



**IOBAC** The future of  
flooring, today.

in partnership with



## The need for flexible flooring in the modern workplace

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# Making flooring as flexible as the workplace

**No longer is the workplace just a bland cubicle and a desk to be working at from 9-5.**

Shifting dynamics of the workforce mean that traditional office environments are morphing into more agile spaces, with legacy space re-purposed into serviced offices, shared or co-working spaces and start-up hubs, and a marked increase in flexible new-build spaces.

To keep up, office design, and the fixtures and fittings within it, must be more agile than ever before.

**Flooring has always been an important component of workplace design, with many stunning examples of installations. Modular flooring has been well adopted in this sector due to its design agility, simplicity and speed of installation.**

However, the ever-changing workplace demands that the design bar is raised even higher, with the impetus on sustainable, contemporary designs that incorporate a variety of different materials to enhance multi-functional spaces. Solutions which promote easier design implementation are therefore very much in demand.

This guide developed in partnership between Division 9 Associates Inc, an expert in commercial flooring specification, and IOBAC, innovative flooring installation solutions provider, demonstrates how through careful selection and installation, flooring can become an important, flexible and sustainable design element, perfectly enhancing today's workspaces for the architect, client and employee alike.





# The rise of the flexible workplace

**There's no doubt that the flexible workplace is here to stay.**

Pre Covid-19 research from global surveyors, JLL, predicted that flexible office space will account for around 30% of all US real estate by 2030. It is a sector that has shown massive growth, and accounts for 41% of all US occupancy gains since the start of 2010. And our "new normal" working practices are dictating that organizations are more flexible than ever before.

Driven by shifting worker demographics, changing work-styles, and enabled by technology advancements, the demand for flexible, diverse working environments has rocketed as organisations seek to attract and retain talent.

A global survey of commercial real estate executives concluded that nearly two-thirds of companies use co-working in some form, with many respondents expecting to double their commitment to co-working over the next five years.<sup>(1)</sup>

**47%**  
employees  
between 20 and  
35 years old  
work in places  
besides work  
or home

Annual  
growth rate  
of the flexible  
space sector  
since 2010  
= **23%**

**30%**  
of all office  
space will be  
consumed  
flexibly by  
2030

Source: JLL

This rising demand for new flexible spaces cannot be satisfied by new build alone – refurbishment and re-purposing of existing stock is helping to keep up with demand with fit-out contractors busier than ever.



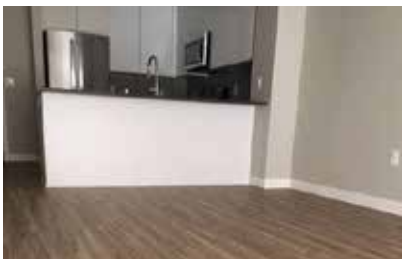


## But what is a flexible workplace?

There's lots of different terminology in this area, which is often used interchangeably.

Not be confused with "flexible working", which describes more generally the concept of being able to work from a variety of locations with a choice of work patterns, flexible workplaces refer to physical spaces and are often described as co-working, serviced offices and shared spaces.

**But what's the difference?** Here's a simple guide:



### Co-working

Fixed monthly fee for unlimited access on a first come, first served basis

More limited access on a pay as you go basis

Includes internet access, refreshments, meeting rooms (may be chargeable) and a curated calendar of events<sup>(2)</sup>



### Serviced Offices

Fixed price per desk/per office for an 'all inclusive' offer

Includes reception services, internet access, refreshments, meeting rooms (may be chargeable)

Other services may be provided for an additional charge<sup>(2)</sup>



### Managed Offices

A hybrid offer for customers who want their own space but don't want the commitment associated with managing it

The fit-out and other services can be offered by the landlord or third party provider<sup>(2)</sup>



# So how does flooring fit in?

We believe that contemporary flooring needs to be just as flexible as the workplaces into which it's being installed, whether that's for a new-build or refurbishment project.

This guide gives examples of how flooring specified with help from Division 9 Associates using IOBAC technology enables:



**Design  
agility**



**Fast,  
hassle-free  
installation**



**Easy  
access and  
maintenance**



**A healthy,  
sustainable  
flooring  
choice**

## What is IOBAC flooring installation technology?

IOBAC technology is one of the fastest and most flexible flooring installation methods available – in fact, installation time can be reduced by up to three times.

No adhesives are needed, so a clean installation process is guaranteed.

The technology works through three simple steps:

### 1. Ensure the base is down and sound

- Minimal preparation is required – no sealants or primers needed
- Often possible to go straight over existing flooring with no uplift required



### 2. Select a magnetically receptive base

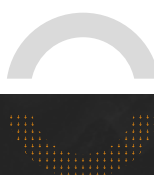
Use either:

- IOBAC Express Cure or High Grab Resin
- Ezy-Install™: a dry-laid acoustic underlay
- The existing metal raised access floor



### 3. Install your choice of top surface tile

- Fit standard tiles including carpet and Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) using IOBAC MagTabs™
- Install magnetic tiles such as magnetic timber, ceramic and LVT direct







## Design agility

**Today's workplaces need to be as versatile as possible.**

Agile or activity-based working styles demand a mix of functional spaces, ranging from traditional desks and meeting rooms to break-out areas and collaboration zones, with even less conventional areas such as yoga studios and sleeping pods becoming more common.

Mixing the formal with the informal, creating multi-purpose space, and utilizing “dead” or “third” space are just a few of the considerations on an architect's mind in order to create a workplace where people want to spend time.

In some cases, facilities such as gyms, cinemas and spas have been introduced in order to support well-being and create that “home-from-home” feel. Introducing features such as these enable the work experience to be enhanced, creating productive and creative communities where collaboration and safe face to face engagement is key.

Being able to flex existing space is important too – why have a meeting room sitting empty for some of the time if it can be quickly reconfigured into hot-desking space when not in use? The ability to change an area from a breakout area to a refreshment area to a meeting room as and when required will be increasingly in demand.



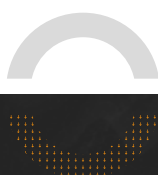


**“There is no doubt that the IOBAC system is a unique and innovative product capable of exceeding the needs of our clients. The simplicity, durability, and flexibility is currently unparalleled in the industry and we are pleased to have this item in our palette of flooring solutions.”**

*Jim Garrison, Client Manager, Shremshock*

Shorter leases mean that spaces are refreshed more frequently requiring further design changes. From a commercial perspective, it makes sense for developers to maximise return on investment by creating spaces with maximum flexibility – future-proof, adaptable buildings that can be reconfigured to suit organizations’ changing needs.

**For customizable spaces, modular has to be the way forward, for everything from furniture to flooring.**



## Flexible floors

Interior design elements such as flooring are crucial in branding and demarcating all these different areas, with different properties needed for different zones. Selection of the right flooring for each area is crucial – flooring that works in a previously open plan area might not be suitable for the refreshment area, for example. And those different flooring elements need to work seamlessly alongside each other.

[>> View our Selection Guide](#)

The options for floor coverings are varied – whilst carpet tile is still a very popular choice, materials such as LVT, ceramic and timber are commonly used, with timber increasingly popular due to its sustainability credentials.

**But it's important to remember that the installation method used is just as important as the floor covering itself.**

Traditionally, modular carpet tiles were adhered using adhesives or tackifiers, with the objective of ensuring that the carpet tiles remained well adhered to the base. However, flooring that has been glued or permanently fixed down is very labour-intensive, messy and costly to remove, especially as redesigns become more frequent.

So, as times have moved on, various installation solutions have been developed which hold the carpet tile in place without the need for wet adhesives, meaning less mess and more flexibility. Adhesive-free installation methods using technologies such as IOBAC enable the floor to be easily changed to accommodate redesigns.

**“As one of the world’s most respected design and project management consultancies, we at Atkins are proud to specify the IOBAC system. We are always looking for truly innovative solutions to benefit our clients, and IOBAC delivers with increased speed of replacement flooring installation and decreased total costs.”**

*Larry Levis, AIA Vice President, Atkins*





## Flooring that pays you money back

Because flooring installed using IOBAC technology can be cleanly removed, it's not considered to be a permanent part of the fabric of the building, so tax depreciation over a shorter period can be applied in the US (and a capital tax allowance of up to 19% can be applied elsewhere).

Meaning massive savings for tenants, landlords and property developers alike.

**“The IOBAC product is very likely to qualify for 5 year life depreciation as it is removable.**

**The objective of a cost segregation study is to reclassify specific constructed or acquired assets within a facility from the typical 39-year long life classification to a shorter recovery period for accelerated tax depreciation purposes.**

**One of the major assets within any given facility is the floor finish. Under examination, the IRS will generally challenge and disallow most floor finishes including carpet and vinyl tile stating that the asset is the floor of the facility and therefore a structural component. Their reasoning is that the manner of attachment to the subfloor is permanent, would cause damage to the structure upon removal, is time consuming and very costly to remove, and is not intended to be removed and re-used but rather removed and disposed of (Whiteco Court Case).**

**After understanding the make-up and installation procedures of the IOBAC flooring system, we believe the magnetized vinyl and carpet tiles that comprise a part of that flooring system could qualify as a 5-year depreciable asset for federal tax reporting purposes. These flooring tiles negate the above IRS position and arguments and pass the five Whiteco tests – which is generally the strongest challenge posed by the IRS.”**

*Mark Shimko Sr. Vice President, Tax Solutions Division, Bedford International*





### Product Spotlight:

## IOBAC Magnetically Receptive Resin Bases

IOBAC magnetically receptive resin bases form a permanent, durable base onto which a wide choice of floor coverings can be fixed. Installed once, the resin base stays intact, enabling the top surface floor covering to be switched quickly and easily when repairs or design changes are required.

One of the major benefits of IOBAC resins is that they can be applied to a floor of up to 95% humidity without the need for moisture mitigation materials such as dampproof membranes. And as an encapsulated system, dust contamination is eliminated.

With a choice of two IOBAC resins for maximum flexibility, there is an option for most circumstances:

- **High Grab Resin** – combines dry-adhesive tack with magnetism to ensure maximum hold between the base and surface tile. Ideal for high-traffic areas demanding maximum durability.
- **Express Cure Resin** – super fast cure of just 1-2 hours results in minimal disruption to business operations. Ideal for refurbishment projects.





### Product Spotlight:

## Ezy-Install

Ezy-Install Underlay offers an alternative to IOBAC Magnetically Receptive Resin Bases for those looking to avoid wet trades.

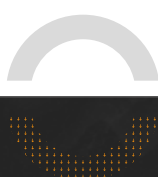
This quick, clean and easy roll down underlay can be simply dry-laid onto bases including concrete sub-floors and existing vinyl floors, making design changes quick and easy.

And like IOBAC resins, once your IOBAC magnetic flooring is in place, the base stays permanently in position, enabling the top surface tile to be easily uplifted and replaced within seconds.

Flooring designs can be switched with ease.

Our Ezy-Install Underlay enables a diverse range of flooring types to be installed seamlessly alongside each other. Its unique Dual Grip technology combines adhesion and magnetism to provide a secure hold to LVT, carpet, ceramic and timber. These different flooring types can be mix and matched and interwoven to create stunning designs.

Its universal compatibility takes the guesswork out of flooring installation, giving greater peace of mind that the flooring is securely in place.







## Fast, hassle-free installation

With the average lease for flexible workspaces around two to three years, and three year leases for traditional offices becoming more common, it is increasingly important for new-build and refurbishment projects to be carried out in as short a time as possible.

A new tenancy often comes with a change in design, so the changeover needs to be quick and clean. Any additional preparation of the sub-floor due to contamination from the previous floor covering adds time, money and hassle to the process.

And often new flooring needs to be installed whilst the office is in use, meaning that the installation needs to take place either over the weekend, or in the case of coworking spaces open 24-7, whilst the building is still occupied. So the project needs to be completed as quickly and cleanly as possible to minimize office disruption and eliminate dust, noise and odor.

**“I realise that this unique and innovative system is something worthwhile considering for many reasons, mainly reduced downtime and overall cost benefit. I can definitely see the outstanding advantages of this system being of benefit both to our clients and the Hilton Organisation”**

*John Walters, CHA Vice President, Hilton Hotel Group*





### Product Spotlight:

## IOBAC MagTabs

IOBAC offers a simplified, accelerated flooring installation.

Either apply a magnetically receptive base such as IOBAC resin or Ezy-Install Underlay direct to the existing sub floor, or use the existing metal raised access floor – minimal preparation is required, and in some cases, there is no need to uplift the existing flooring.

If you choose to use standard flooring tiles, these can then be simply fitted on top using innovation award-winning IOBAC MagTabs.

Magnetic on one side and self-adhesive on the other, these smart little tabs work by locking the top surface flooring tiles tightly together using a unique 2-dimensional grip.

Not only are tiles held together horizontally as per conventional floating floor solutions, but due to magnetic attraction, the IOBAC MagTabs also enable a strong grip in the vertical direction, ensuring tiles are secured well in place until the time comes to uplift them.

The super-quick loose lay method reduces installation time by up to 3x and eliminates the need for any messy tackifiers or wet adhesives, enabling a clean, odour free process. The floor can be walked on immediately after installation, meaning less upheaval to the organisation.

When installed on raised metal access floors, they enable easy direct access to the sub-floor, and remove cleanly with no residue or contamination, ready for the next tenant.





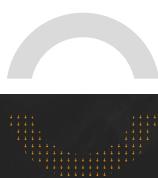


#### Case Study:

## Fast Refurbishment with Luxury Vinyl Tiles and IOBAC MagTabs

The IOBAC adhesive-free installation process meant that this stylish floor could be installed into an commercial office environment with minimal mess and odor, in super-quick time over the weekend and with a stunning end result.

The installation was carried out using IOBAC MagTabs to fix looselay Parterre luxury vinyl tiles to a raised metal access floor.





# Easy floor replacement and maintenance



Flooring is a major investment. Like anything else, it needs to be well looked after to make sure you get the best possible return, and keep it looking its best for a long and productive life.

From general wear and tear, to damage, flood and spills, it's important floors can be easily repaired and kept clean and damage-free to avoid slips and trips.

**More than one million people go to the emergency room each year for a slip and fall accident, resulting in an average of 11 lost days of work. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that the average hospital cost of a slip and fall is more than \$30,000.**

When disaster strikes and your floor is damaged, there's no drama with flooring installed using IOBAC technology. Simply lift up the damaged tile and put a new one in its place in a matter of seconds. Perfect if a high wear area such as a corridor needs replacing whilst other areas are still serviceable.

This quick and easy method doesn't need specialist labor and is incredibly cost-effective when compared with other methods.

**"SOW Design Studio is a multidisciplinary collective of architects and designers with over 20 years' experience in all fields of design. When introduced to IOBAC, we immediately saw its potential. We can specify a floor and have the confidence it will look good in the future when we walk away. Repairs can be done in situ as it is easy to maintain. In addition, as the environment is core to our business ideals, it is sustainable. The top covering never needs to go to landfill as it is not contaminated by messy adhesive, as with traditional flooring. IOBAC comes up as clean as the day it was laid"**

*Jose L. Lobo, AIA, Partner, Sow Design Studio*





### **Raised metal access floors**

Becoming more and more widely used in modern US office buildings and data centres, raised metal access floors create a hidden void for the huge passage of data, mechanical and/or electrical services required in today's working environments. Indeed, research suggests that a large corporation can have over 20,000 miles of cabling in a single facility.

So it's important that the floor covering aids easy access – see the project example overleaf.

**“We've been impressed with the speed, versatility and ease of replacement of the IOBAC magnetized flooring system. We're looking forward to introduce this new flooring solution to our retail and restaurant clients since many tend to refresh their facilities on a 5 or 10 year cycle. Additionally, as the paramagnetic resin is water permeable it can be applied to concrete slabs which contain high moisture levels. This is a great solution that can quickly update the look of a space and should become a game-changer in the commercial flooring industry”**

*Dan Tessarolo, AIA, LEED AP, Chief Operating Officer /  
Principal, Chipman Design Architecture*







### Case Study:

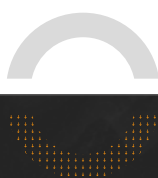
## Freddie Mac, Virginia

Financial services organization, Freddie Mac, wanted a stylish new look to their breakout areas in their headquarters in Virginia and so called upon Division 9 Associates for their expertise.

A beautiful yet durable Parterre luxury vinyl tile was specified for the area, which needed to be installed onto a raised metal access floor. Parterre MagTabs were identified as the ideal solution to easily attach the standard backed flooring tiles onto the access flooring.

Using the MagTabs enabled a quick, clean and hassle-free installation, meaning minimal disruption to business operations, and a seamless fit with the flooring in the adjoining area. The unique 2-dimensional grip properties of the MagTabs gave the client peace of mind that the flooring solution had the durability required to withstand the foot traffic in this busy section of the office.

Because no adhesives or tackifiers were used in the installation process, when the need for repair or change comes, all the client needs to do is lift up the affected tiles and replace. The original tiles are uncontaminated and can therefore be either stored for re-use or easily recycled







## Healthy, sustainable workspace

Health and wellbeing is a crucial consideration in building design today, with a multitude of research confirming that a healthy space is a happy, productive space.

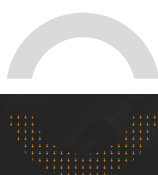
And with increased concern for environmental issues, we will start to see brand new carbon neutral buildings being designed and built in the not too distant future.

**The World Green Building Council has set the challenge for all new buildings to be net zero by 2030 and all existing buildings by 2050.**

### The flooring waste problem

Traditional floor coverings are notoriously difficult materials to recycle. And even 100% recyclable products can run into difficulties when they are installed using adhesive-based methods.

This is because on uplift, the floor tile is more likely to be contaminated by not only the adhesive but also the subfloor to which it was adhered, meaning it's not suitable for recovery and reuse and can't be recycled.



An estimated  
**5 billion pounds**  
of carpet was sent  
to landfill in 2017.

(Carpet America  
Recovery Effort)

Carpet is  
estimated to  
make up  
**2% of volume**  
of all materials  
in landfill.

## Rethink Flooring

But it doesn't have to be this way.

Single use flooring that is adhered to a base is a thing of the past.

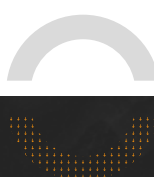
We all try, where possible, to re-use our previously single-use plastic shopping bags.

Why should flooring be any different?

With IOBAC, there's no residue left on either the tile or the floor. The magnetically receptive base remains uncontaminated and ready for installation of new tiles straight away, with no preparation required, and the flooring that's been uplifted is perfectly safe and fine to be reused elsewhere or more easily recycled.



Comparison of uplifting a tile installed with adhesive (above) vs IOBAC





This image shows the level of corrosion and damage that can often be observed on a raised metal access floor on uplift of flooring.

Extra time, money and materials are needed to rectify this before a new floor can be installed.

## Recycle

IOBAC is diligent in ensuring that its technologies include recycled materials and are recyclable wherever possible, with examples including:

- Ezy-Install Underlay made from recycled rubber tyres
- High Grab resin coating manufactured from plant-based renewable castor oil
- Metal additives made from recycled scrap iron
- MagTabs which can be re-used or recycled after use







## Acoustics

In a busy office, there are likely to be phones ringing, co-workers talking, printers, coffee machines running and more, all contributing to the noise levels. Studies have shown that chronic noise in the workplace can cause an increase in blood pressure and heart rate. Plus, excessive noise can affect the emotional wellbeing of employees and can even cause increased stress and depression.

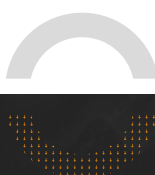
Productivity levels can also be affected if an environment becomes too noisy. Constant interruptions can lead to an inability to focus and if levels of background noise are too high, telephone calls to clients may be difficult.

### Product Spotlight:

## Ezy-Install Underlay

The unique rubber crumb construction of Ezy-Install Underlay provides great acoustic performance and underfoot comfort, ideal for the office environment.

This enhanced performance means that it can be used in combination with standard carpet tiles to give increased acoustic and anti-fatigue performance. The underlay takes the footfall pressure, rather than crushing the pile of the carpet.

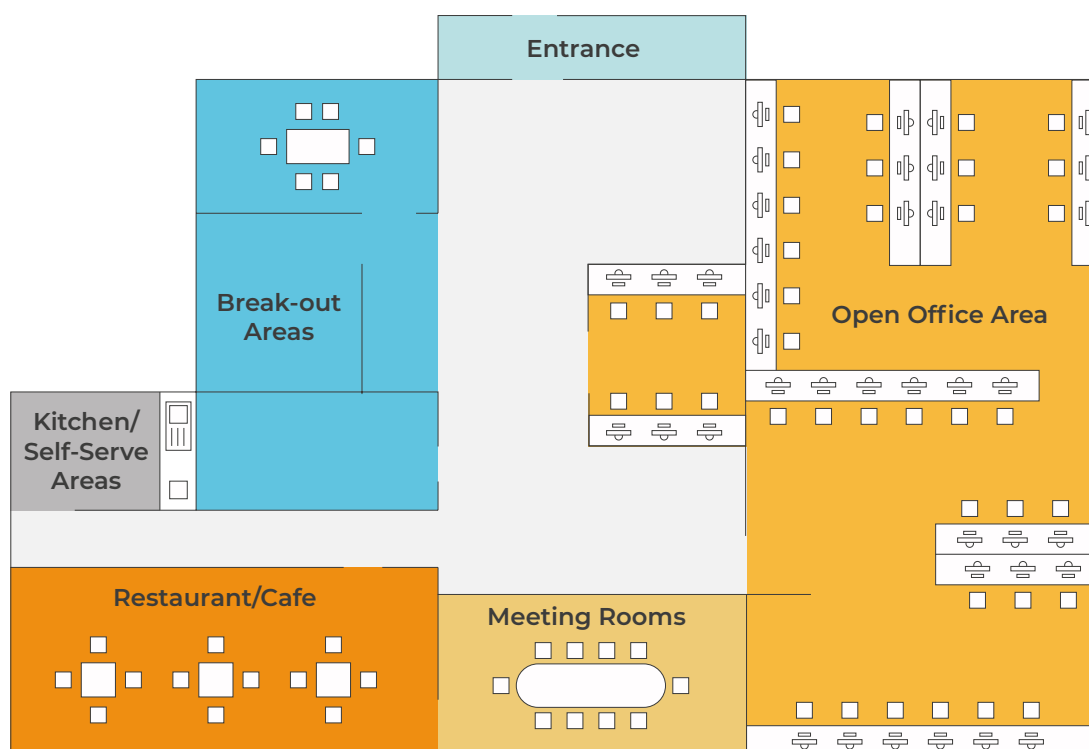


# Selection Guide

There are now many different areas within a modern workspace, each with their distinct flooring requirements.

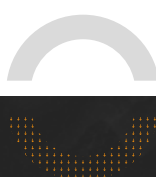
Considerations when specifying the appropriate flooring for an area include the level of foot traffic, noise levels and durability.

Every situation is different, however. Below shows the typical IOBAC solutions used per area within a commercial workplace.



Area	Considerations	Suggested Base	Top surface tile options with IOBAC
Entrance	Durability	Resin	Magnetic LVT Magnetic Timber Magnetic Ceramic  MagTabs + carpet MagTabs + LVT
Open office area	Acoustic, aesthetics	Ezy-Install RMAF, Resin	
Meeting rooms	Access, aesthetics	RMAF, Resin	
Restaurant/cafe	Acoustics, maintenance	Ezy-Install RMAF, Resin	
Break-out areas	Durability, aesthetics, acoustics	Ezy-Install, Resin	
Kitchen/self-serve areas	Maintenance	Ezy-Install, Resin	

RMAF = Raised Metal Access Floor





## The future is flexible!

It's exciting times for the workplace, with flexibility and agility being key design considerations.

Through the use of experienced flooring contractors and innovative installation techniques, flooring can become an integral part of helping to create inspirational, customisable spaces.

Fast installation, flexible products and sustainable processes can marry up to deliver not only outstanding workplace designs and user experiences, but a cost-effective choice over the life of the floor.

### The future is flexible!



#### Speed of installation

- Simplified processes
- Hassle-free systems
- Minimal disruption to business or home



#### Flexibility

- Design agility
- Ease of repair and replacement
- Non-disruptive to infrastructure



#### Operational Effectiveness

- Reduced installation costs
- Ongoing repair and maintenance costs cut
- Improved business outcomes



#### Sustainability

- Energy efficiency
- Recycled materials
- Minimised waste
- Health benefits





# Company profiles

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## Division 9 Associates

One agency, a wealth of choices. Division 9 Associates is your single source for quality flooring in Maryland, Virginia and Washington DC.

As a multi-line sales agency, we represent several manufacturers, bringing a new simplicity to specifying finishes—from carpet and wood to cork, tile and resilients. Whether you design for corporate, multi-family, higher education, health care, or hospitality clients, Division 9 Associates delivers premium products that support your designs without blowing your clients' budgets.

A focused team – a depth of experience. Division 9 has a team of commercial flooring experts ready to answer your questions and assist with your needs. We deliver the best mix of flooring for your design, your clients' budgets, and your project's time frame. Professional and organized, we furnish the image you want, within the budget you have, in the time you don't – elegant, affordable, and efficient.

**For more details, visit [www.division9associates.com](http://www.division9associates.com)**

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## IOBAC

IOBAC is a technology company dedicated to making traditional flooring and heating processes as simple, fast, cost-effective and sustainable as possible for designers, contractors and end-users alike.

We have registered a number of patents in the flooring, walling and heating industries, and offer a range of cutting-edge technologies including magnetic, sensor, conductive and heated flooring solutions

**For more details, visit [www.iobac.com](http://www.iobac.com)**

*MagTabs is a trademark of IOBAC UK Ltd. Ezy-Install is a trademark of InstaFloor Ltd.*

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## References

- (1) "CRE Executive Perspectives on Coworking – How and Why the Flexible Workplace Matters" – *Cushman and Wakefield*
- (2) "Coworking 2019: The UK Flexible Evolution Continues" – *Cushman & Wakefield*



