

SLIPPERY ROCK

GAZETTE

JANUARY 2025

VOL. 30-12

THE BEACON OF THE STONE INDUSTRY www.slipperyrockgazette.net

ROCKin'teriors Leads the Way with Style

Deep in the Research Triangle area in North Carolina is a not-so-undiscovered gem named ROCKin'teriors. The company, owned and operated by Laura Grandlienard, started back in 2008 when it was practically unheard of for a woman to be in the stone business at all, much less at the helm of a fabrication company.

Coming from a successful corporate background, Laura had taken trips to Brazil and other countries on business, but she didn't become truly interested in stone until she was building her own home. She was captivated by the beauty of natural stone and knew she wanted it in her home. And that

by Sharon Koehler

Photos Courtesy ROCKin'teriors

was how she discovered a somewhat overlooked niche in her area: high-end, eco-friendly stone fabrication.

Then, to paraphrase a well-known quote: A dream was born! With a set of business skills equal to the task of opening and running a business, plus some support from family, Laura Grandlienard opened ROCKin'teriors. To further cement her place in the stone world, Laura herself has served on the accreditation committees of the NSI and the

ISFA, plus she has been involved in Women in Stone since its beginning.

ROCKin'teriors is the Research Triangle's only female-owned, certified and eco-friendly natural stone showroom and fabrication facility. Based in Raleigh, the company serves the Triangle region, which also includes Cary, Durham, Chapel Hill and other North Carolina communities. They service high-end, whole home, and large commercial projects such as airports

Offices of Preston Development. This large-scale project involved exterior cladding and interior design elements, including wall cladding, and a curved reception desk in the lobby, other stone accents.

and large office spaces, including but not limited to interior and exterior wall cladding, flooring, ceilings and infinity pools.

They service their wide variety of clients by offering a diversified assortment of natural stone, semi-precious material, ultra-compact surfaces, sintered stone and quartz. Their clients also receive an educational, immersive experience in their 2,300 square foot, purpose-built showroom and conference center, staffed by designers and other cross-trained staff.

Laura elaborated on the customer education process at ROCKin'teriors. "We offer consultations where we discuss the properties and benefits of different stones, guiding clients through the selection and installation process to ensure they make informed decisions. We also host various industry events to pull local industry partners together to talk about trends and the future of the industry. We host an annual 'Raleigh Technical Summit' each year with CaraGreen, an industry partner."

Laura further explained: "Our business model focuses on delivering high-end, luxury stonework backed by a skilled team and state-of-the-art machinery.

[Please turn to page 2](#)



ROCKin'teriors

Continued from page 1

This combination allows us to efficiently meet client needs while maintaining exceptional quality. We bring a white glove service mindset to the industry because our clientele expects fine luxury and amazing service.”

For obvious reasons, the company itself has changed and evolved over the last 16+ years. When asked about the evolution and changes in the business that have made ROCKin'teriors so successful, Laura told us how the company had evolved since the beginning, and what successes those changes had brought to the company.

“Since our inception, we’ve embraced technological advancements to enhance our fabrication processes. For instance, integrating CNC machinery has improved our efficiency and precision, allowing us to better serve our clients. In the last few years, we went digital in all our processes. We have been focused on high-end luxury residential and commercial since inception. We’ve worked on the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral for the Roman Catholic Diocese, Raleigh-Durham International Airport, the N.C. State University chancellor’s residence, as well as in luxury homes for NFL, NBA and PGA superstars, Fortune 500 executives, and other exclusive clientele.”

Though the company as a whole might have gone through some changes over the years, their staff actually has an extremely low turnover rate. Most of their team has been with the company 10+ years. Part of



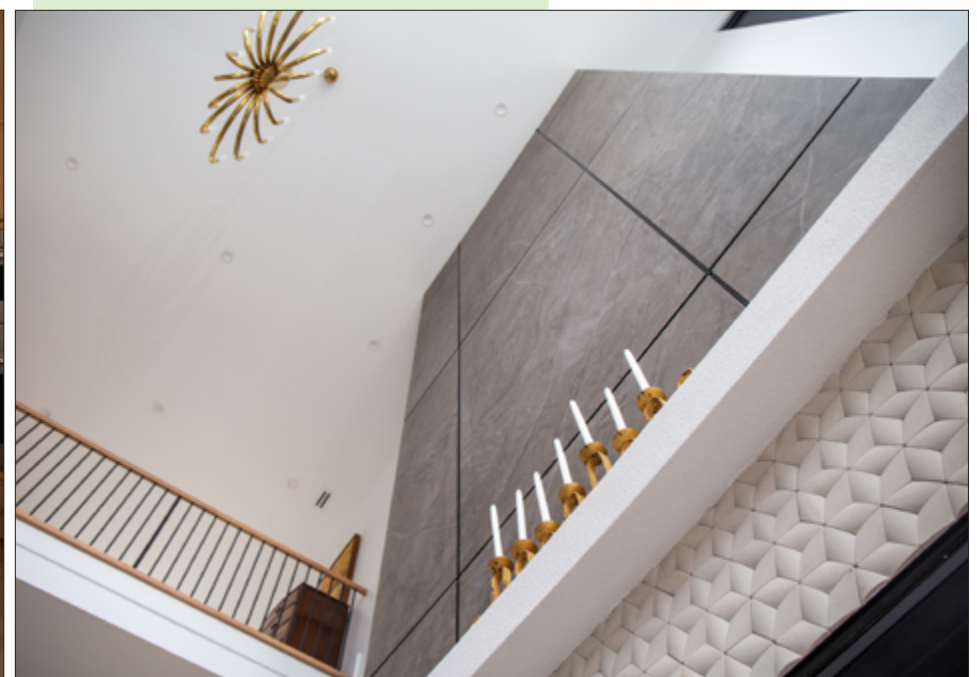
Lakeside luxury residential estate in Hills of Rosemont, Durham, N.C. includes Dekton infinity pool cladding and an interior large format fireplace surround, and ten slabs of one-of-a-kind Delicato Oro Brazilian quartzite for the centerpiece kitchen island and full-height backsplash surround.

ROCKin'teriors installed 24 feet of Dekton Kira with a smooth matte texture to add an elegant touch for this fireplace surround.



that was due to Omar Salazar, Laura’s brother, who recruited and trained a team of skilled craftsmen who went on to be recognized an ISFA Fabricator of the Year – TWICE. Omar was also a key part in getting ROCKin'teriors involved in the Gary Sinise R.I.S.E program that helps to build accessible homes for wounded war veterans. Plus, he also helped the company become the area’s first fabricator to become certified in ultra-compact and sintered stone.

[Please turn to page 3](#)



ROCKin'teriors

Continued from page 2

Besides being ISFA Fabricator of the year – twice, and being nominated for ISFA Project of the Year, ROCKin'teriors has, over the years, picked up numerous accreditations and awards:

Certifications Include:

- * Accredited by the Natural Stone Institute, 2016
- * Certified in Lapitec, 2016
- * Certified in Dekton, 2017
- * Certified in Neolith, 2017

Awards Include:

- * Cosentino Dekton Fabricator of the Year, 2018
- * ISFA Fabricator of the Year, 2018
- * ISFA Fabricator of the Year, 2019
- * Cary Chamber of Commerce 'Small Business of the Year Award', 2022
- * Cosentino High End Residential Award, 2023
- * Cosentino ROCK Masters Program, 2024



This outdoor kitchen in Raleigh, N.C. features wall cladding in Dekton Trillium, an Italian pizza oven surrounded by Dekton Domoos, and counter surfaces in Caesartone Raw concrete.

In addition to the above-mentioned certifications, they also completed NSI's silica safety training in 2024, which recognizes the importance of workplace safety and sustainability.

Laura is also a founding member of Women Who Rock and currently serves in an Advisor role. Women Who Rock is a female-led group that supports and promotes women in professional roles in the surface fabrication, machinery, tooling and stone supply industries. The group's goals include encouraging growth and development through engagement with members from diverse backgrounds and experiences. To be eligible for membership, women must be owners, co-owners, leaders or decision-makers, and they must believe in and support the group's purpose. Women Who Rock members take part in events and discussions that focus on learning, development and collaboration in the surfacing industry. The group is focused on female leadership and decision-making,

and using those skills to empower and elevate other women in the industry.

Laura's other passion beside ROCKin'teriors is "To promote women in professional roles within the surface industry."

The LAFA Initiative

Another one of ROCKin'teriors affiliations is the newly formed group Latin American Stone Fabricator Network. When asked about this new network and ROCKin'teriors involvement, Laura explained: "LAFA is a dedicated platform for the Latin American stone fabricators. The purpose is to bring them forward and have a voice at the table. We held our first inaugural Latin American Stone Fabricator Exposition on November 2,

Please turn to page 10

Laura Grandlienard, pictured below standing, at center: "Our inaugural LAFA Exposition launched with corporate support on November 2, 2024 in Dallas. Among those who supported the kickoff of this initiative are BB Industries, Benjamin Moore, CaraGreen, GranQuartz, Cantera Portofino USA, Farnese, Laser Products Industries, Park Industries, and Spark Capital."



Left, top: Dekton XGloss wrapped fireplace surround.

Bottom: Floating, wall-to-wall Blue Bahia vanity with a unique, offset undermount trough sink.



Featured in this Issue January 2025



SLIPPERY ROCK GAZETTE®
The Voice of the Stone Fabricator

ROCKin'teriors Leads the Way with Style, by Sharon Koehler Begins on 1
Brown Canyon Sandstone: Building Sustainable Landscapes in Utah, by Karin Kirk Begins on 22

Training, Safety and Education

Industry Calendar of Events and Training: January to March 2025..... 5
Your Number One Customer is on Someone Else's Prospect List , by Tim Saddoris Begins on 6
Marketing and Sales Alignment: The Missing Link in Stone Fabrication Success, by Anthony Milia 7
The Power of Google Reviews for Your Shop, by Stephen Alberts 8
Leveraging Customer Experience Feedback to Shape Your 2025 Goals, by Darlene Compagna Begins on 9
The Importance of Understanding Product Margin: Part One, by Rick Phelps 11

Industry Topics, Tips and Featured Columns

Why Not Play "Winter" Music All Year Long? by Sam Venable 13
Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner – The Parish Church of St. Joseph the Worker, by Bob Murrell ... Begins on 14
The Stone Detective Investigates a Real Murder Mystery, by Frederick M. Hueston 16
It's a New Year! by Sharon Koehler 18

Industry News

Natural Stone Institute Announces New Board Members 4
Coldspring Announces New CFO5
NTCA Announces All-Woman Certified Tile Installer (CTI) Test, Marks Industry Milestone..... 12
Natural Stone Foundation Grants Funding to Global Standards Initiative 19
ISFA 2025 Board of Directors 20
NSI and ISFA Announce Silica Exposure Literature Review 23

Marketplace 20

Classified Ads 21

Contributors & Staff

Rick Stimac Publisher
Larry M. Hood Editor and Design Director
G. William Brown..... Graphic Designer
Andrea Horvath Assistant Editor
Stephen Alberts Countertop Marketing
Mark Anderson Department of Humor
Darlene Compagna Direct Opinions
Frederick M. Hueston Stone Forensics Investigations
Karin Kirk usenaturalstone.org
Sharon Koehler Stone Industry Consultant
Rufus B. Leakin Guru of Urban Folklore
Peter J. Marcucci Special Contributor
Anthony Milia Milia Marketing
Bob Murrell Restoration Consultant
Rick Phelps Synchronous Solutions
Tim Saddoris Grand Onyx
Sam Venable..... Department of Irony

Read our online edition at www.slipperyrockgazette.net. Use the Classified drop-down menu to browse ads and to place a classified ad, and the article links to view stories in the current issue. Send advertising inquiries to LHood@slipperyrockgazette.net, and comments c/o publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net. Subscription requests, a classified ad submission form, current and archived back issues and articles are available online at www.slipperyrockgazette.net.

Natural Stone Institute Announces New Board Members

The Natural Stone Institute welcomes two individuals to its board of directors in January 2025.



Joshua Levinson
Artistic Tile



Susan Moser
Fauske Marble by Moser Aps

Joshua Levinson is the CEO of Artistic Tile, a family owned and operated business and leader in the natural stone industry. Based in Secaucus, NJ with eleven locations and dealers nationwide, Artistic Tile imports, designs, develops, manufactures, distributes, and retails natural stone for residential and commercial projects. Josh has nearly thirty years of stone industry experience, including extensive volunteer work and leadership roles supporting the industry. His most recent role included serving as the inaugural President of the Natural Stone Foundation to help launch the industry's only philanthropic arm. He has also contributed to the Gary Sinise Foundation's R.I.S.E. program and volunteered as a Women in Stone mentor.

Susan Moser is a third-generation natural stone industry professional from Denmark who has worked all over the world in different positions, lately as stone consultant for government lead projects in Saudi Arabia. Currently Susan is CEO and owner of the historic Norwegian Rose marble quarry north of the arctic circle in Norway and has reactivated the quarry, bringing it back to the world. She strives to empower the use of natural stone and is an advocate for incorporating natural stone as a sustainable material in building projects. Susan is the recipient of the 2025 Women in Stone Pioneer Award.

About the Natural Stone Institute

The Natural Stone Institute is a trade association representing every aspect of the natural stone industry. The current membership exceeds 2,000 members in over 50 nations. The association offers a wide array of technical and training resources, professional development opportunities, regulatory advocacy, and networking events. Two prominent publications—the Dimension Stone Design Manual and Building Stone Magazine—raise awareness within the natural stone industry and in the design community for best practices and uses of natural stone.

Learn more at www.naturalstoneinstitute.org.



How Do You Compare?

Prove Your Quality & Safety Practices are Best in Class

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

Get started by watching our accreditation webinars.

naturalstoneinstitute.org/accreditation

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

Coldspring Announces New CFO

Coldspring, a leading quarrier and fabricator of natural stone and bronze serving the architectural, memorial, residential, and industrial markets, is pleased to announce the addition of Joe Bahen as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Joe will oversee Coldspring's financial operations, focusing on driving long-term value through strategic financial planning, risk management, and operational efficiency.

Joe joins Coldspring after serving as Chief Financial Officer at Falcon National Bank, where he led financial operations, balanced sheet risk management, and all internal and external reporting requirements. Prior to that, he held senior finance positions at UnitedHealth Group, overseeing a \$37 billion portfolio and leading financial planning and analysis across 26



Joe Bahen, Coldspring CFO

markets. His extensive experience spanning multiple financial disciplines and leadership activities will be pivotal in driving Coldspring's ongoing commitment to

Industry Calendar of Events

January 2025

TISE: The International Surface Event

When: Tuesday January 28 to Thursday, January 30, 2025

Where: Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada

Visit www.intlsurfaceevent.com to register and for more information.

February 2025

KBIS 2025: Kitchen & Bath Industry Show

When: Tuesday February 25 to Thursday, February 27, 2025

Where: Las Vegas, Nevada

Visit kbis.com to register and for more information.

March 2025

NSI: Georgia Stone Summit

When: Thursday March 6, 8:30 a.m. –5p.m. ET

Where: MSI, 1501 Pine Barren Road, Pooler, GA 31322

Visit naturalstoneinstitute.org/calendar for more information.

See the NSI and ISFA Event Calendars for more online events in 2025

innovation, operational efficiency, and excellence across its business operations.

"I am excited to join Coldspring and look forward to contributing to the company's continued success," said Joe Bahen. "With Coldspring's strong reputation for innovation and quality, I am eager to help lead the company in driving strategic financial initiatives, optimize operational efficiencies, and support sustainable growth. I look forward to collaborating with the leadership team to strengthen our financial performance while supporting the company's commitment to excellence across all areas of the business."

"Joe's leadership will play a pivotal role in helping us live out our mission of being good stewards of all that God has entrusted to us while providing for the generational well-being of the people and communities we serve," stated Greg Flint, President of Coldspring. "As a member of Coldspring's leadership team, his extensive background in finance and cross-functional leadership will be key as we continue to expand our capabilities and strengthen our position in the industry."

Headquartered in Cold Spring, Minnesota, Coldspring is one of North America's largest and most respected providers of natural stone products. To learn more about Coldspring and their leadership team, visit www.coldspringusa.com/about-us/partner-with-us/our-people.

About Coldspring: Coldspring, a leading quarrier and fabricator of natural stone and bronze serving the architectural, memorial, residential and industrial markets with all types of natural stone, bronze, and industrial and diamond-tooling products, has been family owned and operated since 1898. With headquarters, a primary manufacturing facility and bronze foundry in Cold Spring, Minnesota, the company has 800 employees at operations across the country, including 30 quarries and multiple fabrication facilities. The passion of their people has built Coldspring into one of the largest, most innovative quarriers and fabricators of stone and other materials. They value teamwork and the skill to understand and surpass customer expectations, along with a determined commitment to corporate sustainability.

"The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie – deliberate, contrived, and dishonest – but the myth – persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic."
– John Fitzgerald Kennedy

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Your Number One Customer is on Someone Else's Prospect List

Sales are down 15-25% for stone fabricators.

Sound familiar?

The entire industry is feeling the squeeze, and panic has set in. The knee-jerk reaction? Hire more salespeople. That's an OK strategy, but before you rush into that, there are a couple of things you should do first — things that will be far more effective for your future.

With every fabricator chasing new sales, your best customers are sitting on someone else's prospect list. They're getting targeted — and courted — by a salesperson intent on moving their business. If you're not in the mix, you might be in for a surprise.

The smartest move you can make right now is to get really close to the clients you already have. I'm talking about you, as the owner. You can't just delegate the task to your salespeople and hope they're doing the right thing. Generals like to talk to generals.

So: when was the last time you personally reached out and took them to lunch or grabbed a beer to find out how things are going, and what you can do to strengthen your business and meet their needs?

Think about it for a moment. This is how you started your business — by solving someone else's problems. It's still the best way to keep your customers coming back. It's also a way to uncover issues you didn't know about, or find new ways to grow your relationship.

I love taking my fabricator clients' best customers to lunch. It's not uncommon to walk away with three pages of notes and learn new things. Did we fix all their problems? No, and they didn't expect us to. After one recent meeting, though, we tackled a key issue and even developed new tech to solve it. The result? Monthly sales jumped from \$33K to \$77K. Coincidence? I think not.

And, when you've reinforced that connection, solved their problems, and shown real results, it's that much harder for your competitor to get their attention.

This strategy has two major impacts.

Tim Saddoris
Grand Onyx

You'll build stronger relationships. Your clients will trust that you're invested in their success, and that kind of loyalty is invaluable.

You'll create new capabilities. By understanding and solving their problems, you'll innovate — developing new products or processes that your competitors don't have. Do this often enough, and when the economy bounces back (as it always does), you'll be leading the pack with new capabilities, and your sales will skyrocket.

Key Questions for Owners and Sales Teams

When you're at lunch, go in with a plan. You're not just sharing a meal; you're doing a bit of detective work to uncover information to help you and your team do a better job of serving your clients. Here are some of the key questions you'll want to ask.

Strengthening Builder Relationships: Questions to Ask Your Builder Partner

Q: What challenges are impacting your projects right now?

Understanding their pain points allows you to anticipate their needs and proactively address issues.

Q: What new projects or markets are you excited to explore this year?

Knowing what's ahead helps you align your offerings with their upcoming goals. You can recommend products and services that support their vision.

Q: What qualities or processes make your projects stand out?

Learning what they're proud of lets you tailor your services to support their strengths.

Q: What are your main goals for upcoming builds?

When you understand their primary goals—like reducing timelines or securing

When you've reinforced your connection to your client, solved their problems and shown real results, it's that much harder for your competition to get their attention.

high-end clients—you can adjust your services to help them achieve these objectives.

Q: What recent projects or milestones are you especially proud of?

Recognizing their accomplishments fosters goodwill and gives insight into the types of projects they value most, so you can align your offerings accordingly.

Q: Are there specific materials, design trends, or construction methods you're interested in?

Staying current with their interests allows you to proactively suggest products or methods that resonate with them, positioning you as an insightful resource.

Q: Who are the key partners and suppliers that support your projects?

Understanding their network may reveal collaboration opportunities or mutual partners, strengthening your business relationship and building trust.

Strengthen Interior Designer Relationships

Q: What challenges do you face when working with clients on stone selections?

Understanding their difficulties, such as budget constraints, availability issues, or specific aesthetic needs, allows you to recommend suitable options proactively.

Q: Are there particular styles or materials you're drawn to for upcoming projects?

Knowing their design preferences enables you to offer relevant product suggestions, such as trending materials or unique stone patterns — aligning your offerings with their creative vision.

Q: What are your main goals for upcoming design projects?

When you understand their priorities, you can adapt your services to support these goals.

Q: What recent projects or milestones are you especially proud of?

Recognizing their accomplishments gives you insight into the kinds of projects that matter most to them. This can guide you in tailoring your offerings to support similar projects or styles.

Q: What are your favorite aspects of working with stone materials?

Understanding what they value in stone, whether it's the aesthetic appeal, versatility, or durability, helps you align your recommendations with their preferences.

Q: Who are the key collaborators that help make your designs successful?

Learning about their network and preferred partners can open opportunities for collaboration. If you work with complementary suppliers or partners, this shared network can reinforce your relationship.

Q: Are there specific qualities or attributes your clients typically look for in stone?

Knowing client preferences, such as low-maintenance surfaces or unique color patterns, allows you to proactively suggest materials that meet these needs.

Don't Wait to Talk to Your Clients

Year-end or right at the first of the year is a great time to do a client check-in. You're demonstrating that you have a genuine interest in hearing directly from your client to understand how you can help their business. You can pick up on trends and gain insights to help shape your business approach.

With this insight, you can then reflect on what you need to do moving forward:

Do you understand your clients' goals and what they need to find success with you?

How are you aligning sales strategies with your clients' goals and success?

How are you empowering your sales team to become trusted guides for clients rather than just salespeople?

Please turn to page 7

#1 Customer

Continued from page 6

How are you using data-driven insights to customize your sales process and improve decision-making?

How are you handling pricing pressure from competitors, and what steps are you taking to ensure your value is communicated effectively?

So, schedule lunch with your top clients. Don't wait for someone else to wrangle the relationship. Then, really listen to what your clients are saying and think about how you can improve your service to make relationships rock-solid.

One more thing about these questions: You don't have time to meet with all of your customers, but your salespeople can. They should know the answers to these questions, too. If not, they need to take a few meetings as well.

Tim Saddoris is the president of Grand Onyx, a firm dedicated to building world-class surface fabricators. Grand Onyx helps companies define operational processes and create road maps to achievements that enable more predictable revenue, stronger margins and foster legacy businesses that stand the test of time. To learn how Grand Onyx can help with hiring or automating your business, visit www.GrandOnyx.Pro.

“The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals.”

– Melody Beattie

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Marketing and Sales Alignment: The Missing Link in Stone Fabrication Success

The disconnect between marketing and sales teams costs businesses millions in lost revenue.

According to LinkedIn's research, 87% of sales and marketing leaders say collaboration between these teams enables business growth. For stone fabricators, this alignment becomes even more critical as modern customers research extensively online before setting foot in a showroom.

The stone industry faces unique challenges in bridging this gap. Marketing teams create photo galleries and social media content to attract leads, while sales teams handle material discussions and detailed quotes. Without proper alignment, valuable opportunities slip away. Research by HubSpot reveals that companies with strong sales and marketing alignment achieve 20% annual revenue growth on average.

Core Business Impact in Stone Fabrication

The relationship between marketing and sales transforms three key areas of stone fabrication businesses:

Marketing evolves from generating unspecified leads to delivering sales-ready opportunities that match specific buyer profiles. Sales teams transition from reactive quoting to proactive consulting with marketing insights into customer preferences. Production teams benefit from clearer customer expectations established during aligned marketing and sales processes.

Research-Backed Benefits

According to Salesforce's State of Marketing report, aligned organizations achieve 36% higher customer retention rates and 38% higher sales win rates. In the stone industry, this translates to more efficient operations and better customer relationships.

Customer Experience Excellence
The impact of alignment is evident

Anthony Milia
Milia Marketing

in customer satisfaction. According to a study by MarketingProfs, companies with aligned sales and marketing generate 208% more revenue from marketing efforts. For fabricators, this translates to:

- **More accurate expectations about materials and timelines**
- **Consistent messaging from first contact through installation**
- **Better-qualified leads entering the sales pipeline**
- **Clearer communication about project specifications.**

Operational Efficiency

Industry observations from successful fabrication shops show that proper alignment has a transformative impact on overall operations. It leads to:

- **More efficient template scheduling**
- **Reduced material waste from better expectation setting**
- **Fewer installation reschedules**
- **Decreased customer change orders**
- **More accurate project timelines.**

Best Practices from Industry Leaders

Leading fabricators implement several key strategies that align with broader business research:

Technology Integration

Successful fabrication shops integrate systems to ensure seamless operations. They connect CRM systems to quote tools, link marketing automation to sales pipelines, utilize project management software for customer communication, integrate material inventory with quote generation processes, and tie installation scheduling to customer updates.

Communication Protocols

According to SiriusDecisions, regular communication between sales and marketing can result in 19% faster revenue

growth. Leading fabricators achieve this by holding weekly alignment meetings, using shared CRM systems, conducting regular performance metric reviews, organizing joint customer feedback sessions, and employing unified project tracking tools.

Action Steps for Implementation

Start your alignment journey with these proven steps:

1. Audit the current state

Examine your processes to identify gaps between marketing and sales functions. This process includes documenting lead flow patterns, analyzing communication systems, identifying points of disconnect, recognizing technology gaps, and evaluating average response times.

2. Create shared definitions

Build agreement on key terms and processes. This includes defining qualified lead criteria, setting standard response times, establishing quote follow-up procedures, developing customer communication protocols, and outlining project milestone definitions.

3. Implement Tracking Systems

Put measurement tools in place that follow industry best practices. These tools include lead tracking systems, quote follow-up metrics, customer interaction records, project timeline monitoring systems, and revenue attribution tracking mechanisms.

Conclusion

Marketing and sales alignment isn't theoretical—it's a proven path to higher profits. While stone industry-specific data is limited, broader business research consistently highlights the value of alignment. According to Forrester Research, aligned organizations achieve an average of 32% annual revenue growth.

Success in today's competitive market demands more than quality craftsmanship. It requires marketing and sales teams to function as a unified force to attract, serve, and retain customers.

Ready to align your marketing and sales teams for maximum results? Contact miliamarketing.com for a comprehensive assessment of your current processes and a custom alignment strategy for your fabrication business.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

The Power of Google Reviews for Your Shop

You know that old saying a picture is worth a thousand words? Well, that's one of the big principles behind today's sales and marketing environment. Gone are the days of simply relying on word of mouth—today, you don't just ask your friends about their contractors, you ask the whole world. And by "the whole world," we mean the internet, and when you search online for anything, 91% of the time, you use Google. Google's power is immense when it comes to search visibility, and if you're smart, you will learn how to use it to grow your countertop shop. One easy way to do that is leverage your Google reviews.

Build Trust With Potential Customers

When a potential customer is searching for a countertop fabricator, the first place they're likely to go is Google. Reviews act as modern-day referrals, giving prospective clients an inside look at what it's like to work with your shop.

Google reviews build trust by providing authentic, first-hand accounts of past customer experiences. These reviews help to validate your reputation and offer social proof that your business is reliable. A fabricator with dozens of positive reviews will stand out to someone who is comparing local businesses.

Highlight Your Commitment to Quality

For countertop fabricators, quality is everything. Whether you specialize in natural stone like granite and marble or engineered options like quartz, the materials you offer represent an investment for your customers. Google reviews give you the opportunity to highlight that commitment to quality.

When customers leave reviews praising the beauty, durability, or craftsmanship of their new countertops, they help solidify your reputation as a fabricator who delivers amazing products. Positive reviews act as a portfolio of sorts, giving future clients confidence that your shop will meet their high standards.

It's important to ask customers who are particularly happy with their countertops to

Stephen Alberts
Countertop Marketing Co.

Google's power is immense when it comes to search visibility, and if you're smart, you will learn how to use it to grow your countertop shop.

share their experience in a review. (We'll talk more about how to effectively solicit reviews shortly!) This is especially valuable for high-end projects, where attention to detail and material quality are paramount. Future customers will feel more comfortable choosing your shop if they see that others were thrilled with the final result.

Improve Your Search Engine Ranking

One of the lesser-known benefits of Google reviews is how they affect your shop's visibility on the search engine itself. When you accumulate positive reviews, it helps boost your shop's ranking in local searches. In other words, the more reviews you have, the more likely your business will appear at the top of the results when someone searches for a countertop fabricator in your area.

Reviews are a ranking factor for Google's local search algorithm. This means that having more positive reviews can lead to more visibility for your shop, which ultimately increases the chances of new customers finding you online. In highly competitive markets, standing out from other shops can be the difference between getting that phone call or being overlooked.

Additionally, Google reviews can help you show up in "near me" searches. These are the local searches people make when they're specifically looking for services in their immediate area, such as "countertop company near me." When you have a strong review profile, Google is more likely to suggest your business in these searches.



Provide Valuable Feedback for Your Business

Beyond helping attract new customers, Google reviews can offer valuable feedback for your business. While positive reviews reinforce what your shop is doing well, occasional negative reviews can offer insight into areas where improvement is needed.

Responding to Google reviews, whether they are positive or negative, shows that you value customer feedback and care about their experience with your business. Taking the time to thank someone for leaving a positive review or addressing any concerns mentioned in a negative one can help you stand out as a company that prioritizes client relationships.

When responding to positive reviews, keep your tone genuine and professional. A simple "thank you" goes a long way in reinforcing the customer's positive experience. If a customer mentioned something specific they appreciated, acknowledge it in your response to personalize the interaction even further.

For negative reviews, responding calmly and professionally is essential. Apologize for any issues the customer experienced and offer a solution where possible. Potential clients who see how you handle complaints will respect the transparency you bring to your business, which helps maintain your reputation even in less-than-ideal situations. Don't use your Google reviews responses for the perfect "gotcha." Be as courteous as possible and let your honesty and professionalism shine through.

Encourage Customers to Leave Reviews

Getting reviews doesn't happen automatically. You need to actively encourage

customers to leave feedback after completing their projects. This can be done in several ways:

- **Ask in person:** After the installation is complete, take a moment to ask the customer if they'd be willing to share their experience on Google.
- **Follow up via email:** Send a polite follow-up email thanking the customer for their business and including a direct link to your Google review page. Direct links are key; the easier it is for the customer to leave a review, the more likely they are to do it!
- **Include a request on invoices:** Add a note to your invoices or project summaries asking for a review once the job is done.

To Wrap it Up

Keep the request simple, and emphasize that their feedback helps other homeowners find reliable, high-quality fabricators.

Google reviews have the power to transform your countertop shops and bring in more leads. They build trust with potential customers, demonstrate your commitment to quality and service, and help improve your online visibility. By actively encouraging and responding to reviews, you can enhance your reputation and attract more clients.

Stephen Alberts is the owner of the Countertop Marketing Co. and STONE ENGAGE. They specialize in helping countertop companies grow the retail side of their business outside of word-of-mouth and referrals. They also offer software to help you engage more with customers and close more countertop projects. To learn more, visit countertopmarketingco.com or stonengage.com. You can also email Stephen at steve@countertopmarketingco.com.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Leveraging Customer Experience Feedback to Shape Your 2025 Goals

IN the stone fabrication industry, delivering timely and accurate bids is not just a courtesy—it's a competitive advantage. Customers, whether they are contractors, designers, or homeowners, expect quick responses to their quote requests so they can plan their projects efficiently. Failing to meet these expectations can result in lost opportunities and erode customer trust. Understanding and addressing these expectations is key to securing business, building long-term relationships, and driving sales growth.

Why Understanding Customer Expectations Matters

Every customer has a timeline, and in many cases, delays in receiving a quote can halt progress on their project. When customers request a quote, they're not just

Darlene Compagna
Direct Opinions



seeking a price—they're looking for reassurance that your company can deliver on time, within budget, and to their specifications. Meeting or exceeding their expectations for bid turnaround demonstrates your professionalism and commitment to their success.

The Business Impact of Faster Bids

Speeding up your quoting process doesn't just benefit customers, it directly impacts your bottom line. Faster bids can significantly improve your chances of winning projects. Studies show that businesses that respond to inquiries quickly are more likely to secure the deal. In a competitive market, the ability to provide clear and timely estimates is a powerful differentiator.

Additionally, a streamlined quoting process allows you to handle more opportunities. The quicker you can prepare and deliver bids, the more customers you can serve. This increased capacity can lead to more closed deals and a stronger revenue stream.

The Importance of Understanding Why Bids Are Lost

While delivering timely bids is crucial, it's equally important to analyze the outcomes of your proposals—especially the ones you lose. Many companies fail to

focus on understanding why a bid was unsuccessful, missing a critical opportunity for growth.

Tracking Bid Requests: A Hidden Opportunity

Another critical factor in driving sales is understanding the percentage of bid opportunities you receive versus those you don't. If you are not tracking the number of quotes requested by your customers—or more importantly the percentage of projects you are missing out on—you could be leaving money on the table.

For example, if you discover that you are only receiving 60% of the bids you expect from your regular customers, it's worth investigating why. Perhaps your quoting process is too slow, or customers feel that your pricing isn't competitive, or they have a need for products you don't offer. By addressing these gaps, you can capture a larger share of potential business.

[Please turn to page 17](#)

100% Financing¹!

Tailored programs to suit your unique Stone equipment needs.

Ask for a no-obligation quote, call today or visit us online:

Tony Zieglar, CLFP
Vice President - Team Leader - Gas/C-Store/ Car Wash
W: 281.883.5005 | M: 517.404.6566
Learn more: Ascentium.info/Rock2025



¹Financing terms subject to change and dependent on credit. Ascentium Capital is a division of Regions Bank, member FDIC.

ROCKin'teriors

Continued from page 3

Having touched on the fact that ROCKin'teriors has successfully completed the NSI silica safety training, we asked Laura to elaborate on their compliance with new OSHA regulations: “We prioritize workplace safety by implementing comprehensive training programs and adhering to industry best practices. Our commitment to safety is reflected in our participation with OSHA, and in programs like Cosentino’s Rock Masters, which emphasizes sustainability and safety.”

When asked about the safety systems in place at ROCKin'teriors fabrication facility, she explained, “Our facility is equipped with advanced machinery that includes safety features to protect our team. We also have protocols for dust collection and water reclamation and recycling to maintain a safe and eco-friendly environment. We are really excited about our whole team transitioning to BBI’s Swiss Air PAPR -purifying respirator. It’s a game changer for our team. Every step we take is to help our team be safe and healthy in all we do.”

Additionally, ROCKin'teriors installation team is trained to handle materials carefully, ensuring that each piece is transported and installed with the utmost care to maintain its integrity and beauty.

One way for a company to become as successful as ROCKin'teriors is through advertising. Standard ad campaigns for shops include commercials, Facebook ads, Google ads and print ads, truck wraps and signage, yet ROCKin'teriors has a different



Laura Grandlienard, pictured at left, meets with design staff in the ROCKin'teriors design space.

Below: One of the vignettes from the ROCKin'teriors showroom.

Bottom: ROCKin'terior specializes in exotic and one-of-a-kind materials for their high-end clientele.

approach. They rely more on marketing, public relations and word-of-mouth from their clients, which makes customer satisfaction a “must” for them.

ROCKin'teriors has a truly clear vision on what “customer satisfaction” means to them and their clients. “Customer satisfaction is achieved by delivering exceptional quality, personalized service, and ensuring that each client’s vision is realized through our craftsmanship. We call this our “white glove” service, and it includes following up before, during, and after our interaction with the customer to ensure they feel special and that ROCKin'teriors has helped contribute to their new home or project. Oftentimes, our customers begin to feel like family, as we have worked so closely together, and we get a lot of referrals based on the experience alone. A lot of our clients

have been with us since the beginning, and they are still coming back to this day.”

Another part of their advertising philosophy is that quality work and focusing on strong client relationships coupled with their professional website and their continuous involvement in industry events helps them to reach a broader audience in their market.

Every good leader has a vision for the future of their company — what they want it to be, how they want it to grow. Laura Grandlienard is no different. When asked about her vision for the future of her company, she was very clear: “The culture that we have created is something that we can move forward for generations and generations. Our craftsmanship and skill set that we have can move us forward and allow us to constantly be at the forefront whether it’s technology, design or customer vision.”



ROCKin'teriors in Raleigh, North Carolina is proof that hard work, craftsmanship and relationships with customers and team members is a great way to be successful.

For more information and to watch a video interview with Laura Grandlienard, visit their website <http://rockinteriors.com>.



TRAINING & EDUCATION

The Importance of Understanding Product Margin: Part One

When networking with other fabricating shop owners you might get into discussions about what it takes to make a profit in this business. You might also see benchmarking data that you are trying to relate to your business and your situation. What I want to do in this article is explain how to understand YOUR numbers so you can compare them to others' numbers if you must.

One key financial metric that gets kicked around a lot in these discussions is 'Margin'. I overheard one shop owner emphatically tell those listening at the bar that *'to be profitable in this business you need to have a margin of at least 62%'*. In this instance, I believe he was referring to the metric Gross Margin.

There is more than one correct way to calculate Gross Margin, so for this article to make sense I need to define some terms. Read these definitions carefully because they may not be your definition of the terms.

Gross Margin: The money that remains in the business after the Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) is deducted from Revenue.

$$\text{Gross Margin} = \text{Revenue} - \text{C.O.G.S.}$$

C.O.G.S.: Material, Contract and Direct Labor costs of producing a product.

Contribution Margin: The money that remains in the business after the Truly Variable Expenses (TVE) have been deducted from Revenue.

$$\text{Contribution Margin} = \text{Revenue} - \text{T.V.E.}$$

T.V.E.: The money that leaves the business to pay suppliers and contractors when producing a job.

Operating Expense (OE): ALL the money you pay to convert what you buy from suppliers into products or services for your customers. This includes Direct Labor.

Rick Phelps
Synchronous Solutions



The way I have defined Contribution Margin is what we at Synchronous Solutions also call Throughput Dollars. For the remainder of this article, I will be referring to Contribution Margin and not Gross Margin because Gross Margin introduces Direct Labor into the calculation, and Direct Labor has not 'directly varied' with output in over 100 years (unless you pay all your direct labor a piece rate and not an hourly wage). Direct labor is for all intents and purposes a fixed cost in every business I have ever worked with.

We have a stated hypothesis: one owner believes you need 62% margin to be 'profitable' in this business. What wasn't stated was what 'profitable' meant, so I will arbitrarily define 'profitable' to mean 10% Net Profit, the minimum profit to sustain and grow a business over time.

Under what circumstance is this owner correct?

We can rewrite the Contribution Margin formula above as percentages as follows:

$$\text{Contribution Margin \%} = \text{Revenue \%} - \text{T.V.E. \%}$$

And then based on this, calculate what the owner's TVE must be:

$$62\% = 100\% - \text{T.V.E. \%}$$

$$\text{T.V.E. \%} = 38\%$$

Contribution Margin is equal to the total of Operating Expense plus Net Profit. Therefore, the total revenue your business brings in must end up in one of three buckets based on this equation:

$$\text{Revenue} = \text{T.V.E.} + \text{Operating Expense} + \text{Net Profit}$$

Or, written as percentages:

$$100\% = \text{T.V.E. \%} + \text{OE \%} + \text{NP \%}$$

Plugging in the numbers, we get:

$$100\% = 38\% + \text{OE \%} + 10\%$$

Solving for OE we get:

$$\text{OE \%} = 100\% - 38\% - 10\%$$

$$\text{OE \%} = 52\%$$

What does this tell us?

We deduce from the owner's assertion that 'you must have at least 62% margin' that the percent of his revenue he pays his supplies is 38%, and that to maintain a 10% net profit he must constrain his operating expenses to 52% of Revenue.

All of which adds up to this: *the owner's assertion is likely correct for his exact situation and is probably not at all relevant to your situation.* Know YOUR numbers!

Here is what IS important to understand about Product Margin:

Your Product Margin is equal to 1-TVE %, so if your TVE goes down by a percentage point, your margin goes up by a percentage point.

There are just three ways to decrease the TVE %:

1. Pay less for your materials.
2. Make more effective use of the materials.
3. Charge more for your products.

Once you know your Contribution Margin, you can decide what NP% you want to earn and calculate what your limit on OE% must be to achieve it.

Suppose you are that business owner with a 62% Contribution Margin and a 10% Net Profit, and you want to increase your net profit to 15% while assuming no improvement in TVE %. What would it take?

If the Operating Expense of the business is \$200,000 per month, then the Revenue must be \$385,000 per month (\$200,000 / 0.52).

To get to 15% net profit, the Revenue must grow to \$425,000 per month with no new OE (\$200,000 / 0.47). That is \$40,000 per month more Revenue.

If the average job in your shop sold for \$3225 it would have a Contribution Margin of \$2,000 (\$2000 / 0.62 = \$3225). This would indicate that you would need to put about one job a day more through your shop to achieve your goal of 15% (\$40,000 / \$2,000 = 20 jobs), requiring you to go from 6 jobs a day to 7 jobs a day, a 17% increase in throughput. (For reference, clients that implement Synchronous Flow typically see increases in capacity from 20% to 40% with no additional resources. Getting 17% more through a shop should not be difficult.)

You need to understand the Contribution Margin for your business. It is a function of what you get charged for your materials and what you charge for your products. Clearly you should be working on reducing the former while increasing the latter.

Across the fabrication industry we have seen contribution margins ranging from 50% to 78%, with an average of about 65%. It is mostly a function of the markets served.

What your contribution margin is not as important as understanding the limitations it places on your business. Contribution margin is the sum of OE + NP. Decide what net profit you want to make then do the math to determine the operating expense budget you will have to work within to make it happen.

It has been my experience that most fabricating shops grow without doing this simple calculation to set up the guard rails to keep them on the road to their desired profitability. The result is predictable: as these shops grow without OE guardrails, their profit margins go down as they are eaten up by new expenses.

Helping fabricating shops grow their business from where they are to where they want to be is what Synchronous Solutions is all about. If you want help working through these calculations in your business, contact us at www.synchronousolutions.com.

NTCA Announces All-Women Certified Tile Installer (CTI) Test, Marks Industry Milestone



Elizabeth Lambert, Chair of Women in Tile, expressed her enthusiasm, saying, “This all-women CTI test represents a groundbreaking step forward in our industry. It’s an honor to provide a platform where skilled women tile installers can demonstrate their expertise, gain recognition, and inspire others to pursue careers in this field. With each certified woman, we move closer to a more diverse and inclusive industry.”

In a historic event for the tile industry, Carpet & Tile Warehouse, in collaboration with Women in Tile, the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF), and the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), is hosting an all-female Certified Tile Installer (CTI) test. This landmark event, scheduled for March 5-8, 2025, at Carpet & Tile Warehouse in Vero Beach, FL, celebrates the skills and dedication of women in the tile industry. Being held on International Women’s Day, this event honors women whose time has come to shine in the tile industry. It will bring together 15 women tile installers from across the country, including participants from as far away as Alaska, to test their skills, expand their expertise, and elevate their careers. The attendees have formed The event will begin with a comprehensive ‘Mind Your Business’ workshop sponsored by Schluter Systems, covering critical aspects of running a successful tile installation business. Attendees will engage in a variety of topics across two days, from crafting a business model and mastering sales negotiation to learning financial management and retirement planning. This intimate, interactive

workshop will feature breakout sessions, worksheets, and exercises designed to empower those starting a business or aiming to strengthen their existing operations.

The Certified Tile Installer (CTI) program itself is widely recognized as a rigorous assessment of skills, testing expertise, and adaptability in a rapidly changing industry. Through the program, installers are challenged to apply best practices with a wide range of materials, from thin and large-format tile to the latest installation tools and techniques. beauty of the world of tile and its longevity,” says Juan.

Deby Winter, co-owner of Carpet & Tile Warehouse, said, “We are thrilled to host such an empowering event that showcases the capabilities of women in tile installation. The skills these installers demonstrate are not just impressive, they are transformative, setting a new standard for quality and professionalism in our field.”

Laticrete, Daltile, and Schluter Systems are helping to support the all-women CTI program, with generous donations.

“The skills these installers demonstrate are not just impressive, they are transformative, setting a new standard for quality and professionalism in our field.”

– Deby Winter, co-owner Carpet & Tile Warehouse

The event marks a collaborative effort to celebrate the talents of women in tile and equip them with the knowledge and certification to advance their careers. Women in Tile, the NTCA, CTEF, and Carpet & Tile Warehouse all encourage industry professionals to support this pioneering event. Those interested in sponsoring or taking the test, please contact Elizabeth Lambert at womenintile@gmail.com or Deby Winters at deby@carpetandtilewarehouse.com.



About Women in Tile

The Women in Tile organization is dedicated to promoting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in the tile installation industry. All women deserve the opportunity to succeed in their careers and achieve work-life balance. We provide support, resources, and advocacy to help women overcome barriers, navigate career opportunities in the tile industry, and reach their goals. Women in Tile also provides a community of like-minded women to celebrate successes and provide camaraderie in the industry. Visit www.tile-assn.com/page/ntca-womenintile for more information.

Why Not Play “Winter” Music All Year Long?

IN case you haven’t noticed, the 2024 edition of Christmas is history.

In most Christian circles, the official end won’t come until Epiphany, or Three Kings Day, on Monday, January 6.

In the secular world, however, the switch was earlier and more abrupt. It occurred the first nanosecond of December 26, 2024 — at which time TV networks and radio stations reverted to regular programming and stores replaced candy canes with candy hearts.

Either way, Christmas won’t be heard from again until Advent Sunday on November 30 (religious observance) or sometime between Independence Day, Labor Day and Halloween (commercial observance, depending on inventories of hot, new, gotta-have gifts.)

But why must “winter” songs vanish along with Santa? Wouldn’t some festive music liven the dreary days sure to come in January and February? A reader once posed that question to me, and I had to admit she made a good point. Consider:

Where in, say, “Jingle Bells” does the word “Christmas” appear?

“Jingle Bells” describes a trip through the snowy countryside in a sleigh. OK, so maybe there aren’t many sleighs, one-horse or otherwise, available for everyday use. But why not four-wheel-drive with 100 horses under the hood?

Fannie Bright, or the companion of your choosing, could still be seated by your side — although this could present an issue with seat belts.

Then there’s “Sleigh Bells.”

This song contains no mention of managers, Mary, Magi or myrrh. Just some

Sam Venable
Department of Irony



snowman named Parson Brown who might conduct a wedding ceremony. We assume, of course, that he is properly licensed by the state.

Speaking of snowmen, why limit “Frosty” to Christmas?

Don’t kids continue to build snowmen as long as there’s even a hint of snow on the ground?

And if the sun comes out, requiring Frosty to “hurry on his way?” No problem. We all know snowman-making conditions are certain to “be back again someday.” (Often at Easter or during the start of spring break, but I mention this only for meteorological trivia.)

There’s also “Baby It’s Cold Outside.”

Or maybe not. The more I thought about this one, I decided its innuendos of sexual harassment, cigarettes and spiked drinks haven’t aged well.

At the same time, it did cross my mind that the first person who breaks into a jolly verse of “Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!” when the interstates are closed might be asking for a poke in the nose.

Maybe we oughta leave well enough alone and start saving our money for Valentine cards, chocolates and roses.

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.

New Year's Resolution:
To tolerate fools more gladly, provided this does not encourage them to take up more of my time.

— James Agate

Makita® VC4210L 11 Gallon Wet/Dry Vacuum

Includes:

- Main Flat Nano Filters (Pair)
- Fleece Nano Filter Bag
- Disposal Bag
- 1-3/8" x 16' Anti-Static Hose
- Crevice Nozzle
- Cuff Adapter

Item# 5146



Makita® XCVO4Z Cordless HEPA Filter Dry Vacuum & 5" Dust Shroud

Vacuum Includes:

- 2 Anti-static hoses
- Crevice tool
- Nozzle
- Curved pipe
- Straight pipe
- Main filter
- Damper and pre-filter

Item# 1146



Item# 11492



Available at
BBI **B·B INDUSTRIES**
Better Service • Better Value

800-575-4401 • www.BBIndustriesLLC.com

Take Control with Makita
Makita Vacs and Shrouds for Dust Management on the Job Site

© MARK ANDERSON. www.andertoons.com



“How goes the merger?”

Stone Restoration and Maintenance Corner

The Parish Church of St. Joseph the Worker

Carl and Patricia Staples, owners of Classic Marble & Stone Restoration, have been friends, peers and customers of mine for at least 30+ years. I remember they came to one of my training classes back in the 1990s. They have since been operating one of the most successful stone restoration companies in Broomall (outside of Philadelphia), Pennsylvania for many, many years now. The following is a case study of the project in their words. I hope you enjoy the story and get some valuable insight into a project of this nature.

The Parish Church of St. Joseph the Worker in Williamsport, PA is a 135-year old Annunciation church built in 1889. The bell tower was not capped with a pointed spire during its original construction because of the death of four men working towards its completion. The marble altar, the open vestibule, and the wooden wainscot panels are all original to the building.

St. Joseph the Worker Church is located 3 hours from Classic Marble & Stone Restoration's location in Broomall, PA. We realized that doing a project like this would require us and our crew to stay in Williamsport during the week, working long days and traveling back home on the weekends to take care of family, personal matters and other things.

Upon initial inspection of the project we realized that the biggest challenge was going to be able to reach all the sections of the 25 foot high Reredos/High Altar. We knew that we would need scaffolds in the rear and front of the altar with long walking boards to get from the front of the Reredos/High Altar to the rear of the structure in the higher areas. There was only a maximum of 26 inches behind the structure in some areas to erect scaffolding. We searched for this type of skinny scaffolding to estimate the project and it took some time, and once located the estimating processing began. On this type of project mostly everything is based on time and materials. Knowing the proper cleaning chemicals and cleaning process to use on these historic 150-year-old statues is only part of the battle. If we used the wrong chemicals the marble could be ruined. Our

Bob Murrell M3 Technologies

Photos Courtesy Classic Marble & Stone Restoration



High Altar restoration and cleaning, before and after. The project required special narrow-gauge scaffolding to reach all areas.

main cleaner for the Reredos structure, statues and altar rails was Prosoco Liquid Marble Cleaner. This professional product is a thick gel that is brushed on and needs to be thoroughly washed off or a residue will be left behind.

An entire day was needed for our 5-man crew to erect the scaffolding around the Reredos/High Altar. After the scaffold was erected, we split our crew into two 2-man teams and our assistant Jim King was there to assist both crews. The owners Patricia and Carl Staples got to work on the scaffolding cleaning the High Altar. Our lead technician Chris Rose started on the statue of The Blessed Mother Mary with the cleaning and the repair of her thumb. Chris removed the broken part of her thumb (pictured) drilled both ends, inserted a small pin and color matched with epoxy to reattach her thumb. Technician Mike McCormick started sanding and polishing



Careful restoration and thumb repair on a 150-year-old statue.



the top of the lower altar. Mike refinished the altar top using 120/400/800 grit diamond abrasives from M3 Technologies and polished the top with Majestic 5X polishing compound.

We estimated 2 weeks' time for 2 people to clean the Reredos/High Altar, with adjusting the scaffolding to get to all the different areas and levels of the structure, and 2 weeks for the 2 technicians to clean the lower statues, baptismal fountain and other structures.

[*Please turn to page 15*](#)

Stone Restoration Corner

Continued from page 14

Below: Altar rail cleaning in progress, using application of Prosoco Liquid Marble Cleaner. **Right:** Baptimal fountain, before and after removing years of chemical residue build-up.



The Baptismal fountain had a lot of etching from the water not being treated and from the splashing. All the marble surfaces had to be sanded/honed and polished. The bottom of the Holy Water bowls developed a yellowish crusty layer that had to be sanded off and polished. Everything went as planned with the cleaning of everything on the high altar area. After all that cleaning was done, the technicians went on to tackle the marble flooring, and Patricia and

I went on to cleaning the altar railings. The 2 technicians were tasked with replacing 7 tiles in the floor, replacing grout where missing, cleaning all the grout lines, sanding and polishing the marble floor. In some areas of the badly scratched and worn marble floors, they started with 50 grit diamond abrasives and brought the finish up to an 800 grit diamond abrasive from M3 Technologies. Then they polished the floor with Majestic 5X polishing compound. The



marble floors came up absolutely beautiful.

The Altar railings were another challenge, as all the surrounding areas were covered with carpet and the church had to be turned back over on the weekends so mass could be held. With all the water that needed to be used to clean all the intricate detailed sculptures/ornaments, the carpet needed to be protected. We used 20 foot-wide 6 mil heavy plastic sheets and duct tape to attach the plastic sheets to the very bottom of each of the 4 altar railings. We then put 4 x 8 -foot hardboard sheets on top of the plastic so we could vacuum up the water as we were washing the cleaner off of the altar railings. This worked out quite well, the carpet did not even get wet, just a little damp in a few areas.

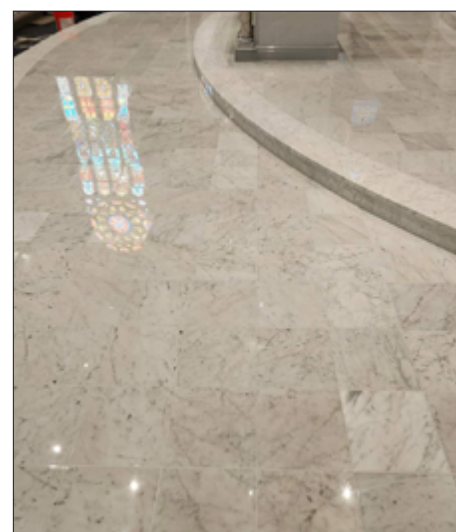
This was one of those once-in-a-lifetime projects that gave us all a lot of personal satisfaction to be able to complete. Having great people from the church to work with was a plus: Leonard Hazel, Jim King, Jr. and Father David Bechtel. We also hired a retired local person that the church recommended who helped us with the project – Jim King, Sr. who was great to work with.

I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Fred Hueston of Stoneforensics.com and Bob Murrell of M3 Technologies for their support and some technical assistance to help us complete this project.

I always recommend doing a test area on any project to confirm both the results and procedure. Also, the best way to help ensure success is by partnering with a good distributor, like BB Industries, that knows the business. They can help with technical support, product purchase decisions, logistics, and other pertinent project information.

As we start this New Year, I wish you and your families a safe and very prosperous 2025.

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](http://M3Technologies.com). Send your comments and questions to Bob at attn:publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net.



Above: Badly scratched and worn areas of the marble floor restored like new. **Left:** The talented crew of Classic Marble & Stone Restoration.



The Stone Detective

Investigates a Real Murder Mystery

IT was one of those rare, chilly mornings in Florida, with temperatures dipping into the low 50s. I decided to don my leather jacket and take the Harley out for a spin to my favorite greasy spoon. There's nothing like the open road to clear the cobwebs from a night of restless sleep. As I pulled up to the diner, I spotted the usual crowd inside—Flo, the ever-cheerful waitress who remembered everyone's order, and the Admiral, a retired Navy man who never missed his morning coffee at Flo's counter.

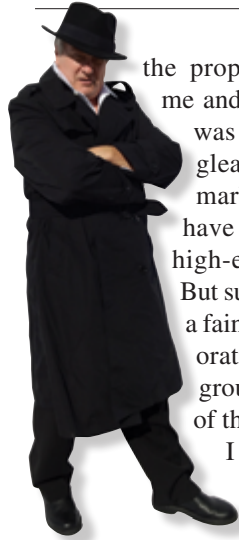
Just as I was settling into my booth, savoring the first sip of black coffee and the comforting aroma of frying bacon, my phone buzzed. It was the kind of buzz that signals something more interesting than spam. The voice on the other end was an old client, a property manager for a historic downtown hotel I'd worked with before. His tone was laced with urgency as he explained the problem: a guest had noticed a strange, reddish-brown stain seeping up from a grout joint in one of the suites. The hotel, a proud symbol of bygone opulence, had recently undergone extensive renovations, and the last thing they needed was a mystery stain ruining their new floors.

"Rust, maybe?" he mused. "Or could it be water damage?"

"Well, let's not jump to conclusions," I replied. "I'll come down later this morning."

After finishing my ham and eggs and exchanging some banter with Flo, I hopped back on the Harley and headed downtown. The historic hotel, with its grand façade and ornate ironwork, stood like a sentinel among the modern high-rises. Inside,

Dr. Frederick M. Hueston, PhD



the property manager greeted me and led me to the suite. It was an elegant room, with gleaming black-and-white marble floors that would have been the envy of any high-end design magazine. But sure enough, there it was: a faint reddish-brown discoloration peeking through a grout joint near the center of the floor.

I crouched down and examined the stain closely. It wasn't the usual discoloration you'd associate with rust or water damage. Something about it seemed... organic.

I began my inspection the usual way, tapping around the area with a rubber mallet, listening for that tell-tale hollow sound that could indicate voids or delamination beneath the tile. The surrounding tiles were solid as a rock. Next, I pulled out my moisture meter to check for any signs of water intrusion. The readings came back dry as a bone.

"Not water damage," I muttered, more to myself than to the manager. His face reflected a mixture of curiosity and concern.

Puzzled, I decided to go a step further. I carefully scored the grout lines around the stained tile and used my tile lifter to remove it, making sure not to damage the surrounding area. As I lifted the tile, the manager and I both recoiled slightly. Beneath it was



a dark, dried substance that had seeped into the substrate. It was unmistakable: blood. The distinct metallic smell hung in the air, cutting through the polished elegance of the suite.

"This isn't just a maintenance issue," I said gravely. "You'll need to contact the authorities."

The property manager paled but nodded. Within the hour, the suite was swarming with police officers and forensic investigators. The entire room was cordoned off as they began their meticulous work. I learned from the officers that the hotel had a storied past, filled with tales of glamour, scandal, and the occasional unsolved mystery. In fact, one of those mysteries involved a missing person case from decades ago. The suite where we found the blood had been closed off and unoccupied for years before the renovations.

Over the next few days, I stayed in touch with the lead detective on the case. He called me with updates as the investigation unfolded. Forensic analysis confirmed what we suspected: the substance beneath the tile was indeed human blood. And it wasn't fresh—it dated back at least 40 years. Further excavation of the floor revealed skeletal remains concealed beneath the layers of substrate and tile. The remains matched the description of a woman reported missing in the late 1970s. As more evidence came to light, it became clear that foul play had occurred, turning this once-charming suite into a decades-old crime scene.

The case captivated everyone involved, including me. It wasn't every day that a routine stone inspection turned into uncovering evidence in a real murder. As a stone detective, I've solved plenty of

mysteries—efflorescence that looked like mold, strange discolorations caused by everything from wine spills to chemical reactions, and even identifying counterfeit stone. But this was something entirely different. This was the first time my work had led directly to the reopening of a cold case.

The incident left me thinking about how much history can be hidden beneath stone and tile. These materials, often selected for their durability and timeless beauty, have a way of silently bearing witness to the lives—and sometimes the crimes—of those who inhabit their spaces. While most of my cases don't involve the police, they often reveal fascinating stories about the environments we live and work in.

For the property manager, the discovery was bittersweet. On one hand, the situation brought unwelcome attention to his newly renovated hotel. On the other, it solved a long-forgotten mystery that might bring closure to the family of the victim. As for me, it was a reminder that no matter how polished the surface, there's always more than meets the eye.

So, the next time you walk across a pristine marble floor or admire the craftsmanship of a historic tile installation, remember: beneath the surface lies a story. Some stories, like this one, just need the right detective to uncover them.

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.

I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're doing something.

—Neil Giaman

Leveraging Customer Experience

Continued from page 9

Closing the Gap

To maximize the impact of your quoting process, consider adopting tools and strategies that streamline and enhance your bid delivery. Automated quoting systems, pre-built templates, and consistent follow-ups can help ensure accuracy and speed. Additionally, make it a priority to gather and analyze data on bid outcomes. Understanding trends in lost bids can reveal patterns, such as pricing inconsistencies or service gaps, that you can address to improve future performance.

In the competitive landscape of stone fabrication, success lies in understanding and meeting customer expectations. By delivering bids quickly, analyzing lost opportunities, and continuously refining your processes, you can drive sales, strengthen customer relationships, and position your business for long-term growth.

In the end, prioritizing speed, accuracy, and customer insight in your bidding process isn't just a strategy—it's a necessity for success in 2025 and beyond.

Consider these Customer Acceleration® tips that will help you make more money from your customers and make them happier in the process!

If you'd like some help, please reach out to Darlene Campagna at dcampagna@directopinions.com or call 216-867-1165.

“Without education we are in a horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously.”

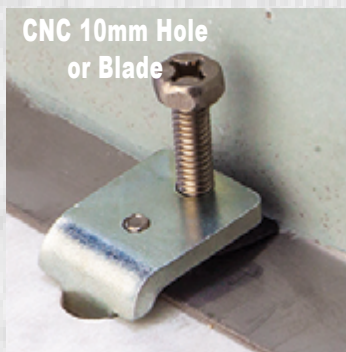
– Gilbert K. Chesterton

GOCLIPS®

5 Second Anchors®

The #1 Patented Sink Anchoring System in the Stone Industry

US PATENTS
9,828,754 **10,378,193**



STD HD - 7/8" Rim
SS HD - 1/8" Rim w/Torque Caps
XL HD - 1 1/4" Rim w/Torque Caps



Slot-based Anchors for Diamond Blades or **CNC 10mm Holes**



OUR EXCLUSIVE USER-FRIENDLY FEATURE-PACKED DESIGN

D855,477

- Fits sinks up to 1 1/4" - No special tools
- Fastest anchor vs other methods = \$\$\$
- 1-2 minutes per sink vs 10-15 minutes with lead anchors and epoxy = less labor



- 7x less cutting than butterfly method
- 100% less epoxy - NON-Toxic
- Professional results every time

SS - 1/8" Rim w/Torque Caps
XL - 1 1/4" Rim w/Torque Caps



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CALL 404-433-5310 OR EMAIL SALES@GOCLIPS.COM

www.GOCLIPS.com

Direct Bulk Sales are Available for High-Volume Companies and Large Projects. Samples Available Upon Request

Please notify us of any knockoffs or counterfeit GoClips® products

Copyright 2023 GOCLIPS LLC. All rights reserved. PO BOX 22553 CHATTANOOGA TN 37422. GOCLIPS is a registered trademark of GOCLIPS LLC AND Z KEEPERS LLC

It's a New Year!

IT is the beginning of a new year and usually, at this time, I encourage you to check your internet security. Look to see if anyone you do business with has been hacked or compromised – putting your information at risk. Keep your information safe this New Year by changing passwords and pins, switching over to a VPN, and going to 2-step authentications.

You need to do all that for the exact same reasons as last year: data breaches are still on the rise, all the holiday shopping you just did, and it's probably been at least a year since you did any cyber security updates.

The beginning of the year is also a great time to take a look at your surroundings. Make sure your showroom is up to date, your vendor catalogs are current. Purge your files, check your trucks for maintenance, wear and tear, and make sure your wraps or signs are legible and easy to read. Are your materials labeled and walking aisles clear? Check your parking and loading areas for clear signage and debris.

Whew, that's a lot to do at the beginning of the year! However, there is more you can do to give yourself a great jumpstart into the new year. One more important thing is to check your services and products. See what's hot and what's not. Also, make sure you are providing all the services you need to, or see if you need to drop anything.

Check the Services and Items You Offer for Profitability

In any business, understanding the profitability of your products and services is critical to your overall success. Keeping track of which items or services bring in the most ROI (return on investment) — and which might be draining resources — is essential. Many businesses fail, not because they lack customers or a good product, but because they didn't pay enough attention to profitability.

1. Resources

One of the most obvious reasons to regularly check the profitability of your services or items is to ensure that your resources are being used the best way possible. In any business, resources such as time, labor, capital, and inventory are limited. By knowing which products or services are most profitable, you can better decide where to invest those limited resources.

Sharon Koehler *Stone Industry Consultant*

For example: If a particular service or product has high demand but low margins, you might want to reconsider how much time and effort you devote to it. On the flip side, if a product is underperforming in terms of profitability, you may decide to discontinue it or re-think your pricing, marketing and advertising.

Checking profitability helps you hone in on what's working. It enables you to direct more attention to high-profit items or services and invest in strategies that help promote those products or services. By doing so, you can free up time and energy from less profitable offerings, making sure you're spending resources where they'll deliver the best returns.

2. Identifying Loss-Leading Items or Services

Loss-leaders — products or services sold at a loss to attract customers — are common in many industries. However, not every business can afford to consistently lose money on a product or service in the hopes of a future sale. By regularly assessing profitability, you can find which items or services are costing you more than they're bringing in, either through pricing issues or inefficiencies in the supply chain.

For instance, if a product is frequently discounted or requires significant maintenance, it could be draining your profits. Analyzing profitability will help you find these loss-leaders and decide whether they should be dropped, re-priced, or changed to improve their margins.

In service-based industries, you might find that certain services require huge amounts of time or resources to execute, leading to low profitability despite high demand. Finding these "time sinks" early can help you restructure your offerings to end inefficiencies.

3. Adjusting Prices

One of the best reasons to evaluate profit on a regular basis is so you can adjust your pricing accordingly. It's common for businesses to undervalue their offerings, especially when they're starting out or when they're in competitive markets. However,



not pricing your services or products correctly can severely hurt your bottom line.

By evaluating which items or services are most profitable, you can identify pricing patterns that either help or hurt your profitability. For example, you may find that a slight price increase on a high-demand product has little impact on its sales volume but significantly boosts profits. On the other hand, you may realize that you're pricing some of your services too high for your target market, causing customers to turn away.

Regular profitability checks allow you to stay agile with pricing. As market conditions fluctuate, demand shifts, or new competitors enter your industry, being able to adjust your prices in real time can keep your business competitive and profitable.

4. Improving Operations

Profitability analysis often shows areas where your operations may be inefficient. Whether it's inventory management, staffing, or supply chain logistics, understanding how different services or products impact profitability helps you pinpoint inefficiencies.

For example, if a product service like sinks and installation requires frequent returns to the job site, this is definitely a red flag that points to issues in manufacturing, shipping, or customer service. These issues can sink profits (no pun intended), even if the product itself has high sales potential. Similarly, if a service requires excessive labor hours or specialized resources, the overall margin might be smaller than you realize.

By regularly reviewing the ROI of your services and products, you gain insights into where these inefficiencies are occurring. You can then implement improvements, whether that's streamlining the production process, reducing waste, or investing in better technology to increase your overall operational efficiency.

5. Enhanced Cash Flow Management

Regularly checking the profitability of your offerings can also improve your cash flow management. Cash flow is the lifeblood of any business, and if certain products or services are tying up capital without generating profits, it can severely affect your bottom line.

For example, if you have a large inventory of slow-moving products, you might have money tied up in stock that isn't yielding a return. Profitability analysis helps you spot these issues early so you can take corrective action, such as reducing inventory levels, introducing promotions, or stopping poor-performing items.

Good cash flow management is also essential for covering operational costs, paying employees, and investing in future growth. By focusing on profitable products and services, you ensure that your cash flow is steady, and your business can run smoothly even during lean periods.

6. Better Customer Insights

Finally, regularly checking the profitability of your products and services can offer valuable insights into customer preferences and behavior. If certain items or services consistently perform better than others, it may be because they align more closely with your customers' needs, desires, or willingness to pay.

Understanding customer preferences allows you to make smarter decisions about inventory, marketing, and service offerings. Moreover, it enables you to tailor your business to meet the ever-changing demands of your target market.

Checking the profitability of the services and items you offer isn't just a financial exercise — it's a vital part of smart business management. By finding high-margin products, ending inefficiencies, adjusting pricing, and effectively use resources, you position your business for long-term success. Regular profitability analysis enables you to make informed decisions that enhance cash flow, reduce risks, and ultimately deliver more value to your customers. Whether you're just starting out or looking to optimize your existing offerings, understanding profitability is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal.

Please send your thoughts and comments on this article to Sharon Koehler at Sharonk.SRG@gmail.com.

Natural Stone Foundation Grants Funding to Global Standards Initiative

The Natural Stone Institute has received a grant from the Natural Stone Foundation to help offset ongoing costs for the ISO Technical Committee 327's work to establish a global set of standards for natural stone. The first standard will be published in 2025.

ISO Technical Committee 327 on Natural Stones is working to create a uniform set of standards for natural stone for members of ISO in over 150 countries. The committee currently has 13 global participating members (Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States), with another 10 national standards bodies observing. The Natural Stone Institute is working alongside ANSI, the official secretariat of this initiative. NSI Technical Director Chuck Muehlbauer currently serves as chair of the committee, while Test Laboratory Manager Scott Scallorn chairs the US TAG committee and a working group on test methods, offering additional input to the committee.

TC 327 is nearing completion of its first set of deliverables: global standards for stone testing and terminology. These standards will bring clarity to what governing documents and standards should be used when natural stone is utilized in a project involving multiple countries (for example: quarried in one country, fabricated in a second, and installed in a third). The ISO standards would be vital in this example, versus an instance where a product was quarried, fabricated, and installed in a single country.

2024 Natural Stone Foundation president Kevin Camarata (Camarata Masonry Systems) commented: "As the philanthropic arm of the Natural Stone Institute, the Natural Stone Foundation provides funding supporting globally unified standards for the natural stone industry. The ISO initiative is a multi-year effort that will ultimately benefit all participants by creating a globally uniform set of standards, nomenclature, and terms of business. It will alleviate misunderstandings about requirements and responsibilities and will provide

a single global standard that will be used as a governing guide for all things natural stone."

To learn more about NSI's ISO initiative, visit www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/ISO.

This initiative is one of several industry initiatives funded by the Foundation. The Foundation also provided funding for NSI's Silica & Slab Safety Certificate, which provides important training resources for employees in the industry. This resource has been widely utilized since launching in late 2023. A Spanish version of the certificate is set to debut in early 2025. To learn more about the Natural Stone Foundation's grant program, visit www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/foundationgrants.

About the Natural Stone Institute

The Natural Stone Institute is a trade association representing every aspect of the natural stone industry. The current membership exceeds 2,000 members in over 50 nations. The association offers a wide array of technical and training resources, professional development opportunities, regulatory advocacy, and networking events. Two prominent publications—the Dimension Stone Design Manual and Building Stone Magazine—raise awareness within the natural stone industry and in the design community for best practices and uses of natural stone. Learn more at naturalstoneinstitute.org.

About the International Surface Fabricators Association

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



R
ROCKHEAD
GROUP • USA
**ELEVATE
YOUR
BUSINESS**

EXCLUSIVE PROGRAM BENEFITS



BEST PRACTICES

Benefit from the collective wisdom of the group.



NETWORKING

Enhance your skills, exchange ideas, and connect with industry peers nationwide.



BENCHMARKING

Advance your business practices with our proprietary tools.



\$1.8B IN BUYING POWER

Unleash exclusive vendor programs that result in extraordinary savings.

**TAKE YOUR BUSINESS
TO THE NEXT LEVEL &
JOIN THE ELITE.**



CONTACT US

www.rockheadsusa.com

Rich Katzmann
Executive Director

(815) 210-1006

richk@rockheadsusa.com

ISFA 2025 Board of Directors

The International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA) welcomes five new members to its board of directors in 2025. Newly elected fabricator directors include Kellie Akins of Innovative Surfaces, Inc. located in Hastings, MN, Omar Chahin of GMD Surfaces in Mokena, IL, Troy Page of Ellis Page Company, LLC located in Manassas, VA, Sheri Pruitt of Alpha Countertops in Russellville, AR, and Chad Thompson of Redding Countertops found in Redding, CA.

“Our new board members are truly a great representation of our member companies and I’m looking forward to increased diversity of thought as ISFA moves forward into 2025” said Marissa Bankert, CEO of ISFA. “Our newly elected and returning board members are excited to collaborate and bring our association to the forefront of the fabrication industry.”

Returning to the board in 2025 are the following officers, directors, and associate representatives:

- Ted Sherritt, FLOFORM Countertops, will serve as president.
- Austin Maxwell, Maxwell Counters, will serve as acting secretary.
- Travis McDermott, McDermott Top Shop, will serve as vice president.
- Jessica McNaughton, Caragreen, will serve as treasurer.
- Joe Duszka, Carolina Custom Surfaces, will serve as director.
- Mike Henry, ASST, will serve as director.
- Meagan Hegland, Park Industries, will serve as an associate partner representative.
- Frank Sciarrino, Quote Countertops and Granite Gold, will serve as associate partner representative.

“Our leadership team is dedicated to the industry and to the fabricator community,” added Marissa. “Our entire Board is fully aware of the challenges faced by today’s fabricators and other professionals across the industry. They are dedicated to developing resources, programs and events that will elevate the association and be of value to our fabricator members.”

For more information about the International Surface Fabricators Association, visit www.ISFAnow.org.

© MARK ANDERSON. www.andertoons.com



“Delegating? Don’t we have people for that?”

The Slippery Rock Marketplace

Get the Latest in Industry News

STONE UPDATE MAGAZINE
Twice-monthly

Hard-Surface REPORT
Monitoring U.S. Imports
Every month

Slab & Sheet
Every 1st & 3rd Wednesday

Radio-STONE UPDATE
Every 2nd & 4th Wednesday

Scan the QR code

or go to www.stonemag.com/srg

Vibora

There's a new Viper in town

BBIndustriesLLC.com 800-575-4401

WOOD'S POWR-GRIP
WPG.COM
THE EASY & POWERFUL WAY TO HANDLE STONE

SUPPORT USA MANUFACTURING

EUROSTONE
QUALITY MARBLE IMPORTERS

Opportunity for Commission-Based Sales Broker Nationwide

Factory Direct Thassos White & Semi-White Marble

Call for more information
www.eurostonemarble.com • 713-521-1414

GET MORE COUNTERTOP LEADS

OUTSIDE OF WORD OF MOUTH & REFERRALS

BOOK A CALL

AT COUNTERTOPMARKETINGCO.COM
CALL (203) 480-0473

COUNTERTOP MARKETING CO.

2024 IS HISTORY!

Did you hit your **2024 GOALS?**

To make **2025** a stellar year, I would love to coach you to **SUCCESS!**

Let's get started on 2025!

<https://fabricatorscoach.com> Ed@FabricatorsCoach.com

BBI Closeouts

Everything on this page has been discounted for your benefit.
Grab 'em while supplies last!

To submit a print or online classified ad, use the online form at www.slipperyrockgazette.net/listing-form – you will be sent a confirmation email. Send other ad inquiries to: Publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net.

2025

CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINES

FEBRUARY 2025 ISSUE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2024

MARCH 2025 ISSUE

MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2025

Classified Ads not meeting guidelines will not be published.

For Sale

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

Turrini Claudio MB 50 Waterwall Dust Control Cabinet Stainless steel waterwall dust extraction cabinet. Unit used in natural stone shops to collect dust from the air during sanding. The MB water wall follows the guidelines of HSE Health and Safety Executive. 98.3% Dust suppression. 2 units available. \$5000 per unit. Located in Miami FL. Contact via email omar@stoneworksinc.com.

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

2001 Hensel CNC 5-Axis Bridge Saw, model 567/90P with rotary-table: model 559. Updated in Fall 2018 with Fagor Motors, drive controls, and new control panel. Will accommodate a 48-inch blade and will also come with blades. Located in Mosinee Mosinee, WI 54455. \$75,000 or best offer. Phone: 715-693-6300, Email: jeffk@krukowskistone.com.

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

CNC Donatoni JET 625: 6 years old. Automation of work process with minimal

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

Mantello B5J Bridge Saw: 20 HP blade motor • Variable speed forward & reverse • Motorized left & right bridge movement • Motorized up & down (14" span) • Manual bridge tilt to 45 degrees • Cutting length 350 cm (11 ½ feet) • High quality stainless steel covers • For mounting on block walls • Remote control panel • 2 blade covers for 10-inch up to 24-in. blades • Router Manual Turn Table (non-tilting) with two positive leg stops at 0 and 90 degrees. Asking \$10,000. Contact Unique Tile, email paul@uniquetile.com – Phone: 417-725-5515.

Weha Filter Project Dry Dust Collector. Fully functional 10-ft. (3 Meter) automatic Dry Dust Collector Booth System for sale. Make us an offer! Call/email for more information and to discuss price. Located in Glen Burnie, Maryland. Call 410-761-6336 or email britt@designtops.com.

2006 Noat Bridge Saw. Tilt table, 0-90 degree miter option, steel stands included, under power-220 volt, available end of December, Reason for selling: replacing with new saw. Located in Cadillac Michigan \$10,000. Contact: Phone: 231-775-7600, Email: cadillaccutstone@yahoo.com.

Business Opportunities

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-foot 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; Email: sdevine@warnert.com.

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

Buy Factory Direct – Quartz and Natural Stone: Looking for Fabricators who are willing to buy slabs directly from factories. The factory will do door step delivery at a minimum order quantity of one container– i.e 50 to 70 slabs at factory prices. For example, a Calacatta slab at \$8 per sq. ft. FOB. Write irshan.ahmad@tripurastones.in for delivery anywhere in USA. Phone: 0091-976-564-0720.

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.

Stone Countertop Fabricator. We are seeking a Granite Fabricator to become an integral part of Black Rock Design-Build Firm in 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 years experience with Granite fabrication and installation.. Drivers license required, Contact: Black Rock Granite and Cabinetry, Ltd. Phone: 828-482-4424, Email: gerri@blackrockdb.com.

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

Sawyer for High End Residential Construction – We are looking for well trained Sawyer to help a busy stone company located in Kailua Kona, Hawaii. We work with Natural Stone & Engineered Slab materials. **Skills Required:** Park Industries Gantry Saws: Yukon & Cougar, Park Pro-Edge and hand tools, extreme attention to details, good Communication skills. Must have valid drivers license & insurance. Must be able to take field measurements, templating and slab layout. Layout book matched stone slabs, Maintain the equipment. Contact: Stoneworks LLC Phone: 808-327-6555 Email: info@stoneworkspacific.com

The Slippery Rock Classifieds

STEINEX
WE SPLIT IT IN A SECOND

MENHIR 320 1300 X 600
w/ MP3RB, BTS & BTS

Call for PRICE – FOB
Whitehall, NY

- 352 TON SPLITTING FORCE
- 61" MAXIMUM OPENING
- 51.18" BLADE LENGTH
- 23.62" SPLITTING HEIGHT
- 22 KW PUMP UPGRADE
- 1.94" PER SECOND DESCENT
- 1.81" PER SECOND RETRACT
- MP 3RB MANIPULATING ARM
- HYDRAULIC FLUID HEATING ELEMENT
- BTS 3X1 INBOUND AND OUTBOUND CONVEYORS
- CURRENTLY IN STOCK IN WHITEHALL, NY 12887



(518) 499-0602
ApexEquipIntl@Aol.com

www.ApexEquipmentInternational.com

BECOME A STONE & TILE INSPECTOR

Stone Forensics is now offering its popular Stone Inspection Correspondence Seminar as an affordable, self-guided PowerPoint presentation.

Take Dr Fred's Stone and Tile Inspection course and learn how to take your skills to the next level as a certified stone inspector. Evaluate installations, understand crack propagation, troubleshoot failures, learn problem solving for stain removal, efflorescence, lippage, and more.

- Live 2024 Seminar Recording
- Complete Class Curriculum
- Self-Paced, Cost-Effective Learning

CALL 321-514-6845



Visit the Stone Forensics website/training page & see what attendees say about the class!

Visit www.stoneforensics.com



Selling 2 Saws

16 foot for \$15,000 and 13 foot for \$10,000 OBO

Sunshine Granite & Marble 907
Back Water Drive
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

Please email, call or stop in Mon-Fri, 8 am to 3:30 pm
727-463-0654

Ask for Sy or Maribeth
sunshinemarblegranite@yahoo.com

Help Wanted in Naples, Florida. Jim Lytell, Inc. is hiring for Marble and Stone Restoration Technicians. Will train, but experience preferred. Looking for a change? Call us today! Good driving record a must! Drug free company. Salary range – \$18-\$30,000. Contact: Jim Lytell, Inc. Phone: 239-948-3000 Email: office@jimlytellmarble.com.

“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.”

– Edmund Burke

Browns Canyon Sandstone

Building Sustainable Landscapes in Utah



Type of Stone: Sandstone
Quarried from: Utah

Karin Kirk

Reprint Courtesy usenaturalstone.org

Photos Courtesy Mountain Valley Stone

Map and chart © Karin Kirk, 2024

The stone contains sand grains that traveled from landscapes as far away as the Appalachian region, carried westward by a transcontinental river system, then lofted by wind across a vast desert. Eventually, the sand dunes were covered by rising seas and buried by other sediments, which helped transform the sand into layers of sandstone.

As the Rocky Mountains were uplifted, the sandstone was tilted and brought closer to the surface, providing a local building stone for the growing communities nearby.

From Masons to Quarry Owners

The Browns Canyon quarry taps into quartz-rich sandstone, which has a consistent grain and ranges in color from a light, warm grey to richly-colored russet brown. The quarry is owned and operated by the Mountain Valley Stone company, which has its roots as a masonry company. RJ Masonry was the largest customer of the sandstone, and they developed a keen understanding for the stone and its market. When the owners of RJ Masonry, Robert John Hicken (RJ) and Paul Ballif, were offered the option to purchase the Mountain Valley Stone quarry, they took the leap.

With some organizational changes and infrastructure upgrades, Robert and Paul sought to leverage their experience to

All photos courtesy Mountain Valley Stone and Delta Stone Products



Browns Canyon sandstone is quartz-rich and varies from a light, warm tan to a warm russet-brown. Customer base extends to Western U.S. and Canada.

When people in Park City, Utah imagine gold and silver, they're probably thinking about Olympic medals awarded to athletes who live and train in this chic alpine town. But Park City has a deeper connection to precious metals, because it's one of the state's richest sources of gold, silver, copper, lead, and zinc.

In the 1800s, long before the gorgeous ski runs and slopeside real estate, Park City was a bustling mining district with hundreds of mines and a thriving industry.

Today, the mining tradition continues – not just for metals but for natural stone as well. A few miles beyond Park City, near the small town of Peoa, Utah, sits the Browns Canyon quarry, the source of robust sandstone seen frequently in Park City architecture and landscape design.

This sandstone is known geologically as the Nugget Sandstone, and it was once one of the world's largest expanses of sand dunes. It formed during the age of dinosaurs, 145 million years ago, during the Jurassic and Cretaceous Periods.

serve the local mason market while also expanding their out-of-state customer base.

Their bet turned out to be correct. In 1999, the quarry area was roughly the size of an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Today, it is hundreds of feet deep and covers more than 150 acres, and the stone is distributed nationwide.

A Natural Stone for Natural Landscapes

The Browns Canyon quarry produces both light tan and red quartz-rich sandstone. Their most popular stone is the Browns Canyon Blond, which has developed a loyal following as a locally-sourced, durable material. Many of Mountain Valley Stone's customers are located in the Western U.S. and Canada. The company works with homeowners, contractors, architects and designers, but their largest focus is masons and landscapers. Naturally, a local stone suits the setting perfectly, helping landscapes and buildings appear at ease in their spectacular alpine setting.

The City Creek Center in Salt Lake City is a stunning example of using Browns Canyon stone to create a naturalized water feature, as a creek bounces down boulders and among aspen trees in the midst of a mixed-use urban development featuring retail shopping, dining, and offices, and apartments.

Utah White Limestone

The company added a second quarry near Gunnison, Utah, which is about 130 miles south of the Brown's Canyon quarry. The Utah White Limestone is ivory white with a uniform texture and coloring, which presents as a smooth, white surface. The stone is well suited for contemporary designs. The Winter Ridge variation is a light, golden tan, blending effortlessly with the colors of the surrounding landscape.

[Please turn to page 23](#)



Browns Canyon Sandstone

Continued from page 22



The main quarry near Peoa, Utah covers more than 150 acres. A sister company, Delta Stone Products, also handles fabrication and distribution.

the entire operation highly efficient. The quarry also uses water that is collected in the mine for dust suppression.

Delta Stone Products is a Platinum Certified sustainable fabricator, a distinction only awarded to two fabricators in the U.S. and Canada.

In an era where just about any company can try to boost their environmental credibility, an independent, rigorous standard is the real deal. Because of this rigorous certification, architects and homeowners can be assured that stone for their projects is produced to the highest standards in the industry. By making sustainability a priority, the entire Mountain Valley Stone operation can keep its eye on the future and help to ensure that these beautiful mountain landscapes are preserved for many generations to come.

Karin Kirk is a geologist and science educator with over 20 years of experience and brings a different perspective to the stone industry topics. Karin is a regular contributor to usenaturalstone.com, NASA, and the Slippery Rock Gazette. Contact her at karinkirk@gmail.com. This article is part of an ongoing series about American quarries.

Local Quarries; Local Fabrication
Mountain Valley Stone partners with its sister company, Delta Stone Products, for fabrication and distribution of their stones. This facility is located in between the two quarries, keeping the entire supply chain close to home, which saves both money and time.

Certified Sustainable from Quarry To Fabrication

Mountain Valley Stone is a platinum rated quarry by the ANSI/NSI 373 standards. To minimize waste, 95% of all the material mined is used either for landscaping stone, building products, or aggregate. The other 5% of material that cannot be used for stone products is used for reclamation purposes, making

Browns Canyon Quartz Sandstone
Peoa, Utah

Quarried by:
Mountain Valley Stone

Products:
Flagstone, boulders
landscaping stone, tumbled
stone, building veneer,
architectural stone

Applications:
Landscaping, water features,
stone walls, residential and
commercial projects – with
styles ranging from traditional to
contemporary

Local connections:

- New Utah White Limestone quarried nearby
- Local fabrication at Delta Stone Products

Sustainability - ANSI/NSI 373 Platinum certified
Quarry and fabrication have both attained the industry's highest standard for sustainable production



 American stones series

NSI and ISFA Announce Silica Exposure Literature Review

NSI and ISFA are proud to present a literature review that summarizes the growing library of studies related to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) exposure. Completed by Yale Occupational and Environmental Medicine, the study covers 34 publications and documents focused primarily on materials and work methods specific to RCS exposure from the fabrication of natural and engineered stone countertops.

The study of this literature aims to showcase key findings, trends, and conclusions from the publications, and highlights strengths and weaknesses from each. The anticipated result of this review was to identify the primary cause(s) of risk for RCS exposure and to identify effective controls and work methods to reduce or eliminate future silicosis cases. A major finding of this review is the need for additional and more detailed research into products, control strategies, and the need for increased RCS workplace air sampling and medical evaluations of workers.

NSI and ISFA are hopeful that by sharing this information, industry stakeholders will gain a better understanding of best practices and effective control strategies. We

also hope that this will lead to safer workplaces for industry stakeholders and their employees.

The full literature review can be found online on NSI's silica safety page. A second report analyzing data from a recent air sampling study from NSI and ISFA members will be available later this year. An additional literature review on medical-related studies is planned for 2025. Learn more at www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/silica.

“Agriculture is not crop production as popular belief holds - it's the production of food and fiber from the world's land and waters. Without agriculture it is not possible to have a city, stock market, banks, university, church or army. Agriculture is the foundation of civilization and any stable economy.”

- Allan Savory

SLIPPERY ROCK GAZETTE
4100 APPALACHIAN WAY
KNOXVILLE, TN 37918

PRSR-STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Knoxville, Tn
Permit #255

YOUR COMPLETE SINK DISTRIBUTOR

Same-Day Shipping
Faster Service Guarantee

Envy[™]
DESIGNER SINKS



Shop Envy Sinks



BBIndustriesLLC.com

**Quality Stainless Steel, Porcelain
and NEW Composite Sinks**

Call NOW for the Industry's BEST Pricing!

BBI **B·B·INDUSTRIES**
Better Service • Better Value

See our Sink
display at TISE
Booth 3823

Call 1-800-575-4401

or Order Online www.BBIndustriesLLC.com

Get Integra at



BB Industries is the **LARGEST**
National Distributor for
Integra with over 250 colors
IN STOCK!

Integra products are trusted,
pre-colored seaming and
assembly adhesives formulated
for quartz, natural stone,
sintered materials, solid surface,
and more.

*Meets or Exceeds Indoor
Air Quality standards*

Integra Adhesives are the tube
innovator and have the best color
match website to make it the
easiest in the industry.
**All others are just
imposters!**



BB Industries is the **LARGEST**
National Distributor for
Integra with over 250 colors



Integra Adhesives

BBI **B·B·INDUSTRIES**
Better Service • Better Value

Three Easy Ways to Partner with BBI



- Phone
- Web
- In Person

Shopping with BBI is so EASY!

www.BBIndustriesLLC.com

800-575-4401