

# NUANCES OF NATURAL STONE



## The MIA Toronto Chapter Discusses the Nuances of Natural Stone Installation



MIA CEO Jim Hieb (left) and MIA Toronto Chapter Director Chair Mike Picco of Picco Engineering introduce the MIA Chapter Stone Installation Seminar.

In June 2013, 15 Toronto based natural stone companies met at Picco Engineering to discuss the prospect of forming an MIA Toronto Chapter. The goal of this group would be to provide training for the Natural Stone Industry and create awareness to the Architectural and Design Communities.

The realization of this goal came on March 27, 2014, at Moscone Marble and Tile. The MIA Toronto Chapter launched its 2014 programming with its presentation "Installation in the Natural Stone Industry" and an accompanying evening CEU Program. The two events attracted more than 75 participants from 29 companies and featured discussions by Michael Picco of Picco Engineering, Mike Micalizzi of Custom Building Products and Rod Sigman of AquaMix.

Michael Picco started off the afternoon session with a discussion about understanding natural stone. To gain the most out of a natural stone selection, fabricators must place a stone in the best situation to succeed. Factors such as using large format vs. mixed sized stones, understating the type of meshing on the back of stones and researching the stone's absorption rate allows fabricators to pick the appropriate type of grout and sealant when installing products. This selection will in turn lead to optimum outcomes and customer satisfaction.

The presentation then turned to Mike Micalizzi's discussion on surface preparation and installation. The thesis of his discussion was substrates need to be true, smooth and ready to accept bond. To create this true and smooth substrate,

installers must assure that the installation area is flat. The installation area must be within 1/8th of an inch per 10 foot section or flooring tile may crack or loosen over time. Micalizzi also reminded installers to give tiles expansion joints in order to allow slabs to set, thus protecting the tiles from cracking.

The final afternoon presentation involved a discussion of care and maintenance of natural stone led by Rod Sigman of AquaMix. The discussion surrounded the use and characteristics of water-based and solvent-based products. Sigman was quick to remind installers that there is no such thing as a stain-proof sealer. Sealers merely increase the reaction time of a stain. Sigman continued that with the increased reaction time for staining comes an increase in time for stain extraction.

After a short break, the evening session provided CEU credits for Architects and Designers in the Toronto area. The evening event included 27 participants and featured both the Natural Stone Discussion from Michael Picco and Care and the Maintenance discussion from Rod Sigman. Architects and Designers were also treated to a tour of Moscone Tile and Marble's 19,000 square foot showroom.

The MIA Toronto Chapter Installation in the Natural Stone Industry was the first of four 2014 events produced by the MIA Toronto Chapter. This year's schedule also includes a Fabricator Town Hall Meeting, a Quarry Tour and a CEU event for Architects and Designers. For more information about the MIA Toronto Chapter, please go to the Toronto Chapter website at [www.marble-institute.com/chapters/toronto](http://www.marble-institute.com/chapters/toronto) or contact Aaron Dahnke at [adahnke@marble-institute.com](mailto:adahnke@marble-institute.com).