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Must-have new products score points with dealers

Despite the impact of the pandemic on the global supply chain, retailers were able to find ways to get their hands on hot new products that consumers demanded in 2021.

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**DIGITAL ACCESS IS INCLUDED**

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## 2022 Executive Forecast



## INDUSTRY LEADERS BULLISH ABOUT THE PROSPECTS

The flooring industry's top executives are forecasting a sales increase between the mid and high-single digits in 2022, saying consumer demand will continue to be very strong for home improvement projects. The projection comes at the tail end of 2021, which has been a record-setting year for many flooring dealers. Their optimism comes despite myriad challenges facing the industry: supply chain woes, inflation, labor shortages and ongoing COVID-19 variants—issues likely to persist well into 2022, but not enough to derail flooring's momentum.

Coverage begins on page 18.

## Retail report

## A record (crazy) year for many top flooring dealers

By Ken Ryan

Some flooring retailers have referred to 2021 as the “best/worst year ever”—a record sales campaign achieved despite myriad challenges that hamstrung many dealers, leading to record backlogs.

As the year winds down, 2021 will go down as one of the most wonderfully difficult years in the annals of the flooring trade, long-time retailers report. “To say our people and our customers are quite fed up with the situation would be an understatement,” said Craig Phillips, president of Barrington Carpet, who owns two other retail businesses in Ohio.

Despite his comments, Phillips' businesses achieved

record sales in 2021.

For Taylor Carpet One Floor & Home in Fort Myers, Fla., 2021 sales “have been beyond belief,” said John Taylor, owner. Less than two years ago, Taylor



RC Willey Home Furnishings in Salt Lake City is on track for a banner year despite shortened hours and fewer employees.

said he wondered if he would even have a business amid the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Here we are a year later

Continued on page 19

## Call for entries for 2022 ‘Best of Surfaces’

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Best of Surfaces contest. The award-based program is cosponsored by *Floor Covering News* and Informa Exhibitions, which owns and operates The International Surface Event (TISE). The competition has become the benchmark for new

product excellence and booth design.

The Best of Surfaces awards are designed to recognize those companies whose product, program, service, business practice or booth design are considered to be best in class. What separates Best of Surfaces from other awards programs is the fact that categories are not segmented by product type; rather, they focus on attribute. As such, the Best of Surfaces awards will cite products and programs in the following categories:

- Style & Design
- Innovation
- Technology
- Disruption
- Booth Design

Winning a Best of Surfaces award can truly drive product success on the retail floor, as



past winners will attest. Winners will receive:

- Recognition on the Surfaces and FCNews websites
- A customized Best of Surfaces 2022 logo for placement on all advertising
- An exquisite, custom-engraved award presented at the booth by members of show management and FCNews staff
- Coverage in FCNews

For exhibitors, consider this a call for entries. Please enter a product, program, service, busi-

ness practice or booth in the category you believe to be most reflective of the product's primary attribute. Suppliers are limited to one entry per category.

For more information or to enter, contact Michelle Swayze at Informa at 972.536.6449 or

[michelle.swayze@informa.com](mailto:michelle.swayze@informa.com).

Retailer panel judges will determine the winners of the 2022 competition. If you are a flooring dealer—past or present—who has an understanding of what constitutes excellence in the Best of Surfaces' five categories, FCNews wants to hear from you. Those interested in judging Best of Surfaces entries should contact Steve Feldman, publisher/editorial director, FCNews, via e-mail at [steve@fcnews.net](mailto:steve@fcnews.net).



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## IN THE NEWS

## Domotex Hanover '22 postponed

HANOVER, GERMANY—Domotex will not take place in January 2022, according to Deutsche Messe AG, organizers of the show.

"Domotex is particularly affected by the impact of the pandemic as the vast majority of Domotex exhibitors and attendees come from abroad," said Sonia Wedell-



Castellano, global director Domotex, Deutsche Messe AG. "However, given the current pandemic situation, international business travel is not expected to recover in the short term."

Show organizers said they are looking into a Domotex date later in the 2022 calendar year.

## New ProSource debuts in Texas

TYLER, TEXAS—ProSource Wholesale welcomed ProSource of Tyler to its member lineup. The new showroom offers thousands of flooring, kitchen and bath products to local home improvement trade professionals.

Miguel Silva Sr. and Miguel Silva Jr. are no strangers to the flooring industry. After successfully running their flooring installation service for the last 20-plus years, they said they are eager to make the jump to franchise owner. Miguel Silva Sr. has been a trade pro member of ProSource showrooms in the Dallas/Fort Worth area for many years. "The great quality of products offered and the relationships they build with members like me, along with the strong support from ProSource National, made me feel very comfortable with taking the leap of becoming a ProSource Wholesale franchise owner," Silva Sr. said.



Celebrating over 30 years of experience catering to the unique needs of its members, the company said it aims to be a business partner dedicated to helping its trade pro members achieve their professional goals.

## CFL signs i4F license agreement

HAMONT, BELGIUM—i4F, a group of companies providing patents and technologies to the flooring industry, signed a new license agreement with CFL regarding i4F's low-gloss, matte-effect surface finishing technology. The technology, developed by Tarkett, is exclusively available via an i4F license as one of its surface finishing cluster innovations, according to the company.

"We are delighted that CFL has signed a new i4F license for this highly sophisticated surface finishing technology," said John Rietveldt, CEO, i4F. "This innovative technology not only meets growing consumer demand trends for low-gloss/matte flooring, but also delivers some truly meaningful benefits, including reduced light reflection under any angle, easy maintenance and enhanced surface performance."

According to Tom van Poyer, CEO of CFL, the NatureTrend coating will be a key part of the company's Firmfit collections that are being introduced at Surfaces 2022.

## Countdown to 2022 Mohawk Roadshow

## Digital marketing solutions front and center

By Reginald Tucker

Excitement is building for Mohawk's 2022 Roadshow—the continuation of the series of in-person regional events the company kicked off in early 2021 in response to increased retailer demand for live industry conferences.

A key area of emphasis for retailers planning to attend any of the four Roadshows set to kick off next year, according to Mohawk, is the further development and promotion of innovative digital marketing tools designed to help Mohawk dealers capture consumers earlier in the research phase, generate bona fide leads and, ultimately, close more sales.

"What we've learned over the past year is retailers really don't have the luxury of taking a lot of time away from their businesses," said Angela Duke, senior director of residential marketing, Mohawk. "One of the main goals of the 2022 Roadshow is to provide retailers with a platform for them to learn as much as they can in a short amount of time and give them the tools they need to make their business more successful."

At the core of that strategy are recent improvements to innovative digital marketing tools such as Mohawk's Omnify and Neighborhood Ad Manager—enhancements that were derived, in part, through recommendations by Mohawk's Edge Advisory Council members. The goal is to further simplify the consumer purchasing journey by creating a seamless shopping experience for the end customer.

"We were able to get specific feedback from our council members based on surveys, conversations and beta testing with our retail partners," Duke explained. "They had direct feedback on some of the enhancements we've made to Omnify and Neighborhood Ad Manager. We've also gained a better understanding of how consumers are shopping for flooring, and that has been built into the new enhancements as well."

For example, Mohawk retailers said consumers in the market for flooring today increasingly crave a purchasing process that's much more streamlined



In 2022, Mohawk is enhancing its showroom layout with a front-and-center Customer Success Area, which will include Omnify (seen pictured here in the 2021 space).

and simple. This is especially important in the age of COVID-19 where more consumers are spending more time researching/shopping online. "It's not just researching online; they're wanting to go all the way through the shopping experience online," Duke explained. "The tools that we're building inside of our digital programs are designed to help our retailers reach those consumers and bring them into their stores."

These new tools range from highly functional e-commerce modules the company is currently testing as well as product visualization enhancements within Omnify. Initiatives to expedite sample delivery are also part of the agenda. "Consumers are expecting more from their online shopping experience, so we want to be able to provide retailers with all the tools they require in order to capture those customers," Duke explained.

## Center of attention

In development of the Roadshow 2022 showroom configuration that will welcome attendees, Mohawk made a conscious effort to position the Customer Success Area—the space where dealers learn about Edge benefits, digital programs and other initiatives that help their business succeed—in the center of the show floor layout. The main idea behind the layout, the company said, was to not-

so-subliminally signal to attendees that their success is the center of its focus.

"Having the Customer Success Area in the center of the showroom will help dealers understand they're really at the heart of everything we're doing," Duke explained. "Whether it's brand experience, product launches, display launches and programs—what we're doing is built around thinking of them first."

That symbolism underscores the critical role the shows play in helping retailers get off to a strong start. "The Roadshows are really our first touch point to introduce retailers to new programs and products, and help them jumpstart business throughout 2022," Duke said. "The 2021 Roadshow was well received, and the dealers we've talked to are really excited to be able to get back on the road again next year."

Mohawk's 2022 Momentum Roadshow will make the following stops next year:

- Philadelphia: Jan. 5-6, Marriott Philadelphia Downtown
- Chicago: Jan. 12-13, Sheraton Grand Hotel
- Huntington Beach, Calif.: Jan. 24-25, Waterfront Beach Resort
- Las Vegas: Feb. 1-3, Surfaces-Mandalay Bay Convention Center
- Calhoun, Ga.: Feb. 22-23, Mohawk Flooring Center

## SNAPSHOT

## Shaw Industries makes a 'run' for St. Jude Children's Hospital

MEMPHIS—A team of 129 Shaw Industries associates, customers and partners raised over \$300,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital on Dec. 4 through the St. Jude Memphis Marathon. Shaw fielded the largest corporate fundraising team for the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the event, which includes a 5K, 10K, half-marathon and marathon. Since 2012, Shaw has raised nearly \$17 million to support the research hospital, crediting much of its success to the support of its dedicated retailers, associates, media partners and suppliers. Among the participants were (from left): Debbie Kelleher, Shaw; Channel Clifford, Cali; Lisa Browning, National Floorcovering Alliance; and Ann McDermott, Shaw. FCNews sponsored Kelleher's efforts with a donation of \$1,000.







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**my take**

**Rick Meyer—#36 ‘Gone but not forgotten’**

**W**ith this being the penultimate issue of FCNews for 2021, I wanted to circle back to something I mentioned after our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue hit the streets. I asked readers to let me know their thoughts on people they believed were omitted from our various lists. One name that repeatedly came up was Ulrich (Rick) Meyer, who founded Carpetland USA. While Meyer was mentioned in at least four sections in that issue, many felt he should have been included in our 35 “Gone But Not Forgiven.” Admittedly, we can’t include everyone, but Meyer certainly has his supporters. I thought I would publish two of the emails stating a case for his inclusion.

From Peter Collaros, a former Carpetland USA team member:

*I have enjoyed reading FCNews for close to 30 years. I have looked forward to reading past-year articles about the history of the floor covering industry and the fascinating profiles of the industry icons. I truly enjoyed reading the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. However, when I read the section, “Gone but not forgotten,” while you included definitely worthy individuals, you did not include Ulrich (Rick) Meyer, which I feel is a major omission of one of the pioneers of the retail flooring industry. Rick was a driving force of franchising in floor covering retail starting in the 1970s that later led to the floor covering buying*

*groups. Rick worked with retail and installer team members from the original Munster, Ind., location to create and finance startup Carpetland USA locations throughout the Midwest.*

*As I am sure others have mentioned to you, Carpetland USA was a quiet company that was a leader in the flooring industry, led by an extraordinary individual in Rick Meyer. Rick’s incredible life story of personal resolve and resiliency was instrumental in him creating a corporate culture that valued relationships, demanded excellence while working with its employees in their times of crisis and need. I truly believe that young people in the flooring industry could learn a great deal from Rick Meyer’s story of how he grew an organization into a retail powerhouse whose legacy lives on today through the many second- or third-generation franchisees that continue to prosper today.*

*I truly considered it a privilege to work for Rick Meyer and Carpetland USA through many years of its growth. His brilliance as a retailer certainly changed my business career in a positive manner, but more importantly my life was changed by him. I was proud to be a part of the Carpetland USA family and will continue to be always.*

*I would ask that you update your story to include this extraordinary individual who enriched the lives of so many inside his organization as well as served as a model and innovator in the flooring industry.*

And the following from David Brownlee, another former Carpetland USA employee:

*Congratulations on the 35 years of FCNews, which I have enjoyed receiving for all of those 35 years. Your 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition is packed full of years and years of fond memories. However, I was very disappointed when I opened page 48, which featured 35 of those who are “Gone But Not Forgotten.” You did not include Rick Meyer, who was the pioneer in franchising of floor covering retail, which led to the formation of the buying groups.*

*Starting in the 1970s, Rick took sales and installer associates from his Munster, Ind., store and financed their startup of Carpetland USA stores throughout the Midwest and beyond. Many of those retail operations have expanded to multiple locations and are now in the second and third generation of family ownership, such as Carpetland USA-The Langan Group of Iowa and Illinois; CarpetsPlus of Wisconsin; Carpetland USA of Dothan, Ala.; Carpetland USA of Appleton, Wis.; and Carpet One of Ft. Wayne, Ind., to name a few. Rick was inducted into the WFCAs Hall of Fame in 1994. He passed away in 2016. Not only is Rick remembered, his life lives on in those he helped and was associated with for over 60 years.*

Steven Feldman

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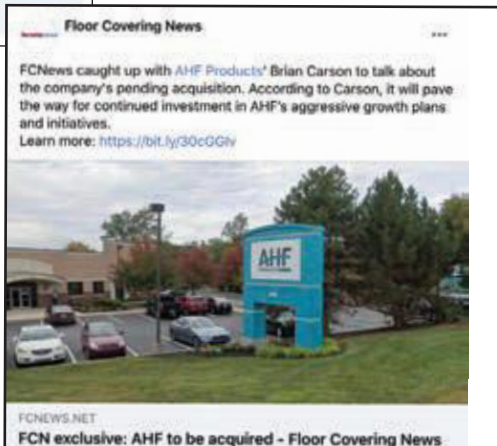
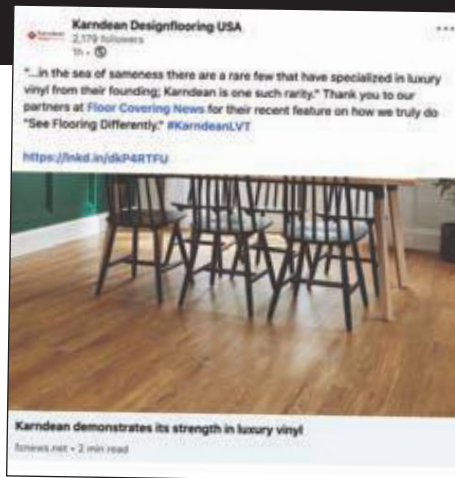
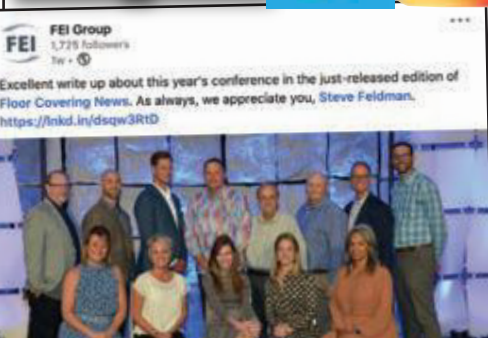


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**GETTING SOCIAL WITH fcnews**





# Engineered Floors adopts digital printing capabilities

DALTON—Engineered Floors has become the first manufacturer in the U.S. to purchase a Hymmen Jupiter digital printing line. Engineered Floors has also signed a license agreement with i4F for digital printing technologies that will be utilized at its plants.

“The latest innovation and technology has always been important to us,” said Bob Shaw, chairman and CEO of Engineered Floors. “Whether it is carpet or LVT, our customers can expect high-quality, stylish products made with disruptive technology like solution-dyed PET or

digital print LVT. We will continue to innovate.”

The new line from Hymmen will be located in north Georgia, where Engineered Floors already operates multiple manufacturing facilities. The decision to start with the Jupiter line highlights Engineered Floors’ strategy to digitally print all LVT flooring produced in North America using new materials.

Designed to enable 24/7 industrial production, Hymmen’s Jupiter JPT-C print-to-board lines



**With its new partnership and capabilities, EF will be able to digitally print all LVT flooring produced in its Georgia plant.**

are said to deliver intelligent and highly precise register accuracy. This ensures the highest levels of

color stability and print quality output while maintaining printing speeds of 25-50 meters per minute.

“Engineered Floors continues to be a front runner, especially when it comes to leading change within the global flooring industry through innovation,” said John Rietveldt, i4F’s CEO. “High-quality digitally printed flooring is the future and now Engineered Floors is pioneering that shift by producing all multi-layer modular flooring with digital printing. Hymmen

digital printing technologies produce the world’s most advanced flooring and are exclusively available via an i4F license.”

Hymmen and i4F’s patent partnership gives i4F exclusive licensing rights for all Hymmen’s digital printing patents and technologies for flooring production.

“We are delighted to welcome Engineered Floors to Hymmen’s world of superior digital printing,” said René Pankoke, managing partner of Hymmen. “This has only been made possible thanks to our partnership with i4F.”

## OBITUARY

### Don Perron, 89

SARASOTA, FLA.—Donald R. Perron, a flooring industry veteran and the father of FCNews contributor Scott Perron, passed away recently. He was 89.

Perron was born in Plainville, Conn., on June 8, 1932, as the 12<sup>th</sup> child to a family of 13. After acquiring a college degree from Dawson Institute, Perron worked in credit investigations and then met the love of his life, Gladys Chasse. During their 60-plus year marriage they both worked for Stanley Home Products, owned/managed rental properties and purchased a flooring business in Plainville, which became The Shag Barn in 1971 before expanding to Perron’s Flooring Center in 1989. After retiring to Sarasota in 1996 he once again jumped back into flooring sales working for Carpet One and, most recently, Abbey Carpet. He retired at 84.

Perron is survived by two children, daughter, Robin Perron, son, Scott D. Perron; daughter-in-law, Sally Perron; and two grandchildren, Zachary Scott Perron and Morgan Taylor Perron. In addition, he leaves behind countless friends, clients and acquaintances, including his best friend, Frank “Chick” Ierardi, whom he knew for more than 80 years, as well as several nieces, nephews and extended family.

Perron is preceded in death by his parents, Arthur and Maria (Csuchor) Perron, as well as six brothers, Raymond, Steve, Felix, Bob, Wilfred and Ed, and six sisters, Ruby, Della, Beatrice, Evelyn, Dorothy and Lillian. His family said he took great pride in being the last and oldest member of his family to pass, competing as always to the very end.



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## educating the industry

# Customer 'experience' vs. service



BY CHRIS WALLACE

(Editor's note: Following is the second installment of a three-part series excerpted from "The Experience Edge," a presentation Chris Wallace delivered at the recent NAFCO conference. Part three will appear in the Dec. 20/27 edition of FCNews.)

In a recent research study conducted by Synchrony Financial, 4,000 customers who made major purchases of \$500 or more across various categories including appliances, home improvements, flooring bedding and mattresses were asked to identify their highest priorities when selecting a company to do business with. Surprisingly, out of a list of 24 priorities, "product selection" ranked No. 13.

What did we learn from this? We learned that there are plenty of products; consumers are telling us that other things are more important. They're saying, "Make my life easier, build trust with me, stand behind your products. Have people who can help me—people who are knowledgeable and actually know what they're talking about. That's what I need, not more product."

It's important to remember that customer service and customer experience are not the same thing. Customer service is responding to your customers. In other words, when they have a need, you're there for them, you listen to them, you show them that you care. Customer experience, on the other hand, is getting way out ahead of what they need, anticipating when they're going to have a need and designing a strategy and solutions that help them meet those needs. It is a deliberate strategy, not a response mechanism.

Here's an example of delivering a good customer experience. When I was younger, in my teenage years, I worked for a

minor league baseball team. I would dare say I learned more about being a good business professional and how to serve clients by working in a minor league baseball stadium than I ever have working in the corporate world. For instance: when somebody pays \$8 for a ticket, if they get a beer spilled on them, they're upset about that. Good customer service is making sure that if they get a beer spilled on them, that you're responsive, you're empathetic, you show them that you understand. You give them a ball or cap, and a pair of tickets for another game.

Providing a memorable customer experience, on the other hand, is making sure that the season-ticket holders don't sit in a place where they're going to get a beer spilled on them. It's anticipating, it's thinking ahead. It's making sure that instead of having a little girl and her family come to you after she got hit with a foul ball—that you make sure families are put in a section where there's netting, where the little kids aren't going to get hit with a ball. That's customer experience.

One of the basic tenets of providing a great customer experience is: the easier you can make somebody's life, the better. Case in point is digital marketing. Over the last 10 years, and we've had so many advancements in this area, but instead of driving a better customer experience, you might actually be driving more confusion.

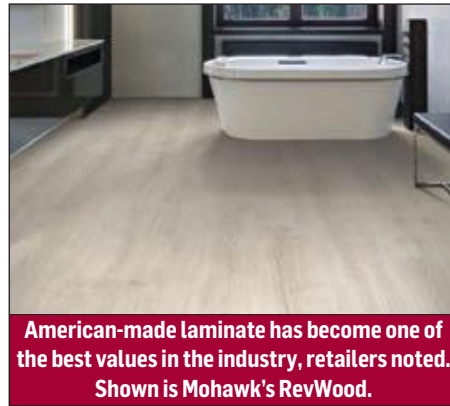
Instead, make sure you have someone who can explain to the customer how the right selection will result in the right investment in her home. Or, how it's going to be the right product for her family, the kids and the dogs—or whatever her life circumstance is. Having somebody help them figure that out is extremely important. The easier you can make that for them, the better.



Chris Wallace is the president and co-founder of InnerView, a marketing consulting firm that helps companies transfer their brand messages to their customer-facing employees and partners.

## RETAILERS REACT

### Other than LVP/rigid core, what product/segment surprised you in 2021



American-made laminate has become one of the best values in the industry, retailers noted. Shown is Mohawk's RevWood.

“Carpet. It made quite the comeback in 2021. I'm not sure why. Readily available, affordable, better styling? Quick installation if you are worried about people in your home.”

—Elisabeth Stubbs, Enhance Floors & More  
Marietta, Ga.

“The biggest surprise for me is the laminate segment making a strong push in innovation, colors, technology and sales. We continue to see the pricing pressure and supply chain of LVP lift sales of the laminate segment, and we look forward to seeing the growth of laminate again.”

—Carlton Billingsley, Floors and More  
Benton, Ark.

“Higher-end broadloom has been a big seller for us. Customers don't blink at spending \$8 to \$15/square foot on carpet. Granted carpet covers less square feet in a home than ever.”

—Chris Kemp, Kemp's  
Dalton West  
Newnan, Ga.

“Laminate flooring is a product that has surprised me in 2021. American-made laminate has become one of the best values in the industry. We can avoid the ocean container costs, keeping price increases minimal. Laminate flooring provides the same types of warranties as vinyl plank, a more realistic visual and durability that is unsurpassed by almost any product category.”

—Jon Dauenhauer, Carpet World Bismarck  
Bismarck, ND

“In our area of northern Florida, we have done very well with commercial carpet tile. There is a lot of Main Street business we are capturing, and carpet tile has been strong for us; it's been a nice surprise.”

—Matt Vann, Vann Carpet One  
Lake City, Fla.

## CALENDAR

Mohawk Momentum Roadshow regional markets to introduce new products for 2022

Jan. 5-6 – Philadelphia  
Marriott Philadelphia Downtown

Jan. 12-13 – Chicago  
Sheraton Grand

Jan. 24-25 – Huntington Beach, Calif.

Waterfront Beach Resort

Feb. 1-3 – Las Vegas  
Surfaces – Mandalay Bay

Feb. 22-23 – Calhoun, Ga.

Mohawk Flooring Center

Contact: Jordan Biasseti;  
jordan\_biasseti@mohawkind.com

Jan. 6-7

Southwest Flooring Market

Regional market, AT&T Stadium;  
Arlington, Texas

Contact: Sammie Baker,  
770.559.0293, ext. 2;  
sammie@flooringmarkets.com;  
marketmakerevents.com

Jan. 6-7

CFI Carpet Certification Residential (R-1) and Commercial (C-1)

Two-day certification requires two-plus years' experience. Lima, Ohio

Contact: John McHale,  
jmchale@cfiinstallers.org;  
816.231.4646; cfiinstallers.org

Jan. 16-19

CCA Global Winter Convention

Combined event for the CCA retail groups: Carpet One Floor & Home, Flooring America, Flooring Canada, The Floor Trader and IDG.

Gaylord Palms, Orlando, Fla.  
Contact: Terri Daniels,  
800.450.7595; info@ccaglobal.com;  
ccaglobal.com

Jan. 21

NWFA Subfloor Preparation

One-day, in-person course providing an in-depth view of identifying and assessing substrate materials, preparation and install methods. Clarksville, Tenn.

Contact: education@nwfa.org;  
800.422.4556

## POINTS OF INTEREST

► **Confidence in the market for new multi-family housing** improved in the third quarter, according to results from the Multi-family Market Survey (MMS) from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The MMS produces two separate indices. The Multi-family Production Index (MPI)

increased five points to 53 compared to the previous quarter. The Multi-family Occupancy Index (MOI) also increased by five points, up to 75—the highest reading since the inception of the index in 2003. "Strong demand and limited inventory are keeping occupancy strong in multi-family properties across the country," said Justin MacDonald, chairman of NAHB's multi-family council. "For that

reason, we have seen robust production of new multi-family properties."

► **Sales of new single-family homes** in October were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 745,000, according to estimates released jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the

Department of Housing and Urban Development. That is 0.4% above the revised September rate of 742,000 but is 23.1% below the October 2020 estimate of 969,000. The median sales price of new houses sold in October 2021 was \$407,700. The average sales price was \$477,800. The seasonally adjusted estimate of new houses for sale at the end of October was 389,000.

This represents a supply of 6.3 months at the current sales rate.

► **A new NAHB survey** showed home builders are battling high material costs, supply chain issues and a lack of available lots. In addition, they are also being challenged by a rising labor shortage, according to respondents. Additional data collected from the October survey for the latest NAHB/Wells Fargo Market Index revealed more than 55% of single-family home builders are facing a shortage of labor. This includes 16 building trades. At least 90% of single-family builders reported a shortage of subcontractors in each of the three categories of carpenters and 80% to 85% reported a shortage of subcontractors in six other trades.



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## CARPET

## Soft surface to continue its momentum in 2022

By Ken Ryan

After a stellar 2021 that saw residential carpet sales increase by more than 10%, the fundamentals are in place for another positive year in 2022, mill executives said.

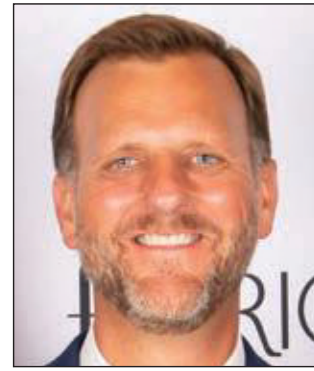
With home remodels expected to remain strong, single-family new home construction rising and consumers' desire for higher-end goods all playing a role, the carpet/rugs segment is expected to increase by mid- to high-single digits in dollars in 2022, with units also up, albeit slightly.



**Brad Christensen**  
director of soft surface  
Shaw/Anderson Tuftex



**James Lesslie**  
executive VP  
Engineered Floors



**TM Nuckols**  
president,  
residential division  
The Dixie Group



**Jason Surratt**  
president,  
Tarkett Residential

### What is your projection for category growth for the industry in 2022?

Demand for soft surfaces will remain strong in 2022 as people continue to prioritize and invest in their homes. Residential remodel and single-family new construction are booming; demand continues to outpace supply. We predict industry-wide residential carpet sales will rise between 5% and 10% in dollars in 2022.

Our industry projection for the residential business growth for 2022 is up. Sales will grow due to retail renovation and replacement continuing at its current pace and new home construction continuing to grow. The percentage up is harder to predict due to labor shortages throughout the carpet supply chain system.

Against a very strong 2021, I expect the industry to see carpet square yards grow slightly—plus 1%-2%. Dollars will grow more significantly, driven by the impact of many price increases in 2021 and better goods continuing to outpace the market average.

The past year and half has shown a modest resurgence of carpet growth compared to the years prior to the onset of COVID-19. So, while resilient will continue to outpace soft surface, we do expect a continuation of the positive growth we saw in carpet in 2021 carry-over into 2022.

### What segments/products will fuel industry growth?

Better-end/premium goods and performance products are fueling growth. Research shows consumers value durability more than ever, and the increased focus on home improvement to accommodate new lifestyles and activities is motivating consumers to upgrade flooring selections.

We see growth in all segments. Residential replacement and both new single-family and multi-family construction. We also see growth in the Main Street commercial segment.

Residential replacement will continue to see growth, driven by strong existing home sales and continued investment in home renovation projects in the post-COVID-19 world.

We anticipate existing home sales and new home construction to continue to fuel industry growth with demand for homes continuing to outpace supply. Beyond the strength of builder business, both metrics drive heavy activity within the remodel segment.

### Where do you see opportunities for next year? Challenges?

The biggest opportunities lie in technology/performance innovations and product storytelling. Enhancing durability and cleanability while selling carpet's tactile/acoustic benefits and sustainability story is how we win in 2022. Supply chain challenges and inflationary pressures will persist, along with ongoing labor shortages.

Opportunities: Product and fiber differentiation and innovation, effective merchandising, readily available inventory. Challenges: inflation, labor, raw material increases, ocean freight shipping issues.

With the industry continuing to move more and more into polyester, I see an opportunity for TDG to differentiate ourselves by maintaining our focus on high performance, very durable, EnVision Nylon products. This is a proven strategy for us, and I believe it is what the market wants and expects from TDG.

As hard surface continues to be used throughout the majority of the home, a key opportunity in the soft surface category is patterned carpet. As the consumer moves away from wall-to-wall throughout the entire home, we continue to see trends that she is more open to unique styling and textures that are different from the traditional beige cut pile.

### What are some of your company's biggest initiatives for 2022?

We're launching innovative soft surface solutions, plus a comprehensive collection of performance products tailored to pets and pet parents. Shaw's Pet Perfect and new Pet Perfect+ offerings are expanding across our residential brands and feature Anso high-performance fibers designed with built-in stain protection, fade and bleach resistance and to release pet hair while vacuuming. Pet Perfect+ offerings boast LifeGuard spill-proof backing.

- To maintain industry-leading service.
- To further amplify our brand through digital marketing initiatives.
- To continue to innovate through patented fiber technology.
- To simplify and streamline our merchandising and marketing efforts.

We will continue to strengthen our EnVision Nylon platform, with a focus on diversifying our nylon fiber supply across several sources. We will make a major investment in our decorative carpet offering with 30 new styles and updated merchandising for our 1866 by Masland and Décor by Fabrica collections.

The biggest initiative for our residential business is our new branding: Tarkett Home. With Tarkett Home, we are focused on improving our overall placement in the residential market with new retail partners and achieving deeper penetration within our current retailers. We're also enhancing and increasing our residential portfolio by adding fresh, on-trend styles with new merchandising and displays that will be more appealing to the consumer.





### Comfort. Style. Durability.

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Product: Davos 4939



# Must-have introductions of 2021 augment banner

For many flooring retailers, 2021 represented their best sales year ever, and it's no wonder as the product pipeline continued to deliver innovative offerings that were in high demand. Following are some of the top must-have introductions of 2021, along with their key selling points.

By Ken Ryan



•**SELLING POINT**•  
PLANKS ARE PROTECTED BY A  
20-MIL COMMERCIAL GRADE  
WEAR LAYER.

## Armstrong: Essentials Plus Rigid Core

Essentials Plus channels the popular Japandi design influence with a 20-SKU assortment of realistic wood and concrete visuals. Built to withstand active lifestyles and households, Essentials Plus' 5.5mm SPC core offers superior indent resistance. Essentials Plus is available in 60-inch planks with 7- and 9-inch width options.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
EXTRA-THICK BOARDS ARE LIGHTWEIGHT BUT  
COMMUNICATE A HIGHER VALUE PRODUCT.

## CALI Vinyl: Legends

To hold a Legends plank is to understand its value. Planks measure 60 inches long by 9 inches wide with a substantial WPC core delivering an overall thickness of a full half inch—ideal if you want to avoid cutting or replacing existing baseboards and door jambs. Highly authentic wood grains in signature coastal colors elevate any home design.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
CHECKS ALL THE IMPORTANT BOXES FOR  
FLOORING DEALERS—LIFETIME  
WATERPROOF WARRANTY, EIR, WIDE AND  
RANDOM LONG LENGTHS, ATTACHED PAD  
AND MULTIPLE ON-TREND COLORS.

## Create Flooring: Lofts

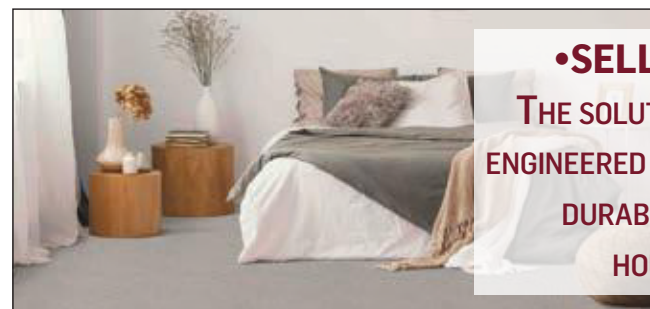
The Lofts collection from Create is designed to withstand most moisture-related accidents without fail, allowing consumers to live and work without the worry. Lofts features a 14mm overall thickness and comes in random long lengths of 2, 4 and 6 feet.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
THE SURFACE PROTECTION IS  
BUILT INTO THE TILE AND WILL NOT  
WASH OR WEAR OFF.

## Daltile: Defend

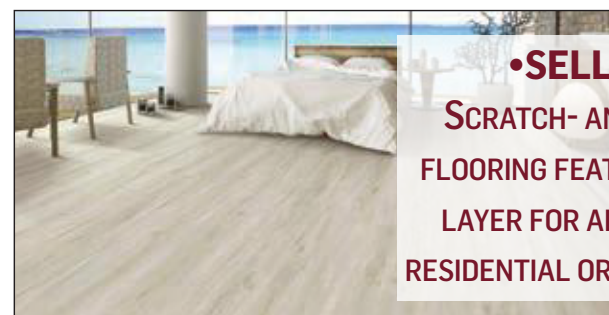
Daltile's new Defend is a distinct product line of high-performance porcelain tile featuring Microban technology. The new Daltile product with Microban eliminates 99% of bacteria on the tile surface, 24/7.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
THE SOLUTION-DYED YARN IS  
ENGINEERED TO ENSURE EXTREME  
DURABILITY FOR BUSY  
HOUSEHOLDS.

## Engineered Floors: Monte Carlo

Monte Carlo III from Engineered Floors introduces an elevated yet casual aesthetic for all designer needs. Featuring 12 earthy neutrals with subtle variations, the plush, 80-ounce carpet offers comfort and a soft velvety feel underfoot.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
SCRATCH- AND STAIN-RESISTANT  
FLOORING FEATURES A 20-MIL WEAR  
LAYER FOR ADDED PROTECTION IN  
RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC.

## Flooring Lines: Christina Collection

Christina Haack from "Flip or Flop" and "Christina on the Coast" used her expertise in design and flooring to launch her new waterproof line, the Christina Collection. Her goal is to help people find quality flooring that is stylish, durable and affordable.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
ZEROMARK USES PROPRIETARY  
COMPOUNDS SPECIALLY  
FORMULATED FOR DEMANDING  
ENVIRONMENTS.

## Happy Feet: Rescue with ZeroMark

Featuring Happy Feet's proprietary Stabilicor Plus core and Green EVA pad, Rescue is the thickest SPC product in the Happy Feet family, providing comfort, quiet and durability. All six colors come with painted bevels.



# year for flooring retailers



**•SELLING POINT•**  
**i-Click4U** TECHNOLOGY ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR CHEMICAL SPRAYS OR ADDITIONAL SEALING SUBSTANCES NORMALLY REQUIRED TO PREVENT WATER LEAKING INTO PANEL JOINTS.

## i4F: i-Click4U

i4F has launched a water-resistant, one-piece, drop-lock flooring installation system. Complementing its Click4U technology, i-Click4U has exceeded NALFA (North American Laminate Flooring Association) requirements relating to water-resistant flooring.



**•SELLING POINT•**  
**DURABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, EASE-OF-USE AND DESIGN AUTHENTICITY.**

## Inhaus: Lamdura

Inhaus has seized the opportunity to merge contemporary design and innovation with its heritage in laminate flooring to produce Lamdura. With three collections—Visions, Inspirations and Landmark—Lamdura boasts 39 designs along with superior water resistance.



**•SELLING POINT•**  
**VAN GOGH MULTI-FORMAT VISUALS ALLOW HOMEOWNERS TO CHOOSE THE FORMAT THAT ADDRESSES THEIR NEEDS IN THE COLOR THAT SUITS THEIR STYLE.**

## Karndean: Van Gogh Rigid Core

The 7 x 48 Van Gogh glue-down range has evolved to meet market tastes and trends, including a selection of Van Gogh visuals in a dual rigid core format. Recent rigid core additions were developed from native Australasian woods.



**•SELLING POINT•**  
**100% WATERPROOF WITH 20-MIL WEAR LAYER AND ALUMINUM OXIDE UV COATING, PROVIDING COMFORT AND SUPERIOR STABILITY.**

## Lions Floor: Natural Essence Plus

Natural Essence Plus offers rich, distinct colors and textures with the latest registered embossing technology that looks and feels like natural wood. The Uniclic system creates an impenetrable tight lock and allows for easy, fast and affordable installation. Natural Essence Plus represents both luxury and supreme craftsmanship.

For more information and complimentary registration, visit:  
[flooringmarkets.com](https://flooringmarkets.com)  
 Use Promo Code:  
**FCNEWS22**

# It's Market Time!

Please join us for the 2022 Flooring Markets. We know it's been a busy year so it's time to connect with your industry partners to source new products and take your business to the next level.

### 2022 Market Schedule:

**Southwest Flooring Market**  
 January 6-7, 2022  
 AT&T Stadium  
 Arlington, TX

**Southeast Flooring Market**  
 January 26-27, 2022  
 Cobb Galleria Centre  
 Atlanta, GA

**Gulf Coast Flooring Market**  
 February 17-18, 2022  
 MS Coast Convention Center  
 Biloxi, MS





Continued from page 13



•**SELLING POINT**•  
THESE GREAT LOOKING LVT  
FLOORS NOW LOOK LIKE  
AUTHENTIC HAND-CRAFTED  
HARDWOOD.

### Mannington: **CraftedEdge bevel**

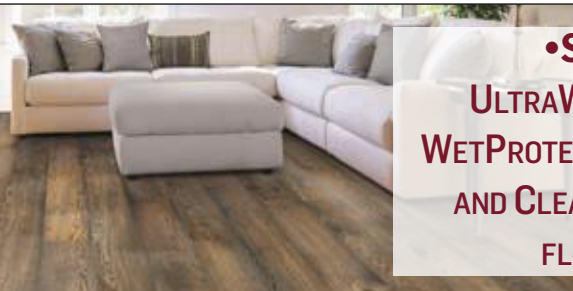
CraftedEdge bevel is the next generation in LVT bevel technology, making Adura floors look more like real hardwood. Mannington's exclusive beveling technology simulates a chiseled, hand-crafted bevel found on today's luxurious hardwood floors. CraftedEdge is currently available on select Adura Max and Adura Rigid designs.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
RED OAK AND WHITE OAK COME WITH A MATTE-  
BRUSHED GLOSS OPTION THAT PROVIDES MORE  
TEXTURE TO THE FLOOR AND HELPS HIDE DUST  
AND EVERYDAY MARKS AND SCUFFS.

### Mercier: **Atmosphere**

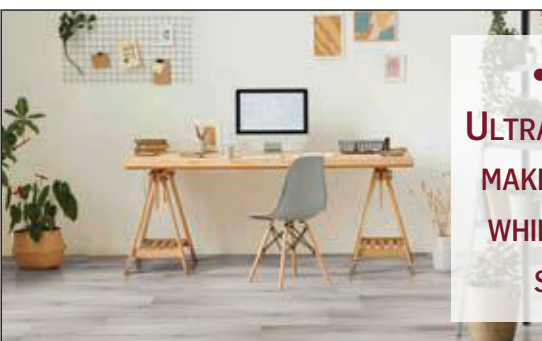
The light shades of Mercier's Atmosphere collection blend with natural highlights to showcase wood's awe-inspiring texture and grain. Floors from this collection are offered in hard maple, red oak, hickory and white oak—on engineered and solid platforms—in a choice of widths ranging from 3 ¼ to 8 ½ inches and four neutral colors.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
ULTRAWOOD UTILIZES MOHAWK'S  
WETPROTECT WATERPROOF TECHNOLOGY  
AND CLEANPROTECT ANTIMICROBIAL  
FLOORING PROTECTION.

### Mohawk: **UltraWood**

Mohawk's UltraWood is the ultimate performance hardwood that offers proven waterproof performance, long-lasting durability, simplified delivery and installation. With no acclimation time, UltraWood can be installed as soon as it's delivered while Mohawk's Uniclic glueless locking system makes installation quick and easy.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
ULTRA-HIGH DENSITY FIBER CORE  
MAKES IT EXTREMELY DURABLE  
WHILE OFFERING THE HIGHEST  
SCRATCH PROTECTION.

### MSI: **Smithcliffs Hybrid**

MSI's Smithcliffs Hybrid—the next big thing in rigid core—is a worry-proof floor that features CrystaLux Ultra technology, which helps protect against scratches, stains and dents.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
THIS STAIN- AND CRUSH-  
RESISTANT CARPET WILL SOON  
FEATURE MICROBAN PROTECTION.

### Phenix: **FloorEver PetPlus featuring Microban**

Bring on pets, wine, tomato juice, heavy traffic—whatever is spilled or stomped on, Phenix carpets featuring SureSoftSDN solution-dyed cationic nylon have the best performance in stain resistance and crush resistance.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
SAFARI KING GIVES AN ARTFUL TOUCH TO  
ANY STAIRCASE OR RUNNER AND IS  
DESIGNED TO BE A SHOWSTOPPER IN  
CUSTOM FABRICATED AREA RUGS.

### Stanton: **Safari King**

The Kilimanjaro collection took off in 2019 with Serengeti and King Cheetah. Based on the success of the first introductions, Stanton grew the collection in 2020 with two dramatic designs—Dottie and King Tiger. This year, Safari King has been added as the epitome of statement carpet. The lush cut pile shows off the complex detail and color livens up the linear animal-like pattern.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
THE 18 ON-TREND DESIGNS INCLUDE  
TRADITIONAL TILES AND WOODS, MODERN  
HERRINGBONES AND UNIQUE CERAMIC TILES.

### Tarkett: **Triton Tuff**

Tarkett Home's new waterproof flooring option, Triton Tuff, features a textile backing, making it stronger than traditional luxury sheet flooring products. Its 18 on-trend designs include traditional tiles and woods, modern herringbones and unique ceramic tiles.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
DIGITALLY PRINTING THE WOOD OR TILE  
VISUAL DIRECTLY ONTO AN SPC CORE  
VIRTUALLY ELIMINATES PATTERN REPEAT.

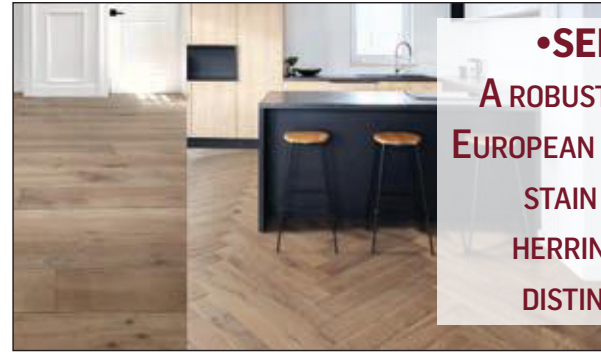
### The Dixie Group: **Trucor**

In today's sea of sameness, Trucor 3DP offers true differentiation in rigid vinyl. Start with digitally printing the wood or tile visual directly onto an SPC core, which virtually eliminates pattern repeats found in SPC film-based products. Make it easy to install with the i4F locking system and finish it off with the TruArmor Advance Performance coating.





•**SELLING POINT**•  
**WATER-REPELLENT EDGE-COATING FOR WOOD-BASED FLOORING.**



•**SELLING POINT**•  
**A ROBUST 6MM WEAR LAYER OF EUROPEAN OAK, PREMIUM REACTIVE STAIN AND COORDINATED HERRINGBONE SELECTIONS DISTINGUISH TIMBERTOP.**

**Unilin: Unicoat**

Unilin Technologies recently introduced Unicoat as licensable technology. This coating upgrades the water-resistant properties of a floor enormously. The coating technology, known as Hydroseal or WetProtect, prevents water from penetrating between the joints of two flooring panels and forms a shield on the floorboard edges.

**Urbanfloor: Timbertop**

Featuring eight curated SKUs available in both a 9.5-inch-wide plank and a 4.75-inch-wide herringbone, the premium Timbertop collection stands out. Each 13/16-inch-thick plank boasts the strength of a cross-finger core, 6mm wear layer and the latest in complex reactive stain technology that produces multi-dimensional colors simply not able to be recreated by traditional staining methods.



•**SELLING POINT**•  
**HDPC/SPC IS IDEAL FOR USE IN AREAS PRONE TO MOISTURE—KITCHENS, BATHS AND BELOW-GRADE BASEMENTS.**



Thanks for building with us.  
 Here's to a legendary 2022.

[CALIfloors.shop/fcnleg](https://CALIfloors.shop/fcnleg)

**Wellmade: HDPC/SPC Waterproof Hardwood**

The performance virtues of rigid core flooring coupled with the unique character of real hardwood. HDPC Waterproof Hardwood is available in popular oak, hickory and birch wood species. Low-luster, wire-brush finishes along with distressed textures augment the collection. Choose from traditional 5 x 48 planks or 7 x 84 premium planks.



[CALIfloors.shop/fcnleg](https://CALIfloors.shop/fcnleg) | 844.795.8697



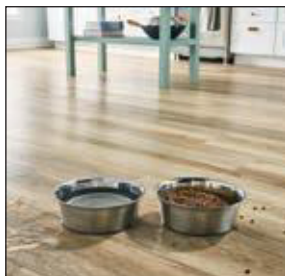
# Surface protection takes rigid to the next level

By Megan Salzano-Birch

**R**igid core flooring has grown in popularity by leaps and bounds of late and shows no signs of slowing down. That's why rigid flooring suppliers continue to launch advancements within their product lines that aim to capture the hearts (and wallets) of consumers nationwide. One such innovation is the development of unique surface technologies that aim to provide enhanced benefits. Following is a sampling of the new and innovative surface technologies currently available.

## 1. ARMSTRONG FLOORING WITH DIAMOND 10 TECHNOLOGY

Armstrong's Empower Rigid Core flooring—with its new Reinforced Mineral Core (RMC)—features Diamond 10 Technology, a patented innovation that uses cultured diamonds—with all the properties of real diamonds—to provide the ultimate in scratch, stain and scuff resistance. Suitable for commercial and residential settings.



1

## 2. CALI VINYL LONGBOARDS WITH SURFACE SHIELD

Each of Cali's Longboards planks features a diamond finish surface shield that aims to make the flooring easier to keep clean and looking like new. Like all Cali Vinyl collections, Longboards also passes the ASTM F3261 resilient flooring standards for surface integrity, resistance to chemicals, resistance to heat and resistance to light. Planks are 100% waterproof.



2



3

## 3. CFL FIRMFIT WITH SCRATCH SHIELD MAX

Scratch Shield Max is made from a proprietary formula of active ingredients bringing extreme hardness to the surface of the floor. Scratch Shield Max brings the possibility for rigid to perform better on all fronts. The result is a coating that is said to outperform traditional technologies in the three areas that matter: scratch, wear and stain resistance.



4



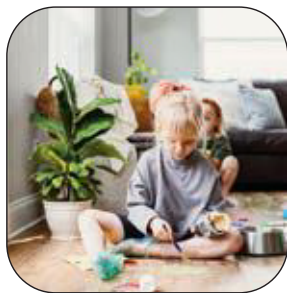
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## 4. CORETEC ADVANCED+

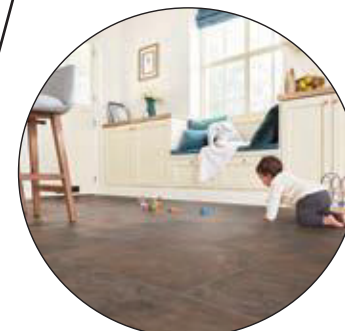
COREtec Advanced+ is the highest-performing COREtec floor yet and boasts superior scratch-resistant surface protection, made possible by its 100% waterproof mineral core. The innovative technology, backed by a 15-year residential scratch warranty, promises the most pet-friendly hard surface flooring available.



7



8



9

## 5. ENGINEERED FLOORS' ENSIGNIUM WITH EVERTUFF

Unlike traditional protective coatings, Evertuff has a matte finish designed to give the product a more natural look when compared to traditional, glossy film. Evertuff is available in EF's Ensignium line, seen here is Avant Garde in Hawthorne. Evertuff is AC4 rated, meaning it is suitable for residential and even commercial applications.



10



11



12

## 6. FLOORTÉ ELITE WITH PAWDEFENSE

New Floorté Elite styles from Shaw feature PAWdefense technology, a proprietary topcoat that provides elite protection from pet nails and other scratches and is backed by a 15-year residential scratch warranty. Floorté Elite also boasts Enhanced Natural Realism technology that more closely mimics hardwood visuals.



13

## 7. HAPPY FEET WITH ZERO MARK

ZeroMark Stain Resistance is crafted using proprietary compounds that are specially formulated for demanding environments. Unlike traditional coatings, Happy Feet's ZeroMark is said to give unprecedented protection against almost any type of scuff, mark or stain.

## 8. INHAUS SONO ECLIPSE

Sono Eclipse is finished using a proprietary system that utilizes multiple technologies to create a surface that is visually appealing, comfortable underfoot and robust. The advanced surface finish offers durability while providing the ultimate blank canvas for designers.

**9. KARNDEAN K-GUARD+**  
K-Guard+ surface protection provides a hygienic, easy-to-clean and scratch-resistant finish. K-Guard+ uses polyurethane technology to provide a hygienic and durable finish that is both flexible and tough and has a history of proven performance. K-Guard+ will not turn white when scratched or leave stress marks when handled and is still able to be cut with a simple utility knife.

**10. MANNINGTON ADURA WITH MICROBAN**  
All of Mannington's Adura-branded floors, including Adura Rigid, feature Microban antimicrobial surface protection. Microban helps to keep floors cleaner longer by not allowing bacteria to grow, floors are said to be 99% cleaner 24/7 for the life of the floor. The protection is built into the wear layer and won't rub or scratch off.

**11. PERGO EXTREME WITH WETPROTECT TECHNOLOGY**  
Pergo Extreme features WetProtect waterproof technology. With water-tight joints that prevent subfloor damage and the unique waterproof finish that traps spills and splashes on the surface, WetProtect is full-coverage waterproofing that is not only backed by a lifetime waterproof warranty, it comes with a lifetime subfloor warranty, too.

## 14. UNILIN ACTIVEGUARD

Activeguard built-in antimicrobial protection aims to make cleaning the surface of flooring effortless. Activeguard prohibits the growth of microorganisms and actively attacks microbes to clear out unwanted bacteria while neutralizing odors.

## 15. WELLMAX HARDMAX NANO FINISH

HardMax Nano Finish Technology provides extraordinary hardness, superior abrasion resistance and crystal-clear visuals. Greenguard Gold certified, HardMax finishes are rated for commercial and residential applications and may be damp mopped for easy care and maintenance.



14



15

## 12. MSI EVERLIFE WITH CRYSTALUX

CrystaLux is a proprietary technology developed by MSI that offers industry-leading protection against everyday wear, including scuffing, scratching, UV and pet accidents. CrystaLux is included in every Everlife product—across LVT, hybrid rigid core and WoodHills.

**13. TRUARMOUR/TRUGLASS**  
Available with The Dixie Group's TRUCOR 3DP collection, TruArmor state-of-the-art performance finish provides exceptional stain repellency and wear resistance with an antimicrobial coating while TruGlass provides superb durability, wear resistance and increased clarity.





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# Demand will continue to drive flooring, leaders say

Despite a bevy of obstacles—from raw material shortages to inflationary pressures—the flooring industry is poised to grow mid- to high-single digits in 2022, according to several major manufacturer executives.

The consensus among the leaders is that demand is still very strong, and coupled with a robust builder mar-

By Ken Ryan

ket and ongoing pent-up demand among consumers for home renovations, the stage is set for another solid year for the flooring industry.

While the same challenges that persisted in 2021 are likely to remain, executives say the positives outweigh the negatives.



**Russell Grizzle**  
president and CEO  
Mannington Mills

**B**ased on the overall trends and fundamentals, I expect good growth in the industry not just in 2022 but for the next several years. I am expecting an increase of upper mid-single digits for the industry—above 5% but not quite 10%. A lot of that growth is coming from price increases as opposed to unit growth.

We're expecting to see some improvement with supply chain issues and raw materials, at least from an availability standpoint as opposed to a pricing standpoint. Prices are still high but availability of most raw materi-

als is limited, so you have backlogs.

I believe there still will be emphasis on the home in 2022 and beyond. It will be awhile before we are completely normal again given the variants, and the stay-at-home trend is here to stay.

As for biggest challenges facing the industry, the limited availability of raw materials is hurting service because everything is in short supply right now. That's the one saving grace, that flooring isn't the only product in short supply, and people are more patient about it when compared to

historical norms.

We see domestic manufacturing as a huge opportunity. Mannington is well down the road with onshoring, and we would be able to onshore more if we had the raw materials. We've worked really hard on domestic manufacturing, and like our position in the product mixes and the channels we are in. I'm proud of the fact that during the pandemic we have not cut back on product; product design and innovation continues to be our life blood. As such, we have some exciting things coming out.

**W**e think 2022 will be a good, solid year for flooring. The way we look at it, commercial is going to be better in 2022 than '21. Builder and single-family home construction will still be very strong, and normally when builder business is strong, and people are selling homes and renovating existing homes, the flooring business does well. And we still think there is some pent-up demand for retail replacement.

In terms of challenges, raw materials (both in cost and getting them) is still going to be a challenge—so it's a double whammy.

Labor is going to continue to be an issue. The carpet plants are very labor intensive while the LVT and laminate plants are more automated, so there is less of an impact on labor. You also have labor shortages with drivers. That said, demand is still going to be solid, which is a good thing.

As for Mohawk, at end of the day, innovation is going to win. We have a new product called UltraWood, with a real wood base and a RevWood chassis that's very innovative. High-end carpet is really smoking. Our Karastan business is really good, and we have

invested a lot in new tufting capacity and patterns. We're starting up a new laminate plant right now, building a new LVT facility and, on top of that building another laminate plant that, will be ready by the end of 2022 [in Thomasville, N.C.]. Domestic capacity will be king, and we will be in much better shape for it.

With WetProtect, we will have the industry's best waterproof warranty, and for customers who have asked for healthier products, we have CleanProtect technology featuring antimicrobial properties.



**Jeff Meadows**  
president,  
residential sales  
Mohawk Industries



**Raj Shah**  
president  
MSI

**D**emand continues to be very strong for home improvement products especially flooring. Prior to the pandemic, flooring was well behind historical norms and then you add the pandemic-related demand due to work from home and educate from home. In addition, new home construction has significantly increased.

With the move to suburban homes from urban the average square feet per home is also increasing. Innovations in flooring, including LVT, waterproof laminate and wood, are also increasing homeowners' appetite to update their floors. All of this leads us to believe it

will be high single-digit growth for flooring in the upcoming year.

Despite the growth, there will be challenges for all of us. Shipping and logistics issues remain the top challenge for the entire industry. Whether it's containers, shipping space, unloading capabilities at the ports, labor and delivery are all challenges for the industry right now. We don't see this becoming easier in the first half of 2022. It will be incumbent for the industry to find ways to navigate these obstacles in order to keep up with the demand increases.

Inflation and labor are other issues. From

electricity, natural gas, trade wars, oil, labor and shipping rates, inflation has affected every industry. Flooring has not been immune. Virtually every manufacturer, distributor and retailer has passed multiple price increases in 2021 and many announcements have been made for early 2022. So far, consumer demand does not seem to be deterred by the increases.

As for labor, whether it is drivers, installers, salespeople, etc., the "Great Resignation" has not spared flooring. Finding labor is extremely difficult and the entire industry is working to attract and retain labor.

**W**e're finishing 2021 with strong demand and look to continue that momentum in 2022. As more people are spending time inside their houses, we have seen an elevated focus on the home. There is renewed importance for transforming spaces to accommodate the new ways we live, work and play. This has impacted both the residential and commercial markets. Homeowners have a strong desire and renewed confidence to invest in their homes, and the flooring industry has seen strong and sustainable demand due to this growing trend.

Installation labor challenges persist, which is placing a cap on both the new con-

struction and renovation markets.

We are seeing some general trends that are specific to flooring: sustainably strong carpet sales (particularly in the "better and best" segments); waterproof LVT continues to gain market share in spite of rapid cost inflation; flooring specialty dealers are innovating and thriving; residential landscape products have hit a tipping point and are growing rapidly in key markets, and commercial business is rebounding.

While demand is strong, supply issues are as challenging as I have ever experienced. The industry is concurrently feeling significant inflationary pressures driven by three com-

pounding areas.

No. 1. Labor availability is below market demand in manufacturing, transportation and trucking and installation/construction, and this is causing permanent increases in costs. The rate of new workers is not currently matching the rate of established people in these jobs who are retiring; No. 2. Raw materials are being impacted by both supply interruptions and rapidly increasing costs. While predictable availability is improving, cost pressures are not subsiding; and No. 3. The global supply chain (ocean freight, port drayage and ground transportation via truck or train) is tangled and costs are unprecedented.



**Tim Baucom**  
president/CEO  
Shaw Industries



**Retail report**

Continued from page 1

with a record-setting year.”

At Carlson Flooring America, another Fort Myers-based dealer, traffic slowed during the pandemic for a period of just a few weeks. After that, sales came back with a fury. “It not only came back, it flourished!” said Travis Carlson, vice president. “And it’s been going like gangbusters ever since.”

Among other reasons outside the usual spike retailers experienced via higher consumer expenditures on home improvements as a result of people spending more time at home, Carlson cited another factor: southbound migration. “We saw a high volume of people moving to Florida on a daily basis from other states because of the leniency in regulations here,” he explained. “People are literally trying to get away from certain types of politics and look at Florida as the gateway, so to speak. They’re coming down here to play, and they need flooring.”

**No cake walk**

The record-setting 2021 for flooring dealers wasn’t easy, and it wasn’t pretty. An ongoing supply chain slowdown, worsening inflation and labor shortages (not to mention COVID-19 variants) challenged the resolve of the industry and forced many to adapt.

As Dan Mandel, co-owner of Anaheim, Calif.-based Sterling Carpet and Flooring, explained, “The shipping backlog is a problem for everyone, but with our warehouse expansion we were able to start inventorying a lot more product and, in turn, have ready-to-go stock. I think this helped us gain market share as competitors who don’t have stock were put at a disadvantage.”

It seemed no matter the obstacle placed in their path, flooring retailers were able to navigate around it. For example, RC Willey Home Furnishings in Salt Lake City dealt with inventory shortages by tagging the products on its floor that had extended back orders so its RSAs and customers were aware and could choose product. “I had very few complaints or cancellations due to back orders and being booked out over six weeks to install,” said Eric Mondragon, hard surface flooring buyer for RC Willey. “I am most proud of the fact that we were able to handle a 20% increase in volume with shortened store hours and about 20% less in personnel. We have

already surpassed 2020 numbers by \$10 million and we are on track to have a record-setting year (\$70 million), 20% ahead of 2020.”

When it comes to back orders, flooring retailers agreed they have never experienced anything quite like 2021 as the global supply chain slowdown—coupled with lack of installers—created delays that kept top-line sales from being even higher.

For many, inventory was king. “We increased inventory dramatically to ensure we would always have stock available,” said Ted Gregerson, president/CEO, Abbey Carpet &

Floor, Anniston, Ala. “We had many more store meetings and management meetings throughout the year to ensure we could stay ahead of any potential problems.”

During the year, Gregerson’s No. 1 salesperson, a rep who sold \$2 million annually, retired; he lost another key employee to relocation. “We are very proud of the fact that we were able to have a record year in spite of losing two key members of our team, and all the other challenges this year presented,” he told FCNews. “That is a testament to the amazing people we have working here, and their determination to suc-



**“We have already surpassed 2020 numbers by \$10 million and we are on track to have a record-setting year (\$70 million), 20% ahead of 2020.”**

—Eric Mondragon, hard surface flooring buyer, RC Willey

ceed no matter what.”

Other dealers like Phoenix-based Baker Bros., which operates multiple locations, shared their praise for staff members during these challenging times. According to Phil Koufidakis, president, 2021 was a “great year” for business, as the company achieved substantial

increases not only over 2020 but also 2019. “We could not have achieved the success we did without their amazing results-driven effort,” he said. “Communication was huge. We gave everyone the proper expectations.”

For more on this story, visit [fcnews.net](http://fcnews.net).



# Stone LVT? No Way!

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SCAN TO GET STARTED





## RESILIENT

## Despite challenges, category grows by leaps

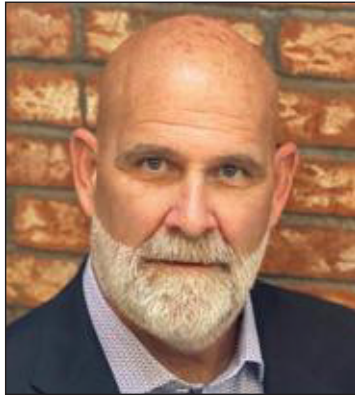
By Megan Salzano

The meteoric rise of the resilient category—namely LVT—has been ongoing for several years. Suppliers remain optimistic that this growth will continue for the foreseeable future and definitely into the coming year.

The category has its challenges, including a serious supply chain issue, which will have to be tackled head on, but suppliers point to strong consumer demand despite the hardship.



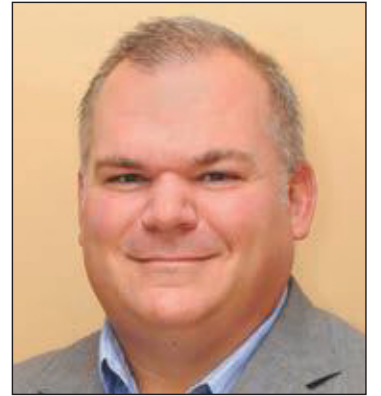
**Michel Vermette**  
president & CEO,  
Armstrong Flooring



**Doug Jackson**  
president,  
Cali



**Thomas Baert**  
president,  
CFL



**Bill Anderson**  
CEO,  
Karndean Designflooring

### What is your projection for category growth in 2022?

Looking ahead to 2022, we anticipate growth within the industry thanks to strong demand in new construction and remodels and as commercial business continues to recover.

Resilient will continue to grow. Setbacks in the supply chain mean it's not as stellar a value as it once was, but customer demand remains strong, the industry is healing and that value will return.

Despite the pandemic, we thankfully still saw continuous growth in our market in 2021. Overall, demand remained healthy and strong and we don't see any reason to suggest this will change. Our future sales prediction looks promising for 2022.

We are very excited for 2022 and are planning for another strong year, despite some lingering challenges with costs and the supply chain. We are well positioned to continue our growth across all channels of the business.

### How do you see the ongoing pandemic impacting the category in 2022?

Container prices and availability as well as inflation on raw materials will be obstacles that the industry will deal with into 2022. Labor will continue to be a challenge.

The effect of the virus remains very relevant, both within our industry and beyond. International supply chains and shipping systems are still in recovery and will remain so into next year. Domestic shipping challenges are likely to continue as well.

Supply chain constraints will remain major factors in 2022. For example, it is hard to predict how long the current extreme freight cost situation will last. Also, cost inflation impacting demand will be a key area to focus on for the coming year. This makes the opening of our Georgia factory an even more significant venture.

Certain links within the supply chain, including obtaining space on cargo ships, port congestion and freight rates have challenged us this year and are likely to continue throughout 2022.

### What other challenges must the category face in the coming year? And how will you meet those challenges?

Supply chain will be a major focus in 2022. While we've seen some moderation in pricing and a slight increase in availability, we still anticipate dealing with container shortages; it's hard to project when things may come back to what we consider normal.

It's become more difficult to travel and do product development outside the U.S., which has made new launches more difficult. One remedy for that will be the development of domestic production and sourcing from alternate countries.

Fluctuating material prices will be another hurdle to overcome in 2022. This is where our innovative and broad product portfolio plays an important role.

We are incorporating learnings from this year into our planning for 2022, most importantly taking care of our current employees and continuing to refine and improve on our current supply chain model to mitigate any future disruptions.

### Where do you see opportunity within the category for 2022?

Rigid core continues to be the area to invest in and focus on. Additionally, U.S. manufacturing will be a significant advantage as various supply chain complications continue to recover.

Some resilient wins will be the further diversification of the supply chain in Asia, and increased production from countries other than China. Add to that the emergence of domestic manufacturing capacity and the ability to have a Made-in-the-USA story.

DIY installations have increased though not solely due to a lack of installers. The increase of availability of easy-to-install products, the additional time people had on their hands working from home as well as a concern around social distancing all led to an increase in DIY.

Although we expect resilient growth to slow overall in 2022, more consumers are being introduced to the resilient category for the first time as they reinvest in their homes. We've seen commercial rebound from Q2 2021 onward. We would expect this to continue in 2022.

### What segments/products will illustrate innovation/fuel growth in 2022?

Rigid core offers all the usual benefits that we've come to expect—performance, visuals and value—which make the product very successful as a residential solution despite tariffs and a more limited supply. We anticipate segments like new construction and remodels to push growth.

The expansion of new applications for rigid core will be something to watch. Cali's already got LVT and real wood layered over waterproof SPC; stay tuned for new lines in this vein coming soon.

We see consumers going toward hybrid products with a higher value add. This is why we've worked hard to develop and patent technologies that allow us to offer products such as our NovocoreQ, an acoustic engineered vinyl floor up to 6x quieter than SPC and 3x quieter than WPC floors.

We anticipate rigid core will continue to be the fastest growing category within resilient.

### What are your biggest initiatives for 2022?

We plan to invest heavily in our segmented brands: Armstrong Flooring Signature for distribution and Armstrong Flooring Pro for the builder segment, as well as our main Armstrong Flooring brand.

We're expanding our waterproof offering, with new surface looks and textures. We're also anticipating a diversification of our product offering, beyond flooring and into the lifestyle realm.

A particularly big milestone for us will be Phase 2 for our U.S. factory in Calhoun, Ga., doubling our current output of rigid core flooring and already under construction.

Our No. 1 initiative for 2022 is to continue improving our stocking situation and to manage the costs that are within our control. We will be focusing very heavily on getting new products to market. We are extremely excited for what's to come in 2022.



# and bounds



**Steve Ehrlich**  
VP of sales and marketing,  
Novalis

We expect to see double digit growth for 2022. Luxury vinyl is developing not only the commodity side of the business, but also the mid- to high-range products of the market needs, specifically as the category takes over other hard surface categories.

The uncertainty of travel, healthcare and the shortage of skilled labor needed to install residential products will drive the luxury vinyl category in 2022. We believe the future is bright for the next few years of remodeling and new construction.

Logistics, raw materials and labor were just some of the major challenges in 2021, which have now become more normalized but are far from resolved. We are fine tuning and closely monitoring our systems to face these big challenges.

The opportunities are to provide an exceptional experience to our customers. Get them the material when they order it. The category needs to continue to mature and push the envelope when it comes to style and design. Novalis will drive higher-end looks and ease of installation.

Residential remodeling, new home construction, multi-family and commercial will fuel growth for luxury vinyl in 2022. Our rigid core and flexible products will lead the industry in marketing and design, backed by systems to service customers at the highest levels without interruptions.

We look forward to strengthening our brands in the coming year as well as continued product innovation. Novalis prides itself in leading the industry like we have done since 1988.



**Jamann Stepp**  
VP of hard surface,  
The Dixie Group

Overall, all indications are pointing to a strong 2022. The entire resilient category will likely push that 20% year-over-year growth total for 2022 over 2021.

The pandemic has not proven to slow down the demand for flooring or building products. The challenges are going to be inflation and bringing innovative products into the market. We're going to remain optimistic that 2022 is another profitable growth year for our industry and for the category.

Ocean freight rates continue to be a challenge. Products that used to retail from \$3-\$4 are now more than \$5-\$6. Fortunately, we haven't seen a huge slowdown in units, but ocean freight rates and a lack of labor are challenges we'll continue to face.

I think once we get into the spring, we'll see a decline in ocean freight rates. I also remain optimistic that our government and trade commissions will look at the 25% tariff and do something with it that's more advantageous for both parties.

We're still bullish on the WPC category, and have new collections launching in 2022. In SPC, we're going to utilize as much domestic opportunity as we can to launch new products in the coming year. And we'll continue to expand our digital printing programs next year.

This year our hard surface division will probably account for about 15% of our overall volume. So we're becoming more meaningful to the overall company's performance. We'll continue to grow our exposure and market share across the country.



**Richard Quinlan**  
VP of sales and marketing,  
Wellmade

Remodeling projects fueled by "work-at-home" consumers helped push rigid core vinyl sales up 18%-20% throughout 2021. As consumers venture back to the workplace, I anticipate vinyl sales will drop back to 7%-10% growth for 2022.

The pandemic should have less impact on the resilient category during 2022, assuming pandemic-driven lockdowns are over.

Shortages of product and higher import costs will continue to be a challenge for rigid core vinyl well into 2022. Wellmade's new 328,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Cartersville, Ga., will allow us to meet those challenges head on.

Rigid core vinyl plank will continue to outpace all other flooring categories.

Porcelain tile and natural stone designs in rigid core vinyl provide an excellent opportunity for growth and innovation throughout 2022.

Maximizing production capacity in both our Cartersville and China plants remains Wellmade's biggest initiative for 2022. This will allow Wellmade to capitalize on higher demand while providing superior service to our partners.

## women of the flooring business



### How thinking outside the box can benefit business

BY RENEE WENNER

*(Editor's note: Following is the 12th installment in a new series promoting Women of the Flooring Business, a social media group that provides members with a platform to share their experiences, observations and best practices.)*

**W**omen make up half the population in a world that is very diverse, and women can bring new ideas and solutions to the table. Case in point: To effectively deal with the current installation shortage, we have expanded our installer crew to include women—three female installers, to be exact.

Some customers are skeptical when they see them coming to the door—they believe the job must be done by a man. When the job is done perfectly and cleaned up, it always differentiates us from other stores. I'm lucky; my business partner is my sister and is

people with pets! The Boss has also made our Facebook page more interesting and engaging. We have customers and visitors to our page posting photos of their own pets.

Point is, I believe ongoing training and outside-the-box thinking is important for myself and my staff to support and grow the business. One thing I've learned over the years is that I have good business instincts and can handle situations without constantly second guessing myself.

I have also taken numerous seminars with Mohawk University over the years. Lisbeth Calandrino has also

been a mentor to me for years. All my training helped me grow my business and become National Dealer of the Year. Business can be stressful, but I've learned

#### I BELIEVE ONGOING TRAINING AND OUTSIDE-THE-BOX THINKING IS IMPORTANT FOR MYSELF AND MY STAFF TO SUPPORT AND GROW THE BUSINESS.

responsible for installation at our company. She is meticulous and always sees that jobs are finished on time and meet her high expectations.

But that's not all we've done to support our business. Recently, we welcomed a mascot to the store. "Boss" the bulldog comes to work every day. Animals are therapy for all of us, particularly now that we've been so isolated. We're all—staff and customers alike—in a better mood because of The Boss.

The Boss is also a conversation starter; people will tell you about their pets, and now we're building a relationship. It's funny how people trust other

to take each day as it comes and not to worry—I know I can handle it. I've also become more supportive of my employees, and I have a new appreciation for their own challenges. It's because of their commitment that our success continues. We've come so far since years ago, when my parents owned this business.

I'm grateful to the women in our group who have been supportive, as well as all the amazing people I have met on my journey who continue to propel me forward. Business is more complicated than when my parents owned it, but I'm up for the challenge.



Renee Wenner is the owner and president of Lima Carpet and Design Center in Avon, N.Y. Renee has been instrumental in expanding the interior design aspect of Lima Carpet and works in the store as the interior design professional.



## CERAMIC

## Housing, innovation to drive category growth

By Megan Salzano-Birch

While the COVID-19 pandemic has created a variety of challenges for the flooring industry, the boom in the housing market it spurred has led to better results for tile. Suppliers remain optimistic that the growth experienced in 2021 will continue into the new year.

In addition, innovations such as easy-to-install and slip-resistant ceramic are poised to drive sales for the category.



**Micah Hand**

director of marketing/  
product management,  
Florida Tile



**Scott Maslowski**

senior vice president of  
sales, Dal-Tile



**Raj Shah**

president  
MSI



**Mara Villanueva-Heras**

VP of marketing  
Emser Tile

### What is your projection for category growth/decline in 2022?

We expect the growth we saw this past year to continue. We understand there will still be challenges in 2022 but look forward to developing new and innovative products.

We expect the market to grow in 2022.

We expect all categories of hard surfacing to expand in 2022. Our estimate is 5% for hardwood and double digit for LVT with tile in the middle.

At this time, we see continued optimism in 2022 for continued growth and expansion for new products that are aligned with 2022 expected trends and colors.

### How will the ongoing pandemic impact the category in 2022?

The industry is still facing labor supply issues, raw material shortages and inconsistent inbound supply chains. Inflation is also a concern, but demand for high-quality materials is still strong and we expect that to continue.

It led to awareness of the home, which led to a significant spike in residential remodel business. New home construction was fueled by low interest rates, which led to an incredible surge in demand.

We don't see changes in the pandemic affecting demand. There are many reasons the flooring market is expanding that go beyond the pandemic. Home ownership is increasing and trends are changing ever quickly. Both of these will cause increases in demand.

We are seeing the transportation and supply chain issues continue across industries and expect it to continue into the future. Emser has been working closely with our partners to increase the quantity of goods being produced and shipped to our distribution centers.

### What other challenges must the category face in the coming year? And how will you meet those challenges?

The ongoing challenge is the shortage of qualified installers. This will remain a challenge for the immediate future. Education initiatives through NTCA and CTEF are vitally important to face this hurdle.

Labor constraints, which led to innovation. Inflation, which we continue to work to find productivity to minimize the pass through to the customer. International supply chain disruption—selling our North American manufacturing story.

Shipping and logistics issues remain the top challenge for the entire industry. We don't see this becoming easier in the first half of 2022.

We expect labor will continue to be a challenge for the construction industry into 2022. This issue definitely needs to be addressed by the industry with a heightened focus on both adequate training and compensation.

### Where do you see opportunity within the category for 2022?

There is a challenge to be met in educating end users about the sustainability benefits of porcelain tile. Tile is substantially superior to other floor materials, specifically plastic based materials.

North American manufacturing and distribution footprint; expanding exterior program; products that support sustainability, health and wellness (i.e. Stepwise, Microban).

The USA lags behind most of the world on per-capita usage of tile. It is [incumbent] upon the industry to continue to find ways to inspire consumers. We have to continue to find ways to use digital tools to inspire and fulfill customers dreams.

We see continued strength in the need for tile for floor, wall and décor. We continue to see natural stone as a day-in and day-out favorite and marble and marble-look tiles continue to be strong sellers.

### What segments/products will illustrate innovation/fuel growth in 2022?

Residential remodels and expanding outdoor living spaces are where we continue to see strong demand for porcelain tile. Outdoor pavers and interior wall tiles are going to set the trends for 2022.

We are bullish in all three segments, including commercial, residential remodel and builder. We expect Revo Tile, Microban, Stepwise and porcelain pavers to fuel growth.

We see innovation happening in almost all categories. In tile, we see anti-slip and new and larger sizes, more realistic visuals. Also, pavers and countertops will continue to be a large growth area for porcelain.

Large-format tile continues to gain market share as it provides a more seamless installation. Tile that mimics natural materials is extremely popular, along with handcrafted looks, wall tile and decorative mosaics and outdoor pavers.

### What are your biggest initiatives for 2022?

The marketing and product teams are working toward being fully back in business for events and trade shows. We want to see our industry friends and partners in person and put tile in their hands. This interaction is important to us.

We'll continue to be the market leader in innovation, driving our made in North America value proposition and celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We are opening at least seven distribution centers and expanding many of our existing ones; investing heavily in inventory, warehousing and labor required to service our retail customers; and heavily investing in our own fleet of trucks.

As always, we will have many new, exciting product launches and a significant focus on all things digital. We are also looking forward to continued strong opportunities across both the residential and commercial markets.





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WOOD

# Segment sales expected to continue strong surge

By Reginald Tucker

Despite the challenges impacting the overall flooring market, as well as competition from look-alike categories, 2021 represented a strong year for the U.S. hardwood flooring sector. While early indications are that the category will continue strong, it will not likely surpass the rate of growth achieved in 2021. Still, experts hold strong projections for the builder market in 2022, with equally robust activity in the residential remodel market.



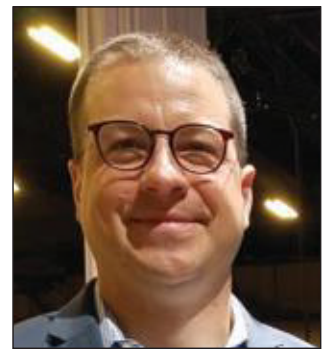
**Wade Bondrowski**  
director of sales, USA  
Mercier Wood Flooring



**Brian Carson**  
president and CEO  
AHF Products



**Drew Hash**  
VP, hard surface category  
management  
Shaw Residential



**David Moore**  
senior product  
director, wood and  
laminates, Mohawk

## What is your projection for the growth of the category next year?

Mid- to single-digit increases for 2021. We see strong double-digit growth through the first half and then a more normal, high single-digit increase for the back half.

We are bullish about 2022. We have seen continued strength in hardwood demand, and we expect to continue in the high single digits.

We're predicting mid-single-digit growth as an industry for the hardwood category in 2022, although solid hardwood business will likely be flat or slightly down.

We will continue to see hardwood becoming a relevant category again as customers are looking for additional options outside of LVT and we start to see a breakthrough of new hybrid wood products.

## What segments and/or products will fuel this growth?

We believe it will still be fueled by engineered wider widths and earth-tone products.

The professionally installed remodel, single-family builder and DIY sectors are all strong. The categories that drove the most sales in 2021 were single-family remodel applications and single-family new home construction builds.

Engineered hardwood will drive growth, particularly those products that offer end-users an enhanced durability and cleanability story, two factors driving consumer purchasing decisions in all flooring categories.

Both specialty retail remodeling and new construction in builder/multi-family will continue to fuel this growth. I think we will also continue to see this growth as the price gap begins to shrink between plastic products and hybrid woods.

## What are the growth projections for your company in particular?

We expect to keep pace with the overall growth of the category next year.

AHF Products has experienced incredible growth since our inception. We are continuing to grow, and we are outpacing the market.

Shaw predicts growth proportionate to the industry in hardwood next year. We believe this growth will come predominantly from our domestic portfolio as customers continue to look for serviceable styles to offer the end consumer.

Above the industry standard. With the addition of several new TecWood and UltraWood launches, I think we will see larger growth in 2022.

## Cite a few of your major initiatives achieved in 2021.

The main initiatives was putting together an offering that we could facilitate in a timely manner. The COVID-19 spike in sales forced us into smaller offering with higher volume yields.

On the innovation front, we launched our Dogwood Densified Wood under the Bruce brand. Our waterproof wood portfolio has continued to expand with the launches of Hartco Hydroblok and Robbins HydroGuard.

Shaw successfully leveraged its domestic production, strong balance sheet and trusted vendor relationships to help our customers keep up with record-high consumer demand and minimize service disruptions whenever possible.

The launch of UltraWood was a key initiative in 2021 as it expanded our footprint in the hard surface category and secured our mark in the waterproof wood category.

## Identify the "X" factor that will impact business in general in 2022.

We expect it will be the continuation of a strong housing market.

The X factor is freight and availability of materials. The other X factor is commercial and when will it find its sea legs. We see it coming back, albeit slowly, but on an upward swing.

Supply chain woes from overseas and domestic labor/logistics challenges are predicted to continue through 2022. Shaw will continue to leverage our domestic capacity with American-made platforms and products.

The biggest impact on the wood business in 2022 will be the supply chain issues, specifically vessel and container shortages.

## Where do you see the greatest opportunities?

We expect to see continued growth in both the residential replacement and remodel markets.

We believe the consumer demand for flooring will remain strong, so we just need to ensure we are listening, adapting, innovating and executing our strategies.

Specifiers and purchasing leads for end users and merchants are all looking for domestic options to avoid supply chain complexity.

Our biggest opportunity will be in the UltraWood line as it is a domestically produced product.



# in the year ahead



**Neil Poland**  
president  
Mullican Flooring



**David Sheehan**  
VP, residential  
hard surface  
Mannington Mills



**Brad Williams**  
VP, sales and  
marketing  
Boa-Franc (Mirage)

I would expect the hardwood flooring industry to experience growth of 5%-8% in 2022 as production improves.

We anticipate growth to be somewhere close to the 4% to 6% range.

We are projecting strong growth (10%+) for the U.S. hardwood category next year vs. 2021 sales.

The new residential construction (builder) should fuel the growth as the demand remains strong for housing.

Mannington manufactures only engineered hardwood. Within the category, hand-crafted, sawn-face, long/wide planks continue to be doing well. Sliced is also seeing decent growth.

The growth will continue to be fueled by single-family, new residential construction as well the retail renovation market. Solid and engineered-type products will both see increases, along with wide width and long lengths.

Our company will target growth in the 10%-15% range for 2022 due primarily to production increases in areas of short supply. We plan to increase pre-finished and unfinished solid flooring production next year to achieve our targets.

We expect to be above the industry average—in the high single digits.

Our projections are to follow the 2022 forecasts calling for strong growth.

We kept our plants running at levels close to our pre-pandemic volume by working hard to minimize COVID-19 infections, purchase adequate volumes of raw materials and focusing on both hiring and retention.

Delivering differentiated visuals that meet mid-premium price points and delivering regional offerings/merchandising that meet the needs of the consumer.

We achieved expanding our production by more than 20% this year through optimization, automation and continuing to stay focused on finding good people to add to the organization.

The X factor is executing our plans for capital investments in our plants; these are mainly automation investments that were purchased in 2021 to be installed in 2022.

The X Factor is definitely the continued impact of COVID-19 and how it affects consumer buying habits.

The supply chain will still be the X factor in 2022. Transport and logistics worldwide will continue to play a role. Those companies that source and produce in North America will have an edge.

Product development drives long-term success, and it will be an area of opportunity for us in 2022.

We see continued opportunity at specialty retail and select builder markets.

We see the greatest opportunities within our current customer base.

## lisbiz strategies

# Tips for better customer engagement

**A**s specialty floor covering dealers look to continue driving traffic—and ultimately, sales—in a highly competitive yet challenging retail environment, many are employing creative ways to engage the consumer. That includes online, the place where many shoppers begin their journey, as well as in-store, where dealers can hopefully seal the deal.



**LISBETH CALANDRINO**

Following are some ideas and strategies designed to help retailers enhance the overall experience for the customer while energizing your sales team.

**Shop at Home 2.0.** I suggest you go big, get an RV, put on a pot of hot coffee and serve lunch when you go to the customer's house. One thing we've learned from the pandemic is everyone loves having things delivered, whether it's an order from Chewy.com or an Amazon package. My neighbor's steps are loaded with packages, and Uber

continues to grow. As a group, we are constantly conducting polls, encouraging members write blogs and reaching out to each other for ideas to help grow the business.

**Look into new payment options for the consumer.** In-store financing continues to be a driver for big-ticket purchases such as flooring. Have you ever considered accepting other forms of payment such as Bitcoin and Venmo? The whole world is into it, so why not you? My friend has a small restaurant and since she put up a sign saying she takes Venmo her sales have gone through the roof.

**THINK ABOUT WAYS YOU CAN PARTNER WITH AN APPROVED INSTRUCTOR AND BUILD A CEU FLOORING CLASS. THEN YOU CAN HAVE CLASSES IN YOUR STORE.**

**Spruce up your store.** In my book, "Red Hot Customer Experience," I state that "getting it right isn't good enough these days; you must get it better!" And that means making

Eats drivers always seem to be at the door. The lesson? Bring the business to your customer's doorstep.

your store a destination. Gucci's flagship store in Italy is a great example of enticing in customers by a mixture of a cafe, museum, art gallery and shop.

**Promote virtual workshops.** Explore creative, new ways to utilize online tools. Talk with your interior designers, paint suppliers and flooring suppliers on ways to do Zoom presentations and then post them on your social media sites. Find out if there are ways to work with local businesses that are creative and are willing to partner with you on these efforts. Create fun themes such as "Workshop Wednesday," "Monday Motivation," "Tool Tuesdays," you get the idea. One of my contacts, Dianne Grossman, the "Jersey Flooring Girl," excels in this area.

**Be the expert in your field.** Get your own "Design Geek Squad" or installation troubleshooters. Best Buy's Geek Squad is a household name; why not create a similar niche for your business? It's a great way to enhance the customer experience. It's a great billboard and copy even if no one uses your service.

**Build engagement through community.** Become more active in local or industry groups. For example, the Women of the Flooring Business Facebook group (of which I am a member)

**Expand your audience.** Most retailers target consumers, builders or Main Street business, but realtors and home inspectors also represent an untapped market. Think about ways you can partner with an approved instructor and build a CEU flooring class. Then you can have classes in your store. Call a local real estate broker and do a color and design class for them.

*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.*



L A M I N A T E

# Comeback kid poised for another good run

By Reginald Tucker

Despite the challenges the laminate category continues to face amid stiff competition from other hard surface categories, suppliers are still bullish on the segment's prospects for the coming year. While some industry observers are not expecting a seismic shift in the market share ratio between laminate and competing hard surface categories, they do say the segment will continue to garner attention for the foreseeable future.

The key to recouping lost market share, suppliers say, lies in the application of new technologies designed to increase the product's resistance to moisture and render more realistic visuals that reflect the demands of today's consumers. "Water-resistant products and enhanced visuals with digital printing will fuel growth of the laminate segment," said Derek Welbourn, CEO of Inhaus. "It's all about creating greater value for consumers."



**David Moore**  
senior product director,  
wood and laminate  
Mohawk



**David Sheehan**  
VP, residential hard  
surface, Mannington



**Derek Welbourn**  
CEO  
Inhaus

## What is your projection for the growth of the category next year?

We expect to see double-digit growth for laminate next year.

The laminate category is projected to grow 5%-7%.

Laminate has seen significant growth in 2021 and we see this continuing for 2022.

## What segments and/or products will fuel this growth?

We see opportunities in both specialty retail and our builder/multi-family segments. Our RevWood Plus products are well positioned with a feature/benefit story that's resonating with consumers.

Growth will come from a resurgence at specialty retail, combined with strong builder growth. Home centers will continue to be a major player, although some laminate real estate there has moved to LVT.

Growth in the building sector, both single- and multi-family. The repair and remodeling segment will represent the majority of growth.

## What are the growth projections for your company in particular?

Our goal is to increase our market share and grow at a higher rate than the industry.

Mannington is projecting our laminate growth to be above the industry rate, probably in the high single digits.

We expect our growth to be higher than the overall rate of the flooring market.

## Cite a few of your major initiatives achieved in 2021.

Navigating all of the labor and supply chain challenges experienced by the market. While not achieving the service levels we hoped for, we were able to maximize our output based on the circumstances.

We continued to leverage our digital print technology with successful new introductions that deliver meaningful differentiation to the consumer and retailer.

The launch of our new Lamdura program and the development of some technical enhancements for our laminate, which include a water-resistant, angle-fold locking system with enhanced scratch resistance.

## Identify the "X" factor that will impact business in general in 2022.

Future disruptions due to COVID-19 variants.

The X factor has to be the continued impact of COVID-19 and how it affects consumer buying habits.

Demand for product has significantly outstripped the supply of raw materials and logistic capacity. It will remain a challenge for everyone.

## Where do you see the greatest opportunities?

While we do not foresee a total shutdown, navigating the market and business interruptions will be a focus.

We see continued opportunity at specialty retail and select builder markets.

The best opportunities will lie in partnering with key customers on both supply and new programs.





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# Software to help flooring businesses improve efficiencies

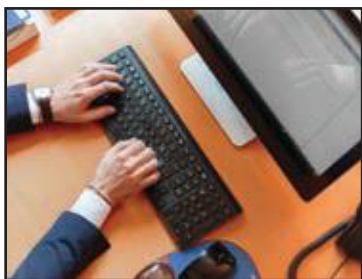
By Jacqueline Hinchcliffe

**W**hether it's estimating, inventory management or general lead-generation or customer relationship management systems, software tools can go a long way in enhancing the operations of any flooring business.

With more and more consumers relying on the internet to begin their shopping journey—

combined with more retailers and distributors utilizing technology to connect the dots—the need for proven software solutions has never been greater.

Following are some of the latest solutions software companies are offering to help users across the supply chain improve day-to-day efficiencies.



## American Business Software

American Business Software (ABS) has developed its own e-commerce platform called COLA (Customer Online Access). The software, utilized

by retailers and distributors alike, was designed to provide round-the-clock access to product inventories.

### HOW IT WORKS

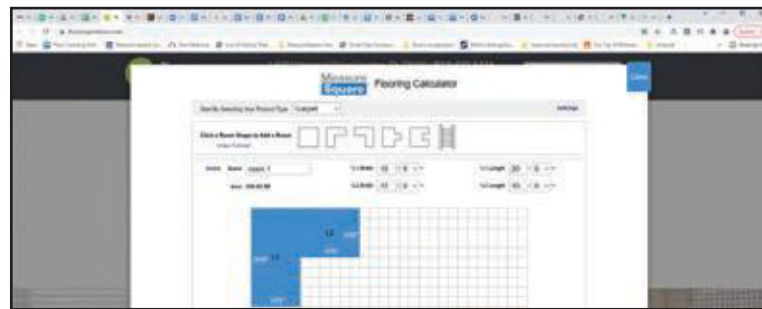
This platform is able to show customers available stock, what stock is coming in, what they've ordered and when it's going to be delivered among other helpful information. According to Joseph Flannick, president, it is usually utilized specifically for the company's customer base

rather than a public e-commerce site. There is login information provided to the customer, by the distributor, that they use to access the platform and utilize its benefits.

"The thing about software is it allows you to use it in a more productive environment," Flannick explained. "You don't have to be in the office, you can be anywhere."

## Measure Square

Measure Square has created a



web-based flooring calculator for retailers to host on their website in order for online shoppers to be able to accurately estimate their product quantity, using Measure Square's pro estimating software, to plan their budget. The calculator can be used for carpet, vinyl, tile, hardwoods, laminates and more.

### HOW IT WORKS

After adding the free web tool to any website by copying and pasting a single line of code to their

web page, it can be accessed any time. Upon opening, users click on a room shape or stairs to add it to the calculator and put in the correct dimensions. Users can then select the product type that allows the tool to calculate how much of the product is needed in order to complete the room. Users also have the option of sending their calculations to themselves, via email, while also sending a copy to the retailer. Simultaneously, retailers are able to both engage their shop-

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pers as well as generate a lead to bring them into their store.

“In this Internet age, home consumers are pretty savvy searching online,” said Steven Wang, president. The software, he noted, helps them estimate their product usages to determine an approximate cost before they go to the store.

#### Pacific Solutions

By utilizing its internal reporting and interface to Tableau, Pacific Solutions is able to aid dealers in recognizing trends before they decide where and how to market. The software’s purpose is to graph historical sales data in order for the dealers to spot these sales trends. After all, if a company doesn’t know what products to market and when to market them, how can they truly market to the target audience successfully?

#### HOW IT WORKS

Dealers are able to access Tableau via a web browser or mobile app. After accessing on their platform of choice, Tableau gives them access to historical data within their company that shows what products are selling the most, how much of each product sold and when the most of each product was being sold. Users are able to click on specific product types, such as LVT, hardwood or carpet, to filter the data. This then isolates the data for that product, allowing the user to determine whether it is a good product to market and when to market it.

“If a dealer has a poorly designed ERP system that doesn’t track or report on their historical data, they have to cast too broad of a net to catch fish,” Bob Noe, president, explained. “However, if they have a good ERP solution that can force their employees to properly track data, then they can cast a much smaller and cost-effective net that yields a much better return on their marketing investment.”

#### RFMS

RFMS offers a suite of apps that are designed to meet the customer’s needs in and out of the showroom. These apps allow

the lead to be managed from the beginning to the end of the sales cycle.

According to Kaitlyn Harris, sales and marketing specialist, RFMS, this innovative ERP system is approved by all the major

buying groups that can seamlessly integrate with each of their individual marketing needs.

#### HOW IT WORKS

After starting an order in the RFMS CRM app, adding job details and product selections by room in the app, users are able to schedule the measure date and time. This data will automatically be added to the estimator’s or salesperson’s calendar in CRM or the user’s preferred calendar platform.

At this stage, the project is auto-generated in Measure Mobile, allowing added rooms and products to be seen via the

to-do list. A floor plan can also be drawn as well using different drawing tools in Measure Mobile. After reviewing the project checklist and confirming the prices, the quote can be shared with the customer via text message or email.

“If everything looks good, your customer can approve and pay the quote on the spot by simply clicking the ‘Approval’ button and you receive confirmation in CRM as well,” Harris

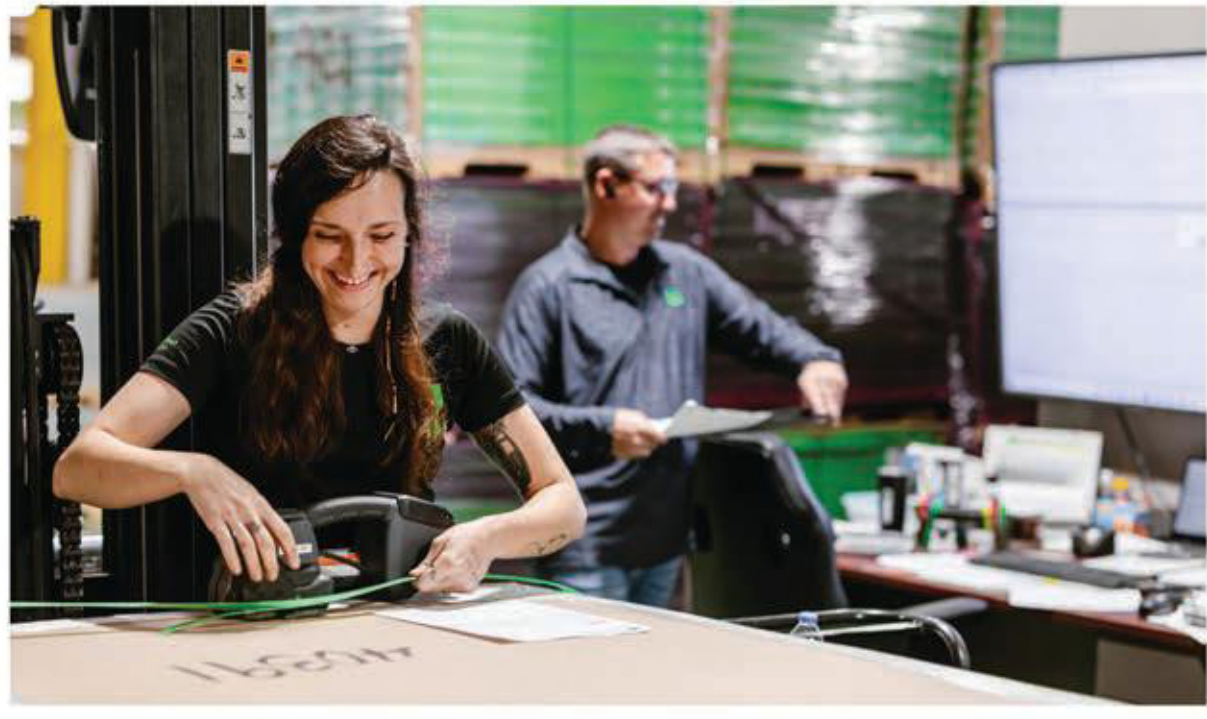


explained. With the addition of these tools, the sale is able to be completed from a mobile device or tablet, from anywhere at any time. “Once the quote is approved, you can create the order in CRM to close the sale,” Harris said.

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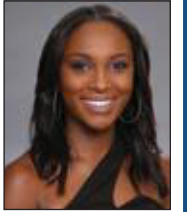


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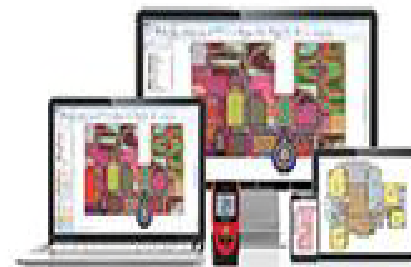
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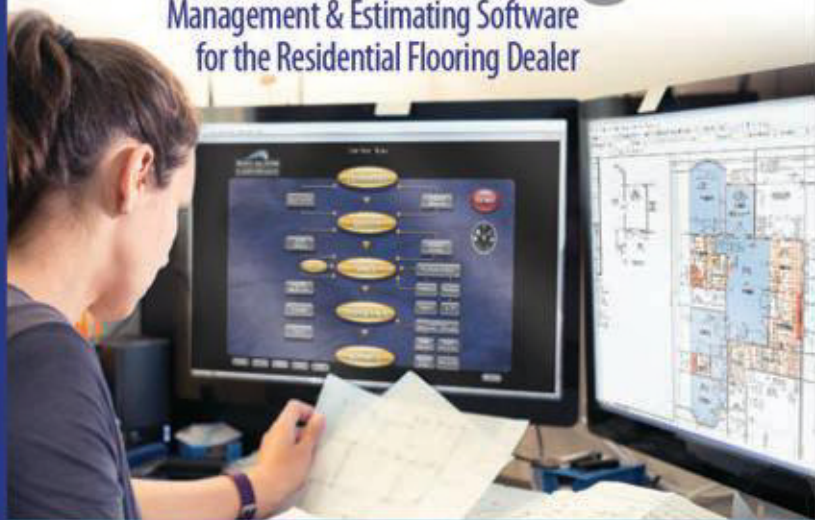


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