

How do you define carpet performance?

McGraw-Hill Construction Study Offers Insights into Carpet Expectations

Carpet is often selected for commercial environments due to its attractive appearance, style capabilities and the ability to create a warmer “feel” within a given facility. Additionally, there are practical considerations that make carpet a facility manager’s first choice, including stain resistance, cleanability, ability to hide dirt, slip resistance and better acoustics/noise reduction.

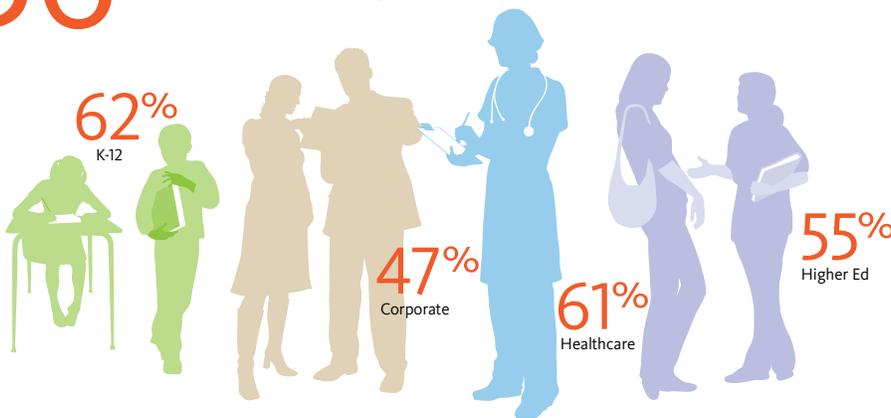
In a recent national survey sponsored by INVISTA, McGraw-Hill Construction reached out to leading facility management professionals responsible for flooring and maintenance decisions to find out what attributes they value in flooring. The respondents managed a range of facilities, including K-12 education, higher education, healthcare and corporate offices.

Respondents confirmed the practical reasons to select carpet over hard surface, such as aesthetics, noise control, comfort, and slip resistance. Beyond the rationale for choosing carpet over hard surface, facility managers also identified their most important considerations when selecting carpet. They expect (on average) more than 11 years of use, and list purchasing criteria such as stain resistance, soil resistance and ease of maintenance as the most important attributes to look for when specifying carpet. The bottom line – **it’s all about performance**. Interestingly enough, it was discovered that customers have higher expectations for carpet performance above and beyond what they may be experiencing today.

With more than half of the respondents rating themselves less than “satisfied” with their carpet, the study offers important information that can benefit those currently purchasing or specifying commercial carpet.

Expectations versus Reality (Figure 1)

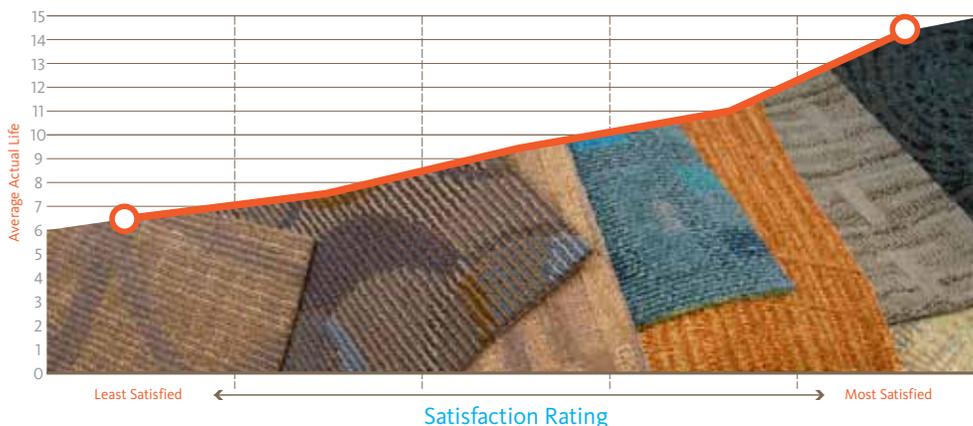
56% of end-users expect more from their carpet.
56% of end-users expect their carpet to last longer than it actually does.
Corporate 47%; Higher Ed 55%; Healthcare 61%; and K-12 62%.



Carpet performance and satisfaction

A notable finding is that performance expectations did not match actual results. In fact, more than half of all end-users expect their carpet to last longer than it actually does. For those end-users whose carpet doesn’t last as long as they expect, the carpet lasts 4 years less, on average. More than 60% of healthcare and K-12 end-users expect their carpet to last longer than it actually does (see Figure 1). With survey participants’ expected length of carpet life ranging from three years to 30 years, it is critical for purchasers to look at performance characteristics to ensure that the desired lifespan is achieved.

Long Life Correlates with Satisfaction (Figure 2)

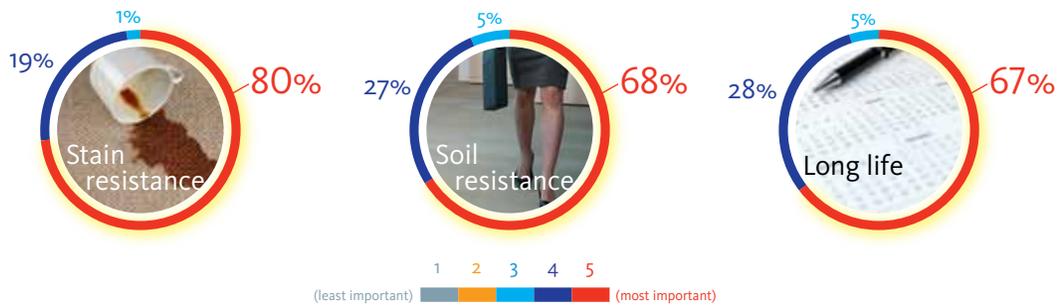


The results are clear: specifying carpet with proven high performance results in greater satisfaction and positive sentiment for years to come.

The primary reasons that carpet is replaced are due to wear and tear, dirtiness and difficult to clean, and staining. It basically uglies out. Since the carpet is replaced when it is no longer attractive, it is critical to consider the performance criteria that can prevent premature loss of appearance when making a selection to ensure long-term satisfaction.

The study shows a direct correlation between carpet life and satisfaction, supporting the assumption that the longer the actual life of the carpet, the greater the satisfaction level. Respondents averaging six to nine years of carpet life rated their satisfaction as a “1”, “2,” or “3”

Carpet Selection Factors (Figure 3)



(with “1” being not at all satisfied), while respondents averaging more than 10 years of carpet longevity gave a higher overall satisfaction rating of “4” or “5.”

Discern the difference

With such discrepancy between the survey respondents’ carpet experiences, the importance of properly specifying and purchasing high performance carpets is evident.

Carpet selection factors

Survey result findings highlighted that once the decision to purchase carpet is made, the most important considerations are stain resistance (80%), soil resistance (68%), and long life (67%) (see Figure 3). Of note is the fact that each of these qualities has a direct impact on the bottom line and the overall return on investment. By ranking all of the cost-containment qualities first, the survey results clearly show the importance of controlling long-term costs to carpet buyers.

Striving to reduce effects on the bottom line and the environment

INVISTA, a leading commercial polymer and fiber manufacturer, firmly believes that only the most stringently tested carpets will yield the greatest satisfaction over time.

INVISTA utilizes an integrated approach to product performance testing through the use of both industry standardized tests, as well as testing in a “real world” commercial facility with soiling and heavy traffic. For certain performance testing, real-world testing is necessary using products of similar color, texture and patterning to understand how a carpet will perform under the daily punishment often found in commercial installations. *This cannot be simulated in a controlled lab environment.*

In 2009, INVISTA commissioned a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) conducted by Boustead Consulting & Associates Ltd., a renowned global leader and third-party expert in environmental life cycle evaluations, to help its customers better understand the environmental benefits of Antron® brand products. The LCA results reflect the eco-profiles of INVISTA’s manufacturing processes for Antron® carpet fibers. Combining the results of the

LCA with data from real-world performance testing conducted by INVISTA’s technical team demonstrated and certified through Scientific Certification Systems that carpets of Antron® nylon last up to 75% longer than the majority of competitive nylon carpets and that carpets of Antron® fiber can have up to 38% lower energy consumption and 42% lower greenhouse gas emissions (expressed as CO₂ equivalents) than the majority of competitive carpets*.

Performance matters

The INVISTA technical team conducted extensive benchmarking studies of its Antron® nylon, and findings showed:

- **Enhanced Texture Retention for Wear and Tear Resistance** – When a carpet retains its appearance longer, it will stay newer looking and its usable life will be extended. Carpets of Antron® nylon have up to 2.5 times better texture retention than a majority of competitive nylon carpets.*
- **Durable Soil Resistance for Ease of Maintenance** – Fiber shape is a key component in soiling performance, and hollow filament fiber shapes – exclusive to Antron® nylon – provide unsurpassed soil hiding and soil release. Carpets of Antron® nylon have up to 65% better soil resistance than a majority of leading competitive nylon.*
- **Stain Resistance** – Carpets of Antron Lumena® nylon have up to 10 times better stain resistance than carpets of the leading competitive solution dyed nylon.*

Conclusion

All carpets are not equal. A product’s construction and performance attributes are key to longer term performance. It is essential for facility managers and others responsible for specifying and purchasing carpets to do so armed with current facts and data. Both the McGraw-Hill survey and INVISTA performance testing results provide key insights into the criteria for selecting high performance carpet that will result in the greatest level of satisfaction, return on investment, and reduce environmental effects over time.

For more information to assist in the specification process, see the Tool Box section on antron.net. 🌟

About the Survey

INVISTA retained McGraw-Hill Construction to conduct an anonymous nationwide survey of facility managers to examine the key aspects they consider when specifying and purchasing flooring. The primary target audience for the survey was end-users and facility managers with the following profile:

– Specialized in one of four end-use segments including higher education, K-12 education, healthcare and corporate/office

– Made decisions on which form of carpet or other flooring material is purchased by their organizations

– Involved in maintenance decisions about carpet and flooring materials

Geographic diversity with 38 states represented:

– 64 percent of respondents have more than 10 years of experience

– 20 percent have five-10 years of experience

– 15 percent have one-five years of experience

Information is current at the time of publication and INVISTA does not undertake any duty to update the information. Specifications are subject to change without notice.

The optimal performance of any INVISTA product is dependent upon how it is integrated into end-use form. Please contact INVISTA for application assistance.

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* Results based on testing of carpets of comparable construction, style and color.