



President's Message

“Thank You” to Current RDs and Alternate RDs

By WIA President Mike DiGilio, C.P.

Hello and welcome,

Summer will soon draw to a close. The other morning, I left to go to work and there was that scent in the air. You remember it from your childhood? That scent of fall approaching. That whiff of air, early in the morning, that used to make your head snap back and your brain realize that school would start soon. Time to go back. Time to get back to business.

The WIA just finished the election process for the part of the Board of Directors that is comprised of our regional directors and alternate regional directors. It was your chance to vote for the people who will represent the region to which you belong. Regional and alternate regional directors work hard toward making our association successful. They

organize regional workshops, listen to members' suggestions, and facilitate the governing of our group. They attend all four of our board meetings, with two being in-person meetings at our convention locations. They attend our monthly huddles through teleconferences. Many serve on committees. They help bring members the best in workshops, “Meet the WIA” events, website and social media ideas, and member interaction. All of this is done by volunteers.

Therefore, I'd like to say “thank you” to all our current RDs and alternate RDs. They have worked diligently to make the WIA what it is today, and they have helped to shape the WIA of the future. If you see them at a meeting or workshop, or if they happen to call you for some reason, please remember to thank them. They will attend this year's convention in Denver in September. If you see them there, say thanks in person. They deserve it. A well-deserved thanks to all.

I would also like to take this time to welcome our new regional directors and alternate regional directors. These folks will be the “new blood” who will help us on our way from here. I wish them good luck and a most enjoyable experience in working on our board.

See you in September! ■

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New Members July and August 2018

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The Multiple Drops in Wallpaper

By Susan Macuna and Kevin O'Donnell



Multiple drop papers are like stealth bombers. Website information rarely admits they exist, labels tend to ignore them other than saying “drop match,” and we can’t prepare for them until we are on site and then...boom. How do you defend yourself against sneak attacks?

On websites, the words “They are packaged in A and B rolls” is a major clue; but, then you must find out the length of each roll. Schumacher has A and B rolls, each 13.5 feet long, which makes the two rolls equal to one double roll. You’re in trouble if you didn’t catch that during bidding. Other brands like Cole and Sons give you a full bolt, because they call a bolt a single roll and add a drop match into the mix, along with a very large repeat. Boom, if you’re not on your toes and haven’t figured your repeats into how many sheets per roll you’re going to get from each roll in your estimates. Boom again, if you haven’t listed how many A and B rolls you will need.

On the job site once you’ve engineered the room, you know how many strips you need. Now divide those into how many sheets per each top mark. I label them: A1, B1, A2, B2. I like to use A and B, so I remember from which roll they are cut and the 1 and 2 so I know for which top mark I reach. I divide the rolls into A and B piles.

Now you have a decision to make: are you matching to the left or to the right? If you hang heading right, then your A1 will be on the far left and B2 will be on the far right of the set, reversed if you hang right to left which would be B2, A2, B1, A1. Remember or you’re pasting in the wrong order. I like to add a small arrow to the strip designations: A1> B1>A2>B2> or B2<A2<B1<A1<. These marks keep my confusion down. I lightly pencil on the walls which panel goes where so the whole room is marked out before I begin. If you use a paste machine, make four separate piles, then you’re off and running. If you hand paste and like to

stack your papers on a table, then you stack carefully backwards from last sheet to first sheet. This is where marking the wall comes in handy. For pasting machines, just grab from the correct stack. When stacking, start from the last and work toward the first. Hurray! You have now escaped the bomb of where-the heck-am-I in the pattern and pasting sheets in the wrong order.

When deciding top marks, I choose my A1 top, and then, remembering which direction I am hanging, I lay B roll either to the left or right: to the right, roll A top becomes A1>. Lay B roll on the right side of A find the match and mark your top. This is B1>. Move A1> off the table, slide B1> to the left, lay an A roll next to the B1> on the right side, find the match which should be halfway down the repeat, and mark it A2>. Move the B1> off the table, slide the A2> to the left, use a B roll on the right side of A2> to find the match, and mark the top B2>. Now that the top marks are decided, you know how many strips to cut of each. If you’re hanging to the left, slide rolls to the right and match on the left side of the rolls. If you’re lucky, you can use the floor to lay out multiple rolls, I don’t depend on luck.

For multiple drop papers in similar rolls, I lay out two rolls to find the match. Once I find it, I move the roll on the left over to the other side of the roll on the right. If it lines up, then I have a drop match. If it doesn’t, boom, it’s a multiple drop. This simple check of matching to both sides of a roll saves time and the pain of having to supply more paper from your own pocket.

I do this on every job, just as I double-check lot numbers, pattern numbers, paper width, and paper length. More and more, we are the final quality control check. I have even double-checked that the paper looks the same as what is shown on the manufacturer websites. With such diligence, I have found mismarked pattern numbers. We can complain or cry, but it’s our reality. I arrange for the paper to be shipped to me as early as possible to avoid losing a day and add the time and cost of quality control

into my bid (not a line item). If you're not double-checking before cutting and hanging, then you end up in trouble.

Multiple drop papers without A and B rolls can be even sneakier. The rolls look so innocent as you check lot numbers and pattern numbers. Only when you begin to lay out the pattern do their beauty and complexity become apparent. The items you will need to figure out what you're dealing with are: the instructions – it's so easy to just drop them in the trash, but they just might save you quite a bit of math – a tape measure, a framing square, pencil, your table, and perhaps even the floor.

Open a roll and lay it on your table, picking your top mark on the left side of the paper. Using a framing square, lay it across the paper and measure down to the other half of your mark. Say it measures 8 inches and the directions say it's a 24-inch repeat. Eight goes into 24 three times or a pattern repeat of: strip A, strip B, strip C, strip A, and so on. If you have three rolls, you can find each top mark before you cut anything.

Cut your first strip from roll 1, then check to see which top mark shows up first. Some rolls lay out in order, and some rolls will be all one kind of top mark. Because you laid out the



room, you can count out how many of each top you need. In one job, I hung the whole room and only had two strips of the A strip. At that point, I cut them one at a time, always matching to the strip about to be pasted and hung.

Finally, I cannot stress enough that double-checking the instructions and checking pattern match on both sides of the paper is the only way to protect yourself from precutting a pile of scrap paper. Multiple drop patterns add complexity and beauty to the rooms we work in and are worth the extra effort. ■

Depart from the Ordinary: WIA's 2018 Unconventional Convention

By Karen M. Smith

On June 19, 2017, venerable business news authority *Forbes* published an article on the skilled trades, "The Top 30 Two-Year Trade Schools: Colleges that Fight the Nation's Skills Gap." In the article, author Carter Coudriet refers to a "scathing critique" by entertainer Mike Rowe of *Dirty Jobs* fame on the prevailing attitude that a 4-year degree is necessary for career success. In that article Coudriet mentions that job openings in the trades go unfilled due to that single faulty premise. As Rowe mentioned on his website, that bastion of white collar emphasis – *Forbes* – "has finally treated Trade Schools [sic] and two year colleges with the same respect as four-year universities. That's a big deal."

Like many associations affiliated with and emphasizing a particular trade, the Wallcovering Installers Association is well aware of the skills gap in this particular industry. Quite simply, there aren't enough skilled wallcovering installers to meet demand. The gap between supply and demand presents an unprecedented opportunity for industry veterans to bring on new talent and guide them into new careers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics helps you attract people with its report on the annual mean wages of paperhangers by various states.

The WIA's Unconventional Convention helps them do just that. Not only does this 3-day event offer classes to experienced installers to improve or add to their skill sets, but it also teaches some basics to those who are embarking upon wallcovering installation as a career. The investment in skills-based

education never goes amiss, because students (or apprentices) can begin applying their new knowledge as soon as they start on their next projects.

OwlGuru surveyed professional paperhangers to determine job duties, job satisfaction, and career personality types. The site states, "You will like this career if you are someone who likes work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. ... You also like following set procedures and routines. They like working with data and details

more than with ideas." The WIA's 2018 Unconventional Convention caters to that preference with sessions dedicated to practical business management and growth, conventional and unusual materials and tools used in the trade, and cross training from another trade –



carpentry.

The awards program demonstrates the incredible skills and artistry demanded of the profession, serving as points of inspiration and pride. Attendees will have multiple opportunities to ask veteran installers questions and receive informed answers.

This year, the WIA's Unconventional Convention goes beyond the usual networking and exchange of compliments to focus on building the industry from both sides of the equation: fulfilling customer demand and narrowing the skills gap. Register online at <https://www.wallcoveringinstallers.org> under the News and Events Convention tab: <https://www.wallcoveringinstallers.org/conventions-tradeshows/unconventional-convention-2018> ■

Your Guide to Communicating With Professionalism and Courtesy

By Julie Young, Leslie Baugh, and Susan Macuna

"I called the plumber, but he never called me back."

"The tree trimmer said he'd be here by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, but never showed up."

"The upholsterer screwed up my sofa and now won't return my calls, texts, or emails."

"After four days, I finally connected with the electrician, but he sounded garbled and incoherent."

How many times have you heard those or similar laments from a homeowner? Believe it or not, every single one of those complaints came to me as feedback from homeowners about colleagues I referred to them. Ouch!

Good communication is your first opportunity to impress the client with your professionalism, courtesy, and skillset. Do you reply to every call or email message? Is your communication timely and well-presented? Do you provide your clients with clear, accurate, concise, helpful information?

There's a good chance your competitors don't.

Many tradesmen are good at their craft, but lack communication skills. Written correspondence keeps information in front of the client and provides a written record to which you and the client can refer. Good communication puts you ahead of the competition.

Following are different circumstances when you might correspond by telephone or email with a client and checklists of items to include. Borrow, tweak, and use this information to create documents that fit your business and clientele.

Initial Contact

Every inquiry deserves a reply. Not replying to customers is just plain rude. Return every call

and email message within 24 hours of receiving it, even if you are unable to accept the job or disinterested in it. Begin your reply with "Thank you for contacting me."

If you are unable or unwilling to accept a job, be courteous. Thank the potential client for contacting you, state you are not available to take the project, and refer them to other installers who may be interested. Provide contact information for referrals.

If you are on vacation or otherwise out of contact, make sure to set "out of office" notifications on your email and voicemail.

Initial Information Pack

Provide customers with an "info pack" of basic information. Begin with a simple salutation (e.g., "Hi, Jessica") and paste the information into the message template. It's quick and easy. Clients love the information and get a feel for your personality, thoroughness, and enthusiasm for the job.

Include the following in your information pack:

- Brief introduction with background information
- Type of wallpaper you hang
- Type of buildings you work on
- Time frame
- Where to buy paper
- How to select good quality paper
- How to set up a consultation appointment
- Trip fee for a consultation appointment
- WIA and other memberships, accreditations
- Your contact information.

I also include a note not to buy paper until the room has been measured by the paperhanger and not to let Joe Handyman prepare the walls.

Consultation Appointment

Inform the customer of the date, time, and how long you expect the appointment will take.

Face-to-Face Communication

The consultation appointment will likely be your first in-person meeting with the client. Use this opportunity to reinforce a positive impression.

Keep in mind:

- Dress appropriately.
- Smile.
- Use a firm – not crushing – handshake.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Face the client.
- Use the client's name.
- Acknowledge spouses, children, pets, other workmen and make a note of their names.
- Strike a balance between establishing rapport and getting too personal.
- Speak clearly in a normal tone of voice.
- Explain how you will do the job.
- Explain what you include and what the client is responsible for.
- Answer questions succinctly and completely.
- Discuss patterns, colors, etc. as appropriate.
- Carry and show samples.

Date of Installation Notification

Your message to the client should include the day and date of wallcovering installation, as well as the rooms included in the job. Let them know what they should do if their plans change and what you will do if their plans change, including the allowable time frame during which your quote for service remains in force and any fees for rescheduling or lost days.

Reminder Message

Two weeks before the job begins, send a tactful message to remind your client of the pending job and flush out any shoppers who may have changed their minds or made other arrangements. Mention the room(s) included in the project and the date the project begins. Confirm that if any construction was underway that the workmen are finished. If another contractor is responsible for wall preparation, ensure that it has been done and to your standards.

Installation Day

The week before the job begins, send a similar

reminder note along with a checklist to help the client prepare for your arrival. Address:

- The times you will arrive, finish, and take breaks
- The room(s) to be papered
- Instructions to put the paper in the room(s) where it will be hung
- Confirm the proper number of rolls, reconcile runs, check for damage and defects
- What preparation work you will perform and what is the client's responsibility – and when it must be completed
- How much space you need
- How you will protect surfaces (floors, countertops, bathtub, etc.)
- Odors, dust, noise you may create
- Climate (temperature, clothing)
- Electricity, running water
- Pets, children, and other workmen
- Furniture, appliances, toilets, mirrors, drapes, blinds, light fixtures, etc., that must be removed prior to your arrival and when they can be replaced
- Extra charges for any of the above
- Clothing, towels, toiletries, jewelry, tchotchkes, artwork, etc.
- Security company information in case alarms are accidentally tripped
- Who, if anyone, must be present in the building while you work or access to the building if the client will not be present
- Lost day charges if work is delayed due to the client's negligence
- Your policy for rescheduling
- Your policy regarding payment.

Thank-you Message

Follow up completion of each project with a simple statement of gratitude, such as "It was a pleasure to work for you. I hope you enjoy the new look." Include information on any warranty you provide, as well as instructions on caring for the new wallpaper. Thank-you messages make the best impression when handwritten and mailed through the U.S. Postal Service. In a follow-up email message thanking the client, ask for reviews. Be sure to hyperlink the review sites.

Additional Communication Notes

When communicating with clients, maintain professional integrity by doing what you promise to do and being punctual. If you happen to run late, then call or text the client.

Begin all correspondence with a polite greeting, end with a thank-you, and include your business contact information. Use full sentences, proper grammar, and correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation – even in text messages. Especially with regard to email messages, note who is included among the recipients and be judicious in using the “reply all” option.

Use positive terminology. For example, instead of stating “I don’t like grasscloth because the shading looks like crap,” say “Grasscloth has a reputation for noticeable differences in color from strip to strip.” This ties into avoidance of “you” statements that may come across as accusatory. Use common language, not industry jargon, to avoid misunderstanding.

You are the expert and the source for solutions, not problems. Don’t leave the customer wondering what to do, but suggest options and alternatives. If a previous contractor did a poor job that you now must fix, then speak to the quality of the work – not of the contractor – and how you will improve upon it.

Never fight with a customer, although you should always stand up for yourself.

Finally, always leave the workspace in as good or better condition than when you found it. Take care not to damage the building or furniture and to clean up after yourself. ■

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When you have a choice of vendors, remember to use WIA Associate Members first.

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Wallpaper Warehouse
Williamson College of the Trades
Wolf-Gordon, Inc.
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A special
thank you
goes to
the 2018
National



Convention Social

Ambassadors! Please visit them
at the Thursday Social in Denver
where attendees have a chance
to win one of six \$25 Amazon
gift cards or the MEGA Prize of
a \$500 Amazon gift card!

THIBAUT MDC

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