

'Wobbles' warning as market hits 78m sq m

THE contract flooring market is set to falter over the next two years after a period of sustained growth, according to Palmer Market Research.

Uncertainty in the immediate short-term is predicted for the contract flooring market in the Great Britain.

The last Palmer report for this sector was published in 2004 and overall, the market has performed well in the period up until 2008. However, Palmer predicts that the future for this diverse sector looks set to see a decline with confusion in the private sector, in particular, leading to less activity.

Examining the market by product and sector, the report finds that the total British contract floorcovering market in 2007 reached 78.4m sq m, a record high.

It was 14% higher than in 2003, and outperformed the predictions in the previous Palmer report, when it was expected that the market would reach 74.3m sq m.

This market (which excludes retail products bought by homeowners) is divided into three areas:

■ **Resilient:** The report notes that of the three main floorcovering categories, resilient notched up the best performance by recording a 31% increase to 24.4m sq m of the overall market; a 4% rise in market share since 2003. This impressive achievement means that it was the highest recorded level since 1981 and Palmer believes is probably an all-time record.

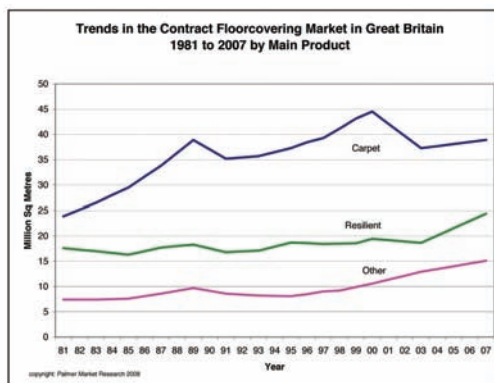
■ **Carpet:** However, over the same four-year period, carpet recorded only a 4% increase to 38.9m sq m over the same four-year period, although this made up for the appalling figures between 2000 and 2003.

Carpet's share of the market declined from 54% in 2003 to 50% in 2007. But this overall trend masks an 8% decline in rolls and a 24% increase in tiles.

■ **Other** (ceramic tiles, wood, laminates, seamless resin terrazzo, etc.): Leaving aside carpet and resilient, other floorcoverings showed a creditable, collective growth of 17% to 15.1m sq m between 2003 and 2007, but the total share of the market remained unchanged, standing at 19%.



Robert Palmer



Mr Palmer believes that allowing for a period of exceptionally high growth, the recent turbulence in the financial markets has, inevitably, led to some concern for the future of the contract floorcovering market.

'Indeed it is hard to keep up with the increasingly rapid pace of events,' notes Robert Palmer.

'We forecast that offices, the biggest sector, will be the hardest hit. Already, there are signs of a cutback and this will worsen in 2009. Other private sector work will not be immune as the financial problems spread to the wider economy.'

Even allowing for the public sector remaining relatively strong, a 2% drop in the overall market is forecast for the whole of 2008, followed by 4% next year before stabilisation occurs in 2010.

Volume 2 of the report is devoted to trends in the decision making process and an attitude study into the major carpet and resilient manufacturers.

The two volume report is available from Palmer Market Research at £6,500 + VAT. The price includes:

- Report in hard copy (three copies) or pdf format;
- A personal presentation of the findings by Robert Palmer at the subscribing company's offices;
- CD of charts shown at the presentation; and
- 24 Month telephone consultancy service to deal with any queries about the report findings.

■ **T: 020 8390 8131**

■ **www.palmermarketresearch.co.uk**

Industry in brief

CFA new members

Recently accepted new members of the CFA include A & H Floor Covering Specialists, Dumfries, Scotland; Andrew John Contract Flooring, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey; Connect Floors, Billericay, Essex; Cooper & Johnson Flooring, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear; Deco Floors, Enfield, Greater London; Lambourne Carpets & Flooring, Chingford, Essex; and NJB Carpets & Flooring, Cardiff, Wales.

NSCC has new member

The British Geomembrane Association has joined the National Specialist Contractors' Council. BGA has 15 contractor members specialising in installing geomembranes for preventing fluid movement in the ground and pollution control. NSCC has 29 member bodies representing over 7,000 businesses.

Consultancy expands

Consulting Plus, the flooring research specialist, has acquired Leading Edge, a research and marketing consultancy. Consulting Plus founder Mel Budd becomes md in the new company which will trade as Leading Edge, while still working with Consulting Plus clients. The company has moved to larger offices in Berkshire. www.lead-edge.co.uk
T: 0118 979 7800

Returning to FeRFA

FeRFA has welcomed Harldwick Resin Flooring and Midland Industrial Flooring back to its ranks.

Tai Ping joins BCFA

Tai Ping Carpets has become a member of the British Contract Furnishing Association.
T: 01494 896790

Fair payment award

The NSCC Fair Payment Campaign has been short-listed in the Trade Association For um awards 2008. www.fairpaymentcampaign.co.uk

QUOTE:

'It's ludicrous that students can pass the construction diploma without even stepping onto a building site!'

– Richard Lawrance, md of recruitment specialist Resourcing Solutions, commenting on the new Construction and Built Environment diploma to be introduced next month.

Contractor wins TV after requesting sample

JUST by requesting a larger viewing sample, Barry Dickinson, of Mark Paynter (Contracts), of Shipley, a member of the CFA, won a new 32in LCD HD TV, by courtesy of **POLYFLOR**.

Barry was one of hundreds of contractors and specifiers who took part in the company's promotion on the new decorative sheet vinyl safety flooring Polysafe Mosaic and its partner product Polysafe Wood FX.

His sample request was the first out of the hat in the Mosaic prize draw, with architect Stuart Eatock, of Michael Cox Associates, Worthing, winning an identical TV in the Wood FX draw.

'We are delighted with the reaction from our customers to both new ranges and overwhelmed by the response to Wood FX,' says Polyflor marketing manager Simon James. ■ www.polyflor.com



TV winner in the Polysafe Mosaic promotion, Barry Dickinson (left) is congratulated by Polyflor area technical sales representative Neil Buckley