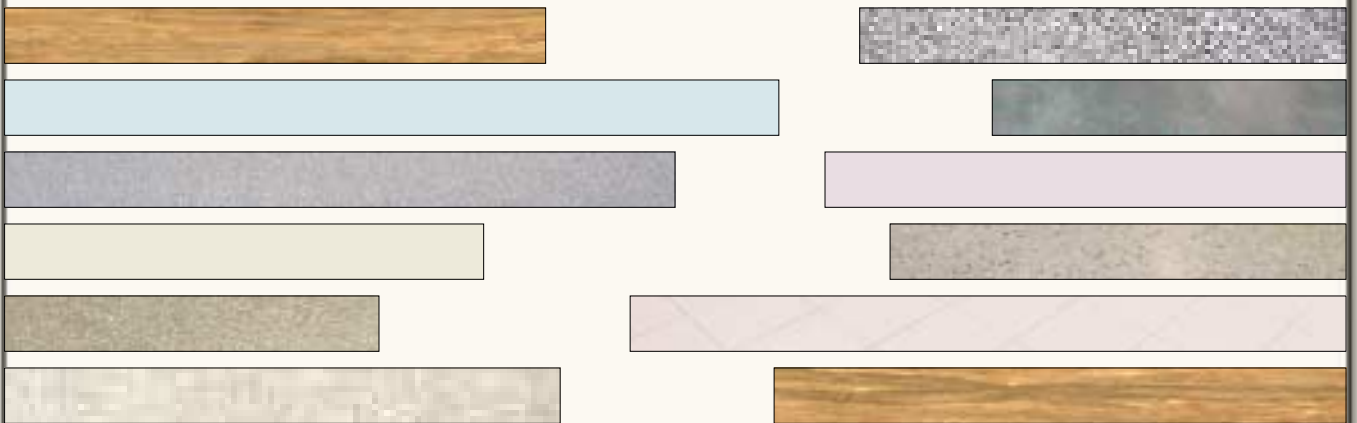


display & design ideas



Flooring



2004
industry survey

A benchmark study made possible by a research grant from:



Flooring feedback

By Sree Roy, Associate Editor

DDI's industry survey reveals usage, trends and budgets

Methodology

DDI has compiled this Flooring Industry Survey to measure retailers' and retail design firms' use and preferences in regard to flooring in the store environment. The survey includes information about annual flooring budgets, predictions about the flooring types that will see increased usage in the next year and trends that are emerging in the industry. The survey was conducted by Equation Research (www.equationresearch.com) for DDI with survey forms reaching nearly 5,000 DDI readers and resulting in an 8 percent response rate. The margin of error for this survey is plus or minus 5.2 percent.

Budgets and how to spend them

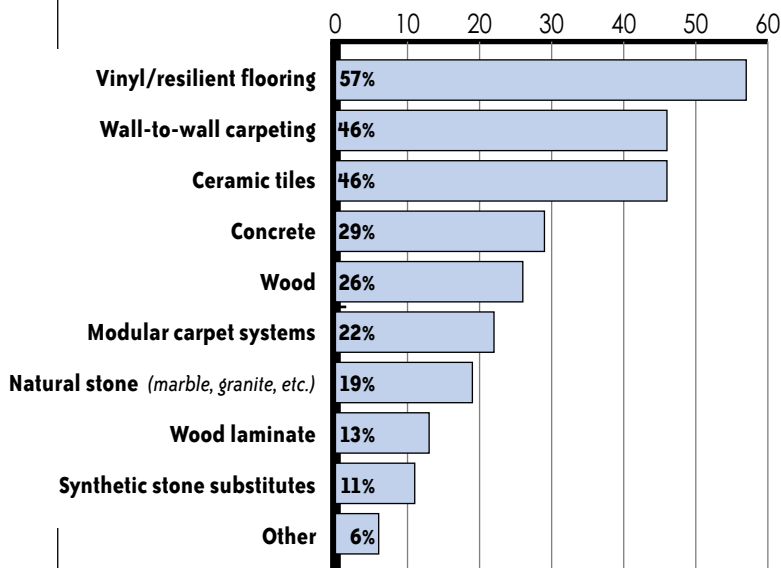
DDI asked our readers about their annual flooring budgets. Most respondents (65 percent) of DDI's flooring survey said their companies have annual flooring budgets of under \$1 million, with 43 percent indicating the annual budget is under \$500,000 and 22 percent indicating it is between \$500,001 and \$1 million. Only 9 percent responded that their companies have annual flooring budgets of more than \$5 million.

When it comes to spending these allocated dollars, several factors come into play. When DDI asked readers what the top factors were in influencing their buying decisions

when specifying or selecting flooring, the top decision-making factor reported was cost (82 percent). Other frequently cited factors were maintenance (73 percent), aesthetics (69 percent) and life expectancy (58 percent).

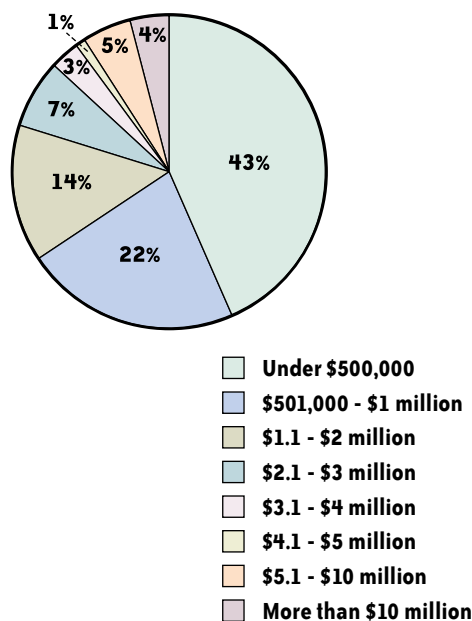
When deciding where to purchase flooring, almost half (46 percent) of respondents said they prefer to buy flooring direct from a manufacturer in the United States. The second most preferred source is from a local jobber or wholesale resource (27 percent). Buying from the installer came in third (18 percent), with the remainder of respondents saying they prefer to buy direct import from

Flooring materials used most in store design projects



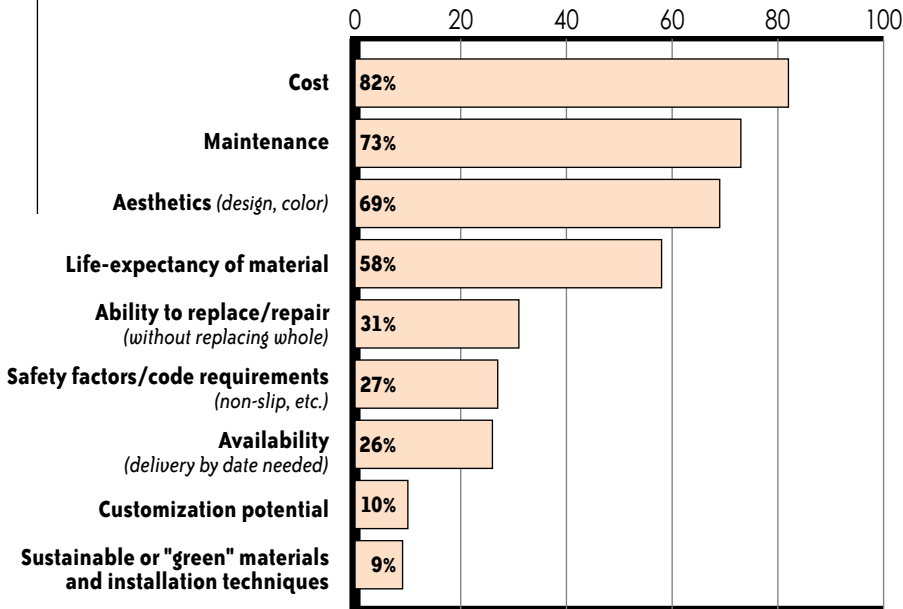
According to the survey, the top flooring material used in store design projects is vinyl/resilient flooring (57%). Tied for second are wall-to-wall carpeting (46%) and ceramic tiles (46%).

Annual Flooring Budget



DDI's flooring survey shows that 43% of respondents have an annual flooring budget of less than \$500,000. The survey reveals 20% of respondents have budgets of more than \$2 million.

Factors influencing buying decision when specifying/selecting flooring



Cost (82%) is the number one factor influencing the buying decision when specifying or selecting flooring, according to DDI's flooring survey. Other reasons in the top four are maintenance (73%), aesthetics (69%) and life-expectancy (58%).

15 top flooring trends

Survey respondents name the top trends they see in flooring's future

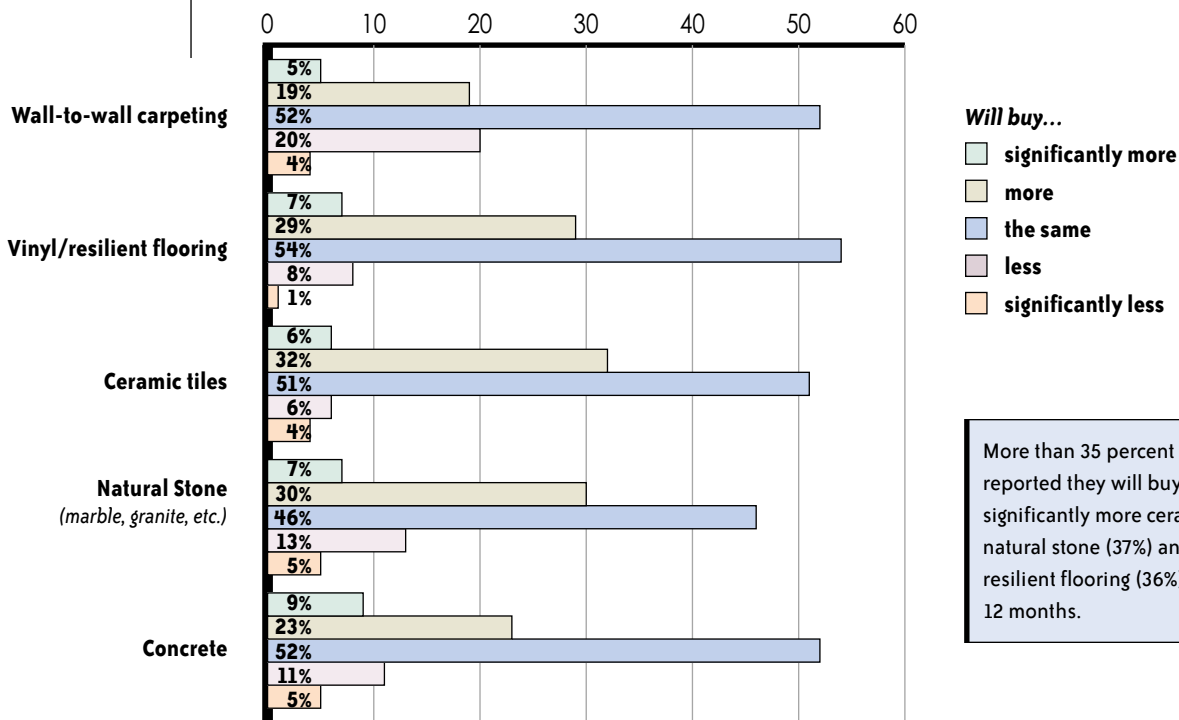
Green products, ranked No.1, will be on the minds of designers in the future. (ranked in order)

- 1 Green and sustainable products
- 2 Stone and synthetic stone
- 3 Recycled materials, materials that can be recycled
- 4 Concrete, especially in colors and textures
- 5 Colors and patterns
- 6 Natural materials: wood, stone, cork, bamboo* and natural fibers
- 7 Bamboo
- 8 Ceramic tile
- 9 Modular carpet systems
- 10 More durable materials
- 11 Vinyl, especially in faux finishes and patterns
- 12 Wood laminate
- 13 Cork
- 14 Engineered wood
- 15 Mixed materials

*NOTE: Some materials that are included in categories may have also received enough separate responses to be listed individually.

Planned use of flooring types in the next 12 months

Results for five common flooring types



Will buy...

- significantly more
- more
- the same
- less
- significantly less

More than 35 percent of respondents reported they will buy more or significantly more ceramic tiles (38%), natural stone (37%) and vinyl/resilient flooring (36%) in the next 12 months.

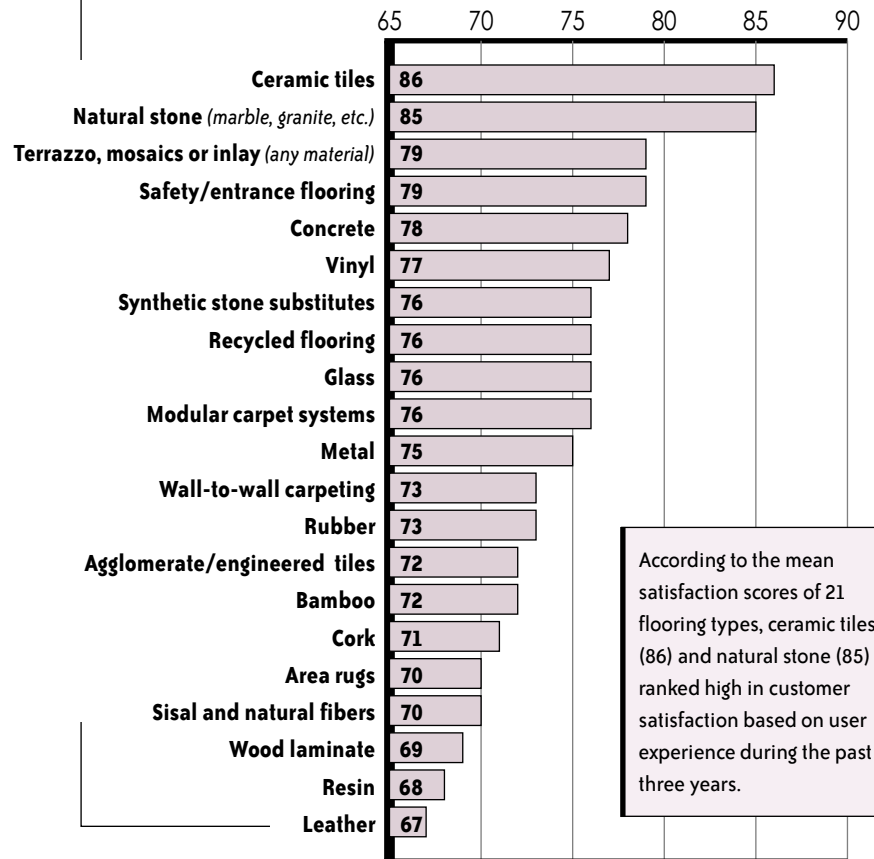
a manufacturer abroad (3 percent) or from another source (5 percent).

Flooring: now and in the future

Vinyl/resilient flooring (57 percent) is the flooring material used most in store design projects, according to the survey. Wall-to-wall carpeting and ceramic tiles are tied for second place (46 percent each), and concrete is the third most used material (29 percent). Looking to the future, retailers and retail design firms also indicated what materials they plan to buy more of, buy less of and buy the same amount of in the next 12 months. DDI has compiled results for five of the most common flooring materials (a complete listing is available at www.ddimagazine.com). Of these common flooring types, a significant percentage reported they will buy more ceramic tiles (38 percent), natural stone (37 percent), vinyl/resilient flooring (36 percent), concrete (32 percent) and wall-to-wall carpeting (24 percent).

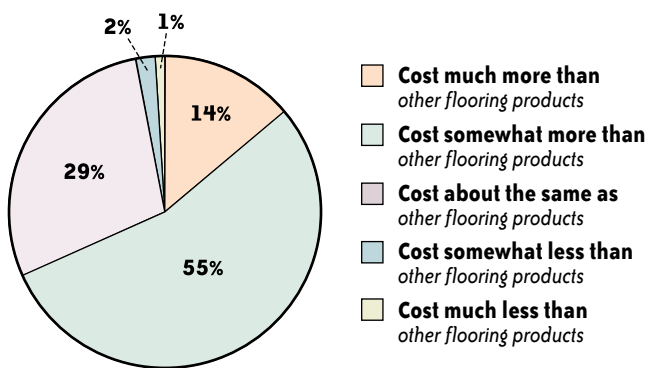
Satisfaction with a material, based on usage in the past three years, seems directly related to which materials they will buy more of in the near future. Ceramic tiles

Satisfaction with flooring types Mean score graphs for all flooring types



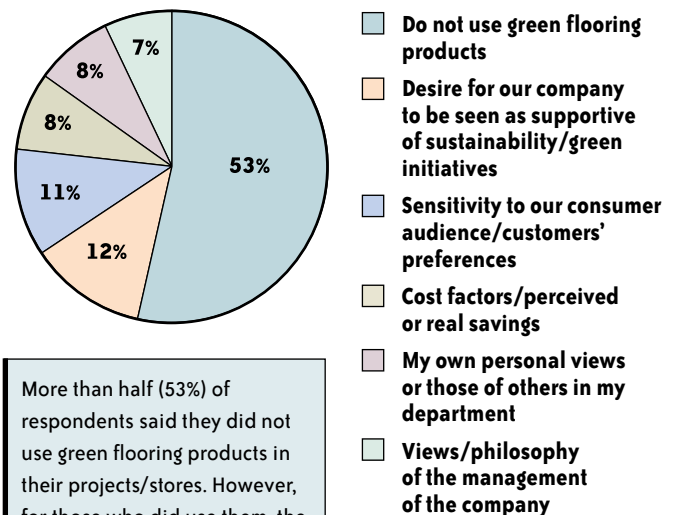
According to the mean satisfaction scores of 21 flooring types, ceramic tiles (86) and natural stone (85) ranked high in customer satisfaction based on user experience during the past three years.

Cost perceptions of green/ environmentally friendly flooring products



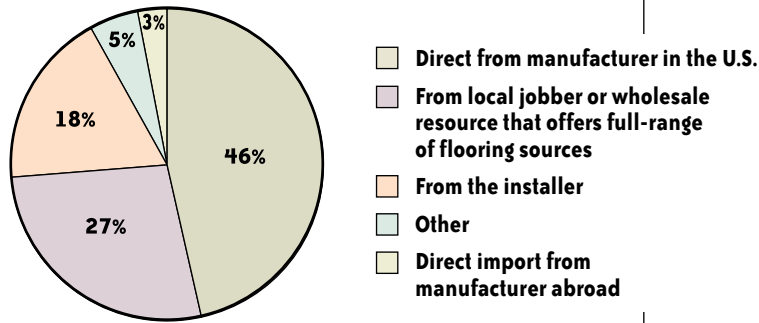
More than half (55%) of respondents think that green flooring products cost somewhat more than other flooring products.

Most powerful factor in decision to use green flooring products



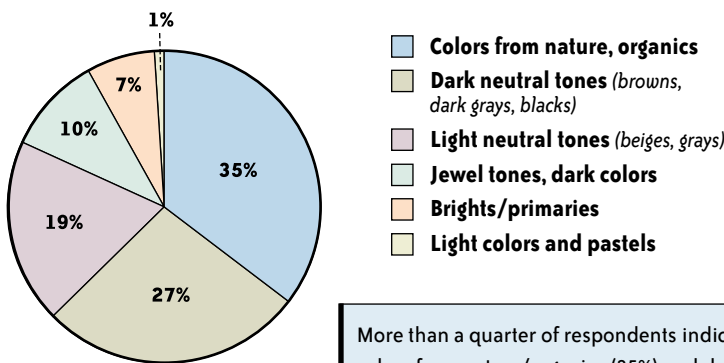
More than half (53%) of respondents said they did not use green flooring products in their projects/stores. However, for those who did use them, the reason most cited was a desire for a company to be seen as supportive of sustainability/green initiatives (12%).

Preferred source for flooring



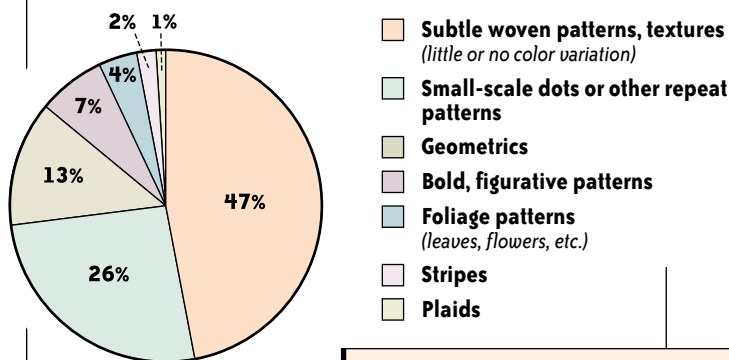
According to DDI's flooring survey, the highest portion (46%) of respondents prefer to purchase flooring direct from a manufacturer in the U.S. Second highest (27%) were respondents who prefer to buy flooring from a local jobber or wholesale resource with a full-range of flooring choices.

Top color preferences for carpeted flooring



More than a quarter of respondents indicated that colors from nature/organics (35%) and dark neutral tones (27%) were their top color preference for carpeted flooring.

Top pattern preferences for carpeted flooring




Almost half of respondents (47%) said that subtle woven patterns and textures, with little or no color variation, was their top choice of pattern for carpeted flooring.

were given the highest mean satisfaction score—86—on a 20- to 100-point scale. Natural stone was given the second highest satisfaction score at 85. Terrazzo, mosaics or inlay (any material) and safety/entrance flooring were both given a score of 79, and concrete was given a score of 78.

Emerging trends

DDI asked our readers the open-ended question: What do you think will be the top trend in flooring for the next three years? The most frequently mentioned response was green and sustainable products. One respondent says, "For us, the top trend will be to increase focus on sustainable resources and reuse of vintage flooring. We have no interest in petroleum-based materials or finishes."

This movement towards green flooring implies a marked difference from what retailers and retail design firms focused on in the past, as evidenced by the 53 percent of flooring survey respondents who said they currently do not use green flooring products in their designs. This hesitation to use green products may be caused in part by cost perceptions of the products, as DDI's survey found that 69 percent of respondents think that green flooring products cost more than other flooring products. Twenty-nine percent said they think green flooring products cost about the same as other flooring products. Only 3 percent said they think green flooring products cost less than other flooring products.

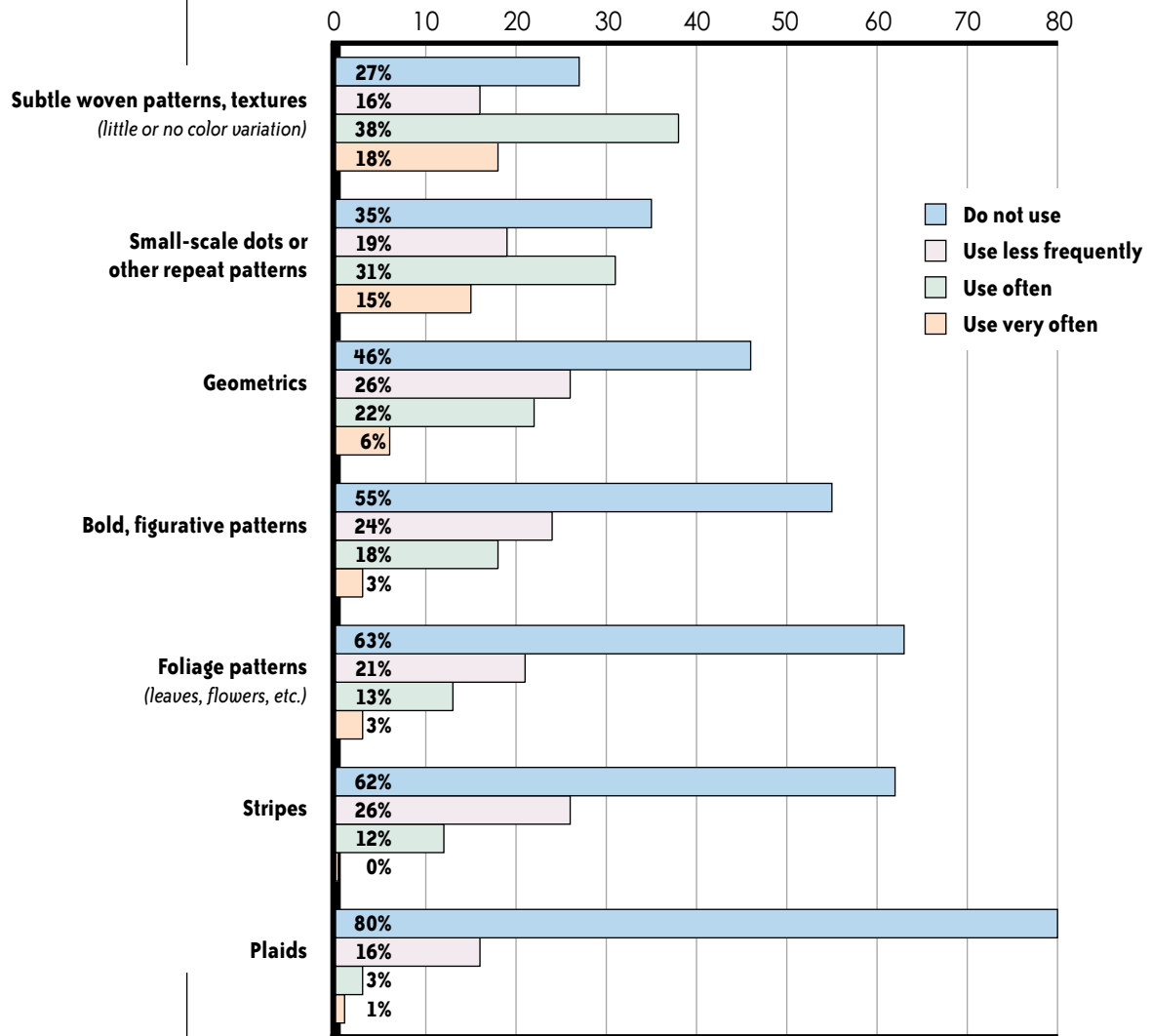
This survey suggests the flooring industry is dynamic, moving toward new trends such as green flooring but also using more of past favorites such as ceramic tile. Cost is, naturally, an important factor when deciding what to buy. But cost is not the only factor, as retailers and retail design firms continue their quest to purchase the best flooring within their annual budgets. As one respondent said, the flooring trend he will be looking for in the next three years is "high image, high durability, readily available, easily customized, lower maintenance, reasonable cost and easy installation" for usage in his design projects. 

An additional five graphs, available exclusively online, are on p. 7-9.

Additional graphs

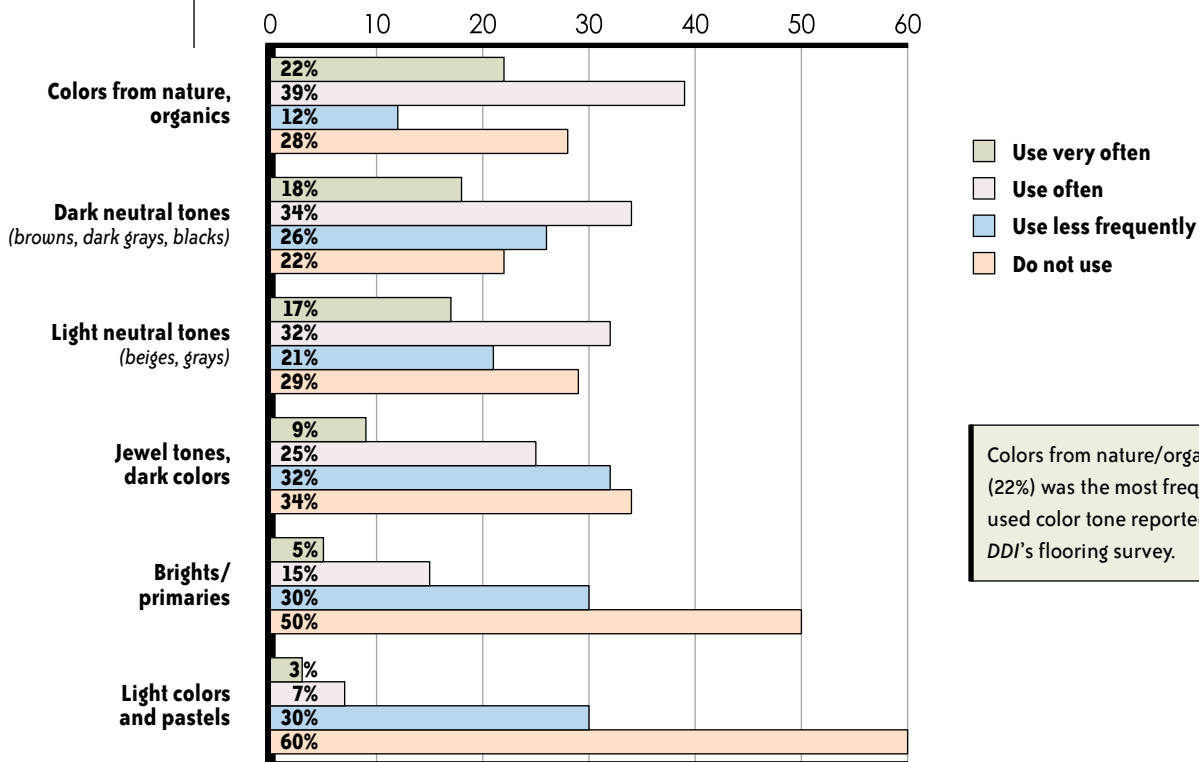
The following five graphs are available exclusively online

Frequency of use for specific patterns in carpeted flooring



More than half (56%) of respondents said they used subtle woven patterns and textures, with little or no color variation, often or very often in carpeted flooring.

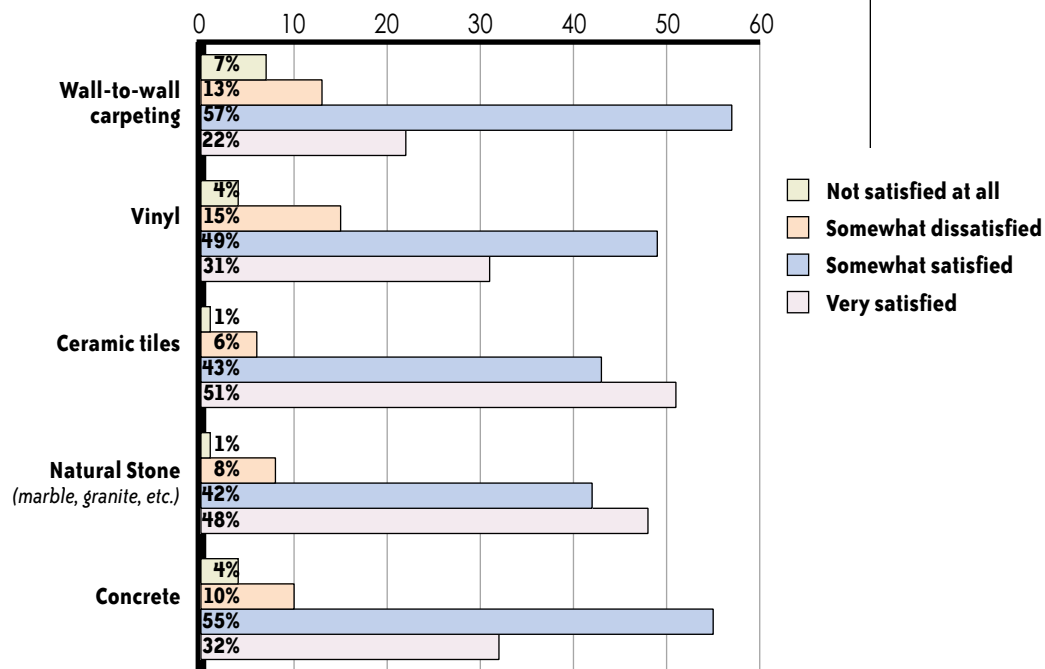
Frequency of use for specific color tones in carpeted flooring



Colors from nature/organics (22%) was the most frequently used color tone reported in DDI's flooring survey.

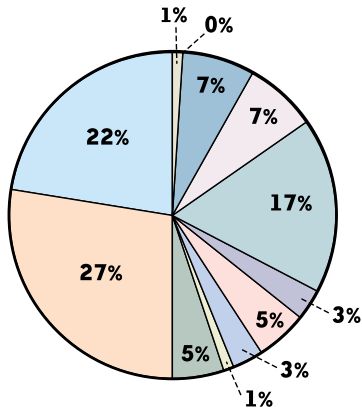
Satisfaction with flooring types

Rankings for five common flooring types



More than 45% of survey respondents said they were "very satisfied" with ceramic tiles (51%) and natural stone (48%) based on their experience during the last three years.

Frequency of carpet replacement in stores

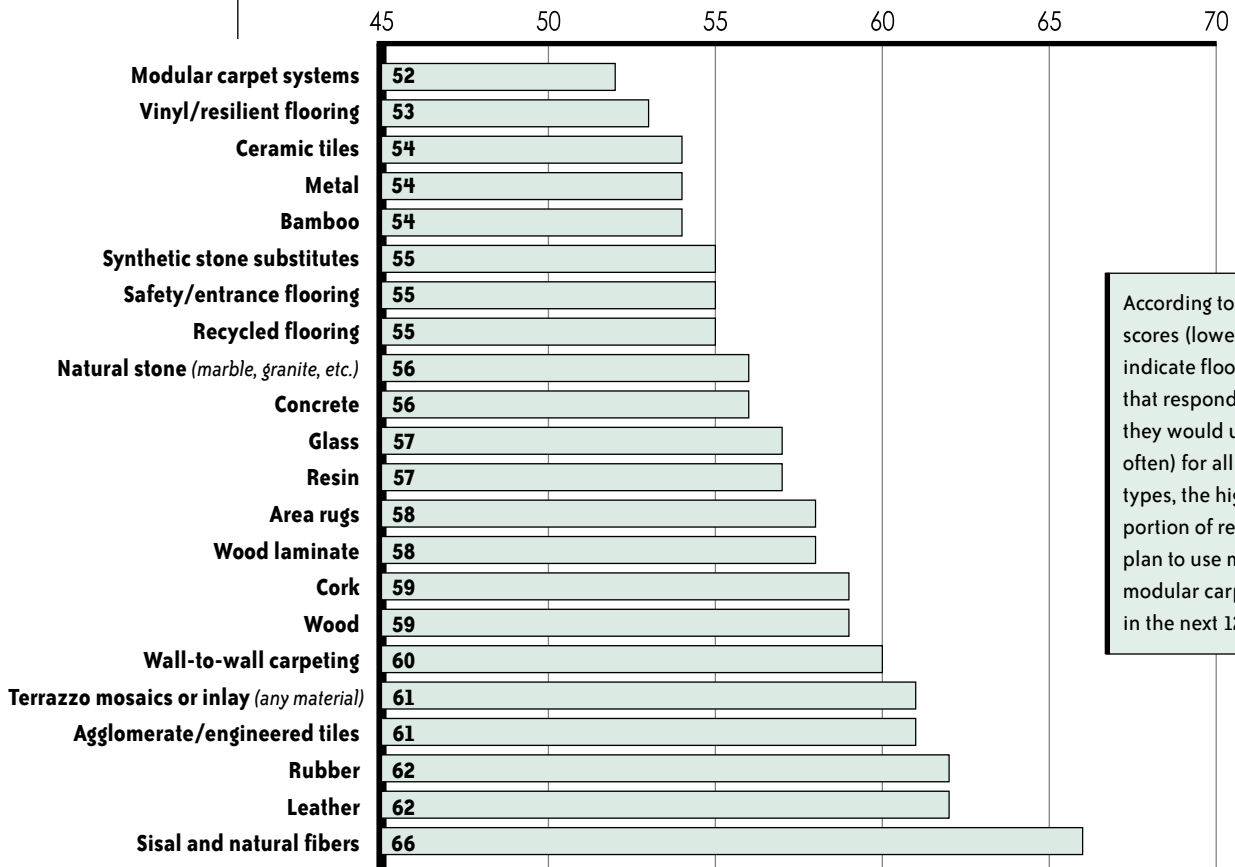


- Annually
- Every two years
- Every three years
- Every four years
- Every five years
- Every six years
- Every seven years
- Every eight years
- Every nine years
- Every ten years
- We have no replacement schedule/
we replace as needed by visual inspection
- Don't know/does not apply

More than a quarter of survey respondents (27%) reported that they do not have a carpet replacement schedule in their stores or that they replace as needed by visual inspection. For those respondents who do have a fixed replacement schedule, replacement every five years (17%) is the most popular, according to the survey. No respondents indicated a replacement schedule of more than every 10 years.

Planned use of flooring types in the next 12 months

Mean score graphs for all flooring types



According to the mean scores (lower scores indicate flooring types that respondents said they would use more often) for all flooring types, the highest portion of respondents plan to use more modular carpet systems in the next 12 months.