

The industry's leading tile installation magazine

JUNE 2026

# TileLetter

The EVOLUTION  
of RTC PRODUCTS  
REACHES FRUITION AT  
COVERINGS 2026

THE  
**TOOLS**  
ISSUE

INNOVATION FOR THE INSTALLER:  
HIGHLIGHTS  
from new tools  
SEEN AT  
COVERINGS  
2026

The Porcelain  
Slab Company  
is a flat-out  
success in  
its niche

The magazine of the National Tile Contractors Association

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## In Every Issue

### **BUSINESS**

12 *Where tile and stone jobs go sideways, and how a connected workflow fixes that*

### **NTCA MEMBERS**

34 *The Porcelain Slab Company is a flat-out success in its niche*

### **TECHNICAL**

42 *Flatness matters: a practical conversation about concrete, specifications, and tile success*

48 *Ask the Experts*

## Columns

### **ONE-TO-ONE**

20 *Best of Everything (BOE): a partnership built on industry legacy and innovation*



## Feature

26 *RTC Products*  
*The evolution of RTC Products reaches fruition at Coverings 2026*





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# Departments

- 6 NTCA Training
- 8 Editor's Letter
- 10 President's Letter
- 52 Product Focus
- 62 News Ticker
- 63 Industry Supporters



# TileLetter

*TileLetter is the official monthly publication of the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), and the industry's leading tile installation magazine.*

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## Meet the 2026 NTCA Training Team



**Matt Weiner**  
Training Department  
Manager



**Randy Fleming**



**Chad Jones**



**Kate Koerber**



**Bill O'Connor**



**Amber Fox**  
Director of Strategic  
Initiatives



**Anthony Oliver**



**Robb Roderick**



**Alex Smith**

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To confirm dates and for more information visit [NTCATraining.com](http://NTCATraining.com)

### JULY

- 13 **Floor & Decor** – Atlanta, GA
- 13 **Floor & Decor** – Thornton, CO
- 14 **Daltile** – Reno, NV
- 14 **Daltile** – Roanoke, VA
- 14 **Floor & Decor** – Colorado Springs, CO
- 15 **Daltile** – Loxley, AL
- 16 **Floor & Decor** – Covington, LA
- 16 **Floor & Decor** – Virginia Beach, VA
- 16 **Daltile** – Albuquerque, NM
- 20 **Floor & Decor** – Tolleson, AZ
- 21 **The Tile Shop** – Rockville, MD
- 21 **Daltile** – Beaumont, TX
- 21 **Floor & Decor** – Santa Ana, CA
- 22 **Daltile** – Las Vegas, NV
- 22 **Floor & Decor** – Grapevine, TX

23 **Daltile** – Houston, TX

23 **Daltile** – Bethpage, NY

23 **Daltile** – St. George, UT

27 **Floor & Decor** – North Richland Hills, TX

28 **Floor & Decor** – Plano, TX

30 **Floor & Decor** – Humble, TX

### AUGUST

4 **Emser Tile** – Sacramento, CA

10 **Floor & Decor** – Bakersfield, CA

11 **Daltile** – Ontario, CA

11 **Daltile** – Lakewood, WA

12 **The Masonry Center** – Spokane, WA

13 **Emser Tile** – Phoenix, AZ

13 **Daltile** – Missoula, MT

18 **Daltile** – Ogden, UT

18 **Daltile** – Cranberry Township, PA

19 **Floor & Decor** – Bethel Park, PA

20 **The Tile Shop** – Nashville, TN

20 **Daltile** – Bedford Heights, OH

25 **The Masonry Center** – Boise, ID

25 **Daltile** – Wilmington, DE

26 **Daltile** – Fort Myers, FL

27 **The Masonry Center** – Missoula, MT

27 **Floor & Decor** – Fort Lauderdale, FL

## 2026 NTCA Regional Programs \*

Register online at [NTCATraining.com](http://NTCATraining.com)

### JULY

- 16 **Floor & Decor** – Pleasant Hill, CA
- 23 **Louisville Tile Distributors** – Louisville, KY
- 23 **Arizona Tile** – Anaheim, CA
- 28 **Floor & Decor** – Mission Viejo, CA
- 30 **Daltile** – Nashville, TN

### AUGUST

- 6 **Floor & Decor** – Happy Valley, OR
- 6 **Daltile** – Lenexa, KS
- 11 **Floor & Decor** – Everett, WA
- 20 **Floor & Decor** – Lombard, IL
- 20 **Floor & Decor** – Denver, CO
- 27 **Floor & Decor** – Gaithersburg, MD
- 27 **Uzin Utz** – Waco, TX



NTCA maintains an ongoing list of training events through an interactive map on its website. Check it out by scanning.



*\*Dates are subject to change*

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# Exploring the tools of the trade

*“Technology can empower or control, depending on its use. Innovation requires wisdom and responsibility to ensure progress serves humanity. Tools must enhance life rather than dominate it.”*  
— SHIVANSHU K. SRIVASTAVA



Lesley Goddin

Our June issue focuses on the vast range of tools that can help you excel in your career.

Starting off with our cover feature, RTC Products presents an overview of new tool products the company exhibited at the Coverings show a few months back and how they can increase your efficiency, comfort and more.

In our Product section, special correspondent Chris Woelfel brings us an additional report on outstanding tools and accessories that impressed her at Coverings, and a sidebar rounds out that report with other choice tools to explore.

NTCA Executive Director Bart Bettiga’s One-to-One this month details the evolution of Best of Everything (BOE) and its strong legacy of innovative tools for the industry.

In our Technical story, James Woelfel delves into the importance of achieving a flat concrete substrate. He discusses ways to properly prepare a concrete substrate, as well as tools to help gauge the floor. In Ask the Experts, we look at matching mixing-drill speed with the needs of the material to obtain a strong bond for thin-set mortars and precise flow for self-leveling underlayments.

In our Business story, Matt Rogers of Measure Square outlines how a CRM dedicated to the needs of tile and stone workflows can streamline, simplify, and organize your processes for greater efficiency and productivity.

In our Mindset Matters blurb, we focus on mental health

tools you can use to enhance your life every day, at home and on the job.

In our Artisan feature, we hearken back to the recent Coverings show with a synopsis of a panel of artisan women who represent different aspects of the industry, how they are intertwined, and how they complement each other.

Rod Owen muses about tools in his opening President’s Letter—from trowels to cutters to software, to skills, knowledge and discipline—and how to use tools of every stripe to their best effect.

And we end with an ask: Do you have a favorite tool that has made a big difference on your projects? We started our Cool Tools section in January, sharing favorite tools that installers and contractors have named as game changers on the job. We want to know what has worked for you! Send a print-quality photo (1.5 MB or larger) of your favorite tool with a comment on why it has made an impact to [lesley@tile-assn.com](mailto:lesley@tile-assn.com), and we’ll consider it for a future issue!

God bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley". The signature is written in black ink and is enclosed within a simple, hand-drawn circular outline.

Lesley  
[lesley@tile-assn.com](mailto:lesley@tile-assn.com)

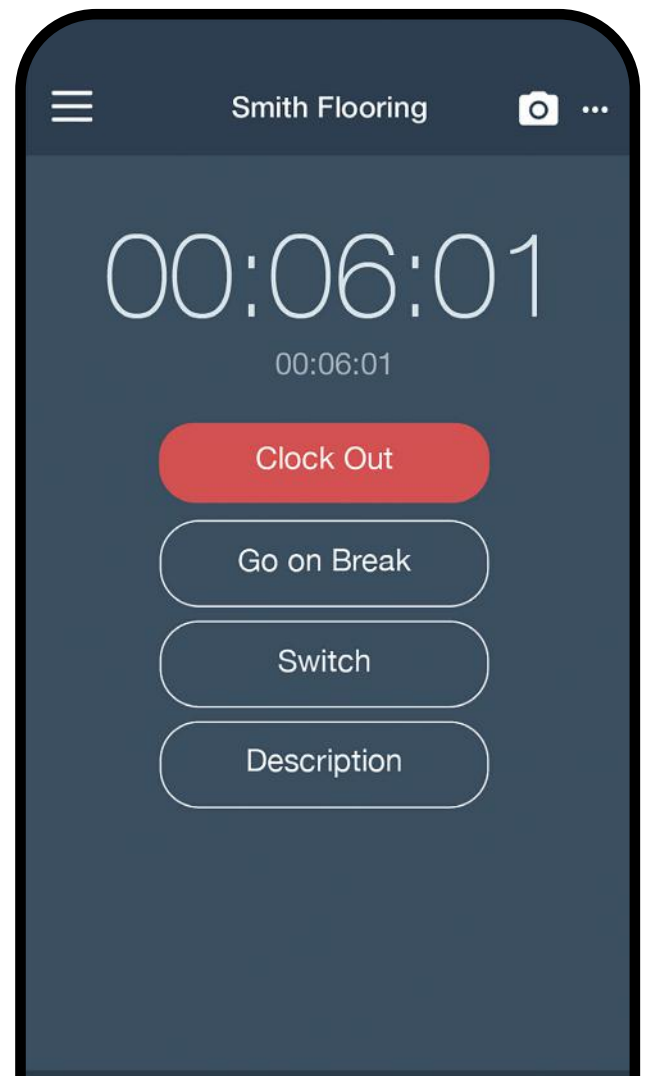
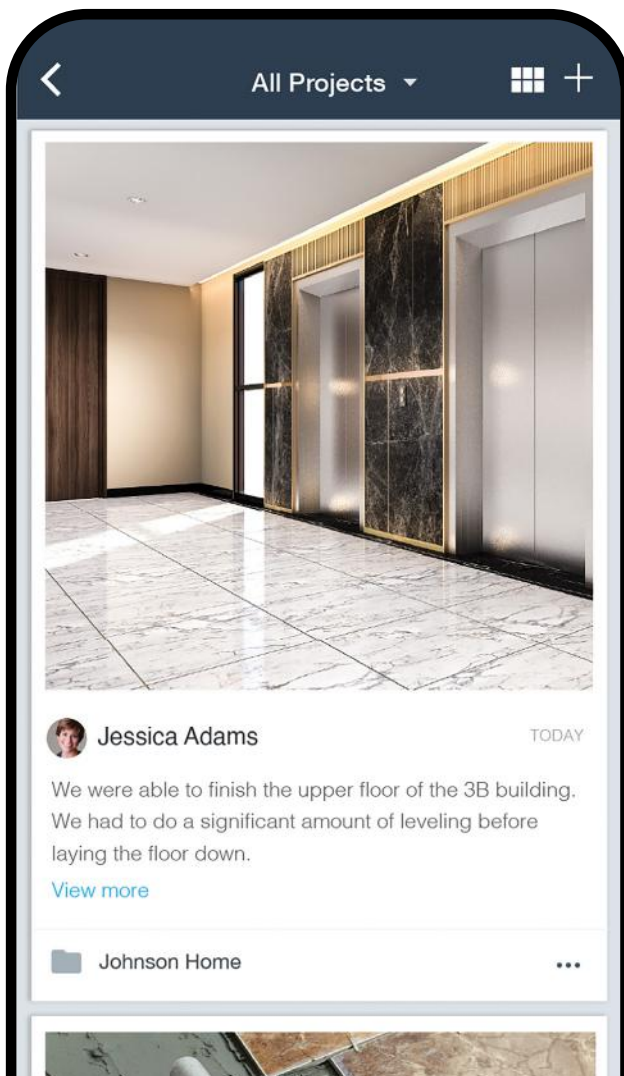
Job Costing  
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RECOMMENDED BY NTCA

# Mobile time tracking for tile contractors

Track time with GPS, manage crews, and get daily project reports—all from your phone. Make your scheduling, job costing, and documentation easy with web and mobile apps. Simplify your workflow and stay on budget with one powerful tool. Built by contractors for contractors.





Rod Owen

# Using the RIGHT TOOLS

Last month, I reflected on my journey in this industry, from the field to the office, and how growth comes from being willing to learn, adapt, and step outside of what's familiar. As I think about tools—this month's *TileLetter* theme—it's clear that they played a major role in that growth every step of the way, but that extends beyond the hand tools we all rely on.

When I first got into this trade over 30 years ago, "tools" meant something very specific. I thought of a margin trowel, a notch trowel, and the old Superior 2A and 3A tile cutters. The 3A was for 12" tile, which at the time felt big, and the 2A handled anything 8" and smaller. That was the world I knew—if you had asked me back then whether someone in an office used tools, I probably would have said no.

I couldn't have been more wrong.

No matter our role, we all rely on tools to do our jobs effectively. On the jobsite, the installer depends on the right tools to produce quality work efficiently, from trowels to layout equipment to cutting tools. One example stands out: the score-and-snap cutter. I've seen mechanics spend unnecessary time setting up and breaking down a wet saw, or making repeated trips for cuts, when many of those cuts could be made quickly and accurately right at their workstation with a score-and-snap. The right tool, used the right way, saves time, increases productivity, and improves profitability.

The same principle applies in the office.

Estimating software, digital takeoff tools, project management platforms, scheduling systems, and

accounting programs are all tools. Not using them, or not using them well, is no different than choosing the wrong tool in the field. It creates inefficiencies, wastes time, and limits performance.

Tools are constantly evolving. Many of you saw that firsthand at Coverings 2026, where innovation continues to push our industry forward. Whether in the field or the office, the opportunity to improve is always there.

But tools alone aren't enough. We must develop the skills and discipline to use them properly. The combination of the right tools and the right knowledge of how to use them drives efficiency, consistency, and success.

Take a look at your operation, both in the field and in the office. Are you using the best tools available? And just as important, are you using them to their full potential? Because in this business, the right tools, in the right hands, make all the difference.

There is no better way to learn what tools are out there, and the best methods of utilizing them, than networking with industry peers. So, I'll say it again, if you're not involved, you're missing out!

As always, Educate for Excellence!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod".

Rod Owen  
NTCA President  
rod.owen@ccowen.us



# FINANCING

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# Where tile and stone jobs GO SIDEWAYS, AND HOW A CONNECTED WORKFLOW FIXES THAT



By Matt Rogers, Stone Solutions Manager, Measure Square

**A** contractor (let's call her Sara) just landed a new job. Maybe it's a custom tile shower and kitchen backsplash for a remodel client. Maybe it's a hotel lobby or a multi-unit residential project. The plans arrive and the clock starts ticking. Now she needs to price it, but the materials aren't organized. That's where the real work begins.

## The takeoff: where the job is first won—or lost

Sara starts measuring. Whether manual or digital takeoff, the stakes are high. With tile, she wrangles with patterns, grout joints, trims, and transitions, driving quantities and waste. Add stone and the equation shifts to slabs, seams, and yield, where layout efficiency directly impacts cost.



## Layout: where waste becomes real

Layout isn't a finishing step; it's the job. For tile, layout decisions directly affect material counts. A diagonal pattern can add 15-20% material waste, while large-format tiles in tight spaces increase cuts. These variables don't live in generic pricing tools.

For stone, seams, vein alignment, and slab

optimization are cost drivers, not preferences. Poor layout increases material waste, and mistakes are expensive. Especially in stone countertop fabrication, this planning lives in sketches or separate tools, making optimization difficult before ordering.

## The job gets rebuilt, again and again

Then, the quote or bid goes in, and things change. Materials shift, designs change, clients revise. That means reworking layouts, recalculating yield or waste, adjusting quantities, and rebuilding pricing—often in systems not built for iteration. Each revision becomes fragmented, with layouts, quantities, and pricing updated in different places. On complex jobs, this is constant. By the time the job reaches fabrication or installation, multiple versions of the truth exist. Takeoffs, layouts, POs, and drawings don't fully align.

That's where rework shows up:

- Ordering extra material
- Re-cutting or re-fabricating
- Delays on replacements
- Last-minute field fixes

Material waste is expensive, and time is even costlier. Mishaps with miscommunication, unclear data, and constant coordination add up.

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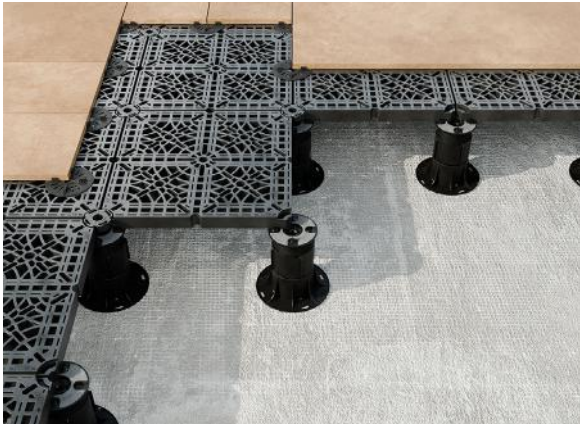
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INDUSTRY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



**MAPEI's PP level Grid**

MAPEI's PP level GRID System is used in combination with pedestals to offer an extra degree of stability, safety, and protection. In the unlikely event of pavers breaking, the grid will prevent anything from falling through. Further, the grids of the system are connected to each other through locking connectors, giving the system stability and strength. The use of PP level GRID System allows the installation of ceramic pavers, natural stone\* and concrete pavers of different sizes. In addition, because the installation is free of the constraints of the pedestals underneath and because of movable head spacers, pavers can be placed on top of the grid in any pattern desired. Designed for use in residential and commercial applications, the PP level GRID System can be installed in combination with pedestals on terraces, balconies and roof decks. The system is also recyclable. The safety grids, connectors and head spacers may be removed and recycled at the end of their service life. For more information, scan.

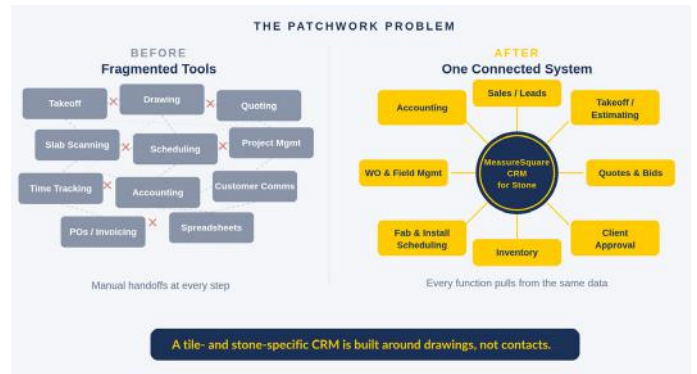


\* Consult with the natural-stone manufacturer as to whether its products are suitable for heavy pedestrian traffic.



**Where “good enough” systems start costing real money**

Most contractors rely on disconnected systems.



This plays out differently depending on scale. For a solo contractor, it might mean jumping between a tile estimating software tool, a spreadsheet for pricing, and a text thread with the client. At the larger end, it can mean about a dozen separate tools for takeoff, layout, quoting, slab inventory, scheduling, project management, time tracking, and accounting—not to mention spreadsheets, email, and texts. The details differ, but the core problem is the same: the job has to be rebuilt at every step.

Generic CRM (customer relationship management) and ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems fall short. They track contacts and pipelines, not tile layouts, slab optimization, or revision history. They can't calculate layout-based material waste or connect drawings to quotes and POs.

So after takeoff, the job isn't done. It's rebuilt repeatedly, scattered across spreadsheets for pricing, documents for proposals, systems for scheduling and purchasing. Each step introduces errors.

**A unified digital thread**

MeasureSquare CRM for Stone is a CRM connected to the drawing, where changes made in one place are



# Ceramic Tile Hygiene Facts

*Ceramic tile is one of the healthiest flooring choices available, all without compromising on artistic versatility.*



## HEALTHY HOME



### ALLERGEN FREE

Ceramic's nonporous surface doesn't allow allergens in the environment such as dust, dirt, and pollen to penetrate.



### NO PVC

Polyvinyl chloride is a resin found in some vinyl flooring that contains phthalates and organotins, both a concern among health experts.



**NO FORMALDEHYDE** Certain levels of formaldehyde can irritate asthma and other respiratory disorders. Ceramic tile does not contain formaldehyde.



### BACTERIA-RESISTANT

Ceramic tile is inhospitable to the growth of bacteria.



### NONTOXIC

Ceramic tile doesn't emit any toxic fumes when exposed to heat or fire.



### NO VOCs

Volatile organic compounds are harmful gases that may cause various health concerns and are emitted by many non-ceramic flooring types.

## HEALTHY CLEANING



### EASY TO CLEAN

Wiping with some soap and water is all that's needed to clean up most messes — no harsh chemicals are necessary.



### ANTIMICROBIAL

Options can suppress and even destroy harmful microorganisms, such as mold, fungi, bacteria, and viruses.



### SCRATCH-RESISTANT

Dents, scrapes, and cuts often seen in other materials aren't the same danger for ceramic tile.



### STAIN-RESISTANT

Your life is bound to see many messes—ceramic tile doesn't stain easily!



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### LOWEST LIFE CYCLE COST

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### RECYCLING

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## HEALTHY PLANET



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Download this free showroom poster of ceramic tile hygiene benefits ► at <https://whytile.com/library/health-hygiene-and-cleanliness-benefits-poster/>



■ BUSINESS

automatically reflected elsewhere. The workflow flows seamlessly from lead → digital takeoff → layout → proposal → fabrication or installation → invoice, with nothing needing to be rebuilt.

**From measurement to invoice, without starting over**

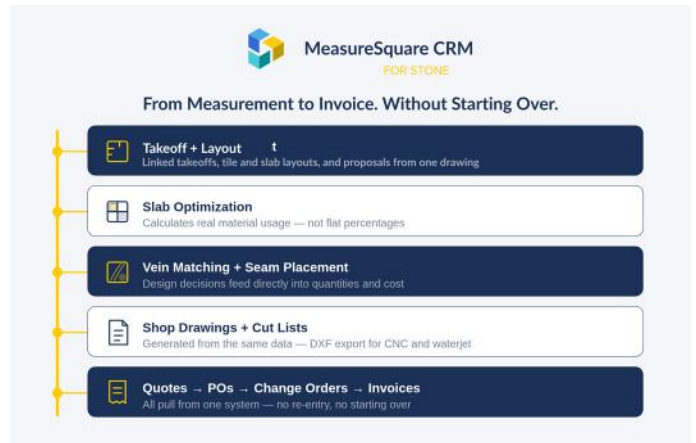
Because MeasureSquare CRM for Stone pulls directly from the drawing, every downstream step stays connected:

- Takeoffs, layouts, and proposals link to a single drawing.
- Material usage comes from real layout data.
- Layout decisions feed quantities and cost.
- Shop drawings and cut lists generate from the same source.
- Quotes, POs, change orders, and invoices stay connected.

**For tile installers: same problem, same solution**

Tile contractors face the same fragmentation—multiple tools, duplicate entry, and version confusion.

MeasureSquare CRM works with MeasureSquare Stone & Tile, which handles tile-specific digital takeoff and layout: pattern planning, grout optimization, and waste calculation. That data flows directly into the CRM, creating a connected lifecycle from lead to invoice.



Whether it's a bathroom remodel or a multi-floor project, the system carries job data forward instead of forcing re-entry.

**Job changes? A one-and-done update streamlines the process**

Changes happen. Materials shift, scope expands, tile becomes unavailable, slabs become discontinued. In disconnected workflows, that means rebuilding the job across multiple, disjointed files.



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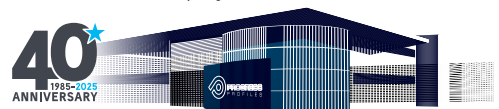
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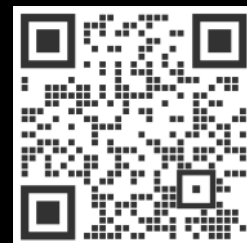
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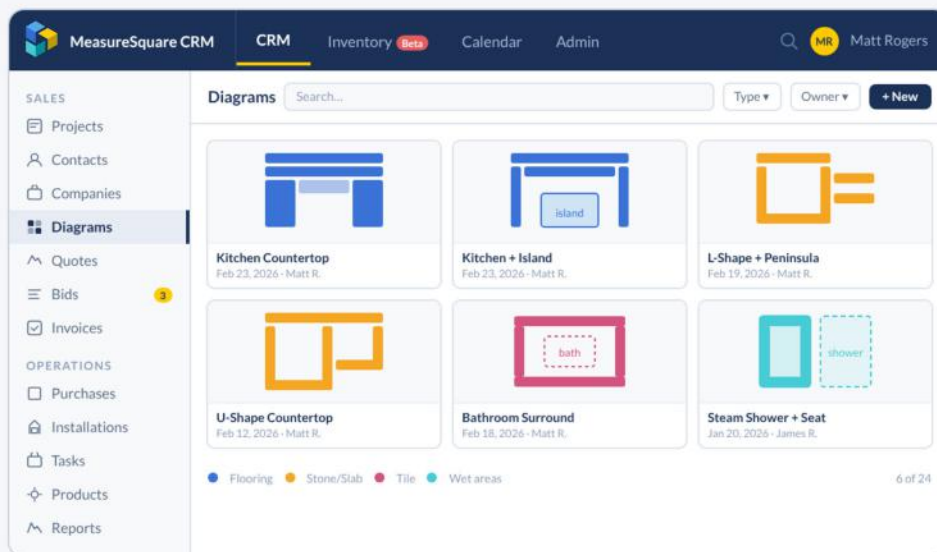
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## Manage Changes In A Connected Workflow



● ONE DRAWING · ONE PLATFORM · ONE SOURCE OF TRUTH ●

In a connected workflow, there's only one place to update. Layout, tile estimating, and quoting stay tied together. Slab usage is calculated within the estimate. Project data feeds directly into scheduling, purchasing, and accounting. No duplicate versions, no manual re-entry, because in a tile- and stone-specific CRM, everything lives in a single, connected file:

- Layout, estimating, and quoting are tied together.
- Slab usage is calculated within the estimate, not after.
- Project data flows directly into scheduling, purchasing, and accounting.

### Small shops, large firms: same problem, same opportunity

For smaller or residential contractors, this might mean:

- Faster, more accurate quotes
- Fewer missed details
- Clearer job tracking

For larger or commercial operations, it means:

- Better material allocation across projects
- Stronger coordination between teams
- Reduced over-ordering and shortages

### Back to the beginning

Sara, the contractor, is still at her desk. The plans are open, and the deadline looms. Whether pricing tile or stone, the difference isn't speed; it's whether she has to start over.

In one workflow, the job is rebuilt repeatedly. In the other, it's built once and carried forward. Same project, less rework, more control.

To learn more about MeasureSquare CRM for Stone, email Matt Rogers at [matt@measuresquare.com](mailto:matt@measuresquare.com) or scan the QR code at right:



### About Measure Square

Measure Square, based in Pasadena, Calif., provides takeoff, estimating, and CRM software for the flooring, stone, and tile industries. MeasureSquare Stone & Tile handles slab optimization, tile layout, pattern planning, and shop drawings, while MeasureSquare CRM for Stone manages the full project lifecycle from lead to invoice in one platform. Visit [www.measuresquare.com](http://www.measuresquare.com) to learn more. **TL**

# NTCA Total Health & Wellness Benefits Program

The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) provides exclusive, cost-saving programs designed to support the success and growth of tile professionals nationwide. Among the many valuable benefits available to NTCA members is the NTCA Total Health & Wellness Benefits Program. This comprehensive program is dedicated to promoting the well-being of our members and their teams. Discover how NTCA can enhance your business and help you thrive!

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# ONE to ONE



**RICH MAGGIO,**  
BOE



**RICK BALDINI,** BOE

## BEST OF EVERYTHING (BOE):

a partnership built on industry legacy and innovation



In the One-to-One column, NTCA Executive Director Bart Bettiga interviews industry leaders about pertinent topics.

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**T**he tile industry has a unique way of bringing together unlikely partners who share a common vision. Such is the case with Best of Everything (BOE), a company born from the convergence of two distinct career paths: Rick Baldini’s Fortune 500 expertise and Rich Maggio’s deep family roots in tool manufacturing.

### A legacy spanning decades

Rich Maggio’s story begins with his grandfather, who founded Superior Featherweight Tools in 1944. What makes this origin story particularly compelling is the ingenuity behind the company’s name and early success.

During World War II, Maggio’s grandfather discovered a source of scrap aluminum from Lockheed Aircraft in the Long Beach area. This innovative material allowed him to manufacture lightweight trowels, hawks, and other tools—hence the “Featherweight” designation. The company pioneered tools for five trades: cement, masonry, drywall, plastering, and tile. Maggio’s father and uncle took over the company after their father died in 1969.

Rich Maggio joined the family business at a very young age, taking on increasingly diverse and demanding roles, including sales, product development, design, and both domestic and international manufacturing. His contributions not only bolstered his family’s business but also garnered significant brand recognition within the contractor community, leading to an advantageous acquisition by a strategic industry buyer.

### Rick Baldini’s journey through building products

Rick Baldini’s career followed a different trajectory, beginning with positions at Fortune 500 building products companies including United States Gypsum and Masonite. His career progressed to TEC, where he ran the company’s West Coast manufacturing and sales operations.

During this time, Baldini identified Aqua Mix, a privately-held care and

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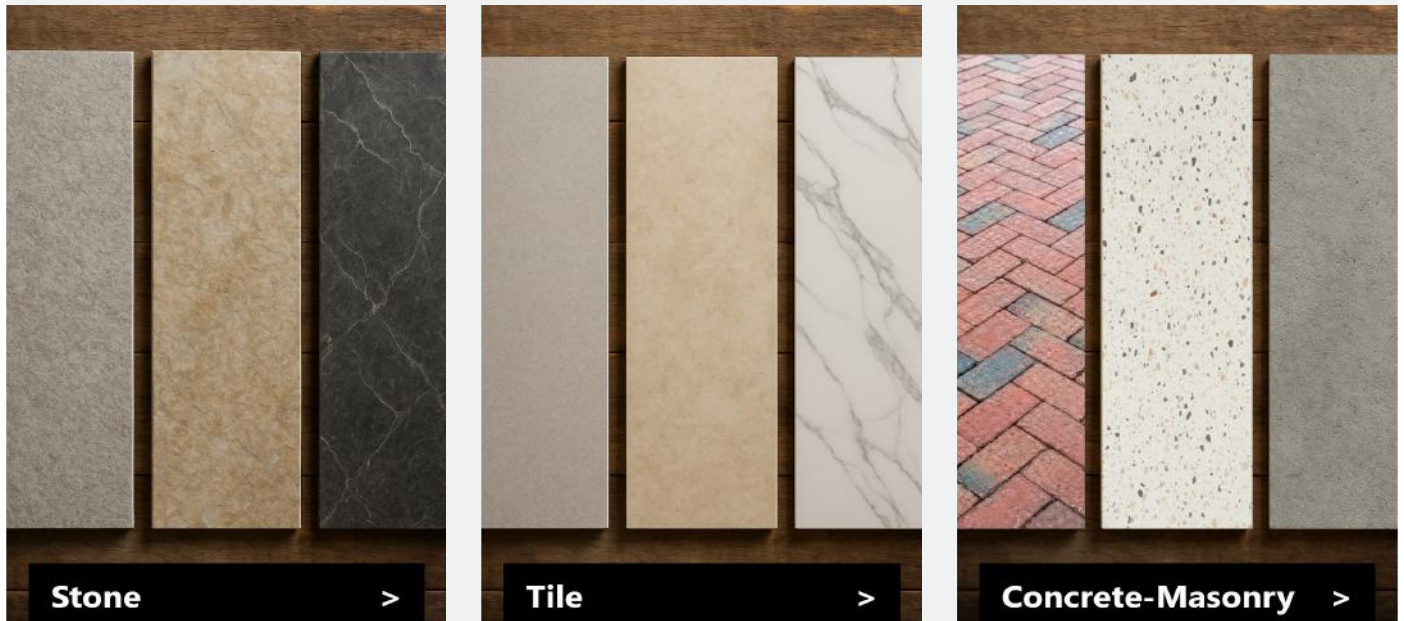
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maintenance company, as a potential acquisition target. Though corporate obstacles prevented the deal, his entrepreneurial instincts led him to approach the owners directly with a partnership proposal, and Baldini became an equity earn-in partner and President/CEO of Aqua Mix. Over his 12-year tenure, he helped grow the company into the most recognized brand of care and maintenance products, culminating in its favorable sale to a strategic industry buyer.

A non-compete agreement then kept him out of the sealer business for five years—a period that would ultimately lead him and Rich Maggio to form a partnership supplying installation accessories to the tile and stone industry.

### The partnership takes shape

Both men had connections to Custom Building Products through prior sales, and they had known each other through the industry for years. When Baldini's non-compete ended and Maggio had already departed Custom, the two decided to explore a "what if" conversation that would change the trajectory of both their careers.

Best of Everything (BOE) was founded around 2007, with the concept of offering "most every installation accessory short of setting materials." The partnership represented a natural marriage of complementary skills: Baldini brought corporate structure, distributor relationships, and operational expertise, while Maggio

contributed his deep knowledge of tool manufacturing, sourcing capabilities, decades of family business experience, and of course, sales.

### Building a unique business model

Rather than pursuing direct-to-contractor sales like many competitors, BOE strategically focused on the distributor channel. The company's philosophy is straightforward: nothing is sold to a distributor until it's sold through the distributor. This commitment extends to the return policy—if a product doesn't sell in one market, the company will take it back with no questions asked, knowing it will find success elsewhere.

Maggio's approach to manufacturing also set the company apart. Rather than simply buying products from overseas factories, he initially partnered with machine shops in Taiwan and China, teaching them his family's proprietary methods. This hands-on approach ensured quality and prevented the company from becoming "just another overseas tool supplier."

The TrueBlue Grout Float exemplifies this commitment to excellence. Developed over 10 years, this flagship product has become the industry standard. Contractors report quicker clean-up, reduced fatigue, fewer carpal tunnel symptoms, even when using epoxy grout; and TrueBlue Float is frequently featured in demonstrations by major grout manufacturers.

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### Innovation through contractor collaboration

A unique aspect of BOE is the company's openness to contractor innovations. Continuing a tradition started by Maggio's grandfather, contractors who develop new tool ideas often reach out to the company. Maggio personally evaluates each proposal, offering honest feedback about patenting, manufacturing, and distribution options. Some arrangements involve the company manufacturing products for contractors to sell themselves, while others result in BOE becoming the exclusive manufacturer/distributor.

### A comprehensive product portfolio

Under the Primo brand (a name derived from the Italian word for "number one") BOE offers tile cutters, diamond blades, sponges, gloves, painter's tape, and practical items like contractor-grade trash bags—products that contractors consistently purchase but typically source from big-box retailers. The company also created OMNI, a care and maintenance product line that evolved from Baldini's experience with Aqua Mix. This line has adapted to changes in tile and grout technology, particularly the rise of porcelain tiles that reduced demand for stone sealing products.

BOE's current top sellers include leveling systems like

The Level Best, Vortex, and Lippage Eliminator, which includes a handy usage calculator that helps contractors and distributor personnel determine the number of leveling system pieces needed per job.

### Distribution and operations

BOE operates through independent sales agents across the nation, most with long-standing relationships with BOE and the distributors in their territories. The company consolidated operations in Henderson, Nev., in 2021.

### Looking forward

Despite the ongoing economic uncertainty, BOE has achieved impressive results. The company posted double-digit growth last year and again in the first quarter of the current year. With its focus on serving distributors and supporting the contractors who depend on its products, the success of Best of Everything (BOE) demonstrates that in the tile industry, relationships, reputation, and genuine commitment to quality ultimately drive success. **TL**



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# The EVOLUTION of RTC PRODUCTS REACHES FRUITION AT COVERINGS 2026

*By Ken Ballin, Social Marketing Director,  
RTC Products; Co-founder, Ballin Knows  
Best; Owner, Skyro Floors*





The new RTC outside sales team, from L to R: Robert Davis, Steven Berger, Kris Blanchard, Steve Sprung, Adam Beck, Rich Eckert, Keith Bettin, Mike Higgins, and Mike Link.

In 2012, a young RTC Products (then called Russo Trading Company) was anticipating Coverings 2012, its first trade show. The company had an impressive line of tools to share with the masses, so its leaders took the plunge, made the gamble, and decided to make RTC's presence known in the industry. The success of this initial debut would dictate the future for the entire organization and everyone involved from this point until today.

In 2012, RTC's Bill Russo and Steve Sprung showed off the original T3 Razor 10" diamond blade, Porcelain Pro bits and diamond hole saws, the Rockin Roller grout wash bucket, Killer Bee polishing pads, and a number of other mainstays that remain in the lineup to this day. Although some of the original products are no longer in the line, some have evolved, and even more have been added to make up the latest product line recently featured at Coverings 2026.

So many years and Coverings shows later, the company—now called RTC Products—underwent a rebranding and a fancy facelift in booth this year. At Coverings 2026, a new, clean, brightly-colored backdrop stood approximately 16' tall and 25' wide and was visible aisles away on the trade show floor. The only thing that outshone that big beautiful display was the new outside sales team, which expands the company's reach to clients and industry events across the country.

## Sigma

As I walked into the booth for the first time on day one of the show, I found myself in a sea of Sigma blue, with a touch of backlit tile cutters, channeling my inner Paul Walker's Nissan Skyline from *2 Fast 2 Furious*.

The next stage in Sigma's evolution, the Sigma Series 4 NEX push-handle tile cutters feature a robust design built to handle rough and large tiles up to 3/4" thick, making it one of the most versatile cutters on the market. The NEX cutter is available in five different sizes: 24.4", 29.9", 37.4", 49.2", and 61".



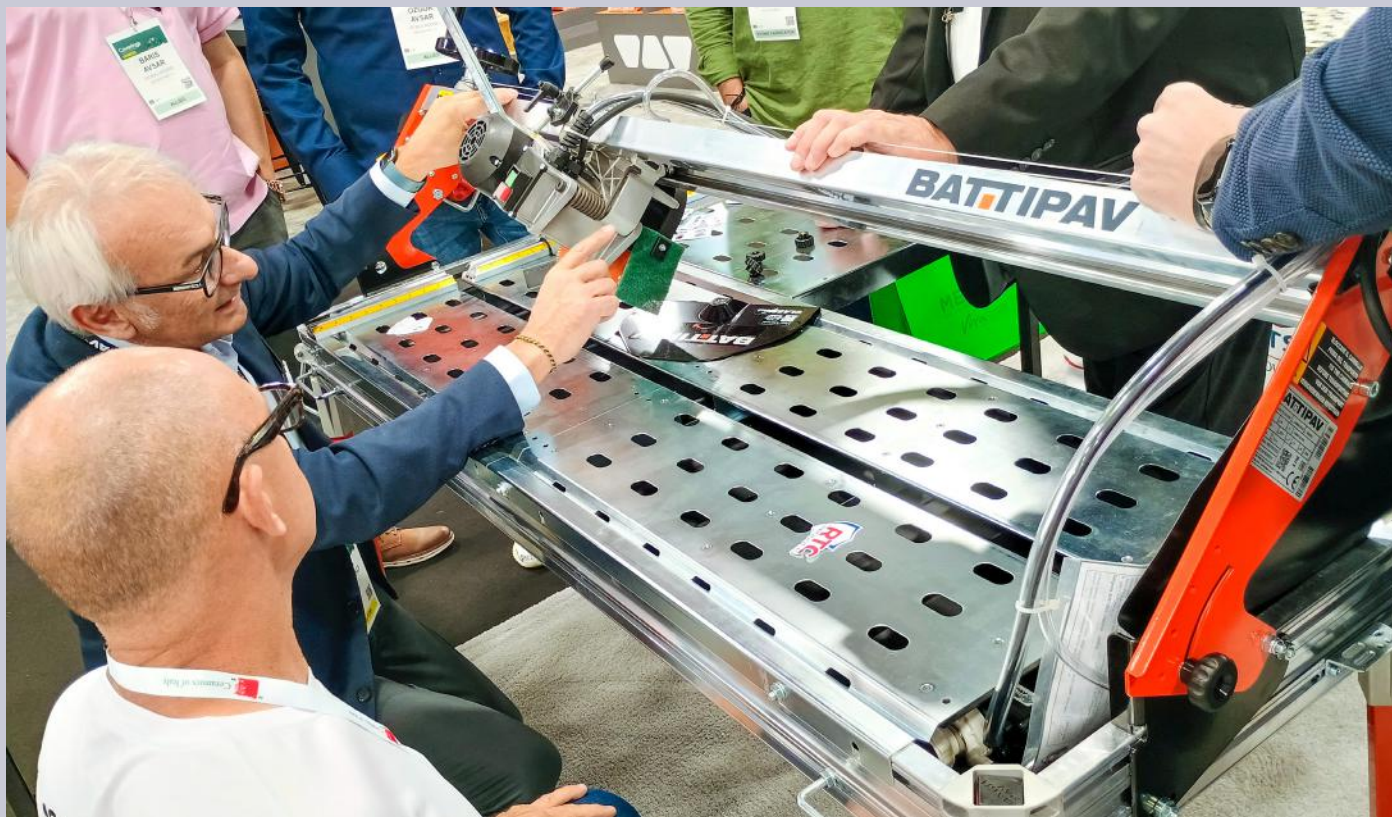
The Sigma Series 4 NEX push-handle tile cutters feature a robust design built to handle rough and large tiles up to 3/4" thick.

Every Sigma fan knows that once you've gone and drunk the light blue Kool-Aid®, you must have all things that come painted in Sigma blue added to your arsenal of tools, and the Sigma Work Table is no exception.

While designed for working with thin panels, this work table is easily modified for all tile projects. The table enables you to set up only half of the table and move the slats wherever you like down the rails, making this versatile enough for everyday use as your cutting station. On the latest version, Sigma has split the cross bars, allowing for further breakdown and easier storage. Thanks to its lightweight and sturdy aluminum frame, it provides excellent support for large-format tiles. Replacement parts and scoring wheels are available on all Sigma products.



The Sigma Work Table was designed for working with thin panels but is easily modified for all tile projects.



*Battipav Export Manager Andrea Dall'Osso came all the way from Italy to show Coverings attendees the miter feature on the Class Plus bridge saw. In the shower project featured on the January 2026 TileLetter cover, Ken Ballin used this saw to cut the 24" x 48" tiles.*

## Battipav

As far as color schemes go, there's nothing that will grab your attention more than contrasting colors. That's exactly what happens when you go from Sigma blue to the opposite side of the color wheel with Battipav orange.

Since bringing the Battipav line to the U.S. and taking over stateside distribution for the Italian brand, RTC has given it a place to call home. With a full line of bridge saws, tile cutters, a variety of accessories, and thin panel tools, Battipav has more than made its presence known in the tile industry, and the quality is not to be questioned.

A variety of wet cutting machines took up a large portion of the booth and ranged from the VIP 2125, with a cut capacity of 49.21", all the way up to the monster Superlunga, designed to cut full-sized thin panels. While the saws are designed with the installer in mind and are very easy to use, Battipav has made all of its accessories available to purchase separately. This allows you to choose which accessories you'd like to add to your arsenal instead of having a bunch of extra parts that never get used.



*Battipav's Superlunga is designed to cut full-sized thin panels—and RTC Products' buddy, Keith Bettini!*



### Kneel-It

The latest innovation in knee protection comes to us from Smart Design Products, and it's called Kneel-It. The modular mobile knee pad moves with you instead of being strapped to your legs. This allows for ease of movement, while not inhibiting your ability to stand up and walk away unattached. It's adjustable, ergonomic, and comes with interchangeable wheel bases for different surfaces.

Depending on the task at hand there are different configurations to choose from, including a bicycle-style seat or chest support for those floor prep days spent leaning on the grinder. It folds down for easy storage and has replacement parts available as well.

### Introducing: WrinGo Work Station

RTC has introduced a wide range of products over the years, but none have had the success on social media that the WrinGo Automatic Sponge Machine has. With tile installers across the country using it with different types of grout and tile, we've seen videos with all sorts of positive reactions to this little time saver. Tile setters everywhere are switching to the WrinGo as an answer to carpal tunnel problems, as well as preventative measures against wrist and hand pain in general.



To make the WrinGo Automatic Sponge Machine more mobile, it's been redesigned as a mobile workstation that takes the place of a 3- or 5-gallon bucket, now on wheels for easy transport.

RTC Products showed the Kneel-It modular mobile knee pad from Smart Design Products. It moves with you instead of being strapped to your legs, allowing ease of movement while not inhibiting your ability to stand up and walk away unattached.



From the brilliant mind of tile setter extraordinaire Mick Volponi comes a new space and break lippage tuning system: the MLT Space & Break Tile Leveling System.

Previously, the WrinGo sat in a 3- or 5-gallon bucket with a cord long enough to reach across the room. To make it more mobile, it's been redesigned as a mobile workstation that takes the place of the bucket and puts it on wheels for easy transport. It also comes with a set of legs to raise the WrinGo up to waist level for grouting backsplashes or shower walls.

### MLT Space & Break Tile Leveling System

From the brilliant mind of tile setter extraordinaire Mick Volponi comes this new space and break lippage tuning system. The MLT Space & Break Wedge is the reusable tension component of the MLT Space & Break Leveling System, engineered to apply consistent, controlled pressure at tile edges to reduce lippage and keep surfaces flush. Its angled profile is designed to work in tandem with MLT Space & Break clips, available in both 1/16" and 1/8", for predictable pulling force and clean, controlled clip breaks during removal—

making it a dependable choice for high-volume professional installations.

### RTC Products today

Fourteen years of Coverings trade shows has done the RTC Products tool brand well as it continues to grow, seek out, and design the latest and greatest tools for the tile industry and everyone in it. From cutting to polishing and spreading to grouting, RTC Products has earned its reputation not just through longevity, but through a relentless commitment to quality, innovation, and the professionals who rely on RTC's tools every day.

In an industry where precision and performance are everything, RTC continues to set the standard by delivering high-end solutions that elevate tile installation at every level. The company's dedication to advancing the craft, supporting installers, and pushing the boundaries of what's possible ensures it remains a trusted leader—today and for years to come. **TL**

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# The Porcelain Slab Company is a flat-out success in its niche



*Book-matching and vein-matching are critical skills with slabs, something The Porcelain Slab Company Owner Nathan Parsons has enjoyed over the years.  
Photo: GID Renovations*

*By Lesley Goddin, Editorial Director and Senior Writer*

**N**athan Parsons and his company, The Porcelain Slab Company ([www.theporcelainslabcompany.com](http://www.theporcelainslabcompany.com)), enjoy a unique niche in the market. Located in Rocky Mount, N.C., near Raleigh, his company tackles both small and large-scale residential and commercial projects that encompass floors, walls, and countertops. But the company does it with porcelain slabs.

“If it’s flat, we cover it,” Parsons said.

His experience with porcelain slabs began in 2014 in a stone countertop shop where he worked with his wife. At home, and at projects around the country, customers begged Parsons to develop porcelain slab procedures and help with installs.

“Even when I was running a massive stone countertop facility in Raleigh, I would get asked to help save the day,” he said. “Knowing that the quartz silicosis problem was only getting worse, I felt comfortable giving up the cushy management role to start something from scratch. So in 2023, The Porcelain Slab Company was started, and it’s been a rocket ride since.”

His company has seen a steep learning curve. “I am proud enough to say that amongst the worst porcelain slab installers, I am the best. I have been able to fail and learn more than anyone else—easily over \$200,000 in hard lessons over the years. But every broken slab, every bad measurement, every curdled silicone line, we have learned a way to get better and faster.”



*The Porcelain Slab Company employee John Richardson surveys a fireplace completed using Dekton 8mm slabs.*



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*Nathan Parsons, CEO of The Porcelain Slab Company, in front of the company's new fabrication section of its 22,000-sq.-ft. porcelain slab facility in Rocky Mount, N.C.*

The sole focus on fabrication and installation of porcelain has provided Parsons with a unique position in the marketplace between tile and stone countertops.

"We understand the science behind the tile process, but have been able to bring the knowledge of the stone world with specialized heavy CNC equipment to make the work easier," he said. "Ultimately, our goal is to make the customer experience painless when ordering porcelain slabs, no matter the application. We don't want them to feel the pushback that they might get from stone shops on what is or isn't possible, or feel that a tile installer hasn't learned what is needed."

### Joining NTCA

Parsons has been hounding Ceramic Tile Education Foundation's (CTEF) Scott Carothers and National Tile Contractors Association's (NTCA) Matt Welner for years with questions, but officially became an NTCA member around 2018.

"I had never touched thinset a day in my life before my first slab training in 2014," Parsons said. "When I learned about the education available through the NTCA, it gave

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*Parsons and his team have a reputation for making porcelain countertops when others say ‘no.’ This kitchen in a downtown Raleigh condo used Neolith 12mm slabs for a 16’-long island and book-matched full-height backsplash. The project was the last kitchen made before switching over to the company’s new CNC machinery.*

me a way to identify the ‘unknown unknowns’ of working with tile. I remember asking Scott Carothers about how to use the trowel properly at one event. I was not shy about my lack of knowledge.”

NTCA membership offers a triumvirate of value to Parsons. “I tell every prospective member the same three things: If you are a business owner, you get your investment back with the vouchers. If you are a manager, you get your investment back through training and education events. If you are an installer, you get the knowledge, insight, and camaraderie of all those in this association that you would not get on your own. The ROI is a no-brainer.”

Parsons took his business to the next level by obtaining his Certified Tile Installer credential (#1969) in January 2025. Montolit’s John Roberts, himself a CTI Evaluator, urged Parsons to take the exam for seven years, but he delayed because his experience was grounded in slabs, not tile. Despite the challenge, Parsons passed on his first attempt and is proud of his accomplishment.

“Being able to say that we understand the fundamentals of tile as a business makes a huge difference when we are compared to stone shops for slab projects,” he explained. Referencing “the TCNA standards, proper methods, and having the technical know-how continues to help us close larger and larger projects, because we put the decision-makers at ease. My CTI is an added arrow in our



*Parsons and his team had to execute floors, walls, and countertops in this North Carolina mountain home during a blizzard, using 6mm and 12mm porcelain slab materials.*

quiver. We are in the middle of multiple six-figure projects because we could answer the questions others couldn’t.”

### **The challenge of growth**

The Porcelain Slab Company continues to grow and evolve, and is on track to double revenues four years in a row. But that rapid growth brings unique challenges, Parsons said.

“We now have a 22,000-sq.-ft. facility filled with brand-new specialized CNC equipment— and the increased overhead costs that come along with it. We have to continually assess where the ideal price point is to maintain volume, while staying at a healthy margin,” he explained. “And as we keep growing, I can’t continue to do it all. So personnel will need to be identified and trained in ways that leave everyone confident in their abilities to perform.”

Parsons’ first career out of high school was as a news photojournalist, and he compares the exhilaration of creating something out of his head for the audience each night with the thrill of creating with porcelain.

“We see the blank canvas,” he said. “We have the idea from the client; it’s then up to us to properly build the vision that is in my head, step by step. That reveal to the client is just like sending the news story out on the 11p.m. broadcast. And I still hear my first producer in my head: ‘You are only as good as your next story.’ But in this case, my next install.” **TL**



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# FLATNESS MATTERS:

## A PRACTICAL CONVERSATION ABOUT CONCRETE, SPECIFICATIONS, AND TILE SUCCESS



By James Woelfel, Principal,  
J.G. Woelfel & Associates

Correction: In our print issue, this story was mistakenly attributed to Scott Carothers.

In today's tile installations, especially with large- and super-large-format tile, the conversation around substrate flatness continues to be one of the most important—and sometimes most misunderstood—topics on the jobsite. While every trade faces real-world challenges, the success of the finished tile installation often comes down to how well the concrete substrate is prepared from the very beginning.

### Preparing the concrete substrate

Concrete placement is a complex process, and variables such as mix design, placement conditions, curing, and finishing techniques all influence the final result. However, when flatness measurements such as FF (floor flatness) and FL (floor levelness) are taken no later than 72 hours after placement, and when measurements are not permitted within 2' of walls or at columns, many tile contractors question whether these practices fully reflect the conditions they ultimately face. From the perspective of the tile installer responsible for delivering a flat finished surface, these measurement limitations can feel disconnected from installation realities.

This disconnect is one reason why some concrete contractors are not enthusiastic about the 10' straightedge method commonly used by tile professionals to evaluate slab flatness, particularly at saw-cut or true cold joints, where variation is often most pronounced. The difference in evaluation methods can create tension between trades, even though both ultimately share the goal of delivering a successful floor system.

### Flatness fix? Depressing the slab

One practical approach that has gained support in industry discussions is the concept of depressing the slab



At a 2021 NTCA Regional Training program held at D.W. Sanders Tile & Stone Contracting, a 10' straightedge is used on a flat floor achieved by a self-leveler.

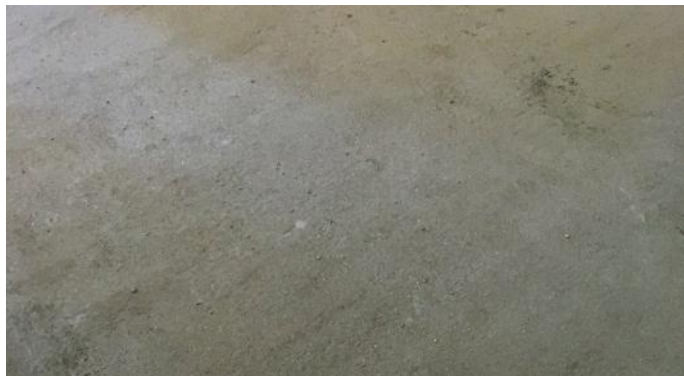
A network diagram with various icons connected by lines. The icons include a speech bubble, gears, a smartphone, a laptop, a '4' in a circle, a 'www' in a circle, and a '@' symbol. The background is a teal-to-green gradient.

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by approximately 2"–2 1/2" and allowing the tile installer to place a mortar bed to create the final flat substrate.

This method can provide several advantages: it gives tile installers greater control over the finished surface, supports the flatness tolerances required for modern tile formats, and helps clarify responsibility for substrate preparation. In some cases, it can also reduce conflicts related to flatness expectations after concrete placement.

### The cost of correcting slab irregularities

Cost considerations further reinforce the importance of achieving flatness as early as possible. Correcting slab irregularities after placement can become significantly more expensive as variation increases.

For example, flowable hydraulic cement underlayment or self-leveling materials applied at 1/8" thickness may cover approximately 46–48 sq. ft., while coverage can drop to 23–24 sq. ft. at 1/4" thickness. Greater deviation from the plane may also introduce the need for mechanical grinding to address ridges or transitions, adding both time and expense to the project.



Installers at Welch Tile used a mortar bed to achieve the desired floor flatness.



On another Welch Tile project, the tile contractor used a 10' straightedge to identify high and low spots that need additional substrate prep work.

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You will receive a monthly email with prepared Why Tile partner social media posts plus the latest industry news and marketing tools.



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- Publications, posters, and prepared monthly social media posts to use in your own campaigns and communications
- Presentations for your use that convey the benefits of ceramic tile over other surface materials and explain industry issues and advancements



**SMART.  
BEAUTIFUL.**



an ever-growing bank of content and research



At another NTCA Regional Training program, self-leveling compound is poured to attain floor flatness

**Collaboration and communication equal better outcomes**

These realities highlight the need for stronger collaboration among specifiers, architects, designers,

concrete contractors, and tile professionals. Clear communication about performance expectations and a shared understanding of how substrate conditions impact installation quality can help prevent costly corrections and jobsite friction.

Industry conversations on this topic are not new. At a concrete contractor’s forum in Michigan attended by tile professionals several years ago, participants discussed the depressed slab approach and recognized its potential benefits as a forward-looking solution. While no single method is appropriate for every project, open dialogue between trades can lead to better specifications and more predictable outcomes.

Ultimately, successful tile installations depend on thoughtful planning, realistic specifications, and mutual respect among project stakeholders. As tile sizes grow and tolerances tighten, the industry has an opportunity to align practices more closely with field conditions, ensuring that quality expectations are met efficiently and consistently.

*Ed. note: For more information, visit pages 52, 54, 56, and 57 in the NTCA Reference Manual. TL*

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# ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask the Experts Q&As are culled from member inquiries to NTCA's Technical Team. To become a member and make use of personal, targeted answers from NTCA's Technical Team to your installation questions, contact Jim Olson at [jim@tile-assn.com](mailto:jim@tile-assn.com).



## PROPER MIXING SPEEDS— and selecting the right mixing drill for the job

### QUESTION

I recently attended an NTCA Workshop where the topic was adhesives. I really enjoyed the training and learned a lot. One of the things the NTCA Trainer discussed was mixing speed and how important it is. This is something I have never really considered before. Can you explain the importance of drill mixing speed when working with thin-set mortars and self-leveling underlayments?

### ANSWER

This is an excellent question and a great example of how tools directly impact installation performance.

The most important takeaway is this: always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Mixing speed is not a guess or a preference—it is a requirement established by the product manufacturer and is critical to achieving the intended performance of the material.



Check the RPM rating on your drill and match that to the mixing speed you need.

### Understanding the differences between products: Thin-set mortars (ANSI A118)

- Most thin-set mortars are designed to be mixed at low speeds (typically around 300 RPM).
- However, there are notable exceptions, with some manufacturers requiring higher mixing speeds for specific formulations.
- This variation reinforces the need to read and follow the product data sheet, not rely on habit or past experience.

### Self-leveling underlayment (Flowable Hydraulic Cementitious Underlayment)

- SLUs generally require higher mixing speeds than thin-set mortars.
- These materials are engineered to achieve a precise flow and consistency, and proper mixing speed is essential to:

# WHAT THEY SAY...



I decided to join because I know the importance of having access to the resources that [NTCA] offers. My networking has expanded more than double since attending just a couple of events.

*Nicole Hulme, Owner,  
The Tile Chick, LLC  
Mesa, Arizona*

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tile business to the  
to the **NEXT LEVEL!**



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Mixing is one of the first steps in the installation process, and it sets the stage for everything that follows. Follow the mortar manufacturer's mixing speed instructions!

- Activate the chemistry correctly
- Achieve proper flow and leveling
- Minimize defects such as pinholes or surface irregularities

### What's happening during mixing (the chemistry)

Both thin-set mortars and SLUs are cement-based materials that rely on cement hydration and polymer dispersion to develop strength and performance. When water is added, the cement particles begin a chemical reaction that forms crystalline structures, while polymers are dispersed throughout the mix to enhance bond strength, flexibility, and adhesion.

Mixing at the correct speed ensures these components are properly wetted, evenly distributed, and fully activated. The result of improper mixing speed is a material that may look acceptable during installation but does not achieve its designed bond strength, density, or durability once cured.

### Why mixing speed matters

Regardless of the product, incorrect mixing speed can lead to performance issues:

- **Air entrapment:** Excessive speed can introduce unwanted air, weakening the cement matrix as it cures while reducing density and potentially affecting bond strength.
- **Inconsistent material properties:** Mixing too slowly or at the wrong speed can result in uneven distribution of cement, aggregates, and polymers, impacting workability and open time. The material may not fully blend, leaving dry pockets or poorly dispersed polymers.
- **Performance risks:** Mortars may not achieve proper bond (or other performance related issues), and SLUs may not flow or cure as designed.

### Selecting the right tool for the job

Because different materials require different mixing speeds, choosing the correct drill is critical.

When evaluating a mixing drill:

- **Check the RPM rating.**
  - Most drills list RPM on the packaging.
  - Manufacturer specifications are typically available online (often under "Specifications").
  - Many drills include a data plate or sticker on the tool itself showing RPM and performance details.
- **Use the appropriate drill type.**
  - Low-speed, high-torque drills are typically required for cementitious materials.
  - Standard high-speed drills may not provide the control needed for proper mixing.
- **Match the tool to the material.**
  - Thin-set mortars and SLUs may require different drills or speed settings depending on the manufacturer's requirements.

Mixing is one of the first steps in the installation process, and it sets the stage for everything that follows. The drill and mixing paddle are not just accessories—they are critical components of the installation system.

Because of the variations between manufacturers and product types, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The best practice is consistent and clear:

- Read the product data sheet.
- Follow the specified mixing speed and procedure.
- Use a drill that meets those requirements.

Taking the time to match your tools and technique to the material helps ensure the installation aligns with manufacturer expectations—and ultimately leads to better, more consistent results in the field. **TL**



# QUARTZ RESURFACING

## KIT

Part# 5480-2025

### Kit includes:

- **BMP-700**  
7" Brushless Variable Speed Rotary Polisher
- **Quartz 3-Step System**  
Color Coded Polishing Liquid
- **Wool Pad**  
High-Nap Knitted Wool Pad
- **2 Diamond Face Foam Pads**  
Diamond Face Foam Pads
- **ROTARY BACKER PAD**  
Rotary Backer Pad



1. Snake Skin Texture

2. Polish

3. Final Polish

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Color Coded Combination System Between Polishing Liquid and Pads

Achieves the Best Results Using a Low RPM on the BMP-700 Variable Speed Polisher

# INNOVATION FOR THE INSTALLER: HIGHLIGHTS from new tools SEEN AT COVERINGS 2026



By Chris Woelfel, J.G. Woelfel & Associates,  
NTCA Technical Committee

**W**alking the show floor at Coverings 2026, it was easy to get drawn into the excitement around new and improved tools. This is where innovation is centered around the installers, and these products stood out to me.

## Best of Everything (BOE)

Visitors to the Best of Everything (BOE) booth got an early look at something tile installers have been asking for longer than almost any other installation tool: a kneepad designed from the ground up around how tile setters actually work.

The concept comes from installer and longtime BOE collaborator Grant Jones of San Diego, Calif. Jones is no stranger to turning jobsite frustrations into practical tools—he is the mind behind BOE’s Bucket Brush, Roto-Wedge, and other installer-driven products in the BOE lineup. His latest idea, currently in prototype, is the Roto-Flex™ Knee Pad. The design is still being refined ahead of the formal launch in the months ahead, aided by valuable input received from installers at Coverings.



Installer/inventor Grant Jones (R) gets feedback on his Roto-Flex™ Knee Pad from NTCA Trainer Anthony Oliver.

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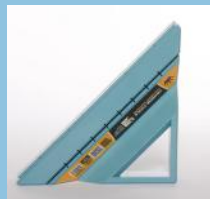


Patent Pending Design

# Other notable tools for the tile installer

In addition to new tools coming out of the Coverings show, these products offer advantages to the tile contractor and installer.

## Crowne Tools



This patented Crowne CaliBro Square is designed of rugged ABS as the ultimate tool for flawless tile trim and jolly cuts. It safely holds aluminum profiles and 1/4" round tile trims for precise 45-degree angle cuts.

It's engineered for versatility, accuracy, speed, and efficiency. This game-changing innovation was developed specifically for the tile trade to produce clean, consistent cuts on delicate tile trims, every time. QEP has signed on as the exclusive licensed distributor.



## QEP



The new QEP® Xtreme™ Pro Series Diamond Blades are mesh blades with a reinforced hub for reduced flex and wobble. The innovative mesh pattern provides cleaner, faster cuts in harder

materials like porcelain. The ventilated Segmented Blades stay cooler and are ideal for more aggressive cutting through paver, concrete, and stone.



## ProKnee



ProKnee's Strap Gripper is a 1" x 4" double-sided, no-sew hook strip that keeps your strap from flapping (acting as a retainer),

extends the life and locking properties of the Smartlock Plus buckle, and is easily replaceable. The Strap Gripper Kit includes four individual Strap Grippers for a complete pair of any ProKnee kneepad model that uses silicone elastic straps. Scan the QR code to see it in action!



The Roto-Flex Knee Pad rethinks a category that has seen very little meaningful change in decades. The goal is simple: better support, less fatigue, and a pad that holds up over the course of a long day—and a long career.



*Internationally-acclaimed mosaicist and inventor David Arnott demonstrates the precision of his Artisan Power Nipper at QEP.*

## QEP

Two years after his first Coverings show, David Arnott—the UK-based, internationally-acclaimed and highly sought mosaic artist known for his portraits of celebrities and custom commissioned work for luxury brands and private owners—drew installers to the QEP booth to see his Artisan Power Nippers in action.

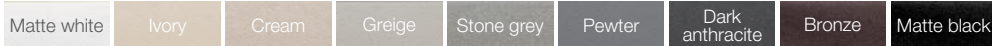
The newly-released tile nippers are designed by Arnott, after years of wanting a tool that would better serve his needs. They have separate settings for porcelain, ceramic, and glass tile. The replaceable titanium carbide tips and three thickness settings (1/4", 3/8", 1/2") deliver clean, controlled cuts with unmatched precision. The weight, grip, and tension of these nippers provide the confidence of a quality tool.

Arnott, who exudes a pure dedication to his craft, said he has ideas for other tools that he hopes to develop in the years ahead.



## Luxury Shower Niche – No Tile Required!

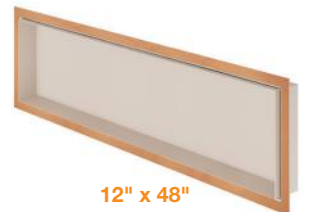
Upgrade your space with storage that's designed to stand out—or blend in. **Schluter-DESIGN-NICHE** installs flush with the tile for a seamless finish or with a visible edge for added impact. Built from durable, powder-coated aluminum, it's waterproof, low-maintenance, and ready to install without tile. With nine TRENDLINE finishes and three size options, DESIGN-NICHE delivers the flexibility to bring any design to life.



12" x 12"



12" x 24"



12" x 48"



LEARN MORE!



### Bihui Tools

Bihui Tools showed a significant focus on efficiency and portability with its switchable-blade notched trowel set and interchangeable-blade grinder. The compact trowel set comes with six 11" x 4.5" stainless steel blades that can be positioned for a right- or left-handed application, thanks to the slide-lock comfort handle. Each blade conveniently

slips into a lock case that serves double duty as a vented protective carry box. Emily Ransom with distributor Better Tools in Miamisburg, Ohio, explained that installers find it a nice way to protect their trowel investment.

Bihui's multi-blade grinder polisher was also an installer magnet. It offers a variety of interchangeable diamond blades, polishing pads, and grinding cups.



Emily Ransom with Better Tools, a Bihui distributor, shows the compactability of the Bihui switchable-blade notched trowel set.

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Noble's Jacob Marchand holds a sample of the multi-functional Npact membrane just hitting the market.

### **Noble Company**

Noble Company is launching its Npact™ high-performance sheet membrane and gave installers a sneak peek at Coverings. Npact is being billed as an affordable, high-performance sheet membrane that combines effective sound reduction, reliable waterproofing, and high-performance crack isolation.

Noble's Jake Gabbert and Jacob Marchand boasted that Npact delivers strong acoustic performance with superior noise reduction, helping to minimize both impact and airborne noise, making it ideal for multi-family and mixed-use applications.

Npact meets ANSI A118.10 for waterproofing and ANSI A118.12 for crack isolation. It has passed the Robinson Floor Test with a Light Commercial rating, providing a durable, efficient solution for projects that demand sound control, moisture protection, crack prevention, or all of the above. Npact will soon be available through your local distributor and comes in a 6' x 100' roll.



[&]



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■ PRODUCT FOCUS

**GRABO**

GRABO, known for its vacuum suction power with the ability to lift and move heavy tiles and just about anything else, listened to installer feedback and will soon release the GRABO Vibration Attachment. The add-on accessory is designed to help vacate air from the back of large-format tiles by collapsing the troweled mortar ridges behind the tile.

Dane Patton, GRABO's Social Media Director, explained the vibration tool is designed to help installers meet the installation standards defined in ANSI A108.19 and A108.20.

The GRABO Vibration Attachment can lift up to 375 lbs., and now, it can help installers achieve better adhesion with porcelain panels. **TL**



GRABO's Dane Patton works the vibration tool attachment being introduced to the market.

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**Thank you Schluter!**

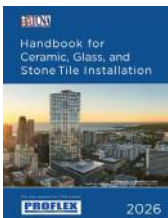
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# ANNUAL SPONSOR Spotlight



# NEWS TICKER

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Industry leaders are preparing for the **2027 TCNA Handbook Committee Meeting**, being held on June 4, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency in Dallas, Texas, to review and consider potential updates to the *TCNA Handbook for Ceramic, Glass, and Stone Tile Installation*. This year's meeting will be held in conjunction with the June ASTM Committee Week...With the continuing growth of global tile imports, **IPA Laboratories** is launching new ANSI A137.1 testing packages designed to evaluate tile compliance to U.S. standards, which are more rigorous and include additional testing requirements than ISO 13006 specifications...**The Natural Stone Institute (NSI)** has released a new fabricator resource developed through ongoing collaboration with the Yale School of Medicine's Occupational and Environmental Medicine Program, providing practical guidance for fabrication shops related to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) and respiratory protection programs...**Cosentino**, a global leader in the production and distribution of sustainable surfaces for architecture and design, closed 2025 with revenue of \$1.61 billion (-2.5% compared to 2024). Over the past five years, the company has achieved a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.3%...**Schluter-Systems** introduced MyDesign, a new customization program that allows customers to personalize select Schluter profiles, corner pieces, and SHELF models, ensuring brand consistency, product coordination, seamless integration, and premium finishes in the pursuit of distinctive visual accents in a wide range of commercial and retail environments...**Louisville Tile Distributors, Inc. ("Louisville Tile")**, celebrated the grand opening of its brand-new location serving the West Michigan design and construction community at 3390 Broadmoor Ave. SE, Suite J, Kentwood, Mich., 49512...**Wonder Porcelain** crowned a new era of luxury with the debut of the Taj Opus collection, a majestic reinterpretation of the world-renowned Taj Mahal marble in shimmering, nuanced porcelain tile...**Crossville** debuted Cleve™, a modern carbon-neutral porcelain interpretation of the veining, crystalline sparkle, and natural striation of quartzite, with the brand's proprietary FeatherSoft™ finish...**Caesarstone** expanded its gauged porcelain tile panel offerings with Caesarstone Porcelain 6mm, allowing for more application possibilities. The 21 options in 6mm include three new hues, two of which feature a leather texture; five colors in both standard and new Glossy finish, and four offered with bookmatch options...A Coverings Happy Hour hosted by **CUSTOM/NTCA** debuted a new membership initiative: the NTCA Membership Certificate Program, which enables manufacturers and distributors to purchase NTCA membership packages to gift to contractors and installers.

Alpha Professional Tools _____	alpha-tools.com.....	51
busybusy _____	busybusy.com/ntca.....	9
Ceramic Tile Education Foundation _____	ceramictilefoundation.org.....	61
Crossville, Inc. _____	crossville.com.....	5
Crowne Tools _____	crownetools.com.....	17
Custom Building Products _____	custombuildingproducts.com.....	35
Dal-Tile Corporation _____	daltile.com.....	25
Engine _____	engine.com/partner/ntca.....	13
EP Wealth Advisors _____	epwealth.com.....	3
EXPO Contratista _____	expocontratista.com.....	37
MAPEI Corporation _____	mapei.com.....	inside front cover - 1, 14, 23, 36
Meridio _____	getmeridio.com.....	19
NAC Products, Inc. _____	nacproducts.com.....	46
Netchex _____	netchex.com.....	59
NTCA TileTV _____	youtube.com/c/nationaltilecontractorsassociation.....	57
NTCA _____	tile-assn.com.....	64 - inside back cover, 40-41, 49
NTCA Training _____	NTCATraining.com.....	39, 60
Partner Ship _____	partnership.com.....	21
Progress Profiles America, Inc. _____	progressprofiles.com.....	16
QEP Co., Inc. _____	qep.com.....	24, centerspread 32-33, 53
RTC Products - Russo Trading Company _____	rtcproducts.com.....	outside front and back cover
Service Finance Company _____	svcfm.com.....	11
Savings4Members _____	savings4members.com.....	43
Schluter-Systems, L.P. _____	schluter.com.....	55
Tile Council of North America, Inc. _____	tileusa.com.....	15, 45
TileLetter _____	tileletter.com.....	7, 56
Tile Pro Network _____	tile-assn.com.....	58
Wonder Porcelain _____	wonderporcelain.com.....	47



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