

“The Adventures of Floor Replacements in Open Stores”

OK — it is time to freshen up the look of the flooring in your store, but you do not want to impact sales by shutting down the store. What can you do? It is possible to complete your face lift after hours and keep the store open. It is important to know that while this is possible, there are several logistical items that need to be addressed. This article can help by providing a snap shot of those items that must be addressed before the face lift can start.

The first item is communication between the retailer’s corporate office, the store personnel and the flooring contractor. It is imperative that the store manager is aware of the number of evenings that it will take to complete the floor replacement. In addition, the store manager must also be aware of any special care that needs to be taken when walking on newly installed flooring (some adhesive manufacturers require eight to twelve hours after installation before any foot traffic is allowed on the new flooring). Many flooring failures happen not because of poor installation or poor quality materials, but because the store manager was not aware of the time needed for the adhesive to set and the area was open to traffic too early.

The second item is the communication between the flooring contractor and the mall. Because this work is done in the evenings there can and should be discussion with mall personnel on proper times to access the store, availability of a disposal dumpster on the property, and the potential need to temporarily move the store merchandise and/or fixtures into the mall’s common area while the old flooring is removed and new flooring is installed. Additionally, the replacement of these items before the mall and store is opened the next day is paramount to the face lift success. Prior to the start of the project, and to insure that the flooring is replaced in a professional and expeditious manner, the experienced flooring contractor must provide significant preparation work and logistics evaluation.

The flooring contractor should provide the following: a site visit by a qualified flooring technician (to determine material quantities, floor conditions and levelness, moisture emission issues, etc.), fixture moving plan (will there be a need for a specialty company to dismantle and then reinstall fixtures?), door entry needs (will the entry system need to be adjusted after new flooring is installed?), etc.

Once all the necessary site visits are complete then the materials can be ordered and shipped. A strong recommendation is to use a retail specialty flooring contractor who is capable of receiving materials to their warehouses. This eliminates the need for the store manager to find storage space for the flooring materials before the job starts. Furthermore, most retail stores do not have the necessary off loading equipment needed for the delivery completion process.

After the materials arrive at the contractor’s warehouse the scheduling process can take place. Since the store managers have been involved in the communications, and know when the face lift is going to happen, scheduling of store personnel to stay in the evenings can be completed easily and efficiently.

This entire process can also be accomplished by the retailer hiring multiple vendors and managing the whole process internally. In the case where there are multiple stores involved in a face lift program, this can be a less cost effective, and more stressful way of dealing with floor replacement.

In the case of a multi store program, the most efficient and least disruptive means of replacing flooring material in open stores is to consider a specialty company that has the complete project management staff, experience, and installation network geared towards multi-store location roll outs. A specialty company such as this can tackle the whole process from start to finish. By having a single source who is an expert in the flooring world, you have more accountability through the one vendor and potentially a cost savings on the entire face lift budget.

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