



Resource Directory

Below is a list of dependable resources to help you build your stone restoration business.

Product and Equipment Suppliers

The below list is supply houses that specialize in stone working tools and supplies. Most of them cater to fabricators, installers, and restoration. So you will also see in their catalogs supplies for repairs and other interesting products you might need occasionally.

Some of these suppliers can also be a great source of support and advise. To sell to you they need to be able to help you decide what you need. Competent sales associates were a great help to me when I was getting started. In this business technology is progressing quickly.

It is good to keep in touch with several suppliers to find out what is new and may be useful to you.

Find one that is located close to where you do business so you can save on shipping costs.

International Polishing Technologies (IPT) I have known Tom Cox from IPT for over 12 years. He is one of the most respected men in the industry. I highly recommend the floor machines they sell at IPT. I have had a few of them since day one and they both are going strong (although not very pretty to look at now) Tom has designed his system with the additional weight built into the drive plates. I believe this is a superior method of weighting a floor machine for two reasons; 1. lower center of gravity = a flatter floor (other floor machines stack weights on top of the motor which rock back and forth as the machine changes directions) and, 2. the momentum of the weighted drive plate creates a flywheel type scenario and actually helps to maintain power and disc speed. Best of all, IPT prices are very reasonable.

<http://iptmarble.com/ipthome.html>

Regent Products This is another company I like a lot. They have some very unique stone restoration products which are awesome. The people are great to work with and know their stuff. I only stopped working with them because I was paying too much for freight, as they were only in Virginia when I did business with them.

<http://www.regentstoneproducts.com/index.asp>

GranQuartz has been around a long time. They have a great catalog with almost everything, and a strong restoration section. They even have their own planetary head floor machine. Very solid company.

<http://www.granquartz.com/>

Hard Rock Tool I remember when the owner of this company was working for Lietch Co. in Anaheim, when they were the only stone restoration supply house in Southern California. He learned while he was there and went on to start up his own company. They hired some key people and grew very fast. Then they put together a product line, private labeling from some very reputable manufacturers, and kept adding more and more stores in various areas. They have it all. Worth looking at.

<http://www.stoneproonline.com/>

Stone Medic was a division of Vic International, and was just recently purchased by Ecolab. I have been dealing with Vic International since day one for me. Day one for Vic International, is now approaching 30 years. I bought some of my first pieces of equipment from them back when they were called Vic Industries. I do not know how well the transition went with the new management, or if the key players are still there. They do have a very good product and equipment line. They have always been pioneers. Have done a mountain of research, and have many innovations in the stone industry to their credit. They are also some good people there, very easy to work with. Very reliable. I sure hope they haven't changed much through this acquisition.

<http://www.ecolab.com/businesses/Professional/Stonemedic/default.asp>

Vic International does still have their own product line as well as well as equipment.

<http://www.vicintl.com/>

Verona Marble is also one of the suppliers who has been around longest. I bought some of my first supplies from them. They specialize in crystallization products (3 different formulas for all types of stone) and have a great line of unique European sealers. They have a fantastic floor machine which will really speed up your work.

<http://www.vmctac.com/>

Stone Boss is another well known supplier worth looking into.

<http://www.stoneboss.biz/>

Eastern Marble supply has been around since like Plymouth Rock. Joe Donatelli is a very respected figure in the industry. They have a great catalog. If you are on the east coast, this would be an excellent choice for a supplier.

<http://www.easternmarble.com/>

Keystone Tools is one of the newer companies. Aggressive pricing and good customer service.

<http://www.keystonetools.com/>

Braxton-Bragg is modeled after Vic Int. Good product line.

<http://www.braxton-bragg.com/>

Stone Care Product Lines

Below is a list of quality stone care product lines. They are all original (not grout manufacturer who is private labeling all their products), they all develop their own products and do their own research. So what they have is going to be unique. These product lines will all have their strengths and weaknesses. Some might have better cleaners, some have better sealers, some better specialty products. So it is good to know all the lines, this will make you better at what you do and your work more versatile.

That, however, is a LOT to learn though for someone new to the business, and should be learned over time. As far as stone care product lines go there is also much to be said for being faithful to just one company. There are several reasons for this.

The first is that your inventory of supplies will be consistent. Let me put another way- I have about 20 half one gallon bottles of various sealers laying around my shop. None of them I can use because a half gallon is not enough to do a thing, and you can't use 4 or 5 different sealers to do a job to use up your stock. So those 20 bottles just sit there gathering dust and represent wasted money.

Also, if you use just one product line your sealing equipment will not get contaminated with other product and can go without being cleaned up and just stored in an airtight container. This saves time and the sealer that is wasted when it is absorbed into the sealing pad or mop.

Additionally, you can sometimes buy in larger quantities and get a better deal. There are always quantity discounts available. Buying in larger containers like a 5 gallon pail, will also save money.

Finally, and probably most important, with one product line you will get to know those products well and they will allow you to produce a better work product and make less mistakes.

So being faithful, in my opinion is always a better way to go. (I think there is a life message in there somewhere). It is always better to "keep it simple" and this is just another way to do so.

So, what I do is focus on one product line, and buy various other products, from various other places to fill in the blanks.

Stone Tech Professional This is what I personally am using right now. They have a great line and reasonable prices. Their products are very easy to work with and perform well. They are readily available and made in the USA. STP also has great training and support and many print materials to help you select what you want to use and how to use it. They have a very polished act. It is easy to see why currently they are the fastest growing stone care product line in the world.

<http://www.stonetechpro.com/>

ProSoCo is an American company who have been around forever it seems. I used to study their catalog just to learn about stone, chemicals, and stone restoration. Their product line is several times larger than the others listed here, they have a formula for just about everything it seems (except polishing marble floors). Whenever a large exterior building restoration project is done in New York or Chicago, you can be almost certain they will be using ProSoCo. They are very professional and exceedingly creditable. In my opinion, they are the leaders in the industry by far. The most respected and most copied. Their line is more geared towards architectural building stone restoration rather than floors.

<http://www.prosoco.com/>

Bellinzoni is a full on European company “straight off the boat” so to speak. The Italians have been known for many years as leaders in stone care. I am interested in this line but for the above reason have reserved them for specialty products use. They do have some unique products well worth keeping on hand. You will find them in many suppliers’ catalogs, for good reason.

<http://www.bellinzoniusa.com/>

HMK is also a very well respected manufacturer of stone care products. They are from Germany and have an extensive line. If you have a well stocked supplier in your area, this would be a great line to go with. They have great printed materials to help guide you in what and where to use their many products. Their neutral cleaner (R55) is the only neutral cleaner worth a damn, and they have a great stone soap, great impregnators, and color enhancing impregnators. I used to use them a lot in the past, but they got left behind in the shuffle, and due to lack of a local supplier.

<http://www.hmkstonecare.com/>

Lithofin is almost the same as above. If this is available locally it would also be a great choice.

<http://www.lithofin.de/default.asp?lang=en>

Miracle Sealants There is no one in the planet who has not heard of the Miracle Sealants “511 Impregnator”. They have been very successful in marketing, and made a house hold name out of a good (not the best) sealer. I know a guy that would use their products exclusively just because of the name. Many, no, most installers swear by this

stuff and if an installer is going to seal his own work there is a 90% chance this is what he will be using. They are however losing their considerable market share these days because of Stone Tech Professional. I like "511 Impregnator" on slate. It brings out the color well and the silicone oil is compatible with the oily slate. They do have a somewhat limited product line compared to some of the others.

<http://www.miraclesealants.com/>

Training & Information Resources

NTC Stone This is the home of Fred Hueston, one of the most respected and published stone experts in the industry. Tons of valuable resources here. You can get lost at this website. Training literature and videos. Some great stuff.

www.ntc-stone.com

Seminars

Some of these are independent. Some are going to teach you to use specifically what they are selling. I know a lot of what they teach may be outdated. I am not a huge fan of 2 day seminars... a good idea if you are coming into this business cold. Hey, if you learn just two or three new tricks, it was worth the time.

National Training Center for the Masonry & Tile Trades Probably the best seminar you will find is here. They do not strictly have an agenda to sell products so they can be a little more objective. Can offer well recognized certification. See above.

<http://www.ntc-stone.com/schedule.htm>

Stone Pro

<http://www.stoneproonline.com/>

Stone Medic

<http://www.ecolab.com/Businesses/Professional/Stonemedic/SeminarInfo.asp>

Miscellaneous

Powr-Flite This is a great place to buy your floor machine brushes, floor tools, hoses, vacuums, and repair parts. Wholesale to the public prices. Great customer service.

<http://www.powrflite.com/istore/>

Brushtec This is where I get my 10" Tynex brushes made for my planetary head machine.

<http://www.brushtec.com/webpage/index.html>

Flo-Pac The home page for the biggest manufacturer of the Dupont, Tynex brushes.
<http://www.flo-pac.com/products/index.cfm>

Publications & Websites

Stone World Magazine From BNP media. Same people who publish Cleaning Specialist magazine. Great articles on fabrication and restoration. Great to read to expand your overall understanding of the stone industry. You can also get a free subscription.
<http://www.stoneworld.com/>

Website
<http://www.stonebusiness.net/>

Website
<http://www.natural-stone.com/>

Organizations

This is the one organization that's worth joining. Offers much more than just a logo to put on your website. Check it out!
<http://www.internationalstoneinstitute.com/>