



Swim Biz

STA's official magazine for swim school businesses



Safety. Qualified.
www.sta.co.uk



Hello, welcome to STA's new Swim Biz magazine for Swim Schools

STA is proud to support and partner many of the UK's Swim Schools, who all work tirelessly and passionately to teach many millions of children and adults to learn how to swim every year.

In 2013 we launched the STA Swim Star Swim School Programme as a further show of our support and we now have more than 50 UK swim schools on board, which is amazing! This has now led us into producing this new quarterly e-mag just for Swim Schools. We want to champion swim schools through our 'I'm a Swim Star feature', share advice and your business tips, and give you exclusive access to discounts and competitions.

Swim Schools: please forward all your news and articles for consideration in future issues of Swim Biz to zofia.houlston@sta.co.uk

We hope you enjoy!

Zoe Cooper,
STA's Business Development Manager

Contents

xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X
xyz	X

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the authors and do not represent those of STA ©2014. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, computerised or otherwise without prior arrangement with the STA.

Swim Biz is published by:
Anchor House, Birch Street, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 8HZ
Tel: +44 (0)1922 645097
Fax: +44 (0)1922 720628
e: sta@sta.co.uk
Registered Charity Number 1051631



STA marks first accredited swim schools

Congratulations to the Swim Schools that have become the first in the country to achieve STAMark Swim School Accreditation:

- **Aquarius Swim School – Bronze**
- **Discover Swimming Academy - Bronze**
- **Taylor's Swim School - Bronze**
- **Inspire Swim School - Gold**
- **Brize Fliers – Bronze**
- **Carol Saunders Swim School - Bronze**

Launched in 2005, STAMark was originally developed to provide greater clarity of standards within the leisure industry for the operation of both public and private swims schools.

Re-launching in 2014, STAMark's aim is to provide a standardised level of accreditation that organisations can work to that demonstrates prestige in the key areas of running a swim school and or leisure facility. STAMark accreditation will act as



symbolisation of excellent standards and operational provision to swimmers. Tiered from Bronze up to Gold, organisations will have to demonstrate levels of competence in the provision of swimming lessons and swimming pool operation according to industry standards and best practice.

For further information visit
<http://www.sta.co.uk/stamark/>

Free workshops for Swim School owners

On Sunday 18th May, STA's East Anglia Region is hosting a STA Swim School Workshop from 13.00-16.00. The venue is The Palomino, 122 Valley Way, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 0QQ.

The workshop, which is free for swim school business owners, will cover topics such as:

- **Getting the most from STA**
- **The benefits of "STAMark"**
- **Swim Star Swim School**
- **Junior Lifeguard Academy**
- **Problems and Ideas Workshop**

For more information or to book a place, please contact John Holden on jholden54@talktalk.net

This event is FREE for the swim school owner - additional guests are at a charge.

Turtle Tots embrace the new Swim Star Programme

Turtle Tots has become the first franchised swim school business to embrace STA's Swim Star Swim School programme, with more than 13 Licence holders from around the UK already on board.

Turtle Tots Ltd was founded in 2011 by Gaby Lixton and Caroline Sparks, and offers an innovative and unique swimming programme, which begins during pregnancy, and continues once the baby is born. Their programme is inclusive of teaching babies, toddlers and young children to swim; it also promotes pre-natal and post-natal fitness.

Gaby Lixton said Turtle Tots is focused on providing quality swimming lessons and that all their teachers'

complete rigorous and intensive Turtle Tots training before they can teach for us.

She said: *"STA's Swim Star Swim School programme further endorses that we are committed to providing excellent standards. It also offers another level of reassurance to parents, so when they bring their baby or toddler swimming with Turtle Tots they know that we are doing everything we can to make sure they have as*

enjoyable and safe a time as possible, and that our focus is always on helping their little one to learn fantastic swimming skills."

Caroline from Turtle Tots added: *"The Swim Star Swim School programme along with STA's STAMark accreditation provides an excellent way for us and our licence holders to demonstrate our commitment to quality."*



STAadmin cited as an example of good practice by Quest

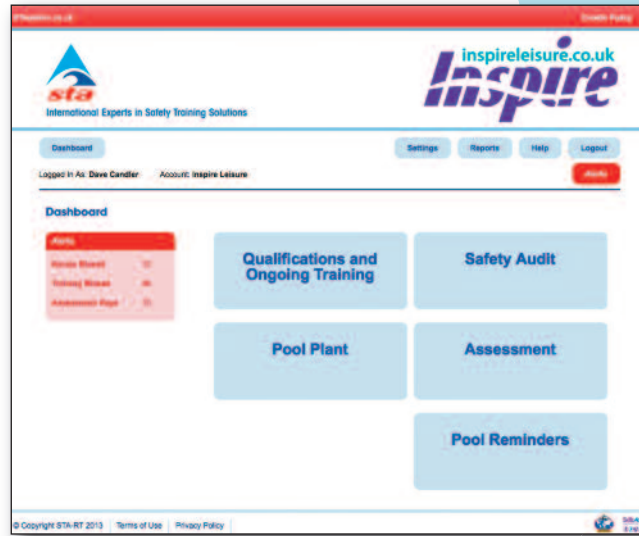
In 2012, Inspire Leisure led the way by becoming the first local authority to adopt STAadmin.co.uk for the purpose of managing and tracking operational safety, compliance, pool water quality, staff training and qualifications. This foresight has now been rewarded with Quest recognising this as an example of good practice.

During a recent routine assessment at Inspire Littlehampton, the Quest assessor highlighted STA's online leisure management system as an 'assessment strength' for the Centre in its Directional Review Report.

The Quest report also went on to say that 'the introduction of this new software based training and monitoring database to handle lifeguard records and performance is an example of good practice'.

Inspire Littlehampton, which is now a Swim Star Swim School, was also commended for having excellent arrangements in place 'covering the set-up, monitoring, training and delivery of pool water quality' and that the system used at the Centre is worthy of further promotion to raise awareness of the methods and the outcomes achieved.

John Stride FCIMSPA, CEO of Inspire Leisure, said: "Quest is very important to Inspire Leisure; it is recognised as the UK quality scheme for sport and leisure, and provides the benchmark for industry standards, good practice and continuous development.



Exclusive STA admin offer for Swim Stars

sta
Digital
STAAdmin.co.uk

STA is delighted to announce some exclusive packages for Swim Star Swim Schools to access the following STAadmin.co.uk programmes:

- Incident Reporter
- Ongoing Training
- Customer Feedback
- Qualification Manager

For Swim Star Swim Schools this will cost from £39.99 per month. It is also available to other Swim Schools from £49.99 per month, which includes payment for STA Mark Bronze on a 2 year agreement (normally £15 per month).

All prices are on a per site, per month basis and are exclusive of VAT.

For more information please contact ryan.brown@sta.co.uk



'Make the important measurable, not the measurable important'

You know your business is successful, yes?

You are running around from pool to pool happily working all hours of the day and night, have full classes each week with swimmers paying their fees and a happy workforce? Brilliant.

Being full to capacity today is great news but how can you know that you will be busy tomorrow, and the day after and the day after? Are you as profitable as you could be? Do you know which pool, which class, which sessions are bringing in the bacon and which ones need trimming of fat? Are there any possible storms on the horizon?

These are tricky questions to answer and there is no magic formula that delivers the perfect strategy for future success. But for sure, the answers lie in the numbers.

If you know your numbers and how to measure the right factors in your business, you are putting yourself in a much stronger position to plan for business growth and to deal with any as yet unknown stumbling blocks, hopefully, before they arise.

So, what does success look like in your business?

- Numbers of swimmers per week/per month/per year
- To be profitable
- To retain swimmers in school / club
- To retain a happy work force
- To provide the best value swimming lessons in the area
- Percentage of swimmers achieving certain grades within a time scale
- Percentage of swimmers who successfully transfer to a club
- To provide accessible lessons for all

No matter what your goals, you need to be very clear about why you have them and what they are in advance. This way you can put methods of measuring the results that reflect these goals in place, keeping you on track towards business success. These measuring tools or Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) as with all objectives should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time framed.

Use KPIs to help you analyse if you are achieving what you set out to.

If your goal is to provide the best value swimming lessons in the area, how do you know that you are? Your SMART KPIs need to very specifically measure whatever your definition of 'best value' is.

If it is determined by speed of swimmer progress, then your KPI needs to measure that and not the price of your lessons versus everyone else.

If your definition of 'value' is to provide cheaper lessons than other swim schools, then you need to measure your charges and lesson length perhaps against all of your competitors. Either way you need to know the numbers of your competitors as well as know your own.

If your KPIs show you are not progressing on the right track you need to take immediate action. By measuring each individual KPI against its own target you will be able to see clearly where the deviation is, enabling you to resolve the issue and get back



on track. Only looking at the big picture can be overwhelming and unhelpful.

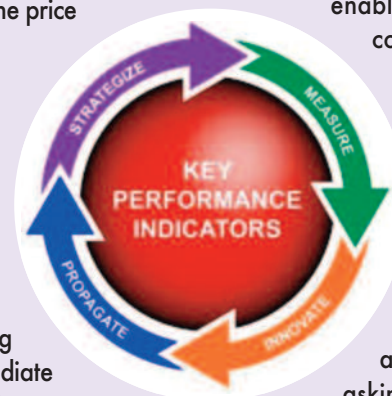
Finally, beware of using the same old sources of information that you have always used just because you have always used them. Consider whether the

information you use today actually reflects your current needs for information towards your objectives. If not, don't use it and find another way. Just because it can be measured doesn't always make it useful.

Maria Timperley of Metabolous Education CIC provides a business mentoring service for small businesses of all types. Metabolous Education CIC is offering the business principals of swim schools registered with STA an opportunity to join 'DELPHINUS' - a Mentored Peer to Peer Business Support Network. Small groups of up to 12 members work with a group mentor towards the objectives of developing managerial skills, improving strategic thinking and encouraging interaction and collaborative working between participants within a structure enabling growth and prosperity of the companies within the DELPHINUS

network. For more information about DELPHINUS contact Maria by email metimperley@btinternet.com

For all swim teachers Maria has recently launched a group on Facebook called 'Swim Teachers Network' - a place for swim teachers to talk, offer teaching tips and ideas and through sharing experiences and asking questions help each other to become better teachers. Log onto Facebook and join the conversation. <http://on.fb.me/1ajWDcl>



Top tips for buying your own franchise

Franchising is big business in the swim school world, so we asked Puddle Ducks, who were recently recognised with a '5 Star Franchisee Satisfaction' award alongside global giants McDonalds at the recent 2013 Best Franchise Awards, to provide their expert advice on what you should do if you are considering taking on a franchise business...



1. Find a business that you are passionate about and a product that you love. Running your own business (especially when you have children) takes commitment and motivation.
2. Spend time producing a detailed and robust business plan. Do your research and include optimistic and pessimistic figures in your plan so that you know what you could be facing
3. Spend some time with the franchisor and speak to other franchisees. Make sure the franchise is well-established and successful, as this will indicate that the product and process works.
4. Understand where the business is going. Make sure you understand the potential of your business as well as its existing product. What investments are being made by the franchisor to ensure future success?
5. Be brave! After all of your research, if you find something that drives you and is a good business opportunity, go for it. Work hard and you really can achieve your dreams!

So, if you're interested in buying a swimming school franchise, what should you look for in a franchisor?

- A tried and tested business model that works
- A well sized territory which has a good mix of potential customers and pools
- Exceptional swimming classes and lesson plans developed by baby swimming experts
- A national brand, with a great website, fantastic search result placing on the web and all of the marketing materials you will need.
- In-depth initial business training ensuring every aspect of launching your business is covered
- On-going head office support in all critical business functions, including marketing, finance, technical and operations
- Extensive training in the pool to equip you with the skills to become a fantastic teacher
- Comprehensive business processes & IT infrastructure to ensure you operate efficiently
- An extensive franchise network, offering invaluable support and advice to one another

What Puddle Ducks franchisees say:

Sarah (Bristol): "A franchise is the best of both worlds. On the one side, you have the autonomy to run your own business and have the flexibility of working when it suits you. I love the fact that I can walk Sam to and from school every day and spend the school holidays with him. On the other side, you are not alone. Being part of a franchise network means there is always somebody to bounce ideas off and ask for advice."

Liz (Nottinghamshire): "Comprehensive manuals and detailed courses provide franchisees with the tools to create and develop a profitable and rewarding business for themselves."

Nicola (Lincolnshire): "Our technical team are fantastic, and keep our lessons fresh and bang up to date. They are constantly evaluating the programmes and taking on board what our teaching team and our customers want out of their classes. I can be very confident in stating that our lessons are second to none!"

For information on franchising opportunities with Puddle Ducks visit www.puddleducks.com or email info@puddleducks.com

7 Swim School feature

I'm a Swim Star

For our new 'I'm a Swim Star' feature, STA's Zofia Houlston spoke with Kirsty Skeates from Swim Start Swim School.

Kirsty was one of the first to sign up to the STA Swim Star Swim School programme in 2013 ahead of officially launching Swim Start. This is a great example of a new business that has taken full advantage of all of the programme's marketing materials to launch a swim school.



About Swim Start

With a passion for teaching Kirsty Skeates decided to launch her own swim school in January 2014. Kirsty was born and raised in New Zealand, and she has always had a passion for swimming and water sports. She gained a diploma in Sport and Recreation, furthering her qualifications by gaining the New Zealand and Austswim Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certification. Kirsty has recently completed the UK STA Award in Pool Emergency Procedures and STA Professional Certificate in Teaching Swimming.

Swim Start is based in the Bridlington area at the Palms Leisure Club.

The swim school officially launched on January 1st and the lessons which follow STA's International Learn to Swim Programme have proved to be popular with over 50 swimmers now signed up.

- **How do you feel working with STA will strengthen your swim school business?**

Working with STA has already strengthened my business. I use STA's Swim Star branding predominately across all my marketing materials and for me as a new swim school it has given potential customers the confidence in my business as a quality provider.

STA's valuable support and expertise also helped me get started and put everything in place ready to launch my swim school. I was able to ask for support on all aspects of my swim school including insurance, and where to find operating policies and general information.

- **Do you feel the dually branded Swim Star Swim School marketing material has helped strengthen the branding of your swim school? And how?**

The dually branded marketing material has helped establish my swim school name within the local area.

The pull-up banner is permanently displayed in the health club and has been the main reason for people enquiring. The marketing material is very appealing as it has bright colours, an eye

catching design and it looks very professional with the STA logo integrated within it. The branded posters are displayed in various places around town and again, the design has made this very eye catching to potential customers.

Swim Start's distinctive logo combined with STA's colourful marketing materials has definitely been the main contributing factor to the amount of people enquiring about our lessons.

- **What are your 6 month and 12 month objectives for the swim school?**

I feel it is important to have goals to work towards as it gives the swim school a focus, as well as being a great measuring tool for performance and improvement.

Swim Start's 6 month goal is to get the swim school established in the area and increase numbers, hopefully double the amount I have onboard now.

My 12 month goal is to increase participation and take on a second venue close to the local area. I will be also looking at employing 2 swimming teachers to deliver new lessons.

- **How do you think being part of the Swim Star Swim School programme will help you achieve your goals?**

I feel that the dually branded marketing material and STAmark accreditation will help enhance my business for expansion by building up my reputation in the area.

The fact that I will be recognised nationally as a Swim Star will also help support my swim school business. Being promoted as a Swim Star on STA's website and by being included in STA's social media and news campaigns, my swim school will hopefully grow so that I can achieve my 6 and 12 month goals.



8 Swim School feature

- **What do you see as the biggest pressures for you as a swim school owner?**

One concern I have is staffing in the future - I would like to find employees that can deliver to the same high standard of teaching that I deliver. Plus, I am very mindful that it is quite easy to lose control when you bring new teachers on board, and the relationship between myself and customers becomes less personalised.

Another problem I imagine I will face is finding pool space as Swim Start looks at expanding. It is always difficult to find a pool with free pool time that is applicable to the demands of my swim school.

- **Which of the pressures concern you most as a swim school operator?**

Pool space is my biggest concern because as the business grows it is difficult to keep taking on new swimmers and increase demand if there is a restriction on pool space. The problem with renting pool space is that you are limited on the times they are available and the amount of pool space that is free. This is always a concern when planning expansion of the business.

- **Since becoming a Swim Star Swim School, as having a dedicated STA account manager in place helped you?**

I feel having a dedicated STA account manager in place as has helped me enormously. Together we have built up a relationship whereby she knows me and my Swim School and is able to offer me support on all aspects of my business. The fact that she is on hand 9-5 Monday to Friday to answer any questions is very useful.

I have been supported with all aspects of my business and really feel this has helped the business get to where it is today.

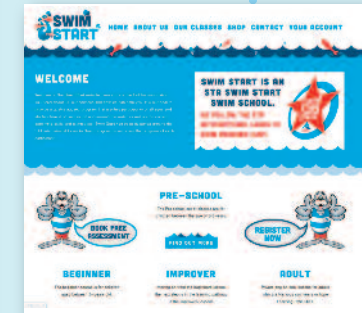
- **STAMark is a big part of the Swim Star Swim School programme, do you feel this accreditation will benefit your swim school and why?**

I feel this will benefit me, as this stamp of approval will be further confirmation to parents that my swim school is operating to an excellent standard. Parents can be assured that my swim school is running in accordance with all health & safety regulations, procedures and policies, and they can be confident that their children are taking part in safe lessons.

It will also help me when I look at securing new pool space in the future. Potential venues will be able to see that I am a quality provider and will have confidence in us using their venue.

We are very much looking forward to re-visiting Kirsty at Swim Start in 12 months to see how the development of her business is doing.

STA Swim Star marketing materials branded Swim Start



Adaptations to Adult Swimming Lessons

When teaching adults the swimming teacher needs to be aware of any mobility or flexibility limitations that their learners may have.

Adult beginner learners may experience difficulty in kicking in the vertical position on their front and back because of stiffness in the ankle joint. The kick may need to be adjusted to a more pronounced "bent knee" action, thereby getting the drive need to move through the water by the lower leg.

Breaststroke action may be performed without a dorsi-flexed foot, making forward propulsion less. A wider wedge kick action may be preferred.

Inflexible or stiff shoulders joints may make both front crawl and back crawl arm action uncomfortable and painful. A wider low recovery over the water for back crawl or even a double arm action may make the stroke more stable and easier to perform. Front crawl may also have a wider, low recovery over the water or change the stroke to side stroke. An adult with a severe shoulder problem may find elongated front paddle more comfortable.

Breaststroke arm action is often better performed as a wider, more circular action just below the water surface – giving a sculling effect – which adults find more supportive. Heads are often kept above the water and this may cause the neck to be hyper extended, resulting in a curve of the lower back, which in turn may lead to lower back pain. As the head is often held above the water, the body needs to be angled to avoid the hyper extension of the back. This means that the stroke will be slower.



Those adults with hip or knee replacements should avoid breaststroke completely.

Another consideration that swimming teachers' need to make is of adults who have had bones replaced by metal shafts or pins. This will alter their float position and may make kicking hard work. An adult who has had a stroke or brain injury may encounter the same problems.

Knowing how to alter head and limb positions will assist the swimmer to balance easier and prevent unwanted rotation.

Adults who are very buoyant will find it difficult to regain their feet when on their back. This may be overcome by rolling onto their front and then standing up, or by adjusting the regaining feet from supine technique to stretching their arms, head and shoulders forward to create a forward rotation in the vertical.

Adults with neck problems may find it easier to swim on their back as their head and neck is supported by the water. Turning the head to breathe in front crawl may be difficult, so adjustment to a full side roll may be needed.

The swimming teacher will need to assess each adult learner individually to assess limitations, and then work with the adult learner to adjust their technique so that swimming becomes a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

STA has a Teaching Adults Programme CPD available on TrainSTA.

For further details go to <http://www.trainsta.co.uk/>

Enjoy your teaching and have fun together!

STA splash out with MacMillan Children's Books

Thanks to the support of Macmillan Children's Books, STA is able to give free swimming and water safety educational resources to thousands of young learners across the country.

In a unique tie-up, the leading UK publisher has sponsored the production of STA's International Learn to Swim Programme Success Tracker; a 16pp colourful booklet that enables learners and their parents to track and monitor their progress through the internationally renowned swim programme.

So far, more than 40,000 Success Trackers have been produced, and are being distributed for free via STA members and Swim Academies. As a further bonus, every Success Tracker features a code for children to receive a 25% discount on selected Macmillan Children's Books.

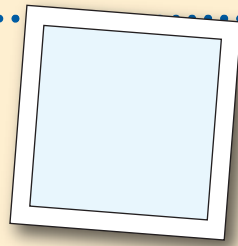
The publisher has also produced a range of children's activity sheets, which STA are distributing for free with all learn to swim certificate orders.



10 Technical Panel

Introducing STA's expert panel, who are on hand to answer all your technical questions. To start us off in this first issue, each panel member has offered their own FAQ, but we really want to hear from you.

Please send your questions to marketing@sta.co.uk for our panel to answer in future issues.



Claire Brisbourne
Lifesaving & First Aid



Lisa Smith -
Swimming Teaching
& Aquatics



Claire Lowbridge
STA Excel / Courses
/ CPDs



Richard Lamburn
- Pool Plant and
Health & Safety



Brett Preston
STA Digital



- **How can we help learners develop and progress with aquatic breathing?**

Teaching correct breathing takes time; for best results elements of aquatic breathing should be incorporated into every lesson. Teachers should use this time to frequently revisit and consolidate earlier practices before progressing learners on to more advanced practices.

When teaching aquatic breathing teachers must ensure learners exhale every time the face is submerged in water, breath holding should be discouraged. This is best introduced using games, songs and activities so that learners who are anxious have the opportunity to relax and enjoy the activity.

Remember if a learner is nervous about submerging their face the teacher should not push them to progress on to the next practice before they are ready. For commonly used practices and games ideas, please refer to STA's Swimming Teaching Manual.

- **Can STA Excel organise my course for me?**

Yes, STA Excel can organise courses for any customer. We will organise tutors, examiners, manuals, registration and certification. This is all included in the course quote. All we ask is that you have a suitable venue with a swimming pool if required.

- **How can a Course Organiser benefit from registering their course through STA Online?**

STA Online has been designed to revolutionise how STA Course Organisers manage candidate registrations and certification. It enables Course Organisers to register courses 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

There are a number of key benefits:

- Instant course results processing
- Electronic certification
- Reduced registration fees which save you money*
- Bulk discounts on course manuals which provide significant savings
- Download course resources online
- Facility for searching for course Tutors and Examiners

Ultimately STA Online saves you time and resources.

* You could save over £200 on registration fees. Saving based on comparative price difference between running a Swimming Teaching – Award course of 16 candidates on STA Online and through paper-based registration.

- **What is the legal requirement for pool plant training?**

The requirement to have staff trained in Pool Plant Operations would come under the broad heading of the Health and Safety at Work Act which stipulates a requirement to undertake risk assessments which in turn would generate risk controls. These risk controls are defined in industry best practice and the requirement for staff to be trained in how to apply these best practices is also stipulated under HSG 179. This guidance document states training must be related to the specific operation and maintenance of particular plant and undertaken by enough staff to ensure the plant need never be operated by untrained staff. Therefore qualifications in pool plant operations provided by STA and other awarding bodies is a necessity for all pool operators.

- **What are the minimum requirements to become a lifeguard?**

In order to become a lifeguard there are certain requirements that should be achievable before attending an STA Pool Lifeguard course. Under the Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools (HSG179) documentation it states that a person's swimming ability should be the following:

- Have the ability to swim 100m on their front and 100m on their back without stopping
- Swim 50m within 60 seconds
- Surface dive to at least 1.5 metres

These minimum requirements ensure that lifeguards have the required fitness and swimming ability to prepare them for the skills they will achieve throughout the STA Pool Lifeguard Qualification. Along with these minimum requirements candidates will learn pool rescue skills such as towing, deep water rescues, spinal injury management and valuable first aid skills to achieve the desired competency set out by the STA.

To Blog or Not!

Here at Little Splashers we wanted to embrace the 'blog' revolution and information explosion.

The Internet is a powerful tool, full of information at your fingertips. We love reading and researching about baby swimming and if we find something useful and informative, we post the link to our parents through Facebook.



However, over a period of time we started to question the sources and reliability of information and never felt it gave our swimmers the right 'tone' and manner that we wanted. So last summer we decided to set up and manage our own blog site. We chose 'Word Press' as our blogging platform, and at first it did take us a little time to learn how to set up blog posts, insert images and pages. But now we are up and running. We try to post on a weekly basis to keep the site fresh and full of useful information.

Our blog is called **Lets talk about baby swimming** - do drop by and take a look. We hope you enjoy reading and want to join in.

Our aim for the site is to make it a 'One stop site', full of useful information for both parents and BPS swim schools alike. Parents enjoy contributing about their news and stories too, and it helps to answer questions that lots of our swimmers have.

Recent blogs include:

When can a baby start swimming?

What to take to your first baby swim lesson?

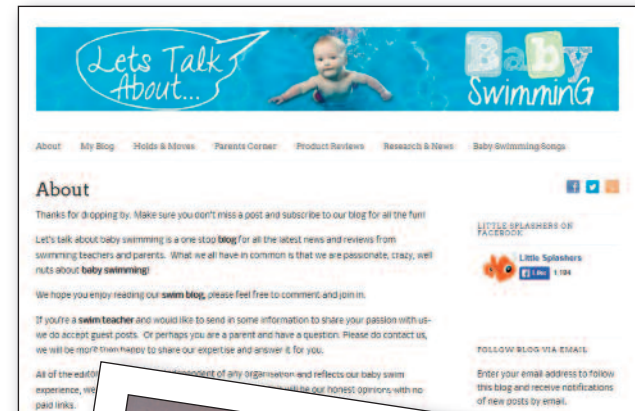
What do swim schools mean by a double nappy system?

Our aim over the next few months is to include more information on holds and moves, and information about toddler swimming.

We have signed up to the **STA's Swim Star Swim School Programme** and are in the process of completing STAMark's on-line questions. We will be blogging about how we got on with this very soon.

If you find our blog useful, then please do join in and let us know if there are questions that your swimmers always ask you. Or perhaps you have some fabulous new songs that you want to share and we can post and link back to your swim school? That's the great thing about a blog site; it can be a great way to connect with different parts of the country and even the world, sharing stories, photos, videos and more.

Happy swimming!



If like Little Splashers you would like to share and write about your marketing successes for Swim Biz, for example how you proactively use Facebook to communicate and share information with customers, please email Zofia@sta.co.uk



STAnley's Whereabouts

STAnley the Seal is STA's very own loveable water safety mascot.



STAnley at South Staffs with the team at Wombourne Leisure Centre.



STAnley at the South Staffs launch with 2 councillors from South Staffs district council and Theo Millward, Operations Director of the STA.



STAnley on the River banks of Shropshire promoting water safety as part of the Shropshire swim academy.



STAnley getting ready to dive at The Village hotel Blackpool with Swimtime North Lancs.

STAnley was created by STA's marketing team in 2002 to support STA's International Learn to Swim programme, and it's his mission to work with swimming teachers like yourselves to help educate young people on the importance of being safe in and around water.

STAnley has become somewhat of a star over the last 12 years (he even has his own Twitter account!) and has met thousands of youngsters at open days, school assemblies, local fetes, special events and launch days.

Above are just some of the places he has visited.

**Do you have a special event coming up, or perhaps a launch of a new venue?
If yes, then why don't you hire STAnley for the day – the children adore him!**

STAnley is available to hire for the cost of £30.00 for the day including post and packaging*

* Extra delivery charges apply to Ireland and Scottish Highlands

New STAnley Merchandising ideas - please feedback

STA is currently looking at new STAnley merchandise ideas, and the marketing team love the idea of a swimming towel as pictured here, which children can sew their badges onto (or just use as a fun swimming / beach towel) and / or a STAnley poncho towel - what do you think, would you buy them? Please feedback your comments to Zofia.houlston@sta.co.uk so that the team can gauge levels of interest. Thank you.



The Importance of Differential Marketing

Here in the UK, we've seen a massive rise over the last decade in the number of swim schools opening, so how do you in a burgeoning market differentiate your services from those of the competition – and from the bigger boys with their massive marketing budgets.

This is an issue that STA knows all too well, and it was one of the reasons why we first created the STAMark accreditation back in 2005 so that swim schools could differentiate and provide greater clarity to their customers of the standards they work to.

Since this time, the big boys have got even bigger and there are even more small operators vying for customers. This is why differentiation marketing is so important, because it helps distinguish your service offering from those of your competition.

The theory behind differentiation marketing

Significance

Differentiation marketing helps your products stand out in a crowded marketplace. It can be an important strategy to implement, especially if your products are very similar to those of your competition. An effective differentiation strategy gives customers a reason to buy your products by pointing out subtle or less obvious differences or benefits that customers may not be aware of.

Types

There are several types of marketing differentiation strategies. With a pricing strategy, you attempt to position your business as the low-price alternative. A high-price strategy can also be used to create a perception of prestige. A product/service strategy emphasizes your large selection or products with additional features. A customer service strategy points out your superior service. With a focus strategy, your marketing emphasizes a unique feature like a convenient location, or attempts to appeal to a specific market segment.

Features

To develop an effective marketing differentiation strategy, you first need to identify features of your products or services that set them apart. In marketing terms, this is known as your unique selling proposition (USP). Your USP could be a product feature, like the fact that your product works faster or lasts longer. It can also relate to your business operations, such as the fact that you offer free delivery.

Considerations

If your USP is not readily apparent, it may require a strong marketing campaign to create the perception of differentiation in the minds of the customers. For example, if your prices are higher than those of your competitors, use marketing to highlight the fact that your customer service is superior. Of course, you'll need to deliver on your promise to keep customers coming back.

Warning

Choosing the wrong marketing differentiation strategy could have negative consequences. For example, if you attempt to establish yourself as the price leader but your prices are too low, you may not be able to make a profit or may project an image of lower quality. It is important to take the time to assess what your customers really want when developing your strategy.



The Importance of Differential Marketing

So how does differentiation marketing apply to Swim Schools?

As swim schools, the number one challenge is to find a way to be seen as different from your competition. Through the use of a marketing differentiation strategy, a swim school owner can create the perception of uniqueness in the minds of her customers. Marketing differentiation strategies can be based on price, service, a unique focus or a different product mix.

Differentiation is one of the key factors behind the Swim Star Swim School programme. In this very competitive marketplace, we wanted to give the 'smaller' swim schools the opportunity to 'shout' louder about their services and use STA's name as an endorsement of their commitment to providing excellent standards.

By using the STA Swim Star Swim School logo we believe, and so do the swim schools who have already signed up to the programme, that it gives further credibility to your own brand – thus providing the differential.

To this end we have created a raft of marketing and PR support materials for Swim Stars to use alongside their own branded marketing materials or on their own.

These include the all-important Swim Star logo, which can be used on stationery, uniforms and the website, as well as posters, pull-ups, email banners and vinyl banners. Hopefully all the key marketing essentials to get you started, but we are always open to more ideas!

For further information visit www.sta.co.uk



14 Swim Star Partners

Introducing Vorgee



Vorgee has teamed up with STA to offer Swim Star Swim Schools exclusive prices, with no minimum order.

If you'd like to learn more about the retail opportunities Vorgee can offer, Wayne Diedericks, Vorgee's UK National Account manager will gladly visit you and show you the company's range of innovative and stylishly colourful aquatic products, which are endorsed by Swim Australia

In the meantime, Vorgee is offering STA Swim Schools an exclusive Easter offer - buy 12 Vorgee goggles and get 6 goggles FREE! The closing date is 30th April 2014.

For more information you can contact Wayne Diedericks directly at wayned@vorgee.co.uk



vorgee
for water

**BUY 12
GET 6
FREE!***

**ORDER 12 VORGEE GOGGLES
AND GET 6 GOGGLES FREE**

*OFFER AVAILABLE ON ALL VORGEE GOGGLES EXCLUDING THE MISSILE RANGE.
TO BE ELIGIBLE 12 GOGGLES AND FREE STOCK MUST BE OF
THE SAME PRODUCT CODE AND PURCHASED IN THE ONE TRANSACTION.

15 Swim Star Partners by the Konfidence Team

Swim Schools reach for the stars with Konfidence

Konfidence™

STA has teamed up with Konfidence™ to offer our Swim Star Swim Schools preferential trade prices across the company's award winning range of baby swimming essentials and learn to swim products.

Konfidence, who are celebrating their 15th anniversary this year, are supporting the Swim Star Swim School programme by giving our swim school community the unique opportunity to purchase smaller quantities of products at a bulk discounted trade price.

STA Swim Star Swim Schools can select from a wide range of baby swimming essentials, including Konfidence's best-selling Babywarma® neoprene baby swimsuit, which works perfectly with the company's range of adjustable and reusable Aquanappies and the Konfidence NeoNappy™ – a swim school approved neoprene swim pant cover that offers a 'double layer' of protection for babies and youngsters in the swimming pool.

Konfidence™ has also included its flagship product, the 'Original Konfidence™ Jacket', in the Swim Star

package, together with a range of Floatsuits, which offer a more traditional swim suit style of buoyancy aid, and the popular Warma Wetsuits for infants and children who feel the cold in the water.

This offer is exclusive to STA Swim Star Swim Schools, and forms part of STA's commitment to offering added value benefits to swim schools participating in this unique programme.

To launch the partnership Konfidence is also offering STA Swim Star Swim Schools an exclusive Easter Promotion – anyone who opens an account with Konfidence and spends £100 on their first order before 30th April 2014 gets a £50 voucher to spend on their next order.

For further information on the Konfidence range, to request a price list or to find out more about the Easter promotion, please contact Dan Allen (Konfidence Sales Director) directly on 07900 952009 or email dan.allen@konfidence.com



16 Swim Star Partners

Pool Platforms - The answer for your Swim School Business?

For 2014, Splash Deck has formed an exciting partnership with STA.

Learn more here about Splash Deck.

When two experienced swim school operators found that there were no products available on the market that met their needs, they decided to come together to create a new product that would work for the UK swim school market.

The product they created, a swim teaching platform called Splash Deck is designed to assist in the delivery of swimming lessons in deeper water or shallow water where students are unable to touch the bottom of the pool and it has been created especially with swim schools, leisure companies, pool operators and schools in mind.

"We faced a real operational issue in our own swim schools," says Claire Harrison, Director of Pool Platforms. "We were simply unable to fit any more students into our existing pool space; our early years' beginner lessons were ineffective and hard to manage, and our pools were not the best places for beginners to learn to swim. Pool space looked crowded with student groups 'bunched up' in one part of the pool, when the rest of the water space remained empty."

As a result of these operational issues and the fact that they could not increase capacity any more, Claire and her colleague Maciej Janik started looking for a teaching platform to use in their pools.

"We needed a platform that was easy to move in and out of the pool. We also needed to be able to store it on the poolside between lessons along with all our equipment too. However we found that there were no products available in the UK for our needs, and the ones that we could import from overseas were heavy, poorly made or super expensive."

And so in late 2012, Splash Deck was launched in

the UK and has since gone from strength to strength supplying everyone from individual swim school owners to multi-site operators such as Virgin Active, as well as overseas customers across Europe the US and the UAE.

So what can a pool platform do for your swim school? The opportunities really are significant...

- Increase the student numbers within your existing pool space.
- Increase the number of beginner lessons and younger age groups.
- Improve growth and retention. (as younger students have a longer lesson life span)
- Be able to divide your pool space so that every student/group has a clearly defined. space to swim a distance.
- Create a shallow area in deeper water.
- Make a swimming pool usable for swimming lessons where, without the use of teaching platforms, it is otherwise considered unusable.
- Be more creative in your swimming lesson plans and improve overall progression rates.



Swim schools and operators also have the opportunity to have their own swim school logo or design printed on their platform, making the name of your own swim school clearly visible both in and out of the pool.

Special Easter offer

Pool Platforms are offering FREE personalised printing to all STA Swim Star Swim Schools (normally £45 via STA Swim Shop) on orders placed before 30th April 2014.

For further details visit

<http://www.staswimshop.co.uk>

For information on all our Swim Star Swim School promotions please contact Zofia Houlston, STA's Business Development Officer at zofia@sta.co.uk



17 Product Review

Splash About Fings

As swimming teachers, we are inundated with new learn to swim products coming onto the market, so we thought we'd ask you to test a few and give us your expert verdict. Starting us off is Swimtime, who kindly agreed to review Splash About's new Fings.

Lorna Salmon from Swimtime Cheshire said:

I currently use the Fing in Swimbabies classes, which are aged from 8 weeks to 4 years. With the babies under 15 months we tend to use them for babies to float on to allow a little independence in the water whilst singing some lovely nursery rhymes. A favourite is "sleeping bunnies".

For the 2 to 4 year olds they are also used for floating shapes as well as independent swims.

The children love them as they are great fun and something different, with the bright colours and design shape being appealing to the children.

Benefits of Fings and a comparison to other aids –

Fings are unique as there isn't a comparable product in the market. Its innovative design is the latest way for little ones (from 3 months to 6 years) to build confidence and have fun in the water. One of the main benefits is, Fings supports the child in a natural swimming position, leaving the arms and legs free to move – kick, splash, doggy paddle! Arm bands can be restrictive and it's difficult to get a child under 3 to hold onto a float or noodle so Fings plug this gap.

For babies or non-swimmers, once on the Fings, take their hands and guide them through the water letting the child kick their legs. Budding swimmers will love to have fun splashing about independently – under the watchful eye of the swimming teacher or mum & dad of course!

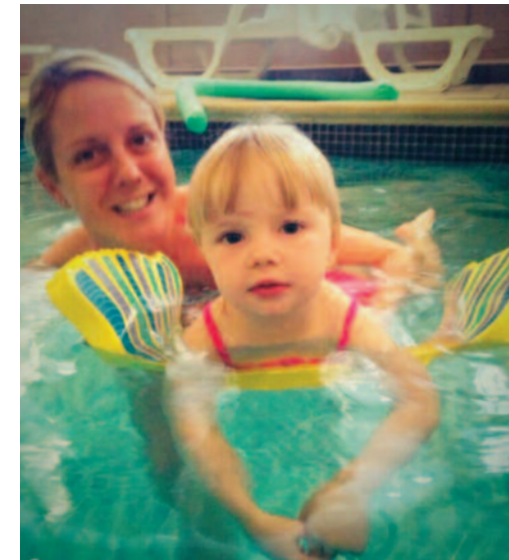
Fings are available in three sizes – small (3-15 months), medium (15 months – 3 years) and large (3-6 years) – and are available to order via STA Swim Shop



Here is Lorna using the Fings in her swim classes with Hayden, aged 6 months



Ewan, 11 months



Florrie, aged 3



If there any products you would like us / you to test please let us know – email Zofia@sta.co.uk with the details and we'll consider them all for the next issue of Swim Biz.

18 Eggciting Games for Easter

Game 1 - for Non-Swimmer and Beginner Lessons

Introduction for non-swimmer, beginner, improver and advanced lessons

- On entering the water safely, the children hop, skip and jump around the pool imitating Bunny movements.
- The teacher can direct the movement changes using voice commands.
- On "Stop", "Watch", "Look" or other commands the learners have to stay still and look and listen for other animals approaching, then sniff the air for the chocolate smell of the Easter Eggs.

Teaching Points:

- o Hop like a bunny
- o Stop
- o Skip like a bunny
- o Watch
- o Jump like a bunny
- o Look

This activity will include full body movements, spatial awareness; listen and communication skills.

Main Theme for non-swimmers and beginners

- "Eggs" scattered around the pool and on the word "Go" the Bunnies have to collect them one at a time and then return it to the poolside or place it in a designated area – like a coloured floating hoop
- Using buckets (or floats) to collect the "Eggs" the Bunnies move around the pool collecting as many eggs as they can before returning to poolside.
- Pass the Egg around (this may be a coloured inflatable ball)
- Bunnies in a circle or in two lines. In a circle they can throw the egg from one person to another – saying the name of the person who is to receive it. They can lay out on a woggle and kick hard to see if they can keep the egg in the air. (This could be adapted to be between pairs or even individuals)

Teachers Notes:

The "eggs" could be colour coordinated to the hoops or the children could be given a specific colour to pick.

These activities incorporate listen and communication skills, motor and colour co-ordination, and social skills.

Main Theme for improver and advanced lessons

- The "eggs" are placed some on the poolside and some floating in the water. The children use a float or bucket to collect a given number and when they have collected the set amount they rest on
- A designated large float or a designated area on poolside.
- Over the fields: Arrange large floats, floating hoops, sinkable hoops and woggles around the pool. "Eggs" can be floating or sunken.
- The learners set off through the field, climbing over the large float, going through the floating hoop, using the woggle to swim if they wish or move around the woggle, pick up a sinkable egg and a floating egg and return to poolside
- The "eggs" could be colour coordinated to the hoops or the children could be given a specific colour to pick.

Teachers Notes:

These activities incorporate listen and communication skills, motor coordination, and social skills.

STA has also created some Easter games and songs for baby and pre-school lessons, which are available to download from the resources area at www.sta.co.uk (STA members only).



18 Eggciting Games for Easter

Game 1 - for Non-Swimmer and Beginner Lessons

Contrasting Activity for non-swimmer and beginner lessons

- Supported by a woggle the Bunnies blow their eggs across the pool, and then tap them forward on the way back.
- In teams and supported by the woggles the bunnies race across the pool, pick up an egg from poolside and return it to their burrow, once there the next bunny goes.
- The winner is the team that arrives at the burrow first with their eggs.
- The eggs could then be counted.
- Exit water safely

Teachers Notes:

These activities incorporate listen and communication skills, numerical skill, motor co-ordination, and social skills.

Teaching Practices Teaching Points Song/Games, Teachers Notes

Contrasting Activity for improver and advanced lessons

- In Teams. The children have to climb over the large float (fence) move forward to a floating hoop, submerge to pick up an egg, tread water and show the egg, move forward and pick up another egg from a floating hoop or container, then return with their "find" and land the eggs, Once returned the next team member can go.
- The teams could be coloured coordinated to the colour of the "eggs".
- The eggs could be counted at the end.
- Exit water safely.

Teachers Notes:

These activities incorporate listen and communication skills, numerical skills, motor and colour co-ordination, and social skills.

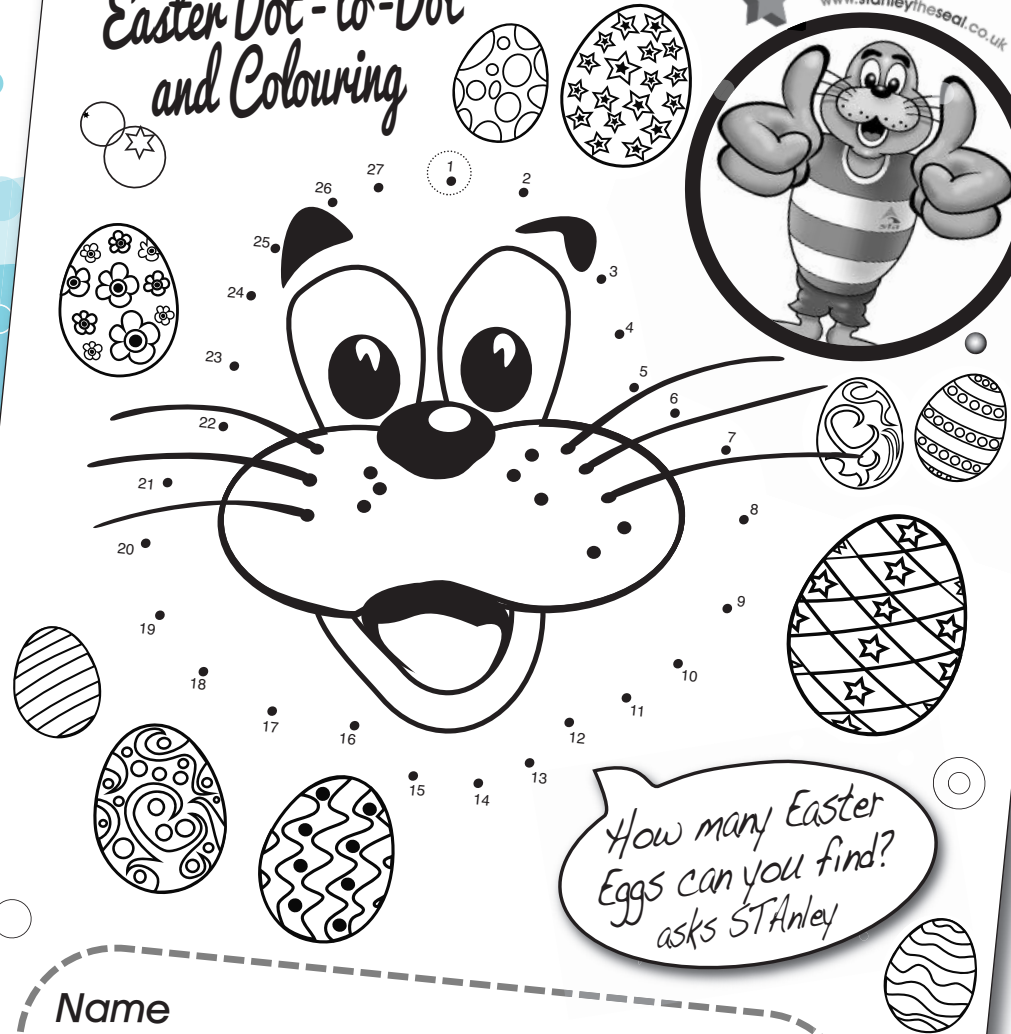


If there any products you would like us / you to test please let us know – email Zofia@sta.co.uk with the details and we'll consider them all for the next issue of Swim Biz.

Easter Dot to Dot

Easter Dot-to-Dot and Colouring

www.stanleytheseal.co.uk



How many Easter Eggs can you find?
asks STAnley

Name _____

★ Age _____

● STAnley, STA's Water Safety Mascot, is on a mission to create a fun, positive experience for young children whilst equipping them with key safety skills in the water.

www.stanleytheseal.co.uk
www.sta.co.uk

sta
Safety. Qualified.
www.sta.co.uk

