

THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

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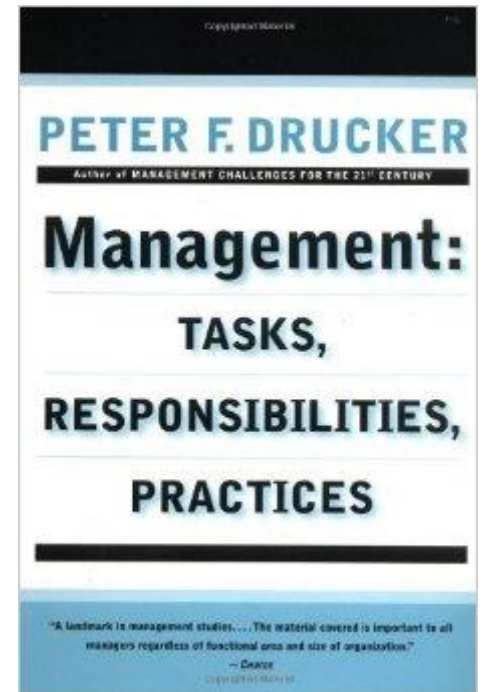
Positioning the Flooring Business for Growth

For the most part the economy is coming back for the flooring industry. Almost every flooring contractor, flooring dealer, installation firm or anyone having anything to do with flooring is telling us business is anywhere from good to them being, using the Southern expression, “covered up.” That’s a great sign but let us not forget there’s another opportunity that exposes itself and that’s positioning your business for growth while business improves. When businesses get busy everyone gets excited about it but not all businesses, regardless of what they are, understand that they have to capitalize on the upturn. Relative to the flooring business, this mean strengthening your position and it’s not just for the people who put their hands on the products, this is also for designers, specifiers, architects, general contractors, building owners, managers and anyone else who has anything to do with flooring products.

With business picking up it’s important to evaluate your financial situation so you can strengthen your business and its operation. We all have a tendency to get a little giddy when the cash starts to flow but common sense should prevail. You need to put yourself in a position of strength, that is, in a financial position that won’t compromise the operation of the business.

While the momentum is moving and picking up it’s also a good time to look at your marketing position. I don’t mean advertising but marketing which is promoting the business so as to help it grow and deliver a targeted message. This goes back to my often repeated statement, “know what business you’re in and who your customer is” from Peter F. Drucker’s book “Tasks, Responsibilities and Practices.” Knowing your business and targeting your customers helps you build stronger and better relationships and improve and increase the business overall.

Technology, product development and design trends have been changing in the flooring industry during the downturn. The amount of new, different, unique and stylized products is overwhelming. From soft to hard surface flooring in various shapes and sizes, made of a multitude of different materials, capable of looking like anything and with a selection that would make a kid in a candy store envious, there’s more for you to know about and understand than ever.



This is an important point because we're seeing more issues with new technologies that require specific knowledge of these products and not even the manufacturers know all the answers. We live in the middle of mecca in the floor covering industry and sometimes find out by mistake about a product we didn't know existed. And the change is so rapid that you're going to be spinning around trying to figure out and understand what to use, how to use it and where and if it's the appropriate product for whatever your project may be.

All of these new products will open up opportunities for extraordinary growth whether it be the sale and installation of the products or the specification, selection and use of them in a specific application. Now more than ever you have the chance to make a space absolutely unique and deliver a look no one else has. You must avail yourself of all there is to choose from and a good way to do that is to call your flooring reps and have them bring in the new offerings for a show and tell. You will then be armed with the latest products to use in your projects or to sell and don't forget to get the technical information on the stuff as well. It's no good to anyone if it's not installed right or it gets installed someplace where it shouldn't. And speaking of installation, there's lots of changes there too. With less adhesive being used and more mechanical systems for all types of hard surface flooring to new adhesives you can boggle your mind. Some of these things work great, none are as easy to install as touted and adhesives for example may make marketing statements that science doesn't recognize. All of the flooring on commercial projects, regardless of how it's installed, should be installed by trained professional installation firms. Thinking otherwise is foolish.



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Being first on the block with new flooring product will put you in the lead in your market, again, whether you're selling the flooring, using it in a new or renovated project or making a statement in a business whether retail, corporate or hospitality. Remember flooring is a style and fashion product and the best look draws in business with an impression. The new flooring products and styles will definitely provide the WOW factor.

The flooring business is also very much about relationships; building them, keeping them and nurturing them. With business picking up you can't forget to do that, whether you're buying or selling; don't forget the people who care about you and cater to you.

Now's the time to take care of the people who have taken care of you and strengthen those relationships. Think of doing a monthly email to your best customer and those you want to add to the family. Call on the people who are doing business and present them with a visual marketing presentation that will make them consider you on their next project. Think about putting on a lunch and learn with CEU credits for architects or a wine and cheese presentation to a group, firm or large client you work with. This is not a sales effort but a marketing effort to expose them to what's new, different and how certain products and practices will help keep them out of trouble and protect their investments. You want to provide improved value and service to your customers and clients and help them prevent problems, complaints and failures which will increase everyone's profits, lower losses and stop issues before they have a chance to take root. This is a good way to increase profits without having to increase sales volume – do business smarter and better. This concept is based more on attitude and beliefs alteration than a monetary investment in tangible product to sell.

We've just put together a great presentation on this subject that will be presented at both Surfaces flooring events; Miami in October and Las Vegas in January. The number of new flooring products on the market are staggering, from hand painted wood to porcelain tiles that can be made to look like almost anything to carpet styles that are only limited

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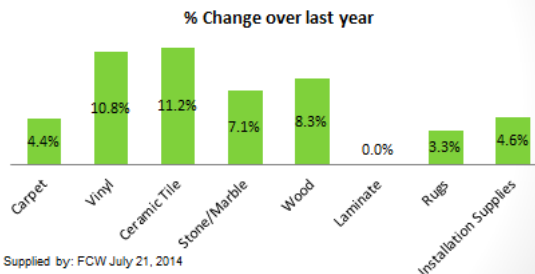
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by your imagination. With the myriad of flooring design and styling options available you have to change the way you think about the flooring materials being used for projects. Even the options for polished and stained concrete are limitless so if you have a substrate condition that prohibits the use of any applied separate flooring material, and they do exist, you can create an “artscape” for flooring applied directly to the concrete substrate. There should be no reason why anyone should go begging for flooring to use that will work, perform and make a statement with the variety of flooring options available today; and they keep coming.

Just to give you a visual example of the growth of the flooring materials in the market place we’ve included two charts for your information. The bar graph shows the increase in each flooring category over the last year (2013 over 2012).

2013 Product Sales Growth (Sales in Billions; product + labor)

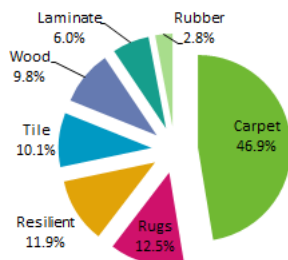


The largest increases are on hard surface flooring, particularly vinyl and ceramic tile. The pie chart shows the percentages of each flooring material. Though carpet growth has not been dramatic, it has grown as depicted on the bar graph but it is still the largest category of flooring as evidenced in the pie chart.

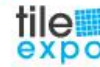
2013 Sales By Category By Market

Share (\$18.578 Billion)

Supplied by: Floor Covering News June 30, 2014



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The increases in hard surface are not going to displace soft surface flooring in the commercial market for two very specific reasons, noise reduction and comfort underfoot and in addition, believe it or not, carpet is less costly to maintain and there is data to prove this. The increase in rugs is due to the increase in hard surface flooring as it seems no one wants wall to wall hard surface flooring without have something soft someplace for occupants to walk on. This is true in the hospitality market where the use of hard surface flooring materials is growing significantly but rugs are used in specific places, such as next to or under beds so guests don't touch down in the morning onto a cold floor or in the corporate market to make statements or to have something soft underfoot in strategic locations. One product not on the graph but enjoying healthy growth is rubber flooring. Two products on the chart we're seeing increased complaints on are wood and rubber and the reason for this with wood is the volume of product coming onto the market that is not high quality commercial product but is being sold as such. As for rubber the problem here is that people don't understand the product and make up their own installation and use applications that cause the product to fail through no fault of its own. Ignorance is the problem we see causing failures with wood and rubber flooring materials.

With so many flooring material choices and more coming it becomes harder for you to determine what exactly will work best for your project relative to what you are trying to accomplish. Those tasked with selecting the flooring, whether it be the architect, designer, project manager or internal member of a project, are expected to know and understand the products being selected for a project. Flooring is only one component in a renovation or new build and often the product known the least about, especially the newest products. For that reason it is imperative the right information is supplied, a legitimate manufacturer selected, that is one with a history of making quality floor covering and technical data furnished with the product. If you don't know who made the floor and never heard of it before you should be very leery of using it. And if you need help or answers, we'll have that for you. The one key component you always need is answers to your flooring questions; we have those answers.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wagner Meters Releases DataMaster™ Firmware Update

Adds ability to automatically load data to www.f2170reports.com



Rogue River, Oregon – September 2014 – Further improving the Rapid RH® DataMaster™, winner of the Most Innovative Product Award 2013, Wagner Meters (www.wagnermeters.com) has released a free firmware update.

A pocket-sized device, the DataMaster™ combines Bluetooth® technology with touch screen controls to automatically record and store Rapid RH® test results. Used with the proven Rapid RH® Smart Sensors, the DataMaster™ and Bluetooth® Reader combination allows users to acquire the internal relative humidity and temperature of a concrete slab via Bluetooth® technology. This data can then be uploaded to www.f2170reports.com, ensuring data integrity and proper data documentation to comply with ASTM F2170-11.

The DataMaster™ firmware update automatically loads job statistics to the www.f2170reports.com website, rather than users having to create a zip file before uploading data. “With this update we have made the DataMaster™ even better by improving the user experience and making the interface more user-friendly,” says Jason Spangler, Sales Manager for the Rapid RH® product line at Wagner Meters.

The update will be included in all DataMaster™ units sold after August of 2014. Current DataMaster™ users can download the free update at bit.ly/DataMasterUpdate.

To learn more about Wagner Meters’ complete Rapid RH® line of concrete moisture testing products, visit wagnermeters.com or call **1-800-634-9961** for more information.

About Wagner Meters:

Wagner Meters is the trusted world leader in moisture meters and moisture management solutions. Each product is proven by science and engineered for accuracy. For nearly 50 years, Wagner’s field-proven moisture meter technology has helped thousands of customers solve and eliminate concrete and wood moisture problems.

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