

Whittemore and Ruland Join Floor Covering Institute As it Begins Second Year

St. Louis Mo, - April 6, 2009 --- **Christine Whittemore**, US flooring industry veteran, and **Carl Ruland**, European flooring expert, have become the newest members of the Floor Covering Institute announced founder Jim Gould. The Institute is dedicated to providing global consulting services to the floor covering industry.

Christine Whittemore is well-known to the industry as an expert on retail marketing, consumer trends and communications. She has a conviction to simplify marketing for retailers and demystify floor covering for the consumer. “Christine adds a fresh, energetic and clarifying element to everything she does,” says Institute President Gould. “Her talent and creativity are a huge boon to both the institute and our clients and we are looking forward to her contribution.”



Carl Ruland is a business consultant based in Germany with ties to both U.S. and European flooring manufacturing. He will assist the Institute’s American clients and referrals with European market research, product development, certifications, pricing strategies, and identifying target markets. “The added expertise of Carl Ruland in Europe gives us a greater depth of understanding and quick access to information and answers particularly with European markets. We have collaborated with Carl in the past and his global knowledge of our industry was very helpful.” Gould continued, “Likewise, we will provide expertise on the American market to his contacts in Europe and Asia”.

Whittemore and Ruland join **Gould, Chris Ramey, David Wootton, and Lew Migliore** as the institute begins its second year during what is possibly the industry's most difficult period. "The pressure of the times," says Gould, "has created a greater need to expand into new markets and strategically analyze how companies are doing business. The Institute provides a single access point to a broad range of expertise. This is the simplest and fastest way for our clients to address their needs."

Christine Whittemore

Christine Whittemore, was most recently Director of In-Store Innovation for Solutia's Wear Dated carpet fiber, **where she** was the creative force behind the transformation of the company's static website to a social, content-rich site that is simple to administer **and easy to navigate**. Simplifying and clarifying a company's message and method is the goal of her new consulting firm, **Simple Marketing Now LLC**, where she is officially known as the Simplifier-in-Chief. She focuses on practical, integrated marketing, public relations and communications.

Industry members are familiar with Christine's lectures on the retail experience, marketing to women and improving the shopping experience. She launched *The Carpetology Blog*, about all things carpet (fashion, style, care, buying advice and news). Whittemore is also a columnist for *Floor Covering Weekly*, where she writes about the customer retail experience, and is creator of the much acclaimed *Flooring The Consumer* blog about the consumer's retail experience, marketing to women and social media marketing.

Carl Ruland

Carl Ruland has been active in the U.S. and European flooring industry holding executive positions with Akzenta Paneele & GmbH Classen Gruppe and Domo Cushion Vinyl, which was recently sold to IVC Group. Ruland was responsible for introducing Classen to the American market and initiating a container direct business with CCA Global Partner's GCO and Global Direct divisions. He also established OEM programs between Mannington and other manufacturers. At Domo, Ruland was responsible for a \$20 million retooling project, installing state of the art machinery to produce up to 30 million square meters of glass backed sheet vinyl. Ruland defines himself as "a discrete, efficient consultant whose primary concern is to develop business strategies for companies seeking opportunities in the global market." He most recently collaborated with the Institute on a review of Europe's DIY markets.

About The Floor Covering Institute

The global consulting group was founded by Jim Gould in late 2007 to help flooring industry companies solve problems, improve their competitiveness and identify new business opportunities. With clients in North America, Asia, Europe and Australia, the group assists in a wide range of disciplines including manufacturing, distribution, logistics, retail, associations, investment groups, recruiting and expert witness testimony. The consultants' real life experience results in tangible, practical guidance to company executives. The consultants maintain their independent consulting concerns providing professional assistance to clients through both individual and team based approaches.

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