



## SIMPLE TIPS FOR WOMEN IN THE STONE INDUSTRY

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by [Jacqueline Tabbah](#)



*Our Coverings 2015 Speaker Blog Series continues with a guest post from Jacqueline Tabbah, Assistant Vice President at International Stoneworks, Inc.*

1. Be confident

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Even if you know your business, if you don't exude confidence, you may be overlooked. Another scenario is you don't know the answer to a client's question. That's ok; keep your composure, but don't bluff. Be honest and let the client know you will find out the answer and let him or her know as soon as possible.

## 2. Know your business

I've been in the stone restoration business for almost 6 years and I have studied and absorbed a great deal of knowledge during this time.

When customers call and hear my voice, some may not initially think I know the answer. Nevertheless, countless times, I end up helping them find out the answers to their questions. I am patient and take the time to explain the solution to their problem in detail.

## 3. Listen to your customers

Before you launch into your explanations and sales pitches, listen to what the client has to say. Maybe I see a particular problem with his or her marble floor, but the customer is concerned about something else entirely. Listening to our clients not only helps us do our jobs, but also shows that we are concerned and genuinely want to help them.

## 4. Observe your surroundings

I try to figure out what my customers really want (even if they are saying something a little different or maybe can't quite express exactly what type of finish they would like on their natural stone surface). Many times our clients have said they do not want a high natural shine on their stone surface, but then end up wanting a mirror finish. I may not get it right everytime, but I try to look at my surroundings in their homes or buildings because it helps me understand their style and design choices.

## 5. Be responsive and have strong written and verbal skills

My strong point is responding quickly to our customers' requests. Even if I can't solve their issue immediately, I want them to know that I received their message and I am working on it.

If you are communicating by e-mail, take the time to re-read your message and make sure your grammar and spelling are correct. If you are on the phone, remain articulate and friendly. Written and verbal skills seem basic and can be overlooked when we are in a hurry, but they really help you put forth a great impression, not only for you personally, but also for your company.

## 6. Be a team player, even if you are the boss

You can't do everything by yourself (even though we try) and you are a stronger company when everyone gets along and works well together. We need smooth internal communication between the administration department and the operations side of the business. It may seem mundane, but take the time to celebrate your co-workers or

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employees' birthdays and milestones. Send them flowers in times of sympathy. They will really appreciate your kindness and you have created a positive workplace for them.

## 7. Show your creativity

I know especially in the stone industry, certain practices have been done the same way for generations, but sometimes change is good! If you have a great idea, share it; implement it. It may not work, but you have to evolve in order to maintain your business. I pioneered our entire social media campaign, updated our website to include an online shopping cart, and recently created our own stone maintenance app! It all took time and commitment, but it was worth it.



*Join Jacqueline for her session, "Managing a Successful Family Business", on Friday, April 17 from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM at the Orange County Convention Center during Coverings 2015.*

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