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■ **OUTSIDE INDUSTRY**
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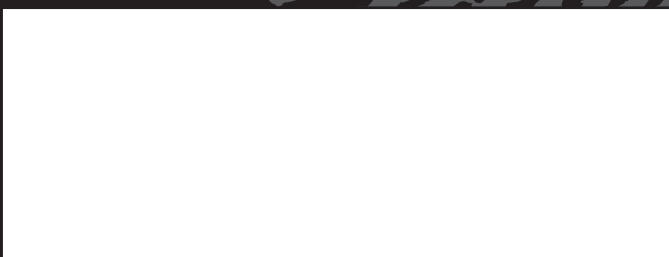
SpaRetailer®

INSIDE THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

DO YOU KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER?

IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER DOWN TO THEIR DNA YOU ARE MISSING OUT ON SALES. HOT TUB BUYING HABITS HAVE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS – IT'S TIME FOR YOUR SELLING PRACTICES TO CATCH UP! PAGE 47



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- ✓ Great employee gifts
- ✓ Increase referrals



GAS TRAFFIC
SOLUTIONS

January/February 2009

SpaRetailer

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Not to be missed! The NESPA Atlantic City Pool & Spa show has lots to offer hot tub retailers.





What your customers want.

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January/February 2009

SpaRetailer

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Atlantic City Pool & Spa Show
January 27-29
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Publishers

David and Karen Wood

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief David Wood
dwood@bigfishpublications.com

Editor Megan McCormack
megan@bigfishpublications.com

Editorial Assistant Rochelle Belsito
editorial@bigfishpublications.com

Contributing Writers/Columnists

JoAnna Brandi, David Carleton,
Kaylene Crandall, Alison Stanton,
Robert Stuart

ART

Senior Designer Jana Jaehnig
jjaehnig@bigfishpublications.com

Graphic Designer Jaime Jaffe
production@bigfishpublications.com

Contributing Photographers

Ian Crysler, Laura Glines,
Ryan Harlow, Stuart Mattingly,
Sandra Ramirez

SALES AND PROMOTION

Director of Advertising John Clemens
jclemens@bigfishpublications.com

Executive Assistant Debbie Nadler
dnadler@bigfishpublications.com



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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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About Us

Who We Are

SpaRetailer is the definitive trade publication in the hot tub industry and is committed exclusively to reporting vital market research and practical tips to aid spa retailers in the day-to-day operation of their businesses. Ranging from detailed surveys to manufacturer comparisons, store maintenance tips to top-level marketing and financial advice, *SpaRetailer* is the one-stop destination for staying informed and competitive in the hot tub market.

What We Promise

- Support hot tub retailers whose livelihoods are dependent on the long-term market viability of the hot tub industry.
- Offer fair and accurate editorial coverage of the hot tub industry.
- Present our editorial content in a professional and visually appealing manner.
- Refrain from covering the swimming pool industry or related pool products.



ON OUR COVER

SR has done the detective work and is ready to reveal the identity of your customer. Page 47.

MAGAZINE *SpaRetailer* magazine is published bimonthly. Each issue is dedicated exclusively to the hot tub industry.

E-NEWSLETTER Our monthly online newsletter is delivered electronically to industry professionals. It features current news, events and industry topics.

INNER CIRCLE™ The *SpaRetailer* Inner Circle™ is an exclusive peer-to-peer business network sponsored by *SpaRetailer* magazine. It is comprised of fellow retailers and industry colleagues with a common desire to promote the hot tub industry to consumers and share tips, ideas and techniques to maximize profitability, customer satisfaction and referrals.

SUBSCRIBE Visit SPARETAILER.COM or call 480-367-9444 for details.



SpaRetailer Magazine Expands to Six Issues

NEW YEAR'S is frequently a time when people and companies commit to positive changes. *SpaRetailer* magazine is no exception.

In 2009, *SR* is expanding frequency to six issues per year, up from four issues in 2008. Despite the continuing economic challenges, *SR* has experienced significant growth since our launch in June 2007.

We are both humbled and acutely aware of the importance a spa-only trade publication should play in the hot tub industry. We appreciate your trust and will work diligently to exceed your editorial expectations in the future.

This year we are also expanding our circulation to more than 15,000 readers who include over 3,200 retailers from outside the hot tub industry such as appliance retailers, hardware retailers, sporting goods retailers and medical professionals who have shown interest in selling spas. Our research shows these segments will offer a fresh perspective on selling hot tubs and help the industry grow.

Our increased frequency and circulation will allow us to deliver news and topics facing the hot tub industry in a timely manner, without sacrificing the in-depth analysis that you expect from *SR*.

While on the topic of news, don't forget to preview our bonus show section on the Northeast Pool & Spa Expo occurring later this month in Atlantic City, N.J. If you're attending, stop by our booth 3630, I'd love to meet you personally and hear about what your business has planned for 2009.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David T. Wood'.

David T. Wood
EDITOR & PUBLISHER
editor@bigfishpublications.com

**OUTSIDE THE
INDUSTRY**

These aren't your traditional hot tub retailers – they sell hot tubs alongside refrigerators, couches and plants. But their unique product combinations give them a business perspective that differs from traditional hot tub retailers. Find out who these outside the industry hot tub retailers are and what you should be learning from them. PAGE 53



SpaRetailer, Winter 2008

The Big Box Debate Continues

Our cover piece on big box retailers raised some eyebrows. A complicated issue like mass merchants produces lots of opinions, but SR is happy to start the conversation. Let us know whenever you think we blow it; we can take it. And likewise, everyone likes a pat on the back now and then.

"I'm a new retailer (just in business 10 months) and love your magazine. The stories are great and I find it to be a very useful tool in my business."

– Allan, Dallas, Texas

"This issue rocks! It's the only magazine I read that consistently provides solutions to very serious issues facing the spa industry."

– David, Chevy Chase, Maryland

MASS MERCHANTS

"It's about time we get the real facts about big box stores. THEY aren't our worst enemy, WE are. If we just sell our spas in a professional manner we can bury any of our competitors."

– Janet
Juniper, Florida

"I thought your article was shortsighted. Yes, maybe mass merchants aren't selling as many spas as they use to, but the fact remains they have 'killed' us in terms of price perception with consumers. This is the legacy we all will have to live with for years to come."

– Melvin
Ontario, California

SHOW SUPPLEMENT

"WOW. I loved your show section for Vegas."

– John
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

"Nice touch to highlight the spa relevant content in the show article. It made it much easier to find the best events for my employees to attend."

– Mike
Bluffdale, Utah

"Again you have printed a thoughtful and informative show issue. I'm really impressed with the quality editorial and graphics you put in every issue. Kudos to the whole SpaRetailer team."

– Scott
Hamburg, New York

INTERNET

"I thought your 'Internet' story on getting your business online was a waste of time and space. It was written like the reader was in the third grade and I found it very condescending."

– Chase
Vancouver, British Columbia

SR: We hope our two-part series on Google Analytics is more up to your standards!

CONTACT US

Would you like to see more on a particular topic? Have we overlooked a critical industry issue?

Write to us at EDITOR@BIGFISHPUBLICATIONS.COM or SpaRetailer Magazine:

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Hot Tub Exclusive Trade Association Formed, Gains Support Abroad

NEW ASSOCIATION HOPES TO WORK MAINLY ON REGULATION ISSUES FACING THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY.

IHTA INITIAL GOALS:

- 1) Hire lobbyists to work solely on behalf of the hot tub industry
- 2) Join ANSI to enable unlimited IHTA members to attend their meetings, present arguments exclusive to the hot tub industry and influence ANSI decision-making
- 3) Create proper definitions that differentiate hot tubs from swimming pools and jetted bathtubs, which will assist in making fair and applicable standards and laws
- 4) Promote the standardization of a single energy protocol across all 50 states
- 5) Work with the states to eliminate sales tax on spas purchased for medical purposes
- 6) Reach out to the insurance industry to get coverage for spas purchased for medical purposes
- 7) Develop tools for retailers on the many benefits of hot tubs
- 8) Build consumer awareness on the many benefits of hot tubs

The IHTA will hold a press conference/round-table discussion January 27 at the Atlantic City Pool & Spa Show. Exact location to be announced.

THE FORMATION OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL HOT TUB ASSOCIATION, was announced in early November 2008. The association is touted as being designed to protect and promote the spa industry.

Andrew Tournas, president of both ThermoSpas and the new IHTA, says that after spending over a quarter of a century in the hot tub industry, he knew this was the time for an association whose singular focus is hot tubs.

“The hot tub industry is the only billion dollar industry that doesn’t have its own single voice, that I know of anyway,” Tournas says. “I’ve never realized a time when there was a need for an organization to take an aggressive posture to support the industry.”

Early incorporators of the IHTA include Mike Dunn and Steve Hammock of Watkins Manufacturing, Sue Ann Sousa of SunStar Covers, Howard Smith of Pleatco, Cindi Magray of Spa Manufacturers and, of course, Tournas of ThermoSpas.

The IHTA signed a contract with association management company Visioneering Consultants Inc. to help them get started. VCI helps associations keep their overhead low by providing experienced staff and canceling the need to rent office space. The company has helped other associations, such as the National Plasterers Council, see a substantial increase in funding and membership.

Mitch Brooks, president of VCI, says the IHTA is off to a good start. “We [IHTA] are incorporated, we have applied to the IRS for our association status, we have our bylaws already done and now we’re actually in the process of forming our board committees, which will culminate in our first meeting at the Atlantic City Show,” Brooks says.

The association has already gained international

support at Piscine, the European pool and spa expo, recently held in Lyon France.

“It was very well received because they [the French Federation of Swimming Pool Professionals] recognized the importance of having an independent organization that totally focused on hot tubs, although they are an organization that is similar to the APSP in that they represent pools and spas,” Tournas says. “They were pretty excited about the whole concept of the IHTA.”

The reaction in North America has been mixed. While the IHTA insists that it does not want to compete with the Association of Pool and Spa Professionals, many see there being an overlap in membership dues and goals.

“I’m always in full support of people coming along and putting their hands into it [industry issues and promotion],” says Todd Whitney, president of the APSP Hot Tub Council and global acrylics market manager at Aristech Acrylics. “I think in order for both groups to achieve what they want to achieve there has to be a consolidation of both, or there has to be an understanding of who’s working on what.”

The IHTA plans to focus mainly in their first year on protecting the industry in regards to government regulations.

“Right now the concern more than anything is the aspect of government regulation and dealing with some of the issues that are already coming down,” Brooks says. “That’s going to take a lot of time, it’s going to take a professional lobbyist to actually deal with it and it’s going to take money.”

Tournas says there is only so much time and money that the APSP can devote to a single issue.

“It’s an overwhelming task because, though the hot tub industry has been hit with a lot of new

rules and regulations, the swimming pool industry has been over-encumbered with even more,” Tournas says. He wants the IHTA to help lighten the load on the APSP. “We’re trying to make it very clear to everyone that we’re not looking to minimize or disengage the efforts of what the APSP is doing with their marketing initiative. It’s just the opposite, we embrace what they’re doing and we hope they’re successful.”

Brooks says it’s possible that the IHTA could help supplement shortfalls of the APSP and the Hot Tub Council.

“They’re certainly going to be receiving our support in some of the projects they’re working with and we hope to receive some

support from them,” Tournas agrees.

The APSP, however, feels that with increased financial support from the hot tub industry, they could better serve hot tub interests.

“Pay your dues to APSP and we can put on a full-time person that can proactively protect the hot tub industry,” says Lauren Stack, director of public affairs and industry promotion at APSP. “Why create another organization that doesn’t have the credibility with the outside agencies that APSP has established over many years?”

Stack says the APSP would possibly work with the IHTA if they are well supported by the industry and have financially established themselves. “But if they’re trying just to create havoc and divide the industry unnecessarily then we don’t think it’s a good thing.”

“I’m the first one to say the hot tub industry is very fragmented and that’s a shame. We shouldn’t be as fragmented as we are,” Brooks says. “However, in certain situations what has to happen in the market is you have to fragment and then come back together. I think that’s what’s happening in the hot tub industry. We are fragmenting and then we’ll come back together and hopefully we’ll be bigger and better as an industry as a whole.”

In a time when people are intensely focused on making ends meet and keeping their doors open, asking them to commit to another expense is maybe a hard task.

“Unfortunately, in the economy today it is difficult to open up a new organization because you’re asking people to join and pay dues at a time when budgets are very tight,” Tournas says. He also notes the administrative costs of the IHTA are fully funded. The additional needed funding is to accomplish their initial goals. “All the things that we want to be accomplished can only be accomplished if we have support from the industry and people joining and paying dues.” ■

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IHTA MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Manufacturer: A company that manufactures hot tubs.
Annual Fee: \$5000.00

Supplier: A supplier of hot tub components, parts or accessories.
Annual Fee: \$5000.00

Associate Member: Allied companies whose primary product is not hot tubs.
Annual Fee: \$2500.00

Retailers: Retail hot tub stores.
Annual Fee: \$500.00 for first location,
\$200 for each additional location

Hot Tub Council Growth Initiative Relunched

■ LUCITE/TSE INTRODUCE FIRST STYRENE-FREE SPA REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM

Lucite International and TSE Industries created a styrene-free, environmentally friendly spa reinforcement system.

"For decades, spa's have been reinforced with a polystyrene blend," said Chris Robinson of Lucite International. "The system has been dirty, labor-intensive and potentially very harmful to the environment and workers in particular. Lucite has been working for some time to bring a better solution to market."

The companies found that the Lucite Better Bond acrylic and the TSE-EcoSpray resin created an ultra strong bond between the two materials to make a better backing reinforcement system. The new system can reduce spa manufacturers emissions by 99.9 percent.

"TSE-EcoSpray resin is an alternative backing technology that provides an 'environmentally preferred' solution without sacrificing the fundamental properties required to ensure the highest quality finished product, such as adhesion, tensile strength, flexural modulus and TG," said Tony Rindone, Vice President of TSE's specialty chemicals division.

THE APSP'S HOT TUB COUNCIL unveiled its new and improved Hot Tub Industry Growth Initiative platform at the International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo, November 19. While the purpose of the HTIGI remains unchanged, it has been repackaged to help the industry better understand its goals after failing to get sufficient funding under the old platform.

"It's the same package with perhaps different wrapping on it," says Todd Whitney, global acrylics market manager at Aristech Acrylics. Whitney was passed the gavel and became the new president of the Hot Tub Council at the meeting.

The new platform has a three-pronged approach to help retailers generate more sales and attract 'today, tomorrow and forever' the 16.9 million people who say they are interested in purchasing a hot tub.

"It's not at all different from what we've been saying all along. The three legs of the previous platform: consumer awareness, industry professionalism and increasing the utility [of hot tubs] to buyers," says Lauren Stack, director of public affairs and industry promotion at APSP.

The Hot Tub Council hopes that the new focus will revive industry interest in the initiative. For those who commit to support HTIGI, funding is determined based on a fee of \$8 per horsepower of pumps on sold units, or roughly \$30 per spa. So far, they have

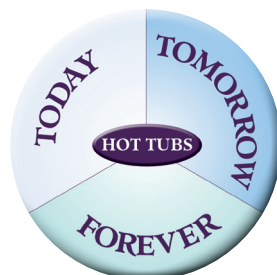
failed to get participation that represents 70 percent of units that was first hoped. The council feels the key to securing industry participation is having retailers aware and excited about the initiative. If retailers are in, the manufacturers will be too.

Attendance at the IPSPE meeting was low, partly because of the scheduling conflict with the Piscine show in France, and discussion quickly turned to what to do if monetary support didn't come in quickly. The consensus seemed to be that it was time to get started one way or another.

"This thing is going forward regardless if you're [majority of the industry] going to be involved or not," Whitney says. "It looks like as far as the minimum amount of funding, we probably have a handful of people that are going to commit to this that would be enough to get the ball rolling. Is it going to be on the scale that we wish? Probably not, but we'd be able to get things done on all three platforms."

It is the hope of the Council that by getting some of the programs started that they will start to generate interest and support.

"We are hoping to show those [in the industry] that might have been on the fence that it's a lot more than maybe what they were assuming it is," Whitney says. ■
For information about an HTIGI tutorial for retailers, visit the "What's New" section at APSP.ORG.



TODAY: Global, tactical sales initiatives that bring in customers now and increase monthly sales (to be measured quarterly).

TOMORROW: Increase consumer awareness of the experience and the benefits of hot tubs to create continuous demand.

FOREVER: Set and deliver quality standards for products, services, and people to build consumer confidence in the hot tub industry.

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

JANUARY

13-17

Texas Pool & Spa Expo
Fort Worth, TX, USA

21-22

Mid-America Pool & Spa Show
St. Charles, IL, USA

27-29

Atlantic City Pool & Spa Show
Atlantic City, NJ, USA**FEBRUARY**

01-03

Spatex
Brighton, UK

03-06

Pool Salon
Moscow, Russia

20-21

Orlando Pool & Spa Show
Orlando, FL, USA**■ APSP UNVEILS NEW CAREER INSTITUTE**

To help meet the training and education needs of the industry, the APSP has created the Career Institute. The Career Institute is intended to help new workers learn the fundamental principles of the industry and give experienced professionals the opportunity to better themselves.

The Institute will offer e-learning opportunities as well as classroom certification and lessons. Adult education experts will be brought in to make the sessions as effective as possible.

Get a sneak peek of classes offered this January-March, for exact dates and times please visit the APSP website.

**SESSION 1
JAN. 5 TO FEB. 13
Business Training**

- Project Management in the Pool, Spa and Hot Tub Industry
- Hiring Great People Fast: Recruitment & Selection
- Creating Raving Fans® Through Exceptional Customer Service
- Millennial Management: Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition – How To Invite, Incite and Ignite Extraordinary Performance
- Selling Strategies for Tough Economic Times

Technical Training

- Safety & Responsibility in General Pool Maintenance
- The Practical Application of the VGB Act and the ANSI-APSP 7 Standard
- Do It Right: Understanding Pool Structures and Construction Methodology
- Management: Fire
- Do It Right: Pool and Spa Calculations for Professionals
- Do It Right: An Introduction to Designing Pool and Spa Circulation Systems

**SESSION 2
FEB. 16 TO MAR. 27
Business Training**

- Project Management in the Pool, Spa and Hot Tub Industry
- Hiring Great People Fast: Recruitment & Selection
- Creating Raving Fans® Through Exceptional Customer Service
- Millennial Management: Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition – How To Invite, Incite and Ignite Extraordinary Performance
- Selling Strategies for Tough Economic Times

Technical Training

- Do It Right: Heater Sizing and Proper Installation
- The Practical Application of the VGB Act and the ANSI-APSP 7 Standard
- Do It Right: Understanding Pool Structures and Construction Methodology
- Do It Right: An Introduction to Water Chemistry and Water Quality
- Do It Right: An Introduction to Automatic Controls



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International: rick.schlottman@watkinsmfg.com

Driving An Endless Stream of Traffic to Your Store

WHEN STORE TRAFFIC SLOWS TO A HALT, YOU CAN'T SIT BACK AND WAIT, IT'S TIME TO GO TO WORK. BY DAVID CARLETON

OKAY, STORE TRAFFIC IS DOWN and a lot of consumers have slowed or completely stopped buying non-essential products like spas, pool tables and many of the other products you sell. Unless you are ready to throw in the towel and close up shop, it's time to start finding new ways to drive prospects to your store.

According to some estimates, the average consumer is exposed to about 3,000 advertisements per day. So, in order to capture your prospects attention, you must offer something unique.

Here are a couple of ideas to consider:

JOINT VENTURES

Contact complementary businesses that sell to your target market. If you are targeting consumers that suffer from back pain, get in touch with a local chiropractor, massage therapist and an acupuncturist and have an open house hosted in your store.

Create an ad inviting back pain sufferers to a "Lunch and Learn" back pain clinic on a Saturday afternoon. Every sponsor sends out invitations to their current list of customers and prospects and at the end of the event, you all get to share the leads.

Don't like the back pain idea? How about landscapers, deck builders and sunroom dealers with a how-to beautify your backyard "Lunch and Learn."

OFFER UNIQUE PROMOTIONS

If you think that you can rely on your standard "Free Steps and Start-Up Chemical Kit" package to drive hungry consumers into your store, you are sadly mistaken. Prospects don't even know they need steps, much less what they cost.

Why not give them something that has an established value and that everyone can use? Look into promotions giving away gas, groceries or other daily necessities. These can be used as a closing tool, to motivate consumers to take a wet test or as thank-you gifts for referral givers.

TIE-IN WITH CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Why not find a way to do some good for your business and your community at the same time? Create promotional tie-ins with local charities. Doing so can exponentially drive traffic to your business. How?

Here's an example: Hold a car wash for a local high school football team or hold a community blood drive in front of your store. In both instances, you and the charity being sponsored can get free PR in addition to the benefits of any advertising you both do. Effective PR can send traffic to your store, especially if a school or charity is endorsing it.

During the event, make sure you have some of the event participants alongside the street with signs literally driving traffic to your store. Having the 'Bloodmobile' in your parking lot is a big plus because it attracts attention and you can invite blood donors into your store for snacks and drinks.

After the event, invite the charity and the local newspaper or TV station back to your store and have pictures taken of you and representatives from the charity along with the presentation of an oversized check.

When the going gets tough, the tough get creative. No more "me too" marketing! ■



ABOUT DAVID CARLETON

Industry expert David Carleton is president of Street Smart Sales and Marketing and creator of the Spa and Pool Dealer Guerrilla Marketing Boot Camp. He specializes in teaching dealers how to increase sales by spending less and getting more from their marketing and advertising. To learn more, go to SPADEALERBOOTCAMP.COM or call 858-442-3131.

Spa Advocate

CARVIN DIGIOVANNI FEELS LIKE HE'S DONE PLENTY FOR THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY AND HE'S READY TO TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT.



Carvin DiGiovanni, technical director at the APSP and 19 year industry veteran.

YOU DO NOT WANT THIS MAN'S JOB. Negotiating with the government, corralling manufacturers and dissuading the fears of retailers on a daily basis are not for the faint hearted. Carvin DiGiovanni, technical director at the APSP, has spent the last 19 years passionately deciphering the regulations and laws affecting the hot tub industry.

DiGiovanni started his career as a teacher, but soon found himself at the American National Standards Institute as part of their safety and health department. When he came to the APSP in 1990, which at that time was the NSPI, the pool and spa industry had no standards that were ANSI approved. DiGiovanni was given the task, and he has been working hard for the spa industry ever since.

On the heels of making a success of the energy law, Title 20, in California this past October and the enforcement deadline of the federal Virginia Graham Baker Act this past December, DiGiovanni had a long, frustrating 2008. But it hasn't been the government causing the most stress and friction; DiGiovanni has found the industry to be the biggest roadblock. He believes that the competitive nature among hot tub manufacturers keeps the industry from coming to a consensus on important legal matters.

"They [manufacturers] want to reach out and do the right thing, but because of their nature they want to be very cautious and not share [proprietary information]," DiGiovanni says. The APSP becomes what DiGiovanni calls the honest broker in these situations, collecting and tabulating proprietary figures, removing product and company names. Sometimes these figures come from non-APSP members.

"I try to create a force amongst the hot tub manufacturers, some members, some not, in hopes of them seeing the bigger picture," DiGiovanni says. But at the end of the day, he hopes that his efforts will drive APSP membership.

"Hopefully we can convert these non-members to see the light of day," DiGiovanni says. "We've got to tell these guys, this is what we're doing for you, and you've got to become part of the family. No more free rides."

And what does the APSP do for its members? Obviously, DiGiovanni points towards their work with standards and regulations, but he says the APSP can offer much more than that, especially when members become proactive in the organization.

"The association is a garage with many tools in it, if you become a member of the association there are many tools that apply to how you want to do your business going forward," DiGiovanni says.

But he says it's the members who ultimately create those tools. "Come together and figure out what your needs are and we can design something around your needs. That's how an association moves. Member oriented, member driven. You're responsible for creating that. Tell us what's wrong, what's broken, tell us where you want to go. That's getting value out of your membership."

If you get a sense of exasperation in his message, you'd be correct. APSP membership from the hot tub industry is relatively low and in early November it was announced that a new, hot-tub-only international trade association was being formed. DiGiovanni feels like the new association will only fragment the hot tub industry further and he says the APSP has been focusing hard on spas.

"We are desperately trying not to show favoritism and balance [pools and spas] out and we're moving very aggressively in the spa area," DiGiovanni says. "You have to have a certain passion to do all this. You can't come in from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and call it quits, it's non-stop trying to do our best. But you do it for the benefit of the total community; that's what I'm doing." ■



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◆ THE ULTIMATE CIRCULATION PUMP

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◆ THE ULTIMATE HEATER

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◆ THE ULTIMATE MIXING CHAMBER

The Ultimate Mixing Chamber ensures maximum natural sanitization of your water, greatly reducing chemical consumption with virtually no off gas effects.

WWW.LASPAS.COM



The Economy: 2009 Outlook

POLITICIANS, PUNDITS AND TV PERSONALITIES HAVE ALL WEIGHED IN ON WHAT THEY THINK THE ECONOMY WILL DO. SO WE TOOK THE QUESTION TO HOT TUB RETAILERS AROUND THE CONTINENT ASKING THEM HOW THEY THINK BUSINESS WILL BE IN 2009.

“We’re going to go through a very tough spot, but we have to **stay positive** and put out a positive message.”

– Doug Moore
Owner, Spas and Moore
Lafayette, California

“In our particular area, we’re very lucky because we’re in a somewhat isolated area. So we’re feeling confident. We’ve been off a bit this year [2008], but not like a lot of companies, so our anticipation is that we’ll hold through next year [2009] and possibly even improve some, that’s our outlook for right now.”

– Cindi Blechschmidt
Owner, Aqua Spas and Pools
Gig Harbor, Washington

“I think that people are worried about putting food on their table, they’re not worried about relaxing in a spa right now. The economy is a cyclical thing, I think it will come back eventually; it’s just a matter of when.”

– Brian Shoer
Owner, Bedford Pool and Patio, Inc.
Bedford, New Hampshire

“January through March is going to tell you what’s going to go on. I see it slowing down. We’re going to go through a very tough spot, but we have to stay positive and put out a positive message.”

– Doug Moore
Owner, Spas and Moore
Lafayette, California

“I wish I knew the answer to that question. Typically, I’m willing to take chances, that’s kind of shifting at the present time; we’re not really taking a lot of chances. There are people having a difficult time and it’s probably not going to get better for a bit.

I think it’s possible when this is all done, the face of the spa industry will be quite different. Which will be a good thing for the consumer because the better manufacturers and better retailers will make it through.”

– Bob Hurd
Owner, Rapid Spas
Rapid City, South Dakota

“It should level out and then once the market does come back, in my opinion, there will be a pent-up demand for the product. The buying cycle has definitely increased. I’ve had customers come in the store for their second or third time and they’re still too scared to spend the money. Once people are comfortable, then you’re going to have a pent-up demand and then sales will definitely be on the increase.”

– Paul Alfano
Co-owner, The Hot Tub Store
Waynesville, North Carolina

“I think it depends on where you are. We’re fairly diverse here in Manitoba, we really don’t get the highs and lows, so we’re pretty level. We’re expecting it to be a positive year. I think there will be some changes [in the industry] just because of the States hurting, so I think the Canadian dealers will be a little stronger.”

– Eric Breckman
Sales Manager, LCL Spas and Billiards
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada



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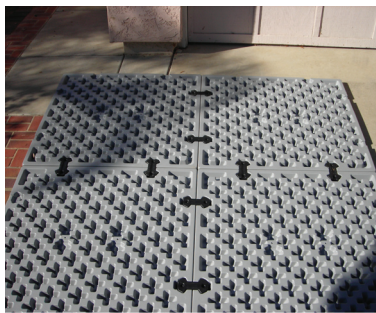


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The plastic EZ Pad comes in four quadrants that are screwed together to form an 8-by-8 foot surface to place the spa.



EZ Does It: EZ Pad to the Rescue

OFFERING CUSTOMERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE HASSLE AND EXPENSE OF POURING CONCRETE MAY MAKE THE SALE.

"WE'RE NOT READY YET," is the most common objection from prospective spa consumers according to Ken Noble, an 18-year industry veteran and owner and creator of EZ Pad.

Noble, who for years sold hot tubs at fairs and home shows, got so frustrated losing sales to site preparation that he decided to do something about it. So in 1999, Noble started EZ Pad, headquartered in his garage.

"The whole idea was to provide a pre-fabricated spa pad with the best engineering possible, and provide an inexpensive alternative to pouring cement or concrete," Noble says.

The EZ Pad is made out of four molded-plastic modules that are screwed together using large connectors to create an eight-by-eight foot pad. According to Noble, the four modules make the pad more stable and easier to level. Extra modules can be added to fit large spas or swim spas.

Noble says that offering a spa pad helps encourage a customer to buy now. "If the consumer hasn't prepared a place for the spa, they're not going to buy one [spa]," he says. "The EZ Pad makes that chore easy and therefore makes it easier for a person to put in a spa."

Rick Rowland, owner of Champagne Spas in San Diego, Calif., has been carrying EZ Pad for about seven years. He says that most of his EZ Pad sales are based on expense.

"A lot of people have a concrete patio in the back," Rowland says. "But the people who don't have that, they have to pour concrete. It [the EZ Pad] is good for them because they don't have to schedule a guy to come out and pour the expensive concrete or get a contractor out there." He continues

that it puts customers' minds at ease about the work involved in their hot tub purchase.

Don Arnone, sales manager at Cal Spas of Minnesota, located in Plymouth, Minn., says that the EZ Pad is a simple way to offer more to his customers.

"It's cheaper than building your own surface generally," Arnone says. "[Customers] don't have to get a contractor out, all they need is level ground and off they go. I think it just gives you one more way to make the customer happy."

Arnone says that they haven't had any negative feedback from customers who have purchased an EZ Pad, but that one of the few comments is its aesthetics.

"It's plastic, so it doesn't look as nice as a deck or a real patio," Arnone says.

Noble agrees that it doesn't look like much, but after having the pad tested by Phillips Petroleum, the supplier of the raw materials used to make the pad, Noble decided to offer a lifetime guarantee for the EZ Pad. According to the test results from Philips, the pad can withstand temperatures from 20 degrees below zero to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. It also has a load-bearing capacity of 5,000 pounds per square foot.

Noble gives a money-back guarantee that states if a customer isn't happy with the EZ Pad, he'll be glad to take it back and refund the purchase price. So far, no one's taken him up on the offer.

"It's just the old fashioned way of doing business," Noble says. ■
For more information: EZPADS.COM or 866-397-2370



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- * R21 insulation rating, for significant energy savings
- * Soft, durable 30 oz. Marine Vinyl, in 12 new and exciting colors
- * UV resistant and mildew-proof
- * Cleans up easily with mild soap and water

Rayner Economy Series

- * 1-lb. density EPS foam inner core with reinforcement channel
- * R16 insulation rating
- * Soft, durable 30 oz. Marine Vinyl available in 12 colors
- * UV resistant and mildew-proof
- * Cleans up easily with mild soap and water

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Plan Your Sales Pitch Down to the Word

KNOWING WHAT TO SAY BEFORE THE CUSTOMER EVEN WALKS IN THE DOOR CAN INCREASE YOUR CONFIDENCE AND HELP YOU CLOSE THE DEAL.

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD HUNDREDS of sales pitches in your life. Some immediately captured your interest, while others you tuned out almost as soon as they began. The most effective sales pitches were those that were well prepared and delivered with confidence. And even if you weren't interested in that product or service, you remembered the pitches that made a positive impression when somebody asked for a recommendation.

Now that you're a hot tub retailer, you want the sales pitch for your store to have that kind of positive impact on your prospective customers. Don't worry that you're not a "born salesperson;" in truth, few people are. All it takes is research and planning – the same steps needed for every other business decision you make as an entrepreneur.

PREPARE SEVERAL PITCHES FOR DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

Because you'll find yourself in many types of selling situations – expected and impromptu – it's best to prepare several pitches, each with the same basic facts tailored to the setting and audience:

THE IN-PERSON PITCH: a formal presentation about your business given to one or more people.

THE PHONE PITCH: a variation of the formal presentation designed for cold calling or following up on inquiries. (An e-mail version of your phone pitch may be good if you expect to market online. Just remember that written text varies in format and style from the spoken word.)

THE ELEVATOR PITCH: a concise description of your business for informal situations, such as social gatherings and plane trips. Imagine yourself on an

elevator with only a few floors of time to explain to someone what you do.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Of course, the content and delivery of these and other sales pitches will vary depending on the setting, who initiates the conversation, the product or service you're describing, whether you're providing general information or pursuing a specific sale. The fundamental ingredients are a full understanding of your business and having as much knowledge as possible about the interests of your listeners. Yes, your pitch is about you, but it's also all about them – what they do, what they need and whether there's a way you can help.

Here are some other guidelines for making any kind of sales pitch successful:

KNOW WHAT TO SAY, EVEN IF YOU DON'T SAY IT

Structure your pitch like the trunk of a tree that leads to multiple branches of increasingly specific information. You may not need all of them over the course of a conversation, but you'll be prepared to field any questions that arise.

ORGANIZE AROUND YOUR KEY SELLING POINTS

The first 30 seconds usually determine whether you capture your listener's attention. You have far less time for phone calls and conversations. You want your pitch to have a logical order, with a defined beginning and conclusion.

BE FLEXIBLE

If your pitch is too tightly scripted, an unexpected question or distraction may throw you off track. Being aware of your listeners and surroundings will

make it easier to answer or defer questions, or take up a new conversation thread of more interest to your listener.

BE HONEST

Avoid the temptation to tell prospective customers everything they want to hear, as you may not be capable of following through.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

As you develop your sales pitch, practice with people who can provide honest and fair feedback, and who understand your customers' perspective. Encourage them to pose questions to practice your ability to respond, improvise and keep your pitch on track.

Always be alert for ways to keep your sales pitch fresh and timely, whether it's a different setting, trends in your prospective customers' businesses, or changes in your product or service. While it is particularly important for formal pitches, your elevator speech may require periodic tweaking as well. ■

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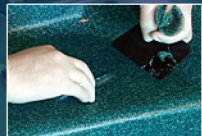
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Leisure Accents Barstools

These barstools give extra sitting room to those that don't wish to be in your dream spa, but still would like to keep you company.

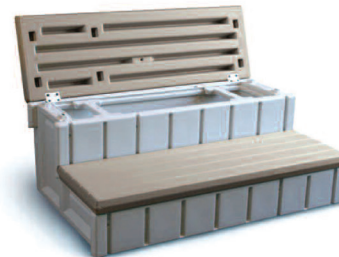
At 26" high, this set of two barstools is the perfect height for comfortable, audible conversation, either outside the spa or in.



Leisure Accents

Bar/Counter

What does your spa have in common with your kitchen? They both can never have too much counter space! Whether it's for holding a drink or the towel, a 12" wide bar has got you covered. Try adding our Leisure Accent Barstools to complete the look and feel.



Leisure Accents Storage Step

Generous storage space combined with a strong, maintenance-free design makes for an unbeatable upgrade step for your spa. 36 inches wide and available in five two-tone colors.

The All-New HS2 Handi-Step

Entering and exiting your dream spa is a breeze with these extremely durable, blow molded plastic steps. Easily assembled with no hardware, the HS2 Hand-Step is available in 13 colors, can hold up to 300 lbs., and can be used for both straight and curved spas.



New Signature Spa Steps

Dress up your spa and increase the ease of getting in and out with our three step Signature Spa Step. Available in 36 inch and 74 inch widths and in five two-tone colors to coordinate with your spa. Two handrails with drink holders/towel bar included. Also available for Swim Spas.

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A Sweet Escape at Sweetwater

A MOOD ROOM FOR WET TESTS AND A PLAY AREA FOR KIDS MAKES SPA SHOPPING FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDRA RAMIREZ

WANDA HILD AND HER HUSBAND, Jason, got into the hot tub business as a pool service company. “Jason basically started with a truck, a pole and a bucket of chlorine in 1983,” Wanda Hild says.

In 1995 they opened their first retail pool store and in 1999, to answer the requests of their consumers, they started selling hot tubs.

“Our primary sales that first year were really at home and garden shows, and we decided after that if we’re going to be in the hot tub business we should be in a nice showroom,” Hild says.

This year Sweetwater Hot Tubz expanded to its second location in the San Antonio area. They have partnered with a local deck builder to help their customers create the backyard living space that they desire. But Hild says that it has been their non-stop commitment to selling hot tubs that has made them successful.

“Sometimes I think you can get spread too thin and then you don’t do anything well,” Hild says.

SWEETWATER HOT TUBZ

LOCATION

San Antonio, Texas

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS

2

SIZE

3,250 square feet

BRAND CARRIED

Caldera

IN BUSINESS

The first hot-tub-only location opened in 1999.

OWNER

Wanda and Jason Hild





THE PERFECT BALANCE

To set the mood in their wet test room, Hild commissioned a local artist to paint an outdoor scene in florescent paint. "People are visual," Hild says explaining that if customers can picture the entire hot tub experience how they would at home they are more likely to buy. "If they see we're putting all that attention to detail in the experience here in the showroom it gives them more confidence in their choice of going with Caldera and Sweetwater Hot Tubz."



CLEARING THE WAY FOR SALES

Instead of having kids climbing all over the hot tubs on busy Saturday afternoons, Hild created a water-themed play area. With an aquarium, sand and seashells, the children are entertained and their grateful parents are free to shop.



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E-mail Marketing

BUILD, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN YOUR CONSUMER E-MAIL ADDRESS LIST TO HELP KEEP TRACK OF ALL YOUR OLD AND POTENTIAL LEADS.

USING E-MAIL as a marketing tool has become more popular over the years because it is an effective way to deliver information and to connect with your customers. E-mail marketing can be used to remind consumers about your services and products through newsletters or updates on new items you are carrying in the store. It can also serve as a form of promotional advertising by offering coupons or detailing upcoming in-store events. However, this type of marketing may be ineffective if it is not used correctly. By knowing how to build and maintain your e-mail contacts, you may have a one-up on the competition.

CAPTURING CONSUMER E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If you actively participate in getting your web-based mailing list out there, such a list could become a greater service to your business. A simple approach is through advertising. By publishing your website address with information about your mailing list on all printed materials, your online service will be available to a wider audience.

In-store marketing ideas can include asking the consumer if they want to be added to your web-based mailing list during checkout, or providing in-store forms that customers can fill out. A similar idea is to include a pre-paid form that the customer can fill out when they get home and mail back to you at their convenience.

If you have a web page, consider including a form that customers can fill out on the home page. Keep it simple though – the easier it is to subscribe, the more likely it will happen. Offer a way for customers to refer their friends to your mailing list as well. This could help generate more buzz about your store.

Get permission from everyone before including them as a part of your mailing list, otherwise your e-mail could be filtered as spam or be discarded immediately.

MANAGING YOUR CONTACT LIST

An important step in building a good contact list is to filter out unnecessary subscribers. By knowing who is really interested in your services, you can build better relationships with your customers.

Send out a confirmation or welcome e-mail. This should allow users to check for accuracy of their information and to make sure they really want to be a subscriber. If you do not receive a response, delete their e-mail address from the mailing list. Weed out e-mail addresses that have bounced back, along with any unresponsive users. This will free-up space and let you interact with consumers who are interested in your services.

If someone has unsubscribed from your list, don't take it personally, just let them go. This isn't a matter of retaining them as a client, but a matter of sending e-mail to only the addresses for which you have consent.

MAINTAINING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

E-mail marketing is a two-way street. If you say you're going to offer a particular service, make sure you have the time and commitment to do so. Let consumers know that you are there for them. Follow-up with customers if they have questions and give them a way to provide feedback.

One option to help you send the appropriate follow-up e-mail is to store your mailing list by customers who already own a hot tub and those who are just looking. This will allow you to send different content to each list of users. Also, consider asking subscribers about their specific spa interests when they officially join the mailing list. This will allow them to receive only the information they want to receive.

Offer subscriber-only coupons or deals. This will give consumers more incentive to stay a part of the mailing list and provide opportunities for them to visit your store again. ■

Need some help putting together and organizing e-mail campaigns?

ICONTACT.COM and CONSTANTCONTACT.COM are both services that help you create and manage e-mail marketing campaigns and online surveys.

Uniforms Can Improve Company Recognition

PROVIDING YOUR EMPLOYEES WITH UNIFORMS MAY BE ONE OF THE BEST DECISIONS YOU CAN MAKE.

BY ALISON STANTON

To read more uniform tips from Donna Flagg, visit EXPERTBUSINESSSOURCE.COM.

WHEN THINKING ABOUT what makes spa businesses successful, owners often consider things like providing high-quality products at fair prices, giving excellent customer service and hiring people who are both knowledgeable and friendly.

But what about the clothing that employees wear when they come to work? Is it possible that their attire can also have a positive impact on the success and overall image of a company? For some spa retailers, the answer is a resounding “yes.” As a result, many owners are issuing their employees uniforms, usually complete with the company logo.

Before any doubting Thomases out there scoff at the idea that a uniform can help contribute to a business’ success, consider this: When someone wearing a brown shirt and shorts shows up at your door, do you even need to see the big brown truck in your driveway to know the person is from UPS? In many cases, uniforms become so recognizable that they essentially become synonymous with the company itself.

Gord Coy, president and co-owner of Arctic Spas Durham and Arctic Spas Peterborough in Ontario, Canada, currently provides his delivery team with t-shirts bearing the Arctic Spas logo. In addition, his retail staff wears golf shirts with the logo.

Coy says he plans to introduce a more standardized uniform in the near future for both stores, including new shirts and sweaters for the retail staff and jackets, hats and hoodies for the delivery and service workers.

“The pros for uniforms are easy,” Coy says. “They make our service and delivery staff easy to recognize. This is extremely important because they are often working on someone’s spa when customers are not home. Neighbors



Gord Coy and Ro Mehta, co-owners Arctic Spas Durham.
Photo: Ian Crysler

need to be able to visually determine who is walking in and out of the neighbors’ yards.”

In addition, Coy says uniforms allow customers to identify his employees quickly.

“At home shows and events away from the store, a uniform is also very important. Again, staff needs to be recognizable. The last thing we want is to have a potential buyer unable to figure out who is working in the booth. I am sure we have all asked or been asked ‘do you work here?’ Having a uniform eliminates this.”

Recalling his own past employment at a fast-food franchise where he was required to wear polyester pants and a striped shirt, Coy says it’s important to make sure the uniforms you choose for your employees are up-to-date and stylish.

As long as your employees keep their uniforms clean and unwrinkled, Coy sees no negatives having his workers wear them.

Donna Flagg, president of the Krysalis Group, a human resource and management consulting firm in New York City, recently wrote a blog about the topic of uniforms. She described a time when the employees where she was consulting did not want to wear uniforms because they felt they were unattractive and uncomfortable, adversely affecting their work performance.

As Flagg explained, “They had a point. But we also had a point. We needed consistency in image and felt strongly that our customers be able to identify employees by sight.”

What ultimately worked for the company, Flagg wrote, was that the employees helped design the uniforms. She said although it took a little longer, the results were well worth it. ■

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Photo: Stuart Mattingly

CHECK OUT THE FACTS

GOAL

Sell 15 new spa sales

TIME FRAME

10 days (2 weekends, 1 week)

1 day  1 month

PERSONAL TIME

5 hours for ads/signage, 2 hours per delivery/removal

1 hr  40+ hrs

DIFFICULTY

Novice  Expert

COSTS

Total: \$7,000 for radio ads/search engine optimization/signage

None  \$1000+

RESULTS

18 new spa sales and 5 used spa sales

PROFIT

Each \$1 spent equaled \$16 revenue

Low  High

Loss Leader

INNOVATIVE RETAILERS ARE USING USED HOT TUBS TO GENERATE SALES OF NEW HOT TUBS.

MOST HOT TUB RETAILERS would say they aren't interested in getting into the used spa business. Rob Carter from Premier Backyard in Tucson, Ariz., would say that as well, but his service and sales team found a way to take used spas and make them work to the advantage of their store and sell new spas.

"We'll take the customer's spas in on consignment and they'll buy a new one," Carter says. "When we sell their old spa we work out a deal with them to facilitate the sale. The customer receives credit for their old spa and they trade up for their new one."

Most of the used spas they received were in tough shape and not sellable. So Carter held an "if you can haul it, you can have it" promotion to get rid of the spas that they couldn't sell.

"They key is having a sales and service team that can handle the graduation from a *free* spa customer to a *used* or *new* spa

customer. Our team, salesmen Scott Culver and Ian Radin, co-owner Kari Trsinar and service pro Mike Velasco are as good as it gets at taking care of our customers and helping them with the transition," Carter says.

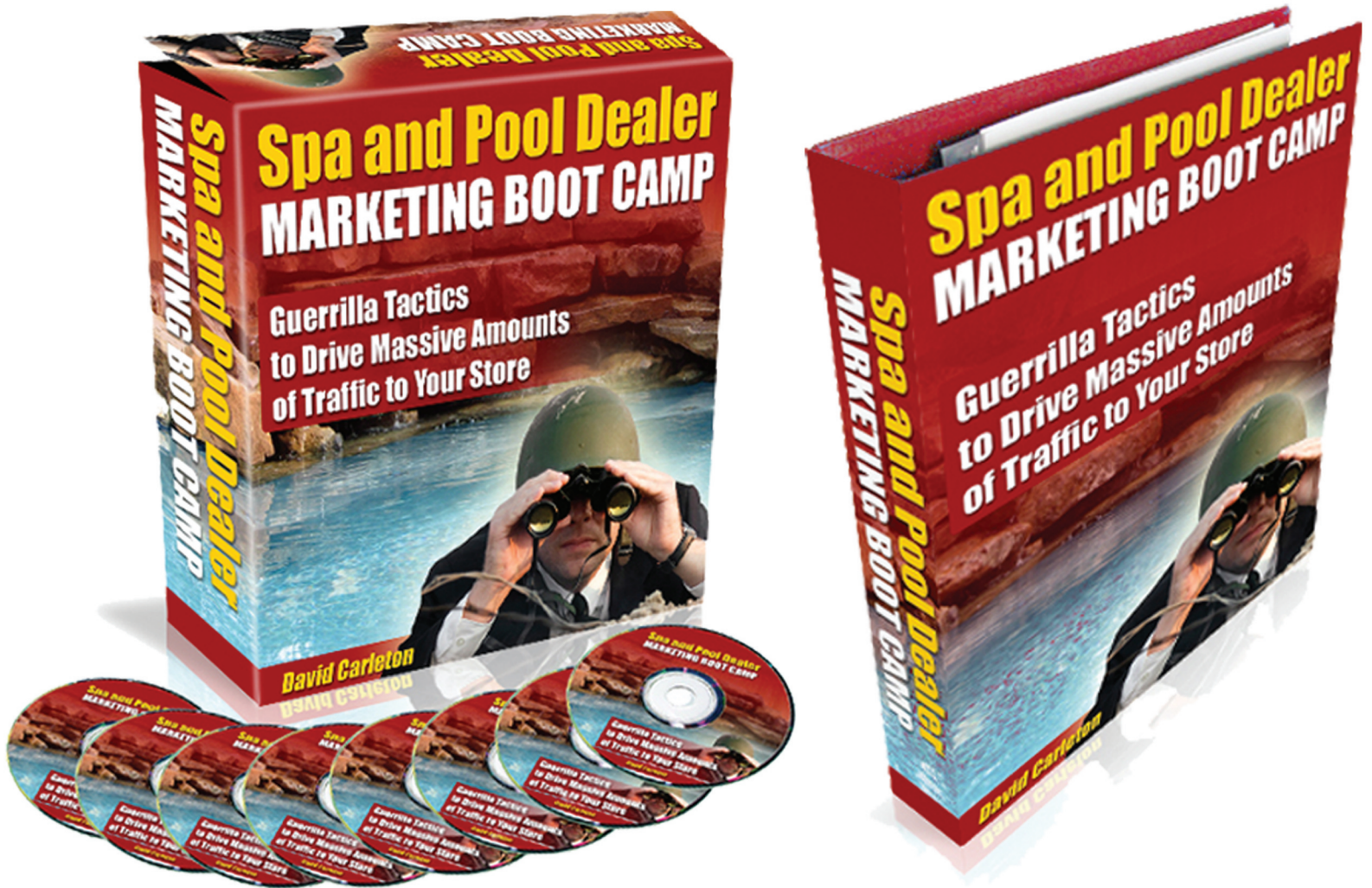
But don't think that the sale's purpose was just to move old junk, what it accomplished was generate a tremendous amount of traffic.

"It wasn't all qualified traffic, we had some people just looking for a free spa," Carter says. They did manage to give away some used hot tubs, sell a few used hot tubs and the real success: Premier Backyard sold just shy of 20 new spas.

"This is usually a good promotion for us. We'll run it several times throughout the year as we accumulate used spas. Considering that most people are looking for and expecting great deals, this has proven to be a reliable traffic driver, even more so during challenging economic times," Carter says. ■

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Google Analytics: The Key to Qualified Leads

CLOSELY MONITORING YOUR HOT TUB BUSINESS' WEBSITE TRAFFIC WILL HELP YOU IMPROVE YOUR ONLINE LEAD CONVERSION. BY KAYLENE CRANDALL

HAVE YOU UNDERESTIMATED the importance of analyzing your hot tub business' website traffic? If you haven't questioned what your site visitors are looking at or how they got there in the first place, you are missing out on a fountain of valuable information.

Finding these answers will help you recognize where to make adjustments and improvements that you haven't distinguished yet. Therefore, you will discover how to attract and maintain your most relevant website visitors.

this may take a minute or two to figure out if you aren't code savvy, but there is no need to panic if you just follow the step-by-step instructions provided.

The tracking begins working immediately and you are provided with an abundance of helpful information. With so many features and benefits provided, they may not all be applicable to your hot tub business needs, but there are more than a few excellent resources you'll want to tap into to begin improving your website:

If you haven't questioned what your website visitors are looking at on your site or how they got there in the first place, you are missing out on a fountain of valuable information. Finding the who, what, where, when and how of your website will help you recognize where to make adjustments and improvements that you haven't distinguished yet.

So how and where is this information found? It can seem like a huge task and you may not feel confident enough in your computer abilities to venture out on your own. But there is a solution: Google Analytics, a simple, free service that anyone can feel comfortable using.

WHAT IT DOES

"Google Analytics shows you how search rank correlates with conversion and revenue for every keyword you buy" (GOOGLE.COM/ANALYTICS). Basically, Google Analytics will do the work for you by creating detailed statistics and easy-to-understand reports on how to strengthen the desired results of your website.

HOW IT WORKS

Ultimately, you start by signing up for a free account and proceed by pasting the Google Analytic tracking code into your website pages. According to customer reviews,

Keyword Comparison

As we've discussed in previous issues of *SpaRetailer*, keyword selection is very important to help bring traffic to your site. Google Analytics will track and compare your ad and keywords on Google and other search engines so you know exactly where your traffic is coming from – whether it's direct traffic, referring sites, search engines, keywords or other campaigns. Some example keywords are "portable hot tubs," "spas," "hot tubs," "portable spas," etc.

AdWords Integration

When used with Google AdWords (a pay-per-click advertising program), users can determine which ads are performing well and which are not by viewing the conversion rate – the percentage of visitors who actually followed through with the intended action (i.e., submitting a form, requesting information,

downloading a file, etc.). After all, why not check the data and save yourself the guesswork?

Internal Site Search

After pasting the Google Analytics tracking code into your website pages, you can then analyze the data on your site's usage including: total number of visitors, average time spent on the site, percent of new/return visitors, bounce rate and pages per visit. This information becomes the key to understanding how effectively you promote your site.

Some information can be misleading, however. For example, make sure you look closely at the bounce rate (percent of single-page visits) as this will tell you how relevant your total number of visitors is. You may have a high number of visitors, but if you are getting a high bounce rate, you probably need to re-evaluate your keywords to help filter out uninterested traffic.

Trend and Date Slider

Want to know how well your website does during a certain time period or date range? The trend and date slider is a useful feature that allows you to slide color-coded sections to any time frame you may be concerned or curious about (holidays, weekdays, market trends, etc.) and see exactly how it compares to the long-term results. By doing so, you can find out when the prime time will be to promote a new product or send a newsletter.

WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

Once you find which features work best for you, make them easier to access by creating your custom dashboard. Now you are not only improving your site traffic and conversion rates, you are saving time and staying organized. This information is also available to share with other members of your business through sending out a one-time e-mail or scheduling regular e-mail reports. ■

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Your Spa &
Our Environment!**



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visit Booth #2809 at the Atlantic City Pool and Spa Show.**



Recent Legislation Affecting the Spa Industry

WHAT SPA RETAILERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TITLE 20 AND THE VIRGINIA GRAEME BAKER ACT.

VIRGINIA GRAEME BAKER ACT

The VGB Act was passed on December 19, 2007 to help reduce entrapments in pools and spas. Enforcement of the act began December 19, 2008 and requires the following:

- All drain covers manufactured, imported, distributed, or offered into commerce must conform to the new ASME/ANSI A112.19.8-2007 standard. This requirement applies to suction outlet covers for all spas, including residential portable hot tubs.
- All public spas (new and existing) must be retrofitted with covers and systems that meet the new ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 2007 standard. Compliant covers must be certified and stamped by the manufacturer or, in the case of Field Fabricated Outlets, by a Registered Design Professional, as stipulated in the ASME standard.
- All public spas with a single main drain, other than an unblockable drain, must employ one or more additional options.

Under no circumstances shall any submerged suction outlet be located on seating or lounge areas, or on the backrest(s) of such areas.

At the time of printing, there were currently not enough covers available for portable spas that met the requirements set forth by the law. The covers that were compliant drastically reduced the water flow rate, making the jets ineffective. The APSP and cover manufacturers were meeting with the Consumer Product Safety Commission to resolve these issues before the compliance deadline. The APSP website will provide the updates from these meetings.

TITLE 20

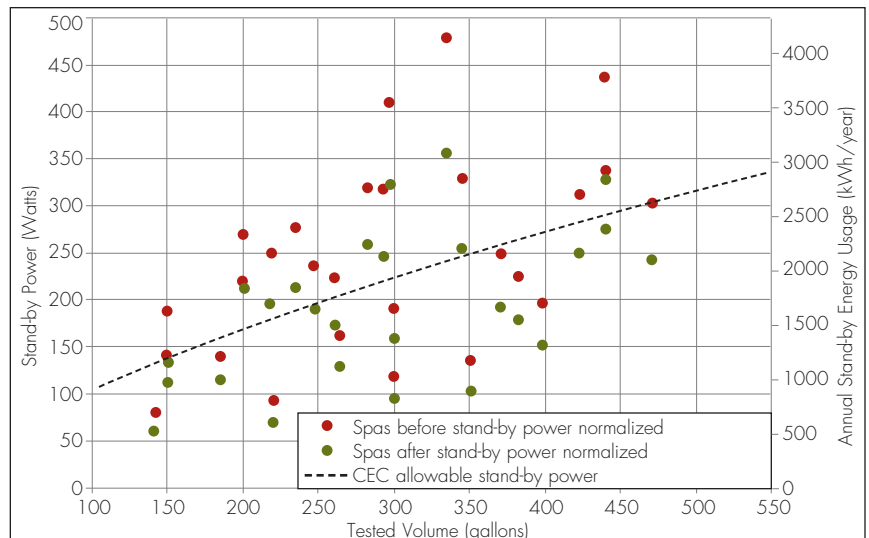
The industry came to an agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric and the California Energy Commission on Title 20 test protocol as a result of the spa testing and data analysis done by California Polytechnic State University, with the support of the APSP and various manufacturers and suppliers.

The Cal Poly study established a baseline power for all spas, which made the stand-by power required by the law attainable for most spas. Before the baseline stand-by power was established, smaller tubs had a hard time passing the requirements.

While this law is specific to California, other states will soon follow. Oregon and Connecticut have already passed legislation based on the California mandate. Keep in touch with your local representatives to see if energy laws in your state will affect the hot tubs you sell. ■

To get the latest updates on these and other regulations, visit APSP.ORG.

In order to pass the CEC mandated stand-by power, hot tubs needed to be near or below the dotted line. Using the findings from the Cal Poly study, most spas are now in accordance to Title 20.



How to Repair a Hot Tub Shell

IT TAKES PRACTICE TO MEND BLISTERING AND CRACKING SPA SHELLS.

BY ROBERT STUART



ROBERT STUART has been in the spa industry for over 20 years as a technician, store manager, factory rep, salesman and business owner. He currently owns Spring Spas and Home Recreation, Inc. in Colorado Springs, Colo. with his wife Tammy.

IF YOU'VE BEEN IN THE INDUSTRY for any amount of time you've encountered a cracked or blistered shell.

I often refer to industry technicians as the spa Ph.D.s, this being the case I would have to refer to acrylic repair specialists as hot tub oncologists.

Learning the ins and outs of shell repair can set you apart from common techs and make you a sought-after specialist. Those who excel at this craft are few and far between.

First, you should attempt to understand what caused the crack. If it was stress and you don't relieve it, the crack will come back. Likewise, if sunlight is hitting the lip of the spa causing blisters or cracks and you repair it without getting a cover for the shell, there's a chance the problem will return.

The specialty tools you're going to need will be a die grinder (I like to use the RotoZip for an electric grinder, but air grinders are much more effective), a heat gun, a single action airbrush (1 cfm) and a heavy-duty buffer.

Our main source in the spa industry for acrylic repair products is Multi-Tech Products, headquartered in Murrieta, Calif. Rob Close, the owner of Multi-Tech, works with most spa manufacturers and acrylic suppliers to come up with tailor-made kits for their specific colors and material types. With their products, you have a ready-made repair kit in the color and type you need along with the supplies and step-by-step instruction videos on repairing a shell and buffing out scratches. I think it's essential for every service center to have these videos on hand.

You will need to order a kit that corresponds

to the color and type of material you're working on before you begin. The kits come with mixing cups, stirring sticks, fillers, hardeners, paints, top-coats and texture, depending on the shell.

To repair blisters, you can often heat around the blister itself until it's flexible and poke a hole in it with a small drill bit or sharp tool to pop it and roll it back down with a wooden dowel (this is considered a temporary repair and not recommended by Multi-Tech).

The other way to repair a blister is to grind it out and follow the steps of crack repair.

To mend cracks, first stop the crack by grinding it out, making sure to grind past both ends to stop the crack (figure 1). On some materials you may want to get behind the shell and reinforce it with an ABS repair kit to prevent re-cracking (figure 2). Fiberglass repair will not stick on ABS long term without other bonding agents.

Grind the crack in a "V" about 1/8"-3/16" deep or until you get to the bottom of it (figure 3).

Once it's ground out, be sure to clean everything well, sand the burrs off the edges and clean the dust away. I like to use tape on either side of the crack to prevent scratches and filler from getting on other parts of the shell.

Depending on the type of shell, you will fill the crack differently. If it's a smooth surface, you can use the acrylic fill in three stages (see Multi-Tech's website); if it's a textured or granite surface you'll fill with a resin matched material (figure 4).

You can speed up the curing time between fills with a heat gun around the outer edges, but be careful and use a low heat. If the surface gets too hot, you can cause a multitude of issues including

blisters and peeling of the cracked area. Always do your final fill slightly above the shell surface so that you can sand it down evenly.

Once you've ground, filled and sanded down the crack, you need to make it look like the rest of the shell. Here is where junior high art class finally pays off – you get to paint and texture the surface.

Granite surfaces are the easiest for me; simply fill with the granitex repair kit color-matching filler, sand down and texture by dabbing the texturing compound with a paintbrush (figure 5).

Smooth surfaces are a bit tougher because you need to sand them very smooth, then airbrush a primer, color coat and clear coat over the top until you match color and gloss.

Swirl or multi-colored areas take a bit more time and practice with your airbrush to match but it is very possible for anyone who takes a serious interest and practices (figure 6). Multi-Tech's video and website can show many more techniques and details for all shell repair and should be viewed before starting on any shell repair project.

I can't stress enough the need for safety in doing repairs of this type. Some of the glues, paints and solvents used in the spa industry can have health risks and caution should be used. Wear a

mask, work in an open or well-ventilated area and wear gloves. Safety glasses also are a must when you consider the damage small pieces of plastic and fiberglass can do to your eyes.

It's very important when doing a shell repair to set realistic expectations with customers. For example, let them know that if they look close they might be able to see the repair. I like to tell them it won't match exactly, but it will be close; that way if you get an exact match, they're thrilled.

The final step on most shell repairs will be to buff the area and make it match the rest of the shell. It's very important to not "dig in" with the buffer and damage what you've fixed. Multi-Tech also has a video on buffing that would be good for techs, delivery crew members, salespeople or anyone who might need to get a scratch out of a shell.

Last but not least, if there are a significant number of cracks or blisters, it's probably not repairable or cost effective to repair. In such cases, it's a great time to put on your sales hat and talk to the customer about a new spa! No one wants to own something broken and you don't have to sell them on spa ownership, they obviously like their spa or they wouldn't have called to have it fixed! ■

For more information on shell repair and to purchase shell repair kits, visit MULTITECHPRODUCTS.COM.

CRACK REPAIR STEP BY STEP

Figure 1: Stop the crack by grinding it out.

Figure 2: Reinforce the shell with an ABS repair kit.

Figure 3: Grind the crack in a "V" about 1/8"-3/16" deep or until you get to the bottom.

Figure 4: If the shell has a smooth surface, you can use the acrylic fill in three stages; if it's a textured or granite surface you'll fill with a resin matched material

Figure 5: To fill a granite surface, fill with the granitex repair kit color matching filler, sand down and texture by dabbing the texturing compound with a paintbrush.

Figure 6: Swirl or multi-colored shells take more time and practice with your airbrush to match.

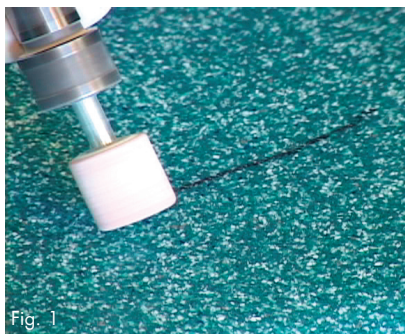


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

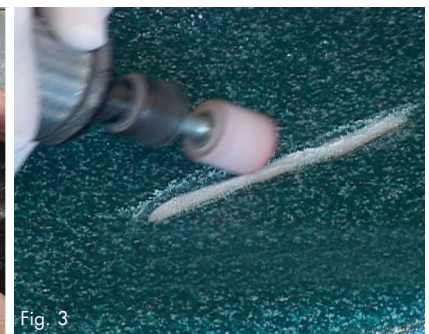


Fig. 3

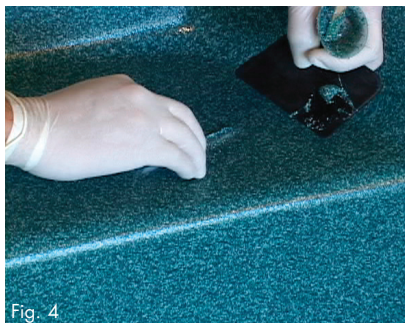


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Your Store's Biggest Customer – You

DETERMINE WHERE YOUR FINANCES ARE AT AND WHERE YOU CAN MAKE ESSENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO WEATHER ANY ECONOMIC STORM.

REDUCING EXPENSES can sometimes have the same net affect on your bottom line as selling new hot tubs. Our quiz can help you recognize where you could save money and increase your profits.

1) AM I PLANNING AHEAD?

- 1) I have a three-year business plan that I modify continually.
- 2) I establish a plan on a yearly basis.
- 3) I can barely keep track of my day.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"Now is the time to act fast. Eliminate cost where you can and plan for the future. Planning ahead, as opposed to an accountant telling you what you made/or lost 15 days after the accounting period closes, enables the business owner to predict and set their own profit. This can be done when a strategic profit model is in place."

– Paul J. Rauseo, Managing Director, World Headquarters, George S. May International Company, Park Ridge, Illinois

2) DO YOU KNOW EVERY SINGLE EXPENSE YOUR BUSINESS INCURS?

- 1) I pay all the bills, I sign all the checks – nothing is spent without my approval.
- 2) I keep track of only high-dollar items.
- 3) As long as we aren't in the red, I'm happy with our expenses.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"We have not replaced employees lost through attrition and we are closely monitoring inventory. We have scaled back some of our larger advertising expenses and are focusing more on inexpensive marketing like the Send Out Cards Program, in-store signage, direct mail to existing customer base, etc. We are also revamping our website to be more current and adding an online store component for spa accessories."

– Amy Barto, General Manager, Barto Pool & Spa, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

3) WHAT ARE MY EXPENSES GOING TO BE AT THE END OF THE PERIOD? WHAT DO I WANT MY PROFITS TO BE?

- 1) I live by the Revenues – Profit = Expenses equation.
- 2) I sometimes monitor expenses.
- 3) Profit is the only number I pay any attention.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"Revenues – Profit = Expenses. This equation is a basic assessment of the three major components of any business: expenses, revenues and what's left over. In the past, this model placed profit as the outcome number; many times it was negative or lower than expected. With profit as a fixed input variable, the amount is decided on and controlled in advance. Too many businesses use an old model, with profit as the result and don't realize how much money they have generated (or lost) until the accounting period ends. So factoring in profit is critical."

– Paul J. Rauseo, Managing Director, World Headquarters, George S. May International Company, Park Ridge, Illinois

4) DO YOU KNOW YOUR PERCENTAGES (I.E., COST OF LABOR PERCENTAGE, GROSS PROFIT PERCENTAGE)?

- 1) I look at our percentages on a daily basis and evaluate if we are meeting our goals.
- 2) My sales staff keeps me posted on how things are going about once a week.
- 3) If it involves fractions and math computations, I leave that to my accountant.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"Whatever you do, look at your numbers, every day, every week and every month. Create sales budgets and goals. Have your accountant and your banker involved and to a lesser extent, your employees. For them, use percentages and not dollar amounts because if you can't measure, you can't see how deep you are in."

– Ken Ax, President and CEO, Brook Valley Appliances, Manchester Center, Vermont

5) WHAT DO MY COSTS LOOK LIKE?

- 1) I evaluate each department on a weekly basis to see where we can cut costs.
- 2) I cut costs when something is brought to my attention.
- 3) If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"It is important to acknowledge and evaluate each and every cost, then see where you can make cuts. How can you cut inventory costs (maybe have less hot tubs on the showroom floor, order upon purchase)? Can I pass the cost on to the customer (increase delivery and installation fees based on fuel cost, time and expertise)? Can I save money by outsourcing delivery and installation?"

– Paul J. Rauseo, Managing Director, World Headquarters, George S. May International Company, Park Ridge, Illinois

6) ARE YOU COMFORTABLE TALKING TO YOUR BANKER?

- 1) We talk so often I should set up a standing appointment.
- 2) I see him on an as-needed basis.
- 3) After he denied a personal loan last year, we haven't talked much.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"If you're not, [comfortable talking to your banker] find a different banker. You need to talk, talk, talk to your banker. Don't get quiet now – they need to hear what's going on in your business. And talk to different ones, because different banks use different ratios."

– Ken Ax, President and CEO, Brook Valley Appliances, Manchester Center, Vermont

7) CAN YOU HELP CONSUMERS GET CREDIT?

- 1) I'm exploring new ways and programs for my customers to get credit.
- 2) I depend on my manufacturer to set up all our financing programs.
- 3) If they aren't approved for credit, that's tough.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"It's often said you have to spend money to make money, but with this economic climate, in some markets that can be suicidal when an increase in sales doesn't follow an investment in additional advertising and marketing. No amount of convincing will close more sales if most consumers don't have the money and can't borrow the money to buy your product."

– Nate Buchan, Retail Manager, Brown's Pools & Spas, Douglasville, Georgia and four other metro Atlanta locations

8) BE REALISTIC, BUT POSITIVE.

- 1) The glass is half full.
- 2) The glass is half empty.
- 3) I don't have a glass.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"Remember, it's a bell curve, we didn't get here overnight and it's not going to change Tuesday either. So batten down your financials and ride it out – there are huge opportunities in a down market. Keep your eyes and ears open and we'll see you on the other side."

– Ken Ax, President and CEO, Brook Valley Appliances, Manchester Center, Vermont

While this SR quiz can give you an idea of where your company is financially, it isn't scientific. Take some time to utilize a proven method of measuring your financial state with George S. May's Financial Fitness Calculator.

GSMIC.COM/FFC/
CALCULATOR.ASPX

QUIZ RESULTS

Add up the numbers corresponding to your response to see where you stand.

1) AM I PLANNING AHEAD?

Score: _____

2) DO YOU KNOW EVERY SINGLE EXPENSE YOUR BUSINESS INCURS?

Score: _____

3) WHAT ARE MY EXPENSES GOING TO BE AT THE END OF THE PERIOD? WHAT DO I WANT MY PROFITS TO BE?

Score: _____

4) DO YOU KNOW YOUR PERCENTAGES?

Score: _____

5) WHAT DO MY COSTS LOOK LIKE?

Score: _____

6) ARE YOU COMFORTABLE TALKING TO YOUR BANKER?

Score: _____

7) CAN YOU HELP CONSUMERS GET CREDIT?

Score: _____

8) BE REALISTIC BUT POSITIVE.

Score: _____

TOTAL:

On top of your finances: 8-13

Doing well, but definitely room for improvement: 14-19

The hands-off approach could make you crash and burn: 20-24

Create a Positive, Upbeat and Caring Workforce

HAPPY EMPLOYEES YIELD HAPPY CUSTOMERS WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR EXPERIENCE AT YOUR HOT TUB STORE. BY JOANNA BRANDI

GIVEN THE CHOICE of dealing with a positive, upbeat employee with a can-do attitude, or dealing with a disgruntled, distracted, uninterested one, which would you choose? No contest. Customers always want the best experience possible; they want it to be easy and pleasant to do business with your company. Enter the real challenge of business: relationship management. Until all of our business is done electronically, managers still need to be concerned with the performance of the most important link in the customer connection – employees.

Whether answering the phone, fixing equipment, selling a product or reconciling an unpaid invoice, the quality of the interaction between one human being and another is how the customer determines how much you care about them and their business. If your company's relationship skills do not equal or exceed your sales and marketing skills, your lifetime relationship with that customer is in danger.

As a manager, you know that people prefer to do business with a pleasant person. As a customer, you instinctively know that people want to do business with people who enjoy what they are doing, are having a good time doing it and genuinely care about being able to help you solve your problem or achieve your goals.

1. REMEMBER, THE BEST TEACHER IS A GOOD EXAMPLE. First, examine your own behavior. Are you talking the positive talk or are you mumbling beneath your breath, "Three more days 'til Friday"? Listen to your own language. Do you frame things in the positive or do you often start your sentences with "No"? Do you say, "Yes, but..." negating the first half of your sentence with your last? Optimistic people tend to adapt easier to change, be more creative, have more fun and be healthier than pessimistic people. Looking for innovation? Think optimism.

2. LEARN (AND TEACH) THE POWER OF POSITIVE SELF-TALK. Often our internal chatter is negative; reprogram your own thoughts and then listen carefully for signs of it in others. For example, when you hear someone saying, "Boy, am I stupid," gently coach them away from that attitude by replying with, "Don't be so hard on yourself. You may have made a bad decision; we all do from time to time. Let's talk about what you've learned, and how to avoid it in the future."

Our body responds to our self-talk; if we tell ourselves we are disorganized, we behave that way. Tell yourself,

with conviction, you are an organized person and your behavior will begin to change. Our brain responds literally, like our computers. Learn to replace negative programming with positive.

3. BAN WHINING. One whiner in the group can bring everyone down, just like an infection, whining spreads. Put one strong whiner in a room and they can start a pity party, so stop it at the source. Learn to spot them during the interview process and don't hire them in the first place unless you are prepared to keep vigilance over their behavior and attempt to change it. Whiners love whining. Put a "No Whining" sign on your door.

4. TEACH PEOPLE THE ART OF WIN-WIN. In our competitive society we have a win/lose mentality. That might be a good strategy to fill a sports stadium, but it's not a good way to run a company. Help people to understand that thinking win-win opens up the possibility for new solutions. Remember, in the 21st century it's innovation and creativity that will give us the edge. Innovation comes from open minds and 'possibility' thinking.

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5. LEARN, TEACH AND REWARD TIMEOUT STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES.

A recent Harris Poll says that 90 percent of all Americans live in a state of chronic stress. No wonder customers get treated so poorly. Make sure your employees understand the role they play in controlling their own stress and reinforce them when they do it correctly. "Bob, I noticed how well you reacted with that angry customer yesterday. I was glad to see you take a deep breath and not react defensively – good job – you saved a valuable customer and your own health as well. I'm proud to have you on the team." We don't have control over circumstances; we do have control of how we perceive and react to them.

6. GET PSYCHED! Recognize that almost 80 percent of what the average person takes in is negative. You've got a job to do. Create a positive sanctuary in your workplace. Develop a corporate library that includes motivational literature, audio and videotapes. Play audiotapes and videotapes in breakrooms, keep inspirational books around and start discussion groups. Create positive energy, people inside and outside the company will feel it and want to come back for more.

7. SMILE. When you activate the smiling muscles in your face, you activate the endorphins in your brain that help you feel good. You can't be depressed when you are smiling and smiles are contagious. So smile.

As a manager, it's your responsibility to help to create an experience for your customer that has the word 'value' all over it. Customers respond better to a company that provides them with a quality product at a fair price served-up by positive, upbeat, can-do people. Who wants to do business with a grump?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JoAnna Brandi teaches workshops on creating positive customer experiences. She is publisher of the Customer Care Coach® a weekly leadership training program on mastering "The Art and Science of Exquisite Customer Care." CUSTOMERCARECOACH.COM and Monday Morning Motivation – Positive Self Talk for the Customer Service Pro MONDAYMORNINGMOTIVATION.NET. She is the author of two books on customer loyalty and one on positive thinking.

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ited, LLC, a Pennsylvania based manufacturer, to solve the major hot tub owner complaint; replacing the cover due to water weight gain. Independent test certificate shown on the web site, www.acculokhottubcovers.com, proves that AccuLok™ covers prevent up to 4X

Finally, retailers can meet customer's demands for a better product, and at bigger profits!

the water absorption. These covers can be identified by the thick, black, heat sealed material, tightly wrapping the insulating foam



core. The exact technology of this exclusive material is patent pending and proprietary, according to the company.

Are your customers concerned about hot tub operating costs? The AccuLok™ patent pending design offers a full 7" heat shield trapping large amounts of escaping heat. This seamless design offers significant energy savings. Thermal images on the web site compare the AccuLok™ design with a typical hot tub cover; the results are obvious. With AccuLok™, customers can have a cover that lasts and performs. That means sales for the retailer and satisfaction for the customer.



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CUSTOMER DNA

Do you know your customers inside and out?
Think your customers were the same in 2008 as they were in 1990?
Meet who your customers are today, who they will be
in the future and what they expect from a modern hot tub retailer.

BY MEGAN MCCORMACK

CUSTOMER CHROMOSOMES



INFORMATION HIGHWAY

In 1998, 87 percent of people researching a hot tub brand or retailer looked for that information in the Yellow Pages. By 2008, only 11 percent turned to the Yellow Pages. Within the span of ten years there was almost a direct reverse in how customers got hot tub related information. Today, 78 percent of potential hot tub buyers look to the Internet to find out about brands and dealers.

This switch is dramatic. For retailers who don't have a website or actively seek new customers with online methods, these statistics should be an awakening. Not only do consumers do most of their research online, the format also gives them the ability to compare more brands and products. This creates a more educated and informed buyer, it also creates a buyer who has higher expectations.

People now expect instant results. They aren't content to wait until they get home to check game scores and e-mail, thus they carry Internet-capable cell phones. In 1998, consumers deemed 6.2 days an acceptable amount of time to get follow up from retailers. Now the acceptable time isn't even 24 hours. However, this time warp doesn't translate into the length of time they take to make a purchasing decision. The average time spent deciding to buy is 97 days.

Technology has changed the sales process and with a quick look at these statistics you might draw the conclusion that hot tub buyers are young and tech savvy. But while customers obviously know their technology, the truth of the matter is buyers are aging.



MEET YOUR NEW BUYER

According to projections by the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2030 (when all of the baby boomers will be 65 and older) nearly one in five U.S. residents are expected to be 65 and older. This age group is projected to increase to 88.5 million in 2050, more than doubling the number in 2008 (38.7 million).

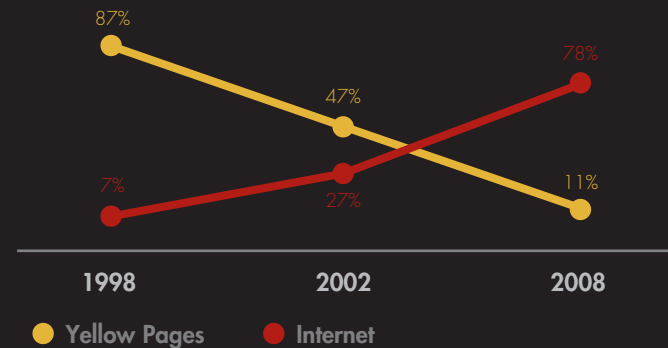
Already we're seeing this reflected in the reasons people give for purchasing a hot tub. In 1998, 67 percent of respondents said they bought a tub to spend more time with their spouse or significant other. In 2008, 41 percent said they purchased a tub to relieve health problems and stress. As these big spenders continue to age and health becomes a major concern for the baby boomers, this response and reasoning will grow.

HOT TUB BUYING HABITS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

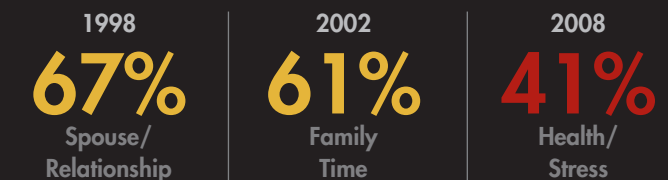
Qualified buyers are comparing more brands:



How buyers researched a hot tub brand/dealer:



Number one reason for buying a hot tub:



Buyers are taking more time to make purchase decisions:

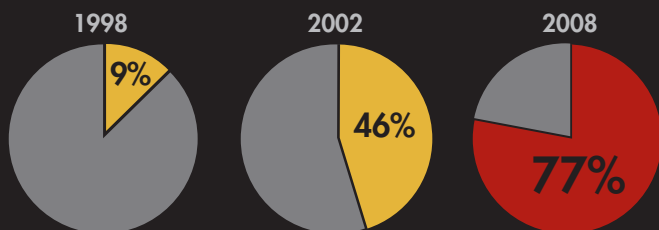


Expected dealer response time to buyer inquiries:



HOT TUB SELLING HABITS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

Percentage of spa retailers with active consumer websites:



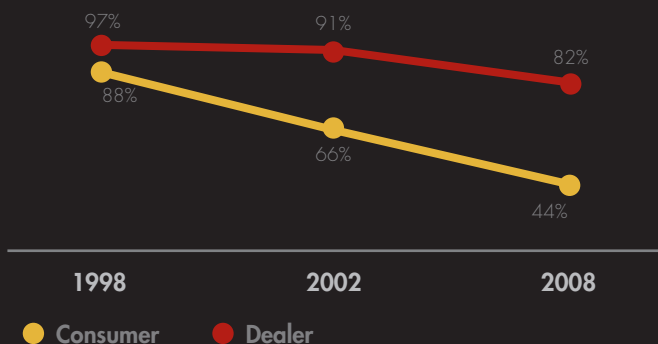
Sales dropping from offsite sales events:



ADVERTISING BUDGET SPENT ON OFFSITE SALES EVENTS



Preferred method of contact (telephone):



DEALER CHROMOSOMES

So are retailers keeping up with their quickly changing consumers? Unfortunately, *SR* research shows dealer selling habits tend to lag behind the customer demographics. And while the economy is down and sales are tough, it is essential for dealers to improve.

CHANGE OF VENUE

Many remember when home shows and fairs generated numerous sales. In fact, many hot tub dealers didn't have a storefront and primarily sold at these venues. In 1998, 57 percent of hot tub sales came from offsite sales events. In 2008, only 22 percent of tub sales came from those same events. It's hard to say why these numbers are down. But if buyers are taking 97 instead of 38 days to decide to buy a hot tub, it is logical to assume that customers are foregoing impulse buys in order to research and comparative shop on their own.

In spite of the lack of sales brought in from offsite events, in 2008, 63 percent of retailers say that these events still represent their biggest advertising expense. These events are generally expensive to attend and each business should reevaluate the cost per lead that they incur at offsite events.

INTERNET HERE TO STAY

Consumers have latched on to the Internet. Retailers, however, are slow to show up for the party. While 78 percent of consumers look to the Internet to research hot tubs, only 77 percent of retailers have an active consumer website. That means that 23 percent of hot tub retailers have decided to ignore the main source of consumer information pertaining to their business.

The Internet is slowly overtaking the preferred feedback method of consumers as well. In 2002 more than half of consumers wanted to be contacted by telephone, and in 2008 more than half prefer the Internet, yet 82 percent of dealers still contact their leads by phone. A salesman may be more effective when he can speak with a customer, but a customer wants to do as much research as possible before getting a sales pitch. Therefore, automatic or instant replies to website inquiries are imperative to making customers comfortable with your store. These are now the professional norm and are expected.

● ● ● ● ●
PICK UP THE PACE

In the midst of doing business, it's easy for trends to pass by unnoticed. Cultural changes sometimes don't seem relevant to how your hot tub business should be run. However, the data is indisputable, the consumer has changed faster than the average hot tub store.

Modern businesses need to have an Internet presence. Whether it's an informational website that drives people to the store or an e-commerce site where customers can purchase hot tubs and related products, many consumers will disregard your store or miss it completely if they can't find you online.

It's also time to rethink your store's advertising, the content and the placement. Gone are the days where a bikini-clad, 20-something model is the best choice for your advertising. A middle-aged head of household, whether a man or a woman, needs to understand the benefits that a hot tub will have on their lifestyle now and as they age.

Don't assume that what worked in the past is still working, take the time to crunch the numbers and make sure you are spending your money wisely.

Carefully analyze the cost per lead of your ads. The high-cost of home shows may be worth it to you if you get five quality leads. Likewise, a Sunday newspaper ad may bring in the best leads in your particular community. Don't assume that what worked in the past is still working, take the time to crunch the numbers and make sure you are spending your money wisely.

You might find it beneficial to study the demographics of your area of the country. The U.S. Census Bureau website has several tools that can help you understand the makeup of your community. For instance, the Northeast has an older, predominantly white population while the Southwest's population is younger and predominantly Hispanic. Your advertising and marketing could become more effective and cost efficient if these characteristics are considered. ■

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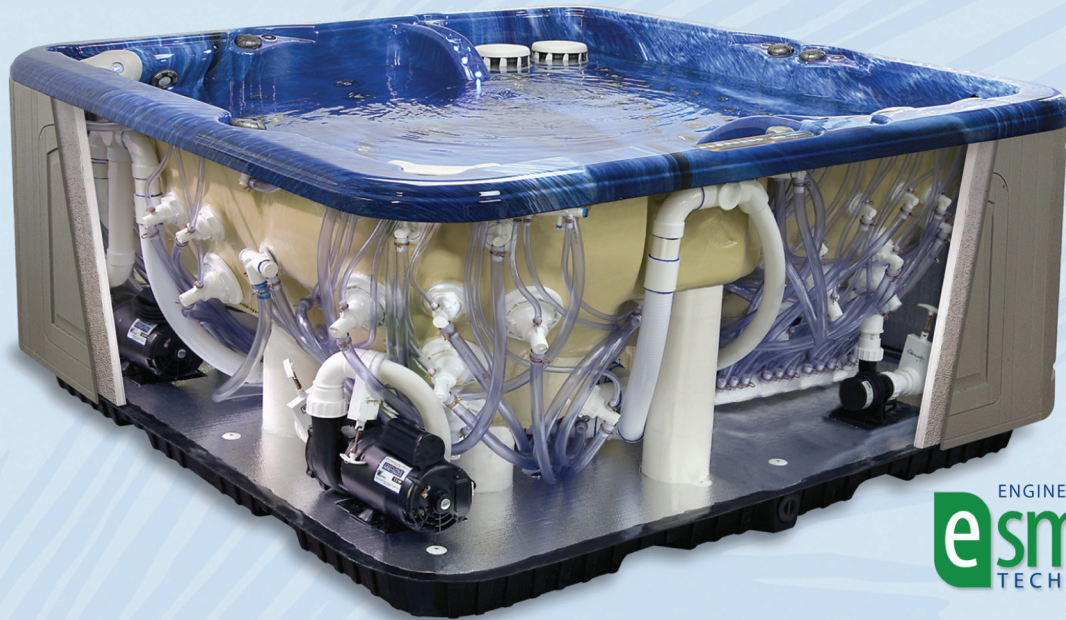


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HOT TUB STORE.**



**BY MEGAN MCCORMACK
AND OTHER CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN HARLOW**

Our name is *SpaRetailer*. Our mission is to provide valuable information to hot tub retailers. And now we are introducing a section called “Outside the Industry?” It didn’t feel right at first, how would this serve you, a traditional hot tub retailer? But as we explored the idea and carefully watched the market and economy, the need for this special section became clear and you should understand why it’s here and what it means for the industry.



Success Stories

Some of the most successful hot tub retailers during these hard economic times are relatively new to selling hot tubs – stores whose primary focus for years was selling furniture, appliances, fireplaces and sprinkler systems. In fact, if you take a look back at our “Retail Store Stars” in the Fall 2008 issue of *SR*, seven out of the 13 stores that we identified as having a good year were non-traditional retailers.

We aren’t suggesting that you start selling couches and bedding, the industry needs hot tub specialists and experts. But this gives you, a traditional hot tub retailer, the opportunity to learn from people who sell hot tubs in a different way. A furniture store will have a different sales and marketing approach to spas than a hot-tub-only store. This is your chance to find those new methods of getting the sales that have been eluding the industry.



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Healthy Manufacturers

As sales of new hot tubs has slowed over the last several years, most manufacturers are scrambling to find new ways to reach consumers and turn the tide. Brands must find new outlets for sales. Disappearing stores in your area may help you gain market share, but if manufacturers continue to lose dealers and sales, your wholesale prices will eventually go up. Less money will be allocated for developing new products – products you need to differentiate your store and attract new customers.

Our industry is at a crossroads. With the uncertain economy, rising unemployment and failure of other industries, it is time for the hot tub industry to come together. No one will be successful if the industry as a whole is unhealthy, so welcome and learn from the dealers that are coming from outside our industry – they represent industry expansion and health.



Innovation/Consumer Perception

The general public believes hot tubs are an extravagance, but should they be? Spa retailers should want there to be a hot tub in every household, just like washing machines and dishwashers. So maybe it's time to stop marketing hot tubs as a luxury and start marketing them as an everyday appliance. Expanding the dealer base from traditional stores that only carry hot tubs to non-traditional stores that carry a wide variety of compatible products, not only exposes more consumers to hot tubs, it also helps change their perception of what a hot tub is and how it should be used.

“While many traditional appliances started off in the kitchen and laundry room dedicated to making domestic chores simple, today they have spread throughout the house and to the backyard,” says Anthony Pasquarelli, communications manager for Jacuzzi Hot Tubs and Sundance Spas. “Air conditioners, outdoor refrigerators, garage refrigerators, outdoor televisions, barbecues and audio/video products are modern extensions of the appliance category. From that perspective, self-contained hot tubs fit within the broad definition and will likely gain increasing acceptance as a luxury appliance.”

Lyndon Throness, marketing director for Beachcomber Hot Tubs, remarks that back in the 1960s, something we commonly take for granted – dishwashers – were nearly unheard of. “But in the 1970s and 1980s they became a common household item and [it was a similar situation with] microwaves in the 1980s and 1990s,” he says. “People who bought these items couldn't believe that they got by without them in the



past, and we find our customers feel the same way about their hot tubs. We think it's a natural progression for people.”

More and more prominent stores are offering a mix of traditional appliances and hot tubs – all on one sales floor. One such company is Brook Valley Appliance in Manchester Center, Vt., a resort town with about 4,000 permanent residents. Ken Ax, president and CEO of Brook Valley Appliance, started selling appliances in 1985 and added hot tubs to his retail line ten years ago.

“Generally speaking, a home appliance is becoming less and less ‘portable’ [and tends to be] a functional product that is hooked up to various utilities such as electric and water, in a fairly permanent manner,” he explains. “Originally in just the kitchen, now appliances are in the laundry room, the wet bar, the outside kitchen, the wine room and the patio.”

And that's where hot tubs entered the picture for Ax, who displays about seven tubs in a large outdoor patio area. “In our market, anyway, I think spas are already widely accepted in the category of ‘high-end appliance.’ They're really glorified outside dishwashers with heaters and plumbing. They have electronic boards, electric pumps, heaters and motors – everything that a dishwasher would have, but they do need to be built to withstand more than a typical appliance.”

Across the country, John Ioppini is the outdoor sales manager for Idler's Appliances in Paso Robles, Calif. Idler's has been in the appliance business since 1954 and has been selling spas since November of 2006.

Ioppini's theory is that pretty much everyone needs to have a stove and a refrigerator. “Do we all really have to have a microwave, trash compactor or garbage disposal?” he asks. “Not really, but having a spa becomes a way of life, it becomes a necessity.”

As Ioppini describes it, a hot tub being considered a regular household appliance is a particularly prevalent feeling in California, thanks to the climate and hence, the clamor for blurring the line between indoor and outdoor living.

“We're still seeing a lot of people that want to renovate,” he says. “They may not be buying a new house, for example, but they're changing out a lot of kitchens and next, they'll update their outdoors. Here in California, hot tubs are a great fit for that.”

Another retailer who mixes it up in terms of spas and appliances is Mark Mesker, owner of Paint Connection Plus in Pagosa Springs, Colo. Mesker's store sells a variety of home products, including paint, appliances – and, since 1997, hot tubs. Mesker defines appliances as anything in your home that runs on electricity or gas that improves the quality of your life. “And spas are used regularly by homeowners and they definitely improve the quality of one's life,” he adds.



Brook Valley Appliance CEO, Ken Ax, says hot tubs are a perfect fit for his high-end appliance customer.

Mesker sees a huge tie-in between thinking of spas as just another appliance and the fact that people are becoming increasingly health conscious. Along with health, people are staying at home more often than in the past. "Most people are taking home appliances a lot more seriously because they're spending a lot of time in their upgraded kitchen, in their home exercise room, in their home theater or in their spa," says Mesker. "It becomes a part of their everyday life – 'this is what I do several times a week' – and that means their spa is definitely a home appliance, kind of a lifestyle staple. And they'll definitely use their spa a lot more frequently than a lawn mower or snow blower."



Introducing...

Beginning in the next issue of *SR*, we will be adding a new section, "Outside the Industry." A place for you, the retailer, to see what an appliance or furniture dealer has to say about selling hot tubs, a place for manufacturers to explore new sales outlets and a place for the industry as a whole to grow. ■

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SUNBELT SPAS **Booth 3311**

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NESPA PRESENTS "CODE FORUM" FOR INDUSTRY POOL & SPA PROFESSIONALS

Monday, January 26

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Atlantic City Convention Center

Member Discount Fee: \$99

Non-Member Fee: \$149

Fee includes refreshment break and lunch.

Are you struggling to understand exactly how your state and local codes affect your business? There is still much confusion regarding how to comply with all the recent construction, safety and energy codes that regulate the industry.

Join your peers at the first Atlantic City Pool & Spa Show "Code Forum", where the most knowledgeable experts will explain and discuss codes, regulations and laws that all pool builders, service professionals and designers must know. This could be the most important five hours of education in which you participate.

Topics to be discussed:

- Suction Entrapment Prevention Requirements
- Pools without Submerged Suctions (main drains)
- Atmospheric Vacuum Relief Devices
- Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act
- Suction Outlet Covers
- Electrical Bonding Requirements for Pools and Spas (NEC 2005)
- Title 20 Energy Code Language and Products That Meet It
- State by State Breakout Sessions

Who Should Attend:

- Builders, Service Technicians, Construction Supervisors
- Mechanics, Retailers
- Office Managers, CEOs, Manufacturers
- Architects, Contractors
- Sub-Contractors, Code Officials

APSP CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS

Tuesday, January 29

12:00 p.m.

All educational sessions have been approved for credit by the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals for the Certified Building Professional, Certified Service Professional, Retailers of Excellence and the Certified Hot Tub Technician Program. APSP will also be offering qualifying and certification examinations on Tuesday, January 29, at noon.

Please contact Bird Dawson, APSP Education Processes Manager, at 703-838-0083, ext. 152, to register for the examinations.

EDUCATIONAL PRICING

Comprehensive multi-track, multi-level education programs are available with new ideas and tactics to help build your business, perfect your skills or just increase your knowledge. There will be several new business topics and speakers as well as commercial track seminars for those in the commercial end of the pool business.

Education Seminar passes for both Technical and Business sessions are required for attendees. Business passes are available for individual days or at a reduced rate 4-Day All-Show Pass. Special sessions are not included in the All-Show Pass and must be purchased separately. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged as some business seminars have limited seating.

All Show 4-Day Technical Seminar Pass

(Your badge is your pass)

NESPA/APSP Members: FREE

Non-Members: \$35

All Show 4-Day Business Seminar Pass

(Best value)

NESPA/APSP Members: \$95

Non-Members: \$170

Individual 1-Day Pass for Monday only, Tuesday only, or Wednesday only Business Seminars

NESPA/APSP Members: \$55

Non-Members: \$85

Individual 1-Day Pass for a Thursday only Business Seminar

NESPA/APSP Members: \$35

Non-Members: \$45

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

2009 SHOW SEMINARS

Make room in your schedule for all the training available at the conferences and stay ahead of your competitors.

 = Hot tub interest conferences

MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2009 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The Bid Process for Commercial Construction and Renovation

Speaker: Robert Wilcox, Robert M. Wilcox Associates, Inc.

Indoor Pool Dehumidification and Reclamation

Speaker: Kevin Ruddy, Omega Pool Structures

10 Steps to Entrepreneurial Success

Speaker: Jeffrey Scott, Glen Gate Company/Landscape Success Systems

Motion is Money

Speaker: David Rose, CNA Insurance

12:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Heater Repairs

Speaker: Tom Apt, RayPak Pool and Spa Products

Pneumatic Spa Controls and Equipment Troubleshooting (limit 30)

Speaker: Marco Munguia, Allied Innovations

Safety Cover Installation

Speaker: Tim Genthner, Merlin Industries

Water Chemistry: Beyond the Basics

Speaker: John Puetz, Advantis Technologies

Solar Heater Installation, Operation and Sales

Speakers: Win Hayes and Kevin Wert, Sunshine Solar Technology

Give it Your Best Shot! Gunite and Shotcrete in Swimming Pool Construction

Speaker: Ron Lacher, P.E., C.B.P., Pool Engineering, Inc.

Achieving Sales Success in Today's Economy

Speaker: Mario Rossetti, Rossetti Enterprises

Goal Planning with A Purpose: The "ZYX" Approach

Speaker: Grant Mazmanian, Pinnacle Group International

2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Tools of the Trade for Service Technicians

Speakers: Marc Brown, We're your Pool Service, Ed Cohen, Ultimate in Pool Care

Automatic Control Systems (ORP) for Swimming Pools

Speaker: Terry O'Neill, If It's Water

Attracting and Retaining the High End Customer

Speaker: Jeffrey Scott, Glen Gate Company/Landscape Success Systems

Just the FAQs: Answers to Store Design, Renovation and Display Queries

Speaker: Linda Cahan, Cahan & Company

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2009 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Intro to Microbiology and Recreation Water Illnesses

Speaker: Roy Vore, Ph.D., DuPont

Heat Pump Installation in Northern Climates

Speaker: Mike Lucus, Jandy Industries

Know When It's time to Upgrade Your Older Spa Controls

Speaker: Marco Munguia, Allied Innovations

The Importance of Product Testing and Certification in the Industry

Speaker: Richard Martin, NSF Int'l

Mastering the Art of Negotiating

Speaker: Skillpath

Strategies for Contractual Risk Transfer

Speaker: David Ludwin, CNA Insurance

Power Excel – Tips and Tricks to Enhance Productivity

Speaker: James Spellos, Meeting U

Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act

Speaker: Dan Johnson, Swim, Inc.

8:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Hydraulic Component Compatibility for Pools

Speaker: Alex Krajewski, Zodiac Pool Care

Electro-Mechanical Spa Component Repair (limit 40)

Speaker: Willie Wise, Spa Parts Plus

Pump/Motor Operation and Troubleshooting

Speakers: Mike Childress, Pentair Pool and Water, Jack Gobeler, Marathon Electric

Chlorine Generators: Principles, Operation, Installation

Speaker: Sean Assam, Auto Pilot Purifying Systems

Basic Water Chemistry Applications

Speaker: Wayne Ivusich, Taylor Technologies

Electronic Hot Tub Component Repair – Hands On (Limit 30)

Speaker: Sophie Tremblay, Gecko Electronics, Inc.

Soils and How They Affect Your Pool Installation

Speaker: Neil Anderson, Neil O. Anderson and Associates

Overview and Assessment of Leaks in Swimming Pools

Speaker: Lance Anderson, Anderson Manufacturing Company

Design, Engineering and Construction of Vanishing Edge and Perimeter Overflow Pools

Speakers: Ron Lacher, P.E., CBP, Pool Engineering Inc., Lew Akins, Ocean Quest Pools by Lew Akins

Commercial Pool Renovation: A Checklist to Guide You

Speaker: Jack Stanley, Neptune-Benson

Making the Sale

Speaker: Stewart Bolno, Team Builders Plus

Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition – How to Invite, Incite and Ignite Extraordinary Performance

Speaker: Jay Forte, Humanentrics, LLC

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Automatic Control Systems

Speaker: Dave Pruchniewski, Hayward Pool Products

Energy Efficiencies for Pools and Spas – Title 20

Speaker: Steve Barnes, Pentair Pool and Water

Designing Large Commercial Systems to Meet the New Sanitary Codes

Speaker: Matt Cappello, P.E. Hunsaker-Councilman and Associates

Algae and How to Control It

Speaker: Jayme Gruen, Alden Leeds

The Secrets of Accounts Receivable Collection

Speaker: Skillpath

How to Be Unique in a Challenging Economy: Creative, Affordable Ideas for Store Design and Display

Speaker: Linda Cahan, Cahan & Company

Website Rx: Are You Reaching Your Customers?

Speaker: James Spellos, Meeting U

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2009 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Grounding and Bonding Requirements for Pools and Spas

Speaker: Wayne H. Robinson, CMI

Designing and Installing Large Pools with Gutter Systems

Speaker: Jack Stanley, Neptune-Benson

Risk Management Issues for Public Pools

Speaker: Alex Antoniou, National Swimming Pool Foundation

Fuel Gas Supply Issues and Troubleshooting for Pools and Spa Heaters

Speaker: Scott Wiegman, Hayward Pool Products

How to Not Market and Wreck Your Business

Speaker: Jon Goldman, Brand Launcher

Cut (the Waste) and Build (the Value) – A Strategy for Success

Speaker: Jay Forte, Humanentrics, LLC

Protect Your Company, Your Employees, Your Customers from Litigation

Speaker: Steven Getzoff, Lester, Schwab, Katz & Dwyer

8:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Advanced Chemistry and Sanitation (RWI)

Speakers: Roy Vore, Ph.D., DuPont Ellen Meyer, Ph.D., Arch Chemicals

Plaster Pools: Maintenance Stains and Surface Repair

Speakers: Randy Dukes, Aquavations Corp. Dennis Chapman, Jack's Magic

Math for the Pool and Spa Professional

Speaker: Trevor Sherwood, Pool Operation Management

Understanding the ANSI-APSP 5 Residential In-ground Pool Standard

Speaker: Stephen Toff, Toff's Pool Inspections

Electro-Mechanical Spa Component Repair (Encore - Limit 40)

Speaker: Willie Wise, Spa Parts Plus

In-ground Vinyl Liner Pools: Measurement and Installation

Speaker: Kevin Shea, Vyn All Products

Diving Board Measuring and Installation (SR Smith Certification)

Speaker: Bryan Mills, SR Smith

Creating Your Own Topographical Drawings

Speaker: Neil Anderson, Neil O. Anderson and Associates

Electrical Principles and Requirements for Service Technicians

Speaker: Danny Crump, Pentair Pool and Water

The Power of Job Costing

Speaker: Jeff Stokes, Next Level Contractor Systems

Why We Click with Some Customers and Clank with Others

Speaker: Stewart Bolno, Team Builders Plus

10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Vanishing Edge Pools: Problems and Solutions

Speaker: Ron Lacher, P.E., CBP, Pool Engineering Inc.

Tools of the Trade for Service Technicians

Speakers: Marc Brown, We're Your Pool Service; Ed Cohen, Ultimate in Pool Care

Ultra-Violet Disinfectant for Commercial and Residential Pools

Speaker: Ken Haagsma, Aquafine Corp./A Trojan Technologies Co.

Safety Pool Cover Installation - A-Z

Speakers: Mark Del Rocco and Fred Boehmcke, Loop-Loc, Ltd

Market or Die: How to Thrive in the New Economic Reality

Speaker: Jon Goldman, Brand Launcher

Good Just Isn't Good Enough - Creating a SuperService Workplace

Speaker: Jay Forte, Humanetrics, LLC

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2009 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Hands On Leak Detection Techniques

Speaker: Lance Anderson, Anderson Manufacturing Company

Commercial Applications for Chlorine Generators

Speaker: Sean Assam, Auto Pilot Purifying Systems

Suction Entrapment Prevention: A Basic Understanding That All Need to Know

Speaker: Scott Wiegman, Hayward Pool Products

Excavation Safety Overview

Speaker: Gary Mural, CNA Insurance

Caveat Contractor: A Best Practice Guide to Avoid Consumer Fraud Lawsuits

Speaker: Eric Probst, Porzio, Bromberg & Newman, PC

How Builders Can Get Top Dollar for Every Job

Speaker: Jeff Stokes, Next Level Contractor Systems


From Ordinary To Extraordinary!
Standing Out in Today's Market is Critical. Offer Your Customers a Unique Spa Surround that's beyond the Ordinary.



Affordable Waterproof Murals Mount to Any Spa Cover

- Dealer drop-ship program
- Enhance in-store displays
- Great for demo spas
- Excellent at Home Shows
- Inspire new customers & close more sales
- Refresh your existing customer's spas
- Easy consumer installation
- Extreme durability - 2 year colorfast warranty
- Strong dealer margins
- No-inventory start-up packages available

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www.pharmaspa.ca

SpaRetailer

SPAZONE

WE'VE DUG UP WHAT DEALERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THESE HOT TUB BRANDS.
VISIT SPARETAILER.COM TO LEARN MORE AND SEE OTHER FEATURED MANUFACTURERS.

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ARCTIC SPAS SPAZONE



4549 52 St. Thorsby, AB T0C 2P0 Canada
877-777-1577 | ARCTICSPAS.COM

Arctic Spas, founded in 1994, has dealers in over 30 countries. The company is owned by former dealers, so they understand the trials and triumphs of retailing spas. Known for their product quality and innovation, Arctic Spas are designed for ultimate performance even in harsh climates. These award-winning spas also help satisfy the needs of the customer through cost-efficiency and an ergonomic design to help customers attain natural comfort and relaxation. Arctic Spas also offers a dealer program that provides a customized experience tailored to the specific needs of the retailer.

- **Hot Tub Families/Models**
Fox, Cub, Yukon, Glacier, Frontier, Kodiak, Klondiker, Summit, Tundra
- **Types of Hot Tubs**
Portable
- **Products Carried**
Chemicals, Gazebos, Steps, Billiard Tables and Accessories
- **Awards**
Spasearch Certified



CALDERA SPAS SPAZONE



1280 Park Center Drive, Vista, CA 92081

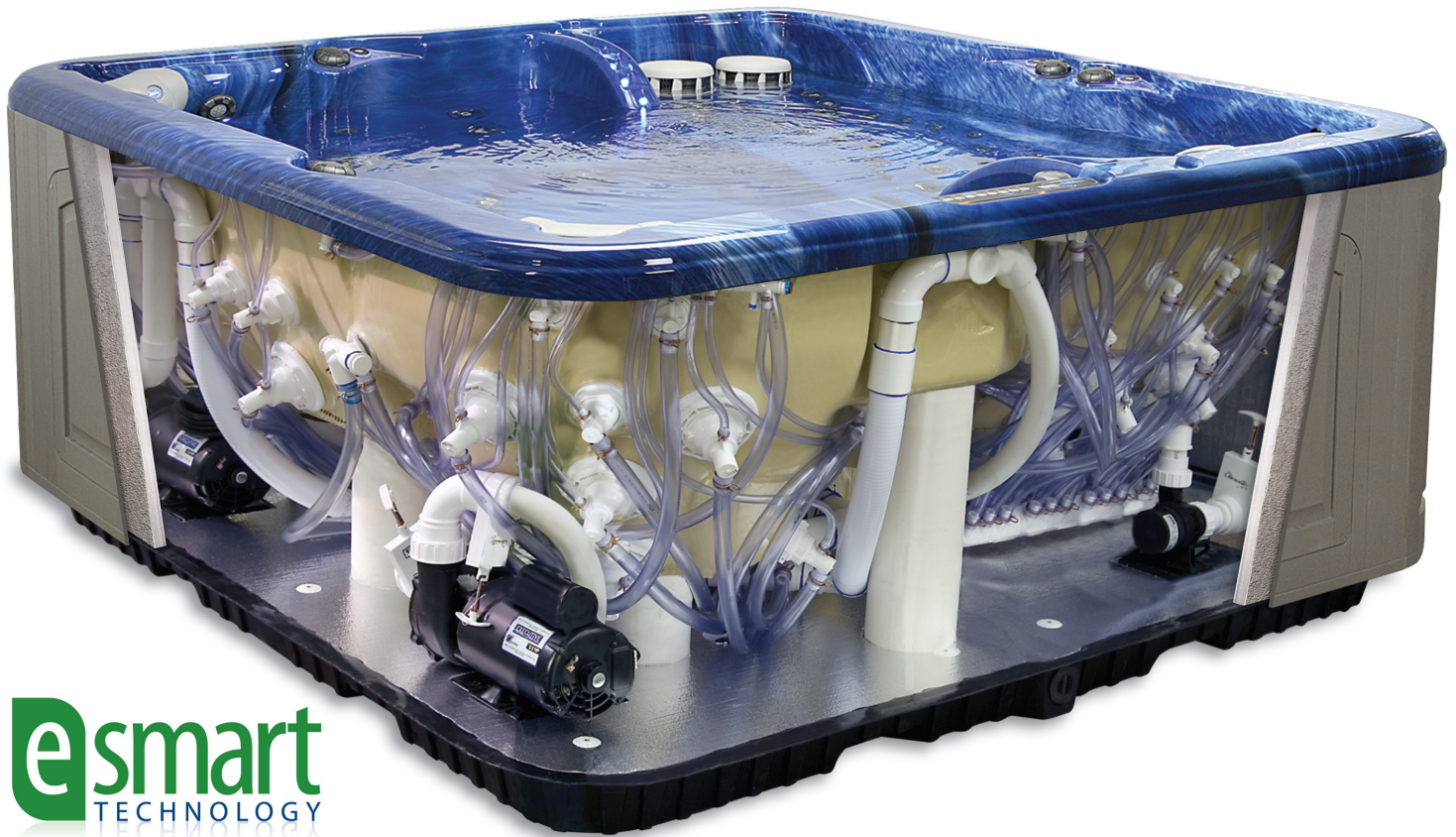
CALDERAPROMISES.COM

Culture, values and vision are fundamental to the growth process, according to Caldera Spas, who opened their doors in 1977. The company focuses on quality and performance when crafting their spas. Caldera Spas believes in teamwork and opening the lines of communication between their staff and retailers – even at the executive level. They allow dealers to partner with their dedicated support team for any customer service needs. Caldera Spas also offers dealers sales and marketing programs as well as training classes.

- **Hot Tub Families/Models**
Utopia Series, Aquatic Melodies Series, Paradise Series, Highland Series, C Series
- **Types of Hot Tubs**
Portable
- **Products Carried**
Chemicals, Remote Controls, Spa Cover-Removal Systems, Filters, Lights, Pillows, Covers, Vacuums, Umbrellas, Steps, Waterfalls, Music Systems
- **Awards**
Spasearch Certified


CalderaSpas®
Pure Comfort

CLEARWATER SPAS SPAZONE



eSmart
TECHNOLOGY



18800 Woodinville-Snohomish Road, Woodinville, WA 98072
800-791-1190 | CLEARWATERSPAS.COM

Clearwater Spas, which has been in the spa business for over 33 years, is one of the world's leading energy efficient hot tub suppliers. Their hope is to create spas that are not only energy efficient, but conserve natural energy while protecting the earth. Clearwater uses 'E-Smart Technology' to craft its spas with energy efficiencies, engineering and the environment in mind. One hundred percent recycled ABS is used to create the floors. Clearwater also recycles one hundred percent of our wood, plastic, and cardboard waste.

- Hot Tub Families/Models
Resort Series, Beachcraft Series,
XS Series
- Types of Hot Tubs
Portable
- Products Carried
Gazebos
- Awards
Spasearch Certified

Clearwater Spas

DIMENSION ONE SPAS SPAZONE



2611 Business Park Drive, Vista, CA 92081
760-727-7727 | D1SPAS.COM

Founded in 1977, Dimension One Spas began as a chain of retail hot tub stores. The owners later changed their focus to manufacturing spas so they could better meet the needs of their customers. The company now sells hot tubs and their Aquatic Fitness Systems around the world and has received awards for their services. Their products are energy efficient and offer unique options. Among these options are water and lighting features and sound systems. The company also introduced the world's first programmable hydrotherapy lounge.

- **Hot Tub Families/Models**
Aquatic Fitness Systems, Bay Collection, Reflections, @Home Hot Tubs
- **Types of Hot Tubs**
Portable, Swim
- **Products Carried**
Aquatic Exercise Equipment, Covers, Cover-Removal Systems, Decking, Enclosures, Gazebos, Lighting, Steps
- **Awards**
Spasearch Certified



DIMENSION ONE SPAS

DREAM MAKER SPAS SPAZONE



2452 Lake Emma Road, Lake Mary, FL 32746
888-768-6772 | DREAMMAKERSPAS.COM

Dream Maker Spas, founded in 1997, boasts that it is the world's largest manufacturer of rotationally (roto) molded spas. These one-piece units are completely portable and the shells are backed by a lifetime warranty. These roto-mold spas use a different method of heating water called the Dual Hot Stick, which eliminates the use of an electric heater. The goal of Dream Maker Spas is to offer portable spas that are affordable to consumers at every income level, while still giving dealers large profit margins.

- Hot Tub Families/Models
X500, X400, X200, X100,
Odyssey, Eclipse, Escape,
Fantasy, EzSpa, BigEz,
Grand Bahama, Lacaya,
Key West
- Types of Hot Tubs
Portable
- Products Carried
Steps, Chemicals,
Accessories, Covers

DreamMaker SPAS
Live the dream

DYNASTY SPAS SPAZONE



101 Dynasty Way, Athens, TN 37303
800-951-6224 | DYNASTYSPAS.COM

With the goal of delivering the best spa experience possible, Dynasty Spas shows quality craftsmanship, durability and up-to-date features in their designs. The company, founded in 1995, offers a unitized frame construction making for ultimate strength and support. To help reduce the need for chemicals, Dynasty Spas are ozone equipped. These spas also include a number of features like LED lighting on handrails and footwells, as well as stereo systems.

- **Hot Tub Families/Models**
Patio Series, American Series, Sun Valley Series, Neptune Series, Excalibur Series, Cinema Series, Aquex Swim Spa
- **Types of Hot Tubs**
Portable, Swim
- **Products Carried**
Outdoor Cooking Islands


Your Daily Vacation!™

EMERALD SPAS SPAZONE



4150 East Paris Ave., Kentwood, MI 49512
800-766-7727 | EMERALDSPA.COM

Emerald Spas began their business over 30 years ago and has since become one of the industry's most recognized and requested brands. They offer a quality product that is competitively priced and includes upgrades that consumers are looking for. Emerald Spas offers dealers support programs and marketing tools. The support programs are to help encourage growth within the dealer's company and the marketing tools include point-of-sale options. Also offered to dealers are on-site training, showroom support, and co-op-freight programs.

■ Hot Tub Families/Models
Manor Series, Estate Series,
Villa Series, Chateau Series

■ Types of Hot Tubs
Portable



It's where you want to be.

HOT SPRING SPAS SPAZONE



1280 Park Center Drive, Vista, CA 92081

HOTSPRING.COM

Hot Spring Spas, which was established in 1977, is known for their quality and value. Taking the work out of what the consumer needs to do to keep up with their spa, Hot Spring Spas offers AutoFresh, which is a water care system that maintains water freshness by automatically dispensing a chlorine-free sanitizer into the spa. The hot tubs also offer a filter system which filtrates 100 percent of the water before it enters the spa. Dealers also can use the company's DeTECHtive software to provide consumers with fast and accurate technical service.

- **Hot Tub Families/Models**
Aria, Vista, Grandee, Envoy, Vanguard, Sovereign, Prodigy, Jetsetter, Classic Series
- **Types of Hot Tubs**
Portable
- **Products Carried**
Chemicals, Covers, Cover-Removal Systems, Filters, Lights, Pillows, Remote Controls, Steps, Umbrellas, Vacuums, Waterfalls, Wireless Music, Custom Cabinets, SpaStone Surround
- **Awards**
Spasearch Certified





1311 North Blue Gum St., Anaheim, CA 92806
800-569-2344 | LASPAS.COM

Founded in Anaheim, California in 1976, L.A. Spas has consistently provided ultimate "Adventures in Hydrotherapy" by offering portable spas, spa covers, steps and gazebos internationally that combine consistent performance, quality and innovation. Combined with comprehensive customer care and dealer support, L.A. Spas is the choice in the portable spa and gazebo marketplace. This year, L.A. Spas will be launching seven new spas: two 7 foot spas, three 8 foot spas, a new entry-level round spa and a state-of-the-art swim spa, "In-Fit". LED lighting, surround stereo/iPod systems, custom jet configurations and patented AquaKlean filtration systems are just a few of the unique features.

- Hot Tub Families/Models
L.A. Series, Tropical Series,
Mountain Series
- Types of Hot Tubs
Portable
- Products Carried
Decking, Gazebos, Steps
- Awards
Spasearch Certified



MASTER SPAS SPAZONE



6927 Lincoln Parkway, Fort Wayne, IN 46804
800-860-7727 | MASTERSPAS.COM

With over 30 years of experience, Master Spas has become a worldwide brand. With their quality materials and craftsmanship, these spas are just as durable as they are attractive. The spas have an energy efficient system and reminder messages appear when it is time to perform maintenance. Unique features such as neck and shoulder massagers, the Master Blaster Foot Therapy system and wrap-around seats are among the spas options. Customer entertainment systems with stereo and video capabilities are also available.

- Hot Tub Families/Models
H2X Series, Legend Series
- Types of Hot Tubs
Portable, Swim
- Products Carried
Accessories, Swim Training
Equipment
- Awards
Spasearch Certified



MASTER SPAS®



75 Palmer Industrial Road, Williamsport, PA 17701
800-451-1420 | PDCSPAS.COM

PDC spas have been the choice of consumers and retailers for over 50 years. PDC Spas are set apart from other hot tubs with a full range of exclusive patented features, including PDC's TemperLok energy conservation system, Air'assage warm air therapy, PowerFlo filtration, and AdvantagePack equipment flexibility. PDC also provides extensive retailer support including an outstanding co-op advertising program, marketing materials program, retailer event support, and "live person" highly skilled technical and customer support. PDC's state-of-the-art manufacturing and hand-made craftsmanship ensure a high quality, custom-made product, usually within two weeks of ordering, backed by a 35 year warranty.

- Hot Tub Families/Models
LX Series, Sun Series, SE Series,
AT Series
- Types of Hot Tubs
Portable
- Products Carried
Accessories, Covers, Gazebos,
Saunas



VIKING SPAS SPAZONE



2725 Prairie St. SW Wyoming, MI 49519
888-254-9736 | VIKINGSPAS.COM

Viking Spas, which opened its doors in the 1970s, had the hopes of keeping spas simple by building the first affordable portable round spa. Today, the company attracts customers looking for great value spas that are energy efficient. These spas are designed with their virtually indestructible spa shell. Viking Spas are available internationally and offer a lifetime shell warranty, a six year parts and labor warranty and a "magical price point" program.

- **Hot Tub Families/Models**
Heritage Series, Legacy Series, Supreme Series, Aurora Series, Viking Series
- **Types of Hot Tubs**
Portable



Looking for an article? We have provided a detailed index of all stories that have previously appeared in *SpaRetailer*. These stories are also available at SPARETAILER.COM. Stories are color-coded based on the following criteria:

■ **STOREFRONT** ■ **MARKETING** ■ **OPERATIONS** ■ **RESEARCH** ■ **EXAMPLE:** Article Topic/Issue/Page Number/Section Code

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