



Green Day

We're at Ecobuild - the biggest event for sustainable design, construction and the built environment and the UK's largest construction event of any kind. Impressive. Before we have a look around ExCel's immense gathering of the good, we've been fortunate enough to talk with someone who can put the entire event, and indeed the event's message into context for us.

Paul King is the Chief Executive the UK Green Building Council. The UK-GBC was launched in February 2007 to bring clarity, purpose and co-ordination of sustainability strategy to the sector. Part of the World Green Building Council and one of the founding GBC's of the European GBC Network, the UK-GBC is also the sole partner of the entire Ecobuild 2011 Conference.

Their Mission is to dramatically improve the sustainability of the built environment, by radically transforming the way it is planned, designed, constructed, maintained and operated. Members include manufacturers (interior and exterior for build environment), architects, main contractors, retailers, NGOs, facilities management, academic bodies and government agencies.

We meet Paul at the InterfaceFLOR stand at ExCel. Incidentally, the leading carpet manufacturer is one of the UK-GBC's Platinum Sponsors for Ecobuild, alongside Aggregate Industries, Autodesk, Keepmoat, M&S and Tata Steel.

From this diverse set of industries, the Platinum Sponsors have sustainability at their core and share a common ethos and goals with the UK-GBC.

Speaking of diverse industries, we begin by asking Paul a difficult question – why are the furniture manufacturers notable by their Ecobuild absence? 'I don't know, to be honest,' he replies. 'There is certainly an appetite out there – and not least amongst the architects and designers. What we do know is that the exhibition as a whole has grown exponentially over the past five years. The first Ecobuild attracted 950 people – this week it's going to be somewhere between 50,000-60,000 people. A 50-fold increase in five years, in a recession, is pretty good going.'

'It is now the only event that takes over the whole of ExCel, both sides, and the conference centre as well – so it has become the biggest trade show there is. That's fairly phenomenal. Clearly, furniture companies are missing a trick here.'

'I think it's about education. It's also about awareness – awareness that there is a

phenomenal, burgeoning market here. You are surrounded by people who recognise that the future is going to demand greener products and greener buildings. Any company looking to come out of the recession in a healthy state really needs to address the subject of sustainability within its core business – otherwise it will get left behind.'

We ask Paul what are the UK-GBC's major aims and goals here at Ecobuild. 'It's a great opportunity for us to meet our members – so there's a lot of networking here for us. We also hope to attract some new members. We are not profit-making, we're a charitable organisation, we exist to promote sustainability – that's our sole purpose – so we want to recruit as many people to join our campaign as possible.'

'We'll be putting on lots of events, we'll be contributing to the conference – help spread a bit of knowledge and awareness – and meet lots of like-minded people in business.'

Seeing as we're sat in the meeting room, on the impressive InterfaceFLOR stand, we ▶▶▶▶



▶▶▶ask Paul about the relationship between the UK-GBC and the leading carpet manufacturer. 'InterfaceFLOR has a long history of getting involved and supporting Green Building Councils all over the world. As well as seeing the phenomenal growth of Ecobuild, we've also seen the UK-GBC grow 10-fold in our three and half years of existence. When we joined the Green Building Council family we were one of 26 – now were one of 82. We were one of three in Europe, now we're one of 29.'

'InterfaceFLOR recently came on board as one of our founding sponsors of the European Network of Green Building Councils. They are a key supporter of Green Building Councils everywhere – that's how we met. They are a shining light in terms of sustainable business. This is something that many companies now starting to think and talk about, but very few actually do to the extent that InterfaceFLOR are.'

We move on to ask Paul about what has driven the successes of his organisation and, indeed, Ecobuild. 'In the UK one of the biggest drivers is undoubtedly regulation. The previous government set some pretty important directions in terms of more sustainable homes, zero carbon homes etc, and it put the industry on a course to put these things much higher on their agenda. It's been different in other areas – such as the US and Australia – where it's been more about companies looking to differentiate their products and less of a response to government intervention. The challenge

here is just how quickly the industry can respond – and the growth of Ecobuild is one example of this.

'When that challenge was first set down in 2006, big, mainstream house builders in the UK – not always known for being at the forefront of innovation – seized the challenge. Within six months some of the biggest brands produced prototype homes nine years ahead of regulation. This industry is amazingly versatile, it's amazingly adaptable – and given the right signals from

customers as well...in saying that, there is still a huge amount still to be done. What we have here is fantastic in one way because it shows the explosion of interest, it shows the potential for growth – but it's the tip of the iceberg.

'In terms of mainstream delivery we're not close to beginning what we need to be doing.

'It's a massive, massive undertaking, but we believe this is a huge business opportunity.'●





Desso returned to Ecobuild for its third consecutive year. The carpet manufacturer showcased its range of Cradle to Cradle certified carpet products, highlighting the progress it has made with its commitment to Cradle to Cradle manufacturing.

It has been an impressive year of innovation for Desso, having launched its new carpet backing, EcoBase, and achieving Cradle to Cradle Silver Certification for an entire carpet tile product. Desso also developed Refinity, an innovative separation technique enabling the yarn and other fibres to be separated from the backing ensuring that the Cradle to Cradle philosophy of continual reuse can take place.

Cradle to Cradle is only possible if materials are captured for recycling and reprocessing which led the forward thinking manufacturer to introduce a carpet tile Take Back Programme. Through the development of the Take Back process, material to landfill will be reduced at an ever growing rate.

Desso also participated in the Carpet Recycling UK seminar programme at Ecobuild, where Rudi Daelmans, Desso's Director of Sustainability, talked about the company's radical new sustainability goals based on the Cradle to Cradle concept of re-processing old carpet tiles to make new ones.

Milliken Contract used Ecobuild to showcase its recently launched Carbon Neutral certified ranges, which provide sustainable carpet tiles across a broad spectrum of public and commercial locations.

With product developments on show, including the Formwork, Fixation, Shadowbox, Scattergraph and Paste Up collections, along with a new brochure highlighting the company's innovative approach to sustainability, visitors were able to enjoy a first hand insight into one of the most progressive carpet tile manufacturers in the world.

The company's range of high performance carpet tiles feature a unique 85% recycled content PU cushion backing. This helps the carpet tiles to absorb wear for increased life-cycle, improved sound absorption and promote underfoot comfort, while stunning designs and textures help to satisfy the style demands of a wide variety of interiors.



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Hansgrohe produces a design-led portfolio of water and energy saving products, TMV approved thermostatic controls and grey-water recycling technology ideal for the bathrooms of modern sustainable buildings. At Ecobuild, Hansgrohe demonstrated how all of these products can help specifiers to comply with Part G of the building regulations, which came into effective in April 2010.

There are three key strands to Part G geared towards improving safety and water-efficiency in the bathroom. Reducing water-consumption is a major focus with all new build homes being required to meet the target of 125 litres per person per day. With the average usage being around 150 litres per day this requires the specification of low flow products such as Hansgrohe's Crometta 85 Green shower. This clever hand and overhead shower combines devised flow regulation with central air intake to deliver just six litres of water per minute while still providing a great shower.

Other Hansgrohe shower ranges, such as Raindance AIR Eco, also use EcoSmart technology to reduce water and, at the same time, boost performance so there is no compromise required when it comes to enjoying a great shower. Hansgrohe mixer taps save water by using aerators and flow limiters to bring the flow rate down to as low as two litres per minute (average flow rate is 14 litres per minute at three bar pressure).



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Burmatex made a welcome return to the Ecobuild exhibition following an overwhelming response to its debut at the show last year, where it launched a new straight-talking environmental policy.

Since then, Burmatex's exemplary approach to sustainability has been recognised by a coveted industry award for environmental and social impact and the company has launched a refreshed corporate identity with tangible eco-benefits.

Burmatex showed this sophisticated new branding, which includes an innovative, versatile photography concept and shadecards with reduced packaging, as well as previewing new colours and concepts within its BRE A+ rated collection of products.



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FLOORING SYSTEMS



This year, **InterfaceFLOR**'s presence at Ecobuild was its strongest ever as the company teamed up with market leading, sustainability focused organisations, and delivered the message of its 'Let's Be Clear' campaign, which aims to put a stop to green claims and create greater transparency in the market place.

In addition to hosting its own stand InterfaceFLOR linked-up with key players in the construction and sustainability field which share its environmental ethos, including Capita Symonds, as part of its 'Cool Workspace' initiative, and The Building Research Establishment (BRE), who approached InterfaceFLOR to provide them with a BRE A rated product that they would be able to use in their bookshop once the exhibition was finished.

Furthermore, the location of InterfaceFLOR's stand, in the UK-GBC Village, reinforces its partnership with the organisation.

On the company's own innovative stand, nine 3m high units with 3D displays and creative graphics showed the qualities customers need to look for in a sustainable flooring manufacturer. Each of the displays visually represented a specific question that customers should be asking when sourcing a supplier in order to ensure they get an accurate idea of a product's environmental credentials.

Commenting on the Let's Be Clear Campaign, Ramon Arratia, Sustainability Director for EMEA at InterfaceFLOR, said: 'There are an increasing number of green claims pervading the market place, and while some are clear and accurate, others are vague and don't correctly represent the environmental benefits of a product. We wanted our presence at the event to raise the importance of full transparency in environmental claims, and as such, we have partnered with like-minded organisations to help us demonstrate a commitment to environmental credentials.'

'Ecobuild is the perfect platform to highlight important developments in our products and processes, for example, our new ReEntry 2.0 recycling in the Netherlands. Our aim for Ecobuild 2011 is a thought provoking presence that highlights our core values of design, innovation and sustainability and we welcome the debate with this key audience.'

Domus, the leading tile supplier to the architectural specification market, has responded to the stringent requirements for more sustainable building methods, materials and products by launching their Domus Eco range at Ecobuild. An amazing 30 collections were on display, of which 20 were premiered at the show.

All collections demonstrate a highly responsible approach towards the environment at every stage of production, along with progressive and innovative techniques for their installation into buildings.

Domus also demonstrated the unique raised access flooring – Domus Floor+ – and Domus Facades, its engineered rainscreen wall cladding. Both feature recycled materials, porcelain slim formats, minimal conventional building content, components that are fully engineered and fully adjustable, plus easy installation with waste designed out.

Among the new collections on display were many that use the ground-breaking slim technology, combined with the latest advances in digital printing to accurately simulate materials found in nature. *i Bianchi* and *Le Essenze* herald the return to a more classic and restrained style that is elegant, natural and mature. Simulated warm white marble tiles combine with porcelain simulated timber panels to create a more traditional feel that has a timeless quality.



At this year's Ecobuild, visitors to the **Forbo Flooring Systems** stand were able to take an interactive journey through the company's impressive environmental initiatives and achievements across its portfolio of linoleum, project vinyl, carpet tile, flocked flooring and entrance matting system solutions.

Centre stage was Marmoleum – Forbo's sustainable and biodegradable linoleum. Made from 97% natural raw materials, more than 37% of which have been recycled, Marmoleum has more independently awarded eco-labels than any other flooring product in the world, making it the environmental product of choice for many flooring specifiers. Already available in an extensive choice of colourways and patterns, Forbo launched a new Marmoleum 'Special Edition' collection at the exhibition – 'The unexpected nature of linoleum'.

Hands-on displays demonstrated the specific environmental improvements and benefits of Marmoleum and a host of other Forbo products, as well as the ongoing efforts Forbo is making to achieve a 25% reduction in its environmental impact by the end of 2015, as measured by the weighted categories in their independently verified Life Cycle Assessment.

Forbo's approach to achieving this goal is simple and is based on applying the four R's: Reduce, Renewable, Reuse, Recycle.