

IN THIS ISSUE

Bhullar receives first WFCALuminary Award

PAGE 4

Real Wood Coalition promo makes its debut

PAGE 16

What's new in flooring software systems

PAGE 26

SPOTLIGHT



Retailer best practices

The coronavirus pandemic has forced specialty flooring dealers to elevate their game in several key areas, including social media, lead generation and merchandising. Some shared their secrets to success.

PAGES 20-23

DIGITAL ACCESS IS INCLUDED

See our latest issue at fcnews.net



HOUSING TRENDS BODE WELL FOR FLOORING

By Megan Salzano

Since early summer 2020 it has been predicted that housing would lead the U.S. economic recovery after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The recession caused by the pandemic was unlike any of its predecessors, and, at the same time, housing was not taking a hit like it did in past recessions. Fast forward to Q1 2021 and the flooring industry has indeed been uplifted by the housing market—residential remodeling in particular.

Continued on page 28

Retail outlook

Dealers take varied approaches to hiring

By Ken Ryan

Despite an ongoing pandemic, it's good to be a flooring retailer these days. Many dealers report business is brisk and, based on a number of factors—including strong housing fundamentals—2021 bodes well for continued success.

Still, many retailers are reluctant to add staff this year, citing COVID-19 concerns and the likelihood of another sudden downturn or dip. For sure, some are planning to hire on an “as-needed” basis, and everyone seems to be in the market for quality installers. However, when it comes to adding to payroll to fund expansion—not so much.

FCNews polled more than a dozen retailers about their plans to hire in 2021. Six said they were happy with their current levels; seven had positions to fill; and three said they could not comment because they were drawing from government-sponsored PPP loans and did not want to divulge sensitive

Residential carpet sales up 10%-plus in fourth quarter

By Ken Ryan

After well more than a decade of decline or tepid—at best—growth, the residential carpet segment has found its groove again, posting a 12%-13% increase in dollar sales in the fourth quarter of 2020, according to industry estimates, while units were up roughly 10%. It was the biggest quarter for residential carpet in recent memory, industry experts said, dating back perhaps two decades to when the segment was the dominant surface in flooring.

Industry observers all agree that COVID-19 served as the catalyst, for during the downturn millions of people began working from home and conducting business via Zoom and other web-based platforms. For many, that trend has continued. As

such, in homes dominated by hard surface, noise often became an issue. Enter soft surfaces.

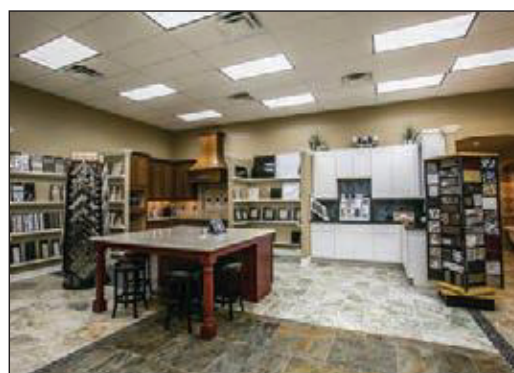
“Carpet is a great insulator/noise mitigator, and it's warm and soft,” Olga Robertson, FCA



Carpet's comeback began during the middle of last year and is expected to continue well into 2021. Pictured is Loop De Loop from Shaw Floors.

Network president, told FCNews. “It's the perfect choice when creating a work-from-

Continued on page 28



Flaherty's Flooring America in Cypress, Texas, plans to bring on a salesperson with kitchen and bath experience.

staffing information.

So where are retailers finding talent? A combination of employee referrals, word of mouth and services like Indeed.com. That's where Typhannie Watson, owner of Carpeting by Mike, Somerset,

Wis., said she went to find a designer/sales associate. “We did receive quite a few applications,” she said. “Unfortunately, not a ton of qualified candidates.”

Watson said she ultimately chose a woman with strong sales experience in the bridal world but with no flooring experience. “I am sure we have some of the same challenging customer interactions (bridal vs. flooring).”

Watson said her business generated \$2.6 million in 2020 with a small staff and seven teams of subcontractor installers. “We are very efficient at what we do and how I run my store,” she explained.

Continued on page 7

SHAW FLOORS SELECT

PRODUCTS DESIGNED TO BE ON TIME, EVERY TIME.



INTRODUCING SHAW FLOORS SELECT

This priority service program guarantees shipments of select styles within 5 business days* of purchase approval.



ORDERS SHIPPED WITHIN 5 DAYS*



SCAN ME!

—
For a current list of styles that ship **within 5 days!** Check back frequently for monthly adds to the program.

*BUSINESS DAYS FROM TIME OF CREDIT APPROVAL.

IN THE NEWS

Holland joins FEI Group leadership team

MARIETTA, GA.—Max Holland has joined the FEI Group team as president of the Home Solutions division. He will also serve in the role of COO working directly with Graham Howerton, FEI president, to manage the day-to-day operations.

Holland, who has served in senior leadership roles with Tarkett and, most recently, Mannington, will also play a strategic role with the rest of the FEI Group management team, developing the short- and long-term strategies, initiatives and member programs for the company and membership.

"Max not only comes with a vast knowledge of the flooring industry but, more importantly, fits the FEI Group culture and brings the energy, dynamic leadership and positivity that fits perfectly with our team," Howerton said.

**Swift-Train elevates Nigh, Killen to new positions**

HOUSTON—Swift-Train has promoted Jason Nigh to vice president of sales, North America, and Chris Killen to director of sales - North America distribution.

In his new role, Nigh will have overall sales responsibility for the company, including all company-owned distribution and the national division, servicing EarthWerks, Pinnacle and private-label brands throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Killen will have the responsibility of the national division promoting EarthWerks and Pinnacle along with many private-label brands throughout the U.S. and Canada.

"These are two of the most talented sales leaders I have ever had the pleasure to work with," said Shane Calloway, Swift-Train president and CEO. "We are confident in their proven abilities to aggressively drive the business forward."



Jason Nigh

Chris Killen

Aaron tapped to head FCEF

DALTON—Jim Aaron has left his role at CCA Global Partners' to become executive director of the Floor Covering Education Foundation (FCEF), effective immediately.

"For years, the floor covering industry has been challenged by a lack of qualified, skilled individuals who can install floor covering in homes and commercial settings," said Scott Humphrey, CEO of the WFCFA. "To address this need, the WFCFA, along with organizations throughout the industry, is leading an effort to recruit, scholarship and place new installers in the industry. The Floor Covering Education Foundation will be the center of that effort led by Jim Aaron. Jim has worked in the industry his entire career, has deep knowledge and is widely respected. He'll be a tremendous asset as we continue our commitment to solve the installation crisis."

**Bhullar named WFCFA's first 'Luminary'****RETAIL GURU LAUDED FOR HIS EFFORTS ON THE TRAINING FRONT**

By Megan Salzano

DALTON—The World Floor Covering Association (WFCFA) recently launched the Luminary Award and named Pami Bhullar, vice president-business development at The Dixie Group (TDG), as the inaugural recipient. The award aims to shine a light on those who have inspirational success in their careers, communities and impact on others' lives.

"I spent much of my career in training," Scott Humphrey, CEO, WFCFA, told *FCNews*. "I know it can be a thankless job. It has concerned me for some time that we often take training for granted in this industry. Trainers make a difference in the lives of those who make a difference in our industry. It is indeed a privilege to invest in the lives of others, and few do it to the level of Pami."

Bhullar, who recently announced a transition from Invista to TDG, entered the flooring business more than 40 years ago. Although he has had a tremendous influence on retail systems and programs, he is most widely known for his contribu-



tions to the development of flooring professionals. "Pami has the rare ability to make anyone who is privileged to stand in front of him feel as if they are the most important person he has ever met," Humphrey said. "Even rarer, Pami has that same connection from the stage. Still, that is not what sets him apart. Pami's sincerity, integrity and passion make him the perfect recipient of this award."

For Bhullar, it's all about making a positive impact on those around him. "I'm humbled," he told *FCNews*. "It means you're doing something other people value and making a difference in somebody's life. But my simple philosophy is this: Don't worry about job titles or who gets the credit, just do your

job. And I'm just doing my job."

Bhullar added that even though his name is on the award, he thinks it was won by the salespeople in the industry. "I simply happen to be collecting on their behalf," he explained. "I wouldn't be able to do what I do without them. They help me do my job better."

Bhullar said the Luminary Award has given him even more determination to create value for the industry, his company and society. "I personally invite all my friends in the flooring industry to give me and my new home, TDG, an opportunity to showcase our product and allow me to help them with their success."

Helping others with their success is another of Bhullar's primary philosophies. "Making others successful is extremely important," he said. "Some people come into the industry and say, 'One day, I'm going to do this or that.' But anyone can make a huge difference in what they're doing today."

Moving forward, Bhullar said he describes his ongoing goal in the industry as the unapologetic and relentless pursuit to perfection. "I know I will never be perfect, but I want to continue trying," he stated. "When you get closer to perfection, it moves a little bit further from you. And that is a beautiful chase."

Mohawk Momentum Roadshow rolls into California

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF.—Following successful events in Dallas, Atlanta and Indianapolis, the Mohawk Momentum Roadshow continues March 2-4 at the Waterfront Beach Resort here. Invitations are still being accepted for the event.

According to Jeff Meadows, president of residential sales, the company has received such a great response for Huntington Beach that it has extended the appointments available for this stop. "The common sentiment from city to city is how excited our customers are to be able to touch, feel and even smell our flooring products," he said. "We haven't had any issues with a strict adherence to our COVID-19 mitigation, including the wearing of masks. The appointment-based motto has given both cus-

tomers and our sales team a one-on-one experience that will be replicated in all future Mohawk events."

Mohawk's commitment to the road-



Mohawk's three previous roadshows have been well received by company officials and retailers. Pictured is a product demonstration in Atlanta.

show goes far beyond the selling of products, according to Meadows. "Our customers are looking for innovation in the beginning of the year to reset their businesses, and Mohawk is hoping to provide the solutions for our business partners."

While other flooring conferences or trade shows went online or rescheduled their in-person events for later in 2021, Mohawk has continued on with its roadshows. Meadows said the company recognized the need for retailers to see new products for the spring selling season against a backdrop where most other shows had been shelved.

Mohawk has taken several safety precautions to ensure the health and wellness of all attendees and instill confidence in the show and its format. For example, all appointments must be scheduled in advance and there is also regular sanitation throughout the space, as well as sanitization checkpoints.

SNAPSHOT

Armstrong Flooring nabs four Good Design 2020 awards

LANCASTER, PA.—A quartet of Armstrong Flooring products—MedinPure, Rejuvenations Restore, Unbound LVT and Rigid Core Essentials—earned the prestigious Good Design Award for 2020. Honored for quality design of the highest form, function and aesthetic, the awards recognize products in several flooring types across both commercial and residential applications.

"Design, performance and innovation are essential priorities of the Armstrong Flooring brand, and we are honored to be recognized again by Good Design," said David Thoresen, senior vice president of product innovation.



We Copy Nature Because Nothing is More Beautiful



REPUBLIC® The Science of Flooring

“Human subtlety will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple, or more direct than does Nature, because in her inventions nothing is lacking and nothing is superfluous.”
Leonardo da Vinci

PureSPC Max

PureSPC

Müller Graff
ENGINEERED HARDWOOD

Pure Grout

LAMINATE
FLOOR

Our most robust engineered vinyl flooring, designed for high-traffic commercial and domestic spaces. Available in a stunning range of designs, it is 100% waterproof and includes Bio-Guard™ anti-bacterial acoustic underlayment.

The most advanced stone plastic composite flooring on the market, printed and embossed with the most elegant and realistic wood, stone and ceramic-look designs. The planks are fitted with Bio-Guard™ anti-bacterial acoustic underlayment.

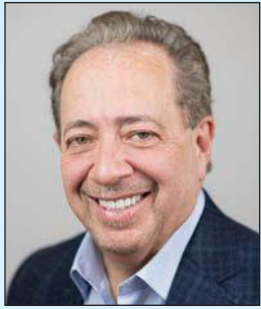
Our pre-finished oak flooring is produced in Europe from sustainable forests. It combines the character, charm and durability of real European wood, with the convenience of broad interlocking planks, milled with micro-beveled edges for a perfect fit.

We took our Pure SPC Max flooring and added Pure Grout technology to create the most authentic alternative to ceramic tile flooring. Warmer and safer than a stone or porcelain floor, the integrated grout also makes it easier to install and clean.

Match the natural look and embossed texture of a wood floor with individually wax-sealed laminate planks that click together seamlessly. Our unique Triple Moisture Protection™ technology makes Republic's laminate flooring water resistant.

www.republicfloor.com

Los Angeles / San Francisco / Houston / Salt Lake City / Toronto / Montreal / Calgary / Mexico City / Worldwide



my take

Real Wood Coalition seeks to promote, educate

This issue marks the debut of the Real Wood Coalition campaign, which involves eight leading hardwood flooring manufacturers/suppliers seeking to promote hardwood flooring to retailers and retail salespeople. FCNews is providing the forum both in print and digitally to get the message out. We are also lending our editorial expertise to the cause.

A little about the campaign and why it is important. First, this should in no way be construed as disparaging to any other flooring category. Every single one of them has a plethora of attributes and has earned their place in consumers' homes. That includes laminate, flexible LVT, WPC, rigid, wood/rigid hybrids, sheet, ceramic and soft surface. But I believe retailers who are not finding success with hardwood flooring today are missing a profit opportunity. I'm thinking, in many cases, it's like it was 20-25 years ago when hardwood was just getting rolling. Many salespeople may be relatively new to the industry and not know how to position a product with a higher price point. Some may not be completely educated on wood. And others may look for the easy sale when a customer walks into the store asking for waterproof flooring.

Here's the thing about wood: It is aspirational. Every other product category has emulated hardwood looks. It is estimated that about 92% of laminate visuals are wood. Many now refer to the

LVT category as LVP(lank). Even some of the most popular ceramic/porcelain looks today mimic wood.

The other thing to keep in mind when selling wood are the profit dollars. I'm not talking margin dollars; I'm talking profit dollars. Some suppliers have told me the retailers who try to always make a 40% margin on hardwood are the ones struggling to sell the product. It's OK to make a 30% margin given that wood costs more than other types of flooring. Some retailers have told me they need to sell twice the number of waterproof jobs to make the same money as one hardwood job.

The Real Wood Coalition campaign aims to do a few things. First, it will educate retailers on the basics of the category, the trends, what to look for in a supplier, etc. There will also be articles on selling, where retailers who have been having success can share some of their tips whether it be how to upsell, merchandise, market, position, etc. We'll also look to spotlight some of the coalition members' products, whether they be something brand spanking new or an existing collection that has proven to be popular with consumers for an extended period of time.

Talking to the coalition members, the consensus is that now is the time to promote the category. Consumers have more disposable income than they've had in a while. Why? They have nothing else to spend it on except home

improvements. They're not taking lavish European vacations right now and many are not even going out to restaurants. They're sitting at home watching Netflix and want to refresh their surroundings. Remember, people like to spend money. It's almost like it burns a hole in their pockets.

Also, there is a lot of relocation happening. People escaping the cities. People buying bigger houses as they work from home—temporarily or permanently. People moving to states like Florida and Texas where the weather (normally) tends to be better and state taxes are non-existent. All this presents an opportunity for new flooring.

In closing, just a few words about the charter members: AHF is the largest hardwood flooring manufacturer in North America; Mirage and Mercier are two Canadian mills most renowned for their quality; Indusparquet is the leading South American manufacturer; Mullican and Somerset count themselves as two suppliers whose offerings are made completely in the USA; Nature Flooring is one of the world's largest hardwood manufacturers with plants in five countries; and Torlys prides itself on its knack for developing innovative solid and engineered flooring products. More companies are expected to join the coalition going forward.

Steven Feldman



michael blick
president/ceo
mike@fcnews.net



steven feldman
publisher/editorial director
steve@fcnews.net



dustin aaronson
associate publisher/
advertising director
dustin@fcnews.net

editorial



reginald tucker
managing editor
reggie@fcnews.net



ken ryan
senior editor
ken@fcnews.net



megan salzano
senior editor/digital director
megan@fcnews.net

art/production



frank notarbartolo
art/production director
frank@fcnews.net

sales



krystal bates
classified and
digital sales manager
krystal@fcnews.net

founder

albert wahn 1920-2011



correspondents

leah gross
k.j. quinn
nicole murray

columns

jim augustus armstrong marketing mastery
lisbeth calandrino libbiz strategies
scott perron retailer2retailer
roman basi financial
fcica installments

headquarters

33 walt whitman road, suite 302E
huntington station, ny 11746
tel: 516.932.7860 fax: 516.932.7639
fcnews.net, website: fcnews.net

Copyright 2021 by Roel Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. Material in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher. The opinions expressed by columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of management. Single copy \$2 U.S. subscriptions \$25/yr. Canadian subscriptions \$50 U.S./yr. Foreign via air \$200 U.S./yr. Printed in the U.S.A. foreign via surface \$100 U.S./yr.



postmaster

Send address changes to FLOOR COVERING NEWS, subscription Dept., 821 West Jericho Tpke., Ste. 2C, Smithtown, NY 11787
Floor Covering News (ISSN-10794174) is published biweekly by Roel Productions Inc., 33 Walt Whitman Road, Suite 302, Huntington Station, NY 11746. Periodicals postage paid at Hicksville, NY, and additional mailing offices.

GETTING SOCIAL WITH fcnews

The collage includes social media posts from the Floor Covering Industry Foundation, Taylor Adhesives, and Mohawk Momentum Road Show. It features images of people at trade shows and various flooring products.

FCNEWS.NET
Proven retail practices to boost profit margins - Floor Covering News

Daltile, Carpet Exchange partner on new campaign

DALLAS—Daltile and Carpet Exchange of Denver will jointly execute the “Ready-Set-Room Refresh with RevoTile” promotional campaign. The new campaign, set to kick off on March 15, highlights for consumers how Daltile’s RevoTile is the solution for an easy room refresh.

According to Daltile, the upcoming collaboration with Carpet Exchange is one example of the many ways in which the brand continually executes innovative, comprehensive sales and marketing campaigns to help set up its retail partners for ongoing

success with the brand’s products. The campaign will take place in all 22 Carpet Exchange stores in the Denver area. In support of the campaign, Daltile said it will equip the Carpet Exchange team with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively communicate RevoTile’s benefits.

“Carpet Exchange has fully embraced the cutting-edge innovation that RevoTile brings to the tile industry and the incredible sales potential RevoTile holds for the DIY market,” said Patrick Warren, vice president of residential sales, dealer and show-

rooms, Dal-Tile Corp. “Through the campaign, Daltile brings to bear a comprehensive support system of displays, custom signage, point-of-sales assets, digital and social media campaigns, a full roster of on-site training for retail sales associates and much more.”

The DIY-friendly tile

“With RevoTile, genuine porcelain tile is now just as fast and easy to install as any floating floor on the market,” said Tony Wright, director of dealer sales, Dal-Tile.

As such, the campaign also aims to tap the DIY market. “By adding the revolutionary benefits of fast and easy installation to [tile’s] existing appeal, RevoTile greatly increases retailers’ sales opportunities by opening up tile to the DIY market,” Warren said. “RevoTile also expands the installation labor pool, because this revolutionary system can be easily installed by any of a retailer’s available installers: tile, LVT, laminate and hardwood installers. RevoTile opens up a new frontier of sales opportunities for retailers.”



RevoTile is available in 26 marble, wood, stone and concrete looks.

Retail outlook

Continued from page 1

Design experience is a skill in high demand for store owners seeking new salespeople. “We are currently searching for an additional salesperson with such experience for one store,” said Mike Beavers, general manager, Flaherty’s Flooring America, Cypress, Texas. “We are also planning to add a person with kitchen and bath experience soon, and additional help in our warehouse in the near future.”

Ben Boss, owner of Boss Carpet One Floor & Home, Dixon, Ill., said that with the increase in residential flooring sales over the last six to nine months, he has hired salespeople and warehouse staff to handle the increased workload.

Rob Elder, co-owner of Hiller’s Flooring America, Rochester, Minn., takes an unorthodox route. He said, as a rule, he does not look for people. “If they come to us and we feel they will fit into our way of doing business, we will always hire them—good times or bad,” he explained. “Our feeling is you can never have too much talent.”

After an “up-and-down beginning to 2020,” traffic started picking up at Star Flooring, in Boulder, Colo., and hasn’t stopped. “All indicators point to 2021 being a very busy year,” said Paul Schallberg, co-owner. “We have already added a new sales associate to our staff to handle the increase in business and, of course, we are always looking at, as well as trying out, new installers.”

The same goes for CountrySide Carpets & Interiors, O’Fallon, Mo., which is looking for installation crews that emphasize service and quality. Likewise, Phil Myer, owner of Carpet One Concord, in Concord, Calif., is seeking carpet installers, sheet vinyl floor layers and salespeople.

STAINMASTER PET PROTECT

LET PETS BE PETS

© 2021 INVISTA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. STAINMASTER AND THE STAINMASTER FAMILY OF MARKS AND LOGOS ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF INVISTA. 012021

educating the industry

Commercial outlook: A mixed bag



BY MARK NESTLER

A (First of two parts) rising tide may not lift all boats after all. That's the prevailing wisdom when it comes to the outlook for the U.S. commercial flooring market in 2021.

I believe there are three major drivers that will impact the level of commercial furnishings activity for 2021 and beyond. They are as follows:

- The pandemic—How it changed behaviors and are the changes permanent or transient?
- Technology—How will the continuing progress of technology impact work and lifestyle?
- Demographics—What will the trend of population growth be, along with its makeup, and how will that impact the different commercial segments?

Here's my view on the drivers that will impact the main commercial segments.

Corporate/workspace. The pandemic has limited the use of offices. As companies discover they are able to manage effectively and productively with fewer people in the office on a regular basis, their evaluation of the amount of office space square footage required to accomplish their business has (and will) change. The magnitude of the change will be impacted by the workplace population growth and technology improvements that enhance the work away from the office experience.

The workplace population's size prior to the pandemic was already being negatively impacted by lower overall population growth and very low immigration. Due to the pandemic, it appears that many companies have permanently eliminated positions. This may be due to lower expectations for top-line revenue and/or to technology thrust on the company by the pandemic that showed there

were tools that lessened the requirements for headcount.

Technology improvements are impossible to know, except that they are sure to continue. These thoughts lead me to believe that overall workspace square footage requirements will shrink. The outlook for 2021 business for the workspace segment would seem to be challenging. While 2020 business was hit by the pandemic, the negative factors were offset to varying degrees by a pipeline of back

orders, which have likely been significantly depleted going into 2021. Also, most companies may wish to restore their financial footing before spending

on non-essential outlays, such as refurbishing an office. A possible offset may be office reconfigurations to accommodate new workspace protocols; however, that would not seem to be a sufficient offset. Due to the trends outlined, the growth thereafter may be limited and likely take many years to return to pre-pandemic levels. Nonetheless corporate will remain the largest commercial furnishings segment.

Government. The broad government segment is best separated between federal and state/local. The overall pandemic impact would seem to be similar to that on corporate/workspace. On the demographic side, government is an area that seems to always be on an upward trend in terms of number of people on the payroll. Technology will also impact this area, but more than likely it will be a segment that is slower to adopt labor-saving technologies. While state/local governments may wish to increase expenditures to stimulate their economies, many will be constrained by revenue shortfalls due to the pandemic. While 2021 may be constrained this seems like a growth segment over time.

In the next installment of this two-part series, I will delve into the hospitality, retail, healthcare and multi-family sectors.



Mark Nestler is president of Nestler Strategies, a firm that provides go-to-market strategies for manufacturers and distributors of commercial interior products.

RETAILERS REACT

Have you seen any impact from urban migration to smaller markets



The great migration brought on by COVID-19 has impacted some flooring retailers positively; others see the work-from-home model as a fad.

“We have not seen a real shift from urban to suburban living. With that said, we are witnessing a continuous increase in consumers' desire to shop for flooring specific to the new functionality needs of their homes and families. We expect in 2021 that the multifunctional home design will dictate our flooring sales.”

—Mindy Arnette, Brian's Flooring & Design
Birmingham, Ala.

“The trend of moving to the outskirts of the city began before COVID-19. Furthermore, we think the trend of the virtual office will diminish over time, due in part to the lack of social interaction that places pressure on productivity.”

—Bobby Merideth, Flooring
America OKC
Oklahoma City

“We have not seen migration as a factor in our business. We are very busy, but I believe that has to do with the pandemic and low interest rates.”

—Jon Dauenhauer,
Carpet World
Bismarck, N.D.

“There is a low inventory of homes for sale in our market. Many are listed for just one day and purchased over asking price. With that being the case, many people are noticing the flooring projects that are slightly neglected in their homes. Our retail remodel work has been strong, and projects seem to be done on a little larger scale. The consumers coming into the store are ready to buy and proceed with the projects in a timely manner.”

—Bill Huss, D&M Interiors, Appleton, Wis.

“Store traffic has continued to be good in our market during the first quarter of 2021. Tulsa has been targeting remote workers with incentives to move to Tulsa through a program called Tulsa Remote, which specifically targets talented individuals who are living in metropolitan areas known for their high cost of living and relatively low rates of home ownership.”

—Palmer Johnson, Johnson Floor & Home, Tulsa, Okla.

CALENDAR

Editor's note: Due to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, some or all of the events listed below are subject to change. As of press time, the events are as scheduled. Please follow up with the contacts listed below for event confirmation.

Mohawk Momentum Roadshow
Regional markets to introduce new products for 2021.

March 2-4 - Huntington Beach, Calif.

The Waterfront Beach Resort
Contact: Jordan Biasetti,
jordan_biasetti@mohawkind.com

March 1-2

Fuse Alliance (Virtual Event)

Contact: Lyndsay Soprano
949.610.6546
lyndsay@boundbymarketing.com

March 2-4

NWFA Intermediate Installation

Three-day course includes in-depth training on jobsite preparation, layout, understanding the science of wood, analysis of solid and engineered flooring, practice and instruction.
Bowling Green, Ohio
Contact: education@nwfa.org;
800.422.4556

March 3

Podium SEO webinar

Join Podium experts to learn about six local SEO myths that need busting and find out how you can improve your online reputation accordingly.
When: 1 p.m. EST
Who: Jaxson Hellbusch, regional director of home services, Podium; Hayley Sonntag, senior marketing specialist, Podium
Register online:
<http://bit.ly/3alA1NU>

March 23-25

NWFA Basic Sand and Finish

Three-day introductory level course for new entrants to the hardwood industry.
Chesterfield, Mo.
Contact: education@nwfa.org;
800.422.4556

POINTS OF INTEREST

► **Home prices increased in every metro area** tracked by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) through the fourth quarter of 2020 compared to a year ago. The NAR reported that 88% (161 metro markets) tracked by the NAR saw double-digit price increases. Just 115 metro areas saw double-digit

gains in the third quarter of 2020. “The fourth quarter of 2020 presented circumstances ripe for home price increases,” said Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist. “Mortgage rates reached record lows, thereby driving up the demand. At the same time, inventory levels also reached record lows, leading to grim inventory conditions of insufficient supply in the fourth quarter.”



► **Despite regulatory and supply issues,** housing affordability held steady in the fourth quarter of 2020 thanks to historically low interest rates.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index (HOI) showed that 58.3% of new and existing homes sold between the start of October and end of December were affordable to families earning an adjusted U.S. median income of \$72,900. This figure remained unchanged from Q3 2020 and was the lowest reading since Q4 2018. NAHB chairman Chuck Fowke said the record-low rates helped offset the spike in home prices to keep affordability rates stable.

► **A key measure of prices paid by U.S. consumers** was unchanged in January for a second straight month, underscoring the pandemic's lingering restraint on inflation. The core consumer price index, which excludes volatile food and energy costs, increased 1.4% from the prior year, a Labor Department report showed. The broader CPI once again got a boost from higher gasoline prices, advancing 0.3% from the prior month and 1.4% from a year earlier. Despite the tame January figure, price pressures are set to firm in the months ahead. That's partly a reflection of expectations that Congress will pass another large aid package and an anticipated pickup in demand as more are vaccinated against the coronavirus.

WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD OF SONO ECLIPSE.



WATERPROOF



FAMILY & PET FRIENDLY



STAIN & FADE RESISTANT



SCRATCH RESISTANT



EASY TO CLEAN



ATTACHED UNDERLAY

SONO[®] ECLIPSE

Introducing SONO Eclipse. A German-made waterproof solution complete with state-of-the-art features and benefits. Available exclusively through our network of leading specialty floor covering retailers. Contact your Inhaus distributor for information.



Fine Tapestry is a new style from Shaw Floors' Foundations collection providing small-scale patterns inspired by textures found in textiles.



The sustainability story of EverStrand from Mohawk aims to connect with younger consumers who want to make a difference. Shown is Regal Appeal.



The technology behind Invista's nylon 6,6 fiber has resulted in strong sales for the brand. Shown is a Fabrica brand offering. Photo courtesy of Invista.

Mills raise the bar higher as category rebounds

By Ken Ryan

For years carpet mills devoted significant R&D to develop ever softer, more durable products to meet the demands of discerning homeowners—even when the category was losing share. That level of manufacturer commitment has only increased as the category rebounded nicely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, mills are seizing on a market opportunity with new, technology-rich offerings that check all the critical boxes: softness, durability, vibrant color, and stain and soil resistance. Executives say carpet's noise-dampening properties and soft texture are appealing to homeowners who are spending more time at home.

To that end, carpet mills are investing in the latest technologies to drive innovation. "The tufting technology has allowed manufacturers who have invested in it to take it to a whole new level in patterns and cleanliness of finish," said Jamie Welborn, vice president of product management for soft surface, Mohawk. "[As a result], today's carpet doesn't look like the carpet of five years ago. It has become a decorative feature, and homeowners are using it to complement their décor."

With most of the common areas of the household moving toward some sort of hard surface, the desire for something soft underfoot in the bedrooms and upstairs living areas has become paramount. "Soft fibers continue to be the hottest trend in the marketplace," said Joe Young, soft surface category manager for Engineered Floors. "Solution-dyed fibers have always been touted for their inherent stain, bleach and fade resistance, but at the end of the day it is pretty carpet that sells. Solution-dyed fibers create 'hi-

def' looks that conventionally dyed carpets cannot copy."

With an eye toward busy households, Southwind designs all of its carpet with solution-dyed yarn. As Luanne Holloway, head of product development, explained, "Consumers need their carpet choices to be built to handle their everyday activities. With this yarn, the color is locked into the fiber all the way through and not applied to the yarn or the carpet after it is produced. This creates important advantages for active families."

Noting that "demand for performance is at an all-time high," Stanton continues to innovate through fiber technology, according to Christine Zampaglione, senior director of marketing. "We develop our product with the end user in mind and how they will live with the product," she explained.

Delivering products that perform under tough conditions has been a hallmark of Invista's for years. Lately, its Stainmaster brand has been surging on the strength of its Nylon 6,6 fibers that enhance performance and longevity for floors.

Following is an overview of some of the latest introductions that promise to raise the bar.

Anderson Tuftex

Anderson Tuftex's newest introductions offer a collaboration of high-end style and performance, combining PetProtect with intricate pattern designs and use of Colorpoint Platinum tufting technology. "Precise detailing means each of these styles feels intimately custom made, providing the elevated

designs our customers expect," said Brad Christensen, soft surface category director, Shaw Residential. Offerings for 2021 include Purrfect Harmony and Sheer Purrfection—PetProtect carpets offered in 12 colors.

The Dixie Group

In 2021, TDG said it is looking to take style and design to a new level with its latest tufting innovation, TECHnique—where state-of-the-art technology



EF's Astounding—which features proprietary ColorBurst technology—layers multiple colors with a space dye to mimic natural hard surfaces.

blends pattern, color and texture. "Through TECHnique, our design team has applied fashion sense and creativity with precision design to create stunning, woven-like visuals," said T.M. Nuckols, president of the residential division.

Six new TECHnique qualities in 2021 include styles made with wool and EnVision 6,6 nylon in its Masland and Fabrica divisions. "These products are well suited in wall-to-wall broadloom installations or as custom-sized area rugs or runners," Nuckols added. "Keynote styles include Fabrica Brushstrokes and Masland Tapdance, each featuring amazing depth and dimension."

Engineered Floors

EF's Astounding series is an

example of solution-dyed yarns providing a more blended multicolor visual. Featuring proprietary ColorBurst technology in a tailored construction, EF's Young said Astounding makes a statement by layering multiple colors with a space dye to create looks of natural hard surfaces like granite and marble.

Mohawk

Mohawk and Karastan introductions emphasize style and on-trend colors and modern patterns. They include Majestic Vision and Luxurious Statement from Karastan, and Regal Appeal (a pattern), and Soft Details II (a Colormax cut pile) from Mohawk. "These patterns really stand out, they are artwork on the floor," Welborn said. "Colormax technology makes it easy for the consumer to decorate around these

carpets."

Welborn said the sustainability story that the EverStrand brand offers is making a connection with millennials.

Nature's Carpet

Nature's Carpet has added to its all-natural, chemical-free offering with the introductions of Aberdeen, Bilbao and San Sebastian. "We have recently launched Nature's Carpet Couture to elevate our styling and our appeal to both the end user and the interior design community," said Keith Donegani, CEO. Couture adds 12 new styles and 56 overall SKUs in 100% New Zealand wool and includes textures and patterns in felted yarns and color palettes that are driving the demand for wall-to-wall car-

pet and finished rugs.

Shaw Floors

Shaw Floors' newest introductions are Foundations and Simply the Best Values collections. Foundations aims for timeless and proven styles and Simply the Best Values boasts budget-friendly styles. Shaw Floors said it is also raising the bar on service with Shaw Floors Select, a priority service program that guarantees five-day shipping on select styles.

Loop De Loop, a new 2021 style from Simply the Best Values, features six colors inspired by macro-lens photography that captures organic elements down to the smallest detail. Fine Tapestry is a new style from Foundations providing small-scale patterns inspired by the vastness of textures found in crafting textiles.

Southwind

Many Southwind products are suited for active lifestyles. A case in point is Artisan—with its dense, 1/8-gauge precision cut and uncut styling, the carpet can work in any application or design style, the company said. Its tonal, textural effects create small, subtle checks of cut and loop. Gallery, a tailored loop carpet in a 1/8-gauge construction; and Brushstrokes, styled in a 1/8-gauge construction, are made in a subtle block pattern created by textural areas of cut and loop.

Stanton

Bahia is a handwoven flatweave product that is designed to look and feel like wool and can be used indoors or out, thanks to its 100% UV-stabilized polysilk construction. Dottie is a woven dense, 100% solution-dyed polypropylene product from the Royalton brand. It comes in eight colors with a range of design elements including tonal colors.

MOHAWK
SmartStrand
FOREVER CLEAN™



**THE SOFTEST, MOST DURABLE,
EASIEST TO CLEAN CARPET ON THE PLANET**

EXTRAORDINARILY CLEAN
for a comfortable home.

EXCEPTIONALLY DURABLE
for confident style and beauty.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
with renewable plant-based ingredients.

Drive more customers in store
for SmartStrand today.



Simply open camera,
tap link.

lisbiz strategies

Are your employees efficient or effective?

(First in a series)

Across many retail industries, flooring included, business owners employ a practice known as benchmarking to see how they stack up against other competitors in their field. (“Benchmarks” are considered the “what” that needs to get done to produce the best results, while “benchmarking” is “how” it gets done.)

Benchmarking is not a quick or simple process, but if you follow the “what” it’s likely your business will show improvements. The difficult part of the process is getting people to do the things that create change.

My master’s studies were in the psychology of business—the concept of efficiency vs. effectiveness sticks in my head like an earworm. The idea was coined by management guru Peter Drucker. According to Drucker, efficiency is doing things right and getting things done, while effectiveness



LISBETH
CALANDRINO

is more about the right priorities and measuring results. This idea of efficiency vs. effectiveness is an important concept for any business owner, but especially floor covering retailers.

job done and being very efficient. Although they are being efficient, per se, you may not want to waste any more time and move on to a more effective strategy.

Managers will tell you things are getting done. The pile of papers is getting smaller; the installers are on site. The manager is seeing that the job is getting done. That’s the manager’s job, but are they being effective?

The job of management is to set future goals and keep the business moving forward. Oftentimes managers get overwhelmed with being so efficient, they forget the business of management. They believe by being efficient and getting things done they are moving the business forward. Unless they focus on the tasks that are effective, they’re not helping the business.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MUST DETERMINE WHAT’S MOST EFFECTIVE FOR ITS LONG-TERM GROWTH AND SURVIVAL.

is more about the right priorities and measuring results. This idea of efficiency vs. effectiveness is an important concept for any business owner, but especially floor covering retailers.

What does this mean to your business? If you want things done with the least amount of wasted time, you are talking about being efficient. In a small business like a floor covering store, there are often limited people and resources, so it’s wise to maximize every resource available to the business so you can keep the business moving forward and running like a well-oiled machine.

For example, let’s say employees are tasked with making 10 calls a day to get new leads, and some days they even make 15 calls but don’t close any. There could be various reasons why they don’t close them, but they will tell you they’re getting the

Lesson in discipline

Years ago, I attended a personal growth workshop in which the instructor emphasized the importance of executing only those tasks that were essential to supporting the growth of the business. He encouraged all attendees to constantly reevaluate any and all functions they perform to ensure that only those tasks that support the business in an effective (not just efficient) manner are to be continued.

So, ask yourself this question: Are your employees producing long-term results? It’s a good conversation to have with them on an ongoing basis as you examine your business. Remember, at the end of the day, a successful business must determine what’s most effective for its long-term growth and survival and yet be efficient in getting it done.

Lisbeth Calandrino has been coaching business owners and promoting retail strategies for several years. If you want to learn how to get this done, connect with Lisbeth about the workshop, *Managing the Customer Experience*. Email Lcalandrino@nycap.rr.com or visit her website at lisbethcalandrino.com.

Using digital tools to connect

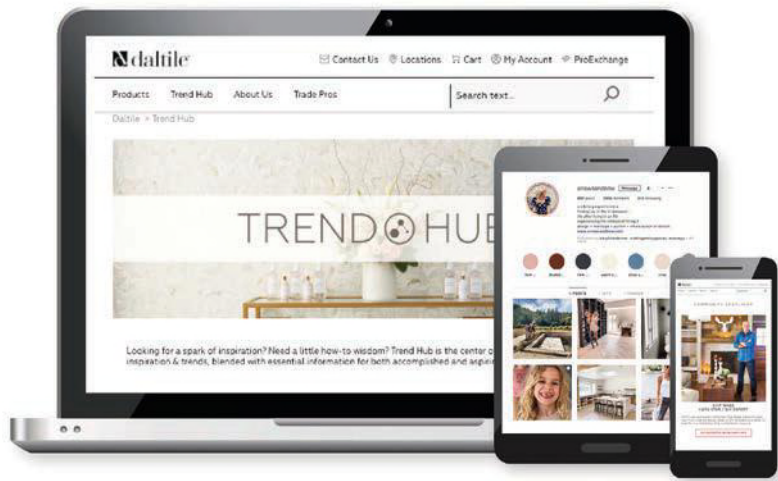
By Megan Salzano

If you haven’t implemented a digital strategy to help generate more sales, you’re already behind the curve. The COVID-19 pandemic helped push your timeline up about five years as well.

But you’re not in it alone. Flooring suppliers are tapping their vast arsenal to support their retail partners in utilizing digital technology. From robust website experiences to 3D visualization and even social media marketing, utilizing digital tools to help convert online shoppers to in-store buyers is easier than ever.

The ceramic category, in particular, benefits greatly from digital tools. Ceramic and porcelain tile are aspirational products that rely heavily on home and fashion trends. As such, design inspiration is key—and that inspiration is acquired digitally.

“Connecting with customers online has become



Every aspect of Dal-Tile’s branded websites and social media accounts are thoughtfully designed to simplify the shopping experience and facilitate conversion.

increasingly important, especially in a stay-at-home COVID-19 environment,” said Rup Shah, president, MSI. “We believe we are still in the very early innings of the impact the world’s digitalization will have on our industry. We believe in the coming years you will see a combination of augmented reality and artificial intelligence dramatically change the

shopping experience.”

According to Shah, digital tools are helpful for everyone, but they are especially useful for an undecided buyer or customer who might have a difficult time visualizing how a project will come together—a key element to a successful ceramic sale.

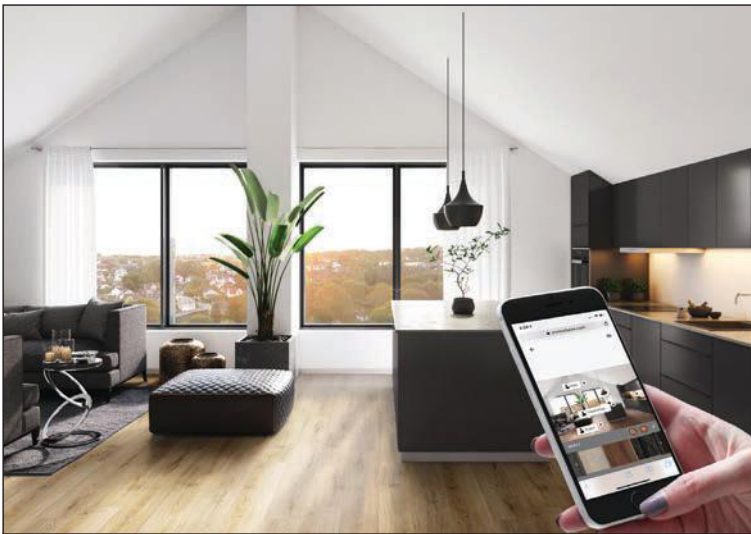
Digital content

When it comes to digital selling tools, don’t discount a well-built website and social media presence. And what’s better—it doesn’t even have to be yours. Suppliers are taking on the cost of high-end, user-friendly web development in order to make the selling process and conversions easier.

“Most consumers are researching online in some form—so whether it’s through inspirational photography that helps a consumer find their style, online sample ordering and delivery or pointing them to a trusted retailer, our goal is to provide what they need to move them from the consideration phase to the in-store selection phase,” said Amber Leigh Martinson, senior director of marketing, Dal-Tile.

Mara Villanueva-Heras, vice president of marketing, Emser Tile, agreed. “Today, companies need an omni-channel strategy to meet the needs of retailers and their customers. Having a strong toolbox of digital solutions helps streamline the process and offer alternative ways to communicate with customers.”

She added that in addition to customizable digital tools, it also includes virtual meetings and product training, along with online ordering and sample delivery. It also means customizing the on-site retail experience with curbside pick-up and text-ahead capabilities.



The multi-surface visualizer allows consumers to get an idea of how an MSI product will look on the floor, countertop or wall.

\$79
company access pass

51 Night Courses

The Customer Experience Path to Sales Success!

One Low Price!

Fire Up Your Success
with Lisbeth Calandrino

“I know these times are tough, but smart biz owners should utilize their downtime to refuel and power up their sales teams to be better than ever coming out of the gate!”
Lisbeth

Join me today at:
www.fireupyoursuccess.biz

in-store

For Dal-Tile, it's about boosting brand recognition to help draw consumers to their retail partners. "The DalTile, Marazzi and American Olean brands understand the importance of a strong web presence in today's digital shopping age," Martinson explained. "It is our mission to create a world-class digital presence for each of our brands, making the shopping process even easier for consumers. Consumers conduct extensive research online before ever entering a flooring store. Then, after they return from the store, they go online again to continue their research, refine their thinking and move along the purchasing journey. Strong websites facilitate conversion and help create a seamless transition for consumers down the purchase path."

Martinson added that all aspects of the branded websites have been thoughtfully designed to simplify the shopping experience and facilitate conversion. "Our sites include high-resolution floor swatches and extensive room galleries to

help customers better visualize the products and get inspired to buy."

Social media also helps drive home that brand recognition. "Brand personality' can be developed via social media in a way that you would have a hard time doing via traditional advertising," Martinson added. "If you do social well, consumers can get a feel for who you are as a brand just by scrolling down the page."

Emser Tile also utilizes digital marketing platforms that empower retailers to easily promote content via social media, email, website banners and landing pages with the goal of equipping customers with the knowledge required to make buying decisions. "Look for more tools to be introduced in 2021," Heras stated. "Our goal moving forward is to put in place experiential tools to fully immerse customers in what's new from Emser Tile and leverage the shift in consumer behavior to digital. Traditional digital materials like catalogs will remain a mainstay. But looking forward and finding the best ways to provide retail partners with the information, content and tools they need to succeed

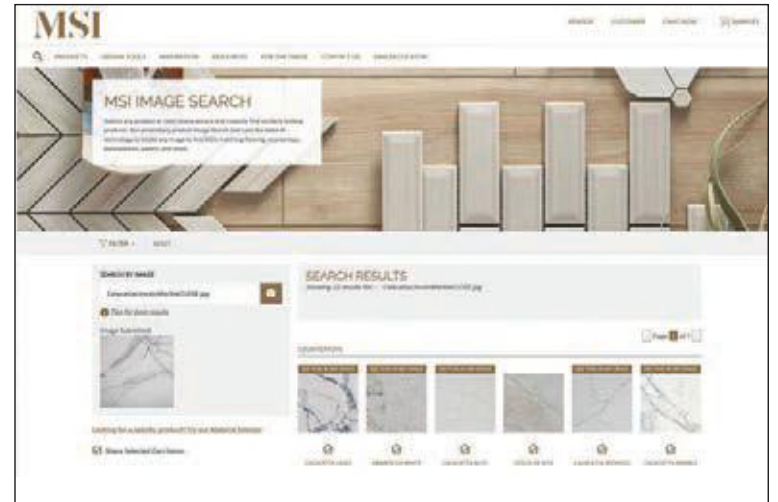
is important."

Digital tools

Digital concepts also go far beyond websites and digital marketing. Digital tools such as visualizers have improved exponentially over the last several years, and retailers across the country are taking advantage.

"We have seen more progress in adopting digital tools for visualization in the last nine months than the previous five years combined," MSI's Shah said. "Using artificial intelligence and augmented reality through digital tools offered by MSI, retailers are helping potential customers make their purchasing decisions easier, showing a multitude of options digitally and helping bring a vision and design solutions together. Our retailers love the ability to provide the end consumer with instant gratification and increased confidence in their selections resulting in both a quicker sales process and a much higher close rate."

MSI's multi-surface visualizer and image search tool are among the latest tools available from the supplier. The tools are also available for customers to



MSI's image search tool uses artificial intelligence to find a match of comparable MSI products instantly.

embed on their own websites.

MSI's multi-surface visualizer tool allows consumers to visualize—with the click of a button—how any MSI product will look on the floor, countertop and wall within a single digital experience. "The multi-surface visualizer has been a complete game-changer, taking the interactive experience to a new level for our customers," Shah said.

More recently, the company has released its image search tool that uses artificial intelligence to find a match of comparable MSI products instantly.

Users simply upload a photo of any product to the search tool and immediately view the results of similar-looking MSI products. "It is impressive how a computer can instantly provide a much better set of similar products than even the most experienced salesperson," Shah said. "We have been pleasantly surprised by the adoption of this tool. It is already being used several hundred times per day. We anticipate investing millions of dollars and multiples of what we have invested in recent years to drive innovation in the digital space."



Make your flooring supply chain simpler, safer, and faster in 2021.



Total Supply Chain Intelligence

- Origin-to-destination insights
- Easy tracking with Freight Tracker
- Forecasting and mix planning
- Automated inventory updates
- Simple online billing



Total Supply Chain Operations

- Largest independent distribution network
- Freight consolidation and streamlining
- Increased speed and decreased risk
- Pallet building
- Custom cutting

Contact us to get started with your next shipment. **844.XGS.SHIP** | xgsi.com

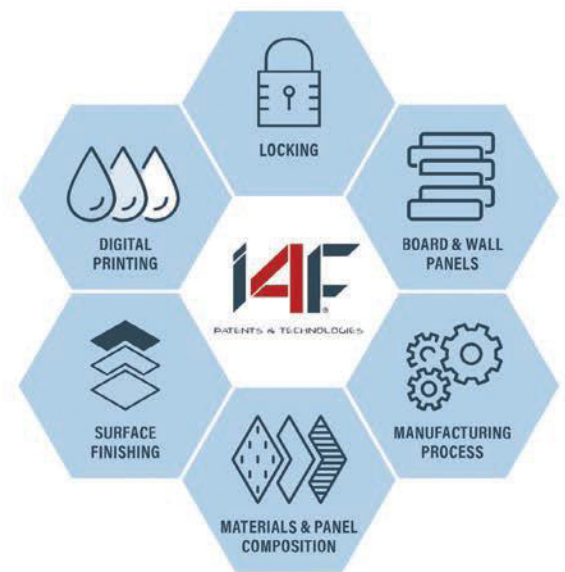
I4F's next frontier: Digital printing capabilities

I4F continues to broaden its capabilities beyond locking systems to include digital printing technologies—a key focus area for many of its licensees. The company recently entered into a patent partnership with Hymmen, a leading global digital printing systems provider specializing in flooring, in a move that gives I4F exclusive licensing rights for all Hymmen's digital printing patents and technologies for flooring production including Hymmen's award-winning Digital Lacquer Embossing (DLE) technology.

This partnership represents an important addition to I4F's comprehensive digital printing portfolio, which already includes market-leading technologies from Classen, Kronospan and Benchwick. "The ability to produce high-quality, digitally printed flooring has become strategically important for the future of our industry," said John Rietveldt, I4F's CEO. "I4F believes that Hymmen not only has the most innovative and highest quality technologies, it also maintains a fiercely strong IP position. This latest addition to our patent cluster concept reinforces our promise to licensees to receive the world's best, most cutting-edge technologies in the industry backed up by a robust patent protection infrastructure."

In addition to its exclusive licensing rights, I4F will work in close collaboration with Hymmen to promote

Clustered patent portfolios represented by I4F cover :



digital printing opportunities in the flooring industry and will represent Hymmen on future patent protection-related issues. "I4F is the perfect match for Hymmen as we share the same passion for innovation and continuous development within the global flooring industry," said René Pankoke, CEO and president of Hymmen. "I4F is recognized as the technology leader in

the flooring industry and will support us on developing and further expanding the market for digital printing."

Reginald Tucker, FCNews' managing editor, recently sat down with I4F's Rietveldt to discuss the broader ramifications of the deal as well as how digital printing will play a more crucial role in the future of flooring innovations. Following are excerpts of that discussion:

Can you talk about the synergies between I4F and Hymmen?

Hymmen knows how we go to market and the way we want to grow market share. Therefore, they were pleased that we could help promote them and the technologies they offer to the market. One of our strengths is the manner in which we approach the market and how we communicate meaningful capabilities to customers.

At I4F, we are in the intellectual property (IP) business. Hymmen, in my opinion, is the best manufacturer of digital printing machines and also has an enormously strong IP position. They have put a tremendous amount of effort in registering all their inventions, including the machinery, processes and products manufactured by their machines. We are helping them by ensuring that their IP is properly represented and, where necessary, enforced in the market to avoid others taking advantage of Hymmen's IP. We will monitor that and take action where appropriate.

With the new digital printing capabilities, will that cover different facets of digital printing, such as the ability to print directly onto the surface of a product as well as the design layer?

That is correct. But our initial focus will be more on direct printing on the board. It's

important to note that there are several layers, such as some primer layers, before you get to the printing.

Initially, I4F plans to focus primarily on PVC products, which entails the whole family: LVP, LVT, WPC, rigid core. Will that be eventually expanded to ceramic tile, for example?

Ceramic tile manufacturers have long been using digital printing and screening technologies in their product development. But that technology, is, of course, different than the technology used to print an image on a board. For laminate, there are several manufacturers that are already using digital printing as a part of their assortment. In the case of Classen, for example, they combine digital printing with another technology called LLT (liquid laminate technology). This basically entails combining the digital printing process with the impregnation process. There are also some other technologies we are looking at that could be utilized on wood flooring in the future.

Historically, I4F is better known for its strengths in patents and technology development partnerships on click and locking systems. How does this latest partnership fit into



John Rietveldt

your overall growth strategy for the company?

When the company started, our main focus was locking—which is still our core business. But over the last few years, we have engaged with several different partners—more recently Hymmen—to explore opportunities to grow market share. Together with the manufacturers we have partnered with, we currently represent approximately 3,000 patents. In order to manage that in a way we can get growth from all the technologies, we have grouped them into clusters. At present, we have six clusters, including digital printing. If we really want to have a successful, long-term growth strategy, we need to keep adding clusters and

new technologies.

One of the new technology areas we have identified is to have grout lines on SPC panels. With traditional products, you can see a line in the middle between the two panels. But with the new technology, you don't see a line because we basically press it on one side of the panel so you don't see that there are two panels. It's a seamless transition from one panel to the next.

Is the new grout technology currently available or in development?

Yes, it is currently available on the market, and several new licensees are launching it.

With all the new digital technologies currently being developed—on top of those yet to be unveiled—what's your strategy for managing the IP protection aspect of everything?

Intellectual property is an important part of the flooring industry, so you need to protect it. For example, if we see anyone copying Hymmen's technologies, we need to do something about it. The first response to those who infringe is to ask them not to do it—or, better yet, try to come to an agreement and structure a license. However, if that doesn't happen, then you need to protect what you have.

Will that be difficult to enforce? With a locking system on a product sample, you can pop them apart and take a close look at them. With digital printing, I suppose, any infraction of infringement might be harder to discern on the surface immediately or efficiently. How would that be enforced?

In much the same way the locking systems go through a very deep and detailed analysis, you have to conduct the same research and testing when it comes to potential digital printing patent infringement. For example, sophisticated equipment can be utilized to identify how ink has been placed on a product that is manufactured using a digitally printed image. Of course, this process typically takes more time.

What's next on the horizon for I4F? Any other technologies that you're targeting that you can talk about?

We expect there will be a continued focus on waterproof technologies, and we will continue to investigate locking systems for different materials. We have actually invented a few technologies for which we have filed patents that I think will contribute to sustainability aspects of new products. We also see a strong focus on products that reduce build-up of bacteria or viruses.

Go Digital For Real

Cutting-edge Digital Printing
Technologies



SPECTACULARLY
REAL OPTICS & HAPTICS

ALL MATERIALS

LESS WASTE



I4F licenses the world's most advanced digital printing technologies delivering results so close to the real thing it's almost impossible to tell the difference. Cutting-edge technologies available from I4F enable the creation of unique designs and avoid unnecessary inventory on pre-printed materials.

I4F's strong digital printing portfolio now also includes exclusive access to all **Hymmen** digital printing technologies, including its award-winning Digital Lacquer Embossing (DLE) technology offering unbelievably real optics and haptics.



PATENTS & TECHNOLOGIES

WWW.I4F.COM

THE FLOORING INDUSTRY'S INNOVATION PARTNER OF CHOICE

DID YOU KNOW

SELLING TIPS



Must-have characteristics to look for in a reliable wood flooring supplier

There are scores of hardwood flooring suppliers in the market today, but not all are created equal. In order to ensure a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership, there are certain traits retailers and distributors need to look for in a potential supplier.

“First, retailers need to look for a hardwood supplier that’s easy to do business with,” said Dewevai Buchanan, CEO of Nature Flooring-North America. “Second, a supplier should have a unique selling proposition. Third, a supplier must have product designs that appeal to local homeowners.”

Experts also agree that retailers should look for hardwood suppliers that don’t try to pass off non-wood floors as real wood. “As our fast-paced industry delivers all types of new products or hybrids of products, along comes confusion,” said Derek Brooks, Torlys’ senior vice president sales and business development-North America. “Authentic hardwood remains the gold standard and retailers, builders and/or consumers should look for products that deliver on performance while

maintaining ‘real wood’ values. Companies delivering high performance hardwood while keeping both the indoor and outdoor environment in mind will present the best value. Warranties are also a sign of the real deal.”

More importantly, a good supplier should provide a high level of service commensurate with product quality. “Distributors really need to take a good look at what is selling and have that amount on supply to provide to their customers,” said Wade Bondrowski, director of U.S. sales, Mercier Wood Flooring. “That requires

partnering with the right supplier.”

This is critical, given the complexities involved in sourcing and handling natural materials such as wood. “There’s a lot of forecasting that has to be done to make sure you get it right on the supply side, and we try to get our partners to get in line with that,” Bondrowski explained. “With popular species like white oak and red oak, you’re looking at several weeks turnaround time. If the supply isn’t correct at that time, you’re looking at delays. A retailer or distributor needs a supplier that can effectively manage that process.”



Mirage: All about quality, service and protecting the environment

More than ever, being in harmony with nature and protecting the environment are principles at the heart of Mirage philosophy and reflected in our actions. We believe that we positively impact the health and well-being of people and the environment through transforming responsibly harvested wood into the best hardwood floors made in North America.

Choosing Mirage Floors is a responsible choice since hardwood flooring comes from a renewable and biodegradable resource—trees. Which is not the case with vinyl floors, LVT, SPC, WPC and rigid-core products. Those products are made of plastic.

Throughout its life cycle, wood requires less energy and has a positive impact on the environment through carbon capture and releasing oxygen. We efficiently manage wood in a sustainable way with our suppliers coupled with energy-saving manufacturing processes that generate zero landfill waste. We respect the highest environmental standards, thus providing future generations and the entire ecosystem with a healthy, non-polluting wood product that makes our flooring good for the environment.

Continued on page 28

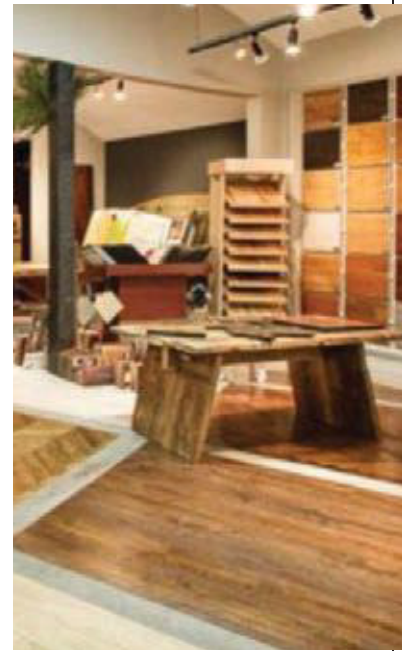
Playing up hardwood’s strengths

Hardwood flooring remains arguably the most aspirational flooring product in the minds of consumers given the category’s well-known attributes, features and benefits. But that doesn’t necessarily mean the product sells itself. RSAs need to be prepared to put hardwood front and center while addressing any objections in order to be successful.

Craig Dupra, chairman of the National Wood Flooring Association and owner of Rochester, N.Y.-based Installers Warehouse, a renowned specialty hardwood flooring distributor, offers a few selling tips:

Tip #1: Emphasize the fact that wood, first and foremost, is real. “I ask folks if they have ever seen a really good toupee,” Dupra said. “They all say ‘yes’ then I say, ‘Great, but you still knew it was a toupee?’ Fake wood always reveals itself as a fake.”

Tip #2: Wood has the best life cycle of any floor covering.



“LVT is just carpet—not fuzzy, but made from some form of synthetic chemical and is destined for the dumpster sooner or later,” Dupra said. “Wood is renewable and sequesters carbon. LVT is made from oil and does not do anything to aid the environment. Plus, the majority of wood floors sold today are made in the U.S. or Canada—or if it’s made in Asia, it is still produced using North American wood products.”

Tip #3: Be careful not to oversell the waterproof attribute of LVT. “Sure, LVT resists water, but what happens when the water filters underneath it?” Dupra asked. “When your OSB subfloor gets damp and the LVT traps the water on the surface, how do you address the mold that can form on the OSB? Many manufacturers are making wood flooring that is sufficiently water resistant for most situations.”

Tip #4: Real wood floors add value to your home—now and in the future. “LVT can ‘trend out’ before it wears out,” Dupra said. “It may be great for 10 to 15 years, but I guarantee there won’t be any stately old homes 100 years from now sporting LVT floors. However, we have tons of 100-year-old houses in my area that are still getting good use out of their original wood floors. Every other type of floor covering is a temporary floor.”

TRIED AND TRUE

SuperSolid 5 from Torlys

Modern, classic and eco-friendly, Torlys’ SuperSolid 5 Hardwood utilizes the latest advancements in flooring to deliver optimal performance in a stunning natural hardwood. Built-in Deca Technology maintains the floor’s beauty year-round by resisting cupping and gapping throughout the dry winter months. This collection features a 3mm, dry-sawn wear layer that resists splitting and can be resanded up to three times, providing a lifetime of performance.

NEW AND NOTABLE

The Revival collection

Mullican’s Revival line boasts 6½-inch-wide oak planks that feature a lightly wire-brushed surface and a proprietary heat-treating technique to create a unique color palette. Planks measure ¾ of an inch thick x 6 feet long (random-length planks). Revival debuts in three SKUs.





REAL WOOD COALITION

Keeping it REAL



Hardwood Floors



Indusparquet's offerings have evolved beyond natural-looking South American species to products featuring wirebrushing and texturing techniques. Pictured is Brazilian oak java.



Contrary to common misperceptions, tropical wood floors are not relegated to orange or red tones. The Indusparquet mix reflects today's emerging trends.

Indusparquet: Repositioned to be more relevant

By Steven Feldman

MIAMI—If you think you know hardwood flooring manufacturer Indusparquet, you probably don't. You may know the name. You may know the company produces Brazilian hardwood. But much has changed over the past few years—changes that create significant profit dollar opportunities for flooring dealers.

While Indusparquet has been producing hardwood for 50 years, its products really landed along these shores back in 2006 when it was the major supplier to BR-111, the company that created the demand for exotic species such as Brazilian cherry.

"When people refer back to that period, nine out of 10 dealers and distributors would tell you BR-111 made some of the best solid flooring in the world, bar none," said Jodie Doyle, Indusparquet's vice president of U.S. sales and marketing. "But 100% of the solids they sold were made by us—everything. And the mill that made those products is that same factory that makes our products today. It's the same premium quality."

Once Indusparquet and BR-111 parted ways, Indusparquet embarked on establishing its own brand in North America. It experienced some success, but a

few years ago the company felt the need to change direction and reposition to move forward. The goal in the repositioning was to be more relevant and efficient to the distributor, retailer and, hence, the consumer. This is where the hiring of Doyle became one of Indusparquet's greatest

assets given his 16-year background at Gilford Johnson in Kentucky. He replaced Jason Strong, who opened up Fuzion Flooring USA in Texas. Strong had led the U.S. sales efforts for Indusparquet from the very beginning.

"Jason will always be part of our family and we owe him so much gratitude for getting us to where we are in the U.S. today," said Flavia Baggio, general manager for Indusparquet U.S. "I think sometimes change is good for everyone involved, and we're so happy that Jason's new company agreed to take on distribution of our products down there. I mean, who knows our products better than him?"

Less is more

One of the first things Doyle did was rationalize the number of Indusparquet's SKUs. "Typically



Flavia Baggio



Jodie Doyle

distributors don't want too many SKUs, especially in a niche category. They want a nice, tight line that is relevant."

To that end, Doyle eliminated about 50% of the SKUs. "We went from roughly 100 to 50," he told *FCNews*. "The ones we eliminated weren't good sellers or were past their prime due to the visual or price point."

Cutting SKUs also leads to improved service. "One of the value propositions we give our distributors is the fact we back up everything in running lines in the U.S.," Doyle said. "Not everybody does that. It's much easier to have fewer SKUs that are meaningful. Then we can make sure we have enough of it when our distributors need it. They know when they're out of stock, we have it. That's a value."

After rationalizing the number of SKUs, the next move was to downsize the merchandising system. "What we had was the Design Tower, which is still in the marketplace today. There are three towers that hold 36 SKUs—actually more because some products are multiple widths," Doyle said. "But I was convinced if we were able to go into a distributor and say, 'We've got this engineered stacker that looks a little nicer than everyone else's and holds 12 samples, we believe we can sell more product that way.' Every distributor that has put them out

would tell you it's a better merchandising system and is producing results."

Indusparquet has placed about 1,000 of these compact units since the summer of 2020. They are fully customizable so distributors can tailor the display to mirror what they stock. "What we did is we make the distributor's life easier. They're

able to focus on what they're stocking, where they have the best landed cost, etc., which then makes them more profitable, which makes the retailer happy because they have it in stock. It's not rocket science."

Once the SKUs and merchandising units were scaled back, the next thing on the docket was to address pricing. Doyle said that although the Indusparquet product is unique and different, it still needs to be priced competitively relative to similar category options. "I went back to our management and ownership in Brazil and told them we don't set the price for these products—the market does. We have been able to discount pricing to distribution so they have the very best chance to compete in the category. We win when they win."

Wholesale strategy

Speaking of distributors, the roster looks a bit different than when Doyle started. Gone are Haines, All Tile and BPI. In are Custom Wholesale Flooring, Derr Flooring and a direct-to-retail model in the Midwest. "It wasn't easy," he said. "Back in 2019, LVT was fully on fire. The number of distributors that wanted to add a wood line was small. The ones that wanted to add a premium exotic line was almost non-existent. But we were able to replace Haines

with two distributors, and today I could tell you we do more business in those markets than we did before with two fantastic partners: Custom Wholesale, which is now owned by Horizon, and Derr Flooring. They're killing it with our line." BPI was replaced with Strong's Fuzion group, which is also experiencing tremendous growth with the brand, Doyle added.

Indusparquet is going direct in the Midwest simply because it could not find a suitable distributor to take on the line. However, it's returning dividends. "We are already doing more business in the footprint than with our previous distributor," Doyle said. "We have hired a new business development manager to give us feet on the street in those areas, so we are planning on growing that market big time."

Baggio said Doyle was the perfect fit for what Indusparquet needed to become relevant again. "One very important thing that he brought to the company was focus and execution of the strategy in which he believed," she said. "We were missing that. If you don't have focus, you cannot execute. He has a very strong strategic mind, is super organized and his distributor background and knowledge is a big asset."

In short, Doyle brought a fresh approach. "The mill is Brazilian. They needed somebody to push back on the sales side to say, 'This is how it works in the U.S., and this is what we need.' And because I came from that distribution background, I have a much broader view of the industry and current needs of our stakeholders than somebody in Brazil."

(View this story on fcnews.net to learn about the unique products.)

Setting the record straight

MYTH

Indusparquet is a relatively new company.

The lines consist predominantly of reds and oranges.

Indusparquet strictly sells exotics.

Every product in the line is expensive.

TRUTH

Indusparquet is a 50-year-old, family-owned and family-run business.

Indusparquet offers a wide variety of species and on-trend colors.

Indusparquet sells South American premium hardwood.

The Indusparquet product line ranges from \$4.99 to \$9.99 per square foot at the retail level.

manufacturers tend to make more SKUs so they have production," he explained. "I come from a distributor mentality, so I really know what distributors' pain points are. When I came here, I noticed there were just too many SKUs.

COREtec[®]
the Original

INNOVATION IS IN OUR CORE

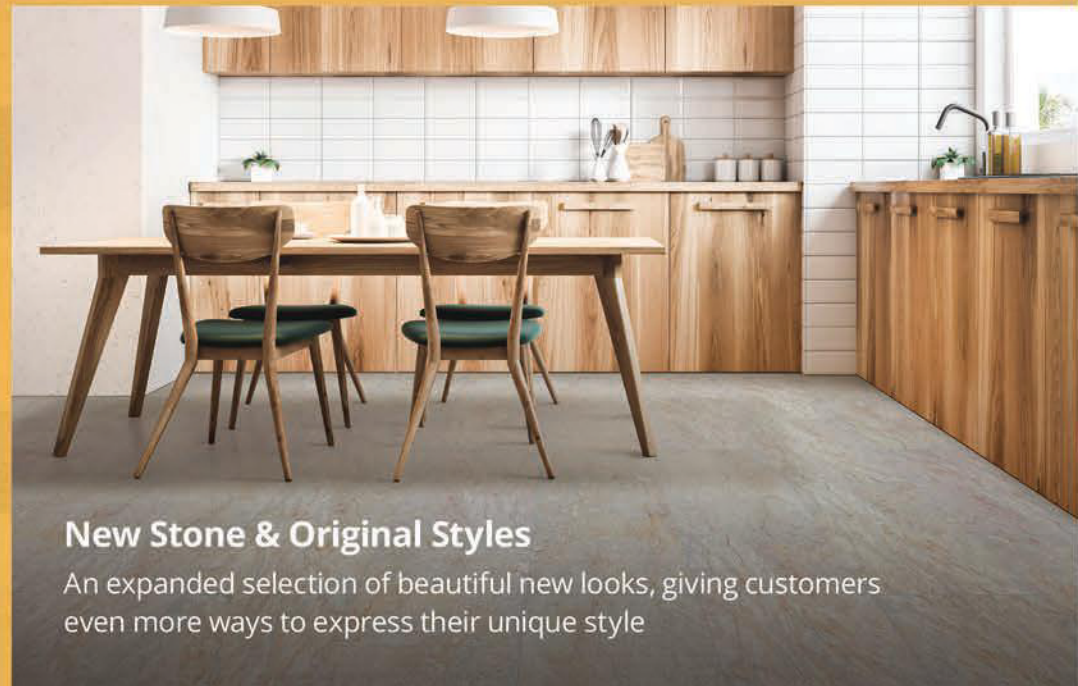
COREtec is disrupting the flooring in industry. Again. In 2021, we'll be pushing what's possible. Challenging the status quo. And giving you exciting new flooring options to upsell customers and grow your business. Here's just a highlight of what we have in store for you at retail – rolling out in 2021.

[COREtecFloors.com](https://www.COREtecFloors.com)



Advanced+

A new collection of trend-setting, high-performance styles featuring the industry's first 15-year scratch warranty and planks up to 86" long



New Stone & Original Styles

An expanded selection of beautiful new looks, giving customers even more ways to express their unique style

More 100% innovations

100% waterproof, kidproof and petproof – look for more smart, new first-to-market offerings throughout the year

Divergence Oak

COREtec Plus Design W028-00018

Seizing opportunities in the ‘new normal’

By FCNews Staff

To say the coronavirus pandemic changed the way retailers attract, engage and interact with customers would be the understatement of the century. Retailers across a host of industries—flooring included—have had to learn how to adapt in a world forever changed by COVID-19. Some businesses have instituted strict guidelines in terms of how many customers may enter the showroom at any given time, while others have adopted various measures to assist customers in sampling product virtually.

At the very least, the pandemic has forced retail-

ers to apply creativity in how they not only present products to consumers, but also in terms of how they set up measuring and installation appointments in customers’ homes. While providing exceptional customer service has always been the hallmark of savvy floor covering retailers, it has become increasingly more important as homeowners express reservations about allowing strangers into their homes.

But as the country gradually begins to emerge out of the pandemic—thanks to the deployment of effective vaccines and better treatments for those who have been hospitalized with the disease—business owners and shoppers alike are becoming more confident in going out and spending money again.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the home furnishings and renovation market, which has benefited greatly from more consumers taking refuge at home and as more workers set up office spaces at home. All this—combined with a migration from crowded big cities to more remote, suburban areas—has contributed to the good fortunes of many floor covering retailers.

In this special section, those specialty dealers who have not only survived but thrived thus far through the pandemic opened up to share the best practices and tips they employed to keep their businesses afloat during these challenging times.

Following are some of their tried-and-true tips:

IT PAYS TO BE PROACTIVE

We took advantage of our stocking positions greatly during COVID-19. We bought multiple truckloads of material so we had good stock of some of our best sellers. And when inventory got tight from most of our suppliers, many customers turned to us to help complete their projects. We gained a ton of new business this way and really helped set us apart from our competition.

—DAN MANDEL

Sterling Carpet & Flooring, Anaheim, Calif.

QUALIFYING THE LEADS

COVID-19 forced us to more aggressively qualify leads to ensure that they were serious about purchasing. This has had a positive impact on the efficiency of our sales process. We’re not making pointless measures; we are closing at a higher rate and increasing our margins.

—MATT WIEN

Marshall Carpet One & Rug Gallery
Mayfield Heights, Ohio

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 significantly increased our online leads. We have always gotten a lot, but they have increased even more since COVID-19. This has challenged us to produce a better solution to properly following up on them. As a result, we have started working with a new CRM and came up with more formal processes for handling online leads. This has been great for us and COVID-19 was the catalyst to get us to improve our system for handling online leads.

—A.J. BOYAJIAN

Rose Carpets & Flooring, Massachusetts

UTILIZE VIRTUAL CONSULTATIONS

COVID-19 has certainly changed our views for the better on how we interact with our customer. We realized that we immediately needed new ways to interact virtually with our clients, and we implemented the ability to schedule consultations through our website for private appointments, online chats and virtual design consultations. This led to generating more leads and creating a more dynamic and meaningful relationship with clients.

—BRITTANEY GESKEY

FCA Associates, Shorewood, Ill.

SHOW AND TELL ONLINE

We have a virtual area rug store that has images of all available rugs online so customers can easily scroll through the 1,500 options that are in stock. Customers can also choose to chat with one of our design reps online who will offer them products that fit their preferences. From there, we can send the carpet directly to their home. You could still do business with us without feeling like you have to put yourself and loved ones at risk.

—STEPHEN ECKARD

Eckard’s Home Improvement, St. Joseph, Mo.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

While it has always been important to have multiple channels of communication available, it is now more vital than ever. Our best practice is to communicate with a customer in the way that they prefer—be it text, email, phone, virtual, in-person, etc. We offer many ways to work with us so that today’s consumer can select how they like to shop and communicate. This makes us easy to do business with and, therefore, provides the premium customer experience we are trying to achieve.

—LAUREN VOIT

Great Western Flooring, Naperville, Ill.a

KEEP MANAGERS, EMPLOYEES IN THE LOOP

The leadership of all eight of our stores used to meet in-person every month to discuss how business is going and how we can improve. These meetings started occurring more often once they went virtual, which made it easier to collaborate. Tasks that usually fell on the leadership in each individual building now became a decision made by all. I was able to sit in on an interview for a new hire at one of our other stores that’s 60 miles away, and all were able to give input if we thought this was the right person to hire or not.

—DAVID MCKINNEY

Custom Carpet Centers, Orchard Park, N.Y.

LISTEN MORE, SPEAK LESS

One of my best practices of 2021 is listening. The client does not care what you know unless you can solve her problem, and when she knows you actually care about it. You are the expert—now act like it. So, my best practice is listen, care and be the expert in whatever it is you specialize in.

—RACHEL BERLIN
Precision Floors & Decor, Plymouth, Wis.

BE MORE VISIBLE ONLINE

We stepped up our online presence big time. We now post to Instagram three to five times per week; more information is online since that is where our customers can access us safely. We put ourselves and our products in front of our consumers on a more frequent basis. As a result, people started asking questions on social media and reaching out about specific products. Leads eventually started coming to us.

—LAURA GRAYDON
Crestview Floors, Calgary, Canada

EMBRACE THE DIY CUSTOMER

We're not just surviving, we're thriving at this time. So many people are doing home renovation projects now. People are home more without much to do, so they are taking on projects themselves. We're a stocking store, so we are geared toward that weekend warrior. If they come in and see something they like, they buy it and take it home rather than having to order it. We've been so fortunate."

—RHONDA DICKIN
Carpet Superstores, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

STAY POSITIVE

We doubled down on patience in 2020 and took things in stride. I relied on my strong allies at Mohawk to help where we needed it; and my FloorForce ally to double down on advertising. We found, through it all, that laughter really is the best medicine. I laughed a lot, because there is no crying in floor covering. And sometimes that is all you can do when life goes upside down. Have a positive attitude every day with customers, employees and installers. Even if your head is reeling with how to handle the next stages. And feed your customers, installers and employees. Full bellies will sure help with your attitude toward the work shifts.

—TYPHANNIE WATSON
Carpeting by Mike, Somerset, Wis.

BE WILLING TO ADAPT

We were closed for about three months and had to pause some projects, but we have a very loyal customer base. So, once we reopened, our customers came back. We are very aware of the safety of our customers and workers alike. We follow the guidelines by taking temperatures, wearing masks and wiping down common surfaces. We also try to stagger the number of customers in the store at one time. Our customers appreciate our attention to their health and safety. Following the guidelines and just going with the flow has helped us continue to do our best.

—BRIAN FLEISSIG
Carpets On U, Brooklyn, N.Y.

LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED

We have had one of our best years yet. We've had a lot of people moving here from California, so we've had a lot of new customers find us to help with their new homes. Most of our business is word-of-mouth recommendations. We've been here for 39 years, so we have a legacy. Most people still want us to come in and work on their homes. A lot of people want the upgrades because they are spending more time at home.

—GEORGE WATKINS
Carpet One of Idaho Falls, Iowa

EMPLOY A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH

We lowered our prices on most items to get more foot traffic. Customers were happy to see our pricing wasn't even comparable to others, and they were happy to shop with us; that helped and business has definitely picked up over the last few months. Our customers also appreciate our safety measures. We take the temperatures of everyone who comes in, and everyone wears masks so they are comfortable shopping. We also employed more print advertising to let customers know we are here and ready to do business.

—GEORGE KEROGLYAN
Carpet Market One, Los Angeles

TAKE ALL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

We've been really busy. We have had a lot more referrals and, in the last few months, we are seeing more foot traffic in the store. Masks and shoe covers are required both in-store and out on consultation, which customers appreciate. We retained our staff, but if they are not feeling well we've been flexible with scheduling so employees can rest.

—MILTON CASTILLO
Main Street Kitchen and Flooring, Santa Ana, Calif.

MAINTAIN A DIGITAL PRESENCE

At the height of the pandemic, we kept our digital presence active, and we had a great year. We were able to communicate with our customers what new services we were offering, such as curbside pickup and phone orders. The last thing you should ever cancel or pull is your digital advertising; it's the new newspaper. If you do, you will lose your Google ranking and that won't make it easy when you do open it up again.

—DEBY WINTER
Carpet & Tile Warehouse, Vero Beach, Fla.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE WORD OF MOUTH

We practice safety measures here in the showroom and in homes, such as regular temperature taking and the wearing of masks. Our customers would share their experiences with us on a local "Talk of the Town" social media group and it helped spread the word. It helped new customers find us, especially those who didn't want to deal with big box stores.

—NOURM FREYER
Carpet Farm, Woodville, Ohio

Continued from page 21

STOCK EASY-TO-INSTALL PRODUCTS

We have been very fortunate that we could rely on our in-stock products, especially during the peak of the pandemic. People have purchased products over the phone, we deliver it and they install it themselves—which meant our installation crew did not have to be put at risk. We offer click flooring that is super easy to install, and because people are bored at home they are willing to look up 'how-to' videos to do the job themselves. Because of this new setup, there are customers I have not met face-to-face but these purchases have helped to keep us alive.

—**ADAM CHARBONNEAU**
Create A Floor, Bradford, Canada

CUSTOMERS APPRECIATE TRANSPARENCY

We were very strict about keeping people safe and I think consumers came to shop with us because of that. Face masks and hand sanitizer were non-negotiable, and we were very open with customers that if any positive tests came back, we would let them know and we expected the same courtesy. So before the shopping even began, we were upfront and honest about a topic that everyone was thinking about.

—**DENNY KAHLER**
Creative Home Enhancements, Anthem, Ariz.

NETWORK WITH LOCAL REALTORS

We adjusted how we marketed our business. We started investing in radio ads to get more retail business and also reached out to other local realtors and contractors. If someone was selling a house and she needed to change out her flooring before she could put it on the market, the realtor would send the business to us for an all-in-one deal with the homeowner. We had business brought to us just by developing the right relationships.

—**LAURA GRAYDON**
Crestview Floors, Calgary, Canada

USE YOUR DIGITAL TOOLS

We've expanded our showroom through multiple digital channels, primarily our website but also Pinterest. Getting to know people through their Pinterest board is so efficient; finding common themes through their pins cuts straight through the struggle of sourcing materials that reflect their vision. Rather than having customers attempt to articulate their vision, just look through their Pinterest boards!

—**MICHELLE WINTERS**
New Braunfels Flooring and Design Center
New Braunfels, Texas

TRY NEW MARKETING IDEAS

We switched our advertisements to a gift certificate promotion that did better than anything we have ever done. When customers purchased a certificate, they received additional money that correlated to how much they bought. We were basically giving them free money for our store. The big boxes were allowed to stay open, so we had to come up with a way to stand out.

—**DAVID MCKINNEY**
Custom Carpet Centers, Orchard Park, N.Y.

VALUE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS

No. 1: Treat your employees, installers and customers by following the principle of The Golden Rule: You treat everyone as you would wish to be treated. Be fair, honest, kind and be respectful. If you present yourself that way, you will get the same in return. No. 2: Keep your product assortment simple. You absolutely do not need to jam your showrooms with displays; that only leads to bewilderment for the customer.

—**STEVE WEISBERG**
Crest Flooring, Allentown, Pa.

FOCUS ON AT-HOME PROJECTS

We turned all of our attention to the at-home projects because people who were stuck in quarantine became the biggest percentage of jobs being sold. We wanted to make sure she could still see the product she was going to buy in person, so we had customers call before coming in for a private showing so we could control our indoor capacity. We never closed because when these people were ready to get started, we wanted to be here to answer their call.

—**DALE KARI LYFORD**
Dale's Carpet & Design, Red Bluff, Calif.

ALWAYS BE READY

We prepared for the spike in business. The phrase we use is 'Isolation Renovation.' Everyone is working from home so they are noticing their worn-out flooring. The only other hurdle to getting started is a family's financial situation. A typical family vacation is between \$7,000 to \$10,000, but no one is traveling. So, we knew that spare money would be used for renovations.

—**MIKE DARY**
Dary Carpets & Floors, Streamwood, Ill.

STAY STOCKED WITH INVENTORY

We have put a lot of effort into our social media presence to make sure people knew we were open with safety precautions put in place. Once people knew, we focused on increasing the number of products we had in stock so customers could get instant gratification; they could get started on their projects immediately while stuck in quarantine. In addition, we offered as many shopping options as possible so customers could choose what they were most comfortable with. Customers can choose to make an appointment to shop in our showroom, to set up a virtual consultation or they can also utilize curbside deliveries.

—**STEPHANIE CURTIS**
Curtis Carpets, Winnipeg, Canada

LEVERAGE VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS

We focused on promoting our available virtual showroom appointments and our shop-at-home service on our social media accounts. Consumers can Facetime with one of our sales representatives who walks them around our showroom and shows them products they are looking for. Both services are very similar, but having two different shopping options gave us the opportunity to use different calls to action on social media. One would direct customers to book an appointment; the other would direct them to a different page on our website. It became a good way to generate additional leads from the same source.

—**JOSH RIGNEY**
Dalton Wholesale Floors, Adairsville, Ga.

LISTEN FOR OPPORTUNITIES

We always take the time to listen to the customer to differentiate what they want and what they say they want. People will enter our store asking for products that will help them in their specific situation. It is our job to listen, to educate or re-educate if necessary and then figure out their expectations so we can give them the perfect product.

—**KIMBERLY KOPPENHOFER**
CR Carpet, Fort Wayne, Ind.

PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD ONLINE

We brought in a younger hire to completely revamp our website and social media. Every staff member now has a profile on our company website so customers can get to know us before they walk through the door. In addition, we list all of our products and link each one to a page where customers can get more information if they are interested. The online world became one of the biggest places customers could learn about us.

—**MARY HASSELL**
Discount Flooring Services or Solutions,
Dacono, Canada

SHIFT RESOURCES TO DIGITAL

We now have all of our products listed online so customers can find what they are looking for on our website. They can order samples and learn product information without coming into the showroom. It is still a work in progress but COVID-19 definitely encouraged us to improve, and we are already starting to see a payoff.

—**SHIFTEH NEGAHVAN**
Edgemont Floors, North Vancouver, Canada

KEEP IT SIMPLE

We developed an online how-to book to give customers access to as much product information as possible. This book included basic information about each major flooring category so she could educate herself and start shopping with basic flooring knowledge. For example, there was information on hardness scales and dimensions for ceramic tile as well as wood species and moisture conditions for our hardwoods. It has proven to be helpful because customers would have a general idea of what she wants before she started shopping.

—**STEPHEN ECKARD**
Eckard's Home Improvement,
St. Joseph, Mo.

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA CAPABILITIES

Facebook, Instagram, all of our social media outreach has been great for us. We have our team capture project videos before and after and our customers love it. We've been trying to do more of that to inspire them on their own projects. People are so attached to their phones, so if you can capture their attention and show them how someone else is doing their own project at home, it inspires others to do the same. Home renovations make people happy. It gives people something to plan for and do it yourself.

—**RHONDA DICKIN**
Carpet Superstores, Regina,
Saskatchewan, Canada

OUT-SERVICE THE COMPETITION

I pride myself on customer service and product knowledge because those two aspects work hand-in-hand. I take the time to listen to my customers and answer all the questions they have. I never rush people off the phone because one detail that gets revealed during the conversation could be the difference between suggesting product 'A' vs. product 'B.' I am constantly researching so I can answer questions about the newest products. If I don't know something, I find out.

—**SHAWN GLINES**
Znet Flooring, Las Vegas

NEVER STOP IMPROVING

Our company is continuously trying to become better, and that happens by collecting and evaluating the data and then adjusting our operations accordingly. For example, we consistently analyze our sales reports to assess what is selling vs. what isn't to ensure we are always offering the best flooring experience possible. We also do our own testing on manufacturers' products before investing so our brand name can be associated with the best products out there. We want continuous improvement because the second you get comfortable, your business will suffer.

—**GREG BESTEMAN**
Advanced Interiors, Jenison, Mich.

ACT FAST WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

People know that if someone really needs us, we will be there as soon as possible. Whether an issue occurred or something broke, we aim to address the problem within 24 hours so customers know they can rely on us even after the sale is closed. The customers' needs come first.

—**AFRAIM AMRAN**
Source Flooring LLC, Chicago, Ill.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

We have a lot of knowledgeable employees answering the phones so there is no wait time for people who call in. We also work quickly whenever a problem arises or claims are filed. When an issue gets drawn out, things become more complicated and it gets harder and harder to satisfy the customer. We look to resolve issues as soon as possible and customers really love that we are responsive and never go too long without communicating throughout the entire process.

—**THERESA RIDINGER**
LW Flooring, Gainesville, Fla.

DON'T JUST SAY YOU CARE, SHOW IT

Our customers love that we are family-owned and operated. There is so much competition out there and we stand out by showing how much we care. We give out our cell phone numbers to our customers and they know they can reach out to us anytime of the day, any day of the week and we will get back to them within a timely manner.

—**MICHAEL FELDMAN**
Redi Cut Carpets, Port Chester, N.Y.

FCIF: Helping industry members in dire straits

Happy go lucky. That's how recent Floor Covering Industry Foundation (FCIF) grant recipient Kay Bearfield described her life today.

Bearfield, a veteran of the floor covering industry, worked as a lead at a manufacturing facility for 23 years. It was not until she was diagnosed with cancer for the third time that things started to change. She became worried about how she was going to pay for her doctor, hospital and pharmacy bills. Thanks to a social worker at her local cancer treatment center, she was informed about FCIF.

"It was like God opened another door for me during a difficult time," Bearfield shared.

With the grant from FCIF, Bearfield was able to have a weight lifted and get the financial help she needed. "Thanks to FCIF, Kay is starting to make a turn back to the happy-go-lucky life she once knew," said Andrea Blackburn, FCIF executive director. "Kay wants everyone to know how thankful she is and that the Floor Covering Industry Foundation can help

individuals like her in a time of need."

It's success stories such as these that FCIF is looking to spread across the industry.



Kay Bearfield, a longtime member of the floor covering industry, was able to obtain life-saving medical treatment thanks to FCIF's help.

"FCIF allows people who have catastrophic illness, and who cannot afford to pay, get the help they need," said Scott Humphrey, FCIF vice chairman and CEO of the World Floor

Covering Association. "The FCIF was created by visionaries within the floor industry who saw a need to help those who were helpless. Our industry rests on the backs of those people who have committed their lives to what we do. So, we feel the need to give back on both an industry level and corporate level."

In order to obtain much-needed medical assistance in time of need, applicants simply need to reach out, according to Humphrey. Those eligible for grant applications—which are available at fcif.org—include floor covering industry representatives, employees and family members of those with at least five years of service to the floor covering industry. Additional criteria for consideration include, of course, severity of medical condition and financial need.

The FCIF's work is made possible through generous contributions from individuals and corporations alike (see sidebar). To learn more about the efforts of the FCIF or to apply for assistance, please visit fcif.org.

CCA Global supports FCIF's philanthropic cause

MANCHESTER, N.H.—Despite the coronavirus pandemic's forced cancellation of its largest annual fundraiser, CCA Global Partners man-

aged to raise a net of \$137,500 to support the Floor Covering Industry Foundation (FCIF) this past year.

The 18th annual Alan Greenberg Charity Golf Tournament, like many special events, was forced to take a raincheck in 2020. Nevertheless, the flooring community came together to make a difference for peers facing difficult times.

During a typical year, the annual golf tournament brings together business owners, manufacturers, distributors and other industry members for a fun-filled day of networking and fellowship.

While floor covering industry participants await the 2021 Alan Greenberg Charity Golf Tournament, which is scheduled to take place Sept. 22, CCA Global Partners has prepared a commemorative golf book that will feature inspiring stories, golf tips from our resident pros and plenty of walks down memory lane.

"After facing cancellation of the FCIF's annual fundraiser, we knew



we needed to think outside the box," said Charlie Dilks, chief product officer at CCA Global Partners and chairman of the FCIF. "The CCA

team stepped up, and through the generosity of our vendors and partners we received donations to assist the foundation in lieu of an event this year. The money raised will go a long way toward helping those in need in the floor covering industry."

EARN YOUR PROJECT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION ON YOUR OWN TERMS



Available online, anytime!
www.fcica.com/CIM · 630.672.3702

installments



RSAs and installers: Bridging the divide

With all the lip service paid to floor layers these days, I still find that some dealers and contractors act as if the installer is disposable. Why is that? Maybe it is the salesmen and estimators who are not needed. I mean, they just mess everything up, overselling and overcommitting to the impossible.

OK, so let's say we just get rid of salesmen and estimators. I can see it now—a wonderful world where salesmen and estimators are a thing of the past and the installer does it all. He finds the opportunity, goes through the selection process, sets the client's expectations, measures the project, orders the materials, schedules the material deliveries, sets the install date, then installs the product flawlessly just like the client wanted.

WHEN WE LISTEN TO AN INSTALLER'S IDEAS AND REALLY VALUE THEIR PERSPECTIVE, YOU CAN BE CERTAIN OF THE POSITIVE EFFECTS IT WILL HAVE ON YOUR PROJECT.

I'm being facetious, of course, but I think you get the point: We all need each other. Projects are like ecosystems that require nourishment. Everyone in the equation has an important role to fill the client's needs. The question becomes, then, how can we improve? How do we create an atmosphere where both sides win and work together?

Don't get me wrong—I do not mean to imply that this is the case in every company. There are plenty of instances where this relationship works quite well. However, a quick peek inside some online installer forums and social media groups revealed a heap of discontent.

My perspective is uniquely formed from spending years as an employee installer, then as a subcontractor and, now, a commercial flooring contractor employing and contracting installers, salesmen and estimators. In my view, there is one



PAUL STUART

way to improve this situation: communication.

Simply telling you that communication is the answer is obviously a bit cliché, so let's dive deeper. We have all heard that communication is the key to life, so why do we experience such disconnect? In my opinion it's because communication is about understanding the other party's perspective and speaking to that perspective. This means we must listen first.

Practice communication

Do you set clear expectations for each project with your installers in your verbal communication? Do you listen to each difficulty as they see it? Give it a try. I guarantee you it will lead to stronger relationships with your crews. In addition, it

will help your staff set up projects better and help the installer be more successful. When we listen to an installer's ideas and really value their perspective, you can be certain of the positive effects it will have on your project.

Bottom line: Keeping the lines of communication flowing during a project encourages dialogue that solves problems before they become a catastrophe. Focusing communication directly on the work order at hand will fend off misunderstandings.

We all must encourage this type of focused dialogue, champion it and build rewards around it. Your client will appreciate the fact that the salesperson and installer are on the same page, thereby unifying their experience. Ask more questions, truly listen to each other and fully understand and appreciate the expectations of the "other" person—and then you can exceed the client's expectations together.

Paul Stuart Jr. is president of Stuart & Associates Commercial Flooring and founder of GoCarrera, a mobile app and desktop software that connects flooring companies and professional flooring installers.



LI-NE211 Azur
The Natural Essence Plus Collection

WE STRIVE FOR

QUALITY

With each product, we inspect the integrity of each plank that we receive.

STANDARD

With high standards, we aim for 100% satisfaction from all of our customers.

YOU

With you in mind, we trust our products to be safe and durable in your home.

Locate dealers at www.lionsfloor.com Phone: 888-575-9220



marketing mastery

Reclaiming control of your life and business

Overwork is epidemic among flooring retailers. It's common for dealers to work 60-plus hours a week, get stressed out and feel like their business owns them instead of the other way around. In short, their business has too much control over their lives.

How do you know if your business has too much control? Take this short quiz to find out:

- Do you regularly work more hours in your business than you'd like?
- Do you spend more than 10% of your time doing tasks in your business you dislike?
- Do you often end the workday realizing you spent it putting out fires rather than taking meaningful action to grow your business?
- When you take time off, do you have to constantly check in with your office to make sure everything is running smoothly?
- Are you regularly more

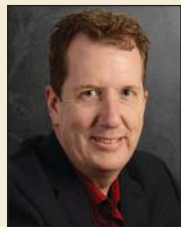
THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF YOUR BUSINESS IS TO FUND AND FACILITATE YOUR IDEAL LIFESTYLE.

stressed out than you'd like?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your business likely has too much control over you. I urge you to immediately take steps to remedy this situation.

I'm going to make a statement that will probably raise some eyebrows: The primary purpose of your business is not to sell quality products and provide excellent service. It's also not the primary purpose of your business to pay taxes, provide employment or keep your installers busy. Those things are very important—just not the primary purpose.

The primary purpose of your business is to fund and



JIM AUGUSTUS ARMSTRONG

facilitate your ideal lifestyle. Let's unpackage that: You could have gotten a regular 9-to-5 job and avoided all the hassles and headaches of entrepreneurship. But you didn't do that. You decided to shoulder the immense risk and responsibility that comes with being a business owner. Why would anyone in their right mind do that? Because you decided—consciously or subconsciously—that by taking that on you had a better chance at a better life for yourself and your family than if you worked for someone else. If you provide great products and services, employment, pay taxes and keep your installers busy, but you're working so many hours you're denying yourself all the things in life that are important to you, you've missed the entire point of going into business for yourself.

That's why I say the primary purpose of your business is to fund and facilitate your ideal lifestyle. If your business gives you the money and freedom to enjoy your life, then you're much more likely to stay in the business for the long term. That's good for your customers, employees, installers and the IRS. The environment for your business is also going to be a lot more positive for everyone who works for you. After all, no one likes to work for an embittered, stressed-out grouch. So, setting up your business so it facilitates your ideal lifestyle is good for all.

In the next installment I'm going to give you a simple strategy for quickly freeing up an entire day every week.

Jim Armstrong is the founder of Flooring Success Systems, a company that provides flooring dealers with marketing services and coaching to help attract quality customers, close more sales, get higher margins and work the hours they choose. For information, visit flooringsuccesssystems.com

Latest advances in flooring-

By Megan Salzano

Maintaining a successful flooring retail operation entails meaningful front-end strategies, such as product selection, showroom design and even marketing, but back-end strategies will make or break the business. Those back-end strategies include everything that goes on behind the scenes. In order to successfully manage those back-end operations, flooring-specific software is key, experts say.

Flooring-specific software—as opposed to generic software such as QuickBooks—can make all the difference to the successful back-end operation of a business. “If you want to stay competitive, you need to be able to handle operations without high overhead, and you need to know exactly what is happening in your business so you can make the best decisions,” said Chad Ogden, president and CEO, QFloors. “The right software delivers both. For the best return on investment, retailers need to embrace software that is easy to use, specific to the flooring industry and with good customer support to help people along the learning curve.”

Kelly Oechslin, product marketing manager, RollMaster, added that flooring retailers need to find the right software to fit their company and the way they do business. “Don't look for shortcuts if you

are expecting to grow your business,” she said. “Don't waste time on software that is not flooring-specific—you'll just end up needing software again in a year or two. Find a software that you will never outgrow but will continue to grow with your business, helping you to become more efficient and more profitable.”

Flooring-specific software providers routinely update and

software was designed to run lightning fast in the cloud. This makes it an ideal solution for today's remote work environment. In addition, we've enhanced our integrated instant messenger platform and expanded our integration with third-party retail websites.”

BanaBoom

BanaBoom deploys new customer updates on a monthly basis due to its Multi-Tenant Cloud Architecture. “Updates are seamlessly deployed with no business interruption,” explained Scott Springgate, co-founder and principal. “Through our closed-loop customer feedback process, BanaBoom has launched a number of new capabilities in the last six months. In addition to usability enhancements, several new features include: an advanced Rules Engine, designed for flexible tax and payroll withholdings; and automated electronic tax filing features or ‘e-File.’”

expand their offerings in order to deliver best-in-class service to their customer: the flooring retailer.

Following are the most recent flooring-specific software advances from the industry's top providers.

American Business Software

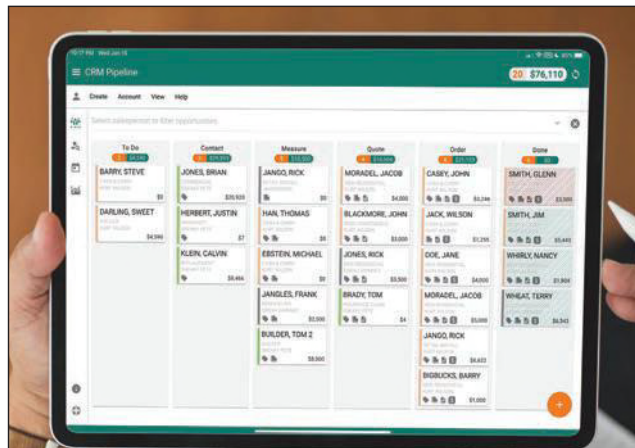
“COVID-19 has changed the priorities of many of our customers,” said Joseph Flannick, president. “More people have been working from home, making cloud solutions more important than ever. Efforts to increase efficiency and reduce labor have intensified. From the start, our FloorPro ERP

Comp-U-Floor

Comp-U-Floor developed and launched a Web & Mobile ERP Business and Installations Management and Accounting software, which includes all of the functionality available in previous Comp-U-Floor Windows versions, but it runs in the Cloud. “It is device independent across multiple platforms: Windows, Apple and Android,” explained Edgar Aya, CEO. “Comp-U-Floor provides full mobility, allowing flooring businesses to be more flexible in their work practices. Flooring stores can't rely on floor traffic during the current COVID-19 pandemic; Comp-U-Floor provides cloud-based tools that allow employees to work remotely.”

Measure Square

Measure Square recently launched its Quote Calculator, which can be easily embedded in a website. “With a click, a pop-up will appear, and a shopper can fill in some information—such as measurements—and get an instant quote,” said Steven Wang, president. “A store rep can then verify the information and close the sale before sending a measurer to



RFMS' CRM app captures lead information, and text messaging, product selection, estimating and quote generation are integrated.

Attention floor dealers! **FREE** book reveals how to...

HAVE AN AWESOME LIFE IN THE FLOORING BUSINESS!

Jim Augustus Armstrong's Latest Book Reveals:

- How a Florida dealer grew his business by 50% while cutting his work hours in half!
- How to take control of your business and work the hours YOU choose!
- How to grow your business, while maintaining your sanity!

Forward by Scott Humphrey
CEO of the WFCMA

For a FREE copy visit: FlooringSuccessSystems.com

specific software

the job site. The self-service approach creates more customer engagement and also cuts down on expensive travel. Moreover, customers expect personalized digital experiences. This is certainly key in improving conversion rates.”

Pacific Solutions

Pacific Solutions’ latest software advancement is its Warehouse Management Module, which runs on a tablet. “With the module, users can receive materials from purchase orders electronically and print inventory tags before putting the materials away,” explained Bob Noe, president. “They can also barcode racks for quick inventory relocation; see a list of staged pick tickets for preparing for material delivery; and capture a digital signature. There is also a Quick Pick and Quick Return function.”

Podium

“Podium is a suite of messaging tools that empowers local businesses to gather and convert leads through the power of messaging,” said Dennis Steele,

co-founder. “Whether you need to collect more reviews, get found and chosen online, communicate more easily with your customers or collect payments faster—Podium makes it all as easy as sending a text. These days, customer experience is really the key factor in conversion. Podium’s tools help businesses provide a much higher quality customer experience.”

QFloors

QFloors’ browser-based cloud software, QPro POS+, now features an advanced integration with QuickBooks Online. “This makes it possible for even the smallest dealer to benefit from the time savings and efficiencies of features built to help flooring businesses, even if they don’t want to step away from their familiar back-end accounting program,” Ogden explained. “Also, QLeads, a new integration add-on, allows leads that come through your website (or other lead-gen platforms) to be uploaded to your QFloors Leads screen, automating and improving the tracking process.”

RFMS

RFMS’ latest software advancement is its new CRM app—Client Relationship Management. “As a complement to the Measure Mobile and RFMS Mobile apps, CRM meets a strategic need in the workday life of a salesperson,” said Kurt Wilson, apps product manager. “With CRM, a salesperson captures initial engagement information for every opportunity and has complete control and visibility of that opportunity through the sales process. Text messaging is built in, and product selection, estimating and quote generation are integrated. Customers can approve quotes and even make payments online.”

RollMaster

RollMaster’s latest software advancement is the Open Application Program Interface (API). “It offers our customers practically endless opportunities to integrate non-flooring specific business, marketing and operations applications to automate more of their daily business tasks,” Oechslin said.




“When you have one software that can automate your flooring business but also integrate with other online applications, you benefit from not having to enter data in more than one application, which also cuts down on errors. Plus, because RollMaster is cloud-based, you can work from anywhere at any time.”

ViSoft

ViSoft’s ViSion software allows a user to select from various room

scenes such as bathrooms, kitchens and even exteriors to visualize products like flooring in the space. In addition, ViSoft Premium products can cover an entire renovation planning process to provide the planner with an intuitive application and a common thread for customer consultation and sales. In addition to a strong and efficient software infrastructure, the product family offers solutions for mobile devices, showrooms and the web.



We Do It All. We Do It Best.



Let our team show you why RFMS is the leading provider of fully integrated software solutions in the flooring industry.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✔ Fully Integrated ERP | ✔ Human Resources & Payroll | ✔ Mobility |
| ✔ Order Entry | ✔ Direct Deposit | ✔ Barcoding |
| ✔ Inventory | ✔ Sales Reporting | ✔ Data Analytics & Benchmarking |
| ✔ Products | ✔ CRM | ✔ REST API |
| ✔ B2B | ✔ Estimating | ✔ Virtual Services |
| ✔ Accounting | ✔ Scheduling | ✔ Training & Consulting |

GET STARTED TODAY | LEARN MORE AT RFMS.COM | SALES@RFMS.COM

Residential carpet

Continued from page 1

home environment.”

Carpet has always been a strong category across the FCA Network’s legion of retailers, according to Robertson, accounting for 52%-58% share vs. hard surfaces. “Business was up overall in 2020 in spite of COVID-19, but the carpet business was up double digits in dollars—not yards, per se—although we did see increases in yards with three of our carpet vendors.”

For FCA Network retailers, the average carpet ticket has increased from \$3,000 to \$8,000—and higher—as consumers invested more money on better carpet. Other buying groups told FCNews that carpet sales among members have also risen nicely.

Retailers not affiliated with any of the major groups similarly reported strong results. For the Flooring Gallery, with five locations in the Louisville, Ky., market, 2020 represented the first year in the past seven in which carpet sales increased. “Working from home and using video conferencing has proved to be a boon for carpeting,” said Nick Freadreacea, president. “Many people told us they set up their offices in a bedroom, so it would be quiet enough to keep background noise to a minimum.”

Myers Flooring Dalton, Myers Flooring Atlanta and Myers Flooring Nashville—part of Myers Carpet Company—all achieved record numbers in 2020, with September the single best month for written floor covering sales in the company’s 63-year history. “The fact that families have been confined to their homes because of the coronavirus means they took the time to look around, and they invested in carpet,” Rick Myers, owner, said.

Given that the home is now being used as an office, classroom and playground by different members of the family, observers say there is a need to make each room more suitable for its purpose. “That includes putting new carpet down in the game room upstairs for sound abatement,” said Joe Young, soft surface category manager for Engineered Floors. “It’s about making the living room a more comfortable place for the whole family to relax, creating a sanctuary in the master bedroom for the parents to retreat to at night and even putting down ‘resi-mercial’ carpet in the home office to make your long list of Zoom calls go just a little more smoothly throughout the day.”

While carpet has benefited by

the “home as a sanctuary” trend, executives say the strong housing market is playing into carpet’s wheelhouse as well. “New home construction and existing home sales have been trending very strongly since the summer of 2020, and it’s continuing into 2021,” said T.M. Nuckols, president of the residential division of The Dixie Group. “Flooring replacement frequently occurs just before or after an existing home sale, and carpet is getting part of that spend. With the consumer focused on creating a comfortable, safe place at home, carpet is getting more share of the floor in the COVID-19 world.”

Some experts even suggest



Retailers said carpet sales were up during the Mohawk Momentum Roadshow. Shown is Mohawk SmartStrand.

carpet’s ascent is part of a larger movement. “The pendulum is swinging back in favor of carpet because that is the way of trends and style choices,” said Keith Donegani, CEO of Nature’s Carpet. “What was the ‘in thing’ for the back half of the 1900s [i.e., install carpet] is finding its cool

factor again. And while carpet may not dethrone hardwood or LVT in 2021, it is certainly back on the radar and looking forward to sharing some of the spotlight with its hard surface friends.”

All this bodes well for the category, but the question remains: can carpet’s run last? Anecdotal evidence suggests carpet started the year on a positive note and should continue.

During the Mohawk Momentum Roadshow, for example, which has had retailer events in Dallas, Atlanta and Indianapolis, dealers spoke highly of their carpet business. “I didn’t talk to one dealer who wasn’t excited about carpet,” said Jamie

Welborn, Mohawk’s vice president of product management for soft surface. “Every dealer I spoke with had a good fourth quarter, and everyone said January was booming and that they were doing well with carpet.”

Don Cantor, owner of Lake Interiors Chelan, in Chelan, Wash., said he remains “very optimistic and bullish” on carpet sales for 2021, not only because of the large amount of new construction going on in his area but because people are still stuck at home and have disposable income to update their homes. “Also, the homes being built seem to be larger than in the past because people want that extra space or office to be able to work from home,” he said. “We are seeing a lot of customers doing additions and remodels to accommodate that extra office space.”

Housing market

Continued from page 1

Flooring retailers across the country and even flooring suppliers continue to reap the benefits of the robust housing market that blossomed in Q2 2020 and has continued into 2021. Over the last few weeks, major housing statistics have revealed how strong a year 2020 was, in spite of challenges caused by the pandemic. Robert Dietz, chief economist for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), noted that historically low interest rates, a pivot for consumer preferences toward housing and a sizeable suburban shift for location decisions lifted the market.

Following an initial dip in early 2020 due to the pandemic, it is clear more than a year later that single-family housing is driving the current housing market boom. According to data from the NAHB, single-family housing starts increased 11.7% for 2020 as a whole, increasing to 991,000 total builds. The NAHB forecast is for ongoing gains for single-family construction in 2021. Production is expected to rise an additional 5% to 1.03 million this year—marking the first year total annual single-family production has exceeded 1 million since the Great Recession.

Industry insights

The boom in the housing market has no doubt been a boon to the flooring industry. Suppliers agree the increased demand for single-family homes and remodeling has exceeded previous expectations and created opportunities for growth. On the retail side, store owners across the U.S. have pointed to a surge in sales and even backlogs of projects leading

well into 2021.

According to Scott Gibson, Mohawk’s senior director of sales operations, builder and multi-family, the company’s sales have seen a surge due to the increased demand on new construction. “Builders have been struggling to keep up with the high demand in the market and have exceeded their original forecasts for starts and finishes,” he said. “We see no immediate end to the trend and expect a positive business result through 2021.”

Herb Upton, vice president of residential product and channel strategy, Shaw Industries, agreed, adding that the positive trends are creating opportunities for strong growth in residential retail. “Our customers are continuing to see the advantages of this boom in business in 2021.

Consumers today have never been more focused on the home—and how it provides a sense of security and well-being from the outside world—and we see this healthy home movement having a positive impact on our retail customers’ businesses even beyond 2021.”

Jimmy Tuley, vice president of sales, residential, Mannington, noted the strong fundamentals in both new home starts and existing home sales as a major driver to the strong finish to 2020 and start of 2021. “With existing home inventories being low, along with an extended anticipation of low interest rates, we expect this strength to continue well into 2021,” he said.

Sweden-based Välinge has also felt the positive impact. “The housing market in the U.S. has

positively impacted Välinge’s business, too,” said Lennart Thålin, region manager North & South America, Välinge. “From a licensee perspective, many have reported all-time-high volume figures for the last few quarters.”

Currently, the retail community itself continues to report strong growth. John Taylor, owner, Taylor Carpet One Floor & Home, Fort Myers, Fla., told FCNews the ongoing shift to suburban settings has provided a lift in sales. “In Florida, we have been the beneficiary of people moving to our area from up north and this has caused the real estate market to explode,” he explained. “This boom has created great demand for our flooring products and therefore most businesses in our area are doing very well.”

(For the full story, visit fcnews.net)

Mirage

Continued from page 16

Our naturally beautiful wood floors are positively impacting the health and well-being of those that purchase it—something that been proven in many studies. The warmth underfoot; the non-repetition of every unique piece. The pride of wanting to tell their friends and family about their new hardwood floor; the fact that it is the only floor covering proven to increase the value of your home; and the happiness of having a product that will last 100 years until the day their home is passed to the next generation.

This positive effect we are having on people has also a positive impact on our own employees. Knowing they are making a product that is positively affecting the health and well-being of people also gives them pride and happiness to do their job well. Our people make the difference at Mirage. It’s not the land, buildings or finest technology you can buy. It’s the people and our teams’ positive support of their families, our community, our supplier and customer networks.

We are making a positive difference in the world. There is no true pride or happiness of purchasing imitation products. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, consumers are falsely sold on the belief that imitation wood looks are better than the real thing. We are asking all RSAs out there to give customers the opportunity to buy the real thing and make sure they fully understand the impact of their decision. Have them invest in real hardwood flooring. Give them the true choice of saving in the short term or gaining the long-term financial benefit for their homes and for their own family’s health and well-being. Right now, less than one out of 10 purchasers in floor covering are getting a real hardwood floor. Imagine if we could just increase that to two or three purchasers out of 10. The positive impact for people and the environment would be tremendous.

Shout out to the donors who
are helping workers with
catastrophic medical conditions
get through hard days.

FLOOR COVERING INDUSTRY
FOUNDATION



2020 FCIF DONOR WALL OF FAME

The Floor Covering Industry Foundation depends on contributions from industry manufacturers, distributors, retailers, buying groups, trade associations, vendors, and individuals. Donations provide assistance directly to flooring industry workers when coping with life-altering injuries, severe disabilities, and catastrophic medical events.

DIAMOND \$50,000+

CCA Global Partners
Engineered Floors
Floor Covering News*
Floor Trends & Floor Covering
Installer*

Mannington
Mohawk Industries
Shaw Industries Group
World Floor Covering
Association

PLATINUM \$25,000 - \$49,999

Floor Covering Weekly*
Floor Focus*
The International Surface
Event/ Informa Markets

GOLD \$10,000 - \$24,999

All Tile / Carpet Cushions &
Supplies
American Biltrite
Armstrong Flooring
Emily Morrow Home
FEI Group
Helen & Harry Saul Foundation
Herregan Distributors
Karndean Designflooring
Redi-Carpet
Resilient Floor Covering
Institute
Roppe Holding Company

SILVER \$5,000 - \$9,999

Arrowstar
Central Alabama Flooring
Dossche Family Foundation
Sharon Greenberg
Invista
J.J. Haines Foundation
Linron Corporation
Mullican

NWFA/ Hardwood Floors
Magazine*
Spartan Surfaces
Stanton Carpet Corporation
The Dixie Group
Will Young

BRONZE \$1,000 - \$4,999

Steve Abernathy
Acierno & Company
AHF Products
Andrea Blackburn
Carl Bouckaert
Brentwood Flooring America
Builder's Carpet
C3 Connect
Carpet One of Livermore
Carpet Spectrum
Congoleum
Dalene Hardwood Flooring Co.
F5 Finishes
The Flooring Contractors
Association*
Floor Coverings of Winona
FloorCovering Soft
Chet E. Grisso
Healthier Choice
Tanja Kern
Macco's Floor Covering
MP Global Products Collison
Mr. G's Flooring America
Paul Murfin
Premier Flooring Retailer
Magazine*
ProInstaller Magazine*
National Floorcovering
Alliance
Margie & Sam O'Krent
RFMS
Sid's Carpet Barn

Star Flooring & Decorating
Starnet Worldwide
James and Susan Walters
Kaye Whitener
Wilsonville Carpet and Tile

GENESIS \$500 - \$999

Abbey Carpets Unlimited
Absolute Flooring Inc.
Atlanta Flooring Design
B.T. Mancini Co.
Brockie International
Carpet Mart Location #10
Carpet One Floor & Home -
Asheville & Hickory
Horizon Flooring Inspections
Scott Humphrey
LICO US and ACP
Linoleum City
Moda Floors and Interiors
Hamernicks Decorating
Northwest Trends of Spokane
Pat's Carpet Outlet
Sarah & Wendell Prescott
Roy Lomas Carpet Contractor
Signature Flooring
Totally Floored

*donated trade media

**Thank you to the following for
making planned and endowed
gifts:** William A. Gold
Endowment, Laurence & Robin
Nagle Charitable Remainder
Trust, Alan Greenberg
Memorial Fund, and Shaw
Industries.

Thank you to all our donors! A
full list can be found at fcif.org.

ALAN GREENBERG MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

\$5,000+

Emser Tile
Floor Covering Institute
Karndean DesignFlooring
Mannington Mills
Mohawk Industries
Shaw Industries - Coretec

\$1,000-\$4,999

AHF Products
Sue & Lee Allwein
Ansira
Armstrong Flooring
Art Guild
Howard Brodsky
Beaulieu Canada / Peerless
Flooring
Brown Smith Wallace
Cain & Bultman
Carpenter Co.
CommCreative
Connectria
Couristan
Customer Analytics, LLC
Daltille
Floor Covering Weekly Maga-
zine
Forbo Flooring Systems
Future Foam
Healthier Choice Flooring
Interceramic, USA
Kaleen Rugs and Broadloom
Leggett & Platt Flooring
Products
Marketing Alliance Group
MasterBrand Cabinets
MC2
MP Global Products
National Coop Bank
Novalis Innovative Flooring

Phenix Flooring
PNC Financial Services
Promotional Spring
Republic Floor
RFMS
Riezman Berger, P.C.
Stanton Carpet Corp
Swift-Train
Synchrony Financial
Tarkett NA
Verisk (Xactware)
Versatrim, Inc.
WarmUp, Inc.
WFCA

\$500-\$999

Jim Acker
Beasley Flooring Products
/Floors For Life
Rick Bennet
Commerce Bank
Cornerstone Solutions Group
CR Productions
Design Materials, Inc.
Charles Dilks
Tod Greenberg
iGAD Productions
ITEL, Inc.
Joy Carpets & Co.
Kane Carpet
Keith Spano
Liminality, Inc.
Michael's Carpet
Nourison
Ron Negley
Saturn Freight Systems
Andrew Shulklapper
Taylor Adhesives
Scott Wheeler

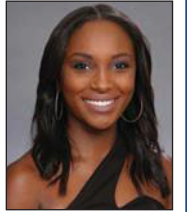
FCIF.ORG

floor covering news CLASSIFIEDS

fcnews.net February 15/22, 2021

Floor Covering News
33 Walt Whitman Rd.
Suite 302
Huntington Sta., NY 11746

FOR A QUOTE CONTACT
Krystal Bates
krystal@fcnews.net
Call: 516.932.7860
Fax: 516.932.7639



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES CAREER OPPORTUNITIES CAREER OPPORTUNITIES CAREER OPPORTUNITIES CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

JOIN A WINNING TEAM
The largest, multi-state, privately held flooring retailer in America is seeking to fill a variety of positions in all locations to keep pace with its exponential growth.
We are looking for only the best people.
If you are unhappy where you are and you want to join the industry's fastest growing company, call Angie VP of HR at 614.916.6813

Salary commensurate with experience. Bonus, benefits, 401k. Email: human.resources@riterug.com



CAREER OPPORTUNITY FOR REGIONAL AND OUTSIDE SALES REPRESENTATIVES
LIONS FLOOR, based in Santa Fe Springs, CA, as one of America's fastest-growing wholesale distributors of the highest quality hard-surface flooring matched with exceptional customer service and satisfaction, is expanding. We carry on-trend, high-demand flooring options that are recognized for their unique aesthetics and superior quality.
Seeking Sales Representatives with proven experience in **Greater Los Angeles Area, OC, San Diego** to join our local crew. Outside Sale Representative Open Regions are: **Northern California, Nevada, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Utah, Texas and New York.**
Merchandize and Samples are ready to ship.
Unlimited earning potential and competitive compensation package will be offered. If you have a winning positive attitude and the desire to drive business growth, we want to hear from you!
Please submit resume with complete job history to: admin@lionsfloor.com

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

www.FloorFactory4sale.com
NE Tennessee/SW Virginia
Owner retiring/Financing available

FOR SALE - FLOORING BUSINESS
Established 42 years - All repeat customers!
Heart of Nassau County, Long Island
Contact 516-998-4697
Ask for Anthony




PREMIUM NATIONWIDE DUSTLESS TILE REMOVAL TERRITORIES AVAILABLE

KING OF DUST FREE TILE REMOVAL®
Increase Your Profits & Stand Out!
Become a Certified DustRam Contractor®

DustRam.com/territories

WE HELP DEALERS
Private labels, specialty mills & etc.
Call us now at 800-228-4632 www.carpetbroker.com




Now Hiring:
FLOORING MANUFACTURER A&D SALES REPRESENTATIVE

REQUIREMENTS:

- Develop a preferred flooring manufacturer status with key A&D firms
- Build relationships with commercial architecture & design firms in order to schedule meetings with specifiers, and present product presentations to interior design teams
- Install core materials (binders, chip kits, loose pieces) in A&D libraries and keep materials up to date
- 3-5+ years experience in commercial architecture, design, or construction industry with a strong technical aptitude

Job location is in Los Angeles CA
Send resume and salary requirements to efi@republicfloor.com



Central Florida's Premier Floor Covering Gallery
New Job Opening for Immediate Hire

Retail Sales/Manager
Must Have Flooring Experience & Customer Service Skills

Send Resumes only:
erusak@theflooringcenterorlando.com

HIRING MANAGERS & SALES
Large, Iowa / Illinois, multi-store flooring retailer is seeking to add to its dynamic team to keep up with its growing business!

Under-paid? Under-appreciated? Not growing?
Join a growing, fun, family-friendly culture! We want to partner with the BEST talent!

Compensation commensurate with experience.
Bonus, commissions, profit-sharing, benefits, 401k
Email: jason.ciluffo@carpetlandusa.net



TERRITORY MANAGER FOR MIRAGE HARDWOOD FLOORS, MIDWEST USA

Territory Covered: IA, IL, KS, NE, MO, MN, WI
Job Description: Sell through distribution to retail, builder, and commercial markets.

Experience in floor covering sales required along with basic computer skills and working knowledge of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

Overnight travel will be required with this position.

Compensation: Competitive compensation package will be offered.

Please submit resume with complete job history included to opportunities@miragefloors.com



BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES



CENTURY 21
Nugget Realty

Contact: 757.472.5352

Amanda.Watts@Century21.com



\$759,000

Turn Key Flooring Business!

Cottage Grove, OR

Owners have been in business since 1977, and they are ready to retire. This sale includes: land, building, inventory, equipment, and book of business. High traffic, main street location.

MARKETPLACE

MARKETPLACE



GO MOBILE.



Measure Mobile



RFMS Mobile



CRM

Estimates - Quotes - Payments

www.rfms.com

MARKETPLACE

MARKETPLACE

MARKETPLACE



1-800-222-8288

QFLOORS SOFTWARE
RAISE PROFITS • LOWER STRESS
NEVER LOSE MONEY ON A JOB AGAIN!
WWW.QFLOORS.COM | 801-563-0140
SALES@QPROSOFTWARE.COM



All You Need For Takeoffs and On-site Measurements

Introducing the MeasureSquare Suite



1.626.683.9188

www.measuresquare.com/fcn

FloorManager

Management & Estimating Software for the Residential Flooring Dealer



PacificSolutions.com/FCN | 800.400.4927 x 206



- Order Entry
- Operations
- Accounting
- POS
- Sample Tracking
- Scheduling
- Estimating
- Field Measuring

WE BUY USED CARPET CUTTING MACHINES
407-509-3030

QUALITY-BUILT PROFIT CENTERS

Hands-on appeal
Grab-n-go simplicity



Solidly-built, heavy metal frames/bases



Easy product access/storage

BAY VIEW DISPLAYS

231-218-6600
BayViewDisplays.com



Innovation reinvented... again.

Inspired by natural landscapes, DW Select featuring twistX offers beautifully styled patterns, textures, and colors. Utilizing a twist multiplier, twistX delivers industry leading durability in synthetic fiber that has a 33% higher bundle size, meaning each square foot of carpet has more yarn and higher densities.

engineeredfloors.com

