

# FCW

FLOOR COVERING WEEKLY

## Sustainability

### Supporting Sustainable Initiatives

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By Lauren Moore-Brennan

When it comes to choosing new floors, the key priorities for consumers are consistently durability, style and price. However, as eco-conscious Millennials and Gen Z shoppers have become the largest group of purchasers, sustainability is creeping up the list of purchase drivers.

"These days, consumers are actively shopping green," shared Malisa Maynard, vice president of sustainability, Mohawk. "Becoming a sustainable brand is no longer just about having a green product. Sustainability has evolved to include environmental, social and governance aspects as well."

The desire for climate-conscious flooring products isn't limited to younger generations. Doug Jackson, CALI president, said he sees customers across all budgets and demographics placing more value on eco-friendly flooring options. "One of the number one features CALI customers like to call out in their online posts and reviews is product quality and sustainability," he said. "It makes them feel good about their purchase to know (and share) that their floor or deck was made with their family's health and the environment in mind. Clean living and sustainable design are much more prevalent now and are swaying more major purchasing decisions."



*As sustainability becomes a more important purchase driver, it's important for retailers to offer climate-positive and eco-friendly flooring solutions, such as this tile from Cradle to Cradle-certified manufacturer Mosa, seen here in a private home designed by Lunet Architekten.*

The full impact of having eco-conscious flooring products in the home is one of overall well-being, said Heidi Steele, founder of Surface Resources, a firm dedicated to providing designers with sustainable, responsibly-crafted surfaces including climate-positive flooring materials. "From hypoallergenic traits to carbon reduction benefits, they offer overall peace of mind," Steele said. "In general, I would say climate-positive products cause minimal to zero harm to the planet and may actually be improving the environment and indoor air quality."

Jackson suggests that retailers create marketing messaging that positions the customer as the hero who can make a true positive impact through their buying decisions. "People won't necessarily know the value of their flooring choices unless you tell them," he said. "Help them understand and feel good that they're doing more than simply replacing old flooring; they're doing the responsible thing for their family and the planet."

Steele pointed out that it's important for retailers to take the time to educate themselves on third-party labeling, in order to avoid being susceptible to "greenwashing" marketing campaigns that sound definitive. "Look to authentic, internationally-recognized eco labels and promotions on displays and cartons," she said. "There are so many options out there that are authentically labeled as climate positive materials, and I am hopeful that as demand for these floors continues to grow at the pace it is — which is unlike anything I've ever seen — that retailers will jump on board and start to promote the authentically certified, healthy, sustainable flooring options that are out there. Younger consumers are truly looking for these, only to turn to non-healthy flooring choices when retailers don't provide them with options."