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Karen Mendelsohn, senior vice president of marketing, makes her mark at Mohawk. See story on page 12.

Channel Surfing

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMS THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

BY TERESA O'DEA HEIN

The wealth of online shopping tools, blogs and review sites at consumers' fingertips is changing the ways they shop for flooring. More and more people start with sites like Houzz and Pinterest for inspiration, and follow up on store visits by checking ratings on Yelp, or polling friends and family on Facebook.

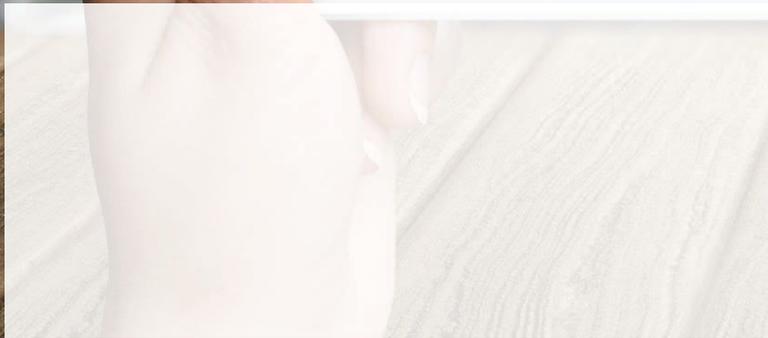
"Being everywhere the consumer expects you to be is the key to reaching them as early in their journey as possible," said Misty Hodge, director of digital marketing for Shaw Floors.

"The question isn't if consumers are engaging with technology, it's when, where and how they're using it — understanding that is what makes a company's digital efforts successful," Hodge pointed out.

While consumers typically go to two or three brick-and-mortar stores, they might visit 15-20 online destinations," noted Seth Arnold, vice president of residential marketing at Mohawk Flooring NA. "Research shows that an ideal time to engage consumers is from 9 p.m.

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TECHNOLOGY *Issue*



CCA GOES CONSUMER CENTRIC

See stories on page 4

Sticking Power

Adhesive suppliers keep pace with next-generation solutions

By Teresa O'Dea Hein

Change is the only certainty in today's world. To keep up with evolutions in flooring products as well as the changing needs of fast track construction schedules and end users, adhesive suppliers continue to introduce products that have adapted

to provide shorter cure times, ease of application and cleanup, environmental sensitivity, moisture mitigation and solid performance.

"The most interesting adhesive changes in the industry are being driven by shifts in flooring choic-

es," explained Jeff Johnson, Mapei's business manager for floor covering installation systems. "For example, as broadloom carpet is replaced by vinyl-backed carpet tile or vinyl flooring, SBR-type latex adhesives become obsolete as they don't have the plasticizer migration resistance required.

"But we still work from acrylic, SBR, urethane, epoxy, hybrid polymer technologies that have proven track records to successfully bond flooring of all types and complexities," Johnson noted. "The industry still prefers a liquid product applied by a trowel in which a flooring material is installed. Other technologies have been proposed but none of them have really stuck (if you will excuse the pun). We keep pace by staying in close touch with all the various players in the flooring industry."

David Ford, vice president for sales and marketing at Stauf USA LLC, pointed out, "What we try to do is

"WITH THE TREMENDOUS ADVANCEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIALS, THE AVERAGE TILE INSTALLATION IS NO LONGER AVERAGE."

- JONATHAN SCOTT, LATICRETE

seek the trend and/or style that's coming and have an answer before it hits the market. Stauf launched LVP 777 adhesive as a direct response to the trends associated with luxury vinyl plank (LVP) flooring."

DESIGNED TO PERFORM

Ford said there's also been a focus on moisture mitigation products, and Stauf introduced a moisture mitigation product and adhesive all in one step.

Bob Bates, technical services manager, systems development at Tarkett, said, "Whether a fast-drying, roller-applied adhesive like Tarkett's RollSmart Adhesive or an adhesive technology that has been



DriTac's 7800 Supreme Green can be easily spread with a flooring trowel.

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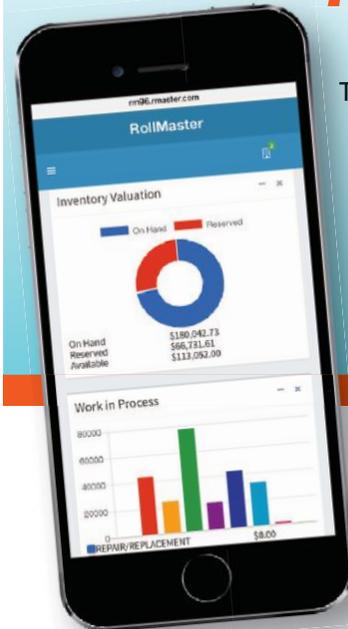
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pre-applied to a flooring product backing during manufacturing such as Tarkett's Transcend SureSet, the goal is the same — create a system that installs faster while limiting post-installation cure time associated with traditional adhesives.

“While floating or loose-lay installations offer speed and design flexibility, many high-traffic installations require a flooring product that's bonded to the subfloor,” Bates observed. “By keeping installation costs low and reducing the time required to re-open a space after installation, fully adhered solutions can meet the desires of today's market while offering performance that is demanded.”

Jonathan Scott, channel manager at Laticrete, noted, “With the tremendous advancements in technology and materials, the average tile installation is no longer average. Thinset adhesives have been designed with unique wetting out characteristics, non-sag performance and extended open time to perform in demanding applications.

“Technology that can lower labor costs, increase operating efficiencies and provide more profitable outcomes is critical to our advancement as an industry,” he continued. “The

most common new developments include fast-curing technology, which allows contractors to install materials in a matter of hours instead of days, and reduces the developer's overall carrying costs.”

Plus, in response to increasing consumer interest and regulatory demand, Scott added, “The tile and flooring industry has seen a significant increase in the quantity and quality of green products.”

Steve Lontchar, vice president of technology for DriTac, maintained, “The most important recent changes in flooring adhesives have been the development of easy-to-use, multi-use adhesive solutions that help maximize overall project value and consistently achieve successful flooring installations.

“These premium-grade products offer multiple solutions in one pail, add to the bottom line, positively impact time management and achieve successful results that considerably add to the value of any project,” Lontchar said.

For instance, he continued, DriTac 7800 Supreme Green is a premium green sound and moisture control hybrid polymer wood flooring adhesive that can be used as an adhesive



HPS Schönox's Roll and Go Adhesive System is geared to LVP and LVT flooring.

only, or a 5-in-1 sound and moisture control wood flooring adhesive able to isolate old cutback adhesive and act as a crack suppressant.

Installation benefits are also spotlighted by Michael Mayer, business development for HPS Schönox North America. The company's Roll and Go Adhesive System for LVP and luxury vinyl tile (LVT) flooring can be installed from a standing position for an easier, quicker application and by using a roller. “You can also load it immediately,” he added.

Benny Dickens, founder, CEO and chemist at Formulators, explained, “The most imperative area of research for the flooring industry is to work toward waterproof versus

moisture tolerant when it comes to adhesive performance.”

Formulators' answer is a patented formulation of a silane-modified, moisture-curable urethane to exhibit pressure-sensitive properties, Dickens reported. “It behaves like a water-based acrylic with a 20-minute flash window and a 60-minute tack window, followed by a transition to a hard-cured film. The cured adhesive film is hydrolytically stable and allows moisture vapor through at a controlled level,” he noted. “Our latest commercial modification is an electrostatic dissipative (ESD) version of our patented waterproof formula.”

In all, these suppliers are problem solvers focused on the future.

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