



THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

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for the Commercial Floor Covering Industry

TOTALLY GREEN PUBLICATION

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CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The last flooring we had didn't do this. We expected it to last longer than this. We didn't expect the colors to run. We didn't expect the carpet to come off the floor. We didn't expect to have to replace it so soon. We expected it to look a lot better than this. We didn't expect it to get dirty so fast. We didn't expect it to fade. We didn't expect it to wear out under the chairs. We didn't expect it to scratch and dent like it has. We didn't expect the edges to curl. We didn't expect it to mat and crush the way it has. We didn't expect it to change colors. We didn't expect it to change in front of the sliding glass doors. We didn't expect.....? You fill in the blanks here because this is what is heard across the country daily from flooring end users who didn't expect you to disappoint them.

People expect products they buy to perform the way they think they should. The reality of this is that they're right. If you buy a pair of jeans or sneakers you expect to be able to wear them for a long time without them wearing out. You expect that the money you spend for a product, after you've been told that it will live up to your expectations, won't be wasted and the product will actually do what you thought it would for as long as you thought it would. This is especially so when it comes to flooring and particularly in the commercial market. Most commercial flooring users have experience with various products and have an innate understanding of how long the flooring should last and how it should look over a period of time. When this doesn't happen things go terribly wrong.

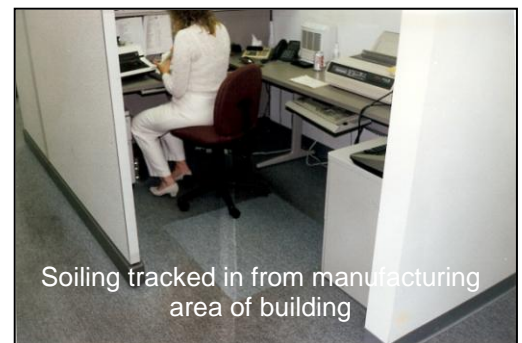
What's the problem here and why don't the products you sell in some situations live up to the expectations of the people you sell them to? The problem is you, the person selling, specifying or representing the flooring product. Not knowing what the products are really capable of doing that you sell. Not qualifying the use of the product and the end user by not asking them questions. I love the saying, "If you don't ask, you don't get".



Color Change In Front Of Sliding Glass Doors



Fading and Soiling – Wrong Color



Soiling tracked in from manufacturing area of building

If you don't ask your customer questions about what their expectations are you open yourself up for your own disappointment because if they're not happy, you won't be either. In these difficult economic times, when you have to fight for every dime you make, you don't need to be giving the dime away because of a complaint. Your eagerness to make a sale does not justify selling a product that won't work as the customer expects it to.



Buying floor covering is a commitment. The space is torn apart and the products are fastened to the floor. It's not like buying a pair of jeans and deciding they really don't like them and bringing them back to the store. You can't put floor covering in a bag and return it.

When you sell these products you have to think about them and how they're going to be used. You have to ask, or qualify the end user and end use. If you don't have a product you think will work then you will have to find it and research it to make sure you provide one that will. The correct flooring product does exist for every application. Today, no one wants to spend money for anything that won't make them happy, whether for a cheeseburger or a carpet.

The expectations in the commercial flooring market are very high indeed and your reputation and business are on the line. The outlays for product are extraordinarily high, at least 5 figures and certainly into 6 and often 7. If you don't know how to play in this market then don't. The commercial flooring market is not for the faint of heart. Though there are various segments of the commercial flooring market, they all demand a high degree of professionalism and commitment. We're seeing more and more failed jobs from lack of knowledge about, specifying, selling and installing commercial flooring. To stay out of trouble ask one question of the consumer, "I want you to be happy with your purchase and us; what are your expectations for the flooring you want to purchase?" From there you have an open forum to satisfy their expectations because you'll know what they expect. Does this sound stupid to you? Like something you might have a problem accepting? Is it what you do today? How is it, with anything in life, that if you don't question it you'll get an answer? Sheep follow, you're supposed to lead. Asking what the client wants will allow you to satisfy their needs. Would you order a steak without the waiter asking you how you'd like it cooked? Should they just bring you the piece of meat the way they want to cook it? How satisfied would that make you? Not very I'd think. So with this point in mind and the fact that doing this actually works, you should be able to provide better products, that perform



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and that deliver the expectations of the end user. Making both of you happy and satisfied.

To deliver high expectations you also have to look around the space. Don't just be concerned with the floor but what in the surroundings might have an influence on it. Does the space have floor to ceiling windows with a Southerly exposure that will



fade red tones out of that beautiful carpet you're expecting to install? Are the parking lots just paved or sealed that will track in impregnating oily soil onto that beautiful light colored vinyl flooring they want to install that will discolor it and never come out? Will the light colored flooring be subjected to foot traffic coming in from manufacturing areas? Is the carpet going to have shades of color in it that would be susceptible to environmental influences you might not have considered? Is the wood flooring that's supposed to be appropriate for commercial use actually going to be able to stand up to the type of traffic it's going to receive? These are only some of the questions that should be asked in situations where commercial flooring is going to be installed.

No one wants to have a problem with anything they buy. Most problems with any type of floor covering do not have a simple solution or an inexpensive one. Yes, most flooring is installed without any concerns or issues but when they do occur, and they do, it will make a good day go bad in a heartbeat. Most flooring problems could have been easily prevented.

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