

New to the Pool & Spa News Top 50

Company: River Oaks Pools, LP, San Antonio

Top 50 ranking: 44

CEO: Dan R. Pendley

2005 key business decision: There were two key business decisions made in 2005 to help keep up with demand and ensure the growth of our business. First, we increased the size of our sales staff from four to eight. It takes between one and two years to get a new salesperson



Pendley

trained adequately to design and sell the *custom projects that make up the majority of our work*. The addition of these people over a short period of time was a significant challenge because our training is on the job. They needed to work with me and/or other key senior salespeople to train in the unlimited options we have in the custom pool market. Second, we moved our construction manager, who has 10 years' experience, into our "tech" department, which works as a liaison between our sales staff and construction department. Once the job is sold, he is responsible for taking the sales plan and working with our CAD department to produce a detailed construction drawing. This has helped to significantly reduce mistakes and misunderstandings while increasing productivity and timeliness of completion.

How do you educate your management?
The training of our staff depends a great

deal on which area and level of management we are talking about. In general, we take advantage of the many seminars and training sessions available at the annual shows.

What percentage of your construction department is in-house? Fifty percent.

How do you get feedback from your customers? For the past three years, we have utilized the Paramount Quality Assurance Program to evaluate our performance following the completion of each project. We developed a set of 14 specific questions to examine our sales, construction administrative/office and service start-up divisions. We submit a list of completed projects to Paramount shortly after plaster and its staff phones each of our customers (up to three times) asking them the established questions. After three attempts, if the customer does not answer or respond, a written questionnaire is mailed to them. We receive a copy of each questionnaire, along with customer comments every month and a quarterly recap. Each question is weighted from one to five; five is excellent, while a rating of one is poor.

How does that translate into company action? Each department is evaluated on the results of customer feedback for potential merit increases, as well as a year-end bonus program structured around the quality assurance program.