



In addition to offering every type of flooring imaginable, Bob Wagner's Flooring America provides renovation services for kitchens, bathrooms, basements, and other home-remodeling projects.

# Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

**BOB WAGNER'S FLOORING AMERICA REMAINS DEEPLY ROOTED IN ITS FOUNDATIONAL VALUES FROM MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO, WHILE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER INNOVATIONS HAVE LED THE COMPANY FORWARD.**

If Bob Wagner were alive today to see the flooring business he founded in 1975, he might be surprised by some of the things he saw—namely, the technological advancements and the ways in which the company has grown. But he would be quite proud of the fact that the cornerstones on which he built Bob Wagner's Flooring America have endured under the leadership of his son, Matt: being a fixture in the community, providing personalized service, and treating customers with honesty and integrity.

"Everything he started is our foundation; my job is to build on it," says Matt Wagner, second-generation owner of Bob Wagner's Flooring America. "We're a local company.

We want to run into our customers in the grocery store and have them say good things about us. We like to volunteer and give back. We've added a lot of technology to how we do things to make it really simple and really convenient, but as far as the values go, nothing has changed. We're still the local company that has been here 51 years and counting."

Bob Wagner had no background in flooring when he started knocking on doors with carpet samples provided by a friend in the industry. Over time he built a thriving business through grit and street smarts. His son, meanwhile, grew up working in the warehouses and even selling flooring, but went on to earn a bachelor's degree in computer science

and an M.B.A., eventually landing a job as a consultant for a major accounting firm.

He was in his office one Friday, 32 years ago, when his dad called to tell him he had decided to retire, and was hoping for Matt to take over the company. Bob gave his son until Monday to make up his mind.

"My wife and I thought about it all weekend long, and then I went in and resigned on that Monday," Matt recalls. "It was never my intention to run the business, but here we are 32 years later. I'm forever grateful for what he started. He barely graduated high school and never went to college, and he afforded me a great opportunity to educate myself, and that certainly helped."

Photos courtesy of Bob Wagner's Flooring America



More examples of Bob Wagner's Flooring America's custom work

Bob Wagner's Flooring America offers every type of flooring imaginable, from the in-demand and low-maintenance luxury vinyl tile (LVT) to hardwood, tile, carpet, laminate, and more. In the showroom, the selections are arranged by color, not by product, so that customers can easily choose the aesthetic they desire and then weigh the pros and cons of each type.

Their expert staff walks clients through the process, explaining in detail what they can expect from certain products, with no sales pressure at all.

"Flooring is a big purchase," Wagner says. "People save money to remodel, and they want to do it with somebody they can trust. That's what we're all about. We want to give good advice, the right advice, and professional advice. Our people have been with us for years and years; we recently celebrated an employee who has been here for 40 years. People stick around because they have the same values as the company, which are to do it right the first time, and if something does go sideways, then fix it. It's that simple."

The team will ask questions to get a feel for what the client wants, inquiring as to what type of flooring they are replacing and why, how long they expect their new flooring to last, and the lengths they are prepared to go to in order to maintain it. A digital tool known as a room visualizer, available both on the company's website and in the showroom, allows homeowners to view different products within their own spaces.

"I love the word *simple*, I love the word *convenient*, and I love the word *excellent*, and that's what we try to do," Wagner says. "When we come to your house, we do a digital takeoff on an iPad, and that makes it

easy to do what-if scenarios. What if we add something here, what if we subtract something there, what if we use this product? My dad did all of this on graph paper; he would be flabbergasted at how we do things these days. It allows us to do it quickly, at the convenience of the customer, but you need the know-how and experience to make it work, and that's where our team comes in.

We have to ask the right questions, because it can be overwhelming."

In that same light, the company delved into a new area five years ago to make it even easier for customers. It now offers renovation services for kitchens, bathrooms, basements, and other remodeling projects within the home. Instead of hiring an outside contractor or trying to do it themselves, they can rely on the company's expert design.

"It goes back to that simplicity and convenience," Matt says. "If someone wants to redo their master bathroom, we can handle everything, from the plumbing to the lighting to the painting to the removal of a tub and the addition of a shower. It's just a total transformation.

"We take it from an overwhelming, daunting project to something that is comfortable and has a nice cadence to it," he continues. "We handle all of the challenges and the logistics for the different trades that have to be done in a certain order."

Making that new division even more meaningful to Matt is that his daughter Emma helps to lead it, making her the third generation of the family in the business.

"She does the 3D renderings, and she's excellent at presentation," he adds. "She listens to what people say and helps them get from an idea to something they can see on a screen

or hold in their hand. It is really cool, working with your kid. You're proud and encouraging no matter what they do, but to see them thrive and become excellent at it is really special."

Clearly, family and community have always been important at Bob Wagner's Flooring America. Another example is HIGH 5 Soccer, a program for kids with special needs that Matt and his wife have been running for 14 years. In its first year there were seven children, including Matt's nephew. Now in its 28th season, 65 children are registered. Each child also has a "buddy" assigned to help him or her

with the drills and activities.

"It's a great program," Matt says. "People drive from all over because there isn't a league like it near where they live. That's what fills the soul. You want to run a company, hire good people, and help them put their kids through college. It's also important to find healthy ways to fill the rest of your time, and hopefully you find a way to give back." ■

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