The Carpet Sample Patterning Process – What to Expect

Once a pattern and colors have been decided, the next challenge is making a carpet sample to begin to see if the pattern and colors, developed in the design process, actually work together.

CADs, point sheets and hand drawings are two dimensional. Creating a carpet sample adds the dimension of depth and the "hand" of texture to the decision making process. In addition, printing colors on paper or viewing colors on a computer monitor are not necessarily accurate to the process of dyeing wool or nylon carpet yarns. Computer and printing technology has certainly improved over the years, but matching colors to wool or nylon carpet yarns still requires the visual inspection of a master yarn dyer.

Time and cost are the decision makers concerning the creation of a carpet sample. Woven carpets can be challenging because unlike the modern tufted carpet process, weaving has to deal with every unique "tuft" or "point" in a pattern with a unique yarn bundle for every individual "point."

To create a 27" wide sample on a typical 216 pitch Wilton 3-frame loom would require the manufacturing, metering, and creeling of 648 unique yarn packages. The same sample on an 8 color gripper Axminster would require 1,512 unique yarn packages. While that was the typical sample method prior to the invention of the computer, technology has come to the rescue of making carpet samples.

This process is called a "Kibby." Invented in Australia in 1991 by the Modra Technology Company, the Kibby carpet sampling machine was developed to produce woven carpet samples consistently, efficiently and less costly.

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Utilizing a precision series of metal peg boards, the Kibby machine process cuts and positions individual points of yarn from a single yarn package, creating the desired patterns in the actual yarn dyed colors.

Color and pattern are quickly seen; however, there are challenges. Because this process resembles a needle punch process, the pile height or thickness of the sample is approximately 25% thicker than a finished carpet sample. Realizing the finished carpet product will be slightly less in pile height, a Kibby sample is a very effective method to sample woven carpet projects.

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