



HOW TO RUN A PROFITABLE CARPET PROJECT

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TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

CARPET TILES AND BROADLOOM: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AS A FLOOR FITTER	<i>3</i>
--	----------

CHAPTER 1

CREATING YOUR CARPET INSTALLATION CHECKLIST	<i>7</i>
--	----------

CHAPTER 2

GETTING THROUGH EACH STEP OF THE PROCESS ON TIME AND BUDGET	<i>11</i>
--	-----------

CHAPTER 3

ESTIMATING THE PRICE OF A CARPET PROJECT	<i>14</i>
---	-----------

CHAPTER 4

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CLIENT BEFORE RECOMMENDING FLOORING	<i>18</i>
---	-----------

CHAPTER 5

ASSISTING YOUR CLIENT WITH CARPET DESIGN CHOICES	<i>21</i>
---	-----------

CHAPTER 6

CONVINCING YOUR CLIENT TO USE CARPET TILES	<i>24</i>
---	-----------

CHAPTER 7

WHY WALL TO WALL CARPETS ARE GREAT FOR FLOOR FITTERS	<i>27</i>
---	-----------

CHAPTER 8

HOW TO CREATE A CARPET MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR YOUR CLIENTS	<i>29</i>
---	-----------

INTRODUCTION





CARPET TILES AND BROADLOOM: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AS A FLOOR FITTER

The right decisions in the fitting phase of a flooring project are made on the base of sound knowledge of carpet construction.

A knowledge of carpet construction will assist you as you make important decisions in the fitting phase of a flooring project. Of course, a good carpet supplier will ably assist you along the way with expert advice, but the more you know yourself, the better you are able to understand and appreciate that advice and make informed decisions.

And making informed decisions is what this guide is all about. Carpet installation projects are prone to any number of hiccups (even disasters) along the way that can cut your profit margin to shreds. A smooth carpet installation project is a profitable project and this guide arms you with the tools to get to the finish line of every project without a hitch.

If you are a carpet expert, you will know quite a bit about carpet construction already. But let's just briefly go through the essentials of carpet construction with an emphasis on the aspects important to you as a contractor and installer.

Carpet types

Broadloom carpet

Broadloom (or wall to wall) carpet is manufactured in long, wide rolls and laid on backing material over the substrate flooring. It's important to note that broadloom must be laid flat in the empty space on delivery, inspected to ensure all rolls can be lined up so patterns match and there are no flaws, then left for at least 24 hours to settle before installation can begin.

The installation of broadloom carpet requires careful planning, as the placement of seams is crucial to obtaining an optimal result. Wherever possible, seams should be run perpendicular to the primary light source. Some further points to keep in mind are:

- Seams should be kept to the minimum where possible
- Seams should run lengthwise through the space
- Main traffic should follow the seam rather than move across the seam
- Seams should be avoided in areas with pivoting traffic
- Seams should not be placed perpendicular to doorway openings

Carpet tiles

Carpet tiles are small carpet shapes that can be laid in many versatile ways. While squares are most common, carpet tiles are also available in other shapes such as planks, triangles, hexagons, sine waves and more. Often cheaper than broadloom, they are also faster and easier to lay and result in considerably less wastage than wall to wall carpet due to less cutting, saving on both time and money.



Carpet yarn and construction

Tufted carpets

Around 95 per cent of all contract carpets are tufted, mainly due to the fast production time, low price point and high design flexibility of this type of construction.

Tufted carpet also offers a broad range of pattern possibilities, using pre- or post-dyed yarns, varying loop height and cut or uncut pile.

When choosing between tufted or woven carpet, installation is an important consideration. A woven carpet is essentially stitched together along the side, while a tufted carpet can be easily seamed both along the sides and across the ends. This means that less carpet is required for a tufted carpet installation, the process is usually speedier, requires less skill and is less prone to errors.

This guide arms you with the tools to be get to the finish line of every project without a hitch.

Tufted carpet will produce great results in most applications, however there are times when the superior quality and durability of a woven carpet may be best.

Woven carpets

Weaving was the production process of choice for carpets up until the 1950s, when advances in machinery and the introduction of synthetic materials began the era of tufted carpets.

Today, most carpet suppliers still carry woven carpets as an option due to their exceptional quality and durability. This is especially true of woven carpets using natural materials such as 100 percent wool or wool blends.

Woven carpets are available in three different weaving techniques: Axminster, Velvet and Wilton. Their plush appearance makes them ideal for high-end projects where a luxury look and feel is required.

Needle punched carpets

Needle punched carpets are exceptionally colourfast, dry quickly and are highly resistant to sunlight and fading. This makes them an excellent choice for areas where moisture could be a problem, such as pool decks, locker rooms and patios. Needle punched carpet is most commonly used for entry mats and is available in both broadloom and carpet tiles.

Whatever type of carpet is specified for a particular project, the support of your carpet supplier is crucial to the success of the job and the final effect.



When choosing between tufted or woven carpet, installation is an important consideration.

Carpet properties

The key properties of contract carpet that architects, designers and building owners will want to know about are:

- Underfoot comfort
- Isolating properties
- Wear resistance
- Acoustics
- Footstep suppression
- Fire resistance
- Soil resistance
- Moisture resistance
- Colour fastness
- Light fastness
- Sustainability

Contract carpets are tested and rated for these properties under various certifications and classifications.

Where help is at hand

Partnering with a supplier that not only provides a consistently high quality and durable product, but the support to back it up, can be the ace up your sleeve to ensure a smooth and profitable carpet installation project every time.

A great carpet supplier will aid you with:

- Seam plans and roll plans for wall to wall carpet projects
- Advice on tolerances for the type of carpets specified
- Advice on the choice of correct backing and adhesives to achieve the optimal result
- A complete installation guide for the carpets specified
- Barcodes on the back of carpet rolls so you can download installation instructions and videos via the internet browser on your mobile phone
- On-site technical assistance for large and complex installations
- A fitting school to educate your team or help them upgrade their skills

Next up, we take a look at the ins and outs of carpet project planning and how communication is key to preventing those hiccups (and worse) that could eat away at your profits.

CHAPTER 1





CREATING YOUR CARPET INSTALLATION CHECKLIST

Poor planning and communication can spell the death knell of what could have been a highly profitable carpet installation project. Here's a list of ideas for your checklist of things you need to be aware of to avoid those pitfalls.

It may not be the most thrilling part of your job, but we need to talk about the elephant in the room: Diligent planning!

The planning stage of any carpet installation process is probably the most underappreciated factor in relation to just how severely it affects financial performance, for better or worse.

To achieve a healthy profit, and avoid risk factors, you need to look to aspects like reducing wastage, avoiding delays and forestalling problems such as inadequate site access for heavy five metre long rolls of carpet.

To succeed, you need to be diligent both in planning and carefully checking all details. Creating your own checklist for each project and following it carefully is the recommended option as no two projects are entirely alike.

We recommend that you make a generic template, which you can adapt to your individual projects. Throughout this e-book, you will meet ideas which you can add to adapt your personal checklist. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Gathering information

Firstly, before any carpet has been ordered and cut you need to collate a host of information. So start by asking questions and keep asking until you have firm answers. As a minimum, you will likely need to talk with your client and carpet supplier. Some questions you might need them to answer are:

- What type of carpet is being installed? Plain, patterned, tufted, Axminster etc?
- What widths is the specified carpet available in?
- What is the recommended method of installation?
- What type of backing is required/specified?
- What is the best subfloor for the carpet being installed?
- Does the site have underfloor heating?
- What time of year will the carpet be installed? (As temperature will affect the installation.)
- Is the installation date likely to be met or is the project timeline overly optimistic?



Make your list of questions as long and detailed as necessary and be sure to pin down an answer for each. Information is KEY, so if in doubt ask. Remember: The time spent planning is time saved from correcting mistakes down the line.

For wall to wall carpet installations you will also need to check:

- Seam positions
- Pile direction
- Best width of carpet to avoid excess wastage
- Site logistics (can the carpet be readily delivered to the site or are there access issues)

Acclimatisation

Check with your carpet supplier how long the carpet needs to be laid out flat on site prior to installation and alert the construction manager that this time is necessary. In cold seasons, you may need to also ensure that heating is available and will be turned on to assist with the eradication of creases and ensure the carpet will stretch correctly during installation.

Depending on the adhesives used, after installation the site may need to remain vacant and be aired for 24 to 48 hours. Ensure you know the recommended time for airing and alert those in charge of the entire project as to this period of time.

Checking the delivery

Once the carpet is delivered it pays to follow a complete checklist to ensure all is in order and no mistakes have been made. This checklist should include:

- Carpet dye batches are the same and match. The same dye batches need to be kept together for use in any particular area/room. Where seams are required, the two pieces of carpet must come from the same dye lot, preferably the same roll, whether the carpet is plain or patterned.
- Check that patterns match up when laid out on site
- Check the labelling on each roll of wall to wall carpet and each box of carpet tiles to ensure the order is correct, there is nothing missing, and there are no mistakes. If you have any doubts about the suitability of a carpet to its intended use now is the time to speak up.
- Also check that the carpet underlay or backing is the correct product that has been specified and ordered.



There is a common misconception that the finished level of broadloom carpet is the thickness of the underlay plus the thickness of the carpet, however this will only be the case if gripper is not used.

Check you have the right gripper for the job

There are a number of different types of grippers with different pin heights and fixings for different subfloors. A good tip is to obtain carpet samples from the supplier prior to installation so you can test you are using the appropriate gripper.

In general:

- Use a short pin gripper for thin gauge carpets such as flatweave
- Use a standard medium pin gripper for most tufted and woven carpets
- Use a long pin gripper for heavy, reinforced back carpets and thicker underlays
- A microplast gripper, a combination of microplast tape and standard gripper pins, is good to use on flatweave installations on stairs.

Always use grippers where possible, even in “double stick” installations. You’ll find the installation will look visually better and neater.

Check adjoining floor coverings/finishes

Using the wrong trim where the carpet meets different floor finishes can cause considerable problems. Understand what types of floor covering the carpet is being fitted up against so you can select the appropriate profile/trim for the installation.

Ensuring a great finish

When finalising finished levels of wall to wall carpet here’s a key fact to remember: the finished height of any traditionally fitted wall to wall carpet installation should be total carpet thickness plus the thickness of the carpet gripper. There is a common misconception that the finished level of broadloom carpet is the thickness of the underlay plus the thickness of the carpet, however this will only be the case if gripper is not used.

Keep reading overleaf as we delve into the essential steps in ensuring your installation runs on time and on budget. Now wouldn’t that be nice!

CHAPTER 2





GETTING THROUGH EACH STEP OF THE PROCESS ON TIME AND BUDGET

Here are some essential tips for staying cool, calm and collected and getting to the end of the job with your wits and profits intact.

With carpet installation being one of the last trades to step onto a site, there's plenty of time beforehand for things to go pear-shaped. It's a knock-on effect as one delay heaps on another.

It happens all too frequently. You get to the site on carpet delivery day, and you and your team are ready for action. Only to find that the carpet has arrived but the subfloor isn't ready and there are painters, electricians and other trades still swarming over the site. Or that the plans you have are not the final plans as promised and that additional walls have been removed or doors added. Or, perhaps worst of all, you weren't made aware of the logistics and the carpet won't fit in the goods lift. You're out of pocket on wages and need to reschedule.

And that's just at the end point of a job. You may have been working with a salesperson from your carpet supplier for three months to three years before the specifications and costs are finalised and the carpet is ordered. If, like many installers, you are paying for the carpet, your financial exposure and risk can be huge.

Communication is key

As one owner of a successful carpet installation business advises: "It's vital to have a good connection and great communication with the client, the architect and your carpet supplier and to have the right guys on the ground to put things in place."

Here again, a checklist for each project can avoid a lot of woes and save your profit margin.

- Check that the architect's carpet measurements provide adequate extra leeway for wastage. Often they don't. Your carpet supplier should help you check this and calculate accurate measurements. If the architect's plan proves to be horrendously wasteful, you and your carpet supplier need to approach him or her with potential solutions. Any other issues with the specifications that could blow out costs should be clarified as early as possible.
- Ensure the salesperson you are dealing with from your carpet supplier updates you regularly as plans change with costing updates.
- Prior to installation, establish good communications with the site manager to establish just how realistic the timeline is for the project and keep tabs on progress. A rush job could result in defects that cost you later down the track. So don't be pressured, wait until the site is completely ready for carpet installation.



It's vital to have a good connection and great communication with the client, the architect and your carpet supplier and to have the right guys on the ground to put things in place.

- Several days before the delivery date, check that you have an up-to-the-minute roll plan, seam plan and flooring plan, that all the logistics are in place and that the site will be vacant and ready for you.
- Also check with the subfloor contractor that the subfloor will be completed and that there are no moisture issues that might require mitigation.
- In colder months, check with the site manager that heating will be available and turned on. Any underfloor heating, however, must be turned off and cooled down and should remain off for at least two days after carpet installation.

During installation

Here are some further tips to ensure you produce a quality job each and every time:

- Carpets should be fitted when the indoor climate in the room matches that recommended for the adhesive. The temperature of the room and underlay should be 17-25C and relative humidity 35-75%
- The subfloor must be level, solid and firm, with no cracks or edges. This is especially important when fitting woven products and carpets with short, even pile, as the structure of the subfloor could otherwise be clearly visible on the carpet surface.
- As much as possible, the carpet and the subfloor should be protected from direct sunlight during installation and for two days afterwards.
- Place the carpet and all materials on site a minimum 24 hours prior to fitting in order for the carpet and adhesive to acclimatise. Lay wall to wall carpet out flat.
- Thoroughly inspect all carpet prior to cutting and report any defects found to your carpet supplier immediately.

Taking the extra time and trouble to ensure the site is ready and all conditions are ideal may seem like extra bother but, ultimately, will save mistakes and defects that could have you turning around and doing all or part of the job again and losing money, rather than moving right along to the next profitable job. If you are at the stage in your business growth that it's becoming impossible for you to attend to all the details personally, and costly mistakes are occurring, now could be the time to engage your own project manager.

In the following chapter, we look into estimating the price of a carpet project and the factors that influence price.

CHAPTER 3





ESTIMATING THE PRICE OF A CARPET PROJECT

Getting the price right for every carpet installation project is crucial. It's a balancing act to come in with a price within the client's budget that also gives your business a healthy profit margin. Here are some important factors to keep in mind.

If a client asks how much a commercial carpet will cost for their project the answer is basically 'How long is a piece of string?' There are just so many variables to contend with, from carpet quality and type of construction, to the type of backing and installation costs that there is, of course, no set answer.

If you are working directly with a client, you will need to gain a clear idea of their budget and work backwards from there to cover both costs for the carpet itself, any backing and adhesives, subfloor preparation, cost of installation time and labour costs plus your profit margin.

If your business has been engaged by an architect or project manager and you have been given a carpet plan and specifications to quote on, you may need to recommend adjustments in order to ensure your profit margin is maintained. Mistakes in the order, such as excess wastage, or not ordering sufficient carpet to cover wastage, can cost you dearly so double check every detail.

Here are some of the main variables that can drastically affect the cost of your commercial carpet project:

1. Type of carpet

- Wall to wall carpet is generally more expensive than carpet tiles, mainly due to greater wastage and more complex and time-consuming installation
- Woven broadloom carpet is more expensive than tufted broadloom
- Tufted broadloom is available in a wide range of quality from low to high, with price points to suit

2. Type of fibre

The type of fibre used – from natural wool to several different types of nylon – also affects the cost of carpet. Generally, natural fibres will be more expensive than synthetic. The "average pile density" also affect the price with higher density usually being more expensive.



3. Standard or custom design

It is hardly surprising that an entirely customized carpet design will be more expensive than a stock design. But even seemingly small changes in colourway to predefined designs can sometimes (though not always) contribute to a higher price as some suppliers have very favourable rates for their stock collections. Other suppliers produce most of their collections on demand and thus can keep favourable rates even for customized versions of them. The impact of your changes on the price can vary greatly though, so be sure to check in with your supplier for a quote on at least a couple of different options.

4. Type of backing

Carpet backing is an often underestimated part of both carpet price and quality. Backing plays a crucial role in ensuring important properties such as:

- Underfoot comfort
- Isolating properties
- Wear resistance
- Acoustics
- Footstep suppression
- Fire resistance

Carpet backing adds structural stability, shape and protection, and the material used (its thickness and firmness) can affect the long-term durability of the carpet, which in itself should always be a topic when quoting your price to your client.

Carpet backing can also act as an integrated underlay so the carpet can be fixed directly to the subfloor which significantly affects installation time and in turn, installation costs.

Today's carpet market offers a wide range of carpet backing options such as latex, PVC, polyurethane (PU), bitumen and textile backings such as woven or felt.

All these backing materials have different purposes, and different price points. Generally, as with the fibres, the natural materials are typically more expensive. The cheapest option is usually bitumen, but the widely criticized environmental impact of this material makes it an unpopular choice with many architects and clients, and for the same reasons, many suppliers have completely discontinued the use of bitumen.



The best balance between price, quality and environmental sustainability is often found with latex, textile or polyester backings. But be sure to consult your carpet supplier to choose the most suitable and most cost-effective backing for every situation in your project – such as high and low traffic areas – that best fits within the overall budget.

NB: If environmental sustainability is important to your client, consider that some suppliers offer carpet backing made from recycled materials. One example of this is the ege Ecotrust carpet backing made from recycled water bottles.

5. Installation

Once you have final costs for all the carpet, backing, adhesives, sub-floor preparation and such you will need to add in your installation and labour costs, then calculate your profit margin leaving some leeway for unexpected delays that could require rescheduling.

Wall to wall carpet installation is generally more complex, more time-consuming and more costly than carpet tile installation and there is also more wastage to be accounted for. Waste for wall to wall carpets will typically be 10-30% depending on the design and building where carpet tiles will usually only waste 2-4%

Installation on perimeter grippers is the most expensive carpet installation technique but for high-end jobs where quality outweighs budget restraints it provides a cushion-like effect when walking over the carpet, increased footstep suppression, high strength and elasticity, resistance to heavy traffic and a simple and quick replacement of the carpet when needed.

Carpet tiles are easy to lay, have little wastage and can be installed immediately, making them ideal for projects on a tight budget or timeline.

Thoroughly checking all factors with your carpet supplier will ensure a win-win for all concerned – the client will get the best possible carpeting solution for their project, within their budget, and you will walk away happy with both the results and your profit margin.

Next up, we guide you through the important questions to ask a client before you recommend flooring choices for their project.



CHAPTER 4



10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CLIENT BEFORE RECOMMENDING FLOORING

When a client simply wants new flooring, not a complete new fit-out, they may approach you directly. Here's where you can flex your knowledge, customer service and guide them on the best possible options for their needs.

If you want a happy client and no hassle down the line, you will have to find out what the client's real needs are, not just what colour flooring they want. Here are 10 questions to get the discussion rolling and determine your recommendations:

1. What type of flooring do you prefer?

If they answer that they prefer the look of timber flooring, but the space is in fact a busy office environment, you can guide the client towards carpet as a better option for its acoustic qualities. They may prefer timber or other hard flooring because they think it will be more durable than carpet. In which case, you can assure them that commercial carpeting is highly durable if well-maintained.

2. What is your budget?

This will determine many factors, such as the grade of carpet you can recommend and whether you should guide the client towards wall to wall carpet or carpet tiles.

3. What is your timeline for this project?

How long the client is able to vacate the premises will also be crucial to the final flooring decision. If only a very short period of downtime is doable then carpet tiles may be the client's only option. Make sure the client knows exactly how long the actual installation will take, as well as any periods before and after installation when the space needs to be vacant for acclimatisation beforehand and ventilation afterwards.

4. Would you prefer a custom design carpet?

If wall to wall carpet would be appropriate then let the client know that you can provide a custom design if desired. Of course, you don't design this yourself but you know that your custom carpet supplier has an in-house design service that will work with you or the client to achieve the client's desired effect. Alert the client to the fact that the delivery lead time may be a little longer than for a standard design.



5. Which areas of the fit-out receive the most foot traffic?

You will need to determine all the heaviest use foot traffic routes in the space and explain to the client that a suitably rated carpet needs to be specified for these areas, as well as for areas with castor chairs in use.

The areas with the heaviest foot traffic will also attract the most soiling during daily use. Now's the time to recommend to the client suitable colours and patterns that camouflage this effectively.

6. In which areas will acoustics be an issue?

You need to know which areas will be the noisiest so you can select the right carpet with good acoustic qualities and the right backing to keep the noise down to a hum rather than a roar.

7. Will areas of the project receive lots of natural light?

Once you have determined that some areas receive a lot of direct sunlight, you can advise the client that fading could be an issue over the long term and a light colour carpet would be best in these areas if they receive only light foot traffic. In heavier traffic areas, the client may need to consider window film or window coverings to reduce UV penetration so a suitable medium-coloured or patterned carpet can be used there.

8. Is sustainability an issue for you?

Your client may not know that eco-friendly carpets even exist. So here's your opportunity to explain the options on the market, such as offerings from a carpet supplier with a Cradle to Cradle™ certification and even carpets made from recycled fishing nets.

9. Would you prefer wall to wall carpet or carpet tiles?

You should have sufficient answers by now to guide the client firmly towards either wall to wall carpet or carpet tiles.

10. Can I interest you in another colour rather than grey?

Many clients will just want plain grey carpet, seeing it as practical and serviceable. Showing them samples of modern carpet in exciting colours and heathered patterns and carpet tiles in a variety of geometric shapes may perhaps inspire them to create a more lively environment for their staff and visitors!

Next, we take a look at how to assist your clients with their carpet design choices.

CHAPTER 5





ASSISTING YOUR CLIENT WITH CARPET DESIGN CHOICES

“Help, I’m not a designer!” we hear you cry. When liaising with clients directly, however, you do have a secret weapon – your custom carpet supplier has in-house designers ready, willing and able to help you make great design choices for your clients.

As well as having expert help at hand to back you up, you deal with carpet a lot more than your clients, right? So you almost certainly know more about carpet, and the choices available in the market, than your clients do. So even though you might think that you know next to nothing about colours, patterns and trends, you can help them choose, not only the right type of carpet for their needs, but the design as well.

Some clients are easy. They want plain grey wall to wall carpet and that’s that. Dull and boring, perhaps, but no problem. Others will ask you: “What do you think?” Be prepared for this by having plenty of samples at hand and also asking your carpet supplier for a range of project photos for you to put together a ‘lookbook’ of design possibilities. Or perhaps they even have such a lookbook ready for you. For starters, you can download the **“10 Amazing Carpet Cases We Love”** which features a bit of everything.

Have samples and a lookbook at the ready

Helping your clients with their carpet design is your opportunity to bring out your samples and the lookbook and possibly do some up-selling if they fall for a particular design or specification that may be more costly than they had anticipated in their original budget.

Showing samples, preferably on site, allows your client to visualise the finished carpet and refine their ideas and preferences. Get them excited about the vibrant design possibilities by showing a range of different textures in their preferred colourway, or showing how different shaped carpet tiles work together to produce lively geometric patterns.



Showing samples, preferably on site, allows your client to visualise the finished carpet and refine their ideas and preferences.

Point out to your client also that your carpet supplier can provide any custom design or colour their heart could possibly desire and can work on a unique design for them in-house. This may inspire the client to order carpet in custom colours to match their corporate logo or choose to have a unique design based on the company's product offering.

Cover the practicalities

Alert your client to the practical issues of carpet colour and design as they relate to the site and their particular needs. For example, in areas with heavy foot traffic, mid-tone colours and patterns such as heathering are best for concealing the build-up of soil between cleanings. In areas that could be subject to fading due to direct sunlight, lighter shades could be preferable.

If the client has questions you simply can't answer – simply call your carpet supplier, ask to speak with an in-house designer and voila, you have the answer.

A happy client leads to more and larger projects

Assisting your client with their design choices can potentially lead to upselling and a healthy profit margin. However, most importantly, a happy client who loves the results means a great testimonial for your website and potential word of mouth recommendations that could lead to more and larger projects, not to mention possible repeat business from the same client.

So you see, you may not be a designer but you can competently assist your clients with their carpet design choices. They'll appreciate your extra effort and advice.

Next up, we'll be talking about the benefits of carpet tiles and how to convince your client to use them in their project.



CHAPTER 6



CONVINCING YOUR CLIENT TO USE CARPET TILES

A night on the tiles might be fun at the time but can leave you with a nasty headache in the morning. Laying carpet tiles, on the other hand, is generally a headache-free process. So how can you convince more clients to choose carpet tiles over wall to wall carpet?

You may have a strong preference for carpet tile jobs over wall to wall carpet jobs. For one thing, moving boxes of carpet tiles is a whole lot easier than hauling huge, heavy rolls of carpet onto a site and into position. Carpet tiles offer a whole lot of advantages for your clients as well, but how do you go about convincing them of that?

For starters, your client may still think of carpet tiles as those cheap and nasty squares of thin carpet available in the past. Pull out your samples and 'lookbook' and show them this is no longer the case. With high quality carpet tiles now available in a swathe of different shapes, colours and designs just showing the endless possibilities and letting them actually touch and feel the quality of the tiles could sway their thinking in no time.

Reducing time and costs

Of course, the real clincher comes when the client wants a stunning flooring result, but is on a tight budget, tight deadline or both. If the fit-out is a renovation of an existing space, downtime can be a real issue.

Point out to your client that carpet tiles are faster to lay than wall to wall carpet and don't always need to settle in place for 24 hours before they are laid, substantially reducing downtime, and that both this reduced time and little wastage serve to reduce overall costs. If need be, most carpet tiles can even be laid with furniture in place. Not an ideal situation, perhaps, but it can be done if time and lack of disruption is a deal breaker for the client.



Just showing the endless possibilities and letting them actually touch and feel the quality of the tiles could sway their thinking in no time.

Practical advantages

Naturally, practical advantages can also sway a client's flooring decision so be sure to point out that tiles allow easy access to underfloor cabling if this is likely to be an issue.

Another significant advantage is that individual tiles are easily replaceable in case of spot stains or excess wear – your client simply needs to order an extra box of the same dye lot to ensure replacements are seamless and match perfectly.

By this stage of the discussion, you should have the client right on side and can move the conversation back to the overall design: Square, hexagon or plank shapes? Light, mid-tone or dark colours? Plain, textured or heathered in design?

Decisions made, measurements taken and a final handshake given and you can be on your way to discuss backing choices and any other final details with your carpet supplier before placing the order.

Next step, delivery and a headache-free project.

Now just hang on a minute, however. While carpet tiles are great for you, the installer, wall to wall carpet projects can be even better for your profit margin. Let's discuss the whys and hows in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7





WHY WALL TO WALL CARPETS ARE GREAT FOR FLOOR FITTERS

*Do you lean towards carpet tile installations as a preference?
Fair enough, but beware not to discount wall to wall carpet outright.
There are healthy profits to be made – and it's all in the planning.*

If you are ordering wall to wall carpet for an installation you may view it as a financial risk. What if the site is not cleared on the given installation date? What if the subfloor isn't ready? What if the carpet plan has changed at the last minute and no-one has informed you? What if the order is not correct and there is a lot of wastage to eat into your profit margin? What if the carpet rolls are too large for the access doorways or the goods lift?

So many worries, yet they are all avoidable with careful planning and communication. And one secret weapon – your carpet supplier.

Remember that wall to wall carpet's big advantage is first and foremost the speed of installation. In fact, it's probably the floor covering that is fastest of all to install. The large rolls are generally bigger than any other floor covering and can be easily laid in large areas by a single person using simple techniques and the right equipment and supplies.

Staying on top of your wall to wall installation

Start with an estimated schedule then consult that secret weapon – your carpet supplier – for advice on how to reduce wastage on this specific project. Every project has its own challenges and they know how to overcome these. Most importantly they help you make the layout plan and check that it's correct once done. This is especially important when working with patterned wall to wall carpets.

Once you have your supplier on board with assistance on the layout plan, your objective becomes staying in the loop, conferring with key people on site to check progress and adjusting your schedule as necessary.

Plan carefully, keep communication channels open and track progress on site thoroughly and, come the day of installation, all should be plain sailing and your profits will stay intact.

Delays and lack of communication are practically inevitable on any construction site unfortunately. It's only in a perfect world that every step proceeds on schedule, though occasionally a miracle occurs and the planned timeline is realistic and achievable. Mostly, however, you'll find the timeline is unrealistic, delays stretch and stretch and your scheduled installation day becomes an impossibility.

So go with the flow, keep up to date with the genuine rate of progress and consult your carpet supplier if you hit any difficulties. If it's a complex installation, the supplier may even be able to send a consultant onto the site to assist with any difficulties on the installation day.

Wall to wall carpet's big advantage is first and foremost the speed of installation.

CHAPTER 8





HOW TO CREATE A CARPET MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR YOUR CLIENTS

Presenting the client with a carpet maintenance plan once the job is complete isn't just a nice touch of after-sales service. Though your client will surely appreciate it, a maintenance plan can also ensure the durability of your work and the carpet itself, saving hassles down the line.

If clients don't maintain their new carpet properly, it could come back to bite you, the installer. In the worst case, you could be called on to repair or replace the carpet at your own cost. So think of a maintenance plan as your insurance plan against this scenario. You have let them know what they need to do to maintain their carpet, in writing, and if they don't follow up then it's not you who is liable.

As you know, proper, consistent carpet maintenance is vital to extending the life of carpet and to sustaining an optimum performance and appearance level and a healthy indoor environment. Be sure your client knows this also.

Preparing a Maintenance Plan

Before installation it's advisable to prepare a maintenance plan to ensure that factors requiring particular attention are carefully taken into consideration. It's especially important to identify any areas which will be impacted by heavy soiling and mark them on your plan:

Track-off areas

These are areas where a carpet collects tracked-in soil from the outside or from hard-surfaced floors. Track off areas average 90 square feet (6 x 15 metres) at building entrances, 10 square feet (2 x 5 metres) at internal doorways, and 40 square feet (5 x 8 metres) in corridors that are six feet wide.

Congested channels

A concentrated channel of foot traffic, such as doorways, stairwells and around drinking fountains is called a congested channel. A congested channel averages three feet (0.9 metres) around doorways and 10 feet (three metres) around elevators.

Traffic lanes

These are the areas with the highest concentration of foot traffic.

A complete and effective program should include three maintenance categories: preventive, daily and periodic maintenance.



Preventive Maintenance

During planning, it's important to establish preventive measures to prevent soiling of the carpet and automatically reduce the costs of additional cleaning. These can include:

Entrance/barrier mats

Mats should be placed in entrances and elevators to collect dirt before it reaches any carpeted area. For optimum effect, make sure the mats are large enough to cover the distance of several footsteps.

Colour selection

Selecting the right colours for traffic areas can assist greatly in maintaining carpet appearance in these areas. Medium colours, tweeds and patterned carpets hide soil, while lighter colours mask fading. To maintain an acceptable visual appearance and cleaning standard, light and uni-coloured carpets need to be cleaned on a more frequent basis than dark, patterned carpets.

Daily Maintenance

Vacuum cleaning is one of the most important and cost-effective elements of an efficient maintenance program. Daily vacuuming can remove more than 80% of all dry soil accumulated in the carpet during use. Vacuum cleaning should be scheduled according to the amount of potential soil build-up in the area in question.

The general recommendations for vacuuming frequency are:

- **Heavy traffic areas:** Daily
- **Medium traffic areas:** Twice a week
- **Light traffic areas:** Once or twice a week

The client's maintenance team should use a heavy-duty wide track machine for wide, open areas, equipped with adjustable cylindrical brushes to whip embedded soil to the surface, as well as an industrial version of the domestic upright vacuum cleaner to tighter areas.

Periodic pile brushing with a pile lifter vacuum preconditions the carpet and removes dry, deeply embedded soil from high traffic areas. This can be especially helpful prior to carpet cleaning.

Vacuum cleaners should have a good and efficient HEPA micro-filter system in order to remove fine dust and maintain a good indoor climate. The HEPA filter system extracts 99.997% of pollen, dust, animal scales and other particles from carpet.



Periodic Maintenance

Cleaning

Periodically scheduled extraction cleaning removes accumulated soil which has not been removed by regular vacuum cleaning and spot removal. Cleaning of transition areas, track-off area and congested channels will be required according to localised use and conditions.

The Chem-Dry method

With the Chem-Dry method, a hot (60-75 degrees) Ph-neutral, heavy carbon dioxide aqueous solution is brushed on the carpet and is subsequently absorbed and then dried with a cotton disc.

This method is extremely efficient, uses small quantities of water, there is no use of chemicals and no soaking of the backing. Dirt is mopped from the carpet pile and the drying time is typically short (one to two hours).

Dry cleaning

Alternative systems such as absorbent compound (Host Dry Extraction) may be used if there is no time allowed for the carpet to dry before it needs to be walked on again.

After cleaning

After the carpet has been cleaned the carpet should be checked for possible remaining stains and these marks should be treated. The carpet should not be walked on until it is completely dry. It also has to be dry before furniture is put back in place.

Spot cleaning

Damage from spills should be minimised by taking immediate action. As soon as a spill occurs, it should be blotted with a clean, white, absorbent towel and this process repeated until the spill is fully absorbed. A professional spot removal kit, such as Chem-Dry Spot Remover, should be kept on hand at all times.

Lightweight portable extractors are also available for efficient removal of spills. These portable extractors assist in thoroughly removing spills and you should encourage the client to keep one available.

Caution

The first time a cleaning agent or stain remover is used on a carpet it should be examined to determine whether it could be harmful to the carpet. Damages can occur as a result of colour bleed, discolouration, bleaching and dissolution. Recommend to the client that any cleaning agents or stain removers should be tested in an inconspicuous area.

Finally, assure the client that a well-cared for carpet will keep looking good for many years and it could be quite a while before your services are required again!

We hope that you have found this guide enjoyable, helpful and informative and we wish you many a smooth and profitable carpet installation project in the future!

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