



How we tailor our retail flooring business to designers

HERE IN THE Los Angeles area, where our business is located, many of our residential customers use interior designers for their home remodels or builds. As a result, it's imperative that we connect

effectively with these professionals in order to continue to win business. Since opening in 2018, we have worked hard to foster these relationships by providing exceptional customer service to designers by always going above and beyond what's expected. Today, approximately 90% of our clientele are designers. We listen to their creative vision and then translate that to wood flooring. Here are some of the specific ways we've catered our retail flooring business to designers.

Strategic location

In mid-2022, we made the decision to move our showroom into SoCo, Orange County's central home design and shopping center with more than 650,000 square feet of design-focused retail. Modern Luxury Interiors magazine named it the "Best Design District" in Orange County. Strategically locating our showroom inside SoCo has allowed us to bring our product line to a wider design-focused audience. We are the only flooring business in SoCo. We also designed our showroom as a high-end art gallery, and we showcase our large format flooring panels on the walls like artwork. The size of these panels (8-by-3-foot) gives our clients a real feeling for how their flooring will look.

Custom education

It's our job to help educate our clients about our product, so we host various educational events so they understand how the wood is selected, why we use a hardwax oil finish and the sustainability aspects of our flooring offerings. This, in turn, helps design professionals become true advocates for our business. We host a Brunch & Learn or Design & Dine once a quarter and invite interior designers, architects

and general contractors to our gallery to enjoy a coffee and bagel or a cocktail and canapés while we educate them. This business is based on relationships, so these events give us a chance to chat informally and connect with potential clients before the presentation. When a potential client has a team of people, we will also conduct table presentations at their studio or office.

Exclusive access

In addition to providing educational presentations for their staff, custom samples and design consultations, we provide our designer partners with a unique PIN so they can access our showroom 24/7 via our pinpad. This way they can explore our products and samples at a



We host frequent educational sessions tailored to designers and their staff in our showroom.

time that works best for them. Our clients really appreciate the convenience.

Precise installations

We want the end user to love the product. They're spending substantial money on their flooring and the installation, and we want to get exactly the look they envision. So, we pre-cut and loose-lay all the boards, then we ask the homeowner and the designer to come in and make sure they like the way it looks. If they want us to change out a board, we do—then we pick it all up and we glue it all down. We find that's the best way to do an installation; it results in an extremely high customer satisfaction rate.

Designer-centric employee training

Employee training happens on the job, but all our employees have a design background, so they came into the business with an understanding of the importance of space planning. Our staff has been trained to listen closely to clients, understand their design vision, and match that vision with the right flooring product. Our design background means we speak the same

language as designers and architects.

Personalized service

A San Diego interior designer client with two small children called to tell us that she wouldn't be able to make it to the showroom but needed samples to show to her homeowner client. Marissa, my daughter, who I'm lucky to get to work with, jumped in the car on a Friday afternoon and braved three hours of rush-hour traffic to hand-deliver samples so the designer and her client could decide on the right width and finish in time to place their order by Monday. All clients have our cell phone numbers—and we always answer our phones. We listen to what our customers want and don't oversell. We pride ourselves on honesty and integrity, and we always recommend the right product for their job, because in our business, it's all about relationships. We truly love what we do and the incredibly interesting and talented people we work with daily. ■

Wendy Meltzer is the owner of Costa Mesa, Calif.-based Unique Hardwood and is a recipient of the 2023 WFB Outstanding Retailer Award.



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