

Steve Woodhead

Marketing director at Interfloor



Steve Woodhead, marketing director at Interfloor, spending some quality time with his twin daughters in the Lake District

■ **Did you get into trouble at school?** At the end of my first day at school, aged four, I didn't know that I had to go back the next day, let alone for another fourteen years. When the teacher, a lovely old lady called Miss Lamb, said "See you again tomorrow" I kicked her in the shin. I remember getting into a lot of trouble for that!

■ **What was your first part-time job?** Petrol pump attendant. Remember them?

■ **What did you spend your first pay cheque on?** I was saving up for a holiday in Benidorm.

■ **What was your first full-time job?** I was an accountant. I worked in audit for about 18 months and realised that it wasn't for me. I left to sell computers and subsequently went into marketing.

■ **What was the best piece of advice you have been given?** Trust your gut instinct – it will be correct at least 80% of the time & that's good enough.

■ **What was your worst business mistake?** I once ran a series of recruitment ads in 35 local papers across the South East. I was in a hurry and didn't check the copy correctly so the ads went out with the wrong phone number in them. Applicants were asked to phone a call centre that was open 24 hours a day but instead they were calling a private address. If that wasn't bad enough the number belonged to a woman who was 7 months pregnant! The poor woman was getting calls throughout the night. I spoke to her, explained the mistake, apologised profusely and re-routed her calls. We paid for her and her husband to have dinner at their favourite restaurant. She was very understanding about it...more so than I would have been!

■ **What was your greatest business achievement?** At the moment that would be Interfloor's Profit Ability

programme, a retail marketing scheme that helps retailers increase their underlay sales by an average of 20%. It's a great team effort in every sense involving many different people and disciplines within Interfloor and our customers. One of our customers has called it 'the best marketing programme in the flooring industry for decades.'

■ **What car do you drive today and what does it say about you?** My wife and I own a Citroen Picasso. A cursory examination will tell you that we have three rather messy children.

■ **If you could have invented any product what would it have been?** Satellite navigation. I have a truly dreadful sense of direction. Although I didn't invent it I know that it was invented for people just like me.

■ **What do you most like about the flooring industry?** I'm very lucky to have worked with some really great customers, who are passionate and knowledgeable. I've learned a lot from them and it's been exciting to collaborate with them and develop some new marketing concepts that help drive their sales.

■ **What do you least like about the industry?** The decline in retail carpet volumes in the last 6 years has changed the focus of some people from consumer volume growth to cost reduction. I believe the industry will maximise its profitability when we all embrace new marketing programmes to grow consumer volumes even when the market is challenging.

■ **Name one change you would make to the industry.** Every new carpet is sold with a new, British, underlay. UK retailers would make an extra £400m profit!

■ **Which company in the flooring industry, other than your own, do you admire?** John Lewis. They have a very successful flooring business with an outstanding reputation for customer service.

■ **Where should we have a flooring show?** The flooring market is truly international. The UK should have the premier flooring exhibition in Europe. I would imagine that only London or the NEC could accommodate this.

■ **Which single possession would you rescue if your house caught fire?** My father's walking stick. It's the only thing of his that I've got.

■ **Do you have any pets?** No. Three kids are enough!

■ **Do you have any hobbies?** Gardening, barbecuing, entertaining friends and family.

■ **How do you relax?** Eating out with friends...and I have the waistline to prove it! I like to spend as much time as possible with our children – a 17 year old boy & twin six year old girls. I'm also, for my sins, a Leeds United supporter but I don't think watching Leeds can be classed as 'relaxing'!

■ **What is your favourite tipple?** A bottle, or more, of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc.

■ **How many times a year do you take a holiday?** A couple of times a year. We've always taken short holidays in the Lake District at least once a year. I like the tranquillity and the beauty of the fells.

■ **What is your idea of heaven?** Peace & quiet, feet up, in the garden on a summer's day, reading

the Sunday paper.

■ **What is your idea of hell?** Karaoke.

■ **Which one record and book would you take to a desert island?** *Born to Run* by Bruce Springsteen reminds me of being a teenager. I'm currently reading *Pies and Prejudice: In Search of the North* by Stuart Maconie.

■ **Who would you like to be stuck in a lift with?** David Blaine. If he couldn't find a way out I'm sure he could keep me entertained.

■ **If you could be anyone (living or dead, fictional or real) who would it be?** Bruce Springsteen: the ultimate combination of artistry, integrity and performance.

■ **Choose five words that describe yourself.** Analytical, balanced, humorous, good communicator.

■ **Do you have any regrets?** It's a fact of life that some things won't turn out as you planned. I believe you've just got to keep moving forward towards your goals.

■ **Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?** I'd love to do a road trip across America with my son.

■ **What was your most embarrassing moment?** I once drove straight through a car park entry barrier. This was doubly embarrassing due to the number of people that saw me do it and then having to explain to the attendant why I had done it.

■ **If you had to choose another career what would it be?** Lecturing. One day I would like to teach marketing to business students. **CFJ**