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## Resilient Installation by the Book

by Christopher Capobianco



The new FCICA Floor Covering Installation training program is now available.

In the mid 1980s, I was working at my father's retail store, Fred's Carpet, on Long Island, when I received a phone call from Lori Dowling, who was then the New York Area Floor Fashion Center rep for Armstrong, and is now the CEO for Starnet Commercial Flooring Cooperative. Lori had seen my letter to the editor in the Long Island Floor Covering Association newsletter about the need for installation training, and called me after a meeting she had with a local technical school about setting up an installation training program.



The FCICA FIT resilient course spells out the proper technique for pattern matching that would have prevented this mistake from happening.

“Bring me a retailer who can confirm what you are telling me about the need for this training,” she had been told. We got together soon after, and that phone call from Lori began a series of events and a change in for direction for me that had a profound impact on my life and my career. I helped organize the program and secure state funding, and eventually had the rewarding experience of teaching the resilient course.

Based on my work on this program, I was invited to a meeting at the 1988 Summer Atlanta market to discuss a new concept known as FIT – the Floorcovering Installation Training Council. FIT was envisioned to be an independent entity, with representation from all facets of the industry, which would create a training curriculum and eventually support installation schools around the country. I met a number of people at that meeting, the most notable being Jim Walker, who went on to found CFI, the International Certified Floorcovering Installers Association.

Warren Kenney, the original President of FITC, recently commented, “The in-depth experience, hands on installation background, plus Christopher’s

intimate knowledge of the retailer/installer relationship was extremely valuable in the creation of the FIT Instructor directions, curriculum, text books and training aids.” Kenney explained, “These tools are still in use by a number of industry organizations.”

FITC did get the carpet program finished, and we on Long Island were one of the first to use it, with Brian Garnier as the instructor. Although the FIT Council didn’t last, the curriculum did, and became the property of FCICA, The Floor Covering installation Contractors Association, who fine tuned and updated it, added videos and offered it to their members as a way of conducting “In House” training programs for installers.

With the carpet program in place, FCICA turned their eye to creating a resilient program, and a number of the best minds in the industry set to work on it. I got involved near the end, as we were editing and adding and crafting the final document, which was released in December of 2004.

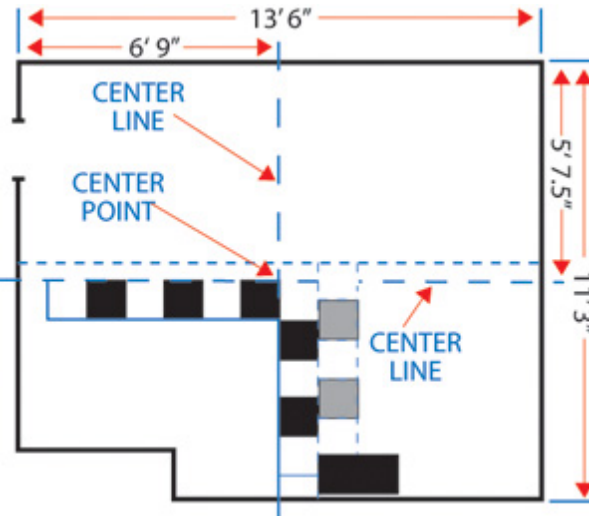


Figure 1

According to FCICA, “The FIT Program is designed to be used by dealers, distributors, or manufacturers to train installers, project managers, and salespeople “by the book.” The FIT materials are flexible and can therefore be taught in a single block or as part of an on-going training program.

Manufacturers may use the FIT materials in workshops, seminars and their own training programs. In-house training programs can tailor FIT materials to support specific company procedures or work policies. An investment in the FIT Training Program is a commitment to quality installation.”



Custom resilient installation being demonstrated at last year's FCICA Convention by Robert Sawyer of Creative Edge

The FIT program is broken up into eight books – the first four being the carpet curriculum, book 5 on Resilient history, background information , sub floor prep and removal of existing flooring, book 6 on tile and tile adhesives, book 7 on sheet flooring and book 8 on resilient accessories such as moldings, wall base and stair treads. There are student manuals and an instructors guide, so the program is “ready made” – just add an instructor. FCICA is also finalizing a “Train the Trainer” update to assist instructors in how to teach.

Having been involved in writing ASTM standards for 12 years, I have come to appreciate how an industry standard can cut down on confusion because everyone works out of the same book. I hope the FCICA FIT program will become an industry standard for resilient installation. Not that this will

replace programs already in place from the various manufacturers, but I hope that the terminology and the techniques in the FIT Resilient Manuals will be adapted by the entire industry so that everyone speaks the same language.

The advantage of this program is that it is not just for training installers. Everyone from retail salespeople to distributor reps can take a lot out of these books – information that will lead to a better understanding of installation methods and a more professional sales approach as a result. I can even see portions being a resource for do-it-yourselfers. I recently had to talk someone through how to lay out and start a vinyl tile installation and having this book available would have been a big help.



In addition to the FIT program, FCICA conducts regular industry training programs.

I like the way these books are written in plain English and are easy to follow, as you can see in the following section of one of the books, showing how to lay out a tile installation.

### 3-4-5 Method for Square Tile Fields

- To square the area to be covered, find the center points of the longest walls and snap a chalk line.
- Measure along this center line to find the middle of the room.
- At the center point, mark off a line across the room at exactly right angles to the first line. This may be accomplished by the 3-4-5 triangle method. Measure 4 feet toward each sidewall from the center point. Measure 3 feet from the center point along the longer line. Measure exactly 5 feet from the 3 foot mark on the center line to the 4 foot mark on the cross line. If the 5 foot measurements do not come out to exactly 5 feet, the center crossing lines are not at a true right angle.
- For large rooms multiples of the above dimensions may be used to obtain greater accuracy. (6-8-10 or 9-12-15, etc.)
- Dry-lay a row of tiles from the center line to the side wall to determine the space left for the border. If the resulting border is too small, move the starting point over a half tile width so that it straddles the center line. Repeat the same procedure lengthwise of the room. (This can readily be figured out from the room dimensions without putting down the tiles if desired.)
- If it is decided to have the center row of tiles straddle either or both of the center lines, additional guide lines should be snapped on the floor 1/2 tile width on one side of either or both center lines as required. See Figure 1.

The challenge for FCICA and the industry is to get this program out to everyone so it starts to get used. Michelle Swiniarski of MAPEI, who leads our committee, said “The FIT Resilient Program is an invaluable resource to companies and individuals as a reference source to assist in growing profits and avoiding costly mistakes. It is an easy-to-use reference guide, with input from all facets of the industry, in one uncomplicated and easy to



FCICA member Pete Austin of Lonseal demonstrating commercial sheet vinyl installation

follow manual". The FCICA FIT program is sold on a subscription basis, and like the carpet program, Swiniarski explained "This program offers basic guidelines for resilient flooring related questions." In addition to the Trainer Manual and Student Manuals, she continued, "Subscribers receive updates as this fast-faced industry changes."

While originally geared for dealers and flooring contractors, FIT can also be used by installers for self training, or to educate "helpers" to become more proficient in installation methods. This program is also available to technical schools, or any other training facility that would like to offer floor covering training as part of their course offerings.



Contact FCICA for more information about the FIT program.

The FIT resilient program is being shipped as an update to existing FIT subscribers, and will also be available as part of the entire FIT curriculum to new subscribers. For more information, contact FCICA by e-mail at [info@fcica.com](mailto:info@fcica.com) or by phone at 248-661-5015.

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