

Industry forms Floor Covering B2B Association

By Matthew Spieler

After nearly five years of coming together as an ad hoc group, the members of the Flooring Industry B2B Standards Committee voted unanimously to approve the formation of the Floor Covering Business-to-Business Association (FCB2B).

Aaron Pirner, CEO of CAP Carpet in Wichita, Kan., and immediate past chairman of the World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), and Pamela Bowe, president of Bowe Co. in Seattle and technology consultant for StarNet Commercial Flooring, were elected co-presidents of the not-for-profit association.

Pirner and Bowe have been strong advocates of the B2B undertaking and each has been involved with the process since things started happening. "I am very thankful the group has confidence in me and Aaron to move this forward," Bowe said. "But, what's more important is the level of support from everyone, especially the mills that realize how important this initiative is to the entire industry."

Pirner added, "The passion and brilliance of our members is the key to our success and our future. They are an amazing group putting aside their competitive nature and doing incredible things for our industry."

Dev O'Reilly, president of software provider RollMaster and a strong supporter of the standard, said, "The objective of the association is to support technology in the flooring industry. It is dedicated to promoting efficient, professional development of the industry while promoting leadership in establishing ethical guidelines, communication standards and general policy which will positively impact the floor covering industry."

Bowe noted that until the association's formation, "It's been a unique operation in the way everyone has come together. There are competitors—whether mills, software providers, distributors, associations, retailers—working together toward a common goal. It's been an incredible process. Especially the fact that those who have been developing it agreed



Aaron Pirner and Pamela Bowe were elected co-presidents of the fledgling Floor Covering Business-to-Business Association.

from the start to make it an open standard so everyone will be able to use it.

"And the deeper we get into it and the more parties that come on board, the more work we realize there is ahead of us."

That is why the formation of a legal entity was important, Bowe explained. "Now there are by-laws and policies in place, whereas before, things were left open for interpretation. This gives us a formal structure to ensure we can move forward smoothly, especially as interest in it has grown."

She noted when she got involved there were about 20 people working on the standard. At the last meeting, over 100 people were in attendance.

Another important factor about having an official organization is that it is the clearing house when it comes to everything related to the industry's standard. "A number of companies who hadn't been involved before are now calling," Bowe said. "Many of them have been developing internal B2B systems and they want to make sure theirs works with what the rest of the industry is developing."

One other advantage to the association is it should make it easier for everyone to participate.

"This will help ensure the B2B standard meets the needs of all the different aspects of flooring," Bowe explained, noting how residential dealers and commercial contractors have different needs, how carpet specs differ from ceramic and so forth. "From our last meeting, it was discussed how everyone does not use U.S. currencies or measurements. So, now we are working to implement this into the standard."

In addition to Pirner and Bowe, the FCB2B board will consist of members of associations such as WFCA, Carpet & Rug Institute, Ceramic Tile Distributors Association, and National Association of Floor Covering Distributors, because this allows for a broad base representation.


There are three levels of membership—affiliate, active and association.

Affiliate membership costs \$250 a year and is designed to get people/companies who are interested in B2B involved. The entry-level membership does not have voting rights, but those are allowed to attend meetings and participate in the standard via committees.

Active membership runs \$495 and is better suited for those engaged in supplying or using B2B software. In addition to the rights of an affiliate member, those in this category get voting rights.


The association category is reserved for those who represent more than one company and have a vested interest for their members or group to advance this technology. Cost for this is \$1,000 and gives all the rights of the previous two levels, plus a seat on the board.

For more information on FCB2B, call Bowe at 206/448-6655 or Pirner at 316/866-2111.



fcB2B
Floor Covering Business to Business Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



fcB2B
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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

01

GENERAL INFORMATION

COMPANY NAME _____ POSITION _____

CONTACT NAME _____ PHONE _____ FAX _____

MOBILE _____ COMPANY WEBSITE _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TYPE OF COMPANY

MANUFACTURER RETAILER / CONTRACTOR / REMEDIATOR STUCCO / REFINISHED FLOORS

DISTRIBUTOR MIXER SOFTWARE PROVIDER

ASSOCIATION GROUP / COOPERATIVE OTHER _____

2/2

02

MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR CLASS OF MEMBERSHIP.

AFFILIATE MEMBER
Introduce your company to the flooring B2B process and become involved. At this entry level of membership your company will be invited to meetings and be encouraged to participate, but will not have voting rights. Your company is eligible for a number of leading B2B that will provide you with the latest information about the B2B Flooring Standard. The annual membership fee is \$250.

ACTIVE MEMBER
Directly contribute to the B2B cause. This level of membership is vital for suppliers and software providers who are actively delivering B2B products to retailers, and installers who have other types of vested interest in B2B for the flooring industry. Your company will have all of the benefits afforded to an affiliate member, and have voting rights. The annual membership fee is \$495.

ASSOCIATION MEMBER
This level of membership is reserved for entities representing more than one company. Association members have all of the benefits given to affiliate and active members, including voting rights. The annual membership fee is \$1,000.

1/2

Joining the new FCB2B association is as easy as doing business via B2B. Simply visit www.flooringb2bstandard.com.