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COVER: PHOTO BY RAFAEL MURCIA/COURTESY PURE SWIM
ABOVE LEFT: ADOBESTOCK
ABOVE RIGHT: RIVERBEND SANDLER POOLS

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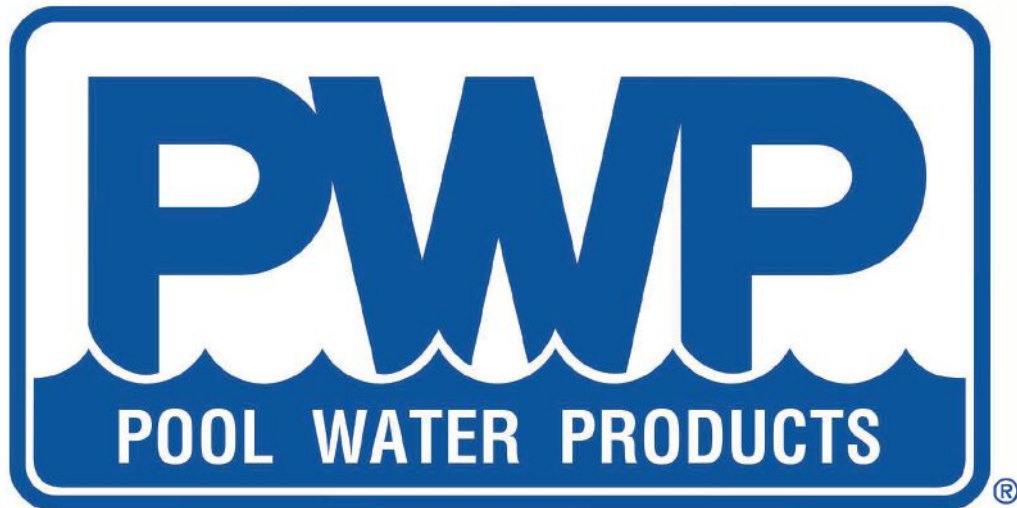
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EDITORIAL

JOANNE McCLAIN

Editor-in-Chief

jmccclain@zondahome.com

REBECCA ROBLEDO

Deputy Editor

rrobledo@zondahome.com

SALES

GARY CARR

National Sales Manager

gcarr@zondahome.com

LISA HEITNER

National Sales Manager

lheitner@zondahome.com

ART

CAROLYN SEWELL

Design Director, Media

MELISSA KROCHMAL

Graphic Designer

PRODUCTION

CATHY UNDERWOOD

Senior Director, Print Production

STEPHANIE FISCHER

Production Manager

OPERATIONS

LENA RAGUSA

Human Resources Manager

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AMY DUDLEY

Executive Vice President/National Sales

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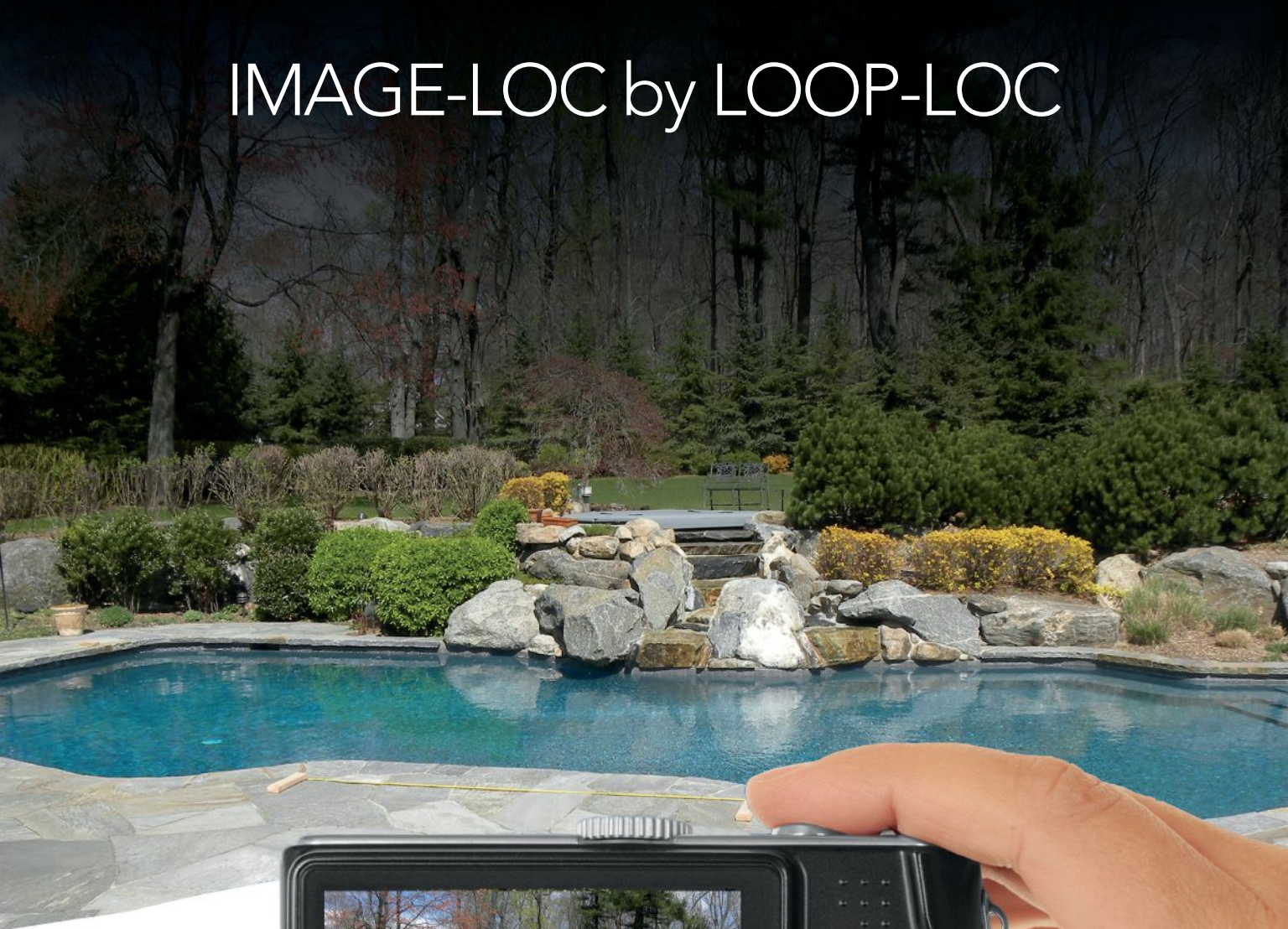


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The Magnificent Seven



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

Welcome to Pool & Spa News' annual Expo issue. It's hard to believe that another year has flown by. While it's true that our perception of time seems to go faster the older we get, it seems even more altered by the insanity of the past three years. Another symptom of COVID, I suppose.

It doesn't seem quite so long ago that I had the pleasure of introducing six deserving MVPs from our Top 50 Builders program in last year's Expo issue. As you might recall, we ask the leaders of our Top 50 firms every other year to name someone whose contributions have made them invaluable to their company. We run all 50 photos and names in small boxes in the award issue — June for Top 50 Builders and October for Top 50 Service — and each time, I regret that we can't go into more detail due to page constraints.

And that's how the idea to profile a handful of exceptional MVPs in our Expo issue came about. The MVPs of MVPs, if you will. It was wonderful to be able to highlight the six from Top 50 Builders last year, and many of you agreed — I received positive comments from numerous industry folks saying how refreshing it was to get to know some of these key, behind-the-scenes players.

Now it's time to welcome a select

group of MVPs from sister program Top 50 Service. Beginning on page 51, you'll meet seven such exceptionally dedicated employees — some from companies that have consistently carved a place for themselves on our annual list, such as Pure Swim, Payan Pool Service, and All Seasons Pools, Spas & Outdoor Living, and a couple from new-to-Top-50 companies, such as Poolsure and The Pool Butler.

Each bring unique strengths and talents to their roles in their companies, but they all have one thing in common: They love to share their knowledge and help build others up. Whether it's pool service-related expertise or something more intangible but equally important, such as creating an inclusive and warm company culture, this group of individuals is truly deserving of the MVP title.

In these profiles, they share their stories along with some of the secrets to their success. I hope you will enjoy getting to know them as much as I have.

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

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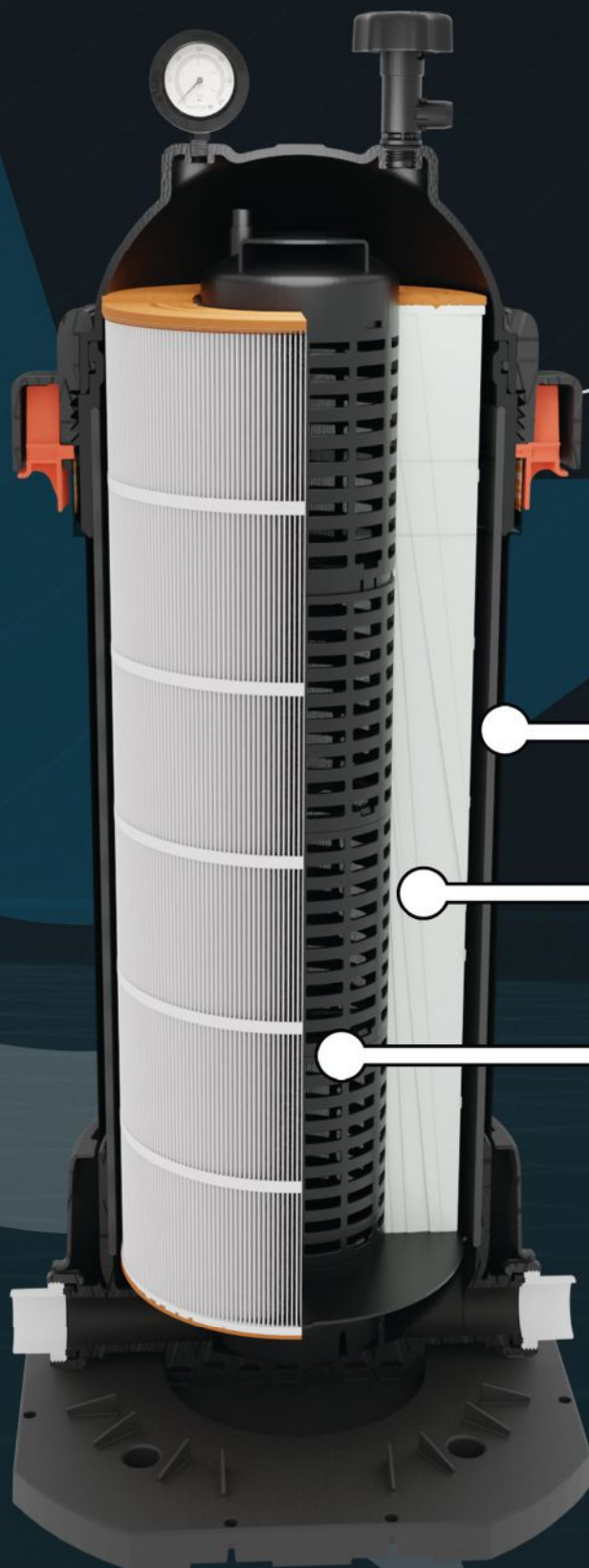
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New President Takes Helm of Fluidra North America

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Barcelona-based “Big 3” manufacturer Fluidra has named a new president of its North America operations.

Lennie Rhoades, the next president of Fluidra North America, will succeed Troy Franzen, who retires next month after a 12-year tenure that included playing a key role in transitioning the firm from Zodiac to Fluidra.

Rhoades now holds full responsibility for the management of Fluidra’s North American business, with a focus on aligning regional strategies with global initiatives to deliver on growth targets across all product categories and segments. He has more than 20 years of senior management experience, as well as expertise in strategic development and plan execution in the home and industrial goods industries.

“Lennie has an extraordinary track record of success across a wide array of major brands in adjacent industries,” said Bruce Brooks, CEO of Fluidra. “He is a results-driven leader who puts focus on building a collaborative team culture and customer-centric innovation. This makes him the right choice to lead our North American organization in its next chapter.”

Rhoades holds an undergrad engineering degree and an MBA from Ohio State University. He previously served as CEO of Big Ass Fans where he helped drive top-line growth through product innovation and di-

versification, while implementing strategic operational efficiencies, Fluidra offices said. He has also held various senior leadership roles including senior vice president of JELD-WEN, vice president and general manager for the retail division of Husqvarna Group, and director of marketing for Electrolux.

“I am thrilled to be joining Fluidra at such an exciting time in the industry and am eager to begin working with the North American team,” Rhoades said. “... Together, we will build on Fluidra’s longstanding legacy of success to drive further growth with our sights set on continually evolving the company for the future.”

Having studied industrial and systems engineering and earned four or five patents, Rhoades said he makes

product focus his priority.

“I’m a huge product guy,” he says. “Part of what I really like about this industry is it’s a products-driven industry. The product’s really important, and I’m blessed to be with a company that makes some of the best products out there. ... At the end of the day, what delivers the experience to the customer is really excellent product.”

Franzen will continue with Fluidra on a part-time, on-call basis through the end of the year, and perhaps into 2023, he said. He then will spend time traveling with his wife, visiting with family and doing volunteer work.

Go to poolspanews.com for more information about Rhoades’ and Franzen’s careers and outlook.



Riverbend Sandler Expands into Houston

BY REBECCA ROBLEDÓ

Riverbend Sandler Pools, a Dallas-area aggregator serving the pool construction and service markets, has officially branched out into the Houston area.

The company, which has made clear its intent to remain in Texas for now, has acquired Backyard Paradise Luxury Pools, a pool construction and service firm based in Montgomery, Texas, and serving the northern and western regions of the Houston metroplex.

Former owner Mitchell Buckley will remain to manage Backyard Paradise, and will retain an ownership stake. All current employees are

expected to keep their current positions, and the operation will continue to be marked under the Backyard Paradise brand in its current markets.

Riverbend Sandler began last year, when Chicago-based Concentric Equity Partners recapitalized three Dallas-area builders: Riverbend Sandler Pools of Plano; Pulliam Pool Builders and Pulliam Services of Fort Worth; and Claffey Pools of Southlake. Last summer, it acquired its first service company: Crystal Clear Custom Pools of Midlothian, Texas. It has also purchased a few small companies with relatively few routes, said the company's CEO, Bruce Mungiguerra.

Riverbend will now focus on its expansion in this new region. "This is our first [company] outside the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and now we're beginning our search in Houston," Mungiguerra said. "If all goes well, we should complete two more transactions in Houston by January."

Backyard Paradise derives most of its revenue from construction and cleans approximately 200 pools per week. Riverbend plans to expand the Houston location's reach in service.

As for the companies currently being vetted for potential acquisition, one is a builder, the other a service firm.

Intermatic Acquisition Expands Pool/Spa Portfolio

Intermatic Inc., a maker of timer controls, surge protection, transformers and electrical control panels, has purchased pool/spa equipment manufacturer Aquapro Systems.

With the investment, Libertyville, Ill.-based Intermatic plans to increase its offerings in the pool/spa market. New lines of pumps, filters, heat pumps, air blowers and other products will be added. Aquapro produces energy-efficient equipment for inground, aboveground and soft-sided pools.

"We're building for the future," says Intermatic President/CEO Rick Boutilier. "Along with our industry-leading timers and energy controls, our goal is to leverage our manufacturing excellence and customer insights to deliver pool and spa solutions that span the entire pool pad."

Aquapro products will transition to the Intermatic brand. Product warranty support and related customer service also will be absorbed into Intermatic.

PHTA Scholarship Recipients Named

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance has named five scholarship recipients for 2022. The PHTA Fellowship Program supports graduate students and post-doctoral fellows who perform research related to aquatic facilities. Graham Lamb will receive a \$2,000 Board Fellowship. Pursuing a Master of Science in Civil Engineering at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, he is involved in two research studies: regenerative media filter and how effectively it removes *cryptosporidium*; and measuring parameters such as chlorine, pH and alkalinity at Charlotte-area venues.

The PHTA Scholarship Program was created for public pool or spa operators receiving education to better protect public health. This year's recipients are Emily Broom, University of Central Florida; and Colton Morris, Arkansas Tech University. Each received \$2,000. Others received \$1,000 scholarships: Jason Marsh, Volunteer State Community College; Meghan Partrick, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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PSN Asks

BRUCE MUNGIGUERRA

The CEO of Riverbend Sandler Pools shares his thoughts on private equity, technology and other matters of the day.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

While aggregators and private equity are becoming everyday realities in the pool/spa industry, Riverbend Sandler Pools is doing something the others aren't — combining service and construction companies and, for now, focusing just on Texas.

The firm, backed by Chicago-based Concentric Equity Partners, began last year with its acquisition of Riverbend Sandler Pools of Plano, Texas. Two other Dallas-area companies soon followed — Pulliam Pool Builders and Pulliam Services of Fort Worth; and Claffey Pools of Southlake.

This summer, the firm acquired its first service-only firm, taking it more squarely into that segment. And just last month, it moved into the Houston area with its first builder/service acquisition there (See story in News section.)

The company CEO, Bruce Mungiguerra, hails from the airline and, most recently, the home security industries. We asked for his perspectives on private equity and other issues, as well as his top influences and advice.

Q: Tell us about your experience with private equity.

A: I've worked with probably eight or 10 different private-equity groups throughout my career. I've had good experiences and not-so-good experiences.

When a new market gains attraction for private equity, it takes one or two private equity firms to show some success, then maybe others want to get involved with it quickly, because they see it as an opportunity to build something.



RIVERBEND SANDLER POOLS

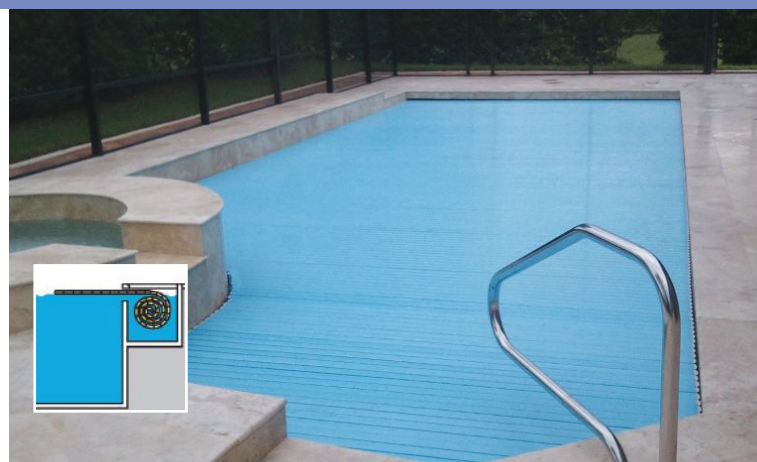
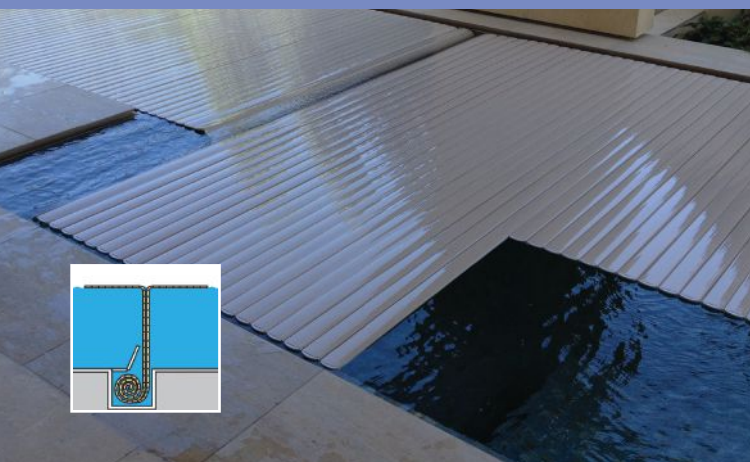


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I think the individual private-equity firms have to make sure they really understand the space for what it is. This is really a home services type space. I think it takes somebody who understand the home service world to be a unique investor for our space.

Q: What advice would you offer pool/spa company owners considering selling to a private-equity firm, or an aggregator?

A: My comment would be to really do your research as to who's trying to get in the space, what their past history has

been. Knowing why you want to sell or get private equity help is probably the most important aspect: What is your personal exit strategy? Each of the companies that we've partnered with had a different reason for selling. I think it's important for us as aggregators to know the true goals of the entrepreneur who wants to sell, and how do we make sure their goals match our goals.

Q: Riverbend and other aggregators seem to focus on the technology they're using. Why is this such an important component?

A: I would think the critical thing is process. I'm really big on process improvement — understanding a process and really ensuring that all our employees understand that process as well. I think far too often in entrepreneurial businesses, we throw people at a problem versus processes at a problem.

When I joined Riverbend, they were cleaning 1,400 pools per week, and were still doing door hangers. Techs were coming in with the tear-off copy of the door hanger, entering chemicals into a computer for somebody to try to track chemical usage. I was quite confident there was some automation out there that we could use. We ended up going to the Skimmer app. We were able to reduce our staff by two tech by just re-routing all our pools through the routing system. So we could clean 100 more pools with the same number of techs.

MUNGIGUERRA'S TAKES

Q: Motto or favorite saying: "Inspect what you expect."

I say this often, probably several times a week, and it's one that's stuck with me and has worked well for me over my career. I think too often we assume things are going in the right direction. If you're not inspecting things from time to time — that could be through a report, a Q&A, through surveys or whatever the case may be

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— then it's probably not happening, you can probably assume that it's not always happening.

Q: Most important ways to maintain focus and energy among staff: Celebrate the small successes. I think we

sometimes get tied up on big wins only.

Also spend time with your team. I try to have a lot of meetings with the teams below those that report to me to really find out what's going on, and hear those ideas and those energies and make sure that we're overcom-

municating. Sometimes people don't understand why we make changes or why we're doing things. Making sure we explain the whys, I think, keeps energy level higher. It helps when they understand what the end goal is.

Q: Favorite business book: "Who Moved My Cheese" by Spencer Johnson. I've had a lot of my teams in the past read that book and think through it. It really breaks down change management and how to get you and your team focused on it. Change can be a word that everybody's afraid of. But as the book explains, change is happening everyday, whether we recognize it or not. It's how do we adapt and move the business forward.

Q: Personal role model and the single most important thing they taught:

A long time ago I had a call center director who took me under her wing. I was with Delta Airlines, and had transferred from an operational role into the sales office. I was reluctant because I didn't think that was my side of the business. But she saw something in me and within a year, she got me into a training role, into a supervisor development program. I was promoted to be the youngest manager in reservation sales for Delta at the time. She was always very inspirational to me and saw things in me that as a young person I probably didn't see myself.

Through her example, I learned to identify people who are at that same point in their lives who need some development. I've prided myself over the years in mentoring a number of people to get them to the next level.

One of her most important lessons was to listen to what people want to do, and to listen more and talk less. I find that many young leaders want to talk a lot about what they want to do. But if you listen and learn more, then when you do speak, it's a lot more meaningful.

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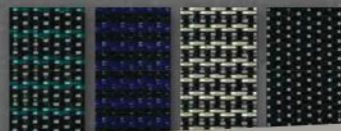


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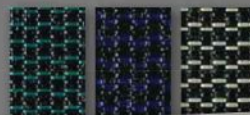
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Use this handy guide to get the most from your PSP/Deck Expo experience. Included is a show floor map with an exhibitor list and an education schedule.

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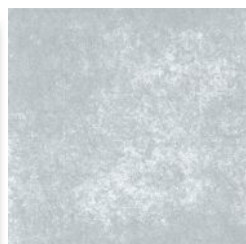
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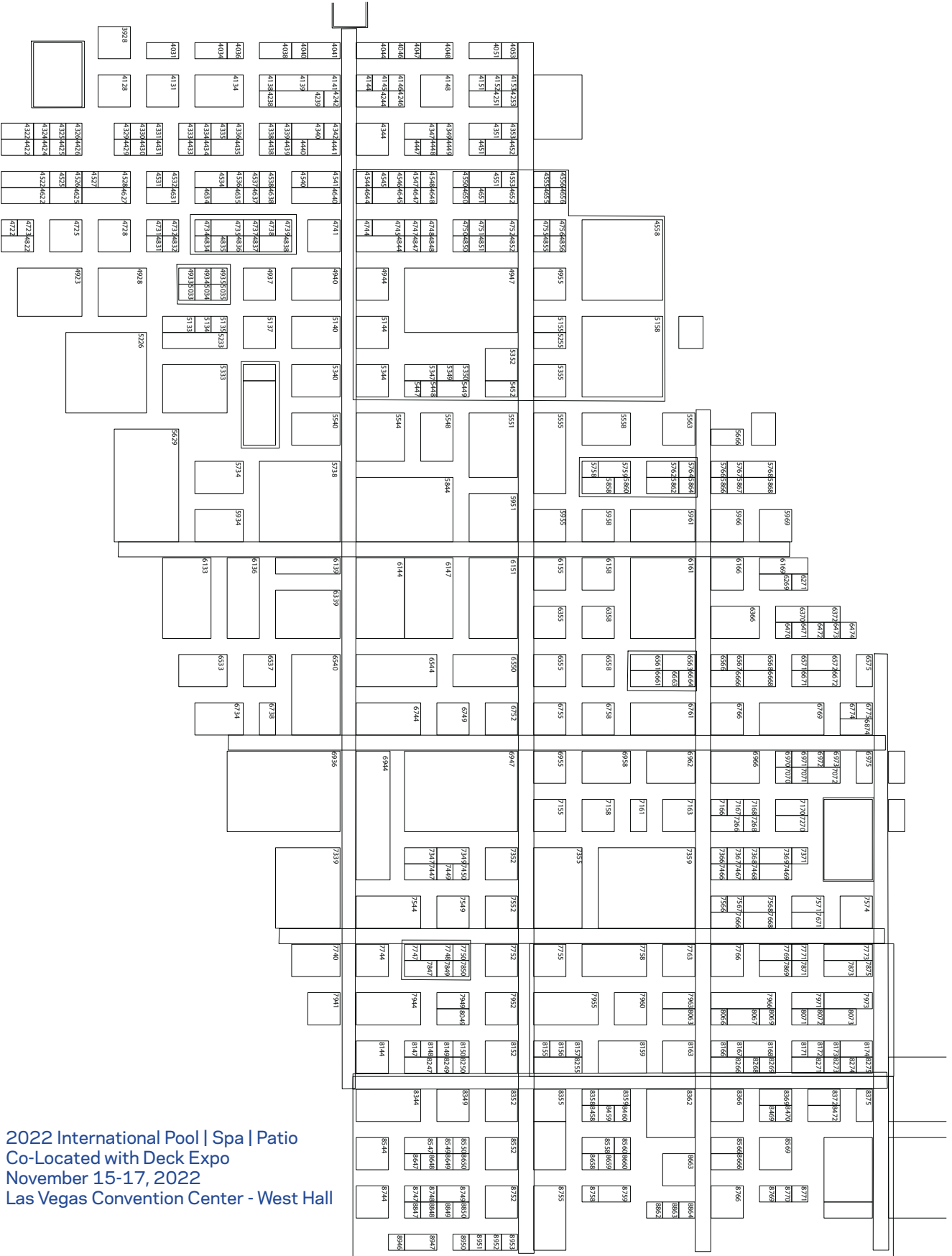
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Las Vegas Convention Center - West Hall

Exhibitor List

1SEO.com Digital Agency	4528	Cal Spas	6944	Ecosmarte	5867	ICC ES	4652
8Streme	4048	CamerEye	4426	EdgeMate Pool Chair	8171	IMP Digital	5866
Accoya Color Wood Decking	8558	CAMO	8755	Endless Pools	6874	Industrial Test Systems, Inc.	6563
Acorn Finance	4550	Canaxy USA, Inc.	6474	Essentials	6962	Infinity Massage Chairs	7266
Action Spa Parts	5135	Carvin	6761	EstimCAD Decking & Railing	8647	in-lite Outdoor Lighting	8349
Advantage Manufacturing, Inc.	4429	CCEI USA INC	7352	EXAGRES SA	8271	Innovaspa / Pur Spas	4728
AFCO Columns and Railings	8352	Cemen Tech	6540	Exclusive Pools	5355	inSPAration	6955
Aiper	7944	Century Aluminum Railings	8547	Explore Industries	7952	Intertek	8850
AIS Water	5563	Chemtrol	6661	Expo enterprise	8072	invisirail	8174
Alttoglass USA	4555	Chlorine Genie	4351	Expo enterprise	8269	Istec International, Inc.	4422
American Ground Screw, Inc.	8372	CityPost	8952	E-Z Weld	4739	IPS Controllers	4650
American Profit Recovery	4651	CL Industries, inc	6372	FAFCO, Inc	4837	J&J Electronics	6358
Anderson Manufacturing Company	4844	Clear Comfort	7161	Fairway Making Cleaning Easy	4431	Jack's Magic Products	4848
Angi	6555	Clearwater Pool Systems	4146	Fast Tent	4741	Jacuzzi Hot Tubs	6144
Aqua Comb / Mi-Way, Inc.	4835	Clearwater Spas	6161	FASTENMASTER	8247	Jasco Products Company	8268
Aqua Creek Products	6269	CocoNut Outdoor	4441	Feeney, Inc.	8152	Jetstream of Houston LLP	4325
Aqua Leisure	5137	Cofair Products, Inc.	8550	Fibalon GmbH	4038	Jilin Test Bio-Electron Co.,Ltd.	7567
Aqua Magazine	4551	Color Guard, Inc.	8666	Fiber Clear, Inc.	4526	JobTread Software	4433
Aqua Technics Pools	5961	Confer Plastics, Inc	6966	Fiber Creations	4547	JobTread Software	8460
Aquabella Tile	4822	Consolidated Manufacturing Int'l LLC	6566	Fiber Pools & Spas	6766	Kelley Technical Coatings	7447
AquaComfort Solutions, LLC	5768	ControlOMatic, Inc	5034	Fiberlite Umbrellas	7771	Kona Labs	5764
Aquamatic Cover Systems	5548	Coral Smart Pool	6971	Finnleo Sauna	6744	Kona Pools	4735
AQUASALT, LLC	5758	Core Covers	5333	FinTurf	4440	KS FLOORTECH Inc.	8469
AquaStar Pool Products	7155	Coverstar	7158	FinWise Bank	4425	L&L Lines, Inc.	7847
Aquatherm Industries, Inc.	4850	Crossville, Inc	6572	Floating Luxuries	7769	LaMotte Company	6155
Aquatic Access Inc.	7850	Current Systems	5155	Fortress Building Products	8752	Landscape Drains	5759
Aquatic AV	4627	Cutco Business Gifts	4556	FROG Products	5955	LASWATER SPA PRODUCTS	4851
Aquatic Glazing International	7552	Cutco Business Gifts	8069	Fujiwa Tile	7748	LEACHE CHEM LTD	4322
ARCHPOT	4452	Cyclone Filter Tools	8148	Gecko Alliance	6355	LEACHE CHEM LTD	4747
Aristech Surfaces. Now part of Trinseo	6758	Daldorado LLC	6166	GENESIS Solutions Center	4558	LEACHE CHEM LTD	6571
Arizona Fire and Water	4955	Danner Manufacturing, Inc.	6567	Gladon Company	7450	LeakTronics	7752
Artesian Spas	5226	Dansons	7763	Global Pool Products	6136	Ledge Lounger	7355
Artistic Paver Mfg.	7744	Davey Water Products	4036	Glow Path Pavers	7367	Leslie's Poolmart	6169
Artistry In Mosaics	5347	DD Pedestals	8950	GreenSky, LLC	7070	Leisure Concepts	5844
ASI	4756	Deck Builder Marketers	8549	Guangdong Tianjin New Material Co., Ltd	8569	LeisureCraft	7766
Atlantis Rail Systems	8147	Deck Specialist	8951	H2flow Controls	4541	Life Saver Pool Fence	6271
AtWater Financial	6970	Deckorators	8362	Hammer-Head Patented Performance	4349	Lippert	7869
Aurand Mfg. & Equipment Co.	6774	Deck-O-Seal	7666	Hangzhou Kongyu Swimming Pool Co., Ltd.	8249	LongKou Keda Chemical Co. Ltd.	6473
Barrette Outdoor Living	8552	DekoFence / Ceiling Innovators	8274	Hardware and Glass	8847	LOU - powered by Evosus	4940
Barrier Reef Fiberglass Pools, LLC	4937	Delta Performance Products	7468	Harvia Global	6769	LUCITE SPA	5140
Basecrete	4750	Desert Empire Palms	4548	Hasa	4635	Lumi-O / Innovaplas	4728
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Best clear system	4546	Digger Specialties, Inc.	6568	HearthStone Outdoor	8073	Magic Plastics, Inc.	7750
Betta Robotic Pool Skimmer	5969	Digger Specialties, Inc.	8766	Heritage Pool Supply Group	6133	Main Access	7668
Big Green Egg	8163	Dimension One Spas	6544	HFS Financial	5934	Manzarena	4152
BIODESIGN S.p.A	7960	Dirigo Pools	5864	HIDE Skimmer Lids	7571	Marine Fasteners. Inc.	5133
Biolab/NC Brands	6752	DiversiTech	5349	Home Port Water Testing	4544	Markbro Materials Inc.	4656
Blue Devil Pool & Spa Accessories	4339	Doughboy Recreational	6339	Homeland Vinyl Products, LLC	8862	Marquis Spas	6936
Blue Square Manufacturing	5144	Dream Maker Spas	6550	Hot Tub Products	5734	Master Pools Guild, Inc.	7574
Blueray XL Mineral Purifier	4540	Dura Plastic Products, LLC	5035	Hydroplay Elite Corp.	6672	Maytronics	4139
Blue-White	4537	Duradek US Inc.	8369	Hydropool Swim Spas and Hot Tubs	6151	Merchant Cost Consulting	4553
Bullfrog Spas	5629	Dynasty Spas, Inc.	5352	Hydro-Quip / Therm Products	7671	Meridian Tile	7268
busybusy Mobile Time Tracking	7270	EasyCare Products USA	4326	Hyphen Solutions	7349	Merlin Industries, Inc.	4935
		ECO Terrace	8769	IAPMO EGS	7449	MetalTrap	4151
		ecoFINISH High Performance Coatings	4944			Midwest Canvas/Ocean Blue	5233



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Exhibitor List

Millboard Distributed by Outlive	8744	Poly-Planar	4836	Screw Products INC	8375	The VacDaddy	4732
Millner-Haufen Tool Co.	8150	Pool & Spa Enclosures, LLC	7466	Service Industry News	4324	Think Wood / Real Cedar	8470
Mini Bucket Test	4439	Pool and Spa News	4725	SiLi Sigmund Lindner GmbH	6973	Thursday Pools LLC	4856
MIRACOTE	4934	Pool Brain	5762	Simpson Strong-Tie	8355	Tiki Toss	8157
MODERN MOULDING	6671	Pool Builder Marketing Pros	4145	Skimmer	4251	TimberTech	8472
MoistureShield	7941	Pool Contractor Pro	4138	Smart Level	6664	Tkey	6663
Mont Alpi Grills	7755	Pool Magazine	5858	Softroc The Driveway Company	8266	Torginol, Inc.	4041
Morton Salt	4637	Pool Nation Podcast	4344	Solar Sun Rings/ Bio Active	8166	TRC Recreation L.P.	6749
MP Industries Inc.	4238	Pool Office Manager	7849	Solaxx	5768	Trevi Pools	5452
MSPA	4239	Pool Tiger	4522	Solenis	5551	Trimstone Products LLC	8758
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Multitouch Pro	7371	PoolCandy - Division of B&D Group	7875	Spa Dolly	8049	Truffoire LV	8359
Murrine Mosaics	4752	PoolCandy - Division of B&D Group	7973	Spa Electrics Inc	7072	TruNorth Decking	8749
N. Jonas&Co. Inc.	6158	Poolmaster	6755	SpaRetailer/PoolPro Magazine	4340	Tufdek	8650
NADRA - North American Decking & Railing Association	8344	PoolPal USA Inc	7071	Spartan Railing, LLC	8648	TurningWest	8167
Natare Corporation	4838	PoolRx Mineral Technology	7366	SPAX	8544	U2 Fasteners	8953
National Drowning Prevention Alliance	4148	PoolScout	4527	spazazz	6738	Ultimate pool tools	4447
National Plasterers Council	4737	Poolside Tech	6575	Speck Pumps	5951	Ultra Fence & Railing	8560
National Pool Route Sales	4451	Pooltone	7167	Spin Master Outdoor	8159	Ultralift Cover Lifter Systems	4928
Natural Current, Inc.	5766	Poolwerx	4430	Splash-A-Round Pools	4933	Ultralox Interlocking Technologies	8366
NCP Industries & ZipUP Underdeck	8566	Pouralid	7949	Starborn Industries	8770	UltraPure Water Quality Inc.	4723
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Ningbo PoolStar Pool Products	6470	Presair	4647	Stenner Pump Company	4645	Uni Pool Motor	5448
Nissan Commercial Fleet	7955	Prestige Spa Covers	6561	Stephens Pipe & Steel	8747	Uni Pool Motor	5449
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Novagard	4625	Prism Hardscapes	6370	SummerSpace	7758	United Mineral & Chemical Corporation	4622
NSF International	8149	Pro Deck Supply	8649	Summit Appliance	8173	Universal Rocks / Natural Spas	4134
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On Core Filtration	4128	ProDBX Software	5767	Suncoast Built	7773	Vacless	4831
ONDECK Waterproofing	4751	ProGreen International	4448	Sundance Spas Inc.	6147	Versatex Building Products	8947
Only Alpha Pool Products	5544	ProValet.io	4342	SUNHEAT International	8063	Viance	8250
Otto Wilde Grills	7871	PUL Products	7740	Sunlight Grow Inc.	8273	Viewa VisualisAR	4331
Outdoor Fire Concepts	7163	PWT Treated LVL	8660	Sunstone Grills & Cabinetry	7971	Viking Capital, Inc.	4640
Outdoor Solutions inc	7467	QDI Surfaces	5540	Superior Pump	5860	Viking Spas, Inc.	4923
Owens Corning Pinkbar®	8748	R3Tract (Retract)	5448	Superior Wellness Ltd	6947	VOS	8071
Owens Corning Weardeck™	8848	RAM Outdoor Decor	8066	Superx	8156	Wahoo Building Products	8459
Oxygen Water Products	4631	Ramuc Pool Paint	4834	SwamCam	8155	Water Tech Corp	6734
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Panda Windows & Doors	8358	RB Retail & Service Solutions	7166	Swimables	4738	Watershape University	6537
Paneltim	4347	Regal Ideas	8144	Sylvanix Outdoor Products	8864	Waterway	5966
PARAMOUNT	7549	RenoSys	4744	SynkedUP	8946	Weld-On Adhesives, Inc.	4644
PASSION SPAS	7339	Results Branding	5255	Tanzite StoneDecks	8458	Wellis USA	7359
Patio Roof Riser	8759	RicoRock Inc.	6975	Taylor Water Technologies	5344	Wells Fargo	4534
Pebble Technology	7941	Riptide Pool Vacuums	4531	Techno-solis, Inc.	5134	Westlake Pipe & Fittings	7168
Periodic Products	4755	Rising Dragon International Inc	5555	Tecmark Corporation	6775	Wet Edge Technologies	4438
Perma-Column LLC	8275	River Pools	4855	Tenjam	7963	Wise Software	4655
Philadelphia Insurance Companies	8172	Rocky's Reel Systems Inc.	5350	The Get Smart Group	8067	Wolf Home Products	8659
Phoenix Pool Products	4153	Rola-Chem Corp.	5033	The Great American Waterfall Co.	6558	WYBOTICS CO LTD.	3928
PHTA - Pool & Hot Tub Alliance	5158	Roll-n-Vac by Truebite	4832	The LeverEdge	4638	YUNDA H&H TECH (TIANJIN) CO. LTD	7469
Pieles Sinteticas	4734	Safety Grip - The Original Handrail Cover	4242	The Outdoor Plus	6533	Z Poolform	8168
Pivot Pool Products	5862	Safron Manufacturing	6668	The Pool & Garden	7368	ZEO, Inc.	7566
Plaster Logic	4353	Salal Credit Union	4847	The Pool Fence Warehouse	4047	Zhejiang Bellagio Luxury Co., Ltd	4947
Pleatco	4745	San Juan Pools	6139	The Pool Pump Cover	4648	Zika Mist Systems/Q,P,A,	4329
Podium	4338	Sauna America	7568	The Skimmie	4449	Zion Technology	5868
				The Spa Dragon	4748	ZIPLEVEL/Technidea Corporation	4852
				The Spa Marvel Company Inc.	4538		

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**2022 INT'L POOL SPA PATIO/DECK EXPO CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 15 - 17, 2022 | LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER**

Tuesday, November 15			Speaker(s)	Track	Room/ Location
TU01	7:30am - 8:45am	If We Could Turn Back Time: 25 Lessons That We Have Learned	Matt Gohlke, Nick Day	Business	W223
TU02	7:30am - 8:45am	Watershape University: Steel Reinforcement and Effects on Shotcrete	Bill Drakeley	WATERSHAPE University-Builder	W220
TU03	7:30am - 8:45am	Use AUTOMATION To SELL More and SATISFY More, WITHOUT More Manpower!	Brett Abbott	Business	W231
TU04	7:30am - 8:45am	How to Survive and Thrive in an Ever-Changing Retail World	Jane Merritt, Mallory Wachowski	PHTA-Retail	W209
TU05	7:30am - 8:45am	Water Balance 101	Christopher Golden	Service	W228
TU06	7:30am - 8:45am	The Multi-Types of Railing Requirements for Multifamily & Other R2 Dwellings	David Mullins	Deck Education	W205
TU07	7:30am - 8:45am	Comprehensive Swimming Pool Inspections with Leak Detection	Darren Merlob	Service	W233
TU08	7:30am - 8:45am	D323: Outdoor Kitchen Design	Jason Brownlee	GENESIS- Outdoor Living	W214
TU09	7:30am - 8:45am	C205: Pool Tile – The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly	Greg Andrews	GENESIS - Builder	W217
NPC	8:00am - 5:00pm	NPC's Start-Up Technician Certification Course	Kent Westfall	Add'l Education	W107
ASA	8:00am - 4:00pm	ASA Shotcrete Nozzleman Education Course Presented by the American Shotcrete Association (English)	Charles Hanskat	Add'l Education	W110
KEY	9:00am - 10:20am	State of the Industry/CEO Panel	Kevin Holleran, Dave Jackson, Ardy Arani, Matt McDermott, Landon Tarvin, Larry Katz	Special Events	W326
10:30am - 5:00pm		Exhibits Open Exhibitor Product Clinics			
ST1	11:00am - 11:45am	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Footings, Posts and Beams		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
G1	11:00am - 12:00pm	GENESIS Solution Center: Understanding Architecture, Why it Matters	Paul John Boulifard	GENESIS Solution Center	Booth #4558
E1	11:30am- 12:15pm	Introducing the New PHTA/ICC-2 Standard for Public Pool and Spa Operations and Maintenance	Dennis Berkshire, Joe Laurino, Jody O'Grady, Ken Gregory, Justin Wiley, Steve Barnes, John Weber	Show Floor Education (PHTA)	Booth #7173
S1	11:45am - 12:30pm	Podium Presents: 5 Way to Win Locally	TBD	Spa Retailer Academy	Booth #5337
P1	12:15pm - 1:15pm	PHTA DEMO: Fiberglass Installation Fundamentals	Jason Hughes, River Pools	PHTA DEMO	Booth #4058
ST2	12:15pm - 1:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Resisting Rot, Decay and Corrosion		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
E2	12:30pm - 1:15pm	Why Not Me? How I Went From 5 Startups to 5 Multi-Million Dollar Businesses and Why You Can Do it Too	Lance Bachmann	Expo Stage	Booth #7173

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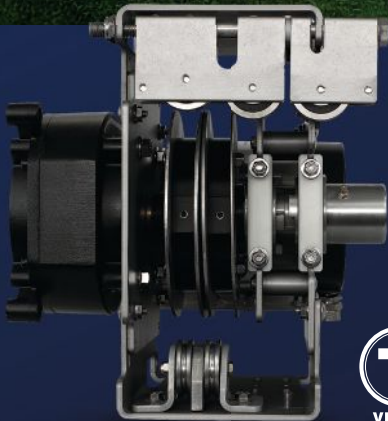


Anywhere

2022 INT'L POOL SPA PATIO/DECK EXPO CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 15 - 17, 2022 LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER					
ST3	1:15pm - 2:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Dr. Decks		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
E3	1:30pm - 2:15pm	Watershape University White Papers on Key Issues	Dave Peterson and Bill Drakeley	Show Floor Education	Booth #7173
S2	1:45pm - 2:30pm	Secrets Spilled: The Tried-and-True Marketing Plan to Grow Your Retail Business & Spa Market	Jake Ricks, Bullfrog	Spa Retailer Academy	Booth #5337
P2	1:30pm - 2:30pm	PHTA DEMO: Incorporating Wellness and Fun in a Backyard Project	Mark Lutz, Michael Sparacio	PHTA DEMO	Booth #4058
ST4	2:30pm - 3:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Ledgers		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
G2	3:00pm - 4:30pm	GENESIS Solution Center: Taste of GENESIS - Wine Tasting	Brain Van Bower, GENESIS and Erin Cline, Three Wine Company	GENESIS Solution Center	Booth #4558
ST5	3:30pm - 4:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Lateral Connections, Joists, Railings and Stairs		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
WAVE	4:30pm - 5:30pm	PHTA WAVE Network Young Professionals Reception		Special Events (PHTA)	W305
FT	4:30pm - 5:30pm	First Time Attendee Reception		Special Events	Third Floor Terrace
TUWP	5:00pm - 7:00pm	Welcome Party		Special Events	Third Floor Terrace
Wednesday, November 16		Speaker(s)		Track	Room/ Location
BOC	7:00am - 8:30am	Breakfast of Champions Powered by PHTA		Special Events	W326
ASA2	8:00am - 4:30pm	Quality Shotcrete - Know It When You See It (without Exam) Presented by the American Shotcrete Association	Charles Hanskat	Add'l Education	W110
ASA3	8:00am - 6:00pm	Quality Shotcrete - Know It When You See It (Presented by ASA) with Exam	Charles Hanskat	Add'l Education	W110
WE01	8:45am - 9:45am	Geotechnical Loads and the Unified Soil Classification System	Dave Peterson	WATERSHAPE University-Builder	W220
WE02	8:45am - 9:45am	D415: Designer Dialogues; How to Choose to Work with the Architectural Styles; Timeline Design	Feras Irikat, Paul Boulifard, Kate Wiseman, Jason Brownlee, Andy Kaner	GENESIS-Builder/ Design	W217
WE03	8:45am - 9:45am	Outdoor Kitchen Reward the Lifestyles of the Owners	Michael Gotowala	Outdoor Living	W205
WE04	8:45am - 9:45am	Post Pandemic Business Awareness	Juliet Phelps	Business	W233
WE05	8:45am - 9:45am	"I'll Just Get it Online": Strategies to Keep Your Customers on Your Doorstep	Anne Obarski	Retail	W231
WE06	8:45am - 9:45am	Finding Leaks - Turn Headaches into Profits	Brad Madison and Lance Anderson	Service	W209
WE07	8:45am - 9:45am	Maximizing Efficiency: The Role of Specialty Chemicals in Pool Care	Alicia Stephens	Service	W228

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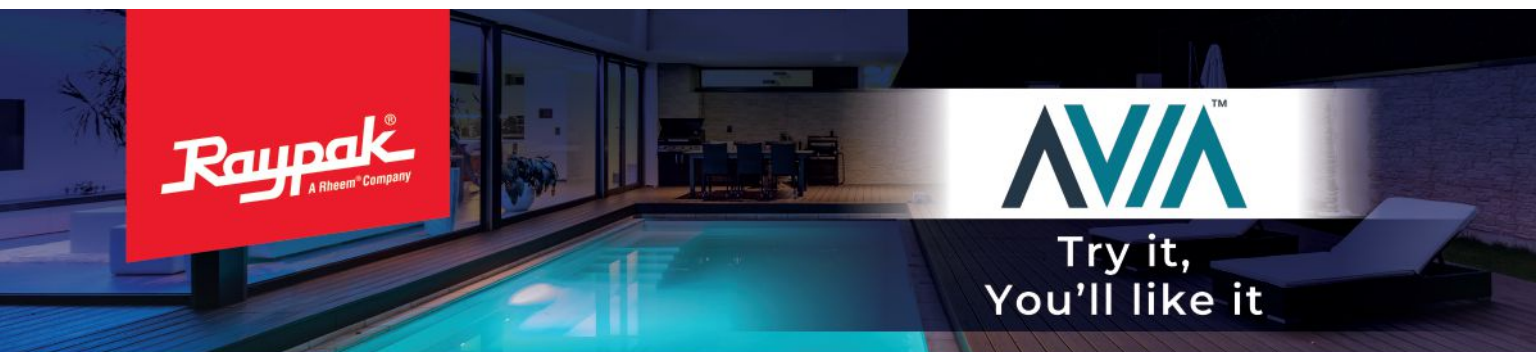


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NOVEMBER 15 - 17, 2022 | LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER**

WE08	8:45am - 9:45am	Stop Losing Money Before the Job Even Starts: How to Fix your Estimates	Chris Breen	Deck Education	W223
WE09	8:45am - 9:45am	C230: Shotcrete Science (Part 1)	Terry Brannon + Rocky Wisely	PHTA- Builder	W214
	9:45am - 10:00am	Break			
WE10	10:00am - 11:00am	Builders, Bloopers and Blunders - Common Construction Defects in Swimming Pools	Scott Cohen	Business	W209
WE11	10:00am - 11:00am	C230: Shotcrete Science (Part 2)	Terry Brannon + Rocky Wisely	GENESIS- Builder	W214
WE12	10:00am - 11:00am	Impressive Construction Proposals	Michael Nantz	WATERSHAPE University-Business	W217
WE13	10:00am - 11:00am	10 Secrets to A Successful Digital Marketing Strategy	Bruce Porter	Business	W233
WE14	10:00am - 11:00am	Service TOUCHPOINTS: 9 critical points of contact that impact customer loyalty	Anne Obarski	Retail	W231
WE15	10:00am - 11:00am	Equipment Pads Built for Ease of Service	David Penton	WATERSHAPE University-Service	W220
WE16	10:00am - 11:00am	How to do More Service with Reduced Staff	Mike Leone	Service	W228
WE17	10:00am - 11:00am	Staining, Scaling & Discoloration: Identification, Prevention & Removal	Jim Sturick, Jana Auringer	Service	W223



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NOVEMBER 15 - 17, 2022 | LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER**

	10:30am - 5:00pm	Exhibits Open Exhibitor Product Clinics			
ST6	11:00am - 11:45am	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Footings, Posts and Beams		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
G3	11:00am - 12:30pm	GENESIS Solution Center - D411: Integrating Manufactured Pools into a Master Plan	Kate Wiseman, MLA	GENESIS Solution Center	Booth #4558
S4	11:45am - 12:30pm	Podium Presents: 5 Way to Win Locally	TBD	Spa Retailer Academy	Booth #5337
E6	11:30am - 12:15pm	Let's Clear the Air - Air Quality for Indoor Swimming Venues	Jody O'Grady, John Weber, Jim Egan	Show Floor Education (PHTA)	Booth #7173
P3	12:15pm - 1:15pm	PHTA DEMO - Pool Circulation & Debris Removal in a Variable Speed World	Ryan Dubes, PHTA	PHTA DEMO	Booth #4058
E8	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Million Dollar Pool Design Challenge	Mike Farley, Reid Schindler	Show Floor Education	Booth #7173
G4	1:30pm - 2:30pm	GENESIS Solution Center - C271: GENESIS Project Profile Series	Kirk Bianchi	GENESIS Solution Center	Booth #4558
ST7	1:30pm - 2:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Resisting Rot, Decay and Corrosion		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
S5	1:45pm - 2:30pm	SMP Presents: Marketing & Merchandising: Blending Techniques to Increase Sales	Crystal Lengua	Spa Retailer Academy	Booth #5337
ST8	2:30pm - 3:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Ledgers		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
E9	2:45pm - 3:30pm	How To Make Chlorine Last Longer	Terry Arko	Show Floor Education	Booth #7173
P4	3:00pm - 4:00pm	PHTA DEMO - Basic Leak Detection Procedure, Techniques and Equipment	Brad Madison, Lance Anderson	PHTA DEMO	Booth #4058
D11	3:15pm - 4:00pm	Deck Workshops		Deck Workshops	Booth #8774
E10	3:45pm - 4:45pm	Proper Inground Spa Jet Design a Variable Speed World	Scott Roodbergen	Show Floor Education	Booth #7173
ST9	3:30pm - 4:15pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Lateral Connections, Joists, Railings and Stairs		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
	4:30pm - 6:00pm	Booza-POOL-Ooza: Networking Happy Hour		Special Events	Expo Hall
	6:00pm - 9:30pm	Pool Nation Awards		Special Events	TBA
THWD	7:00pm - 10:00pm	GENESIS Family Reunion and Winemaker Dinner		Special Events (GENESIS)	Celebrity Cars
Thursday, November 17			Speaker(s)	Track	
TH01	7:30am - 9:00am	C415: Damp Proofing Panel (Part 1)	Terry Brannon	GENESIS- Builder	W214
TH02	7:30am - 9:00am	Instagram Shops, Facebook, Tik Tok, Pinterest and More! Understanding Your Expanded Social Commerce 2022 Ad Options!	Pam Vinje	Business	W223

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TH03	7:30am - 9:00am	Myths of Water Chemistry and Testing	Christopher Golden	Service	W231
TH04	7:30am - 9:00am	Building Your Lean Projects for Profitable Results	Brad Humphrey	Business	W228
TH05	7:30am - 9:00am	Hiring, Managing, and Leading in Pool Service	Hal Denbar, Nathan White, Harry Geller, Robert Daniels, Tyler Rasmussen	Service	W209
TH06	7:30am - 9:00am	Fast Friends - Quickly Bond with Your Clients to Discover What They Really Want	Scott Cohen	Business	W233
TH07	7:30am - 9:00am	VGBA Application and Field Inspections	Steve Barnes + Steve Getzoff	PHTA - Builder	W217
TH08	7:30am - 9:00am	Solving the Biggest Marketing Challenge Facing the Deck & Patio Construction Industry - Unconverted Leads	April Edwards	Deck Education	W220
	9:00am - 9:15am	Break			
TH09	9:15am - 10:30am	Preventing Litigation	Bill Drakeley + Paolo Benedetti	WATERSHAPE University-Business	W233
TH10	9:15am - 10:30am	D423: Outdoor Living: How to Create Beautiful and Comfortable Outdoor Rooms	Kate Wiseman	GENESIS-Outdoor Living	W220
TH11	9:15am - 10:30am	D237: How Innovative Creativity Can Profit Your Business	Feras Irikat	GENESIS- Business	W217
TH12	9:15am - 10:30am	Find, Hire, Train and Retain Self-Motivated Workers	Brad Humphrey	Business	W228
TH13	9:15am - 10:30am	Pool Inspections - The Why, Who, How & When	Peter Muehlbronner	Service	W231
TH14	9:15am - 10:30am	How to Design with Elevations From Too Flat to Too Steep	Mike Farley	Builder/Design	W223
TH15	9:15am - 10:30am	Consolidation of the Pool Service Industry - From the Experts	Augusto Titarelli, Hal Denbar, Fraser Ramseyer, Lucas Dorrel, Wendy Parker, Gary Crayton	Service	W209
TH16	9:15am - 10:30am	C415: Damp Proofing Panel (Part 2)	Terry Brannon	GENESIS- Builder	W214
	10:30am - 3:00pm	Exhibits Open Exhibitor Product Clinics			
ST10	11:00am - 11:45am	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Footings, Posts and Beams		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
G5	11:00am - 12:00pm	GENESIS Solution Center - Taste of GENESIS, What's Coming for Design Education	Kate Wiseman, MLA and Feras Irikat	GENESIS Solution Center	Booth #4558
P5	12:15pm - 1:15pm	PHTA DEMO - Start Your Engines (Well, actually water chemistry)	Jody O'Grady	PHTA DEMO	Booth #4058
ST11	12:00pm - 12:45pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Ledgers		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555
ST12	1:00pm - 1:45pm	Deck's Done Right Presentation Series: Lateral Connections, Joists, Railings and Stairs		Simpson Strong-Tie	Booth #8555

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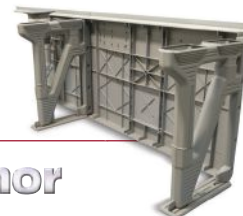
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Making Fast Friends

In this first of a three-part series, Scott Cohen explains how to bond quickly with clients and build lasting rapport through neuro-linguistic programming.

BY SCOTT COHEN



PHOTOS: THE GREEN SCENE

Did you ever notice how sometimes you just “click” with some people, but not with others?

Over the years, I have become great friends with many of my clients. By the end of a project, I know exactly what they want and how to make them happy. But what if you could become close friends at the very beginning of the project? Wouldn't a closer relationship right up front help you understand their desires better? How can we get to click with all of our clients?

I spent the first decade of my 30-year career in garden design focusing on being the best pool designer, contractor and garden artisan that I could. But I realized that I spent half my time working as an impromptu marriage counselor. Many clients are couples, and I often find the old adage “opposites attract” to be true. This sometimes leaves us designing a single project for two people with completely different ideas and preferences. It makes our jobs interesting.

How can we all get on the same page? We want to communicate with both personalities in their own preferred language.

STEAL A CHAPTER FROM THE THERAPISTS BOOK

Professional therapists need to quickly bond with their clients and build rapport with a high level of trust to be effective at their jobs. Knowing this, I have stolen a chapter from their book — well, not just a chapter.

Actually, I have read a dozen books on the subjects of body language and neuro-linguistic programming to help me quickly become a better friend to my clients. Neuro-linguistic programming, or NLP, is actually a type of hypnotherapy developed by Dr. Richard Bandler and Dr. John Grinder back in the 1970s. Understanding the basics of NLP will help you develop a better way to communicate directly with your clients and become friends fast.

PEOPLE HIRE WHOM THEY LIKE, AND THEY LIKE THOSE WHO ARE SIMILAR TO THEM.

Whether we like it or not, people decide how they feel about somebody within minutes of meeting them.

They will make this decision based on what they see and hear. When they like you, they subconsciously tend to see you in the best light, looking for opportunities to

agree with you. If they don't like you, the opposite is true.

Think back to high school: Remember all those cliques of people who hung out together? I think the saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together." Well, that remains true forever. We never really get out of that high school mentality. Think of your own close friends and the people you hang out with today. They probably are a lot like you, with similar interests, clothing styles, likes and dislikes.

Through NLP, we form a bond with a customer by relating to them where they are. It begins by understanding that we all have a preference in how we take in information. Some of us are more visual, some auditory and others kinesthetic. We give away our preference through the language that we use. Some examples:

- "Do you see what I'm saying?"
- "Do you hear what I mean?"
- "Do you understand what I'm getting at?"

Your answer may help determine if your personal preference is visual, auditory or kinesthetic.

CLUES ON LANGUAGE PREFERENCE

To learn about our clients quickly, we should use the same words they do when they communicate with us.

But it starts by listening to them.

When meeting with clients, I go through an extensive design questionnaire with dozens of questions about entertaining needs, style preferences, spouse, etc.

Honestly, I already know the answers to most of these questions when I ask them. But through their answers, I am seeking information about whether the client is more visual, auditory or kinesthetic, so I can select and phrase the words I use accordingly. At the end of the meeting clients often say, "I just feel like

we click."

You can tell a potential client's preference by listening well to the words they use when communicating with you. Keep them talking as much as possible. I realize this is contrary to the practice of many salespeople in our industry, who love to tout the benefits of their products and services. My advice: Shut up and listen. You'll gain a ton of information and really learn how to service your client best. That strong relationship leads to better designs, happier clients, and more money for your firm.

People with a visual preference will say things like, "I know what I like when I see it," "I have trouble visualizing," and "Can you show me a picture?"

People with an auditory preference will say things like, "Tell me more about it," "That sounds interesting," "I love the sound of waterfalls," or "As you said ...".

Kinesthetics will talk thoughtfully about the "feel of the yard." They will say things such as, "I want a space that feels homey, or cozy," or, "I like the ambiance of a fireplace." They typically also talk with a lot of hand movements.

There are also eye charts that help you identify language preference by watching the client's eye movement when they are speaking. Visual people often look up when they are explaining something, as if the information is somewhere up inside their head. Auditory preference is shown by side-to-side eye movement. And, finally, people with a kinesthetic language preference often look down and to the right (opposite for left handers).

PARROT BACK THE WORDS THEY USE

If they want a spa, sell them a spa — don't call it a hot tub.

FOR THE SKEPTICS

Is NLP an unfair advantage? Is it really worth all of this effort?

The benefits of bonding and getting to know your clients quickly and developing a friendship early in the relationship can help you be a better designer, avoid conflicts, earn referrals and build better projects. Of course, many salespeople are natural at this and have never given it a moment of thought. But for others, it can be a learned skill that pays dividends your entire career. It just takes a little practice.

This is not about tricking people into liking you or misleading them in any way. NLP is all about developing better listening skills and then acting on what you have learned.

I've been asked: What happens when the client picks up on what you are doing? I had this happen to me only once. At the end of a design consultation, when I was asking for the client to approve my design work order, I said, "Please sign here since you are comfortable going ahead with complete confidence."

My potential client said, "That's a very well-thought-out statement. Are you a student of NLP?"

His wife asked what that meant, and he said, "Well, do you feel like Scott is a longtime friend of ours and we all just click?" After she said yes, he explained, "Well, that's because he's been practicing NLP this whole time and he's good at it. It also means, he's a good listener. And yes, I am comfortable going ahead with complete confidence."

— S.C.

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Here, Cohen can be seen mirroring the client's hand gestures.

I once saw a salesman correct a client who asked for a Jacuzzi. "What you mean is you want a hot tub," they said. "Jacuzzi is just a brand name." The potential customer's body language shrank away, and you could tell the salesperson had made him feel stupid and embarrassed.

It was no surprise when the potential customer chose not to buy either a hot tub or a Jacuzzi on that particular day.

It's not that people won't understand what you are saying if you don't speak in the identical manner of their preference. One time I heard a child say, "I'm thirsty for pizza." I know what it means, but it required another step. On the other hand, when you do match a person's language preference, the information is taken in directly to their subconscious, removing the step of translating into their own preferred language.

It's very subtle, but it works.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

Rapport is a state of unconscious responsiveness.

When building rapport with new people you meet, try to match their tempo, tonality and speed at which they speak, in addition to their language. You will find yourself in sync with them: Subconsciously, they will see you as a friend, and people look for the best in those they like.

Match their physical movements as well. If a client puts her hand on her chin, mimic the behavior and put your hand on your chin. It might seem awkward at first, but you'll get the hang of it quickly and it speaks to their subconscious. In their mind, you are a trusted friend.

Matching and mimicking behavior can be about how you dress too. Don't show up to a business meeting wearing flip flops and a tank top. I try to remember what the clients were

wearing at the last meeting and dress accordingly at the next.

There is a lot more to learn about NLP, body language and anchoring and I would encourage you to read some books on the subject. For more information and a deeper dive into this subject matter, attend my seminar at this year's International Pool | Spa | Patio Deck Expo in Vegas on Thursday, Nov. 17, at 7:30 a.m. in Room W233.



Scott Cohen is president of The Green Scene, an outdoor design/build firm in Chatsworth, Calif. He also is a construction defect expert witness, consultant, instructor and author. He recently became president of the California Pool & Spa Association.

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During the application process for our Top 50 programs, company owners are asked to name one staffer as their Most Valuable Player, and explain why they deserve the honor. Each MVP is revealed as part of the Top 50 Builder and Top 50 Service issues.

For our special PSP/Deck Expo issue, we wanted to learn more about a handful of the MVPs named by this year's Top 50 Service firms. Some work in the field, others in the office. Some lead initiatives that made quantifiable effects on the bottom line, while others contributed in less tangible ways, such as improving training, morale and cohesiveness. But all perfectly demonstrate the correlation between staff quality and a company's success.

Valerie Venegas and the Very Big Deal

The office manager of Payan Pool Service transformed operations, lifted morale — and landed an account that instantly expanded the firm's scope.

BY NATE TRAYLOR

Behind every successful business is a smart, capable office manager.

At Payan Pool Service, that person is Valerie Venegas.

After nearly 20 years in nonprofit administration, Venegas sought a new challenge in the for-profit world where she could affect change for the better.

October marks her second anniversary at the Santee, Calif.-based service company, but she's made a sizable impact on the 2022 Top 50 Service company in that short time. Her achievements include implementing a new health benefits plan, giving the employee handbook a long overdue update, rolling out a new software program, streamlining operations, and improving morale.

REACHING FOR NEW VISTAS

Venegas' transition to the pool industry wasn't as jarring as you might think.

"The background and training I had from the nonprofit world are pretty much the same thing: Supervising staff, managing budgets, purchasing, HR activities," she says. "It was very transferable to any company you might go to."

Her ability to translate government contracts, which she learned in her previous role, enabled Payan Pool Service to take on a different kind of project, thus expanding its market.

Before joining Payan, Venegas was a program administrator for Episcopal Community Services. Among other things, this organization provides marriage and family therapists to conduct behavioral evaluations on behalf of county agencies such as schools and child protective services. For Venegas, that involved sifting through reams of requests for proposals (RFPs) from public agencies.

Government contracts can be intimidating, requiring substantially more paperwork than your typical civilian job. That's one reason the firm's president and CEO, Javier Payan, hesitated to pursue a maintenance contract at Coronado Naval Air Station, despite its repeated requests for a bid. Thankfully, interpreting government RFPs is second nature to Venegas.

The naval contract was immense, calling for the maintenance of multiple bodies of water, including a million-gallon training pool for SEALs, at the historic airbase. The project came during a nationwide chlorine crisis — another reason Payan wasn't sure he wanted the job.



PHOTOS COURTESY PAYAN POOL SERVICE



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“It’s nice to have someone like her who’s so detail-oriented, who understands these things,” Payan says. “There is no way in creation I would’ve entertained these jobs otherwise.”



But it became apparent that the company’s expertise was sorely needed at the base. The condition of the training pool was so poor that complaints reached all the way to the Pentagon. With Venegas overseeing the correspondence, Payan Pool Service won the contract.

More naval work came Payan’s way. In October of last year, his team remodeled a pool at Naval Base Point Loma.

Payan says he couldn’t have done it without Venegas.

“It’s nice to have someone like her who’s so detail-oriented, who understands these things,” Payan says. “There is no way in creation I would’ve entertained these jobs otherwise.”

IMPROVING COMPANY CULTURE

Venegas proved instrumental in many other initiatives.

Among her first priorities was providing a more robust benefits package, including health and retirement plans. Now, about half of the team is covered under the company’s health insurance, she says.

This not only helped retain talent, but also served as an effective recruiting tool in a challenging job market.

There was also the matter of the long-neglected company handbook, which hadn’t been revised since 2016. Many statewide mandates had passed since then to address health, safety and access issues. Venegas updated the employee manual to reflect those changes and included accommodations for lactation and other crucial policies.

Also on her punch list: Upgrading the company’s

antiquated software system, long a desire of Payan’s.

“He tried to do this on his own but didn’t have the support personnel to help him roll it out,” Venegas says.

For years, office staff used a combination of programs, including QuickBooks, to handle all functions of the business, from scheduling jobs to billing and receiving. Last year, Venegas shopped for a solution to consolidate and streamline office operations. Next came the sizable undertaking of transferring the company’s data into the new system, which required the support of temp staff to meet a tight January 2022 deadline.

She wasn’t done yet. There was also the matter of vague job descriptions, which resulted in overlapping duties between office staff. Venegas defined roles in detail, created an accounts receivable position, and hired two more office personnel, dedicating one to assist the repair manager and another to Payan. Today, everyone knows what’s expected, and support staff are much more efficient, she says.

“By doing so, we were able to hire more staff and get more jobs that would challenge [Payan] and get into new fields,” Venegas says.

Morale is up, too. Venegas gets a kick out of surprising staff with spontaneous barbecue lunches, group outings to San Diego Padres games, Christmas parties and gift cards, among other efforts to make the company’s 25 employees feel valued and appreciated.

Finally, Payan says, he has a company culture that reflects his values: “She came in and set the stage.”

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The Quick Success of Alec Small



Leveraging his computer technology background, the general manager of MCM Pool Service overhauled the firm's maintenance business and improved internal communications.

BY RENA GOLDMAN



When Alec Small first began working at MCM Pool Service, he had no plans of building a career in the industry.

But, as has happened to so many others, the industry would soon draw him in.

Small, who studied computer arts and computer science in college, says he had bounced from employer to employer after graduating. “[MCM] was a job to pay student loans when I didn’t have other work,” he says. “I would come and go ... before I settled into seeing the pool business as a long-term vocation.”

Small, who now has been with the company for about five years, started as a pool cleaning technician. At first, he toggled between work at MCM and a tech company, where he taught kids computer animation, programming code and Photoshop. He soon recognized some internal gaps he could fill at MCM.

“So, one year, I just put all my eggs in the MCM basket,” he says.

Small brought the tech, teaching and leadership skills he’d learned in roles outside the pool industry and applied them at MCM.

“I really took to the pool maintenance operations

because I enjoy teaching people, and there’s a large part of that in cleaning,” he says.

Giving it his all paid off, both for Small and the company. In less than five years, he rose from maintenance technician to head of the maintenance department, and now to general manager.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Matt Small, a co-owner of MCM Pool Service, and Alec Small’s brother, was impressed with the progress. “He turned the least profitable section in the company into probably one of the most profitable sections,” he says.

In terms of profitability, Matt Small calculated how much income each service generates per minute. As it turned out, the dollar-per-minute income rate on maintenance is about double what they see on other service work. Alec Small achieved the profit increase by restructuring the company’s maintenance pricing and route scheduling.

“Our pricing was not competitive, and for a number of reasons, it needed a major facelift,” Alec Small says. His experience working as a cleaning technician gave him an understanding of what customers wanted and

PHOTOS COURTESY ALEC SMALL

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B L U E S Q U A R E

“I grew up as a gamer, you know, living behind a screen. So I’m very familiar with the techie side of things. And I try to implement those things into the job in ways that can help overall user experience ...”



how to create a price that matched the quality customers believed they deserved.

He got rid of biweekly cleaning services, which made scheduling more complicated and created more work. He replaced them with twice-weekly cleanings: More frequent visits meant there wouldn’t be enough time for the chemistry to go askew, making each visit quicker and easier.

Additionally, Small approached pricing like streaming services do, developing a subscription system with three-tiered pricing for maintenance.

“The customers like it, because it’s just a flat rate that they understand,” he says. “If there are [water chemistry] recovery fees, they understand why they are.”

Matt Small says the tiered subscription program got MCM to the point where maintenance is pulling in big money. Even chemical sales have increased dramatically, despite the lack of a retail store. “Last July, we had around 100 weekly maintenance customers, and we did about \$65,000,” Alec Small says. “This year in that same month with probably 120 [weekly maintenance customers], we did \$92,000.”

COMMUNICATION UPGRADES

Small also used his background in tech to improve communication systems with customers and with staff internally.

He led the team in switching from paper-based systems to using Skimmer, an app that allows techs to track service calls and communicate with customers, and in adopting Discord, a communications app commonly used for video gaming communities, for peer-to-peer

staff communications.

“I grew up as a gamer, you know, living behind a screen, so I’m very familiar with the techie side of things,” Small explains. “And I try to implement those things into the job in ways that can help overall user experience, so for Skimmer specifically, the customer doesn’t need to download the app, and I think that’s why it’s the most user friendly.”

Small is responsible for creating all of the infrastructure for MCM in the Skimmer app and routing the technicians to the jobs for the day.

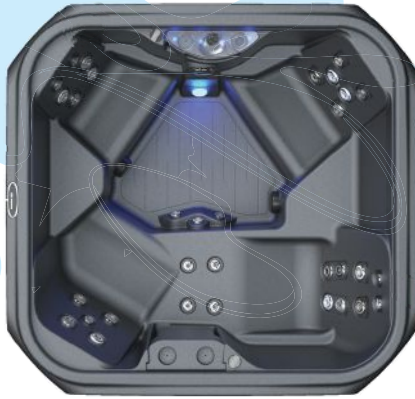
He chose Discord for internal communications because it was a platform he was very familiar with as a gamer and could easily adapt for MCM, to improve communication between office staff and field technicians. Team communications now occur in one place, and people know how to reach one another. This helped build team culture, Small says, because it gave people a forum to share things that went on in the field, whether it was a product they liked, an animal they saved, or a job they took pride in.

Finally, Small implemented one more crucial element of building team culture and communication: a daily meeting where team members go through the post-job notes of the day with a manager. He calls it Day Review and says the process allows for himself and other managers to provide guidance and build rapport with staff.

“He started at the bottom here, and he worked his way right up to the top,” says Matt Small. “Now he’s the GM running the show, and he did it with hard work, and he did it for himself and for the team.”



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The Natural Talents of Adam Sayre

After Pure Swim recruited him in the wild from outside the industry, this born leader and teacher immediately elevated the staff's skills and sense of teamwork.

BY RIN-RIN YU

Ask Adam Sayre why he was chosen as his company's MVP, and he's very modest.

"I don't know," he laughs. "I make sure to talk to [the service technicians] at least once or twice a day. And if they have any questions, I'm always here to help them."

Sayre may downplay the honor, but the work ethic he described actually earned him the title.

"Adam's relentless dedication to constantly improve is what makes him my most valuable player," says Rich Gallo, owner of Pure Swim, a pool/spa service firm in Van Nuys, Calif. "He sees the vision of how Pure Swim is different from all other service companies and [he] is always innovating to keep us on top."

Sayre's commitment has shown tangible results. Last year, Pure Swim's revenue increased 24%, which Gallo attributes to Sayre's efforts training three new service techs.

In addition, Sayre singlehandedly made it possible for the company to expand into new territory when he brought in a \$1.7 million movie-studio account. Not only was it the largest contract in Pure Swim's history, but it enabled the company to form a new division catering to such clients.



CAREER SWITCH

Sayre wasn't always in the pool business. He came to Pure Swim after a chance meeting.

About eight years ago, he was working in a truck and outfitting company when he met Gallo on a business run. As the story goes, Gallo asked if Sayre was interested in working for Pure Swim. He suggested that Sayre take a photo of Gallo's truck, which had the company's information on it. When Sayre got home, he looked up Pure Swim on Google, but it showed Gallo's house instead of his business.

"He said he had an office, but this was a home," Sayre recalls.

At the time, he wanted the stability of an established company, not someone working out of his house, so he didn't pursue it.

A year later, they reconnected, and Gallo asked directly why Sayre didn't call him about a job. After hearing Sayre's honest answer, Gallo had a good laugh. Once he explained the issues that can arise with Google, and that Pure Swim indeed had an office, Sayre made the switch and hasn't looked back.

Sayre began with the company as a service technician

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“I train all the guys when they come in, and just really focus on their strengths and weaknesses. [But] it’s not a weakness. It’s something we can help them be stronger in.”



with 60 pools a week. But his work ethic ensured quick progress.

“I was trying to take in as much knowledge as I could,” he says. “The more I did it, the more I understood [the problem] and solutions.”

He always made it a point to share whatever he learned with the other technicians. His willingness and skill in training others, whether formally or informally, became part of his reputation.

“I train all the guys when they come in, and just really focus on their strengths and weaknesses,” Sayre says.

But then he reframes that last thought, revealing the kind of constructive approach that no doubt has served him and the company well: “It’s not a weakness,” he says. “It’s something we can help them be stronger in.”

FAST PROGRESS

Through his history with the company, Sayre progressed from technician to account manager and, eventually, a route manager.

But the titles aren’t important to Sayre. It’s the daily work — being with customers, signing on new accounts, teaching homeowners how their pool equipment works, being outdoors — that drives Sayre. He calls it a “lifestyle.”

In his training capacity, Sayre strives to ensure that each technician understands as much as he does, “not

just walking into a backyard like a robot and going through the motions,” he says.

Patience is a key part of the process. It takes baby steps to make sure the technicians understand what they’re doing and why, and to continue to build on that knowledge.

Gallo says Sayre knows having a strong team helps build and grow the company. He’s impressed by how much Sayre lives by this philosophy.

“I never imagined having an employee who would have the same drive and dedication as the owner,” Gallo says. “His tenacity forces me to up my own game. He’s the reason why I still love doing this after 31 years. Truthfully, I wouldn’t be where I’m at without him.”

The company owner says it’s important to look after his employees, and he did so to keep Sayre in the business. When Sayre’s family experienced healthcare issues, Gallo didn’t hesitate to increase the route manager’s insurance coverage and keep him on the payroll while he took leave to care for his family. During that difficult time, Gallo was surprised to see Sayre show up to the office, quietly working, even when he was not expected to be there.

“You invest in people,” Gallo says. “My investment in this kid has been the biggest payout of any investment in my entire life. I still think he’s going to be the best investment of my entire life.”

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Matt Kochan and the Thread from Past to Future

With a deep history and keen abilities to retain and share knowledge, the service manager at Great Valley Pool Service is the glue bonding the company.

BY RIN-RIN YU

When siblings Tracy and Cecil Bond took over Great Valley Pool Service in Frazer, Pa., approximately eight years ago, they also got Matt Kochan with the business.

Time proved that he wasn't just another employee — he was the nucleus of the operation, the caretaker who made sure the company stayed strong and its employees happy.

"When we first took over the business, we had to make it his objective not to work as many hours as he did, because you need a life outside the pool business," recalls Cecil Bond. "But he made the pool business his life."

But his contributions amount to more than hours worked, says Tracy Bond, who calls him the "consummate multitasker" and "the glue that holds this company together."

WALKING ENCYCLOPEDIA

Kochan has been working at Great Valley Pool Service for 26 years, since the time it was managed by the previous owners.

Currently, he is service manager of the recurring service division, spending his days in front of multiple

computer monitors, managing calendars. He schedules 450 weekly and biweekly service customers, 1,200 pool openings, and 1,600 pool closings.

He has a "keen awareness of all 450 of his service pools, many of which he serviced himself when he first started as a service tech with the company," says Tracy Bond.

He even knows what equipment and plumbing set-ups local builders tend to use, which helps him guide techs in servicing individual pools. "As long as I know who built the pool I can just access the file stuck in my head and give them the guidance/info they need," Kochan says.

He joined the company in the mid-1990s, after he graduated high school, started college, and tried to figure out what he wanted to do. A friend from high school introduced him to her parents, who owned the company, and he began working with them over the summer.

"I liked it so much — the office is outdoors, every day is different and challenging, and I was seeing beautiful pools and houses," he remembers. "I was hooked from there."

He began as a helper in the two-man crew with a technician, serving about 35 customers. By his third year, he went to the owners and asked to take on the recurring service portion of the business — scheduling and



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“I take a lot of satisfaction in helping everybody learn, giving as much information as possible, and helping them through their problems [so] they keep growing themselves.”



running it. The 1990s were a hot time for the industry, so he was in the right place at the right time, with the right attitude. “It just took off from there,” he says. “After so many years, 30-some pools turned into 400-some pools.”

Even during the most hectic times, such as the historic demand brought on by the pandemic combined with a chronic labor shortage, Kochan has always been there to help guide the company through.

“Scheduling is a full-time job, yet he spends a large portion of his day on the phone with our recurring service technicians coaching, mentoring and helping them to troubleshoot issues encountered out in the field,” Tracy Bond says. “When we are short-staffed, he is willing to roll up his sleeves and spend days in the field ... and still comes back to the office to do his scheduling work.”

MACRO MEETS MICRO

When asked about his dedication to go above and beyond expectations, Kochan just chuckles and, in his humility, attributes it to a short commute. But his employers and coworkers know better. He does

admit that he truly enjoys helping those around him continually grow in their jobs.

“I take a lot of satisfaction in helping everybody learn, giving as much information as possible, and helping them through their problems [so] they keep growing themselves,” he says.

A few years back, the company underwent an entire technological upgrade to make it paperless, and Kochan was on board with the changes and learning curve. All of the technicians operate on mobile technology, using tablets on-site and uploading information and photos in real-time. Kochan was instrumental in helping the technicians learn the software and understand the importance and benefits of it.

But he doesn’t take credit. He calls the daily work a “multiple-headed monster” in which everyone chips in.

Cecil Bond says that Kochan thinks of everything, big and small. “The guys — before they come to me, they go through him first,” he says.

Kochan advocates for the other employees and constantly comes up with ideas to boost morale. “He really is the heart of our operation,” Cecil Bond says.

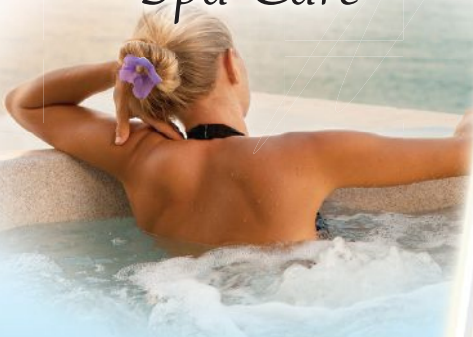
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The Many Roles of Melanie Brzozowski



With an ability to adapt under pressure, the service office manager of All Seasons Pools Spas & Outdoor Living sets an example at the office and at home.

BY RIN-RIN YU

Melanie Brzozowski remembers going into her interview with All Seasons Pools Spas & Outdoor Living in Orland Park, Ill., on her birthday. She already had customer service experience, having worked in retail at Walgreens, and was studying interior design. So she thought her background might complement the needs of the company.

Her intuition proved accurate. “I ended up getting the offer that day,” she says.

Though All Seasons might have given her a birthday gift in the form of a job offer, co-owner Dan Lenz would say Brzozowski herself was the real gift.

“She’s one of the most dedicated employees a company could ever hope to employ,” he says.

GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

Lenz cites the pandemic as an example of how she truly shines.

As service office manager, Brzozowski worked with five others in the office before COVID. When the pandemic hit, she and one other staffer stayed on while the rest were sent home. However, as demand for swimming pools rose, the office was inundated with calls. “It was

almost impossible to keep up with it,” Lenz says.

He also notes that Chicago has a short swimming season. The huge consumer demand coupled with the short window of opportunity to build left the team under immense stress.

“But [Brzozowski] managed to not only keep her wits about her amidst everything going on around her but also managed to keep that end of our business running at that high level — above and beyond.”

Not only that: As a single parent, she was managing a toddler at home — a child whose daycare was unpredictable due to the pandemic. Brzozowski worked remotely on days when her daughter, Olivia, was home. She took client calls, organized service schedules, and oversaw the office all from her laptop.

Brzozowski’s ability to get the job done from home led to a policy change that benefited both the company and its employees. She proved that it was possible to have remote employees so, when it came time to re-hire positions, Lenz — who was initially nervous about the idea of remote employees — agreed to hire people who didn’t even live in the same time zone. He says they have also proven to be exemplary at their jobs, even from afar.

PHOTOS: ALL SEASONS POOLS SPAS & OUTDOOR LIVING



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“I want to make sure [my daughter] Olivia sees that if you put your all into something, you’re going to be successful — make sure she sees you’re on top of your game.”



Brzozowski didn't think she would stay indefinitely at All Seasons. It's true that she took to the company like a fish to water: She was even named Employee of the Year award one year after she started, which she considers her proudest moment with the company. Still, as Lenz puts it, she was in her early-to-mid-20's and "wanted to see what else was out there." So she left the Chicago area and moved to Salt Lake City, where her sister lived.

Not much time passed, however, before Lenz received a message from her saying that she missed working there. Lenz had just created the service office manager position and asked if she wanted it. A month later, she was back in Chicago.

THE ROLE MODEL

Brzozowski says it's important for her to set a good example for her daughter about success, in the same way her own mother had for her.

"I want to make sure Olivia sees that if you put your all into something, you're going to be successful — make sure Olivia sees you're on top of your game."

That includes seeing Brzozowski working late at night or early in the morning to make sure her work isn't neglected, but neither are her parenting duties.

Brzozowski is driven to make sure things are getting done in the office and on the job sites. When she first

started, she would take all the questions from customers and talk to Lenz, write it down, and commit it to memory. Soon, she didn't even need to ask Lenz most of the questions from customers because she already knew the answers. She says she wants to understand why something is the way it is, believing it's the best way to take care of a customer.

She has even gone through some training to become a certified maintenance specialist and certified service technician. "She never just took a response," Lenz says. "She always took the next step: 'Why?'"

Brzozowski also contributes to the industry at large, serving as a WAVE committee chair for the Midwest Chapter of the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA), as well as a member of the national WAVE Young Professionals Network steering committee. She says she loves meeting others, learning from and socializing with them.

She believes that the pool and spa industry has many opportunities for people, including sales, building, customer service, marketing, design, and more, and that it's a cozy industry of friendly, like-minded people who love what they do.

Most of all, she feels at home with All Seasons as a company. "I feel so important and loved," she says. "You can't get that kind of feeling from a corporate environment. You can feel like it's your second home."



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The Improvisational Stylings of Josiah Powell



With a military background and ability to think quickly on his feet, the lead field service tech at Poolsure accomplishes in a day what would take others a week.

BY NATE TRAYLOR

The Marine Corps has a mantra: Improvise. Adapt. Overcome. This has served Josiah Powell well in both his military and pool industry careers.

As a lead field service technician at Houston-based Poolsure's service and repair department, Powell has been instrumental in getting big projects done on tight deadlines — improvising solutions, adapting to demanding environments, and overcoming challenging obstacles.

Powell has been in the pool industry since he was a teenage lifeguard. He joined the Marine Corps at 18, got married the summer after bootcamp, and served in the infantry for four years. He found it difficult to transition back to civilian life. Employers, even those who claimed to hire veterans, passed him over.

To support his young family, Powell cleaned pools for \$10 an hour for another firm. He eventually was promoted to repair technician, a job he'd have to learn on the fly.

Then he found an interesting opportunity at Poolsure, a chemical delivery and water management services company. In 2015, the firm launched a repair and service division. Powell would join industry veteran Kevin McAuley in the new venture. "Together we started a service department with pen and paper and a little bit

of know-how and Harbor Freight Tools," Powell recalls.

Today, he leads a team of seven field service technicians for a company that touts commercial clients such as Legoland Florida Resort, Kalahari Resorts and Schlitterbahn, among destination resorts. The team has thrived under his leadership, in part because Powell trained them to be more than repair experts — they serve as technical sales representatives, as well.

"They listen to the customer and provide concrete solutions in layman's terms," says McAuley, director of technical services. "[Powell] is always asking, 'What is important and what does it take to serve the customer and how can I get in front of our people to help them do that?'"

"He's humble and capable."

He's also a guy who gets things done.

RIISING TO THE OCCASION

There are two specific jobs that demonstrate Powell's determination and outside-the-box thinking.

Under normal circumstances, changing two 15,000-pound sand filters would take several days to a week. But Powell didn't have the luxury of time. The Catholic school pool was a week from hosting a large swim meet.

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That meant replacing the sand and repairing a blown lateral in less than 24 hours to allow time for the 400,000-gallon pool to heat back up and chemicals to balance.

In most jobs like this, you'd drain the sand from the bottom of the filter, making a big mess of the equipment room. Then you'd scoop it into a truck to haul away. To expedite the process, sewage suction trucks were borrowed from Poolsure's wastewater and stormwater services division. Two technicians were inside the filter tanks, one scooping sand into the snorkel and the other on clog patrol, beating the 8-inch tube to bust up clumps of sand.

The vehicles made quick work of evacuating the tanks. The task of filling would also require an unconventional method. Rather than order pallets of 50-pound bags, Powell procured 4,000-pound supersacks to crane over the filters. The sacks had pull strings at the bottom, making it easy to dump directly into the units. "I've never filled up 30,000 pounds in under 24 hours," Powell says.

He employed a bit of Marine-like improvising to repair the broken lateral hub. This particular filter model used either a different class of PVC or metric-sized PVC — there's some debate on that. Either way, a standard 4-inch fitting wasn't going to work, as it would leave a 1/8-inch gap between the coupling and the pipe. "This wasn't a

part you could find at the pool-supply warehouse," Powell says. "We had to fabricate a solution in the field."

Powell made up the difference with rubberized tape, as the fitting didn't have to be watertight. He then secured it with stainless steel screws in the sidewall.

QUICK SWAP

For Powell's next trick, he'd replace two horizontal sand filters and install secondary sanitation equipment within an 8-hour window at Shades of Green, a Walt Disney World resort exclusively for members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

The resort didn't want to disrupt the pool's schedule, so Powell and his apprentice were given from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to complete a job that should have taken two to three days. Rather than empty, disassemble and haul out the filters piece by piece, Powell cut the plumbing and lifted 6,000-pound units by crane, being careful not to crush the electrical panel in the tight quarters.

The new filters were craned in and installed, and the pool was ready for guests eager to luxuriate.

"The pressure was a factor, however, military training in that situation helps out a lot," Powell says.

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Melissa Gravitt and the Seismic Culture Shift

The MVP of The Pool Butler created a healthy team environment to attract and retain quality staff and drive business growth.

BY RENA GOLDMAN

It's been said that team culture can make or break a company. Without a strong foundation built on shared values, work standards, communications and processes, it can be very difficult for a group to accomplish business goals as a group.

Leaders set the tone in this regard — something Melissa Gravitt understands well. So she quickly made changes to create an environment that would more effectively attract and retain company staffers. She significantly contributed to the company's growth in other ways as well.

QUICK EVOLUTION

The MVP for The Pool Butler came to the pool industry by chance. She was a stay-at-home mom looking to get back into the workforce when a friend suggested she work for a pool business. That was in 2010.

Four years later, she started at the Hiram, Ga.-based service firm as a maintenance scheduler. That position provided her a quick education on the basics of pool/spa maintenance. After taking a break to care for her sick father, Gravitt joined a newly opened location as office manager. "I was actually the only person in the office,"

she says. "I did all of the maintenance, billing, scheduling, ordering — everything — and I did that for three years."

Through this exposure to so many aspects of the business, Gravitt gained an intricate understanding of the company's workings, enabling her to become company trainer for both locations.

In this capacity, she played a key role in growing The Pool Butler's newest location. When she started at that facility in 2018, it serviced about 49 pools per week with one technician, she recalls. It now has nine technicians who maintain about 90 pools each week.

Company owner Tim Bolden credits his MVP with making the decisions and running the location as if she were the owner. "Basically, this office started from nothing," he says. "I gave them 40 accounts from our other location, and within three years, they created a million-dollar office process from the ground up."

Those numbers alone are impressive, but Gravitt takes pride in another important fact: "We've actually retained almost all of our employees. When they're hired, they don't leave."

For all these reasons, Bolden considers Gravitt the backbone of the company.



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She views her biggest achievement as developing an office culture that has fostered employee retention, even through the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

"We set forth guidelines as far as what is expected, and it's communicated and it is enforced," she says. In this case, enforcement doesn't mean scolding an employee for doing something wrong, but rather talking about what happened, learning and devising a better way for next time.

In addition to clearly communicated policies, Gravitt also worked to establish and maintain a solid relationship between the office staff and technicians. She worked to set that foundation from Day One and has clearly been successful. The first technician at her location started with her in January 2018, and she hired a second the following month. Both remain with The Pool Butler.

One factor in building a team culture is having regular social outings together.

"We'll take half the day and we'll go bowling, or we'll go do something on a Friday where it's just showing appreciation for the hard work that they have put in," Gravitt says.

Keeping this strong company culture across office and field staff begins at hiring. Gravitt oversees every interview for new office positions, while the director of maintenance does so on technician interviews.

Then during training, Gravitt sits with new hires to see how they're working and offer tips to improve efficiency. She'll say, "Let me see how you do this, so that we can work on it together to get it done the way it needs to be."

After her promotion from office manager to trainer, Gravitt taught all the new office staff how the company systems work. Once they were trained, she was promoted again to director of operations.

"Now she's kind of handling everything that I do, so I can step out of the picture and start growing another market coming into the winter," Bolden says.

He describes Gravitt as a solid role model for staff and someone who leads them as a group rather than taking credit for what she has done. That becomes apparent when she quickly points out that it takes a solid team to deliver for the customer and build a good reputation for the business.

"The fact that I'm successful is only because of the teamers I have under me are," she says.

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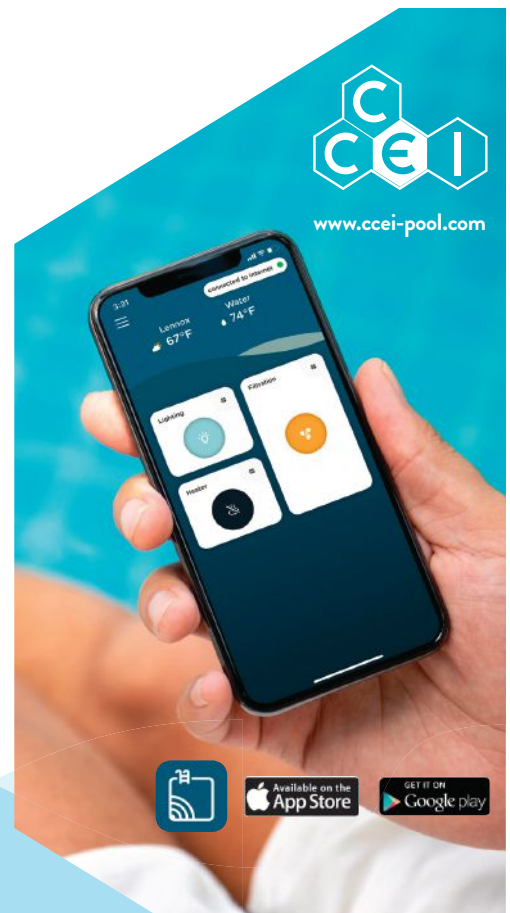
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PSP/Deck Expo Exhibitors Marketplace

Details on products of exhibitors at the 2022 PSP/Deck Expo are based on materials provided by the manufacturers.

BY PSN STAFF



Anderson Mfg. Booth 4844

Product: Leakalyzer w/Blue-tooth to Reporter App
Features: enables rapid determination of a pool's leak status; Bluetooth results can be downloaded
Contact: leaktools.com



Aqua Comb/Mi-Way Booth 4835

Product: Aqua Comb
Features: come in styles that clean pool, spa and hot tub cartridge filters; designed to clean in 3-5 minutes using water; attaches to a garden hose; the combs open the filter pleats, letting the 3" water spray remove built-up debris; made in the USA
Contact: aquacomb.com



Aqua Creek Products Booth 6269

Product: Ranger 2 Pool Lift
Features: seamless, easy-to-use pool lift with smooth, whisper-quiet out and down motion
Contact: aquacreek.com



Aquabella Tile Booth 4822

Product: Britannia Glass Tile Series
Features: available in four colors: Stonehenge (pictured), Cathedral, Dover, and Yorkshire; mesh mounted, glossy 2x6-inch tiles can be used in residential and commercial pools
Contact: aquabellatile.com



Aquamatic Cover Systems Booth 5548

Product: Hydramatic Automatic Safety Cover
Features: modular design takes only four bolts to assemble, making installation simple; patented cable compensator automatically aligns both sides of the cover as it extends and retracts
Contact: aquamatic.com



AquaStar Pool Products Booth 7155

Product: AquaStar Pipeline Filter
Features: new cartridge filters available in two sizes — 27,000 and 35,000 gallons
Contact: aquastarpoolproducts.com



Artesian Spas Booth 5226

Product: TidalFit DT-21 | Dual Temp FitSpa
Features: ideal for families looking for an alternative to a full-sized backyard pool; features a 13-foot swim spa plus an 8-foot hot tub
Contact: ArtesianSpas.com



Artistry In Mosaics Booth 5347

Product: Scroll Centerpiece
Features: ceramic mosaic tile designs are handcrafted from a box of clay; suitable for all applications; the tiles undergo a seven-step quality control process; frost proof and meet or exceed TCNA standards
Contact: artistryinmosaics.com



**BioLab/Natural Chemistry
Booth 6752**

Product: Pool Perfect Max with PHOS Free
Features: formulated to work as a continuous filter cleaner, removing maintenance levels of problem-causing phosphates, reducing scrubbing of scum lines and waterline ring; simply add one capful per 10,000 gallons of pool water each week
Contact:
naturalchemistry.com



**Blue Square Mfg.
Booth 5144**

Product: Vivid 360 Retro Pool & Spa Lights
Features: engineered to replace most existing pool and spa lights; use to replace a broken light or upgrade to a more colorful brighter LED light
Contact:
bluesquaremfg.com/vivid/



**Blue-White Industries
Booth 4537**

Product: FLEXFLO A1A Acid and Liquid Chlorine Feeder
Features: designed for aquatics facilities that require higher chemical feed requirements for sanitizing and pH adjustment; will detect tube failure and shut down the pump to prevent chemical spills
Contact: blue-white.com



**Bullfrog Spas
Booth 5629**

Product: Swim Series S150
Features: designed to help users build endurance and strength with preset or customizable fitness programs, resistance training, and space for any number of low-impact, water-based workouts; ample number of multilevel seats
Contact: bullfrogspas.com

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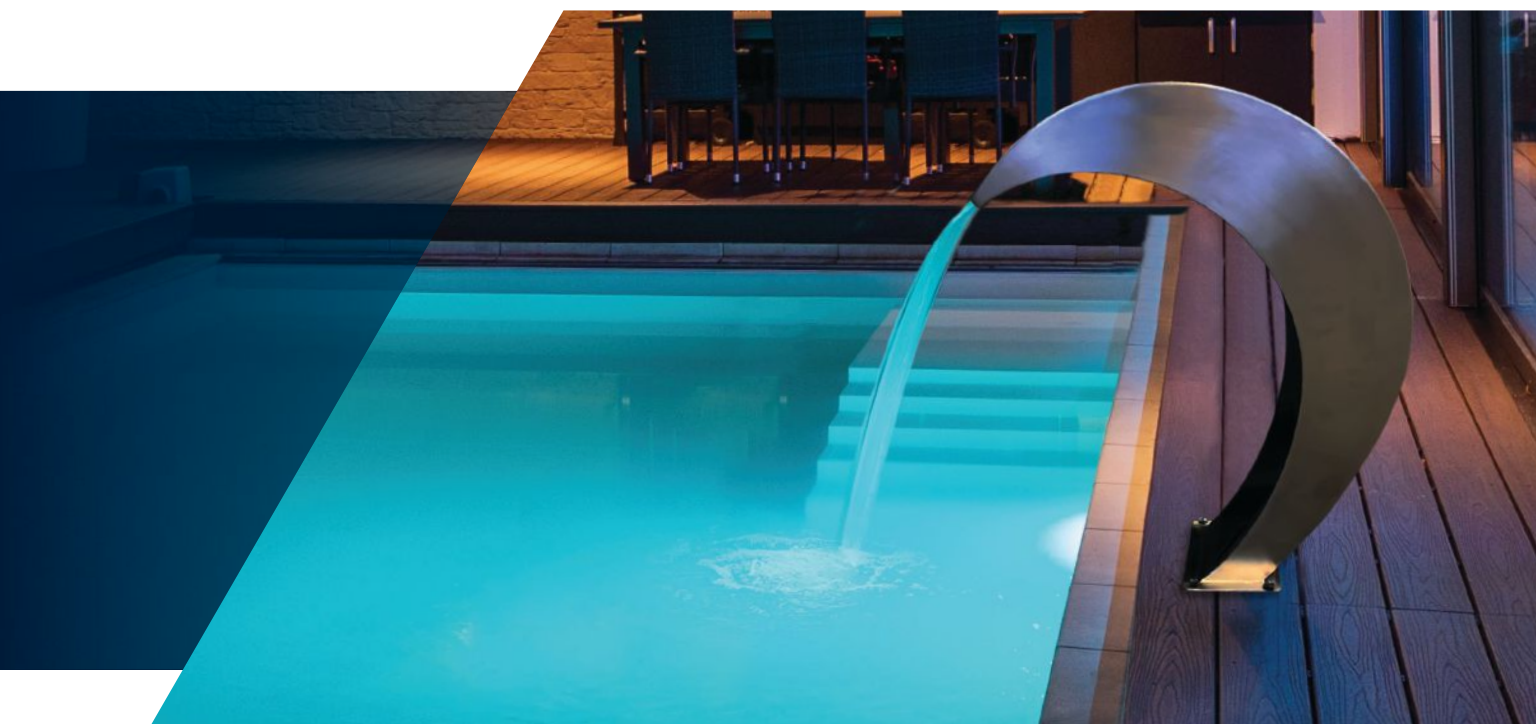
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**CamerEye
Booth 4426**

Product: CamerEye
Features: offers pool construction monitoring, inspection and pool safety; advanced artificial intelligence (AI) camera safety/security system is built for the pool industry to monitor, detect, and alert both on the job site and for your customer's pool safety after the job is done
Contact: camereye.ai



**Carvin Pool Equipment
Booth 6761**

Product: Resin Aboveground Pools
Features: modern design pool with 3D wall effects and latest technology; easy and fast installation
Contact: carvinpool.com



**CCEI USA
Booth 7352**

Product: Tild
Features: simple pool automation controls the pump, heater, and lights all from a smartphone; monitor pool remotely, schedule equipment
Offer: early buy pricing
Contact: ccei-pool.com



**Chemtrol
Booth 6661**

Product: Chemtrol Chemical Controllers
Features: automated chemical controllers are programmable for control of water chemistry (ORP, PPM and pH), water balance (conductivity and Langelier Index), heater, and automatic filter backwash
Contact: sbcontrol.com

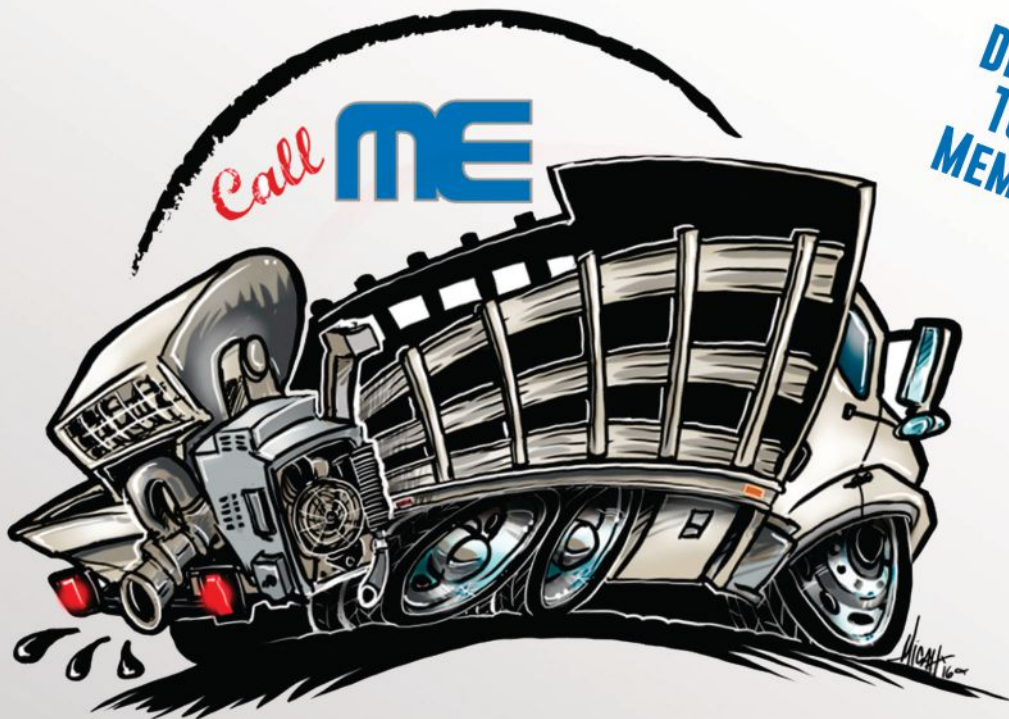
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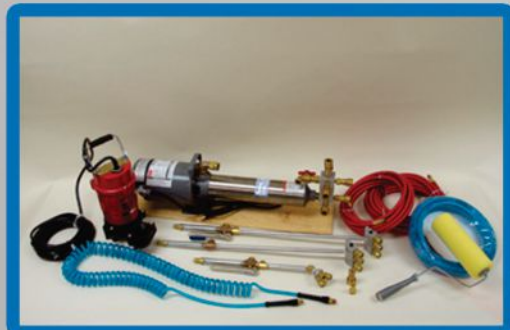
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**Chlorine Genie
Booth 4357**

Product: Chlorine Genie
Features: patented technology chlorinates a pool without adding industrial chemicals; adjusts pH with a flip of the valve, reducing the use of muriatic acid; easy to install, use, service and clean
Contact: chlorinegenie.com



**Clearwater Enviro
Technologies
Booth 4146**

Product: pH PURE
Features: new CO2 injection system designed specifically for residential pools for pH control; trace amounts of carbon dioxide are injected into the pool's water in time-controlled amounts throughout the day with the computerized control system; easily installed in under an hour
Contact:
ClearwaterEnviro.com



**ControlOMatic
Booth 5034**

Product: New SmarterSpa+ Chlorine Generator
Features: saltwater chlorine generator with chlorine control built into the cell; tests and measures chlorine in the water; when spa water needs more chlorine, it will start a chlorine generation cycle and will never over-chlorinate; now app-enabled to control the unit from anywhere
Contact: controlomatic.com



**Daldorado
Booth 6166**

Product: DalLUX Stone & Tile Support System
Features: the DalLUX Stone & Tile Support System allows pool designers to take the decking to the water's edge for aesthetics and functionality
Contact: daldorado.com

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**Deck-O-Seal/W.R. Meadows
Booth 7666**

Product: HS-1 SL
Features: one-part, self-leveling hybrid sealant, developed with silyl-modified polymer (SMP) technology; cures under the influence of atmospheric moisture to form a medium modulus sealant with excellent adhesive properties and resistance to aging and weathering
Contact: deckoseal.com



**Deckorators
Booth 8362**

Product: Sedona Voyage
Features: Sedona is a new color in the Voyage line of mineral-based composite decking; Sedona compliments a diverse array of outdoor furnishings and natural surroundings with its earthy tones and warmth
Contact: deckorators.com



**Edgemate
Booth 8171**

Product: EdgeMate Pool Chair
Features: provides a fixed in-pool seating experience for all swimmers; weighs less than five pounds; arrives fully assembled; easily accommodates any-sized swimmer; folds flat for easy transport and storage
Contact: edgematepoolchair.com



**Frog Products/King
Technology
Booth 5955**

Product: FROG @ease Floating System
Features: hot tub sanitizer uses minerals and a unique chlorine called SmartChlor; the combination is formulated to kill bacteria two ways while reducing chlorine use up to 75% and shocking to only once a month
Contact: frogproducts.com

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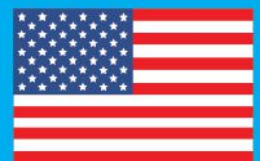
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**H2flow Controls
Booth 4541**

Product: FlowVis Flow Meters
Features: NSF-50-certified flow meter available for pools, spas, fountains, and water features; models are available for 1.5 to 8-inch pipe diameters; readouts of flow in GPM or optional LPM or m3/h, as well as velocity in ft/s; 1.5-, 2-, and 2.5-inch units also feature check valve functionality
Contact: h2flow.net



**Hammer-Head Patented
Performance
Booth 4349**

Product: Service and Resort Pool Cleaning Machines
Features: the Service-21 and Service-30 (shown), and Resort-21 and Resort-30 are manually operated, self-contained, portable pool vacuums; units do not rely on traditional filter systems, water pressure or electrical connections for operation, allowing rapid underwater cleanup using a rechargeable 12V battery
Contact: hammerheadvac.com



**Haviland Pool & Spa
Booth 7170**

Product: StainDrop All Purpose XpH Stain & Scale for Salt Pools
Features: formulated to work in a wide range of pH levels and chlorine ranges making it ideal for use in pools with salt-chlorine generators; phos-free stain remover prevents and removes stains as well as discoloration and scale caused by metals and minerals; compatible with all pool surfaces and sanitizing systems; 1 quart, 5 gallon and now also in 55 gallon sizes
Contact: poolstaindrop.com



**HFS Financial Services
Booth 5934**

Product: Home Improvement Loans
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Contact: hfsfin.com

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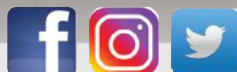
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Contact: homeportcomputer.com



**Industrial Test Systems
Booth 6563**

Product: eXact iDip Pool Professional Test Kit

Features: combines two state-of-the-art water quality test instruments: the eXact iDip Smart Photometer System and eXact pH+ Smart Meter System; integrates patented two-way wireless communication with any compatible iOS or Android smart device; tests more than 40 water parameters; uses electrochemistry technology combined with Bluetooth connectivity

Contact: exactidip.com



**InnovaSpa/Lumi-O
Booth 4728**

Product: Stream Spa

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Contact: innovaspa.com



**IPS Controllers
Booth 4650**

Product: M720 Chemical Controller

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Contact: ipscontrollers.com



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**Jack's Magic Products
Booth 4848**

Product: Emerald Stuff & Sapphire Stuff
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Contact: jacksmagic.com



**LaMotte Co.
Booth 6155**

Product: Insta-TEST Strips
Features: new look with multilingual (English, Spanish, French) instructions for the label and blister card; test strip formula is designed for stable color development; allows adequate time for the user to match very distinct colors along with preventing cross-contamination between pads; instant read test strips come in a convenient PopTop bottle with a molded desiccant liner that protects the strips from moisture intrusion
Contact: lamotte.com/pool



**Ledge Loungers
Booth 7355**

Product: Autograph Collection
Features: the centerpiece of this collection, the Autograph Chaise, features a sleek new design with improved ergonomics, a simplified fill system, and works in up to 12 inches of water
Contact: ledgeloungers.com



**Lyon Financial
Booth 5340**

Product: Unsecured Swimming Pool Loans
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Contact: lyonfinancial.net



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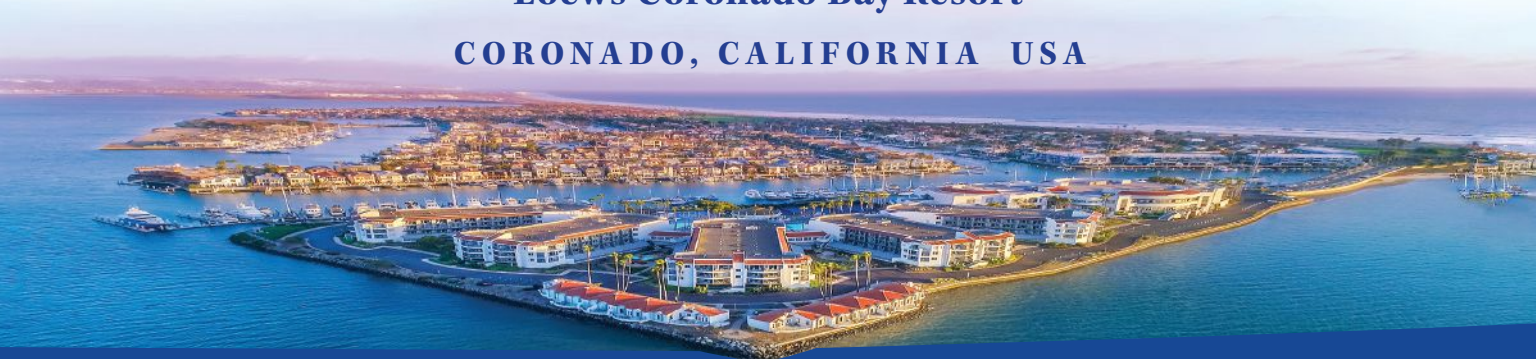


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**Magic Plastics
Booth 7750**

Product: Union Assemblies
Features: easy connection, self-aligning Buttruss Threads and deep socket connections with glue traps are designed to reliable and leak-free; features patented VibeProof locking feature to assure the Union Nut will not loosen or backout should vibration occur; available in a variety of configurations in 1-, 1½-, 2-, 2½- and 3-inch IPS sizes
Contact: magicplastics.com



**Marquis Spas
Booth 6936**

Product: Crown Collection
Features: high-output therapy zones deliver high flow volumes to targeted areas; patented dynamic flow control valve; users can enjoy gentle hydrotherapy or deep-tissue massage in the same seat; available in a full range of sizes and price points
Contact: marquisspas.com



**Merlin Industries
Booth 4935**

Product: Professional Safety Covers
Features: Dura-Mesh II features a combination of sunlight shading, abrasion resistance, tear strength, and burst strength; provides 100% shade from sunlight and offers 40 micron filtration of debris
Contact: merlinindustries.com



**Only Alpha Pool Products
Booth 5544**

Product: Alpha Evolution Systems
Features: three-part pool system that consists of componentized fiber-reinforced composite wall panels, a concrete bottom and finished with Evolution Pool Coatings by Eco Finish
Contact: onlyalpha.com



**PAL Lighting
Booth 6958**

Product: PAL Sonar Replacement LED Bulb
Features: patent-protected product offers underwater wireless color control; operates using low frequency wavelength which allows the end user to control their pool light via remote handset or app
Contact: pallighting.com



**Pebble Technology International
Booth 7941**

Product: PebbleBreeze (Luxurious-Polished) Pool Finish
Features: new pool finish combines the beauty and durability of traditional pebble finishes with an exceptionally smooth-polished surface; glass beads create captivating colors while Pebble Technology's proprietary additive and a chemically-resistant base material make PebbleBreeze more durable; smooth, non-slip finish
Contact: pebbletec.com



**Phoenix Pool Products
Booth 4153**

Product: FIXX IT! Water Saver
Features: conserves water usage, reducing water loss and increasing savings; conserve more energy when using chillers; easy to use; add 4oz per 20,000 gallons weekly in traditional chlorine or salt-water pools; compatible with all chemical programs; safe for children and pets; environmentally friendly; made in the USA
Contact: phoenixproductsco.com



**Pleatco Filtration
Booth 4745**

Product: Pleatco Advanced ULTRA Pool Filter Cartridges
Features: Pleatco Ultra is a bandless pool filter cartridge that incorporates Pleatco PurePleat for evenly spaced ultra strong pleats, which allows for optimal use of the fabric and filtration efficiency.
Contact: pleatco.com

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**Poly-Planar
Booth 4836**

Product: FS1 Speaker
Features: floating daisy chainable Bluetooth/Wi-Fi speaker allows users to have great sound throughout an outside space; design of the speaker allows the system to perform better while on the water, using the water to reflect sound
Contact: polyplanar.com



**Poolmaster
Booth 6755**

Product: Summer Garden Pool
Features: This adult wading pool is designed for patios, decks, and on other smooth surfaces. It features inflatable bottom for sitting comfort, four beverage holders located around the perimeter and a drain plug for easy water removal.
Contact: poolmaster.com



**Poolside Tech
Booth 6575**

Product: The Attendant
Features: controls and monitors any equipment from existing manufacturers in the industry; cloud-based automation system continually monitors equipment, water quality and temperature to determine energy efficiency; helps poolowners save money and lower their overall environmental impact
Contact: poolside.tech



**Raypak
Booth 7544**

Product: AVIA Pool and Spa Heater
Features: built-in Wi-Fi control system can be controlled by the Raymote app; can be set up with automation on temperature setpoint, scheduling, and one AUX on/off water feature; weighs 140 pounds, and can be installed by one person
Contact: raypak.com

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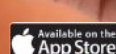
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**RB Retail & Service Solutions
Booth 7166**

Product: New Shopping Cart Software Feature

Features: shopping cart feature can be added to existing websites to provide a fully equipped, easy check-out and curbside pick up or delivery

Contact: rbpoolandspa.com



**Solenis
Booth 5551**

Product: Poollife

Features: designed to give your customers effective, easy-to-use products that make owning a pool feel like a holiday, every day

Contact: solenis.com



**Spazazz
Booth 6738**

Product: Spazazz Spa Lab Collection

Features: 1.9oz bottle contains 800mg CBD isolate which is 100% all-natural, THC free, and GMP certified; soaking expedites the process of CBD absorption into skin and bloodstream; formulated to elevate mood, reduce inflammation and lessen stress

Contact: spazazz.com



**Speck Pumps — Pool Products
Booth 5951**

Product: BaduJet Turbo Pro System

Features: designed to provide a smooth and strong swim lane; the system features a magnetically coupled motor for seal-free operation

Contact: usa.speck-pumps.com

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(continued on page 106)

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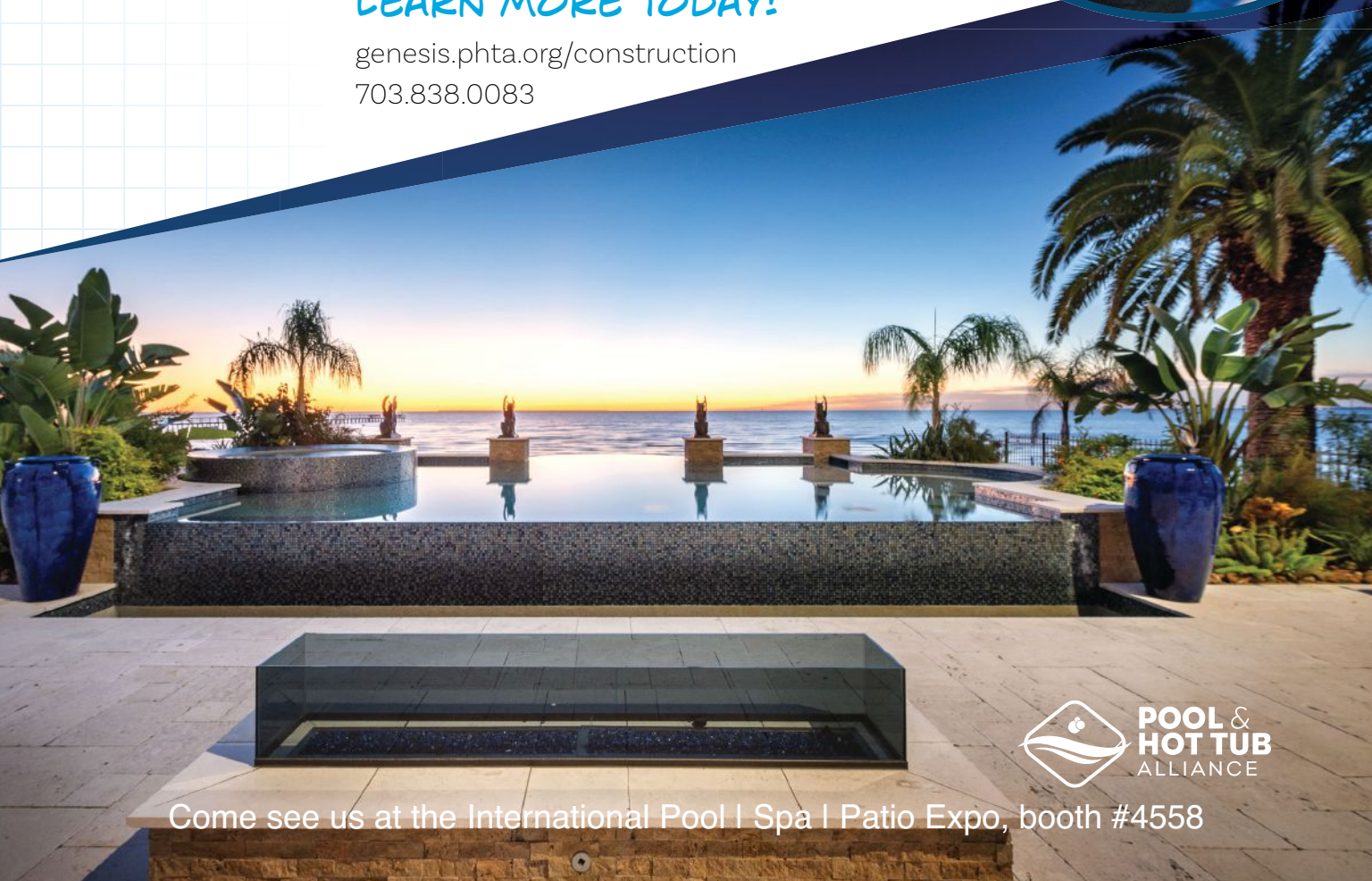
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**SwamCam
Booth 4330**

Product: SwamCam Drowning Prevention System & Pool Safety Alarm

Features: uses an advanced child detection algorithm to ensure accurate alerts; smartphone app allows users to receive alerts and view the live-stream from the pool, and communicate through the camera as well with a built-in microphone and speaker; includes a built-in Wi-Fi repeater to extend Wi-Fi signal to the pool for SwamCam and all other devices

Contact: theswamcam.com



**The VacDaddy
Booth 4732**

Product: The VacBaggy

Features: the VacBaggy Carry Bag is designed to conveniently keep all vacuuming equipment plus extension cord, brush, net and other tools in one place; durable luggage is light enough to carry but can easily be used to roll on hardscapes with rugged wheels and telescoping handle

Contact: thevacdaddy.com



**Thursday Pools
Booth 4856**

Product: Double-O7 Skimmer

Features: designed with a 7° angle and special mounting plate to provide a more polished look after installation; easy to install because they are manufactured to account for the five to tenth degree draft angle of the pool wall that most fiberglass pool manufacturers use; angled skimmers reduce the number of extension collars required to level the skimmer, and allows the pool to reach its optimum water level

Contact: thursdaypools.com



**Ultra Aluminum Railing
Booth 8560**

Product: Ultra Signature Glass Railing

Features: railing is designed to be sleek, beautiful and low maintenance; locally-sourced tempered glass meets code requirements; outer rail provides a secure hand grip, and completely covers all stainless-steel fasteners for a hidden-fastened look, in post-to-post or continuous railing; never needs painting; won't rust, rot, crack or peel; lifetime limited warranty

Contact: ultrarailing.com



**Universal Rocks
Booth 4134**

Product: Grotto Bay Spa

Features: made with a formulated blend of materials resistant to chips, cracks, scratches and fading, all while being lightweight and maintaining an authentic appearance that blends in with the landscape; three color options: Classic Brown, Castle Rock and Classic Grey

Contact: universalrocks.com



**Vacless Systems
Booth 4831**

Product: Pump Shut-off System/SVRS

Features: electrical pump shut-off system with an alarm or siren instantly turns the pump off upon entrapment; automatically resettable in 3 minutes, and features no non-sense programming, no false tripping, choice of air or no-air induction, and no by-passing for pool vacuum cleaning

Contact: vacless.com

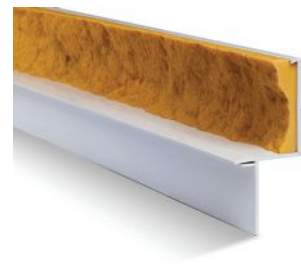


**Water Tech Corp.
Booth 6734**

Product: New Volt Spa VacRecharge!

Features: completely cordless, lithium-battery powered hot tub and spa vacuum cleans tight spa spaces and collects the smallest dirt and sand; run time of up to 40 minutes; fully rechargeable vacuum designed to quickly removes debris, leaves, sand and algae; includes a reusable, all-purpose filter bag and a three-piece sectional pool pole to reach all areas

Contact: watertechcorp.com



**Z Poolform/Concrete
Countertop Solutions
Booth 8168**

Product: Z Poolform

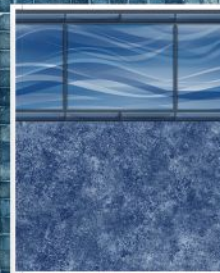
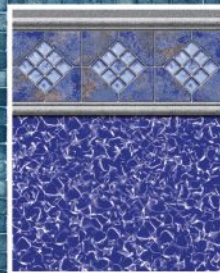
Features: reusable PVC form is used to create decorative concrete copings for swimming pools; interchangeable Form Liners will allow for a variety of different edge profiles and textures; can be used with vinyl liner, fiberglass, or concrete pools; will attach to the pool wall without the need for tie wires; they are rigid enough to screed on and vibrate against

Contact: concretecountertopsolutions.com

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