



February 2022

Hello Friend,

If we thought 2022 was going to be a different change of pace, the aquatic industry in Canada was in for a real surprise. On January 12, 2022 the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) announced the end of the Swimming & Water Safety Program in December 2022, after 75 years.

You can read the complete press release [here](#). I share some off-the-cuff remarks [here](#) and [here](#) via [Instagram Live](#) video. And Kevin Paes, CRC Swimming & Water Safety Program Manager in Alberta for 10+ years, shares his thoughts in [Opioids Killed the Swimming Star](#).

The TL;DR is this means no more CRC Water Safety Instructors (WSIs) or any of the swim programs (colours, Aqua Quest, Swim Kids, etc.) Canadians have grown up attending at your local aquatic facility. [The American Red Cross \(ARC\) was also quick to say their programs are unaffected.](#)

The Lifesaving Society of Canada (LSS) Swim for Life program is the recommended replacement program, but it's just not going to work for all facilities and communities. New programs and services will enter the Canadian market - we lack the variety currently available in the larger US market - and even those facilities that immediately switch to the LSS Swim for Life, they have a long road to evaluate and implement system-wide changes.

11 months sounds like plenty of time until you learn that many Summer 2022 program schedules are already done, with programmers at work on Fall/Winter. Promotional literature like program guides and website; swim instructor credentials; program support materials (report cards, badges); and front-line staff all need to be updated...just as we all continue to do more work with less money!

In terms of industry forecast for the next 3-5 years, we can expect to see the explosion of private swim schools showcasing individual curricula and a lot more independent instruction by swim instructors (who choose not to affiliate with one particular curriculum) out of backyard & rented hotel pools. (This is where my avowed nemesis Swimply in particular comes to mind.)

What does this mean for the larger industry? I think there's two big lessons we can take from this watershed moment (pun intended!)

1. As much as we can talk about individuals becoming generalists in a specialized world, it is my firm belief that businesses (SWIMMING POOLS) need to specialize more than ever. They need to refine their WHY and understand WHO they serve and WHAT they provide, including what they DO NOT do. Being all things to all people is no longer the key to financial survival during this period of belt-tightening, inflation and rising costs to staff wages (labor) and raw goods (chemicals, utilities, pool equipment, etc.)

We need to have 100 dedicated fans of what we do vs 1000 lukewarm, fair-weather friends. We should be focused on more revenue from fewer sources, and perfect the processes that result in those conversions.

2. Market circumstances continue to change, and - if you're not willing to adapt - it might be best to cut your losses. **You have nothing to prove to anyone other than your future self.**

I recently gave my notice that - at the end of my current term - I will not be renewing my volunteer position as a committee chair. Am I disappointed how little progress has been made in two years? Yes. Do I want to see the work completed? Yes. Is the work necessary for our industry? Yes. Do I feel guilty for stepping back? Yes.

But, like a good game of *Settlers of Catan*, we all have finite resources and the *opportunity cost* to assigning more resources to a sunk cost is remaining stuck in the same place - financially, psychologically, and professionally.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results. I have to give all the credit in the world to the Canadian Red Cross Board of Directors for taking decisive action on what is a highly unpopular decision to double down on what matters to their strategic direction for the organization, and how to best spend budget dollars.

The problem is that you and I face these same important decisions daily/weekly, and we just might be fumbling them (and our future) because we don't stop and go back to the beginning to remember what exactly we set out to accomplish.

This was a long one, so thanks for sticking with me to the very end! If you have any thoughts or comments, please hit reply - I'd love to hear from you.

-Katie Crysdale
Founder, Lakeview Aquatic Consultants.

PS. There will not be any new POOLaide Webinars for March 2022, but we're keeping our options open for 2023. All [2020 POOLaide](#) and [2021 POOLaide](#) recordings are available on our [YouTube Channel](#).

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