Area rugs: State of the industry

Oriental Weavers' Tommy Bahama collection, released last year, has been exceedingly popular with consumers.

FIRST HALF OF 2015 OFFERS POSITIVITY, UNCERTAINTY

By Jana Pollack

In the first half of 2015, the area rug market has experienced ups and downs. Most manufacturers reported gains in certain categories, but the overall market remains volatile as consumers continue to delay purchases due to economic uncertainty.

Award of Excellence

Shaw captures trio of honors including Best Overall title

By Ken Ryan

GARDEN CITY, N.Y.—It was a banner evening for Shaw Industries, which was voted the industry’s Best Overall Manufacturer in the 19th annual Award of Excellence competition. Best Overall was one of three awards for Shaw; it also earned Best Manufacturer in Carpet Group A as well as the Environmental Leadership award.

Shaw has now won Best Overall six times, capturing the award in four of the last five years. It has won for Environmental Leadership every year since the award’s inception in 2010.

"On behalf of Shaw Industries and our 23,000 small mill carpet manufacturer for our Tuftex division,” said Randy Merritt, Shaw Industries.

FCNews welcomes Morrow

Design expert Emily Kiker
FCLC outlines industry initiatives in first meeting

By Ken Ryan

ST. LOUIS—The Floor Covering Leadership Council (FCLC) recently met here for the first time in 2015 and identified three initiatives set forth by its members: an industry training portal, improvement of communication between members and the industry, and addressing needs and issues related to installation.

The Council was formed in 2014 by 12 flooring-focused associations to identify the most important issues affecting the industry and develop solutions. Leaders from 10 associations participated in the recent meeting.

On the issue of training, the group identified a pressing need for access to efficient, effective and affordable professional programs and instruction for industry members in all capacities.

To address this concern the group agreed that an industry portal was needed to consolidate all available training programs by all flooring organizations in one location. This portal would provide access across the board to all available training programs at all levels and designations. In addition to the convenience factor, this consolidated platform will help to alleviate training program duplication and ultimately reduce training costs for companies by connecting them with programs that already exist.

The FCLC delegates also discussed ways to streamline communication and cooperation between association members and the industry overall. As part of this initiative the FCLC recently publicized the launch of its website at fclcouncil.org.

Kim Oderkirk, committee chairperson for the Communication and Cooperation Committee, told FCNews the website “will help those in the flooring industry have a better understanding of who the FCLC is and the members it represents. One of the most powerful features within the website is the industry calendar, which captures all events of the floor covering industry. We ask those in the industry who plan events to look first to the calendar so we can avoid unnecessary overlapping of events.” Submission forms for events are also available on the website.

Regarding installation, Robert Varden from the Certified Flooring Installers (CFI) and Brett Miller from the National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) hosted a program that consisted of a five-week training session, including Business 101, OSHA Safety Training, wood flooring training and carpet installation.

The group will meet again in the fourth quarter to determine next steps.
Fire
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payment terms. Some additional supportive measures offered by vendors included waiving minimums, front-of-the-line production and relaxed consigned inventory policies. “Our manufacturers have gone above and beyond,” Glavin said. “There wasn’t a single vendor that didn’t reach out to offer their sympathy and express their desire to help in any way they could.”

The National Wood Flooring Association (NWFA) also contacted PFS to offer assistance, according to Michael Martin, president and CEO. That included waiving dues for 2015 and buying lunch for the staff. “[PFS is] an important training partner and active member with us,” he said. “We know that a lot of NWFA members, including competitors, have offered help and assistance.”

Among the vendors lending a helping hand were 3M, Shamrock, Boen, Basic Coatings, Bona-Kemi, Primatech and Unilin. Shane Calloway, vice president of North American independent distribution sales for Unilin, said PFS has been a trusted partner for over 15 years. “They provide their local customers with outstanding customer service and product knowledge that is second to none. It is our privilege to lock arms with them after the fire and ensure that they can continue providing their usual excellent service, uninterrupted.”

Tom McNeil, director of professional sales at Bona, said his sport, professional and adhesives sales teams have been in regular contact with PFS. “We will do all we can to help support their business during this difficult time.”

Glavin said the store could not have bounced back so quickly without the support of its suppliers. “A tragedy like this really brings out the best in people. The support from vendors and our customer base is just awesome.”

Much work remains to be done, however. Glavin said statistics show that most small businesses struggle to recover from a fire of this magnitude, whether it is because the business was underinsured, loss of customers or disruption of business for an extended period. “We’re up against it, but we have a positive attitude. The stuff that burned is just that—stuff. The people who run our business are still here.”

He added that if he has one message for small independent flooring dealers it is to “make sure your data is backed up at an off-site location and verify that it works. I know people with their own businesses who are paying IT [staff] for this service only to find out—when they tested it—that it didn’t work. Make sure you know what your policy says. What this showed me is how important it is to have good systems in place because even a week’s disruption in business can be hard to recover from.”

Less than three weeks after the fire, the company is making local deliveries and the owners are determined to make the business better than ever. “Twenty-three years ago when we started, we didn’t know anything,” Glavin concluded. “Now we do and we’re going to do it bigger, bolder and better than ever before.”

We would like to thank our loyal customers for voting Tuftex The 2015 Best Carpet Manufacturer