

# SLIPPERY ROCK

## GAZETTE

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## Fabrication in Paradise

Just a stone's throw off the coast of Washington state, in the Puget Sound, is a cluster of islands. Within them lies Whidbey Island. Located 30 miles north of Seattle, the 168 square-mile island is abundant with hills, forests, farmland and beaches, and is accessible from the mainland by two ferries and one bridge.

According to history, the first mention of Whidbey Island was during the 1790 Spanish Expedition of Manuel Quimper and Gonzalo Lopez de Haro. Already inhabited by several Native American tribes, the island was fully explored in 1792 by British Royal

by Peter J. Marcucci

*Photos Courtesy NorthWest Granite & Flooring LLC*

Navy Officer George Vancouver and soon after, fully mapped by Royal Navy Officer Joseph Whidbey.

Known for being the longest island in the United States, Whidbey Island is dotted with year-round residential communities both modest and high-end. The island is geared for tourism, offering an abundance of tasteful cafes, charming boutiques and galleries, and cozy lodging. It is also home to U.S.

Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, a base constructed in 1942 to defend the Northwest Pacific coast against foreign intruders during WWII. NorthWest Granite & Flooring serves this diverse market, initially offering custom flooring. After a change in management, and seeing an opportunity in the market, custom stone fabrication was soon added. The company is co-owned by Jeremy Jackson and wife Suzette. According to Jeremy, who, by the way, is a 27-year reader of the *Slippery Rock Gazette*, the company has seen a few changes, he recalled.

"When I started with the company in 2001, it was called NorthWest Cabinets &

Flooring. It was owned by three people, and I was just an employee. Then, just six months later, two of the three partners pulled out, and I bought half of the company. Then, in 2004, my wife Suzette and I bought the last owner out, and we changed the name to NorthWest Granite & Flooring LLC." By 2006, business had increased to the point we purchased property and built our own 8,000 square foot shop and showroom." The now state-of-the-art facility also boasts a whole-building water recirculation system designed and installed by Jeremy. No city water is used for fabrication or shop cleaning. It's a closed-loop system that earned Whidbey's Green Seal.

NorthWest Granite & Flooring specializes in custom slab work, both new construction for builder clients and remodels, and often uses exotic materials for their jobs, with stunning results. Jeremy Jackson: "One of our jobs was located in Anacortes, an Oxford Blue quartzite slab shower, bench and curb. The shower was on the second story of the house, so we had to use a special lift in order to reach the second level of the home."

Bottom right: Family memorial installed at the historic Sunnyside cemetery on Ebey's Landing (Coupeville), following strict historical society guidelines.

### *The Nuts, Bolts and Moving Parts*

With 90% of the company's work located on Whidbey Island as well as the neighboring San Juan Islands, an average of 200 slabs are kept in stock. Visitors looking to embellish their homes with NorthWest Granite & Flooring's finest materials need not go to the mainland. This is very important, explained Jeremy. "Most of our work used to be builders, but now is also walk-in style retail with repeat clients and through referrals. Many of our clients are Navy personnel, and it's important that slabs are in stock because their off-time is limited. Once a week, I'm in Seattle purchasing materials, and I've gone through six different vehicles and over a dozen trailers hauling slabs back and forth over the years. We do get deliveries, but sometimes

the cost outweighs the fact that I can pick up more materials in one shot rather than just have a few slabs brought here. Hand selecting slabs is also important for quality custom work."

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## NorthWest Granite

*Continued from page 1*

The company's shop is fully equipped with primarily Park Industries machinery, currently consisting of a Sierra bridge saw, a Titan CNC router, and a Fusion Waterjet-saw. "We're essentially a Park shop," Jeremy added. "The Park Fusion Waterjet has really helped fabricate quartzites, which is a big part of sales in our market. We have many high-end clients who follow that trend, especially in the San Juan Islands. Also, about half of our business comes from Naval officers who expect near-perfection."

Average output is somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,000 square-feet per month, consisting of natural stone, quartz and porcelain, with slab showers being one of their specialties. Many of their designs are beautiful slabs mixed with tile and used for vertical applications, explained Jeremy. "Our showers, curbs, seats, vanities and windowsills, or anything that can be built out of remnants, are utilized. We don't throw anything away that can be used. We are also beginning to see more interest in Dekton."

With basically a captive market and only one local competitor, (a top notch carving artist who's mostly retired), customers are sourced through word of mouth or through Google searches. That said, there is a wee bit of competition by off-island fab shops and big box stores on the mainland, but not much to worry about, explained Jeremy. "These companies are my competitors, but they are also my referrals, because it is very difficult and costly for competitors on the mainland to do business here. In the San Juan Islands especially, we have ferry issues, but we know the barge owners and what equipment is needed to get the job done. We can out-price our competitors, and if they make a mistake it is very costly for them to come back here for return calls. Their work may be fabricated clear out of Portland and shipped all the way up here, and if there's a problem, they wind up calling us to fix it! We are seeing more and more of this from our competitors."

NorthWest Granite & Flooring currently has five slab team members, while six sub-contractors do the wood, tile, carpet, and flooring installations. Jeremy and Suzette's son Tyler Berisford has over 20-years' experience as a fabricator, oversees daily shop output and coordinates installations. Tyler utilizes laser templating, CAD and does machine maintenance,



as well as being responsible for the often challenging job of figuring out exactly how materials will be transported to the jobsites and installed.

At most any jobsite, anywhere in the U.S. the terrain can be tough to negotiate. In the Pacific Northwest, the difficulty of getting materials through the terrain and tough turf can sometimes be multiplied by a factor of two, and problematic, explained Tyler.

"We use the No-Lift Install System on about 80% of our installs. If I have to go out on an install, I am careful with my

back because of previous year's heavy lifting. Even if it's a small piece, I'm like, 'Dude, I'm not going home sore because of this 200 pound slab!' That's not a lot of weight for two guys, but I'm happy to let the cart do the heavy work!

"Anytime you've got those very big countertops and you're tipping and sliding them onto the cabinet, you could damage the edge. You then say, 'Sorry, we made a mistake' and we had to go back and fix it.



"On one of our jobs we needed to use an articulating style crane to lift the slabs up to the second story where they were being installed. The material was Blue Moon quartzite, and the job was located on Henry Island. There was no ferry service, so we took a private barge to the island. We only had a two hour window to install, because the ferry has to shut down when it's low tide. We had to go out there with my truck, offload that A-frame up onto the deck, and then haul those slabs around through five sets of doors to a shower. We built a 3 slab shower for the builder customer."

"On a different job on Whidbey, we needed to transport and use a glass-handling machine, I think it's called an Easy Lift, along with the articulated crane. We had to stack and lift 2 full slabs 17 or 18 feet into the air, and bring the Easy Lift machine into the house at the same time. We had to build a structure underneath the house and also put boards underneath it, just to get it in the house so we could move it around and pick up the slab, then lift it up six and a half feet over our heads!"



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## NorthWest Granite

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“Now though, we don’t install that way. As a templater, CAD and layout designer, using the No-Lift Install System has also enabled me to make pieces bigger and not have to seam wall-to-wall pieces. In the early years, I had done plenty of installs without the right tools, and I know how difficult it can be. I have the correct tools for the job now.”

### Creating a Safer Environment

In the beginning, NorthWest Granite & Flooring was mostly a dry shop, the norm for most fabricators. Then they got their first bridge saw, followed by a Park Industries Destiny in 2011. They had been using air filtration and a dust booth all along, but the fab area was still dusty and hard to manage. Things needed to be changed, explained Tyler.

“For the last twelve years we’ve been a fully wet shop, and we welcome inspection visits. We monitor the air, test our people, and our guys wear their personal protective equipment (PPE). After all, all stone has silica in it, but we know that quartz is the main culprit. In a lot of shops, the majority of their business is fabricating quartz products. It cuts like a dream and is easy to fabricate, but milling quartz creates a dust that seems to stick to you and everything else, with a talc-like dust that just has an unhealthy feel. It’s really no big surprise that it’s bad for you! I think

that ultimately it’s up to each employee to protect themselves, but it’s also up to the managers and owners to keep their employees safe by giving them what they need and *insisting* that they use it. Our people are also mindful of our customers, care about the job and care about the finished product. They are family, and we care deeply about their well being.”

Jeremy added, “In the beginning, fabricating dry was what I knew, but seeing Tyler in that dust booth and then going home with his clothes covered with dust, we realized the work may harm our own son with silica exposure, eventually. Seeing this really brought the issue home to us, forced us to buy the machinery, and change the way we did things. Also, we are the stewards of this island, local business owners, and a part of this community, so we have to be a good example. We don’t want our son or our people possibly harmed because we put our profits before their health. It was our chance to create a safe environment for everyone, and longevity for our company. So when it came to buying wet equipment and the No-Lift Install System, it was always about the safety.”

NorthWest Granite & Flooring is a member of the Natural Stone Institute and Stone Fabricators Alliance, along with other builder groups, and a loyal BB Industries customer for over 20 years. For more information please visit [www.nwgraniteandflooring.com](http://www.nwgraniteandflooring.com).

**From Left, below: NorthWest’s Park Fusion WaterJet saw, and Titan CNC Router. Additional machinery includes a Park Industries Sierra bridge saw and vacuum lifts to safely move material around the shop, and No-Lift System Installation System carts.**



**Part of the NorthWest Granite & Flooring team. The company transitioned to a stone fab shop in 2004, under the leadership of Jeremy and Suzette Jackson, along with son Tyler. Below: Desert Canyon granite kitchen for a residential customer. Bottom, right: Outdoor kitchen installation in progress.**





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**ALL IN FOR NATURAL STONE  
Online Poker Tournament  
Announced**



Announcing the ALL IN FOR NATURAL STONE POKER TOURNAMENT, to benefit the Natural Stone Foundation and the Gary Sinise Foundation.

Who’s the best poker player in the Stone and Tile industry? Will it be an installer, fabricator, quarry, or dealer? Maybe an architect or contractor? We’ll find out on **November 14**, when an on-line tournament to benefit the Natural Stone Industry will be held to crown the top players, world-wide.

Players will compete for valuable

prizes, enjoy some great camaraderie in Zoom Rooms, and try their best to make the final table in an all-out race to be the best in the business.

Companies can sponsor their best players, invite their clients and host on-line parties to entertain employees and friends.

Save the date and contact [all.in.for.stone@gmail.com](mailto:all.in.for.stone@gmail.com) for information about sponsorship opportunities and for tournament information and registration. Limited sponsorship opportunities are now open.

**NTCA Welcomes Jeremy Sax as Deputy Director**

The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) is proud to announce the appointment of Jeremy Sax as the new Deputy Director. With over 26 years of extensive experience in the tile industry, Sax brings a wealth of knowledge and strategic expertise to the organization.



Jeremy Sax, NTCA Deputy Director

Jeremy Sax began his career in the tile industry in 1998 as the Director of Domestic Sales for Tamiami Tile in Miami, Florida. Since then, he has held significant leadership positions across various sectors, including manufacturing, distribution, and private equity. Sax’s career trajectory is

marked by his remarkable ability to scale businesses, drive organizational growth, and engage with stakeholders effectively.

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## Industry Calendar of Events

### October 2024

#### Park Industries: Digital Stoneworking Expo

**When:** October 3-4, 2024

**Where:** Honolulu, Hawaii; Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort  
Visit [Parkindustries.com/event](http://Parkindustries.com/event) to register and for more information.

#### BB Industries Open House: Utah facility

**When:** October 10, 2024, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, Mountain Time

**Where:** 4033 South Howick St., Millcreek, Utah

Visit [www.BBIndustriesLLC.com](http://www.BBIndustriesLLC.com) for more information.

#### ISFA: Solid Surface Fabrication Training

**When:** October 22-23

**Where:** Woburn, MA (Host TBA)

Visit [isfanow.org/calendar](http://isfanow.org/calendar) for more information.

#### Kitchen + Bath Canada and Stonetech Canada

**When:** Tuesday, October 22, 2024 to Thursday, October 24, 2024

**Where:** International Centre, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Visit <http://KBCexpo.com> for more information.

### November 2024

#### ISFA 3-Day Annual Conference

**When:** Wednesday November 6 to Friday, November 8 (CDT)

**Where:** Miami Florida

Visit [isfanow.org/calendar](http://isfanow.org/calendar) for more information and to register.

#### BACA Bash

**When:** Wednesday November 6 to Thursday, Nov 7

**Where:** 101 Premier Drive, Orion Township, Michigan

Visit [bacasystems.com](http://bacasystems.com) for more information on BACA's training events.

#### NSI: Texas Stone Summit

**When:** Thursday November 7, 9a.m. -3p.m. CDT

**Where:** Arizona Tile, 2701 Regent Blvd, #100, Dallas Texas 75261

Visit [naturalstoneinstitute.org/calendar](http://naturalstoneinstitute.org/calendar) for more information.

## BB Industries Announces Utah Distribution Facility Open House

AS part of BB Industry's year-long celebration of its 30th Anniversary, the stone industry equipment distributor has announced an Open House on October 10, 2024 at its Millcreek, Utah facility.

Stone fabricators and company owners are invited to join the celebration, which will start with a catered breakfast at 8 a.m. followed by a catered lunch in the afternoon from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Industry reps will be on hand with live product demos. Training sessions on CNC tooling, scratch repair, and more training opportunities are also scheduled. Industry



manufacturers providing demos and product information will include: Alpha Professional Tools, BVC, Diamut, Disco, Fillachip, Flex, Integra, Innochem, Makita, Nelson Shims, Sinkits, Zenesis, and more. The Natural Stone Institute will be on hand with the latest info on safety training, company accreditation, and the Silica initiative.



## How Do You Compare?

Prove Your Quality & Safety Practices are Best in Class

Only the finest companies in the industry can meet all of the qualifications necessary to earn Natural Stone Institute Accreditation. Differentiate yourself from the competition. Prove to design teams and consumers that your fabrication and installation methods are best in class and that safety is a top priority.

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[naturalstoneinstitute.org/accreditation](http://naturalstoneinstitute.org/accreditation)

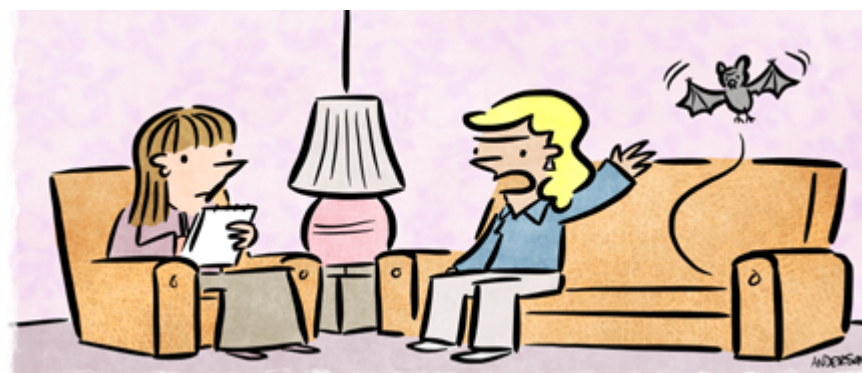
Project completed by Carnevale & Lohr, Natural Stone Institute Accredited since 2014.

BB Industries will be offering exclusive product buy opportunities, and there will be free BBI company swag and giveaways for attendees.

The event will run from 8 a.m. to 3p.m. (Mountain Time). The facility is located at 4033 South Howick Street, Millcreek, Utah 84107.

For more information and event updates visit [www.BBIndustriesLLC.com](http://www.BBIndustriesLLC.com).

Since its beginning in 1994, BBI's philosophy has been to offer the best customer service in the industry and the best value stone fabrication products. We are right there for our customers through all phases of business with education, training, and support from CNCs to blades. For more info, visit [BBIndustriesLLC.com](http://BBIndustriesLLC.com), and [BBIndustriesLLC on social media channels LinkedIn, Instagram, and facebook.com/BBIndustriesLLC.USA](https://www.facebook.com/BBIndustriesLLC.USA).



"See!! When the going gets tough, POOF! Right into a bat!"

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Stop Guessing On Your Marketing Efforts: Take Action with Benchmarking

## Move From Uncertainty to Strategic Action for Your Stone Business

Are you wasting your marketing dollars guessing what strategies and marketing channels will work to enhance your sales? Do you wonder why you keep plugging away with no tangible results?

Why guess with your marketing when you can literally see what the market leaders are doing, do the same or better, and achieve the same or better results? There's a reason market leaders in the stone industry remain at the top. Now, with benchmarking, you have full access to just what that reason is.

Do you want to keep guessing, or do you want to BE SURE?

### The Pitfalls of Guesswork in Marketing

You can't play the guessing game with your marketing efforts and hope to succeed in an era where everyone depends 100% on data. If you're still stuck in the trial-and-error phase of marketing, here's what you're risking:

- **Misalignment with Market Needs:** Your marketing efforts might not resonate with your target audience, leading to campaigns that fail to connect with customer needs and preferences.
- **Resource Waste:** You could be spending valuable budget on strategies that don't yield returns, diverting funds from more impactful initiatives.
- **Inefficient Customer Acquisition:** If your targeting is off, you'll likely see higher acquisition costs and lower conversion rates, making it more challenging to grow your customer base effectively.
- **Challenges in Scaling:** Without data-driven insights, scaling your business can become a hit-or-miss affair,

**Anthony Milia**  
*Milia Marketing*

potentially stalling growth as you struggle to identify what works.

• **Lost Competitive Advantage:** Relying on guesswork causes you to fall behind competitors who use strategic, data-informed marketing approaches, eroding your market position.

So, where does marketing benchmarking come into play in all of this? — Let's break it down.

### All You Need to Know About Marketing Benchmarking

Marketing benchmarking is a strategic tool for assessing your company's performance by comparing it with the industry's leading brands or market standards. Think of it as using a performance yardstick to measure your progress in areas like customer engagement, digital marketing effectiveness, and overall sales growth.

It's like having a high-resolution, real-time GPS for your marketing efforts, guiding you through the fastest routes and alerting you to roadblocks or traffic jams. Benchmarking provides detailed insights into how your marketing strategies stack up against the competition.

It pinpoints areas where you excel and identifies opportunities where your strategy needs adjustment, ensuring you're keeping pace and setting the pace in the stone industry.

With this strategy, all your marketing decisions and actions will be better informed, allowing you to allocate your resources effectively and grow your stone business.

### How Does Benchmarking Empower Strategic Action?

For a business in the stone industry,

Aspect	Your Stone Business with Marketing Benchmarking	Your Stone Business w/o Marketing Benchmarking
<b>Decision Making</b>	Informed decisions based on data, focusing on effective strategies and resource allocation.	Decisions are often based on assumptions, which may lead to mis-allocated resources and ineffective strategies.
<b>Targeted Improvements</b>	Precise improvements in areas identified as lagging, using industry best practices for enhancement.	General or scattered improvements without clear focus, possibly missing critical areas needing attention.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Higher efficiency through optimized processes and resource allocation, driven by proven ROI strategies.	Potential waste of resources on low-impact strategies due to lack of clear ROI data.
<b>Performance Tracking</b>	Regular performance reviews against benchmarks ensure alignment with goals and timely adjustments.	Infrequent or no performance reviews, leading to strategies that may drift from business objectives.
<b>Competitive Edge</b>	Constantly updated on industry trends and competitor strategies, enabling proactive adjustments and innovation.	Often reactive to market changes, lagging behind trends and innovations, potentially losing competitive edge.

where competition is stiff and consumer preferences shift quickly, understanding how to use benchmarking effectively improves your marketing efforts and results. Compare key points in your business with and without benchmarking, shown in the chart, above.

### Crucial Steps to Implement Marketing Benchmarking in Your Business

Implementing marketing benchmarking can seem daunting, but by breaking it down into manageable steps, you can effectively use this strategy to elevate your business in the competitive stone industry. Here are the crucial steps to take:

#### 1. What are Your KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)?

Identify the metrics that are most relevant to your business goals. For a stone industry business like yours, focus on metrics such as lead conversion rates, customer acquisition costs, and customer satisfaction scores.

Align these KPIs with your strategic objectives to ensure your benchmarking efforts are focused and relevant.

#### 2. Which Data are You Concerned About?

Compile your current marketing data. This includes website analytics, sales

conversion data, and any other measurable outcomes from your marketing efforts. Use tools like CRM software and web analytics like Databox to automate data collection where possible, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

#### 3. Choose Competitors and Leaders

Pinpoint which competitors or industry leaders you want to compare your performance against. Consider those who are achieving what you aspire to in terms of market reach and customer engagement.

Research publicly available data and industry reports, and maybe even consider partnership opportunities for sharing data. You can also take advantage of Milia Marketing's benchmarking group, which shows you all the data you want in one place.

#### 4. Analyze the Data: Compare and Contrast

Study how your numbers stack up against the benchmarks. Look for patterns in areas where you excel or lag. Use this analysis to identify actionable insights. Where are the gaps? What are the opportunities for improvement? Where is the competition doing better?

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## Take Action with Benchmarking

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### 5. Develop an Action Plan for Strategic Improvement

Create a detailed action plan to address weaknesses and leverage strengths based on your analysis. This could involve revising your marketing strategies, optimizing budget allocations, or enhancing customer engagement tactics.

Assign responsibilities and set timelines for each initiative. Ensure every team member knows their role in executing the plan.

### 6. Implement Changes and Monitor Results

Implement the improvements based on your action plan. Monitor these changes closely using the same KPIs you've established. Regularly review the impact of these changes. Are you moving closer to your benchmarks? What has changed? What needs more work? Benchmarking lets you see all of that.

### 7. Iterate and Adapt

Benchmarking is not a one-time process. Industry standards and competitor tactics evolve with time, and so should your strategies. Schedule regular benchmarking reviews (quarterly or biannually) to update your data and refine your

strategy based on new insights. Always be on the lookout for changes.

### Start Taking Data-Driven, Actionable Steps for Your Stone Business Today

Now is the time to transition from guesswork to precision, from reactive strategies to proactive success. [Join our benchmarking group today](#) to gain access to essential industry data that can improve your marketing strategy. Milia Marketing created the first-to-market benchmarking platform for the stone industry to benchmark your marketing efforts.

By joining our benchmarking group, you'll gain insights into Conversions, Bounce Rate, Average Session Duration, Sessions, User Engagement, Total Users, All Conversions, Amount Spent, Authority Score, Average Position, Avg. CPC, Conversion Rate, Conversions, Cost, CTR, CTR (Link Click-Through Rate), Form Submissions, Keywords in TOP 10, Site Audit Score, Keywords in TOP 20 and Domain Rank, and so much more.

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## Jeremy Sax

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During his impressive 18-year tenure at Dal-Tile, Sax served in eight different roles, overseeing various business operations in both the Commercial and Residential channels. He further expanded his industry expertise at Interceramic as the Director of Sales, where he managed sales across all company-owned branches. His leadership continued as the Vice President of Sales for GlobalFair, Inc., a construction technology and sales startup, where he spearheaded significant business expansion and enhanced the company's market presence throughout North America.

Most recently, Sax held the position of Vice President of Sales & Marketing for The Aldinger Company at Incline Equity Partners. His experience in the global construction industry, combined with his background in private equity, has equipped him with a unique perspective that will greatly benefit NTCA.

As the new Deputy Director of NTCA, Sax will play a crucial role in supporting the association's objectives to enhance industry standards, foster professional growth, and advocate for the tile contracting community. His proven track record in managing complex projects and driving strategic initiatives aligns perfectly with NTCA's mission of innovation and excellence in the tile industry.

"We are thrilled to have a proven industry leader like Jeremy Sax join the NTCA team," said Bart Bettiga Executive Director of NTCA. "Jeremy has a strong background in sales and business management, as well as strategic planning and fundraising. Jeremy also is committed to the mission of the NTCA and its role in promoting proper installation of tile and stone. He joins our team ready to form a strong personal legacy and is excited to help NTCA expand its outreach and meet our lofty goals."

Sax's appointment is effective immediately. He will be working closely with the NTCA team to ensure the continued success and growth of the association and its members.

Established in 1947, the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) is a non-profit trade association dedicated to the professional installation of ceramic tile and natural stone. It is widely recognized as the largest and most respected tile contractors' association in the world. For those seeking to improve their tile business, NTCA provides unparalleled educational experiences, supportive peer interaction, unique cost-savings programs, and a commitment to help develop the skills needed to improve your work, recruit, train, and manage your employees, and ultimately, make your business more profitable. Find out more at [www.tile-assn.com](http://www.tile-assn.com).

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# How Countertop Shops Can Use Google Ads to Generate More Leads

Google Ads is a powerful tool for countertop shops looking to generate more leads and grow their business. With the right strategy, Google Ads can help you reach homeowners at the exact moment they are searching for a countertop. I'll break down what you need to know!

### 1. Start with Keyword Research

The foundation of any successful Google Ads campaign is thorough keyword research. For countertop shops, it's essential to identify the keywords potential customers use when searching for countertops.

#### Key Strategies

**Target Specific Product Keywords:** Focus on keywords that directly relate to your offerings, such as "granite countertops near me," "quartz countertops installation," or "custom marble countertops."

**Consider Long-Tail Keywords:** Long-tail keywords like "affordable granite countertops in [City]" or "best quartz countertop installers" are less competitive and often have higher conversion rates.

**Include Local Keywords:** Since most countertop businesses serve a specific geographic area, include location-based keywords like "countertop store in [City]" or "kitchen countertops in [City, State]."

### 2. Optimize Your Ad Copy

Your ad copy plays a crucial role in attracting clicks from potential customers. Effective ad copy should be concise, relevant, and include a clear call to action (CTA).

#### Best Practices for Ad Copy

**Highlight Unique Selling Points (USPs):** Mention what sets your business apart, such as "5-Day Turnaround Time," "Free In-Home Consultation," or "Over 100+ Colors Available."

**Use Action-Oriented Language:** Encourage users to take action with phrases like "Get a Free Quote," "Schedule Your Consultation Today," or "Explore Our Countertop Options."

**Stephen Alberts**  
*Countertop Marketing*

**Include Relevant Keywords:** Incorporate your target keywords in the ad headline and description to improve relevance and quality score.

**Utilize Ad Extensions:** Use ad extensions to provide additional information, such as site links, location, call buttons, and promotions. This increases the visibility and effectiveness of your ad.

### 3. Leverage Local Search Ads

For countertop shops, local search ads are invaluable. These ads appear when users search for local services, making them highly relevant and effective.

#### Strategies for Local Search Ads

**Set Up Google Business Profile:** Ensure your maps profile is complete and accurate, as it directly influences your local search ads.

#### Bid on Location-Based Keywords:

Use keywords that include your city or neighborhood to capture local leads.

**Optimize for Mobile:** Since many local searches are done on mobile devices, ensure your ads and landing pages are mobile-friendly.

### 4. Create High-Converting Landing Pages

A well-designed landing page is essential for converting clicks into leads. The landing page should be directly related to the ad and provide a seamless user experience.

#### Landing Page Best Practices

**Match the Ad's Message:** Ensure the headline and content of the landing page reflect the ad's message and keywords.

**Include Strong CTAs:** Encourage users to take the next step with clear CTAs like "Request a Free Estimate," "View Our Countertop Gallery," or "Contact Us for Pricing."

**Use Visuals:** Showcase high-quality images of

your countertops, as visuals can significantly impact decision-making.

**Simplify Forms:** Keep lead forms short and easy to complete, asking only for essential information to avoid deterring potential leads.

### 5. Implement Smart Bidding Strategies

Google Ads offers various bidding strategies that can help you optimize your budget and maximize conversions.

#### Effective Bidding Strategies

**Maximize Conversions:** Automatically set bids to help you get the most conversions within your budget.

**Target CPA (Cost Per Acquisition):** Set bids to get as many conversions as possible at your desired cost per acquisition.

**Target ROAS (Return on Ad Spend):** Bid based on a specific return on ad spend, ideal if you have clear revenue goals.

**Manual CPC (Cost Per Click):** Allows for more control, enabling you to adjust bids based on performance and competition.

### 6. Track and Analyze Performance

Continuous monitoring and analysis are crucial for the success of your Google Ads campaigns. Use Google Ads and Google Analytics to track key performance indicators (KPIs) such as click-through rate (CTR), conversion rate, cost per conversion, and overall ROI.

#### Optimization Tips

**A/B Test Ad Variations:** Regularly test different ad headlines, descriptions, and CTAs to see what resonates best with your audience.

**Adjust Bids Based on Performance:** Increase bids for high-performing keywords and reduce or pause bids for underperforming ones.

**Refine Targeting:** Use data to adjust your targeting settings, focusing on the demographics, locations, and times that yield the best results.



### 7. Utilize Remarketing Campaigns

Remarketing allows you to target users who have previously visited your website but did not convert. This is an effective way to keep your business top-of-mind and encourage them to return and complete an action.

#### Remarketing Strategies:

**Display Ads:** Show visually appealing ads to previous visitors as they browse other websites within the Google Display Network.

**Dynamic Remarketing:** Tailor ads to show specific products or services users viewed on your website, increasing the likelihood of conversion.

**RLSA (Remarketing Lists for Search Ads):** Customize your search ads for previous visitors when they continue searching for related terms on Google.

Google Ads offers countertop shops a robust platform for generating leads and driving business growth. By conducting thorough keyword research, crafting compelling ad copy, optimizing landing pages, and using smart bidding strategies, you can create effective campaigns that attract high-quality leads. Continuous tracking and optimization are key to maintaining and improving your campaign performance over time. With these best practices, your countertop shop can harness the full potential of Google Ads to stay ahead of the competition and increase your bottom line.

*Stephen Alberts is the owner of the Countertop Marketing Co and STONE ENGAGE. They specialize in helping countertop companies grow the retail side of their business outside of word-of-mouth and referrals. They also offer software to help you engage more with customers and close more countertop projects. Visit [countertop-marketingco.com](https://countertop-marketingco.com) or [stonengage.com](https://stonengage.com). You can also email Stephen at [steve@countertopmarketingco.com](mailto:steve@countertopmarketingco.com).*



## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Troubleshooting Made Easy: Four Steps to Improve Production Efficiency

Have you ever felt like everything is going wrong and you're not sure where to start fixing problems?

When your production isn't running at speed or your machinery keeps breaking down, it can quickly feel like that. It can be frustrating – and expensive.

Guess what? You're not alone. Many of the world's top manufacturers struggle with these same issues.

Been there. Done that.

Before I decided to exclusively focus on stone fabricators, I built a software company that focused on troubleshooting and improving production and machinery efficiency. Here are four steps I learned along the way that can help to diagnose problems and maintain consistent, high-quality production.

### Step 1: Establish Your Baseline

Understanding your current performance is crucial to know what's normal. So, when things aren't going just right, you can gauge the impact.

You want to set a baseline before problems occur. While you will want to measure a variety of metrics, here are two key ones you must know:

- What's your square feet produced per day?
- When were the machines NOT running but supposed to be?

This also helps when you are making changes to your production runs. By comparing the baseline against any changes you make, you can quickly see how it impacts your output and downtime.

### Step 2: Set Shop Floor Standards

With your baseline data in hand, you can define what peak performance should look like. What's your A+ Grade that you want to hit every day?

For example, how many square feet should you be able to produce per day when you're working optimally? There are several ways to compute your daily production goal. Here are two I use:

**Tim Saddoris**  
*Grand Onyx*

- Track how many square feet you produce daily over several weeks. Take your best day and use that to create your daily target.
- If you are using an automated machine, check with your manufacturer or rep. They should be able to tell you how many square feet you can produce each day.

### Step 3: Implement Daily Tracking

Now, track your DAILY activity. Keep a close eye on these two numbers and compare them to your baseline and your standards:

- The square footage produced each day.
- Any instance when automated machines are not operational.

This continuous tracking makes it easier to see when there's even a slight deviation that can impact operations and signal problems. It gives you a chance to dig and look for the root causes that are causing performance to lag.

### Step 4: Analyze and Adjust

Have your shop floor manager review those records and note anything that caused performance to dip — especially on your worst days. Eventually, a trend will start to emerge.

Here's a cheat code: If you are using a system like Moraware, Stone App, or Stone Profits, this will automatically track the square feet produced every day. If you are using one of the automated machines like Park, Baca, or Poseidon for cutting your slabs, these typically have a way to download how many minutes the machine wasn't running and how many square feet you produced.

### William of Ockham Had It Right

Have you ever heard of the term Occam's Razor? It dates back to the 14th century, but it's amazing how relevant it still is.

William of Ockham said that the simplest explanation is most often the right one. We can often get caught up looking for patterns and problems that don't exist and ignore the easy fixes right in front of us. It's like that saying: when you hear hoof beats, think horses and not zebras.

When you're troubleshooting, make a note of the reason for any downtime using standard codes and make sure each code is actionable. For example, your code shouldn't be "machine stopped running" without noting the reason. Think more like "machine stopped running — the light curtain was tripped." This gives you a tangible thing to investigate. It also helps you quickly see which items are isolated incidents and when trends start to emerge. If this problem starts to repeat regularly and causes your performance to suffer, you may justify a new process or maybe an upgrade to the light curtain technology.

One thing to keep in mind here. If you have 100 reason codes, the top three almost always account for about 80% of the issues. You've got to prioritize your work and focusing on the top three will solve most of your biggest problems.

### When You Get It Right

When you get it right, you can see significant benefits. The biggest one is improved margins.

Downtime means a slowdown in output, but you're still paying for people waiting for machines to get back up and running. That only increases your total costs. The more you can keep your equipment running at peak performance, the lower your cost of goods and the more profit you make. By being proactive, you can also reduce the cost of maintenance, repairs, and waste — creating a bigger ROI.

All of this gives you a competitive advantage. Improved throughput means you can do installs faster, serve more customers, and yes — make more money.

### Make Continuous Improvement Part of Your Culture

Once you've isolated recurring problems and addressed them, the data you've gathered helps you create a culture of continuous improvement. After all every improvement you make in your output and efficiency lowers your cost of production.

You can test changes or upgrades and track the impact against your baseline and best days.

There are all sorts of methodologies for how to create this culture of continuous improvement like Kaizen, Lean, and Six Sigma. But I like simple explanations that you can put in place easily. Here's one from the American Society of Quality (ASQ) that's easy for every to understand:

- **Plan:** Identify an opportunity and plan for a change.
- **Do:** Implement the change on a small scale.
- **Check:** Analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference.
- **Act:** If the change was successful, implement it on a wider scale.

Plan. Do. Check. Act. It's a simple, but powerful, checklist.

I'd add one more: **rinse and repeat**. You should always be looking for ways to improve your production cycle to optimize your efficiency and your profitability.

*At Grand Onyx, we help stone fabricators increase their revenue by 30% to 300% using proven techniques and a World Class Blueprint System™ to help you build a more profitable, scalable business. If we can help you grow your business, get in touch with us at [grandonyx.pro/contact](mailto:grandonyx.pro/contact).*

**“I want an American character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for ourselves and not for others; this, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home.”**

*—George Washington*

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Finding Growth Opportunities in an Uncertain Economy

The talking heads agree we are in a recession. Year-over-year sales figures from many fabricators back that up. This has a lot of shop owners planning to hunker down as they wait for the Fed to lower interest rates.

The good news is this economy is also creating opportunities for shop owners that recognize them and are prepared to take advantage of them.

### Increase Market Share

In a recessionary economy, it is common for shops to start cutting costs. An early victim is usually the marketing budget. It's common for shop owners to think they can't afford to support their usual level of social media ad spend or their traditional advertising costs.

However, this can create opportunities for shops that are prepared to go against the norm. A shop that continues to advertise can maintain its sales level during slow times. If most of your competition has stopped advertising, this approach can even increase your share of the market - as the available market shrinks, you are able to pick up a larger percentage. Better yet, when the market eventually turns around, as it always does, the shop that increased its market share will grow much more quickly than those who stopped advertising.

### Upgrade Labor

Some shops have already started reducing their working hours. Others have already started laying off employees.

This means, if you need to upgrade the quality of your workforce, there is a larger labor pool for you to select from. If you have a competitor that has cut back on shop hours, consider placing yard signs near that competitor and/or use geofencing and texts to advertise your current openings.

This cost-cutting mentality isn't limited to the stone industry. Most businesses follow this model. If you have a good training program, there will be more quality applicants of all backgrounds to select from, allowing you the opportunity to upgrade your workforce.

## Ed Young

*Fabricator's Coach*

### Enhance Your Company Image

If you think the only factor you can compete on is price, then it's time to introduce you to the UVP (unique value proposition). Your UVP tells prospective customers why they should buy from you instead of your competition.

Even though you fabricate countertops just like your competition does, your business still has characteristics that are different from your competition. Some of these are how well you execute your work, your level of customer service, the market segments you are experienced in, any special services you offer, and many more. The key is to craft a simple but compelling UVP.

A marketing strategy that leverages your UVP is the key to keeping your sales volume up while everyone else is slowing down. A solid strategy would include social media and an email campaign along with traditional marketing methods.

If you are struggling to craft a UVP or to define a solid marketing strategy, get professional help. While this will cost some money, it won't cost nearly as much as all the sales you will lose without a strong UVP.

**Pro tip:** A strong UVP is not based on price! Properly crafted, your UVP will reduce the pricing pressure that normally comes with an economic downturn.

### Improve Processes

If you have been struggling to find time and resources to work ON your business processes, this could be your golden opportunity.

Have you been thinking about implementing a different software package? This could be the time to tackle that project. Have you been wanting to build out your training program so you can finally grow your own in-house experts? Now is the time to do it. Have you wanted to visit other shops in the organizations you belong to so you can see what everyone else is doing (better yet - send some of your key people on those



visits)? Maybe this is the time to get your NSI Silica and Slab Safety Certification. Consider scheduling your free OSHA voluntary safety inspection. Attend one of the many regional and/or annual events in the industry to get even more ideas.

### Bring on New Product Lines

Are you getting more requests for porcelain but have struggled with it in the past? This could be the time to get some solid training and start building your procedures for working with those materials. Your consumables supplier can help you with getting the right tooling. ISFA can provide the technical training you and your folks need.

Increased pricing pressure is common during a downturn. Rather than reducing pricing on your main bread-and-butter products, consider taking on some lower priced product lines. This will give your customers an array of options to meet their budget requirements without hurting your primary business.

### Enhance Your Customer Experience

This would be a great time to consider upgrading the overall experience of your customers. How long does it take to generate a quote? How can you improve the speed of following up on initial customer inquiries? What can you do that your competition is not willing to do? Is this the time to experiment with in-home sales? Is this the time to work on shortening your template-to-install lead time? Maybe now is the time to consider offering annual countertop inspections and sealing services. This is also a great time to conduct structured sales training for all your salespeople. Raising the bar on your customer experience can put a lot of pressure on your competitors - yet another way to gain market share.

For a business to grow profitably, key people must spend a large portion of their time working ON the business as opposed to working IN the business. While the uncertainty can be a bit scary, an economic downturn can present the ideal opportunity to work ON your business. Companies that execute well on these items will create a strong competitive advantage that will pay off handsomely - both now and when the economy rebounds.

If you enjoyed this article and want to hear more from Ed on this and other key Fab Shop topics, check out our podcasts ([www.fabricatorscoach.com/podcasts](http://www.fabricatorscoach.com/podcasts)) and videos (search YouTube for Fabricators Coach).



Scene from *I was a Middle-aged Werewolf*



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# The Stone Detective

## The Case of the Flaky Travertine

IT was just another sunny day in Florida, and the heat promised to bake everything, my old bones included, which now seemed to operate on a slow modem dial-up connection. Waking up had become quite the circus act; the bones creaked, the back balked, and the muscles played a reluctant game of “not it” when nudged to get moving. I chuckled to myself, “If I pop any more in the morning, they’ll start calling me ‘Rice Krispies.’”

Hungry for breakfast, my stomach growled for a good ol’ Cuban sandwich—pork, ham, cheese, pickles, and mustard all pressed together between slabs of crispy bread. It’s a taste of Miami, a slice of my youth, just like the stone structures I examine — both are layered, flavorful, and have stood the test of time.

Just as I was about to head out to my favorite greasy spoon, my phone rang. The voice on the other end was tinged with distress. A lady had a travertine paver driveway that was spalling, and she didn’t know why. Known in these parts as the “Stone Detective,” I usually unraveled the mysteries of historical buildings and ornate masonry, but driveways with attitude? Right up my alley.

I grabbed my keys and hopped into my trusty old Woody, which was almost as vintage and temperamental as I am, and drove to the diner. I perched on my usual stool. Flo, the waitress with a knack for sassy banter, greeted me with a raised eyebrow and a smirk. “Back again, huh? Can’t stay away from our coffee or is it just me?” she said with a wink.

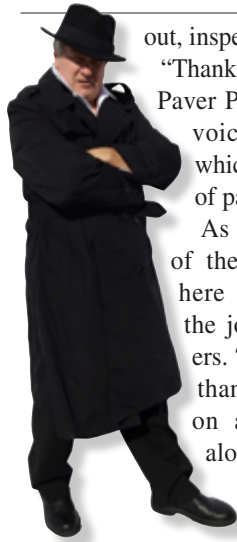
Flirting with Flo was an old routine, as comforting and familiar as the Cuban sandwich she was about to serve up. “Maybe it’s a bit of both,” I grinned, winking back. “But today, make it quick, Flo. Duty calls, and driveways apparently don’t fix themselves.”

As I scarfed down the sandwich, my phone buzzed again. It was Paver Panic Patty anxious for me to come over. I reassured her with a quick, “On my way!” and threw down a couple of bills for Flo, who was already pouring another cup of to-go coffee, she knew I wouldn’t have time to linger at the counter for more banter.

Upon arriving at Paver Panic Patty’s place, the travertine pavers were indeed spalling — they were shedding bits like a nervous cat.

“Good morning!” I greeted her as I stepped

**Dr. Frederick M. Hueston, PhD**



out, inspection bag in hand.

“Thank goodness you’re here,”

Paver Panic Patty, replied, her voice echoing her heels, which clicked a Morse code of panic against the stone.

As we surveyed the scene of the crime, I knelt down here and there, inspecting the joints between the pavers. “These joints are tighter than a new pair of shoes on a long walk,” I said aloud. “And these pavers, they’re thinner than my

patience on a hot day.

They simply can’t handle the weight of cars without a bit more meat on their bones and some breathing room.”



Paver Panic Patty looked both perplexed and intrigued. “So, what’s the fix?”

“Well, the whole driveway needs a facelift,” I explained. “Thicker pavers, wider joints. It’s a bit like plastic surgery for your driveway — expensive, but worth it in the long run.”

She sighed, a mix of dismay and relief etching her face. “I should have called a seasoned stone sleuth like you from the start.”

## ISFA and Worktop Fabricators Federation Announce Strategic Training & Advocacy Partnership

The International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA) and the Worktop Fabricators Federation (WFF) are excited to announce a partnership aimed at expanding resources, education and advocacy for surface fabricators across the globe. This strategic alliance will empower fabricators with the tools and support needed to excel in an increasingly competitive industry.

The collaboration between ISFA and WFF will bring a wealth of new opportunities to surface fabricators, including access to cutting-edge training programs, enhanced advocacy efforts and a broader network of resources. By combining the strengths of both organizations, the partnership will create a unified voice to address the challenges fabricators face in today’s rapidly evolving market.

Founded by a group of dedicated fabricators in 1997 and based in the United States, ISFA has a longstanding foundation in the surfacing industry as a trusted resource,

**The collaboration will bring a wealth of new opportunities to surface fabricators, including access to cutting-edge training programs, enhanced advocacy efforts and a broader network of resources.**

providing education, standards, community, industry advocacy and other tools that foster growth and success for its members. Initially an organization focused on manufactured surfaces like solid surface and engineered stone, today ISFA represents fabricators and industry professionals who work with all kinds of materials, including stone.

Launched in 2020 and based in the United Kingdom, WFF’s objectives are to promote professionalism across the industry,

After wrapping up there, I made a mental note to stop by the diner again on the way back. Flo’s good humor and the diner’s buzzing atmosphere were the perfect antidote to a morning spent diagnosing spalling driveways. And who knows? Maybe I’d have time for that a third cup of coffee: and some more flirting!

Driving back, I mulled over the day’s events. Every job was a mix of detective work, craftsmanship, and a dose of old-fashioned charm. Just another day in the life of the Stone Detective, preserving the past, one stone at a time, ensuring each piece could withstand whatever life decided to park on it. And with any luck, there’d be another Cuban sandwich at the end of the next mystery.

*The Stone Detective is a fictional character created by Dr. Frederick M. Hueston, PhD, written to entertain and educate. Dr. Fred has written over 33 books on stone and tile installations, fabrication and restoration and also serves as an expert for many legal cases across the world. Send your comments to [fhueston@stoneforensics.com](mailto:fhueston@stoneforensics.com).*

including best practices, standards and regulations that foster health and safety in the workplace. The WFF is a unified representative voice for the industry on matters of industry-wide importance, including silica safety. According to the WFF website, there are more than 2,000 surface fabrication businesses in the UK, some of which are also ISFA members.

“We are thrilled to join forces with the Worktop Fabricators Federation,” said Marissa Bankert, executive director of ISFA. “Our goals are perfectly aligned, and this partnership represents a significant step forward in our mission to support and elevate the surface fabrication industry. By combining our resources and expertise, we can offer unparalleled support to fabricators around the world.”

Key Initiatives of the partnership include:

**Expanded Educational Programs:** The partnership will introduce comprehensive learning modules covering the latest techniques, technologies and best practices in surface fabrication. These programs will be available to fabricators worldwide, ensuring consistent quality and innovation across the industry.

*Please turn to page 13*

## ISFA and WFF Strategic Partnership

*Continued from page 12*

**Global Advocacy:** ISFA and WFF will work together to represent the interests of surface fabricators on a global scale. By advocating for fair regulations, sustainable and safe working practices, and industry standards, the partnership aims to protect and promote the interests of fabricators everywhere.

**Resource Sharing:** Members of both ISFA and WFF will benefit from access to a shared repository of resources, including technical guides, market research and industry insights. This collaborative approach will help fabricators stay ahead of trends and maintain a competitive edge.

“Partnering with ISFA is a natural progression for both of our organizations,” added Nigel Fletcher, operations officer at WFF. “Together, we are stronger and more capable of addressing the needs of fabricators, whether they are just starting out or are established industry leaders. This collaboration is about ensuring that all fabricators have the tools and knowledge they need to succeed.”

*The International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA) is globally recognized as a premier trade organization serving the architectural surface industry. ISFA exists to help fabricators and other industry professionals increase product quality, improve safety measures, encourage professionalism and elevate profitability by facilitating education, standards and camaraderie. ISFA values innovation, dependability, trust, honesty, ethics and serving others above all else. Learn more at [www.ISFAnow.org](http://www.ISFAnow.org).*

*Launched in 2020, the Worktop Fabricators Federation (WFF) is a nonprofit organization for those using industrial fabrication methods to make worktops from natural stone and similar materials. The Federation’s objectives are to promote professionalism across the worktop fabrication and stone masonry industries, including the promotion of good working practices and policies for health and safety in the workplace. The WFF is a unified representative voice for the industry on matters of industry-wide importance. Learn more at [www.worktopfabricators.org](http://www.worktopfabricators.org).*

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# The Link Between Customer Satisfaction and Employee Satisfaction

**I**N today’s competitive business landscape, customer satisfaction is essential. Companies invest in customer experience strategies, innovative technologies, and marketing campaigns to enhance their relationships with customers. However, one of the most critical, yet often overlooked, factors influencing customer satisfaction is the satisfaction and engagement of employees. Satisfied and engaged employees are the backbone of a positive customer experience, and their impact on customer satisfaction cannot be overstated.

### **The Power of Employee Satisfaction**

Employee satisfaction refers to the contentment employees feel about their jobs, work environment, and the organization they work for. Satisfied employees are more likely to stay with the company, be productive, and contribute positively to the organization’s goals. But how does this translate into customer satisfaction?

**1. Quality of Service:** When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to go above and beyond in their roles. They take pride in their work, which translates into better service delivery. For instance, a satisfied customer service representative is more patient, attentive, and willing to resolve issues effectively. This level of service enhances the customer’s experience, leading to higher satisfaction.

**2. Consistency in Service:** Satisfied employees tend to have lower turnover rates. This stability allows them to build expertise in their roles and create consistent experiences for customers. Consistency is key to building trust and loyalty among customers, as they know they can expect the same high-quality service every time they interact with the company.

**3. Positive Work Environment:** A workplace where employees are satisfied is often characterized by positive morale and a supportive

### **Darlene Campagna** *Direct Opinions*

culture. This positive atmosphere is contagious and can be felt by customers. When employees are happy, they exude positivity, which customers notice and appreciate, leading to a more pleasant and satisfying experience.

### **The Role of Employee Engagement**

While employee satisfaction is crucial, engagement takes it a step further. Employee engagement refers to the emotional commitment an employee has to their organization and its goals. Engaged employees are not just satisfied with their jobs; they are passionate about their work and motivated to contribute to the company’s success. This deep level of engagement has a direct impact on customer satisfaction.

**1. Proactive Problem Solving:** Engaged employees are more likely to take ownership of their work and actively seek solutions to problems. When they encounter customer issues, they don’t just follow the script; they think critically and find the best possible solutions. This proactive approach enhances the customer experience, as customers feel valued and understood.

**2. Innovative Ideas:** Engaged employees are often the source of innovative ideas that can improve customer service and satisfaction. Because they are deeply invested in the success of the company, they are more likely to suggest improvements, identify inefficiencies, and propose new ways to enhance the customer experience. This continuous innovation keeps the company ahead of the competition and ensures customers receive the best possible service.

**3. Emotional Connection with Customers:** Engaged employees are more likely to form emotional connections with customers. They

are genuinely interested in helping customers and ensuring their needs are met. This emotional connection fosters loyalty, as customers are more likely to return to a company where they feel a personal connection with the employees.

### **The Ripple Effect on Customer Experience**

**When employees are both satisfied and engaged, the ripple effect on customer experience is profound.** Customers notice when employees are happy and invested in their work, and this positively influences their perception of the company. They receive better service, feel more valued, and are more likely to become loyal advocates for the brand.

Additionally, companies with high levels of employee satisfaction and engagement often experience fewer customer complaints and higher levels of customer retention. This is because employees who are satisfied and engaged are more likely to address issues before they escalate, provide consistent service, and create memorable experiences that keep customers coming back.

Satisfied and engaged employees are the driving force behind exceptional customer experiences. Their satisfaction leads to better service quality, consistency, and a positive work environment, while their engagement fosters proactive problem-solving, innovation, and emotional connections with customers. Companies that prioritize employee satisfaction and engagement are not just investing in their workforce; they are investing in their customers and, ultimately, in their long-term success. By understanding and leveraging the powerful link between employee satisfaction, engagement, and customer satisfaction, businesses can create a scenario that benefits everyone involved.

If you’d like some help, please reach out to Darlene Campagna at [dcampagna@directopinions.com](mailto:dcampagna@directopinions.com) or call 216-867-1165.

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Are Your Employees in Flow?

Let me tell you about the best employee I have ever managed. He worked in the Reliability department in an iron mine in northern Minnesota. I knew very little about Reliability. What I did know was how to harness the best out of my team and lead improvement efforts across a company.

Tyler was one of my newly inherited technicians. He was a high school graduate who had worked his way through mine operations and maintenance to land in my department. He had no official schooling after high school, yet whenever anyone had a question, they went to Tyler.

I wanted to reward this highly capable employee and keep him on my team for the foreseeable future. When I went to the Human Resources department to request a merit-based raise for Tyler, I was told that it would never happen. Tyler was on a 'blacklist' of no raises and no advancement. I found out that Tyler had been caught playing video games on

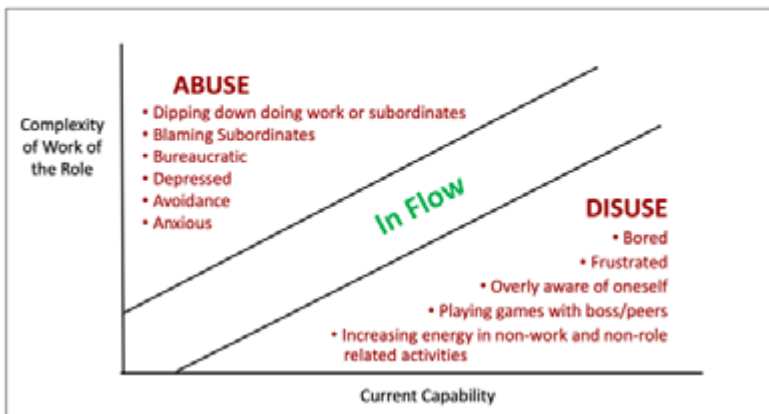
**Ed Montgomery**  
*Synchronous Solutions*

work tasks, employees are "in flow". In flow, employees are happy, productive, and engaged. However, when leadership fails in their duty to hire the right people for the right role, employees cannot succeed.

An employee who is out of flow is not at fault, but rather it is the failure of leadership to match roles and capability. When we fail as leaders to consider this simple concept, we should not be surprised by the negative consequences but should expect them. It is the work of managers to constantly balance these concepts, creating opportunities for success for all employees.

The concept of "Systems Leadership" emphasizes that it is the responsibility of leaders to align job complexity with employee capability, fostering a productive and fulfilling work environment.

*When an individual's current capability does not match the complexity of the current role, they are not IN FLOW...*



the control room computers, as well as receiving calls and moonlighting on a side business on company time.

A month later, I learned about a business theory called 'Systems Leadership.' The foundation of this theory was the idea of running your company like a meritocracy where great employees are rewarded. As part of the presentation, the speakers showed a chart with specific examples.

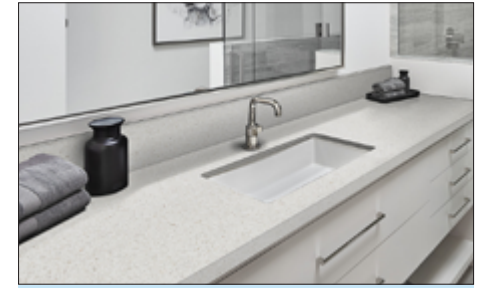
When leadership is able to match a person's capability with the complexity of

**Ed Montgomery**  
– *Synchronous Solutions*

*Ed has been working as an operational manager and continuous improvement leader for over twenty years. He combines the tools of continuous improvement with organizational design, creating deep and sustainable improvements in multiple industries across the globe. For more information, and to book a free discovery call, visit [www.synchronousolutions.com](http://www.synchronousolutions.com).*

## Arizona Tile Announces New Agglomerate Marble Products

Arizona Tile has introduced a new line of Agglomerate Marbles, now available in four stocked colors in a 24-inch x 24-inch tile and 126-inch x 63-inch slab option. Often used in mid-century modern design, this playful material can be used for both commercial and residential projects. However, this timeless marble is versatile enough to take your design anywhere your imagination will take you.



**Classico Agglomerate Marble Slab**

### What is Agglomerate Marble?

To appreciate the beauty of agglomerate marble, knowing how it is made enhances its appeal. A natural stone formed within the earth, marble is a metamorphic rock, meaning it changes form. Think caterpillar to butterfly. When limestone, a sedimentary rock, is subjected to extreme heat and pressure over millions of years, it goes through a process of recrystallization which causes calcite crystals within the limestone to grow and fuse together. When this occurs, marble has been created.

That's how marble is formed, but agglomerate marble is a bit different because it is manufactured from marble chips. These chips are tumbled to round their sharp edges, then combined with resin and marble powder, and placed in large rectangular tanks to be cured into a block. Once cured, the block is cut into ¾-inch or ½-inch thick slabs or cut down further into tile.

Given that resin is nonporous, this helps tremendously with durability, whereas standard marble slabs and marble tiles are porous, making them more susceptible to staining and wear and tear if not properly cared for. However, as a product containing natural stone, it is recommended that it be sealed to extend its longevity. Due to its durability agglomerate tile can be used throughout the floor and wall of an entire commercial or residential space. A highly trafficked area is of no concern to this tile, with proper care and maintenance.

### Classico

Classico is a polished agglomerate marble comprised of a white resin background that elegantly displays small, grey marble chips. Upon a closer look, there are some soft hints of beige that may appeal more to a warmer design, while still remaining neutral.

### Iceberg

Iceberg is quite similar to Classico in that it is a polished agglomerate marble with a white



**Iceberg Agglomerate Marble Slab**



**Vector Agglomerate Marble Slab**

background and a stunning display of grey marble chips, but these grey marble chips are a bit larger. Slight hints of beige can also be detected here, but the larger marble chips allow the grey to really pop. Again, it is neutral and versatile, but if you're working with cool-toned décor, the more prominent grey may cater to your preferences.

Similar to Classico and Iceberg, Vector and Regium offer many similarities but provide a more vibrant color palette.

### Vector

Vector is a polished agglomerate marble comprised of an off-white background. Where it really differs is in the marble chips. Embedded in this resin are small black, gold, and grey marble chips. This is a timeless way to add some color and playful energy to kitchen and bathroom floors, walls, and more.

*Please turn to page 19*

# Not All Social Media is Created Equal!



Social media has become a valuable tool for businesses, enabling them to reach their audiences (and customers) in innovative, creative and direct ways. However, not all social media sites are the same. There are different types of platforms and they have different requirements and accomplish different things. Here's an overview of some of the different types of social media and the pros and cons of each for business use.

## 1. Social Networking Sites

**Examples:** Facebook, LinkedIn

### Pros include

**Broad Reach:** These platforms have vast user bases, allowing businesses to reach a large and diverse audience.

**Targeted Advertising:** Advanced targeting options enable businesses to reach specific demographics with tailored ads.

**Brand Awareness:** Excellent for building brand recognition and loyalty through consistent engagement and content sharing.

**Networking:** LinkedIn, in particular, is invaluable for B2B networking, recruitment, and professional development.

### Cons include

**Algorithm Changes:** Frequent changes to algorithms can affect the visibility of business posts.

**Privacy Issues:** Data breaches and privacy concerns can erode customer trust.

**Competition:** High level of competition for user attention, requiring businesses to continuously innovate their content strategies.

**Ad Caution** – Many people are wary of social media posts and ads from businesses because they are concerned about being scammed.

## 2. Microblogging Platforms

**Examples:** X (formerly known as Twitter), Tumblr.

## Sharon Koehler

*Stone Industry Consultant*

### Pros include

**Real-Time Interaction:** Ideal for real-time updates, customer service, and engaging with trending topics.

**Brevity:** Encourages concise communication, which can be effective for clear and direct messaging.

**Viral Potential:** Content can quickly go viral, providing significant exposure.

### Cons include

**Character Limits:** Restrictions on post length can limit detailed communication.

**Negative Feedback:** The open nature of these platforms can attract public criticism and negative feedback.

**Fast-Paced:** The fast-moving nature of content can make it difficult to keep visibility without frequent posting.

## 3. Photo and Video Sharing Platforms

**Examples:** Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube

### Pros include

**Visual Appeal:** Highly engaging visual content can capture attention and drive higher engagement rates.

**Brand Storytelling:** Videos and images are powerful tools for storytelling and creating emotional connections with audiences.

**Influencer Marketing:** These platforms are prime for collaborations with influencers to reach new audiences.

### Cons include

**Resource Intensive:** High-quality visual content creation can be time-consuming and expensive.

**Algorithm Changes:** Like social networking sites, algorithm changes can affect

content visibility.

**Privacy Concerns:** Sharing visual content can raise privacy issues and the potential for misuse.

## 4. Messaging Apps

**Examples:** WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat

### Pros Include

**Direct Communication:** Provide a direct line of communication with customers for personalized interactions.

**Customer Service:** Excellent for offering customer support and addressing inquiries in real time.

**Engagement:** High open and response rates compared to traditional email marketing.

### Cons include

**Privacy Issues:** Concerns about data security and privacy can deter some users from engaging.

**Limited Reach:** Typically requires users to opt-in, which can limit audience size.

**Spam:** Potential for messages to be perceived as spam if not used carefully.

## 5. Content Curation and Bookmarking Sites

**Examples:** Pinterest, Pocket

### Pros include

**Drive Traffic:** Can drive significant traffic to a business's website or blog through shared content.

**Inspiration and Ideas:** Great for highlighting products and providing inspiration to potential customers.

**Longevity:** Content has a longer lifespan compared to other social media types, staying discoverable for longer periods.

### Cons include

**Niche Audience:** May attract a more niche audience, limiting reach.

**Limited Interaction:** Typically have lower levels of interaction and engagement compared to other platforms.

**Copyright Issues:** Risk of sharing content without proper attribution or permission.

## 6. Discussion Forums

**Examples:** Reddit, Quora

### Pros include

**In-Depth Engagement:** Allow for detailed discussions and deep engagement with users.

**Market Research:** Offer valuable insights into customer opinions, preferences, and pain points.

**Authority Building:** Businesses can show authority and ability by contributing valuable content.

### Cons include

**Moderation Challenges:** Difficult to moderate, leading to potential abuse and off-topic discussions.

**Negative Feedback:** Open forums can attract negative comments and criticism.

**Time-Consuming:** Requires consistent monitoring and participation to keep a positive presence.

## 7. Review and Recommendation Sites

**Examples:** Yelp, TripAdvisor

### Pros include

**Customer Trust:** Positive reviews build customer trust and influence purchasing decisions.

**Feedback:** Provide valuable feedback that can be used to improve products and services.

**Visibility:** High visibility on these platforms can drive traffic and sales.

### Cons include

**Negative Reviews:** Negative reviews can harm a business's reputation.

**Fake Reviews:** The presence of fake or biased reviews can mislead customers.

**Limited Control:** Businesses have limited control over the content and reviews posted about them.

FYI: You can link your Facebook page to your Instagram, so you only have to make one post instead of 2, BUT there must be a picture or video with the post.

Google is NOT mentioned. Why? Google is not a social media platform. It is a search engine. Yes, you can leave reviews just like Yelp or Trip Advisor and you can run Google ads like you can place ads on other social media sites, but Google is not a social media platform.

Not all platforms will work for all businesses. You need to pick and choose the ones that work best for your business and then you need to learn their posting guidelines and regulations. Happy posting everyone!

Please send your thoughts and comments on this article to Sharon Koehler at [Sharonk.SRG@gmail.com](mailto:Sharonk.SRG@gmail.com).

"A grandmother pretends she doesn't know who you are on Halloween."

– Erma Bombeck

## CaraGreen Unveils GEOS Destin – A Coastal-Inspired Sustainable Surface



**Destin by GEOS is a durable, eco-friendly hard surface product made from recycled glass.**

**C**araGreen, a leading distributor of sustainable building materials, has announced the arrival of GEOS's newest color, Destin. Inspired by the serene coastal beauty of Destin, Florida, this stunning new shade is now available and promises to bring a touch of tranquility and elegance to any space.

GEOS, renowned for its innovative and eco-friendly surfaces made from recycled glass, has once again captured the essence of nature in their latest color. Destin embodies the clear blue waters and pristine sandy beaches of its namesake, making it a perfect choice for a variety of interior applications.

GEOS's new color, Destin, is a unique and calming hue that provides endless design possibilities, and its eco-friendly composition aligns perfectly with our commitment to sustainable building solutions.

### Key Features of GEOS Destin

- **Versatile Design:** Destin's soft yet vibrant color complements a range of design styles, from modern to coastal chic.
- **Eco-Friendly:** Made from recycled glass, GEOS surfaces are an environmentally responsible choice.
- **Durability:** GEOS surfaces are not only beautiful but also durable and easy to maintain, making them ideal for both residential and commercial spaces.

### Applications for Destin

- **Kitchens:** Enhance your kitchen with Destin countertops or backsplashes, adding a refreshing and inviting atmosphere.
- **Bathrooms:** Create a spa-like retreat with Destin-colored vanities and shower surrounds.
- **Living Areas:** Introduce sophistication to your living room with accent walls or furniture pieces in this serene hue.

*GEOS is a pioneer in creating beautiful and sustainable surfaces from recycled glass. Committed to environmental responsibility, GEOS combines design innovation with eco-friendly practices to produce surfaces that are both stunning and sustainable.*

*CaraGreen is a trusted distributor of sustainable building materials, dedicated to providing eco-friendly solutions for modern design. With a focus on quality and innovation, CaraGreen partners with leading manufacturers to offer a diverse selection of products that promote a healthier planet. For more information visit the website <http://caragreen.com>.*

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## Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner

### *Handling New and Difficult to Polish Stones*

**A**s a stone restoration and maintenance contractor, you run across many types of stones, especially in 2024. There are new stones that are being used as building materials, more so than ever before. More and more exotic stones are also being used, and in many cases have their own set of issues. Used to be, polishing rock was pretty straight forward; there were a few different types of marble, granite, travertine, limestone, and slate. Of course, there were also the sandstones and flagstones, terrazzo, and few others, but this was the norm.

Nowadays, it is not uncommon to run into onyx, alabaster, jade, more and more epoxy terrazzo, and of course, the dreaded quartzite. There are so many exotic marbles and granites that I've only seen in the last few years, and I've been doing this for about 50 years now. There are those who want the most ornate stone they can find, just because it's not common and no one else on their street has it.

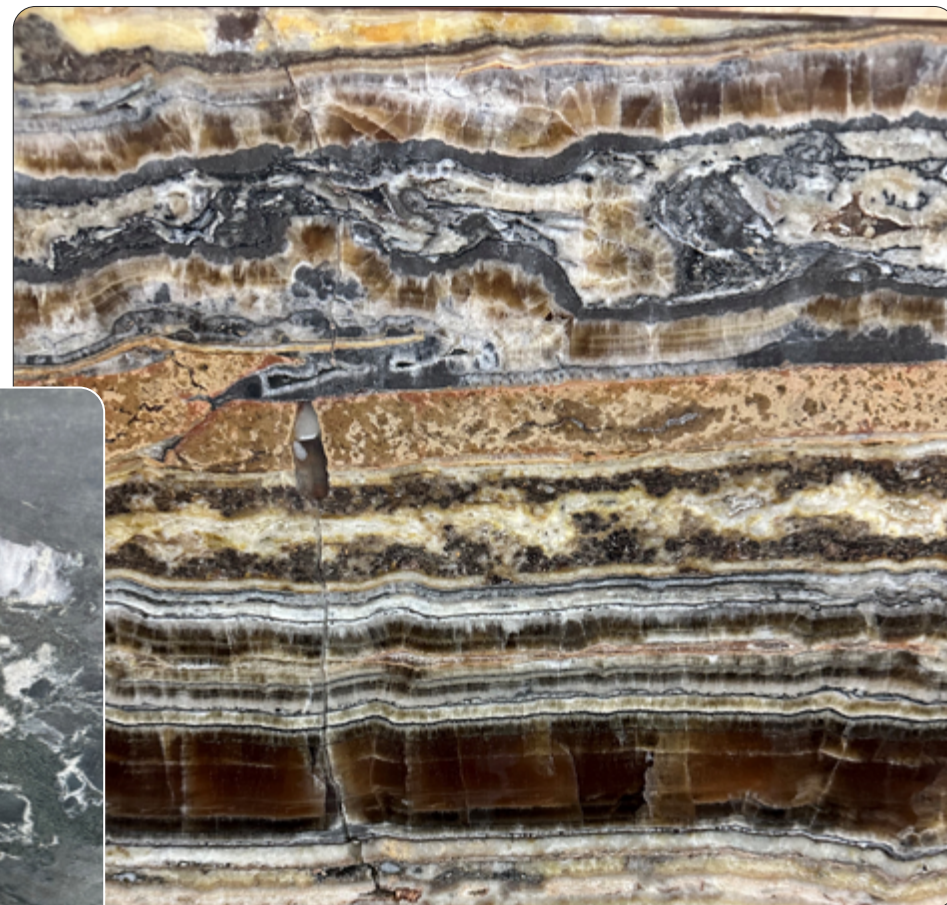
Now, with all these exotic stones in brilliant colors in the marketplace, they obviously have different mineral content, even though they may be classified as marble or limestone or granite. The different minerals are what make all the pretty colors and veins. Of course, most are still calcium-based or quartz-based.

Geologically speaking, there are only a few true marbles and the same is true for granite, as well. However, for our purposes, and commercially speaking, we group most of the metamorphic limestones as marble and the metamorphic granites as, you guessed it, granites. These later stones are actually gneiss. Gneisses are usually the granites with lots of movement, which some mistake for veining.

For example, black granites are not true granites at all. They are basalt, anorthosite, or gabbro. Commercially, we call them black granites. Pink Tennessee marble is not a true marble, it is a metamorphic limestone, and the same is true for many stones that we label marble. Carrera marble is an example of a true marble.

Onyx is another example of a calcareous stone, like marble and limestone. So is Alabaster. These stones can be somewhat

**Bob Murrell**  
M3 Technologies  
*Photos by Bob Murrell*



Polishing a very ornate onyx poses challenges as it contains fairly soft material. Left: Silver Tapestry granite (actually a type of gneiss, I believe) with large inclusions of quartz. Below: Leathered, resin/color enhanced Negresso needs careful handling.

finicky to polish as they tend to be soft. I have polished a particular (under-lit) onyx bar top for many years now, when the client wants it to look fresh again. I get a call from them about every 2-3 years, as they do tend to take good care of it. I usually go down to about a 220 grit then proceed to a 400, and then an 800 grit before polishing using Majestic 5X Gold. It works every time, but extra care must be taken as scratching and even heat swirls from the 5X are a constant battle. On some onyx and marble, I prefer the performance of the Majestic DiaBrite 10X or the Majestic XXX polishing powders. It pays to have them on the truck. If you're not getting the results you expect, and you have tried varying the amount of water to powder ratio, the number of passes or time per square foot, and/or weight of the machine, try the 10X or XXX.

We have so many brands of engineered stones now that I can't keep up with them anymore. Quartz or engineered stone is basically a material that has similar characteristics to granite. They are made of



quartz and resin. We have special polishing kits for the quartz materials called Quartz Renew. It contains special polishing pads which are used with specific compounds that are designed to give excellent results when refinishing these harder materials.

There are also manufactured or engineered marbles as well. I have used the

standard polishing procedures for the engineered marbles with good success. You may have to play around and experiment with the different polishing powders (like 10X or XXX), but you should be successful.

*[Please turn to page 18](#)*

## Stone Restoration Corner

*Continued from page 17*

Not only are there many more exotic stones in the marketplace now but there are also some new surface finishes, too. Have you ever heard of 3D soapstone? It is a bizarre material which is heavily textured but finished like the leathered or antiqued materials to achieve some tightness at the surface. These textured materials should be sealed for sure. There would be little to no refinishing that could take place due to the dimensional features, other than using brushes and chemicals.

There are also more and more honed materials gaining popularity today. This is “no brainer” as these materials, especially calcareous in nature, will show less etching and scratching. They also have what I have always called the “European” look. These normally require refinishing with normal diamond abrasives, only less high in the grit series. I call a good, honed look around a 200 grit, maybe less or more, depending on the particular stone.

My point is this, there are so many stones being used in the dimensional building stone industry nowadays, you will be getting requests to restore them, at some point. You will need to be ready for working on them, so have all of your tools in order. Most tooling will be universal, with the textured materials being an obvious stand-out regarding the use of different tooling. Test, test, test! Call me or another experienced reference, when in doubt. We should be able to give you some pointers.

I always recommend doing a test area on any project to confirm both the results



and procedure. Also, the best way to help ensure success is by partnering with a good distributor, like BB Industries, that knows the business. They can help with technical support, product purchase decisions, logistics, and other pertinent project information.

*Bob Murrell has worked in the natural stone industry for over 40 years and is well known for his expertise in natural stone, tile, and decorative concrete restoration and maintenance. He helped develop some of the main products and processes which revolutionized the industry, and is currently the Director of Operations for M3 Technologies. Send your comments and questions to Bob at [attn: publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net](mailto:attn:publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net).*



### Gen-Z Zombie



**Top Left:** Old school exotic marble, including Tennessee Pink wall cladding – a true craftsman install done in the in the 1930s-1940s.

**Top right:** A very ornate-looking Splendor White, another type of “granite” material, with shiny but fragile mica inclusions scattered throughout.

**Above:** Black and white Italian marble. Pretty exotic though, wouldn't you say?

## Arizona Tile

*Continued from page 14*



Regium Agglomerate Marble Slab

There is value in mentioning that pops of color like this, especially on a floor, can truly make the general appearance a little less stressful throughout the day as tracked in dirt won't be very noticeable. This makes it ideal for both household and commercial settings.

### Regium

Regium offers the same make-up and colors as Vector but with larger marble chips for a bolder design. Add color to your space or even mix and match Vector tile and Regium tile to add movement to the space.

Whether your design is modern or mid-century, or you're choosing to go neutral or bold in your color pallet, there is something for everyone with agglomerate marble. With beautiful and versatile tile and slab options, the possibilities are endless!

Founded in 1977 in San Diego, California, Arizona Tile has grown into a nationally recognized commercial and residential distributor in 10 Western states. Arizona Tile distributes more than 300 varieties of granite, marble, quartzite, limestone and travertine slabs and tile, over 60 colors of Della Terra® Quartz, and over 60 series of porcelain, ceramic and glass tile. Founded by John Huarte, former NFL player and Heisman Trophy winner, the company is still family-owned after more than 45 years. Visit [www.arizona.tile.com](http://www.arizona.tile.com) for more information.

"The constitution does not just protect against human malevolence, of which there is plenty. It also protects against human *stupidity*, of which there is much more."

—Laura Hollis

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## What's the Story on this Headless Dinosaur Abandoned Beside a Lonely Florida Backroad?



Drivers heading along the backroads in Hernando County, Florida might spot this strange figure on the side of the road.

It's a large, headless sculpture of a brontosaurus, with its interior exposed to the elements.

But it has a name: "The Lake Lindsey Dinosaur."

It can be found along Lake Lindsey Road near U.S. Highway 41, though there are no signs or markers nearby to indicate why such a large decoration is just sitting out in the open like this.

However, local lore explains that the sculpture stems back to 1966, when artist August Herwede began its construction.

Herwede was reportedly inspired to build the dinosaur thanks to the Dinoland exhibit at the 1964 New York World's Fair, and he set out to create a statue to scale with the prehistoric brontosaurus — meaning it would have stretched around 60 feet long and over 30 feet tall. Herwede crafted the beast with a wooden frame and wire-reinforced concrete shell.

"It would be hollow, with access to the inside from a hole in the beast's belly," says one source — the Nature Coaster website "He dug a pit to be its swamp home at the curve on State Road 476 and began construction."

But disaster struck in 1967 while Herwede was building the statue. He fell from the creature's shoulders, breaking his neck and ultimately dying from the accident.

Herwede was buried in the nearby Lake Lindsay Cemetery, and many of the other small sculptures on his property were sold off. However, his family left the brontosaurus as-is to commemorate Herwede.

That's not where the story ends, though.

Nowadays, the dinosaur is owned by Steve Eaton, who lives just up the hill on his 5-acre property.

Eaton's brother Kevin regularly decks out the statue for the holidays, putting up garlands, lights, and other festive decorations.

"For fifty years, this dinosaur sat untouched," says Eaton. "I thought something should be done with it. It would be nice if someone would finish the front half — if they know how to do that — but I decided to decorate it."

The statue is reportedly equipped with a security camera, too, helping to safeguard the strange attraction from vandals and looters.

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**NOVEMBER 2024 ISSUE**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

**DECEMBER 2024 ISSUE**

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## For Sale

**Tree Sculpture for Sale:** Limestone tree that Cliff Dieker carved at the Missouri Ledge Stone Co. in Oak Grove Mo. Very detailed with squirrels, raccoon and even acorns in and on a hollowed out tree trunk. It measures 6 ft. 4 in. tall, 32 ins. at widest base and 32 ins., at widest middle area. Original sculpture at price of \$7000.00 email us at [dkrede54@gmail.com](mailto:dkrede54@gmail.com).

**Achilli MBS/CE bridge saw, Edgemate polisher, Trac Saw and Scorpion sink machine:** \$6,150 for the Bridge saw (fits in tight quarters) \$2,800 for the Edgemate with rails \$4,250 Trac Saw with rails (used very little) \$4,900 for the Scorpion with extra motor. All are under power and working. Contact: Loren Fisher: (785)925-3400 Email: [loren@fisherfixtures.com](mailto:loren@fisherfixtures.com).

**Comandulli Speedy Edge Polishing Machine For Sale** – Edge polishing machine for sale \$14K OBO - Must sell! Located in Los Angeles, CA, the machine is in excellent condition, low hours, Model Speedy System, Year 2006, Automatic Tool changer, Pneumatic turntable for piece loading, pre-set programs visualized on "touch-screen" control panel. Contact us at 310-328-8000 or email [elizabeth@delorenzomarmble.com](mailto:elizabeth@delorenzomarmble.com).

**INTERMAC MASTER STONE 4000 Used Parts:** I have disassembled and salvaged 2 machines. Too many parts to list. Cables, switches, breakers and relays, motors, drives, motor controllers, tanks (1 set custom made), vacuum fittings, pumps, and on and on. Please feel free to inquire about any part you may need, send a picture, and I'll see if I have it. Prices negotiable and reasonable. Buyer pays shipping. Since these are used parts, no guarantees but will refund for returned non-working parts. Contact: Bob Armstrong: (440) 233-9458; Email: [largestcanine@gmail.com](mailto:largestcanine@gmail.com).

**Denver Slot Bridge Saw For Sale:** Denver Slot, 230-240 volt, fixed table, rotating head, 15 hp motor, 18" max blade, power x, y & z axis, Manual head rotation, No longer under power. Price reduced: \$6,500. Contact: Jeff Kohmann: (330) 575-3871 Email: [jeff@rocksolidcutstone.com](mailto:jeff@rocksolidcutstone.com).

**CNC Donatoni JET 625:** 6 years old. Automation of work process with minimal intervention by operator. Tilting table, photographic identification of work area, programmable and reliable. The DONATONI JET 625 is a n easy-to-use and compact CNC bridge milling machine on a monobloc structure, with 5 interpolated axes. Ideal for the production of kitchen countertops, bathroom countertops, shower trays and various claddings for the building industry in marble granite and artificial stone. Email: [omar@stoneworksinc.com](mailto:omar@stoneworksinc.com).

**For Sale:** 2007 Sawing Systems Gantry Saw. \$12,000 OBO. Thunderhead 541-CS Diamond Gantry Saw with a 20 hp motor. Originally purchased new for \$31,000. One-owner, selling for upgrades. Disassembled and located in East TN. Estimated 40,000 hours and around 40,000 slabs cut. Features a 12 foot cut capacity, Powered blade raise & lower, Blade guard fits up to an 18 inch blade, 14 inch Milling blade. Replaced Parts: 20 hp motor, Spindle, Dry shaft, Drive belt. Please contact [Elliotenterprise1@gmail.com](mailto:Elliotenterprise1@gmail.com).

**Blow Out Bridge Saw Sale!** Sawing Systems Inc Bridge Saw model 515c with turning table and laser. Already disassembled and in a storage room for the last 10 years. Sale Price \$2,500 Located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Zip code 19146. Contact Angelo 215-546-5777. Email: [amgkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:amgkitchen@gmail.com).

## Business Opportunities

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### MANUFACTURER OF EXTERIOR CLADDING PANELS IN FLORIDA

This opportunity is a Florida-based business manufacturer of lightweight exterior cladding panels as well as waterjet-cut natural stone products. In business since 1984, the owner recently passed away and the family does not wish to continue operations. The 25,000 sf facility (owned by family) requires relocation, They have the team and plans to execute a relocation. Over 1m in equipment alone, and proprietary processes included. Contact: Michael Wehl Phone: 786-395-3862. Email: [michael@siriusbusinessadvisors.com](mailto:michael@siriusbusinessadvisors.com).

**Turn Key Fab Shop for Sale in Connecticut**  
Owner selling for health reasons. Granite

fab shop with excellent reputation, with zero negative reviews in 13 years. Very clean shop, Show room, Marmo bridge saw, water recycling system, Scorpion router, Denver JOB CNC machine. Polishing stations, work tables, box truck with frames and shelving, shop carts, Gorilla Grips and lots of miscellaneous tools, Hyster fork truck, slab racks and A frames. \$105,000. Contact: Bernard Hogan Phone: 860-919-6233 or email: [benrhogan73@gmail.com](mailto:benrhogan73@gmail.com).

## Help Wanted

**Machine Operators / Fabricators / Installers.** We are seeking to add experienced stone workers to our team. **European Marble** has been in business for over 55 years. We are seeking a machine operator with a minimum of 2 years' experience for a Genya 600 Bridge Saw. These positions are for full time experienced workers only. Compensation is based on experience. If interested, please contact John Stewart at 941-955-9536. Email: [mary.europeanmarble@gmail.com](mailto:mary.europeanmarble@gmail.com).

**Stone and Marble Finisher.** We are seeking a Stone and Marble finisher to join us at our fabrication facility.

**Requirements:** 2 years min. experience in fabrication/ polishing. Experience in work on miters, cut-outs. Compensation according to experience. Reliable and professional with time & schedule. **Benefits:** Health Care plan. Paid time off (Vacation, Sick Days, Holidays). Retirement Plan (401 K-IRA). Life insurance (Basic-Voluntary & AD&D) Contact: Miller Druck Specialty Contracting, 9 17-855-8053 Email [Eliana.bahamon@millerdruck.com](mailto:Eliana.bahamon@millerdruck.com).

**Stone Mason CNC/CAD Specialist.** Country Stonemasons is an Iowa design/build company, specializing in residential and commercial projects since 2003. We have an opening for a CNC/CAD Specialist. Understanding of stone fabrication, installation, templating, and software preferred - will train. Park Industries Apex and Voyager knowledge a plus. Includes health insurance, dental, PTO and 401k plan. Applicants must be at least 18, have valid driver's license and cell phone. We are an EOE employer. Apply <https://www.countrylandscapes.com/careers>.

**STONE FABRICATORS IN PA –Lehigh Valley** Currently we have openings for Stone Fabricators in our Fabrication Facility. We will train the right candidates. NO experience required, however if you have experience this will put you in the front of the line! Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania. 18103. Contact: JC STONE FABRICATION Phone: (484) 538 6402 Email: [solanojc@icloud.com](mailto:solanojc@icloud.com).

**5-Axis CNC/CAD Operator Position.** Wanting to hire A CNC operator for small well versed stone fabrication shop.

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Park Industries 5 axis APEX or Park Industries Voyager experience a plus, but willing to train. CAD and sketch up experience needed. Located in North Liberty, IA. Contact Country Stone Masons, [Barnhouse@countrylandscapes.com](mailto:Barnhouse@countrylandscapes.com), call 319-321-7918.

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to face it head on and proceed with determination."

– *Rudyard Kipling*

## How to Lose Your Mind in Five Easy Steps

**MY** wife and I are doing our part to boost the American economy.

**Sam Venable**  
*Department of Irony*

How?

By wearing the hide off our Visa card in a game called “*Finding Lost Items by Purchasing Their Replacements.*”

This is not a game in the relaxing, recreational sense. Quite the opposite. It is a maddening experience that plays out in five steps.

**Step One.** You have an item.

Any kind of item. A wristwatch, knitting needle, hammer, hairbrush, fishing lure, serving spoon, necktie, magazine or any of 10-kajillion others. It can be expensive — a diamond ring, perhaps. Or inexpensive — say, a favorite cereal bowl.

**Step Two.** You lose the item.

You're holding it one moment, and it's

gone the next. Poof! Just like that.

Conversely, the time factor can stretch much further than a minute. Hours, days, weeks, months, even years could elapse between usages. All that matters is that the item is now AWOL.

Rarely is it truly lost, with no hope of recovery. Most of the time, it simply has been misplaced, either through boneheaded absentmindedness or first-degree stupidity. You've set it down somewhere, anywhere, and when you reach for it again, it has disappeared.

**Step Three.** You start looking for the item. You retrace steps to where you remember having it last. No luck. You check,



double-check and triple-check the place it's supposed to stay when not in use. Could be a bracket on the garage pegboard, the medicine cabinet, your catch-all drawer or a shelf in the hall closet. No matter how many times you look, it's just as gone as when you first launched your investigation.

During this step, your sense of humor wanes and your vocabulary coarsens. A jovial “reckon it sprouted legs, ha ha, and walked off?” soon morphs into “where in the (bleep) could I have put that rotten, no-good (bleepidity-bleep)?”

**Step Four.** After days or weeks of failed searches, you abandon the quest, buy a replacement, and write off the tribulation as “one of those nutty things that happens to everybody.”

Which brings us to **Step Five**, and you know what it is even before I type another word: The hateful AWOL item magically reappears, like nothing ever happened.

Over the past three months — I swear on a stack blood pressure charts — Mary Ann and I have lost/replaced/lost a set of heavy-duty knee pads, a level, a packet of hose washers, a medical test kit and a framed photograph of wildflowers in bloom at our house.

Still AWOL, as of this writing, is an alarm clock. We finally ordered a replacement, which arrived in the mail a little over two weeks ago.

I double-dog guarantee the original clock will have surfaced long before the words you're reading right now roll off the *Slippery Rock Gazette's* printing press.

*Sam Venable is an author, comedic entertainer, and humor columnist for the Knoxville (TN) News Sentinel. His latest book is “The Joke's on YOU! (All I Did Was Clean Out My Files).” He may be reached at [sam.venable@outlook.com](mailto:sam.venable@outlook.com).*

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