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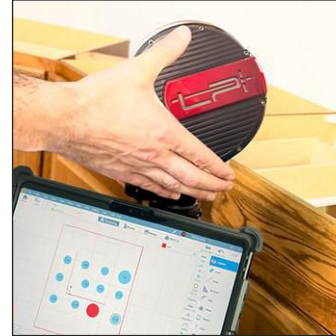


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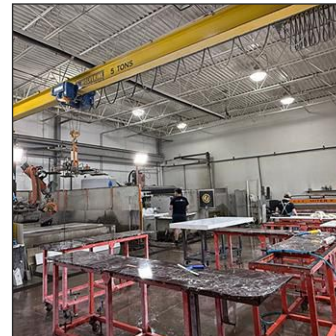
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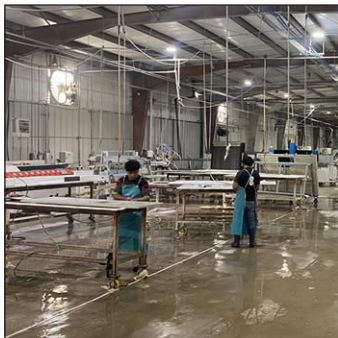
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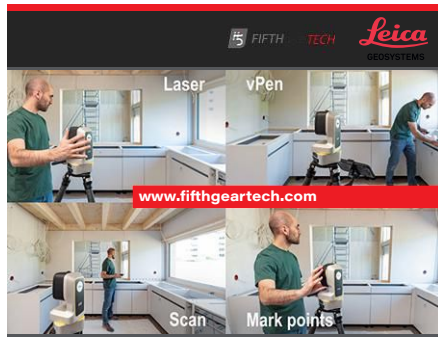


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Measure Anything. Compromise Nothing.

The robotic templating system that won't make you choose between a laser and a pen

Sponsored by FifthGear Technologies x Leica Geosystems



Photo courtesy of Leica Geosystems.

Every templater knows the spot. The job is nearly captured and then you see it: the top of a fireplace wall that runs to a vaulted ceiling, a full-height backsplash detail well overhead, the sliver of wall behind a range. It is the point that, as one templator put it, is “too tight or too high to get a tape on.”

You get it however you can: a stretch off a ladder, a tape held overhead, an educated guess. Then you carry that guess back to the shop, where it shows up later as a seam that will not line up or a backsplash that fights the wall. The most common fix is the one no shop wants in 2026: carrying the piece back outside and cutting it on site to make it fit. With everything the industry now knows about silica, on-site cutting is exactly what we are all trying to avoid.

Digital templating was supposed to put that risk to bed, and for the most part, it has. Laser measure replaced sticks and

corrugated plastic in most serious shops over the last 20 years. But the first generation of digital tools carried blind spots of their own. The Leica iCS50, out since fall 2024, was built to close them.

THE REPOSITION YOU NEVER HAVE TO MAKE

Ask anyone running a laser templator about their least favorite part of the job and the answer comes fast: moving the unit. A laser only measures what it can see, so the moment an island or a wall return blocks the beam, the templator has to pick it up, set it down somewhere new and re-reference to the points already captured. Every move is another chance to introduce an error and another few minutes gone.

A templator described one big complex job to us and counted it out: five repositions with a laser. The same job on the Leica iCS50: zero. It is a robotic instrument that combines a laser with the wireless Leica vPen, a measuring pen you touch directly to the point, accurate to 1 mm at 10 m. Where the laser's line of sight runs out, the pen reaches past it, so the blind spots that would force a laser to relocate just get touched instead, up to 25 m (80 ft) with extended range now available for vPen.

A COUNTERTOP IS 2D. A WALL ISN'T.

A countertop is, honestly, a 2D job. It is a flat plane sitting on the cabinets, and a two-dimensional measure captures it just fine. That is the case some systems make for staying 2D, and on countertops alone, it holds up.

The trouble is the work no longer stops at the deck. Full-height back-splashes, shower walls, fireplace surrounds: the stone is going up the wall, and a wall is a 3D job. Now you are not capturing one flat plane; you are capturing how several vertical surfaces relate to each other and to the counter below. The iCS50 measures it in true 3D, and the iCON trades High/Low point tool shows you, right on the tablet, where a surface deviates from plane, color-coding what is in tolerance and what is out,



even checking something as practical as whether the cabinet run is level before the countertop goes on. You know the wall bows or the base is off before you cut, not after.

TRACE THE CURVE YOU CAN'T SHOOT

A laser measures one point at a time, which is fine for straight runs and square corners but no help on a true curve. You end up faking the arc from a scatter of taps. The classic headache is the undermount sink that shows up with no template file or DXF. With nothing to work from, you are measuring the physical sink, hauling it back to the shop and risking a chip or a scratch.

With the vPen, you trace it where it sits. Tracing with vPen, a feature Leica added to iCON trades, lets the templator run the pen tip continuously along a complex edge, in 2D or 3D, and capture the real shape with 1.5 mm precision. Trace the actual sink, the actual curve, right there on the jobsite.



Photo courtesy of Leica Geosystems.

And the software finishes the thought. iCON trades' Smooth tool takes that raw traced line and refines it into clean lines and fitted arcs with actual radius dimensions: a hand-traced curve resolved into production geometry, right on the tablet, ready to cut. The pen captures the real shape; the software turns it into something the saw can follow.

That is the real separation from a plain laser: the iCS50 measures points for the straight runs and square corners, traces the true curves and scans a whole surface or line to find the high and low spots, one tool covering what a laser can only do part of.

SIMPLE ENOUGH TO LEARN BEFORE WE EVEN TRAIN YOU

iCON trades runs on an Android tablet and works the way any app on your phone does, simple enough that most new templators have it mastered before they ever sit down for onboarding with us. The 2D plan or 3D model builds on screen as you measure, so you can see the job take shape and catch a missed point while you are still standing in the kitchen, not back at the shop wishing you had caught it. The whole template gets done right there on site: connect the lines, add offsets and profiles,

drop in the cutouts for the sink, cooktop, faucet, sockets and notches — all built on the actual site dimensions.

ADDITIONAL JOB AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE INCLUDED

Here is where FifthGear Technologies adds to the iCS50 and iCON trades Digital Templating package. Every iCS50 comes with two of FifthGear's own shop apps, SPEEDfolder and SPEEDinventory, at no additional charge and no per-user fees. Included with the system, for the whole crew.

SPEEDfolder runs the whole job and the whole business with it. Office, sales, templators, installers and the shop floor all work from the same place, so everyone is on the same page. No version of the job lives in someone's texts or head. Jobs push out from the office, so the templater shows up with the quote, the job details and everything else right there in the job file on his phone. The finished template goes to the cloud from the jobsite, so the shop has it the moment he is done: no thumb drives, no emailing files, no chasing the right version. Every job carries its own notes and photos, so back-office, fabrication and the install crew all see exactly what was measured. Sales can pull up a job to review the template, so a pricing change gets caught before it gets cut. It is effectively everything you need to run a countertop business, included with the system.

SPEEDinventory is a cloud-based inventory app built for how a yard actually works: stick a preprinted QR label on a slab or remnant, scan it with your phone, snap a photo and that piece now has a digital identity the whole shop can see, with no more writing on the edge of the stone and never knowing what you have actually got in the yard. Sales lives in it, answering "What do you have in 3cm Calacatta?" without walking the warehouse, pulling the actual slab and remnant photos and sharing a list straight with a contractor or customer. The same inventory can go right onto your website too. Turn your remnants into revenue.

ONE TOOL, NO COMPROMISE

Traditionally, choosing a digital templating solution was about what you

were willing to compromise on. Not anymore. A laser-only system is fast on open runs, but the laser only measures what it can see: block the line of sight with an island, a peninsula or a wall return and you are repositioning, and it still cannot read glass or dark, glossy stone. A pen-only system measures anything by touch but gives up the laser's reach on the long open work. Each is good at part of the job and compromised on the rest.

The iCS50's answer is to stop choosing: a robotic instrument that uses the laser where the laser wins and tracks the wireless vPen where touch wins and captures real 3D for the work that is not flat. The blind spots that defined a generation of templating, from line of sight to the vertical jobs to the shapes a laser cannot trace, are closing, and the shops that close them first will template cleaner, remake less and stop carrying guesses back from the field.

It is a complete system, and with financing it usually lands somewhere around \$500 a month (exclusions apply). Book a live 15-minute online demo today with FifthGear Technologies: creating solutions for fabricators, because we are fabricators.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

FifthGear Technologies is a software and hardware company serving the countertop fabrication industry, built by fabricators, for fabricators. For years FifthGear has delivered innovative tools that shops actually use day to day, including the SPEED suite of software: SPEEDtemplate, SPEEDfolder, SPEEDlabel, and SPEEDinventory, which connect templating to the rest of the digital shop. As an authorized Leica Geosystems partner, FifthGear is proud to offer the Leica iCS50 robotic templating system, paired with fabrication-specific accessories, training, and support. Learn more or book a live 15-minute online demo at <https://calendly.com/d/3qy-txx-428>.

Leica Geosystems, part of Hexagon, has been revolutionizing the world of measurement and survey for more than 200 years. Known for premium sensors, software, and services trusted by professionals across construction, surveying, and manufacturing, Leica Geosystems brings that same Swiss precision to digital templating with the iCON iCS50.



www.fifthgeartech.com



The Evolution of Digital Templating:

Why Connected Workflows Are Changing Fabrication

Sponsored by LPI



Photo courtesy of Laser Products Industries

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

A templator finishes a measure and heads back to the shop with handwritten notes, photos stored on their phone, paperwork clipped together in the passenger seat and a list of verbal jobsite changes they are hoping not to forget before getting back to the office. Meanwhile, production is waiting for finalized dimensions. Programming is waiting for completed layouts. The office is trying to confirm customer approvals. Installers are asking questions about sink locations, overhangs or updated revisions.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE JOBSITE, THE OFFICE AND THE SHOP FLOOR, INFORMATION GETS LOST.

For many fabrication shops, the biggest operational challenge is no longer simply measuring accurately. It is keeping information connected throughout the entire workflow. As projects become more complex and customer expectations continue rising, shops are under increasing pressure to improve turn-around times, reduce remakes, minimize material waste and maintain tighter communication between departments. At the same time, many fabricators are still relying on disconnected

systems built around paper packets, spreadsheets, text messages, manually transferred files and scattered jobsite documentation.

Even highly skilled shops can experience bottlenecks when critical information moves manually between templating, programming, fabrication, project management and installation.

That is why digital templating has evolved far beyond replacing tape measures and “sticks and glue” alone. For modern fabricators, digital measurement is increasingly becoming the foundation of a fully connected fabrication workflow.

Digital templating originally gained traction because it solved one of the industry’s most expensive problems — inaccurate measurements. By replacing manual templates with digital capture systems, shops were able to improve precision, reduce costly remakes, accelerate turnaround times and simplify the measurement of complex layouts.

But many fabricators eventually discovered that accurate measurements alone do not eliminate operational friction. If photos are separated from layouts, if revisions are buried in email chains or if installers are working from outdated paperwork, problems still occur regardless of how accurate the original template may have been.

A DIGITAL TEMPLATE ALONE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY CREATE A CONNECTED WORKFLOW.

That realization is driving one of the biggest operational shifts currently happening throughout the stone fabrication industry — the movement toward centralized, cloud-connected workflow management. Instead of relying on disconnected systems, modern fabrication platforms now allow shops to keep dimensions, photos, layouts, notes, approvals, machine exports, shop sheets and installation details connected directly to the same project throughout production.

For office staff, this creates greater visibility into job progress while reducing the confusion caused by multiple versions of paperwork or missing information.

For programmers, connected workflows reduce manual handling of measurements and help streamline machine preparation through cleaner

file organization, integrated exports and more efficient programming tools.

For installers and field crews, mobile access to updated project information can help eliminate unnecessary return trips, improve communication onsite and reduce installation delays caused by outdated layouts or missing documentation.

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

- A programmer opens a drawing only to discover the customer approved a revision after the paperwork was already printed.
- An installer arrives onsite and realizes the sink information on the cut sheet does not match the customer’s final selection.
- A templator captures measurements correctly, but handwritten notes about wall conditions or appliance clearances never make it into production.
- These are not unusual situations. They are common operational problems caused by disconnected workflows.



Photo courtesy of Laser Products Industries



Photo courtesy of Laser Products Industries

AS FABRICATION BUSINESSES SCALE, THESE INEFFICIENCIES BECOME INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE.

What may feel manageable at lower production volumes often becomes difficult to sustain as shops take on more jobs, more installers, more equipment and more complex projects. That is why many fabricators are now investing not only in digital measurement hardware, but in broader workflow systems designed to improve communication, organization, visibility and coordination across the entire operation. Modern digital templating software platforms now extend far beyond measurement capture alone.

Advanced tools allow shops to refine complex splines and curves, automate square footage calculations, streamline machine-ready exports, manage project information through cloud-based systems and coordinate layouts, documentation and installation details between departments. These capabilities become increasingly valuable as projects involve more custom work, curved surfaces, waterfall edges, fireplaces, shower surrounds, integrated backsplashes and irregular layouts that are difficult to manage through traditional manual methods.

At the same time, hardware innovations continue improving speed, mobility and measurement precision onsite. Wireless laser templating systems now allow templators to move more freely throughout the jobsite while simplifying setup processes and improving measurement reliability across a wider range of surfaces and applications. Enhanced surface mapping and spline functionality also provide greater flexibility when capturing complex architectural conditions that would traditionally require far more manual adjustment during programming or installation.

FOR MANY SHOPS, ONE OF THE BIGGEST ADVANTAGES OF CONNECTED DIGITAL SYSTEMS IS NOT SIMPLY SPEED. IT IS THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROCESS.

When project information remains connected throughout the workflow, shops can reduce many of the small communication breakdowns that create production delays, scheduling problems and avoidable

reworks. This becomes especially important as labor challenges continue affecting the industry. Many fabrication businesses are trying to increase production capacity while operating with leaner teams and fewer experienced employees. Connected workflows help reduce dependence on tribal knowledge by keeping critical information centralized, accessible and standardized throughout production.

Organization inside the shop is also evolving alongside digital workflows. Integrated labeling and tracking systems are helping fabricators bridge the gap between digital project information and physical production management by allowing teams to identify and track slabs, remnants, carts, parts and completed pieces throughout fabrication and installation.

By improving traceability and visibility, shops can reduce confusion, improve accountability and maintain better control over materials as projects move through production.

THE RESULT IS NOT SIMPLY A FASTER TEMPLATING PROCESS.

It is a more connected operational structure that helps fabrication businesses improve communication, reduce friction, increase efficiency and scale more effectively as workloads grow. At Laser Products Industries, this evolution has shaped the development of technologies including LT3Raptor, LPI Cloud, the 5X digital templating system and StoneTag workflow tracking solutions. Together, these technologies were designed to help connect measurement capture, project management, programming preparation, fabrication workflows and installation coordination into a more unified fabrication ecosystem. Because the future of digital templating is no longer just about replacing manual measurements. It is about creating a connected workflow that allows the entire fabrication process to operate with greater visibility, accuracy, organization and efficiency from template to install.



Photo courtesy of Laser Products Industries

LT3 RAPTOR

Built for Scale. Driven by Speed.



STONETAG

The industry's most trusted partner in digital templating.

Powering 11,000+ jobs a week across more than 4,500 companies.

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Minimize downtime, maximize productivity.

Scales Seamlessly

Share production drawings with your whole team via LPI Cloud.

Advanced Integration

CAD Intelligence reduces production bottlenecks

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DIGITAL TEMPLATING: Ways It Can Advance a Fabrication Business

Several fabricators weighed in on how digital templating is an essential component of their overall operation

by Jennifer Richinelli



Digital templating equipment is a reliable method for fabricators to achieve speed, accuracy and complex work. Photo courtesy of Laser Products Industries

Regardless of the specific equipment being used, digital templating systems are a proven way for fabricators to increase efficiency, accuracy and produce more innovative and complex work. *Stone World* recently asked several fabricators from different regions of the U.S. a host of questions to gain valuable insight into how their personal experiences with digital templating – from points of consideration before purchasing equipment to its benefits and much more. Those who participated include:

- WYATT ENGLISH, operations manager
English Marble & Granite | Henderson, NV
- AMANDA LANG, vice president of administration
Bay Area Granite & Marble | Wrightstown, WI
- CHAD PEPPERS, measuring technician
Chivino Surfaces | Mesa, AZ

SW: How long have you been using a digital templating system?

WE: We have been using digital templating technology for approximately 12 years. Prior to purchasing the ICS 50 with the VPen, we used a Leica 3D Disto paired with Laser Products software. Digital templating has been a core part of our operation for well over a decade.



"The software is intuitive, making it easy to learn and train others on," Chad Peppers, measuring technician, of Chivino Surfaces in Mesa, AZ, about the LPI 2D/3D system. Photo courtesy of Laser Products Industries

AL: More than 10 years.

CP: I have been using digital templating systems for approximately 22 years.

SW: What were some reasons why you decided to invest in one?

WE: Digital templating is essential when trying to achieve a perfect fit on intricate shapes, large-scale projects and complex installations. Here in Las Vegas, we have built a reputation for being able to tackle projects that many shops would consider impossible. To maintain that reputation, we need to stay at the forefront of technology and the ICS 50 provides that next level of precision and efficiency.

AL: Precision and consistency were major factors. We wanted to improve accuracy, reduce remakes, streamline production and provide

a better overall experience for both our team and customers. Digital templating also helped us improve efficiency from measurement through installation.

CP: I could see the industry evolving toward greater automation in both fabrication equipment and machinery. Digital templating technology was advancing alongside those changes, and I recognized the opportunity to improve accuracy, efficiency and overall workflow by adopting it early.

SW: What were some points of consideration when determining which one to go with?

WE: For us, it was not a difficult decision because we have extensive experience with digital templating systems. After getting our hands on the ICS 50 at TISE [The International Surface Event], we immediately recognized it as a major advancement in the industry. We evaluated other

"Digital templating has been a core part of our operation for well over a decade," said Wyatt English, operations manager for English Marble & Granite. "To maintain that reputation, we need to stay at the forefront of technology, and the ICS 50 provides that next level of precision and efficiency." Photo courtesy of Wyatt English/English Marble & Granite



options, but no other system offered the same level of innovation. The ability to seamlessly switch between the VPen and traditional red-dot laser technology was a significant selling point because it provides flexibility for virtually any field condition or application.

AL: Accuracy, ease of use, reliability, software capabilities, training and support, and the company behind the product were all important considerations. We wanted a system that could grow with our business and adapt to different project types and applications.

CP: There are several digital templating systems on the market, and I've had experience with a variety of them. What stood out to me about LPI's 2D/3D system was its combination of accuracy, consistency and ease of use. The software is intuitive, making it easy to learn and train others on, while the laser unit consistently delivers precise measurements. Additionally, the lightweight, durable tripod and equipment design make it highly portable and practical for everyday field use.

SW: What advantages do you think digital templating has over physical templates?

WE: Physical templates are cumbersome, time-consuming and largely outdated. We operate as a fully digital shop, so introducing a physical template into our workflow would only add unnecessary steps. In many cases, a physical template would eventually need to be digitized anyway. Digital templating is faster, more accurate, reduces human error and integrates seamlessly with modern fabrication software and equipment. It creates a much more efficient workflow from field measurement to final installation.

AL: Speed, accuracy, efficiency and innovation. Digital templating reduces the margin for error, eliminates the need for bulky physical templates, improves communication between departments and allows

projects to move through production faster. It also creates a more professional experience for customers.

CP: Digital templating offers numerous advantages, including accuracy, efficiency, mobility, customer convenience and increased productivity. Whether you're measuring large housing developments or projects spread across a wide geographic area, digital templating allows you to capture a high volume of work quickly and with exceptional precision. It also minimizes disruption for homeowners, allowing them to continue using their kitchens until installation day. Ultimately, digital templating helps fabricators work more efficiently while consistently delivering a high-quality finished product.

“Speed, accuracy, efficiency and innovation. Digital templating reduces the margin for error, eliminates the need for bulky physical templates, improves communication between departments and allows projects to move through production faster.”

SW: Was there a learning curve?

WE: In our experience, there was very little learning curve. We completed a brief training session with Speed Template and then immediately put the system to work on a large commercial buffet project requiring approximately 50 slabs. The entire project was measured using the ICS 50, and we did not experience a single recut. Everything fit flawlessly. That experience gave us confidence in both the system and the technology from day one.

AL: Like any technology, there is a learning curve, but Laser Products Industries does a great job with training and support to ensure technicians feel comfortable with both the laser and software. With consistent use and proper training, most technicians become confident fairly quickly.

CP: Because I had prior CNC programming experience, the transition was relatively smooth. Like any new technology, there was a learning curve, but the software's user-friendly design made it easy to become comfortable with the system in a short amount of time.

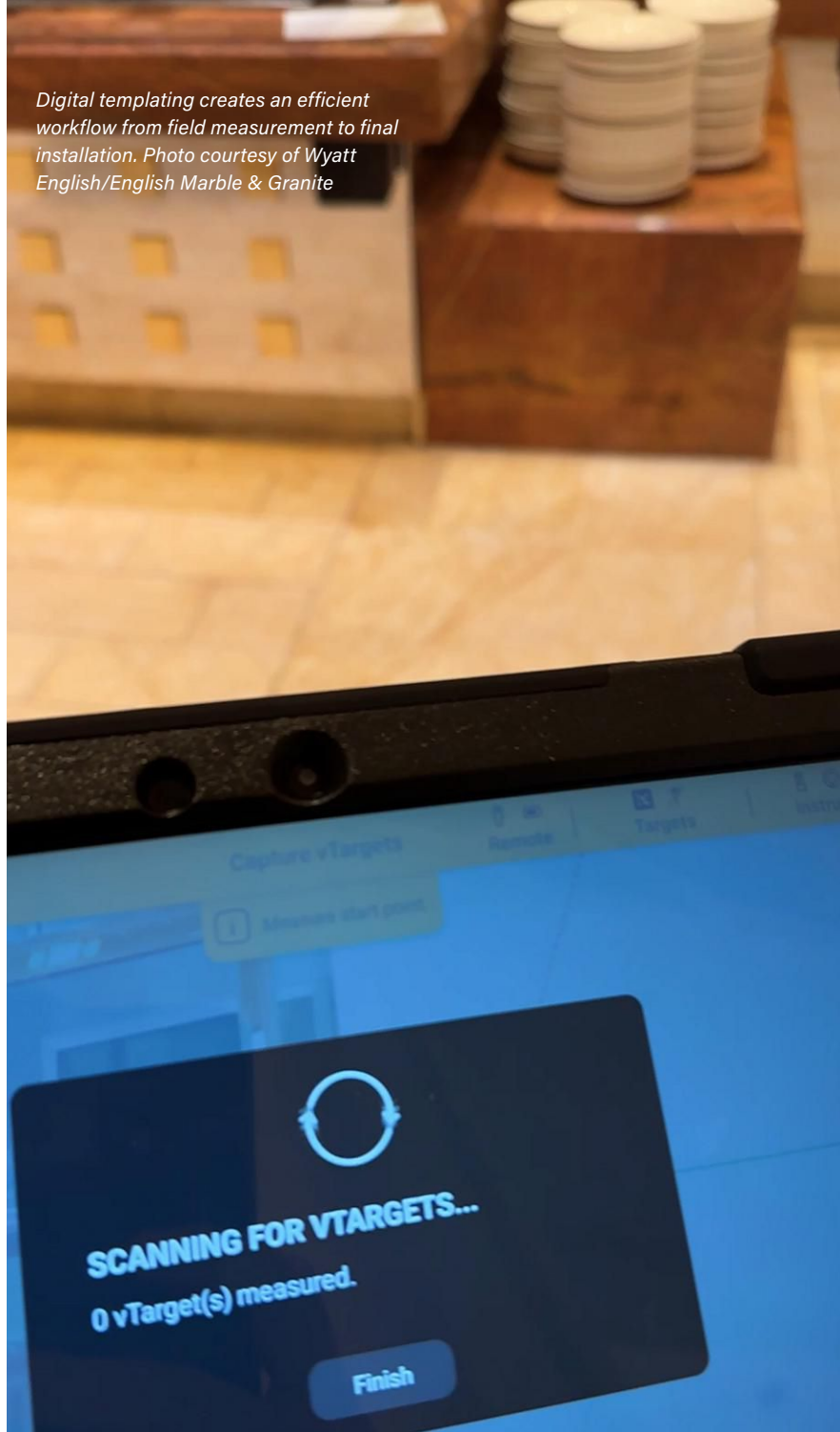
SW: Does it handle complex projects well?

WE: Absolutely. One of the biggest advantages is the ability to organize information using layers, allowing the user to focus on specific details while still visualizing the entire project in 3D. Complex projects often involve intricate geometry, tight tolerances and numerous intersecting components. The accuracy of the ICS 50 significantly simplifies these challenges and provides confidence that everything will fit as designed.

AL: Yes. It can handle projects of all sizes and complexities. Digital templating allows us to confidently measure curved walls, large layouts, multi-piece projects, custom designs and detailed spaces while maintaining accuracy throughout the process.

CP: Absolutely. We use the LPI 2D/3D laser system for every type of project — from residential remodels to highly customized commercial applications. Whether it's a small vanity, a custom kitchen, shower surrounds, wall cladding, waterfall features or intricate mosaic wall designs, the system provides the accuracy and flexibility needed to successfully execute complex projects. It has become an essential tool for our team at Chivino Surfaces.

Digital templating creates an efficient workflow from field measurement to final installation. Photo courtesy of Wyatt English/English Marble & Granite



SW: Has digital templating led to more business outside of countertops and backsplashes?

WE: Without question. At English Marble & Granite, we fabricate and install much more than countertops. We regularly complete staircases, fireplaces, full-height slab backsplashes, shower systems, slab flooring applications, commercial projects and other highly customized stone installations. Digital templating has expanded our capabilities and allowed us to confidently take on projects that would be extremely difficult — or impossible — to execute using traditional methods.

AL: Absolutely. Digital templating has allowed us to expand into showers, fireplaces, stair components, wall cladding, vertical applications and other custom spaces. Having confidence in the measurements allows us to take on more unique and detailed projects.

CP: Yes. While countertops remain a significant part of our business, digital templating has allowed us to expand into additional applications such as vertical wall features, outdoor water features and custom mosaic wall projects. The precision and versatility of the technology have opened doors to a broader range of opportunities.

SW: What are qualities you look for in a good templator?

WE: Attention to detail is critical. A good templator must also understand how a project will ultimately be fabricated and installed. On highly complex projects involving multiple miters, compound angles and large assemblies, the templator needs to anticipate installation requirements and account for offsets, seam locations, material thicknesses and assembly sequencing. Accurate measurements are important, but understanding how the finished project comes together is equally important.

AL: A high attention to detail, strong communication skills, problem-solving ability and willingness to evolve with technology upgrades and advancements. A good templator must also understand installation requirements and think ahead to ensure a smooth fabrication and install process.

CP: A great templator combines strong customer service skills with product knowledge, industry experience, attention to detail and a willingness to learn. They should be able to communicate effectively with customers while accurately capturing the information needed to ensure a successful installation.

SW: What advice would you give a fabricator who is hesitant to make the switch?

WE: There may be a small learning curve for fabricators who have never used digital templating, but the benefits far outweigh the initial

“While countertops remain a significant part of our business, digital templating has allowed us to expand into additional applications such as vertical wall features, outdoor water features and custom mosaic wall projects.”

adjustment period. Digital templating reduces human error, improves efficiency, increases accuracy and opens the door to projects that may have previously seemed too complicated. Once you experience the workflow and consistency it provides, it becomes difficult to imagine going back to traditional methods.

AL: Work with the team at [the manufacturer] to better understand the products and solutions available. The investment quickly pays for itself through time savings, improved accuracy and reduced material waste. Once you make the switch, you will not want to go back to traditional templating methods.

CP: Take a close look at your current fabrication process and consider how digital templating can be integrated into your workflow. While any new technology requires an investment of time and resources, the long-term benefits in accuracy, efficiency, consistency and scalability can significantly improve both production and customer satisfaction.

SW: Is there anything else you would like to share?

WE: In our experience, digital capabilities have become a major differentiator in the Las Vegas market. Today, we are frequently the shop that other contractors and fabricators turn to when a project is especially intricate or challenging. Everything starts with the template, and digital templating is the foundation of a successful modern fabrication operation. The ICS 50 with the VPen has streamlined our workflow, eliminated headaches and given us the confidence to take on projects that push the boundaries of what can be done with stone.

AL: Digital templating has transformed the way we approach projects. It has improved efficiency, accuracy and confidence across our entire workflow while helping us expand into new applications and opportunities. Having a strong partner like Laser Products Industries has also been an important part of that success.

Precision by Laser: Detroit Stone and Tile's Digital Templating Shift

The Michigan fabricator credits speed, accuracy and near-zero remakes to a move it first made in 2008

by Jason Kamery



Photo courtesy of Andrei Napau



Photo courtesy of Andrei Napau

When Detroit Stone and Tile opened in Shelby Township, Michigan, in 2003, its templators still walked into every jobsite with a tape measure and built their templates by hand out of plastic and wood. More than two decades later, the custom fabrication company runs four locations across the state, and it traces much of that growth to a single change on the jobsite: the switch to digital templating.

The company specializes in precision and quality stone finishes, working primarily with designers and custom home builders while also serving

homeowners directly. By 2008, the shop had purchased its first laser measuring system, and the reasoning behind the investment was simple.

"The two main reasons for switching to digital templating were speed and accuracy," said Andrei Napau of Detroit Stone and Tile.

Those gains showed up almost immediately. According to Napau, the laser did not just replace the old method, it reset what a single templator could accomplish in a day.

"It's definitely been a game changer since switching to digital templating," said Napau. "One templator can now measure at least twice



Photo courtesy of Andrei Napau

the amount using a laser compared to wood or plastic templates. This has also drastically decreased cutting time and reduced our remakes to almost zero."

For shops weighing the same move, the cost of a remake is often what tips the decision. A single remake means lost slab material, lost labor and a delayed install, so even a modest drop in the remake rate can offset the cost of a templating system over time.

The learning curve, a common worry for fabricators considering the jump, proved to be short.

"Although any new technology has a learning curve, you can teach somebody with zero experience to measure with a laser in just a couple of weeks," said Napau.

Today the company measures with the Leica iCON iCS50 and the LT-2D3D. The LT-2D3D, built by Laser Products Industries, is among the most



Photo courtesy of Andrei Napau

widely used digital templating systems in U.S. countertop fabrication, valued for its accuracy, speed and direct file output to the shop's cutting equipment.

The technology supports a busy operation. Detroit Stone and Tile's Shelby Township shop spans 15,000 square feet, including roughly 6,000 square feet of production space, and employs a team of 26. On a typical day, the shop turns out six to eight jobs.

For Napau, the takeaway after more than 15 years of digital templating comes back to the same two words that drove the original decision. The laser delivered the speed to measure more work in less time and the accuracy to all but eliminate the remakes that once ate into both. For a fabricator working alongside designers and custom home builders, where a missed measurement carries a high cost in material and trust, that combination has become the foundation of how the shop runs.

A wide-angle photograph of a large industrial workshop. In the foreground, a worker in a blue apron is seated at a workbench, working on a large, flat object. Another worker in a blue apron stands nearby, looking at a large sheet of material. In the background, another worker is visible near a large machine. The floor is wet and reflective, showing the overhead lights and machinery. The workshop is filled with various pieces of equipment, including workbenches, carts, and large machines. The ceiling is high with exposed pipes and lighting fixtures.

*With a strong lineup of machinery, Texas Counter Fitters has built a solid reputation as a quality fabricator in the region.
Photo courtesy of Texas Counter Fitters*

Laser System Provides Peace of Mind for Texas

Texas Counter Fitters investment in a Laser System LT3 Raptor has ensured accuracy in templating and improved communication for the shop



The company nurtures the individual success of each employee to create its overall prosperity. Photo courtesy of Texas Counter Fitters

Texas Counter Fitters (Rock Cutters L.L.C) is a family-run business which was established a little more than 10 years ago in Garland TX. Within the first five years, the company set up a showroom and within a decade expanded into the success it is today. While for many years its primary market was fabrication and install, over time its distribution and slab inventory grew and became its main market.

The company's fabrication shop is equipped with a lineup of state-of-the-art equipment, and it also relies heavily on its digital templating systems from Laser Products Industries (LPI). Among the machinery are

seven machines from Flow Corp., seven machines from Park Industries and two CNC Machines from XYZ International.

"The LPI LT3 Raptor would be our most recent investment in this category, and this has helped tremendously on little errors that could sneak past us while trying to do everything with a tape measure and pencil," said Kyle Gilbert of Texas Counter Fitters. "I went through about three company's before landing on LPI. What caught my attention most was their program set up. It was clear to me that someone with knowledge and experience in this field helped build this program, and they were will-



"The LPI LT3 Raptor has helped tremendously on little errors that could sneak past us while trying to do everything with a tape measure and pencil," said Kyle Gilbert of Texas Counter Fitters. Photo courtesy of Texas Counter Fitters

ing to listen and provide feedback on suggestions that I had made early on. They have a great team and solid communication."

Gilbert explained that the company runs the FlowXpert program to create its cuts and it uses the Raptor in tandem with Moraware for its templating/office work. "The Raptor can also easily transfer files to FlowXpert," he said.

"I enjoy the peace of mind it gives me when it comes to measurements," Gilbert went on to say about the Raptor. "Anyone in a production position has many things to review and double/triple check before sending to the fabrication shop. This program has just made it that much easier not having to worry about numbers so much. It's also incredible when it comes to fireplaces."

Gilbert also pointed out that the Raptor has opened the door for Texas Counter Fitters' shop/install department to go digital. "We are in the



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process of switching over to no paper, and it's a lofty goal, but not achievable without this program," he said.

When asked what he would say is one of the biggest challenges the company currently faces as a fabricator, Gilbert cited communication issues. "Making sure you give the correct information to the correct person, and also receiving the correct information from the correct person, is challenging," he said. "LPI has tools to help with this too.

"Creating better ways to communicate without communicating directly, placing notes in the right places, having more customer signatures on notes and simply following through, are strategies we have to solve communication problems," Gilbert continued. "We will use LPI to help us get there."

Texas Counter Fitters also has implemented best business practices to assist the success of the company as a whole. "We all believe the saying,



While for many years Texas Counter Fitters' primary market was fabrication and install, over time its distribution and slab inventory grew and became its main market. Photo courtesy of Texas Counter Fitters

'Your team is only as good as the weakest link' and instead of cutting the weakest link we help them improve and become part of the team," said Gilbert. "I've always respected that about this company and how they don't look for just company success, but they believe in individual success as well.

"We are in the middle of a transition, but we are continuing to grow in all aspects of the company," Gilbert went on to say. "Most companies tend to view that with caution, but we're excited because we know the horizon has only expanded for us and we hope you hear more about us in the future."

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