

Latest padding products serve multiple purposes

By Jacqueline Hinchcliffe

As hard surface flooring continues to evolve and grow in popularity, the need for the appropriate underlayment grows along with it. While it might not be visible once these floors are installed, underlayments serve critical functions. For one, they provide an effective sound barrier, which can be especially beneficial to those working from home in shared spaces. Underlayments also provide much-needed cushioning underfoot, especially under hard surfaces. Padding can also help regulate the temperature in a room.

Following is a sampling of the latest underlayments hitting the market.

FOAM PRODUCTS

Foam Products offers a wide array of underlayment options for virtually any situation. The company's top-selling products for the past 10 years are its Eco and LVT underlayment options. These products cover all vinyl, wood and laminate, according to Jim Wink, vice president of sales and marketing. Recently, Foam Products added a new self-adhesive crack isolation/acoustical underlayment product for ceramic and porcelain called Silencer CPS. The product, which boasts a thickness of 2.4mm, features non-woven polyester fabric, a high-density polyurethane foam, aggressive acrylic mesh adhesive and a release liner. Just like the LVT Silencer product before it, it also boasts a quick and easy installation. The product is also GreenGuard certified for low chemical emissions, making it environmentally friendly.



MP GLOBAL

MP Global recently launched FloorLyft, a premium acoustical and insulating fiberboard underlay subfloor. Unlike any of its previous recycled products, it doesn't come on a roll but rather in sheets. "We had a problem in the installation world that they would replace carpet with the vinyl plank and then you'd have this unsightly gap," said Deanna Summers, marketing specialist and account manager. "So, there's a lot of solutions; you can obviously raise or lower the trim boards or you can add some underlayment underneath it to build it up, [which] is what we're illustrating with FloorLyft."

Aside from ridding floors of gaps, FloorLyft makes for a great acoustical barrier as well, according to Summers. FloorLyft is lightweight, easy to install and approved for use with radiant heat systems, according to the company.



SCHÖNOX

Schönox's Renotex 3D system for multi-family, senior living and apartment buildings includes two different underlayments: a glass fiber reinforcement fabric and an UL-classified mineral wool sound insulation sheet. The customizable system combines these underlayment layers, Schönox RS foam tape and AP Rapid Plus to provide a fast, cost-effective, one-of-a-kind subfloor renovation system. Due to its high density, the system allows for walkability at any time following installation. What's more, the system was designed to exceed sound-dampening, insulation and fire-resistance requirements.

Aside from the sound-dampening and fire-resistance qualities, the system boasts hybrid active-dry technology, which helps facilitate fast turnaround times.



SIKA-DRITAC

The newest underlayment entry in the Sika-Dritac portfolio is the 8400 EnviroTread. The high-performance rubber underlayment is available in 2mm, 5mm and 10mm thickness for glue-down or floating installations of hardwood, carpet, ceramic tile, carpet tile, ceramic stone and laminate. The EnviroTread line makes for a great acoustical barrier by combating sound transmission and improving overall footfall sound performance. 8400 EnviroTread is repurposed from up to 100% post-consumer waste and is VOC compliant.

"Stocking EnviroTread and other underlayment solutions enables retailers to cross-promote comprehensive flooring systems and improve their bottom line and profitability," said Nick Mizzone, marketing coordinator, Sika-DriTac.



VINYL TRENDS

Vinyl Trends' Comfortboost, designed for vinyl PVC flooring, is made using the same material as the company's Eternity underlayments but adds a fused aluminum film. According to Rob Kuepfer, president, the film prevents radiant energy from penetrating down into the floor, instead reflecting it back into the home. This prevents homeowners from losing heat/air conditioning, which not only saves money but makes for a more stable, comfortable environment in the home.

According to Kuepfer, even the best R-rated underlayment materials out there can only prolong heat transfer, but not Comfortboost. "The Comfortboost reflective layer bounces the heat that would normally pass through it back into the floor creating a warmer floor, which then heats up the air layer above it," he explained.



WE CORK

WE Cork's WECU Silently+ is a 2-in-1 underlayment for hardwood and laminate applications. The product includes a vapor barrier and boasts superior sound control and thermal insulation. What's more, it's a low profile, making it easy to install and suitable for floating floors. "A lot of times for installation you need a vapor barrier [along with] the underlayment so this basically covers both," said Tina Crossland, national sales manager.

WECU Silently+ bolsters WE Cork's expansive lineup of underlayments. The company has been selling cork underlayment for decades and has successfully installed millions of square feet, according to Crossland.

