



One of the Howe Green access covers at the Roman Baths

Entry

level

Access flooring often plays a key role in buildings:

Howe Green designed and manufactured two bespoke runs of brushed stainless steel floor access panels for either side of the new 5m glass floor at the Roman Baths, visited by thousands of people annually.

The see-through floor was added to provide a view of the main drain. Each floor access panel allows any steam that rises from the water below to escape without fogging the glass and obstructing the view.

The removable panels are designed to provide access for cleaning and maintenance of the lighting below. The panels are said to withstand heavy foot traffic while blending in with the refurbished Roman Baths, which incorporate stainless steel, glass and oak finishes.

Howe Green makes purpose-built floor access covers for use with any type of flooring. Covers can be single unit, continuous runs or multi-part configurations. Said to be maintenance and corrosion-free, they are double-sealed to resist the ingress of dirt, water and other contaminants. Showedge options include brass, aluminium, stainless steel and high impact coloured PVC. www.howegreen.co.uk

Legrand says its ultra-low cable management floor system

provides total flexibility for commercial environments and is fully recyclable.

The Soluflex system comprises raised steel floor tiles and recycled polypropylene supports that integrate with connection points for power and data, and is installed by placing supports on the floor and then clicking the durable steel tiles into place – a process that requires neither glue nor screws.

Once laid, cabling and connections can be installed between the Soluflex supports by removing the relevant tiles. And when finished, the completed installation can be covered with any type of floorcovering. Finally, if the office layout changes, the system can be reconfigured and re-used or recycled.

Soluflex is said to offer considerable time and cost saving because the floors and cables can be installed virtually simultaneously. Adding or restructuring connection points can reportedly be done in minutes, often without cutting or breaking cables. **CFJ**

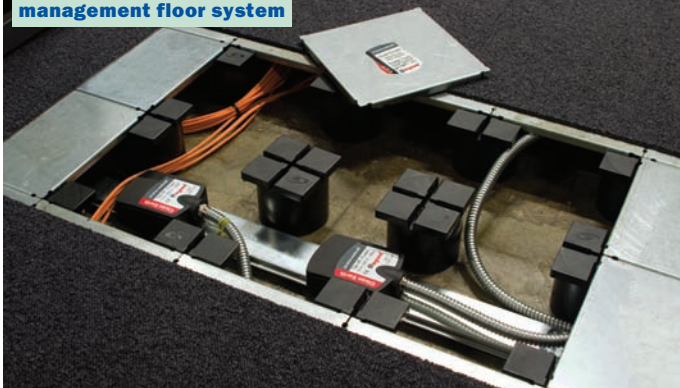
www.legrand.co.uk

BUYERS' GUIDE

*For further information on any of the products mentioned, contact the suppliers directly. And please remember to tell them that you read about their companies in **CFJ**:*

Bathgate Flooring	01432 347705
Howe Green	01920 463230
Legrand	0845 605 4333

Legrand's Soluflex cable management floor system



Stacking the odds

Andrew Hubbard, general manager at access flooring manufacturer Bathgate Flooring, looks at ways contractors can improve their chances of success by adopting manufacturer's strengths as their own:

TALK to the market, talk even to your own sales team and all too often they'll tell you it's all down to price.

Of course, price plays its part, but it's often other considerations that tip the scales – even in a recession. The experienced contractor – especially one looking to retain a sensible margin – can maximise their chance of success by improving the value of their offer.

So what are the big issues with raised access flooring?

For the contractor its performance and credibility: Can you be relied on to do a good job, on time, on budget and to the given specification?

For the manufacturer, products must conform to the PSA or BSEN specification, satisfy decision-makers on quality, reliability and performance, have a proven track record and offer competent technical support.

Many contractors offer all the above. And whilst there are only two or three access floor manufacturers in the UK, they'd each argue the above boxes are comprehensively ticked.

Which leads sharp-thinking contractors to look for additional strengths to differentiate their tender and win the decision-maker's attention. Not a guarantee for success, but helping to stack the odds in your favour!

As the UK's second largest manufacturer we've tried to focus on how the benefits of our products and manufacturing process can be turned to the contractor's advantage.

Our product is UK made, which with the Euro strengthening means our prices are more stable, predictable and even more competitive against imported floor panels. It also means less 'energy miles' in getting the product to site, which together with the high percentage of recycled timber and steel used in our Permaflor range, verified FSC 'chain of custody' documentation and low-waste manufacturing policy gives our products excellent environmental credentials.

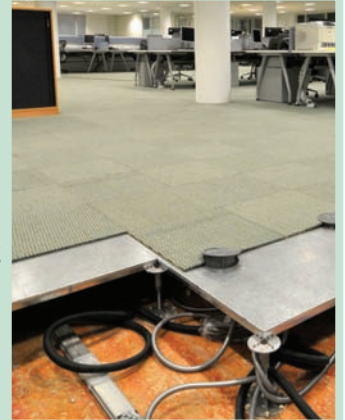
Next is the product itself. We stock all of the popular PSA and BSEN products, which means our direct-sale customers can typically expect delivery to site within 24 hours of ordering.

Our manufacturing flexibility allows contractors to offer their customers solutions others can't easily match.

Take the less popular panel configurations for example – or even small production runs – we can accommodate these easily, allowing contractors to offer this capability knowing we can deliver. It lets them respond to their customer's needs, rather than just push what's in stock.

It also means they're unlikely to get caught short when product is needed urgently on site. The same goes for bespoke finishes and even sizes - we can match Imperial-sized panels for refurbishment, make panels to fit existing pedestals and grid formations and factory-apply just about any finish including carpet, timber, vinyls, ceramics... even marble.

In summary: the recession has created difficult, competitive trading conditions for us all. But by working closely with your access flooring manufacturer, familiarising with the brand and learning how to translate their capabilities into benefits for your customers, contractors can add genuine value to their own offer, so helping secure important contracts without just cutting prices. www.permaflor.co.uk **CFJ**



Permaflor access flooring offers bespoke as well as standard products

