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New Life for Aquatic Centers

THE 4 PILLARS OF THE SUSTAINABLE AQUATIC FACILITY

REHAB
LEARN TO SWIM
COMPETITIVE/COMMUNITY
FITNESS

USA SWIMMING

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Saving Pools Saves Lives

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Colorado Springs,
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This project was made possible by the collaboration of National Drowning Prevention Alliance, Pool Safely Campaign and USA Swimming Foundation. Something as simple as a community pool that we all have taken for granted would be there forever is now in jeopardy of closing.

However the 3 organizations understand if pools continue to close across the country we could experience the next generation of children not learning how to swim or even understanding how important it is to learn how to swim. This generation will become adults that will keep children away from the water because they do not know how to swim.

Pools not only provide a way for the community to stay cool in the summer and socialize but the pools offer programs that directly affect the quality of life for all ages. Pools are not just pools anymore; they are considered Water Gyms. Pools are essential to all communities.

The Aquatic Resource Manual is for every city or school that has a pool(s). We feel the Aquatic Resource Manual and the Saving Pools Saves Lives Workshop is part of a comprehensive drowning prevention plan. This project is one piece of the puzzle to Prevent Drowning's.

Again if there are no pools there will be no swimming lessons in the community.

About PoolSafely.gov and CPSC

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from thousands of types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. In addition to Pool and Spa Safety, the CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical or mechanical hazard.

National Drowning Prevention Alliance (NDPA)

The National Drowning Prevention Alliance (NDPA) was formed as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 2004 to maximize efforts to prevent drowning through the development and implementation of strategies to facilitate and improve education, public awareness, effective barrier codes, and greater utilization of layers of protection. The NDPA, with a mission is to be a catalyst in drowning prevention, is headquartered at the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The organization's activities address drowning prevention in all bodies of water, from pools and spas, oceans, lakes and rivers to household drowning hazards. The NDPA's largest national event is the group's Annual National Drowning Prevention Symposium. See www.NDPA.org for further information.

About the USA Swimming Foundation

The USA Swimming Foundation serves as the philanthropic arm of USA Swimming. Established in 2004, the Foundation works to strengthen the sport by saving lives and building champions. Whether we're equipping our children with the life-saving skill of learn-to-swim, or providing financial support to our heroes on the U.S. National Team, the USA Swimming Foundation aims to provide the wonderful experience of swimming to kids at all levels across the country. The Foundation also serves as the home for our National and Olympic Team Alumni reunions and regional events. The development efforts of the USA Swimming Foundation aim to establish an endowment to strengthen the future of USA Swimming's programs and services.



Acknowledgements

The *New Life for Aquatic Centers* manual is dedicated to all of the wonderful staff of the USA Swimming Make A Splash team we have worked with from 2006 – 2010. This manual is dedicated to all future aquatic professionals who will persevere and always find a way to financially provide a safe environment for all ages in the community.

Sponsored by and prepared in cooperation with the National Drowning Prevention Alliance and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's Pool Safely program (PoolSafely.gov).

New Life for Aquatic Centers and Saving Pools Saves Lives Disclaimer

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The Dilemma

Cities are over budget, and pools are closing. This epidemic of closures = no one learns to swim in those locations. Drowning is already the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 1 to 14 and the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 1 to 4. These rates will increase as opportunities to learn lifetime aquatic safety skills diminish.

Pools are not known for being profitable - especially those that have been operated the same way for many years - and are easy targets for budget cuts. Do we keep trying to operate pools like we have since the 1960's, or develop and implement a plan so that pools can stand on their own financially in today's market?

If your pool is in trouble, you need to obtain the facts, learn from others, and develop a plan.

The purpose of this resource manual is to provide valuable information to the decision makers in cities, counties, park districts and schools in the United States with pools that are having trouble sustaining operations. Pools must become financially self-supporting with programming that benefits the entire community. This manual, and the workshops to be hosted by USA Swimming staff with the support of the National Drowning Prevention Alliance and Pool Safety, will present practical solutions and examples that are working NOW.

Our objectives are to help you:

- ▲ Identify and assess current programs, and look at programming and pricing in a new way.
- ▲ Develop a *safe, functional, and sustainable* aquatic center.
- ▲ If needed, become compliant with the Virginia Graeme Baker (VGB) Act, new American's With Disability (ADA) codes, and other regulatory requirements that will follow the CDC's Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC).
- ▲ Save your pool and, as a result, save lives.



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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The purposes of the *New Life for Aquatic Centers* manual and the Saving Pools Saves Lives workshops are to create awareness of the importance of aquatic centers to be in compliance with federal and local codes, and to deliver best programming for members and patrons. We will also address the need for swim lessons for all children especially for those who do not have access to pools because of lack of funding or transportation. Our intent is to illustrate how community pools do not need to be the “white elephant” that governmental agencies or schools cannot pay to maintain. Our intent is to also provide relevant information to the person or persons in charge, so you will know where to begin and who or what resources to utilize to be able to offer a structure for programming to be safe, functional, and financially sustainable. The model for this manual has been developed, in part, from the practical experiences of the authors, and lessons learned while creating and implementing the Atlanta Make a Splash project. The Make a Splash project was launched in 2006 and initiated the kickoff of the USA Swimming Foundation’s Make a Splash Initiative. When we examined the lessons learned over our careers, including the Atlanta Make a Splash project, the true success stories were the direct result of a concept we coined “total aquatic programming”.

The Total Aquatic Programming Concept

A total aquatic programming approach to operating pools is simple, yet few are being managed with this goal in mind. Total aquatic programming is built upon the belief that there are four pillars that must be the foundation of relevant and profitable programs. These pillars include:

- ▲ Rehab
- ▲ Learn to Swim
- ▲ Community/competitive
- ▲ Fitness

The rehab and fitness pillars add a new dimension to the “horizontal” programs typical in pools by expanding to activities that take place in the “vertical”. More information about the pillars will be presented in chapter three.

In addition to the pillars, total aquatic programming relies on cross programming, a lifespan focus, marketing appropriate programs for target audiences, and pricing using operating costs as a guide. You’ll learn more about these topics in chapters two, four, and five. Combined, these components set the stage for a sustainable aquatic facility.

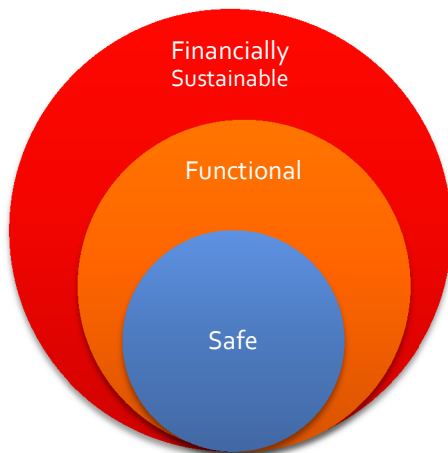
Programming for Success

It is one thing to understand a concept such as total aquatic programming, and quite another to implement changes to get improved results. To be effective, the content in this manual must be complemented by a multi-level team approach that involves administrators, management, and staff. First step is to take a hard look at your current situation. These are the areas you will need to assess:

- ▲ Pools - for compliance to current regulatory codes and laws
- ▲ Staff - for appropriate certification, and personal and professional competencies
- ▲ Current horizontal and vertical aquatic programs

Then you will need to implement:

- ▲ Staff training programs to gain “buy-in” and update to current standards
- ▲ New programs to generate revenue, based on a solid aquatic business plan
- ▲ Programs to address the problem of drowning
- ▲ Marketing to put the aquatic program into action



GOALS

ASSESS CURRENT PROGRAMS

BE COMPLIANT

DEVELOP A BUSINESS PLAN

DEVELOP STAFF AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS

CREATE A FACILITY THAT IS SAFE, FUNCTIONAL, AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

Pool Closures in the United States

USA Swimming's Facilities Development Department has been tracking pool closures since January 1, 2008. It is very difficult to assign a number to the total pool closings across the USA but we know the number exceeds 500. Some pools closed because they could not afford to upgrade and retrofit to comply with the new codes like the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGB) drain laws and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, but most have been budget stressed and running at a deficit for many years. In the current economic times, city and school officials have had to look at all of their individual program budgets to see which are running in the red. Pools stick out when only looking at the numbers.

There are 2 sides to this issue:

The first is operational cost – money going out.

The other side is programming income – money coming in. Competitive swimming can only generate about 25% of the pool rental income needed to operate a pool. Other income must come from total aquatic programming or other sources, or the operational costs will always exceed income.

We can offer the following suggestions and will elaborate further in this manual.

- ▲ The program pricing has to match up with the cost to operate the pool.
 - ▲ We always recommend a pool be host to, or conduct a Learn-to-Swim program. An instructional program has income advantages and is a tremendous service to the community by teaching a lifesafety skill that can reduce the risk of drowning, especially in children.
 - ▲ Many pools have programming opportunities that are being overlooked. We have an aquatic programming specialist on staff at USA Swimming who can offer some advice in this area.
 - ▲ Many times a facility can invest dollars that have a great savings in the long run. Operationally, if dollars are saved it is actually money back into the budget. Exploring things such as coving a pool at night or evaluating the HVAC unit for operational efficiency can offer up to a 40% operational savings with a modest investment.
-

The Ongoing Need for Capital Improvements

Unless the pool budget has a capital improvement and repairs line item with a guaranteed monthly amount of dollars set aside, the problem of how to keep the pool financially sustainable will never go away. The amount set aside for capital improvements and repairs needs to be a minimum of 10% of the operational budget including salaries. Most pools will have a \$10K to \$20K repairs or upgrades need every year. Ongoing operational cost cannot be ignored. These repair costs will not go away and if put off they become up to three times more expensive to complete, and in the meantime the pool can become inoperable.

The Future of Aquatics...From Pools to Aquatic Wellness Centers

What do you think pops into someone's head when you ask them "how does a pool benefit the community". Ask the question and you will get variety of answers. You can have different perspectives from the following groups:

Aquatic architects and engineers
Aquatic directors and coordinators
Swim coaches and swimmers
Swimming instructors & aquatic fitness instructors
Masters swimming & fitness swimming
Adult vertical aquatic exercisers
Aquatic therapist and patients
And many more.....

Community pools have been serving all of these individuals in a single pool setting for many years. In most cases the aquatic industry has been remarkable in adapting the pool environment for the community. For years aquatic centers list pool activities as *recreation* although there is often far more going on that includes lifesafety skills and fitness or exercise.

PREDICTABLE REPAIRS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

- PUMP POOL HEATER REPAIRS AND INSPECTIONS
- HVAC REPAIRS AND INSPECTIONS (INDOOR POOLS)
- POOL COVER REPLACEMENT AND ROLLER REPAIR
- PUMP REWINDING AND REPLACEMENT
- POOL FILTER REPLACEMENT AND CLEANING
- VALVE REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENT
- CHLORINATOR AND CHEMICAL FEEDER CLEANING AND REPLACEMENT
- SHOWER ROOM REPAIRS AND UPGRADES
- DECK EQUIPMENT REPAIR AND UPGRADES
- BUILDING REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENTS
- LEAK DETECTION AND REPAIR
- RESURFACING OF THE POOL ITSELF

Focusing on the benefits provided by the programs in your pool will help you turn your pool into an aquatic wellness center and greatly expand your influence and reach within the community. This manual will help you develop the aquatic wellness center concept, especially chapter three, which includes information on “windows of exercise” and the “T.A.D” (temperature, access, depth) methods of meeting the needs of your aquatic customers.

Make a Splash Atlanta...A Case Study

Make a Splash is the umbrella name for what has become a series of new programming, national marketing, and public relations initiatives of the USA Swimming Foundation. The primary objectives of the Make a Splash campaign are:



1. **Drowning Prevention** - To give all children the opportunity to learn how to swim in order that they can be safe in and around the water.
2. **Diversity in the Sport** - To introduce children to team swimming so that they might discover a healthy activity that will improve their physical fitness, raise their self-esteem, and expose them to values that will carry-over into other aspects of their life.
3. **Dedication to Fitness** – To promote swimming as a lifetime activity that offers the positive benefits of competition, regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

These objectives align with the strategic plan of the USA Swimming Foundation and will serve as the Foundation's implementation arm. This campaign will bring disparate new and existing programs together, all tied under the common themes of drowning, diversity and dedication to fitness.



Make a Splash – Atlanta was the first programming initiative for the *Make a Splash* campaign. This outreach initiative presented an ideal opportunity to address all three objectives of *Make a Splash* – drowning prevention, diversity in the sport, and dedication to fitness. USA Swimming recognized the need to develop innovative ways to deliver the sport of swimming to underrepresented populations. In an effort to address this need, *Make a Splash - Atlanta* was a pilot program that provided the chance to test alternative program concepts in an urban setting and to make the sport of swimming part of the daily regimen for young people who typically do not swim.

Make a Splash Atlanta was launched in 2006 with the partnership of the Metro Atlanta Boys & Girls Club. Out of the 22 clubs operated they had 4 clubs with pools. Recreation swimming was the only thing happening in the pools. They were under staffed, minimally trained, and the pools themselves needed much work to be a safe environment.

For several reasons, the Boys and Girls Club of metro Atlanta was an ideal partner for this program. In addition to serving a diverse demographic, the Boys and Girls Club's mission and objectives align seamlessly with the objectives of *Make a Splash*. The program significantly expanded and enhanced their aquatics program. It made the sport of swimming a core component of the regular year-round activities offered at the four Boys and Girls Clubs that have pool facilities.

“The experience that the members received; members who were afraid of the water received the support needed to move pass the fear and learn to become very good swimmers. The experience has transferred into other aspects of their life. One member who was not strong in math; took advanced math because while in the pool the SSI [Starfish Swim Instructor] said you can do anything... she repeated that phrase the same way when I asked her about the harder math class. The program built a resilience that will benefit across so many challenges they will experience.”
Nneka Carter, Director
Whitehead Boys and Girls Club

Make a Splash Atlanta Objectives

- ▲ To positively impact young people in urban Atlanta by developing lifelong skills that increase health, recreational, and fitness opportunities.
- ▲ To create a pilot program that can serve as a model for urban communities throughout the United States by collaborating with organizations and/or agencies that have access to youth in an urban environment.
- ▲ To galvanize the support of several national and local organizations to rally around the sport of swimming as a vehicle to make a difference in communities.
- ▲ To utilize the pilot program to evaluate what works and what needs adjusting before expanding the concept to other communities.

The program funded in part through the Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation. Programs put into place by the project partners offered educational and participation opportunities for all ages and ability levels. The year-round program included:

- ▲ Water safety education – an educational program for children and parents was conducted at all Boys & Girls Club branches. The water safety campaign utilized DVDs and printed materials provided by Educational Adventures featuring the animated Danger Rangers characters.
 - ▲ School-age Learn-to-Swim program – a multi-level instructional swimming program utilizing the progressive Starfish Swimming curriculum of the nationally-recognized Starfish Aquatic Institute (SAI) was implemented. Children began with water acclimation and progress through several levels of instruction and skill acquisition to pre-competitive stroke skills. SAI provided the curriculum licensing rights, staff training and materials, and follow-up supervision. Speedo provided swim suits, caps and basic equipment for program participants.
 - ▲ Water fitness/aerobics – an alternative fitness program to seasonal competitive team. The Aquatic Exercise Association and Human Kinetics provided staff training, testing, and materials. Many of the staff became certified aquatic fitness professionals. This certification allowed them to provide programs for the club members as well as the local communities.
 - ▲ Seasonal competitive swimming – an introductory competitive swim team program, starting with basic instruction in the four competitive strokes, progressing to age appropriate skill development and conditioning, and eventually to dual meet competition between the different Boys & Girls Club locations. Speedo provided the necessary apparel, uniforms, and equipment. USA Swimming team, DeKalb Aquatics provided mentoring for the staff when they became ASCA Level 1.
 - ▲ Lifeguard training and audits– SAI provided StarGuard lifeguard training, certification, and follow-up performance audits for the aquatic staff at each Boys & Girls Club pool facility. The StarGuard training also enabled certain Boys & Girls Club staff to be lifeguard instructors and to provide lifeguard training to club members that advanced to that skill level.
-

From a broad perspective, the young people served by the Make a Splash Atlanta program will:

Be exposed to the benefits of swimming

Increase knowledge of basic water safety

Improve swimming skills

Improve fitness levels

There are now program opportunities being offered for revenue producing that utilize the Boys & Girls pools facilities during the day and on week-ends when club members are in school. Such programs will allow the Boys & Girls Club to serve more people and are consistent with the *Make a Splash* objective to use the sport of swimming to make communities better.

Make a Splash Atlanta Program Participants

RECIPIENT AND PARTICIPATING PARTNER - BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF METRO ATLANTA

FUNCTION	ORGANIZATION	RESOURCES
PARTNER	Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation	Funding and media events
PROGRAM RESOURCE PROVIDERS	Starfish Aquatics Institute	Training for program directors, lesson instructors, coaches and lifeguards. Ongoing oversight of the learn-to-swim program and pool operation.
	Educational Adventures	Water safety curriculum and materials as well as the kick-off event using Danger Ranger characters.
	Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA)	Training for program directors and lesson instructors for aquatic fitness program and certification.
	Human Kinetics	Lifeguard and swim instructor textbooks, online course and testing materials for AEA
USA SWIMMING CLUB PARTNERS	National Swimming Pool Foundation	
	City of Atlanta Dolphins	
EQUIPMENT PROVIDERS	DeKalb Aquatics	
	Speedo America	Swim suits, caps, goggles and kickboards for all participants
	Kiefer & Associates	Pool equipment for each of the sites

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Pools are closing, but the concept of total aquatic programming can bring new life and create aquatic centers.

To be sustainable, a pool must be more...and position itself as an aquatic wellness center.

The Make a Splash Atlanta initiative is an example of what can be accomplished by innovative programming and partnerships.

Chapter 2 -From Pool to Aquatic Center

What's in a Name?

How many people in the community are familiar with the term “natatorium”? Not many. Many community pools are named after someone. You would see something like - welcome to the Smith Recreation Center. This could be a recreation center with or without a pool.

One of our goals is to develop an aquatic business that will show communities and other interested parties that pool(s) are ESSENTIAL to every community for all ages in any stages of life. So this chapter will deal with learning and staying on top of new trends for aquatics.

In marketing, we learn that it helps businesses if the name tells the community what the business is about. We want the community to know the pool environment is for all ages and that you can do so much more than just “swim” in pools. You don't even have to know how to swim to participate in many of the programs offered, although we recommend everyone should be comfortable in the water and know how to recover if one loses their balance in the pool.

WHAT SHOULD REALLY BE HAPPENING IN POOLS?

Swim lessons for all ages	Water polo training	Aquatic developmental therapy
Swim team training	Synchronized swimming training	Aquatic Ai Chi
Aquatic camps (competitive & youth)	Youth fitness (vertical & horizontal)	Aquatic Dancing
Fitness swimming	Diving training	Water walking
Masters swimming	Aquatic therapy & rehabilitation	Snorkeling and Scuba
Adult vertical exercise	Aquatic post-rehabilitation	And much more...

If you look at the list of what should be happening in pools, you'll see the benefits of **health/wellness/fitness, safety, and fun**. When your pool is struggling to be sustainable, promoting these benefits as the foundation of your marketing plan can completely change the perception of the facility in your community. Emphasizing that community pools provide lifesaving skills helps families develop the right mind-set for participating which can lead to development of lifesafety responsibility. Emphasizing how the properties of water can provide a total body workout will encourage individuals to enter the water, which can lead to development of other swimming skills. Increased participation generates both financial support and community commitment.

WHAT WOULD YOU RENAME YOUR POOL THAT TELLS PEOPLE WHAT HAPPENS EVERY DAY?
EXAMPLE: THE WATER GYM. LIST YOUR IDEAS.

IDEA 1	IDEA 2	IDEA 3

Aquatic Fitness and Wellness Terminology

To understand what is possible in a pool, it is important that you recognize the terminology currently in use for the varied types of programs that can generate income from aquatic fitness and wellness.

▲ Aquatic fitness center or aquatic wellness center

An aquatic facility that provides a total range of aquatic programming in the vertical and horizontal plane

▲ Water continuum or bridge program

Examples include: 1) a learn to swim program that transitions into a pre-team or youth fitness program which transitions into the swim team; 2)an aquatic exercise course that transitions from a one course fee into a monthly fitness program; 3)an aquatic therapy and rehab program that transitions into aquatic personal training

▲ Vertical aquatics

A program conducted in the vertical plane (upright position), and often includes participants who do not know how to swim. Vertical aquatics can be conducted in either shallow or deep water.

▲ Horizontal aquatics

A program conducted in the horizontal plane (prone position), and teaches participants how to swim, or how to maintain fitness levels by swimming.

▲ Aquatic Ai Chi

A vertical mind and body program conducted in warmer, shallow water usually 3.5 to 4 feet deep. Licensed aquatic therapists and certified aquatic fitness professionals offer this program to their clients.

▲ Watsu

A horizontal mind and body program conducted in warmer, shallow water and uses a combination of massage, acupressure and yoga techniques. Watsu is a bodywork and water therapy treatment also called Water Shiatsu or a Water Dance. A Watsu therapist gently rocks and cradles the client within rejuvenating waters.

▲ Aquatic personal training

Aquatic Personal Training can be performed in shallow and deep water. It can be for the swimmer or non-swimmer. This is a perfect way to create IAP (Independent Aquatic Programs) for members if they choose to use the water like a “water gym” in the same way the “land fitness member” uses a health club.

▲ Aquatic rehab

A program that provides a continuum for individuals who have been discharged from therapy. Aquatic Rehab can be provided by a certified therapist or a licensed aquatic professional.

The use of water for a specifically designed activity by qualified personnel to aid in the restoration, extension, maintenance and quality of function for persons with acute, transient, or chronic disabilities, syndromes or diseases.

▲ Aquatic therapy

The use of water for specifically designed activity by qualified personnel to aid in the restoration, extension, maintenance and quality of function for persons with acute, transient, or chronic disabilities, syndromes or diseases.

▲ Aquatic exercise

Movement performed in the water that promotes and improves physical and mental fitness. Aquatic Fitness is typically performed in a vertical position in both shallow and/or deep water.

▲ Aquatic fitness professional

An Aquatic Fitness Professional is no longer “just” a water exercise instructor. The Aquatic Fitness Professional must be an advisor who understands the full spectrum of the aquatic continuum and has the required areas of expertise which includes:

- 1) Knowledge about fitness, aquatic injuries and conditions.
- 2) Customer service: be able to listen, be passionate, show care and empathy for members, and have a great attitude.
- 3) Business concepts: understood both from the liability aspects, and the unique marketing plan for the aquatic center.
- 4) Skills and experience: be able to promote a mentor type relationship with the participant and properly evaluate the participant’s exercise plan.
- 5) Safety and leadership: in the field of aquatics, first aid/CPR and personal fitness.

Recreational Pool or Fitness Pool or Both?

In the past, pools provided recreational programming without defining what the health benefits were to their customers in the community. It was simply *assumed* the community knew and thought about the benefits. From personal experience, we know the community does not recognize the variety of benefits from exercising in the water. Therefore, to be financially successful, it is very important to constantly market the health benefits of water exercise as well as market health benefits such as being *safer* in the water through swim lessons for all ages and stages in your community. Your aquatic center can market to the appropriate medical groups how safe it is for their clients to exercise in the water to improve their balance challenges. You literally might never run out of ideas for water programs.



Swimming is a recreation activity when a person goes to a water park or plays recreational games in the water, such as water basketball, water polo, or Marco Polo. However, when those activities are designed to be a class or organized activity, we need to look at the activity differently. We should market differently and take the opportunity for a teaching moment to educate the public about the benefits.

Using descriptive words such as aerobics or aquacise to promote signing up for a program does not always work as well as you might expect. It would be more beneficial to market not only the name but also promote all of the health benefits and staff credentials. For example, “The program offers Total Body Exercise that addresses all of the 5 components of fitness and is supervised by a qualified aquatic personal trainer.” You should market the programs by listing all of the health benefits and the overall value of the program. This benefits-based marketing will help with word-of-mouth advertising and may motivate people in the community to give it a try. In general, even in tough economic times, people will be willing to pay the price of the program if the stated benefit validates the value of the program.

Barriers to Becoming an Aquatic Wellness Center

Consider this statement: “Because I like to read I will be a great teacher.” Is this always true? Of course not! Yet in aquatics we have had the tendency to consider accomplished competitive swimmers, coaches, or lifeguards as the most qualified to have a say in designing, operating, or managing aquatic facilities.

Just because a person has been in aquatics for years and years, does not mean a lifeguard or a competitive swimmer is qualified to develop a suitable program or business plan for the aquatic center. The staff hired will need to not only have a background in modern aquatics but be able to apply the components of a well-designed fitness and wellness program.

However, there is a significant lack of appropriate training for aquatic managers in the United States. The table on the next page summarizes this problem from the perspective of the indoor waterpark industry, but the same issues are relevant to all of aquatics.

LACK OF TRAINED PERSONNEL AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

LACK OF TRAINED PERSONNEL

According to the International Aquatic Foundation, there are close to 300,000 commercial swimming pools in the United States, yet there is a lack of qualified managers and pool operators. For example, in 2007 it was estimated that 2,300 leadership and management positions would open between 2007 and 2012.¹ Over 1400 individuals were hired in 2006 for the indoor waterpark industry.² Although industry growth has slowed during the recent economic recession,³ new facilities continue to open and qualified individuals are needed to run new and existing pools and waterparks.

In addition to managers, there is a shortage of trained individuals at the entry level in the aquatics industry. According to the 2008 *Aquatics International Salary Survey*⁴, nearly 70 percent of operators and managers have experienced a lifeguard shortage in the past five years. *Aquatics International* adds that most guards are expected to carry a full range of certifications. Of those surveyed, 92 percent require CPR; 89 percent, first aid; and 30 percent, an oxygen administration (OA) certification.⁵ Even though facilities recruit at local schools, job fairs and through existing employees, they cannot fill the open positions.⁶

LACK OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

At least 460 university graduates are estimated to be needed each year to fill open positions at aquatic facilities. However, most universities do not offer programs to train students for this role⁷, and aquatic facilities are often forced to hire unqualified personnel. With proper training and guidance, however, individuals without college degrees are qualified to manage aquatic facilities and bring a new level of risk management to the aquatics industry. *Aquatics International* notes that when it comes to supervisors, 75 percent of aquatic facility managers say they require a high school diploma or equivalent⁸. Only 24% of responding facilities required a college degree for the position of aquatics supervisor.

Up to date aquatic management training programs are virtually nonexistent. The availability of community training programs for lifeguards, swim instructors and pool operators varies widely, but tend to be concentrated in affluent areas that have aquatic facilities and not where the majority of untrained potential employees reside.

WHY AREN'T UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES TAKING THE LEAD?

1. Because of the indoor waterpark industry's newness, universities are unfamiliar with its growth.
2. Those who are aware most likely do not know what curriculum is needed to create successful professionals.
3. Universities are unsure how to categorize indoor waterparks to decide in which college department this area should be placed. (Is it Exercise Sports Science, Commercial Recreation, Business Administration or Hospitality?)
4. Many professors would prefer to teach in areas they are most familiar.
5. Universities and colleges are supported by state governments and educate people for areas in which they receive the most funding.

¹ "Mounting Concerns," Fred Inter. *Waterpark Resorts Today/Aquatics International* (Fall 2007)

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "Short Changed?," *Aquatics International* (April 2008)

⁵ *Ibid.*


⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ "Mounting Concerns," Fred Inter. *Waterpark Resorts Today/Aquatics International* (Fall 2007)


⁸ *Ibid.*

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

There are a wide variety of aquatic fitness and wellness programs that have marketable benefits.



Use benefits-based marketing and naming to educate the public about your aquatic wellness center.



Seek qualified staff, but realize a barrier may be lack of quality training for aquatic management personnel.

Notes:

Chapter 3 - Sustaining Business: the Four Aquatic Pillars

The Pillar Concept

In buildings, pillars help create a strong foundation and hold up the structure. Pillars also create an attractive and powerful appearance. If any one pillar is missing or damaged, the integrity of the structure is compromised.

Using the pillar concept for your pool will help focus your programming efforts. There are four pillars of aquatic activities that must be present for an aquatic facility to be sustainable. Each pillar is not equal in the ability to generate revenue or profits. However, by having four pillars, those that are profit generating can bear the weight of those that are not.


THE 4 PILLARS
Rehab
Learn to Swim
Competitive/Community
Fitness



The Learn-to-Swim Pillar

Learning to swim should be as much of a priority as learning reading, writing, and math in school! Both children and adults should have the opportunity to enjoy the water. If all communities take the necessary steps to make their children safer through comprehensive Learn-to-Swim programs, we can change the statistic that drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death of children in most states. The learn-to-swim programs should be offered with a variety of options both for size of class and for pricing.

A learn to swim program should have several levels and pricing structures. The upper level (higher priced) programming will help support the community (lower priced) programs.



Group classes and Make a Splash initiative
Lowest price but still good quality.

Small group classes
Moderate price - better quality.

Semi-private classes (2 :1 senior level instructor)
Higher price - market best quality.

Private classes (1:1 senior level instructor)
Highest price and flexible scheduling options.

The Rehab Pillar

Aquatic therapy and rehabilitation (rehab) is the fastest growing and one of the most popular and beneficial services that can be offered in a pool. However, you will need to consider if you have the proper design to rent water space to qualified licensed therapists. When patients are released from traditional physical therapy, they need a place to continue their water routines. Warm water and professional guidance are keys to this service. Those who cannot exercise on land can now be afforded the opportunity to change their lifestyle and, through aquatics, begin a program that will eventually lead to a healthy lifestyle. In terms of water therapy, the availability of 88 to 92 degree water with convenient access and comfortable depth is the number one thing lacking in the United States. The aquatics industry is **servicing less than 10% of therapy needs, so there is great potential to tap into this underserved market.**

The Fitness Pillar

Aquatic fitness should be viewed as *adults and children exercising in water to LIVE on land.*

Whether water walking, vertical exercising or swimming laps, exercise in the water promotes better health with reduced risk of injury. Many community members simply cannot safely or comfortably exercise on land. If a person is in water up to the neck or chest, 85% to 90% of the body weight is supported by the water. For the healthier person, water can provide 12 times the resistance of air for endurance training. Cross training on land and in the water is a successful exercise option. Aquatics programs are the key to helping solve health issues relating to obesity and de-conditioning problems. Pools with 88 degree water with convenient access and comfortable depth are not readily available in the United States. The aquatics industry is servicing less than 30% of fitness needs.

The Competitive/Community Pillar

After learning to swim, many children try competitive swimming. Swimming offers physical development and benefits unmatched by any other activity. USA Swimming clubs provide professional instruction and coaching to help children of all ages and abilities enjoy this life-long activity. Sports and recreation can help address fitness and obesity issues.

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Four programming pillars help create a sustainable aquatic facility.



More profitable pillars help bear the weight of less profitable pillars.



Within pillars, high priced higher level services help support community level services.

Notes:

Chapter 4 - One Pool - Many Users

Windows of Exercise (WOE) and Traditional Classes

For an Aquatic Center to be self-sustaining, the center must bring in enough dollars to meet the budget. One way for this to work is to look at the pool as a “water gym” or “health and wellness center”. When you hear the word gym or health club you think of land fitness clubs. We now know a person can obtain a total body workout in the water. We can actually design the pool or aquatic center to offer the same program versatility as a health club. An Aquatic Health Club’s business plan is based on an annual membership fee, monthly fees and special programs with a separate cost.

This is exactly the way an Aquatic Center can operate while providing program options for most income levels in the community. This is done by implementing the “Window of Exercise” method. *See handout in the Resources section. .

The Aquatic Center’s owners/managers will have to decide what they want to achieve, other than make money to stay open. Who is the target audience? When can their customers get to the pool? Do they have the qualified staff to conduct the programs? Can they mix vertical aquatics and swimming (horizontal) at the same time in the same pool? What will the pool look like when mixing multiple programs?

One important thing that needs to be determined is how many programs or activities/exercise sessions can be going on during one hour in the same pool. The next thing is to identify a qualified person(s) to manage the program(s). This format does not require a lot of staff, but those selected must be qualified to work in a health and wellness environment. The program needs a staff that has knowledge of fitness, aquatics and an understanding of health and wellness. In an average size commercial pool (25 yards/75 feet long x 3.5’ to 4’ depth), you can provide programs that meet the needs of all ages and stages in the community.

Once the community starts to realize the pool offers health and wellness programs, they will look at the pool with a totally different perspective. No longer just for RECREATION, but rather, for programs that are essential to leading a healthier lifestyle. All water programs need to be supported by educational fliers and workshops that focus on being healthy via the water. The Aquatic Educator(s) can teach their members how they can improve their fitness levels by using the properties of water.



The Health Club Model

The aquatic business plan for your pool should look like a health club model; think of the concept of a “water gym”. In addition to community or public level pricing, there should be a variety of fee structures including annual fee, monthly fee and fees for special programs. This is what we mean by upper level programming supports community programming.

Typically, members who pay the monthly fee have the ability to come to the pool to exercise any day of the week and any hour of the day the pool has designated for the “window of exercise.” One day a person might come to the pool to do an independent aquatic program at 9 a.m., and the next day, he or she may choose to come in the afternoon. A qualified and certified staff member has developed a program for the member, so it does not matter when the activity occurs. The plan could be as simple as a water walking program or a more sophisticated cross training program of vertical aquatics and swimming components.

The member can keep learning new exercises or skills by attending other mini clinics and classes the aquatic center offers which are **included** with the basic monthly fee.

Anyone wanting more than the mini clinics can ask to have a qualified staff person provide aquatic personal training, for which there is a separate fee. The member will only pay for such training if they want the service.

Basic programming is included in the monthly fees, and everyone has the option to participate in the special programs if they choose. The programs that are offered for all members are weekly mini clinics/classes, monthly pool chats, and educational workshops.

Cross Programming

When an aquatic center offers the window of exercise format, cross programming is easily implemented. It also promotes the cross training of staff. This can provide better job security and motivation for staff and can lead to a part time staff person being offered a full time position. This helps nurture aquatic careers and fosters professionalism. This method could provide a better understanding of all aquatic professionals and their area of the aquatic industry.

EXAMPLE: 25 YARD 6 LANE POOL – MULTIPLE DEPTHS WITH POOL ACCESS

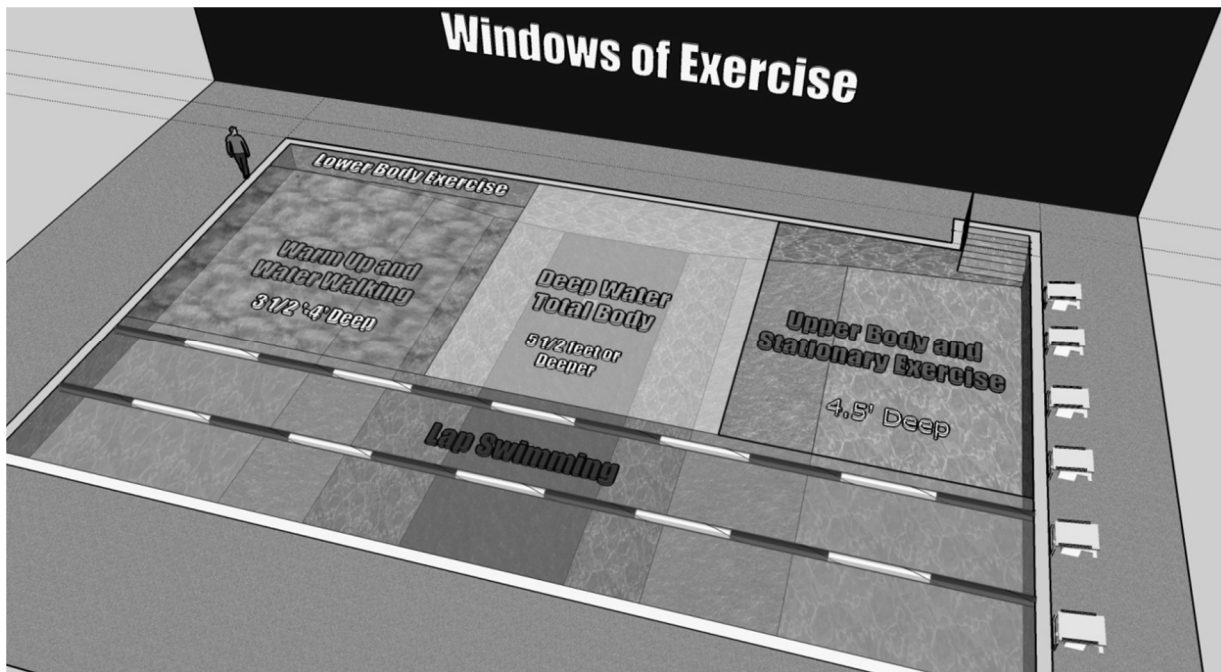
Two lanes are for circle swimming only and the rest of the pool is set up for vertical aquatic exercise. Without the lane lines in the water, you have open space that can be divided into thirds. The first third of the pool would be used for warm-up by performing water walking. For some members, this will be their entire exercise program. The second third can be used for stationary exercise such as upper body

or lower body exercise. The last third is used for cardio exercise, which is usually in deeper water but not necessarily so.

Each person has their own routine designed specifically for them addressing their own abilities and contraindications. It is possible to have 15 to 20 people in the pool at one time without being overcrowded. These 15 to 20 members are taking advantage of the programs offered with the monthly fee. Remember, this customer service the aquatic center provides makes their services valuable and sets them apart from other facilities. The members can be in the water one day a week or five days a week. It is their choice how many times they come in.

Because the members are exercising on their own, with proper supervision, you now can offer *upper level programming or even more community programming such as learn to swim*. Because your staff is cross- trained, there is someone qualified to work with more than just a single program.

The diagram below illustrates how a pool can be cross programmed to accommodate the windows of exercise member model.





Examples of Cross Programming Options

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

OPTIONAL PROGRAMMING

DAILY ACCESS	
LEARN TO SWIM GROUP CLASSES	Spotlight classes
	Custom classes
	PASS class
	Home school classes
	Day care classes
	Special needs classes
ADULT WINDOW OF EXERCISE MEMBERSHIP BASED	
	Aquatic personal training
	Masters swimming
	Juice gang
FINE PROGRAMMING MEMBERSHIP BASED	
MINI-CLINICS/CLASSES	HAP-E program
POOL CHATS	SAF-E program
	Special goal programs (ie obesity)
	Ai Chi Baby
	Creating Ripples
	Catch the Wave
YOUTH FITNESS	MEMBERSHIP BASED
	Pre-team bridge program
	SKWIM
	Water basketball league

Understanding the TAD Principle (Temperature, Access, Depth)

A large percentage of calls the USA Swimming Facilities Development Department receives are questions about water depth, water temperature, and air temperature for indoor pools. There are “ideal situations” and there are situations that need to be “adapted to.” Everyone has their opinion as to what is ideal, usually based on their experience and personal preference. An aquatic physical therapist or an aquatic fitness professional and even a swimming instructor views a pool much differently than a competitive swim coach, yet many times, they have to share pool time because that’s the only pool available to their program and community.

One of USA Swimming’s goals is to assist USA swimming clubs, and the people who partner with those clubs, in getting new pool water, or make existing pools “user friendly.” This can mean renovation of existing pools or building new multi-use facilities. Our prime directives are:

- ▲ Never build a single pool. One pool does not and cannot meet the needs of everyone in the aquatic community
- ▲ Programming precedes design. Build to what you want to do in the pool, otherwise you may be surprised at the limitations because of poor design decisions.

The term **TAD** stands for **T**emperature – **A**ccess – **D**epth. These components ALL need to be considered when programming a pool, and since programming should precede design, TAD should play an important role in design planning.

Temperature

You may have heard the “rule of thumb” that the air temperature needs to be maintained within 2 degrees of the water temperature. This is only true within certain parameters. With the increasing popularity of “warm-water” rehab and specialty pools, this axiom does not always apply. Air temperature higher than 85 degrees can be both unhealthy for the patrons and extremely hard on the building structure and equipment.

More than air temperature needs to be considered. The air flow CFM (Cubic Feet per Minute) and humidity, and mixture (if any) of outside air also are important.

Water Temperature Guidelines

Water varying from 83-86 degrees Fahrenheit (27-30 degrees Celsius) is the most comfortable temperature for typical water fitness classes. This allows the body to react and respond normally to the onset of exercise and the accompanying increase in body temperature. Cooling benefits are still felt and there is little risk of overheating. Program modifications will be required for water temperature



outside the recommended range. Aquatic Fitness Professionals should know the water temperature and modify the program accordingly based upon the population and the program format. Water temperature below the recommended range requires modifications in programming. The primary focus of the warm up should be large, lower impact, rhythmic movements that gradually elevate core temperature of the body and should last for at least 9-15 minutes. The main segment must be of adequate intensity to maintain proper body temperature and prevent injury. Participants may find it necessary to wear specialized clothing to maintain body heat. The cool down and post-stretch must be adjusted, in overall length as well as activity, according to the environmental conditions. Water temperature above the recommended range also requires modifications in programming. The intensity and length of the main segment should be adjusted to prevent overheating. Encourage proper hydration and apparel (e.g. avoid swimming caps that prevent heat dissipation). An extended cool down with emphasis on stretching and relaxation is appropriate. Be aware that specialized populations may require specific water temperatures for safe and effective programming. Some general guidelines are as follows:

PROGRAM	TEMPERATURE	COMMENT
SWIM TEAM AND LAP SWIM	78-82 F = 25.5-27.5 C	Slightly warmer may be appropriate
RESISTANCE TRAINING	83-86 F = 28-30 C	
THERAPY AND REHAB	91-95 F = 22-35 C	Can be as low as 87 F for many types of therapy
MULTIPLE SCEROSIS	80-84 F = 26.5-29 C	Warmer water can cause adverse effects
PREGNANCY	78-84 F = 25.5-29 C	Warmer water can cause adverse effects
ARTHRITIS	84-88 F = 29-31 C	Arthritis Foundation minimum
	86-90 F = 28-32 C	ATRI low function program
FIBROMYALGIA	86-96 F = 30-35.5 C	ATRI recommendations
AEROBIC ACTIVITY	84-88 F = 29-31 C	Arthritis Foundation recommendation
OLDER ADULTS-VERTICAL	83-86 F = 28-30 C	Moderate to high intensity
	86-88 F = 30-31 C	Low intensity
CHILDREN, FITNESS	83-86 F = 28-30 C	
CHILDREN'S SWIM LESSONS	82+ F = 27.5+ C	Varies with age and class length

Water Temperature Issues: A little more explanation

One of the most important features of any facility design is the ability to vary water temperatures for specific populations and programs. Many articles have been written on this subject, and USA Swimming has prepared guidance on what activities can be effectively performed in certain temperatures:

95 degree water - aquatic therapy, WATSU, Ai Chi, Learn to Swim for infants. The ideal indoor air temperature is never higher than 84 degrees; slightly lower is ok..

90 - 92 degree water - aquatic therapy, Ai Chi, Learn to Swim for youngsters, diving. The ideal indoor air temperature is never higher than 84 degrees; 82-84 or slightly lower is ok.

86-88 degree water - Learn to Swim, moderate vertical exercise and water walking, younger age (10 & under) swim training, low intensity lap training, synchronized swimming, diving, recreational swimming. The ideal indoor air temperature is never higher than 84 degrees; 82-84 or slightly lower is ok.

82 degree water (and lower) - competitive swim team training, adult lap swimming, high intensity vertical exercise. The more the aerobic the activity, the lower the temperature needs to be. The ideal indoor air temperature is 78-80 degrees, never higher than 82 degrees..

Outdoor pool water and air temperatures

Outdoor temperatures are always a controversial topic. There are just so many variables to consider, especially humidity and the heat index factor. 80 degrees in Minnesota does not always feel the same as 80 degrees in Arizona or 80 degrees in the south. Common sense should be the guiding force when evaluating the following variables:

- ▲ Water temperature – anything under 76 or over 90 degrees needs to be evaluated
- ▲ Air temperature – anything under 55 degrees or over 100 degrees needs to be evaluated
- ▲ Wind speed
- ▲ Humidity
- ▲ Air quality – e.g. smog – pollen count – etc.
- ▲ Direct sunlight
- ▲ Activity being conducted

Individuals taking part in the aquatic activity may have different tolerances to cooler water. For example, an 18 year old experienced swimmer may be able to tolerate cooler water better than the 9 year old swimmer with low body fat and muscle mass.

Individuals taking part in the aquatic activity may have different perceptions of water and air temperature. What feels warm to one person may feel cool to another. In these instances, perception is everything and in many cases there is not one temperature that will please everyone.

Access

Many pools have ramps, walk-in access, chair lifts or shallow water areas where participants can enter and exit the water. However some private or home pools still require the use of steps and ladders, and this may restrict the participants. As of 2011, commercial pools must have certain guaranteed forms of access, per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The law mandates that any commercial pool containing more than 300 linear feet of pool wall perimeter must have at least two means of entry that are wheelchair accessible. One entry is required to be either an automated lift, or a sloped entry. The second can be a lift or a sloped entry — or it can be one of several other methods: pool access stairs, a transfer system that resembles a set of small portable stairs; or a transfer wall, which is a low wall with handles that helps people lift themselves over the side of the pool. Pools with less than 300 linear feet of pool wall perimeter need one accessible means of entry: either a lift or sloped entry. Spas need one entry, which can be a lift, a transfer system or a transfer wall. Facilities that are not in compliance could face lawsuits and complaints filed against them

with the U.S. Department of Justice. The law will become effective in April 2011, and will apply to all newly constructed commercial pools. Existing facilities will be allowed one year from that date to bring their equipment into compliance with the standards. However, most pool operators and designers have long been using the guidelines, which were first published in 2004.

Some individuals may require assistance where as others may be able to get in and out by themselves. All steps and ladders and ramps should be secure, slip resistant, and have safety hand rails. When designing NEW pool facilities it is imperative to consider safe entry and exit options for all abilities.

Depth

Depth plays an important role in the ability to offer aquatic programs.

Zero depth - ramped entry - beach entry

These are all terms for basically the same concept. Some form of water that starts at the dry land and gradually slopes to a comfortable standing depth. Sometimes this area can be as narrow as 40" and other times it can be as wide as the entire pool. Seldom is this the primary focus of the pool, usually it is a convenient form of entry into the pool. This area can be used for several purposes:

Zero depth is ideal for children ages birth to three. An example would be a community parent and baby class for exercise. The above depths can also be used for small children learning to swim. Having children stand in water that covers over 50% of their body, while at their swim lessons, allows children to develop core strength. As a child's body becomes stronger, they feel more secure in the buoyant waters.

You can design an aquatic developmental program to address all domains for ages birth to three, for children with special needs in ramped entry pools. This program can work in conjunction with your state's Early Intervention Program. As the children progress into preschool, your aquatic program can be adapted. The zero depth is a wonderful place for a child to start learning to walk with less gravity and hopefully progress to land. Varying depths become an automatic way to measure the child's progress.

On the rehab side, a person can begin in the deeper water and progress towards shallower water – replacing buoyancy with gravity. Rehabbing such things as ankle, knees, and back are just a few options. Your facility can be very beneficial for people with diabetes - it's just good to have a diabetic's feet in the water to increase circulation – and it's good for the person to have the tactile feedback that shallower water offers.

Plyometric exercises in varying depths allow a person to assess personal improvement and control resistance. Using sloping depths of water is a very valuable way to feel secure and measure one's physical improvements. Zero depth entry is excellent for this type of program.

Constant depth pools

These pools can be in the ground or on-the-ground. The uses are as versatile as the people who build or install them. On-the-ground pools with raised decks and ramped access are becoming more popular every day. Unless some intricate design and construction modifications are made, these will all be constant depth pools. With modular steel wall in-the-ground pools becoming more economical to construct, constant depth is becoming the norm rather than the exception.

The most common constant depth pool is 4 ft. which provides a very comfortable depth for both vertical water exercise and horizontal lap swimming. Portable platforms can be put in the pool for children who are learning to swim. The same platforms can be used to decrease buoyancy and increase gravity for a variety of water exercises.

Variable depth pools

These pools are the most challenging to design yet the most valuable to the greatest number of people. No one pool can be the end-all answer to our aquatic needs. However, creative design and multiple pools with varying depths and access can increase your ability to offer valuable aquatic services to your community. Many times two separate pools can fulfill most of the programming needs. Almost always three pools will cover all programming needs.

Advantages of each depth

Most variable depth pools will start with about 42" of depth at the shallowest end, unless tied in with a ramped entry, stair entry, or zero depth features,

As many as 50% of the people who enter the water to do aquatic exercise or aquatic therapy do not know how to swim. Many of these people will be at risk of slipping under the water and not knowing how to safely recover. A large percentage of those individuals already have a story from childhood to tell why they are afraid of the water and have never learned how to swim.

42" to 48" water depth. Let's use a person who is 5'6" in height as the working example in 42" of water. The water would be a little above the waist. If the person chooses to be in deeper water they will have less stress on the joints.

- ▲ A walking program is a great way to use this depth. The person will be at 50% weight bearing and yet feel reasonably safe while walking.

- ▲ A total body exercise program can be designed to encompass all of the 5 fitness components: aerobic, strength, flexibility, balance and coordination.
- ▲ An aqua suspended program can be designed by putting on buoyant equipment and working the aerobic system. This will almost always provide some strength training and trunk stabilization as well.
- ▲ Depending upon the water temperature, any of the aquatic mind and body exercises such as Ai Chi and Watsu.
- ▲ Water running for the person who wants to train with resistance but with reduced gravity.
- ▲ Competitive swim training and lap swimming could be performed in this depth. No diving or head first entries would be allowed.

If the bottom gradually slopes to 48", this depth is ideal for multiple types of classes. You could conduct all of the above programs and offering additional challenges by arranging the class to move across the pool. You would place your participants by height. If you want to move the class the length of the pool, it would challenge the class by moving in/out and through different depths.

52" to 60" water depth

Works well for the person who is comfortable in water armpit to neck depth or for individuals who want to exercise with buoyant belts or sit on noodles. This depth would be ideal for the extremely overweight person to reduce stress on their joints.

- ▲ Water walking programs for people who have orthopedic issues
- ▲ Aerobic and strength training programs
- ▲ Competitive swimming and Fitness swimming
- ▲ Athletic Training (vertical)
- ▲ Tall men and women

7' and deeper water

- ▲ The more aquatically advanced and skilled person. It is always recommended to have supportive devices such as belts or cuffs that allow a person to maintain proper posture and alignment.
- ▲ This is also a good depth for the overweight person to be aerobically active with much less risk of injury than if in shallower water or on land.
- ▲ Deep water "hanging" (vertical suspension) has become very effective to decrease back pain as long as the person is stabilized in a position so the core muscles are being worked.

Swimming: More on Water Depth

Shallow water programs are typically performed in water that ranges from mid-rib cage to mid-chest in depth. This provides the benefits of reduced impact while still maintaining proper alignment and control of movement and allows for activities that sufficiently train all the major muscle groups against the water's resistance. Specific programming options may require variations in water depth. Water that is below waist-depth will require that impact levels be modified to prevent musculoskeletal injury, and will also reduce the water's cooling ability during sustained exercise so intensity should be carefully monitored.

Pools with a depth range of 3.5 - 4.5 feet (1.07 - 1.37 meters) seem to be the most useful for typical shallow water fitness classes; pools with a depth of 3-5 feet (0.91 - 1.52 meters) will accommodate nearly all heights of participants. A gradual slope of the pool bottom is preferred to accommodate varying heights of participants. A steep slope may lead to musculoskeletal stress.

Deep water exercise is most successful at a depth where a body can be suspended vertically and is free to move in any direction and speed, without experiencing impact or weight bearing stress. A pool depth of 6.5 feet (1.98 meters) or more provides the ideal environment for a deep water class. In some situations, either due to the pool slope / depth or the height of the participant, it is necessary to perform a modified deep water workout.

A modified deep format would incorporate flotation equipment but movement adaptation would be necessary as compared to typical deep water training. For example, full range of motion cross country skis would be modified to prevent striking the feet on the bottom of the pool.

Air Quality

Air quality for indoor pool facilities should be monitored according to the County, State and local Health Department guidelines. Adequate ventilation is critical to maintain proper humidity and remove chemical fumes from the pool area. Humidity level and air circulation will also influence the comfort level of the participant and thus requires constant monitoring.

An Ideal Facility on a Limited Budget

Taking a very complicated and detailed concept and simplifying it, here is what one prototype limited budget facility for the new concept aquatic center would look like:

Main Pool - 8/10 lane 25 yard pool with water depth 4' to 5'

Pool would be 75 feet long by 67 feet wide with stair and rail (not laddered) entry off to the side of the 5 foot and 4 foot end. Lane line anchor configuration would allow for:

- 1) 8 each 8' wide lanes with the extra buffered area on the outside lanes – this would be for competition
- 2) 9 each 7' wide lanes with slightly wider outside lanes – this would be for everyday swim training for adult size people
- 3) 10 each 6.7' wide lanes for age group swim training

This pool would be kept between 82 and 84 degrees depending on programming needs. The air temperature would be kept 78-80 degrees. *In most areas approximate construction cost of this pool complete with basic operational equipment would be \$550,000 or less.*

Community Pool - 4 lane 20 yard pool with water depth 3'6" to 7'.

Pool would be 36 feet wide by 60 feet long. It would have a railed 40" wide ramped entry along the side with a side stair entry at base of ramp. The useable "lane" area would be 32 feet wide. The 7' deep area would be "hopper style" and would take up only 10' of the length. The balance of the length would be 42" deep gradually sloping to 52" deep. This pool would be kept between 87 and 89 degrees depending on programming needs. The air temperature would be around 82-84 degrees. *In most areas approximate construction cost of this pool complete with basic operational equipment would be \$250,000 or less.*

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Cross programming and the "windows of exercise" model will help increase revenue and provide cash flow

Temperature, access, and depth will limit or expand the types of programs you can offer.

Determining the programs you want to offer should precede any design decisions.

Chapter 5 - Value Received Pricing

A New Way to Look at Pricing

Pricing can have a huge effect on profits, and your ability to have a sustainable aquatic center. First and foremost, you must simply break the mold of pricing that has been carried over from the past.

Outdated Pricing Methods

PAST METHOD #1 PRICE TAKERS/PRICE MAKERS

There must be a difference between the *PRICE MAKERS* and the *PRICE TAKERS*. Can you imagine the confusion and financial destiny of the store that allowed the customer to pay whatever they thought was “fair” for bread and milk. Or the insurance company that lets you pay whatever you can afford for health insurance. Yet, in the recent past and even currently, the people who are going to use the service are the ones setting the fees. While for some swim clubs run by a volunteer parent board, this may be an admirable undertaking, it is not an effective way to conduct a business.

PAST METHOD #2 COMPARATIVE PRICING

The swim school or pool down the street charges this many dollars so we can charge so many dollars more or less. If you are in business to collect fees rather than offer service, then this is probably the system that set your original pricing. However – the pool down the street is probably in as much of a tentative financial situation as you are so why copy averageosity? Plan to offer a superior service and set your pricing so you can afford to do so.

PAST METHOD #3 TRADITIONAL PRICING

We’ve always charged this much so that is what we have to go with! This is propagated by the fear that customers will leave if prices are noticeably raised. This mindset does not take into account that utility prices have doubled in the last 20 years or that construction that used to cost \$28 a square foot now costs \$128 a square foot. We also have new equipment and technology that is necessary if a business

is to compete. Salary requirements are up over 30% the past 20 years not to mention benefits. Traditional pricing simply cannot keep up.

PAST METHOD #4 SHARED FUNDING PRICING

This is perhaps the most common and most dangerous form of pricing. It assumes that the patron or client is not responsible for paying their fair share of the cost of running a facility. This is common in a municipality or university/school setting. Somewhere along the line the actual cost of building the facility became synonymous with the cost for programming. This is a sure fire formula for negative cash flow and eventual facility financial failure. If tax dollars or activity fees built a facility – that is what they accomplished. The facility is now there for the community to use. Programming must be designed so that the operational cost of the facility and staffing of the programs is paid for as a separate “business.” Even non-profit businesses should not lose money. Operational subsidies are becoming a thing of the past.

Pricing For Sustainability

Value received pricing is a method of establishing price based on cost – not just cost of the program, but all operating costs. This pricing method is where we all need to be headed to be sustainable. The facilities and programs that are currently using this structure are financially self-sustaining. Many Park Districts have adopted a form of this pricing over the past few years. It is really a very simple and extremely effective method. Value received pricing is based on the following premises when compared to your local or regional competition:

- ▲ You will hire a more prepared and competent staff and make sure you advertise their certifications and or licenses.
- ▲ You will make sure your facility offers more and better amenities that offer your clients advantages not available elsewhere.
- ▲ You will make “customer service” your motto and train staff accordingly.
- ▲ You will offer the best programs available anywhere and make sure your clients and staff believes this and delivers.
- ▲ You will make sure your facility is always super clean, super accessible, and super friendly

The two main parts of any successful business plan are:

- ▲ Managing expenses
- ▲ Increasing income

Value received pricing can help you do both.



When establishing a PRICE for a specific program you must consider all aspects of the facility that have related costs.

Below is an example of programs using **Value Received Pricing**:

Programming :				
Necessary income to support indoor facility	per hour	per week	per month	per year
12,000 sq. ft. facility	\$152	\$6,080	\$26,144	\$313,728
<hr/>				
Necessary Program Annual Income:	Competitive	Learn2swim	Community	Therapy Rent
12,000 sq. ft. facility	\$99,000	\$60,000	\$88,200	\$90,000
	100x\$99mth	based on fees	150x\$49mth	\$50-\$70 hr.

Based on **VRP** (*Value Received Pricing*) for 12,000 square ft. facility as an example

Postulate: Any single program must be able to generate enough income to cover 50% of the per hour rate.

Assumption: In a multiple pool setting, at least two separate programs will be conducted simultaneously.



Program Pricing Analysis:		Learn-to-swim	
	Program Expense:		
	Pool rental per hour	\$35	
	Instructor's compensation	\$15	
	Benefits based on 25%	\$4	
	Insurance based on 3 million liability	\$3	
	Staff certification & Continuing Ed	\$1	
	Capital fund contribution	\$5	
	Program Profit	\$5	
	Equipment maintenance and replacement	\$1	
	Advertising and Marketing	\$2	
	Program overhead	\$5	
		Expense Sub	\$76
			Income per hr needed
Income	Based on the hypothetical subtotal:	Per 1/2 hour	
	1:1 Aquatic personal training or private lessons	\$38	
	Semi-private	\$19 x 2	
	Small group (3 or 4)	\$12.50 x 3	
	Profit margin increases as multiple sessions are conducted by multiple instructors as pool income is based per hour rather than per program.		
Program Pricing Analysis:		Continuum/Community	
Income	Based on the hypothetical subtotal:	Per 1/2 hour	
	1:1 Aquatic personal training or private lessons	\$38	
	Water Rental	\$35	
	Programming - monthly \$49	\$49	
Program Pricing Analysis:		USA Swim Team	
Income	Based on the hypothetical subtotal:	Per 1/2 hour	
	1:1 Aquatic personal training or private lessons	\$38	
	Water Rental	\$35	
	Programming - monthly \$99 and up	\$99	
	Registration-seasonal (Based on three seasons @ \$100)	\$25	



Learn to swim lessons would be priced as follows:

\$38 per ½ hour for each private lesson

\$19 per ½ hour for each person for each semi-private lesson

\$9.50 per ½ hour for each person for each 4 person group lesson

Community sessions would be priced as follows:

\$38 per ½ hour for each personal training session

\$35 per ½ hour for each class shared by number of participants

\$49 per month per person for “window of exercise” aquatic access

USA Swim team would be priced as follows:

\$38 per ½ hour for each private stroke lesson

\$99 and up per person for monthly training

\$25 and upper person per month amortized seasonal registration

Water rental options for therapy or other instances would be priced as follows:

\$50 to \$70 per hour for a designated pool plus a per person price for parties and special functions.

The Aquatic Business Plan


Just as you would with any business venture, your aquatic business plan should serve as your roadmap toward growth and sustainability. There are many helpful software programs that can help guide you through the business plan development process. USA Swimming Facilities Development department can help provide statistics and information to customize your plan to the aquatic industry.

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

You must break the old method of pricing to be sustainable.



Value Received Pricing is based on overall cost recovery.



Value Received Pricing must be supported by exceptional staff training and service.

Chapter 6 - Staffing and Management Considerations

The Management Effect

Managers are the key to how an aquatic facility operates. Good lifeguard managers make good lifeguards. Good program managers make good instructors. Good facility managers make happy guests. When you look at a well-run, sustainable aquatic facility it is the direct result of management. You'll need to do everything you can to invest in the training and professional growth of your management staff if you are looking to break from the status quo and save your pool.

The Management Triangle

Sustainability is more than just a word or a catchy phrase. It is a PLAN that has working parts. If any part is deficient, the plan fails. As with any successful plan, it's the people that make things work rather than the building they work in. If as much time and effort was spent on the staff preparation and education as went into the facility planning and building, all would be better off. This is the job and vision of the "people leader," sometimes called manager sometimes called director.

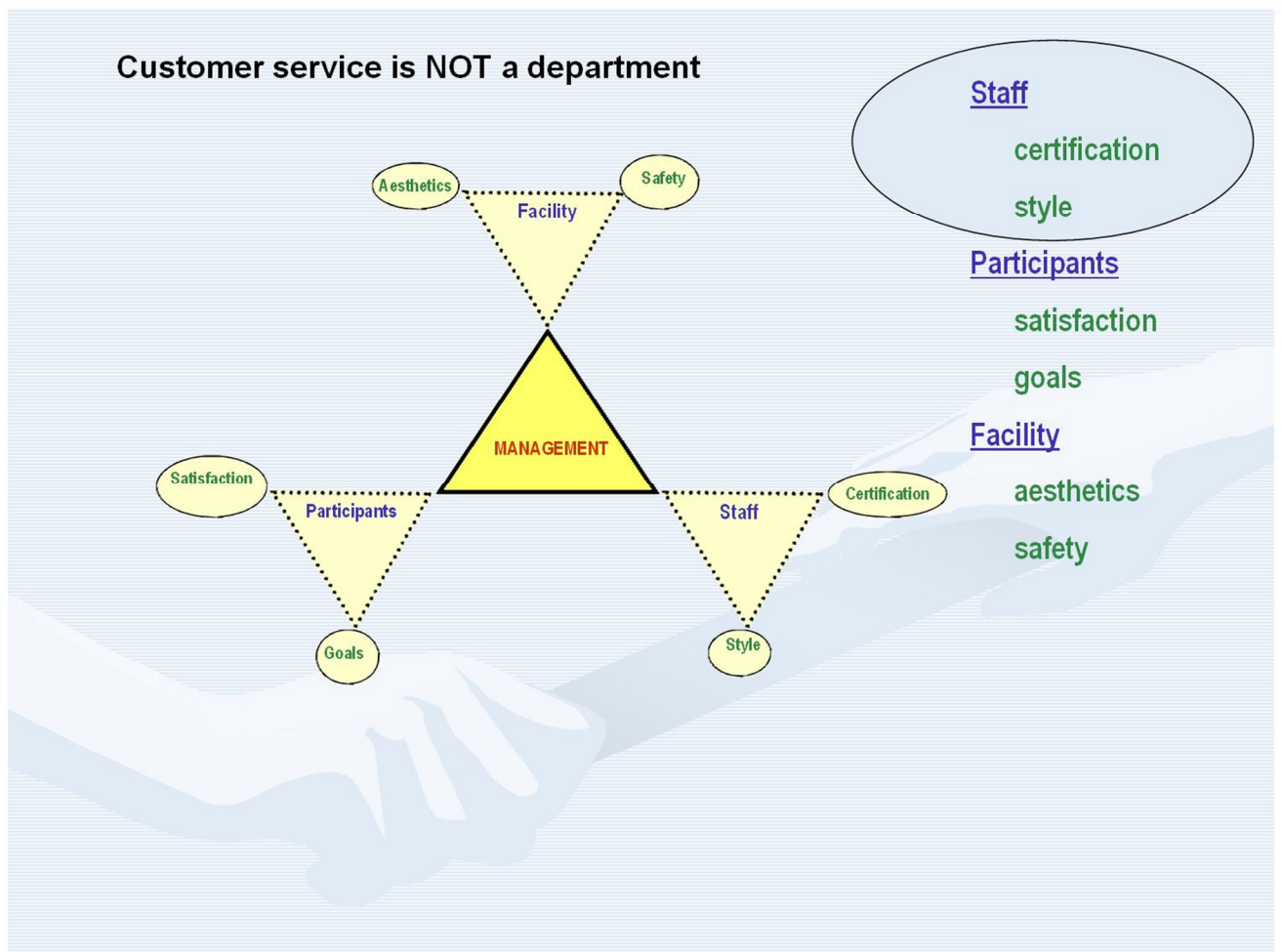
What do managers need to constantly "focus on" to promote program success?

What is a "manager"? For this discussion, it is anyone who is in charge of anything that involves more than themselves. You do not have to be a president, upper level director, or have an important sounding title to manage or lead. Coaches manage swimmers and parents and staff. Learn-to-Swim instructors manage children and adults and co-staff.

If you want to give yourself and your programs the best chance for success and longevity, learn not only to lead/manage, but also make a constant effort to understand what works and what doesn't. The

only way success can be reproduced for the next project is if you track the steps taken to reach your end goal.

Motivation and tracking are critical, and you can never quit learning how to do them better. Categorizing helps both the manager and the staff clarify what is being tracked and how tracking impacts the total plan. There is no BEST WAY to manage, as each manager is unique, but being sure to include each of the three main areas and sub-areas can help you develop aquatic leadership.



Comments about the management triangle

The FACILITY: It really doesn't matter whether you are renting a facility or own your own, the same principles still apply.

- ▲ The facility has to be clean and attractive. Everything from the parking lot to the reception area to the shower rooms to the pool itself has to say “welcome to our facility” and “we care about both the facility and the patrons.”
- ▲ Risk management is and always has been extremely important. However, the need to reduce risk is receiving more public attention than ever before. You have to have a “plan” and make everyone aware of that plan. The days of winging it are gone. There are great nationally recognized firms that specialize in helping you development and implement your risk management plan. For more information, see the resource section.

The STAFF: You can never spend too much time and too many resources on staff training and support. Teamwork has become a catch-phrase but it is so important.

- ▲ Staff training and certification benefits everyone. The certification needs to be relevant and from a reputable organization. There is much more to aquatics than just first aid and CPR. Once certifications are achieved, all clientele need to be made aware that the staff is among the best in the country.
- ▲ Each staff member has to be conscious of their personal style. How do they appear and relate to others? No one should ever think their “style” is proficient. Improvement is something that just doesn't happen, it is caused. Staff motivation and a concerted effort to be better than last week is critical.

The PARTICIPANTS: These are the people who write the checks. Without them the business does not succeed. Many customer service oriented businesses fail because the staff did not recognize what it took to keep people happy, healthy, and coming back day after day.

- ▲ Customer satisfaction is a daily challenge that has to be discussed, analyzed, and tracked. Customer comment cards should be available at the front desk. Periodically, the staff needs to talk with the participants and see how they feel they are doing.
- ▲ Do all of your participants have goals? Have they been taught goal setting? Have you discussed their personal plan and the benchmarks they will use along the way? People quit because they feel they are wasting their time, not because they are succeeding



You are in the SERVICE BUSINESS. "Aim to please!" Remember the code word **A.I.M.**

- ▲ **A**ppreciated = always make people feel their efforts are appreciated. Don't forget staff and customers are both equally important.

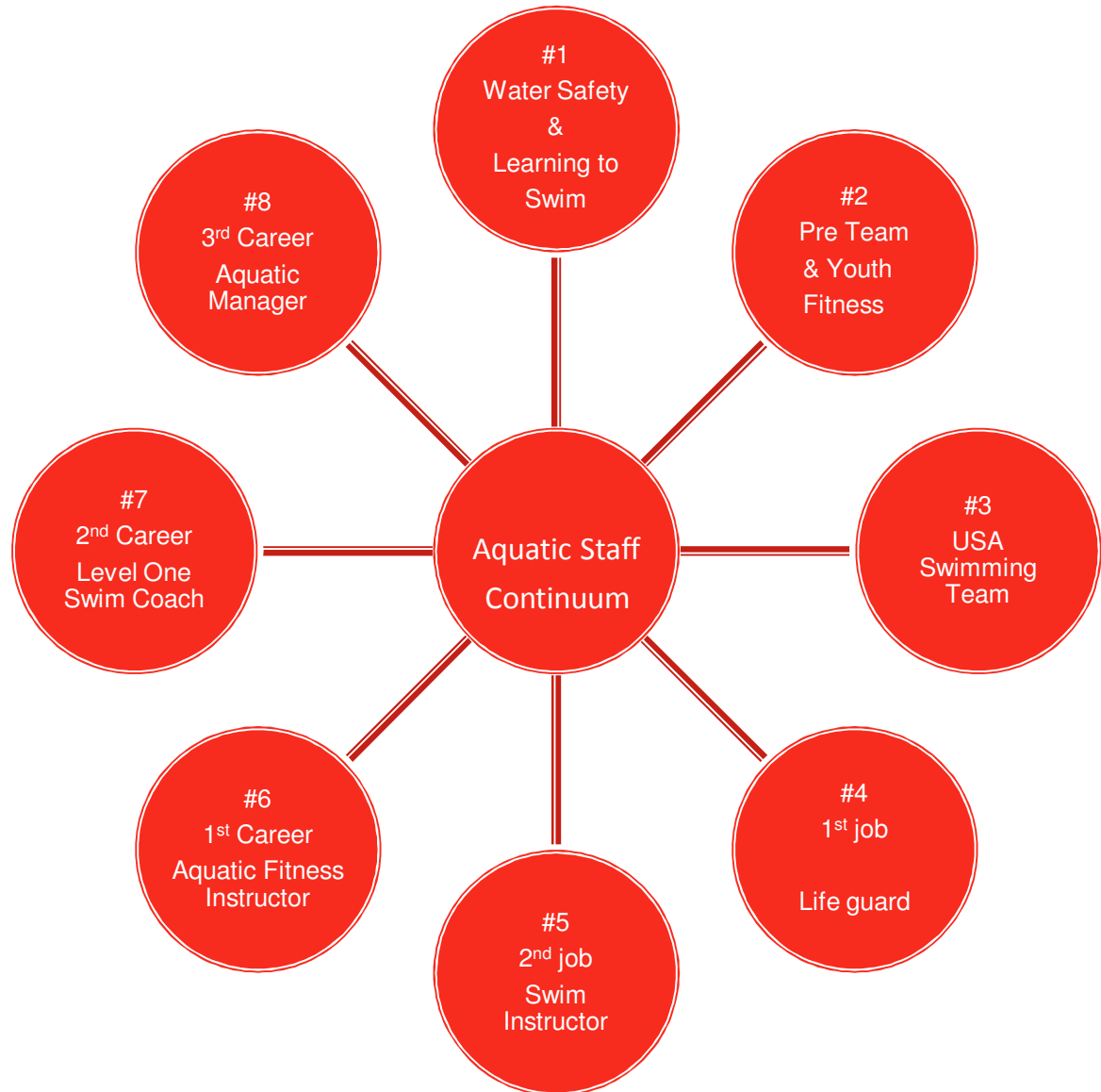
- ▲ **I**mportant = make someone feel important whenever possible. This applies to clients, co-workers and acquaintances.

- ▲ **M**ore = give people more that they expect and more than they have paid for.
Quantities of Quality!

Every facility has a better chance of success and survival with total aquatic programming. Every program has a very important place in the culture of success. It is very difficult to have one program functioning with one plan, delivery method, and staffing philosophy while another program works an entirely different way. Aquatic programming has way too many commonalities for us all not to take advantage of the above six points and collaboratively make the business a sustainable success.

How you develop your staff, the resources you provide, and the culture shift you support will all affect the ability to become a sustainable aquatic facility.

The Aquatic Staff Continuum





Sample Staffing Model

Below is a sample staffing model for an aquatic center with multiple pools, utilizing the total aquatic programming concepts.

Salaries for 12,000 sq. ft. multi use facility open ~60 hours a week			
Position	Number Employee	Hourly Rate	Budget Hour
Operational tech's	3	\$10	\$30
Coordinator level	2	\$15	\$30
Manager level	1	\$20	\$30
Approximate total no benefits included			\$80
Annualized salaries=	\$166,400		
Annualized Budget =	\$334,400		

Does not include Taxes - Depreciation - Employee benefits - Dept reduction

Salaries for 15,000 sq. ft. multi use facility open ~60 hours a week			
Position	Number Employee	Hourly Rate	Budget Hour
Operational tech's	4	\$10	\$40
Coordinator level	2	\$15	\$30
Manager level	1	\$20	\$20
Approximately total no benefits included			\$90
Annualized salaries=	\$187,200		
Annualized Budgeted=	\$397,200		



Salaries for 21, 000 sq. ft. multi use facility open ~60 hours a week			
Position	Number Employee	Hourly Rate	Budget Hour
Operational tech's	5	\$10	\$50
Coordinator level	2	\$15	\$30
Manager level	1	\$20	\$20
Approximately total no benefits included			\$100
Annualized salaries=	\$208,000		
Annualized Budget=	\$502,000		

Does not include Taxes - Depreciation - Employee benefits - Dept reduction

Salaries for 50,000 sq. ft. multi use facility open ~60 hours a week			
Position	Number Employee	Hourly Rate	Budget Hour
Operational tech's	6	\$10	\$60
Coordinator level	3	\$15	\$45
Manager level	1	\$20	\$20
Approximately total no benefits included			\$125
Annualized Salaries=	\$260,000		
Annualized Budget=	\$960,000		

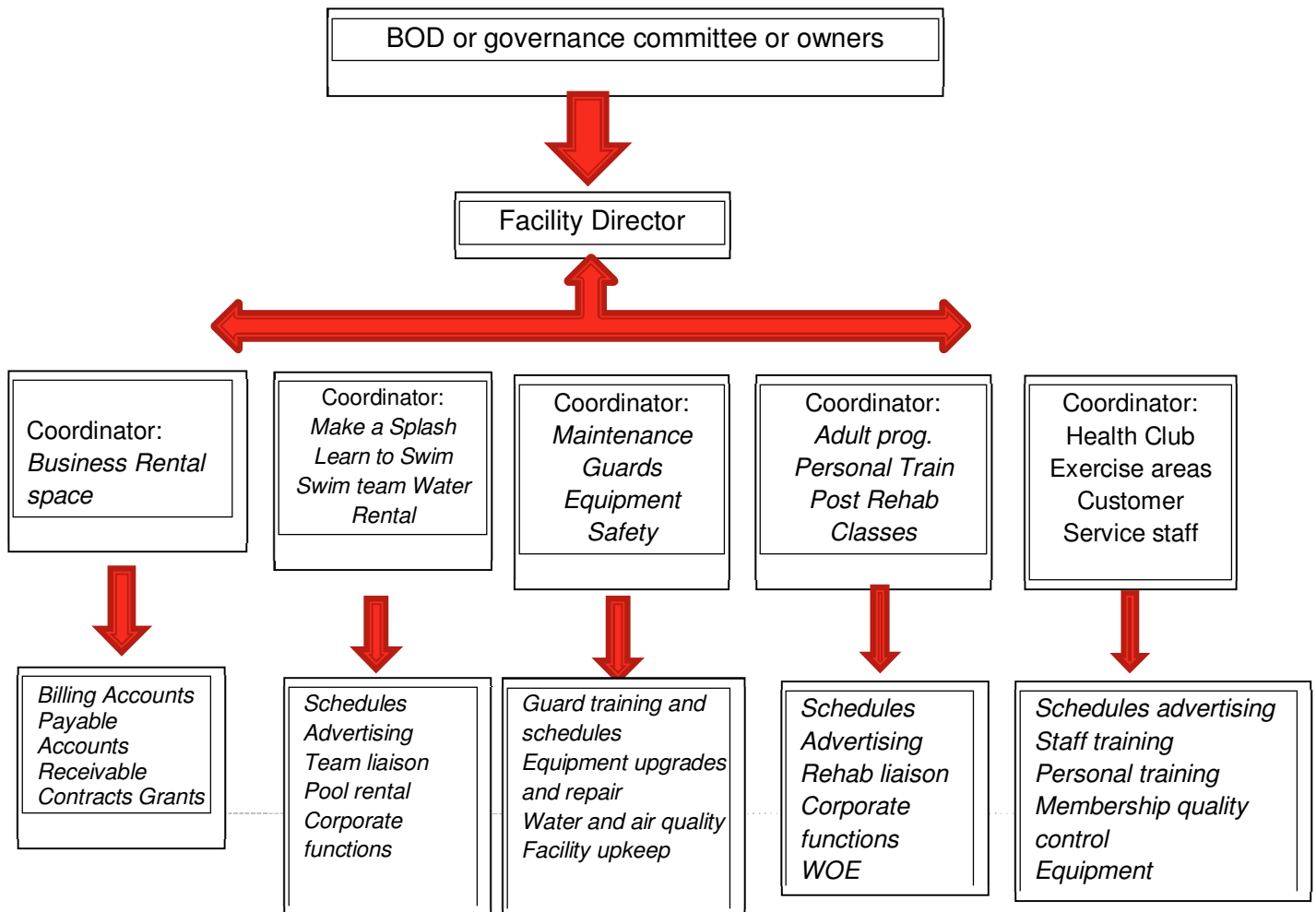
Note the design or layout of the facility may require 3 times (or more) the amount of “operational techs” as listed in the basic samples above*

Sample Sustainable Staffing Chart

Being sustainable brings on more responsibilities. It will help if there is a good understanding of the organization and what the expectations are for the aquatic team who will be operating the Aquatic Center. Each Aquatic Center could look totally different depending on the target audience. One person could incorporate the duties in two to three job descriptions. The more Aquatic Centers offered, the more staff will be divided up to meet the needs of their target audience.

Aquatic Centers will need to decide how many of the 4 aquatic pillars they want to offer at each center. The more programs, the larger the staff needed to provide the services for the community. Below you will find the list of sample job descriptions in the Total Aquatic Programming Model.

Facility Director or Manager or Aquatic Director, names are interchangeable in most cases. This position is responsible for the facility(s) and the staff. This is the business “manager partner” and is responsible for staff leadership and motivation, rentals and all other business matters.



Training and Certification Requirements

We feel when bringing new life to a pool or pools there is a need for an assessment and observation for the current model. This will include the facility as well as the staff. Are all certifications current and is there a system in place for continuing education? Is someone following through with inservices in all areas? In the facility you will need to check the mechanical room and equipment, on deck equipment, shower and/or locker rooms and etc.

Across the country pools are closing at a devastating rate. We feel that one of the main reasons pools are closing is that pools are not designed to be self-sustaining. The other reason is pools are in need of renovation which is very costly, thus the need to have an assessment to see if it is worth keeping the pools open.

A new approach will need to happen in many cases getting everyone on the same page. This will be the beginning of becoming self-sustaining because everyone will understand the viewpoint of the management.

COMMITMENT: from all areas will be needed to buy-into the new approach. Understanding the aquatic center is not just teaching techniques of swimming but to provide a water safety, health and wellness education component for customers.

ASSESSMENTS: of your programs will need to happen. Evaluate how many staff it will take to provide a great customers service along with the programs offered. The largest part of the aquatic budget is staff salaries. This is where many facilities start the cutbacks. However it is very difficult to have great customer service without staff. It will be very important to understand how to add a fee to programs that customers will be willing to pay. Funding can come in many different forms; charge for service, donors, grants and etc.

THE BUY-IN to the “new approach” is important so everyone is on the same page. This means from the human resource department, if you have one, accounting, marketing, and finely your staff that run the daily programs.

What does it take to implement the model to give new life to an aquatic center?

- ▲ Re-evaluate the aquatic programs making sure it is what you want.
 - ▲ Develop a position to oversee the aquatic staff and program (if you do not have one). If you have such a position evaluate to make sure they are doing what is needed.
 - ▲ Evaluate the staff certifications making sure everyone can truly perform what the certifications say they can.
 - ▲ Become knowledgeable about the operations of the pool(s)
 - ▲ Assessment of pool(s) contact USA Swimming Facilities Director for advice if needed
 - ▲ Develop a manual for each pool(s) - labeling of pipes in filter room if needed
-

- ▲ Provide basic operations for staff – contact USA Swimming Facilities Director for advice if needed
- ▲ Implement the Valued Received Pricing method
- ▲ Develop and implement a workable results, based accountability form. Using this provides a simple, plain language and useful framework for assisting communities and agencies to improve quality of life conditions for their citizens and their customers. See Results Based Accountability form
- ▲ Think “Aquatic Fitness Center” or “Aquatic Wellness Center” instead of “Pool”.

Additional information about the specific types of certifications that are available to support total aquatic programming can be found in chapter 11.

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Aquatic managers have the most influence over success of the facility.

How you develop and support your aquatic managers affects sustainability.

All levels of administration and management must work together to manage change.

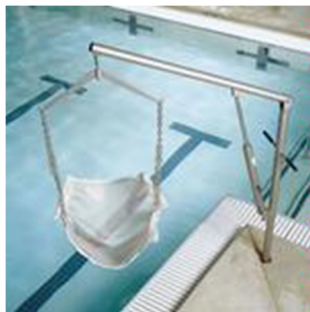
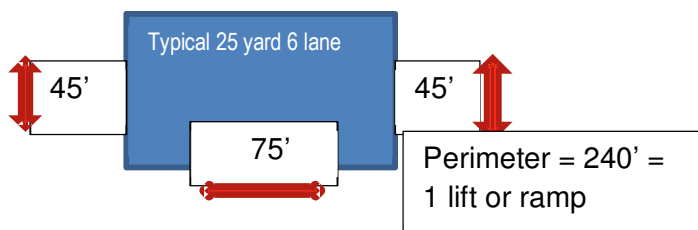
Chapter 7 - Regulatory and Compliance Considerations

The American's With Disabilities Act (ADA)

On July 26, 2010 The US Department of Justice released updated Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Among the updates for a number of facility types were new requirements specifically for public swimming pools [\[See Sections 242, 1009\]](#). The level of accessibility depends on the size and type of the pool. For pools under 300 linear feet in size, the ADA Standard for Accessible Design calls for one means of access, which must be either an ADA-compliant lift, or a sloped entry. Pools with greater than 300 linear feet of pool wall must also have a second means of access. This second means can either be another lift or ramp, or it can also be a transfer wall, a transfer system or pool stairs. Visit the [ADA website](#) for more information.

These final rules will take effect March 15, 2011. Compliance with the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design is permitted as of September 15, 2010, but not required until March 15, 2012.

Putting this into perspective – a standard 6 lane 25 yard pool has approximately 235' of linear wall. An 8 lane 25 yard about 275' of liner wall. They will all have to either buy a portable ramp or a lift.





The Virginia Graeme Baker Act (VGB)

On Dec. 17, 2007, the [Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act](#) (*P&SS Act*) was signed into law. This important child safety law became effective in December 2008 and strives to:

- Enhance the safety of public and private pools and spas
- Reduce child drownings in pools and spas (nearly 300 each year are children younger than five)
- Reduce the number of suction entrapment incidents, injuries and deaths
- Encourage the use of multiple safety steps
- Educate the public on the importance of constant supervision of children in and around water

In its role as the lead agency implementing and enforcing the Act, CPSC is working with the pool and spa safety community to encourage the use of multiple safety steps, such as fencing around pools, constant supervision of children and requiring anti-entrapment drain covers and other safety devices on all public pools and spas.

The Act establishes a series of strict standards for public pool and spa safety, focusing on the importance of installing anti-entrapment drain covers and other devices in public facilities. The compliance effort is complemented by public education efforts through CPSC's *Pool Safely* campaign.

The *P&SS Act* mandated the following changes in federal pool and spa regulations for public pools and spa:

- All pool drain covers manufactured, distributed or entered into commerce on or after Dec. 19, 2008, must meet the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 standard.
- All public pools and spas must be equipped with new ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 compliant drain covers.
- Pools and spas operating off of a single main drain (other than an unblockable drain) must also add one or more of the following options:
 - A safety vacuum release system (SVRS)
 - A suction-limiting vent system

- A gravity drainage system
- An automatic pump shut-off system
- A disabled drain
- Any other system determined by the Commission to be equally effective as, or better than, the others listed above.

A pool may have more than one single main drain. If a pool has dual or multiple main drains more than 3 feet apart, it may be exempt from this final requirement. Pools and spas with single main drains that are unblockable are also exempt from this requirement.

The *P&SS Act* also strengthened the CPSC's civil and criminal penalty authority, giving the agency the ability to shut down pools or spas that are not in compliance with the law.

Water Safety Education – Utilize the CPSC's Pool Safely brochures, tip cards, videos and public service announcements, available for free for your families. You can download or order these materials on <http://www.poolsafely.gov/parents-families/resources-for-parents-families/>.

The Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC)

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), through an initial grant from the National Swimming Pool Foundation, is working with public health and industry representatives across the United States to build a Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC). The MAHC will serve as a model and guide for local and state agencies needing guidance to update or implement standards governing the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of swimming pools and other treated aquatic facilities. CDC has agreed to host the MAHC on its Healthy Swimming website. To review MAHC modules, [click here](#).

In the United States, there is no federal regulatory authority responsible for disinfected aquatic facilities (e.g. swimming pools, water parks, etc.); all pool codes are developed, reviewed, and approved by state and/or local public health officials. As a result, there are no uniform, national standards governing the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of swimming pools and other treated aquatic facilities. Thus, the code requirements for preventing and responding to recreational water illnesses (RWIs) can vary significantly among local and state agencies. The Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC)

is intended to transform the typical health department pool program into a data-driven, knowledge-based, risk reduction effort to prevent disease and injuries and promote healthy recreational water experiences. The MAHC should ensure that the best available standards and practices for protecting public health are available for adoption by state and local agencies. It will provide local and state agencies with uniform guidelines for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of swimming pools and other disinfected aquatic facilities.

CDC has agreed to host the MAHC on its Healthy Swimming website. To review and comment on MAHC modules, visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/mahc

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Updated ADA requirements for pools were released in July 2010 with compliance required by 2012.

The Virginia Grame Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act is a federal law with civil and criminal penalties.

The CDC sponsored Model Aquatic Health Code project is your opportunity to provide input into potential regulation.

Notes:

Chapter 8 - Marketing and Business Planning to Save Your Pool

The Power of Programs Already In Place

Successful aquatic marketing is as simple as telling people how they can benefit from what you offer so that they will want to attend.

You have the opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of the programs you already offer – and the power of the participants who are already your customers.

The marketing power of the programs you already have in place will not increase your marketing budget, yet and can reap significant increase in revenue.

Staying Committed to Marketing during Challenging Times

Concerning the business planning for total aquatic programming- you may soon be in the middle of a process that is a real challenge. It may seem like you will need both a crystal ball and a microscope to reach the end results you expect. Actually it just takes planning help and the ability to inform others. There are two things that will remain true throughout the life of the facility. Success will be measured by:

- ▲ The comparison of the actual bottom line to the forecasted budget
- ▲ The level of customer satisfaction and loyalty and proof thereof

The aquatic business plan has to make financial sense and be able to be implemented and carried through. Some “presented” plans that we have seen are very impressive but end up being sheer fiction and have no chance to ever approach the practical. Style can never over-shadow substance.

You have to take the time to not only build a programming model that will show where you are going to end up after 18 months and 36 months, but it has to be understandable and a quick read. Many

programming models are too detailed and will limit future flexibility to grow or change. Present basic categories with budget predictions then stop. Use a spreadsheet program such as Excel so when you change a figure the totals are automatically adjusted. Be prepared to answer questions asking for more details but don't invite them.

Aquatic business planning is not new science but you'd be surprised how many times managers or directors with little "hands on experience" finally buy into a concept only to see it go down in flames by lack of support or micro-management from a BOD or group that just doesn't get it. When planning you must understand and be able to explain the difference between a *goal*, an *objective*, and a *tactic*. A goal is a dream. An objective can be quantitatively and qualitatively tracked and measured and there is a success plateau that can be reached and proven for different stages. A tactic is how it will be done, who is going to do it, and when it will start, be evaluated, and finished. The "tactic" is the most important part and seems to be the least understood. Make recognizable distinctions between these processes.

Business Plans are an art form and you may need professional assistance to develop yours. Sustainability is not fostered solely by a great facility, or by a creative professional staff, or by innovative community based programs, but rather by all three of these working in harmony and in a state of constant evolution and change.

Below is an example of allowing your staff input on what to market and why. They buy into the messages and therefore are the best ambassadors possible. When potential members hear the enthusiasm and passion of the staff, your marketing is off to a great start.

History is rich with examples of companies that gain advantage by maintaining or increasing marketing during difficult times. What at first may seem like a bold or risky strategy — funding a variable cost such as marketing during a time of financial pressure — is in reality a well-documented and proven course of action to increase revenue.

A facility that stays committed to marketing during challenging times:

- ▲ Prevents a downward spiral of falling behind
- ▲ Gains market share from competitors who cut back
- ▲ Positions itself for a surge when conditions improve

But history aside, the reality is you must find new ways to make marketing work more effectively, to get more out of marketing investments and to measure and account for marketing decisions. In short, you must make changes. Because doing the same things in a challenging environment and expecting the same results is a strategy headed for disappointment.

Sample Internal Marketing Survey

This is an actual survey completed by the staff of one of the more successful aquatic centers in the country that utilized the total aquatic programming concept.

1. *As related to members, after changing the programming plan, what do you think is the most important new thing instituted (or did)?*

- ▲ Employee #1: Began development of the Member Handbook
- ▲ Employee #2: Made a statement how important preventative health measures are.
- ▲ Employee #3: Showing the community and members that we are going to continue to grow by starting new programs and purchasing new equipment.
- ▲ Employee #4: I think that one of the most important things that we instituted is having options other than traditional classes.
- ▲ Employee #5: Brighter colors and updated schemes in facility.
- ▲ Employee #6: The management did a great job of choosing and training employees. Each person demonstrates professionalism and compatibility with all members. Members often comment to me how nice it is to walk in the door and see everyone with a smile on their face.
- ▲ Employee #7: Beginning training for the tech's transition to specialists. This transition has given the members more sources to access to improve their health.

2. *As related to the way we operate our staff, what is the strongest asset?*

- ▲ Employee #1: Our professionalism and knowledge of our industry.
- ▲ Employee #2: Creating a safe place and educating the members
- ▲ Employee #3: Educating the staff and showing that the customer comes first. I think that our strongest asset is our knowledge of what we do on land and in the water.
- ▲ Employee #4: Strongest asset is the personal relationships the staff makes with the members.
- ▲ Employee #5: Strongest asset is the way our staff works together as a team.
- ▲ Employee #6: Strongest asset is the availability of all staff members to address members concerns and needs.

3. *What could we do better?*

- ▲ Employee #1: Advertising and marketing
 - ▲ Employee #2: Come up with a plan to get the working people here. 30 to 50 age group. Market details about the programs offered. Not just a name but reporting the outcomes from the people participating, telling about the success stories of who we work with.
-

- ▲ Employee #3: The phone system could be improved. Many members state that they cannot get through to us on first try. We need to spread the word to the community that we are here.
 - ▲ Employee #4: Billing system. Based on the amount of questions or problems that come to the front desk after members receive their billing, I think that the way that we do it now confuses the members.
 - ▲ Employee #5: The staff members could communicate better.
 - ▲ Employee #6: With the levels of membership, everyone does not have access to all equipment. I think it would be great to let them rent certain items, this way members can also progress in their programs.
 - ▲ Employee #7: We need to continue to improve the opportunities for some members to move up a level in membership and services.
4. *If the center received a \$25,000 grant - how would you spend it?*
- ▲ Employee #1: towards building expansion
 - ▲ Employee #2: I would create a program with a team made of up Personal Trainer, Nutritionist, and Behavior Therapist. Each team person would be an expert in their field. You educate the person in each category and build a support group at the same time. Exercise and your Medical Condition - 8 to 12 week course and have the individuals receive CEC. The program could address the Heart, Arthritis, MS, Chronic Pain (FMS), Diabetes. Then I would take it to Health Alliance and show them how this is prevention and this would be a lot cheaper to financially support than when something happens to their customer they try and fix it after their customer has become a victim.
 - ▲ Employee #3: I would love to see programs for the obese. The majority of obese people do not have financial means to receive the type of education on fitness/nutrition/motivation programs. I don't believe that they should not pay something for it. But maybe programs that allow them to pay as they go or that are on a sliding scale. How about they pay if they don't do it. I remember way back when I started paying \$15 was hard to come up with. Luckily I was allowed to pay weekly when needed. I truly believe we can make a difference by providing affordable programs.
 - ▲ Employee #4: I think we should implement some new programs for those who can't afford one of our monthly programs and desperately need to come in and get in the water or the health club to exercise.
 - ▲ Employee #5: I would spend the grant money on more equipment for the land and water areas.
5. *Make a 10 word or less statement that describes the center*
- ▲ Employee #1: _____ is a place where our members like to be.

- ▲ Employee #2: _____ is trying to show people (community) the answer to preventive health care is internal not just external.
- ▲ Employee #3: Committed to educating and connecting the physicians and the community to the many health and financial (medical) benefits of exercising.
- ▲ Employee #4: _____ is helping others achieve the possible every day.
- ▲ Employee #5: _____ is a place where anyone can come and feel welcome. We will get you started on the path to health and wellness.
- ▲ Employee #6: _____ fosters wellness through a caring, informative, and supportive environment.
- ▲ Employee #7: The place where today makes tomorrow.

Given the current economic conditions conditions, you may be asking: “How can my facility be one of those success stories that market and grow their business during challenging times?”

Making Marketing Work

Here are some things you can do to make marketing work in challenging times:

1. Focus on what you can control

You can't control the economy or most other external market factors. You can't control the pace of market demand. But what you can control — and therefore what you should focus energy and action on — is how you invest the marketing budget you have. While you can't control demand, you can recognize where demand is and go after it, perhaps in places and ways that are new to your plan.

As part of taking control, you must ask pointed questions:

- How can every dollar of marketing investment work harder for your facility?
- Where should you focus marketing efforts?
- What media choices provide the best opportunity to gain new customers?
- What should you avoid spending on?

This is the time when your facility must re-allocate its marketing budget to better performing programs, to meet and match customer demand.

By paying attention to what you can control and act upon, and at the same time ignoring the noise of what you can do nothing about, you can apply your experience and strengths to forge a strong, effective marketing strategy that will carry your company through challenging times, and beyond.

2. Re-state your goals

What marketing goals are achievable during these times? Your facility may be committed to launching a new program, following up more with existing customers, seeking new market niches for programs, or considering expanding market demand.

Are all of your facilities marketing goals achievable? Each must be evaluated and prioritized. Which ones are must-haves and which are nice-to-have? By prioritizing goals, marketing also can be prioritized. You may have difficult choices to make, but it's easier to implement effective marketing programs against a prioritized list of goals than it is to "do everything" with a finite budget.

For example, let's say your facility has an important program to launch. You'll certainly allocate a portion of your marketing budget to promote this launch. The goal of a successful program launch will not change. You must get the program in place and active. (Strategy & Tactics) Therefore, marketing resources should be devoted to achieving this important goal.

In the past, if you promoted a program launch through standard brochures or direct mail, for example, it's time to enhance these efforts with a comprehensive plan to reach more customers and prospects and get a greater return out of the program launch. Engineers and others in the technical community perform a lot of work online; devise strategies to reach them through e-mail, targeted e-newsletters and banner advertisements, Web announcements and other online tactics.

3. Get more targeted

A fundamental but sometimes overlooked marketing tenet is to "fish where the fish are." In other words, place your marketing investments and increase your visibility in those specific, targeted media vehicles where you know your customers and prospects will be exposed to your message.

What you may need to do first is define exactly what your target market is. For some facilities, challenging times may prompt them to broaden their definition of a target market in terms of demographics, customer needs or other criteria. This way, they might be able to gain members that otherwise would not have come their way. Other facilities might narrow their definition of a target market, putting all of their energy on those programs most likely to interest their customers, perhaps in a specific area where the facility has good market share.

4. Measure the past to control the future

Everyone knows the saying, and everyone knows it's true: "You can't manage what you can't measure." You demand greater measurement and accountability from marketing efforts, and the economic situation will only increase that demand.



It's time to take a hard look at the performance of your marketing investments. Unfortunately, any marketer will tell you it's extremely difficult to measure the performance of a print advertisement and old school print directories. Online programs — which are built around delivering visibility, impressions, clicks, leads and customers — are easier to measure, and your customers and prospects are proven to be online.

While it's always the right time to drop marketing programs that don't perform, it may also be time to suspend or scale back any marketing plans whose results you can't measure or are unsure about. In other words, re-allocate and “right-size” marketing budgets to measurable programs. While a tighter financial situation may require that some non-revenue projects at your facility be cut, marketing programs that are measurable and can be tied to revenue should continue to be funded.

5. Think integration and inclusion

Integrated marketing means your marketing strategy takes advantage of multiple media, resources and customer touch points to create a whole that's greater and more effective than the sum of its parts. Integrated marketing allows you to achieve better reach, targeting, measurement and results.

You should consider how you can reach those in the target audience who normally don't seek out traditional information sources. The more that marketing efforts are integrated and comprehensive, the greater impact you can achieve in gaining visibility in your market. This implies you should take a broader view of all media available to you — both traditional and online — to create an integrated marketing approach, always keeping in mind to “fish where the fish are.”

6. Maintain frequency and consistency

While it's important to ramp up marketing efforts around important events such as program launches, it's also important to maintain a level of frequency and consistency — in other words, stay in front of your customers and prospects; don't disappear for stretches at a time. Never sit back and think you are successful.

The benefits of regular visibility tend to compound over time as more prospects know about your facility. Without frequency and consistency, your facility will miss out on opportunity when demand is present. Remember, although the pace of demand is something you can't control, you can be there to service demand — if customers and prospects have you top of mind. Word of mouth is your best friend.

What type of marketing helps maintain frequency? Since your customers and prospects are spending more and more time on the Internet for work, a consistent online presence on those Web sites, directories and search engines they use and the e-newsletters they read will help your facility stay

visible day in and day out. They will offer both the branding benefits achieved through consistency and frequency, as well as measurable lead generation benefits via online contact.

However, your marketing shouldn't rely exclusively or too heavily on online tactics such as search engine optimization and search ads on general search engines. While they belong in the marketing mix, their performance varies, they are not targeted specifically to your audience, and they cannot promise a consistent presence in front of your prospects and customers. That's why consistent presence through targeted online resources, banner ads and e-newsletters is such an important part of your marketing mix.

7. Push and pull your way to success

Most marketing can be classified as either push or pull: facilities push their message out to prospects and customers through tactics such as direct mail, advertisements, e-mail marketing, and e-newsletter sponsorships; and they also establish a presence in online directories, Web sites and search engines to pull customers in real-time when prospects are searching for information, programs and services like those your facility offers.

Rather than struggling over whether to allocate resources to push marketing or pull marketing, seek out a media partner that has your target audience captive and can offer both push and pull programs under an integrated program. You'll get far more mileage out of your marketing investments.

8. Focus on quality over quantity

More leads! More leads! More leads! That rallying cry has likely echoed through the halls of your facility in the past — and during challenging times, that cry might be sounding even louder.

But what is missing from this rallying cry? "Quality"!

It's time to re-frame the rallying cry — from quantity to quality. From measuring Web site traffic to focusing on quality conversions, from counting clicks to gaining and keeping customers. If marketing efforts focus solely on quantity over quality, fewer leads will become members, more resources will be wasted, and staff will begin to distrust marketing's lead generation programs.

No matter what the business environment looks like, and particularly now, wouldn't you rather have a measurable number of quality prospects likely to become customers than have a barrel full of unknown Web site clicks?

And if it's time to re-frame the rallying cry, it's time to re-allocate marketing investments where quality is a key attribute. You should commit marketing dollars to programs that can deliver interested prospects, provide prospect contact information, and offer reports of program performance.

9. Seek assistance from media partners

The market environment is likely forcing you to make harder and smarter decisions about allocating budgets. While you may be facing challenges, you don't have to face them alone. Ask existing or potential media partners to demonstrate how their marketing solutions help your facility achieve the strategies mentioned above.

Ask your media partners:

- ▲ Do they have your target audience's attention?
- ▲ Can they keep your facility visible to prospects and customers at all times?
- ▲ Do they offer a variety of integrated marketing solutions aligned with your goals?
- ▲ Can they provide both visibility and lead generation?
- ▲ Do they deliver targeted, quality leads with full contact information?
- ▲ Do they provide reporting you can use to measure the performance of your marketing and justify your marketing investments?

Note* (Some information courtesy of GlobalSpec marketing)

Health and Wellness Month Themes for Aquatics

From water classes to aquatic fitness programs the community should be both interested and excited about their new Aquatic Fitness Facility. In the past it was perceived in the fitness industry that you go to land exercise for "total fitness" programming. You go to the pool to feel better, splash around and have fun. In reality, because of the fitness level of our communities, we must continue to show what water can offer and how it can become the perfect "total fitness center" many. That means:

- ▲ Empowering members with health and wellness knowledge
 - ▲ Provide programming in the pool or the "water gym"
-



It is important when creating an aquatic business plan that the members needs are at the forefront. There are 3 objectives to follow when changing from just water classes to a full service aquatic fitness and wellness facility:

- ▲ *1st objective* > think about a name change – from “Pool” to “Health & Wellness Center”
- ▲ *2nd objective* > Offer preventive education on health and wellness
- ▲ *3rd objective* > Diverse and inclusive aquatic programming

Validation that change is good: Remember the days of the “Amusement Park”. What did the amusement industry do? Disney led the way and changed the market when they introduced the THEME PARK and the idea that there is more to do during the experience than stand in line and ride rides. They found a great way to maintain focus on the guest experience while keeping patrons in the park longer doing other stuff they enjoyed. The result was being able to charge a higher admission fee and a higher per person total amount was spent while in the park.

Their “park” is our “pool”. The primary focus of water exercise is maintained while introducing nutrition, flexibility training, cross training, horizontal and vertical movements, etc. This way the members look forward to each day’s activities while becoming smarter about their lifestyle. They will also be more willing to pay the monthly fee necessary to support the facility and programming. The main reasons members quit any healthy activity is because they get bored and unmotivated.

Different ways to introduce preventive education on health and wellness

- (1) Create an **AQUATIC CALENAR** that will keep your members wanting to come back. For example: March is National Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month and National Nutrition Month. Collaborate with other medical professionals to provide the material plus tie it in with water exercise to compliment the material.

By offering the aquatic calendar you have the perfect opportunity to honor your members. Have fun with M & M of the Month. Find a member that has improved their health numbers or they have reached their fitness goals. Find someone who needs encouragement to stick with the program. And designate him or her as the M & M of the Month. Take a picture, and write some nice things about them and you have made their day. Now you have an opportunity to present them with a little container of yummy M & Ms. And if the member is not allowed to eat the candy they will share them with others.

- (2) Establish monthly **POOL CHATS** to educate, motivate, and collaborate. Monthly Pool Chats are conducted and designed to bring in specialists and medical professionals to educate and empower members on the theme of the month. The format is a 30- 45 minute presentation conducted poolside or in the water while members engage in movement and exercise. The presenter will share medical,



health, wellness and lifestyle issues via a shore presentation, demonstration and questions/answer period.

- (3) Offer **MINI CLINICS** 2 times per week for safety instruction and education for clients who do not want invest in aquatic personal training. The mini-clinic will still allow for social interaction and maintain support within the group
- (4) **Window of Exercise (WOE)** is another way to meet the needs of your members plus the needs of the aquatic facility. WOE has no set hours other than when the aquatic facility opens and closes. This allows the members to prioritize exercise. You would always have a staff person in the area to be able to interact with the members. This format also allows diverse programming to happen with all ages and stages of members. Such as personal training with members who wants that special attention. Bring in children with special needs and encourage the other members to interact.

To be able to offer any of the above programs you must be organized. Starting with a blank yearly calendar will allow you to pencil in the all of the National Health Observances for the upcoming year which can be found at <http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/default.aspx>. Then start identifying where you want your efforts to be focused. Build on your theme and you will be able to offer workshops as well as water exercise to match the theme.

Practical Experience: More than just 60 minutes of water exercise and fun for members needs to be offered. At our facility the member conversations I overheard lead me to make a change in the format we offered. For example, during the warm-up and warm-down conversation would turn to food and health questions. It was obvious the community wanted to be informed and empowered when it came to their health. What were the members really saying? Members were not having enough time with their health providers to find the answers to their questions.

We had already decided to change the name of our business to represent fitness and wellness not just a place to swim. So it made sense to change the format to match. Creating a business plan to incorporate exercise and education was the next step. Twice a year the staff had a planning session to identify the theme of the months and incorporate exercises to match. Each month would start with a theme of health and wellness then a workout was designed to match.

Theme your day-week-month-year. Keep your members at the pool longer and get them in more often. Educated and healthy members make the best ambassadors for your business in the community.

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Use the power of programs already in place to market your aquatic center.

Take the time to do sound business planning based on internal and external surveys and information.

Ramp up your (effective) marketing during challenging times.

Chapter 9 - Alternate Management and Operating Options

The Outsourcing Option

Some pools, depending on size, might find it helpful to outsource programming to independent contractors. Other aquatic centers might find it better to restructure some programs and bring in a training agency to conduct staff development and certification for expanded programming. Then there is another option to privatize the entire facility. The options and structure of agreements are as varied as the individual circumstances of the parties involved.

Consulting and Training Agreements

Consulting and training agreements are ideal in situations where you want to go to a new level of programming, risk management, or overall operations, but need some short-term help. There are a handful of experienced and well-qualified sources familiar with total aquatic programming and capable of providing this type of customized service.

Privatizing Management or Program Services

You may want to consider privatizing all or part of the management of your aquatic center.

Contracting for program services

In some instances it may make business sense to contract with a local provider to run your learn to swim program, or the aquatic fitness program, or therapy services. In these instances you would enter into contract agreements that would identify the financial, marketing, and liability responsibilities of each entity. These types of arrangement can range from straight lane rental through collaborative agreements.

Facility management contracts

An aquatic management firm typically assumes responsibility for all staffing, programming, and day to day operations, with the owner responsible for capital improvements, major repairs, marketing, pricing, and policy. Financial arrangements that share expenses and income are common.

Facility leasing contracts

A facility lease relinquishes the most control on the part of the owner, but guarantees a known revenue stream in the form of rent.

The Importance of Due Diligence

Regardless of the type of outsourcing option you may be considering, due diligence is paramount. You will be (hopefully) entering into a long and profitable relationship, but like any business relationship, if you have not done your homework ahead of time to be sure you are compatible, your facility operations can degrade very quickly.

The USA Swimming Facilities department can provide you with more details on how to create an effective RFQ (Request for Qualifications), RFP (Request for Proposal), as well as other information about various outsourcing and consulting options.

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Outsourcing all or part of your facility programs or operations may be your best option.

There are several types of privatization models that have been successful.

Due diligence is paramount in selecting a consultant or management partner.

Chapter 10 - Training and Certifications

Certification and Training Opportunities - For Aquatic Fitness

Cooperative Certification - Sharing the Health!

By Julie See, Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA)

www.aeawave.com 888-232-9283

Clarifying the certification issue for aquatic professionals. How certifications can cross over between vertical and horizontal programming to enhance success.

What Certifications are Necessary?

Q. What Certification should EVERY staff member in your facility have?

A. _____

Q. What Certification should every AQUATIC PROFESSIONAL at your facility have?

A. _____

Past this scope of training, the type of Certification necessary will be dependent upon an individual's job duties. Everyone, including upper management, can benefit from the knowledge gained in a variety of Certification programs, but in some cases the education is more important than the examination score!

When an Aquatic Professional is promoted as specializing in a specific field or area of training, that person most certainly needs at least Certification status, some areas require degrees.

- Pool Operator / Manager
- Lifeguard
- Swim Instructor
- Coach
- Adaptive Aquatics (swimming & water safety for individuals with disabilities)

- Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation
- Aquatic Group Exercise Instructor
 - General Population
 - Special Considerations such as Arthritis, MS, Parkinson's, etc.)
- Aquatic Personal Trainer
- Others?

There are many areas of cross over that can **benefit**:

- The facility
- The Aquatic Professional
- The clientele

Encourage Aquatic Professionals to be flexible and willing to “wear more than one hat” – this increases marketability and income for the individual and more cost effective for the facility! However no one person can “do it all”.

An area that is often not considered, but is a growing market is Vertical training, as opposed the more often pool-associated option of swimming (Horizontal training).

Coaches, lifeguards and swim instructors are excellent candidates to cross over into the field of vertical aquatic fitness.

This will provide opportunities for more hours (if that is a goal of the individual and/or the facility), will enhance retention of employees through diversification and will allow the individual to grow professionally and personally.

Adding group exercise and aquatic personal training in your pool will boost revenues and can be blended with other ongoing programs.

- Q. Can a coach, lifeguard or swim instructor become an aquatic group exercise instructor or personal trainer without an additional Certification?
- A. Yes, he/she COULD become AN instructor or trainer, however the real question you need to ask is...
- Q. Can this coach, lifeguard or swim instructor become a GREAT aquatic group exercise instructor or personal trainer that will NOT increase your liability risk AND bring in more revenue without the training provided by an additional high-quality Certification?
-



- A. Not likely - unless this person has a background in anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, choreography, cueing and music interpretation.

Are ALL Certifications Beneficial?

Although, in general, all knowledge is beneficial, if a Certification program promotes inaccurate information or outdated research, then the outcome could lead to safety and liability issues.

By definition, the word “Certify” states/confirms that something is true or correct, or declares that somebody or something has passed a test or achieved a certain standard.

When determining Certification requirements for your staff, do your homework:

- 1) Is the Certification developed by a credible organization (rather than the opinion and beliefs of one individual)?
- 2) Does the Certifying organization review and update materials on a regular basis?
- 3) Is there an examination administered and how is this done (i.e. some areas are not appropriately tested with an “open book” method or completed “at home”)
- 4) Must Certification status be maintained with continuing education or reinstatement via re-testing – or was it a “one-shot deal”?
- 5) Are there pre-requisites for becoming Certified?

Is Certification the FIRST Step for Aquatic Professionals?

In some cases, yes, the individual needs to successfully complete the certification course before working with clients in the water.

On the other hand, AEA does not recommend our Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification Examination as the first step.

Shadowing or team teaching with an experienced Certified Aquatic Professional is an excellent way to begin in-house training.

Helpful Vertical Aquatic Resources for Facilities

The *AQ Biz* area of the AEA website (members only access) is designed exclusively for Directors, Managers, Operators and Owners. Marketing tips and more to help you increase participation, memberships, etc will be updated and rotated throughout the year. The *Resources* area allows you to download PDF files to help you manage your facility and employees and connects you with AEA Partner Discounts & Affiliates. See below for what is currently posted, but keep in mind it changes frequently.

Resources – Useful Forms

- AEA Sample Client/Student Consent Forms
- AEA Sample Client/Student Physician's Consent
- Aquatic Fitness Instructor Evaluation-Long Form-Detailed
- Aquatic Fitness Instructor Evaluation-Short Form
- Member/Client Comment Card-Evaluation
- Petition form
- Professional Evaluation-Training Courses, Continuing Education
- Sample Aquatic Fitness Class Names & Descriptions

AQ Biz - Articles

- Seven Hallmarks of a Great Workplace – Norm Sptizig
- Hiring Veterans: How Your Company Can Benefit – Elaine Dumier
- Delivering Tough Conversations With Integrity – JoAn Majors
- The 8 Things Your Staff Hates About You – Dr. Rhonda Savage
- The 8 Things I Hate About My Staff – Dr. Rhonda Savage

Why Choose an AEA Certified Instructor or Trainer?

The Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA) is the leader in aquatic exercise programming serving fitness professionals and exercise enthusiasts worldwide. AEA is an internationally recognized organization specializing in aquatic fitness education and certification. At AEA, we recognize that, as an exercise participant, you have important objectives:

- Getting the most out of every class or training session you attend is valuable, as you are investing time and money!
- Receiving a well-designed workout that considers your personal fitness goals in a safe and fun environment is important to your success.
- Having confidence that your aquatic fitness professional is well trained, professional and up-to-date on industry standards is a significant consideration in selecting a class or personal trainer.

AEA's Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification is an intermediate level certification designed to test a standard level of theoretical and practical competence and skill. The AFP Certified individual is qualified to teach Aquatic Fitness to general populations where participants are approved by their physician for independent exercise. Thus, selecting an instructor or trainer who holds the AEA Aquatic Fitness Professional Certification provides assurance that you will meet your health & fitness objectives through safe, effective and enjoyable water exercise.

To receive certification with AEA, all candidates must successfully complete a 100-question written examination that covers both theoretical and practical application skills. Candidates must also have current training in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) administration. Additionally, certified instructors must renew AEA Certification every two-year period with a **minimum** of 15 continuing education credit hours, which assures that each individual remains current with industry standards and research. Continuing education also keeps your fitness leader motivated and refreshed with new and exciting training formats, fitness equipment and fun movement ideas!

AEA is not only committed to aquatic fitness, but also to each individual within the industry and strives to make everyone successful through increasing awareness, education and networking opportunities. With AEA, achieving healthy lifestyles through aquatic fitness is a team effort and is supported worldwide.

So ask your trainer or instructor, “Are you currently certified as an Aquatic Fitness Professional with AEA?” Expect the best....train with the best!

AEA’s Mission

The Aquatic Exercise Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the advancement of aquatic fitness worldwide.

Certification and Training Opportunities - For Aquatic Therapy and Rehab



ATRI Aquatic Therapeutic Exercise Certification

Thank you for your interest in the Aquatic Therapy & Rehab Institute’s Aquatic Therapeutic Exercise Certification. ATRI is a non-profit organization created to further the education of health care professionals working in the aquatic environment.

Who is the Certification For? Competent, knowledgeable professionals in aquatic therapy, rehab and therapeutic exercise. The exam will test your ability to meet the Aquatic Therapy and Rehabilitation Industry Standards to practice. The Standards are available on the ATRI web site and can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.atri.org/stflyer.htm>. It will allow you to use the term “ATRI Certified” or the initials “ATRIC” after your name. The certification will not make you a therapist if you aren’t already a licensed therapist.

Prerequisite. The prerequisite for this exam is 15 hours of Aquatic Therapy, Rehab and/or Aquatic Therapeutic Exercise education. It is preferable that the education is hands-on but online or correspondence courses also qualify.

Certification and Training Opportunities - For Safety and Risk Management

Risk Awareness and Safety Training (RAST)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A majority of aquatic exercise instructors, aquatic therapy and rehabilitation practitioners, and arthritis leaders have minimal training in recognizing and responding to emergencies in the dressing room, on the deck, or in the pool. Many work in facilities without lifeguards because of pool classification. In lifeguard-staffed pools, they need to identify their role in an emergency. Most instructors and practitioners focus on session content. Awareness and prevention of potential emergency situations with appropriate response increases the safety of all involved. The positive reputation of a reliable and trustworthy program increases participation and program revenue. Identification of potential risk areas such as the locker room and deck are crucial. Knowledge of and involvement with Emergency Action Plans and Recreational Water Illness Policies ensure the safe operation of the aquatic facility and excellence in programming.

The course content of Risk Awareness and Safety Training (RAST) for Aquatic Therapy and Rehab Practitioners covers five major areas of safety when providing therapy in an aquatic setting. RAST fills the gap because courses in the medical field do not address aquatic risk in a comprehensive way and neither do courses in aquatic safety address aquatic therapy. RAST covers facility evaluation, supervisory guidelines, and infection control to include MRSA and cryptosporidium, practitioner and client safety, emergency recognition with emphasis on sudden illness, emergency response, bioethics, and risk management.

Recognizing emergencies and precursors to emergency situations and being able to respond are included in the RAST course along with signs of physiologic stress demanding immediate attention, and performing aquatic assists and rescues appropriate to the water depth of the facility. Emphasis is on prevention and the necessity of having a plan of action in case of an emergency.

Facility evaluations address the safe environment, including compliance with legal codes, water chemistry, communication, signage, and ADA standards; inspection checklists for rescue equipment



and first aid supplies; closure guidelines for severe weather and lightning storms; and basic hygiene rules.

Practitioner safety includes awareness of safe immersion time, self-rescue skills, emergency communication avenues, and supervisory guidelines regarding client surveillance. Safety for the client includes pool entry and exit, transfer protocols, equipment use, positioning in water, and communication techniques. Bioethics as related to practitioner/client interaction includes familiarization with resuscitation orders, refusal of care guidelines, and client choice of treatment options.

The safety training portion of the course includes basic assists, rescues, and emergency extrication. Risk management includes checklists for facility access and security meeting ADA guidelines and state/local codes; awareness of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards; a written Emergency Action Plan (EAP); and guidance in required training in the Bloodborne Pathogen Plan and an outline for writing the Exposure Control Plan.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Provide risk management skills and knowledge to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies
- Review care for sudden illness, communicable disease outbreaks, and injuries with proper response
- Differentiate types of emergencies and requirements in various types of therapy pools
- Develop written plans for addressing varying types of emergency situations
- Insure top-notch therapy and rehab care is a priority
- Gain a safety perspective on all areas of aquatics and comply with current safety standards
- Practice basic water assist skills
- Recognize potential emergency situations – your role, lifeguards, facility

THE RAST CERTIFICATION WILL REVIEW AND TEST:

- ◆ Supervisory guidelines including ratios of practitioners to clients, monitoring of clients and clients' appropriate water depths
- ◆ Practitioner safety and client safety, including immersion time, transfers for entering and exiting pool, communication with client, equipment for heat retention, flotation, shoes, emergency communication, recovery to standing and safe positioning
- ◆ Risk management, including basic assists, rescues and extrication, ADA guidelines, OSHA standards, record keeping, Emergency Action Plan, counseling and Exposure Control Plan – including prevention of transmitting communicable diseases
- ◆ Emergency recognition including signs of physiological stress, facility communication system, rescue equipment and practicing emergency response
- ◆ Facility evaluation which includes familiarization with ADA standards, facility maintenance, signage, water chemistry, air quality and ventilation, closure guidelines, rescue equipment and patron cleanliness
- ◆ Bioethics including do not resuscitate orders, refusal of care guidelines, and client choice of treatment options



PREREQUISITES:

- ◆ Documentation of CPR and First Aid certification
- ◆ AED Training is Recommended

FACULTY: **Mary O. Wykle, PhD, ATRIC**, is a professor of physical education at Northern Virginia Community College. She holds multiple certifications in aquatics and fitness. Her company, *MW Associates*, offers consulting workshops in health and aquatics. Mary is a long-time faculty member and serves on varied committees for ATRI. She is a regular presenter for the Aquatic Exercise Association/IAFC. Mary is Committee Chair for Aquatic Therapy Practitioner of NCCARD (The National Commission for the Credentialing of Aquatic Rehabilitation Disciplines). She is the author of *Risk Awareness and Safety Training* and developed Aqua Pi-Yo-Chi™.

[StarGuard Lifeguard Training and the StarReview Lifeguard and Facility Operational Audit Service.](#)

The StarGuard training program is one of the four nationally recognized options for lifeguard training in the United States. It is highly regarded and offers an experiential based curriculum that results in a competent and confident staff. When combined with the StarReview audit system, the ability to increase the level of safety and reduce risk at your facility is unmatched. The StarReview system may also be used at facilities who have lifeguards certified through other national agencies. Management training and consulting are also available. For more information visit www.starfishaquatics.org

Certification and Training Opportunities - For Swim Instructors

[American Red Cross](#) – structure is to have Authorized Provider who gets assistance from the local chapters. The providers are individuals not the facility. The providers have the options to teach from the following programs: parent & child aquatics, learn to swim for all ages, (new program 2009 will be for 5 and under). The providers are also given the assistance with marketing. They also provide lifeguard training.

Contact: Connie Harvey
Manager, Aquatics Technical Development
Preparedness and Health and Safety Services
703-894-8033
Email: harveyco@usa.redcross.org
Website: <http://www.redcross.org/SERVICES/HSS/aquatics/sfp.html>



[Starfish Aquatics Institute](#) – structure is to have Authorized Training Centers who utilize the companies programs. The company offers trainings for lifeguard (Starguard) and Swim School Instructors. The company also has multiple programs such as Aqua Tech, Best Practices for Pool and Aquatic Facility Operators.

Jennifer White, National Director of Operations -Starfish Swimming

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Email: jennifer.white@starfishaquatics.org

Website: www.starfishaquatics.org

[Swim America](#) – structure is to have Program Directors be the owner of the Licensed Learn to swim program. The program was designed by swim coaches for swim coaches to feed into their swim teams. National office provides a onetime training for the Program Directors to gain a better understanding on how to marketing their program.

Contact: Julie Nitti – National Swim America Director

1-800-356-2722

Email: jnitti@swimamerica.org

Website: www.swimamerica.org

[YMCA of the USA](#) - Operates 2600 pools and has been teaching group lessons for 160 years. Each YMCA operates independently with assistance from 4 region offices. Each site has access to the many resources such as marketing tips, use of logos. It is not mandatory for the local sites to utilize the curriculum of the YMCA.

Contact: Kay Smiley - Aquatic Program Specialist

1-800-872-9622 ext. 2872 - Email: kay.smiley@ymca.net

Website: http://www.ymca.net/about_the_ymca

[United States Swim School Association](#) – This is a company that has Swim Schools as their members. The company provides opportunities for learning and sharing for their members. Help maintain high ethical and standards in the aquatic (particularly the learn to swim) industry. They provide business development education for their members. To be a member the swim school must be a “for profit” business.

Contact: Sue Mackie – Executive Director

480-837-5525

Email: Office@usswimschools.org

Website: <http://www.usswimschools.org/>

Certification and Training Opportunities - For Swim Coaches

American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA)

Why Be Certified?

Certification means that you are serious about your profession. It means that you care about your continuing coaching education and your professional preparation. It marks you as a coach who is in the mainstream of the coaching profession, and willing to be examined in the same light as the great coaches of this country, be they in collegiate, high school, YMCA or club positions. Employers know that the Certified Coach is committed to professional effort, has professional preparation and professional ethics.

In addition, compensation information and access to professionally evaluated positions are available to Certified Coaches. Certification gives you a title you deserve... "Coach John Doe, ASCA Level 3, Age Group."

Certification also states your credentials precisely and concisely. If you are well educated, but do not yet have the time in service or the opportunity to work with better athletes, it says so. As you gain experience, and then gain the opportunity and are successful in actually producing fast swimming with your athletes, it reflects that. This precision is very important and valuable to those who employ swimming coaches... and hence, it protects you from unfair comparisons with others who write "creative resumes" to apply for jobs. ASCA Certification provides factual information on you to your potential employer.

There are three things analyzed in the Certification process. They are: Education, Experience and Achievement. Your Certification shows that you have met the required standard at each Level. The Five Levels become increasingly more difficult. Level 5 is composed of the top 2-5% of coaches in the USA. Level 4 is the top 5-8% and Level 3 is the upper 15% of coaches. Level 2 requires more "units" of education and experience than Level 1.

USA Swimming

The Foundations of Coaching (or USA Swimming's Foundations of Coaching test).

It is about the philosophy of our sport and its coaching. It is, indeed, its title, the *foundations* of coaching. Included are starter materials on teaching strokes, training athletes, working with parents, etc. It's Coaching 101. It makes you competent to step on-deck and assist swimmers and other coaches. It's minimal, it's the *start*. Take the test online and its reported to USA Swimming, for your coaching membership there, and to ASCA, to start your Certification process.



Certification and Training Opportunities - For Pool Operators

Pool Operators Courses

American Lifeguard Certified In-Class Pool Operators Course

American Lifeguard Association, Inc.
8300 Boone Blvd., 5th Floor
Vienna, VA 22182
Phone: 703-761-6750
Fax: 801-838-0960
E-mail: alalifeguard@aol.com

Aquatic Facility Operator Course (AFO)

National Recreation and Park Association
22377 Belmont Ridge Road
Ashburn, VA 20148-4501
Phone: 703-858-0784
Fax: 703-858-0794
E-mail: membership@nrpa.org

AquaTech for Aquatic Facility and Pool Operators

Starfish Aquatics Institute
Phone: 877-465-4545
E-mail: aquatech@sai-intl.org

Certified Pool Operator Course (CPO)

National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF)
4775 Granby Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80919-3131
Phone: 719-540-9119
E-mail: media@nspf.org

Commercial Pool Technician Course (CPT)

Aquatic Training Institute
Attn: Tom Donaldson
PO Box 141797 Gainesville, FL 32614-1797
Phone: 800-385-0270
Fax: 904-687-0107
E-mail: Tom@AquaticTrainingInstitute.com

Licensed Aquatic Facility Technician Course (LAFT)

American Swimming Pool and Spa Association
Attn: Tony Suchy, Chairman
1108 Little River Drive Elizabeth City, NC 27909
Phone: 877-766-5724



Fax: 252-330-7227
E-mail: Info@SwimmingPoolOperator.com
Practical Pool Management Plus (PPM+)
Aquatic Safety Research Group, LLC
Attn: Tom Griffith
1632 Glenwood Circle
State College, PA 16803
Phone & Fax: 814-234-0313
E-mail: TomGriffith@AquaticSafetyGroup.com

Tech I / Tech II
The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP)
2111 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-838-0083

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

There are numerous options for certification and training.

Select a course or training agency that fits your needs.

Consider becoming an authorized provider for an agency and conducting your training in-house.

Chapter 11 - Efficient Facility Operations

Reducing Costs by Reducing Consumption

There are some simple things you can do at your aquatic center to begin to reduce your consumption and increase your bottom line.

- ▲ Indoor pools can realize a tremendous cost savings by covering the pools at night and on the weekends when not in use.
- ▲ Check the HVAC system at least twice per year (or more) for operational pumps, condensers, vents, and filters.
- ▲ Use high quality cleaning supplies, and seek to get the best price.
- ▲ Evaluate the type of pool chemicals and feed system you are using. The right combination for your source water characteristics can not only reduce consumption on a day to day basis, but save in downstream maintenance costs caused by unbalanced water.

These are just a few, but effective strategies you can implement right way.

Budget Planning for Operations

The introduction to this manual listed predictable repairs and capital improvement needs. These ongoing expenses are to be expected and must be planned for if you hope to be a sustainable aquatic center. Otherwise, the first major repair or replacement need, or unexpected regulation, can jeopardize your ability to keep the doors open. These are some planning strategies to consider:

- ▲ Expenses need to be evaluated quarterly.
 - ▲ Have contract services been evaluated and comparative bids collected?
 - ▲ Do you have a capital improvements budget that has income every two weeks just like an employee?
-

Summary - Top 3 Key Points

Evaluate simple yet effective ways to reduce consumption and reduce operating expenses.

Realize that costly repairs and capital expense are part of operating a pool.

Plan ahead for repairs and upgrades, and for the unexpected.

Notes:

Resources

Guidelines for Working with Children with Special Needs

Creating Ripples Program

Adjustment to Water: is more difficult for the disabled than the able-bodied. Asymmetry is distorted and balance is more difficult to achieve. Conditions that affect respiration, communication, comprehensive, inability to gain voluntary control and or achieve normal gross motor patterns will be additional factors that evoke natural anxiety and fear

- A. Mental adjustment is equally that of the parent/volunteer
 - 1. always demonstrate control and correct holding patterns
 - 2. talk, hum, sing to the infant/child
- B. Relaxation is essential for water activity
 - 1. support of buoyancy
 - 2. warmth
 - 3. swaying, rhythmic swinging movement
 - 4. good handling techniques
 - 5. create an appropriate environment
 - 6. relaxation is needed to attain breath control and balance
- C. Breath Control
 - 1. encourage breath control at all times “blow”
 - 2. automatic breath control may be lacking due to disability (focus on mouth and nose closure)
 - 3. blowing is also a prerequisite for head control as it brings the head forward
- D. Head Control
 - 1. most important skill to acquire balance, rotation and safety
 - 2. results in eye-hand coordination, visual sharpness, gross and fine motor skill
- E. Balance Control
 - 1. ability to make appropriate adjustment to compensate for altered body, shape, tone and the resulting rotational patterns
 - 2. start in stable shapes with minimal turbulence and slowly move to less stable shapes and/ or increase turbulence
- F. Body Image and Spatial Relationships
 - 1. water enables a child to learn body dimension and awareness
 - 2. learn the extremes of posture and the resulting effects of their movement
 - 3. water decreases tactile input

To function - a small child needs, upper body strength, trunk rotation, flexibility and endurance.

Water allows a person to develop in these area while the focus is on play. Playing, kicking, jumping, twisting, blowing, reaching, alternating arms. These moves increase strength, flexibility, and endurance. When the child improves in these areas it is a direct carry over to land functions.

Why Choose Water for Pediatrics?

Pediatrics: Rationale for Early Intervention (EI)

- ▲ Increase variety of motor programs used
- ▲ Increase opportunities for sensory input and organization
- ▲ Promote functional and task related movements
- ▲ Enhance parent/child acceptance and interaction
- ▲ Promote compensation and function in spite of severe sensory and/or motor deficits

WHY CHOOSE THE WATER?

- ▲ Aquatic activities are fun!
- ▲ Children and families are motivated – aquatic activities are “mainstream”
- ▲ The properties of water and a trained therapist can offer a child earlier and greater opportunities for risk taking, learning
- ▲ Physiological responses to immersion help build stronger and more capable bodies
- ▲ Motor learning, motor skill acquisition, and practice (repetition)
- ▲ Build strength and endurance
- ▲ Skills can be learned in a functional context
- ▲ Can lead to a lifelong opportunity for fitness and community integration
- ▲ Overall, there is increased motivation for independence, builds self-confidence

PEDIATRIC

Indications & Aims of Treatment

INDICATIONS

Disorders of bones, joints, and muscle

- ▲ Juvenile Chronic Arthritis
- ▲ Muscular Dystrophy
- ▲ Congenital Abnormalities
- ▲ Spinal Bifida
- ▲ Osteogenesis Imperfecta
- ▲ Burns

Neurological and Developmental

- ▲ Cerebral Palsy
 - ▲ Head Injury
-

- ▲ Epilepsy
- ▲ Addicted Infants
- ▲ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Mental Retardation & Behavior Disorders

- ▲ Severely Mentally Retarded
- ▲ Mild-Moderate Mental Retardation
- ▲ ADD
- ▲ Perceptual Disabilities
- ▲ Autism

AIMS OF TREATMENT

- ▲ Orthopedic
- ▲ Strengthen Postural Alignment
- ▲ Limited Weight Bearing Exercises
- ▲ Normalize muscle tone
- ▲ Strengthen muscles
- ▲ Visuomotor skill development
- ▲ Proprioception
- ▲ Balance
- ▲ Coordination
- ▲ Endurance
- ▲ Gait training
- ▲ Improved range of motion
- ▲ Develop functional movement
- ▲ Improve cardiovascular fitness

Neurologic

- ▲ Sensory integration
 - ▲ Spatial awareness
 - ▲ Decrease tactile stimulus
 - ▲ Mental adjustment
 - ▲ Improve neural response
 - ▲ Improve cognitive functioning
-

Psychological

- ▲ Reduce anxiety
- ▲ Decrease agitation
- ▲ Behavior modification
- ▲ Emotional outlet
- ▲ Builds confidence
- ▲ Improves self-image /self-esteem
- ▲ Psychologically and physically motivating

Social

- ▲ New surroundings
- ▲ Variety of learning experiences
- ▲ Development of relationships
- ▲ Community integration
- ▲ Decrease disability stigma
- ▲ Opportunity for recreation with others
- ▲ Shared family fun

Developmental

- ▲ Provide motor learning sequencing
- ▲ Mental adjustment to environment
- ▲ 3 dimensional environment
- ▲ Developmentally appropriate activities
- ▲ An environment of continuous learning
- ▲ Exploration of movement

Aquatic Sports Rehab: Why Aquatic Therapy for Athletes in Non Aquatic Sports?

- A. Benefits of aquatic training for athletic conditioning/skill development
- Sports specific water training can address every component of fitness; strength, speed, aerobic and anaerobic conditioning, flexibility and balance
 - Can duplicate sports specific sports skill in “safe” environment
 - Resistance slows down movement for better skill analysis
- B. Benefits of aquatic training for athletic injury rehabilitation
- Water accelerates healing: reduces edema, increases circulation
 - Unloads sore/injured joints
 - Increase in ROM
 - Increase in strength and flexibility
 - Can maintain intensity without risk of compensation or further injury
 - Balances strength and flexibility of opposing muscle groups
- C. Water makes an ideal transitional training environment
- Deep to shallow to land
 - Aquatic cross-training after rehab completed
- D. Sport specific
- Basketball
 - Football
 - Volleyball
 - Golf
 - Tennis
 - Running
- E. Athletes who have benefited from Aquatic Rehab/Training
- Bo Jackson (baseball/football player)
 - John Lloyd (tennis player)
 - Mary Decker Slaney (mid-distance runner)
 - Wilt Chamberlain (basketball player)
 - Jackie Joyner Kersee (runner / track)
 - Nancy Kerrigan (ice skater)
 - Rich Gedman (baseball, Red Sox)
- F. Educating your patients (athletes)
- Therapy can be fun, but also engaging and tough! Remember athletes are used to working hard so they need to be challenged.
 - Keep in mind that not all athletes come in young, fit packages. Weekend warriors are at least as injury prone as competitive athletes.
 - Know where the best services are for your patients; trained, credential, and motivated

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Glover, Bob and Weisenfeld, Murray. *The Injured Runner's Training Handbook*; Penguin Books, 1993
Huey, Linda and Robert Forster, PT. *The Complete Water Power Workout Book*; Random House, 1993
Koury, Joanne. *Aquatic Therapy Programming: Guidelines for Orthopedic Rehabilitation*; Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1995.



Example of an Aquatic Course that Leads to an Aquatic Continuum Program

Aquatic F.I.N.E. Program: Aquatic Fitness is Nutrition and Exercise

Purpose: To educate individuals regarding nutrition and exercise. Empower a person to take charge of their life through exercise and nutrition.

Target Population: At risk individuals for diabetes or heart disease. A person must be at least 30% over weight.

Objective: Offer a program that teaches how physical activity helps control weight. Offer a program that includes strength training, aerobic, and flexibility training. The program would be controlled in size so that we can offer the individual support that is needed to motivate someone to stay with something new.

Program: The F.I.N.E. will include classroom education from a Nutritionist, Cardiologist, Licensed Social Worker, and Certified Personal Trainer. The water lab will give hands on instruction on how to start exercising and how to progress to the maintenance level. In 12 weeks, the person will have the opportunity to progress to land exercise or continue to exercise in the water.

Program Cost: \$\$\$ - annual membership is included in the cost – Participates will be able to continue after they finish the “A. F.I.N.E. Program”. Handouts and lectures are included in cost. Limited to no more than 8 participates– must have at least 5 participates for the course to begin. The course will be repeated if more interest by new participates.

Basic Outline

Step #1 – Referred by a Physician

Step #2 - Complete Registration Form and pay for Course

Step #3 – Opening Workshop – Presenters

1. Cardiologist from hospital
2. Nutritionist from community
3. Licensed Social Worker
4. Personal trainers from wellness center

Step #4 – Orientation

Facility Walk through

Medical History

Life style PAR-Q

B/P – BMI – Height – Weight?

Step #5 – Implement exercise program for 12 weeks and retest

Graduation - Ending is the beginning – At the end of 12 weeks the person should have the knowledge and the motivation to take the next step into the “Aquatic Fitness Continuum”.

Pool Covers Case Study



Both Indoor pools and Outdoor pools can save a lot of money by covering their pools when not in use. This usually means every night or when the pool is not in use for 6 hours or more. This article explains the challenges and then offers 3 solutions.

Concept: Energy efficiency which helps lower operational budgets is a leading issues for all pools. There are over 100,000 commercial indoor year round swimming pools in the U.S. These pools are heavy energy consumers due to maintaining water temperatures between 80–86 degrees and higher. Natatoriums consume over five times more energy than the average commercial building. Addressing comprehensive energy-water solutions has social-political-economic impact and should become a top priority for survival mode with all pool operations.

USA Swimming is a leader in this energy efficiency and water efficiency awareness and implementation effort. Natatoriums everywhere face cost rationalization and closure when municipalities, schools, owners, and investors focus not only on the operating economics, but environmental implications of high energy consumption, water consumption, and emissions. To preserve, promote, and grow the business of swimming, embracing major energy and water conservation initiatives through the use of pool blankets or covers is a responsible necessity economically and ecologically.

USA Swim Clubs have an opportunity to gain recognition with distinctive energy leadership among all businesses during this critical period of the “greening of America” by launching a high visibility unique program for energy efficiency and water conservation. Clubs and facilities need to understand how good an investment pool covers are. Savings of between 30% and 50% energy, water, and emissions are possible. Green leadership can benefit the sport and business of aquatics, promote sustainability of swimming pools, and highlight swimming’s unique efforts to address two of the most important issues, energy and water, of the coming decades. By advocating the use of pool blankets to achieve real economic and environmental improvements, this combined effort among USAS Clubs could achieve practical results and higher visibility for the sport.

With over 2700 swim clubs using 4100+ pools, USAS Clubs efforts to advocate the practice of employing pool blankets could have huge practical and promotional implications - gas and electricity combined savings of \$100 million annually, water savings of \$15 million, and \$5 million chemical savings. That’s \$1.2 billion over 10 years.



Not to mention IAQ and corrosion reduction results by stopping humidity and airborne chloramines, plus the significant environmental benefits of reducing CO2 greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 400,000 tons.

Case Study Background: In an effort to save operating expenses, Dynamo Swim Club Atlanta Georgia installed solar hot water heating systems and began using pool blankets on its indoor pools beginning in 2003. For the four years period from 2004 through 2007, the Club saved over \$200,000 annually in gas, water, and chemicals. 75% of savings were energy efficiency achieved with the use of blankets, while only 25% was attributable to solar. Yet blankets were only 10% of the project capital cost. It is believed this 4-year study of evaporation is one of the first of its kind ever undertaken.

Clearly energy efficiency is a better investment for pools than alternative energy creation at this time. In a natatorium, 97% of heat loss from the water is due to evaporation (70%) and ventilation (27%). Placing a vapor barrier material (blanket or cover) on the water surface virtually stops the heat transfer physics of evaporation loss and humidity gain in the air. An energy blanket, applied for 7-10 hours at night when the outdoor differential temperatures are much greater than the indoor pool water temperature, can stop 50% of total heat, water, and chemical losses to evaporation year round.

Based on U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) geographic climate savings calculations for indoor pool energy consumption, evaporative heat loss total costs and relative savings using blankets nationwide are surprisingly close. Dynamo's study over four years averaged 17% better than DOE calculations for Atlanta. The DOE data shows it is economically attractive for all indoor pools to use blankets. As a very general rule of thumb, annual indoor pool water heating costs will run about \$.20/square foot of surface water area, and potential 50% savings with energy blankets about \$.10/sf.

An estimated 95% of natatoriums (indoor pools) do not use pool blankets because of two primary reasons:

- First, heat energy loss from pools inside HVAC climate-controlled buildings is not clearly understood by operator
- Second, time and labor problems with blanket handling

While the evolution of dehumidification in natatoriums has made great progress in the last 20 years, architects, HVAC engineers, and pool operators still generally fail to address the primary source of humidity and heat loss, the open pool itself. Yet ASHRAE 90.1, the guideline for natatorium energy design and the basis for most building codes nationwide, has a mandatory requirement, "Heated pools shall be equipped with a pool cover."

Incentives: Interestingly, though many are becoming available (federal, state, local), no supplemental tax incentives, enticing subsidies, fancy rebates, generous grants, or carbon credits are needed to financially justify investing in pool blankets. The bottom line is rapid payback (months) and pure, green, real savings (ongoing). Added energy-water incentives are added bonuses.



What's Unique? Water retains heat quite effectively, and pools are very large storage vessels. However, evaporation from water surfaces, whether indoors or outdoors, results in a huge amount of heat loss as a result of the physical transformation of water from a liquid to a gas. This evaporation process can be virtually stopped by applying a vapor barrier material on top of the water. This also stops humidity. Quite simply, the huge energy cost for mechanical dehumidification can be drastically reduced when a vapor barrier is applied to the source of humidity, evaporation from the surface of the pool.

DYNAMO SWIM CLUB – ATLANTA PERFORMANCE TRACKING 2004 – 2007

ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECT

Dynamo launched an Energy Project in 2003 combining energy conservation (evaporation blankets) and renewable energy (solar thermal hot water). Dynamo's two natatoriums have five indoor pools totaling 1.8 million gallons of water with 28,700 sq. ft. of surface area. Each pool is heated year round at constant temperatures of either 79 or 86 degrees. No HVAC/dehumidification systems are employed in the pool spaces, only ventilation essential to healthy air circulation. About 70% of indoor pool energy loss is due to evaporation, 27% due to ventilation. Blankets cover all 46 individual 25-yard lanes from 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM to stop evaporative heat loss. 500 solar panels (27,000 sq.ft.) supplement gas heaters, exceeding hot water demand fully during May to September conditions. Savings for the past four years document an average 55% reduction in therm consumption, while gas market prices increased 100%. The DOE software model shows 40% of total savings came from solar heating replenishment, while 60% was due to blankets stopping evaporation energy heat loss 7 hours at night. These results validate other studies.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>USAGE THERMS</u>	<u>ANNUAL COST *</u>	<u>AVERAGE \$/THERM**</u>	<u>THERM SAVINGS</u>	<u>SAVINGS vs. 2001 Baseline</u>	<u>BLANKET SAVINGS***</u>
2001	253,315	\$174,787	\$0.69	(Baseline actual Dynamo consumption)		
2002	(solar & blanket systems installed Oct/2002)					
2003	(data incomplete due to start-up variables)					
2004	97,030	\$114,461	\$1.18 (+71%)	156,285	\$184,416	\$110,650
2005	114,398	\$162,778	\$1.42 (+105%)	139,917	\$198,682	\$119,209
2006	131,264	\$179,400	\$1.39 (+101%)	122,051	\$169,651	\$101,791
2007	116,540	\$166,508	\$1.43 (+107%)	136,775	\$195,588	\$117,353
Four-year cumulative gas savings:					<u>\$748,337</u>	<u>\$449,003</u>



Additional conservation not included above = \$27,000 water (reduction from 9MM to 4.4MM gallons) and \$10,000 chemicals annually. About \$150,000 added evaporation efficiency cumulatively. This brings TOTAL energy project savings-to-date to \$900,000, of which \$600,000 is attributable to pool blankets.

NOTE: Energy conservation efforts by Dynamo over these four years averaged 139,000 therms annually. This equals 55% reduction of greenhouse gas (CO2) emissions or 1.6 million pounds (812 tons) per year. The U.S. EPA calculates this as being equivalent to taking 142 passenger cars off the road each year.

- * Economic value = therms reduced 55% while gas costs have increased over 100%
- ** Average billed cost per therm = gas base, service charges, pipeline transportation fees, taxes
- *** Savings variables = weather, thermodynamics, gas "mileage," solar efficiency, blanket regimen (usage)

**GEOGRAPHIC SAVINGS CALCULATOR
USING EVAPORATION BLANKETS AT NIGHT FOR INDOOR POOLS**

Source: U.S. Department of Energy & NOAA / NCDC annual climate data

*Example: Calculate water surface area - 50mtr x 25yd pool (12,300 sf) = 12.3 factor
Multiply 12.3 factor x cost & savings/1000sf coefficients in chart below
Atlanta 50-mtr: Cost: 12.3 x \$13,800 = \$169,740 gas cost /year
Savings: 12.3 x \$5,800 = \$71,340 savings using blanket*

CITY / REGION	Pool Type	Annual Heating Cost per 1000 square feet of surface water area - Multiply x pool factor	Evaporation Blanket Average Gas Savings - Multiply x pool factor
Atlanta	Indoor	\$13,800	\$5,800 (42%)
Boston	Indoor	\$14,100	\$6100 (43%)



Chicago	Indoor	\$14,100	\$6000 (43%)
Dallas	Indoor	\$13,400	\$5600 (42%)
Denver	Indoor	\$12,300	\$5500 (45%)
Kansas City	Indoor	\$13,800	\$6000 (43%)
Los Angeles	Indoor	\$14,500	\$6300 (43%)
Miami	Indoor	\$12,100	\$4600 (38%)
New York	Indoor	\$13,700	\$5900 (43%)
Philadelphia	Indoor	\$13,700	\$5900 (43%)
Phoenix	Indoor	\$10,900	\$5000 (46%)
San Francisco	Indoor	\$14,600	\$6300 (43%)
Seattle	Indoor	\$14,200	\$6100 (43%)

NOTE: Adjust your actual +/- total gas bill x savings % for better savings estimate accuracy

(1) 2007 assumption - Delivered gas/pipeline/taxes @ \$1.50 total per therm



- (2) Water evaporation cost & savings not included - Add 15% to above
- (3) Chemical evaporation cost & savings not included - Add 5% to above
- (4) Natatoriums with dehumidifiers - Electricity savings equals gas savings above

There are basically 3 options for pool covers. Each has its own set of advantages and cost implications. Budget drives the decision making process more than any other factor so all three options are briefly discussed below. There is little difference between the energy savings of these 3 systems on indoor pools. The difference is cost to purchase and install product.

Option #1.....

DEVELOPED with Dynamo Swim Club / Atlanta - www.dynamoswimclub.com With 5 indoor pools, energy savings averaged \$237,000 per year for 4 years - cumulative savings totaled over \$1.1 million . Natural gas market prices have skyrocketed and plummeted in the past 12 months, but electricity and water rates are increasing. The automated H2O Energy Blanket system makes productivity even better - blanket on/off is all about speed, ease, efficiency, simplicity, reliability, and coverage integrity. Solution? One lightweight blanket covers the whole pool.

AQUASYNTHETICS - H2O Energy Blankets are lightweight engineered fabrics, high durability, high vapor barrier technology that stops 97% of heat loss due to evaporation, ventilation, and dehumidification - without worrying about problems with chloramines, air flow, indoor air quality, corrosion, and water balance. Energy blankets put a lid on your water, prevent surface evaporation (a heat loss phenomenon otherwise known as evaporative cooling), and control most of the problems that arise with being uncovered. Keep heat energy in the pool, keep your money from evaporating, make a big contribution to climate change, feel much better.

FACTS... After a 4-year energy tracking study, 2004-2007, Dynamo has documented savings averaging \$237,000 annually, totaling \$1.1 million to date. This sure brings the global energy and economic crises into perspective for pool people. Still our life-guards complained about having to reel blankets off at 5AM, then dragging them all back on at 10PM, every single day. This dilemma got us thinking about making blankets easier - everybody knows they're a hassle, right?

EVAPORATION... is all about energy, environment, and economics. You may not know that the same thermodynamics or physics of evaporation apply indoors as outdoors? Except for wind. Or that all indoor pools nationwide are heated year round? Or that indoors you can virtually stop 97% of heat loss by stopping evaporation? Or that the open pool is the source of humidity, and lower RH accelerates evaporation (heat loss)? Or that heat of evaporation is stopped with a vapor barrier?

CLIMATE & GEOGRAPHY... No matter what your location across the nation, costs of heating indoor pools and the potential savings using energy blankets are surprisingly similar. It's mostly about outdoor nighttime temperature differentials and relative humidity factors compared against indoor pool environment conditions.



Information for OPTION #1 At: www.h2oblankets.com or call 770-913-0802 E-mail: harvco@mindspring.com

Option #2





CLARKSTON - The Asotin County Family Aquatic Center is continuing to work on capital improvements, especially ones that end up cutting costs. "The Aquatic Center purchased pool covers as part of their capital improvements and installed them in November and they are essentially a blanket that floats on top of the pool that prevents evaporation, retains heat in the water itself as well as the chemicals in the water and they are a way to save on utilities," said Nick Bacon. Aquatic Center Director. Since that time they have spent about \$13,500 dollars less on utilities. Bacon says some of this can be attributed to a warmer winter, but most is related to the pool covers. "They cost us \$25,000 total and three months in we are already half through that payback"

This type of thermal blanket is the best for outdoor use. They can be purchased with 2 or 3 layers and with weighted edges so the wind does not blow them off in outdoor pool applications. They can become heavy and more than one person will be needed to put them on and take them off. For these type of thermal blankets you can check with the suppliers below. Let them know if they are for indoor use because you will not want weighted edges or triple layer.

Mark Hines

Director of Business Development

Spectrum Products

Cell: 309-531-7956

email: mhines@spectrumproducts.com

www.spectrumproducts.com

Howard Baetzhold- Regional Sales Manager
Lincoln Equipment, Inc.
P.O. Box 50531
Indianapolis, IN 46256
(317) 776-1755 Office
(800) 223-5450 Ext. 204 Toll Free Voice Mail
(317) 776-1756 Fax

hbaetzhold@lincolnaquatics.com

Option #3

For those in a “budget crunch” there is an option for 25 yard pools. The typical short course pool is 75’ long x 45’ wide. Residential solar cover reels can be bought and installed along one side of the pool. 5 of the 18’ reels can be installed with reel #2 and #4 being set back about 24” farther from edge of the pool and overlapping width wise with the reels (#1 #3 #5) co in front of them. This allows the 16’ covers to be reeled properly lined up with the other covers. There are some reels that may be able to handle more than one cover alleviating the necessity to offset 5 reels. Check with the manufacturer regarding cover capacity. The covers need to be slightly wider than 15’ and slightly longer than 45’ because they will shrink. We suggest 16’ x 46’ covers which fit nicely on 18’ reels.



5 each 12 or 16 mill solar covers 16’ wide x 46’ long can then be purchased. This size can be custom ordered or if cheaper a larger stock size can be ordered and then cut on site when delivered.



The web is the best place to get pricing on the covers and reels. Many distributors will pay the freight on this size of order. Shop around.

<http://www.solarcovers.com/blue-solar-covers.asp>

<http://www.swimmingpoolsetc.com/rectangle-solarcover12mil.htm>

Our experience tells us that you should be able to get the reels and covers for between \$1600 and \$2200 for a 25 yard 6 lane pool. Prices vary depending on the time of year you purchase. The best time to buy is the fall or winter. The products will probably not be discounted during the spring or summer.

For more information please contact distributors direct or e-mail mnelson@usaswimming.org

Appendix and Samples

Management Education: What is Your Personal Leadership IQ?

By Joelle K. Jay

As a leader, you likely know how to lead your company or department. But how are you doing in terms of your personal leadership? If you're wondering what personal leadership is, here's a definition. Personal leadership is the leadership of the self. It is the ability to define a direction for your leadership and life, and to move in that direction with consistency and clarity.

When you practice personal leadership, you "lead from the inside out." The process involves asking yourself, "How do I need to be, act and think in order to be my best?" To do that, you must periodically turn away from the concerns of the day – the people, the problems and the pressure – to explore and discover your inner edge.

To practice personal leadership, you apply the principles of leadership that make businesses a success ... to yourself. For example, leading in business involves having a compelling vision, developing strategies and inspiring people to use their talents to meet a goal for improved business results. Leading yourself means applying these same principles of leadership to your role as a leader and your life. You, too, need a compelling vision and a strategy for reaching it. You need a team supporting you. You need results, as well as a sense of contribution and purpose. The difference is that personal leadership doesn't just make for better business; it makes for better leadership. It makes for a better you.

When you practice personal leadership, you use every ounce of your potential with inspiration instead of perspiration, synergy instead of sacrifice, and wisdom instead of work. Personal leadership is so important, in fact, that renowned management expert Peter Drucker once called it "the only leadership that's going to matter in the 21st century." So now the key question is, "Are you succeeding in leading yourself?" Take the following quiz to find out.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D., is president of the leadership development practice, Pillar Consulting. As an executive coach, author and speaker, Joelle helps leaders achieve top performance and business results. Her clients include presidents, vice presidents, and C-level executives in Fortune 500 companies. Joelle is the author of "The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership."

Management Education: Employee Performance: Do You Have Fizzlers or Sizzlers?

By Jay Forte

In today's workplace, employee performance follows the Pareto Principle (the 80/20 rule) – 80 percent of employees fizzle, 20 percent of employees sizzle. The 80 percent of employees who fizzle are weak and disinterested performers who do just enough not to get fired. The 20 percent of employees who sizzle are passionate and engaged performers, committed to making a difference.

How can any organization be successful if only small percentages (20 percent) are actively driving service responses and results? The better question is why does this happen? The *twenty percenters* are employees who are well matched to their jobs; they are intellectually connected to their work (they have the right talents and skills) and are emotionally connected to their work (it activates their passions and interests). Intellectual *and* emotional – this combination creates a high-performing employee; it empowers an employee to be confident, committed and engaged; it encourages an employee to think and acts like an owner. Attracting, hiring and retaining “great fit” employees is a critical responsibility of today's managers.

Intellectual connection (right talents and skills) is required in today's workplace. For an employee to be productive, he or she first must not only have skills, but must also have the core talents and thinking required to do the particular job well. This encourages employee confidence, competence and commitment. The more this happens, the stronger the employee's response. Employees who work in jobs that do not match their talents and skills feel incapable ... and then fizzle out.

Emotional connection (passion) is actually a more important component of employee fit and performance. Research presented in the book *Human Sigma* by Dr. John Fleming and Jim Asplund, supports the fact that a dissatisfied customer and a satisfied customer buy nearly the same volume (this seems contrary to rational thinking but their studies prove it to be true). A loyal customer, however, buys significantly more than a satisfied customer. The only difference between the satisfied and loyal customers is the loyal customer is *emotionally connected* to the brand, product or organization. This emotional connection makes all the difference. The same principle follows with employees. Satisfied and unhappy employees (80 percent of the workforce) perform at nearly the same level – average; loyal employees (20 percent of the workforce) perform at significantly greater levels. And the reason for the increased performance is the emotional connection the employees feel with their jobs and managers. Employees who work in jobs that activate their passions, values and interests become emotionally connected to their work and to their performance.

Today, it is a responsibility of management to ignite employee performance. This is done by ensuring an intellectual connection and an emotional connection. This is the formula for customer and employee loyalty.

So, let's see it in practice. Here are several employee performance or attitude problems that can be addressed by either reconnecting the employee intellectually and/or reconnecting the employee emotionally. Review your employees and determine who is an eighty percenter, and then create a plan for how to move the employee to twenty percenter performance.

Performance problems Set 1:

- ❖ Employees constantly threaten to quit, are critical of others, blame others.
- ❖ Employees can't achieve their basic job description requirements, other performance expectations or continually miss deadlines.
- ❖ Employees do as little as possible and show no real effort in any aspect of their work.
- ❖ Employees need significantly more praise, affirmation and attention.
- ❖ Employees need constant instruction, guidance and hand-holding. If these behaviors are happening in your workplace, your employees do not feel capable or confident in their work.

Consider: Reconnect employees *intellectually* by assessing employee talents and realigning employees to jobs that better match their talents and skills. Use a talent assessment (there are many online) to identify natural strengths and abilities. By aligning employees to roles that use their best attributes, they feel more connected, competent and engaged. For example: Employees whose talents are more social are better matched to roles that put them in front of people (sales, service) and not in a cubicle. Employees who are more analytical are more comfortable and capable with details and procedures (accounting, engineering) than with people. Employees who have strong controlling talents (they like to be in charge) are more effective in leadership and solo performance roles. Employees who have strong supportive talents are more effective in management, team and collaborative roles. Knowing your employee's talents is the first step in matching the employee to the right job. Fit is critical to activate an employee's intellectual connection.

Performance problems – set 2:

- ❖ Employees show little or no passion in their work, workplace or team.
- ❖ Employees are constantly unhappy, critical or negative.
- ❖ Employees show little or no enthusiasm; they are visibly bored.
- ❖ Employees seem detached, disconnected and are the last ones in and the first ones out each day; they do only the minimum and need constant supervision.
- ❖ If these behaviors are happening in your workplace, your employees are not finding a personal connection to or passion in their work.

Consider: Reconnect employees *emotionally* by customizing their jobs around their talents, values and interests, and in things that are meaningful to the business. This actively involves their passions in a way that adds value to the company.



For example:

- ❖ A customer service employee who also loves to write, may feel more emotionally connected to his job if he can also prepare the company newsletter, write about the company for trade journals or host a column on the company intranet.
- ❖ A sales employee, who is also great at organizing, may feel more emotionally connected to his job if he can organize a company event, party, meeting or product announcement (not part of his regular job).
- ❖ A driver, who also loves to teach, may create and host a program that reviews driving regulations, how to better load a truck and how to drive defensively for all new drivers.
- ❖ A soon-to-be-retiring manager may feel more engaged when paired with younger employees to mentor, coach and guide them in their performance.
- ❖ A workplace of sizzlers has employees who are connected intellectually (they have the right talents and skills) and emotionally (they are passionate) to their work. They become max-performers because they feel capable, confident and passionately connected to what they do.

Focus on these two components to revive any employee to passionate-performance status; your results depend on it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Performance consultant, speaker and workplace coach, Jay Forte, works with management, women's organizations and individuals to maximize personal and professional performance. As president of Humanetrics, LLC, Forte provides talent-based hiring and management training to create high-productivity workplaces. His new book "Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition," brings workplace theory into real life, with interactive tools and exercises. Forte is also a member of SHRM and ASTD. To hire him for keynotes or consulting, visit: www.HumanetricsLLC.com or www.FireUpYourEmployees.com or call: 401-338-3505.

Management Education: The Weakness Trap

By Garold L. Markle

What is the best thing to do with a weakness? According to the Gallup Poll data, the most successful managers don't normally try to fix an employee's weakness. Instead, they work around it. Ignore it, if possible. While this sounds counter intuitive to some, it actually agrees with what most of us have noticed in life.

Consider coaching. What would a football coach do with a short but fast player who has quick hands? Try to fatten him up and make him stronger? Of course not. The coach would place him in the defensive backfield where speed and agility are key. He would charge the small, fast guy with getting faster. Meanwhile, he'd take his biggest, strongest player and challenge him to become bigger and stronger.

Thomas had been written up as needing to work on his Analytical Skills for the last three years. His manager can do it again, but Thomas is probably not going to improve in this area. Is Thomas worth keeping? Absolutely! He produces a high volume of work. The only thing needed here is for the manager to refocus his improvement efforts on things that were more realistic and valuable. Challenge Thomas to do more heavy lifting; just don't assign him tasks that require heavy analysis.

It is customary for managers to focus their coaching attempts on correcting areas of weakness while praising areas of strength. They fall into *The Weakness Trap*, spending good energy on a bad idea. To achieve a team of fully functioning employees, *Areas for Improvement* are more productively focused on *Strengths* rather than *Weaknesses*. Obviously, there are some weaknesses that must be improved upon in order for the employee to be valuable to the company. What is being questioned here is the absolute adherence to the concept of improving all weak areas. Wherever possible, focus the attention on enhancing the strengths and limiting the job description in the weak areas. The same ideas apply at home. When a child walks through the door with a report card showing five As, two Bs and one D, what do we always talk to her about? The low grade, of course. We tell her how the sub-par subject matter is critical to proper growth and development and force her to spend more time focused on areas in which she's potentially ill-equipped to excel. Instead of lecturing our mathematically inclined child on the merits of mastering English and Geography, if that's where she's behind, perhaps we'd be better served to encourage her to focus the bulk of her attention on Physics and Calculus, where she sits at the head of her class. After all, who cares whether the nuclear physicist that designs the first truly viable electric car can write creatively or explain haiku? And her computer or secretary can clean up her misspelled words.

So how do we avoid *The Weakness Trap*? Consider taking the following actions:

1. Design Around Weaknesses. Whenever possible shift roles and responsibilities to give those who work for you a chance to focus on what they're good at and what they enjoy. Fit the job to the people and the people to the job. Not all accountants have to have identical responsibilities. The same goes for supervisors, managers and executive assistants. Few of us are universally talented. It is more

important to create a team that wins through working together than to mandate that all jobs with similar titles are carbon copies.

2. Shorten Improvement Cycles. If you have an employee that has a weakness that you can't build out of her position (for example, a manager who can't delegate), give her a limited amount of focused attention to make the improvement. In general, if she can't start making demonstrable progress in a one to three month period, she is not worth spending additional time on. Great sports coaches move quickly when they determine that a player's aptitude is insufficient for a given role. In business, time is money. Repurposing or replacing usually beat rewiring.

3. Focus on Strengths. Do your homework to determine what people are good at. Things they have a competitive advantage at. Identify activities that give them energy. Knowing someone's weaknesses is valuable information for selection and placement decisions. If they're not tall enough, fast enough, agile enough (in other words, a poor match for the position), consider making a change. If you're going to coach them where they're at, however, the key is to take what they're good at and make it better. Do that and someday the Gallup Poll researchers will be writing stories about you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Garold Markle is an author, executive consultant and speaker whose primary mission is to energize and engage the human spirit at work. He is the author of *Catalytic Coaching: The End of the Performance Review*. Gary has held senior level HR management and executive positions for four globally prominent companies including Exxon, and Shell Oil. For more about his books, consulting and teachings go to www.energage.com or contact him at gmarkle@energage.com.

Staff Education: What is the aquatic continuum?

What is the Aquatic Continuum? Swim Lessons – Swim Team – Swim Fitness

How do you get kids on your swim team? The ideal way to have children want to join your swim team is to always have a pool of swimmers who are graduating from your learn-to-swim program. If this is happening, you have developed the appropriate transition to the swim team or swim fitness.

Some swim clubs train at the pool where the owners of the aquatic facility will be in charge of providing swim lessons, and the team is not allowed to offer swim lessons. This could be the perfect opportunity for coaches to show the owners they would like to be part of the swimming curriculum.

Coaches need to point out that, many times, a child will only stay enrolled in either type of swim lessons long enough to feel comfortable to play in the water. Creating a swim program that provides a continuum option in the curriculum will allow you to offer the kids the choice of joining a swim team or joining the swim fitness group. Both ways you are offering the kids a chance to be safe and healthy.

When you offer a continuum of programs, it is more likely to help with the development of a person. The following is a sample of a continuum water program. This type of program will provide income for the person who owns the program. More times than not, most of the kids will want to come on the team at the time that is best for them instead of joining before they are ready.

Another nice benefit of offering the aquatic continuum is that, if children are not ready until they are older, they will have been in the water learning, terminology, technique and will not have to try to play catch up.

Youth involvement on swim team = After learning to swim, many children try competitive swimming. Swimming offers physical development and benefits unmatched by any other activity. USA Swimming clubs provide professional instruction and coaching to help children of all ages and abilities enjoy this life-long activity. However, some children do not find competitive situations enticing. That does not mean swimming cannot play an important part in their physical and social development.



Youth aquatic fitness program = Competitive swimming may not be for everyone. Youth exercise with professional program planning can help address fitness and obesity issues. Everyone needs exercise to survive. Forty five minutes two to three times a week can make a huge difference in coordination and strength skills development. To provide water safety skills would be of paramount importance.



Staff Education: Aspects of Effective Water Wellness Programs.

Health Histories and Lifestyles Evaluation

Detailed information gathered and kept on site for appropriate and SAFE intervention. Knowledge of each client's health status, risks, problem areas and precautions guides effective programming and optimal participation.

Fitness Evaluations

Measurements of abilities, implementation of activities and re-measurement shows results and OUTCOMES associated with water exercise. Attention pre and post exercise will help develop and educate participants.

Structured Leadership & Staff Intervention

Constant supervision and interaction with clientele, instruction and direction, includes ADL's safety, proper pool entry, social appropriateness, education on community events, reality orientation, body awareness, equipment responsibility as well as proper water fitness techniques. In water interaction, hands-on-approach vs. verbal direction or deck supervision.

Goal - Oriented Programs

Monthly focused format vs. spontaneous planning. Selected areas to be addressed, with activities designed to meet participant needs and IMPROVE SKILLS in water with carryover to land. See calendar for example.

Consistent Scheduled Exercise

Offer consistent exercise implementation to allow clients to incorporate exercise into their lifestyle and daily routine. Twice a week, regular programming will show the most progress vs. a hit and miss schedule. Clients benefit from a consistent, steady ROUTINE, and knowing what and when to expect their participation. Regularly scheduled programming allows them to "be prepared" physically and mentally. Making fitness a priority is a good example for an agency to set by incorporating it into their master plan.

Individual Reinforcement and Group Recognition

MOTIVATION to continue in a program, stay interested and progress lies in the feedback one gets within that program. The program offers a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for the participants. Providing personal benefits of water exercise by verbally reinforcing, complimenting and guiding them through the process, thereby developing a relationship and bond with the group, is one of the keys to success. Establishing tangible incentives for participation i.e. raffles, birthday celebrations, group and individual pictures, swim meets, banquets, certificates, awards, Christmas gifts, etc. sparks increase effort.

Staff Education: Free Water - No Such Thing!

Everyone wants a SWEETHEART DEAL – right? We are working with kids, teaching values and a life style skill so we should be congratulated, not charged by the hour – right? We are passionate about swimming and all others around us should share that passion – right? My wife’s father is lifelong friends with the Athletic Director and we have a life time guarantee for just-about free pool use – right?

Don’t be too sure!

Since the formation of the Facilities Development Department, one of the most prevalent comments the USA Swimming staff has heard has been regarding water rental. There have been clubs that have had free or drastically discounted water and have been notified that their rental for next year will be \$50 per lane per hour rather than \$50 a week. There have been clubs that have had their lane rental multiplied by 10, even in one case by 20. When delving into the details surrounding each one of these situations, a common theme surfaced. There was a “sweetheart” deal for the club involved and it ended abruptly.

Pools are not free – water, heat, light, and maintenance cost money – a lot of money. Aquatic managers and pool owners are recognizing the fact that, if their facility does not produce income to offset operational cost and upkeep, it will soon not be there anymore. There are some basic figures you should know:

- ❖ It cost about \$14 per square foot to operate an indoor pool in the Midwest. More in the Northern parts of the U.S, slightly less in the Southern states..
- ❖ It costs about \$10 a square foot to operate an outdoor pool in the more mild-climate regions of the country.
- ❖ Neither of these cost estimates include staff salaries for the pool to operate

This money does not “grow on trees,” as the saying goes. Even if the pool is subsidized by referendum dollars, tax dollars, community school dollars, etc., the expenses have to be held to a line of accountability.



Let's look at the standard single lane in a 25 yard pool. It's about 525 square foot. That would mean in any business situation that lane needs to produce \$7,350 per year to operate and another \$16,000 per year to meet program expense requirements, which includes staffing. That means that the lane rental fee per hour can be \$11, and there are business cost considerations that can cause a facility to need a higher fee. And that is for short course water. Keep in mind this does not include use of shower rooms and other parts of the facility we seem to take for granted. One of the last things we want as a team is for a facility manager to look at the square footage our swimmers actually "use" during a practice.

There is a very broad spectrum charged for lane rental. A pool located in the high-population East Coast will have to charge more than the pool just a few hundred miles south of them in the Carolinas. The cost of living and cost of doing business in these areas are not comparable. We have found that short course pools charge anywhere from \$8 to \$15 per hour per lane and long course pool charge anywhere from \$10 to \$22 per hour per lane for rental. There are some higher – but we want to draw your attention to those that are LOWER.

Do not take a "sweetheart" deal for granted. It can change overnight. Our advice is to budget "water use" expense into your yearly fee structure. Go in and talk to the person who is responsible for your unbelievable deal and let them know you want to pay your fair share. That way you get to help set the price. Set it reasonable and fair. We also know that many teams help out the pools by buying and maintaining timing systems for the pool and other VIK services. You are not the ones who are likely to get the notice about pool rental being raised. It will be the clubs that just figure their deal will last forever and does nothing to look down the road that will have major problems when costs go up.

Staff Education: Understanding VRP (Value Received Pricing)

Author: Mick Nelson USA Swimming

An important part of **Value Received Pricing** is the Staff Education and Excellence component.

Income and Growth are important but what about all the things that support programs to make them sustainable, popular, and profitable?

The #1 support mechanism for any successful program is your employees. Of particular importance is:

- Education of your employees
- Delegation of responsibility to employees
- Trust and rewards to employees
- Acknowledgement of their importance

In return you can expect:

- Best anywhere service for your clients
- Exceptional new program development
- Pricing that supports sustainability
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness including safety and ascetics
- Retention
- Growth that does not infringe on existing programs or operations

BOTTOM LINE – It is your employees that make the difference. They are the reason you have customers and generate profits. Employees create sustainability and success.

The business LEADER will need to focus 70% of their effort and time on employee support and development. It may be hard to grasp, but employees are just as important as clients. They are interdependent. You focus on your employees and let them focus on the clients.

Methods:

- Develop and market a unique CULTURE. Your employees must understand all aspects of this so they can implement it throughout all programs.
- Market your core values of the business. Beat your own drum. Blow your own horn.
- Diversity is important. Train your employees in leadership, coaching, teaching, and mentoring. Every employee should be able to step into any role and do a competent job.
- Communication is much more than a “catch word.” If you do not constantly improve your own and your staff’s skills and methods, you will not survive.
- Spend dollars investing in your staff’s professionalism. Protect your investment with understandable and fair policies.
- Have passion, commitment, and professionalism. Lead by example and then expect it of your employees.
- Set goals and become a master of Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics with your staff. Goals need to be identified in three main categories:
 - Growth and success of the business (profitability)
 - Dedication and development of the staff (professionalism)
 - Customer satisfaction and retention (programming)

Employees need to manage the programming and customer service and the manager needs to lead the employees. The ultimate goal of all programs should be to improve the quality of lifestyle of the client. Once this is accomplished in any form or stage, the leader, staff, and clients all need to celebrate one milestone of success. All people like to accomplish something and then be acknowledged. This process becomes part of the CULTURE of the business. Acknowledgement works coming from the TOP DOWN. It can be destructive the other direction.

Objectives Strategies Tactics

It’s all about POTENTIAL. Don’t make it more complicated than that.

Objectives – *What do you want to accomplish?* You can be afraid of failing and still function. You have to lay it on the line here and now. Your objective or goal needs to be both qualitative (when) and quantitative (how much). An objective is not: “grow the business,” that is a dream. “During the next six months we want to increase our client base by 20% with 90% retention” – that is an objective.

Strategies – *The plan or map to get there.* Many times an objective needs to sit and be “tossed around” as an idea before the timing is right. When the strategy develops, then it is time to move. You’ve always heard **TIMING IS EVERYTHING.**

Tactics – The *who – when – how* - phase. This is the success fail zone. This is the phase we do not usually spend near enough time doing follow-ups and lending support. Action does not happen – remember Inertia? Someone has to be made accountable and given the resources and guidance to make good things happen.

Pricing is not #1

Effective managers and program directors understand this phenomenon and help the staff-team recognize that it is especially critical in tough economic times to help customers visualize the difference between price and cost.

They direct the staff team to focus on value.

Price must not become the major issue and it should be the last issue on the table and not the first. If people understand their value propositions and can communicate that value while providing real solutions, then price does not become the deciding factor.

- **Remember:**
 - **Price isn’t part of your value proposition**
 - **The art of selling has nothing to do with price**
 - **Value trumps price**
 - **Value is determined by the customer --- not you**

Most companies have created the mythical term “added value.” It’s a term that many have never really understood. It usually is a bunch of gibberish containing very little value. If you were asked individually to describe what added value is, some of you probably would have a hard time with it.

Value is defined as the dominant benefit you provide that helps your customer produce more benefits from, and/or profit from or satisfy a need.



This is a selling approach that focuses on helping the customer solve their problems without regard to “making a sale.” That means everyone must be part of the sale!

..

Most Important – often ignored by the staff-team

- What words create the greatest engagement or stimulate questions from the customer? Don't sell, rather, answer questions
- What is the customer really interested in?

The Value Proposition, if used properly, can;

- ELIMINATE or reduce competition.
- Set forth things that make you the only choice.
- Create competitive advantage

Once again – It's staff-team education and training. Believe you are the best then become the best.



Sample Staff Training Manual - Clues and Cues to Professionalism

The “Clues and Cues to PROFESSIONALISM” is a practical common sense approach to improving the status-quo of the aquatic workplace. Most businesses do not have the luxury of spending hours and hours on continuing education and growth – but the leaders need information that is both usable and effective to help motivate their team. The cues and clues are listed in order by the letters that make up the word PROFESSIONALISM. There are 15 of them and these mini-articles will cover these one-at-a-time. I think it was Yogi Bera that said “The better I become the better I am”?

Keys to Professionalism by Mick & Sue Nelson

P R O F E S S I O N A L I S M (Clues and Cues)	Part 1
R EPUTATION	Part 2
O PPORTUNITY	Part 3
F AMILY	Part 4
E XPERIENCE	Part 5
S ENSE	Part 6
S ERVICE	Part 7
I NNOVATION	Part 8
O RGANIZATION	Part 9
N CESSITY	Part 10
A TTITUDE	Part 11
L EADERSHIP	Part 12
I NTEGRITY	Part 13
S TYLE	Part 14
M ANAGEMENT	Part 15

PART 1

PROFESSIONALISM.....is characterized by understanding and properly practicing the ethical and technical standards of a profession. *Ethics & Standards play a much more important part in our aquatic culture than they did 20 years ago. If you are not involved with professional organizations that are working to make your profession better, you are missing the boat.*

Professional = One who participates for gain, success, and livelihood, in an activity or field often engaged in by amateurs. *Gain and success are not "dirty words." They need to be strived for and celebrated when achieved. Ask most people who consider themselves successful what their strengths are, and the word "communication" will always be on their list. So here are some cues:*

Suggestions for successful communication:

- (1) Written form..... Be correct, concise, and professional. This is your main forum to sell your professionalism. Be the expert and use your communication skills both efficiently and effectively. Know the English language – it is your tool. Try to avoid slings and improper tenses. If you are not verbally "strong" get help!
- (2) Telephone & E-mail..... Be polite and informative. Make the person feel they are not bothering you and that their questions are both valid and important. Do not debate over the phone or electronically.
- (3) Personal contact..... You have one mission and that is to accomplish your goal leaving the person with whom you are dealing with the reassuring feeling that
THEY ARE IMPORTANT!

All situations are people situations. The more you learn about your clients and their families, and the sooner you learn it, the more effective you will be handling situations. Reading and understanding people comes down to opening your senses to what is going on around you. Talk less and listen more. You can learn almost everything you need to know - and more than other people would like you to know - simply by watching and listening.

Plan to improve and build your **"People Reading Skills"**.

- Listen aggressively.
- Observe aggressively (but don't jump to conclusions).
- Talk less.
- Take a second look at first impressions.
- Take time to practice and use what you have learned.
- Be discreet.
- Be detached (emotional involvement blurs your vision of reality).
- Learn to read egos.

If you can read ego and understand its impact on a situation, then control it by playing it, using it, or at least minimize the damage it can do, you can then be in more control of a situation. Understanding your own ego is the best place to start.

PART 2

REPUTATION..... *Old fashion principles still have their place.* Develop a set of personal and professional guidelines that will help attain the desire results. You will constantly be judged on your use of these guidelines.

Reputation is what others think of us. Character is what we think of ourselves.

If your character **is right, in the long run, your reputation will be right.**

"The way to gain a good reputation is, to endeavor to be what you desire to appear."-- Socrates

It takes so many good actions to gain a good reputation, but only one bad action to lose it. There are two modes of establishing a good reputation:

1. To be praised by other reputable people, or
2. To be abused by the not so popular person

Concentrate on the first part; it will invariably be followed by the latter.

Like the LIBERTY BELL, a reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eyes on the spot where the crack was.

An honest reputation is within the reach of us all; we can obtain it by being fair and consistent. This kind of reputation, though neither brilliant nor popular, is often the most conducive to happiness.

You can be ahead of the game by creating the right impression. Simply treat someone the way they want to be treated. This applies to correspondence, phone conversations, and face-to-face meetings. Always try to be your "best self." Great professionals impart positive impressions.

The best way to do this is to.....

1. Do exactly what you say you will do
2. Exactly when you say you will do it

You will be judged by 3 criteria:

1. Your commitment
2. Your attention to detail
3. Your ability to follow up on a task

To make a positive impression you must excel in all three areas. Common sense is an important asset. You also must have the ability to laugh at yourself. Establish your principles but don't claim "this is a matter of principle" to cover for your ego.



Learn to wisely use the three hard-to-say phrases:

1. *I don't know.*
2. *I need help.*
3. *I was wrong.*

Admit your errors before someone else exaggerates them.

PART 3

OPPORTUNITY..... Great opportunities come to all, but many do not know they have met them. Without talent, opportunities go unnoticed; without opportunities talent goes to waste. Everyone has equal chance to be as great as they please.

"Opportunity, sooner or later, comes to all who work and wish." - *Lord Stanley*

Opportunity always looks bigger going away than coming. It is common to overlook what is near by keeping the eye fixed on something remote. In the same manner, present opportunities are neglected by minds busied upon future advantages. However short our life and limited our opportunities, it is made shorter by waste of time. Opportunities are diamonds, hard to find because of what they look like at first glance. A wise person will **MAKE** more opportunities than he **FINDS**.

Don't wait for a chance, take one. Taking a chance is becoming more and more rare. We deal with people and planning every day and too many want to plan for a "sure thing." They want guarantees and to predict the outcome of every scenario, as they plan and re-plan opportunity passes them by. Risk taking makes life exciting and makes people realize their value to the problem-solving process.

We cannot give a formula, or artificial plan, for making people producers - or a scheme for driving them into success and team building. They must follow their own self-interest. Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do well, learn to use ordinary situations.

PART 4

FAMILY..... No one has ever accomplished anything "all by themselves." Self-importance is a character flaw that has to be corrected if one is to achieve sustainable success and be of value to others.

20 years ago there were very few female swim coaches, few male swim instructors. Things are slowly changing and we have to adapt our outlooks and attitudes for the change.

The three essentials for happiness:

- Something to do;
- Someone to love;
- Something to hope for.

The three formulas for happiness:

- Accept the moment;
- Appreciate it;
- Adapt to its opportunities.

The three reminders for survival:

- 1) When dealing with yourself ...
 - Think how happy you'd be if you lost everything you have right now...and then got it back again.
 - Success is simple...do your best and people may like it!
 - The better we feel about ourselves, the fewer times we have to knock somebody else down to feel tall.
- 2) When dealing with your spouse.....
 - Decide how you are valuable rather than how valuable you are.
 - Happiness is an inside job.
 - People often forget the favors received but seldom the favors they have done.
- 3) When dealing with your children.....
 - Whenever things sound easy, it turns out there's one part you didn't here.
 - The best way to give advice to children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it. (common sense rules)
 - Beware of the little things; a small leak will sink a great ship.

PART 5

EXPERIENCE..... Paraphrasing John Wesley –

When I was young I was sure of everything. In just a few years I have been mistaken a thousand times, and I am not half as sure of things as I was before. At present I'm hardly sure of anything except my love for family and vocation.

Many people will not use other people's experience, nor have any of their own until it is too late to use it effectively. The work force has (and always has had) an influx of excited young practitioners who want to know everything NOW. They constantly question today's methods and some have an insatiable hunger to be a leader in their field. This is the nature of most professions.

Clues:

- Learn from others' mistakes; you can't live long enough to make them all yourself.
 - If you can't make a mistake, you can't make anything.
-

One of my favorite questions to a professional is:

“Do you have 20 years of experience, or one year of experience 20 times?”

Always travel and observe to learn and come back home to teach.

- Smart is when you believe only 1/2 of what you hear
- Brilliant is when you know which 1/2 to believe

PART 6

SENSE..... The six senses:

Sense of Humor -
Sense of Purpose -
Sense of Fairness -
Sense of Honesty -
Business Sense -
Common Sense –

Sense of Humor – not a practical joker or a clown – rather the type of person who enjoys being around people, smiles, and likes to make other people smile. Quick and witty comments that make people think, while at the same time, not trying to constantly be the center of attention.

Sense of Purpose – motivated and energetic, but not obsessive. A goal is with perspective and balance.

Sense of Fairness – those in position of authority and policy making simply must be fair. The people who are members of your team will embrace this quality and your team will be solid as a rock.

Sense of Honesty – temptations will always be there – rewards will be tantalizing. You can either have a sense of value that promotes honesty or understand the universal principal of “cause and effect” and make proper judgments accordingly.

Business Sense – one of the easiest to acquire – one of hardest to apply. Read everything that interests you, but understand that by the time the “book was published” the guru who wrote it has probably changed what they are doing. This is truly a moving target, a living document so to speak. Trial and error can work as long and you are adept at using the other senses.

Common Sense - the ability to see things both how you want them to be and how they have to be. This is the rarest of senses and is a true gift to possess. Wisdom is the quality that keeps you from getting into situations where you need it. Wisdom is knowing what to do next.



PART 7

SERVICE; is a helpful or useful act. We are in the SERVICE BUSINESS. "Aim to please!"

CUE WORD **AIM**.

Appreciated = always make people feel their efforts are appreciated. Too many people confuse the "appreciation factor" with ego. It is a great idea to take the time to say thank you and in today's electronic age, try to do it in person.

Important = make someone feel important whenever possible. This applies to clients, co-workers, and acquaintances. Think about it – do you like to be around people who are important or people who make you feel important? Maybe a little of both, and that is perfectly normal. (*Do not confuse this with "kissing-up"*) There are two types of people: Those who walk into a room and have the aura of "Here I am" and those who walk in and have the aura of "There you are." Which do you want to be around?

More = give people more that they expect and more than they have paid for.

Quantities of Quality! There is a fine line between this type of service and "giving away the farm," these are not free-bees or discounts or promotions. The MORE quality is simply that little extra thing you can do to make someone notice; like learning and using their first name.

And remember the four "I's"

I = Introduction - *how will you let people know who you are and what you offer?*

I = Impression - *you will never get a second chance for a first^t impression.*

I = Indoctrination - *always educate and sell your culture*

I = Information - *if you are going to be successful, you must track and use information.*

Part 8

INNOVATION..... is a new idea or method. Change or invent.

It is discovered by youth, and tempered by judgment with age. Strictly speaking, it is little more than the new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and saved in our memory. Nothing can be made of nothing - he who offers nothing can produce no new combinations.

People must continually be willing to deviate from what has worked in the past, with hopes of a finer model for the future. If we do not invent or find something new, we will at least have a chance to improve what we already have.

One of the most dangerous forms of human error is forgetting what one is trying to achieve.



We all must prevent boredom and burnout by scheduling time for exercise and relaxation. Boredom occurs when your learning curve goes flat. Never quit learning about your profession and ways you can do it better.

Don't let structure slow you down. Planning is great, Strategic Planning (so-so) and mezzo/macro/micro cycles may be important, but refrain from doing things the same way every time just because they have worked in the past. Look for ways to be creative and still maintain consistency. Without creativity and flexibility, it's too easy to get into a rut, and a rut is nothing more than a grave with both ends kicked out.

Work unconventionally. Don't just look for opportunities to do something innovative, create the opportunity. Aggressively pursue change.

Almost a dozen years elapsed between the "invention" of 3 M's Post-It-Note Pads and their commercial debut. The developer, Art Fry, saw the need when the little bits of paper he used to mark hymns in a church choir kept falling out of the books. Despite the fact office supply distributors thought it was a silly idea and market surveys were negative, once 3M secretaries started using the pads and were hooked, marketing went smoothly toward a \$200 million success.

"A good plan aggressively executed right now is far better than a perfect plan executed next week." General George Patton

PART #9 -

ORGANIZATION is to set up an administrative structure with a plan and united effort.

Prime Directive = Be Prepared.

When you plan your time, don't look at a 40 or 50 hour work week. Examine all 168 hours so you can plan time for sleep, exercise, relaxation, and work. Use an organizational system where you can write down ideas and projects and then don't dwell on them; forget them for the moment.

Make them come back when they are needed. (Tickler file, pop up reminder on the computer)

Schedule your time. Decide what can be done for the day, then the week, maybe even the month or longer. Establish a schedule and stay close to it. Honor appointments with yourself as you would appointments with others.

Your organization has to include your team/staff. Meetings are fine and occasionally necessary – but 1:1 conversations are confidence boosters and can reinforce the plan.

Depending on your structure, monthly or every-other-month team/staff meetings can keep everyone on track and can hold people accountable to the objectives of the plan.



However, an unplanned weekly short face-to-face conversation with every member of the team can be very productive. Ask questions like:

- How's it going?
- What can I do to help?
- Do you have everything you need?
- What should we be doing better?
- What's the most recent problem you handled?
- If you could change one thing we do what would it be?

Make your team be active and take pride and ownership in the business.

PART #10

NECESSITY..... Rules evolve out of necessity. Make sure all rules are necessary. If what we do is necessary, all the odds are in our favor.

"There is no contending with necessity, and we should be very careful how we censure those that submit to it. It's one thing to be able to do what we want, and another to be forced to do what we must.

Necessity is usually the first stimulus to leadership. Those who conduct it with prudence, perseverance, and energy, will rarely fail.

If viewed in this manner, it can be a blessing rather than a crisis, and produce results.

Necessity of action takes away some of the fear of the act, enabling people to make bolder decisions. The vigor of the human mind quickly appears when there is no longer any place for doubt and hesitation.

To fully understand Necessity we have to understand Fear and Courage.

THE PROBLEM as explained by History's finest:

There is a virtuous fear which is the effect of faith, and a vicious fear which is the product of doubt and distrust, the former leads to hope as relying on ones-self, in whom we believe; the latter inclines to despair, as not-relying upon ones-self. (Pascal)

Present fears are less than horrible imaginings - (Shakespeare)

We often pretend to fear what we really despise, and more often to despise what we really fear. (Colton)

Fear is the mother of foresight. (H.Taylor)

All fear is painful, and when it conduces not to safety, is painful without use. Every consideration, therefore, by which groundless terrors may be removed, adds something to human happiness. (Johnson)

- He who fears being conquered is sure of defeat. (Napoleon)
- Early and provident fear is the mother of safety. (Burke)
- There is great beauty in going through life without anxiety or fear. Half our fears are baseless and the other half discreditable. (Bovee)
- In morals, what begins in fear usually ends in wickedness.
- In religion, what begins in fear usually ends in fanaticism.
- In organizations, what begins in fear usually ends in failure.
- Fear, either as a principle or a motive, is the beginning of all bad things. (Composite)
- Desponding fear loosens every power. (Thomson)
- No one loves the thing which they fear. (Aristotle)

THE SOLUTION as explained by History's finest:

- Courage consists, not in blindly overlooking fears, but in seeing and conquering them. (Richter)
- True courage is cool and calm. The bravest of men have the least of a brutal, bullying insolence, and in very times of fear, are found the most serene and free. (Shaftsbury)
- The truest courage is always mixed with circumspection: this being the quality which distinguishes the courage of the wise from the hardness of the rash and foolish. (Jones of Nayland)
- Courage is, on all hands, considered as an essential of high character. (Froude)
- Physical courage which despises all danger will make a person brave in one way; and moral courage, which despises all opinion, will make a person brave in another. The former would seem most necessary for the battle; the latter for the council; but to constitute a great person both are necessary. (Colton)
- To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage. (Confucius)
- A great deal of talent is lost in this world for the want of a little courage. (Sydney Smith)
- Courage ought to be guided by skill, and skill armed by courage. (Sir P. Sidney)
- Courage - the Lion never counts the herd that is about him nor weighs how many flocks he has to scatter. (Hill)

RID-FUD clue

FEAR + COURAGE = STRESSED SUCCESS (Notice the last part of courage is age.)

The every-day challenges of being associated with organizations can cause destructive surges in blood pressure that rival those experienced in combat. When you are being threatened and cannot retain control, your brain releases two powerful chemicals:

- 1) Cortisol (raises your blood pressure slowly and steadily, and release high-energy fats and blood-clotting agents into bloodstream)
- 2) Adrenaline (raises your blood pressure quickly and strongly, and release high-energy fats and blood-clotting agents into bloodstream)



Ultimately these blood-clotting agents etch chinks in the blood vessel walls setting the stage for heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.

Many people are too busy to think about why they feel the way they do. Their lives can seriously be affected by a demanding job, a family problem, finances, etc. If self-analysis is not one of your strong points, learn to RID-FUD!

Recognize the most common stress-signs..... **RID**

- Restlessness,
- Irritability,
- Driven.

To control stress, overcome..... **FUD**

- Fear,
- Uncertainty,
- Doubt.

Establish VALUES that are in sync with your lifestyle.

- Mentally write your autobiography.
- Take the adjective test.

Write down every adjective that describes you and then pick the top 10 and put them in order of performance. A sample list is below:

Creative, Ethical, Honest, Responsible, Intelligent, Empathetic, Punctual, Resourceful, Sociable, Productive.

- Strengthen your marriage, friends, spirituality
(When all three are in harmony they make up a confident person.)
- Develop as many of your talents as possible.
(Personal development is sometimes more important than career development.)
- Stop your negative-self-talk.
(Be aware of what you say to yourself in types of situations.)

PART #11

ATTITUDE: is our feeling or moods that determine the actions, feelings or moods of others.

Our attitude tells the world what we expect in return. If it is cheerful attitude, it says to everyone with whom we come in contact with that we expect the best in return; we tend to live up to our expectations, and others give to us what we expect. Many people never think about their attitudes at all. They begin each day in neutral, poised to react to whatever stimuli they encounter. They are chameleons, going through their days reacting to whatever confronts them.

There are two important words: *GRATITUDE & EXPECTANT!*

Grateful for the opportunity to participate - in our case - in the exceptional field of aquatics. Then, expect the best; expect to reach your goals.

Attitude is the reflection of the person inside. When you have a "good attitude" you have already placed yourself among the top 5% people in the world.

- It is your attitude at the beginning of a task that will bring about a successful outcome.
- Your attitude towards others determines their attitude toward you.
- The success you have will largely depend on how well you relate to others. We are all interdependent.
- Before you achieve the level you want, you must think, act, talk, and conduct yourself as would the level of person you wish to become.
- The more elite the person, the better attitude you will find.
- A great attitude is not the result of success; success is the result of a great attitude.
- The deepest craving for a person is recognition and self-esteem is to be needed, to feel important, to be recognized and appreciated.

The difference between "teaching great" and a "great teacher" is attitude.

AND – Smile and make eye contact and say something pleasant to those you interact with. If they don't respond accordingly they will at least wonder what you are up to.

PART 12

LEADERSHIP.... It is a mistake to smile a friendly smile when somebody is trying to make a fool out of you. Like me or dislike me, but don't ignore me.

A leader is a person who expects their followers to be as good as they meant to be.

Expediency > Efficiency > Effectiveness..... Pick any two!

Make it FUN to be around you. Get rid of "sad dogs that spread doom." Surround yourself with enthusiastic people.

Quote from "A Passion for Excellence" by Tom Peters & Nancy Austin (Random House, N.Y).

"Leadership is 'show business'; it is symbolic and often dramatic. The new leader is not necessarily a cop, referee, or a dispassionate analyst. The new leader is more of a cheerleader, coach, nurturer of heroes, builder, facilitator and historian."

Key Leadership recommendations:

- Create a unique culture for your business
- Respect and enjoy your associates and what you do
- Listen deeply
- Visit your competition to find out what they are doing
- Choose a priority (and clearly, repeatedly, religiously, urgently, attentively, passionately focus your discussions and energy on that priority. Do something - right now!)
- Subscribe to the "Dog Sled" leadership principle: If you're not the lead dog, the scenery never changes.

Lessons on Leadership

Look for what is missing. Many know how to improve what is there; few can see what isn't there. It is human nature to focus on what is in a presentation, but sometime what isn't there is even more important. Always think about what is missing; it's amazing what you will find. This is what leaders are looking for in individuals who are coming up in the organization. Are these individuals pushing the corners of the box? Are they energizing the team and its thinking? *Swanson's Written Rules of Management*

Lessons on Leadership

"Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." The ripple effect of a leader's enthusiasm and optimism is awesome. So is the impact of cynicism and pessimism. Leaders who whine and blame engender those same behaviors among their colleagues. I am not talking about stoically accepting organizational stupidity and performance incompetence with a "what, I worry?" smile. I am talking about a gung-ho attitude that says "we can change things here, we can achieve awesome goals, and we can be the best." Spare me the grim litany of the "realist," give me the unrealistic aspirations of the optimist any day. - *Colin Powell, Leadership Primer*

PART #13

INTEGRITY is a principle that gives quality and purpose to your career. It also produces a peace of mind and self-confidence that never wavers.

When the word integrity is mentioned, people often conjure up a person of stern and sober visage who walks the straight and narrow. That is not the kind of integrity we mean. We are talking about the kind of integrity with a sense of humor; integrity with understanding; integrity with kindness but forceful - fairness but powerful.

Never expediency - never saying....."Well everybody else is doing it that way so I guess it won't hurt if I do it that way too." But it does hurt! More than anyone who makes that decision could possibly understand.

Integrity means to TRY, as best we can, to *KNOW OURSELVES*; examine ourselves as Socrates advised, and make a true assessment of ourselves, an inventory of our abilities, our talents, our goals.

Your mind, experience, talent, and time, no one can take these things away from you. You take them wherever you go, and they represent your true wealth. That is what makes you autonomous, although most people do not

realize it. Some people are like the horse that meekly does what it is told or directed to do. It is unaware of its own strength; it does not know how easily it could do whatever it wants. Thousands of professionals across the country live in tiny prisons of their own fashioning, completely unaware of their powers to accomplish their wildest dreams and goals; to reap a harvest beyond their wildest imaginings. They are slaves to "the norm" and follow each other around and around like the processional caterpillars.

Integrity means giving everything our very best. It is the willingness to keep an open mind, to look for answers throughout your career. It is realizing that the greatest joy a person can experience is the joy of accomplishment.

PART #14

STYLE, is a way or form of acting or communicating with proper words in proper places.

Think as much about your delivery as your message. Spirit, grace and dignity are of great importance, but as important are the value and correctness of your message. In other words, first have good sense, and then have the ability to express it.

The style shows the professional. Whether in speaking or writing, a professional will be known for their style. Style is your own; it is part of your nature.

- Tact is the knack of making a point without making an enemy.
- The mark of a true professional is giving more than you get.

In 1931, Charlie Chaplin and Albert Einstein drove down a street together. Pedestrians waved and cheered. Chaplin explained to Einstein: "*The people are applauding you because none of them understands you, and applauding me, because everybody understands me.*"

Remembering and taking notes will assist you in finding your style. There are a thousand clues in your life to help you discover your style. The way you dress, the way you decorate your home & office, your favorite foods, colors, activities, etc. These preferences define who you really are. Your style allows you to exercise the creative power to shape your world and complete yourself.

First you must like yourself – then others will like you. Take cues from those who you admire. Notice how they act and what they do that impresses you, then decide how you can improve your style by cultivating those qualities.

And, supporting Style are *ETHICS*....

- "Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people wanting to be important." - *T.S.Eliot*
- "Remember always that all of us Are descended from immigrants and revolutionists." *F.D.R.*
- "One person practicing sportsmanship is far better than a hundred teaching it." *Knute Rockne*
- An ethical person is one who thinks more of other people's feelings than of his own rights; and more of other people's rights than of their own feelings. *Paraphrased from Matthew Henry Buckham*

Ethics is a personal thing. Each of us, through the teachings of our childhood and our experience with others, has developed an unwritten list of criteria for behavior. All too frequently I find that a person's ethics is a code by which he believes others should perform toward him, rather than a code guiding his behavior towards others. It is our actual day-to-day behavior that determines and defines our ethics.

12 things to remember

- (1) The value of time
- (2) The success of perseverance
- (3) The pleasure of working
- (4) The dignity of simplicity
- (5) The worth of character
- (6) The power of kindness
- (7) The influence of example
- (8) The obligation of duty
- (9) The wisdom of economy
- (10) The virtue of patience
- (11) The improvement of talent
- (12) The joy of originating

PART 15

MANAGEMENT is to direct an individual or team so as to succeed in accomplishing one's purpose.

- Skill = the ability to use something both efficiently and effectively. Good administrators never put off until tomorrow what they can get someone else to do today.
- Productivity is quantities of quality. People who feel good about themselves produce good results.

Achieving productivity:

- At the beginning of a new task, spend some time making clear what each person will be accountable for. Have them describe what they would like to see happen. Write out the selected goals on a single sheet of paper using less than 250 words. Retain a copy of the list so you can help check periodically on progress and identify actions that promote the goals. The 80/20 rule applies to goal getting. 80% of your really important results will come from 20% of your best written short term goals.
- Don't tell me only about attitudes or how you feel. I need to be told what is happening in observable, measurable terms. Now tell me what you would like to see happening.....If you can't tell me what you'd like to see happening, you don't have a problem yet. You're just complaining.
- Catch people "doing something right". Tell them up front that you are going to let them know how they are doing. You will need to provide them with frequent and clear feedback. You must be observant and have the proper communication skills. Praise good performance immediately. Use your preferred method for positive criticism. Your goal should be to eliminate behavior and keep the person. You have to care

enough to be tough. I am very tough on the poor performance - but only on the performance, not on the person's integrity.

- In some organizations, you may not know what you are supposed to be doing. No one probably told you. If I asked you whether you were doing a good job you may reply "I think so." Your main motivation was not to do a bad job.
- Feedback is the Breakfast of Champions. It is the #1 motivator of people. Feedback takes time, energy, and planning. It is the #1 priority of the manager.
- Punishment..... You are potty training your dog. It has an "accident." You take the following steps:
 - *Rub his nose in it.*
 - *Hit him with a newspaper.*
 - *Throw him out the window.*
 - You are not focusing on the behavior you want, but on what you don't want. *After about a week, the dog will poop on the floor, and jump out the window.* You must formulate a method to clarify your expectations and restate your goals.
- Knowing as much as possible about your customers is as important as knowing everything about your service. Are you using the "Ready-Fire-Aim" method?
- It is the client's job to be suspicious and cynical about the service you are offering. It's your job to neutralize these feelings so your service gets the fair chance it deserves. If you are correct, smile and say NO until you are hoarse. Make "heady" not "hearty" decisions. Make decisions with your heart and what you'll end up with is heart disease.
- Have confidence in yourself. Humility is the most overrated of human emotions.

A leader knows WHAT'S BEST TO DO, a manager knows merely HOW TO DO IT.

Hope you have enjoyed PROFESSIONALISM and have discovered some clues to help you adapt to this ever changing world of Aquatics and some cues to help remind you when where and how to apply what you have discovered.

And then, after all is said and done and we have worked long and diligently to sharpen our professional skills, someone reminds us:

"Professionals built the Titanic, amateurs the Ark!"

Have FUN and keep Smiling. *Mick & Sue*



Mick Nelson (BS-MS) he is the Club Facilities Development Director for USA Swimming and Sue Nelson (BS-ATRIC) is the Aquatic Program Specialist for USA Swimming. They come from a club coaching background along with extensive experience in business and aquatic management. They formed their own swim club and built their own indoor facility in Danville Illinois in 1972. In 1974 they formed Nelson's Swim Supply, a retail and wholesale pool/spa and aquatic equipment business. In 1982 they formed NSS Inc. which offered aquatic facility design, building, and business development and management consultation to the aquatic industry. In 1994 they formed WaterWay Therapy Inc. which was one of the first and only privately owned and operated Medicare approved outpatient Aquatic Physical Therapy centers in the country. In 2002 they formed Poolside Health & Wellness Center which became not only the home for the USA Swim Club, WaterWay Therapy, and Swim America learn-to-swim program but a full service land and water community health and wellness center. In June of 2004 they moved to Colorado Springs to help form the new Facilities Division of USA Swimming.



Sample Staff Orientation Checklist

Staff orientation to pool and spa specific areas

Staff member name _____

Position _____ Date _____

Safety orientation:

Entrance ways and exterior lots and ramps _____ Office areas and public access _____

Dressing areas _____ Pool decks _____ Spa perimeter _____ Pool ramps and stairs _____

Pool circulation equipment _____ Specialty equipment _____ Electrical Equipment _____

Therapy Equipment _____ Wellness Equipment _____ Emergency plan _____

Assistance warnings _____ Bad Weather Policy _____

Personal Aquatic Skills:

Balance in water _____ Bi-directional movement in water _____ Treading _____

React / OppReact _____ Basic rescue skills _____ CPR/First Aid _____

Water Safety _____ Recovery _____ Support & Transfers _____

Knowledge of Aquatic Principles:

Buoyancy _____ Buoyancy Assisted _____ Buoyancy Resisted _____

Buoyancy Supported _____ Off loading _____ Hydrostatic Pressure _____ Viscosity _____

Force/Drag/Lift _____ Center of Gravity _____ Center of Buoyancy _____

Center of Rotation _____ Refraction _____ Turbidity _____ Surface Tension _____

Aerobic _____ Anaerobic _____ VO2 max _____ Threshold _____ Vital Capacity _____

Short Lever/Long Lever _____ Ballistic _____ Flow _____ Action/Reaction _____


Short Axis/Long Axis _____ Bournelli's Principle _____ Frontal Resistance _____

Thermo dynamics/temperature variance _____ Eddy Flow/Resistance _____

approval by _____ Date _____


Sample Aquatic Calendar


Member Of The Month



Mr. Kenny

NOVEMBER 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		National Diabetes Month				1
2	3 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	4 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	5 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	6	7	8
9	10 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	11 Veteran's Day	12 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	13	14 <i>Swim Team Not In Session</i>	15
16	17 Pool Chat 9:30-10:15		19 <i>Classroom Chat</i> 9:30-10:15 <i>Mini-Clinic</i> 10:15-11:00	20 Get your diabetes questions answered... Sign up with a Fitness Tech today!	21	22
23/30	24 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	25	26 <i>MiniClinic</i> 9:30-10:15	27 FACILITY CLOSED	28 <i>Swim Team Not In Session</i>	29



Happy Thanksgiving

How can exercise help my diabetes?
 Exercise can help control your weight and lower your blood sugar level. It may also lower your risk of heart disease, a condition which is common in people who have diabetes.

Exercise checklist for people with Diabetes

- ⇒ Talk to your doc about the right exercise for you
- ⇒ Check your feet for blisters or sores
- ⇒ Wear the proper shoes
- ⇒ Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise
- ⇒ Have a snack handy in case your blood sugar level drops too low



Sample Comment Card - Aquatic Fitness Instructor Evaluation

(fill in the aquatic centers name) Comment Card – **INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION**

Please help us maintain the highest level of group exercise programming by sharing your constructive feedback on the **class leader**.

Instructor Name: _____

Class Name: _____

Day of Week/Time of Class: _____

Date of Class Evaluated: _____

Did the instructor begin and end class on time? Yes / No

Did the instructor follow the class format advertised? Yes / No

Could you hear & follow the instructor's verbal cues? Yes / No

Were the instructor's demonstrations easy to understand & follow? Yes / No

Did the instructor make modifications for various fitness levels? Yes / No

Was the instructor energetic & motivating? Yes / No

Could the instructor have better met your fitness goals? Yes / No

If so, please explain.

Comment Card – **GROUP EXERCISE CLASS EVALUATION**

Please help us maintain the highest level of group exercise programming by sharing your constructive feedback on the **program format**.

Class Name: _____

Day of Week/Time of Class: _____

Date of Class Evaluated: _____

Did the class meet your expectations based on the description? Yes / No

Was the class at the appropriate intensity for you? Yes / No

If not, please explain.

Was the music motivating & enjoyable? Yes / No

Is there any way that the class could better meet your needs? Yes / No

If so, please explain.



Sample Walk-through Facility Evaluation Form

1. Aesthetics
2. Safety
3. Functionality

Rating system 1 - 2 - 3

1 = Best condition safe and functional

2 = Average condition and may soon need maintenance but considered to be safe and functional for the time being.

3 = Needs immediate attention – not safe and/or functional (comments needed to explain)

There is a vast difference between and outdoor and indoor facility. If a section does not apply to your facility please mark DNA (Does Not Apply) under the comments

Aesthetics – How the general areas of the facility LOOK and SMELL and FEEL.

Under LOOKS we include:

- Lighting

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Color schemes

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Cleanliness

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Signage and bulletin boards

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Furnishings – Fixtures – Equipment

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____



• Staff apparel and presentation
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• General facility layout
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Information and assistance areas well marked
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Trash receptacles well placed throughout the facility
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Clocks and TV's and Mirrors in logical and user-friendly locations
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Décor – pictures and colorful appropriate decorations
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

Under SMELLS we include:

• Chlorine odors
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Cleaning odors
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Bathroom and locker odors
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Health club odors
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Food odors
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____



Under FEELS we include:

• Various room temperatures in different zones of the building
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Air flow or breezes people can feel
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Humidity
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• How are entrances and fresh air coming into building handled?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• How is noise control and reduction handled?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

Safety – How all areas of the facility meet codes and protect patrons.

• Are floors non-skid in proper areas and unobstructed in all public areas?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Do all public areas comply with ADA codes?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Are the “WET” and DRY” areas segregated and appropriately marked?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Are chemicals stored properly in secured areas away from public access?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Are NON-PUBLIC areas marked with warnings and doors kept locked?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____

• Are all emergency exits, fire extinguishers and alarms, AED’s, SHARPs containers, etc. easy to locate and clearly marked?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 *Comments* _____



• Are the outside areas, entrances/exits, sidewalks, kept clear and clean?
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

Functionality – Does the building layout make sense to the average user? Are all amenities easy to find and use?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Is the first thing people see inside the main entrance the information desk with a person to greet and help them?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Do the members/users areas have controlled access so the general public cannot simply walk into them?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Are there adequate bathrooms for the general public, members, family changing areas, caregiver and member areas, and wet and dry segregated shower/changing rooms?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Do the pools have safe and convenient access in the form of stairs, ramps, lifts, etc.?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Are pool decks kept clear of equipment and obstructions?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Are there staff areas or stations that are easily accessible to the patrons?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

• Are their dry viewing areas for aquatic activities so guest can watch members without getting wet or walking in wet areas?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____



Non-public areas – The safety and comfort of the staff is just as important as that of the members or patrons. The staff will be in the facility many more hours per day/week than any member.

- Staff bathrooms and changing areas need to be segregated from the public. At least 2 are needed (Men’s and Women’s) and they should include a bathroom – showers – and lockers with changing area.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Staff break rooms are suggested. This should include a couch, table and chairs, microwave, coffee maker, refrigerator, computer station with internet access, first aid station, TV, emergency radio, etc.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Staff should have access to a washer and dryer in the facility.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

Specialty areas – These are areas that only properly trained people should be in. They include:

- HVAC and building operational equipment rooms

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Electrical rooms

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Sprinkler system rooms

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Computer router rooms

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Storage rooms for cleaning equipment and cleaning chemicals

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Pool equipment and filter rooms

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Pool chemical treatment rooms

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____



-
- Record storage areas and private offices
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

The POOL –

- The tank needs to be checked periodically for worn spots or cracks.
 - Gunitite pools will need to be re-plastered or coated every 4-6 years
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

- Concrete pools need to be repainted every 2-4 years and the same type of paint must be used as the original coating or the paint will peel.
 - Chlorinated rubber enamel paint
 - Epoxy (2 part) paint
 - Acrylic paint*Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments* _____
-

- How long the pool is allowed to dry before painting and cure after painting will determine how long it will be before repainting is necessary
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

- Fiberglass will last 5 years or longer before maintenance is necessary. Many times fiberglass has problems with resin bubbles and spots in the walls.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

- Pools with liners can last from 10 -12 years before liner replacement is necessary.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

- Tile needs to constantly be inspected and re-grouting tile can be every 3-5 years. Water chemistry plays a big part in the life of the grout.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

- Leaks can happen in any pool. The integrity of the circulation system is dependent on the plumber's quality of workmanship. The more pictures of piping runs taken during construction, the easier it will be to locate potential problem areas underground.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

- The pool deck equipment should be made from Type 304 or Type 316 stainless steel. These steel pieces need to be cleaned every 3 to 4 months or when rust spots appear. The steel is usually not rusting but rather droplets of water evaporate and leave rust colored deposits which build up on the surface of the steel. If not cleaned this will pit the steel and permanently mar the finish. For stainless steel – wipe down rail or pole with a scotch guard pad.



Then wipe poles with damp towel (good quality paper towels also will work).
Then apply a liquid silicone car wax – any brand will do as long as it is silicone based

Wipe away excess wax after a few minutes. This cleaning and recoating process is usually necessary 3-4 times a year.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Other equipment that needs to be periodically inspected and cleaned are:

- Gutters and Skimmers

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Diving boards, platforms, stairs, railings, etc.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Moveable bulkheads and their related equipment

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Doors and all hardware and door jams

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Safety equipment

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Drains – are the VGB compliant and securely attached and clear from debris?

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____



- The filter room is the heart of the pool. All of the operational equipment needs to be inspected weekly and routine maintenance is an absolute necessity. \

- The pool pump – will need to have the bearings lubricated on a maintenance schedule. Only a marine quality lubricant should be used. The pump motor may need to be re-wound after a few years of service. The pool pump should be inspected annually by a professional.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Pump strainer baskets need to be cleaned at least every time the filters are backwashed or cleaned. A back up strainer basket should be kept alongside the pump. The rubber gaskets and any o’rings should be lubricated with a silicone based lubricant. Never use Vaseline or WD-40 around chlorine water.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- The pool filters need to be cleaned when appropriate. This is usually called backwashing and is monitored by pressure or vacuum gauges. The filter media will not last forever and usually is cleaned chemically every year and replaced every 3-4 years.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Pipes and valves need to be inspected every week or so. A leaky pipe or a sticking valve never fix themselves. Leaks are the sign of a potential major problem. Fix it immediately.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Pool heaters experience the most wear and tear of any equipment. The life expectancy of a pool heater is 3 to 5 years before a major overhaul is necessary. If you have a heater with titanium heat exchangers, then the repairs may be fewer and further between. The pool heaters need to be inspected by a professional every 6 months. Replace parts before they break.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Ultra Violet units – simply a necessity for indoor pools. The bulbs will burn out so you need to stock at least one back up bulb for each unit. These also need to be inspected by a professional every 6 months.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Automatic chlorinator units. These need to be cleaned every month and inspected every time the filter is backwashed. Spare parts need to be on the shelf so the equipment can be repaired immediately. Stay way form saline generators and ozone units. Stick with chlorine/bromine and Medium Pressure UV for indoor pools and just Chlorine for outdoor pools.

Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____



○ Shower and bathroom water heaters – these seem to go unnoticed until one stops working. Then it is a catastrophe. Have these inspected by a professional every year.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

● HVAC – Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning units. There will be at least 2 different types of units and multiple versions for each appropriate area.

○ Regular heating and air conditioning for dry areas and shower rooms.

▪ These need to be inspected yearly by a professional and the air filters need to be changed every 3 months.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

▪ If the units have exterior vents to bring in outside air these vents need to be cleaned every year and the armatures on the vents lubricated and inspected.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

▪ Back up fuses need to be stocked for all units.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

▪ Fan and blower motors need to be lubricated according to suggested maintenance schedules
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

○ Dehumidifiers and heat recovery systems for the aquatic environment.

▪ These units are designed to dehumidify and control the temperature not scrub the air. The pool water must be kept in balance and free of chloramines for these units to work effectively. Clean water promotes fresh air. If there is a chlorine smell there is a problem with the water.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

▪ These units need to be inspected every 6 months (at the minimum). Filters, compressors, belts, etc. all need to be carefully monitored so the units remain 100% functional.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____



- Ducts and vents need to be cleaned yearly and vents may need to be adjusted if necessary.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

-
- Lighting – different situations may require phased lighting
 - Lighting in public areas should be adequate and meet codes. T-3 and T-8 lights are the new energy efficient recommendations. Indirect lighting has also become popular.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- Lighting in the pool should have at least 2 phases separately controlled. Daily programming requires 30 to 50 ft. candles at deck level. Event lighting needs 75 to 100 ft. candles. Therefore banks of lights should be on separate switches/breakers so daily operations are on one bank of switches and event lighting on another that can be added to daily lighting requirements.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____

- If a bulb is out it needs to be replace immediately not “when someone can get to it”.
Circle rating 1 - 2 - 3 Comments _____
-

Sample Procedures Checklist

See following page



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
POOL AREA - Daily procedures																																
Lights on																																
Locker & Bath room check - toilet paper, towels, general cleanliness																																
Benches & Chairs wiped off																																
Uncover pool - check covers & rollers																																
Check pools - clarity and bottom clean																																
Test water-pH +CL x2 and record AM																																
Test water-pH +CL x2 and record PM																																
Clocks on correct time																																
Ck calendar for daily events /clients																																
POOL FILTER ROOM - Daily procd																																
Check pumps and filters for leaks or unusual noises																																
Check chemical containers																																
Ck area of room for proper storage																																
Check for wet floor																																
LAND AREA - Daily procedures																																
Lights on																																
Pick up rooms																																
Access area check																																
Check supplies																																
POOL AREA - Daily routine																																
Greet members by name and interact																																
Encourage members																																
Maintain safety of member and pool																																
Reports attendance and maintenance																																
Distribute information																																
Cover and uncover pools as needed																																
Clean equip. spray with disinfectant																																
Safety check on all equipment																																
Report comments or concerns - in writing - to supervisor																																
Hosing of decks & floors																																
Weekly /Monthly																																
Pool cover cleaning																																
Rust inhibitors for any metal																																
Clean metal - silicone																																
Check gutters for build up																																
Check pool Vac equipment																																
Check test kit for chemical testers																																
Disinfect decks and floors																																
Check written reports																																
Closing Procedures - Daily																																
Bathroom CK - toilet paper, towels																																
Benches wipe off																																
Check pools																																
Hook up Vac - cover pools																																
Towels supply																																
Lights off																																
Lock area																																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	



Sample Performance Management Form

Aquatic Center Template: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FORM

Name:		Social Security Number:	
Title:		Appraisal Period	
Department/SBU:	(Name)Health & Wellness Center	From:	To:

The Performance Management process should:

- Recognize employees for performance compared to job expectations.
- Identify opportunities for performance improvement.
- Motivate employees regarding job related achievement.
- Encourage two-way communications among managers and employees.
- Support managers in managing.

Completing the performance management form is a critical part of this process

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, INCLUDING SIGNATURES, IN INK.

(Aquatic Center Name) has a legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard the privacy of all employees and protect the confidentiality of all records. In the course of my employment/assignment at (fill in the aquatic center), I may come into possession of confidential information. I understand that such information must be maintained in the strictest confidence. As a condition of my employment I hereby agree that, unless directed by my supervisor, I will not at any time during or after my employment with (fill in the aquatic center name) disclose any information to any person whatsoever or permit any person whatsoever to examine or make copies of any reports or other documents prepared by me, coming into my possession, or under my control, or use information, other than as necessary in the course of my employment.

No information is to be read or discussed except in the line of duty and only as such confidential information pertains to my assigned work, and then only that part of the information that is necessary to perform the work. I understand that releasing information or indiscriminately reading records about members or employees may be cause for dismissal. As a condition of my employment, I hereby agree that, I will not access any applications other than those which I have been fully authorized to use, or disclose information about sign-on names or passwords. I understand (fill in aquatic centers name) computers, software, telecommunication equipment, and associated computer equipment is intended solely for the Aquatic Center's business activities.

I have reviewed the responsibilities and this performance appraisal. My signature acknowledges that I have reviewed this appraisal and agreed to the above obligation regarding confidentiality and does not necessarily indicate agreement with the performance level.

Employee's Signature	Date
Appraiser's Signature	Date
Reviewer's Signature	Date



Performance Rating Scale <i>For each responsibility, check the appropriate performance level using the following guidelines.</i>		
<p>Meets Or Exceeds Expectations - Results consistently met or exceeded defined expectations. Work behaviors were appropriate to the responsibilities assigned and effective in producing the desired outcome.</p> <p>Does not Meet Expectations and/or Retraining Indicated - Special effort should be made to improve performance in this area. Results sometimes fell short of defined expectations. Performance should improve to meet standards consistently.</p>		
Job Specific Responsibilities <i>Note: A competency checklist may be attached in lieu of completing this section.</i>	Meets or Exceeds	Does Not Meet and/or Retraining Indicated
Maintains compliance competencies on an annual basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides supporting documentation of competency assessment at annual review.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adheres to and reviews all policies and procedures and provides documentation of review on an annual basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitors Pool activities and programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains and cleans equipment in areas of AQUATIC CENTER as outlined by departmental protocols.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assists in other functions as directed by assistant manager/coordinator.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitors member access areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains standards of confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains professional appearance and grooming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consults with coordinator regarding any incidents or equipment problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains infection control standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains a safe, orderly, and stocked work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides positive feedback and encourages co-worker towards professional growth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepares for and attends staff/professional meetings as required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains aquatic center operational and safety standards are met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates flexibility and a willingness to adjust to specific situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dresses in a clean style according to AQUATIC CENTER policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides the members of AQUATIC CENTER prompt, courteous, and professional quality service. To provide the AQUATIC CENTER with effective and efficient customer services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Shared Responsibilities <i>The following behaviors demonstrate commitment to the AQUATIC CENTER values of teamwork, accountability, acknowledgment, and empowerment.</i>	Meets or Exceeds	Does Not Meet and/or Retraining Indicated
In his/her own words the employee can state why we're here, what we do, our Mission and the employee's role.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treats peers, subordinates, and supervisors as professionals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completes, on schedule, all required training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proactively identifies customer service problems and takes appropriate action to solve them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helps maintain cleanliness of facility including picking up trash and disposing of it correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Escorts guests who are "lost", rather than simply giving directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projects a happy/enthusiastic demeanor. Is appropriately attired and groomed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides constructive feedback. When there is a problem, does not just complain, takes appropriate action to get it resolved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gives complete, timely and respectful answers to customers' questions. Finds out the answer if doesn't know.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Works positively to adapt to new situations. Works toward/supports innovative solutions to new problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively encourages expression of diverse ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reports to work as scheduled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appraiser's Comments <i>Comment on performance and degree to which employee met goals and development plans documented in previous evaluation.</i>		
Accomplishments (optional) <i>Note special efforts or accomplishments achieved during the year.</i>		
Strengths <i>Note areas of strength that should be further utilized.</i>		
Development Plan/Goals for the Coming Year		
Employee's Comments (optional)		



Contributors

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for being part of the Make a Splash Atlanta project. This manual could not be written without the help of many people who have a passion for making total aquatic programming.

Aquatic staff from the Atlanta Boys and Girls Club

Samuel L. Jones
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