



John Roberts on joins in carpets

If the join is jumping you've done it wrong!

MOST end-users ask not to have joins! This is usually due to a poor join they have had on a previous carpet or possibly having heard from a friend about a bad experience in their carpet.

Let's be honest, a carpet without a join is the best option, but this may not be possible.

Remember, for example, that there are many rooms larger than the width of a carpet. There are also obstacles, like pillars, which have to be cut around, creating a join.

Never claim to produce an invisible join! Even good joins can be seen on certain colours or textures. But by the same token certain textures or colours can help to disguise joins. This is assuming the join has been made correctly.

There are a number of rules to consider when planning where to place the join, such as:

- traffic flow is along rather than across the seam;
- the incident light does not strike across the seam;
- the seams and cross joins are placed away from areas subject to heavy and twisting wear; and
- doorways, lift entrances, stair noses and areas of narrow access, unless protected by proprietary finishes.

However much you follow these rules, there are times when they all cannot be avoided, so use commonsense.

Common faults: The most common fault with joins is where the edges are not tightly butted together. Other faults include poorly cut joins and cuts which do not run in-line with the weave / tufting line.

Cutting across the weave or tufting line will, in most cases, leave an edge. This will have gaps between the tufts, due to the zigzag effect of the tufts. On loop pile carpets cutting across the loop line will result in fraying and sprouting of the tufts.

Row running or row finding will help to cut along the tuft line, avoiding cutting across the tuft line. Once a line has been created cut through from the face

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with a loop pile or cushion back cutter.

These cutters have two slotted blades. The blade can be set on the right or the left side of the cutter, enabling the cut to be tight against the pile. Using a knife or scissors can leave the fibres sheared or an inconsistent edge.

Underlays: Avoid making a join on top of the underlay, as some will change their shape when warmed up. Some underlays will recover but not in all cases. Underlays can be affected to the point that they will not recover leaving variations in the height along the join.

Woven carpets need different methods to determine where to cut. Most but not all woven carpets have selvages which vary in their width. Do you or don't you cut off the selvage? The best method to determine this is to place the two edges together and look at the gap between the tufts.

If there is a gap of more than one row of tufts cut off one of the selvages. Place the edges back together and check again. If there is still a gap of more than one row of tufts then cut off the selvage from the other piece.

Sewn joins: The object is to achieve a tight join with minimal

gaps between the tufts. Having said this, the description above is for heat seam joins and not sewn joins. If a sewn join is required, then it is normal to leave the selvage on, but this must be evaluated based on each carpet and should not be taken as standard procedure.

Sealers: Once a join has been cut whether woven or tufted, I recommend sealing the join with a proprietary sealer. Cut edges on woven and loop pile carpets must be sealed. Seam sealer on tufted carpets help to prevent peaking.

Heat seaming: When a join is heat seamed you are only adhering the backing together and when a carpet relaxes, the join can lift leaving an obvious gap.

Seam sealer glues the edges at the primary backing level, helping to reduce or eliminate peaking. Not all seam sealers act as adhesives so please check with the manufacturer.

Even if you cut the join correctly and seal the edges, poor joins can still be created by trapping pile between the join.

Tape: Another consideration to good joins is the type of tape you use. I have found that some tapes do not adhere to some types of backings.

There are two solutions to this problem. Ask your supplier or test a piece of the carpet with the tape, assessing the strength of the join. The heat setting on the iron can also have an effect on the strength of the join.

Too little heat or passing over the tape too quickly, can lead to minimal or no melting of the adhesive. Too much heat will normally degrade the adhesive leaving the adhesive slightly brittle, resulting in a breakdown when the join is walked on.

Spiked rollers: I don't recommend using a spike roller, as the fibres are at their weakest whilst warm and will re-set in the position you leave them and in a lot of cases can untwist the fibres, leaving a matted weak and obvious line along the join.

There are many more points that could be said about joins, so always seek advice if you are unsure on any methods of producing a join.

TAOFS (The Academy of Flooring Skills) offers training in all types of floor coverings, including how to produce successful joins. **CFJ**

■ www.taofs.co.uk

■ www.taofs.eu (Ireland)

John Roberts is founder of TAOFS and a prominent consultant in the flooring trade

Further information on

■ **T: 07831 584334**

Leo Aspden on marketing in a weak economy

Don't you need a cunning plan?

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Which communications do they use? What messages do they convey? What are their strengths & weaknesses?)

3. SWOT analysis.
4. Promotional plan (Online & offline, above the line, below the line).
5. Action plan, timeline & budget. www.cim.co.uk

This toolkit can be adapted to suit your own business and markets to focus your staff on achieving a competitive edge. If it is merely used as a boardroom

document or sits in a filing cabinet or a folder on your computer, then we have lost the plot, and perhaps it is time for handkerchief and pencils!

In an environment with increasing pressure on staff levels and ever growing work loads, finding time to prepare a plan may seem like 'nice to have' and currently unachievable.

A further option is to outsource and seek a qualified marketing professional with experience of your markets to assist in working with you to formulate an effective

marketing plan.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing website contains a directory of marketing consultants identified by market sector and specialist experience.

Happy New Year! **CFJ**

Leo Aspden is chair of the Manchester branch of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

■ [E: leoaspden@reach-mc.co.uk](mailto:leoaspden@reach-mc.co.uk)

■ www.reach-mc.co.uk

■ www.cim.co.uk

Further information on

T: 0161 969 4515