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Taking a stand

In *FCNews*' latest department, 'Ordinary people doing extraordinary things,' Lou Morano is recognized for his generous charity work.

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NEW SEASON USHERS IN SLEW OF COOL PRODUCTS

Floor covering retailers often look at the fourth quarter as an opportunity to finish the year on a high note, a chance to make or exceed plan and continue the momentum into the next year. One of the easiest ways to accomplish that goal is to offer difference-making products that resonate with consumers.

Fortunately for dealers, the 2016 fall season is off to a promising start as manufacturers have ramped up their R&D efforts to introduce offerings that provide true differentiation to a market that is often dominated by me-too products.

Turn to pages 10-11 for a preview.

Third quarter retail report

Reviews a mixed bag for flooring, home furnishings

By Lindsay Baillie

As the third quarter winds down, projections point toward slightly slower retail activity in the home furnishings sector compared to the second quarter. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, total retail sales in the U.S. this year declined 0.3% in August compared to July. Analysts say this marks the first decline in five months as sales dropped for almost all sectors, with the exception of grocers and clothing stores. Within the home furnishings category in particular, home-improvement centers saw a decrease of 1.4%, and furniture and home furnishings sales fell 0.7% during the same period.

Several flooring dealers contacted by *FCNews* are anticipat-

ing an overall increase in the third quarter. Some say this is fueled by the surging luxury vinyl tile/WPC category. Eric Langan, president and owner of Carpetland USA, with multiple



Sales of home furnishing products, including flooring, varied widely during the third quarter.

stores in Iowa and Illinois, said the third quarter has been successful, in particular August,

Continued on page 22

Hanjin Shipping bankruptcy causes minor hiccups

By Ken Ryan

Hanjin Shipping Co., the world's seventh-largest container shipper, recently filed for receivership in Seoul, South Korea. As a result, an estimated \$14 billion in cargo has been tied up globally as ports, tugboat operators and

cargo-handling firms that are worried about not being paid refuse to work for Hanjin, according to reports. While some ships have been offloaded, bottlenecks are forming at some ports and truck yards as containers pile up. As of Sept. 15, some 60 Hanjin cargo vessels are stranded at sea.

While some flooring companies that rely on imports have largely been unaffected by Hanjin's bankruptcy, others have been hard hit. One of those is Jeff Hamar, president of Galleher, a top 10 distributor based in Santa Fe Springs, Calif., who said his company has been significantly impacted. "We had five contain-

ers that were impacted. I believe they are on four different ships. One ship with two containers



Two weeks after the company's bankruptcy filing, there were an estimated 60 Hanjin ships stranded among the world's oceans.

was offloaded over the weekend in the Long Beach port and we should get the containers any day now. Another ship was scheduled to dock on [Sept. 14]

and we should have the container on that ship soon. No news on the other two ships and the last two containers."

At the time Hanjin declared bankruptcy, Metroflor Corp. had some containers on their vessels, according to Russ Rogg, CEO. "We're seeing some modest delays in securing those containers upon arrival." However, he said Metroflor is "working through the situation with minimal disruption to the company and our customers."

Most other distributors and manufacturers contacted by *FCNews* have not been impacted or have worked around the situation. John

Continued on page 18

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IN THE NEWS

Raskin Industries appoints new director of sales

BOCA RATON, FLA.—Raskin Industries has named Ted Rocha director of sales. In this capacity, Rocha is responsible for expanding revenues for the Raskin family of brands, which includes FloorNation, the company's first Made in the USA collection; Elevations Loose Lay; and Formations glue-down and new waterproof products.



Rocha has more than 25 years experience in the flooring industry with a strong background in manufacturing and distribution platforms. "Rocha brings a great deal of industry knowledge to the Raskin team," said Michael Raskin, founder and CEO of Raskin Industries. "He will undoubtedly represent Raskin with professionalism and help steer us toward new growth opportunities, and he will bring new business to distributors."

DriTac hires business development director

CLIFTON, NJ—DriTac Flooring Products has named Wade Verble new business development director. Verble, a 25-year industry veteran, is responsible for expanding sales with the development of new business opportunities through a variety of evolving channels.



His targeted business objectives will emphasize market needs and span the domestic and international marketplaces.

Verble previously served as Southeast regional sales manager before being promoted to national sales manager. He left the company to explore other interests more than a decade ago but has now returned to DriTac. "Wade brings a lot of experience and industry knowledge to the DriTac team," said Myrna Block, executive vice president, citing Verble's strong background in manufacturing and distribution platforms.

Ellis appointed CMO of Beaulieu America

DALTON—Beaulieu Group has selected Tom Ellis as chief marketing officer of Beaulieu America for both residential and commercial activities.



Tom Ellis

Ellis joined Beaulieu after more than 30 years of senior management experience, including stints at Tandus and Armstrong.

"We are happy to have Tom as part of our management team with his extensive experience and excellent track record in the commercial and hospitality market segments," said Michael Pollard, president of Beaulieu Group. "Our residential and commercial activities are poised for substantial growth, and we know his leadership and vision will help our business attain its new goals."

Ellis is glad to be on board. "I'm excited about the opportunity to lead all the marketing efforts and being part of this family-owned business that is so committed to their customers and associates."

MaxWoods relocates office, warehouse

MCGRANE TAKES 50% OWNERSHIP STAKE

By Ken Ryan

KEY WEST, FLA.—Josh McGrane, president and COO of MaxWoods, has purchased equity shares in the business from founder and sole shareholder Peter Spirer, CEO, resulting in an equal partnership in the hardwood flooring business.

In support of the amendment to the ownership structure, MaxWoods announced it is relocating its office and some warehousing facilities. The company, currently located in Adairsville, Ga., will move the accounting and customer service departments to an office building in Key West, which the company will purchase.

MaxWoods will maintain its distribution center in Adairsville. Shipping will continue from there as well as Dixon, Tenn., which is conveniently located near American OEM, its major supplier. "Shipping from Tennessee directly to customers eliminates the duplicate cost of transporting the material first to Georgia and from there to the customer," Spirer explained.



Peter Spirer

The move is anticipated to improve management oversight. Locating the company offices to Key West, according to McGrane, "will enable me to spend more time setting up and administering the systems our customers rely on. The transition has been taking place for weeks, and I'm pleased to say it has been seamless. Not a single order was lost, and the dealers with whom I've spoken are very pleased. As new staffers become

more familiar with the specifics of the hardwood business, things will get progressively smoother."

For the last 18 months, MaxWoods has been making the transition from selling Chinese imports to domestic product. "We love how this is working out," Spirer said. "The dynamics of this strategic shift have fundamentally changed how we do business. The new model offers greater flexibility, improved service and cost savings."

MaxWood's primary goal is straightforward: to provide flooring dealers with the

most salable products and best service. Through improved logistics and by trimming unnecessary costs, MaxWoods aims to offer the most competitive pricing possible. "Affordability to consumers is imperative to our future growth," Spirer said. "There is just no justification for overlapping costs. For dealers in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, shipping from Tennessee is faster and costs less. We service the Southeast from Georgia; for Texas and the Southwest we inventory in Houston."



Josh McGrane

McGrane noted MaxWoods has been growing its sales since the beginning of the year despite the logistic challenges.

"Speculation is over. We have a solid growth plan, and we're putting together the pieces for a major new product launch for 2017."

Spirer, 85, plans to remain active in the marketing and product development side of the business for years to come. "I am fortunate to be in wonderful health. Josh is now a full partner and is as good with operations as he is with sales. He'll do a great job running the business. It is appropriate to establish the basis for the future at this time."

Armstrong continues supporting U.S. troops

LANCASTER, PA.—Armstrong Flooring announced it is continuing as the exclusive flooring sponsor of Homes for Our Troops (HFOT) through 2019.

HFOT is a national non-profit organization that builds mortgage-free, specially adapted homes nationwide for severely injured veterans post 9/11 to enable them to rebuild their lives.

Armstrong Flooring has been a supporter of HFOT since 2013. Nearly 90 home build projects already have been completed with many more builds planned over the next three years. HFOT veterans can select from options in hardwood, laminate, luxury vinyl plank and Alterna engineered stone flooring to personalize their homes to their specific tastes and needs.

"We are deeply honored to have the opportunity to assist these veterans in rebuilding their lives, one home at a

time," said Andrew Lippman, vice president-marketing, Armstrong. "Our involvement makes sure these homes are built with the very best flooring to suit each family's particular situation."

Major General (USA, Ret.) Timothy P. McHale, president and CEO, Homes for Our Troops, noted: "It is only with continued support from sponsors like Armstrong Flooring that together we can help more severely injured veterans eliminate the daily obstacles and barriers that their physical limitations impose upon them and their families."

In addition to providing products and funding, many Armstrong Flooring employees as well as a number of its distributor and retail partners have partici-



Ssg Jeremy Breece with his wife, Roxanne, and their two sons, Zachary and Seth, enjoying their specially adapted home.

pated in HFOT home builds in their local communities and across the nation.

Many of Armstrong Flooring's retail partners have donated installation services to HFOT over the past three years, saving HFOT more than \$100,000 in installation costs by covering the cost and labor of installation.

SNAPSHOT

Derr Flooring presents 15th annual Scholarship Excellence awards

WILLOW GROVE, PA.—Derr Flooring recently honored Rocco DeFelice, an engineering major at the University of Maryland, and Marissa Strine, who will be an elementary education major at Millersville University, during its 15th annual Scholarship Excellence awards. The scholarship program was the original brainchild of Chester Derr Jr. and his late sister, Gayle Holden. To date, the Derr family has provided financial support for students in the amount of \$117,000. Pictured here are Marissa Strine and Rocco DeFelice outside Derr Flooring headquarters.





my take

Eight thoughts from one of the country's top economists

It has been awhile since we talked about the economy in this space. Whenever we do, I tend to lean on the forecasts of our favorite economist—Alan Beaulieu, president of ITR Economics and a frequent speaker at the North American Association of Floor Covering Distributors events. Listen to 10 economists and you may get 10 different opinions, but Beaulieu is spot on more than 90% of the time. In fact, you can bet every one of your shekels and pesos that his presentation by far will be the most well attended presentation at the upcoming NAFCD conference in Chicago on Nov. 3.

Anyway, while most economists are offering a somewhat mixed message this season, Beaulieu is taking a more positive, long-range view for future growth than most.

Here are some of his thoughts as we approach the Presidential election:

1. 2017 will be a stronger year for businesses than 2016.
2. 2016 has turned out to be a worse year for the industrial sector than economists predicted with mining being a particular drag on growth.
3. This year's Presidential election will not affect the forecast. "Whether it's a Democrat or Republican isn't going to change the outlook for 2017 because it

really doesn't matter. It takes a while for anybody who's elected to have an impact."

4. From World War II on, ITR Economics has studied where the economy does better—under Democrats or Republicans. "It's statistically insignificant. We're just as apt to have recovery under a Democrat or Republican. We're just as apt to have a recession under one or the other."

5. Interestingly, 53% of Americans think China is the largest economy on the planet, which shows the lack of intelligence on the part of so many in this country. The U.S. remains the largest economy with 24.5% of the world GDP compared to China's 15%. (Japan and Germany come in next at 5.6% and 4.6%, respectively.) What's more, the United States' share of the pie has increased over the past year. "We are alive and vibrant and doing well. We're not old and dying."

6. Oil and gas has been a challenging sector, and the U.S. has really curtailed production. Some of that has been painful, but some has been good, too. "For right now, the good thing is we—and other nations—are cutting back on production, mostly non-OPEC. As we're cutting back on production, that's taking care of the glut that's out there in the

world. As we're beginning to take care of the glut, these prices are going to be seeing some more upside pressure."

7. This eventual upward pressure, combined with the increased reliance on renewables, will mean that eventually all other costs will go up, leading to inflation. Beaulieu expects some mild inflationary pressures in 2017.

8. Overall, the U.S. is in good shape and poised for growth for the next 14 years. He believes we will have our minor recessions, but nothing really bad will happen until a predicted major depression in 2030, which is tied to global demographic trends and a massive amount of people expected to retire. "In between, you need to be aggressive. You need to hire, you need to train, you need to optimize, you need to make sure your marketing is in place and ensure your competitive advantages are in place. If you do all those things and plan for higher profits, you're going to find yourself ahead of those who are still waiting."

We will cover more of Beaulieu's thoughts in the FCNews issue that publishes after the NAFCD convention.

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Getting social with fcnews

Pierce Flooring & Design
17 hrs · 46

The Tuttle Fall Fashion Sale is going on now! Save up to \$1,000 on Area nylon and STAINMASTER nylon carpet (receive a rebate for \$250, or \$22/sq ft).

Flooring 101
September 8 at 10:26am · 46

If you need us, we'll be outside!

20 Cozy Fall-Inspired Outdoor Spaces
Your backyard doesn't expire by summer's end. Use these decorating ideas to transition your porch, patio or backyard for autumn.

Roberts Carpet & Fine Floors
Yesterday at 2:32pm · 46

http://www.eldecor.com/.../enr.../g3226/fall-wedding-flowers/

10 Fall Wedding Flower Arrangements Blooming With Seasonal Charm
And you thought you couldn't love fall any more than you already do.

Hadinger Flooring
Yesterday at 1:36pm · 46

Pastels aren't just for spring!

18 Reasons to Embrace Pastels this Fall
Veranda brings you these thoughtful fall uses for pastel colors: lavender and celery make a crisp, calming match that capture the subtle beauty of the changing season.
VERANDA.COM | BY MELISSA DOLGAN

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Light Lab: Latest in design, sustainability

MOHAWK GROUP UNITES ALL COMMERCIAL DIVISIONS UNDER ONE ROOF

By Steven Feldman

DALTON—The Mohawk Group earlier this year brought its entire commercial team under one roof, transforming the iconic building that once housed World Carpets and for years served as Mohawk's Dalton headquarters into an eco-friendly space that is now dubbed the Light Lab.

About 80 people now call the Light Lab home. This includes Mohawk Group's core commercial, hospitality, hospitality pre-order (floor plans, sample entry, planning and estimating) and custom divisions.

"We were previously located in three or four different areas," said Jackie Dettmar, vice president of commercial product development and design. "It's nice to have all our design teams together for collaboration, cross fertilization and to break down barriers between the groups."

The space incorporates the latest design and sustainability trends. This includes both open and alternative workspaces. "Everyone has their individual workspace, but they can also work in collaboration areas," Dettmar explained. There are also some traditional office spaces with actual doors when privacy is needed, or where a designer can work if he or she needs light blocked. "We also encourage people to work outside in our green space."

Aside from bringing together its commercial teams, Dettmar said Mohawk Group needed a space where it could bring commercial customers. "We use it as a showroom for product but we also work with designers here in real time on custom design projects. We can run samples in our pilot plant while they are here. Then we can review and make changes, and work on visualization simulations so we can accelerate custom design projects."

The Light Lab also comes equipped with its own "Experience Room," where Mohawk Group can do training in the traditional sense in a space that can accommodate up to 70 people. The room can also be reconfigured for community events. "We recently hosted a Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals class," Dettmar said.

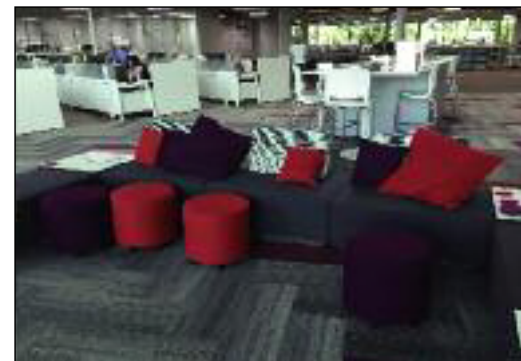
The "building in the round's" revamp has been in the works for a couple of years. Dettmar said the idea came up to go to the Savannah College of Art and

Design (SCAD) and collaborate with the interiors group at one of top interior design schools in the U.S. "We had 12 students who came up with ideas on how to use the space. We chose the Light Lab idea from a student named Bradley Oldem. He has since started own design firm in Atlanta. We also took what we liked from other students and incorporated them into Bradley's concept."

After Mohawk finished its work with SCAD, the company

started getting involved with the International Living Future Institute (ILFI) along with its Declare labels and transparency initiatives. "We thought this would be a great opportunity to work through IFLI's Petal certification, which is similar to LEED," Dettmar said. The Petal option provides a platform for a project to inform other efforts throughout the world and accelerate the adoption of restorative principles. "What I love about IFLI certification is beauty, health and

wellness are all part of that certification. So we incorporated a lot of biophilic design initiatives and also were cognizant of health and wellness of employees. For example, everyone in the entire space gets a view of the outside. We weren't going to put up walls. People went from basements to sunlight. The other



Mohawk's new Light Lab features both open and alternative workspaces.

big part is we were the first restoration in the Southwest to achieve Petal certification."

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educating the industry

Satisfying the 'me' in customer



BY BRIAN GRACON

You know there's no "I" in "team," but there is a "me" in "customer." Customers buy based on "What's in it for me?" but what are they looking for these days when making their buying decisions?

From luxury cars to gourmet coffee shops, many companies were recession proof and are strong today. These companies used growth strategies based on the new consumer buying habits you can leverage in your business.

Extensive research revealed three strategies fueling much of this growth: 1) help a customer define or reinforce her self image; 2) provide entertainment through your products, services or shopping experience; and/or 3) pamper the customer to make her feel special. By using these same strategies, you can also tap into these new buying habits.

Let's explore these three strategies

in areas where your business influences your customers: marketing, selling and staffing.

Marketing

Focus on your customer's emotional wants and needs. Instead of asking customers to "think hard" about physical features and warranties, invite them to "think soft" about personal and emotional benefits in your marketing efforts.

Check your marketing for an appeal to your target customer's self image. Make sure you understand which self images those are.

Convey how your offering or customer experience will be fun or easy.

Communicate how you value the uniqueness of your customers and will pamper them. Affirm with customers that they are special, will be treated special and that your offering is special, too.

Audit your current marketing for the three strategies—self image, entertain and pamper. If you are having a difficult time finding any of the lenses in your marketing, that can still be good news. You'll have many opportu-

nities to improve your marketing and your business.

Selling

Your sales process needs to deliver on the customer expectations created by your marketing. The following companies and their sales processes teach us about selling to today's customers using these three strategies:

- Entertain: Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle has gained international recognition (and a lot of sales) because employees throw fish around as part of their sales process.

- Pamper: Lexus of North Miami offers customers complimentary Club Lexus service. Customers can choose an onsite manicure, health club session, massage, pedicure or hair styling while their cars are being serviced.

- Self image: When you enter a Moe's Southwest Grill restaurant, every employee in the place calls out "Welcome to Moe's." Then they give personal service by customizing the order.

Staffing

Do you hire, train and coach your staff so they have the skills necessary to provide these customer experiences? When hiring new staff, consider the typical self images of your customers and make sure your staff is comfortable working with those images.

Ask your training providers how they can incorporate these three strategies into their regimens, and make sure the instruction provides opportunities to practice these new skills.

Participate in staff training so you know what they have been trained to do. Then, develop a coaching playbook so you know what to do whether confirming or corrective feedback is needed.

The above integrated set of marketing, selling and staffing strategies can help satisfy today's customer needs and sell as if you had multi-million dollar marketing budgets.



Brian Gracon has 20 years experience as a training and marketing consultant serving the flooring industry. At TISE 2017 he will present "Even More Growth Strategies the Big Boxes Don't Want You to Know About." For more information, visit tisewest.com.

RETAILERS REACT

What do you see as the biggest opportunity for your business today



Billy Mahone III of Atlas Floors sees the biggest opportunity coming from online shoppers who can be converted into customers.

The biggest opportunity I see today would be remodeling. The homes that were built in the boom are now 10-plus years old and are prime for updating and upgrading. We also have a lot of customers who are no longer upside down in their homes so they are willing to invest in them.

—Josh Elder, Gainesville Carpets Plus Colortile
Gainesville, Fla.

The biggest opportunity for our business comes from the growing number of consumers shopping online before they step foot in a store. Our goal is to convert more online shoppers into customers through engaging media and a simple shop-at-home program.

—Billy Mahone III, Atlas Floors
Carpet One, San Antonio

Opportunities should come from those people who purchased from the box stores 8-10 years ago who need new floor covering now. I would think that maybe only 20% would go back considering the experience they would have had there. We continue to learn, execute better and provide better customer service so we can continue to earn market share.

—Steve Weisberg, Crest Flooring
Allentown, Pa.

We have an opportunity as an independent, locally owned dealer, to be viewed as the reliable experts and continue to expand the chasm between us and the home stores or shop-at-home flooring options. If we don't take advantage of this enlarging difference between us, we'll have to revert to low prices as well. The promising news is that consumers do still care about service and are willing to pay a little more to know they're in the hands of true experts whose livelihoods depend on transforming their clients homes and places of business.

—Casey Dillabaugh, Dillabaugh's Flooring America
Boise, Idaho

We're always looking to expand, and we are opening a 13th store at the end of this year, or early 2017, in north Seattle.

—Ryan Bechtold, Contract Furnishings Mart
Tigold, Ore.

CALENDAR

Sept. 21
Alan Greenberg Memorial Charity Golf Tournament
Barnsley Gardens, Adairsville, Ga. Contact: Paula Holt, 800.466.6984, ext. 1101; alanguerbergfcif.com

Sept. 24-26
CarpetsPlus
Member summitt, Sheraton Station Square, Pittsburgh. Contact: 423.954.1133; carpetsplusbuyinggroup.com

Sept. 26-29
NWFA Intermediate Installation + NWFACP Installation Testing
E.J. Welch, Elk Grove Village, Ill. Contact: Tracy Swindoll, 800.422.4556; member.nwfa.org

Oct. 4-6
FCICA
Mid-year meeting, Green Valley Ranch Resort, Las Vegas. Contact: 248.661.5015; fcica.com/events/mid-year-meeting

Oct. 5-7
Greenbuild
International conference, Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles. Contact: 866.606.7765; greenbuildexpo.org

Oct. 18-20
FloorTek Expo
Dalton Convention Center, Dalton. Contact: Wanda Ellis, 800.288.4101; floor-tek.com

Nov. 1-3
NAFCD
Annual convention, Hyatt Regency, Chicago. Contact: 800.383.3091; distributorconvention.org

Nov. 4-6
Starnet
Fall meeting, Omni Nashville Hotel, Nashville, Tenn. Contact: 919.426.1819; starnetflooring.com

REMEMBER WHEN...



Back in 1989, Dow Chemical named Shaw Industries the recipient of its prestigious Mill of the Year award. Vance Bell, center, then the vice president of marketing for Shaw, and Norris Little, right, senior vice president of operations, received the award from Robert Neely, commercial manager of the polyurethane carpet backing systems of Dow Chemical. Today, Bell is the CEO of Shaw Industries. Little would later ascend to become president and CEO.

Ordinary people doing extraordinary things

Lou Morano: Selfless service to kids in need

By Steven Feldman

Lou Morano over the last 30 years has built Capitol Carpet and Tile into one of the premier flooring retailers in Florida. After working for a carpet retailer in New Jersey, Lou migrated to Florida in the mid-1980s and along with his father opened the first of what now numbers five locations in Palm Beach County plus a very successful commercial division. The business does about \$18 million, and Lou still spends about 50 hours a week in the office.

In 2009, Morano's son, Gabriel, went on a mission trip to Mexico. He would have no idea how that would impact his life. A year later Morano accompanied his wife on another mission to Mexico. Moved by that trip, the following year he had the opportunity to go to Haiti. The mission centered around putting a roof on a church. When he arrived, Morano was shocked at what he

saw in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

"The thing about the northern part of Haiti is these people live in 1st century conditions," he said. "Most people have no power or running water. There



Lou Morano and other missionaries standing with sponsored children.

is garbage all over the place. Women are washing clothes in the river where there are dead animals 20 feet away. There is no industry in this area of Haiti, so there is no opportunity for work locally. When we build churches and other projects, we get local men coming by hoping to work for \$10 a day. Kids are running around with no shoes

and some have no clothes. Truly heartbreaking, and when you see this much poverty around you, I knew we had to help make a change."

Morano found a mission in Haiti that was started 25 years ago, which built four schools that today educate over 1,000 children from kindergarten through 9th grade. "I found out through this mission, for \$30 a month, people could sponsor a child. For this sponsorship, the child gets an education, a uniform and medical attention when needed. They also eat once a day in school, and \$12 of the \$30 goes to their family so they have money for food as well. In many instances the one meal in school is all the child will eat for the day. In addition, the children write letters that are translated and sent to sponsors twice a year."

The catalyst for Morano was one day on the construction site during his first trip to Haiti. "I remember so vividly there was this girl around 9 years old—she

reminded me of my daughter—she stood up and looked into me. And I don't mean she looked at me, she looked into me, like into my eyes, into my soul, into my being...like she was saying 'help.' It was like one of those movies where there are lots of people and things going on around you but you don't hear or see anything. It was just she and I. It hit me like a ton of bricks. I thought what if she were my daughter and I could not afford to give her food every day. What if she were my daughter and I could not give her medical help when she needed it. What if she were my daughter and she was roaming the neighborhood with no shoes or education because I could not afford it. From that point on I decided my goal would be to get every child in all four schools sponsored. When I started, 150 of the 600 children were sponsored. Now there are over 1,000 children of which 550 are sponsored."

As part of the sponsorship, the children receive a gift box once a year. Each box contains whatever the sponsor decides to put in it. That can range from underwear to toys to necessities like a toothbrush and toothpaste. Morano and the mission team personally hand out every box to every child each year. "When you deliver these gift boxes with what we would call bare necessities, the children light up. When they open up the box, it is the best thing they will have received all year long. They are thankful and appreciative."

Morano and the team actually make two trips to Haiti each year ranging from four to seven days. "We visit all four schools and see all the children. In September the mission tore down one of the schools and are rebuilding it. We are going with a team of 22 in a couple of months to put a roof on that school. When you do something like this or build them a church, it is empowering and gives them hope.

"When you go on one of these mission trips, you see how people live," he continued. "I remember that first Mexico trip. I saw a family of four living in an 8 x 10 foot pressboard box. Then you build them a house. So you are literally changing people's lives."

To this point, this Haiti mis-



Two missionaries working on the rafters at the work site.

sion has been extremely local, but Morano would like to create awareness to get more people involved, either through sponsorships or donations. "This started in my church and I've kind of taken the lead with a few other people from his congregation. We are in the process of developing a website so different organizations can have their own branded web page with sponsored children. This website would be 100% funded by my church, Journey Church. The organizations can have their employees sponsor the children or they can sponsor the kids themselves."

Morano said the unique thing about all this is the church pays all the credit card fees for the monthly \$30 sponsorships. "So all of the money goes 100% toward the child's needs—nothing toward administration or anything else. This is so unique in that no other non-profit organization can state this fact. Now we are trying to bring this to other organizations."

For those interested in becoming involved in the effort, Morano stressed three key points:

1. Haiti is unlike other places where there may be an opportunity to overcome the poverty they live in. In the northern part of Haiti there is no opportunity to break the cycle of poverty.

2. People can sponsor a child for \$30 a month or just donate money to the schools, children and their families.

3. This isn't a matter of sending money abroad and not knowing where that money goes. "We go every year to every school and see all our children. There are no middle people, there is no chance things won't wind up where they're supposed to."

To learn more or become involved in the effort, call Morano at 561.228.5657 or you may email Lou directly: loum@capitolcarpetandtile.com

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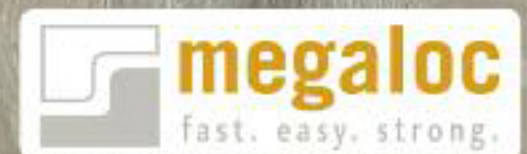
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Bamboo Hardwoods: Old West

This fall Bamboo Hardwoods is introducing the Old West collection to its Highlands Line. Highlands is a container-only, priced-to-move program that encourages retailers and builders to put some high-quality bamboo into their private-label programs at competitive prices. The line includes rich warm tones such as leather or saddle colors that are wire brushed and delicately scraped. "We have been witnessing different style and design demands in various marketplaces across the country," said David Keegan, CEO. "The Old West collection is in response to that demand."



Daltille: Slate Attaché

Daltille is introducing Slate Attaché, a glazed porcelain floor and glazed ceramic mosaic featuring its proprietary Reveal Imaging technology. Slate Attaché provides a combination of rustic durability and warmth via its mix of tone-on-tone and multicolor stone looks. The line comes in six colors across the browns, beige and gray spectrums, and are available in large size formats and three styles: 2 x 2 mosaics, 12 x 24 field tile and 24 x 24 field tile. Slate Attaché includes the company's patent-pending StepWise, a technology engineered to provide improved slip resistance on interior surfaces.



EarthWerks: Pavilion

EarthWerks takes the wraps off Pavilion luxury vinyl plank, a 6 x 36 entry-level offering with eight colors ranging from traditional to modern tones. The new line, which features Tuff Plank technology for greater performance and durability, is suitable for multi-family applications.

Pavilion, a gluedown LVT, contains a minimum of 50% recycled content and 100% recyclable post-use. It comes with a 20-year residential and 10-year light commercial warranty.



Engineered Floors: Pentz

Pentz Commercial Flooring Solutions is the new Main Street brand from Engineered Floors. Positioned as a "bold new day" for Main Street, Pentz promises maximum performance, features and warranties at a competitive price. The line entails three collections—Essentials, Formation (modular), and Prismatic (modular and broadloom)—made of PureColor nylon with Nexus backing. All products are available via QuickShip.

Also new is FlexBac, Engineered Floors' first premium backing system offered within the entry-level residential product category.



HF Design: Montage European Oak

HF Design is updating its signature Montage European Oak line with new color tones. Five new styles (Canelli, Fiana, Lorenzo, Pompeii and San Marino) will be added to the Ferno collection. Each plank undergoes a thermal treatment process to help increase dimensional stability and produce a range of vibrant colors. This color variation, HF Design says, helps display the true natural wood characters. Montage is finished off with Organic, an eco-friendly, natural air-dried oil process that penetrates through the wood grains for a long-lasting floor.



IndusParquet: Langania Hickory

IndusParquet's new Design Tower display rolls out with new products designed to meet today's trends in Brazilian hardwood flooring. The three new offerings are: Langânia Hickory, Peroba Rústico and Dolcé Pecan. Langânia Hickory features ½ x 7 ½-inch x 8-foot boards. Additional features include wire-brushed, hand-stained finishes. Peroba Rústico is a wide-plank/long-length product featuring sandblasted, band-saw marks, while Dolcé Pecan, a ½ x 6 ¼-inch x 8-foot format, features handcrafted touches. According to IndusParquet, the new offerings remain true to its exotic roots.



IVC: Moduleo LVT

This fall IVC US is showcasing its brand new Moduleo LVT collection, which features three style and quality categories—Vision, Horizon and Embellish. Moduleo features all new colors and designs, new sizes, embossed in register SKUs and is made in the USA. Moduleo comes with a new modular display system that can be arranged in three different configurations to satisfy the footprint of any dealer's showroom space.



Johnson Hardwood: Jockey Hollow Series

Johnson Hardwood introduced the Jockey Hollow Series, a handcrafted collection inspired by the rustic planks found at the historic Continental Army winter encampment in Morristown N.J. Designed to capture the look and feel of this historic period, the collection features wide/long planks that feature a variety of surface treatments not commonly found on new floors. Johnson utilizes a combination of skip sawing, hand scraping, soft grain brushing and surface watermarks to accentuate the colors and textures in the wood.



Karndean: LooseLay Longboard

LooseLay Longboard is Karndean's fastest and easiest product to install, combining its longest plank size with LooseLay's K-Wave backing. The new 59-inch planks feature 12 contemporary designs inspired by authentic American, Australian and European woods such as pine, walnut and spotted gum. The floors are waterproof, kid and pet friendly while still being soft and comfortable underfoot. Additional benefits include a durable K-Guard+ protective layer, enhanced acoustic qualities and the ability to install over subfloors with moisture readings of up to 95% relative humidity.

THE FALL ISN'T ONLY USHERING IN COOLER WEATHER—IT IS BRINGING WITH IT A BEVY OF NEW FLOORING INTRODUCTIONS JUST IN TIME FOR THE CRITICAL FOURTH QUARTER.



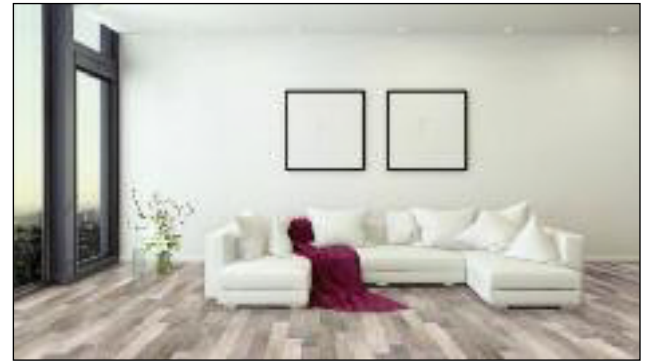
Mercier: Nature collection

Mercier Wood Flooring's newest introductions reflect current trends while meeting customers' needs and preferences. Irish Cream and Taj Mahal have been added to the Nature collection. These white-textured floors, marked by the passage of time, are intended to create industrial and modern looks. Many of Mercier's new launches reflect a Scandinavian-inspired trend that gives the floors a rustic chic look with naturally softened colors. Company executives believe beauty can be found even in imperfection as each board provides uniqueness.



Metroflor: Engage Genesis

Metroflor announces the next iteration of its Engage Genesis portfolio—Engage Genesis 600 featuring Isocore technology. Engage Genesis 600 is the first product in Metroflor's Engage Genesis portfolio to incorporate the company's new DropLock 100 locking profile, which provides easy, fold-down installation. Available to distributors with or without an attached IXPE (cross-linked polyethylene) underlayment, Engage Genesis 600 features a 6 mil wear layer in a 7.5 x 48 plank format, 5.5 mm thickness without attached underlayment and 7mm with underlayment.



Mullican: Oakmont

The Oakmont collection is a ½-inch engineered product available in four species (hickory, maple, oak and walnut) and nine colors. Manufactured in the U.S. and offered in random lengths up to 6 feet, the 5-inch-wide Oakmont collection conveys a classic hardwood flooring look that has been enriched with a hand-sculpted surface texture. Also new is the St. James collection, which features a wire-brushed surface texture in four designer colors. This ¾-inch solid product is manufactured in a narrow 3-inch width and captures the natural characteristics found in oak.



Novalis: NovaCore HPC

Novalis Innovative Flooring is adding extra-large 9 x 60 planks to its popular NovaCore HPC (High Performance Core) product line. NovaCore is made with the USFloors patent under license from Unilin. These large, rigid planks can be easily installed over almost any subfloor thanks to the NovaClic FD angle-fold locking system and are available in eight wood reproduction styles.

NovaCore comes with a 10-year light commercial warranty and a lifetime limited residential wear warranty. All planks are FloorScore Certified and feature the CeramGlaz wear layer coating for extra protection.



Quick-Step: LVF

Quick-Step recently announced its entry into the surging luxury vinyl flooring segment, with a nationwide launch of 16 SKUs to be sold through specialty flooring stores this fall. According to Quick-Step, its new LVT offering is "waterproof," not "water resistant" like many other LVT products. Another key advantage touted by the company is the product's resistance to heat and sunlight. The company said it conducted independent testing that showed Quick-Step's luxury vinyl floors maintained dimensional stability up to 110°F and as low as 32°F, so the floors won't warp or gap.



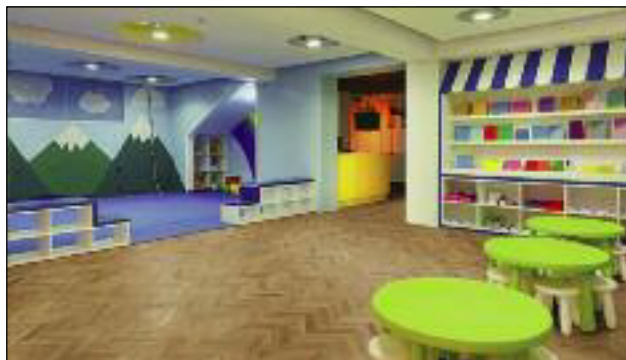
Raskin: FloorNation

FloorNation, Raskin Industries' first LVT line to be produced in the USA, will be offered in three patriotic themes: Freedom, which features a 2.5mm thick format with a 12 mil wear layer in a 7 x 47 plank; five SKUs are available. Pride, which comes in eight SKUs, includes two collections that feature 20 mil wear layer constructions in a 7 x 47 format and is distinguished by varying textures. Glory is a 4mm, loose lay product with fiberglass sheet, micro-beveled 20 mil wear layer in 9.25 x 59.25 planks. Glory comes in five SKUs.



Stanton: Atelier

This fall Stanton unveils textured designs durable enough for Main Street commercial use. The newest Atelier collections are made with long-lasting nylon, making them resistant to wear providing the critical performance that soft commercial interiors demand at a terrific value. This board display is shipping now and also includes four new styles in the hot-selling Stainmaster PetProtect program. The designs are now backed by a 15 year residential wear warranty making them ideal for rooms with heavy traffic in the homes of your customers.



Urban: Savanna

Urbanfloor announced three products for the fall including the engineered Savanna collection featuring a sliced face, rustic European oak with a brushed texture. With 7 ½-inch widths and up to 7-foot lengths, this collection includes an advanced HDF core platform designed to absorb higher impacts. Two other introductions are Timbertop Lifestyle and Timbertop Chevron. Lifestyle is an engineered European oak in a 9-½ wide by 8-foot long format with a 6 mil wear layer. Chevron is a classic, angled Chevron design. It measures 11 ½ inches wide and 4 or 5- feet in length.



Wickham: Engineered

Wickham is investing \$7 million into a new engineered wood line that will be sold under the Wickham brand in addition to a private-label offering that will be available in Canada and the U.S. The engineered products will be offered in three platforms: ½ inch, 5/8 and ¾, in widths ranging from 3-¼ (7 ply) to 7 (12 ply) inches. In addition Wickham will be unveiling a 30,000 square foot manufacturing facility in early 2017 as the company expands with new maple and red oak species. The company is also planning new finishes that run the gamut from smooth to distressed.

Incentives spice up selling season for dealers, suppliers

Marketing executives agree that fall is an ideal time to promote your business or new product line. Consumers are back in town after summer vacations, their kids are back in school and everyone is ready for a fresh start.

The flooring industry seems to agree as several manufacturers and retailers are busy with fall promotions and rebate programs.

Mohawk

In addition to instant rebates of up to \$500 on SmartStrand Forever Clean and ArmorMax products, Mohawk's largest annual sales event will feature product discounts on select SmartStrand Forever Clean carpets, select ArmorMax and Mohawk brand hard surface products. The sale started Sept. 16 and runs through Oct. 31. The National Karastan Month semi-annual event tradition is slated for Sept. 22 to Nov. 8. "With an assortment of product discounts, rebates and attractive consumer offers, National Karastan Month consistently proves to be a successful in-store selling event for Karastan retailers across the country," said Doug Ensley, director of marketing operations for Mohawk.

Shaw

Shaw Floors is giving flooring retailers two comprehensive promotional opportunities during the fall selling season. "You Save. We Give" takes place in September and is designed to benefit the retailer, the consumer and the children of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. In the past, Shaw's retail partners have deeply embraced the partnership with St. Jude and wanted to get more involved. According to Shaw,



this promotion is another way to address those requests and is supported with Shaw social media, customizable advertising materials and point-of-sale materials.

Shaw Friends and Family Sales Event promotion runs Oct. 1 to Nov. 14. For the first time, consumers will have the opportunity to save up to \$1,000 on select Shaw floors and get 24 months of special financing.

Raskin Industries

Raskin will be offering its



FloorNation Displays for a \$99 promotional price. Displays, which are powder coated, include the shelves and 18 x 20 boards. In addition, the five top-selling stores (of each Raskin distributor with the FloorNation Display) will receive new Apple watches until the end of 2016.

Mirage

Boa-Franc, parent company of the Mirage brand, is promoting the Mirage Fall 2016 Rebate Sale, which takes place across North America (excluding Quebec) at

Continued on page 18



dear david

Why employee manuals are essential tools

Dear David:

I've been reading articles about how important employee handbooks are for these new millennial employees. I don't have a manual and the truth is I don't know if it is really necessary. Is it worth going through the process of creating one when we do a pretty good job of training and setting expectations with our employees?



DAVID ROMANO

ensure managers across the organization handle issues consistently.

"Sell" the benefits you offer. A good handbook should briefly list all of the benefits provided by you at no cost to the employee. These include: medical insurance and short-term disability insurance, vacation, sick leave, parental leave and paid holidays, etc.

Provide ammunition against unemployment claims and lawsuits. The reality is it's only a matter of when—not if—a business owner will face a lawsuit from a current or former employee.

When this happens, one of the most useful documents you can provide your attorney

or third-party investigator will be a copy of your handbook, which demonstrates the organization exercised "reasonable care" toward its employees.

Outline safe workplace practices. Keeping both employees and customers safe at all times should be a top priority—and your employee handbook can help.

Provide guidance for managers. Employers can also use employee handbooks as a way of providing supervisors with information on key management policies, such as how to recognize the signs of substance abuse, performance counseling and corrective action, and interviewing and hiring guidelines.

Developing an employee handbook takes effort, but it is definitely worth the investment in time. You'll find it might save you a world of heartache and trouble down the road.

Dear Concerned Owner, Creating an official employee handbook gives you the ability to clearly communicate to employees how they should behave, what they should wear, how they will be compensated and how they will be disciplined and rewarded. The ideal employee handbook should facilitate the following:

Educate employees about what they can expect from management. An employee handbook clarifies company objectives and leadership styles, as well as management

DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK MIGHT SAVE YOU A WORLD OF HEARTACHE AND TROUBLE DOWN THE ROAD.

best practices—all of which foster healthy management-employee relationships.

Let employees know where to turn for help.

Ultimately, you want employees to feel comfortable turning to a trusted member of management for help when they want to report workplace violations or get workplace-related assistance or answers to any other questions they may have.

Get employees to behave according to set standards. A handbook should outline for employees how to conduct themselves, and what will happen if they fail to meet those expectations. A handbook should also inform employees about how they can succeed in their jobs. Personal conduct, dress code and ethics—are all things that should be clearly defined for employees.

Serve as a guide for managers. A handbook tailored to the way you do business helps

David Romano is the founder of Romano Consulting Group and Benchmarkinc, a group that provides consulting, benchmarking, recruiting and software solutions to the flooring, home improvement and restoration industries.

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Retailers, suppliers seize opportunities at the

By Reginald Tucker

The abundance of laminate flooring brands in the marketplace has expanded the number of options consumers, builders and end users have when selecting the products best suited for their design needs and budget requirements. But the downside of this tremendous availability is increased pressure on already razor-thin margins as many of the major home centers and discount merchandisers aggressively promote low, entry-level prices to generate traffic and volume.

The good news for specialty retailers is there are still plenty of opportunities in the midrange and upper end of the spectrum, given the right product mix, a targeted marketing strategy and, finally, the discipline to resist competing solely on price. “We don’t go after the low-end business,” said Phil Koufidakis, president of Phoenix-based Baker Bros., which sells the Armstrong brand of laminate

flooring. Instead, he markets his company as a “high-service” operation and prices his products and labor accordingly. “When I ask customers how they perceive us in the marketplace, they usually say, ‘You’re the high-

have, as it turns out. Having your name associated with higher-end goods and services—supported by a storefront and interior presentation that screams “upscale” marketing and merchandising—bodes well for the retailer in

bar high for ourselves.”

Of course, focusing on the “high end” with laminate is all relative. With many entry-level products coming in at around \$1.19 per square foot, products hitting price points at \$3.99 or slightly above are generally considered on the higher end of the midrange. Throw in high-quality acoustic underlayments and installation training by certified installers, and you have a recipe for a much bigger ticket. (All of Baker Bros.’ laminate installers are Armstrong certified.)

For other dealers, the route to bigger laminate tickets lies in strategic product positioning. For example, a \$4.59-per-square-foot laminate situated next to a hardwood flooring display that typically houses products double or even triple that amount all of a sudden looks like a tremendous bargain. “When we talk about the difference between laminate and hardwood it is typically someone didn’t realize how expensive some of these hardwood products can

be,” said Chris Green, owner of Great Southeast Flooring, Melbourne, Fla. “Meanwhile, their budget is telling them they should be in the laminate category. That’s where we can tell them they can be in laminate and still get the same desired effect.”

Similar product placement strategies are helping other dealers maximize opportunities to sell midrange and higher laminate flooring. At Flooring Town Group in North Hollywood, owner Abe Bashir has seen positive results by grouping laminate, WPC and wood lines from Eternity Flooring all in the same section. “It’s clearly one of the best products I’ve ever had,” he said, citing the above-average margins he earns on the laminate line. Beyond the trendy colors, designs and patterns, Bashir said his customers are increasingly gravitating to the improved performance attributes of the laminate and WPC offerings.

Battle for share

While the big boxes and mass merchants appear to be winning the battle for market share of the



Upscale merchandising systems go a long way in positioning laminate for profit on the specialty retail showroom floor.

priced guys,” he explained. “Then I ask them if that means we’re too expensive or if we are known for offering high-quality products and services. The question usually stumps them.”

That’s a good problem to

terms of both profit opportunities and differentiation from the big boxes. “When you’re selling high-quality product and promoting high-quality installation, the expectation of the customer is also very high. So we set the

Wood at its best

 SWISS KRONO



South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley (center, in red) and Swiss Krono executives gathered in Barnwell to break ground on a new facility.

ONLY RETAIL PARTNERS
LIKE YOU COULD MAKE US
SHOVEL DIRT IN THIS HEAT.

We’ve broken ground on a \$230 million high-density fiberboard (HDF) mill and factory expansion, which will increase our annual laminate flooring capacity by another 8 million square meters. And the cornerstone of this new facility will always be our retailer partners who want to offer their customers the world’s best laminate flooring.

upper end

laminated business in terms of sheer volume, research shows. “Home centers, by a wide measure, are driving the bulk of laminate flooring sales,” said Roger Farabee, senior vice president of marketing, Unilin North America. “When you combine the home centers, Lumber Liquidators, Floor & Décor and warehouse clubs, this represents more than 70% of the market in 2014. Specialty retail, in terms of the independent dealer, is by far the smallest segment selling laminate today representing about 25% to 30%.”

The good news for specialty retailers, however, is that there are still tremendous profit opportunities available to dealers through step-up products. What’s more, in many cases these upper-tier laminate options come with additional features and benefits such as thicker cores and enhanced surface textures—all of which warrant higher prices at retail.

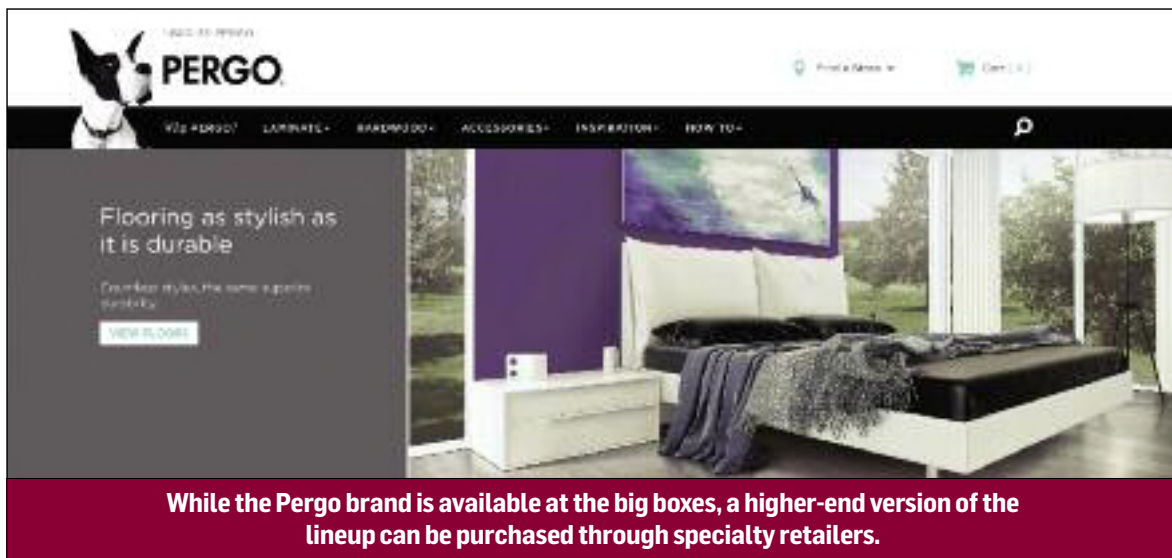
Given the fact that laminate was a remodel-focused category for so long, the product naturally gravitated toward the home center side. But as Dan Natkin, senior director, residential products, Mannington, reports: “Now we’re seeing more growth on the other side, namely specialty retail, because of increased penetration into the new home construction sector.”

Technological advances in laminate in particular have translated into exclusive opportunities for the specialty retailer. While the home center channel continues to drive volume with low-cost laminate, suppliers agree that specialty continues to win the margin battle by focusing on durable performance and realistic visuals that are differentiated from the home centers.

Hence the reason why major manufacturers are investing so heavily in their plants. Case in point: Swiss Krono recently broke ground on a \$230 million

HDF mill and factory expansion in Barnwell, S.C. According to Zeb Portanova, CEO, the investment is due to “strong consumer demand for our quality laminate flooring. Our strong retail partners who choose to sell our innovative products are the real foundation on which this expansion is built.”

Laminate flooring manufacturers are counting on continued innovations in the way of performance and design to not only help the category keep pace with competing hard surfaces but also to give specialty retailers



more products that can’t be shopped at the big boxes. Many of these advances and develop-

ments span new 12mm to 14mm boards featuring improved cores and more realistic wood visuals.

Vendors are also showcasing new capabilities in both color renderings and depth of textures.

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Photo courtesy of Ted Gregerson Abbey Carpet.

Private-label laminate programs, such as the one shown here from Abbey Carpet, prevent consumers from shopping around for lower prices.

Fantasy Football for a Cause: 10 charities included

The *Floor Covering News* Fantasy Football for a Cause league closed this year with 10 teams. All are playing for worthy causes as seen in the box below.

Each team pledged \$5,000, totaling to \$50,000, which will be divided as follows:

- \$11,500 to the winner's charity

- \$7,500 to the runner-up's cause
 - \$5,000 to the third-place team
 - \$2,500 to the fourth-place team
 - \$1,500 to the fifth-place team
 - \$500 to the sixth-, seventh-, eighth-, ninth- and tenth-place teams
- In addition, the top player of every week will

receive \$1,000 and the runner-up will earn \$500. The best part is all of the charities are guaranteed to receive a donation.

Following are snapshots of each cause that will be represented by the league's participants. *FCNews* and all teams encourage contributions from our readers to any charity near and dear to them.



Coverings

Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF)

ceramictilefoundation.org

The Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF) is an educational institution offering training programs for consumers, installers, construction professionals, architects, designers,

building inspectors and sales associates affiliated with the sale and installation of ceramic tile. The CTEF Certified Tile Installer (CTI) program is the only third-party assessment of installer skill and knowledge recognized by the industry.

Dritac

Habitat for Humanity New York City

habitatnyc.org

Habitat for Humanity New York City was founded in 1984 as



an independent affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. The organization's mission is to transform lives and communities by building quality, affordable housing for families and individuals in need, and to unite New Yorkers around the cause of affordable housing. With the help of family partner homeowners, volunteers and professional contractors, Habitat NYC has served more than 380 families in the five boroughs of New York City.

Floor Covering News

Long Island Cares

licares.org

Long Island Cares' mission is to collect all available resources for the benefit of Long Island's hungry and to provide for the humanitarian needs of its community.



Founded as the first food bank on Long Island in 1980 by Grammy Award-winning songwriter and social activist Harry Chapin, the organization is now one of the region's most comprehensive hunger assistance organizations that serve thousands of families and individuals in need.



Metroflor

Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA)

ccfa.org

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA) is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization dedicated to finding cures for Crohn's Disease and ulcerative colitis. Since its founding nearly five decades ago, CCFA has remained at the forefront of research. The organization serves more than 600,000 patients annually and provides national education and support programs.

Mirage Hardwood

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (CCFA)

stjude.org

St. Jude's has spent more than half a century finding cures and saving children. Leading the way the world



The Terrific 10

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Coverings | Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF) |
| Dritac | Habitat for Humanity NYC |
| FCNews | Long Island Cares |
| Metroflor | Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA) |
| Mirage Hardwood | St. Jude Children's Research Hospital |
| Mohawk Commercial | Susan G. Komen |
| Mohawk Residential | Sunshine on a Rainy Day (SOARD) |
| Nonns Flooring | National Multiple Sclerosis Soc. Wisconsin Chapter |
| Raskin Industries | Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) |
| Salesmaster | American Cancer Society (ACS) |



Rethink Bamboo.

PICTURED: MANOR HERITAGE



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in *FCNews*' annual fundraiser

understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases, St. Jude's research has helped push the survival rate for childhood cancer from less than 20% in 1962 to more than 80% today. Consistent with the vision of its founder Danny Thomas, no child is denied treatment based on race, religion or a family's ability to pay.

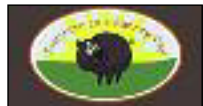


Mohawk Commercial

Susan G. Komen

ww5.komen.org

Susan G. Komen has transformed how the world treats and talks about breast cancer, and it has helped turn millions of breast cancer patients into breast cancer survivors. Since 1982, the organization has funded more than \$889 million in research and upwards of \$1.95 billion in medical care, community education and psychosocial support. The organization serves millions of people in more than 60 countries worldwide.



Mohawk Residential

Sunshine on a Ranney Day (SOARD)

sunshineonaranneyday.com

Sunshine on a Ranney Day (SOARD) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to renovating homes for children with special needs and restoring hope for families. Founded in 2012 by Peter and Holly Ranney, SOARD is a licensed general contractor that specializes in wheelchair accessible bathrooms, dream bedrooms, in-home therapy rooms and wheelchair ramps/lifts. SOARD's makeovers—which are facilitated through partnerships with local companies and donors—are provided to the families at no cost.



Nonns Flooring

National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society Wisconsin Chapter

nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/WIG

The National MS Society aims to help people affected by MS live more productively and restore what has been lost by MS.

The ultimate goal is to end MS forever. The Wisconsin Chapter works to improve the quality of life for people affected by MS in its area and raises funds for critical MS research. The organization drives change through advocacy, facilitating professional education and providing programs and services that empower people with MS and their families to move their lives forward. Furthermore, the National MS Society connection programs bring together people who share common life experiences.



Raskin Industries

Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF)

melanoma.org

The Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) is the largest independent organization devoted to melanoma. MRF is committed to using medical research to find effective treatments and hopefully a cure. The organization advocates for the melanoma community and educates patients, caregivers and physicians about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of melanoma.

and service. With approximately 2.5 million volunteers, ACS is able to provide multiple services to those facing cancer. Thanks in part to ACS's contributions, more than 1.5 million lives have been saved in the U.S. in the past two decades. The American Cancer Society takes a comprehensive approach to combating multiple forms of cancer and providing support for patients and their families.



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Fall promos

Continued from page 12

all participating Mirage dealers from Oct. 3 to Nov. 26. Consumers get a \$0.50/sq. ft. rebate on Mirage flooring during this promotion. This offer is valid on all Mirage Classic, Mirage Engineered and Mirage Lock products regardless of species, color or width. "For many consumers, fall represents the time of year for renewal into their home," said Brad Williams, vice president of sales and marketing at Boa-Franc. "Thanks to the \$0.50/sq. ft. rebate offered on all our flooring during this sales event, it is the perfect time to save big while enjoying the quality for which Mirage Floors are known." Nearly 2,000 Mirage Maestro Dealers through North America are participating in this event.

Retail promotions

Carpet One Floor & Home's new advertising campaign, "Where Do You Stand?" focuses on customers' needs when it comes to updating their homes with new flooring. The TV spot for this campaign takes the customer perspective by visually looking down at their floors as they go through their day.

In addition to the customer-centric messaging, the campaign makes use of Instagram with #ISTANDHERE to encourage customers to share photos of where they are standing. The campaign gives local stores the opportunity to highlight the causes they support in their communities and to share the many ways they take a stand for their customers. Weekly winners will receive \$100 gift cards toward a new pair of shoes at a leading online retail-



er. Contest details can be found at carpetone.com/Where-Do-You-Stand.

O'Krent's Abbey Flooring in San Antonio held a 101st birthday sale on hard surface goods. The September sale offers consumers 10% off on hardwood, tile and laminate if they spend \$2,500; 15% off for spending \$2,501 to \$5,000; and 20% off for spending over \$5,000.

Worldwide Wholesale Flooring, Edison, N.J., which recently launched a new rug website (therugcorner.com), is offering 20% off rug sales through Sept. 30. Consumers are encouraged to visit the website and enter their email address to receive coupons and notices of future promotions. A free rug grip comes with every area rug purchase.



To date, most flooring companies contacted say they have been unaffected by the Hanjin bankruptcy.

Hanjin

Continued from page 1

Carney, executive director of Bravo Services LLC, the umbrella organization for 14 of the industry's leading distributors, said no one in the Bravo group has been impacted so far.

Jonathan Train, president and CEO of Swift-Train, a top 20 distributor based in

Houston, also said the company has been unaffected. "We do not use Hanjin, and any of our steamship lines that may have scheduled our containers through Hanjin were diverted."

Floor covering manufacturers and importers are no stranger to problems on the seas and at the ports. In February 2015, MaxWoods faced a dire situation during the West Coast port slowdown. At the time, MaxWoods sourced most of its hardwood flooring products, leading CEO Peter Spierer to say, "The port issue is one of real seriousness and threatens to grow to massive proportions. Importers like ourselves will be in a bad way depending on its duration."

In the last 18 months, MaxWoods has been making the transition from selling Chinese imports to domestic product, with American OEM as its new domestic supplier. And so the fate of Hanjin is not exactly keeping Spierer up at night. "Thankfully, we aren't involved in any way with the Hanjin Shipping bankruptcy," he said. "Matter of fact, I'm not even sure who Hanjin is."

lisbiz strategies

Lessons learned from Wells Fargo fiasco



LISBETH CALANDRINO

By now we've all heard about Wells Fargo and its fraudulent bank practices that have recently come to light. Apparently, thousands of employees—over the course of several months—opened up bank accounts or credit cards without the customer's knowledge. Investigators say it was the result of overambitious employees who were under pressure to meet lofty sales goals.

It may seem preposterous unless you've asked your bank representative if he gets paid when he opens up a new account. I remember taking out an IRA at a branch that I rarely did business with and getting a call from the place where I usually bank. My "relationship manager" was disturbed that I didn't go to him first. I asked how much he lost on the transaction but he passed on the question.

As the trial in the George Washington Bridge lane-closing scandal opens, again we ask the same question: Do these things

AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE OBJECTIVE SHOULD ALWAYS BE TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

take place without knowledge of the CIC (Chief in Charge), or do employees take it into their own hands to cause serious trouble? I doubt it would happen in your business.

Let's face it: Employees rarely do anything, especially if it has to do with money, without the approval from the owner or manager. Although Wells Fargo is back-peddling, saying, "What happened doesn't coincide with their values," the deed has been done. The question we should ask ourselves is who is responsible for my business?

If you look a little further into Wells Fargo, you will see that employees had monthly sales targets they were required to meet as a way for them to earn bonuses. According to a former Pacific Northwest branch manager, meetings are held each morning to make sure everyone is committed to 120% of the daily quotas. Apparently it doesn't matter how you do it.

What does this mean to your

business? It could mean many things. For instance, how do you determine your commission structure? Does it make it almost impossible for your salespeople to earn a living forcing them to sell with little concern for the customer? We all say the customer is the most important concern of your business, but are they? Do you unthinkingly ask employees to do things that might put your business in a precarious position?

Do your managers review your weekly goals and then work to help the salespeople be better salespeople, or do they tell them to just get the money at the door? Unless times have changed, this is not unheard of. Salespeople

often get little training on being better with the customer as they have to push to make their quotas. In many places it's a very unhealthy atmosphere. The bottom line is the business eventually suffers by scaring customers away. Don't misinterpret what I'm saying; you must have goals and quotas but not at the expense of your customers. If your salespeople aren't good at meeting their quotas, I recommend spending time on teaching them how to build better relationships with customers rather than just having them push harder. Being overly aggressive just drives customers out the door and tells others not to do business with you.

This is a good time to review your company values. In fact, this is something you should be doing at every meeting. When there is a difficult or conflicting encounter with a customer, one's value system should win out. Not adhering to this can cause a huge financial loss to your company as well as other negative repercussions.

At the end of the day, the objective should be to do the right thing—whether you're selling flooring or financial services.

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.

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Logistics challenges, public perception change dynamics

By Reginald Tucker

In recent years, momentum behind the Made in the USA movement has been steadily building as wood flooring suppliers that source primarily from China look to address quality control issues while reining in shipping/logistics costs. Amidst all the heat that Chinese manufacturers have taken in both the mainstream press and trade magazines, some companies that still import from China are working to allay the concerns that distributors, retailers and consumers might still harbor when it comes to product safety and quality.

"The concerns we've heard from any of these groups is really minimal," said Bill Schollmeyer, CEO of Johnson Hardwood. "Years ago, there were many doubts about products produced in China. As quality and design improved, those concerns were pretty minimal. There was an uptick in questions about formaldehyde when the Lumber Liquidators story broke [in 2015], but I feel the impact against the more legitimate, well-known companies like Johnson

was pretty minimal. It's probably a different story for smaller, unknown companies."

Nonetheless, large-scale changes in the sourcing of supply—particularly as it relates to duties and tariffs on some imported wood flooring products—have forced several suppliers to adjust accordingly. "We've always imported flooring from two of our company-owned factories as well as several contract production facilities," Schollmeyer said. "With respect to the anti-dumping/countervailing duties, we never focused on the low-priced, commodity end of the market, so in most cases we were able to absorb the duty costs. But due to the uncertainty of the annual duty rates as well as the retroactive assessment of duties, it makes it difficult to sustain a long-term business plan. With that in mind, we're gradually transitioning production to our newly built factory in a different country. Aside from cost savings

with respect to known duty rates, we were able to upgrade production equipment, processes and technologies to help us produce a higher-quality, more attractive product. So in the end,



Johnson Hardwood firmly stands behind the quality of its products, many of which are manufactured in China.

it's all good for us."

Other manufacturers that import from China also stand firmly behind their products. Case in point is Eternity Flooring, which has been importing from that region of the world without incident. "We deal with a top-of-the-line factory in China," said Doron Gal, owner

and CEO. "We haven't had any problems so far." What's even more telling, he notes, is his dealer partners say Eternity Flooring consistently maintains high quality levels and near-zero claims despite relatively low pricing on its various products.

Other suppliers with manufacturing operations in China attest to the quality of their products. Provenza, for example, not only has a good track record in this regard, but the company has also found a way to deliver high-margin products—something not normally associated with Chinese imports. Wood floors from Provenza may retail any-

where from \$5 to \$12 per square foot and higher.

"We think of ourselves as a trendsetter and the pioneer in flooring, and the products we come out with are always on the cutting edge of the industry," Ron Sadri, principal/owner, said. "This is what sets us apart from the competitors."

Sadri's customers tend to agree. "Provenza is definitely a leader in style and design," said Alan Gage, president of Tri-West, ranked No. 10 on the industry's top 20 wholesaler list and a partner for 16 years. "They work very hard at what they do and have a good eye for product. They work very closely at the manufacturing level to make sure the designs come out the way they envisioned."

While most companies interviewed for this story firmly support their manufacturing partners in China and stand behind their quality standards, some prefer to not draw a lot of attention to the fact they import product from that country. "We don't want to promote ourselves as a 'Chinese supplier' in that way," one executive told FCNews.

Reshoring movement strong

Industry experts believe there will continue to be a need for companies to import from China as well as other Asian countries. They cite an increasingly intertwined global manufacturing and financial marketplace as well as strong consumer demand for

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of sourcing product from China

lower-priced products, which in turn negatively impacts margins. That being said, there's no denying the strong movement the industry has seen toward "reshoring," which is largely defined as the gradual return of manufacturing operations—and jobs—back to America as domestic companies re-evaluate the cost-benefit equation of outsourcing production.

This phenomenon is taking place across a diverse range of markets and industries, including hardwood flooring. Industry members report the benefits of keeping hardwood production stateside (i.e., faster delivery times, lower inventory commitments, increased quality controls, closer proximity to resources and R&D) vastly outweigh the once-significant labor and material cost savings achieved by moving production offshore.

A prime example was Armstrong's decision to shutter its Kunshan, China, facility and onshore its scraped engineered hardwood flooring to the U.S. back in 2014. "With energy and transportation costs accelerating at a faster pace than exchange rates and import fees, it is more cost effective to produce in the U.S. for domestic consumption," Joseph Bondi, vice president of North America residential floor products, told *FCNews* at the time. "This is true not just for hardwood but LVT and other products." In the months leading up to that move, Armstrong began investing significantly in its Somerset, Ky., engineered plant, where it manufactures the popular American Scrape hardwood line. "We now have a team trained in the manufacture of scraped products—two years since the launch of American Scrape—that can make other scraped products in our portfolio," Bondi said.

Another case in point was the decision by Kentucky-based Somerset Hardwood Flooring to discontinue sourcing of its engineered flooring products from China and instead construct a state-of-the-art plant dedicated to producing engineered hardwood products in its own backyard. At the time it was considered a bold move for Somerset, and the industry took notice. Distributor Elias Wilf realized a dramatic difference when Somerset began producing its new engineered products right here at home. Although the decision entailed millions of dollars in capital investments to build a modernized, state-of-the-art plant in

Crossville, Tenn., the expenditures were worth the risk.

"When Somerset moved its engineered production from China to the U.S., it was a fundamental change based on the quality of what they were getting there vs. what they could make stateside," Jeff Striegel, president of Elias Wilf, told *FCNews*.

For Somerset, the decision to reshore production of the once-outsourced engineered line meant making a strong statement to distributor partners, the industry and consumers. "We manage the raw materials and

supply chain from the forest to the finished flooring, and we are personally involved in all aspects of quality control," said Steve Merrick, Somerset president and CEO.

Another exemplary reshoring case study entails Adairsville, Ga.-based MaxWoods. After dealing with issues from its mill source in China, MaxWoods turned to American OEM, a domestic supplier, for help. Launched in 2014 by Don Finkell, former president of Anderson Hardwood Floors, American OEM stepped in and put together a complete program

for MaxWoods that not only entailed product and inventory but also sample development, merchandising and customer service support.

Some U.S. manufacturing advocacy groups and associations that closely track reshoring activity are convinced the trend is not only real but also sustainable over the long term. One such agency is The Reshore Initiative, which pro-



Eternity Flooring says it only partners with reputable Chinese manufacturers.

motes factory-location choices in the U.S. By the group's count, approximately 60,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs were created in 2014 as a result of reshoring and foreign direct investment.



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How to double your ticket size

Dealers are finding it more difficult and expensive to get new customers through advertising. Which is why if you want to maximize your success in the 21st century, it's critical that you maximize the dollars you generate from every sale to maximize your advertising ROI. However, my informal polling of dealers who attend my live seminars and webinars has shown that most don't train their salespeople to look for ways to increase the size of their tickets. This is a gigantic missed opportunity. Let's look at some easy ways you can increase your average ticket size in a way that provides world-class service to your customers.

If you want to create upsell opportunities, it's vital that you establish trust. So demonstrate that you want what's best for your customer by taking the time to sit down and ask her questions. Testimonials and positive online reviews are another fast way to create trust.

During a recent webinar, a number of dealers told me up to 80% of their flooring sales are part of a larger remodel or design project. So during your

BY TRAINING YOUR SALES TEAM TO LOOK FOR UPSSELL OPPORTUNITIES ON EVERY MEASURE, YOU CAN SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE YOUR AVERAGE TICKET SIZE.

consultation, find out what else she's planning to have done to her home. Let's say she's having window treatments installed, painting done and cabinets installed. And let's assume you provide window treatments. You can now give her a quote for windows and refer her to a high-quality painting and cabinet contractor with whom you have an established referral relationship. By adding windows to your quote, you can easily double your ticket size. By referring the paint and cabinet contractor, they will likely reciprocate.

While you're in the home, get permission to measure and inspect all the areas, even the rooms where she's not replacing the floors. Let her know you're



JIM AUGUSTUS ARMSTRONG

doing this for two reasons: 1) so you can keep the measurements on file for when she's ready to replace those areas, and 2) so you can give her professional recommendations on getting the longest life out of all her floors, even areas she's not replacing. This is a big "wow" factor, and it's something your competitors are unlikely to do.

I recommend arming your salespeople with a checklist of every possible upsell and referral opportunity. This should include cabinets, window treatments, area rugs, paint, etc. As your salesperson measures and inspects each room, he should use the checklist to look for two things: 1) products you provide, and 2) products your referral partners provide.

When it's time to give the quote, use package pricing and give her three options: good, better, best. Don't pressure her into the more expensive package, just make it available. Most customers will go with the middle option, but many will opt for the premium package. Another upsell.

Next, using your list of items from the whole house inspection, include quotes on a few other things she may need. For example, if she's having wood installed in her living room, include a quote for an area rug.

By training your sales team to look for upsell opportunities on every measure, you can substantially increase your average ticket size and sometimes double or even triple your revenue on individual jobs while at the same time create goodwill with your referral partners. You can achieve all this without spending another dime in advertising.

Jim Augustus Armstrong specializes in providing turnkey marketing strategies for flooring dealers. Email him at Support@FlooringSuccessSystems.com with "Dealership Evaluation" in the subject line for a free, one-hour dealership evaluation.

Pergo campaign targets millennials

DALLAS—Pergo, the inventor of laminate flooring and one of the world's most recognized flooring brands, recently kicked off its new brand campaign titled Master the Art of Staying In. The campaign's goal is to further elevate Pergo's brand awareness nationwide, especially among the ever-important 25-34 age group.

Research shows that staying in is the new going out among these young homeowners. "Millennials are a very coveted consumer group for home and shelter products, because millennials combined with Gen X make up more than 59% of all home buyers in today's market," said Paj Thorn-Brooks, vice president of brand marketing for Pergo, a division of Mohawk North America. "To most effectively increase brand awareness within this target group, our new marketing campaign focuses on how Pergo products enhance those aspects of life most important to millennials."



Retailers are increasingly coveting the influential millennials demographic.

"The first step of Pergo's new brand campaign was the recent launch of an original 8-episode, Pergo-branded reality series titled Ultimate Staycation. "This branded digital content series is new and ground breaking for the flooring category," Thorn-Brooks said. "Capturing organic content directly related to the performance of our products is extremely valuable for resonating with the end consumer. No other flooring brand has reached out to millennials yet via this concept."

Pergo's message for millenni-

als during the Ultimate Staycation series and throughout the Master the Art of Staying In brand campaign enables millennials to envision themselves living on Pergo floors in an engaging way.

"The series tells millennials that when you upgrade your home with Pergo floors, it's the start of making your place so nice you'll never want to leave," Thorn-Brooks said. "You'll soon realize everything you go out for is so much more enjoyable at home. You have everything you want, just the way you like it. There's no place like home when you have a Pergo floor."

"With a heavy focus on millennials, Pergo's go-to-market strategy for the new campaign has placed its social media channels center stage. "We recognize the importance of engaging consumers on their preferred channels, therefore our digital priorities for this campaign are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest," Thorn-Brooks explained.

Retail report

Continued from page 1

which saw revenue increases of 20% above the year-ago period. He noted the retail and commercial contract sectors were particularly healthy.

Ted Gregerson, president and owner of Ted's Abbey Carpet & Floor, with stores in Anniston and Birmingham, Ala., has seen a 12% increase in the third quarter. He attributes this increase to new business. "We have picked up a few small commercial jobs this past quarter."

Kevin Rose, president and

owner of Carpetland USA, Rockford, Ill., reports an uptick in sales during the third quarter—primarily due to an increase in advertising spending. "The third quarter is faring well. Our team is very upbeat and positive. I am very pleased with hard surface sales so far this quarter."

Carlton Billingsley, president and owner of Floors and More in Benton, Ark., said the third quarter has been "very strong with sales up and commercial flooring backlog growing."

Not everyone reported increases during the period, however. Signs of softness

emerged at HOM Furniture, Coon Rapids, Minn., which has seen flat retail sales for both its flooring and furniture departments. However, the company's commercial flooring business is much more robust, according to Kelly Cosgrove, flooring buyer.

In that same vein, Tim Schoolfield, owner of Country Side Carpets Flooring America in O'Fallon, Mo., attributed the softness in his sales to the weather. "It was a hot and sloppy wet summer here in the Midwest, and [the] last thing people were thinking about was replacing their floors."


Olga Roberston, president of FCA Network, defined business as flat in Chicago. Looking ahead, she predicts the fourth quarter will be the same.

All in all, many flooring retailers FCNews interviewed feel 2016 will end with a flourish. Abbey's Gregerson is particularly positive about the upcoming quarter. "Our expectation is we'll be up a few percentage points in the fourth quarter. We are busy at the moment, and we are putting more money into advertising in October and November."

Despite Country Side Carpets Flooring America's anemic third quarter, Schoolfield said the fourth quarter looks good. "The weather is great and people are thinking about fixing up the house before the holidays."

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Latest grouts help facilitate faster application

By K.J. Quinn

Choosing the right grout is a critical element of any ceramic tile and stone installation, experts say. Technological advances are triggering the development of products that last longer, enable faster installation and help ensure easy maintenance over the lifetime of the surface.

"Today's tiles are larger, grout joints are smaller and end users expect higher grout performance," said Tony Pasquarelli, director of marketing, Custom Building Products. "Stain-proof, color-consistent grouts that are easy to install and require no sealing are quickly becoming the new standard."

As tile sizes get larger and joints become narrower, grouts need to be more fluid in consistency for ease of installation and deeper penetration to avoid shrinkage. "Ardex grouts have a different type of polymer technology than what has been typically available in North America containing very fine aggregate but still deliver outstanding strength," noted Russ Gaetano, marketing

manager, tile and stone installation systems. "Stain resistance and color consistency are very important components, and they have self-contained sealers that don't require a grout sealer."

Finding tile grout that withstands the test of time is an ongoing challenge for installers. While the basic functionality of the product remains largely unchanged—filling in joints between floor and wall tiles, preventing the edges from chipping or cracking, and maximizing the beauty of tile—suppliers continue tinkering with formulations to keep up with ever changing tile formats. New polymers and chemistries are allowing manufacturers to design rapid-setting grouts with enhanced performance characteristics while maintaining ease of installation.

"Premium grouts are more color consistent than ever before allowing a more worry-free installation," said Michelle Swiniarski, market manager, ceramic installa-

tion systems, Bostik. "They offer enhanced stain, crack and chemical resistance making them easier to maintain and more aesthetically pleasing during the life of the installation."

Ease and speed of installation are critical components for any tile contractor, especially in mar-

ket and epoxy grouts," said Ryan Fasan, technical consultant, Tile of Spain.

Custom's Fusion Pro Single Component Grout is warranted to be stain proof and color perfect, making it ready to use from the get-go. "The single component grout is factory mixed, so there is no need to add water, mix on site or allow for slake time," Pasquarelli said, adding it is easy to spread and does not require sealing. "Plus, you install then clean immediately, which is a huge benefit on typical jobs." Fusion Pro comes in 40 standard colors, and eight Fusion Pro Designer Series options offer reflective color accents.

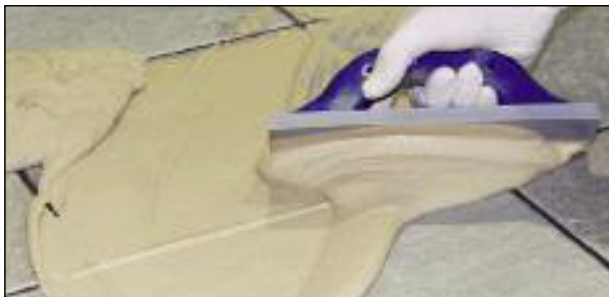
High performance, pre-mixed grouts reportedly combine the strength, durability and suitability attributes of cement-based and epoxy grouts for use in commercial spaces. "Premium, fast curing pre-mixed and cement-based grouts are the largest growing trend," Bostik's Swiniarski said. "End users are looking for premi-

um performance characteristics, and contractors are looking for speed and ease of installation."

These products are easy to use and attractive to the growing influx of installers new to the tile trade. "All pre-mixed grouts are polymer resin-based or urethane-based," said Tom Plaskota, technical support manager, TEC. "Pre-mixed grout tends to be resistant to stains, cracks and shrinking." TEC InColor Advanced Performance Tile Grout, available in 17 colors, is a high-performance, pre-mixed product applicable for residential or commercial usage, inside or outdoors.

Grout comes in various colors, and specification often is determined by the width of the tile joints. For example, unsanded grout—made from a blend of Portland cement and powdered pigments mixed with water—is recommended for floor and wall tiling projects with joints spacing from 1/8 to 1/4 inch. Sanded grout is typically used for larger joints and consists of a cement-based mortar with small sand grains added to it to help when setting.

"There are even grouts that offer atomized glass beads of dif-



Ardex FL Grout has a creamy consistency, which allows application to a large area before cleaning.

kets with high labor rates. This has helped accelerate introductions of more single-component grouts, where grouting and cleanup are measurably faster, industry members say.

"These materials have greater performance and color-fastness than their traditional cementitious counterparts and offer a kind of half-step between

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ferent colors, and even metallic, specifically for glass mosaic installations,” Fasan pointed out. “Some of the finer aggregate grouts are even safe for glossy finishes, depending on the hardness rating of the glaze. [This] helps alleviate the necessity of using non-sanded varieties that can be much more difficult in cleanup and frequently have shrinkage issues if too much wash water is used.”

In the cement grout category, new, higher performing cement grouts are growing rapidly in popularity. “They are rapid curing and more color consistent and efflorescence resistant than a standard cement grout while remaining easy to clean during the installation process,” Swiniarski said. “They also offer enhanced stain resistance. Their drying speed allows the installation to be opened up to traffic much sooner than a standard grout and are easier to maintain.” Bostik’s Hydroment Vivid, a rapid curing, premium-grade and cement-based grout, offers consistent color technology with enhanced stain and efflorescence protection for demanding commercial and residential projects.

Epoxy grout, considered a premium product and available in sanded and non-sanded formulations, offers water-resistant properties and can be utilized for virtually any tile application. Ardex WA is marketed as the easiest to apply and clean epoxy grout available.

“It has a very creamy consistency unlike any other epoxies and cleans off with only water, leaving minimal or no haze for the final cleaning,” Gaetano explained. “Ardex WA can also be used as tile adhesive for use in pools and other difficult environments.”

Indeed, grout is becoming much more specialized. Vendors are making them lighter in weight and easier to handle. And in the case of cementitious grouts, advances have been made to all but eliminate color inconsistencies. “With our new Permacolor Select, we can now offer thousands of custom colors within two weeks at a very small minimum, allowing designers no limit to their creative juices,” said Ryan Blair, product manager, grouts and sealants, Laticrete. Sealing of the cementitious grout is not required, thanks to new sealer technology incorporated into the base material, which saves on installation time and labor costs.

In reformulating their products, producers are mindful about the impact grouts have on

the environment and meeting sustainable building design requirements. Manufacturers publish a list of low-VOC setting materials to aid in occupant health and safety concerns. “More and more grouts are exhibiting zero or low VOCs,” Plaskota said. “In addition, ready-to-use grouts allow grout to be resealed and used for future jobs, which reduces product waste.”

There are grouts that incorporate partially recycled content, if that is a consideration for a project. “We are currently look-

Dimension RapidCure, a glass-based, pre-mixed grout, conveys a reflective appearance.

ing into renewable resources as a large basis of our raw materials for many of our products,” Laticrete’s Blair said. “This change will happen in the near future.”

The use of recycled content adds a green component to these traditional products. For instance, Custom’s Prism Grout contains up to 15% post-consumer recycled content by weight. Prism is part of Custom



Building Products’ Build Green and Emerald programs, which promote sustainability.

“To an installer, this lightweight component makes Prism

easy to work [with],” Pasquarelli said. “Design professionals and end users find it ideal when they are seeking environmentally conscious installation solutions.”



“ With Mercier, it’s all in the box! Wood species, colors, widths, grades and the only Greenguard certified floor on the market. What more do you want? ”

DUSTIN FERRIN, VICE-PRESIDENT INTERMOUNTAIN WOOD FLOORING

* At Intermountain Wood Flooring, we’ve been in the business of excellence since 1931. With 11 distribution centers and millions of square feet of hardwood floors sold, it’s critical for us to rely on manufacturers like Mercier that not only deliver quality hardwood floors, but are also on the cutting edge of design trends and environmentally-conscious solutions.

Their attention to detail and their passion for excellence lets us concentrate on supplying our customer base, knowing that what’s in the box will exceed their expectations.

Doing it right: that’s our Mercier edge.*



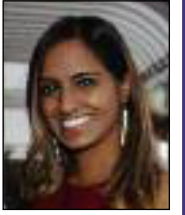
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Territory: Western Michigan

This is an excellent opportunity for a knowledgeable,
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with a rapidly growing manufacturer.
Candidates based in Grand Rapids preferred.
Phenix is a privately owned company based in Dalton Georgia
which specializes in the manufacturing and distribution of
residential flooring to the nation's top retailers.

Benefits include:

- Health, Life, and Disability Insurance
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- Paid Vacation

Compensation:

- Base Salary plus Commissions
- Paid Business Expenses

Interested Candidates may apply via e-mail to
hmillsaps@phenixflooring.com
or by fax: 706-279-8284

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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

TERRITORY SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Job Description:

Provenza Floors, Inc., has been creating innovative, stylish and unsurpassed quality hardwood floors, both custom and running line, for over 33 years. Provenza is currently hiring full time Territory Sales Representatives throughout several U.S. markets. The Territory Sales Representative is responsible for achieving sales goals and executing sales plans within an assigned sales territory. The Territory Sales Representative will be expected to constantly prospect and secure new business to help generate sales growth as well as increase the existing customer base volume.

Benefits:

- Full health benefits · 401K · Paid Vacation

Compensation:

- Base salary plus commission *Earning potential \$100,000 plus after 1 year
- All business related expenses paid monthly
- Company provided smart phone with service included

Responsibilities:

- Design an action plan to successfully create new business and build client relationships
- Responsible for achieving company sales targets and update management with the status of accounts
- Maintain a professional, ethical, and positive disposition as a primary representative of Provenza in the community
- Regularly attend client meetings, trade shows, networking events, conferences, and any other flooring related functions
- Integrate sales efforts with other organized marketing activities (promotions, advertising, exhibitions, telemarketing, social media marketing, etc.)

Requirements:

- 3+ years previous experience working in a sales role and/or as a business development representative, preferably outside sales and in the flooring industry
 - Bachelor's degree (BS/BA) from a four-year college or university or related work experience preferred but not required
 - Industry knowledge or the ability to seek knowledge if new to the industry
 - Able to work in a fast paced environment with a demonstrated ability to multi-task according with the tasks of the job
 - Proven ability in creating new business and strong client relationships
- Keywords:** sales, business development, flooring, growth, relationships
Please email: hr@provenzafloors.com



SALES AGENTS

Excellent opportunity awaits you. Major new flooring manufacturer is seeking sales agents in WA, MT, OR, ND, SD, NE, MN, WI, IA, IL. Qualified applicants can call 1.800.868.2194 ext. 301 or mail their resume to:

ATM Floor Covering, Inc., P.O. Box 1012, Dalton, GA 30722

or email: kyle@atmfloorcovering.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE WANTED

Quality Carpet & Vinyl is one of the fastest growing companies in the flooring industry. We are seeking experienced sales representatives, in the Metro-Atlanta area, to maintain professional relationships with current clients as well as mine for new business in the apartment communities, single family homes, senior living centers and new construction markets. We pride ourselves in doing things right the first time! Please submit resumes to: wbean@qcvinc.com. All inquiries will be kept in strict confidence.

DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING

Derr Flooring Co, one of the nation's largest and oldest wood flooring distributors, is seeking a director of sales and marketing to help the company achieve our goal of significant growth over the next decade. The position reports directly to ownership. Responsibilities include managing the outside sales team, working with suppliers to create and implement sales programs and working with ownership to evaluate and modify product mix.

Requirements: A minimum of 10 years of sales experience in the flooring industry with at least 3 years of management experience.

A bachelor's degree, or higher is desirable.

A competitive salary and benefit package accompanies this position.

Interested parties should send their resume to: Chet Derr III. at cderr@derrflooring.com

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PHENIX FLOORING IS GROWING AND IS SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR A TERRITORY MANAGER POSITION
Territory: Massachussets and Rhode Island.

This is an excellent opportunity for a knowledgeable, experienced Floorcoverings Sales Professional to align with a rapidly growing manufacturer in an established territory. Phenix is a privately owned company based in Dalton Georgia which specializes in the manufacturing and distribution of residential flooring to the nation's top retailers.

Benefits Include:
·Health, Life, and Disability Insurance
·401K with Company Match
·Paid Vacation

Compensation:
·Base Salary plus Commissions
·Paid Business Expenses

Interested Candidates may apply via e-mail to hmillsaps@phenixflooring.com or by fax: 706-279-8284
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