

## B.019 – Basic Training: Steps to Success

This document provides a guild line for the needed steps you need to take to be successful in the decorative concrete and custom seamless flooring industry.

### Your First 30 Days...

1. Be Professional.
2. Establish a company name: Keep in mind that although you are going to be a decorative concrete contractor, you don't want to limit yourself to simply exterior work. Try to come up with a name that will instantly inform customers of your type of work or give them reason to believe that you are just as viable of a flooring installer as you are exterior finishes. Look at it this way; would you hire a concrete contractor to install marble floors? Would you hire a roofing company to install new granite countertops?  
  
In addition, stay away from initial based company names. You know the type, some concrete contractor named John Doe comes up with a company name of J.D. Concrete. Make it professional.
3. Open a business checking account: Its pretty hard to look professional when your customer makes the deposit check out to you instead of a bona fide company.
4. Have business cards made. Don't make them yourself on a bubble jet printer. Business cards are very inexpensive. We can provide you with same business card artwork if you need it.
5. Have proposal forms prepared or printed with you company name. [www.nebs.com](http://www.nebs.com) is a great source but talk to your Authorized Distributor for specific content to protect yourself.
6. Put your company name and phone number on the available Elite Crete Systems brochures and marketing tools. You can use a custom made stamp, tape your business card to it or even have small professional looking stickers made.
7. Find out when the next Home and Garden shows are. County and State Fairs are also fantastic places to exhibit your samples and services. These shows are an absolute must and generate immediate jobs. Most successful contractors do 4 to 5 shows a year.
8. Make sample boards: These are your sales items. Customers need to see and feel the patterns, colors and textures. Be sure to only make and show samples of the type of work you are capable of doing. Keep it simple. Multi-colored samples sure look nice but can you install it quickly and turn a faster profit?
9. Find a give away job for practice and advertising: Not just any place but find a nice driveway in a medium to upscale neighborhood where it will receive a lot of exposure. An 800 sq. ft. driveway would cost you about \$500 worth of material to apply a Slate Trowel Down. Be sure to tell your "free customer" that part of the stipulation of getting this free job is that you will occasionally send people to their home to look at the work. You might even tell the customer that you will send them a gift certificate to their favorite restaurant for every job you close from the their job.
10. When starting out talk to people you **know** personally that are of influence.
  - a. Landscapers
  - b. Pool Contractors
  - c. Designers
  - d. Home Remodelers
  - e. High end custom home builders
  - f. Architects
  - g. Real estate agents
  - h. Painting contractors
  - i. Concrete contractors
11. Network with other building trade contractors.
  - a. Tile Contractors
  - b. Flooring Contractors
  - c. Swimming Pool Cleaning Contractors
  - d. Painters

e. Concrete Contractors

12. Pass out letters of introductions with brochures. Go door to door in nice neighborhoods placing your info in doors and newspaper boxes. Put them under wind shield wipers at home improvement stores and at the local mall. Post a handful of your brochures at places like Home Depot and Lowes.

**The Next 90 days...**

1. Learn how to sell this product.

- If you are responding to a phone call to set up appointment: Set appointment a day or two later with the impression you are busy and that is as soon as you can get to them. **DO NOT RUSH!!**
- Qualify - Find out what they are looking to do and what they are looking at in comparison.
- What to carry in with you: Brochures, measuring tape, hand held calculator, pad and pencil. Leave samples in the truck and have them go to the truck and look at them there. Get them away from their comfort zone. Take control.
- What to say.
  - Ask and lead with questions for information.
  - Women of the household are generally the decision makers.
  - What do they want to achieve - looks, ease of maintenance, durability, etc?
  - Do they have pictures of something they have in mind?
  - People want suggestions – careful, ask lots of questions about colors, textures and the impressions they want to achieve before responding. Start broad and narrow down.
  - If you are confident in the systems you want to recommend make your recommendations with at least two choices. That way you are leading them to closing decisions on the colors and styles rather than the purchase of the job.
- After you have measured your job and estimated the sales price, present it to them with a total dollar amount and not a square footage cost then ask them for their *authorization* to proceed and then shut up. **Never ask for them to Sign.** They will respond.

Most likely they will want to know when you can start. Again you will tell them you are a week or two out, however you have a couple other jobs pending and if they are not ready in time you could work them in sooner with a few days notice. You ask “With your authorization I could put you on the schedule. Just so I understand you want that overlay done with a gray base with terra cotta highlights is that right?” If they say yes to that question hand them the proposal and pen.

2. Market your services.

- Hand out brochures and cards. Obviously these things cost money but getting them into people hands is the only way you can put them to work. As time goes on, these handouts will make it back to you.
- Use signage on your vehicle and/or trailer. Hire a local sign shop to add decals and photos to your work vehicle.
- Use yard signs. Put them in before you start the work and leave them there as long as your customer will allow it.
- When you have gotten a job in a neighborhood, while you are there past out brochures to every homeowner in the neighborhood with your letter of introduction explaining who you are, where you are working in their neighborhood, invite them to come by and look. Offer incentive discounts while you are in the area. (**Most contractors fail to take advantage of this**).
- Ask for referrals – offer incentives to customers for jobs that are produced from their reference. (Dinners for two, movie passes, tickets to sporting events, etc.)
- Trade shows – Home and Garden shows, NARI shows, county fairs, exhibit shows, etc. Trade shows are the single most effective form of marketing your products and services available.

- Memberships in Chamber of Commerce, Home and Apartment Builders Associations, NARI Association and some pro business affiliations.
- Advertising – Should be about 10% of gross sales. Newspaper inserts, The Clipper, Penny Saver, etc.
- Depending on budgets – Magazine, some small local newspapers, inserts, sponsorships of youth sports organizations, direct mail, door hangers, internet websites and some cable spots.
- Yellow Pages – only a line listing.
- Concretelideas.com on the internet (works very well)
- Follow up and Follow through!

Without your immediate attention to this part of the business you can forget what you have done above. We realize that the demands on your time are grueling with the constant juggling of advertising/estimating/installing and networking; however, how you manage this will ultimately determine your success or failure in this business.

Keep in mind that this document doesn't provide all of the answers but simple suggestions. Speak to your Authorized Distributor for additional ideas that work in your region.