

HITACHI
Inspire the Next¹

POOLCORP



 **Hitachi Solutions**

Case Study Written by Washburn Communications



CUSTOMER PROFILE

POOLCORP

INDUSTRY

Distribution

LOCATION

United States

ABOUT

POOLCORP is the largest distributor of swimming pool and backyard products in the United States. To provide more personalized service to its wholesale customers, the company decided to upgrade its customer relationship management system to Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Now primed to provide more thrills on sunny days, POOLCORP is putting customer information in the hands of its salesforce, running targeted marketing initiatives, and staying ahead of the seasonal fluctuations of the industry.

Dynamics CRM Customer Story

Swimming pool wholesaler dives into customer data to provide targeted services

The business demand for swimming pools and backyard products is highly dependent on sunshine. In this industry, wholesalers have to ride the ebbs and flows of the weather, be innovative, and invest in long-term business development initiatives.

This is the approach POOLCORP has taken for more than 23 years as a wholesale distributor of swimming pool and backyard-related products. The company, whose motto is “Where Outdoor Living Comes to Life,” specializes in construction materials, replacement parts, fencing, irrigation systems, pool-care products, and spas—basically, everything except the water. POOLCORP has 80,000 wholesale customers, including pool builders, retailers, and service professionals. With such a large and broad customer base, the company is dedicated to building long-standing relationships based on the specific needs of its customers. To do so, POOLCORP aims to equip its sales force with the right information to provide personalized, data-based service.

Afloat in every season

POOLCORP’s business has grown steadily, even through the economic downturn of 2008. That’s good news, of course—except that the company had outgrown its customer relationship management (CRM) system. POOLCORP ran an in-house built CRM that employees used for scheduling, but otherwise the tool provided limited information about customers, and was too slow for the size and needs of the company.

By 2013, the wholesaler knew it needed to update its CRM platform. It also needed a champion who could bridge the gap between IT—the group responsible for choosing and deploying a tool—and salespeople, the primary users. POOLCORP didn’t have to look far. “I was a sales manager for seven years with the company,” says Skip Martin, Sales Development Manager for POOLCORP. “I got involved on both sides and created my own position. Now I’m focused on driving the development of sales management using the many tools available, including CRM, which is our number one priority.”



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Skip Martin, Sales
Development Manager

Martin, working closely with the software engineering and project teams, carefully considered several solutions before deciding to deploy Microsoft Dynamics CRM. Now, POOLCORP salespeople use Dynamics CRM to access customer information more quickly, and can pull up customer records while planning. In a competitive market, POOLCORP doesn't want to lose even one lead or customer, and fast, quality data means the company can avoid that possibility at all costs. “The account record in Dynamics CRM has an unbelievable amount of information, which includes sales, marketing, maps, and consolidations of different account numbers. Today, our salesforce has a lot more resources at their fingertips and the mobile solution is a huge timesaver as well!”

Martin points out that a modern CRM is especially helpful in an industry with so much variance across geographies and climates. POOLCORP can use data from last year's purchases to help salespeople anticipate customer needs and see how similar businesses are planning their purchases. “Our sales team has seen a huge value in being able to provide customers with historical information, such as past items purchased and dollars spent, all within seasonal trends,” says Martin. “We call it the bell curve which is especially prevalent in the Northeast and Canada. In our Northern Sales Centers, there are five months out of the year where customers do the lion's share of their business. Dynamics CRM helps us handle that seasonality.”

Customer visibility and a marketing lifeline

Not only does POOLCORP use Dynamics CRM to provide data to its own salespeople, but it also uses the solution to extend marketing initiatives to its customers. “We do a tremendous amount of marketing for our customers and help grow the industry, which requires digestible data. We try to make our customers visible because the better they do, the better we do,” says Martin.

One of POOLCORP's customer marketing initiatives is called Splash Cash: the company gives qualifying customers back a certain percentage of dollars spent, which they can then use to help market their own businesses. This program shows POOLCORP's commitment to long-term relationships and strategic development. “Much of the relevant Splash Cash information resides in Dynamics CRM. When our business development reps are doing



their planning, they can find the details about how much money is available and help their customers use it to grow their businesses.”

When reflecting on the company’s use of Dynamics CRM so far, Martin says, “Moving the company to a CRM solution with so much to offer has been a big win for POOLCORP and our customers. I feel very happy to be an integral part of that.”

