

Shock finding in latest NSCC state of trade survey

£55,000 owed to each firm in late retentions

FLOORING contractors are among specialist subbies owed an average of over £55,000 in overdue retentions, according to a new state of trade survey for the National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC).

The survey, covering the first quarter of 2009, was conducted among the body's 7,000 specialist contractors, including those in flooring. CFA is affiliated to NSCC.

Conducted for the NSCC by the School of the Built Environment at Northumbria University, the survey shows that the average specialist contractor is owed an average of £170,000 in retentions at any one time. Although this is down from a previous survey, the alarming trend is that nearly a third is overdue for repayment.

Late payment and under valuation are seen as the abuses with most impact on specialist contractors.

Another worrying factor is that almost half of the contractors who responded to this survey were working at less than 75% capacity, which shows the effect the recession on the industry.

This has resulted in further falls in

Ryalux wins award for innovation

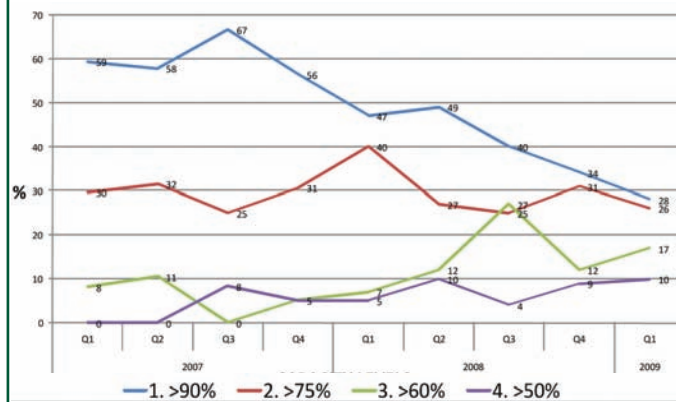
RYALUX scooped a Wools of New Zealand (WoNZ) Product Innovation Award at this year's Domotex.

A jury of over 30 representatives from the world's carpet media, retail businesses and buying groups awarded Ryalux's creative director, Darren Clanford, with the award for Best Colour Range as a result of his team's colour work on the V&A Twist collection.

The V&A Twist, launched at The National Floor Show in September 2008, has a colour palette inspired by the jewels on display at the V&A museum's famed jewellery gallery.

Darren Clanford said later: 'Ryalux has been a pioneer in the carpet industry, both in terms of product innovation and colour trending. It is fantastic to have gained recognition for the V&A Twist collection, which achieves an eclectic feel while

Capacity levels in steep decline



both the average number of employees and apprentices in the workplace with almost all specialist contractors being in a position to bid for work due to the widespread availability of skilled workers.

The majority of respondents to the survey continue to report a decline in both enquiries and orders, and a member of the Association of Concrete Industrial Flooring Contractors (ACIFC) summed up the concerns of many, saying that

'contracts are simply being shelved due to lack of funding'.

Payment problems are still seriously affecting businesses with nearly a quarter of respondents regularly waiting more than 60 days for payment.

NSCC continues its Fair Payment Campaign to improve payment practices in the construction industry. Anyone committed to fair payment is urged to signing up at: www.fairpaymentcampaign.co.uk



retaining a strong sense of heritage.

'This award category demonstrates that the industry acknowledges the vital importance of colour, and is prepared to reward those that push

the boundaries.'

ABOVE: Darren Clanford, centre, of Ryalux, with Tim Lonsdale, left, WNZ ceo, and Klaus Steimann, WNZ manager Europe

What flooring costs for a primary school

FLOOR finishes account for around 4% of the total construction price of a primary school, according to a new cost model analysis by consultant Davis Langdon published in *Building* magazine.

The floor finishes in the model cost £16,270 and are calculated at £52.48/sq m gross internal floor area. They include 310sq m of cement screed at £19/sq m; 150sq m of carpet tiles at £23/sq m; 90sq m of safety flooring, including skirtings at £38/sq m; 68sq m of heavy duty vinyl, including skirtings at £42/sq m; and 2sq m of entrance matting with aluminium matwell £325.

Industry in brief

Bag your off cuts

Floorlayers on projects across the north east are to receive plastic sacks, bulk bags and wheelie bins to collect off cuts and 'up lifted' vinyl flooring, for manufacturers to collect and reuse. The scheme, developed by WRAP in partnership with UK manufacturers, is being run by the technology organisation Renew, with guidance from Axion Consulting, which runs the nationwide Recovinyl PVC recycling scheme. T: 01642 455 340

Pre-qualification body

A new industry group plans to reduce pre-qualification costs, provide assurance for clients and contractors, and improve health & safety. The SSIP Competence Forum is supported by the National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC), which has the CFA as a member. www.ssi.org.uk T: 01283 224614

Grant scheme changes

CITB-ConstructionSkills Grants Scheme changes take place on August 1. They include removing the grant for health & safety touch screen tests for CSCS Cards (£17.50). www.cskills.org

Skills matching

ConstructionSkills has expanded its apprenticeship matching service to help 'displaced' floor tiling apprentices to continue their training and become fully qualified. The support service helps businesses retain apprentices through the downturn, including advice on funding options. www.cskills.org

New funds for schools

The government says it plans to accelerate £1bn of investment for thousands of school projects to start in the next 12 months. Total schools capital spending in 2009-10 will be £7.9bn, up from under £700m when the Conservatives left office in 1997.

Women are given a lift

Government-funded Women and Work, a project to help support women working in construction has won £420,750 further funding. The project, led by ConstructionSkills, has so far helped over 2,200 women to access construction work-related training and support.

Emissions charge

From 2011 all businesses with a £1m-plus energy bill must pay £12 per tonne of carbon dioxide they emit, say government guidelines.