

Selling solutions generate excitement

By Ken Ryan

Cedar Creek, Texas—Alliance Flooring's national convention here served as the official debut of co-CEOs Ryan Dunn and Kevin Logue as leaders of the buying group—an opportunity to chart AFI's course for the next generation of ownership.

They were not looking to hit singles. As Kevin Logue explained, "We felt we needed to make a bold statement—to make this a landmark convention that 10 years from now people will be talking about."

The talk of this convention—and likely for future conventions—was Perfect Home, an all-new retail selling solution and technology platform intended to create a unique and memorable user experience through technology that is seamless from online to in-store. Perfect Home is a curated collection of select products from multiple mills with a focus on colors, visuals, warranties and performance attributes. The system will initially be offered for carpet this fall. The hard surface system is scheduled for 2024.

At convention Alliance Flooring made Perfect Home available—not mandatory—to the first 50 retailers on a first come, first-serve basis. The reaction was swift. When the signup period commenced dealers lined up inside the convention hall seeking to become one of the first 50.

"What they are doing here is unique," said Carole Cross, founder and president of Mobile Marketing, who is a technology partner on this initiative, offering Samplesapp. "I'm just blown away, super excited by the integrations and collaborations that are going on with this selling system to deliver solutions. This is something very special."

Key components of the so-called technology HUB include:

- Room visualizer from Roomvo
- In-store touch-screen kiosk with QR code reader
- Digital marketing and enhanced lead capture
- Samplesapp—designed to solve the challenge of samples leaving the store and not being returned. The app also makes it easier to begin communication and share marketing and product information with the customer.
- Interactive Design Consultant, or IDC—a technology developed by Form Films that is exclusive to the flooring industry for Perfect Home members. With IDC consumers are guided through the flooring selection process by a designer who recommends products based on the customer's design preferences. The matching products can be seen in the room visualizer and saved for an in-store visit.



Co-CEOs Kevin Logue (2nd from left) and Ryan Dunn (3rd from left) with other members of Alliance Flooring's staff: David Ellis, Tami Stahl & Megan Simmons.

All Alliance members who purchase the Perfect Home selling solution will also receive a redesigned website with the features and branding of the HUB website.

Dunn and Logue told FCNews they had been strategizing about delivering a difference-making selling solution for a few years. As the pieces came together, they reached out to supplier partners for their input and buyin before taking the plan to their retail buying committees to sign off.

Retailers are gung-ho

Judging by their eagerness to sign up, Alliance Flooring dealers were quick to embrace Perfect Home as the ideal selling solution to reach the next generation of flooring customers. "This is something that needed to be done, it's a necessary step in our evolution," said Paul Schallberg, co-owner of Star Flooring, Boulder, Colo. "The entire program is curated very well. It's a win for everyone involved. We're excited."

Other dealers said the technology pieces will raise their profiles among the younger set. "This will show my customers that I am working toward the future, that I'm not stagnant, that I'm ready to help that next generation," said Brad Coty, sales manager with Carpet Brokers of Missoula, based in Montana. "The younger shoppers don't want to go through a slow buying process. They want to hit the 'easy button' or—in this case—the kiosk."

Tony Fry, president/owner of Texas-based CarpetsPlus Colortile of Winnsboro, plans to turn the business over to his daughter, April, soon. This is a step in the right direction, he said. "Perfect Home positions us for the future; it will put us ahead of the curve."

Claire McCoy, owner of Rugs, Rolls 'n' More, Plaistow, N.H., praised Dunn and Logue for "taking a monumental leap forward—it is extremely ambitious

what they have done here," before adding, "I'm thrilled to see everyone jumping on board with Perfect Home. This is right in line with how consumers shop."

Buying group member Mike Peters of CarpetsPlus Wisconsin in Madison, said he was sold on the new concept halfway through the initial presentation. "I could see it had a lot of benefits. It's going to make our advertising dollars more efficient. The whole concept [of the technology HUB] is attractive to younger people who are not impressed with 1970s-era order processing. Us old-timers must get with the program because this is the way it should be done."

First-year members Cynthia Kramer and Bob Gurley of Pulskamps Flooring Plus, Batesville, Ind., were among the first 50 to sign up despite being newbies with the group. "It's pretty exciting being one of the first," Gurley said. "A lot of what we're wanting to do for the store is in this package. It's all here for us to grab it and take off."

Alliance Flooring will convene a Perfect Home Summit at Barnsley Resort, Adairsville, Ga., in October for the 50 members taking on the new selling system.



Members were excited to see the new Perfect Home displays as well as the technology piece. Perfect Home includes three carpet & three hard surface displays to start.



Roomvo's Brandon Shidlovski (left) showed Alison Dennis and Terry Byrd, CarpetsPlus of Steamboat Springs, Colo., the new Perfect Home in-store digital kiosk.