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**COATINGS & CONCRETE**

## 'GEEKING OUT' ABOUT CONCRETE

Produced by Patrick Rose and Written by Emma Gregg

IN THE MANUFACTURING WORLD, CONCRETE FLOORING IS NOT SIMPLE. BLACK BEAR COATINGS & CONCRETE SAYS IT KNOWS WHICH CONCRETE FLOOR AND COATING IS BEST FOR INDUSTRIES THAT INCLUDE FOOD AND BEVERAGE, PHARMACEUTICAL AND HEALTHCARE.





**H**ow will this floor be used? It's the first thing Justin Tousignant asks clients and one of the most important, he says, as co-owner of Black Bear Coatings & Concrete, a flooring contractor that specializes in installing and maintaining concrete coatings and polished concrete floors.

"The coatings industry, with regard to flooring in particular, has evolved over the last decade," explains Tousignant. "A commercial or industrial floor is much more than just a surface to walk on. You need to look at the bigger picture—assess the crucial impact flooring has on the overall design and construction of a space. Only then can you engineer the right solution for a customer."

Black Bear's crews know that the right flooring system protects against heavy wear and tear brought on by fork lift and vehicle traffic, harsh cleaning processes and other industrial processes. The goal is always to keep customers and employees safe through preventing trip hazards and using anti-slip measures, when appropriate, they've learned.

"I could geek out about the different type of floors and different resinous coatings systems we can install, but what we do... is we take into consideration how the environment will affect the floor, how it will perform and what it is going to be exposed to," he says.

By knowing the right questions to ask, Black Bear's team of experts ensure a customized product that not only minimizes downtime, but also provides more value for Black Bear's clients across the Northeast.



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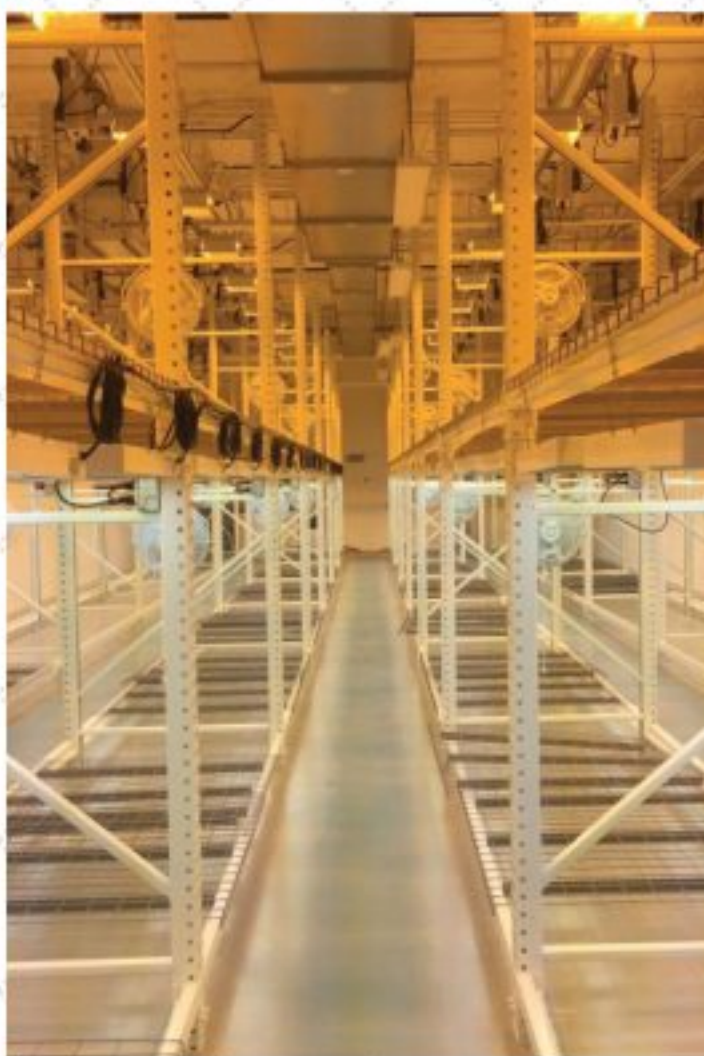
### One size does not fit all

Located in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Black Bear has partnered with businesses in nearly every industry, including food and beverage, pharmaceutical and life-sciences, healthcare, manufacturing, corporate and managed properties, as well as education and government.

Tousignant insists that there is no “one-fits-all solution” in his business.

When partnering with a manufacturing plant, Black Bear has to account for scenarios such as thermal shock, heavy fork lift traffic, wet environments and chemical exposure.

In the pharmaceutical industry, the priority is to minimize impact on operations; keeping downtime minimal while maintaining a clean work space so as not to impact manufacturing processes. Additionally, the coating systems must tolerate byproducts of production and harsh cleaning solvents that will be used on the floor and walls to maintain a sterile environment.











To account for all these factors, Black Bear's team interviews each client and does extensive walk-throughs of every space to observe the working environment.

For some industries, Black Bear already knows what's best.

For instance, an epoxy or urethane hybrid is an ideal solution for healthcare and life sciences. The quick turnaround time and seamless surface provide long-term durability, easy cleaning and minimizing of bacteria exposure.

But for something like retail, Tousignant says polished concrete is a great alternative to enhance the aesthetic design of a space.

"At Black Bear, we pay attention to how trends affect these industries, but we always determine the best course of action based on our client's individual needs," he says.

## Seamless Floor Systems

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### Business-minded coatings

After considering the duty cycle, chemical exposure, clean procedures, and strength and surface hardness of the concrete required of a project, Tousignant says the next consideration is a client's schedule.

Although the company does new construction projects, nearly 80 percent of its work is in existing facilities, and often these clients can't close down their business to accommodate construction renovations.

Sometimes Black Bear's crews are required to work during off-hours (such as nighttime or weekend installations) or even during regular business hours with minimal distraction to their client's business.

In the case of DHL, the world's largest logistics company, Black Bear was hired to fix flooring that had been poorly installed. The crews had to work over a weekend from Friday at 5 p.m. to Monday at 5 a.m. in order to minimize impact to the client's shipping operations.

It goes to show that the best way to save a company time (and money) is to make sure the floor is installed right the first time, Tousignant says.

"Epoxies don't fail, installations do. Proposing the proper solution is one thing, but execution is the most important part of any project we work on," he says. "The materials we install are not meant to come up, and repairing a floor that wasn't properly affixed in the first place is just plain cost-prohibitive."

It is this knowledge of these formulas, as well as the properties of the technology and additives, that has brought Black Bear success.

"At the end of the day, I'm a small business owner," says Tousignant. "So whether it's a large enterprise level client or a new manufacturing startup, I approach the customer's project as if I'm spending my own money. At Black Bear we treat each client the way we would want to be treated." •