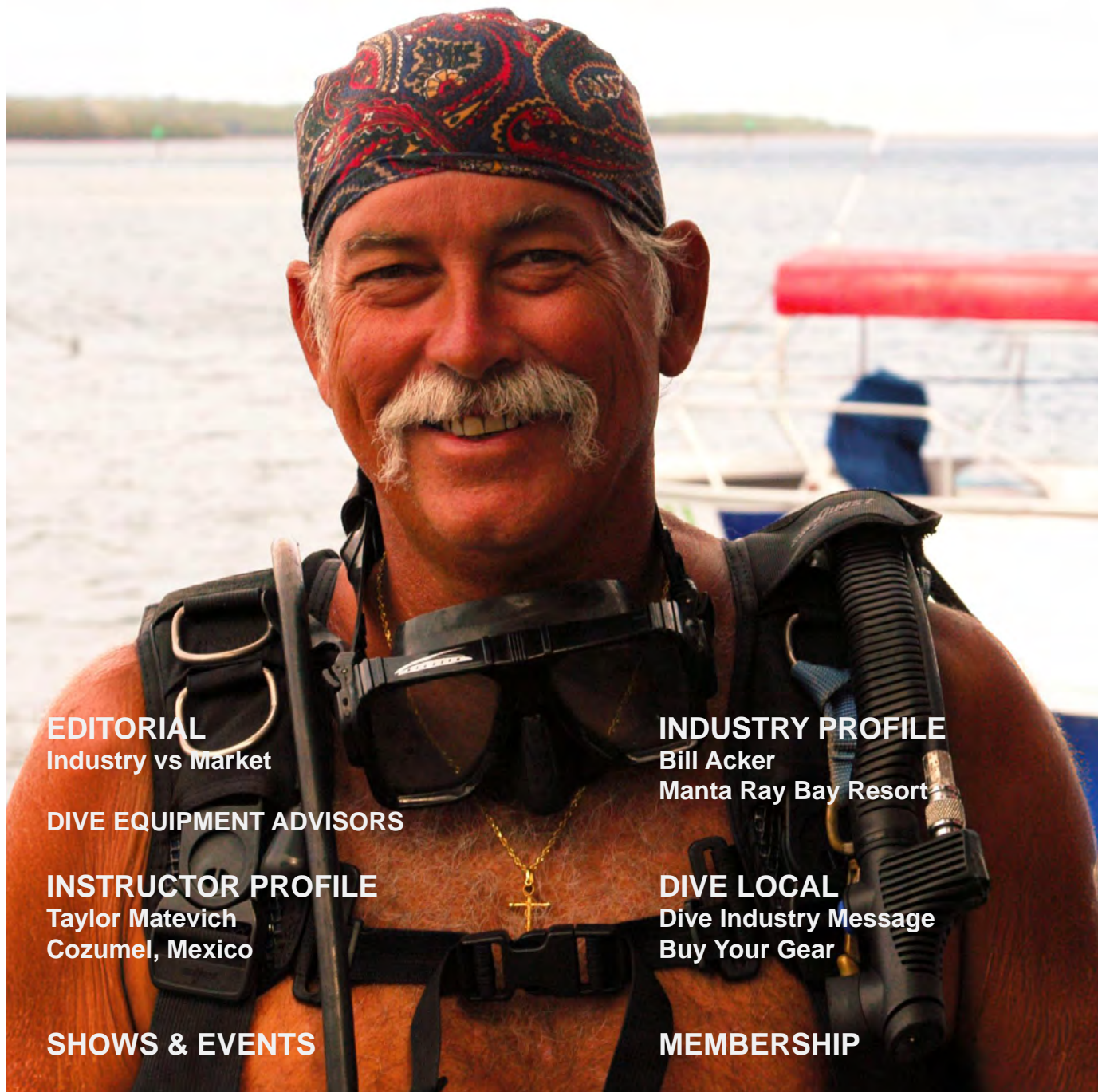


THE DIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

July 1, 2024 - Vol 24, Issue 7



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Welcome to the July 2024 edition of *The Dive Industry Professional*. As a Trade Publication, *The Dive Industry Professional* is dedicated to the professional advancement of Dive Industry Professionals worldwide. Our mission is to bring buyers & sellers together by the increasing our usage of 21st century marketing tools and technologies. We look forward to collaborating and working closely with our members and industry partners to bring you the best business of diving articles to help advance your career in the recreational diving industry.

In this month's issue we begin with our editorial, **Industry vs Market**. We learned a lesson from a beer company that lost a tremendous market share and revenue when they tried to get an established demographic to change their products preferences. The truth is that when you have a new and dissimilar product in your lineup, you must identify a new market for that product. If you don't you risk losing your current market. In our **Industry Profile Series** we feature Bill Acker from Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers. A true dive industry pioneer in every aspect, Bill followed his dream to Micronesia many years ago and has been improving on that dream ever since. You have to read all about this Industry Icon who has logged over 18,300 dives. And just so you don't think we only feature Dive Industry Legends, check out our new **Instructor Profile**. We met Taylor Matevich in Cozumel this May and were very impressed with this young Divemaster / Instructor. Taylor joins us this month with an article that tells you, in her own words, how she arrived at this point in her career. Her story may be very relevant to the next generation of Dive Industry Leaders.

Our DIVE LOCAL Series, **Dive Industry's Message to Local Divers** continues with, **Buy Your Gear**. We have created a path to grow the recreational diving industry and serve the current diver community. We are showing divers and prospective divers how to learn to dive, buy their gear, go diving, and stay active. Conducting scuba courses is the way to increase the global diving community, but to focus solely on teaching diving is rather short sighted. As an industry, our end goal should be to create more *active* divers, not just certified divers. They are the people who buy their gear, continue with training, and travel. In this article we focus on what we are training our scuba instructors for and what they need to know about equipment. It's time to raise the bar for diving instructors and provide them with comprehensive training about diving, equipment, and the industry. We added an article about **Dive Industry Advisors**, and our plans to create an educational program for Dive Equipment Advisors, Dive Equipment Specialists, and Industry Influencers. And finally, our Shows & Events column brings you upcoming events for the rest of 2024 and into 2025. **Enjoy the read.**

Gene Muchanski
Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

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Photo Shaun The Sheep by Kewin Lorenzen

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EDITORIAL



Industry vs Market

by Gene Muchanski, Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

Have you spent the last decade or two carving out a nice niche market and creating an awesome circle of influence for the programs, products, and services that your company specializes in, only to see your market share slip through your hands because you don't know how to diversify your portfolio? ***I hope you are not one of those people who don't know that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!***

As we enter into the dog days of summer, at the beginning of hurricane season in the Caribbean, while we are preparing to exhibit at the DEMA Show, there is an awful lot of industry product planning going on that is bound to go sideways. From our vantage point, we are seeing a lot of industry planners getting ready for the next upcoming buying season. Many will be ready for the official launch of the 2025 season on September 1 while others will wait until November. Waiting until November to make your pitch is the first mistake.

The second mistake we are noticing is as plain as day to dive industry Professional Business Advisors but apparently not to some companies in the diving industry. We are starting to see a number of companies trying to diversify their product offering without taking into consideration what industry they are in and what we know about niche markets. If I spelled out the red flags we see going up around them, you would immediately be able to recognize the companies who are making these critical errors. Rather than offer them unsolicited advice, maybe we should

just explain the difference between an industry and a market.

An industry is a group of like-minded companies that produce a similar program, product, or service. Let's call them products. In the "diving industry" we recognize the predominate stakeholder groups (aka Industries) as Manufacturing (33), Wholesale Trade and Distribution (42), Retail Sporting Goods (45), Sports and Recreation Instruction (61), Travel Agencies and Tourism (56), and Organizations and Associations (81), to name a few. The most successful companies in our industry produce products that are similar to what is produced in their industry but have chosen to specialize in products related to diving. There are a few that are engaged in other industries, sometimes to the detriment of their own success. The numbers in parentheses are the first 2-digits of their NAICS codes.

The word market has a few meanings for us. A market could be a description for a pool of potential customers. i.e. *There is a large market for my product.* It can also refer to a group of buyers and sellers that engage in commerce for mutual benefit. i.e. *To be successful in the diving industry, you have to understand the composition of the market.* The words market and marketplace are often used interchangeably. i.e. *A market is a place where buyers and sellers meet to do business.* Professionally, I would rather use the word marketplace to describe a location.

When we talk about a niche market in the diving industry, we are actually targeting a group of customers who are looking for diving and diving-related products. That is why the diving industry is really a niche market, not an industry. We are a conglomerate of industries that produce diving and diving-related products and are in the marketplace to sell our products to people interested in what we produce.

For the past 70 years, there have been many businesses, from different industries, that have produced products specifically for diving and diving-related functions. As successful producers and sellers of diving equipment they have acquired a large customer base of people who have become part of the diving niche market. As long as there was a demand for diving and diving-related products, these specialty companies were able to stay in business by meeting the demand. In recent years, two important changes have altered the marketing mix. Increased competition from new product producing companies has

decreased their market share and a decrease in the number of new divers in the market has decreased their sales.

Normally in a free market economy, a number of options would be on the table. Marginal companies would leave the diving niche market in search of more profitable markets. More established producers would fight to steal market share from their competitors. More successful companies would attempt to stimulate the market to produce more divers, who in turn would purchase more products. However, in this post pandemic, recovery economy, critical social and economic demographics have changed. Maybe even permanently altered. With the passing of the baby boom generation, the raw population numbers are down. The younger generations are not as interested in scuba diving as the boomers were. Annual certification numbers are down. Younger divers are more interested in single experiences rather than committing to a lifestyle hobby. The sale of complete diving outfits is down dramatically. New divers are more likely to rent their gear when they dive, instead of purchasing it. That is not an encouraging picture I'm painting here, and unfortunately, many Dive Industry Professionals agree with this bleak scenario.

It appears that we have come to a fork in the road in our industry. And I know that **Yogi Berra said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."** But all kidding aside, whichever fork you decide to take, opportunities will open up on the other fork. One option is to know your niche in the diving industry. Are you going to continue to specialize in your niche products, and market them to your niche audience? Can you increase your niche market and your market share in it? Are you going to increase your level of specialization in the diving community and get better at everything you produce that is diving and diving-related? Will you become the leader in your niche product category and niche market customer group? If you decide to expand your product diversification, would you create new customers for your new products? I certainly hope so.

Product diversification can be a good thing, but it can be a step in the wrong direction if you are not matching the right product with the right customer, based on your core competency abilities. I am seeing some travel advisors in the diving industry starting to sell

Cruises and African Safaris as part of their product offering. They are dealing with new travel vendors they meet at travel industry shows and they are coming into contact with clientele from a totally different demographic than the diving community. Granted, Cruise Ships and African Safaris have significantly higher sales potential, but the increased competition and marketing challenges can also be significant. The challenge to becoming successful would be not to dilute your sales potential to your active diver database while trying to sell a new product to an old database, that may not be interested in the new product. Of course, to me, a perfect crossover from a diving trip to a safari, would be to baby boom diving clients who have decreased their dive trips because of age and are looking for a vacation alternative. Finding out which of your clients meet this situation could increase your sales and client retention.

When you understand your primary industry's core competencies and you can properly match consumer niche products with the purchasing niche consumer, you can dominate your niche market. When you try to grow your business by adding new products to your line without understanding how to and who to market your products to, it could be a recipe for disaster.

This is an exciting time to become part of the Global Diving Business Network. For more information about global marketing opportunities, contact Gene Muchanski, Executive Director of the Dive Industry Association, 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904. Phone: 321-914-3778. Email: gene@diveindustry.net Web: www.diveindustry.net

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INDUSTRY PROFILE



Dive Industry Profile Series

Bill Acker

Manta Ray Bay Hotel & Yap Divers

In the Words of Bill Acker

with Gene Muchanski, Editor

The Dive Industry Professional

If there is one thing that diving pioneers have in common is that they are all living the dream. Some diving pioneers get to where they got by following a Dream. Others discovered their passion in life by finding their dream. Then there are the diving pioneers we all love in the diving community who create their dreams. Bill Acker, of [Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers](#), from Yap, Micronesia is one of those people. When we looked closer at Bill's history, we see that he is actually a combination of all three types of diving pioneer, and then some. Bill followed a dream. He found a dream. He built his dream. And now he is sharing his dream with the world. Bill Acker is what we call a Dream Maker.

Born on November 19, 1952 in Austin, Texas, Bill Acker's oceanic adventure of a lifetime began at the

age of 26 when he joined the Peace Corps in 1976. *"I went to Yap as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1976 and was an avid snorkeler. I LOVED the ocean and the beauty of the reef and marine life. One day, I was snorkeling while a Yapese friend of mine (one of the first 3 Yapese to be certified and the eventual two-term Governor of Yap) was diving. I became very jealous that he could go down to the bottom and sit there while I was going up and down for what seemed like the entire day. This ability to join nature up close and personal and be in a place where man was not made to be, really intrigued me. When the Australian Navy helped make it a reality, it made it easy for me years later. I've never regretted jumping at the chance to learn the sport...in fact you could say I'm Aussie certified."*

Bill Acker went to work for WA'AB Transportation in 1977 and started diving. *"We had an oxygen and acetylene plant on the dock that I managed as the Port Manger of Yap. There was a group of Navy Divers onboard an Australian Navy ship that stopped in Yap one day. We got a question about filling SCUBA tanks from the divers after seeing our compressor for the O2 plant. When I told them we didn't know about*

BILL ACKER



this, they said they'd set it up for us."

"The port also had a tugboat and barge to dredge sand, so I thought it would be good for comradery among the staff to certify as many of them that wanted to learn. I got in touch with Pete Peterson, the owner of [Micronesian Diver's Association](#) (MDA), who sent three instructors to Yap so 45 of us took dive classes and got certified. This included my wife." So, Bill Acker gets certified in Yap in 1985 and his dream gets better and better.

"After we became divers, I decided we'd take the tugboat out on weekends to spearfish, barbecue, and drink beer. That was the mid-80's, and nobody knew better than to spear fish on SCUBA. Sometimes, after doing this a few times, we'd get stray tourists who happened to come to Yap after a dive trip to Palau. We always said yes to their requests to go diving when they heard we were diving. I had the bright idea that if we used my motorboat and opened a dive shop, we could charge tourists for diving and that would pay for our beer. It's true, Yap Divers was started for beer money." That was in 1986.

It didn't take Bill long to upgrade his professional diving status. He became a PADI Instructor in 1988. I wish I had known Bill then. I visited Yap briefly on my way to a three-week U.S. Navy salvage project in Palau but we never hooked up. It's strange how many times Dive Industry Professionals seem to pass by each other, like ships in the night over the years and never connect. Two years later on March 1, 1990, Bill opened the Manta Ray Bay Hotel. By this time Bill had become the General Manager of WA'AB Transportation. It was time to take his dream to the next level. *"In July of 1991, I left WA'AB and purchased Yap Divers and the Manta Ray Bay Hotel from the*

company. Since then we have opened Yap Planet Blue Kayak Company, Yap Anglers catch and release fishing company, the Taro Leaf Spa, a hydroponics garden and the Stone Money Brewing Company which brews world-class beer."

We asked Bill what his favorite diving specialty was and of course he said, *"Manta Rays. I am eternally biased as I believe the diving in Yap compares very well with any place I have ever dived. My favorite dive spot in Yap is Yap Caverns on the Southern tip of the island. There is everything there including very clear water, swim throughs, walls, shark cleaning station, macro critters, schools of fish and it's never boring."*

Jacques Cousteau and Lloyd Bridges may be Bill Acker's most favorite diving people but, *"The late Hall of Famer, Mr. Paul Tzimoulis was my mentor in all things diving. Paul knew more about dive travel than the rest of the industry combined and to my great joy and benefit, he took a liking to me, my family, and Yap. The rest is history."*

You might wonder what type of an inner circle of influence does a diving pioneer have? My question would be more like, who influences whom? Bill Acker's list of favorite diving people he has dived with is, *"Way too many to name. I have been extremely fortunate to have dived with lots of great people. Paul Tzimoulis and his wife Geri Murphy would certainly be included in any list. My wife and 4 kids have done hundreds, if not a thousand dives with me, and then there is Tim Rock, David Fleetham, Steve Miller, Marty Snyderman, Ray Bullion, Stefan Michi & Steven Lamphear from Mares, Frank Schnieder, Andreas Schumacher, Amos Nachoum to name a few but there are lots more. Some famous and some just good people.*



INDURSTRY PROFILE

Diving is my passion and I love diving with different people."

And people love diving with Bill Acker and Yap Divers. Bill was inducted as an SSI Platinum Pro in their first selection class and is a 2014 member of the International SCUBA Diving Hall of Fame. Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers has received numerous awards from Scuba Diving Magazine over the years for Readers' Choice, Top 10 Destinations for Big Animals, Top 10 Value Dive Destinations, Top 10 World's Best Marine Life, Top 10 Best Place for Phot Ops, and Top 10 World's Best Place for Small Animals.

But what good is being a successful Diving Pioneer and Industry Leader if you are not giving back to the Global Diving Community that has given you so much success, enjoyment, and fulfillment? Bill has our respect when it comes to Phillanthropy. *"I do not have a particular NGO that I would call my "favorite", but I have contributed in one way or another to various NGO's that have reached out for my expertise or assistance. I help organizations that I believe are there to better the planet and its Inhabitants."*

"Philanthropy holds a different meaning to me than I am sure some people. I have lived most of my adult life in an island nation where the core belief is that one's actions must be for the good of all. So, although my family and I have a business, we have not only done it to benefit ourselves, but have done so to help our island communities. Since being in business, we have been involved in summer training of Yap's youth, offered opportunities for locals to network with visitors and contributing to anything that will help my island home in improving the standard of living of its citizens."

Bill Acker is still as active as a Dive Industry Professional can get. *"I have dived Yap, Chuuk, Palau, Kosrae, Majuro, all over the Philippines, Bali, and Raja Ampat and I have discovered and named over 50 sites in Yap. I have over 18,300 dives and still love it."* Bill is thankful for the good work that is done by divers in the global diving community. *"I love the work we do every day throughout the world in protecting our oceans."* Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers are Members of the [Dive Industry Association](#) (# 0433).

Since 2006, Bill Acker and Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap divers have produced the [Annual MantaF-](#)



[est Photography School & Contest](#). *"Our MantaFest program has brought underwater photographers, both amateur and professional, to this small island and its protected reef to compete for prizes, attend workshops, take tours of the island, and experience the unique culture of Yap, which is considered to be among the best preserved in the Pacific region."* The 17th annual program is scheduled for August 24, 2024 – September 8, 2024.



A new edition to the annual MantaFest program is the [2nd Annual BlackwaterFest 2024 Photography School](#). Unique to the Underwater Photography circuit is an opportunity to photograph Mantas by day and Blackwater by night. *"Each night, we'll explore the water over the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean, the "Yap Trench", that reaches depths of over 9,000 meters. Discover exotic creatures of the deep blue sea that are rarely seen and experience their sighting in their natural habit. This exceptional experience will change your outlook of the ocean's wonders and will give you an up-close insight of her dark secrets."*

Bill concluded our interview with these comments. *"I have been so very blessed throughout my life in all respects and this opportunity to be featured here in*



The Dive Industry Professional is a part of the blessing. I truly believe I have made a positive difference in the lives of many people, and I thank God daily for the blessings bestowed on my family and me and our business and co-workers."

For more information visit Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers or email Bill at bill@mantaray.com

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Manta Ray Bay
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& Yap Divers
mantaray.com



INSTRUCTOR PROFILE



Dive Instructor Profile

How I Ended Up in the Diving World

By Taylor Matevich, PADI OWSI MSDT 458150
Freelance Guide and Instructor

Growing up as a competitive swimmer, I've always preferred water to land, feeling more graceful and comfortable in the water while rather uncoordinated otherwise. I have always felt more at home near the water, especially the sea despite having grown up in the Midwest. My journey into diving began in high school, learning to scuba dive alongside my father and sister and training through the Advanced Open Water course. However, my academic pursuits eventually took me on a different path. I left home for the West Coast to attend the University of Washington in Seattle, and after graduation, I pursued a master's degree which took me to Budapest, Hungary, and Barcelona, Spain. My career took me to various countries, but city living and the industry I started working in left me wanting more.

At 28, I realized I was too young to feel indifferent about my future career. It was time to turn the "one day" dream of becoming a divemaster into reality. Leaving my temporary home in the Netherlands, I first went to work at a shark field research station in South Africa. There, I gained hands-on experience in data collection while applying my data analysis skills.

To continue my dive training, I moved closer to home

and family, landing in the Mexican Caribbean just before the pandemic. I volunteered with an organization in Puerto Morelos, identifying and monitoring reef fish species for government data. This experience allowed me to hone my diving skills and knowledge, including rigorous practical water skills and advanced buoyancy exercises. I even learned to identify up to 100 local fish species!

After obtaining my Rescue certification, I moved to Xcalak, Mexico, to begin my divemaster training with [XTC Dive Center](#). This has been the most valuable professional experience in my diving career so far. The DMT program in Xcalak lasted three months, during which I assisted and worked hands-on in a full-service dive resort, seeing the ins and outs of how everything runs behind the scenes. Since I was there during the summer of 2020, there were not many other trainees, which allowed me to take on a lot of responsibilities and learn much more than I could have expected. Xcalak is a very remote and special location with gorgeous reefs, access to Banco Chinchorro, and is home to manatees – a truly unforgettable experience!

After finishing my IDC training and IE in Xcalak, I



moved to Cozumel Island, I have lived and worked in Cozumel as a divemaster and instructor for nearly four years now, mostly as a freelance guide and instructor.

Later this year, I will begin working on liveboards on the Pacific side of Mexico and hope to eventually make the move there permanently. My goal is to return to academia and pursue marine conservation with a focus on shark population dynamics, so I aim to be based in Baja California Sur.

TAYLOR MATEVICH



For more information contact Taylor Matevich,
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DIVE LOCAL



DIVE LOCAL™ – A Community Effort Building a Local Diving Community

Message to Local Divers

By Gene Muchanski, Executive Director,
Dive Industry Association, Inc.

Buy Your Gear – Get Outfitted to Get Started

The best way to build a thriving global diving community is to show people how they can become active scuba divers and enjoy the recreation for as long as they wish.

Four Steps to Becoming an Active Scuba Diver:

- Learn to Dive
- **Buy Your Gear**
- Go Diving
- Stay Active

Buy Your Gear: If you want to go scuba diving, you are going to need scuba diving equipment to do it. Human beings were not meant to live underwater, but with the proper equipment we can visit the underwater realm for short periods of time. Scuba diving equipment makes underwater exploration possible. The primary goal of diving equipment is to keep divers safe. Being safe in a potentially hazardous environment is what makes our short visits enjoyable. Some long-time divers might even say enjoyable and productive. Productive because with the proper diving equipment, divers can perform purposeful tasks underwater for work or pleasure. Regardless of the reasons we take up scuba diving, the diving equipment we use should never be taken for granted. Investing in your own diving equipment is an important decision to make and should never be taken lightly. To put things in proper perspective, I like to think of

diving equipment as life support equipment. Yes, it is still in the sporting goods category, but its primary purpose is to support life underwater. Maybe this will remind you how important the selection, care, and maintenance of your diving equipment really is.

Diving equipment can be purchased, rented, or borrowed. I've never been a fan of borrowing dive gear from friends or family. You may not know how old the gear is or when it was last serviced. You may not know when the gear was used last and if it still is in proper working order. Diving with unfamiliar gear that you have not been trained on or have any experience using may present problems. Unless you are the same size as your friend, it may not fit you. And if you are borrowing gear from a friend, what are they going to use? A major reason is that the gear you borrow may not be the right kind of gear for the type of diving you will be doing.

Renting diving equipment from a Professional Diving Center is a viable option, but it has its limits. The rental sources that are the best to rent from have top-of-the line equipment for rental and rotate their rental equipment on a frequent basis. Their rental equipment should be well maintained, serviced on a regular basis, and documented. The equipment you rent should be the type of gear that you were trained on or are familiar with. The price of your rental package should be reasonable, and the rental process should be simple and convenient for your schedule.

When traveling to a dive destination away from home, renters have two options. One would be to rent from their local dive center and be able to dive with equipment they are familiar with. The other option is to rent your gear from the dive destination's dive operator. Without knowing much about the specifics of the destination's rental department, this is a tough call to make. Another factor that makes renting difficult is that not all pieces of diving equipment are offered for rent. Specialty items such as dive computers and underwater lights are not always available. Many dive destinations only offer tanks, regulators, BC's, and maybe wetsuits for rent. Renters need to do their research on their dive destination prior to the trip and reserve your gear as early as you can.

The good news is that dive destinations are working hard to improve their rental services for traveling divers. It is a good idea to check with your local dive

store, group Dive Travel Specialist, or your Dive Travel Wholesaler when renting gear on your dive trips.

Purchasing your own diving equipment makes a lot of sense if you are diving frequently enough to enjoy the benefits. Equipment owners have the luxury of selecting the right type of equipment that is suited for the type of diving they intend to do. They have control of the selection, care, and maintenance that is required for life support equipment. The more they use their gear, the more comfortable they become with it. They never have to worry about the availability of rental equipment and they save an enormous amount of time, money, and manpower by not having to go through the rental process every time they want to go diving. Divers who make a financial investment in their own diving equipment have a tendency to use their equipment more often. If you own your own equipment, you will look for more opportunities to use it.

The recreational diving industry has been divided on the subject of divers who decide to purchase their own equipment as opposed to divers who choose to rent. There are good arguments on both sides of this debate. To me, ***the major factor in making a decision about the purchasing of equipment is the reason a person decided to take scuba lessons to begin with.*** If a student enrolls in a scuba diving course just to experience something new, they have only made a decision to “check it out.” When I taught scuba in a university setting, I taught and certified hundreds of students who just wanted to give it a try. Of course, those who really enjoyed their course and wanted to go diving more often, had the option to take it to the next level. Becoming an active diver is really a series of decisions that result in the desire to have your own equipment.

As responsible Dive Industry Professionals we need to help our students choose the best options for them. Not for us. Granted, many dive instructors are motivated to teach as many people as possible, but to what end? Are we doing it for the student, the industry, or for our own purposes? Let’s leave it up to the student to tell us why they are taking diving lessons. If it is to try something different for a one-time experience, an introductory to scuba class may be just the right thing for them. Introductory Classes have little or no equipment purchases to make. If a student enrolls in an openwater certification course,

the initial investment in equipment may be minimal. Most courses require the purchase of a mask, fins, snorkel, and booties. If they are taking lessons to become an active scuba diver, then we can put them on the right path to make that happen too. Identifying and understanding the needs of our students makes our job as Scuba Instructors and Diving Equipment Advisors much more professional.

Part of the Learning Process: Learning about diving equipment should be a large part of the certification process. We have to teach scuba students about the equipment in a classroom setting initially, and then teach them how to use the equipment in the water. One of the main reasons we limit the sale of life support equipment to certified divers or students engaged in a scuba course under the supervision of a certified scuba diving instructor is because using diving equipment by an untrained individual can be potentially dangerous. During a scuba diving course, students learn about the different pieces of equipment that make up a diving set, or kit. They learn about the inner workings of the equipment and how it is used to keep the diver safe. It is important to learn about any limitations a piece of equipment may have. Does it have a time or depth limitation when in use? Does it need to be recharged or filled periodically? Learning about its normal or scheduled maintenance requirements is important for a student to know. Educating a diving student about the function of diving equipment is important also. I believe that the more a diver knows about what a piece of equipment can and cannot do will help them decide what type of equipment is best for them.

Learning How to Use Diving Equipment: Diving is an equipment intensive recreation. A big part of a scuba course is learning how to use the equipment. Most of the skills we perform in a scuba diving course are first conducted in confined water. This type of environment is good for initial equipment training with mask, fins, snorkel, air delivery systems, and buoyancy systems. In deeper water, students can get additional firsthand experience with wet and dry suits, weight belts, dive computers and underwater lights. The more experience that a student diver can get with equipment while being supervised in confined water, the more comfortable they will be diving with that gear in the open water environment. As a university scuba instructor, I have seen the positive results from repetitive skills training, using scuba equipment in an

DIVE LOCAL

Olympic size swimming pool, during a semester-long scuba course. ***Frequent practice in confined water builds confidence.***

Raising the Bar for Professional Dive Equipment

Advisors: Regardless of how this was handled in the past, this is the 21st Century. Dive Industry Professionals need to learn and stay current with their professional training agency standards and procedures. As Scuba Instructors they need to be proficient at teaching diving theory and diving skills. Diving equipment falls into both categories. Training Agencies need to ensure that their Scuba Instructors are knowledgeable about the diving equipment that is currently on the market and commonly used by divers. They must also verify that their instructors know how to teach a student to properly use the equipment they train with. For most of the 35 Training Agencies we deal with in the United States, a simple review of their Policies & Procedures will probably show they are all in compliance. A review of their Instructor Training Course curriculum might be the first step in a comprehensive audit. We will leave it up to the training experts at the agencies to figure out what their instructors need to know about equipment.

Going Beyond the Basics: Diving equipment has significantly improved over the 57 years that I have been a certified diver. My hope is that Training Agencies and Equipment Manufacturers have kept up with their educational programs to keep Instructors knowledgeable about the latest changes and developments. There are many improvements in dive equipment education that we can make in the industry. The diving equipment manufacturers have always conducted excellent maintenance and repair training programs for their Authorized Dealers. As a dive store owner, I always took advantage of repair courses that were offered to me and my staff by the manufacturers. Whenever a manufacturer allowed me to include any of my instructors in their repair course, I enrolled them. I figured that the more an instructor knew about equipment, the better.

I seem to remember that Scubapro formed a training organization to teach Dive Industry Professionals about diving equipment. I believe it was called SEA – Scubapro Educational Association. I'll have to check my archives. Anyway, the diving industry needs an organization like that again. I believe there is a need for a four-part diving equipment training program,



conducted by the diving equipment manufacturers. The first part would be an introductory course that would teach the basic theory about diving equipment. The second part would dive into more details about the features and benefits of individual pieces of equipment. The third part would be a program to certify "Professional Diving Equipment Advisors." I believe this part could include sales training on topics that help identify diver equipment needs. This part would be useful to Dive Industry Professionals who have a desire to become industry influencers. The fourth part of this program would be about equipment maintenance and repair and lead to a certification as an Equipment Repair Specialist.

The Roll of the Scuba Instructor: Every scuba instructor should have a basic understanding of how diving equipment works, to have any credibility in the classroom with their students. That is a responsibility every Training Agency should take seriously. How much an instructor needs to know about equipment, at a minimum, should be up to the Training Agencies. When it comes to the confined and open water training portions of the scuba course, the instructor must know how to operate every piece of equipment used

in the class. There is no way an instructor can teach a student how to use gear they don't know how to use themselves. When a scuba instructor is ready to grow professionally into a Professional Equipment Advisor or Industry Influencer, there should be a path to help them advance in their career.

Becoming a Professional Equipment Advisor: There is a plethora of diving equipment brands, makes, models, and configurations available on the market. Choosing the right gear for the right purpose may seem like a monumental task for a new diver. Using a Professional Equipment Advisor can take much of the confusion and guess work out of selecting and purchasing a complete diving outfit. A Professional Equipment Advisor is a seasoned Diver who is familiar with an array of major brands in our industry. They don't necessarily have to be licensed as scuba instructors, but being one adds to their credibility. It is our belief that diving equipment manufacturers should have a training program to educate Professional Equipment Advisors. PEA's would be valuable assets as sales advisors at dive stores, especially if the store's scuba instructors did not have the time or desire to advise students on their diving equipment selections. PEA's would make excellent brand ambassadors for equipment manufacturing companies. Being certified by a number of equipment manufacturers, PEA's would gain the credibility they need to be successful bloggers and industry influencers.

Buy Your Gear - In Summary: Buying your own diving equipment has many options. It is not a one decision - fits all type of argument. We can't say that everyone needs to buy their own gear and we certainly don't recommend the old way of instruction where we say that all diving equipment is evil, and we must learn how to escape to the surface in case all of our gear fails! We train our instructors to teach professional scuba diving courses. We provide Dive Equipment Specialists with the knowledge and skills training to become knowledgeable and proficient with all types of diving equipment. We train and support Dive Equipment Advisors, Dive Equipment Repair Technicians, and Industry Influencers. We have come a long way in our industry. We follow professional industry standards that introduce people to diving, teach and certify people through an open water scuba course, and provide a path for certified divers to stay active in a great recreation. That path is: Learn to Dive – Buy Your Gear – Go Diving - Stay Active.



Diving Equipment Advisors

by Gene Muchanski, Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

For every diving or specialty class that is taught, there are usually corresponding specific pieces of diving equipment that must be learned and mastered. How much detail do you think is included about the equipment that is used? Do instructors need to cover just the basics in theory, with a minimal amount of time practicing with the gear, or do they need to provide more equipment training in the classroom and confined water?

We believe that equipment training is important in all entry level courses and especially in the specialty programs. That means training in the classroom, confined water, and open water environments. There have been many equipment educational programs created in the past that included information on the technical function of equipment and the maintenance and repair of the gear we rely on in the water.

We are proposing that the diving equipment manufacturers help us create a program that educates Dive Industry Professionals about equipment theory, equipment use, and equipment maintenance & repair. We propose that such a course would also include feature and benefits training, sales training, and the equipment manufacturer's branding strategy.

For more information about becoming a Diving Equipment Advisor, contact Gene Muchanski, Executive Director of the Dive Industry Foundation, 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904. Phone: 321-914-3778. Email: gene@diveindustry.org Web: www.diveindustry.org

SHOWS & EVENTS

2024 TRADE SHOWS



June 1-2, 2024: Scuba Show. 37th Annual Consumer Scuba Show. Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, CA. Contact Mark Young, Executive Director. Phone: 816-665-8679. email: mail@scubashow.com Web: www.scubashow.com



November 19-22, 2024: Dema Show. 48th Annual Industry Trade Show. Las Vegas Convention Center, South Halls, Las Vegas, NV. Phone: 800-687-7469, email: Web: www.demashow.com



June 28-29, 2024: Operation Lionfish – Clear The Path. Lionfish Derby, Contest, and Dock Party. All Net Proceeds Benefit Warfighters Scuba. Deerfield Beach, FL. Contact Mark Ellert, President Guy Harvey Outpost. Phone: 954-368-4845. email: mhellert@guyharveyoutpost.com Web: www.OperationLionfish.com



January 8-10, 2025: Surf Expo. 48th Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center – West Concourse, 9899 International Drive, Orlando, FL. Contact Rod Tomlinson. Toll Free Phone: 800-947-7873. Phone: 678-781-7900. email: rod.tomlinson@surfexpo.com Direct: 678-781-7914. Web: www.surfexpo.com



September 5-7, 2024: Surf Expo. 47th Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center – South Concourse, 9800 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819. Contact Rod Tomlinson. Toll Free Phone: 800-947-7873. email: rod.tomlinson@surfexpo.com Direct: 678-781-7914. Web: www.surfexpo.com



January 18-26, 2025: Boot Dusseldorf – 54th International Boat Show. Dusseldorf, Germany. Diving Pavilion in Hall 3. Contact: Justin Kesselring, Project Manager, Messe Dusseldorf North America, 150 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2920, Chicago, IL 60601. Phone: 312-781-5180 email: info@mdna.com Web: <http://www.mdna.com/trade-shows/details/boot>



September 7-8, 2024: ScubaCon – In-Person Scuba Event. 41st Anniversary Scuba Event. Boulder, CO. Contact Steve Weaver, Dream Weaver Travel. Phone: 303-499-0942. email: steve@diveDWT.com Web: www.DreamWeaverTravel.com

SHOWS & EVENTS



March 15-16, 2025: *The Boston Sea Rovers 71st Annual International Underwater Clinic.* CoCo Key Hotel & Water Resort, Danvers, MA Contact David Caldwell, Exhibit Co-Chairman, Email: djc.searover@gmail.com or visit www.bostonsearovers.com



March 28-30, 2025: *Beneath the Sea* - 46th Annual International Oceans Exposition. New Jersey Meadowlands Expo Center, Secaucus, NJ. Contact Maria Hults. Phone: 914-664-4310. Fax: 914-664-4315. email: info@beneaththesea.org Web: www.beneaththesea.us

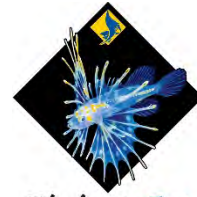


November 11-14, 2025: *Dema Show.* 49th Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL. Phone: 800-687-7469, email: Web: www.demashow.com

2024 PHOTOGRAPHY EVENTS



August 24 – September 8, 2024: *MantaFest Photography School & Contest.* 18th Annual Event. Yap, Micronesia. Contact Bill Acker. Web: www.mantaray.com



September 7-15, 2024: *BlackwaterFest 2024 Photography School.* 2nd Annual Event. Yap, Micronesia. Contact Bill Acker. Web: www.mantaray.com



MEMBERSHIP



The Dive Industry Association is a Marketing and Trade Association dedicated to *"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time."* Founded in April 2001, Dive Businesses and Individuals have joined our association to promote their business and grow the diving industry.

"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

Our Purpose is to build a cohesive and functional Global Diving Business Network.

Our Vision is to *Build a Better Industry, One Member at a Time.*

Our Mission is to Bring Buyers & Sellers together to facilitate business success and industry growth.

Our Focus is to concentrate on the industry's sale of diving equipment, training, travel, and lifestyle products.

Our Goals are to:

- Unite the Industry to a common purpose
- Promote Professional Business Development within our Membership
- Generate maximum marketing exposure and sales leads for our Members
- Increase business opportunities for our Members

Reasons to Join: Annual dues are \$125. Annual renewals, if paid by your annual renewal date are \$100. There is no place in the industry where you get as much coverage for so little an investment. The association promotes your business using blogs, websites, directories, social media, at trade and consumer shows and through direct referrals. Our networking capability is the envy of the International Diving community. The discounts you receive from Constant Contact by being a member and the FREE weekly press releases you receive more than pay for your dues many times over. Don't be a *Lone Marketeer*. Join the Dive Industry Association this year.

For more information: Contact Gene Muchanski, Executive Director, Dive Industry Association, Inc., 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, Florida, 32904. Phone: 321-914-3778. eMail: gene@diveindustry.net Web: www.diveindustry.net



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS



"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

We would like to thank the following New Members for joining our Global Diving Business Network.

We would like to thank the following Charter Members and Members for renewing with us for another year.

NEW MEMBERS

0435 – Koro Sun Resort and Rainforest Spa – Travel, Dive Resort – www.korosunresort.com

0436 – Surf-fur – Manufacturer, Apparel – www.surf-fur.com

RENEWING MEMBERS

0048 – Tektite Industries, Inc – Manufacturer, Equipment – www.tek-tite.com

0071 – Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society – Non-Profit – www.owuscholarship.org

0216 – Dive Industry Foundation – Non-Profit Organization – www.diveindustry.org

0346 – Beqa Lagoon Resort – Travel, Dive Resort – www.BeqaLagoonResort.com

0351 – Dream Weaver Travel – Travel, Wholesaler – www.DreamWeaverTravel.com

0353 – NAUI Worldwide – Training Agency – www.naui.org

0356 – Saint Lucia Tourism Authority – Travel, Tourism Board – www.stlucia.org

0374 – XINSURANCE – Service Provider, Insurance – www.xinsurance.com

0393 – Bilikiki Cruises Limited – Travel, Liveaboard – www.bilikiki.com

0394 – SeaCure Mouthpiece – Manufacturer, Equipment – www.seacuremouthpiece.com

0423 – Villa on Dunbar Rock – Travel, Dive Resort – www.dunbarrock.com

0424 – Cabanas on Clark's Cay – Travel, Dive Resort – www.clarkscay.com

0429 – The LZK Group (ZooKeeper) – Manufacturer – www.LionfishZK.com

0432 – ITDA International Technical Diving Agency – Training Agency – www.diveitda.com

MEMBERSHIP. BENEFITS. YOU.

BECOME A DAN MEMBER TODAY.

[JOIN NOW](#)





"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Company Name: _____

[] Proprietorship [] Partnership [] Corporation [] LLC Years in Business: _____

Contact Person: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Contact Person's Position: _____ Years with Company: _____

Business Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Business Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Toll Free Phone: _____ Toll Free Fax: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Facebook: _____ Skype: _____

E-mail Address for directories: _____

E-mail address for DIA correspondence: _____

Web Site (URL): _____

Trade Directory by-line (1-2 lines only): _____

DEMA Member? [] No [] Yes Number: _____ Votes: _____ Voting Delegate: _____

Category – Business - (Choose One) \$25 Registration Fee + \$100 Annual Membership Dues

- [] Manufacturer [] Distributor [] Retail Center [] Charter Boat [] Dive Club
[] Service Provider [] Industry Media [] Trade Association [] Training Association
[] Service Organization [] Trade Show Organizer [] Training Facility [] Travel Business

Category – Individual - (Choose One) \$25 Registration Fee + \$50 Annual Membership Dues

- [] Sales Representative [] Professional Educator [] Industry Professional

Payment Method: [] Cash / [] Check / [] Credit Card / [] PayPal / [] Square

[] Check (payable to Dive Industry Association, Inc.) \$ _____ Check # _____

[] If paying by Credit Card, please fill out: Type: [] American Express [] MasterCard [] Visa

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ CVV: _____

Card Holder's Name: _____ Signature: _____

[] Referred by: _____

* DIA retains the right to re-classify members according to our membership standards.

Mail to: Dive Industry Association, Inc., 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904-7339

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