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Setting the Trend from Floor Level: Floor Design Considerations in Commercial Venues

What is interior design? Why is it important? Is it just about looking good? Or, would it perhaps be more accurate to suggest that interior design is more often about how a building or interior space can make its users and occupants feel?

The Role of Interior Design

Interior design plays a big role in commercial premises. A clever design theme can really make retail, leisure and hospitality clients stand out amongst the competition. It can influence a users' brand perception and first impressions, it can drive users to perform certain goals (including spending more money or choosing higher value items in retail spaces) and it can directly impact on how likely a user is to recommend that commercial venue, such as hotel, restaurant or bar, to others.

How a customer feels, both physically and psychologically, when entering or using a space is of paramount importance to commercial interior designers. It's not just about colour, texture and decoration, elements such as building materials, layout, space distribution, lighting and interior wall arrangement can have a big influence on creating a welcoming, inspiring design space that has a positive impact on the bottom line.

Bugis+ (Iluma), Singapore

Monochrome shades of dark grey and off-white laid in wide abstract bands adorn the atrium of the stunning Bugis+ mall. Formed from seamless terrazzo systems, the floor space draws visitors in from the surrounding neighbourhoods and leads them to the heart of the development's retail experience.

Bugis+ is an entertainment and retail complex, located at the famous Bugis Street area in Singapore, now a designated art, education and entertainment district. The building's design centres on contrasting rectilinear blocks against the exterior's curvaceous sculpted form.



The Role of the Floor

It might often be overlooked, but the floor offers commercial interior designers with the second largest platform or surface within an interior scheme to make a bold design statement. With a little imagination, floors can become much more than something to walk on, they can be a canvas from which to project brand personality, set a mood or even define the building's purpose.

Innovations in technology combined with changing design trends have seen the introduction of a wide variety of synthetic flooring materials brought to market. Vibrantly coloured, high-gloss epoxy resins, decorative terrazzo containing a variety of aggregate chippings, natural and coloured stone carpet systems as well as decorative flake and quartz based systems are just some of the hard floor options available to commercial clients.

Taking inspiration from natural building materials, new innovations include intricately hand applied systems that offer clients a choice between solid or multi-dimensional marble

colour tones to recreate the look of polished stone or a subtle metallic effect for a warm industrial feel.

Not only do these systems take advantage of a wide range of materials and design processes they offer clients a robust performance that matches up to the operational requirements of the space involved including heavy footfall, dirt and spillage as well as slip and scratch resistance.

Exploring Colour

Warm and appetising, bright and open or cool and relaxing? Choosing a colour palette can have a big impact on the mood and ambiance of any commercial design scheme. Changing the colour scheme of a hotel, restaurant, airport waiting area or shopping mall concourse can completely transform the space itself.

Colours communicate aspects of personality or brand and have the power to produce psychological and physiological effects. These hues and setting the right mood to strike a balance between comfort and productivity is an important commercial decision.

YELLOW

The colour of knowledge and creativity. Yellow offers hope, happiness and fun.

ORANGE

An optimistic, uplifting colour. Orange inspires and motivates positive thoughts.

RED

A positive colour associated with brand leadership, ambition and determination.

PINK

The colour of love, compassion and intimacy. Pink drives romantic ideals.

PURPLE

Represents the imagination. Purple expands awareness & connects to deeper thoughts.

BLUE

Trust, honesty & loyalty define blue. It is reserved, conservative and reliable.



GREEN

The great balancing colour. Green promotes stability between energy & emotion.

FIGURE 1: The Meaning of Colours

Data provided <http://www.empower-yourself-with-color-psychology.com/meaning-of-colors.html>

Disneyland, Hong Kong

Visitors to Fantasyland at the Disneyland complex on Hong Kong's Lantau Island will experience a burst of colour as they enter the restaurant arcade.

Seamless epoxy terrazzo has been installed in an enchanting display using a variety of attractive candy colours to frame a dancing statue of Sleeping Beauty and her Prince. Lining the entrance walkway of the Fantasy Land Fare Restaurant and Princess Shopping Arcade, the special design features six different colour ways, and two systems incorporating complimentary aggregate blends.



Typically, the floor represents one-sixth of the entire facilities' surface area and therefore plays a big role in a design scheme. Resin based flooring systems are available in a wide range of standard colour options and unlike other types of material can be colour matched or made to order using any shade off the RAL colour palette. This is a big plus for corporate clients or chains looking to achieve design scheme consistency across locations.

Seamless resin floor finishes can also be used to complement existing design schemes. This is particularly useful in localised floor repair or floor refurbishment situations.

Decorative & Functional Patterns

The floor doesn't have to be a solid colour or void of any type of pattern or design. In fact a variety of options are available to install pattern on the surface of the floor, particularly when using resin based materials.

Complicated geometric or banded designs can be set out using aluminium or brass trims and the resin material poured into the design framework – similar to painting by numbers.

Once ground, sealed and polished the stunning design reveals itself on the surface of the floor. This process can also be used to embed corporate logos or signage into the surface of the floor, which is often a unique touch in corporate offices or hotel lobbies.

Other options include the use of floor graphics, where any design, imagery or lettering is printed onto a large fabric mesh, placed over the floor area in question and sealed with a clear, translucent resin, which can then be trafficked and cleaned in the same ways as other resin floor systems.

Finally, another interesting way in which to create pattern or design on the floor is through the use of colour zoning or blocking, where different systems or systems in different colours or using different aggregate mixes are installed side-by-side to create a fusion of textures, colours and patterns.

Colour zoning or blocking can also serve a functional purpose in commercial venues, designating different practical spaces, walkways, waiting areas, relaxation zones and the like.

Times Square Center, UAE

Seven coordinating colours of seamless epoxy resin terrazzo have been used to create an intricate design scheme across the concourse areas of the Dubai's luxurious Time Square Center development located on the bustling Sheik Zayed Road. The center is home to a wealth of lifestyle, fashion and sports retailers and is renowned as being home to the only sub-zero dining experience in Dubai.

The floor serves as the centrepiece for the community-oriented shopping mall with an oriental flower design achieved through the use of an aluminium framework. The epoxy terrazzo material was installed within the framework before being diamond-ground sealed and polished.



Creating Illusions

The eye naturally follows the floor up to the wall and then eventually to the ceiling. When these elements are all the same colours, or tones, you will see a continuous line.

By keeping the three surfaces in the same colour family the space will visually open up as they recede creating the illusion of more space. A room with one floor colour, another wall

colour, and yet another ceiling colour will appear disjointed and can make the space appear smaller than it is.

Lighting is also an important part of creating the illusion of an expansive, open and bright space. A small space with poor lighting can make users or occupants feel claustrophobic. A properly lit venue, ought to have three sources of light that bounce off the walls and give the room a visual breadth.



The Blue Planet, Denmark

The Blue Planet is the largest aquarium in Northern Europe and is fast becoming Denmark's architectural landmark. Designed to flow in the shape of a giant whirlpool with curved walls, innovatively integrated water features and shimmering floors.

Here, a unique polyurethane resin material has been installed throughout the spectator areas of the venue's impressive underwater installations in a creative technique designed to create a smooth floor that reflects the swirling lights of the water.

This effect is most dramatically created in the main entrance room, which is lit up with flickering sunspots that falls in waves onto the flat resin surface, adding to the visitor's impression of having been transported beneath the ocean.

In a space with a smaller floor area for table lamps or floor lamps, track lighting can help to light a room. Another good trick is to use mirrors, but these need not be restricted to the wall space.

A wide range of seamless resin flooring materials incorporate decorative aggregates, including recycled mirror glass chippings. These chippings reflect light from the floor space to create the illusion of a brighter, wider and deeper space – all without the need for any additional energy usage.

Lifecycle Costing

Lifecycle costing is a process that can assist commercial clients and venue owners to understand what a building material will cost over its entire lifetime while at the same ensuring that the specified material is not only fit for purpose but meets the long-term requirements of the facility.

Not only considering the face-value cost of any flooring material, lifecycle costs analysis will address life expectancy, care and maintenance programmes, repair work as well as end-of-life options.

A major benefit of resin flooring material is that end-of-life materials can be easily and quickly overlaid with a new floor covering – with no need to rip-out the existing material for disposal.

Much harder, more robust resin flooring materials offer an enhanced life expectancy, with some lasting equal to the lifetime of the building provided correct care and maintenance is adhered to.

Together, these factors ensure that resin flooring offers one of the lowest lifecycle costs of any hard floor covering resulting from its high durability, low maintenance requirements and minimal need for repair or replacement.

This guide has been produced to give an overview of floor design considerations when looking to inspire creativity and design psychology within commercial, entertainment or leisure destinations and venues as well as public spaces.

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