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POOL AND SPA NEWS

2023 Distributor Derby

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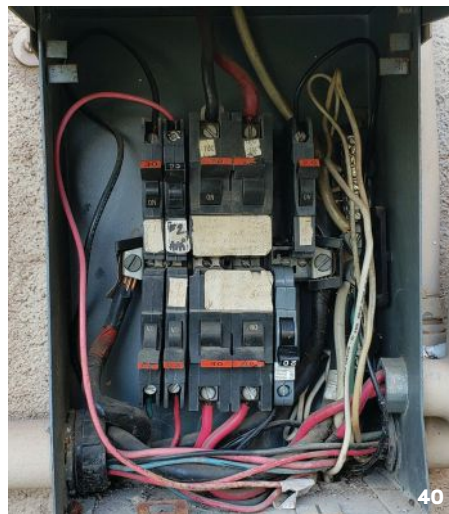
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The Everything Bagel Edition



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

Welcome to the Everything Bagel edition of *Pool and Spa News*! Like the popular bagel seasoning, this issue is chock full of a little bit of everything: the latest industry news, pool and spa design, safety, distributor info, pool service and business advice.

Combining the last two topics, industry expert Michelle Kavanaugh offers insight into the many factors single-polers need to consider before expanding their operations in “Taking the First Step” on page 18. With the continued demand for service, and with the many smaller companies that have recently entered the service side of the industry, this information will surely prove to be invaluable for successful growth.

Another area of growth and change is in the distribution sector. We provide an annual directory of industry distributors in our April issue. This year’s listings, beginning on page 28, show a considerable difference from years past due to the massive consolidation activity of the past two years. Be sure to check it out.

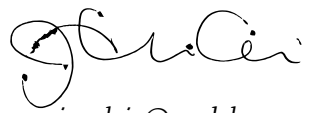
Moving on to our features, we begin with a pictorial of a few design winners from Europe’s largest pool and spa expo. Last winter, I was honored to serve as part of an international panel of judges for Piscine Global Europe’s Pool Design Awards. The program is divided into five categories: residential, small pools, renovation, wellness, and sport and leisure. Countries from all over Europe were well represented by the myriad entries. In the end, the three

highest scored projects won coveted spots in the program. You can see highlights from the winners beginning on page 30. For more photos and information on the 15 winning projects, go to: piscine-global-europe.com/en/schedule/contest/design

Next, Deputy Editor Rebecca Robledo talks to industry experts about what a complete electrical safety inspection for pools and spas should include. It’s a great reminder as we begin preparing for the busy summer season.

Then we look to construction business expert David Gerstel, a regular contributor to our sister publication *JLC*, for a deep dive into why standard formulas used to calculate overhead and profit when bidding on projects do not make sense. (Look for Part Two in our next issue.)

Lastly, a special note of gratitude: On page 10, we report on the passing of Nancy Fields, former co-owner of *Pool and Spa News* and its sister publication, *Aquatics International*. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Nancy since I came on board well after she and her husband, Jules, sold the business. But I’m profoundly grateful for their longtime stewardship of *PSN* — a publication with 62 years of dedicated service to this industry — and hope to live up to the high standards of the legacy they left behind.


jmcclain@zondahome.com

With Drought Over, California Faces CYA Bill, Decarbonization Efforts

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

With record rainfall occurring in California, pool and spa builders there no longer have to worry about drought restrictions.

At least four atmospheric river events have slammed the state so far this year, dumping rain in inch counts many times the annual average. Before the last storm hit, only about one third of the California remained in a state of drought — and only moderate, at that.

As a result, all drought restrictions involving pools and spas — or threats of them — have been dropped there, said Scott Cohen, chairman of the California Pool and Spa Association.

“We are able to pull pool permits in communities that previously shut them down because of

drought concerns,” he says.

While the state will always have to contend with the threat of drought and resulting restrictions, the industry in the Golden State now is turning its attention to opposing decarbonization laws that prohibit the installation of gas lines on new homes. Beginning April 1, for instance, Los Angeles will not issue home permit for those that use gas service.

“Our focus is managing the legislation that comes out of California, on minimizing its impact on California builders,” Cohen said. “We don’t have a way to heat pools otherwise.”

While the issue is specific to The Golden State for now, Cohen sees potential ramifications across the country. “Some of the decisions that are

made in California set the trends for the rest of the country,” he said.

New legislation to impose a tax on products containing cyanuric acid is also garnering industry attention.

Senate Bill 676, by Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), would authorize counties to tax trichlor up to 30 cents per tablet, if voted on by the electorate. Retailers would be required to collect the tax from customers and remit it to the county.

The tax ordinances would have to be renewed through a vote every five years, or they would expire.

So far, the bill has been referred to its first committee, the Committee on Governance and Finance. CPSA is studying the legislation to determine its position.

Former PSN Owner Dies

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Nancy Field, former president of the company that previously owned *PSN*, has passed away. She was 78.

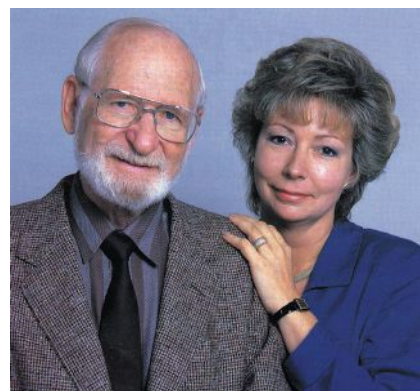
For more than 30 years, Field held the position with Leisure Publications, which owned *PSN* for four decades until it sold to the current owner in 2001.

She owned the company with her husband, publisher Jules Field.

Nancy Field was born Aug. 16, 1944 in Chicago, where she lived until moving

to Los Angeles as a young adult. She worked at the company that printed *PSN*, then called *Pool News*, where she met Jules Field. They married in 1970. Shortly after, she joined Leisure Publications, gradually encompassing more and more of the operational duties and eventually working her way up to the position of president.

Nancy Field played a pivotal role in the growth of Leisure Publications, said Steve Field, Jules Field’s son, who



Jules and Nancy Field

used to work there as a sales representative. While Jules Field had a sales background and was comfortable overseeing the editorial function, he

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didn't have a taste for human resources and other management issues, his son said. Through her natural talents and pursuit of education and training, Nancy Field was able to focus on those aspects of the business at a crucial time, as it grew from a company with few employees to one that had close to 50 at its peak.

"She brought the whole organization together," Steve Field said. "That was really invaluable."

Field also played an active role in business publishing organizations, encouraging employees to take advantage of their education, Steve Field said.

After the Fields sold *PSN* and its sister publication, *Aquatics International*, they continued to publish another title, *Fitness Management*, and acquired some other small magazines until they retired in 2006. Jules Field



Nancy Field with her grandchildren

passed away in 2008.

In her retirement, Nancy Field became very involved in local causes and organizations. With the Kiwanis, she was responsible for selecting high school students to receive col-

lege scholarships.

"She was a big proponent of [education] ... not only with businesses and charities, but even in the family," said her daughter, Molly LeSueur. "She just inspired everyone to build and grow their character and knowledge through higher education."

Nancy Field served as president of the Laguna Woods Garden Club. Her love of opera drove her to become a sponsor of the local Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Orange County, Calif. "She had a positive impact on so many people, in both realms — in keeping the family together and keeping the business together," LeSueur said.

In addition to Steve Field, Nancy Field is survived by her sister Fran Cottini, daughter Molly LeSueur, step daughter Elizabeth Robbins, five grandchildren, four nieces, a nephew and a great grandson.

PHOTOS COURTESY MOLLY LESUEUR

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Pentair Establishes Pool Group, Appoints Leaders

Manufacturer Pentair has formed a pool division and named two executives to oversee it.

The Pool segment was established Jan. 1. Before, the pool market was served under Consumer Solutions.

“We believe this new segment structure will help our pool business accelerate efforts to improve customer service, differentiate our products, and drive profitability ...,” said company spokesperson Rebecca Osborn.

Jerome Pedretti now serves as executive vice president and chief executive officer of the pool segment. Greg Claffey is group president, reporting directly to Pedretti.

Pedretti joined the company in 2005 and has held positions of increasing responsibility in several of the company's departments, including business development, EMEA, valves and controls, and aquatic systems. Most recently, he served as executive vice president and president of the industrial and flow technologies segment. Before Pentair, he was a growth consultant for Bain and Company. He holds a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree from University of Nancy, France and his Master of Business Administration degree from Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

Claffey has worked for Pentair since 2017 and has held various global sales and leadership positions with Pentair's industrial and flow technologies segment, most recently as group president of the residential and irrigation flow business. Before joining Pentair, he held various sales and marketing leadership positions with Xylem. Claffey has a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Boston University, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

Pentair, which provides products for a number of water applications, reported approximately \$4.2 billion in revenue in 2022.



Jerome Pedretti



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Taking the First Step

Hiring your first pool service professional can be scary, but it's necessary if you want to grow. These tips will help you expand from a single-pole operation.

BY MICHELLE KAVANAUGH



Most pool service companies in the U.S. are small businesses with few employees, or perhaps just one — the business owner.

The size of the market plays a big role in this business structure, but we know there are many single polers out there. At some point, those companies will max out the number of pools they can service on their own and will have to make an important decision.

Are they satisfied with their current business revenues, or do they want to scale and grow? If they want to expand, they will take the steps necessary to hire their first pool service pro. Many business owners allow fear to paralyze them from scaling their companies, as they feel they are not deserving of big success, or

that having employees will be too hard to manage. Stop torturing yourself and become the person you have decided to be — a successful business owner with one or more employees.

The key to business growth and hiring is to plan effectively. This helps you avoid costly mistakes or unplanned expenses. Nothing is a sure thing in business, but the likelihood of success increases significantly by dedicated planning.

There are several advantages to hiring your first employee, including increased productivity, better customer service and, as a result, higher revenues. Perhaps the most important advantage for a business owner: Once the employee fully integrates into the company, you'll experience less stress and burnout, and

an increased ability to focus on strategic aspects of the business versus everyday tasks.

A DEEP DIVE INTO FINANCIALS

Before preparing to hire their first pool service pro, a business owner should analyze their business structure and take an honest look at the financials.

Are you working within a budget, and are you fully aware of expense buckets and where you are spending your money? Do you know how much money it will cost to hire an employee, and do you have the current reserves to withstand the increased costs for three to six months before you see increased revenue?

When you are honest with yourself, you can be realistic about the success of this venture, so you don't go into this new phase blindly. Schedule a meeting with a local CPA to get advice on how to prepare your finances for growth. That will be the best money you spend on your business, whether or not you decide to hire your first service tech. There are also many coaches and consultants in the industry who can help you analyze your business and set goals. Access your network and ask colleagues for referrals.

Truly understanding your business financials, analyzing them monthly, and setting success metrics can set you apart from most small businesses in the industry.

Another question to ask yourself: Will you be a good leader? The most effective ones communicate effectively, have a clear vision for the company and communicate that vision. They also hold themselves and employees accountable for actions and decisions. A good leader inspires and motivates

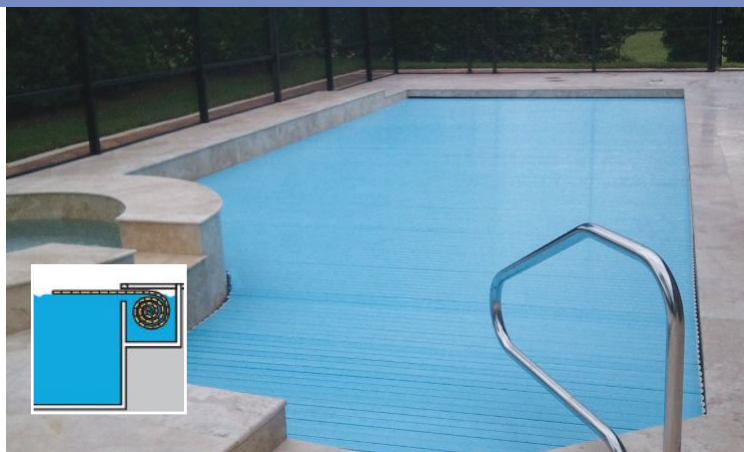
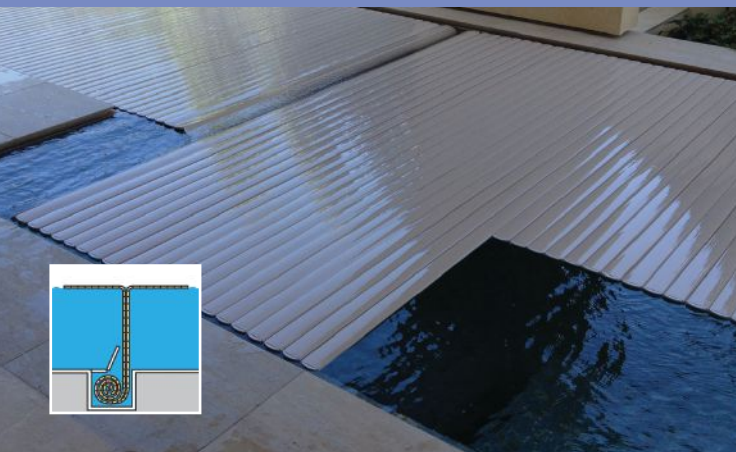


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employees to perform to their best, and even prepares staffers for success. There are many options for leadership training online, and most of the industry trade shows and regional meetings offer a leadership track.

EXPENSE MANAGEMENT

As you prepare to hire the first service pro, you can expect to increase expenses in the form of labor costs by about \$5,000 per month, depending on your location and job market. To do that, you must prepare for the rise in costs to your business ahead of time, since increased revenue may be delayed 3-6 months.

Run the business tight by cutting or reducing any expenses you can. The amount of money required in reserves to hire your first service tech can certainly vary depending on location, but here are some costs you can expect when hiring your first employee.

Wages: You can easily find a competitive wage for pool pros in your area just by

Run the business tight by
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The amount of money
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depending on location.

asking your network in the pool industry. Keep in mind that employees won't stay if they are not appreciated, so offer a competitive wage from the start.

Benefits: Health insurance and retirement plans may be too expensive with your first employee, but you can provide education as a benefit up front. Increasing their skill set is a huge benefit to them and you that many employers don't offer.

Payroll taxes and workers' compensation: The CPA you consult can help estimate these costs, but employers are required to withhold certain taxes from employee wages. You also may be required to purchase workers' compensation insurance, which provides benefits to employees who are injured on the job. Make sure you are compliant with tax laws and regulations.

Equipment and supplies: Develop a list of needed equipment and supplies, and estimate their costs. If you can't find a low-cost vehicle for them, give them a car

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credit to use their own vehicle for the first six months. You can research average car credit amounts or consult with your CPA about the appropriate amount.

The general rule of thumb is to have at least six months' worth of expected expenses saved or borrowed before hiring your first employee.

BUILD CAPITAL

Hiring your first pool service pro is an investment in yourself and your company. The first three to six months will be hard, as you see increased expenses with little revenue growth. However, that will begin to diminish once the new hire is trained, and you can focus on strategic business growth.

You should have \$25,000-\$30,000 in savings or lines of credit when you hire your first employee. If you need to set up lines of credit or borrow money, having good personal and business credit is im-

portant. Paying high interest rates is not a good business model, as it puts the business at higher risk of not being able to pay the money back. The goal should be the lowest interest rate possible on loans and 0% for 12 to 16 months on lines of credit.

Business owners should not feel ashamed if their personal or business credit needs a boost. If you need help, consult a credit building association, which can help boost both your personal and business credit. The latter is your company's ability to borrow using your EIN number versus your social security number and is an asset to the company. If you ever plan to sell the business, potential buyers will look at your business credit score. It also provides new lending opportunities for your company.

The credit building process can take several months, so if you plan to hire in the next year, you should start the process now, especially if you have bad credit.

CONCLUSION

Once you have successfully completed the steps above and developed a time line and plan for hiring your first pool service pro, you can focus on finding the right person.

Michelle Kavanaugh is the president of Michelle Kavanaugh Inc., a consulting company that specializes in helping small businesses become more efficient and financially sustainable. She served as mission development director of the National Swimming Pool Foundation for 14 years, managing its education. She then spent two years as executive director of the California Pool & Spa Association. She has more than 35 years of experience in relationship building, growing organizations, leading and managing teams, budgeting and profit and loss management, government relations, contract negotiation, policy and process development, marketing content creation, sales and customer service, and strategic planning.



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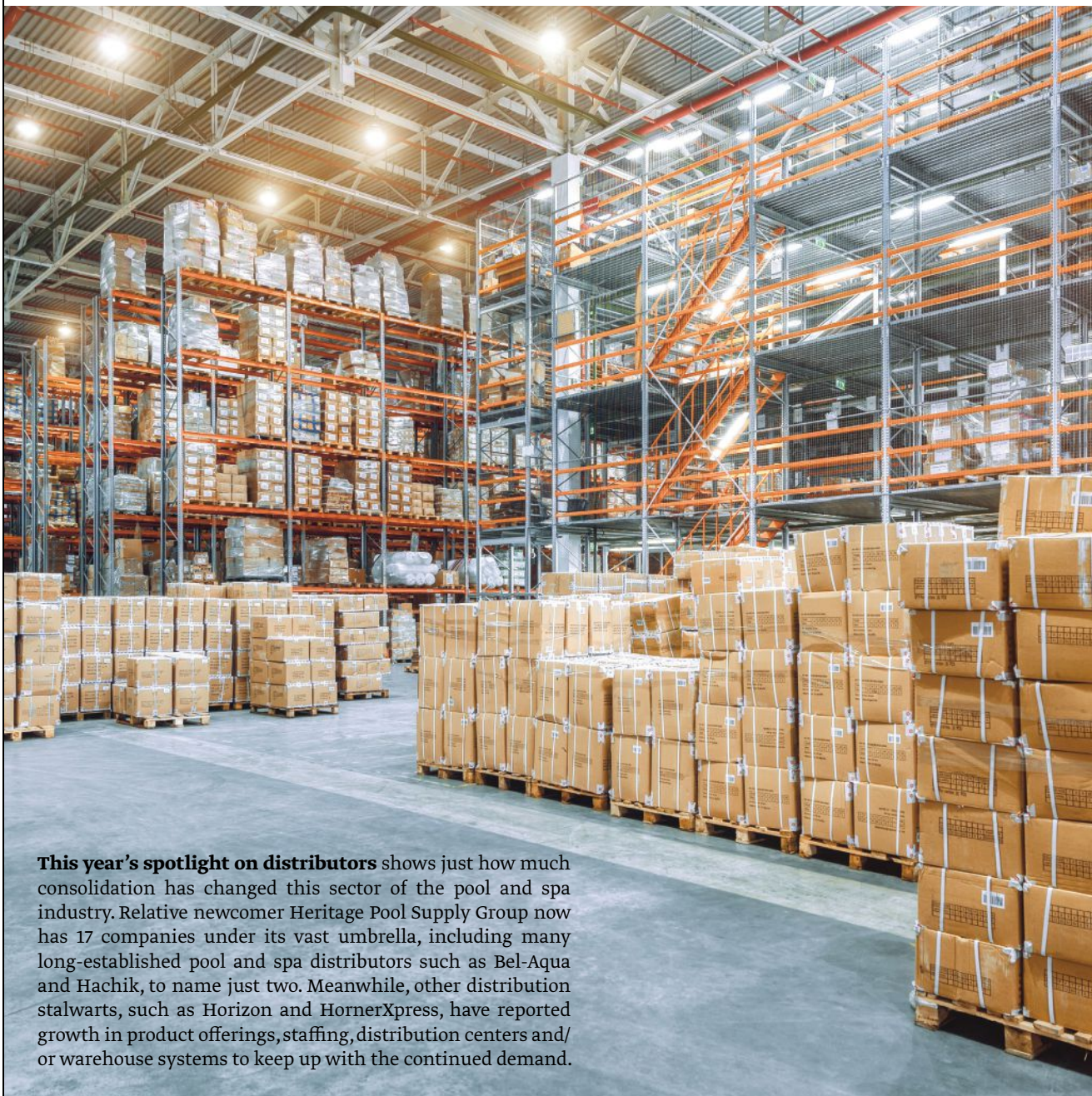
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2023 Distributor Derby

Consolidation has changed the distributor landscape. Here's a look at the latest vital stats on each major player.

BY PSN STAFF



This year's spotlight on distributors shows just how much consolidation has changed this sector of the pool and spa industry. Relative newcomer Heritage Pool Supply Group now has 17 companies under its vast umbrella, including many long-established pool and spa distributors such as Bel-Aqua and Hachik, to name just two. Meanwhile, other distribution stalwarts, such as Horizon and HornerXpress, have reported growth in product offerings, staffing, distribution centers and/or warehouse systems to keep up with the continued demand.

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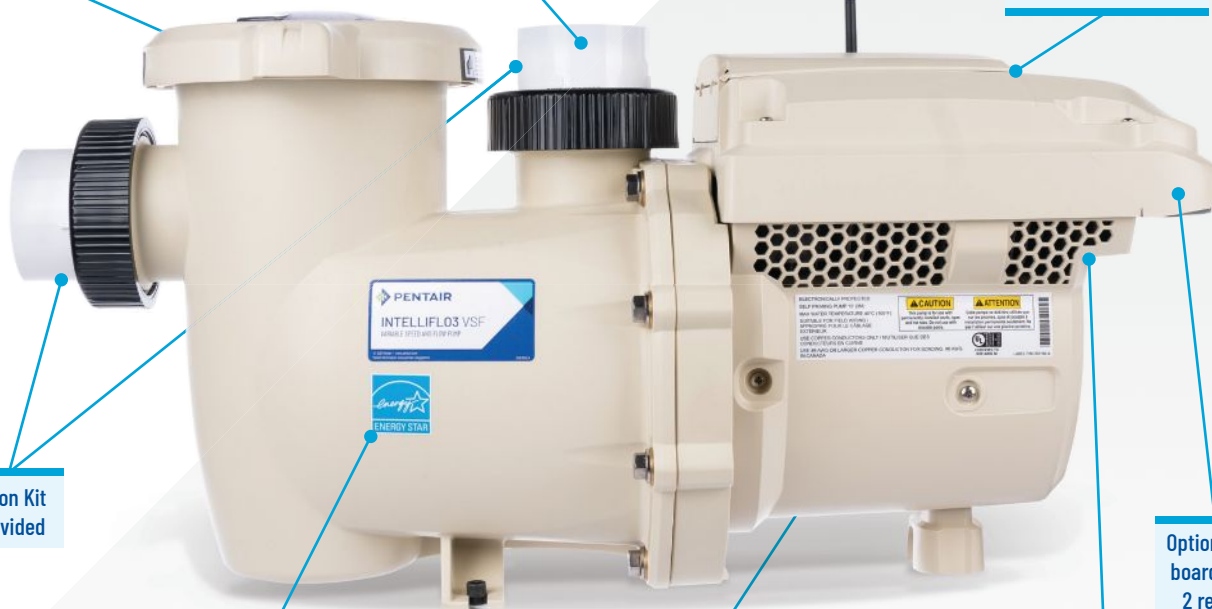
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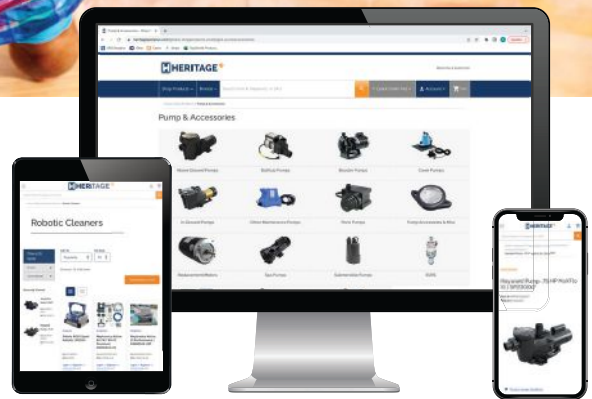


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DISTRIBUTORS A-Z



APPATEK INDUSTRIES INC.

(855) 225-0539
www.appatek.com

Founded: 1986

President: Donna Ketron

Headquarters: Concord, N.C.

Employees: 13

Distribution centers: 1

SKUs: 1,500+

Key products:

- Many national brands of chemicals, replacement cartridge filters and water testing for the pool and spa.

What's hot:

"There's currently a very high demand — and short supply — for sanitizers," says Jose Miranda, COO.



AQUATIC PARTS COMPANY

(800) 234-6700
www.baystatepools.com

Founded: 1999

Owners: John and David Arakelian

Headquarters: Bloomfield, Conn.

Employees: 65

Distribution centers: 1

SKUs: 120,000+

Key products: Specializing in swimming pool and spa parts, including technical guidance.



Baystate Pool Supplies, Inc.

BAYSTATE POOL SUPPLIES INC.

(617) 547-9145
www.baystatepools.com

Founded: 1965

Owners: John and David Arakelian

Headquarters: North Billerica, Mass.

Employees: 265

Distribution centers: 12

SKUs: 80,000+

Key products:

- Whole goods, such as above- and inground pools, spas, pool construction products, filters, pumps, heaters, automatic cleaners, chemicals and deck equipment.

What's hot:

Inground Fiberglass pools, aboveground pools, spas, automatic pool covers



HERITAGE POOL SUPPLY GROUP

American Pool Supply, Aqua-Gon, Bel-Aqua Pool Supply Inc., Cinderella, Classic Tile Designs, Conely Company, Davis Supply, Emsco, Florida Water Products, Hachik Distributors, Noble Tile Supply, Pool Builders Supply, Pool Contractors Supply, Pool & Electrical Products, Quality Pool Supply, Sun Country Distributing, Texas Pool Supply

(214) 491-4149

www.heritagepoolsupplygroup.com

Founded: 2021

President: Dave Cook

Headquarters: McKinney, Texas

Employees: 1,250

Distribution centers: 106

SKUs: 50,000+



HORIZON SPA & POOL PARTS

(800) 874-7727
www.horizonparts.com

Founded: 1992

Headquarters: Tucson, Ariz.

Employees: 49+

Distribution centers: 2

SKUs: over 70,000

Key products:

- Swimming pool and spa equipment whole goods and replacement parts
- Technical support team and search engine (parts finder)
- Advance website customization tool for in-field, retail and service use
- Match parts email and support
- Same day shipping
- Underwater Magic
- NEMO underwater power tools

What's hot:

- New and improved warehouse and systems
- Expansion of pool products and updated diagrams for new industry product offerings.



HORNERXPRESS

(800) 432-6966
www.hornerxpress.com

Founded: 1969

CEO: Bill Kent

Headquarters: Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Employees: 600

Distribution centers: 18

SKUs: 10,000+

Key products:

- Key brands carried include AquaCal, AutoPilot, StoneHardscapes, Lo-Chlor, TropiClear, Pentair, Hayward, Century, Bluffton and Fluidra.

Education: Monthly trainings on heat pumps and salt chlorine generators, CPO Certification classes and other continuing education classes periodically throughout the year

What's hot: Heat pumps, along with ChlorSync, a new chlorine generator.

**POOL WATER PRODUCTS**

(949)756-1666

www.poolwaterproducts.com

Founded: 1964

CEO: Zelma M. Allred

President: Dean C. Allred

Headquarters: Irvine, Calif.

Employees: 300

Distribution centers: 20

SKUs: 100,000

Key products:

- All Clear Pool & Spa Chemicals, Accessories, Cartridges and Grids
- Heaters, Filters, Pumps, Automatic Pool Cleaners, Chlorine Generators
- Electronic Controls, Lights, Motors and parts for all of the above.

**POOLCORP**

NPT; SCP Distributors, LLC; Superior Pool Products, LLC

(888) 476-7665

www.poolcorp.com

Founded: 1993

President: Peter D. Arvan

Headquarters: Covington, La.

Employees: 4,000+

Distribution centers: 280

SKUs: 160,000

WWW.SPAAZZZ.COM



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EUROPEAN STAYCATION

Highlights from the latest Piscine Global Europe Pool Design Awards
in Lyon, France. BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



RESIDENTIAL

First Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect

Andrea Meirana Architects
London, UK; Genova, Italy

Builder

Ecoedile S.r.l.
Bergamo, Italy

This two-sided vanishing-edge pool was designed to appear as if floating from the steep hill, integrating with the sky and lake view. With the outside becoming part of the home interior, the design strengthens the home's connection to nature. Tile and natural stone cloak the pool in greens and grays. An eight-person hot tub offers another view outward.



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE: ANDREA BOSIO



RESIDENTIAL

Second Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect

Francesc Recoder Roses
Mataro, Spain

Builder

Recoder Piscines Maresme, S.L.
Mataro, Spain

The homeowners wanted their pool to integrate into their garden, and this team answered with a modified kidney pool with a deck-level beach entry, rock waterfall and stone accents. Porcelain tile made to look like wood covers the deck.



RESIDENTIAL

Third Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect

Lluís Segarra
Barcelona

Builder

Recoder Piscines Maresme, S.L.
Mataro, Spain

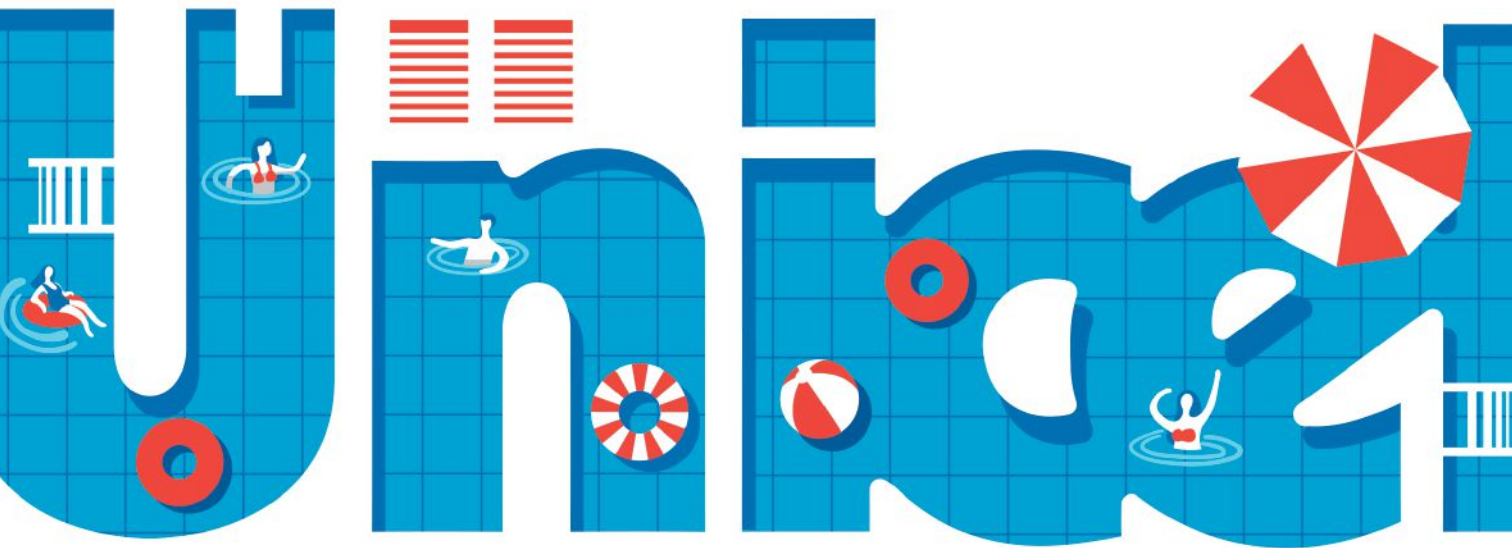
This vanishing-edge pool features a network of submerged horizontal surfaces, including a sunshelf, benches and steps across the entire width. Porcelain tile is used to cover the interior. Half of the pool sits on the roof of a garage, while the other half rests on a concrete slab.



RECORDER PISCINES MARESME PHOTO LEFT COURTESY FRANCESC RECODER ROSES, RECORDER PISCINES MARESME; PHOTO RIGHT COURTESY LLUIS SEGARRA.



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SMALL

First Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Designer/Builder

Nicollier Group SA
Fully, Switzerland



SMALL

Second Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect

Pau Gimenez Miralles
Alicante, Spain

Builder

Gunitec Pool Spa, S.L.
Xàbia, Alicante, Spain



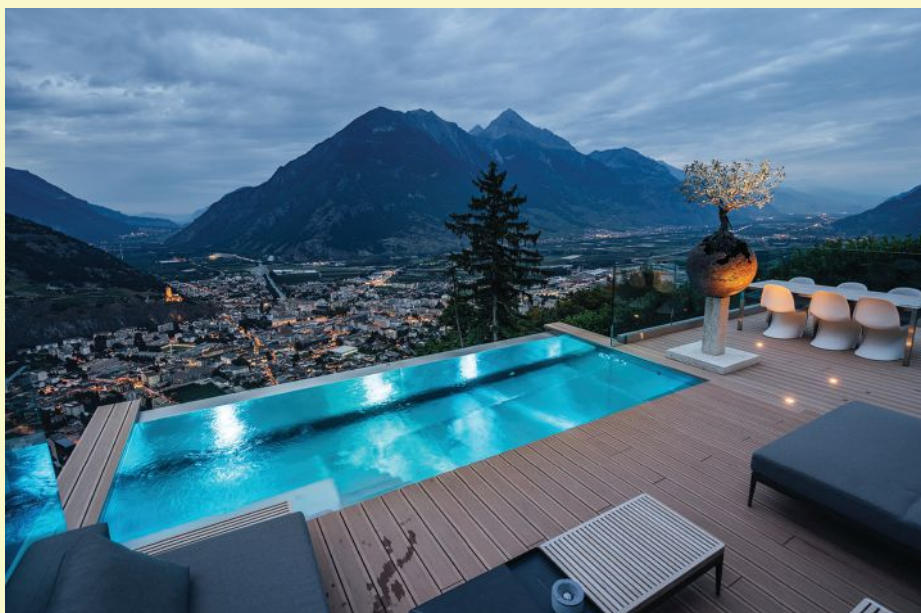
SMALL

Third Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Builder

Carré Bleu Nicollier
Piscines
Fully, Switzerland



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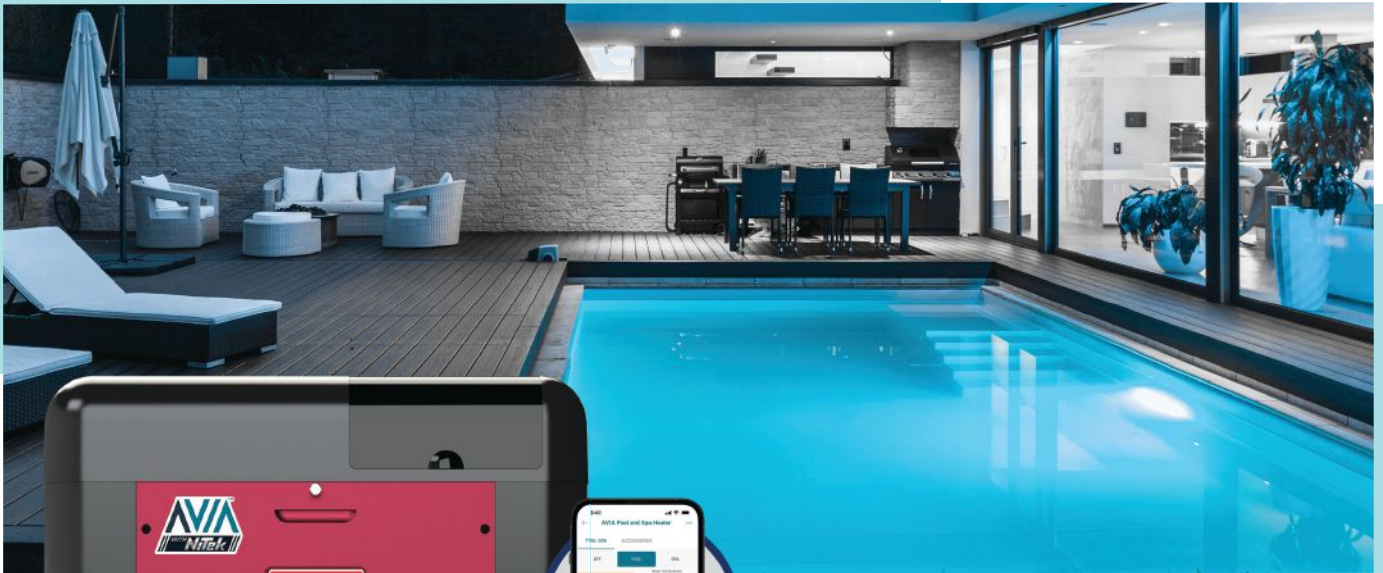


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RENOVATION

First Place



PROJECT DETAILS

Architect
Z Architecture
Lyon, France

Builder
Baudin Chateauneuf
Chassieu, France

WELLNESS

First Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect
Sergio Neves, Carré
Bleu Nicollier Piscines
Fully, Switzerland

Builder
Carré Bleu Nicollier
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TOP PHOTO: JONATHAN LETOUBLON, BOTTOM PHOTO COURTESY CARRÉ BLEU NICOLLIER PISCINES

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SPORT & LEISURE

First Place

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect

DBA Ltd.
Novi Sad, Serbia

Builder

Promont Group Doo
Novi Sad, Serbia



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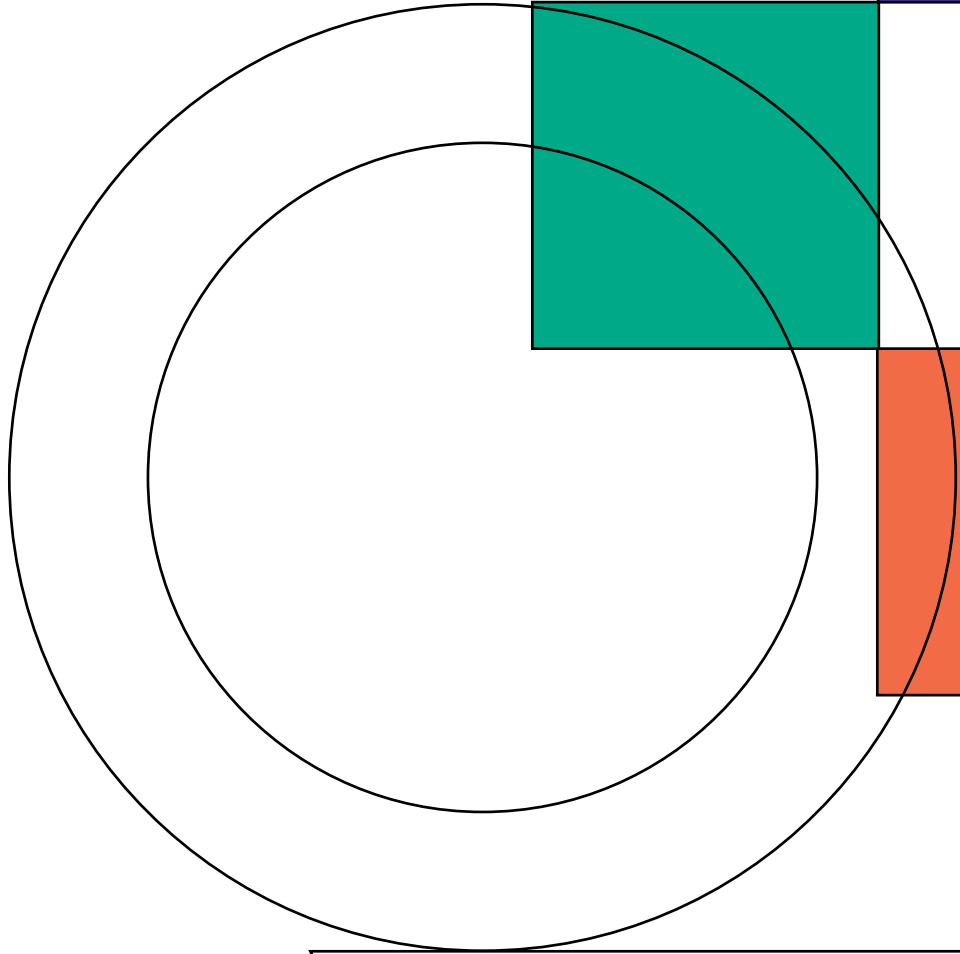


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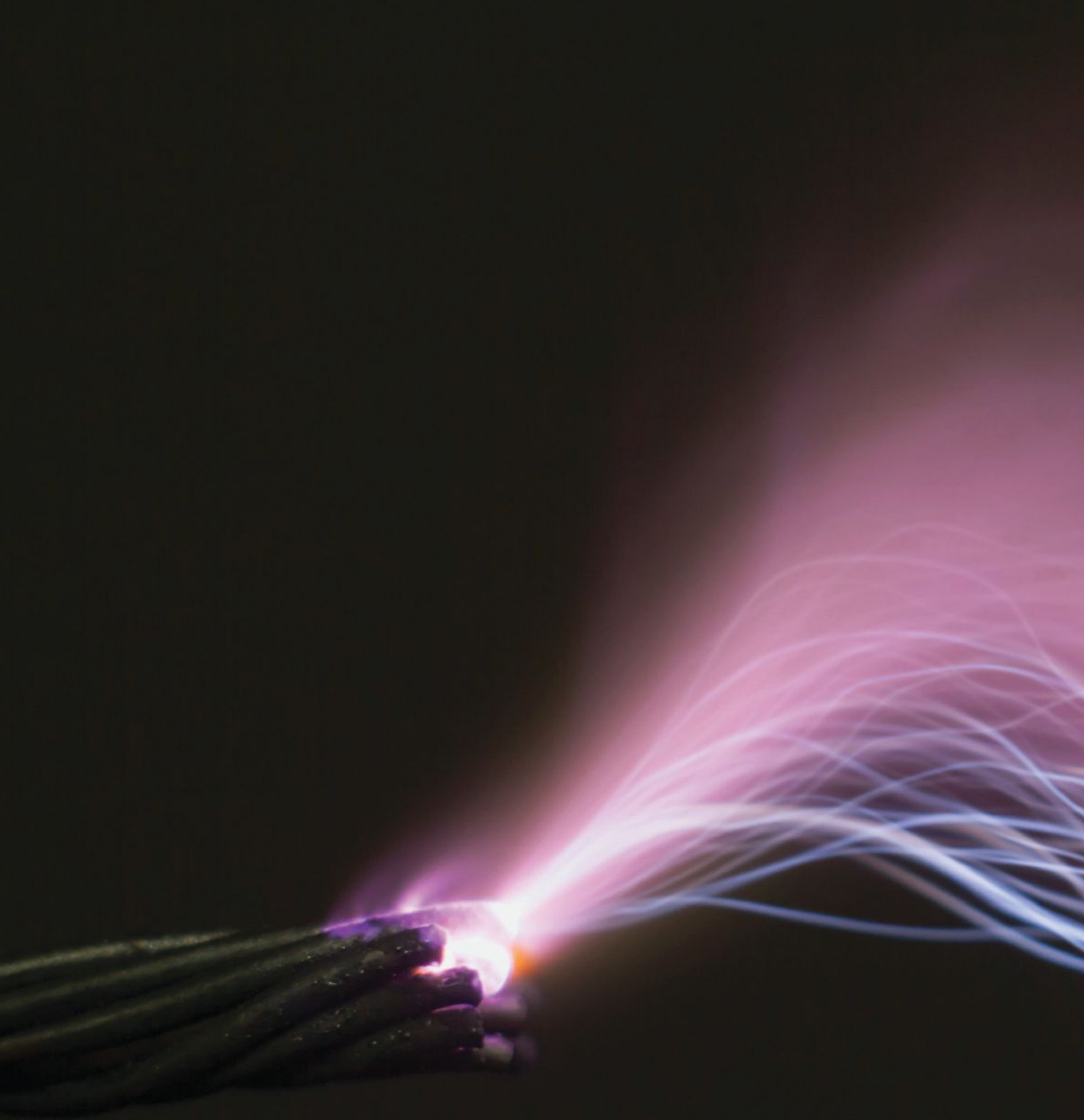
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CONDUIT FOR SAFETY

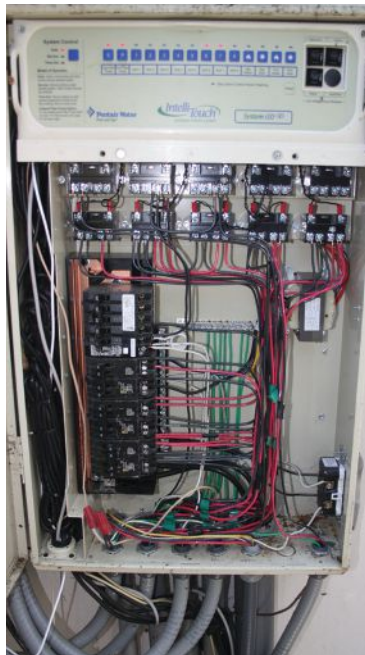
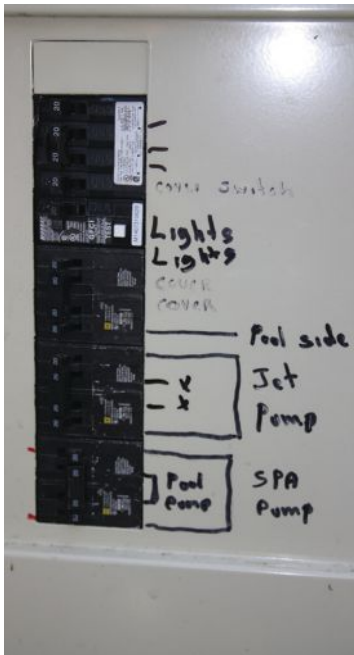
By performing an electrical check, you
can help protect your clients.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Electrical safety never stops being a concern. However, some believe the industry should pay more attention to it.

Whether you want to perform a dedicated electrical inspection, or just continuously stay on the lookout for red flags, follow these tips for assessing projects for electrical safety.

Of course, when examining a system, don't operate outside your qualifications. If your locality requires an electrician, then hire one for the job. If your specialty license only allows you to work from the electrical box to the pool, then limit your work to that. Don't open panels that you're not qualified or licensed to handle, as they contain live connections.



On-site mistakes: Above left, GFCI protection is missing on pumps and electrical components. Above middle, a tan low-voltage wire passes through a high-voltage compartment. Top right, an overcrowded box is not bonded, and conduit rising out of concrete is not Schedule 80; Right: a broken connections box with flex conduit.

CHECK THE BONDING, GROUNDING AND GFCI PROTECTION.

Check for bonding on all pool and spa components that require it, along with anything metallic within 5 feet of the pool.

This includes pumps, metal filters, light fixtures, ladder pockets, fences, cover rails, handrails, diving boards, lifeguard stands, some handicapped lifts and automatic pool covers.

To make sure that all the components are properly bonded, perform a continuity test. This verifies that electricity is able to flow freely through the wire from one component to the next so there is little to no difference in voltage or potential.

When performing the test, the meter should read 1 ohm or less to signify a lack of resistance. If you get a higher reading, that shows the item is

not properly bonded. The differences will generally be obvious, says Bill Hamilton, Ph.D., president of Austin-based engineering and architectural firm Hamilton and Associates, and a representative on the committee that writes the National Electrical Code's pool and spa section. Properly bonded, an item will register less than 1 ohm on the meter; improperly bonded, or not bonded at all, it will go much higher.

Also make sure all applicable components are grounded. Visually inspect the ground terminals to make sure there's a green wire and that they're tight.

Hamilton recommends checking the bonding and grounding once a year.

Finally, make sure every electrically operated element is protected by a GFCI breaker or outlet. This can

be overlooked or shortcut sometimes if the installer or technician runs out of space in a panel.

"The automation panels that we have don't have enough knockouts for most pools to provide GFCI protection for everything," says Paolo Benedetti, principal and designer of Aquatic Technology Pool & Spa in Morgan Hill, Calif. "So sometimes builders don't put the GFCI breaker in on every appliance because the slots don't exist, and they don't want to put in a secondary sub-panel to provide those extra knock-outs."

CHECK WIRES AND BREAKERS.

Start by verifying that the wires are the proper size.

"That's one of the most common things I find," Benedetti says. "People use undersized wire, especially with

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Red flags, from left to right: A bond wire is cut between two pumps; and a corroded ground electrode connection spells a hazard.

variable-frequency-drive pumps.”

Installers may use 12-gauge wires out of habit, but since many variable-speed pumps can go up to 3 horsepower, they may need 10-gauge wire instead. “You need to have that little bit of extra cushion that the electric code requires,” Benedetti says. With the larger wires, there’s less hazard of overheating and tripping breakers.

If the project includes both high-voltage and low-voltage hookups, make sure those wires are separated. Low-voltage wire should not be strung through high-voltage conduit or on the high-voltage side of an automation panel.

“There’s nothing wrong with putting multiple low-voltage wires in the same conduit,” Benedetti says. “It’s just you can’t mix high-voltage and low-voltage.”

When it comes to breakers, check their size as well. They should be able to accommodate all the equipment that’s connected to them. “Over the years, people sometimes add something new to their pools, and there might not be enough breaker slots, so they add it to an existing breaker,” Benedetti says. “They might exceed

the capacity of the breaker.”

Calculate the load. It should not exceed 80% of the breaker’s capacity. In a 20-amp breaker, for instance, there should not be more than 16 amps. “We don’t want to push it right to its limit because devices turn on and off, motors have a little higher amp draw when they start than when they’re running,” Benedetti says. “So if we have a couple things come on at the same time, we’re going to start having nuisance tripping of the breakers.”

LOOK AT THE PUMP AND MOTOR LABELING.

Particularly if you’re looking at an older pool, examine the pump motor to make sure it is matched to the wet end and the application.

If the label is missing, replace the motor, Hamilton suggests. You likely don’t know if the original motor is still in place and whether the tech who came before you installed the right type. You wouldn’t want a motor that could overload.

“There’s a whole variety of motors that will fit on these pumps that may or may not be mechanically and electrically matched to that pump,”

he says. “Additionally, you don’t have any immediate information on the voltage for the pump or the amount of current that it would be expected to carry.”

If the label is in place, verify that the motor is matched to the pump and the application. Check that it is listed with a nationally recognized testing laboratory. “There are motors out there, particularly on the import market that are coming in, that are not listed,” Hamilton says.

When looking at a commercial installation with three-phase pumps, make sure the unit is internally thermally protected. If not, code stipulates that it needs separate overload protection, so make sure that is present.

CHECK THE PUMP DISCONNECT.

The pump should have a motor disconnect that’s in plain sight, for quick disabling when you need to work on the unit or if there’s an emergency.

This disconnecting means must open both wires going to the pump, if it’s a 240v unit. That rules out utility controllers — those devices placed by the utility to make sure the unit

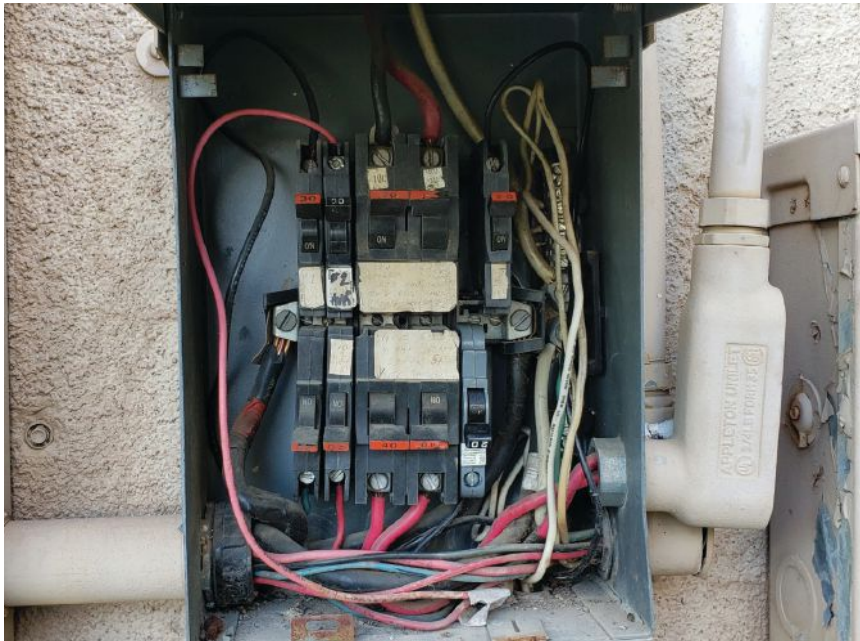
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Red flags, from left to right: A bond wire is cut between two pumps; and a corroded ground electrode connection spells a hazard.

doesn't run during peak hours — because they only open up one wire. "It will turn the pump off but it won't de-energize it," Hamilton says. "If you open up the electrical box and go into the wiring, you're going to get shocked, even though the pump's not running."

Examine the electrical connections between the disconnecting means and the pump. If it's set in conduit, do you see exposed wires? Is the conduit intact? Do you see corrosion developing? These may need repair.

EXAMINE THE UNDERWATER LIGHTS.

Professionals should check the lights for many potential problems. Of course, check for bonding, grounding and GFCI on high-voltage lights.

If a wet-niche light can be removed from the niche, do so and perform a visual inspection. Look to see if there's

a pool-light wedge holding it in place. If so, make sure it is conductive, rather than insulating. This particularly becomes a concern on older pools. While the newer wedges are made of a conductive material to preserve the bonding connection, some older ones were made of an insulating material that breaks the bond. If you find an insulating wedge, the bonding has been compromised. Replace with a newer wedge made of a conductive material, or otherwise restore that bonding connection.

Make sure there is no creative rigging to maintain the connection between the light and the niche. "I've seen people use wallboard screws that are sitting there rusting in the niche," Hamilton says.

Similarly, examine the cord for modifications. If they've turned white, that's fine — it's the normal reaction to continuing exposure to chlorine. But look for physical dam-

age — evidence of overheating, a cut or scrape to the jacket, splicing to another cord.

"The whole light needs to go if you find that — it's very, very dangerous," Hamilton says. Also make sure it's the right kind of cord, not something meant for a lamp, for instance.

Look at the lens for signs of water intrusion. If you see green or black behind the lens, then that indicates electrical damage or algae, which means water has gotten into it. If you see either, replace the light.

If the light is a sealed unit, don't try to open it. Perform a visual inspection for cracks, holes, burn spots or a bonding lug screwed into the plastic. Those signs indicate that the light is not sealed against water anymore, and so needs replacement.

For 120-volt lights, test the GFCI. Start with the light on, and make sure not only that the GFCI trips, but that the light actually turns off. This ensures that the GFCI hasn't been bypassed by somebody who considered it a nuisance.

CHECK CONNECTIONS FOR SAFETY.

Throughout the project, examine connections to make sure they don't look like they've overheated. Overheated connections will need to be repaired. Tighten any loose connections, as they can pose a fire hazard or cause equipment damage. This includes bonding connections.

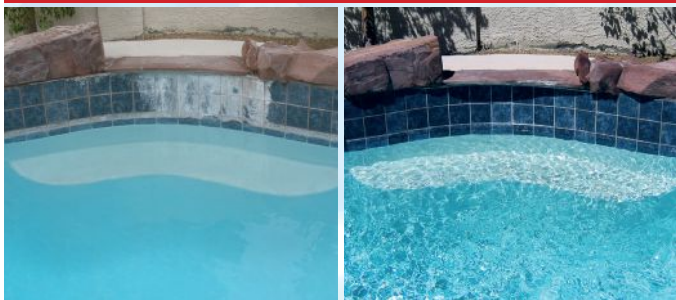
CHECK FOR CONDITIONS THAT COULD LEAD TO CORROSION.

If the equipment pad is set indoors, check the ventilation to make sure it meets code. Also, ensure that chemicals are not being stored in that space. Lastly, look for any liquid leaks that could result in corrosion.



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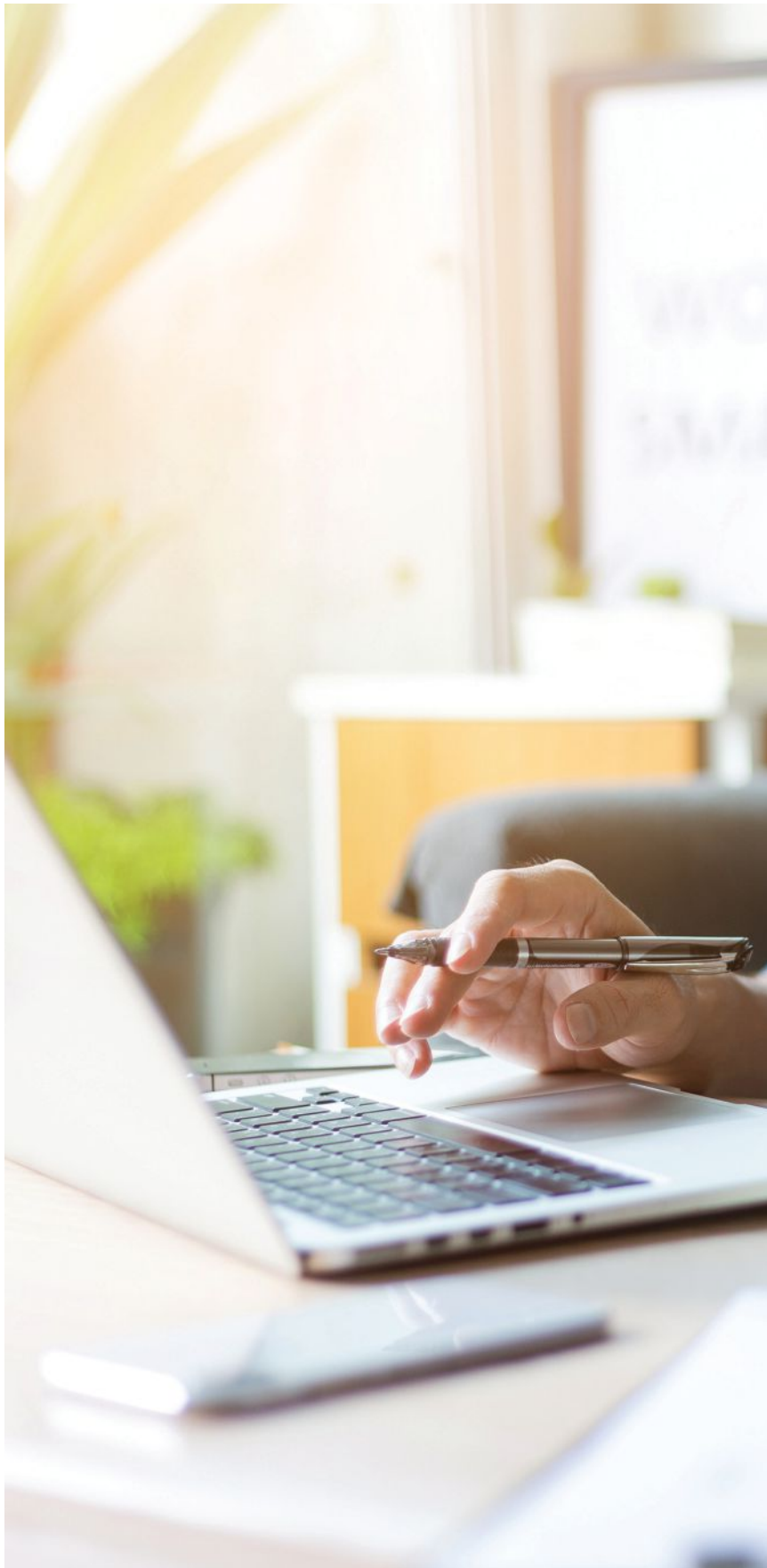


Charging for Overhead and Profit

Accurate bids require more than
just applying a formula

BY DAVID GERSTEL

ADOBESTOCK





Figuring overhead and profit (O&P) is the most challenging step in creating a bid for a construction project. By contrast, estimating direct costs of construction — namely the costs of labor, material, and trade partners (subs) — is relatively straightforward. You provide your material suppliers and subs with lists, plans, and walk-throughs and get back written quotes. For labor costs, if you have developed a file of labor productivity records, you need only count and multiply to reliably project costs. (If you are not up to speed at figuring direct costs of construction, see my book “Nail Your Numbers: A Path to Skilled Construction Estimating and Bidding” and my earlier articles about the creation of labor productivity records and other tools of estimating.)

In this article, I will turn to calculating overhead and profit charges for a project.

For several reasons, those calculations are not as simple as figuring direct costs. To begin with, overhead and profit charges are not as tightly linked to the project at hand. The studs you buy for an addition are for that project and none other. And their cost is a cost of that project and none other. Overhead costs for items such as equipment, office supplies, and owner's pay for running the company, however, are spread across many projects. Questions then arise: How do you best apportion overhead to each of your projects? Likewise, how can you best determine the amount of profit to aspire to on each project?

STARTING OUT WITH FIXED PERCENTAGES

When we are starting out and still naïve about business, we tend to respond to the challenge of charging for overhead and profit by ignoring it. We commit the thinking error of "overhead obliviousness." We are spending steadily for equipment and supplies. We are working late into the night and on weekends at estimating and administrative work. But we don't yet appreciate that

we need to get reimbursed for the expenditures and paid for our time.

As for profit, we think that's the payment we collect from our customers for our jobsite work — which we are likely charging for at a rate less than our former bosses charged for our labor at their projects. We find ourselves working 60 or more hours a week between our jobsite and office tasks. Yet we are keeping less money in our pockets than when we worked 40 hours in someone else's company. At that point, many of us, exhausted and poor, give up. We retreat to employee-hood or perhaps, as did certain friends of mine, move into window sales or peddling Tupperware.

Some of us are luckier. We become aware of the necessity of charging for — that is, "recapturing," to use a technical term — overhead costs and realizing a profit. We begin to wonder how much to include for overhead and profit (O&P) in our bids. Maybe we ask Hank, sales manager at the local lumberyard, or some other graybeard whom we revere as a fountainhead of construction wisdom, how much to charge for O&P. "Go with 10 & 10," we are told. "Add 10% of your direct construction costs for overhead and 10% for profit. That's industry standard."

Though he may not use the term, Hank is advising what is called the "fixed percentage method" of charging for overhead and profit. Typically, it does involve use of "10 & 10." That's partly because those percentages are insisted on by certain insurance adjusters and architects though they may have no understanding of overhead and profit in the construction business.

MOVING TO GPM

Often, builders who start with the fixed percentage method move to an alternative method of charging for overhead and profit on their

BASIC TERMS

Costs of construction: Also termed direct costs and costs of goods sold (COGS), costs of construction include costs for labor (including by an owner), material, subcontractors, and services used at a jobsite.

Overhead: Also termed indirect costs. Overhead is the ongoing cost of running a company. It includes out-of-pocket costs for everything from stamps and staples through heavy equipment. It also includes owner's pay for company management tasks from sales calls and estimating through hiring and firing employees.

Profit: Profit is income, as *JLC* author Michael Anschel explains, that you "aspire" to take in above and beyond all costs for construction and overhead. Realistically, it is also insurance against what I call "profit costs" such as litigation that can arrive even after a project is long over and take a bite out of your hide.

projects. It goes by the abbreviation “GPM,” for gross profit margin. It’s an odd term. It refers to overhead and profit combined as a percentage of sales price. For example, say a company bids \$150,000 for a project, with \$50,000 of the bid for overhead and profit. In that case, it is aiming for a GPM of 33% on the project ($\$50,000 / \$150,000 = .33 = 33\%$).

GPM for a specific project is figured by applying a formula to the direct costs of construction to produce a bid or so-called “selling price.” In the example above, the company would first figure the direct costs (\$100,000) for the renovation job. Since it was aiming for a 33% GPM, it would apply the GPM formula, slotting in 33%, to produce a bid of \$150,000. The selling price thereby includes \$50,000, or 33% of the total price of \$150,000, for overhead and profit.

Though I go through it in “Nail Your Numbers,” I’ll spare you a full explanation of the GPM formula in this article. I will just note that the formula is complex. It’s impressive looking. Maybe that’s why construction pros think that when they switch from the fixed percentage method to the GPM method for figuring overhead and profit that they are moving up the ladder of business sophistication.

They are not. At its core, GPM represents no advance on the fixed percentage method. Though wrapped up in fancier math, it’s just another formulaic percentage calculation.

Think about it. When you use the GPM formula, you are doing the same thing as with the fixed percentage method. Namely, you are including a predetermined percentage for overhead and profit in a bid. You may be using a bigger number — say the 33% long recommended for remodelers — instead of 10% and 10%. But you are still relying on a rigid formula to determine overhead and profit charges for your projects.

THE DEFICIENCIES OF FORMULAIC METHODS

Some construction companies have survived or even prospered, at least for a time, while relying on a fixed percentage or GPM formula. Nevertheless, both methods are deficient. Both incorporate a troubling assumption about overhead. That is, both assume that all companies have the same overhead. Thus, 10 & 10 assumes that overhead is actually 10% of construction costs for all companies. The GPM method does not even separate out overhead and profit charges. Yet, when the formula is put forward with a recommended percentage, which it often is, the assumption is that the percentage will adequately recover overhead for any company that elects to use the formula and automatically provide for profit as well.

Such percentage calculations may be adequate for your company if you manage overhead very tightly. But if you are outfitting an office or shop or showroom, hiring office staff, or making other substantial investments in marketing and administration, a fixed 10% for overhead likely won’t come close to recapturing your actual overhead outlays. If you are using the GPM method with a typical recommended percentage such as 33% (or for that matter, the 40% also often recommended for remodelers), that may or may not be enough to recapture your overhead costs, including pay for your own management work, and provide profit as well.

Also troublesome, when you go with a recommended percentage for overhead — whether 10% or some percentage wrapped up inside of a GPM — it will at best have a coincidental connection to your actual overhead on a specific project. It may have no connection. You are assuming that your overhead, whether figured as a percentage of construction costs as

When you go with a recommended percentage for overhead — whether 10% or some percentage wrapped up inside of a GPM — it will at best have a coincidental connection to your actual overhead on a specific project. It may have no connection.

PROBLEMS WITH STANDARD FORMULAS

- The percentage-based formulas for charging for overhead and profit typically incorporate “industry standard” percentages. The charges resulting from use of those recommended percentages may have little relationship to the actual overhead needs or profit opportunities of any particular company using them.
- Overhead charges may have little relationship to the overhead burden incurred on a specific job. For some, the percentage may be too high. For others, it may be woefully low.
- Profit charges may be divorced from market conditions and opportunities and a company’s need for work.
- With the fixed percentage method, the percentages, such as the oft recommended “10 and 10,” may be too low for a company to recapture its actual overhead and earn a profit adequate for survival.
- With the GPM method, overhead and profit are jumbled together. That can encourage overhead obliviousness, which can result in lost jobs or missed opportunities for profit.

with the fixed percentage method or of selling price as with GPM, is an identical percentage for all jobs. It likely won’t be. It can be very different for, say, a kitchen remodel, a new home, a foundation replacement, and construction of a bridge over a creek (a range of projects similar to those done by my company).

Jerrald Hayes, a builder and consultant with deep expertise on overhead and profit issues, insists the formulaic percentage methods of figuring overhead on specific projects are “arbitrary.” I agree. Similarly, for profit. A profit charge figured as a standard percentage of construction costs or selling price might happen to be appropriate during some phases of the economic cycle. At others, it could be woefully off. During good times, when work is abundant, you might be leaving money on the table. During hard times, your percentage might force your bids so high you cannot get enough work to keep your company going.

Use of a formulaic percentage for profit assumes, just like the use of a formulaic percentage for overhead, that all jobs are alike. It assumes that all jobs present the same opportunity for profit. It assumes that all projects burden a company with the same level of risk during construction. It presupposes that all projects saddle a company with the same degree of liability after construction is complete. But, as you know, some projects, clients, and designers impose far more hazard than others. Projects with different levels of hazard demand different levels of profit charges to buffer the hazard.

Use of the percentage-based formulas can lead to sheer foolishness. I have seen capable companies pass up good opportunities because of rigid adherence to their formula. They aspired to gross profit margins of around 40% on each and every one of their projects. That was reasonably competitive for remodels given their reputations and the level of service they rendered to clients. It was unnecessarily and unacceptably high for new homes. As a result, they rarely or never got those projects.

In the next installment of this article, we will look beyond the standard formulas and consider a smarter way to charge for overhead and profit for construction companies of all sizes.

David Gerstel has been a home builder for over four decades and is the author of “Running a Successful Construction Company” (often cited as an industry bible) and “Nail Your Numbers: A Path to Skilled Construction Estimating and Bidding.” His latest book, “A Construction Pro’s Path to Financial Independence,” is now available from Amazon or at the bookseller of your choice. You can contact David via his website, DavidGerstel.com. This article previously appeared in sister publication JLC.

Product Profiles: Automation and Systems



Aqua-Rex WK1P Water Conditioner

Aqua-Rex is an electronic water conditioner that is engineered to do a lot of good things to the pool water.

It is designed to stop scaling on the water line, keeping pool tiles clean, and helps with water features as well.

In salt water pools, it can stop the salt cell from scaling, reducing maintenance and extending the life of the cell.

It can also reduce phosphates, so users need less chemicals and keeps the pool water clearer.

It does all these things using radio waves transmitted into the pool water and, once installed, it needs no servicing or maintenance at all.

"We call it the 'Pool Guys Pal' for very good reasons," says Jonny Seccombe, president of Aqua-Rex. "We receive excellent reviews — the only criticism we get is that it's too good to be true."

Technical support is available by calling 877-640-2170.

Aqua-Rex is warrantied for five years.

Contact: Aqua-Rex | aqua-rex.com



Hydramatic Automatic Safety Cover

The motors of Aquamatic's Hydramatic covers run on hydraulic pressure rather than electricity. That means one-fourth the moving parts, no lubrication, and ropes that self-adjust, says Tom Dankel, cocreator of AI-camera safety system built just for the pool industry. It takes only four bolts to assemble, making installation simple. Another time-saver is Aquamatic's patented cable compensator, which automatically aligns both sides of the cover as it extends and retracts. "Technicians are constantly telling us, 'I started your system up, and it worked right away with no fuss,'" Dankel says.

Every Aquamatic cover meets the ASTM F1346-91 safety standard and is custom-fitted down to the half-inch. Consumers can choose from 11 standard colors and six designer colors.

Contact: Aquamatic Cover Systems | aquamatic.com



Tild

Tild is a simple, easy-to-use pool automation system for a simple body of water, either pool or spa.

Tild allows users to remotely control any heater, pump and lights via Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. Users can remotely control when lights come on, as well as when to kick in the heater and filter the pool, and it is agnostic to the brand. This allows customers to have the benefit of automation without breaking the bank.

It has a simple and easy-to-use interface, and wiring is straightforward, with terminal blocks that are labeled for ease of use. The app interface is sleek and can be monitored from anywhere via Wi-Fi.

"Customers will enjoy being able to upgrade their pool and not worry about additional adapters or equipment," says Arthur Schutzberg, CCEI's head of U.S. sales. "It works with major heaters, pumps and lights, as well as CCEI's suite of products."

Tild comes with a warranty of 3 years.

Contact: CCEI USA | na.ccei-pool.com



eXact iDip Pool Professional Test Kit

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

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

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

The iDip is NSF-certified.

Contact: Industrial Test Systems | exactidip.com



WaterLink Spin Touch Lab

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

In addition, when used with the WaterLink Solutions PRO software program, it's able to analyze test results and recommend the correct products to fix water chemistry issues.

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

Contact: LaMotte Co. | lamotte.com



IntelliCenter Pool Control System

IntelliCenter is the flagship automation systems at Pentair. To better serve pools with automation, the IntelliCenter products have expanded capabilities and can accommodate new equipment add-ons over time.

IntelliCenter, IntelliCenter Lite and the IntelliCenter Upgrade Kit for EasyTouch/IntelliTouch provide pool owners with control via the user-friendly IntelliCenter2 app, enabling full automation and easy control for heaters, lights, pumps, water features and more. Pool service professionals can provide remote monitoring via the Pentair Pro desktop app, making it easy to troubleshoot issues.

An intuitive touchscreen walks users through easy step-by-step installation and Amazon Web Services (AWS) technology for true set-it-and-forget-it automation.

Contact: Pentair | | pentair.com/intellicenter



The Attendant

The Attendant is designed to control and monitor any pool equipment from existing manufacturers in the industry.

The cloud-based automation system continually monitors equipment, water quality and temperature to determine energy efficiency, and helps poolowners save money and lower their overall environmental impact.

Contact: Poolside Tech | poolside.tech



Raypak AVIA Low NOx Residential Swimming Pool & Spa Heater

The AVIA pool and spa heater includes a built-in advanced Wi-Fi enabled control system — no need for an additional control panel to manage the pool heater.

AVIA heats and learns the size of the pool and will let poolowners know when the pool is ready at the set temperature. The Raymote app provides a smart connection to AVIA for real-time service alerts and control from anywhere.

AVIA pool and spa heater weighs under 140 pounds and can be installed on a standard 2x2 foot pad.

“Both AVIA’s size and controls capability are what make it the best product choice for pool pros,” says Justin Reyes, Raypak’s associate marketing manager. “AVIA’s straight tube heat exchanger design makes it the most serviceable in the market.”

AVIA comes with a 90-day warranty; extended 2-year warranty on parts and labor if the heater is registered within 90 days of being installed by a professional.

Contact: Raypak | raypak.com



Envision AR App

The new Envision AR app from Tara brings the power of augmented reality to the pool design process.

Now homeowners can see how their new pool liner will fit in with the surroundings of their backyard. They can browse Tara’s entire pattern collection and choose any pattern. With each pattern they can view it from far away, up close and from any angle. Envision AR shows how the pattern looks in water or they can remove the water with a touch of a button.

Experience different lighting conditions too, from morning to noon or even dusk. With the power of Envision AR they will have a true sense of what their new liner will be like before they make their decision.

In addition to the pool liner, homeowners can change the deck color and material, add a safety cover or even a sun shade.

Envision AR is available for download from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Contact: Tara Pool & Outdoor Products | tarapools.com

Product Profiles: Filters and Filter Media



The Filter Fiber Stuff

The Filter Fiber Stuff is a safe filter media that can be used as an aid to cartridge and sand filters, and as a replacement to DE for DE filters.

When used as a safe alternative/replacement to DE in DE filters, The Filter Fiber Stuff requires less than half the amount of product (by weight) than needed when using DE.

The Filter Fiber Stuff is non-toxic, biodegradable and can be backwashed safely. It can help extend filter runs and reduces clogging.

"It combines high performance, outstanding value and environmentally friendly features into one great product," says Jim Sturick, the company's regional sales manager.

"Customers love that the Filter Fiber Stuff is a safer alternative to DE that is non-toxic, safe to handle and can be backwashed safely."

Technical support is available by calling 800-348-1656, or visit JacksMagic.com.

Contact: Jack's Magic Products | jacksmagic.com



Pleatco AdvancedUltra

Pleatco AdvancedUltra uses patented filtration technology along with Pleatco Pure Pleat to produce a filter cartridge high in dirt holding capacity.

In addition to an impressive dirt holding capacity, Pleatco AdvancedUltra also allows for long cycle times, requiring less maintenance.

"With optimized performance and a design that consolidates multiple cartridges into a single cartridge, this inventory-simplifying innovation is designed for performance and built to last long," says Sarah McClintock, demand marketing manager for Pleatco.

Contact: Pleatco | pleatco.com/ultra



Unicel Replacement Cartridges and DE Grids

Unicel offers a full line of replacement filter elements made to exact OEM specs to ensure the right fit and proper performance. They include replacement pleated elements for all makes of pool and spa cartridge filter systems, replacement rectangular DE grids (center port, top port and offset top port), and replacement vertical DE grids for up-flow and down-flow filter systems.

Unicel has been making filter elements for OEM and replacement markets for years, optimizing all aspects associated with pool and spa filtration to give the customer the highest quality filtration experience and sparkling clear water.

Unicel uses Reemay filtration fabric because its unique trilobal fiber shape offers consistent filtration efficiency throughout the filtration cycle, while maximizing dirt-holding capacity for extended run times between cleanings.

Contact: Unicel | unicelfilters.com



Automatic Air Relief Valve

Most filters equipped with manual air release valves run half air filled, says Hassan Hamza, president of Vacless Systems. "This is the only existing automatic air relief valve for pool filters."

The Automatic Air Relief Valve is designed to force the filter elements to fully engage with the circulating water, and shorten the pump's running time.

The valve provides immediate release of entrapped air inside pool filters. It helps guard against serious injuries caused by accidental blow-offs of pool filters.

It is easily installed onto any pool filter in place of old manual air release valves, and is designed with an innovative self cleaning mechanism.

Customers are invited to call directly for installation and trouble shooting support at 818-701-6200.

The valve comes with a 3-year warranty.

Contact: Vacless Systems |
Vacless.com

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New Products

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Harbour

The new Amalfi Collection includes eight sectional pieces that can be used to create a sofa, an ottoman, and two chairs. Soft to the hand, the fabric feels like an indoor textile that is resistant to sun, moisture, sweat, mildew, and staining. Mix and match the collection to create the perfect, custom outdoor seating area.

Contact: shopharbour.com



Lyon Financial

Lyon's Inquiry Team is a new resource for pool builders and their customers. The Inquiry Team supports builders by fielding customer financing questions so builders don't have to. Calls will always be answered by a live, friendly, knowledgeable representative who is eager to offer solutions.

Contact: lyonfinancial.net



Nature's Care

Nature's Care 'Open-Close' product is formulated to break down organics in cold water making pool openings faster. This environmentally friendly product uses a concentrated enzyme formulation to prevent hard to clean waterline rings and staining. It's biodegradable, non-toxic, and made in the USA.

Contact: naturescarepool.com



Strandkorb

Traditionally a beach chair from Northern Germany, the Strandkorb has evolved into an elegant piece of outdoor furniture, suited for residential use in backyards, patios and poolside. The reclining wicker cabanas are available in a large variety of styles, ranging from classic to modern.

Contact: strandkorb.us



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