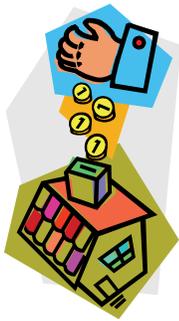




G.S. FLOOR

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news@gsfloor.com



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Ground Floor News

G.S. FLOOR DESIGNS & THE HOME DEPOT PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Why Qualify Your Hard Surface Customer?

What exactly does “qualify” mean and what does that mean to your Hard Surface flooring customers?

When you take the time to discuss aspects of not only the product your customer has chosen for their flooring project, but also the installation, you’re giving your customer the most important tool of all – knowledge.

For example: Mrs. Jones visits the Naperville store and decides to purchase 3/4 inch pre-finished wood to be installed in her master bathroom and asks Department 23 Associate Bob to help her start the process.

After taking the needed information to set up the measure, Bob notices Mrs. Jones has chosen wood. “Mrs. Jones, you’ve indicated that you wish to have a wood product installed in a bathroom...is this

room used a lot? Does it have a Jacuzzi bath and/or a steam shower?”

When Mrs. Jones answers yes to these questions, Bob is concerned. “Mrs. Jones, I really can’t recommend a wood product be installed in a room with so much moisture. It’s a beautiful floor, but it won’t last with all the water and I’d hate for you to pay for something that won’t last. Have you thought about vinyl or tile?

Those are really the most durable and long-lasting choices for a bathroom.”

In just a short period of time, Bob has shown Mrs. Jones that he understands the products he’s selling, cares about her as a customer and wants her to be satisfied with her installation.

What other questions should you ask or make sure is explained?

Well, you’ll need to explain that certain issues that affect the installation won’t be known until the current floor is removed; that a flat floor is very different from a level floor; that wood flooring is laid across the floor joists; that quarter round is needed for all wood jobs; and that sound barrier is required for condo and high-rise buildings as well as board approval for materials.

The more information you give your customer at time of sale, the better prepared they’ll be for installation day and will understand the product they’ve purchased. You’ll have the satisfaction that you’ve given your customer the best possible service and created a happy consumer and new referral base.

Acoustical Concrete - Not All It’s Cracked Up to Be

What exactly is acoustical concrete? It’s actually very similar to regular concrete, except it’s made using a sand base instead of crushed gravel or stone.

Why do you need to know about acoustical concrete? Because this is the material used for many years in residential construction of apartment buildings and condos. Used primarily as a fire block and sound barrier (hence it’s name), acoustical

concrete is found in the majority of multi-level residential buildings with 4 to 5 floors, commonly called “4 plus ones” in the city and suburbs.

Acoustical concrete raises many issues when it’s discovered during an installation. Since it’s a sand-based mix, it’s gritty and dusty and over time, develops cracks, voids and crevasses, which need to be filled before installing new flooring.

What about the new flooring? Well,

tile cannot be installed over acoustical concrete unless the concrete is sealed with a latex sealer. In order to install floating or glued down wood over this material, the concrete first needs to be prepped by filling cracks with a latex crack isolation membrane, otherwise, after the wood is installed you’ll hear a crackly sound similar to walking over a bag of potato chips.

(continued on page 4)



Have a question?

Want to suggest a topic for next month's newsletter?

Send us an email at news@gsfloor.com

Acclimatizing

You hear us say it quite a bit, "The product needs to acclimatize before it's installed." But what does that mean?

Before any pre-finished hardwood or laminate flooring is installed, it must be placed in the actual installation area for *at least* 48 to 72 hours so that the product can be accustomed to the environment and reach common ambient temperature, which will reduce expansion or contraction problems after installation.

Read the label - some manufacturers recommend that the product cartons be opened during this period; others simply recommend that the cartons remain closed and stacked.

Always store hardwood and laminate flooring away from outside walls, windows, doors and air vents and away from direct sunlight, which will not allow for proper acclimatizing.

If installing hardwood over a concrete subfloor, the concrete

must be at least 30 days old.

After the installation, the home must be climate controlled with proper heat and humidity in the winter and dehumidified in the summer to remove excess moisture from the air.

Call us if you have any questions about this process. We want to avoid any issues and provide the customer with a great experience!

Shower Tile



With all the tile options available for a shower, are there any guidelines for the customer?

You bet! When installing tile on a shower wall, it's better to avoid natural stone. Why? Because it's porous, which means it absorbs water and can lead to failure and water leaks.

Since they're non-porous, ceramic and porcelain tile are much better choices for long-term du-

rability and performance.

The size of the tile is important as well when installing a shower pan; in order to allow water to flow to the shower drain, you need a slight pitch which cannot be done correctly with large tiles. It's better to use smaller size tiles to create this necessary angle.

Larger tiles can be used for a shower seat, but remember that these will need to slope slightly

away from the wall in order for water to drain properly, just like the floor.

Today's ceramic and porcelain tiles come in a wide range of colors and textures and many offer the look of natural stone but in a more consumer-friendly format.

Call us for further details and all the scoop on shower tile or visit us on the web at www.gsfloor.com

Plumbing



What does plumbing have to do with hard surface flooring? Quite a bit, actually, especially if your customer is having a new bathroom or kitchen floor installed.

As you know, the G.S. Floor Designs affiliated Service Providers can remove a toilet, sink or refrigerator if the customer has chosen that option and if the existing conditions are acceptable. What does that mean? If the Service Provider is removing a vanity, they will need to shut off the water valves that are

connected to the sink or a waterline connected to the ice maker in the refrigerator.

But what happens if the valves are old and cannot be shut off? If they're broken? What if they aren't where they should be? That's a job-stopper, since no installer should assume the role of plumber and become liable for water leaks or seepage due to poor plumbing conditions.

How can this type of situation be

avoided? Talk to the customer, have them check to ensure the water valves are in place and in working condition. If not, the customer will need to have a certified plumbing professional come out and repair prior to the flooring installation and return when the installation is complete in order to reconnect the toilet, sink or waterline.

Call us at (847) 394-4000, option 3 for further details on what can be removed and replaced!

Set Correct Customer Expectations

How long does the average floor installation take?

Well, that depends. Let's say your customer has decided to replace the living room carpet - is the carpet that's been chosen an F&I stock or Special Order? Is the living room all one level? Is there a lot of furniture in the room? Does the room have many angles or closets? Is the installation area easy to access?

Now imagine that your customer has instead decided to replace the old kitchen floor with ceramic

tile—what's currently on the floor? Is it 9x9 tile that was installed prior to 1984? What does the sub-floor look like? Is the kitchen over a slab or a basement? What types of flooring are in the adjoining rooms? Is there a stove or refrigerator to move? Is the customer replacing cabinets at the same time?

There's no way to address these issues unless you ask! If you let your customer think a one hundred square foot ceramic job will take a half a day, you've set your-

self up for a big problem and the customer will be faced with a lot of frustration.

Some questions just won't be answered until the measure is completed or the installer is actually on-site. But if you let your customer know that ahead of time, you're giving your customer an important tool - knowledge.

Call G.S. Floor Designs; we can answer any question you might have!

"If you let your customer think a one-hundred square foot ceramic job will only take a half a day, you're setting yourself up for a big problem"

Heat & Humidity

Summer is a wonderful time of year, but not for hardwood floors.

Why? Because high temperatures and humidity can cause hardwood flooring to cup, emit creaking or crackly sounds or just feel loose.

How do you solve any of these issues? By making sure you keep your home set at a constant temperature and using a dehumidi-

fier.

Wood floors will cup if there is excess moisture underneath it, like a crawlspace, for example. The moisture source must be identified and eliminated. Evidence of moisture may be water or mud in the crawlspace or mildew in the framing.

Typical sources of excess crawlspace moisture are improper

drainage of run-off water, faulty gutters or downspouts, soaker or sprinkler systems that direct water near or against the foundation, improper grading or backfill or improper drainage from household appliances.

Using a dehumidifier will help eliminate the excess moisture and condition the wood for years of beauty.



Have a question?

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Sub-Floors

One of the most challenging aspects of any flooring job are the unexpected issues that arise once the old flooring is removed.

Why? Because until the area is cleared, you just don't know what the condition of the sub-floor will be. Adding to this troublesome brew is the effort of removing old grout, Thinset,

leveler and other types of product; the older and denser the existing flooring, the more likelihood of causing damage to the sub-floor, thus needing replacement.

Prep work is the other big unknown; the sub-floor may be unstable or damaged and have to be replaced; nobody knows until it's revealed.

No installer will lay new flooring over a suspect sub-floor. Why? Because he cannot guarantee it won't fail, thus causing damage to the new flooring and possible failure, which leads to total job replacement.

Make sure you discuss this process with your Hard Surface customer!



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Acoustical Concrete - *continued from page one*

In order to help you understand what's involved with the various types of flooring installations over acoustical concrete, which the customer can find out if they have in place by contacting their building association or condominium board, we've developed a quick guide:

For ceramic tile - installer will remove existing flooring, vacuum all loose sand, dust and grit then skim-coat the entire surface with a latex-modified thinset. Over that, a layer of anti-fracture membrane in order to solidify the concrete. Then the tile can be installed as usual.

For a glue-down or floating wood floor, in addition to vacuuming all loose sand, dust and grit, and applying a skim coat of latex-modified thinset, the installer will most likely apply a leveling product to ensure the surface is completely level before completing the installation.

It's vital to understand that this sub-base needs to be solid with good integrity. The concrete can be cracked, because these cracks will be contained and filled with the skim-coating, but if there are voids and/or crevasses, or loose in any way, the concrete should be removed entirely. If this is the case,

carpet would be a better choice than a hard surface product; but keep in mind, extra preparation would be involved as well to ensure a quality job.

Of course, all installations that involve acoustical concrete will be different. But as long as the customer is aware of the possible additional labor and materials that may be involved, the correct expectations are set and the surprise factor is removed.

Please visit our website www.gsfloor.com if you have any questions on this or any other installation process!

How to Close the Sale Every Time

It's the moment of truth...you've received the finished quote and need to call the customer to close the sale. Will you sell this job or lose this customer?

You will sell the job, if you follow these simple steps:

- Ensure your customer has been pre-qualified on the product and installation process
- Build the quote in timely fashion and be sure it's complete
- Bring the customer back to the store to discuss the quote
- Understand and explain to your customer the full value of the project :

- Job backed by the power of The Home Depot

- Fully certified and insured installers that have passed a rigorous background check

- Full one-year labor warranty

- Guaranteed pricing

- Creative financing options

- Quality products with full vendor warranty

- Try to be the one point of contact for the customer to avoid confusion
- Don't be afraid of questions
- Explain and discuss the floor plan to give the customer confidence and eliminate surprises
- Offer to quote in other areas of the home as well
- Explain all services offered and express product/process excitement

- Ask for the sale

According to several Store Associates with consistently high close rates in the Chicago area, if you follow these steps on every completed quote, you will close more jobs and increase your stores' sales.

Add to this the in-store and online training offered by G.S. Floor Designs and you will see your close rate skyrocket.

How? Because by understanding how to read a measure and how the various Hard Surface products are installed, you'll be able to answer any question your customer has and give them the confidence that they've made the right decision to have The Home Depot install their flooring.

Take advantage of the training

www.gsfloor.com and learn how Hard Surface products are installed. Or call us at (847) 394-4000 - we're here to help!

