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**May 17, 2020**

*Our monthly newsletter is weekly during COVID. If you're new here, Welcome! Newsletter archives are available [on our website.](#)*

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Friends & Colleagues,

The big topic I'm hearing on the ground in aquatics this week is concern about BRAIN DRAIN. "Brain drain" is defined as the emigration of highly trained or intelligent people from a particular country or - in this case - industry.

How will COVID destroy the ranks of qualified lifeguards/instructors built up at your aquatic facility over the last few years? Whether a volunteer program, junior lifeguard club, swim team, stay-at-home parent coop, etc. all of the feeder programs you depend on to mitigate the labour shortage in the aquatics industry (because it's no longer "cool" to be a lifeguard) have stopped dead in

their tracks.

Brain drain occurs when market conditions shift. Historically we think of better economic opportunities elsewhere, but - in the case of COVID - it's going to be economic and personal uncertainty that drives poolies into jobs that they can do NOW, and not when pools eventually reopen.

Yes, there will be a brain drain at your pool. However, I'm going to go out on an unpopular limb and say that it's really not going to be any worse than what you would normally experience in the next 12-18 months, it's just all happening at once.

Walk with me for a moment....

By fearing the brain drain, you're inherently presupposing that your service level - once you reopen - will be the same as what you saw in February. **Whether your pool reopens next week or next year, I can tell you with conviction that people are not coming back to your pool the way you're planning.** The staffing model you have in mind will last maybe 4-6 weeks (two pay cycles or one monthly GL report) before it requires downsizing because upper management wants staffing costs to match lower revenue targets.

In other words: people won't come to the pool, so you're going to need fewer staff - period. Even if (and a big IF) you program swimming lessons or aquasize or swim team practice or lifeguard classes, customers across a wide spectrum will not set foot in your aquatic facility until some arbitrary personal safety threshold - that you have zero control over - has been met. Compare it to flying post-

9/11: some people recovered quickly, many didn't recover until a life event pushed them to get on an airplane years later.

Sorry, but you don't pay me to sugar coat it.

So where does that leave you in terms of action items? Now is the time to rewrite your organizational (org) chart. I'm not talking one that you make public or hand over to HR and the union, I'm talking about what job functions do you need to operate our aquatic facility and how many people can do that.

And you need to do it entirely nameless. Don't assume that Susie isn't going to quit because she's the breadwinner or John has family closeby, how many lifeguards, instructors, pool operators, trainers, etc. are needed to staff the facility in a way that is realistic to how your community experienced the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, if you're a small community with 10 deaths, it's even less likely that you will need a high level of staffing - the appetite just isn't there.

Once your org chart is done, then you can slot staff in as you connect with them individually *once you have a date to reopen*. Not before - too much will change - but once you have a go date, then see where your actual staffing level sits.

As always, if you have any questions or need any help, please don't hesitate to reach out!

-Katie Crysdale

PS. USA Swimming put together an interesting Facility Reopening Messaging & Planning document.

# POOLaide

free webinars for uncertain times

**last call: Friday, May 22**

Presented by Lakeview Aquatic Consultants Ltd.



Now available to book!

# Your Pool Post-COVID Virtual Session

We're overwhelmed by the interest in the session "Your Pool Post-COVID" Katie delivered at a virtual conference last week. This session is now available to book for groups or organizations anywhere in the world. Please [contact us](#) for rates and availability.

*"Katie's presentation was captivating. She raises important questions Aquatic Facility Managers need to ask themselves when preparing their opening plans, many of which I had not even considered."* - virtual participant

## **Session Information**

This session provides an overview of areas of swimming pool operations changing in a post-COVID world: communication; health & safety; programming; pool operations; and cleaning. Every aquatic facility will develop their own protocol under the guidance of local health authorities, but this session will get you thinking about the biggest risks and opportunities.

This is a 90-minute session, including Q & A.

## **Speaker Bio**

## **Presentation Excerpts**



## From Notifications



50 mins • 

Aquatics Directors worst nightmare...just found out one of my guards was in contact with someone who tested positive. Turns out that was almost 2 weeks ago. Now I might have to quarantine my entire staff.



and 27 others

13 Comments



Like



Comment

## This is your new reality - really

If you attended the "Your Pool post-COVID" session, we told you this is coming: it's not if, but when for the next 12-18 months.





# **CERTIFIED POOL OPERATOR (CPO) CLASS ONLINE**

**SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS  
MAY 23, 24, 30, 31  
10 AM - 2 PM EST  
8 AM - 12 PM MST**



Last chance to join this virtual class starting next weekend! Register now for guaranteed book delivery in North America.

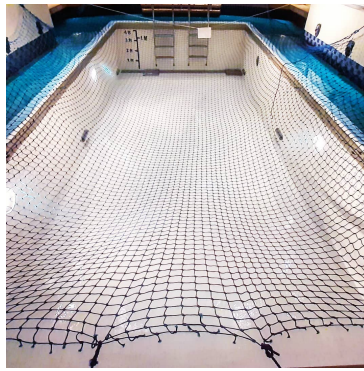
Have you considered if your job will exist when the pool reopens? Without fear mongering, we encourage all aquatic professionals to think beyond your current job description by updating your resume and auditing your skill set.

Maybe you prefer to work as a programmer, deck lead, or leadership instructor, but what if those jobs don't exist because there's no programming at your facility until 2021? All swimming pools need pool operators. Many jurisdictions and job descriptions require CPO certification.

All prices are CAD \$

[Click for details](#)

## Instagram Posts



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