

CFR The Commercial Flooring Report

For the Commercial Floor Covering Industry

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It's Back!! This is our first Commercial Flooring Report for the 2026 year. We're on track for a newsletter to release every month. We're excited to bring you information you won't find anywhere else. We hope you find each newsletter inspiring, insightful, entertaining and full of riveting information.

Carpet It Just Feels Better

Carpet - It just feels better, was the slogan in the carpet industry several years ago and it's the truth. Carpet is a soft surface product as opposed to hard surface. To state a fact, carpet is always soft, regardless of how dense it is, and hard surface flooring is always hard. The terms Hard and Soft are direct opposites. And carpet looks better too. Carpet can be tufted, woven or printed to achieve any design or depiction the mind can conceive. No other flooring product can achieve this nor is any other flooring product as versatile as carpet. No other flooring material can make that claim or do the same thing at the point of manufacture.



COURISTAN HOSPITALITY—SILVER REEF CASINO RESORT, FERNDALE, WA



We can make carpets that are virtually indestructible, such as the carpet at the Portland Oregon airport (PDX) which we wrote the construction specs for and oversaw the manufacture and installation of it. This is not to take anything away from hard surface flooring, but they are two entirely different products with different attributes, pros and cons, and performance characteristics. But there is no question that carpet is the most versatile flooring material in existence and it isn't dead yet, not by a long shot, nor is it ever going to be.

PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PDX) CARPET

Since we focus on the commercial segment of the flooring industry the two carpet categories used in the commercial market are broadloom carpet and carpet tile. And the face fiber for broadloom carpet and carpet tile products used almost exclusively is nylon, with some exceptions for specialty products, and wool for high end carpet used in four and five star hotels, casinos and exclusive applications. Carpet can also be made in any color and dyed in several different ways. Most commercial carpets are made with solution dyed nylon, meaning the fiber is colored while being extruded in molten form. Think of solution dyed fiber as a carrot - the color goes all the way through the fiber.

The key to maximizing carpet performance is density. The denser the carpet construction the higher the performance level. This can be achieved by selecting a loop pile style, lower pile heights, closer gauge and stitch rates, and high yarn twist levels. All these attributes must be understood by whoever is specifying the carpet so the right product is used for the application. Further, this can be achieved by selecting a product from a commercial carpet manufacturer from their running line product specifications or writing a construction specification particular to a specific project, such as the carpet at PDX. Here we wrote the specifications for the construction of the carpet, from tufting to finishing with unique alterations made to the tufting machine and the finishing range and intense post manufacture inspection. Even an additional inspection to examine the straightness of the pattern and align it.

Density is the key to carpet performance. Think of a truck for example. You wouldn't use a pickup truck to haul tons of gravel; the first load would crush it. You would use a heavy duty commercial dump truck that would perform this task repeatedly for years effectively, with proper care, because that's what it was built to do. The same goes for carpet, which goes back to the right product in the right place.

Carpet is predictable – we can determine how it's going to perform based on the specs, the construction, the fiber type, the color and the components, all of which you can see. And we can further test the carpet in the lab for performance, construction, appearance retention, structural integrity, soiling and cleaning, flammability, color fastness, and several other factors, and how it actually performs when walked on. Everything about carpet is in plain sight and measurable. We can determine the tuft bind, twist level, stitch rate, gauge, laminate strength of the backing, dimensional stability, latex penetration and fiber lock. Not like a hard surface product where everything is hiding in plain sight.



THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

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Carpet is also easily identifiable. That means a seasoned and astute carpet person can tell just by looking at it the style and construction and whether it's the right product for where it's being used and what may be wrong with it relative to soiling, fuzzing, sprouting, delaminating, edge ravel and lifting on the edges (for carpet tile).

Carpet comes from finite sources. Unlike vinyl plank and tile, which comes from hundreds of locations and sources around the world – like 85% of it, with very little made in the US. Most tufted carpet is domestically produced in Dalton, Georgia – The Flooring Capital of the World. Shaw, Mohawk and Engineered Floors control the bulk of the tufted carpet market followed by several medium to small manufacturers. The carpet manufacturing corridor stretches from Chattanooga, TN to LaGrange, GA. There are also specialty manufacturers of carpets in the US and abroad and custom manufacturers of carpets, most of whose products are produced overseas.


Constructions of carpet are cut pile, loop pile and cut and loop and variations of the three. And it can be tufted, woven, needle punched, flat woven or fusion bonded. And you can buy inexpensive carpet for an application and temporary use, like exhibition carpet, or very expensive carpet that is a bespoke style made especially for a particular application. This would be for a high end, five star, hotel, casino or a cruise ship. As for specialty carpet, made here in Dalton is carpet for airplanes that can cost hundreds of dollars per yard for private jets or the commercial airlines many of us fly on regularly.

Fibers used to make commercial carpets are nylon; most widely used, wool blends for woven carpet used mostly in the hospitality market, and to a lesser degree by polyester and polypropylene.

Pattern in carpet can be achieved by tufting, weaving or printing.

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Pro's of carpet are that it is soft and quiet, it can be made to look like anything, it can be made in almost any color and pattern. I have a rug that was given to me as a gift many years ago by one of the manufacturers that has my face tufted into it. No one here will let me lay it anywhere in our offices, so it's been sitting in a closet for years. Yup, I'm in the closet on this one.

Soft – No other flooring material is as soft as carpet or as comfortable. Hard surface flooring is not soft and quiet, regardless of who says it or uses that as a sales pitch. Hard means solid, rigid or stiff. That would be hard surface flooring. The opposite is soft, which in this case would also mean comfortable to walk or lay on. Carpet is also quiet; no other flooring material is as quiet. Which is why it is a perfect fit for offices, hotel rooms, or any application where you don't want noise to resonate off the floor, walls and the ceiling. Carpet is versatile, as has been stated, it can be made in any style, any configuration, any color, any pattern and customized in look or construction for any application. Which leads to design; it has endless design capabilities. Anything that you can think of you can make a carpet look like whether my face, which you definitely wouldn't want, like anybody here or at home, or something that looks like pure art with a bespoke patterned woven carpet.

Con's of carpet

Soiling – the biggest complaint on carpet is that it soils. Correct color and design and regular maintenance are key and with the proper and appropriate maintenance and cleaning, this con can be easily controlled.

Ugly out – if not specified for the correct and fitting application a carpet can look worn out, faded or, as the term states, just plain ugly. The right product in the right place can prevent Ugly Out if it is designed engineered and constructed and correctly specified for the application. Ugly out is loss of appearance.

Why carpet is a wise choice. Commercial spaces take a beating — foot traffic, rolling chairs, spills, and the daily chaos of people doing what people do. With so many flooring options out there, carpet often gets overlooked, but it remains one of the most reliable, comfortable, and cost effective choices for commercial environments. It creates a warm and inviting atmosphere and it can be iconic – like the PDX carpet.

Hard flooring can make a space feel cold, echoey, and impersonal. Carpet instantly softens the environment, reduces noise, and makes people feel more at ease the moment they walk in. In settings where first impressions matter, that warmth goes a long way.

There are far fewer failures and claims with commercial carpet as opposed to hard surface flooring, if it's the right product in the right place, in the right colors and it's properly maintained. Soiling and ugly out are the main complaints on broadloom carpet. Edge lifting and edge fuzzing are the main complaints on carpet tile. Carpet isn't just a flooring choice — it's a strategic decision that impacts comfort, acoustics, design, and long term cost. For commercial spaces that need to look good, feel good, and perform well, carpet is hard to beat.

If you need help with a flooring issue, from concrete to carpet and any flooring product or type in between. Contact us. We can help you, before you have a problem or after you get into trouble. We always have an answer, always.

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If you need help, have a question, aren't sure of a situation you're in, want to avoid a problem, or need guidance on a project or product, contact us. We always have the answers, always. It's what we do, from the substrate to what goes on it.

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