



Build Your Customer Base

A field toolkit for creating more customer conversations

This downloadable guide pulls together the practical tools from the Build Your Customer Base webinar and resource page. It is built for SSI Training Centers that want more customer conversations, better local outreach, and fewer "we need more students" meetings that end with no action.

Create customer contact first. Registrations come after conversations.

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How to Use This Toolkit

This is not meant to be read once and filed away. Use it as a working tool. Pick one audience, choose one clear offer, place it where that audience already spends time, and follow up quickly.

Do not try to do everything. Pick one customer lane and run one useful campaign at a time.

Inside this guide

- **The customer-generation shift** - why the problem is usually upstream.
- **Three customer lanes** - vacation/pre-trip, experience seekers, and reactivation customers.
- **Campaign ideas** - practical ways to create customer conversations.
- **Customer Push Makeover** - turning weak messages into targeted offers.
- **Outreach templates** - copy-paste starters for local partners and groups.
- **Social posts and hashtags** - useful discovery support without pretending hashtags are magic.
- **Follow-up and lead capture** - what to ask once someone responds.
- **Disclaimer** - standards, legal, insurance, and results guidance.

A better working question

Instead of asking:

"How do we get more students?"

Ask:

"Where are our future students already spending their time, and what reason are we giving them to contact us?"

The Customer-Generation Shift

Many centers do not have a registration problem first. They have a customer-contact problem first. A center cannot register students it does not have. The first job is creating more conversations with people who have a reason to care.

That means the center has to stop only talking to divers and start getting in front of people who are planning trips, looking for activities, managing youth programs, organizing employee events, or trying to get back in the water after too long away.

The Three Customer Lanes

Pre-Trip / Vacation Customers People planning warm-water travel, resorts, family trips, honeymoons, spring break, or destination events. The message is not just "take a class." It is "prepare locally before you go."	Experience Customers People looking for something different to do: families, teens, couples, corporate groups, youth groups, gyms, swim families, outdoor clubs, and local activity seekers.
Reactivation Customers People already certified but inactive. They may be rusty, traveling soon, in need of gear service, or waiting for a reason to get back into the water.	The common thread Each lane needs one clear audience, one reason to care now, and one simple next step. Anything more usually gets muddy fast.

Pick one audience. Build one clear offer. Make the next step easy.

Real-World Campaign Ideas

These are not theories. These are practical ways a center can create conversations with people who are not already walking through the door.

Campaign	Who It Reaches	Offer / Angle
Vacation-Ready Scuba Night	Travelers, families, couples, honeymooners, resort guests	A short evening event: certification options, Try Scuba, refreshers, snorkeling gear, and what to know before booking resort dives.
Try Scuba Date Night	Couples, young professionals, local date-night groups	A pool-based experience that is different from dinner, drinks, or another escape room.
Family Try Scuba Day	Parents with teens, swim families, youth groups	A supervised pool experience that turns curiosity into a real adventure.
Corporate Try Scuba Night	HR, employee engagement, wellness groups	A memorable team activity that does not require awkward trust falls or forced karaoke.
Certified But Rusty?	Past students, travel customers, inactive divers	A refresher-first campaign tied to comfort, confidence, and upcoming trips.
Snorkeling as the Gateway	Vacation travelers, families, nervous first-timers	Mask/fins/snorkel fitting, travel gear help, and a low-pressure path into Try Scuba or Open Water.

The goal is not to promote everything. The goal is to create one clear reason for one audience to contact the store.

Example: Parents With Teens

Message example:

Looking for something different for your teenager this summer?

Try Scuba is a supervised pool experience that can turn curiosity into a real adventure.

Where to reach this audience besides social media

- **Swim schools and community pools:** front-desk flyers, family newsletters, bulletin boards, and "what comes after swim lessons?" conversations.
- **YMCA's, JCCs, and recreation centers:** summer activity guides, teen nights, camp add-ons, and family adventure nights.
- **Parks and recreation departments:** seasonal activity guides, youth programs, community program listings, and special-event partnerships.
- **Schools and activity offices:** science teachers, marine biology teachers, swim coaches, activity directors, PTOs, and summer enrichment newsletters.
- **Scout troops and youth organizations:** troop events, water-confidence sessions, ocean-awareness nights, and parent-and-teen Try Scuba sessions.
- **Summer camps and teen camps:** YMCA camps, school camps, outdoor adventure programs, STEM camps, and college youth programs.
- **Family-focused businesses:** orthodontists, pediatric dentists, martial arts schools, dance studios, tutoring centers, and family fitness centers.
- **Employers with family newsletters:** hospitals, universities, school districts, banks, manufacturers, municipal offices, police/fire departments, and large local companies.

Go where parents are already making decisions about what their kids are doing this summer.

The Customer Push Makeover

This is the easiest way to make the strategy real. Take a weak, generic message and rebuild it using three pieces:

- 1 **Audience:** Who is this for?
- 2 **Reason to care now:** Why should they stop scrolling or call today?
- 3 **Simple next step:** What should they do next?

Weak / Generic
Open Water starts soon.

That is not wrong. It is just mostly talking to people who already understand scuba and already care. A brand-new customer does not know why they should call, message, or spend money right now.

Makeover #1: Parents With Teens

Looking for something different for your teenager this summer? Try Scuba is a supervised pool experience that can turn curiosity into a real adventure.

Makeover #2: Certified But Rusty

Heading somewhere warm but haven't been underwater in a while? Let's get you comfortable before the trip.

Steal the structure, not necessarily the exact words.

Where to Put the Message

Posting on social media can help, but it should not be the whole plan. A center should place the message where the audience already exists.

Audience	Where to Reach Them	Message Angle
Parents with teens	Swim schools, YMCAs, parks departments, schools, scout groups, summer camps, orthodontists, family fitness centers	Something different for your teenager this summer.
Couples / date-night seekers	Local event calendars, apartment communities, wedding planners, restaurants, hotels, young professional groups	A date night that is actually different.
Corporate groups	HR contacts, employee engagement teams, Chamber directories, wellness committees, executive assistants	A team activity people will actually talk about afterward.
Inactive divers	Past student lists, gear service customers, travel customers, email lists, dive club contacts	Get comfortable again before your next trip.
Pre-trip customers	Travel advisors, honeymoon planners, destination wedding planners, community travel groups, parent travel groups	Prepare locally before you go.

Using Travel Advisor Partnerships Without Overdoing It

Travel advisors are one useful audience, not the entire strategy. Use them when the fit is obvious: warm-water travel, honeymoons, destination weddings, family resorts, cruises, or clients asking about water-based activities.

How a dive center uses this

- 1 Identify a few local advisors or planners who already work with warm-water travelers.
- 2 Offer to be their local "before you go" scuba and snorkeling resource.
- 3 Give them one simple flyer, link, or email they can share with clients.
- 4 Make the client's next step easy: call, message, or request a travel-prep conversation.

Simple positioning line

If your clients are traveling somewhere warm and thinking about scuba or snorkeling, we can help them prepare before they go.

What to offer

- Open Water before travel
- Try Scuba before a resort experience
- Refresher for certified-but-rusty divers
- Snorkeling gear fitting
- Travel gear help
- Vacation diving Q&A;

The trip creates the opening. The center creates the relationship.

Copy-Paste Outreach Starters

Keep outreach short. The goal is to create a reply, not explain the entire scuba industry in one email.

Travel Advisor / Planner

Hi [Name], I wanted to introduce our shop as a local scuba and snorkeling resource for your clients traveling to warm-water destinations. We can help travelers prepare before they leave with scuba certification, Try Scuba pool experiences, refresher sessions, and snorkeling gear guidance. If you ever have clients asking about diving or snorkeling before a trip, we would be happy to help.

Youth / Parent Group

Hi [Name], We offer supervised Try Scuba experiences for teens and families who are looking for something different to do locally. It is a pool-based introduction for curious first-timers and can work well as a youth group, family activity, or summer program option. If you ever need a unique activity idea, we would be happy to talk.

Corporate / Employee Group

Hi [Name], We offer private Try Scuba experiences for groups that want a fun, supervised, and memorable activity. No previous scuba experience is required, and it can work well for employee engagement, wellness groups, family events, or incentive trip prep.

Swim School / YMCA / Pool

Hi [Name], Many families who are already comfortable around the water are looking for the next activity or adventure. We offer a supervised Try Scuba pool experience for eligible teens and families and would be interested in discussing a simple local partnership or shared event.

Social Posts and Hashtags

Social media can support the campaign, but it is not the campaign. The post still has to speak to a real person with a real reason to care.

Post starters

Parents / Teens

Looking for something different for your teenager this summer? Try Scuba is a supervised pool experience that lets curious teens discover what it feels like to breathe underwater. Message us for upcoming dates.

Certified But Rusty

Certified but haven't been diving in a while? Before your next trip, let's get you comfortable again. Ask us about refresher options and upcoming pool times.

Local Activity

Looking for something different to do locally? Try Scuba is a pool-based introduction for people who are curious about scuba but not ready to jump into a full certification course.

Using Hashtags Without Pretending They Are Magic

Hashtags are a discovery tool. They can help connect a post to local searches, topics, and audiences, especially on public posts. They cannot rescue a boring post, a bad offer, or a center that only posts once every lunar cycle.

- Use 5-10 focused hashtags instead of a wall of random tags.
- Mix program tags, audience tags, and local tags.
- Examples: #TryScuba #LearnToDive #FamilyAdventure #TeenActivities #VacationReady #[City]ThingsToDo #[City]Events #[City]Families

Follow-Up, Referrals, and Lead Capture

The first contact is rarely the whole win. The follow-up is where most opportunities either turn into activity or quietly disappear.

Good follow-up questions

- When are you traveling or when would you like to try this?
- How many people may be interested?
- Is this for you, your family, a group, or an employee/team activity?
- Are you looking for full certification, a Try Scuba experience, a refresher, or snorkeling help?
- Are you already certified but rusty?
- Would a private group date help?

Capture the basics

- Name and best contact method
- Audience/source: who sent them or where they heard about it
- Reason for interest
- Travel date, event date, or timeline
- Program or product interest
- Next promised follow-up action

The Referral Ask

Do not just say, "Tell your friends about us." That is a sentence, not a referral strategy. Give people a specific reason to think of someone.

- Who do you know going on a warm-water vacation this year?
- Who do you know with a teenager looking for something different to do this summer?
- Who do you know who would try scuba if there was an easy first step?
- Who do you know who is certified but probably needs a refresher before the next trip?

Make the next step easy: a link, flyer, date, form, phone number, or one clear invitation.

What Kills Good Ideas

- Promoting everything at once. If the post tries to sell Try Scuba, Open Water, Rescue, Nitrox, travel, gear, and the meaning of life, nobody knows what to do next.
- Talking only to divers. Course codes and internal language do not help non-divers understand why they should care.
- Depending only on social media. Social supports outreach; it does not replace local relationship-building.
- Failing to follow up. If someone asks a question and the shop answers three days later, the moment is probably gone.
- Not making the next step clear. People should know exactly whether to call, message, fill out a form, or reserve a spot.

Bottom Line

A dive center cannot register students it does not have. The first job is creating customer contact. Choose one audience. Make one clear offer. Put it where that audience already exists. Follow up quickly. Then keep doing it.

Disclaimer

This guide is intended as a general business-development resource for SSI Training Centers. The ideas, examples, and templates provided are meant to help dive centers create more customer conversations and should be adapted to fit each center's local market, staffing, facility access, training schedule, and business model.

All training activities, promotional programs, and customer experiences must be conducted in accordance with current SSI Training Standards, applicable laws, insurance requirements, facility rules, and safe industry practices.

This guide does not guarantee specific sales results, student registrations, revenue, or customer response. Each Training Center is responsible for how it markets, prices, promotes, schedules, and delivers its programs.

Questions or want help tailoring this to your market?

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