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## How Do You Build? Are You Stuck in a Routine, Missing Out on Possibilities?

Have you ever gotten into a routine that blinds you from seeing other possibilities? Our lives are so busy today and overloaded with stress, distraction, and noise that it seems to be more challenging to break the status quo—slowing down, thinking differently, and trying new things. It's easy to become complacent and comfortable with our routines. However, this can prevent us from finding better solutions.

My wife and I love to eat out. I've noticed that when we go to some of our favorite restaurants, we always seem to order the same things. It's interesting, because restaurants typically have several items on the menu, but I tend to have that one special item I go there for. Of course, I haven't tried other things, so how would I know if there was something better? I'm probably missing out on my next favorite thing.

This can be the same in construction. Are we building from routine? Or are we continuously trying to improve and build with the most innovative and high-performance materials and systems of today? For example, my construction company used concrete masonry units to build foundations for years. Then we tried cast-in-place concrete, which afforded us many advantages, as well as added value for our customers. It was definitely worth the investment of time to explore something new. Later, we moved to precast concrete foundations, which again improved efficiency, and provided even more value to our customers. Of course one size doesn't fit all, but it's more about not being complacent to the point that we miss out on opportunities for growth and improvement. This often results in added value and benefits, especially when we are designing and building structures.

When you think of precast concrete, what comes to mind? What do you use it for? Have you ever tried to use it in a different way? Precast concrete is one of the few high-performance materials that offers a huge array of attributes and benefits, from aesthetic versatility to resiliency, and everything in between. And it is used in almost any type of structure from low-rise to high-rise, from commercial to residential, from structural to aesthetic applications. However, I often meet designers who only use it for one or two applications, missing out on the true potential to be gained.

This issue of *Ascent*<sup>®</sup> showcases the PCI Design Award winners. These projects are some great examples of how designers have gotten out of their "routines" and used precast concrete in innovative ways. The results are some amazing projects that provide more value to all stakeholders.

As you look at your next project, consider using precast concrete, maybe in ways you haven't considered before. Make sure to really explore all of the various attributes and benefits that using precast can provide. Don't overlook the versatility, efficiency, or resiliency that precast concrete inherently offers. This is how precast builds!

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