



Grumpy Joe's

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Why is Joe grumpy?

In 1989 Joe Weston-Webb - nowadays also known as Grumpy Joe - revolutionised the world of portable flooring when he invented **Florlok**.

The system, which allowed parquet panels to interlock without screws or tools, quickly became the acknowledged industry standard.

Grumpy Joe based his design on an interlocking tent-floor that he created in 1976 and which was used everywhere from the Olympics to war-zone military hospitals.

His floors went on to be chosen for Elton John's parties, Posh and Becks' wedding and the ballroom dancing world championships.

To this day Florlok - along with Grumpy Joe's other creations, **Publok** and **Weblok** - remains the portable flooring of choice around the globe.

And yet, nearly 30 years after laying the foundations for revolution, Grumpy Joe hardly dares call Florlok his own.

For he suffered the fate of so many architects of revolution before him: he was betrayed by those closest to him and found himself with his back against the wall.

Of course, he didn't give up. Quite the contrary. Giving up is not in Grumpy Joe's nature. Like any mould-breaker worthy of the title, Grumpy Joe never quits.

That's why he thinks it's time to shed some light on the darker side of the industry: namely, the dodgy deals, corrupt practices and blatant campaign of intimidation that has tried - and failed - to put him out of business.

This is Grumpy Joe's story. He's confident that, having read it, you'll understand why the man who changed the way floors are laid everywhere is no longer willing to take things lying down.





In the beginning

Grumpy Joe was always a showman. He started his career in entertainment, running touring stunt shows, staging family fun days and steam fairs and even promoting pantomimes.

He was always inventive, too. Whether firing his human catapult, jumping rivers in a bus or parading his all-girl motorcycle stunt team, he invariably displayed an uncanny talent for innovation.

So when he finally decided to settle down and set up his own portable flooring business he found a way to combine showmanship and inventiveness to maximum effect.

Having already spent decades in the marquee rental trade, he identified a gap in the market: an easy-to-assemble, quick-to-fit portable floor.

The result was Florlok - a dancefloor that required no tools yet could not split apart during use.

Along with Publok (a black-and-white version) and Weblok (the original tent-floor), it became global hit, with clients including:

- Every major hotel group
- The Atlanta Olympics
- Field hospitals during the Gulf War
- Sir Elton John's birthday bash
- David and Victoria Beckham's wedding
- A glitzy showbiz party hosted by Calvin Klein.

Its incredible popularity meant that in 2003, with his business now a multi-million-pound success story, Grumpy Joe was able to semi-retire and move to America.

And that's when strange things began to happen.

What's in a name?

When Grumpy Joe left for the States his company, **Portable Floormakers Ltd**, was enjoying an impressive annual turnover of £3m.

Two years later, to his astonishment and horror, it was placed into administration and closed down.

Incredibly, on the very same day - indeed, on the very same morning and very possibly within the very same hour - it was back again.

Except this time there was no Grumpy Joe. .

The replacement company - launched with a name so similar to its predecessor's that many customers didn't even spot the difference - now belonged to new owners who had swooped to buy it on the cheap.

All Grumpy Joe was left with were credit-card debts and a painful pile of personal guarantees.

Men of letters

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Last year, before the Showman's Show at Newbury, three cars parked outside Grumpy Joe's home were disabled by having the valves cut off their tyres. And earlier this year, the night before Hotelympia, another major exhibition, Grumpy Joe's offices were the target of an arson attack that damaged their phone lines and internet connections.

At around the same time a petrol-bomb was shoved through Grumpy Joe's letterbox. Mercifully, it failed to go off. And, just for good measure, four cars were vandalised outside Grumpy Joe's daughter's home. Each vehicle had its tyres slashed, and one had a paving slab hurled through its windscreen.

Joe can't prove who instigated this bullying and intimidation – but it doesn't take a genius to guess!

Floored Arguments

As the competition has come to realise, though, Grumpy Joe is not afraid to fight his corner.

After all, this isn't the first time he has had to stand his ground.

In 1992, in a court in America, he battled to protect the Florlok name and prove he was the inventor - and he won.

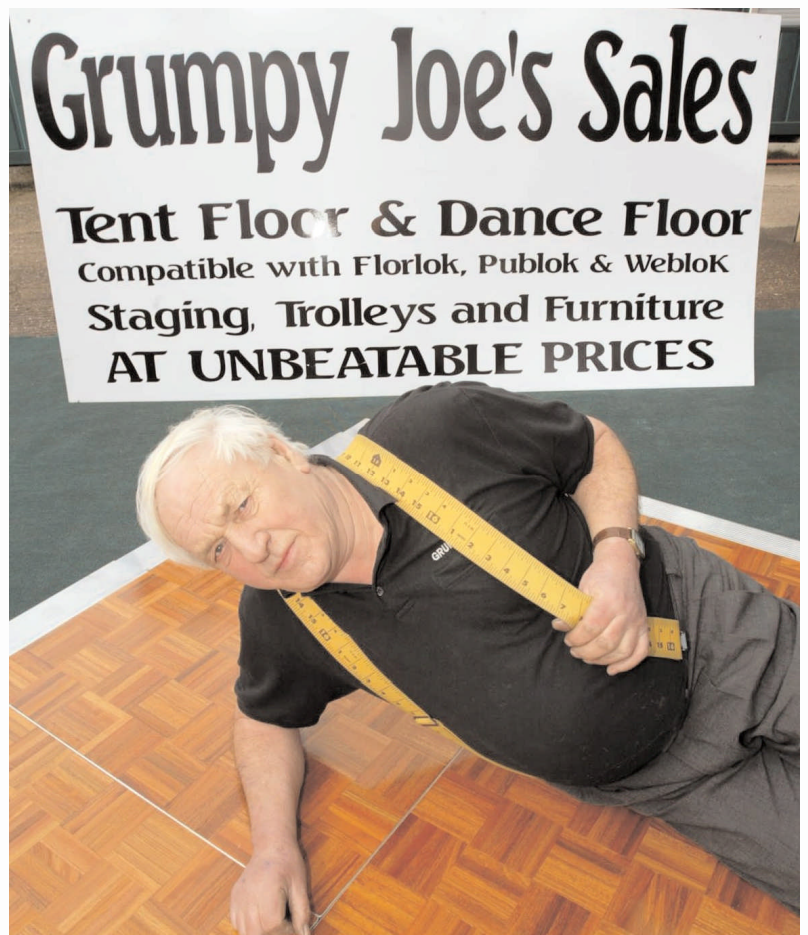
The bitter irony now is that he's actually being prevented from using the names of the products he created.

Thankfully, more and more customers are realising what happened when Portable Floormakers Ltd closed down. As a result, more and more are making the right choice by returning to Grumpy Joe.

Others have yet to fully grasp the full and worrying implications of what occurred. But Grumpy Joe hopes this story has helped rectify that.

As the man himself says: 'I may not be a sharp businessman, but I am honest.

'I value the support of friends, customers and suppliers I have dealt with for many years, and I cannot and will not sit back and allow them to be taken advantage of.'



For details of Grumpy Joe's portable flooring, staging and furniture, visit www.portableflooring.co.uk