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POOL AND SPA NEWS

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EDITORIAL

JOANNE McCLAIN

Editor-in-Chief
jmccain@zondahome.com

REBECCA ROBLEDO

Deputy Editor
rrobledo@zondahome.com

SALES

GARY CARR

National Sales Manager
gcarr@zondahome.com

ART

TINA TABIBI

Art Director
Graphic Designer

ALICE ASHE

PRODUCTION

CATHY UNDERWOOD

Senior Director, Print Production

STEPHANIE FISCHER

Production Manager

BERNADETTE COUTURE

Ad Production Coordinator

OPERATIONS

LENA RAGUSA

Human Resources Manager

HANLEY WOOD MEDIA

ANDREW REID

Chief Operating Officer

JENNIFER PEARCE

Executive Vice President/Chief
Content Officer

PAUL TOURBAF

Executive Vice President

MARI SKELNIK

Vice President/Audience Operations

BRIDGET FORBES

Vice President/Digital Strategy
and Operations

LILLIAN SPIO

Vice President/Marketing

JENNIFER MALKASIAN

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TIM SULLIVAN

Senior Managing Principal/
Advisory Group

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AMY DUDLEY

Executive Vice President/National Sales

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICES: 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90048 • (323) 801-4900; SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES & BACK-ISSUE ORDERS: (888) 269-8410; fax, (847) 291-4816; e-mail, psn@omeda.com; REPRINTS: Wright's Media, (877) 652-5295; e-mail, hanleywood@wrightsmedia.com

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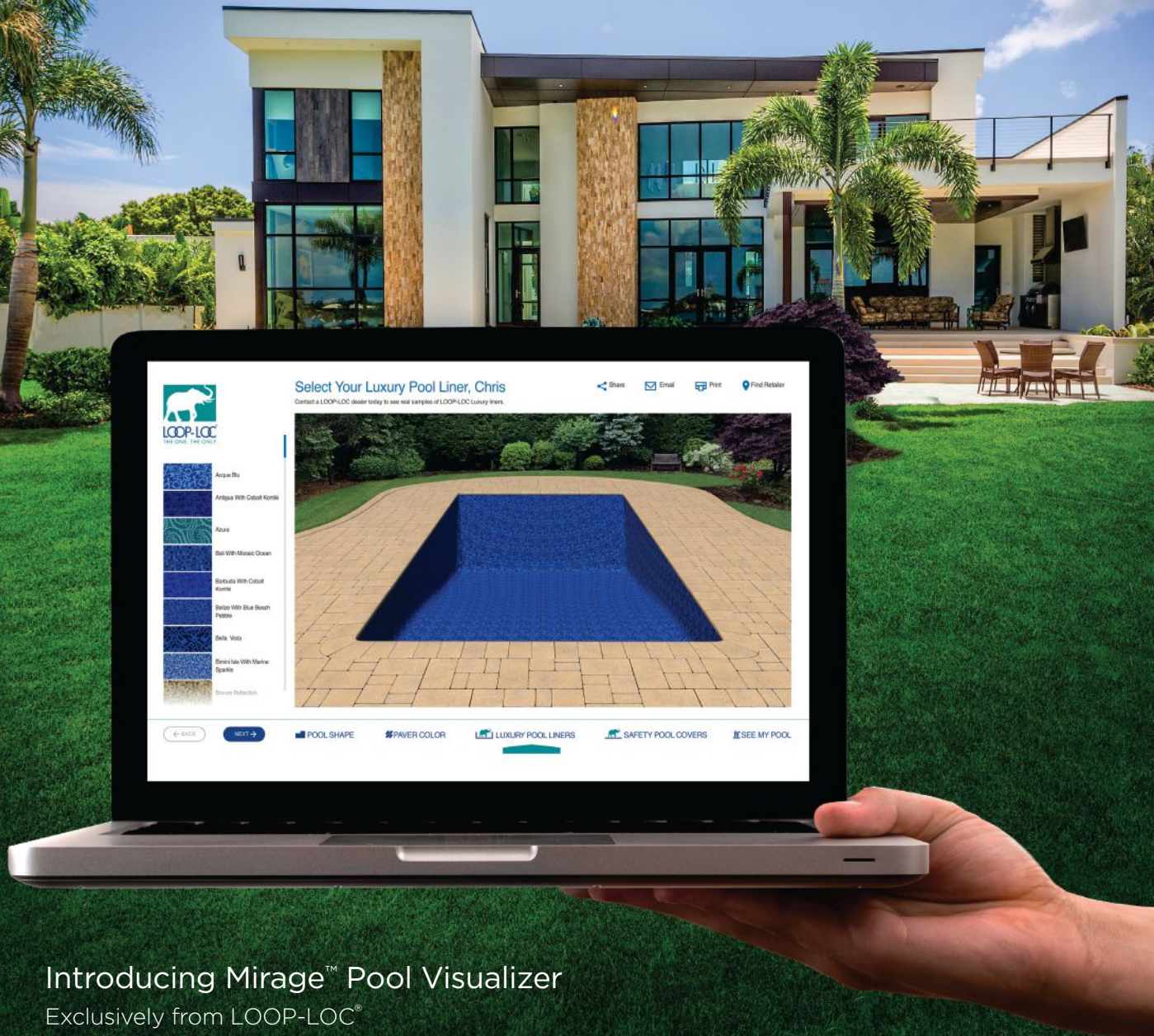
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A February Feast



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

By all accounts, the pool and spa industry is busier than ever. How else to explain the fact that we're already six weeks into the new year and how quickly it's flown by?

To help our industry businesses survive and thrive, we've come up with an issue chock full of what I hope will prove to be a feast of useful content.

Firstly, it is a truth universally acknowledged that the industry is desperately in want of skilled labor, now more than ever before. But the pandemic has made in-person screening even more difficult. What can you do to ensure you're enticing the best candidates for the job? In "How to Attract High-Quality Talent Using the Internet," Susan Smith, a digital marketing expert for the construction trades, offers practical advice that assures an uptick in the number and quality of candidates for your open positions.

Now that you've got some qualified job candidates, what if I told you there was a way to offer instant customer service and engagement 24/7 without increasing the workload for your staff? In Rebecca Robledo's cover feature, "Help Around the Clock," she explores the use of chatbots — along with its limitations and benefits — to help you see if adding this automated feature to your business makes good business sense.

Another big topic of concern for the entire industry is the expected shortage

of chlorine as demand is projected to remain high over 2021. To help with this anticipated shortage, it's more important now than ever before to understand and improve chlorine's efficiency. In "Getting the Most from Your Chlorine," BioLab's Emily Johnson lays out the ground rules on how the basics of pool care can impact water quality and the importance of additional technologies to maximize sanitizer performance.

Lastly, a bit of streamlining for our builders, who continue to work tirelessly to get as many pools in the ground as possible. As you know, punch lists can be the trickiest part of a project when dealing with customers. To help the process move forward as smoothly and expediently as possible, Dennis Dixon, a longtime general contractor, shares nine essentials tips to establish expectations and improve communication with your customers in the final days of completion.

So there you have it — meaty topics to chew on as we charge through the rest of February. Anything else you'd like to see us to cover? Feel free to drop me a line.


jmcclain@hanleywood.com

CYA-Free Sanitizing Solutions for Hot Tubs

Multiple sources, including the CDC, recommend eliminating Cyanuric Acid (CYA) from hot tubs. Yet many hot tub owners use chlorine containing CYA resulting in cloudy, smelly water in as little as a few weeks. The goal is to ensure proper disinfection while making water care easier to manage so hot tub owners are delighted with their hot tubs and rave about them to family and friends. Fortunately, there are alternatives that keep water cleaner longer without constant monitoring – thus accomplishing the goal.

CYA RECAP

According to PK Data in the APSP 2018 Yearbook, 60% of all hot tub respondents said they are sanitizing with chlorine and dichlor is the chlorine most recommended by dealers. Dichlor is about 50% CYA. This means that for each 10 ppm of chlorine added to the water from dichlor, the CYA increase is 9 ppm.

CYA continues to build with every dose of dichlor added to the hot tub. As it builds, it slows down the ability for chlorine to kill microorganisms that can live in hot tubs. The result is within a few weeks, hot tub

owners start experiencing cloudy water that is harsh to soak in and requires far more work to keep sanitized.

CYA MAKES CHLORINE A MOVING TARGET

As CYA increases the effectiveness of the chlorine decreases. The kill time (CT value) for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (the organism that causes hot tub rash), with no CYA is about 20 seconds. It is 1 minute and 30 seconds with 50 ppm CYA and nearly 2 minutes with 100 ppm CYA. To achieve the ideal 20 second kill time would require a much greater chlorine level in the water. So, as the CYA increases you need to make a corresponding increase in the free chlorine level. This makes the free chlorine level a moving target.

The CYA/Minimum Free Chlorine Table clearly shows that more and more free chlorine is needed to attain safe water as the CYA increases from dichlor use. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maximum for free chlorine in hot tubs is 5.0 ppm. Therefore, free chlorine levels of more than 5.0 ppm are not recommended, except when superchlorinating and when bathers

CYA/MINIMUM CHLORINE TABLE

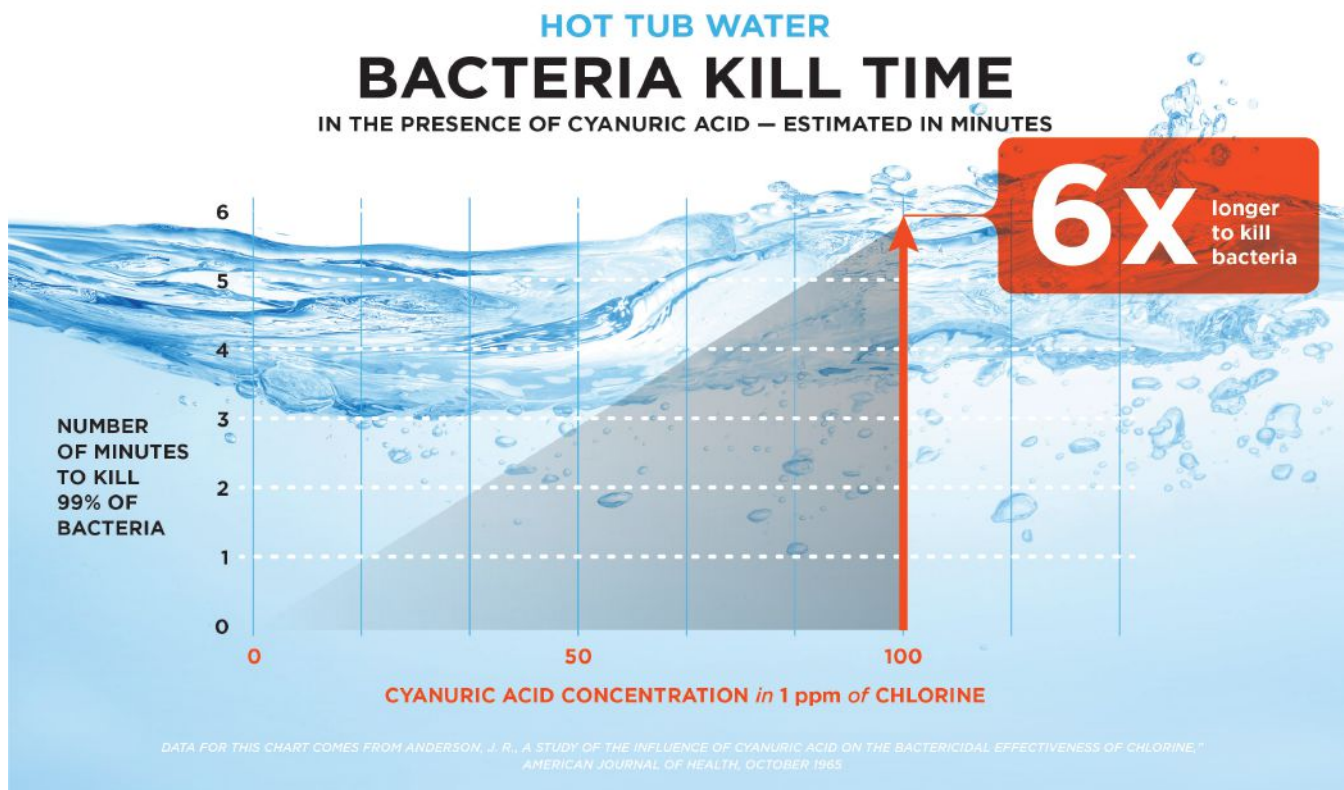
CYA (ppm)	Minimum Free Chlorine (ppm)
0	0.11
30	3.4
50	5.6
70	8.1
100	11.5

are not present. Active hot tubs using dichlor could reach the 5.0 maximum within a month.

CYA BUILDUP IS FAST

If you were to add 1½ teaspoons of dichlor four times a week to a 300-gallon hot tub, the CYA level would build up to 50 ppm in as few as 4 weeks and reach 100 ppm CYA in only 7 weeks. If the hot tub is used more often and dichlor is added after each use, the buildup is even faster.

CYA buildup and the increase in kill times led the CDC to issue this statement,



The CDC recommends NOT using cyanuric acid or chlorine products with cyanuric acid in hot tubs.

“The CDC recommends not using cyanuric acid or chlorine products with cyanuric acid in hot tubs/spas,” published in May 2016 in a CDC article called “Your Disinfection Team: Chlorine & pH.”

In December 2016, the Pennsylvania Department of Health published a statement in “Public Swimming and Bathing Places: Operational and Biological Protocol Recommendation,” stating: “At even moderate levels of cyanuric acid, the amount of time it takes chlorine to kill *pseudomonas aeruginosa* (the bacteria that causes hot tub itch) can be as much as a hundred times as long as in a hot tub or spa without cyanuric acid.”

PROBLEMS RUIN HOT TUB ENJOYMENT

High levels of CYA have also been known to cause corrosion because it is part of the Total Alkalinity (TA) of the water. When working with the Langelier Saturation Index (LSI), to balance water, you must account for the CYA level. To do that, subtract about 1/3 of the CYA reading from the TA reading. The result is your TA may be lower than you think. This could result in corrosive water that is damaging to surfaces and metal components and a hot tub that is unpleasant to soak in.

For hot tub owners, CYA buildup has a myriad of negative effects including cloudy

and smelly water, skin irritations and worse. Even so, when disgruntled customers look for answers, they are told to add more chlorine to “shock the tub,” which only compounds the problem by adding even more CYA. After as little as two months, there’s no way for chlorine to recover. Owners are forced to empty their hot tubs prematurely, which leads to frustration and the perception that owning a hot tub is difficult.

THE CYA-FREE SOLUTIONS

Thankfully, there are EPA regulated disinfection options for hot tubs that do not contain CYA. King® Technology, Inc. has the only chlorine alternative in SmartChlor®; it’s used with FROG®’s mineral technology to kill bacteria 2 ways. This self-regulating chlorine sanitizer maintains a consistent low 0.5 to 1.0 ppm chlorine level for 3-4 weeks. When the SmartChlor is spent, users simply replace the cartridge for another 3-4 weeks of worry-free water care.

King Technology, Inc. also offers a bromine solution, which contains no CYA. FROG Serene® uses minerals with granular bromine in convenient prefilled cartridges that float in the hot tub. The minerals on all FROG hot tub products last 4 months, while the bromine for FROG Serene lasts 3-4 weeks.

**WONDERING WHY YOUR
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To help dealers determine if their customers may be experiencing problems due to high CYA levels, King Technology, Inc. has a postcard available containing a single Cyanuric Acid test strip and information on how to eliminate CYA problems with FROG @ease®. For more information visit nocya.com.

Resources for this article:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Programs/Operations-SOPRecommendations.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/residential/disinfection-testing.html>

J.E. O'Brien, J.C. Morris & J.N. Butler, “Equilibria Aqueous Solutions of Chlorinated Isocyanurate” Ch. 14 in Alan J. Rubin’s Chemistry of Water Supply, Treatment and Distribution”, Ann Arbor Science Publishers, Inc., 1974, ISBN 0-250-40036-7, pp. 333-358

Anderson, J.R., “A Study of the Influence of Cyanuric Acid on the Bactericidal Effectiveness of Chlorine,” American Journal of Public Health, Oct. 1965.





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New Roll-Up Firm Enters Service Sector

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



Augusto Titarelli
CEO
National Pool Partners

Another roll-up has launched for the pool/spa service sector.

Last month, National Pool Partners debuted by announcing its first two acquisitions — Patriot Pool & Spa in Austin, Texas, a *PSN* Top 50 company; and T&D Pool & Spa near Orlando.

NPP was started by two veterans of the pest-control industry, Augusto Titarelli and Matthew Stevenson. Titarelli, who serves as NPP's CEO, has four decades managing home-services companies. Most recently, he was vice president of field operations with Terminix. Before that, he worked with the alarm company ADT. Stephenson was Titarelli's manager at Terminix. He serves on the NPP board.

After leaving the pest-control giant, the two sought to begin a venture where they would take their knowledge and experience from working in the home-ser-

vices space, but to a different industry. After investigation, they decided to enter the pool/spa field.

"I'm coming in from other home-services industries that are more consolidated [than the pool/spa industry]," Titarelli said. "Looking at this space in the pool industry, we saw the quality of people and the energy ... I think it's an industry that excites and has a lot of opportunity."

To fund the venture, team partnered with Imperial Capital, which tends to invest in smaller businesses looking to grow. Supported with \$200 million, it formed NPP as a holding company to acquire existing service firms.

Patriot Pool & Spa was founded in 2006 and serves the greater Austin market. According to NPP, it has been growing at a rate of more than 20%. It has ranked on the *PSN* Top 50 Service since the list's beginning in 2018. The company reported a total service revenue of \$3.5 million in 2019.

"We have spent the last year dreaming of a vision to revolutionize pool service, and today it's coming to fruition," said Patriot founder Hal Denbar. "Our customers and teammates stand to benefit for decades to come. I look forward to enabling the success of other entrepreneurs in the industry I love and carrying on the legacies that other owners have built ..."

T&D services The Villages region northwest of Orlando. Its owner, Eddie Skehan, has more than 30 years experience. "I had not planned to sell T&D until I was ready to retire," Skehan said. "But joining NPP has allowed me to take some chips off the table

and feel re-inspired to grow T&D and NPP together, while sharing tricks of the trade with all our partners nationally."

Both selling owners will remain with their existing operations as well as take on new corporate roles with NPP. Skehan of T&D Pool & Spa will serve as national vice president, leading the company's operational excellence. Denbar of Patriot Pools, takes the title of regional vice president, leading growth in the Lone Star State.

NPP will expand with a combination of acquisition and organic growth. To enter a new market, it will purchase an existing, well-established service company. With the hub established in a new region, management may open new locations organically in that area.

In addition to increasing its presence in Florida and Texas, the company is currently in negotiations to purchase a company in Arizona, which it hopes to finalize the first half of this year. Company owners who sell will have opportunities to continue on and potentially take a corporate role with NPP, or leave the firm, depending on the wishes of the seller and needs of that region of the company.

NPP will be the name of the holding company only. Branding for many of the acquired firms will remain intact, however some smaller acquisitions in a region may adopt the established branding for the area.

With its first acquisitions, the company now services 5,000 pools. The company has set a goal of servicing 100,000 pools in five years, and generating at least \$100 million by 2023.



Hal Denbar
Regional Vice
President, Patriot
Pool & Spa/NPP



Eddie Skehan
National Vice
President, T&D
Pool & Spa/NPP

PHOTOS COURTESY NPP

Through Acquisitions, Florida Water Products Has National Aspirations

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



Carlos Del Amo, Sr.
CEO
Florida Water Products

A distributor in Florida has set its sights on going national.

Florida Water Products, a supplier that had primarily focused on the Sunshine and Lone Star States, recently closed its second merger, making it the second-largest pool/spa distributor in North America, according to CEO Carlos Del Amo. It plans to further expand its national footprint by continuing to roll up other independent distributors.

Recently, the company merged with Corona, Calif.-based Pool and Electrical Products, known as PEP. Founded in 1992, it brings 29 locations throughout California, Arizona and Texas.

Under the terms, the family that owned PEP, the Becerras, are shareholders, with two members — Sandy and Andreas Becerra — serving on the Board of Directors, Del Amo said. They will not remain active members in the company, he added.

Louie Mozas, who came from FWP as its president, also will serve as president of PEP.

In 2018, FWP merged with Las Vegas-based American Pool Supply, carrying it into Nevada and Utah. The founder of the nearly 50-year-old company, Jack Crockett, remained with the distributor until his recent passing. His son, Rick Crockett, remains with the company.

Both PEP and American Pool Supply will retain their brands.

In total, the company now has 47 locations in the six states.

Along with Louie Mozas, the roll-up plan has largely been implemented by Del Amo, who joined the company in

2017 as executive vice president, after more than 20 years with Big Three manufacturer Pentair.

The team believed the market would benefit from another larger distributor, rather than having a landscape with one dominant distributor, PoolCorp, and many small independents. “I just believed there were people out there who wanted an alternative choice,” Del Amo said.

With the three brands combined, the company now employs approximately 500, Del Amo said, where FWP alone previously had a staff of a little more than 200.

The company is designed to provide the infrastructure of a larger firm, but retain the family-run feel, he added.

Del Amo and Mozas are shareholders in the firm, along with the Becerras and some members of the company’s management team.

Susan Mozas, the other principal in FWP, has retired and left the company. FWP was founded in 1983 in Tampa.

The company expects to continue growing in this manner, focusing for now on the Sunbelt but exploring other regions of the U.S. as well, Del Amo said.

Hanley Wood Becomes Zonda

The company that owns and publishes *Pool and Spa News* has rebranded.

Hanley Wood, which has owned the publication since acquiring it in 2001, now is known as Zonda. The rebranding includes a new name, logo, positioning and website.

The branding reflects the expansion of the company’s construction and real-estate data operations. In 2018, Hanley Wood, which had data and media divisions, was purchased by New York-based private equity firm MidOcean Partners and merged with another data company it had just acquired, Meyers

Research. The name Zonda comes from one of the company’s data products.

“As we’ve grown, a wide variety of businesses and products have come under our umbrella and there was a need to align and unify our story,” said Jeff Meyers, CEO of Zonda. “The new brand identity is not only current and modern but continues to reflect the core ethos of Zonda — continuous growth and innovation.”

The new logo is an evolution of a BIT — the fundamental building block of data — and brings in design inspiration from a housing property grid.

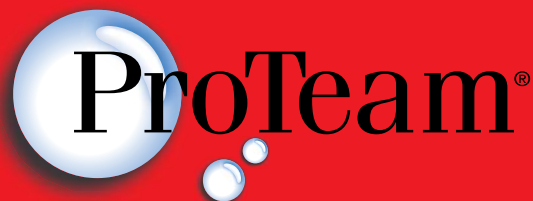
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Fluidra Acquires Heat Pump Maker

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Big Three manufacturer Fluidra has acquired Built Right.

Based in Punta Gorda, Fla., the 10-year-old company manufactures pool heat pumps, largely serving the Sunshine State, which holds the largest market for

that product category.

According to Fluidra, the purchase closed in January and included all of Built Right's substantial assets.

"Built Right has an excellent reputation for quality and service," said Troy Franzen, president Fluidra North America. "And because it is based in Florida — the largest heat pump territory in the U.S. — it will put us closer to our core heat pump customer."

Built Right will retain its branding and remain in its current location, Franzen said.

"There are no plans to change the Built Right product line — it will be business as usual."

Its staff will also remain in place, with the exception of the company founder, who will pursue other business opportunities.

Fluidra North America is the company that used to be known as Zodiac Pool Systems. It took on that name in 2018, after merging with the global manufacturer/distributor Fluidra. The multinational firm, Fluidra, is publicly traded and operates in more than 45 countries.



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Florida Permits See Highest Increase in Decade

The year 2020 certainly was one for the books.

After an extremely busy year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, new-pool permit figures in Florida rose 23% — the largest increase enjoyed by the state's industry since 2011 to 2012.

Florida registered 32,100 new pool permits last year. This does not account for remodeling or significant repairs.

Migration explains part of the story, said Wendy Parker Barsell, executive director of the Florida Swimming Pool Association, based in Sarasota.

"People are coming to Florida at a rapid pace," she said. "They're leaving states that are closing down, so the housing market is strong here."

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NPC Introduces New Initiatives at Conference

BY REBECCA ROBLEDÓ



As the **National Plasterers Council** prepares its virtual conference, it also is debuting or enhancing instructional initiatives.

Its popular start-up certification class will become available in a formalized virtual learning management system. The presentation will be similar to online driving classes, with instruction followed by a test on the same platform. Students will receive needed materials beforehand. The online class will be available on-demand anytime. But in-person classes will resume when it's safe, said NPC President Jeff Henderson.

The organization has also begun a new podcast, called "Smooth Finish" and hosted by members Chris Marcano, Brent Lane and Rob Romano.

NPC also will launch a video series called

Tech Tidbits. Here, members submit quick videos taken onsite to show how they handle a technique, best practice or challenge.

Some of these new initiatives will be previewed at NPC's conference, which will be presented virtually this year. It takes place February 10 and 11, running live from 10:00 to 2:00 Central time each day. Content will be available to registrants for 30 days after the conference closes.

It will include 12 sessions — fewer than usual, since some sessions traditionally take place outside and, thus, can't be replicated online. NPC insists on certain things, however. As always, its ever-popular auction will take place both days at the midpoint, with Jay Eaton and his daughter Laura Eaton hosting. It will run 45 to 60 minutes each day.

PHOTO: NPC

An advertisement for AquaMatic Cover Systems. The main image shows a large, rectangular swimming pool with a blue cover, set in a lush green backyard. Overlaid on the image is the AquaMatic logo (a blue triangle with 'AQUAMATIC COVER SYSTEMS' text) and the word 'EXCELLENCE' in large, white, serif capital letters. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular seal that reads 'POOL AND SPA NEWS 2020 TOP 50 PRODUCTS'. In the bottom right corner, there is a smaller inset image showing a pool with a custom-printed cover featuring a pattern of green umbrellas and lounge chairs.

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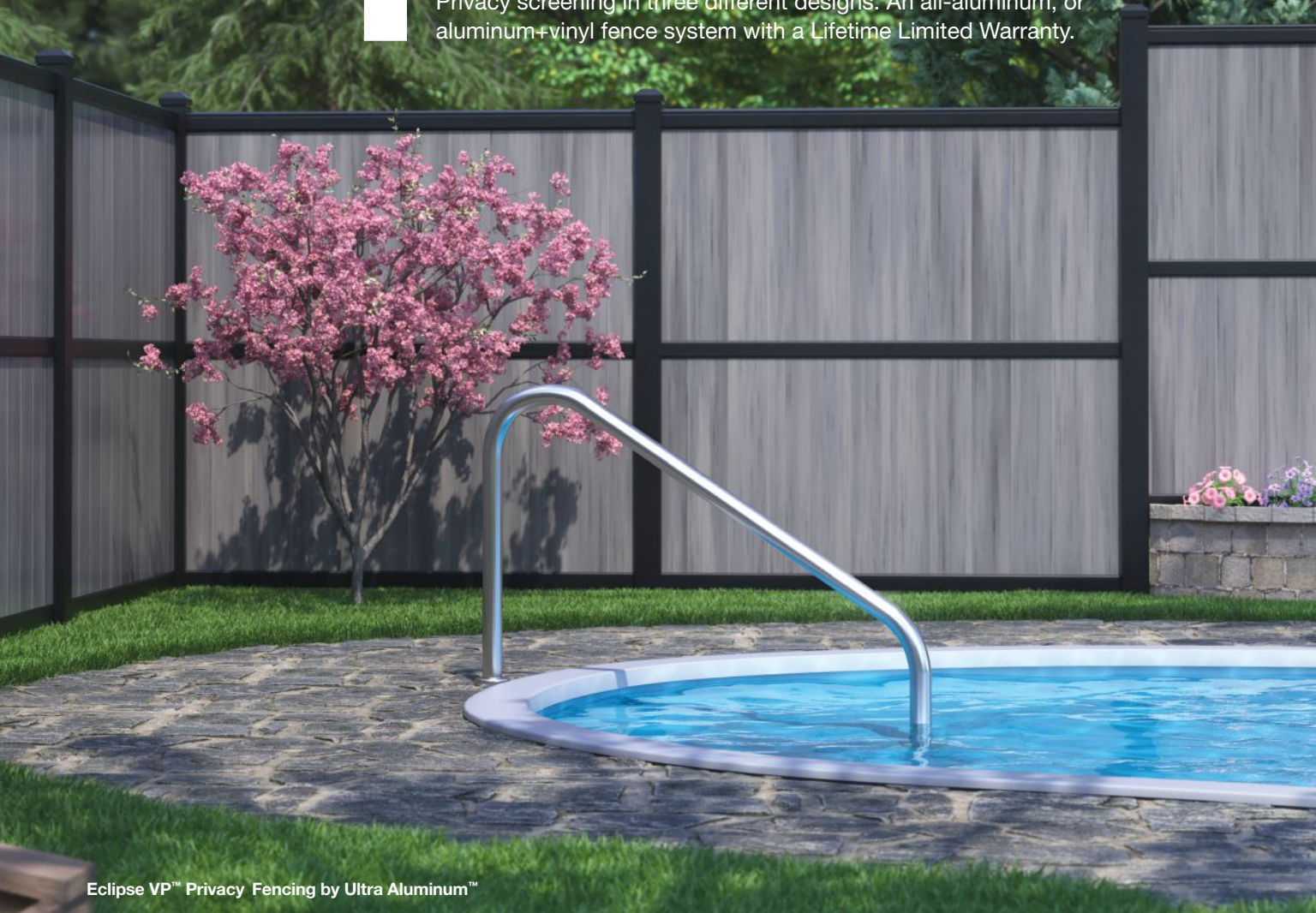
Looking for something different? Aquamatic is partnering with Artpoolcover to create specialized printed covers, imprinted with graphic images, playful designs, or your own photo.

When you want the best pool cover, ask for HydraMatic! EZ-Covers and HydraLux automatic covers are also available. Visit our website at www.aquamatic.com

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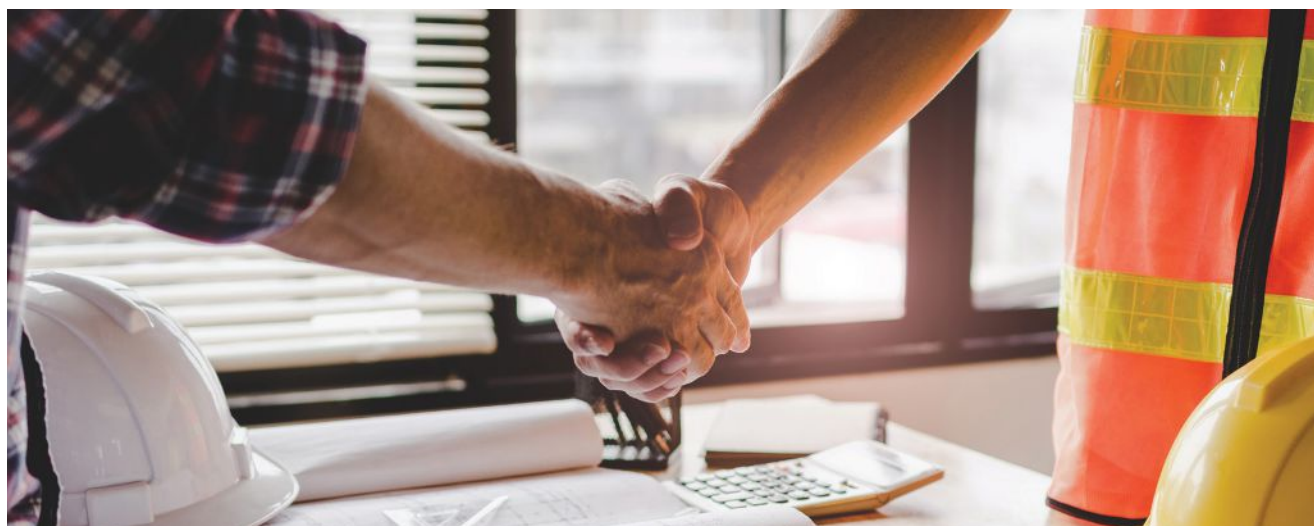
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How to Attract High-Quality Talent Using the Internet

Figure out your ideal applicant, and then keep them interested, spark their ambition, and encourage them to take action.

BY SUSAN SMITH



In today's recruitment market, it's more difficult than ever to attract high-quality talent. Getting the right person for the right job at the right time is a struggle at the best of times — let alone in the middle of a pandemic.

Learning to attract and recruit qualified job candidates online is crucial to this goal.

Thanks to the wonderful world of the internet, job seekers are able to access in-depth information about a company in an instant. They can research positions available, browse reviews regarding what kind of employer you are, and see exactly what you're made of with a simple click of a mouse. There are a variety of sources out there to post career opportunities on, such as local career sites, job boards, and social media platforms such as LinkedIn.

However, this just makes the battle to win good workers even harder. You have easy access to all these tools, but so do your competitors. You might get loads

of applicants, but they're not necessarily the right fit for your business.

So how do you increase the number of *qualified* job applicants applying for your positions through the World Wide Web?

START WITH THE RIGHT TARGET

First, let's take a minute to think about who you're looking for.

If you could clone your best employee, would you? Of course you would. Who doesn't want their best employee multiplied so they can provide hours upon hours of amazing work that keeps customers happy (and doesn't require hand-holding from you)?

So now that we know you're cloning your employee, who are you cloning? Do you have a picture in your mind of who you'd like to clone?

Now think about it. What are they like? What makes them so valuable to your company?

Once you've compiled all the details, it's time to make a profile based on this star employee. Here's an example to get you started:

Your ideal employee (let's call him James)

- 28
- Engaged
- Saving up for his first home
- Wants a family
- Is licensed
- Has a great work ethic
- Nice guy, always has a smile on his face
- Loves any challenge you throw at him
- Eager to learn new things every day
- Not afraid to put in the hard work
- Always looks to put in overtime
- Is interested in how things work
- Is a strong team player

Do you know a "James" in your workplace?

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Are they hardworking and exceptional at what they do? If so, keep them in your mind when writing up your job application. It'll make it easier to target the right talent if you've got a picture of who you want.

Now, take the profile we've created for James and compare it with the "generic profile" that's often posted on recruitment websites.

- Anyone who has a pulse
- Aged somewhere between 25 and 50
- Shows up for work
- Has their license
- Only does the bare minimum

Now, think about this: The generic profile works for their paycheck and their paycheck alone. They show up, clock in, clock out, that's it.

But your star employee, James, works because he believes in his job, takes pride in his work, wants to become something, strives to do the best job possible, and complete his goals.

Who would you prefer to work for

Focus on your star employee as the target audience when recruiting. He or she is the type of person you want in your business — and there are others like them out there.

you? James, of course. But, how does James help you recruit other staff?

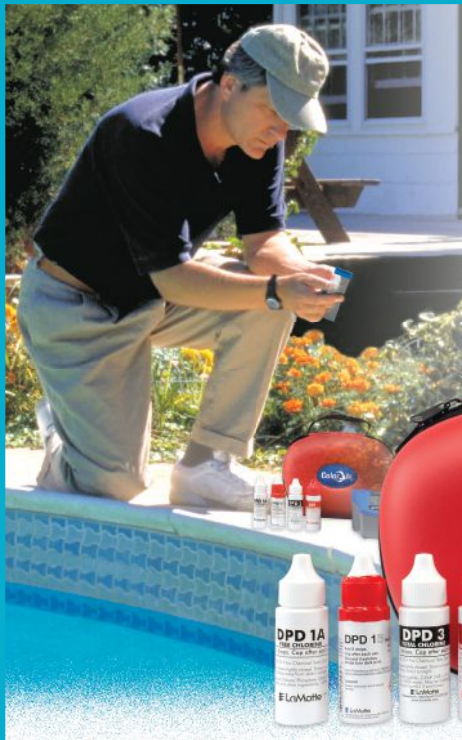
It's simple: Focus on James as the target audience when you are recruiting. He's the type of person you want in your business — and there are others like him out there. You just have to find them.

You can find employees just like James by:

- Focusing on applicant-centered recruiting rather than job-centered recruiting
- Writing job posts specifically catered for James or applicants like him
- Not writing a cold and impersonal job description
- Highlighting the benefits of working with you, not the demands of the position

REELING IN THE RIGHT CANDIDATES

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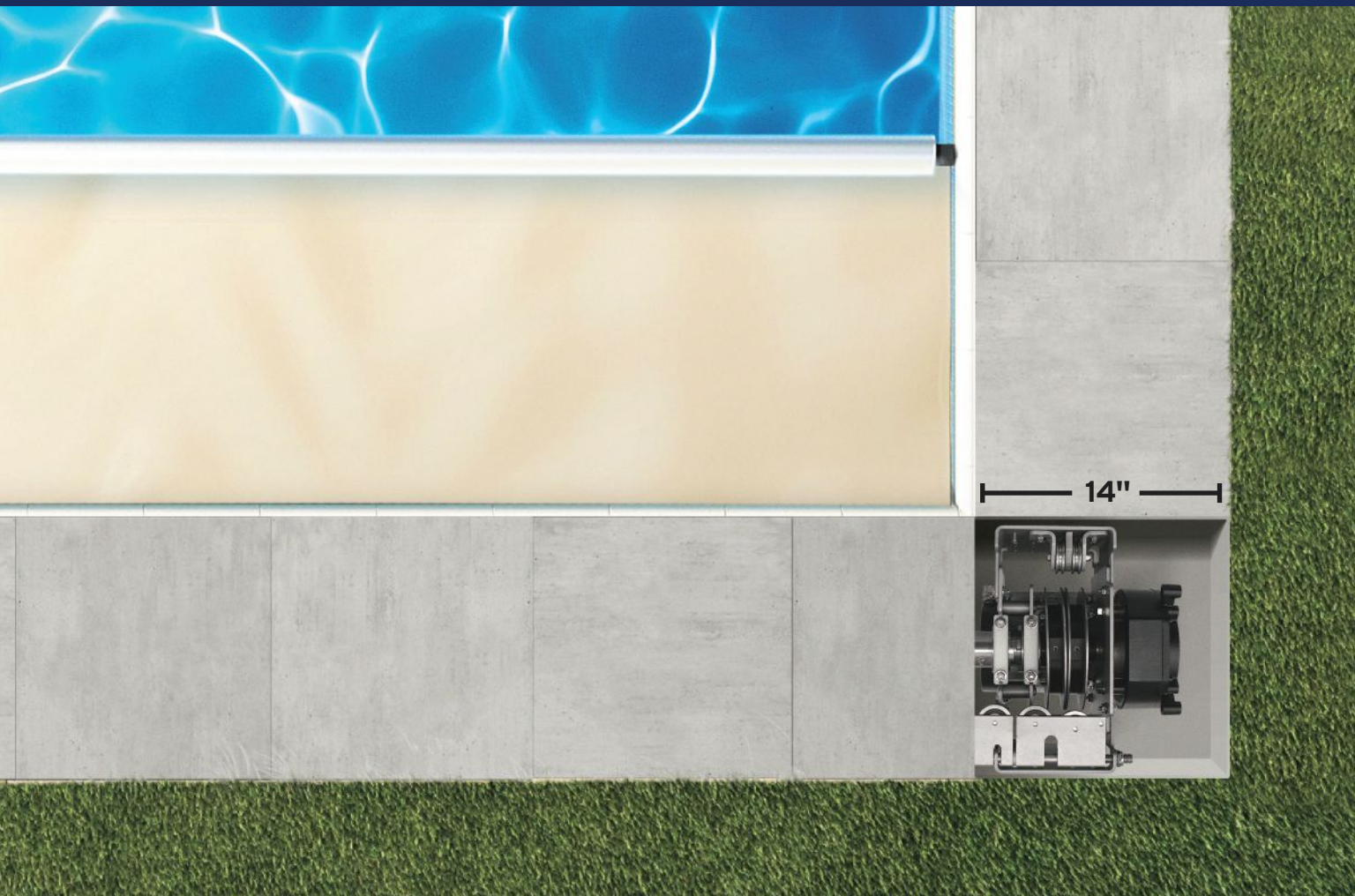
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Keep James' attention by:

- Leaving the option to learn more about the job;
- Showing off benefits that recent hires and current employees are enjoying;
- Being specific about what the job entails but staying concise. Long-winded sentences might make him stop reading;
- Always focusing on the applicant — not the job — and what you can do to help them;

THREE STEPS FOR SECURING QUALIFIED TALENT

1. Keep them interested.

If you want to keep James hooked, then you have to keep him reading. How do you do that?

- Avoid using industry jargon;
- Be specific;
- Show them what a day will be like working with you;

- Make sure your job listing can be easily accessed on mobile devices;

2. Spark their ambition.

Make them want that job.

The easiest way to do this is to tell them a story about your workplace. Get them engaged by how amazing it is to work for you. If you're placing the ad on your own site or on social media, include a video showing employee testimonials or showcasing your facilities and perks.

3. Encourage them to take action

You have one goal in this step: Don't lose them. Make it easy for them to get in contact with you to apply for the job. You can do this by:

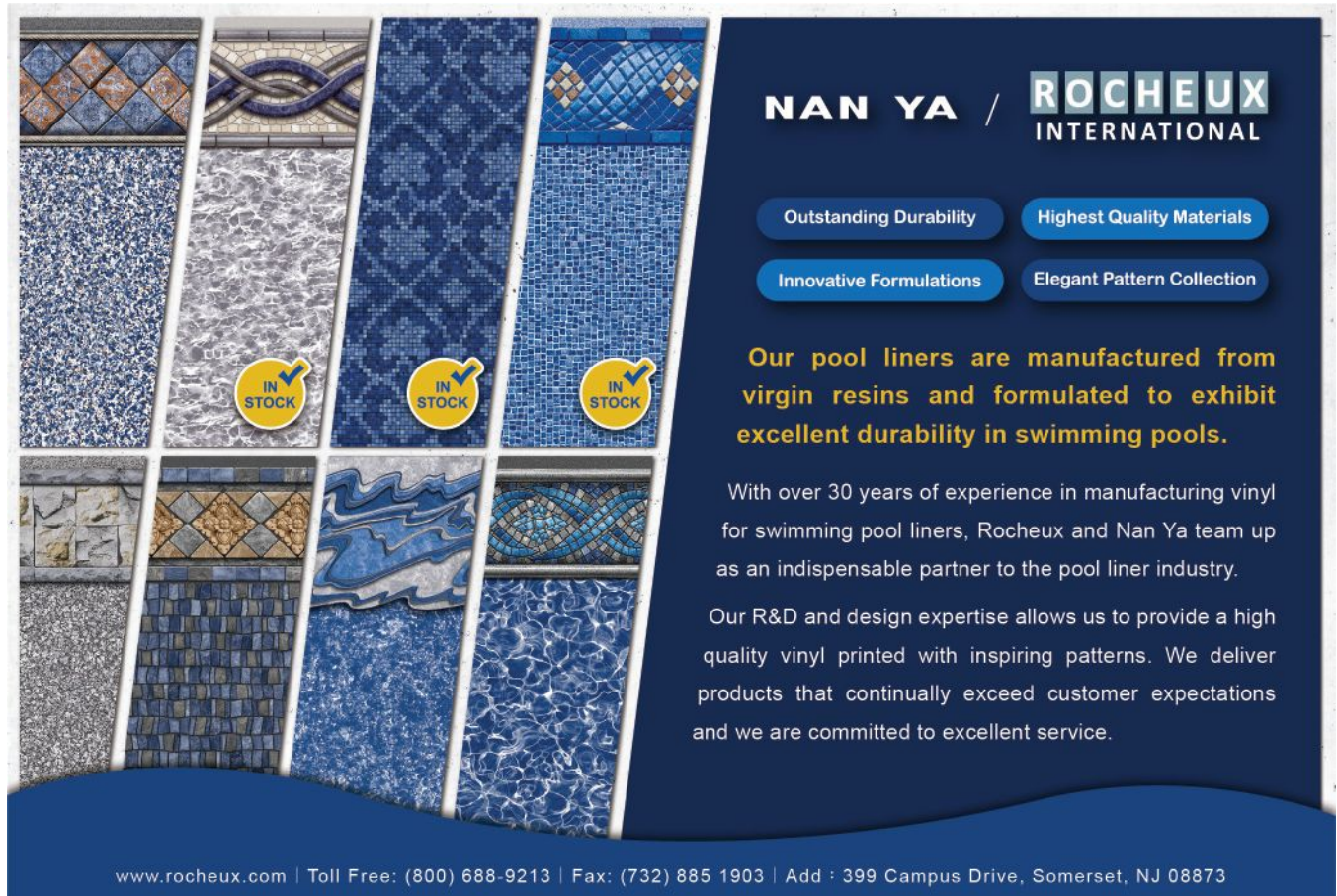
- Keeping online application forms short and only including the necessary information needed. Long, complicated application forms scare off applicants;
- Linking from the job ad straight to your careers page;

- Naming the best person to contact in relation to applications so they know who they're talking to;
- Including your phone number and email address;
- Telling them what to expect after applying.

By implementing these tips, you'll see an increase in the number of applicants you receive for open positions. But most important, you'll see a huge improvement in the quality of the applicants applying.

The next time you post a job advertisement online, try this approach and see the radical change in applicant quality and number.

Susan Smith is the founder of Just for Contractors, a digital agency that specializes in websites and digital marketing for the construction trades. She's been in construction since she was a kid — her dad owned a 100-plus-people tool and die business. This article originally appeared in our sister publication Builder.



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A Punch List That Won't Knock You Out

To keep the final phase of a job from derailing, make sure you address these nine items.

BY DENNIS DIXON



The final few days of a job can be the most difficult. You want to wrap things up and move on to the next project, and the homeowners are anxious to have the place to themselves. Often all that's between you and final payment is the punch list. I've learned from long experience that the best way to keep this last phase from derailing the job is to have a set of procedures in place and make sure the homeowners understand how they work.

I put what I call "close out, completion, and final payment procedures" into all of my agreements for new construction, remodeling, and commercial-tenant improvements. Since I believe an informed customer is a happy customer, I try to cover all the bases and use this section

Since I believe an informed customer is a happy customer, I try to cover all the bases and use this section of the contract to reinforce good communication and set expectations.

of the contract to reinforce good communication and set expectations. As a result, the homeowners understand the rules, and I get a road map on how to perform.

While I can't recommend specific language to include in your punch-list procedures — that's a job for your attorney — your contracts should address the concepts listed below.

PUNCH-LIST PREPARATION

I explain to homeowners that during the last few weeks of the project, I will begin to prepare a list of items that are incomplete or require adjustments, repairs, or touch-up. I also explain that I will present this list to them during a final inspection walk-through. While I

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make it clear that the homeowners are welcome to communicate their own list of items and concerns at any time during the project, the goal here is to make sure they understand that they can't add to the list after the walk-through. (I'll get to warranty items a little later.) Otherwise, I might show up at the site to find sticky notes sprouting like mushrooms.

Final payment. Most homeowners want to withhold the entire final payment until the punch list is completed. But punch-list work is usually small stuff that seldom adds up to anything even close to the amount of a final payment. So I itemize the list and put a price on everything, and the homeowner can withhold the total of those itemized prices or \$500, whichever is greater. The goal is to encourage communication and avoid a situation in which something like the late delivery of a special-order light fixture worth a few hundred dollars threatens to hold up a final payment of thousands of dollars. It might be a good idea to tie the

Homeowners are
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payment to the final inspection by a third party, like a building inspector or a lender. If the home is deemed fit to be occupied and the bank releases the needed funds, then it's difficult for the homeowner to argue for withholding the entire amount.

Timely completion. I specify that we will complete all punch-list items as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than 30 days from the final inspection by the appropriate building authority. In practice, we try to finish everything up before the final inspection, or at worst within 10 days of it. If something gets in the way of that happening (like a late special-order light fixture), we negotiate that part of the deal, and put the outcome in writing.

Homeowner responsibility. Some punch-list work may require moving, protecting, or even storing the homeowners' personal property — everything from artwork, clothing, and furniture to pets, rugs, and vehicles. We prefer that the homeowners handle this themselves,



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though they must agree to cooperate with us on timing. If we handle it, we state that we will not be held responsible for their personal property.

DAMAGES AFTER INSPECTION

Sometimes items are damaged after the walk-through. Maybe one of the movers pokes a hole in the screen door or fuzzes up the paint on a door molding while trying to jockey a rug into a bedroom. Though we usually perform these small repairs without making a fuss, our contract says that we do so at our discretion. This gives us control.

Speaking of control, sometimes things happen despite our best efforts. For example, once we installed an AC compressor just outside the back of a house, and the next morning we found that it had been stolen. Another time, the homeowner's children displaced freshly laid tile by walking on it too soon. Things like this (a neighborhood dog leaving paw prints in a freshly poured concrete



sidewalk, a gust of wind smearing fresh paint) are unfortunate but not our responsibility. Again, we are pretty generous about taking care of these kinds of problems, but our contract states that we are not obligated to make the repairs.

Utility service. Our punch-list procedures exclude us from liability for damage caused by an outage or surge from a utility serving the property. We added this in response to a problem we had one super-cold winter. One night the demand for natural gas was so high the pressure dropped in the entire neighborhood and shut down the gas appliances, including our clients' furnace. The pipes froze and we got the phone call. We responded and eventually the insurance companies worked it out, but we decided to address it in our contract to avoid similar problems in the future.

Limitations. A related issue has to do with finishes, textures, and overall appearances. For example, Ponderosa pine — a very messy tree — is common in Flagstaff where we do most of our work.

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Pine cones and sap often fall on decks and porches and can discolor the finish. Our contract explains that we are not obligated to repair, repaint, or replace materials that may be affected in this way.

Product performance. I once had a homeowner claim that the porch heaters we installed should be replaced because they generated too much heat. Another customer complained that the dishwasher made too much noise. While we are sympathetic to these complaints and try to help, we are not responsible for creating or resolving them.

WARRANTY ITEMS

We spell out warranty coverage in a separate section of the contract, but it's worth mentioning briefly here. Because it's easy to confuse a punch-list item with a warranty item, we specify what is covered by warranty. That way, if the air conditioner stops working, it won't hold up our final payment. We'll fix it, but not as part of the punch list. Our suppliers

It's important to anticipate how you will handle strange, Murphy's-law-type circumstances that impact your work — without taking responsibility for problems you didn't cause and shouldn't have to fix.

and subcontractors cooperate with us on this, and if we can, we try to be part of the solution. But we also make it clear that while a manufacturer warranty may cover parts, we have the right to charge for the labor required to make the repair.

This distinction can get tricky. We once had a homeowner complain that the burners on an expensive commercial gas range had discolored after just a few weeks of use. We worked with the manufacturer to replace the burners, but we explained that the discoloration was a normal part of everyday use and thus fell outside of both our warranty program and the manufacturer's. It's important to anticipate how you will handle strange, Murphy's-law-type circumstances that impact your work — without taking responsibility for problems you didn't cause and shouldn't have to fix.

Dennis Dixon is a licensed general contractor in Flagstaff, Ariz. This has been adapted from an article that originally ran in our sister publication, JLC.



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The Driver

As the first woman to chair the National Plasterers Council, Yvette Gammon parlays her business chops and an outlook shaped by childhood challenges.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



Yvette Gammon
NPC Chair

At the age of 9, Yvette Gammon learned some lessons about life that some of us never do.

What she experienced generally only comes to those 50 or so years older. “I had an aneurysm and a stroke,” says the National Plasterers Council Chair. “I spent some time in a wheelchair, and I was told I would never walk again. I was told I would never have a healthy [child].”

She did walk again, but she had to learn how to do it, as well as how to eat and dress herself. “I had to start all over again at age 9,” she says.

But she gained an outlook that has served her well throughout her life. “I appreciate the very small things in life, because I know what it feels like to basically lose your life and then wake up and you’re still here,” she says. “I learned that you have to fight to live — I had to fight to take that first breath. And it just made me very appreciative.”

This attitude has infused her accomplishments, whether co-founding a business in her adopted industry or taking the helm as the first female NPC chair. As she begins the second of her two-year term and prepares to oversee her first NPC Annual Conference in this position, get to know more about this history-making professional.

RESOURCEFUL TURN

Despite what her doctors said, Gammon did have a child. In fact, she was pregnant with him when she hatched the plan for Gammon Pools, a pool/spa surfacing and remodeling firm based in San Diego.

It was also in this period of her life that she showed some of the grit and perspective gained early in life. Though she had recovered from the stroke itself, she was left with an after affect. The brain surgery she underwent to repair the aneurysm

left her with epilepsy. While pregnant, she suffered a couple seizures, which kept her from working.

“When something [like that] happens to you at an early age, you go one of a couple ways,” Gammon says. “You either get angry and say, ‘The world owes me because this happened to me,’ or you ... say ‘I’m lucky. I’m blessed. I got another chance — and I need to do something with it.’”

She clearly chose the latter. She and her husband, Donnie — both San Diego natives — were a young couple and first-time parents-to-be. Donnie Gammon was already an accomplished plasterer, following the path originally carved into the pool/spa industry by his grandfather, then his father and aunt. He was working for some of the bigger plastering companies in the San Diego area.

“It runs very deep in his family,” Yvette Gammon says.

Meanwhile, with a Bachelors of Business degree and marketing minor from National University, she was benched from her position as a product marketing manager for semi-conductors. She was thinking about how the Gammons could best utilize Donnie’s talent and skills in the field and her business background.

“At that point, I was tinkering around with the business because I was bored,” she says. “I kept calling and saying, ‘Hey, this is getting exciting!’ And it blossomed from there.”

In 1998, they officially opened shop. Yvette Gammon would handle the business side of things, while Donnie Gammon would oversee construction. To keep their options open, in case it made sense to add new revenue streams in the future, she decided to call the company Gammon Pools.

“I figured from a marketing perspective, we could go in any direction,” she says. “I



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put us in a position where we were able to really look around, get a feel for what we wanted to do and give ourselves the time to figure out what that meant."

She also used her position as an industry-outsider to benefit the company, talking to as many people as she could to find out what gaps the local industry had that Gammon Pool could fill. Learning the construction industry's reputation for inconsistent customer service, she figured the company could distinguish itself in that arena.

Ultimately, the Gammons decided to maintain their specialty in pool surfacing and renovations and to keep the company small. "It gave us the ability to have that family business feeling," she says. This way, the Gammons could stay close to the work and clients, focusing on that high level of customer service.

SEAT AT THE TABLE

With the NPC, Gammon took the same approach.

The company joined soon after it started. She learned as much as she could from her more established peers.

"They seemed important and scary and really smart," Gammon says. "I was that wide-eyed person in the room looking up to all these people."

In relatively quick order, she joined the Board of Directors. "I was terrified," she says. "I had never sat on any type of board like this and, as a woman I was even more challenged. They all knew each other, they had created this organization, and I felt like the outsider. So I tried to keep my mouth shut and my eyes and ears open and learn."

While there, she has worked in several capacities, at different times heading the membership committee, the marketing committee and helping with the organization's start-up certification instruction.

"I'd had my hands in just about every pot you can think of," she says.

Last year, she was unexpectedly thrust into the top position, when the expected incoming chair was not able to take the helm. Outgoing Chair Lee Valenzuela hand-picked her. But this meant she would come in cold. Normally, one has the benefit serving two years as vice chair before taking over. But she didn't have this breaking-in period.

So far in her term, Gammon and the board have put the priority on preparing NPC for the future. She feels most proud of new programs to carry the organization into the digital age (see page 18). And she sees that the younger generation is beginning to claim its seat at the table.

"There are more women on the board now, there are younger faces on the board," Gammon says. "There's a new energy. I have people who are so motivated and excited about what's happened that I see the new age of NPC coming, and I feel like I am right at the forefront of it."



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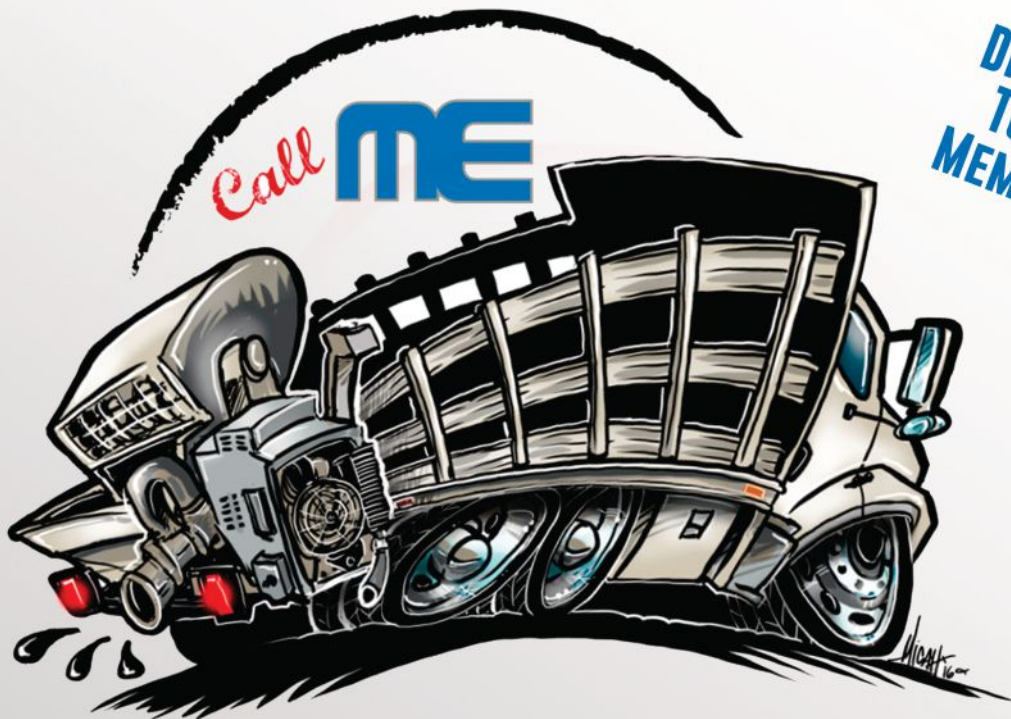
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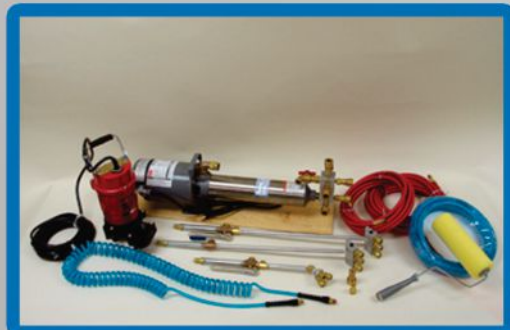


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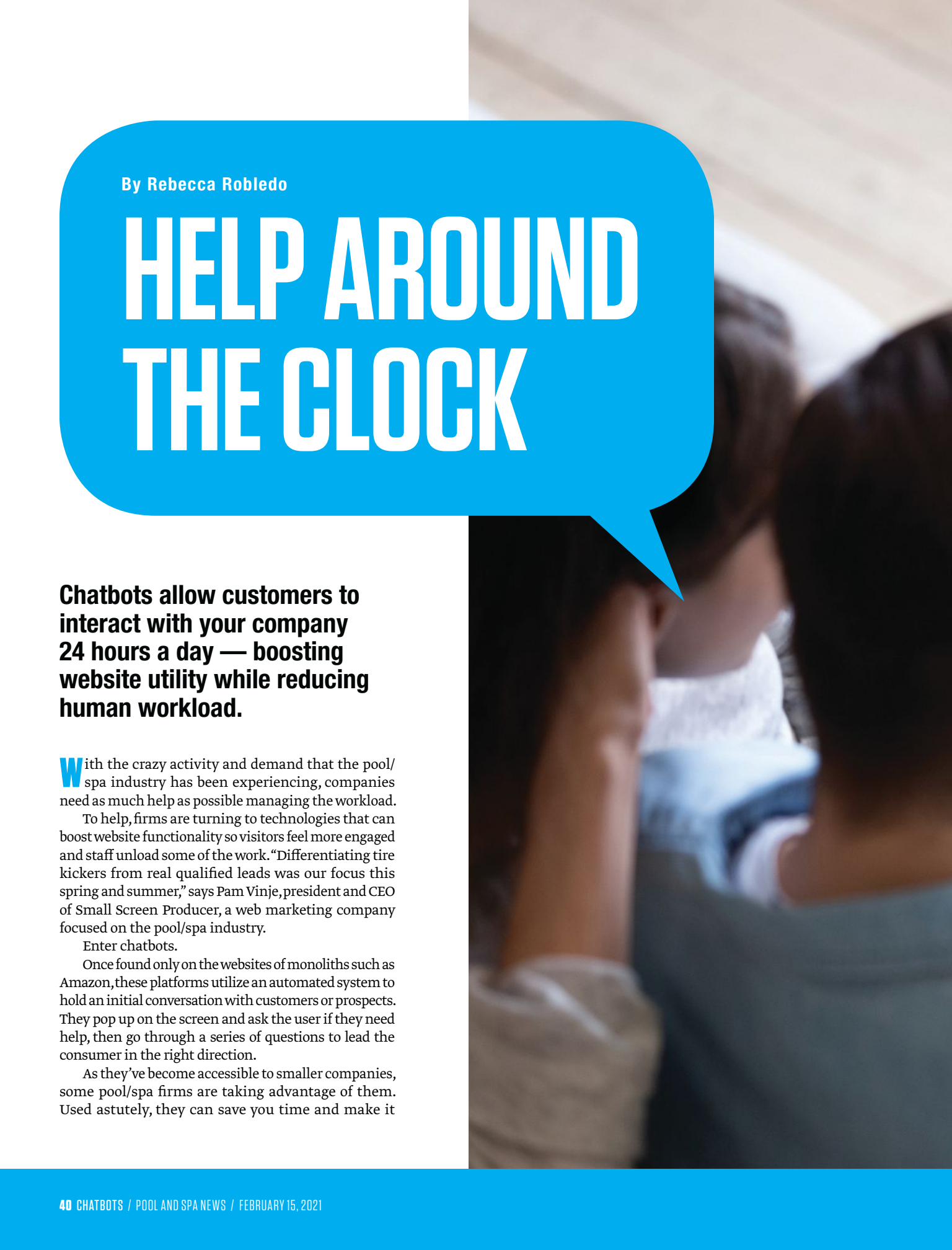


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By Rebecca Robledo

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Chatbots allow customers to interact with your company 24 hours a day — boosting website utility while reducing human workload.

With the crazy activity and demand that the pool/spa industry has been experiencing, companies need as much help as possible managing the workload.

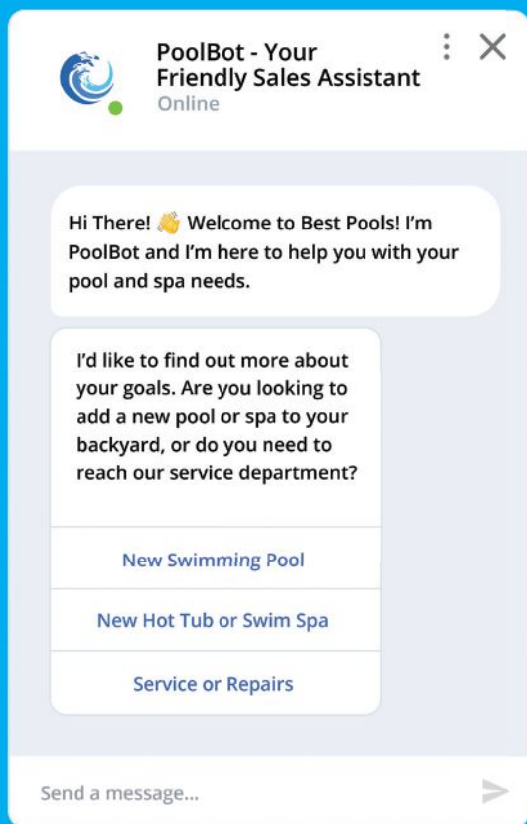
To help, firms are turning to technologies that can boost website functionality so visitors feel more engaged and staff unload some of the work. “Differentiating tire kickers from real qualified leads was our focus this spring and summer,” says Pam Vinje, president and CEO of Small Screen Producer, a web marketing company focused on the pool/spa industry.

Enter chatbots.

Once found only on the websites of monoliths such as Amazon, these platforms utilize an automated system to hold an initial conversation with customers or prospects. They pop up on the screen and ask the user if they need help, then go through a series of questions to lead the consumer in the right direction.

As they’ve become accessible to smaller companies, some pool/spa firms are taking advantage of them. Used astutely, they can save you time and make it





"WE ARE TRYING TO CREATE THE WEBSITE AS A 24/7 SALES MACHINE."

upkeep, Vinje says. They often just require the application of a code on the back end.

These often rely on human backup to type in the answers, Barrocas says, requiring more time and expertise to manage.

Among small business, such as those in the pool/spa industry, decision-tree chatbots are most commonly found. These ask web visitors a series of questions and provide choices to help narrow down and pinpoint their needs.

For those who want a more customized chatbot decision tree without as much work setting up and fine-tuning, marketing professionals such as the experts quoted here can help. They can customize the workflows — the chains or funnels of questions and responses that lead to the resolution — to provide the right information and a good experience for the consumer.

"The difficult part is organizing the information into a flow that makes sense so that people don't jump off," Vinje says.

More sophisticated systems use natural language processing, which allow customers to type in a question and respond with an answer. But those haven't become common among small businesses yet, Barrocas says.

Expectation management

In their effort to save time, more people prefer to delay making human contact with a company and prefer to work with automated services, says Scott Reynolds, CEO of The Get Smart Group, a digital marketing agency that specializes in the pool/spa industry, based in Angels Camp, Calif.

While chatbots appeal to that tendency, they also can become very frustrating if expectations are not managed, he adds. A visit can turn sour very quickly if the user expects a human response, only to realize they're communicating with a bot

easier for website visitors to engage with your company. Applied inappropriately, however, they can prove frustrating for potential customers.

Here, experts discuss this technology and provide advice on implementing it to maximum benefit.

What they do — and what they don't

To best utilize this technology, users should understand their purpose and limitations.

Chatbots are not meant to completely replace human interactions. At this point in their development, they will not answer complex questions or close sales. Instead, they perform like something of a traffic cop or gatekeeper. They can relieve staff of some basic phone-answering duties, providing basic information such as store hours, or gathering cursory information from the client then directing them to the best professional to address their needs. Not only can they sift out tire kickers, but they can gather information on serious prospects, making for a quicker, easier

sales call when that does happen.

Chatbots also can enliven a website and make it more useful. "Forever, websites have been built like brochures: You click on a website, and you're looking at hot tub models, but there's no way to convert a sale," Vinje says. "We are trying to create the website as a 24/7 sales machine."

This helps keep customers on the site longer. One marketing specialist that has worked with pool/spa firms, Local IQ, found that 2- to 5% of site visitors engage with the chatbot, compared with the traditional 1- to 2% of browsers who convert from passive browsers to active prospects. "Chat really helps capture leads and visitors that otherwise would have bounced from your site," says Olga Barrocas, senior product manager for Local IQ, the marketing solutions division of Gannett, which serves more than 300,000 small businesses in the U.S.

Chatbots come in different forms. Do-it-yourself chatbot platforms are available for companies to install on their own and operate for a monthly fee. They're generally easy to install for those accustomed to website



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“GIVE THEM TWO OR THREE OPTIONS AT EVERY STAGE. IF YOU GIVE MORE THAN THAT, IT GETS OVERWHELMING.”

that can't answer their specific question.

Experts suggest immediately disclosing that the user is communicating with a bot. Handle this in the greeting. “Right out of the gate, say something like, ‘I’m the ABC Pools chatbot, and I’m here to answer your common questions,’” Reynolds says.

You can even include a photo or drawing of a robot, rather than a human, to help convey this, Barrocas adds.

At some point, most customers will need to be handed off to a human — often at their request. When this happens, use the opportunity to collect their information. More importantly, when promising to send their information to the staff, make clear when they can expect to hear back. Otherwise, the user will expect a fairly immediate call, Reynolds advises. If they don't hear back quickly, they can become angry.

“If the [user] wants to talk to a person, we ask for their name, phone number and email address and say, ‘We will forward this to someone who will get back to you within 24 hours,’” Reynolds says as an example. “That seems to break that cycle of anger.”

This also is a good time to let potential customers know if it will take a while to receive their products. Whether it's construction backlogs or supply-chain issues, let them know if they'll need to wait several weeks or months for their products.

Smooth exchange

To make the exchange as pleasant as possible for the user, it is also necessary to establish easy-to-understand and effective workflows. So spend time and thought on your scripts, whether working with a professional or handling it on your own.

The wording from your chatbots should be very leading — try to avoid the opportunity for freeform answers. Most of the

time, you'll want to take a multiple-choice approach as you zero in on what they need.

For instance, many companies begin by asking what product or service category a customer is interested in — pools, hot tubs, service, etc. Then they use the next question to narrow it down further. If they choose “pools,” you can ask if they're inquiring about inground or aboveground pools. Those who choose inground can be asked if they want concrete, vinyl-liner or fiberglass. After making that choice, they can be given options such as “view galleries,” “download resources,” or “speak with service rep.”

“You really have to guide them down the path and give them two or three options at every stage,” Reynolds says. “If you give more than that, it gets overwhelming for them.”

If they choose “service,” you can ask if they want regular maintenance, openings, closings, repairs. If that's what they want, the chatbot can provide a form. Give extra thought to whether you want to handle appointments through the bot, Reynolds says. Some companies find that a human should speak with the customer first, to

get the specifics about their pool and/or spa and any issues they are having.

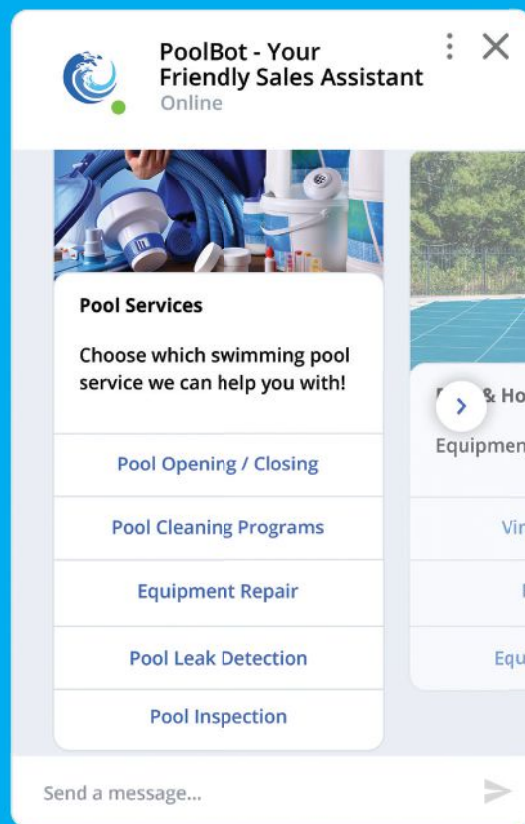
Most often, they'll be asking a simple question that is answered in the website's FAQ page. Other times, they want to schedule an appointment. Either way, try to pinpoint what they need by the fourth or fifth question, these experts recommend.

If a form is the answer, make sure to keep these simple, too, Barrocas advises. It's tempting to ask tons of in-depth questions to help jump-start your in-person interactions, but the user's attention span may not last that long. Remember, people choose the chatbot because they want to save time.

“The quicker they can submit their inquiry the better,” Barrocas says. “Those additional questions can be gathered and answered by the live receptionist or live staff.” It can seem less arduous to go over this information in conversation, she added.

Place your best sales writer in charge of writing the scripts, and bring appropriate staffer together to gather input when writing bot responses.

Keep the exchange conversational,



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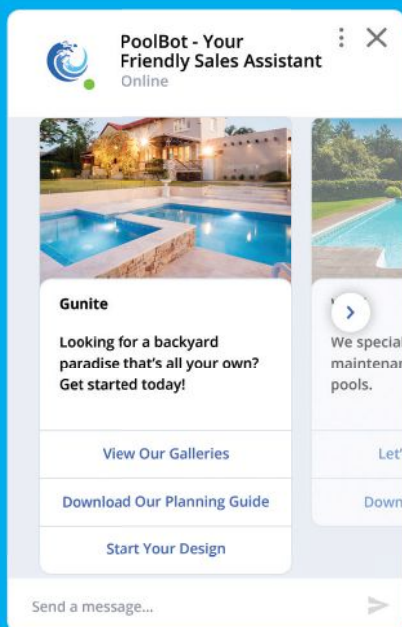
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Reynolds says. Language that's stilted and formal — or robotic — can be a bit too on the nose. Feel free to use humor and even emojis. "You can say something like, 'I can help you with plenty of things, and if I can't, I'll find one of my human overlords to help you out,'" he says. "Lots of tongue-in-cheek humor goes a long way."

Platform of choice

When choosing a chatbot platform, look for one that will integrate with your customer relationship management (CRM) system, Reynolds suggests, so you can maximize its usefulness.

This way, the bot can send gathered information to the CRM as it triggers a notification for the next action, whether it be setting an appointment or emailing brochures and other materials that will help the consumer in the meantime.

Reynolds and his team also chose a chat platform that integrates directly with Facebook Messenger. This way, the chat conversation can carry across

devices through Facebook. "If you start a conversation when they're browsing your website and they click the chat button on their phone, it opens up in Facebook Messenger," he says. Now they chat with you on their phone, go to bed, and when they get to their computer in the morning, the same chat is there."

Consumers who don't use Facebook can chat as guests, but the conversation will not transfer devices.

Facebook doesn't charge for this service in its native format. However, it has limited functionality. Additionally, this requires that any employee who monitors or responds to chat gain access to the company's Facebook page, leaving open the hazard that somebody could accidentally post something on the company page that was meant for their personal page.

To provide more functions and avoid any mis-postings, Reynolds works with a tool that integrates directly with Facebook and only provides employees access to the chat.

IMAGE: SMALL SCREEN PRODUCER



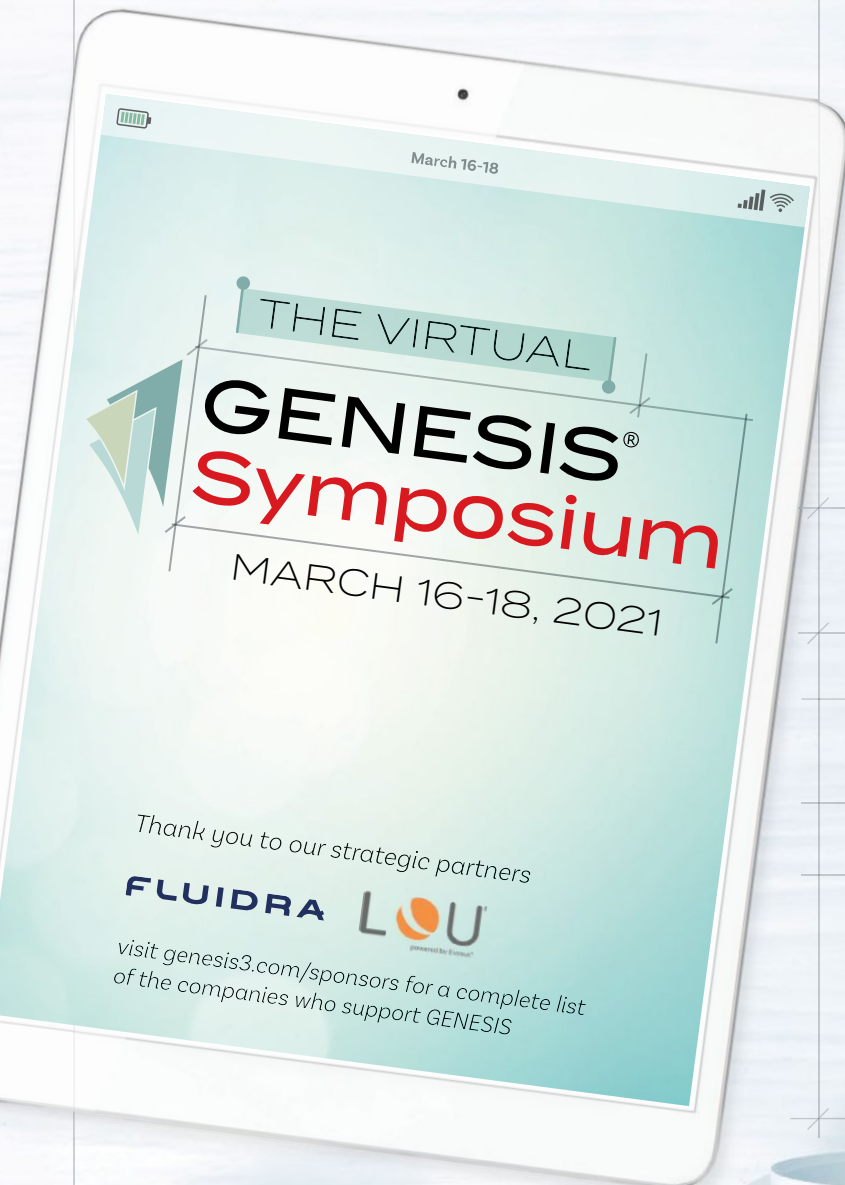
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GETTING
THE
MOST
FROM
YOUR

CHLORI

BY EMILY JOHNSON



NE

To help with product shortages, make this sanitizer work as efficiently as possible.

In order to protect customers from harmful microorganisms, pool-care experts and pool owners alike should have an understanding of sanitization. Sanitizers protect swimmers by killing pathogens introduced from sources such as rain, source water, swimmers, and nearby vegetation.

Chlorine is the most commonly preferred among these products. Demand for granular and tableted types will likely remain high in 2021. To meet this need while working with expected shortages, improving chlorine's efficiency will be essential to satisfying customers. Professionals can help maximize chlorine's efficiency through such factors as chemical balance, considering the characteristics of the sanitizer pro-

gram of choice, and incorporating supplemental products into maintenance routines will. If this is done correctly, customers can safely enjoy their backyard investments.

WHY CHLORINE IS EFFECTIVE

Chlorine has been the preferred disinfectant for drinking and recreational water since the early 1900s. It kills quickly because it is toxic to many organisms.

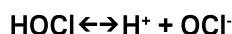
When chlorine is added to pool or spa water, hypochlorous acid (HOCl) forms, along with a negatively charged hypochlorite ion (OCl⁻). Hypochlorous acid, the most active killing form of chlorine, has a neutral charge, allowing it to easily penetrate the negatively charged cell walls of most microorganisms.

The most popular testing methods available to pool professionals will detect both the beneficial hypochlorous acid and the less desirable hypochlorite. Keeping free chlorine available at 1 to 4 parts per million is the most important task to ensure safe water. It takes effort, but there are strategies worth examining that will be effective.

WATER BALANCE

Balanced water is not only important for protecting pool surfaces, but is also important to chlorine's efficiency.

When chlorine is administered to the water, it dissociates into hypochlorous acid and hypochlorite.



Hypochlorous acid is the killing form needed to sanitize and oxidize.

Chlorine is most effective when maintained in neutral environments with a pH range of 7.4 to 7.6. Water with a lower pH shifts the equilibrium to the left side of the equation, producing more hypochlorous acid. If the pH exceeds 7.6, the equilibrium shifts to generate more hypochlorite, which is about 80-100 times less effective at sanitizing. Negatively charged microorganisms are repelled by the less effective hypochlorite's negative charge and won't be effectively killed.

INFLUENCE OF TOTAL ALKALINITY AND SANITIZER TYPE

As seen in the chart, keeping the pH in range is very important to chlorine's effectiveness. Total alkalinity helps to control pH balance more effectively. A total alkalinity below 40 ppm causes difficult-to-correct pH swings. It also can decrease the pH, which impacts swimmer comfort and can be detrimental to pool surfaces and equipment.

These effects on alkalinity are important when evaluating the options for a

chlorine-based sanitization program. The sodium hydroxide by-product introduced by salt chlorinators or sodium hypochlorite creates an acid demand, resulting in cloudy water if not corrected quickly. Acid will be needed to account for this change and keep the water balanced. At the opposite end of the spectrum, trichlor's acidity over time erodes total alkalinity depending on the amount applied and the pH balance of source and rain water.

Total alkalinity should be measured weekly and maintained at 80-150 ppm to maintain pH between 7.2 and 7.6. This range helps keep the proper amount of hypochlorous acid available for disinfection and maximize its efficiency in the pool water.

LIQUID CHLORINE

It is anticipated that the 2021 pool season will see a rise in the use of liquid chlorine by pool service professionals and consumers, because it is easy to use and economically advantageous.

In a 10,000-gallon pool, 10.7 fluid ounces of standard 12% sodium hypochlorite increases free chlorine by 1 ppm. Using stabilizer will help protect chlorine from rapid degradation caused by sunlight and ultraviolet rays. Unstabilized chlorine has a half-life of only 35 minutes. Properly stabilizing a pool using liquid chlorine will allow free chlorine to last six times longer. Keeping an adequate stabilizer residual reduces the need for constant replenishment to maintain a proper free chlorine residual.

To further get the most out of your sanitizer, climate control of stored chemicals will be crucial, because sodium hypochlorite's shelf life is adversely affected by heat.

pH	%HOCl	%OCl ⁻
7.0	76	24
7.2	66	34
7.5	50	50
7.8	33	67
8.0	24	76

With just a 10° F temperature increase, 10-15% sodium hypochlorite decreases its potency almost 3 times as fast. Higher concentrations of liquid chlorine also degrade faster, an effect that is further accelerated by increased summer temperatures. Paying close attention to this during transportation and storage will be critical to insuring that maximum-strength liquid chlorine is applied every time.

Liquid chlorine's typical pH of approximately 13 raises the water's pH. This doesn't just diminish hypochlorous acid output, but it also increases the propensity of calcium carbonate precipitation when added to the pool, which can result in prolonged cloudy water or scale deposits on pool surfaces and equipment in areas of hard water. To account for this pH shift, standard application of liquid chlorine into 10,000 gallons will likely require 10 to 16 fl. oz. of muriatic acid, or 12 to 20 oz. of dry acid, accompanied with a scale inhibitor for maximum protection.

OXIDATION IMPORTANCE

The addition of a weekly maintenance oxidizer is another important tool to maximizing sanitization efficiency.

Applying a weekly shock to prevent buildup will garner better customer satisfaction, and cost less overall. Some professionals only apply oxidizers to remediate major issues, such as an algae outbreak or cloudy water. But, as with most things, prevention is important for pool care success. During oxidation, electrons transfer between hypochlorous acid and its target. Each atom has a preferred oxidation state based on its periodic table location, which controls the reaction. To oxidize

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effectively, both chlorine and its target will need to change their oxidation states. Hypochlorous acid generates chlorine at a +1 state and needs to decrease to a state of -1, which happens as hypochlorous acid interacts with most organisms.

Nitrogen and many nitrogenous compounds are a common target for chlorine because they react with chlorine so readily. To prevent nitrogenous compounds from remaining in a form that will continue to react with the free chlorine needed for proper sanitization, maintenance shocking should be performed weekly, as well as after rain storms or heavy use to enable chlorine to primarily focus on sanitization.

Prevention is an easy way to avoid fighting an uphill and likely expensive battle with superchlorination or water dilutions.

ANCILLARY PRODUCTS

Algaecides

Most algae growth is suppressed under an adequate chlorine residual, however algae stresses chlorine and diminishes sanitization efficacy.

Because of this, it is important to use a

weekly algaecide to prevent growth, especially as temperatures rise during pool season. Quat algaecides behave like detergents and are cationic antimicrobial agents that bind to negatively charged membranes of algae's cell walls to destroy the cell. Quats are economical but can cause foaming if overdosed, or in pools with added agitation from spillover fountains or attached spas. In these situations, algaecides containing chelated copper or polyquats become more appropriate. Polyquats behave similarly to quats but do not foam.

Eustigmatos, a stubborn form of green algae, contains the powerful antioxidant beta-carotene. Beta-carotene's antioxidant properties protect the cell from chlorine oxidation. Using a more specialized algaecide with copper circumvents this challenge.

It's always a better practice to incorporate a preventative algaecide on top of thorough brushing in regular maintenance. This alleviates some of chlorine's burden, and lessens the demand on chlorine so it can focus on sanitizing.

Enzymes

To maximize chlorine efficiency, professionals should also consider ways to

prevent water-quality problems before they develop.

Chlorine and adequate filtration will remove visible contaminants from the water, but oils and dirt inevitably deposit along the waterline. An enzyme is a naturally derived catalytic protein used to break organic matter down into more manageable forms. Enzymes can be highly specialized and often picked for certain wastes. One type of enzyme, protease, breaks down nitrogenous amino acids. Another enzyme, lipase, hydrolyzes fats and oils. Often, multiple enzymes are paired together to target more than one type of problem. For better performance, enzyme and surfactants are often a part of dual-action formulas, as they have a synergistic relationship. With surfactants, a hydrophobic "tail" attaches to oils at the surface, while a hydrophilic "head" lifts oils from the surface where they enter the water to be broken down and removed by filtration. These also help prevent oily buildup in the filter. The elimination of these oxidizable non-living wastes reduces the demand on chlorine and improves the overall water quality.

CONCLUSION

After the challenges experienced globally throughout 2020 with increased demand on pool supplies and products, it is important to plan for similar conditions in the upcoming season.

With COVID-19 still a major influence on the pool industry and homeowners alike, finding ways to add efficiencies into pool maintenance routines is key to delivering on the expectations of a homeowner's backyard investment. Understanding how the basics of pool care can impact water quality and what additional technologies can maximize sanitizer performance will be important, as it is typically more successful and less costly to remove the things that present challenges before they become major problems.

Emily Johnson has been working for R&D at BioLab, a KIK Custom Products Company, since 2014. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences with a Chemistry minor from the University of South Carolina.

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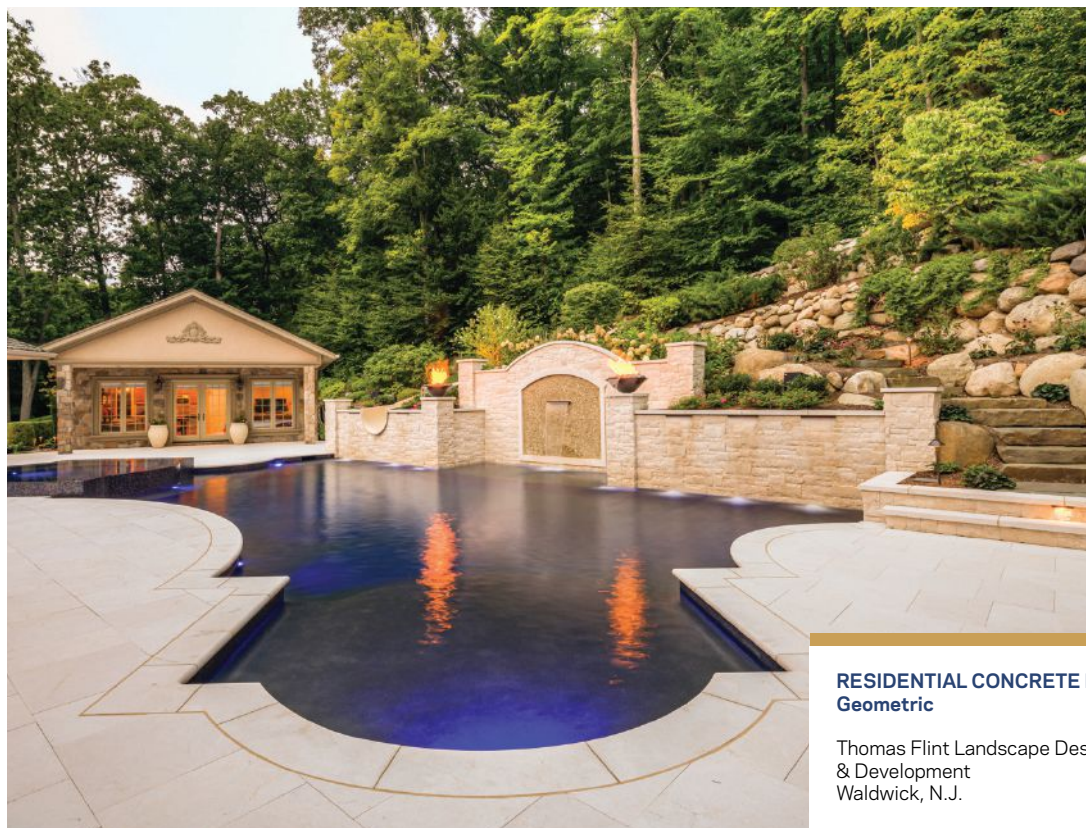
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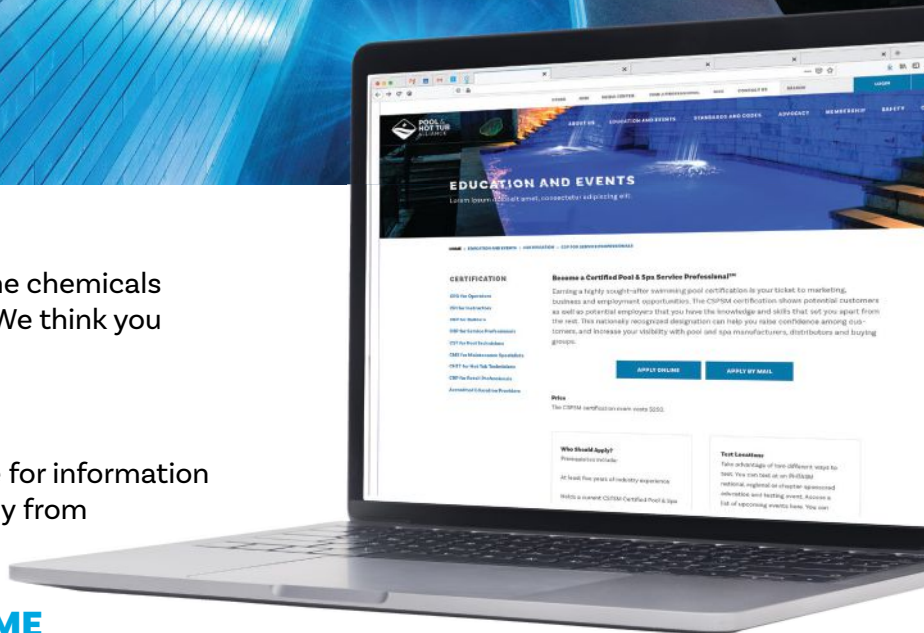
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Contact: FluidraUSA.com

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LaMotte Co.

Product: ColorQ 2x PRO 7 Kit

Features: eliminates the need to visually determine slight color variations using an innovative dual-optic design with wider path-length; packaged in a compact carrying case for on-site testing.

Contact: lamotte.com



Ledge Loungers

Product: Signature Slide

Features: designed for water depths of 0-12 inches, the Signature Slide has a smooth slide area, slip resistant steps and rounded edges to create a safe space for hours of fun

Contact: ledgeloungers.com



Lo-Chlor

Product: Miraclear Tab Display Box

Features: this easy-sell product is ideal for high traffic areas in pool retail stores; unique gel tab formulation removes particles too small to otherwise be filtered; provides clear, sparkling water for 30 days

Contact: lo-chlor.com



Lyon Financial

Product: Pool & Home Improvement Loan Solutions

Features: firm offers terms up to 20 years, no consulting fees, no prepayment penalties, and low, fixed rates; company's experience is unique to swimming pools, not just any type of loan!

Contact: lyonfinancial.net



Natural Chemistry

Product: Pool Perfect Max

Features: formulated to work as a continuous filter cleaner, removing maintenance levels of problem-causing phosphates, reducing scrubbing of scum lines and waterline rings

Contact: naturalchemistry.com



PAL Lighting

Product: PAL Sonar Replacement LED Bulb

Features: with underwater wireless color control. This patent protected product operates using low frequency wavelength which allows the end user to control their pool light via remote handset or App

Contact: pallighting.com



Century, a Regal Brand

Product: VGreen 165 Variable Speed Motor

Features: The VGreen 165 is a durable energy-efficient replacement pool pump motor known for its ease of installation and premium energy savings of up to 80% versus a single speed motor, per maker.

Contact: pool-motors.com



Speck Pumps — Pool Products

Product: BADU SwimJet Systems

Features: The in-the-wall BADU SwimJet Systems now come with new LED touch buttons; redesigned control box with new digital circuit boards come with built-in Wi-Fi to connect to the BADU Connect App.

Contact: usa.speck-pumps.com



WATERCO USA

Product: Multicyclone Cyclonic Powered Filtration

Features: This filter spins out debris down to 5 microns and is ideal for new and existing installations. It works with all equipment brands and extends media filter cleaning cycles by at least four times

Contact: waterco.us



Water Tech Corp.

Product: Precision 2.0 Li

Features: this battery operated pool cleaner now has reinforced the battery and motor compartment that incorporates new sealing process; easy, push-button on-off switch, completely cordless

Contact: watertechcorp.com

Product Profiles: Automatic Pool Cleaners



Q360+

The Q360+ automatic pool cleaner works using flow not pressure.

It automatically cleans your pool while users relax, circulating water and chemicals to every square inch of the pool. The Q360+'s valve circulates with today's latest energy efficient pumps, and is independently proven to reduce chemicals and energy costs, according to company officials.

"It's a revolutionary product — the valve is flow based and easy to install and maintain," says Mandy Pascua, Blue Square's national sales and marketing manager. "The Q360 Performance Plus cleaning jets deliver more cleaning distance and more efficiency than ever."

Marketing materials are available to download on the company's website or literature by request.

Technical support is available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-3 p.m., Arizona time by calling 480-612-6880.

The cleaners come with a 3-year with optional limited lifetime warranty.

Contact: Blue Square Manufacturing | bluesquaremfg.com



Aquabot Rapids 1500

BWT's Aquabot Rapids 1500 is an automated pool cleaner equipped with the patented AquaSmart Gyro System.

The cleaner can brush, vacuum and micro-filter dirt, debris and contaminants from the pool's floor, walls and waterline in the shortest amount of time while preventing cable tangling.

Contact: BWT | bwt.com



Polaris EPIC Robotic Cleaner Series

The new Polaris EPIC cleaners are designed to provide greater agility with a new rear flow outlet that helps propel the cleaner up inclines and over obstacles, and introduce a dual-traction motor that enables brushes to rotate independently — providing greater maneuverability with a tighter turn radius.

These cleaners also incorporate a Track Wheel design constructed of a continuous treaded wheelbase that increases the surface area resulting in better traction — making it ideal for climbing walls, stairs and other obstacles (such as the main drain) while creating a strong area of suction beneath the cleaner.

Additionally, all three EPIC cleaners come with a new patent-pending Double Helix brush — a split-brush composed of strategically staggered rubber blades that gently agitate stuck-on dirt and draw debris in, channeling it towards the large inlet for more effective cleaning.

Contact: Fluidra | fluidraUSA.com

poolspanews.com

is the resource for exclusive online content, new and innovative product information, and the comprehensive POOL AND SPA NEWS Directory—the industry's comprehensive business resource list.



AquaNaut 450

The patented self-adjusting variable vanes of AquaNaut's V-Flex technology provide maximum power at almost any flow (perfect for use with variable-speed pumps) while virtually eliminating clogs, says Patrick Caty, Hayward's senior global product manager: automatic pool cleaners.

By adjusting automatically, the turbine vanes allow large debris to pass easily through the cleaner. AquaNaut's four-wheel drive capability allows it to quickly and completely clean standard-sized pools (up to 16-by-32 feet) and even those with deep ends. It can also be adapted for pools up to 20-by-40 feet with an upgrade kit.

The patented robust tire treads provide superior climbing power on any surface and easy navigation of obstacles such as main drains. AquaNaut's patented adjustable roller skirt ensures it never loses suction on uneven surfaces or obstacles. Three easily interchangeable throats improve suction performance at lower flow and allow larger debris to pass.

Contact: Hayward | hayward.com



Dolphin M400 Robotic Pool Cleaner

The Dolphin M400 is designed to provide a superior cleaning solution for all pool types up to 50 feet in length.

Utilizing a smart navigation technology called CleverClean, this cleaner scans and cleans a pool in 2.5 hours. It's equipped with a dynamic dual drive motor, three scrubbing brushes, and durable tracks. It's designed to effectively remove leaves, dirt and debris on the floor, walls and waterline — leaving your pool sparkling clean.

This cleaner also uses Bluetooth technology to connect it to a smart phone, allowing users to set the weekly scheduler and control the Dolphin via the MyDolphin App.

"In my opinion, the best thing about the M400 is its reliability," says Brittany Brock, Maytronics' marketing specialist. "I often refer to it as the 'workhorse' because it's easy to use and gets the job done, every time."

Contact: Maytronics | maytronicsus.com



Product Profiles: Chemicals



All Clear Professional Pool and Spa Chemicals

If there's a problem or a watercare need for a pool or spa, the All Clear line has an application for it.

Manufactured for more than 50 years, this complete line has eight selling categories.

The list includes large and small stabilized chlorinating tablets, granulated stabilized chlorinating products, algaecide products, non-chlorine sanitizer and acid/PH decreaseers.

The 3-inch tablets and sticks are extremely hard and slowdissolving.

Dealers and consumers love the All Clear Professional Pool and Spa Chemicals, from the quality of the child-resistant packaging to the attractive color-coding system, according to the company.

Technical support is provided on the website, where SDS's are posted for all products.

Contact: Aqua Tri | Irvine, Calif. | aquatri.com



Spa No Phos

New for 2019, Spa No Phos is a naturally formulated hot tub water additive that helps remove phosphates from spa water.

Phosphates can enter the water through a variety of ways, including source water from the tap, laundry detergents off bathing suits, cosmetics and other chemicals.

Phosphates can impede sanitizer performance, especially in salt water hot tubs, so removing them from the water helps overall water maintenance.

"Finally, a phosphate remover for hot tubs," says Mark Ridpath, sales and marketing manager for Capo Industries. "Spa No Phos is specifically formulated for the use in hot tub water with correct dosages for hot tub water volumes."

Technical support can be found by calling 800.263.8250.

Contact: Capo Industries | capoindustries.com



Powerclean Salt Ultra

Power clean Salt systems are NSF-Certified to produce up to 2 pounds of chlorine per day.

Powerclean Salt has a dependable cell in a broad range of salinity levels—3,000 to 35,000 PPM. This chlorinator dynamically adjusts conductivity at low temperatures to extend the life of the cell.

"Pool professionals appreciate the updated Powerclean Salt Ultra design," says Rich Simpson, CMP's national sales manager, pool division. "Large, wide plate spacing helps minimize calcium buildup and increases time between cleanings."

This backyard chlorinator can be cleaned by hand using the included blue cleaning stick, no acid or special stands needed.

CMP also offers product-specific marketing materials including brochures, product images and videos for print and online use. Request access at c-m-p.com/assets.

All CMP products include a 12-month limited warranty.

Contact: CMP | c-m-p.com



Eclipse3 Algaecide

Now on the market for almost 20 years, Eclipse3 is a mineral based, natural way to combat algae growth.

In addition, Eclipse3 Algaecide is blended with clarifiers, formulated to bring sparkle to the water, and is chelated to eliminate mineral staining.

"Eclipse3 is a pool water maintenance product that will help reduce the amount of sanitizer used," says Mark Ridpath, a sales and marketing spokesman for the company. "It will help reduce water balance adjustments and pool owner headaches."

Contact: Crystal Clear Pool & Spas | eclipse3.com



Salt Support System Start

Salt Support System Start uses borate technology to help buffer pool water, reduce chlorine demand and protect both swimming pool liners and pool equipment against the extreme conditions of salt water.

System Start uses Chlorine Shield to decrease salt generator cell activity and is designed to be added at the start of every swimming season — simply add 25 pounds for every 10,000 gallons of water.

In addition to balancing water and preventing corrosion, this product is formulated to improve filter maintenance, keep water clear and inhibit algae growth.

"Adding Salt Support System Start once per season can improve pool water quality while extending the life of salt pool equipment," says Bokor. "You can truly give your customers the worry-free pool they've always wanted with this product."

Available in 10- and 25-pound pails.

Contact: Haviland | saltsupportusa.com



Computerized Water Testing Labs

The best choices in computerized water testing, according to Richard DeLeo, a partner of Home Port Computer, are the Wave Test Strip Scanner and LaMotte's Spin Touch Lab.

Each are supplied with Home Port's Pool Watch Software along with 100 test strips/disks. The units can be installed together on one water test computer, enabling users to get test results from either system with a simple click of the mouse. The Wave provides six test results in less than 20 seconds. For more in-depth testing, the Spin Touch Lab can give up to 10 test results in 60 seconds.

In addition, the Pool Watch Software is pre-loaded with all of today's popular chemical brands. Salt chlorine generators, ionizers, etc., are also included.

"Customers love the flexibility of switching back and forth from the Wave and the Spin Touch Lab," says DeLeo. "They also love the cost effectiveness of the Wave test strip scanner."

Contact: Home Port Computers | homeportcomputer.com



eXact iDip Pool Professional Test Kit

The eXact iDip Professional Test Kit combines two state-of-the-art water quality test instruments. The first is the eXact iDip Smart Photometer System, which integrates patented two-way wireless communication with any compatible iOS or Android smart device and has the potential to test more than 40 water parameters. The second is the new eXact pH+ Smart Meter System, which uses electrochemistry technology combined with Bluetooth connectivity.

The kit is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch with the minimum iOS system version 9.0 and Android version 4.4 with Bluetooth 4.0.

The pre-configured kit is housed in a rugged and durable plastic case with secure fasteners and padded compartments.

The iDip is NSF-certified.

Contact: Industrial Test Systems | exactidip.com



Super Pacs

Jack's Magic Super Pacs is a natural enzyme that prevents the buildup of suntan lotions, oils, grease, and other organic contaminants that can lead to scum lines in pools and spas.

This phosphate-free product also improves filter efficiency, reduces chemical usage, and helps prevent dull hazy water in all sanitizer systems. It is biodegradable, non-toxic and environmentally friendly. Just one ounce treats 20,000 gallons for two weeks.

"Many of our commercial customers love this product for its performance in high chlorine levels," says Nadia Beane, executive vice president of Jack's Magic. "They also love the fact that so little product (1 ounce) lasts for two weeks in 20,000 gallons of pool water, saving money over liquid enzymes."

For technical support, customers can call 800-348-1656 and speak to a technician Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST or visit jacksmagic.com.

Marketing materials can be downloaded from the company's website.

Contact: Jack's Magic Products | jacksmagic.com



FROG Serene

The FROG Serene is a hot tub sanitizer designed to use fresh minerals to make the hot tub water cleaner; it kills two ways, with minerals and a very low level of bromine.

Company officials say the FROG Serene uses up to 50% less bromine and minerals to condition the water compared to the minimum ANSI recommended bromine level of 2.0 ppm for a hot tub.

Unlike chlorine, bromine slowly dissolves in hot water, it's easier to regulate and has far less odors. Bromine is less impacted by pH swings, ensuring sanitizing effectiveness.

The FROG Serene is also designed to eliminate the work and guesswork with prefilled cartridges that last about a month — no daily dosing needed.

Dealers benefit from a proven, repeat business model with products that come with MAP protection to ensure profitability year after year.

Contact: King Technology | kingtechnology.com



WaterLink Spin Touch Lab

The WaterLink Spin Touch with Centrifugal Fluidics Photometry uses a patented WaterLink Spin reagent disk to measure 10 different tests in just 60 seconds. It measures Free Chlorine, Bromine, Total Chlorine, Combined Chlorine, pH, Alkalinity, Hardness, Cyanuric Acid, Copper, Iron, Phosphate and Salt.

In addition, the water analyst can be proactive, since they are able to measure all of these important tests and recommend the correct products to fix their water chemistry issues when using the WaterLink Solutions PRO software program.

"We have received a lot of feedback from customers about how the innovative WaterLink Spin Lab has improved their business by making water testing so easy anyone in the store can use it and receive accurate results," says Rich DeMoss, LaMotte's global pool business director. "Many retailers have mentioned that the lab has increased their chemical sales by 20% because they are testing everything every time."

Contact: LaMotte Co. | lamotte.com



Ultrapen PT4 FCE Pocket Tester

The Ultrapen PT4 Free Chlorine Equivalent (FCE) Pocket Tester provides one-button, instantaneous, reagent-free pH, ORP and FCE testing in a rugged aluminum field tester.

Daniel Robinson, North American sales manager for Myron L Co., explains how it came about: The firm took decades of industry knowledge and combined that with years of pocket tester user feedback to design and build "the benchmark in accuracy, reliability and simplicity — the PT Series Ultrapens. By fully potting this product line in an aircraft aluminum tubular enclosure, it provides the toughest, most reliable pocket tester on the market."

A quick-start guide, product data sheet/brochure and posters are available for the PT Series Ultrapens. They come with a manufacturer's warranty.

Contact: Myron L Co. | myronl.com



Enjoy

On the market for more than five years, Enjoy, by N. Jonas & Co. offers all the chemicals a pool owner needs for one month in one convenient box.

Busy pool owners appreciate that it makes pool care a snap — and that less chlorine is needed. In fact, says Vice President Ed Wexler, one of the best things about the product is the fact that up to 80% less chlorine is used.

Enjoy contains a sanitizer that is used weekly, and special tablets used once a month. It comes in four sizes for the following aboveground pools up to 24 feet, round; and pools up to 15,000 gallons, 20,000 gallons and 30,000 gallons.

Attractive point-of-purchase displays and merchandising materials are available.

For technical support call 800-523-6533 or visit the company's website njonas.com

Contact: N. Jonas & Co. | njonas.com



Pool Perfect Max

Pool Perfect Max is Natural Chemistry's premier maintenance formulation. Added weekly, this product reduces the amount of time and effort needed on pool care.

Its key benefits include: working as a continuous filter cleaner, removing maintenance levels of problem-causing phosphates, reducing scrubbing of scum lines and waterline ring.

Pool Perfect MAX is a premier maintenance product that combines three industry-leading technologies: 1) Broad spectrum enzymes that clean filters and scum lines, 2) phosphate removers that keep phosphate levels low and 3) water clarification ingredients that keep water sparkling.

"The best thing about this product is the fact that it combines three powerful products into one bottle so pool professionals or their clients simply add one capful of this highly concentrated product per 10,000 gallons of pool water, just once a week, to make pool maintenance super simple," says Jamie Novak, brand manager, NC Brands.

Contact: Natural Chemistry | naturalchemistry.com



INTELLICHEM Commercial Water Chemistry Controller

The IntelliChem Commercial Water Chemistry Controller continuously monitors pH and chemical levels and automatically delivers just the required amount of chemicals needed to keep pools clearer, safer and always ready to enjoy.

It features an adjustable dual sanitizer support with a secondary liquid chlorine source feeder able to kick in, as needed, to get the pool up to chlorine set point quickly. The unit also has a programmable chemical feed cycle complete with on and off times for precise water balance.

Additionally, the unit's flow sensor ensures chemicals won't feed without system flow, protecting against false readings and equipment damage. Plus this unit has a BUILT-IN Langelier Saturation Index (LSI) calculator that allows users to know when water chemistry is in or out of balance.

Designed for easy of use, the unit also offers "plug & play" installation with all components pre-mounted and pre-wired with a two-pump configuration option.

Contact: Pentair | pentair.com



Xpress Flex

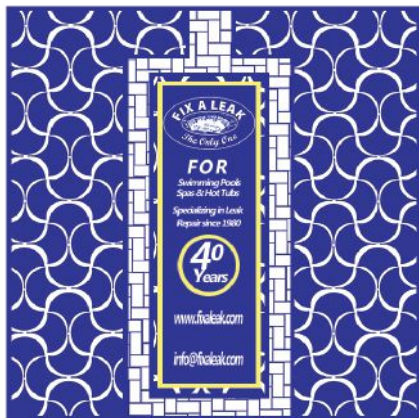
New for 2021, Xpress Flex provides a new in-store testing solution that combines speed, accuracy, and affordability into one testing platform. It tests up to 11 parameters in less than one minute, for less than a dollar per test.

"Xpress Flex combines the three elements that retailers value in water testing: fast testing, accurate testing, and affordable testing," says Joe DeFuria, Director of Brand Development for Taylor Technologies. "We have been in development of the device and testing the system for the past three years. Feedback about our introduction of Xpress Flex has been really strong, highlighting the desire for more in-store water testing options."

Live demonstrations of Xpress Flex from the company's R&D facility in Maryland are available. For more information, please contact or complete the form at TaylorXpressFlex.com. Marketing materials, such as product brochures and videos, are also available.

Xpress Flex has a two year full replacement warranty.

Contact: Taylor Technologies | TaylorXpressFlex.com



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New Products

BY PSN STAFF



Good Maneuver

The new Polaris EPIC cleaners are designed with a new rear flow outlet that helps propel the cleaner up inclines and over obstacles, and introduce a dual-traction motor that enables brushes to rotate independently — providing greater maneuverability with a tighter turn radius.

Contact: Fluidra; fluidraUSA.com



Easy Access

The AquaTRAM 90+ lift rotates 90° left or right for easy pool access. The lift has an increased lifting capacity of 400 lbs and has an improved reach to clear spa benches and most gutter types. Includes dual flip-up armrests, seat with adjustable belt and footrest plus simple-to-operate controls.

Contact: Pentair; pentair.com



Streamlined Lift

The newly redesigned Portable Pro 2 Pool Lift has a much less complicated, sleeker look than the original and features a 350-pound weight capacity, a choice of colors and a choice of weight plate or sand counter-balance. Users can supply their own sand to conserve on freight costs and simplify assembly.

Contact: Aqua Creek Products; aquacreek.com



A Natural Look

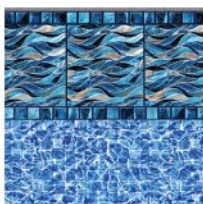
Renolit Alkorplan Touch is an 80-mils, 3D embossed pool liner made of two layers of flexible PVC sheets interleaved with a polyester mesh. Thicker than a traditional liner, this reinforced membrane reproduces natural textures, such as marble and sand, making each pool unique and original.

Contact: Renolit; aquaandmore.com



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