



Speaker Handbook



Matt Peterson, 2024 NSI Continuing Education Speaker of the Year.

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A Message From Our Director

Hello Speakers!

I want to start by welcoming you to Natural Stone Institute (NSI)'s Continuing Education Network and congratulate you on becoming a speaker. We are thrilled to have you and encourage you to feel pride over this new adventure. As a speaker, you are revered as an expert in the stone industry, and we are here to help you along the way.

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to help speakers prepare and deliver high-quality presentations that uphold the standards and reputation of the NSI. Whether you are a new or seasoned speaker, this resource is designed to ensure a consistent and professional educational experience for all participants.

From all of us at the Natural Stone Institute, we want to thank you for your commitment to the NSI Continuing Education Network and for your dedication to working with and promoting natural stone as the premier building material.

Sincerely,

Aaron Dahnke, CAE
Natural Stone Institute
Education and Membership Director



About the NSI Continuing Education Network

Program Vision

The NSI's Continuing Education Network provides accurate and ongoing education about the value, benefits and best practices of using natural stone as a building material to architects, designers and other professionals in the construction industry.

What the Program Offers

- **CEU-Approved Courses:** The program provides almost 2 dozen ready-to-use, accredited courses that cover topics such as sustainability, stone specification and stone design.
- **Accreditation:** CEU credits are recognized by prestigious bodies such as AIA, IDCEC, NKBA, LACES, GBCI, and many more, empowering professionals with knowledge of natural stone.

Why the Program Matters

- **Industry Credibility:** Companies offering continuing education programs gain recognition as experts, strengthening relationships with architects and designers.
- **Professional Growth:** Speakers and participants both benefit—through reputation enhancement and deeper technical understanding.
- **Educational Reach:** Supports both in-person and virtual learning, enabling broader reach and accessibility.

Some Facts About the Program

2005

The year the first course was approved for AIA Credit and the program began

20+

Number of turnkey courses offered through the program

Almost 10,000

Number of design professionals taking advantage of NSI's CEU courses per year

400+

Number of speakers from over 100 enrolled companies

Policies and Procedures

NSI Commitments

The Natural Stone Institute is committed to providing the highest standard of course materials and support to our NSI Continuing Education Network Speakers in order to maintain a professional and informative experience for each of our participants.

In order to maintain the integrity of and the authorization of our program, the NSI pledges to:

- Review all continuing education courses prior to submission through the provider network to make sure the information within is accurate, well rounded, and educational in nature
- Ensure all courses are up to date with their CEU credit status
- Orientate and approve the speakers
- Administer the program by providing necessary tools to the speakers, report credits and maintain records of all participants and their courses
- Listen to valued feedback from NSI Continuing Education Network audiences and utilize their responses to continually improve our program
- Provide a volunteer committee opportunity to collaborate on speaker best practices and better our educational programs

Policies and Procedures (continued)

Speaker Responsibilities

In turn, the NSI expects our speakers to uphold the highest standards of industry credibility by presenting accurate, unbiased, and engaging educational content. Your role is to foster professional growth for yourself and your audience, strengthen relationships within the design community, and expand the reach of natural stone education through effective in-person and virtual presentations. All speakers are required to sign an oath before becoming a speaker.

- Learn the content of each presentation utilized by studying the available training materials and other relevant sources.
- Read, understand, and disseminate all information regarding participation involved with the NSI Continuing Education Network.
- Ensure the quality of any educational programs that are being reported under this program.
- Conduct operations and programs in an ethical manner that respects the rights and worth of the professionals we serve.
- Provide full and accurate disclosure of information about the program's promotional material, this includes keeping up to date with any changes to class codes, organization approval status, current logos, and other credit information.
- Ensure company logos, product names, and branding are limited to the first and last slides only. Recognize that any information and handouts distributed are done with the intent to reinforce the learning objectives.
- Defer product and proprietary specific questions for discussion either before or after the course has concluded.

Policies and Procedures (continued)

The NSI Speaker Oath

The NSI's Continuing Education Network requires each of our speakers to sign an oath upon the completion of the orientation process. This oath ensures that our speakers recognize their responsibilities and commits them to an understanding that as they perform these responsibilities, they are representing the Natural Stone Institute and its mission. See page 17.



Speaker Oath

My primary responsibilities as an NSI Continuing Education Network speaker are prioritized as follows:

- Present the courses and their educational value to my audience.
- Promote natural dimension stone as the leading materials choice for residential and commercial applications.
- Publicize NSI as the authoritative source for information on standards of natural stone workmanship and practice.
- Deliver courses without endorsement, bias, marketing, or sales orientation.
- Conduct our operations and programs in an ethical manner that respects the rights and worth of the professionals we serve.

I understand that it is NOT my responsibility, nor privilege, to distribute the program resources beyond my own company.

My firm is a member of Natural Stone Institute in good standing abiding by the Code of Ethics.

I understand that the NSI Continuing Education Network and its CEU courses are subject to quality audit, and that we may be removed from the system (forfeiting paid fees, credits presented by other members, and required to return all electronic versions of education programs) if we are non-compliant.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Company: _____

Policies and Procedures (continued)

Continuing Education Compliance

This checklist outlines the essential steps for delivering education through NSI's Continuing Education Network. Following these guidelines ensures your presentation meets the design associations' strict compliance requirements, maintains NSI's professional standards, and delivers a high-quality, unbiased learning experience for participants.

- Ensure accurate documentation of attendance
- Use approved sign-in sheets or digital tracking methods
- Deliver required learning objectives and course content exactly as approved
- Do not deviate from or alter course material without prior approval (**Please note you can and are encouraged to change the photos of the presentation to make the session more engaging.**)
- Distribute and collect evaluation forms from all participants
- Avoid promotion or product bias — keep the focus on education, not sales
- Follow the approved time length for the course
- Present content in the order and scope approved by the design associations
- Clearly identify any proprietary terms in an educational context only
- Ensure accessibility (e.g., captions, large print, accommodation requests)
- Maintain participant privacy when handling sign-in or evaluation data
- Use the exact approved course title and description in all materials
- According to reporting standards, there is a short turn around time to report credits to design associations. Please report attendance to NSI within 3 days of the event taking place to ensure a timely accurate submission.

This checklist is designed to guide NSI speakers in delivering engaging, accurate, and accredited presentations. Following these best practices ensures your session meets NSI standards, maintains professional credibility, and provides a valuable learning experience for all participants.

Please remember that you are representing the NSI Continuing Education Network – not your company – when delivering these presentations.

Presentation Guidelines

Types of Educational Sessions:

CEU Lunch & Learn Overview

A Continuing Education Lunch and Learn is an informal, in-office educational session where a design firm's team can earn CEU credits while enjoying a provided meal. The NSI's CEU-approved sessions offer architects and designers valuable, unbiased knowledge about natural stone, enhancing their skills while meeting their licensure requirements.

How to Set One Up

1. **Identify the Firm** – Target architecture and design firms whose work often includes stone or related materials.
2. **Make Contact** – Reach out to the firm's office manager, continuing education coordinator, or a key designer to introduce the course options.
3. **Confirm Course Selection** – Offer a choice of approved topics that align with their interests.
4. **Schedule the Session** – Choose a convenient weekday lunch hour and confirm the number of attendees.
5. **Arrange Catering** – Provide lunch (often an expected courtesy) for all participants.
6. **Prepare Materials** – Bring approved slide deck, sign-in sheets, evaluation forms and samples.
7. **Deliver the Program** – Present the course, engage participants, collect evaluations, and record attendance for credit reporting.

Presentation Guidelines (continued)

Types of Educational Sessions (continued):

CEU Event at Your Facility

Hosting a CEU event at your facility gives architects and designers an immersive, hands-on learning experience while earning CEU credit. Participants not only receive the approved course content but also gain valuable insights by seeing your operations, viewing material samples, and engaging directly with your team in a professional setting.

How to Set One Up with a Design Firm

1. **Identify the Audience** – Reach out to local architecture and design firms that specify stone or related materials.
2. **Select the Course** – Offer them CEU-approved topics that match their interests or current projects.
3. **Schedule the Date** – Coordinate a convenient time for the firm's team, typically during work hours.
4. **Plan the Experience** – Pair the CEU presentation with a facility tour, hands-on demonstrations, or sample viewing.
5. **Prepare Materials** – Have the approved slide deck, sign-in sheets, and evaluation forms ready.
6. **Hospitality** – Offer refreshments or lunch to create a welcoming environment.
7. **Deliver and Report** – Present the course, engage participants, collect evaluations, and report attendance for credit submission.
8. **Safety First** – Provide required PPE (hard hats, safety glasses) and enforce closed-toe shoe requirements for all visitors.

Presentation Guidelines (continued)

Types of Educational Sessions (continued):

Presenting at a Local Design Association Chapter Meeting

Securing a spot to present at a local design association such as AIA, ASLA, IIDA, USGBC or NKBA chapter meeting can expand your reach and connect you with a broad audience of architects and designers. Start by researching upcoming chapter events and contacting the program or education chair to introduce yourself and your approved course offerings. Provide a concise course description, learning objectives, and the number of CEU credits available. Highlight how your presentation supports their members' professional development and offers unbiased, relevant content. Be flexible with dates and formats (in-person, virtual, or hybrid) and confirm any AV or logistical needs in advance.

Step 1 – Research & Identify the Contact

- Find your local AIA, ASLA, IIDA, USGBC or NKBA chapter's website.
- Identify the **Program Chair, Education Chair, or Executive Director**.
- Review the chapter's event calendar to see upcoming education opportunities.

Quick Tip: Chapters often plan education months in advance — early outreach is key.

Step 2 – Make Initial Contact

Send a short, professional email introducing yourself and the NSI Continuing Education Network program.

Sample Email:

Subject: AIA-Approved Continuing Education Presentation Opportunity

Hello [Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a speaker in NSI's Continuing Education Network. I'd love to offer your members an AIA-approved course, [Course Title], worth [#] LU/HSW credit(s). The session provides unbiased, relevant information on [brief course benefit].

I can adapt the presentation for in-person, virtual, or hybrid formats, and will handle all AIA attendance reporting.

Would you be open to discussing available dates for your upcoming [chapter meeting/education program]?

Thank you,

[Your Name & Contact Info]

Step 3 – Confirm Details & Prepare

- Finalize date, time, format, and AV needs.
- Provide the official course description, learning objectives, and credit information.
- Send a brief bio and headshot for chapter marketing.
- Arrive early (or log in early) to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Presentation Guidelines (continued)

Types of Educational Sessions (continued):

Setting Up Distance Learning

Setting up a virtual session or webinar follows many of the same steps as setting up a live in-person class, and it also provides an opportunity to expand the reach beyond the walls of a physical learning space. Virtual programs provide convenience to the A&D community who are often traveling for work, and it allows the presenter to focus on the course materials rather than the needs of a room set up.

Step 1 – Identify the Firm or Firms

A virtual learning session allows for the opportunity to present the materials to a larger audience than an in-person program would. **Note:** Some online webinar platforms put a cap on the number of attendees that can sign on to a program. Zoom, for instance, allows 100 attendees for a basic or pro account.

Step 2 – Make an Initial Contact

Send a professional email introducing yourself and NSI's Continuing Education Network. (See the sample email in the previous handbook section, Presenting Your Continuing Education at a Local Design or Association Chapter Meeting.)

Step 3 – Confirm Details and Prepare

- Finalize date, time, and schedule your webinar through an online platform such as Zoom or Teams.
- Provide the official course description, learning objectives, and credit information to your contact at the firm(s) you are presenting to.
- Send a brief bio and headshot for marketing.
- Log on early to ensure everything runs smoothly. Practice sharing your screen and have PowerPoint placed in a convenient location on your computer to retrieve quickly when it's needed.

Presentation Guidelines (continued)

Before Your Presentation

- Use Official Materials: Present with the official NSI slide decks to ensure accuracy.
- Rehearse Timing: Practice delivering your session within the allotted time, leaving room for Q&A or interactive elements.
- Plan Engagement: Include at least one interactive segment, such as a poll, case study, or Q&A opportunity.

Slide Design & Content

- Maintain branding consistency
- Use NSI-approved logos, colors, and visual styles throughout.
- Up to 20% of the presentation can be personalized, and we encourage you to swap photos and add stories of your own.
- Simplify technical language
- Limit jargon and define and technical terms clearly
- Ensure readability and visual appeal
- Slides should be clean, legible and visually engaging
- Use large fonts when possible
- Limit amount of text per slide
- Utilize clear graphics or images

During Your Presentation

- Deliver factual content
- Only present verified information, avoiding personal opinions or unsupported claims
- Engage professionally
- Maintain a professional tone and interact respectfully with participants
- Encourage participation
- Promote questions and dialogue during Q&A or interactive segments

After Your Presentation

- Encourage participants to complete an evaluation form
- Collect feedback and improve future sessions and ensure compliance with continuing education standards
- Record and submit attendance to ensure participant credit is properly recorded

The Use of AI

We recognize that the use of AI provides a positive impact in the workplace allowing for time efficient practices and creative use of text. Speakers may use AI for content research and structuring as well as for designing audience-centered content or interactive elements such as polls or quizzes.

We ask that our speakers refrain from using AI as a substitute for expert advice or by copying text word for word plagiarizing someone else's work.

We ask that while AI may be used for drafting assistance, but speakers remain fully responsible for the content of their work.

Please remember that the speaker oath binds our speakers to work in an ethical manner, and we ask that you use your good judgement when using AI.

Feedback and Evaluation

- Encourage participants to complete evaluations
- Use feedback to refine and improve delivery
- Review feedback with a mentor or peer when possible

Resources

Audience Engagement Tips and Strategies

Start Strong with a Past Project

- Open with a compelling story or image from a natural stone project you completed.
- State what they'll gain from the session in a clear, benefit-focused way.

Connect to Their Work

- Tie examples to real-world architectural and design challenges they face.
- Reference current design trends, sustainability goals, or compliance requirements relevant to their projects.

Ask Questions Early and Often

- Use polls, quick hands-up prompts, or rhetorical questions to encourage participation.
Example: "Who here has specified stone in the last year?" or "What's the biggest challenge you face with stone?"

Use Visual Impact

- Showcase high-resolution project images, quarry videos, and close-up textures to make concepts tangible.
- Keep text minimal — let images and diagrams carry the message.

Incorporate Short Activities

- Use mini case studies where attendees choose the right stone for a scenario.
- Give brief discussion breaks for peer-to-peer sharing if time allows.

Tell Stories, Not Just Specs

- Share behind-the-scenes quarry stories, fabrication challenges, or client wins.
- Humanize technical details through real-life applications.

Address Misconceptions

- Invite the audience to share myths they've heard about stone — then debunk them with facts.
- This keeps the tone interactive and positions you as a trusted expert.

Build in Q&A Moments

- Don't save all questions for the end — sprinkle in short Q&A pauses every 10–15 minutes. This helps prevent mental fatigue and encourages real-time clarification.
- Create a list of questions you want to ask the audience.

Resources (continued)

Audience Engagement Tips and Strategies (continued)

Involve the Senses

- If possible for in-person sessions, pass around small stone samples or display them for tactile engagement (Consider bringing a black table cloth.).
- For virtual sessions, zoom in on textures and show 360° rotations.

Close with Action

- End by summarizing key takeaways and inviting attendees to apply what they've learned.
- Provide follow-up resources like the NSI website or technical bulletins.

Resources (continued)

Staff

Julie Zorn

Education Coordinator

julie@naturalstoneinstitute.org

Aaron Dahnke

Education and Membership Director

aaron@naturalstoneinstitute.org

Dacia Woodworth

Architect and Design Community Liaison

dacia@naturalstoneinstitute.org

General Continuing Education Inquiries

ceu@naturalstoneinstitute.org

Report Attendance

naturalstoneinstitute.org/nsiceu

Pricing*

Premier Provider: \$2500

(Per membership calendar year)

- Unlimited speakers and courses presented
- Prime placement on NSI's "Find a Speaker" page

Typical Provider: \$300

(Per membership calendar year)

- Includes one speaker
- Each additional speaker: \$50
- Each course presented: \$50

*Must be a current NSI member.

Design Community Requirements*

AIA: 18 hours per year—12 Hours HSW

ASID: 10 hours in 2 years

ASLA: 12–24 hours in 2 years

NKBA: CKD 60 hours, plus annual requirements

*Ranges depending on Organization and state.

Current Courses

- Achieving Green Building Goals with Natural Stone
- Celebrate Natural Stone: Walking Tour
- Certified Stone (for A/D): Why Specify Certified Stone | How the Natural Dimension Stone Sustainability Standard Can Assist Green Building Projects
- Fabricators: Partnering with Natural Stone Countertop Fabricators and Distributors for Increased Sales
- Green Design: Natural Stone and Green Design
- Natural Stone Countertops: Considerations for Marble, Granite, Quartzite, and Soapstone
- Natural Stone Embodied Carbon Research
- Natural Stone Principles
- Natural Stone vs. Manmade Materials: Exterior Applications
- Natural Stone vs. Manmade Materials: Interior Applications
- Sandstone: The Basics of Selection, Fabrication, Maintenance and Restoration
- Specifying: The Art of Specifying Natural Stone
- Stone Care: What You Should Know
- Stone II: Introduction to Natural Stone Design II
- Stone Tile: Natural Stone Tile: An Overview
- Thin Veneer: Natural Stone Thin Veneer: The Basics
- Tour: Natural Stone: The Evolving Marketplace, Technology, and Product Applications
- Travertine: Basics Selection, Fabrication, Maintenance, and Restoration
- Why Choose Natural Stone?
- Wine & Stone



Speaker Oath

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- Publicize NSI as the authoritative source for information on standards of natural stone workmanship and practice.
- Deliver courses without endorsement, bias, marketing, or sales orientation.
- Conduct our operations and programs in an ethical manner that respects the rights and worth of the professionals we serve.

I understand that it is NOT my responsibility, nor privilege, to distribute the program resources beyond my own company.

My firm is a member of Natural Stone Institute in good standing abiding by the Code of Ethics.

I understand that the NSI Continuing Education Network and its CEU courses are subject to quality audit, and that we may be removed from the system (forfeiting paid fees, credits presented by other members, and required to return all electronic versions of education programs) if we are non-compliant.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Company: _____



Platform Instructions

Go to naturalstoneinstitute.org/nsiceu.

Filling Out a Form

1. NSI's Continuing Education Network Event Registration Form

The web link will take you to NSI's Continuing Education Network Event Registration form. You will be able to choose "Filling out a form" or "Using a spreadsheet". We will go over both options, but to start, we will discuss "Filling out a form".

CEU Event Registration Form

How would you like to sign up? *

☒ Filling out a form ☐ Uploading a spreadsheet

Save Next

2. Speaker Information Form

Please fill out the fields.

Speaker Information

Name *

First Name Last Name

Company Phone Number

(000) 000-0000

Please enter a valid phone number.

Email * Website

example@example.com

Back Save Next

Platform Instructions (continued)

3. Program Information Page

You will be asked to choose from Preset Course or Custom Course: The preset courses are any one of our 20+ courses. You will select one from the pull-down menu and fill out the rest of the details about your event in the fields.

Program Information

☒ Preset Course
 ☐ Custom Course

Selected Course *

Achieving Green Building Goals with Natural Stone
 ▼

Event Date *

MM-DD-YYYY
 📅

Date

Phone Number

(000) 000-0000

Please enter a valid phone number.

Event Location

Name of the venue

Event Address *

Street Address

Please Select
 ▼

City

State

Back

Save

Next

Platform Instructions (continued)

4. Choosing a Custom Course

A custom course that has been approved by NSI and has been created by the company who has a specific need for it. When selected, it prompts you to fill out fields about your custom course details just as the preset course did.

Program Information

☐ Preset Course
 ☒ Custom Course

Type course name *

Event Date *

Date

Phone Number

Please enter a valid phone number.

Event Location

Name of the venue

Event Address *

Street Address

Please Select

City

State

Back

Save

Next

Platform Instructions (continued)

5. Attendee List

The next step is to fill in the information for your “Attendee list”. These fields appear because you selected “filling out a form” in the first step. This option works best if you only have a short list of attendees. You will fill in their name, email address, choose their association and add their association member#. You will click the “add new” button to add additional attendees and click “next” when you have completed each attendee.

Attendees & Certificate Information

NSI will record attendance and maintain records of all attendees. NSI will file credits for AIA, IDECE, and LACES if box is checked. NKBA, GBCI & Other will self file.

Attendee list *

First Name*	Last Name*	Email Address*	Credit Needed*
			☐ AIA ☐ IDECE ☐ LACES ☐ NKBA ☐ None

Association #

6. Submitting Your Course

The next page will bring you to the final step, which is submitting your course.

Your application is ready to be sent. Please click the Submit button below to start the registration process.

If you have any questions, please reach out!

Natural Stone Institute Support: education@naturalstoneinstitute.org

CEU Events Department: Julie Zorn, ceu@naturalstoneinstitute.org

Platform Instructions (continued)

Uploading Your Attendee List Spreadsheet

1. NSI's Continuing Education Network Event Registration Form

If you have a large group attending your course, you may want to upload your attendees on one spreadsheet and submit it to NSI's registration form. To accomplish this, you will select "Uploading a spreadsheet" on the Registration Form page.

CEU Event Registration Form

How would you like to sign up? *

☐ Filling out a form
☒ Uploading a spreadsheet

To sign up using a spreadsheet, please follow these steps:

- Download our [CEU Event Registration worksheet template](#)
- Fill up the required event and attendee information
- Upload the completed document in the section below

If you need help or have any questions, please feel free to reach out directly:
CEU Events Department: ceu@naturalstoneinstitute.org

2. Download Event Registration Worksheet Template

The Event Registration page will provide you with a link to "Download our CEU Event Registration worksheet template". Once you download the template, we suggest bringing a laptop to your program and asking your attendees to fill out the form on the laptop in the back of the room. It should look like this.



SIGN-IN FORM






COURSE TITLE:	
Program Credit Information	Provider Information
ATA/CES	Name <i>Natural Stone Institute</i>
IDCEC	Contact <i>Julie Zorn</i>
LA CES	ID#
Other	Ph # <i>(440) 250-9222</i>
Date of Program	Speaker Information
Location	Name
Phone Number	Company
City, State	Phone #
	Email
	Website

Platform Instructions (continued)

Uploading Your Attendee List Spreadsheet

3. Upload Attendee List Spreadsheet to NSI's Continuing Education Network Platform

After the event, when all of the attendee information has been entered onto the Attendee List Spreadsheet, upload the Excel file by dragging it into the “Browse Files” box. Then click “Next”.

Document Upload *


Browse Files
Drag and drop files here

Save

Next

4. Submit Your Attendee List Spreadsheet

Click on the “Submit” button and your Excel spreadsheet will be sent.

Your application is ready to be sent. Please click the Submit button below to start the registration process.

If you have any questions, please reach out!

Natural Stone Institute Support: education@naturalstoneinstitute.org

CEU Events Department: Julie Zorn, ceu@naturalstoneinstitute.org

Back

Save

Submit

Platform Instructions (continued)

How to Review Courses, Outlines and Materials

Visit the following link to view:

- Courses available for speakers in NSI's Continuing Education Network to teach
- Course descriptions
- Learning objectives

naturalstoneinstitute.org/education/ceu-page/classes-available

For course outlines and materials, please email:

ceu@naturalstoneinstitute.org