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ABOVE LEFT: ADOBE STOCK
ABOVE RIGHT: CALVIN RUSSELL AND JASON RUSSELL

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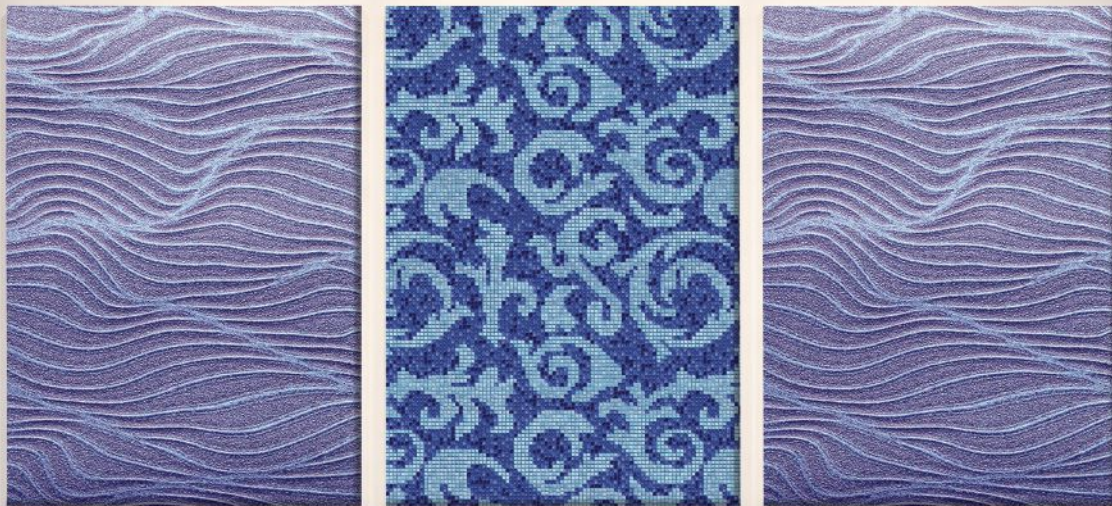
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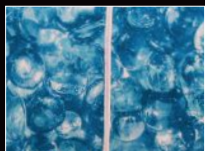
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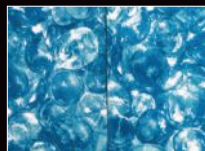
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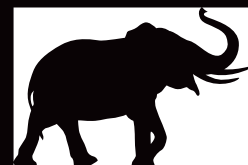
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The Gift of Giving



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

It may be hard to believe, but 2020 was the year I embraced gratitude.

The past year has shown me just how much I have to be grateful for. The arrival of the coronavirus and its subsequent restrictions changed everything for everyone. But there was one thing that really changed my outlook during the darkest times of isolation and anxiety.

A few months ago, a notice for a neighborhood group called Buy Nothing appeared on my Facebook feed. As I soon discovered, it's a local gift economy group based on simple acts of giving and receiving. As its founding website, *buynothingproject.org* states, it's meant to be "a sustainable sharing and caring economy." No cash involved.

The rules are simple: "Buy Nothing: Give Freely. Share the bounty. Post anything you'd like to give away, lend, or share amongst neighbors. Ask for anything you'd like to receive for free or borrow. Keep it legal. Keep it civil."

Did you succumb to Costco's pack of two dozen muffins but can only eat four (OK, six) without fearing for your waistline? Post it to the group and give away what you can't consume. Have you completed that 1000-piece puzzle? Pass it on to a neighbor. Have extra paint after redoing your walls? Someone in the group will be thankful to have it.

The gifts go both ways — perhaps you are the muffinless one, or want a new puzzle or could use that shade of paint for a project. Respond to the post that you'd like to be considered for that gift.

The feeling of community that

comes from sharing and receiving freely with your neighbors is so heartwarming! The generosity in my local group knows no bounds. To date, I have gratefully received such things as a beautifully glazed vase from a local ceramicist, extra puppy pee pads, a beautiful accent chair, and even an outdoor family portrait session with a local photographer.

But the best gift I've received is the joy of giving back. I've provided picture frames, an antique mirror, new shoes, clothing. The gifts can also be acts of kindness — I've cooked and delivered meals for a neighbor recuperating from a car accident, and picked up groceries for another who is immunocompromised. I'm constantly looking for ways to pay the generosity forward. And with that mentality, my attitude began to change. I began to feel lighter, more connected to the people around me. It was a relief from the ugly political divisiveness our country was going through, and a break from the ever-pervasive COVID.

So now I want to share that experience with you. Check out your local Buy Nothing group. Meet your neighbors (well, virtually, of course). Feel connected and feel grateful. It'll carry over into all other aspects of your life, including your business.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne McClain'.

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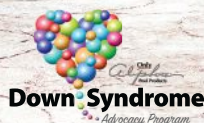
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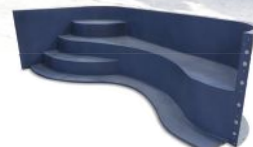
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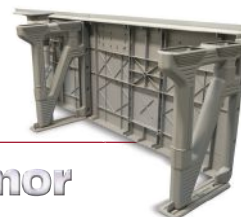
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Everything Under the Sun Proceeds as In-Person Event

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Citing the wishes of its members and the fact that its state is open for business, the Florida Swimming Pool Association continues plans for an in-person event.

“We are not going virtual,” said FSPA Executive Director Wendy Parker Barsell. “We are having a face-to-face event unless the governor shuts us down.”

The Sunshine State completely reopened its economy in September, after stay-at-home orders swept the nation last spring. The Orlando Convention Center and even amusement parks are open. Governor Ron DeSantis has stated publicly that he will not shut the state’s businesses down again in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given these facts, along with the need for FSPA members to take continuing education to keep their licenses up to date, the FSPA Board chose to move forward holding its Everything Under the Sun Expo Feb. 19-20 at the Orlando Convention Center.

If DeSantis were to close things after all, Parker Barsell said, “our first choice is to postpone it or we just won’t have it.”

The event will be held in the usual hall, with certain provisions to help safeguard attendees and staff. All exhibits will be cor-



ner booths so that staff and attendees will have more room to maintain distances. The education program will see an impact, too. Organizers want to keep students in one place, rather than changing classes between every session. As such, courses will be grouped together in blocks. Students can book a block of two or three classes, all held in the same room. During sessions, each professional will keep the same seat,

which will be spaced 6 feet from the nearest classmate. This avoids the need to sanitize between each session, Parker Barsell said, which would take too much time.

FSPA and its chapters have been holding most or all of their normal events and meetings, often while wearing masks and practicing safe distancing. “There is a slight reduction in attendance, but there are people going,” Parker Barsell said.

New Florida Building Code Now in Effect

As of Dec. 31 at 11:59 p.m., the 2020 Florida Building Code took effect.

Updated every three years, the new version has mostly been altered on the commercial pool and spa side. Among the major changes, the method for determining the minimum size of commercial pools has changed somewhat to be more flexible, and a new section has been added to address artificial lakes and lagoons.

No notable changes have been made to the code as it concerns residential pools and spas.

Designers and engineers of commercial pools will still have to determine a minimum sized based on potential bather load, said Dallas Thiesen, government affairs manager for the

Florida Swimming Pool Association. Now, however, each vessel alone doesn’t need to be sized to handle total bather load. If a property has multiple pools, water features, etc., they can combine to accommodate the potential bather load.

The idea was to allow more flexibility and help designers avoid the need to impose strange dimensions, such as extraordinary depths, to achieve the minimum gallonage. “That’s going to allow for smaller pools in certain situations by being able to spread that bathing load across, because people can’t use multiple features at once,” Thiesen said.

As for the artificial lakes and lagoons, it has been determined that any pool-like features, such as steps, floors, walls and rails, must be built according to the building code for pools.

Rowdy Gaines Takes Position with PHTA

BY REBECCA ROBLEDÓ



Rowdy Gaines

Olympic gold-medal swimmer Rowdy Gaines has joined the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance staff as vice president of partnerships and development.

"I am so incredibly excited to join the PHTA family," Gaines said. "The past 30 years of my life have been dedicated to educating families on how to be safe in and around water. I look forward to working with our members on this mission ..."

In addition to acting as a PHTA spokesperson, he will manage the Step Into Swim Program, which has the goal of creating 1 million new swimmers by 2022. He also will work on partnerships and business development for the group.

"We couldn't be more excited about it," said PHTA CEO Sabeena Hickman. "He's got

great ideas.... He's a great person and obviously cares deeply about drowning prevention. I think he's going to offer a tremendous amount of value, not only for fundraising for Step Into Swim but promoting aquatics."

As a swimmer, Gaines has earned three Olympic gold medals, been inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame and the International Swimming Hall of Fame, and worked as a commentator for Olympics coverage.

He also has led the USA Swimming Foundation, raising more than \$50 million and developing the Make a Splash initiative. For the past five years, he was vice president of aquatics for the Central Florida YMCA and, before that, served as executive director of both the USA Swimming Foundation and the LIMU Company.

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Meet the 2020 Pleatco Perfect PoolGuy and PoolGal

Of 150 contestants across the nation, this duo was chosen as the techs most likely to get the job done.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDÓ



Pleatco Perfect
PoolGuy Jesse
Gist and Pleatco
Perfect PoolGal
Shannon Sellers

PLEATCO'S SPECIAL AWARDS

In addition to the Perfect PoolGuy and PoolGal, Pleatco presented a number of other awards:

- **Pleatco Perfect PoolGuy 2020 Runner Up:** Michael Baker, Tucson, Ariz.
- **Pleatco Perfect PoolGal 2020 Runner Up:** Trish Mendenhall, Chandler, Ariz.
- **Pleatco Lifetime Achievement Award:** Bob Charlton, Citrus Springs, Fla.
- **Pleatco Future Leadership Award:** Josh Fletcher, Stockbridge, Ga.
- **Pleatco Industry Spirit Award:** Matthew Boranian, Kailua Kona, Hawaii
- **Pleatco Customer Service Award:** Ashley Rabbit, Mohegan Lake, N.Y.
- **Pleatco Community Service Award:** Bryan Zettle, Johnstown, Pa.
- **Pleatco Young Achiever Award:** Michael Birch, Good Hope, N.Y.
- **Pleatco Voters Choice Award:** Ken Post, Poway, Calif.

Every year, filter manufacturer Pleatco holds its Perfect PoolGuy and Perfect PoolGal contest, whereby the industry votes among dozens of nominees to choose the winning duo.

This year, no pandemic was going to stop that. More than 150 nominations were submitted, and the industry has spoken. The 2020 Perfect PoolGal honor goes to Shannon Sellers, manager and quality control with Jeff's Pool & Spa Service in Brunswick, Ga. The 2020 Perfect PoolGuy title was given to Jesse Gist, senior service technician for Gallagher Pools and Spas in Westminster, Md.

Awards include their choice of Genesis course — Concrete Pools or Vinyl Liner/Fiberglass Pools — as well as oth-

er prizes from manufacturers LaMotte, Mod-Lite, Skimlock and Bungee-plug.

With the passion they hold for their careers, clients and industry, it's no wonder voters deemed them representative of their profession.

TRUE BELLE

Sellers entered the pool/spa industry 10 years ago, but she has a deeper history of working in male-dominated professions.

A military brat whose family settled in Hazlehurst, Ga., she moved to Brunswick shortly after high school and began working in warehouses. Soon after, she entered the world of cabinetry as a finisher. The Great Recession took its toll on that industry, so in 2010 she began working

for her fiancé and owner of Jeff's Pool & Spa Service, Jeff Noser, as the company's first female service tech. "I started from the bottom, riding with the senior techs, learning the routes, and just worked my way up," Sellers says. From cleaning pools, she became a quality control specialist. After about six years, she took over as manager of one of the company's stores, in addition to her service work.

Sellers found that the skills and strengths she gained from finishing cabinetry helped with pool and spa service. "Being a finisher, you had to pay attention to any nicks or dings and your paint strokes," she says. "[That] has translated over into the pool industry — just paying extra attention to the mold on the grout line that

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maybe not everybody acknowledges or even realizes, or the scum on a depth marker.”

As a seasoned tech, her favorite jobs are those that pose a challenge — especially algae-ridden pools. “I love the satisfaction of walking up on a pool in its worst condition and then a few days later bringing it back to life and turning some-

body’s swamp into an oasis,” she says.

While green pools were intimidating at one time, Sellers eventually found the process that worked best for her. “Some people like to use a flocc,” she says. “I’m not a flocc’er — I just [use] a shock and algaecide and vacuuming.”

In both cabinetry and pool service,

she’s found that she’s needed to work a little harder as the rare female. That was another challenge she welcomed. “I’m a strong woman: If he’s going to do it, I’m going to do it,” she says. “I was raised to be a strong woman. I’m a Southern belle — and us Southerners, we’re hard workers.”

SELF STARTER

Gist took what he thought was a summer job at Gallagher Pools and Spas between college sessions. Twenty years later, he’s still with the company. “One year turned into five, then five turned into 20,” he says.

He started out as a helper, riding with a crew leader. In just a few weeks, he had his own vehicle. As a newbie, he tried to show as much independence and initiative as possible. “As time allowed, I would dabble into stuff,” he says. “If [something] wasn’t working, instead of having to get a tech out there to fix it, I would start dabbling, then eventually took the ball and ran with it.”

He quickly found that, given all the products, technologies and designs out there, each pool is different, and you’re going to see something new everyday. “I just challenged myself,” he says. “There were a lot of blown boards and things that I broke trying to figure things out. You don’t want to have to tell your boss, ‘Hey, I just blew out a \$1,000 control board and we’re going to have to buy them another one!’”

But he found that key to his learning curve was a willingness to take chances and occasionally fail. Fortunately, his boss felt the same way. And those first big wins were gratifying. “I remember the first heater I worked on was an old ... milivolt heater that had a bad pilot generator on it, and I thought I was the king because I could diagnose it and get the heater up and running.”

His natural tendency to be thorough and attentive helped. “Back when [the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act] was crazy, and everybody was changing drain covers out, I would dive in a pool and see if they needed to be changed out just to cover ourselves,” he says.

As lead tech, he now trains others on subjects such as heaters, electrical and basic topics. In the future, he hopes to work as a general manager or service manager.

After two decades, he’s still drawn by the work pace. “It’s something different everyday,” he says.

LET’S TALK ABOUT NOTHING



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Shift Happens: 2020 and Pool Water Care

A look at the CYA Alliance.

BY STEVE BERENS



2020 has been a year like no other. Residential pool and spa customers' demands have changed faster than ever before. These cataclysmic shifts created the biggest challenges as well as opportunities for various areas of the industry — water care being no exception. In addition to the global pandemic, other external influences have contributed to those broader changes in the industry.

THE SHIFTING DYNAMIC

Residential pool owners are spending more time at home, which also means more time in their pools and spas.

The increased hours of swimming have allowed for these consumers to dedicate more care and attention to their water quality. With a growing demand for the best, healthiest water available and, in some cases, no in-person store options,

they have turned to the internet to find sanitation solutions and options that will meet their demand. Smart pool professionals need to optimize their offerings and be discoverable online to ensure they can deliver clean, safe and fresh-feeling water that protects each swimmer from bacteria and irritation.

The demand for healthy water has also been impacted by events outside of COVID-19. In August 2020, the chlorine supply was hit hard by Hurricane Laura's impact on manufacturing plants in the gulf states. As retailers' concerns over supply levels have risen, they are looking to alternatives to provide their customers. Typically, homeowners would be closing their pools at the end of summer, but with 2020 offering more chances to spend time in the water, they pushed this off and still need a fully functioning and operating

pool to enjoy swimming.

For decades, pool service and retailers have been relying on chlorine from sources that are now compromised. It is prudent to stay ahead of internet savvy homeowners and provide leadership around shifting to newer and better long-term solutions for pool water care — ones that will improve the pool professional's brand image and deliver better bottom line results.

FINDING SUPPORT

In efforts to help pool professionals provide healthy, safe water to their customers, the CYA Smart Alliance has been formed.

The goal of the organization is to facilitate a positive movement in the pool industry and help professionals navigate forward as a collective group to deliver the best possible water to pool and spa owners.

Over the years, there has been a lot of talk and minimal action when taking a harder look at cyanuric acid and the problems it causes. The CYA Smart Alliance is geared to change that by reducing over-stabilization and bringing sanity back to pool care.

Members of the CYA Smart Alliance are actively committing to simpler pool and spa care, chemically safe and healthier water, and sustainability by saving water. By adopting methods such as advanced oxidation processes (AOP), Smart Oxidation and non-stabilized chlorine offerings, the CYA Smart Alliance works to significantly reduce over-stabilization and the negative effects that follow along with it.

The CYA Smart Alliance is a multi-vendor approach that doesn't point fingers and doesn't leave the responsibility up to one company or market. It is the responsibility of all pool professionals to educate and take action to use the new available sanitation methods to meet the customers demands for healthier water. Members support one another with re-

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The turmoil created of 2020 has provided the backdrop for pool industry improvement. It is time to serve our customers better by stabilizing their lives and less so their pools.

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sources, knowledge and the best methods to help with business growth and brand recognition as a company dedicated to delivering an unmatched swimming experience.

THE FUTURE OF CYA, A SMARTER STEP

Members of the CYA Smart Alliance gain brand awareness, industry recognition and educate customers on how to achieve the ideal water quality they are demanding.

The CYA Smart Alliance has brought additional insight to the water care recipes that work. In addition to managing chemistry, the CYA Smart Alliance encourages responsible CYA levels that deliver better, more consistent oxidation. Solutions that deliver lower CYA provide more stable and consistent water. As AOP systems have gained in popularity they help complete the solution and lower CYA needed.

The CYA Smart Alliance continues to welcome new members from the pool industry to propel the movement further forward. As a new member, Zac Nicklas from The Pool Boys (League City, Texas) adds, "The number one issue we fight with chlorine pools is high CYA ... Using less chemicals while creating a better swimming experience is the smart choice for healthier water and a happy customer."

Pool and spa professionals seeking to take advantage of this industry-wide initiative can do so by enrolling at cysmart.org. There is no cost to join and the only requirement is the members must post a link to the CYA Smart site on their webpage. They can also utilize the materials made available to help their pool owners migrate to this new standard of care.

FROM CHAOS TO CALM

The turmoil created from the chaos of 2020 has provided the backdrop for pool industry improvement. It is time to serve our customers better by stabilizing their lives and less so their pools. Change is happening at a record pace today and the winners will be those that can shift to a better platform for their customers and their business.

Steve Berens is CEO of Clear Comfort, a Boulder, Colo.-based manufacturer of advanced oxidation process systems.

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The Flexible, Easy-to-Install Lighting Solution for Outdoor Living Spaces, Part 2

A look at fixtures and installation of low-voltage LED systems

BY JASON RUSSELL



One of the most striking fixtures the author has used is the CrystalRail system, from Regal Ideas, which consists of aluminum mounting brackets with built-in LED lighting that connects to the deck's low-voltage system. The LED fixtures in the mounting bases illuminate tempered-glass panels that are part of the system, providing a dramatic nighttime look to the deck from all directions.

Light emitting diodes (LEDs) have revolutionized the way we see everything at night. The technology has evolved, making outdoor lighting systems more stable and the fixtures more compact. With a life span approaching 50,000 hours, an LED fixture virtually guarantees that you will never have to worry about those lights for the life of the deck.

In the first part of this article, I discussed system basics and the components in a good LED system. Now let's look at fixtures and installation.

Fixtures

In general, I plan lighting so that it meets code, provides for task illumination, and — my favorite part — adds an element of pizzazz to the space, through a combination of decorative and accent lighting.

Code requirements. When a door leads out onto a deck that has access to grade, an exterior light controlled by an interior switch is required by code near the door. This is typically a line-voltage fixture installed by an electrician, but many like to coordinate the fixture style with the outdoor lighting. At the same time, there needs to be at least one 120-volt GFCI-protected receptacle serving the deck.

General and task lighting. Grills, outdoor kitchens, and dining areas are among the spaces on a deck that require illumination. I put safety lighting — around stairs and other transitions, and near spas and hot tubs — in the same category. People need to be able to see what they're doing, but do not to overdo it with fixtures that are too bright. Separately-controlled circuits that can be dimmed are a good way to manage light levels in the various areas on a deck.

PHOTOS BY CALVIN RUSSELL AND JASON RUSSELL

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To install a puck light, the author lays out (A) and drills the proper diameter hole with a Forstner bit (B), which creates a clean hole in composite material. After connecting the fixture to supply wiring (C), he installs the fixture; friction holds it in place (D). A cordless stapler makes quick, neat work of running the wiring for the low-voltage system (E).

Decorative lighting. When considering the placement of decorative or accent lighting fixtures, you don't need to be traditional. I've seen many creative examples on floors of decks, up privacy walls, and under benches to create indirect lighting as well.

Decorative lighting can also serve a practical purpose. For example, I include multiple 1-inch round LED lights, using them on stairs and at transitions to highlight safe paths from upper to lower areas.

Once the transformer location and light-fixture locations have been determined and you know approximately how much wire will be needed, it's time to create a path from the transformer to each light location. Before installation, though, test your light kit in place in the dark to make sure lights are spaced correctly and lighting levels are what you expect.

Installation

I pay a lot of attention to wire management, during and after installation. The liberal use of cable zip ties and staples goes a long way toward keeping things tidy under the deck.

Cable staples can be tapped in manually, but it's faster to use a staple gun. I start by connecting the cable to the transformer and testing each connection before I install the fixtures. This way, I can be certain each light works before installing it.

Low-voltage wire doesn't really have positive and negative sides, so if you cross over the polarity on every light, the lights will still work as long as you have a positive connection to each wire. The other cool thing about LED technology is that you only need to run one wire to make all the connections — you don't

need to run multiple wires to make the lights emit the same amount of light. Everything is the same. The last light in the run will be the same brightness as the first as long as the transformer is rated for the proper amount of wattage to power the lights.

There are a number of ways to connect the lights to the power supply, depending on what is supplied to you from the manufacturer. My old way of hooking up lights was to either cut, splice, solder, and heat-shrink each connection, or to use heat-shrink crimp connectors and then heat-shrink over each set of connections. Both techniques are time-consuming, but are better than twisting wires and using electrical tape.

For the past few years, however, I've been using In-Lite's cable and lighting



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Choosing Lighting Products

I've seen the low-voltage lighting market explode over the past 10 years, with product quality generally rising as competition has increased. Most of the major decking-products manufacturers have jumped into the lighting business, along with independent companies that specialize in outdoor lighting fixtures and accessories. Among my favorite products are the fixtures from In-Lite (in-lite.com) and Regal Ideas (regalideas.com) featured in this article. But there are inferior products on the market as well. How do I know? Because I've already done warranty replacements from installing a bargain light kit purchased off the internet to save a buck, and got burned. So be careful with those too-good-to-be-true online deals.

Some clients express an interest in solar, but I don't feel it is a long-term solution, and I don't care for the look of solar panels on top of every light. Besides their limited light output, the variety of fixtures is limited. For example, as far as I know, there are no small solar lights that can be installed in the face of a step or the edge of a deck, as shown in this article.

system. Each light comes with a special connector that works with 12-gauge wire and larger. The connector has three stainless steel barbs in its base for each wire; the barbs pierce the wires to make a positive connection to both wires at the same time. Then dielectric grease encompasses each barb to ensure a long-term connection.

The In-Lite connectors provide a solid, positive connection that installs with minimal effort and doesn't compromise the integrity of the main wire — no splicing is required. The downside is they are slightly bulky, so plan to spend a couple of extra minutes organizing the connection points.

Beyond the basics

If you want to create an amazing lighting experience on your client's deck, consider Regal Ideas CrystalRail. CrystalRail is a unique system in which special pods hold low-iron glass and emit light through it. At night, the glass glows blue, to incredible effect. Regal Ideas also sells traditional

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There are as many approaches to lighting up outdoor spaces as there are folks who build them. A good way to look for inspiration is by checking out what other builders are doing. On Instagram, see @infinitedecks for some alternative lighting for decks or @imaginedesignandbuild for complete landscape lighting solutions. Pinterest is another source for finding outdoor lighting inspiration.

This article, the second of two parts, originally ran in sister publication Professional Deck Builder. The first installment appeared in the Oct. 19, 2020 issue of Pool and Spa News.

Jason Russell owns Dr. Decks, in Tacoma, Wash., and is featured in the television program "The Deck Doctor." He's been building custom decks for 25 years and specializes in custom heat modification of PVC decking and railing products, automation, and custom audio installation.



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Accountability by the Numbers

It's not enough to say you are willing to hold your team responsible for achieving the company's goals. Follow-through is everything.

BY DOUG HOWARD



As business owners, we spend lots of time strategizing, planning, budgeting, analyzing and otherwise thinking about our business. All of these are important for business leaders in order to drive the success of an organization. And yet, how the business performs is greatly dependent on how well your team executes those strategies, follows those plans, achieves those budgets, responds to that analysis and delivers for your customers, on-time and on budget.

Accountability starts with a comparison of planned performance to actual performance, and follows with the ownership

of the results. Most importantly, this follow-through, this ownership, must translate into a company's ability to adapt so the company can align its plans with actual performance to consistently achieve its goals.

For some, holding your team accountable comes naturally. For others it is a constant challenge and one that can be stressful. Finding good strategies to hold your team accountable while maintaining a positive and encouraging culture is not easy, but the payoff can be huge.

1. Define a critical process. The first step is defining a critical process and identifying what goes into the company's ability

to meet its goals for the coming year. Start with the major categories of activity in your organization: sales and marketing, design and selections, material ordering, pre-production, production and accounting. Be clear to set goals for each area of the company, and define how each will contribute to the overall goals of the company while staying on budget. Then, in each of these areas, define the specific objectives that must be met so this area, or department, can succeed.

2. Assign responsibility. The next step is to assign responsibility for each critical task. For each objective that must be achieved, there must be only one person

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responsible for that objective. If multiple people in the organization are responsible, then accountability is almost impossible. It is important that each person know what they are responsible for, and that the organization as a whole knows who is responsible for other objectives. This simplifies communication, performance measures and the ability to address areas of potential shortfall.

3. Define performance. There needs to be clear performance measure of each critical task. Each responsible person must know: What is the objective? What is a success? What must our profit margin be? Or closing ratio? Our percentage of on-time completion? Whatever measures are going to determine success, the measures must be clear and visible to the person responsible. One only need to imagine any sporting event without a scoreboard, without yard lines or mile markers, to realize that avid watching alone will not drive winning performance.

It is also important that those numbers are not just about outcomes (i.e. what Sales made) but also about predictive indicators, such as number of leads, closing ratio and other parts of the equation that lead to the outcome being sought. Each team member must have a scorecard of key measures so they can gauge their performance as projects and work progresses.

4. Review performance. Once your critical objectives are determined, each is assigned to a responsible person and measures of performance are put in place, the last step is to be sure to review performance in light of the objectives. Don't fall into the trap of measuring "effort." This leads to justifying shortfalls or changing objectives. Instead, conduct an honest assessment of whether or not the objective has been achieved. When a kicker misses a field goal, a batter strikes out or a skater falls, a good coach does not pretend that those things didn't happen. They circle back to training, communication, motivation and processes to make it more likely that success will be achieved the next time.

At the end of the day, the ambitious goals that come from strategic planning and budgeting can only be achieved if the individual tasks that drive each goal are also achieved. It is the challenge of every leader to look not only at the whole, but also at the role each person must play and at the level

of performance each person must achieve for the organization to be a success.

Keep in mind, leaders that create a culture of accountability and consistent success are the ones doing the very most for the company, its customers and the people in the organization being led.

Doug Howard is the director of consulting services for Remodelers Advantage. He has more than 25 years experience in leading organizations, starting new companies and assisting client businesses as they start-up, grow or transition. This article previously appeared in sister publication Remodeling.

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NESPA's 2021 Show Unveiled

With the new coronavirus precautions in mind, the Northeast pool and spa show gets a makeover.

BY LINDA G. GREEN

In some ways, this will be a Northeast show like no other. True, it started out as usual as the Northeast Spa & Pool Association worked with Atlantic City, N.J., venues and industry folks.

Then COVID-19 arrived on our shores.

Organizers adroitly adjusted to a different way of doing things to keep attendees safe. Working with PSAV, a full-service global event company, NESPA crafted an experience that includes the time-honored elements of shows past, bringing them to life in a new way.

Here's what attendees can expect.

THE EXPERIENCE

Welcome to the Pool & Spa Show Experience 2021! This live-streaming event is slated for Jan. 26-27, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST), and will include on-demand educational opportunities as well.

In past years, NESPA predicted 11,000 or more industry professionals would be at the show. What will happen in 2021? Instead of seeing an attendee drop-off, Show Manager Trish McCormick says there's more interest than ever. "We have the ability to market to other regions now [so] we can expand our marketing beyond the East," she says. With this

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new format, pool and spa professionals who might not have been able to travel long distances to Atlantic City, N.J., in the past will be able to take part easily from their offices or homes — at times that fit their schedules.

HOW IT WORKS

McCormick explains that when you log in online, you'll click on the platform and find options such as "visit exhibitor" or "new products" ...or you can participate

in live-streaming presentations from industry speakers on the Main Stage. She notes that show organizers will open the website one week prior to the event and train attendees. So by the opening day, they'll be comfortable with the process.

Likening the experience to scrolling TV channels, McCormick says a visitor will find options that allow him or her to view up-close demos on technical topics by industry experts at the popular Training Wall — live or on-demand. Or they

can scope out new items at the Featured Products Area. And who doesn't want to visit the exhibit hall to check out various exhibits and chat with booth personnel? McCormick says there are four ways to arrange a meeting with an exhibitor: make a reservation in advance; send in a contact form; live text them; or drop into a Zoom meeting.

And that's not the only way to connect with folks. Organizers are working on live-streaming parties, and coffee and conversation opportunities. And, yes, the show's popular giveaways will occur this year as well, McCormick adds.

The Outstanding Achievement Awards ceremony honoring builders and service companies is set for Wednesday, Jan. 27, at 4 p.m.

THE WELCOME PARTY

The Welcome Party has always been a popular show feature, but what can party-goers expect for 2021?

"It will be like Dick Clark's Rockin' New Year's Eve!" says McCormick.

Hosted by the Northeast Spa & Pool Association in conjunction with a group of major sponsors, the online welcome party is slated for Tuesday, Jan. 26, at 4 p.m. It offers a chance to have fun, reconnect with industry friends and make new ones. And, yes, there will be live music by a band.

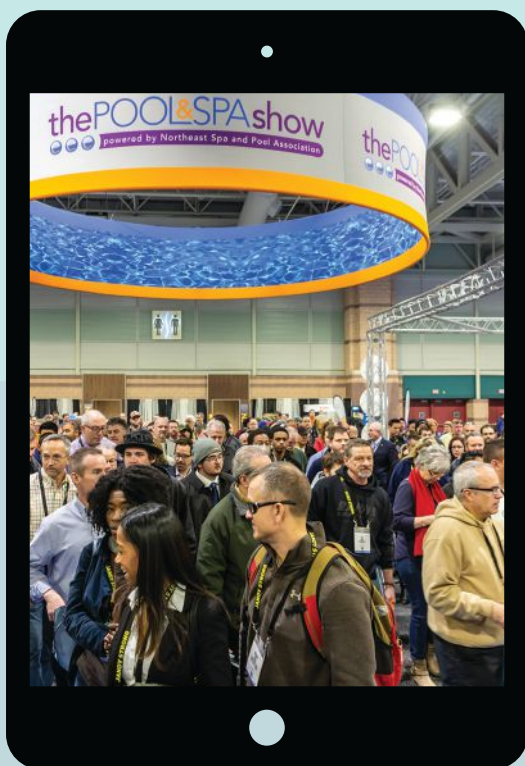
The event typically would attract 2,000 party-goers to Bally's Wild Wild West in Atlantic City, says McCormick. This year is anyone's guess and details were being worked out at press time, but organizers intend to make it memorable. (Check the show's website for details in the days ahead.)

EDUCATIONAL LINEUP

Education has been a major focus of the Northeast show, and so it will be this year.

"We have a very robust educational program," McCormick declares. "We'll be live-streaming presentations on our Main Stage, and some on-demand will be available for two weeks after the show ends." She adds that "tried-and-true topics, favorite speakers — the heavy-hitters" — will be returning.

The lineup includes 30 to 40 classes, notes Dominick Mondì, NESPA executive



director. Topics were still being finalized at press time, but he could confirm that there will be a variety of business and technical topics, including programs from GENESIS, Watershape University, PHTA and NPC. Two to four programs taught in Spanish will be held, as well.

Also, there will be roundtable discussions, with panelists covering Northeast topics.

Finally, the On-Demand Learning Library will enable students to earn CEU's — and companies can customize training schedules for their teams.

LOOKING AHEAD

It's natural to wonder if the event will return to an in-person format in 2022. "Of course, it will be in person, but you can't discount this live-streaming experience," McCormick says. Stay tuned to find out how that shapes up!

For updates and to register for the Pool & Spa Show Experience 2021, visit thepoolspashow.com



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MAKING BIGGER BETTER

Industry specialists offer tips for working with large-format tile.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Several factors have come into play to boost the popularity of large-format tiles.

First comes their availability and improvements. More large tiles are suitable for immersed applications. In addition, porcelain products meant to imitate stone or wood have vastly improved in authenticity, with more realistic details and patterns that don't repeat. This coincides

with the ever-increasing popularity of contemporary and modern styles, which benefit from a cleaner material that has fewer grout joints.

Design and installation with these materials does require some attention to assure their optimal beauty and long-term performance. Consider these tips from industry professionals.

DESIGN AND PREPARATION

When it comes to including large-format tile in a pool installation, it's best to know well in advance that you want to move

forward with this material so you can undertake proper planning.

→ Choose a through-body tile.

Porcelain tile has come a long way over the decades, with one of the biggest advancements being the availability of through-body pieces, which are colored all the way through the tile. This contrasts with glazed tiles, which often are white, gray or tan underneath the glazed surface.

The consistent color makes it easier to surface a pool or spa with this material, says builder/designer Rick Chafey,

co-owner of Phoenix-area firm Red Rock Pools & Spas.

"We have the ability to machine, to bullnose, to ease edges — all those things," he says. "And if you chip or damage it somehow, which is hard to do because the material is so hard, you don't have this white chipped-out piece of tile."

That can significantly ease the process of installing this material on vanishing-edge weir walls. If the edge isn't exactly level, it can be ground to the right elevation without losing the color.

→ Think about slip resistance.

Some designers like to work with more expansive tiles for a cleaner look, free of that tighter grid formed by more frequent grout joints.

However, this can pose a safety hazard if not considered. Those grout joints help provide slip resistance on horizontal surfaces that see foot traffic. When laying larger-format tiles on floors, steps or other areas where people will walk or climb, choose a material that has slip-resistance built in.

For his most recent *PSN* Masters of Design Award-winning poolscape, Chafey worked with a large black tile that comes in a variety of surfaces — glossy, matte or textured. For the vertical surfaces, Chafey went with the glossy finish. But he chose matte for the horizontal pieces.

Some porcelain manufacturers may offer smaller tiles in the same family as your large-format material. If so, you could consider using these in areas where you'd want slip resistance, for the traction provided by the extra grout joints, suggests Luke Denny, co-owner of tile installation firm Alpentile in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

→ Plan well in advance.

Because you'll have to fit larger rectangles or squares onto your surface, it helps to plan the dimensions of the pool or feature to accommodate the material, particularly if you plan to use it on the whole interior.

"If you're dealing with a 2-foot piece of tile, you want to start designing on 2-foot modules instead of having a 1-foot module, so you're not cutting slivers and slices," Chafey says. "So layout becomes a little more critical."



On these stone-tile installations, latex has re-emulsified through the grout, likely due to inadequate curing times for the thinset.



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The original installers tried spot bonding these large-format tiles, placing dollops of extra thinset on the back in the hopes of promoting better adhesion. The top photo shows the spots, the high points, on the thinset layer. The bottom shows where the tile came loose from the dollops.

Think about such things as how the larger tile will transition to other materials, about other plans, and how you want to handle corners and edges, Luke Denny says. If children will be playing in the area, you may not want sharp corners. In those cases, Denny may chamfer or miter the corners.

→ Consider the material's convertibility.

Some designers and builders will choose a larger tile and set it full-sized in certain spots, but cut it to fit various other applications.

Chafey, for instance, often uses 12-by-24-inch material. He and his team will

snap it into 6-by-24-inch pieces for the waterline. In larger expanses, such as the back of a raised vanishing-edge wall, the material can be used in full.

→ Combine large-format with mosaic for visual impact

For years, Luke Denny and Amy Denny, also co-owner of Alpentile, have combined iridescent glass mosaic tiles with large-format porcelain on the same project. The mosaic is used to showcase more visible or attractive areas.

"It's also a way to balance the budget out," Amy Denny says. "If you have 100 linear feet of waterline and you're choosing 6-by-24-inch, that may only cost \$5 per square foot. So you get some economy in your tile selection that can be balanced out with the more expensive product that might go on those more high-impact areas like a baja shelf."

INSTALLATION

While much of installing large-format tile remains the same as more traditional sizes, tilers should take certain precautions.

And whether a designer, project manager or setter, professionals should get past one particular (and understandable) assumption about the process with the larger pieces. "I would caution installers and end users or specifiers that just because it's a larger tile doesn't mean it's going to take less time to install," says Greg Andrews, co-founder of National Tile and Stone Authority in Winnetka, Calif.

→ Allow for proper curing.

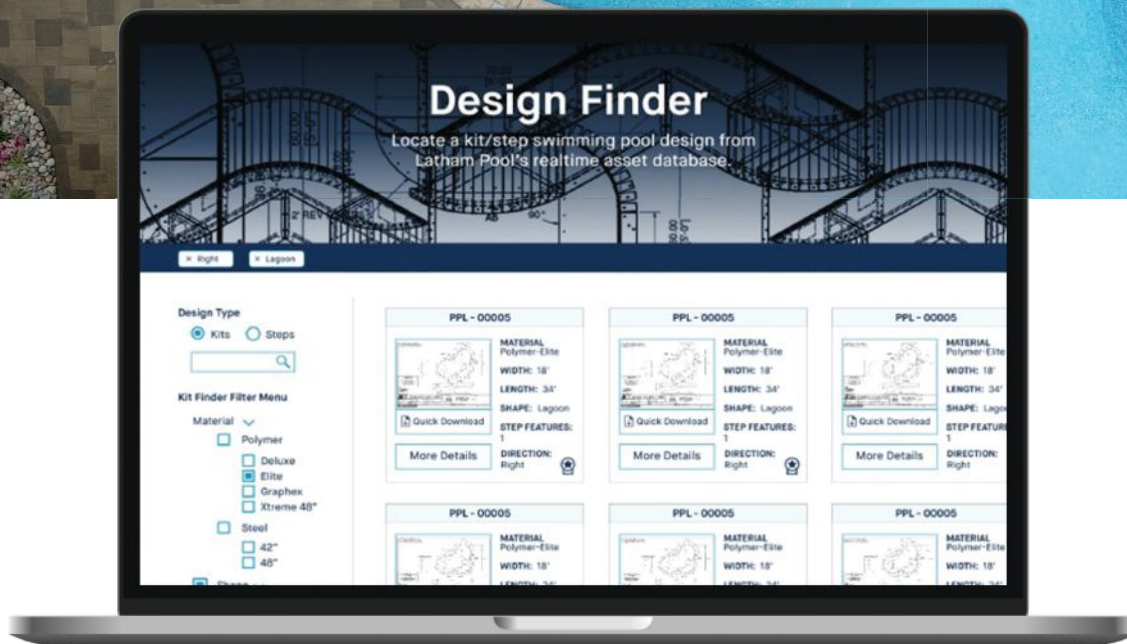
The very size that makes large-format tiles appealing to some projects can also cause complications. When it comes to installation, the first and foremost challenge comes from the need to properly cure the thinset.

While cementitious thinset materials have evolved such that they provide about 10 times the bond strength that they did when Andrews first started, these products still require air to set. No matter the tile size, the thinset nearest the grout lines will harden first, as they interface with the air. It takes longer for the material behind the tile's center to cure out. This becomes especially prob-

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When finishing a whole pool or spa in larger tiles, installers should prepare a thorough layout plan before beginning to set the tile. Consider how you want to address corners and transitions.

lematic with larger pieces.

“The material left along the back of the tile, especially toward the center, doesn’t have a chance to cure,” Andrews says. “Probably if it’s given enough time — and I’m talking about months — then ultimately it may cure out. But it’s rarely given that much time.”

After water is reintroduced to the thinset, it will re-emulsify and either compromise the bond and/or leach out. The latter is especially likely on vanishing-edge spillways and other surfaces that undergo wet/dry and hot/cold cycles. The warmth will draw latexes or acrylics out of the thinset, through the grout joint and deposit them on the tile surface. “It looks like calcium, but it’s usually not,” Andrews says.

For him, the solution comes in a relatively simple, but pricey, switch of materials. Here, he relies on synthetic thinsets that contain their own catalyst, such as epoxy-based products. These systems are generally applied in two parts, which

TOP PHOTO: MICHAEL WOODALL/COURTESY RED ROCK POOLS AND SPAS; LOWER IMAGE COURTESY ALPENTILE AND GROUPWORKS



Left, large format tiles especially enhance the clean, contemporary designs that continue to increase in popularity. Above, large-format tiles can be especially subject to slight warping. Here, spacers placed between the tiles help control lippage where slightly warped or bowed pieces abut.

react to each other and initiate the set.

"They will set up because they have a catalyst — part A is mixed with a part B," Andrews says. "So you can sandwich it between two impervious materials — the backside of a porcelain tile and the front side of a waterproof membrane — and it will set up just fine without air."

The downside: Synthetic thinsets cost more, which doesn't square well with some clients.

When using an epoxy, be sure to avoid getting resin marks or fingerprints on the material, Andrews advises. This especially applies to stones or porcelain tiles with a honed or matte look.

If you decide a cementitious thinset is best for the situation, it is imperative to follow manufacturer directions and industry standards. This could mean allowing a few more weeks for proper curing to take place.

"Communicate with the pool owner so they understand they might have to

wait another 21 to 28 days for the thinset to cure," Amy Denny says. "It's critical, that cure time."

To avoid lengthening the cure time even further, do not place a thick coat of thinset. Apply a mortar bed to make sure everything is level and plumb, flat and true. Don't rely on the thinset to make up for variations in the elevation.

And, above all, follow the directions for all materials used in the installation.

→ Avoid the voids.

It can be easier to form voids behind larger tiles when applying the thinset.

In general, pay closer attention to troweling techniques, especially if there is any warpage in the tile. You can also make use of a longstanding technique of installing, then pulling back every few tiles to make sure there's adequate coverage of the material.

Tilesetters should avoid a method called spot bonding. Here, they comb out the thinset with a trowel, then apply the occasional dollop of material on top of the layer, say on the corners of the tile and in a couple spots toward the center. Unsure how the standard layer will hold with the larger pieces, some less experienced tilesetters try this as a back-up to ensure good adhesion. But it actually has the opposite effect.

"What it does is create a lot of voids behind the material," Andrews explains.

"And those voids are a perfect area for water to travel through and start to wreak havoc. So especially in submerged conditions, it's a big no-no."

→ Work with the warpage.

Larger tiles generally will be somewhat warped, with the perimeter laying slightly lower than the middle.

The larger the piece, the more potential for warpage. This is more predominant in porcelains but can occasionally be found in stone material, too.

To help with this, use spacers or other type of system to control lippage — where one piece is higher than the other and may curve up where they meet, suggests Jimmy Reed, president of Rock Solid Tile, in Calabasas, Calif. These spacers serve something like small clamps between the tiles to help control their elevation.

If installing the pieces in an offset pattern, such as the bond pattern commonly used for bricks, you should make a slight change to the technique. Rather than offsetting them by half a tile, as is traditionally done, Andrews says, offset them by no more than one-third.

"You don't want the lowest point of the tile, which is the end of it, to interface with the highest point of the crown, which would be halfway across the tile," he explains.



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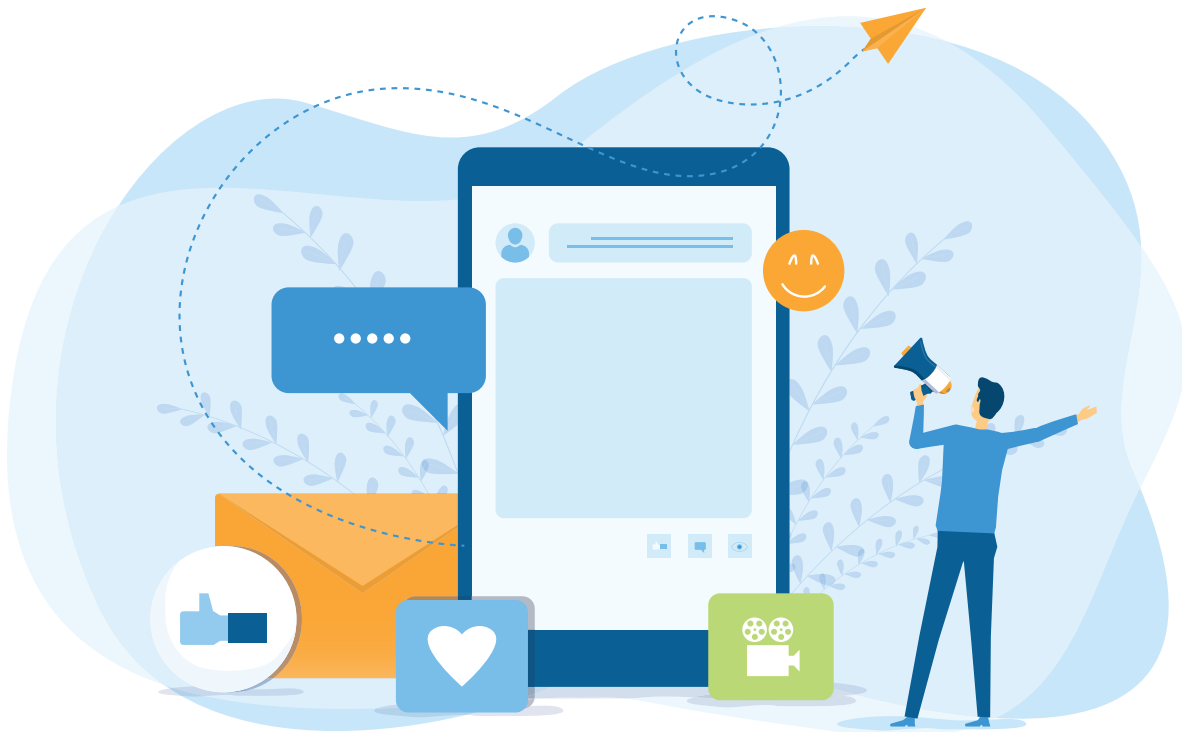


By Donna Campanelli

FIVE REASONS WHY YOUR WEBSITE DOESN'T GENERATE LEADS

Marketing strategist Donna Campanelli says there are many ways to improve lead generation.

In my work as a marketing strategist for contractors and the trades, I have met with countless business owners struggling to grow sales. Some were larger companies with elaborate websites, and some had simple websites. But regardless of size, they all faced the same problem: Their websites were not generating leads.



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In talking to those business owners about their websites, they often had a misunderstanding of what a website entails. Many see websites as a commodity that they must have. They look to buy a website based on price rather than as an investment that will generate year-after-year returns. By basing a decision on price, the website's design will go to the lowest bidder instead of a company that has experience in creating a lead generating system that takes businesses the distance.

Having analyzed hundreds of websites, I've seen the same mistakes over and over again. Here are five possible reasons your website is not generating leads.

1. LACK OF VISIBILITY

Perhaps the most common reason websites don't generate leads is a lack of visibility, or lack of traffic. If your website doesn't

If your website doesn't rank on page one of the search engines, Google and Bing for example, and you are not doing any kind of advertising to drive potential customers to your website, then your company is invisible.

rank on page one of the search engines, Google and Bing for example, and you are not doing any kind of advertising to drive potential customers to your website, then your company is invisible. The only way people will find you or your website is if they know your company name or you hand them a business card.

To generate leads from your website, you need to be visible and you need traffic. Just like sales is a numbers game, so is online lead generation. When I trained real estate agents we used to say, it takes 100 suspects, to get 10 prospects to generate one sale. In online marketing, it is the same. A great conversion rate on the web is 5% or higher. The average conversion rate is 1 to 2%. So, if you want to make five sales per month, you need to get at least 500 people to your website each month.

The quickest way to generate traffic to your website is to use pay-per-click marketing. With pay-per-click marketing, ads for your company appear at the top of the search engines when customers enter

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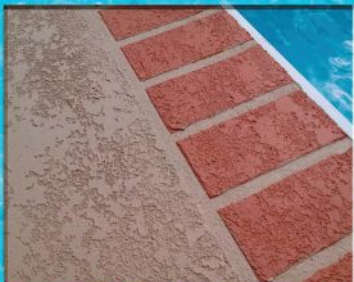


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BACKLINKS: ANOTHER CORE REASON WHY YOUR CONTRACTOR WEBSITE ISN'T RANKING

Learn what backlinks are, how to use them correctly, and why they matter for organic search.

So I've talked about some of the major mistakes that I see builders and other contracting professionals make when building their websites. Things like a lack of visibility, unprofessional or nonexistent portfolio photos, missing calls to action, and more all play a far more important role in a website's success than most people realize.

The general theme is that if your website isn't ranking on Google, it's likely not generating leads, which means that you're also not generating revenue and meeting your goals. Therefore, addressing these five points one by one is a great way to solve the lion's share of your problems, essentially all at the same time.

But thinking about it, there's another reason why your contracting website isn't ranking that also happens to be the one that most people just don't think about at all. More specifically, backlinks are a critical part of your website's success — and possibly a major contributing factor to its less-than-stellar results — that you need to pay more attention to moving forward.

Backlinks: What they are and why they matter

For those unfamiliar, a backlink is exactly what it sounds like: a link from one website to another. In this case, it's when someone else on the Internet includes a link to your business' website on their website.

The classic example of this involves what happens if you reach out to a thought influencer in your industry

to write a guest post for a blog. At the end of the blog they include a link to your website. Not only does this help you carve out a little bit of their audience and (hopefully) make it your own, but Google and other search engines look at this as an indicator that your website is important.

It's very, very hard to rank highly for your target keywords if you don't have backlinks. Search engine optimization (SEO) experts agree that backlinks are one of the biggest factors built into Google's algorithm as it relates to organic search. When you consider that organic search accounted for roughly 94% of ALL organic traffic in 2017 alone, it's easy to see why this is something you need to care about.

Common misconceptions about backlinks

Having said all of that, it's equally important for you to understand that not all backlinks are created equally. Simply asking your friend to put a link on their website to your home page is NOT the same as getting a backlink on a site like HGTV because you gave an interview or wrote a blog post.

Those big websites (with HGTV being



just one example) have massive amounts of daily and monthly traffic, bringing with it a high domain authority as well. Your friend's website probably doesn't meet either of those two characteristics.

Domain authority, also sometimes referred to as thought leadership, describes the relevance of a particular website for a specific subject area or industry. A lot goes into determining how authoritative a domain actually is, including:

- The prestige of a website or, conversely, of the people who write for it;
- The quality of the information found on that website;
- The general scope of the information found on that website; and
- The competitive situation around the topic or subject at hand.

In other words, backlinks that come from websites with high domain authority naturally "count" more in the eyes of Google because major search engines always consider the source.

To add clarity, I often use this analogy. If you are on the golf course and a total stranger recommends a golf club to you, it's nice but doesn't hold a lot of weight (i.e., low domain authority).

If you run across Tiger Woods on the golf course and he recommends a golf club to you, it means a lot because of who he is (i.e. high domain authority).

In search engine ranking, a few backlinks from high domain authority sites that people in your target audience actually trust and care about will always outweigh the former. It's about quality, not quantity, after all.

Now that you know the difference between a high domain authority site and a low domain authority site, you are armed to ask the right questions when hiring an SEO company. You need to make sure the SEO company you hire is building high-quality backlinks on websites with high domain authority.

Sadly, there are SEO companies out there who have created blogs for the express purpose of creating backlinks for SEO clients. Unfortunately, those blogs have no traffic and low domain authority. As a client of theirs, it seems great that they are getting you backlinks, but those backlinks can actually hurt your website's ranking more than they help.

You should ALWAYS ask any SEO provider that you're considering working with the names of the sites where they

will create backlinks and ask them to verify the domain authority for those sites. If you don't recognize the names of the sites — or worse, if they don't know what you're talking about — keep looking.

To build as many high-quality backlinks as you can and to establish yourself as someone worth paying attention to in your industry, you need to double down on creating as much relevant, high-quality, high-value content as possible. The better a blog post or white paper is, the more people are likely to share it. Continue to reach out to those industry blogs or other industry professionals and see if you can schedule an interview, write a guest post, or contribute in some other way. Take the time to build meaningful relationships with other people and earn those backlinks the good, old-fashioned way.

Note that this isn't something that is going to happen overnight, but that's OK because the long game is much more important, here. Backlinks have a tendency to generate their own momentum, and the more positive attention you're able to create for yourself, the more links you'll be able to generate as a result.

— Donna Campanelli

keywords related to your business. When they click on your ad, you are charged a fee for the click.

Depending on the keyword, the cost per click will vary. For instance, today the cost per click for "home builders in Colorado Springs" is \$5.23. The cost for "affordable home builders in Colorado Springs" is \$3.25. The cost per click is dependent upon how many companies are competing for that keyword.

It is important to have a good mix of keywords. It is equally as important to work with someone who really understands the workings of pay-per-click marketing to manage your ad spend and work on adjusting your ads to increase your ROI.

There is a downside to pay-per-click advertising, though, and that is if you stop advertising, you stop getting traffic. The

When your website moves to page one, and ideally within one of the top three organic spots for terms people are using to find companies like yours, you will get traffic to your site without having to pay a monthly pay-per-click ad spend.

long-term strategy to drive traffic to your website is to hire a company to optimize your website for the search engines. This process, called search engine optimization, is not marketing. It does not generate leads by itself. But, when your website moves to page one, and ideally within one of the top three organic spots for terms people are using to find companies like yours, you will get traffic to your site without having to pay a monthly pay-per-click ad spend.

If you are getting traffic to your website but visitors are not contacting you, then the question is, what are they doing on your website? Google Analytics combined with Google Search Console is a must-have tool to determine what is and isn't working with your website. Using these tools, you can know how many visitors are coming to your website,



how they got to the website, how long they stay on your site, and where they enter and exit your site.

2. UNPROFESSIONAL OR LACKING PORTFOLIO PHOTOS

Your website in many cases is the first impression a customer gets of your business. Yet many companies skimp on photography. I analyzed a website for a tile contractor that came to me recently. Her website was ranking on page one for 24 keywords, but she said her website wasn't generating any leads.

The first thing I did was look at Google Analytics to see her website's traffic numbers. She was getting plenty of people to her website, but no one was contacting

Your website must showcase your best work. Hire a skilled photographer. You don't necessarily need a professional photographer, but one that knows about lighting and that will stage the photo for you.

her. So, I dug deeper and looked to see where people were exiting her website.

What I found was that 25% of the people who visited her website left the site after viewing the project portfolio page. When I viewed the page, I understood why. There were two pictures that were taken by her with her cell phone, but they weren't staged in any way. While the tile work in the photo was very nice, you had to look over tools and pans sitting on the kitchen counter to see the work.

Your website must showcase your best work. Hire a skilled photographer. You don't necessarily need a professional photographer, but one that knows about lighting and that will stage the photo for you.

If you are doing renovation work, have before and after photos taken from the same vantage point so the visitor can easily see the differences. A little planning before taking photos will go a long way in making you look great.

3. MISSING CALL-TO-ACTION

In sales we say “ABC,” always be closing. The equivalent to that in websites is always have a call-to-action. I have seen many websites missing the call-to-action. Essentially, the website gives a lot of information on the company’s product or service and then says, “for more information contact us.”

That’s great, but website visitors need direction. Your website needs to very specifically tell them how to reach you and it needs to be easy.

A call-to-action on your website needs to be in two forms. The first is your call-to-action within the text of your site. It should say, for example, “To learn more about our custom home building offerings, fill out our convenient contact form or for immediate assistance call us today at 719-555-1212.”

In this call-to-action, the phone number should be setup as click-to-call so smart phone users can click on the phone number to dial. The whole call-to-action should be in a different font and set apart from the rest of the content on the site so it is easily recognizable.

The second is a form on your website. We recently worked with a client whose site only had the call-to-action in the text of the site. Once we added a “Request a Quote” form in the right column of all the services pages, he started getting leads.

4. MISALIGNED CONTENT

When visitors come to your website, they are typically looking to answer a question. Many people start researching new homes or home renovation projects months before they are actually ready to buy. So, in preparation they head to the web to see what it will cost, get ideas of what they might buy, and even compare offerings. What I see time and time again is that websites are not designed to answer the questions customers are looking to answer. Instead, they give the information owners and salespeople want them to know.

Take, for instance, a custom home

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builder we worked with recently. His website had a lot of information and gorgeous examples of his work, but visitors were not requesting to meet with him. After working with him at a local home show we noticed that people in the booth first looked at the photos of his work and then they asked for floor plans. He didn't have floor plans on his website because he said he can build whatever the customer wanted. But customers want a place to start. They want something to build on. So, we added a few of a variety of floor plans that he has built to his website.

Understanding how your customers think and what questions they always ask is important when building or redesigning your website.

5. LACK OF ATTENTION

The biggest reason business websites don't generate leads is because business owners don't understand what is required to create

The biggest reason business websites don't generate leads is because business owners don't understand what is required to create a lead generating machine and they don't give their website the attention that it needs.

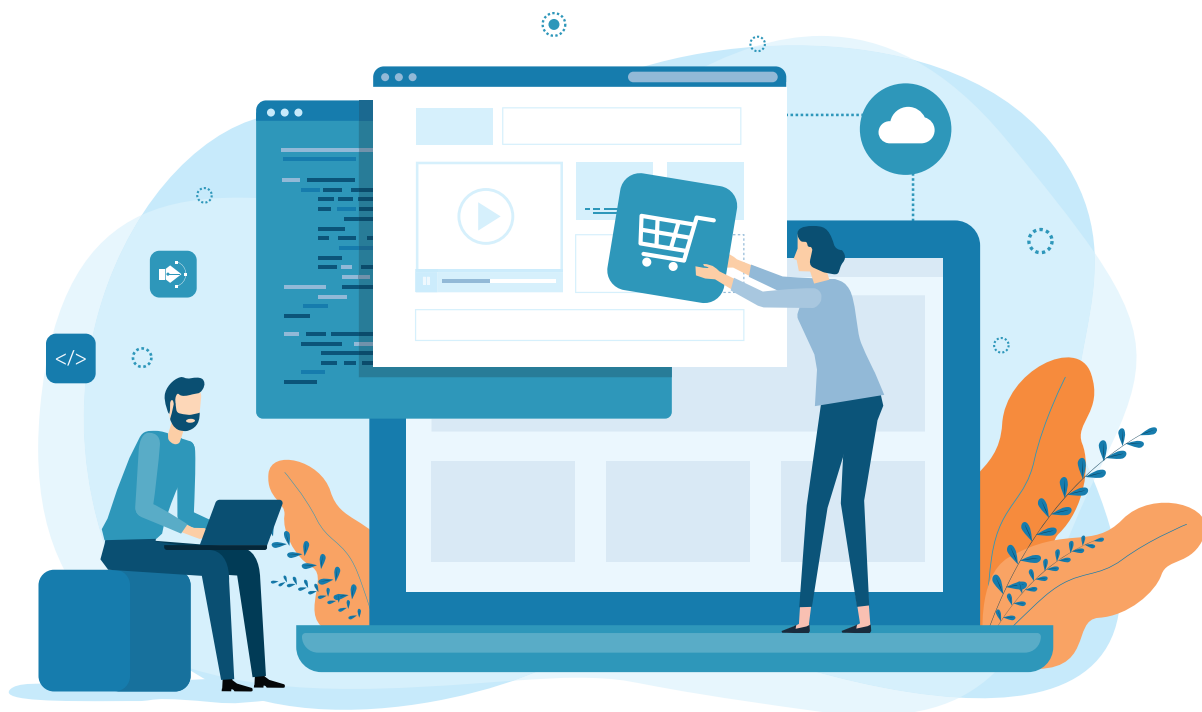
a lead generating machine and they don't give their website the attention that it needs.

Just like building a home, building a website is part art, part science. Building a website that generates a steady stream of leads takes time, testing, and analysis.

I always tell my customers, you wouldn't put an ad in the newspaper for 52 weeks and leave it there if it wasn't generating business, and so you shouldn't let your website sit if it is not generating business.

Your website can be a powerful player in the success of your company, but as a business owner you need to understand that this is not the Field of Dreams. They will not come just because you build it. A website can be your best salesperson, but it needs to be nurtured and tended to.

Donna Campanelli is a marketing strategist, owner of Contractor-Websites.com and HubSpot Inbound Marketing Partner. Her company works with construction companies, contractors, and the trades to implement marketing strategies and tactics that grow sales.



Product Profile: Package Pools and Vinyl Liners



APC 365 Auto Cover for Vinyl Liner/Package Pools

Pool builders and installers of vinyl liner pools now can offer Automatic Pool Covers' APC 365 auto cover specifically designed for vinyl liner pools.

The APC 365 uses a coping and housing system that allows an automatic cover to be integrated into the pool construction by using a 48-inch coping that encapsulates the pool corners. This provides a 100% accurate fit.

The system uses a slide-on polybox housing that saves installers hours of time, and keeps the housing's lid perfectly flush with the deck.

"It is the most comprehensive and best-engineered automatic cover solution for vinyl liner pools," says Michael Shebek, the company's president.

The complete unit includes a high-density poly box, coping, electric motor drive, flush lid, premium grade vinyl, Invisa-Rope and a personalized PowerTouch operation system to secure the pool in 45 seconds. It's available in 8 different colors and four corner styles.

Contact: Automatic Pool Covers | automaticpoolcovers.com



CMP Vinyl Pool Faceplate Kits

CMP Vinyl Pool Faceplate Kits are an exciting upgrade for standard pool installs or renovations, says Rich Simpson, CMP's national sales manager pool division. "Vinyl faceplate kits from CMP add variety to common 'white' goods product offerings."

Color faceplates blend in with or accent any vinyl liner color or pattern. The pre-packaged kits are for regular and wide mouth skimmers. Every part needed to repair and replace common fittings is included.

"Pool professionals appreciate not having to stock, order and keep track of dozens of different parts," says Simpson. Main drain covers, faceplates, eyeballs and all required gaskets and stainless steel screws are included in every kit.

Complete vinyl builder kits with skimmers, main drains and returns are also available for new construction.

All CMP products include a one year manufacturer's limited warranty.

Contact: CMP | c-m-p.com



Imperial Pools Square Poolside Spa

Imperial has rounded out its Whitewave poolside and spillover spa product line with the introduction of the 86-inch Gray Granite Square poolside spa.

Delivered completely plumbed for ease of installation, the Whitewave Square Poolside Spa features 483-gallon average fill, six to eight person seating, nine hydrotherapy jets, two air controls and two suction fittings.

"Whitewave Spillover and Poolside Spas are the ultimate poolside pleasure," says Jeff Mazzone, Imperial's director of marketing.

Contact: Imperial Pools | imperialpools.com



Latham Design Finder

Latham's Design Finder provides builders with immediate access to the digital library of pool designs in the industry with over 20,000 pool kits and steps.

Users can browse the collection for new ideas, or get specific with easy-to-use filters and find a drawing that fits the homeowner's vision. With one site for steel and polymer kits as well as step features, Design Finder allows Latham Builders to leave the dig books back at the office.

Available from the company's easy-to-use, web-based platform, the Design Finder is compatible with laptops, tablets or mobile devices and can be accessed anywhere you use your browser. Design Finder is loaded and ready to go, no more waiting for drawings or getting back to customers when it matters the most.

Contact: Latham Pool Products | lathampool.com



LOOP-LOC Luxury Liners: Palm Springs

LOOP-LOC has added nine new exclusive patterns to its line of Luxury Liners, including Palm Springs (pictured).

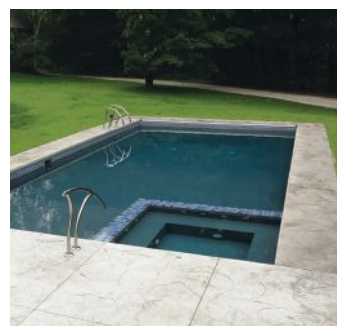
"This elegant new pattern has beautiful swaying palm leaves that create a tropical energy and help turn your backyard into your own luxury resort," says LOOP-LOC President and CEO LeeAnn Donaton-Wheatcroft.

LOOP-LOC also has introduced Honu and Mahalo, two other exclusive patterns for 2021 manufactured with Aqua Shift inks. Pool liners printed with Aqua Shift ink technology transition in color from shimmering silver-teal to dramatic violet-blues across the curves and angles of the pool wall, and continue to shift color with changes in the viewing angle.

Other new exclusives this year include Bengal Bay, Mandala, Cambridge, Oceania, Pacifica, and Timeless.

All liners come with a 20-year pro-rated warranty.

Contact: LOOP-LOC | looploc.com



Alpha Evolution Systems

The Alpha Evolution Systems Pool is a three-part system that consists of componentized fiber reinforced composite wall panels, a concrete bottom and finished with Evolution Pool Coatings by Eco Finish.

"This high quality product is comparable to a concrete pool but can be completed in a fraction of the time," says Thomas Eppe, Only Alpha's owner/CEO. "The coating process instantly cures, making the pool swimmable as soon as the process is finished. By using our Alpha Evolution System your project can be completed in as little as 14 days, from start to finish."

Alpha Evolution System boasts many patents and offers an unlimited lifetime structural warranty. Evolution Pool Coatings offers a 5-year full/10-year pro-rated finish warranty and a limited lifetime transferable structural warranty on the long-lasting thermo polymer finish.

Contact: Only Alpha Pool Products | onlyalpha.com



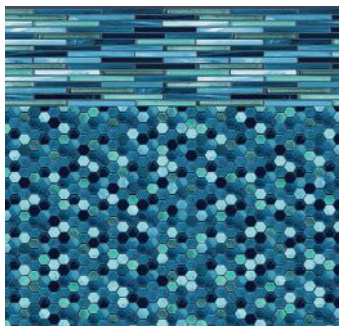
Pegasus Inground and Aboveground Vinyl Liners

Pegasus' experienced engineers and products can accommodate a more comprehensive range of needs. "The quality of our product is second to none," says Frank Patel, owner/president. "We have high standards that we adhere to, from raw goods to the finished products." Patel cites the unique variety of patterns with a realistic appearance as being among the key features of his company's products.

The material for the liners is made using virgin-grade vinyl that contains ultraviolet inhibitors as well as fungicide and biocide protectors. Using the latest in computer-aided design and cutting, Pegasus can customize its liners to fit its customers' pools perfectly.

Technical support is available at the company's toll-free number. A variety of marketing materials, including brochures, banners, fliers and liner material samples, are available upon request.

Contact: Pegasus Products | pegasus-products.com



Enchanted Vinyl Pool Liner

Enchanted is one of seven new patterns that Tara is adding for 2021.

This exclusive design features a unique hexagonal mosaic tile floor and a horizontal glazed tile border. With colors and textures derived from nature, this new pattern gives the pool a spa-like appearance.

Enchanted expands the color palette for vinyl liners by incorporating greens and turquoise colors. The contrast between dark and light tiles will add sparkle to the water.

Enchanted will be available in 20-mil vinyl as well as the company's SureStep textures surface material.

In addition, customers can see how Enchanted and the entire Tara pattern collection looks in water using the company's new Envision pool visualizer, available on Tara's website. The simple, interactive format lets pool owners see how each liner pattern looks in the water and in various conditions.

Contact: Tara Liners & Safety Covers | taraliners.com

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Product Profiles: Construction Equipment and Supplies



Carrousel Pump and U-Blend Mixer Combo

The Carrousel Pump, U-Blend Mixers, and related spray equipment are capable of pumping epoxy grouts, heavily bodied materials, and re-grouting mortar joints and also spraying fireproofing, waterproofing, EIFS, artificial rock work, stucco, and other commercial coatings.

For users with specific requirements, Quikspray will build a custom unit for your application. "Our equipment is known for being well designed and constructed, time tested in the field, simple to clean, and offering ease of operation with low or no maintenance," says Leah Barker, who handles sales and marketing for Quikspray.

The U-Blend Mixer is designed to allow lower dumping heights for a variety of containers that eases operator fatigue.

Many of the top rock/water-scape formulas use larger aggregates and reinforcing fibers. The venturi design of the eight-airjet gun helps pump the product, creating negative pressure or suction, which allows for a smooth spray flow.

Contact: Quikspray | quikspray.com



Roll-On Cement Pool Plaster — Sider-Proof FF-PR

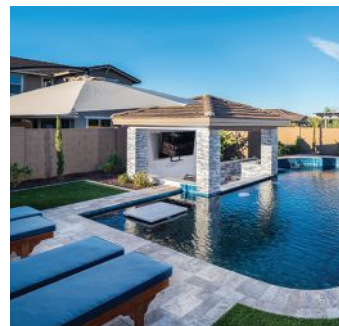
A cement-based, swimming pool plaster and resurfacing coating for plaster, concrete and ICF swimming pools. It is packaged as a kit and easy-to-apply with a standard paint roller and smoothed with a MagicTrowel. It is suitable for residential, commercial, hot tubs, chlorine and salt water system application. This coating is also designed to coat and waterproof waterfalls, fountains and concrete ponds. This product is NOT a pool paint but a true cement-based swimming pool plaster and resurfacing coating.

The manufacturer describes the application as "easy as roll-it-on and blade-it-smooth!"

It comes in several standard pre-blended colors and custom colors, and also is available with premixed colored quartz.

For a full marketing package, including a DVD, email or contact Sider-Crete at the toll-free number or by email at sales@sider-crete.com.

Contact: Sider-Crete Inc. | sider-crete.com



Finest Finish Blends

Universal White Cement's Finest Finish Blends and Universal Mini Pebble Interior Pool Finishes are designed with recipes, which are given to applicators with carefully crafted combinations of Universal White High-Performance Cement, aggregates, colored pigments, Jewels for Pools Glass, and abalone.

"The mix is what differentiates Finest Finish Blends pool interior finishes from others on the market," says Astrid Petersen, the company's national sales and marketing manager. "Strong quality control during the pre-blending process ensures consistency and cuts done on jobsite errors."

The natural pebble aggregates are delicately smoothed by nature along beaches, in rivers and in mines, for example. This gives their surface a textured finish that is non-abrasive and very pleasing to the touch.

Finest Finish Blends come with 7-year warranties on all of the components.

Contact: Universal White Cement | finestfinishpools.com

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Advertisers: To update your listing, contact Stephanie Fischer at 773-824-2422 or send an email to sfischer@zondahome.com

New Products

BY PSN STAFF



Within Reach

JED Pool Tools' new commercial grade, Pro-Series Telescoping Pole, is designed for service professionals in the field. This new pole is a three-piece click-cam system which extends from 5- to 18 feet and is made with extra thick tubing protected with an anodized finish to resist corrosion. It fits all standard accessories.

Contact: JED Pool Tools; jedpooltools.com



Light Control

The Innovalite 9015-RGB/BT is a high-output SMT (surface-mount technology) multicolor LED light that plugs into a standard 120V outlet. Bluetooth technology allows users to control the light from a smartphone using the Innovalite app. It's functional up to a range of 100 feet.

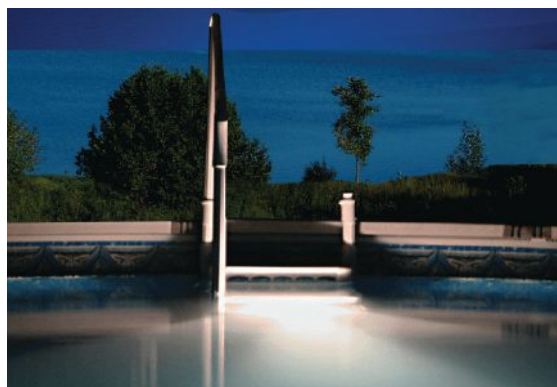
Contact: lumi-o Innovaplas; innovaplas.com/en_us



Float Assist

Poolmaster's Lil' Splashers Swim Shirt Floaties combines a UPF 50+ swim shirt with integrated EVA foam arm floats to provide buoyancy support for children ages 4-6 years. The arm floats are sewn into the shirt at the shoulder leaving the underarm area open, allowing for freedom of movement. No inflation needed.

Contact: Poolmasters; poolmaster.com



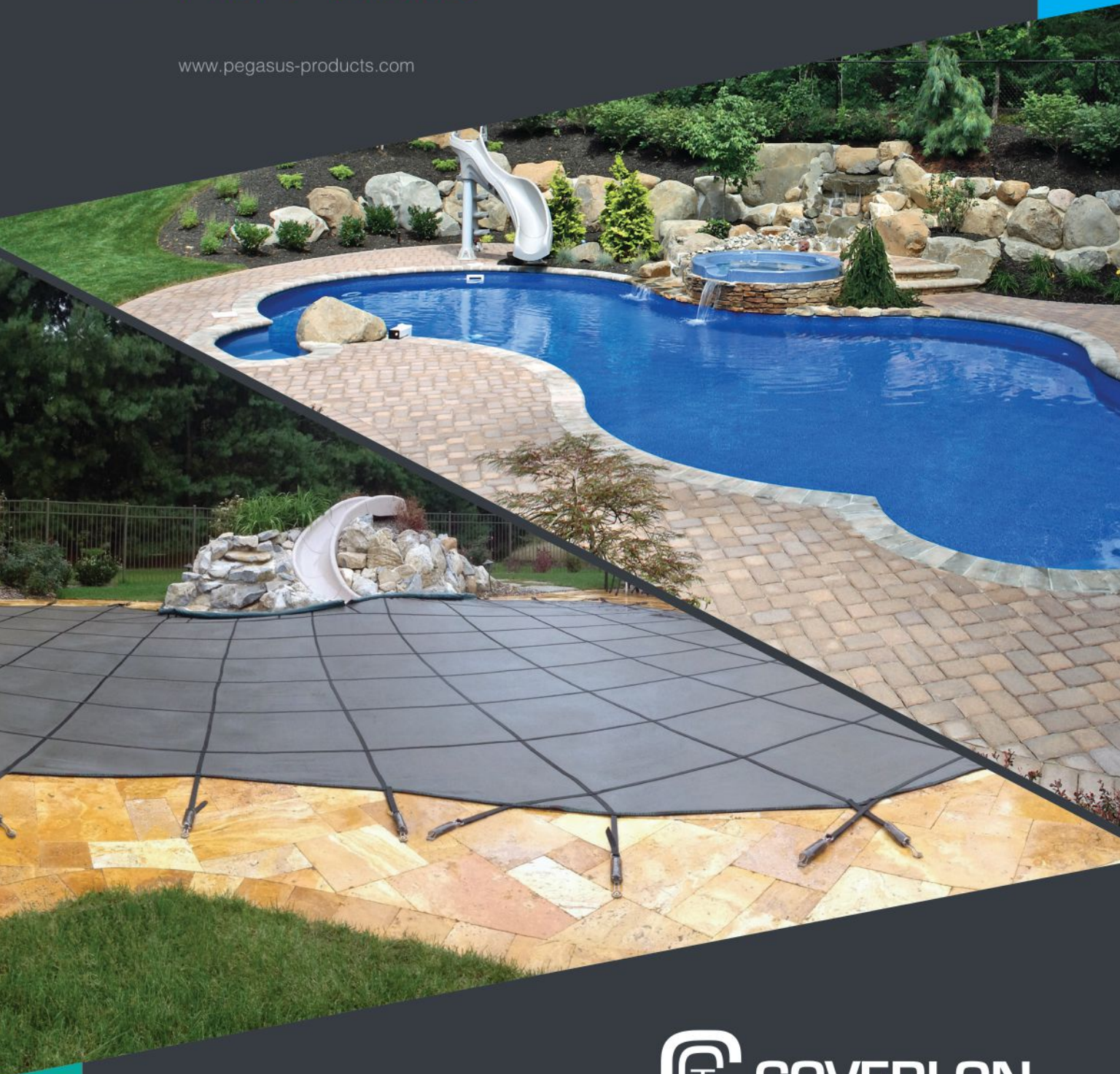
Playing with Light

The new PAL Sonar Replacement LED Bulb with underwater wireless color control operates using low frequency wavelengths, which users control via remote handset or smart device app. Its features include color temperature; access to 16 million colors; third party voice control; and more.

Contact: PAL Lighting LLC; pallighting.com



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