

Progress: *noun* - development or advance toward a better, more complete, or more modern condition.

By Dan Johnson, Swim, Inc.

Construction and progress are inextricably linked; the one compels the other. Want to out-sell the competition? Build a product that is more advanced, efficient, or enjoyable to own and use. It's why automobiles have become living rooms on wheels; reclining seats, 12 speaker stereos, DVD players, personal heating & cooling . . . the list goes on. American Motors didn't get it – remember American Motors – probably not, they became irrelevant and disappeared. How about Eastman Kodak – can you say “digital”?

The point here is that progress will occur with us or without us. It will not wait for us or seek our approval. So when it occurs, we have essentially two choices; embrace it or become irrelevant. In our industry, it's occurring now. New building codes and safety standards are being implemented across the land and compliance requires that we master some new skills related to flow and velocity – pressure, vacuum and total system resistance measured in feet of head. I know, having taught the ANSI-7 standard, that many of us accepted these changes only after we were forced to through code requirements – dragged into the future against our will. Well, here's a basic truth; those who stay ahead of the curve by embracing change determine the future.

How many builders do you suppose are currently building energy efficient pools? We all know the code requirements are coming - so if you're not currently building efficient systems – why not? Those who wait until they're forced to comply will remain behind the curve, moving toward irrelevance.

This concept isn't new. In areas outside Florida, where they haven't had a steady influx of new customers moving to their area over the last 25 years as we have, builders have been unyielding in their efforts to stay on the cutting edge of progress. The same ANSI-7 seminar I presented in Florida for classes of up to 50 people drew over 390 people in New Jersey – and they don't need CE credits. They understand the value of embracing change – it can mean the difference between prosperity and failure. We could take a lesson from them.