

ON THE FLOOR

CTS Flooring is an expert in retail flooring selection, installation and repair.

Jennifer Orr



Naturally, you would expect a commercial flooring contractor to be an expert on carpet, tiles and hardwoods and, after being in the industry for more than 40 years, it's true that CTS Flooring knows floor materials from the ground up. But CTS Flooring is also schooled in the business of retail, with approximately 95% of its revenue coming directly from the services it offers retailers. The national flooring vendor focuses specifically on the retail industry, providing floor selection, installation and repair servic-

es for stores around the country.

Headquartered in Limerick, Pennsylvania, CTS Flooring likes to consider itself a one-stop shop for a retailer's flooring installation needs; the contractor can take over every aspect of a task, from picking out products to installing the floor. Or it can handle only those aspects of the program that the retailer wants to outsource. The company will even break down existing fixtures and replace them after completing floor installation.

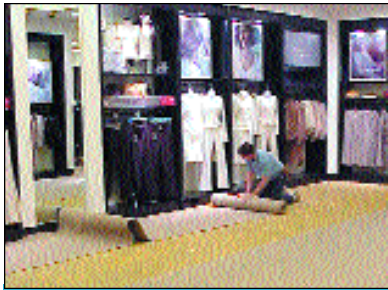
When a retailer hires CTS Flooring

to install or replace a floor, the contractor first begins researching the customer's current store concept and discussing different floor options with the retailer's construction crew and design firm. "We look at a customer's budget and help them select the best product to fit their needs, not only in the initial year of purchase but over the entire life cycle," says Drew Guinan, owner and executive vice president of CTS Flooring. Even though the company does not offer floor maintenance services, it still considers a floor's long term care when helping retailers select materials.

"We also make sure that all the products we recommend are right for commercial usage and that they meet all ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and any other local requirements," Guinan continues. CTS has experience with every type of flooring material, whether it's carpet, wood, vinyl or an



Many retailers today prefer hardwoods to carpeting.



A store's floor in transition.



CTS prides itself on its detail work.



Putting on the finishing touches so that everything is back in place and ready for business.

epoxy coating.

When recommending materials, CTS Flooring has plenty of options. The company is part of StarNet Commercial Flooring Cooperative, a network of more than 100 commercial flooring contractors. The cooperative has a strong relationship with many flooring manufacturers and can offer CTS and its customers access to numerous products at competitive prices.

Over the past few years, as the retail industry started moving away from carpets, customers began choosing hard surfaces for their stores. The result, Guinan says, has been increased consumer interest in floor coatings. More and more retailers are looking at epoxy alternatives and polyurethane floors with color built into them.

Not only does CTS Flooring try to stay current with the latest trends in floor materials, the company also keeps an eye out for new products coming to the market. "We're very active in looking over in Europe for new and innovative products," Guinan says. "We have a reputation for bringing products to the United States from Europe that can be more cost effective."

Once a particular material has been selected and ordered, CTS Flooring's traffic department tracks the product from the time it leaves the manufacturer to ensure that it arrives at the store on time, ready for the installation crew. The company has a network of more than 500 installation crews nationwide, so CTS Flooring can install a floor in just about any part of the country.

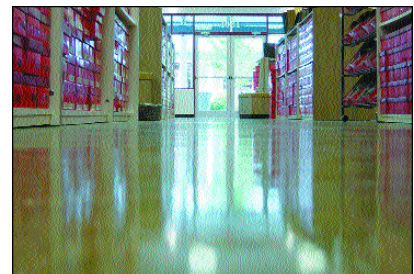
During the ordering and installation process, CTS Flooring makes sure that all parties involved — the retailer, the installer, the manufacturer, the general contractor — are kept abreast of the project's status. "Communication is important for us," Guinan says. "We pride ourselves in coordinating all the parties involved in the project."

To help keep customers apprised of their flooring projects, CTS Flooring invested in a new computer system that automatically generates status reports for customers. In addition, the company is in the process of investigating how to offer its customers secure access to its Web site. Keeping itself up to date with technology trends is also crucial to the company's success. "We can't afford to stay where we are with respect to technology," Guinan says. "Our customers are increasing their use of technology, and we need to be able to respond. By using technology, we can streamline the processes for us and for them."

When installing floors, the crews work with the stores' schedules, making sure that the retailers don't lose revenue. Often that means working after hours. "Once a store closes, our people come in, do the work and have the store back in shape ready to reopen the next morning," Guinan says. "For



Floors, like the one in this candy store, can make a bold impression.



A high polish new floor for one shoe retailer.

those floors that require four or five nights of work, we perform the work in phases. We do just enough work within a given night so the store is up and running the next day and experiences no downtime."

CTS Flooring sees its projects through to the very end, and sometimes installation doesn't necessarily mark the completion of a task. If a floor issue arises, the company is still around to resolve the problem. "When we have a customer, we're not looking at just that one job for a store in Los Angeles — we're looking at the other 40, 50 or 100 stores that we're working on across the country. So we can't afford not to go back and get that issue fixed," Guinan says. "We have enough leverage with our installation network that they're going to go in and fix a problem as quickly as possible."

From selection and ordering materials to installation and even beyond, CTS Flooring takes total responsibility for a flooring project. "We handle a task from start to finish to make sure the job gets done right," Guinan says. "So our customers have the freedom to go off and do the other things that they need to do day in and day out." **PRSM**