Stepping It Up

Educating Staff Combined with Using BonaKemi Products and Systems Prove Successful

“Drop of the dime” is one motto that Eric Herman of State of the Art (SOTA) Floors in Manhattan, NY, runs his business by to stand out in the competitive wood floor industry. Herman reacts quickly, taking extra steps to go above and beyond, exceeding his customer’s expectations. His target clientele of general contractors, architects, and homeowners recognize his efforts, ensuring repeat business. Building and nourishing his relationships through attentive customer service, along with precise training of crews using the highest quality systems and finishes keep SOTA Floors prominent in the tri-state area. Niketown, the NY Stock Exchange and the critically-acclaimed restaurant, Spice Market in New York, which received an honorable mention award at the 2004 NWFA Floor of the Year competition, are a few of the works of art done by Herman and his crew.

In 2000, Herman took over his father’s flooring business and established a crew of 35 installers and refinishers dedicated to perfecting hardwood floors. Herman believes in educating not only his staff but his customers on the importance of using quality products and systems that give unsurpassed results that last a lifetime. GREENGUARD certified by an independent, non-profit organization for healthy indoor air quality, Bona Atomic® Dust Containment Systems (DCS) and waterborne finishing systems have become staple products for use on every SOTA Floors jobsite.

Bona's portable Atomic® 110 is in high demand among general contractors and homeowners alike. Not only does it provide a safer, healthier work environment for Herman and his crew, but it also benefits the homeowner’s time, health and space. “Our goal when doing a job is to respect the homeowner. Bona’s Atomic systems have allowed us to achieve that through executing each job meticulously and skillfully in a timely matter, minimizing the inconvenience for the homeowner as

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The upscale Nautica Sportswear showroom, beautifully finished with Bona Traffic by SOTA Floors, New York, NY.
much as possible.” In addition, the portability of the Atomic 110 has proved to be a valuable necessity in a city like Manhattan, where the use of a trailer-mounted system is impossible when working on floors in a high-rise building.

Bona Traffic®, along with Bona’s other waterborne finishes, have also placed Herman and his crew ahead of the game. Herman attributes his success to thinking into the future.

“Educating my customers on using the most durable finishes that are certifiably safe for indoor air quality and beneficial for the environment creates customer satisfaction, which leads to repeat business. It becomes a win-win situation for everyone when you can feel confident about what you recommend for your customer’s floors. I wouldn’t trust my reputation with anything other than Bona,” states Herman. This was apparent when SOTA initially shared a job refinishing 70 New York University apartments and was able to take the job in entirety due to the outstanding results of Bona’s finishing systems in comparison to the competitor’s products.

By using Bona’s DCS system, along with low-VOC waterborne finishes, Herman continuously wins bids. Specializing in installations and refinishing, SOTA Floors understands and implements the systems that get the job done right the first time, saving time, money and energy.
Tech Tips

Bona Prep - 5 easy steps to recoating

Deep Cleaning

1. After thoroughly cleaning the floor, spray and buff (standard speed ~ 175 rpms) with Bona Prep and a single Bona Conditioning Pad.
   - Use 1” green/black pads if the conditioning pad is loading up.
   - Apply Bona Prep with a clean, wrung out cotton mop or garden-type sprayer on larger jobs.

2. Tack the section with a Bona Prep-dampened Bona MicroPlus Mop to remove any dirty residue before it dries.

Abrasion

3. When dry, abrade the entire floor with two stacked Bona Conditioning Pads.
   - If excess scratching and wear exist, screen first with 150-180 grit screen to blend worn areas. Follow screening with the Conditioning Pad.
   - Pad sides and detail areas by hand.
   - You may need to use an even more conforming system when working on hand-scraped or distressed flooring. Use either 3 Conditioning Pads or a 1” white or green pad driving a Conditioning Pad.


Coating

5. When dry (within two hours of abrasion but the sooner the better), apply 1-2 coats of Bona Strong™ or Bona Traffic® waterborne finish. If the floor can’t be coated within 2 hours, stop between steps 2 & 3, then proceed with step 3 (abrasion) within 24 hours.

Quick Tips for Recoating

- Test, Test, Test, for wax and adhesion.
- Avoid finish sandwiches - i.e. oil-water-oil or water-oil-water
- Educate the homeowner and understand their expectations before-hand.

Many flooring contractors will include a disclaimer in their contracts, similar to the one at right, so that the possibility of adhesion issues and the need for a full sand and finish are disclosed beforehand and understood by the customer.

Even with techniques to minimize adhesion issues, professional hardwood floor contractors do not have the hindsight we would all love to have: to know all of the maintenance products that have ever come in contact with the floor in question. Many times, the homeowner is not the only person who has lived in that home, thus does not know the long-term maintenance of the floor either. For both the owner of the floor and the flooring contractor, recoating is a cooperative gamble; but one which costs less, is less intrusive, prolongs the life of the wood floor, and takes much less time than a full sand and finish. Therefore, this still makes recoating a desirable option.

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XYZ Hardwood Floors

...“XYZ Hardwood Floors will do everything possible to ensure success with this recoating procedure, including the use of the full Bona PREP recoating system. However, contamination by maintenance products previously used on the floor and surrounding furniture may cause adhesion problems or failure. If this happens, the floor will need to be sanded and refinished. 

__________ (customer initials here)."

“As a service to our valuable customers, if a complete sand and refinish becomes necessary due to adhesion failure, we will subtract 50% of the price of the abrade and recoat from the price of a complete sand and refinish to achieve success on the job.”

Sample of a recoating disclaimer section of a contract.
Why Take an Unnecessary Risk?

Bona Prep is the smart & efficient way to prepare hardwood floors for recoating

Recoats are the most profitable jobs in the hardwood flooring industry, but also the riskiest part of the business. There can never be a 100% guarantee of proper adhesion on the recoat of a hardwood floor, even when utilizing Bona's Prep System. Adhesion issues that occur on these types of jobs typically come from contaminants on the floor, either across the entire floor or localized to certain areas like board seams or around pieces of furniture.

Many sources of contamination exist and include some of the following: furniture polish overspray, fabric softener, window cleaners, etc. There are numerous floor care products on the market today that claim they are hardwood floor cleaners. The real test of these cleaners comes over a longer period of time and whether or not they contaminate the floor due to residues they may leave behind, usually accumulating in the soft grain and board seams. In these situations, the finish is not failing, but is unable to achieve full adhesion due to these surface contaminants.

Minimize Failure

Pre-testing and the use of the Bona Prep System are two ways to minimize the possible failure of recoats. Pre-testing includes testing for waxy residues, as well as testing several areas for adhesion.

To test for wax, use high grade mineral spirits and a clean, white terry cloth towel to clean a spot on the floor. If a yellowish residue appears on the towel, there may be some sort of wax/polish on the floor which can affect the adhesion of future recoats when applying a urethane finish.

To test the floor for adhesion, pick several inconspicuous areas, about 1' x 1', that receive normal maintenance (i.e. not under a couch). Tape off the test area and go through the Bona Prep system by hand. Apply a coat of finish to the area and let dry for 24 hours, then take a quarter and scratch the area being tested. If the finish flakes or peels, then you have poor adhesion.

Remember, successful tests do NOT guarantee a successful recoat on the entire floor.

Bona Prep is a fast and simple way to deep clean and condition an existing floor to optimize adhesion of a new coat of finish. There is no mixing involved and no special training necessary to use Bona Prep. The Bona Prep System can be used to apply a new coat of finish over the following:

- Waterborne and oil-modified urethanes.
- Moisture-cured and acid-cured urethanes.
- Pre-finished flooring, including aluminum-oxide and ceramic.