



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM | MONTH THREE

Stone Industry Specific Conversation Topics

Sales, Marketing, Communications- Focused on sharing ideas and experience related to selling stone and communicating with customers.

1. Discuss your company's social media efforts.
2. What sort of training do your sales people have access to?
3. What experience do you have with email marketing?
4. Does your website produce leads?
5. Analyze your company's online presence.
6. What types of advertising does your company do?
7. How do you interact with customers that you aren't currently working with? —once a year?
8. How to attract walk-ins.
9. How to track where your leads are coming from.
10. Identify your target market. Commercial or residential. Job size. Demographics.
11. Does your company send product samples? What does your typical sample pack consist of? Do you follow up with customers after samples have been sent?
12. Do you participate in trade shows?
13. Does your company have a sustainability program that might attract customers?
14. Has your company been involved in any LEED certified projects? Do you/How do you market that kind of information?
15. Do you survey your customers after a project has been completed? What kind of feedback do you ask for (quality of the product, quality of craftsmanship, timeliness, customer service, ease of use/installation, packaging quality, etc.)
16. Is your company involved in your local community?
17. Do you have a sales manager? If so, has the sales manager identified the goals of the sales team and you as an individual?
18. How many people within your sales team?
19. Do you have weekly / monthly sales meetings to review the goals of the sales team?
20. Are you commission or salary based? What personal goals have you have set for yourself?
21. What is your follow up style?
22. How do you keep track of potential sales, and how often do you follow up with clients?
23. Who is your competition? Do you know their sales team, goals, and communication style?
24. What is your personal communication style? Do you prefer face to face communication, or communicating via phone or email?
25. Discuss the Use Natural Stone promotional campaign, powered by Natural Stone Institute. How else can we all work together to promote the industry? Where does the money come from?
26. Discuss our attempts to pass legislation for a Check-Off Program (similar to Beef its what's for dinner, The incredible edible Egg, The touch the feel its Cotton, etc). How could this help natural stone?

27. How do you compete with artificial stone building materials? (quartz, porcelain, concrete, glass, etc) What makes them successful?

Leadership, Management, Career Advancement- Focused on advancing your career and developing leadership skills.

1. How much time do you spend each month on personal and professional development?
2. What courses have you taken? (Tech schools, college/university, online, at trade shows, sales training through company)
3. How often do you meet with your team to discuss strategy?
4. What does your company offer to help train you?
5. Is your company open to implementing a training program?
6. What is your relationship with your manager / owner of the company?
7. Are there issues you have been hesitant to address with management?
8. How would you evaluate your management team? Can you list pros and cons of management style? What can you learn from their management style? How can you individually participate to improve management (improve on communication skills to be clear of goals and expectations)
9. What are your long terms professional goals? How long do you see yourself in this position? Are you looking to advance within the same company? Have you considered looking elsewhere? (Mentor: give the option of having this conversation off-hours or at a time where the mentee can speak freely). Establish goals for each (if considering alternate employment, set a goal for your job search or set a goal for advancement from within).
10. Do you understand your company's mission/vision/values? Does your company have these defined?
11. What books/resources do you recommend on the subject of leadership?
12. What is the difference between leadership and management?
13. What is your leadership style?
14. How do you communicate with people with varying communication styles?
15. Why did you join the stone industry?
16. What qualities do you look for in a person during the hiring process?
17. Describe your goals in the industry. Have you achieved them? How did you achieve them?
18. How do you manage your time at work? (Hands on, in meetings, do you make yourself available at all times, do you allocate amounts of time to different tasks?)
19. What do you struggle with in your company? How do you go about resolving issues?
20. What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?
21. Is your company open to you participating in leadership webinars?
22. Who do you admire as a leader? What attributes does this person retain which makes them admirable as a leader? How can you attribute these attributes to your leadership / management style?
23. Have you had a recent experience in which the communication process completely broke down? How did you learn from this experience?
24. Family businesses are common in the stone industry. Does your company have a succession plan? What is it and how do you fit in?
25. Labor shortages are a common issue within the stone industry. How do immigration laws affect your workforce? How do you find/train skilled workers?

Stone Industry Knowledge- Focused on sharing what and who you need to know to be successful in the stone industry.

1. Review industry associations and the resources they produce.
2. Review events that you participate in: Marmomacc, TISE, Coverings, NATURAL STONE INSTITUTE Study Tours, etc.
3. Review regional industry associations: Regional NATURAL STONE INSTITUTE Chapters, AIA, ASID, NKBA, etc.
4. Review current leadership for NATURAL STONE INSTITUTE and past presidents.

5. How to get involved with industry committees.
6. Talk about connecting with architects and designers. Consider the NATURAL STONE INSTITUTE CEU Program.
7. Do you, personally, go through training on new equipment/software/techniques that your company might use?
8. How do you educate yourself on your specific product that you offer to the world?
9. How do you educate yourself on other company's products to be "well-rounded" in the industry
10. Visit stone warehouses / distributors, understand the variation within the different types of stone.
11. Visit jobsites when given the opportunity.
12. The stone industry is a continually evolving industry, new fabrication methods, finishes, quarries depleting, new quarries opening. It is important to stay relevant and up to date. Reading *Stone World* magazine, *The Cutting Edge* newsletter, and other trade publications are a great way of staying on top of current information and topics. These can be read at lunch or off hours. It is surprising how much information can be absorbed by spending an hour or so a month reading.

Technical Knowledge- Focused on increasing knowledge about stone including fabrication & quarrying techniques, testing standards, stone sourcing, etc.

1. Review standards organizations and the regulations they author.
 - a. ASTM, ANSI, CEN & ICC
2. Review industry associations and the resources they produce.
 - a. Natural Stone Institute, TCNA (Tile Council of North America), NTCA (National Tile Council of America), ILIA (Indiana Limestone Institute of America), NBGQA (National Building Granite Quarriers Association), NSC (Natural Stone Council), & TMS (The Masonry Society)
 - b. Review *Dimension Stone Design Manual* and its practical uses
3. Review other sources for information.
 - a. Material Manufacturers, Consultant companies, Specification templates
4. Discuss NSC/ANSI 373 Sustainability Standard. How does it tie in with LEED, LBC (Living Building Challenge), SITES, etc.
5. Discuss OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) Regulations
6. Discuss MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration) Regulations
7. Discuss Natural Stone Institute Accreditation program- benefits for both contractors and fabricator/installers.
8. Natural Stone 101- geology and testing standards- review resources available through the CEU Program.
9. How to specify stone.
10. Discuss logistics such as DOT (Department of Transportation) issues, importing, customs classifications, etc.
11. Take the opportunity to speak with every industry sales person available. Sales people represent; equipment, setting products, quarries, fabricators, freight forwarders, etc. Invite sales representatives to your office or have conversations over the phone, this is an opportunity to obtain FREE KNOWLEDGE. Ask them questions about their products and how they work. If a stone supplier, ask them if their stone has been ASTM tested, asked them the results and ask them to explain what the results mean. Ask about different quarrying methods and why they have opted to use those methods, who they used for freight forwarders, etc. Ask them about installation, what setting methods work best with their stones. Quite often after trade shows (TISE (The International Surface Event), Coverings, and others), industry sales people will make the rounds to various areas and try to visit as many people as possible. Take advantage of this opportunity. If you are working on a project which requires a specific stone, call the company, ask if they have a local representative, get on the phone and find out as much about the stone as you can.