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■ THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL WOOD FLOORING ASSOCIATION

AUG/SEPT 2025

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THE JOBSITE



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FEATURES

ON THE COVER

GET *Organized*

By Libby White Johnston

There is an art to setting up a jobsite. Taking the time to do it right can save time and money throughout a project. Learn tips from wood flooring professionals about how to organize a jobsite for maximum efficiency, safety, and cleanliness.

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The Wood Floor Mallet

By Brett Miller

Among the most common tools in a wood floor installer's arsenal is the mallet. Though simple in appearance, the components of flooring mallets are essential to the role of this tool.



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The Advantages of Smart Moisture Apps

By Jason Spangler

How can an app make moisture testing easier, faster, and more secure? With smart moisture apps you can check moisture readings from the comfort of your phone, anytime, anywhere.

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CHAIR'S CUT

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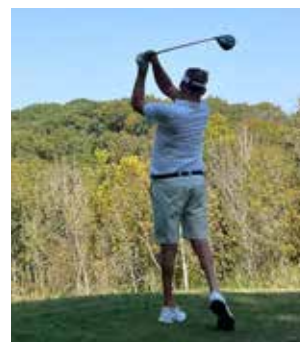
Installing, selling, or creating real wood flooring is just one part of running a successful business. Leadership, strategy, and business development are just as critical. That is exactly why the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) launched the Leadership Development Summit and Real Answers Small Business Workshop.



Last year's inaugural Leadership Development Summit brought together NWFA members from across the industry. They walked away with real tools to navigate challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and drive sustainable growth in their businesses. One of the highlights was the Real Answers Small Business Workshop, with a panel of contractors (myself included) who shared best practices on finance, marketing, operations, and social media.

This year, we are doing it again – and we want you to be part of it. NWFA will host this event October 15-17, 2025, in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to the Summit, a panel discussion with NWFA's Emerging Leaders and the Wood Flooring Manufacturers Assembly will take place at the same time.

Throughout the week, you will have the opportunity to network with industry leaders and attend training sessions developed by the NWFA. They will share practical information you can put into use at your company regarding finances and marketing. There also will be "Mastermind Breakouts" where key industry leaders head up discussions on a variety of topics. Whether you are looking to improve your margins, leverage technology solutions, optimize efficiency, or make informed financial predictions, this event has it all.



Doug Howard of Growth Team Strategies is joining us again this year to help you turn ideas into action and give you the motivation to put them into practice. For a taste of how Doug's insights can help your business, watch the NWFA's new Competitive Edge series, which is now available through the NWFA University. A direct extension of last year's Leadership Development Summit, these new courses are one of the many tools designed to help you sharpen your skills and lead your business to success.

This event isn't solely about classroom time, though. There will be receptions and plenty of chances to connect with your peers and engage more deeply with the NWFA. One of the most fun ways to do that is the second annual NERF Golf Tournament, which will be held on October 17 as part of the Leadership Summit. This optional event will be held at the beautiful Missouri Bluffs Golf Club, just steps from the new NWFA headquarters. Proceeds from the tournament will benefit the Flooring Futures Initiative, which is dedicated to training and supporting the next generation of wood flooring professionals.

Take a significant step toward advancing your career and thriving in the industry you love. To register for the Summit, visit nwfa.org or call 800.422.4556.



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PC Floors, a flooring supply wholesaler established in 1979, announces the grand opening of its newest location in Allentown, Pennsylvania. This marks the company's ninth store and its first expansion into Pennsylvania.

UCX has announced that Paul Castagliuolo, president since 2016, will step down from his position, effective January 1, 2026. At that time, in addition to the CEO role, **Ray Mancini** will assume the role of president on an interim basis. The company also has welcomed **Lynn Druan** as its CFO.



Paul Castagliuolo



Ray Mancini



Lynn Druan

RETAILER ROUNDUP

Floor & Decor has opened new locations in Gilroy, California; Kissimmee, Florida; and San Antonio, Texas.

NWFA Completes 79th Home with Gary Sinise Foundation

The **National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA)** has provided flooring for its 79th home in support of the **Gary Sinise Foundation R.I.S.E. program (Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment)**.



The R.I.S.E. program builds mortgage-free, custom, specially adapted smart homes for severely wounded veterans and first responders. The home dedication for **U.S. Army Sergeant (Ret.) Joshua Hargis** took place in Nolensville, Tennessee. Flooring for the project was donated by NWFA member Somerset. Installation services were provided by Brown Oaks Flooring.

To learn more about the program, and how you and/or your company can get involved, contact the NWFA at 800.422.4556, or e-mail anita.howard@nwfa.org.



MANUFACTURER MEANDERINGS

AHF Products has appointed **Brent Emore** as CEO. Emore, who most recently served as the company's CFO and interim CEO, brings more than two decades of leadership experience in the flooring and building products industries.



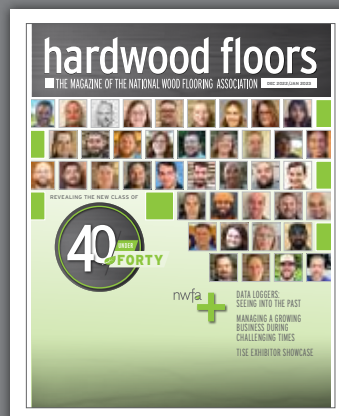
Brent Emore

Arboritec USA has promoted **Tom Ruekert** to president/CEO of the company's North American operation.

Darko Pervan of **Välinge Innovation and the Bjelin Group** was one of eight recipients of this year's business medals at the Swedish Royal Patriotic Society's annual ceremony at the House of Knights. Pervan was honored "for transforming the flooring industry with a clever invention and building a world-leading company."

Get in the news!

To be included in the Business Briefs section of *Hardwood Floors* magazine, please send your happenings to libby.johnston@nwfa.org.



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MANUFACTURER MEANDERINGS

Havwoods has appointed **Rebecca Jeffery** as head of UK and US marketing. The company also named **Andrew Dias** as showroom manager for its New York City showroom location.



Rebecca Jeffery



Andrew Dias



Manny Hernandez

Loba-Wakol North America has promoted **Manny Hernandez** to business manager – U.S. Central Division.

Chemicals group **WACKER** has commenced production of hybrid polymers at its Nünchritz site in Germany.

AHF Products, **Chelsea Plank Flooring**, and **WW Flooring Group**, manufacturer of Maine Traditions, are the latest companies to earn NWFA/NOFMA Mill Certification from the National Wood Flooring Association.



CONTRACTOR CORNER

Footprints Floors recently honored **Matt Therriault**, owner of Footprints Floors of Peachtree City, Georgia, with the Franchisee of the Year Award.



Get in the news!

To be included in the Business Briefs section of *Hardwood Floors* magazine, please send your happenings to libby. johnston@nwfa.org.

Retirement announced at Uzin Utz North America Inc.

Uzin Utz North America Inc. has announced the retirement of Mark Weglowski, who has been with the company for nearly 13 years and has more than 25 years of experience in the hardwood flooring industry. Succeeding Weglowski as vice president of PALLMANN is Josh Neuberger, who has spent 12 years at Uzin Utz North America.



Mark Weglowski



Josh Neuberger

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Wood Stock



MASTERING THE MATCH

By Burt Bollinger

A call from a project manager in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, set in motion a uniquely intricate restoration project for Matthew Szyszka of Floor Master Company. His task was to repair and restore a European-imported wood floor as part of a renovation in a 4,000-square-foot home. But it wasn't just any floor – it was a fumed, prefinished, hand-distressed floor originally installed 15 years earlier, and no one had been able to match its color or texture.

Szyska was recommended for the project after the manager read about his award-winning work in *Hardwood Floors* magazine. He recently had earned the 2023 Wood Floor of the Year award for Best Color and Texture, thanks to his innovative work with fuming techniques. That made him a natural fit for the job.

“The project manager sent me pictures, but I told them I needed a physical sample. Without seeing it in person, there was no way to match the color accurately,” says Szyszka. A panel soon was shipped to Szyszka at his Crystal Lake, Illinois, shop, where he began the intricate process of analyzing the tones and textures.

"A repair job like this isn't just about tools or materials. It's about patience, precision, and getting both the large and small details right."

– Matthew Szyszka,
Floor Master Company

Szyska ended up offering more than 250 color samples using a variety of techniques, including fuming, hardwax oil, and pigmented wax. He then sent the samples back to Wyoming for approval. Once it was approved, Szyska personally traveled to Jackson Hole to walk through the property and further discuss the project in person.

As he examined the home's floor, he found heavy wear, discoloration from liquids, wax that had worn away in places, and damage from high heels. Seven areas of the floor needed patching, most significantly around the kitchen where cabinets and a large island had been removed. The largest repair zone ended up being about 150 square feet.

During the initial walk-through, Szyska noticed the flooring dimensions were unusual. The planks measured $6 \frac{5}{8}$ ", $7 \frac{1}{8}$ ", and $7 \frac{7}{8}$ " wide and were $\frac{7}{8}$ " thick – none of which matched standard sizing. When he brought this to the project manager's attention, they revealed the original floor had been imported from Belgium, which meant the dimensions were metric. Szyska confirmed it with a metric tape measure.

To replicate the original flooring, he sourced raw white oak from Graf Custom Hardwood and a local lumber supplier. The boards were 12' long, $1 \frac{1}{4}$ " thick, and $8 \frac{1}{2}$ " wide – a mix of rift-and-quarter and character grade. He set up a full production station in his shop, including a planer, miter saw, table saw, and routers.

"We had to match the thickness to 20 mm, three different widths, tongue-and-groove profiles, and two-sided hand-scraped bevels," says Szyska. He milled every piece by hand, including cutting grooves on the back of the boards for moisture control. To avoid letting the shop environment interfere with the precision, he even installed dehumidifiers to simulate the drier climate of Wyoming.

Once milled, the boards were dry-laid in the shop and sanded. The bevels were hand-scraped again to ensure a pillowed look rather than a sharp edge. Finally came the color. Szyska found he needed to create two separate batches to account for fading in the existing floor, using varying fume combinations. After that, he applied a custom blend of hardwax oil followed by layers of



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MATTHEW SZYSKA / FLOOR MASTER COMPANY

Duraseal paste wax mixed with dry pigments. Eight total applications were required to achieve the desired tone.

After a curing period, about 350 square feet of flooring was transported to Jackson Hole – a 21-hour journey. Once on site, the boards were left to acclimate for one full month before installation.

When Szyska returned, installation began. Each board was hand-selected and distressed room by room to ensure the new wood blended seamlessly with the original floor. A final pass included deep cleaning and an additional coat of wax.

The results of Szyska's efforts are undetectable to the untrained eye and stand as a testament to his attention to detail and deep understanding of both wood and finish. "A repair job like this isn't just about tools or materials," he says. "It's about patience, precision, and getting both the large and small details right."

PREPPED for Possibility

By Burt Bollinger

When Alex Hamilton of Grain Design Flooring was approached to take on the flooring for a new-construction home in Kentucky, he saw it as more than just a job. It was a chance to showcase creativity for a homeowner open to something distinctive.

The general contractor, who had worked with him before, brought him in near the end of the build to install more than 2,800 square feet in a five-bedroom, four-bath home using Graf Custom Hardwood rift-and-quartered 4" solid white oak. Hamilton ordered 3,100 square feet of material to ensure coverage for the entire job, allowing a margin for cut-allowance.

Most of the living space was located on the first floor, including the open-concept living area and the primary bedroom, with additional bedrooms and a long hallway upstairs. Hamilton began by installing approximately 2,400 square feet of straight-lay flooring throughout the main areas. With most of the layout complete and enough material confirmed for further customization, attention turned to the dining room.

A hobbyist photographer, Hamilton maintains an organized gallery of previous and aspirational pattern work. When clients are unsure, these visual references help them explore what is possible.

"In cases like this, we'll actually give homeowners a discount if we can have some creative freedom," says Hamilton. "This approach shows that it's not all about the money – it's about the craft. We come to work to earn a living, of course, but once they see we're willing to work with them on price to do something special, they are often more than willing to pay."

In this case, that inspiration helped define a focal point for the home. With the foundation laid and the opportunity to incorporate a more distinctive element, Hamilton presented the homeowners with a small panel he had created for a local home and garden show. The design immediately resonated with them, and once they gave the green light, he scaled up the pattern to suit the proportions of the dining room.

"Success comes from preparation. If you do your math, scale it to the space and build good jigs and templates, installing it becomes the easy part. At that point, it's like building with Legos."

– Alex Hamilton of Grain Design Flooring



Once the dining room – featuring a scaled-up chevron pattern – was complete, the homeowner raised the idea of enhancing the mudroom and hallway leading to the garage. She suggested a herringbone layout, but Hamilton offered a creative alternative.

“We had mostly shorts left over. If we went with herringbone, I’d need to order more material,” he says. “Instead, I suggested something completely different that no one else in the area had seen.”

He proposed a double basketweave pattern that would not only make use of the remaining stock but also offer a distinct, high-impact aesthetic. However, working with 4” stock meant adapting the design. “Basketweaves I’ve done before used wider planks – 6”, 7”, or even 8”,” explains Hamilton. “With 4” material, it looked too busy, so doubling up helped balance the scale.”

With the design approved, Hamilton and his team spent a half day milling the material, and the full installation was completed in just three days. Altogether, the layout included 242 individually milled pieces, all glued and nailed into place. Hamilton credits the success to detailed preparation. “Success comes from preparation. If you do your math, scale it to the space and build good jigs and templates, installing it becomes the easy part. At that point, it’s like building with Legos.”

The newly installed floors were first sanded with a Lägler Hummel using 40- and 50-grit abrasives, then worked with a planetary sander through 60, 80, and 100 grit. A final buff with Norton PowerMesh using 120 grit smoothed everything out. For finish, the team used Loba EasyPrime with Whitener as a base coat, followed by three coats of Loba Invisible for a raw, natural look.

Reflecting on the job, Hamilton says the project underscored something important: that there may be more interest in custom floors than many assume. “Many homeowners don’t realize these designs are an option until they’re presented with confidence,” says Hamilton. “If you have the training and support, you can’t be afraid of the challenge. There still is a place for craftsmanship, even in today’s fast-paced market. That shared investment often fuels excitement on both sides. When I’m excited about a project, the homeowner gets excited too. That kind of momentum makes a big difference.”

With the design approved that included a double basketweave pattern (above) and a scaled-up chevron pattern, (right and below), Alex Hamilton of Grain Design Flooring and his team spent a half day milling the material, and the full installation was completed in just three days.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALEX HAMILTON | GRAIN DESIGN FLOORING

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS 

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO PASS LEGISLATION? Politics, Process, and Priorities in 2025

If you've been watching the news, including your Hardwood Federation updates, talking to your members of Congress, or attended the annual Federation Fly-In, one thing is crystal clear - passing legislation is harder than ever. While gridlock in Washington is nothing new, the current political climate and the speed and flexibility of policy development under the returning Trump Administration has added even more complexity to an already cumbersome process. The hardwood industry, like so many others, finds itself waiting on important decisions while policymakers fight over process and priority.

The System is Not Built for Speed. The Founding Fathers did not create a process to move quickly on legislation. The three co-equal branches of government, the deliberate process required to pass legislation, the two-party system which allows for minority dissention (and tools to further slow things down), and the privilege of public engagement all are intended to ensure proposed legislation has a full review before becoming law. More recently, the rise of social media has created further tensions between the parties.

By Dana Lee Cole



Reconciliation: Big Promise, Bigger Problems.

Reconciliation, a powerful tool to pass budget-related legislation with a simple Senate majority, is supposed to streamline action. But this year's massive reconciliation bill, packed with expiring business tax provisions and new revenue raisers, became a political lightning rod. Lawmakers were at odds over what stayed, what was cut, and who paid. Negotiations went late into the night – some running into early morning hours. Ultimately the bill passed and was signed by the president, much to the surprise of many political pundits. However, the tensions between and within party lines that grew out of this process will have a chilling effect on much needed cooperation to move additional legislation this year and next.

The Budget Battle. Crafting and passing a federal budget has always involved sausage-making, but in

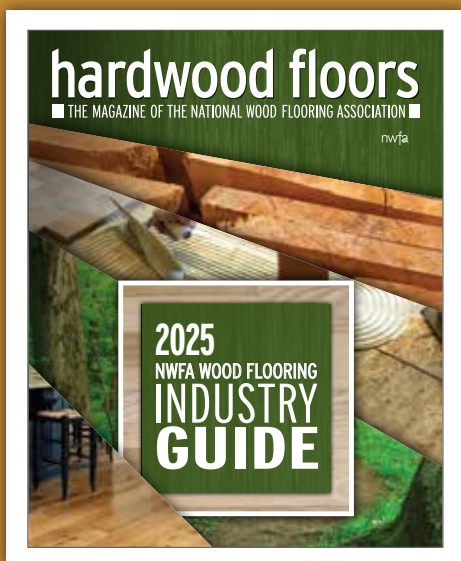
2025, it's more like trench warfare. Deep divisions remain between fiscal hawks demanding spending cuts and others pushing for expanded investments in economic growth, including infrastructure and workforce development.

Defense and Division. Even traditionally bipartisan efforts like the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) are now sources of partisan wrangling. While the NDAA has long been seen as "must-pass" legislation, this year's version has become weighed down by unrelated policy riders, culture war amendments, and broader geopolitical anxieties.

Last year was an unusual year for the Hardwood Federation; we engaged actively on the NDAA in order to get language encouraging adoption of American red oak for use in military truck beds. We also worked to get

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During the annual 2025 Hardwood Federation Fly-In in Washington, D.C., we shared real-world stories of how uncertainty affects mills, markets, and jobs. We made the case that international trade policy must support - not strangle - U.S. hardwood exports. We asked for extension of critical tax provisions. And we reminded policymakers that without a functioning legislative process, we all lose.

Government Affairs *(Continued)*

some troublesome language out of the bill that would have limited harvesting on federal lands. While the NDAA doesn't usually directly impact the hardwood sector to this degree, its fate is tied to broader legislative momentum. When even the NDAA stalls, it signals trouble for everything else – including Farm Bill reauthorization, export program funding, and rural workforce initiatives critical to our communities.

What It Means for the Hardwood Industry. The Fly-In this year could not have been better timed. With reconciliation negotiations unfolding as our members met face-to-face with more than 100 congressional offices and administration officials, we delivered a clear message: our industry needs action – not delay.

We shared real-world stories of how uncertainty affects mills, markets, and jobs. We made the case that international trade policy must support – not strangle – U.S. hardwood exports. We asked for extension of critical tax provisions, which

ultimately proved successful. And we reminded policymakers that without a functioning legislative process, we all lose.

Your Voice Still Matters. The dysfunction in D.C. may seem overwhelming, but our voices carry weight. Every meeting, every phone call, every email helps break through the noise. Advocacy takes persistence. Most of the time, success happens over the course of many months, or even years. The path forward may be tough, but the Hardwood Federation's commitment to the hardwood industry is tougher.

So while legislation is hard to pass – especially now – it's not impossible. And with your continued engagement, we'll keep pushing forward.

Dana Lee Cole is the executive director at the Hardwood Federation, a Washington, D.C.-based hardwood industry trade association that represents thousands of hardwood businesses in every state in the United States and acts as the industry advocacy voice on Capitol Hill. She can be reached at dana.cole@hardwoodfederation.com.



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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

MARKET MATTERS 

SLOW GROWTH DURING ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

The overall U.S. economy is expected to grow slowly during this early period of economic uncertainty in 2025 and 2026 and then grow at a moderate rate thereafter. Consumer spending will continue to drive the economy, growing throughout the forecast period. This economic forecast is projecting real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2025 to be 1.3 percent, consumer spending rising 2.1 percent, and inflation at 3.2 percent.

Key assumptions underlying this forecast:

- Strong consumer demand continues to support economic activity, though uncertainties around tariffs and government policies will slow growth in the near term.
- New home construction in 2025 will continue to be constrained by affordability issues, mainly affecting younger buyers. As consumer income and employment rise in 2026 and beyond, housing starts will rise above 1.5 million units annually. Existing home sales will face moderate challenges in 2025 from the same affordability issues as new home construction.



ADOBESTOCK ©

By Santo Torcivia



- In 2026, like new starts, existing home sales will grow to about 5 million units annually and then higher.
- Real disposable personal income will grow moderately in 2025, buoyed by growth in professional and skilled occupations and then accelerate as employment rises due to investment in domestic production plants coming on-line.
- Non-residential construction will experience slow growth in 2025 through 2026, before rising strongly in 2027 and beyond. The strongest sectors will be education, institutional (public safety and transport terminals), and lodgings.
- More foreign firms will establish flooring manufacturing operations in the U.S. given logistical advantages, tariff avoidance, low capital costs, and rising labor costs abroad. Tariffs on U.S. imports will garner additional government revenue which will somewhat offset federal deficit spending, slowing the growth of U.S. inflation and U.S. dollar exchange value erosion.
- It is not expected that the war in Ukraine or the Middle East, or any other global war or terrorist threat, will threaten U.S. economic growth. There are not expected to be any significant logistical interruptions during the course of this forecast.



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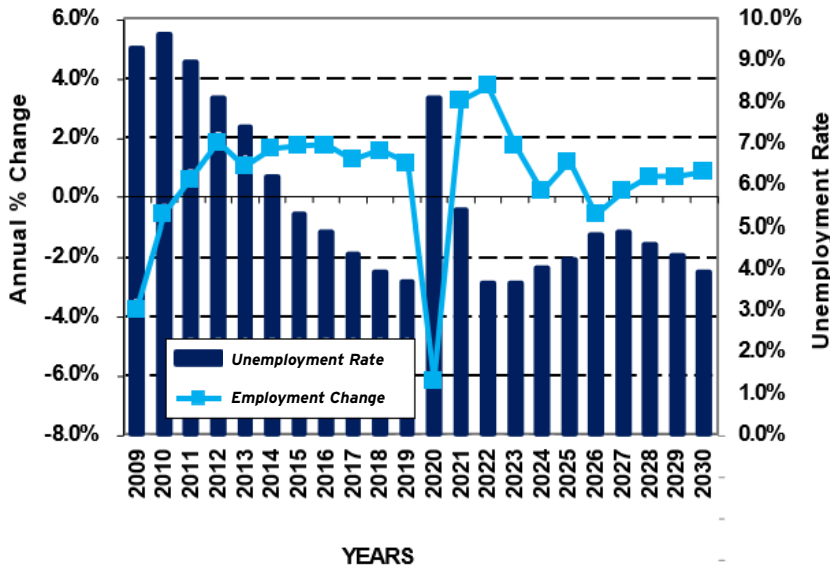
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EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



This is a summary of the June 2025 Quarterly Market Monitor Report published by Market Insights LLC. NWFA members have exclusive access to the full report, which provides forecasts and analysis of economic, market, and industry conditions and trends affecting the North American flooring market. The report includes a historical and forecasted volume of dollar sales of total wood flooring (at mill sell price) per metro area and state. Separate reports are available for the United States and for Canada. The availability of the reports on a quarterly basis will provide NWFA members with current data that can help them develop business plans, prioritize inventory, and react to market conditions in a timely manner. NWFA members may download the full report by visiting nwfa.org.

Significant downside risks related to this forecast include:

- Tariffs on U.S. imports could raise prices and inflation beyond forecasted levels, slowing consumer spending. The tariffs also could disrupt trade relationships and create logistical interruptions.
- Deficit spending, if continuing, will weaken the U.S. dollar. Continued deficits also could accelerate inflation and interest rates severely threatening U.S. economic growth.
- The U.S. stock market is expected to remain relatively positive. Should a major market correction occur, it would jeopardize the economy, especially firms and individuals with retirement savings, endowments, pensions, etc. A risk to this analysis is that a major downturn in the market could trigger a major decline in the U.S. economy and national wealth.

Near-term employment growth will slow as firms, faced with economic uncertainty, hold back on new hires until the situation clarifies itself (chart above). Given the shift of the U.S. economy to more technical occupations and more small businesses, personal income continues to rise supporting consumer spending.

U.S. productivity has been exhibiting gains which offset the continuing annual U.S. budget deficits. With the current budget deficit averaging \$1.75 trillion and the total gross federal debt currently outstanding in 2025 at \$37.3 trillion, continued productivity gains from automation, artificial



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intelligence, and general productivity enhancements will be required to keep the growing federal debt manageable.

A major obstacle to U.S. economic growth is the current high bank prime interest rate. High interest rates are a function of a fear of anticipated return of higher inflation and the large annual federal budget deficit. As inflation cools, the prime rate will fall.

Lastly, Iran's potential responses to attacks on its nuclear bomb making centers are very uncertain. It is assumed that any responses by Iran will not markedly affect the U.S. economy.

Santo Torcivia is president of Market Insights LLC in Reading, Pennsylvania. He can be reached at 610.927.2299 or storcivia@marketinsightsllc.com.

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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

DESIGN TRENDS 

SHARING Real Wood's Story at the United Nations

Earlier this year, PID Floors was honored to be both participants and sponsors of a profoundly meaningful design event and luncheon which took place at the United Nations (UN) in New York City. The purpose was to foster innovation to address design world challenges and celebrate the intersection of creativity, sustainability, and forward-thinking design.

This event brought together UN delegates, global mission representatives, students, and top design industry leaders to celebrate the role of interior design in shaping sustainable and inclusive communities. Susan Kaplan and Currie Gardner from HLW, Emma Bernstein from Project Horizon, and Elisabeth Perreault from Cannon Design, joined as PID Floors' special guests and presenters.

Our family company always has been about more than just hardwood flooring – it is about crafting extraordinary design experiences and sharing our knowledge with others. Three generations and 36 years later, we aspire to continuously inspire, excite, and educate the next generations of the design industry while making sure to focus on sustainability as a tandem goal.

ADOBESTOCK ©

By Steven Skutelsky



Much of PID Floors' presentation that day focused on the work and impact of the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA). We discussed how Health Product Declarations (HPDs) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) are helping us to be transparent in the hardwood flooring industry. We spoke about the importance of education, for consumers and for the next generation of the design industry.

People might be drawn initially to a synthetic product due to its seemingly lower price tag – but via the path of education, it can be taught that real wood floors always will be a better, more long-term, and more sustainable option for everyone that actually will cost way less over time. Part of this education process is explaining all the reasons how and why wood flooring is environmentally friendly and a sustainable design product.

We explained how real wood flooring is a renewable resource, has a low carbon footprint, and is durable. This will lead to less waste and reduced

resource consumption. Trees sequester carbon dioxide during their growth and, when harvested sustainably, can be replaced, making wood a carbon-neutral material. Additionally, wood requires less energy and water to produce than other flooring options like carpet or tile. No energy is used to produce the raw materials – the trees grow just from energy provided by the sun, making wood flooring the only flooring product that is renewable, and the only carbon footprint is the manufacturing process after extraction. Other products are either manmade using energy intensive means and/or synthetic materials based on fossil fuels. Wood flooring production is a zero-waste operation.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVEN SKUTELSKY | PID FLOORS



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"As educational outreach director for PID Floors and as NY11+ VP, it was incredibly moving to see our students present at the United Nations - demonstrating how sustainability, design, and storytelling intersect. Their exploration of sustainable materials reflected both creative excellence and ethical awareness. The event was a proud moment for education, design, and the future of our industry."

– Hans Galutera,
HG Design Works



The sawdust and other waste/byproducts of milling lumber into flooring planks gets used as pellets for heating and powering the production facility. We also talked about pairing with the NWEA to teach these concepts via educational courses at design schools and universities, something we are so passionate and excited about continuing to do.

Hans Galutera of HG Design Works spearheaded our participation in

this event, along with NY11+. "As educational outreach director for PID Floors and as NY11+ VP, it was incredibly moving to see our students present at the United Nations – demonstrating how sustainability, design, and storytelling intersect. Their exploration of sustainable materials reflected both creative excellence and ethical awareness. The event was a proud moment for education, design, and the future of our industry," he stated.

We always are inspired deeply by the next generation of the design industry. But we are encouraged by the next generation of the A&D community's interest and commitment to using only natural and sustainable resources. To spend the day at the UN, speaking about wood flooring, sustainability, and education – topics that are all very close to our hearts and in alignment with our ethos as a company – truly was beyond our wildest dreams. It was a day that we will never forget.

Steven Skutelsky is managing partner at PID Floors in New York City, New York. He serves on the NWEA's board of directors and is an NWEA Certified Sales Advisor. To learn more about PID Floors: pidfloors.com.



Lawrence (left) and Steven Skutelsky of PID Floors were honored to be both participants and sponsors of a design event and luncheon which took place at the United Nations (UN) in New York City.

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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

SPECIAL CONTENT 



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By Anita Howard



REAL WOOD

Reduces Toxin Risks During Fires

In response to the devastating fires in California earlier this year, the hardwood industry is rallying to educate consumers about the benefits of real wood products over plastic look-alikes. The fires, which affected areas from San Diego to Los Angeles, destroyed more than 18,000 homes and structures. The use of plastic products in these buildings contributed to the devastation.

“It is a well-known fact among firefighters that the use of plastic products in homes and businesses makes fires more difficult to fight,” says Paul Hoffeditz, former Battalion Chief at the Rock Island Fire Department in Rock Island, Illinois. “We often encounter things like PVC pipes and luxury vinyl floors in newer construction. Unfortunately, products like these burn faster and hotter than those made using natural materials like real wood. This means we often can’t save the building, because when you’re fighting a fire, minutes count.”

Often, even structures that can be saved are uninhabitable due to the toxic chemicals released from burning plastics. “More and more plastics and vinyls are being used in furniture, flooring, trim, and countertops,” says Hoffeditz, “all of which release hydrogen cyanide when they burn. This is a highly toxic chemical.” In fact, the World Health Organization reports that an airborne hydrogen cyanide concentration of 300 mg/m³ will kill a human within about 10 minutes, so even short exposure is extremely dangerous.

"There's a pretty well-known video produced by the Underwriters Laboratories Fire Safety Research Institute that shows a side-by-side comparison of identical rooms burning. One is made using synthetic materials like plastics, and one is made using natural materials like real wood. The room made using plastic materials burns in less than five minutes. The room made using natural materials like wood takes more than 30 minutes to burn. Clearly, the natural products give your family more time to reach safety, and give firefighters more time to save your home."

— Paul Hoffeditz,
former Battalion Chief at the Rock Island Fire Department

One solution, says Hoffeditz, is to use real wood products instead of plastic. "There's a pretty well-known video produced by the Underwriters Laboratories Fire Safety Research Institute that shows a side-by-side comparison of identical rooms burning. One is made using synthetic materials like plastics, and one is made using natural materials like real wood. The room made using plastic materials burns in less than five minutes. The room made using natural materials like wood takes more than 30 minutes to burn. Clearly, the natural products give your family more time to reach safety, and give firefighters more time to save your home."

There also is the environmental issue to consider. In 2018, in response to a viral video of a plastic straw being removed from a sea turtle's nose, plastic straws were banned in communities throughout the world. Experts estimate that 500 million single-use plastic straws are used every day, making up a sizable portion of the plastic products thrown away on a daily basis.

By comparison, in 2024, 5.8 billion square feet of plastic flooring was sold. A little simple math reveals that equates to 15.9 million square feet per day. And since most plastic flooring has a warranty of only 5 to 10 years, and most cannot be recycled, that translates

to a lot of plastic straws. In fact, just 1,000 square feet of luxury vinyl tile equates to about 570,000 plastic straws. At 15.9 million square feet daily, that equates to more than 9 billion plastic straws each and every day.

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"Real wood products are safe for humans and the environment," says Ian Faight with the Hardwood Manufacturers Association, "even when they burn. In fact, hardwood is used as a heating and cooking source throughout the world, so it's safe to say that burning hardwood is a part of our everyday life."

Real wood products also have the added benefit of being an environmentally friendly material. Trees take in carbon dioxide during their growth cycle and produce oxygen. What's even more impressive, though, is that the products made using real wood continue to store carbon throughout their entire service life. A wood dining room table, wood floors, even wood framed artwork have a great environmental story to tell that no plastic product could ever match.

Anita Howard is senior vice president of industry partnerships and meetings for the National Wood Flooring Association in St. Louis. She can be reached at anita.howard@nwfa.org.



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BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES

FINANCE 

THE POWER OF ORDER: Keeping Your Small Business Finances Organized

In the fast-paced world of small-business ownership, financial organization is often the first thing to fall by the wayside. Between managing customers, employees, inventory, and marketing, it's easy to let receipts pile up and spreadsheets become outdated. While disorganization might seem harmless in the short term, it quietly can sabotage your growth, cash flow, and even your legal standing.

Organizing your business's finances isn't just about staying out of trouble – it's about gaining clarity, control, and confidence. First, we will look at practical steps to help you organize your finances. Then, we will explore the benefits you'll enjoy once you do.

While the idea of getting organized can be overwhelming, you don't need an accounting background to get started. Here are some basic steps any small-business owner can take:

1

SEPARATE PERSONAL AND BUSINESS FINANCES

This is rule No. 1. Open a dedicated business checking account and, if needed, a business credit card. Mixing personal and business expenses creates accounting confusion, limits tax deductions, and could put your personal assets at risk in the event of legal issues.

2

CHOOSE THE RIGHT ACCOUNTING METHOD

Most small businesses use either cash-basis accounting (recording income and expenses when cash is received or paid) or accrual-basis accounting (recording income and expenses when they are earned or incurred). Cash-basis is simpler and often sufficient for small operations, but accrual offers a more-accurate picture of long-term performance. Consult a tax professional to choose the right method.



3 USE ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Manual spreadsheets can work early on, but they are time-consuming and prone to errors. Accounting software automates tasks, syncs with your bank accounts, and generates real-time reports. Look for features such as invoicing, expense tracking, tax estimation, payroll, and financial reporting.

4 TRACK EVERY EXPENSE

From office supplies to client dinners, track every dollar spent. This helps with budgeting and maximizes your tax deductions. Get in the habit of saving and digitizing receipts. Many accounting apps let you scan receipts directly into the system.

5 STAY ON TOP OF INVOICING AND PAYMENTS

Late invoices seriously can impair your cash flow. Create a system to send invoices promptly, follow up on overdue payments and reconcile deposits regularly. Consider offering incentives for early payment or using software that sends automated reminders.

6 SCHEDULE REGULAR FINANCIAL REVIEWS

Set aside time weekly or monthly to review your balance sheet, profit and loss statement, cash flow, and any upcoming expenses. This routine helps you spot trends, flag issues early, and stay aligned with your financial goals.

7 PLAN FOR TAXES YEAR-ROUND

Don't wait until April to think about taxes. Set aside money regularly – typically 25 to 30 percent of profits – to cover estimated quarterly tax payments. If you're unsure, work with a bookkeeper or certified public accountant (CPA) to stay compliant and avoid surprises.

8 WORK WITH FINANCIAL PROFESSIONALS

Even if you manage day-to-day accounting, it's wise to have a bookkeeper or accountant review your records quarterly or annually. They can spot inefficiencies, offer tax strategies, and ensure compliance with evolving laws.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

9 Create a budget: Outline your expected monthly income and expenses. A budget helps control costs and plan for growth.

Use cloud storage: Back up financial documents securely using services like Google Drive or Dropbox.

Automate where possible: Set up auto-pay for recurring bills and automate savings for taxes or emergencies.

Track KPIs: Monitor key financial metrics such as gross margin, net profit, and customer acquisition cost to measure performance and growth.

INVEST IN YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

Staying financially organized isn't a one-time project – it's an ongoing commitment. By investing in systems, tools, and habits now, you set the stage for smoother operations, stronger decision-making, and sustainable growth.

BENEFITS OF FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION

1

BETTER DECISION-MAKING

Clear, up-to-date financial data allows you to make informed decisions about hiring, marketing, pricing, and more. Disorganized finances make it hard to see what is working – and what is not.

2

IMPROVED CASH FLOW MANAGEMENT

Understanding how money moves in and out of your business helps you anticipate slow periods and plan for large expenses. Organized books help you avoid overdrafts, late payments, and missed opportunities.

3

SIMPLIFIED TAX PREPARATION

Come tax season, organized finances make it easier to file accurately, claim deductions, and avoid penalties. If you are ever audited, detailed records can be a lifesaver.

4

ENHANCED ACCESS TO FUNDING

Whether you are applying for a loan, seeking investors, or exploring grants, lenders and stakeholders will want to see clean, consistent financial records.

5

REDUCED STRESS

Money-related anxiety is real. Knowing your financial information is in order gives you peace of mind and more time to focus on growing your business.

Staying financially organized isn't a one-time project – it's an ongoing commitment. By investing in systems, tools, and habits now, you set the stage for smoother operations, stronger decision-making, and sustainable growth.

Dana Rogers is the controller for the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) in St. Louis. She can be reached at dana.rogers@nwfa.org.



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BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES

MARKETING 



Why Structure = Marketing Success

Running a flooring business without a marketing plan is a bit like laying hardwood without a subfloor. You might get it down, but it won't hold up for long. Marketing, like installation, relies on a solid foundation - and that foundation is built on organization. If your promotional efforts are more reactive than strategic, you likely are spending too much time putting out fires and not enough time lighting the path forward. A thoughtful, organized marketing plan doesn't just make your year less chaotic - it makes it more profitable.

By Welton Hong



This might surprise you, but the first step in getting your plan together isn't looking forward – it's looking back. Last year holds the blueprint for this year's success. Business owners should carve out time to review website traffic trends, ad performance, lead volume, email open rates, and showroom conversions. These data points reveal which campaigns connected with your audience and which missed the mark.

A Memorial Day promotion might have sparked a spike in interest. A behind-the-scenes Instagram video could have outperformed every product shot. An ad targeting homeowners searching for wood flooring may have delivered a flood of conversions. Knowing what worked – and why – helps you lay a stronger foundation for the year ahead.

Once you have reviewed the past, it's time to map out the future. Companies that market with purpose don't treat marketing as something to squeeze in when business slows down. They schedule it, budget it, and approach it with the same diligence they apply to installations.

Seasonality is one of your greatest tools. Each part of the year brings different customer motivations. Spring is a natural time for home improvement. Summer attracts vacation homeowners. Fall becomes pre-holiday renovation season, and the new year brings a fresh-start mindset that often translates to flooring upgrades. A marketing calendar that reflects these seasonal patterns keeps your business relevant year-round. When you plan your emails, blogs, promotions, and social media in advance, you avoid the last-minute rush and make room for creativity.

No marketing calendar functions without a well-structured budget. Organizing your finances for the year ensures your messaging doesn't just go out – it lands. That means deciding in advance how much to allocate to paid search, social ads, video production, email campaigns, SEO, and review generation.

Equally important is building in some flexibility. Maybe your "Dustless Sanding Week" campaign goes viral. Maybe a competitor closes shop and suddenly there's an opportunity to scoop up market share. An organized budget isn't restrictive – it's strategic. It gives you clarity but also allows for smart pivots when opportunities arise.

The beauty of an organized marketing strategy is that it creates freedom. With the foundation in place, you're no longer scrambling for last-minute ideas. You're not wondering where your budget went. You're not sweating over whether the phone will ring next week. Instead, you're confident, prepared, and focused.



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A vital component of your annual plan is content. It is no longer a nice-to-have – it is a must-have. Your content works while you sleep, reaching homeowners researching at midnight or waiting in the carpool line. A well-crafted blog post can answer their questions before they ever pick up the phone. A client testimonial can build trust without a word from your sales team. A video showing a project from start to finish can remove hesitation and drive action. These are essential tools in the modern flooring business toolbox.

AI-powered tools like ChatGPT can help generate ideas or jump-start drafts. That said, those drafts still require review. No AI knows your brand, voice, or customers the way you do. The goal isn't to publish content quickly. The goal is to publish content that is right.

Once your plan is in place, the real work begins: tracking how it performs. An organized marketing plan isn't a document that lives in a drawer. It's a living system that evolves with your business.

Make time each month to assess your campaign metrics. Are your Google Ads still converting? Are people engaging with your blog? Are your emails being opened? The best marketing plans are built with structure but leave room for movement. What works in January might not work in July. What resonates in one neighborhood might fall flat in another.

The beauty of an organized marketing strategy is it creates freedom. With the foundation in place, you are no longer scrambling for last-minute ideas. You are not wondering where your budget went. You are not sweating over whether the phone will ring next week. Instead, you are confident, prepared, and focused.

Just like the thoughtfully crafted spaces your floors help create, your business deserves the same level of care. Organize your marketing like you organize your installations – with precision, pride, and a plan – and you will be well on your way to a year of steady growth, stronger branding, and more loyal customers walking across your floors.

*Welton Hong is the founder/CEO of RRM@home, a marketing firm specializing in solutions for home improvement businesses, and the author of *Your Digital Floor Plan: Digital Marketing Strategies for Flooring Businesses*.*

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GET *Organized*

HOW TO STRUCTURE SUCCESS AT THE JOBSITE

By Libby White Johnston

The quote “A place for everything, and everything in its place” has been attributed to Benjamin Franklin. Is that something you apply to tools, equipment, and the space where you work?

There is an art to setting up a jobsite, and everyone puts their spin on it. Taking the time to do it right can save time and money throughout a project. Read on for tips from wood flooring professionals about how to organize a jobsite for maximum efficiency, safety, and cleanliness.

JASON ELQUEST PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUNFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY FOR NWFA



FROM THE START

How to begin the set-up process varies depending on the location, the size of the job, and the type of work being done. Preparing for a smaller project may take minutes, while a larger project could take a few hours. Jobsite setups range from basic to extravagant.

"If it's a small installation and there are no patterned floors, no custom milling needed, no mouldings or reducers, then it might be as simple as a table saw, a miter saw, a jigsaw, and maybe that's all we really need for the entire project," says Jason Elquest of Blackhawk Floors in Scottsdale, Arizona. "When you start getting into patterned floors or a project you're going to be set up on for weeks, that is a different story."

One way to cover all of your bases before the project even begins is to use the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA)'s Jobsite Checklist. The comprehensive document can be used when conducting an estimate at a customer's home. While it is detailed enough to cover substrate evaluation and moisture readings, sections on exterior and interior evaluation can help you think through the needs you will have on site.

Once the sales process is complete, Mark Whatley of Amber Flooring in the Bay Area of California, walks a jobsite to see everything that is in the contract, to be sure they're on the same page, and to address any concerns. "We want to look at the level assessment, take measurements, see that the HVAC is on and there is proper climate for the house, check moisture content, understand the direction of the flooring, header boards, specialty items, transitions at doorways, or expansion joints," he says are just a few of the things he is checking out.

"When stocking the job, we do not put material where we are starting our lines or where lines are going to be running through to make sure our floors are square, because nobody wants to move material more than once," advises Whatley. "Stage your areas and think about where you are snapping the lines versus where you are going to stock all of the material, because if your material is right in the middle of where you are snapping your lines, you're wasting crucial time just to get that first line snapped."

"Put the offset pieces in the garbage or away from the saws, don't just drop them in front of you. It'll get out of hand really fast, and when you're starting to step over piles of debris or cut off chunks, it becomes a hazard. If you're more organized, you tend to become more efficient in your work, and that goes for all aspects of life."

— Mark Whatley,
Amber Flooring

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Organized

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Going into the job, Elquest notes that a big factor is whether or not someone is living at the home. For example, you can't really set up a saw system in the middle of a living room when someone is trying to live there. Other points to consider include confirming with homeowners that furniture will be removed before your work begins, where to park, protecting areas not being worked on, and how to safely secure everything at the end of the day to avoid any potential for injuries involving homeowners or children living there. Additionally, when no one is staying in the home during a project, determining whether it is protected enough to leave your tools behind, if a lock box system is needed, or if it would be best to load everything back up at the end of the day.

EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

The tools needed to get the job done vary depending on the scope of work, but the basics tend to stay the same.

"Table saw, miter saw, jigsaw, oscillating tool, and a router. Hand tools, good chisels, mallets, and a vacuum," lists Elquest. "On every project that we are going to do, those go with me."

Cesar Cardona of Cardona Flooring in Stamford, Connecticut, emphasizes lighting when making his list of must-haves. "Dust containment systems, vacuums, floor protection materials, sanders, edgers, buffers, LED curing equipment, respirators, safety glasses, and ear protection.

"For cleanliness and safety, work off of tables as much as possible, whether it's something as simple as a fold-up table or something extravagant that you handmade or purchased. When we're at a jobsite for a decent amount of time, the saw station I use makes the flow so nice. I have my miter saw, I have my table saw, and a router station right there."

– Jason Elquest,
Blackhawk Floors



We always bring extra portable lights to make sure we can see every detail."

Being based out of Weyers Cave, Virginia, means Aaron Sheaves of Sheaves Floors always brings a backup. "You have to, in case something breaks, because we are two to three hours from anywhere to get something fixed or replaced. I have two of everything – two Power Drives, two vacuums, and two edgers in the van."

Whatley's basics are a miter saw, table saw, nail gun, air compressor, nailer, oscillating tools, circular saws, routers, and hand tools. "A tape measure is probably the most important tool you have out there, right next to your pencil. From there, you have your hammers, nail

sets, speed squares, and all of the safety equipment. Safety glasses, earplugs, you want to make sure those are all in proper working order and that you have them."

SAFETY

Speaking of safety, Whatley believes it should be top of mind at every jobsite. He runs a tight ship from a safety perspective and says the safety equipment is the first thing to come off the work van.

"I don't want a saw or compressor or anything running before there's a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher in case there is an emergency," he explains. "I have a safety meeting every week.

GET Organized

If you're wearing a hoodie, you're not allowed to have a drawstring on it. You either have to take it completely off or not wear the hoodie at all. Same with bracelets, rings, and anything else that can get stuck or caught up in a saw."

In addition to using all the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), another way to protect yourself is to read the instruction manuals for power tools and machines. Reduce the risk of injury by maintaining and inspecting tools properly to ensure they are in good condition.

"For us, safety starts with training, making sure every team member knows proper tool use and understands jobsite-specific risks," shares Cardona. "We always prioritize personal protection and dust containment."

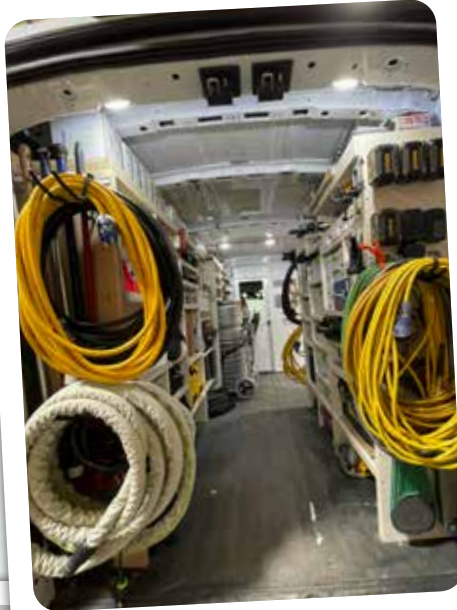
From fires to health, dust is a major consideration when it comes to safety. As Sheaves focuses more on the sanding side of the business, he says dust containment equipment is an area where he would not recommend sparing any expense.

"Everything is hooked up to the vacuum because I don't want to breathe in the dust and have lung issues down the road," says Sheaves. "We always have top-of-the-line vacuums to help contain every single thing that we can."

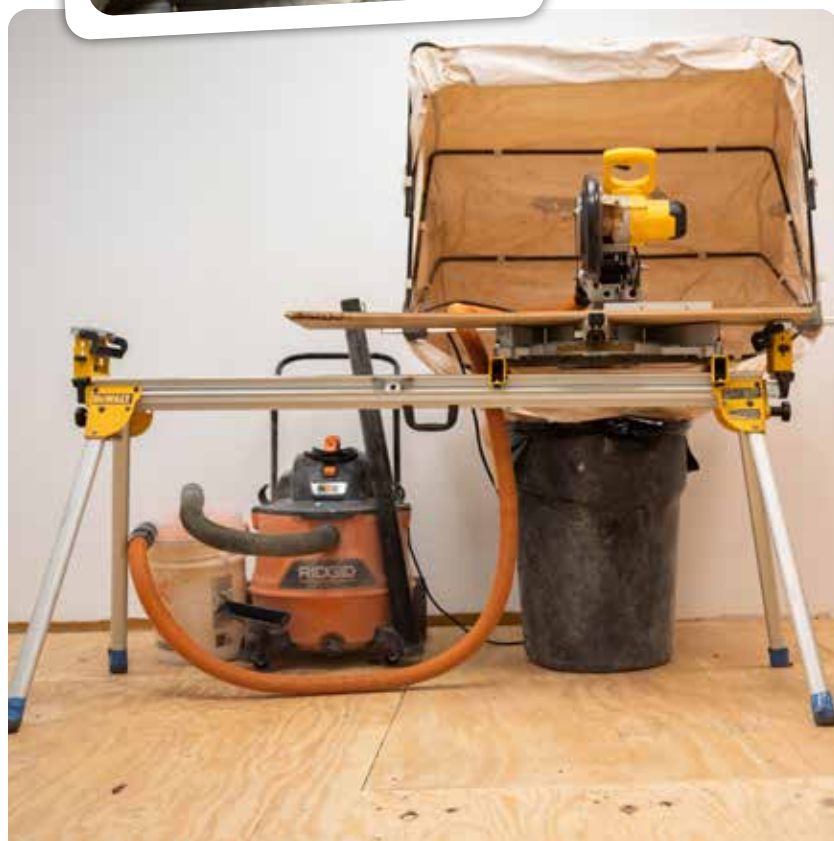
In the process of controlling dust, avoid creating tripping hazards from cords and vacuum hoses by placing them behind a workstation. Beyond sanding, Elquest notes that if you are cutting a lot of wood inside a home, it can create dust and loose pieces of flooring in the middle of a room.

"You have to run a vacuum, and we run dust separators on ours," explains Elquest. "I use a saw hood in conjunction with a vacuum that is attached to our saw, and the hood helps catch all of that loose dust that falls straight down. There's a trash can underneath it, so it falls right into the trash can. That trash can also works for small pieces that would normally get set aside or tossed onto the ground."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHEAVES FLOORS



Aaron Sheaves with Sheaves Floors says of organizing his work van, "It has made me more efficient because I know where everything is at any given time. There is no looking for it; I know exactly where it is at in the van, so I just grab it and go."



INSIDE THE JOB BOX FOR NWFA SCHOOLS

Organizing the tools for the traveling NWFA schools is like organizing a work van or trailer. The only difference is we are packing everything you need for an installation class into two job boxes. The large brown job box has everything from various saws, hand tools, moisture meters, and other items that the instructors and students will need. The smaller green job box has air compressors, cleat and finish nailers, air hoses, and mallets. That's a lot of tools in a small footprint, so the way I have found to make life easy for our regional instructors to pack and unpack the job boxes is to use pictures taped to the inner lid of the job box showing them how the tools should be packed. Also, on the inner bottom of the box, I have included an outline of which tools need to be packed into the box first. No matter what organizational method you use, the important thing is that it works for you and helps your jobs to flow smoothly.



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- Terry Patton, NWFA

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMBER FLOORING

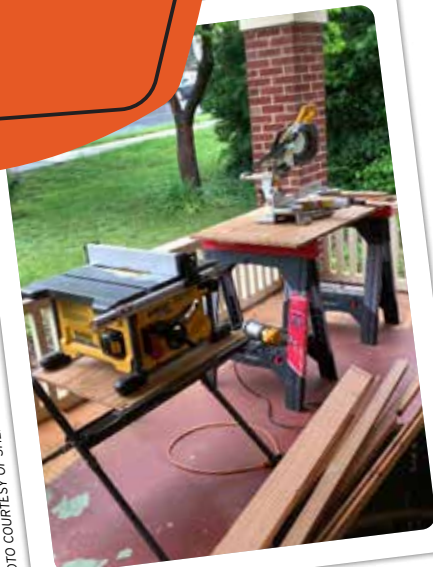


"An organized jobsite reflects your professionalism to the client. Clients remember how you work, not just the final result."

— Cesar Cardona,
Cardona Flooring

In addition to using all the appropriate personal protective equipment, another way to protect yourself is to read the instruction manuals for power tools and machines. Reduce the risk of injury by properly maintaining and inspecting tools to ensure they are in good condition.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHEAVES FLOORS



WORKSTATIONS

Now that you know the jobsite details and the must-haves you will bring, how can you set up workstations for maximum efficiency?

For Sheaves, that process begins with his work van. He has a system where the bigger items are easily accessible and smaller items are up on shelves inside. His advice is to take your time figuring out what works for you and build your own custom shelves based on the specifications of the tools you have.

"Everything I need right off the bat is easy to get to. I don't even have to get into the van to get to them. I can just roll them right to the door and take them out," says Sheaves. "It has made me more efficient because I know where everything is at any given time. There is no looking for it; I know exactly where it is at in the van, so I just grab it and go. I've seen other work vehicles that have everything buried in there, and they spend half of the time unloading the van to get to one small tool. I'm not wasting time looking for something, I know where everything is at all times."

Cardona echoes the importance of keeping equipment organized: "We stage tools in the order they'll be used to avoid wasting time looking for them."

Elquest has a container for everything. If he is not using something, it is put away. He suggests having a small belt or pouch in which to place a tape measure, pencil, and a small pry bar so you always have one handy. Elquest says using containers keeps things neat and out of sight, out of mind, while protecting the tools. "It makes set up faster, makes tear down faster, makes transportation safer and faster, and when you are buying expensive tools, you want to take care of them and have them last for a long time," he shares. "I don't want to just throw my stuff into the back of a truck and listen to it rattle around when I turn corners."

"I have a small box for my router table and my miter saw system, which has all the little wrenches I might need to make an adjustment



Jason Elquest's workstation on display at Blackhawk Floors' brand new showroom in Scottsdale, Arizona. He says using containers keeps things neat while protecting the tools. "It makes set up faster, makes tear down faster, makes transportation safer and faster, and when you are buying expensive tools, you want to take care of them and have them last for a long time."



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMBER FLOORING



for those systems, so I don't get to a jobsite and wonder where a certain wrench is or where my router collets are," explains Elquest. "All of my router bits and everything else stays nice and neat. It makes my job run smoothly because I don't have to run to buy something I forgot and spend \$35 when it's sitting on my bench at the shop, but it's an hour drive to get it, and it is 10 minutes to the distributor. Time is money."

A workstation also can be set up to save wear and tear on your body. Elquest suggests using a table or a portable bench to keep off of your knees.

"When I was younger, table saws and miter saws went on the ground and then you cut on the ground. Everything was done kneeling. I'm older now, so I want to be as efficient as possible," he says. "For cleanliness and safety, I work off of tables as much as possible, whether it's something as simple as a fold-up table or

When someone is living at the jobsite, confirm with the homeowners that furniture will be removed before your work begins, where to park, protect areas not being worked on, and safely secure equipment at the end of the day.

"The house should be cleaner when you leave than it is when you get there, regardless of whether it's a brand-new construction home or it's something 200 to 300 years old in rough shape."

– Aaron Sheaves,
Sheaves Floors



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARDONA FLOORING

something extravagant that you handmade or purchased. When we're at a jobsite for a decent amount of time, the saw station I use makes the flow so nice. I have my miter saw, I have my table saw, and a router station right there. I can make all my cuts, and everything is in one spot. It's almost like setting up a portable shop."

Whatley advises locating the nearest source of power at the site to avoid not drawing enough power through your cords and tripping breakers. Additionally, set up your areas as close as possible to where the installation is taking place, giving enough space around saws and tools so you can still walk around the area. "Houses out here can be 12,000 square feet, so we cannot have our area on the opposite side of where we are starting. That would take way too much time to go back and forth," says Whatley. "A lot of times, we

will set up and then tear down areas of tools and set them up in other areas as needed throughout the project."

CLEANLINESS

After a workstation is in use, keeping it clean is key. This contributes to the safety and efficiency of your team while also keeping the homeowner happy.

"That's what the customers want," notes Sheaves. "The house should be cleaner when you leave than it is when you get there, regardless of whether it's a brand-new construction home or it's something 200 to 300 years old in rough shape."

"Clients notice it right away, and it impacts their trust," shares Cardona. "We clean continuously as we work, not



just at the end of the day. Clients tell us often how impressed they are with our cleanliness.”

Cleaning tools as you put them away and cleaning the workstation as you go is Whatley’s recommendation. “Put the offset pieces in the garbage or away from the saws, don’t just drop them in front of you. It’ll get out of hand really fast, and when you’re starting to step over piles of debris or cut off chunks, it becomes a hazard,” he says. “If you’re more organized, you tend to become more efficient in your work, and that goes for all aspects of life.”

A jobsite kept in good condition makes a statement about being professional. Cardona says to keep in mind, “Clients remember how you work, not just the final result.” So, not taking shortcuts and having structure to the set-up process just may be the secret to success.

Libby White Johnston is the publisher of Hardwood Floors magazine. She can be reached at libby.johnston@nwfa.org.



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The Wood Floor **MALLET**

Wood flooring installation demands the right tools for the job. Among the most common tools in a wood floor installer's arsenal is the mallet. This tool is designed specifically to be used with pneumatic mallet-actuated flooring nailers and staplers, or manual flooring nailers. The mallet must be capable of delivering controlled force without damaging the flooring surface. Though simple in appearance, the components of flooring mallets are essential to the role of this tool.

This article details five primary components of a wood flooring mallet: the handle, the head, the wedge, the rubber, and the cup ring (or clamp), as well as proper use of this tool and alternative tools used in its place.

By Brett Miller



THE HANDLE

The most common material used for mallet handles is hickory, prized for its superior strength-to-weight ratio and exceptional shock absorption. This is the same reason hickory long has been favored for baseball bats. During floor installation, repeated impact creates significant vibration which can lead to health issues such as strains, tendinitis, and even carpal and cubital tunnel syndrome. Hickory helps dampen this shock, reducing fatigue for the installer and improving control.

While less traditional, fiberglass handles also are used and offer notable advantages. Unlike wood, fiberglass won't split, making it a durable alternative option. However, it does not absorb vibration as well as hickory, and some professionals find fiberglass handles transmit more impact to the wrist and elbow.

The length of the handle varies depending on the ergonomics of the tools. The manufacturer of the mallet normally pairs the length of the handle with the nailer it is used with. A lower profile nailer will require a longer handle, while a nailer that is positioned higher will require a shorter handle. Some installers even cut their handles to a comfortable position for their stature.

Regardless of material, design, or length, most handles feature grip-enhancing dimples or textures, or even over-lay grips that help the installer maintain a secure hold of the mallet during floor installation. Ergonomics and grip design are essential considerations for tool performance and user safety.

THE HEAD

The mallet head is constructed typically from either cast iron or aluminum, with each material tailored to specific needs. Cast iron heads, normally available in 3-pound and 5-pound options, deliver more driving force and often are preferred by flooring professionals in heavier-duty installation applications. Aluminum heads, commonly found in lighter weighted, 1½-pound mallets, provide handling ideal for pneumatic nailers that require only a light tap to activate the plunger.

Regardless of the type of metal used, the head is designed with a tapered end and a rubber end that allows the installer to drive the boards tight while reducing the likelihood of damage to the face of the wood plank.



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AT THE SITE

The Wood Floor Mallet (Continued)



For those old-schoolers who used to hand drive cut-nails into the floor with their mallet, the taper of the head is perfect for driving and setting the nail into the nail pocket of the tongue, without damage to the tongue or the face of the board.

Most cast iron or aluminum mallet heads undergo a finishing process called electrocoating, or e-coating. This process involves applying a thin, corrosion-resistant paint layer to the metal using an electrical current. The coating not only resists chipping, but also resists rust and protects adjacent materials from metal-to-metal abrasion.

LOCKING THE HEAD TO THE HANDLE

A critical component of the mallet is the wedge, a small but essential piece that locks the mallet head onto the handle. After the head is pressed onto the end of the handle, a wedge is driven into the top of the handle, expanding the hickory wood to create a tight mechanical fit.

In some cases, epoxy is applied alongside the wedge to ensure a permanent bond. A loose or improperly seated wedge can result in the head detaching during use – a serious safety hazard. Regular inspection of the wedge and handle connection is advised as part of ongoing tool maintenance.



THE RUBBER CAP

Perhaps the most critical wear component of the flooring mallet is the rubber striking cap. Wood flooring mallets use a very high-quality rubber that contains a high percentage of natural rubber, similar to the material used in tire manufacturing. This type of rubber is chosen for its durability and resistance to breaking down over time. According to Todd Anstett of Pownail, “lower-quality rubbers can dry-rot, crack, or crumble, especially in dry climates or after prolonged storage. This is why we opt for the higher quality rubber.”

Rubber hardness varies among manufacturers and affects both the mallet’s impact behavior and its potential to damage flooring. Harder rubber transfers more energy with less compression, which may increase the risk of denting wood or scuffing finishes. Softer rubber cushions the blow more effectively, but can leave heavier marks and break down more quickly.

Rubber caps also are available in different colors, usually black or white. Traditionally, black rubber mallets were used for unfinished flooring, and white rubber was used for factory-finished flooring. The natural color of the rubber is tan; white rubber is bleached, and black rubber is pigmented. According to Anstett, both color options typically offer comparable performance, though many installers still favor white rubber to avoid potentially leaving black scuffs on the finished floor.

THE CUP RING OR CLAMP

To keep the rubber cap securely attached to the mallet head, a cup ring or clamp is used. This component fits snugly around the base of the rubber, where it attaches to the mallet head, preventing it from shifting or detaching during repetitive use.

These clamps can vary slightly in form; some are rigid cups, while others are metal ring clamps, but the principle is the same, keeping the rubber on the mallet head.

MALLET WEIGHT AND USE CASES

The overall weight of the mallet is determined mostly by the type of nailer and installer preference. For pneumatic



Rubber striking caps



Rubber cup ring



nailers, which are activated by a simple strike, 1.5- and 3-pound mallets are most common. The lighter 1.5-pound mallets reduce fatigue and allow for faster work without overdriving the plunger. Anstett noted, “the heavier 5-pound mallet originally was intended for use with manual nailers, which require more force to operate.” Personal preference also plays a role. Some installers favor heavier mallets for their momentum and reduced effort per strike, while others prefer lighter tools for improved speed and reduced strain.

AT THE SITE

The Wood Floor Mallet (Continued)

ALTERNATIVE AND EMERGING TOOLS

While traditional flooring mallets remain standard for many hardwood installations, alternative tools are very common, and in some cases a requirement for the floor being installed.

Tapping blocks, for instance, often are used with thinner profile engineered wood floors, where the tongue-and-groove may not be able to withstand the impact of a traditional flooring mallet. Tapping blocks are designed specifically to join engineered wood floor planks together with much less force, while reducing the risk of damage to the board. Many flooring manufacturers require the use of a designated tapping block instead of a flooring mallet for installation.

More recently, “ring hammers” or mallet rings have entered the market. These tools have become a common tool for parquet installations in the European market. They are made from a similar high-grade rubber as used in traditional mallets, but they are donut-shaped and designed to offer a different ergonomic option for applying tapping force while reducing fatigue. These tools are ideal for the precision and delicacy often needed when installing a patterned parquet floor.

The mallet used for wood floor installation is far more than a simple striking tool. Its performance and longevity depend on the quality and compatibility of its core components. Each part is engineered for specific functions, from reducing



Tapping blocks

Ring hammer

installer fatigue to minimizing damage to premium flooring materials. A well-made traditional mallet remains a cornerstone tool in hardwood installation, delivering precision and reliability in every strike.

Brett Miller is the vice president of technical standards, education, and membership for the National Wood Flooring Association in St. Louis. He can be reached at brett.miller@nwfa.org.



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AT THE SITE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WAGNER METERS

An Orion 950 Moisture Meter sends its readings to a mobile app via Bluetooth.



The Advantages of *Smart* MOISTURE APPS

How can an app make moisture testing easier, faster, and more secure? In this article, I will explain:

- How apps can enhance the moisture testing process
- How to know whether your moisture device comes with an app

HOW APPS CAN ENHANCE THE MOISTURE TESTING PROCESS

Convenience and efficiency is the name of the game for any mobile app. Smart moisture apps are no exception. With smart moisture apps you can check moisture readings from the comfort of your phone, anytime, anywhere. Smart moisture apps are user-friendly, portable, and typically free.

Besides providing a more convenient way to monitor your moisture devices, smart moisture apps help you avoid liability issues by keeping your moisture data secure. Of course, the specific capabilities of each app will depend on the app you are using. To give you a broad understanding of what these apps can do, we will go over some of the best perks of using a smart moisture app, including:

- Wireless data retrieval
- Moisture alerts
- Secure data storage
- Report generation
- Easy data sharing

WIRELESS DATA RETRIEVAL

With the help of Bluetooth, moisture devices can transmit moisture readings to smart moisture apps wirelessly. The devices can provide real-time readings to get the most-current look at your floor. Or, you can set your device to take readings at regular intervals so you can see how your floor's condition has changed over time.

Because regular and real-time readings provide current and consistent data, setting up your device to connect to an app in this way can help you catch (and mitigate) developing moisture issues that might have slipped by if you limited yourself to manual moisture device checks.

Some moisture devices even can send your smart moisture apps' moisture readings remotely, making it so you don't have to go all the way to the jobsite to check your moisture devices. (Although, remote-monitoring capabilities may require additional hardware, like a Bluetooth extender, to function).

AT THE SITE

The Advantages of Smart Moisture Apps (Continued)

MOISTURE ALERTS

Some moisture apps can be programmed to send you alerts (which you will receive as long as you're within Bluetooth range of your moisture monitoring device) when your readings exceed a certain threshold. These alerts will help you spot moisture issues early on so you can resolve them before they damage your client's floor.

SECURE DATA STORAGE

Smart moisture apps offer secure storage for all of your readings. Because the readings are stored digitally on your app, you won't ever have to worry about losing paper records. Many apps even allow you to backup the data on an account you can access from any computer or phone.

And because the app does all the work and keeps a secure record of the data it collects, no one can say the data has been messed up or tampered with. This makes your app a trustworthy resource for you and your clients. Its secure records also provide you with a strong defense should anyone question the quality of your work.

Some apps even allow you to document photos, voice memos, and text notes from your projects so you will be able to provide your clients with even more transparency about your installation work.

REPORT GENERATION

In addition to storing your data, moisture apps can convert your data into a report, a list, even a graph. This makes it easy to compare data, as well as giving you and your client a visual of how your floor moisture readings are progressing toward acclimation.

EASY DATA SHARING

Having your data on a mobile app also makes it easy to send your data to your client. The app allows you to send data reports as emails. Some even let you print a physical copy, if you prefer.

Smart moisture apps can monitor and record the readings of an ambient data logger like Smart Logger.

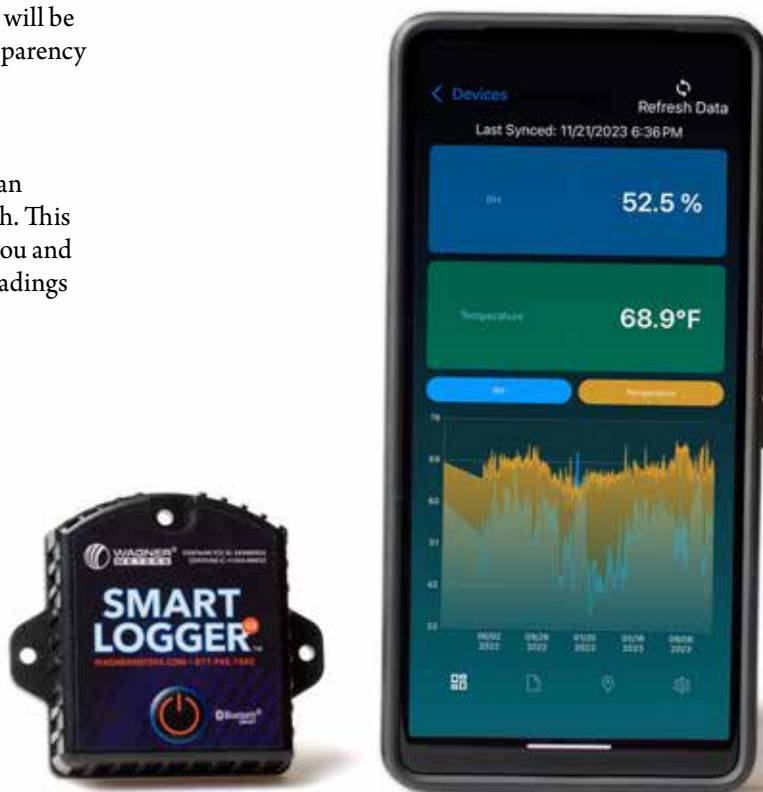
HOW TO KNOW WHETHER YOUR MOISTURE DEVICE COMES WITH AN APP

Smart moisture apps usually are designed by manufacturers to pair with their moisture device products. If you are not sure if your moisture device has an accompanying app, you can check the product description page on the manufacturers' website (or look in your owner's manual) for more information.

To download the app, search for it by name on the App Store or Google Play. Once it is downloaded, you will want to follow the app's instructions for pairing it to your moisture device.

Smart moisture apps open the way to faster, easier, more efficient moisture testing.

Jason Spangler, sales manager for Wagner Meters, has more than 25 years of experience in sales and sales management across various industries. He has launched a variety of products successfully to the market, including the original Rapid RH® concrete moisture test. Spangler has extensive industry involvement, including the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA), the International Certified Flooring Installers Association (CFI), and The Flooring Contractors Association (FCICA). For more information about Wagner Meters, call 800.634.9961 or visit wagnermeters.com.



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“With a new generation coming into our trade, which type of tool(s) do you feel require basic level training to use properly?”

AL CARVALHO

We should be careful with them and do basic training on any power tools like miter saws or table saws. I don't want any of those guys to be on a saw during their first week, at the very least. We will do basic safety training on the machine itself – what it does, what it can do, and how easily it can hurt you. Show them how it works and how you should operate it, then let them do something simple and stand by them the first few cuts or the first few times they use the machine. Safety would be my top priority with training on tools. We all know fingers only grow once.

TODD MCDONALD

A tape measure and a straight edge. A lot of people starting out don't know how to read a tape measure correctly. Mark it on a board in big letters and show them how to do it. If they are cutting something and it is off, it could waste a board if it's too short or cause many trips back and forth to make cuts. If they are measuring something and it is done incorrectly it could throw the square footage off. Reading a measuring device and then learning simple math to figure square footage or even something as simple as calculating the lineal footage for shoe moulding on a job is important.

TOM OURADA

The scraper is a simple tool, but it takes a little finesse to figure out. It will get dull pretty quick depending on what you are scraping. Some finishes dull it immediately and then it makes your work 10 times harder. If you don't know the correct way to sharpen it, you might sharpen it so it cuts a little bit, but it doesn't last very long and it's frustrating. When I first started and this happened to me, my brother would laugh at me, grab the scraper, sharpen it, and give it back to me. So, I would say learning how to sharpen a scraper is a big deal and is a lesson I would teach a new person coming into wood flooring.



For additional
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SHOWROOM *Stunner*

By Burt Bollinger

M P Carol Hardwood in Buffalo, New York, received the 2025 Wood Floor of the Year award for Best Use of Technology for a showroom addition that reimagines how clients experience wood flooring. The space, once a warehouse, has been transformed carefully into a hands-on display area that reflects the company's long-standing commitment to excellence.

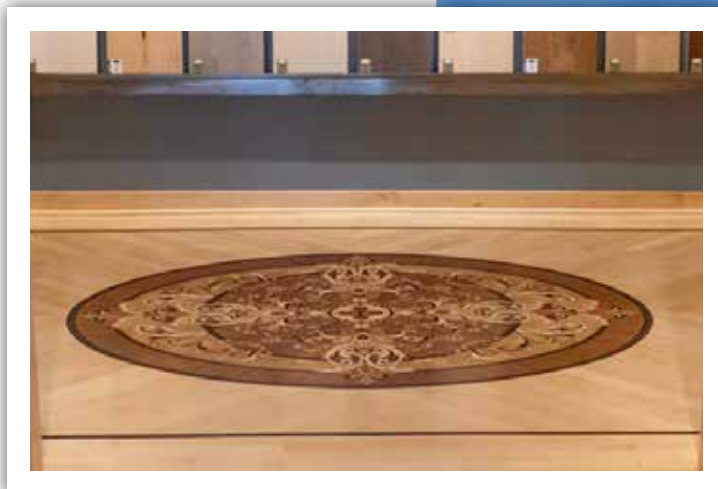
As a wood-floor-only business, the showroom plays a vital role in the company's operations. It functions not just as a display but as a working example of what clients can expect in their own homes or businesses. The showroom allows clients to experience samples directly underfoot, offering a more immersive way to evaluate texture, tone, and finish. By integrating a display into the floor itself, the space reinforces the company's emphasis on craftsmanship and offering the highest quality materials.

Central to the showroom update is a custom-designed oval medallion crafted in collaboration with Czar Floors, a multiple Wood Floor of the Year award winner, and a manufacturer known for its precision and design innovation. The medallion features eight wood species: maple, ash, American cherry, pear, white oak, kempas, merbau, and wenge. It was installed within a compact rectangular section of the room and framed with a wenge strip. The layout also incorporates a reverse perspective mitered pattern of clear maple and ties into a prior Czar Floors criss-cross design that already was part of the space. The intention was to honor the original layout while elevating the visual impact.

Czar Floors provided detailed digital design files and precise installation instructions to support the complex layout. These tools helped the installation team achieve a clean, accurate fit for the medallion, seamlessly integrating it with the existing floor. The flooring arrived unfinished, requiring sanding and three coats of finish, each applied with a lambswool applicator. The process required both technical precision and careful coordination to ensure that every element aligned with the room's existing flow.

This is the second time M P Carroll Hardwood's showroom has been recognized with a Wood Floor of the Year award, with the first win dating back to 2014. The repeat recognition underscores the company's consistent focus on excellence and its ability to evolve without compromising craftsmanship.

The project reflects how thoughtful design and technical expertise can work together to create a space that is both beautiful and functional. From layout to finish, every decision was made to ensure that the showroom not only highlights the company's capabilities but also serves as a daily tool in client engagement. By partnering with Czar Floors and integrating advanced design with hands-on skill, M P Carroll Hardwood has once again proven its place at the forefront of the industry.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF M P CARROLL HARDWOOD

FEATURED CATEGORY

BEST USE OF TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY DETAILS:

Entries in this category have installed floors utilizing advancements in technology (CNC, laser, etc.).

INSTALLATION TYPE:

Glue Down

FLOORING TYPE:

Solid

FLOORING FINISH:

DuraSeal 550 VOC Polyurethane

FLOORING SHEEN:

Satin

SPECIES:

Maple, Ash,
American
Cherry, Pear,
White Oak,
Kempas,
Merbau,
and Wenge

SQUARE FEET:

168



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Learn more about the Wood Floor of the Year at nwfa.org/wfoy/

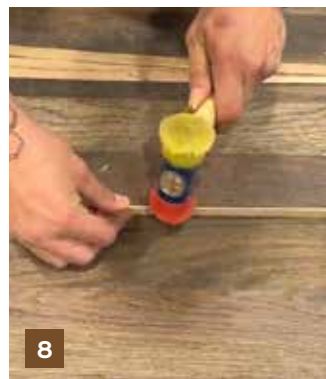
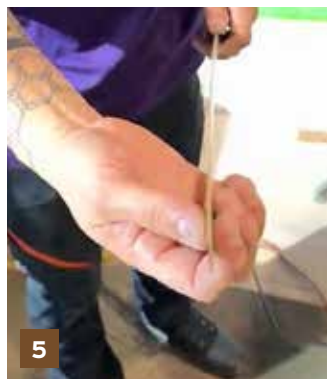
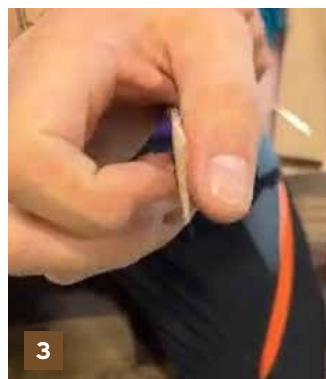
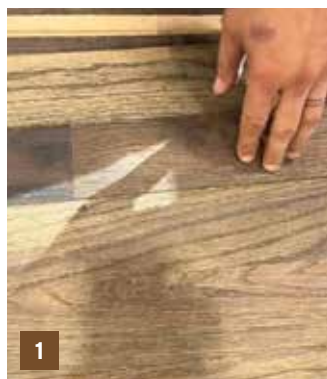


HARDWOOD HINTS

By Mike Somodean | MSCS Inc.



Cutting and Installing Slivers



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NWFA

When you go into a sand and finish job of an existing installation, one common situation we all run into is an excessively big gap where a regular wood filler is not going to be a permanent solution.

An alternative is cutting slivers, which are very thin strips of the same type of material as the flooring. They are cut at a taper, so that the top is wider than the bottom. The taper is cut at a 3-to-5-degree angle on one side of it. The reason for the angle is the gap is not going to be consistent throughout so it might be wider at one end and narrower at the other. Because of the angle, once the sliver is inserted, it is going to be higher and lower and it is going to be deeper or less deep depending on how wide the gap is. Apply adhesive to one side of the sliver. That way your sliver won't end up gluing two boards together. This allows that board to function naturally.

I use the same exact species and make sure the grain somewhat matches the wood you are installing the sliver in. You can use a featherboard or a regular jig for making the slivers. Adjust the saw anywhere from a 3-to-5-degree bevel on the blade. It is going to be tool specific; it might tilt one way or another. The objective is to cut the sliver thicker at the top, thinner at the bottom, and smooth on both sides.

You want to cut different thicknesses if you have multiple places throughout the house. Apply glue on one side of it, insert the sliver, and tap it into place with a mallet. Now that the sliver is installed, let the glue set and then either use a block plane or a regular flush cut saw to trim it down to the surface of the existing floor. Once everything is sanded, it's going to look like the gap was not even there.



WATCH IT!

See Mike Somodean complete this process in a video on NWFA's Facebook and Instagram pages.



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UZIN UTZ®

FASTENER SCHEDULE

Wood Flooring Type	Fastener Type	Fastener Spacing
Engineered (<5/8")	18g-20g cleat or narrow-crowned staple (not less than 1½" length)	3"-4" spacing 1"-2" from each end Minimum 2/board
Engineered (≥ 5/8")	15.5g staple or 16-18g cleat (not less than 1½" length)	6"-8" spacing 1"-3" from each end Minimum 2/board
Solid ¾" strip	15.5g staple or 16-18g cleat (not less than 1½" length)	8"-10" spacing 1"-3" from each end Minimum 2/board
Solid ¾" plank	15.5g staple or 16-18g cleat (not less than 1½" length)	6"-8" spacing 1"-3" from each end Minimum 2/board
Solid >1/2" to <3/4" strip	18g cleat or staple (not less than 1½" length)	6"-8" spacing 1"-3" from each end Minimum 2/board
Solid ≤1/2" strip	18g-20g cleat or narrow-crowned staple (not less than 1½" length)	3"-4" spacing 1"-2" from each end Minimum 2/board
5/16" top-nail	15g flooring brads (not less than 1" length)	1 for every inch-width of flooring every 6½"-7"

Source: NWFA Wood Flooring Installation Guidelines (revised 2019).

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NWFA Welcomes NEW CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS

The National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) has announced the newest additions to the NWFA Certified Professionals program. The NWFA's Certified Professional program was developed to recognize and promote the competence of wood flooring professionals throughout the industry. To achieve each certification, specific online and hands-on testing must be completed. Available certifications include Certified Sales Advisor (CSA), Certified Installer (CI), Certified Sand & Finisher (CSF), and Certified Wood Flooring Inspector (CWFI). Included here is a list of individuals who became Certified Professionals between January 2 to May 1, 2025. Becoming an NWFA Certified Professional enhances professional credibility, offers customers peace of mind, and generates new business by appearing on the NWFA's "Find a Professional" search feature for consumers.

- **Kara Allen, CSA**
Spiegel's Flooring - Sandy Lake, PA
- **Jason Allen, CSA**
Spiegel's Flooring - Sandy Lake, PA
- **Frankie Ayers, CI**
Haywood Floor Coverings - Gloucester, PA
- **Melanie Blair, CSA**
The HeartPine Company - Amherst, VA
- **Rejina Jane Borlongan, CSA**
Latta Floors - Livermore, CA
- **Allison Bowring, CSA**
RipprFinish - Gladstone, MO
- **Chris Brand, CSA**
Panel Town and Floors - Columbus, OH
- **Brian Burkhardt, CSA**
Footprints Floors - Columbus - Westerville, OH
- **Douglas Calcada, CI**
Carpenters International Training Fund - Las Vegas, NV
- **Mark Campbell, CSA**
Warehouse Direct Flooring - Santa Cruz, CA
- **Juan Caputi, CSA**
Footprints Floors - Central Gold Coast - Delray Beach, FL
- **Ebany Cardona, CSA**
Cardona Floors - Stamford, CT
- **Scott Copeland, CSA**
Southern Hardwood and Floor Supply - Richmond, VA
- **Igor Costa, CSA**
Costa Hardwood Floors - Port St. Lucie, FL
- **Justin Cowley, CSA**
Footprints Floors - Northern Utah - Plain City, UT
- **Draper Davis, CSA**
Closets Plus - Manchester, TN
- **Jhonas de Lima, CI**
St. Peter Flooring - Gastonia, NC
- **Chris Domsodi, CSA**
DZD Hardwood - St. Jerome, QC
- **James Fisher, CSF**
Fisher's Floor and Sanding - Kingston, NY
- **Corey Ford, CWFI**
Mr. Hardwood Inc. - Acworth, GA
- **Mario Garcia, CSA**
Santi Hardwood Floors - Durham, NC
- **Luke Garrett, CSA**
The HeartPine Company - Amherst, VA
- **Sean Gelber, CSA**
Grand Teton Floor & Window Coverings - Jackson, WY
- **Bertin Gomez, CSA**
Sedaris Floors Inc. - Wake Forest, NC
- **Henrique Goncalves, CSA**
Empire Wood Floor - Ocean Township, NJ
- **Alexandro Gonzales, CI**
IUPAT - Hanover, MD
- **Skylar Gossett, CSA**
Macon Hardwood - Bolingbroke, GA
- **Lawrence Guzman, CI**
IUPAT - Hanover, MD
- **Aaron Hall, CWFI, CSF**
Avery Design Solutions - Greensboro, NC
- **Jacob Hammonds, CSA**
Hammonds Wood Floors - San Antonio, TX
- **Amanda Hartley, CSA**
Floorcraft Designs - Toledo, OH
- **Eric Haug, CSA**
The Flooring Professionals - Cary, NC
- **Amanda Huynh, CSA**
Latta Floors - Livermore, CA
- **Joe Keller, CSF**
Oaken Floor Company - Mooresville, NC
- **Ricky Lachmiller, CWFI**
Creative Oak Hardwood Floors - Sonoma, CA
- **Matthew Lindenmuth, CSA**
PA Acquistio Floor Sanding Refinishing & Supplies - Binghamton, NY
- **Sebastian Lukasik, CSA**
Metropolitan - Annacis Island, Delta, BC
- **Edith Marin, CSA**
Latta Floors - Livermore, CA
- **Randal McCaslin, CSA**
Footprints Floors Corp. - Greenwood Village, CO
- **Ted McGloin, CWFI**
All American Hardwood Flooring - Wake Forest, NC
- **Matthew McGrew, CI**
Book Smart Construction - Kenna, WV
- **Raymond Mertens, CSA**
Wildwood Flooring - Columbia Falls, MT
- **Timothy Mitchell, CI**
Mitchell's Hardwood Floors - Pittsburgh, PA
- **Antonio Nava, CSA**
Nava Meneces Flooring - Dallas, TX
- **Juan Navarro, CSF**
Navarro Floors - Rohnert Park, CA
- **Alex Oliveira, CSA**
Empire Wood Floor - Ocean Township, NJ
- **Malachi Owen, CSA**
Classic Flooring Solutions - Chesterfield, MO
- **Litzy Panduro, CSA**
Latta Floors - Livermore, CA
- **Tony Pedregon, CI**
IUPAT - Hanover, MD
- **Jordan Peguero, CI**
Carpenters International Training Fund - Las Vegas, NV
- **Emily Perkins, CSA**
Carpetland of New England by DFP LLC - Avon, CT
- **Steven Poche, CSA**
Blue Mountain Hardwood Flooring - Lewistown, PA
- **Nick Rodriguez, CSA**
Legendary Custom Hardwoods - Colorado Springs, CO
- **Joe Santora, CI**
Carpenters International Training Fund - Las Vegas, NV
- **Daniel Sisk, CI**
Armour Wood Floors - Fenton, MO
- **Andrew Sparks, CI**
IUPAT - Hanover, MD
- **James Staats, CI**
IUPAT - Hanover, MD
- **Dariusz Szymczyk, CSA**
Footprints Floors - Hartford, Plainville, CT
- **Lance Takehara, CSA**
Paradise Flooring - Honolulu, HI
- **Mike Totta, CWFI**
Totta Hardwoods - Kansas City, MO
- **Leonardo Sanchez Valentin, CSA**
Leo's Wood Flooring - Durham, NC
- **John Van Orden, CSA**
Sedaris Floors Inc. - Wake Forest, NC
- **Patrick Venson, CSA**
PID Floors - New York, NY
- **Julio Santiago, CSA**
Santi Hardwood Floors - Durham, NC
- **Buffy Stancill, CSA**
Faith and Grace Flooring - Murfreesboro, TN
- **James Werner, CSA**
Independence Floor Supply - Westbrook, ME
- **Cheskel Werzberger, CSA**
Floorit USA - Monroe, NY
- **Kyle Wood, CSA**
Footprints Floors - Carmel - Parker, CO
- **Dan Yangas, CSA**
Footprints Floors - Naperville/Fox Valley - Lombard, IL
- **Sal Zacheo, CI**
Carpenters International Training Fund - Las Vegas, NV

If you are ready to learn more about being recognized as an expert in your field, visit [NWFA.ORG/CP-ABOUT/](https://www.nwfa.org/cp-about/) or contact Katie Norton, director of education and certification for NWFA, at katherine.norton@nwfa.org or 636.736.5227.

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Introducing the all-new 3M™ WorkTunes™ Connect + Solar Hearing Protection. Engineered with a Powerfoyle™ Solar Cell that charges continuously in outdoor or indoor light. Equipped with premium sound quality and the latest Bluetooth® wireless technology for all-day entertainment. This hearing protector works as long as you do – at home or on the jobsite.

[3M.com](https://3m.com)



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Albert Floorotex is our premier floor protective roll. It is waterproof, breathable, non-slip, non-tear, and reusable. Made out of recycled PET fibers with a slightly adherent spray-on adhesive on the underside. Perfect for hardwood floors and other surfaces.

floorotex.com



APRILAIRE

Model 800 Steam Humidifier

The Aprilaire Model 800 Steam Humidifier is ideal for managing damaging dry air in homes with hardwood floors. The model 800 can humidify independently of a heating call to ensure proper RH levels in the home regardless of the time of year or type of HVAC system.

aprilairerepartners.com



ARBORTECH

MG1000 Mini Grinder

The Arbortech MG1000 Mini Grinder delivers superior performance with a powerful brushless motor and DEWALT 20V Max battery compatibility. Its long extension arm enhances visibility in tight spaces. Enjoy effortless material removal, improved low-speed torque, and durable heavy-duty bearings – ideal for tile cutting, regrouting, woodworking, and metal fabrication.

arbortechtools.com



CORUS FASTENING

L38FL-2 18 Gauge Engineered Flooring Stapler

The L38FL-2 stands out as the only 18 Gauge Engineered Flooring Stapler equipped with a roller system. Its smooth glide, lightweight design, and extended triple load magazine for increased staple capacity make it a top choice for professionals. Delivering a perfect balance of speed, comfort, and productivity.

corusfastening.com



See our ad on page 21.

DELMHORST

JX-30

The JX-30 meter offers a professional-grade, accurate, and versatile tool to lumber/woodworking, flooring professionals, and inspectors to address moisture issues and perform your job with complete confidence. The JX-30 features the Delmhorst EDGE® app with expanded wood species, customizable settings, and the ability to share data from any location.

delmhorst.com



EASY GROOVE TOOLING

Router Bits

Easy Groove router bits are for the jobsite created T&G floor joints. They feature a top-bearing design, durable C2 carbide tips, heat-treated alloy arbors, and replaceable cutter heads. The bits are sized for 3/4", 1/2", and 5/8" thick flooring. The company also produces an inlay router bit and 5/8" spline.



FLOORCLOUD

CLIMIT

Floorcloud provides wood flooring installers with remote, real-time monitoring of jobsite temperature and humidity conditions, reducing the liability of working in uncontrolled environments. By eliminating unnecessary site visits and ensuring conditions meet NWFA standards, Floorcloud prevents costly problems, reduces callbacks, and increases efficiency. climit.com



FLOORPROTECTOR

Fidbox

This in-floor data logger uses a free app, which notifies homeowners and contractors of the ambient temp/RH and the temp/RH coming from the substrate. This avoids costly damage to a wood flooring investment.

fidbox.net



LIGNOMAT

VersaTec

The Ligno-VersaTec is our best meter for floor installers and inspectors. It can be used as a pin and pinless meter or as a RH-insitu humidity-concrete meter. We offer the pinless dual-depth Ligno-VersaTec meter by itself or complete measuring kits V2-M up to V24-KM. Accuracy and dependability are guaranteed with smart design and quality manufacturing. lignomatusa.com

See our ad on page 53.



PALLMANN

Ninja Drive Plate Complete

The Ninja Drive Plate is an extremely effective grinding disc for mono disc grinding machines. Fits onto the PALLMANN Spider or a standard 16" buffer for the preparation of substrates, removal of existing adhesives, or thinsets. The innovative slide-lock system allows for easy changing of segments. Segments sold separately.

us.pallmann.net

See our ad on pages 1, 67.



PRIMATECH

Q900.A

Nail it every time with the Primattech EDGE. Trusted by wood flooring professionals everywhere, the Edge is a game changer – getting you closer to the wall and saving you time on the finishing process for every installation. The EDGE is designed to blind nail as close as two inches from the end wall, making it the perfect tool to use in hallways, closets, on railings, cabinets, and any other challenges on the job.

primattech.ca

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RAPIDRH.COM



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Pro-Drive Fasteners® new Mallet and Mallet Cap Display allows you to boost sales with a showcase of entire product lines in one easy-to-understand, highly visible package. This display comes pre-assembled with caps securely affixed. All you need to do is mount and place our mallets on the built-in hanging bracket. prodrivefasteners.com



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Repair Kits

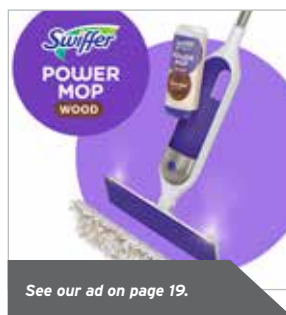
Sika-DriTac's Engineered Wood and Solid Wood and Bamboo Floor Repair Kits are designed to correct hollow spots and popping conditions. Lightweight, easy to clean up, and easy to transport, they're designed for pro installers and average homeowners alike. With these sustainable, cost-effective repair systems there's no need to weigh down boards – simply fill and forget in four easy steps. usa.sika.com



SMARTPLANK

SmartPlank

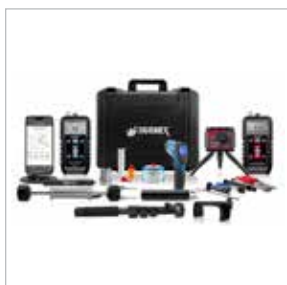
Revolutionize your hardwood with SmartPlank™. Our premium, built-to-order hardwood comes equipped with technology to track humidity and temperature through a user-friendly app. Create anything from solid to engineered wood, unfinished to pre-finished, various textures and stains, and craft the floor of your dreams while protecting it for years to come with SmartPlank™. Build it. Protect it. smart-plank.com



SWIFFER

PowerMop Wood

The Swiffer PowerMop is an all-in-one cleaning tool that gives you a mop and bucket clean in half the time. The cleaning solution is built-in and breaks down dirt and grime while the layered pad traps and locks away the mess. Mop smarter, with the Swiffer PowerMop. swiffer.com/powermop



TRAMEX

Flooring Master Kit X

This kit includes top of the range meters for instant, non-destructive quantitative moisture content testing of concrete and wood flooring, measuring and monitoring of RH and dew point testing of concrete and ambient conditions, both pre- and post-application of floor covering materials. All items available individually and in other kit formations. tramexmeters.com



WAGNER METERS

Orion 950

Wagner Meters' non-invasive wood moisture meters provide wood flooring professionals with fast and accurate wood moisture content measurements. Its proven IntelliSense™ technology measures deep in the wood and is virtually unaffected by surface moisture. The MMC line is backed with an industry-leading seven-year warranty. wagnermeters.com



WOODWISE

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WOODWISE's unique line of tools and accessories were designed by professionals for professionals to help save time and money. Learn more about our dust collection bags, easy-sand stair tread extension, felt edger pads, nail set, nap savers, paper retention bolt, putty knives, scrapers, trowel, stair jig, and white oak test kit. woodwise.com

To be included for consideration in the Product Focus section of *Hardwood Floors* magazine, please send a high-resolution image and 50-word description to

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SEEN AT NWFA SCHOOLS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NWFA

2025 PRECISION PATTERNS: MEDALLIONS & PARQUETRY

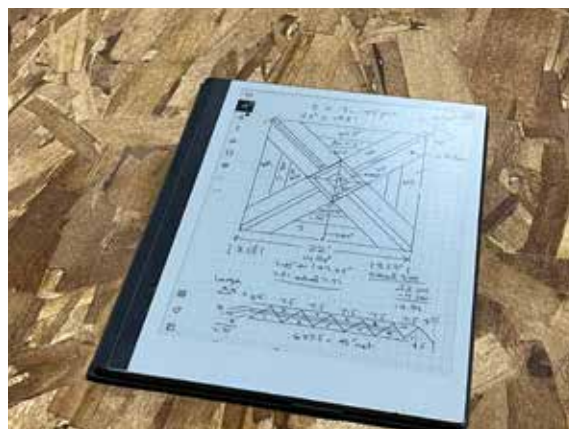
MAY 13-14, 2025
PALO DURO HARDWOODS
DENVER, COLORADO

This two-day in-person course is designed for experienced wood floor professionals and was led by Lenny Hall, NWFA Regional Instructor and owner of Endurance Floor Company. Attendees learned how to produce a variety of medallion styles by hand, including symmetry of medallions, mosaics, and other decorative elements that become the focal point of the flooring design. They also created parquet patterns by hand, including developing and utilizing sleds and jigs, and installing them in any application.

“The training was top notch,” says Joe Lott of Mountain Impressions Hardwood Flooring in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. “It can be a bit nerve-racking when you go in with other professionals that are at the top of their game, but when you get there, it’s not intimidating. The camaraderie that you get and bouncing ideas and techniques off of each other, you pick up so much more besides the school.”

▶ Continued on page 74

SEEN AT NWFA SCHOOLS



“When you do the school, you see it’s basic math once you get the medallions laid out. It’s not near as intimidating as it was before going to that school,” says Lott. “Take the classes because if you are working every day and you aren’t learning something every day, you’re losing.”

NWFA hands-on workshops provide the opportunity to gain cutting-edge skills, master innovative techniques, and network with industry leaders. You’ll learn from NWFA Regional Instructors and manufacturer representatives showcasing cutting-edge products and expertise. To view the schedule of events and enroll, visit

NWFA.ORG/HANDS-ON-TRAINING



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Attend the training schools that NWFA has to offer in 2025.

>> For updates and more training opportunities scan the QR code or visit nwfa.org/hands-on-training/



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRENT WALTER | FLOORING GUY



For Brent Walter of The Flooring Guy in Durango, Colorado, the return on investment surfaced quickly. Soon after the school there was a delay in receiving premade medallions for a job, so he ended up making them in his shop instead (pictured above on this page).

“Lenny’s instruction at that class at Palo Duro was what allowed us to pull this off,” says Walter. “Truth be told, I had zero experience doing these until that medallions class. Talk about being thrown into the fire.”

Walter adds that if it wasn’t for what he learned in the class, the client would have reversed charges on his floor material.

“A big thanks goes to NWFA,” he says. “It was truly remarkable how everything fell into place.”

NEW PRODUCTS



BJELIN

Flooring Accessories

Bjelin has introduced a complete range of accessories to complement its flooring collections. The range covers every aspect of a flooring project, from underlays that enhance acoustics, level uneven surfaces, and protect against moisture, to essential tools that streamline installation.

bjelin.com



LOBA-WAKOL LLC

AmberPrime

Loba-Wakol LLC has launched LOBA AmberPrime, a water-based sealer that adds an amber-toned look to natural wood surfaces. Perfectly designed to enhance the color of LOBA Stain or provide a subtle amber hue to untreated wood, LOBA AmberPrime is the ideal choice for finishers looking to elevate the beauty and richness of their wood floor projects.

loba-wakol.com



MULLICAN FLOORING

Mystic Grove

Mullican Flooring has launched Mystic Grove, a new solid hickory product line that brings timeless warmth and sophistication to any room. Offered in 3" wide, 3/4" thick planks with random lengths up to 7', Mystic Grove features a lightly brushed face with beveled edges and ends.

mullicanflooring.com

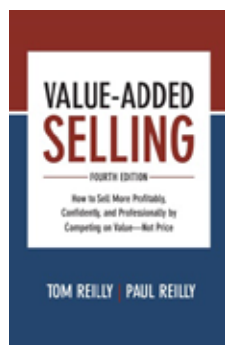


PIONEER MILLWORKS

The Sunset Collection

FSC® certified and made in the USA, The Sunset Collection™ is inspired by the golden hour where a day's end becomes a new beginning – the magical time where the sun and horizon create a stunning palette in real time. This new reclaimed and engineered flooring line is made with domestic oaks sourced from the iconic four rail fences that reign in America's pasturelands.

pioneermillworks.com



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PROKNEE

Bomber Pad

The new ProKnee Bomber Pad is a great fit in tight spaces and easily moves with you without the bulk of a full knee pad. Bonus: it's got a replaceable, washable cover and is made from the same top-grade cushion and liner materials as used on all ProKnee kneepads. Sustainably made in the USA, this kneeling pad also features a board surface of 17" W x 12" H x 1 1/4" D and an anti-slip sole.

proknee.com



STILES MACHINERY

HOMAG CENTATEQ

N-300 PRO

Stiles Machinery is introducing the HOMAG CENTATEQ N-300 PRO CNC router. The new PRO model offers an auto-lubrication system, enhanced air conditioning, and vertical safety light curtains.

stilesmachinery.com

To be included for consideration in the New Products section of *Hardwood Floors* magazine, please send a high-resolution image and 50-word description to libby.johnston@nwfa.org.

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Contribute Now to Build Your World

The Real American Hardwood Coalition has launched its Build Your World™ campaign in partnership with Magnolia Network. The ads are inspiring a national audience by educating them on the benefits of Real American Hardwood® products.

The campaign was made possible thanks to voluntary contributions from the hardwood industry. Your continued support is critical to advance the initiative and reclaim market share for the benefit of all industry stakeholders.

Help Build Your World. Learn more about the RAHC's promotion efforts, see a list of supporters, and make a voluntary, tax-deductible contribution at RealAmericanHardwood.com/industry or scan the QR code.



OVERHEARD



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ON NWFA PODCASTS

"I'm in the process of creating an apprenticeship program. I encourage people that if they want to go out on their own, they should do it. I am a firm believer that competition is a weak mindset, to a certain degree. Competition happens at the bottom, while collaboration happens at the top. The real goal for me is to get young people involved in the industry and let them know that there is good money. I don't think you need a degree to make good money. There are a lot of people out here making a great living working with their hands. We want to get these people into the NWFA certification program, and then if they want to go out on their own, that's fantastic. We won't be covering payroll, but in some ways, they will still be working with us."

- Alex Hamilton
NWFA Wood Talk Podcast
A Conversation with Alex Hamilton

"We train inspectors to identify the causes of issues. With a good supply chain history, they can talk to the manufacturer, supplier, installer, and builder to create a timeline and sequence of everything that has occurred with the floor and verify if proper installation methods were followed. However, mysteries can still arise. They will find the floor was installed perfectly, the subfloor was perfect, and the jobsite conditions were ideal. So why is the floor failing? Many people jump to the conclusion that it must be a manufacturing defect. In some cases, that may be true. What we often find, though, is that a single event at one point in time - where the floor was exposed to something extreme - caused it to cup, split, or fall apart. It takes analyzing historical data to pinpoint that one critical moment. It's a tricky one."

- Brett Miller
NWFA Wood Talk Podcast
A Conversation with Rose Fall of Fall Designs



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Brian Conklin

is the executive vice president of Gutches Lumber Company, where he also sits on the board of directors and chairs the product management committee.

Headquartered in Cortland, New York, the fifth-generation and employee-owned organization operates seven facilities across New York and Pennsylvania. The company has been manufacturing northern hardwood lumber since 1904. Conklin has been with Gutches Lumber for 16 years and is host of "The Hardwood Advantage" podcast, which explores the environmental benefits of hardwood and the latest industry trends.

Conklin recently was featured on the NWFA Wood Talk podcast, so *Hardwood Floors* magazine caught up with him to ask a few more questions.

Tell us something interesting about yourself. I have been to 23 different countries.

How did you get started in the industry? Right out of high school I really had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I applied for a job at the local lumber yard, and it turned into a 30+ year career.

Who has influenced your career the most and why? It's impossible to name only one person as so many people have had an influence on me in major ways. My parents were extremely supportive and always told me, "Whatever you do just do your best." Wayne Wilson hired me and encouraged me that there were career opportunities in the industry. I learned so much from Jack Matson about sales and marketing. Tom Caldwell helped



Brian Conklin

BRIAN CONKLIN

GUTCHESS LUMBER COMPANY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRIAN CONKLIN / GUTCHESS LUMBER COMPANY



me get out of my own way and see the big picture. Matt Gutches gave me opportunities to advance my career. I could go on and on.

What energizes you to stay in the hardwood industry? We are producing a product that will help fight climate change. I don't know of a single other manufacturing process that sequesters carbon.

What are you listening to right now? I love podcasts by Darren Hardy, Tony Robbins, or others that focus on self-improvement with advice on how to be a better leader, husband, father, friend, and colleague.

Do you have a morning routine that sets you up for success? I spend 65 minutes in the gym six days a week.

What keeps you busy outside of work? Spending time with my family and in the outdoors, where I enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, and skiing. I have the most amazing wife in the world and two daughters that I can't imagine life without.

You can listen to a technical-focused discussion between Brian Conklin and NWFA's Brett Miller, as well as other hardwood flooring experts by visiting HARDWOODFLOORSMAG.COM/NWFA-WOOD-TALK-PODCAST.

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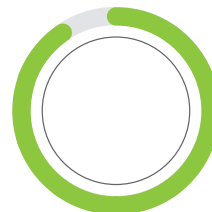
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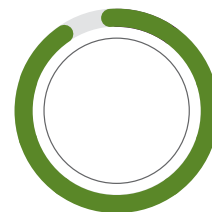
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