

# SLIPPERY ROCK

## GAZETTE

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

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## New Slab Caddy Offers Safe Alternative to Moving Slabs Around the Shop

**P**rojects Designed and Built Inc. (PD&B) has been a custom designer and builder of mechanical and robotic manufacturing equipment for over 25 years. Located in Toledo, Ohio, the company is comfortably positioned to serve six major cities within five hours drive time: Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Indianapolis, Indiana and Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio. Founded by Ken Martin and now operated by mechanical engineer and son Jack Martin and his wife Dana, PD&B has been the place to get manufacturing equipment into production and out the door to global customers throughout

by Peter J. Marcucci  
*Photos Courtesy Slab Caddy and The Countertop Shop*

“When Mike Langenderfer asked my husband Jack for a solution, he was really only asking for a solution to increase safety at the saw. His guys would overstock the standing A-frame there, and he was very worried about it from a safety stand point. Yes, slabs were being moved around the shop using push carts, but it was not very efficient.”

Iteration after iteration, the prototype turned from a simple storage vehicle, to one that offered so much more, she continued.

*A System Built for Safety, Efficiency, and Fewer Mistakes*  
At this point, you might be thinking that what you’ve just heard is someone else’s problems and not yours, right? But you’d be wrong. There are lots of potential problems moving material around with a forklift – too many to list. Suffice it to say that most fabricators have seen or heard the scenarios about some type of forklift/slab mishaps or a-frame related accidents due to wind, human error or carelessness. When do they happen, they are dangerous, life-threatening events, besides being costly and halting production.

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Designed to tow heavy loads, the battery-powered Slab Caddy tug is simple to operate. Inset: Dana and Jack Martin at TISE 2024.



Photo Courtesy The Countertop Shop

Europe, South America, and China. That said, even though PD&B is not a new kid on the block, the design and production of their very own Slab Caddy is.

Designed in cooperation with Mike Langenderfer, the owner of The Countertop Shop located in Monclova, Ohio, the patent-pending Slab Caddy represents countless hours of rigorous testing in real-world conditions, and offers safe, movable slab storage, explained Product Manager Dana Martin.

“Jack was on a flight going somewhere, and he saw an airplane tug moving a plane around and thought, ‘Hmm, Why don’t we move carts around like that?’ So he started looking up tugs that were already on the market, so he wouldn’t have to reinvent the wheel. Jack was also told to pare down the original cart, which was way overbuilt, to make it more cost effective. He then developed a fixed-point-hitch on the tug that would ascend and descend into the cart, and we were in business!”



## Preventing Silicosis

### The Renewed Focus On Silica Exposure in the Stone Industry

**I**F you’ve been listening to the news these days, you may have heard some of the current controversy about the risks of silicosis dust generated while fabricating. New local regulations in California are specifically aimed at the manufacturers and fabricators of quartz products.

Clearly, this problem is not just going to go away. If not dealt with from every angle, first by industry professionals and leaders at the top, then through shops using these products, it promises to fester and grow bigger by the year. Though not a simple fix, it is simply one of those situations that if shops do not take responsibility, someone else will, and the result will not be pretty.

*Ted Sherritt is one of those leaders. He’s the owner and CEO of FloForm, as well as a longtime member of the Artisan Group, The Rockheads, and is the newly appointed president of the International Surface Fabricators Association. Sherritt carries all the credentials needed to address this problem, and as you’ll see, he’s not afraid to speak up for our industry...*

There are a significant number of issues in our industry today around silica safety, government regulation and legislation, and product bans. So many big picture problems, that I thought I could add some value to help our industry get through these things. These are risks, right? If engineered stone goes bad in North America, my business changes dramatically and so does everybody else’s and it would be a devastating day for our industry. So we need to work in unison with the Natural Stone Institute (NSI), the International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA), the manufacturers, legislators and regulators to ensure that there is science around our belief that we are not harming our employees with silicosis.

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# Slab Caddy

*Continued from page 1*

Just imagine what it looks like to the client who just witnessed their slab break into pieces. That said, most accidents are preventable.

Now imagine, if you will, this scenario: Your forklift or crane unloads slab after slab off the delivery truck and onto a cart that's just a few feet away—up to eight slabs, stacked in order or by the job. Then, when loaded, the cart is simply and safely trundled away, securely stored and tagged. A heavy-duty version cart will hold two bundles of slabs.

Then when it's time to produce that job, instead of a forklift or crane bringing each slab one by one to the saw or CNC, that cart is trundled to where the material is needed, locked in place and disconnected. The operator can now load his machine by himself, while the tug is on its way to protect and serve on another mission. As a plus, cut material can now be stacked on that same cart or an additional empty cart, and tugged to the next machine or fabrication work area. Once fabricated, carts can now be used to hold finished work until ready for delivery – Super efficient, and super safe.

**Unloading and moving incoming slabs to storage is simplified and safer with the Slab Caddy. The high load capacity allows one operator to safely move several full slabs at once.**



**Slab Caddy carts can hold up to eight slabs, and can be customized for special needs, like full-bundle carts, remnant carts, and even a special hopper to hold scraps.**

**Photos (4) Courtesy The Countertop Shop**

According to Dana, the powder-coated Slab Caddy carts are over-engineered for strength, fitted with casters rated at 5,000 pounds each. As for the battery powered tug, it only needs one operator, will handle slabs up to 136 inches long and has 24 hour tech support. Furthermore, as an additional plus for shops in cold areas of the country,

slabs can be brought in the day before cutting and staged, letting them acclimate to ambient temperature and avoiding condensation that can mask flaws, such as unpolished areas and fine cracks.

Slab Caddy carts are serviced and warranted strictly through PD&B, keeping the manufacturer/customer relationship simple, close and reliable. Dana also noted that custom versions of their carts are also available for special needs, such as full-bundle carts, carts for remnants, shops doing glass work or a hopper to hold scraps, adding, "We've engineered it, tested it, and we build everything in-house. We'll then ship it where ever it needs to go. I think our biggest hurdle, is getting people to think that this is not an apple to apple comparison,

because we are not just replacing a standing a-frame with a bigger a-frame. We are changing the actual work flow, and from what we've come to realize, once that shops grasp that, they'll see that the Slab Caddy is a much bigger advantage than just an a-frame. Additionally, when shops are considering a second forklift, adding the Slab Caddy will take the place of that purchase. Yes, you still have to load our carts with a forklift or crane, but you can use our tug and carts in every part of the workflow."

## *A System Worth a Look-See*

To recap, the Made in America Slab Caddy completely eliminates a-frame related accidents, drastically reduces forklift/boom or clamp related accidents, increases work flow efficiency due to increased mobility, makes better use of warehouse or yard space, and reduces in-door forklift traffic and its associated exhaust and dust. It only needs one operator, will help keep your shop organized and safer, and its ability to offer movable, scalable storage will save oodles of space in an ever-changing environment. Your bottom line is increased, your people are safer, and your company image has increased by a couple of notches.

PD&B is a member of the International Surface Fabricators Association and the Natural Stone Institute.

For more information, visit their website [www.slabcaddy.com](http://www.slabcaddy.com) or give Dana a call at 419-726-7400.

**The ease of bringing in new slabs directly to a greenboard photo station is one workflow improvement the Slab Caddy offers.**



## Preventing Silicosis

*Continued from page 1*

If you're doing it right and following the 2016 OSHA standards and operating below the action level for dust in your work areas, we believe that the work area is safe for the employee without a respirator. Our industry needs the science to prove that if we follow current regulations we are not harming our employees regardless of the product we are fabricating from quartzite, to engineered stone, to granite, to porcelain, and so on.

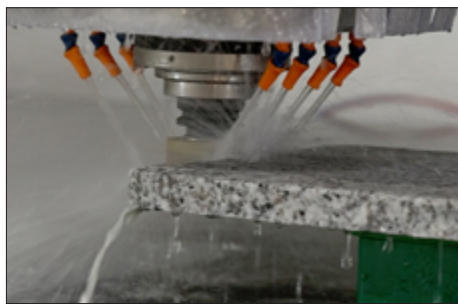
The good actors, they understand these rules, and work every day to make sure that their work environment is safe for their employees. There is air testing, medical monitoring and using wet practices, all the things we need to do to make a safe environment. The good actors are doing that, and doing their best to make sure their employees go home healthy after working in a safe environment.



**Proper masking and wet fabrication are part of managing dust from cutting, grinding and drilling stone.**

On the flip side, there are two kinds of bad actors. There's the bad actor who is uninformed and ignorant about the current laws, and the damage that silicosis can do. He's happily working away and hoping that everything is going to be great. This bad actor needs education and awareness, and needs to understand that you have got to follow the rules or people are going to get sick. They need awareness from the ISFA, the NSI, and the manufacturers and their sales people to inform and educate them.

Then there are the worst kind of actors, the ones who know the rules, and know the damage that they are incurring by dry cutting and grinding. They also know it is cheaper and faster to do it this way, and there is more money to be made, but just don't care and just keep on doing it with no regard to their employees' safety. These are the ones who don't and won't follow regulations, and they



**Wet fabrication has been the recommended best practice over a decade, and followed by the majority of the industry.**

need to be shut down! Enforcement needs to shut these guys down.

The good actors, the ones who are trying to do fabrication right, they should keep working to get the dust below the action level, to make their workplaces safe. These shops are the majority of the industry, and the bad shops are a small percentage. However, they are giving all of the good shops a bad name.

Unfortunately, the government has lumped us all together as fabricators, and has claimed that all fabricators are killing their workers. It's not true and it's not fair, but that's what's happening in the government's regulatory areas – in California, anyway. Today, the law is that you have to wear a full respirator to work in a California stone shop. That's the law, it's not getting adequately enforced, but that is the law today.

In our FloForm shops, we do a bunch of air monitoring, and if we're below the action level, we just keep on with production! As soon as we get above the action level, we'll put in more air scrubbers, change engineering and administrative controls and do more house cleaning. It's not easy to get below the action level everywhere, every time, but you have to keep working at it.

These are your employees. Quite often they are friends with your son, or your nephew or your own kid! You want those people to be safe, and not catch a disease that is not

curable, but is preventable. So we need to do all we can do to operate a shop and prevent silicosis, because it is a terrible, incurable disease, and it only gets worse. The first day you find an employee with symptoms of silicosis and he or she tests positive, you've got to get them out of that environment, and get them a new job somewhere else, such as in sales or templating. It is your responsibility as a business owner or manager to ensure the safety and health of your employees.

A lot of these owners and workers are undocumented and not covered by workers compensation or alternative medical insurance. This is a major cause of the silicosis issue exploding in California today. Bad actors not following safety and employment regulations in place to safeguard employee health.

Additionally, so many people are buying engineered stone these days, that is why quartz is considered the problem. The success of this product category has dominated the countertop industry today, and if it was never invented and the same penetration happened with granite, the same problem would exist, and people would be still be suffering from silicosis today. But the fact that engineered stone came in and took a large market share from granite, is one more reason that this is an engineered stone issue, today.

### **What Can the Industry Do?**

There are a bunch of answers to this problem. One answer is more inspections, and enforcement for the bad actors. We can identify them. It just needs the intestinal fortitude of OSHA to go deal with it. It's enforcement for the bad actors who know they're doing it wrong, but don't care, and education for the ones who don't know they are doing it wrong, so they can get better at it. It's also engagement with associations like ISFA and NSI to help educate them on solutions and tools from our supply member partners,



like air scrubbers and wet hand tools that use water to suppress the dust.

For the people who are doing it right, the answer is a pat on the back and recognition. We need to market to the fabricators who are doing it right, through the NSI, trade associations and the manufacturers, and they should get more customers, because in the end, doing fabrication right costs money. But if you really care about this industry and the people who work in the fabrication shops, you shouldn't be buying from the cheapest guy out there, because they are most likely doing it the wrong way.

We know that OSHA can't enforce the regulations effectively and quickly enough to close down all of these shops, so a bill was introduced into California's legislature to require licensing of all fabricators. Fabrication shops have to prove they have wet shops, air monitoring, and they've trained their employees before they get a license to buy slabs from a distributor. This will take about three years before it is put into place and helping, but it's not going to prevent more silicosis cases from happening while dry cutting and grinding is going on today.

Moreover, the class action lawyers are out there handing out pamphlets all across the nation to employees, saying, "Join us on a lawsuit, because we are going to sue the manufacturers who sell quartz countertops, because they didn't tell us it was a danger."

So the industry needs to regulate the suppliers, so the bad actors can't get licenses, and sooner or later they won't be able to buy materials, and they'll have to get out of the business.

So education and awareness, controlling the supply channel, and increased OSHA enforcement is what I think the answers are, and if we don't take action as an industry and improve the situation for the workers, we won't be able to sell products containing silica – including granite and engineered stone – in North America. They've already done this with engineered stone in New Zealand and Australia.

The stories on today's news headlines need to be about good stone companies, the ones doing it right that have no sick people. Again, silicosis is an incurable lung disease that results in debilitating injuries to workers and significantly impacts their lives and their families. The good news is that silicosis is preventable if we all do the right thing.

[See page 13 for more resources on safe fabrication practices from NSI.](#)

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The Voice of the Stone Fabricator

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## Natural Stone Institute Announces Thor Lundh Quarrier Award

The Natural Stone Institute is pleased to announce a new industry recognition award for 2024. The **Thor Lundh Quarrier Award** will recognize a Natural Stone Institute member who has made an extraordinary contribution to quarrying natural stone. The recipient will be recognized at either the NSI Study Tour or Marmomac. The jury panel will include representatives from both the North American Quarry Advocacy Group and the Global Advocacy Group.

The ideal candidate for this award has demonstrated successful and notable accomplishments throughout a professional career in quarrying natural stone. They have been involved and dedicated to the activities and objectives of quarrying operations in their companies and have contributed to furthering the careers of other professionals in the quarrying field.

Reid Kubesh (Coldspring), chair of the North American Quarry Advocacy Group, commented: “NSI has added several programs to support the quarrier segment and further advance natural stone in the past few years. We are thrilled for the inclusion of this new award, which will recognize the individuals responsible for the stone at its source.”

The award is named after Thor Lundh, founder of Lundhs AS, the largest natural stone producer in Northern Europe. Thor Lundh has been instrumental in transitioning quarry operations from manual to industrial production, contributing to numerous local and international jobs. Thor Lundh demonstrates how far a natural stone supplier can go when daring to take risks and innovate. He industrialized larvikite production in Norway and today the company is developing a global brand. Thor-Anders Lundh Håkestad, CEO of Lundhs commented: “We at Lundhs are honored to be able to present the Thor



**THOR LUNDH  
QUARRIER AWARD**



Lundh Quarrier Award in close cooperation with the Natural Stone Institute. The areas of use for natural stone have changed a lot and the ways of extracting have changed completely. Lundhs has always been at the forefront of these changes and will continue to develop sustainable production methods and utilization of the stone resources for generations to come. With this award we are looking forward to supporting great achievements within the quarrying industry.”

Nominations are due by May 20. Learn more at [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/quarrieraward](http://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/quarrieraward).

## Industry Calendar of Events

### May 2024

#### Rockheads: Spring Member Event

**When:** May 15-17

**Where:** Nashville, TN;

**More information will be posted when available.**

#### NSI: New Jersey Stone Summit Fabricator Town Hall

**When:** Thursday May 9, 2024

**Where:** 1150 Cranbury South River Rd, Jamesburg, NJ 08831

**Host:** TBA

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

#### NSI: “Doing the Heavy Lifting”: Design, Anchorage, and Installation of Heavy Cubic Stone Elements

**When:** Thursday May 16, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ET

**Where:** Online

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

### June 2024

#### NSI: Wine & Stone Event

**When:** June 5, 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM

**Where:** 10000 E. 40th Ave., Denver CO

#### NSI: Colorado Stone Summit – Dynamic Intentionality

**When:** June 6, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**Where:** 10000 E. 40th Ave., Denver CO

**Host:** TBA

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

#### NSI: Virtual Quarry Tour

**When:** Thursday, June 20, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ET

**Where:** Online

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

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

## Denise Daniels Receives Pioneer Award

Denise Daniels (MB Stone Care and Supply) is the 2024 Women in Stone Pioneer Award recipient.

Denise began her industry journey with minimal stone knowledge, yet now stands as a reliable source of guidance and knowledge for stone restoration professionals. Her steadfast dedication and involvement within the industry has enabled her skillful development of cutting-edge resources that allow others to benefit from her expertise.

Through her passionate work at MB Stone Care and Supply, Denise equips each of her customers with the best tools available to guarantee they can fulfill their job to the highest standard. She ensures that



each customer she interacts with is granted an incomparable customer experience of respect and exceptional value.

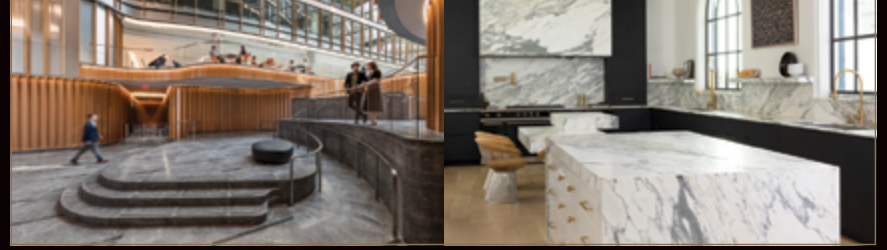
Denise has gone the extra mile to offer her knowledge through training stone

## You Are Doing Extraordinary Things

Celebrate your projects and people through the Natural Stone Institute Awards Program.

Submit Your Entries by **JUNE 20.**

### PINNACLE AWARDS



Submit Your Entries by **MAY 20.**

### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

### SCHOLARSHIPS



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

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



#usenaturalstone

restoration professionals across the globe. With an awareness that numerous individuals have come to depend on MB Stone’s “Intro to Stone Restoration” course, Denise has taken initiatives to advance that learning experience by introducing additional courses that refine one’s skills.

Essential to MB Stone’s ongoing success, Denise not only aided in the introduction of new and intriguing courses but has also played an integral role in the design and testing of the company’s product line over the years. Her fervent passion for the preservation of luxurious stone has been shared with the rest of her team, shaping their confidence in the products and services they deliver.

It’s the Stone ID Kit, designed in collaboration with geologist Karin Kirk, that is one of Denise’s proudest accomplishments, and something that has become a hot commodity in the stone industry. It won the 2023 Best of Innovation award at The International Surfaces Event and was part of a featured hands-on demonstration

at KBIS in 2023. Denise has also teamed up with the Natural Stone Institute to host “What Stone Is This?: An Interactive Experience,” a CEU course that teaches others how to identify natural stone.

Denise has achieved great success in the stone industry, becoming a figure of admiration for countless women and proving that women can be just as knowledgeable as men in her field. With a growing team of women at MB Stone championing the same cause, Denise has become a respected mentor, developing an unrivaled community of like-minded industry professionals, and cultivating a family culture. Appreciated and celebrated, Denise continues to shine as an impressive luminary in the stone industry. For a list of recipients, visit [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/awards](https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/awards).

Nominations for the 2024 Women in Stone Pioneer Award are being accepted until May 20. To learn more, visit [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/pioneeraward](https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/pioneeraward).

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Are You the Superhero in Your Business?

### The Superhero Trap

**Ed Young**  
Fabricator's Business Coach

**I**n the chaotic world of countertop fabrication, where every day brings a new set of challenges and hurdles to overcome, maintaining order can feel like an uphill battle. As a fab shop owner, you're no stranger to the chaos it brings – from broken splashes to scheduling snafus, the demands of running your business can be relentless. It can feel like you're always trying to be a superhero, rushing to solve problems left and right.

It's all too easy for fab shop owners to fall into the trap of playing the role of the superhero – the one who swoops in to save the day whenever disaster strikes. Yet, in the midst of juggling countless tasks and responsibilities, it's essential to ask yourself: Is this sustainable? And at what cost?

#### *The Toll of Chaos*

While you may thrive on the adrenaline rush of being the superhero, it's essential to recognize the toll it takes on your business and personal life. In a perpetual state of crisis management, there's little time for strategic planning, process improvement, or personal well-being. Your employees may feel the strain as well, grappling with uncertainty, inefficiency, and burnout. And what about your family? Are they getting the time and attention they deserve, or are they left to contend with a perpetually stressed and absent partner or parent?

This is just a partial list of the negative impacts of being the superhero in your business:

#### *Burnout*

Constantly being in superhero mode means you're always on high alert, ready to swoop in and solve any problem that arises. This level of vigilance can lead to burnout – a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. This

will show up as fatigue, irritability, and a decreased sense of accomplishment, ultimately impacting your overall well-being and productivity.

#### *Limited Growth*

When you're always the one swooping in to save the day, you end up being the limiting factor in your business's growth. Your employees may become reliant on you to solve every problem, stifling their own growth and development. The business can only grow to the level you personally can handle.

#### *Tunnel Vision*

When you're constantly in firefighting mode, it's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. You may become so focused on solving immediate problems that you neglect long-term strategic planning and goal setting. This tunnel vision can hinder your business's ability to innovate, adapt to changing market conditions, and stay ahead of the competition.

#### *Strained Relationships*

Being the superhero of your business often means sacrificing time with loved ones. Your family and friends may feel neglected or resentful of the time and energy you devote to your business, leading to strained relationships and feelings of isolation. Ultimately, neglecting your personal relationships can take a toll on your mental health and overall happiness.

#### *Reduced Creativity*

Constantly being in crisis mode can stifle creativity and innovation. When you're always focused on putting out fires, there's little time or mental bandwidth left for brainstorming new ideas, exploring opportunities, or experimenting with different approaches. This can hinder your business's ability to adapt to changing market trends and stay ahead of the curve.



Are you relying on your Superhero Abilities to save the day and keep your business afloat?

[www.FabricatorsCoach.com](http://www.FabricatorsCoach.com)



#### *Financial Instability*

Relying solely on your superhero efforts to keep your business afloat can create financial instability. Without clear systems, processes, and delegation in place, your business may struggle to maintain consistent cash flow, profitability, and sustainability. Additionally, the lack of scalability and growth potential can limit your business's ability to weather economic downturns or unexpected challenges.

#### *Breaking the Cycle*

So, how do you stop being the superhero in your business? The first step towards reclaiming control is acknowledging the chaos that surrounds you. It's about recognizing that there's a better way to operate – one that doesn't rely solely on your superhero efforts. But where do you begin? How do you shift from a reactive mindset to a proactive one?

The answer is determining how and where you can start working ON your business. One way is to think about which part of your business consumes most of your day. Are you continually solving problems in the shop? Are you always scrambling to find new sales to keep the shop full? Is cash flow keeping you up at night?

Once you determine the area causing the most problems, then craft a plan to resolve those problems. What's left is to then execute that plan.

Make no mistake – the journey towards order and efficiency won't be easy. It will require dedication, perseverance, and a willingness to embrace change. But the rewards are well worth the effort. Not only will you see improvements in your

business's performance and profitability, but you'll also enjoy a greater sense of balance and fulfillment in your personal life. If you do this well, your business – and your sanity – will thank you for it.

#### *The Journey Ahead*

Running a stone fabrication business is no easy feat. It requires juggling countless tasks and responsibilities, all while trying to keep your head above water. But with the right tools and mindset, you can navigate the chaos and emerge stronger than ever.

If you want to stop being the superhero in your business but don't know where to start, go to [www.FabricatorsCoach.com](http://www.FabricatorsCoach.com) and take the Chaos Index quiz. It's a simple 20-question automated quiz that will only take 10 minutes to complete. It will give you instant feedback on six critical dimensions of your business: Sales, Template-Fabricate-Install, Scheduling, Financial, Problem Solving, and Business Management. **Use the red QR code above to go to the quiz on the Fabricators Coach website.**

Figuring out how to stop being the superhero in your business is not just about improving your bottom line; it's about reclaiming your sanity and creating a better life for yourself and those around you.

**“If you're going to worry about what people say, you're never going to make any progress.”**  
– Joseph Murray

# TRAINING & EDUCATION

## Prioritize – Focus – Finish

“What gets measured gets done” – a timeless adage that is always relevant.

**Rick Phelps**  
Synchronous Solutions

Our Synchronous Flow Operating System (SFOS) is a management system and structure that forces countertop fabricators to align their business so that “what gets measured” is driving what actually is what is most important “to get done” for the success of the business.

Far too often, there is little to no connection between what is being measured/ worked on, and what is required for success. In many cases, nothing is actually measured at all because of the owner’s belief that “my team knows what to do, and gets it done!” Rarely is that the truth.

In other cases, the leadership team makes the effort, identifying things they think they should work on every quarter, and then don’t, because frankly, they just were not important enough to merit the effort.

I recently observed a review meeting of one such team. They were most of the way through the quarter and virtually no work had been performed on their “rocks”(key projects). At the end of meeting, they all rated the meeting a “9” or “10”. I was in the back corner thinking “...and from the Russian judge, ‘2’,” and about how much fun it was going to be to teach this team how to create goals aligned with the needs of their business – projects aligned with achieving those goals – and how to hold each other to account!

When we align a business, we talk in terms of “Intent,” and start with the generic Intent of every business: “To make more money now and in the future.” We then cascade that Intent down through the business to align all management roles, and eventually ALL roles with that Intent of the business. The idea here is that everyone in the business can look up at the stated intent of the business, or their department, and develop a clear understanding of what their intent needs to be contribute to the overall success of the business.

For the General Manager (S4) role, the generic Intent of the business can be broken into three core Intents that need to

be true to achieve “making more money now and in the future.” These are shown in Figure One.

Sticking with the first Intent: “Maximize the Flow Rate of \$T through the system,” we can follow the logic tree for this core Intent down through the business.

To achieve this Intent, what would the Fabrication Shop Manager’s ‘intent’ need to be?

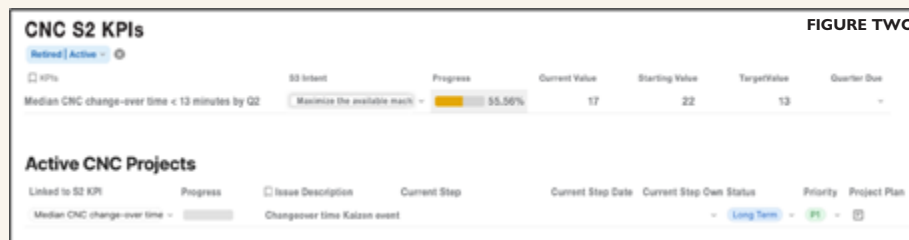
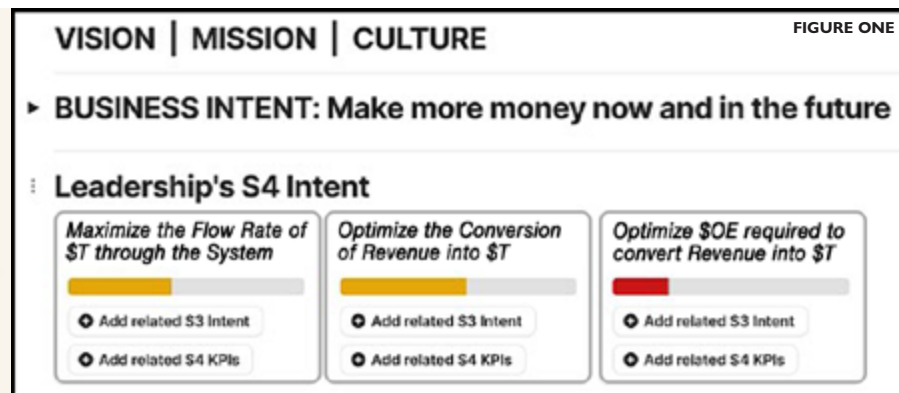
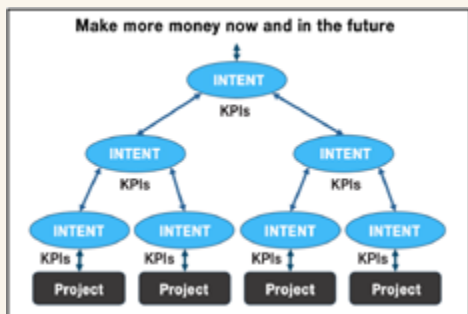
The Shop Area Manager’s Intent would logically be “to maximize the production process that limits the flow of jobs through the shop,” and looks like this in our SFOS software:



This in turn translates to the Section Manager in charge of Constraint to have the Intent:



The team working at the Constraint Process can look at this ‘Intent’ and translate it into what they need to do to maximize the time available at this critical process: things like fast changeovers, preventive maintenance, etcetera.



By using “Intent” instead of the terms “Objectives” or “Goals,” we make the alignment process more approachable, relatable, or perhaps “human.”

From Figure Two, you can see we set up KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for each Intent. We do this by asking the question: “What would we measure to tell us if we are moving toward our Intent or away from it?” We also identify specific projects to be executed to drive the KPIs toward their goals.

Every Monday morning, each team, starting with the General Manager’s team, quickly goes over their plan for the week so that everyone is in tune with what is being worked on, and what cross functional issues need to be addressed to keep the work progressing.

Shops that have implemented the rigor of this system are relentless in their pursuit of the continuous improvement of their businesses. All project work is clearly linked to the business objectives and prioritized.



You can see from these examples that every KPI is explicitly linked to an Intent, and every project linked to a KPI. This creates a direct connection between every role’s KPIs and projects to the Intent of the business.

Toward the end of every week every manager meets with their boss (the General Manager meets with their Executive Coach) for a *LION* meeting to review what was accomplished *Last* week in moving their projects forward, what *Issues* they encountered that need to be elevated to the team, what *Opportunities* they identified, and what their work plan is for *Next* week to move their projects forward.

**Only three active projects per manager are allowed.** We want the businesses we work with to Prioritize, Focus and Finish their project work. There is no “partial credit” in the business world. There is also no credit for doing projects that do not connect to the Intent of the business!

If you would like to align your business and Prioritize and Focus your team’s efforts so they actually Finish projects in a timely manner, Contact us at [www.synchronousolutions.com](http://www.synchronousolutions.com).

*Rick Phelps – Synchronous Solutions*

# Using Natural Stone to Create At-Home Water Features

Being near water has a calming effect and research studies have shown that water features can positively contribute to our overall mental health and well-being. Incorporating natural stone water features at home can bring both beauty and tranquility into your space.

Anne Roberts, president of Chicago based Anne Roberts Gardens Company, finds that people love the sound of water because it's relaxing. Since not every home has a water feature, adding one is a way to make your home stand out.

Michael Zimmer, founder of Santa Fe, New Mexico-based Stone Forest, often uses natural stone in his water feature designs. According to Zimmer, many homeowners choose to add a water feature to their outdoor spaces for aesthetic reasons or because it goes well with other elements in their space. "Water features add a dramatic focal point in the garden space; a tapestry of sound, visuals, and texture that attracts birds and other wildlife (including the human variety)," Zimmer says. Another benefit? Water features mask road noise quite effectively.

## Why Add a Natural Stone Water Feature?

There are countless options for natural stone water features in landscape design, including fountains, basins, waterfalls, ponds, and pools. More elaborate designs include computerized water features synchronizing music to water and light animation, like what you might see in Las Vegas or the front of some hotel properties.

Natural stone fountains will last for generations, according to Zimmer. In addition to helping mask road noise, natural stone water features can become a focal point or help define a garden space.

Contrary to what some people might think, a water feature doesn't have to be large like a pool or big waterfall design. "Natural stone water features can be as big or small as you have space for," Roberts says. Her company has installed smaller streams with recycling water systems, small foot ponds, and even large natural dry riverbeds for water that periodically overwhelms areas in one's yard.

## Megy Karydes

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### What to Consider When Installing a Natural Stone Water Feature

Natural stone water features can make a dramatic statement, whether as a focal point of a space or background statement. There are several things to take into consideration when choosing a water feature, including price and maintenance. Here are a few additional things to consider when choosing your water feature.

**The size of the reservoir.** Both Roberts and Zimmer remind clients that the final design needs to fit the desired space.

**The size and weight of the water feature.** If a sizable fountain is being considered, for example, how will it be installed? Will it require a dolly/ hand truck, forklift, or crane?

**Incorporate plants.** This will be geography dependent, but something to think about as you're deciding the location of your water feature. In the southwest where Zimmer is based, it's all about drought tolerant species. "It's nice to 'layer' different perennials around the water feature," he says.

**Let the light in.** Adding lighting systems will bring some visual interest to your space during the night.

**Consider short- and long-term maintenance.** In addition to making sure pumps and other accessories are in working order, homeowners will want to add cleaning the reservoir to their calendar once a year, Zimmer says. He also recommends using an algaecide that is bird and animal-friendly, along with a weekly dose of a chemical to fight hard water buildup.

### Types of Natural Stone Water Features

Natural stone water features can be true works of art in an outdoor space and part of their appeal is they engage several of our senses. Not only can they provide a soothing backdrop from the movement of water



**Two Stone Forest fountains: Above – A Granite millstone, polished and repurposed.**

Photo by Ali Bryn

**Right: A custom triple cube fountain.**

Photo by Karen Hardy



over the stone, but they provide a striking visual with their textured designs.

When choosing a water feature like a fountain or basin, you want one that will be built to last in your environment. "Granites and basalt can handle cold environments and will last for generations," Zimmer says.

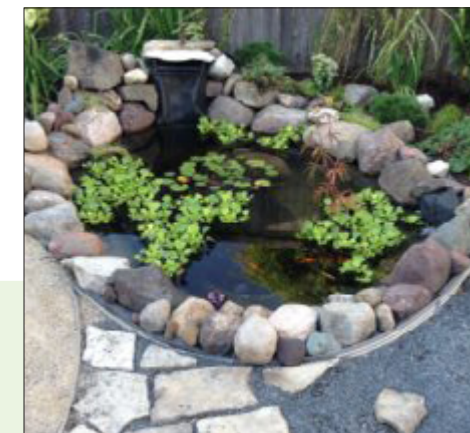
Some gravitate toward stunning marble and onyx fountains which may not hold up quite as well, but generally will withstand the life of the garden and homeowners, Zimmer adds.

In addition to the water feature, most pieces include rocks or smaller stones beneath the focal point to capture the movement of the water.

Photos Courtesy Anne Roberts Garden Company



**Incorporating plants and landscape design in a water feature works with both rough (unpolished) and natural-looking river rocks and boulders.**



[Please turn to page 9](#)



## At-Home Water Features

*Continued from page 8*

One of the most common mistakes Zimmer sees with homeowners and water features is sub-standard installations. If you're not planning to hire a professional to install your water fountain, Stone Forest has a blog post on creating a successful fountain installation that Zimmer directs people to so they can do it themselves correctly. Another mistake Zimmer sees is buying a cheap foundation made of concrete. Those, he says, tend to fall apart after a few seasons.

If the project is beyond your DIY capabilities, Roberts highly recommends hiring a firm with experience installing water features such as ponds as not every landscape has that expertise.

Once you install a natural stone water feature, it'll be enjoyed for decades.

*Megy Karydes is a Chicago-based writer. Find her at [MegyKarydes.com](http://MegyKarydes.com).*

Photos (2) by Eric Swanson



Japanese rock garden-inspired fountains installed on a pebble base, created by Stone Forest. Above: Onyx & Jurassic stones. Above, Right: Green marble seats surround a central monolithic fountain boulder.



A vase-shaped vessel fountain with a carved and etched bamboo pattern, by Stone Forest.

Photo by David Hoptman



A custom, carved granite boulder fountain, by Stone Forest.



Photo by Josh Zimmer



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## TRAINING & EDUCATION

# Revenue Rush: A Powerful Strategy for a Quick Cash Flow Boost

**A**re you the owner of a stone industry business, such as a countertop shop, fabrication enterprise, or distribution company? Have there been instances where you've found yourself in need of a substantial financial boost, and quickly? This article explores the concept called a "Revenue Rush" — a hyper-focused, dedicated effort designed to substantially increase your sales and cash flow in a short amount of time.

In our work, we partner closely with stone industry professionals to help them build a sustainable business. Our focus is on creating a predictable pipeline of business and helping our clients gain control of their sales processes. However, we're well aware that there are often times when cash flow can become tight. This could be due to a variety of factors such as seasonality, market conditions, or the retirement of a general contractor who previously made up a significant portion of your monthly sales. In these challenging circumstances, we've provided assistance to our clients and the members of our programs by helping them to plan and execute a Revenue Rush. This strategy is designed specifically to inject a much-needed influx of cash into the business.

### Where's the Cash Coming From?

At this point, you might be thinking, "This all sounds great, but where do I begin?" Let's break it down. The first crucial step is to take a comprehensive, in-depth look at your business and identify potential opportunities to capture unrealized revenue. This could involve focusing on collections or conducting a thorough audit of your sales pipeline to identify deals that have been forgotten or overlooked. Another potential avenue to explore is examining past business-to-business (B2B) customers and figuring out tactful strategies to re-engage them in the short term.

You'll want to set clear goals that you and your team are aiming to hit. To give a few examples, perhaps you aim to collect \$10,000 from outstanding invoices and receivables, or you set a target to secure \$50,000 from older deals that have gone stale in your sales pipeline. Another goal

**Justin Shaw**  
Stone Fabricator Elite



might be to upsell a total of \$15,000 for the month on your upcoming opportunities.

### Motivating Your Team: The Revenue Rush Challenge

A Revenue Rush is effective partly due to its focus on a short-term goal that motivates the team to unite. Consequently, team members become more diligent in upselling, as opposed to only seizing obvious opportunities, which might be their usual approach.

Once these targets are set, it's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work. To capture that revenue and pull in those sales, you'll need to employ effective, proven strategies. However, it's important to note that we can't quite do this justice in this article, because no two businesses are the same. The approach required for a successful Revenue Rush is typically an activity-based sales and collections push. This isn't a half-hearted effort, but rather a committed, intensified undertaking.

We often refer to this as the "Revenue Rush Challenge" when presenting to teams. The objective is to significantly increase both the quantity and quality of your sales and collection activities. This means more calls, more follow-ups, more negotiations, and more closings. But it's crucial to remember that it's not solely about the quantity. Each interaction must also be of high quality. This dual focus on volume and quality ensures that you not only reach more potential leads but also convert them effectively, thereby substantially boosting your revenue.

Another key aspect to consider is how to expedite your cash inflow. One simple strategy is to offer customers incentives for early payments, which can reduce the time between making a sale and receiving the cash, helping to benefit your bottom line. Another tool might be to employ electronic payment methods that can streamline the collection of payments and deposits, helping to avoid unnecessary delays and supporting your cash flow.

For a Revenue Rush Challenge to be successful, it's crucial for everyone on the team to be fully committed. Consider assigning specific tasks or goals to individual team members or even whole departments in your business. This approach helps everyone feel like they've got a stake in the game, and it creates a clear connection between everyone's work. When people are striving to achieve their own goals, knowing that it's all part of a larger mission, you'll start to see a real improvement in performance. This is how you build a team that's not just working together to make this Revenue Rush a success, but also transforming into a more cohesive, driven, high-performing unit.

To add an element of fun and keep the momentum going, consider gamifying your challenge. You could set up a leaderboard to track progress, or offer attractive prizes (with a decent budget) for hitting certain goals. These tactics can serve to motivate and excite the team, encouraging them to

fully commit and really go for it.

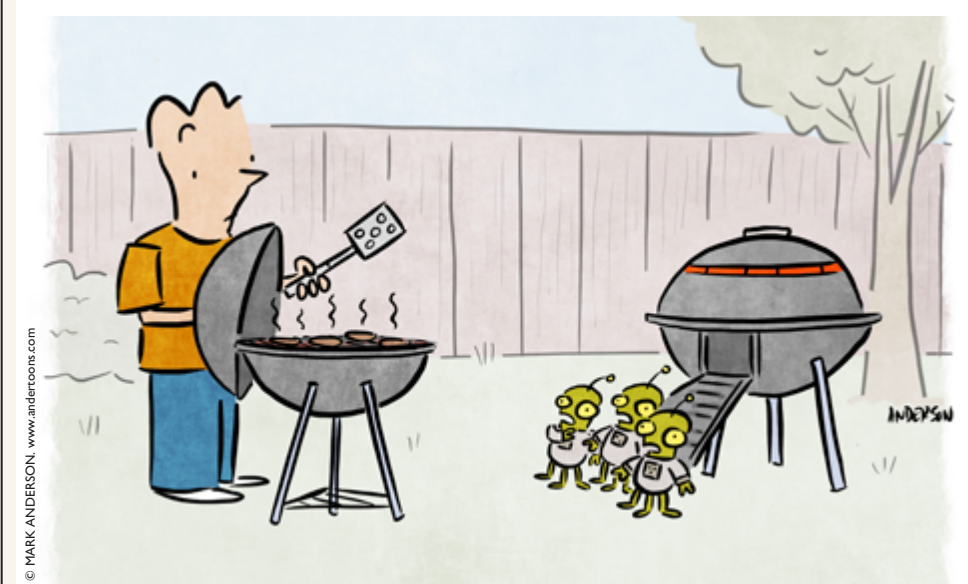
Finally, it's important to continually monitor your progress during your Revenue Rush. Regularly compare your current performance with the goals you set at the outset. This will help you determine if you're on track or if you need to adjust your approach. Being adaptable and willing to change your strategy as needed is often a vital part of this process.

### Important Note

While the Revenue Rush Challenge presents an attractive strategy for a quick cash flow boost, it's crucial to understand that this is a short-term solution. There are no silver bullets in business. The long-term focus should always be on building a sustainable business. This involves implementing the right systems and strategies to provide stable sales and cash flow. It's the consistent, daily actions that lead to lasting success. So while the Revenue Rush can provide a necessary surge, keep on pushing for the end goal — a thriving, sustainable business.

*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 [justinshaw.com](http://justinshaw.com).*



## Quarry Life

**WE** all deal with stone in one way or another: buying, selling, studying, fabricating, installing, advertising, restoring, shipping, admiring, hating, loving... whatever. The question is: "Do you ever wonder where it comes from?" Not like – "This Soapstone comes from Virginia," or, "This marble comes from Vermont." Do you ever wonder about the quarries? What they go through to get you product? Just how does the product get from the earth to your hands?

Rock quarries actually have life cycles or stages:

### Stage 1: Site Selection and Inspection

Geologists and surveyors analyze the rock formations of a site, as well as the topography, and accessibility, determining the feasibility of extraction. Then, once a suitable site is found, environmental impact studies are conducted to determine possible effects on the surrounding ecosystems and communities.

### Stage 2: Licensing, Permits and Planning

Before any activity begins, owners/operators must obtain permits and approvals from ALL relevant authorities. This phase is quite complex and assures that the quarry will comply with environmental regulations, safety standards, and land use policies. The planning phase also includes designing "best practice" extraction methods, plus determining the size and shape of the quarry, and implementing measures to mitigate environmental impacts.



## Sharon Koehler

*Stone Industry Consultant*

### Stage 3: Extraction

Once all the permits are in place, workers and heavy machinery are brought in to start the extraction process. If the permits allow, blasting is done to help break rock masses into more manageable fragments.

### Stage 4: Processing

After the mining process is complete, the raw materials undergo processing to meet specific quality and size requirements. Crushing equipment breaks down larger rocks into smaller, more manageable pieces. Sorting machinery then separates the materials based on size and quality. This stage is critical in producing consistent and marketable products for construction purposes.

Blocks that are to be slab cut are generally shipped off site to a processing center where they are cut, face finished, inspected, and made ready for shipping. Sometimes the quarry owns this facility, sometimes they don't.

### Stage 5: Transportation

Transportation can be tricky for quarries. Depending on the material, they can sometimes deliver straight to the end user. However, most of the time, especially when slabs are involved, there are multiple modes of transportation. Blocks go to the processing center, slabs to the port, in a container or out of a container, to the



**Originally a limestone quarry, Centennial Beach, near Naperville, Illinois was first made into a public-use park in the 1930's.**

distributor or wholesaler. It all gets distributed by trucks, trains, cranes, ships, rail cars, etc. (It's a good thing stone is a tough material.)

### Stage 6: End User

For the quarry, the end user is not the customer who gets a new countertop, paver patio or new retaining wall. Their end user is the company, wholesaler, or distributor who orders the material they need from the quarry. The quarry's end user receives the material and passes it along to their customers or their end users. (Fabricators, landscapers, hardscapers, construction companies, etc.), who then, in turn, pass it on to their customers.

### Stage 7: Reuse and Reclaiming

In terms of how long quarries have been around, this is a fairly new stage in quarry life. Back in the day, when quarries ran out of the specific raw material they were opened for, they were just abandoned and left as big, ugly holes in the ground with big, ugly surrounding landscapes that had been ruined by roads and mining equipment. Eventually they filled up with rainwater and people, not realizing the dangers, used them as impromptu swimming holes.

That is not so much the case anymore. More and more quarries are being "reclaimed" and used for other purposes.

In Missouri, 6 old quarries have been turned into lakes for swimming, boating and family fun.

Just a short drive outside of Evansville, Kentucky there is an adult only venue called Falling Rock Park. Made from a reclaimed quarry, adults can swim, paddleboard, snorkel, canoe, and kayak. No motorboats allowed.

Not all old quarries have been turned into lakes and swimming attractions. Louisville, Kentucky has turned an old limestone mine into an underground bike park with dirt trails and stunt courses. In San Francisco, the old Dumbarton quarry is now a campground with trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. In San Diego, Quarry Falls, now known as Civita, is a multi-use space built on an old rock quarry site. It has a park, residential housing, a retail center, and commercial space.

The United States is not the only country reclaiming quarries. Butchart Gardens, a very popular tourist attraction right outside of Vancouver, Canada used to be a limestone site. In China, abandoned quarries are being turned into libraries, performance venues and meeting spaces.

It's easy for us to jump on the phone or send an email to a supplier and say we need this or that and when can you deliver, but what those slabs, pavers, gravel, etc. go through to get to you can be tough.

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

**Fugitive Beach, in Missouri. This abandoned, reclaimed quarry has pumped-in water to fill it.**

# The Stone Detective

## The Case of the Granite Harassment Lawsuit

The stone and tile industry can be a strange business, especially for yours truly, the Stone Detective. I was sitting at my favorite greasy spoon flirting with Flo when my phone rang. The first words I heard on the line were a declaration of disaster: “We have a major problem!”

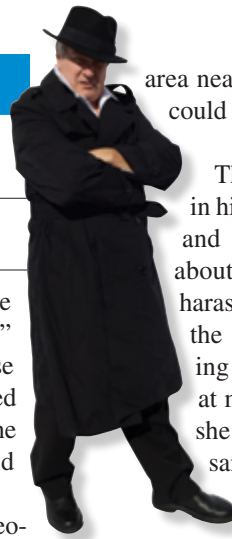
Well, that’s what I do for a living: I solve problems, so I continued to listen. The person on the other end sounded frantic. He yelled out, “We are going to be sued for sexual harassment!” At first, I thought he must have called the wrong number. I started to explain to him that I was not an

### Dr. Frederick M. Hueston, PhD

attorney, but a stone and tile expert. He said, “I know, that’s why I’m calling you!”

OK. I thought, I have never had a case with any stone or tile project that caused sexual harassment. I was eager to hear “the rest of the story,” as Paul Harvey would say.

The caller went on and on about how people could see everything and seemed to be ranting on and on about women’s skirts. He then told me that it was hard to explain and I would have to see if for myself. Now my curiosity was at its peak, so I asked for the address. It was a major hotel in a downtown



area near my office so I told him I could meet with him today.

The Admiral, who was sitting in his usual stool, overheard me and started telling me a story about some sailor and a sexual harassment case when he was in the Navy. Was kind of a boring story, and Flo just looked at me and rolled her eyes as if she had heard this story a thousand times. I continued to sip

on my cup of joe as I listened to him drone on and on. I finished my breakfast and headed on over to the hotel.

...

I pulled up to the hotel in my ole Woody and handed the keys to the valet. He took one look at the manual stick shift and asked if I could park it “over there.” Sheesh. Kids these days have no idea how to drive a stick. I remember when you had to special order an automatic transmission! All the cars I drove back in the day were manual transmissions. I pulled the Woody over to the side, tossed the keys to the valet and told him I should be back in a while.

I walked into the main lobby and there were a number of people waiting for me. Based on their carefully tailored suits my guess is there were some attorneys in the mix. Sure enough, each introduced themselves and two of them were in fact, attorneys. The hotel manager asked me to take a seat and they proceeded to tell me that there may have several sexual harassment lawsuits being filed unless they could come up with some way to solve this problem. Again, I had to explain that I was a stone and tile expert and didn’t understand what this had to do with sexual harassment. They all looked at one another and said, “We will just have to show you.”

They all got up and led me down a long hallway. We stopped at the woman’s restroom and a maid knocked on the door, went inside and a minute later came out and said the coast was clear. We all shuffled into the restroom. The restroom was clad in marble and granite from floor to ceiling. The vanities were a pink marble and the floors were highly polished black granite. I looked around and everything looked great. There were no failures that I could see etc. I still was puzzled and one of the attorneys asked the maid to enter one of the stalls. She opened the door to the stall, closed the door, and just stood there. The hotel manager pointed to the floor and said, “There’s the problem.” I stepped back and immediately saw what he was talking about. The floor was so highly polished that it looked like a mirror was on the floor. When anyone entered the stall, you could see everything in the reflection. *Wow, I thought. Now I get it.*

I looked at them and told them the solution was simple: The floor would need to be honed to dull the shine so it didn’t reflect. They all looked at me as if I had lost my mind. Apparently, they were unaware that granite can be honed. I explained in detail what needed to be done and suggested they either close this restroom or put some kind of disclaimer sign up. I’ve seen a lot in my years in this business, but this one was a first. Another case solved.

*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).*

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We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to **overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.**

– Abraham Lincoln



## Connecting with Public Health Officials

**NSI** CEO Jim Hieb joined ISFA board president Ted Sherritt for a meeting of California public health officials hosted by Nate Kolenski at Block Tops, an NSI Accredited fabrication shop in Anaheim. The meeting helped officials understand what a silica safe shop looks like and showcased industry training resources available to stone companies. It also provided an opportunity for questions and brainstorming on how the industry can work together with these officials, who play an important role with government officials and regulators.

### Key Outcomes of This Meeting

- Showing public health officials what a compliant shop looks like. Keep in mind that many of these officials have only seen the worst of the worst. This may be their first time seeing our industry in a positive light.

- Highlighting industry best practices and training resources.
- Fielding questions about how more companies can be compliant to current silica regulations and allowing open discussion on a sensitive issue.
- Establishing a relationship.

### What Do Stone Companies Need to Know About Public Health Officials?

- Public health officials were the first to call attention to the silicosis issue in California. They care deeply about the health and safety of employees, but typically have little knowledge of industry best practices specific to preventing silicosis.
- They have jurisdiction concerning local health issues and can influence change by politicians and regulators.
- Often public health officials have only



Public health officials tour the Block Tops facility, in Anaheim, CA. Block Tops hosted the meeting between public health officials and representatives from the stone industry.

they have about the industry. They will most likely be eager to learn!

seen the worst of the stone industry: employees working for companies with zero or minimal safety precautions.

### How Can Stone Professionals Engage with Public Health Officials?

- Identify officials in your area and invite them to your facility for a tour to help them better understand the industry. Be prepared to field any questions

- Highlight your company's safety best practices and what you're doing to be compliant with silica regulations.
- Keep the communication lines open.

To learn more, please contact Jim Hieb, [jim@naturalstoneinstitute.org](mailto:jim@naturalstoneinstitute.org), or visit the NSI general silica safety page at [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/silica](http://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/silica).

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## The “Good Ol’ Days” of Writing Weren’t All that Wonderful

“Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party. The quick brown fox jumped over...”

**Sam Venable**  
Department of Irony



Oops, pardon me. I didn’t realize you were standing there. As my wife of 55 years will agree, once I begin keyboard concentration, I’m numb to 95% of distractions: dogs barking, grandkids puking, house on fire, minor stuff like that.

Nor am I alone. Just ask anyone who ever worked in a crowded newsroom with dozens of typewriters being furiously pounded five minutes before deadline. Even the occasional airborne dictionary or ashtray didn’t merit so much as a second glance — unless, perhaps, it landed directly on the paste pot atop your desk.

What I was doing at the start of this piece were finger exercises with my old Royal, a manual typewriter that’s a sure-nuff journalism antique — along with dictionaries, ashtrays and paste pots, for that matter. I just discovered it in the dark recesses of an upstairs closet the same way I make other discoveries: While looking for something else.

Until I lugged it out of hiding, I’d forgotten what a hunk of metal it is. We’re talking a full 27 pounds, 12 ounces, according to my digital fish-weighting scale. Which is roughly 27 pounds, 10 ounces heavier than the computerized messaging gizmo people wear on their wrists these days.

Typewriters like this had to be hefty to absorb a kajillion vicious finger jabs over their careers. Yes, jabs. Back in the day, there was no such thing as genteel key-tapping.

A newspaper typewriter was played with strength and emotion. It sang a deep baritone, nothing like the polite “click-clack-click” of a computer keyboard. This came with the territory because old-time newsrooms could be bawdy. Never were they confused with the front office of a mortuary.

Not that I’d go back, you understand. Today’s writing devices offer multiple advantages, not the least of which is the ability to edit on the fly. No more first drafts, second drafts, fifth drafts — which seemed like the number of retypes required for the first magazine article this Royal finally spit out for me in 1969. Things got better for my first book in 1981, but I still needed three complete, 400-plus-page re-dos. My fingers throb at the memory.

True, manual typewriters don’t need batteries or a password. They still happily perform if the electricity goes out or you’ve lost your power charger. They even boast an instant “printer.”

But unlike today’s handheld devices, they can’t warn you if storm clouds have formed three counties to the west and are headed your way. They can’t solve algebraic equations. They can’t recite the lyrics of “Bohemian Rhapsody,” instantly recall the final score of the 1976 Super Bowl, call up a picture of your long-gone high school, or send a text to your cousin in Dubuque.

They also, ugh, need regular ribbon changes. Not only were our fingertips calloused back then, they were usually ink-stained.

Vocational nostalgia’s fine. But in danger near any line of work, the good ol’ days weren’t always what they’re cracked up to be. (Just for fun, though, I’d love to see one of my old colleagues heave his dictionary halfway across the room. What an arm that guy had!)

*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).*

“Science cannot survive in a society that does not value truth and strive to discover it.”

– Martin Kulldorff

## Natural Stone Institute 2024 Awards Program Call for Entries

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

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#usenaturalstone

The entry period for the 2024 Natural Stone Institute Award Program is now open. The association is pleased to announce a call for entries for the Pinnacle Awards, Industry Recognition Awards, and scholarship program.

[The Pinnacle Awards](#) honor projects whose beauty, creativity, ingenuity, and craftsmanship exemplify professional mastery in the use of natural stone for commercial and residential applications. Pinnacle Awards are given in the following categories: Commercial Interior, Commercial Exterior, Renovation/Restoration, Residential Interior/Exterior (Single and Multi-Family), Architectural Carving/Lettering/Sculpture, Public Landscapes/Parks/Memorials, and Kitchen/Bath. A Grande Pinnacle Award, sponsored by Marmomac, is presented to the jury's choice for the best overall project. Pinnacle Award submissions are due June 20.

[The Industry Recognition Awards](#) celebrate individuals in the stone industry for exemplary contributions to the industry and association over several years. Available

awards include the Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Women in Stone Pioneer Award, the Natural Stone Craftsman of the Year Award, the Thor Lundh Quarrier Award, and the David Fell Spirit of Service Award. Industry Recognition Award submission deadlines are due May 20.

**Two scholarships, the Natural Stone Scholarship and the Women in Stone Empowerment Scholarship**, provide hands-on educational opportunities for aspiring professionals interested in furthering their careers in the stone industry. Scholarship applications are due May 20.

Award recipients will be celebrated at the annual Natural Stone Institute Awards Ceremony at StonExpo in Las Vegas in 2025. All awards are open to Natural Stone Institute members. For more information about each award, including nomination forms, submission requirements, sponsorship information, and details on past recipients, visit [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/awards](https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/awards).



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## Stone and Tile Restoration: The Manual

**Deborah Nelson**  
Surface Care PROS

IN the early 1990s, Fred Hueston, a highly regarded and sought-after authority on stone and tile, published "The Stone Restoration and Maintenance Bible," for pros in the industry. Many in the business purchased the manual and it quickly became an essential resource, providing in-depth knowledge and practical guidance for those involved in the restoration and care of natural stone and tile. In a remarkable move, Fred has recently decided to release a new version of the manual, now titled, *Stone and Tile Restoration: The Manual* completely free of charge to stone and tile restoration professionals.

Since the time of the original publication, changes in the industry have occurred and Fred has had additional decades of in-the-trenches experience to bring to the table providing expert inspection and consultation services, serving as an expert witness in myriad court cases, teaching numerous workshops and courses, as well as providing technical support to those in the industry as president of Stone Forensics, Inc. and Chief Technical Director for Surface Care PROS. Fred has updated the contents of the manual, ensuring it is current, relevant and valuable to professionals in the field.



**Fred Hueston, PhD, brings science and decades of in-the-trenches experience to deliver a wealth of relevant information including how-to's, valuable resources, and more with a new reference manual for those in the stone and tile care industry.**

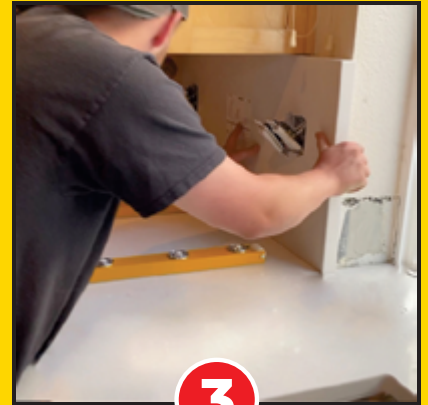
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### Pre-Release Access

The delivery of the manual takes advantage of new technologies. Registered subscribers have at-their-fingertips-online access to the chapters and resources that make up the manual, and as new and updated content becomes available, they will be notified.

Several components of the manual are still being updated and a formal release date is scheduled for early summer 2024, but

Fred wanted to make what is ready accessible to the industry with the intent that as additional components are published, subscribers would be notified. (The printed manual will also be available to purchase once it is officially launched.)

### Why would Dr. Fred choose to offer such a valuable resource at no cost?

His explanation is both noble and straightforward: "Over the past 40-plus

years, I have devoted my life to the education and betterment of the stone restoration industry. I firmly believe that the insights and knowledge I have accumulated should be freely available to all those who seek it. The potential income from selling this manual pales in comparison to the significant value of the knowledge it contains.

*Please turn to page 19*



## Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner

### *Adventures in Residential Surface Prep and Polish*

Let's say you are a stone restoration contractor and you want to branch out with some concrete work. How hard can it be, right? The project described in this article involved the removal of vinyl plank parquet wood, ceramic tile, and multiple layers of carpet adhesives, glue, and thinset. The building is the Barclay House Apartment building right in the heart of the University of Tennessee campus, in the historic Fort Sanders neighborhood, which was listed on the National Register in 1980. Both students and professionals live in this somewhat upscale urban building.

Upon arrival, the floor was an absolute mess, once the vinyl plank was removed. The client wanted the floor to have a "restoration hardware" polished look. That part would be pretty much guaranteed, as there were many divots from previous carpet tack removal and other issues, too. It would be cost prohibitive to remove all of the glues from most of these divots. So, a test was performed using a M3 Heavy Duty 20" machine, running wet, with 6 each 3-inch, 8 segment, 46 grit Magnum metal bond diamonds. Some carpet adhesive stripper and hot water was applied to help soften the many layers of glue and adhesives before running the diamonds wet.

It was determined after testing that 3 segment 46 grit Magnums would better scrape and grind the layers of adhesives than the 8 segment, due to higher PSI on the 3 segment discs. Even so, the single disc machine was slow going, at best. So, an older HTC 500 machine was brought to the site. 220 vac power was supplied via the range receptacle. Just like with the single disc machine, the HTC would be run wet (dust could not be tolerated in the occupied building) using 40 grit single segment trapezoids (total of 9). This improved production tremendously, probably by a factor of 3-5 times.

Now, if you noticed, when I said the machine was run wet, this created another issue: wastewater disposal. Cutting concrete wet, and the coatings on top, generates quite a bit of nasty slurry. In hindsight and with an adequate dust extractor, I would suggest doing the first step or two dry, so that the waste disposal is simplified.

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



**Getting down to the concrete involved lots of scraping with razor blades. Just look at this mess!**

Bags of concrete dust could be thrown into the onsite dumpster. Of course, this alternate process would need to be tested to confirm both the results and procedure.

Now, the hardest part of this nightmare was doing the edges. The multiple layers of glue and adhesives went all the way to the wall. Remember, this is an apartment, with two bedrooms with closets, hallways, bathroom, kitchen (with appliances that must be moved out and back in), foyer with closet, and you get the idea. Unlike a large open warehouse, surface prep in a residential environment like this requires massive amounts of labor-intensive hand tool edge work. So, once the coatings on the main floor area were removed with the large planetary machine, everything from about 2 inches to the wall had to be completed by hand, before moving on to the next grit with the floor machine work.

Keep in mind that there were many holes (remember, the carpet tack removal holes) and low areas that still held adhesives. These would show up at the end as to remove these would not be cost effective at all. These low areas were here and there, especially on the bathroom floor. The areas



**Underneath a layer of vinyl plank flooring, the concrete floor was overlaid with multiple layers of different adhesives.**

were ground as best possible. Hence the "restoration hardware" look.

After the adhesives were removed from the floor, 50 grit resins were used to transition from the metal bond diamonds. Then the sequence was completed from 120 grit resins, 220 grit resins, and up to 400 grit resins. The edgework was taken to 120 grit just before the floor machines were run at 120 grit.

Once the floor was adequately ground with 90% of the adhesives removed, the staining process began. The client requested a black stain. The AmeriPolish Classic solvent-based penetration dye was used. It was immediately determined that the standard directions (1 bottle of dye to 1 gallon of acetone) was giving a color that was way too dark. So, the dye was double diluted at 1 bottle of dye per two gallons of acetone. This provided the look the client wanted.



**Buckets of slurry, from grinding wet, had to be carried offsite for disposal.**

The dye was applied using a sprayer and microfiber applicator. Note: if you use a sprayer with acetone-based dye, it needs to be made for solvents. They are made with solvent-resistant materials, have special seals, and cost more than a regular sprayer. Believe me when I tell you, a regular sprayer will deteriorate and leak in a short amount of time from solvent exposure. Spend the extra amount and get one made for the job.

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

## Stone Restoration Corner

*Continued from page 17*



Floor after first burnishing with old 1500 rpm machine. Plan is to return with a 2,000 rpm machine and 3,000 dip, after construction is finished, for final polish.



**AmeriPolish black dye, solvent-based stain for concrete, was chosen to achieve the effect the client wanted.**

Once the dye was applied as evenly and consistently as possible, it was allowed to dry for an hour or so before buffing the floor with a 3,000 grit diamond impregnated pad to remove any excess dye on the surface.

Next, it was time for the concrete guard. This was applied using a microfiber applicator. Four coats were applied, buffing with a 3,000 grit diamond impregnated pad (dip) after the second coat and final fourth coat. The final buffing was accomplished using a 1,500 rpm old burnisher with the 3,000 grit dip. It did OK, but a 2,000 or higher rpm burnisher is really needed for the best and clearest shine possible. Once the baseboards and other things were all put back and all of the other construction work was completed, it was agreed that the concrete contractor would return with the higher speed burnisher and dip to hit the floor one more time for the final pop on the gloss of the guard.

This project was a refresher course for sure! Doing surface prep in a residential setting is some of the hardest work I have seen in my 40 year career. I'm pretty sure

the next concrete project will go better. Sure enough, the client has 3 more apartments in the same building, and wants them finished the same way! Oy vey..

I always recommend doing a test area on any project to confirm both the results and procedure. Also, the best way to help ensure success is by partnering with a good distributor, like BB Industries, that

## Richard Stahl Named 2023 Natural Stone Craftsman of the Year

**R**ichard Stahl (Galloy & Van Etten) has been named 2023 Natural Stone Craftsman of the Year.

Richard Stahl stood by his father's side at the tender age of 6, gradually learning the intricacies and skills of the stone business. He eventually began his own career at the age of 16 as a laborer in his father's cut-stone company. Richard quickly acquired the necessary skills to become a bridge saw operator, and within a year, was promoted to planer operator, a job at which he excelled, but he and his father both knew his true passion was for stone carving.

Carrying on in the family stone tradition, Richard completed his journeyman apprenticeship in 1980 under the wings of a master carver who was also a great mentor and cherished friend. In 1983 Richard opened his own stone carving studio in an old chicken coop, working tirelessly in the evenings and weekends to create original designs, models, and stone carvings, as he continued to work full-time at the stone shop.

Richard carved in his own studio full-time for ten years, collaborating with architects, contractors, and various local stone fabricators. He eventually returned full-time to the industry, settling in at Galloy & Van Etten in 1993, where he immediately shared his passion for the stone business while demonstrating his versatility carving in a large variety of stone types.

As a third-generation stone carver with nearly 30 years as an essential part of Galloy & Van Etten, Richard is a master carver that takes great pride in teaching

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).*



**Richard Stahl (left) receives the Stone Craftsman of the Year award at TISE.**

his coworkers the craft. He has mentored countless planer operators, cutters, and carvers over the years, sharing his expertise, love, and passion for working with natural stone.

Richard believes in continuing the tradition of his trade and in giving back to his community. He is a founding member of The Stone Carvers Guild. He has conducted educational programs for local boy and girl scouts, schools, and church groups, some of which have been recipients of his various stone carvings and sculptures.

Nominations for the 2023 Craftsman of the Year Award are being accepted until May 20. Learn more at [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/craftsman](http://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/craftsman).

*The Natural Stone Institute is a trade association representing every aspect of the natural stone industry. Learn more at [www.naturalstoneinstitute.org](http://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org).*

**“During the course of administration, and in order to disturb it, the artillery of the press has been leveled against us, charged with whatsoever its licentiousness could devise or dare. These abuses of an institution so important to freedom and science are deeply to be regretted, inasmuch as they tend to lessen its usefulness and to sap its safety.”**

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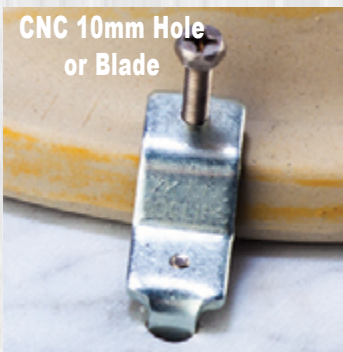
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### Stone and Tile Restoration: The Manual

*Continued from page 16*

“The updated manual has evolved substantially from its original incarnation over 20 years ago. While it retains the foundational techniques and theories that have stood the test of time, it now encompasses a wealth of new information, reflecting important advancements that have occurred in the industry. This newly revised edition is an invaluable tool, designed to guide professionals through the complexities of stone restoration and maintenance with up-to-date techniques and comprehensive coverage of topics ranging from the scientific to the practical aspects of the trade.”

#### What's in the new manual?

For those familiar with the original “Stone Restoration and Maintenance Bible,” the latest edition offers a host of significant updates and new chapters, making it an indispensable guide not just for seasoned veterans but also for newcomers to the field. Some of the notable topics covered in this comprehensive manual include:

- **Geology and Stone Identification** — A deeper dive into the origins and types of stones. Stone Identification is crucial for effective restoration.
  - **Quarrying and Fabrication** — Insight into how stone is harvested and prepared for use, impacting restoration approaches.
  - **Chemistry** — Essential knowledge for understanding the reactions involved in cleaning and restoration processes.
  - **Stain Management** — Strategies for identifying, preventing, and removing stains from stone surfaces.
  - **Stone Restoration** — Detailed methodologies for restoring stone to its original beauty.
- ... and many more topics.

Designed so subscribers can create their own working reference manual that can be perpetually updated and added to. The manual is published and supported by Surface Care PROS at SR-Manual.com. To register for free and to access the manual go to <https://www.sr-manual.com>. For questions or support, email [support@surfacecarepros.com](mailto:support@surfacecarepros.com).

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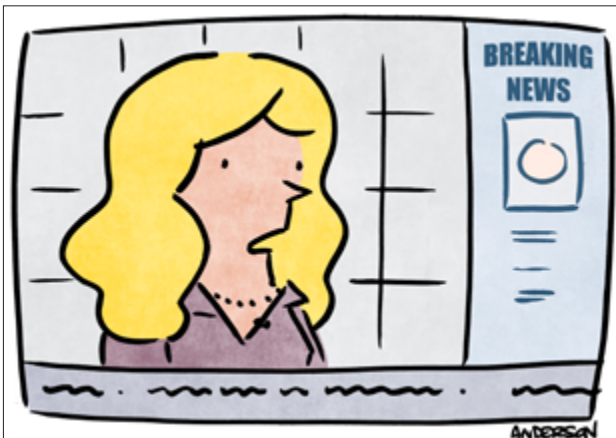
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—Mark Twain

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**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

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

**Stone and Marble Finisher.** We are seeking a Stone and Marble finisher to join us at our fabrication facility.  
**Requirements:** 2 years min. experience in fabrication/ polishing.  
-Experience to work on miters, cut-outs.  
-Compensation according to experience.  
-Reliable and professional with time & schedule.  
**Benefits:** -Health Care plan. Paid time off (Vacation- Sick Days-Holidays). Retirement Plan (401 K-IRA). Life insurance (Basic-Voluntary & AD&D)  
Contact: Miller Druck Specialty Contracting, 718-585-7084 (Eddie Moreno), [Eliana.bahamon@millerdruck.com](mailto:Eliana.bahamon@millerdruck.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 environment. Minimum of 2

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[sunshinemarblegrinit@yahoo.com](mailto:sunshinemarblegrinit@yahoo.com)

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).

**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).

## ISFA Appoints Heather Duve as New Membership Director

The International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Heather Duve as its new membership director. In this role, Heather will lead the association in driving membership growth and retention, as well as contribute to the development of events, programs, groups, resources and other initiatives.

Before joining ISFA, Duve served as the membership and development director at the Water Quality Association (WQA), an Illinois-based organization representing the point-of-use, point-of-entry water treatment industry in the United States. During her tenure, she oversaw membership recruitment and retention initiatives, facilitated member support and spearheaded sponsorship recruitment for WQA events.

Before her time at WQA, she held positions in member services for various associations, including the Urgent Care Association of America. Heather earned her degree in journalism from Bowling Green State University, and she maintains a Certified Association Executive designation from the American Society of Association Executives.

"I am thrilled to join the ISFA team," said Duve. "And I'm looking forward to applying my expertise to drive membership growth and engagement through the strategic development of the value proposition and the creation and expansion of programs and resources that support fabricators and other industry professionals. I continuously seek innovative methods to enhance the member experience, and my dedication to delivering exceptional customer service is unwavering."

Duve has devoted her efforts to the non-profit sector throughout her career, specifically focusing on membership in trade associations. With a genuine passion for collaborating with members and association partners, she brings a wealth of experience to her role. Before joining ISFA, Duve significantly enhanced membership value by spearheading educational programs, recognition initiatives and expanded member networking opportunities.

As she embarks on her journey with ISFA, Duve eagerly anticipates connecting



Heather Duve, ISFA Membership Director

with ISFA members and partners, immersing herself in the industry. "This is an exciting field," she added. "And I'm diving right in—visiting local fabricators, suppliers and manufacturers. The warm welcome and generosity of everyone I've met have been truly inspiring. I'm excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for this association and its members."

"Heather comes to ISFA with the expertise that will drive growth and opportunity for the association and its membership," said Marissa Bankert, ISFA executive director. "Her passion for association management and member services is a perfect fit for the organization, and we are excited to see how she can help us expand membership and increase engagement."

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

## Thinking About Selling Your Business? Five Key Areas to Focus On

Greetings, Slippery Rock readers! Allow me to introduce myself. I'm a business broker specializing in connecting buyers with sellers across the country. With a background in business management, operations, and expansion, I bring valuable expertise to the table. My roots in the flooring and countertop industry run deep, thanks to my family's longstanding presence. For eight decades, we've operated a flooring company, alongside a stone fabrication shop for the past two decades, employing approximately 100 individuals. Given my history, I dedicate much of my attention to aiding stone shops in selling their businesses.

In this article, I'll walk you through five essential steps to determine if your business is ready to be sold. It usually takes a few years to get everything ready to be marketed – so start now!

**1. Prepare your business to be sold as a whole entity, not just you.** While you can influence your profit, you can't control the market's valuation. For instance, consider two businesses in the same industry, one making \$100,000 and the other \$300,000. The business with higher seller's discretionary earnings will likely fetch a higher market value.

And the less your business relies on you personally, the more attractive it is to potential buyers. Consider how your absence for a month would affect the business. Processes, teams, systems will help remove the "you" factor.

**2. Organize your financial records.** Many business owners neglect proper financial management, leading to messy records. A business owner needs to start this process

### Chase Busenbark

First Choice Business Brokers

3-5 years in advance of wanting to sell. And sometimes I run into a business that just simply does not use financials to make decisions in their business – usually these are the smaller shops.

Just remember, if it's difficult for an analyst like me to understand, it will be challenging for a potential buyer, too. Regularly track your financials either with the help of an external professional or dedicate this to someone in-house. A consistent financial track record instills confidence in buyers.

**3. Consider the diversity of your client base.** Address any issues related to customer concentration, wherein a single customer contributes more than 10% of your revenue. Heavy reliance on one client poses a significant risk to your business's stability. Diversify your customer base to minimize this risk, and it will instill confidence in potential buyers regarding the business's future performance.

**4. Justify your business's value.** Work with a team to determine a fair market value for your business and be ready to defend it. Have all your due diligence documents organized and transparent. Validate any adjustments or "add backs" made to your financial reports to accurately represent your business's profitability. [Addbacks are when a business expense is \$5,000 on your financial reports, but the true expense is \$3,000. Which means \$2,000 gets added back to the bottom line.

*Please turn to page 23*



## Selling Your Business

*Continued from page 22*

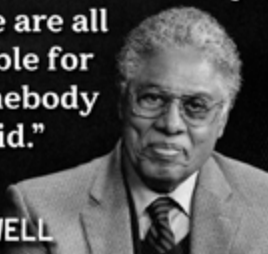
**5. Plan for life after selling your business.** Transitioning from the busy day-to-day operations of a business owner to your newfound freedom can be a significant change. Don't underestimate the adjustment period. Deciding to sell your business will be one of the most difficult decisions you will face as a business owner – and selling your business will require your full-time attention. It will be tough keeping the business at optimal running speed while dedicating time to prospective buyers, answering questions, and keeping your daily tasks up, and your staff on even ground. You have to focus on keeping your business profitable while also navigating the sale process – but the payback for all this work could be the freedom of retirement or your next adventure.

Addressing these 5 key areas will improve your chances of selling your business quickly and profitably when the time is right. If you're curious about your business's value, contact me for a complementary market price valuation at [chase.busenbark@fcbb.com](mailto:chase.busenbark@fcbb.com).

*Chase has worked in the natural stone industry for 20 years and has been in the shoes of an owner of a stone fabrication company. He's taken the shop from a manual shop to completely digital with one dual sable sawjet, a single table sawjet, 3 routers, and multiple line polishers. He has also implemented paperless scheduling, quoting, and work in progress software for the business as well. Chase has worked as a business broker with many business owners in the stone industry to help them sell their business. Send any comments and questions to [chase.busenbark@fcbb.com](mailto:chase.busenbark@fcbb.com).*

**"We seem to be getting closer and closer to a situation where nobody is responsible for what they did but we are all responsible for what somebody else did."**

THOMAS SOWELL



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CUTTING

PHASE 2  
REMOVAL OF SPLASH + WASTE

PHASE 3  
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