

**STOREFRONT**

DISCOVER HOW THE APSP  
CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS

**MARKETING**

PREVIEW THE UPCOMING  
POOL I SPA I PATIO EXPO

**OPERATIONS**

STOP PATCHING HOT TUB  
LEAKS FOR GOOD

**RESEARCH**

CONSUMER BUYING  
HABITS OF 2008

# SpaRetailer®

INSIDE THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY

FALL 2008



## RETAIL STORE

# STARS THAT SHINE

**SHHHHHH.....**

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DEALERS THAT BUSINESS IS SLOW.  
THEIR SALES ARE UP AND THEY  
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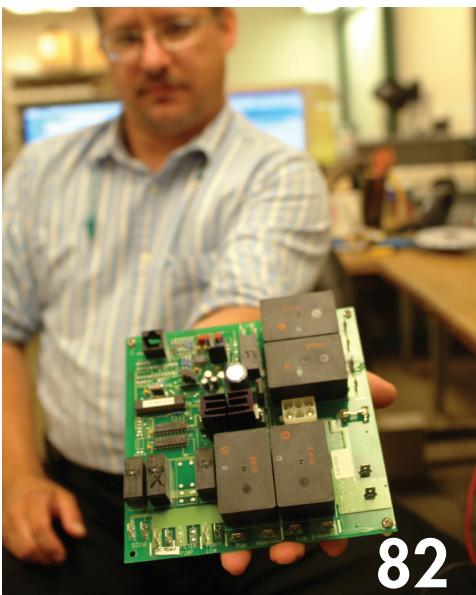
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# Fall 2008

## SpaRetailer



## FEATURES

### **29 Creative, Innovative, Positive: Retailer Stars**

These hard-working retail innovators are shaking up the hot tub industry and making money while they do it – competition is taking notice.

### **63 Accessories: The Difference is Marginal Income**

Don't leave any money on the table; maximize your hot tub sale with accessories essential to growing your bottom line.

### **69 Show Preview Guide: Pool | Spa | Patio Expo**

You may not realize how important it is to go to the trade show, so we've spelled out the best reasons for you to make the trip to Las Vegas.

### **82 Replacement Parts to the Rescue**

Your service department provides a steady income for your entire business. Part suppliers can make it even more profitable.

### **89 Research**

We've surveyed hot tub buyers and found some interesting consumer trends that may help you target your sales message.



# *What your customers want.*

Running a successful and profitable business is simple when your product is just what they've been looking for...

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ARCTIC SPAS

# Fall 2008

## SpaRetailer



26



24

## STOREFRONT

**19 Coaching** Testimonials are neutral third-party endorsements that build trust and garner attention from prospective buyers.

**20 Insiders** The Richards Group, a Dallas-based advertising agency, will be designing and implementing a broad-based campaign to increase consumer awareness (and hence sales) of hot tubs.

**22 Opinions** Attitude may be the most important thing when it comes to success. Retailers share their opinions about staying positive during the good and the bad times.

**24 Products** You may not think such a small-ticket item could reap so many benefits, but learning how to sell aromatherapy may give you a much-needed boost.

**26 Profile** The NSPF's research, lead by CEO Dr. Tom Lachocki, may be the key to keeping your doors open.

## MARKETING

**55 Leads** Monitoring your lead cost will save you valuable time and money. It's about quality instead of quantity.

**56 Internet** With these pointers, you can make sure your Web site is truly the asset to your business that you intended it to be.

**58 Promotional Home Run** Hundreds of retailers have signed up for Hot Tub Cards; see how well it's been working out for them since we first featured them in Winter.

**60 SpaZone** Don't spend hours searching for the right accessory companies; we've compiled all the information you need to get started.

## OPERATIONS

**75 Personnel** In order to grow your business, you need to be able to keep quality employees. Building a beneficial relationship with them is the key.

**76 Expenses** Tips on how to maximize the fuel usage of your spa delivery and service fleet.

**78 Legal** Learn how to keep track of all your company's important legal documents. It's not as complicated as you may think.

**80 Troubleshooter** Leaks can be a nightmare to hunt down, but these leak-sleuthing tips can help make the job much easier.

IN EVERY ISSUE	
10 Publisher's Welcome	
11 About Us	
12 Mailbag	
14 Industry News	
94 Past Issues	
96 Advertiser Index	



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# Are You Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?

To be honest, I have never been a person who really gets charged or inspired from hearing some famous person's quote, but recently I was reading a newspaper and saw a quote that stopped me in my tracks.

Ready for it?

**"Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right."**

– Henry Ford

After pondering the quote, I quickly realized I'm part of the problem. I admit it. To some extent I have let the media, economic news and even my fellow colleagues influence me to think that the spa industry is in trouble and there is little I can do but wait for better days. Shame on me.

I'm not naïve; I recognize the industry has several huge challenges ahead, but many of these obstacles are outside of my immediate control. Going forward, I will work diligently to invest in things I can influence, such as my employees, company direction and industry promotion. Instead of accepting the negative, I will embrace a more positive stance.

Consequently, much of *SpaRetailer* Fall 2008 is devoted to attitude. You will read numerous positive and inspirational stories about spa retailers who are enjoying significant sales gains, profitability and market share. We also included tips and ideas about how they are growing their businesses regardless of the economy.

And if our current editorial features or Henry Ford's quote don't get the blood flowing and invigorate you to jump start your positive attitude, consider the alternative...

**"If you don't think every day is a good day, just try missing one."**

– Cavett Robert

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David T. Wood".

**David T. Wood**  
EDITOR & PUBLISHER  
[editor@bigfishpublications.com](mailto:editor@bigfishpublications.com)

## ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Change your attitude, change your outlook, make a positive change for your business. Business will inevitably go up and down, but your attitude can hold steady. Read on as successful retailers explain how they maintain a good attitude and how that attitude has helped them maintain sales. Pages 10, 22 and 29.

# SpaRetailer

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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.

**RETAIL STORE STARS**

SHHHHHHH.....  
DON'T TELL THESE HOT TUB  
DEALERS THAT BUSINESS IS SLOW.  
THEIR SALES ARE UP AND THEY  
ARE HAVING RECORD YEARS.

**ON OUR COVER**

These retailer stars are doing well and willing to talk about it. Find out what has made them successful on page 29.

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

**E-NEWSLETTER** Our 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](http://SPARETAILER.COM) or call 480-367-9444 for details.



SpaRetailer, Summer 2008

# Warranties are on Your Mind

We encouraged you to stop operating like a pool business and give hot tubs their due diligence. But it was the feature on warranties that really got everyone talking. Some readers thought we hit the nail on the head while others felt we had missed the mark. Whatever your opinion might be, it's a conversation that can bring about a positive change for the entire industry.

"Wow! I never thought I would see a trade magazine tackle the warranty fiasco facing our industry – awesome!"

–Pat, Columbus, Ohio

## WARRANTIES FEATURE

"The warranty article is spot-on."

– Paul

Tucson, Arizona

"I appreciate SpaRetailer's view on warranties, but you should have highlighted some brands that have taken a leadership role in offering longer warranties that ultimately drive more people to buy spas."

– Miguel

Tampa, Florida

"Finally, a fair story on warranties. It's about time."

– Dan

Vista, California

"I found your warranty story very accurate and informative. I especially liked your comparison to the appliance industry."

– Michael

Cleveland, Ohio

"Thanks for the statistics on warranties."

– Thomas

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

## OTHER COMMENTS

"I have to say, after reading every issue of SpaRetailer, I have been very impressed. I never thought I would read a trade magazine cover to cover."

– James

Calgary, Canada

Nice profile on Todd Whitney, but I would like to see one on a spa retailer some time.

– MaryAnn

Joplin, Missouri

**Great idea! Check out this issue featuring 13 retail stars.**

**GET PAID FOR YOUR OPINION!**

Get a free subscription of SpaRetailer when we publish your comments. Please include full name and address. Email comments to [editor@bigfishpublications.com](mailto:editor@bigfishpublications.com).

## 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](mailto:EDITOR@BIGFISHPUBLICATIONS.COM) or SpaRetailer Magazine:

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The distinctive color of the AccuLok cover makes it easy to inventory and stands out to consumers.

Another benefit of AccuLok touted by PDC is the reduction in heat loss.

"In an effort to also combat energy concerns that our country is in the grips of now, I wanted to look at the design of the current cover on the market and find a way to make it better as far as heat consumption," Livingston says.

The AccuLok cover has a seamless design with a seven inch heat shield around the entire perimeter of the hot tub. The cover was tested using thermal imaging, and Livingston says the results show a significant improvement in reducing heat loss. Those images will be available on the PDC Web site.

"In releasing this to the industry, our biggest intent was to not just make claims but actually have documentation to backup what we're selling," Livingston says. "Not only do we have an independent testing certificate for the AccuLok water vapor material but we also have thermal imaging camera results to document the lack of heat loss."

The price point will be higher than traditional covers, but Livingston says the price is worth not having to replace the cover 36 months later. AccuLok will not be sold under the PDC brand but rather Diverse Designs Limited LLC.

## INDUSTRY CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER

17-20

International Casual Furniture & Accessories Market  
Chicago, IL, USA

### OCTOBER

03-07

ASLA Annual Meeting and Expo  
Philadelphia, PA, USA

15-17

The World Aquatic Health Conference  
Colorado Springs, CO, USA

### NOVEMBER

15-20

International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo  
Las Vegas, NV, USA

18-21

Piscine 2008 Eurexpo  
Lyon, France

### DECEMBER

09-11

Canadian Pool and Spa Conference and Expo  
Toronto, ON, Canada

# PDC Unveils New Cover

## ACCULOK COVER TO BETTER PROTECT AGAINST WATER RETENTION AND HEAT LOSS

After four years of research and development, PDC Spas unveils their new AccuLok cover.

"I stood back and thought, 'As much as I love my tub, what do I not like about it that I could make better?'" says Lynda Livingston, vice president of PDC. "It's the darn hard cover that gains water weight and becomes too heavy to use, usually after three years."

The answer to that frustration, according to Livingston, is the patent-pending water vapor barrier material that is 400 percent better than anything currently on the market.

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## ■ REGISTRATION FOR EXPO NOW OPEN

Early registration for the 2008 International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo is available online at [POOLSPAPATIO.COM](http://POOLSPAPATIO.COM). Pricing increases beginning October 8. Options are as follows:

**SUPER PASS:** Conference seminars on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, admission to Expo, Keynote by Bill Walton and Welcome Party at TAO.  
APSP \$195  
Non-members \$245

**DAY PASS:** Conference seminars on Tuesday only, Wednesday only or Thursday only, admission to Expo, Keynote by Bill Walton and Welcome Party at TAO.  
APSP \$105  
Non-Members \$130

**EXECUTIVE ACADEMY:** Four conference seminars on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, admission to Expo, Keynote by Bill Walton and Welcome Party at TAO.  
APSP \$295  
Non-Members \$345

**EXPO ONLY:** Expo admission on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and Keynote by Bill Walton.  
APSP & Non-members \$20  
More information on the Expo see page 69.

## ■ NBA LEGEND KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT POOL/SPA EXPO

Legendary basketball player Bill Walton will deliver the Keynote Address at the International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo Tuesday, November 18 at 10:00 am. The successful basketball player and businessman will share the characteristics that have helped him thrive on and off the court.

"We are delighted that Bill Walton will be offering his first-hand experience," says Donna Bellantone, director of the Expo. "As a proven leader, Walton will provide attendees with a wealth of inspiration and business advice based on a brilliant career in sports."

Walton will speak on teamwork, overcoming adversity, hard work and having a positive attitude.

"Many similarities exist between what it takes to succeed at the highest level of competitive sports and what it takes to succeed in the challenging pool, spa and backyard marketplace," says Bill Weber, APSP President and CEO.

Walton played college basketball for John Wooden at UCLA, where he was a member of the 1972 and 1973 NCAA championship teams.

He went on to have a successful professional basketball career, winning two NBA championship titles and being named the NBA's Most Valuable Player in 1978. In 1993, he was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame.

Walton currently works as the lead analyst for ESPN/ABC's coverage of the NBA and is a regular contributor to several sports magazines.



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## ATHLETE ENDORSES MASTER SPAS, QUALIFIES FOR THE BEIJING OLYMPICS

Olympic medalist, World champion and Master Spas user, Allyson Felix, qualified for the Beijing Olympics on July 6. Felix finished the 200 meters in 21.82 seconds at the US Olympic track and field trials.

"Soaking in my Master Spas hot tub is as vital as warming up and training before any race," Felix says on the Master Spas Web site. "This is therapy for mind, body and soul."

Felix is the second female athlete to win three gold medals at a single edition of the IAAF World Championships. At the last Olympics in Athens she finished as a silver medalist in the 200 meters.

"We are really very proud to have this relationship with Ms. Felix," adds Bob Lauter, CEO of Master Spas. "Our spas are uniquely designed to complement a healthy lifestyle, and her choice of the LSX1050 STS is good because of the adjustable therapy features ideally suited for athletes and non-athletes alike."

Felix says her next goal is winning a gold medal in Beijing.

To follow Felix's quest for gold check olympic results at [OLYMPICS.COM](http://OLYMPICS.COM).

## ■ CORRECTION

An article in the SpaRetailer Summer 2008 issue about Hot Tub Council chairman Todd Whitney inaccurately listed the Hot Tub Council officers. The correct officers and their positions are as follows:

Todd Whitney, chairman, from Aristech Acrylics LLC; Jim Jennings, vice chairman, from TruHeat, Inc./Aquatemp Products; Steve Gorlin, past chairman, from Gorlin Pools and Spas; and Chris Robinson, division director, from Lucite International.

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You get technical phone support from Horizon  
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# Storefront

COACHING

## Referrals: Customers are Willing, You Have to Ask

**91% OF CUSTOMERS WOULD GIVE A REFERRAL, BUT 80% HAVE NEVER BEEN ASKED. BY DAVID CARLETON**

Over the years, you've invested thousands of dollars in newspaper advertising, direct mail, home shows, radio, etc. for only one reason: to get prospects to come into your store and buy a hot tub. Then you spent even more time and money to close the deal.

### IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN GETTING REFERRALS

Why do prospects eventually buy from you? Certainly price is a factor. But somewhere along the way, your prospect decided they liked you and trusted you. And if you continue to keep your promises and deliver great after-the-sale service, their respect and affection for you and your store will continue to grow. Remember, people buy from people, not companies.

You may be saying to yourself, "Okay, I get that, but why is all this important?" It's important because most dealers spend the majority of their time and marketing budget trying to convince strangers to buy from them using a vehicle that most consumers inherently don't trust – advertising!

Don't get me wrong – advertising is important and certainly has its place in building your business. But the fastest, cheapest and most effective means of finding new business is through referrals. A referred prospect comes to you predisposed to buy your products or services. Why? Because they are being sent to you from a previous customer who already knows, likes and trusts you. The bottom line is that referred prospects are easier to convert to paying customers than those that come from advertising.

And guess how much it costs you when that referral turns into a sale? ZERO!

### BUILDING A CAMPAIGN BASED ON REFERRALS

Now that you understand how effective referral marketing can be, it's time to start a referral marketing campaign. You can do this in any number of ways, including e-mail, phone calls or direct mail. The most important thing to do is to create a referral marketing system and then automate it as much as possible.

I recommend systemizing and automating your referral marketing system because it will help you leverage your time and resources. In addition, the easier you make it for you and your employees to ask for referrals, the more likely it is to get done.

Here's a real shocker: One study said 91 percent of customers would give a referral, but 80 percent have never been asked. Want to increase your sales ASAP? Start asking your current customers for referrals. ■



Industry expert David Carleton is president of Street Smart Sales and Marketing and creator of the Spa Dealer Marketing Boot Camp. With a 30-year track record of success, Carleton has worked in the sales and marketing trenches for companies ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500s. He spent six years as vice president of sales and marketing at Dimension One Spas where he was responsible for developing programs that helped hundreds of dealers in 30 countries generate leads, enhance their marketing and increase their sales.

**Want to learn the six easiest ways to get more referrals? Check out "The Referral Marketing Success Manual." SpaRetailer readers can obtain a FREE copy from [STREETSMARTREFERRALSYSTEM.COM](http://STREETSMARTREFERRALSYSTEM.COM).**

# Ad Agency Hired to Promote Hot Tub Lifestyle

**AFTER A RIGOROUS SCREENING PROCESS, THE RICHARDS GROUP WAS SELECTED TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND BRAND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.**

“People may not realize or may have forgotten that the industry started to decline two years before the housing market collapsed,” says Todd Whitney, chairman of the APSP’s Hot Tub Council and market manager for Aristech Acrylics, LLC. “So it’s not the economy that is keeping consumers away. In fact, only 20 percent cite the economy as a barrier to purchasing a hot tub.”

If it’s not the economy, what is it?

According to Whitney, research shows that the concept of owning a hot tub only comes to the mind of the consumer when they’re prompted. That’s why industry leaders and the Hot Tub Council felt it was critical to fund what has become known as the “Hot Tub Initiative,” a comprehensive marketing and advertising campaign utilizing the services of a highly-qualified advertising agency.

“This campaign will position the hot tub category to help and convince the consumer that a hot tub needs to be a bigger part of their backyard and ultimately their lifestyle.”

*—Todd Whitney,  
Chairman of the APSP’s  
Hot Tub Council*

marketing and promotion for the APSP. “The search firm sent a request for proposal to 20 firms. Twelve responded, and the review committee placed six of them into a semi-final round.”

The semi-finalists each gave presentations to the review committee; afterwards, three finalists were selected who, in turn, presented to a larger industry group.

“Due to their experience with the *GoRVing Coalition*, particularly the interactive/online campaign, along with their highly-acclaimed creative work with A-list clients, The Richards Group became the obvious consensus choice,” Whitney says.

## THE RICHARDS GROUP

Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, The Richards Group is the largest independent ad agency in the United States.

“Our mission is to endear brands to people, [therefore] trade associations who want to establish that kind of a connection with their customer base tend to seek us out,” says Dale Hruby, a principal of The Richards Group. “We also have a history of helping retail brands build sales overnight and brand meaning over time, including the Florida Department of Citrus, the

### HOT TUB COUNCIL TASK FORCE & CHAIRS

**Chair**  
Todd Whitney  
Aristech Acrylics, LLC

**Vice Chair**  
Jim Jennings  
TruHeat, Inc./  
Aquatemp Products

**Past Chair**  
Steve Gorlin  
Gorlin Pools  
and Spas

**Division Director**  
Chris Robinson  
Lucite International

## SEARCH PROCESS

So how was the ad agency chosen?

“Many leaders in the industry came together to generate \$400,000 in start-up funding and some of the money was used to hire a professional search firm to help us select the right agency,” explains Lauren Stack, director of

*GoRVing Coalition* and the National Pork Board.”

The Richards Group’s goal is help the Hot Tub Council reposition the idea of hot tub ownership. “We’ll start by establishing a brand identity that will connect with consumers,” Hruby says. “Our branding strategies have been developed and approved, and we have a very detailed three-year marketing and media plan to support the effort.”

Whitney notes that the campaign will be structured to not only increase awareness, but also to better educate the consumer on the value of hot tub ownership, since research and trends show that consumers are spending and plan to spend more money on improvements to their backyards.

“It is projected that 2008 North America unit sales will finish between 200,000 and 250,000, a nearly 50 percent decline in sales from 2004 when the category peaked. However, research shows that 16.9 million prospects are interested in hot tubs, and 6.3 million of these prospects are very likely to buy,” Whitney says, stating that another key

piece of the initiative is to raise industry professionalism and consumer satisfaction.

## HOW AND WHEN

Whitney says they are in the process of recruiting original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and suppliers to commit verbally, in a non-binding manner, to a three-year campaign. “This is so we can establish fund estimates and develop a marketing plan with which to garner written and binding commitments,” he explains. Hruby adds that they are hoping to launch the online and public relations portions of the campaign this fall, followed in early 2009 with additional media elements, including print, direct response, television, radio, direct mail and more.

The success of the campaign will be measured using a set of key metrics such as qualified lead generation, Web site visits, click through, response rates, etc. However, both Whitney and Hruby agree that the ultimate measurement will be sales. ■



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# Positive Attitudes Make More Money

WHEN WE ASKED RETAILERS HOW IMPORTANT THEY THOUGHT ATTITUDE WAS WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH, THE ANSWER WAS ALMOST ALWAYS THE SAME.

**"I think if you decide the market's down and that's how it's going to be for you, then it probably will be."**

– Shawn Maynard, Owner, Bullfrog Spas of Ogden, Ogden, Utah

"It's easy to fall into a trap, especially when things start to get a little bit slower and you're not as excited and pumped-up about selling the product as you are when things are really busy. You've got to try and maintain that [attitude] because when you're excited about the product and when you're able to show that enthusiasm to your customers, they respond better."

– Gord Coy, Owner, Arctic Spas Durham, Whitby, Ontario, Canada

"What I see sometimes is their [retailer's] attitude slows them a little. In tougher times, typically you have to work harder. And in a lot of cases, it takes more energy to be out there and just make things happen in the quieter times."

– Ross McCall, Owner, Beachcomber Hot Tubs London, London, Ontario, Canada

"Your brain automatically picks up on all those negative things subconsciously, then you start looking for it. I don't even open a newspaper or turn on the news anymore. All I want to hear about is positive things. Make your salesmen read something positive. Every morning take half an hour to read something positive or motivational, bettering your craft as a salesperson."

– Alex Nemet, Owner, Northeast Factory Direct, Cleveland, Ohio

"It's [attitude] nearly critical because anywhere you turn, the media is doing a wonderful job of scaring the general public about various issues in the news. So it's easy to become very concerned and very conservative. You just can't let that feeling permeate your organization. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that your salespeople, your service team and everybody are going to become less confident and that will play-out in your customer's mind. What we need to do during times like this is be excited about our product. Remember that we're still selling a product to customers that will make their life better and actually have the reverse effect to all the negativity and provide some enjoyment and fulfillment in life."

– Rob Carter, General Manager, Premier Backyard, Tucson, Arizona

"I think it's THE crucial thing. I think if you decide the market's down and that's how it's going to be for you, then it probably will be. If you decide that people aren't walking in the door and you should go do something about it, then you do and it pays off. When it got slow for us, we stepped up our marketing and got more creative with it, and I think we're at least holding our own and taking bits of other peoples' market share."

– Shawn Maynard, Owner, Bullfrog Spas of Ogden, Ogden, Utah

## ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

Change your attitude, change your outlook, make a positive change for your business. Business will inevitably go up and down, but your attitude can hold steady. Read on as successful retailers explain how they maintain a good attitude and how that attitude has helped them maintain sales. Pages 10, 22 and 29.

UP TO

4



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GL-3



GL-4



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# Aromatherapy: Key Selling Points

**FRAGRANCES GO BEYOND JUST SMELLING NICE. THERE ARE BENEFITS FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS AND YOUR STORE'S PROFITS.**

**"It [aromatherapy] gives a dealer something new and fresh to sell."**

– Allan Frankel, Brand Manager, Zodiac Pool Care

## AROMATHERAPY MANUFACTURERS

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### Arch Chemicals Inc.

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### PharmaSpa

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### InSPAration Spa Fragrance

800-882-0037

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### Zodiac Pool Care

800-299-2832

NATURE2.COM

Other industries are catching on to the aromatherapy trend, and so should you. Household cleaning products, home goods, personal care and hygiene items have started to integrate the therapeutic benefits of aromatherapy into their product lines. The principle of a hot tub aligns directly with the purpose of aromatherapy – to better the health, well-being and mind-set of the individuals who use them.

But when there are so many other products for you to carry, why should you bother with aromatherapy?

## AFFORDABLE LUXURY

Aromatherapy isn't a necessity, but it is a luxury that any hot tub owner can afford. It offers the sensation of a splurge, without the buyer's regret.

## RENEWED EXCITEMENT

Long-time hot tub owners might feel as if they've reached the full potential of their hot tub and that there are no new products for them to try. Aromatherapy gives them a chance to experience their hot tub through an endless array of scents, giving them that new-tubber sensation all over again.

## EASY IMPULSE

Due to the size and price of aromatherapy products, they make for the perfect POP impulse buy. Aromatherapy will feel like a great new find to explore each time someone comes in to purchase their regular water maintenance chemicals.

## SPA SATISFACTION

Consumers use their spa to relieve stress, reduce aches and pains, and provide fun and entertainment right at home. As their local retailer, it's up to you to offer them a variety of tools to achieve their goals. The essential oils found in aromatherapy products can enhance the spa experience, making your customer happy and adding to your credibility as a person who is concerned with their overall well-being. ■

"Promoting products that enhance a consumer's feeling of well-being is a great way for a spa retailer to demonstrate that they care about their customers and want to maximize the enjoyment of their spa, which in many cases is purchased for therapeutic purposes." – April Nielsen, Southeast Regional Sales Manager, Arch Chemicals

"According to the Sense of Smell Institute, fragrances can help people relax, be more alert and feel better. Different fragrances have different effects, and the effects vary from one person to another, but the Sense of Smell Institute and others have found that fragrances relieve stress, reduce depression, retrieve memories and more."

— Mike Moore, Vice President of Marketing, Advantis Technologies



# Offering Hope to Hot Tub Retailers

**HOW THE CEO OF THE NSPF, DR. TOM LACHOCKI, IS TRYING TO USE HOT TUBS, TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.**

“The ‘spring of hope’ for spa retailers as well as spa manufacturers, is that the world is lining up very much favorably associated with spas.”

*— Dr. Tom Lachocki,  
CEO, NSPF*

Why should a hot tub retailer or manufacturer pay attention to the National Swimming Pool Foundation? Because they are researching the key ingredient to hot tub ownership, and perhaps the key ingredient to getting more hot tub sales – health.

Dr. Tom Lachocki, CEO of the NSPF, describes the current state of the hot tub industry in the words of Charles Dickens:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...”\*

“When I think of the spa industry I think of it really as being representative in those words,” Lachocki says. “It really is a ‘spring of hope’ and it’s also in the ‘winter of despair.’” Lachocki says that most people in the hot tub industry are seeing more despair than hope, but he is certain that better things are on the horizon.

“The good news, the ‘spring of hope’ for spa retailers as well as spa manufacturers, is that the world is lining up very much favorably associated with spas,” Lachocki says.

According to Lachocki, what is lining up is that the population in the Western world is aging. And as the population ages, the emphasis on health grows. “We cannot afford as a nation to have 30 percent of our population chronically ill for 20 or 30 years. It’s just not sustainable,” he says.

So the NSPF, which is dedicated to improving public health by encouraging healthier living through aquatic education and research (not to selling swimming pools or hot tubs), has become the leading funder of research into the benefits of immersion in warm water as well as exercise in water.

“We [the hot tub industry] are a profoundly important field in the country. And a lot of people, honestly, in our industry, I don’t think they believe it or they don’t realize it,” Lachocki says.

Prior to joining the NSPF, Lachocki had worked in the pool and spa industry for several years as a chemist at a chemicals company. His knowledge of the industry, along with the ideals of the NSPF, were a perfect match from the start. Even though it isn’t a great revenue source for them, Lachocki is proud of the commitment the NSPF has made to support research into hot tubs. However, he says a lot of work still needs to be done, work that should have started years ago.

“It’s the ‘best of times’ because the data is starting to show how valuable hot water immersion is,” Lachocki says. “It’s the ‘worst of times’ because we’ve been despicably negligent in not funding this type of research for the last several decades. So when we look at ourselves in the mirror and think financially it’s one of the worst times, the fault rests on our own shoulders. If we had been funding this type of work two decades ago, the likelihood it would be the ‘worst of times’ would not be true. It would likely be the ‘best of times.’”

Lachocki knows that’s not an easy thing to hear, but he feels that as the research continues, and as more people in the hot tub industry start to embrace that research, the financial hardships will turn around.

“Although business is bad, the good news about that is that people are taking a closer look at what we do to help create a prosperous summer in the future and that’s where we are now. We’re in the ‘spring of hope’ to create a more prosperous future.” ■



## DR. TOM LACHOCKI

### EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Chemistry from Louisiana State University, LA
- B.S. from Lock Haven University, PA

### HIS WORK WITH THE NSPF

Thomas M. Lachocki, Ph.D., is CEO of the NSPF, a nonprofit organization founded in 1965 that is committed to improving public health by encouraging healthier living through aquatic education and research. NSPF is the world's leading provider of educational programs for North American pool/spa operators and health officials through the Certified Pool/Spa Operator training program. In addition, NSPF and the National Environmental Health Association jointly launched the Certified Pool/Spa Inspector training program designed for health officials and operators to reduce risks at aquatic facilities. The NSPF disseminates research results and provides advanced training at the World Aquatic Health Conference with speakers from the U.S., Canada and Europe. Research grants and graduate fellowships are available. Information about NSPF programs can be found at [NSPF.ORG](http://NSPF.ORG).



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 // MEASURE SUCCESS BY MARGINS // PROFITS // PROFITABLE // BROOK VALLEY APPLIANCE // KEN AX // CONSULTA  
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 IAL EVENTS // ENTICEMENT TO CUSTOMER // BULLFROG SPAS OF OGDEN // SHAWN MAYNARD // VACATION AT HO  
 RD // MAKE IT HAPPEN // GO GET 'EM // F&F SPRINKLERS // DAVE FISKE JOHN // CONTINUED PHILOSOPHY // PROM  
 ONEY TO MAKE MONEY // HOT TUBS AND BBQS // BRETT BERGSTROM // JIM BERGSTROM // SUCCESS // KNOW ALL

# CREATIVE // INNOVATIVE // POSITIVE RETAILER STARS

INTERVIEWED BY MEGAN MCCORMACK

## SO YOU THINK YOU CAN'T MAKE MONEY IN THIS MARKET?

ARE YOU JUST WAITING OUT THE STORM? THESE  
 INNOVATIVE, HARD-WORKING HOT TUB DEALERS MIGHT  
 CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS.

OPPORTUNITIES // THINK CAREFULLY // FOCUS ON WHAT WE'RE BEST AT // GREAT LOOKING HOT TUB STORE // RETAIL  
 ST FACTORY DIRECT // ALEX NEMET // POSITIVE THINGS // GOOD ATTITUDE // TAKING CARE OF CUSTOMERS // GOIN  
 FOLLOW UP WITH PEOPLE // READ SOMETHING POSITIVE // MOTIVATIONAL // SUPPORT // WORKING TWICE AS HARD //  
 WATSONS // BRUCE RICHARDS // DON'T BLAME OTHER THINGS // PRESSURE ON US // POSITIVE // TRAIN ON EVERYT  
 PROMOTIONS // ADVERTISEMENT // BEACHCOMBER WHITBY // MIKE MADORE // CUSTOMER SERVICE // QUALITY // HC  
 SELLING // PREMIER BACKYARD // ROB CARTER // CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT CARDS // PERFORMANCE // TAKE CARE  
 / PROMOTIONS // LOOK INTERNALLY // LAND O DREAMS // RICK LISKOW // TV COMMERCIAL // SELLING MORE HOT  
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**ATTITUDE IS  
 EVERYTHING**

Change your attitude, change your outlook, make a positive change for your business.  
 Business will inevitably go up and down, but your attitude can hold steady. Read on as  
 successful retailers explain how they maintain a good attitude and how that attitude  
 has helped them maintain sales. Pages 10, 22 and 29.



## NORTHEAST FACTORY DIRECT //

Gulf Coast/Dimension One/  
Master Spas  
Cleveland, Ohio  
216-941-7727

**ALEX NEMET**, owner of Northeast Factory Direct and an extreme desert marathon runner, would never have imagined that this year would be his most successful yet; his hot tub sales are up almost 60 percent. Nemet says the important thing is investing in your customers and not a fancy showroom.

Pictured: Owner Alex Nemet  
Photos: Jonathan Hull/Felixco, Inc.

### HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK ATTITUDE IS WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR SUCCESS? //

Your brain automatically picks up on all those negative things subconsciously, [and then] you start looking for it. I don't even open a newspaper or turn on the news anymore. All I want to hear about is positive things. You have to get lean and take care of your customers and just have a good attitude. [Sometimes] it gets so slow that when that person comes in, people jump all over them. You've got to act like you've already sold ten hot tubs that day and [think about] what I can do to help that customer. Acting as if that customer was their grandmother going out to buy a hot tub and really holding their hand and taking them through the entire process from their [the customer's] perspective and finding out what's good for them, they're always going to buy. People sense whether you're trying to help them or whether you're trying to help yourself.

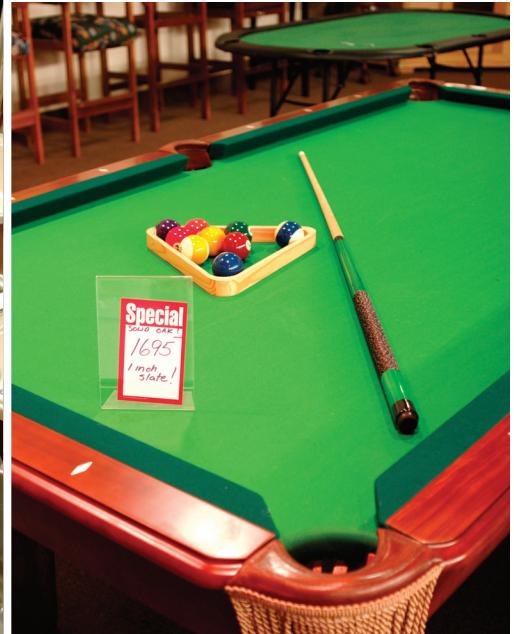
Make salesmen read something positive. Every morning take a half hour to read something positive or motivational, bettering your craft as a salesperson. I'm doing tent sales and I'm doing home shows. We belong to networking groups.

We do things out of the norm: we don't do a lot of advertising and when somebody does give us a referral, we thank them.

### WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR SALES ARE UP? //

I do whatever I can and give the tools that I can to help my sales staff. I support the sales staff, they support the customers and the customers support the business. We're just working harder, that's really what it comes down to. We're working harder to help all of our customers. We're working twice as hard for the same amount of business as a couple years ago, and when the economy turns around we'll be stronger.

You can't just wait in your store and wait for people to come in when it's like this. We've built relationships outside of the business with landscapers that refer us, and they're basically strategic partnerships. Also with chiropractors, we've been trying to build strategic relationships with them. I'm not just going to place a \$3,000 full-page ad in the paper. I'm a couple of those away from being in big trouble.





Pictured: Owner Mike Madore  
Photos: Ian Chrysler

## WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR SALES ARE UP? //

Normally we do a 25 percent to a 30 percent increase every year. Right now we are right under a 100 percent increase. We are huge right now and I think for one reason: The past three years we've worked really hard at customer service. We fix tubs. Any calls that come in we answer within 24 hours; we now have an on-site staff during the weekends. We [service] all makes and models. So the word started to get around that we're the people to deal with when it comes to service and quality.

It's a weird snowball effect. When we started this years ago, I told everybody on the staff that we are going to be better than anybody else and we're going to treat everybody fairly. We're going to make sure that they are happy to pay us. I'll receive checks, and the check will be for \$1,200 and there will be a sticky note on the check that says, "Thanks for the great service, we will do business again with you soon." These people are actually thanking me for taking their money, and that's the way people should treat their customers. Some people forget about it, especially if they've been in business a long time, and you have to step back and get a breath of fresh air and say, "You know what, it's worth it."

It doesn't happen overnight, don't get me wrong. We've worked hard at this and I'm proud of where we are today, but

it's a lot of work. It's one of those things where it's on-going and the more you do, the better you do it, the bigger your business will become and it will just snowball year after year after year.

## ARE YOU OFFSETTING YOUR HOT TUB SALES WITH OTHER PRODUCTS? //

A couple of years ago we did try to bring in fireplaces and barbecues to add as a second and third item. People looked and smirked at it because they knew we were geared as a hot tub store. So last year we decided to get rid of everything. Now we are right back down to hot tubs, hot tub chemicals and pool chemicals. And this year's sales are huge again. People walk in and they know that we are hot tub experts.

When we were carrying barbecues, I noticed that some days, when it was busy and two or three employees were busy selling barbecues, we would see people walk out because nobody was helping them with the hot tubs. And that is where my concern came in: We weren't servicing our primary need. For me to do that I'd have to hire more and more staff and that's why I scaled it back. We are known now as the hot tub expert in this area. Now we are known as the customer service people.



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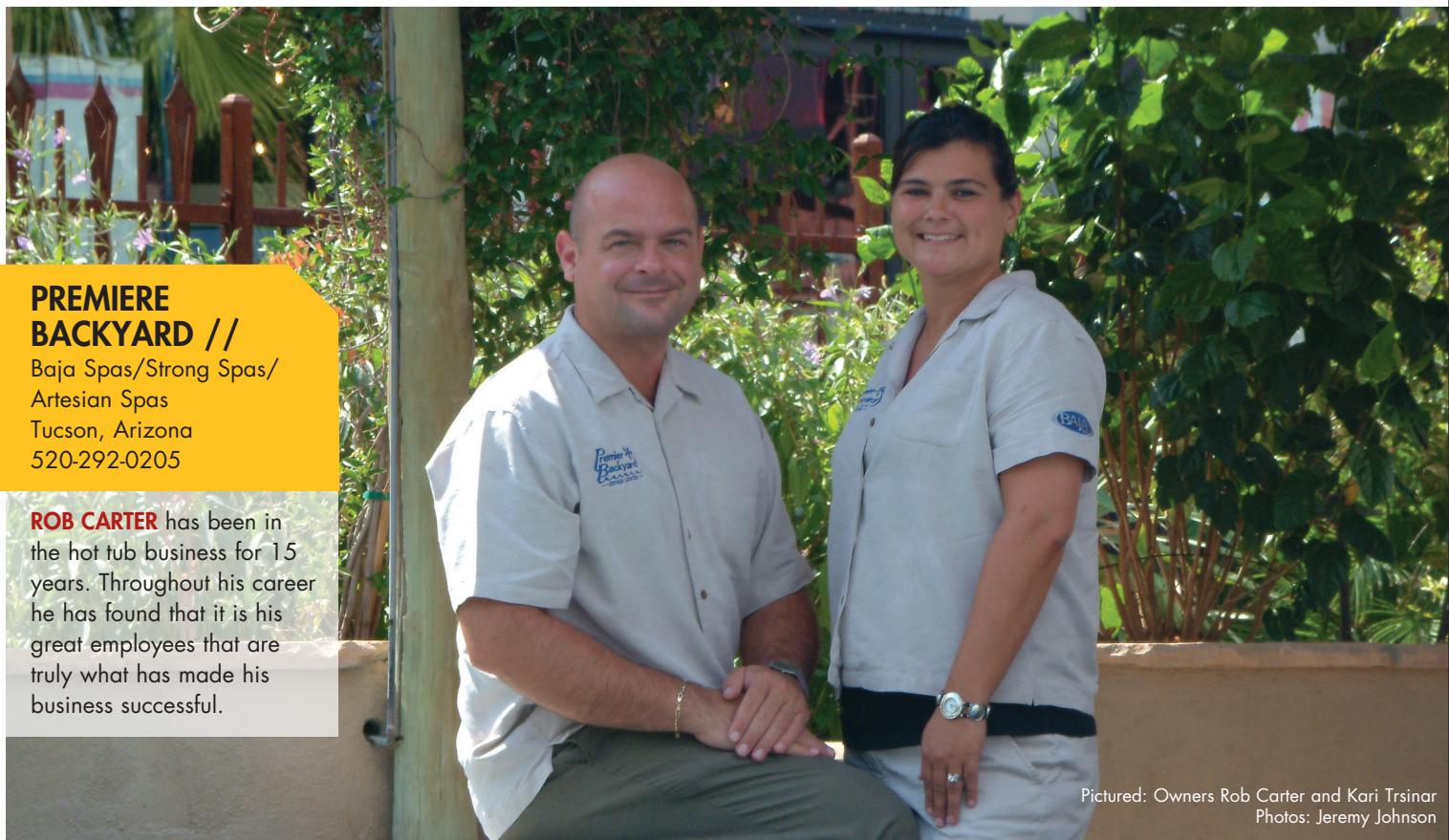


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## PREMIERE BACKYARD //

Baja Spas/Strong Spas/

Artesian Spas

Tucson, Arizona

520-292-0205

**ROB CARTER** has been in the hot tub business for 15 years. Throughout his career he has found that it is his great employees that are truly what has made his business successful.

Pictured: Owners Rob Carter and Kari Trsinar  
Photos: Jeremy Johnson

### HOW DO YOU MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH? //

Truthfully, we pay attention to our customer service report cards. It's all about customer service and if our customers are happy then we're doing a great job taking care of our customers. What happens in times like these, there are enough people out in the marketplace buying our products, you just have to get your share. In a down time like this, it's a great opportunity to grow your market share. So by taking care of your customers and providing spectacular customer service, follow-up and making the experience a very enjoyable experience, you build your referral base. There are enough people out there buying spas, if you can get enough referrals you don't have to spend as much money on advertising. That's totally in your control. That's [based on] how you perform and how you take care of your customers. That's one way to grow your business even during a down time, by getting that word out there that you're a great company that sells a great product that really takes care of the consumer.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION? //

We'll take their [the customer's] spas in on consignment and they'll buy a new one and then when we sell their old spa we work out a deal with them to facilitate the sale. So the customer receives credit for their old spa and they trade up for their new one. We have those spas around often, so we did a big sale promotion on hot tubs. We had some

pretty beat-up hot tubs that weren't even operable that we took out of people's homes. So we did a free hot tub promotion that 'If you can haul it you can have it.' It drove a ton of traffic into our store. It wasn't all qualified traffic, it was a lot of people looking for a free lunch or a free spa. We did give away a few spas that would cost us more to cut them up and throw them away than to just give them away. We gave away a few, we sold a few used spas and we sold just shy of 20 new spas. That was a good promotion for us.

### DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE ON WEATHERING THE STORM? //

Just be smart. Look internally. You hear a lot about big retailers, and well-run retailers, who will close stores even when things are fine. The typical perception is if somebody's closing stores they're in trouble and they're going out of business. But the way I look at it is, if you're closing stores, you're getting rid of the under-performers and you're constantly pruning your business. I think that you have to be smart enough to look internally that hard. If there's something that you're doing that's not conducive to winning and making money, you need to cut bait and not be afraid to do it. A lot of people, unfortunately, can't get past their ego and they'll continue doing something they know they shouldn't be doing. I think it's important to be proactive, look internally and define your goal and your finish line. Let that goal or finish line govern every decision you make.





## LAND O DREAMS //

Sundance Spas  
Rochester, Minnesota  
507-289-0313

Land O Dreams first opened as a water bed store in 1976 and expanded over the years to carry all types of bedding, billiards, saunas, tanning beds and hot tubs.

**RICK and DEBBIE LISKOW** say that hot tubs are now the biggest part of their business and growing. The Liskows have expanded to three stores with one more on the way later this year.

Pictured: Owners Rick and Debbie Liskow  
Photos: Graddy Photography

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION? //** What has been working for us is our locations and doing a lifestyle TV commercial. We used very good, professional Sundance Spa commercials that were made by the company, we put them on there and just tagged them at the end. You can get your product, your store, the emotion – everything into their home on a TV. This spring we tried this in Rochester.

I think we're competing with a lot of other products out there, not just ourselves. When you see boats they show people having fun, skiing behind it, barbecuing on the beach and all this stuff. You know we're competing with people desiring that. I think the industry as a whole, manufacturers and retailers, [needs to] all put money into a pool and do a national ad campaign that covers the lifestyle. I think if everybody tries to get in the direction of marketing this product the right way as a group, which is a big task, it does take a council [like the Hot Tub Council] to do it.

What I tried this spring, with the TV commercials, is one of the reasons the Rochester store is selling more hot tubs.

**HOW DO YOU MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH? //** I'd have to say [we measure our success by our] margins because if you're going after units you're not focusing on the other profit centers in your store. You need to look at your service department as a profit center, not as a liability. We re-looked at everything that we were doing, trip charges, billing hours [etc.] and made sure that we were becoming profitable there and not a burden to the rest of the store. We also set it up so that our delivery personnel actually make money out there trying to sell new lifters, covers, chemicals, accessories and filters. We have brand new sprinters in our service department because they can hold all this extra stuff for these guys to sell. Before we were running around in these little vans, the gas mileage was half as much as it was with the new sprinters and we didn't have any room. So on-the-road profit centers, especially in a large metro area where people have a harder time getting to your store [have been very helpful].



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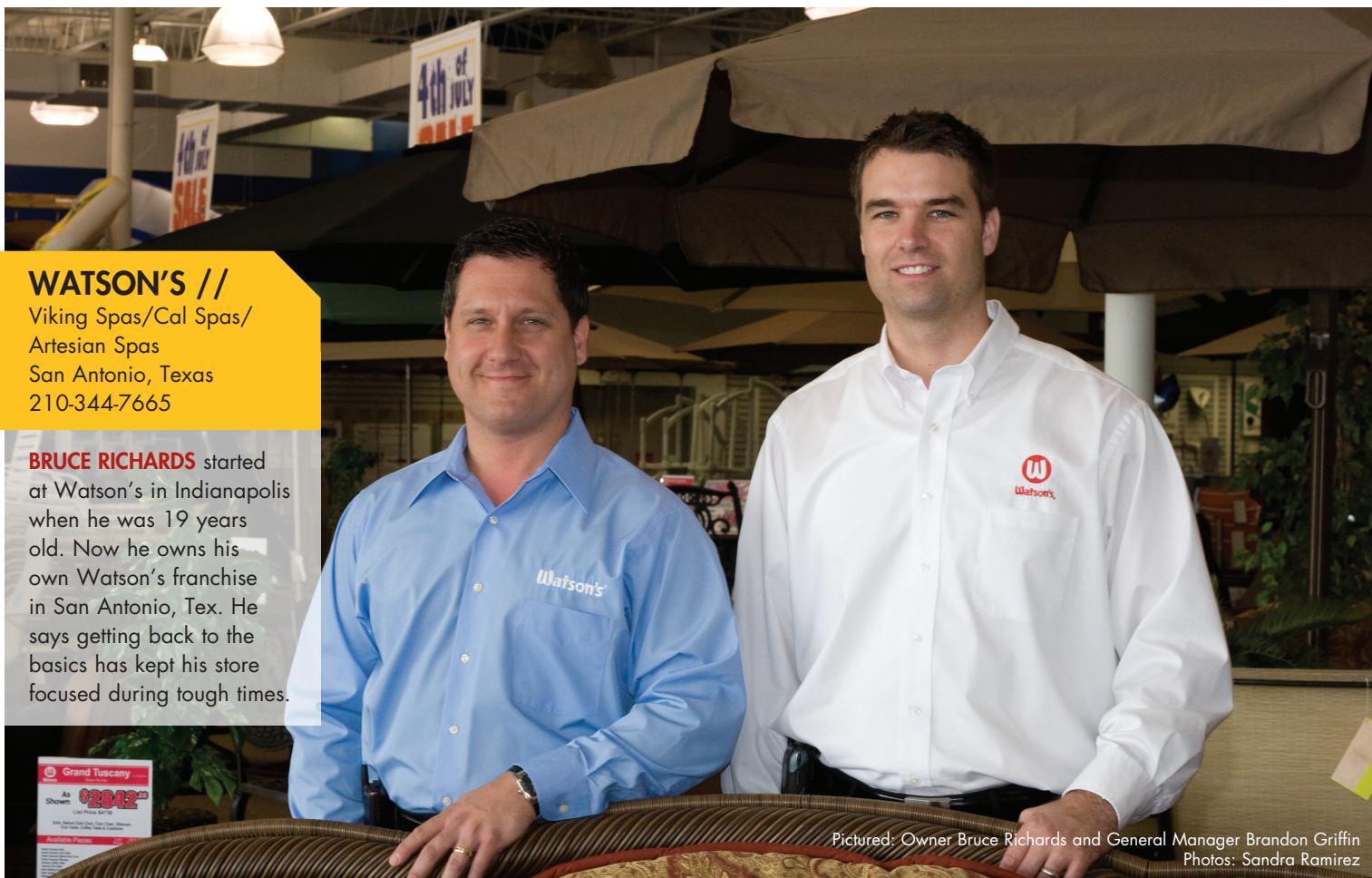


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## WATSON'S //

Viking Spas/Cal Spas/  
Artesian Spas  
San Antonio, Texas  
210-344-7665

**BRUCE RICHARDS** started at Watson's in Indianapolis when he was 19 years old. Now he owns his own Watson's franchise in San Antonio, Tex. He says getting back to the basics has kept his store focused during tough times.

Pictured: Owner Bruce Richards and General Manager Brandon Griffin  
Photos: Sandra Ramirez

### WHY DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING WELL?

// From my perspective, it's pretty easy. It's nothing complicated. We don't ignore the situation that we have in front of us with the economy, we just don't talk about it. And I don't take the pressure off myself. I don't blame other things. We have to put more pressure on ourselves. What we do is go back to the fundamentals: We go back to training, and we train, train, train. I do the majority of the training so I have some control over the attitude of the sales staff. Just keeping everybody positive and not looking outward, looking inward and saying, "What could we do to make it better?" So we train on basically everything that I can think of. We train on the product, we train on sales techniques, we do a lot of talking and a lot of role-playing; we're always role-playing, it keeps us focused on what we need to do and not what's going on everywhere else.

### HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK ATTITUDE IS WHEN IT COMES TO SUCCESS? //

It's everything. It [the market/economy] is what it is, and if you dwell on it, it's going to bring you down. Everybody knows the attitude of an organization starts at the top and trickles down. So if I come in [talking about] doom and gloom, it's going to affect everybody. I don't think it's a hard thing to do, I think it's about staying

as positive as possible. Not talking about it doesn't mean you're ignoring it, it just doesn't need to be said. We fill our time and our minds with what we need to do: focus, train, stay positive.

### WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO INCREASE YOUR SALES? //

We have done a couple of changes in our pricing. I know a lot of us spa retailers like to put a cushion in the price so when a customer walks through the store maybe we can sell the tub for \$6,000 but we have it priced at \$7,000. I've gone to straight net pricing. If things are tighter, we need to look like we're more aggressive. We need to look like we're more accommodating to our customers' pocketbooks. It gets their attention.

We're also doing some in-store promotions. We promote heavily on TV, radio and in the newspaper. That's exciting and can be great, but we also have to mirror that excitement [in the store]. So we have in-store promotions. We'll even do some unadvertised promotions to get their attention. We might do a rebate sale that's not advertised and do some inventory surplus on certain spa models that aren't advertised. That way when they get in there, we can show them something really special that might make the difference between buying today and buying later.



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## BROOK VALLEY APPLIANCE //

Hydropool  
Manchester Center, Vermont  
802-362-1045

Even though **KEN AX** added hot tubs to his product line on a whim, he says that they have helped him get through the slow times at his appliance store. In the resort community where Brook Valley Appliance is located, the challenges are atypical.



Pictured: Owner Ken Ax  
Photos: Ryan Harlow

### HOW DO YOU HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES BALANCE ALL OF THE DIFFERENT PRODUCTS THAT YOU CARRY? //

You have to be a consultant. That's a hard thing sometimes, it's a challenge for your salesmen to do. You have to get their trust, learn a little more about them and what they're doing. Teach them about what your business is and become their consultant. Use a closing area as a place to sit down where, with the hot tubs, they can draw out their backyard or their deck, wherever they're going to put the tub. If it's an appliance, draw out their kitchen if they don't have their plans with them. Let them be comfortable that you are going to be able to actually help them fulfill their needs. You have to make sure that they understand that your prices are competitive and that you'll take care of them in the long run.

Make sure that your sales people know that it's a good profession, it's not a five-year job. I have a small store. I don't have a couple of extra sales people. We deal with such a gamut of products in the appliance business. We do have a wide range of products and there's definitely a difference when somebody is looking at an inexpensive commodity-based washer [rather] than something that's going to last them 20 years. As a consultant, you can deal with that and all the extra add-ons; you're almost doing them a disservice if you don't tell them about everything that is available.

### DO YOU THINK THE DIVERSITY IN YOUR PRODUCT LINES HAS HELPED YOU DURING THIS TIME? //

Oh absolutely. By the end of March, our second homeowners are tired of skiing and looking forward to warmer weather. So they stop coming up here. Offering the preventative maintenance [on the hot tubs] and doing all the drain-and-clean at the end of the season, it definitely keeps my delivery crew full-time. It keeps them busy and we're still sending out bills. The tubs have really helped fill in the soft spots for sure.

### WOULD YOU RECOMMEND HOT TUBS TO OTHER APPLIANCE DEALERS? //

Appliances, in some cases, can be very drab. Hot tubs, they're like a warm fuzzy. When you deliver a washer and dryer to somebody, you're not bringing [over] a bottle of wine, a stick of bread and a thing of cheese to sit around outside and talk about it. With a hot tub, if you're so inclined, you can do that and have fun again. Retailing should be fun.

It all depends on your market, but certainly in general, most of the independent appliance retailers with upscale appliance lines, that's exactly the same customer who is buying hot tubs. If you can find a niche to go into it, I think it's a very good thing. You've already got your delivery crew and you've already got your service technicians. So absolutely, I would recommend it.

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Pictured: Parts Department Manager Dave DosSantos  
Photos: Adrien Broom

## TEDDY BEAR POOLS & SPAS //

Hot Spring Spas/Limelight  
Hot Tubs/Tiger River Spas/  
Hot Spot/Solana  
Chicopee, Massachusetts  
800-554-2327

As a 24-year veteran at Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, salesman **JOHN SHEA** has seen the store go from a one-man spa show to an eight-person water-testing lab with several trucks devoted just to spa service. Shea is convinced that Americans have money to spend, despite the "recession," you just have to work harder to find them. His motto is, "Thou shalt not whine."

## HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK ATTITUDE IS WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR SUCCESS? //

Have a good attitude, have a positive attitude. If you think it stinks, it will. And if you think it stinks, keep your mouth quiet. Especially if you're in any position of authority in the company. If you're complaining about the economy and there's some 19-year-old kid [working] there, he doesn't care. He just wants his \$8 an hour and all of a sudden he thinks the place is going under and business is down. Be positive.

Try something different, look at it a different way. How can I sell? Should I go to a show? Should I go out to the mall? Should I advertise? It's hard to spend money when it's a tough time, but [you should] advertise not when things are really good but when things are tougher. There are other things you can do to get your name out there. You have a product that people do want to buy. They say it's [the market] bad, but it still seems the same to me. People are coming in, spending \$8,000 and they're not financing.

In the end, when times are tough, try and keep a good attitude. Even outwardly if you're not thinking it inside. Pretend you're successful, pretend things are good and it almost seems like success follows.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE ON WEATHERING THE STORM? //

Hang in there, keep positive and try something different, something that you haven't been doing. Look at the people who are successful and see why they are successful. We're more expensive than most of my competition, so I'm not winning because of price. People are spending more here. And while the economy is bad, I'm still selling pools and I'm selling spas. A lot of people aren't financing. It's their home, it's [the spa] a health benefit, it makes you live longer, it makes you feel good.

You can be as successful as you want to be. Is it tougher? Sure it is. We're selling spas for \$9,000 and \$10,000 when you can go to a discount house and get one for \$3,000 or \$3,500. But people have heard of us, we've been around a long time. We're very big in the community as far as sponsoring sports teams and events. And who wouldn't want a hot tub? From 5-years-old to 90-years-old, when someone sticks their hand in a spa, in a second they're smiling.





## ARE YOU GETTING SALES FROM THE SAME PLACES THAT YOU WERE WHEN THE MARKET WAS BETTER? //

We work a lot with the same people. We work with the industry trade, we work with landscapers, designers and architects. We definitely get a lot of repeat business from these people and we treat them well. So it's worth their while to send people in our direction. We're always mingling with different marketplaces, and within those marketplaces there's always the big decision-making people. And we're always looking for referrals through these people and try to make it as beneficial for them as we can for them to give us references and referrals. It works hand-in-hand for both of us.

## HAVE YOU DONE ANY SUCCESSFUL PROMOTIONS? //

We're always trying to intermix or mingle within a lot of the events that are going on and thinking outside the box about our positioning and placement.

[For example] if there's a triathlon or some sort of marathon, or even a mountain bike race – any sort of physical competition where a spa would be beneficial to use after the event – wouldn't it be a nice [promotion] to have the participants cross the finish line and jump into a hot tub to relax their muscles that had our name on the tub?

[We also are] inviting our best clients to our showroom, getting out in public events, having a cheese night, giving special discounts for health spas or clubs or running teams. All

of these things, strategic marketing, planning and positioning are really keeping us, Marin Outdoor Living, our name, out in front of everybody else's name.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE ON WEATHERING THE STORM? //

What I suggest for people to do, whether they're in their tenth year or fifteenth year or second year in business, I think they should focus and refocus on their original goals and business plan. A lot of times you're spreading yourself too thin and thinking too far out of your network and your major area. Mingling in different circuits that they perhaps wouldn't get involved in in the past that could benefit from what they're selling and their product line. That's what I'm doing. I'm constantly going back to the very basics and thinking, "What was my original plan?" [I'm constantly] reviewing and re-reviewing to come up with simple and straightforward ideas. I plan my attack without costing a lot of money and seeing what comes out from that. I keep a good handful of contractors and developers that I'm constantly calling and constantly giving each other different jobs. Just having a good network. It is very beneficial for me and I can't imagine that it wouldn't be beneficial for everyone else. I think that in these tough times that are happening, if you just re-review what you first wanted to do and take a step back and approach it with perhaps one new idea and see where that goes. Stay simple and have some clear thoughts.

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Pictured: Owners Gord Coy and Ro Mehta  
Photos: Ian Chrysler

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION? //** We call it our "all-included" event and we run it a couple times a year. They [the customers] come in and we basically lay it out: This is the hot tub, this is how much it is and we're going to give you all this stuff. It's displayed on our spas right up front.

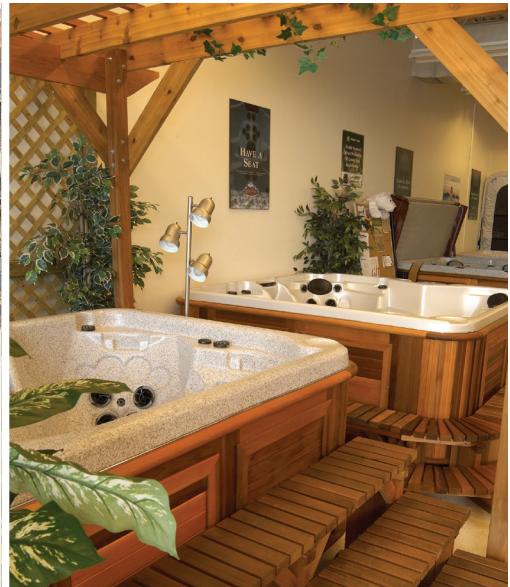
People come into a store and they see a price stuck on a hot tub and they think, "That's great! That's what I want, that's the right price." Then they sit down and it's going to cost for delivery, it's going to cost for this, it's going to cost for that. So it's not like they're sitting down thinking the spa is going to cost them a certain amount and then they find out they need to purchase a cover and stairs and all those accessories.

That has been one of our most successful promotions because it takes all of the stress away from the customers. They come in and they can see right off the bat what they're getting and how much it's going to be. Especially this time of year, in this market with all the competitiveness, people

aren't enjoying shopping for a hot tub. Doing that takes away a lot of the stress.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER RETAILERS? //** You need to keep yourself visible. Our referral sales have started to climb in the past couple of years. We've been following up with our customers more, keeping them informed of updates and changes. If you can maintain good service and look after your customers, they're going to be happy.

The main thing is try to stay focused on what you do. Try to keep your enthusiasm about your product. Try not to let the market bring you down. Look after your existing customers. There's always going to be some people that are out looking for hot tubs, and if your customers are happy they're going to refer those people. An unhappy customer tells 100 people. If you do bad service, they're going to tell everybody, so keep everybody happy.





## BULLFROG SPAS OF OGDEN //

Bullfrog Spas  
Ogden, Utah  
801-737-4515

With a can-do attitude and a recognizable product, **SHAWN MAYNARD**'s heating, cooling, fireplace and hot tub store hasn't been feeling any of the effects of a down market or slow economy.

We focus on service during that period. People aren't buying but they're okay to do service then, so we try to keep everybody employed that way.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE ON WEATHERING THE STORM? //** I think that the tough times come for everybody, and a time comes when you have to choose if you're going to be content to decline at the same rate as everyone else or if you're going to work really hard to keep the status quo, which takes market share from all your competition. When it gets slow, when it gets tough, you just redouble your efforts and make it happen. And that's really hard to perceive as a retail store because you're just waiting in your store for people to come in, so you have to change your entire paradigm and go get 'em.

### WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR SALES ARE UP? //

I think that the market being down is, in some weird way, better for us. We're pushing the whole "vacation at home" concept. It's too expensive to drive somewhere, the housing market is down, so people are stuck in their houses. They're fixing their houses up and that's affecting our sales in the various businesses.

**ARE YOU OFFSETTING YOUR HOT TUB SALES WITH OTHER PRODUCTS? //** We do fireplaces and heating and cooling. Lots of [those] things are seasonal. Hot tubs are the least seasonal thing that we have. Fireplaces are there when everything else slows down and that helps us maintain the employee base and infrastructure.

Everything seems to die after Christmas for a month or two.



## F&F SPRINKLERS //

Marquis Spas  
Williston, North Dakota  
701-572-8615

Sprinklers, hot tubs and an oil boom are helping **DAVE FISKETJOHN** and his business partner **HARLAN FIXEN** have an incredible year. In a small town, customer service is key, which Fisketjohn knows far too well as he battles the mosquitoes while installing and servicing much of the products himself.

Pictured: Owner Dave Fisketjohn  
Photos: Carin Black

### WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR SALES ARE UP?

// We've been continuing with the same philosophy that we started with: We're going to give the best service and service everything that we sell. That has helped. We do a lot of promotions, and we're experiencing an oil boom [in the area].

### HAVE YOU DONE ANY SUCCESSFUL PROMOTIONS? //

We do a lot of TV now. We have our name out there in spots three times a week, two days another week and it alternates. You always need people coming through the door, and when you don't have traffic coming through the door, it's tough. We've been there. In my situation, I think that a lot of people say that you can't afford to advertise on TV. My thought on that is you can't afford not to advertise on TV. Sometimes you need to spend money to make money; you still

have to get your name out there. You can't start hiding back when times get tough.

### ARE YOU OFFSETTING YOUR HOT TUB SALES WITH OTHER PRODUCTS? //

We've always got something to fall back on. If we were just in the hot tub business, that's all you have. We do have other lines that help us along when one is slow or the other is slow. That is one advantage that we do have. We do service on pools and we build in-ground pools. I think a lot of dealers can branch out and get into other things. It's an outdoor living thing now. We do some big built-in barbecue systems, and it all kind of ties in with your yard and people staying home. It doesn't have to be sprinklers, it doesn't have to be pools, there are a lot of other things that go with it.



## SWEETWATER HOT TUBZ //

Caldera Spas  
San Antonio, Texas  
210-735-7946

**WANDA HILD** and her husband Jason started their pool service company 25 years ago with a truck, a pole and a bucket of chlorine. In 1999 they opened their first hot tub showroom and this year opened their second location. Hild says that the new home building in the area, along with their own creativity, has helped boost their business.



Pictured: Owner Wanda Hild  
Photos: Sandra Ramirez

### HOW DO YOU MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH? //

What we find is you have to work harder at what used to come easier. I think we have to be much more creative in our marketing, and also we're finding follow-up is key. A lot of people out there are interested in hot tubs, but they may just pop into the store, look, get some information and then go home and set it on the back burner. And I think as a retailer, it's our job to be creative not only in the store but in follow-up and creating special events. Every month you can create an event, whether it's Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Father's Day or Mother's Day. There are all kinds of things you can get creative with and you have to give people a reason to buy now. And that's our job: Be creative and package things to make it an enticement to the customer.

### DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR SALES ARE COMING FROM THE SAME PLACES AS THEY WERE WHEN THE MARKET WAS GOOD? //

In this economy, we're finding a lot of people are not traveling or going out of town on vacation; they're staying home. We work hand-in-hand with a deck builder who creates an outdoor

kitchen, a family play area and a place for the hot tub. So you create that environment that when you come home from work and all the stresses of the day, no matter the traffic, the gas prices, all the things that come related to our lives these days, you get to come home to that private time with just the family in the backyard and spend quiet time with your loved ones. If we can create that backyard environment, that makes it enticing [for customers] to want to make those memories in the backyard.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER RETAILERS? //

I think the best advice is, you have to work harder at what used to come a lot easier. I'm constantly looking for ways to improve my sales approach, whether it be listening to CDs, going to sales training or reading a book on how to improve my skills. You have to be sharp and set yourself apart from the competition. We can't be the pushy, aggressive salespeople because our customers are much more educated. Almost every customer that comes in has either been on the Internet or they've done some research already. Those customers are well-educated already and if they come in and the salesperson doesn't know what they're talking about, you're not going to make that sale.

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## HOT TUBS AND BBQS //

Marquis Spas  
Avondale, Arizona  
623-925-4765

**BRETT** and **JIM BERGSTROM** have been through the hot tub business wringer and back. Now at their third location, the two have had time to reflect on the lessons they learned while in the trenches.



Pictured: Owners Jim and Brett Bergstrom  
Photos: Jeremy Johnson

**FAILURE IS NEVER AN OPTION //** At first glance, you might not think that Brett and Jim Bergstrom would be included in a section about retail “stars.” But what many would consider a failure, the Bergstroms don’t see as a mistake, but rather a lesson learned.

When Brett decided to leave the corporate world, he wanted to take the route of a good friend of his who owns a successful Marquis hot tub dealership. With his father, Jim, Brett opened a small store in the rapidly growing city Surprise, Ariz., a suburb of Phoenix.

“We were very blessed there,” says Brett. “We did good business there. In our first full year, we made the top 15 retailers for Marquis. It was really exciting. Then I started thinking about expanding out and carrying more than just hot tubs, which was all we really had room for.”

Since the Surprise location didn’t get any customers coming from Metro Phoenix, Brett thought a better location would increase traffic and sales after a couple of slow months. So the Bergstroms moved into a 5,000-square-foot showroom. The space housed four barbecue islands, fireplaces, saunas,

hot tubs and a large wet-test room with five hot tubs. Unfortunately, the move didn’t work out as they had planned.

“We never got the traffic we needed,” Brett says. “We ended up giving away several of the fireplaces to charity functions because nobody was buying fireplaces. We never did sell a sauna. We came to the decision that we either go out of business or we go back to doing it the way we started.”

Jim Bergstrom says that even though the move out of the big location was painful, it was the right thing to do. “Unfortunately, at my age, many of the lessons you learn in life can cost money, especially if you’re in business,” Jim says. “And in this case, yes, there was a financial wound that went along with this. But fortunately we were able to get a hold of what was happening quickly enough. There’s no doubt in my mind we would’ve been totally bankrupt [if we hadn’t moved again].

Now that they are settled into their smaller location, they have been able to get back to the basics and reflect on what the turmoil has taught them.

“I was gone all the time,” Brett says. “I like this so much more, knowing every customer, it’s almost like they’re part



of the family. That sounds like a worn out cliché, but it's so true. We literally know by name and face all of our customers."

Jim says despite the upheaval and financial loss, they aren't going to shy away from good opportunities when they come around. He encourages anyone who is looking to expand into other product lines to think about it carefully.

"First of all, does it [the new product] work with your customer base?" Jim asks. "Are they looking for entertainment and enjoyment in the home and in the backyard? Spas and barbecue islands are a great fit. Children's playground equipment is a great fit, but I don't see those people coming into my store looking for playground equipment. If you're a hot tub dealer, that's where you really better keep your focus and your energy number one."

The traffic at Hot Tubs & BBQs is starting to pick up again, and they are operating at a fraction of the cost of the large showroom.

And what is the biggest lesson that they've learned from this experience?

That you don't have to be the biggest retailer to be the best retailer.

"We're back to focusing on what we know and what we do best and that's selling Marquis hot tubs," Jim says. "2,000 square feet is adequate to have a great-looking hot tub store." ■

**Think you are a top dealer? Are your sales up? Are you doing something new and innovative? Contact [editorial@bigfishpublications.com](mailto:editorial@bigfishpublications.com) and tell us all about it. Maybe your store will be featured in the next issue.**

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# Marketing

## Cost Per Sale is King

LEADS

GETTING LOTS OF LEADS DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GETTING GOOD LEADS. TAKE A LOOK AT COSTS TO FIND IF YOU ARE GENERATING THE BEST LEADS YOU CAN.

Too often when talking with spa retailers, inevitably the conversation switches to marketing and lead acquisition. With floor traffic down, many retailers are becoming inundated with sales pitches from lead generation companies that claim they can generate more leads for your business.

Don't get trapped! While most firms are highly skilled at delivering names of potential spa buyers at a low cost per lead (CPL), they also typically rate among the highest cost per sale (CPS).

Cost per sale is an easy number that should be used to calculate the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns launched throughout the calendar year. In fact, most spa retailers are surprised to learn that the quantity of leads you receive from an ad campaign rarely equates to the quality of the buyers.

So next time you are tempted to launch a new ad campaign, calculate the CPS first! You might be pleasantly surprised how effective smaller, targeted campaigns can be to your bottom line. ■

### COMPARISON OF TWO AD CAMPAIGNS

#### Lead Source A: Garden Show

Cost of ad campaign: \$6,500

Number of Leads	<b>837</b>
Number of Appointments	53
Number of Sales	9
Average Sale:	\$7,250
Total revenue generated:	\$65,250
CPL (Cost per Lead):	\$7.77
CPA (Cost per Appointment):	\$122.64
CPS (Cost per Sale):	<b>\$812.50</b>

#### PROS:

- High number of leads
- Very Low CPL costs

#### CONS

- Low sales conversion
- High CPS

#### Lead Source B: Sunday Newspaper Ad

Cost of ad campaign: \$6,500

Number of Leads	<b>41</b>
Number of Appointments	27
Number of Sales	14
Average Sale:	\$7,250
Total revenue generated:	\$101,500
CPL (Cost per Lead):	\$158.54
CPA (Cost per Appointment):	\$240.74
CPS (Cost per Sale):	<b>\$464.29</b>

#### PROS:

- More gross revenue for retailer
- Low CPS

#### CONS

- Fewer sales opportunities. More riding on each potential sale. Emphasis must be on customer satisfaction and prospect follow-up.

EVEN WITH MUCH FEWER LEADS GENERATED, THE QUALITY OF THE BUYER WAS MUCH HIGHER RESULTING IN MORE SALES, HIGHER REVENUE AND LOWER CPS.

Leads 55 ) Internet 56 ) Promotional Home Run 58 ) SpaZone 60 )  
Accessories Feature 63 ) Show Preview Feature 69 )

# Seven Ways to Get Your Web Site Noticed

**WHY SPEND THE TIME AND MONEY CREATING A WEB SITE IF NO ONE EVER USES IT? THESE TIPS WILL HELP MAKE YOUR SITE A TRUE ASSET TO YOUR BUSINESS.**

**BY DAVID RICH**

You've built a great Web site. It's well designed, encourages customer interaction and is filled with compelling, well-organized content. Now comes the tough reality: Creating a great site doesn't automatically mean customers will visit it. With millions of Web sites today, chances are slim that a customer will randomly happen onto your site.

That's why it's imperative that you use numerous strategies to get your Web site noticed by the 100 million-plus people who now surf the Web. Here are seven ideas to help get you started:

## 1. PUT YOUR URL EVERYWHERE

These days, your URL – or Uniform Resource Locator, also known as your Web site's address – is as important as your telephone number. Make sure people know where to find you online by including your URL on:

- Business cards, letterhead, envelopes, mailing labels
- Packaging, catalogs, statements, invoices
- Advertising, press releases, brochures, even shopping bags

Some businesses also print their URL on giveaways – t-shirts, hats, bumper stickers and pens. Clothing-maker Joe Boxer even weaves the company's URL into the waistband of its garments.

## 2. ADD YOUR BUSINESS TO SEARCH ENGINES

List your site in the major search engines and take the time to index your site with keywords that accurately describe your business. One benefit of using an integrated e-business service is that these services submit your site to search engines for you, based on your individual business needs.

A cautionary note: Not long ago, when there were just a few thousand Web sites, listing your business with search engines was enough to attract regular traffic. However, not anymore. With millions of Web sites, chances are your long-term customers won't come from the ranks of the curious Web surfer, but rather from your continuing efforts to promote your site.

## 3. CREATE AN E-MAIL LIST

Add a form to your site so visitors can drop their name in your business's "digital fish bowl." Make them part of your mailing list and send them periodic e-mail publicizing special offers, bargains, and new merchandise or services. A few caveats, however:

- Make it easy for people to "unsubscribe" from your mailing lists.
- Only send e-mail when you have something valuable to offer or say.
- Keep the length of your e-mails to two screens – less, if possible – and include links back to your Web site for more information. Keep in mind, many people skim e-mail messages.

## 4. PURCHASE E-MAIL LISTS

Many vendors sell e-mail lists, targeting a variety of audiences. Purchase a sample list, draft an appropriate message and give the audience an incentive to "click through" to your site. Then, based on the response rate, determine if the cost of acquiring that customer was worth the investment. These new customers can be added to your database for future communication.

People should never receive your e-mail in an unsolicited fashion. Make sure they really want to hear from you. Work only with list vendors who provide "opt-in" mailing lists.

## 5. CREATE A REGULAR E-NEWSLETTER

It should be short, lively and full of valuable information. Some content ideas include:

- Links to new content on your site
- Special offers on products and services and how to order
- Articles on any new products or services
- News on your business's recent accomplishments and other important happenings
- Bonus articles from relevant sites or publications
- Information on how to "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" to the newsletter

Providing an e-newsletter is an instant customer database builder. Moreover, integrated e-business services offer easy-to-use e-newsletter tools, [so that] creating them on your own is quick and straightforward.

## 6. RUN FUN CONTESTS AND PROMOTIONS

Contests can be as simple as asking people to fill in a form on your site with their name and e-mail address so they can win a product or service in a random drawing. You can attract significant attention by running a promotion that is fun and promotes your products and services.

Before you organize any contest, check into the legal ramifications of publishing it on the Web. By putting your contest on the Web, you make it available to visitors worldwide, which may make your contest subject to certain laws.

## 7. ESTABLISH RECIPROCAL LINKS AND BANNER EXCHANGES WITH COMPLEMENTARY SITES

Use search engines to find other Web sites that you think your site visitors would find valuable. Then, send an e-mail offering to

link to those sites, and requesting that they link to you in exchange.

You might also consider a banner exchange. Banner ads are the most frequently used advertising method on the Web. Most advertisers pay thousands of dollars to display a banner, but by becoming a member of an exchange, you can advertise at countless member Web sites without spending a cent.

## SOME FINAL ADVICE

Always promote your site on the Web's terms. For instance, if you're using e-mail as a promotional tool, never, ever send unsolicited e-mail (also known as "spam") to your list. Also, before you start any publicity or promotion, make sure you can handle the traffic you anticipate on your site. Finally, never lose sight of your goal: acquiring and keeping satisfied customers.

*David Rich is vice president of marketing for BIGSTEP.COM, a free, all-in-one Web-based service that allows small businesses to build e-businesses. Prior to joining Bigstep.com, Rich was a brand consultant for numerous Internet companies, as well as a marketing executive at The Walt Disney Company and Pepsi-Cola.*

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FOLLOW-UP TO "MAGIC CARDS" FROM THE SPARETAILER WINTER 2007 ISSUE



## Are the Cards Really Magic?

IN THE WINTER 2007 ISSUE, WE TOLD YOU ABOUT A DIRECT-MAIL PROGRAM WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH. HUNDREDS OF HOT TUB RETAILERS HAVE SIGNED UP, BUT HAVE THEY HAD ANY SUCCESS?

Staying in touch with existing customers and prospective customers has always been a challenge; phone calls can come across as pushy making the customer uncomfortable, and direct-mailings usually get tossed before they are even read. Greeting cards, however, always get opened.

Busy salespeople usually don't have the time to send out personal greeting cards to all of their prospects.

"We were looking for a way to be able to better communicate with our customers," says Gabe Ganser, Internet sales manager at Family Recreation Products in

Bellaire, Md. His company needed a way to utilize the customer database they were working on. "This seemed like a good fit for that," Ganser says.

Still in the beginning stages of their card program, Ganser says that they are already getting a good response.

"We like the idea of being able to ask customers for referrals conveniently but also as reminders for them," Ganser says. "That's one thing we find is customers don't like to read owners' manuals and they have a tendency to forget. So it keeps us in mind and it keeps customers

coming back to the store when they're supposed to, which long-term, should reduce service calls for the bad things."

Tad McLeland, sales and service manager at Hot Spot Fire in Delta, Colo., says they have been using Hot Tub Cards to let customers know about upcoming sales related to products they've already purchased.

"If somebody's bought a grill, we give them 20 percent off on pellets and if it's a spa, we give them their chemicals 20 percent off, or something like that," McLeland says. "[We are] just using that [greeting card program] as a word-of-mouth tool to keep those customers coming back to us for their future needs and then letting their friends know we're here."

With a small shop that covers a large area, McLeland says it's important for them to take advantage of all their advertising opportunities. The greeting cards give

them a cost-effective way to target their customers' needs.

Ganser says the investment per customer is small compared to the benefits. "I think right now we're spending about \$6 per customer in postage and card costs, which is a small investment to help the customer be more loyal and [for us to] get more business in the future," Ganser says.

John Newton, a veteran salesperson for Central Jersey Pools says, "I have been selling in the pool industry for ten years and have always relied on post cards as a thank you for a store visit, with little or no success." Newton adds that since using the Send Out Cards he has had customers come back into the store with the card in hand ready to purchase. "I believe using the Send Out Cards system has improved my sales and my closing ratio by more than 25 percent." ■

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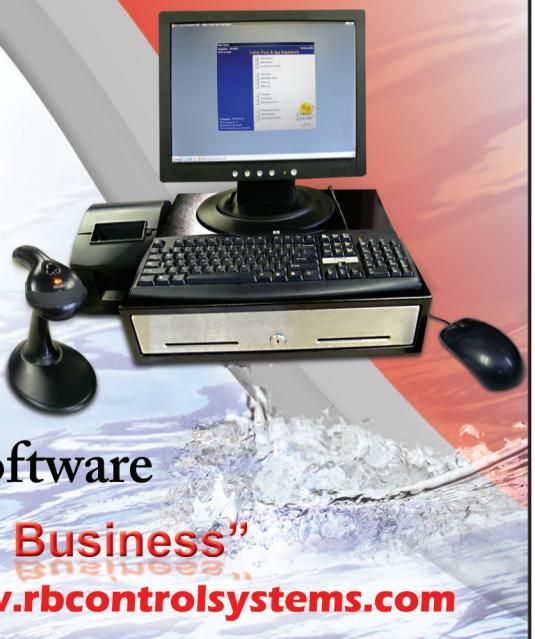
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# All About Accessories

MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ALL THE ACCESSORY CATEGORIES AVAILABLE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH OUR GUIDE TO ACCESSORIES.

SpaZone is a one-stop-shop where you can find out all you need to know about some of the top brands and brand-names in the industry. We've compiled several accessory companies and all the products they carry, so you can be sure that you can offer your customers anything and everything they could possibly need for their spa.

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## ACCESSORIES:

# *The Difference is Marginal Income*

BIG-TICKET SPAS CAN ONLY GET YOU SO FAR. YOU MAY NOT REALIZE THAT SELLING ACCESSORIES CAN ALSO IMPACT YOUR BOTTOM LINE IN A BIG WAY.

BY MEGAN MCCORMACK

*The argument isn't new; it's been talked about at every hot tub show, conference and expo.*

But for some reason, it still hasn't sunk in for some. To put it plainly: Accessories may not always carry a big price tag, but they definitely are big business. Not only that, they can create a life-long customer.

#### TRUST THE NUMBERS

The numbers don't lie. Increasing each hot tub sale by several hundred dollars can add a substantial amount of revenue and keep you in the black.

"We have a number of dealers whose goal in 2007 was to raise their accessory sales. They've gone from an average of \$450-500 [in accessories] per spa to \$800-900 [in accessories] per spa. That's a substantial amount of money," says Eddie Wood, vice president of Leisure Concepts, headquartered in Spokane, Wash. "That could be crucial money to keep your doors open."

#### BETTER BUSINESS

Even if the economy wasn't down, adding to your revenue without spending another dollar to get someone in the door is simply good business and good salesmanship. The majority of consumers have no idea what accessories are out there, they're waiting for you to tell them not only what they need, but what they want. When people purchase a hot tub, they are buying into a lifestyle, a lifestyle that involves much more than simply turning on jets. They expect their hot tub to be a stress-reliever and not a hassle; to customers, cover lifters, steps, towel racks, handrails and other accessories are necessary for that lifestyle – they just don't know it yet.

Some salespeople worry that trying to sell accessories may turn the customer off, thus losing the entire hot tub sale. But if approached correctly, a customer will appreciate that you are respecting their expensive purchase by making sure that they can enjoy it as it is meant to be.

It's important to note that you can't count on a consumer coming back to you if they get home and realize there's an accessory they need or want.

"That's what we drive home all the time," Wood says. "The day that you have them buy the hot tub is the day that they need to buy all the accessories. Now there's a chance that they could come back in two or three weeks and buy some more but the odds are not in your favor. You've got to get the emotional tie."

#### CHEMICALS

Necessary accessories could also include chemicals, such as aromatherapy (see Products pg 24) and water maintenance chemicals. Water maintenance chemicals are a necessity, but taking the time to teach your customer how to use them will build trust so you will be the first call they make when questions arise. The beauty of displaying and making a significant effort to sell chemicals is that chemicals are consumable, meaning customers will need to come in on a regular basis. That gives you an additional opportunity to show them new products and talk about upgrading their hot tub and accessories.

"When many consumers are shying away from large purchases, it's a great strategy to have a variety of enjoyable impulse items, like aromatherapy, at the counter to generate sales. It allows the customer to splurge on something they will enjoy, without adding to the pinch in their wallets," says April Nielsen, southeast regional sales manager at Arch Chemicals.

#### BENEFIT OF SELLING CHEMICALS

If you are still having a hard time seeing the benefits of chemicals, let the numbers convince you.

Assume you sell 100 new tubs a year and those customers all purchase \$20/month in chemicals from you:

X100 - \$24,000 year 1  
\$48,000 year 2  
\$72,000 year 3  
\$96,000 year 4  
\$120,000 year 5

#### LOSING THE SALE

When people come in and are not ready to commit to a new hot tub, don't consider it a lost sale. In other words, don't assume because someone doesn't purchase a hot tub that they won't be an accessories buyer.

"There's plenty of people out there that may come into the showroom and don't necessarily want to [buy a hot tub], that maybe already own a spa but do not upgrade, especially



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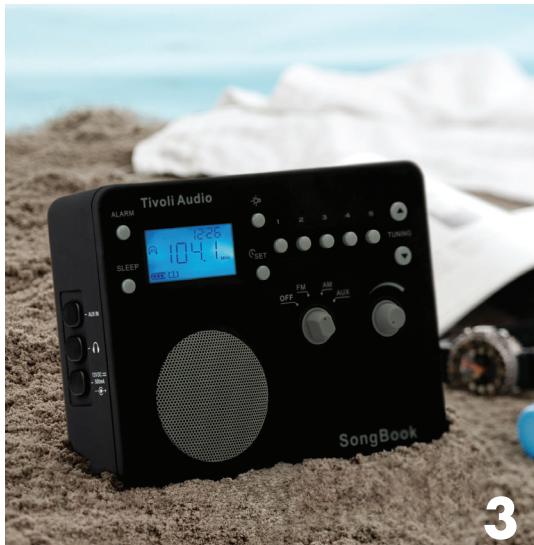
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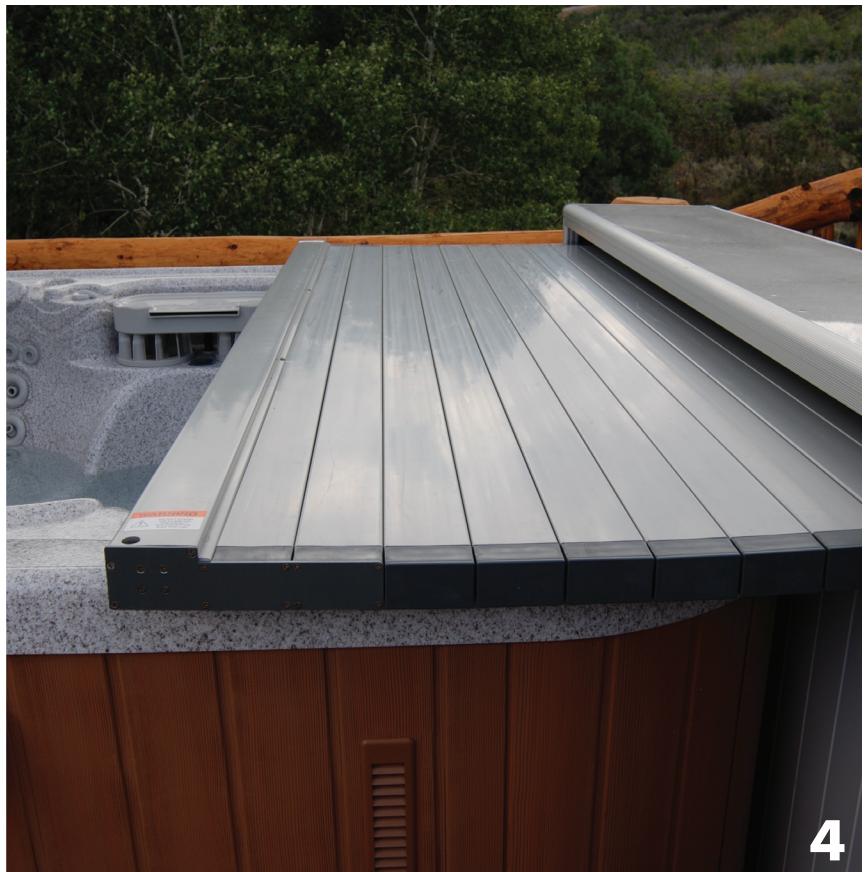
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1



2



4

- 1 Gazebo Works Too  
Swimspa Enclosure
- 2 Sundance Spas  
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- 3 Cambridge SoundWorks  
PlayDock MP3
- 4 Pool Cover Specialists  
EZ Top
- 5 Leisure Concepts  
Smart Step
- 6 Sun Star Covers  
Atlas Cover
- 7 Umbrella pictured with a  
ThermoSpas hot tub



5



6



7

# Innovation...



Meets



# Innovation...



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when money is tight [as it is] right now in this market," says Matt McMillan, director of sales and marketing at Cover Valet, Long Beach, Calif. "So they purchase accessories for their older spas to make them look newer and more state-of-the-art."

## DON'T MISS OUT

You can't control the economy, but don't let it dictate the success of your business.

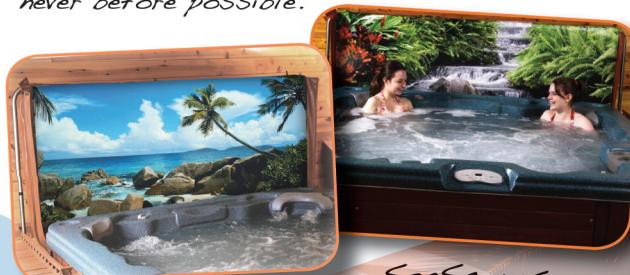
"Because you're having fewer sales, it's important to make the most out of each sale," says Craig Cohen, owner of Gazebo Works Too, Central Point, Ore.

The bottom line is, take control of the sales you do get and maximize your profit by maximizing your accessories sale. How? Integrate accessories into your displays. Don't let the customer think that they can go without it. Make the accessories sound as essential as the hot tub itself. In the end, they will be happy they have them because they will enjoy their hot tub more. Happy customers means repeat customers means more referrals and a more profitable business. ■



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1

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Tricks that you don't want to miss and information you don't want your competition to get a leg up on; inestimable knowledge for rookies and veterans. See opposite page for more information on training and education.

2

### STATUS QUO

You never want to become outdated or behind in your business practices. But that doesn't only pertain to products; it also pertains to selling techniques, marketing techniques and service standards. The Expo will help you gauge if you are up to par, sub-standard or exceeding the industry standards.

3

### CAMARADERIE

You compete against each other all year long, but no one understands the highs and lows of your business like other hot tub retailers. Forget for a moment that they are your competition and embrace that common experience. Share your stories from the year, laugh about the mistakes and learn from the triumphs of your fellow dealers. These anecdotes could be the most important thing that you take from the Expo.

4

### PLAN FOR TOMORROW

The Expo exposes you to all of the new products and technologies that are available in the industry, helping you determine the growth and direction of your business for the next year. But beyond that, you are able to get a feel for where the industry is headed, how the market will change, and the marketing campaigns and promotions that you will see from your competition. It can change your entire outlook and strategy.

5

### WELL-DESERVED VACATION

You hate leaving your business to take a vacation, you feel guilty for taking a lunch break and you stay up late at night catching up on all the industry news. If you have a hard time enjoying being away from your store, the Expo can be a well-deserved, dual-purpose get-away. You are still engulfed in hot tubs, but surrounded by all that Vegas has to offer. So sit back, learn all you can and don't forget to have some fun too.



## TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

BE SURE TO TAKE PART IN THE TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL CLASSES AVAILABLE. THIS IS THE ONLY TIME DURING THE YEAR THAT SUCH AN IMMENSE POOL OF KNOWLEDGE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO YOU. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY HANLEY WOOD

### LIVE WORKSHOPS

Presented by the APSP Builders & Service Councils. Add an extra dimension to the learning process with hands-on, interactive education. Watch and learn as masters show you how to use, sell and install products for maximum profitability and effectiveness. These 40-minute intensive workshops cover a variety of challenging topics, giving you step-by-step instructions. These sessions are free with all registration packages. Located on the show floor in booth #252, bleacher seating is provided for your comfort.

Three of the best education programs in the industry have united to provide you the crucial knowledge you need to advance your business and your career. Expand your expertise, acquire new skills, earn professional credentials and take your business to the next level with this intensive, high-energy conference.

- 83 idea-generating seminars
- 46 technical; 37 business; 22 retail classes
- 77 all-new topics
- 50 intermediate/advanced level courses
- 71 high-profile speakers

### EXECUTIVE ACADEMY

As a seasoned veteran, you have mastered the standard practices and procedures to successfully run a profitable company. To answer your need for something over and above the traditional conference program, the new Executive Academy will provide you with four unique programs featuring high-level instruction led by experts in their field.

### GREEN/ECO-FRIENDLY SEMINARS

With sustainability and environmentally friendly pool/spa maintenance, equipment and construction growing in demand, eight seminars will address this hot topic.

### APSP ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

APSP offers advanced education that tackles the important topics challenging today's pool builders, retailers and service technicians. Each program offers a unique and remarkable curriculum that is guaranteed to grow your skills and enrich your personal development.

#### ADVANCED RETAILER PROGRAM

**Monday, November 17**

**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

A full-day program focusing on store design and merchandising secrets that will increase your sales and profits – whether you have a new store, second location or remodel. Topics include store design tactics and secrets on how to maximize and maintain your store's optimum selling image. Presented by APSP Retailers Council.

#### ADVANCED SERVICE PROGRAM

**Monday, November 17**

**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

A full-day program featuring management-level presentations for owners, supervisors and managers of service companies. Includes six classes on sanitation and oxidation, anti-entrapment, water problems, state standards, disinfection and safety, as well as four vendor presentations. Presented by APSP Service Council.

#### CERTIFIED POOL-SPA OPERATOR COURSE

**Sunday, November 16**

**8:00 am - 6:30 pm**

**Monday, November 17**

**8:00 am - 6:30 pm**

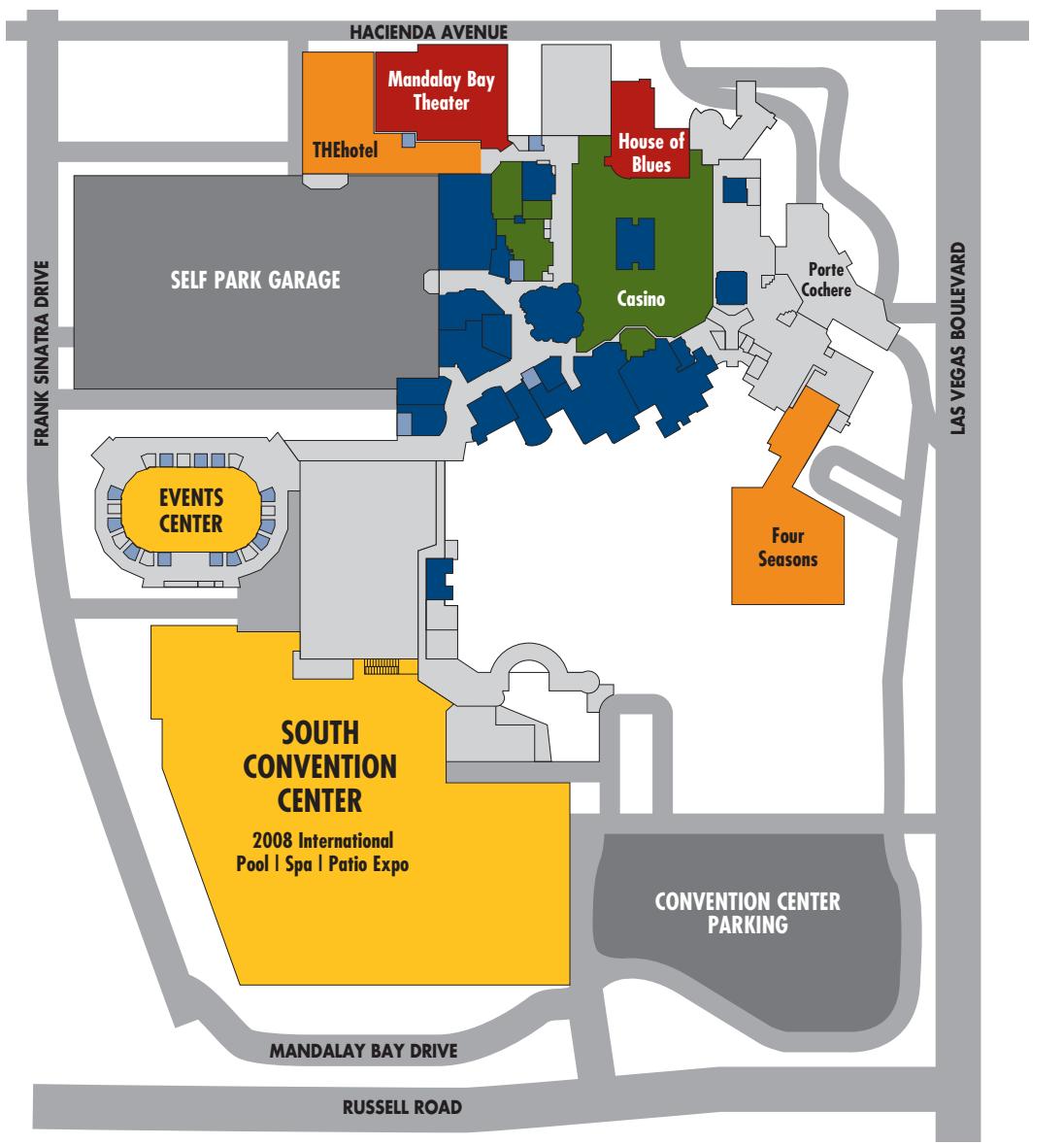
This two-day course is the leading education and certification program for pool and spa operators, engineers, service company professionals, health officials, retailers, property owners and other professionals who help protect aquatic venues.

### STAY TUNED

Our Winter 2008 issue will feature expanded show information, arriving in early November.

## HOW-TO: GET AROUND MANDALAY BAY

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- HOTELS
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- CASINO



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### WHEN:

Conference: November 15-20, 2008  
 Exhibits: November 18-20, 2008

### WHERE:

Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino  
 Convention Center:  
 Bayside and Shoreline Exhibit Halls  
 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. South  
 Las Vegas, NV 89119

### HOW:

McCarran International Airport  
 5757 Wayne Newton Blvd  
 Las Vegas, NV 89119  
 702-261-5211

### WHERE TO STAY:

For individual and group reservations, visit: [HANLEYWOODHOUSING.COM](http://HANLEYWOODHOUSING.COM)

HOTEL NAME	DISTANCE TO CONVENTION CENTER	RATE RANGE
Excalibur	0.5 Miles	\$71 to \$159
Luxor Hotel/Casino	0.3 Miles	\$129 to \$179
Mandalay Bay Resort/Casino	Adjacent	\$213 to \$283
MGM Grand Hotel/Casino	0.6 Miles	\$199 to \$269
THEhotel at Mandalay Bay	Adjacent	\$240 to \$310



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# Operations

PERSONNEL

## Working Hard to Keep Your Hard Workers

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE BENEFICIAL TO BOTH YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEE CAN INSTILL LOYALTY AND ULTIMATELY KEEP GOOD PEOPLE IN YOUR BUSINESS. **BY SHEILA ROE**

It's the bane of every spa dealer's existence: employee turnover. Some attrition is inevitable, but there are things you can do to minimize the revolving-door-syndrome and the turmoil that can cost your business thousands of dollars each year.

In surveying business owners from a number of industries, several themes recurred. First, people's lives and priorities have evolved and so must your approach to working with your employees. Second, your success in keeping good employees hinges on two concepts: communication and adaptability.

### INVESTMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Openly communicating your expectations and goals, and allowing employees to do the same, ensures that everyone is on the same page. Consider a three-pronged approach to potential employees. Using an ownership-enticement-payback formula, encourage employees to be as invested in their jobs as you are in hiring and training them.

Give the employees ownership of the tasks they're responsible for and then don't micromanage. Ultimately though, the employee is responsible for delivering results, so it's an ownership with accountability scenario. Next, to entice the employee to stay, offer incentives such as participation in a profit-sharing plan which requires vesting. Finally, tell them up-front that you are investing in them through training, such as for service technicians, and consider having them sign an agreement that requires them to pay back the cost of their training if they leave before a certain time period is over.

### FOCUS ON FLEXIBILITY

Catherine Gilbert, business manager for law firm Almquist and Gilbert, P.C., echoes this focus on communication, calling it imperative. "It's just as important for the employee to communicate their needs to us as it is for us to communicate what's expected of them," she says. Once everyone understands both sides, "we can make their employment terms work for their needs, as well as ours." She cites as an example an employee with young children who might elect to have more sick days available and give up or reduce another benefit that would be of less use or value to them.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Respect ranks high for Lynda Hewitt, vice president of Hewitt Partners, an executive recruiting firm. "Besides money, being respected for the work they do, as well as respect for their personal needs, is important," she says. Because a small business often can't compete with a larger firm when it comes to benefits, "we try to make up for it in a personal way, [for example] providing mentoring so they can see the potential for advancement, letting them know we understand they want to be heard and we take them seriously."

Small businesses in many sectors can likely see increased retention of good employees simply by clearly stating goals and expectations and balancing the needs of the business with the needs of the staff. ■



# Fleet Fuel Economy

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR GAS LAST: SMALL STEPS CAN HELP YOU SAVE BIG-TIME MONEY ON YOUR FUEL EXPENSES. BY ANNE C. LEE

So you manage your service calls by grouping orders and waiting for a full load before proceeding with shipments and deliveries – but what else can you do to save fuel on your fleet, when gas is pushing \$5 a gallon?

Streamlining your service fleet is absolutely crucial, whether in terms of maintenance or route planning. Impeccable driving habits are also imperative when it comes to maximizing fuel.

With today's rising fuel costs, scheduling spa deliveries and service calls to optimize efficiency has proven to be one of the most effective improvements a company can implement in terms of saving gas. It's important to not only group orders, but also to make sure there are no mistakes – everything on the vehicle should be delivered on each trip. Unnecessary weight will weigh down the vehicle and yield less mileage per gallon; having to make extra trips to deliver the correct item makes it even worse.

Fortunately, many software programs now exist to make route planning a cinch. Microsoft MapPoint saves labor time in trip planning by efficiently plotting the quickest route to each destination with the added benefit of logging miles between each leg of the delivery.

Besides investing in software, ensuring that drivers are practicing good driving habits can also be surprisingly crucial in saving gas. When a driver

leaves their truck or van idling between deliveries, the vehicle gets zero miles per gallon – so be sure to remind them to turn the engine off. Switching gears at exactly the right time is another driving technique that can help save gas. Maintaining a constant speed and never exceeding 70 mph can also help save gas because running the engine at higher rotations per minute decreases fuel efficiency.

Don't underestimate the importance of vehicle maintenance – routine service checks are critical in keeping vehicles in tip-top shape for optimal efficiency. For example, a tire with too little pressure will severely impact a truck's fuel economy, while clean oil will help your engines run more efficiently. Service checks will also help you determine when it's time to invest in a newer vehicle.

When switching or adding new vehicles to your fleet, it's important to thoroughly research vehicles that give good mileage, while also having an optimal amount of cargo space. A smaller vehicle most likely yields better mileage, but it's important to consider the amount of cargo you deliver on the average trip, so you can deliver the most goods with the least number of trips.

These are seemingly small tasks, in the long run, the gas dollars saved will add up – helping save you money in the face of high fuel costs. ■

### FUEL-SAVING TIP

Software from companies like RB Controls, Vetra Systems and Microsoft MapPoint allow you to manage all aspects of your service calls. These products can help save you time and money by optimizing your service and delivery routes.

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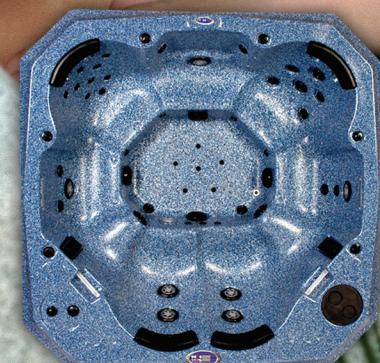
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# Manage Your Company with These Easy Tips

**DON'T BE OVERWHELMED KEEPING TRACK OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO YOUR BUSINESS. KNOW WHERE TO LOOK AND WHO TO ASK. BY KAREN LANGE**

Bruce Troutman, owner of Heritage Rentals, LLC, has great ideas on saving money for his business. He found a new bank with lower fees for business accounts and a new insurance provider where premiums are a bargain. He wants to move forward with these cost savings as soon as possible, but he is missing some key pieces of company documentation. The bank and the insurer need to see these documents to get his new account and policy started. Does Bruce have a problem? Not with these easy tips.

Keeping official company documentation up-to-date sounds complicated. But with the help of a service company and the Secretary of State, there is no mystery. The entire official history of a corporation or LLC is available with just a phone call.

## CERTIFIED COPIES

Bruce's LLC had been formed many years ago. Along the way, he misplaced the Certificate of Formation for his LLC. By calling a service company, Bruce can get a certified copy of his Certificate of Formation from the Secretary of State in about two business days. Nearly any official company filing is available and is easily obtained, including copies of annual reports or annual statements, copies of amendments and more.

## AMENDMENTS

Bruce would like to take this opportunity to update the name and duration of his LLC. While corporations and LLCs are

enduring legal entities, they also provide great latitude for change. Business structure, name and other company details can be updated simply by filing an amendment. Through a service company, Bruce can amend the LLC name and duration with the Secretary of State and have his official document back in five to seven business days.

## CERTIFICATES OF GOOD STANDING

Bruce has been asked by both the bank and the insurer to show that his company is in good legal standing with the state and that it is up-to-date on all taxes and fees. It is good business practice to order a Certificate of Good Standing (also called a Letter of Good Standing or Certificate of Existence in some states) each year. With a phone call, Bruce can order one through a service company and have this important certificate back from the state within one to two business days. They can even help Bruce bring his company back into good standing if it has accidentally gone void or he has fallen behind in state franchise taxes.

While time frames and fees vary from state to state, it is important to know that all official company documents are retrievable from the Secretary of State. The easy accessibility of company records lets business owners find the best deals and make business modifications as needed. ■

*Source: SCORE.ORG "Counselors to America's Small Business" is America's Premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs.*

## THE COMPANY CORPORATION

**With over 100 years of experience, The Company Corporation and its affiliated companies provide expert incorporation services to small businesses and entrepreneurs nationwide. In addition to filing corporations and limited liability companies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, The Company Corporation offers a wide range of products and services that help businesses preserve and protect their corporate status. We provide registered agent services, Tax-on-Time and mail forwarding services, corporate kits, publications, certificates of good standing and qualifications to do business in any state. Our commitment to the success of small businesses does not end there. Our exclusive, Compliance Watch online reminder and calendar service takes the worry out of staying in corporate compliance. For more information on small business incorporation and business services, contact 800-472-2709, e-mail [info@corporate.com](mailto:info@corporate.com) or visit our Web site at [INCORPORATE.COM/SCORE](http://INCORPORATE.COM/SCORE).**

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# The Art of Plumbing Part 2

WHETHER IT'S A FULL- OR PARTIAL-FOAM HOT TUB, WE'VE GOT THE TRICKS TO HELP YOU FIND THAT ELUSIVE LEAK. BY ROBERT STUART



Stuart is the owner of Spring Spas and Home Recreation, Inc. in Colorado Springs, Colo. He owns the business with his wife Tammy and his faithful dog Lakota.

The average tech would rather change every electrical component in the spa with a butter knife and pliers than hunt down and fix a plumbing leak.

Spas hold water and therefore can leak. Ergo, as a tech you will (more often than not) hunt down leaks. Murphy's Law dictates that these leaks will be in a spa 80 miles from the shop, sunk into a deck, against a house wall and with a hornet's nest right next to where the water is coming out. So, we want to try and make this easier.

First off, let's talk about types of insulation. Contrary to what is often preached on the sales floors, it's not any easier to fix a leak in a "Thermopane" or partial-foam spa than it is to fix in a full-foam. Both can be work, but both need to be diagnosed differently.

In both spas, your first step is to look for discoloration, damage to the cabinet or obvious mold or calcium collection around the base. Depending on the pitch of the pad, this will give you a side to start on. Also, have the customer shut the spa off and let it leak until it stops and you can see what jets or fittings are on that level. This will give you a height to look at once you're in the cabinet.

At this point, on a fully-foamed spa you can either remove the panel or tip the spa up on-end and feel under the spa for soaked foam. For me, this is a benefit of the full-foam because I can feel the amount of water and know I'm getting close. The discoloration will increase the closer you get to the leak, so look for dark yellow, brown or even black areas. If the leak is fresh, you might need to use a dye to actually discolor the foam before draining the spa. You could save a lot of time by having your customer pick up dye and add it to the water a day or so before you come out. Make sure they know how to use it and that they first remove any pillows or items that are permeable from the spa.

In a partial-foam spa you're more likely to see calcification around the area where the leak is. However, don't be fooled by water traveling to the low-hanging pipes and collecting calcium there. Look for yellow or brown in the water spots and you should be getting close. You can also use dye in a partial-foam spa, but I suggest looking for the calcium first. Don't count on feeling for the leak in this type of cabinet because the water often travels along the pipe. This is a much bigger problem in a spa that has just a small amount of insulation over the plumbing because the outer shell of the insulation hardens and forms a path. Between the cabinet heat and air exposure, the flexible plumbing can become stiff, brittle and impossible to move or re-glue. In that case, you will need to follow the plumbing to the next good point.

If a spa has hose clamps, it can make things easier to see, just look for rust stains along the plumbing or in the insulation.

One of the most important things you can do for yourself when detecting leaks is to use good lighting. Don't try to hunt down a leak in a dark cabinet or you may be back several times!

Here is a trick that many of the old pros use: Put the dye in a syringe or small bottle and release a bit around each wall fitting, then watch the streams and see if the dye disappears more around one fitting than another. This can give you a starting point, but it takes some experience to do this with skill, so try it on spas that you know where the leak is first to get the idea.

Another thing to consider is the cause of the leak; this will tell you if you need to look for further damage. Chances are a hole didn't just miraculously appear in the PVC. Most likely it was freeze damage, chemical damage or stress. Finding the cause might save several trips. ■

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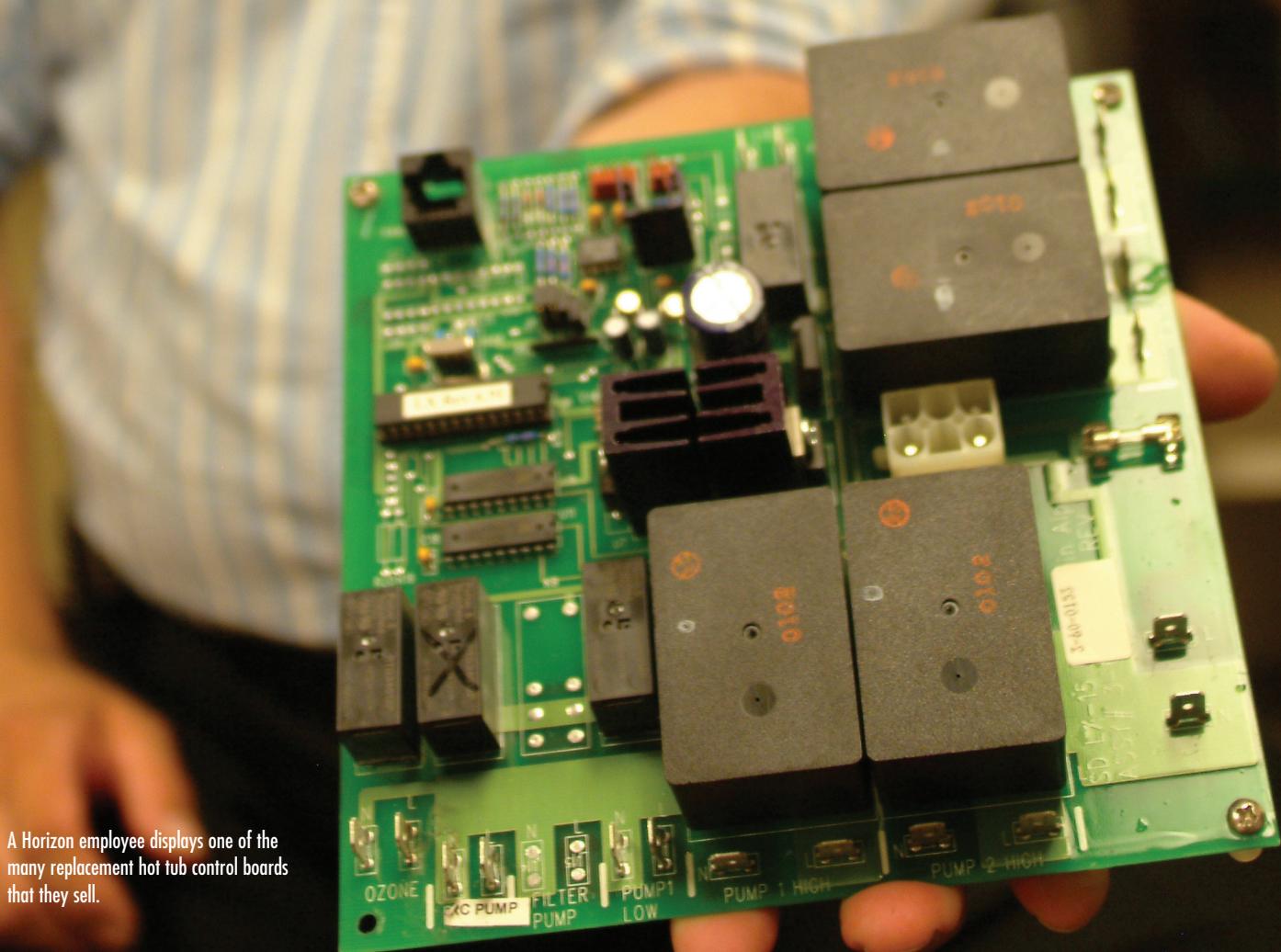


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SERVICE CALLS ARE HARD ENOUGH,  
WHY NOT MAKE ORDERING REPLACEMENT  
PARTS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE?

WRITTEN BY MEGAN MCCORMACK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEREMY JOHNSON

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A Horizon employee displays one of the many replacement hot tub control boards that they sell.



Easy to order and quick to deliver, replacement parts companies can help you keep your service department on track.

NEED SOME OTHER IDEAS ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR HOT TUB BUSINESS AND SERVICE DEPARTMENT RUNNING SMOOTHLY? KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER TIME-SAVING SOFTWARE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF SPARETAILER.

## Service is becoming a more

important component to many hot tub stores, regularly bringing in additional incremental revenue.

Rob Carter, general manager of Premier Backyard in Tucson, Ariz., says their intense focus on service is one of the reasons why their business is doing so well. (Read more about the success of Premier Backyard on pg. 34)

"We've increased our service department," Carter says. "We've put all of our resources and efforts back into our service and delivery department and it's paying off for us. If they [the customers] already own a hot tub they're still using it. They've got to have the stuff to take care of it, they've got to have the service to take care of it, so that's not slowing down at all."

### EASE OF USE

Hot tub replacement part suppliers can help you simplify your service department, ultimately saving you time and money.

Horizon Spa and Pool Parts Inc., headquartered in Tucson, Ariz., distributes spa parts across the country.

"It is our desire to make things as easy for the service techs as we can," says Ray Thibault, general manager at Horizon. "[We want] to help them identify and purchase whatever parts they need during the course of the day."

Horizon provides parts from all makes and models and manufacturers. How this benefits service techs and retailers is that if you sell one brand but are called upon to do service on another, you can purchase all your parts from the same place.

"You as a retailer will save a considerable amount of money," Thibault says. "We've put together everything you need."

When ordering from one single location, you do run the risk of a specific part not being available when you need it. But Robert Howard, owner of R.H. Technologies, a hot tub service company that operates in the tri-state New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware area, says that is rare.

"Sometimes there are parts that they [Horizon] don't have and they've even recommended other places to go when they don't have parts, so that hasn't been a real issue," Howard says. "Generally if they don't [have it in stock] they can get it in fairly quickly."

Howard and David Foraker, owner of Branson Hot Tubs and Pools in Branson, Mo., both say that Horizon's new and improved Web site has made the ordering process even smoother.

"They're [Horizon] really easy to use," Foraker says. "They've got an easy-to-use Web site."

Howard agrees, adding that even though he likes talking to the sales people at Horizon, using their Web site is much more convenient.

### KNOWLEDGE

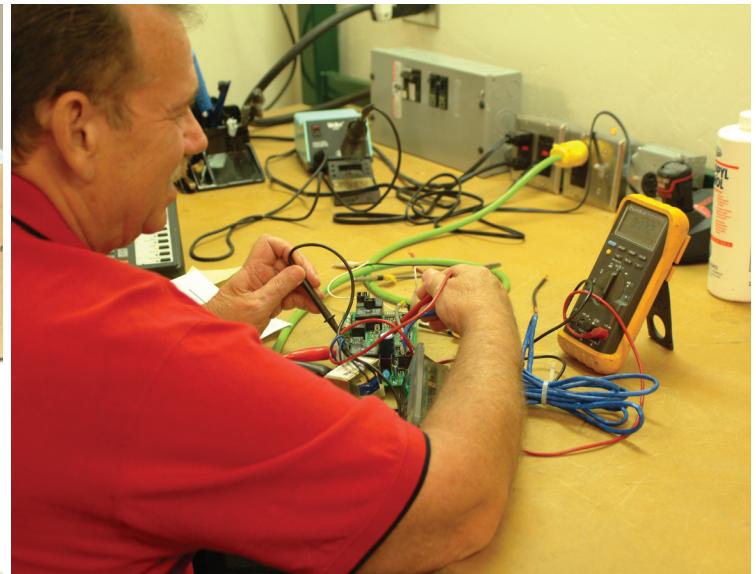
Using parts companies can be advantageous because these companies offer more than just the products they sell. In fact, Horizon feels the biggest advantage they have to offer to service technicians is their expertise.

"Our goal is not to sell parts for the cheapest price, we want to provide a complete service," Thibault says.

Part of the service Thibault is talking about is the knowledge base that is provided anytime you call in. Experienced service technicians answer each call personally,

"WE'VE PUT ALL OF OUR RESOURCES AND EFFORTS BACK INTO OUR SERVICE AND DELIVERY DEPARTMENT AND IT'S PAYING OFF FOR US."

— ROB CARTER, GENERAL MANAGER, PREMIERE BACKYARD, TUCSON, ARIZONA



"WE REALLY UNDERSTAND FROM AN EXPERIENTIAL POINT OF VIEW WHAT HE'S GOING THROUGH AND WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO HELP HIM OUT. AND THAT IS HARD TO REPLICATE."

— RAY THIBAULT, GENERAL MANAGER, HORIZON SPA AND POOL PARTS, TUCSON, ARIZONA

which Thibault says is critical when trying to tackle an unknown problem. That shared experience is helpful when you're searching for a part to repair a circuit board and when dealing with the inevitable frustration that can occur when servicing a hot tub.

"Whether the technician is on his back under the spa, in the sun or in the middle of the winter, whatever the conditions are wherever the tech is, behind the service counter or out in the field, we have the experience to be able to place ourselves in that technician's position," Thibault says. "We really understand from an experiential point of view what he's going through and

what we need to do to help him out. And that is hard to replicate."

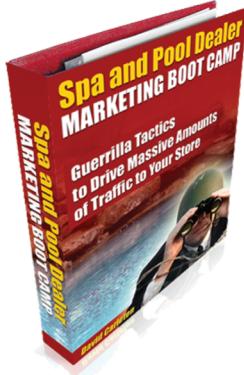
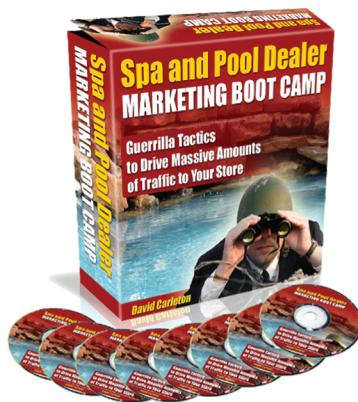
Howard says the accuracy that Horizon is able to achieve over the phone is pretty amazing.

"If I run into a problem in the field that I may not be familiar with, I will call their tech service and they will walk me through it or find out an answer and help me solve [the problem]," Howard says. He adds that their accuracy also depends on his ability to communicate what he's seeing in front of him.

Howard and Foraker both say they would recommend Horizon to other companies that service hot tubs. ■

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**Jaden Kemp - Bullfrog Spas**

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**Mark Verplaetse - Poolside**

"This stuff just blew me away! This is a must have for anyone who's really serious about turning their business around in a very short time. Thanks Dave, you exceeded my expectations (and that's not easy)!"

**Tom Bellia, Bellia & Son**

"I can't believe how easy your systems were to set up and how great the results have been. I highly recommend your boot camp to any pool and spa dealer who wants to increase sales."

**Phil Sandner, Easy**

"The course is very concise on driving people into your store. Packed with high tech content."

**Don Adams - Clearwater Spas**

"Your referral strategies showed me how to expand our referral system into something that will generate more business."

**Theodora Sergion, Nicholas Pools**

"Dave's education marketing concepts are great!"

**James Keirstead - Arctic Spas**

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# DRIVE UP YOUR MARGINS



Reduce freight-in costs and accelerate profitability with Emerald Spas' Co-op Freight Program. Participating dealers pay only \$185\* freight-in to most locations within 800 miles of our Midwest manufacturing facility.

**Better step on it and call today!**  
**800-766-7727**

As Low As  
**\$185\***  
For Most Locations



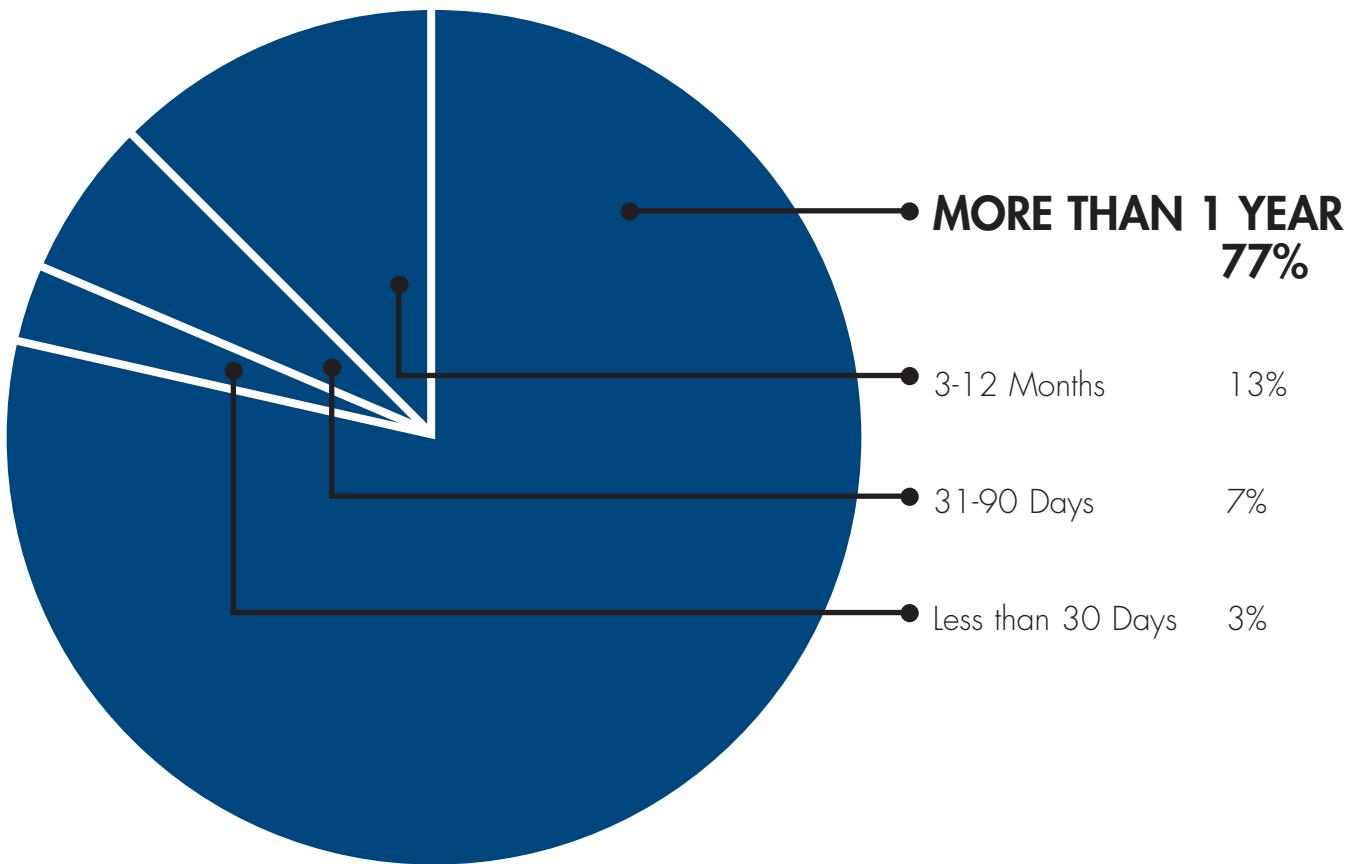
\* Freight charge for +2 units. Some geographic restrictions apply. Call for details.  
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# Research

Research provided by Spasearch Magazine

## HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN CONSIDERING THE PURCHASE OF A HOT TUB?



## Consumer Hot Tub Survey

WE SURVEYED ACTIVE HOT TUB CONSUMERS FROM SISTER PUBLICATION  
SPASEARCH MAGAZINE AND DISCOVERED SOME INTERESTING TRENDS  
IN HOT TUB BUYING HABITS.

We wanted to know how consumers have been going about researching and purchasing hot tubs. Through our survey we learned that consumers don't feel a sense of urgency when it comes to buying a hot tub. They wait, look and research until they are completely comfortable with their decision. These numbers do show us that there are consumers out there who are interested in hot tubs, the challenge is getting them to buy now and helping them understand the personal benefits of hot tub ownership creating the need for a hot tub.

# 84%

of readers surveyed were considering three or more brands when shopping for a hot tub. Sixteen percent were considering two or fewer brands.

## WHERE THE RESEARCH COMES FROM

**Study:** 2008 Spasearch Reader Survey  
**Sample Size:** 403 e-mail participants  
**Goal:** To gather feedback and gain information from consumers who have actively shopped for a hot tub in the last 12 months.

What is the most important consideration when buying a hot tub? Of the readers surveyed, **34%** said the hot tub **FEATURES** was the most important thing they looked for in their hot tub. **PRICE** was the most important consideration for **31%** of those surveyed.

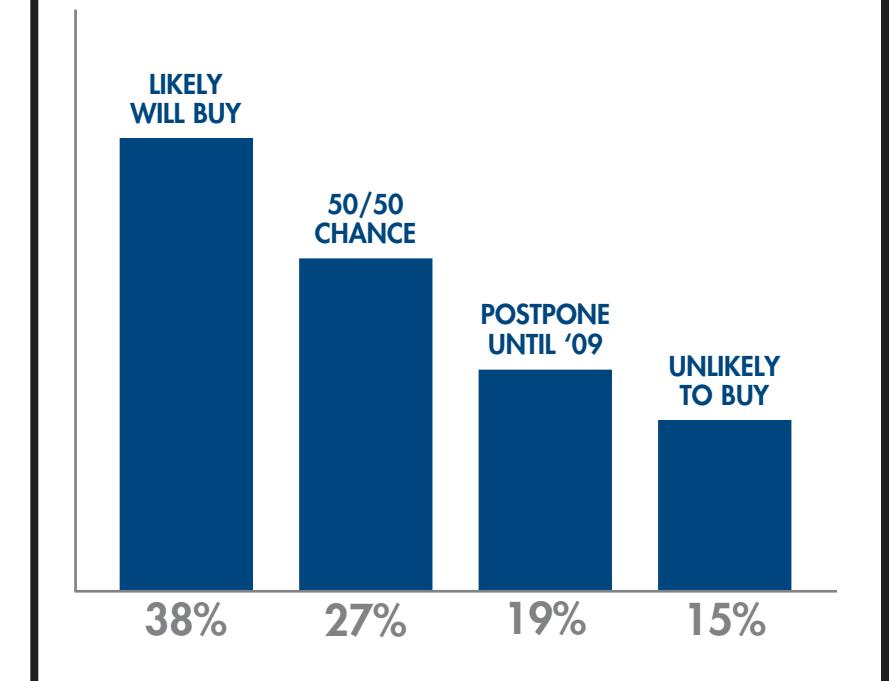
HAVE YOU REQUESTED A BROCHURE FROM A HOT TUB MANUFACTURER IN THE LAST 90-DAYS?

**29%**  
HAVE

HAVE YOU VISITED A HOT TUB RETAILER IN THE LAST 90 DAYS?

**38%**  
HAVE

## HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO BUY A HOT TUB IN THE NEXT 12-MONTHS?



# CELEBRATING OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY



THE **ONLY** TRADE MAGAZINE DEVOTED  
EXCLUSIVELY TO THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY

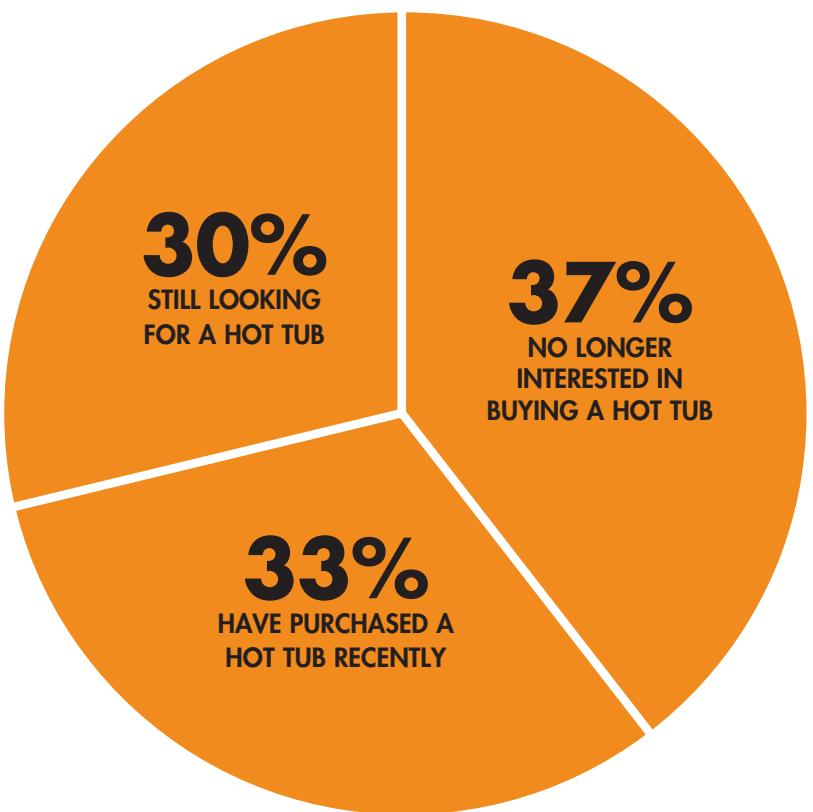
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**SpaRetailer**  
INSIDE THE HOT TUB INDUSTRY

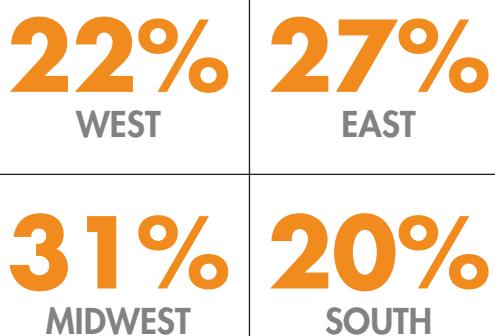


**78%** of those surveyed said that **THIRD PARTY ENDORSEMENTS** were either very important or important. Utilizing awards and endorsements during the sale will help give your brand credibility and identity to consumers who, with the naked eye, are unlikely to be able to distinguish the differences brand by brand.

## HAVE YOU PURCHASED A HOT TUB IN THE LAST 24 MONTHS?



### WHAT REGION OF THE COUNTRY DO YOU LIVE IN?



# 81%

were **VERY SATISFIED** in their hot tub purchase. Only **5%** were **DISSATISFIED** with their hot tub purchase.

Pool Cards  
Now Available!

**“My customer referrals  
are up **173%** in 3 months”**

**173%**

**Are Yours?**

**Our Greeting Card Referral System can double,  
triple, even quadruple your referrals--Guaranteed.**

**Schedule a 20-minute demo today!**

P.S. Did we mention that if you do not increase your hot tub referrals by at least 30% in 90-days we will pay for your cards and postage. Visit [hottubcards.com](http://hottubcards.com) for complete program details. Some restrictions apply.



**HOT TUB CARDS**  
Toll free: 877-808-7665

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

■ STOREFRONT ■ MARKETING ■ OPERATIONS ■ RESEARCH

## COACHING

- Managing Rude Customers/Fall 07/32 ■
- Double Your Spa Business/Winter 07/30 ■
- Closing First-Time Buyers/Spring 08/26 ■
- Ways To Get Testimonials/Summer 08/24 ■
- Building Your Referrals/Fall 08/19 ■

## COVER STORIES

- State of the Industry/Fall 07/40 ■
- \$10 Million Woman/Fall 07/25 ■
- We Want You/Winter 07/51 ■
- Home Show Secrets/Spring 08/43 ■
- Pool vs. Spas/Summer 08/41 ■
- Retail Stars/Fall 08/29 ■

## INSIDERS

- Hot Tub Tech Manual/Winter 07/32 ■
- Show Me The Money/Spring 08/33 ■
- Here's To Your Health/Summer 08/32 ■
- Richard's Group Profile/Fall 08/20 ■

## INDUSTRY NEWS

- Hot Tub Council Initiative/Fall 07/19 ■
- Trade Show Previews/Winter 07/90 ■
- Spa Dealer Boot Camp/Winter 07/19 ■

## INTERNET

- Creating an Effective Web site/Fall 07/45 ■
- Optimization Gets Results/Winter 07/57 ■
- Small Efforts, Big Results/Spring 08/47 ■
- To Blog Or Not To Blog/Summer 08/55 ■
- Seven Ways to Get Your Site Noticed/Fall 08/56 ■

## LEGAL

- Hiring Contract Labor/Fall 07/64 ■
- CAN-SPAM Laws/Winter 07/78 ■
- Tango Over Title 20/Spring 08/64 ■
- Easy Tips to Manage Your Company/Fall 08/78 ■

## MARKETING

- Systematic Follow-Up Marketing/Fall 07/56 ■
- Magic Cards/Winter 07/65 ■
- Multiple Personalities/Spring 08/59 ■
- Rotomold Spas/Summer 08/65 ■
- Expo Preview/Fall 08/69 ■
- Accessories/Fall 08/63 ■

## MERCHANDISING

- Store Remodeling/Fall 07/48 ■
- Use Sense of Smell/Winter 07/60 ■
- Keys to Good Signage/Spring 08/50 ■
- Soak Rooms/Summer 08/58 ■

## OPERATIONS

- Superior Store Locations/Fall 07/68 ■
- Credit Card Considerations/Fall 07/61 ■
- Floor Financing/Winter 07/82 ■
- Cell Phone Plans/Spring 08/66 ■
- Spa Business Insurance/Spring 08/70 ■
- Replacement Parts/Fall 08/82 ■

## OPINIONS

- One Brand vs. Two/Fall 07/34 ■
- One Location vs. Multiple/Winter 07/28 ■
- To Endorse or Not to Endorse/Spring 08/24 ■
- Warranties/Summer 08/45 ■
- Attitude/Fall 08/22 ■

## PERSONNEL

- Employee Retention/Winter 07/80 ■
- Entrepreneurial Employees/Spring 08/68 ■
- Hiring Good Employees/Summer 08/80 ■
- Keeping Good Employees/Fall 08/75 ■

## PROFILES

- Chris Robinson, Lucite/Fall 07/36 ■
- Bill Weber, APSP/Winter 07/34 ■
- Barry Knickerbocker, Spa Parts Plus/Spring 08/28 ■
- Todd Whitney, Hot Tub Council/Summer 08/30 ■
- Dr. Tom Lachocki, NSPF/Fall 08/26 ■

## PROMOTIONAL HOME RUN

- Finding Local Journalists/Fall 07/46 ■
- Reward Cards/Winter 07/58 ■
- Cable TV Inspires/Spring 08/48 ■
- Vehicle Wraps/Summer 08/60 ■
- Do Send-Out Cards Work/Fall 08/58 ■

## PRODUCT PROFILES

- Spa Toter/Winter 07/38 ■
- EZtop Spa Cover/Spring 08/30 ■
- Spa Delivery/Summer 08/28 ■
- Aromatherapy/Fall 08/24 ■

## RESEARCH

- After-Sales Customer Follow-up/Fall 07/73 ■
- APSP Backyard Study/Fall 07/76 ■
- 2008 Retailer Outlook/Winter 07/87 ■
- Home Shows/Spring 08/75 ■
- Weber Grills/Spring 08/77 ■
- Warranties/Summer 08/89 ■
- Consumer Hot Tub Survey/Fall 08/89 ■

## ROOKIES

- Spa Delivery/Fall 07/30 ■
- What's In a Name/Winter 07/27 ■
- Boot Camp for Spa Retailers/Spring 08/23 ■
- Point-Of-Purchase/Summer 08/21 ■

## SPAZONE

- Major Spa Brands/Fall 07/51 ■
- Chemical Brands/Winter 07/62 ■
- Best Selling Spas/Spring 08/55 ■
- Rotomold/Summer 08/62 ■
- Accessories/Fall 08/60 ■

## STOREFRONT

- State of the Industry/Fall 07/40 ■
- \$10 Million Woman/Fall 07/25 ■
- We Want You/Winter 07/51 ■
- Home Show Secrets/Spring 08/43 ■
- Pool vs. Spas/Summer 08/41 ■
- High Cost of Warranties/Summer 08/45 ■
- Retail Stars/Fall 08/29 ■

## STORES

- Olympic Hot Tubs/Fall 07/25 ■
- Champagne Spas/Winter 07/47 ■
- Marquis Casual Living Store/Winter 07/40 ■
- Barto Pool & Spa/Spring 08/34 ■
- Intermountain Aquatech/Spring 08/38 ■
- Paint Connection Plus/Summer 08/35 ■

## TROUBLESHOOTING

- Service Techs, Hot Tub Physicians/Fall 07/62 ■
- Spa Heaters/Winter 07/77 ■
- Tools of the Trade/Spring 08/63 ■
- Plumbing Pt.1: Glue/Summer 08/86 ■
- Plumbing Pt.2: Leaks/Fall 08/80 ■

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Cards Available!

**“I generated 129 referrals from  
mailing just 1 greeting card!”**

**129**

**And I did it while I was sleeping...**

Our Greeting Card Referral System can double,  
triple, even quadruple your referrals--**Guaranteed.**

Schedule a 20-minute demo today!

P.S. Did we mention that if you do not increase your hot tub referrals by at least 30% in 90-days we will pay for your cards and postage. Visit [hottubcards.com](http://hottubcards.com) for complete program details. Some restrictions apply.



**Hot Tub Cards**

Toll free: 877-808-7665

# Need a Business Partner?

**Got Brochures!** Highlighted below is our Fall 2008 advertiser index of major players devoted to the hot tub industry. To request brochures, simply circle the designated companies and/or product categories on the BRC card (shown right) and we will promptly forward your request for information. Don't forget to visit SPARETAILER.COM for additional online advertisers.



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	POOLSPACARE.COM	
2	Arch Chemicals .....	45
	ARCHCHEMICALS.COM	
3	Arctic Spas .....	7
	ARCTICSPAS.COM	
4	Aristech Acrylics .....	9
	ARISTECHACRYLICS.COM	
5	Baja Spas .....	77
	HOTTUBS.COM	
6	Bioguard .....	Inside Front Cover
	SPAGUARD.COM	
7	Cal Spas .....	2
	CALSPAS.COM	
8	Caldera Spas .....	1
	CALDERASPAS.COM	
9	Clearwater Spas .....	74
	SPAGUARD.COM	
10	Cover Valet .....	68
	COVERVALET.COM	
11	Dimension One Spas .....	28
	D1SPAS.COM	
12	Emerald Spas .....	88
	EMERALDSPA.COM	
13	Endless Pools .....	57
	ENDLESSPOOLS.COM	
14	EZ Pads .....	64
	EZPADS.COM	
15	Great Lakes Home & Resort .....	23
	LIFEISGREATLAKES.COM	
16	Greentree Warranty .....	39
	GREENTREEWARRANTY.COM	
17	Hanley Wood Exhibitions .....	37
	POOLSPAPATIO.COM	
18	Horizon Pool & Spa Parts .....	18
	HORIZONPARTS.NET	
19	Hot Tub Cards .....	93, 95
20	Hot Tub Hauler .....	67
	HOTTUBHAULER.COM	
21	Jacuzzi Hot Tubs .....	4
	JACUZZI.COM	
22	L.A. Spas .....	73
	LASPAS.COM	
23	Leisure Bay Industries .....	54
	SPASBYLEISUREBAY.COM	
24	Leisure Concepts .....	21, 51
	LEISURECONCEPTS.COM	
25	Lucite International .....	Back Cover
	LUCITE.COM	
26	Master Spas .....	Inside Back Cover
	MASTERSPAS.COM	
27	PDC Spas .....	17
	PDCSPAS.COM	
28	PharmaSpa .....	33
	PHARMASPAINTERNATIONAL.COM	
29	RB Control Systems .....	59
	RBCONTROLSYSTEMS.COM	
30	SPAccessories .....	65 insert
	888SPALIFT.COM	
31	Spa Dealer Boot Camp .....	87
	SPADEALERBOOTCAMP.COM	
32	SpaScenes .....	67
	SPASCENES.COM	
33	SpaRetailer .....	81, 91
	SPARETAILER.COM	
34	Sunbelt Spas .....	13
	SUNBELTPSPAS.COM	
35	Textron Financial .....	16
	TEXTRONFINANCIAL.COM	
36	Viking Spa Corporation .....	79
	VIKINGSPAS.COM	
37	Waterway Plastics .....	41
	WATERWAYPLASTICS.COM	

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