

FLOOR

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Members Ben Shepherd from Gainesville CarpetsPlus and Adam Arnquist from Arnquist Flooring share best practices to get more builder and commercial business.

Business-Boosting Sales Strategies for Flooring Retailers Revealed at Next Generation Summit

By Tanja Kern

Alliance Flooring, the parent company for CarpetsPlus ColorTile and Carpetland, hosted its Next Generation Flooring Summit at Barnsley Gardens in Adairsville, Georgia, where 66 retailers came together to share best practices and business-boosting strategies.

“We were the first group to bring together independent flooring entrepreneurs to network and share best practices at an event we called our Summit,” said Kevin Logue, co-president and CEO of Alliance Flooring. “We started 25 years ago in 1999 with our first Summit in Marco Island, Florida. Summits allow members to share all aspects of their business from how they run their day-to-day operations to their long-term strategies for being the successes they’ve become.”

Alliance Flooring has long recognized the benefits in bringing like-minded retailers together. In the past, these events have showcased a single-member host store that opened every aspect of their business for the benefit of the group.

“We decided to bring our members together to network and learn from each other instead of putting all that pressure on one location to share what they do best,” said Ryan Dunn, co-President and CEO of Alliance Flooring. “This year we had 10 stores opening up their businesses and sharing their best practices instead of just one. This Summit was all about members leading members.”

Alliance Flooring brought 10 stores together to host and share best practices for this educational, networking event in one location. All members were invited to this Summit to attend breakout sessions and discuss topics that will propel their businesses forward. In addition, Alliance Flooring also showcased suppliers featured in their Perfect Home selling solution along with their best product specials. The Summit also highlighted the announcement of the addition of new vendors to the Perfect Home program.

The first round of member breakout sessions covered topics such as diversification, finding and keeping good personnel, and advertising and marketing. A panel of members shared about their individual businesses and what has been working for them.

Don Cantor and Jon Cantor of Lake Interiors in Chelan, Washington, shared how they achieved significant growth through water restoration services and window coverings.

“Everybody knows that if you own a house, you have a 99% chance of having a water problem in your lifetime,” Don Cantor said. “Water restoration doesn’t depend on what the economy’s doing.”

Jon Cantor, who runs Lake Interiors window covering business, said the Hunter Douglas mobile selling app simplifies and streamlines the selling process.

“When somebody wants to buy a new floor, it’s just a natural addition to be able to add the window coverings with it,” Cantor said. “When we’re selling flooring, we’re selling the protection like the Scotch Guard add-ons, carpet cleaning packages, but you really want to protect your floors from UV fading.”

Next, another group of members shared about gaining more builder and commercial business, claims, returns, project management, and scheduling. To give more background on their operations, each shared information about their business, demographics of their customers, competition and industries that make up their community.

Leadership gave an update on the Perfect Home retail selling solution, which was introduced in 2023. The two-pronged approach to flooring sales utilizes merchandising and technology to bridge the gap between the digital and in-store experiences. The carpet module shipped in October 2023.

“We have about a year of data on the carpet, and they’ve increased their carpet sales within the program by 9% or 10%,” Logue said. “What’s even more interesting about it is their average net selling prices have gone up as well.”

The hard-surface surface module shipped in July of this year.

“We’ve had it in the stores for about 60 days, so it’s still very new, but the feedback on the carpet has been phenomenal,” Logue said. “The retailers love it— it’s producing really, really good results. It’s a very quick and easy frame of reference to hone in on the wood tone that you’re looking for regardless of construction or the core of the product.”

While retail business has been soft in 2024, Alliance Flooring is cautiously optimistic about 2025.

“We see things coming back beginning the second quarter of 2025,” Logue said. “The rate cut that we just got has helped at least spur retail traffic somewhat. We need at least one more significant rate cut to really move things along.”

To complement Perfect Home, Alliance Flooring will add the Perfect Home Accents program in 2025, which will feature 104 Stanton soft surface products, and the Perfect Home Cushion program by Carpenter. In 2026, the group will add engineered hardwood and decorative carpets.

Next year, the team plans dedicated outreach to second-, third-, and fourth-generation owners and managers.

“We’re trying to track those up-and-coming generations,” Logue said. “We’re trying to really make our group—and retail flooring in general—an attractive business for younger people coming up.”