

Expanded Technologies: Floor, Furniture And Surface Protectors For All Environments

Protecting hard floors from scratches and dents caused by chairs, desks and tables has been the specialty of **Expanded Technologies** since 1987.

The company, headquartered in **Kenosha, WI**, develops and manufactures products to protect all types of hard floor surfaces and finishes for both commercial and retail settings. These products include: Adhesive-back Felt Pads, the Slip-Over™ Floor Saver, Slip-On® Floor Saver and the Wrap Around™ Floor Saver. Also offered is a full line of furniture sliders. All of these products can be found in offices, schools and other institutions.

"Our first product, a 7/8-inch self-adhesive felt pad developed by my father (**Richard Bushey**) over 30 years ago, has grown into a complete line. Today, we offer almost every size and shape of Floor Saver products you can imagine," said **Expanded Technologies Vice President of Sales Bret Bushey**. "When we started selling to the commercial market, we received feedback from people who loved the protection our pads provided. However, they wanted them to last longer and to be quicker to install."

Listening to these suggestions, Expanded Technologies developed the Slip-On® Floor Saver. It consists of a vinyl sleeve with a reinforced rounded felt bottom. Bushey said Slip-On® easily slides over round or square furniture legs, stays put without adhesive and lasts up to four times longer than adhesive-backed felt pads.



Slip-On® Floor Saver

Expanded Technologies now also manufactures the Wrap Around™ Floor Saver, used for sled-style chairs.

"This product has a thin layer of plastic formed on the back to increase durability and to ensure that the adhesive will not absorb into the felt, which would make the product less effective," Bushey said. "In addition, we doubled the amount of adhesive and included stress relieving wings on the Wrap Around™. This helps take pressure off of the adhesive. Once a customer applies the Wrap Around™ Floor Saver, it sticks until it has been removed by hand."

Expanded Technologies' most recent addition to the company's Floor Saver line is the Slip-Over™ Floor Saver.



Wrap Around™ Floor Saver

"We found that some of our customers loved the Slip-On™ concept but wanted something that was a little more aesthetically pleasing. Our solution was the Slip-Over™ Floor Saver. It's constructed from the same materials used in the Slip-On®, and is designed to fit snugly around the existing chair glide. When installed, it resembles the original glide of the chair leg. You hardly notice it is on," Bushey said.

Expanded Technologies has enjoyed success with its various Floor Saver products thanks to company officials carefully listening to customers and developing products that address their needs.

"If a customer has an application, I am happy to suggest a product and provide enough samples for them to try within reason. If one of our products will not work for a particular application, we will look at it and try to figure out one that will," Bushey said.

With budgets being tight, and the cost of floor care rising, it has never been more important to protect the floor finish, Bushey explained. Also, today's vinyl composite tile (VCT) floors are softer than traditional tile of the past, he added, so proven protective products are more important than ever.

"Our Floor Saver products help keep costs down by reducing the frequency and time it takes to buff or refinish floors. Even if you are applying the best finish available, without the chairs, desks and tables being protected, they are going to damage that floor," he said. "We have also been told that our Floor Saver products provide a less stressful, better learning environment in schools by dramatically reducing the noise of sliding furniture. Teachers love them because they quiet a classroom. It's not a problem when students slide furniture."

New products, such as the Slip-Over™ and Wrap Around™ Floor Savers, are the norm at Expanded Technologies as continuous feedback from customers leads to new and better ideas. For instance, the company will soon be introducing a line of door stops. One such product already available is the Flip Down Door Stop, which slides over the base of a door. It features an arm that flips down, and is adjustable to whatever type of clearance is needed.

"We developed this particular product to replace the common door wedges in the marketplace. The Flip Down Door Stop is easy to install. You just slide it under the door. It's there when you need it and can easily be transferred to another door," Bushey said.

Expanded Technologies also plans to soon introduce the company's own style of door wedge.

"With our item, the door slides up on top of the wedge. A person is able to lock it in any position," Bushey said. "With the current wedges, you have to jam the door on top of the wedge. The problem is the door can slip off."

"Our goal is to have the highest quality and most innovative products available. To ensure this, we have built a test machine that simulates furniture movement and allows us to test our products under the most extreme conditions. If any of our products fail to meet our expectations, or outperform the competition, we look at what can be done for improvement."

Offering quick delivery and looking at new ways of manufacturing have also helped Expanded Technologies in today's ever-changing commercial marketplace.

"The cost of doing business is increasing for everyone. Over the last year, material costs have gone up dramatically and there are indications this trend will continue," Bushey said. "Knowing how tight budgets are in pretty much all of Expanded Technologies' markets, raising our prices is not a good option. So, we've been concentrating on automation to maintain the company's prices. We have not had a price increase in quite awhile."

"As far as delivery, we usually ship orders in one or two days and track packages to let customers know when they will arrive."

To further increase its presence in the commercial



Slip-Over™ Floor Saver

marketplace, officials at Expanded Technologies plan to add to the list of trade shows they attend, develop new products and introduce new lines.

"To better support and educate our distributors, we are setting up reps across the country. If any of our distributors have reps they like working with, they should let me know," Bushey said. "We have also started to produce products for furniture manufacturers and are exhibiting for the first time at the AWFS (Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers) Show, scheduled for July 27-30 in Las Vegas."

Bushey personally gives presentations to distributor sales forces for training purposes. Expanded Technologies' web site and catalog have also been designed to be used as sales tools.

Bushey added that sales for Expanded Technologies have increased over the past several years, and with the addition of new products, good press and new markets, he expects this trend to continue.

"Originally, we sold almost exclusively to the retail consumer market. When I started with the company about seven years ago, we began focusing on new markets," Bushey said. "We found there was a desperate need of floor protection for schools and other institutions. Once we started getting into that market, we received feedback and made products to meet expectations."

"What has helped Expanded Technologies is innovation. We're constantly coming up with new products through feedback from the field. This is obviously great for distributors. New products give the distributor another reason to visit customers."

The company manufactures its own products at its Kenosha facility and employs close to 100 people.

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Flip Down Door Stop