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From the Publisher's Desk

Dear Readers,

It's been an upswing year for construction in general and decorative concrete appears to have gained a solid foothold in the market. In turn, trade organizations across the board have reported a surge in membership in 2016. The American Society of Concrete Contractors, for instance, is enjoying its highest level of membership, having just passed 600 and still growing. The newly formed Concrete Polishing Council, a result of the Concrete Polishing Association of America's merger with the American Society of Concrete Contractors, makes that organization more resourceful.



I think this increase in association membership has a lot to do with more people finally having cash again, rather than just making it from payday to payday. With their pockets more padded than they have been in recent years and with a steady workload on the horizon, many can now afford to support the industry that supports them and their endeavors. Long-time members will tell you that with associations such as the ASCC, you'll benefit from the collective knowledge of the concrete industry that's shared between members.

And here's some exciting news to share concerning *Concrete Decor* and the 2017 World of Concrete. We'll be sponsoring an event called Decorative Concrete LIVE! in the Concrete Surfaces & Decorative Lot located in front of South Hall. Here, top artisans and innovators from across the USA and around the world will gather to showcase the best in architectural and decorative concrete. We talked with a lot of movers and shakers at the recent Concrete Decor Show in San Diego as to what they'd like to see. Suffice it to say, this event is shaping up to be something spectacular.

Along the lines of more spectacular news, we've nailed down the site for the 2017 Concrete Decor Show. We're heading to Birmingham, Alabama, in October 2017, ya'll, for a visit in the "Heart of Dixie" and to partake in some old-fashioned Southern hospitality.

Finally, turn the pages of this issue and peruse our training guide and related articles. Education and training are so very important to our industry's well-being and reputation. Staying abreast with new trends, methods and products helps keep products out of the consumers' hands and in the hands of a knowledgeable workforce. It's up to you to be in charge of what you can do with your hands. Sign up for a class today so you can be prepared for many tomorrows.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen
Publisher

On the cover: Petersen Automotive Museum houses cars from all over the world, including vintage cars, race cars and famous Hollywood cars. The Los Angeles museum features 90,000 square feet of polishing and 10,000 square feet of Ardex PC-T overlay that creates a polished concrete look. For the full story, see page 33.

Photo courtesy of Mark Beamish Waterproofing

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concrete DECOR® EXPERTS



Kimberly Kayler is president of Constructive Communication Inc., a full-service marketing communications firm she founded in 2001 that specializes in the concrete industry. She is a member of the board of direction for the American Concrete Institute and serves on a variety of industry committees as a volunteer. Contact Kimberly at kkayler@constructivecommunication.com or (614) 873-6706. See her article on page 22.



Karen Keyes wears many hats at Denver-based Colorado Hardscapes Inc., including business development, marketing, sales, estimating and project management, with an emphasis on specialty rock construction. She can be reached at karen@coloradohardscapes.com. See Karen's article on page 24.



Rick Lobdell, a classically trained artist with a master's in fine arts in painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design, has also studied math and drafting. In this series, the owner of Concrete Mystique Engraving in Tennessee will explain how he lays out his well-known designs. He can be reached at rick@concretemystique.com. See his column, "Design Theory," on page 50.



Lane Mangum, vice president of business services for the Concrete Countertop Institute, started off in 2002 as the marketing and sales manager for Jeff Girard's concrete countertop business. In a few short years, she transitioned the company from a hobby-level business to a dominant regional fabricator of concrete countertops. For more information, visit www.ConcreteCountertopInstitute.com. See Lane's article on page 44.



David Stephenson owns Polished Concrete Consultants, based in Dallas, Texas. As a consultant, he offers decorative concrete programs for retailers and troubleshooting for a wide range of clients. Contact him at david@polishedconsultants.com. See his column, "The Polishing Consultant," on page 46.



Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. and a member of the Concrete Decor Hall of Fame. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net. See his column, "Concrete Questions," on page 48.

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THE TRAINING GUIDE helps you find training opportunities that fit the specific needs of decorative concrete experts, beginners and everyone in between.

This print Training Guide tells you which service providers offer different types of training. The online Training & Events Calendar at ConcreteDecor.net tells you when and where classes are being held. Online calendar information is updated on a daily basis. Have questions? Give *Concrete Decor* a call at (877) 935-8906.

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GranQuartz		●	●	●					
Increte Systems, the Decorative Brand of Euclid Chemical	●	●	●	●				●	●
Jon-Don	●	●							
Super-Krete Products by Arizona Polymer Flooring Inc.	●	●	●	●				●	●
Trinic LLC	●	●	●	●				●	
Westcoat	●	●	●	●				●	

STAMPING & TEXTURING

(Includes Antiquing Agents, Borders/Liners, Engraving, Photoengraving, Releases, Sandblasting, Stamps, Texture Mats)

	Seminars			Online		Books	DVD/CD	AIA Credit	Offered in Spanish
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Job Site Training/Consulting	Webinars				
Brickform / Solomon Colors	●	●							
Butterfield Color Inc.	●	●	●	●				●	●
Concrete Decor Show	●	●	●			●	●		
Duraamen Engineered Products Inc.	●	●	●						
GranQuartz		●	●	●					
Increte Systems, the Decorative Brand of Euclid Chemical	●	●	●	●				●	●
Westcoat	●	●	●	●				●	



POOLS & WATER FEATURES

(Includes Pool Decks/Coping, Water Features)

	Seminars			Online		Books	DVD/CD	AIA Credit	Offered in Spanish
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Job Site Training/Consulting	Webinars				
Quikspray Inc.	●	●	●	●					

RESTORATION & MAINTENANCE

(Includes Cleaning, Color & Aggregate Matching, Color Restoration, Crack Repair, Grout Repair, Patching, Resealing, Resurfacing, Sealing)

	Seminars			Online		Books	DVD/CD	AIA Credit	Offered in Spanish
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Job Site Training/Consulting	Webinars				
Blastrac of North America	●	●	●	●	●				
Brickform / Solomon Colors	●	●						●	
Concrete Decor Show	●	●	●			●	●		
Duraamen Engineered Products Inc.	●	●	●						
GranQuartz		●	●	●		●			
Increte Systems, the Decorative Brand of Euclid Chemical	●	●	●	●					●
Jon-Don	●	●							
Super-Krete Products by Arizona Polymer Flooring Inc.	●	●	●	●		●			

VERTICAL APPLICATIONS & HARDSCAPES

(Includes Faux Effects, Outdoor Space Design, Outdoor Kitchens, Shotcrete Applications, Wall Carving)

	Seminars			Online		Books	DVD/CD	AIA Credit	Offered in Spanish
	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Job Site Training/Consulting	Webinars				
Brickform / Solomon Colors	●	●							
Butterfield Color Inc.	●	●	●	●				●	
Concrete Decor Show	●	●	●			●	●		
Increte Systems, the Decorative Brand of Euclid Chemical	●	●	●	●				●	●
Quikspray Inc.	●	●	●						
Trinic LLC	●	●	●	●				●	

CPAA merges with ASCC

The Concrete Polishing Association of America is merging with the American Society of Concrete Contractors to become the Concrete Polishing Council, a specialty council of ASCC. The ASCC has three other councils: the Decorative Concrete Council, the Safety & Risk Management Council and the Manufacturer’s Advisory Council.

CPAA was formed in 2010 to provide standards, education and a professional network for the concrete polishing industry. As an ASCC council, the group will continue to be a resource for contractors, designers and owners involved with specifying, installing and maintaining polished concrete.

CPAA was managed by Creative Association Management, a subsidiary of the American Concrete Institute. “This move does not reflect dissatisfaction with our previous management firm,” said Chad Gill, CPAA president. “CAM made us more solid and credible, increasing membership and adding significantly to the substance of the organization. We become part of ASCC as a strong coalition of polishing companies, ready to take our next steps.”

Since polishing contractors work closely with placement contractors, it made sense for the CPAA to merge with the ASCC, Gill said. “Combining with the ASCC, we now have an unrivaled depth of technical and real-world knowledge about how to deliver

the best possible end product. Our members will be exposed to an array of new benefits and resources (and)... our customers will see the benefits of a synergistic relationship between the canvas and the deliverable.”

“We, too, believe there is symmetry between the goals of both groups that makes this a logical union,” said Bev Garnant, ASCC executive director.

ASCC specialty councils elect a council board of directors and have their own bylaws. Councils have an independent strategic plan while still being wholly involved and in step with the mission of the ASCC.

The ASCC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the capabilities of those who build with concrete and providing them with a unified voice in the construction industry. Members include concrete contracting firms, manufacturers, suppliers and others interested in the concrete industry, such as architects, specifiers and distributors. There are approximately 600 member companies in the U.S. and 14 foreign countries.

www.asconline.org

(866) 788-2722

ACI releases documents on new structural concrete specifications

The American Concrete Institute recently published two important new documents for concrete industry professionals: “ACI 301-16 Specifications for Structural Concrete” and “ACI Field Reference Manual.”

The ACI 301-16 is a reference specification that an architect or engineer can apply to any construction project involving structural concrete by citing it in the project specifications. A mandatory

requirements checklist and an optional requirements checklist are provided to assist the architect or engineer in supplementing the provisions of this specification as required or needed by designating or specifying individual project requirements.

The document complements the completely reorganized “ACI 318-14 Building Code Requirements for Structural Concrete.” This enables the designer to use the 301 specifications to complement the design. The specifications are totally inclusive of virtually all forms of structural concrete that are used in the building construction industry.

The reference manual is a compilation of ACI 301-16 specifications, along with other pertinent ACI documents.

www.concrete.org

(248) 848-3700

MIT research bolsters concrete campaign backed by NRCMA

A new study, “A Break-Even Hazard Mitigation Metric” released by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, reaffirms the importance of using durable materials in construction. The report confirms the validity of recent efforts by Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, to educate the design/build and construction communities in Seattle, Washington, about the importance of using durable and resilient construction materials.

Using a new tool known as BEMP (Break Even Mitigation Percent), people can now estimate the cost of weather hazards. The study found a \$10 million nonengineered wood building is expected to face more than half a million dollars in hazard-related damages over 50 years, while a \$10 million engineered-concrete building is expected to face only \$165,000 over the same period.

MIT’s research is particularly useful to Seattle’s low- to mid-rise residential sector because residents are more vulnerable to the weather-related hazards than other parts of the country.

In other news, the NRMCA coalition also released a new video looking back at Chicago’s construction development in the aftermath of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and the use of noncombustible materials in the city ever since.

www.buildwithstrength.com

EVENT CALENDAR

EPIC 2016 – The Regatta

Oct. 20-22, Covington, Ga.

www.buddyrhodes.com/epic-2016

American Concrete Institute Convention

Oct. 23-27, Philadelphia, Pa.

www.concrete.org

American Concrete Paving Association Annual Meeting

Nov. 29 – Dec. 1, Austin, Texas

www.acpa.org

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Register now for the 2017 expo in Vegas

To save money, register now for CONEXPO-CON/AGG and IFPE 2017 with new Badge-Packs for added value and convenience, and access to the new Tech Experience. In addition to exhibits, the expo will feature in-depth industry education, with flexible education ticket options to fit attendee needs and schedules.

CONEXPO-CON/AGG and the co-located IFPE exhibitions will be held March 7-11 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, spotlighting the latest technologies, products and best practices for the construction and construction materials and fluid power/power transmission/motion control industries.

Attendees also will have access to the new 75,000-plus square-foot Tech Experience, which will showcase the ideas and technologies that will transform the future of construction to enhance safety, productivity and profitability.

☎ (800) 867-6060

🌐 www.conexpoconagg.com

Aggretext partners with Heritage Glass

Aggretext Systems LLC, a leading manufacturer in the decorative concrete flooring industry, has formed a strategic partnership with Heritage Glass Inc., a premiere supplier of decorative glass aggregates that are widely used in terrazzo and embedded aggregate concrete floors. The newly inked relationship allows Aggretext customers the ability to source Aggretext products and specialty glass aggregates from Heritage with a single order.

Aggretext has been an innovator in embedded aggregate material for concrete surfaces for almost a decade. Contractors, designers and clients rely on the company's consistent quality materials and product support. Featuring a unique, patented wet-on-wet installation system, Aggretext can be a huge time saver in new pours as well as being finished in place on existing concrete sub floors.

☎ (800) 350-6021

🌐 www.aggretext.com

Sandy Springs, Ga., amends code

In August, the Sandy Springs, Georgia, City Council voted unanimously to amend the city's building code to include new requirements that prohibit combustible building materials from being used in certain building elements, such as the structural frame and load-bearing walls, in structures above three stories and more than 100,000 square feet.

The regulation, effective immediately, comes at a time when many cities have instituted a requirement for construction with enhanced quality materials that increase the resiliency of buildings. The amended code is based on City Council findings, which determined local climactic, geologic, topographic and public safety conditions justified the amendment.

In order to create easily accessible development regulations that integrate the adopted state regulations, the mayor and council locally amended the state minimum standard building code to provide for increased building quality, sustainability, durability and longevity, while revitalizing the areas zoned for uses other than what is currently developed.

The new ordinance provides assurance to not only the occupants, but also the fire safety professionals who adjust their firefighting strategy based on the composition of a building.

🌐 www.buildwithstrength.com

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Circle Reader Service Number 14

Flex-C-Ment Systems division is rebranded as Stone Edge Surfaces

Turley International Resources LLC, the owner of mining, quarry, packaging and fulfillment operations in the U.S. and New Zealand, and parent company of Consolidated Aggregates, Wet Edge Technologies and Flex-C-Ment Systems, has rebranded its Flex-C-Ment division to the new brand of Stone Edge Surfaces.

Eight years ago, Turley International purchased Flex-C-Ment and has been operating the division under that name. During the past eight years, the company has spent millions of dollars enhancing, testing and improving every formulation, additive and aggregate it uses.

“Our scientifically enhanced formulations, when combined with our incredibly high-grade aggregate and proprietary pigments, all of which are only produced in our quarries and facilities, make a better, more consistent and easier to use mix that looks more realistic,” says Laurence Turley, Turley International’s chairman and CEO. “It’s also stronger, lasts

longer, and resists cracking from stress and freeze/thaw.” To help enhance its products, the company has been buying and licensing quarries, and upgrading all of its packaging and processing facilities.

“Our rebranding is a lot more than just a name change,” Turley says. “We are introducing a new logo, product names, and over the next few months we will roll out new professional packaging with upgraded bag and bottle designs to add strength and enhanced mixing capabilities.”

☎ (480) 380-6253

🌐 www.turleyinternational.com

ICRI launches certification program for concrete repair inspectors

The International Concrete Repair Institute has developed a new certification program based on industry demand and code language for those interested in becoming a repair technician and inspector for the performance of concrete surface repairs.

ICRI’s Concrete Surface Repair Technician certification program offers enrollees the ability to become

professionally qualified as a concrete surface repair inspector through a two-tier program, including training modules and exams, all for one registration price.

CSRT is a competency-based program using current best practices for online training and evaluation. The educational component is presented and tested online while the performance component is tested both online and assessed by observable criteria (video submission or live recorded).

Inside this program, ICRI offers a two-tier certification process. Tier 1 was designed for those not regularly engaged with concrete surface repair while Tier 2 was created for those who seek full certification.

🌐 www.icri.com

Correction

The photos that ran with the La Jolla Village Square article on p. 49 of the August/September issue of *Concrete Decor* should have been credited to Westcoat. We apologize for the mix-up.

TRANSITIONS

Bruce Grogg has joined the Turley International Resources LLC team and will head up the growth of its decorative concrete and overlay division as it transitions from Flex-C-Ment to the new brand of Stone Edge Surfaces. As Stone Edge Surfaces new president, Grogg brings years of experience in branding, manufacturing, distribution, sales and marketing. Turley International is also the parent company of Consolidated Aggregates and Wet Edge Technologies, and owns mining, quarry, packaging and fulfillment operations in the U.S. and New Zealand.



Scott Carnell has recently been appointed president of the U.S. division of Atlas Copco Construction. He succeeds Erik Sparby who has accepted the role of general manager, Customer Center CR Greater China. Carnell brings more than 32 years of industry experience to his role, the last 10 of which have been with Atlas Copco. Just prior to his new role, Carnell was president of Atlas

Copco Rental in North America, based in LaPorte, Texas. He’ll be based in Rock Hill, South Carolina, where the company’s new 180,000-square-foot manufacturing facility will open in spring 2017.

Russell Ayers has been named director of customer service for Lackmond Products Inc., a leading supplier of diamond tools, carbide tools and equipment. In this position, he’ll oversee the company’s inside sales strategies and operations for both the Lackmond Products and Lackmond Stone divisions. Previously, he worked for UPS for 38 years.



To fill unexpired terms with the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, **David Koppenhof**, executive director OEM sales and support with Cummins Inc., has been elected to the AEM board of directors, and **Scott Harris**, vice president of Case Construction North America and CNH Industrial, has been elected to the AEM CE sector board. AEM is the

North American-based international trade group representing off-road equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

Brian Hazelton, CEO of Schwing America, recently left the company to pursue a new leadership position in the recreational vehicle industry.

The American Concrete Institute has promoted **Melinda G. Reynolds**, CAE, to director of membership and customer service. She has been managing the member services department at ACI since 2002.

Richard “Dick” McDermott of the All Family of Companies has been promoted to national service manager. He’s based in Chicago, where All operates as Central Contractors Service. He started with Central in 1991 as a crane mechanic and in 2001 was promoted to service manager and equipment superintendent of the Chicago location.



ESR-3010 design complies with IBC

Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute has received confirmation from ICC Evaluation Service LLC that its ESR-3010 Precast Concrete Diaphragm seismic design methodology complies with the provisions of the 2012 and 2015 International Building Code.

This confirmation, as evidenced in ICC-ES evaluation report ESR-3010, provides guidance to code officials faced with approving the use of precast concrete diaphragm seismic design methodology under these codes. The evaluation report is based on acceptance criteria for "Alternative Seismic Design of Precast Concrete Diaphragms and Qualification of Precast Concrete Diaphragm Connectors (AC468)" dated June 2016.

In the 2018 International Building Code, this design methodology will be mandatory for precast concrete used as horizontal diaphragms in buildings assigned to Seismic Design Category C, D, E or F, and optional in SDC B according to ASCE 7-16. Through the use of ICC-ES evaluation report ESR-3010 and the approval of the local code official, a design professional can immediately use this state-of-the-art design methodology for precast concrete diaphragms without waiting until their jurisdiction adopts the 2018 IBC.

PCI releases environmental impact report

The precast concrete industry is striving to reduce its environmental impact at the manufacturing level through the North American Precast Concrete Sustainable Plant Program. The NAPCSPP is designed to encourage continuous improvement in the plants and allow individual plants to benchmark against their industry peers.

Energy, materials and transportation data are tracked and results are reported in the following categories: carbon dioxide equivalent (global warming potential), total primary energy and water consumption.

Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute members have been reporting environmental impacts for 18 months, beginning the first quarter of 2015. This annual report includes moving averages for PCI members during 2015. A list of participating PCI plants and the PCI Sustainable Plant Performance Report can be found on the PCI website.

The NAPCSPP is a joint initiative for the members of PCI, the Canadian Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute and the National Precast Concrete Association.

www.pci.org

It's a snap to win a Ram

Trade professionals know that getting the job done right demands a combination of attitude, skill and the right tools. Bosch is one company that understands the commitment it takes and that's what the "Stand By Your Work" Sweepstakes is all about — showing pride in what you do.

Taking part in the "Stand By Your Work" sweepstakes, which runs from Sept. 2 through Nov. 30, 2016, is easy. All you need to do is get a picture of yourself on a job site or with a completed project and send it off to the Bosch sweepstakes' website. Entries will be posted on a rotating online display that captures submissions to create one larger photo.

One lucky winner will walk away with the grand prize of a \$50,000 credit toward his or her choice of a new Dodge Ram truck or van.

www.boschstandbyyourwork.com

Westcoat relocates San Diego headquarters

Westcoat Specialty Coating Systems has moved to its new location at 4007 Lockridge St., San Diego, CA 92102. Staying close to its roots, the business acquired the building so it could combine the corporate offices with its manufacturing facilities that were previously in separate locations.

Owner Paul Koury says, "This new building has allowed us to bring together the two parts of the company in one location and become a more cohesive team, especially more efficient to serve our customers better."

The building underwent some major changes to suit Koury's vision for his new headquarters. Windows and doors were cut in the second floor for the offices upstairs, an old awning was removed to place a balcony deck for employee breaks or outside work space, and the building was painted with a Westcoat-manufactured acrylic top coat.

Koury, who believes in using his own building for research and development, chose to resurface the showroom with his terrazzo-like flooring system. Also, the balcony deck has three different waterproofing systems installed side by side.

"When we have this kind of R&D on site it allows for truly controlled testing as well as day-to-day monitoring. I really enjoy it," Koury says, adding that current Westcoat systems were used throughout the whole building.

To celebrate the move and the building's new look, Westcoat hosted an open house on the last day of the Concrete Decor Show in September.

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HALL OF FAME

Roster Grows by Four

THE prestigious Decorative Concrete Hall of Fame, established in 2010 by Professional Trade Publications, welcomes four men into its hallowed halls this year. Dan Sieben, one of the founders of Bomanite, along with his Bomanite cohort, John “Jack” Dryden, are among the 2016 honorees. Joe Garceau of Butterfield Colors and George Lacker of GLC3 Concrete and Couture Concrete Systems round out this year’s selection. Sieben and Garceau were honored with plaques at a dinner Sept. 26 during the Concrete Decor Show events in San Diego. Lacker and Dryden were inducted posthumously.

The Decorative Concrete Hall of Fame recognizes individuals and companies whose contributions have impacted the future of decorative concrete, both as a business and an art form. Since the Hall of Fame’s inception, 26 individuals and two companies have been bestowed this honor for unselfishly giving their time, energies, loyalty and resources to help the decorative concrete industry not only grow but flourish.

Honorees are chosen by Hall of Fame members. They are as follows:

John T. Dryden

AFTER World War II ended, John “Jack” Dryden, a flight instructor for the Marine Corps during the war, chose a confirmed job in construction over



college. By the mid ’50s, he became a general contractor and, by the mid ’60s, had built more than 1,000 homes in Southern California. That’s where Dryden met Brad Bowman, discovered Bowman’s stamped concrete and got involved with the fledgling Bomanite company.

By the 1970s, Dryden was installing this “ornamented concrete” throughout Southern California around model homes, in malls and such — with the highest profile job a pool deck for Richard Nixon’s home in San Clemente — and helped develop the blueprint for Bomanite’s franchise agreements. At the request of several landscape architects, he introduced a stamped-concrete/wax installation system that wasn’t grouted, significantly giving stamped concrete a cost advantage over actual tile or masonry surfaces.

In the ensuing years, he trained contractors for Bomanite all over the United States, Europe, Latin America and Asia. Always a stickler for the perfect product, Dryden remained in the business until he retired in the early ’80s. He passed away in 1999 at the age of 78.

Joe Garceau

AFTER working summers in high school for a local concrete contractor, Joe Garceau started his own concrete contracting business in 1977 when he was just 18. In 1979, he began installing decorative concrete, which was very rudimentary back then. It was a perfect fit for the creative-minded Garceau, who loved inventing and building things.



His brother, Jerry, joined him in business in 1984 and they created their first urethane concrete stamp. From there they continued to perfect the decorative concrete craft through new stamps and coloring techniques, using what they had learned and designed on their own concrete jobs.

By 1994, the brothers founded Butterfield Color Inc., a decorative concrete manufacturer headquartered in Aurora, Illinois, with warehouses today in Temple, Texas, and Salem, Oregon. Their sales success is based on the simple understanding that every bag of color, concrete stamp or bucket of sealer they make is an integral part of someone’s concrete job, all of which are important.

Garceau says he’s proud his company has become a place for 40+ employees to work together building something while supporting their families. He’s also happy Butterfield’s able to support various industry and charitable organizations, including the local homeless shelter.

George Lacker

GEOERGE Lacker, who was posthumously inducted, passed away unexpectedly last March while on a business trip. The 62-year-old began his concrete career when he was just 16 years old placing industrial floors for Baker Concrete in Ohio. In the mid ’90s, he began staining and polishing floors in such notable places as the Hard Rock Café in Hollywood, the Ritz-Carlton in West Palm Beach and Sloppy Joe’s in Key West.



Lacker owned GLC3 Concrete and Couture Concrete Systems in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and in 1996 he debuted his acclaimed Concretativity, a cementitious topping that can be applied from 3/8 to 2 inches thick, as an alternative to more traditional toppings.

During his lifetime, he received recognition and awards from *Concrete Decor*, *Concrete Construction* and *Residential Concrete* magazines, as well as the *Concrete Network* and *Artistry in Concrete* at the *World of Concrete*. A staunch supporter of many of *Concrete Decor*’s endeavors, he remains among the first sponsors of the newly launched *RoadShow*.

Among the family members he left behind is Cathye Rankin, his life and business partner of 28 years. She fondly remembers his “Wizard of Oz” role, “Because George was a lion, king of his concrete.”

Dan Sieben

DAN Sieben, 74, is a perpetual entrepreneur who co-founded the Bomanite Corp. in 1970 when he was just 27 years old. He served as president/CEO of Bomanite, a worldwide leader in the franchising of specialty concrete paving and flooring construction products, and in 1989 left the business to explore other entrepreneurial activities.



According to his vitae, his “overriding personal mission is to bring ideas, people, money, technology and organizations together in private or nonprofit companies to make a sustainable, lasting, measurable difference in the quality of peoples’ lives.”

Since leaving Bomanite, he’s been the founder and initial CEO in a number of small startups that achieved varying degrees of success. Currently, he is involved with Venture Partners Ltd., a company formed to bring the ambulatory surgery industry to Latin America, and is working on a project whose mission is to build and operate high-quality elder-care communities in Mexico.

Sieben received his Master in Business Administration from Columbia University and his bachelor’s from Northwestern University. Fluent in Spanish, he and his wife, Kay, of 40 years live in Mexico and have two daughters and five grandchildren. 🚗


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Circle Reader Service Number 16

HTC launches new floor grinder line

Swedish company HTC recently launched Duratiq, a newly developed floor grinder. The machine is available in two grinding widths, 600 and 800 millimeters. Both versions are completely new designs and are based on many years of intensive studies of the future needs of customers.

Some of the 100 new features incorporated into Duratiq are:

- Newly designed digital control panel and remote control that offer even new operators full control and easy handling.
- New grinding head, hermetically sealed and dustproof for maximum reliability.
- Compact, robust chassis design for optimal maneuverability, handling and simple transport.
- Enhanced AirFlow technology and Mist Cooler System that increase productivity by up to 216 percent and dust collection by 100 percent.
- Simple-to-adjust weights, 20 different handle settings and 74 percent less vibration ensure significantly improved ergonomics.

Since Duratiq has been designed from scratch by HTC's own R&D department, no detail has been left to chance. The numerous smart features include GPS tracking and USB ports to download operating data, upload new software and charge personal equipment.

CEO Stefan Lind emphasizes that this is the most pioneering launch in the company's history. Some 29 years ago, HTC developed the method for grinding concrete floors using diamond abrasive technology and the step being taken now with the launch of Duratiq is almost as huge for the company, he said.

"As a company, HTC's fundamental motivating force is to always be at the forefront of development," Lind said. "Duratiq is proof of HTC's innovativeness for the whole industry."

Duratiq grinding machines have been tested for more than 5,000 hours before the launch. Because of the precise, yet extremely robust design, of every single detail, the service interval is an impressive 1,000 hours. Thanks to a new modular structure and meticulous design detail, it is easier than ever to replace high-wear parts.

www.duratiq.com



Painter's Comb improved design speeds up brush cleaning

Wooster brushes are made to last, but heavy paint buildup shortens their lifespans. With the improved Painter's Comb, professionals and consumers can thoroughly care for and maximize performance of their favorite Wooster paintbrushes.

The Wooster Painter's Comb now features a streamlined design with a shorter handle. Made with two unique sides, it combines the benefits of a traditional pin-style comb with a powerful yet gentle wire brush.

Break down thick paint residue on brush filaments with the nonrusting brass bristles, which can also clean the handle and ferrule without scratching. The comb side has 10 stainless-steel pins for separating filaments to thoroughly clean out the paintbrush heel and for reshaping the brush after cleaning to keep a sharp edge.

The 1832 Wooster Painter's Comb features brand-new, full-color packaging and retails for \$9.

[\(800\) 392-7246](tel:8003927246)

www.woosterbrush.com

Patent-pending method fills and repairs concrete control joints

E-Z Pour, a revolutionary method of filling concrete control joints, has just been unveiled by Solid Solution Products, a polyurea and urethane developer and equipment manufacturer for concrete joint fill and repair. This new, patent-pending, polyurea mixing and placing system is designed to fill the gap between traditional, cumbersome polyurea cartridges and high-end joint-fill machines. E-Z Pour offers concrete contractors speed, easy mixing and

placing, and 24 standard colors with custom colors available.

Listening to the concrete contractor marketplace and hearing its frustrations with traditional polyurea cartridges caused SSP's Brian Bowers to dream up the idea of changing the packaging and methodology of polyurea mixing and placing. With his decades of experience in working directly with contractors in the field, he knew the new joint-fill method had to be simple, cost effective and contractor friendly. He is confident this polyurea mixing and delivery system is an excellent innovation for the concrete industry.

[\(844\) 747-5785](tel:8447475785)

www.ssppolymers.com

Coating offers low odor, fast cure time

Tnemec Co. Inc., a leading manufacturer of high-performance protective coatings, has introduced an extremely fast-curing, multipurpose addition to its StrataShield line of resinous floor and wall products. Series 256 ExcellaThane, a modified aliphatic polyaspartic, provides a return-to-service time of three hours for light traffic and six hours for full service, as well as low-temperature cure capabilities, according to Joe Schmit, director of the StrataShield flooring line.

As a 100 percent solids polyaspartic, Series 256 is low in VOCs and exhibits low odor, allowing the coating to be used near occupied spaces. This characteristic makes Series 256 a viable alternative to methyl methacrylate (MMA) floor coating products that exhibit a distinctively strong odor.

[\(800\) 863-6321](tel:8008636321)

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Huber Engineered Materials, a division of J.M. Huber Corp., is investing in commercial production capacity for its patented Spherilex amorphous precipitated spherical silica and silicate technology. This investment will be at Huber's Hamina, Finland, production facility, and is the first production-scale capacity for the Spherilex technology. The Hamina operation will support the business growth of Spherilex precipitated silicas and silicates globally.

Spherilex products are produced via a novel manufacturing process designed to create unique spherical particles

that provide new or improved functional benefits in a variety of applications including coatings, plastics and personal care products. Capacity is expected to be online in the first quarter of 2017.

The new manufacturing process allows for the production of Spherile precipitated silicas and silicates with a wide range of surface areas and tight control on both particle size and particle size distribution.

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Take quick moisture-level reference measurements on building materials such as plaster, concrete and mortar with this convenient compact-sized moisture meter. Easy to operate with display icons that indicate the levels of moisture content, the meter has an alert feature that beeps faster as the moisture level increases. It's ideal for building restoration projects and applications where moisture detection on floors and under carpets is critical.

The easy-to-use meter is equipped with icons that display low, medium and high levels of moisture content, as well as a built-in battery level check test. It has a data hold function that freezes readings on display and an auto power off to conserve battery power.

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Machine produces cellular concrete continually

Production of up to 6 cubic yards an hour of cellular concrete on a continuous basis is now possible with the new Cretefoamer Model CS-6G, which fits in a 3/4-ton pickup truck. It's designed to do jobs of two to 40 yards in less than a day, though obviously it can handle larger jobs by running more than one day. The cellular concrete that is produced can range from less than 30 pounds per cubic foot up to 100 pcf or more.

Powered by a Honda gas engine running a 150-amp alternator, the Cretefoamer features all-electric drives for precision control of the cellular concrete produced. It includes an on-board 65-gallon water tank, which can produce eight yards of 30 pcf cellular concrete without refilling. There are no hydraulic components to leak and cause problems. It needs only an external water source and cement slurry feedstock to produce cellular concrete in even remote locations.

The 6G can be fed from a mortar mixer or other source, including ready-mix trucks, by using the optional hoist to lower the pump portion to ground level. It is capable of pumping up to several hundred feet, depending on mix design and density of the cellular concrete. The standard 6G Cretefoamer is priced less than \$20,000. Like all its cellular concrete equipment, it is designed and manufactured in the USA by Richway Industries.

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Concrete patch and repair products added

Dur-A-Flex Inc., a leading manufacturer of commercial, industrial and institutional resinous floor and wall systems, has added two new concrete patch and repair products to its product line: Dur-A-Tex LM (Latex Mortar) and Dur-A-Tex UM (Urethane Mortar).



Dur-A-Tex LM is a quick-curing, single-component latex mortar requiring only the addition of water for mixing and use. Dur-A-Tex UM is a three-component urethane mortar supplied as a premeasured kit for simple use on site. Both products are designed for bucket mixing and trowel application and can be applied prior to installing any of Dur-A-Flex's Accelerator, Hybri-Flex, Poly-Crete or Epoxy floor systems.

Dur-A-Tex LM is supplied in 50-pound bags and each covers approximately 0.5 cubic feet or 50 square feet at 1/8 inch. It can be applied as a skim coat up to 2 inches neat or up to 5 inches extended.

Dur-A-Tex UM is supplied as a 40-pound three-part kit consisting of a bag of aggregate and a premeasured resin and hardener. Each kit covers approximately 0.3 cubic feet or 14 square feet at 1/4 inch. It can be applied at 1/4 inch to 2 inches neat or up to 6 inches extended.

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Flowcrete Americas now does walls too

Having been recognized as a world-leading manufacturer of polymer-based flooring technologies for close to four decades, Flowcrete Americas recently launched its complementary Flowgard high-performance coatings range for use on wall and ceilings.

The Flowgard range incorporates three abrasion- and scratch-resistant, nonporous epoxy coating systems, which offer clients and specifiers the ability to integrate fiberglass matting for additional strength.

This includes excellent resistance in the face of chemical attack and spillage — either from corrosive solvents, bodily fluids or commonly used foodstuffs. Unlike most paints, stains or contaminants can be easily cleaned away by simply wiping down the surface using hot water and a soft sponge. Flowgard systems can be sterilized through hot water hose downs or using specialist cleaners and disinfectants without damaging the coating's structural makeup.

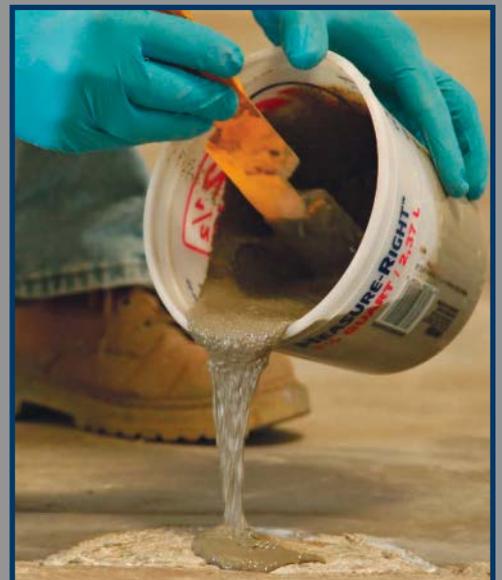
The seamless, UV-resistant and color-stable finish of Flowgard epoxy coating systems eliminates the cracks, crevices and pores most commonly associated with the application of ceramic tiles. Flowgard wall and ceiling coatings resist flaking, chipping and cracking and are available in a range of solid colors.

In facilities or working areas where accidental impact or scratching may occur, fiberglass matting can be incorporated into the system to offer additional impact, abrasion and chemical resistance where needed.

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Saw can cut rebar up to size #8

A larger version of the BNCE-20 Cutting Edge Saw was recently released with a 7-inch blade for cutting larger material. A compact and lightweight tool, the new BNCE-50 has a wrap-around top handle and a rotating trigger handle that provides the operator with multiple cutting positions and increased maneuverability in tight areas.

The tool works great on rebar up to size #8 and can also cut pipe, strut, threaded rod, coil rod, tubing and a variety of other steel material up to a diameter of 1 3/4 inches. Included with each tool is a molded plastic case, an extra blade, replacement brushes for the motor and a specially designed chip collection bag to collect steel fragments as the tool is cutting.

Installed on the bottom of the tool is a spring-loaded material guide. This helps to keep the tool perpendicular with the material being cut. The guide directs the tool to give you a clean cut that is squared off at the end.

This tool has a double-insulated power harness and is ETL/UL certified and listed. It is designed to emit minimal cutting sparks and the cut material is burr-free and cool to the touch. Each Cutting Edge Saw is warranted to be free of defects from workmanship and materials for the period of one year from the date of original purchase.

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Trailer-mounted vacuum works quickly

Marco recently released a new portable, trailer-mounted vacuum, the Vacmaster 23T Abrasive Vacuum.

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Marketing Budgeting: Identify goals and tactics to set up success for 2017

by Kimberly Kayler, CPSM

It's time to plan for 2017 and put together the marketing plan and budget. While you may be trained in the latest technologies, processes and equipment, chances are you don't have any formal education in the latest marketing trends and techniques. This reality has led to many firms that have never budgeted for marketing expenditures to struggle when tracking their return on investment and haphazardly responding to marketing opportunities. So, where should you start?

Experts state that 5 to 7 percent of your total company revenue should be spent on marketing. Properly budgeting for marketing is a large task, but can provide tremendous dividends and ensure your company is not left behind as competition continues to increase.

Getting started

The reason typically cited for not having a marketing plan and budget in place is lack of time to prepare them. Too often, when tasked with assembling a budget, businesses estimate their overhead, salaries and then their gross profit. Anything left over is fair game for technology upgrades, capital expenditures and marketing. However, this method does little to correlate the tactics needed to fulfill your

marketing objectives in order to support your sales or branding goals.

Setting budgets should really be more about market opportunities — identifying the target audiences you need to reach and the anticipated cost to reach them. By determining this number — a number that's realistically tied to your objectives — you can lump it in the budgeting process from the beginning and treat it with the importance it deserves.

Further, with this approach, you have the opportunity to develop a baseline to present in defense of your marketing goals. This baseline serves as the means to identify the mandatory elements of the marketing plan that simply must be funded, allowing for choices on other tactics to be made based on desired results, not merely dollars.

Begin by identifying what you need to do to accomplish your sales goals in support of your business plan. This involves identifying between three and five major goals and outlining the tactics needed to create success. Only identify reasonable, tangible tactics that can be considered not only in terms of dollars and staffing, but also your corporate culture.

For example, if improving customer satisfaction is a goal, outline how you're going to measure that goal, beginning with an assessment of the current satisfaction level. Also outline the steps you'll take to improve in this area and come up with a means of measuring satisfaction at the end of the year. Then, conduct a gut-check on all tactics by reviewing whether or not execution is probable.

Too often, ideas presented in the marketing plan are solid ideas that have worked for others, yet they simply don't fit your corporate personality and won't work for you. For example, a marketing plan calling for your CEO to personally visit each client with the hopes of improving customer satisfaction is a solid tactic. However, if the CEO would prefer to stay in the office and leave the customer contact to the project management and sales team, adjust the tactic to better reflect your corporate culture.

Collaborative budgeting

Probably the most overlooked means of saving money in the marketing budget is the opportunity to collaborate. Although we've heard this suggestion before, few firms take advantage of the chance to share in marketing expenses with other members of their team.

Begin by looking for ways to collaborate with your vendors, associates or other members of your project teams through joint sponsorships, co-op advertising or even shared marketing staff. One example that's easy to implement is project photography. If all members of the team were to share in this expense, all would benefit with professional images that can be used for marketing efforts at a reasonable price.

This effort also could extend to award submissions, product press releases, event sponsorships and joint presentations at association meetings. Be creative in your approach and conduct a brainstorming session with key members of your team to identify other ways to share in expenses.

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Knowing when to outsource

Another key component of your marketing budget is outsourcing — deciding what internal resources will manage and what outside experts will manage. Unfortunately, many overlook this expense when budgeting so key tactics remain untouched because realistic expectations with regard to resources weren't allocated. Many argue that outsourcing marketing activities and strategy is smart as it allows you to benefit from an outside expert's opinion.

Let's begin with the selection process — a scenario we're all accustomed to, although we often forget our key selling attributes when we're on the other side of the equation. The secret to success clearly lies in selecting a consultant that matches your needs and with whom you can build a relationship.

Because not all marketing and advertising agencies are the same, it's essential that you match your need with the core services and expertise of your chosen agency. For example, most full-service marketing or advertising agencies will work with you on branding efforts; create marketing, sales and advertising materials; and handle website development and electronic marketing.

Contrast these services with a graphic design or web design firm, both of which may or may not possess any copywriting expertise. And, while some agencies offer public relations services, others specialize specifically in publishing, technical writing and the PR process. Still others focus on market research, telemarketing, trade shows, specialty giveaways or event planning.

Many of the firms I know that feel they got burned by outside marketing consultants were quick to explain that the firm they hired had a great track record in one service, such as brochure

development, but just couldn't cut it for other services needed. Further, it's essential that your chosen marketing firm understands your industry. After all, why would you trust your marketing and branding efforts to a firm that knows nothing about concrete?

It's also important to fully understand how your consultant charges for services.

Final thoughts

Experience has shown those who fail to plan, especially when it comes to marketing, often fail. At the very least, they probably spend more money with fewer results because of last-minute marketing programs and rushed implementation strategies.

Although marketing plans, by their nature, will be modified throughout the year, the effort of budgeting based on actual goals, tactics and means to measure results helps guide efforts and increase the probability of success. Diligence in marketing planning and budgeting results in knowledge. And though results aren't guaranteed, the knowledge of where you've been and where you're going is priceless. 🚗

Kimberly Kayler is president of Constructive Communication Inc., a full-service marketing communications firm she founded in 2001 that specializes in the concrete industry. She is currently a member of the board of direction for the American Concrete Institute and serves on a variety of industry committees as a volunteer. Contact Kimberly at kkayler@constructivecommunication.com or (614) 873-6706 or visit www.constructivecommunication.com for more information and marketing tips.



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Circle Reader Service Number 33

Successful Training Requires Commitment and a Plan

by Karen Keyes

TRAINING in the construction industry seems more daunting than some other professions. With all of the moving parts of our industry, we not only need to train on skill and leadership, but also safety and technology. The decorative concrete industry thrives on innovation, so maintaining skilled craftsmen is crucial for success.

However, pulling craftsmen from the field to take time out to train involves commitment and long-term visioning because, honestly, it costs you and your company time and money in the short-term. So what makes training successful in our industry? The No. 1 way to ensure successful training is intentional commitment to training.

We, by no means, have mastered the art of training our employees. But, we have witnessed what works and what doesn't. The most important training happens on the job site. However, it can be risky to rely solely on on-the-job training. It's easy to become lazy about it.

You can throw new employees onto a job site and call it "on-the-job training," knowing they'll either sink or swim. Although this may work occasionally, it's neither the most effective method, nor is it the most beneficial to you, your clients or your employees.

Successful on-the-job training requires a plan. Some elements of that plan may include:

A key person committed to mentoring the new hire. The only way our companies can grow is if we continue to train and develop the next generation of artisans. The best way to achieve this is to partner experienced craftsmen with rookies.

But these mentors must be patient and grasp the reality that they, too, once started as inexperienced as the new hires. They also need to understand that training someone else won't threaten their own position but will make their crew even more valuable. In the long run, it'll make the workload easier for everybody involved.

A check-in meeting every 30 days for the first three months. New hires need to feel valued and need reassurance



Continuous training in the field is most effective with hands-on interactive demonstrations, like this training of new finishes and techniques for Bomanite contractors and their finishers.

Photo courtesy of Colorado Hardscapes

and correction. Both should be done daily on the job, but a formal meeting once a month will also provide them a setting to see where they have already grown and where they are headed next.

These meetings can also be points of progressing pay increases if their employment and pay were based on an introductory wage with potential to grow with acquired skills (for example: obtaining a commercial driver's license or excelling at finishing).

A 90-day introductory period.

Research repeatedly shows many job site accidents happen within the first 90 days for a new employee. To help mitigate these accidents, you can use a different color T-shirt or hardhat to remind everyone that there is an inexperienced individual on the job site. We have used neon green shirts and a general contractor in Denver I know uses neon green hardhats.

Whichever method you choose, it serves as a helpful reminder. This identifier will visually remind your crew to take a little extra time with the individual to explain things, have more patience and to provide more support.

In addition to on-the-job training, it's also valuable to bring employees in for

more formal training. This is done best with face-to-face instruction rather than books or videos. The more interactive the class, between them and the instructor and between each other, the better.

Also, keep classroom time to a maximum of 45-minute segments to maximize their attention and retention. Once a month, we do foremen training where we have discussed topics such as safety, working with others and leadership styles, and toured a ready-mix plant. For many, we bring in outside experts to train our leaders.

Continuously investing in your employees is the best investment you can make for your company. Good employees are what keeps us all in business. If they grow, so will the company. And, in turn, if your employees see you value them and want them to be their best, their loyalty and continuously improving quality of work will provide you with a strong and growing company. 📱

Karen Keyes wears many hats at Denver-based Colorado Hardscapes Inc., including business development, marketing, sales, estimating and project management, with an emphasis on specialty rock construction. She can be reached at karen@coloradohardscapes.com.



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ARTISAN IN CONCRETE



Photos courtesy of Architectural Concrete

David Alvey, Architectural Concrete Louisville, Kentucky

by Jacqueline Valle

WHEN you're 22 years old, it's hard to seriously imagine that you could be one of the founders of your own business with some friends and succeed in doing it. But that's what happened to David Alvey back in 2000 when he was asked to help start a business called Architectural Concrete Inc. in Louisville, Kentucky, with his lifelong friend and business partner, Dillan McArthur.

The business first started with partners Alvey, McArthur and Damon Bootes (who left a few years later to work for a family business, but since returned in 2015 to help in sales). Alvey focuses on the office management, growth and marketing side of the business while McArthur serves as the project manager and runs operations.

After Alvey graduated from Xavier University with a major in sports management and marketing, he was ready to try something new. Bootes' cousin had a landscaping company and a couple of clients wanted to spruce up their patios. The cousin offered the work to the ACI crew, who didn't have a lot of experience but were eager to learn.

Initially, Alvey says, he thought to himself "what's a year" in the big scheme of things and he'd eventually move on to something else. But one year progressed to two, three and then four. Before he knew it, concrete had become a way

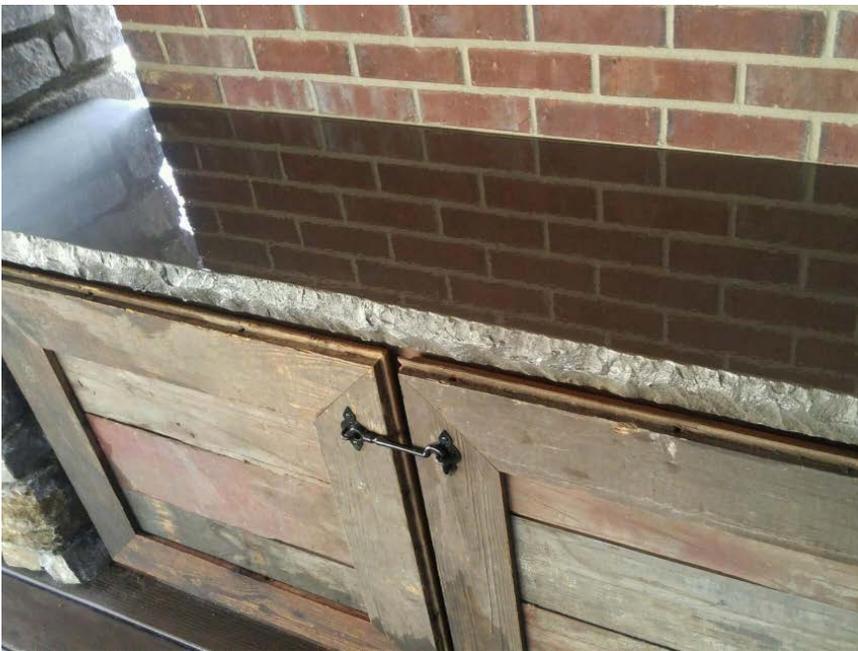
of life and the partners enjoyed the work and the success that came along with it. Bootes had moved on to the family business, roles changed and it was like starting all over again.

"There was kind of a no turning-back point," says Alvey. "The time just flew by." He says it was a "let's see what happens" attitude that propelled both of them deeper into the concrete world.

Starting out small

In the beginning, Architectural Concrete started as a crew of three to four guys doing one to two jobs at a time. Fast forward to now and they've evolved into juggling five to 10 jobs at once with a 10- to 20-person crew. In 2008 when the economy took a nosedive, the company slowed its pace, weathered the downturn and was fortunate enough to survive until business picked back up.

Architectural Concrete now runs three different divisions: commercial, interior and residential. With about four to six guys in each category, sometimes they combine crews to handle the workload. These days, says Alvey, their work largely involves outdoor living areas, patios, pool decks and driveways. The polishing and staining crews are always busy.



Keeping abreast with the industry

Alvey believes that being very detail oriented and hands on has set his business apart over the years. On any given day, you can spot Alvey and/or McArthur at each of the company's job sites. As Alvey puts it, "The bosses are on the job every time," monitoring the work performed throughout all of its stages.

While Alvey loves to keep focus, he also greatly emphasizes teamwork and isn't the type of person to ask his guys to do something he wouldn't do himself. He wants his crew to enjoy coming to work,

to be successful at what they do and to continue to be motivated to do their best. With a mantra of working hard for his workers, he notes his inspiration doesn't just come from one thing.

"It comes from making sure we have a successful business. Take care of your business and the business will take care of you," says Alvey. Not only is he inspired by seeing other people succeed but he also likes to stay on top of things by going to shows, reading up on the latest trends and checking out the newest products. Always listening, reading and learning about what's

new are what keeps him on track, ahead of many others.

Outdoors projects are in

Outdoor living projects are big business for Architectural Concrete and most jobs involve either polishing or staining and stamping. Describing his work in three words, Alvey notes that it's unique, creative and detailed.

Personally, he likes to do residential work where he deals with homeowners and designs/builds a project, often improving on what's already there. "We like to come



up with a totally new outdoor living space for them to see what we can do with the old outdoor living area,” he says.

When he isn't working, he likes hanging out with his family, watching college basketball and going to the lake on weekends. Grilling is one of his favorite things to do — hamburgers and steak to be specific.

When he thinks back on what he would be doing if he wasn't in the concrete industry, Alvey says he'd like to be coaching basketball, a sport he used to play and coach. Recently, he's got a little more free

time and is starting to coach again with his young boys, something he did back in the day for a 10-year period.

Alvey says he has a well-rounded and busy life and is content on maintaining his business. While he doesn't anticipate it getting any bigger anytime soon, he believes business in five years is going to be robust.

Along with a very busy schedule comes some major challenges, including retaining and recruiting good workers. Because of the shortage of manpower, at times, “It's been hard to keep up with the work demand,” he notes.

Alvey's advice to those coming into the business is to realize it's hard work that often involves working seven days a week. “What you put into it is what you get out of it,” says Alvey. 📱

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When Downtime Must Be Minimal, Polyaspartics are Paramount to the Job

Two fire stations near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

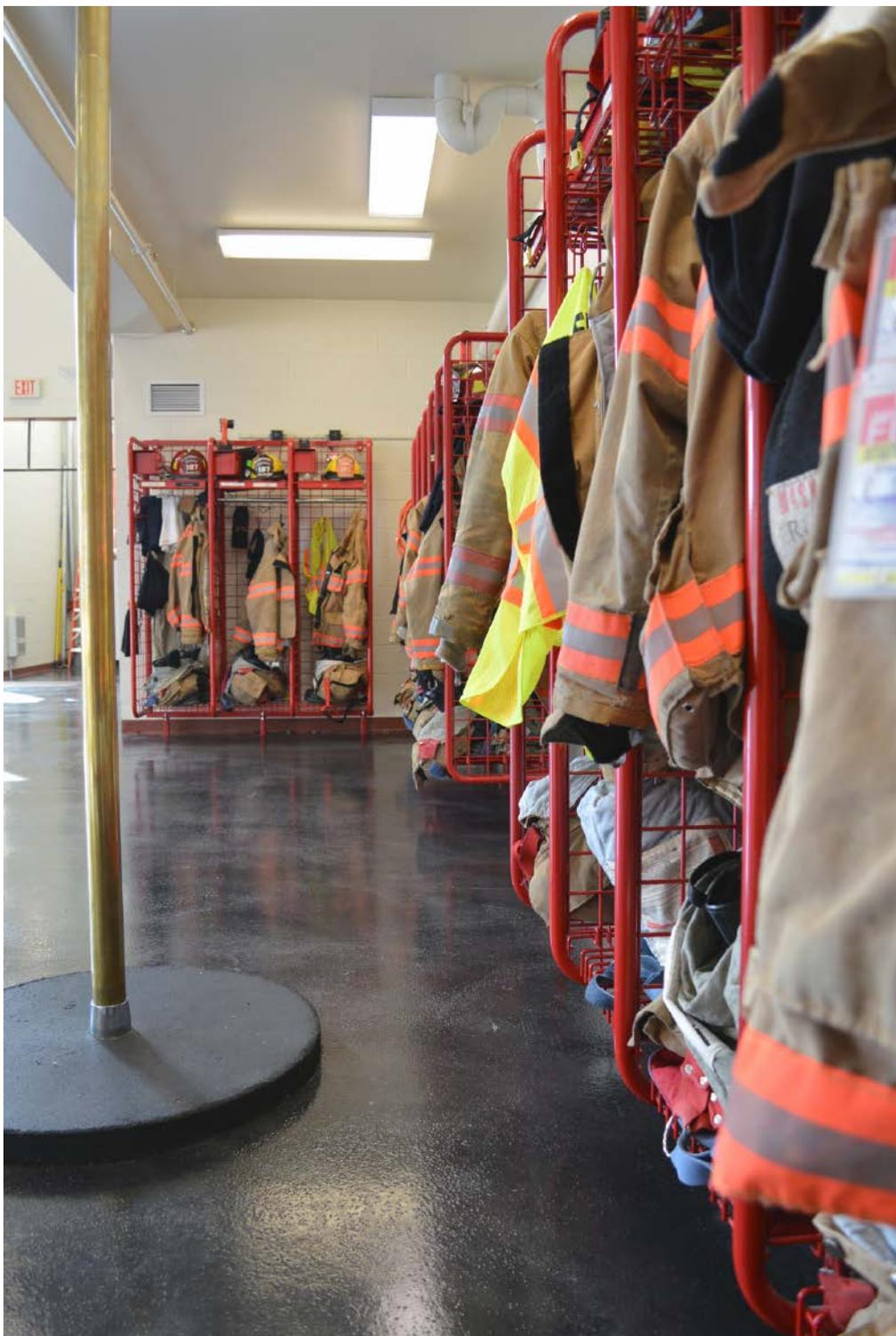
by Erik Pisor

WHEN fire stations are upgraded, contractors must complete improvements while minimally disrupting operations and firefighters' access to equipment. Oftentimes, the return-to-service window of products used is paramount to completing this task, especially when coating and sealing concrete apparatus bays.

Because epoxy coatings normally put a facility out of commission for three to seven days, an increasing number of fire stations are hiring contractors who use polyaspartic coatings and sealers that cure in an hour.

This trend is evident in the greater Pittsburgh metro, where two fire halls, and a medical rescue station, recently turned to locally based U-Neek Concrete Coatings and Flexmar, a manufacturer that introduced its polyaspartics to the market 10 years ago.

At the Ignomar Volunteer Fire Co. in the town of McCandless, Pennsylvania, U-Neek



Project at a Glance

Decorative concrete contractor: U-Neek Concrete Coatings, www.u-neekconcretecoatings.com

Client 1: Ignomar Volunteer Fire Company; McCandless, Pennsylvania

Scope of project 1: Apply polyaspartic coating and variegated sealers onto a 3,600-square-foot apparatus bay floor.

Products used: Flexmar self-prime polyaspartic coating (White Night Grey), Flexmar Variegate semi-transparent polyaspartic stain sealer (Storm Cloud Grey)

Most challenging aspect: Working with variegated polyaspartic sealer in a short timeframe.

Client 2: Crabtree Volunteer Fire Department; Crabtree, Pennsylvania

Scope of project 2: Apply polyaspartic coating and vinyl chip onto a 2,500-square-foot apparatus bay floor.

Products used: Flexmar three-coat, high-build vinyl chip polyaspartic system (Safety Red and Night Grey colored coatings, Cherry Bomb and Lighthouse blend of vinyl chips, clear coat sealer)

Most challenging aspect: Dividing the job into two, contrasting visual areas with the vinyl chip system.

Photos courtesy of Flexmar Coatings Inc. All rights reserved.



used solid color Flexmar polyaspartic coating and a semi-transparent, variegated polyaspartic stain sealer to create a look that resembled black smoke.

Prior to U-Neek's work, the station's 3,600-square-foot bay floors were bare, exposed concrete susceptible to absorbing dirt, grime, road salt and various leaking fluids from engines. The floors easily stained and also absorbed carcinogen-rich soot from equipment.

Epoxies weren't the solution to the problem, says Geoffrey Allerton, a volunteer firefighter, as waiting for them to dry would cause the station dual problems. "We'd have to find another location for the trucks or let them stay outside," he says. "But our trucks don't lock."

Additionally, if the firefighters couldn't walk on the bay floors an hour after application, their access to staged equipment — water pumps, boots, hats — would be limited.

Thanks to U-Neek using Flexmar's polyaspartics, the volunteers could walk on the floor and move equipment back within an hour of final application. Fire engines returned to the bays the next day.

A variegated process

Before rolling and hand applying coating and sealers, U-Neek's crew diamond-ground the concrete to remove any contaminants that had been absorbed, creating a surface profile that would accept the coating system.

Hairline cracks were also repaired.

A solid-colored base coat of White Night Grey Flexmar self-prime polyaspartic coating was then tightly rolled on the floor, drying in roughly an hour.

Applicators then worked to achieve random strokes with even shading while hand-applying a coat of Storm Cloud Grey Flexmar Variegate polyaspartic stain. This also cured in roughly an hour.

According to Kevin Bertocki, co-owner of U-Neek, working with a variegated polyaspartic sealer is a step-up in difficulty compared to applying vinyl chip. "With Variegate you show them (the clients) samples and tell them 'this is basically the color you'll get,' but you can't tell them how Variegate will disperse," he says, adding this is largely dependent on the hardness or softness of the concrete.

Bertocki, along with his partner Todd Slomka, hand-applied a second coat of the Variegate sealer mixed with a clear coat to achieve a "three-dimensional look." To add more depth, they muted individual strokes during application.

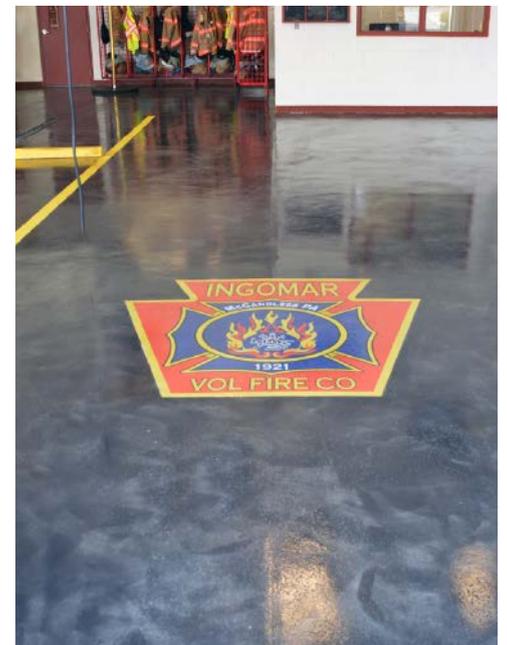
During this second, final coat of Variegate, they embedded two 60-inch-wide fire company logos and broadcast a slip-reduction agent into the topcoat. The sealer again dried in about an hour.

Since application the coating system has proven durable. "The nature of what we do, we beat that floor up," Allerton says. "It's holding up great. No discoloration,

scratching or abrasions."

To clean the bay floors, firefighters now only use Simple Green in water. The durability of the new floor has influenced the fire company to have its nearby substation coated and sealed with Flexmar polyaspartics.

For U-Neek, the Ignomar project doesn't represent the contractor's lone experience working with variegated coatings. The company completed a similar job with Flexmar products at the Medical Rescue Team South station in the nearby township of Mt. Lebanon.



PROJECT PROFILE

When the chips are down

The contractor's tally of fire station jobs recently increased late last year when it applied a Flexmar three-coat, vinyl-chip polyaspartic coating system at the Crabtree Volunteer Fire Department.

Located within Salem Township, the station featured a 2,500-square-foot bay that was separated into two visual areas with the vinyl-chip system.

After repairing cracks and diamond grinding the surface, U-Neek created parking lanes by roller-applying Safety Red Flexmar NextGen Self-Prime H.S. coating onto the concrete and broadcasting Cherry Bomb-colored vinyl chips into it while wet. The other floor surface received White Night Grey NextGen Self-Prime H.S. and a broadcast of Lighthouse-colored vinyl chips. In both applications, U-Neek's crew removed excess chips after an hour.

Two coats of Flexmar Clear Coat H.S. polyaspartic sealer were then applied an hour apart. The second coat featured a slip-reduction agent additive said to provide higher final thickness and more gloss. Equipment was moved back onto the floor within an hour.



New poly products, jobs

The NextGen coating used by U-Neek at Crabtree is part of Flexmar's new line of polyaspartic coatings aimed to make it easier on the applicator and to lower labor costs.

According to Jack Bracco, owner of Flexmar, a number of other polyaspartics have a one-hour walk time, but carry a five-minute working time. "We have extended ours to a 20- to 25-minute working time," he says. "That brings it almost to the same application openness of an epoxy, without the three or four days of downtime."

Another attractive characteristic of NextGen, especially for contractors in areas like Pittsburgh, is its ability to cure below freezing.

Bracco notes that as some manufacturers begin to cheapen polyaspartics by adding other resins, creating hybrids and lowering costs, they are eliminating their products' ability to low-temperature cure.

While good polyaspartics can be three times more expensive than epoxies, their ability to cure quickly and in nearly all temperatures continues to garner U-Neek more fire station, residential garage and other jobs.

Bertocki was recently awarded a project at a local American Legion after the organization initially selected a contractor who was going to use epoxy. The switch was made after the legion was told its operations would be down for a week with the epoxy application.

"They didn't want to hear that," he says, explaining his crew went in at night when the legion was shut down and completed the job. "They never lost any revenue." 🚒

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In addition to high-end car dealerships requesting polished concrete floors, the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles also underwent work recently to achieve a sophisticated polished look.

Photos courtesy of Mark Beamish Waterproofing

Polished Concrete Positively Reflects High-end Cars

A museum and Audi, Maserati and Mini Cooper automobile facilities, California

by Vanessa Salvia

IMAGINE a \$75,000 Maserati Ghibli on display on a cracked, chipped, unevenly colored concrete floor. Having trouble with the visual? The same can be said for Audis and Mini Coopers. They're much more at home on a pristine, polished floor.

Over the past year, these high-end automobile dealers have turned to Mark Beamish Waterproofing to create stunning polished concrete floors that create an interesting work environment and show off the cars the way they deserve.

The finished floors were polished to a high sheen, largely without any color additives. The ones that used color went with gray or black.

"As part of their vision, many high-end

dealerships have a showroom that provides customers with a unique purchasing experience that makes them feel they're getting the ultimate experience. Polished concrete 'reflects' that vision," says Dan Hennes, an MBW division manager in Livermore, California, who was involved with some of these projects.

Hennes notes that polished concrete is a natural choice for the clean, modern, industrial look companies often want. However, he says, "I think one reason they end up choosing it is its maintainability. There's very minimal upkeep on a polished concrete floor and the main things that do need to be done are relatively inexpensive."

Project at a Glance

Concrete coating and resurfacing: Mark Beamish Waterproofing, Anaheim, California; www.markbeamish.com

Clients: A car museum; and Audi, Maserati and Mini Cooper automobile dealerships

Scope of work: A notable square footage of concrete was resurfaced and polished or coated with polishable overlays in a museum and for customer facilities in three high-end car dealerships.

Challenges: Old, uneven and damaged concrete had to be leveled, coated and polished on short schedules and while sharing the space with other trades.

Products used: Prosocon Consolidack LS and LS Guard sealer, Ardex PC-T topping, black and gray dyes by Ameripolish, and clear sealer from L. M. Scofield.





PRECOSI VELOCI

Il 250 GTO è stato il primo motore V6 della Ferrari, progettato da Villoresi e Colombo. È stato il primo motore a 24 valvole della casa di Maranello. Il motore era montato in posizione trasversale e aveva una cilindrata di 2.5 litri. La Ferrari ha costruito solo 36 esemplari di questo modello, di cui 12 erano destinati al mercato di serie e 24 erano destinati ai clienti privati. Il 250 GTO è stato il primo motore V6 della Ferrari, progettato da Villoresi e Colombo. È stato il primo motore a 24 valvole della casa di Maranello. Il motore era montato in posizione trasversale e aveva una cilindrata di 2.5 litri. La Ferrari ha costruito solo 36 esemplari di questo modello, di cui 12 erano destinati al mercato di serie e 24 erano destinati ai clienti privati.

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A preference for gray

The majority of the automobile dealers that MBW works with prefer no dye, although Audi Beverly Hills chose a dark gray by Ameripolish for a resurfaced area in its showroom (*photo above and below*). Roughly 1,000 feet of Ardex PC-T, a polished concrete topping, was applied and polished to a level-2 shine.

Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles (*see photos on preceding pages*) was another job that opted for the sophisticated yet neutral look of gray. Petersen is a

museum housing cars from all over the world, including vintage cars, race cars and famous Hollywood cars such as the Batmobile, as driven by Michael Keaton in “Batman” (1989) and “Batman Returns” (1992).

It took about six months from late 2015 to early 2016 for project manager Jose Tovar and his crew to finish 90,000 square feet of polishing and 10,000 square feet of overlay creating a polished concrete look using Ardex PC-T. The team also linearly patched hundreds of feet of concrete where walls

once stood. To date, this job features the largest area covered with Ardex PC-T on the West Coast.

“We polished all three floors which involved a lot of prep work,” says Tovar. “The floor was in bad condition. The floor had a lot of challenges and was very uneven. It took a lot to pour and level out the floor, get all the low and high points. We used a lot more material than we had planned to but it turned out beautiful.”

Tovar says the Ardex self-leveling topping performed well, especially considering that it was poured between a half inch and two inches thick to make it level. “We polished it, stained it and sealed it,” Tovar says, “starting with 30 metal-grit pads, all the way to 800.”

Working around problems

Hennes was project manager on the Mini Cooper of Camarillo, California, job that was his biggest polish-and-dye project to date. It involved using Prosocon Consolidex LS and LSGuard and a black dye by Ameripolish to finish 15,000 square feet of floor.

The job’s biggest challenge was the flatness of the concrete. The flatter the





The biggest challenge of the job at the Mini Cooper dealership in Camarillo, California, was the flatness of the concrete.

concrete, says Hennes, the more consistent level of aggregate exposure you can get when polishing. “Unfortunately, this one was very uneven, so we had a wide range of aggregate exposure. We had to grind much lower than normal for a more consistent look.”

Like the usual challenges of working around other trades and the general contractor’s schedule, the polishing work required that they have the floor to themselves, with no other traffic. Scheduling that is always hard, but it’s imperative to getting a high-quality floor.

“If people are walking on it they will create stains that won’t come out,” Hennes says. “The fast-track schedule we had on this job didn’t allow us to have the floor all to ourselves so we had to figure out how to do it in sections and block it off.”

Nonslip qualities required

Maserati has a facility in Thousand Oaks, California, where cars get delivered for service (*photo at right*). Originally, the area was covered with an awning and the concrete surface was further protected with a coating.

“They were having issues with moisture,” Hennes says. “If you put a coating down

where there’s high vapor drive you get blistering unless you treat for it. An alternative way to do that was to come in and polish the concrete.” Their solution involved a really deep grind to expose the aggregate and make the concrete look like marble.

This 2,500-square-foot area of older concrete had to be ground quite heavily,

and since it was where customers routinely exited their cars, it had to be slip-resistant. “We couldn’t get it too shiny,” Hennes says, “so our final product on this was a clear sealer from L. M. Scofield with an aluminum oxide that gave it the nonslip they required.” 🚗



TROWEL POWER

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A power trowel can save time and manpower on jobs as small as 1,000 square feet. Its main advantage, though, is not letting the pour get ahead of you.

Photo courtesy of Wacker Neuson

by K. Schipper

LET'S face it, working concrete is a hard job. It's hard on the hands, the back and especially the knees. Fortunately, for some contractors there's an option that allows them to stand upright and still complete their jobs.

Given the sizes of jobs, the manpower available and what clients want in a finished product, it might be time to invest in a power trowel.

If your specialty is staining, dyeing or polishing residential floors, a ride-on model probably isn't going to be the best fit. Not only does it require a large expanse on which to work, but it can finish a floor much harder than those processes need.

On the other hand, a walk-behind model can offer good coverage of even a modest square footage for both dewatering and densifying.

Power up?

When is it time to start thinking about a power trowel? The size of jobs is a good first indicator for many.

"They can use them on fairly small spaces," says Tamrah Boren, acting



Having the correct blade for the job is a must, whether it's (from the top) a finish blade, a combo blade or a float blade. It's important to remember that you get what you pay for, too, in terms of durability and life of the blade.

Photo courtesy of Kraft Tool Co.

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Photo courtesy of Wacker Neuson

The largest jobs — airport runways, big box stores — may require multiple ride-on units to get the job completed in a timely manner with the desired finish.

president of Boren Super Trowels in Wills Point, Texas. “Even a job of a couple thousand square feet is large enough.”

“I would say anything around 1,000 square feet would definitely warrant

having a power trowel,” says Luke Sevcik, a product applications training specialist with Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin-based Wacker Neuson. “And, anywhere over 3,000 square feet you might want to consider replacing

a walk-behind trowel with a smaller ride-on one.”

Looked at another way, Sevcik says a walk-behind power trowel can easily take the place of three finishers using boards or skates.

While the most-obvious advantage of a power trowel might seem to be the speed at which a job can be completed, Ben Wiese, a product manager with the Carson, California-based Multiquip/Whiteman, advises that isn’t necessarily the best way to look at going to a power trowel.

“It’s more a matter that they have a job that requires them to cover a certain amount of area,” Wiese says. “A power trowel allows you to stay in control of the floor. You don’t want to finish early, but you don’t want to finish late.”

Both Wiese and Drew Fagley, president of Hover Trowel in Mohnton, Pennsylvania, say in the end a power trowel is more about the finish.

“It’s really going to provide a more-consistent finish, a faster install and is generally easier on the crew,” says Fagley. “Hand-troweling can be grueling on knees, shoulders and elbows and as the job wears



Photo courtesy of HoverTrowel

Along with their ability to quickly finish larger concrete areas, power trowels are also being marketed by some manufacturers to the epoxy segment of the industry.

on fatigue affects all aspects of the work. Simply put, power troweling just makes a difficult task easier.”

There are even jobs where a power trowel isn't a good option. For example, Sevcik, cites situations where the concrete is likely to be exposed to freeze-thaw conditions, such as residential garage floors in moderate climates. In these instances, hand-finishing should be considered to prevent destroying the air entrainment in the surface.

However, climate can also be an influence when it comes to deciding to use a power trowel, says Boren.

“Weather conditions can be a selling point,” she says. “Our machines have extremely high rpms (revolutions per minute), and if you're in an area with extreme heat — like the Arizona desert — or just have a lot of hot summer days, you're going to need that speed so you don't lose your concrete. Guys in cooler climates don't necessarily need the size and weight of a power trowel, or they'll buy something lightweight.”

The real bottom line is what the end-user is planning to do with the concrete, Wiese says.

“If it's a big job, you can always throw more people on it, or more walk-behinds,” he says. “However, it really comes down to how much abrasion resistance you need. Is this a job where they're going to get another finish on top of it like carpet, tile, wood or even a self-leveling cementitious product? Not every job is going to be a warehouse-quality floor that's going to have forklifts running over it all day.”

A matter of blades

What the client wants to do with the concrete once it's finished may also have an impact on what blades a power trowel operator will want to use on a particular job.

Although blade manufacturers use various descriptive colors or terms to differentiate their blades to the buying public, when push comes to shove there are really three blade options, according to Jeff Snyder, vice president of sales and marketing for the York, Pennsylvania-based Wagman Metal Products.

“You have three distinctive blades,” Snyder says. “You have a float blade, which is used in the floating operation. You have a finish blade used in the finishing operation, and then there's a combination blade which, as the name implies, you can use in the floating

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Regardless of the job, power trowels can save the knees, backs and shoulders of a finishing crew while creating a harder finish.

Photo courtesy of MBW Inc.

operation and the finishing operation.”

Chris Windsor, marketing director for Bartell Morrison in Keyport, New Jersey, says the combination blades are easy to use, but more expensive because they combine the float and finish blades in one system. The combination blade is left flat for floating and then the angle of the pitch is adjusted for finishing.

“The combination blade is usually a little wider and somewhat different in shape,” says Steve Cook, sales and marketing manager for Kraft Tool Co. in Shawnee, Kansas. “The finish blade is usually a little narrower — about 6 inches wide.”

Finish blades also play a role in floating, because separate float blades are clipped onto the finish blades, then slid off when the floating is complete.

Despite the descriptive terms used to market them, Cook says the coding used by many companies actually differentiates the thickness of the blade (and the cost).

“You have what I’m going to call a steel finish that looks like a plain piece of steel that’s the standard and most popular,” he says. “Then, you have the different thicknesses and the thicker the steel, the longer the blade should wear.”

Snyder notes that the thicker — and stiffer — the blade, coupled with the pitch (or angle) at which the blade is set, determine the hardness of the finish.

There is another option with floating that also involves the finish blades, and that’s the use of a float pan, which again connects to the trowel via those finish blades.

“The benefit of the pan is it has much more surface area to work more quickly,” Windsor says. “The negative is that panning requires much more effort for the operator to control the trowel because of the additional surface of the pan.”

There is a fourth type of blade that can be very important for power trowel users who are doing decorative concrete. Snyder

says it’s most often described as plastic or polymer, and while the name suggests something that’s cheap and easy to break, that’s far from the case.

“If you’re doing decorative concrete you don’t want to leave dark burn marks on the floor, which can be fairly typical of the high-carbon steel blades,” Snyder says. “Poly blades with steel backing can give a hard finish without leaving the dark burn marks you don’t want if you’re coming back to put a stain or dye on the concrete. You can control your canvas per se, so when you come back, you have better control over your colors.”

Proper techniques

Depending on the trowel manufacturer, the devices can also be used for other purposes. Boren notes her company’s machines are proving popular with epoxy installers, and Hover Trowel designs trowels for overlays including epoxy, urethane and engineered concrete toppings.

When shopping for a power trowel, both Multiquip/Whiteman’s Wiese and Joe Angeles, international sales manager for the Slinger, Wisconsin-based MBW Inc., say the first consideration should always be operator safety.

After that, other considerations should include something with a variable speed — particularly for prepping floors for decorative purposes — and return-on-investment.

Shopping for a power trowel can involve everything from talking with friends to talking with manufacturers to checking them out at tradeshow. Wacker Neuson’s Sevcik and Kraft’s Cook say in the end a lot of the decision comes down to personal preferences.

“If you worked for a contractor who used a walk-behind and always used combination blades to start and finish the job, that’s what you’re going to be trained on,” Sevcik says. “Another contractor may prefer a different approach.”

And, it never hurts to take a little training on a machine, although Wiese says it’s important to remember a power trowel isn’t a shortcut to success.

“It’s mechanized the finish process and made it easier,” he concludes. “But, if you don’t understand how to finish concrete by hand, you shouldn’t be running a power trowel. It’s all about proper finishing techniques.” 🛠️

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To have a successful concrete countertop business, aspiring contractors should strive to create high-end countertops that don't resemble floors.

Photo courtesy of Brent-Indenbosch of Diamond Finish Concrete Countertops in Chilliwack, B.C., Canada

THE TOP 7 MISTAKES

🌀 THAT CAN 🌀

👉 MAKE OR BREAK 👈
Your Concrete Countertop Business

by Lane Mangum

AVOIDING certain pitfalls can mean the difference between a struggling hobby and a thriving business. When it comes to countertops, here are a few of the most common mistakes we at the Concrete Countertop Institute think are the biggest stumbling blocks for aspiring concrete countertop contractors.

Mistake #1: Lack of communication with your clients.

It's vital you explain what you are providing to your client and how your concrete will perform. Communication goes beyond setting expectations and includes project communication about what to expect before, during and after the job is done. To avoid this mistake:

- Know exactly how your sealer performs in terms of staining, scratching and heat, and have a printed handout for prospects.
- Put the performance characteristics in your contract.
- Use a templating checklist and an installation checklist that you send to the client or contractor before you go to template or install.

Mistake #2: Experimenting on your client.

It's good to incorporate new products, technologies and innovations into your concrete countertops if you need to make improvements. However, it's in your best interest to research those products and test their performance thoroughly before ever using them on a client.

It's also tempting to constantly change things in an attempt to improve them. But if you can't demonstrate a real and positive change that will directly benefit your client and/or save you money in the long run, then don't fall into the trap of "fixing" something that isn't broken. To avoid this mistake:

- Once you have a mix design and sealer that do what you want and don't cause your clients problems, don't change them unless necessary.
- Any change you make should be justified by a clear business need that reduces costs, increases profits or results in higher client satisfaction.
- Any change you make should be thoroughly tested before using it on client projects.

Mistake #3: Making mistakes!

Making technical mistakes in the process of creating concrete countertops is expensive. It's not just the cost of the materials, it's the time involved. Consider the lost time in redoing a job and the lost business from not being able to take on new projects.

Most mistakes happen because you have a hard time keeping up with all of the details. Develop quality checklists for every step of a project, and have your employees — and you — use them consistently. To avoid this mistake:

- Every project should have a job folder that contains all of the pertinent information about the job, including a detailed project description, checklists, client contact information and schedule.
- Don't rush. Spending a few minutes thinking through the best way to do something can save many hours later.
- Don't let a client rush you. Say no when asked if you can start forming before the sink is available. Say no when asked if you can just use the drawings and skip the physical template. Don't speed up a project by taking shortcuts.

Mistake #4: Not using a contract.

Doing business without a contract is like driving an uninsured vehicle while not wearing a seatbelt. Contracts don't scare off clients and they don't limit creativity. A clearly written contract shows that you're a professional who has thought out all of the details and is looking out for the best interest of the client. To avoid this mistake:

- Know what the legal or permitting requirements are in your state. In some states a contract is legally required for jobs more than a certain dollar amount, and in some states the content of the contract is regulated.
- Use a contract that clearly states all of your and the client's obligations, a detailed project description, payment schedule, remediation options, a warranty and performance expectations. Use it for every project.

Mistake #5: Running your business like a hobby.

A hobby is something you do to have fun that costs you money. A business is something you do to make money and that you enjoy (hopefully). Not all parts of a business are going to be fun, but you must balance the fun and the work to focus on the end result. To avoid this mistake:

- Mark Twain said, "Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you all day." Do what you need to do to build your business, even if it's not fun.
- Have a clear business need for every sample, color, shape or experiment you do and every piece of equipment you purchase.
- Plan ahead in materials ordering to save big on shipping.

Mistake #6: Neglecting marketing.

You took a class, got the tools and have spent the last six months making samples. Now you simply have to sit back and wait for the customers to call. After all, if you build a better mouse trap the world will beat a path to your door. Right?

Wrong! That old adage is a fallacy. Being successful in business means you actively seek out customers and educate them in what you offer. They won't know who you are, what you can do or why they should choose you instead of your competition unless you actively market your business. To avoid this mistake:

- Don't be scared of marketing. Simply networking and handing out your cards is marketing. Having a website is marketing. Marketing is anything and everything you do to build awareness and get prospects to become interested in your offerings.
- Use relationship marketing. Learn how to work with the influencers such as kitchen designers and architects to leverage your marketing efforts.
- Be frugal with money on print ads, until you've already worked through free marketing techniques and can afford expensive ads.

Mistake #7: Making your concrete countertops look like floors.

Floors belong in the decorative concrete industry. Concrete countertops belong in the kitchen and bath industry. Sure, they are made out of concrete and have color and other nuances, but their fit, finish, functionality and performance all get compared to other countertop materials.

Floors are seen from a distance, whereas countertops are literally closer than arm's length. A single sealer drip that is nearly invisible on a floor becomes a glaring defect on a countertop. To avoid this mistake:

- Find a good performance sealer that you can learn how to apply to get a perfect finish.
- Learn what high-end countertops look like. Subscribe to high-end design magazines. Visit high-end kitchen design showrooms in your area.

Use the tips in this article and you'll avoid problems, sell more countertops, have happier clients and ultimately have a more profitable, less stressful business. 🛠️

Lane Mangum, vice president of business services for the Concrete Countertop Institute, started off in 2002 as the marketing and sales manager for Jeff Girard's concrete countertop manufacturing business. In a few short years, she transitioned the company from a hobby-level business to a dominant regional fabricator of concrete countertops. Today, she teaches other concrete countertop companies how to do the same. For additional information, visit www.ConcreteCountertopInstitute.com.

The Polishing Consultant

The Five Ps of Concrete:

Proper planning prevents poor performance

by David Stephenson

In management or leadership training classes worldwide, you can learn about the five Ps for success: “Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance.” I think these Ps can apply to polished concrete projects as well. There are several specific planning items that can be addressed that will help any polish project be successful.

Start from the ground up

Just like a structure, you should build your concrete slab from the bottom up, beginning with a vapor barrier. Without a good vapor barrier, concrete slabs will absorb moisture from the ground. This moisture travels up through the slab and is released at the surface.

As water travels, it has a tendency to erode materials in its path and carry bits with it. In concrete this is usually salt. The salt crystals get deposited at the surface in a process called “efflorescence.” The salt by itself etches the concrete and the crystals appear white so they lighten the color. Efflorescence is an issue that’s controllable with proper planning.

Design the right mix

The next item that must be reviewed is the concrete mix design. The term “mix design” refers to the recipe of materials that, when combined together, turn into concrete. All mix designs have cement, sand, aggregate and water. In addition to these, there are other items that could potentially be included in the mix design.

A common item used today is fly ash, a recycled byproduct of the coal-burning power industry. It’s used to replace some cement in a concrete mix. Manufacturers figured out a long time ago that if a mix has too much fly ash there isn’t enough reactive material left for densifiers to harden the concrete appropriately. You should check with your chemical manufacturer to understand tolerance levels. Most manufacturers don’t like anything above 20 percent fly ash.



Photo courtesy of Yezco Concrete Polishing

You can look at other things as well, like water reducers, finishing aids or other products that retard or increase concrete’s set time. It’s important to review these items in the mix design because once the concrete is poured you can’t change or remove something that’s harmful to the floors.

Place properly

As we continue to review concrete from the ground up, let’s consider “placement.” This is the standard industry term for getting the concrete from the truck to its actual location. Placement is important to polished concrete because generally this is the only time that the concrete flatness can be controlled.

Usually, the concrete is physically deposited from the concrete truck either by buggy or a pump. As the material is placed into a form, it is extremely wavy. The part of the placement process where the flatness is controlled is called “screeding.” There are many methods to screed a slab that will get it fairly flat, but a fairly flat floor will have high and low spots that will be evident when the concrete is polished.

High spots will get cut off more by concrete grinders which expose more aggregate. The low spots are harder for a

grinder to reach. Typically, they show little or no aggregate and will usually be darker in color than the rest of the slab.

The best method used to screed a polished concrete project involves a “laser screed.” This machine uses a laser to level the screed boom and produce a much flatter finish than any type of hand screed.

Finish with pans

The next level of planning is called “finishing.” This is the process where trowels are used to get the concrete tighter and the surface hard. If concrete is only screeded and not troweled, its surface will be rough and porous, which isn’t conducive to polishing because the concrete’s texture is like pumice stone. It’s impossible to polish an extremely porous piece of stone and the same rule applies to concrete.

Finishing can be done many different ways. The process I find works best begins with the finisher using pans, which are basically like big round cake pans that a power trowel blade sits in. The pan knocks off some of the concrete that’s high and fills in some of the areas that are low. Along with the screeding process previously discussed, this helps with the overall flatness.

Pans are the only method of finishing that

can help with the flatness of the concrete. Obviously they need to be used while the concrete is still slightly wet and soft.

Use the right blades

After the pans, the concrete should be troweled with steel blades. These are large, rectangular, thin pieces of metal that are flat and slightly angled (like ceiling fan blades). With a slight pressure, they push down on the concrete and consolidate the surface. In the process, sand particulates are also pushed down and a creamy paste of concrete fines is brought up and deposited at the surface. This condensed, tight layer is what you need for polishing.

I like to use plastic blades for the final pass because a steel trowel blade significantly darkens the surface with a process called “burning in.” This really dark finish has to be cut through before you can begin polishing or chemically treating the surface. This is unnecessary extra work you can avoid. By using plastic blades to finish, the concrete doesn’t get burned in but is still really tight and well compacted. This is perfect for polished concrete.

Find the right cure

The final process of placing and finishing concrete that pertains to the polished variety is the curing. Concrete gets hard through a chemical reaction where water is key. It naturally rids itself of water as it cures. By holding water in for a period of time, the concrete gets much harder and lasts much longer. This process of concrete holding in moisture is called curing.

The most common type of curing involves spraying a membrane sealer onto the top of the concrete right after it’s been finished. This membrane traps the moisture and allows that cure to happen.

However, when it comes to a decorative concrete finish, the sealer is problematic. Whereas it holds moisture in, it also keeps chemical treatments out. This membrane sealer has to be ground through to allow the concrete to be polished, which costs the decorative concrete contractor time and money.

Instead, I recommend a water-curing method where you basically keep the concrete surface wet for seven days after the concrete has been finished. This allows the concrete to get hard, and it doesn’t leave

any film that needs to be ground through. A lot of general contractors don’t like to water cure because they can’t do any other work on the slab during this period. This slows down the construction schedule and requires extra manpower on site to ensure the slab stays wet.

When water curing is not an option, I recommend a dissipating cure. These curing agents create a membrane that holds in the moisture for the required seven-day period and then begins to chemically break down. There are lots of variations of dissipating cures so do your research and figure out which option works best for your project.

In my mind, these steps make up the five Ps: “Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance.” If you follow them, you’re almost assured you’ll have a good slab that’s easier to polish and more likely to meet your customer’s expectations. 🛠️

David Stephenson owns Polished Concrete Consultants, based in Dallas, Texas. As a consultant, he offers decorative concrete programs for retailers and troubleshooting for a wide range of clients. Contact him at david@polishedconsultants.com.

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Lingering Odors from Sealers

Ew, that smell. Can you smell that smell?

by Chris Sullivan

Is it possible to smell sealer months after application? Someone asked me this regarding a stained and sealed floor in a Colorado residence.

The homeowners wanted stained concrete in their new home. They selected a light brown acid stain and a solvent-based high-gloss acrylic sealer with multiple coats of a water-based finish as the sacrificial topcoat. The floors were stained and sealed the last week of October 2015. The weather had already turned cold, so the house was closed in, but the heat had not yet been turned on. Temperatures in the house were cold, but above product installation minimums.

Within two weeks of applying the stain and sealer (no wax yet), the cabinets in the bathrooms and kitchen were installed as was all the finish trim, tile and woodwork. Work in the house was complete by the end of December, at which time the heat was turned on.

According to the owners, the smell of solvent from the sealer had never really dissipated and when the heat was turned on, it really got bad. It eventually diminished but was always there. They aired the house out for days once they finally moved in at the end of January, but the sealer's solvent odor remained.



Photos courtesy of Chris Becker, Becker Architectural Concrete

Sealing interior spaces with solvent-based sealers requires special attention to removing odors and allowing enough time for the sealer to fully dry.

Is it possible to have a solvent odor from the sealer still present after three months? My initial response was no way, but after researching the issue and getting more background it turns out the sealer was still giving off fumes, but only in specific places. Before we get back to where the odor is coming from, let's take a quick look at why sealers smell the way they do.

Chemistry lesson

In their most basic form, sealers are a combination of a solid and a liquid. When applied to the floor, the liquid evaporates and the solid remains and forms a protective film. It's the evaporating liquid that's the smelly culprit.

Depending on the type of liquid evaporating, the odor will vary greatly. One only needs to smell the difference between acetone and water to understand that point. The process by which sealers give up their liquid is called evaporation, and it's the rate of evaporation that determines how long the smelly odors are going to stick around. There are a lot of factors that impact the

evaporation rate including, but not limited to, air temperature, air movement, solvent type, air pressure and surroundings.

Now that we know the odor comes from the liquid evaporating as the sealer dries, we can start trying to figure out where or why the sealer is still drying months after application. The homeowners took initiative and ran tests to narrow down where the smell was coming from. In the end this proved to be important in determining the source of the odor and helping resolve the issue.

The homeowners' take

The installer's initial suggestion was to wax the floors with multiple coats to try and trap any remaining odors coming from the sealer. The response from the homeowners was, "While the waxing really made them [the floors] look even better, it did nothing for the smell."

They then took matters into their own hands and spent weeks draping and airing out the house, all in the winter, to narrow down the source of the odor. Here's an excerpt from an email explaining what they did:



When applying any sealer, always follow the recommended application procedures and allow for proper dry time before putting the floor into service.

“First, we aired out the house. Then we closed the doors to all the rooms and left for about two weeks. When we returned, the smell was noticeable in the main portion of the house. However, there was no smell in any of the rooms that had been closed off from the main portion of the house, other than a slight smell in the master bedroom/bath.

“Based on the above, we narrowed our focus to the main portion of the house. The only areas of the floor there that don’t have easy air circulation are under the lower cabinets in the kitchen, the cabinets between the living room and dining room, and the hall cabinets. We purchased plastic drop cloths and covered the lower kitchen cabinets and the cabinets between the living room and dining room as best we could.

“We again aired out the house, closed the doors to all the rooms and left for several days. When we returned, the smell was less noticeable in the main portion of the house and, again, there was no smell in any of the closed-off rooms. Once we started uncovering the cabinets, the smell increased.

“Our working hypothesis is that the stain/seal on the floors under the cabinets is still curing, and until there is some air circulation to those areas, the smell will never go away or not within a reasonable time frame (which should have been a week or two!). Our reasoning is based on the construction time line and the weather (at the time the cabinets were installed).”

Solving a mystery

So if the odor is coming from sealer that never completely dried and is slowly continuing to evaporate, why is there no smell from under the bathroom cabinets?

It turns out that when the tile was placed in the bathrooms the installer used a space heater and increased the air temperature significantly during the week after the sealer was applied and when the tile was being installed. The bathroom cabinets also have a much smaller footprint than the larger kitchen cabinets.

It turns out the homeowners’ hypothesis is the most plausible, and the first time I’d seen such a prolonged dry time for a sealer. No heat in the house meant cold concrete and cold air in the rooms. The cold temperatures slowed the evaporation of the sealer. Wintertime meant the house was closed up to retain the little heat there was, so no air movement.

Placing cabinets over a large section of the sealed floor reduced the air movement further, which also created a closed space concentrating the sealer odors. Those concentrated odors slowly escaped into the house. Anyone who has worked with solvent-based sealers knows that a little goes a long way in regard to odor, and just how irritating those odors can be.

Food for thought

The final solution was to find a way to air out the space under the cabinets in the kitchen. Borrowing a technique used by disaster restoration service companies when drying behind walls after floods, the toe kick was removed, 1-inch or so holes drilled every foot through the front cabinet bases and air was blown through the holes with floor fans. If that didn’t work, the cabinets would have to be removed to allow the sealer to dry and/or coat that area with a high-solids coating (not solvent based) to lock in any lingering odors.

The bigger concern is the real or perceived health issues created by the odors. “While we use the term ‘smell,’ the problem is more than just a nuisance,” the

homeowners wrote. “If we cannot keep the house aired out enough (and we have the propane bills to prove how much ‘airing’ we have done this winter), then eye drops, cough drops, etc., all come into play, so we believe there are some health risks to this.”

I think this isn’t a case of negligence, but rather an unfortunate situation created by multiple unrelated factors. This article isn’t intended to lay blame, but rather to educate so we can all learn and possibly avoid a similar situation in the future.

Next time you seal an interior floor, consider the environment, temperature, air movement, and what the time line is for cabinets and furniture. I also suggest considering water-based sealers! 🛠️

Chris Sullivan is vice president of sales and marketing with ChemSystems Inc. He has led seminars and product demonstrations throughout North America. Chris was inducted into the Decorative Concrete Hall of Fame at the 2015 Concrete Decor Show. Reach him at questions@concretedecor.net.

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Ashlar Pattern Layout can be Quick and Easy

by Rick Lobdell

OVER all the years I've worked in decorative concrete, I've done a lot of basic tile patterns. That's all I did almost every week for three years as I learned to use my tools. I got so bored doing these that I had to find a way to design something a little different but still easy to lay out.

With an extensive background in custom tile work, I remembered doing ashlar patterns in showers and floors. The tile came with a predesigned layout for you to learn how to install it. I tried a couple of them on my floors and was very frustrated early on because I made it too complicated. First off they were way too busy. Second it was harder than I expected to keep everything square.

One week during those early years, my supervisor showed me how to draw an ashlar pattern. As I watched, I had to stop him and correct him. Due to his lack of technique and planning, he was out of square within 10 feet of starting the layout. By the time he finished, the room was so far out of square I wanted to fire him myself and start all over. Not only was I shocked at how bad he drew the design but also that the clients never noticed.

Now I have this ashlar design down to a science and choose it over a basic tile pattern whenever I can. Let me explain how to draw it almost as fast as a basic tile pattern.

The overall layout

First, always start by drawing a border around the room based on the room's size. I never go under 6 inches and usually never over 12 inches. Since this is an asymmetrical pattern, don't start in the center. Start in a corner. Make sure the corner is square. If it's not, adjust the border because the walls aren't square.

To keep things simple, I'm going to explain my layout using a 6-foot design. (I do everything based on 6 feet but I've had great success doing 8-foot and 10-foot layouts as well. But over the years, I've found 6 feet is an easy starting point for me.) Use

a 6-foot straight edge to measure 6 feet out in both directions from the corner. To start, chalk a line between those two points. Next, decide the size of the tiles for the project. Remember, with all of these design layouts it's important to see the whole room in your head.



After chalking the first line on a diagonal, measure 6 feet off that line twice. Make these measurements as far apart as possible to try to accomplish the same goal I talked about in my basic tile pattern article. This helps keep everything square. After making those two marks, chalk a line through both points across the entire floor. Keep doing this until you reach the other side of the room.

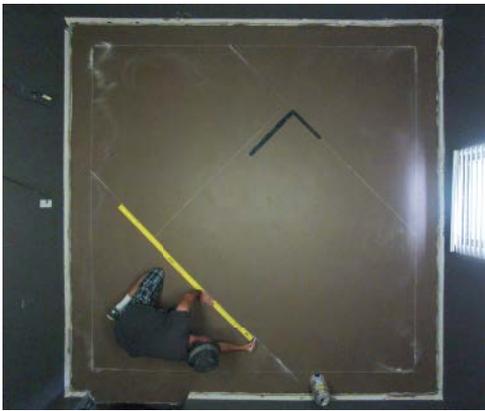


Now, pick a place anywhere on the floor to start. Remember this is asymmetrical so the only rule you must follow is to keep everything square. Square off one of the lines and draw a perpendicular line between two of them. It has to be perfectly square because if you make one mistake with these lines everything will be off square.

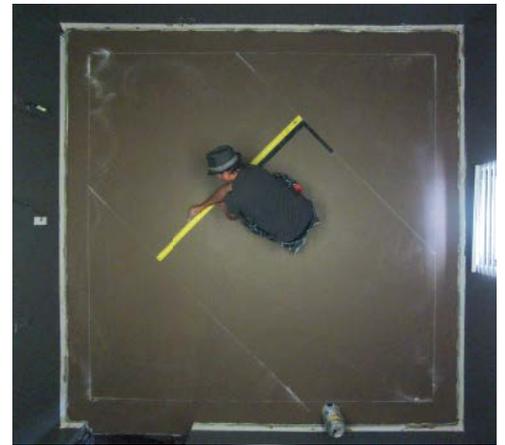
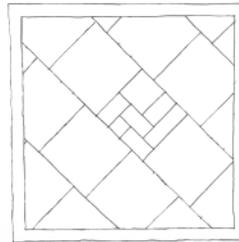
While drawing that line, make a dash at 18 and 36 inches from the bottom chalk line. This will be important in a minute.

Next, go back to the main chalk lines



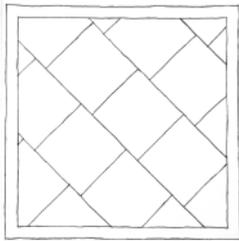


With that said, I always shift 18 inches to the left and square up to the chalk line. Draw another 6-foot line perpendicular to the chalk lines and make dashes at 18 and 36 inches again. Mark off every 18 inches in both directions of that chalk line just like the previous two. Repeat this throughout the room until you have what appears to be a block pattern across the entire floor.



and measure 18 inches. Drawing gets really easy after that. Make another perpendicular line 6 feet from the first one and make a dash at 18 and 36 inches again from the bottom chalk line.

Creating the next row of large squares is crucial to the entire design. I've tried multiple ways to lay out the next row of tiles and I've learned that just adjusting the design 18 inches off the last row makes this design look completely random.



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Drawing the tiles

Now comes the fun part. Inside each of those 6-foot squares you can draw whatever you want. It's up to you to make them extremely busy or very simple. The squares don't have to look the same if you don't want them to. However, I typically just repeat the same design in each one. That way I'm fast, efficient and everything stays square.

Remember, you have to cut this design after you're done drawing it. If you make it too complicated, you may have trouble cutting it.

Now, it's time to use all those dashes. This is where the design speeds up if you keep it simple. First, place a 6-foot straight edge at the 36-inch mark. Then starting from the left side, draw a line 54 inches long stopping 18 inches shy of the right line. As you draw this line, make a mark at 18, 36 and 54 inches.



Draw a perpendicular line on the right 18-inch dashes, another 54 inches long. Finally, draw one through the center skipping one section in the middle. When finished you'll have a 3-foot tile, a 54-inch tile, four 36-inch tiles and one 18-inch square. Repeat this layout in every 6-foot box.

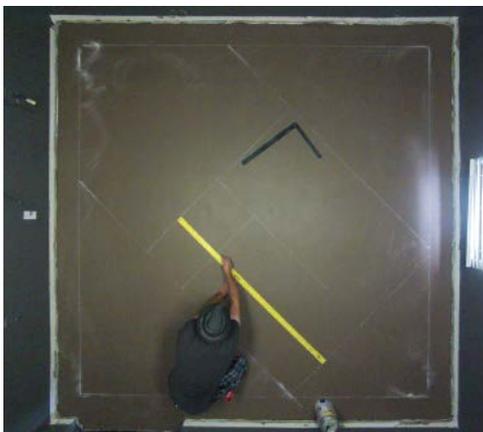


By the end, it's hard to see that a pattern was made. The clients will never know you did. 📷

🌐 GoPro video tutorial: <http://bit.ly/2cCWcTn>

Rick Lobdell is a classically trained artist who owns Concrete Mystique Engraving and Gallery Mystique. He has been using concrete as a canvas for his art. He can be reached at rick@concretemystique.com.

Next draw a perpendicular line to that at the first 18 inches of the left side of the square. Then draw another 54-inch line from the lower 18-inch marks you made on the perpendicular 6-foot lines. This time it is from the left side of the big square to the line just drawn. There are now two lines left to draw.



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A Watershed Monument

by Stacey Enesey Klemenc

WHEN EnnisArt was contacted to install a map of the Connecticut River Watershed for the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, Massachusetts, it was up for the challenge — specifically the Living Building Challenge. Based in Asheville, North Carolina, EnnisArt specializes in custom concrete flooring and concrete innovation, with a penchant toward artistic projects that maintain a green focus.

The Hitchcock educational center is made with building products which conform to stringent qualifications that meet the Living Building Challenge, by and large the most rigorous standard for green building. “Some have dubbed it ‘LEED on steroids,’” says Daniel de Wit, design associate, who together with his boss, Tom Schulz, created the map and densified and sealed 4,500 square feet of floors throughout the building.

They ended up exclusively using Prosoco Consolideck products because the colors, densifier and sealer had already been vetted to meet LBC criteria and were free of any chemicals on LBC’s “red list.” The products carry a Declare label, which is likened to a food’s ‘nutrition-label’ that lists all ingredients.

“The Living Building Challenge, with its emphasis on beauty, connection to place and elimination of chemicals of concern, is a perfect fit for Prosoco,” says Dwayne Fuhlhage, sustainability and environment director. “Our use of the Declare label is an extension of collaboration with leading design teams in our mutual journey towards constructing better buildings that are made to last and designed with future climate challenges in mind.”



Photos courtesy of EnnisArt



The map, which is in a passageway that connects two larger parts of the building, is designed to give visitors a sense of a larger picture of the river’s watershed through a blend of art and cartography. The center’s rain water filtration and storage tanks are housed in the large hallway in flush tanks for all to see: a small-scale watershed that mimics the Connecticut River ecosystem. The center’s salamander logo marks the building’s location on the map.

The map’s design was derived from a combination of Google Earth maps and historic maps and images, de Wit says, to make an architectural blueprint. Schulz painted a watercolor that de Wit photographed and placed inside the blueprint, which was then hand-drawn on the floor using a scaled grid. To get a layered, mottled and 3-D effect, Schulz hand-painted the river’s edges and sprayed

12 Consolideck ColorHard hues in various dilutions and patterns.

Schulz and de Wit also installed deer and coyote tracks as a wayfinding system that runs from the classrooms to the bathroom in a realistic pattern that looks like the coyote is chasing the deer. “The Hitchcock Center’s summer youth program toured the site and one of the children thought a coyote had actually run through the building,” de Wit says. “That’s how realistic they ended up looking.” 🐾

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