

THE DIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

August 1, 2026 - Vol 26, Issue 8



EDITORIAL

Making Businesses Better Not Bigger

SHOWS & EVENTS

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

MARKETING

Understanding Customers

MEMBERSHIPS

EDITOR'S GREETING

Welcome to the August 2026 edition of *The Dive Industry Professional*. **This year, we are celebrating our 25th Anniversary.** 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 through our use of 21st Century marketing tools and technologies.

We begin this issue with our editorial, ***Making Businesses Better Not Bigger.*** Building bigger businesses doesn't necessarily make them better, but building better businesses has a higher probability that they will become bigger. And more likely to be more successful as they scale upward.

Our Marketing Series continues with ***Understanding Customers.*** There are three types of customers; Current Customers, Former Customers, and Future Customers. There are three things we do with customers; Acquire them, Maintain them, and Recapture them. This article tells you which types of customers are the best and most profitable to deal with. We also give some basic arguments as to which types of customers could be the least costly and the most profitable to deal with.

Our ***Shows & Events*** have details about trade and consumer shows & events for 2026 & 2027. Our ***Membership*** pages invite you to join the Dive Industry Association and find out why so many dive businesses become Members and renew in our Global Diving Business Network.

Gene Muchanski
Editor, *The Dive Industry Professional*

Dive Industry Association, Inc. is the Premier Trade Association in the Global Diving Industry, with Members Worldwide.

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Trade Publication

The Dive Industry Professional

EDITOR: Gene Muchanski

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EDITORIAL



Making Businesses Better Not Bigger

by Gene Muchanski, Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

With a new diving season starting in September, August has always been a time when dive industry businesses get their products ready for production or distribution, conduct their sales meetings, and prepare their sales force for a September launch. At this point in time, dive businesses should already have finalized their marketing plans and decided who they are as a company, what they are selling next year, and who they are selling too. Marketing Departments can then roll out their strategies and exhibit plans for Surf Expo in September and Dema Show in November.

I recently had an opportunity to participate in a marketing survey for a major diving industry vendor. I can't say for sure if it was a marketing analysis survey or a marketing rebranding survey. It really didn't make a difference to me from a professional marketing perspective, because a marketing analysis always comes before any marketing rebranding effort. Only after a company has determined where they currently stand competitively, can they begin to formulate a rebranding campaign for growth and success. To even think about rebranding before you have measured and analyzed your current competitive

position, would be like putting the cart before the horse. A Medical Professional would never perform an operation before diagnosing the patient. Why would a Marketing Professional make recommendations before analyzing a client's current performance in the market?

My opinion on conducting a marketing analysis is to first define what your business was started for and why. What are your core competencies and what is your purpose and mission. The products you sell should be in support of your purpose and mission and the grand majority of your revenue should be coming from the sales of those products. If your top revenue generating products are not in line with your advertised purpose and mission, then your company has somehow, some way gotten off course. This may be a good reason to repurpose or rebrand your company so that its revenue stream and intended purpose and mission are back in line. A thorough marketing analysis would support that argument.

Should your company leadership and the majority of your customer base want you to be true to your original purpose and mission, the best solution may be to make your business better at what it does and grow stronger, rather than diversifying too widely and growing competitively weaker. ***There should be a great deal of thought and planning with senior management and company executives, when making decisions between depth and width of product lines and even with customer personas.*** There are many factors to consider before finalizing your strategic plans or marketing rebranding efforts. The results may vary widely, and in many cases, the consequences may be irreversible.

What Business Are You In? When you know deep down that you are in the business of doing something specific, every decision you make should be in support of that specific purpose. When a company is true to their specific purpose, that purpose becomes their calling card, and how they perform that purpose becomes their unique selling proposition (USP).

Who are you in Business For? Knowing who your true customers are is probably the most important aspect of your business. Companies that are customer centric build their company and their reputation around the people they serve. When Product Managers in our industry are working on expanding their product lines, their first thought is how it will benefit their targeted customer base and other consumers like them. The key to building better businesses is by continually improving the products and services your current customers have come to expect and demand. Successful companies build Customer Satisfaction Departments to ensure that every new customer they acquire is satisfied with their intimal purchase and would be likely to purchase from the company again. Satisfied customers become repeat customers, who in turn become loyal customers, who in turn become life stylers. Life stylers can be very persuasive as advocates for you when they refer your business to their family and friends, based on their satisfaction with your products and your company.

The goal of every business should be to lay a foundation based on customer centricity. The cornerstones of your business should be a strategy of acquiring potential lifelong customers. When you focus on the lifetime value of each customer, you are building a business based on quality over quantity. When you do a good job at maintaining your customer base, your customers tend to stay with you longer and your customer turn decreases. That kind of growth strategy is highly scalable, and financially stable.

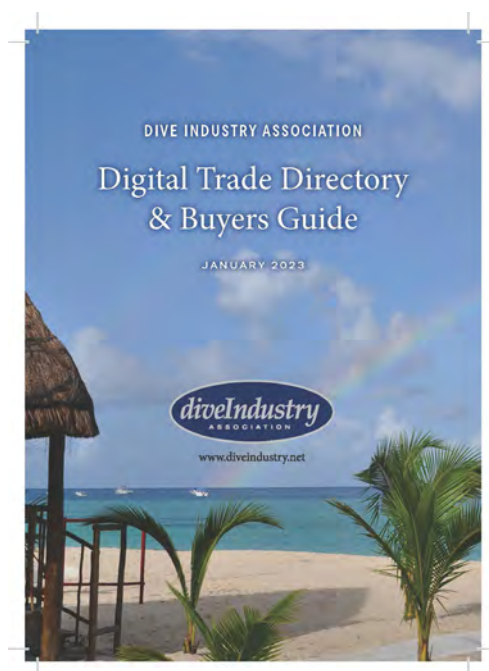
Profitable Growth: Not all growth is good. The preferable business growth should be controlled and profitable. If you focus on building a better business, there is a higher probability of the business getting bigger. If the goal is to build a bigger business, it doesn't necessarily mean that it will become better. In fact, history shows us that uncontrolled growth often leads to business failure and bankruptcy.

Ways to Make Your Business Better: Make prod-

uct management and customer management the cornerstones of your business. Staying within your core competencies, continually improve the products you create, distribute, and sell. That will give your business a good reputation for quality products. Continually track your ideal consumer persona and monitor your customers' journey with your company. Create a customer satisfaction department that nurtures initial customers into repeat customers and life stylers. When you build the best products that you can, for a customer base that you are familiar with, your growth strategy can be planned in small increments, within acceptable standard deviations from your current path.

Become a Member of our Global Diving Business Network: Annual Membership in the Dive Industry Association is \$125 and includes placement in a number of Trade Directories and websites. Our organization uses websites and directories in advertising and marketing campaigns to refer business to our members. By joining our network, you are becoming part of a network that works on your behalf to bring buyers and sellers together for the benefit and growth of the Global Diving Community. Download a [Membership Application](#) today.

###



MARKETING



Marketing Series: Understanding Customers

by Gene Muchanski, Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

When I ask business owners to tell me what their biggest needs are, many times they will tell me that they need more customers. Although that may be true to some degree, when I dig down a little deeper, I find out what they really want is more sales. And the reason they want more sales is because they equate more sales with more revenue. If you have ever thought that your business needs more customers or more sales, I know how you **feel**. Many people have **felt** like that before. What changed their minds was what they **found** out about the different types of customers.

Getting a little basic, there are three types of customers; current customers, former customers, and future customers. There are three things we do with customers; acquire them, maintain them, and recapture them. And by the way; ***The reason we want customers is because we love what we***

do so much that we want everyone in the world to share our passion.

Current Customers: When talking about the three types of customers, we usually talk about current customers first because most businesses already have some number of customers. Current customers are the people who have purchased programs, products, or services from us in the past twelve months. We make reference to *consumers* when we talk about people who purchase products. We call them *customers* when they buy from us.

Customer Journey: Every customer has a buyer's journey. If your new customers are pleased with their purchase they may become a repeat customer, if that applies to your type of business. Enthusiastic repeat customers become evangelistic customers or what we call lifestylers. Business owners should recognize and facilitate the customer buyer's journey from customer to repeat customer to lifestyle.

Maintaining Customers: Customer maintenance is critical to the success of every dive business and its sustainability. Creating satisfied customers is the key ingredient. ***A business must sell a sufficient number of profitable products to a sufficient number of profitable customers to stay in business.*** That gives entrepreneurs a great latitude in how they run their business. It also gives them plenty of options and strategies pertaining to the number of products they sell and the number of customers they can properly serve at any given time. Before any thought is given to looking for new customers, it is a good idea to take a hard look at the current customers you have. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Every business should have a customer contact database. You should know how many current customers you have. You should know who your customers are, what they have purchased from you and when, and have their contact information handy so you can stay in touch with them on a frequent basis. There are many ways to store customer contact information. Depending on the

number of customers you have and the size of your business, you should choose a computerized program that allows you to collect, organize, sort, and extract specific data to use in some type of outgoing sales and marketing campaign. ***The important thing to remember is that you can't organize and use data you haven't collected and stored.***

Point of sale programs with a customer relationship management application works well for retailers. For other types of companies, accounting programs with invoicing and CRM capabilities can help you stay in touch with your customers. Email management platforms like Google Workspace, Microsoft Outlook, and Constant Contact all do an excellent job at collecting, storing, organizing, and sorting customer contact information that can be sent to targeted customers, individually or in groups. Marketing Automation Software (MAS) like HubSpot is used by marketing professionals to keep the lines of communication open between a buyer and seller. At the bare minimum, a Dive Industry Professional should have their current customer's contact information on a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel or Google Workspace Sheets. Spreadsheets are easy to set up and use. They are flexible to work with, and the data can be downloaded from and exported to other applications easily and reliably.

Customer maintenance includes learning more about your customers and their recreational needs. It's all about forming a friendly business relationship with your customers and treating them as your recreational partners. They are using the diving skills you taught them and are hopefully diving with the equipment you sold them. Are they traveling with you on your sponsored dive trips? And have you invited them to attend your regional dive show with you? What have you done this year to keep your current customers engaged with diving and specifically, with your business? Do you sponsor a dive club and keep your customers active and engaged in diving?

Advantages of Current Customers: The first thing to remember is that your current customers are only yours on a temporary basis. They are only your customers while you are meeting their recreational needs. If you want to keep them as customers, you have to treat them right and make addressing their needs a top priority. This builds loyalty and keeps them from becoming your former customers. Or worse, your competitor's current customer.

Current customers are easy to maintain. You've already paid the acquisition cost. You have their contact information and their purchasing history. You know what they've bought, and you should know what they need. You've already created the market for diving equipment, additional dive training, and new dive travel. Don't lose the market you built.

Former Customers: Former customers are people who bought from you once but haven't bought from you in the past 12 months. There could be a number of reasons why. Maybe they moved, got married, had kids, or just stopped diving. You would know that if you had kept in touch with them. If life is the same with them, maybe all it takes is for you to reconnect with them again. It could also mean that something is wrong with your products or your after-sale service. It could be that your former customers no longer have a need for your product or have found a competitor who fills their needs better. Looking in the mirror and honestly analyzing your company and your products can be a very painful experience to undertake. But if you do find something that needs to be addressed, and can be corrected, the benefits will outweigh the effort.

Recapture Your Former Customers: Unlike the Prodigal Son, your former customers may not just return home on their own and show up at your door. It's most likely that you will have to write, call, email, or visit them. But all is not lost if you had recorded their contact information in your database in the first place. (I know. That was a dig). I have always made it a point to connect

MARKETING

with former customers on a limited and periodic basis, and I can testify that the process works well. Not always, but often enough to make it worth the effort. Many times, our former clients say, “Thanks for getting in touch with me. I’ve been meaning to call you.” With that, a recapture takes place and a Prodigal Son or Daughter returns. And yes, we celebrate that.

Advantages of Former Customers: There are numerous advantages to working with your former customers. They have already done business with you before and know who you are. There is no acquisition cost. They already have some type of professional relationship with you. You have their contact information, and you know how to reach them. You should have their sales history in your POS system. You should have a general idea as to where they currently are in their recreational customer journey. You know what they have and you know what they need.

Make Recaptures Possible: There are many reasons why former customers become current customers again. Staying in touch with your former customers is one reason. Improving your business, carrying better products, diversifying your product line, offering products and services that are more in line with your customers’ lifestyle are just a few things that will get an old customer back in the door. To increase your customer traffic, I would make it a point to give your customers a reason to do business with you again. And then communicate that with them.

A good way to target former customers for conversion from former customer to current customer is to make that conversion a priority at your business. As soon as a customer goes 12 months without making a purchase, transfer them from current customer status to former customer status, in your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and your Marketing Automation Software (MAS). Conduct a quick survey to inquire why they have not purchased from you in 12 months. Maybe some of the answers you get will help you do things that will improve your

business. As you make improvements in your operation, be sure to update all of your former customers on the improvements you’ve made. Recapturing former customers is not about telling them you want them back. It’s all about improving your business and offering them the products and services that will make them want to come back and do business with you again. If you have truly improved meaningful aspects of your business, you’ll be back in the ball game of meeting your former customers’ needs again.

Future Customers: It should now be clear why I left future customers for last. If you have done an outstanding job of maintaining your current customer base and recapturing your former customer base, you may not need or have a capacity for new customers.

To be perfectly honest, most businesses do have an ongoing need for new customers. I make a distinction between new customers and more customers. Dive businesses that have a professional customer management strategy in place will prioritize acquiring new customers and have a list of preferred personas and prequalifications. We’ll get into that in more detail later. Dive businesses who are interested in churning out as many customers as they can get in the door will prioritize only in acquiring *more* customers.

Advantages of New Customers: All businesses have a certain customer turnover. You should know what yours is. In the diving business, as in other businesses, people die, move, lose their jobs, get married, have children, change locations, change their recreational priorities, or lose interest in diving all together. ***We can simplify customer turnover by understanding that customer needs change.***

As a rule of thumb, businesses lose about 25% of their customer base every year. That is the main reason we must always be looking for new customers to fill our customer pipeline. The first thing you need to measure is your customer turn rate. What is yours? If you have a customer satisfaction program that tracks and measures

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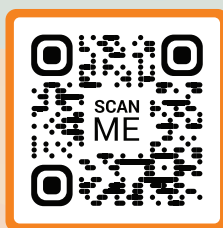
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MARKETING

customer sales performance, your company can significantly decrease your customer turn rate. There are new ways to deal with customer turn rates, but let's first talk about the traditional disadvantages of looking for new customers.

Disadvantages of Finding New Customers:

Acquiring new customers is the most expensive and time-consuming process of increasing your customer database. The funny thing about that, is that most of the dive businesses in the recreational diving industry spend more time, money, and manpower looking for new customers than they do servicing the current customers they already have. The disadvantages or challenges, as I call them, are numerous. Finding new customers takes research, promotion, advertising, marketing, exhibiting, and asking for referrals. Many times we don't know who our future customers are and it is most likely that they don't know who we are.

Depending on the stakeholder group in the diving industry you identify with, your customer acquisition process may differ. When you break down the components it really is easy to put together a strategy for finding the right kind of customers for the programs, products and services you sell. Like any hunter will tell you, the most important thing is that you know what kind of customer you are looking for. An old saying in marketing is, "If you try to sell to everyone, you'll end up selling to no one."

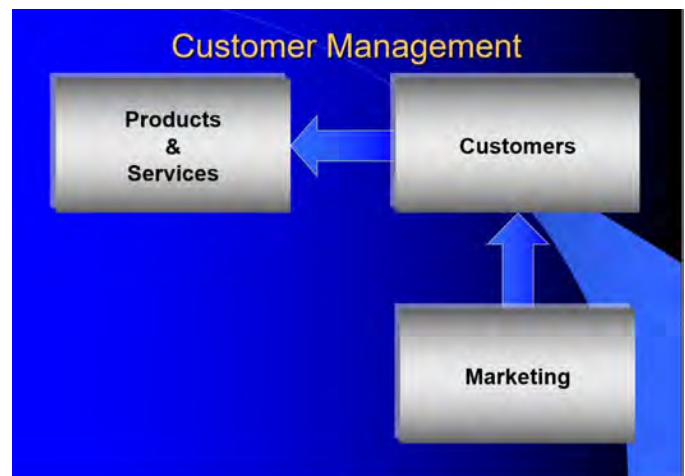
Acquiring New Customers: You can learn a lot about the type of future customers you want by knowing more about the current customers you have. Your current customers are doing business with you because of something. What is it about them that made them want to be divers in the first place? What was it about you that they liked? It is a good idea to build an ideal customer persona and use that as your average standard for customer selection. As in any average, it's a good thing to move to the left and right of your average standard. Your customer persona common denominators may be geographical,

demographic, psychographic, or gender related. You should also consider social, economic, and professional similarities in your current customer base.

In the final analysis, it is always a good thing to plan your acquisition strategy on your acquisition cost, return on investment, and projected customer lifetime value. Your customer acquisition campaigns should include detailed planned outcomes, achievable actionable items, and measurable key objectives that give you a sufficient return on outcome (ROO).

In future articles about customer strategy, we can discuss the buyer's journey and purchasing funnels. Consumer Science covers more than just getting more customers in the door. It covers issues like getting the right customers to begin their buyer's journey with your company and going through a well-thought-out purchasing path. A purchasing path that identifies their needs and satisfies their recreational growth in a systematic manner. It's about tying in Product Management issues that develop the right product for the right customer in an attempt to match products with people. It's about how to understand and execute 21st Century Dive Industry Marketing. Are you ready?

###





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SHOWS & EVENTS

2026 TRADE SHOWS



September 16-18, 2026: Surf Expo. 50th 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



November 3-6, 2026: Dema Show. 50th Annual Industry Trade Show. Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA. Phone: 800-687-7469. Web: www.demashow.com



January 23-31, 2027: Boot Dusseldorf – 57th 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>



March 13-14, 2027: The Boston Sea Rovers 73rd Annual International Ocean Clinic. CoCo Key Hotel & Water Resort, Danvers, MA Contact David Caldwell, Exhibit Co-Chairman, Email: djc.searover@gmail.com or visit www.bostonsearovers.com

2027 TRADE SHOWS



January 6-8, 2027: Surf Expo. 51st 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



April 2-4, 2027: Beneath the Sea - 47th 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.us Web: www.beneaththesea.us

SHOWS & EVENTS



April 24-25, 2027: Scuba Show Atlantic City. 2nd Annual Consumer Scuba Show. Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, NJ. Contact Ross Arnold, Publishing Director. Phone: 816-665-8679. email: events@rorkmedia.com Web: www.scubashow.com



May 15-16, 2027: Scuba Show Anaheim. 40th Annual Consumer Scuba Show. Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Contact Ross Arnold, Publishing Director. Phone: 816-665-8679. Email: events@rorkmedia.com Web: www.scubashow.com



September 4-6, 2027: Surf Expo. 51st 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 Web: www.surfexpo.com



November 2-5, 2027: Dema Show. 51st Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL. West Concourse. Phone: 800-687-7469. Web: www.demashow.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





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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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E-mail address for DIA correspondence: _____

Web Site (URL): _____

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

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* 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

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

0450 – Divers Alert Network (DAN) – Non-Profit Organization – www.dan.org

0451 – Ocean Vibes Scuba / Salt Raker Inn – Travel, Dive Operator – www.oceanvibes.com

0452 – Fat Guy Scuba supply LLC – Non-Store Retail – www.fatguyscubasupply.com

0453 – Lotus Hotels – Travel, Dive Resorts & Liveaboards – www.lotus-hotels.com

0454 - ScubaCo Travel – Travel, Dive Travel Wholesaler – www.scubacotravel.com

0455 – Rheo Dive Inc – Manufacturer – www.rheodive.com

0456 – Sea Ventures Pro Dive Centers – Travel, Dive Operator – www.DivePuertoRico.com

RENEWING MEMBERS

0026 – Beneath the Sea – Shows & Events Producer – www.beneaththesea.us

0048 – Tektite Industries, Inc – Manufacturer – www.tektite.com

0061 – Travel Resource Solutions, Inc. – Travel, Reservation Services – www.trsres.com

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

0079 – Florida Keys & Key West – Travel, Convention & Visitors Bureau – www.fl-keys.com/diving

0089 – ScubaDoRag – Manufacturer, Apparel – www.ScubaDoRag.com

0222 – Cane Bay Dive Shop Inc – Travel, Dive Operator – www.canebayscuba.com

0410 – OCG Creative – Service Provider, Digital Marketing – www.ocgcreative.com

0414 – Mermaid Liveaboards – Travel, Liveaboards – www.mermaid-liveaboards.com

0437 – Scuba Educators International (SEI) – Training Agency – www.scubaeducators.org

0446 – Dive 1st Aid – Manufacturer – www.dive1staid.com

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