



ASP's February 2018 pool school where it trains its franchisees

AMERICA'S SWIMMING POOL CO. A POOL SERVICE COMPANY THAT BECAME A FRANCHISE

STEWART VERNON, CEO AND FOUNDER of America's Swimming Pool Co., used to have the luxury of saying his was the only franchised pool brand in the country. That changed about three years ago.

"It's certainly nice to see others come in the space and recognize something we saw earlier on," Vernon says, "which is that the model for swimming pool cleaning and repair business in this country really had not taken off on a national scale."

Out of college, Vernon was looking to start a service business. "[The service industry] is just a low-capital, lower risk sort of thing," Vernon says. "At 22 years old, that was certainly the position that I was in."

In 2002, he saw an opportunity in his hometown of Macon, Georgia, to service swimming pools. He started All Seasons Pool Company (where the A, S and the P come from). Without any prior pool business experience, Vernon doubled revenue year over year, eventually having multiple trucks. By 2005, he was testing franchise locations.

One location turned into two, and then 10, and around 2007 he'd made the leap over to the franchise company full-time. He sold the original Macon franchise to an employee. "I put all the chips on the table to the real business here, ASP Franchising," Vernon says.

Franchising aligned with some of the things Vernon himself loves to do.

"Franchising is taking a business you have created and turning it into a road map for someone else," he says. "I love teaching. I love coaching and helping. That is what franchising really is. It's teaching someone else business. You're teaching them how to do something better than the competitor."

From the beginning, Vernon strategically aligned with manufacturers and Poolcorp, using its large distribution network to supply its franchisees.

"We'll spend in the multimillions just with Poolcorp," Vernon says. "All our franchisees purchase through one national account, and we work with one point of contact who services our franchisees at all of the different branches."

This approach is different from most franchise models, where products are private labeled.

"We came to find out, these manufacturers all have their own strengths in different markets and their own promotions at different times," Vernon says. "Team up with all of them and allow your franchisees to do what's best for them." He says it has worked well to never mandate, but to allow its franchisees to run their own business and do what's best for them.

While people who came from outside the pool industry operated the majority of ASP franchises, they have converted about five existing pool businesses over to an ASP franchise, including the company's largest franchisee.

"He was just stuck at \$700,000 in revenues and had been doing that for 15 years," Vernon says. "We brought him into our system, and he'll do \$3 million in revenue this year. Our future really is with conversions."

ASP franchisees use PoolOps, what Vernon calls the digital version of their roadmap.

"All of our franchisees operate digitally," he says. "Technicians have GPS on their cars, and the customers are communicated with via email and text messaging.... We always try to find out what's missing in the industry, and jump one step ahead and map that out in a format a business-minded person can follow."



ASP

aspfranchising.com

INITIAL INVESTMENT

\$75,000 to \$100,000, including a franchise fee

FRANCHISE FEE

Begins at \$32,000; average \$36,000

ONGOING FEES

ROYALTY FEE: 4% to 8% (average of 5.5%)

MARKETING FUND: 1% goes toward the National Brand Development Fund

POOLOPS: \$120 monthly, plus \$20 per vehicle

WEBSITE & TECHNOLOGY FEE: \$350 monthly