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Issue Date: 05/02/05, Posted On: 5/6/2005

Christopher Capobianco, FCICA

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Christopher Capobianco grew up on Long Island immersed in the floor covering business since day one. Now he's president of the Floor Covering Installation Contractor's Association (FCICA) and his own start-up consulting firm, Flooring Answers. *FCW* associate editor Ray Pina recently spent some time getting to know what it is Capobianco plans to do with the FCICA and Flooring Answers.

Sounds like you practically have flooring in your blood?

On my father's side, four generations. And my mother's father actually worked for his father's father in their Hicksville store, which isn't there anymore. And then he started his own store in East Northport in 1959.

What are you doing now?

I have an independent consulting and sales agency and I'm doing my own thing.

Who are your customers?

Right now I'm working for a couple of flooring contractors, one distributor and two manufacturers. All with different needs. I'm writing training programs for three of them, to help them go out and train their clients. For two of them I'm doing a review of job-site analysis; going out into a job making sure its ready to get installed. And for another one I'm doing some assistance in architectural sales and getting a new product out into the marketplace.

And this is Flooring Answers?

Yup, Flooring Answers.

So now you're also chairman of the FCICA.

I am. Yes. And I'm pretty excited about it actually. It was a little unexpected.

Well, I called to congratulate Jonathan Stewart on his appointment and I was told he's out and you

That was a surprise. Jonathan's a great guy and I've worked with him through FCICA for a few years and enjoyed working with him – always had a lot of great ideas. But he had an opportunity come along that was outside the flooring industry that he went for. Two weeks before all of this I was asked to be vice chairman not in the bylaws that vice chairman is automatically vice chairman but I was thinking if Jonathan does what he does I'll be ready in two years. Little did I know that in a very short period of time, "Guess what? You chairman."

When I spoke to Jonathan Stewart in Puerto Rico he said his mission was to educate the industry what the FCICA really is?

I definitely share with Jonathan that I really feel strongly about carrying that forward. One of the things people don't understand about the FCICA is, yes, we're involved in the installation of floor covering, but really, what we are is the flooring contractors association. We haven't changed our name but we've changed what we call ourselves. Because our association represents members that sell and install over \$800 million worth of floor covering a year. So it's not just that we install it, we sell it too.

What type of clients would you like for Flooring Answers?

What I enjoy doing most is training: teaching, training, writing. You might not know, my first ever gig in journalism was for *Floor Covering Weekly* in 1989. I wrote a monthly column on installation. I love to write and I like to speak up in front of a group of people and teach them about floor covering and I'm doing that now.

What can you do for a manufacturer?

My specialty is commercial resilient. I provide some level of technical support that they don't spend a few hours and review their published installation guide and make corrections, make critiques and suggestions. Or I can go to a job and be there when the job is going on to make sure it's installed correctly, that the sub-floor prep was correct and that the installers were comfortable with the whole procedure. Just be there to show a presence from the manufacturer on the job.

There are a lot of companies that are importers who haven't grown to the point where they can afford a full-time technical person. So a guy like me can do it by a job-by-job basis or be put on a monthly retainer. But I can be there whenever you need me, whether it's for reviewing documents relevant to a complaint, going out on a job to train installers or rewriting an installation manual. All of those types of things is what I do.



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