

## Going Green Can Help Deal with Recession

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In view of the current world economic crisis, professional pond builders are experiencing the same economic challenges the world is facing. After being in business for many years, some recently closed their doors.

I met a very talented pond builder out of Arkansas who closed shop and now works for a distributor. There are many more just like him. Many struggle to keep the doors open by contacting past clients and making special offers.

Despite the challenges, we must remember that every downturn provides opportunities. When one door closes, another door opens; you just need to find it.

The key to surviving the economic turndown is DIVERSIFICATION. Diversification is the ability of a business to stretch its arms and embrace other forms of similar work. For example, many landscape companies diversified to enter the world of pond building. Because landscapers already are familiar with trenching, moving pipes and setting rocks, pond building would be a great way to diversify. Pond building companies also should be looking for ways to diversify.

One of the best ways to make diversification work for you is to observe the public's interests and follow this direction. For example, the media has taken the word "green" to new levels. The "green industry" used to be synonymous with the world of landscaping. Now, "green" seems to grace just about every label on the market. While walking the aisle of the local pet store, I noticed a can of cat food with the word "green" on the label. Green cat food? I would like to point out that we were "green" before it was cool.

What kind of "green" can the pond world offer? Since we know rocks, liner, piping and pumps, another natural outgrowth of ponds is rain water harvesting. Rain water harvesting is not new; it dates back to the days of the ancient Babylonians. The ancients pooled natural rain water for future use, as piping and pumps were nonexistent. A generation ago, rain barrels were used to capture rain water for use. The technology has improved, to embrace the pond world, making use of liner, pumps and piping. Now rain water harvesting systems can be installed underground and covered and even can be used to top off the evaporated water from a water feature.

A major competitor to rain water harvesting systems is another "green" technology product: solar panels. Solar power provides an immediate return on investment, while rain water harvesting systems do not offer much action until the rainy season.

Rain water harvesting systems are a viable diversification choice for pond contractors looking to expand their businesses. To help the rain water harvesting movement get a jump start in the current economic world, speak with architects and designers. They are looking to install "green" products that help them obtain LEED points.

If you found other "green" diversifications to help in this economy, please share your insights. Tell us about your success with rain water harvesting system installation as well.

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