The word is out that attending a wallcovering installer association convention will get you revved up and ready to build your business. You’ll be pushed to new limits in your craft and gain confidence from learning new tricks of the trade. It’s not all hard work, at night there are dinners, dancing, and tours to explore the city with your new friends that are really more like family. This is a three-day event full of learning, networking, and building the relationships you’ll want as your lifeline when tasked with an exciting new mural, a hand-crafted paper job, or maybe your first commercial gig.

While some tracks have already been listed on the agenda for this year, we wanted to share the latest developments in new sessions and speakers in the works to date. We’ll cover speakers, companies, and manufacturers who’ve recently committed to present, share, and answer your questions - live. Here are seven sessions scheduled for the convention. They will help you see the value we’re adding and hopefully encourage your attendance.
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Online Reputation Management

When you're fully focused on getting the work done well, who's managing the other parts of your business? It would be great if you could continually book business by word of mouth. However, we all know prospects are searching online during their decision making phase. How do you come across in the moment they are searching? Kelley Alexander, Marketing Strategist, Coach and Trainer of Kelley N Co. is leading a comprehensive session on Online Reputation Management that will break down your goals into manageable action items that yield results.

Kelley is the visionary for the business aspect of your craft. She lays out business strategy, digital strategy, and a complete marketing plan. All while defining your ideal client and optimizing your ultimate potential for getting found and booked from your online presence. Your online reputation can be influenced by any digital touch point a potential client engages with while discovering, considering, and deciding on hiring a professional wallcovering installer.

What does your online reputation look like? Having a consistent branded look and feel across your website and social media channels is one thing. But, how do you manage reviews from happy and even unhappy clients? A five-star review is gold for any service-based business. What's more, Kelley goes into how to ask for the feedback. Also, where to collect those “A+” ratings, so your online reputation works as hard as you do.

Live link from a wallcovering manufacturer with Koessel Studios

You put your heart and soul into your craft every day, wouldn’t you expect the same from the papermakers you source? Koessel Studios puts artisanal back into wallpaper by creating bespoke wallpaper that celebrates all of the irregularities that come with creating by hand. They have been honing their craft for over 20 years. In their old felt factory in Chicago no less! They have created a
This session shares an exclusive video showing all the behind the scenes footage. How a highly desired handcrafted studio creates their unique products. It’s an intimate look at how the decisions are made. The product assembled (using green energy policies), crafted, packaged, and quality tested. After the viewing, Judy Koessel will join us from her Chicago felt factory-turned paper making headquarters for a lively question and answer open forum.

Preventing for a commercial job with Gary Stanley of Wallpaper Express

Making the switch from residential to commercial jobs is high on many professional wallcovering installer’s lists, but where to start? Commercial jobs require project management with greater budgets, managing time and supplying more resources. They also have the potential to yield greater returns and even bigger jobs in the future. The allure of expanding your skills beyond residential homes into hotels, restaurants, and even museums makes this a huge opportunity to potentially land your name on the proverbial map - if you’re into that sort of thing. We have long-time craftsman, Gary Stanley, from Wallpaper Express, presenting on how to plunge into the commercial project world. Learn from his entertaining anecdotes. From hundreds of commercial projects across the globe and quickly discover how to navigate the commercial world of wallcovering.
Marketing Your Business

We’ve heard your feedback and wallcovering installers want business acumen to help them book more business. Every great wallcovering installation professional needs these things. A fully thought out marketing plan of action to hit the market and gain traction with designers, manufacturers, and suppliers, all while finding more customers. While the way we do marketing is changing at lightning-speed, in this session we aim to provide a pulse on what top professionals and small business owners are doing today to carve out an edge in their niche. Whether it’s showcasing your work with curated imagery on Instagram, or leveraging an online lead capture form on your website. There are simple ways to elevate your business and make the most of your time and resources.

Turning it all into wallcovering with Tim Little and Darren Silverstein

Tim Little is a success story going from hardworking art school student putting himself through college with odd jobs to full recognition as a skilled craftsman among San Francisco decorators. His talent for creating color schemes and hard work ethic quickly helped him graduate into high-end homes and commercial businesses in the bay area. Since 2005, Little has grown into a niche-Berkley small business specializing in the custom installation of designer wallcoverings.

Darren Silverstein, President of The CLI Group, will also be joining the session to share a deep dive into how the goods are chosen by a designer or architect, are then turned into wallcovering for you to install, and how they get adapted to become a wallcovering. CLI is a market leader and a number-one choice for designers and architects in the industry. They are an American manufacturer with over 50 years of expertise in converting textiles, nonwovens, and papers into custom-engineered materials.
This session is still being developed but will follow a live presentation and introduction to what they do. Followed by a question and answer-style forum. Check back for more updates to come as we approach the conference dates.

7 Steps to Social Media Success with Erin Cell

Erin Cell, CEO of Social Powered, based out of Colorado, will step you through the complexities of creating and maintaining a social presence. She emphasizes the importance of marketing on social as a small business owner. However, the advantage is how she condenses a social media marketing plan into 7 manageable steps. The plan comes complete with a guide as well as a social media calendar tool.

How to use the WIA in your career with Lilian Weist

Traveling from her home of Nashville, Tennessee, Lillian Weist will be joining the convention speaker list this year to gush - we mean share - how to use WIA to grow your business as well as expand your skill set. Weist is a long-time board director for the greater Nashville area and owner of Lillian Interiors, a prestigious wallcovering and mural installer and sought-after interior design company with over 30 years in the business.

She knows a trick or two for how to leverage the WIA features. These help the installer expand their know-how and adapt with the latest trends. Such as, weather-stone and digital murals, or getting found by new prospects in the find an installer search application on the website. Whether you are an installer on the fence attending the convention to up your skills game, or a member that’s lost touch. Lillian will leave you pumped to get involved and also get the most out of what WIA has to offer.
How to Register

This year the 2018 Unconventional Convention is taking place in Denver, Colorado. It will be held at a great time to be in the sunny city. This September 13-15 members can attend the three-day event for $745 and non-members can gain access for $815. Register early by August 12, and members get the added benefit of saving another $100. WIA has identified two tracks for apprentice-level installers and gurus. Focus on learning from where you are in your career or choose whichever session speaks to you. Still on the fence? We couldn't imagine why, but we've designed a track meant to be taken on the go with the Selling and Marketing Yourself 101 Guide available for download now.

Register for early bird pricing by August 12 by heading over to our events page and registering online or contact Kelley Alexander at by email events@wallcoveringinstallers.org or by phone 513-560-8769. Or register between August 13 and September 12 for last minute registration and a chance to gain first-hand insights into the latest for wallcovering installers' business needs, design trends, manufacturer happenings, and more.