

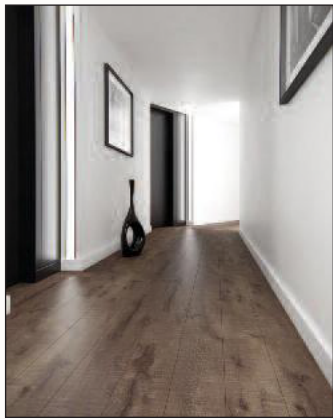
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SPOTLIGHT



Oh, Canadian hardwood

In a field defined by so many me-too products, suppliers North of the border are looking to carve out their own niches in the market.

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DIGITAL ACCESS IS INCLUDED

See our latest issue at fcnews.net

CAUSE MARKETING



Cali Brand representatives regularly contribute their time and efforts to build Habitat for Humanity homes.

INDUSTRY PUTS SUPPORT BEHIND NOBLE ENDEAVORS

By Reginald Tucker

For many for-profit corporations and companies, supporting worthy charitable or philanthropic causes are much more than “feel-good” initiatives—they’re also good for business. That’s according to those floor covering manufacturers and retail associations that leverage cause marketing as part of their overall strategy to build brand awareness while driving consumer loyalty.

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CCA Global

Summer convention gives members a big ‘LIFT’

By Ken Ryan

While it may never replace the real thing—face-to-face meetings and in-person networking—CCA Global Partners’ integrated virtual summer convention drew rave reviews from

retail members, many of whom were able to conduct business while also benefitting from convention content.

The conference theme, LIFT2020, was originally scheduled for August but was moved to late June so co-op members could leverage some of the new tools and programs that were unveiled. The meeting combined Flooring America, Flooring Canada, The Floor Trader, International Design Guild and Carpet One Floor & Home members, including sales associates and managers. An “on-demand” element allowed retailers to tend to business during normal hours and catch up with convention classes later on.

“I loved it,” said Kevin Frazier, president of Frazier’s

Carpet One Floor & Home, Knoxville, Tenn., echoing a sentiment shared by other Carpet One and Flooring America dealers who spoke with FCNews. “The convention created a significant amount of energy, offered way better than average convention specials (on both roll and palletized goods), brought us together with

suppliers in a fresh, dynamic manner, and we saw the launch of some significant initiatives—all at a very important juncture in the life of both our co-op and our industry.”

In addition to the two-day live event, LIFT2020 closed with four days of live and on-demand education sessions. At the end of each day’s session, members had the opportunity for virtual networking via Webex meeting rooms.

“The team has done a spectacular job to reach the members with very important

tools and information,” said Cathy Buchanan, owner of Independent Carpet One Floor & Home, Westland, Mich. “The blessing of this conference has

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Retail Report

Business heats up for floor covering dealers in June

By Ken Ryan

The COVID-19 punch that temporarily dazed flooring retailers during late March-April has been supplanted by a rather frenetic period of activity, resulting in higher ticket orders and, in some cases, record sales.

Despite scores of showrooms being closed for weeks, many retailers contacted by FCNews say they have bounced back quickly and are matching 2019 levels on the strength of a resurgent June.

Unlike the restaurant or airline industries, which continue to suffer from the effects of the lingering COVID-19 virus, flooring has largely benefited by consumers staying at home.

Indeed, many retailers cited pent-up demand and consumers’

willingness to invest in their homes as two major factors in leading to the uptick in business.

“The customers coming into the stores today are definitely buying; they are serious shoppers for



The flooring division of RC Willey Home Furnishings has seen a 30% increase in the average ticket order.

sure,” said Ted Gregerson, owner of Ted’s Abbey Carpet & Floor, Anniston, Ala., who reported second quarter sales are up 42% over

Continued on page 20



John Gilbert



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IN THE NEWS

Domotex USA 2021 postponed

CHICAGO—Hannover Fairs USA (HFUSA), the organizer of Domotex USA, has decided to postpone its 2021 trade show, which was scheduled for March 1-3. The new date and location for the next Domotex USA will be shared when available.



The decision to postpone the 2021 edition of the show was based upon several factors, including the results of extensive market research as well as ongoing global conditions, according to HFUSA. "We were pleased with the research results, which indicated a continued need and desire for the Domotex brand in the U.S.," said Donna Busse, show director of Domotex USA at HFUSA. "With this new insight, we look forward to using the remainder of 2020 and 2021 to develop a show that will incorporate strategic changes for an even better and improved experience for both exhibitors and attendees."

CM Services partners with FCICA

GLEN ELLYN, ILL.—CM Services has formed a partnership with the Floor Covering Installation Contractors Association (FCICA) to provide full-service association management services.

Catherine Church, CM Services co-owner, will serve as FCICA's executive director. She replaces Kimberly Oderkirk, who managed FCICA for 21 years.



Pat Kelly

"We look forward to the experience, professionalism and high-touch customer service Catherine Church and the whole CM Services team will provide FCICA to help us develop and fulfill our mission," said Pat Kelly, FCICA chairman and president of Synergy Flooring.

Founded in 1982, FCICA's membership includes approximately 285 floor covering companies representing installation, distribution and manufacturing entities.

Indusparquet expands its U.S. marketing team

MIAMI, FLA.—Indusparquet has added Jessica Murphy to its U.S. team as the company's sales and marketing coordinator and director of special projects.

Murphy joins Indusparquet from Gilford Johnson Flooring, a Top 20 distributor based in Jeffersonville, Ind. She most recently served as a category manager for some of the company's most prominent vendor partners.



Jessica Murphy

"Jessica was a tremendous contributor [at Gilford Johnson], and so we jumped at the opportunity to add her to the team when she became available," said Jodie Doyle, vice president U.S. sales and marketing. "We are experiencing a really nice positive trend toward our products right now. When you couple that with the launch of our IP Home & Outdoor brand, we have a lot of work to do and need high-quality, high-impact people. She will be a fantastic addition to our team."

Novalis to bring rigid core production stateside

By Steven Feldman

DALTON—Novalis remains on track to take rigid core production stateside in the third quarter. Novalis will be one of only a handful of manufacturers with domestic rigid core capability by 2021. However, unlike most others, it has been doing this for 30-plus years—only on the other side of the world.

The difference between Novalis and the other manufacturers is knowledge and experience, according to Steve Ehrlich, vice president of sales and marketing. "Novalis has a history dating back to 1984 and has always been at the forefront of innovation," he told FCNews. "We will have the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art SPC factory run by the most experienced company in the U.S."

It's no secret that companies have tried to manufacture LVT, SPC or WPC domestically, but a year or two later they're still sourcing. Why? "It goes back to experience," Ehrlich explained. "We're an LVT manufacturer; we're not a carpet manufacturer. We're not a wood manufacturer. So, we haven't added on these businesses to our portfolio like a lot of other companies



Novalis' new SPC plant will leverage its 30-plus-year experience in LVT production. Pictured is Serenbe, its best-selling line.

who have with LVT. We are specialist. We have 30-plus years of LVT experience and the foremost LVT experts in the world working for Novalis. Others may have tried to add luxury vinyl capability now that the category is booming, but they had no expertise in doing this. It was a ground-up thing for them. We're not doing something new; we're just doing what we do best somewhere else in the world."

There are obviously many advantages to manufacturing domestically, especially now as tensions escalate with China. But the key for Novalis will be innovation. "Everything we are going to do here will be new and innovative," Ehrlich said. "We will be making new products and finding new technologies to build on existing products

here. So, it's the next evolution for us." Ehrlich noted that products coming out of this facility will not cannibalize anything Novalis is doing in China. He also shared that manufacturing domestically does not necessarily mean higher prices despite the higher labor costs. "There's a lot that goes into the production process," he explained. "You have the raw materials, you have the finishing materials and then you have the logistics. When we balance all of the variables, we feel that we're going to be really competitive."

Specialty retailers benefit from that innovation possibly more than they may realize, according to Novalis. When a company doesn't innovate, they must rely on price as a competitive advantage. This can commoditize a category. With the innovative products slated to come out of the Dalton facility, retailers will be able to offer something different and maintain margins, Ehrlich noted.

Continued on page 5

Invista takes wraps off Stainmaster Home Studio

KENNESAW, GA.—Invista's Stainmaster brand and Nebraska Furniture Mart have announced the launch of the Stainmaster Home Studio at the retailer's Kansas City location.

Promising a new shopping experience for carpet-buying consumers, the exclusive Stainmaster Home Studio was developed from years of research and consumer insights. The result: an intuitive way for consumers to sample and visualize select flooring styles in-store for the first time. The patented design for the display combines physical Stainmaster samples and a proprietary interactive digital technology, allowing shoppers to navigate the interface through touch.

The decision to install the Stainmaster Home Studio at NFM made sense on multiple levels, according to the company. "Stainmaster is continuously pushing to improve the shopping experience and to provide more value for the consumer," said Dave Chambers, direc-

tor of flooring at Nebraska Furniture Mart. "Here at NFM, we have the same commitment. We saw the value and potential in the Stainmaster Home Studio, not just for our-



Stainmaster's new Home Studio features a display that combines physical carpet samples and proprietary interactive digital technology.

selves but for the consumer—and that's something we appreciate."

At the center of the experience, according to Brook Brown, vice president of

Stainmaster, is a digital educational tool that empowers shoppers with important information about the specific benefits that each carpet option offers. "The digital touch screen experience helps us meet shoppers right where they are in their journey," she explained. "Shoppers are able to save their favorites and to order and ship samples directly to their home."

The benefits aren't just for consumers. Because of the digital nature of the Stainmaster Home Studio, both Nebraska Furniture Mart and Stainmaster will be able to collect information on how customers are shopping that will help both the brand and retailer serve customers better in the future.

Kansas City was also chosen because it is a hot spot for pattern carpet. "Patterns are always a pain-point for customers as it can be difficult for them to visualize just what the carpet may look like in their homes," Chambers noted. "The Stainmaster Home Studio helps them understand while also being able to touch and feel the carpet—and even helps them get a sample at home right away."

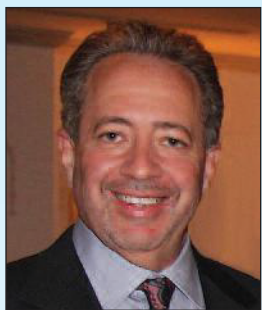
SNAPSHOT

NTCA names Tom Ade Scholarship award winners

JACKSON, Miss.—The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) recently announced its 2020 Tom Ade Scholarship Award winners for academic achievement. The program was created to provide educational opportunities for children or grandchildren of NTCA contractor members.

This year's program featured one \$5,000 Grand Prize scholarship winner as well as several \$1,000 winners. The Grand Prize Winner is Kimberly Callahan (pictured), daughter of Wei Callahan and stepdaughter of Woody Sanders, president of DW Sanders Tile & Stone Contracting located in Marietta, Ga. Callahan has just completed her first year toward a Master's degree in social work with an emphasis in clinical psychology.





my take

10 things we learned from retailers across America

The second leg of FCNews' Retail Recovery Across America was completed a couple of weeks ago. Round two took us to five locales in Florida (before things escalated down there), Louisville, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Chicago and Madison, Wis. We checked in on large and smaller retailers alike; I encourage you to watch the video series on fcnews.net. I know some of them run a little long, but I think in each case there are some valuable nuggets from which all retailers can benefit. We add a new video every few days, but if you miss one they are all archived at fcnews.net/videos.

So, 11 retailers and six states later, there were many takeaways that seemed to hold true wherever we stopped. Here they are:

1. The first two and a half to three months of the year were gangbusters for everyone. Many were on track for a record year. Some cited a more moderate winter; others touted the solid economy. Either way, if not for the disruption caused by the virus, this was shaping up to be a great year for the flooring industry.

2. April was the challenging month. Some businesses came to a grinding halt, while others were able to continue builder and/or property management work. Some retailers were able to complete installations from the previous month's sales—providing the customers felt comfortable. The fact that the first quarter was strong allowed many dealers to weather the storm.

3. As April turned to May and state economies reopened—some earlier than others—business gradually returned.

Some stores were open by appointment only, but customers returned to the store.

4. While flooring retailers that were not considered essential and forced to shut in late March and April lost business to the home centers, once their stores were able to open, consumers said they prefer shopping somewhere with one or two customers in the store as opposed to the throngs that are walking around the big boxes.

5. The customer today is not kicking tires, nor is she coming into the store three and four times before making a decision. She is a serious buyer, has done her homework (plenty of time for that when the country shut down in April) and maybe visits twice. Close rates are through the roof.

6. Price has not been as much a driver as what is typically seen despite the lofty unemployment numbers we are constantly inundated with. Many of today's flooring consumers have not been negatively impacted financially in the second quarter. In fact, they have money burning a hole in their pockets because there was nothing to spend on in early spring.

7. Retailers cite a number of reasons why business rebounded in May and June. First, there is pent-up demand from March and April. The people who were going to spend in those two months simply postponed their flooring purchases, and that should hold through the summer. Second, many people are not taking lavish vacations this year and instead are diverting those funds to home improvements. Third, many people are sick of staring at their

outdated and/or dirty floors after spending the better part of two months in lockdown mode and now want to replace them.

8. Business is expected to get even stronger in the coming months as people escape big cities and relocate to the suburbs. This migration is already happening in droves as people want more space as many are now working from home. They also don't want to be stuck in a cramped city apartment in case the economy ever shuts down again. (Personally, I don't think it ever will.)

9. Flooring dealers are taking advantage of the Internet to drive business. While their messages vary, most don't even mention COVID-19 or sales discounts. They are all taking a positive stance with messaging like, "We're open" or "It's time to beautify your home" or stressing safety and cleanliness.

10. All are predicting the second half of the year to be solid. No one is expecting to be down for the year, although many acknowledge this is an election year and things often get wacky in the month or two leading up to the election.

There were other solid comments, but I recommend you watch the videos to get a pulse on what's happening at retail across this great land.

So, where should I go next? If you have something solid to share, the Retail Recovery Across America might stop in your city later this month.

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GETTING SOCIAL WITH fcnews

Novalis

Continued from page 3

Novalis said it does not play at the lower end of the market. “We’re never going to be an opening price-point player—that’s not our niche,” Ehrlich explained. “We produce high-end products and are usually priced at the mid to upper end of the retail spectrum.”

Differentiation is a hallmark for Novalis, something the company said sets it apart from the competition, particularly in terms of technology. A prime example, Ehrlich noted, is its Nova Shield coating, a patented coating exclusive to Novalis.

“Marketing from other manufacturers has sent the message to customers that they need a 20-mil wear layer, and a 12-mil wear layer is no longer sufficient,” he said. “But what the consumer doesn’t realize is no one walks on the wear layer anymore. It is the coating that is really what’s important. We’ve tested our coating in all possible environments, and we perform at, or better than, any other coating on the market.”

Specialty retail remains strong
Novalis was trending up significantly at specialty retail through the end of March. “We got off to a fast start,” Ehrlich said. “People



“We will have the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art SPC factory run by the most experienced company in the U.S.”

—Steve Ehrlich, vice president of sales and marketing, Novalis

were excited about our new product launches that were introduced at Surfaces and the expansion of our Maybree collection premium offering, a 20-mil rigid core SPC.”

According to Nate Hohenstein, director of strategic accounts, this was only a continuation of the success Novalis had in the fourth quar-

ter of 2019. “We finished 2019 very strong,” he said. “Our team placed 1,000 displays at specialty retail in 2019. A brand-new display and brand-new concept we call the Flooring Design Center houses all of our residential products. Getting that on the street meant that we started to see the dividends pay in Q1.”

Driving that growth was the Serenbe collection, which consists of 12 tiles and 12 planks that are available in either rigid core or glue down for a total of 48 SKUs. “That is by far our No. 1 selling line,” Hohenstein said.

Despite the industry slowdown in late March and April due to COVID-19, Novalis is still trending up for the year. “We’ve had weeks of spikes; we’ve been down and then we’ll spike back up to a normal run rate every other week,” Hohenstein explained. “But we’re back at the run rate that we were seeing for the first three months of the year.”

Wellmade breaks ground on rigid plant in Georgia

As part of its “Made in the USA” initiative, Wellmade Performance Flooring has expanded its manufacturing operations to Bartow County, Ga., with its first domestic production facility to manufacture rigid core vinyl and other products. The company plans to invest \$35 million in capital improvements at the new 328,000-square-foot facility, which will open in three phases.

“With its deep roots in the flooring industry, Georgia provides an excellent pro-business environment for Wellmade’s expansion to the East Coast,” said Richard Quinlan, senior vice president sales and marketing, Wellmade. “We look forward to providing a superior customer experience while decreasing lead times to our growing customer base.”

Wellmade worked closely with the Georgia Department of Economic Development to secure the build for lease agreement, which promises to be an economic windfall for residents in and around the Cartersville area.

“It’s a pleasure to welcome this family-owned business to Georgia,” said Georgia Governor Brian Kemp. “I’m confident the move will benefit Wellmade significantly, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities this creates for the hardworking folks in and around Bartow County.”





The first of the three phases commences June 2021, and will have a capacity of 3 million square feet. In preparation for that, Wellmade said it plans to fill more than 100 positions across all levels, from management to engineering and production. By phase three, Wellmade expects to employ about 200 people and increase monthly production beyond 6 million square feet.



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educating the industry

Qualifying customers properly

BY CHRIS COLTRAN



Having spent more than 28 years in our industry—and having had the opportunity to train tens of thousands of RSAs ranging from highly experienced to brand new—I have seen firsthand so many of the challenges that salespeople deal with on a daily basis. Of these many challenges, I want to address the qualifying step in the selling process. With so much emphasis put on product knowledge, it's easy to see why qualifying gets overlooked. Many RSAs just want to start talking about product as soon as possible, because that's where the majority of their training has been and where they tend to feel the most comfortable.

While talking about products is comfortable for the RSA, it is quite the opposite for the client. Chances are



pretty good that your prospect hasn't purchased flooring in more than 10 years, if at all. So now you are speaking a foreign language to them. To not take a moment to first qualify your client is a big mistake and a huge waste of your time. It's akin to proposing marriage before first going out on a date!

Time is money. It's a non-renewable resource that you can't get back, so be sure to use it wisely. Is your potential client a tire kicker? Or is she someone who intends to make a purchase? Before you know the answer, you first need to qualify her, meaning you need to ask qualifying questions to get to know her better. This can be accomplished by asking the typical "what, where, why, when, who and how" questions.

As you proceed with your line of questioning to qualify the client, it's important to not confuse the term "qualifying" with "prejudging." While qualifying is a process designed to glean information through a conver-

sation with a client based on a series of relevant questions, prejudging is when you make a determination about your client based on observations, either visual or verbal, and not on solid information.

Most people have probably been prejudged at some point in their life. These prejudgments are based on frivolous things such as: where we are from, how we talk, where we live, the vehicle we drive, where we work, where we went to school (or if we even went to school), how we dress, our accents or expressions, etc.

In sales, it's dangerous to qualify your customer by making assumptions based on superficial assessments.

Remember, people are all individuals. Believing you can observe a few details about someone and be able to determine their income level, education level or their potential as a client is ludicrous. RSAs should worry less about whether they think their client can afford something and more about showing products that meet the needs of their clients.

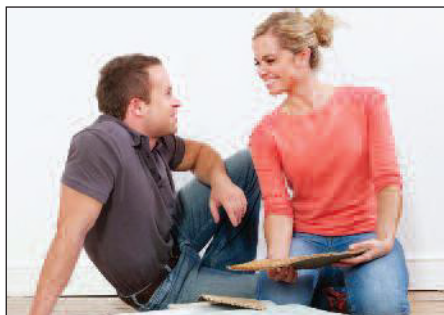
In my popular books, "Selling to your Grandmother" and "Grandmother Philosophy," I encourage retail salespeople to treat every customer as if she were their own grandmother. You wouldn't lie to her, cheat her or take advantage of her, and you certainly wouldn't sell her something that you wouldn't buy. You love your grandmother and you would treat her like your best customer. While you would certainly qualify her, you would not prejudice her. Remember, just because Granny's hair is purple, doesn't mean her wallet isn't green. She is standing in your store and she has money to spend on your products. Treat her with the respect she deserves.



Chris Coltran is the president of C2 Coaching & Training, providing sales coaching, custom sales training and customer service courses. For more information, visit chriscoltran.com.

RETAILERS REACT

How would you describe today's consumer—serious buyer or tire kicker?



Flooring retailers say consumers are in a great buying mood and willing to invest on home improvement projects.

“Since March 2020, we have seen an influx of intentional buyers. We feel homeowners are motivated to complete their projects, largely due to staring at their undesirable flooring for months and simply ready to make the improvements. We feel social distancing measures have put a damper on the tire kicker numbers, which we really cannot complain about. An intentional buyer is the most optimal buyer for us.”

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

“I am feeling resurgence in consumers entering our store, more so than ever before. If someone has left the safety of her home to get in the car and drive to our store and enter our doors, they are seriously going to invest in flooring. We better show her she has come to the right place and the right people.”

—Cathy Buchanan, Independent Carpet One Floor & Home Westland, Mich.

“Since we were allowed to reopen on June 5, we've been exceedingly busy. The consumer is in a great buying mood, and possibly because of our great reputation it seems that they've been waiting for us to open. Some had forecast a pent-up desire, but what we have seen the past few weeks is certainly beyond expectations.”

—Steve Weisberg, Crest Flooring Allentown, Pa.

“We are seeing today's flooring consumer is a serious buyer. They know what they want and are taking advantage of the great financing offers available. Also, they are looking to make a quick decision so they can get the project done.”

—Jason Waggoner, ICC Floors Indianapolis, Ind.

“Right now, since we have moved to appointments only, our close ratio is around 80%. People who put the effort to come in and wear a mask and gloves are serious buyers. That is a big commitment. We are finding our close ratio is through the roof, and our salespeople are not wasting a lot of time with tire kickers. This is the most serious buyer we have ever seen by far, which is one positive among this big mess.”

—A.J. Boyajian, A.J. Rose Carpets & Flooring Burlington, Mass.

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.

July 13-17 CFI 1-Week Resilient

The one-week CFI Residential Resilient course is a comprehensive overview of basic residential resilient installation beginning with how to approach a customer's door and ending with how to leave the job site
Forney, Texas
Contact: John McHale; jmchale@cfiinstallers.org; 816.231.4646; cfiinstallers.org

July 27-31 CFI 1-Week Hardwood/Laminate

The one-week CFI Hardwood/Laminate course is a comprehensive overview of basic residential hardwood/laminate installation beginning with how to approach a customer's door and ending with how to leave her home
Forney, Texas
Contact: John McHale; jmchale@cfiinstallers.org; 816.231.4646; cfiinstallers.org

Aug. 11-13 NWFA Intermediate Installation + CP Testing

Three-day, in-depth training course. Prerequisites: 1 year of installation experience or attendance at the Basic Installation School or principles of wood flooring, plus completion of the NWFA University Installation Safety course
Chesterfield, Mo.
Contact: education@nwfa.org; 800.422.4556

Aug. 18-20 NWFA Intermediate Sand & Finish + CP Testing

Three-day, in-depth training course. Prerequisites: 1 year of installation experience or attendance at the Basic Installation School
Chesterfield, Mo.
Contact: education@nwfa.org; 800.422.4556

POINTS OF INTEREST

► **The National Association of Realtors (NAR)** reported a record comeback for May pending home sales as many COVID-19 restrictions were eased last month. The latest Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI), a forward-looking indicator of contract signings, jumped 44.3% to 99.6 in May. This is the highest month-over-month gain in the index since the series initiated in January 2001. “This has been a spectacular recovery and goes to show the resiliency of American consumers and their ever-green desire for homeownership,” said Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. “This bounce back also speaks to how the housing sector could lead the way for a broader economic recovery.”



The market, however, still needs more supply. “More home construction is needed to counter the persistent underproduction of homes over the past decade,” Yun noted.

► **Businesses' payrolls increased** by 2.37 million in June following a revised 3.07 million gain in May that

was previously reported as a decline, according to ADP Research Institute data. The hiring reflects a rebound in economic activity following pandemic-related shutdowns that brought an end to the longest-running expansion earlier this year. While fiscal and monetary stimulus are helping the economy regain its footing, a gradual improvement in demand amid a pickup in coron-

avirus cases indicates the job market will take time to recover to pre-recession levels. Economists had expected the ADP report to show 2.85 million jobs added. The biggest additions came in leisure and hospitality, construction and trade and transportation.

► **Outlays for construction projects** fell 2.1% in May at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1.36 trillion, according to a Commerce Department report. Spending in April was revised to a 3.5% fall from the prior estimate of a 2.9% drop. Spending on private construction projects dropped 3.3%, offsetting a 1.2% increase in outlays on public projects. Spending on both residential and non-residential construction products such as manufacturing and power plants fell.



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 **MERCIER**
The original prefinished wood flooring

Ties to fashion, interiors inspire tile design

By Megan Salzano

Fashion and home trends have long inspired tile design. In fact, tile's ties to these industries can be traced back centuries while also seen represented on the hottest runways and inside the trendiest homes of today. It's a love affair that has not waned and is projected to live into the future indefinitely.

As such, today's tile makers often keep a close watch on evolving fashion and interior designs in order to develop coordinating collections that reflect those changing inclinations. "As a solid starting place, we keep a close eye on the fashion industry," explained Laura Grilli, lead product designer for the Daltile brand. "Looking at the fashion of other cultures is another great source of inspiration. We are also attentive to current and upcoming trends in the world of interior design—and then we creatively think about how to translate these looks into tiles."

However, the need to seek out new fashion trends and interior styles is not only important for the tile maker, but the tile retailer as well. "It is always advantageous for a retailer to be educated on fashion and style trends and how tile is the ideal medium to replicate these designs, patterns, textures and colors," said Mara Heras, vice president of marketing, Emser. "Customers are often looking for something stylish and highly desired that will add value to their space as well as meeting their own personal look."

Below are just a few of the latest tile looks with links to this year's fashion/interior design trends.

Seamless, continuous design

Daltile's Panoramic Porcelain Surfaces: Calacatta Topaz



"Creating seamless, continuous design is currently one of the hottest trends in interior design. New homes feature large, open floor plans that are perfectly served by the level of style, design and luxury that extra-large format tile and slabs provide."

—Laura Grilli, Daltile

Foundational pieces

Emser's Borigni Beige



"For many, their fashion statement is built around foundation pieces accented with more trend-driven accents."

—Mara Heras, Emser

Floral forms

Artistic Tile's Garden Party



"A continuing fascination with geometric, foliate and floral forms—all of these we have in common [with the world of couture.]"

—Roy Marcus, Artistic Tile

Curvilinear shapes

Crossville's Cursive wall tile



"A couple years ago, we noted the trend of curvilinear shapes. We observed this shift across interior and runway fashion. This inspired us to envision a new collection with these unexpected circles and curves."

—Scott Jones, Crossville

Boho style

MSI's Kenzzi line



"[One] fashion trend is the boho style. Very casual yet modern, very similar to the modern farmhouse style we are seeing in home interiors."

—Emily Holle, MSI



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Vivid Introspective from Karastan is a high-styled product made from SmartStrand fiber.



Masland's Mesa Bella is a textural pattern with a striated effect and exceptionally clean finish.



Find Your Comfort, shown here, is available in Shaw's reimagined 'Color that Speaks to You' retail colorwall.

Better goods equal higher profit margins

By Ken Ryan

While carpet's footprint in the home has shrunk in the past decade, the trend has allowed better, higher-end goods to thrive within residential settings. Mill executives cite two reasons for this shift: 1) with carpet mostly relegated to the bedroom, consumers want a nicer look in that space; and 2) with most hard surfaces priced above carpet, homeowners are willing to consider carpet at a higher price point than before.

There are other factors at play as well, including the abundance of carpet products featuring styles and patterns not seen previously. "Twenty years ago, solid color beige cut pile ruled the day," said TM Nuckols, president of the residential division of The Dixie Group. "Today, we have an incredible number of patterns, loops and differentiated looks. Patterns have grown significantly and probably comprise 25%-30% of industry sales. In the higher end market, patterns are closer to 50% of the sales. Colorations have changed significantly as well. Instead of plain, solid color carpet, today we have tonals, multi-colors, striated effects and combinations of these, which is giving the consumer some amazing color lines to work with."

For select areas of the home where carpet remains, consumers are apt to make a design statement. "So, they will often choose a stylish pattern, a unique styling technique or a luxurious, plush carpet that will create a very enriching experience," said Luanne Holloway, head of product development for Southwind. "And for this, they are willing to purchase better goods. Within the better goods segment, carpets that provide layers of texture and color—and patterns in geometrics and organics are trending."

With such a diverse portfolio of differentiated visuals, the consumer has the ability to make the

right decisions for her specific budget and lifestyle—whether it is a value price point or high end. After a two-month lull in March-April due to the COVID-19 pandemic, executives say the market is regaining its equilibrium. "We are seeing a return to pre-COVID-19 trends that have given us a more positive outlook for the balance of the year," said Teresa Tran, vice president Shaw Floors retail channel. "Although the trends have been consistent across all of our collections, our better/higher-end goods are seeing a quicker rebound from the market. This could indicate that, after months of making the home a safe haven, consumers are not compromising on their selection and choice of flooring needs."

RSAs incentivized

With hard surfaces claiming a dominant position in the home, there is less replacement business going on, which hurts the carpet category. As a result, unit volume is down, and the only surefire way to maintain or grow revenue is to sell a higher priced product (starting at \$14-\$15 per square yard wholesale). In that vein, retailers and RSAs are incentivized to push higher-end goods. "We have a consumer who wants something to complement the hard surface flooring running through her home and has many great options to choose from with today's loops, patterns and colorations," Nuckols explained. "And she is open to higher price points, which the retailer and RSA should be pushing. Within her budget, she can get a nylon or wool product that will last a long, long time, and she will be a very happy consumer. This is a scenario for higher-end carpet to thrive, which we have seen over the last several years and expect to continue going forward."

Following is an overview of some 2020 introductions that target the high end of the market:

Anderson Tuftex

At one time patterned looks were primarily reserved for upper-end markets in wool. Today, the convergence of fiber and machine technology gives mills like Anderson Tuftex the ability to create statement designs offering the consumer affordable luxury. "Whether you are carpeting a



Southwind's Serene Retreat features an LCL carpet pattern and is made of the company's So Soft PET yarn.

room or designing a rug or staircase runner, we have beautiful options in a variety of price points," said Lisa Lux, director of soft surface R&D.

This year, Anderson Tuftex introduced four designs from its Yin collection: Private Retreat, Ming, Aristocrat and Artifact. All are constructed with the newest in machine technology and the right fiber luster, allowing for a wool-like visual in Anso nylon.

The Dixie Group

EnVision66 nylon fiber, which creates great margin opportunity for retailers, is a common fiber used across all three brands of TDG. For Dixie Home, Finery is a new pattern product that offers a

new twist on the classic pin dot with tonal colorations.

For Masland, Mesa Bella is a textural pattern with a striated effect and exceptionally clean finish. Made with EnVision66 fiber in 40 tonal colors, this product is a real money maker for the retail sales associate and retailer, Nuckols said.

For Fabrica, Stratus is a new luxurious pattern constructed with EnVision66 nylon fiber featuring an overall abstract pattern with a subtle tonal effect and striking color line.

Phenix

Modern Contours has been successful in bringing fashion-forward design and textures with the enhanced protection of Microban antimicrobial treatment at an affordable price. Two styles that make a bold statement are: Bespoke, featuring patterning inspired by the Japanese Shibori art form; and Elegance, which delivers line work reminiscent of subway tile in earthy tonal colors.

Mohawk/Karastan

Deco Impressions, Featured Legacy, Vivid Connection and Vivid Introspective are examples of products from Karastan's KaraLoom collection. "They are high style, beautiful, trending colors and differentiated from what is currently available to the masses," said Jamie Welborn, vice president of residential carpet product development for Mohawk. "In addition, they are made out of a premium fiber, SmartStrand. The consumer sees craftsmanship that is beautiful and is willing to pay more for this because it is not just another beige cut pile."

Shaw

The Caress collection has been reimagined with new patterns

and modern accent colors designed for the premium consumer. Featuring refined Anso nylon styles in wall-to-wall or rug options, Caress pairs with The Gallery, a new premium hardwood collection from Shaw Floors.

The Shaw Floors Anso Colorwall has been an anchor in retail showrooms for more than 20 years, and has been reimagined to 'Color that Speaks to You,' exclusive to the Shaw Flooring Network.

Southwind

The Classic Traditions pattern collection is a line of better goods made of Southwind's own So Soft PET that offers a range of stylish patterns in a variety of trending textures, colors and design styles. "Our new Celestial collection is a unique, upscale pairing of carpets that is 100% solution dyed with the look of more costly space-dye styling," Holloway said. "Orion and Capricorn are made of our So Soft PET with our exclusive ColorSurgeSD yarn. This new yarn system is designed with premium color separation and just the right amount of color pop for extra appeal."

Stanton

Stanton Carpet introduced a slew of offerings across its family of brands in June. These include Stanton Street, Antrim, Rosecore, Crescent and Hibernia—all performance-based products that offer retailers high margin opportunities.

Through style innovation, Crescent has created strong demand for highly decorative flat woven stripes; it has now developed three new and distinct designs to the Tailor Made collection. Also from Tailor Made is Varkala Quadra, a 15-foot hand loomed carpet utilizing a UV stabilized polysilk fiber. The ultra-supreme performance product mixes high style and low maintenance, for use indoors or out.

lisbiz strategies

You can't put a price tag on peace of mind

Businesses around the country are beginning to gradually reopen. The question now is, what's the best way to welcome customers back in your store?

If you're nervous and feel stressed, you're not alone. Your customers will be watching your every move and looking at all your surfaces. Your customers are likely to be skeptical and even apprehensive, in some cases. However, you can score lots of points by doing it right. For many retailers, this is the perfect time to provide extraordinary customer service. There are a few things you can do to show your customer that you're paying attention and that you care.

In this day and age, customer service is all about safety and cleanliness. It's time to tear down the sign that reads, "Closed because the state said we have to" and replace it with a cheerful welcome message. If you are still

SOME BUSINESS OWNERS ARE FOCUSING ON WAYS TO BE MORE 'ESSENTIAL' TO THEIR CUSTOMERS IN CASE ANOTHER SHUTDOWN IS NECESSARY.

closed, I would wash the windows and post a message saying, "We will see you soon!" It would be even better if you could stop by your store daily, clean up the outside, plant some flowers and put up a motivational quote on your sign. You want the customers to think you've been waiting for them.

Case in point: There is a nursery by my house that does a countdown until they open rather than a sign that says, 'Closed until further notice.' The closer it gets to the opening date, the more flowers or bright colors on the sign. It looks like they can't wait for their customers.

While you're waiting for the go-ahead from your local officials, think about ways to spruce up your business. How about giving your store a cleaning that your mother would be proud of. Perhaps a fresh coat of paint, at least in the bathroom. And when you do officially open, make sure you have plenty of paper towels,



LISBETH CALANDRINO

soap and hand sanitizer. However, I would go easy on the disinfectant; you don't want the place to smell like bleach when customers walk in the front door. But you should disinfect your samples, get rid of the ripped ones and get some new racks if you need them. Clean up your desks and bring home your old boots left from the winter.

If business is good, continue what you're doing—although, it could be more difficult with the new rules. If you have fewer customers and are afraid you can't make it, consider closing. It might be a good time to try to get out of your lease, close for a few months or move altogether. For example, my friend who owns a restaurant decided she can't turn a profit serving fewer customers, so she decided to close and focus on two other locations she runs.

Some dealers are learning to survive by becoming more creative. Some business owners I know are focusing on ways to be more "essential" to their customers in the event another shutdown is necessary. For instance, a friend of mine added some groceries, cleaning supplies and even toilet paper to become essential. Another friend added a cookie business, Cookie Therapy. Everyone is crazy about her cookies and they've gotten tremendous publicity.

Lastly, think of ways to connect with more of your customers virtually. Try using video technology to record your showroom, and try to get as much done over the phone as possible. Just look at what's happening in other industries; auto dealerships are videoing the cars in their lots and not allowing customers to test drive or go in the showroom. My friend says it's not hurting his sales because customers understand everything is being done for their safety—and yours, too.

Lisbeth Calandrino has been promoting retail strategies for the last 20 years. To have her speak at your business or to schedule a consultation, contact her at lcalandrino@nycap.rr.com.

Parkay Floors comes of age amid crisis

By Ken Ryan

When many flooring suppliers pulled back during the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic, Parkay Floors swung into action and seized a market opportunity.

The Sunrise, Fla.-based supplier of hard surfaces and sundries kept its retail partners well stocked at a time when inventory levels were strained. Parkay was able to deliver up to 100,000 square feet of product to its retailer network across four states (The Carolinas, Georgia and Florida) during the height of the pandemic. To ensure safety precautions were met, Parkay sent packages complete with sanitized samples, wipes, gloves and masks to its dealer base of 3,600, which includes CCA Global Partners.

The result: Parkay had its best month in company history, going back 14 years, in June. "We have combinations of products that we offer our dealers that helped us grow in a pandemic," said Juan Molina, CEO. "Our success is not luck. We have worked very hard to get to this point."

Parkay's hard surface portfolio runs the gamut from waterproof vinyl to engineered hardwood and porcelain. It maintains a small collection of four to six SKUs in each line but has extensive inventory within each assortment. "Retailers can count on us to have inventory, and installers love to install our products, which have the Unilin click system," Molina said.

The company sources from Cambodia, Malaysia, Turkey and Switzerland. Many of its sundries

are made in the USA, and its main warehouse is in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Its retail partners praised Parkay for its ability to adjust quickly and keep current. "They are able to turn on a dime and will stop selling a line if it is not working and switch to something else," said Kent Copeland, owner of Floors Direct, with three stores in South Florida. "Being nimble has given [Molina] the edge. He's never out of stock, which is a

day, if not within two days, and they carry the products we sell."

Travis Carlson, owner of Carlson's Flooring America, Fort Myers, Fla., said Parkay is extremely proactive in dealing with its retail partners. "Most reps today are order takers; theirs aren't. Parkay is very different in that they are always pushing product specials, offering something exciting. They don't have one shtick. They work with all the independent retailers to see what makes them tick, whether it is doing the sampling different or repricing a line. It's not cookie cutter, and it works."

Parkay's offerings are diverse and do not follow the usual acronyms found in today's waterproof products. Some examples:

XPS Flooring. XPS stands for extreme polymer stone. This 100% waterproof layered material is made of stone powder and polymers that will not show small imperfections, according to the company. What's more, the top layer offers 3D printing technology, which adds depth and realism, durability and high performance.

XPR Flooring. Parkay positions its Xtreme Polymer rigid product—which features an extra dense rigid core—as the next generation of plastic composite flooring.

WPL Flooring. This waterproof performance laminate earned the name based on its resistance to spills and outstanding performance in wet areas, according to Parkay. WPL's aluminum oxide anti-scratch finish makes it ideal for high-traffic areas.

XPL Flooring. The Xtreme Polymer layer has a rigid core that has gone through several improvements on stability and performance.

RCB Floors. This stress-free rigid core board was designed to provide optimal density and dimensional stability. The 100% waterproof collection can be installed over most existing hard surfaces and will not telegraph minor subfloor imperfections, the company said.

Laminated. As the name implies, the laminated line is made of compressing several layers of materials ranging from HDF and other conglomerated wood, decorated with a high-tech photographic printed paper on top to simulate real wood.

"WPL came out at the beginning of the year, and it has been growing non-stop," Molina explained.



Juan Molina, CEO of Parkay Floors, said the company completed its best month in company history in June.

problem with other suppliers right now because of the novel coronavirus."

Ethan Manning, who operates The Carpet Store in Tampa and St. Petersburg, Fla.—and stocks everything from Parkay's water-resistant laminate and rigid core products to laminate moldings and underlayments—said what's most unique about Parkay is its ability to tailor products to suit markets like his.

"They have a great ability to hire solid reps, and they keep in touch with Florida-specific looks and styles," he said. "They are located close to us and are able to service us most often the next

Canadian suppliers look to carve out their own

By Reginald Tucker

Some suppliers tout a high level of product quality and attention to manufacturing details; others cite innovations in staining and finishing technologies that accentuate hardwood's natural aesthetic attributes. Then there are those who say the key to success lies in tailored, go-to-market strategies that aim to drive brand awareness at retail.

These are just some of the approaches that several of the major Canadian hardwood flooring suppliers are taking as they seek to carve out their own respective niches in a hypercompetitive market. Following is an overview of the various approaches suppliers are leveraging to differentiate themselves in at the retail level.

Boa-Franc (maker of the Mirage brand)

Often considered the brand to which most others aspire, Mirage has earned a reputation for consistently providing high-quality hardwood flooring products that retailers can sell confidently. This is evidenced by the company's recent receipt of its 11th FCNews' Award of Excellence—which brings to 38 the total number of honors the company has earned since its inception. Boa-Franc has been named one of the Best Employers in Canada for 2016 and 2017 based on the results of the survey by Aon in Canada. The company was also the recipient of the highest distinctions the Canadian and Quebec government can bestow on businesses and organizations that successfully apply best business practices. In addition, Boa-Franc earned the Gold Trophy Award at the 2013 and 2018 Canada Awards for Excellence and the Grand Prix of Quality Award (Quebec) in 2012 and 2017.

While it's not the only quality



producer north of the border, the company aims to stand out from other brands that compete in the same tier/category of the market by executing at virtually all levels of the product development/manufacturing process. "Not only do we have a huge lineup in terms of styles, species, etc., but we also have the technology and means to properly service all segments of the market—retail, builder and commercial," said Jerome Goulet, product manager. "We can offer our customers flexibility in terms of custom colors as well as different merchandising options. Plus, it's all made 100% in North America."

Lauzon

Longevity is a common hallmark when benchmarking success. That holds true for most organizations, but it's especially relevant when it comes to hardwood flooring manufacturing. But it's not the only metric. Just ask David Lauzon Jr., director of sales for the 35-year-old company that bears his family name. The combination of product quality, innovation and environmental commitment has helped sustain growth and its reputation for more than three decades.

When asked to identify the company's primary keys to success, Lauzon cited three core elements. "The control of the product over the entire supply chain

from forest to floor, thereby guaranteeing to our customer constant supply, guaranteed quality and stability in pricing; our constant investments in innovation, especially with the Pure Genius finish—an innovative coating that purifies ambient air; and our environmental commitment to the preservation of the best construction material the planet has—hardwood."

Lauzon said it believes in the beauty of quality, and its floors are renowned for the high precision of their milling and the quality of their construction. The company's innovative Expert Engineered technology is said to be a builder's dream come true. The ¾-inch thick, 2-ply construction with a 5.2mm wear layer allows movement and installation on slightly uneven subfloors while reducing cupping. Wholly manufactured in Canada, the new Lauzon Expert construction meets the needs and requirements of contractors. "A hardwood floor that combines the rich look of solid hardwood floor with all the stability of a high-performance engineered hardwood floor," he said.

The beauty of Lauzon floors is protected with its unique Titanium Sunshield finish, which provides an ultra-clear finish and optimal protection against wear, scuffing, chipping and discoloration.



"Lauzon's Titanium finish has exceptional ability to absorb heavy impact without cracking and provides remarkable protection against scuffing and chipping," he said.

Mercier Wood Flooring

Some wood flooring companies are willing to compromise when it comes to lowering pricing and, subsequently, manufacturing standards, in order to compete with the likes of wannabe wood products such as LVT, WPC, SPC and even some hybrid offerings. Mercier is not one of them. It's niche and reason for success, according to Wade Bondrowski, director of U.S. sales, is its insistence on maintaining a stronghold in the middle- to upper-middle range of the market.

"As a company, we're sitting in the best place that we could be right now," he said. "If you're an entry-level to low-end producer, you are probably getting hurt by the LVT and multi-layer flooring products. Retailers are looking for products that can deliver higher margins that they can't necessarily shop. I think we've really bucked the trend."

For Mercier's retailer partners, it's all about generating the right return on investment. And that's where Mercier said it has the right solution. "When you're selling a product that offers profitability on a \$5 product vs. 30% on a \$2 product, obviously you're doubling your margins. For an RSA, why wouldn't you try to push the higher-quality product instead of just going to the path of least resistance?"

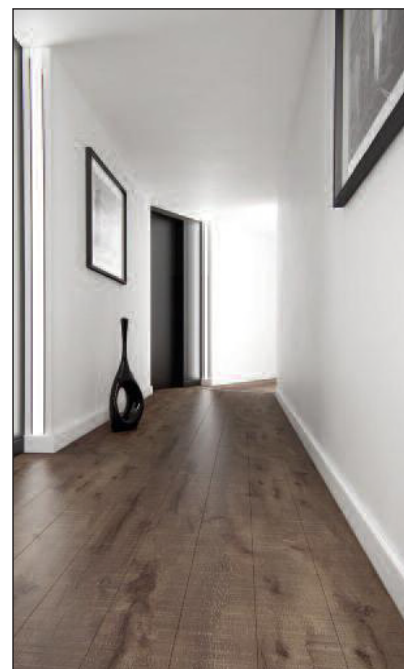
Opus Floors

In an age where so many manufacturers are focused solely on moving large volumes of product, Calgary, Canada-based Opus Floors just wants to make sure retailers have access to only those products they need to sell.

"I'm in the flooring business over 25 years because I love

flooring—not because I have to do it," said Vern Verkley, Opus Floors owner. "When Opus Floors started eight years ago, it wasn't just about making money. I started the journey to produce superior-quality engineered hardwood and other types of flooring to my own specifications, something I would love to put in my own home. Obviously, the goal of any business is to turn a profit, but the more important goal was to start to build something I could enjoy with people I enjoy working with, and to ultimately bring products to market that customers will enjoy."

This select product offering includes genuine engineered hardwood flooring as well as a collection of environmentally friendly cork flooring products designed to entice consumers, retailers, architects and designers looking for something out of the ordinary. "Most visuals currently available in cork resemble the natural cork look; with our ultra-high-resolution digital print program, we can offer retailers everything from wood visuals to concrete looks to natural mosaic patterns," Verkley explained. "But the best part is



Mercier extends spring sales promotion into summer

Montmagny, Quebec—Mercier Wood Flooring is extending its spring promotion until July 31, 2020, to allow more time for consumers to take advantage of the sale during this unprecedented COVID-19 situation.

The sale, which is open to participating Mercier Le Plus retailers across the U.S. and Canada, allows consumers to save \$0.75 per square foot on all purchases of Mercier wood flooring protected with either Mercier Generations or Generations Intact 2500 Greenguard gold certified finishes. (The only exception is yellow birch authentic-grade products.)

"There is no better time for consumers to treat themselves to the original prefinished wood floor-

ing for their homes," said Michel Collin, director of marketing, Mercier.

Joe Bell, third-generation owner of Bell Floor Covering in Philadelphia, has been selling Mercier for 15 years. He is among the Mercier Le Plus participating dealers. "The Mercier spring promotion gives consumers a great incentive to go toward high-end Canadian products," he said. "Mercier's turnaround time and product availability definitely make them the go-to brand. The Mercier line is easy to understand and sell; they have a wide range of styles, colors, widths and finish options to choose from. The per-square-foot rebate will definitely help to close more sales."

unique niche

the digital technology used in producing the visuals for the product offers fewer repeats in the patterns, making for a more beautiful, natural looking floor. Combine that with a nano-particle, commercial-rated finish, it essentially outperforms any product out there.”

Beyond manufacturing practices, Opus Floors is also taking a different approach to the market when it comes to reaching potential retail customers. The company is bent on duplicating its direct-to-dealer model that it currently operates in Canada.

Presently, Opus Floors maintains a network approaching 300 dealers in Canada. The company said it is confident it can replicate that success in America. In terms of logistics, products will be inventoried in Vancouver and Toronto. In fact, Opus Floors has already set up the logistics, so anyone looking to have product shipped will enjoy competitive freight rates. “We will be able to service any location in the U.S. within a week to 10 days,” Verkley said.

Wickham Hardwood Flooring

Quick-ship, customized orders delivered in a timely fashion as if they were in-stock items and keeping distributors and retailers apprised of special deals tailored for their individual markets. That’s the approach Wickham Hardwood Flooring has taken to set itself apart from other manufacturers in the marketplace.

“We introduced a bi-monthly mass email that went out to all of our customers to keep them abreast of what was going on production-wise,” said Paul Rezuke, vice president of U.S. sales. “We also offered specials as we built up some excess inventory that we made available to customers. This allows them to build up inventory and give them the financial protection they need. That was our niche that we applied successfully.”

Wickham is also looking to

stand apart from the pack by not caving in to pressures to expand its product offering with wood/rigid core hybrid floors. According to Rezuke, the company has built its reputation on providing high-quality, genuine hardwood flooring for years—and wants to keep it that way.

“The hardwood flooring industry has always faced challenges, even going back to laminate,” he explained. “We don’t feel the need to alter our strategies in light of the competition we’re seeing from LVT, WPC, etc. We have maintained a

straightforward approach, and it has served us well. We invest heavily in the Wickham brand, especially at all the major shows, and we have strong brand recognition in the market. Our grading standards have always been stricter for the most part, and we always had a reputation for high quality.

“We continue to provide that high quality at a reasonable price, and that has sustained us so far. In fact, if not for the pandemic, 2020 would have been probably our best year in the last four years.”



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Wickham expanded its offering with new white oak planks.

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Cause marketing

Continued from page 1

By definition, “cause marketing” is the cooperative effort between a for-profit company and a non-profit entity for their mutual benefit (not to be mistaken for corporate philanthropy or social marketing). Through cause marketing, profit-generating, powerful global brands have the resources to raise awareness of nonprofit organizations while also promoting their product. These mutual benefits can include the creation of social value, increased connection with the public, the communication of shared value as well as, of course, profit.

A genuine and well-executed cause marketing campaign is one of the most useful marketing campaigns for corporations and non-profits alike. A non-profit organization can gain increased funding, exposure and reliability by aligning themselves with a trusted brand, while corporations see increased brand loyalty, boost employee morale and raise sales by sponsoring a worthwhile, notable cause.

Following is a sampling of some of the causes supported by flooring suppliers as well as retail associations:

Armstrong Flooring

Armstrong Flooring has partnered with Good360, a global leader in product philanthropy and purposeful giving, to provide donated Armstrong Flooring products to non-profit organizations that help the needy and those recovering from disasters in local communities.

Since the start of the partnership in 2017, Armstrong Flooring has donated more than 1 million square feet of product to Good360, in turn helping dozens of community-based, non-profit organizations and responding to the urgent needs of recent national disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires.

“At Armstrong Flooring, we champion the resilient spirit

demonstrated by so many who have been impacted by, and are working to overcome, disasters or other challenging life circumstances,” said Brent Flaharty, senior vice president and chief customer experience officer for Armstrong Flooring. “By partnering with Good360, we have the ability to reach local non-profits with the products they need, when they need them, thereby strengthening the communities we serve. It’s comforting to know that our beautiful and durable resilient flooring products have the ability to provide hope and transform the lives of individuals who are truly in need.”

In addition to product donations, Armstrong Flooring continually invests in local communities through financial contributions made through the Armstrong Flooring Community Fund. Through this effort, Armstrong Flooring strives to make a meaningful impact in communities throughout the U.S. where it operates business and manufacturing facilities.

Cali Brands

Cali has a core group of non-profits it supports throughout the year by way of product donations, volunteer service and monetary support. These groups include Habitat for Humanity, San Diego Surfriider Foundation, The Humane Society, The San Diego Food Bank, the San Diego Blood Bank and Rady Children’s Hospital.

“Cali was founded on the premise that a successful company can—and should—be structured in a way that gives back to the planet,” said Milica Sapungin, Cali’s manager of human resources. “To that end, we have always incorporated sustainable practices both in the products we manufacture and in our daily operations.”

The causes Cali supports tend to align under four categories: providing housing, promoting animal welfare, improving respiratory health and protecting the environment. For example, each

year Cali contributes bamboo and vinyl flooring to the San Diego chapter of Habitat for Humanity. “This is a fantastic partnership because the new homes get quality flooring that looks great and is easy for residents to maintain, and Cali team members get a chance to volunteer on the job sites, installing the very floors they provide to customers,” Sapungin explained. “We can then promote the fact that premium Cali flooring was used in critical community housing and share images of the process and final looks.”

Cali has also donated bamboo and vinyl flooring to Rady Children’s Hospital in San Diego. Because its product is ultra-low VOC and FloorScore certified, it was able to be installed in the pediatric respiratory unit where staff study and treat children suffering from various illnesses affecting their breathing.

It’s not just people who are the beneficiaries of Cali’s charitable efforts. Each year, Cali sponsors the Society’s Walk for Animals where it displays its flooring and takes free, professional pet portraits for anyone walking the event. Pet owners can later download their pet’s photo from the Cali Facebook page, introducing them to Cali and its products in the process.

Cali’s causes also extend to the environment at large. Thanks to its collaboration with Surfriider Foundation, the company has participated in scores of beach clean-ups, sponsored many Surfriider campaigns and provided product donations and financial support.

“It is no accident that these endeavors partner well with what we are best equipped to provide as a flooring company,” Sapungin stated. “In determining where our time, skills and goods will be put to best use, we harness Cali’s strengths for the good of the community while demonstrating a credible narrative for our customers about how our company and products stand out.”

CCA Global Partners

Carpet One Floor & Home supports several causes on a national level, including the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF), the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation and the Homes for Heroes Foundation.

Through its Carpet One Welcomes Your Support campaign, the group sells pink ribbon welcome mats that support breast cancer research and awareness. Twenty-five percent of the sale price of these mats is donated to the BCRF.

In support of Tunnel to Towers, Carpet One Floor &



Mohawk has donated PPE as well as pet food supplies to help the ASPCA care for vulnerable animals and communities in need.

Home members provide the installation of all flooring in smart homes built by the organization and are significant fundraisers for the organization overall. The Carpet One Floor & Home T2T 5K team was last year’s top fundraiser.

The co-op’s newest partnership is with Homes for Heroes Foundation, a Canadian organization that provides caring, innovative and comprehensive solutions to veteran homelessness. Canadian Carpet One stores will sell custom-made hats and conduct fundraising to support this organization.

Then there’s the Hats for Heroes/Hats for our Bravest promotions, which are included in the group’s national promotions. How it works: Local members can purchase hats to sell in their local markets, and the proceeds go to the organization in their country.

“We support all these initiatives through social media and website content,” said Terri Daniels, vice president of public relations and communications, CCA Global Partners. “They share these makeovers with their followers, and Carpet One shares this content on our website and social media channels. These programs also give us ample opportunities for positive PR.”

Mannington

Mannington supports a wide range of causes, both local and national. In Salem, N.J., where the company is headquartered, Mannington has hosted the Art is Cool program for 18 years running. (This year’s event was done virtually in light of the pandemic.)

In addition, Mannington sponsors the Stand on a Better World scholarship, which relies on donations from associates and recognizes students who do extraordinary things in their communities. Mannington also sponsors two scholarships through the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The company also contributes time, talent and dollars to local United Way chapters.

On the contract side, Mannington Commercial

launched a partnership with Mercy Medical Angels, a group that aims to remove the barrier to medical care by providing air and ground transportation for patients with life-threatening conditions who cannot afford long-distance travel to receive health care.

How it works: For every square yard sold of the new Bloom Collection, Mannington Commercial will donate a percentage of the purchase price to their organization.

It doesn’t end there. In support of those who gave so much in their service to our country, Mannington partners with the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) and the Gary Sinise RISE Foundation to donate hardwood flooring for homes for disabled veterans.

Mohawk

Mohawk partners with several prominent organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Building for America’s Bravest, Sunshine on a Rainy Day, Susan G. Komen, The Ocean Cleanup, United Way and, most recently, The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). The society has expanded its work to meet the current needs of pet owners and the animal welfare community by launching the ASPCA COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Initiative. By providing access to free pet food, supplies, veterinary care, emergency boarding, information and crucial funding, the ASPCA is comprehensively addressing the most urgent needs of pet owners and animal shelters across the country, helping to keep animals safe and healthy.

In much the same way that Mohawk temporarily retooled its manufacturing facilities in Calhoun and Dalton to produce much-needed personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers, police and first responders, the company donated masks and shields to help animal care workers feel safe and comfortable while continuing to care for and protect animals across the country. During the pandemic,



Carpet One Floor & Home members provide the installation of all flooring used in support of the Tunnel to Towers initiative.

Mohawk produced a total of 155,000 gowns and 235,000 face shields. The company is no longer in PPE production.

“As Mohawk grows around the world, we bring with us a legacy of commitment to the communities in which our manufacturing facilities are located—the same communities our employees and their families call home,” said Karen Mendelsohn, senior vice president of marketing, Mohawk. “This strong commitment and our corporate philanthropic efforts are aligned with causes through which we can leverage our strengths and core capabilities.”

Phenix Flooring

Since 2013, Phenix Flooring has been proud to partner with United Way of Northwest Georgia. Phenix also supports the local United Way through annual corporate gifts and participation in activities such as the CEO Trike Race and Make A Difference Day. Phenix Flooring is proud to co-sponsor Make a Difference Day through the United Way of Northwest Georgia each year.

In addition, Phenix Flooring has been a Signature Sponsor of the American Heart Association’s

(AHA) Annual Heart Ball since 2018. The initiative is in support of research for heart disease, the No. 1 killer worldwide.

“We want to see a world free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke,” said Betsy Amoroso, senior director, corporate communications, Mannington Mills, parent company of Phenix. “The annual Heart Ball helps fund these initiatives through the AHA.”

Phenix and Mannington both are significant supporters of the Floor Covering Industry Foundation, an organization that helps families get back on their feet when battling catastrophic injuries, severe disabilities or other life-altering medical crises. Founded in 1981 by industry leaders, the 501(c)3 charitable non-profit helps those who have worked in the floor covering industry by providing direct grants for medical care and other basic needs.

Grants are awarded based on need for expenses such as medical care, medications, medical supplies and other expenses

directly related to beneficiary care, as well as food, shelter and utilities.

Shaw Industries

Shaw Floors supports several noble causes, but the one the company said is most near and dear to its heart is St. Jude



Armstrong Flooring has donated more than 1 million square feet of product to Good360.

Children’s Research Hospital. The partnership includes sponsorship of the St. Jude Dream Home Giveaway; a co-branded carpet cushion; a retailer promotion called “Give a Little, Change a Lot;” and a co-branded carpet tile collection named the Butterfly Effect. Shaw associates and customers also support St.

Jude in myriad other ways, including raising funds and running in the annual St. Jude Memphis Marathon. To date, the partnership has directly raised more than \$10 million for the kids of St. Jude.

“It is instantly clear when you visit St. Jude that it is a place of abundant creativity and considerable innovation,” said Scott Sandlin, executive vice president, residential division. “The doctors, nurses and other staff are engaged and excited about their work. What you see when you visit St. Jude is indeed almost magical—except that it isn’t magic. It is some of the most important scientific research benefitting not only the patients at St. Jude, but kids with cancer around the world.”

Beyond its support of St. Jude Hospital, Shaw Industries also has a long-standing and extensive partnership with the United Way, the company’s primary local giving partner. Through the United Way, company associates contribute to an array of local causes about which they feel passionate.

Shaw is then able to extend the impact of associates’ financial and volunteer contributions through corporate donations. Shaw associates are also central to local United Way operations, holding dozens of board seats and other volunteer positions.

Collectively, Shaw associates contributed more than 45,000 hours of volunteer service in a single year, including group volunteer projects and individual service commitments. “As the largest manufacturing employer in Georgia, with more than half of our associates based in the state, we support the United Way’s vision of ‘A world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives;” Sandlin said. “We believe in the power of United Way’s mission to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities to advance the common good.”

Shaw also stepped up in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic by working to make and deliver flooring products for critical shelter and infrastructure needs, including meeting tight deadlines for flooring needed for temporary medical facilities such as those in Reno, Nevada and New York City.

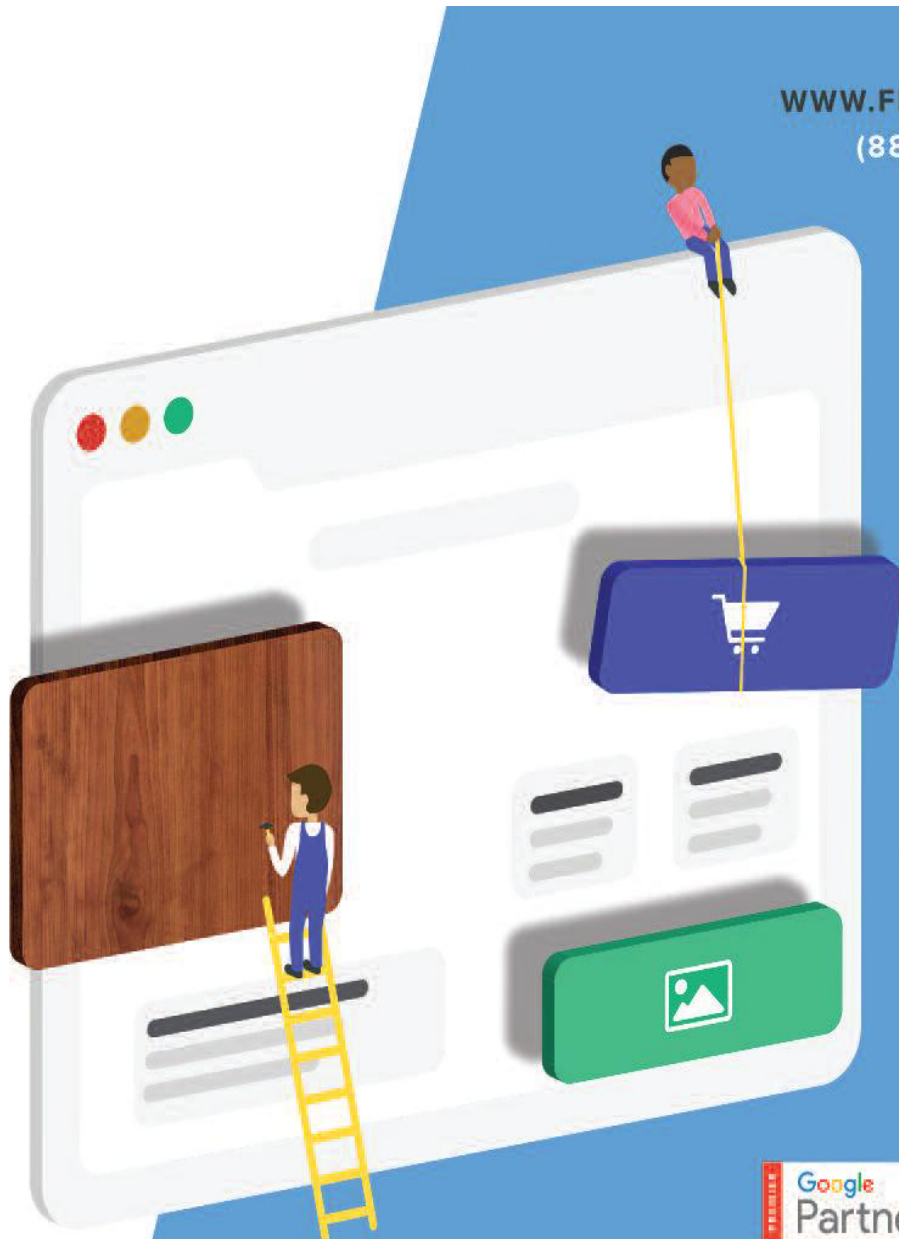
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Suppliers stick with tried-and-true glues

By Ken Ryan

Pity the poor adhesive. It's not enough just to be proficient at adhering to a surface. These days, top-performing glues have to be multi-taskers, flexible enough to work with dozens of flooring types, environmentally responsible and cure quickly enough so businesses can return in 24 hours or less.

Thanks to technology advances and proprietary formulas, manufacturers are coming to market with adhesives that can do all these things and so much more.

Following is a list of new adhesive products designed for the most demanding installation environments.

Bostik

Bostik's Ultra-Set SingleStep2 is a multi-use hardwood flooring adhesive offering high-performance adhesive, moisture control and sound-reduction membrane all in one.

Ultra-Set SingleStep2 offers a lifetime warranty for unlimited moisture vapor protection and also contains a proprietary thickness control spacer technology intended to maintain the proper membrane thickness during installation. Ultra-Set SingleStep2 is VOC free and features Bostik's Blockade antimicrobial protection, which inhibits the growth of bacteria, mold or mildew on the surface of the cured membrane.



DriTac Flooring Products

DriTac 7700 Easy Clean is a premium-grade, "green" sound and moisture control MS polymer wood flooring adhesive. Its single-component product can be used as an adhesive only or a 5-in-1 system solution that allows for a one-day, one-step installation. Installers can accomplish in one day what it typically takes two or more days to complete, according to Sean Collard, an installer with Costen Floors in Richmond, Va. Collard said Easy Clean has been "easy to use on the job site and offers superior grab in adverse job site conditions. We're very happy with the results and performance."

Easy Clean is used to apply solid wood plank, bamboo, multi-ply engineered plank, acrylic impregnated wood, plain-back parquet and recycled rubber. Made without isocyanates, this low-odor adhesive helps contribute to LEED credits. Easy Clean has been independently tested and certified by the Carpet and Rug Institute's (CRI) Green Label Plus Program for Indoor Air Quality (IAQ).



Mapei

Ultrabond ECO 373 is a high-performance adhesive for the installation of LVT and has been one of Mapei's best sellers, according to Jeff Johnson, Floor Covering Installation Systems (FCIS) product manager. "What makes Ultrabond ECO 373 so special is its performance package. Ultrabond ECO 373 starts with quick dry times and adds a full 12-24 hours of working time. This makes for very efficient LVT installation."

Johnson said installers trust the product's aggressive grab and resistance to high-humidity conditions, which is ideal for fast-track construction practices. "This product allows for flooring installation on concrete slabs that would otherwise require a moisture mitigation system or to wait for the slab to dry out for additional months," Johnson said.



Mohawk

Performance accessories by Mohawk provides a one-stop shop that makes it easy for retailers to offer shoppers a complete solution. With a variety of differentiated products, retailers also have access to innovative tools developed to make the job easier and faster with better results. Products such as Mohawk V-One are multi-functional. This 3-in-1 adhesive can be used as a releasable bond for sheet vinyl and residential LVT. It can also be used as a permanent bond for more robust LVT installations.

Mohawk V-One is capable of withstanding high moisture (99% RH) in concrete slabs.



Schönox

Schönox Protect is a universal resilient flooring adhesive that offers a bevy of benefits. First, the product is flexible and can be used with sheet vinyl, VCT, LVT, sheet synthetic rubber coverings, sheet linoleum, rubber cork granulated underlayments as well as artificial turf. In addition, Protect is moisture resistant to 95 RH and safe with qualities such as low VOC.

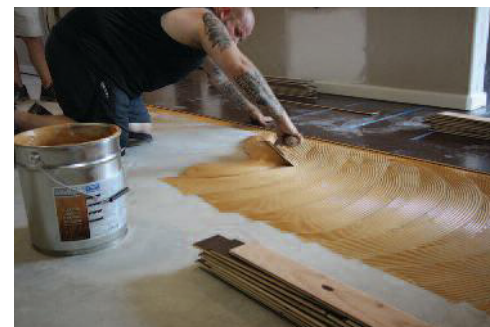
The product is also solvent-free and low odor. What's more, Protect is non-shrinking even in thicker layers, temperature resistant after curing and heavy duty with high strength ratings. It also offers easy application as well as the ability for indoor and outdoor use.



Stauf

Stauf's leading adhesive is WFR-930, which is popular among installers because it is so forgiving. "It totally eliminates hollow spots and it grabs so quickly," said David Ford, vice president of sales and marketing for Stauf USA.

The solvent-based adhesive qualifies for LEED points and cleans with any alcohol-based product. Ford said mineral spirits, acetone and rubbing alcohol are all acceptable cleaners even after cured and will not etch the finish. "WFR-930 increases productivity and resolves issues with bowed boards, low spots in subfloors," he explained. WFR-930 has an alcohol odor that dissipates very rapidly. "A painted room carries more odor for longer than does WFR-930," Ford noted. "It does not require rolling and spreads like a water-based adhesive. Our installers absolutely love it. This is by far our most requested adhesive."



Taylor Adhesives

Dynamic, a top seller at Taylor Adhesives, has been lauded by distributors and flooring contractors for the number of flooring surfaces it works with. Dynamic installs on over 30 flooring types—among them LVP, LVT, rigid core, rubber, sheet vinyl, VCT, broadloom and carpet tile, cork and even stair treads. Installers benefit from its cross-linking chemistry, ColorReady technology and fully repositionable installation with up to 12 hours of working time. Property managers and owners can benefit from Dynamic's immediate access to light traffic following installation.

Dynamic provides high-moisture tolerance (99%) and a waterproof bond. How good is Dynamic in a wet condition? The Taylor technical team subjected a sample of Dynamic holding LVP to concrete for over eight months—under water—and it's still holding with no re-emulsification of the adhesive, according to the company.



CCA Global

Continued from page 1

been the opportunity to watch the sessions that were possibly missed due to our work schedule and showroom traffic. Each session from the product runways to guest speakers to education days have all been recorded. And I won't lie—I am still catching up on many of the sessions because last week we were extremely busy and I was actually on the showroom floor with customers, so I missed the live sessions."

Indeed, that ability to stay on top of their business while not missing out on important convention material resonated with members. "It is a bit difficult to do these types of events while in the stores due to interruptions, so we elected to go off site to be able to concentrate on the event," said John Taylor, president of Taylor Carpet One Floor & Home, Fort Myers, Fla. "My opinion is this was well done and very well received."

New initiatives

The global pandemic has reinforced the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in homes and showrooms alike. To that end, CCA Global announced during convention the enhancement and expansion of its Healthier Living Installation System, with a new program called Neutralize. The installation process is said to destroy viruses and other contaminants before, during and after a flooring installation. Updating and expanding this program was already in the works prior to COVID-19; however, due to increasing health concerns, the CCA team said making the new program available for all CCA flooring groups was increasingly urgent. Buchanan, an early adopter of the Healthier Living Installation System, predicted Neutralize would be a "game changer."

DRIVE, a marketing automation platform first introduced to Flooring America and Flooring Canada members, is now rolling out to Carpet One retailers. DRIVE allows dealers to communicate with online leads and keep in contact throughout the purchasing process. "The beauty of DRIVE is it works even when our salespeople aren't, which give our members a leg up," Keith Spano, president of Flooring America and Flooring Canada, told FCNews.

Early planning

When coronavirus was just emerging in March, John

Gilbert, president of Carpet One Floor & Home, and Spano convened a meeting to rethink marketing plans and initiatives such as touchless transactions and DocuSign. "Ironic that the [March 10] meeting was not designed to deal with what eventually happened [the pandemic] but as it turned out we were so well positioned conceptually and strategically that we were ahead of this thing," Gilbert told FCNews. "They say luck is the residue of design. In this case, we got ahead of the curve."

During the early days of the pandemic, CCA Global was proactive in recommending

that its dealers apply for PPP loans. Spano said 83% of members received funding, which he called tremendous. "Members were appreciative of the guidance," he noted.

While some CCA retailers endured weeks of shutdowns and others never closed their showrooms, the overall consensus is that co-op members have fared well during the pandemic. After a down April and May relative to the year-ago period, business has surged in June. "Consumers have a large amount of open-to-buy resources available to them," Gilbert said. "Members are in a real good spot right now."

Spano said he was expecting a much slower sales ramp up than what has occurred. "It's not everyone, but I will tell you that with the vast majority of our members, the stores are busy," he said. "They are utilizing consumer financing and seem to be buying better products, which is good. And we are also watching our web traffic. As we continue to monitor, we are watching the sales grow."

Mike Foulk, owner of Foulk's Flooring America, Meadville, Pa., spoke for many members when he said, "We have a lot going on right now. We are riding the wave as much as possible."



Keith Spano

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Retail report

Continued from page 1

the year-ago period.

Other retailers say the commitment of today's shoppers is leading to higher close rates. "Our store beat the projected goal we set for May and June at the beginning of 2020," said Chris Green, owner of Great Southeast Flooring America, Melbourne, Fla. "Due to the COVID-19 crisis, people are investing in their homes. Usually, people would be spending money on vacations during the summer."

With few places to safely travel to—here or abroad—and with entertainment options like sports or Broadway not allowing spectators, consumers have stayed home more often and have the disposable income to be spent on projects such as flooring. "We have seen a real uptick in business since the Memorial Day holiday," said Eric Langan, president and owner of Carpetland USA (The Langan Group), with several locations across Iowa and Illinois. "I attribute that to some pent-up demand being released, coupled with the hard work and focus of our team members. I'm hopeful this positive momentum has some legs."

Even where traffic is lighter, customers are spending more per average ticket, dealers note. "The biggest surprise has been the size of the jobs—our average job increased by about 30%," said Eric Mondragon, hard surface buyer for RC Willey Home Furnishings, with 14 locations in four Western states. "Consumers who are coming in are serious buyers and not competitively shopping around as much."

After a desultory May that saw its business decline 40% from the year-ago period, California-based Carpet One Floor & Home Concord opened its showroom to customers June 1 and promptly produced its highest grossing sales month ever, according to Phil Meyer, owner. His business is currently up 17% over last year.

Even in states where COVID-19 is hitting daily highs and hospital capacity is being stretched, flooring business continues to flourish. "For us, May began a strong rebound that picked up steam in June," said Kelby Frederick, owner of My Flooring America, Flower Mound, Texas. "We are definitely seeing pent-up demand, but we are also seeing people willing to invest in their home so they can enjoy the amount of time they are spending there."

Nick Freadreacea, president

of The Flooring Gallery, with multiple locations across Louisville, Ky., is one of several retailers experiencing long backlogs—the result of being closed for weeks. Despite this, closing ratios are well above normal. "Everyone seems to be in a rush to get things done," he told FCNews. "May and June were better than we had expected, and retail is starting to build with serious buyers."

In that same vein, Lauren Voit, owner of Great Western Flooring in Naperville, Ill., said May and June fared better than expected based on the pandemic and economic uncertainty. "We

optimistic about the second half, acknowledging there are many unknown variables that could slow business down such as a major spike in coronavirus cases. There is also the specter of a Presidential election looming.

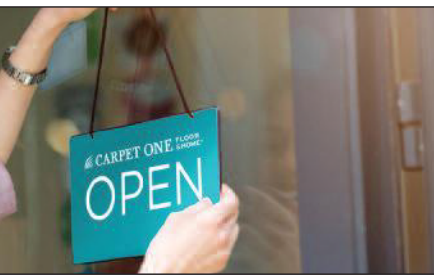
Asked for his outlook over the next quarter, Adam Joss, co-owner of The Vertical Connection Carpet One Floor & Home, Columbia, Md., quipped: "Outlook? What outlook? Buckle up. The next three-plus months will be a bumpy ride with ups and downs. The key is to survive the ride because there are certainly brighter days ahead."

To prepare for any possible slowdown, My Flooring America's Frederick has shifted his business to be more mobile to satisfy the customer's desire for a personal, touch-less buying experience. "That is paying dividends for us and we believe will help separate us from most of our competition," he said.

Abbey's Gregerson is also preparing for a slowdown in the second half.

"We realize no one knows the full effect the past three months are going to have on the economy as a whole, and we are therefore still preparing for a drop in business," he said. "With us preparing for that, at least we will not be caught off guard if that happens. We do not feel business will drop off dramatically, but enough so that it will make us have to work harder to get it."

Echoing a familiar refrain, Kevin Rose, owner of Carpetland USA and America's Flooring Store in Illinois, is expecting a strong third quarter based on his current projections. However, he admits the fourth quarter makes him a little nervous. "I'm staying positive—preparing for the worst and hoping for the best."



Carpet One Floor & Home Concord in California opened its showroom on June 1 and finished the month with the highest gross sales in its history.

have seen steady traffic in both the residential remodel and new construction sides of our business," she said. "Commercial activity has seen the biggest decrease with many of our projects on hold for new brick and mortar businesses, and restaurant work coming to an abrupt halt. One surprise is we are seeing carpet gain share of sales."

Denise Fike, co-owner of Fike Bros. Carpet One Floor & Home, with three Pennsylvania locations, said that while business is a "mixed bag" right now with the number of new leads down on the retail side, the good news is the close rate is much higher.

Outlook for remainder of 2020

Flooring retailers are cautiously

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(Third of three parts)

launched Flooring Success Systems in October of 2007—right before the U.S. economy tanked. I had the task of somehow helping my floor dealer clients survive what was to become the worst economy since the Great Depression.

A key marketing approach I taught (and still teach) follows the example of a chiropractor from Arizona who built three practices that grossed over a million dollars annually. He began to give seminars to teach other chiropractors how to duplicate what he had done. Attendees would often approach him and say, "I need a strategy to get 50 new patients a month." To which the million-dollar chiropractor would reply, "I don't know one strategy to get 50 new patients a month, but I do know 50 strategies to get one new patient a month—and I do all 50."

This is the kind of strategic thinking you need to apply to your dealership, especially during a recession. Let's look at some examples.

Market to your past customers. This is the foundation to recession-proofing your business.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN ONGOING STREAM OF POSITIVE REVIEWS, YOU'RE HURTING YOUR BUSINESS.

I covered this in depth in the last installment (FCNews, June 8.)

Market to your sphere of influence. This includes not only past customers, but past prospects (who didn't buy), friends, family, acquaintances, club members, members of your church, etc. It also includes anyone with whom you do business. Invite them all to subscribe to your newsletter.

Generate referrals.

Marketing to your past customers will automatically generate more referrals. But you should also train your sales team to ask for referrals after every installation. Publicly reward and thank your customers for referrals. Also develop referral partnerships with realtors, designers, remodelers, etc.

Sales system.

Develop and



JIM AUGUSTUS ARMSTRONG

maintain a step-by-step sales process that can be taught to your team, and for which they can be held accountable for using. It should create differentiation, position your team as trusted advisors, help you to command full margin and close more sales.

Online reviews. Reviews are simply online testimonials posted on a third-party platform, i.e., Google, Facebook, Angie's List, etc. Everyone reads reviews. If you don't have an ongoing stream of positive reviews, you're hurting your business. These can also be repurposed for use in other marketing: website, printed materials, social media, etc.

Five around. After every installation, market to the two homes on either side of your customer—and the three across the street. Have your installer leave door hangars with a special offer.

Ask for testimonials. When you complete an installation, take a photo of your

customer and get a testimonial. Create a postcard that includes their photo and testimonial along with a "special offer for neighbors of ___." Send it out to everyone in their neighborhood.

Employ an ambassador strategy. Have each of your employees bring in 25-50 (or more) names and addresses from their sphere of influence, and subscribe them to your newsletter. The employee gets a commission for anyone on their list who purchases from you.

Phone etiquette. I've lost count of how many times I've called a dealership, and the person who answered sounded disinterested or even grumpy. Train your team how to answer the phones (scripts are very helpful). They should sound friendly and welcoming—always.

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

MoreFlor seeks to change the resilient game

By Reginald Tucker

With so much competition in the resilient category today—especially within the LVT, WPC and SPC product subsegments—it’s easy to fall into the “me-too” trap. But one company, Akron, Ohio-based SRP Industries, is looking to change the game with a new iteration of resilient flooring based on advanced polymer technology.

The new product, called MoreFlor, features a combination of both natural and synthetic (non-toxic) materials to render a floor that offers end users a host of desirable attributes and properties ranging from durability to comfort underfoot. “We were looking to design the perfect flooring for residential and light office use,” said Shane Price, president. “It was developed from the ground up to be the ultimate fusion of function, style and durability. The goal was to design something that had the best of all worlds.”

Following is a closer look at the key attributes of MoreFlor:

Durability. “The first thing it had to be was long lasting,” Price

said. “You can replace a floor because design styles change, or for other reasons, but we didn’t want customers to ever have to replace something because it wore out. MoreFlor is designed to last for decades.”

Visual appeal. MoreFlor aims to mimic the look of in-demand natural materials such as hardwood and tile. Beveled planks come in a 6 x 48-inch format, which accentuates aesthetic properties such as graining. “MoreFlor won’t warp, cup, shrink or grow like wood, but it has the look of natural wood,” Price explained.

Comfort underfoot. Thanks to its elastomeric properties, MoreFlor provides a comfortable surface for consumers to walk on. Tricia Lionetti, the first residential customer who had the product installed in her home earlier this year, concurs. “MoreFlor looks

great and is easy to maintain,” she said. “I am still amazed how comfortable it is to walk on compared to other floors.”

Sound dampening. In much the same way that cork flooring provides resiliency while mini-

contain phthalates—plasticizers put in vinyl to make it softer. Other resilient products contain PVC, a known carcinogen. MoreFlor doesn’t. “Toxic substances are absent in this product,” Price stated. “They don’t belong in our office spaces, they don’t belong in our homes.”

According to Price, MoreFlor is inherently hygienic due to its antimicrobial content, which is designed to inhibit the growth and proliferation of microbes.

The technology is actually incorporated within the matrix of the product as opposed to a coating or other topical treatment.

Installs easily.

MoreFlor was developed to be simple enough for the handy homeowner to install and familiar for the professional floor layer. What’s more, it can be installed over any underlayment, includ-

ing plywood or luan in residential settings or concrete in commercial. “If you can install LVT, you can install MoreFlor,” said Steve Eickelman, vice president of Ryan Carpet Sales & Service, Youngstown, Ohio.

Low maintenance. Designed with busy consumers in mind, MoreFlor can easily be cleaned via wet mop. “Because it’s an elastomer, it will not stain like carpet or grout,” Price explained. “You can spill anything on it and just wipe it up. Another big advantage is you don’t have to wax it or seal the grout.”

Made in the USA. MoreFlor is produced wholly in the U.S. at the company’s plant in Akron, Ohio. This not only translates into faster delivery times for retailers, but a more stable supply of product at an accessible price point. (Suggested manufacturer retail price is between \$5.29-\$6 per square foot, allowing elbow room for distributors and retailers to make margin.)

“Even though it’s in that price range of the LVT, we believe firmly it’s a far superior product,” Price said. “It’s a completely new game changer for residential.”



MoreFlor, a new product from SRP Industries, offers the visual appeal and performance attributes of competing natural products without the shortcomings.

mizing noise transfer, MoreFlor’s cushioning properties also offer benefits in the form of sound attenuation.

Health benefits. Some resilient floors on the market

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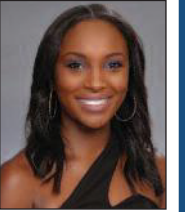
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