



Julia Ham, Director,  
Hampton Swim School

## Changing the face of relationships with the right technology

Relationships are at the heart of everything at Hampton Swim School and TumbleTastics. We met with the Director, Julia Ham who says nothing is more important than nurturing relationships and seeing their students grow and progress in their programs and in life.

Under Julia's leadership, both the Swim School and TumbleTastics have witnessed rapid growth. In operation since 1999, the Swim School has nearly 25 staff on its payroll. Each week, over 1000 students walk through the doors of their three Hampton Swim School centres, while the two TumbleTastics centres draw 400 more. As both businesses grew in size, however, it became evident that the prevailing payment approaches weren't scaling fast enough.

### The Multiplier Effect of Cash Flow Issues

"At the beginning, parents would usually put their money or cheque in an envelope into a physical mail box. This later evolved into an EFTPOS machine," Julia says. It was obvious fairly early on that this system wouldn't scale in the long run.

Since the schools worked in 12-week term intervals, staff took several weeks, every few months, to process enrolments and payments. There was also no real way of confirming rolling bookings. Often, it wasn't until after four or five weeks into a term before they could confirm whether an

earlier booking had lapsed. Centres weren't operating at full capacity and "we were losing a lot, financially," says Julia.

Recovering late payments is hard for any business, and in Julia's case, customer conversations descended into awkwardness. Julia discovered the hard way that being process heavy in the back-end negatively impacted the services they were delivering at the front.

*"The turning point came when we had a few customers that got really irate with what we were doing, the system we were operating."*

Julia explains, "I remember one of them saying, 'you only ever speak to us when you want payment,' and that's really not what we're about. We're in the business of kids, and early childhood, and having fun and teaching children lifesaving skills in the water. So to have that said to us, it really hurt us. Deep down, it was difficult to swallow."

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Ezidebit made it really simple, that it was all in one system that – parents just had to complete the form and that was done. It made it really easy for us, and it cut down our time on the phone and chasing up accounts. Once it was all done, it was just clear sailing then. It was just, oh, what do we do with all this time, so it was really nice.

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### An All-in-one Solution

For Julia and her team, Ezidebit proved to be an all-in-one solution – one that was helping streamline processes, saving time on administration and reconciliation and ensuring secure payment options for customers. “It made it really easy for us, and it cut down our time on the phone and chasing up accounts. In terms of bad debts or having outstanding accounts, it’s really, really minimised that right down. Ezidebit ticked all the boxes in terms of everything,” she points out.

*“In this age of technology, we want things to be simple. It ended up, across the board, saving a lot of headaches, time and money in processing and chasing up outstanding payments.”*

### Flexible. Automated, Integrated Payments

Payments could also be made more easily than ever before. The flexibility meant that they could choose to pay quarterly or make part payments on a monthly basis. “So for those on a budget, they could budget a little bit better – it gave them a lot of flexibility.”

Integration was also a big plus. Julia says, “The beauty about being with Ezidebit is that it talks to our customer database software. On the day payments are processed, we receive a report from Ezidebit, and because Ezidebit talks to our customer database, it’s like it all happens miraculously in the cloud. Our accounts receivable lists are cleared soon after with what’s been processed into our account.”

### Building meaningful, lasting relationships

On processing day, everything runs like clockwork. “We know that on this date, this amount of money is coming in to our bank account, and for cash flow purposes for the business, it’s amazing to have that. It’s another one of those things you just don’t have to worry about,” says Julia.

But it was more than just the security of regular payments. It was about spending time getting to know the children and their families better. For Julia, it was always about building stronger relationships, taking care of kids, and having fun teaching children lifesaving skills in the water. Julia concludes, “It was about being able to truly live up to our mission of *Nurture, Achieve, Celebrate.*”