

# FLOOR

## Trends & Installation

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Alliance Flooring co-CEOs Ryan Dunn and Kevin Logue showcase the new Perfect Home selling solution hard surface display at the group's convention in Orlando.

## Alliance Flooring Expands Perfect Home Retail Selling Solution

By Tanja Kern

One year ago, the Alliance Flooring buying group introduced the Perfect Home retail selling solution. The two-pronged approach to flooring sales utilizes merchandising and technology to bridge the gap between the digital and in-store experiences. It was a strategic investment that the group's leadership says carefully balances the fierce independence of its 322 retail members with the need for a unified approach to marketing.

"What we're trying to do is keep everyone ahead of where the industry's going," said Alliance Flooring Co-CEO Ryan Dunn. "The industry's changing and evolving right in front of our eyes. Consumers are getting more sophisticated, they're getting more savvy, they're embracing technology more. They have less time to shop. They're going to fewer stores. They want the decision and they want the process to be simpler and more streamlined. And that's what we're trying to deliver to them. We're obviously big proponents of independent specialty, brick-and-mortar retailers. That is what this selling system is designed to do: support those small business people."

50 members of Alliance Flooring invested in the inaugural rollout of the system, which began with soft surface.

"This is a big, big seismic shift in the way we do merchandising for both Carpetsplus and Carpetland," said Co-CEO Kevin Logue. "We always had mill-specific racks. Now we own the fixtures, we own the displays, and we've got the mills bidding for slots in those displays, bringing their best products, bringing their best values, bringing their best pricing."

The carpet system includes 195 products from Anderson Tuftex, Engineered Floors, Mohawk, Phenix, Shaw Floors and Tarkett Home that are merchandised in three collections of 48 cards organized by style, performance and comfort.

"The carpet system shipped late October, early November, so it's been in the stores about

three months and the reaction has been phenomenal," Dunn said. "The members love it."

"It's one of the easiest selling systems that I've ever seen," said Don Cantor of Lake Interiors in Chelan, Washington, who was one of the first members to invest in Perfect Home. "It eliminates a lot of time and flipping through every single sample in the showroom."

The Perfect Home system is designed as a boutique store-within-a-store program. Merchandising displays can be ordered for wall or island presentation, depending on a store's specific needs, and leaves the remainder of a retailer's showroom square footage to showcase other manufacturer or distributor programs as needed for their local market.

"Candidly, we didn't know what kind of reaction we were going to get," Dunn said. "It was very much uncharted territory—the way we structured the selling system, the way we put together the product was a very different direction—and we were very, very excited when the membership embraced it to the level that they did."

Alliance Flooring's three-year plan expands this year with 50 more retailers and the addition of the hard-surface displays. Dunn and Logue said they kept the rollout to 50 retailers a year to keep costs manageable for everyone involved—and to be able to get ample retailer feedback on which products to include.

"We launched the carpet first and took more time on the hard surface," Logue said. "We wanted more member feedback on the hard surface in terms of what suppliers we should align with, what the color selection should be."

The new hard surface color program offers products from Engineered Floors, Happy Feet, International Flooring Company (IFC), Karndean, Mannington, Metroflor, Mohawk, Tarkett, Trucor and Shaw Floors. A few unique offerings include 10 exclusive SKUs of WPC from IFC, six

exclusive SKUs of WPC from Metroflor, and an island display dedicated to Mohawk's PureTech PVC-free flooring and Revwood laminate.

The hard surface program also includes tile displays from Emser and Daltile. The Dream Designs display, in collaboration with Daltile, showcases curated design collections for each room that include porcelain floor tiles, glaze, ceramic mosaics, and glazed ceramic wall tiles. Another tile collection from Emser, called Artistic Accents, includes a 16-board wall tile showcasing statement tiles for the walls in various colors and sizes

In addition to the in-store merchandising displays, the system can include an in-store Roomvo interactive touchscreen display that mirrors that products and experience that consumers may have researched on the retail websites. In addition to Roomvo, other technology partners include Mobile Marketing, TheoryFarm, QFloors, Showroom Pricing, and Form Films, which is developing an Interactive Design Consultant, or IDC. The IDC technology for 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.

Dunn said Alliance Flooring members will have first dibs on being a part of the second rollout of Perfect Home before the team takes it to other retailers across the country.

"At the end of the day, it's still their choice," Logue said. "They don't have to take on Perfect Home to be Carpetsplus or Carpetland, but we try to create it and position it where it's a no brainer—it just makes sense to do it. If you want to grow your business, if you want to evolve, if you want to stay ahead of where the industry's headed, at the end of the day, it's a good business decision."