

A FLOOR FOR EVERY

CONTRACTOR-SUPPLIER VERSATILITY SERVES HEALTH FOOD MAKER

Flora is a manufacturer and distributor of a wide variety of natural health foods and supplements, and one of their two production facilities is located in Lynden, Wash., just a couple miles south of the Canadian border.

It is here that the company recently responded to growing demand for their herbal tea beverages with a 7,000 square-foot expansion that would house new brewing equipment, a bottling line and some additional office space.

To say that the project requires a floor would be accurate, but somewhat misleading, according to flooring contractor HTI Polymer, Inc.

“Visually, they require a single floor that is uniform in appearance,” says Damon Paulsen, a project manager for HTI. “Functionally, what they really need is three different floors.”

Differentiation plan

For HTI, recognizing the unique needs of flooring customers like Flora is part of the differentiation plan that guides the company, according to its president, Chris Campton. Campton is a 25-year veteran of the flooring industry and founded the company in 2005 after identifying a target market that wasn't being serviced appropriately.

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“I saw a sole focus on the bottom line in the industry, and facility owners could recognize it by the inconsistent quality and durability of the floors they saw being installed,” says Campton. “I knew there was a market for a company that focused on the delivery of a high quality product with a substantial service life.

“Granted, it's always necessary to keep an eye on profitability, but not to the exclusion of delivering the highest quality product we possibly can.”



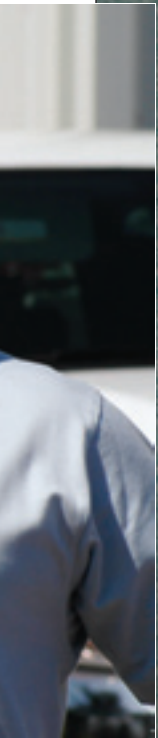
Campton's instincts proved correct, and his company hit the ground running, grossing \$4 million in 2005, its first year of operation. Clearly, the market liked what it saw out of HTI, as revenues boomed to \$12 million by 2008.

“Growth becomes exponential when you do good work,” he says. “Word gets out.”

Campton ensured that all his projects were “good work” when he insisted that all his project managers were NACE-certified inspectors. He also regularly recommended Sherwin-Williams resinous flooring systems in his efforts to standardize flooring installations and performance. The diverse systems offered by Sherwin-Williams ensure an appropriate custom match to the clients' needs, says Campton.

“Each environment is different, and you have to put some standards in place in order to properly customize a floor for your clients' needs,” says Campton. “For example, each project manager has a form that becomes part of the project file.

PURPOSE



At far left, Chris Campton heads up HTI Polymer, Inc. Some of the detailed slope work by HTI Polymer will facilitate proper water flow on a floor at a Flora food and beverage production facility in Lynden, Wash. Above, an applicator trowels a concrete base into shape.

That form ensures that we consider what kind of traffic the floor will be exposed to. What temperatures, chemical exposure, and moisture vapor transmission are present. What kind of joints are present. Whether thermal shock will occur, whether it will be steam cleaned, whether it will face temperature deflection or see UV light.

“From all that information we pull together a customized system designed to work in that specific environment.”

Flora new construction

HTI studied the usage plan for the expansion at Flora and worked with the general contractor to ensure that proper slope be built into areas in which water would be present. They came up with a customized flooring blueprint that would employ three different Sherwin-Williams flooring systems over the newly installed concrete in the production area, or wood floor in an upper level office area.

The floor that would face the harshest environment would be in what would be defined as the “wet area,” about 1,000 square feet of concrete where the tea product would be brewed and bottled. Here floors would be subject to thermal

Condensation on walls will be ever-present in a beverage production area, and Chris Campton ensures that proper drainage will occur at Flora.

shock in cleanings at greater than 180 degrees F. Frequent exposure to cleaning agents as well as condensation would also make a durable floor a necessity.

To stand up to that kind of treatment, HTI recommended a Sherwin-Williams FasTop Urethane system. “Put that kind of hot water on a floor at ambient temperatures and it’s going to cause some deflection,” says Campton. “But the FasTop system expands and contracts at the same rate as the slab, so you’re not going to have a fracture. It’s the right choice for this environment.”

Outside of the wet area is a larger dry area of about 4,300 square feet that would handle light industrial traffic and storage. Here, a Sherwin-Williams troweled mortar TPM 115-U1 system would provide adequate protection at an economic cost for Flora.

The expansion also includes an upper level of about 1,000 square feet that would house offices and a cafeteria, and only be subject to foot traffic. Here, HTI installed a Ceramic Carpet system over a flexible membrane, similar to the floor installed in the dry areas below and identical in appearance.

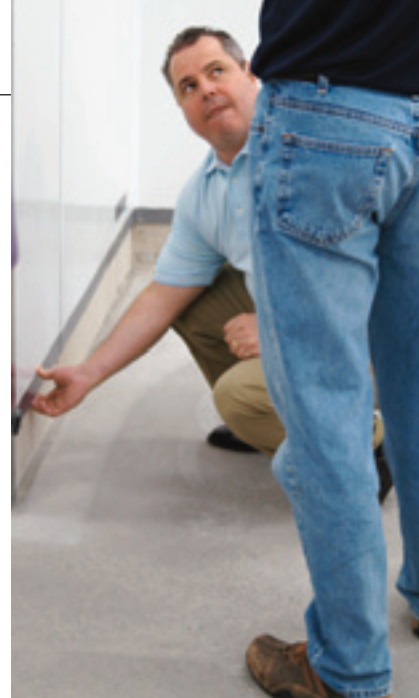
The project also included about 600 linear feet of 6-inch Epoxy Cove Base, specially designed to eliminate water penetration between the wall panels and the base.

Right the first time

For Flora facility manager Ray Kornelis, it doesn’t matter greatly what was installed, as long as the system is the right choice for each specific exposure environment.

“It’s very valuable to have a company like HTI and Sherwin-Williams that can tell me exactly what we’ll need, and where we’ll need it,” he says.

Adds Campton, “What’s important is to get a project like this done right, the first time, because these people — the architects, engineers, facility managers and general contractors — they all talk to each other. What matters to them is the final result.”



SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP HELPS HTI EXPAND REACH

HTI Polymer is gaining traction in markets across the United States in part because of the national presence of flooring materials supplier Sherwin-Williams, according to HTI president Chris Campton.

“We get consistent product no matter where we are, and we get awesome customer support, especially on the front end analysis of these projects,” says Campton. “Their national presence is an absolute necessity for what we do.”

HTI services several national accounts, including Costco Wholesale warehouses, providing a consistent product by maintaining and documenting detailed installation procedures. The company also ensures consistency by keeping HTI superintendent staff involved in on-site management.

HTI has also established operations in Mexico City, and is soon to kick off an office in Sydney, Australia.

