

The Commercial FLOORING REPORT

The Front End of a Project can be the Greenest Part of the Equation



Problems with new floor covering products, whatever they may be, don't necessarily mean the product has to be replaced. Carpet in particular can be made so it doesn't get shipped with defects and, depending on what defects may be in it, it is often possible to make repairs. Color shade issues, surface

irregularities from shearing, stop marks from tufting and minor flaws can very often be repaired in place. The most prudent move however is to make sure these problems don't occur by being proactive rather than reactive – the former being much less expensive.

The services of LGM & Associates can be the best insurance you can buy to assure you get the product you ordered relative to the specification and without flaws. We can provide guidance in selection, assistance with specifications, oversee production and installation, test the product, and evaluate it for use and application to prevent failures and complaints after installation. We can oversee the manufacture and finishing of the carpet, interface with the manufacturer to make sure you are getting what was specified and evaluate the product and the spec to insure the proper product is going to be installed and will perform as expected. If the product has a desired life expectancy of 7 years we can help you

decide which one to choose and who should maintain it and how.

Selecting flooring really is a science that most people find challenging to the point of frustration in many cases. We can relieve that pain. The fastest growing part of our business is acting in a consulting capacity to clients in the commercial and hospitality segments of the industry. From evaluating the product specs and the product itself, testing it to make sure it is what the specs say it is, testing it for performance, appearance retention, construction prior to installation and then reviewing the final and actual produced material prior to it being installed. No carpet or flooring paranoia for the client anymore. Very often we can go see the product being manufactured and finished and inspect it during both processes to approve or reject it, see any flaws and have them corrected, removed or left in so as to not cut the material into small rolls,

Including special articles from Jeff Bishop with Clean Care Seminars, Dave Stafford Industry Consultant, Mike Currin with Flooring Warranty Services, and Lance Wallach, CLU, CHFC, CIMC.

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leaving that to the installation contractor to see how and where he may be able to use that piece and remove or work around the flaw. We can also work with the installation contractor making sure the product is installed according to industry standards and manufacturers specs. All of these services save the client money and prevent carpet and flooring from being wasted. The front end of a project can actually be the greenest part of the equation – all unnecessary waste can be eliminated.

We've got experts in fibers, backing systems, adhesives and chemistry, concrete substrates and moisture related problems, wood, vinyl and tile. LGM has expert installation repair craftsman who have fixed carpet on site and saved the job and a truly elite "Strike Force Installation Team" that can successfully install almost any carpet "when the Ox is in the ditch." The LGM team oozes expertise. We are always ready to help you.

This issue contains Jeff Bishop final segment on carpet care and Dave Stafford, one of our associates, on successful professionalism and how it can make or break a job, Mike Currin on correcting side match shade variation and stop marks on site and Lance Wallach on IRS audits.



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Commercial Carpet Cleaning Conundrum (Final Segment)

by Jeff Bishop, Administrator
 Clean Care Seminars, Inc.

Restorative Cleaning

Sooner or later, routine maintenance and interim cleaning procedures no longer can produce acceptable visual results or physical soil removal. At that point in the maintenance and cleaning program, periodic restorative cleaning is required to return the carpet to a sanitary state or higher. IICRC S100, the *Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Carpet Cleaning* (Reference Guide, Chapter 3), provides guidance for cleaning frequencies of various types of residential and commercial environments. Still, professional judgment on the part of professional cleaners is required to establish an effective maintenance and cleaning program.

While shampoo cleaning, using CRI SOA-approved chemicals, followed by wet vacuuming or even cold water rinsing, is one of the oldest of the restorative cleaning methods, today, most restorative cleaning is accomplished using the hot water extraction method. Restorative cleaning – even salvage cleaning – steps may include:

1. Thorough pre-vacuuming to remove particle and fiber soils and to lift matted carpet pile.
2. Preconditioning and extraction of problem spots and stains, particularly those involving liquid spills.
3. Preconditioning the carpet overall.
4. Agitation of precondition agents into the carpet pile using hand brush, or cylindrical or rotary brush agitation.
5. Providing adequate dwell time for cleaning chemicals to suspend and emulsify soils.
6. Double or triple-rinse stroke hot water extraction followed by dry stroking to remove excess moisture.
7. Implementing procedures to ensure rapid drying (HVAC, airmovers, ventilation).

As with interim cleaning, the frequency of restorative cleaning depends on the size of the building, the amount of traffic and the objectives of building managers. Carpet may need to be *restoratively* cleaned as frequently as 2-4 times annually. Heavy-use entries, food service areas and special work areas may require monthly restorative cleaning.

The Ultimate Solution?

Since **carpet specifiers** seem to be more concerned with color, style and decorative impression in the carpet they recommend, it's obvious that both the manufacturing and cleaning industry must do a better job in communicating with and educating these key people in the carpet value chain. Not only must carpet selection decisions be practical, based on performance data, but also, there must be decisions made up front about appropriate maintenance and cleaning even before the floor covering is installed.

Building users must wake up and acknowledge the real costs involved in floor covering maintenance and cleaning. As with any other business asset, there are hidden costs in terms of depreciation, and loss of employee motivation and productivity, and even absenteeism resulting from the neglect of necessary maintenance and cleaning, and culminating in building-related symptoms (BRS).

In the final analysis, it may be that only **carpet manufacturers** can motivate end-users to acknowledge the importance of programmed maintenance and cleaning by building minimum compliance standards into their warranties. Consider, for example, automobile manufacturers: oil changes, lubrication, even routine tune-ups - all are necessary to maintain car warranties. The consuming public accepts that.

Carpet manufacturers also must take a strong stand on who is qualified to maintain and clean their products if warranties are to be valid. It's really a question of trained versus untrained technicians, and the best *objective* indication of appropriate training in the industry to date is the non-profit IICRC certification.

[Jeff Bishop is a '67 graduate of the University of Georgia, an Army Ranger and assault helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam. He is a 36-year cleaner/restorer and international speaker and instructor. He has produced 13 books and 6 videos on cleaning and restoration topics.

<http://www.cleancareseminars.com/>]



The Slight Edge between a Win and a

Problem By: Dave Stafford

With a mill rep, it may be returning a phone call within a couple of hours. In closing a sale, it may be something as simple as the way you are dressed or how you present a proposal. In delivering a quality job, it may be familiarity with how products are made or installation standards. Perhaps one of the following examples may give *you* a slight edge when you face your next challenge.

Coat and Tie versus Shorts and Tennis Shoes: George was the Facilities Manager for a large insurance company and responsible for purchasing flooring for a new wing. He contacted four flooring companies for a site visit to discuss the type of flooring to be used, his concerns, time constraints, and pricing. On the appointed day, three companies showed up, two were on time and Wally was late by 30 minutes and missed most of the walk-through. Fred identified himself as an estimator, "I was told to come out here and take measurements and see what product you'd selected." Fred was dressed in a tee shirt,

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low-rider shorts, and tennis shoes. Steve presented a business card and company brochure and said that he was a commercial project manager. He was wearing a sport coat and tie. Steve said, "Since I wasn't sure you had selected products, I did bring along some information that would be suitable for an occupied replacement project." While George asked all three to provide products and pricing; in the end, he selected Steve. "Well, his price was a little higher, but he was on time, suggested procedures that made more sense, and *he seemed much more professional*. I had no trouble in justifying the difference in value."

A detailed Scope of Work wins the job: Rob and Karen were competing for the same project, a large suite of doctor's offices. The owner was comfortable with both Rob and Karen and asked them to suggest products that would meet specific criteria and work within the established budget. Rob delivered his hand-written proposal which specified flooring materials and a cryptic breakdown, "1 Lot, Materials and Labor = \$16,400." With his proposal, he included architect folders and chain sets. Karen's proposal also specified

flooring materials and included samples; however, Karen provided color-coordinated carpet, resilient, and base samples and her written proposal included a detailed scope of work showing quantities and price of each material. In addition, Karen provided a paragraph outlining the suggested delivery and installation schedule. Her price was \$18,200. Who do you think got the job? Yes, Karen did agree to a \$17,950 price and took the job.

A phone call was worth \$127,000: Gerry had been working on a large government project for 9 months and was finally awarded the job. After rechecking all measurements and scope of work, he placed the order for some 8,000 yards of carpet. Delivery time was quoted as 4 weeks after order. In spite of repeated assurances that the carpet would be shipped on time, the mill missed the ship date and then sent a written notice that production would be delayed for two additional weeks. Reluctantly, the government granted an additional two weeks time, but said that "you [Gerry's company] must furnish the specified product or an approved equal within the new time period or you will be in default of your contract and



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subject to the liquidated damages provision of \$500 per day for every day beyond the agreed upon delivery period." Gerry then asked the mill to guarantee shipment but the mill refused. The order was then canceled by Gerry's company. By now, Gerry had other products approved, so he placed a call to several other mill reps with specific product information, stating that time was of the essence and that a call back in 2 to 4 hours was expected. One of the mill reps called was Curt; he responded within 90 minutes that, "Yes, we can provide the carpet you selected in two dyelots and have it shipped within seven days; we already have 3500 yards on the shelf and have the yarn in house to tuft the rest. Yes, this is guaranteed and you can note this on your purchase order." While two other mills eventually responded, one in 8 hours and the other in 24 hours, Curt already had the order in process and delivered one day earlier than expected. Gerry's team completed the installation and his government client was delighted that the building could be opened on schedule.

A Visual Blemish that could have turned ugly:

Roberta, an astute interior designer, looked at the carpet and immediately knew she had a potential problem on her hands. A tufted, multi-level loop carpet in a medium tan color had a couple of distinct lines running the length of the carpet. Upon close inspection by a certified flooring inspector, she found that the lines were caused by a slight pulling down of several rows of looped carpet yarn during the tufting process. While this was not a performance issue, Roberta had a very picky client and this was a wide open room where lighting would magnify the lines. She explained the issue to the client and offered a solution: An attractive 9" border in a contrasting color would be installed to "picture frame" the area; this would be done at no charge since the mill would provide the carpet border and pay for the extra installation. This was in lieu of a price concession or the return of carpet to the mill. The client was pleased and the issue of defective carpet was put to rest.

CRI-104 Section on Trowel Notch Sizes: While Joe was not an installer, he was an experienced commercial project manager who looked at the details when his jobs were being installed. When he walked on a large, glue-down job, he immediately noticed that the size of the glue ridges of the adhesive being applied for the unitary-backed carpet seemed incorrect. He looked closely at the trowels and discovered that 1/16" V-notch trowels had been issued to the crew instead of 1/8" U-notch trowels; this meant that too little adhesive was being applied to the floor and the carpet would eventually release from the floor. He stopped the job until the right trowels were delivered. Potential problems with carpet adhesion had been avoided with minimal delay in the schedule.

Important sales can be made and costly problems avoided by how you handle details and the speed with which you deal with client concerns. Make this a priority and you'll have the *slight edge* you need to be successful.

(Dave Stafford is an industry consultant and who spent 22 years as a flooring contractor, dealing with residential, government, and commercial clients and their problems. He is an Honorary Lifetime Member of the FCICA and former chairman of the Floor Covering Installation Board. He may be reached at dave@dsainfo.com or 703/926-1288)

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Micro Shearing

by Mike Currin

Tip sheared products are popular in commercial settings. They are usually a pattern of high and low loops that are tip sheared to make a cut and loop carpet with a very fine finish. These styles incorporate two design elements that lead to exceptional appearance and the ability to withstand the commercial environment: high density, and low profile.

True shearing problems are rare, but can and do occur. Many can be repaired in place without the need for removal or replacement. Some of the common shearing problems are, chatter marks, uneven shearing, and stop marks. The photos here are of a very unusual situation that had two separate problems, chatter marks, and uneven shearing.

The request for service came in initially as a sidematch repair, but when we got to the job it was apparent that color was not the problem. The carpet exhibited a difference at the seam due to unlevel shearing. One side was sheared more than the other and it also had a section exhibiting chatter marks. Like most commercial jobs, this involved several hundred yards of carpet, yet only a small amount had problems and the consumer was pleased overall with the carpet and happy to find that there was a workable solution to the problems.

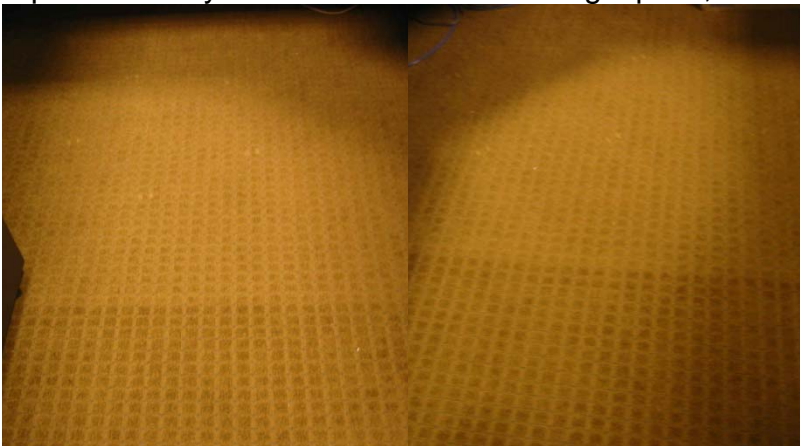
Micro shearing replicates the manufacturers shearing process, but as the name implies on a relatively small scale. The shearing machines at the mill are as wide as the carpet. The micro shear used to repair cuts only about four inches in a single pass,

and to achieve the correct cutting depth may require more than one pass. It requires patience and a steady hand to get good results.

Stop marks in this case are readily identifiable. They appeared as a widthwise band a few inches wide that just did not get sheared. These also are generally repairable. The general contractor was adamant that the carpet needed to be replaced, and that he did not see how it could be fixed. He was asked to allow a small section to be serviced and he agreed. He came back after half the stop mark was corrected and was amazed that it could be done. He allowed the repair and the client was able to move in on time. In both of these cases we saved hundreds of yards of carpet. They are examples of what can be done with carpets that have a minor correctable problem. The end users were happy with the results, and the repair saved everyone time, money and hassles of replacing the carpet.

When that next call about a carpet problem comes in, be cautious about immediately jumping to the conclusion that replacement is the only option. Realize also that your customer may be willing or may even prefer repair to replacement. If the problem is visual only and does not affect performance, it may be correctable on site.

Michael Currin is a 37 year veteran of the carpet business. He is an LGM Associate and owns and operates Flooring Warranty Services Inc. a national warranty service company, out of the Dallas, TX region. Visit <http://carpetservices.biz/> for more information.



Uneven Shear



Repaired Uneven Shearing



Chatter Marks



Corrected Chatter Marks



HOW TO GET AUDITED

By LANCE WALLACH, CLU , CHFC, CIMC

The IRS will increase audits of small businesses by 50%

HOW TO GET AUDITED

- ✓ put a lot of zeros after numbers on your tax return
- ✓ amend your tax return
- ✓ take a low salary
- ✓ operate as an S corp, or sole proprietor
- ✓ do not report all your income, especially cash income
- ✓ live in an expensive house, but take a low salary
- ✓ have a retirement plan that has not been updated to reflect the new laws
- ✓ have independent contractors, illegals, etc. as your employees
- ✓ utilize an abusive tax shelter, listed transaction, etc. to reduce your taxes
- ✓ these include various types of retirement and life insurance plans
- ✓ realize that accountants under the new tax laws will be forced to report you to the IRS

To avoid a potential \$100,000 IRS fine imposed on them if you are in a listed transaction or you take questionable tax positions or deductions (a lot of accountants will now be forced to report their clients to the IRS, which will then probably audit them). ANY ONE or a combination of some of the above will probably result in an audit.

CREATIVE ways to reduce insurance and tax costs.

- ✓ rent a captive insurance company to reduce both taxes and various insurance costs
- ✓ utilize a HSA to reduce insurance costs and taxes
- ✓ utilize a VEBA to reduce taxes, deduct succession and estate planning costs etc.
- ✓ utilize the insurance swapout process to reduce insurance costs
- ✓ utilize non- recourse loans to obtain insurance without laying out any money
- ✓ use life settlements to get paid for your life insurance without dying

✓
APPLY some of these techniques to YOUR business

- ✓ why you should operate as a C corp to make many non- deductible expenses deductible
- ✓ why you should consider VEBA, 412(e)(3) or K plans to keep more money in your pocket
- ✓ how to utilize a HSA, captive insurance company and insurance swapouts to reduce taxes and insurance costs
- ✓ how to find an accountant who will be your tax protector instead of an IRS collector
- ✓ how to apply a few of these techniques to save thousands

Lance Wallach, speaks and writes extensively about retirement plans, estate planning, and tax reduction strategies. He speaks at more than 70 conventions annually, writes for more than 50 publications, and was the National Society of Accountants Speaker of the Year. Contact him at 516-938-5007 or visit www.vebaplan.com

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