

2021 Resolutions for the Floor Covering & Retail Professionals**MY PERSONAL NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE AND GRATITUDE****May the best of health, resilience, kindness and prospective be with you in 2021 and beyond**

Let us all listen to understand, not just respond. Be FOR something than AGAINST something!

IF IT ISTO BE, IT IS UPTO ME (you)

Greetings and Happy New Year friends! Who could have thought the year 2020 would change our world so dramatically that we will remember it for the rest of our lives? Though I did not physically see many of you last year, we sure met on little screens and phone calls more often than any other year of my life. We all wish that in the pie chart of lifetime, 2020 will be a small slice. Yes, 2020 was unprecedented for personal, business and financial health uncertainties, full of unimaginable stress, social isolation and anxiety of ambiguous futures, but we have many things to be thankful for. I am thankful for your friendship and express my deepest gratitude.

During all the uncertainties, the tradition of New Year's resolutions continues to be consistent. It is an expectation from most of you, therefore I will not disappoint. Thank you for your insights, critiques, input, support, friendship, inspiration, business and the knowledge you share with me. You make me a better person with your wisdom, kindness, evaluations, requests and love.

Welcome to 2021, the start of the new decade with a changed world. Hopefully it will embark upon a dawn at the end of a long dark night and a clear sky after a long rainy season. Every difficulty teaches us a new skill to overcome new challenges. We focused more on family, relationships and home improvements. The growth that started mid 2020 will continue for a foreseeable future. In 2021, a switch may not immediately flip for better or normal life, but what we learned this past year has possibly prepared us for what may follow because of it. It is up to all of us how we apply learnings to make 2021 a robust year. We must make up for the lost time and do our part for prosperity. If we can call it a "silver lining," I believe the flooring business will still be robust because many may not be traveling or vacationing as before and will focus on home improvements. Our home now serves many purposes and is now our office, gym, classroom, castle, fortress and many more things. I also believe that carpet as a soft and comfortable flooring will experience a relatively higher growth with consumers desiring to buy better flooring.

My personal resolutions for 2021: I will focus on being FOR something rather than being AGAINST something, listen to understand you rather than just answering and dedicate my energy to creating higher value for all of you. Shared below are my personal views independent of TDG.

New Year's Resolutions for the Floor Covering/Retail Professionals Choose 3 that you like for your improvements in 2021

- 1) **Resolve Not to Give Up NOW:** It is common wisdom that most accidents happen when we are close to the home, or most of us give up when we are so close to success. Yours truly believes that we are much closer to the end **of pandemic**, so we should not give up now or let our guards down for our own health and the health of all around us. Let us consciously keep practicing safety measures.
- 2) **Practice Gratitude and Positivity:** We all have so much to be thankful for and should count our blessings of personal safety, health, business, customers, each other, our partners, family and friends. We are all craving positivity. Let us pledge to practice positivity in our communication and actions.
- 3) **Listen to Understand:** Please make every effort to come across relaxed and confident. It is a skill that can be mastered with practice and focus. Customers want to be heard, and as professionals, let us practice our listening skills. Let us listen to understand rather than just respond. All you have to say is, "Mr. Smith, I did not understand what you just said, would you please repeat that again?" or "Mrs. Jones, let me understand what you are saying is...." and paraphrase in your own words what she said. This practice allows you to listen to understand rather than just answer, calms people down, makes them feel heard/respected and improves your trust and relationship.

- 4) **Upgrade Your Story:** If you do not have a story to tell, all you have is a price to sell. We all want to support local businesses. Does your story explain that you are a locally owned business serving for x number of years? Build your story with your competitive advantage that answers a very basic question, "why should customers buy from your store?"
- 5) **Focus on BRAND:** Brands create confidence, comfort, safety and deliver the promise of performance. When we are stressed out, short on time and or anxious, we tend to do or buy familiar things. Therefore, present the most trusted and recognized brands you carry in your store. To share an example, when I need a pain reliever, I no longer compare the generic ones to branded ones. I rather say, "Tylenol, you are going home with me."
- 6) **Be FOR Something, Not AGAINST Something:** When you put energy against something the opposite energy cancels or reduces your efforts. If we are for something (positive energy) and not against something (negative energy), not only do we have more fun, we accomplish our objectives as well. Anything that you focus on grows.
- 7) **Strive to Double Your Consumer Financing as BRO:** In challenging times consumers prefer to hang on to their money. If you give them a chance to use financing the right way, many may even upgrade and buy better flooring. In stores, I experienced that most often Retail Sales Pros (RSPs) offer financing at the very end when someone is not buying. That is like saying; "I am so sorry you cannot afford this product; I am going to let you use our financing." Bringing financing at the end is almost disrespectful to customers. Therefore, bring it on the front as a Benefit (B) of doing business with your store, in the middle as a Reinforcement (R) and at the end as an option (O). A recent survey by a large consumer finance provider shared that approximately 40% of customers either will not buy from you or buy at all if you do not offer financing as stated above. If financing is offered as B.R.O., many more may buy as well as upgrade.
- 8) **Present the Best:** In the past several months, I have heard from many of you that your customers are buying better flooring to make their home more comfortable. The home now functions as a gym, castle, fort, school, and many more things. Give your customer a chance to buy the best. It is easier to go downhill than uphill, and when you go from the best to a better product, customers lose some benefits justifying the value in the best product.
- 9) **Stay Connected:** Connection with others has never been more important than it is now. Please call past customers, mill reps and friends more often to stay connected. If you need help with something, call the best person you think can help. You will be helping that person as well because he or she wants to help.
- 10) **Top 20:** If everything is special then nothing is special. Make a list of the top 20 soft and top 20 hard surface products in your store. This list may not be based on mill's best sellers because those could be regional or national. This list should be based on your own value system and criteria of what would you be proud to sell, what creates the best value (not price) and what your customers would be proud to buy or own. Over 70% of consumers have pets as part of their family. Make sure you have enough STAINMASTER® PetProtect® products in this list. Identify these top 20 products in your store so that everyone can easily locate them. This process may allow you to close sales faster and help the customers focus on the right products. Upgrade this list as needed.
- 11) **Bonus:** Learn the art of virtual selling, actively promote your company and follow your vendors on social media.

This pandemic is affecting all of us differently. Based on the actions we take now, we will come out stronger or weaker on the other end, but none of us will be the same. It is my desire that you come out stronger. I promise to do my part.

I have not included my bookshelf, but if you would like a copy, please email me. Thank you for your continuous support. Please visit PamiTalks for more tool. Do your part to make this world and flooring industry better. Share these resolutions generously with others to make a difference in their lives.

Respectfully, Pami Bhullar - dedicated to the memory of my son, Supi Bhullar