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For many Toronto families, a summer visit to Kidstown Water Park has been a tradition for decades. Located within L'Amoreaux Park in Scarborough, Ont., the facility has long been one of the city's most popular outdoor aquatic destinations. Following several years of planning, design development, and community consultation, construction of revitalization project began in spring 2024. Two years later, the waterpark opened to the public, ready to welcome a new generation of visitors.

PHOTO COURTESY RUTHERFORD CONTRACTING

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POOL & SPA MARKETING

VOLUME 50 • NUMBER 5 • SEPTEMBER 2026
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SUBSCRIPTION

To subscribe to *Pool & Spa Marketing*,
call: (800) 409-8688;
email: circulation@poolspamarketing.com

Rates

Canada 1 year: \$49.00 (incl. taxes)

U.S. 1 year: \$77.00 US

Foreign 1 year: \$98.00 US

Publications Mail Agreement #40663030

Postmaster: Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Kenilworth Media Inc. 30 Leek Crescent, Suite 201, Richmond Hill, ON, L4B 4N4
Tel: (905) 771-7333; Fax: (905) 771-7336



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Looking Beyond the Season

September marks a turning point. For many businesses, the intensity of the summer season begins to ease, creating an opportunity to look beyond the next service call and focus on what comes next. As the closing season approaches, the strongest companies are already thinking further ahead—investing in the tools, knowledge, and business strategies that will position them for success in the year ahead.

That mindset is reflected throughout this issue. Rachael Pritz opens the conversation in "Thinking Beyond Seasonal Service: Building Year-round Revenue," (page 20), challenging one of the industry's longest-standing business models: relying primarily on openings and closings. As she writes, "The most successful pool and spa service companies have solved this problem. They do not wait for the phone to ring; they have built systems that generate consistent monthly revenue year-round by turning one-time customers into long-term service relationships." As customer expectations continue shifting toward convenience, subscription services, and proactive support, recurring revenue is becoming less of an advantage and more of a necessity.

Technology is driving a similar transformation within dealerships. In "Becoming AI-Fluent," (page 26), Dennis Gray argues that competitive advantage will belong not to businesses with access to AI, but to those that know how to use it effectively. "The difference between a mediocre and an extraordinary AI user is not which tool they use, but how well they have learned to communicate with it," he writes. As AI becomes part of everyday operations, developing those skills may prove as valuable as adopting the technology itself.

That same forward-looking approach extends to connected equipment. "The Connected Pool," (page 14) explores how homeowners increasingly expect the same level of control over their pools as over the rest of their homes. "They are no longer selling equipment; they are selling a lifestyle upgrade," the article notes. For builders and service professionals, automation is creating new opportunities for upgrades, stronger customer relationships, and recurring service agreements.

Looking beyond technology, proactive maintenance remains one of the industry's strongest risk-management tools. In "Surface Level, Deep Impact," (page 34), Briana Valente reminds readers that "maintenance should not wait until a surface fails." Regular inspections and preventive maintenance remain among the most effective ways to avoid costly mid-season closures while protecting both guests and long-term investments.

Finally, "Renewing a Toronto Landmark," (page 38) demonstrates what thoughtful planning can achieve on a much larger scale. The revitalized Kidstown Water Park integrates improved accessibility, modern water treatment, and Indigenous placemaking to create a facility designed to serve future generations.

September is often seen as the start of the season's wind-down. In reality, it marks the start of the groundwork for next year. 

Jason Cramp
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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The Next Pool Renovation Cycle

By Tony Jordan

PHOTOS COURTESY RENOLIT

PVC Membranes Emerge as an Alternative Finish

The pool industry in North America is entering a new renovation cycle. Millions of residential pools from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s are reaching a point where interior finishes are no longer just cosmetic concerns but also functional issues. Cracked plaster, persistent staining, rough surfaces, and recurring repairs are prompting homeowners to ask an important question: Is there a better long-term solution?

Although reinforced polyvinyl chloride (PVC) membranes have not yet become the standard in all construction projects, their increased use in commercial renovation work is steadily building market confidence. As these projects demonstrate durability and performance in challenging environments, they are beginning to influence discussions around residential renovations.

The commercial renovation segment presents a significant opportunity. Each year, hundreds of commercial pool projects move forward across both new construction and major renovation work.

Reinforced PVC membrane systems account for a small proportion of commercial projects. They are frequently chosen as long-term repair solutions for cracked or deteriorated concrete vessels, especially when reliable waterproofing performance is essential.

For builders and service professionals, replacing interior finishes is often the initial step in a broader

renovation discussion. It is also where the industry has the greatest opportunity to move beyond tradition and adopt modern technologies that offer longer service life, enhanced performance, and more consistent results. Increasingly, reinforced PVC membranes are being considered as one option in renovation projects where longevity and dependable waterproofing are priorities.

"There are many concrete swimming pools that were built in the 1980s and 1990s, and we are seeing exponential growth in the number of these pools being renovated or resurfaced," says Carl St-Jean, owner of Piscines Bayto and Béton Decorum in Quebec. "With concrete pools, the need to resurface the interior is common after three to five years, but unfortunately, traditional resurfacing methods are not always ideal.

"Repainting requires sandblasting the pool, which generates a significant amount of dust. It also requires several consecutive days of dry, sunny weather to complete the work, which can be challenging in the spring when many homeowners want to renovate their pools in time for summer."

St-Jean states that the refinishing process usually takes two to three days of good weather, followed by about seven more days of favourable weather for the coating to cure before refilling the pool.

"When we are approached about this type of concrete resurfacing or renovation, we often

recommend a reinforced PVC membrane because the installation process can be completed in just a few days,” he says. “The renovation process is cleaner because it does not involve sandblasting dust, and the membrane can last 20 to 25 years or longer. Reinforced PVC membranes are also completely watertight.”

St-Jean notes that these characteristics influenced the company’s decision to use reinforced PVC membranes inside the plunge pools it manufactures, markets, and installs.

“The plunge pools we manufacture are constructed as monolithic cement shells with plumbing pre-assembled into the walls, so no drilling or on-site assembly is required,” he says. “They arrive at the jobsite finished with a reinforced PVC membrane, creating a durable surface that is ready to be filled with water upon installation.”

Renovation cycles by pool type

Concrete and plaster pools

Structural shells often last for decades, but plaster finishes usually need resurfacing every seven to 10 years, depending on water chemistry, usage, and climate. Renovation is most often prompted by surface roughness, staining, or cracking.

“Cracking is a natural characteristic of concrete,” explains St-Jean. “You see it in bridges, highways, and sidewalks because concrete has very little flexibility, so some degree of cracking is inevitable.”

Due to these surface and waterproofing challenges, reinforced PVC membrane systems are most often used in this sector, where they can act as both the interior finish and a watertight lining over the existing structure.

Vinyl liner and steel wall pools

The structural wall system itself can last for decades, but renovation cycles are usually prompted by liner aging. Over time, liners may lose elasticity, fade, develop seam fatigue, or become punctured. Replacement cycles are typically cited as occurring every seven to 10 years.

Rather than serving as a direct replacement for standard vinyl liners, reinforced PVC membrane systems are often chosen as a premium upgrade in steel-wall pool renovations. They deliver a more durable, technically advanced interior finish for owners looking to elevate both performance and appearance.



Fibreglass pools

Fibreglass shells also have structural lifespans measured in decades. Structural issues rarely prompt renovation and are more often triggered by gelcoat wear, oxidation, discolouration, or surface blistering.

Since fibreglass pools are manufactured as complete shells with finished interior surfaces, reinforced membrane systems are typically not used in this type, except in specialized conversion or repair cases.

Interior finishes: The renovation trigger

Most renovation projects begin with a surface problem. Homeowners notice discolouration that persists, plaster that feels rough underfoot, or cracks that reappear soon after repairs. Over time, repeated acid washes and patch repairs become frustrating, costly, and disruptive.

Premature plaster deterioration usually results from a combination of factors rather than a single failure point. Aggressive water chemistry—especially low calcium hardness, low alkalinity, and low pH—can cause etching and roughness. Improper startup procedures and inconsistent curing practices may also impact long-term durability. Additionally, minor structural movement in aging shells can lead to recurring cracks in the plaster finish.

In vinyl pools, renovation triggers are typically related to material aging, UV exposure, liner tears, or punctures rather than chemical erosion. In steel wall

Many renovation projects begin when aging pool interiors show wear, such as cracking, staining, or surface deterioration that cannot be solved through repeated repairs.



Interior finish replacement often becomes the first step in broader renovation discussions as builders evaluate long-term performance rather than short-term repairs.

systems, corrosion can also become a long-term concern. Fibreglass pools are more often prone to esthetic gelcoat wear—oxidation, fading, or blistering—rather than structural cracking of the shell itself.

For pool professionals, these issues often serve as the starting point for broader renovation discussions, prompting evaluation of how the interior finish should perform in the coming decade rather than merely restoring the original surface.

Key criteria when evaluating interior pool finishes

- Waterproofing reliability (is the system decorative or also a waterproof barrier?)
- Chemical resistance and tolerance to real-world fluctuations in balance
- Ability to accommodate minor structural movement
- Slip-resistant performance in wet areas
- Surface hardness and wear properties
- Expected lifespan and total cost of ownership
- Installation duration and operational downtime

Moving beyond tradition in pool finishes

For decades, plaster finishes have been among the main choices in the residential pool market, largely because they were well-known. Builders stuck to proven methods from the past, and homeowners accepted relatively short surface lifespans as part of owning a pool.

Comparing service life across common pool interior finishes

- Standard plaster finishes are usually expected to last five to 10 years before major refinishing is needed, with premium aggregates sometimes prolonging that period.

- Vinyl liners are typically replaced every seven to 12 years, depending on exposure and maintenance.
- Fibreglass shells generally provide decades of structural durability, but gelcoat refinishing might be needed eventually.
- Reinforced PVC membrane projects are built as long-lasting interior systems, easily exceeding a 20-year lifespan with consistent maintenance when properly installed and cared for.

As understanding of renovation cycles improves, focus is increasingly shifting toward the long-term performance of interior finish systems.

That mindset is evolving as pool interiors benefit from advances in modern materials science, much as other areas of residential construction do. Homeowners no longer accept solutions based solely on tradition; they want to understand durability, maintenance needs, and long-term ownership costs.

In Europe, this move away from traditional plaster finishes started decades ago, driven by the need for more reliable waterproofing and longer-lasting interior surfaces. Today, many North American renovation projects are beginning to adopt a similar approach—assessing interior finishes not only for appearance but also for their long-term performance.

In this market, reinforced membrane systems are generally regarded as specialized interior systems rather than optional upgrades. Structured training programs, standardized detailing procedures, and clear expectations for substrate preparation and welding techniques support their installation. This focus on process control and installer training has helped establish consistent long-term results—an approach that is gradually gaining traction in North America.

Why reinforced PVC membranes are practical in renovations

Reinforced PVC membranes are especially suitable for renovation projects because they serve as a complete interior system instead of just a coating applied directly to the shell. Installed over a prepared concrete substrate, the membrane forms an independent waterproofing layer that relies less on the condition of the existing surface.

From a practical perspective, this offers several benefits for renovations:

- The membrane can cover minor substrate imperfections that might otherwise show through rigid finishes.
- It accommodates small structural movements that often happen in older pools.
- It creates a continuous surface across walls, floors, steps, benches, and transitions.

Technical considerations when evaluating membrane systems

- Structural integrity of the existing shell
- Moisture conditions and preparation requirements for the surface
- Proper membrane-compatible fittings
- Geometry complexity (steps, benches, tight corners)

While membrane systems can better tolerate minor imperfections and limited structural movement compared to rigid finishes, any underlying structural issues must be resolved before installation. For homeowners who have experienced recurring plaster problems, this predictability is a key advantage. Instead of hoping the next finish will last longer, reinforced membranes provide clearly defined performance expectations and service life.

Where esthetics and performance come together

One of the most common misconceptions about performance-driven solutions is that they restrict design flexibility. In reality, modern reinforced PVC membranes offer a range of colours, patterns, and surface textures, enabling builders to achieve both visual enhancements and functional improvements during a renovation.

Interior finish replacement is frequently combined with wider esthetic upgrades, including:

- Cleaner, more modern visual styles
- Updated steps, benches, and tanning ledges
- Surfaces designed to be truly slip-resistant

Instead of viewing interior finishes as an afterthought, reinforced membrane systems can make them a deliberate element of the overall renovation plan. Builders can align the pool interior with surrounding decking, coping, and architectural features, thereby improving durability and safety.

St-Jean highlights that reinforced PVC membranes provide both high performance and a variety of



Reinforced PVC membranes are installed as welded interior systems that create a continuous, watertight surface across the pool structure.



esthetic choices that can enhance modern outdoor living areas.

“Our company often handles turnkey projects and complete backyard renovations where the entire outdoor space is designed as a single environment,” says St-Jean. “We are seeing strong interest in darker, textured finishes that give the pool interior a natural stone appearance. These types of surfaces are being specified more frequently in both renovation projects and new pool builds.”

This ability to blend esthetics with performance reflects broader trends in residential renovation, where upgrades are increasingly expected to offer both visual appeal and lasting functionality.

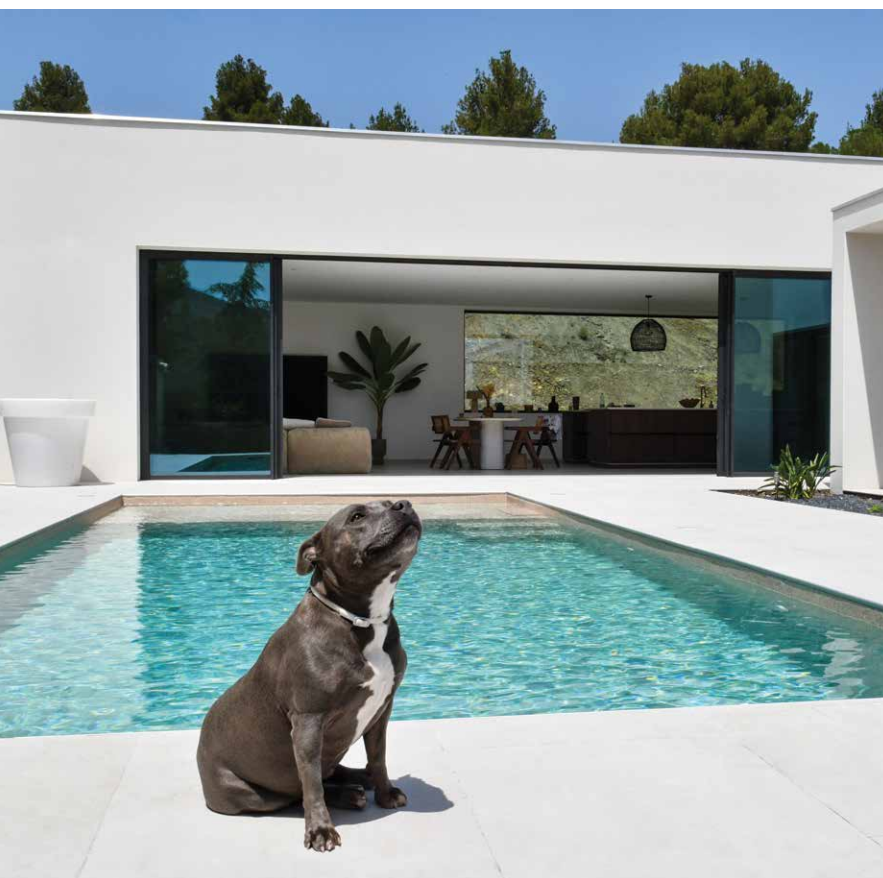
Service and maintenance benefits professionals appreciate

Beyond installation, reinforced PVC membranes can also impact long-term service considerations. Many service professionals value the predictability these systems provide for routine maintenance.

In steel-wall pool renovations, reinforced membrane systems can provide a durable interior finish designed for long-term waterproofing performance.

Lifecycle comparison of common interior finish approaches

Traditional plaster refinish	Reinforced PVC membrane system
Longer renovation timelines	Faster installation, typically three to five days
Shorter service life	Longer service life
More frequent surface treatments or refinishing	Predictable maintenance requirements
Repeated disruption from future resurfacing	Fewer full-surface renovations over time



The finished membrane surface provides a uniform, non-porous interior that supports predictable maintenance and long-term durability.

A reinforced membrane provides a uniform, non-porous surface, making water chemistry easier to stabilize than in aging plaster finishes that gradually erode and become more reactive over time. Fewer surface-related issues can lead to fewer callbacks, fewer complaints about staining or roughness, and clearer maintenance expectations for homeowners.

From a business perspective, this predictability can help service companies build stronger long-term relationships with their clients. When pool owners understand what to expect from their interior finish—and those expectations are consistently met—confidence and trust tend to grow.

Different interior finishes have distinct maintenance characteristics. Plaster surfaces are porous and chemically reactive, making them more susceptible to fluctuations in water balance and long-term etching. Vinyl liners are less chemically reactive but can still age or suffer physical damage. Fibreglass surfaces are non-porous but may oxidize or become dull over time. Reinforced membranes offer a uniform, non-porous surface designed for predictable maintenance routines, helping to reduce surface-related callbacks when properly installed and maintained.

Evaluating lifecycle cost when making renovation decisions

One of the most effective ways builders can position reinforced PVC membranes during renovation discussions is through lifecycle cost analysis. While the initial cost may be higher than a basic plaster refinish, the long-term economics can tell a different story.

Plaster refinishing often takes several days for preparation, application, and curing before the pool can be refilled and restarted. Vinyl liner replacement can be relatively quick when the underlying structure is sound, while fibreglass resurfacing timelines vary depending on the extent of repairs. Reinforced membrane installations are frequently scheduled within predictable three- to five-day installation windows.

When homeowners see a renovation as a long-term investment rather than a quick fix, the value becomes more apparent. Builders who take the time to explain the total cost of ownership—not just the initial price—position themselves as advisors instead of simple installers.

A new chapter in pool renovation

As the renovation market grows, interior finishes are becoming a crucial decision in any project. The industry is no longer limited to repeating past solutions. Today's technologies enable builders and

service professionals to deliver upgrades that enhance durability, safety, esthetics, and long-term performance.

Reinforced PVC membranes reflect this broader trend. They demonstrate an evolving method for evaluating pool interiors—moving away from traditional choices toward solutions based on engineering, installation expertise, and real-world performance.

Common misconceptions include:

- That membranes are merely “liners” instead of reinforced, welded interior systems
- That installation requires little or no specialized training
- That water chemistry management becomes irrelevant

For professionals willing to rethink how renovations are approached, interior finish replacement is no longer just a repair. It can be an opportunity to deliver a pool designed for the next generation of ownership—one that lasts, performs reliably, and maintains its appearance over time.

Installation practices also vary across interior finish systems. Concrete resurfacing and plaster application typically depend on regional subcontractor expertise and manufacturer training. Vinyl liner installation is often supported through distributor-led education and on-site apprenticeships. Specialized crews usually

perform fiberglass repair and refinishing. Reinforced membrane systems, however, are commonly supported through manufacturer-led technical training programs that focus on substrate preparation, detailing, welding techniques, and quality control—highlighting the system-based nature of the installation.

As renovation activities continue to grow across North America, choosing interior finishes is shifting from tradition toward long-term performance. Builders and service professionals who understand the strengths and limitations of different interior finish systems—and can clearly communicate those differences to clients—will be better positioned to guide renovation decisions and deliver durable results. 🦋



Tony Jordan has more than 35 years of experience in the manufacturing, sales, and application of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) reinforced pool membranes for commercial and residential use. He is the business development manager at RENOLIT and can be reached at tony.jordan@renolit.com. For more information, visit www.renolit-alkorplan.com.



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The Connected Pool

By Martin Grenier
PHOTO COURTESY CCEI

How Smart Automation Drives Profit for Pool Pros

There are millions of pools in the ground across

North America, and a large portion of them are running on outdated equipment with no connectivity, no remote monitoring, and no automated chemical control. For pool builders and service professionals, that backlog of aging infrastructure is not a problem; it is a pipeline. Smart automation technology has matured to the point where a straightforward upgrade conversation can add thousands of dollars in revenue per project, differentiate one's business from competitors, and lock in long-term service agreements that compound over time.

The market is clearly moving toward automation. Homeowners who already control their thermostat,

security cameras, and front door lock from their phones are asking why their pool is not connected, too. The professionals who can answer that question, and back it up with a clear recommendation and a clean installation, are winning the renovation and service business that others are leaving on the table.

One app, total backyard control

Modern pool automation systems give homeowners a single app to manage everything: pool and spa heater setpoints, variable-speed pump (VSP) schedules, LED lighting scenes, water features, fire bowls, irrigation, and chemical dosing—all from their smartphone. The interface is intuitive enough that clients need no



For pool professionals, automation technology transforms the conversation from selling equipment to selling a lifestyle upgrade.

PHOTO COURTESY CCEI

training. They can confirm their pump has shut off before bed, fire up the spa on the drive home, or set a custom light show for a backyard party without touching a button on the equipment pad.

"Many first-time pool owners are consumers who are 25 to 40 years old, and that demographic generally prefers to control everything with an app on their phone," says Tony Guagliardo, vice president of sales for Carvin Pools, a Quebec-based manufacturer of above-ground pools and equipment, overseeing sales in the United States.

Typical buyers already manage most aspects of their daily routines through their phones, says Guagliardo. Whether it is their alarm system, heating and cooling, irrigation, or even fitness tracking, automation systems are increasingly expected to deliver simple, accessible control at a price point that aligns with consumer demand.

For pool professionals, this is a selling point that closes deals. Consumers have been conditioned by smart home devices to expect app-based control of everything in their lives. When retailers demonstrate how a pool—often the largest investment in their client's backyard—can be fully connected, the conversation changes. They are no longer selling equipment; they are selling a lifestyle upgrade.

"Our dealers can offer this automation system for an extra \$1,400 to \$1,600 to give consumers control of their pool's heater, pump, and lighting. Automation systems can also accommodate chemical dosing systems if the consumer wants to control their water sanitization," says Guagliardo,



Modern pool automation systems let homeowners manage pool and spa operations, lighting, and chemical dosing from a single app.

PHOTO COURTESY CCEI

whose company is positioning automation systems as an upsell option for any pool type. "We are finding that people are very attracted to the fact that this is an app-based automation system that can be quickly downloaded to their phone for free with no subscription fees, and that the app will allow them to control aspects of their pool from the palm of their hand."

From a retail standpoint, this simple, affordable automation system with a free phone app has made it easy to start selling this upgrade for pools.

"This spring we just started introducing this upsell automation system, and it has already been very successful," says Guagliardo. "Six pool stores recently installed these systems on their retail show floors and saw immediate sales results. The system is easy to demonstrate to retail customers."

The efficiency upgrade that opens the door

Now that VSPs have become the norm, what makes the VSP upgrade genuinely powerful is wireless integration. New wireless automation devices allow service and installation professionals to connect these pumps directly into a pool's automation ecosystem, enabling remote speed adjustments, energy-optimized scheduling, and real-time performance monitoring, all through the same app



Automated chemistry keeps water balanced around the clock, reducing emergency calls and protecting equipment from damage.

PHOTO COURTESY CCEI



Pool automation apps provide convenient, subscription-free control, allowing homeowners to manage their pools from their phones.

PHOTO COURTESY
4G NELSON POOLS

Top benefits of pool automation upgrades

- Remote control: Manage pumps, heaters, lights, water features, and chemical dosing from a smartphone.
- Energy efficiency: Optimize pump schedules and monitor equipment performance in real time to save on energy costs.
- Water quality assurance: Automated pH and oxidation-reduction potential (ORP) monitoring keeps water balanced between service visits.
- Early problem detection: Receive alerts for equipment issues or abnormal water conditions before they escalate.
- All-in-one app convenience: Single, easy-to-use app with no subscription fees. 🌊

the homeowner already uses. This integration also provides a diagnostic edge: if a pump is working harder than expected during a low-demand window, it can indicate a clogged filter, a valve issue, or an early equipment failure—allowing issues to be addressed before they escalate into major repairs.

The service call that pays for itself

Automated pH and oxidation-reduction potential (ORP) monitoring and dosing is where automation delivers its clearest, most quantifiable value for both the homeowner and the service professional. These systems continuously measure chemical levels and automatically dispense acid or sanitizer to keep the water in range around the clock, between service visits, without homeowner intervention.

For service professionals, the business case is direct: automated chemistry reduces emergency callbacks, protects equipment from damage caused by chronically imbalanced water, and, in plaster pools, can prevent repairs that run into the thousands of dollars. For clients with salt chlorine generators, which make up a significant and growing portion of the installed base, pH management is particularly critical. Scale build-up from improper pH levels shuts down the chlorine generator, and that service call is one of the most common complaints in the industry.

Compact pH controllers—some small enough to fit on any equipment pad regardless of how tight the space—connect to the homeowner's app and send push notifications if water chemistry drifts out of range. The client gets an alert to replenish the acid reservoir and professional avoids an unscheduled trip. ORP-based dosing systems work in parallel, continuously monitoring sanitizer effectiveness and automatically dispensing chlorine or oxidizer to maintain safe, clear water. The result is a pool that stays in balance between service visits, which is a direct selling point for service professionals looking to justify premium service contracts.

The dealer portal: Managing the business from a dashboard

For service companies managing dozens of accounts, the professional monitoring portal may be the most operationally significant feature of modern pool automation. These platforms aggregate data from all connected pools into a single dashboard, giving service professionals real-time visibility into water

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Back-end monitoring enables service technicians to arrive prepared, with the right parts and expertise for each pool service call.

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How pool automation helps service pros

- Proactive service: Remote monitoring enables technicians to address issues before they become emergencies.
- Route efficiency: Plan service visits based on real-time data rather than routine guesswork.
- Higher revenue: Sell automation as an upgrade and secure more profitable service agreements.
- Customer loyalty: Deliver a more personalized, tech-forward experience. 🏊

chemistry readings, equipment status, pump performance, and chemical feeder levels across their entire client base.

The workflow shift this enables is significant. Instead of arriving at a pool to discover imbalanced water, a non-functioning light, or a tripped pump, a technician can start the day by scanning the dashboard, flag any accounts showing out-of-range conditions or equipment alarms, and route the day accordingly. Reactive service becomes proactive, data-driven pool care, which means fewer surprises, more efficient routes, and stronger client retention. The professional who calls a customer before they even know there's a problem builds a level of trust that is very difficult for a competitor to displace.

Guagliardo also sees great potential for service companies looking to offer this simple and affordable automation system to all their service clients whose pools were built without automation.

"Not only does it offer a quick revenue stream for installation on any existing pool, but it also offers the service office the ability to monitor all the pools they service 24/7 on a computer," says Guagliardo, who feels simple automation systems with back-end monitoring provide a phenomenal opportunity for service companies to increase efficiency and customer satisfaction.

"With back-end monitoring, service technicians can ensure they have the right parts, equipment, and expertise to tackle the job before going to the jobsite," says Guagliardo. "Service companies can potentially charge more for the monitoring system or charge the same, but visit the pool less often, which saves service companies fuel and labour costs, in addition to providing superior service to pool owners, in turn helping those service companies stand out from competitors."

Renovation, loyalty, and recurring income

For pool builders and service professionals, automation is not a single-transaction add-on; it is a recurring revenue and retention strategy. A pool owner who has their backyard connected via an app, monitored by their service provider, and running optimized chemical and energy management is far less likely to shop around for a cheaper service rate. They have a relationship with their system, and by extension, with the professional who set it up and supports it.

Renovation projects that include automation upgrades, such as a new VSP, a pH or ORP dosing controller, or a wireless automation system with app integration, command meaningfully higher ticket values than equipment swaps alone. And because the connected pool generates ongoing data and monitoring needs, each installation creates a natural entry point for a premium service contract. The off-season is an ideal time for retailers to evaluate which automation platforms best align with their business model, market, and clients' comfort level with technology—ensuring they enter the season with solutions in place rather than responding to emerging demand. 🏊



Martin Grenier is the Canadian commercial sales manager for CCEI, a manufacturer of automation and controller systems integrated by the CCEI Vigipool app available in the United States. The company also offers its lighting systems in Canada, Mexico, Europe, and Africa. CCEI's head office is located in France. Grenier has more than 10 years of experience in the swimming pool industry, having worked for Hayward for over seven years and held other positions in retail and distribution. He can be reached at mgrenier@ccei-pool.com.

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Thinking Beyond Seasonal Service

Building Year-round Revenue

By Rachael Pritz

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As the pool season transitions toward fall, many service businesses are already preparing for the busy closing rush. But if revenue models still rely heavily on openings and closings as their primary revenue drivers, businesses are likely riding a familiar rollercoaster—strong seasonal peaks followed by stretches where technicians have idle hours and cash flow becomes less predictable.

The most successful pool and spa service companies have solved this problem. They do not wait for the phone to ring; they have built systems that generate consistent monthly revenue year-round by turning one-time customers into long-term service relationships.

What does that look like in practice? Consider a pool store that shifted from primarily seasonal, one-time pool sales to building ongoing customer relationships.

The changes made include:

- Expanded recurring maintenance and repair services
- Created loyalty and membership programs
- Used water testing and customer data to drive repeat chemical purchases
- Expanded into equipment, parts, and other year-round pool needs.

The outcome is more than higher sales—it is a fundamentally different business model. Instead of relying solely on seasonal pool sales, the



business generates revenue year-round. Pool dealers can achieve similar results by turning one-time customers into ongoing service customers through maintenance plans, chemical programs, equipment care, and annual opening and closing services.

When pool and spa service offerings focus only on openings and closings, the short-lived revenue spikes in the spring and fall are often followed by longer periods of low activity. Scheduling becomes unpredictable, inventory planning is harder, and customers may only hear from their dealer twice a year—making it easy for a competitor to step in.

Expanding into recurring, value-added services helps address all three challenges at once: stabilizing



Scheduled chemical delivery programs generate predictable recurring revenue while giving customers a more convenient way to receive the products they need throughout the season.

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cash flow, keeping teams productive, and keeping the business top of mind with customers year-round.

Companies that introduce recurring maintenance plans often find their revenue becomes far more predictable, reducing their dependence on the seasonal highs of openings and closings.

Here are four simple ways to boost pool service revenue, no matter the season.

Turn chemicals into recurring revenue

Today's pool owners expect convenience—and many are already buying their chemicals elsewhere simply because it is easier. A scheduled delivery program puts businesses in that role, generating predictable sales while ensuring customers use the right products for their specific water chemistry.

The success of scheduled delivery programs highlights a broader reality: customer expectations have changed. Pool owners increasingly expect convenience, and pool stores are adapting by making pool care easier, faster, and more digital.

- **Online ordering and pickup:** A habit formed during COVID-19 that has stuck. Customers want to order chemicals and parts online.
- **Automatic replenishment:** Subscription or recurring chemical programs help customers avoid running out of essential products.
- **Digital water testing:** Customers expect faster, more accurate water testing, with recommendations sent directly to their phones.



Recurring maintenance plans help businesses build long-term customer relationships by emphasizing convenience, preventive maintenance, and peace of mind rather than one-time service visits.

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- Mobile communication: Text notifications for service appointments, water results, and order updates are becoming more common.
- One-stop service: Customers prefer a dealer who can handle everything—from water testing and chemical balancing to maintenance, repairs, and equipment replacement.
- Faster service: Customers expect quick responses, easy scheduling, and transparent pricing.

Building a Year-round Revenue Model

Instead of focusing on a single service, successful pool and spa businesses combine several recurring revenue streams to keep customers engaged year-round. The article identifies five key building blocks:

- Recurring maintenance plans provide predictable income and reduce scheduling uncertainty.
- Scheduled chemical delivery creates regular customer touchpoints while generating recurring sales.
- Hot tub service programs extend service opportunities because hot tubs require year-round care.
- Bundled service packages increase the perceived value of services while raising the average transaction size.
- Seasonal upgrade work—such as safety cover installations, resurfacing, liner replacements, tile work, and lighting upgrades—helps keep technicians productive beyond opening and closing season. 🌊

Weekly or monthly deliveries create a steady revenue cadence and a natural touchpoint that keeps a company highly visible between service visits. The right business management software can make this operationally simple by helping:

- Optimize technician routes to reduce drive time and fuel costs
- Track inventory levels and trigger automatic replenishment actions
- Automate billing so collections happen without manual follow-up

Adding a chemical delivery service not only increases recurring revenue but also strengthens customer loyalty. Since customers already purchase chemicals throughout the season, scheduled delivery makes that process more convenient while keeping the business connected with the customer.

Sell plans, not visits

A customer who calls once for a repair is worth something. A customer on a monthly maintenance plan is worth far more—and they are also far more likely to call first when something bigger breaks down.

Recurring plans—whether weekly cleanings, biweekly water checks, or monthly system inspections—provide businesses with predictable income and customers with the peace of mind that their investment is being properly cared for. Structured contracts also reduce the back-and-forth of scheduling as the appointment is already on the calendar.

Look for software that includes the ability to:

- Manage recurring appointments without having to manually reschedule
- Maintain a detailed service history for every customer account
- Set up automatic billing tied to each plan tier

The most common objections customers have to pool maintenance plans are that they can maintain the pool themselves, the service is too expensive, or they prefer to call when a problem occurs.

Successful companies overcome these objections by focusing on the value of convenience, preventive maintenance, and peace of mind rather than simply selling pool cleaning. They clearly explain what is included, offer flexible service options and tiered plans, break costs into predictable monthly

payments, and demonstrate how regular service can prevent costly repairs and extend equipment life.

Many also build trust through electronic door hangers, before-and-after photos, transparent pricing, and clear communication.

Build a service that goes beyond the basics

Hot tub owners are a particularly valuable segment—their equipment requires consistent care, and many do not fully understand what that entails. Between water chemistry management, filter maintenance, and seasonal tune-ups, there is meaningful service revenue available if it is easy to access.

The key is looking beyond the value of a single service call. Dealers may assume individual hot tub service calls are not worth the time and travel. However, because hot tubs are used year-round, they provide an excellent foundation for recurring service relationships.

Proactive education is a good starting point: a quick tip sheet, a seasonal reminder email, or a brief checklist at the point of service can position a team as the trusted expert. From there, bundled service packages covering

a hot tub owner's core needs for a flat monthly or seasonal rate simplify their decision-making and increase the likelihood they will commit. Hot tub customers typically want someone to handle everything for them, so offering quarterly tune-up packages that can provide pool pros with immediate revenue growth.

Pool professionals who implement hot tub service programs often find customers appreciate having routine maintenance handled for them, creating another reliable source of recurring revenue.

The good news is that building a recurring hot tub service program does not have to be complicated. A typical quarterly hot tub service package might include three or four scheduled visits per year, with technicians performing a full water test and chemical balancing, filter inspection and cleaning, water-level checks, inspection of pumps, heaters, jets, and other equipment, and a general leak and safety check.

Sell more with bundled services

Bundling is one of the most effective options in a service business's pricing toolkit—it reduces friction

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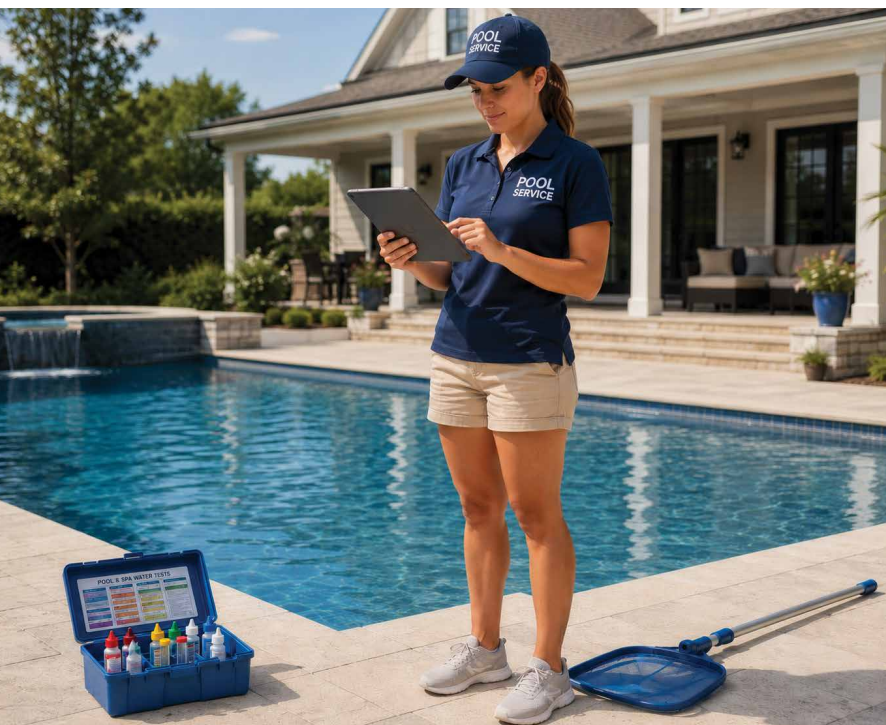
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Customers increasingly expect faster, more convenient service, including digital communication, online ordering, and transparent scheduling that keeps businesses connected between service visits.

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for customers, increases the perceived value of individual services, and raises the average transaction size without requiring additional sales effort.

Rather than selling individual services one at a time, dealers can package them into solutions tailored to different customer segments. For example:

- Premium concierge plan: Full-service weekly pool care, hot tub maintenance, opening and closing, chemical delivery, equipment monitoring, and discounted repairs. Target higher-income customers who value convenience.
- New pool owner package: Bundle the first year of maintenance, water chemistry education, opening and closing, and equipment orientation into the initial pool purchase. This helps convert new customers into long-term service customers from day one.

A “summer care package” combining chemical delivery, a mid-season inspection, and a filter cleaning is easier to say “yes” to than three separate line items. Customers appreciate the simplicity of having multiple maintenance needs addressed through a single, easy-to-understand package.

Good service management software can help identify which services customers are already pairing together, build those combinations into formal offerings, and track labour and parts costs to ensure the bundles remain profitable.

Keep revenue flowing year-round

Preparing for closing season does not have to mean looking ahead to another lengthy slowdown. With the right mix of recurring services, scheduled deliveries, and thoughtfully priced bundles, businesses can continue generating revenue well beyond the seasonal rush while strengthening customer relationships and maximizing technician utilization.

Maintaining year-round revenue also means identifying opportunities that naturally fit each season. While recurring service provides a steady income stream, fall is an ideal time for safety cover installations, resurfacing, liner replacements, tile work, and lighting upgrades that prepare customers for the following summer.

The shift is not complicated. It begins by giving customers a reason to stay engaged throughout the year. In turn, service revenue becomes more predictable, customer loyalty grows, and the business is better positioned for long-term success.

The key is to start small and build momentum. Over the next month, create one easy-to-understand package that bundles services such as opening, closing, water testing, priority service, and discounted repairs into a monthly fee. Then begin offering it to existing customers during the fall closing season as an easy way to enroll them for the following year. 🦋



Rachael Pritz is the vice-president of RB Retail & Service Solutions. She has been active in the pool industry for more than 20 years, which has given her comprehensive expertise in the trade. Pritz worked at a local pool store while pursuing a master’s degree at the University of Pittsburgh. With her technical skills and industry knowledge, she joined the launch of RB Retail & Service Solutions in Pittsburgh in 2003. She can be reached at rachael@rbcontrolsolutions.com.



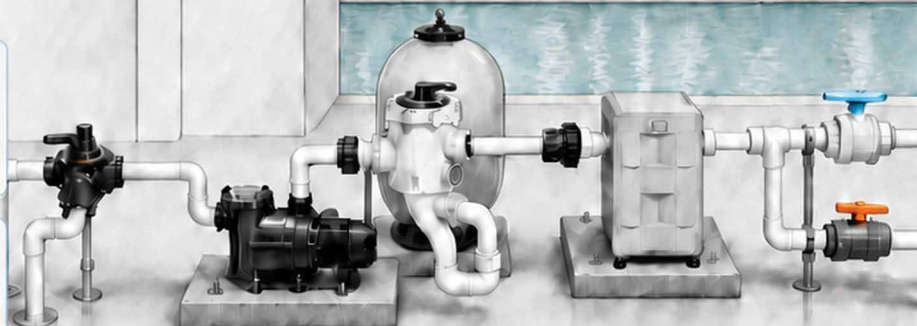
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Becoming AI-Fluent

Four Skills Every Backyard Leisure Team Needs

By Dennis Gray

AI-GENERATED PHOTOS/
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In the April issue, the first article of this series introduced the Iron Man metaphor: AI does not replace the hero—it augments the hero. The team is Tony Stark; AI is the suit. The question is not whether to use AI; it is whether it will be used like a search engine—typing questions and scanning results like

a fancier Google—or whether it will be used to fly the suit. This article is about flying the suit.

That first article also identified four skills that separate AI tourists from AI practitioners: choosing the right tools, prompt engineering, concept engineering, and context window management.

This article explores each skill in greater detail and provides practical guidance for applying them effectively.

One note: everything in this article applies to any AI platform—ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or the purpose-built applications to be introduced later in this series. These are universal skills, but the difference between a mediocre and an extraordinary AI user is not which tool they use, but how well they have learned to communicate with it.

Skill #1: The real cost of free

It is important to start with the decision that most dealerships get wrong, because it caps everything else.

Free AI tools are demonstrations. They are designed to show what is possible and to hook people, not to deliver business-grade capability. Using free-tier AI for professional work is like test-driving a sports car, then trying to win a race in the dealership's courtesy shuttle.

What free AI provides

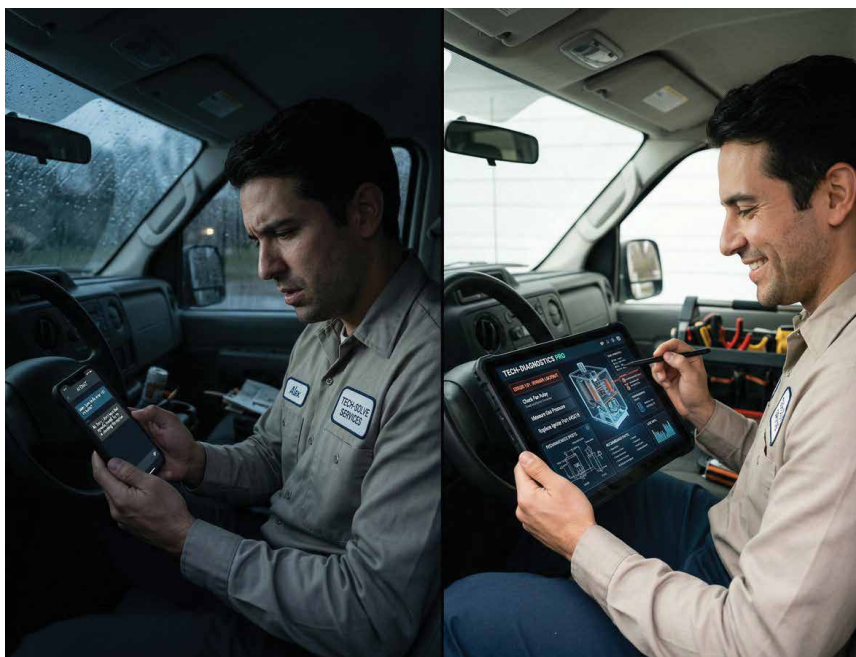
Using only free AI platforms limits access to older, slower models and imposes strict daily usage caps, which can prevent further use once those limits are reached. They offer small context windows, so the AI forgets critical details mid-conversation. They also lack privacy protections, as questions, product knowledge, and diagnostic approaches may be used to train the next model version. Lastly, there is no way to create persistent configurations, as each session starts from scratch.

Imagine JARVIS with amnesia. Every morning, Tony Stark must re-explain the suit, the mission, the physics, and who the bad guys are. That is what free-tier AI is like.

What paid AI provides

At \$15 to \$35 per month per user, it unlocks a fundamentally different tier:

- Current-generation models—The reasoning capability between free and paid tiers is not incremental; it is categorical. Paid models can handle multi-step diagnostic reasoning, nuanced product comparisons, and complex troubleshooting sequences that free models cannot.
- Expanded context windows—Free tiers hold roughly 10 to 15 pages of active memory; paid tiers can retain 50 to 200 pages. For a technician performing a complex equipment diagnosis with multiple variables, this is the difference between an AI that tracks the whole problem and one that forgets the filter type halfway through.

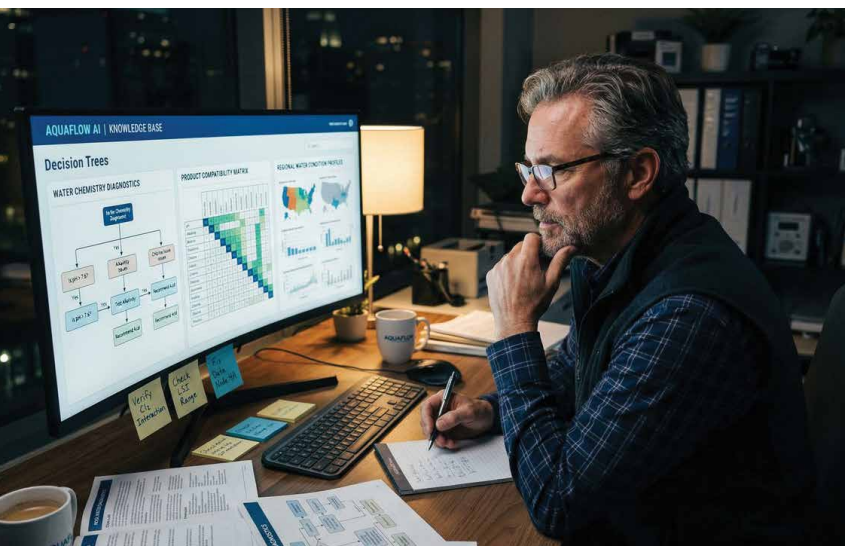


The result of using free AI versus paid is the same technician, different capabilities.



An important aspect of using AI is training team members to use expert prompts rather than asking generic questions.

- Privacy protection—Paid tiers typically guarantee that conversations will not be used for model training. The user's proprietary knowledge remains with them. In a competitive industry where businesses' diagnostic expertise is their moat, this matters.
- Persistent memory and custom configurations—The ability to create AI assistants that remember product lines, regional water conditions, and service protocols, session after session.



Business owners should embed domain-specific expertise into AI so it begins to think like their best technician.



AI users need to remember that platforms know a little bit about everything, but they need to be coached to become experts.

This is where the JARVIS analogy becomes literal. It is not starting from scratch; it picks up where the conversation left off, with an AI that already knows all the business details.

The math

A team of five with paid subscriptions costs between \$75 and \$175 per month. That is less than the revenue from a single service call. If those five team members each save one hour per week through better diagnostics, faster customer responses, and more

efficient troubleshooting—and as discussed in the first article of this series, a Harvard Business School study of 758 management consultants at Boston Consulting Group found that AI users completed tasks 25 per cent faster and produced results 40 per cent higher in quality—the return is immediate and compounding.

This is not a technology expense; it is a capability investment. The dealership that treats it as the former will always lose to the dealership that treats it as the latter.

Skill #2: The art of asking

Prompt engineering sounds like a skill for software developers. However, it is a skill for anyone who has ever managed a new employee. When assigning a task to a new hire, the quality of their output depends entirely on the instructions they receive. Vague direction produces vague work. Specific, contextual direction produces specific, useful work. AI is the same—except it processes instructions in seconds instead of hours.

Side-by-side: The Google prompt versus the JARVIS prompt

The Google approach: “Cloudy pool water after rain. What do I do?”

Result: A generic list. Check your filter, test your water, shock the pool, add a clarifier, and wait. This is useful in the way a first-aid pamphlet is—technically correct but practically inadequate for the specific situation.

The JARVIS approach: “You are a water chemistry expert specializing in Canadian residential pools. I’m a service technician in Calgary, Alta. My customer’s 40,000-L vinyl-lined pool has been cloudy for three days after a severe rainstorm that brought significant debris. Here are the test results: total chlorine 5 ppm, free chlorine 0.5 ppm, pH 7.8, alkalinity 110 ppm, calcium hardness 280 ppm. The last treatment was a calcium hypochlorite shock four days ago. The pool uses a diatomaceous earth (D.E.) filter that was last backwashed two days ago. The customer uses ‘XYZ’ water treatment products. What is the most likely cause, and what is the correct treatment sequence?”

Result: A specific diagnosis—combined chloramine lock from organic storm runoff overwhelming the available free chlorine—along with a step-by-step treatment plan using the customer’s actual product line, adjusted for the D.E. filter and Calgary’s water chemistry, including dosing calculations, timing intervals, and an expected resolution timeline.

Same AI and same technology. The difference is entirely the human's skill at framing the question. Prompt engineering is the practice of being specific enough for AI to be brilliant, rather than generic enough for it to be mediocre.

Skill #3: Teaching AI to think like the business

If prompt engineering is the art of asking better questions, concept engineering is the art of building a better brain for the AI to think with.

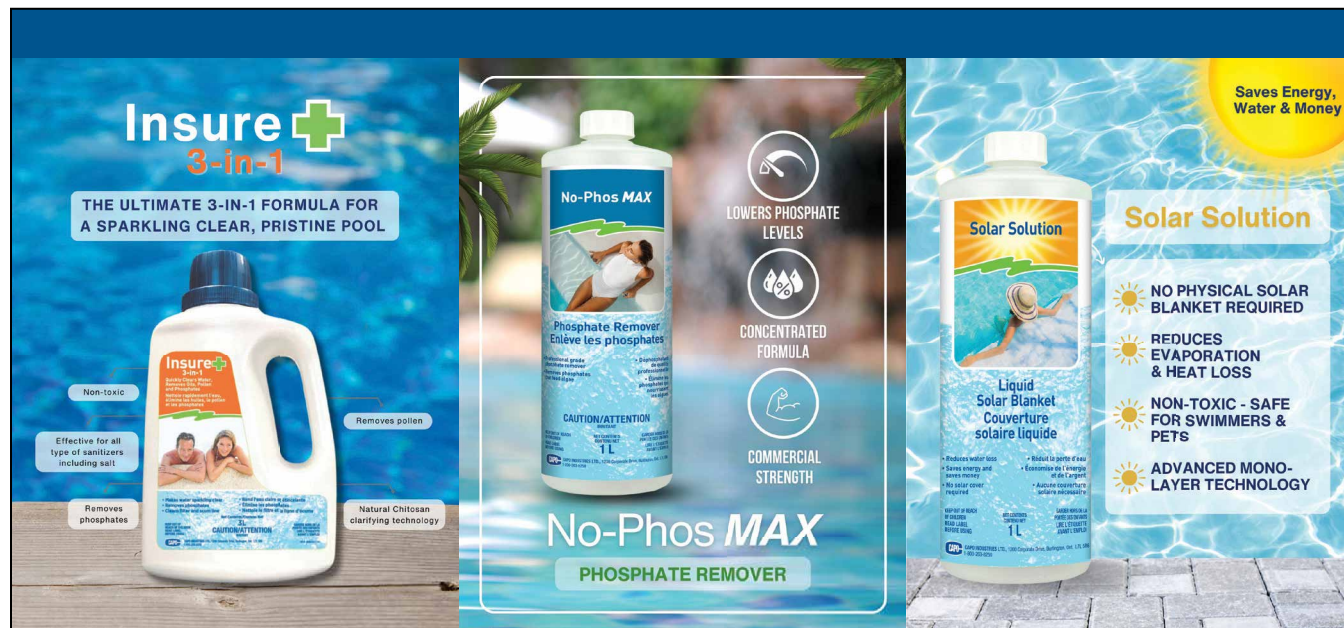
Here is the core problem: generic AI knows a little about everything. It knows what calcium hardness is, what a D.E. filter does, and the basics of water chemistry. But it does not know the user's business. It does not know that a specific region's water source creates specific challenges, or that a product line includes a proprietary calcium management system. It does not know the user's diagnostic hierarchy, the decision tree that the team's best technician uses instinctively when confronted with a complex problem.

Concept engineering is the practice of encoding that knowledge into a structured format for AI to use. It is the difference between giving JARVIS a general physics textbook and giving it Tony Stark's personal engineering notebooks, the ones with margin notes, failed experiments, and hard-won insights no textbook contains.

Building a concept layer

Step 1: Identify the core concepts. What key terms, relationships, and decision frameworks define expertise in the business? For a backyard leisure dealer, this might include a specific product portfolio and the factors that differentiate each product, such as regional water chemistry profiles, diagnostic decision trees, customer segmentation (first-time pool owners versus experienced enthusiasts), and service protocols.

Step 2: Define the relationships. Expertise is not just knowing facts; it is understanding how they connect. A veteran technician does not just know that calcium hardness matters; they know that in



The advertisement is divided into three vertical panels, each showcasing a different pool maintenance product by CAPO. The background is a vibrant blue pool with water ripples.

- Left Panel (Insure 3-in-1):** Features a white jug of 'Insure 3-in-1' pool sanitizer. Text includes 'THE ULTIMATE 3-IN-1 FORMULA FOR A SPARKLING CLEAR, PRISTINE POOL'. Benefits listed: 'Non-toxic', 'Effective for all type of sanitizers including salt', 'Removes phosphates', 'Removes pollen', and 'Natural Chitosan clarifying technology'.
- Middle Panel (No-Phos MAX):** Features a white bottle of 'No-Phos MAX' phosphate remover. Text includes 'No-Phos MAX', 'Phosphate Remover', 'Enlève les phosphates', 'LOWERS PHOSPHATE LEVELS', 'CONCENTRATED FORMULA', 'COMMERCIAL STRENGTH', and 'PHOSPHATE REMOVER'.
- Right Panel (Solar Solution):** Features a white bottle of 'Solar Solution' liquid solar blanket. Text includes 'Saves Energy, Water & Money', 'Solar Solution', 'NO PHYSICAL SOLAR BLANKET REQUIRED', 'REDUCES EVAPORATION & HEAT LOSS', 'NON-TOXIC - SAFE FOR SWIMMERS & PETS', and 'ADVANCED MONO-LAYER TECHNOLOGY'.

At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a large blue banner with the text 'Contact us today' in white, followed by 'Call us 1-800-263-8250 www.capoindustries.com'. To the right is the CAPO logo, which consists of the word 'CAPO' in white inside a blue rounded rectangle, with the tagline 'Quality, Tradition and Innovation Since 1893.' below it.

Marco's two diagnoses

The following scenario puts these four skills into practice.

Marco has been a service technician for 14 months. He is capable and willing, but he lacks 20 years of pattern recognition. He is at a customer's home, where a persistent green tint in the saltwater pool remains despite the chlorine generator showing normal output. The homeowner is frustrated. She has had two service visits already, yet the problem persists.

Scenario A: The search engine approach

Marco opens a free AI tool on his phone. He types: "Green pool water salt system working fine."

The AI responds with a generic list: check phosphate levels, verify salt concentration, inspect the cell for calcium buildup, and consider an algaecide treatment. The advice is "textbook correct" but practically useless. Marco has already checked phosphates and salt. The cell was cleaned last month, and he has tried algaecide twice.

He tries again: "Still green after algaecide." The AI, operating on a free tier with a small context window, has already lost the salt system detail from the first exchange. It suggests checking the pump run time and verifying chlorine levels—advice that ignores everything Marco already told it.

Marco puts his phone away. He calls the office. No one there knows the answer. He tells the customer he will research it and get back to them. This means a third visit is coming, and customer confidence is declining.

Scenario B: The JARVIS approach

Marco opens a paid, concept-engineered AI assistant. He has been trained in the 5C approach (see page 32.) He provides a mission briefing:

"You are a saltwater pool diagnostic specialist. I'm a service technician in the Greater Toronto Area. The customer's 50,000-L (13,209 gal) fibreglass pool with a salt chlorine generator has a persistent green tint. The chlorine generator shows normal output. Here are the results from my test today: free chlorine 3.0 ppm, pH 7.6, salt 3,200 ppm, phosphates below 100 ppb, copper 0.3 ppm. I've treated with algaecide twice in the past two weeks with no improvement. The customer uses 'XYZ' water treatment products. This is my third visit. What am I missing?"

The AI identifies the problem immediately: copper. At 0.3 ppm, dissolved copper in the water, likely from the heat exchanger or the original fill water, is oxidizing and causing the green tint. This is not an algae problem. The algaecide was never going to fix it. The AI recommends a metal sequestrant treatment specific to the "XYZ" water treatment product line, with a dose for 50,000 L (13,209 gal), and flags the need to investigate the copper source to prevent recurrence.

Marco resolves the problem during this visit. The customer's confidence is restored, and his diagnostic capability is permanently expanded. He will recognize copper tint on sight from now on. The AI did not replace Marco's growing expertise; it accelerated it by years. 

Calgary, calcium hardness, when combined with high pH and a plaster pool, creates a scaling risk that requires a different treatment approach than the same numbers in Vancouver's soft water. Map these relationships.

Step 3: Create reusable templates. Build prompt templates that a team can use repeatedly. Examples include a "water chemistry diagnosis" template covering all relevant variables, a "customer consultation" template for retail interactions, and a "service call preparation" template for technicians. These templates translate a concept layer into a format anyone can use.

Step 4: Iterate and refine. A concept layer is not a one-off project. It is a living document that improves every time someone on the team discovers a new pattern, encounters an edge case, or identifies a gap. The dealership that treats its concept layer as a competitive asset—and invests in maintaining it—will build a competitive edge that competitors cannot replicate by simply buying the same AI subscription.

Skill #4: The mission briefing

This is a skill that separates competent AI users from exceptional ones, yet almost nobody teaches it.

Every AI operates within a context window—the total amount of information it can hold in working memory during a conversation. Think of it as the whiteboard in JARVIS's operations room. There is plenty of space, but it is not infinite. When the whiteboard fills up, the oldest information is erased to make room for the newest.

For casual use, this rarely matters. For technical, multi-step work, the kind that makes AI valuable in a dealership, it is everything.

What happens when the window fills?

Imagine walking a technician through a complex equipment diagnosis over the phone. Twenty minutes in, the conversation refers back to what was discussed at the beginning: the model number, the installation date, and the error code. If they have been taking good notes, they have got it. If they have not been, it is just repetition.

AI works the same way, except the "notes" are the context window. When it fills up, the AI does not ask the user to repeat what they've already shared—it silently drops the oldest information. It forgets the model number mentioned 10 exchanges ago, neglects the filter type, or loses the vinyl liner constraint it was given. AI does not tell the user it has forgotten. It just

produces answers that are subtly wrong and hard to catch.

Practical techniques

- Front-load critical information—Place the most important context at the start of the conversation. Include product names, equipment types, regional conditions, treatment history, and anything that defines the specific situation. Early information stays in the context window longer than later-added information.
- Use the “mission briefing” approach—Before diving into a complex task, provide a structured briefing, as Tony Stark does when briefing JARVIS before a mission. Explain the situation, the constraints, and what is needed. A well-structured opening saves context window space because AI does not need to infer meaning; it is explicitly stated.
- Know when to start fresh—If a conversation has run long and the AI’s answers start drifting—becoming more generic, forgetting earlier details, or contradicting itself—start a new conversation

with a fresh briefing. A clean context window with a strong opening will produce better results than a cluttered one.

- Provide explicit reminders—Periodically restate the key parameters during a long diagnostic conversation. It takes a few seconds and prevents costly drift.
- Separate complex tasks into focused sessions—Instead of one long conversation covering diagnosis, treatment plan, customer communication, and follow-up scheduling, break it into focused sessions. Each session has a clean context window dedicated to a single task. The results are sharper because the AI’s full attention is on one problem.

Building the dealership’s AI playbook

Every dealership needs a playbook—a shared document that captures the concept layer, prompt templates, and operational standards the team uses with AI. Think of it as JARVIS’s startup configuration: the set of instructions that loads whenever the system activates.

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For a technician performing a complex equipment diagnosis with multiple variables, paid tiers are the difference between an AI that tracks the whole problem and one that forgets the filter type halfway through.

AI-GENERATED IMAGE

Mastering the 5C Approach

- **Clear**—State exactly what is needed. Do not ask “help me with this pool,” but ask “diagnose the cause of persistent cloudiness in a vinyl-lined pool and recommend a treatment sequence.”
- **Contextual**—Provide relevant background, such as water volume, test results, equipment type, recent treatments, regional water source, and product line. The more context, the more specific the answer. This is where domain expertise becomes the fuel—the user knows what context matters because they know the field.
- **Constrained**—Tell AI what guardrails to operate within, e.g. “Use only ‘XYZ’ products,” “Assume a vinyl liner—no copper-based treatments,” or “The customer is a first-time pool owner—keep the explanation simple.” Constraints focus the AI and prevent generic, unconfigured answers.
- **Conversational**—Do not treat AI as a one-shot query engine. Treat it as a dialogue. Ask a question, read the answer, and refine. For example, “That’s close, but the customer mentioned they added a clarifier yesterday—does that change the sequence?” This iterative approach is where AI shifts from search engine to thought partner.
- **Corrective**—When AI gets something wrong—and it will—correct it explicitly. “That’s incorrect. Calcium hypochlorite should not be used within 24 hours of adding a sequestrant. Revise the sequence.” The AI learns within the conversation and adjusts. The correction makes every subsequent answer in that session more accurate. 

This playbook should include:

- **A product knowledge brief**—Covering the specific product lines, key differentiators, competitive positioning, and the brand’s language. This is pasted into AI conversations to ensure every recommendation aligns with the product strategy.
- **Regional water profiles**—The specific water chemistry characteristics of the user’s service area, including source water hardness, typical pH ranges, seasonal variations, and common issues. This context transforms generic advice into locally accurate guidance.
- **Prompt templates for common scenarios**—Pre-built prompts for water chemistry diagnosis, equipment troubleshooting, customer consultations, seasonal opening and closing protocols, and sales interactions. Not every prompt needs to be built from scratch; they use the template and fill in the specifics.
- **Guardrails and brand standards**—What AI should and should not recommend. Product lines to prioritize, competitors’ products to avoid recommending, safety constraints, and liability boundaries. The playbook ensures consistency across the entire team.
- **An update protocol**—A simple process for adding new concepts, refining templates, and capturing edge

cases. When a team member discovers a new pattern or encounters a situation the playbook does not cover, there is a clear path to incorporate that learning. The playbook compounds, and that is the economic moat.

What comes next

The user now has the four skills needed to thrive with AI. They understand the difference between using AI as a search engine and using it as Iron Man uses JARVIS. They can choose the right tools, craft prompts that produce expert-level output, engineer concepts that make AI think within their domain, and manage context windows so AI does not lose the thread.

The question is: where within one's dealership do these skills create the most value?

The third article in this series, "The AHI Dealership in Action," will walk through seven case studies from the retail floor to the service van to the customer's backyard—demonstrating how AI augmentation turns potential failures into

wins. It follows three team members through a single day at a dealership.

Finally, the last article, "Sage, Rocky, and the Knowledge Harvest," introduces two purpose-built applications that embed everything from this article into platforms designed for backyard leisure—so teams do not need to build JARVIS from scratch. Someone already has.

The skills in this article form the foundation. What comes next is the architecture that operationalizes those skills at scale. 🦋



Dennis Gray is president of Backyard Brands Inc., supporting independent Canadian pool and spa dealers across a national network. He has more than 40 years of experience developing and marketing advanced water-care technologies. He is the architect of the Augmented Human Intelligence (AHI) platform, currently deployed across more than 260 dealerships.

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Surface Level, Deep Impact

How Proactive Maintenance Prevents Costly Mid-season Closures

By Briana Valente

PHOTO COURTESY
FL BOMANITE

One of the most challenging events a facility can endure is a mid-season closure due to unexpected maintenance. The headaches include lost revenue, disappointed guest reviews, missed opportunities, and scheduling conflicts with suppliers and contractors.

Every guest interacts with surfaces in some way, which is why paints, coatings, and surfaces are important to maintain well and clean often. Proactive, diligent maintenance with the right products in the right spaces is key to improving operational efficiency and avoiding unplanned closures.

Jake Round, amusement sales manager at Baynum Solutions, advises that “a good maintenance walk should separate what looks worn from what is actually at risk.”

“Fading, chalking, peeling, rust staining, cracking, exposed substrates, failing seams, and moisture-holding areas can all tell a bigger story. The real value is knowing which items are cosmetic, which are actively deteriorating, and which could create safety concerns, corrosion, water intrusion, larger repairs, or in-season downtime if they are not addressed,” he adds.

Tools should be used to assess site conditions, comparing original conditions with measurements regularly, and manufacturer wear specifications should be reviewed when products are nearing the end of their life. Photos should be taken and stored for reference as a historical database and for warranty coverage, when applicable.

Different coatings and surfaces can create a strong synergy across a facility, in different areas, without



competing with one another. For example, outside amenity areas with high shoe traffic can be a great place for concrete; inside amenity areas surrounding play zones, non-slip coatings can be suitable; and play spaces can leverage safety surfacing to better protect guests.

Round adds, "Product selection should always be based on the environment. Wet areas, UV exposure, chemical exposure, heavy traffic, and moving structures all require different considerations. When budgets require phasing, start with the areas where failure creates the most risk or future cost."

Tom Maellaro, vice-president of business development for MRT, agrees that "maintenance should not wait until a surface fails. Regular inspections, touch-ups, and planned recoating cycles help protect the original investment and keep facilities looking intentional instead of reactive."

Concrete and decorative concrete

Concrete can be used in aquatic environments, both leading up to the attraction and as the foundation itself, but it must be poured correctly and should always be used in the right areas for foot traffic.

"A properly poured concrete foundation is the backbone of both safety and performance for any aquatic amenity. It doesn't just support static weight; it must constantly withstand dynamic kinetic forces from rushing water and heavy pump vibrations," says architect and concrete expert Pablo Aviles Gonzalez Jr., who has extensive experience designing and building entertainment venues, theme parks, and water parks. "Getting the mix and reinforcement right is crucial for long-term stability, while precise sloping prevents water from pooling in areas where guests walk. Additionally, the right slab finish is essential to ensure that safety-surfacing systems, like non-slip tiles and foam cushioning, bond perfectly and last for years."

Decorative concrete can provide lovely visuals for areas where rough-and-tumble play is not necessary and where something artful can be developed.

"Decorative concrete proves that structural materials can also be highly creative. Since it is so customizable in colour, texture, and virtually any design characteristic, it allows us to blend thematic elements directly into the attraction, elevating the overall guest experience," says Gonzalez Jr. "Beyond esthetics, it is a high-performance solution built to



excel in wet, high-traffic conditions where alternative materials would either fail or demand incredibly high maintenance costs."

For example, exterior walkways outside of an amenity are heavily used by people wearing their street shoes, which can carry pebbles embedded in the tread and scratch a softer surface. For any repairs, a licensed professional should assess the damage and provide recommendations, as concrete work can range from simple patchwork to full-scale demolition and repour.

The following are the positives and negatives of using concrete/decorative concrete:

Pros

- Resistant to cuts/user-inflicted damage
- Durable
- Critical for stable foundations

This shows an amenity before and after repair and repainting.

PHOTO COURTESY
BAYNUM SOLUTIONS



Paints, coatings, and surfaces should be carefully selected and tailored to the amenity types in which they are being implemented.

PHOTO COURTESY FL BOMANITE



A concrete foundation before and after repair.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYNUM SOLUTIONS

Cons

- Abrasive
- Hard
- Stains easily
- Must be sealed regularly if exposed
- Semi-porous
- Can crack with ground movement

Safety surfacing

Safety surfaces are often used at amenities encouraging high-speed play, such as splash pads and water parks. These kinds of surfaces can provide greater peace of mind for guests and staff, enhance the space's beauty and comfort, and enable a range of plays appealing to people of all abilities and ages. Choosing the right safety surface for aquatic play areas often comes down to overall performance and budget. Phasing can help mitigate budget concerns by starting with installations on high-risk areas such as slide exits, splash pads, and pool coping. By phasing safety surfacing projects, money can be saved over time by reducing injuries and subsequent lawsuit costs, resulting in a net positive return on investment.

NSF/ANSI/CAN Standard 50, *Equipment for Pools, Spas, Hot Tubs and Other Recreational Water Facilities*, outlines the criteria a safety surface must meet to be considered an acceptable, certified surface. Jonathan Keller, chair for the NSF/ANSI/CAN 50 task group on aquatic safety surfacing, co-chair for the NSF/ANSI/CAN 50 task group on pool perimeter finishes, and co-lead of a task group on surfacing in aquatic play environments under ASTM F2461 *Standard Practice for Aquatic Play Equipment*, adds "Our task groups have determined that aquatic surfaces should be slip-resistant, cushioned, UV resistant, impermeable, easy to clean, and chemical resistant because those are the key criteria that make the greatest positive difference for facility staff and end-users alike."

Safety surface repair work is typically straightforward due to the product's modular design, but the manufacturer or installer should be consulted, as product specifications may vary.

The following are the positives and negatives of using safety surfacing:

Pros

- Cushioned
- Slip-resistant
- Modular
- Improves esthetics
- Increases accessibility

Cons

- Can be expensive
- Sharp edges—such as metal bike components—can damage it
- Not all safety surfaces meet industry standards

Coatings

Coatings can support ancillary amenities, such as walkways and areas that become wet but are not considered play spaces, such as entry points, locker rooms, and bathrooms. These types of products are often budget-friendly, offer a fast-turn solution, and are easy to apply; however, they must be applied properly to achieve the best possible results.

"The success of any coating system usually starts before the coating is ever opened. Cleaning, profiling, repairing cracks, confirming compatibility, and respecting environmental conditions are what separate a cosmetic refresh from a surface that performs," says Maellaro.

Without proper preparation, a coating application can fail, delaminate, or bubble. "Across a facility, coatings work best when they're viewed as part of a larger surface strategy. Pools, decks, courts, walkways, and common areas all have different needs, but the goal is the same: safer, cleaner, more durable, and more inviting spaces," Maellaro adds.

Repair work often involves properly preparing the substrate to the standard required for the initial application, then reapplying the coating to specification.

Pros

- Can be applied quickly and easily
- Improves esthetics with custom designs
- Durable
- Can be slip-resistant

Cons

- Installation preparation must be done properly, or it will not adhere
- Does not offer impact cushioning

Other surfaces

Beyond those mentioned above, some products can struggle in harsh aquatic environments because they were created specifically for dry spaces, where they excel in amenities such as playgrounds and childcare rooms.

Pour-in-place rubber surfaces can break down in aquatic environments because the bonding agents are not resistant enough to the harsh combination of UV, pool chemicals, constant water, and foot traffic. Particles can loosen, clog drain lines and pumps, and require patching within a single season, depending on traffic intensity. Brick, pavers, stone, and slate should typically be avoided for water play areas because they are slippery, hard, and difficult to clean, according to the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC). Marine-grade wood can be used, but requires regular maintenance to avoid splinters.

In conclusion, paints, coatings, and surfaces should be carefully selected and tailored to the amenity types in which they are being implemented. Round advises, "One thing many parks may not realize is that technical service teams from paint and coating suppliers can often support walkthroughs, help identify problem areas, recommend appropriate systems, and even assist with written specifications. That resource can be



Concrete coatings can be applied quickly and easily.

PHOTO COURTESY MODERN RECREATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES, INC.



extremely valuable when parks are trying to plan, budget, or phase work correctly."

A solid service team can guide from start to finish, and many guarantee their work with proper warranties.

Regardless of the selected paint, coating, or surface finish, regular, proactive maintenance is essential to creating amenities that guests can enjoy for generations to come. ♡

The success of any coating system usually starts before the coating is ever opened, through cleaning, profiling, and repairing cracks.

PHOTO COURTESY MODERN RECREATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES, INC.



Briana Valente serves as a marketing manager for Life Floor. She has been with Life Floor since 2018 and adores the aquatics industry. She works extensively with industry publications, conferences, and workshops that bring meaningful education to individuals spanning municipalities, resorts, waterparks, and more. She holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.



Giving a Toronto Landmark New Life

The Revitalized Kidstown Water Park

By Des Caruana
and Nik Ahir

PHOTOS COURTESY
ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.

For many Toronto families, a summer visit to Kidstown Water Park has been a tradition for decades. Located within L'Amoreaux Park in Scarborough, Ont., the facility has long been one of the city's most popular outdoor aquatic destinations. It remains the only waterpark owned and operated by the City of Toronto.

However, after years of heavy use, the aging facility needed a complete replacement. The city's goal was not only to rebuild what existed before,

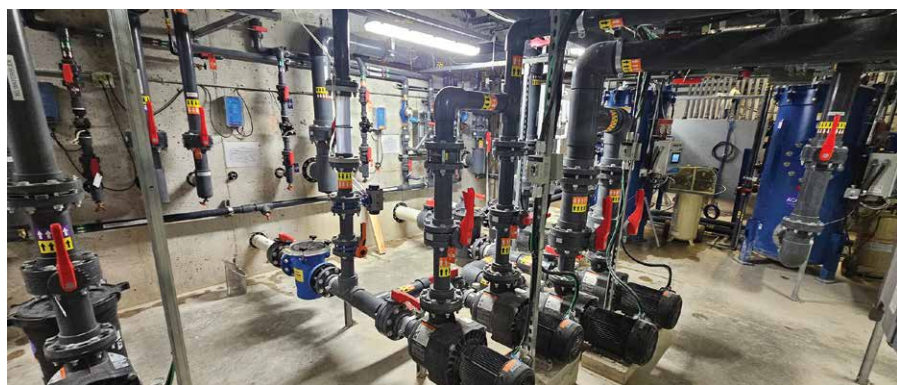
but to create a modern waterpark that would improve accessibility, increase capacity, enhance water quality, and provide a better experience for all visitors.

Following several years of planning, design development, and community consultation, construction began in spring 2024. Two years later, the revitalized waterpark opened to the public, ready to welcome a new generation of visitors.



The hill slide attraction features an accessibility ramp as opposed to a traditional staircase.

PHOTO COURTESY PMA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



The upgraded mechanical systems also include variable-frequency drives (VFDs), UV treatment for the splash pad, automated chemical control systems, and heat recovery equipment.

PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.

Designed for today's demands

The design of the new Kidstown Water Park was led by PMA Landscape Architects, with Aqua Plans Aquatic Consultants Inc. providing aquatic design and consulting services. The redesign was inspired by the surrounding landscape and the area's connection to the historic Huron-Wendat village.

L'Amoreaux Kidstown Water Park is located near the Alexandra Site, a 14th-century Huron-Wendat village uncovered during an archaeological assessment in 2000. The excavation revealed evidence of 16 longhouses and several sweat lodges. Throughout the redesign of Kidstown, the design team collaborated with the Huron-Wendat Nation to incorporate elements that reflect the history and culture of both the Alexandra Site and the Huron-Wendat people. One example is the hillside waterfall area, an Indigenous placekeeping element inspired by La Chute Kabir Kouba, a site of cultural significance to the Huron-Wendat Nation. Additional

animal-themed features and shade structures throughout the park further reinforce these cultural connections. These influences helped shape the facility's overall character and its relationship to the broader park setting.

A primary challenge facing the design team was accommodating the significant number of bathers the facility attracts during the summer months.

To meet this demand, the new park was designed with larger aquatic areas, expanded attractions, and upgraded water treatment systems capable of maintaining high water quality even during peak operating periods.

The completed facility features two distinct pool areas. A 398 m² (4,290 sf) shallow pool features a zero-depth beach entry and gradually sloping water depths, making it ideal for young children and families. Nearby, a 209 m² (2,251 sf) leisure pool provides recreation space and serves as the landing area for the tower waterslide. A separate run-out hill



The upgraded mechanical systems at the revamped Kidstown Water Park in Scarborough, Ont., has offered the operator greater control.

PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.

surface contaminants and improve circulation throughout the water body. The project also incorporated regenerative media filtration technology, replacing the traditional sand filtration systems used at the original facility.

The shallow pool, leisure pool, and splash pad all operate with dedicated filtration systems, allowing operators to maintain water quality efficiently across the entire site.

The upgraded mechanical systems also include variable-frequency drives (VFDs), UV treatment for the splash pad, automated chemical control systems, and heat recovery equipment, reducing energy consumption by preheating domestic water.

Together, these improvements provide operators with greater control while enhancing both water quality and operational efficiency.

Accessibility for all users

Accessibility was another major focus of the redevelopment.

The shallow pool's beach entry creates a gradual transition into the water, while a dedicated accessibility ramp provides an additional point of entry. An accessibility lift further expands access to the facility, ensuring visitors of varying abilities can enjoy the waterpark.

Accessibility considerations extend beyond just the pools. The run-out hill slide features full ramp access, allowing users to reach the attraction without relying solely on stairs. While stair towers are traditionally used with many aquatic slides, the ramp design provides a more inclusive experience for a wider range of guests, including individuals with mobility challenges, families with young children, and caregivers.

The site's overall layout was equally important. Throughout the design process, careful consideration was given to circulation routes, gathering spaces, and deck areas to create a comfortable environment for families moving between attractions.

Shade, seating, and staging areas were also important elements of the overall visitor experience, recognizing that aquatic facilities of this scale serve both recreational and social purposes, with families spending extended periods throughout the day.

Bringing the project to life

A project of this scale required close co-ordination between multiple contractors, consultants, and



By prefabricating the curved formwork sections off-site, it reduced labour requirements and helped to maintain dimensional accuracy.

PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.

slide adds another attraction, offering an experience that does not need a pool landing area. A splash pad rounds out the aquatic offerings, providing another interactive play area while distributing users throughout the facility.

While the attractions are the most visible changes, most of the work in creating the new facility happened behind the scenes.

Improving water quality

Given the facility's popularity, maintaining water quality during heavy bather loads was a key consideration throughout the design process.

To achieve this, the pools were equipped with perimeter overflow gutters to continuously remove

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Kidstown's Big Splash Revival



1

Construction began in spring 2024.
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2

This included the construction of reinforced cast-in-place concrete leisure and shallow pools, surge tanks, and a splash pad holding tank.
PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.



3

A significant portion of the aquatic infrastructure also required extensive underground and exposed piping systems.
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4

To improve quality control and streamline installation, curved formwork sections were prefabricated off-site before being delivered to the project.
PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.



5

Periods of prolonged winter weather added complexity to exterior works, requiring certain concrete and site activities to be carefully scheduled around temperature conditions to maintain quality and avoid delays.
PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.



6

The project also incorporated regenerative media filtration technology, replacing the traditional sand filtration systems used at the original facility.
PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.



7

The completed facility features two distinct pool areas.
PHOTO COURTESY ACAPULCO POOLS LTD.



8

The facility has been transformed into a destination that meets current operational standards and the expectations of today's users.
PHOTO COURTESY RUTHERFORD CONTRACTING



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A splash pad rounds out the aquatic offerings, providing another interactive play area while distributing users throughout the facility.

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Shade, seating, and staging areas were also important elements of the overall visitor experience.

PHOTO COURTESY RUTHERFORD CONTRACTING

project teams. Working under the project's general contractor, Rutherford Contracting, Acapulco Pools was responsible for delivering the aquatic scope of work.

This included the construction of reinforced cast-in-place concrete leisure and shallow pools, surge tanks, and a splash pad holding tank; installation of epoxy-painted pool finishes and coping systems; and the supply and installation of mechanical, chemical treatment, electrical, and safety systems. Acapulco Pools also supplied and installed the recirculation and filtration system serving the splash pad. The splash pad features and waterslides were supplied and installed by ABC Recreation.

A significant portion of the aquatic infrastructure also required extensive underground and exposed piping systems. This included both pressure and return piping for circulation, as well as distribution piping serving the filtration, chemical treatment, and feature systems. Schedule 40 and Schedule 80 polyvinyl chloride (PVC) piping were used

throughout the installation, depending on the application, with careful co-ordination required for proper routing, access, and integration with the concrete structures and mechanical equipment.

To improve quality control and streamline installation, curved formwork sections were prefabricated off-site before being delivered to the project. This approach reduced on-site labour requirements while helping maintain dimensional accuracy throughout construction.

As with many large-scale projects, challenges emerged along the way. Periods of prolonged winter weather added complexity to exterior works, requiring certain concrete and site activities to be carefully scheduled around temperature conditions to maintain quality and avoid delays.

Equipment issues affecting several pool heaters were identified during pre-startup testing, allowing replacement parts to be sourced and installed well before the facility's scheduled opening. Early commissioning efforts also helped identify and resolve several operational issues before the waterpark welcomed its first guests.

Preparing for opening day

Commissioning and operator training were key to preparing the facility for public use.

The facility's mechanical systems were completed and thoroughly tested in fall 2025, well in advance of the planned summer 2026 opening. Following successful testing, the pools were winterized, giving the commissioning team a head start and allowing preparations for opening day to go smoothly in the spring.

When warmer weather returned, all mechanical, filtration, chemical treatment, and circulation systems were restarted, tested, and verified to ensure they met engineering specifications and public health requirements.

Equally important was preparing the operations team. City staff participated in extensive hands-on training covering filtration equipment, chemical controllers, UV treatment systems, pumps, heaters, accessibility equipment, and routine maintenance procedures. Training focused heavily on troubleshooting and preventive maintenance, ensuring operators were well-equipped to manage the facility safely and efficiently throughout a busy summer season.

Ready for the future

The new Kidstown Water Park represents a significant investment in Toronto's aquatic infrastructure.

The facility has been transformed into a destination that meets current operational standards and the expectations of today's users.

Beyond its immediate recreational value, the redevelopment also positions the facility for long-term municipal use, with systems and layouts designed to support heavy seasonal demand for years to come, while allowing operators to manage the site efficiently throughout peak summer conditions. The improved configuration of aquatic zones also helps distribute users more effectively across the site, contributing to a smoother overall visitor experience during high-attendance periods.

Most importantly, it preserves the role Kidstown has played in the community for decades—providing a place where families can gather, play, and cool off during Toronto's hottest summer days, now supported by infrastructure built to serve the next generation of visitors. ♡



Des Caruana is a commissioner for Acapulco Pools Ltd. in Kitchener, Ont. He has been with the company since 2013 and brings more than 25 years of experience in the construction industry. Caruana is responsible for commissioning new aquatic facilities, ensuring systems operate as intended, and ensuring that staff are properly trained in daily pool maintenance. He can be reached at des@acapulcopools.com.



Nik Ahir is a project manager for Acapulco Pools Ltd. With a background in construction management and civil engineering, and eight years of industry experience, he manages commercial pool projects of all sizes across Canada. He can be reached at nik@acapulcopools.com.

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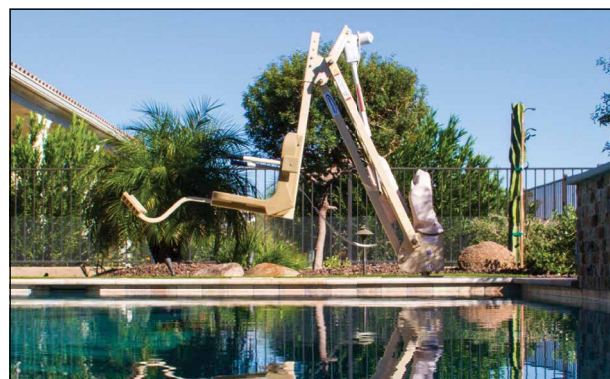
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www.hstsynthetics.com



The Mighty 400 Pool Lift by Aqua Creek

The Mighty 400 Pool Lift is ADA Compliant and UL Certified, with a unique patented design that offers versatility without taking up too much deck space. By itself the lift is ideal for in-ground pool and spa applications, but with the addition of any of the available pedestal options, the lift can clear up to 48-inch high walls. Its impressive setback range can reach out across the pool deck by as much as 44-inches. Whisper quiet and simple push button operation, available in an array of standard and custom color options. Solar options also available!

aquacreekproducts.com



Everyday Protection at the Flip of a Switch

Coverstar automatic pool covers offer reliable protection and streamlined operation with just the touch of a button. Custom-built to fit your pool, each cover is crafted from premium materials for durability, easy maintenance, safety and peace of mind.

www.lathampool.com/automatic-safety-covers



Taylor's test strips are engineered for accuracy

Taylor's new line of test strips make testing and maintaining balanced water easier than ever. Simply dip and read to determine the water quality of a pool or spa. Included are parameters needed to keep water safe, clean and comfortable for swimmers. Offerings include: Pool (S-1411); Spa (S-1412); 7-Way (S-1413), which includes the free sureTREAT mobile app allowing the user to snap a picture with their mobile device and receive treatment recommendations in an instant; Salt (S-1414). The test pads contain a patented technology which provides better results and are therefore "Engineered for Accuracy". Bilingual service (French/English).

www.taylorstechnologies.com



Jandy® Infinite WaterColors™ Nicheless Lights with QuickConnect Technology

- All the color. None of the hassle.
- Jandy® Infinite WaterColors™ Nicheless Lights with QuickConnect Technology offer unlimited colors, instantly. Our innovative QuickConnect technology allows service pros to easily extend the lights above the waterline for any future servicing, making what used to be a tedious, costly process now simple and fast. Plus, our proprietary HydroCool® Technology ensures your lights will run cooler, so they last longer for endless enjoyment with none of the hassle.
- *Alexa is a trademark of Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates

Jandy.ca



Now Any Hot Tub Can be a Salt Water Hot Tub

Northern Saltub® Chlorine-Free Water Enhancer is specially formulated to improve hot tub water quality and enhance your soaking experience. This easy-to-use granular formula conditions the water for a soft, silky feel while helping increase the effectiveness of other water care products. It also helps protect metal surfaces from corrosion and adds a pleasant, fresh scent to your hot tub water. Simply add Saltub® as part of your regular water care routine and enjoy water that feels and smells noticeably better.

northernleisureproducts.com

2-INCH SIDE-MOUNT MULTIPORT VALVE



Praher's SM2-PP3 is a 2-inch, pre-plumbed side-mount multiport valve designed for Pentair sand filters. Its high-impact ABS construction provides corrosion resistance, while the moulded 90-degree plumbing sweep supports optimum flow performance. The valve features 2-inch female threaded connections and is NSF 50 approved. Made in Canada using U.S.-made, UV-stabilized high-impact ABS, every unit is factory-tested. Praher's Aquastar automatic backwash actuator is available for new installations and field retrofits.

www.praherplastics.ca

Reliable Efficient Heating Performance



Specially designed to withstand the rigors of commercial operation, Universal H-Series ASME gas heaters include upgraded features and materials at no additional cost. By combining industry-leading hydraulics, energy efficiency and reliability with eco-friendly low NOx emissions, they provide the ideal heating solution for new or existing applications. At the center is Hayward's Universal Display, delivering a consistent, intuitive control experience across Omni®, OmniX®, and competitive automation systems. Hayward Universal H-Series Heaters are ASME Certified for commercial use.

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Designed and built by BonaVista Leisurescapes, this compact north Toronto backyard demonstrates

how thoughtful planning can maximize a limited footprint. The focal point is a custom 2.7 x 5.5 m (9 x 18 ft) concrete pool with an attached spillover hot tub, creating a seamless transition between relaxation and recreation. An automatic cover maintains the pool's clean appearance when it is not in use. A defining feature is the pool's negative-edge design, where water flows into a decorative river rock trough, creating a striking visual effect. Architectural elements frame the water, while the surrounding hardscape, tiered decks, generous lounging areas, and carefully placed plantings create a cohesive outdoor living environment. Warm, built-in landscape lighting highlights the space after dark, extending its usability into the evening and reinforcing the clean, contemporary design. The surrounding landscape was completed by LandCon, based on a design by Calumna Creative, complementing the pool with a unified outdoor setting. Although compact in size, the thoughtful arrangement of amenities allows the backyard to feel significantly larger than its footprint, demonstrating how careful design can transform a small urban property into an elegant outdoor retreat. 🌿

—Jason Cramp

PHOTO BY RAMZI KHALIL/COURTESY BONAVIDA LEISURESCAPES



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