

THE WATER BUSINESS

New logo, new vision, new future...

When Swimart's executive team announced a new three-year rebrand strategy to the nearly 200 delegates – including 65 Australasian franchise partners – gathered in Malaysia for its 2019 conference, it heralded an exciting phase for the 36-year-old pool and spa franchisor.

What started out a year earlier as a business and marketing audit had culminated in a clear vision to cement Swimart's position as a category leader.

Spearheaded by executive officer Rick Graham, marketing manager Nathan Hallahan and franchise development manager Alex Johnson, the announcement also coincided with the official reveal of Swimart's new logo.



"The theme of this year's conference was 'From Good to Great' and that journey begins with the rebrand," explains Hallahan.

BACKSTORY TO ONE OF AUSTRALASIA'S LARGEST POOL AND SPA FRANCHISE NETWORKS

Swimart was founded by ASX-listed Waterco Ltd in 1983 so that more people could have access to the world's best water filtration products. What started as a single pool retail store in the Sydney suburb of Killara has grown into 75 franchise outlets across Australia and New Zealand, and a fleet of more than 250 mobile service vans.

"After 36 years, we know everything there is to know about pools and spas – and that's why we make pool care easy," says Hallahan. "Swimart sells pool and spa solutions, from an extensive range of supplies and chemicals, to trusted pool

services and advice. And while the brand is well-known, we knew it was time to evolve."

CUSTOMER RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Swimart started the re-branding process last year by conducting research into the personality types of its current and future customers. The goal was to better understand what types of customers were attracted to the brand, as it would then give the franchisor valuable insights into why they behave the way they do.

"The data has since given direction to all brand cues including instore design and layout, staff training, website and social media, category treatments, and all aspects of customer interaction," explains Hallahan. "After analysing our target customers' path to purchase, we now have a clearer idea of where our marketing spend should be and the types of promotional activities we need to invest in."

BRAND STRATEGY AUDIT WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS

Earlier in 2019, Swimart's executive team held a brand strategy meeting to gain a deeper insight into one simple yet critical question: why does Swimart exist? Swimart invited a mix of franchise

partners, product suppliers and agency associates.

"We got down to the nitty gritty, like ascertaining who the "real" Swimart customer is (the one who takes responsibility for the pool as opposed to the one who is responsible for the pool)," Hallahan explains. "We talked about category tensions (unhealthy water) and barriers (complex chemical interactions and product information) and what it is that Swimart sells (ultimately, peace of mind). We also workshopped the company's marketing assets and the journey a brand goes on.

"It was an eye-opening experience for everyone where we ultimately came to a single-minded proposition about the brand. This became the foundation for what the brand has and will continue to evolve into."

Swimart also concluded that it is not in the pool business but the water business. "There is a powerful simplicity in the molecular make-up of water," says Hallahan. "Water doesn't lie."

From a new business perspective, Hallahan says this is an exciting time in the brand's life cycle.

"We're investing in the brand for future growth and working as one network on a strategy totally focussed on the customer needs, so they can love life in their pool, which is great for anyone looking to become part of Swimart's franchise family," he says. ■



Alex Johnson



Nathan Hallahan



Rick Graham