

Fabricator Case Study: Carrying on a family's specialty career

by Michelle Stinnard

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Scott Murphy founded Dream Stone Inc. of Frederick, CO, in 2001, shortly after his parents decided to shut down their own granite business.



Machinery at the shop also includes computer-controlled machinery from CMS/Brembana such as a four-axis Speed CNC stoneworking center.

Dream Stone Inc. currently operates out of a 12,000-square-foot shop in Frederick, CO, which includes a fabrication facility, offices and a showroom. According to owner Scott Murphy, he was inspired to open his own shop shortly after his parents sold theirs. "My parents started in the granite business in the late 80s, and of course went on to sell in the late 90s," he said. "When they sold their company, I decided to open my own in 2001."



Additionally, a five-axis Maxima CNC stoneworking center is in place at the company's facility.

In 2005, the company made the decision to purchase computer-controlled machinery from CMS/Brembana of Caledonia, MI. Equipment includes a five-axis Sprint bridge saw, a five-axis Maxima CNC stoneworking center and a four-axis Speed CNC stoneworking center.

"The CNCs have allowed us to do a lot of different things," said Murphy. "We can carve on our five-axis Maxima and also do a lot of intricate work that I would have never dreamed of being able to produce. Also, the machines have allowed us to do some high-production work that we ship all over the country, which wasn't possible when we were hand fabricating."

In all, it took the company's employees about three months to really learn how to make the machines work to the best of their ability, according to the fabricator. "We have one operator for our saw, and on the two CNC machines, we have one main operator who runs both machines," he said. "After we purchased all our equipment, we found that we could produce more in a day with a lot less headaches."



When it comes to digital templating, workers at Dream Stone rely on a system from ETemplate System of Raleigh, NC.

"The biggest obstacle with the machine was getting a program together to allow the work to flow," he continued. "When we first went automated, we were able to produce a lot of material in one day with a lot less effort, so our biggest problem was keeping the machines running all day everyday."



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Digital technology

Workers at Dream Stone also rely on a digital templating system from ETemplate System of Raleigh, NC. "We had previously been using a laser templating system and found that a significant amount of the programmer's time was spent on the phone verifying details and dimensions with the templator," explained the company's programmer, Craig Buckley. "Intricate field drawings were also necessary to ensure

ETemplate best suited our needs because of its accuracy, ease of use and excellent customer support," explained the company's programmer, Craig Buckley.

accuracy. Of the photogrammetric templating options available, we felt that ETemplate best suited our needs because of its accuracy, ease of use and excellent customer support."

According to Buckley, the company's efficiency and accuracy have greatly improved with the use of the ETemplate System, as well as the ability to add artistic elements to designs and make modifications on the fly. "In addition to countertop dimensions, ETemplate allows us to verify cabinet level/flatness, and accurately scribe to walls," the programmer explained.

"We frequently use ETemplate to produce sink templates, design furniture tops and measure floor installations."

Buckley said that the photogrammetric allows the template interpreter and programmer a real time perspective, as if they were on the jobsite. "We use multi-monitor workstations, which allow real time verification of details, which might otherwise be overlooked using conventional templating techniques," he said. "Calls to the templator in the field have become unnecessary due to the nature of the system and the amount of data available to the processor.



Dream Stone Inc. relies on the the ETemplate System to template increasingly diverse installations, according to Buckley. For this residence, the company utilized the machine to template an island top for the kitchen area.

"There is a learning curve to the system; however, individuals experienced in any of the CAD programs, or those who have some general photo editing experience, should have little difficulty adapting," Buckley continued, adding that his staff was fully utilizing the system within three weeks of leaving ETemplate's training facility. "We have continued to manipulate the ETemplate System to template increasingly diverse installations. Resistance to trying something new is the biggest obstacle, as pointed out in the ETemplate literature. An open mind and willingness to experiment are key to successful use of the system."



Most recently, Dream Stone has switched from an older style of ADI tooling to the new UHS tooling from ADI, purchased from GranQuartz of Tucker, GA. "The switch has taken us from working overtime with two machines, back to 8-hour days, five days a week," said Murphy. "The new UHS tooling has almost doubled our production capacity."

According to Murphy, Dream Stone works in various markets, mostly covering Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and areas of Las Vegas. "We do everything from small vanities to high-end residential and commercial projects," he said. "We produce an average of 10 to 12 slabs worth of material a day. In our busier times, we can produce as much as 20 slabs a day. We purchase a lot of material locally, then if we need to, we will outsource to other states or bring the material in ourselves."

The company averages a staff of 20 employees, most of whom have been with the company for many years, said Murphy. "Most of them can fabricate edges by hand or even do some sort of carving," he added. "We try to make sure that our guys can do almost every aspect from fabrication to installation."



Dream Stone Inc.

Frederick, CO

Type of work: high-end residential, commercial work

For unique carvings, such as this island top, the company relies on the five-axis CMS/Brembana Maxima, which can handle intricate work, according to Murphy.

Machinery: a five-axis Sprint bridge saw, a five-axis Maxima CNC stoneworking center and a four-axis Speed CNC stoneworking center from CMS/Brembana of Caledonia, MI; a digital templating system from ETemplate System of Raleigh, NC; ADI/UHS tooling from GranQuartz of Tucker, GA

Number of Employees: 20

Production Rate: 10 to 12 slabs worth of material a day

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