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For Immediate Release
December 7, 2011

Success of 2011 Distributor Marketplace Marked by Quality Education, Networking, and Positive Attitudes of Industry Leaders

With more than 600 distributors and manufacturers in attendance from throughout the flooring and building materials industries, the 2011 NAFCD Distributor Marketplace was filled with valuable learning and relationship building opportunities reflecting a positive sentiment for the economic climate to come.

Distributor attendees took advantage of many opportunities to build relationships and make strong business connections with hundreds of new and existing supplier partners. In addition, the event's educational sessions were highly rated, with attendees taking away relevant and practical business and sales tools from industry experts.

"We are very pleased with the high turnout at this year's Marketplace, despite the current challenges many are facing in this economy," said NAFCD President David Williams. "We received positive feedback that this year's event was highly valuable, from both a business planning and educational perspective. We added learning opportunities for NAFCD members, including the sharing of best practices and industry-specific speakers. We intend to follow this format and build on it for future events."

NAFCD members in attendance had the opportunity to attend two exclusive educational sessions. One featured longtime floor covering expert Jonathan Trivers, who focused ways to adapt to the new mindset and behaviors of today's consumers. The second session was a *Back to the Basics* roundtable session where members discussed the critical issues of logistics and credit, sharing concerns, lessons, and ideas.

Stuart Varney, host of Fox News Channel's *Varney & Company*, shared his perspective on current economic conditions. Taking a macro-level view, he explained the impact of changes in our country's population, and how current events and policy have a direct effect on America's businesses, from suppliers to retailers. Entrepreneur and consultant David Nour provided highly practical tips on how to reach ideal target audiences and make meaningful connections with people online. He pinpointed a number of best practices on how to optimize websites to be easily found and navigated, and how to use social media as a way to develop relationships with customers. Economics professor and author Dr. Barry Asmus pointed out a number of events that brought our economy to its current state. He then identified and examined a number of factors and trends that will affect the economy from this point forward, concluding that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

A new educational track was offered to more than 40 branch and operations managers. Mike Workman, PhD, professor and distribution consultant, shared his expertise in this interactive two-day workshop. In addition to providing his own insights, he facilitated dialogue on the topics of operations, costs, integrated supply, technology, sales functions, and the changing roles of managers. Conversations among attendees are continuing on an ongoing basis as they make progress implementing the principles and tools provided by Dr. Workman.

Planning for the 2012 Distributor Marketplace is currently underway. The event will take place November 13-15, at the Hilton Orlando, in Orlando, Florida.

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The North American Association of Floor Covering Distributors (NAFCD) is a North American, not-for-profit trade association serving distributors and suppliers of floor covering materials and related products. Its purpose is to enable wholesale floor covering distributors to be the most efficient, professional and profitable vehicle for bringing their suppliers' product to market resulting in the highest degree of dealer satisfaction. To become a member or to learn more about NAFCD's offerings around leadership, networking, education, and trends, visit www.nafcd.org, or email info@nafcd.org.