



Contract Flooring Association

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The chief executive officer: Richard Catt

CFA 'probably the best' association

LIKE most trade associations, the CFA has a basic model which could be copied if a new trade association (for any industry) were formed. You need an office with all the requisite equipment, people to work in it and then you bolt on member benefits.

You will need to add few helplines to get things started, including employment law, health and safety, legal and contractual, taxation and VAT advice. You would almost certainly have to publish all of this on a website along with member's details and any technical documentation if your industry is so designed.

Sell all of this to companies and then organise member activities for networking, say a dinner dance and some regional events, and Bob's your uncle you've got a basic off the shelf, pop-up trade association.

Don't misunderstand me, these are extremely important functions and the CFA offers them to good effect. Industry specific helplines and support networks have been developed over the years to specifically support the contract flooring industry.

But here's the rub for anyone setting up a trade association; none of the above things necessarily make a good or outstanding trade association. That takes a little more: Things that differentiate and mean that members get more than a few basic helplines and a logo and preferably ones that appeal to the wider industry as well, giving credibility and quality assurance to attract work to members and a quality job for those who employ them.

In addition to ensuring our members meet certain initial membership criteria, I believe the CFA delivers this in a number of ways. For example, we don't just say we offer training. We actually do it through our own training organisation FITA with a fully equipped and dedicated training centre based at Loughborough.

The support we receive from the trade is enormous and FITA's

reputation is continually spreading. We recently secured the contract to deliver the demonstration area at Interbuild 2009 (October 18-21, NEC, Birmingham, www.interbuild.com).

This gives us a fantastic opportunity to spread the word in relation to training and, in partnership with different manufacturers, showcase some of the latest tools, techniques and materials.

For further detail of courses currently being offered visit www.fita.co.uk or contact the FITA office on 0115 950 6836. Don't forget we can provide tailored courses too, as well as assist towards NVQ level 2.

Then there is our dispute resolution service. Available to CFA contractor members. It's free and offers a site inspection of any jobs where the quality of installation is being questioned. A detailed report of the consultant's findings follows. I'd like to say that, in common with Heineken lager, CFA members never receive a complaint.

A more realistic claim would be that with all the support and training they have to hand, they

receive far fewer than other flooring contractors. And if they do happen to receive a complaint, they deal with it in a business-like fashion according to the CFA contractors' code of conduct. And if support is ever needed with a problem, the CFA can offer this in a very tangible way.

In fact, the dispute resolution service has been the latest area of CFA activity to be updated. We modernised the procedures, documented the process and will shortly launch a helpful leaflet to explain the service. The review has been extensive to include updating the consultants' we work with and ensuring that they have access to a range of support that keeps them at the cutting edge of their areas of expertise. This has also been made a membership requirement.

Finally, of course, having the leading trade publication as your journal makes a pretty large difference too!

As another old lager advert used to claim; 'CFA, probably the best association in the world'. OK, maybe a bit of a bold statement, but definitely not run of the mill or just a sticker for the van.



CFA president: John Alcock

Hopes for my next 12 months

ANOTHER year over ... And a new one just begun. Don't worry I'm not going to burst into song, but for those of you keeping track you may have noticed that 12 months has passed since I was elected as president of the CFA and what an interesting 12 months it has been.

Starting with a quick recap, I've been to the regional meetings and met with many more people than I would normally get to meet, although I would still like to see a bit more participation from members at these events as

they are important.

I know that there is a 'can't be bothered attitude' out there among some, and I do keep banging on about it, but it's your association and your input can make a difference.

I will be putting some effort this year into finding out what we can do to encourage more people to participate and if you're one of those who doesn't attend for a specific reason then please tell me what this reason is and maybe it's something we

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