

Spotlight: Stewart Vernon, CEO, America's Swimming Pool Company, Macon, Ga.

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Stewart Vernon launched ASP, a pool service franchise company, in 2001. In a decade, it has grown to 73 pool service franchises in seven states, from North Carolina to Texas.

A long with opening new pool service companies, ASP also does franchise conversions. What motivates a service company owner to become a franchisee?

Well, our most recent conversion was in Dallas, Texas. This was a guy that met our typical criteria — he owned a successful pool business with well over half a million dollars in sales. He started exploring our conversion program, and it took a good two months for him to really see the value of it.

In the short term, he was looking to take his business to the next level. Long term, he was looking to improve his brand, and ultimately for a future generation, possibly an exit strategy.

For a guy out there currently running his business, he can keep doing a lot of things his way, but we can add some things that he might not even know are missing to help increase sales, brand awareness and the bottom line.

For instance, the week before Memorial Day weekend — we call it hell week in the pool business — our franchisees are out there having the busiest and biggest week, revenue-wise, of the year. While here in our offices, we're finalizing their June direct-mail piece, and making tweaks to the search engine optimization and ordering product and hats and shirts, and negotiating with SCP on lowering pricing for certain products — that's what we do for a franchisee.