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### New York Floor Coverers Take Significant Step to Reduce Moisture Problems

by Howard Olansky  
December 3, 2002

It was billed as a "Moisture in Concrete Seminar," sponsored by the Greater New York Floor Coverers Association/Industry Promotional Fund. A star-studded panel played to a packed house that brought together in one place (a first) a large number of floor covering contractors, distributors, manufacturers, retailers, architects, and designers. The message: it's time for all of us to communicate with each other.

The seminar panel featured three internationally acclaimed and respected experts: Christopher Capobianco, technical support manager for Toli International; Larry Press, Para-Chem's director of Technical Services; and Thomas Ruttura, president of Farmingdale, N.Y.-based Ruttura & Sons Construction Co. and a leading figure in the Concrete Contractors Association.

I have been a panel moderator for many industry educational meetings. But none was more exciting or productive than this one. It was a program specifically designed to air problems and answer questions from architects, designers and floor covering contractors/retailers about the installation of floor coverings over concrete subfloors.

The session began with attendee questions (and opinions) directed at the panelists. Interest focused on such areas as causes of problems and solutions, fast-track construction, efforts to develop adhesive standards, the viability of moisture tests, ways to increase the effectiveness of moisture protection, and the Industry White Paper on moisture emission testing (which has been endorsed by a large number of floor covering associations).

Then, the seminar took a significant and, in many ways, history-making turn. It was Ruttura who started the ball rolling when he said he had just attended a national concrete in moisture meeting with 150 concrete contractors. When he added that "Today's seminar is the first opportunity I've ever had to sit down with a group of floor covering contractors," the lights went on. He underscored the need for more communication. Capobianco and Press agreed that dialogue among all of the industries is a must, as did the contractors/retailers.

Several architects capped things off by calling this type of seminar "crucial." They urged establishment of programs that meet the need for communication and understanding among architects, designers, floor covering contractors/retailers/manufacturers/distributors, concrete contractors, and general contractors. The floor covering contractors gave this their strong support, with many of them calling for industry standards in many areas.

This seminar delivered a loud, clear message to everyone in the floor covering industry. The message: through our associations, we can and should develop and support programs that bring together all of the industries involved.

Who better to take the lead in this effort than the talented members of the floor covering industry? We really have two choices: 1. continue to drown in the problems of moisture, or 2. take the lead in developing meaningful ways to dramatically reduce moisture problems.

I vote for No. 2. How about you?

Howard Olansky  
hiolan@sbcglobal.net  
Senior Editor



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