STRETCHLEARN · WORKBOOK

Pool Service Business — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into the numbers, logs, and contracts your own pool route will run on. Work through each section with your real figures: your wage, your truck costs, your chemical prices, your service days, and your accounts. By the end you will have a defensible cost per stop, a priced monthly contract, an LSI-based dosing habit, a denser route, and a repair-and-recovery upsell plan you can deploy this season.

The Pool Route Business and the Weekly Service Visit

Decide your market, build your route economics from scratch, and standardize a timed weekly visit you can route and price from.

Worksheet: Define Your Route Model and Market

Lock in the basic shape of your business before you price anything, because year-round versus seasonal billing and your starting kit set every later decision.

My market type (year-round Sun Belt or seasonal) and billable weeks per year

Target service area and the ZIP codes or neighborhoods I will start in

Number of accounts I want on a full solo route (target 60 to 80)

Are chemicals included in the monthly price or billed separately?

Startup tool budget (pole, drop test kit, brush, vac, safety gear)

Opening chemical inventory budget

Service software I will use (Skimmer, Pool Office Manager, or Jobber)

Resale benchmark: target monthly billing times 9 to 12 for route value

Exercise: Time Three Real Weekly Visits

Service three pools of different sizes and conditions with a phone timer, recording each step, so your routing and pricing rest on real minutes instead of a guess.

• What is the full door-to-door time for a standard maintained pool, a heavily-shaded leafy pool, and a large or salt pool?

• Which step (skim, brush, vacuum, dose, log) eats the most time on each pool, and why?

• Which of the three runs chronically long, and is it mispriced or does it need a service-frequency conversation?

• What single standard stop time will you use as the basis for routing and cost per stop?

Checklist: Weekly Visit Standard Checklist

[ ] I test the water first, at elbow depth, before dosing anything
[ ] I skim, empty skimmer and pump baskets, and brush shaded corners every visit
[ ] I check pump, filter pressure, and the cleaner and note anything trending wrong
[ ] I dose acid, chlorine, and balancers to the pool's gallon count, not by eye
[ ] I log the date, readings, and exactly what I dosed for every pool
[ ] I take a finished-pool photo as proof of service on every stop
[ ] Acid and chlorine ride separated, secured, and ventilated in my truck

Water Chemistry and Chemical Cost Control

Memorize the five target ranges, build an LSI-based dosing habit, and measure and shrink your chemical cost per pool.

Worksheet: Balance One Real Pool with the LSI

Pick one pool, run the full panel, and enter the readings into an LSI calculator (the free Orenda app or Pool Math) to decide the correct correction instead of chasing one number.

Pool volume in gallons (measured, not guessed)

pH reading (target 7.4 to 7.6)

Total alkalinity reading (target 80 to 120 ppm)

Calcium hardness reading (target 200 to 400 ppm)

Cyanuric acid reading (target 30 to 50 ppm outdoor)

Free chlorine reading and the FC/CYA target ratio (about 7.5 percent of CYA)

Water temperature (degrees) for the LSI

Calculated LSI value (target about minus 0.3 to plus 0.3)

The corrective action the LSI indicates (raise calcium, raise TA, add acid, etc.)

Exercise: Diagnose a Chlorine-Lock or Green Pool

Take a pool that will not hold chlorine or keeps greening and work through the real cause before reaching for more shock.

• What is the CYA reading, and is the free-chlorine target it implies actually being met?

• Is the problem high CYA (needing a partial drain-and-refill) rather than too little chlorine?

• What does the FC/CYA chart say the correct free-chlorine target is for this pool's stabilizer level?

• What is your corrective plan, and how much repeated shocking will it save versus the wrong diagnosis?

Worksheet: Calculate Your Chemical Cost Per Pool

Turn chemicals from an invisible leak into a managed line item by measuring the real cost and finding where to cut it.

Total monthly chemical spend (all products)

Total pool visits per month

Chemical cost per visit (spend divided by visits)

Average chemical cost per account per month (cost per visit times visits)

Bulk-buy opportunities (liquid chlorine, acid, bicarb by the case or drum)

Number of SKUs I carry now versus a standardized shorter list

Estimated savings per pool from precise dosing and bulk buying

Target chemical cost per visit after changes (aim 6 to 10 dollars)

Checklist: Chemistry and Safety Checklist

[ ] I dose only from a drop-based FAS-DPD test, never from a strip reading
[ ] I know each pool's gallon count before calculating any dose
[ ] I run readings through an LSI calculator before correcting new-plaster or problem pools
[ ] I make one change per visit where possible, then retest, to avoid over-correcting
[ ] I never store or pour chlorine and acid where one could reach the other
[ ] I add chemical to water (never water to chemical) with the pump running and stay upwind
[ ] I wear chemical-resistant gloves and goggles and keep Safety Data Sheets accessible
[ ] I track chemical cost per visit every month and act when it drifts up

Pricing Monthly Contracts and Building Route Density

Build your true cost per stop, price a monthly contract that holds its margin, and re-cluster your accounts into tight, profitable day-zones.

Worksheet: Build Your True Cost Per Stop and Monthly Price

Calculate the floor under every contract from real costs, then add margin to set a flat monthly price you can defend against any lowball competitor.

Total monthly fixed costs (truck, fuel, insurance, software, phone, owner/tech wage)

Billable pool visits per month (accounts times visits each)

Labor-and-overhead cost per visit (fixed costs divided by visits)

Chemical cost per visit (from Section 2)

True cost per stop (labor-and-overhead plus chemicals)

Target margin percent (aim 35 to 50 percent)

Per-visit price (cost per stop divided by [1 minus margin])

Monthly contract price (per-visit price times visits per month)

Route minimum: the lowest monthly price I will start a truck for

Exercise: Re-Cluster and Day-Zone Your Accounts

Plot every current and prospective account on a map (Google My Maps with colored pins is free), assign each to a service day by location, and find your densest cluster.

• How many tight day-zones can your service area support, and where are their boundaries?

• Which neighborhood or street holds your densest cluster of accounts right now?

• Which accounts are stranded off-zone, and what incentive would move them to the right day?

• Where will you aim door-hangers or yard signs to add neighbors with almost no extra drive time?

Exercise: Sequence One Day into a Loop

Take a single day's stops and order them into one continuous loop out from base and back, then compare against how you actually drive it today.

• What is the current stop order, and where does it backtrack or re-cross a highway?

• What loop sequence minimizes total distance from base, through the cluster, and back?

• How many minutes of drive time does the optimized sequence save versus today?

• Which tool (Skimmer, Pool Office Manager, RouteSavvy, or Google Maps multi-stop) will lock the sequence?

Checklist: Pricing and Density Checklist

[ ] I price every contract off my true cost per stop, not a competitor's number
[ ] My monthly price holds a margin of at least 35 percent after chemicals
[ ] I charge more for shaded, salt, oversized, or long-drive pools
[ ] I have a written route minimum and will not sign below it
[ ] Every account is plotted on a map and colored by service day
[ ] New leads are quoted the service day that matches their location
[ ] Each day's stops are sequenced as a loop with no needless backtracks
[ ] Drive time is under about 15 percent of my working day (or I have a plan to get there)

Repairs, Green-Pool Recovery, and Scaling the Route

Price the equipment repairs that out-earn cleaning, scope a green-to-clean recovery, and plan a clean handoff to your first hired tech.

Worksheet: Build Your Repair Price List

Price the common repairs you can legally perform on parts-plus-labor, and mark the jobs you must sub out to a licensed electrician or plumber.

Repair labor rate per hour (set well above your cleaning rate)

Variable-speed pump swap — part cost, labor hours, price, possible utility rebate

Pump motor or shaft-seal replacement — part cost, labor hours, price

Filter cartridge or DE service — part cost, labor hours, price

Salt cell replacement — part cost, labor hours, price

Multiport valve or O-ring or basket — part cost, labor hours, price

Parts markup percent applied to retail

Jobs I must sub to a licensed electrician or gas plumber (and my local limits)

Worksheet: Scope and Price a Green-to-Clean Recovery

Take a real or hypothetical green pool, grade its severity, and build a flat recovery quote that covers multiple visits and heavy chemical use.

Pool volume in gallons and severity grade (light green, deep green, black-algae or swamp)

Drain-and-acid-wash needed, or chemical recovery? (note extreme CYA or contamination)

Estimated number of visits and days to clear

Estimated liquid chlorine and other chemical quantity

Filter cleans required during recovery

Flat recovery fee (covers visits, chemicals, filter wear) and what 'clear' excludes

Discounted first-month maintenance offer bundled into the close

Equipment that contributed to the failure and the repair to quote alongside

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Exercise: Plan Your First Truck Split and Hire

Plan the move from solo to two trucks before you are drowning, carving the second route from density rather than scattering a new tech across the metro.

• Which dense clusters would you carve into a second truck's route, and how many accounts?

• What is documented (visit checklist, dosing rules, pricing, routing) that a new tech can follow on day one?

• Which work (repairs, sales, green-pool quotes) will you keep yourself, and which will the new tech run?

• How will you inspect water logs and customer feedback during training so standards never slip?

Checklist: Repairs, Recovery, and Scaling Checklist

[ ] I inspect the equipment pad every visit and quote failing parts on the spot from my app
[ ] I carry a small inventory of fast-moving parts (O-rings, baskets, common cartridges, a salt cell)
[ ] I price repairs on parts-plus-labor and sub out work that legally requires a license
[ ] Every green-pool recovery is priced flat, photographed before, and scoped in writing
[ ] I offer weekly service at the close of every recovery while the clear water is the proof
[ ] My visit sequence, dosing, pricing, and routing are written down before I hire
[ ] I carve new routes from dense clusters so added trucks inherit tight day-zones
[ ] I track stops per day, revenue per stop, churn, and chemical cost per pool every week

Your Action Plan

1. Decide your market type and billable weeks, choose your starting ZIP clusters, and pick your service software.
2. Time three real weekly visits to set your standard stop time, and adopt the test-first visit sequence with a logged photo on every stop.
3. Memorize the five target ranges and start running every problem pool through an LSI calculator before correcting it.
4. Measure your chemical cost per visit, switch to bulk buying and precise dosing, and drive it toward 6 to 10 dollars.
5. Calculate your true cost per stop, set a flat monthly contract price at a 35 to 50 percent margin, and publish a route minimum.
6. Plot every account on a map, assign day-zones, sequence each day into a loop, and cut drive time under 15 percent of your day.
7. Put every account on autopay by card or ACH and log proof-of-service on each visit to lock in retention.
8. Build a repair price list on parts-plus-labor and start quoting failing equipment from the pad every week.
9. Market a green-to-clean recovery offer, price it flat, and convert each recovery into a recurring account.
10. Start a weekly scoreboard tracking stops per day, revenue per stop, churn, and chemical cost per pool, and plan your first truck split from your densest clusters.