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PLUS: TRANSITIONS AND
MOLDINGS UPDATE P. 40



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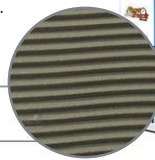
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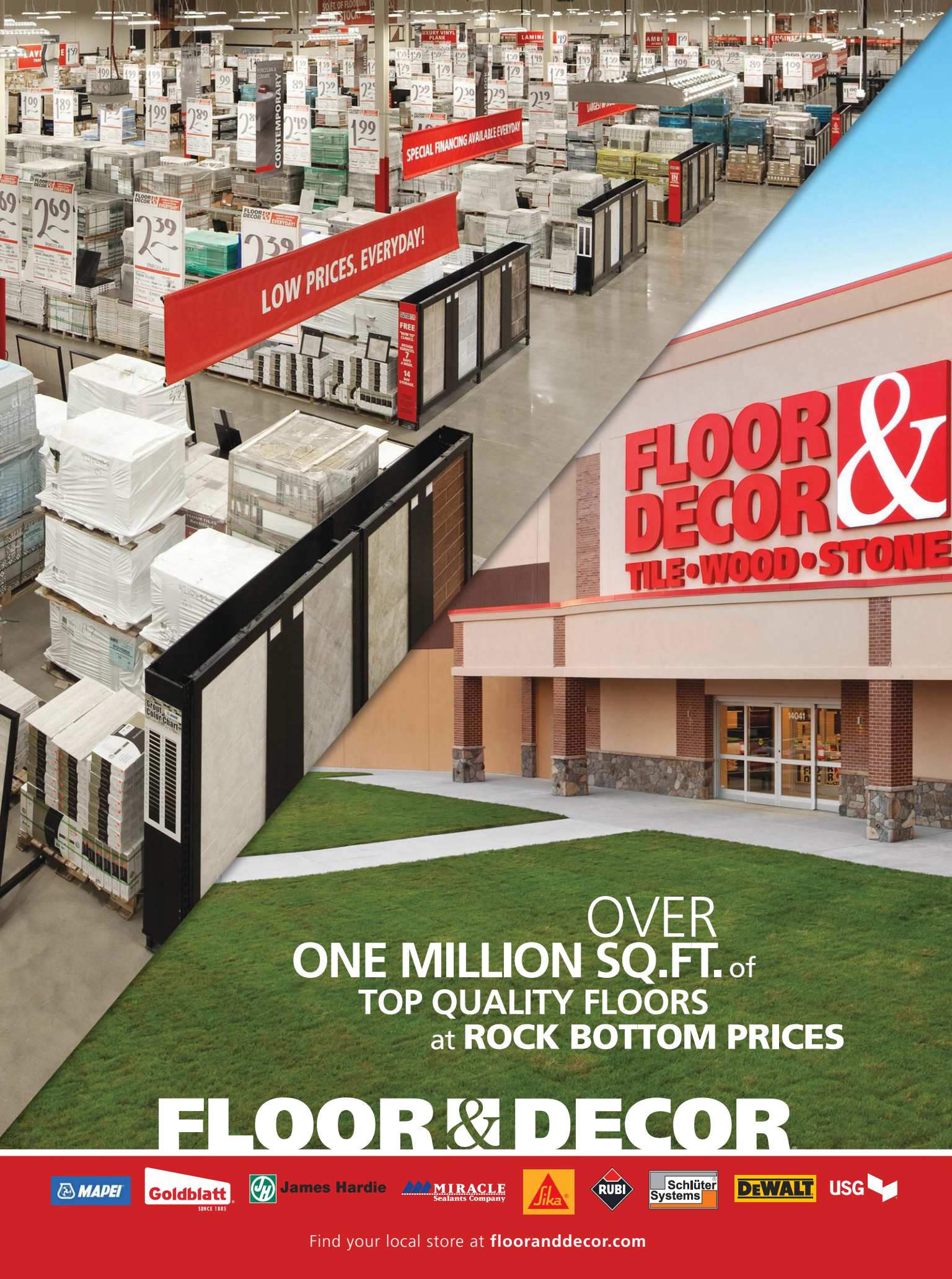
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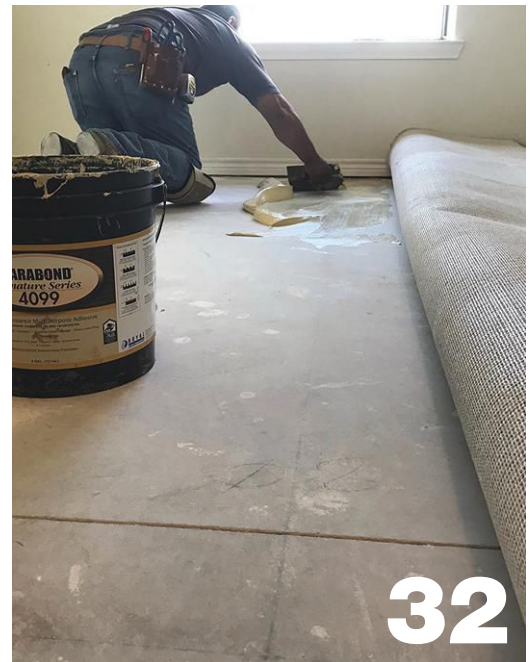
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On the cover: Applying MAPEI's Mapesonic 2, a lightweight, load-bearing peel-and-stick sound reduction and crack isolation membrane. Photo courtesy of MAPEI.



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FLOOR COVERING INSTALLER

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SOUND CONTROL ROUNDTABLE

In this manufacturer roundtable we learn about the latest sound control products, when to choose an underlayment and when to choose an adhesive for sound control, the pros and cons of each type of system, and what STC and IIC ratings really mean.

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INSTALLATION TIPS FOR CARPET

Guest columnist Sonny Callahan of the National Academy of Floor Covering Training (NAFCT) shares best practices for installing carpet. One important consideration is knowing the type of backing system and whether or not it's breathable. This information will let contractors decide the type of moisture test to perform.

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TRANSITIONS AND MOLDINGS UPDATE

In this short primer on the latest transition and moldings technology, manufacturers talk about their newest profiles and the importance of staying on top of flooring trends when creating these products. Also discussed are transitions designed for the new multilayer-core floors.

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DIGITAL EXCLUSIVES

In this month's digital exclusive, read tips from installation industry manufacturers about what to consider when working with both underlayments and adhesives for sound control.

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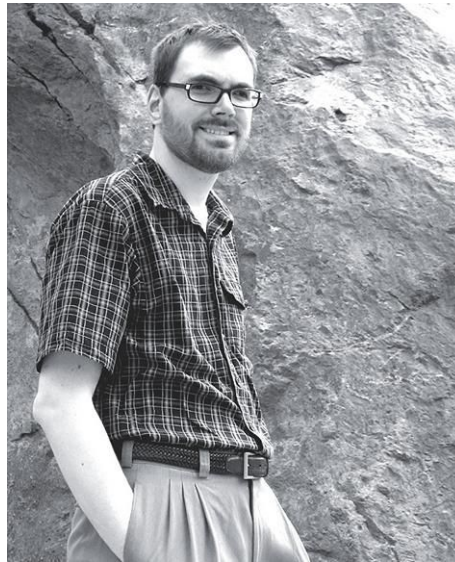
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Making Installation a Career



Phil Green, a Chicago-area tile and flooring contractor with nearly 50 years of experience, and inventor of the Back Butter Buddy and Edge Strip Kits, recently shared his thoughts on the future of the construction trades. Originally published in a post to his LinkedIn followers, he graciously allowed us to reprint the following excerpts.

“I was working today at a home and the 10-year-old son of my client was in his room saying ‘Alexa, turn on song so-and-so.’ And [the cloud-based, voice-activated device] did. Then I heard him give another command to which she responded as well. I was in a good mood so I thought I would have some fun.

“I asked him to ask Alexa if she could help install a shower door. Alexa said, ‘You do not have Shower on your playlist.’ Then I said, ‘Alexa, can you install a toilet?’ To which she answered, ‘I do not know that one.’

“The point I am having fun making is that the trades are still a great career opportunity that cannot be done by a virtual command or outsourced to another country. We need more young blood coming into these rewarding jobs where you produce a tangible finished product. I personally have been in construction for more than 47 years and still love it. I have heard it said, ‘Find a job you love and you will never work a day in your life.’ This is my life verse.

“High school students, I’m talking to you now. Sure, you could stress out about which college you *must* attend and go *deep* in debt, only to find out after four long years that you still don’t know what you want to do. However, if you get yourself set up to apprentice, help or just be a ‘gofer’ on a job site, you might find out that you were made for this. If it doesn’t work out for you, you could always go back to school.”

I always enjoy reading perspectives directly from industry experts. I run into Phil a lot at trade shows, and even with nearly 50 years of experience under his belt, every time I see him he is just as enthusiastic and passionate about the flooring installation industry as ever. You can tell this isn’t just a job to him—it’s something he lives for.

And he’s not the only one. So many of you out there are incredibly passionate, and gracious with your time and expertise. You always look to help out friends, even if they’re competitors. It’s something unique to this trade—and it’s that sense of brotherhood and sisterhood that tells me even when the industry is going through rough patches, it will stay upright as long as the true professionals continue to put their attention and care into everything they do. **FCI**

Mike Chmielecki

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How Do Remodeling Contractors Feel About Flooring Contractors?

I had the opportunity to speak and conduct demonstrations at the JLC Live remodelers show in Providence, RI, March 22-24. I presented a seminar entitled “Proper Substrate Preparation for Hardwood and Floating Floors” covering hardwood, laminate, LVP, WPC, SPC and other multi-layer cores.

When I asked how many of the remodeling contractors had ever had an installation issue, unfortunately a majority of hands went up. However, it is important to note that flooring contractors were not their only headache; the same majority said they'd had issues with other subcontractors' workmanship as well.

What really surprised me is when I asked how many of the remodelers had moisture meters, more hands went up in this group than I've seen in several seminars with flooring contractors. This concerns me. If the rest of the construction industry is starting to get a better understanding of moisture and taking a proactive approach to test for it, shouldn't flooring contractors already be ahead of the game?

Here's something that was even more concerning. When I asked why the remodelers had moisture meters, the response was they've experienced moisture issues and since their installers don't check for moisture they're checking for it themselves. What does that do to the credibility and perception of professionalism in the flooring industry?

On the show floor were plenty of ongoing seminars including trim, waterproofing the building envelope, roofing, framing, tile installation and flooring. A big thanks to Bostik who was

the main sponsor of the demo stage, and thanks also to Festool, OLFA, Stabila, MAX USA and Contractors Direct for their support.

One thing that impressed me was that on the second day of the show, lots of high school students from the local area came to attend the show. It was great to see so many young adults with real interest in the building trades, and for me to have the opportunity to expose them to the flooring industry.

If any of you installers out there have an opportunity to attend a remodelers' show close to your area, I would recommend you go. Not only will you gain a better understanding of how the products you're installing fit into the overall construction of a building, you can also help expose more people to this industry and give them a more positive impression of the work we do. And if you really want to impress them? Talk about the importance of moisture meters. **FCI**



JLC Live in Providence, R.I., welcomed remodelers, homebuilders, contractors and other professionals for three days of product demonstrations, on-floor building clinics and classroom-style conference sessions.



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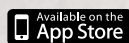
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Titebond's 771-Step Adhesive, Sound and Moisture Control system and 811 Advantage Urethane Wood Flooring Adhesive are now available in convenient pouch packaging.

Franklin International has introduced new pouch packaging for its Titebond hardwood flooring adhesives. The 0.75 gallon foil pouches offer a light, easy-to-open package while reducing messes and adhesive waste according to the company.

The pouches are sold in two- and four-pouch boxes, which are easy to carry to the job site. Once there, the installer removes the pouches from the boxes and positions them across the installation area, based upon expected yield per package. As the installation progresses the installer simply moves on to the next pouch in reach.

To apply the adhesive, just snip the tail on the pouch, squeeze out the adhesive, then spread and trowel it. Adhesive placement is precise, resulting in quicker and more uniform spreading, the company noted.

"The pouch size also reduces adhesive waste—and cost. The weather-resistant pouch packaging keeps the adhesive fresh, resulting in longer shelf life and easier spreading and troweling. In addition, the pouch size results in less unused product that would otherwise skin or go to waste," Franklin International added.

The pouch packaging is launching with the Titebond 771-Step Adhesive, Sound and Moisture Control system and Titebond 811 Advantage Urethane Wood Flooring Adhesive. One pouch of Titebond 771-Step covers 49 sq. ft. when used as an adhesive and 27 sq. ft. when applied as an all-in-one system. The Titebond 811 pouch covers 38 sq. ft. when used in an engineered wood flooring installation.

Titebond is rolling out both pouch products at select Lowe's stores. The pouches will also be available at specialty flooring retailers and building supply stores.

For more information visit titebond.com.

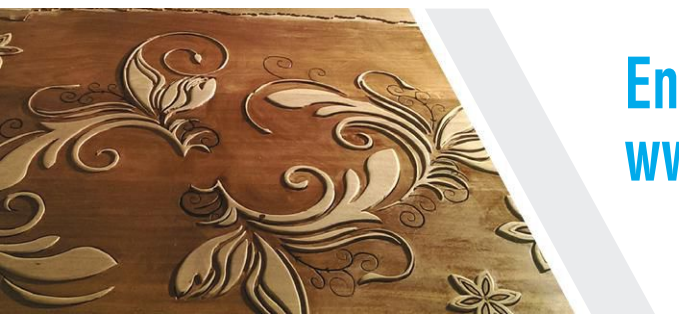
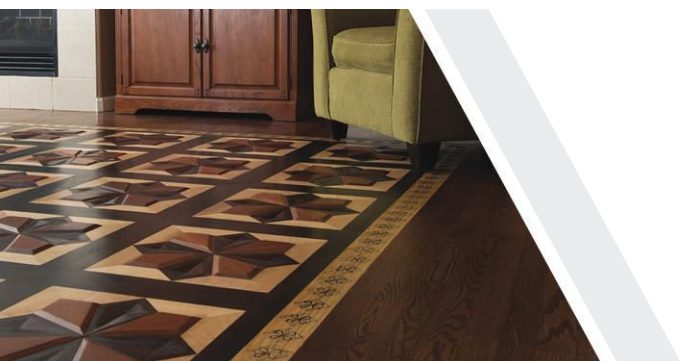
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Effortless Resilient Cuts with Bullet Tools' 'Cruiser'

Included in Bullet Tools' TISE 2018 introductions is the Cruiser. The company's latest addition to its vinyl tools portfolio, the Cruiser utilizes dual rolling razor edges and a gear drive system to provide score cuts on thicker and wider LVT/WPC products.

BulletTools.com



iQ Power Tools Introduces Dry-Cut Tile Saw Accessories

iQ Power Tools has introduced accessories for its Dry-Cut Tile Saw, which is designed to cut ceramic, porcelain, marble and stone. These new accessories include the iQTS244 miter attachment, extension table and vacuum port. Pictured here, the iQTS244 vacuum port hose converts the iQTS244 into a convenient vacuum that can be used to clean up the surrounding work area, grout joints and other areas for a quick touch up.

iQPowerTools.com



Bona Launches Wire Brush Technology

Bona's new Wire-Brush Technology is durable and easy-to-use on-site with both newly installed and refinished floors. By removing the soft wood grain, the brush leaves the more durable, hard grain behind, providing a natural texture and look to the floor. Because the wire brush pairs with the Bona FlexiSand Power Drive, it allows for close proximity to walls for minimized edge work and easier blending.

bona.com



Laticrete Unveils Advanced Electric Radiant Floor Heating System

Laticrete's Strata_Heat electric radiant floor heating system consists of a heat conductive thin-set additive, an innovative high-performance floor heating wire, an uncoupling mat and a Wi-Fi enabled thermostat. In addition to minimizing floor heat up and cycle time to reduce energy costs, Strata_Heat features a smart-focused design that is compatible with home automation devices.

laticrete.com



General Equipment Adds Next-Generation Floor Covering Stripper

General Equipment Co.'s new FCS16 Gen 3 RIP-R-Stripper features an advanced blade clamping system, improved centralized lubrication, quick-release operator handles and integrated static weights to maximize productivity when removing VCT tiles, rubber-backed carpeting and other sheet-type coverings from wood and concrete surfaces. The FCS16 Gen 3 is powered by a quiet 3/4 horsepower, 115/230 VAC, 60-Hertz electric motor and offers a maximum cutting width of 16 inches.

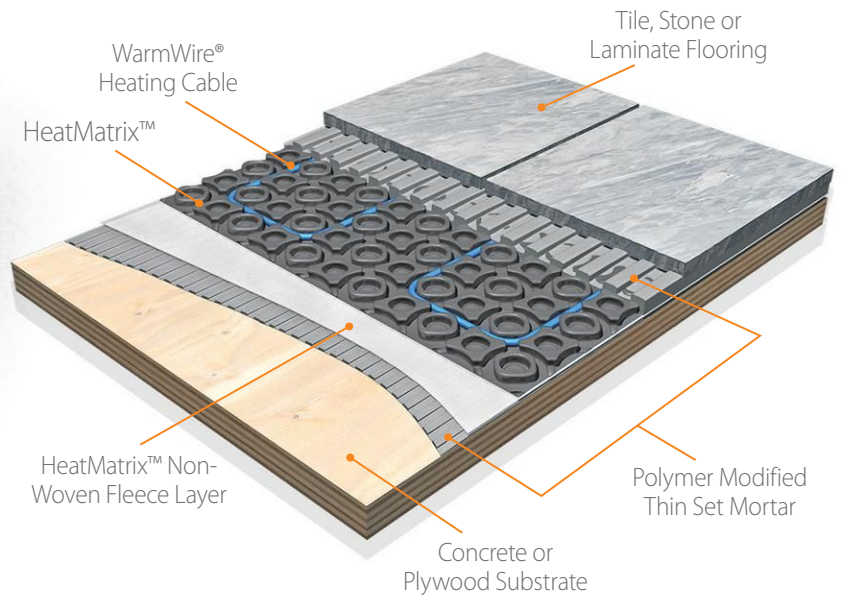
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CURRENT STATE OF REPAIRS:

A GUIDE TO AVOIDING UNDERLAYMENT REPAIR CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUES

For more information visit:
usg.com/repair

By Phil Ciesiulka, Director, Sales, Tile & Flooring Solutions at USG

For nearly 40 years, poured gypsum-based underlayments have played an important role in both fire and sound resistance in multifamily dwellings. Even though gypsum and lightweight concrete products can be used interchangeably as a heat sink, engineers and designers tend to give gypsum underlayments preferential consideration since they can achieve fire ratings at half the thickness of lightweight concrete. When repairing gypsum underlayment, maintaining the fire resistance of existing structures is critical for code compliance, which is why many products are tested per the ASTM E119/UL 263 standard for fire resistance.

“Because safety is never an afterthought at USG, we ensure all USG gypsum-based floor products are classified by UL as noncombustible in accordance with the Standard ASTM E136,” said Brett Fleury, Product Marketing Manager, Performance Flooring, USG.

2018 INDUSTRY STANDARDS

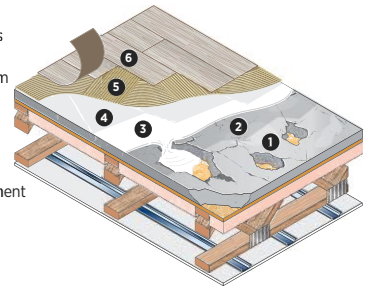
The International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC) prescribe ASTM E136 for materials that are required to be noncombustible. The trouble that’s encountered when rehabbing old, existing gypsum floors with low-compressive strengths is that the gypsum is often fractured, broken and crumbling. Loose materials must be removed, which can leave the thickness of the gypsum underlayment below the minimum requirement of 3/4 inches. When that happens only gypsum repair products that are UL classified for noncombustibility tested per ASTM E136 can be used.



Vintage gypsum underlayment that presents wear, from mild to severe, is easily mitigated with a UL-certified gypsum repair protocol.

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- Step #5:** Apply floor covering adhesive
- Step #6:** Apply new floor covering



ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE

The USG Gypsum Underlayment Repair Solutions portfolio includes pourable and trowelable products that can be used to rejuvenate a bad floor and provide a new durable, smooth surface ready to receive today’s most demanding types of floor coverings. All USG gypsum-based underlayments and patches are UL classified as noncombustible and can be used in over 130 fire-rated floor assemblies, including:

- USG Durock™ Brand Quik-Top™ Self-Leveling Underlayment
- USG Durock™ Brand Quik-Top™ FR (Fiber-Reinforced) Self-Leveling Underlayment
- USG Durock™ Brand Multi-Use Self-Leveling Underlayment
- USG Durock™ Brand Tuf-Skim™ Floor Patch

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NTCA Names 2017 Tile Person of the Year



Chris Walker is the recipient of NTCA's 2017 Tile Person of the Year Award.

Christopher Walker, vice president of the David Allen Co., is the National Tile Contractors Association's (NTCA) 2017 Tile Person of the Year. A recognized industry expert, Walker has more than 32 years of experience in the tile industry as a professional manager and installer.

Currently, Walker serves as first vice president of NTCA, chairman of the American National Standards Institute A-108 Committee, chairman of the U.S. Technical Advisory Group for ISO T-189, Associated Builders & Contractor (ABC) of Virginia board, and has been a voting member of the NTCA and TCNA Handbook and Technical Committees for many years.

"Being recognized by my peers with this distinguished award is both humbling and validating. I am lucky to have had the chance to work with these groups and to have potentially had a small impact on our industry," Walker noted.

He added, "Tile installations are becoming much more complex and demanding. The growing use of Gauged Porcelain Panels has allowed allied product manufacturers to produce a whole new array of technically superior products completely different than materials used when I was first introduced to the industry. This represents a real opportunity for growth in our industry. Tile is now being specified where it may never have been considered before."

Walker said he is proud to play a part in the collaborative effort to move the industry forward.

Schönox Named Fuse Supplier of the Year



Schönox is the Fuse Alliance Supplier of the Year.

Schönox HPS North America is the recipient of the Fuse Alliance Supplier of the Year award.

The Fuse Awards program was established to recognize excellence and highlight best practices among members and suppliers. As described by Fuse, Supplier of the Year recognizes a vendor that has performed above and beyond what a typical vendor does in terms of product quality, service and support. This is the 10th year the award has been given and the winner is based on results from a survey taken by Fuse members.

"Winning Supplier of the Year is a huge honor for all of us at HPS Schönox. It is the very essence of our 'ÖN IT' culture, where we aspire to meet or exceed our customer expectations daily," said Thomas Trissl, HPS Schönox principal. "Thanks to Geoff Gordon, Mike Hutton and the entire Fuse organization and its members. We'll continue to do our best by simplifying the process through advanced subfloor technologies."

Previously, HPS Schönox won the Best Support award for three consecutive years from 2014 until 2016. The Best Support award is for the supplier that demonstrates outstanding support of both the Fuse organization and its members.

"HPS Schönox proactively calls on our members and always goes the extra mile to visit jobsites when there is a problem or questions on how to proceed on short notice," said Gordon, executive director of Fuse.

For more information visit hpsubfloors.com.

Chapman Inducted into WFCA Hall of Fame



Harold Chapman

Harold Chapman is the 48th inductee into the World Floor Covering Association (WFCA) Flooring Industry Hall of Fame.

"Harold epitomizes all that the Hall of Fame stands for," said Scott Humphrey, CEO of WFCA. "He has achieved this honor for his continual contributions and achievements throughout his career."

Chapman is the former president of Bonitz Flooring Group, where he retired in 2016. He spent his entire professional career in the flooring industry, starting as a salesman for Sears in the commercial division. He later joined the Bonitz sales team, and eventually rose to the position of president and CEO.

Chapman's involvement with WFCA began when Bonitz became a member in 1998. He was elected to the WFCA board for the first time in 2002, and during his first years as a board member, he served on the finance and executive committees, as well as several others. He was elected again as chairman of the board in 2012 and continued to hold board and committee seats with the association.

Additionally, at its inaugural Hall of Fame induction in 2000, the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) honored Chapman for his dedication and support of the commercial design community. He is also a former member of the Floor Covering Installation Board (FCIB).

Chapman serves as chairman emeritus at Starnet Commercial Flooring Cooperative,



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and he is a former chairman of Starnet's board. He served as chairman for five years during the vertical integration days and helped reestablish Starnet as a successful entity for the independent flooring contractor.

For more information, visit WFCA.org.

Palo Duro Appoints New Members to Management Team

Tom Ruekert and Marc Schulz have been appointed to the Palo Duro Hardwoods management team. Together, Ruekert and Schulz will assume all re-

sponsibilities for Palo Duro and for Lägler North America.

"We're committed to continuing to expand our PST program," said Ruekert. "We've recently marked our 10th year of training floor sanding professionals, and are celebrating by hosting our first-ever couples trip to Germany to commemorate this milestone."

Palo Duro, a wholesale distribution company located in Denver, was acquired by Eugen Lägler GmbH, headquartered in Frauenzimmern, Germany, in October 2015.

Palo Duro has been the exclusive North American importer and sales agent for Lägler since 1995. Eugen Lägler was founded in 1956 and is credited with developing the first wood flooring belt sander. Today, under the management of Karleugen Lägler, Lägler is recognized as a leader in sanding equipment and technology, and has manufactured more than 50,000 Hummels.

For more information, visit paloduro-hardwoods.com.

Bona to Present New Naismith Award



Bona has partnered with administrators of the Naismith Trophy, Atlanta Tipoff Club for a new award: the Naismith Defensive Player of the Year, presented by Bona. The award will annually recognize the most outstanding men's and women's college basketball player who excels on the defensive end of the court. Specifically, the Naismith Defensive Player of the Year presented by Bona will recognize the top performers who excel in "protecting the rim" with a mid-season All-Defensive Team, as well as an end-of-season All-Defensive team.

This new addition further bolsters the Naismith Awards family that features the



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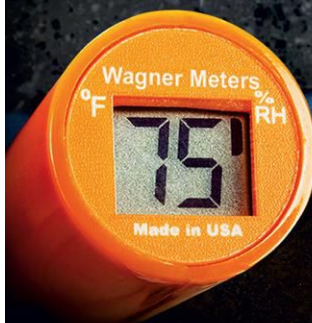
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Citizen Naismith Trophy College Players of the Year and Werner Ladder Naismith College Coaches of the Year awards, as well as honors for lifetime achievement and high school players and coaches of the year honors.

"The Naismith Awards are an honored sports tradition we have admired for years," said Tiffany Baird, brand manager, Bona US. "Bona is thrilled to now be part of the Naismith family."

For decades, professional and collegiate athletes have played on floors finished with Bona Sport waterborne finishes, sealers and paints. Bona provides a complete system of sport products including waterborne and oil modified finishes, paint, machines, abrasives, adhesives and a fast, effective maintenance system.

"Bona is recognized as a global leader in the installation and protection of hardwood floors, which creates a tremendous platform to activate in college basketball," said Eric Oberman, executive director of the Atlanta Tipoff Club. "We believe strongly in recognizing all facets of the game, and this partnership allows us to focus on defensive stalwarts, while also growing our tremendous family of awards and partners."

For more information, visit bona.com.

Starnet Announces Partnership with Profilitec

Profilitec, Italian producer of floor profiles and related installation products, has partnered with Starnet to provide Starnet members with ceramic and hard tile commercial flooring products.

"[Profilitec] has over 50 years' experience in this industry, and its commitment to provide the most advanced systems is right in line with what our members are looking for and, demanding," said Jeanne Matson, president and CEO of Starnet. "Profilitec's broad product offering addresses the problems our members are encountering as they continue to take market share in the ceramic and hard tile commercial flooring business segment. Our board was especially impressed with the company's selective distribution network model."

As a new player in the North American market, Profilitec's positioning strategy is to be the choice of the professional. "There are so many benefits associated with this partnership," said Greg Gelston, president, North America, of Profilitec. "Our products are meticulously designed to maximize intended function so contractors know they are getting the best possible solution for their flooring challenge."

For more information, visit starnetflooring.com and profilitec.com.

CFI Announces 25th Anniversary Convention

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the annual International Floorcovering Installers Association's (CFI) convention, to be held Aug. 15-17 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Fla.

Since its inception in 1993, the CFI Convention attracts professionals from across the globe in every sector of the flooring

industry including installers, retailers, and manufacturers. For this year's celebratory convention, CFI said it has secured "some of the most innovative break-out sessions with flooring experts from across the country who will discuss everything from the business surrounding installation to how to successfully work with and retain your installers."

For more information, visit www.cficonvention.org.

Ardex Invests in DTA

Ardex has attained a strategic stake in DTA, a quality tools, trims and machinery provider for the wall and floor market.

DTA manufacturers, imports and distributes throughout Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. Dedicated to delivering innovative, dependable products, DTA focuses

on servicing the professional contractor.

"This joint venture is an exciting addition to the Ardex strategy of system solutions," said Mark Eslamlooy, CEO of Ardex. "The burgeoning synergies we develop with DTA will present additional value to our customers."

DTA will continue to operate independently from the Ardex companies in the U.S., Australia and New Zealand, and according to the companies there are no planned changes to personnel in either company.

For more information, visit ardex.com.

NWFA University Wins 2017 Association Trends All Media Contest Award

The National Wood Flooring Association's (NWFA) University has received

the 2017 Association Trends All Media Contest Award.

NWFA University received the gold award in the e-Learning & Live Training category. This category recognizes associations who have successfully implemented an online learning platform.

"We're really proud of the platform we've built and the number of people we've been able to reach in under two years," said Stephanie Owen, education and member engagement director at NWFA. "Our mission at NWFA is to develop educational opportunities for our members and to provide them with the knowledge they need to achieve their goals. We're looking forward to achieving more growth as we continue to develop courses and expand our reach."

For more information, visit nwfa.org/nwfa-university.aspx.

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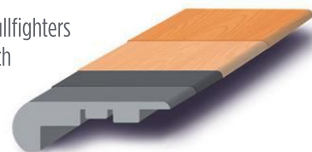


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Schluter's Horton Retires, DeGooyer Promoted



Larry Horton has retired after a 34-year career in the tile industry.



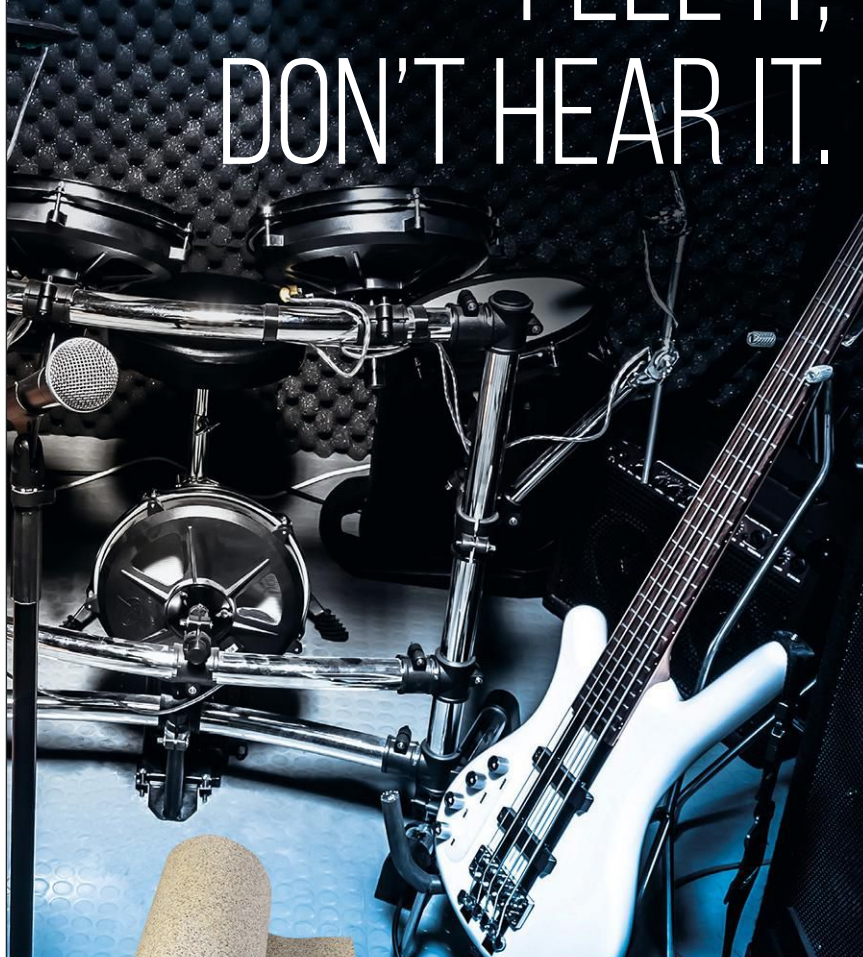
Dee DeGooyer has been promoted to senior vice president of sales for the Schluter-Systems.

Schluter-Systems' senior vice president of sales Larry Horton has retired after a 34-year career in the tile industry.

"When Larry joined Schluter Systems in 1998 as the territory manager for the Mid-Atlantic there were fewer than 10 people in the sales organization in the U.S.," said Marco Ludwig, president and CEO of Schluter-Systems. "Today that number has grown to more than 70, and most of that growth has been under Larry's leadership. It has been my pleasure to work with Larry these past few years. He has become a friend and I will truly miss working with him, as will so many people at Schluter and in the tile industry as a whole."

To replace Horton, Dee DeGooyer has been promoted to senior vice president of sales for the company. DeGooyer joined the company in 2006 as the territory manager for the intermountain states. Since coming on board with the company, he was promoted to the role of architectural and commercial sales

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manager for the Western U.S. in 2010, followed by regional sales manager in 2016, and regional sales director in 2017.

For more information, visit schluter.com.

Laticrete Acquires Solepoxy

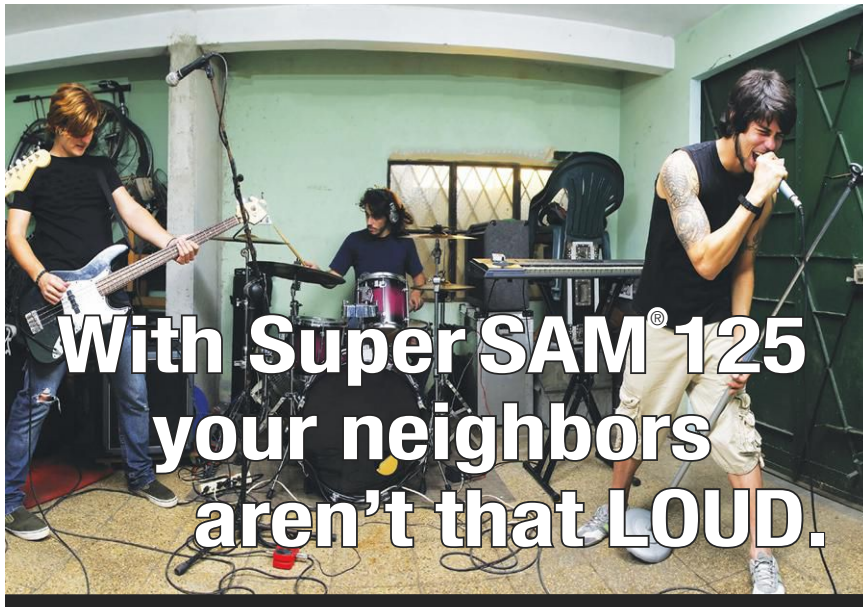
Laticrete has acquired Solepoxy, a Brazilian producer of resinous floor coatings, including epoxy, urethane, polyaspartic and epoxy terrazzo. Operating under a new name, Laticrete-Solepoxy returns

Laticrete to the Brazilian market, where the manufacturer has been present for more than 20 years.

“This acquisition is an important part of our strategic plan to become a full-line supplier in the flooring industry worldwide,” said Erno de Bruijn, president and COO, Laticrete International division. “The technology, experience and reputation that Solepoxy brings us in the area of resinous floor coatings will be leveraged in all our other international business units outside Brazil.”

The general management of the company will continue under the direction of Alexis Fonteyne, founder of Solepoxy. “The union with Laticrete is strategic for both companies,” said Fonteyne. “We share the same values and culture, which is very important to me. The synergy between the two organizations will generate significant gains of competence and competitiveness in the coming years.”

For more information, visit laticrete.com.



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IIC: 51 STC: 54 ΔIIC: 22

6" concrete substrate with engineered hardwood finished floor:

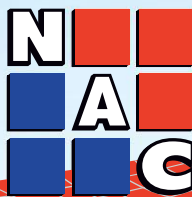
IIC: 51 STC: 52 ΔIIC: 23

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Crossville Updates Tile Panels Installation Manual



Crossville has released an updated version of its Installation Manual for gauged porcelain tile panels.

Crossville has updated its Installation Manual for gauged porcelain tile panels. The revised technical manual, offered in English and Spanish versions, highlights the company's compliance with ANSI A137.3 standards and reinforces



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proper interior installation per the ANSI A108.19 standard.

Crossville's Derrick Patterson of the technical services team was instrumental in the revision of the manual, ensuring it conveyed Crossville's compliance with ANSI A137.3 and supported the ANSI A108.19 installation standard as well. Notably, technical services director Noah Chitty was among the industry experts at large who collaborated to develop the installation standard for this burgeoning product category.

"It's our goal to support installers with the education and practical know-how they need, and our technical guide is just one of many ways we're here to help," said Chitty. "Their work is the cornerstone of the growing success of the gauged porcelain tile panel category."

For more information, visit crossvilleinc.com.

INSTALL Announces Opening of Texas Training Center



The Carpenters and Millwrights Training Center has moved to a new 52,000 sq. ft. facility in Pasadena, Texas.

Due to significant growth in the Houston metropolitan region, the

Carpenters and Millwrights Training Center recently moved to a new 52,000 sq. ft. facility in the nearby suburb of Pasadena, Texas. The center provides one of the top carpenter and millwright apprenticeship and journeyman training programs in the nation.

From safety and technical skills to communication and leadership skills, instructors train professional carpenters and millwrights to be productive, safe and demonstrate leadership on the job site.

At its new location, the center will have six full-time instructors, eight classrooms and significantly more space for hands-on learning opportunities, and will be home to 485 apprentices.

"With the opening of this state-of-the-art training center, the Central South Carpenters Regional Council (CSCRC) intends to provide the flooring industry throughout the gulf coast region with skilled, qualified, floorcovering professionals," said Craig Wright, chief of staff for CSCRC. "This venture will only be possible through collaborative partnerships with INSTALL contractors."

Southern expansion has been a key initiative for INSTALL for several years. As the organization continues to increase its presence in key markets across the country, it will maintain its focus on council-to-council and contractor support. This relationship provides contractors with the opportunity to enter viable construction markets and establish new offices, allowing for additional revenue streams. It is also an opportunity to bring additional training and certification to the Southern labor pool.

"With major growth in cities like San Antonio, Austin, Dallas and Houston, our commitment to the Texas market means that contractors will have better access to training and certification," said John McGrath, executive director of INSTALL. "Together we can help create the next generation of expert installers that will drive the industry forward."

For more information, visit ubctexastraining.com.



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Expansion Joints—Are They Necessary?

Most people will agree that buildings experience significant movement on a day-to-day basis. Accommodating this movement is crucial for a successful installation of ceramic, porcelain and/or glass tile. Although there are many causes for movement in a structure, temperature and moisture changes play a large role.

Tiled floors can move significantly when affected by heat. The source of this temperature swing may be a result of the increasingly popular use of in-floor heat. In this case, the floor tiles will expand as the electrically heated cable (or the tubing which carries water heated by a boiler) varies in temperature. When the heat is on, the floor expands. When the heat cycles off, the floor cools and contracts.

Another often unconsidered source of heat is sunlight. The sun shines brightly, causing the floor to expand. When the sun is hidden by passing clouds, the floor cools and contracts. The movement is much like the action of an accordion, with the in-and-out motion similar to that of a floor expanding and contracting many times per day.

This resulting expansion and contraction must be accommodated or the tile assembly may rebel by shearing away from the substrate and moving upward in what is known as “tenting.” The attached photo demonstrates the unfortunate result of tile installed with nowhere to go...but up. This job was a large tiled area between elevator cars and 16-ft. floor-to-ceiling windows with southern exposure. There were no expansion joints in the field tile and no perimeter joints along the elevator



If the proper expansion joints aren't put in place, the tile will have nowhere to go during regular expansion and contraction cycles but up.

wall or the window wall. Hot sun plus a large tiled area with no allowance for movement is a recipe for failure, as seen here.

The tile industry has done a good job of providing guidelines, in the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) publication, designed to handle this movement. The ANSI book provides several guidelines which must be followed to ensure a long-lasting tile installation.

The ANSI A108.01 document provides the following standards:

Section 3.7.3.1—Interior areas exposed to direct sunlight shall have expansion joints spaced at 8 to 12 ft. (2.4 to 3.5 meters). These joints are necessary

in both north/south and east/west directions.

Section 3.7.4.1—Unless otherwise specified, use sealants complying with ASTM C920, which designates sealants according to types, grade, class and uses. Back-up strip shall be a flexible and compressible polyurethane, and rounded at surface to contact sealant... It must fit neatly into the joint without compacting, to such a height as to allow a sealant of half the width of the joint. Sealant must not bond to the back-up material.

Additionally, ANSI A108.02, Section 4.4.2 states: “Movement joints area are a requirement for tilework.”

Armed with this information, the installer can ensure the finished installation will look great, with plenty of room for expansion and contraction.

Scott Carothers is the Director of Certification and Training for the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation headquartered in Pendleton, SC. He is responsible for the creation of the Certified Tile Installer (CTI) program and is also involved in the creation of the Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) program as well as providing training to others in the tile industry. He has been involved in the ceramic tile industry for over 35 years and was the owner of a successful retail store and installation firm prior to coming to CTEF. He has served as President and Chairman of the Board of the National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA), Chairman of the NTCA Technical Committee, named the NTCA Tile Person of the Year in 2005 and received the NTCA Ring of Honor in 2013. He is a voting member of the ANSI and the TCNA Handbook committees. He may be contacted at 864-222-2131 or scott@tilecareer.com.



Sound Control Roundtable: Adhesives vs. Underlayments

Sound control, whether achieved through an adhesive or an underlayment, is an essential component of a hard surface flooring installation. In commercial projects, sound control will help meet building code requirements. In residential homes, a noisy hardwood or resilient could result in an angry callback. FCI convened a panel of industry experts to discuss both adhesive and underlayment systems for sound control.

Our panelists include: **Mike Micalizzi**, Custom Building Products senior director, technical services; **J. Alex Keene**, Dependable division manager, floor preparation; **David Jackson**, DriTac field technical services manager; **Arthur Mintie**, Laticrete senior technical services director; **Jeff Johnson**, MAPEI business manager, floor covering installation systems; **Beth Lee**, Maxxon senior development and

project manager; **Deanna Summers**, MP Global Products marketing coordinator; **Brian Petit**, NAC Products vice president of operations; **John Serraino**, QEP vice president of product management; **Sean Gerolimatos**, Schluter Systems technical director; **Blair Roberts**, Schönnox HPS North America marketing coordinator; **Wayne Williams**, Stauf director of training and technical/sales support; **Mark Lamanno**, Titebond/Franklin International technical market manager, flooring; and **Brett Fleury**, USG product marketing manager, tile and flooring solutions.

What are the pros and cons of choosing adhesives versus underlayments for sound reduction?

Micalizzi: When used in tile and stone floor applications, sound reduction membranes meeting ANSI A118.13 provide multiple benefits to the occupants of a multi-story building. Primarily, there's a

reduction of impact noise from footfalls, especially high heels, and these membranes can also provide important crack isolation protection.

The reduction of impact sound is measured in decibels and stated as an impact insulation class (IIC) rating. The actual decibel reduction in an assembly when recorded in a laboratory setting is listed as the delta, or difference made by the membrane. The thickness of the membrane typically improves the performance.

Another valuable benefit from the use of these membranes is providing crack isolation from existing crack movement in concrete, future cracks and assisting

Above: Maxxon has unveiled Acousti-Top, a sound control mat ideal for multifamily renovations and concrete multifamily construction. Made of a patented blend of acoustical fibers, Acousti-Top is less than 1/16" thick and is compatible with a range of flooring materials and adhesives. Photo courtesy of Maxxon.



Along with its wide range of flooring adhesives, DriTac now offers two underlayments: DriTac 8301 Impact for resilient floor installations and DriTac 8302 Double Impact for wood and laminate floor installations. Photo courtesy of DriTac.

with movement from substrate deflection. Membranes meeting ANSI A118.12 requirements accommodate movement from 1/16" to greater than 1/8". Our membranes are rated as 'High Performance' and exceed 1/8".

There are some limitations for certain types of sound reduction membranes in respect to point loading, tile types and tile sizes. To absorb sounds, they are designed to be less dense, so consult product technical datasheets to decide which is right for your project. Adhesives used for sound reduction membranes vary.

Lee: Sound-reducing adhesives are not a widely adopted solution for floor applications in multifamily environments where minimum sound code is required. There is a lack of sound test data for this type of product in the industry. Sound control mats installed directly under the finished flooring are very popular for carpet to LVT conversions in multifamily renovations.

In new wood frame construction, a sound mat plus gypsum underlayment installation is always recommended because it provides permanent sound

control and improved sound reduction in low frequencies, which are commonly found in multifamily construction.

In multifamily renovations and concrete new construction, sound control mats installed directly below the flooring are generally easy to install and most will achieve minimum code. It is important that if code must be met, the flooring contractor request sound control tests specific to the project's assembly. Many acoustical consultants recommend seeing both lab and field tests to prove the mat or adhesives actually perform when installed with normal field installation methods.

Fleury: Adhesives do not decouple the floor covering from the framing system; therefore, an adhesive can never achieve the kind of improvement in sound transmission you can get from a sound mat and gypsum underlayment.

In multifamily construction the floor/ceiling assembly is required to be fire rated. The underlayment is there to achieve the code-required fire rating as its primary purpose. The mass that an underlayment provides improve both

the sound transmission class (STC) and impact insulation class (IIC) per Section 1207 of the International Building Code (IBC). An adhesive as a replacement for an underlayment will not help meet the building code for a fire rating.

Sound mats/boards used in conjunction with a gypsum-based underlayment provide an economical, permanent sound solution that addresses both airborne (STC) and structure-borne (IIC) sound transmissions for the life of the building. In new or old construction. Addressing sound after the fact is very difficult and, in most cases, can't be addressed just from the top of the floor/ceiling assembly. Topical solutions, although effective in some cases, may have to be replaced every time a new floor covering is installed.

Mintie: When choosing the specification and selection of an appropriate sound reduction product, one should begin with the targeted Impact Insulation Class (IIC) rating required for the specific project. From there, a comparison of the available sound reduction product performance properties can be made to select the ideal product.



Custom Building Products' sound control offerings include Crack Buster Pro Crack Prevention Mat Underlayment and EasyMat Tile & Stone Underlayment. Photo courtesy of Custom Building Products.

The pros and cons of choosing an adhesive versus an underlayment mat for sound reduction go hand in hand. For some, adhesives are the preferred method for sound control because they take the place of costly, time-consuming underlayment mat systems by allowing for faster, more effective tile or stone installations.

However, adhesives are not ideal for all types of floorcoverings. This is where underlayment mats come in. Underlayment mats for sound control often include a wide array of mat thicknesses and ultimate IIC values, making them possible to be used in all types of flooring projects rather than limited to tile or stone.

Johnson: The advantage of selecting an adhesive that provides sound control is that you can simplify the installation method down to a single step. The disadvantage of a single-step adhesive solution is that it is limited to a single application of adhesive, which is driven by the requisite coverage required by the flooring type.

For example, sound-controlling adhesives for wood flooring (solid or engineered) typically have a coverage rate of 30 sq. ft. per gallon. That means on average you are counting on all your sound control attributes to come from a layer of adhesive that is close to 1/16" thick. To double this

thickness means you would be installing floor covering on a sea of adhesive, which would be extremely difficult and messy.

The same situation would be applicable to installations of LVT and LVP. Here you need to work with pressure-sensitive types of adhesives and those thicknesses of application are considerably thinner than those of wood flooring types. There is no way really to increase their thicknesses and their sound control abilities without huge cost increases and a lot of mess.

Sound control underlayments can be tailored to any thickness and to virtually any sound control requirement based on their applied thickness. Sound control mats range in thickness from 2 mils to 1/2" or greater. Composition will also range from polyurethane foams, cork, reground rubber, cork/rubber composites and the list goes on. True, they require multiple steps and increase overall build height of the floor, but they also offer customizable solutions for sound control greater than what you can get with from a single-step dual-function adhesive solution.

Jackson: Each of our adhesive technologies holds an appealing value for different reasons to different people. The same concept is true with our sound control product selection. We offer both system adhesives

and underlayment and allow the installer to decide which they prefer to work with. When utilized together, DriTac adhesives and underlayments form a Total Sound Reduction System (SRS) with a lifetime warranty from a trusted single-source supplier.

Pros for using system adhesives center around a one-step application process. Pros for using underlayment are rooted in a tried-and-true method that has been used successfully for many years. Some of the top foam and rubber underlayments in the market carry the most optimal sound control ratings available.

Underlayments also offer installers a valuable flexibility through the potential employment of different product thicknesses. Finished floor height disparities can be minimized by different thicknesses of underlayment. Underlayment can also help overcome minor subfloor irregularities.

Gerolimos: There are several pros to using adhesives or underlayments for sound reduction, the first being that underlayments often provide multiple functions. For example, sound-reduction underlayments may offer uncoupling or crack isolation capabilities. Another advantage is that they can be used in combination with other sound control measures, such as sound-rated ceilings.

A con to using underlayments for sound reduction is they can increase total floor thickness. The mass of an underlayment is one of the greatest contributors to the sound reduction performance, and increasing the thickness is a common way to increase the mass of an underlayment. Another disadvantage is many underlayments designed for sound reduction are compressible and may provide poor load support to the floor covering, which can lead to reduced service life of the assembly.

Williams: Using a sound-reducing adhesive saves time since you don't have a two-step process of gluing the underlayment and then the hardwood. The cost of two layers of adhesive usually is more

expensive than just using the one layer of sound-reducing adhesive. Additionally, labor costs are saved because you don't have to pay the installer to spread two layers of adhesive or cut in the underlayment.

However, some sound-reducing adhesives are more expensive than using two layers of regular wood adhesive.

Petit: It is important to understand the characteristics of the sound material being used and ensure that it meets at least the minimum sound requirements. Rigid products like tile or marble should be installed over a product that won't compress (understand the point load), which could crack the flooring.

Lamanno: One major advantage of using adhesives versus underlayments is that the underlayment will result in a hollow sound; it doesn't sound like a solid floor. When the substrate is flat and you can create a continuous film from the adhesive, you can achieve a more solid feel. However, adhesive doesn't work as well as a sound barrier on uneven substrates because the adhesive in low spots does not create a continuous film. There will be gaps that allow sound transmissions to lower levels and moisture that can affect the flooring above the film. The unevenness of the sub-floor will create hollow spots.

Serraino: While some adhesives do have higher sound ratings than underlayments, you can find products of either type to fit your needs depending on the job at hand. Using adhesives means higher costs—both in product and installation—with additional skill requirements. There may also be some restrictions based on jobsite conditions. Additionally, moisture barriers may be needed.

Keene: The biggest advantage of choosing a sound-reducing adhesive over an underlayment is time savings. Eliminating the underlayment reduces a step in the installation process. However, not all flooring products require an adhesive for installation.

Furthermore, relying on an adhesive alone can limit the potential for sound reduction. It should be noted the use of an adhesive does not always preclude, or eliminate, the need for using an underlayment. The Dependable StepSoft product,

for example, could enhance the performance of an acoustical adhesive.

Are there situations when one of these product types should be chosen over the other?

Fleury: In renovations of existing multi-family wood-framed buildings,

topical sound attenuation systems may be the only solution. Removing the existing floor covering and underlayment, installing a sound mat and then re-pouring the floor would certainly be more cost-prohibitive. Over concrete slabs or planks, you may be limited by an overall height restriction which may



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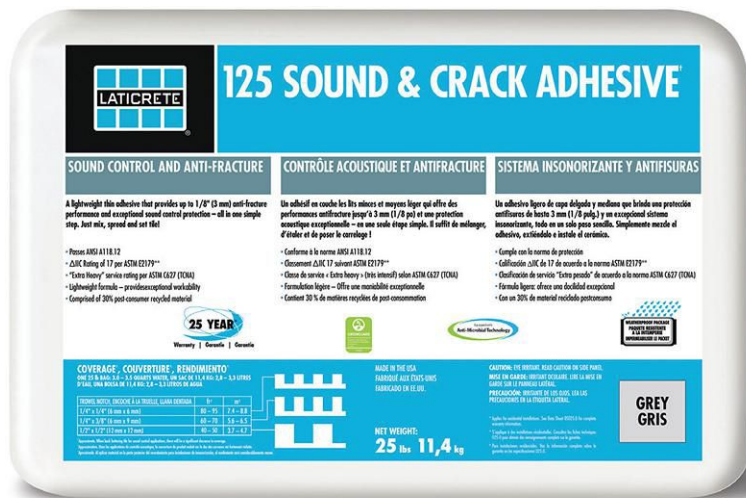
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Laticrete's latest sound reduction product is 125 Sound & Crack Adhesive, designed to provide sound transmission protection while simultaneously protecting the tile or stone finish from any cracking starting in the substrate. Photo courtesy of Laticrete.

prevent you from installing a sound mat (1/8" to 3/4") with 1/2" to 1 1/4" of underlayment. This is when a thin topical acoustical system becomes more palatable from an economic standpoint.

Serraino: This will depend on the desired installation type. In the instances when a floating floor is desired, the use of underlayment is acceptable and you may use a moisture barrier, etc. In other instances, when the floor needs to be adhered and sound suppression is a part of the requirement, then the obvious choice is adhesives with sound suppression.

Both installation methods are used often and sometimes required in the design of a building. Also, in some cases the installation will require a cork underlayment to be glued down to the substrate, then the floor glued down to the underlayment. This process can get expensive with additional labor and adhesive costs. Sound suppression of the glue can thus become a cost-saver.

Mintie: When there are several competing products with similar sound ratings, a contractor should always compare each product's Delta IIC results to determine the sound performance the tested product will actually provide to the substrate.

Typically, adhesives are best suited for ceramic and porcelain tile finishes as well as natural stone. They are also ideal for renovation projects where finish heights

have already been established due to their thinner system profile build up.

Underlayment sheet mats work best under other types of glue-down finishes, such as hardwood, making them more versatile when various finishes require sound control.

Johnson: The main decision drivers for the choice of sound control solutions are available money, sound reduction requirements, limitations on build height and flooring type. There is no situation where one sound control solution is typically better than another as it is all really dependent on building code requirements and which system fits that requirement within the expense budget allowed.

Lamanno: If a floating floor is desired, an underlayment would be the correct choice. The pad can either be floated or adhered using adhesive. If you choose to adhere the pad, you would 'double stick' it, applying adhesive to the subfloor and then on top of the pad to adhere the flooring. A floating pad works well when a particular type of flooring (such as old vinyl asbestos or perimeter-bonded vinyl floors) is going to be covered and is difficult or problematic to remove. The double stick method also eliminates the hollow sounds that a non-adhered pad creates.

Gerolimatos: In most circumstances, sound reduction performance is only a portion of the expected capabilities of a

floor assembly. Other functions must also be considered. For example, a bathroom floor would benefit from uncoupling and waterproofing. Each job can be different and should be evaluated for its particular needs or challenges.

Jackson: The ultimate choice for attaining the best sound control properties for any given project is to utilize adhesive and underlayment together. This system approach provides a solid-sounding floor free of hollow-sounding areas and optimizes sound abatement to the highest degree. Whether underlayment is utilized or not, gluing a floor down helps achieve optimal results for consumers.

Flooring adhesives should only be utilized when the flooring manufacturer recommends that the product can be glued down. When a particular flooring product is not recommended for glue-down installations, underlayment is the best option to implement sound control properties within the flooring system.

Williams: Situations where using both an underlayment and adhesive may be a better option would be if the added height of the system is needed to meet up to another flooring product. Using just the adhesive would work better in the reverse situation—when adding to the height would cause an issue of meeting the other flooring.

Petit: The type of substrate and the finished flooring to be installed can help determine which products to use. However, it is important that the products are mold- and mildew-resistant, meet at least the minimum ratings for impact insulation class (IIC) and sound transmission class (STC), and meet the ANSI specifications for setting the finished flooring.

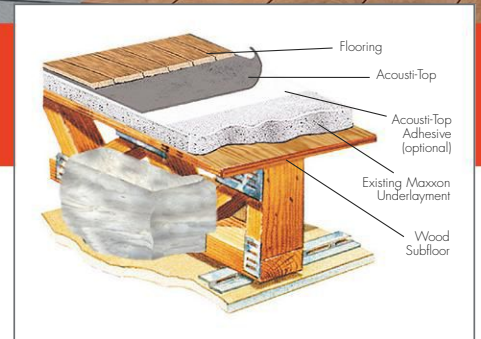
Summers: Consumers with chemical sensitivities often choose nailed-down floors to avoid the need for adhesives. Underlayments that don't need to be glued down are an excellent option for these consumers. **FCI**

Editor's note: Find out what other factors to consider when working with these materials, in our digital edition. For more information, visit fcimag.com and click on "FCI Digital Edition" under the "Magazine" tab.

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Carpet Installation Tips

As a flooring professional who has been in our industry for 26 years, I have seen a lot of changes in the way flooring can be installed. Not only the method for installing flooring, but also the backing systems used on the flooring. Traditionally broadloom carpet had a breathable backing system, either jute or polypropylene. Now there is almost an infinite amount of backing systems for broadloom that can either be breathable or non-breathable.

So why am I bringing this up? Knowing the backing system of the carpet you are installing is vital to a successful installation. The backing system will dictate which form of

moisture testing you will need to do prior to installation. Not all moisture testing is relevant for broadloom carpet with a breathable backing system.

If you are planning to install a broadloom carpet with a breathable backing system, you will need to use ASTM F1869 Standard Test Method for Measuring Moisture Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride. F1869 has been around for many years and is a good standard as long as you understand what it is telling you. ASTM F2170 Standard Test Method for Determining Relative Humidity in Concrete Floor Slabs Using in situ Probes shouldn't be

used for this application as the results will not be useful in an installation where the surface of the concrete isn't covered with a non-permeable floor covering. When installing a carpet backing that is non-breathable, then ASTM F2170 is an acceptable test method.

Knowing your backing system will also dictate the open and working time of the adhesive you choose. In today's construction, more and more concrete

Above: Make sure you understand the backing system of the carpet you are installing. It will dictate not only the type of moisture testing to conduct, but even the adhesive's open and working time. Photo courtesy of H.B. Fuller.



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slabs are being power troweled and therefore causing the concrete surface to be non-permeable (non-porous). When installing a non-breathable backing system over a non-permeable concrete substrate, the installer can be challenged knowing exactly when to place the flooring into the adhesive.

If you are installing a drop room

(no seam required) the issue is almost negligible; if you are installing a 40' x 40' room, then it is imperative to know the working characteristics of your adhesive. You must wait for the adhesive to flash off before you place the carpet into the adhesive, yet still allow enough working time to align your seams. Add in a 3' pattern and you

Above: Always use the adhesive manufacturer's referenced trowel to apply adhesive. They have been tested to ensure maximum performance for each application. Photo courtesy of H.B. Fuller.

can see where this is truly challenging. If the installer "assumes" the substrate is porous when it is not and places the non-breathable backing system into



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wet adhesive you can have a real issue. The adhesive may not ever dry under the carpet, which can cause bubbles, adhesive displacement, inhibit mold growth and cause a foul odor in the building.

You will also be choosing a different trowel for a permeable slab vs a non-permeable. The permeable slab will require more adhesive, which will compensate for any absorption into the porous slab. Over-absorption from the slab is also a very important issue to not overlook. If the slab is powdery or dusty, the adhesive can absorb into the slab and not leave enough adhesive on the surface to properly bond the carpet.

Typically, an acrylic primer is used for this in a two-coat application. This will fill the pores of the concrete and allow the adhesive to work properly. Always use the adhesive manufacturer's referenced trowel to apply their adhesive. These trowels have been tested to ensure maximum performance for each application. Using too much adhesive or too little adhesive can cause an installation failure. When an independent inspector or the manufacturer comes out to look at the failure it will be very easy for them to determine if the proper trowel was used.

These are just a few tips to help ensure a successful installation. Always remember when there is a failure or complaint, you will be judged based on one or all of the following:

- Adhesive installation guidelines
- Carpet installation guidelines
- ASTM F710 Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring (this standard was written for resilient, but has been adapted and accepted by most types of flooring manufacturer)
- ASTM F1869 Standard Test Method for Measuring Moisture Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride
- ASTM F2170 Standard Test Method for Determining Relative Humidity in Concrete Floor Slabs Using in situ Probes
- The Carpet & Rug Institutes CRI 104 Standard for Installation of Commercial Carpet & CRI 105 Standard for Installation of Residential Carpet

Knowing these guidelines will help protect your reputation and ensure your customers will always want you back for their next project. **FCI**

Sonny Callaham has over 26 years in the floor covering industry, covering all aspects including installation, sales and training. Callaham started out installing multiple types of flooring in the commercial and residential markets in Central Florida. Over the years he has held many volunteer positions including TAC Chair for the IICRC ISSI Committee. He is the director of education for the NAFCT and is a contributing member of ASTM F06. He carries multiple certifications including Certified Flooring Installer through the CFI and Slab Moisture Testing Technician through the ICRI. He is formerly the technical product manager for Royal Adhesives, which is now an H.B. Fuller company.



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Specification and Installation of Glue-Down Hardwood Flooring

Hardwood floors are beautiful, durable and can last for decades when properly maintained. When issues do arise, they are typically caused by moisture, either from below or above. Therefore, a majority of hardwood issues can be avoided before the first plank is installed by properly preparing the substrate.

In this article, we will be examining glue-down installation methods over concrete. Other methods, such as pneumatic nailing and click-together planks, bring their own challenges which will not be addressed here. This article also does not address laminate or bamboo although many of the same considerations apply, especially regarding moisture.

Wood flooring adhesives are typically formulated for either dry or damp environments. Be aware that there is a difference between a high-moisture slab and one that exhibits hydrostatic pressure, which is moisture that is

actively forced up through a concrete slab by a nearby pond or water source. No adhesive manufacturers recommend use in areas with hydrostatic pressure.

Asking the right questions before you start is important to the finished product:

Is my site ready to receive hardwood?

Visit the National Wood Flooring Association (nwfa.org/technical-resources.aspx) for guidelines and a free site evaluation form that addresses things like slope, drainage, gutters and sprinkler systems that can contribute to moisture in the slab and can be properly taken care of by landscaping.

Does my slab have a vapor barrier?

By building code, on-grade slabs should have a plastic moisture barrier and a drainage path beneath them to stop moisture intrusion. If your slab does and there are no obvious signs of seasonal moisture (white mineral deposits on the surface or dark coloration near walls, for example) then you can move on to the next step. If a moisture vapor barrier

is not in place or if it is unknown, it's worth considering applying an epoxy or polyurethane barrier to the concrete surface. Typically this involves shot-blasting the concrete, mixing and applying the moisture barrier, then using a self-leveling underlayment to make the substrate flat. This approach can also be used over newly poured concrete seven days old or older.

How much moisture is in my slab?

There are two common tests for moisture that are conducted, with pros and cons to each. Which one you should use is typically dictated by the flooring you will be applying and the adhesive you will be using. A moisture emission test is conducted by the procedure in ASTM F1869 and produces a number like '3 pounds in 1,000 square feet.' A relative humidity test is conducted per ASTM F2170 and is listed as a percentage. Both

Above: Applying a self-leveling underlayment. Photo courtesy of MAPEI.

are useful and recommended to help you determine which adhesive to use.

These tests are typically conducted in three locations for the first 1,000 square feet to be covered, and one for every 1,000 feet after to give a roadmap of the slab. Adhesives for dry areas typically are in the 3 lbs./75% RH range while adhesives for damp areas can go higher. When the moisture exceeds the recommendations of the adhesive and the flooring being installed, a moisture barrier will be needed prior to installation.

If you are specifying hardwood, the answer to the questions about moisture barriers and moisture levels will help you determine what to specify. You may need an epoxy or polyurethane moisture barrier, a self-leveling underlayment (including a primer) or both. It is rare that a floor is ready for installation with just a bucket of glue and a trowel. You will also need to determine which glue to use. This is typically determined by knowing what type of wood will be installed and the moisture level of the slab.

What condition is my slab?

Hardwood installations require flat, dense concrete that is level to a tolerance of 3/16 in. in 10 ft. or 1/8 in. in a six-foot radius. If that doesn't describe your slab, you will need to do some surface prep. The most common approach is to cover what is there with a self-leveling underlayment. For high-moisture situations, the self-leveling underlayment or patch must be exterior-rated if a high-moisture adhesive is used. However, care must be taken not to go over any active movement joints with the self-leveler.

The self-leveling underlayment will flow to a degree but must be tooled to be uniform across the entire area. In an ideal situation, there should be at least three people present when installing a self-leveler: one person mixing, one person carrying the buckets and pouring out the mix, and one person tooling and smoothing the self-leveler. It also helps to mark the desired height of the leveler on adjacent walls. HVAC and direct airflow should be turned off while the self-leveling underlayment cures.

For all types of hardwood installations,



Applying an epoxy moisture barrier over concrete. Photo courtesy of MAPEI.



Buckling and tenting of the hardwood is common if the substrate moisture is too high. Photo courtesy of MAPEI.



Moisture-related issues can lead to installation failures such as the cupping seen in this hardwood floor. Photo courtesy of National Wood Flooring Association.

it is important to allow the wood to acclimate. Most installers have a moisture-testing device so they can determine what the moisture content of the wood is prior to installation. Acclimation occurs when the wood and the substrate are within 2 to 4% of each other. When the slab has high moisture, the base boards and the casings can be checked to determine acclimation. Over time, the moisture content of the wood will match that of the room.

Note that exotic species of solid wood flooring may require longer acclimation

periods. Installing very damp wood can lead to separation, and installing very dry wood can lead to tenting or cracking of the wood. Once the floor is flat and the wood flooring is acclimated, it's time to get installing.

Remember these tips:

Layout. Laying out a floor requires assessing which direction the wood will run, the presence of obstructions and doorways, and the length and width of the wood versus the length of the room. A few minutes spent looking at these factors can save frustration later.

Application of adhesive. Wood glues are typically trowel-applied. Those designed as moisture barriers often require a special trowel clip which ensures that the application does not cause any voids which would allow moisture through. Achieving a flat substrate is key to getting the 100% coverage needed to encapsulate the moisture. Use the trowel suggested by the adhesive container suitable for the wood flooring you have selected.

The adhesive must be wet for it to bond with the wood; apply only as much as you can cover within the window allowed by the adhesive (30-45 minutes typically). Push wood into the adhesive, taking care not to get excessive adhesive between the planks or on the surface. Follow manufacturer-recommended installation and direction of application.

Any adhesive on the surface of the wood should be removed immediately with the appropriate cleaner. Refer to the adhesive manufacturer for recommended removal procedures. If a special type of cleaner is needed, have this on hand during the installation. Always work backwards toward the room exit, and avoid walking on the newly installed flooring.

Curing time and finish. Follow the instructions for how long to stay off of the floor before allowing foot traffic. Normally this is 24 hours but can vary depending on temperature and humidity. While it is not within the scope of this article to explain the entire finishing process, unfinished hardwood will need a finish applied. Typically, this involves sealing, staining and several layers of finish with more sanding between coats.

By understanding the requirements of a glue-down hardwood installation, the common failures associated with this flooring can be avoided. Understanding what you are covering and the process for installation is the key for specifying and installing hardwood successfully. **FCI**

Dan Marvin is the director of technical services for MAPEI Americas. He has over 25 years of technical expertise in the flooring industry working for Armstrong/AO, Dal Tile, Florida Tile and MAPEI. Marvin chairs the Green Initiative Committee for the Tile Council of North America and is also active on technical committees for the Adhesives and Sealants Council, Marble Institute of America, National Wood Flooring Association, ANSI, ISO, ASTM and others. He speaks frequently on topics of concern to the flooring industry including sustainability, silica and performance standards for installation products. Marvin is a regular contributor to flooring-related magazines, blogs and MAPEI's 'MTI-TV.'

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Technology Update: Transitions and Moldings

Transitions and moldings serve both a functional and aesthetic purpose. They can help bridge the gap between different flooring materials, protecting the edges and reducing the potential of a tripping hazard. A professional installation without transitions or moldings will often look incomplete and half-finished. We spoke with several manufacturers of these products to learn about the latest advancements in the category.

According to Greg Gelston, Profilitec's president, North America, when taking into account the multitude of installation situations "manufacturers within the transitions and moldings segment must have the flexibility, versatility and creativeness to address the market's rapidly changing needs. Companies must continually innovate and present new solutions to remain viable."

Newest to the category are longer-length transitions and profiles that "better

adapt to North American construction standards [and help] reduce seams," he said. "There are also new finishes on the market that use 'sublimation' technology, which is vastly more resistant to wearing and scratching and can better replicate the look of wood."

When it comes to wood-plastic composite (WPC), stone-plastic composite (SPC) and other multilayer core floors, Gelston noted that "the key for these types of products is to incorporate transition systems that enable the contractor to address each and every height difference while protecting the edges of the materials—which is the primary intended function—without creating tripping hazards. Look for companies that offer solutions for all flooring products and you will find a vast array of solutions."

Bill Treiber, Artistic Finishes' technical sales and education manager, describes his company's Enduracor line as one that

"complements our customers' multilayer flooring lines. The Enduracor profiles are solid polymer core transitions designed to accommodate any floor from 2.5 to 15mm thickness.

He added, "The compliance in quality to ASTM 1700 has been attained through the creation and availability of the Enduracor line of Artistic Finishes profiles. Through Enduracor all commercial and residential compliances have been met from both a standards and function standpoint. The industry has responded very favorably to the new Enduracor profiles.

"Other manufacturers provide stair nosing, reducers, T moldings, and square nosings made of metal, plastic or rubber. We offer a durable, water-resistant and cost-effective solution in a wood look."

Above: An installation of Enduracor on a set of stairs. Photo courtesy of Artistic Finishes.

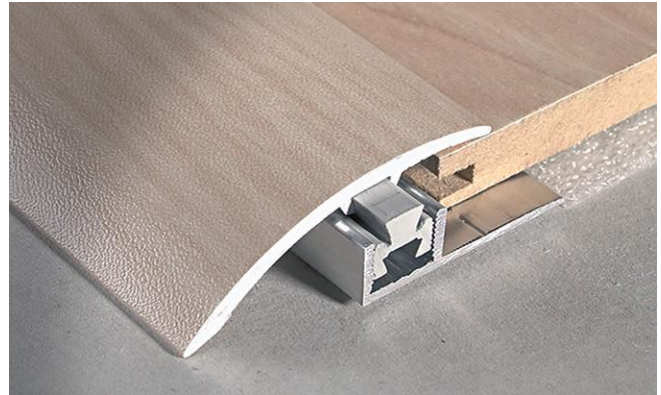
Right: Profilitec's Multiclip for all floor covering types. Photo courtesy of Profilitec.

Bottom Right: The Enduracor profiles are solid polymer core transitions designed to accommodate any floor from 2.5 to 15mm thickness. Photo courtesy of Artistic Finishes.

Sean Gerolimatos, Schluter Systems' technical director, gave a brief overview of his company's line of products for use with ceramic tile installations. "Schluter Systems offers various profiles, such as Schluter-Rondec, Quadec, etc., in textured powder-coated finishes as part of our Trendline series.

"These profiles feature a range of colors to complement recent trends, such as porcelain tiles with the appearance of stone, wood, and concrete. Colors include rustic brown, stone gray, 'greige,' pewter, bronze and others. Matte black and white options are particularly popular in the design world currently."

He explained the importance of staying on top of trends when designing the latest installation products. "For example, large-format gauged porcelain panels (e.g. Laminam, SlimLite, etc.) continue to gain in popularity. Most of these panels are less than 6mm thick and none have ceramic trim. Schluter Systems has various profiles available in the appropriate sizes to finish and protect the panel edges, which are the areas most vulnerable to damage." **FCI**



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FCICA CONVENTION IN BILOXI ONE OF MOST HIGHLY ATTENDED

The Flooring Contractors Association’s (FCICA) membership was “in it to win it” at this year’s annual convention in Biloxi, Miss. Offering four days of networking, education, live product demos, a commercial flooring tradeshow and giveaways, the event welcomed 184 attendees—74 of them for the first time—marking the largest attendance for the group in almost 20 years. With 60 new members joining the association

since last July, FCICA’s total membership now sits around 250.

According to Kim Oderkirk, FCICA executive vice president, “We aggressively went after new members by attending Starnet, Fuse and Commercial One events, showcasing membership and education opportunities. The Successors group also actively encourages those 40 and under to attend and network.”

CIM Program Update. As FCICA aims to elevate the professionalism of

the trade, its vision to be the resource for premier commercial contractors is supported by the association’s number-one priority: the Certified Installation Manager (CIM) Program.

“The CIM Program is our flagship program,” explained Mike Newberry, chairman of FCICA. “This is the only

Above: This year’s convention offered various educational opportunities, including live product demonstrations during lunch.

program out there dedicated to training project managers and installation managers.” To date, 65 flooring contractors have achieved CIM designation, enhancing their skill sets with technical education, business support and industry networking.

Newberry noted that professionals who have earned the designation are “taking the time, the effort and the energy to dedicate [themselves] to education training and separate [themselves] from the competition.”

As the first contractor to receive CIM designation, Amy Johnston of Livonia, Mich.-based Flooring Services now leads the CIM steering committee in its efforts to produce more qualified contractors.

Business Development Sessions. In addition to her responsibilities as chairman of FCICA’s CIM committee, Johnston attended the convention for its array of education opportunities. “I’m here because you don’t get a lot of opportunities locally for the education sessions we have here,” she said.

Topics covered this year included the ASTM F710 Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring and ACI 302.2R-06 Guide for Concrete Slabs that Receive Moisture-Sensitive Flooring Materials. Leading attendees through a comprehensive review of both standards, presenters Sonny Callaham of H.B. Fuller and Jeff Johnson of MAPEI Americas explained the importance of knowing these standards well. As Callaham noted, “The guy who knows the rules of the game is going to play it the best.”

Also featured was a highly anticipated panel discussion on Innovations in Multilayer Flooring. Panelists included Don Styka, Tarkett; Beth Steel, Six Degrees; Bill Treiber, Artistic Finishes and David Altman, Metroflor. Moderated by Pat Kelly, FCICA’s vice chairman, the panel addressed attendees’ questions on multilayer flooring and the future of the category.

For Johnston and many others in the industry, multilayer flooring is still a category that is being uncovered and learned about as it continues to grow. “In one of my committee meetings yesterday, one of the panelist said they spent hours and hours on the phone preparing for the education session because they all had different opinions [on multilayer flooring],” she said.



FCICA’s chairman Mike Newberry welcomes attendees to the convention at its opening session.



Through a Q&A format and interactive polls, attendees participate in a panel-led discussion about Innovations in Multilayer Flooring.



Among the companies hosting live product demonstrations were Traxx, DriTac, MAPEI and GCP Applied Technologies.



The convention closed with a Mardi Gras-themed dinner, featuring New Orleans-inspired foods and décor.

Other presentations included Communication and Ramifications of Specifications, Auditing Your Flooring Project and Effectively Driving, Achieving and Sustaining Positive Change. Additionally, during lunch attendees were able to attend product demonstrations from DriTac, MAPEI, Traxx and GCP Applied Technologies.

The Successors Program. For first-time attendee Karl Johnson, account manager for Lippert Flooring and Tile, the convention's education sessions and product demos served as a valuable resource as he continues to learn and grow in what he calls a fast-paced and dynamic industry. "Being new to the industry, I can tell you FCICA has been a great educational resource for me personally as I navigate all there is to learn about the industry."

Johnson is part of a group that represents the next generation of leadership in the flooring industry. For him and others under 40, FCICA has developed the Successors task force to attract and retain these younger professionals.

"There is wealth of knowledge and experience out there that will be retiring in the next 10 years," he said. "These individuals have taken the flooring industry through a lot of ups and downs. It's important we focus on the next generation to grow our industry and continue to make it better for generations to come."

Successor Amanda Bartik of Loba-Wakol was drawn to the group's focus on education, networking and community service. "Last year was my first year at convention, and [Successors] was a way for me to get involved."

For Bartik, the Successors program is a place to go for a younger person in an older industry. "The whole flooring industry in general has an older demographic. A lot of these guys have been in the trade for their whole lives contract-wise, and there's not a lot of fresh blood coming in. Successors really focuses on trying to change that and getting the younger generations interest in the trade and realizing that they have other options as far as professions go."

Networking is key, and Successors serves as a platform to connect the leaders of tomorrow and help them form relationships that will be beneficial down the line. "As a successor you're able to meet with and discuss the future of our industry with the other individual that will make up our industry's future," said Johnson. "It's the beginning of building a strong comradeship and a love for this industry."

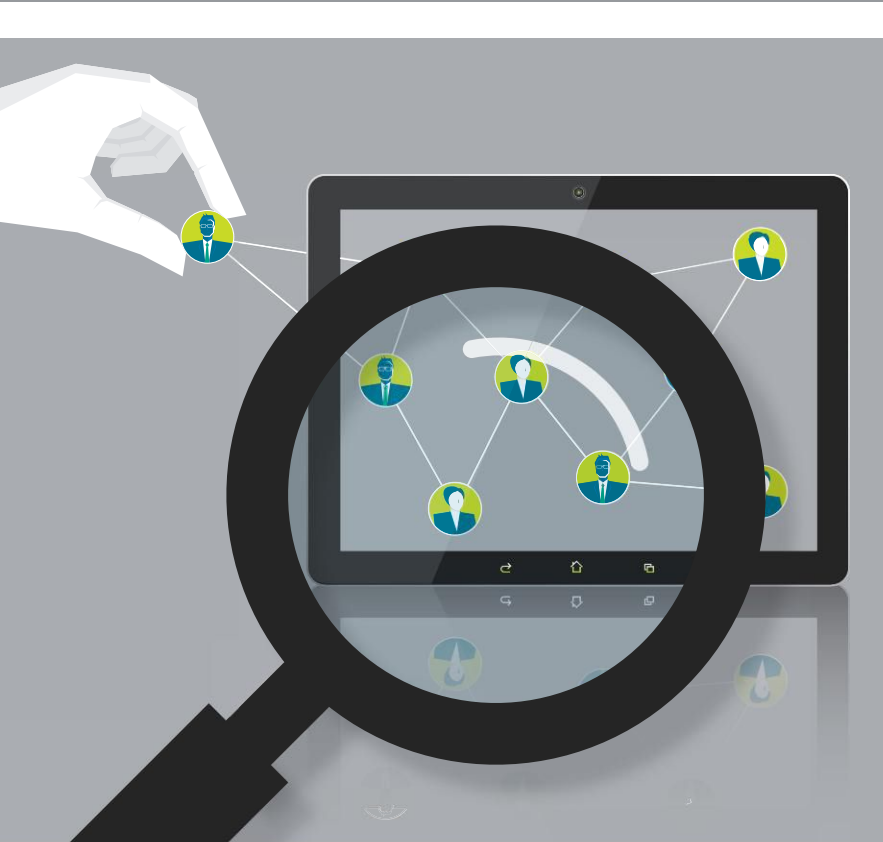
FCICA will next head to Hershey, Pa., for education, networking and leadership sessions at its next Mid-Year Meeting set for Oct. 3-5. For more information, visit fcica.com. **FCI**

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FUSE ALLIANCE: THE RISE OF THE CONTRACTOR

The flooring contractor’s role in the construction chain has become more important than ever before, and Fuse Alliance is helping its members prepare for their ever-increasing responsibility.

“We feel this is a time of the rise of the contractor,” said Geoff Gordon, executive director of Fuse Alliance, speaking at the organization’s spring conference in New Orleans. “There was a time maybe 10 years ago where some manufacturers were like, ‘Contractors aren’t going to be that important—anybody can install carpet tile,’ but that certainly is not true today. If anything, our role in that chain has gotten bigger, because without us, it’s not flooring until it’s installed.”

Fuse numbers are echoing this sentiment with membership rising to 99 companies—nine new in the past year—and total members doing business

in 150 locations. Those members carry clout—generating \$1.7 billion in sales, or approximately \$1 billion in purchasing power, according to Gordon. Fuse member sales rose about 9% over the last year in comparison to the 3% industry average. In addition, the group added 15 new suppliers over the past year.

“It’s become very sophisticated from an installation point of view, and this is where our network is really thriving,” Gordon said. “We view ourselves as the fair and impartial network of flooring experts, and we think we have somewhat of an advantage in that we speak the language of a lot of different products.”

The conference theme, “Never Miss a Beat,” was designed to help contractors deftly handle the plethora of materials on the market today by nurturing connections with suppliers, enhancing contractors’ ability to problem solve

with facilities managers, and addressing installation challenges by sharing best practices. A candid roundtable discussion at the event encouraged members to share pain points and potential solutions.

“Every time I meet with the Fuse group I take away tremendous positive energy,” said Larry Woodland, executive vice president, Commercial Flooring Solutions, a multi-store, full-service commercial and retail flooring provider in Nova Scotia, Canada. “It’s neat to share real business experiences with dealers...dealers often separated by thousands of miles, borders and often even cultural or political differences but bonded by similar successes and challenges.”

Above: “We view ourselves as the fair and impartial network of flooring experts,” said Geoff Gordon, executive director of Fuse Alliance.

A shortage of qualified labor is a perennial problem, with installers retiring and too few young people entering the trade to replace them.

“People—skilled labor—shortages are common with almost all of us,” Woodland said. “Motivated younger installers are in great shortage seemingly in most every market. National and international installer certification and training is an important step in preparing for the future.”

Fuse recently announced a joint task force with Starnet Worldwide Commercial Flooring to address the issue, with leaders and members from both groups teleconferencing quarterly to develop a plan of action.

“In 40 years in the business, I’ve never seen anything like the pickle we’re in now, but I’ve also never seen more opportunities,” said Robert Varden, vice president of the World Floor Covering Association’s (WFCA) International Certified Floorcovering Installers Association (CFI). He presented Fuse members with an update of CFI’s movement on the issue.

As *Floor Covering Installer* and *Floor Trends* have previously reported, CFI continues to host installation trainings at its facility in Forney, Texas, and the organization is working with contractors and manufacturers to develop a network of other training locations across the country and around the world, such as in China, Canada and Brazil. Varden is encouraging companies to host job fairs at high schools and to be open about the salary and job growth prospects.

“Kids are not aware of the job opportunities afforded by the flooring industry or how much money they can make as an installer,” he said.

Direct selling by mills is another issue emphasized by Fuse contractors. “I think we are missing the elephant in the room—the proliferation of direct selling,” said a member during the roundtable. “It is open, it is out there, they use the same estimating software as we do and they are preparing the same diagrams. Until collectively we, meaning flooring contractors, stand up and say, ‘no more,’ it’s just going to get worse.”

More manufacturers are developing



GP Flooring Solutions in Brockport, N.Y., wins Best in Show at the Fuse Alliance Annual Conference in New Orleans.



Todd Bircher, executive vice president, Nebraska-based Floors Inc., which won several Spark Awards, together with Gordon and Mike Hutton, Fuse’s senior vice president.

turnkey services and using traveling labor crews to do the installation work, so Mike Hutton, senior vice president of Fuse, is advocating for members by calling on major suppliers to cultivate accounts. “Individual companies don’t always have the manpower to do all the work on an account...so we have to do that as a group collectively,” he said.

Moisture mitigation is another major issue among contractors. Too often, responsible flooring contractors are being undercut by competitors who are willing

to quote projects without mitigation systems or solutions that do not offer the same level of protection against moisture.

Looking ahead, Gordon said he wants Fuse to be the “go-to network”: “We look at our customers not just as the end user—which is the designer, architect, general contractor—but also the supplier. At the end of the day, we want to provide impartial consultation to make sure we are protecting our customers and giving them what they expect and at the same time protecting our suppliers.” **FCI**



FinPan Takes Family-Focused Approach

There's a basic truth among flooring and tile installers: time and skilled tradespeople always seem to be in short supply. FinPan, a manufacturer of cement-based backerboard and lightweight shower installation products, is revamping its market strategy to help installers complete more installations in less time and with less training.

The family-owned company, established in 1975 by Ted Clear, began in Hamilton, Ohio, as a manufacturer of cement-based backerboard. The family has retooled its business over the last year through new leadership, process improvements, and a reorganization of its inside and outside sales teams.

Renee Robertson, the company's senior marketing director, joined the team in January 2017 with the task of helping to rebrand the company and reposition its communications and marketing strategy for accelerated growth.

"Ted Clear was the original inventor in the United States of the process to make backerboard, and we are still utilizing

these systems 42 years later," Robertson said. "After doing some analysis, it was unanimous that no one knew who we were. It was an opportunity to get refreshed."

After further study, Robertson said it became obvious that the brand needed to be positioned as upscale and high-quality, and communicate a core message of "keeping families together." This message resonates for several reasons, she said. "We are a family-owned business with third-generation family members in leadership roles."

This family focus also extends to product development. "Our ClearPath barrier-free shower system is a patented product that is intended to keep loved ones in their home longer instead of having to move them to accessible living," Robertson noted.

The ClearPath curbless shower system offers those with mobility issues an ADA-compliant shower without sacrificing design and style. ClearPath presents a major sales opportunity as more homeowners rip out 3x6 bathtubs

or showers in favor of curbless systems.

"Because of the fundamental shift in population, we figure in 20 years there will be 145 million people who will have some circumstances that would force them to otherwise be displaced," Robertson said. "In our product ideation, we are always thinking about what's the quickest, most efficient way for the contractor to save on his labor, produce more in a day, spend less time at each job and get out faster so he can get back home faster."

While some shower installation systems require a lot of training, Robertson said FinPan's PreFormed shower pans are a drop-and-go system. The shower pans are made from high-density polystyrene, ProTec concrete backer board and a reinforced, waterproof coating. The pans also have the proper slope, drain assembly and curb built-in.

The ClearPath curbless shower pan system is designed to maintain independence in life while offering fashionable designs in level-entry showers.

“You really just need a modified thinset and you can be tiling the same day—just two hours later,” she said. “With other systems, you will not be tiling the same day, and if you’re doing mud, it’s a four-day process.”

The first products FinPan created (and still sell today) are Util-A-Crete and ProTec backerboards. Util-A-Crete is an underlayment for interior and exterior applications, providing a stable, long-lasting foundation for ceramic tile and other facing materials used on floors, walls, ceilings, countertops and exteriors. ProTec is an underlayment for interior and exterior applications, providing a long-lasting foundation for ceramic tile and other facing materials used on floors, walls, ceilings, countertops and exteriors.

A lightweight product, ProPanel backerboard offers waterproof performance in just 6 lbs. and is made of high-density expanded polystyrene reinforced on both sides with fiberglass mesh and a polymer cement coating.

“The installer can now bring all the materials to their install location in one trip, allowing for modification at the site as our product does not require a saw to cut but instead a simple utility knife—and this product in the long run just saves him or her from back pain,” Robertson stated.


The TI-ProBoard is a patented product that was introduced for tiling outdoor decks or sunrooms, even in states with severe weather. “This product has no need for deck boards or plywood substrate and is easy to install, has superior freeze-thaw performance, low expansion-contraction coefficient and an extra-heavy floor rating—it will not warp, mold or mildew and has a commercially approved rating,” Robertson noted.

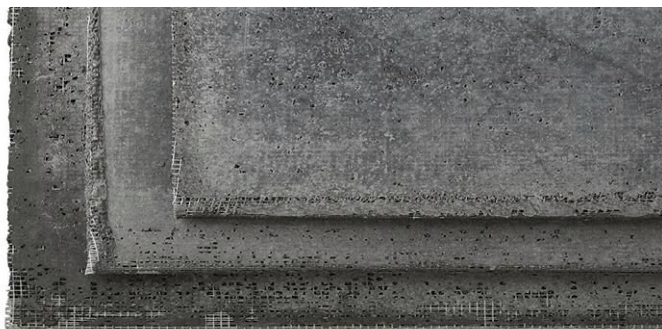
Today, the third generation of the Clear family is running the company. Ted Clear named Ryan Schaffer CEO and Jason Clear president and COO in the summer of 2016. Jason Clear studied civil engineering and had been an independent contractor for five years, always knowing he wanted to get into the business. Schaffer was in the engineering field for most of his career and had always worked on projects at FinPan.

“Both gentlemen worked alongside their grandfather throughout the years and had such a vested interest in continuing their education in engineering,” Robertson said. “Both parties are deeply invested and very passionate about their family-owned business, and both are immensely strong and devoted men working toward making products that obtain beautiful results.”

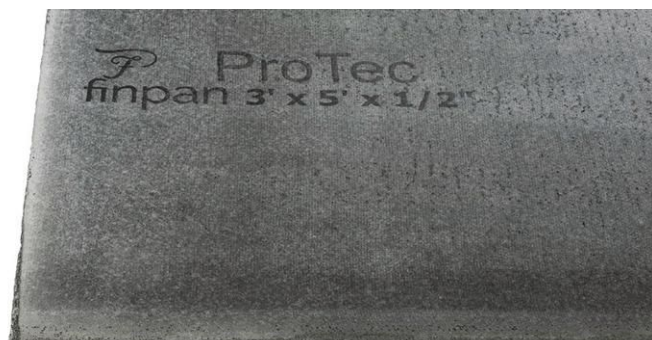
The company also brought on Kristi Williams, customer relationship account manager, and is currently building inside and outside sales teams. In order to maximize the company’s reach into various markets, the company also hired three new outside territory sales managers.

Looking forward, FinPan has added stone accessories to their Finishing Touches line in 2018, which can be used for shower niches, seats and curbs. The Warming Effects platform will go to market in winter 2018. The ProPanel board is moving from a white color to gray, and the company has added ClearLine linear drains which are designed to work with the ClearPath system. The company also continues to team up with distributors to host product knowledge and certification events for installers.

For more information, visit finpan.com. 



Util-A-Crete is an underlayment for interior and exterior applications, providing a stable, long-lasting foundation for ceramic tile and other facing materials used on floors, walls, ceilings, countertops and exteriors.



ProTec is an underlayment for interior and exterior applications, providing a long-lasting foundation for ceramic tile and other facing materials used on floors, walls, ceilings, countertops and exteriors.



ProPanel backer board offers waterproof performance in a six-pound board. ProPanel consists of high-density expanded polystyrene reinforced on both sides with fiberglass mesh and a polymer cement coating.



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