

Client: Aquastar Swimschool

Date: February 2009

Location: Heatherton, Victoria

Company website: <http://aquastarswim.com.au>



**smart connection
training**

Overview: Smart Connection Training helps a swim school in Victoria overcome their staff shortage

Introduction

Gareth Cope is the Managing Director of Aquastar Swimschool, based in Heatherton, Victoria.

Each week, his company helps over 1500 children between the ages of six months and 15 years old to learn to swim. Aquastar's mission is to create a lifelong connection for children to the water, encouraging and building their confidence in all the skills needed to establish a strong foundation for water safety and personal fitness.

Gareth's business is growing well. He is running at almost 100% capacity and feedback from his students and their parents is glowing. His business has recently reported a revenue growth of over \$95K in the last 12 months.

However, Gareth faces a major challenge in his business - finding new staff.

Aquastar employs a total of 30 swim teachers, with one instructor to four children, because Gareth knows that small group classes are the most effective learning environments for young people. But keeping up with the demand for Aquastar's swim classes, means Gareth is constantly searching for new swim instructors. This is not only expensive because Gareth has to spend money advertising jobs, it's also time consuming to go through the process of screening and interviewing candidates.

"Our leadership group all agree that staffing is by far the biggest headache when it comes to the day to day operating of the swim school," Gareth says.

"Our staff retention rate is great, but when that time finally does arrive for a teacher to move on and explore other avenues, finding a suitable replacement is our greatest challenge."

When Smart Connection Training (SCT) approached Gareth to help him find trainee swim instructors for his Aquastar business, Gareth jumped at the chance.

SCT's National Sales Manager, Peter Evans, used his extensive database of contacts in the sport and recreation industry to locate three students from Cheltenham Secondary College, who were interested in becoming swim instructors. Peter arranged for the three female students to combine their Certificate 3 in Sport and Recreation with on-the-job training with Aquastar. The course was also linked with the girls' existing VCE studies.

SCT provided the theory component of the Cert 3, from their teaching facilities in their South Melbourne head office. Meanwhile, Gareth employed the girls from between six and 10 hours per week as part of their placement.

Initially, the girls shadowed existing members of the Aquastar team to learn the skills necessary to become a swim instructor, before being given the chance to teach on their own. Gareth says this had residual benefits for his business.

“ Having the students come to our centre had a knock-on benefit for our staff members, because it gave them the opportunity to experience a managerial role for a few weeks which is invaluable to our business.”

At the end of January 2010, all three students successfully completed their Cert 3, which included an AUSTSWIM course as well as a level 2 first aid course, and passed their placement with flying colours.

For being part of the training programme, Aquastar received \$2,250 for each student after three months, and a lump sum payment of \$2,500 for each student at the completion of their course in the form of Government funding. Gareth was able to put this money towards wages, still leaving him with a cash surplus at the end of it.

Best of all, all three students chose to take up permanent employment at Aquastar, which means Gareth now has an extra three swim instructors – all trained in-house at no cost to his business.

Gareth is overjoyed at the success of SCT’s training programme. So much so, he’s now working with SCT again, to help find him more students for his business.

“Working together with SCT brought about so many benefits for us,” Gareth explains.

“Above all, there’s just a great sense of satisfaction to be able to help young kids realise their dream of working in a healthy industry.”