

Polishes

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Well, hello, hello, and welcome to another year at the top of the food chain – here’s hoping your 2024 has started well or at least *as well* as could be expected and everything is as it should be in your world.

As with most new years the start of a *new game* of flooring can be interesting and may occasionally deliver a few unexpected or even expected surprises, which might possibly create a little uncertainty for any number of reasons – so why expect this year be any different? Late January to early February can be a pretty hard slog, especially if you’re coming back to work after a holiday – even if you’re lucky enough to be part of the world’s best and most exciting industry. If it wasn’t for mortgages, tax and kids, sometimes just staying on holidays might be a better option.



What can occasionally make a new year worse is when a familiar little glitch pops up – when you remember that December was so busy that you didn’t get out to quote so much (which is fine as you made a \$bomb\$ during the Christmas rush). Unfortunately, you probably proceeded to drop that \$bomb\$ on a very well-deserved Christmas celebration and a holiday, and who could blame you after 350 odd days of sucking dust. However, nothing snaps you back to reality like finding a couple of Mr Albanese’s henchmen sniffing about looking for their share of last year’s spoils.



All’s good though, it just means it’s time to rip out a little *cashy* or chase up that staircase you didn’t want to do last year, finish them off with some good looking *leftover* materials and “BANG!” 100 percent profit, no harm done and you’re back on the horse (or the bike or whatever you like to get on top of). BUT, what if one day the gods don’t deliver as expected – what if the *cashy* doesn’t come through or the stair folk found a dodgy painter or worse, a neighbour who was prepared to give the staircase a crack? Or maybe the phone just got very quiet very quickly and you start feeling a little pressure, what’s next? What’s your go to?

Unfortunately, my initial ‘Plan B’ was a no go as in Australia it’s illegal to sell blood or semen (here they term it as a ‘donation’ for some reason), so no *cashola* from that source... So, I guess that makes it a good time to work on a ‘Plan C’?

So, what could a reasonable or realistic Plan C look like? Desperate times can lead to desperate measures, and you could probably sell a spare machine (which you will obviously need immediately after its sale) or maybe you could cash in some of the bitcoin

you’ve been sitting on. Alternatively you could take a leaf from all these ‘young instagrammers’ and set up one of those *side hustles* (whatever that is) – that’s sure to make you buckets of money before BAS and the new school year. Or if things go really south there’s always ‘Only Fans’ – apparently there are some odd bods out there that might flick you some coin for a quick flash or a video of some obscure talent. Apologies, that got weird very quickly, *as if you’d sell your bitcoin*.

Fortunately, things are unlikely to get so dire in this industry as the flooring gods always seems to provide – even in times of general financial uncertainty – or at least they have in the past. But just in case you think it might be a good time to take stock and to go for a quick wander into *left field* or even *outside the square* if you prefer... While some folk may think what I’m about to suggest is a bit too out there, it may just be a good time to explore for a number of reasons – maybe to get ahead a little, to keep up with the interest rates, to *future-proof yourself*, or just in case there’s an obvious opportunity (or side hustle) being missed. This suggestion doesn’t involve rocket science or tremendous change, getting a degree or spending a bomb on new tools and machinery etc. It’s just a matter of recognising what skillset you have to maximise your potential income *just in case*.

One train of thought recognises that a lot of folk don’t or can’t do much for themselves these days and will cough up bags of their *hard-earned* for all sorts

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of unexpected tasks – things that in the past we all just did for ourselves or delegated to the kids without even giving it a second thought – jobs like cleaning, washing, gardening or god forbid driving all the way to the takeaway. I even gave a fella that I suspect sleeps in the park near my place 100 bucks to clean my windows over the holidays (he asked me, I did not drag him out of the park). I was convinced that I was being charitable and not endorsing slavery – until of course upon checking his work I remembered that I live in a pretty small house with about 8 moderately sized windows – he was done in just over an hour and had to use MY bucket and sponge. Yes, I may have been ripped off a little, but to be honest he did a way better job than I could have committed to, and he did it before 2026 and I'm sure he invested the money wisely. But the point is I let him do it.

If you think about this scenario a little deeper, it would seem that timber flooring contractors may possess skills that are well suited to some 'periphery activities', which may potentially mean *missed opportunities*. It may be when a punter calls with an enquiry that's not in your usual wheelhouse, or you're already on a job site that has a little job or 'need' but nobody to do it, or even just when you need some 'bits and pieces' to fill up the diary. Whatever the scenario, you could very likely be leaving easy cash on the table – if you wanted it (that was not meant to sound so sleazy).

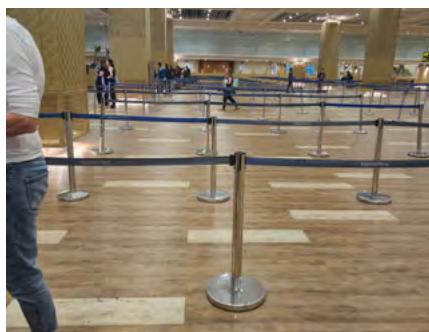
Of course, *re-sanding or recoating timber floors* will always be the 'golden goose'. It's what you do, but it could also be beneficial to consider 'cleaning up' by cleaning up, or as I like to think of it, 'making more for doing less'. It's not a new thing and there are other folk out there cleaning and *rejuvenating* all sorts of tired floors and floor surfaces and making a pretty decent dollar doing it, and all without carrying the big guns into the house or needing three or four days on a job.

Where this is going is that whether it's timber, engineered flooring, tiles, laminate, vinyl or even decking, commercial or domestic – not all projects

need to be a major operation, some may involve attending to something that just needs a little love – and there is potential for making a pretty decent dollar doing it. Best of all most timber flooring contractors already have most of the tools required and the skillset is perfect – but very few fellas seem to be doing it – who doesn't need some extra money?

If you're well entrenched in a specific timber-only comfort zone then the closest gig to home for a fella that likes a spot of sanding would probably be the 'rejuvenating' of a timber floor – not to be confused with cutting back and recoating, but using all manner of products that are available to give a heavily used, poorly maintained, old or fragile surface a bit of a lift.

There are many reasons why the rejuvenation of a floor surface is a preferred option – it may not be sand-able or in fact coat-able or maybe it's actually made of plastic or vinyl (same same); or it might be a prefinished floater or an engineered board with a thin veneer, bamboo (sand-able but I'd rather not); or a house that is up for sale and needs a smarten up; or even a timber floor that probably has no sanding potential left in it. It could even be a commercial site that just doesn't have the downtime available to allow for sanding or recoating – either way if you have the ability to use a mop, a polisher, an applicator, and can coat a floor, then these jobs (and there are loads of them) are in your wheelhouse and could be very beneficial to your wallet – if you want.

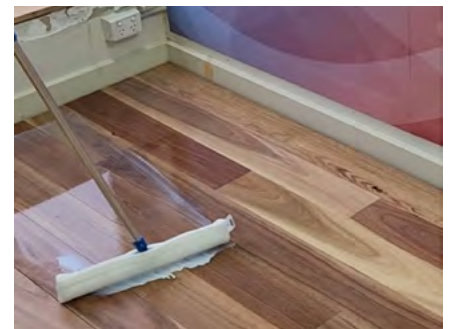


Don't just imagine putting polish on little domestic floaters, commercial floors can also be ripe for some fast and easy love. Some time ago a project came out of the blue where we were involved in putting polish on 2000 sq metres of vinyl in Adelaide – first job on vinyl and not as ominous as it sounds.



There are a lot of oiled floors out there that need love a little more often than water-based and poly-finished floors. But, just like the maintenance of decking oil etc. nobody seems to think of it or offer to do it until it's too late?

Many of the fancy prefinished engineered oak floors are coated so poorly that they would benefit from sealing/resealing before use but there isn't opportunity. A polish is better than nothing – or if they are an oiled finish then happy days, it's a good wash and a buff with oil or a wax polish (as above) – depending what's on it.



Prefinished engineered floating floors are another big opportunity. Plenty about, many in need of a bit of a spit and polish for various reasons – and only a few folks doing it. Coating a floating floor is too risky especially when it moves too much, a polish is perfect, quick, and clean and smartens up a floor nicely. Think of all the rental apartments, shops with no down time and my favourite – the tenant trying to get their bond back.

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Technical article...

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The application for vinyl and laminate is exactly the same, as only the polish/product may change depending on the manufacturer, but either way it's a 'no new tools' job and no miraculous skills beyond reading a label or watching a YouTube video.



If you want to take it to a serious level a deep cleaning and polishing service for solid, floating prefinished, vinyl and laminate floors could be a whole new market that has until recently been serviced by a dirty old mop and no discernible improvement.



A lot of buffing machines either came with or have a brush attachment for a wet scrub.

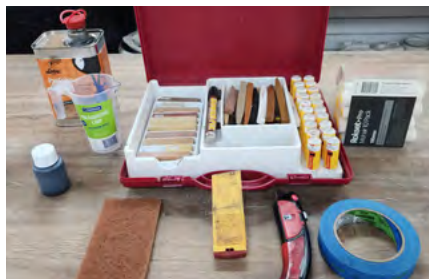


A wet/dry vac is required but can be super cheap starting at \$40-\$150 for something that works.



For those folks that get super serious, a small scrubber/drier is the bomb, particularly the Karcher BR40/10C which has a drum cleaning system and various brushes, perfect for getting into nooks and crannies around floors and is widely available as it's been re-badged by various companies.

Only downside is that there isn't any change out of 5k for a newie.



While you're cleaning and polishing, rumour has it that there is plenty of opportunity and gratuity if you keep a little repair kit with you – just in case.



While this one is a little further out into the field on the left, it is an opportunity just the same. You already have the tools and the skills to use them, and it's a pretty easy and instant earner as the improvement in a well-scrubbed tile, slate or concrete floor is always visually significant.



There are probably plenty more 'little opportunities' that will fit nicely into your skillset and schedule that are worth considering – if you're looking.

Sanding and finishing floors demands a reasonable level of skill; I can assure you that some of these 'little jobs' that folks no longer want to do themselves do not, but they can be of financial benefit and there are plenty of them – sometimes you just have to ask. **t**