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POOL AND SPA NEWS

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JULY 13, 2026

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CLOSE-UP ON COVERS

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Sauna by Winter

Tips and Tricks for Choosing
the Best Construction Software

The Future of Sustainable
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POOL AND SPA NEWS

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Perfection in Progress



I love when the ideological aligns with the practical.

It rarely happens – those times when doing the right thing for the long term also yields immediate benefits in addition to any sacrifice that was made.

As our wise industry has known for a while, that is certainly the case when it comes to sustainability. As it happens, what's good for the planet often benefits clients' bank accounts as well. Keeping those plumbing runs shorter means less work for the pump, yielding energy saving over the long haul. A weir that rests dead level allows that vanishing edge or waterfeature to make the most of every drop.

In many ways, the industry has been good to the environment without even trying. Sustainability has become more than a talking point in the pool and spa industry. As Crystal Lengua writes in this issue, "the companies making the biggest strides are those that treat being green as a system, not a trend." From product design and manufacturing to shipping, warehousing, and installation practices, her feature explores how businesses across the industry are finding practical ways to reduce their environmental footprint while delivering long-term value to customers. Learn more about how the industry is progressing, and steps that any company can take to improve sustainability with intent, in "The Systemization of Sustainability," page 46.

Among the many, one product category in particular has a history of making sustainability practically effortless for all segments of the industry – pool and spa covers. We all know the various and sundry ways that these products reduce the use of electricity, water, and chemicals – often while ensuring safety and maintaining comfortable temperatures. On page 32, "Mastering the Mechanics" offers tips on how to properly install and maintain these multitasking add-ons. Then see a covers showcase beginning on page 44.

Efficiency and heat retention certainly ranked high among the objectives when one team created an artificial-rock cave that served as a swim-in haven during the summer and a sauna in winter. Besides the eye candy, such as a beautiful door with rebar fashioned into a tree, the basic concept presented some technical hurdles. The end product certainly promises to fulfill another of this industry's obligations – providing products that promote both wellness and fun. You can read about this one-of-a-kind installation on page 14.

Rounding out this issue, we present a piece meant to help promote another type of sustainability – that of your company. As software becomes increasingly important in a firm's operational efficiency, learn seven questions that will help you land on the right system in "Choosing a Construction Software?" page 22. **PSN**

Rebecca Robledo
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Top Vendors Start Year with More Incremental Increases

The industry's primary publicly traded companies reported very modest growth in their earnings reports for the first quarter

By Rebecca Robledo



ADOBE STOCK

In submitting reports regarding their first-quarter performance, the Big 3 manufacturers and megadistributor POOLCORP reported modest growth, with most reporting single digit increases in sales. Service/maintenance and the aftermarket continue to receive credit for their performance, while purchases for new pool construction continue to lag.

Fluidra reported a year-over-year global sales increase of 5.4% to €564 million (approximately \$654 million USD), saying all regions performed positively and benefitted from volume and price.

North America delivered 5% organic growth. Southern Europe performed the best, with 6% growth largely thanks to the markets in France and Spain in particular. The rest of Europe increased by 4%, with the remainder of the globe yielding a 5% increase. The manufacturer credited part of the increase to the growth in its commercial division and aftermarket sales, which it has been intentionally growing for several years. It estimated that aftermarket now accounts for approximately 65% of sales, while new construction generates about 35%.

Hayward Holdings, parent company to Hayward Pool Products, reported a net sales increase of 12% compared with the first quarter of 2025, to \$255.2 million. The Charlotte, N.C.-based manufacturer attributed the growth to positive net price meant to offset inflation and tariffs, the favorable impact from foreign exchange rates, and an increase in volume.

Gross profit increased by 13% to \$118.7 million compared to the first quarter of last year, while gross profit margin increased by 0.5%. The latter is attributed to positive net price and operating efficiencies, though partially offset by tariffs and inflation.

Sales were slightly better in North America, with a year-over-year net sales increase of 12% to \$209.8 million. This compares

with non-North American markets, which saw a net sales increase of 9% to \$45.4 million. A modest decrease in volume offset the positive impact of foreign exchange rates and positive net price on the non-North American markets, the company said.

As a result of its performance in the first quarter, the Big 3 producer has slightly increased its projection for the whole year, expecting net sales to increase approximately 5% compared with 2025, rather than the original guidance of approximately 4%.

Pentair's pool division showed a sales increase of 1% compared to sales for the same period last year. Excluding currency translation, acquisitions and divestitures, core sales grew 1% in the first quarter. Reportable segment income of \$128 million was up 2% compared to the first quarter of 2025, and ROS was 33.1%, an increase of 30 basis points when compared to the first quarter of 2025.

For the second quarter, including all divisions of the company, it anticipates an increase in total sales of approximately 1%, while it expects growth of approximately 2% to 4% for Fiscal 2026 compared with 2025.

POOLCORP saw a net sales increase of 6% compared with Q1 2025, to \$1.1 billion. "Maintenance demand remained resilient, and we saw continued, though still gradual, recovery in discretionary categories," said then-President/CEO Peter D. Arvan.

Equipment sales also proved strong for the company, as did some discretionary categories, including building materials. The company also credits new locations to the net sales growth.

Gross margin decreased 0.2% to 29.0%. Consistent with normal seasonal patterns in the first quarter, gross margin in the first quarter of 2026 was impacted by a higher proportion of equipment sales and early buy purchases, which generally bring slightly lower margins. **PSN**

MPG Presents Marketing Awards

As construction has slowed down, marketing has become an ever-more important part of a company's strategy. Today, many pool/spa industry firms are opting to use professional marketing services, whether through an in-house marketing staffer or by contracting through a company.

Well before this became a common priority, Master Pools Guild (MPG) was acknowledging the importance of this discipline and the tools that make it work, whether social media, websites, or AI. Every year, the group honors members who submit the best marketing programs, with categories getting as granular as AI voiceover or No Hidden Fee guarantees.

Here are this year's recipients of The Edge Awards:

Top Honor:

Best Integrated Marketing Program: Gib-San Pools

Category honorees:

Best Website Redesign: CPS Outdoors



Best Social Media Presence: Regal Pools

Overall Use of Video: Regal Pools

Leading Edge AI Conversational Agent: Shasta Pools

Leading Edge Digital Tools for Sales Conversion: Mission Pools

Leading Edge Construction-Phase Email Automation: A&G Pools

Leading Edge Case Study on Instagram, Growth in a Small Company: Ashton Pools by Design

Leading Edge AI Voiceover – Elevating Storytelling: Mission Pools

Leading Edge No Hidden Fee Guarantee: Ashton Pools by Design

Leading Edge Splash Loyalty Program: Gib-San Pools

Leading Edge Master Pools Guild: Why It Matters to You: Shasta Pools [PSN](#)

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The GENESIS MasterMind Summit Slated for September

The educational group GENESIS brings its annual leadership conference to Phoenix.

The MasterMind Summit takes place Sept. 16-18 at the Wigwam Arizona in the Valley of the Sun. Preconference sessions will be presented Sept. 14 and 15.

In addition to educational sessions over the three days, participants can sit in on Sessions for Success roundtable discussions, a business summit moderated by Cornell Professor Neil Tarallo, and daily networking lunches, as well as an opening party with Journey cover band Voyagers, an Historic Litchfield Park

walking tour hosted by Women of Water, and the chance to race against three-time Olympic gold medalist Rowdy Gaines.

The summit opens with a session on economic trends and industry projections. Business sessions cover such topics as sales, key performance indicators (KPI), and ways to use AI. Technical courses include project profiles and designing for wellness.

Genesis will present the three pre-conference sessions, covering hydraulics, color theory, and converting design into sales opportunities. [PSN](#)

PHTA Accepting Proposals for Water Conservation Standard

As PHTA works to reaffirm its water conservation standard, it is undertaking a revision process for the language.

The association is conducting a public review of the ANSI/APSP/ICC-13 2017 American National Standard for Water Conservation Efficiency in Residential and Public Pools, Spas, Portable Spas, and Swim Spas. Interested parties have until July 28, 2026 to submit their comments. [PSN](#)

PHTA Appoints Faculty Chairs for New Educational Program

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance has officially named the faculty leaders for its most recent educational initiative, the Center for Excellence.

The program was created to support workforce development and practical training for pool/spa professionals.

PHTA assembled the inaugural Faculty Chair team to bring decades of experience spanning across the industry's many segments, including swimming and spa construction, service and repair, technical training, marketing, sales, operations, leadership, and business development to the program.

"The strength of the Center of Excellence starts with the people behind it," said Sabeena Hickman, President & CEO. "...Their expertise will help ensure the Center of Excellence delivers relevant,

real-world training that industry professionals can rely on."

Their responsibilities include shaping curriculum, recruiting and mentoring faculty, supporting the development of learning pathways, and monitoring the course content to make sure it remains aligned with current industry practices, technologies, standards, and workforce needs.

The inaugural team comprises:

Isaac Keselman serves as Faculty Chair for Building & Engineering. His four-decade industry career has included roles from service technician to president of Aqua Doctor and COO of the consolidation platform Azureon.

Kevin Poe, national accounts trainer at Fluidra, was named Faculty Chair for Maintenance and Operations. He

specializes in pool service, repair, and technical training, with more than 30 years of hands-on experience. He has trained professionals across the country on installation, operation, and troubleshooting.

Jamie Novak, director of marketing at POOLCORP, is now Faculty Chair for Business Education. She brings more than 20 years of experience in marketing leadership, brand strategy, and industry engagement, having worked across leading manufacturers and industry brands. She also focuses on customer experience and business growth.

Rick Harvey, senior director of sales at BioLab's Pro Pool Division, takes the role of Faculty Chair for Retail Education. He brings extensive experience in sales leadership, client relationships, team development, and market expansion. [PSN](#)

Lyon Financial Names New Senior Relationship Manager



Lyon Financial has hired Paul Roughton as its new senior relationship manager.

The position is meant to

strengthen the company's national sales and business development team, the company said.

Before joining Lyon Financial, Roughton served as business development manager at First National Bank of Omaha. According to Lyon, Roughton consistently exceeded sales goals, achieving 335% over quota while earning recognition as a top performing sales representative across multiple years. He also played a key role in sales pipeline development and team growth, the company added.

At Lyon Financial, Roughton is charged with supporting contractor relationships, strengthening strategic partnerships, and helping to drive continued growth. **PSN**

GPM Brands Announces Appointment of Two New Executives to Its Sauna Division

GPM Brands, a manufacturer and distributor of hot tubs, swim spas, saunas, and wellness products, has appointed Mark Raisanen as executive vice president of operations/Sauna Division, and John Hoiem as executive vice president of sales/Sauna Division. With more than 30 years of leadership experience in the sauna industry each, the duo is expected to play pivotal roles in driving strategic initiatives and operational excellence across the organization moving forward.

"Their extensive track record of building highly effective dealer programs and delivering results in complex market environments makes them invaluable additions to our organization," said James McClure, executive vice president of GPM Brands. "The depth of their

experience and strategic vision will be instrumental as we continue to expand our market presence and pursue new growth opportunities."

Founded in 2020, GPM Brands is a lifestyle company that produces hydrotherapy products. **PSN**



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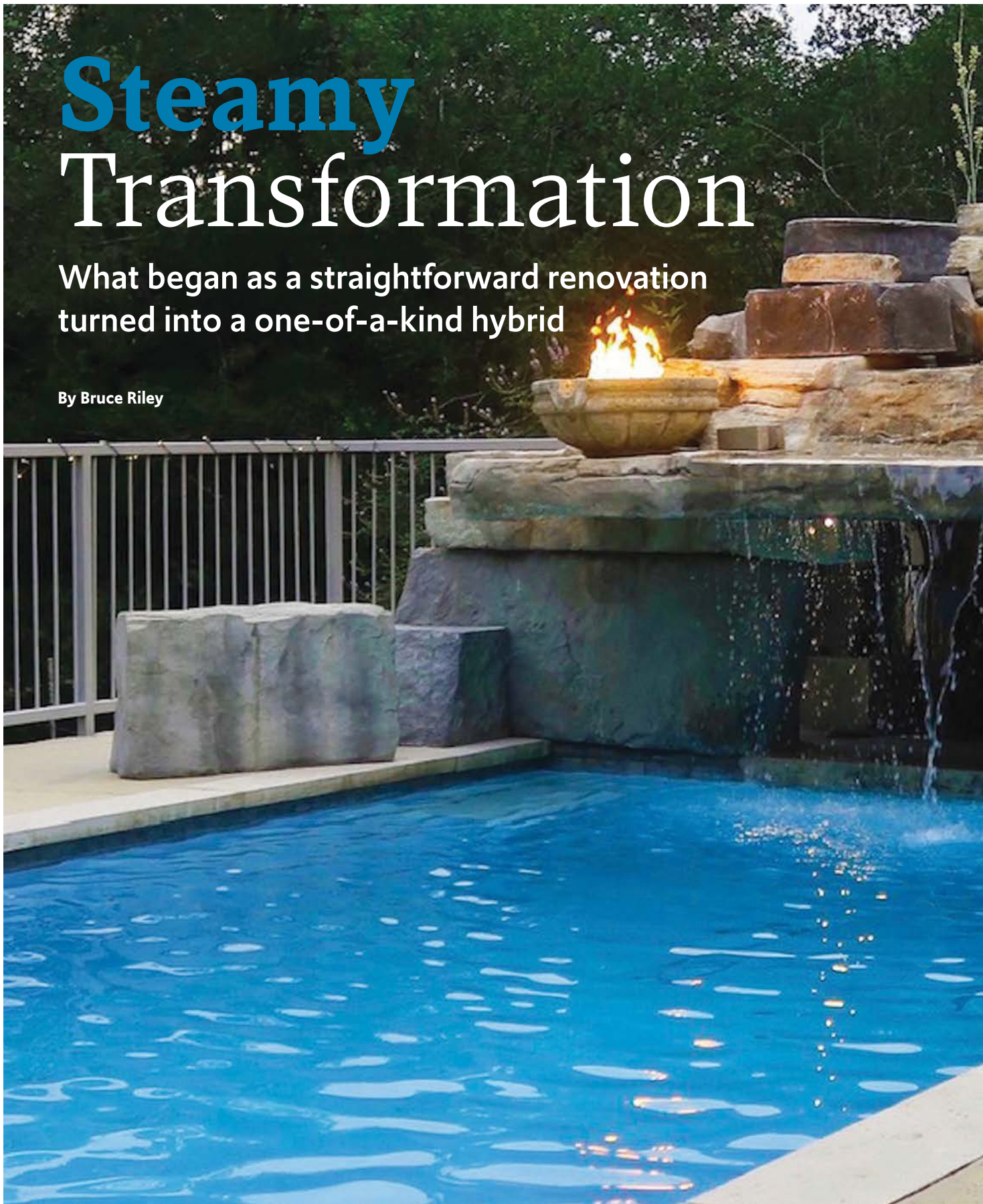


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Steamy Transformation

What began as a straightforward renovation turned into a one-of-a-kind hybrid

By Bruce Riley





It started as a routine structural repair. It ended as something nobody on the jobsite had ever built before — a hand-crafted, architecturally refined cave that moonlights as a fully functional sauna during winter.

For Zavian Camacho, lead designer and builder on the project, the transformation was the result of equal parts opportunism, artistry, and a timely suggestion from an unlikely source.

The project began as a straightforward remodel of the 18-by-40-foot rectangular pool, which measured 8 feet deep and was set into a hillside behind a mid-century modern home in Texas. The renovation was needed to remedy structural settling that had occurred. During the necessary excavation to repair the pool, the crew sat looking at the substantial void roughly 4 feet below the pool's depth at the deep end. That discovery changed everything.

"We looked at the hole after excavating and thought, this really is a great opportunity to build a cave," Camacho says.

But not just any cave.

Designing to the architecture

Most pool caves are bold, dominant features — typically rising 7 feet or more above the deck and commanding the entire backyard. That approach didn't fit here.

The home's mid-century modern aesthetic demanded something more restrained and



Clockwise from top left: The crews discovered a sizable gap, leading to the cave sauna concept; Large openings such as the window leading directly to the pool had to be sealed off to sustain sauna temperatures in winter; Concrete being applied for the top of the cave; the artificial-rock panels are attached to the block wall structure.

PHOTOS COURTESY RICOROCK



architectural. The excavation, as it turned out, provided exactly the right canvas.

Because the cave would sit below pool depth rather than soar above it, the team could easily integrate the unique feature into the landscape rather than imposing upon it. The result is a structure that feels like it could have been carved out of the hillside rather than constructed on top of it.

"The homeowner didn't want a typical boulder-style cave," Camacho says. "The house is mid-century modern; everything had to fit that language."

To complement the home's clean lines, Camacho's team turned to RicoRock's Temple Stone

Series for both the interior and exterior facade panels. The effect is striking: The surface reads like ancient stonework, evoking old castles and temple architecture, yet sits in quiet harmony with the modernist sensibility of the surrounding property.

The main chamber measures 15 by 15 feet with an 8-foot ceiling — generous enough to be immersive, but proportioned to feel intimate rather than cavernous. The ceiling panels, drawn from RicoRock's Climbing Wall Series, carry a limestone-inspired colorway that gives the interior the feeling of a genuine quarry. Custom acrylic staining was applied throughout to deepen and personalize the finish.

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The team chose a rustic-style stove to provide the heat for the sauna and add to the ambiance.

Access to the space was designed with the same attention to detail. This included four distinct entry and exit points: a walk-in from the pool deck, a passage beneath, an opening directly into the pool and — perhaps the most memorable — a hidden entrance from the hillside at the rear.

That back entry features a custom-fabricated rebar door. A crew member hand-welded the elaborate tree design from scrap $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rebar stock.

"The tree design on that entrance door is one of my favorite parts of the whole feature," Camacho says. "It's beautiful."

Propane-fueled fire bowls flank the waterfall, with the tanks hidden within the rockwork.

The moment everything changed

Several weeks into construction, as the open-air cave took shape — with its large wall openings designed to encourage maximum airflow through the Texas summer heat — a crew member reshaped the entire project with a quick observation.

The independent contractor, Aspen Steven, originally comes from South Dakota. As he explained, his family had a deep appreciation for sauna culture and wellness. As he viewed the cave's structure — its thick masonry walls, substantial roof, and framed openings — he suggested that, if the openings could be sealed in winter and a sauna stove added, the cave could function as a genuine sauna during the colder months. In summer, simply remove the panels to restore airflow, and the space reverts to a cool, shaded retreat.

The elegance of the idea was hard to argue with. Camacho and the team ran with it.

Engineering the dual function

Fitting the sauna stove proved straightforward: The team ran the pipe through the roof using a standard flue installation.

The greater challenge came from engineering a reliable sealing system for the cave's multiple large openings — which had been intentionally sized for ventilation, not enclosure. To reach and sustain the 120-degree-plus temperatures required for a true sauna experience, every opening must be completely closed off — no gaps, no leaks. The steam needs to stay inside.

The designers solved this issue with custom steel frames that were installed around each opening. Additionally sealed with caulking and mortar joints, the frames remain in place all year. In winter sauna mode, acrylic sheets or solid wood panels are screwed into these frames, with foam weatherstrip added to create an airtight seal.

When warmer weather returns, the panels are simply removed and stored, reopening the cave to the breeze and restoring its summer identity.

The cave came through its inaugural winter season with flying colors.

Building for permanence

The structural approach behind this cave reflects a broader philosophy RicoRock has been developing: making complex cave construction more accessible to a wider range of contractors without sacrificing quality or longevity.

Traditionally, RicoRock built cave structures using shotcrete — a method that produces excellent results but demands highly skilled applicators. For this project, the team adopted a block-wall construction method learned from a builder named Randy Phillip, owner of Artificial Rock Tech in Trinidad. The walls and columns were erected using standard concrete block, which serves as the primary structural element, with RicoRock's facade panels secured to the exterior. The roof was poured in reinforced concrete, and the ceiling panels were cast in place as in-situ forms.

The advantages of this approach go beyond labor. Engineers and municipal building

departments are far more comfortable reviewing and approving block-wall construction than shotcrete structures, which can complicate the permitting process. A block-based system follows conventional structural logic that engineers recognize and can stamp with confidence.

The result is also extraordinarily durable.

With two tons of rebar and 40 yards of concrete, this structure will outlast the home on the property. The reinforced concrete roof doubles as a jumping platform into the pool — a practical bonus that required no additional design work.

All told, the project ran approximately seven to eight weeks and came in just under \$50,000 in material costs before mark-up. This included about \$20,000 in castings, \$5,000 in rebar and concrete, with the rest covering the in-house crews who installed it. Most of the project was completed in three weeks. This made for a meaningful investment that delivered a genuinely one-of-a-kind amenity.



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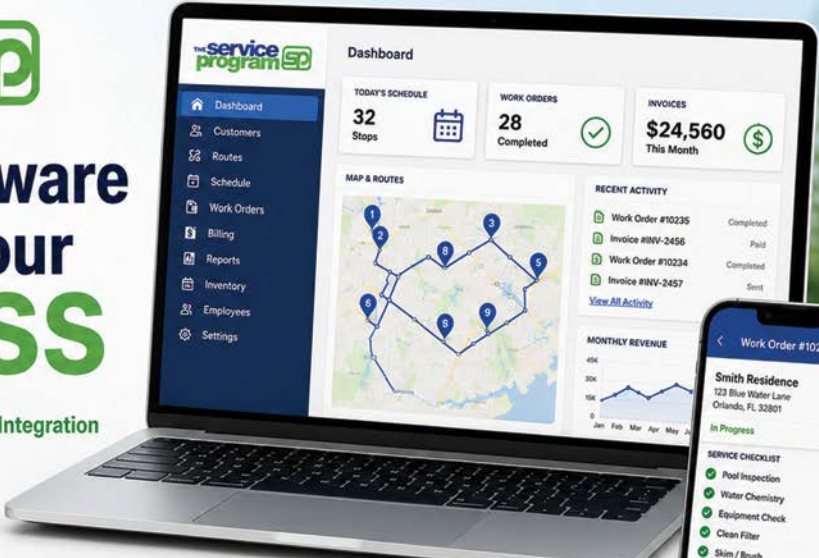
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Top: The rebar entry door
fashioned into a tree.
Bottom: The view from
inside the cave.



A blueprint for what's possible

This marks RicoRock's first cave conversion to a dual-purpose sauna. The concept is reproducible, the construction methodology is teachable, and the market continues to grow. We expect to see it again through our network of independent contractors who are experienced in cave construction and available for consultation.

Ingenuity, as this project demonstrates, often comes from the most unexpected places.

Sometimes it comes from a guy from South Dakota who really loves saunas. [PSN](#)

Bruce Riley is managing director of RicoRock, a maker of cast-concrete rock, which includes component systems for building caves/grottos, waterfalls, and waterslide products for use in pool applications. He has more than 25 years of experience building rock-style pools in Southern California and now develops products and designs waterfall kits for the company. He can be reached via email at bruce@ricorock.com.

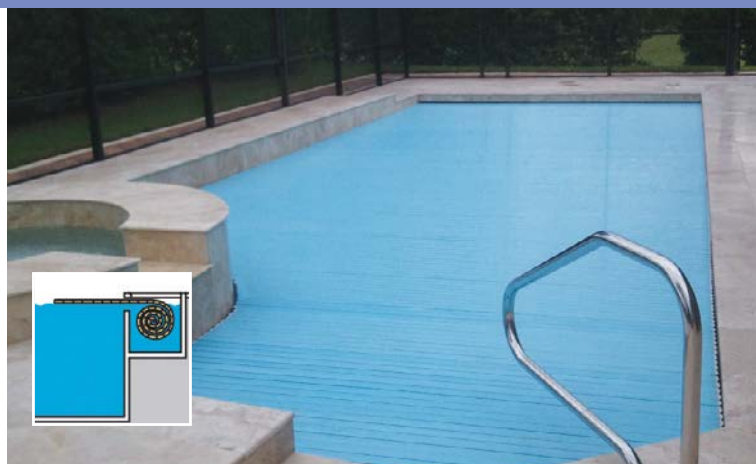
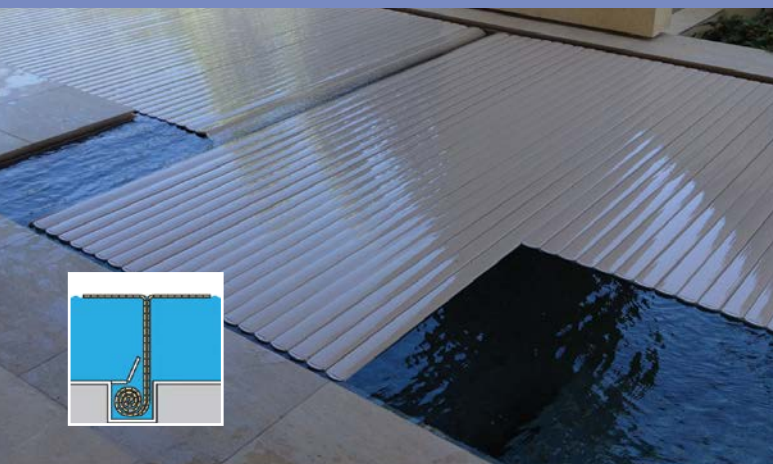


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By Erika Mosse



When Kelley Turner and her husband founded Staycation Fiberglass Pools in 2022, they placed a high priority on picking out a project management software platform early.

Today, Turner has a stat that explains why.

"If you're [using] spreadsheets, you're probably leaving 8% to 12% on the margin," says Turner, co-owner of the San Antonio-based company.

She has watched it play out among builders who have switched from spreadsheets to a single construction management platform. Once they could document, line by line, what each pool actually required, their margins improved.

"A spreadsheet doesn't give you what's needed," she says.

The distinction matters. Many of today's pool companies still operate the way they always have, with a spreadsheet for the budget, a separate calendar for the schedule, and text messages flying

back and forth with customers. Add to the mix a bunch of supplier invoices sitting in an email inbox and job photos buried on a project manager's phone.

Construction management software pulls all this information and more into one platform. The estimate becomes the contract, which feeds the schedule, which tracks against the budget in real time for accuracy.

When a supplier delivers materials, the cost lands on the right job automatically. The customer can see progress photos and message the builder through the same system. By the time the pool is finished, the builder can see exactly what the project earned, line by line.

For a pool contractor, construction software is like a full-fledged team member — picking the right one matters as much as any new hire. Here, three tech-forward pool builders share what they looked for when deciding which platform to trust.

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For builders evaluating construction management software, the ability to turn customer conversations into detailed, accurate bids can be one of the most valuable and time-saving features of a platform.

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1. Is the pricing simple, transparent, and affordable?

Turner learned this lesson the hard way.

Before she finally found a platform that worked for Staycation, she spent eight months on one that didn't.

"Eight months of hell," she says. "Every time we tried to make a change, it was an increase in price."

Software pricing in the construction space can get complicated fast. Many platforms run on tiered plans, where the basics sit at the entry level, but other key functions, such as customer support and the ability to add users, live two or three tiers up. The lowest price simply gets you in the door with software that may not meet your needs.

A flat, affordable all-in price is worth more than a low entry rate that climbs every time you need to do something.

2. Does it have the features a business needs to operate efficiently?

Different builders have different priorities. For Jason Shanks, vice president of operations at Coastal Pools in Grasonville, Md., what mattered most was how fast his team could turn a customer conversation into an accurate bid.

A typical pool proposal at Coastal runs between 200 and 400 line items. Many pool builders, he says, take an old-school – and imprecise – approach to pricing materials – averaging the last 10 rebar invoices, dividing by square footage, and hoping it evens out across jobs. His current software changes that.

"With JobTread, you can have legitimate pricing line by line. You can pre-build out your groups. You can actually bid a pool in 10 minutes with legit



Construction management software gives pool builders real-time visibility into schedules, budgets, customer communications, and job progress, helping them track every detail of a project in one place.

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WHAT AI CAN DO WHEN IT'S CONNECTED TO YOUR SOFTWARE

AI has become impossible to ignore, and pool builders are right to wonder what it can do for them. The answer depends almost entirely on what you connect it to.

On its own, an AI assistant is similar to a brilliant new hire who has read almost everything but never set foot on a job site: It's fast and capable, but it probably doesn't know your operation or workflows.

"Think of it as a Harvard grad with no field experience," says Eric Fortenberry, CEO of JobTread, a provider of project management software. "AI is really powerful, but it is not your business system."

That's the role of a construction management platform. It holds your estimates, budgets, proposals, selections, schedules, and communication in one place. Connect AI to that platform, and the assistant can finally work with your real business data. It can read your jobs and pull custom reports, create new estimates and purchase orders, and update records across your whole operation.

The time savings add up fast. Fortenberry describes a customer who used AI to read a homeowner's quote request, then create the job, add budget line items, generate a purchase order, and schedule the work with the right project manager assigned. A task like that can save huge amounts of manual entry every time it runs.

AI also fits into the day-to-day life of a pool builder. Walking a job site or sitting in the truck afterward, you can simply talk to the assistant, telling it everything you want entered, and it writes up the daily log for you.

"AI isn't replacing your software. It's finally working with it." **PSN**



You can bid a pool in 10 minutes with legit accurate pricing down to the plumbing fittings.

—Jason Shanks

accurate pricing down to the plumbing fittings," Shanks says.

Coastal's sales reps can now write a vinyl-liner replacement quote in the customer's driveway before they leave.

For Turner, margin tracking at the job level ranked as the make-or-break feature. With supplier invoices flowing automatically to the right pool, the picture sharpens.

"Every single piece is going to be charged to that job," she says. "So you really now know what your true margins are and where you're spending."

Of course, AI is reshaping the possibilities for construction software. Builders use it to pull data, build dashboards, and answer questions about their own jobs in ways that would have required a developer as recently as a year ago. (See the sidebar above.)

Whatever your priorities, list the features you need from a software before you start shopping, not after.



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3. Does it connect to the other tools that your company uses?

For Liliana Escudero, co-founder of Los Angeles-based J Designs Pool & Spa, one feature mattered most when she chose her current platform.

"That was the first thing that sold me, having an open API," says Escudero, in reference to a platform that is built to connect with outside tools. "It reduces my time just making double entries. That's one thing that I hate the most — a double entry."

Pool builders use a many different variations of software. Some project-management platforms connect easily to the rest of a company's tech stack while others leave the builder bolting on integrations through third-party services or building it themselves.

For Turner, a seamless integration with POOLCORP and Heritage means that every material



If you're on spreadsheets, you're probably leaving 8 to 12% on the margin. The software has allowed us to keep our profit.

—Kelley Turner

AN AI USE CASE

At Coastal Pools, production manager Mel Gowl wanted a fair, repeatable method of evaluating the company's six project managers. The information was already inside Coastal's construction management platform. He just needed a way to pull it together.

Using an AI assistant connected to the platform, Gowl built a method to tabulate a single employee score for each project manager. It combines the PM's margin performance against the company average, change-order revenue against their target, and information relating to customer reviews. He has the ability to update the dashboard on demand.

"In this scenario, AI has really only helped me compile all the data into one place," Gowl says. "We were very good at looking at a singular KPI but didn't have a great way to compile all the KPIs and tell the full story of how that PM is doing."

Gowl says he may use the scorecard to fuel the company's bonus program next year. [PSN](#)

charge flows automatically to the right pool, so her team doesn't have to enter it by hand.

"The integration within JobTread has allowed us to not need as many employees to do jobs that would have had to be done manually," Turner says. "It's allowed us to keep our profit."

When you're evaluating software, ask which of your current tools the platform connects to natively, and what happens when you need a connection it doesn't already offer.

4. Does it put all your project information in one place?

For many pool builders, the information they need for one job lives in multiple places. Project photos, texts, and change order conversations scatter across team members' devices and email inboxes every day.

Escudero knows the problem. For years, every customer conversation and job site issue at J Designs stayed in her husband JC's head. "It's very difficult to run a business with limited information on projects," she says.

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Once that information moved into one place, she could see exactly where every job stood. "I can see at all times where my jobs are."

At Coastal, Shanks has pushed his team to move conversations off text messages and into the platform, where everything is recorded.

"Everybody doesn't always remember things the same way," he says, so it's good to have a record. "When you're customer-service based, you're always going to do the right thing for the customer. The builder tends to have to eat those things if he doesn't have the documentation."

5. How good is the training and support after you sign?

Every platform takes some learning. But how does the software company support you while you're getting up to speed, and even after?

Escudero says builders should look for two things when evaluating support — training that you can do at your own pace, and a customer-service team that responds quickly if you're stuck.

"You don't need to answer my call immediately, but don't make me wait two days to solve my problem," Escudero says.

It's also smart to make sure that the training and support are unlimited and included in one price. You never know who on your team might need assistance — or when.

6. Is the product still evolving?

In all likelihood, the software you sign up for today will not be the software you're using in two years. The question is whether the company is improving the platform constantly, or sitting on it until the next big overhaul.

Shanks watched his previous platform sit unchanged for years before, finally, one single, massive took place. His current system is the opposite.

"They're always making it better," he says. New features roll out regularly, and customers can submit requests directly.

The best platforms release updates often and listen to their customers.

7. Is there a strong user community behind the platform to provide each other with support over the long haul?

Beyond the help desk, the best platforms also come with a network of other users willing to share what they've learned.

The best user communities take work for the software company itself to manage. That means investing in Facebook groups, annual conferences, round tables, and other means for users to stay connected and share insights.

Turner and Escudero take part in a user group of eight to 12 pool builders who meet every month to compare budgets, share dashboards, and trade lessons on what's working in their businesses, and what isn't.

"Everybody has come up with their formulas that can help another builder," Turner says. **PSN**

Erika Mosse is research and content specialist at JobTread, a provider of construction project management software for pool builders. She can be reached at emosse@jobtread.com.

Decide what you need the software for. Do you want it to run your business? Do you want it to create pretty documents? Do you want it to sign contracts? Ask yourself what's most important

—Liliana Escudero



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Mastering the Mechanics

A pool builder and service tech guide to pool covers



PHOTO COURTESY ENGWARD



Every seasoned builder has seen it: the call that comes six months after final payment. The cover will not open. The vault is holding water. The track is binding. The homeowner is frustrated — and suddenly the most expensive accessory on the project is the most visible failure.

In almost every case, the problem was not the cover itself. It was a tolerance missed during excavation, a vault poured slightly out of square, an anchor set into the wrong substrate, or a design feature that looked beautiful on paper but ignored the basic physics of tension, drainage, and load.

Pool covers have quietly shifted from luxury upgrades to expected baseline features. Clients want energy savings, water conservation, child safety, and seamless automation built into the design from day one. For builders and service technicians, that shift creates a real revenue opportunity—but it also narrows the margin for error. Automatic and safety covers operate within strict mechanical and legal parameters. When those parameters are ignored, the consequences surface quickly in callbacks, warranty disputes, and preventable liability.

Whether forming a vault for an automatic cover system, anchoring a safety cover into pavers, or interpreting contractual language related to ASTM compliance, a thorough understanding of pool cover mechanics extends beyond technical expertise. It is a critical business discipline that helps safeguard profitability, uphold professional reputation, and build lasting client trust.



The success of a safety cover depends on the proper choice of anchoring system, based on the deck material.

PHOTO COURTESY LOOP-LOC

Engineering automatic covers: Vaults, drainage, and clearances

The operational success of an automatic cover relies entirely on the precise, pre-dig construction of the pool shell and the cover vault. The slightest bow in the pool walls or a banana-shaped vault will fatally disrupt the cover's glide. An automatic cover requires a pool with perfectly parallel sides, as the width dictates the size of the cover drum, lead edge bar, and the fabric itself.

Before the deck is poured, builders must ensure the cantilever coping does not extend beyond the intended limit. Some prefer to keep it at a maximum of 25.4 mm (1.5 in.) past the retainer. Anything extending beyond the leading edge can create a physical obstruction for the glider, causing the bolts to rub against the coping stone every time the motor engages.

The cover vault itself requires precise sizing and dedicated, fail-safe drainage. Water and pool chemicals are the enemy of expensive high-voltage

motors and drive gears. Some contractors prefer to incorporate 76.2 mm (3-in.) open-air gravity drains directly into the bottom of the vault. They also recommend avoiding sump pumps if possible, as they require homeowners to perform periodic testing and maintenance, which likely will not occur as regularly as it should—if at all.

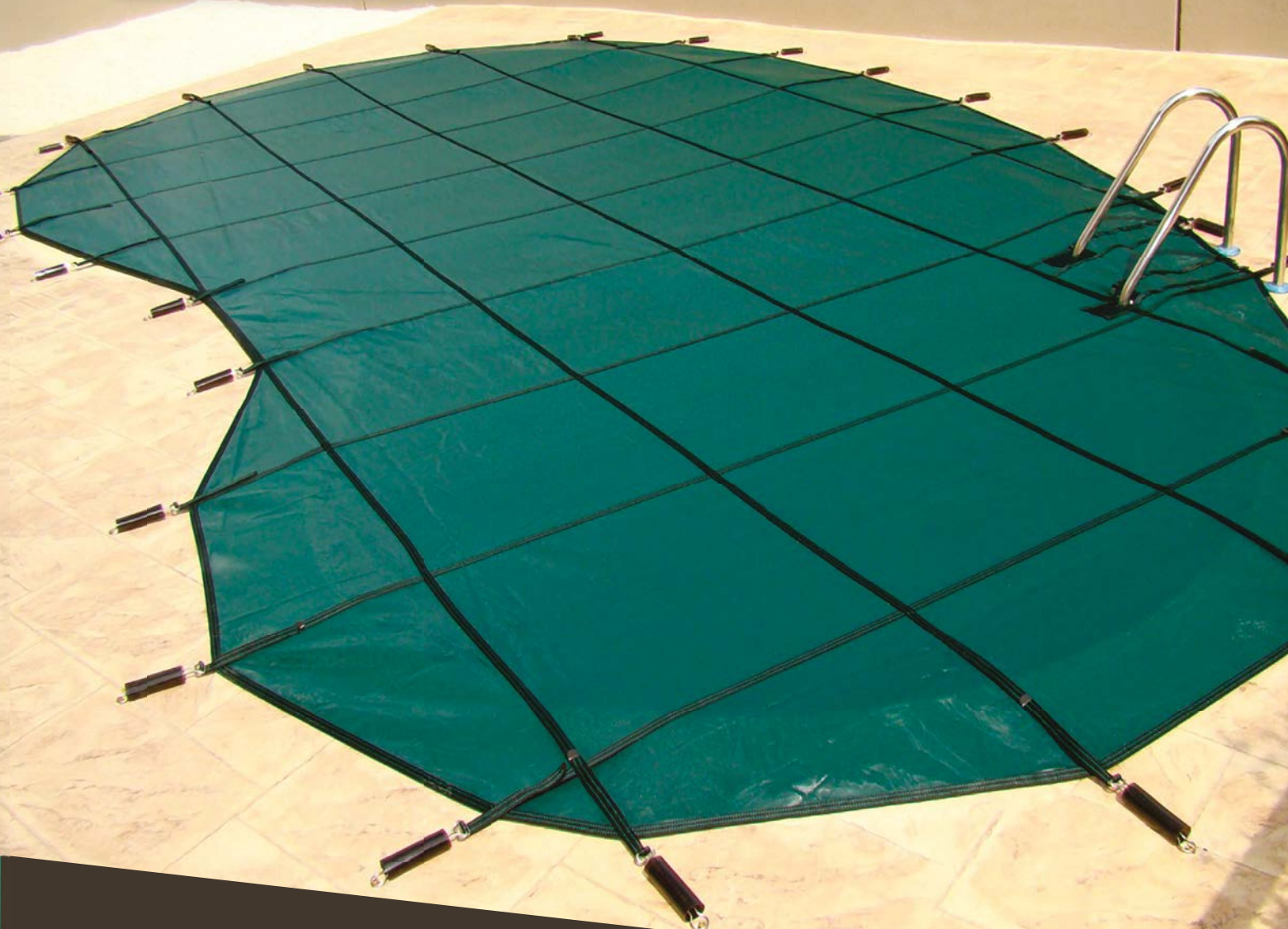
French drains should only be used in sand or exceptionally well-draining soil. They should be sized generously and tested to ensure they can hold enough water.

Further, the mechanism and pulley assembly must be perfectly leveled with the track. Installing the mechanism as close to track level as possible significantly reduces drag and premature motor wear over time.

When it comes to the physical hardware, technicians must avoid the common error of cutting ropes and metal tracks too short. Tracks must be left long enough to allow the guide and the end-of-track mounting plate to be tied together seamlessly.



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When anchoring the fabric, installers should not fully collapse the steel springs, but rather leave them at approximately 75-80% tension.

PHOTO COURTESY MERLIN

Consult the manufacturer's recommendations regarding the length of the ropes and track.

Finally, builders should consider the service technician when designing custom masonry vault lids. Massive, 88.9-mm (3.5-in.)-thick stone trays are physically impossible for a single maintenance technician to lift safely. Large architectural stones should be cut down into manageable 0.61 x 0.61 m (2 x 2 ft) sections to ensure the mechanical housing remains accessible for routine servicing.

Safety covers: Measurement, anchoring, and tension

While automatic systems make summer use easier, heavily tensioned safety covers shoulder the physical burdens of winter weather.

For technicians, efficiency and safety begin during the measurement phase. The era of manual pen-and-paper A-B triangulation has passed. Traditional methods are incredibly prone to transposition errors and distorted drawings—especially if triangulation stakes are placed less than 0.9 m (3 ft) from the waterline. These days, modern smartphone

measurement applications instantly detect mismatches on-site, eliminating the costly overhead of return trips to remeasure freeform pools.

The structural integrity of a safety cover relies entirely on proper anchoring, and the deck material dictates the hardware. A standard solid concrete deck requires a baseline brass anchor set into a 19 mm (0.75 in.) hole. Interlocking pavers require special consideration. Under heavy winter tension, standard drop-in anchors can often lift separate pavers out of the ground. To safely install pavers with safety covers, technicians must drill 457 mm (18 in.) deep, bypassing the stone entirely to set the anchor in a sleeve driven into the solid earth below. This specialized hardware and labor should be clearly communicated to the client and appropriately billed as a line-item upcharge.

Proper tensioning and spatial planning significantly impact the cover's lifespan. Downward-facing chafing strips, typically 457- to 609 mm (18- to 24-in.) wide, must be placed perfectly along the perimeter to protect the vinyl or mesh from the pool's rough coping. Without these strips, abrasive



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Covers can be customized into virtually any shape, even one that is heavy on the contours like this guitar.

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hardscapes can destroy a 15-year cover in just three seasons. Installers must allocate 762 to 609 mm (30 to 24 in.) of clear deck space around the perimeter to drop the heavy anchors. This accounts for the necessary 305-mm (12-in.) fabric overlap, 152 mm (6 in.) of strap, 152 mm (6 in.) of spring coil, and the remaining space required to pull the straps tight as the fabric naturally stretches over the years.

Crucially, when connecting the fabric to the deck anchors, technicians must never fully collapse the heavy steel springs. Initial installations should leave the springs at roughly 75 to 80 percent tension. This unused coil space is what allows the cover to dynamically adapt and stretch under the crushing weight of sudden winter snow loads without snapping the hardware. When installing over complex freeform shapes, strap spacing must be reduced from the standard 1.5 m to 0.9 m (5 ft to 3 ft), and the installation sequence must always begin at the center of the pool, moving outward to navigate bump-outs and organic curves properly.

Custom features: Navigating obstacles and managing liability

Integrating covers with vanishing edges, rock waterfalls, and raised spas requires serious structural ingenuity and a firm grasp of legal liability. On a vanishing-edge pool, because there is no traditional coping or freeboard, builders must install a special track behind the spillway on the face of the weir wall. This track should sit approximately 25 mm (1 in.) below the weir's edge to hide the hardware from the house's view, allowing the cover to glide effortlessly over the drop. The cover vault should also be plumbed to drain directly into the vanishing-edge catch basin rather than into a street curb to conserve treated water.

Porous obstacles, such as naturally jagged rock grottos, completely upend standard anchoring procedures. A safety cover cannot be forcefully dragged over sharp boulders. Technicians must drill metallic pad eyes directly into the vertical rock faces, utilizing heavy-duty stainless steel carabiners to



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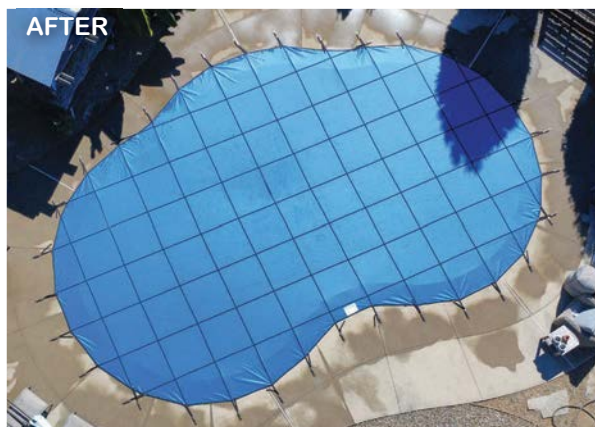
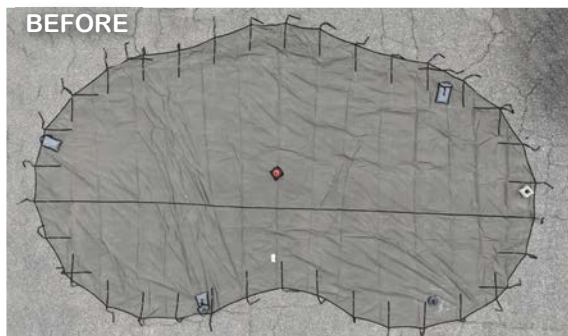


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The performance of a safety cover depends on details that homeowners never see, from anchor placement and deck conditions to proper spring tension and strap spacing. Getting those details right helps extend cover life, reduce callbacks, and protect both the client and the contractor.

PHOTOS: LEFT, COURTESY GARRETT; RIGHT COURTESY PEGASUS

secure the cover fabric. High-density foam padding should be placed aggressively wherever the cover meets a hard rock edge. For automatic covers with interior stepping stones or shallow sun shelves, using the spa blower for 5 minutes before opening can create an air cushion beneath the fabric, billowing the cover up and over the obstacles to prevent snagging.

Integrating moving water introduces a high risk of rapid disasters. If a sheer descent or deck jet accidentally engages while an automatic cover is closed, millions of gallons of water will be pumped directly onto the fabric, instantly destroying the mechanical tracks. All interior water features must be plumbed independently and rigorously fitted with automatic electrical override switches that physically sever power to the water feature the exact second the cover motor is engaged.

Most importantly, builders and service providers must understand the legal ramifications of these highly engineered workarounds. ASTM safety standards strictly dictate how a cover must perform under pressure to be legally classified and sold as a certified safety cover. If an installation requires structural gaps around a rock waterfall or significant modifications to the anchoring system, the cover may no longer meet its ASTM-rated performance

criteria. In such cases, contractors should revise the product description in their contracts accordingly, as continuing to represent the cover as ASTM-compliant could expose their business to substantial liability. Do not sell or refer to it as a safety cover; it must be contractually documented as a “spring-attached winter cover.”

The dual-cover strategy: Maximizing ROI and bundled sales

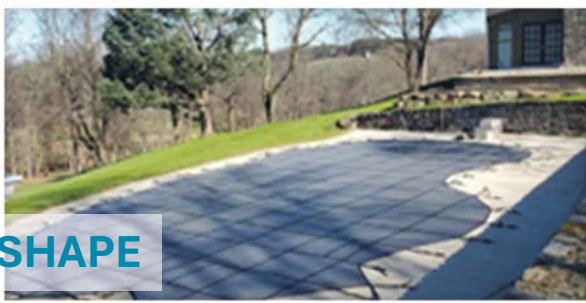
The financial economics of pool covers offer builders a highly logical, data-driven upsell opportunity: the dual-cover strategy. An automatic cover priced between \$8,000 and \$10,000 is an incredible asset for daily summer convenience and energy savings. However, its custom vinyl fabric is highly susceptible to the brutal realities of freezing winter climates and sustained snow loads. Leaving an automatic cover closed throughout the winter can significantly accelerate vinyl deterioration, potentially leading to premature replacement and substantial maintenance costs well before the end of its expected service life.

Builders should pitch the dual-cover strategy during the initial contract phase, bundling a mesh safety cover with the automatic system. By rolling the automatic cover into its subterranean vault at the end

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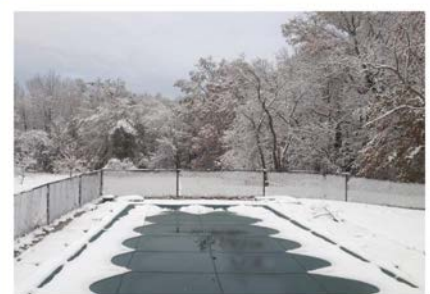


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Precise measurements and tight tolerances are required for automatic-cover vaults such as the one seen on the right-hand side of the image. Otherwise, covers could glide less smoothly or prematurely wear.

PHOTO COURTESY ENGWARD

of the swimming season and dropping a mesh cover over the shell for the winter, the expensive automatic fabric remains pristine and dry. Over a standard 15-year lifecycle, shielding the automatic cover from winter weather can save the homeowner up to \$12,000 in replacement costs. For the builder, it secures a secondary product sale at the point of construction, where bundling is significantly easier than attempting a post-build retrofit sale. Additionally, because modern mesh covers block 99 percent of incoming UV light, service techs benefit from vastly easier spring openings with minimal algae blooms.

Managing expectations: The pre-construction conversation with clients

The ultimate key to a successful cover installation is managing homeowner expectations before the excavator ever hits the dirt. The modern consumer often approaches the design process with a highly idealized, perfectionist vision fueled by home-improvement television.

Builders must immediately integrate into the architectural conversation. If an architect designs an infinity-edge pool facing an open lake upwind, the builder must be willing to push back. Unchecked

wind driving off a lake will catch the leading edge bar of the cover, creating a dangerous “bounce house” effect that will inevitably destroy the track system. Builders must be willing to force design changes or ultimately walk away from guaranteed failure.

Finally, service techs must clearly communicate the product’s physical realities. Covers are not airtight, and mesh covers will allow fine silt and varied water levels to pass through. Safety covers will noticeably sag under the weight of spring rain and leaf accumulation; this is simple, intentional physics designed to protect the deck anchors. Inform the client that elevated features will prevent a strictly airtight seal, meaning some debris entry is inevitable. Use this reality as a service opportunity: Offer automatic pool cleaner rentals in the early spring. Once clients experience the convenience of the rental, it frequently converts into a hard equipment sale.

When builders and service technicians strictly enforce engineering tolerances, clearly define their liability terminology, and master the art of the dual-cover upsell, pool covers transform from complicated installation hurdles into highly predictable, lucrative cornerstones of the pool business. **PSN**

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The Systemization of Sustainability

How the pool and spa industry can lead by design

By Crystal Lengua

PHOTO BY JASON CRAMP

For years, sustainability and “being green” have hovered on the periphery of the pool and spa industry. It was something people mentioned at trade shows, added to brochures, or brought up when a customer asked about energy use and savings. It existed as a good idea, but not always a shared priority... but that has changed.

Across North America (and beyond), sustainability has moved from a marketing message to a design philosophy. The companies making the biggest strides are those that treat being green as a system, not a trend. These businesses have come to understand that being green is not a trend. It is a responsibility. The health of the planet depends on the choices people make, and the industry has a real opportunity to contribute to that solution.

Changing consumer expectations

Homeowners have also helped accelerate this shift. They are more informed, aware of how products are made, and conscious of the costs involved in maintaining a backyard year-round. Today's

consumers still seek comfort, performance, and a space that feels like an escape, but they also prioritize efficiency and durability. They want equipment that does not increase their utility bills. They prefer materials that are both durable and long-lasting. Finally, they look for water-care systems that simplify routines. They desire fewer surprises while feeling that they are making a difference.

When customers opt for greener choices, they do not just purchase a product. They invest in the feeling of contributing to something larger than their own backyards. People like knowing their decisions matter. When a spa uses less energy or a pool system reduces water waste, homeowners take pride in their choices. It provides them with a sense of control and purpose. Psychologically, that is important. When individuals believe their actions have a positive effect, even on a small scale, it deepens their connection to the product and the brand that supplies it. It becomes more than equipment — it becomes a choice they feel good about every time they use it.



Manufacturers review their packaging, warehouse logistics, and freight operations to optimize efficiency.

PHOTO ©DOLGACHOV/BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM

Industry practices are evolving

Manufacturers across North America are also rethinking how products are built from the earliest stages of development.

Some have shifted to spa cabinetry made from recycled or reclaimed materials. Others reduce emissions related to molding and shell production by revisiting older methods and investing in new ones. Companies are also examining how smarter insulation packages, variable-speed pumps (VSPs), and more intuitive automation systems can improve energy profiles without sacrificing the homeowner's overall experience.

These design choices matter. They influence how a product performs not only on day one but also over the next decade.

This idea of "designing for responsibility" is carried through the production process. Manufacturers are review their packaging, warehouse logistics, and freight operations to optimize efficiency. Using lighter, recyclable packaging materials reduces waste and lowers shipping emissions. Improved pallet design enhances distribution efficiency. Modular components simplify repairs and extend product lifespan. These small choices become significant when implemented across an entire product range. This is where sustainability transforms from a concept to a practical reality.

Efficiency extends to the field. Builders and installers influence sustainability in more ways than homeowners realize. Here, sustainability is not always driven by new technology, but often comes from better decisions made at every step of the process. Their choices, such as plumbing runs, equipment placement, circulation rates, cover recommendations, and sanitation methods, all affect

long-term energy consumption. A well-designed system has fewer inefficiencies. Shorter plumbing runs require less effort from pumps. Thoughtful equipment placement protects components and improves airflow. Using a lifter that keeps the cover secure enhances heat retention, reduces heater demand, and supports stable water temperatures.

Retailers and service professionals also play a significant role. Sustainability strengthens when paired with education. When retailers understand the difference between a standard pump and a high-efficiency model, or between basic insulation and a performance insulation package, they can guide customers toward choices that support long-term performance. When service technicians have access to detailed documentation, updated manuals, compatible components, and clear troubleshooting paths, they minimize unnecessary part replacements. A technician who diagnoses correctly saves the homeowner money, reduces waste, and extends the product's lifespan.

Information is a key sustainability tool. Training is also essential. Both are often overlooked.

Distributors: The backbone of sustainable progress

Across the United States, distributors have become the quiet backbone of this movement. They influence sustainability at multiple levels, often in ways that homeowners never see but the industry relies on.

Distributors promote sustainability by:

- Striving to improve inventory flow, managing how products move through the supply chain, reducing delays and unnecessary handling.
- Sharing real-world insights with manufacturers when parts show early failure trends, preventing waste and enhancing design.



Above: Builders and installers influence sustainability in more ways than homeowners often realize. Their choices, such as plumbing runs, equipment placement, circulation rates, cover recommendations, and sanitation methods, all affect long-term energy consumption.

Right: When a spa uses less energy or a pool system reduces water waste, homeowners take pride in their choices.

PHOTOS BY JASON CRAMP



- Identifying installation challenges reported by dealers so training and resources can be updated before problems escalate.
- Consolidating freight into larger, strategic shipments that reduce the number of trucks on the road and lower emissions.
- Reducing transportation impact through efforts to switch from frequent partial loads to well-planned pallets that cut repeated travel cycles.
- Supporting dealer education with accurate product information, sustainability messaging, and updated technical materials.
- Strengthening supply-chain efficiency through coordinated ordering, improved forecasting, and better communication across regions.

These actions generate a quieter, behind-the-scenes sustainability impact that accumulates quickly. A single consolidated shipment can have a significantly lower carbon footprint than multiple partial loads. When distributors operate with efficiency and communication at the forefront, the entire value chain becomes cleaner, smoother, and more sustainable.

Collaboration maximizes sustainability

The industry is built on partnerships. Original equipment manufacturer (OEM) relationships, dealer

networks, service providers, supply-chain operations, and retail connections all play a role. When each part of the chain operates independently, progress slows down. When the chain is aligned, progress speeds up more quickly.

Compatibility exemplifies this well. Manufacturers who design products that integrate seamlessly with existing equipment footprints, bracket placements, or plumbing standards make installation more efficient. This results in fewer modifications and less wasted materials. Additionally, better compatibility decreases shipping frequency because fewer incorrect parts need to be returned or exchanged. Although it may seem straightforward, proper alignment during the design phase has a significant impact on the entire industry.

Transparency aids collaboration

The industry advances further when companies share their learnings and support collective progress.

If a business has no intention of competing in a specific category, there is real value in opening up the opportunity for collaboration. Manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and service teams can exchange ideas, speak openly about what is working, and even plan future improvements together. When information is shared freely without the threat of competition, innovation becomes easier, which in turn strengthens the industry and leads to increased sales and revenue.

Circular design naturally integrates into this kind of partnership. More companies are beginning to think beyond a product's initial sale and focus on the product's entire lifecycle. They are developing spas and components that can be repaired, replaced, or repurposed rather than discarded. Some implement take-back programs, while others add modular panels and internal parts that prolong the system's lifespan. This encourages a shift away from a "build it and discard it" approach toward a loop where materials are reused for a longer period.

Collaboration promotes this shift. When manufacturers share information, service teams can repair more and replace less. When retailers provide feedback on what homeowners value, companies can design products that last longer and perform better. This demonstrates how partnerships support both the environment and customers simultaneously. It truly is a team effort.

From a marketing (and public relations) perspective, this kind of alignment matters more than most people realize. When the entire value chain is united around responsible design, the message becomes consistent, believable, and easy for customers to trust. Brands do not have to “sell” sustainability; they demonstrate it through every touchpoint, from product performance to service support. That kind of clarity builds stronger storytelling, greater loyalty, and a growing reputation (leading to more sales).

Operational sustainability: Moving beyond products

Beyond the products themselves, sustainability encompasses how a business operates. Companies are re-evaluating freight strategies, dealer support models, and warehouse operations. Some are transitioning to paperless workflows, while others are reconfiguring trade show materials to reduce waste. Some are implementing training programs that teach service teams how to communicate the value of sustainability in a way that resonates with real



homeowner concerns without sounding insincere, because they genuinely believe in it. It is also advisable for organizations to produce a year-end sustainability report to highlight their efforts and set clear benchmarks and accountability for future progress.

Currently, there are many ways companies can be more environmentally friendly without altering any products, such as:

A technician who diagnoses correctly saves the homeowner money, reduces waste, and extends the product's lifespan.



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The industry is built on partnerships. Original equipment manufacturers (OEM) relationships, dealer networks, service providers, supply-chain operations, and retail connections all play a role.

1. Optimizing logistics by consolidating shipments, reducing partial loads, and planning efficient routes.
2. Moving manuals, onboarding, and education tools into digital formats.
3. Reusing displays and promotional materials for events and exhibitions.
4. Implementing energy-smart warehouse practices, such as LED lighting and climate-conscious layouts.
5. Offering virtual or hybrid training to minimize unnecessary travel (transportation is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions).

These operational choices may seem minor, but they add up quickly when they become part of a company's daily routines. This is where the conversation naturally shifts from action to leadership. Sustainability has reached a point where merely meeting the minimum requirements is no longer sufficient. Compliance keeps an organization within legal boundaries, but genuine leadership requires going beyond compliance to set higher standards and inspire progress. Regulations move slowly, and the organizations that stand out are those that take the initiative well before being mandated to do so. Leadership in any category comes from understanding the current position and having a clear plan for the desired future.

Starting the journey: Practical steps to leadership

So, where does one begin? A simple starting point is conducting an internal sustainability audit. Companies can make significant advances by:

1. Reviewing internal operations such as freight patterns, office practices, warehouse routines, trade show materials, and training programs to identify quick wins.
2. Using tools like carbon footprint calculators, energy-use assessments, and freight-impact reviews to uncover opportunities that are not immediately obvious.
3. Sending out an anonymous staff survey to gather green ideas directly from those closest to the daily work. Frontline teams often see practical improvements long before leadership does.
4. Hosting a sustainability roundtable where operations, sales, marketing, distribution, and service teams brainstorm realistic next steps together. Even brief sessions can lead to meaningful change.
5. Creating a simple three- to five-year "future impact map" that outlines where the company is now and where it aims to be. The goal is not perfection but rather direction, consistency, and a genuine intent to improve.

Every step forward counts. The key is to start with clarity and commit to steady, attainable progress. A sustainability mindset encourages smarter planning, more consistent performance, and stronger long-term results. It boosts homeowners' confidence, cuts costs across the value chain, and positions the industry as one that thinks ahead rather than reacts under pressure.

In a market where customers are more informed than ever, being intentional about sustainability is not only beneficial for the environment but also good for business. It helps the industry remain relevant, resilient, and respected **PSN**



Crystal Lengua is the vice president of Canadian operations at Cover Valet, bringing 25 years of experience in the pool and spa industry. Widely recognized as a "Power Woman" in her field, she is known for her leadership and many career achievements. Outside the office, Lengua shares her expertise through seminars, trade show presentations, and contributions to trade publications in the pool and spa industry. A York University graduate and advocate for female empowerment, she holds degrees in marketing management, public relations, and corporate communications, along with professional experience in sales, social media marketing, and event management.

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ANCHOR POOL COVER REMAKE PROGRAM

Anchor Industries' Pool Cover Remake Program allows dealers to replace virtually any pool cover, regardless of manufacturer. Existing Anchor covers can often be reproduced from archived drawings linked to the work order number, while covers from other manufacturers can be shipped to Anchor for measurement and duplication.

"The fact that Anchor can remake any cover gives dealers more options to provide the best product for their customers," says Phil St. Germain, general manager of pool covers, shade and awnings. "The process can be completed without the dealer needing to measure the pool, resulting in significant time savings."

According to the company, dealers appreciate the program's simplicity and ability to provide customers with a safe, attractive replacement cover. Replacement mesh and solid covers are backed by warranties of up to 144 months and 120 months.

Anchor Industries Inc. | anchorinc.com



Renovation & Repairs

ADOBE STOCK

TRUPRO RAILS & LADDERS

Aqua Creek Products' TruPro Rails & Ladders are manufactured in Missoula, Mont., using U.S.-sourced stainless steel.

Produced through an ISO 9001:2015-certified process, they provide dependable access and a professional appearance.

Featuring a 600-grit finish, TruPro Rails & Ladders offer a smooth, scratch-resistant surface for aquatic environments. All rails are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant when installed with specified anchors and are available in standard and custom configurations.

"The use of U.S.-origin stainless steel is one of the product line's key advantages," says Marley Cunningham, director of marketing at Aqua Creek Products. "The material provides consistent alloy composition, certified traceability, and corrosion resistance designed to withstand demanding aquatic environments."

Customers frequently cite the products' appearance, durability, finish quality, and reliable lead times. TruPro Rails & Ladders are backed by a three-year limited warranty.

Aqua Creek Products | aquacreek.com



Z POOLFORM

Z Poolform is a reusable PVC form used to create decorative concrete copings for pools.

Interchangeable Form Liners will allow for a variety of different edge profiles and textures not previously possible with pool coping forms.

Z Poolforms can be used with vinyl liner, fiberglass, or concrete pools. It attaches to the pool wall without the need for tie wires.

The forms are not stripped until the concrete has cured, meaning there is no need to finish or dress the edge while the concrete is still green, saving time and money.

"Any pool builder or concrete contractor who does at least one pool deck a year will love this product," says Dario Baldoni, the company's vice president of marketing and technology. "The high level of relief and detail created with the textured form liners can be matched to the stamp, resulting in a realistic stone look."

Concrete Countertop Solutions | concretecountertopsolutions.com





THE FILTER FIBER STUFF

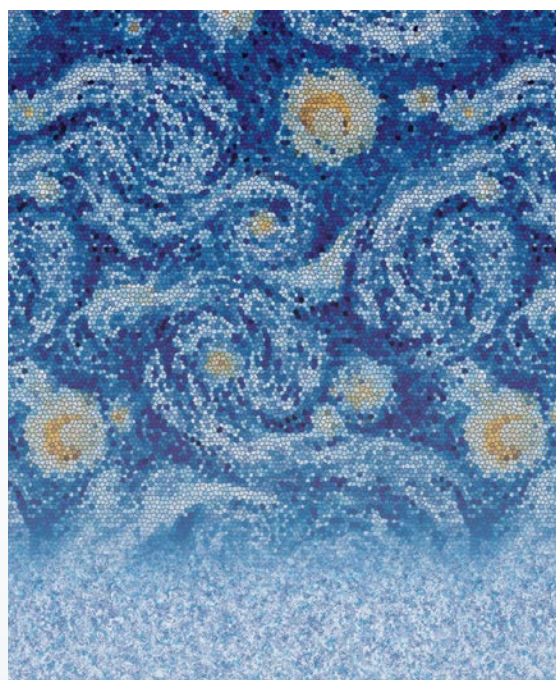
The Filter Fiber Stuff is a safe filter media that can be used as an aid to cartridge and sand filters, and serves as a direct replacement for diatomaceous earth (DE) filters.

When used as a safe alternative/replacement media 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 nontoxic, biodegradable, and can be backwashed safely. It can help extend filter runs and reduce clogging in filtration systems.

"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."

Jack's Magic Products | jacksmagic.com



PEGASUS PRODUCTS

Pegasus' inground and aboveground vinyl liners are made using virgin-grade vinyl that contains ultraviolet (UV) inhibitors as well as fungicide and biocide protectors. Using computer-aided design (CAD) and cutting, Pegasus can customize its liners to fit its customers' pools perfectly.

Pegasus Products | pegasus-products.com



2-INCH GROUT PLANT

Quikspray's 2-Inch Grout Plant is a heavy-duty pumping system designed for placing thick, abrasive materials with consistent flow. Suitable for grouts, mortars, repair materials, epoxies, and cementitious mixes, the unit is built to handle demanding construction, repair, and grouting applications. The system can also be equipped with a spray gun for shotcrete and other spray-applied materials.

"The all-in-one design eliminates the need for separate equipment, which helps simplify setup and operation on the jobsite," says Leah Barker, sales and marketing representative at Quikspray. "It is also easy to clean, making it a practical solution for contractors working with demanding grout, repair, and shotcrete applications."

Customer feedback has highlighted the Grout Plant's versatility, particularly for repair projects. Users describe it as the ideal in-between pump—offering more capability than a patch pump without the size and complexity of a boom pump.

Quikspray Inc. | quikspray.com

RENOLIT TOUCH PVC MEMBRANES

RENOLIT's TOUCH collection of reinforced PVC membranes is designed for pool renovations and new construction projects. The 80-mil-thick membrane is made from two layers of flexible PVC reinforced with an interwoven polyester mesh, creating a waterproofing system that functions independently of the pool shell.

Available in seven designs, the TOUCH collection replicates the appearance of natural materials such as marble, slate, and sand through printed patterns and 3D relief finishes. The membranes provide a continuous waterproofing layer while accommodating minor substrate imperfections and structural movement. All seven designs feature Class C slip-resistant properties.

According to RENOLIT, builders and homeowners value the product's ability to break the replastering and repainting cycle of pool maintenance while providing a long-lasting interior finish. The membrane is also a popular choice in freeze-thaw regions.

RENOLIT offers on-site training and support and backs the TOUCH collection with a 15-year warranty.

RENOLIT | renolit.com



RICO ROCK GROTTO & SLIDE COMBO

Rico Rock's Grotto & Slide Combo combines cast-concrete artificial rocks with slides to help pool professionals transform existing pools. The modular water-feature kits, along with glass-fibre-reinforced concrete (GFRC) panels, provide a predetermined finished appearance while helping builders maintain predictable timelines and labor costs.

The system uses steel-reinforced artificial rock components that are lighter in weight and less expensive than natural stone. Builders can use the rocks to fill space around, behind, and beneath slide structures, while matching artificial rock stair systems provide access to the top of the slide.

"These rock-and-slide combinations provide a natural setting around the pool that is aesthetically pleasing and super fun for swimmers," says Bruce Riley, managing director of RicoRock Inc. "Adding a rock and slide feature can dramatically renovate any pool and give it a true resort feel in any backyard."

RicoRock Inc. | ricorock.com



HS-1 SL

Deck-O-Seal HS-1 SL is a one-part, self-leveling hybrid sealant, developed with silyl-modified polymer (SMP) technology. It cures under the influence of atmospheric moisture to form a medium modulus sealant with excellent adhesive properties and resistance to aging and weathering.

HS-1 SL is designed for horizontal expansion joints in pool decks, patios, and sidewalks. It is self-leveling and does not need to be tooled.

HS-1 SL is packaged in a convenient, easy-to-use 32-ounce pouch, eliminating the need for a caulking gun required when using cartridges. The pouch fits comfortably in the hand for easy application.

"The HS-1 SL has become a fan favorite very quickly," says Glenn Tench, vice president, sales and marketing for W.R. Meadows. "This new

innovative pouch really makes a difference in the ease of application."

W.R. Meadows/Deck-O-Seal | deckoseal.com

Business Tools & Software

HAYWARD PROAPP

Hayward ProApp allows pool professionals to configure, monitor, and troubleshoot Omni controls from virtually anywhere.

Available for Apple and Android devices, the app streamlines service operations and reduces time onsite.

Using default settings and saved templates, pool pros can speed up configuration and improve consistency. Remote access enables technicians to monitor pool status, make real-time adjustments, and resolve issues faster.

The app's remote configuration and dashboard tools allow users to work from virtually anywhere, reducing site visits and improving efficiency.

Hayward Pool Products | hayward.com

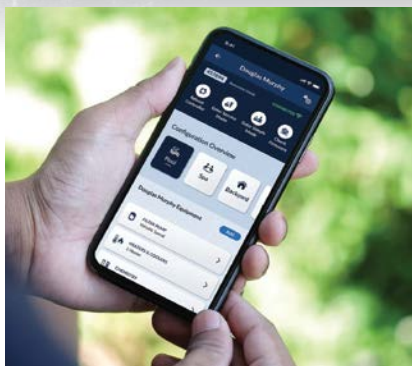


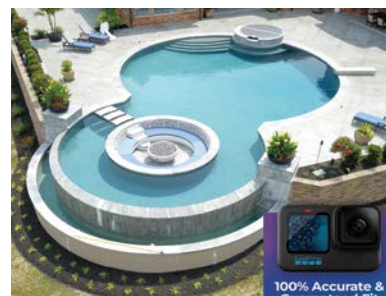
IMAGE-LOC KIT WITH GOPRO

The IMAGE-LOC with GoPro Kit simplifies safety-cover measuring by eliminating the time-consuming manual process, says LOOP-LOC CEO LeeAnn Donaton.

Using a GoPro camera, IMAGE-LOC captures accurate measurements in minutes and ensures a guaranteed fit. The one-person system simplifies measuring and eliminates the guesswork associated with traditional methods.

Additionally, this system is drone-compatible, providing even greater flexibility and accessibility for pools with unique layouts or hard-to-reach areas.

LOOP-LOC | looploc.com



LYON FINANCIAL

Lyon Financial is a leader in unsecured financing for pools and outdoor living projects, with over 47 years of experience and more than 800,000 customers.

"Since 1979, we've partnered with builders nationwide to offer fast, flexible financing designed to help close more deals," says Carla Barrera, Lyon Financial's director of business development, marketing, and advertising.

"With low fixed rates, terms up to 30 years, and no collateral required, we make it easy for homeowners to say yes. And we don't stop at pools—our financing options cover everything needed to create a complete backyard oasis, including spas, patios, outdoor kitchens, fencing, and more."

"Financing isn't just a perk—it's the builder's competitive edge," she adds. "With low monthly payments and long terms, builders close more deals, upsell bigger projects, and reach clients who might otherwise hesitate."

Lyon Financial | lyonfinancial.net





MARKETING SERVICES PROGRAM FOR DEALERS

RB Retail & Service Solutions has launched a marketing services program designed exclusively for its dealer network. The initiative helps dealers navigate digital marketing by providing access to professional support tailored to the pool and spa industry.

The program begins with a strategic review of each dealer's goals, target audience, budget, and branding. From there, RB Marketing Services provides hands-on assistance with search engine optimization (SEO), blog content creation, social media management, and digital advertising campaigns.

The company's vice president, Rachael Pritz, says dealers are responding positively to having marketing support from a supplier that understands the unique demands, timelines, and seasonality of the pool industry.

Online demonstrations are available by appointment.

RB Retail & Service Solutions | rbretailandservicesolutions.com



THE SERVICE PROGRAM POOL SOFTWARE

Westrom Software's The Service Program is a pool service management platform designed to help service companies improve efficiency, organization, and profitability. The software combines routing, billing, invoicing, customer management, service scheduling, and reporting into a single centralized system.

Field technicians can use the mobile app to complete service stops, capture photos, record chemical readings, update service checklists, and communicate with the office in real time. Office staff can manage recurring service schedules, optimize routes, track customer history, process invoices, and monitor technician activity from a single dashboard. The platform also integrates with QuickBooks Desktop and QuickBooks Online to simplify accounting and reduce duplicate data entry.

"Customers consistently tell us that The Service Program helps them become more organized, improve communication between the office and field technicians, and save significant administrative time each week," says Bill Westrom, president of Westrom Software. "Many pool service companies also appreciate having routing, billing, service history, invoicing, and QuickBooks integration all within one platform rather than using multiple disconnected systems."

The Service Program is offered as a month-to-month software-as-a-service (SaaS) subscription that includes ongoing software updates and technical support.

Westrom Software | theserviceprogram.com



ACCRETE SOFTWARE SUITE

United Aqua Group's Accrete software suite is designed specifically for pool builders and service companies. Drawing on decades of experience in field service, construction, and operational software, the platform helps businesses improve visibility, efficiency, and control without adding unnecessary complexity.

The suite includes RenewalSmart for contract renewals, RouteSmart for scheduling and route planning, ConnectSmart for customer communications, ConstructSmart for project visibility and profitability tracking, and PoolSmart FSM for field service management. Together, these applications help pool companies protect recurring revenue, improve operational efficiency, keep customers informed, and gain real-time insight into business performance.

"The feedback we hear most often is that our customers gain visibility they simply did not have before," says Craig Goodson, president and CEO of United Aqua Group. "Owners and managers appreciate being able to identify issues earlier, make decisions with greater confidence, and spend less time reacting to operational surprises."

More than 15 pool companies, including approximately 10 United Aqua Group member organizations, currently use Accrete solutions. Each customer is supported by a dedicated account manager and a 24/7 monitored support channel.

United Aqua Group | accrete.ai

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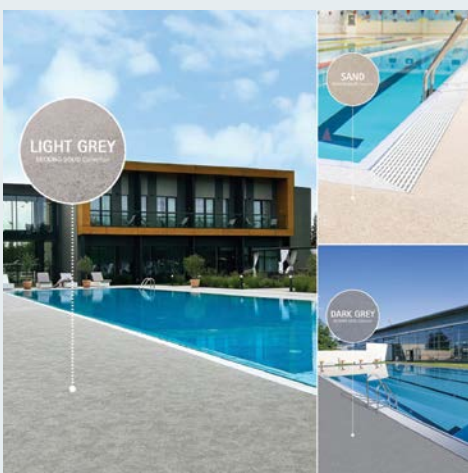
419-732-2611 <https://quikspray.com/>



CCEI

The new Antea VS manages variable speed pumps by seamlessly integrating them into CCEI Vigipool ecosystem. Simply plug the antenna into a 12-15 VAC (50-60 Hz) outlet, then connect to the pump and within minutes you have full control on your smartphone. The system automatically adjusts pump room speed based on real-time environmental conditions.

ccei-pool.com/us



RENOLIT

RENOLIT SOLID is a reinforced PVC membrane engineered to renovate and waterproof decks at residential and commercial aquatic facilities. At 80-mil thick, it delivers a durable, slip-resistant surface that addresses the most common deck challenges: cracks, chips, peeling paint, and more. Now available in Sand, Light Grey, and Dark Grey.

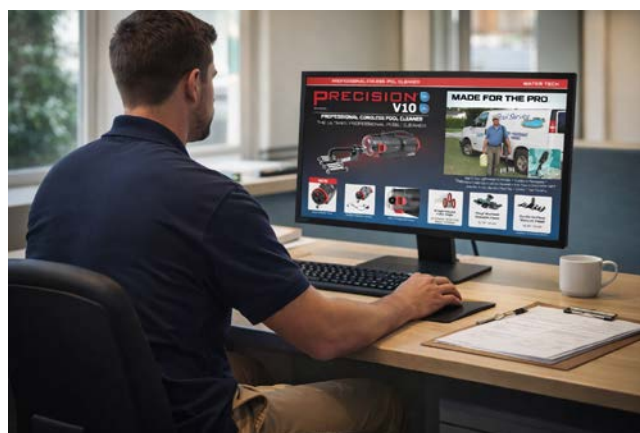
renolit-alkorplan.com



KING TECHNOLOGY

FROG's prefilled FROG Algae Gone Drop 'N Go pods treat and cure yellow and green algae outbreaks. They're a quick, simple solution for eliminating algae in pools up to 20,000 and 30,000 gallons. Just drop a pod into the skimmer basket and it dispenses into the water within 24 hours. When the water is clear, use 1 pod every 90 days to prevent outbreaks.

kingtechnology.com

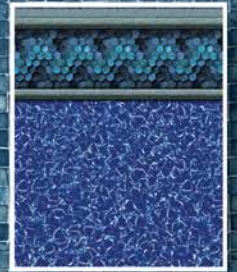
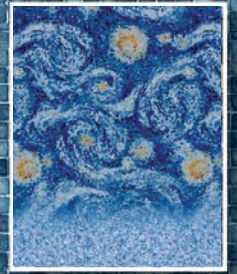


WATER TECH CORP.

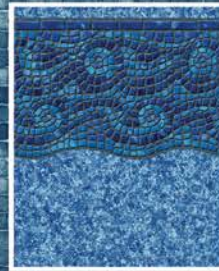
Water Tech Corp. has released its 2026 product catalog as an interactive online flipbook —available 24/7. The 20-page catalog is designed as a comprehensive ordering and service reference for pool professionals. It features detailed product descriptions, SKUs, UPC-12 codes, and part numbers alongside full replacement part breakdowns.

online.flippingbook.com/view/961943389

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