

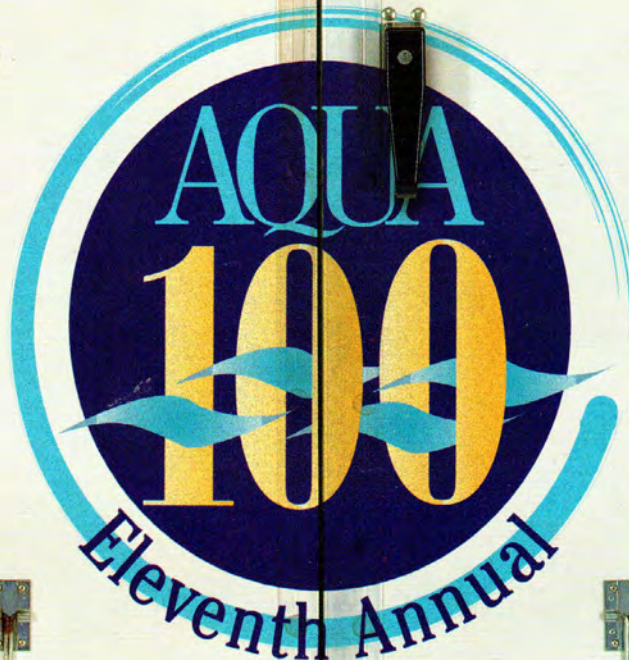
THE LATEST IN AUTOMATIC POOL CLEANERS (Page 45)

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AQUA

The Business Magazine for Spa & Pool Professionals

STEP-BY-STEP
ABOVE-GROUND POOL
INSTALLATION
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Status Report: Strong fourth-quarter sales and lead flow, combined with continued strength in the local economy, are expected to keep in-ground pool sales on the rise at this second-generation family business. And with more pools in the ground, chemical sales and overall revenue are also expected to keep increasing. As a result, new salespeople and additional subcontractors have been lined up. At the same time, advertising expenses will be trimmed because the company enjoys a high referral rate.

The best thing I did for my business in 1999: We hired an additional salesperson to take advantage of the wave we are riding.

Tip for Success: Don't let your product or service quality be compromised in this strong economy. A controlled growth plan is very important.

ASSOCIATED POOL BUILDERS INC.

Location: Bismarck, N.D.

Principals: Duane and Randy Traynor, Jerry Ternes

Founded: 1974

Outlets: 4 construction/retail

Employees: 15 year-round, 65 in-season

Professional Affiliations: Chamber of Commerce, NAHB

Previous AQUA 100 Appearances: 2

Products Sold: Custom gunite pools/spas, package vinyl-liner pools, decks, portable spas, chemicals, supplies, toys

Status Report: By riding the economic boom wave and selling 22 percent more pools in 1999, this multimillion-dollar firm boosted gross revenue 15 percent. The strong economy is expected to help the first-generation family business increase revenue by another 20 percent this year.

The best thing I did for my business in 1999: We added salespeople and gave them the support and tools needed to increase sales.

Tip for Success: The best sales tools are referrals won with quality and customer satisfaction.

BACHMANN POOLS & SPAS LLC

Location: Madison, Wis.

Principal: Fred Bachmann

Motto: "The home relaxation specialists"

Founded: 1985

Outlets: 1 retail

Employees: 13 year-round, 15 in-season

Professional Affiliations: Local Builders/Remodelers, NSPI

Previous AQUA 100 Appearances: 0

Products Sold: Portable spas, above-ground pools, gazebos, saunas, steam suites, fireplaces, billiards, chemicals, supplies, toys

Status Report: Even though Bachmann's retail store was being renovated during the peak season last year, the company managed to increase chemical sales 27 percent by buying a direct-mail list of pool owners. In its second year selling above-ground pools, the company moved 53 units, a 30 percent increase from 1998, and hopes to sell 100 this year. Meanwhile, its main business — spas — increased 7 percent last year. More store traffic following the renovation is expected to push spa unit sales up around the 400 mark this year and boost gross revenue by 20 percent — the same increase the company posted in 1999.

The best thing I did for my business in 1999: We renovated our store and warehouse, added staff and computerized inventory.

Tip for Success: Maintain an experienced, friendly, qualified staff in every aspect of your business.

BACKYARD AMENITIES

Location: Baytown, Texas

Principals: Brad and Patricia Stephens

Motto: "When quality counts ... count on us"

Founded: 1998

Outlets: 1 construction/retail

Employees: 44 year-round

Professional Affiliations: Better Business Bureau of Houston, Chamber of Commerce, NSPI

Previous AQUA 100 Appearances: 1

Products Sold: Custom gunite pools/spas, chemicals, supplies, toys

Status Report: A new store with two display pools helped this first-generation family business sell 149 pools last year — a 48 percent increase over 1998. Further, having a retail store where they previously had only business offices helped Backyard Amenities increase chemical sales by 200 percent. These increases boosted gross revenue by 50 percent. A more modest 10 percent increase in gross revenue is expected this year while building about the same number of pools.

The best thing I did for my business in 1999: We built a new showroom/warehouse/design center that also houses offices and two display pools.

Tip for Success: Always be available to the customer — before, during and after the sale — while striving to provide the best product available.

BACKYARDS OF AMERICA

Location: Midvale, Utah

Principal: Ray Schureman

Motto: "Bringing vacations home"

Founded: 1984

Outlets: 1 retail/construction

Employees: 9 year-round

Professional Affiliations: Better Business Bureau of Utah, NSPI

Previous AQUA 100 Appearances: 3

Products Sold: Portable spas, package vinyl-liner pools, above-ground pools, decks, gazebos, saunas, Christmas items, chemicals, supplies, toys

Status Report: Gross revenue increased by only 5 percent last year, but with Y2K preparations and nearby freeway construction over with, this ski-area business is anticipating a 20 percent jump in sales this year. Most of that growth is expected to come from a forecasted 30 percent leap in spa unit sales — from 230 last year to around the 300 mark.

The best thing I did for my business in 1999: We improved our location signage.

Tip for Success: Show your product well, compensate employees well, treat customers well, have passion and values and share them with your employees.

BASSEMIERS' FIREPLACE & PATIO INC.

Location: Evansville, Ind.

Principals: John and Diane Bassemier

Motto: "The pros of the patios"

Founded: 1968

Outlets: 1 retail/service

Employees: 35 year-round, 40 in-season

Professional Affiliations: Better Business Bureau of Evansville, Hearth Products Association, NACFR, National Barbecue Association, National Chimney Sweep Guild

Previous AQUA 100 Appearances: 2

Products Sold: Fireplaces, portable spas, gazebos, casual furniture, billiards, Christmas items, chemicals, supplies, grills

