

As We've Learned—Where Your New Floors Come From Is As Important As How They Look

(NAPSA)—Some learned the hard way that just because a new floor looks good and the price was right it might not be the best option for you and your family.

Where a floor comes from, the company that manufactures the floor, and the retailer that sells and installs it are critical considerations when it's time to buy new floors.

Consider the expense and the impact installing new floors will have on you and your family. We all know by now that being an informed consumer is essential. Working with credible companies that always have your back—from the decision process to years after your installation—will make the process as smooth as possible.

Your first task when buying new floors is to be informed and prepared. Even before you seek the store, you should get a sense of what types of flooring would suit you and your family best. Remember, your floor not only has to look good and feel comfortable, it has to be able to take whatever you, your kids, pets and guests care to dish out for years on end. Do you want a floor that stands up to heavy traffic? Is easy to clean? Warms the room? Blends well with walls and furniture? How much space do you have? What's your budget? Once you consider these questions, a flooring professional will walk you through the remaining steps to find the best floor to suit you and your family.

For help finding a reputable flooring store in your area, check out www.wfca.org, which offers a database of certified flooring retailers across the country. Once you identify a few local stores, check out their reviews on Yelp and Angie's List. Read the customer testimonials to help make your selection. Another great resource is friends and colleagues who have had new floors installed—find out about their experiences, the good and the bad.

The flooring dealer you select should be dialed into your tastes



You can rely on independent flooring retailers to provide the latest in looks, room layout and economical options—and be there for you when you make your decisions.

and needs. Stores that sell a variety of goods for the home—tools, plants, groceries and so on—likely will not have the range of products and prices and the in-depth flooring knowledge that you can find in a specialty store. You also can't count on finding the same sales associate when you go back for more information or with an issue!

Specialty flooring retailers are professionally trained and specialize in just one thing—flooring. Salespeople in these stores make it their business to know the qualities and characteristics of flooring products, as well as the latest styles, colors, trends and proper installation techniques. There may even be interior designers affiliated with the store who can help you find the floor that's best for your home.

Independent flooring retailers invest in continuing education to keep themselves at the forward edge of the industry's technologies and fashions. They know which manufacturers they can rely on to bring you quality products. They can guide you step by step to get the most out of each square foot of flooring. Since their business is dependent on it, an independent retailer selling flooring exclusively tends to be invested in having happy, satisfied customers and so is likely to stock the brands that

best provide value and customer satisfaction over the long term. Plus, they'll be there to answer any questions you may have when the floor is installed—or even years later. After all, repeat customers and word of mouth are how they stay in business.

When you've found the right floor for your home as well as the store you want to work with, one last step may help you save a little more time, trouble and money. Ask your retailer these questions and make sure you are happy with the responses: Do you offer warranties and guarantee customer satisfaction with the end result? Who will be responsible for the flooring installation? Is the installer's work 100 percent covered by the store? Will you be provided with and given final approval of a complete budget with a thorough breakdown of ALL costs including fees and services? Get the name and contact information of someone at the store whom you can reach in case of an emergency after hours or on the weekend. And lastly, find out who to reach out to at the store if there is a problem down the road.

Learn More

For further facts and useful tips about buying and enjoying floor coverings, including where to find a certified dealer nearby, visit the World Floor Covering Association at www.wfca.org.