

Coverings



CANADA'S FLOORCOVERING MAGAZINE

May/June 2016

**CREATIVITY ON
THE OPEN MARKET**

**TERMINATION
DONE RIGHT**

**CONCRETE
MOISTURE THREAT**

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**THEN-AND-NOW
Quebec cottage:
Low tech, high style**

**Digital social channels
and retail marketing:**

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Kerry Knudsen Editor and Publisher
kknudsen@wimediainc.ca
647-274-0507

Steve King Associate Publisher
sking@wimediainc.ca
905-703-6597

Mike Edwards Contributing Editor
medwards@wimediainc.ca

Lee Ann Knudsen Art Director
lak@wimediainc.ca

nsGraphic Design Graphics
nspace@wimediainc.ca

Omni Data Services Circulation
circulation@wimediainc.ca
www.omnidataservices.com

Cover: James Brittain Photography

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New eyes reflect “traditional” products

Fog of change

AMERICAN POET CARL SANDBURG wrote: “The fog comes in on little cat’s feet. It sits looking over harbor and city on silent haunches and then moves on.” Change must be like that.



Kerry Knudsen

I noticed recently there is a new trend in the builder market. In new surveys the builders are putting up condos, but the first floor is retail. Obviously, this is not unheard-of. Many Canadian families lived “above the store” when starting out in the last century, but that was usually their store.

Also, this is only a new trend in North America. It has been the standard in other countries forever or for years, typically as the result of high-density, urban demands. Because

of this, we might speculate that the target markets for both the stores and the residences may be immigrants.

Immigration is currently a dangerous topic if you want calm. However, it may be a more dangerous condition without discussion than with it. For starters, I love immigrants, immigration, cultural variation, different foods and so on. My grandparents were immigrants. My son-in-law is an immigrant.

However, I would be remiss not to note that there seem to be two types of immigrants: people that are happy that they immigrated to Canada, and people that are not.

I think this will become socially important in the intermediate future, probably because our government will force the issue. As you know, Canada sees itself as a haven for cultural diversity, and we criticize our southern neighbours for their own self-image as being a “melting pot.” And, while we see the “melting pot” as dangerous because it arbitrarily forces people together that normally would not associate, the Americans may be right in their view that “diversity” is just segregation in Sunday clothes.

I minored in anthropology at university, but I rarely mention it since by now anything we learned

before 1990 is wrong. However, we were told that cultures are slower to assimilate than are individuals, and the last thing to assimilate is food.

That is, the last thing to assimilate FROM the immigrant culture into the host culture is food. As far as the host culture, the majority of the host culture’s residents seem to welcome and enjoy the new ideas and approaches. It is already normal in our local stores to see halal products, lamb and “dal” (another word for the lentil type of legumes).

However, for the host class, which is most of us, even if we once were immigrants, ourselves, it is much easier for us to see, evaluate, buy and enjoy new offerings from faraway places than it is for the immigrants to jump into what we would see as normal. I will never forget the look on my son-in-law’s face the first time he bit into a microwaveable, sugar-crusted, plastic-wrapped cinnamon roll. As somebody whose main acquaintance with cereal grains was in tortillas, the riot of sugar, leavened flour and a spice whose rightful place in the world was on the savoury side, he could not even choke it down.

Come to think of it, I never eat the things, either.

So our challenge becomes interesting people from other cultures in our products. Anthropology minor or not, I don’t know how people from India, Pakistan, China, U.A.E. or Brazil feel about carpets, tiles, vinyl or engineered wood. I will make a note to do some research and see if we can do a story in the near future.

Assuming they are either not favourable toward those products or are ambivalent, how can we approach those markets with educational tools to help stimulate interest? Another good story idea.

But between now and whenever we get the answers together, we need to look at today. Today, we have record building permits being sold, a strong economy and good prospects. We have increasing market size, based largely on immigration, and we have expertise in our field.

Before we miss it, we should seize the opportunity. I don’t think change is coming. I think it has been here, looked over harbor and city, and moved on.

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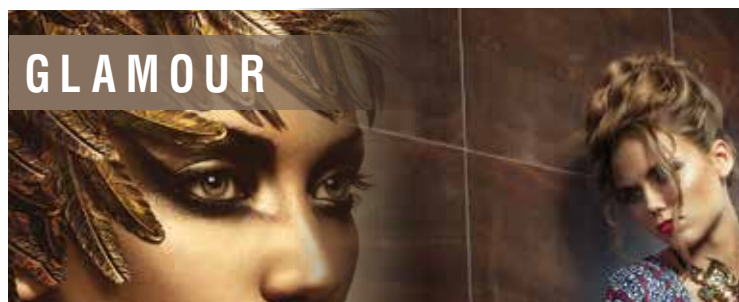
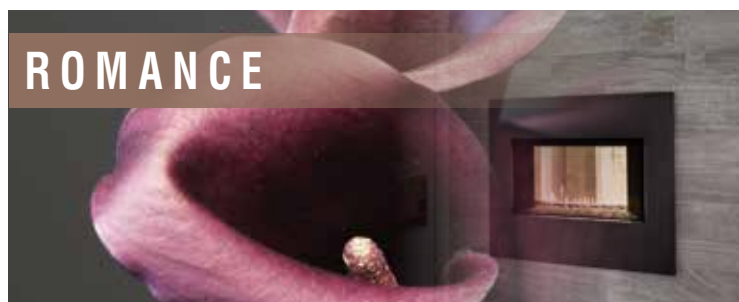
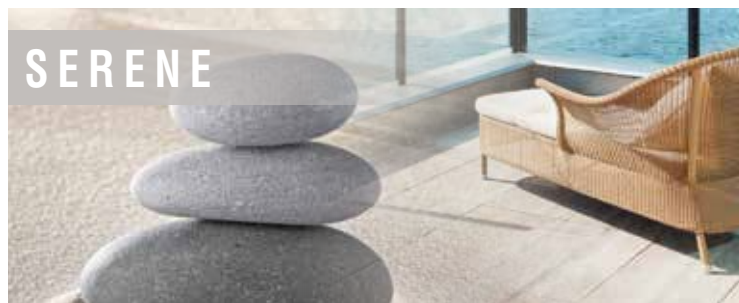
SET the MOOD

MAPEI's NEW color collections help to **personalize** your space

In an industry first, MAPEI has used color technology bundled with artistic knowledge to develop a new 40-color palette for its grouts, caulks and colorant divided into 5 color collections, each themed with a distinct personality.

Whether it complements or contrasts with the tile selection, the proper grout color can give personality and feeling to the final look of the flooring installation. MAPEI's color collections simplify the search for the perfect hue, ensuring a better end result for the customer.

Scan the QR Code below to learn more about the new color palette for MAPEI's grouts, caulks and colorant.



LEADS at a COST

Flooring retailers are trying hard to find marketing sweet spots in digital social channels

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How
Loca

When it comes to internet retail marketing, the one tool that no one can do without is a website.

After that, though, the digital tools available are seemingly endless. How deep or wide — sophisticated — do you want your website design to be? Which social media platform do choose: YouTube, Vimeo, Twitter, Facebook, Houzz, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+? Do you take the plunge and invest in Google AdWords?

Hey, guess what? All of these choices have escalating costs attached. Even “free” social media needs to have a warm body (or two) to feed the endless appetite of each platform.

Darmaga Hardwood Flooring Ltd. in Richmond Hill, Ont., took the plunge into marketing on the web several years ago, according to executive director Carrie Darmaga. Her mandate at the broad-line flooring retail store was to improve the website, try some digital marketing tools and monitor the results.

“We’ve been around for 75 years and we needed to catch up with the times,” Darmaga says. “The things that I’ve implemented, the social media and beefing up the website — that sort of thing — I think has helped to some point but don’t know that it’s had a huge impact — at least not yet.

“I think generally people do a lot of research online as to what kind of floor they can put into certain rooms, or they might look up different looks and styles.

They then come in here, but they aren’t coming in fully educated.”

Knowledgeable, in-store sales staff are still key to “educating the consumers as to what and why and how. We’re trying to use our social media to help them find that information easily.” Darmaga has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+ and Houzz, with YouTube under consideration.

Toronto-based SearchKings, a digital marketing and tracking specialist, is very familiar with social media outlets. SearchKings services include AdWords management, Google Analytics, Google remarketing, mobile marketing, YouTube video marketing and website design.

President and co-founder Darryl Margaux says “generally the way it works is that Pinterest or Facebook is a good place to post imagery. You want to show off your product line. That’s good for people who are browsing.”

Margaux describes online marketing using social media as a funnel that captures consumers’ imaginations at the initial stage of research.

“At the top of the funnel is someone who just said ‘I’ve got to get rid of my carpet. It’s been 10 years and we need new carpet.’ Now they say to themselves ‘what kind of carpet am I going to get?’ Then they start browsing.

“They go to Pinterest, for example, and start looking at thousands of different pictures of carpet. They look at what the trends are, such as celebrity carpet.”

Steve Consentino, vice president of Capitol Carpet & Tile and Wood, in Boynton Beach, Fla., says “I don’t know how sold

Poster Child of the Post-Recession Marketing Frenzy

SOCIAL SCANNER: SNAPCHAT'S PITCH TO MARKETERS

How to Use Pinterest for Small Businesses

I am on the importance of social media for a dealer of our size. We have a Facebook page and a Twitter page, a Pinterest page, a Houzz page. To do it to the extent where I believe it would truly make a difference I think I would have to hire someone to man all of those pages properly. That is a lot of time."

Some suppliers, such as Shaw and Mohawk, provide social media and content tools for retail websites. "It's an automatic feed into our Twitter and Facebook page," says Consentino, "where we give them the authorization to publish postings onto our pages as if we're posting."

The next stage for retailers is getting consumers into the nearest store location to refine their choice of flooring and to schedule an installation.

When a consumer is at this stage, they are more than likely to employ a Google search to triangulate. Darmaga knew this and sought out a website design company that was also an SEO (search engine optimization) expert who could bring searches to her store at the top of the returns.

"We started slow and just ramped up over the years," Darmaga says. "At first it was just SEO, putting keywords on our site to capture Google searches. But Google keeps changing their rules regularly — what works today doesn't work tomorrow. It's a guessing game constantly and you are constantly asking yourself, 'is it worth it?'"

She found that it was very expensive to have a specialist help the company maintain its SEO process. "And we weren't getting much from it. So you think 'maybe it's just this company,

so you switch and then you switch, and you keep on switching because you're not getting results from anybody."

Free keywords that are built into the back end of postings on a website help to a degree, but may fall short when it comes to geo-targeting your business. Consentino has come to rely on paid Google AdWords to promote Capitol's multiple locations in south Florida.

He cautions that not all web marketing companies know what they are doing when managing AdWords. "We were spending around a couple of thousand dollars a month at one point.

"We were getting some really lousy leads. So we had a 'contact us page' on the net website. Nothing like our website today. We had, of course, an 800 number.

"It was a dedicated 800 number so that we knew when the calls came in through that number that it was off of the page search that we were doing on Google AdWords."

Unfortunately, the calls coming in were "just bad leads" that were attributed to using bad key words.

"We knew everything was about 'value' and 'lowest price,' 'cheapest,'" says Cosentino. "All those key words that give you bad leads. We didn't know better."

Revamping the company's website after changing its AdWords ad agency management and digital marketing provider to FloorForce of Boca Raton, Fla., did turn its fortunes around, however. FloorForce has numerous flooring clients such as Tampa Contract Floors, Heritage Carpet & Tile, The Longest Yard, and Personal Touch Flooring, and provides retailers with services such

LEADS at a COST

How to Create an Instagram
Marketing Strategy

AD BLOCKERS ARE MAKING MONEY OFF ADS (AND TRACKING, TOO)

Yes, Search Ads Really Can Lift Sales

as website design, reviews, directory sites, social media, pay per click, email marketing, after-sale marketing and and blogs.

"We're spending considerably more now. I have incorporated different landing pages into our AdWords campaign. Not just our website, but we have specific landing pages for our specific campaigns. We have different coupon offers and such so we can generate more leads. We're getting more than 70 to 90 leads a month. The vast majority of those are quality leads."

When Capitol opened a new location in January this year it created a new landing page separate from its main web site for that store. "That was also geo-targeted, pay per click advertising, that I worked out with search engines, that gave them a radius of so many miles."

The Google AdWords pay per click advertising model can work for any flooring retailer with a web site, says Margaux, whose SearchKings company provides its services to FloorForce. "Now you want to drive some traffic to it. You say to Google 'I want to spend thirty dollars a day and I want to buy thirty different key words.' Those key words are what people actually bid on.

"'Hardwood,' 'store' and insert the city 'Calgary' or 'Toronto,' 'carpet,' 'tile,' 'laminated' — all the different keywords associated to the types of product you sell. Every single one of those keywords has a value tied to it.

"Value has a click price and the click price is made up of any other advertiser who is bidding on the same keyword. So what you get is an online auction where different companies are willing to spend different amounts of money per click to try and get that person to visit their site."

Geo-targeting also involves the judicious use of "negative" AdWord keywords. After the ad goes up on Google and someone types in 'hardwood flooring Bradford' on the top of the

page, several different ads will be returned, Margaux explains. But instead of Bradford, Ont., in this example, "I actually see ads for somebody in the U.K. Why would somebody in Bradford, England, be showing their ads in Canada? The answer is because they don't know what they are doing.

"They are targeting the city Bradford. They haven't negated any other Bradford in the world."

This where Margaux's "funnel" analysis and the use of targeted AdWords makes its case.

"When you don't have an unlimited budget — which is essentially every small- and medium-sized company in the country — you have to be very careful where you put your ad dollars.


"Do you want to go to the top of the funnel where people are still learning about what they want or do you want to be at the bottom of the funnel where they are ready to purchase?"

In the end, the flooring retailer just wants to educate the consumer and make her happy.

"Flooring is complex," says Darmaga. "It's changing all the time as well and on top of it, there are contradictory opinions.

"You can look online and find one way of looking after your floor and then look somewhere else, and someone is telling you to use a different product or it's something you can't use — like vinegar, for instance, different cleaners, buffers, or things that make your floor shiny.

"If you're not entirely sure truly where that information is coming from, you have to be careful — it can be misleading."

That is when a consumer walking into a retail store, talking to a professional and touching the product closes the deal. 

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Darmaga Hardwood Flooring wins Top Choice Award



Walter (left), president, and Rod Darmaga, vice president of Darmaga Hardwood Flooring at the 2016 Top Choice Awards.

The 2016 Top Choice Award for Top Hardwood Flooring Services company in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) has been announced as **Darmaga Hardwood Flooring Ltd.** of Richmond Hill, Ont. Darmaga, a fourth generation-owned family business that celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2015, has won the award two year running.

Top Choice Awards (TCA), an international market research firm based in Vaughn, Ont., has conducted a survey annually since 2005. The survey accepts nominations from the public and allows them to vote in a variety of categories for their favourite businesses and professionals in their city. This year's survey was conducted in 26 cities across North America and received responses from over 880,000 participants. Nominating and voting happens via phone, email, mail and online outlets.

AWI shareholders receive Armstrong Flooring stock
Though **Armstrong Flooring** soon will go its separate way from **Armstrong World Industries**, according to LancasterOnline, Armstrong Flooring is taking along Armstrong World shareholders. These shareholders have received one share of Armstrong Flooring stock for ev-

ery two shares of Armstrong World stock they own. In lieu of fractional Armstrong Flooring shares, Armstrong World shareholders will receive cash. No action is required of Armstrong World shareholders to receive their Armstrong Flooring stock. In addition, **Matt Espe** will step down as ceo of Armstrong World Industries when the company spins off its flooring business. Espe has been president and CEO of Armstrong since July 2010. Armstrong World Industries will be led by current ceilings division ceo **Vic Grizzle**, and Armstrong Flooring will be led by current flooring division ceo **Don Maier**.

New Canadian reps at Preverco



Sebastian Lukasik (left), Brownie Dove and Ryan Smithdorf of Preverco.

Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.,-based **Preverco** has hired three new representatives to support the flooring manufacturer's plans to boost production capacity by 30 percent. **William "Brownie" Dove** and **Ryan Smithdorf** will serve the British Columbia and Alberta/Saskatchewan markets respectively, and **Sebastian Lukasik** will work with Greater Toronto Area and Eastern Ontario customers.

Lumber Liquidators pays US\$2.5M for clean air claims
Hardwood flooring retailer **Lumber Liquidators** of Toano, Va., has paid the Sacramento, Calif.-based **California Air Resources Board** (ARB) US\$2.5 million to settle ARB claims that Lumber Liquidators sold, supplied, or offered for sale in California composite wood products that ARB testing showed exceeded state formaldehyde limits, and that Lumber



Liquidators failed to take reasonable prudent precautions to ensure those products met such limits designed to protect public health.

During inspections at Lumber Liquidators' stores in California between September 2013 and May 2015, ARB staff obtained boxes of laminate flooring samples for testing that were labeled as compliant.

According to a signed settlement agreement between ARB and Lumber Liquidators, ARB notified the company of its testing showing that some of these samples showed excesses of state formaldehyde limits and alleging that the company failed to take reasonable prudent precautions to ensure that laminate flooring sold in California contained composite wood products that complied with the formaldehyde emissions standards set forth in California's Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) for composite wood products.

Bethel to business development post at J+J Flooring



Bob Bethel

J+J Flooring Group of Dalton, Ga., a manufacturer of commercial specified flooring, has named **Bob Bethel** as director of business development

for education and health care. An 18-year J+J veteran, Bethel brings a wide range of

experience across different functions to the position. Bethel most recently served as strategic account director where he was responsible for servicing the company's largest end-use customers and securing new national accounts. Prior to this, Bethel played a key role in the company's ISO 14001 implementation in 2008. Bethel began his career as a sales representative managing territories in South Carolina and South Florida.

Len Ferro appointed president of Tandus Centiva



Len Ferro

Paris, France-based **Tarkett**, a global maker of flooring and sports surfaces products, has announced that Len Ferro has been named president of the **Tandus**

Centiva business division of **Tarkett North America** in Florence, Ala., reporting to **Glen Morrison**, president and ceo of Tarkett NA. He succeeds Glen Hussmann, who announced his retirement in January. Ferro served most recently as the chief operating officer since 2013 and previously as the chief financial officer from 2004, when he joined Tandus Centiva.

Promising outlook for Domotex Turkey 2016



From 23 to 26 May 2016, **Domotex Turkey** is being staged in Gaziantep, Turkey, for the third consecutive season. All signs are pointing to a successful event ahead, with nearly all available space having been booked months in advance.

The exhibition will again consoli-

date its position as the leading trade platform for carpet manufacturers in Turkey and the Middle East, Domotex Turkey organizers say. The trade fair is organized by a **Deutsche Messe** subsidiary, **Hannover Fairs Turkey**, in cooperation with the **Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce** (GTO), the **Association of South Anatolian Carpet Exporters** (GAIB) and the **Gaziantep Chamber of Carpet Manufacturers** (GHO). The keynote displays of the trade fair will be machine-made and handmade carpets, textile and resilient floor coverings, parquet and laminate flooring, as well as machines and accessories.

Approximately 200 companies will be showcasing their products and latest developments in an area of close to 22,000 square meters. Turkish manufacturers will be joined by companies from Bangladesh, Belgium, China, France, Germany, India, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan.

Thanks to collaboration between the tradeshow organizers and **Turkish Airlines** as the event's official airline, exhibitors and visitors can book flights to Istanbul or Gaziantep with special discounts of up to 20 percent. More information on the trade fair can be found at www.domotexturkey.com.

CCA teams up with WFC and CFI
Manchester, N.H.-based **CCA Global Partners** has partnered with the **World Floor Covering Association** (WFC) of Anaheim, Calif., after its recent purchase of the International **Certified Flooring Installers Association** (CFI), to help address the shortage of qualified flooring installers. Through this new partnership, members of CCA's floor covering divisions will be provided with incentives to bring new hires to the industry, and the CFI will provide training. Through this new partnership, members of **Carpet One Floor & Home**, **Flooring America/Flooring Canada** and **International Design Guild** will benefit from tuition credits and discounts from both CCA and WFC. CCA will provide its members a discount toward the cost of tuition when the installer completes one of CFI's installation training classes for carpet and hard surface classes. In February 2016, the CFI training facility based in Forney, Tex., just outside

of Dallas, training commenced for a new group of students in its new proprietary residential carpet installation course. The class, which is only offered at the CFI school, turns out certified installation graduates ready to begin work in a five-week timeframe. To learn more about CFI, visit www.cfiinstallers.com.

Mapei wins brand awards



Mapei executives accept awards: David Mowery (left), business manager, Brian Pistulka, TSIS product manager, and Jeffrey Johnson FCIS product manager.

Deerfield Beach, Fla.-based **Mapei Corporation** received six awards from **Clear Seas Research** of Troy, Mich., at the 2016 TISE West (Surfaces) Expo, which was held in Las Vegas, Nev. Every two years, Clear Seas — a market research company covering the flooring industry — surveys the members of the **National Tile Contractors Association** (NTCA) of Jackson, Miss., asking for their Preferred Manufacturer in 16 different categories. As a result of the 2015 survey, Clear Seas presented Mapei with most preferred brand awards for: cementitious grout; cement-based medium-bed mortars; single-component grouts; cement-based mortars (thin-set); organic-based adhesives; and, self-leveling and patching underlayment.

Shaw encourages the development of STEM skills

Dalton, Ga.-based **Shaw Industries Group**, Inc. has extended its educational partnership program to include mentoring and sponsorship of First Robotics Competition and First Tech Challenge events teams in Georgia. (First Canada hosts competitions across Canada.) First events encourage the development of science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM) skills in students before they reach post-secondary school levels. With more than US\$1 billion invested in new equipment, technology and processes over the past few years, the company says, its manufacturing operations have become increasingly complex.

As Shaw focuses on innovation for its products, services and processes, it needs designers and data scientists, engineers and electricians, machinists and marketers with a higher skill level than in the past. Shaw is a vertically integrated manufacturer that supplies carpet, hardwood,

laminate, resilient, tile and stone flooring products, and synthetic turf to residential and commercial markets worldwide.

Pioneer Millworks salvages wood

Reclaimed wood specialist **Pioneer Millworks** of Farmington, N.Y., is salvaging 400,000 board feet of timbers and planks during the selective deconstruction of



Centennial Mills in Portland, Ore., undergoing selective deconstruction.

Centennial Mills in Portland, Ore. Deconstruction of five warehouses and several old grain elevators, deemed beyond repair and unsafe, began in September 2015 and is expected to be complete by June 2016. To date, seven tractor-trailer loads of Douglas fir timbers and cribbing planks have been transported to Pioneer Millworks' McMinnville, Ore., yard. Some of the wood can be re-used as heavy timber and beams, while some will be re-milled for use as paneling or flooring. The Centennial Mills site is owned by the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and lies within Portland's River District urban renewal area.

CCA Global promotes Gundlach

CCA Global Partners of Manchester, N.H., has announced the promotion of **Cathey Gundlach** to vice president of merchandising for the **Flooring America/Flooring Canada, International Design Guild** and **The Floor Trader** groups. In her new role, Gundlach will guide proprietary, private label programs and complete the necessary trade up strategies for three of CCA's flooring businesses. Gundlach first joined the CCA team in 2006 working for the ProSource division. Most recently, she held the position of vice president of hard surface flooring. Gundlach will continue working out of CCA Global Partners' St. Louis, Mo., office.



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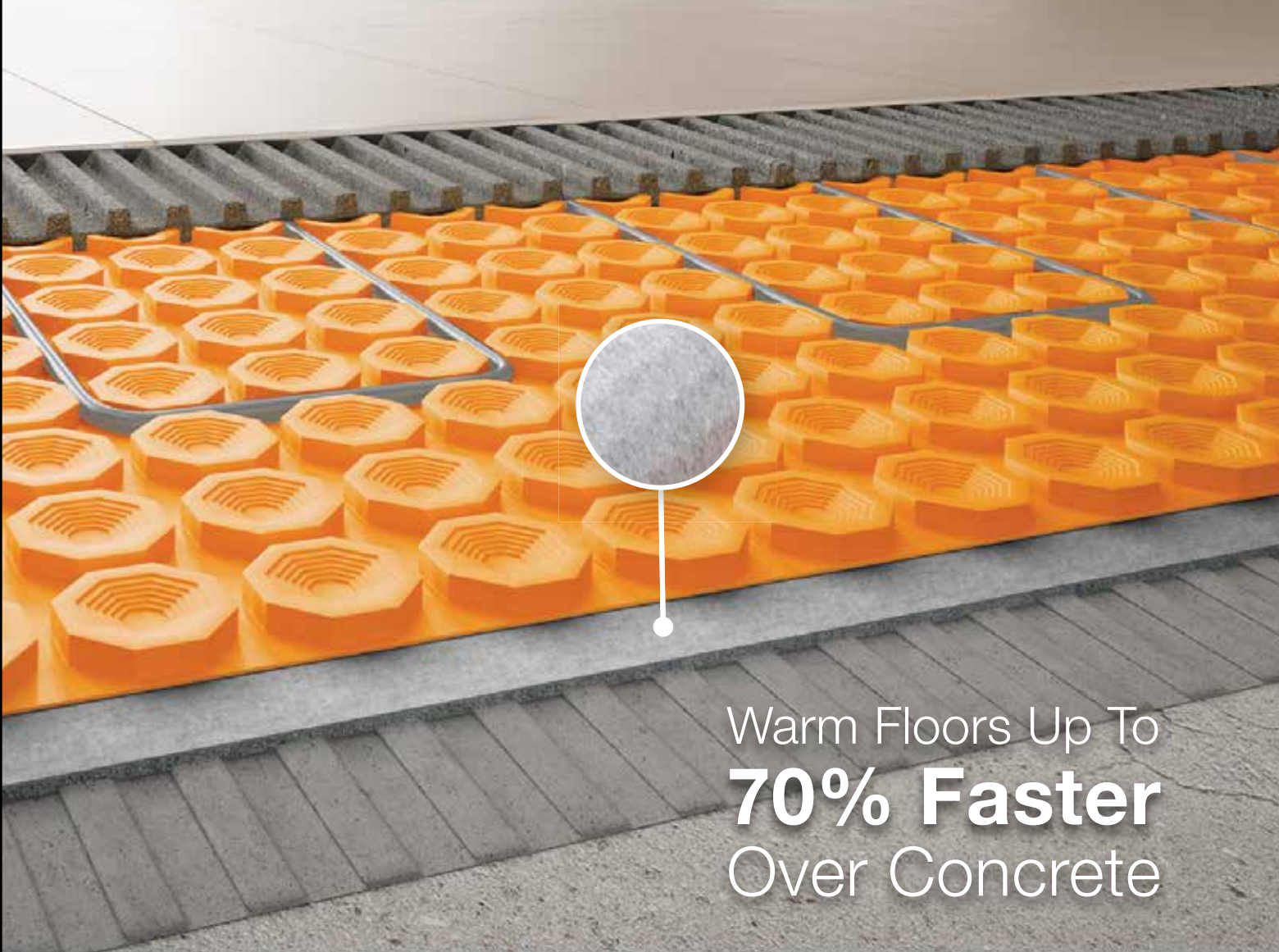
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Chasing glory and marketplace success

Design and creativity

I have just walked through the large 'pop-up' craft market in San Cristobal De Las Casas in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. There were hundreds of booths displaying many things, but there was a definite emphasis on textiles. The colours are spectacular and the workmanship is both highly skilled and conspicuously laborious. It was very impressive.



Paul Epp

Beyond the dazzle of the goods being displayed, what seemed the most noteworthy was that there was so little design variation. There were lots of different designs, but each booth had, basically, the same ones. I'm sure that this is principally a result of noticing what has proven to sell and nothing succeeds like success: the winning designs get reproduced over and over again.

What came to mind was a parallel with the biological world: the survival of the fittest. If we, for the sake of this argument, think of designs as inorganic genes, then we can recognize that certain design genes have prevailed. They have replicated themselves the most successfully because they are what the market wanted. If we sustain this analogy, we can recognize that certain genes represent the best qualities. We might even recognize that the word "best" should be considered carefully. Certain characteristics in other design genes may have been superior, but the combination of the right look, the right price, the right function, the right time and maybe even a bit of luck will have allowed the winner to win and proliferate.

The insider world of design tends to place a premium on creativity. This is reflected in that novel designs are often those that obtain the greatest amount of publicity. In design schools, students are also rewarded, by better marks, for their demonstrations of creativity. I recall a discussion (an argument?) that I had with one of my own design instructors, many years ago. He maintained that only the most highly original designs were worth pursuing. It was like a manifesto for the virtues of revolution over evolution. Incremental improvements in design was the work for losers.


But, these many years later, I still wonder if that is accurate. The message of the market here in San Cristobal is that certain designs are worth doing, to the exclusion of others. I'm sure that, from time to time, some eccentric craft producer will try something new. And maybe, one try out of many, a new saleable design is discovered and it will add to the vocabulary of what gets copied. But, mostly, the river of known and proven designs rolls along without too many surprises.

This is not only true of this craft market. One has only to consider almost any category of goods: cars, smartphones and footwear as only a few of many examples. What is on the market is fairly largely indistinguishable to the cursory glance. What sold got copied. And thus the market achieved the homogeneity that we are so familiar with.

In a design school such as mine, with roots in an art school, there is an emphasis on something that is called 'finding your voice.' This usually means finding a way to be originally creative. And I have been happy to support that, feeling that the capacity to be original is not only what distinguishes our graduates but is what makes them valuable.

However, much of what passes for design work has more to do with finding the voice of the market rather than one's own particular and precious voice. Designers often get jobs to replicate what is already on the market and adapt it to some particular and unique requirements, such as the technical capacity of a particular manufacturer, or a different market size, or another of many other variables. This might look, at a quick glance, like a lesser version of design. But I'm not convinced. If there isn't a market for what gets designed (and made), then why do it? Markets are an aggregate of the demonstrated needs and desires of a specific set of consumers. Human needs exist and markets are created to meet them. We should be happy to comply.

My instructor of long ago was eventually revealed to be, at times, a covert plagiarist who thought he was too clever to be found out. But this discovery kind of makes my point. Even he realized that a proven winner was worth backing.

We can follow the market or we can try to lead it. The former is a lot safer and probably more remunerative. The latter may turn out to be more glorious, or it may not turn out at all. 

Paul Epp is a professor at OCAD University, and former chair of its industrial design department.

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An action plan benefits all parties

Termination done right

By Damien M. E. Buntsma

Terminating an employee is one of the most difficult decisions employers face. Once the decision to terminate has been made, employers must consider the potential negative effects upon the employee, other staff, the organization's reputation, and the threat of litigation. To avoid negative consequences, the conduct of the termination is as important as the decision itself.

In short, the most basic advice for any employer, to avoid increased liability to a terminated employee, is to act honestly, assert cause only if cause truly exists, remain fair in the manner of dismissal and conduct the termination meeting in a humane and professional manner.

Reason for terminating

Termination can be undertaken with or without cause. Termination with cause, viewed by the courts as being the "capital punishment of employment law," is usually reserved for serious, proven misconduct, such as theft, fraud, assault, sexual harassment, excessive absences for unsubstantiated reasons, serious insubordination, or conflict of interest. Of note, poor performance will rarely be considered cause for dismissal, unless there is clear evidence that the employee has not responded to progressive disciplinary measures.

Where an employee is terminated with cause, they are not entitled to any compensation related to the termination of employment. By contrast, in terminating without cause, in its simplest form, the employee will be entitled to compensation by way of one of the following regimes: minimum standards under the relevant employment standards legislation, an amount specified in a contract, or an amount provided under the common law.

Further, the applicable regime will invariably depend on whether there is a written employment agreement in place, and whether the termination provisions under said agreement are legally enforceable. Given the potential for a substantially increased amount being due to an employee under the common law, as opposed to either of the other two regimes, where they do not have a carefully drafted employment agreement, employers are duly advised to have employment

counsel assist in crafting comprehensive, enforceable agreements.

Additionally, the employer should seek legal advice prior to terminating any employee to determine a particular employee's entitlements upon termination without cause.

The termination letter

Before having the employee attend the termination meeting, the employer should have a carefully crafted termination letter prepared. Its content and specificity will depend upon the circumstances and whether the termination is with or without cause. Nonetheless, in order to avoid the potential for a claim to additional damages by a terminated employee (i.e. punitive damages), an employer should ensure to remain truthful within the contents of the termination letter.

In order to avoid some of the common pitfalls in drafting any termination documents, legal advice should be sought in completing the same, including an employee's Record of Employment.

The termination meeting

To mitigate potential legal liability, employers should follow specified, scripted procedures in carrying out any termination meeting, whether with or without cause. We offer the following ten tips on how to carry out a proper termination meeting:

Prepare what you will say; make a checklist of items to be covered.

One person should be the "official voice" during the meeting, with a witness taking notes. Do not "gang up" on the employee.

Be brief. Let the employee know unmistakably that he or she is being terminated, but in general terms. If the employee pushes for specifics, simply state that the decision was made by management; it is final and you cannot discuss further details.

If alleging cause, make sure that this is clear, including whether or not you are offering any gratuitous payment in lieu of notice.

In many cases, the meeting will become emotional. The person conducting the meeting should be firm, yet sensitive, without losing control of the meeting.

Have the termination letter plus any written offer and associated documents ready for the employee. Do not require the employee to read the letter or sign a release immediately.

Describe the notice, or payment in lieu of notice, being provided, plus any offers in exchange for a signed release.

Allow employees to take their personal effects with them, or make arrangements to retrieve these items at a later date, supervised by management. Employees should not be allowed access to any company computers or other electronic devices after termination, unless supervised by management.

Carry out a dismissal early in the week and late in the day, so that the employee can seek advice and leave without encountering co-workers.

Pay for a taxi to drive the employee home, or contact someone to come and pick up the employee.

The last word

The best advice to avoid potential liability in the event of a breakdown in the employment relationship is to seek legal assistance prior to the time of hiring, by having carefully drafted employment agreements and ensuring that you have comprehensive policies and procedures in place.

When the termination of the employment relationship is necessary, seek legal advice from a specialized employment counsel *before* making the decision, not after.

Damien Buntsma is a partner at Lawrences and Heads up the Employment and Labour Law Group. He represents and advises public and private sector employers, unionized and non-unionized, in all areas of labour and employment law.

Damien can be reached at 905-452-6876 or dbuntsma@lawrences.com



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Problems are still with us, so be aware

Concrete moisture

By Christopher Capobianco

One of the most common problems in the floor covering industry continues to be floor failures related to excess moisture and high alkalinity at the surface of the concrete. All floor coverings are affected, including carpet, resilient, wood,



Christopher Capobianco

laminates, coatings, stone, and tile. The symptoms include gaps between tiles, adhesive oozing, carpet buckling, tile cracking, bumps, dents, cupping, bubbles, wheel marks and more. If these problems are not corrected, issues of mold and bacterial growth, trip hazards from floor coverings which are not flat or slip and fall accidents because of unstable floors can create liabilities and cost owners, installers and /or manufacturers countless dollars. Failures can

occur because new concrete has not dried fully, on or below grade slabs are placed without a vapor retarder, or by outside factors such as broken pipes or poor grading or drainage outside building.

Many failures occur because of false assumptions about the nature of concrete floor slabs. For example, it cannot be assumed that older slabs are immune from these types of problems. Those old slabs may not have a proper vapor retarder beneath them. Another com-

mon assumption is that slabs above the ground will not be a risk for moisture. However, with the use of lightweight concrete and/or metal deck construction, these slabs often take longer to dry than a standard mix concrete on ground level.

In the case of new construction, drying time is often misunderstood; "28 day cure" is a term often misused to assume the slab is dry enough for a new floor. However, curing and drying are two different things. Curing is the chemical reaction between the ingredients that bonds them together and drying is the evaporation of the excess water after curing. Slabs can take months to be dry enough to cover with flooring, not just 28 days.

There is an industry standard that covers many of these issues, ASTM F710 *Standard Practice for Preparing Concrete Floors to Receive Resilient Flooring*. On the topic of moisture, F710 goes into detail about above-grade slabs and those on metal deck and why they take longer to dry. It also calls out the difference between curing and drying. Most importantly, F710 states "All concrete slabs shall be tested for moisture regardless of age or grade level," and this language is also included in virtually every type of floor covering manufacturer's guidelines.

Since you can't see, smell, or feel moisture emitting from concrete, there is no easy way to test for it. Moisture meters are sometimes used, but this is just a spot test for surface moisture at that spot in the slab at that point in time, so the industry does not recognize moisture meter testing on concrete as a way to determine if a slab is ready for a new floor.

The Calcium Chloride test is well recognized in the floor covering industry. Known as ASTM F 1869, *Standard Test Method for Measuring Moisture Vapor Emission Rate of Concrete Subfloor Using Anhydrous Calcium Chloride*, this method measures moisture emitting from the top surface of the concrete to provide a moisture vapor emission rate (MVER) in pounds of water vapor per one thousand square feet per 24 hours (lbs/1000 ft²/24h), or just "pounds."

A newer method,



Moisture from the outside of a building from poor drainage can affect the slab inside and lead to floor failures.



This sheet vinyl was installed in a 50-year-old hospital, and no moisture testing was done prior to installation. For reasons unknown, the previous tile floor did not exhibit any problems, but the new floor did. Moisture testing could have warned of this potential problem.

ASTM F 2170, *Standard Test Method for Determining Relative Humidity in Concrete Floor Slabs Using In Situ Probes* (known as the RH Method) became an ASTM standard in 2002. By drilling into the slab, the RH method measures the percentage of humidity inside the slab, as opposed to the Calcium Chloride test, which only sees a short way into the surface. The RH Method is a high-tech way to accurately predict the future moisture movement from the inside of the slab to the surface.

The importance of testing concrete before installing a floor cannot be overstated, but who should do the testing is often misunderstood. In October 2001, a group of 10 trade associations worked together to release *The Floor Covering Industry White Paper Position Statement on Moisture Emission Testing*. In 2013, an updated version was published by Floor Covering Installation Contractors Association (FCICA). There are three key parts of this document that I'd like to see circulated through the floor covering and construction industries:

1. *It is unreasonable to expect flooring installers to be responsible to correct concrete problems that they have had no role in creating. While they are continually encouraged to develop sufficient expertise to anticipate and ask the proper questions for evaluation of potential concrete/flooring problems, it is not their responsibility to correct problematic substrate conditions created by others.*

2. *General contractors and flooring contractors must be made aware of all of the test results. Most flooring manufacturers have specific test criteria and limits required for the moisture conditions of concrete. The flooring contractor should only commence*

installation once these requirements are met and should not begin flooring installation if any requirement is outside of the manufacturer recommended limits.

3. *One of the best ways to ensure fair and responsible testing is to specify that it be done by a third party independent and/or certified testing company. Their results are clear and unbiased. The project can then proceed in accordance with the findings.*

Independent testing assures that trained technicians follow the proper test protocol so that the results cannot be questioned, and they do so without any bias or vested interest in the results.

For new slabs, accelerating drying can be done by enclosing the building as soon as possible, maintaining close to 'in service' temperature, removing curing compounds or sealers from the slab and keeping the air moving. In some cases the same type of dehumidification equipment that is used to remediate flood damage can be used to dry out the concrete.

If there is no time to wait or if there is no vapor retarder beneath the slab, surface applied systems may need to be applied and selecting these systems is best done in consultation with someone who has experience in this area.

Christopher Capobianco has been in the floor covering industry since the 1970s in various roles including retail and commercial sales, technical support, consulting, journalism, education and volunteer work. He currently is part of the sales team for Spartan Surfaces in New York City. You can reach him via christopher@SpartanSurfaces.com.



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Commercial interior space ideas at NeoCon 2016

Design that works

NeoCon, the trade show about commercial interiors, presents its 48th year this June 13-15 at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago.

The three-day trade show and conference highlights hundreds of exhibitors across vertical markets, including workplace, healthcare, hospitality, retail, education, public spaces and government. The 2016 edition will feature: the latest prototypes and product launches for commercial interiors; educational programming — from keynote presentations that give attendees insider access to today's most influential thought leaders — to over 100 accredited seminars



led by industry experts; and, industry networking events.

This year's overarching theme, "Design That Works," is said to speak to the power and vitality of good design. This message will be carried throughout the many aspects of the show, from products to educational programming, says the show organization. This year's keynote speakers are said to be emblematic of the influence of good design; how

it motivates, inspires, nurtures and connects. Headliners include: Paul Scialla, founder/ceo of Delos, and of the International Well Building Institute (IWBI), a public benefit corporation whose mission is to improve human health and well-being through the built environment; David

Rockwell, founder and president of the award-winning architecture and design firm Rockwell Group; and Oana Stanescu, partner of Family, the architecture studio behind projects such as + POOL.

Seminar ses-

sions will cover topics such as leveraging neuroscience, drones in professional design practice and acoustical privacy.

NeoCon will showcase multiple floors of new product solutions and concepts from many brands. In addition to the three full floors of year-round showrooms, The Mart has a redesigned exhibit hall on the 7th floor that will host nearly 300 brands. Feature areas include interior building products/materials and finishes, furniture and fabrics, flooring, and technology.

Association partners for NeoCon include the International Interior Design Association, Interior Design Society, American Society of Interior Designers, Business & Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association, and American Academy of Healthcare Interior Designers.



2016 Tech Expo in Niagara-on-the-Lake

For all wanting to learn

The Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada (TTMAC) 73rd Annual Convention will be held in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., June 9 – 12, 2016, at the award-winning Queen's Landing Hotel.

This is a unique opportunity to increase your knowledge of the hard-surface industry, whether you are an association member or not, and to associate with TTMAC members from across Canada, including contractors, architects, designers and specification

writers from the industry. For association members, this is also your opportunity to have your company's voice heard at the AGM as well as at the suppliers' and contractors' annual meetings.

Thursday, June 9, the first day of the convention, we are hosting a Tech Expo. The Tech Expo is a unique opportunity to learn about and discuss some of the most important and current technical topics in the industry. This event has previously been successfully hosted in Vancouver, Victoria and Halifax. During this day there will be six seminars available for architects, designers, specifiers and all convention attendees. We are running two, one-hour-long seminars at a time, for a total of six in three time slots. In addition to the seminars there will be a round-table discussion where panel members will discuss a preselected subject and the

audience will be able to ask questions or discuss points of interest on the subject.

If there is a particular topic you would like to see covered or there is a topic you would like to present, please contact the association as indicated at the bottom of this story.

Because this year's convention will be just an hour away from Toronto, we are planning to bring architects and designers from Toronto (by chartered coach) to attend the event. These specifiers play a crucial role in the hard-surface industry. In recognition of their importance, the TTMAC is getting the accreditation necessary from the OAA so the attendees at the Tech Expo can get valuable ConEd points. Also we are working with IDCEC to provide the same for interior designers.

Industry suppliers are encouraged to take advantage of this gathering of hard surface industry professionals of all types by participating in the Expo with a tabletop display. We are confident that the event will be a huge success and we encourage all suppliers that would like to attend this expo to contact our office as spaces will be limited.

All in all, it will be a great day for our professional partners in the industry, within a rewarding trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake, ConEd points, tabletop displays by our supplier members and, last but not least, great food and networking.

We hope to see many architects, designers and specifiers at this important industry event. If you would like to receive an invitation, please call the TTMAC office at 905-660-9640 or email association@ttmac.com, ask any of our supplier members who will be visiting your office, or the easiest way — register on our website directly: www.ttmac.com.

The Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada was founded in 1944 to promote standardized installation techniques and to provide technical resources.

The Terrazzo, Tile and Marble Association of Canada (TTMAC) 73rd Annual Convention
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PRODUCTS

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Mapefil T from **Mapei** is a professional-grade, 100 percent-silicone sealant for use on multiple substrates. The product is formulated for heavy traffic and expansion/movement joints exceeding both ASTM and ANSI standards. Its excellent elongation and flexibility make it ideal for use in both change-of-plane and joint applications in tile or stonework, the company says. It has been formulated to a low sheen to match the gloss of grout joints and is color-matched to the company's grout color palette. www.mapei.com

Carpet tiles survive high-travel areas



En Route style carpet tiles introduced by **Beaulieu Canada** are in the Hollytex Modular collection. Made of loop construction with nylon fibre and an OmniLoc backing, the tiles are available in eight colours. Dimensions are 61 x 61 cm (24 x 24 in.). The carpet employs Magic Fresh, an environmentally friendly carpet treatment specially formulated to neutralize common household odors such as pet urine, food and cigarette. It is a self-renewing, odor reducing formula that is effective for the life of the carpet

and it is completely safe and natural. The product has Green Label approval, whereby the carpet is better at trapping allergens than hard surface, such as tile or hardwood, because carpet fibres catch particles and allergens that fall to the floor. www.beaulieuflooring.com

Premium resilient sheet flooring rolled out



CBC Flooring has announced the rollout of Mature Select premium resilient sheet flooring from Toli International. This flooring combines an expanded collection of wood grain and natural fleck patterns with a two-tier, no-wax wear layer that is said to deliver long-lasting, maintenance-free performance designed for high-traffic commercial flooring applications. Currently available in 18 wood grain patterns in various shades, in addition to 12 new, natural fleck color ways in earthy taupes, browns, grays, greens, blues, and reds — all of which are protected by Toli's patent-pending ClearGuard transparent, two-tier, antibacterial wear layer. Comprised of heat-fused compressed backing imbued with fibreglass reinforcements, the flooring is compatible with heat-welded or chemically-welded seams. The flooring is made with 10 percent post-consumer and 16 percent pre-consumer recycled content and is also FloorScore certified. <http://cbcflooring.com/matureselect>

Collection inspired by fabric surface texture



The Knit porcelain collection by **Walker Zanger** is said to mirror the flexibility and texture of luxury textiles to create noteworthy and beautiful designs. Each of the design fields — Quilt, Twill and Corduroy — mimic their namesake fabric, recreating the look of quilted, woven and knitted material. The matte finish of the tile accentuates the detailed texture, but with the durability of porcelain for floor and wall applications. The tile can be closely stacked like shingles, set in a herringbone weave, or even laid out in random geometric patterns like a crocheted afghan. This premiere porcelain collection is available in a variety of neutral colors including cotton, felt and linen. www.walkerzanger.com

WiFi thermostat adds integration



Pentair has announced that its Nuheat brand of electric floor heating systems now works with the Nest Learning Thermostat. Through the integration, Nest's combination of sensors, algorithms and machine learning can prompt the Nuheat Signature program to react to home occupancy. The floor heat will remain on when the residents stay home,

or turn off when they leaving early or arrive later than expected. Nuheat Signature product features include: easily connects to WiFi network; control via smartphone apps or web browser; and, view hourly, weekly and monthly usage. www.nuheat.com/nest

Profile colours match tile trends



The **Schluter-Systems** series of Trendline profiles features a new line of colours to go with the latest trends in tile. The series offers 7 new colours, each available in the most popular profile shapes: flat (Jolly), rounded (Rondec), and square (Quadec). The profiles are made of colour-coated aluminum, and feature a textured finish, achieved with Schluter's powder coating procedure. These finishes have been developed to complement tiles made from natural materials, or porcelain that is finished to look natural. www.schluter.ca

Engineered hardwood collection



Fuzion Flooring has introduced its Coastline Collection of engineered hardwood. The lightly wire brushed French Oak comes in a 5-7/8 or 7-1/2 in. plank, 1/2 in. ply engineered core format. Specifications include: multi-layer plywood core construction; 2 mm sliced wood wear layer; micro beveled edges; 10 layers UltraMax A.O. finish; low degree luster level; and, T&G, stapled, nailed, glued down or floated installation. Certification is E1 CARB II. www.fuzionflooring.com

Single SKU acoustic underlayment



When installing more than one type of hard surface flooring in a home or at multiple locations, **MP Global Products** says its "universal" Sound Buffer acoustic underlayment is transferrable from room to room and jobsite to jobsite, saves on waste and is consolidated into a single SKU. Made from 100 percent virgin latex rubber and designed for use under hardwood, engineered wood, laminate, and luxury vinyl flooring, it can be nailed, floated, stapled, single-glued or double glued. The product is engineered to suppress impact sound and floor to ceiling noise. The IIC Test for 6-inch concrete subfloor with no ceiling assembly with luxury vinyl planks floor covering result is 52, a rating that exceeds the standard for high-rise installations. The system has a 1.2 mm thickness, a density of 25 lb/ft³, and a compression set of 16 percent. www.mpglobalproducts.com

Dispersible pigment grout in thousands of colours

Laticrete has introduced Permacolor Select Anycolor, a dispersible pigment grout product that is in addition to the



original 80 Permacolor Select colours. Anycolor comes in two parts: Color Kit and the Permacolor Select Base powder. The process of preparing the grout begins with the Color Kit's dispersible pigment packets. When added to water, these packets dissolve like laundry or dishwasher packets. When the neutrally-colored Permacolor Select Base is added to the pigment-water mix, a color-consistent grout is formed that does not require sealing. To order a desired color, contractors can choose a Sherwin-Williams or Benjamin Moore color from their color palettes. Permacolor Select is reinforced with Kevlar to resist cracks and shrinkage. The grout is ready for foot traffic in three hours. www.laticrete.com

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PRODUCTS

Finish nailers seat nails sub-flush



Milwaukee has announced cordless M18 Fuel finish nailers with the power to consistently seat nails sub-flush to hardwood surfaces with no ramp-up time and no gas cartridges. With no gas cartridges, a Powerstate brushless motor, and no cleaning required, the tools are designed to deliver durability and reliability with very little maintenance, the company says. The tools fire up to 1200 nails on a single 2.0 Ah battery pack charge. Units are available in four models, with nail size ranges from 1-1/4 to 2-1/2, 5/8 to 2-1/8 and 3/4 to 2-1/2 in. and magazines holding 110 nails. www.milwaukeetool.com

Hardwood floors range extended



Hardwood flooring maker **Mirage** has announced the addition of two new colors to its range of products: Rio and Havana. Reminiscent of a warm, sunny beach, the company says, Rio is a sandy beige color with subtle grey tones. Havana is a pure brown shade with golden highlights. Rio and Havana are offered with Mirage Admiration Collection and are available on Yellow Birch, Red Oak, and Maple in Classic technology in 3-1/4 and 4-1/4 in. widths, on Red Oak and Maple in Engineered technology in 5

and 6-1/2 in. widths, and in Lock technology in a 4-5/16 in. width. www.miragefloors.com

Self-leveling flooring underlayment



Levelquik RS, a rapid setting, self-leveling underlayment from **Custom Building Products**, helps level floors prior to the installation of ceramic tile, natural stone, resilient flooring, carpet, wood and other floor coverings. The underlayment can be applied to 1.5 in. (3.8 cm) thick in one pour and seeks its own level in minutes. With proper installation, the use of the product can achieve an extra heavy rating for high impact use in food plants, dairies, breweries and kitchens. The underlayment may be applied to in residential structures with floor joists up to 24 in. o.c. Formulated using Controlled Cure Technology, the product helps eliminate installation problems such as bond failure, crumbling and staining of resilient flooring caused by the free moisture found in traditional underlayments, the company says. www.custombuildingproducts.com

Photoluminescent strips for commercial spaces



Tarkett has updated its Safe-T-First System (STF). In compliance with

International Building Code requirements, the revamped STF utilizes photoluminescent technology to provide an escape path marking system through emergency egress stairwells and hallways that may go dark in the event of a fire or other unexpected power outage. STF integrates photoluminescent technology into color- and design-coordinated resilient flooring products, allowing the space to look well-designed when lit, in addition to providing safe passage when dark. The updated collection features a 36-colour palette that coordinates through Johnsonite flooring systems, as well as a custom colour option. www.tarkett.com

LVS flooring has natural stone look



Parthenon resilient luxury vinyl flooring from **Mannington** features a natural stone look and worn edges for added realism. Its upscale rectangular layout and large-scale travertine visual brings a high level of style to any room, the company says. Featured in a rectangular layout, it is available in three colors: Alabaster, Pumice and Stone. Repeat length is 36 in. and repeat width is 72 in. The LVS ColorSelect System features patterns in three performance levels that consumers select based on their lifestyle and budget considerations. Once consumers select their specific pattern and color, they then choose the performance level that best suits their needs. www.mannington.com

Wet polisher matches speed to application

Wet polisher from Makita introduced by **Lackmond Stone** features a variable speed control dial that enables the user to match the speed to the application. The polisher includes a soft start feature for smooth start-ups, electronic speed control that maintains constant speed under load, and a common fitting that



accepts popular water hose connections. Units have a 7.9 A motor and weigh 5.1 lb. A high power-to-weight ratio offers reduced operator fatigue, the company says, and the housing cover protects the industrial die cast aluminum gear housing. An overload switch to protect armature failure Includes a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) plug. www.lackmondstone.com

Luxury loose-lay flooring introduced



Aurora loose lay luxury vinyl plank flooring from **Earthwerks** is said to offer many advantages to traditional types of flooring. Installation time is usually about half that of other flooring types, often requiring less prep work and less cleanup of the installation site, the company says. The flooring has been engineered with a backing and a glass fibre reinforcement layer, creating additional dimensional stability for a beautiful floor that is easy to install and simple to maintain, the company adds. There are no locking mechanisms or full-field adhesive required, so the product can easily be removed and reused elsewhere. Eight colours are available. Dimensions are 8 x 39.5 in., or 203.2 x 1003.3 mm. www.earthwerks.com

Carpet fibre technology offers stain resistance

Mohawk Industries has announced a new line of residential carpet to the flooring industry. SmartStrand carpet, made with DuPont Sorona polymer, is said to promise consumers durability,

superior performance, stain resistance and comfort. At the molecular level, SmartStrand carpets made with Sorona will not allow stains to stay permanently



attached to the fibre. This built-in stain resistance reaches new levels of protection, allowing tough stains such as mustard, red wine and cherry Kool-Aid to be removed simply with warm water and a mild detergent, or with Mohawk FloorCare Essentials. There are 10 new Mohawk SmartStrand products, ranging from tight and loose cut piles, standard textures to friezes and Berber flecks. www.mohawkflooring.com

Rubber tile for healthcare and educational spaces Roppe has introduced Health and Learning rubber tile in a palette of calm, warm and inviting



colors that also allows for pops of color to add interest and character to many different types of healthcare and educational spaces. Available in .080 in., 24 x 24 in. or 1/8 in. 50 cm Hammered and 1/8 in. 50 cm Smooth tile, benefits include PVC free, 10 percent post-industrial waste, and FloorScore, NSF332 and CHPS criteria. Colours coordinate with other Roppe products, so users can mix and match with tile, tread, wall base and accessories. www.roppe.com

High performance luxury vinyl plank-Bolyu Contract has introduced Elevate, the first collection in its new EvoWood resilient product line. Available in 9 colors (ash, cherry, driftwood, ebony, maple, pecan, redwood, sandalwood, and walnut)



to match high traffic commercial spaces, the collection uses a real wood veneer with no pattern repeat, giving the look and feel of hardwood floors with the durability and ease of maintenance of LVT. The high performance luxury vinyl plank comes in 6 x 36 in. (152.4 x 914.4 mm) tiles. The flooring includes: Class III wood veneer layer; vinyl plank, Type B (embossed); commercial grade backing class; B Tech UV-cured polyurethane backing finish; micro bevel edge profile; and, nano silver incorporated antimicrobial installation. It is recommended to be used with glue down Beaulieu LVT adhesive. www.bolyu.com

LVT applicable for uneven subfloors



Luxe Plank with Rigid Core Technology, luxury flooring from **Armstrong**, is available in two installation options: Self Adhesive – Fastak Installation and new Rigid Core Technology, suitable for uneven subfloors. It is a luxury vinyl product that is impervious to water, with the rigidity of laminate. Nineteen wood and stone designs in thick, sturdy planks are integrated with a rigid composite core and backed with an acoustic cork underlayment. The products can be installed with no acclimation time. Fast and simple locking technology secures the planks together and beautifully hides minor subfloor irregularities, the company says. www.armstrong.com



Current business highlights

- After fighting to keep its head above water in 2015, Canada's economy is poised to return to a more solid growth path this year. Real GDP — gross domestic product — is expected to advance by 1.9 percent in 2016 and 2.0 percent in 2017. —*TD Economics*
- The global non-resilient flooring market is expected to reach US\$253.41 billion by 2020. Advanced digital printing technologies for ceramic tiles have led to the development of innovative and versatile products along with improving installation techniques. This has significantly broadened the scope of their application across residential, commercial and industrial flooring market. Rising urbanization and the subsequent increased demand in new construction sector is expected to be the key driving force for the market over the forecast period. —*Research And Markets*
- The U.S. goods and services deficit was US\$45.7 billion in January, up US\$1.0 billion from US\$44.7 billion in December. —*U.S. Department of Commerce*
- The New Housing Price Index rose 0.1 percent in January, following an identical increase in December. The advance was led by higher new home prices in Vancouver and the combined region of Toronto and Oshawa. The increase was largely moderated by lower or unchanged prices in two-thirds of the metropolitan areas. —*Statistics Canada*
- Prior to 2000, Canadian merchandise exports to China made up less than 1 percent of total exports. That share increased steadily over the past 15 years, growing almost five-fold at the peak in early 2013. However, since then, the share of exports to China slid below 4 percent, not so much because of China, but thanks to the US economic recovery. In fact, the recent increase adds to a steady upward movement that began in the spring of 2015. China's share of Canadian exports is back on the rise, over 4 percent again, and rising. —*Export Development Corporation*
- Residential construction investment in Canada totaled \$29.7 billion in the fourth quarter, up 2.4 percent compared with the same quarter in 2014. Investment in apartment and apartment-condominium building construction, up 25.1 percent to \$4.8 billion, accounted for most of the increase at the national level. Acquisition costs related to new dwelling units built (up 3.3 percent to \$3.4 billion) and spending on row house construction (up 1.9 percent to \$1.2 billion) also contributed to the quarterly gain. —*Statistics Canada*
- The trend measure of housing starts in Canada was 198,880 units in February compared to 199,107 in January. The trend is a six-month moving average of the monthly seasonally adjusted annual rates (SAAR) of housing starts. —*Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation*
- U.S. furniture imports grew faster in 2015 than in the two previous years. Wooden furniture imports were worth US\$16.23 billion in 2015. Imports from all major suppliers increased. —*Fordaq*
- From 2006 to 2011, the incidence of Canadian households in severe housing need increased, going back to its 2001 level and reaching 5.3 percent (655,380 households). Also from 2006 to 2011, shelter costs for all Canadian households increased more rapidly, on average, than household income before tax. —*Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation*
- U.S. imports of wood flooring increased again in 2015, following a year of significant growth in 2014, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) reports. Hardwood flooring imports were worth US\$47.4 million in 2015, up 30 percent from 2014. Imports from all countries increased, but the strongest growth was in Canadian shipments where manufacturers benefited from the weak Canadian dollar. —*Lesprom*
- Municipalities issued building permits worth \$6.4 billion in January, a decline of 9.8 percent from the previous month. This decline, which followed a 7.7 percent increase in December, was largely due to lower construction intentions for multi-family dwellings in British Columbia and Ontario and, to a lesser extent, institutional buildings in Quebec and Alberta. —*Statistics Canada*
- The U.S. current-account deficit — a net measure of transactions between the United States and the rest of the world in goods, services, primary income (investment income and compensation), and secondary income (current transfers) — decreased to US\$125.3 billion in the fourth quarter of 2015 from US\$129.9 billion in the third quarter. The deficit decreased to 2.8 percent of current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP) from 2.9 percent in the third quarter. —*U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis*
- Privately-owned U.S. housing starts in February were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,178,000, 5.2 percent above the revised January estimate of 1,120,000 and 30.9 percent above the February 2015 rate of 900,000. Single-family housing starts in February were at a rate of 822,000; this is 7.2 percent above the revised January figure of 767,000. —*U.S. Census Bureau*



EVENTS

June 9 – 12

TTMAC Convention

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www.ttmac.ca

June 13 – 15

NeoCon

Chicago, Ill.

www.neocon.com

Sept. 26 – 30

Cersaie

Bologna, Italy

www.cersaie.it

Nov. 2 – 5

The International Surface Event East

Orlando, Fla.

www.tiseeast.com

Nov. 30 – Dec. 2

The Buildings Show

Toronto, Ont.

www.thebuildingsshow.com

Jan. 10 – 12

K/BIS

Orlando, Fla.

www.kbis.com

Jan. 14 – 17, 2017

Domotex

Hanover, Germany

www.domotex.de

Jan. 17 – 20

TISE (Surfaces)

Las Vegas, Nev.

www.tisewest.com

Jan. 19 – 22

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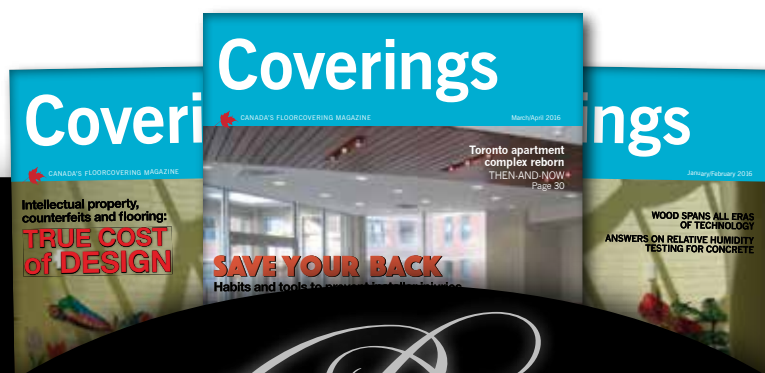
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Bleachers that embrace nature and expand floor space

Cabin or cottage?

DESIGNING A COTTAGE OR CABIN IN THE WOODS by a lake that does the landscape justice is a task that has been approached from many different angles. And when the property is on a hill with a significant slope and great view, why not take advantage of the changing elevation?

That is what the Montreal, Que.-based architectural firm Architecturama has done with its “Lake Jasper House” in Chertsey, Que. According to architect partner Sylvain Bilodeau, he and his partner and co-owner of the project house, Nicolas Mathieu-Tremblay, the design inspiration of incorporating modular bleachers as surfaces throughout the front of the building came from the theatre.

“The slope of the hill and direction of the lake lends the design towards having stairs going up. To keep expenses down we went with standard soft wood (for the bleacher construction).”

With its cube shape and advantageous ratio of envelope to usable volume, the structure promotes energy efficiency and economical use of materials. “It’s an efficient volume,” says Bilodeau. “The footprint is around 850 square feet, but the gross floor area is 1,900 square feet, with all the area of the rooms and the individual bleachers.” Kitchen, bathroom, small bedroom and a bunk room is located at the back. The

property is 16 by 250 meters.

“We’ve had 12 people sleep over, but more could stay if they were comfortable on the bleachers.” A fireplace, movie projector and feather cushions help people enjoy the space.

The only metal framing is the curtain wall with all of the glass, everything else is all wood. The bleacher structure is black-painted wood 2 by 4s, the posts are 2 by 4s, and they are glued and screwed together with ½-in. wooden plates.

“The outside bleachers are made with treated wood — but are also protected by the overhanging roof so it’s going to last some time,” says Bilodeau. The structure can be easily repaired, stained or replaced, or reconfigured into something else.

“They can be turned into a table, or side table, or whatever. The bleachers are open to interpretation — the deck is one big piece of furniture.

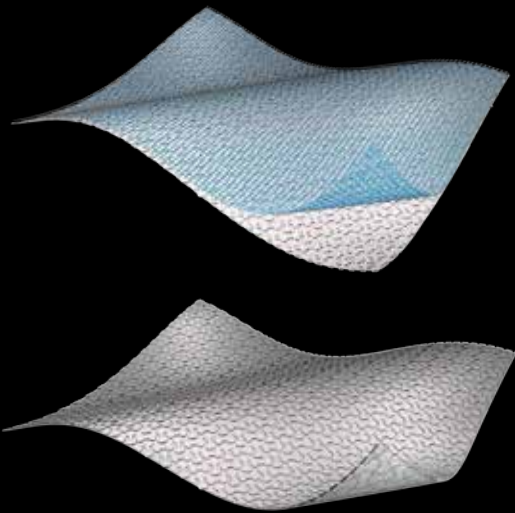
“Occasionally when someone wants a wider, flat surface, we can just accumulate elements so we can just add modular blocks to level up two surfaces. The usage is blurred — it can be a floor, seat or a table.”

Bilodeau says that visitors don’t mind that the bleacher surfaces are a soft, construction wood. “Of course we have to keep bare foot or socks, but that’s OK because that’s part of the idea of the cottage experience.”

Please submit project suggestions to news@wimediainc.ca

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