Disrupting the Traditional Pool Service Model: Smart Pool Innovation from WaterGuru Launches New Pool Pro Service Careers

Super-Efficient Pool Service Comes to Rural America

In rural areas of the country, finding competent pool service companies to maintain commercial and residential pools is a challenge. The economics don't favor a pool service business where a region's pool density is low, and the distance separating pools is great. Unlike metro areas dotted with hundreds of pools per square mile, such as Dallas, Houston, Miami, Phoenix, and Los Angeles, rural America — with its low population and even lower pool density — has been economically out of reach for traditional pool service companies.

What is fueling the growth of new entrants into the cutting-edge residential and commercial pool service businesses nationwide? The answer is a more profitable business model enabled by the latest AI-powered smart pool technology, which overcomes the long-standing inefficiencies of the traditional pool maintenance service models. These inefficiencies stem from relying on manual testing tools that require 1) dispatching a service person, 2) driving to the customer pool, and 3) performing and reading the test results.

The time and labor required by this century-old service model are excessive just to collect test data. As a result, for residential pools, no pool water quality data is known in-between weekly service appointments. Meaning the service company responsible for maintaining those pools is blind, operating without water quality data six days a week. But pool water is volatile, and when chlorine is rapidly consumed, sometimes in a single day, a lot can go wrong. Overcompensating to avoid this problem by over-chlorinating pool water, a common industry practice, causes a second problem - creating an unwelcoming water environment for swimmers who complain about burning eyes, itchy skin, and other symptoms. This has been the trade-off pool service

companies have had to make in the past due to the blindness factor six days a week - but no longer is this true.

The only beneficiaries of this outdated pool service model have been the manufacturers of swim goggles protecting eyes from over-chlorinated or low-pH waters. In the absence of having daily water quality data, pool service firms, by default, place the burden on customers to report problems - a leading cause of pool service customer dissatisfaction and terminations. Outdated testing methods often utilized by pool service companies rely on the imperfections of human eyes to read changing colors on test strips, or liquid test sets, an inherent deficiency when color perception varies greatly between people. Five people looking at the same water test result see different colors leading to mis-dosing of chemicals.

Without the ability for the pool service to track the daily volatility, small problems become big ones by the next service interval and allow costly issues such as algae bloom.

Many service firms overdose chemicals as a risk mitigation strategy to avert the costly clean-up problem for their business when a customer's pool turns green. This practice, while optimal for the service company seeking to avoid the high costs of salvaging a pool gone bad, produces an inferior result for the pool owner who expects a perfectly healthy pool that's safe and comfortable for the whole family, including the most sensitive young children. This mismatch between pool owners' expectations and pool service firms' need for cost containment makes the industry ripe for disruption.

What if pool service companies, without any travel involved, could know the exact water condition every day for each pool under their care? That would be a game-changer. And that time has come.

In this connected, smart pool tech world, testing is fully automated, with the daily test data results analyzed by AI before being communicated back to the service provider responsible for maintaining pool health. The in-pool test monitor does the work automatically and reports back like a dutiful soldier. Armed with real-time, high-precision test data, service pros no longer operate in the dark, dispatching staff only when needed, according to the data.

For residential customers, that means a weekly cleaning might be rescheduled for a two-week cadence instead during certain times of the year, saving the customer money or raising the service provider's profitability. With the same staffing, a greater number of pools can be serviced, generating greater revenues. Efficiency has risen, and so have

revenues. Conversely, when a problem is brewing, oftentimes in the aftermath of a pool party that includes adults, kids, and maybe a dog, or following a weather event, the bacterial load rises so quickly that chlorine is rapidly consumed, leaving the pool unsanitized, primed for algae blooms. In the modern pool service era, smart pool monitoring sends real-time alerts warning of impending problems, triggering the service company into action. Greater efficiency of service staff and better outcomes for pool owners is the result.

What about commercial pools? Pool care is often governed by state or county health regulations, and each state's regulations vary. But more and more state regulations are embracing test automation based on the understanding that it's more accurate and reliably performed without fail. In the commercial pool world, multiple tests per day are required. Sometimes three times a day, sometimes four depending on the state. The labor cost associated with attending to commercial pools is particularly high, and service prices reflect that reality.

Servicing commercial pools with AI-powered smart pool technology produces an even greater upswing in the quality of work performed and in the economics of service delivery. With fully automated testing, the need and cost for a live person conducting manual testing are often eliminated except when regulations explicitly call for human-conducted tests or when automated test results indicate a need to rebalance the water. It's the live monitoring of the pool water health that is important, similar to how security companies monitor thousands of homes using in-home or in-office sensors. The pool is now instrumented, and the new role of the pool service provider is to closely monitor the transmitted test results, which drives dispatching to spring into action when needed.
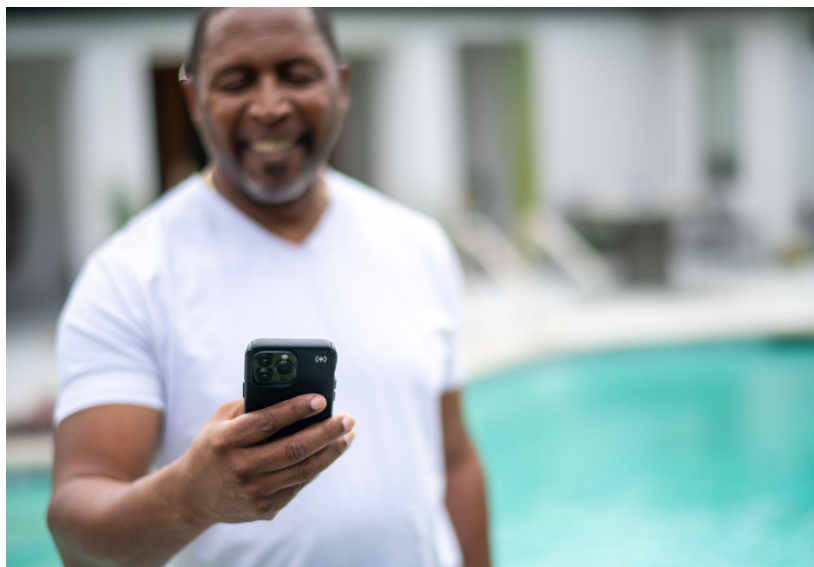
This is a new and exciting way to run a pool service business. Where customers appreciate you more than ever, and with inefficiencies removed, the ability to drive greater revenues and profits is easily within reach.

Grant Linder, in rural Alabama, like so many other early adopters of smart pool technology across the country, has come to this same realization, launching new pool service businesses not hamstrung by the old ways of labor-intensive water testing nor burdened by the problems resulting from operating blind.

Necessity is the mother of invention, as the saying goes. For Grant Linder, necessity was born out of living in a tiny town in Alabama with 12,000 residents. The low population, lower pool density, and vast distances between pools didn't economically support a traditional,

labor-intensive pool service business model. Recognizing the poor condition of his local pools, Grant seized the opportunity after gaining the confidence to start his own professional pool service a few years ago after successfully using WaterGuru's SENSE smart pool monitoring to finally gain control over his own residential pool.

The cutting-edge technology allowed him to effortlessly access accurate water chemistry readings on demand, aided by the expert in-app advice which analyzes the pool's digital twin in the WaterGuru cloud environment. That digital twin knows the size and type of each customer's pool, along with the type of chemicals being used to maintain balanced water. Pumping all of that data, including pump flow and temperature, into the AI engine results in the prescribed proper water rebalancing treatment to follow. This raises Grant's pool care IQ equivalent to that of a highly experienced professional. Grant's podcast education, combined together with the AI-guided advice from the WaterGuru app, was the breakthrough innovation that convinced him to launch his new business.
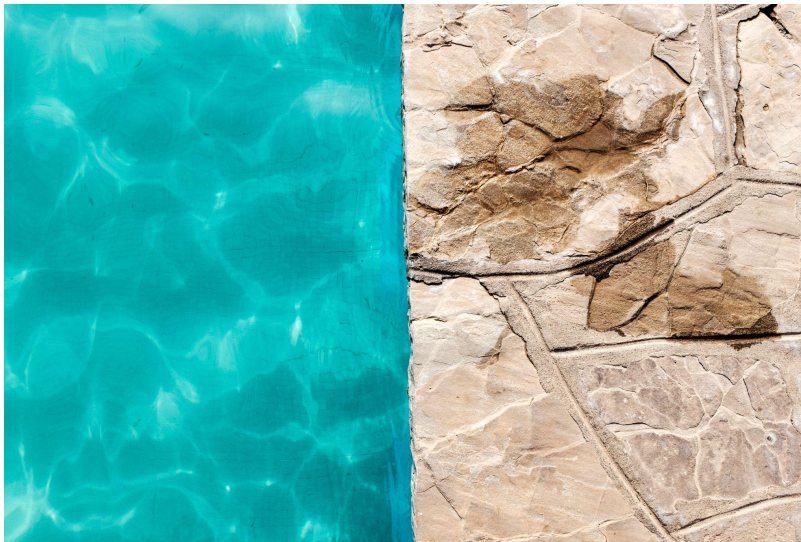
"I started my pool service to support our under-served pool community, which lacks the full range of services available in a big city. Down near the coast, there are a great many swimming pools and several pool service companies servicing both hotels and residential properties," Grant says. "But locally, everyone here was on their own. "With the WaterGuru phone app in my hand," Grant says, "regardless of where I am, I get a highly precise test result as often as I want, without traveling to any of the pools that I maintain." Now, Grant only travels to his client's pools when needing to be rebalanced or cleaned, and he never misses a deteriorating pool condition. No more unfortunate surprises. No more overdosing. No more costly problems to resolve with expensive over-use of chemicals. No more guesswork and time-consuming trips for pool water testing.

The implications for the traditional pool service industry are profound. Using technology to conquer time, distance, and error-prone manual test deficiencies eliminates the biggest constraints to delivering exceptional pool care cost-effectively. For Grant, his thriving pool service business now includes the community public pool and country club pool, as well as several residential pool owners and local hotels.

Delivering Proactive Pool Care and Maintenance

This technological advancement of smart pool monitoring has helped Grant scale his business. Now he watches over a growing number of pools, and anytime one of his managed pools begins to fall out of balance, he receives real-time alerts indicating which pool needs attention and what the prescribed dosing should be.

"I only need to drive over to my customers' pools when an action is required, never to conduct a test," Grant says. "And rather than being reactive to customer complaints, I respond proactively to what the data tells me. The data is my one source of truth, allowing me to be as effective as if I was physically on-site every day. This means I can deliver a higher level of service than traditional big-city service companies without all their overhead costs. And when I need to hire more staff, it gives me the flexibility to recruit novices who, with some minor training, just follow the AI-directed chemical dosing expert advice. Thanks to AI, staff turnover is no longer the big problem it once was."

Working Smarter, Not Harder. A New Business Model Based on Smart Pool Water Monitoring

While Grant enjoyed his job in the insurance industry, he also relished starting his own business and earning additional income. Stepping up from maintaining residential pools to commercial pools, however, presented a steep challenge. With his area's dense foliage, tree leaves often collect in pools, with tannins leaching into the water, causing rapid algae blooms. According to Grant, "The country club pool would turn green three times a year before I took over maintenance."

Nonetheless, after using WaterGuru's SENSE as the enabling technology for his pool service business, Grant saw that the standard concept of the pool service having to be physically on-site to conduct a water sample test and visiting once a week had become obsolete, but the pool service world hadn't figured that out yet. This gave him a first-mover advantage that made it possible to expand his pool service business into adjacent geographic areas where established firms already existed. He had a cost and quality of service advantage over traditional pool services, whose customers had grown accustomed to below-average water quality.

"By installing the WaterGuru SENSE in each pool's skimmer, I am never flying blind," Grant says. "No more wondering what I will find a week later, which can be dramatically different than what I had expected to see. We are, virtually speaking, visiting each pool several times a day without any physical travel involved. Every day I see the chlorine, pH, alkalinity, calcium hardness, and CYA levels on my WaterGuru dashboard." Eliminating the pool problems customers have been plagued by for so long while running the business with incredible operational efficiency has raised the performance benchmark for the entire industry. No more being held back by outdated twentieth-century pool care technology.

"Gone are the days of flying blind and reactively dealing with problems when it's too late," Grant says. "We don't see green pools anymore. I mean, work smarter, not harder, right? That's my approach."

Welcome to a New Era of Smart Pool Service

With the advent of 21st-century technology that leverages the full powers of AI and IoT, the economic curve has bent in favor of super-efficient pool service providers. What has changed is the ability, for the first time, to fundamentally rethink the pool service model and reinvent it in ways better for both the service provider and the pool owner.

WaterGuru's SENSE not only offers better readings, easier maintenance, and happier customers but also allows for more business opportunities for pool service providers working smarter. Whether your business focuses on lodging, pool building, shared community property, or solely on pool water maintenance delivery, the AI-powered SENSE smart pool monitor provides ongoing visibility and perfectly balanced water for every guest or client.