

# Stewart's Shops

Case Study | Retail

creative  
materials  
corporation



## Locations

New York  
Vermont

## Project Type

Retail

## Areas Supplied

Main Retail Floors  
Restroom Floors & Walls

## Products

Ethos  
Vintage Wood

Stewart's Shops is a roadside convenience store and gas station with a near cult-like following of their homemade ice cream and farm-fresh dairy products. Stewart's Shops believes that customers can expect better, friendlier service because almost 40% of the company is employee-owned. They take great pride not just in their quality products, but in creating a quality guest experience. Stewart's Shops has been in business for more than 70 years. Today there are over 400 Stewart's Shops employing 5,500 people in 31 counties across upstate New York, southern Vermont and western New Hampshire.

## CHALLENGE | SOURCE HIGH ANTI-SLIP TILE

When the recession hit in 2008, instead of putting on the financial brakes, Stewart's Shops doubled down on the aesthetic appeal of its stores, more determined than ever to create a top-of-the-line shopping experience. While the intention was the right one, Stewart's Shops found that there was room for improvement in the tile initially selected for remodels and new build-outs. Although the tile initially selected met Dynamic Coefficient of Friction (DCOF) requirements for commercial applications, given the extreme weather conditions of the Northeast in the winter and the high volume of traffic in the stores, the tile was prone to becoming extremely slippery and dangerous. Stewart's Shops primary concern was that guests would be able comfortably enjoy the stores without having to worry about slipping, so they began searching high and low for a tile that would be suitable for guests as well as fit the design scheme.

## SOLUTION | PERFORMANCE AND PERFECT AESTHETICS

Stewart's Shops was relieved to find that Creative Materials could offer a wide variety of suitable options for their stores. As Stewart's Shops was not working with a commercial designer, they relied heavily on Creative Material Corporation's own in-house Design Services and Product Sourcing team.

"Creative Materials partnered closely with Stewart's Shops to deliver a flooring solution that enhances safety, durability, and brand experience, combining thoughtful material selection with scalable supply and reliable execution across locations."

~ Craig Lansley,  
Vice President, Supply Chain,  
Creative Materials Corporation

Per Stewart's Shops request, the Creative Materials team initially proposed several stone-look matches to the existing floor tile, but with higher slip resistance. Taking it a step further, the Design and Sourcing team at Creative Materials suggested some wood-look options in a plank format which they felt would not only add some rustic character to the stores but provide additional grout joints. Thanks to advanced digital printing, durable flooring that mimics natural wood is now a viable option for high-traffic commercial areas. Additionally, the plank format which added grout joints increased the slip-resistance of the floors. These benefits, coupled with a dark grout color and grain movement in the wood look, camouflaged coffee spills and wound up being the winning combination for Stewart's Shops.

## RESULT | CONVENIENT PARTNERSHIP

Creative Materials offered numerous aesthetic options, sourced a porcelain tile that enhanced store design, mitigated slipping issues, and fit within budget. This convenient partnership fit perfectly and resulted in the following benefits:

- Average 3-day lead times
- Dedicated product availability
- Consistent pricing
- Dedicated account management

Now, Stewart's Shops guests enjoy their favorite ice cream flavors (Crumbs Along the Mohawk!) in a safe, risk-free environment.

