff meeting is a great opportunity to ensure dive professionals have the information to answer questions and guide clients.

It is important for dive shop owners as well as trip leaders to know if their customers have travel insurance. One option is to have clients provide information on both their dive accident coverage as well as any travel insurance they have purchased. This can be discussed at the pre-trip meeting, normally held about a month before travel. By having insurance information handy, a trip leader and/or dive shop owner is in a much better position to assist.

Insurance companies understandably need proper documentation to deliver on their promised coverage. The trip leader and dive shop should be knowledgeable of the types of documents that are needed. For example, Shelli points out that if there is a medical issue or possible theft of personal property, it is critical that the traveler obtain a copy of any medical/hospital or police report before leaving the destination. Obtaining these documents is difficult once you've left a remote location and could significantly delay any claim processing. Equally important is having any receipts or other information like delayed flight schedules to support any claim.

Dive retailers are in a unique position to open up the underwater world to so many people and to take them to some incredible diving destinations. These trips are an investment and should be protected because things do go wrong. Partnering with insurance professionals like Shellie Wright from DAN or Brandon Hughbanks from Travel Insurance Center can help the dive shop educate their clients, offer products, and generate additional revenue. Dive travel insurance is definitely a win-win for the customer and the dive shop.

If you're dive shop is interested in either program contact: Member@DAN.org or bhughbanks@travelinsurancecenter.com.

email Jeff

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BUSINESS EDU

5 Ways Resorts Can Attract Dive Travel Sellers

– by William Cline, Publisher, & President for 35 years of Cline Group, a marketing, research and advertising consultancy specializing the scuba diving industry.



I'm often asked, "How do we build a strong travel seller and retailer program for our resort?" Based on 30+ years of experience helping resorts and governments grow dive tourism, I've created this simple "how-to" guide to get your resort, liveaboard, or dive operation started.

Here are **five key elements** for a successful B2B marketing program—and why advertising in *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* can fast-track your success.

1. Develop Strong Relationships with Dive Retailers and Dive Travel Agencies

- Build a Target List: Focus on agencies that specialize in your region. Companies like Caradonna Dive Adventures or Deep Blue Adventures are good starting points. A regular ad with a call-to-action in *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* helps attract the right retailers.
- Exclusive FAM Trips: Invite top retailers to experience your resort with complimentary stays, private activities, and, of course, exceptional diving. FAM trips create loyalty—and excitement.
- Incentive Programs: Offer tiered commissions:
  - 10% base
  - 12%-15% for 10+ bookings per year
  - Bonus cash rewards or complimentary stays for top sellers
- Group Trip Specials: Sweeten deals with offers like free Nitrox or complimentary night dives.

Example: A resort in Bonaire, Sand Dollar, created a simple group booking guide and sent it to U.S. dive shops. This effort generated over $1 million in bookings. Smart targeting works—and *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* can help you reach these buyers monthly.

2. Leverage Trade & Consumer Shows

- Choose the Right Shows: Big events like ITB Berlin or WTM London are valuable but expensive. Dive-specific shows like DEMA (USA), ADEX (Singapore), Boot (Germany), and The Scuba Show & Beneath the Sea (USA) offer direct access to the dive market.
- Maximize Travel: While attending shows, visit nearby dive shops and travel agencies. Make the most of your travel investment.
- erfect Your Elevator Pitch: Craft a 60-second summary of your resort's highlights. A recommended quick-read: Weekend Language by Andy Craig.
- Create Pre-Show Buzz: Let potential partners know you'll be at the show through *Scuba Diving Industry Mag-*

Sample B2B Marketing Phases (6 Months)

Phase 1	Activity	Details	Goal
a.	Launch B2B Portal	Create a section on your website for travel agents with resources & tools.	Establish a professional presence.
b.	Start a Monthly Ad Campaign	Use *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* to get the word out about your new portal.	Generate new leads.
c.	Email Pitch Campaign	Send personalized outreach to top travel agencies & tour operators. *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* offers sponsored emailer just for this reason as well, reaching travel sellers.	Generate new leads.
Phase 2			
a.	Webinar #1: "Sell the Experience"	Host a live webinar showcasing your resort's unique selling points.	Educate and engage agents.
b.	FAM Trip Invitation	Select top-performing agents for a familiarization trip to the resort.	Build loyalty & firsthand experience.
c.	Trade Shows	Attend an industry event, distribute marketing materials, collect leads.	Expand industry connections.
d.	Agent Incentive Program Launch	Introduce a commission bonus or reward program for top bookers.	Motivate agents to prioritize your resort.

azine ads, and offer incentives for visiting your booth.

- Booth Design: Invest in striking visuals—underwater photography, VR experiences, or immersive videos.

Example: Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas offered a $100 Visa gift card for any group booking at DEMA. The promotion helped generate over $500,000 in group bookings at just one show.

3. Create a Dedicated B2B Sales Platform

- Agent Portal Features:
  - Registration and logins for agents
  - Downloadable media kits and rate sheets
  - Real-time availability calendars
  - Automated email follow-ups via CRM tools like HubSpot
- Keep it Simple: Even small resorts can integrate basic B2B tools easily.

Example: Aggressor Liveaboards' agent portal includes marketing resources, online training, and commission tracking—easy for agents to use and promotes repeat bookings.

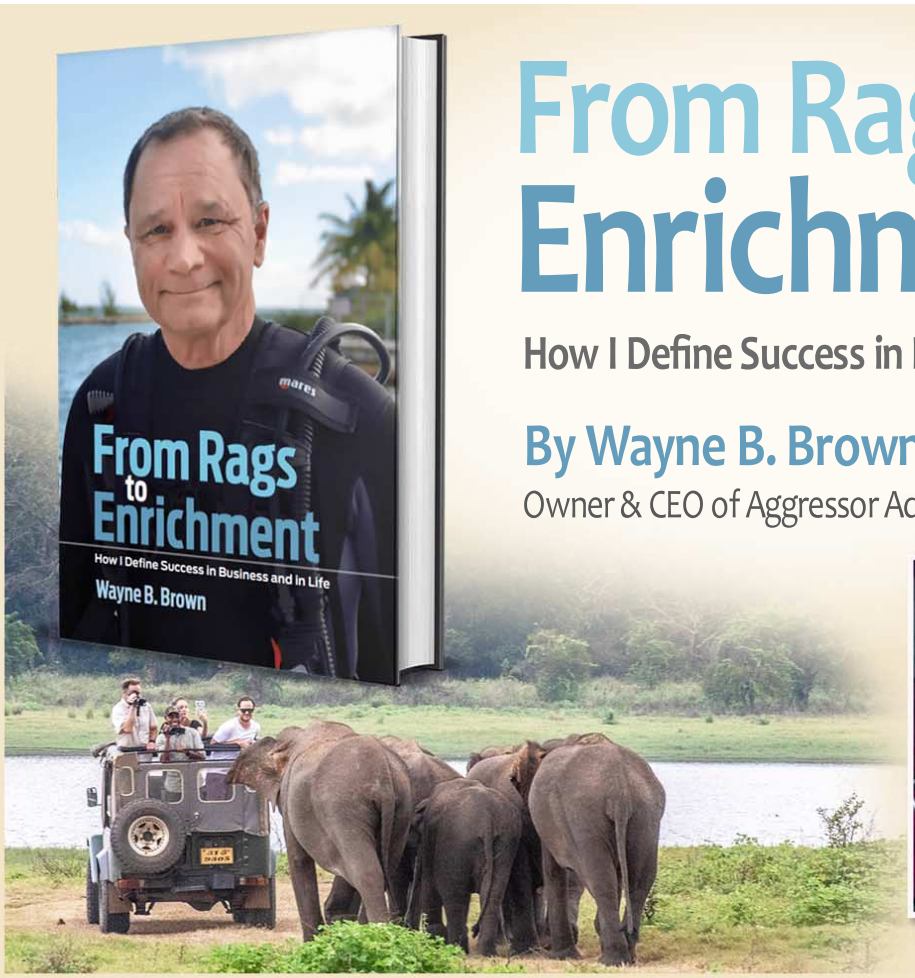
4. Strategic Partnerships with Specialty Wholesalers

- Partner with Wholesalers: Work with companies like Caradonna, Reef & Rainforest, and Deep Blue Adventures.
- Co-Marketing: Share costs for emails, social media, and ads—especially in *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine*, which reaches dive retailers monthly.
- Bundle Experiences: Offer packages that include activities beyond diving, appealing to non-diving travel companions.

Example: Caradonna Dive Adventures' co-op marketing programs blend magazine ads, social media, and emails to maximize B2B reach cost-effectively.

5. Host Webinars and Virtual Trainings

- Monthly Webinar Series: Host sessions like "Top 5 Experiences at [Resort Name]" to educate and engage travel sellers.
- Keep it Interactive: Use polls, quizzes, and live Q&As.
- Offer Certifications: Create a "[Resort Name] Specialist" digital badge agents can proudly display.



From Rags to Enrichment

How I Define Success in Business and in Life

By Wayne B. Brown

Owner & CEO of Aggressor Adventures

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Example: Both Caradonna and Deep Blue have successfully hosted webinars featuring resort operators, celebrities, and dive experiences, generating thousands of impressions and leading to new group bookings.

Why You Should Start Now: 200 Days Until the DEMA Show

The DEMA Show, the world's largest business-to-business dive industry event, is just 200 days away—and that's both plenty of time and not a minute to waste if you want to maximize your B2B impact.

Here's why starting now matters:

- Building Awareness Takes Time: Travel sellers and dive retailers need multiple touchpoints before they feel confident recommending or booking your resort. Magazine ads, emails, webinars, and personal outreach all work best with a 6-month runway.
- Relationship Building: Top-performing agents and dive shops plan their 2025 group travel 6–9 months in advance. That means now is when they're deciding where to send next year's groups.
- Trade Show Lead-Up: Exhibiting or attending DEMA is important, but success at DEMA starts long before the show. By launching your campaigns now, you can create pre-show buzz, set meetings in advance, and enter DEMA with agents already familiar with your brand.
- Exclusive Promotions: Early promotions give agents more time to market and sell your packages before and during the busy DEMA networking period.
- Media Timing: Advertising in *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* between now and November ensures repeated exposure to the exact travel sellers and retailers who can grow your bookings.

Recommended Timeline Starting Now:

- Next 30 days: Launch your first B2B ad campaign, build/update your travel seller list, and promote a webinar.
- Next 90 days: Host your first webinar, announce a FAM trip opportunity, and strengthen partnerships with wholesalers.
- Next 180 days: Confirm your DEMA booth promotion, finalize incentive programs, and prebook appointments with travel agents and retailers you've nurtured.

Bottom Line:

You have the perfect window right now. Resorts that build relationships and brand familiarity over the next 6 months will dominate at DEMA—and set themselves up for a record year of group and dive travel bookings.

Don't wait. Start your B2B marketing program today.

Scuba Diving Industry Magazine is here to help you reach the right audience, every month, leading up to DEMA and beyond.

Practical Tools to Support Your Program

Webinar Script Outline (30-45 mins): "Selling Dive Paradise: Mastering [Resort Name] Bookings"

- Intro: Warm welcome and highlight a special incentive
- Overview: Showcase USPs (location, experiences, eco-credentials)
- Selling Tips: Discuss commission structures, group incentives



- Interactive Q&A: Live engagement
- Closing Offer: Special booking incentive for attendees

Sample B2B Email Pitch:
Subject Line: Boost Your Dive Travel Bookings with [Resort Name]!

Why Book Us: Private beaches, world-class diving, sustainable practices, and lucrative commissions.
Invite: Promote your webinar and portal access for agents.

Sample Social Media Posts:

- Webinar Promo: "Sell Dive Paradise—Join Our Free Webinar!"
- Agent Incentive: "Earn More, Travel More—Exclusive Rewards!"
- FAM Trip Invite: "Experience [Resort Name]—Join Our Dive Travel FAM Trip!"

FAM Trip Sample Itinerary:

- Day 1: Resort tour, welcome dinner
- Day 2: Diving/snorkeling, eco-sustainability presentation, sunset cruise
- Day 3: Sales training workshop, farewell networking breakfast

Sample Incentive Program Flyer:

- "Earn Up to 15% Commission + Free Stays!"
- Simple steps: Register, Book, Earn

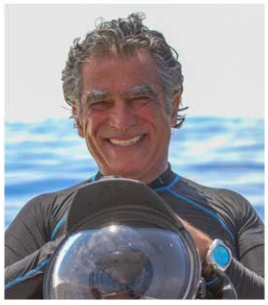
Conclusion:

If you want to build long-term success with dive travel sellers and retailers, it takes consistent marketing, strong partnerships, and smart incentives.

One of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to get started? Advertise in *Scuba Diving Industry Magazine* – the ONLY business-to-business publication that reaches 100% of USA's dive retailers and an estimated 90% of all dive business globally. We help connect you directly to the partners you need to grow.

email William

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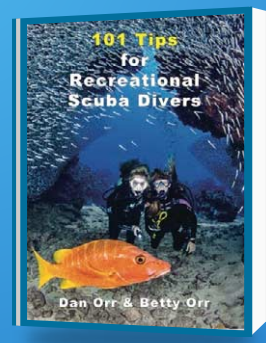


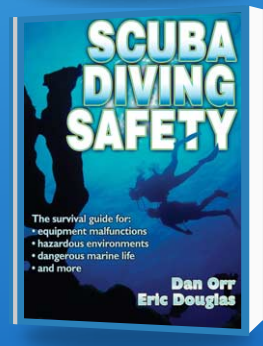
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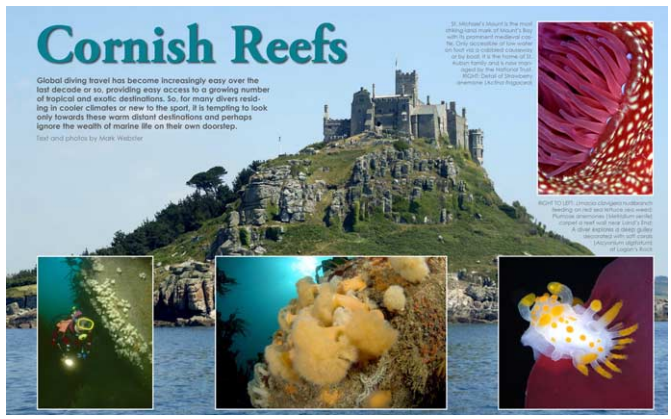
TRAVEL

Dive Into Europe: Geopolitics Aside, the Water's Still Fine in Europe

– by Peter Symes, Publisher, X-Ray Magazine



This month, I am going to deviate a bit from the usual format. First, there is now a white elephant in the room, which would be odd not to address, and that is the ongoing geopolitical spats over tariffs and trade wars that have resulted in widespread travel boycotts affecting incoming tourism to the U.S. I want to keep this column free of politics, as we are joined in this forum by our common interest and love for diving. I am simply describing what is going on and how it may affect dive travel, without voicing any opinion either way. In this context, I would just like to stress that, in my view, American visitors will still be warmly welcomed in Europe, regardless of the ongoing international political discourse. Individuals won't be held accountable for politics or certain politicians. In fact, it will likely be seen as favourable if you come over to see and find out for yourselves what we are really like. Just be respectful and polite, as you otherwise would.



Secondly, I would like to address the fact that diving in Europe is not just an alternative destination for groups from dive centres or dive clubs, which has been the focus and target group in my previous posts. In all of these, I have emphasised that it would be a grave mistake not to also incorporate a considerable portion of land excursions, exploring historical sites, trying out local cuisine, and appreciating the local culture.

However, there may also be many cases where diving is not the main reason or purpose for your visit to Europe. For instance, you might come over on business, attend a conference, study, visit friends or relatives, or just go shopping. In these cases, you might be curious about sampling some local diving as well.

Let's pick an easy example: England. Say you go to London on business and have some leisure time. England has a very lively dive community, is home to many classic dive equipment brands, and hosts one of the best consumer shows on the planet - Go Diving. You can dive all around Britain's extended coastline. But if I have to pick out one suggestion, let me point you to Cornwall at England's southwestern tip. In this county, which is home to two manfacturers, Fourth Element and AP Diving, you will find lush kelp forests, diverse and colourful marine life, and countless wrecks. The villages are picturesque, with century-old inns, pubs, and cobbled streets, and the landscape is beautiful with its lush green rolling hills. Or how about a visit to Tintagel, the ruins of the fabled King Arthur's castle? At least there won't be much of a language barrier. Just bear in mind that "British English" is really not a thing, just a software setting. Here, we speak English. It's the real deal and not an accent, though with a vast array of dialects. Just saying.

email Peter

As for more information about UK diving, check out BSAC.com or scan/click this QR code for more about Cornish Reefs.

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Breathing guard

- Divo monitors the diver's breathing activity in the diving system. If the diver's breathing ceases for more than 35 seconds, Divo automically inflates the diver's buoyancy control device (BCD), and lifts the diver to the surface.

Out-of-air guard

- Divo monitors how much breathing gas is in the scuba cylinder. When the gas level drops below 72 psi (5 bar), the Buoyancy Control Device (BCD) automatically inflates the diver's BCD and lifts the diver to the surface.

Reset function

- The inflation process can always be reset, by pressing the deflate button to return to normal operation mode.

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TRAVEL

Part III: How to "Blue" Your Business & Make More Green; Beyond Green Eco-Resorts

– by Gil Zeimer, ScubaStoryteller.com and Zeimer.com, San Rafael, CA
As a PADI Open-Water Diver for nearly 40 years, Gil has published more than 110 articles in over 25 magazines and websites, plus another 170 newsletters about his experiences. He's also a two-time skin cancer survivor.



This series has presented "blue" initiatives that can make your business more sustainable and help increase your bottom line. Part III focuses on "the planet's most sustainable hotels, resorts, and lodges" and how their collective mission helped them build their brand."

A Passion for Embracing Travel as a Force for Good: More divers, especially high-end clients who value sustainability, want to experience something new… something unique… something worthy of their destination.

Guided by a passion for embracing travel as a force for good, Beyond Green is a global portfolio of more than 50 meticulously vetted properties across over 20 countries that exemplifies leadership in environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and community engagement.



The Brando, Tetiaroa, French Polynesia

In addition, this brand aims to transform the global travel industry by setting new standards where sustainability is integral to every guest experience. Through collaborative efforts and leadership initiatives, each member property undergoes a vigorous vetting process based on over 50 sustainability indicators that align with global sustainable tourism standards and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

As a family-owned company operated by Preferred Travel Group, Beyond Green offers a new way to experience genuine hospitality, making it easier for environmentally minded travelers to find the perfect eco-friendly accommodations and empowering them to select among the world's best resorts.

CEO Lindsey Ueberroth summarizes her company's mission by saying, "Beyond Green reflects the shared commitment of our member properties to transforming travel into a force for good. Together, we are creating a space where travel truly makes a positive impact — for people and the planet."

Sparking a Wave of Action Toward Essential Change: Beyond Green member properties are enacting essential change through innovative ocean research initiatives, inspiring community partnerships, and engaging educational programs.

These efforts provide travelers — especially divers — with a deeper understanding of and connection to the marine ecosystem and the impact of human activities.

Here are a few examples of their resorts that offer scuba diving and snorkeling…

The Turtle Inn (Placencia, Belize) combines luxury and unspoiled beach beauty to create an idyllic refuge for relaxation or adventure. It's been honored by the Condé Nast Traveler "2025 Gold List," plus Travel + Leisure 500 "World's Best Hotels 2024."

Martin Krediet, General Manager, adds, "Francis and Eleanor Coppola acquired this 25-room beachside hideaway in 2001 and saw their role as conservators to preserve the pristine natural environment. They have strongly supported Belize's commitment to ecotourism and continue to explore new technologies to benefit these isolated resorts."

There are seven Beyond Green-approved lodges and resorts among The Family Coppola Hideaways. A simple 5% fee added to each guest's folio at the two Belize Hideaways — The Turtle Inn and the Blancaneaux Lodge — provides financial assistance to The Belize Community Fund. It encompasses an impressive list of sustainable efforts from ridge to reef to assist, support, and raise funds for various programs. These include buying a roof for the local basketball court, soccer teams, arts festivals, fishing tournaments, the local marathon, wildlife cameras for research, and building new classrooms for schools.

Other sustainability projects encompass:

- MarAlliance: Explores, enables, and inspires conservation action for threatened marine wildlife and their critical habitats with local communities. These consist of shark, turtle, and protected areas research, satellite tagging and tracking, and education. Some tagged tur-

tles are named after Francis and Eleanor, and recently tagged turtles are available for adoption.

- Dive Tours: Divers can make two-tank tours, conducted in inner, outer, and atoll locations along the Mesoamerican Reef System (SAM), the world's second-largest barrier reef.
- Coral Reef Restoration: Fragments of Hope is a local community-based organization that partners with The Turtle Inn to focus on the restoration of coral reef habitats and their sustainable management.
- Inspiration Center: Helps pay therapists every month for kids with special needs.
- Placencia Humane Society: Offers free spay and neuter programs, a mobile vet clinic, and vaccination programs.
- ROMP Global: The Range of Motion Project is dedicated to ensuring access to high-quality prosthetic care and rehabilitation services for Belizeans who can't afford one.

The Brando (Tetiaroa, French Polynesia) – One of the world's most iconic private island luxury retreats boasts powder white beaches, azure tropical waters, and vibrant coral reefs.

Fulfilling Marlon Brando's vision of a "university of the sea," this resort is at the forefront of innovative ocean research, focusing on the health and sustainability of Tetiaroa's marine ecosystem.



Turtle Inn Tagging, Belize. Credit: Rachel Graham Mar Alliance

Sustainability projects include:

- Studying Shark Populations: For the past decade, the Tetiaroa Reef Shark Project has studied the lagoon's shark population to better understand its ecology and behavior.
- Monitoring Green Turtles: Te Mana O Te Moana, an environmental organization that has protected green sea turtles nesting on the atoll's beaches for 17 years, focuses on the impact of climate change on female turtles.
- Innovative Cooling: The Brando harnesses deep-sea water rather than using harmful hydrofluorocarbons to naturally cool its tropical villas with its innovative Sea Water Air Conditioning system.

Coulibri Ridge (Soufrière, Dominica) provides a 14-suite resort perched atop a mountain ridge, powered by 100% renewable energy and using only captured rainwater. Near the Soufrière-Scott's Head Marine Reserve, guests can enjoy unforgettable underwater experiences that support marine conservation efforts at the island's finest diving and snorkeling spots.

Sustainability projects include:

- An Exclusive Sperm Whale Encounter: Led by renowned photographer, environmental activist, and frequent contributor here, Amos Nachoum, this tour offers once-in-a-lifetime snorkeling experiences alongside families of sperm whales, some reaching up to 55 feet in their natural habitat.
- The Coulibri Ridge Dive Package: Available year-round, this tour combines world-class dives with luxury accommodations and includes gourmet meals, a coral conservation tour, and a donation to the Soufrière Marine Reserve Coral Restoration Project.
- Coral Restoration Project: Coulibri Ridge's REZDM organization is actively involved in the Soufrière-Scott's Head Marine Reserve through the purchase of a dedicated boat and the employment of staff for the daily survey and treatment of the reserve's coral.

SCP Corcovado Wilderness Lodge (Bahía Drake, Costa Rica) – This secluded rainforest retreat is set amidst 450,000 acres of pristine wilderness, lined by two kilometers of beaches and the largest reef systems on Costa Rica's Pacific Ocean. In an area once described as "the most biologically intense place on earth," this boat-only access lodge provides an immersive experience in nature.

Sustainability projects include:

- Strategic Partnerships: NGO partners like Innoceana boost conservation efforts with immersive, hands-on activities such as scuba diving and snorkeling expeditions involving data collection and animal identification, truly impacting marine conservation.
- Community Engagement: The property provides therapeutic nature experiences for individuals with disabilities, curates events to bridge the gap between guests and nearby communities, supports infrastructure proj-

ects that enhance clean water access, and empowers local teens with language training and education in sustainable tourism.

- Guilt-Free Dining: The "Zero Waste" restaurant concept ensures nothing organic goes unused and has eliminated single-use plastics.

Hotel Las Islas (Cartagena, Colombia) offers a beacon of sustainable luxury on private Barú Island overlooking the Caribbean Sea. The 65 bungalows overlooking the sea are surrounded by a tropical forest and white sand beaches, while another 10 sea-level bungalows are only accessible by boat.

Sustainability projects include:

- Mangrove Restoration: Partnering with the Malpelo Foundation, they have created the mangrove reforestation project that has restored over 95,530 plants of vital ecosystems.
- Coral Reef Reproduction: Together, their innovative coral planting program has reintroduced 70,000 new corals and regenerated more than 250 square meters of reef habitat.
- An Activity Center: Offers snorkeling, diving, bioluminescence tours, mangrove expeditions, stargazing, and spa treatments.
- Hiring Local Certified Coral Gardeners: The property's purpose is to be a source of work for the local people, which is why 80% of the staff come from Barú, the nearest Afro community.

Many Divers Can Afford Sustainable Luxury Resorts: A 2023 DEMA survey of 2,444 consumers found the average international dive trip cost just over $3,800, including diving, lodging, airfare, and related expenses. However, 27.6% of the respondents paid $4,001 and up to $20,000+ to pamper themselves – showing there is clearly a luxury eco market for dive groups.

The Bottom Line: To best cater to your high-end clientele who firmly embrace sustainability initiatives, consider booking a Beyond Green resort trip that can make a positive impact – on them and on the planet.

To discuss how I can help with your "blue" initiatives, please email me c/o gil@zeimer.com or scan or click this QR Code.

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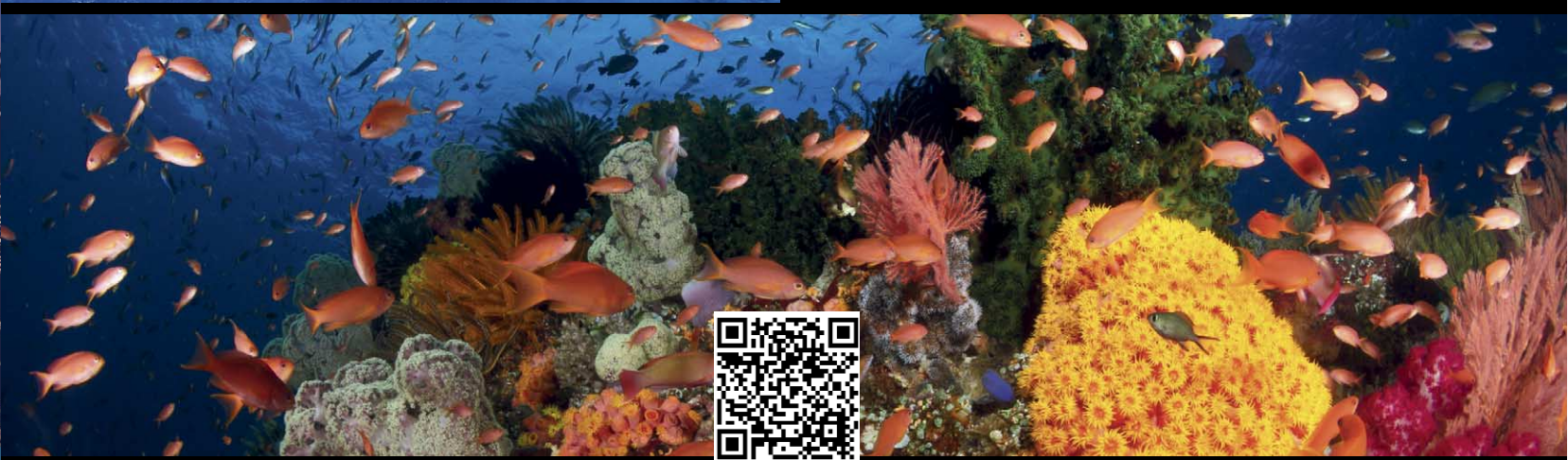


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2024/25 ARTICLE INDEX

Listed are all Articles Listed by Subject Matter (through March 2025)

Subject	Issue	Title/Link	Author	Page
Across The Globe	February 2024	How are Destinations in Oceania Faring Since COVID?	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	23
Across The Globe	March 2024	Differences Between the USA and European Markets	Peter Symes	8
Across The Globe	May 2024	ADEX 30 Years of Commitment to Marine Conservation	Ian Bongso-Seldrup	10
Across The Globe	September 2024	Cayman ISDHF Update	Amber Wagenknecht	40
Business EDU	January 2024	How Big Is The USA Dive Retail Market?	William Cline	20
Business EDU	March 2024	'How To' Podcasting Guide for Dive Retailers	Jeff Cinciripino	15
Business EDU	March 2024	Insights into Working with College & Universities	Tec Clark	26
Business EDU	April 2024	How to Get Your Business Growing, Part One.	Cathryn Castle Garcia	12
Business EDU	April 2024	Master Your Data to Enhance Your Divers' Experience	Peter Letts	22
Business EDU	May 2024	How to Get Your Business Growing, Part Two	Cathryn Castle Garcia	12
Business EDU	June 2024	How Executive Coaching Can Help Your Business	Cathryn Castle Garcia	39
Business EDU	June 2024	How to Operate a Full-Service Dive Center	Tom Leaird & Brooke Speedy	11
Business EDU	June 2024	Rebreathers 101 – The Individual Perspective	Jeffrey Bozanic, Ph.D.	17
Business EDU	July 2024	Are We at an Inflection Point in the Dive Industry?	Jeff Cinciripino	17
Business EDU	July 2024	Selling With Your Wallet: Upselling Dive Equipment	Jennetta Adams	28
Business EDU	July 2024	The Top 10 Ways to Promote Your Scuba Business	Gil Zeimer	15
Business EDU	July 2024	Thinking About Selling Your Dive Business?	Dean Hollis	26
Business EDU	August 2024	Building a Strong Online Presence	Cathryn Castle Garcia	22
Business EDU	August 2024	Selling a Dive Business Part Two – How Much?	DeAnn Olsen	26
Business EDU	September 2024	Come Join Me at DEMA & Let's Grow Your Business	Cathryn Castle Garcia	28
Business EDU	September 2024	Communicating A Change in Ownership – Part 3	Jessica Jarosh	22
Business EDU	September 2024	To "A.I." or Not "A.I." – That Is The Question	Gil Zeimer	10
Business EDU	October 2024	Avoiding the "Castle Mentality" in Business	Wayne B. Brown	18
Business EDU	October 2024	Let's All Jump on The Global "Blue Friday" Bandwagon	Gil Zeimer	13
Business EDU	October 2024	The Business of Women Divers	Linda Sue Dingel	42
Business EDU	October 2024	Tips from Former Owners – Part 4, Selling Your Shop	Dean Hollis	53
Business EDU	October 2024	Using Heros & Guides to Brand Build	Cathryn Castle Garcia	29
Business EDU	November 2024	Audience of One: How to Find Your Ideal Customer	Cathryn Castle Garcia	20
Business EDU	November 2024	My First Time – Make It Memorable and Give Thanks	Gil Zeimer	11
Business EDU	November 2024	Rebreathers 202, Dive Resort/Liveaboard Perspectives	Jeffrey Bozanic, Ph.D.	21
Business EDU	December 2024	Diving Risk Management: Part 1	Al Hornsby	11
Business EDU	December 2024	Honing Your Marketing Message: One-Liners	Cathryn Castle Garcia	20
Business EDU	December 2024	Part 1: How To "Blue" Your Business in 2025	Gil Zeimer	18
Business EDU	January 2025	A Different Kind of Blue: The Social Media App Bluesky	Cathryn Castle Garcia	20
Business EDU	January 2025	Diving Risk Management: Part 2 Tempting Probability	Al Hornsby	11
Business EDU	January 2025	Establishing a Clear Target	Wayne B. Brown	22
Business EDU	January 2025	Part 2: How To "Blue" Your Business in 2025	Gil Zeimer	18
Business EDU	February 2025	Diving Risk Management: Creating a Safety Culture	Al Hornsby	11
Business EDU	February 2025	What's the Best Way to Achieve Success? Plan for It.	Cathryn Castle Garcia	20
Business EDU	February 2025	Conducting Effective Team Member Appraisals	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	25
Business EDU	March 2025	The Importance of Standardized Practices	Al Hornsby	11
Business EDU	March 2025	Succeeding in Business – Know How to Steal	Cathryn Castle Garcia	20
Business EDU	April 2025	Turning Problems into Opportunities	Wayne B. Brown	14
Business EDU	April 2025	Direct Supervision – When Definitions Really Matter	Al Hornsby	18
Business EDU	April 2025	Using a Strong Hook to Stop the Scroll	Cathryn Castle Garcia	20
Business EDU	April 2025	5 Ways Resorts Can Attract Dive Travel Sellers	William Cline	29
Cousteau Files	October 2024	Calypso & Jacque's Photographer	Bill Macdonald	38
Cousteau Files	November 2024	PROTEUS™ – One Small Dive for Man One Giant Leap	Fabien Cousteau	8
DEMA	February 2024	Driving Growth, Empowering Businesses, Public Policy	Tom Ingram	30
DEMA Show	May 2024	DEMA's 2024 Advertising Survey Results	Tom Ingram	34
DEMA Show	June 2024	The Value of Education and Networking	Peter Letts	20
DEMA Show	June 2024	View our DEMA Show Marketing Plan & Road Map	William Cline	40
DEMA Show	July 2024	View our DEMA Show Marketing Plan & Road Map	William Cline	38

2024/25 ARTICLE INDEX

Subject	Issue	Title/Link	Author	Page
DEMA Show	August 2024	Creating Effective Pre-Event Awareness for DEMA	Scott Jones	36
DEMA Show	August 2024	DEMA Show 2024: A World of Opportunity	Tom Ingram	38
DEMA Show	September 2024	A First-Timer's DEMA Guide	Peter Letts	38
DEMA Show	October 2024	2024 DEMA Sponsored Seminar Schedule	DEMA	50
DEMA Show	October 2024	2024 Exhibitor List with Booth Numbers	DEMA	47
DEMA Show	October 2024	A Manufacturer's Perspective of the Show	John Flanders	31
DEMA Show	November 2024	DEMA is Over... Post-Show Report	Patty Cline	27
Dive God Diaries	June 2024	Diving & Guard Dogs? How it All Began.	Neal Watson, Sr.	23
Eco Pro	January 2024	Redefining Dive Tourism: There is no "Planet B"	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	26
Eco Pro	February 2024	"What Business are we Really in?"	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	27
Eco Pro	March 2024	Big Picture Thinking: Don't Be Just Another Instructor	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	7
Eco Pro	April 2024	It's the Play, Not the Actors in Coral Reef Education	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	28
Eco Pro	May 2024	What is a ECO PRO & How Do They Help Our Industry?	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	32
Eco Pro	June 2024	Redefining Today's Dive Professionals	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	36
Eco Pro	July 2024	Shark Diving – To Feed or Not to Feed	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	22
Eco Pro	August 2024	The Role of Bad Photography in Marine Conservation	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	31
Eco Pro	September 2024	Sustainability – What is it & Why Should I Care?	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	31
Eco Pro	October 2024	Reef-World's ED Chloe Harvey Interviewed	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	20
Eco Pro	November 2024	A New Soft Coral Invasion	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	16
Eco Pro	December 2024	Carbon Calculators: Empowering Sustainable Air Travel	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	16
Eco Pro	January 2025	What is "Blue Carbon" and Why Should I Care?	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	29
Eco Pro	February 2025	Coral Reef Bleaching – Causes & Trends	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	29
Eco Pro	March 2025	Using Sunscreen to Do the Right Thing for the Planet	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	29
Eco Pro	April 2025	A Diver's Guide to Responsible Seafood	Alex Brylske, Ph.D.	12
From the Publisher	January 2024	Why Publish a Dive Industry Magazine Now?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	February 2024	What's New in our February Issue!	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	March 2024	Should I Be Planning for the DEMA Show in April?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	April 2024	Artificial Intelligence vs. Authentic Intelligence	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	May 2024	171 Days Until The DEMA Show – Start Planning Now	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	June 2024	Another Survey? how many of these do you need?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	July 2024	The Power of Working Together	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	August 2024	How Can We Look Forward? Remember the Past	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	September 2024	The DEMA Show is Coming – Are you Ready?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	October 2024	Come Together for the Ultimate Event in Las Vegas	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	November 2024	it's not me, it's y'all...	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	December 2024	Did you know U.S. Retailers Reach 2.4 million Divers?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	January 2025	The Power of Influence: Our Circulation Shapes Millions	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	February 2025	It's Dive Show Season: What Do They Mean?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	March 2025	Does Anyone Really Read Print Anymore?	William Cline	5
From the Publisher	April 2025	200 Days to the DEMA Show, We Have a Roadmap	William Cline	5
Industry News	February 2024	A Tribute to Paul Humann	Neal Watson, Sr.	16
Industry News	March 2025	Boston Sea Rovers Show Report	Jeff Cinciripino	17
Industry News	March 2025	In Memoriam: Barry Guimbellot	Cathryn Castle Garcia	17
Innovation	March 2024	The Avelo System – an Improvement to Scuba?	Peter Letts	30
Innovation	May 2024	Revolutionizing Diver Safety: A New Self-Rescue	Dan Orr	29
Innovation	January 2025	Exploring Reef Smart Guides: The Future of Mapping	Lisa Malachowsky	36
Non-Profits	April 2024	Ralph Erickson Educational Foundation Builds Legacies	Pat Hammer	26
Non-Profits	June 2024	Take a Suitcases – Change a Life!	Theresa Aranda	35
Non-Profits	September 2024	The Sea of Change Foundation – Small but Mighty!	Samantha Whitcraft	23
Non-Profits	December 2024	Christ of the Abyss Statue & Diveheart Foundation	Patty Cline	27
Photo Pro	April 2024	The Passion & Business of Underwater Photography	Stephen Frink	7
Photo Pro	May 2024	From Fear to Triumph – Diving with Polar Bears	Amos Nachoum	17
Photo Pro	October 2024	How I Got The Shot: Sailfish on the Hunt	Amos Nachoum	15
Photo Pro	October 2024	Into the Depths of Nature and Storytelling	Cristian Dimitrius	24

2024/25 ARTICLE INDEX

Subject	Issue	Title/Link	Author	Page
Photo Pro	November 2024	Behind The Lens - Eye to Eye with a Leopard Seal	Amos Nachoum	14
Photo Pro	December 2024	Behind The Lens: Face-To-Face with the Nile Crocodile	Amos Nachoum	14
Photo Pro	January 2025	Face-To-Face with the Greenland Shark	Amos Nachoum	14
Photo Pro	February 2025	The Narwhal – Unicorns of the Arctic	Amos Nachoum	14
Photo Pro	March 2025	A Dance with the Giants of Dominica	Amos Nachoum	15
Photo Pro	April 2025	Behind The Lens: The Great White Shark Breach	Amos Nachoum	17
Research	February 2024	Cline Group's 4th Quarter 2023 Global Survey Results	William Cline	14
Research	October 2024	3rd Quarter Survey Results	William Cline	52
Retailing	January 2024	New Research Reveals The Importance Local Divers	William Cline	7
Retailing	February 2024	Using Metrics to Enhance Diver Engagement	Jeff Cinciripino	7
Retailing	March 2024	Advice to Help Improve Customer Retention	Cathryn Castle Garcia	10
Retailing	March 2024	Five Steps to Future-Proof Your Business	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	31
Retailing	April 2024	Is It Time To Clean-Up Diver Research Databases?	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	31
Retailing	April 2024	The Big Event – Harnessing The Power of Local Events	Richard Thomas	25
Retailing	April 2024	The Tip of the Spear – The Local Dive Shop	Jeff Cinciripino	15
Retailing	May 2024	Building a "Dive Tribe™" for Your Store	Richard Thomas	25
Retailing	May 2024	Tips on Managing Your Store's Inventory	Jeff Cinciripino	15
Retailing	June 2024	Dive Shops Need an At-Once World	Jeff Cinciripino	25
Retailing	June 2024	Harnessing The "Gray Tsunami" for Your Operation	Gil Zeimer	15
Retailing	July 2024	Role of Dive Centers in Fostering Adventure & More	Peter Letts	34
Retailing	August 2024	Constant Innovation – a Driver Of Dive Tourism	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	11
Retailing	August 2024	Pros and Cons of Starting a Technical Dive Program	Richard Thomas	27
Retailing	August 2024	Rebreathers 201 – For Dive Retailers	Jeffrey Bozanic, Ph.D.	15
Retailing	August 2024	Using Intros as a Marketing Tool	Tom Leaird & Brooke Speedy	34
Retailing	August 2024	Working with a Dive Travel Partner – A Secret Success	Jeff Cinciripino	24
Retailing	September 2024	A Service Department Challenge - Antiquated Gear	Jeff Cinciripino	34
Retailing	September 2024	Importance of DEMA and the DEMA Show	Tom Leaird	20
Retailing	October 2024	Attitude & Innovation is Everything	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	45
Retailing	October 2024	The DEMA Show & Why it Still Matters for Retailers	Jeff Cinciripino	34
Retailing	November 2024	Show Sponsored Sessions Being a Part of it All	Jeff Cinciripino	30
Retailing	December 2024	Building Strategic Partnerships	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	23
Retailing	December 2024	Considerations for Entering New Dealer Agreements	Jeff Cinciripino	21
Retailing	January 2025	The 6 Characteristics of a Successful Company	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	25
Retailing	January 2025	Watching Your Wallet - Improving Cash Flow	Jeff Cinciripino	31
Retailing	February 2025	Part 3: Moving Your Dive Group onto the Next Trip	David Prichard & Lily Mak	13
Retailing	February 2025	Getting Your Store Ready for the New Dive Season	Jeff Cinciripino	32
Retailing	February 2025	Memory Marketing and How It Can Help the Industry	Peter Letts	36
Retailing	March 2025	How Dive Clubs Can Be a Dive Retailer's Best Friend	Gil Zeimer	16
Retailing	March 2025	POS Systems - The Heart of Your Operation	Jeff Cinciripino	26
Retailing	March 2025	How to Embrace Generation Z	Tec Clark	24
Retailing	April 2025	Travel Insurance - A Win-Win for Your Dive Shop	Jeff Cinciripino	26
Safety	January 2024	Issues For Older Divers: Health & Insurance Coverage	Dan Orr	18
Safety	February 2024	Insights for Dive Pros: Safety Means Business	Dan Orr	18
Safety	March 2024	Go on an Amazing Citizen Science Trip to Antarctica.	Dan Orr	18
Safety	April 2024	The Dangers with Normalization of Deviance	Dan Orr	18
Safety	June 2024	The Value of Customers Taking Refresher Training	Dan Orr	28
Safety	July 2024	The Older Diver & Health Questionnaires	Dan Orr	7
Safety	August 2024	Scuba Diving Safety: Whose Responsibility Is It?	Dan Orr	7
Safety	September 2024	Cardiac Issues – Getting to the Heart of the Matter	Dan Orr	7
Safety	October 2024	The Four "P's" of Scuba Diving Safety	Dan Orr	7
Safety	November 2024	Sipping Your Way To Safety	Dan Orr	7
Safety	December 2024	Confronting Immersion Pulmonary Edema (IPE)	Dan Orr	7
Safety	January 2025	Situational Awareness & Addendum	Dan Orr	7
Safety	February 2025	Situational Awareness Pt. 2 – It's All in the Details	Dan Orr	7
Safety	February 2025	The Mental Health Benefits of Scuba Diving	Gil Zeimer	18
Safety	April 2025	The Chamber Crisis Continues	Dan Orr	7

2024/25 ARTICLE INDEX

Subject	Issue	Title/Link	Author	Page
Training	May 2024	Experiential Learning: A Campus Trend	Tec Clark	28
Training	January 2024	Adding Swim Lessons, Freediving, Mermaid Programs	William Cline	9
Training	January 2024	Setting Meaningful Goals for Dive Professionals	Shelli Hendricks, Ph.D.	10
Training	February 2024	Are Collaborations Good for Business?	Shelli Hendricks, Ph.D.	13
Training	March 2024	How to Run a Successful Instructor-Level Program	Pat Hammer	32
Training	March 2024	Ways to Deal with Workplace Conflict	Shelli Hendricks, Ph.D.	29
Training	April 2024	Our Take on Training New Divers: A 7 Week Course	Tom Leaird	29
Training	July 2024	Why Teach Specialties?	Pat Hammer	19
Training	August 2024	The Liability Release – Protection for the Dive Industry	Al Hornsby	8
Training	September 2024	Using Seal Team Training to Change Lives	Sherry Hammer	26
Training	October 2024	Don't Let a Single Point of Failure Ruin a Good Day	Eric Douglas	22
Training	November 2024	Tips for Keeping Divers Engaged and Active	Patrick Hammer	25
Training	February 2025	When is it Time to Stop Teaching?	Pat Hammer	38
Training	April 2025	3 Tips for Building A Stronger Customer Base	Shelli Hendricks, Ph.D.	11
Travel	January 2024	Great Barrier Reef Condition Update	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	23
Travel	January 2024	How Dive Resorts Can Improve Customer Service	William Cline	13
Travel	January 2024	Nordic & European Countries Winter Update	Peter Symes	25
Travel	February 2024	European Shows Updates from BOOT	Peter Symes	15
Travel	March 2024	Info on the South America & Brazil's Dive Industries	Andre Valentim	13
Travel	May 2024	A Perspective on the Global Coral Bleaching Event	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	35
Travel	May 2024	Diving into the Scandinavian Market: Opportunities	Peter Symes	23
Travel	May 2024	The Dreams that Feed the Diving Industry: Dive Travel	Brooke Speedy	7
Travel	June 2024	Enhancing Diver Retention – by speaking Mandarinfish?	Marty Snyderman	7
Travel	June 2024	The Evolution of 'The Bottom Line' in Dive Tourism	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	31
Travel	July 2024	Branding and Marketing Basics, Part One	Cathryn Castle Garcia	31
Travel	July 2024	Diving into Europe? No Junk Fees or Junk Food	Peter Symes	38
Travel	July 2024	How Climate Change Impacts the Dive Industry	Terry Cummins, Ph.D.	11
Travel	August 2024	How Divers Helped Capture the Paris Olympic Games	Jeremy Gabrielson	19
Travel	September 2024	Diving into Europe? Try Portugal's Diving	Peter Symes	19
Travel	September 2024	Korean Diving Country Clubs: From a Small Stream	Karl Shreeves	15
Travel	September 2024	South America's Dive Industry: Brazil Show Report	Andre Valentim	24
Travel	October 2024	Colombia's San Andrés Archipelago	Carlos Lander	17
Travel	October 2024	Diving into Europe? Try Spain's Costa Brava	Peter Symes	37
Travel	November 2024	Adventure Tourism & Diving: A Call to Action	Lisa Malachowsky	18
Travel	November 2024	Diving into Europe – Try Malta!	Peter Symes	29
Travel	November 2024	Insta-Buddy: Advice for Assigning Buddy Teams	Carly Anderson	24
Travel	November 2024	The Mystery of Margarita Island	Carlos Lander	13
Travel	December 2024	Diving into Europe – Greece: A Journey In History	Peter Symes	9
Travel	December 2024	Part 1 of 3: What Dive Travel Means to Retailers	David Prichard & Lily Mak	30
Travel	December 2024	The Natural Beauty of Trinidad and Tobago	Carlos Lander	13
Travel	January 2025	Diving into Europe – Italy and the Agony of Choice	Peter Symes	9
Travel	January 2025	Leading a Scuba Trip Part 2: The Trip Leader's Role	David Prichard & Lily Mak	13
Travel	February 2025	Dive Into Europe: The BOOT German Show Report	Peter Symes	9
Travel	February 2025	Tara Artner: New Dive Destination – Jordan's Red Sea	Tara Artner	34
Travel	February 2025	Los Roques, an Exotic Caribbean Paradise	Carlos Lander	35
Travel	March 2025	Dive Into Europe: Dive Tuscany, Italy?	Peter Symes	13
Travel	April 2025	Cartagena, Colombia – A Timeless Blend of History	Carlos Lander	24
Travel	April 2025	Geopolitics - The Water's Still Fine in Europe	Peter Symes	33
Travel	April 2025	Part III: How to "Blue" Your Business With Eco Resorts	Gil Zeimer	36