

# SLIPPERY ROCK

## GAZETTE

MARCH 2024

VOL. 30-03

THE BEACON OF THE STONE INDUSTRY [www.slipperyrockgazette.net](http://www.slipperyrockgazette.net)

## Smokey Mountain Tops: A Brand Customers Trust

**S**mokey Mountain Tops recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. This premier fabricator of custom residential and commercial surfaces has flourished by offering a diverse selection of solid surface, quartz and natural stone. With locations in Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee, Smokey Mountain Tops is jointly owned by Todd Scott and Tim Scott, and is the outgrowth of the brothers' past experience in the laboratory case industry – countertops and fixtures used in a laboratory environment.

Todd Scott recalls that many years ago, the brothers were commissioned by a large manufacturer to design a more stylish work surface, and things just blossomed from there. "The Eastman Chemical Company, one of the biggest chemical companies in the world, wanted a laboratory countertop other than black and with nicer esthetics. So we came up with an acrylic, polyester formula, and started pouring our own lab countertops."

by Peter J. Marcucci

*Photos Courtesy Smokey Mountain Tops and Greg Smits*

In 1994, working out of a 10,000 square-foot building, the brothers decided to get out of producing lab countertops and into the commercial solid surface market to compete with the local distributors and fabricators of quartz, taking the company in another direction. Scott explained, "We were now solid surface guys competing against quartz and stone. At the time, quartz was a new product in the market,

and had some features and benefits not found in Corian or other solid surface products. It also had some characteristics of granite, such as hardness. I knew it was a new market that some people wanted to get into, so in 2001, I researched it and found Cambria, and worked a deal to get a territory from them, so that when we promoted it, we'd be the only one who had it."

### *New Products, New Markets*

As more brands of engineered stone entered the market, Smokey Mountain Tops eventually began representing names like Silestone, Caesarstone and Han Stone Quartz, to name a few, further diversifying the company's offerings. However, in order to purchase, hold and sell this much inventory, a second fabrication and sales location was needed. The decision to rent

an existing building three hours away in Nashville, Tennessee was finalized, and a facility was up and running by 2007.,

Now jump to 2010, a time when a third and big change was in the works. Natural stone fabrication and local fabricators had gained a huge market share in the area, and it was again time to rethink the company's position. Scott recalled, "As a company in both Knoxville and Nashville, we had developed very strong relationships. I didn't want to not be able to fully service our customers. So adding natural stone was truly a relationship-driven process with our customers."

Smokey Mountain Tops caters mostly to mid- and high-end residential builders, retail clients, and kitchen and bath dealers and commercial builders.

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**Residential remodel: White Soapstone, with custom builder Forte Building Group, Nashville, TN**  
**Left, below: Custom Onyx sink for Blackberry Farms builder partner FE Trainer, Knoxville, TN**



## Smokey Mountain Tops

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Their installation territory extends throughout the state, as well as adjacent states when called upon. Between both locations, shop space totals 63,000 square feet, while the average fabrication output is a whopping 28,000 square feet per month. A total count of machinery consists of 3-Northwood CNCs, 2 duel table BACA Systems Robo Sawjets, 2 BACA Miter X miter saws, 2 Park Industries CNCs, 2 custom built bridge saws of an unspecified origin, and 1 Paladin CNC by Better Built Machines, and 9 Laser Products LT-2D3Dtemplate systems An Ebbco closed loop water filtration system, Water Treatment Technologies water filtration systems and three axis overhead cranes round out the safety and efficiency portion of both shops, while Moraware and Slabsmith software are used exclusively for job tracking and slab management.

### Keeping Prices and Profits in Balance

Clearly, Smokey Mountain Tops has a huge market share in both Knoxville and Nashville, and the area is competitive, so price does matter, explained Scott. “We do have to stay competitive with everybody



50 foot Cambria Skara Brae bartop for Nelson's Greenbrier Distillery – Nashville, TN



Reception desk for custom builder Grove Park's new offices, in Brentwood, TN

else, but we try to offer more than just price. I'm not saying I don't worry about it, but we do work on our relationships and service more than on price, and we are doing a very good job of it. So there are a lot of compelling reasons to use us. We sell about 10% more quartz than natural stone, and when we show a client samples and they pick one, it is strictly on what they like the look of, and then we obviously say 'that's Cambria,' or 'that's Caesarstone,' 'that's granite or marble,' or 'that's Silestone.' Our goal is to ask them what they like, what they're going to do with it, and what kind of designs they have in mind. Then we'll introduce what we think they're looking for. We also give them all the literature. We don't hide anything. We had our best year this past year, because we serviced the customer not based on brand, but on need.

“We are expanding into large format porcelain Dekton. We are trying to use it in the best applications for us and our customer. We have been successful with vertical applications like fireplaces, showers, outdoor areas where direct sun and lots on heat



Caesarstone quartz Rugged Concrete mitered island and kitchen for a Knoxville, TN Parade of Homes



Dekton conference room counters and table for Nashville, TN architect's office

could effect the other surfaces. The fabrication is quite a bit different, so we are trying to be better at it. We've found that it is a little more unforgiving to work with, you have be more careful in how you cut and fabricate it. When you're doing something new, your people don't always love change, but it is what we have to do to stay on the cutting edge and to offer our customers the best options.”

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## Smokey Mountain Tops

*Continued from page 2*

Smokey Mountain Tops is a member of the elite stone fabrication organization Artisan Group. For those unfamiliar with this group, it is an assembly of fabrication company owners from specific locations around the country, who come together to share knowledge and solve problems. When asked about being a member, Scott said, “It’s been a great group. I’ve been a member for over ten years, and also serve on the Board, and have made some great friends. It has really been a sounding board for us growing up in the industry and learning from each other in order to share ideas without the concern of competing with anyone. We have annual meetings and shop tours, and that’s where we collaborate. Moreover, the knowledge gained, when sitting at the bar after hours, while having a beer and talking about business is just as rewarding as any of the other stuff. Because, in my opinion, this is where you open up and discuss concepts of different things that help you grow with your peers, who value your opinion.”



**Todd Scott and brother Tim Scott co-founded Smokey Mountain Tops over 30 years ago.**

“I think we try to stay on the cutting edge with what’s new in the industry, and not just follow what’s happening. Our goal is to continue to lead the solid surface, quartz, natural stone and Dekton market. Hopefully, we will continue to not just be



**Tim Scott, Smokey Mountain Tops**

satisfied by market shares, and continue to stay educated on what’s next, so we can continue to grow. Each of our markets has different goals for growth, and we will jump through hoops to keep things right and keep our business growing like it’s done over the last thirty years. Last year’s growth was up 11% over the year before. Because we are conservative, we have paid as we go, so during difficult times not being over-extended has given us the luxury to not have to worry about paying for equipment.. We simply evolved with the times, and it has always helped us to be a better company.

“Additionally, we will continue to work on keeping state-of-the-art equipment in our production line. Wet cutting and safe material handling is going to remain our biggest priority over the next five years. Our shops are wet, and have always been safe, and we will continue to look for better ways to keep our people safe. You can’t run a business without good people, right? And it takes years and like-minded people to earn success, and I’d put our people against anyone else’s as far as quality and doing the right thing. Our 135 team members are extended family, and do a great job. Honesty and integrity is important, and a blessing in our business.”

Smokey Mountain Tops is a Natural Stone Institute Accredited Stone Fabrication Shop, a member of the International Stone Fabricators Association, and several builders associations. Todd Scott was also recently appointed to the board of International Stone Fabricators Alliance as an advisor to its members, with the goal of promoting safe practices for all types of surface fabrication.

For more information, please visit [www.smtops.com](http://www.smtops.com).

Photo by Greg Smits



**Kitchen for builder partner Luna Custom Homes, cabinetry by Franklin Kitchen Center  
Below: Cambria Quartz mitered bartop for Neyland Stadium remodel,  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN**



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The Voice of the Stone Fabricator

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## BB Industries Marks 30 Years in the Stone Industry at 2024 TISE Booth



**BB** Industries was once again one of the main stone industry companies presenting at The International Surfaces Event (TISE) in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. BBI was a Gold Sponsor of TISE, and their booth was positioned right at the front of the Stone section of the show as you walked in, allowing them to greet and meet the many people who attended the event.

The attendance was great this year and the overall participation from other stone industry pros was also strong. Many people who came by the BBI booth got to see a nice selection of tools on display, and were able to talk with the BBI experts about the select tools on display, and how they can benefit stone fabricators. BBI also had stainless steel and porcelain sinks on display and their position on the event floor allowed them to be the first distributor being approached

by those interested in sinks and their general product offering. Sharing the booth space with BBI this year were presentations from Poseidon, IMS, IPS/Integra, RYE Corp, the Rockheads, and WEHA.

The second day of the show had a slightly larger crowd of attendees. One well-attended venue was the Stone Fabricator's Alliance (SFA) Booth, where stone industry pros had a chance to exhibit and talk about featured products. BBI was there talking about a new respirator available to the market, manufactured by Swiss Air.

It was also the day that Women in Stone (WIS) held its 4th Annual Amazing Race. This event is a great way to explore the Natural Stone Pavilion, meet fellow women in the industry and expand your network. BB Industries was honored to be a part of this race as a Sponsor and one of the stops for the groups participating in the Amazing Race.

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## Industry Calendar of Events

### March 2024

**NSI: California Stone Summit: Fabricator Town Hall**

**When:** March 7

**Where:** North Hollywood, CA

**Host:** Pacific Shore Stones

**Xiamen International Stone Fair**

**When:** Saturday, March 16, 2024 to Tuesday, March 19, 2024

**Where:** Xiamen, China

**NSI: Women In Stone's Block Talk: Work/Life Balance**

**When:** Tuesday, March 19, 2pm to 3pm

**Where:** Zoom Presentation

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

**ISFA: Solid Surface Fabrication Training**

**When:** March 26-27

**Where:** Gecko Solid Surface Solutions, San Antonio, TX

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

### April 2024

**NSI: Alabama Stone Summit: Fabricator Town Hall**

**When:** April 4; 9:00 Am -3:00 PM, CST

**Where:** Birmingham, AL; , 9:00 Am -3:00 PM, CST

**Host:** Triton Stone Group

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

**ISFA: Fabricator Forum Training**

**When:** Wednesday, April 10–Thursday, April 11 26-27

**Where:** Charlotte, NC

**Host:** Cosentino

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

**Coverings 2024**

**When:** Monday, April 22, 2024 to Thursday, April 25, 2024

**Where:** Atlanta, GA

Visit [www.coverings.com](https://www.coverings.com) for more information and to register.

Other regional and online event opportunities are available through the industry association websites listed above.



"Seriously, what are the odds?"

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## Keep Your Employees Safe



## Silica & Slab Safety Certificate

The Natural Stone Institute provides robust safety training for employees in the natural stone industry.

This newly updated online certificate includes education and resources for preventing silicosis, safe slab handling and creating a safety program.

**FREE** for Natural Stone Institute Members

\$199 for Non-Members



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[naturalstoneinstitute.org/safetycertificate](https://naturalstoneinstitute.org/safetycertificate)

## BB Industries Marks 30 Years

*Continued from page 4*

On Thursday evening of the show, BBI once again hosted their Partner Appreciation Party at the House of Blues, in Mandalay Bay. This year's party was bigger and louder than ever before, with a great live band, Empire Records, performing awesome tunes from the past and present on the stage for everyone to see and enjoy, and even dance to. According to attendees, the party was popping, the guests were dancing, the food and drink (and adult beverages) were flowing. BBI went above and beyond to make sure that everyone who came to their party had a great time. BBI is certainly gaining a reputation for throwing the best party for stone fabricators at TISE.



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. Our vendors and customers are valued partners. For more info, visit [BBIndustriesLLC.com](https://BBIndustriesLLC.com), and [BBIndustriesLLC](https://BBIndustriesLLC.com) on social media channels LinkedIn, Instagram, and [facebook.com/BBIndustriesLLC.USA](https://facebook.com/BBIndustriesLLC.USA).

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# How Effective is Your Business Strategy?

Economic signals are all over the map. Interest rates remain high, housing starts are down, yet the stock market is setting records. Most of the prognosticators who gaze into their crystal balls for a living are still forecasting a slowdown for the rest of this year.

All this uncertainty makes it difficult to make effective business plans. Do you plan for a weak market, or do you plan for a strong market?

**Would you rather hope the market gets stronger or would you rather have a plan for whatever this economy throws at you?**

When I ask this question, many shop owners will say they have prepared for a downturn by paying off all their loans and banking cash. That's a solid strategy – if you've already completed implementation of it. Unfortunately, it's pretty late in the game to start implementing that strategy.

One of the challenges with using only this approach is predicting how long any downturn will last and how much cash you will need to weather the storm. For this strategy to really work, it also needs some proactive components. Here are a few to consider.

**Raise prices now.** The mechanic's adage of 'tighten it until it strips, then back it off a quarter turn' applies. Intentionally increase pricing until your customers start to really complain, then back off a little. All your operating costs are going up, as are your material costs. (A quick check on your pricing structure: For retail jobs, your material cost for the job – including waste – should run about 30% of the sales price. If it is higher, you probably haven't been keeping up with the increase in your slab prices.)

Once inflation is no longer increasing, your customers will automatically push back on price increases. Increase prices now while you still can.

**Know your leading indicators.** If your first indication of a slowdown in volume

**Ed Young**  
*Fabricator's Business Coach*

is a decrease in orders, you'll find yourself constantly behind the curve and playing catch-up to current market conditions. To manage your business effectively (in either a downturn or an upturn), you need earlier indicators of business volume.

Quote volume obviously precedes order volume. **How is your quote volume trending? How is your conversion ratio of quotes to orders trending?** Posting this data where employees can see it keeps them from having emotional reactions based on perception – and allows you to operate based on facts.

Inbound calls and showroom traffic precede quotes. How are those trending? Are you using a CRM (customer relationship manager software) to track:

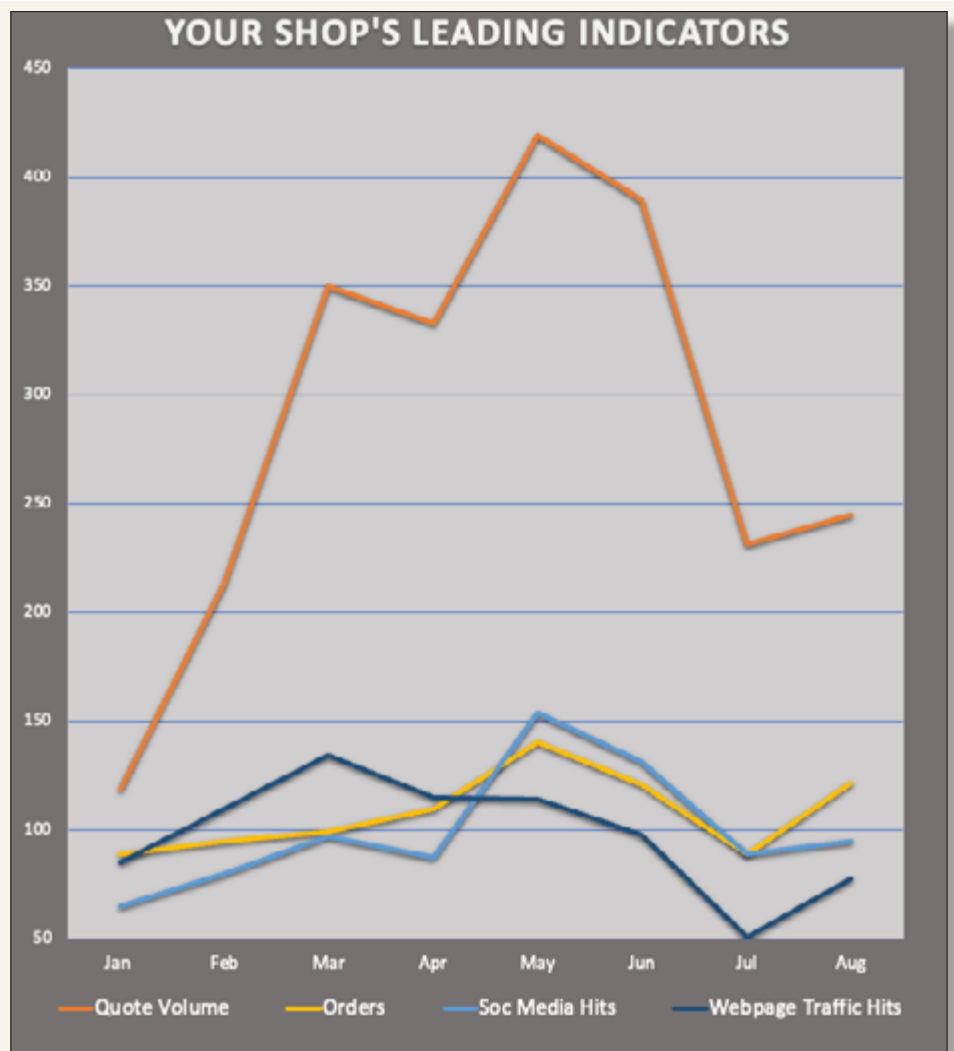
- Social media engagement
- Web site traffic
- How quickly your salespeople respond to inquiries
- How quickly your salespeople turn around quote requests
- Trends for all the above

Think of these leading indicators as an early warning system – radar – for your business. It will tell you what business changes are headed your way so you can proactively deal with those changes.

**Quantify your intuition.** You have additional fees for full height splashes, raised bar tops, mitered edges, and mitered full drop legs because you know they take longer to fabricate and install. But have you measured the true impact of those factors on your profitability?

You know that some K&Bs and some contractors are more challenging to deal with than others and they probably impact your profits accordingly. But have you quantified their impact on your profitability relative to your other customers?

You know that some market segments generate more profit for you than



others. **Have you quantified that impact, so emotion and your personal desires don't color your decisions?**

Analyzing metrics like Throughput Dollars (\$T) as a percentage of sales is a start but, to really get at the heart of the matter, analyze \$T per install hour for your market segments, your kitchen configurations, your materials, and your B2B customers. Determine what factors drive that variation and compare that impact to how fast you burn cash. This will quantify your business intuition to help you make sound business decisions.

**Invest in good tools.** Anything you can afford to purchase and implement that will allow you to produce more kitchens with the same labor or less labor and/or improves your quality is an automatic 'do it'. All digital tools fall in this category: digital templating, CNC equipment, tool setters for CNCs, etcetera. So does material handling equipment like cranes and powered install carts. Focus on tools

that help break recurring bottlenecks to the flow of orders through the entire business – including the front office. Don't forget to upgrade your company's computer systems as well.

Anything that improves the customer's experience falls in this category. Take advantage of technology to automatically communicate the status of sales calls, templater arrival, and install crew schedules to your customers. This helps them feel safe and cared for. Invest in customer service training for customer-facing employees – including templaters and installers. Invest in upgrading the selling skills of your salespeople.

**Build your marketing plan now.** Too many shops rely solely on word-of-mouth marketing. While nothing beats a solid customer referral, you need a way to effectively leverage those referrals. This calls for a solid marketing plan.

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## How Effective is Your Business Strategy?

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What is your market identity and how does your market message communicate that? How well does this differentiate you from your competition? Have you customized your marketing message to meet the unique needs of each of your primary market segments?

**PRO TIP:** Each market segment needs its own specialized market message.

This can be tough to do on your own. It can be immensely helpful to have the perspective of someone outside your business asking the right probing questions to help you define this. It also takes an experienced marketing professional to craft the appropriate language and integrate it into the appropriate delivery vehicle for it to be effective. Few shop owners have this capability in their business. Find the help you need and build your marketing plan now.

**HOPE is not an effective business strategy.** As we face the headwinds of economic change, we can hunker down and hope to weather the storm or we can take decisive action. The shops who decide to take the actions recommended above are the ones that will come out ahead of their competition when this storm passes.

*You deserve to have a business that makes you money, but also allows you time to enjoy it. If you want to discuss how to make your business strategy really work for you, contact Ed at [Ed@FabricatorsCoach.com](mailto:Ed@FabricatorsCoach.com) or call 864-328-6231.*

**“Don’t go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.”**  
– Mark Twain

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

### How Do You Identify Who Will Be a Good Manager?

**AS** your stone shop grows, your team grows with it. More people doing more work will eventually require you to add ‘managers’ to the business, and that should get you to wonder ‘*What exactly does it mean to be a manager, and how would I know a good one if I tripped over them?*’

If you don’t have the time to find out what makes a great manager, you will just be giving someone the title and hoping they figure it out!

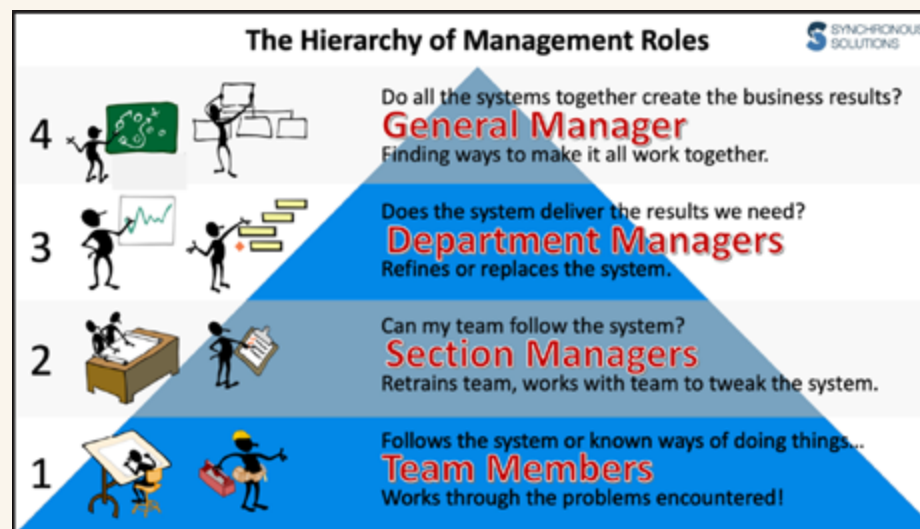
As the business continues to grow, one day you will realize there are so many managers hanging around that you better

**Rick Phelps**

*Synchronous Solutions*

If your managers are not working on your business’ systems, they are not ‘managing.’ And the chances are really high that they are NOT working on your business’ systems.

There is a hierarchy of management work directly tied to your business systems. For those of you who like to dig deeper, read Systems Leadership by Ian Macdonald, which builds on the research and writings of Elliot Jaques, but is a whole lot easier to read and understand!



put in place a manager to manage the managers. So, you do.

And sooner or later, you realize you have a mess on your hands. There are lots of managers, but you really aren’t sure what they are ‘managing.’ Your profitability is tanking, and chaos seems to reign. Turns out, they (the managers) didn’t ‘figure it out.’ How could they?

This would be a good time to get yourself educated on what ‘management’ and ‘leadership’ are all about.

Businesses run on systems, and people run those systems.

You **MANAGE** the systems.

You **LEAD** the people.

These statements should give you a big clue to what went wrong. Ponder them.

Most stone shops will only ever need three layers of management: a General Manager, some Department Managers, and Section Managers. Really large shops with multiple locations will have a fourth layer of management, the CEO. The number of people at each layer of your business forms a pyramid like the one above.

At the base of the pyramid are your Team Members, the people who do the work that makes the money. These are the people running your business systems, and they are the key to your success.

Management exists to help your Team Members be as successful as possible, and each layer of management plays a different role in insuring that success.

The first layer of management, the Section Managers, oversee a small

‘section’ of the business process and are responsible for making sure the systems being used by their team make sense, are followed, and are tweaked and improved as new and better ways to get things done are identified by the team.

These roles are critical if your business systems are to persist through time. Without a manager doing this work, the system will fall into disuse, and everyone will eventually do their work their own way.

The second layer of management, the Department Manager, looks at the collection of systems their department uses to insure they are delivering the results required by the business. For example, the Production Manager is accountable for the capacity of the business’ chosen Constraint. Do the maintenance systems deliver the required machine availability? Do the operating systems deliver the required machine effectiveness? Are the upstream and downstream production processes doing their part to maximize the ability of the Constraint to produce?

When the department systems are NOT delivering what is needed, it is the Department Manager’s accountability to refine, design, or buy new systems that CAN deliver the required results. When this role isn’t doing this work, the Team Members will do ‘the best they can with what they have,’ and that is rarely good enough in the long run.

The third layer of management is the General Manager (GM). The GM is where all the different systems of the departments come together to deliver the Value the business wishes to create. What do I mean by ‘Value?’ The first and most obvious Value is the Return on Investment (ROI) of the business, a second Value would be ‘Customer Value’ – the delighting of the customer so they return to do more business with you. There are others.

The role of the GM is critical to any business that runs our Synchronous Flow System. The example above for a department manager describes how the Production Manager is accountable for the capacity of the business to produce countertops.

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## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Create These Pages on Your Shop's Website to Get More Leads

When a homeowner wants to redo their countertops, what do they do? They go straight to Google and start searching for *granite countertops*, *quartz countertops*, *countertops near me*, and many other terms. Then they will either jump on a few sites and start looking around or they will start reading reviews.

But what pages on your site are the most important? Which ones will get you the most leads? We have the data from all the shops we work with so I will break it down for you. You can't make this data up! We work with 50+ shops and have a ton of data to review on what's working/what isn't. I suggest you make sure your website has each of these pages and then start improving them.

### Homepage

Your homepage is the most important page on your website! Think of it as your portal. Most people will come through on your homepage. You want to have all the important pieces on this page, including the types of material you offer, reviews, a little blurb about your company, any deals you are promoting, project pictures, and really, anything that someone will want to consume if they only went to this page!

### About Page

An About page is essential for countertop shops because it adds a personal touch to your business. It's where potential customers get to know the faces behind the countertops, establishing a connection. Moreover, it's your chance to showcase your expertise, years of experience, and unwavering commitment to top-notch quality, building trust and credibility in the eyes of your visitors. Plus, your About page lets you share your unique shop story, setting you apart in a competitive market and leaving a lasting impression on those who visit your site.

### Granite and Quartz Pages

Most people will visit your granite and quartz page the most. Make sure to showcase material on these pages. You don't

**Stephen Alberts**  
*Countertop Marketing Co.*

need your full inventory, but it's good to have a sample size of stone they can browse through. It should be mobile friendly and very easy to navigate.

### Live Inventory Page

A Live Inventory page on your countertop shop's website is a real asset. It lets customers see what's available right now, helping them make decisions on the spot. It's like having an open conversation with them, offering convenience and building trust by showing your stock in real-time.

### Sink Page

Having a Sink page on your countertop shop's website is important because it helps customers choose the right sink to go with their countertop. It makes their kitchen or bathroom project easier and more attractive. Plus, it shows that your shop offers everything they need, making them feel more confident in choosing your products.

### Gallery Page

A Gallery page on your countertop shop's website is a must-have because it lets potential customers see the beautiful work you've done. It's a visual showcase of your craftsmanship, making it easier for them to imagine how their own countertops could look. This page not only highlights



your skills but also builds trust, giving customers the confidence to choose your shop for their projects.

### FAQ Page

An FAQ page on your countertop shop's website is a handy tool to have because it answers common questions that customers might have. It's like having a friendly chat with them, providing quick and clear information about your products and services. This page not only saves them time but also shows that you're attentive to their needs, making them more likely to consider your shop for their countertop projects.

### City Page

A dedicated City page on your countertop shop's website can work wonders for attracting local SEO traffic. By optimizing it with relevant keywords and local information, you improve your shop's visibility in local search results, making it easier for nearby customers to find you and potentially become valuable leads.

### Contact Us Page

A Contact page on your countertop shop's website is like a direct line of communication between you and your customers. It's a simple but crucial way for them to get in touch with you, whether they have questions or are ready to discuss a project. This page not only makes it easy for them to connect with you but also shows that you're accessible and ready to assist, which can go a long way in building trust and attracting potential customers to your shop.

These essential website pages are the foundation for attracting valuable project leads to your countertop shop. Your Homepage is your digital storefront, offering visitors a comprehensive overview of your offerings. The About page adds a personal touch, while granite and quartz pages ensure easy navigation. A Live Inventory page builds trust with real-time updates, and a Sink page can simplify project choices. The Gallery page showcases your craftsmanship, FAQs save time, and City pages enhance local visibility. Finally, the Contact page signals accessibility and trustworthiness. Together, these pages create an effective online presence, increasing your chances of gaining valuable project leads for your countertop shop.

*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. To learn more visit [countertopmarketingco.com](https://countertopmarketingco.com) or [stoneengage.com](https://stoneengage.com). You can also email Stephen at [steve@countertopmarketingco.com](mailto:steve@countertopmarketingco.com).*



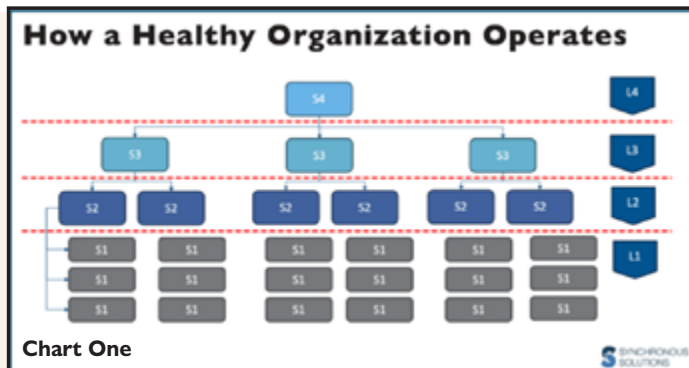


## How Do You Identify Who Will Be a Good Manager?

*Continued from page 7*

At the same time, the Marketing & Sales Manager is accountable for keeping the pipeline and the plant full of the right work. These two departments need to be aligned, and that happens at the GM role. The other departments' systems (HR, Finance, etc.) also need to align to optimize the creation of business Value.

When each layer of management is doing the work of their role, the organization chart looks and acts like Chart One. The reality of most businesses is Chart Two (the chart on the right). In these organizations, the work being done by managers doesn't match their true role. Each of the layers of management are engaged in the base work of the business, usually through firefighting and micromanaging.

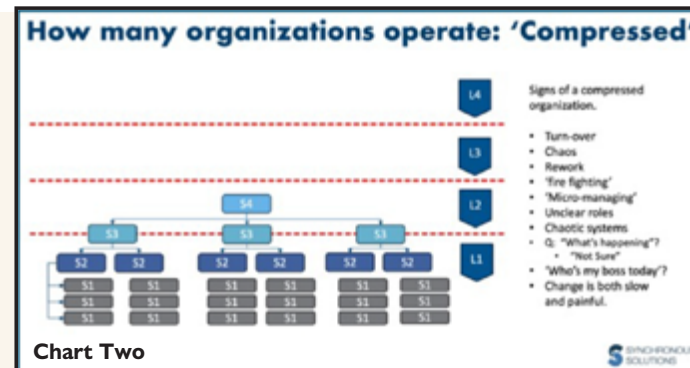


If you can relate to Chart Two, get some help to understand where and how your organization is broken, and how to rectify it.

With this as context, let's discuss what it takes to be a great manager, and how you can identify the best candidates for management positions in your company.

### *Finding the Managers in Your Shop*

First, please understand that basing a capability assessment on education, age, and experience can lead you astray. A degree in management indicates an interest in the management profession and an awareness



of management systems but does not guarantee capability. Basing your assessment on age is largely about seniority and confuses value of the role with the value of loyalty. Experience is only helpful if we are judging applicable experiences. Experience doing a task and experience managing a task being done are different experiences.

### *Managers Manage Systems*

They also must create, redesign, modify, improve, discard, replace, and integrate systems. To do any of this they have to recognize the value of systems.

The complexity of systems work increases substantially between each layer of management, and capability at one layer does not imply capability for the next. As the complexity of work goes up, the number of people capable of doing that kind of systems work goes down – significantly.

So how do you identify potential managers? Look at how they solve problems. If they are "really good at their job" but never try to create better ways (systems) for making it easier or more consistent, they are not manager material.

*Please turn to page 11*



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## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# The Inner Game Advantage: Business Success with Confidence

Small business owners often face a high degree of pain and frustration in their entrepreneurial journey. In the stone industry, where nothing comes easy, this is compounded by the immense pressure and constant challenges we encounter. We find ourselves trapped in a chaotic business environment that stretches us thin, just like our margins. We struggle with a team that sometimes lacks the motivation we desire, while dealing with the roller coaster of fluctuating revenue, upset customers, and vendor delays. On top of all this, we have to take on many different roles and juggle countless responsibilities.

However, there is a path to calmer waters and smoother operations. The key lies in leveling up our inner game. By harnessing our mindset, beliefs, values, vision, and habits, we can inspire our team and achieve our ambitions. It is through understanding and mastering our inner game that we can navigate the challenges, find balance, and unlock the full potential of our business.

The journey may seem daunting, but by focusing on our inner game, we can transform our frustrations into opportunities for growth and success.

Success in business often depends on more than just external strategies and techniques. It also relies on our inner game – our mindset, beliefs, values, vision, and habits that influence our approach to entrepreneurship. Understanding and harnessing our inner game is essential for achieving long-term business success. Let's dig into the main areas I have personally focused on over the years and have now included in my signature coaching program.

### Mindset and Business Success

In business, the right mindset is crucial for our success. A growth mindset focuses on continuous improvement, embracing challenges, and putting in effort to acquire new abilities. It empowers us to achieve our goals.

On the other hand, a fixed mindset believes that abilities cannot be improved. Those with a fixed mindset avoid challenges and fear failure, leading to less achievement and a reluctance to learn.

**Justin Shaw**  
*Stone Fabricator Elite*

**The Pomodoro Technique is a time-management method based on 25-minute stretches of focused work broken by 5-minute breaks.**

Organizational cultures can also have growth or fixed mindsets. Growth mindset companies prioritize internal promotion, value passion and potential, invest in employee development, and encourage risk-taking.

### High Performance Habits

One of the pillars of our inner game is developing high performance habits. These habits include getting clear on our values and purpose, managing our energy, maintaining focus and productivity, cultivating discipline, and constantly seeking ways to improve and sustain our game. By consistently practicing these habits, we can optimize our productivity, make better decisions, and achieve exceptional results in our business endeavors. High performance habits also involve effective communication, continuous learning, and proactive problem-solving, all of which contribute to our overall success as entrepreneurs.

### Time Management

We have found that this is one of the most significant constraints entrepreneurs face — inability to own our time. For owners of countertop companies, this constraint is especially amplified. There is simply a massive amount of oversight, and there isn't enough time spent on initiatives that will impact growth.

As the saying goes, "Show me our calendar and I'll show you our priorities."



Effective time management is vital for business success. It involves prioritizing tasks, setting realistic deadlines, and optimizing our workflow. By mastering time management techniques, such as the **Pomodoro Technique** or **Eisenhower Matrix**, we can enhance our productivity, minimize procrastination, and make the most of each day. Managing our time efficiently allows us to focus on high-value tasks, delegate effectively, and allocate resources wisely, leading to increased efficiency and success. Furthermore, effective time management enables us to strike a balance between work and personal life, reducing stress and increasing overall well-being.

### Beliefs and Motivations

Our beliefs, both empowering and limiting, have a big impact on our actions and decisions as entrepreneurs. It's important to identify and align these beliefs with our business goals and purpose to gain clarity and stay motivated. By understanding what truly motivates us and challenging any beliefs that hold us back, we can make choices that are in line with our vision and make a meaningful impact. Developing a strong sense of purpose and aligning it with our business activities can fuel our passion and drive sustainable growth. Also, creating a culture within our organization that reflects our beliefs can attract like-minded employees and create a positive work environment.

### Awareness & Reflection

Developing self-awareness and practicing reflection are essential components of our inner game. Regularly assessing our strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement allows us to make informed decisions and grow as entrepreneurs. Reflection also helps us gain valuable insights from our experiences, enabling

us to refine our strategies and approaches. Cultivating mindfulness and being present in the moment can enhance our ability to adapt to changing circumstances and make well-informed business decisions. It can be helpful to get feedback from trusted mentors or peers who can provide valuable perspectives and help us uncover blind spots.

### Community and Coaching

Building a supportive community and seeking guidance through coaching can greatly contribute to our business success. Surrounding ourselves with like-minded individuals who share similar aspirations and challenges allows for collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing. Additionally, working with a coach or mentor provides valuable guidance, accountability, and an outside perspective that can help us navigate obstacles and accelerate our growth. Engaging in mastermind groups, attending industry conferences, and participating in networking events can expand our inner circle and provide valuable insights and connections. I find that being part of a community of entrepreneurs can provide emotional support, motivation, and inspiration during challenging times. Just be sure you pick a good one! The wrong ones can do more harm than good.

### We'd Love to Hear From You

We love jamming on the topic of unlocking our inner game for business success, and we believe that there is so much we can learn from each other. We would love to hear from you about how you work on your inner game and what strategies you have found to be effective in your entrepreneurial journey. Share your experiences, insights, and tips with us by sending the author a message at [justin@justinxshaw.com](mailto:justin@justinxshaw.com).

*About the author: Justin Shaw is the Founder & CEO of Stone Fabricator Elite. He has also launched a signature coaching program under his personal brand, offering trade professionals the opportunity to access his training and coaching to build a business by design, rather than by default. His aim is to help them achieve sustainable growth, unlock more profit and lifestyle freedom through both coaching for business and personal growth.*

*You can find more information about his programs at [stonefabricatorelite.com](http://stonefabricatorelite.com) or [justinxshaw.com](http://justinxshaw.com).*

## The Best Worst-Kept Secret Carved in Stone

The Black Hills of South Dakota house many secrets... Mount Rushmore not being one of them (everyone knows about Mount Rushmore). And to be truthful, most of us probably know about the Woolly and Columbian mammoth excavation site there, and the gold rush action that happened there, as well.

But did you know that the four faces of Mount Rushmore are not the only faces carved in the Black Hills? About 25 miles southwest of our four presidents is another face in another mountain in the Black Hills. It is the Crazy Horse Memorial.

It was started back in 1947 by Korczak Ziolkowski [Core-chalk Jewel-cuff-ski]. Back then, Lakota Chief Henry Standing Bear got the idea and asked Ziolkowski to spearhead the project. Ziolkowski had worked on Mount Rushmore. The first phase involved creating a model and securing support for the monumental project.

In June, 1948, Ziolkowski made the first blast and started carving the colossal sculpture into the side of Thunderhead Mountain, chosen for its symbolic significance to the Lakota people. The mountain itself is 6,532 feet above sea level and is the 27th highest mountain in South Dakota. It is made of pegmatite granite.

In May of 1951, Ziolkowski painted the outline of Crazy Horse on the mountain. It took 176 gallons of paint. In April 1952 the first cut of Crazy Horse's 90-foot-tall profile was made. In May 1988 work on Crazy Horse's face began and in only 5 years the forehead, eyes and the area under his nose was complete. In June 1998, 50 years after the first blast, the face of Crazy Horse was finished.

The next phase of the project is Crazy Horse's left hand, left forearm, right shoulder, his hairline and part of the horse's mane and head. This phase of the project is scheduled to be completed in 2037.

The construction of the Crazy Horse Memorial has been a slow and ongoing process, relying on private donations and admission fees for funding. Ziolkowski wouldn't accept any government grants or funds, fearing he would lose control of the project. The project faced financial hardships, but despite the obstacles, progress has continued and is in its 76th year. Also, in the beginning, Ziolkowski worked almost completely

### Sharon Koehler

Stone Industry Consultant

Photos © Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation



Carving progress as of 2023. Ziolkowski left detailed measurements and instructions to complete the massive work.

solo on the carving, again fearing that if he allowed others to work on it, he would lose control. Ziolkowski carried dynamite and stone up and down the mountain by hand. He worked on the project non-stop until his passing in 1982. He is buried at the base of the mountain in a tomb he carved, himself.

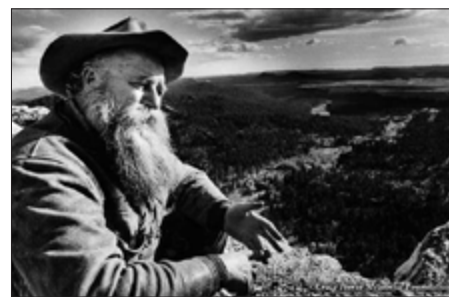
After his passing, his wife, Ruth Ziolkowski, took control of the massive project, making sure of its continuity and fostering collaboration with their 10 children and a dedicated team of sculptors and artisans. Today 4 children and several grandchildren work on behalf of the memorial.

Originally, it was thought that the memorial would be complete in 30 years, but it is now in its 76th year of on-going work and has no true completion date.

The sculpture's final dimensions are planned to be 641 feet long and 563 feet high. His outstretched arm will be 263 feet long, the opening under his arm is to be 70 feet wide and 100 feet high, and the finger 29 feet 6 inches long. The face of Crazy Horse, completed in 1998, is 87 feet 6 inches high; in comparison, the heads of the four U.S. Presidents at Mount Rushmore are each 60 feet high. The eyes are 17 feet wide each.

As for the horse, the head will be 219 feet high, the mane – 62 feet high. The horse's ears will be 54 feet long. The eyes will be 20 feet wide by 15 feet high and the nostrils will be 26 feet in diameter.

Time-wise, it is the longest on-going mountain carving in the world and when it is complete, it will be the world's second tallest statue, second only to The Statue of Unity



in India which stands 597 feet tall. It is considered by many to be the 8th wonder of the world in progress.

As was mentioned earlier, there are no government funds or grants to help defray the cost of this huge undertaking. It is done by donations and admissions. "Donations" is pretty self-explanatory, but admissions? Yes, admissions. There is a

welcome center at the site, but it isn't free. The fee for admission varies depending on the time of year. For your admission fee, you have access to 3 museums, a cultural/orientation film and you get to see the monument from the veranda. Plus, if you are there after dark, weather and season permitting, there is a laser light show. There are also frequent cultural events and a gift shop.

However, if you really want to get up-close and personal, you can take a bus to the base of the mountain. If that's not close enough, you can get a guided van ride up to the top of the mountain. (Both of these adventures are a fee separate from your admission fee). If you can't get it in all in one day, you can get a re-admit pass good for one more admission in a three-day period.

For more information (and there is a lot more), you can go to their site at: <https://crazyhorsememorial.org>. The website is a wealth of information but be sure to look at two things: Number 1 is the live webcam page, and number 2 is the photo history of the project. It starts with the very first photo in 1948 and progresses through 2023.

Let's face it, we are all stoners. Whether we install it, fab it, carve it, quarry it, sell it, transport it, repair it, or write about it, we are all stoners. But how many of us would have the vision and the knowledge to pull off something this big? Think about it.

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

## How Do You Identify Who Will Be a Good Manager?

*Continued from page 9*

If you need to pay them more and that is the reason you want to promote them, don't, just pay them what they are worth. Team members can be more valuable and contribute more to the business than their manager. If that is true, pay them appropriately.

Department managers need to be able to create systems and imagine, design, and conceive of them in their head. This is not a capability everyone possesses. Look carefully and make sure you are putting people in charge of your departments who can do this type of work. If you are looking outside of your business, when interviewing, ask about the systems and processes they have designed in their previous work experiences. If they look at you funny, don't hire them. If they understand what you are asking, they will tell you all about their systems, what they did, why they were needed, what they accomplished, as they are probably thrilled that they are talking with someone who recognizes their value. Hire them if they have the people skills to go with their systems thinking!

Many companies are so busy that they don't have the time, even if they have the talent, to develop their own systems. This is why companies like ours exist. We can help you implement a comprehensive business system that is proven to work in this industry. We can also train, coach, and mentor your managers to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be great managers AND great leaders.

– Rick Phelps  
*Synchronous Solutions*

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# The Stone Detective

## The Case of the Missing Weep Holes

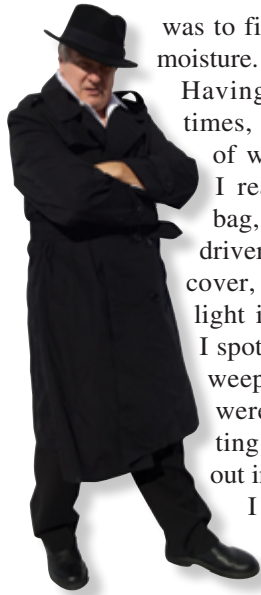
I've been in the stone and tile business for over 40 years, and it still amazes me how many contractors out there don't follow industry standards and guidelines. As an old-timer in the field, I've seen a lot, and it seems to be getting worse. Now, I'm not saying there aren't good contractors out there, but I rarely get called to look at the good jobs. Today would be another one of those bonehead projects.

I got up early, as usual, and headed over to my favorite greasy spoon diner. When I walked in, Flo, the waitress, looked like she'd been crying. I greeted her and asked what was wrong. She shared that she had a tough morning with an abusive customer and just needed to let out a few tears. Interestingly, weeping was precisely what today's call was about – or rather, the lack of it. Just as Flo poured me a cup of Joe, my cell phone rang. The voice on the other end, a frustrated tile supplier, had a customer complaining about her porcelain shower tiles changing color, blaming it on defective tiles. She wanted to hire me for an inspection to determine if the issue was with the tile or something else. Since it was going to be a slow day, I agreed to take a look after breakfast. I ordered ham and eggs, sunny-side up, from Flo. When she brought my order, I noticed the eggs were extremely runny – even they seemed to be weeping, another hint towards today's mystery.

After finishing my breakfast, I said goodbye to Flo, gave a nod to the Admiral at the diner, and started up my old Woody to head to the site with the suspected defective tile.

Upon arriving at the address the tile supplier texted me, I was greeted by a friendly little old lady. She led me into the house and to the master bath where the tiles were installed. The shower was a typical walk-in with 12 x 24 white porcelain tiles on the wall and a mosaic tile floor. The first row of wall tiles was a shade darker than the rest, and I immediately suspected moisture. Using my trusty moisture meter, I confirmed that the darker tiles had higher moisture content than the lighter ones. The next step

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



was to find the source of the moisture.

Having seen this many times, I had a good idea of what was happening. I reached into my tool bag, pulled out a screwdriver, removed the drain cover, and shone a flashlight inside. Immediately, I spotted the problem: the weep holes in the drain were clogged, and setting mortar was oozing out into the drain. Bingo!

I explained to the old lady, "You see, the bottom tiles are dark because they're wet. They're wet because the mortar bed underneath isn't draining properly, usually due to blocked weep holes. It's like a water traffic jam. When water can't drain, it backs up into the tile bed, and the bottom tiles soak it up like a sponge, making them darker."

I then explained that the installer had failed to install the drain correctly. The weep holes should have had gravel around them to allow water to drain from the setting bed, but instead, the setting mortar was placed right up against the holes.

The old lady looked like she was about to cry, herself (no pun intended). I reassured her that the tiles weren't defective but that the installer needed to redo the floor properly. Next, I'd call the tile supplier with the good news.

Another case solved, and it was off to the next mystery in stone.

*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).*

# 2023 Pinnacle Awards Announced

## Nineteen Projects Honored with Pinnacle Awards of Excellence

The winners of the 2023 Pinnacle Awards were celebrated during the Natural Stone Institute Awards Ceremony at StonExpo in Las Vegas. Nineteen projects were honored with Pinnacle Awards of Excellence. The 2023 Grande Pinnacle Award was presented to Polycor for their work on the Permanent Mission of the UAE to the United Nations in New York City ( See page 13).

### Grande Pinnacle

Permanent Mission of the UAE to the United Nations  
New York, New York

### Polycor

Quebec City, QC Canada

### Commercial Exterior

95 State at City Creek  
Salt Lake City, Utah

### IMS Masonry, Inc.

Lindon, Utah

Taylorville Temple

Taylorville, Utah

### KEPCO+

Salt Lake City, Utah

### Ghirardi Stone Contractors

Carpandolo, Italy

### D.L. Engineering

Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

### PICCO Group

Concord, Ontario, Canada

### Commercial Interior

2100 Penn, Washington, DC

### Lorton Stone, LLC

Springfield, Virginia

Texas Tower

Houston, Texas

### Camarata Masonry Systems

Houston, Texas

Permanent Mission of the UAE to the United Nations

New York, New York

### Polycor

Quebec City, QC Canada

### Kitchen/Bath

Boyce Master Bath

Huntsville, Alabama

### Ceramic Harmony

Huntsville, Alabama

Super White Dolomite Kitchen  
Dover, Massachusetts

### Pedrakut

Natick, Massachusetts

### Public Landscapes/Parks/Memorials

Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall of Remembrance, Washington, DC

### Lorton Stone, LLC

Springfield, Virginia

Our Lady of the Lakes World Peace Plaza

Notre Dame, Indiana

### Murphy Marble Company

Chicago, Illinois

Pillars of the Valley

Saint Louis, Missouri

### Coldspring

Cold Spring, Minnesota

Turn to the River

Terre Haute, Indiana

### Coldspring

Cold Spring, Minnesota

### Renovation/Restoration

Christ the King Chapel-Christendom College

Front Royal, Virginia

### Rugo Stone

Lorton, Virginia

Missouri State Capitol Building  
Restoration

Jefferson City, Missouri

### Bulley & Andrews Masonry Restoration

Chicago, Illinois

### Phenix Marble Company

Springfield, Missouri

### Gary Galassi Stone & Steel

Romeoville, Illinois

### Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates

Northbrook, Illinois

Russell Senate Office Building Exterior  
Envelope Repair & Restoration

Washington, DC

### Lorton Stone, LLC

Springfield, Virginia

Saint Dominic Parish

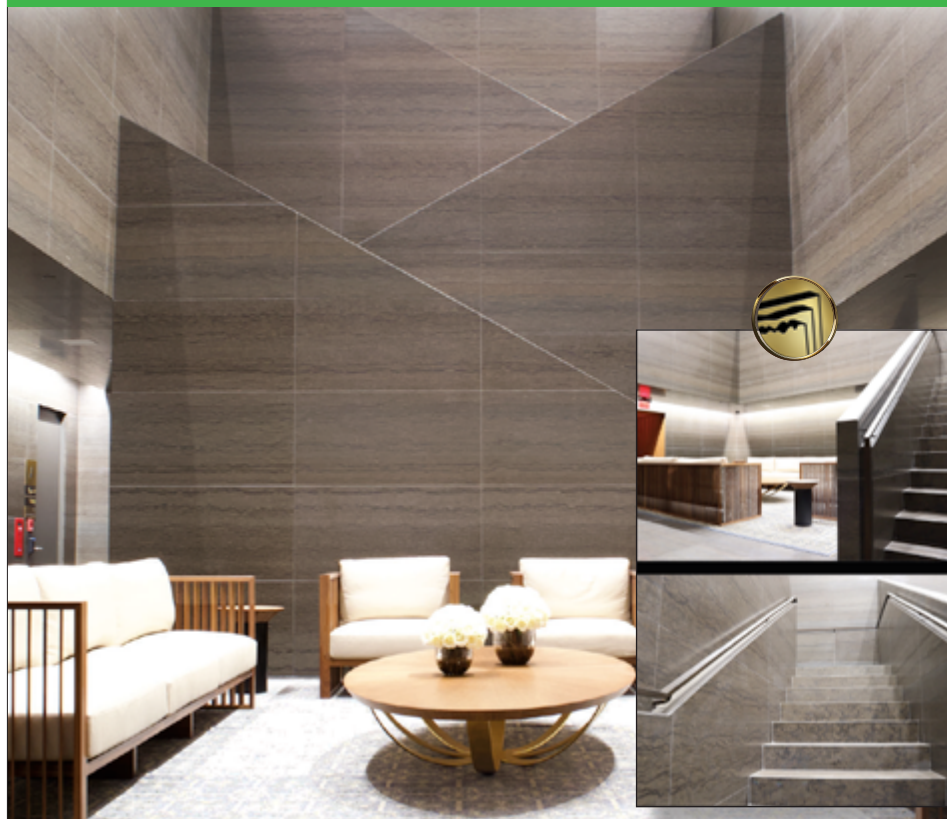
Brick Township, New Jersey

### Rugo Stone

Lorton, Virginia

[Please turn to page 20](#)

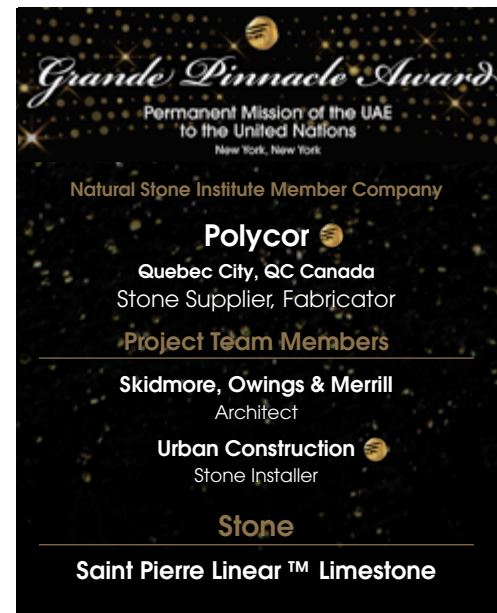
## 2023 Grande Pinnacle Award



IN 2014, having outgrown their two-story office space, the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations opted to design their new home around the essence of Middle Eastern culture: hospitality and the convening of friends and strangers. Each floor is inspired by traditional courtyards; the key component is a central reception area and gathering space.

Upon entering the building, visitors first experience the main courtyard. Forty feet high and entirely clad in floor to ceiling darkly veined limestone, its primary focal point is a monumental zigzag staircase that rises out of the back of the double-height entry hall.

The pronounced nature of the stone's veining required the alignment of the panels to be carried out with surgical precision. To achieve this level of meticulousness, the entire fabrication process, from the extraction of the stone, the selection of blocks, slabbing, cut-to-size, packing, shipping, to installation, required the highest degree of coordination. Every piece needed to be cut from the same exact location in successive slabs to ensure that the veins matched perfectly and that the subtle variations of shades remained consistent throughout the lobby.



The nature of the quarry deposit, with its perfectly flat beds, made it possible to carry out this razor-thin level of precision. Before packing and shipping, the project was entirely dry laid so each piece could be numbered, and crates sequenced in order of installation. By assisting the architects early in the design process with samples, product data, successful bidding, and being awarded the project, Polycor could not be prouder of their contribution to this masterpiece of architectural diplomacy.

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## Natural Stone Institute Announces Stone Scholarship Recipients

The Natural Stone Institute has announced the recipients of the 2023 Natural Stone Scholarship and Women in Stone Empowerment Scholarship. All recipients were celebrated during the association's annual Awards Ceremony at StonExpo in Las Vegas on January 24.

Three individuals have received 2023 Natural Stone Scholarships. This scholarship provides a trip to StonExpo and an opportunity to gain valuable technical and practical knowledge regarding the natural stone industry while meeting and networking with leading stone professionals.

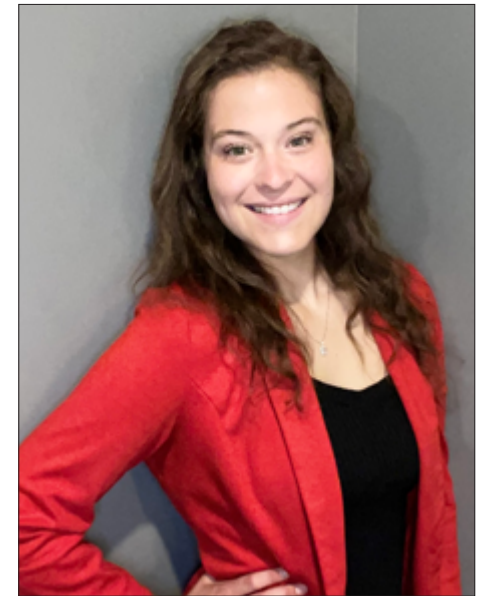
**Frances Alderson**, General Manager for American Stone in Vancouver, Washington, credits her company colleagues and the experienced local quarriers for teaching her the ins and outs of the stone they offer to contractors and retail clients. She intends to continuously drive sales, open new locations, and raise knowledgeable team members to be dynamic salespeople and leaders in the industry.



Frances Alderson, American Stone

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it."

—Thomas Paine

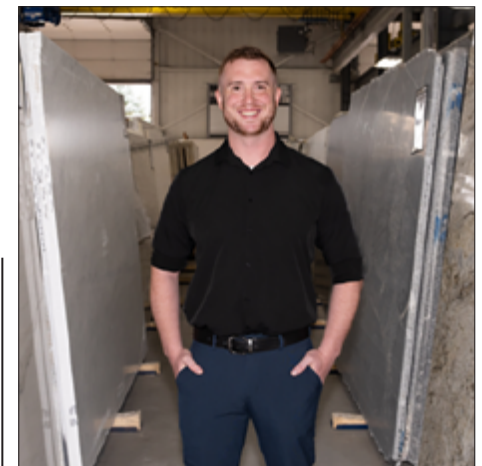


Tiffany Biagi, Advanced Granite Solutions

**Tiffany Biagi**, office manager for Advanced Granite Solutions (AGS), is currently studying towards a bachelor's degree in environmental management with a minor in natural sciences. She hopes to continue using the resources offered through her employment and through the Natural Stone Institute to further incite her passion and solidify her educational and career direction.

**Robert McCoy**, inside sales for Dwyer Marble & Stone, believes that expanding his resources will serve him well when local fabricators reach out to him for solutions to their problems. He gratefully realizes this opportunity to network and make new contacts in the industry.

[Please turn to page 18](#)



Robert McCoy, Dwyer Marble & Stone

## 'Cutting Weed\$' is \$oon to Be a Labor of Love

Like fishermen, fisherwomen and fisherkids around the country, I'm up to my waders in fishing-related material right now.

Fishing catalogs. Fishing magazines. Fishing TV shows. Plus fishing blog posts, fishing websites, fishing videos, aka piscatorial porn.

The people who generate this stuff have us at their mercy. They know we suffer cabin fever something awful this time of year. All it takes is the mere suggestion that spring awaits "somewhere out there," and we addicts can't hand over our credit cards fast enough.

This year, however, it wasn't the latest, greatest, most-innovative, sure-nuff, guaranteed, oughta-be-outlawed lure or technique that caught my eye. Instead, it was an online story about the wonders of hydrilla.

For those whose closest association to water is a shower stall or bourbon-and-a-splash, let me explain: Hydrilla is an invasive aquatic plant that has found a home in reservoirs throughout the Southeast. Kinda like milfoil and the myriad other species of "freshwater seaweed" that grow in our lakes.

Rarely do people have mixed feelings about this flora. As a TVA director once told me: "It's the No. 1 thing I hear about from lake users. They either hate the stuff or they love it."

Waterskiers, pleasure boaters and lake-front property owners are in the "hate" category. To them, aquatic veggies are not only an eyesore, they also impede freedom of outboard propulsion. Sorta like driving down the interstate and having to dodge broken glass, bags of garbage, old tires and chunks of metal.

"Human Felicity is produced not so much by great Pieces of good Fortune that seldom happen, as by little Advantages that occur every Day."

— Benjamin Franklin

**Sam Venable**  
*Department of Irony*



Duck hunters and anglers fall under the "love" category. Hydrilla and milfoil provide a great source of food for waterfowl, plus excellent habitat for fish.

But the online fishing story that I saw described a novel use for hydrilla.

Health food. And I promise, scout's honor, I'm not making this up.

Powder made from dried hydrilla apparently is a popular dietary supplement. It's loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Stirred into a smoothie, or taken straight with water, it's supposed to turn the proverbial 97-pound weakling into Superman.

It's expensive as all get-out, too. One online source I checked was offering a 1-pound bag for \$130.

Wow. Lord knows there's plenty of raw material floating around. I say let the harvest begin!

And so: If you happen to be on Fort Loudoun, Melton Hill, Watts Bar, Chickamauga, Guntersville or other TVA lake this summer and see a 17-year-old boy standing in the bow of a 17-foot bass boat, holding the legs and feet of a 76-year-old croak who is whacking furiously with a machete, think nothing of it.

It'll just be Yours Truly and grandson doing our part to make a few bucks; uh, I mean help Americans stay healthy.

*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).*

## NTCA Announces Five-Star Accredited Companies

The NTCA Five-Star Contractor Program has, in recent years, advanced to include accreditation, emphasizing members' dedication to industry professionalism through third-party validation. Since 2008, the program has consistently maintained rigorous standards for tile and stone installation contractors, acknowledging outstanding craftsmanship and strict business practices.

In response to industry changes, all companies, including existing NTCA Five-Star Members, must reapply and undergo accreditation. This transformation marks a shift from "company recognition" to an official "accreditation" program with a thorough third-party review process. NTCA released this change in October 2023, with the companies that successfully transitioned, and will continue to showcase the tile installation companies that transition through this process, every quarter in 2024.

NTCA is proud to announce the companies have successfully transitioned to Five-Star Accredited status after reapplying as of December 31, 2023:

### Residential

Cox Tile  
Hawthorne Tile  
Hohn & Hohn, Inc  
Icon Tile & Design  
Lambert Tile & Stone  
Vallefuoco Contractors, Inc.

### Commercial

A+ Tile & Stone

### Residential and Commercial

J&R Tile

*Established in 1947, the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) is a nonprofit trade association dedicated to the professional installation of ceramic tile and natural stone. It is widely recognized as the largest and most respected tile*



Five-Star Meeting held at the Noble Company

Bart Bettiga, NTCA Executive Director, emphasized the significance of accreditation, stating, "In a world where credibility and competence define success, our certification program stands as a beacon of assurance. This shift to accreditation reinforces the NTCA Five-Star Contractor Program's commitment to upholding the highest industry standards and ensuring the continued excellence of its members."

*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).*

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## Thanks for the Heads-Up

A very small earth-bound asteroid has exploded as a fireball in mid-air before landing in Germany, NASA reports.

The U.S. space agency said the 3 foot-sized asteroid disintegrated harmlessly over Germany on January 21, one and a half hours before it would have impacted

Earth's atmosphere.

NASA's Scout impact hazard assessment system, which monitors data on potential asteroid discoveries, gave advance warning as to where and when the asteroid would impact.

This is the eighth time in history that a small Earth-bound asteroid has been detected while still in space, before entering and disintegrating in earth's atmosphere.

The asteroid's impact produced a bright fireball, known as bolide, which was seen from as far away as the Czech Republic and may have scattered small meteorites on the ground at the impact site about 37 miles west of Berlin.

Since the asteroid disintegrated over a relatively populated part of the world, many photos and videos of the fireball were posted online minutes after the event.

## DEWALT® Celebrates 100 Years of Innovation

DEWALT, a Stanley Black & Decker (NYSE: SWK) brand, is celebrating its 100th anniversary of powering the pros. Through its commitment to innovation, safety and productivity, DEWALT has been delivering tools to meet the needs of professional tradespeople around the world since 1924 when Raymond DeWalt's forward-looking vision resulted in the founding of DEWALT.

"DEWALT has been committed to professional tradespeople for the past 100 years, and Raymond DeWalt's founding principles of innovation, safety and productivity remain the core ethos of our company today," said Chris Nelson, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Vice President and President, Tools & Outdoor at Stanley Black & Decker. "When we put the DEWALT name on something, it's a commitment that our tools will help get the job done right. This milestone anniversary is also a humbling reminder of both the responsibility and critical role DEWALT plays supporting the trades with solutions, training and resources needed to meet the demands of the future."

DEWALT has championed the trades sector since its founding, and in 2019, the company began offering annual DEWALT Trades Scholarships to support and grow the next generation of trades professionals. DEWALT continues to expand its commitment to the future generations of tradespeople. In 2023, DEWALT pledged \$30 million over five years toward its Grow the Trades initiatives to support active and aspiring tradespeople. In addition, DEWALT contributed nearly \$7 million last year to programs that support tradespeople, including trade schools, VOCTEC schools and other training organizations, while also collaborating with industry and non-profit partners on increasing women, diversity and veteran participation in the trades.

## A Company Built on Innovation

Raymond DeWalt was a tradesman in Pennsylvania in the early 1920s and became a power tool pioneer when he sought a way to streamline and expedite wood-cutting operations without sacrificing quality or safety.

*Please turn to page 24*



## Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner

### A Basic Geology Guide for Stone & Tile Pros

I've been in the stone industry for well over 45 years. I have taught the restoration and maintenance of natural stone, terrazzo, concrete, and ceramic tile for almost 40 years, and yes, I'm getting older, LOL! I was taught about the geology and chemistry, as it relates to natural stone, from both German and Italian engineers and technicians. 40 years ago, it was more straight forward than today as there was little to no engineered stone in the marketplace, much less the new porcelain products. Polishing concrete was a new and up-and-coming thing. There was no such thing as a purple (epoxy) terrazzo or porcelain countertops (solid tops, not from tiles).

It is imperative to understand the characteristics of natural stones and how they are formed and what minerals they contain in order to restore, protect, and maintain them correctly. If you do not understand the basics in chemistry and geology regarding the stones, you will never understand why we use different chemicals, and do certain things on different materials. So bear with me and let's dive into it.

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



Engineered marble. Note the minor surface scratches.

Above: Porcelain center island. Horizontal and vertical pieces are 1/2 inch with a 45° miter joint to appear like thicker material.



Marble countertop with etching all over the surface.



A drop of hydrochloric acid on marble (top picture) and on granite. Note that on the marble, the acid effervesces, and on the granite the acid has no reaction.

There are three basic types of natural stones: sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic. Sedimentary stones are composed of layers which are settled upon each other over time. Igneous stones are composed of previously molten minerals or lava. Metamorphic stones are either of the first two categories which have then been folded and compressed over time by enormous amounts of heat and pressure. It is fair to say that most stone with veins or considerable movement are metamorphic. Limestone that has been metamorphosed eventually becomes marble. Granite that has been metamorphosed becomes gneiss.

Marble, limestone, onyx, alabaster, travertine, terrazzo (both cementitious and epoxy-based), and concrete/cement are some of the materials that contain calcium. At the most basic level, there are two groups of stone in the world, those that consist of mostly calcium and those that do not. This is an extremely important concept to grasp. By understanding this, we can

proceed to the procedures for each group.

Calcium carbonate is a metal salt (20 on Periodic Table) and very sensitive to acids. To test if calcium is present in a stone, simply place a drop of acid on the stone (in an inconspicuous area!). If the drop of acid effervesces (fizzes), the stone contains calcium. This is an etch. All calcium-containing stone will etch if subjected to an acid. The stronger the acid, the faster and deeper the etch. On metamorphic stone containing ample amounts of calcium, we can actually use acids to accelerate the polishing process. Most polishing products for marble and calcium-based stones contain a specific acid combined with micro-abrasives, which aids in producing a glass-like finish on the surface. Majestic 5X Gold is known as one of the world's best marble polishing powders.

Calcium-containing stone is generally softer than non-calcium containing stone, as well. Marble and limestone are somewhere between 3-4 on the Mohs hardness scale, while granite and similar stones are around a 7 on the Mohs scale. You can do an in-field test using a knife blade to see if the stone will scratch (test in an inconspicuous area!). The knife blade (steel) is around a 6.5 on the scale. The rule is it takes a higher number to scratch a lower number. The knife blade, at a hardness of about 6.5, will scratch marble (hardness of 3-4), but will not scratch the granite (hardness of about 7).

*Please turn to page 18*

## Stone Restoration Corner

*Continued from page 17*

These two tests are the most common methods of determining the type of stone, and therefore determine the methods for restoring, polishing, and maintaining.

Of course, a visual inspection is another identification method as well. When it comes to other materials like engineered stones, terrazzo, concrete, and ceramic tiles, these same testing procedures are applicable in many situations.

Terrazzo, for example, is typically composed of marble and/or limestone chips in a cement or epoxy-based matrix. An acid test and a scratch test would confirm the presence of the calcium-based chips and cement. The resin in epoxy-based terrazzo will not react to the acid.

Engineered stones are a newer addition to the hard surface scene. They have come on strong as a consumer-preferred material over the last 20 years. Quartz is one of the most popular varieties and is very durable. Engineered quartz is composed of quartz (basically granite) and resin (normally an epoxy). These are the most common types. This group of man-made stones is very resistant to staining and scratching, similar to that of true granites. They are more sensitive to heat, because of the resin, and care should be taken to avoid setting hot pans directly on the surface. One advantage is that these stones do not have as much porosity as true granites, and are somewhat more resistant to staining, and therefore sealing is not normally necessary. We do have specific tools and polishing products for quartz materials like Quartz Renew.

However, there are also engineered marble stones, which exhibit the same characteristics of marble and limestone (calcium-based) stone. They will etch and scratch, just like marble. Because they are manufactured with an epoxy and marble, they do have the lower porosity and

are more stain resistant and typically don't require sealing or impregnating.

Porcelain is the newest and latest material used for many applications like countertops, floors, and showers. Porcelain is the Kevlar of hard surfaces! With new technology, manufacturers are now able to apply hundreds of tons of needed pressure to make porcelain countertop slabs. Countertops made from quality porcelain are the most durable countertops ever made. However, if the porcelain is honed, this can change the surface porosity by removing the original "skin." But even so, the porosity is still less than .05%, whereas with marble and granite, the porosity can be anywhere from 1% to 5%, or more.

Each of these different materials are processed using different tools and chemicals, even though the basic concept of rubbing or honing from coarse to fine grit is similar. Be sure to verify your restoration equipment, tools, and chemicals to make sure you are approaching the situation with the right stuff.

As always and before beginning any new project, I recommend submitting a test area to confirm the results and the procedure, prior to starting a stone or hard surface restoration/maintenance project. 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:publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net).*

**"A people that elect corrupt politicians, imposters, thieves and traitors are not victims... but accomplices."**

*—Attributed to George Orwell*



**Refinishing a cement-based terrazzo floor. Older terrazzo installations are more likely to have a cementitious binder instead of an epoxy binder and will affect your tool choices.**

## NSI Stone Scholarships

*Continued from page 14*

The Women in Stone Empowerment Scholarship provides a trip to one of three major industry events: StonExpo, Coverings, or the Natural Stone Institute study tour. The recipient is given the opportunity to shadow industry professionals within different sectors of the stone industry and explore her potential for leadership and her commitment to a career in the stone industry.

**Joanne Bish**, marketing for DuBois Granite & Quartz, is the recipient of the 2023 Women in Stone Empowerment Scholarship. Joanne has utilized the webinars, training resources, and success stories from both NSI and Women in Stone to further her education and motivations toward future company and committee leadership roles. Joanne will use her scholarship to attend NSI's Utah Study Tour this August.



**Joanne Bish, DuBois Granite & Quartz**

*The Natural Stone Institute is a trade association representing every aspect of the natural stone industry. The current membership exceeds 2,000 members in over 50 nations. Learn more at [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org](http://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org).*

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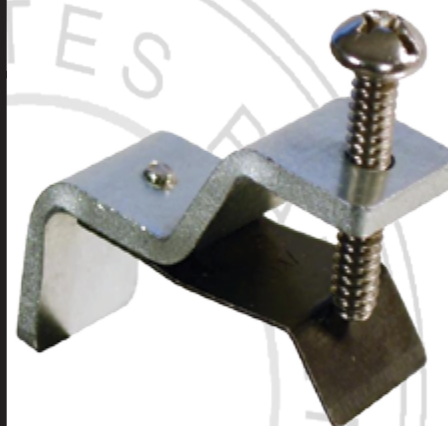
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## Current Litigation

GoClips LLC vs [REDACTED]	Pending
GoClips LLC vs [REDACTED]	Pending
GoClips LLC vs [REDACTED]	Pending

## Past Litigation and Disposition

GoClips LLC/Z Keepers LLC vs Cinclips LLC	Won at Jury Trial
GoClips LLC vs [REDACTED]	Settled
GoClips LLC vs [REDACTED]	Settled
GoClips LLC vs Ronald M Benton	Settled
GoClips LLC vs Web Granite Supplies Inc.	Settled
GoClips LLC vs Diamond Tec Enterprises LLC	Settled

## 2023 Pinnacle Awards Announced

*Continued from page 12*

United States Capitol South Exterior  
Stone Restoration  
Washington, DC  
**Lorton Stone, LLC**  
Springfield, Virginia

**Residential-Single Family**  
Colorado Residence  
Aspen, Colorado  
**Gallegos Corporation**  
Vail, Colorado

The Sequoia  
Lakeville, Minnesota  
**Stonwerk Inc.**  
Watertown, Minnesota

South Louisiana Estate  
Thibodaux, Louisiana  
**Triton Stone Group of New Orleans**  
Harahan, Louisiana

The 2023 Pinnacle Awards are sponsored by Marmomac (Grande Pinnacle Award), Cactus Stone & Tile, Coldspring, GMR Quality Stone Products, GranQuartz, MSI, and Triton Stone Group. To learn more about each project, visit [naturalstoneinstitute.org/pinnaclewinners](https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/pinnaclewinners).

The *Slippery Rock Gazette* will publish photos and more details on these special projects in coming editions of the SRG.

The *Natural Stone Institute* is a trade association representing every aspect of the natural stone industry. The current membership exceeds 2,000 members in over 50 nations. The association offers a wide array of technical and training resources, professional



**Commercial Exterior – Taylorsville Temple**



**Commercial Interior – 2100 Penn**

*development opportunities, regulatory advocacy, and networking events. Two prominent publications—the Dimension Stone Design Manual and Building Stone Magazine—raise awareness within the natural stone industry and in the design community for best practices and uses of natural stone. Learn more at [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org](https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org).*

“You cannot defeat, by appeals to truth, someone who does not acknowledge truth as the ultimate arbiter. You cannot defeat, by appeals to proper procedure, someone who ditches procedure whenever it is convenient.”

—Anthony Esolen

## Manu Shah of MSI Receives 2023 Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement

Manu Shah (MSI) has received the 2023 Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Manu and Rika Shah started MS International (MSI) in 1975, in the basement of their home in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The original idea behind the business was for Mrs. Shah to work at home during her pregnancy and still generate additional income for the family. Manu had originally come to the United States to get his Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Purdue University, which he accomplished in 1968.



**Manu Shah, 2023 Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement**

From 1974-1981, while getting MSI off the ground, Manu continued to work full-time as a mechanical engineer at International Harvester, a manufacturer of trucks and farming equipment. During these years, he also worked as a broker selling blocks of granite to U.S. manufacturers, primarily in the monuments industry. In 1981, while still operating MSI out of their basement, the Shahs secured the contract to supply black granite for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. With their entire savings invested in this project, they spent endless nights making sure that the project was executed perfectly—and it was.

Building on this success, the Shahs decided to develop and grow MSI full-time, and moved the company to Southern California. Until 1987, the business primarily served as a distributor of granite for monuments and tombstones. The Shahs soon realized that natural stone for residential and commercial usage had even higher market potential and redirected their efforts toward developing this sector of the industry. By 2008, MSI was among the top importers of natural stone in the world, with materials from virtually every major stone sourcing country across the globe, including India, Brazil, China, Turkey, Italy, Spain, and Mexico.

*Please turn to page 21*



## 2023 Migliore Award

*Continued from page 20*

MSI became a member of the then known MIA in 2004 and since then, has always been a reliable and generous partner to the association.

What is striking about Shah's contributions to NSI is that he has never officially served on a committee or the board of directors. Yet, he and his company have played key roles in supporting five major initiatives undertaken by the association and other industry groups and has been a consistent donor or motivator to several other NSI programs and events.

Manu was the first to contribute financially and to donate stone for testing during the industry response to the radon crisis. He provided constant input and counsel during the 2-year effort to defend and protect the natural stone industry.

The vast NSI safety training resources enjoyed by stone industry professionals today, including the focus on material handling and silica safety, are in large part due to Manu sharing his early vision for our current training library.

He provided visionary direction for the 2013 History of Man and Stone documentary, as well as funded nearly 80% of the project, which topped \$125,000. No one has done more to support the Natural Stone



Institute and the industry while never serving on the board of directors.

With leadership shared by sons Raj and Rup, MSI was recently projected to reach sales of more than \$3 billion and employ over 3,500 people worldwide. MSI is proud to indirectly support the employment of over 150,000 people, translating to impacting the lives of over 500,000 people worldwide. Beyond the industry service, their MSI Charitable Trust supports causes such as early childhood education, health-care and wellbeing, and employment generation. The Trust is also a Diamond level member of the Natural Stone Foundation Leadership Society.

Nominations for the 2024 Migliore Award are being accepted until May 20. To learn more, visit [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/migliore](http://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/migliore).

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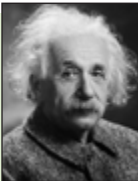
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 –Attributed to *Albert Einstein*

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## For Sale

**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. Contact Jeff Kohmann, 330-575-3871, [jeff@rocksolidcutstone.com](mailto:jeff@rocksolidcutstone.com).

**2007 Sawing Systems Gantry Saw. \$10,000 OBO.** Thunderhead 541-CS Diamond Gantry Saw with a 20 hp motor. Originally purchased new for \$31,000. One-owner, selling because of an upgrade. Disassembled and located in East TN. Estimated 35,000-40,000 hours and around 40,000 slabs cut. Features a 12 foot cut capacity, Powered blade raise & lower, Blade guard that fits up to an 18 inch blade, 14 inch Milling blade. Replaced Parts: 20 hp motor Spindle Dry shaft Drive belt. Call 423-323-2722, [Elliotenterprise1@gmail.com](mailto:Elliotenterprise1@gmail.com).

**Fab King.** Fabrication Center including tools, Under power for inspection. \$8,000 or best offer. Contact Steve Hardesty, 231-838-9603, [steve@petoskeygranite.com](mailto:steve@petoskeygranite.com).

**Klindex Plantario Stone Grinder/Polisher with Diamond Pads.** 1Klindex Plantario Stone Grinder/Polisher.K1000. 16 inch. Great for grinding and polishing Marble, Limestone, Terrazzo, Travertine, etc.. Planetary design for faster polishing than with a single head floor machine. Works best with a 1.5hp 110V 17 inch swing buffer of any make and model. It comes with a holder for a Clarke and Koblenz 17 inch Buffer but it can be changed to match your model or changed to a universal insta-lock. Used at a dozen jobs with great results includes a set of diamond grinding, honing and polishing 4 inch pads (50 grit to 800 grit). Selling due to retiring soon. Will email photos if requested. Customer pays for shipping. Asking \$425.00. Please contact via email: [info.simplymagic@gmail.com](mailto:info.simplymagic@gmail.com).



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## Business Opportunities

### Delaware Marble Sculptor Retiring & Selling Business After 60 Years

Selling 40 tons of granite, marble, precious stones like onyx and jasper, and some finished sculptures! Also lapidary equipment, diamond saws, and 300+ tools are for sale. Marble man has sold over 700 stone sculptures. Please call for more information: Richard H Bailey (302) 399-9777 or (302) 653-4810. Located in Smyrna, DE — 30 miles from Wilmington, DE. Website: [www.richardhbailey.com](http://www.richardhbailey.com).

### Granite, Quartz & Cabinet Shop For Sale - Florida West Coast

Get out of the snow and come to Florida's West Coast where the housing market (remodel and new construction) is booming! Established business 10+ years with excellent reputation, good mixture of General Contractor and home-owner sales 1M+ sales. Retirement sale. Beautiful showroom, all equipment owned. (Saw, forklift, trucks, trailers) Leased property; owner is willing to sell to new business owner. Please contact via email. [flgranitewestcoast@gmail.com](mailto:flgranitewestcoast@gmail.com).

### Turn Key Shop For Sale

Looking to get out of the business. Shop is located just outside Buffalo, New York. I am willing to take monthly payments, with some money down. We have 2 Intermac master 43 CNCs, a Yukon 2 bridge saw, overhead crane with vac lifters— everything you need to get started. Maybe some help, too — owner willing to stick around for the change over. Email [stonetech45@gmail.com](mailto:stonetech45@gmail.com).

**Successful Granite Fabrication Shop for Sale in Tenn.** Cumberland County Tennessee continues to grow each year, and has a very large retirement community. No other local fabricator shop! All other tops in area are sourced out of county, a lot of

business to be had. We stayed 4-6 months out in manual shop. Contact for details of equipment, materials, and tooling available. Also, willing to stay on for a while to train. Contact: McGinnis Tile and Stone, 931-787-1156, [mcginnistile@gmail.com](mailto:mcginnistile@gmail.com).

**Custom Stone Fabrication Business For Sale.** This Central MN business has an excellent reputation for quality work. The owner has been in the business for over 44 years, started this business in 2015 and is selling for personal reasons. Sale includes all the equipment, 16' Morgan Box truck, showroom displays, furniture, computers and software, etc. Owner will provide help for smooth transition. Real estate is leased and can be purchased. Phone: 320-251-9300, [sdevine@warnert.com](mailto:sdevine@warnert.com).

## Help Wanted

**Shop Foreman.** Looking for a self-motivated person to assist in building our company. Must have CNC experience and Auto Cad would be an added feature. Must have experience using a Donatoni CNC bridge saw, and a Flow Water Jet. Must be able to communicate with customers along with motivating and directing 4 employees. Compensation will be equal to your experience. Health and Yearly bonus included. Contact: Michael Germono, 1-408-431-8033, [mike@baysidecommercialcaseworks.com](mailto:mike@baysidecommercialcaseworks.com).

**Stone Countertop Fabricator.** We are seeking a Granite Fabricator to become an integral part of Black Rock Design-Build Firm in HIGHLANDS, NORTH CAROLINA. We are searching for proactive, motivated, skilled, team-players to join our successful and growing business experienced working with a bridge saw a plus. This position requires fine attention to detail in a fast-paced environ-

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## STONE INSPECTION & TROUBLESHOOTING

STONE FORENSICS will again be offering its popular Stone and Tile Troubleshooting workshop. The next class will be held January 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada, presented by Dr. Fredrick M. Hueston.

The program is designed to teach the basics of investigating stone and tile installation failures.

"The amount of failures, poor installations and other issues with stone and tile flooring are on the rise. This seminar is perfect for restoration and installation contractors as well as architects, building engineers and maintenance staff who have to deal with stone and tile installation and restoration," says Dr. Fred.

Class size is limited—register today.

Call 321-514-6845

For more information, visit [www.stoneforensics.com](http://www.stoneforensics.com)



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- Lab Testing

ment. Minimum of 2 years experience with Granite fabrication and installation. Drivers license required. Contact: Black Rock Granite and Cabinetry, Ltd, 828-482-4424, [gerri@blackrockdb.com](mailto:gerri@blackrockdb.com).

**Stone Carver Opportunity.** Immediate opening for skilled and accomplished stone carvers for marble carving (bas-reliefs, moldings) as well as lettering/engraving projects in both sandblasted and hand-cut letters, must have experience in marble and limestone. This is a full-time position and salary will be based on experience. Must be able to relocate to Northern Virginia. Call: 607-651-8585, [sam@rugostone.com](mailto:sam@rugostone.com).

**Help Wanted — Naples, Florida** Jim Lytell, Inc. is hiring for Marble and Stone Restoration Technicians. Will train, but experience preferred. Looking for a change? Call us today! Good driving record a must! Drug free company. \$18-\$30. Contact: Jim Lytell, Phone: 239-948-3000. Email: [office@jimlytellmarble.com](mailto:office@jimlytellmarble.com).

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## NTCA's *TileLetter* Editor Lesley Goddin Joins Tile Heritage Foundation Board

Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer for NTCA's *TileLetter* and *TileLetter ARTISAN* edition, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Tile Heritage Foundation (THF). This decision, made unanimously during the summer 2023 meeting, aligns seamlessly with Goddin's extensive experience and dedication to the tile industry.

Goddin assumes the position following the retirement of Riley Doty from Doty Tile in Oakland, who served THF for two decades. Doty remarked about Goddin's appointment, "When I announced that I needed to retire from the board, I was fighting regrets that I would be letting THF down. Instead, look at what has transpired! My departure put the matter of board membership on the front burner and led to this result. I couldn't ask for a better outcome!" In an invitation letter, THF President Joseph A. Taylor praised Goddin's unwavering support for both the industry and Tile Heritage, emphasizing her notable focus on the history and artistic aspects of the craft, particularly evident in her role as the editor of *TileLetter ARTISAN*.

Accepting the appointment, Goddin expressed her gratitude, stating, "I am honored and humbled to be invited to serve on the Tile Heritage Foundation board. And the folks on the board are some of the finest in the industry. What fun it will be to work with you all to further the aims and goal of THF and the amazing artistry of tile."

Lesley Goddin joins esteemed members of the THF Board, including Joseph A. Taylor, Sheila Menzies, Eric Astrachan, Josh Blanc, Irene de Watteville, Katia



Lesley Goddin, Tile Heritage Foundation

McGuirk, and Kathy Meyer. Together, they are dedicated to advancing the mission of THF and celebrating the incredible artistry of tile.

THF advocates for the ceramic arts and mosaics as well as the preservation of significant installations. The library and archives that have been housed at the Healdsburg, Calif., headquarters since 1987 are immense, and are a resource for tile makers, academics, the public and those in the tile industry seeking to match or source period tiles on restoration projects. THF is a custodian of over 40,000 documents, more than 44,000 digital images, and more than 4,000 American ceramic tiles dating back to the late 19th century. THF also maintains a blog-style website at [www.tile-heritage.org](http://www.tile-heritage.org) – visit to learn more about the Foundation.

## DEWALT®

*Continued from page 16*

His journey led to the invention of the "Wonder-Worker," an adjustable electric radial arm saw that provided the ability to efficiently execute multiple operations on one affordable piece of equipment, and the creation of DEWALT.

The "Wonder-Worker" set the stage for DEWALT to begin distributing products both nationally and internationally, with the company counting household names like Steinway & Sons and Westinghouse Electric Co. among its satisfied clients. By 1927, Sears, Roebuck boasted that DEWALT's saw contributed to helping manufacture "50 ready-cut houses" each day.

Later in life, DeWalt focused on helping close the skilled trades gap. He became a shop teacher at Mechanicsburg High School in Pennsylvania, educating the next generation of professional tradespeople. DeWalt passed away in 1961, but his trailblazing legacy lives on in the tools and



Raymond DeWalt

outdoor products that bear his name.

Today, DEWALT powers trades around the world with award-winning products that includes a portfolio of power tools and technology equipment, hand tools, accessories and storage as well as outdoor powered equipment.

### **DEWALT's Commitment to the Pro**

Alongside its commercial success, DEWALT from the beginning has influenced the trajectory of the industry through its commitment to innovation, safety and productivity:

In the 1930s, DEWALT collaborated with the U.S. Government and industry organizations to define and improve safety regulations in the construction industry, before the establishment of what is now known as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

During the 1940s, DEWALT began a period of rapid expansion of its

manufacturing capabilities to meet the demands of government orders in connection with national defense requirements.

In 1992, DEWALT introduced its first line of portable electric power tools and accessories designed to meet the unique needs of pro users. Two years later, DEWALT introduced a revolutionary system of more than 30 new cordless tools, including the most powerful cordless tools at the time: the 14.4-volt cordless drill/driver and the 5-3/8 inch cordless saw.

*Please turn to page 25*



**DEWALT®***Continued from page 24*

In 2016, DEWALT introduced FLEXVOLT™, the world's first battery that automatically changes voltage when the user changes tools.

In 2021, DEWALT was the world's first major power tool brand to use pouch cell batteries designed for the construction industry with the launch of its POWERSTACK™ battery.

In 2023, DEWALT introduced the DEWALT® Ascent™ Series. The completely reimagined battery-powered commercial mowing platform with advanced tech solutions.

In 2024, DEWALT announced the launch of DEWALT POWERSHIFT™, a groundbreaking equipment system to optimize the workflow of concrete jobsites through electrification.

### *Anniversary Celebrations Throughout the Year*

DEWALT will celebrate its milestone anniversary in multiple ways this year. A few highlights include:

- Launching innovative products including DEWALT POWERSHIFT™, an electrified equipment system that optimizes the end-to-end workflow of concrete jobsites, which made its debut at the World of Concrete trade show last week with an electrifying activation on the exterior of Sphere;
- Ringing The Opening Bell® at the New York Stock Exchange on May 14, 2024, officially marking 100 years in business;
- Introducing a special anniversary branding and paint scheme on NASCAR driver Christopher Bell's #20 Toyota Camry; and
- A "Pro Series" social media campaign honoring and highlighting the contributions of current professionals and promoting careers in the trades.

"Entering DEWALT's second century, we remain just as committed to driving relentless innovation and supporting the trades as Raymond DeWalt did in 1924. From cutting-edge technology to skills development, DEWALT's future remains strong, and we will lead the way in empowering tradespeople to succeed while defining the next era of industry innovation," Nelson said.

To learn more visit [www.stanleyblackanddecker.com](http://www.stanleyblackanddecker.com).



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