



Steve Ruscigno

# SAVED BY SOFTWARE

*How a former hot tub operator leveraged software to streamline and grow his business through uncertain times*

**S**teve Ruscigno does not consider himself to be tech savvy. However, he is a firm believer that software can be a powerful tool for growing a business.

Throughout his twenty years in the hot tub industry, Ruscigno, who was vice president and general manager of Oregon Hot Tub, depended on an enterprise resource planning (ERP) program to bring the business through crises even stronger.

“We had the software, so that’s actually what saved us,” he says. “The owner and I got together and went to a whiteboard and said, ‘Okay, what happens if we don’t ever deliver another hot tub? How are we going to survive?’”

As Ruscigno explains, they found those answers in their business software.

## Build a stronger foundation

Ruscigno wasn’t at Oregon Hot Tub long before facing his first test. He began just six months before September 11, 2001. The terrorist attacks hit the industry hard, and Oregon Hot Tub was faced with a 30% decrease off top line sales.

“We survived that, but I always look at these kinds of downturns as a real opportunity to shore up your foundation,” says Ruscigno.

Part of reinforcing the foundation of Oregon Hot Tub included adopting a new software program. In 2002, Oregon Hot Tub became the first client of Evosus, an ERP platform built specifically for the pool and hot tub industry. Not only did the software reduce inefficiencies to provide more time to be proactive, but it provided the company with the insights needed to make smart business decisions.

Oregon Hot Tub was soon stronger than before. However, in 2008, the business again saw a decrease of 30% in hot tub sales due to the Great Recession.

“That’s when we really dug into the service side of our business,” says Ruscigno. “The software really helped us understand where our revenue came from in the service division, where our opportunities were, since we couldn’t rely on selling 50 to 100 hot tubs every month.”



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With the insights gained from their software ERP, Oregon Hot Tub realized an opportunity to focus on the high profit revenue that its service center could offer.

"We not only survived, we started thriving in a big way," says Ruscigno.

## Streamline and grow

Ruscigno's experience working with Evosus made such an impression on him that he left the hot tub industry in early 2022 to become the software company's chief revenue officer.

"Evosus's tagline is to help businesses streamline and grow," he says. "That's exactly what I tried to do over 20 years at Oregon Hot Tub. So, to come here with this tool and be able to help with that is very exciting to me."

Ruscigno leverages his background to help pool and hot tub businesses get the most out of LOU, the new cloud-based version of the original Evosus platform. Retailers, service providers, and builders in the pool industry can grow their business with ERP software like LOU that offers three key benefits.

### Productivity all on one platform:

Businesses should look for software that provides the ability to streamline operations by completing multiple functions — such as managing inventory, scheduling services, collecting and processing payments, and creating estimates and work orders — all in the same hub. It's an added bonus if the platform also comes with a mobile app technicians can use in the field. This not only provides each person in the business with accurate information in real time, but also means one source of support for any software issues.

### Comprehensive inventory tracking:

Businesses can benefit from software that can track your inventory across all sites, including vehicles, in real time. This visibility not only ensures that technicians have everything needed for a job, but also can save businesses money.

"When money's tight, inventory is cash. You want to make sure you're not reordering the wrong stuff and you are ordering the right stuff," says Ruscigno. "Having

that software helps you determine your top sellers and bottom sellers, right? Then you can close out the bottom sellers and get more top sellers."

### Real-time data:

Software that provides comprehensive real-time data can provide the opportunity to make smarter business decisions and stay proactive.

For example, each October while at Oregon Hot Tub, Ruscigno would utilize LOU to run reports to determine the top-selling heaters in the field. He was then able to order the heaters they'd need for winter installation jobs in advance.

## Make the change

Transitioning to an all-in-one software program is easy, whether you currently use multiple software programs or a pen-and-paper system. Ruscigno's advice is to start by cleaning up your existing data and carefully consider how to best set up the platform for maximum efficiency.

More business owners have been willing to adopt new software following the pandemic, according to Ruscigno, as they realize that the benefits software offers can help them prepare for future crises.

"Having relevant data will help you weather that storm," he says. "I talked to a lot of people that are still on pen and paper, or they use an Excel spreadsheet to run their business, and it works. But if you want to grow, you've got to have a vehicle for growth."



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