

STANDARDS and SUSTAINABILITY



The MIA Toronto Chapter and *Stone World* Discuss Standards and Sustainability



The Toronto Stone Summit Fabricator panel answers questions from the audience.

On May 14, 2014 the MIA Toronto Chapter and *Stone World* magazine held the Toronto Stone Summit at MS International in Mississauga, Ontario. The Toronto Stone Summit, which featured a discussion by Tony Malisani of Malisani Inc, attracted over 30 fabricators from 23 companies. Overall, 48 stone industry leaders were involved in the day long event.

The morning session started with a project costing discussion led by Malisani. The goal of this session was to prompt fabricators to think about company costs and how those costs compare to other companies in the industry. Using worksheet templates and real life scenarios, Malisani provided attendees with a list of financial benchmarks and comparable costs from the 2013 fabricators benchmark survey.

The afternoon session featured a panel of Toronto-area fabricators. Participants

on the panel included Paolo Mantenuto of Marble & Marble Ltd, Mariangela Muia of Majestic Marble Import Ltd. and John Traczuk of Moscone Marble. While the panel discussed nearly every aspect of the natural stone industry, specific care was given to raising standards for companies, employee retention and sustainable practices.

The first question the panel discussed was how raising industry standards could affect the bottom line for companies. John Traczuk from Moscone Marble argued that for a “company to make money, they must first look inside.” A company can only run efficiently when they first analyze what they are doing and then create processes that ensure the best and most consistent product. Traczuk suggested that to assure the best outcome, companies must find the technology that best accomplishes the

company’s goal and train their employee on how to effectively use that equipment.

Another topic discussed was how to find and keep employees. Paolo Mantenuto suggested that training is the key to all employee relation issues. John Traczuk furthered this notion by citing an Ontario Government program that pays companies who hire, train and retain new employees for at least 17 weeks. To assure success with this government program, Traczuk trains and evaluates each new employee every 30 days. During the evaluation, he gives the new employee tasks to master. Every task that is mastered by a new employee is tied to an hourly pay increase. This incremental pay increase improves the employee’s motivation and increases the likelihood that the employee will stay with the company.

The final area the panel discussed included sustainability of natural stone with an emphasis on the disposal and use of remnant slabs. While a number of suggestions were given by the audience, including giving staff bonuses for effective use of remnants slabs and allowing local artist to use remnants as artwork, Paolo Mantenuto suggested that effective remnant reuse is tied to understanding inventory. Mantenuto holds an electronic inventory of all remnant pieces including pictures and barcoding. This allows him to effectively retrieve remnants for customer viewing and use on existing jobs.

The Toronto Stone Summit is part of a greater MIA and *Stone World* magazine Stone Industry Education Series. The 2014 series includes eight regional events. For more information on the Stone Industry Education series, please go to www.stoneindustryeducation.com or contact Aaron Dahnke at adahinke@marble-institute.com.