Great Leaders...

...insist on intelligent risk. The reasons are multiple. People usually perform best when there is something at stake and they are at least mildly stressed. (Risk is a source of stress.) There should be something to gain for exceptional performance. Forcing a team to play a higher level game and perform to higher than expected standards improves the team’s ability to solve problems and work together.

...promote complexity. While not true for everyone, it is important to keep most people from being hypnotized by their work. Doing the same thing in the same way works fine for treatment protocols but the rest of the job should not be reduced to precise steps. We realize we’re on ambiguous ice so we will introduce the concept and let you figure it out. If you remove the need to think about a process,

continued on page 4
Happy Spring Everybody!

The weather here in South Texas has been balmy for a couple of weeks. Frankly, I am morning the early departure of winter. I love our mild, chilly Texas winters. But every spring brings new hope and new possibilities for making this the best swim business year yet. I am definitely up for our industry’s fun and frenetic spring and summer seasons.

To prepare for what I hope is our Association’s best year yet, your Board of Directors gathered in Phoenix for 3 days of strategic planning during the early part of January. During this meeting we committed to continue to use the Rockefeller Habits One Page Strategic Plan tool in an effort to maintain continuity and alignment for our organization. If you haven’t been through a strategic planning exercise, I would recommend Mastering the Rockefeller Habits by Verne Harnish, a “how to” book for strategic planning, for any business.

Overall, the board’s focus is positioning our organization for growth. This year we intend to do this by continuing to develop and refine our systems for data collection and analysis and for the professional development of our membership and of our executive director. We continue to look for and implement ways to bring educational value through our website and our education courses. Making those member benefits slick and meaty is an ongoing concentration of this board, the supporting education course committee’s and the Association office.

Developing and maintaining our strategic alliances with organizations such as The Safer 3 Foundation and the National Drowning Prevention Alliance is another way we create value for our members. We are thrilled to renew our commitment to these sister organizations that mean so much to so many of our member schools.

I am truly honored to finish my time as President of this Association with the stellar group of individuals currently serving as your Board of Directors. Their clarity of purpose, over-flowing energy and commitment to serving our membership is phenomenal. Our Association’s future is so bright, yep, I gotta wear shades!!

Make it a great swimming season!

Love,

Mary Reilly-Magee
Love to Swim School
President, U.S. Swim School Association

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Tammy Schoen, 713-434-7946
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Kendra Walker, 817-552-7946
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Lynn Ledford, Pat Sunderhaus, Mary Reilly-Magee (president), Tammy Schoen, Miren Oca (vice president), Kendra Walker, Mike Williams
Can you believe it’s been 25 years since the original Charter Members banded together to form the National Swim School Association? The NSSA was renamed the United States Swim School Association in 2003 and continues to carry out the original vision of the swim school pioneers from 1988.

Thanks to Peggy Burger, we have a comprehensive library of the monthly and quarterly newsletters from the early years when it was simply known as the NSSA Newsletter. Recently I was reading through the November 1988 issue, where just as today, it focused on sharing good business related articles and teaching tips for the industry. I was very proud to see how steady and strong our mission has remained over the years. This newsletter featured a look back at legendary Swim School teacher, Lucy Cowles, whose 1972 book “Teaching Your Tot To Swim” was a best-seller. She advised NSSA members to, “Make the lesson a happy, rewarding experience for both the student and yourself.”

This edition also featured some sage words of advice offered by Kathy Scala of Scala Swim Schools in Tucson; “We accept a student’s fear and talk about it a lot so they can be at one with the water, allowing swimming to take place.”

The interview with Kathy also revealed that she was charging $60 for 12 half-hour swim lessons. Wow! Thankfully that is something that has defiantly changed!

The Scala Swim School in Tucson was sold, but Kathy’s daughter Theresa continues to teach swimming in Colorado. As with many of our members, we are seeing the next generation stepping up and working in or even taking over the business. Of the original 30 charter members, 10 have maintained their membership over the past 25 years: Australian Swim Schools, Blue Buoy Swim School, Emler Swim School, Jan Thomas Swim School, LaPetite Baleen, Leahi Swim School, Lifestyle Swim School, Sherman Swim School, and Swim Gym. We would like to thank these charter members and many other early affiliates for their commitment to the NSSSA, and for helping to shape and support the USSSA that we know today.

As we celebrate the silver anniversary of our Association (NSSA/USSSA) we intend to take a look back at other “Moments In Time” to give members a better understanding of how the dynamic association we know today, came to be just that.

Welcome New & Returning Members

Above The Wave Swim School
Marie Girdamo, Carmel, NY

All Star Swim Academy
Katrina Brandhagen, Henderson, NV

Atlantic Swim Academy
Oksana Balakirev, Burnsville, MN

Aqua-Tots Swim School - Helotes
Arlette Gallegos, Helotes, TX

Aqua Tots Swimming
Greg Galustian, Plainview, NY

Little Lappers Swim School
Brent Carlson, Centennial, CO

Michael Phelps Swim School
Catharine Bennett, Baltimore, MD

My Swim Academy
Amro Taha, Missouri City, TX

Pengu Swim School
Tiffany Hofbauer, Houston, TX

Splash School
Ricardo Vasquez, Guadalupe
Nuevo Leon, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

Stephanie’s Swim School
Stephanie Woerner, Antioch, CA

Sunfish Swimming Lessons
Matthew Treydte, Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Swim Swim Swim I Say
Agnes Davis, New York, NY

Swimtuition
Galen Franchek, Poughkeepsie, NY

Membership Renewal

It’s almost that time again! Membership renewal for 2013-2014 is due on May 1st, 2013. To ensure that your membership status and benefits remain current, please do not delay.

In celebration of our 25th anniversary, the first 100 members to renew their membership will be entered into a drawing to receive a FREE United States Swim School Association hat! We will have a grand total of 25 lucky winners. Logon to the US Swim School Association website to renew today!
you are in danger of killing the habit of thinking at all. Or perhaps more crudely stated, if you make a job idiot-proof, you have no right to be surprised that only idiots will take the job.

...champion choice. Charles Coonradt, author of The Game of Work says that one element that makes playing games enjoyable is the introduction of choice. In most, if not all sporting activities, even when the rules are confining, there is still an element of choice, for example the stance you choose when making a free throw, the route you choose when returning a punt, the club you choose for the first drive out of the tee box. In healthcare, choice could be deadly but sometimes it saves lives. Your task is to figure out under what circumstances choice will be encouraged. To encourage choice requires enormous effort, but the result is sometimes it saves lives. Your task is to figure out under what circumstances choice will be encouraged. To encourage choice requires enormous effort, but the result is sometimes it saves lives.

...get an enemy. Every team needs an enemy and every enemy needs a name. In healthcare this is easy because you’re always fighting something. And most of those somethings already have names. You’re wrestling with cancer or trauma or obesity...those are all named enemies that don’t need renaming. What they need is personifying and consistently referred to as the enemy, the bad guy, the dark side...however you choose to portray it so long as the team is able to relate to something that is tangible in addition to being real.

...present plenty of problems. Human beings are built to solve problems. We are at our best when we are at work on big problems. Team leaders (a.k.a. bosses) are not supposed to solve problems! Solving problems for the team deprives them of the opportunity to feel they have contributed fully, robs the team members of the opportunity to grow, and steals valuable management time that could have been better spent mentoring or exploring new territories. Problem solving is the job of the team. The leader’s job is to be a problem giver not a problem solver. The leader is responsible for making certain that every team member is properly trained and equipped. Then and only then is it the leader’s responsibility to make certain that everyone is working on solving problems appropriate to the ability of that individual. There is nothing more beautiful, nothing more tea provoking than a team member leaving your office with a great big, fat, juicy problem... preferably a bunch of them!

...foster team intelligence. The popular saying is Together Each Achieves More. While that may be true, I believe that together each knows more. It doesn’t make for a snappy acronym but it does make for powerful teams. Simply put, the more individuals know about each other personally or professionally, the more they will be capable of working as a team— not as buddies who get along with one another but as team members, capable of achieving more together.

...go first. Leadership is not about directing the way. It’s about leading the way. And you can’t lead from behind any more than you can follow someone from in front! The oft unspoken goal of leadership is not followership but independence.

The goal of leadership is to get the team to do the right thing when the leader is not there.

The example set by the boss is the most powerful influence.

When presented with an opportunity to act, team members aren’t thinking about the organization or the patient. They are considering the consequences for themselves. And the biggest factor in the decision is often the example that has been set by the boss. Like tracks in the snow, leadership by example tells the team, “Go ahead. Take a step in this direction. You can do it. I’ll show you the way.”

...carry the compass. The two most important things a leader must do are: 1) Assemble the team; and 2) Sell the dream. If you put together a strong enough team, they’ll figure out how to use their collective talents to get the job done. Unless you sell the dream and set the course, they will select a course of their own which may or may not be the course you have in mind.
FINIS IS PROUD TO SUPPLY GREAT PRODUCTS TO YOUNG SWIMMERS!

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Contact Sarah Dodge for more information at 925.273.0958 or SDodge@FINISinc.com
Around the Pool

Bruce Sullivan

The United States Swim School Association has had numerous keynote speakers, but most would agree that the congeniality award would have to go to our good friend and motivational speaker, Bruce Sullivan. As many conference attendees know, Bruce Sullivan is a favorite throughout the Association, not just for his outstanding speeches, or enjoyable group activities, but for his overwhelming genuine interest in our industry and its mission.

Bruce is an accomplished author, relationship specialist, award winning keynote speaker, director of six private companies, and most importantly, a proud husband and father. His incredible balance of business and helping others seems to give him a true understanding of the human side of business, but it’s his ability to translate that and motivate others that has made him such an inspiration throughout our organization.

“There is no other industry in the world that inspires me as much as the learn to swim industry. The passion, energy and dedication of the people I meet makes for a positive learning experience and no doubt has a tremendous impact on the kids that they teach!” – Bruce Sullivan

In January Bruce traveled to several Association swim schools including Bubbles to Butterfly Swim School, Houston Swim Club, Ocaquatics Swim School, Saf-T-Swim, and SwimJim to speak and interact with both management and staff. Owners reported that their teams were still stirring with excitement and motivation days after their visit from Bruce.

*Bruce Sullivan visited Houston in January to inspire Houston Swim Club, FINS, SwimJim Houston, and Nitro Swim Club employees! When asked to describe Bruce’s session, those present...*
claimed it was “Exuberant”, “Eye-opening”, “Helpful”, “Moving”, and “Educational”! It never gets old to hear Bruce; and as always, we all left the meetings with him feeling better prepared to be the best people we can be everyday and in every aspect of our lives.”

Tammy Schoen, USSSA Board Member and Owner of Huston Swim Club

“I loved Bruce Sullivan’s inspirational and motivational information on how to be a better communicator. He really facilitates a group discussion and individual examination of how to improve yourself both personally and professionally. He’s fun, dynamic and very engaging to listen to. I absolutely loved him!!!!”

Ailene Zaret Tisser, co-owner of Angelfish Therapy

The US Swim School Association would like to thank Bruce for his continued support and positive impact on our organization. He will be back in the US during the month of April and still has a few dates available. For more information on “Bruce events” and/or scheduling, please contact Melissa McDonald at Melissa@brucesullivan.com.

Congratulations Johnny Johnson!

In case you happened to miss the great big shout-out to Johnny Johnson in the Facebook Owners’ Group, the above mentioned all-star was named one of Aquatics International’s most influential people of the past 25 years! Not only was he recognized for the success with Blue Buoy Swim School, but also for the outstanding awareness created by the Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation founded by Johnny and his wife Cindy.

Johnny has been a member of the US Swim School Association since its inception in 1988. A regular speaker at the National Conference and Spring Workshop he has also spoken at a multitude of events nationally and internationally. Johnny has been recognized by the United States Swim School Association throughout the years for his tremendous leadership and dedication to the Association’s mission. In 1996 he received the Guiding Light Award, became a USSSA Hall of Fame inductee in 2004, and in 2010 Johnny and Cindy Johnson earned the Humanitarian Award for their incredible works of service in drowning prevention. He continues to help move our organization forward with his commitment to water safety and promotion of education. It is easy to see why Aquatics International has chosen him as one of the most influential people in aquatics.

Blue Buoy Swim School is now in its 57th year, and continues to build upon the original standards and goals set by creators, Mel and Doris Maxwell many years ago, “Swimming lessons should be fun, effective, and individually paced”. With that firm belief, Blue Buoy has molded caring and talented instructors, taught countless students to swim at every level, and has even had multiple students go on to be Olympians.

Congratulations Johnny, and thank you for continued commitment to the Association and learn-to-swim industry!
Partnership:
Congratulations to AquaSafe Swim School on their new Life Floor®!

AquaSafe Swim School
Scottsdale, Arizona

LIFE FLOOR®
Solutions To Stand On™
LIFEFLOOR.COM/swim-schools
Non-Compete Agreements: Are They Enforceable?

By: George W. Keeley

The most litigated issue in employment contracts is the legality of so-called “restrictive covenant” provisions, such as a non-compete clause which bars an ex-employee from going to work for a competitor. Courts are often reluctant to enforce these restrictive covenants if they impose an unreasonable hardship on the ex-employee. They are strictly scrutinized as to their “reasonableness” in light of the facts and circumstances presented in each case. A company considering the use of non-compete agreements should keep the following points in mind:

• Whether a non-compete is legally enforceable will be determined by state law.
• Generally the law of the state where the employee is located will apply. A contractual agreement as to which state law applies may be ineffective.
• Non-competes have to be reasonable to be enforceable. Reasonableness is determined by the courts based on the specific facts in each case. Primary attention is given by the courts to:
  • the geographic scope of the non-compete,
  • the duration of the non-compete, and
  • the type of activity the ex-employee is precluded from engaging in.
• Non-competes are more likely to be upheld if the geographic scope is smaller, the duration is shorter and the type of activity is narrower (e.g., sales position only, versus working for a competitor in any capacity). They are also more likely to be upheld if the employee is only prohibited from soliciting the employer’s established customers.
• Many states will void an unreasonable restriction rather than modify it. For example, if a two-year duration is specified, and the court considers this duration unreasonably long, the court may nullify the restriction entirely rather than upholding it for a shorter duration.
• The employee should realize what he or she is agreeing to and receive a benefit in return. This may be initial employment if the non-compete is agreed to at time of hire, or an additional payment to an existing employee for the non-compete.
• Always consult company legal counsel for guidance in preparing a non-compete to meet your particular needs and to be consistent with state law reasonableness criteria.

The following is a sample non-compete provision for inclusion in an employment agreement which defines other terms and conditions of employment.

Noncompete/Confidentiality. During my employment with the Company and for a period of ________ after my employment is terminated by the Company or by me for any reason, with or without cause:

a. I will not, in (define geographic territory), directly or indirectly, engage in or own or control any interest in (except as a passive investor in publicly held companies and except for investments held at the date hereof) act as an officer, director, or employee of or consultant or adviser to, any firm, corporation, or institution directly or indirectly in competition with or engaged in a business substantially similar to that of the Company, including the manufacture or sale of products or the provision of services which the Company was engaged in, or was developing, at the time my employment terminates.

b. I will not recruit or hire any employee of the Company, or otherwise induce such employee to leave the employment of Company, to become an employee of or otherwise be associated with me or any company or business with which I am or may become associated.

c. I will not solicit or have any contact with any person who was a customer of the Company at the time of my termination of employment or within one year prior thereto and for whom I rendered services or with whom I became acquainted with as a result of my duties with the Company.

d. At any time upon the Company’s request and, in any event, upon termination of my employment with the Company, I will immediately deliver to the Company all data, manuals, specifications, lists, notes, writings, customer and product lists, photographs, microfilm, tape recordings and all other documents or tangible materials whatsoever, including all copies or duplicates, concerning any part of the Company’s activities or concerning any part of my activities as a Company employee. All such documents and tangible materials, and copies or duplicates thereof, including my own notes, are acknowledged by me to be the Company’s property which is only entrusted to me on a temporary basis.

e. I understand that in the event of a violation of any provision of this Agreement, the Company shall have the full right to seek injunctive relief, in addition to any other existing rights provided in this Agreement or by operation of law, without the requirement of posting bond. I shall reimburse the Company for all costs, expenses or damages that it incurs as a result of any violation by me of any provision of this Agreement. This obligation shall include court costs, litigation expenses, and reasonable attorneys’ fees.

f. I acknowledge that the restrictions imposed by this Agreement are fully understood and will not preclude me from becoming gainfully employed following a termination of my employment with the Company.

g. The foregoing restrictions are limited to (describe the type of activity or job the employee is precluded from taking). [Delete this section if the employee is precluded from taking any position with a designated competitor.]

NOTE: The above non-compete provision is only a sample. Each company is encouraged to consult your legal professionals to develop a non-compete provision which suits your needs and circumstances.

Source: Keeley, Kuenn & Reid
www.kkrlaw.com
The Committee Report

Special Abilities Committee

The United States Swim School Association’s Special Abilities Training is a professional development resource designed to help aquatic professionals understand students with disabilities, which we have termed “Special Abilities.” By learning to focus on students’ special abilities and adopting customized learning plans, instructors can help students achieve unprecedented success in the aquatic environment, ultimately increasing the opportunity for these individuals to participate in aquatic activities, learn water safety and discover an environment in which they can excel.

Historically, swim instructors who taught disabled students were considered “special needs” or “adaptive aquatic” instructors. Our goal is to redefine these terms and focus on the ability of the swimmer. After all, when we work with special ability swimmers, we get in return so much more than we give. It is often said that working with disabled students “requires the patience of a saint.” Not true. What it does require is compassion. Swimmers with special abilities challenge us to care more than we think possible and engage more than we believe we are able. And they open our hearts in ways that few individuals ever experience. In short, they have a Special Ability to bring out the best in us.

The Special Abilities Committee goal is to provide every member of the association with up to date research, awareness and teaching strategies so they may be successful while working with this vast and unique population of students. In October 2011 the initial formal committee was formed to include:

- **Tammy Anderson** - Chairman
  *Aqua Pros Swim School, San Diego, California*

- **Dave Tonesen** - Board Liaison
  *SwimKids, Woodbridge, Virginia*

- **Erin Seal-Grande** - Committee Member
  *Seal Swim School, Lutz, Florida*

- **Misty Peters** - Committee Member
  *American Kids Sports Center, Bakersfield, California*

- **Marty Girch** - Committee Member
  *Mar-Tar Swim School, Elkridge, Maryland*

The committee’s main goal was to develop and complete the first version of the training course. The course was to include both a classroom and an in-water training segment to present to the members of the United States Swim School Association at the 2012 Conference in Hawaii.

To help guide the committee through the process and successfully reach our goal, we first established our core values. The core values include:

1. **World Class**: Create a training curriculum that is viewed as an international standard of excellence.

2. **Empowering**: To instill confidence and understanding while working with Special Abilities by providing the adequate tools and proper education.

3. **Interactive**: Leading an interactive pool

Each quarter the Association will be featuring a different USSSA committee in our Swimformation Newsletters. This will give our members an opportunity to learn more about the history of each committee, its purpose, and how they are actively improving our association one project at a time.
session that role plays working with Special Ability students.

4 **Adaptable:** Acknowledging that each class may desire different information and adapt and modify specific topics as needed.

5 **Innovative:** Continuously providing new and creative ideas with cutting edge teaching techniques.

6 **Comprehensive:** Provide a detailed and current curriculum.

We then developed an action plan and held monthly telephone conference meetings to stay on track and achieve our goal.

In April, 2012 we presented a “dry-run” course to 35 volunteer United States Swim School Association members in Ft Lauderdale, Florida. The dry-run training was extremely valuable. The input we received from the attendees literally altered the entire course and direction. We added and made multiple improvements to the course.

Finally, we rolled out the inaugural Special Abilities course in October, 2012 at the National Conference in Hawaii, where we received positive feedback from the attendees. Our success would have not been possible without the help of the association office and our gracious hosts, Ben and Lori Komer of Leahi Swim School, Honolulu, Hawaii for allowing us to utilize their facility for the training.

What’s Next?

Once again, the feedback from the National Conference gave us additional insight to improve upon. We have changed the training to an 8 hour training course, rather than two separate 4 hour courses. This will eliminate the time restrictions and give us a little more flexibility. It will also ensure that attendees will have the opportunity to have all of their questions answered and for us to spend more time on specific topics, if needed.

Currently, the committee is in the process of making improvements to the first course which was presented in Hawaii by adding more instructional videos and interactive topics for discussion in the classroom.

In October, at the National Convention, Dave Tonnesen’s term ended and he stepped down as our board liaison. Dave was instrumental in getting the Special Abilities Committee formed and he contributed many hours towards the successful launch of Special Abilities Training. We now welcome Mike Williams of American Kids Sports Center, Bakersfield, California as our new board liaison. We look forward in working with Mike and the board to continually improve on the Special Abilities Training for all of the USSSA members.

*The Association would like to express their thanks to committee chair, Tammy Anderson for the information provided above.*
Do you feel the same way we do? After attending a conference with our colleagues, we come home with a renewed passion and fervor. We are feeling that way now after returning from the National Drowning Prevention Alliance Symposium. We had the opportunity to meet with many of you during the USSSA Spring Workshop at the Symposium and share our enthusiasm for water safety. If you missed our workshop, we outlined the Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation and USSSA partnership. Our presentation went into detail of what the Safer 3 can do for you… swim school owners.

One of the programs that we focused on most during the workshop was the Safer 3 Water Safety Challenge. We enhanced the event guide to include more marketing materials, additional event details, a new event planning template, and much more. We encourage everyone to host a Safer 3 Water Safety Challenge this year. The Safer 3 Foundation is available to help you plan and offer assistance to ensure that you have a successful event. Please visit our website to learn more and request the updated event guide.
Connect with Your Association

The US Swim School Association e-newsletter is the primary source for all USSSA information. The Association office sends two e-newsletters each month to ensure that our members are receiving the most up-to-date information, easy access to useful links, and educational articles to conveniently make the most of their membership. We use this resource to send voting materials, committee applications, new member lists, event updates, deadline reminders, and more.

If you are not receiving your semimonthly news please contact the Association at office@usswimschools.org to update your email address or request our e-news link.

Dear Valued Member,

As many of you are preparing to head into the busy spring season, the US Swim School Association is ramping up and reaching out to help you prepare for your best season yet!

Projects include, but are not limited to:
- The Membership Public Relations Committee recently sent a short survey, examining improvements for member benefits.
- The upcoming Spring Workshop is packed with educational opportunities, from roundtable discussions and outstanding speakers, to water workshops and classroom courses.
- Our new Infant Toddler Presenter Course means future opportunities for the Association to bring courses to your...
To celebrate our 25th anniversary, the 2013 USSSA National Conference will be our biggest event to date! In response to our e-newsletters, Facebook, and surveys, our members have spoken, and your Association is delivering. This conference schedule is packed with education for every level of swim school. Additional courses for this event include the ever evolving Special Abilities and Infant Toddler workshops, and business development courses. While many of our regular conference attendees have participated in workshops in the past, our courses have been revised to include current industry leading concepts, training tools, and teaching techniques. In addition to our list of speakers from within the industry, we are excited to announce our two keynote speakers for our anniversary conference; Michael Brandwein & T. Scott Gross. (see full bios on page 17)

Education is our main objective, but having fun may simply be unavoidable. Scottsdale, Arizona is a beautiful historic town with a number of attractions for the entire family and swim school team. Hiking majestic desert terrain, kayaking the Verde River, and visiting the Scottsdale Historical Society and Museum, are just a few of the many activities awaiting you. A short drive from gorgeous Sedona and one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World - the Grand Canyon, there are many opportunities to make this a trip for the ages. With close to twenty member schools in the surrounding area, this year’s swim school tours promise to add to the wide variety of educational “sight-seeing”.

Between the relaxing hotel amenities, unique dining experiences in Old Town, and the abundance of educational tools, the only stressful detail will be deciding which courses to attend and how many nights you will be staying. Join us, and experience world class resources, education, and networking opportunities to help you develop your swim school business.

That is the true promise of the United States Swim School Association.

Event Date
October 9th - 11th, 2013

Event Location
The Scottsdale Plaza Resort
Scottsdale, Arizona

Registration Rates
$500 for first attendee
$350 for second attendee
$295 each additional attendee
Celebrating 25 Years
Obamacare is Here to Stay. Now What?

Now that repeal is off the table, you need to get with the program, like it or not. Here are three things you have to do.

By David McNew/Stringer/Getty

The Affordable Care Act withstood many trials on its way toward becoming reality, from epic congressional battles, to a pivotal Supreme Court ruling, to the Presidential election.

Obama’s reelection means his health care reform act has dodged its last bullet, and the age of universal mandates, penalty taxes and tax credits will almost certainly go into effect, although probably not exactly as scheduled on January 1, 2014. What do you need to do to get your business ready?

Inc. (magazine) put the question to healthcare policy expert Henry J. Aaron, a senior fellow at Washington think tank Brookings Institution. Aaron offered three key ideas for entrepreneurs facing the enormous changes scheduled for healthcare during Obama’s second term.

Weigh the Costs

The key decision you will face is whether to sponsor a healthcare plan, if you don’t already have one, or to drop a policy you may have and leave employees to buy insurance on the exchanges themselves. The pros and cons of either route will depend on the size of your payroll, both in people and dollars. Do you have 50 or fewer employees? Then you aren’t subject to penalties for not providing an employee plan. On the flip side, helping employees pay for insurance affords tax advantages. If you have fewer than 25 full-timers on your payroll and their average pay is less than $50,000, the law affords you a tax credit of up to 35% for providing insurance today, rising to 50% in 2014.

“There’s a calculation to be done,” says Aaron, if your employees are below the threshold (which tops out at 400% of the poverty line) for getting a federal subsidy to buy insurance on their own. In such a case, it might make sense to drop insurance and add the savings to your employee’s cash compensation. The question you should ask, Aaron says, is, “If my employees are going to be eligible for subsidies, why should I leave that money on the table?”

If you have more than over 50 on staff, it’s a
different story. If just one employee qualifies for insurance subsidies, and you don’t provide insurance, that means tax penalties. **Check Your State’s Approach**

In theory, you should be able to buy insurance for your employees on the new health-insurance exchanges. However, states differ in how they plan to administer the exchanges. “If you’re running a small business, what prospects you face depend sensitively on where you’re doing business,” says Aaron. Some states, like Vermont, will take an active role, making sure that a broad range of insurance plans will be available on the exchange. Many others leave it to the federal government to run the exchange for individuals and will leave employer-sponsored plans alone.

The complexities are likely to create a mini-boom in the services of insurance brokers. Aaron suggest that you are likely to find them even more necessary than they are now in navigating the explosion in new options and rules.

**Take Your Time**

Enrollment in the new healthcare exchanges won’t begin until October 2013 at the earliest. Legal requirements—and the accompanying fees for disobeying them—won’t take effect until January 2014. Washington red tape probably could push those dates out even further into the future. “It’s a complicated bill, and it’s not drafted in a way to facilitate implementation,” says Aaron. “Delays could become inevitable and necessary.” That might suit many business owners just fine.


**National Conference Keynote Speakers**

It is the essential priority of the United States Swim School Association to provide the highest level of educational contacts, materials, and services to every member. It is our duty to obtain accomplished presenters that address pertinent topics with a fresh approach. We aim to equip our members with the skills and confidence to run a better business and will continue to build on those standards each and every year.

Join us at the 2013 National Conference to experience the industry’s best!

**MICHAEL BRANDWEIN**

Prior to becoming an internationally recognized speaker, Michael Brandwein achieved a great deal both academically and professionally. He served nine years as a trial lawyer and partner in a Chicago law firm until following his true passion into a full-time career of teaching and speaking. An accomplished writer, Michael is the author of four best-selling books, and wrote and presented three Emmy® award-winning television programs on communication (1999). Brandwein has spoken in all 50 states, multiple Canadian providences, and on 6 of the 7 continents. His impressive resume is only enhanced by his communication background which includes projects with HBO and NASA and client list of organizations such as Hewlett-Packard, Frito-Lay, and Kodak. While his career history appears to be “all business” at first glance, it is his marriage of intelligence, hard work, and creativity that has made him a true success. Michael has also performed as a professional magician for over two decades, and writes and performs in live productions (e.g. Jim Henson’s Muppets).

The United States Swim School Association is pleased to host Michael as he delivers his keynote address and two breakout sessions on Wednesday, October 9th in Scottsdale, Arizona.

To learn more about Michael Brandwein, visit his website at michaelbrandwein.com.

**T. SCOTT GROSS**

T. Scott Gross a highly successful author and speaker that truly relates to the masses. Among his many hats, Gross is serving his third term as a city council member, has served as a first responder (EMT), firefighter, and franchisor (just to name a few). As a keynote, his client list includes the likes of Southwest Airlines, WalMart, and Ford. The eclectic resume of T. Scott Gross boasts an array of interests and experiences that allow him to connect with his audiences regardless of size or industry. Best known for his first book, Positively Outrageous Service, Gross confirms the necessity and method of making your customers your most effective marketing tool.

The USSSA is thrilled to have Gross as a keynote speaker at the 25th anniversary National Conference. He will be presenting his keynote address on the morning of Thursday, October 10th, 2013 and delivering two breakout sessions later that same afternoon. Gross is celebrated for his ability to simultaneously entertain, educate, and inspire; preparing all to be captivated by a true storyteller that rouses the thought process. Learn more at tscottgross.com.
Welcome back to our “Ask the Expert” feature, designed to assist you with any and all issues related to swimming pool water, mechanical equipment, space conditioning, and code compliance. Ask a question, and we will answer to the best of our ability.

In drilling down to review the many Filtration alternatives that are available to the swim school owner, we can ask: what is the best filter for a swim school? That is a trick question! It actually depends on a wide variety of variables such as bather load (# of patrons per week), desired water quality, budget, maintenance tolerance, space, etc.

Filters can be located on either the suction side of a pool pump, or the pressure side. Also it is true that pool pumps are much happier pushing water through a filter (AKA a pressure filter) than pulling or sucking it through (AKA a vacuum filter). Pressure filters have a more gradual decline of flow as they get dirty, while a vacuum filter will experience a quicker drop off as the filter soils until they are clean. You know they are dirty once the pressure differential (difference between inlet (influent) and outlet (effluent) pressures) reaches 10 lbs… so having a couple of working liquid filled gauges before and after the filter will end any guesswork. They have been largely ignored as a serious commercial pool alternative due to their labor-intensive nature, but have the LOWEST water consumption of all filters.

These filters are very susceptible to oils and grease, so using an enzyme will help. If you have cartridge filters, get a couple of sets, for quick clean out, or pre-coat them with small amounts of wood pulp, and you will enhance their appeal. Still… not the best solution for a heavily used swim school.

Pool filters are, in order of popularity in the industry:

• Hi-Rate Granular Media (Sand) Filters
• DE (Diatomaceous Earth)
• Cartridge

Each of these filter are available in both the pressure and vacuum variety, and we will briefly review each to help you sort out some potential advantages.

Cartridge Filters
Cartridge filter normally come in either a stainless steel or plastic housing, and they are made of a pleated paper-like element to improve on space efficiency. You clean them by physically removing them from the housing and hosing the captured dirt off the individual grids until they are clean. You know they are dirty once the pressure differential (difference between inlet (influent) and outlet (effluent) pressures) reaches 10 lbs… so having a couple of working liquid filled gauges before and after the filter will end any guesswork. They have been largely ignored as a serious commercial pool alternative due to their labor-intensive nature, but have the LOWEST water consumption of all filters.

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Diatomaceous Earth (DE) Cartridge Filters
DE is prehistoric skeletal remains delivered as bags of clean white powder. The powder is uniformly coated (pre-coated) on a cloth-like filter septum located either in an enclosed filter vessel (pressure DE) or open tank (vacuum DE). While DE is widely acknowledged as the best filter media (in the laboratory) its efficiency varies widely with maintenance and is only as good as the barest spot on the grid. You clean these by dislodging the spent DE media from the grid into a separation tank, then disposing in the landfill or other approved means.

Grids need to be cleaned whenever the pressure differential reaches 10 PSI, or when the suction reaches -15 Hg on a vacuum DE filter.

Most of these filters can use other powdered DE alternatives such as Perlite and Wood Pulp Fiber, and these offer more relaxed disposal, but offer little relief with the manual handling and cleaning. You can extend the filter run by “bumping” the filters. Bumping occurs when you temporarily alter the flow to the filters allowing the powder to fall off then recoat in a different configuration thus exposing new crevices for soiling. The filter bump normally doesn’t have the full filter life as the original pre-coat.

New Regenerative DE filters provide a “more” automatic bump cycle, less water consumption, and are more space efficient than some other filters…. but they are more expensive than any other filter alternative, and many customers find them much more complicated to operate.

Granular Media (Sand) Filters (GMF)
Sand filters also come in vacuum and
more popular pressure models. They are misunderstood by many rookies but are the long-time choice of many veteran operations. You can vary the water quality by using different “Permanent” granular medias and you can tweak them all the way to drinking water quality filtration.

They backwash by reversing the flow of water upwards, thus dislodging the trapped contaminants. Good sand filters only require a 2.5-3 minute backwash every week or two (when pressure differential reaches 10 lbs) depending on bather loads, so these are the most maintenance-friendly filters of the bunch. GMF, in the drinking water variety, are being used by some of the leading USSSA swim schools in the US.

**About Water Loss**

Ever hear that “The solution to pollution is dilution”? Well it’s true.

Regardless on how well you operate your chemistry, you will accumulate disinfection byproducts and organic contaminants that will help cause irritation for instructors and patrons alike. World Health Organization, DIN and other European Standards, and Canadian codes recommend that fresh water be added to the pool at a rate of 5-8 gallons per bather. The new US Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) will also offer similar recommendations.

If you use a Sand filter the water losses are pretty close to the recommended amounts, but if you use DE or Cartridge filters, you will need to proactively dump water on a periodic basis.

There is no one “right” filter for the application, but you should be able check with your fellow USSSA leaders and find a good combination of cost, maintenance requirements, water quality, and fresh water introduction… and you’ll have a winner.

Best Regards,

Alvaro G. Mendoza

Please feel free to forward your questions & comments through the USSSA office, or directly to me via email at amendoza@ceswaterquality.com

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