

Pond Businesses Report More Optimism

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After a year of near-weekly interviews with pond and water garden businesses across the nation, I feel encouraged by the more positive, recent perspectives. Companies worked hard to reduce spending, reevaluate goals and consider other options, and they are seeing the fruits of their labors.

Most pond and water garden entities that now report steady sales and work diversified their offerings. On the builder side, some added maintenance services, landscaping, hardscaping and similar add-ons. Retailers report offering maintenance services, backyard birding and other outdoor lifestyle products, educational seminars and special events.

As the industry adjusts to no longer counting on impulse buys and owners' perceived discretionary incomes, prospering businesses return to marketing basics and engaging the discerning buyers. For newer businesses, this might require education and practice in attracting, working with and retaining clients and customers who ask many questions, do their research, get bids/pricing from several places and wait to get what they want.

Fewer businesspeople talk about waiting out the recession. More business owners talk positively about the industry and are working to exit the recession in a more prominent and secure place.

Participants in the pond and water garden industry impress me with their passion. Though small and undeveloped compared to allied fields, such as landscaping and construction, this niche appears ready to grow and prosper because of your fervor and the benefits. Please tell me about your experiences as the recession continues and businesses strive to overcome their challenges.

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