

Make more money, work less, and build your business around your life.

Ideal **BUSINESS** Ideal **LIFESTYLE**

Here's why this FSS member says "We're finally in control of our time, not held hostage to the store!"

Shari Syzmanski has been in the flooring industry for decades, since opening Contemporary Carpets in 1985 with her husband, Mike. But doing the same thing for so long can take its toll, so when Shari joined Flooring Success Systems in early 2016, she was delighted to find that the program reignited her enthusiasm for her business – and also **ignited a serious boost in the store's revenue!**

We caught up with Shari recently to learn about how things have changed since her last Ideal Business, Ideal Lifestyle interview in the spring of 2017. Here's what she had to say about how business is going:

"We love Flooring Success Systems! It's really changed our business. We've been sending out the Neighborhood Advisor pretty much since we started, and along with the eNeighborhood Advisor **it's been great for increasing our referrals and returning clients.** Recently, we've also seen a lot of success on Facebook. Every time we post photos of a completed commercial project, we get tons of new inquiries, particularly for more commercial projects.

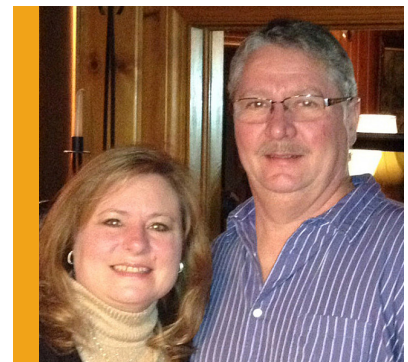
Getting these systems in place has been huge for us. It's really increased the numbers of people coming through the front door, and we've seen significant year over year growth. We were up **30% in 2016** from the previous year, up 25% in 2017 from 2016, and this year is shaping up strong as well.

Consistency is vital – we apply the systems consistently, and we see consistent results. That stability has helped my husband Mike, who is very cautious when it comes to hiring, finally feel comfortable adding some new installers to the team. I've also been able to get some help in the store, and I'm working on getting her trained and increasing her hours and her responsibilities.

It's exciting to feel like we're getting to a place where **we're truly in control of our time**, instead of feeling tied to the store. We're off the rollercoaster. We know that when we market consistently, we see consistent results, and we're confident that the work is there to support the people we're hiring.

Our goal isn't just to work fewer hours or to become absentee owners. We love the flooring business – we wouldn't still be doing it all these years later if we didn't! But it's a great feeling to get to the point where we're in control of our time. We work as much as we want to, when we want to, and we're able to take off when we want to, as well. **We're currently planning a vacation we've been dreaming about for years** – a 14-day road trip through Colorado and Wyoming. We've never been able to be away from the store for more than a week before. I can't wait!"

That's FANTASTIC news, Shari, and powerful evidence that the FSS systems can change your business – and your life – if you apply them! We can't wait to hear about how your vacation goes, and how your business continues to grow.



Growing Your Business With One Meeting a Month

How one monthly meeting can totally change your flooring business

The flooring industry is in a constant state of change. To stay competitive, you have to change as well: change your product mix, change your sales approach, change the way you acquire new customers. This is especially true because the cost of acquiring customers the “old way” (e.g. radio, TV, newspapers, billboards) is only going up. If your primary strategy for gaining new prospects relies on buying their attention, you’re going to be in a lot of trouble trying to compete against the big boxes.

Fortunately, there’s a better way. I’m going to show you how to cultivate a sales force that doesn’t require a paycheck, doesn’t require commissions, and works tirelessly to bring you a regular, reliable stream of prospects who are predisposed to like and trust you.

“You need to develop a strategy – a system for your networking efforts, so you can turn the occasional referral into a reliable stream of new business.”
- Jim Armstrong

I’m talking about **strategic networking**.

Now, networking isn’t exactly a new strategy. There are probably many of you out there who belong to the Chamber of Commerce, or who’ve joined a networking group at some point or another. That’s a great start, and it’s probably landed you a customer or two over the years.

But what I’m talking about goes further than that. It’s about developing a strategy – a system – for your networking efforts, so you can turn the occasional referral into a reliable stream of new business.

The first thing you need to understand is why referrals are so important for your business. Flooring is an industry built on trust. Your clients spend thousands of dollars, invite strangers into their homes, and trust them to literally rip apart their floors (and hope that everything gets put back together even better than it once was). But building trust with potential customers one by one is a time-consuming process.

That’s exactly why referrals are so valuable. When you get a referral, you’re trading on the referrer’s credibility instead of your own. Joining a networking group allows you to vastly expand your sphere of influence. Instead of having to build a direct relationship of trust with every single prospect, your networking partners can use their established relationships to direct business your way.

And aside from the cost – building and maintaining referral relationships isn’t free, but it’s incredibly cost effective – one of the main benefits of referrals is that clients who are referred to you are far more likely to close the sale, and often at a higher price point or margin. Referral clients also tend to be more loyal and more likely to refer you to even more prospects.



How to find and develop a strategic network

There are a lot of business networking opportunities out there. When I talk about networking strategically, there are two aspects I want you to focus on: **where** you network, and **how** you network.

Networking is most effective when you’re really able to devote your time to developing strong relationships. I highly recommend that when you’re starting out, you limit yourself to one or two groups where you can focus your efforts.

There are a lot of options out there: the local Chamber of Commerce, Business Networking International (BNI), LeTip, service organizations like the Rotary Club, Optimist’s Club, Kiwanis, – not to mention local organizations. But what really matters is finding a group that you click with, and one where there are a lot of people who can potentially refer you. That means looking for real estate agents, property managers, interior designers, various contractors and handymen, mortgage lenders – all people who are likely to be regularly doing business with your ideal clients.

Once you've found the right group, your goal should be to go all-in on demonstrating your value. Attend all of the group's meetings. Introduce yourself to everyone, both guests and regulars, and seek opportunities to have one-on-one meetings where you can both learn more about the other person's business. Be clear about exactly who you'd like to see referred to you. And whenever possible, try to educate the group as a whole about your industry and why you in particular can be a valuable referral partner.

Scott Perron, a veteran flooring dealer who currently owns two Florida locations, has attributed **up to 30% of his growth in his first two years in business to his networking efforts** – and that's all on an investment of just \$1200 in yearly membership fees. In addition to monthly meetings and scheduling one-on-one meetings, Scott is also a big fan of holding open houses. He invites everyone in his networking group over to his store after hours. For the price of some appetizers and refreshments, Scott is able to give people an up close and personal look at what sets him apart from his competition, AND he strengthens his networking relationships along the way.

If you've dabbled in networking before but never really taken it seriously, now is your chance. You'll be amazed by the difference it can make in your business when you develop genuine, authentic relationships with fellow business owners. But remember: nothing takes the place of world-class service. Before you can ask people to refer you, you have to ensure that you're running the type of business anyone would be happy to be associated with.

Do You Run Your Business – Or Does it Run You? By Jim Augustus Armstrong

Why are you in business?

You might say that it's to fill a need in your community, to sell products, to make money, to employ people, to feed your family. And all of those things are great, necessary even. But they're not the primary purpose of your business.

Your business exists to fund and facilitate your ideal lifestyle. That's it. That's what makes being an entrepreneur worth all the extra work, time, worry, and risk. And when you design your business to help you achieve your ideal lifestyle, all that other stuff will follow. It's part of being successful.

Begin With the End in Mind

There are a lot of flooring dealers who didn't set out to be business owners. They inherited a family business, or bought the store they worked in when the owner retired. And even when they do an excellent job running the day-to-day store business, they have a hard time stepping back to see the big picture. They're building the plane as they fly it, keeping things going, and they're afraid that if they let up for a moment everything will come crashing down.

That's where Flooring Success Systems comes in. I want flooring dealers to see that you can pause to get your business back to basics – and if you want to be truly successful, you have to.

If you want to *revitalize* your business, you need to begin with the end in mind. What do you want your business to look like? What do you want your life to look like? Until you know your end goal, you can't design a business that lets you achieve it.

I use the word "revitalize" for a reason. Revitalize means "bring back to life". So many flooring dealers I meet are running businesses that aren't really alive. They're not thriving – they're running from problem to problem, putting out fires, dealing with the ups and downs of the price-driven feast or famine roller coaster. They find themselves wondering, "Who's in charge here? Me or my business?"



"Be undeniably good. No marketing effort or social media buzzword can be a substitute for that." — Anthony Volodkin

If that's where you're at with your business right now, you're in the perfect position to fix it. Think about how you would describe your ideal business and ideal lifestyle. Get specific: How many hours do you work? How much money do you make? What do your days look like when you're at work? How much time do you have to spend with family, enjoy your hobbies, work on your dreams?

Once you know your goals, you can ask yourself the most important question of all: "What do I need to make happen in my business to accomplish these goals?" In other words, what changes do you need to make so your business funds and facilitates your ideal lifestyle? Here's an extremely simplified example: let's say you want to work Monday through Thursday, and take Fridays and weekends off. You would then determine what strategic hires you'd need to make and/or what training you'd need to put in place so you could take those days off while at the same time having your business continue to run smoothly.

A lot goes into making a transition like this in your business. If you need additional help, I offer private coaching to help you reach the goals you have for your business and life. Please call our office if you have questions.

Support Team Spotlight **Riina van Rixoord**

If you're a participant in our Digital Floor Dealer program – or interested in trying it out – then you'll want to get to know our newest support team member! Riina has spent her entire career working in the marketing field, and joined the Flooring Success Systems team in July 2018. She handles the logistics for FSS members who want to use Facebook to build their business. That includes optimizing cover and profile images, ensuring branding consistency, and creating engaging content.

Outside of work, Riina is passionate about volunteer work. She serves as secretary on the Board of The Brodie Fund, a non-profit that helps pets fight cancer through grants to families who cannot afford the treatment. She is also a member of the Aberdeen-Matawan Emergency Response Team, and teaches Microsoft Office for women in the local Displaced Homemakers Program to give them the skills to re-enter the workforce.



FEATURED WEBINAR: *Available for a short time only!*



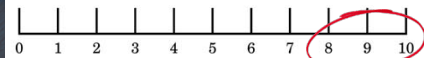
Turn Your Employees Into Store Ambassadors

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To view this featured webinar and learn how your fellow Flooring Success Systems members have added hundreds of thousands of dollars to their annual revenue!



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