

*Press release from Jan de Beer, cell 082 456 3677:*

# Flooring Care And Maintenance Vital Part Of Facilities Management

Too many facilities managers and their clients are unaware of – or apathetic to – the importance of a proper maintenance programme for carpets, cautions leading South African carpet supplier, Kevin Bates Albert Carpets (KBAC).

KBAC – which is celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year – says there is alarming ignorance regarding aspects such as appointing competent installers, choosing the right type of carpet for specific areas and applications, selecting experienced and professional cleaning specialists, and the correct scheduling of carpet installation in building contracts.

Three key members of the KBAC sales team, Ian Duncan and Werner Gouws (Senior Contracts Managers), and Dave Keefer (Business Development Manager), voiced their concern about the negative effects of neglect in carpet maintenance:

Duncan says: “With proper cleaning and maintenance, carpets can last 10 years or longer. Without it, you can generally expect no more than about five years’ durability. Neglecting carpet cleaning can also adversely affect working conditions and the health of employees. By regularly extracting pollutants from carpets through proper maintenance, the quality of the indoor environment is improved and staff exposure to fungi, mites, and bacteria vastly reduced,” he explains.

KBAC is the local distributor for some of world’s leading carpet producers which are obsessively involved in environmental-protection policies and producing carpets protecting the health of users in various innovative fashions.

When it comes to persuading clients and facility management to maintain carpets, there is a limit to what a supplier can do. “We provide advice on the selection of a reputable maintenance contractor, but there is a growing tendency to cut costs by employing the cheapest cleaning company. Then, if the carpet wears badly, the carpet’s quality is blamed,” Duncan observes.

Competent installation is another important factor in prolonging carpet life. About 80% of the carpets supplied by KBAC are laid by the company’s own installers who are provided with experiential training mentorship for at least two years. The company is one of the pioneers of promoting training in the industry. “Laying carpet tiles is generally within the scope of most installers but installing carpet in roll form calls for optimum joins, edging and pattern matching,” says KBAC Business Development Manager, Dave Keefer.

Most soil is transferred on to carpets by foot traffic. KBAC therefore advocates that effective, specialist dirt barrier matting be installed at external entrances, goods lifts, loading docks and adjoining hard areas. “The special tough barrier matting should be maintained and serviced daily. At shopping malls with heavy foot traffic, the matting might even have to be cleaned several times daily,” adds Keefer.

KBAC’s preferred cleaning specialists, Getset Cleaning, is headed by P-J Fernandes, who is extremely concerned about the declining standards of professionalism in the commercial carpet cleaning business. “Most players in the carpet maintenance industry now are fly-by-night operators with vacuum cleaners on bakkies, who cut costs to the bone to get business – and then provide services

that actually damages carpeting by just concealing, instead of removing, the dust and chemicals trapped in the carpets,” Fernandes states.

Another major challenge to carpet durability, says KBAC’s Werner Gouws, is the almost complete disregard for correct scheduling of carpet installation in building programmes.

“It has become the norm for carpet fitting to take place in the midst of dry wall installation, painting, wall-papering, and electrical installations, to name but a few of the finishing trades. Building contractors, keen to stay on schedule to avoid penalties, display carpeted offices as a token of completion – despite the fact that other internal installations may be incomplete. The dust generated by sub-contractors’ heavy foot traffic on new carpets and the cutting of dry walling, for example, can ruin new carpets.

“Carpet installation should be the final phase of a building project but in eight years in this business, I can recall only two instances when the carpet installation actually took place after a building project had been signed off,” he laments.

Ends

**Caption ‘carpet care worley parsons’:**

***Carpet maintenance programmes should take into account heavy traffic areas such as the one pictured above at the new WorleyParsons office block in Melrose Arch for which KBAC provided the carpeting. (Picture: James Rautenbach).***

***ends***

**Caption ‘kbac carpet fitter’:**

***KBAC’s carpet installer, Rich Sebothe, is one of a team of fully trained operators the company employs. About 95% of the carpets supplied by KBAC are laid by the company’s own installers who are provided with experiential training mentorship for at least two years. (Picture: Ian Duncan).***

***Ends***

*Issued for KBAC Flooring Group / Further info: Neil Duncan on 011 608 4270 or Michelle Richards on 021 464 4320 / [www.kbacflooring.co.za](http://www.kbacflooring.co.za)*

