

# THE PROFILE

COVER STORY

**WORKSHOPS & IN-HOUSE SEMINARS**  
Schluter®-Systems offers a wide range of educational programs designed to enhance product knowledge throughout the industry.

**1 HELP SOLVE THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE INDUSTRY.**  
Schluter®-Systems is working to solve the leading problem in today's tile industry.

**4 NEW FOR 2006!**  
Find out what Schluter® has been working on this past year.

## Our products cannot be "sold" – they have to be understood

**K**nowledge is an important asset within any industry, and the tile industry is no exception.

The ability to specify and construct lasting tile assemblies, and to choose the right systems for a particular application, depends on a clear understanding of the dynamics involved.

Schluter®-Systems has always embraced this principle, and offers a wide range of educational programs to help spread knowledge throughout the industry.

### INNOVATION WORKSHOPS

Daryl Petty never planned on becoming a tile setter. In fact, he had worked in general construction since he was 17 years old. It wasn't until years later, after setting tile in his own home, that he realized how much he enjoyed the tile trade.

Petty began reading all that he could about tile setting, both in books and online, and by the time a close friend approached him to do some tilework in his own house, Petty felt comfortable enough to say yes.

Mose Kaufman, owner of Kaufman Construction in Columbia SC, saw the



Werner Schluter, CEO of Schluter®-Systems

tilework in his friend's house, and asked Petty if he would like to do some work for his company.

Petty accepted the offer, and his first job took him to Aiken, SC, where he performed the carpentry work and tilework on the exterior deck of a house. It was on that job that Petty was first introduced to Schluter® products.

Petty consulted with Paul Metto Tile in Columbia on which products he should use for the tile installation. They suggested Schluter®-DITRA as the underlayment, KERDI-BAND to waterproof the seams, and the KERDI-DRAIN.

In February of 2004, Paul Metto Tile invited Petty to attend the Schluter®-Systems Innovation Workshop in Clemson, SC.

These 2½-day workshops take place at the Tile Council of North America's CTEF training school in Clemson and at various locations in Canada, one of which is the TTMAC. They were first offered approximately 4 years ago, and continue to be offered once a month.

Attendees participate in classroom discussions and attend valuable hands-on workshops, providing them with the latest innovations in ceramic and stone tile installation systems and methods.

"I learned so much at that class," says Petty. "My eyes were opened."

"The Schluter® guys that were doing the product

### WANT TO HELP SOLVE THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE INDUSTRY? *By David M. Gobis*

Over the years, the worldwide ceramic tile industry has been plagued by a number of problems, including poor substrate and setting material quality as well as tile shortages and low-grade tiles. The last 20 years has seen a surge in the availability of high quality tile in an endless variety of styles, sizes, colors, patterns, and textures. The ceramic tile industry has grown 100% in each of the last 4 seven-year periods. Material technology has provided many improvements in membranes, backerboards, adhesives, grouts, caulks, and other products to aid the installation of tile. But one problem, perhaps the greatest of them all, remains unsolved.

With the ever increasing use of ceramic tile, industry participants from around the world generally identify the shortage of trained installation personnel, not product, as the major problem. This shortage causes numerous problems and results in failures, which leads to dissatisfied customers, poor product reputation, and higher costs. In many cases the installer or customer looks wrongly to the tile or installation material manufacturer for costs of repair or replacement. This causes the manufacturer to build reserves into its pricing to cover these claims, whether justified or not.

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demonstrations were very well-informed, and I enjoyed being with other people in the industry. There were a lot of ideas brought to the table because of the attendees' various backgrounds."

Once he came back from the workshop, Petty began setting all of the tile in the Kaufman homes. His business, Petty Specialties, is now 90% tile-setting jobs.

"These [Kaufman] homes average 7-8,000 sq.ft. of floor space. They are multi-million dollar homes, and just like I do in my other tile-setting jobs, I always use Schluter®-DITRA on the floors and the KERDI Shower System in the bathrooms. Using Schluter® products helps ensure that a quality product is being installed for the homeowner, and I know I can trust them because I have seen



"We have had a great response from customers after Schluter comes in."

how these systems work and the mechanics behind them."

## IN-HOUSE SEMINARS

The more the distributor and dealer know about the products they sell and about the industry as a whole, the more successful they will be. The more a builder knows about the products available for both residential and commercial applications that make installations easier, lessen call-backs, and ensure positive results, the better his/her reputation will be within the building community.

Schluter®-Systems offers in-house seminars to distributors, dealers, builders, and contractors. By visiting businesses and jobsites, our trained professionals continually educate their customers on the systems that are available for ensuring long-lasting tile installations.

Quality Discount Tile in Palo Alto, CA is a retail outlet with an extensive tile line and selection of Schluter® products. Dave Seaver, owner, Steve Mann, warehouse manager, and John Zerille, tile contractor, all attended the Schluter® Innovation Workshop in Clemson, SC in November 2004.

A few months later, Quality held an in-house Schluter® seminar with a handful of employees, 25 local contractors, and even a few "DIY" customers. "Dan and Truman [local Schluter® represen-

tatives] did a mock-up of the Schluter® Shower System and showed them [attendees] how to put the waterproofing right over the sheetrock and install the drain," says Mann. "They even let a few attendees dive in and help with the demo."

In fact, the seminar was such a success that Quality invited Schluter® to come back in six months and present another one. In attendance at that program was a member of the Palo Alto Building Inspection team.

Mann said that because the system is fairly new in their local area, they wanted to take this opportunity to educate the inspector on the system itself, how it works, and the various codes it meets. They knew this knowledge would enable the inspector and his fellow colleagues to easily recognize the system in the field.

"We had a great response from customers after Schluter® came in, and we hope to do another seminar after the first of the year," says Mann. "The Schluter® reps really take the time to sit down and teach attendees the correct installation process for their systems, and that's why we continue to do the seminars. We look forward to them!"

Allan Bradley, Sales Manager at Muskoka Carpet and Drapery in Huntsville, Ontario, says that he also finds in-house Schluter® seminars beneficial.



Muskoka, a long-time dealer of Schluter®-Systems, requires training for all new installers who are unfamiliar with Schluter® products. Before they begin installing, local Schluter® Territory Manager Tod Valickis provides them with the necessary training.

"Tod is a very hands-on person and has personal experience with installing in general, and with installing Schluter® products," says Bradley. "A lot of other companies' sales people don't have that experience and can't answer questions because they haven't tried the products themselves."

Bradley also says that being able to get answers for in-depth questions, and seeing the installation of Schluter® products during in-house seminars,

makes him feel more secure when selling the products.

"Anytime I can talk to customers and give them first-hand technical knowledge, it makes them feel much more confident in the system and the money they would spend on it."

## ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN PROGRAMS

Schluter®-Systems is a registered AIA/CES provider and involved in ongoing events with AIA, CSI, and various design organizations. Through in-house lunch-box seminars, and events such as the Tile Seminar series, in which Schluter® was involved with the Tile Council of North America, Crossville, and Tec, design community members are able to learn about the latest industry standards and the installation systems that are available.

Tony Dallessandro from the Northeast Architectural Services Group for Pulte Homes in Bernardsville, NJ visited the Schluter®-Systems booth at the AIA Convention in Las Vegas in May of 2005. He then attended Tile Seminar Two in NYC in September, at which Schluter® presented.

In late October, Schluter®-Systems was invited to Dallessandro's office to give an architectural presentation (AIA/CES-approved).

"It was an excellent presentation," said Dallessandro. "The information and material were presented in a clear and concise manner, and the videos of the installation were great. It was especially beneficial to the younger Architects in the office who were not familiar with the applications."

Bruce Donnally, principal architect with Donnally Architects in Seattle, WA, also recently held a Schluter® in-house architectural seminar. Donnally first heard about Schluter®-Systems from a contractor on one of his projects but was not aware of all their offerings until after the presentation.

"The presentation was excellent," said Donnally. In fact, he was so impressed with the installation systems he had learned about that he decided to incorporate them into his own tile projects at home.

*If you are interested in learning more about Schluter®-Systems' educational programs, or would like to request an in-house seminar, please call our Customer Support staff at 1-800-472-4588, or visit [www.schluter.com](http://www.schluter.com).*

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With the advent of Floorcovering Dealers entering the market, supported by buying groups and carpet mills, the situation regarding the installation dilemma has become even greater. The types of phonecalls we have received lately evidence this.

Among their other services, the Tile Council of North America and The Ceramic Tile Education Foundation answer questions regarding tile installation and methods on a daily basis. Those who responded to technical questions during the past three years cited no clear-cut examples of failed manufactured product. On the other hand, they cited thousands of questions pertaining to improper installation.

#### WHAT WERE SOME OF THE REASONS FOR THESE FAILURES?

In no specific order,

1. Failure to follow manufacturer's written recommendations.
2. Use of improper techniques.
3. Poor environments for installation, such as temperature, dirty water, etc.
4. Improper substrate for tile installation.
5. Deviation from recommended procedures.
6. Combination of approved methods in untested situations.
7. Lack of movement, control, or isolation joints.
8. Use of improper materials.
9. Failure to clean and properly prepare the substrate to be tiled.
10. Poor specification.

#### IS THE INDUSTRY DOING ANYTHING ABOUT THIS SITUATION?

The answer is, yes. The Ceramic Tile Education Foundation (CTEF) conducts education and training courses in various formats ranging from basic installation to an advanced course in mortar bed construction. These efforts are sponsored with funds from industry-wide participants. The goal is to provide education and training in the many facets of tile installation to those desiring and capable of receiving this instruction. These courses are available for salespeople, tile designers, architects, civil engineers, tile installers, building owners, remodelers, and others simply interested in properly installed tile. There is a special emphasis by the CTEF on recruiting new employees into the industry. Classes introductory to tile installation are currently being taught at both the CTEF Training Facility located a short distance from the Tile Council of North America campus in Clemson, SC and at the World Floor Covering Association in Anaheim, CA by CTEF staff.

It is well known that for any national program to be a success, some of the training must be portable; that is, it must be able to be taken to the various locations around the nation. The CTEF has responded to that

challenge by not only making its course material modular (i.e., able to be taught in sections), but by also providing complete information on various training mock-ups and assisting in securing materials for the class using its nonprofit status to encourage product donation from available industry resources. CTEF has partnered with many associations in the floor covering industry to jointly answer a need for knowledgeable installers. Special training sessions have been held in numerous states and, in a few instances, other countries.

While we host courses for many different manufacturers, we have to acknowledge Schluter®-Systems as a leader in providing educational opportunities. They make these available not only for their customers, but also for those who are considering becoming customers. CTEF has hosted courses for Schluter®-Systems for three years. Typical comments from those attending range from "I can't believe a program like this exists" to "best time I have ever spent in a training session." On more than a few occasions we have heard, "In three days as their guest, not once have they tried to sell me something." Rather than follow the usual manufacturer path of making this type of opportunity available for best customers only, Schluter®-Systems welcomes all who have any interest in its products with open arms. As CTEF hosts courses for many additional manufacturers, we can say with qualification that Schluter®-Systems sets the standard when it comes to both presentation content and customer comfort in their Innovations class, and we are glad to be able to provide our facility for their use.

Regardless of all these efforts, one thing is certain: the shortage of trained installation mechanics is and remains acute. With the current growth in the tile market, the pent-up demand, the attrition rate of current installers, and the lack of automation in the installation process, it is estimated that a minimum of three thousand additional installers will be needed per year to satisfy the market. Manufacturers such as Schluter®-Systems have responded with many innovative products to make installations simpler and better. Even so, we all need to work together to bring about a revolution in the tile industry and provide true craft training that extends beyond a few hours a couple of times a year. CTEF stands ready to assist any party interested in the tile industry and installation training. You can reach CTEF at 864-222-2131 or dave@tileschool.org for further information on its programs. Be a part of the solution!

*Bio: David M. Gobis, a 3rd-generation tile setter, is the Executive Director of the Ceramic Tile Education Foundation. He has been in the trade for over 30 years and owned a successful contracting business for 18 years prior to his current position. Mr. Gobis is a member of the NTCA Technical Committee, ASTM, and ANSI A108, 118, 137 and TCA Handbook committees.*

#### VISIT US AT

##### SURFACES

February 1 - 3

##### CONSTRUCTION EXPO 2006

February 21 & 22

##### MIDWEST BUILDERS' SHOW 2006

March 15 & 16

##### SURFACE FABRICATION & DESIGN EXPO 2006

March 17 & 18

##### CONSTRUCT SEATTLE 2006

March 21 & 22

##### CONSTRUCTION EXPO 2006

March 22 & 23

##### JLC LIVE NEW ENGLAND 2006

March 24 & 25

##### NEOCON WEST 2006

March 27 & 28

##### CSI SHOW 2006

March 29 - 31

##### COVERINGS 2006

April 4 - 7

##### CONSTRUCTION EXPO 2006

April 18 & 19

##### K/BIS 2006

April 21 - 23

##### ATLANTIC BUILDERS' CONVENTION

April 26 - 28

##### HOSPITALITY DESIGN EXPO 2006

April 27 - 29

##### CONSTRUCTION EXPO 2006

May 16 & 17

##### JLC LIVE SOUTHERN CA 2006

May 18 & 19

##### AIA EXPO 2006

June 8 - 10

##### SOUTHERN BUILDING SHOW 2006

June 8 - 1

##### NEOCON WORLD'S TRADE FAIR 2006

June 12 - 14

##### AIA FLORIDA 2006

July 28

##### 21 BUILDING EXPO 2006

August 23 & 25

##### JLC LIVE MIDWEST 2006

September 14 & 15

##### AIA SAR CONFERENCE 2006

October 4 - 8

##### NEOCON EAST 2006

October 11 & 12

##### DESIGN-BUILD EXPO 2006

October 18 - 20

##### AIA NYS 2006

October 20

##### REMODELING SHOW 2006

October 19 - 21

##### TSA SHOW 2006

November 2 - 4

##### JLC LIVE PACIFIC NW 2006

November 9 & 10

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NEW FOR  
**2006**

DILEX-EKE-SP  
off-center tray  
Tile countertop brochure

## offcenter tray



Schluter®-Systems has developed a new 32" x 60" shower tray with an off-center drain placement for remodeling applications where a tub is being torn out and replaced with a tiled shower. The drain on this new tray is located 10" from one end. Although the installer may still need to make adjustments to the plumbing, since not all jobs will place the outlet at exactly the 10" mark, the new tray will make the set-up easier while still providing the necessary slopes for tile installation.

Still available are the 48" x 48" and 32" x 60" shower trays with center drain placement. These two sizes are available in the Schluter®-SHOWER-KIT. The off-center tray will be available in the kit after January 2006.



48" x 48" SHOWER-KIT



32" x 60" SHOWER-KIT

For more information about the Schluter® Shower System and all of its components, and to view or request our installation video, please visit [www.schluter.com](http://www.schluter.com), or call us.



### COUNTERTOP BROCHURE

A Schluter® Countertop System brochure will be available in February 2006. This brochure explains how the Schluter® Countertop System allows the installation of virtually any ceramic or stone tile on a countertop.



### DILEX-EKE

Schluter®-DILEX-EKE, a corner movement profile that effectively absorbs movement at inside wall corners and at floor/wall transitions, will be available in a sand pebble finish in January 2006. This new finish is ideal in situations where a beige-colored grout is being used.

NEW COLOR: SP 

For more information on all of Schluter®-Systems' innovative installation systems and supporting literature, please visit [www.schluter.com](http://www.schluter.com), or call one of our Customer Support Representatives at 1-800-472-4588.

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