

Consumer's Guide To Floor Covering

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WARNING: Don't call or visit any floor covering dealer until you have read this consumer awareness guide!

In this Guide You'll Discover...

- **How to turn your floor-buying nightmare into a dream come true**
- **How to avoid predatory floor dealers**
- **7 costly misconceptions about floor covering**
- **6 mistakes to avoid when choosing a floor covering store**
- **The 3 "Dirty Little Secrets" about installation that floor covering dealers hope you NEVER find out**
- **Which floor covering is best for you**
- **How to get an iron-clad warranty**
- **4 steps to getting the beautiful floor of your dreams...WITHOUT the stress!**

Provided as an Educational Service by
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A Message From Tampa Bay's Floor Covering "Guru's"

Dear Friend,

Floor covering is one of the most important purchases you will make in your lifetime. When redecorating your entire home, the floor covering represents a big part of this investment. A home means different things to different people, but to most it's a sanctuary; a haven of security, safety, rest and memories. And beautiful, quality flooring provides the foundation for the interior beauty of your home.

But choosing a floor covering store isn't easy. Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information.

- From super low prices, hundreds of products, and high-pressure sales
- To unqualified or unscrupulous "sales people"
- To unethical, bait-and-switch dealers, or "Discount," "Bargain Corral," and "Mega-Depots" stores...

...how do you ever find a qualified, competent, professional floor covering expert?

You start by reading this Consumer's Guide. In this fact-filled booklet, you'll discover how to avoid predatory floor covering dealers, six mistakes to avoid when choosing a store, and four steps to getting the beautiful floor covering of your dreams!

We wrote this guide to help you better understand floor covering. We want your floor covering experience to be a dream come true rather than the nightmare you hear about so often. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision.

And if you have any questions about floor covering, you're invited to call us. We've dedicated our business to educating consumers. We'll be happy to help you in every way.

Your Friends,

Kathie Rice
Kathie Rice & Tyler Rice
Experts in Floor Covering

Tyler A. Rice

Introduction

How to Turn Your Floor-Buying Nightmare Into a Dream Come True

You might think it's strange that a floor covering dealer is using the word "nightmare" when it comes to buying flooring. You might even be wondering if we've lost our marbles!

You might be thinking, "Isn't getting a new floor supposed to be fun? Supposed to be a pleasure? Supposed to be the fulfillment of a dream?"

Well, the answer to all three of these questions is a definite "YES!" It's **supposed** to be fun, pleasurable and a dream come true. **There is really no reason why it shouldn't be!**

But all too often it's not.

***"So, if it should be a *dream come true*,
why do so many people wind up in the *nightmare*?"***

Great question. Before we explain why this happens (and how to insure that you get the "dream come true" experience you deserve), let us share with you a letter that was written by a real flooring consumer. She purchased floor covering for her and her husband's investment property and wanted to share her story to help other consumers. We think you'll find it very illuminating.

We were getting ready to sell our investment property and needed to do some remodeling before we put it on the market. I thought choosing flooring for the remodel would be fun and I looked forward to all of the possibilities. After I got into it, I was overwhelmed by all of the possibilities.

The first salesman was low keyed and patient and stood quietly in the background as I looked over the sea of possibilities. I wanted a combination of cabinets, countertops and flooring that would have a WOW factor. I kept going to the more daring colors, lugging them back to the house where they would die once I laid them on the floor. How in the world do you get a room to *pop????!!!*

My thoughts kept returning to the fact that it was going to cost just the same amount of money to make the house beautiful as it was to make it ugly. Flooring and installation is a big investment...and ugly doesn't cost less.

I decided to try another store where there was a sales person who said she could help (decorating experience)...and she did help us gather tile pieces that went with the *glazed mocha* cabinet sample that we brought in. We once again lugged a stack of flooring back to the house. We tried a few pieces, but honestly couldn't tell what looked good anymore. Everything looked stale and we were sick of the whole process. BUT we didn't worry because the helpful decorator/sales person from the store was coming out at 10:00 the next morning to help.

She didn't show up. (Arg!) She never called and we still have her samples (she was supposed to pick them up when she came back out).

Back to the first store we went (by this time my husband's eyes glazed over every time I held a sample up and he would just shrug his shoulders...he only came with me so I didn't have to go through the torture alone. He was completely burned out). The original salesman was out of town so the owner said he would help us. He got INVOLVED; he gave us ADVICE tailored to our exact situation. He said not to do daring stuff or we'd limit who we could sell our investment property to.

He disappeared for a minute and came back with the perfect tile. Upper-end, neutral color, gorgeous texture, looked expensive. We loved it.

Mr. Owner said, *"What color grout do you want?"*

We said, *"You choose..."*

AND HE DID!

The sun broke through and the birds began to sing and an ENORMOUS weight came off our shoulders.

He said, *"What do you want in carpeting?"*

"What will go with this tile?" I asked.

He brought out two samples.

"Which one do you like?" we asked. (By this time it was literally impossible for us to tell what looked good anymore!) He picked the one on the left and we took it.

If someone had told me beforehand just how emotionally difficult the process could be, I would probably have laughed. Until I got hip-deep in the project, I just couldn't imagine. Even little things like having to make ANOTHER trip to the store turned into an utterly frustrating grind.

Words just can't describe how wonderful it was to find a store owner who cared enough and had the experience to guide us. Next time we buy flooring we will NOT go through this again. (I've got my hand on a stack of Bibles as I write this!) We've found a store owner we can trust and we're going to let HIM help us right from the beginning on the next project.

We paid a little more than the other store quoted us, but we didn't care...we could hear strains from the *hallelujah chorus* as we left his store.

-A (now) Thrilled Customer

If you have been through the floor-buying process before, you may have found yourself nodding your head in agreement as you read this letter. We've listened to consumers over the years and we've heard stories just like this time after time.

And that's why we've written this *Consumer's Guide*. You see, **we want your floor buying experience to be a dream come true and there is absolutely no reason on Earth it can't be.** We've invested hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars creating a "World Class Installation Process" at Carillon Floor Center so our clients' experience will always be a great one. And based on this knowledge, we've written this *Consumer's Guide* so **YOU** can have a great experience, too!

4 Predatory Sales Tactics

Predatory Sales Tactic #1—Bait and Switch

Here's how it's done: you pay for a high-quality carpet, but the dealer secretly installs a lower quality carpet of the same color and style. It's extremely difficult for the average person to tell that this has been done. UNTIL...about 6-12 months have passed. Then you begin to notice wear patterns, fraying or other problems with the cheap carpet.

The same thing is done with carpet padding and hard-surface floors.

Another bait and switch tactic is to advertise a ridiculously low price to get you into the store, but when the "salesperson" visits your home to measure, the price is suddenly inflated. Then the "salesperson" uses high-pressure tactics to get you to buy at the higher price. Dealers who engage in this kind of deceptive practice hire "salespeople" who are nothing more than con-artists and who are masters at manipulating and pressuring people.

This is why it's critical that you work with a local dealer you can trust. ALWAYS get a list of references from past clients.

Predatory Sales Tactic #2—Using Untrained, Uncertified Installers to Cut Costs

Buying floor covering is different than buying other interior decorating items such as sofas, lamps or tables. Why? Because when you buy a sofa, you simply bring it home and set it in your living room—you don't "install" the sofa. Floor covering has to be installed in your home. So when you buy floor covering, you're really buying two things: the floor covering itself and the installation.

Unfortunately, unethical dealers try to save money by hiring "cheap" labor to do their installations. Here's how it works:

They offer super low prices or ridiculously discounted "specials" to lure people into their store. Well, all of their overhead remains the same: rent, utilities, and their cost for the floor covering. NONE of these costs can be reduced. So how do they "pay" for super-discounted price offers? They don't. Instead, they make YOU pay by hiring cut-rate, untrained, uncertified installers. And the worst part is, you don't even realize it until the installers show up at your door.

Some common problems encountered with uncertified, untrained installers:

- They show up late or not at all (lack of professionalism).
- They are not trained in good customer service. Many times they are rude or simply don't communicate well with the home owner.
- Since they are underpaid, they have to rush through your job and hurry on to the next so they can complete as many jobs as possible.
- Damaged floor covering

- Damage to your home

Another big problem is high turnover. Since these “Discount,” “Bargain Corral” or “Mega-Depot” dealers can’t afford to pay a fair salary, installers are constantly quitting. In the desperate rush to find new installers (who will agree to work for “peanuts”), things like training, customer service, and criminal background checks don’t get done properly. This is bad news for you, the consumer.

When considering a floor covering store, always ask to see the certification credentials of their installers. Don’t simply take their word for it that the installers are certified. If they balk at showing you certification credentials, find another store.

At Carillon, our installers are neat, clean, well-groomed, well-spoken and professional. They are well-trained and attend on-going educational courses on the newest installation techniques. They are guests in your home, and they conduct themselves as such. They respect your home by using corner guards, walk-off mats and drop cloths. You’ll receive the highest-quality installation in the business. And after they’re finished, they will leave your home as neat and clean as when they arrived!

Predatory Sales Tactic #3—Making False or Misleading Claims

One way this happens is when a “salesperson” claims that a carpet is “stain proof.” Modern science has helped us make carpets that are pretty amazing at resisting stains. However, we still haven’t reached the point where we can make carpet “stain proof.” And because of this, NONE of the manufacturer’s warranties make this claim. They all say “stain resistant.”

If you ever hear a salesperson call a carpet “stain proof,” they either lack training or they are unethical. Either way, find another store.

Another misleading claim is “invisible seams.”

Here’s the rule of thumb for seams: short pile or “looped” carpets tend to show seams more than deep or “cut” pile. In order to make the sale, a dishonest or incompetent salesperson will promise “invisible seams” even with short or loop pile carpet. It’s only after the carpet is installed that you find out you weren’t told the truth.

A competent, ethical dealer will give you an honest assessment about the visibility level of seams for the different styles you are considering. That way you can make an informed decision BEFORE the carpet is installed.

Predatory Sales Tactic #4—Not Honoring their Warranty

Warranties protect you in two ways:

1) **Defect Warranty.** Sometimes even the best manufacturers send out a product that has a defect. One mark of a quality manufacturer is not that they never accidentally send out

a defective product, it's that they replace it at no cost to the client. This is called the "defect warranty" and it simply protects you in case this happens.

No matter what you're buying (toaster, TV, computer, floor covering, etc.), any honest, ethical company will replace it or fix it if it's defective. This is just good, old-fashioned business decency and it's how we operate at Carillon.

2) Installation warranty. Floor covering is installed in your home. No two installations are the same. It's a complicated process that requires a lot of training. Installers are human beings and because floor installations are so complex, even the best installers can make a human "error" sometimes. But YOU shouldn't have to pay for the error. The installation warranty protects you in case a mistake is made during the installation.

Virtually every dealer offers some kind of warranty or "guarantee." But here's the problem...

WARNING: Unethical, bait-and-switch, "discount" dealers might offer a warranty to get you to buy, but if a problem comes up they simply refuse to honor the warranty.

A typical scenario might go like this:

The "Delay Game"

You buy a laminate floor from a dealer and several weeks after the installation you notice that the joints are coming apart. You call the dealer and the following happens:

- They don't return your repeated phone calls & messages.
- After finally getting hold of a manager, they make an appointment to "inspect" the floor, but never show up.
- Your follow up calls are ignored.
- After many missed or delayed appointments, they finally "inspect" the floor, promise to get back to you, but never call.
- They say it's a "manufacturing problem," so you call the manufacturer and they say it's an "installation problem." They pass the buck back and forth for weeks.
- They offer to send you a few hundred dollars in order to make you go away. You refuse.
- They begrudgingly agree to replace the floor at no charge, but the installers never show up.
- The installers finally show up, but they inform you that the cost to "re-install" will be \$500. You tell them that the dealer said "no charge." They refuse to do the work without getting paid. More delays. More stress.

(Go to www.ripoffreport.com and look under carpet & tile stores to see real life examples of the "Delay Game.")

This process typically drags on for weeks or months while the floor you paid a lot of money for is NOT getting fixed. Keep in mind that this is done deliberately. You see,

unethical, bait-and-switch, “discount” dealers **know ahead of time** that because of their low price they simply cannot afford to honor their warranties.

So they play a numbers game. If they get ten warranty claims in a month, they know that if they play the “Delay Game” long enough, eight of the customers will simply give up and go away. Now they only have to pay for two warranties! Not a bad deal...for them.

The “Delay Game” is especially frustrating when the big-box, “Mega-Depots” play it. These stores are HUGE corporations and have layer after layer of bureaucracy and lots of lawyers. Trying to get them to honor a simple agreement can be like dealing with the federal government: a hair-pulling nightmare.

Finally, in desperation, you hire an attorney (more money out of your pocket) and FORCE them to honor the warranty that you paid for and you get your floor fixed. (Hopefully they get it right this time; otherwise you get to play the “Delay Game” again!)

In this case, did the warranty protect you? Well, in a way it did, because you eventually got your floor fixed. But what a nightmare! Wouldn't it be better to work with a local, honest dealer that backs up their warranties out of simple ethics rather than legal threats?

This is another reason it's critical that you work with a local, reputable company you can trust. **ALWAYS** get a list of references from past clients. References are simply the **ONLY** way you can know ahead of time that you're dealing with an honest company. If they refuse to provide references, find another store. Period.

7 Costly Misconceptions About Floor Covering

Misconception #1—The company that offers the lowest advertised prices offers the greatest value.

No. Low price does not equal good value. Price is what you pay, but value is what you get. Many consumers choose a floor covering store based on price and only later discover that they didn't get good value.

There are many things that go into providing good value:

- Quality materials. No bait-and-switch.
- Iron-clad warranty that is not only in writing, but the dealer stands behind it out of a sense of ethics rather than threats of legal action.
- Knowledgeable sales consultant who can help you narrow the thousands of options to the one that's best for your unique situation
- A stress-free World Class installation process

- Friendly and reliable communication from the dealer’s staff during the selection and installation process.
- Your calls are returned promptly and NOT ignored.
- Expert installation by clean, well-groomed, well-spoken and well-trained installers who conduct themselves as professionals in your home.
- A beautiful finished product that you can be proud of.

The “discount” dealer who offers the lowest price has to “pay” for that low price by cutting out value. Ultimately this means that YOU pay.

That’s why it’s critical that when you choose a floor covering store, always look at overall value rather than simply the price tag.

Misconception #2—All floor covering dealers are the same

No. Many floor covering companies carry products that look the same or have the same name. This leads to one of the biggest misconceptions in the industry: “All dealers are the same.” Based on this misconception, many consumers make a decision based on price alone. This causes several problems.

First, many products may look and feel identical, but are vastly different in quality. Knowing the type of materials used in the product, face weight, density and construction are critical. An honest dealer will educate you on the differences and help you select the right product.

Second, dealers may offer the same product, but have vastly different warranties. Or one dealer honors its warranty while another plays the “**Delay Game**.”

Third, two stores may offer the same product, but the installation quality at one store may not be good. Remember what we said earlier: “Floor covering is “installed” in your home. It’s not like buying a sofa.” A lousy installation means you wind up with a lousy finished floor, even if you paid extra for high-quality products. This is why it is so critical to ask to see a list of references.

Fourth, a reputable dealer will take the time to help you find the product that’s best for your unique situation rather than just trying to “sell” you flooring. It’s the difference between dealing with a sales person and working with a Trusted Advisor.

We want to be your Trusted Advisor. At Carillon we have a process called a “**Free Design Audit**” where we take you through a series of questions that helps narrow the thousands of options to the one that works best for you. This also saves many hours of fruitless shopping and takes the stress out of buying. It makes the process fun!

Misconception #3—All warranties and guarantees are the same

No. For example, two stores may have the same product, but each store offers different installation warranties.

Many stores offer only a 30-90 day or one-year installation warranty (or NO installation warranty) on carpet installations. At Carillon, we offer a LIFETIME installation warranty on all carpet installations (warranty is only for owner-occupied homes and does not cover natural environmental issues out of Carillon's control such as flooding, humidity issues, foundation issues, etc.).

We also offer a No Regrets Carpet Guarantee. If you don't like your new carpeting, we'll replace it free within the first 30 days. (We'll give you more details about this a little later on.)

For all hard surface installations (wood, laminate, tile, vinyl), Carillon offers a one year installation warranty.

Keep in mind that most stores have some kind of warranty. The question is, will they honor their warranty if there's ever a claim? Or, will they play the "Delay Game" and hope you give up and go away and force you take legal action to MAKE them honor their warranty?

The only way you can know ahead of time is to work with an honest, local dealer and ALWAYS get a list of references.

Misconception #4—You should choose the flooring material THEN locate a dealer

No. This can be a problem for two reasons.

First, there are literally thousands of products on the market. Trying to sift through all of them can take weeks. Work with a dealer who has your best interest in mind and who can help you do the sifting. This will save you many frustrating hours and make the process less stressful.

Second, there are so many new and improved products coming out that it's really a full time job just keeping up with it all. You might select a product to solve a flooring challenge, not aware that there is another product that will do a much better job for the same money. We and our sales staff dedicate hundreds of hours each year educating ourselves on the industry so we can make the best recommendations to you.

A competent, professional dealer will ask lots of questions to help determine the best flooring for you. We use the "**Free Design Audit**" to take you through a series of questions. Based on your answers, we can quickly narrow your search to the best floor covering for YOU.

The best way to find floor covering is to choose a dealer you can trust and work with them to help find the flooring that's best for you.

Misconception #5—The company that quotes you the lowest price is the company you should choose

No. There are two problems with this approach.

First, there are many dishonest, unethical dealers who will quote low prices up front in order to get your business. Then they make you “pay” for the low price in several ways:

1. They install a lower quality product than you originally paid for, but don’t tell you. (This is called bait-and-switch.) It’s virtually impossible to tell that they’ve done this until 6-12 months later when the carpet begins to show wear and/or fall apart.
2. They cut corners on installation costs by hiring “cheap,” uncertified, improperly trained installers.
3. They don’t honor their written warranties. If you ever make a claim, they play the “Delay Game” because they can’t afford to honor their warranties. They hope you will give up and go away. The only way you can get them to honor the warranty that you paid for is to take legal action.

The second problem is that many dealers through their advertising have promoted the myth that price is the only consideration. (This is especially true of the big-box, “Discount,” “Bargain Corral,” or “Mega-Depot” stores.) While price is important, overall value is even more important. Remember these critical items that go into creating overall VALUE:

- Quality materials. No bait-and-switch.
- Iron-clad warranty that is not only in writing, but the dealer stands behind it out of a sense of ethics rather than threats of legal action.
- Knowledgeable sales consultant who can help you narrow the thousands of options to the one that’s best for your unique situation.
- A stress-free World Class installation process.
- Friendly and reliable communication from the dealer’s staff during the selection and installation process.
- Your calls are returned promptly and NOT ignored.
- Expert installation by clean, well-groomed, well-spoken and well-trained installers who conduct themselves as professionals in your home.
- A beautiful finished product that you can be proud of.

Misconception #6—The best way to buy flooring is to shop online

Not so. One of the worst places to go for floor covering is to the internet. There are several things that make the internet an extremely undesirable place to look for flooring.

1. You have no idea if the person on the other end of the line is ethical. We have many clients who, before coming to us, used an online dealer and were promised certain prices and products, only to have something different installed or have the price change. Not to mention endless delays.

2. You have no idea if the “sales person” is experienced. In most cases, you’ll be working with a young telemarketer who knows nothing about flooring. Flooring transactions are very complicated and online dealers are notorious for making mistakes and causing delays.
3. They don’t care about developing a long-term relationship with you. They will treat your purchase as a one-shot deal, with no consideration given to providing good service so they can earn your referrals and repeat business. (At Carillon, 84% of our business comes from repeat and referral clients. We depend upon repeat and referral business for our livelihood, so we have a vested interest in making sure that you are head-over-heels thrilled with the service you receive.)
5. Warranty claims are a nightmare. We all hope that making a warranty claim won’t be necessary. But when it becomes necessary, you really need the warranty to be honored. Getting most online dealers to honor their warranty is a time-consuming, frustrating ordeal. You will most likely wind up playing the “**Delay Game.**”
6. They have no relationships with installers. Because online dealers sell to anybody living anywhere, it’s impossible for them to keep control of the installation. They might say they have “trained installers in your area,” but these are nothing more than sub-contractors. These sub-contractors work for many different dealers, so they have no real loyalty to the online dealers. And since the online companies lure consumers in with “cheap price” offers, they cut corners by underpaying their installers. This causes the installers to “rush” through the job and makes them very reluctant to return to correct mistakes. They simply can’t afford it.
7. Finally, the Internet is not regulated. These days anybody can put together a website quickly and easily using the software that’s available. Sometimes these “businesses” are nothing more than installers working out of their garages to create a “company” via a website. Many of these are fly-by-night, here-today-and-gone-tomorrow dealers. This platform is geared toward perking interest. These are people who don’t have existing relationships and who don’t work via referral. Unfortunately, they try to commoditize the industry.

Choosing floor covering is one of the largest decorating decisions you will make in your home and it needs to be taken very seriously. It’s not like shopping for the best price on a table lamp. You need to consider that the lack of regulation on the Internet allows these dealers to offer anything they want to you the consumer just get their phone to ring.

Misconception #7—Any honest floor dealer should be able to give you accurate prices over the phone

No. Here’s why.

There are four items that must be reviewed before a dealer can give you an accurate price quote:

1. Kind of flooring.
2. Size of the rooms.
3. The shape of the rooms.
4. Any “special needs” that can affect the installation, such as floor prep, patching & grinding, moisture issues, removal & disposal, etc.).

Any dealer who does not review these four items is basically guessing at the price.

At Carillon, we review all four items before giving you our written, guaranteed, “No Surprises” price quote. This means that the price we quote is the price you get. Period. If we make a mistake and under price something, WE pay for it, not you.

6 Mistakes To Avoid When Choosing A Floor Covering Store

Mistake #1—Choosing a dealer based on “cheap” price

Choosing a dealer based on “cheap” price can be a problem in 3 ways:

1. Low price can be the bait that attracts your phone call or visit. Once the dealer gets you on the phone or into his store, he may try to pressure you into paying much more than the advertised price.

OR...to make up for the cheap price, they may install a lower grade flooring than the one you paid for. This is called “bait-and-switch.”
2. The price quoted to you at the beginning of the process may go up at the last minute. Unscrupulous dealers know that it will be very difficult for you to back out of the installation at the last minute and they are hoping that you will simply accept the last minute changes.
3. The installation process is a stressful nightmare. Some dealers advertise “cheap” prices to attract customers, but this makes it almost impossible for them to hire quality installers or support staff. As a result, the “installers” often don’t have adequate training or experience. They are usually paid a low “piece” price, so they wind up rushing through the job and they have little incentive to make sure you get excellent service. Many clients wind up with delays, unreturned phone calls, conflicting information...and a very stressful experience!

Always make sure you are working with an honest, reputable, local dealer so this doesn’t happen. And get LOTS of references!

Mistake #2—Choosing a company based on a single telephone conversation

Remember that to give you accurate prices, a dealer needs to know the following:

1. Kind of flooring.
2. Size of the rooms.
3. The shape of the rooms.
4. Any “special needs” that can affect the installation, such as floor prep, patching & grinding, moisture issues, removal & disposal, etc.).

A dealer simply cannot guarantee accuracy based on a single phone conversation alone.

Mistake #3—Choosing a company that does not have a written, 100% satisfaction policy

In our view, every dealer should be fully accountable for its work. If you aren’t pleased with the job in every way, the job should be fixed to your satisfaction. Period. Ask the dealer if he offers a guarantee and then make sure the dealer puts the guarantee in writing. (And get lots of references from past clients.)

In a minute, we’ll tell you how you’re protected by our 100%, Iron-Clad, Triple Guarantee on Carpet Installations.

Mistake #4—Choosing a dealer who does not employ licensed and certified installers

Floor covering is “installed” in your home, so the installation is critical. A poor installation will mean a poor finished product, even if you paid for high-quality flooring. That’s why professional, trained, certified installers are critical. Always ask to see the certification paperwork for installers. If the dealer won’t provide it, find another store.

Mistake #5—Choosing a company that does not have a quality installation & customer service system

The installation process is extremely complicated, often involving forty or more steps from beginning to end. Each step must be tracked so nothing is missed. (Most of these steps happen behind the scenes, so you never know about it...until something goes wrong!) If a dealer is handling twenty installations per month, each with forty steps, that’s over 800 items that need to be tracked each month! Many dealers simply don’t have a system that can adequately handle this many items at once. Things wind up getting misplaced or delayed, or the dealer spends all his time handling emergencies rather than providing good service.

Therefore it’s critical that the store you choose has a sophisticated processing system to keep track of these steps. It’s very easy for a dealer who does not have a quality processing and customer service system to let things “fall through the cracks” with

missed deadlines, lost paperwork and other mishaps. These mishaps often cause clients a lot of stress and fear.

We realize that buying floor covering can be stressful. At Carillon, we don't leave getting a smooth floor covering process to chance. We have invested thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours in developing a World Class Installation System to insure that our clients experience a smooth installation process, with no missed deadlines or lost paperwork...and without the stress! **We even make the process fun!**

Mistake #6—Choosing a company without getting comments from their past clients

Any dealer can say anything about their past clients. Sadly, some of what they say may not be true. Any ethical dealer should be able to provide a list of references. Make sure you read comments from a dealer's past clients so you can be sure the dealer is an honest, ethical and knowledgeable professional that you can trust.

The 3 “*Dirty Little Secrets*” About Installation That Dealers Hope You NEVER Find Out!

Dirty Secret #1—Uses uncertified, uninsured installers

In order to offer “cheap” price, dealers will cut costs by hiring uncertified, uninsured installers who are not trained properly. Also, since they pay them so poorly, these kinds of unethical dealers have high turnover. They are constantly having to replace installers. So they cut corners on things like training, certification and criminal background checks.

Also, any installer you allow into your home should provide you with a government I.D. (Driver's license, state I.D., etc.), and should be able to speak your native language. It's vital that you be able to communicate with your installer.

Dirty Secret #2—Uses “independent” installers who have no loyalty to the dealer

Unethical, fly-by-night dealers, or “Discount,” “Bargain Corral,” or “Mega-Depot” stores will hire just about anybody who will agree to work for “slave” wages. These installers operate “independently” from the dealer and don't care about warranties, guarantees, or earning repeat business. Because they are underpaid, they are only interested in “rushing” through your job so they can hurry on to the next one.

It's not uncommon for dealers who use these kinds of dealers to make YOU deal with the installer if something goes wrong.

Honest, professional dealers sometimes have installers as employees and sometimes as sub-contractors. HOWEVER...whether using employees or subs, ethical dealers always keep close relationships with their installers. They do this through training, certification, regular staff meetings and by paying them a good wage. This prevents high turnover, so the dealer is able to maintain healthy, long-term relationships with their installers. The installers are loyal to the company and are committed to the warranties and World Class customer service offered by the dealer. The installers then have a vested interest in doing a good job for you, the consumer.

Ethical dealers NEVER, under any circumstances make you deal with the installer if there is an issue with the installation. They realize that it's THEIR job to make sure the installation is done correctly. Not yours.

Dirty Secret #3—Does not have an installation warranty

A store may have a warranty on the flooring, but not the installation. They simply hope you will be dazzled by the flooring warranty and overlook the fact that there is no warranty on the installation.

If they do offer an installation warranty, it may be severely “limited.” It might only be good for 30-90 days! And remember, even if a “discount” dealer has a warranty they may not honor it, and instead play the “**Delay Game.**”

We offer a lifetime installation warranty on all carpet installations at Carillon. You NEVER have to worry about something going wrong with your carpet installation. If it does, we fix it FREE! And we do it quickly. We offer a one year installation warranty on all hard surface installations (wood, laminate, tile, vinyl).

How To Determine Which Floor Covering Is Best For You?

The right flooring will accomplish two important jobs:

- 1) It will meet your unique decorating needs (color, pattern, brightness, etc.)
- 2) It will meet your unique practical needs (traffic, wear, ease of maintenance, etc.)

Decorating needs—The flooring you choose affects all the other décor in your home: furniture, paint scheme, lighting, paintings/artwork, window coverings...everything. Floor covering is the foundation for your interior décor. Floor covering that looks great in one home may look terrible in another.

Practical needs—The right flooring will stand up to your home's level of traffic. It will also be easy to maintain. Floor covering that's easy to maintain in one home may be a huge hassle to maintain in another.

This makes choosing the right floor the single largest decorating decision you will make!

There are many factors to consider when choosing a floor:

1. Level of traffic
2. Indoor pets
3. How long you intend to stay in the home
4. Your lifestyle
5. Country, suburban or city living
6. Your decorating taste
7. Your “unique” situation
8. etc.

There are literally tens-of-thousands of floor covering options and each year your options increase as science develops better and better products. This is both bad and good. It’s good because there are more wonderful options than ever to meet your **practical needs** and your **decorating needs**. The downside is the huge array of options can make choosing the right floor confusing and frustrating, not to mention a little scary. After all, you don’t want to invest the time and money to get new flooring only find out once it’s installed that it’s too dark or too light, or is a giant hassle to keep clean.

That’s why partnering with a professional floor covering expert is critical! An experienced professional has seen thousands of completed floors. He or she knows **AHEAD OF TIME** how completed flooring will look **AND** how it will perform.

In other words, an experienced pro can help you select floor covering best suited to:

1. Meet your unique decorating needs
2. Meet your unique practical needs

Unfortunately, some dealers are just interested in “making the sale.” Because they have to find ways to cut costs, all too often their “sales people” lack the training and experience (and the concern!) to insure that your decorating **AND** practical needs are truly met.

We never let this happen to our clients. We have invested a lot of time, energy and money making sure our Flooring Consultants have the best training. They are experienced professionals who have seen thousands of jobs to completion. They know **AHEAD OF TIME** how flooring will look once it’s installed **AND** how it will perform in different homes.

At Carillon, one of our trained, experienced Flooring Consultants will give you a “**Free Design Audit**.” During the “Audit” the Flooring Consultant will ask you a series of questions that helps narrow the thousands of options to the two or three options that will best meet your unique decorating needs AND your unique practical needs.

For your “**Free Design Audit**,” call us at 727-771-0905 and we will be happy to schedule it for you. Or just come by our store at 29450 US Hwy 19 North, Clearwater, FL 33761.

You'll be greeted with a warm smile and one of our trained, experienced Flooring Consultants will be absolutely thrilled to help you!

How To Get An Iron-Clad Warranty

Remember, warranties cover two basic areas:

- 1) **Defect Warranty**
- 2) **Installation warranty**

Let's look at them one at a time.

Defect Warranty. If your flooring has a defect, it should be replaced at no cost to you. Period. It's the same as if you bought a DVD player and three days later it stopped working: a reputable store will replace or repair it. Same with flooring.

Some dealers will agree to replace defective flooring at no charge, but then charge you for installing the new product. Why should YOU have to pay for something that's not your fault? This is nothing more than the dealer trying to make you pay for something that is his responsibility.

At Carillon, if there is a defect in the flooring, we replace it for free and WE pay for the re-installation...not you.

Installation Warranty. This guarantees that the flooring is installed correctly. Sometimes an installation error is immediately noticeable, for example a split seam. However, sometimes it takes months for an installation error to show up.

Some dealers offer only a "limited" carpet installation warranty. These "limited" installation warranties do not provide good protection for you, the consumer. After all, what happens if it takes more than 30-90 days or a year for an installation problem to show up? You're really stuck.

We feel that if we sell you carpet, it's our responsibility to make sure it's installed correctly. At Carillon, we offer a lifetime installation warranty on all carpet installations.

For all hard surface installations (wood, laminate, tile, vinyl), we offer a one year installation warranty.

Remember that unethical dealers and "Discount," "Bargain Corral" or "Mega-Depot" stores make you pay for their "cheap" price by cutting corners: hiring untrained installers, hiring untrained "sales people," and by not honoring their warranties. They play a numbers game. If they get ten warranty claims in a month, they know that if they play the "**Delay Game**" long enough, eight of the customers will simply give up and go away. Now they only have to pay for two warranties! Not a bad deal...for them.

(Go to www.ripoffreport.com and look under carpet & tile stores to see real life examples of the “Delay Game.”)

That’s why it’s so important that you work with an honest, local dealer that you can trust. Someone who has your best interest in mind, not their own.

Oh, by the way...we DO honor our warranties. We’ll be happy to give you a list of client testimonials to prove it!

100% Iron-Clad Triple Guarantee

We want you to be super-pleased—in fact, absolutely delighted—with your beautiful new flooring and the service we provide. So every carpet installation comes with this 100%, iron-clad triple guarantee:

Guarantee #1 “No Regrets Carpet Guarantee!”

Here’s how the “No Regrets Carpet Guarantee” works: if at any time during the first 30 days after installation you decide you don’t like your new carpet for whatever reason, just let us know. We’ll replace the materials free of charge. (With an incredible guarantee like this, we can’t include the cost of installation, so you’ll have to cover that.) The No Regrets Carpet Guarantee does not apply to custom-color orders or any wool or woven products.

We offer this amazing guarantee because you’re going to have your new carpet for a long time and we don’t want you to have to live with a choice you’ll regret. We want you to be head-over-heels thrilled with your selection. So if you are unhappy with the carpet, we’ll replace it one time free of charge with another style of equal or lesser value. (If the new carpet you select costs more, you simply pay the difference.)

If you walked into any other flooring store and asked them for a guarantee like this, they will probably laugh and tell you “no way!” So how can we offer such a powerful guarantee? We couldn’t unless we were absolutely confident in the quality of our products and service. We are confident, and you will be, too...We guarantee it!

Guarantee #2 Lifetime Carpet Installation Warranty

Buying carpet is not like buying any other piece of interior décor, such as a sofa or a lamp. Why? Because unlike other products, carpet is installed in your home. This makes the installation critical. We offer a lifetime carpet installation warranty at Carillon. You NEVER have to worry about something going wrong with the installation. If it does, we’ll fix it FREE! And we’ll do it quickly.

Guarantee #3 Installer Professionalism Guarantee

Carillon’s installers are neat, clean, well-groomed, well-spoken and professional. They are well-trained and attend on-going educational courses on the newest installation techniques. They are guests in your home and they conduct themselves as such. They

respect your home by using corner guards, walk-off mats and drop cloths. You'll receive the highest-quality installation in the business. And after they're finished, they will leave your home as neat and clean as when they arrived!

Many dealers don't guarantee their work—but we feel nothing is more important than your complete satisfaction. We stand behind every floor. If you ever have any questions or concerns about your floor, please call us right away at 727-771-0905.

4 Steps To Getting The Beautiful Floor Of Your Dreams...WITHOUT The Stress!

If you're thinking about investing in new flooring, we encourage you to follow these four steps:

Step #1—Make a commitment to find a quality floor covering store

Trying to find a floor covering dealer by hunting through the yellow pages or the internet can be very problematic for two reasons. First, you could wind up with an unscrupulous dealer and second, it's almost impossible for the average consumer to keep abreast of the industry to a point where they can insure making the best floor covering decision.

Instead, find a quality dealer that you trust. A dealer with whom you feel completely comfortable sharing your decorating goals and information. Partner with them and let them help you find the right floor covering. Contrary to much of the advertising out there, buying and installing floor covering is very complicated. A competent flooring professional will spend countless hours every year studying the market, researching new floor covering technologies and expanding their education. A knowledgeable, experienced flooring professional will know the right questions to ask and will know how to find the best possible floor covering for your unique situation.

Step #2—List your objectives

Are you simply looking for “Cheap” dealers, or “Discount, Mega-Depot or Bargain Corral” stores? Something you can find on the internet or in the yellow pages? Or do you want competent, experienced and professional advice from the dealer you work with? Do you want to work with an honest and reputable company? Or are you willing to risk working with the company that simply offers “cheap” price—knowing that the company might not be in business tomorrow, or may not honor their warranties?

Step #3—Ask questions

The way to learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are five tough questions to ask any dealer before you agree to anything:

5 Tough Questions To Ask A Floor Covering Dealer Before You Agree To ANYTHING:

- 1. Do you offer a No Regrets Carpet Guarantee? If I'm not happy with the flooring will you replace it free in the first 30 days?**
- 2. Do you have a lifetime warranty on your carpet installations? And can I see it in writing?**
- 3. Are your installers licensed and certified? And can I see their credentials?**
- 4. Do you offer "Stain Proof" carpet?** (Remember: there are no warranties that guarantee carpets to be "stain proof." If the dealer says yes, they are either incompetent or dishonest. Find another dealer.)
- 5. Can I see a list of references?** (This is probably the MOST important question. References are simply the ONLY way you can tell ahead of time if you are working with an honest, competent dealer. If they balk, or refuse, find another dealer.)

And above all, get all of these in writing.

STEP #4—Invite them into your home for an exact quotation in writing

Once you're satisfied that you're working with an honest, competent professional, invite them into your home and ask for a specific quotation in writing. A written quotation gives you the assurance that you know exactly what your job will cost—no surprises.

Summary

By following these four steps, you'll gain all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision. If you simply want "cheap" price quotes—that may not be reliable—many companies in the phone book or on the internet can help you.

But if you want competent advice from an honest floor covering professional, then we invite you to call us.

We'll be happy to answer your questions without cost or obligation of any kind.

Thanks again!

...for reviewing our new CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO FLOOR COVERING. We hope you found this information helpful.

If you have any questions or comments—or if you'd like us to give you an exact written quotation for floor covering—please call us at 727-771-0905.

We've dedicated our business to consumer education and service. We'll be pleased to help you in every way. We look forward to your call.

Thanks!



Kathie Rice & Tyler Rice

Owners, Carillon Floor Center

Real life stories of clients who have used Carillon Floor Center...

“We come to Clearwater just to come to your store. We are very happy with all of our rugs – and that you had what we were looking for.”

-Mr. and Mrs. Bart Bongers, Retired, The Villages, Orlando

The Bongers are a five time repeat customer

“Sean and George – Thank you very much for the work you did in my home. You answered my questions and brought humor to the whole process. Your courtesy and professionalism made me comfortable – even in the disarray of a remodel. The flooring looks fantastic.”

-Meredith Penney, Tampa

“Ed - We came back because of the service we received. There was a problem with the carpet meeting the tile. With no questions asked they came out immediately and fixed that problem. Installers were courteous and clean. We are very happy and if we did not get good service we would not have come back. We would recommend Carillon to everyone.”

-Terri & Russ Kelly, Tarpon Springs

“Tyler – It has been an absolute pleasure working with you!! “Service” in today’s society is the road to success, and you certainly deserve a gold medal. George and I especially are impressed with the “personal touch” you add to the business. It makes a world of difference.

-Ginny & George Pappas, George Pappas’ Restaurant, Largo



We used Carillon Floor Center for our bathroom remodel, kitchen backsplash tile and our laminate flooring throughout the entire house. It’s not often you have the opportunity to experience a company like Carillon. Their professionalism, attention to detail and timeliness were truly extraordinary. I would highly recommend them to anyone needing flooring, tile or rugs in their home or business. Thank you Kathie & Ed.

-Andy & LouAnn Robinson, Tampa

“Carillon Flooring was my first stop. I never buy at my first stop but Don and I hit it off and started coming up with some fun and different ideas. Carillon took the extra time

even though it was not a huge purchase. As Don and his colleague were loading my rug I mentioned that I was building another house. Carillon will get my business.”

-David Frey, Largo

“Tyler – Mrs. Steele and I were very very pleased by doing business with you on providing and installing white Karastan carpet in our condo. Your installers were very professional. We will most certainly tell our friends and neighbors of your excellent firm.”

-Richard Steele, Palm Harbor

“Paul, Great working with your store. Your advice for utilizing the waste by adding a few extra feet saved me from having to do another project in the spring. Instead, I was able to get it all done now. Thanks.”

-Frank & Cathy Giambalvo, Dunedin

“Thank you to everyone at Carillon for assisting me in the purchase and installation of my new carpet. It was a pleasure to do business with you.”

-Margaret Coyle, Clearwater

“Greg – Everyone at Carillon, from the sales people to the installers, is very knowledgeable and professional. I had half of my house carpeted and loved it. I went back several years later to do the rest and sure enough, the same salesman, Greg, and same installers were there to repeat their excellent performance.”

-Richard Schutz, Dunedin

“Ed – Wanted to say hi and let you know how much we’ve enjoyed our beautiful new carpet and oh that padding – feels like we’re walking on clouds! The guys did a wonderful job- tell them hi. I miss them after they were here for 2 days! Whenever we need carpet – we’ll definitely use Carillon. We are so pleased with all.”

-Jeanne Krupit, Clearwater

“Tyler - Just a big thank you, your installers were nice and so helpful. The carpet looks so nice and all of the Garden Club was very impressed. Thanks again.”

-Alice L. James, Garden Club, Clearwater

“Kathie – Sean did a great job repairing our bamboo floors this month. You are blessed to have an employee with such integrity and high work ethic. Please include this document in his personnel file folder as a letter of commendations.”

-Ron & Barbara A. Stepanik, Safety Harbor

“Paul, Thanks for all your assistance & working within our budget. Installation looks great.”

-Joe & Irma Fenley, Tarpon Springs

“Hello Tyler, Thank you for your kindness – and understanding. The carpet looks great – so this is what a properly installed carpet looks like! We’ll be seeing you soon –”

-Jim and Erin Mills, Indian Rocks Beach