

IMPROVE ANY SPACE BY STARTING WITH THE FLOOR



The ideal floor for the
hospitality & leisure sector

DON'T FORGET THE EYES AND EARS

PERCEPTION IS A COMBINATION OF FACTORS

FACT

Guests relax more in a unique space.

The hospitality and leisure sector is a branch which covers more or less everything we can do with our spare time. From theatre or stadium visits, hotels or camp sites, dinner or lunch in a restaurant, to relaxing in the sauna. In this white paper, Forbo Flooring aims to answer the question of whether there is an ideal floor for the leisure sector.

Catering cake, catering cutlery, catering cheese. For many years, the use of catering as a prefix was associated with inferiority; the mass versions of the real stuff, which did nothing to promote the hospitality branch. Times have changed however. Leisure companies nowadays embrace quality and design, and that is recognisable on walking through the door. Many establishments in the leisure sector pay a great deal of attention to design in general and to the lighting, spaciousness, floor and furniture in particular. The interior has become an important success factor rather than just being at the bottom of the budget list.



Where does the floor fit in? Is there an ideal floor for all leisure establishments? First and foremost, it is the difference which catch the eye. Bars want a trendy look, hotels have requirements with regard to acoustics, an aquatic park needs to prevent guests from slipping, and hygiene is paramount at a wellness centre. Not all these wishes can always be perfectly combined, though they do share a lot of common ground. Let's take a closer look at them.



ACOUSTICS

FACT People talk even more loudly when there is a lot of noise.

Acoustics plays an important role in many sub sectors within the leisure segment, and the acoustics requirements will vary from establishment to establishment. For hotel owners, transfer of noise to neighbouring rooms and rooms located below must be limited where possible, while acoustics is a total package which is essential in raising perception to a higher level in a theatre or cinema.

Carpet is therefore a popular choice in hotels, because it greatly reduces contact noise. A disadvantage of carpet, however, is the maintenance and cleaning required. Dirt is easily trapped in thick pile carpet and is hard work to remove, while moisture can also be problematic in combination with carpet.

Luckily there are various ways of keeping it clean – for example the spray extraction method – but that is not something you want to do weekly.

A possible solution is the hybrid form which is somewhere between hard and soft flooring. A floor which feels soft but has a waterproof back, made from nylon and nylon fibres, for example. It gives the look and feel of a carpet but is suitable for wet cleaning like a hard floor. Hygiene and great contact noise reduction in one and the same floor therefore.

This type of floor is also increasingly used in cinemas and theatres because of the ease of

maintenance and cleaning. As already mentioned, such flooring helps contribute to good acoustics, especially in terms of absorption of walking noise, though by far the most acoustic benefits are achieved by fitting the right walls and ceilings in such establishments. There are plenty of agencies (try Googling acoustic monitoring) which monitor noise levels and can offer good advice, also specifically for theatres and cinemas.

Contact noise often also plays a role in restaurants and pubs. The less you hear of chairs being moved around and/or 'click-clack' stiletto heels, the easier a conversation becomes. Theoretically, carpet is the best option but is not always the ideal solution in terms of hygiene or when an owner requires a different look. Once again, a hybrid product is a good compromise, being easy to clean thanks to the vinyl back, and absorbing noise through the textile top layer. Flotex is an example of such a hybrid floor: a high-tech flooring which looks like carpet and feels warm and comfortable, but without the (unhygienic) disadvantages of soft flooring.

An alternative could be to fit a standard vinyl floor: it gives much less walking noise and other annoying contact noises than wood, for example, and can simply be wiped clean. Vinyl floors offer no end of possibilities in terms of looks: wood, concrete, colours; virtually anything goes. It can even be digitally printed with any image, pattern, logo or artwork of your choice. It is, however, important to keep an eye on quality. If you want to enjoy the floor for a long time, any printed images must be protected with a top layer,

and a PUR finish is always essential in order that the floor can be easily kept clean.

And finally, some technical data. Flotex gives a contact noise reduction of 20 dB, the average carpet tile 23 dB and the new special soft back tiles no less than 28 dB. Would you prefer a hard floor? There are acoustic versions of Marmoleum and project vinyl, which can reduce noise transfer by maximum 17 dB.

HYGIENE & CLEANING

FACT

86% of the life cycle costs of a floor lies in its maintenance.

Quick and simple cleaning is important not only in pubs and restaurants, but for more or less any project owner. Think in terms of a bungalow park or hotel room where the maid often only has 10 minutes to get the room back in tiptop condition. Or the hygiene in a gym or sports school, for example. When looking for a quickly and easily cleaned floor, we always advise hard flooring such as linoleum or vinyl. The smooth floor surface does not trap dust and dirt, so that any soiling can be simply removed by daily wiping or vacuuming. These floors also do not absorb moisture, so there is no risk of staining. If hygiene and quick and simple cleaning are top of the list, a hard floor is the best choice.





SUSTAINABILITY & HEALTH

FACT 40% of consumers is willing to pay more for healthy food.

Sustainability has become a norm rather than just a trend. When opting for materials produced in a fair and environment-friendly manner, you can extend that to your floor as well. Take linoleum for example, the most sustainable hard flooring in the world, alongside wood. Produced from natural and renewable raw materials, this floor is perfectly in keeping with other natural interior elements. Moreover, the floor has a life cycle of at least 20 years and can be easily repaired when damaged. Marmoleum is available in more than 150 colours and four basic designs (marbled, patterned, solid and linear) in tiles and sheets. The product is therefore perfectly in keeping with almost any style. Moreover, the material can be produced and laid in the design of your choice.

Or would you prefer a vinyl because of other advantages? Make sure you at least choose a

sustainably produced vinyl floor. If the flooring has been manufactured in the Netherlands, you can be sure that it complies with the guidelines prescribed by our government and the European Union, and that you are saving a great deal of transport kilometres when compared with the alternative produced and shipped from China.

Nowadays, EPDs (Environmental Product Declarations) are increasingly used in order to objectively compare the environmental burden of various floor finishes. An independent party determines the environmental impact of a product throughout its life cycle, allowing you to very simply compare various types of flooring and their manufacturers. The Forbo EPDs can be found at www.forbo-flooring.nl under the heading 'creating better environments'.



IMAGE

FACT First impressions are crucial in this sector.

Image is probably the most important factor, which is why companies in the hospitality and leisure branch all try to create their own unique experience. Many owners (also looking at trends) want to make their mark on the interior. There are countless options of course, though we mustn't forget that interiors also need to move with the times and therefore don't always need to last for decades. Traditional pubs are the exception of course. So decide beforehand how long your furniture and floor must last. Are you looking for a floor for the next 20 years? A timeless design and repairable floor such as Marmoleum is the ideal choice. If a shorter life cycle is acceptable, a more outspoken flooring can also be an option. When designing a digitally printed floor, it can be quirky as you like. A fairytale landscape, champagne bubbles or motorway cutting across your restaurant? No problem. A floor with a unique print certainly reinforces your identity. It can also contribute to routing, which can be very advantageous, working constructively and sometimes also lowering thresholds. The quality is extremely important, what could be worse than seeing the design which is your heart and soul becoming shabby because the print is not properly protected?

When a warm look and feel is what you need, thick pile carpet is the answer. Remember that it does require a different degree of

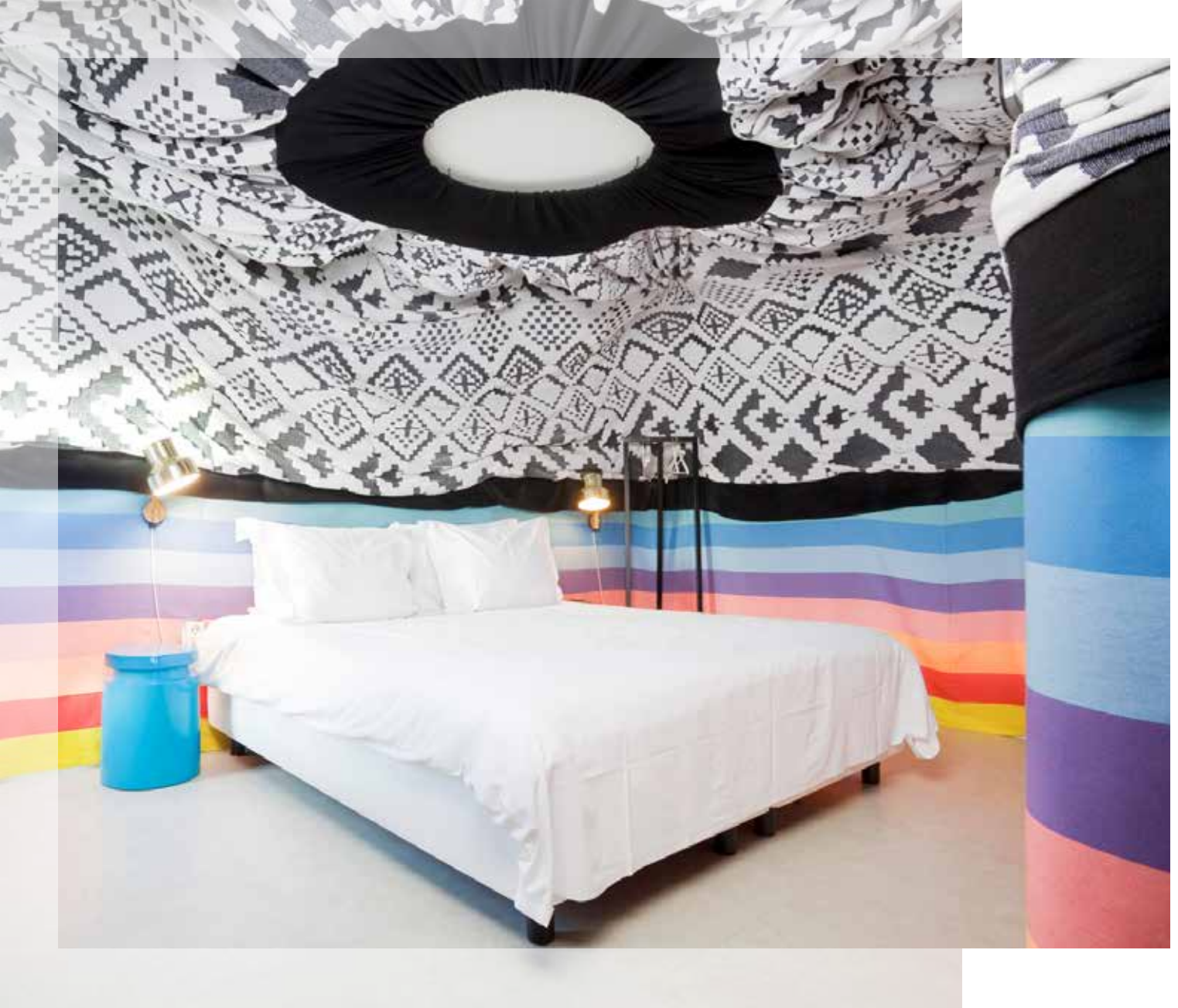


cleaning than short pile carpet or the hybrid Flotex floor which can even be cleaned with water.

What we are increasingly seeing is flooring such as vinyl or linoleum being continued up as wall covering or headboard, which can give very trendy and attractive effects. Marmoleum Modular is also worth a mention in that sense. The tile sizes from XL to small, and a fantastic range of colours and various basic patterns gives you, as the entrepreneur, designer or architect, almost endless possibilities.

An attractive and clean entrance is equally essential for your image. After all, first impressions tend to count most in people's perceptions of a total environment. It is therefore sensible to opt for one of the entrance systems described earlier.

Generally speaking, there are choices to be made when purchasing flooring. What matters most? The look and feel, the hygiene, ease of cleaning or acoustics? As you can imagine, a robust wooden floor is harder to keep clean than a vinyl floor with a wood print. Now that PVC planks are available, it's hard to tell the difference between vinyl floors and real wood. Project vinyl is nowadays available in very attractive wood and natural stone looks with a 'natural' wood grain and knotty pattern without repetitions. This can give a room a totally different look without the costs or maintenance requirements getting out of hand. And even if you can't imagine your restaurant or hotel room without the subtle ambiance of a floating wooden floor, it's not always ideal because of the noise it makes – however beautiful it may look.



IDEAL FORBO FLOORING FLOOR

The conclusion of this white paper is that the ideal floor does indeed exist, but that no one floor is ideal for everyone. It all depends on your requirements and priorities. Start by determining what you need to achieve, what you don't want and for how long you want to use it. With that information, it's time to contact a specialist for interior advice. That could be an

architect, a project designer or the Forbo design service which provides free advice and floor plans. And so you receive independent advice which will stand you in good stead for many years. When opting for Forbo Flooring, Forbo System Solutions gives a warranty on the floor, subfloor and installation.

Forbo Flooring B.V.

P.O. Box 13
1560 AA Krommenie
The Netherlands
Tel.: +31 75 647 74 77
Fax: +31 75 647 77 01
E-mail: contact@forbo.com

Follow us on

