

JUNE 2024 | ISSUE 02

# POOL NATION

SPOTLIGHTS & INSIGHTS

BUSINESS  
TIPS  
IN 2024

Common Reasons  
Small Businesses  
fail and how to  
avoid them

INDUSTRY  
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**W**elcome to the second issue of Pool Nation Insights & Spotlights! In this series, we are thrilled to bring you the inspiring stories of individuals who are making waves in the pool industry. Every month, we will highlight the achievements and contributions of those who are driving progress and innovation within Pool Nation.

At Pool Nation, our mission is to empower pool professionals through education and community engagement. We believe that by sharing the journeys and experiences of our industry's top talent, we can foster a stronger, more connected community.

Stay tuned as we delve into the lives of these remarkable professionals and discover the secrets behind their success. We hope their stories will inspire and motivate you to reach new heights in your own journey within the pool industry.

Thank you for being a part of Pool Nation. Together, we are building a brighter future for all pool professionals.



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## POOL NATION SPOTLIGHT:

# Meet *MEGAN KENDRICK*, Owner of Pool Pro Magazine and Kendrick Content & Consulting



**G**rowing up in North Dakota, Megan Kendrick never envisioned becoming a writer, editor, and publisher in the pool industry. "There aren't many pools in North Dakota," she joked when we met at a recent Pool Nation Boot Camp, a transformative event that brings together pool industry professionals in an interactive and uplifting atmosphere.

In-person, Kendrick exudes calmness and warmth. It's clear that her charisma significantly contributes to her professional success by making people feel welcomed and understood. From a young age, she was curious and passionate about connecting with people and telling their stories.

**"I pursued an English degree in college and found my way into journalism," she shared. "I imagined a future in magazines, but not specifically in the pool industry. Still, I'm quite happy with where I've ended up."**

After meeting her husband, Aaron, in Phoenix, the couple moved to Norman, Oklahoma, where he landed a job in the oil and gas industry. They are parents to two young daughters (8 and 4 years old) whom Kendrick considers the greatest joy of her life.

"Being away frequently this time of year is tough. When mom's gone, the household ecosystem is completely thrown off, and you never know how the four-year-old will react, but she always finds a way to make her feelings known," Kendrick laughs.

Kendrick says there really is not such thing as balance when it comes to running a business and caring for

your family. But over the years she's gotten better at letting things go and focusing on what's important.

"Women, myself included, often hold ourselves to impossible standards," she says. "We seek perfection in all areas, but perfection is a myth and you can kill yourself trying to achieve it. Some days my family is going to eat peanut butter and jelly for dinner, and that's OK. Some days or weeks my house is going to look like a disaster, and that's OK. Some days I'm going to quit work at 3 because my youngest wants me to play Barbies with her. That's also OK."

As difficult as it can be, Kendrick says it's crucial to make sure you take care of yourself first, because both your business and your family can't be healthy if you aren't. Which is a lesson she had to learn the hard way.

**"I thought I was doing OK keeping all of the plates spinning, but my body told me otherwise," she says. "It got to the point where I became so exhausted and burnt out that I couldn't serve my employees or my family. I had to really evaluate where I was at and make some changes. Now I try to give myself more grace, and be more aware of the basics things I was neglecting like sleep, food and exercise."**

Megan's company, Kendrick Content & Consulting, will celebrate its seventh anniversary this November. She is the publisher and editor-in-chief of prominent industry magazines SpaRetailer, PoolPro and consumer buyer's guides Spasearch, and Poolsearch. Under her leadership, these magazines have seen a significant increase in readership and have become go-to sources for industry professionals.

After working for Bigfish Publications for a decade, Megan and Aaron founded Kendrick Content in November 2017 and purchased the company's magazine titles in April 2018. In 2023, they further expanded by purchasing TradeCertified from Bigfish as well.

Megan entered the pool and spa industry immediately after completing her master's in journalism at Northwestern University. Like many in the pool industry, she has developed a deep passion for the benefits pools and spas offer to people's lives — enhancing their bodies, minds, and souls.

Today, Kendrick Content is the authoritative voice in the hot tub and swimming pool industries. Is it dedicated to providing consumers with independent information about transformative products while supporting pool and hot tub professionals in managing and expanding their businesses.

But Megan says she sees the role of the magazines in a much different way than when she worked at them as an employee. "Our goal was always to help pool and hot tub companies run better businesses," she says. "But now as a business owner I understand so much more what that actually looks like. I understand the weight of that responsibility. I also know how isolating it can be. Your employees, your friends, your family, unless they have owned businesses can't really relate to what you're going through. So now, in addition to the stories about new products and best practices, I'm passionate about making sure we provide a place where pool and spa professionals can see themselves represented. Where they hear from others who are dealing with the same struggles they are and to provide them encouragement. You are not alone."

The Pool Nation Spotlight is a new blog series we're launching each month to illuminate the faces and names of people in the pool community.



This series features longtime community members and newcomers, recognizing that every voice and story matters. It's our way of acknowledging and celebrating the diverse and talented individuals who make our pool community thrive.

This month, Pool Nation is proud to visit with Megan Kendrick, whose work has not only elevated the pool industry but also inspired many others to pursue their passions.

**Q: Hi Megan! Can you tell us who you are and what you do for a career?**

Megan: I'm Megan Kendrick and I'm the publisher of PoolPro Magazine.

**Q: How amazing is it just to come to events like this and see the faces that are in the pool industry? What does it mean for you personally?**

Megan: So I always say, and people are like, why do you go to all of these things? But I feel like that's where I learn the most about the industry and where I get to connect with the people and they gain a better understanding of who I am. I get to see what their issues are, what their problems are and what they need us to talk about.

**Q: When it comes to the magazine, what are the hot topics for features and stories? Like what's behind it all, I guess.**

Megan: We really want to help pool pros run a better business. So, a lot of what we focus on is the business side. We do some technical things as well, but really our goal is to be as helpful as we can to the people who are out there working on pools every single day. One thing I'm learning and hearing from people is they feel like they're on their own a lot.

**Q: The sense of community in the pool industry is important. Have you seen that as well?**

Megan: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. It's something that I think I didn't appreciate until I became a business owner myself. It can feel isolating. I imagine too, when you're going out to pools every single day by yourself, you feel pretty isolated. Having a community that you can turn to is I think one of the most important things you can have.

And so I think it's great that there's things like Pool Nation and some of the other organizations out there who are creating this insider industry because it's so needed.

You can't do it alone.

**Q: Have you noticed any changes or trends in the industry recently? Over the past four years, particularly since the pandemic, what insider insights have you observed?**

Megan: Well, when it comes to community, that's one of the major changes I've noticed. I've been in the industry since 2008, and I've seen a significant shift towards a stronger sense of community. Nowadays, people are more willing to talk to each other and seek help and advice on various matters.

When you go to events like this, you can feel that people are here together to learn, support, and get to know each other. So, yeah, that is the most significant change I've seen in the industry since my time there.

**Q: What's it like being a woman working in a male dominated industry?**

Megan: There's challenges, but there's also great things that you can bring. This industry has treated me fantastic. There are just so many amazing powerhouse women in this industry. And what's really cool lately is that I feel like they've kind of come to the forefront.

People are talking about women in the industry so much more, which I love. You're seeing them represented more at events like this and in the magazine and things like that. And it's been so great because women have always been working in this industry. They just have been a little bit more behind the scenes.

It's incredibly rewarding to see women being brought to the forefront. Throughout my career in the pool industry, it has consistently been women who have come to my aid when I needed support. I'm thrilled that others are now getting to experience and enjoy networking with these incredible women, benefiting from the same impact they've had on me.

**Q: Can you tell me a bit about your life and where you grew up and did you ever imagine this is what you'd be doing today?**

Megan: (Laughs) No, I didn't think I'd be here doing this. I grew up in North Dakota, so there's not a whole lot of pools in North Dakota. I went to college for English and ended up in journalism. And so, yeah, here I am today.



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I guess I saw myself working in magazines, but definitely not in the pool industry. But I'm pretty happy that this is where I landed.

**Q: And you're now living in Norman (Oklahoma). How did that happen?**

Megan: The oil field. My husband and I met in Phoenix and he got a job in the oil field, so we moved to Oklahoma.

**Q: So as far as moving forward for you and your future and the excitement that you have for this industry, what are you looking forward to the most?**

Megan: Oh, man. That's packed. Yeah. There are so many good things happening in our industry right now. It's really exciting. For instance, the new technology you're starting to see and, again, the community and networking happening. Also, we are seeing some of the professionalism brought to the industry that we haven't seen before. There are just so many innovative, talented entrepreneurs in our industry. The next 10 years are going to be amazing for growth. It's really an exciting time.

**Q: What else is going on?**

Megan: As everyone knows in our industry, the first quarter is a travel extravaganza with trade show after trade show and event after event. With our small team, I try to attend as many as possible, though there are definitely some we can't make it to. You end up seeing many of the same people from one event to the next, and you sort of start to run out of things to talk about (laughs). But it's fun. It's fun to get out there, see people, and engage in all those activities.

**Q: So this right now is grind time?**

Megan: Kind of, it definitely is grind time. The Western show usually kind of marks the end of the trade show travel season. Then I get to be home with my family and hopefully go on vacations instead of just work travel.

**Q: You mentioned your husband. I heard you're also a mom. Do you mind sharing more about your family?**

Megan: Being away frequently this time of year is tough. When mom's gone, the household ecosystem is completely thrown off, and you never know how the four-year-old will react, but she always finds a way to make

her feelings known.

They have such strong personalities. They definitely do. Don't get me started on my kids though, because we could talk about them for a long time.

**Q: I think being a mother likely helps you in this business because you might see safety from a mother's point of view?**

Megan: Absolutely. I believe having more women working in the field brings a different perspective, often from a mom's viewpoint. This perspective is incredibly valuable and beneficial to the entire industry.

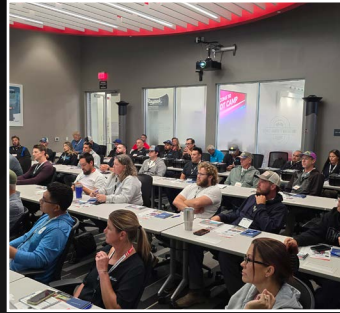
On behalf of the entire Pool Nation team, Megan, thank you for sharing more about your story and life. We also appreciate you for bringing so many stories to the forefront and congratulate you on making such a profound impact on the community.

Your dedication and passion have not only enriched the industry but also inspired countless individuals. We look forward to seeing your continued success and the positive influence you will undoubtedly bring in the future through your publications and stories.





# POOL NATION - RAYPAK 201 BOOT CAMP







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# UNDERSTANDING COMMON REASONS BUSINESSES FAIL AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Running a business is no small feat, and understanding why businesses fail is crucial to building a successful and sustainable enterprise. In this month's edition, we delve into some foundational reasons businesses often stumble and provide insights on how to steer clear of these pitfalls.

## Reason Number 1: Lack of Financial Knowledge

Financial knowledge is the backbone of any successful business. Understanding business finance is not something learned overnight and can take years of practice to master. The complexity of your finances is relative to the size of your business. For example, if you are just starting out and are your only employee, the financial workings of your business will likely be fairly simple. However, for a million-dollar-plus business with many employees, the financial aspects can be quite complex.

### Here are some key aspects of financial knowledge for your business:

- **Tracking finances:** It's essential to keep a close eye on the money collected, money spent, and money borrowed.
- **Cost and pricing:** Understand the cost of providing your product/service versus what to charge for it to ensure profitability.
- **Borrowing money:** Learn about different financing options such as working capital loans, vehicle financing, and other types of financing.
- **Negotiating costs:** Lower your expenses by negotiating better prices for the products or services you need.
- **Reading financial statements:** Being able to read and understand your profit and loss statements, balance sheets, and other financial documents is crucial.

- **Tax strategy:** Know how taxes impact your business and develop a strategy to manage them effectively.
- **Separating personal and business spending:** This is crucial for understanding the true financial health of your business.

When you start to understand these aspects, you become empowered to make strategic decisions for your business. You will be able to identify trends and decide whether it's time to hire another employee, purchase a truck, raise (or decrease) your pricing, negotiate costs, and much more. The bottom line is that to build a truly successful business, you need to get comfortable with knowing your numbers.



## Reason Number 2: Ineffective Business Planning

Many entrepreneurs start their businesses without a clear and defined plan. While this is a common initial approach, it's critical to develop a business plan as you go along. Without a plan, you lack a roadmap for making business decisions, spending money, marketing, and all the other activities involved in growing your business.

**Think of it as flying a plane without instruments. How do you know where you are going or if you are headed in the right direction? Here are some elements to consider when creating your business plan:**

- **Ultimate goal:** Why are you doing this?
- **Revenue target:** What kind of revenue do you want to make, and how many customers do you need to achieve this?
- **Employee needs:** Do you want or need employees to achieve your revenue goals?
- **Services/products:** What do you want to offer, and is there a return on investment for delivering these?
- **Brand building:** Are you targeting a budget-friendly market or aiming for a premium, exclusive brand?
- **Exit plan:** Are you planning to pass the business down, sell it, or retire?
- **Personal goals:** Factor these into your overall business plan.

A well-defined plan can change and evolve over time. The key is to consistently monitor your plan and make improvements as needed. Having a plan gives you the confidence to say "yes" to the right opportunities and "no" to the wrong ones, helping you build a successful business.

## Reason Number 3: Inadequate Management

In the early stages of a business, entrepreneurs often wear all the hats—owner, manager, technician, accountant, and problem solver. This is often necessary to get the business going, but it doesn't always have to be this way. As your business grows, more elements will need focused management, including:

- Customer service and support
- Finances
- Advertising
- Employee recruiting, training, and management
- Building culture

Each of these areas will require more focus and management as your business expands. While learning as much as you can is beneficial, you will eventually need to delegate different roles and tasks to people who can successfully manage them. Building your financial knowledge and your plan will help you put these pieces in place and afford them.

## Reason Number 4: Marketing Mishaps

Business owners are often bombarded with offers for various advertising services, which can be overwhelming. Some of these services may be effective, but many are not, and falling prey to ineffective marketing can be costly. Before spending money on marketing, refer to your business plan to identify where you can best allocate your marketing budget.

Consider:

- **Service type:** What kind of service are you trying to sell (good, better, or best)?
- **Brand image:** What brand image are you trying to portray?
- **Target customers:** Where are your target customers, and what platforms are they on? What do they like?

Different age groups and income levels may require different marketing approaches. Don't just throw money at various marketing tactics to see what sticks. Instead, develop a strategic marketing plan to attract the right customers and avoid costly mistakes. Seeking professional help can be beneficial, but always do your due diligence.

## Reason Number 5: Lack of Working "ON" Your Business

There's a saying: "Work ON your business, not IN it." As a business owner, it's critical to spend dedicated time working on all the aspects discussed. Building time to focus on these elements will help you avoid getting stuck and stressed out, ultimately preventing you from simply creating a job for yourself instead of building a company.

Many business owners often say they're too busy or don't have enough time. However, the success of your business requires that you put in the time to focus on it. By addressing these common reasons for business failure, you can set your business on a path to success and profitability.

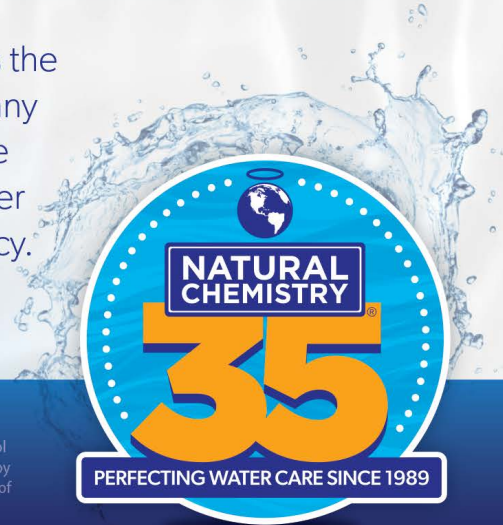


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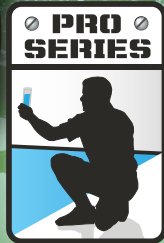


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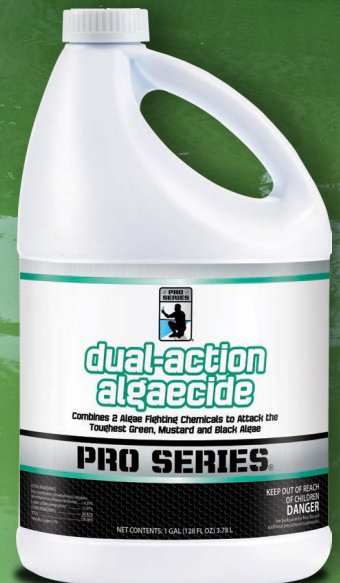


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# EVENTS

## Pool Nation Women's Summit

August 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>

McKinney, Texas – Heritage Headquarters

Join us at the Pool Nation Women's Summit, a dynamic gathering designed to empower and connect women in the pool service and repair industry. Explore innovative business strategies and network with industry leaders to enhance your professional growth.

For more information visit [www.PoolNation.com](http://www.PoolNation.com)



## Pool Nation Awards Nomination Night

September 11<sup>th</sup>

McKinney, Texas – Heritage Headquarters

Experience the excitement of the Pool Nation Nominations Night, where we reveal the nominees for this year's awards. It's an evening of suspense and celebration, setting the stage for recognizing the industry's finest. Join us to discover the top contenders and network with professionals from across the pool service industry.

For more information visit [www.PoolNation.com](http://www.PoolNation.com)

## Pool Nation Awards

November 13<sup>th</sup> - 6pm to 9pm

Join us at the prestigious Pool Nation Awards, where we honor the best and brightest in the pool service industry. Celebrate as we announce the winners in various categories, recognizing their exceptional contributions and achievements. This gala event promises an inspiring evening of accolades and professional camaraderie.

For more information Visit [www.PoolNation.com](http://www.PoolNation.com)



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November 9<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>

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