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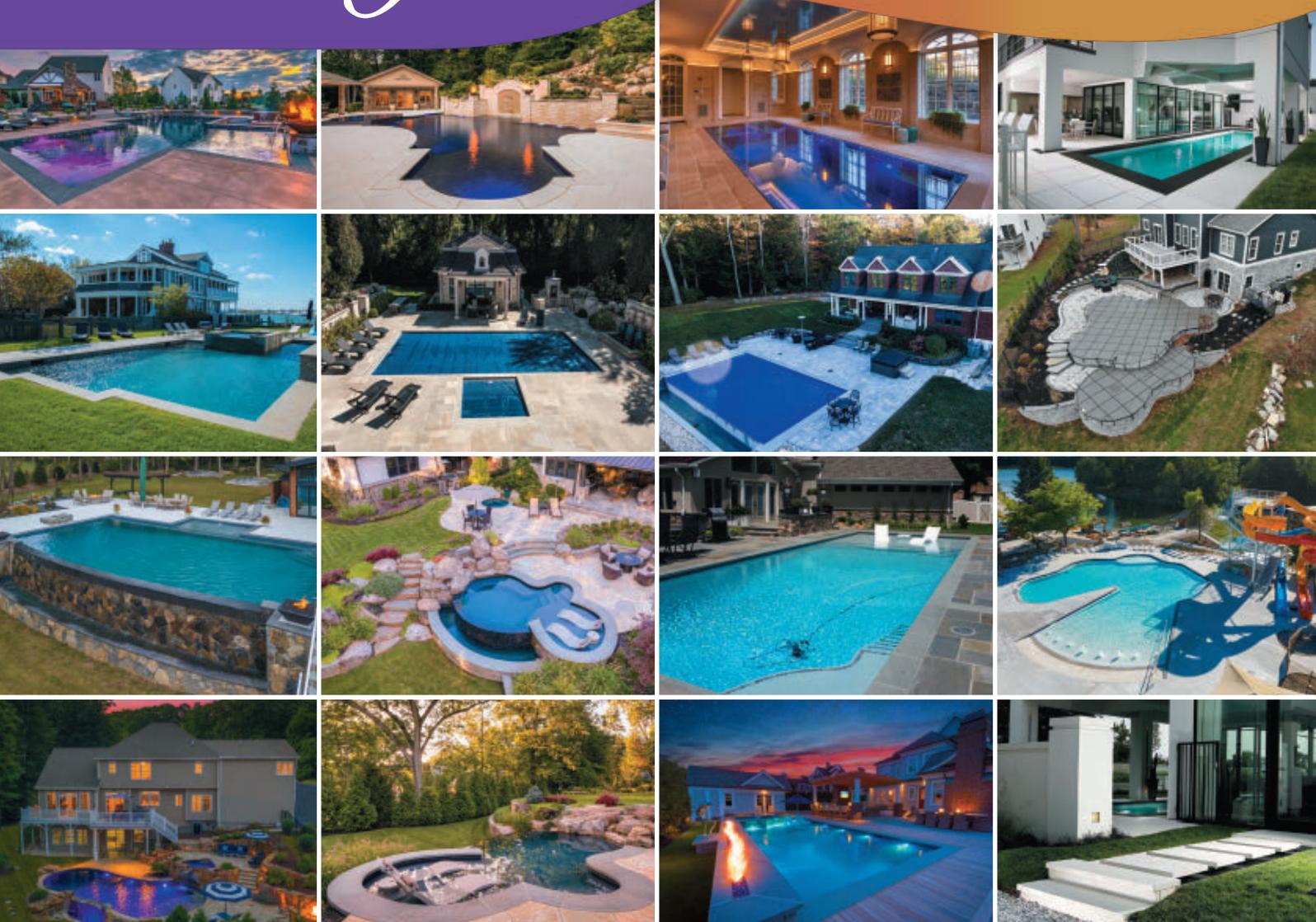
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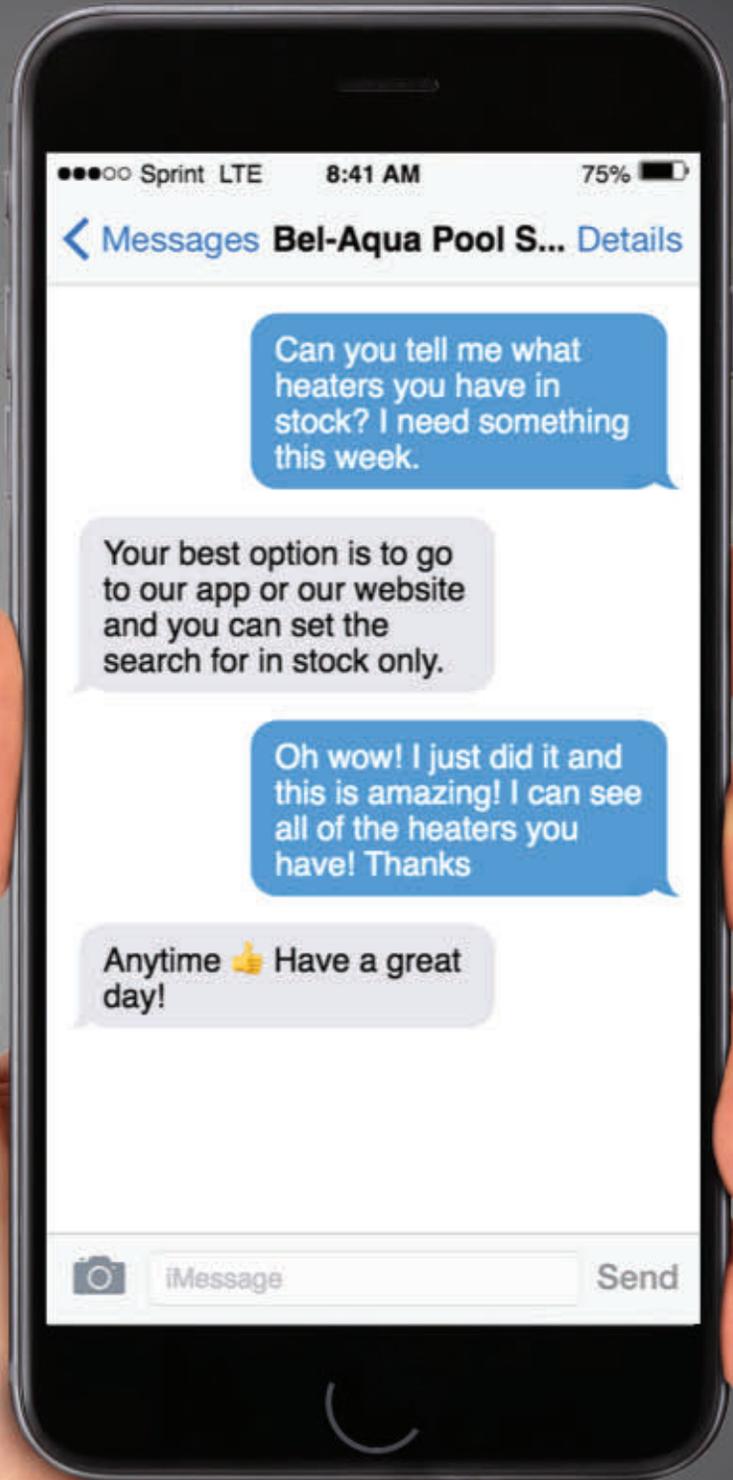
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the Edge contents

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features

Silver Lining: Reimagined Retail Delivers Long-term Benefits 8

As a result (of the pandemic), savvy merchandisers are taking the opportunity to renovate their retail stores during the slower months.

by *Jamie Novak*

Why More Business Doesn't Always Mean More Profits 12

Without profitability, an increase in business just takes more of your company's time and resources. Tracking your profitability throughout the year is key to running a successful business.

by *Mike Leone*

Thinking Strategically in a Constantly Changing World 14

How do you decide where, when and how to move forward in a period of epic change?

by *Jay Forte*

Critical Thinking for Small Business Owners 18

Through practice, determination and a conscious effort, you can begin to retrain your mind to think critically.

by *Robert P. Kane and Mark Kremen*

Celebrating You! 2020 Outstanding Achievement Award Winners 20

Installing Automatic Pool Covers on Fiberglass Pools 24

As fiberglass pools continue to gain market share in the pool industry, builders and auto-cover installers are learning to adapt construction methods to adjust to their unique properties.

by *Mike Shadoan*

Diving Into a Pool Inspection Business 28

No matter what part of the industry you work in, residential pool inspections make a great addition to your business.

by *Rick English*

Service in the Time of Corona: Lessons Learned in the Field 32

Staying up with trends and cultivating ideas on how you can keep up with inevitable change will be crucial to your success.

by *Julie Kazdin*

Ask Not What Your Chlorine Can Do for You, But What You Can Do for Your Chlorine 34

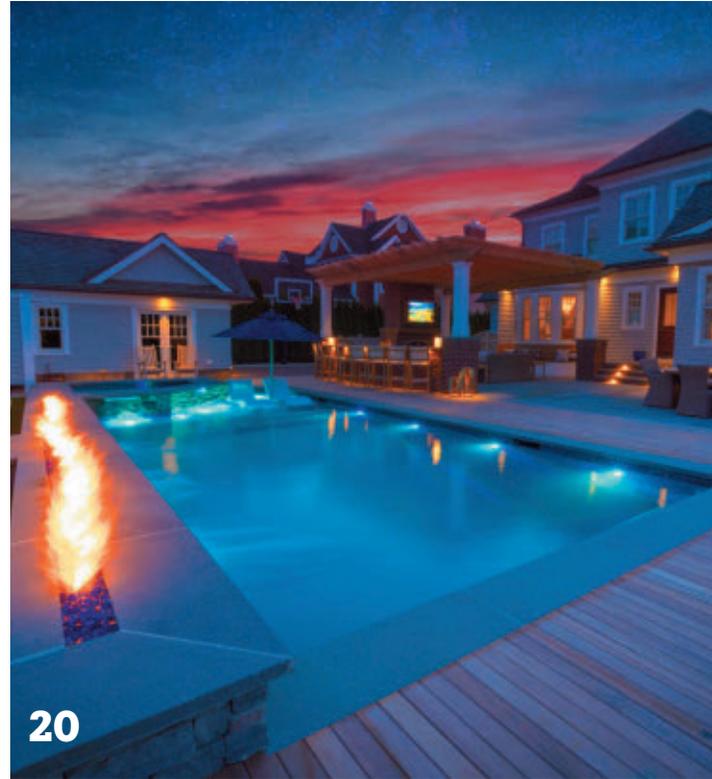
Pool construction is exploding, and the demand for chlorine is at an all-time high. Getting the most out of your chlorine is imperative.

by *John "Legend" Bokor*

Modernize Your Approach to Leak Detection 38

In today's modern service industry, technicians can perform leak detections from outside the pool, with superior accuracy and precision in line and leak locating.

by *Darren Merlob*



On our cover:

Catch a glimpse of the winners of the 2020 Outstanding Achievement Awards and get ready to be part of the Awards Celebration at the 2021 Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE!

departments

The President's Message 7

Index of Advertisers 40

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New Year. New Challenges.

New Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE!

by Amy M. Rullo

WHEN JANUARY ROLLS around, I know it's time to make my annual trip to Atlantic City for The Pool & Spa Show. I bring my whole team with me to get the training they need for the upcoming season. I'm able to meet with vendors and get up-to-speed on new products and what is happening in the industry.

And most importantly, I get to connect with you. The chance to come together as an industry, build our relationships and enjoy each other's company is something I look forward to each year.

As was so much of 2020, the Pool & Spa Show will be different this year. But I'm so proud that the Northeast Spa & Pool Association has gotten creative to make sure we can all still experience the show. NESPA has taken everything that we love about the show and delivered it right to our offices and homes.

What I'm most excited about at the Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE is that this event will break the mold for virtual events by creating new, real-time ways to engage with each other, including live-streamed training featuring hands-on demos and real-time conversations with industry leaders. And don't forget the fun! The Show EXPERIENCE will have a work hard, play hard mindset, which is exactly what we need after 2020! View all the details on this year's Pool & Spa Show Experience at www.ThePoolSpaShow.com.

The show has meant so much to my career. Over the years, I've expanded my industry connections and knowledge. I'm grateful to have the chance to provide those same resources to my team this year.

NESPA is thinking outside the box to create an experience, and companies should, too. Consider new ways to get staff energized and involved. Think differently about this year's show experience. With no travel costs, now is the time to include even more employees and give them the chance to show you what they can do with this new opportunity. Take advantage of all the fun and entertaining events offered by the Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE to create team-building experiences that will get your company ready for the upcoming season.

Creating a culture of learning isn't a once a year exercise at our show, but a year-long focus. NESPA's Professional Training Institute builds on the momentum started at the show to keep giving us opportunities to grow and learn throughout the year. When you add the dozens of programs offered by our chapters, NESPA members have access to everything they need to succeed in 2021. Check out the full schedule of upcoming events offered by NESPA and our chapters at www.NESPAPool.org.

Not a member of NESPA? Now is the time to take the leap and become part of the industry's leading association. The year ahead will undoubtedly be challenging, and I'm so glad that I can depend on NESPA to keep me informed about government actions that impact our business. Things can change quickly, and NESPA is always there with the latest news and what it means for my business.

You can learn more about NESPA membership at NESPA's booth at the Pool & Spa EXPERIENCE. Staff will be there to answer any questions you might have and walk you through all the benefits the association offers. You can also join today by reaching out to us at 609.689.9111 or by going to www.NESPAPool.org.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon at The Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE! |

Amy M. Rullo is the 2020-2021 president of the Northeast Spa & Pool Association.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AQUATECH.

Silver Lining: Reimagined Retail Delivers Long-term Benefits

by Jamie Novak

MANY SPECIALTY RETAILERS agree that the pandemic forced them to rethink the layout and design of their stores. As a result, savvy merchandisers are taking the opportunity to renovate their retail stores during the slower months. Taking the time to strategically plan the showroom's layout so retail spaces remain attractive while meeting social distancing protocols can be extremely beneficial for business owners. Although it has been a forced renovation for many, pool and spa retailers agree that their store renovations will have lasting, positive effects on their business's efficiency and profitability.

USING DISPLAY RACKS AND CHEMICAL BUCKETS

One of the first decisions to be made is how to keep everyone safe yet comfortable in the store – both employees and customers. Many retailers have found creative ways to use display racks and chemical buckets to create social distancing while still making it easy and pleasant to sell to their customers. For example, a 4 ft. long display rack can create a natural social distancing prop. By positioning these racks at the store entrance and placing social distancing 'dots' on either end of the rack at 6 feet apart, store staff can comfortably speak to customers while staying safely apart. Putting the rack between the sales team member and the client keeps things from feeling awkward.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALL SEASONS POOL AND SPA.

Although it has been a forced renovation for many, pool and spa retailers agree that their store renovations will have lasting, positive effects on their business's efficiency and profitability.

Other retailers have been using chemical buckets to reconfigure their showroom to keep customers socially distant while moving through the store efficiently. It was common in the past to have chemicals placed at the back of the store – much like how grocery stores keep the milk. However, many are now using chemical buckets and signage throughout the store to help ensure social distancing. For example, chlorine buckets can be especially helpful in creating aisles for the flow of customers in and out of the store. Having social distancing markers on the floor inside and outside the store and signage will help ensure safety and the smooth flow of traffic.

MOVE WATER TESTING DROP-OFF

One of the most valuable services provided by pool retailers is water testing. The water testing station's placement and efficiency are central to any retail store's renovation during this pandemic. Crowding around the water station counter is no longer an option. As retailers examine their renovations, some are opting to create a water-testing drop-off and pick up stations outside of the retail store. Retailers are finding that an exterior water-drop-off area can be especially helpful by providing a place for customers to drop off their water samples, label them and leave them to be analyzed without worrying about getting too close to other people or having to wait in line. Consider also offering new test jars for customers to take as they leave the 'drop zone.'

By using this system, once water samples are tested, your staff can send out an email with the results, including links to the products they should purchase to balance their water – which they can then order directly from an online store for delivery or pick-up.

Not everyone has a space for exterior water drop-offs, but other retailers are considering separating or moving water testing areas far from the checkout counter. This, too, will significantly improve the flow and spacing of customers. In fact, doing so allows retailers to re-evaluate how to strategically place products to sell while being helpful with social distancing.

To keep the water testing "line" appealing and intentional, consider adding a new display rack that promotes your newest products or a product that is particularly important to your customers. For example, if your region was plagued by chronic phosphate issues this past season, place phosphate removal products and test kits on the rack flanking the water testing line – and keep the rack fully stocked – making the sale of these products even more successful.

REMOVE CLUTTER, PRIORITIZE PRODUCTS, FIND NEW SPACE

De-cluttering and prioritizing where and when products are placed is even more important now that space is truly at a premium. De-cluttering makes a huge difference to customers; it makes them feel calmer and more likely to make a purchase. You don't want your clients to feel claustrophobic when trying to shop, so spacing products out really helps keep things calm and makes it easier to put social distancing markers throughout the store, just because more space is available.

Renovating a retail store includes being more deliberate about product placement and the constant movement of sale items and timely products. De-cluttering a retail store might also reveal that some products should not get as much space or maybe should not be on the showroom floor during certain times of the year.

Don't overlook the possibility that you may need to completely remove products to create the necessary space for social distancing. Look at profit margins by product. You may find, for example, that toys and maintenance equipment are not big movers, so consider removing them entirely from the retail floor to help open up space in the showroom. In some cases, free up space by moving products off the showroom floor completely if they are not appropriate to the weather or the time of year. Consider moving bigger ticket items front and center. Don't be afraid to continue to move products and displays on a routine basis to keep spaces open for social distancing and keep things fresh for your customers.

GET STARTED

Despite the extra work and chaotic conditions, strategic retail renovations will make your retail store more dynamic and appealing to customers. Because customers are visiting your store less often, having a positive experience while shopping is imperative. Some retailers are already saying that they believe their new, more open retail layout is helping their sales closing rates. In hindsight, some retailers think people might have felt more pressured in the past and unable to make a purchasing decision if the store was more crowded. Having a more open, calm, peaceful showroom and/or possibly providing a 'personal shopper' to help them through the store makes consumers feel more comfortable and relaxed when making a purchase decision. This is especially true for customers who are now interested in making just one visit, stocking up for the season and maybe visiting your store less. Don't wait. Get started now! |



Jamie Novak is a brand manager at BioLab, focusing on Natural Chemistry, SeaKlear, and Aqua Pill specialty chemicals. She has more than 15 years of pool industry experience and previously worked in both sales and marketing for Newell Rubbermaid. Novak can be reached via email at jamie.novak@biolabinc.com.

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Why More Business Doesn't Always Mean More Profits

by Mike Leone

IF YOU'RE LIKE most pool companies, this year brought an upswing in business, and possibly even more business than you wanted or could handle. Business was up, but were your profits, too? Without profitability, an increase in business just takes more of your company's time and resources.

Tracking your profitability throughout the year is key to running a successful business. It's not something to put off until the end of the year when it's too late to make meaningful changes. Fortunately, there are ways you can monitor and impact your profitability, leaving no doubt that all your hard work was worth it at year's end.

Many company owners have a natural gut feeling about their profitability

even if they don't know their exact numbers. They can generally sense if the company is running well or needs some adjustments. But that gut feeling should be backed up by real numbers, and the good news is that this type of tracking is not difficult. We can group expenses and income into various categories to gain a simple understanding of profitability or performance that leads to profitability. This provides concrete insights with minimal effort, especially during busy times, ensuring your company is trending in the right direction.

After working with hundreds of pool companies, I have found several methods to improve profitability. For example, many companies are aware of their largest profitability roadblocks,

yet they ignore them, building tasks and processes around them instead of solving the root problem. Not only does the problem remain, but working around it leads to inefficiencies that impact profitability.

We recommend the simple "5-Why" method of understanding the core problem, addressing the root cause and solving it. This approach means you drill down through the problem, with each answer forming the next question until you can identify the root cause.

Let's try a simple example: You know that your profitability is taking a major hit because your crews chronically start their days late. **Why?** Because they have to wait for the route list from the manager. **Why?**

Using the right tools and technology can save significant operational hours, and the marginal cost is a no-brainer.

Your manager can't create the schedule in advance. He has to wait until the morning when he knows about the availability of parts. **Why?** Your company lacks an inventory system, so someone has to physically check part availability before the manager can finalize the schedule.

In this scenario, it only took three "Why" questions to see that the issue with crews getting out on time is actually an inventory tracking issue. This exercise typically takes between three and five "Whys" to find the core problem. Solving core issues and not surface issues will likely solve multiple problems with one solution. Just like trying to clean a pool efficiently, we provide the tools that help your business operate more efficiently, leading to more sustainable profitability with the least amount of time and effort.

Many pool companies nationwide are challenged by the same issues. With so many tools, apps and programs available, it's easy to reduce the time needed for office-related tasks. Yet, it's essential to be selective about what technology you use because the wrong tool can make any job less efficient quickly. Reduced efficiency is why we often see many pool companies sticking with inefficient manual processes.

Using the right tools and technology can save significant operational hours,

and the marginal cost is a no-brainer. Beyond pool company-specific software, there are other tools to consider:

- Messaging and communication
- Customer intake signup forms
- Emailed or texted service reports

Companies often don't realize how easy it is to adopt a new app or software to increase their efficiency and profits.

Pricing and invoicing strategies have a significant impact on profit. It is essential to consider the pros and cons of simple, flat-rate pricing, service + chemical pricing, autopay, pre-pay, recurring pay, and nearly all the other ways that pool companies invoice and collect revenue.

For example, if your pricing structure includes service cost plus parts/chemicals costs, accurate tracking of any parts and chemicals used is critical. But we've found many owners admit that they are not accurately recording these costs, which hurts profitability long term, and sometimes significantly. Does it make sense to go to a flat rate pricing system? Does it make sense to devote time and resources to tracking and record-keeping? How much money are we leaving on the table by "donating" parts that were supposed to be invoiced?

There is no right or wrong answer to anything mentioned here, but thinking through this process will pay off in the long run. At this year's Pool

& Spa Show EXPERIENCE, I'll share behind the scenes information of what other pool companies do, from pricing to operations to invoicing and more. It will make an impact on your business, improve your profitability, and help it grow as the industry continues to boom. |



Mike Leone is the founder and president of Pool Office Manager, an independent software development company bred from a pool service company unable to find functional software. His team continues to improve Pool Office Manager and implement it for companies looking to transform their businesses. Mike is a frequent presenter at the Pool & Spa Show and will be part of the 2021 Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE.

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Thinking Strategically in a Constantly Changing World

by Jay Forte

AS THIS PAST year has proven, the world can – and does – change on a dime. You can wake up one morning and find that much of what you planned to do no longer makes sense. Perhaps you were building or developing something that is suddenly no longer in demand. Or perhaps you find yourself presented with a dynamic opportunity to expand a portion of your business, offer a new product or take advantage of talent that was previously unavailable. How

do you decide where, when and how to move forward in a period of epic change?

Successful organizations build a strategic plan that is responsive; it defines *what* it wants to accomplish, but allows for flexibility and adaptability in *how* to achieve it, knowing that so much of the world and workplace is uncertain. It isn't uncertain just because of COVID-19. It is uncertain because we operate in a global marketplace

where politics, weather and social circumstances from around the world can affect our supply chain or influence our customers' buying decisions. We must be aware of what is going on around us and be flexible enough to shift when circumstances demand it.

This is now the new normal: flexible, responsive and adaptive. But to be this efficiently and successfully, every organization needs to build a solid strategic plan. The starting point is to establish your goalposts.

THE GOALPOST MODEL

Visualize two goalposts. The right goalpost is your objective for the organization, what you want to achieve. This could include, for example, 2021 sales targets, percentage growth, bottom line or various key objectives such as creating an extraordinary customer service response or remarkable employee experience.

The left goalpost is where you are now, your current performance. Gaining clarity of the areas of your business that are functioning well and the areas that need attention will provide you with a clear understanding of your starting point. Without this clarity, you can't create a truly meaningful and flexible strategic response because you don't know what is and is not working in your business.

Knowing your goalposts (what you want to achieve and your current performance) lets you see the gap between them. How you want to close this gap is your strategic plan. This is where your plan must be responsive and flexible because the factors and environments affecting your organization's performance will change.

Let's get our arms around these goalposts to understand better how they can help you create a strategic response in 2021.

REVIEWING YOUR ORGANIZATION

The purpose of defining your left goalpost is to force you to intentionally review where your organization is today.

This helps you identify what's working well (and what you should therefore do more of) and what's not working (worthy of improving as a possible component of your strategic plan).

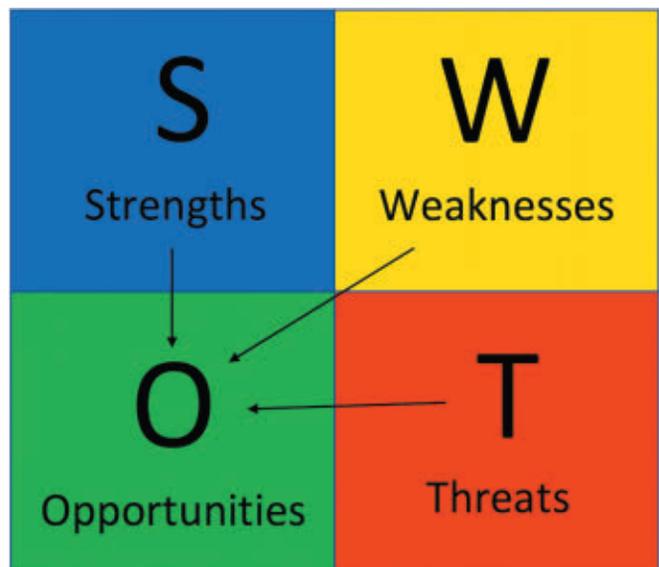
So, how do you review your current organization? The conventional strategic model to do this is called a SWOT Analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Strengths refer to the core abilities or success attributes of the organization. Maybe it's your talent's quality and expertise, your position in your market, your buying effectiveness, your remarkable service response to customers or anything else that leads to a competitive advantage or key success abilities.

Weaknesses refer to the organization's challenge areas; basically, these are areas that need attention. This could be breaks or failures in the customer experience, employee turnover, buying effectiveness or poor leadership, just to name a few. Whatever you identify as an area for improvement will need to be addressed to achieve your organization's goals successfully.

Threats are external factors that can negatively affect the organization. These are generally things you may not have direct control over or that are realistically hard to predict, but their presence impacts your business. These could include things such as COVID-19, a drought, new legislation that affects the pool industry, a drowning in a pool, a low unemployment rate (hard to find talent), the departure of your best employee or the bankruptcy of a key supplier. You will need to stay informed to be aware of them and have a plan to manage or respond to them. Left unattended, they can stop you from achieving your goals.

Opportunities come from using your strengths, improving your weaknesses and mitigating your threats. Opportunities help you start to think differently about how you can close the gap between where



you are and what you want to achieve. To do this part of the SWOT analysis well, you need to pay attention to the details of every aspect of your business. Know your people, operations, customers and suppliers. Know your strengths, weaknesses and threats. Understanding your organization and seeing a clear picture of where it is creates the guidance you need to move forward to achieve your goals.

As you're working through the SWOT analysis, try to avoid letting yourself get caught up in seeing only what's not working or committing to only one plan or approach to work toward your organization's goals. Instead, stay focused on what you want to achieve (goals) and allow yourself flexibility in how to achieve it. Know your strengths in each area of your business so that you know what you can rely on and lead with. Work on correcting or improving weaknesses or anything that will create a challenge. Seeing them and knowing them will help you be more flexible, adaptable and responsive. With this information, you can move more confidently in any direction that makes sense to achieve your goals.

Challenging times require organizations to be more precise about who they are, what they do well and where they want to go. As 2021 begins, spend time

understanding your strengths, weaknesses and threats. Review all areas of your organization, particularly your leadership, your employees, your customers your marketing/social presence, your sales approach, your products/services and your suppliers. Get clear about what is true for you, particularly what you can rely on and build from within your organization. Develop the specific steps (i.e., tactics) to move from where you are to what you want to achieve. Check them regularly and adjust them as the world around you changes. Knowing your goalposts and being mindful, adaptable and responsive will prepare you to navigate the constant changes and achieve your goals confidently. |



Jay Forte, MBA, CPC, GCC, ELI-MP, a former financial executive, is now a business and motivational speaker, certified workplace and CEO coach, author and nationally ranked thought leader. As president and founder of The Forte Factor LLC, he provides talent and strength-based tools to help people and organizations achieve extraordinary results. Visit www.ThePoolSpaShow.com to learn more about his session at the 2021 Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE.

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Critical Thinking for Small Business Owners

by Robert P. Kane and Mark Kremen

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS can play an important role in making decisions, conducting business and processing information. These skills can help you question basic assumptions, look at situations through a different prism and grow as a stronger, more decisive leader.

Two important questions worth exploring are:

What is critical thinking? One definition of critical thinking is a disciplined process of analyzing, reviewing and exploring ideas through an organized process; it is taking thinking to a new level. Everyone, hopefully, uses their thinking skills all day long. But too often our thinking is on auto-pilot and we take an easy way out. Critical thinking moves us away from the routine thinking process and allows us to engage in a more robust form of thinking.

What are some of the key behaviors that comprise critical thinking? We all have the potential to be critical thinkers. We can share some of the behaviors and skills needed to develop critical thinking skills within the business world. Here are the top eight skills and behaviors:

1. CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Our assumptions are based on several factors and are developed from our first-hand experiences, education, upbringing, culture and how we view the world. When confronted with a situation that engages our thought process, such as reacting and activating our thinking processes, we almost automatically engage our assumptions. Examples: a person lives in a particular zip code, then they must be rich; an individual graduated from an Ivy League college, then they must be brilliant. These assumptions are developed



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over time. In fact, many of our assumptions may not be accurate or are build on false premises. As critical thinkers, we start with a fresh perspective and take the facts as they are presented, and our assumptions are put to the side.

2. GATHER INFORMATION

A part of the critical thinking process is gathering as much information as possible. The more information a person processes, the better they will be able to analyze and decide. Effective ways to collect information are through observation of actions, experiences you have had, reflection on events and communication received from multiple sources.

3. ASK QUESTIONS

What kinds of questions do you ask when you begin your critical thinking process? It is crucial to get out of your comfort zone and be willing to ask questions that will probe beyond the surface. These types of questions should be open-ended and designed to dig deeper into specific topics.

4. LISTEN

Once you ask questions, how good of a listener are you? Too often, we 'heard' the responses to the questions, but we didn't really 'listen' to them. Listening is an action that

requires concentration, being in the moment and being open to the response. A lifelong skill, it takes effort and focus to become an effective listener.

5. KEEP AN OPEN MIND

To be an effective critical thinker, it is important to have an open mind. An open mind will allow you to be receptive to new ideas, concepts and viewpoints. Being open-minded is a method of receiving information. Once that information is received, then you can begin the analysis and interpretation of it. Closed-mindedness presents a new set of circumstances, and these circumstances will not allow you to see or hear different perspectives other than those you already possess.

6. KNOW YOUR BIASES

What kind of biases do you have? If you are honest with yourself, you will have identified more than one bias. While everyone has biases, how you allow them to influence you and your thinking process is important. Biases come from our experiences, family life, education and culture.

7. REVERSE YOUR THINKING PROCESS

This thinking process may also be known as inversion. It is the ability to take a break from the normal thinking process and redirect how you will look at a situation. An example: In planning a party, you traditionally think of all the tasks you need to do to make the party a success. In reverse thinking, you list all the things that might go wrong and how you would address them. It is the same goal, just approaching it from a different viewpoint.

8. DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY

Part of being a successful critical thinker is the ability to demonstrate empathy. Empathy is the ability to place yourself in someone else's shoes. This allows individuals to understand better other points of view and how other people view situations.

These behaviors can help to focus your mind on how to think differently. Through practice, determination and a conscious effort, you can begin to retrain your mind to think critically. It will take time, patience and some hard work to achieve this, but the outcome will result in your growth both professionally and personally, which will help you become a more effective leader in the pool and spa industry. So, start thinking differently. |



Robert P. Kane and Mark Kremen are senior partners with Training Unlimited, LLC, a management consulting firm that provides in-person and online training specializing in professional development programs.

Additionally, they provide human resources support to large and small businesses, including employee handbooks, interview preparation and staff development. They are long-time presenters at The Pool & Spa Show. Visit www.ThePoolSpaShow.com to learn more about their session at the 2021 Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE.

TAKE TIME TO

Celebrate

IN A YEAR full of challenges, it feels good to take a step back to celebrate our members' hard work and achievements. Each year, NESPA's Outstanding Achievement Awards honor the best in building and service.

Whether it is a breathtaking construction project that brings a customer's dreams to life or continuing to deliver stellar customer service while operating during a pandemic, 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges. Once again, NESPA members have risen to meet them.

The following pages feature just some of the Gold Medalists from the 2020 Builders Competition. On January 27, during the live-streamed Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE, we will be hosting an interactive celebration showcasing all of the 2020 winners, including both the builders and service competition, as well as announcing this year's Best of Competition Winner! Get all the details about this must-attend event at www.ThePoolSpaShow.com

Congratulations to the 2020 Service Competition Gold Winners

Integrity Pool and Spa Lanoka
Harbor, NJ

Specialized Pools, Inc
Brick, NJ

The Pool & Water People of CT
Cheshire, CT

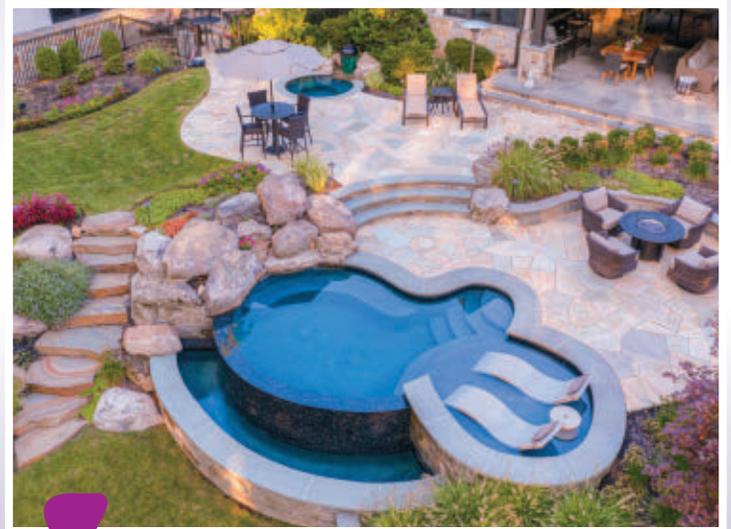
Swimming Pools by Jack Anthony
Patchogue, NY



AQUAVISIONS, INC.

Carlisle, PA

Residential Concrete Pools, Geometric



THOMAS FLINT LANDSCAPE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Waldwick, NJ

Specialty Pools, Cocktail



NEAVE POOLS
Wappinger Falls, NY
Commercial Pool



GLEN GATE COMPANY
Wilton, CT
Water Features, Residential



AQUAVISIONS, INC.
Carlisle, PA
Safety Cover



STEELE'S SIGNATURE POOLS
Medford, NJ
Pool/Spa Combination, Concrete



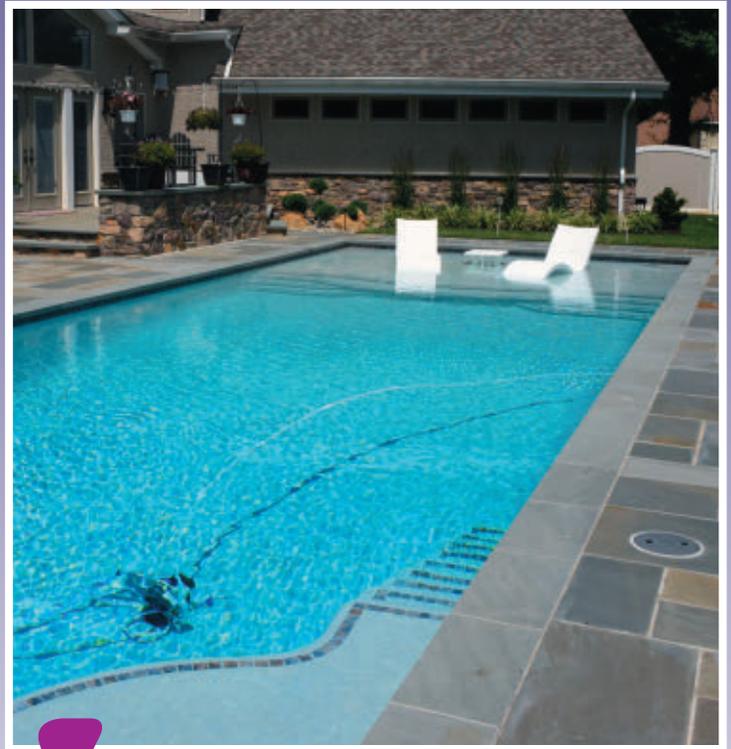
GLEN GATE COMPANY
Wilton, CT
Residential Concrete Pools, Geometric



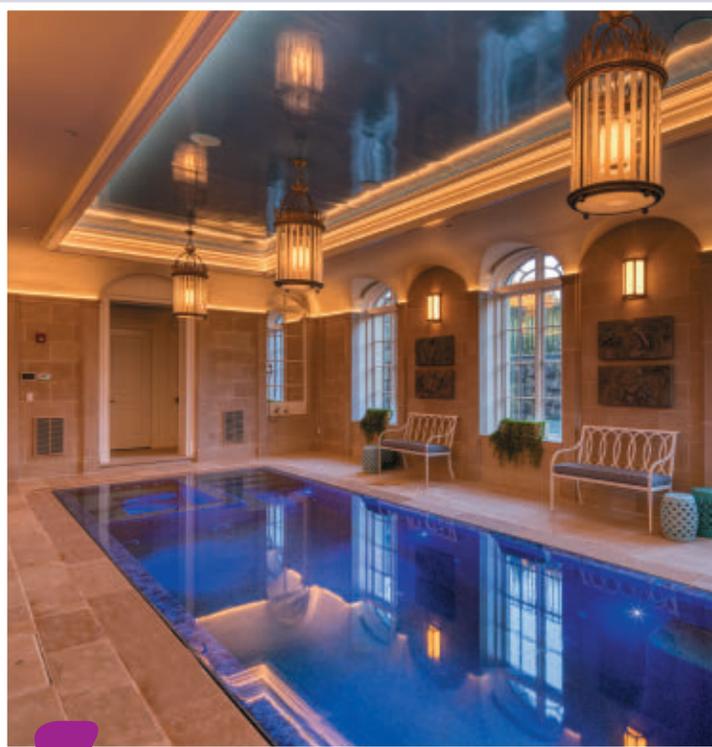
THOMAS FLINT LANDSCAPE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT
Waldwick, NJ
Specialty Pools, Negative Edge



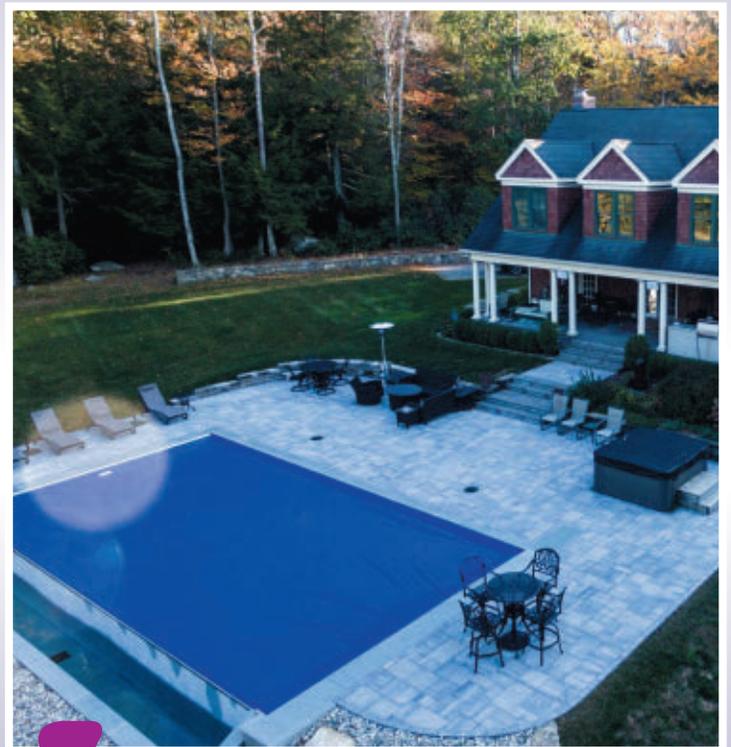
TOTAL POOL & PATIO
Newton, CT
Pool/Spa Combination, Concrete



JAMES SANKEY & ASSOCIATES, LLC
Warminster, PA
Renovation, Concrete



B&B POOL AND SPA CENTER
Chestnut Ridge, NY
Residential Concrete Pools, Geometric



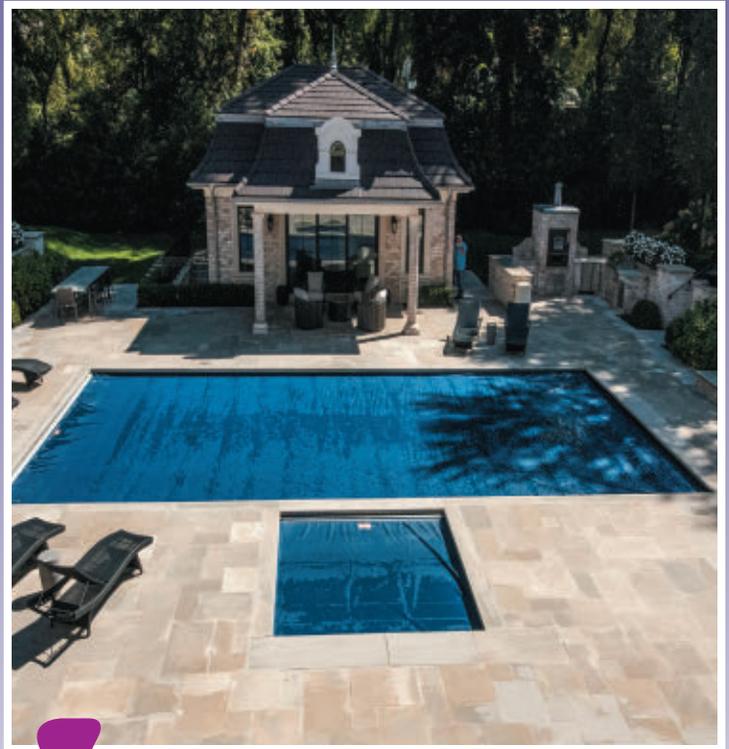
DENSCOTT SWIMMING POOL & LANDSCAPE SERVICE, LLC
New Preston, CT
Electric Cover with Tracks



SPECIALIZED POOLS

Brick, NJ

Pool/Spa Combination, Concrete



SWIMMING POOLS BY JACK ANTHONY

Patchogue, NY

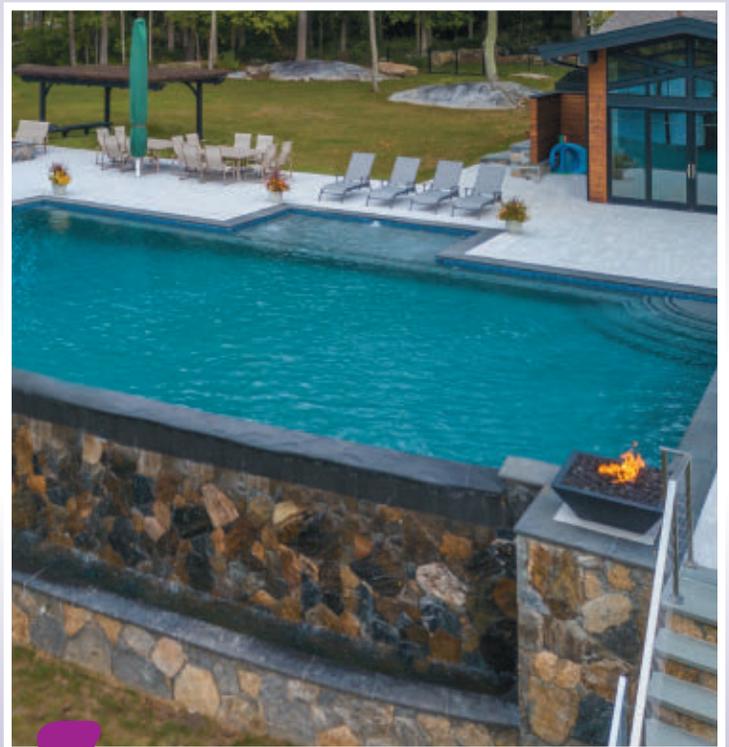
Electric Cover with Tracks



THOMAS FLINT LANDSCAPE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Waldwick, NJ

Residential Concrete Pool, Geometric



TOTAL POOL & PATIO

Newton, CT

Specialty Pools, Negative Edge

Installing Automatic Pool Covers on Fiberglass Pools

by Mike Shadoan



AS FIBERGLASS POOLS continue to gain market share in the pool industry, builders and auto-cover installers are learning to adapt construction methods to adjust to their unique properties. Because of their installation speed, fiberglass pools became even more popular this summer as builders struggled to keep up with consumer demand

for pools. So, too, did the demand for automatic pool covers – as they provide more flexibility for pool owners to open and close their pools on demand. However, fiberglass pools present some unique challenges to the installation of automatic pool covers. Being prepared for these challenges can help installers avoid frustrating mistakes in the field.

SIZING CHALLENGE

Busy pool builders work around the clock to coordinate the timing of both the pool installation and the installation of the automatic pool cover. This time crunch may force builders to call in the order of an auto cover from their truck while traveling between jobs. They might ask for an auto cover for a 16 x 32 fiberglass pool without considering the fiberglass pool's actual dimensions.

It is essential to understand that, when ordering an automatic pool cover, the builder or installer needs to provide the inside dimensions of the pool to the auto cover manufacturer. In most cases, the inside dimensions of a fiberglass pool are narrower than the marketed 'size' of the pool. It's not uncommon for the inside, water dimension of the pool to be just 15 ft. wide for a fiberglass pool marketed as a 16 ft. wide pool. So, if the builder orders the cover at 16 ft. wide, the cover will be too big. The width of an automatic pool cover is key for the cover to fit and function properly.

To avoid this mistake, pool builders and auto cover installers should either wait until the fiberglass pool is installed and take measurements or contact the fiberglass pool manufacturer and ask for their inside pool measurements before ordering the cover. Understanding that most auto covers are essentially custom products highlights the importance of providing precise measurements.

POOL WIDTH CHALLENGE

Fiberglass pool builders understand that keeping the width of a fiberglass pool consistent down the pool's entire length is challenging. By nature, fiberglass pools want to flex and bow along the length of the pool because of the pressure on the walls from the backfill or the water. Builders need to be filling the pool with water while simultaneously backfilling the fiberglass pool to avoid having the backfill bow the walls in, or the water pressure push the walls out. If this isn't done correctly, the pool won't remain a consistent width down the pool's length. Auto cover systems can accommodate for up to a 1-inch difference, but not much more. This variation in width along the pool's length is what makes installing the track for the auto cover challenging. Placing the track so that the automatic pool cover functions properly, but is also aesthetically pleasing, is important to a successful installation.

INSTALLATION TIP: Keep track components installed symmetrically down the length of the pool on both sides. Automatic pool cover manufacturers provide enough track for the entire pool, but installers need to cut the track on-site during the installation. To help ensure a better installation, even if there is a variation in the pool's width, it's important to install the track the same on both sides. Always lay the track around the perimeter before cutting, and be sure the lengths of the pieces are the same on both the right and left sides. For example, if your track length was 36' long, then you would want three 12' foot pieces on both sides, not two 12' pieces and two 6' pieces on just the right side. Keeping both sides



the same makes the pool look symmetrical, especially if coping clips are being used.

Alerting the auto cover manufacturer to the fact that you are installing the cover on a fiberglass pool should prompt the manufacturer to ask additional questions. This will ensure you get the correct sizing and components so that the cover fits and functions correctly and the installation goes as fast and easy as possible.

ELEVATION CHALLENGE

By nature, an automatic pool cover requires that it be installed on a completely level plane. The track cannot be sloped or the cover mechanism will not operate properly. This can be a challenge to those installers working with different deck treatments or tile additions that might raise the elevation of the top of the pool from the shallow end to the deep end. This applies to tiles on a built-in-spa in the shallow end as well as to the various deck treatments used around the perimeter of the pool. Pool builders need to consider the height of the stone, travertine and mortar used around the pool perimeter. This added elevation must match the elevation in the deep end where the auto cover enters and exits the housing. Auto cover

Because of their installation speed, fiberglass pools became even more popular this summer as builders struggled to keep up with consumer demand for pools. So, too, did the demand for automatic pool covers – as they provide more flexibility for pool owners to open and close their pools on demand.

manufacturers provide risers to accommodate for the increased elevation, but there is a limit to the height accommodation. Matching the lid's height to the different coping and retainers is crucial to ensure the successful operation of the automatic pool cover. Builders need to plan this out in advance of the installation.

POLYBOX/AUTO COVER HOUSING CHALLENGE

Before completing the backfilling of the pool, the automatic pool cover kit is attached at the deep end. The process begins with a one-piece encapsulated coping with a wall cap that supports a slide-on polybox. The polybox is a pre-made housing that is screwed into the wall in a 'tongue-and-groove' style that is easily attached to the fiberglass pool wall. However, the attachment of the polybox to fiberglass doesn't come with a pre-designed solution. This requires a little 'McGyvering' to support the polybox by free-staking into the ground. The polybox must be level for the auto cover to function properly. This process needs to take place in the pre-pour stage of the auto cover installation.

LID CHALLENGE

As mentioned earlier, the lid on the top of the auto cover housing, or polybox, also needs to be level for the auto cover's proper functioning. The manufacturer usually provides a flush, pre-painted walk-on lid to make the installation fast and easy. However, there are also many lid-tray options available that can be filled with concrete to accommodate popular stone, paver and stamped concrete options. It is important to remember that there must be an area for the cover and lead-edge to exit the housing area.

OUTSOURCING AUTO COVER INSTALLATION

Fortunately, many pool professionals throughout the US and Canada now exclusively install and maintain automatic pool covers. This makes it easier for pool professionals to subcontract this portion of the job, easily offer automatic pool covers and still profit from selling them without having to train or hire personnel to install and maintain them.

As the demand for fiberglass pools and automatic pool covers continues to soar during this pandemic, pool professionals need to take the time to strategize their approach and be prepared to maximize their profits on these products while avoiding frustrating mistakes in the field. |



Mike Shadoan has more than 25 years of experience working as a service tech in the field. He worked his way into the position of VP of sales for Automatic Pool Covers in Westfield, Indiana. Shadoan has been an integral part of the company's rapid growth due to the innovative automatic pool cover products it offers installers, including the APC 365, a vinyl liner pool cover system and a tool-less torque limit controller for auto covers. He can be reached at mshadoan@apc-mfg.com.

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Diving Into a Pool Inspection Business

by Rick English

NO MATTER WHAT part of the industry you work in, residential pool inspections make a great addition to your business. Service people, builders and retailers can all become part of the inspection industry. You'll meet many interesting home buyers, and no matter what the outcome of the inspection, the client is happy. Imagine that – no unhappy customers! Let me walk you through the steps to starting a pool inspection business and the critical factors to keep in mind.

GETTING STARTED

There are two or three hurdles to overcome before marketing a pool inspection business. While most states do not require a license for inspections, confirm what is need where you plan to work before getting started. Insurance is tricky; existing policies often do not cover inspections. Errors and omissions coverage is critical. If a buyer sues a seller or realtor, the seller or realtor can bring the inspector into the lawsuit as co-defendant. It doesn't matter if the

inspection was excellent, and the plaintiff is happy with the inspection and the inspector. Verifying that your policy covers inspections is critical.

MARKETING

How does one market a pool inspection business? An informative website is a start, and social media accounts are useful to connect with potential customers. But most of your business will ultimately come from referrals. Start with your local service, retail and construction firms. They will occasionally get calls for inspections. Most of them will gladly pass on your contact information. While you might think that a realtor would be a good referral source, a good realtor will only sell a limited number of homes in a year, and only a fraction of those homes will have a pool. Usually, only a buyer's realtor will recommend inspectors to their clients, not a seller's realtor. Even though only a small number of referrals will come from realtors, it is important not to ignore them in your business plan.

Probably the best source of business for a pool inspector is other home inspectors. For a variety of reasons, good home inspectors usually do not like to inspect pools. A home inspector may inspect 100-200 homes per year and a percentage of them will have pools. A few home inspectors that refer a pool inspector can be a great source of business.

There are several home inspection trade associations. The American Society of Home Inspectors (www.homeinspector.com) is the biggest. InterNACHI (www.nachi.org) is another. Pool inspectors should join these groups as associates or affiliates and attend the meetings. They are always looking for speakers, and pool inspection is a great topic for them. Making a 30-60-minute presentation for home inspectors covering the trickiest parts of a pool inspection is a great marketing tool. A presentation covering the Virginia Graeme Baker Act (VGB) and electrical bonding will always attract an audience.



CHECKLIST

A pool inspector should have a checklist (It is not recommended to give the list to the client.) in the same order as the report. Review your notes and pictures very carefully when making the report. When you look at your pictures, items will always “pop up” that were not discussed at the site, but that will need to be covered in the report.

RECOMMENDED INSPECTION ORDER

- *Water level:* Measure from top of the tile to water in several places around the pool to see if the pool has shifted.
- *Coping:* Is it secure? What is the condition of the grout?
- *Tile:* Are there loose or missing tiles, tile scale, sharp edges?
- *Decking:* Expansion joint, lifting, settlement cracking, trip hazards, abutment to the house.
- *Pool Fill:* Is it working, antisiphon valve, autofill and backflow protection.
- *Covers:* Auto covers, floating covers, etc.
- *Spa:* When attached, overflow and drain down, jet performance and air handling.
- *Drains:* Review compliance with the VGB standards. Always recommend compliance with current safety standards, even when the pool's age may not be under a mandate to do so.
- *Plaster:* Look for severe discoloration, delaminations, calcium nodules, rust spots. This can be a sore spot because many plaster jobs may not look pristine, but still have a serviceable life. Resurfacing can be expensive and destructive.
- *Plumbing:* Are pipes labeled? Is the flow well identified? Pipe sizing.
- *Pumps:* Identify the make and model, discuss sizing, variable speed.
- *Filter:* Properly sized. Backwash (if included), warnings about filter separations.
- *Heater:* Operability, location, air requirements for indoor heaters, soot, rust.
- *Lighting & Electrical:* GFCI & J-Box. Compliance with Article 680 of the National Electric Code.
- *Bonding:* Complete bonding grid per Article 680 of the National Electric Code.
- Controls and automation – verify operability; clients will often ask for information about upgrades.
- *Sanitizer:* Tablet feeders, Ozone, UV, Mineral, Salt Chlorine Generators; clients often ask for recommendations.
- *Pool cleaner:* Operability and safe installation.
- *Water features:* Operability, plumbing and safety.
- *Slides:* Proper installation; compliance with CPSC Standard for Slides.
- *Diving Boards:* Refer to the manufacturer to certify that the pool is safe for diving.
- *Solar:* Inspect if installed, recommend proper sizing.

That may sound like a lot, but most inspectors can conduct this in 90 minutes to two hours.

OLENA HROMOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

CODES AND STANDARDS

A pool inspector should be familiar with all codes and standards. The Pool and Hot Tub Alliance website (phta.org) is a great source. The International Pool & Spa Code is essential. A pool inspector would prioritize the following standards:

- APSP/ANSI/ICC-5 Standard for Residential Inground Pools
- ANSI/APSP/ICC-7 Standard for Drain Entrapment Prevention
- ANSI/APSP/ICC-15- Standard for Energy Efficiency

CONDUCTING THE INSPECTION

When conducting the inspection, safety should be the first consideration. Diving, slides, fencing and electrical hazards should always be the top priority. Remind the client that the inspector is there to provide information and recommendations and not for enforcement.

THE REPORT

This can be the most important part. There is no set format for an inspection report, but a narrative style report instead

of a checklist-style is recommended. Check out samples of reports on (www.poolinspections.com). An excellent report will “generate buzz” and referrals. It’s always a good idea to under-promise and over-deliver. If you think the report will take a day to get out, then promise two days. If the report is early, then the client is happy. If the report is just “on time,” then the client is still pleased. The last thing an inspector wants is a call from a client asking for a delayed report.

At first, the report will be the most challenging part. Don’t forget to stay positive. Never accuse a builder or service person of wrongdoing. Simply recommend that an item needs correction. The client will often ask if the seller should fix an item in your report. I simply state that my job is to inspect and recommend that the clients discuss negotiations with their realtor.

My recommendation is to build a library of documents and images that you can import into reports. For example, if the pool pump is “Slush Flow” from Acme

Manufacturing, research and write a document about that pump. Include images, flow ratings, expected life and where to get service. Include that information in your report. The next time you run into that pump on an inspection, you will already have the work done. After a time, a library of documents will develop that makes report writing less tedious.

At the end of the report, write a summary. Be very careful here. Some buyers, and especially realtors, will only read the summary. So be sure the summary refers back to the text. After the summary, you can also include a list of referrals for repairs and service. Always send the report in a format that cannot be edited by a recipient. Retain a copy of the report for your records.

FUTURE WORK

Most home inspector associations have a code of ethics that prohibits the inspector from performing any work for an inspection client for the first year after the inspection. A pool inspector, even one affiliated with an inspection organization, is not necessarily required to follow that code. However, a pool inspector’s reputation can be rapidly tarnished if the inspection’s primary purpose is to get additional work or upgrades. Clients will often ask inspectors if they can perform the recommended repairs. If you accede, then be sure that your prices are reasonable and that the product, service or repair is necessary. If the home inspector or realtor who referred the pool inspector hears negative feedback, then a vital business source is lost. Home inspectors and realtors talk among themselves, so the damage to the inspector’s reputation could be widespread. |



Rick English is the owner of English Pool Consulting in San Diego, California. He is a Certified Pool Operator (CPO) Certificate and Certified Building Professional (CBP) as well as an instructor for the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance. English regularly teaches the Pool & Spa Construction Course and the Certified Pool Operator Course. He works as a forensic consultant in litigation involving pool construction, pool service, and pool safety and has been an expert witness in California, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, Texas, New Hampshire, Idaho, Washington and Kansas.



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Service in the Time of Corona

Lessons Learned in the Field

by Julie Kazdin

IT ALL STARTED on March 13, 2020. As a moderate workaholic – like most of us in the pool and spa service industry – I could never imagine that what began as a temporary stay-at-home order would completely upend our opening season and beyond.

Located in the eastern end of Long Island, my family-owned business was situated in the center of the “first wave” of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each day, we had conflicting information on what our company could or couldn’t do. The Northeast Pool and Spa Association was working day and night to get a clear determination of whether pool service and construction were to be deemed essential. After some gray areas and individual interpretations, our service team was considered to be essential. We could get to work.

Since it was March, I thought it would be no big deal to social distance - plenty of trucks, not many pools open. But this March was not typical by any stretch of the imagination. With New York City locking-down, many city-dwellers decided to return to their summer or weekend homes on Long Island. March turned into a full-blown opening season. Right in the middle of a pandemic.

We needed to hire, rehire and train our crews. We needed to do all this while working from home, socially distanced. Our entire system had to change based on the new environment. While we were not starting from scratch, our service department had to reimagine how we worked.

STARTING POINT

Our service department was already utilizing a scheduling software program, a picture app and fleet management software. Our current technology included *The Service Program*, an extension of QuickBooks for our weekly service scheduling program; this is run on our server in our main building so everyone can access it. We were already using *CompanyCam* as an app in the field and in the office for picture management. *Intellishift*, which offers GPS and fleet management, manages our fleet.

We already had two remote employees out of state. We had been working toward a paperless environment, but were not in any hurry - until now. Paper, at that time, was thought to carry the virus. That impacted mail, work orders – anything printed and passed through the building.

TAPPING INTO TECHNOLOGY

In 2019, we started using *Microsoft Teams*. Now we had a reason to start using the chat features to boost our staff collaboration. We created a digital format for training to be done individually, instead of in a group as we had in years past. The biggest obstacle was tracking jobs – start to finish – from multiple locations. We have always had a central job board (with index cards on which you put pencil to paper and moved across this wall-sized board) and mirror copy on excel. However, that was just not going to cut it this time around. Here was another opportunity to find a new tool to bring our project

tracking system to life in a virtual environment. The best option for our needs was *Trello*, and it was free! Our eyes were opened to a plethora of options to make our business more efficient and profitable.

The scheduling software systems (or packages) available on the market are incredible. They range from extremely basic options to programs that will perform your entire company’s functions. Your accountant should be involved in your decisions based on the data they need at the end of every fiscal year.

Before researching scheduling software programs, make a list of must-haves, would-likes and options, and rate the programs as you see them. This will help you decide the closest match based on your checklist and notes.

Whether it be cloud-based or server-based, the scheduling software can be available to users remotely through an IT professional. Make sure you are setting up firewalls and security protections on your servers for the thorough protection of your software, data and intellectual property.

REMOTE WORKING CAN WORK

Your remote employees will need access to your company programs, documents and information to perform their job functions properly. Limit access to just what they need to do their job completely and professionally. Since your teammates may be working remotely, you need to have a level of trust in them. They must be working according to the company’s guidelines.

Often, companies may not have had a remote work policy. If that describes your



situation, be sure to create one and put it into your manual going forward. If your company supplies equipment to an employee, a policy should be signed specifying the return of material should the relationship end.

Having teammates in different locations may lead you to consider options like Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programs. A CRM will allow all your team members to offer client support to new or existing clients. Another option is Contact Management Software (CMS) for leads in your company. Having these in a virtual space will allow for easy access to multiple team members and oversight of your team's daily activity and progress.

WHEN OUT IN THE FIELD

Don't forget about your service team. There are advances in water chemistry testing all the time. There are apps that help with testing, readings and the addition of balancers. Your company should have a list of acceptable apps and standards to adhere to so that you know your clients are all receiving the same standard of care.

Phones are amazing tools to use in the field. The question is whether to supply them or provide a stipend; we have chosen to provide a stipend. Our teammates' phones are equipped with flow sheets giving them easy access to troubleshooting guides, telephone numbers of support teams of the manufacturers we use and our representatives.

Phones have GPS tracking capabilities, a useful function more likely to be available and used if the company owned the phone. We have an app for taking pictures both before and after the service of every pool. This helps cut down on additional trips to properties for broken items, proposals and questions. Staff use phones, tablets or laptops to complete work orders for certain types of scheduling software; however, there is always the concern of those pesky batteries dying and the lack of cellular service.

Someday the coronavirus will be behind us, but workspaces likely will never be the same. Staying up with trends and cultivating ideas on how you can keep up with inevitable change will be crucial to your success. Future teammates will demand a work experience and format that is forward-thinking.

Find the things you can *manage* and that will work for your situation. If you do it all, you cannot manage it all. Pick the things that will give you the best return on your investment for your situation. |



Julie Kazdin is a partner at Kazdin Pools and oversees business operations for the company. She currently serves as treasurer for the Northeast Spa & Pool Association and is

a volunteer leader for both the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance and the Long Island Pool & Spa Association. Kazdin is also an instructor for Watershape University. Learn more about this topic at the Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE. Find out more at www.ThePoolSpaShow.com.

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS FOR SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

Take the time to investigate if these tools, or similar ones, could help your service business maximize its performance in our new normal.

- The Service Program (QuickBooks add-on)
- Company Cam App
- IntelliShift Fleet Management
- Microsoft Teams (staff collaboration)
- Trello App (workflow, productivity)
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Ask Not What Your Chlorine Can Do for You, But What You Can Do for Your Chlorine

by John "Legend" Bokor



THIS YEAR, MORE than in years past, pool owners need to get the most 'bang for their chlorine buck.' Pool construction is exploding, and the demand for chlorine is at an all-time high. Getting the most out of your chlorine is imperative.

There are a few steps that can be taken to reduce chlorine demand quickly. In fact, diligent hygiene and simple changes to the pool's maintenance routine can reduce sanitizer consumption by up to 30 percent and keep the water sanitized.

BALANCE THE WATER

Balanced pool water is the best way to ensure chlorine can keep water sanitized. Retailers and service techs can help customers avoid having to continuously add chlorine to their pools by suggesting customers invest in test strips to monitor their pools' sanitizer levels.

Borates can lower chlorine consumption because borates have a buffering ability that allows pool water to remain at a more stable pH level for a longer period of time. In turn, borates allow chlorine to be more efficient and effective at sanitizing the water.

BRUSH REGULARLY

What the dentist says about teeth also applies to the pool. Although it can be time-consuming, regularly brushing and cleaning the pool is the easiest way to control chlorine consumption. By brushing pool surfaces, contaminants clinging to the surfaces can be removed by the pool's filter, so chlorine is allowed to do the job of sanitizing rather than having to work to combat algae, mold or other bacteria. Regular brushing, skimming and vacuuming will keep the pool water clear and make it easier to keep it balanced.

CLEAN THE FILTER

Keeping filters clean allows the filter to operate properly and remove contaminants from the water so chlorine is not tied up with floating debris. Water clarity is only as good as the filter will allow it to be. Chemicals can resolve many different water quality problems, but the water treatment program won't work if the filter is not working properly. The pandemic has kept people at home

using their pools frequently. As a result, filters have been working overtime, so they need even more frequent cleaning.

REMOVE PHOSPHATES

High levels of phosphates can cause calcium phosphate scale. Here, prevention is the best solution. Maintaining a phosphate residual of less than 125 parts per billion (ppb) is the key to preventing phosphate-related issues. Removing phosphates helps limit calcium phosphate formation and ensures the efficient operation of chlorine generators, which, in turn, ensures optimal chlorine generation.

OXIDIZE WITH NON-CHLORINE SHOCK

In keeping with the goal of reducing the use of chlorine, routinely oxidizing pool water with a non-chlorine shock can be beneficial to controlling contaminants so that chlorine works more effectively. Disinfection – also referred to as sanitizing – is the effective killing of germs. Oxidation is the destruction of non-living waste materials like skin, urea and hair follicles.

Chlorine demand is much higher when organic contaminants are present. Therefore, it takes longer to remove demand and create an effective free-chlorine residual. This is why oxidizing with a non-chlorinated shock is so important. Because non-chlorine shock does not contain chlorines, it will not combine with chlorine to create unwanted disinfection byproducts such as combined chlorine or chloramines. The odor from combined chlorine or chloramines is carcinogenic and causes eye and lung irritation. Higher bather loads can lead to higher demand and more sanitizer consumption. So, it is important to regularly oxidize this non-organic waste to free up chlorine to sanitize.

USE ENZYMES

Like oxidation, another helpful additive to lessen the demand for chlorine is the use of enzymes. As a part of regular maintenance, using a high-quality, broad-spectrum enzyme every week will help break down the organics swimmers bring into the water – which will even help oxidizers work more efficiently.



Enzymes naturally break down contaminants, making them easier for filters and chlorine to remove from the water.

With the number of families staying home and using their pools, not to mention the number of new pools installed this summer, chlorine usage has skyrocketed. To ensure there is enough chlorine available to go around, the industry needs to get back to basics and do what it takes to maximize chlorine's utility and keep pool water sanitized. Regular brushing, cleaning filters, removing phosphates, oxidizing and using enzymes will help keep the customer's pool water balanced and chlorine usage in check. Don't ask what your chlorine can do for you, but what you can do for your chlorine! |



John Bokor is the host of Haviland Pool and Spa Products' "Legendary Pools and Spas," a web series that promotes the fun of owning a pool or hot tub. He is also the company's director of sales and has more than 25 years of experience in the pool retail industry. Bokor,

a certified pool operator (CPO), regularly speaks to professional dealers and pool owners within his territory about water chemistry and maintenance. John will be part of the 2021 Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE. Get more details at www.ThePoolSpaShow.com

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Modernize Your Approach to Leak Detection

by Darren Merlob

IN YEARS PAST, swimming pool leak detection technicians relied on antiquated equipment designed to find plumbing leaks and diving into pools wearing scuba gear to dye test for leaks. Customers were left to longer wait times for service and were often subject to invasive digging to find leaks and make repairs. In today's modern service industry, technicians can perform leak detections from outside the pool, with superior accuracy and precision in line and leak locating.

The weight of water in a full pool creates a pressure that forces water through cracks and separations. This pressure creates a whooshing sound that, when using modern listening equipment, lets a user identify the sounds of leaks with accuracy. The equipment professionals use to hear those sounds is called a hydrophone, a microphone designed to go into the pool so the technician doesn't have to. While dye testing, the main drain may be an option to verify if you hear a leak. If no leak is heard at the bottom of a pool, there's no reason to get wet.

A hydrophone, assembled at the cable's end, allows the technician to listen to all protrusions in the pool. When dangling the hydrophone in front of returns and lights, in skimmers and at side suction, water escaping through separations can be heard at the precise location of the leak. Hydrophones can be pulled along structural cracks and onto drain covers to listen for leaks. After visually identifying where plastics and protrusions come through a pool wall, the user can listen to them for escaping water.

Ninety-five percent of leaks in a pool occur within a 3-foot radius of the pool shell. Like pipe mics, smaller diameter hydrophones can be inserted into returns and pipes that run away from the pool. When leaks are heard at their loudest point, measuring how far into the line the leak occurs is as easy as measuring the cable from its entry point. Lay the cable onto the deck and know where digging will take place and repairs will be made. This reduces the breaking of concrete and

invasive digging to get at broken pipes and make repairs.

In the past few years, new technologies have been created by LeakTronics that address the need for accurate leak detection for professional technicians. Sonde technology lets technicians find the exact location of microphones and camera heads underground for precision repairs without the expense of digging along pipes and water lines to locate leaks. Sonde technology, like the FLASH System, can find multiple leaks in the same line, even when the location of pipes underground is unknown. Where lines cross under patios and concrete, through soil and landscaping, the expense of digging and renovating can be astronomical, but knowing precisely where to dig gets technicians on top of leaks and makes repairs fast and easy. Using a 512-hertz pulse and a receiver, technicians can identify



LEAKS CAN BE DETECTED WITH A POOL SCOPE HYDROPHONE.

leaks from several feet underground and make precise repairs.

Other recent equipment developments have created methods that use a vacuum to draw air into pipe leaks. When employing a camera, they can show technicians more than just where a leak occurs, but the extent of the damage and what may be penetrating the line that needs repair. When combined with sonde technology, users can see leaks from inside the pipe and make repairs at the exact area where the leak occurs. It's a fast and effective technology that makes leak detection easy and less invasive.

Finding pipes underground using listening technology to locate where they lay is made simple using the non-destructive technology in LeakTronics Pulse Generator, the PG-2. Without unnecessary shaking and rattling, the Pulse Generator puts a clear audible

pulse into the fluid in a line. When using a ground probe or deck plate, technicians can map and trace where pipes are located, allowing for fast and effective leak detection work. |



Darren Merlob is the business founder, owner and inventor of LeakTronics and LeakTronics leak detection equipment. A pioneer in the swimming pool industry with more than 30 years of practical experience, his frustration with outdated leak detection methods led him to develop the Leaktronics Leak Detection Kit for the Swimming Pool industry. Merlob will be part of the 2021 Pool & Spa Show EXPERIENCE taking place January 26-28. For more details, visit www.ThePoolSpaShow.com.

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Solar Pool Enclosures of New York, Inc.31
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Hayward Pool Products17
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POOL SALT

East Coast Salt26
www.EastCoastSalt.com

POOL TOOLS

G & P Tools LLC35
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 Custom Molded Products.....4
 www.c-m-p.com
 Hayward Pool Products.....17
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