

Pool Service Owner Becomes Expert in Field to Grow Her Business



Several years ago, Lisa Ifland oversaw the installation and building of a new pool at her home. What intended to be a project to create a family gathering place for relaxation, social gatherings, and years of fun memories for the family eventually became much more. It was the early foundation of starting her

own business.

At the time, Lisa was working in corporate America, where she'd taken up residency at cubicles for 25 years working in IT and as a procurement manager. As the earth in her backyard was overturned, and the shape of her new dream pool was taking form, she had an idea. Lisa knew she could own her own pool business.

As she became involved in the pool operations at her home, she researched everything she could about the subject and gained the confidence she needed to start her own business.

Fast forward to April 2019, Lisa opened her own Pinch A Penny swimming pool retail, service, and repair store. She made an immediate impact in

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the Dallas market, establishing service routes and maintaining more than 70 local pools in the months before the store even officially opened.

"When something excites you, and you feel that bit of fear, you are absolutely going to grow," she said. "I was really stepping out of my comfort zone, but I have experienced so much growth in the last four years owning and operating a franchise. It is a business that I knew nothing about, and my only option was to learn it and know it all. There is no aspect of my business that I have any type of fear in today."

She says it takes a confident approach to run a store, especially one that is dominated by men. Zippia estimates more than 93% of pool technicians are men, and Guidant Financial reports women account for about 30% of small business and franchise owners in the U.S. These are statistics Lisa feels daily. In fact, her suppliers

know her when she calls because she is the only female pool store owner they deal with.

"I don't know any other woman doing what I am doing in this market," said Lisa.

The makeup of the industry doesn't deter her from pursuing what she knew was a service people needed in her area, and one that could be very successful. Along the way, she has learned every inch of her business—occasionally to the surprise of customers or suppliers. Lisa said people will walk right past her to ask her male employees questions about equipment and mechanical issues.

"When I start talking to them about it, they are blown away," said Lisa. "I know equipment, and I know my business. I walk them through various scenarios, and they say to me, 'You have a lot of passion for what you do because I can see it and feel it in the way you are communicating to me.' I think that is a compliment, and I

have a lot of passion for my business".

Her dedication has driven her business to success, along with the help of a strong brand and support system. She is the sole operator, but she hired a top-notch staff and a store manager. Even her son and daughter have worked in the store, which she calls "one of the coolest blessings".

It's more than family assistance that has brought in a wave of success. Pinch A Penny provides tremendous franchisee support, which she says is integral to her success. The company name brought customers, and her drive led to profits. In addition, Pinch A Penny's training helped hone her business skills and learn the fine details of every part of the operation. In three years, her store almost hit \$2 million in sales. With her astounding growth, her store received an internal award for the highest increase in sales year-over-year from 2020 to 2021.

"Having the knowledge, the trust, engaging with the customer with empathy and diplomacy is all important with being a woman who owns and operates her own business," Lisa said.

What advice would she share with other female franchise owners? To learn every inch of the business they pursue. When they are confident in speaking about all the business's ins-and-outs, they will be able to earn the customers' trust. That will then help the franchise succeed and grow.

