

## Mobile dealer gets franchise honor

By Maya Avrasin

For the second year in a row, Carpet Network has made the Franchise Business Review's Franchise 50 list. The mobile retailer is the only company from the flooring industry to make the list.

More than 300 franchises were reviewed by the independent market research firm, which surveyed members for customer satisfaction. More than 65,000 franchisees were surveyed for this year's list, which is only the second time Franchise Business Review compiled the information. The Mt. Laurel, N.J.-based company is listed at No. 44, down significantly from the 2006 list when it made it to No. 13.

Leonard Rankin, CEO and founder of Carpet Network, said this year's competition was fier-

er than last year's, which only had about one-third the number of franchisees respond.

Carpet Network is in its 15th year as a franchise and has 42 members. Rankin said he hopes to add 18 to 21 new members each year, now that the company has hired two people devoted to franchise development. The territory size for each member is smaller than a typical brick-and-mortar, averaging about 35 households or 35,000 owner-occupied houses within a zip code, Rankin said. But the demographic is similar to traditional flooring stores, albeit with a higher concentration of shoppers located in suburban areas.

The mobile flooring trend is gaining speed, Rankin said, as more consumers become comfortable with the idea of flooring

coming to their home. "The consumer is much more accepting of shop-at-home today," Rankin said, adding he has noticed this behavior change within the last 3 to 5 years. Even though there is a housing slump throughout much of the nation, Rankin said his members will not be affected because most of their clients are residential replacement with a focus on remodeling. "Once they decide to fix up their house, they still need flooring," he said.

According to the listing results, Carpet Network members ranged from having a very good to excellent relationship, satisfaction and financial opportunity with the company. Rankin hopes his members' experiences will continue to remain positive.

This past year, Rankin introduced a computerized measurement system for franchisees to take to clients' homes, and will continue to reinvest in the company as it expands. "Our goal is to make sure our existing franchise network is extremely happy and profitable," he said.



Leonard Rankin



Carpet Network made the 2007 Franchise 50 list for franchisee satisfaction.