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The Business Magazine for Spa & Pool Professionals

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# Q&A With Jamie Ori



**JAMIE ORI**  
President, Rosebrook Pools  
Libertyville, Ill.

**1 THE NATIONAL ECONOMY HAS PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON THE POOL/SPA BUILDING INDUSTRY. HOW DEEPLY HAS THE RECESSION AFFECTED OUR INDUSTRY AND WHAT ARE BUILDERS GOING TO HAVE TO DO TO OVERCOME IT?**

We have not been greatly affected (financially) by the economic downturn. Demographically, our customer base has been among the least-affected sectors. However, we have had to make some adjustments in the ways that we work with our prospective customers and current clients. Our customers want and expect more value across the board. They want to make sure they are getting the most for their money. Quality and product integrity go without saying at our company. Consumers are more educated and expect us to educate them. They want added value more than ever before.

**2 FORTY-ONE PERCENT OF BUILDERS WE SURVEYED CITED LENDING AS THEIR BIGGEST CONCERN AFFECTING BUSINESS THIS YEAR. HOW CAN BUILDERS WORK THEIR WAY AROUND THAT?**

Builders can offer extended payment plans for qualified customers to ease the burden of making enormous payouts at one time. We are willing to do this for our clients. Not only does it ease the large cash outlays for our clients, it also shows them that we are a company that believes in the value of our product and will be around for the long haul.

“Consumer education and employee education are crucial components to our business.”

Builders can also allow customers to use credit cards for some of the payments.

**3 WHAT OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS DO YOU SEE AFFECTING THE INDUSTRY?**

The direction that national health care is taking will certainly be a factor that puts strain on small business owners. On the positive front, tax incentives for use of sustainable products and energy-efficient mechanicals will certainly be something that we can all benefit from. We already have customers that are able to file for tax credits for use of geothermal heating systems.

**4 ANY MAJOR BUILDING TRENDS?**

Sustainable and eco-friendly materials and mechanicals are definitely in demand. Education is the other key factor driving business right now. Consumer education and employee education are crucial components to our business. We train, train, and keep training all of our employees. The saying that you are only as strong as your weakest link is true!

**5 HOW IMPORTANT IS THE RENOVATION BUSINESS NOW THAT NEW CONSTRUCTION IS DOWN?**

Rosebrook has always been heavily involved in renovation. Historically, it has been a solid source of our revenue. As with most businesses, the most cost effective marketing and revenue comes from working within your existing client base.

**6 I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT PEOPLE ARE TIRED OF HEARING BAD NEWS, AND THEY WANT SOLUTIONS AND IDEAS FOR**

**MOVING FORWARD AND INCREASING BUSINESS. ANY ADVICE?**

Education and training! The more educated each and every employee is, the less room there is for costly errors. Education makes you proactive. The companies that focus on educating their employees will always rise to the top.

**7 ANY SIGNS THAT THE MARKET IS ON THE UPSWING?**

We look at the changes in the economy as more of a correction rather than a downturn and subsequent upturn. What we see are people who want quality over quantity — bigger is not better. We focus on doing things more efficiently starting with our own internal operations and translating that efficiency to all our projects. We have also found success by promoting and expanding the areas of our company that we excel at.

**8 WHAT ARE SOME BEST PRACTICES THAT BUILDERS CAN USE TO KEEP RAISING THE STANDARDS OF THE INDUSTRY?**

Stay in the field. Owners should be present on all job sites at every stage of the project. Visit and connect with customers throughout the entire process, and afterwards. The relationship does not end after the sale is made. Really invest the time to know your clients.

Stay on top of trends in your industry — continuing education, professional affiliations and certifications. And remember that there is no such thing as a 40-hour work week.

**Comments or thoughts on this article?  
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