

Carpet tile design and office communication - ILYA CORPORATION

TAJIMA released 10 new patterns for our TZ series of mid-to high-end carpet tile products in the spring of 2022.

In this article, we place a spotlight on "TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI" and "TAPIS TRIOS" through a dialogue between Asako Nakamura of ILYA CORPORATION, the design supervisor for these products, and one of our company's carpet tile designers. The conversation covers the project's launch, reflections after the products hit the market, and the envisioned future for office spaces.

Thanks to ...

ILYA CORPORATION

Asako Nakamura(on the left in the picture below)

Architect Facility Solution Division. In charge with work place consulting.

Tajima Roofing Inc. (Interviewer)

Mariko Asada(on the right in the picture below)

Product Development Division. In charge with engineering and design of carpet tiles.



The beginning of this new carpet tiles project traces back to the summer of 2018 when Nakamura and the Tajima designer Asada came across at a seminar and immediately connected with each other.

Concept of "Communication" in office, which was conceived even before the pandemic.

▶ **Nakamura from ILYA CORPORATION**(hereafter referred to as Nakamura.)

The kickoff was around May 2019, right? During this period, discussions on making offices more innovative and determining the ideal workspace for that purpose were starting to attract attention. I felt that for innovation to happen, people needed to be in offices, interacting and bouncing ideas off each other. I'd been wishing we could have a greater variety of carpet tiles suitable for that kind of space. So, the project kicked off with TAJIMA taking into account my personal wish or request.

▶ **Mariko Asada from TAJIMA**(hereafter referred to as Asada)

We were still talking without masks, weren't we? The pace of change in office trends was so rapid that I found it tricky to keep up with what the future would hold, and I was a bit uncertain about our next moves. The timing of our connection turned out to be quite fortunate.

However, once the project kicked off, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and I started worrying about how the world and the expectations for offices would shift.

▶ **Nakamura**

I remember you asked me if the concept really should be "communication." But, you know, we still believed that being in the office and talking to people would become even more valuable, especially with all the remote work options expanding. So, we stuck with the same concept for the products.

▶ **Asada**

As we were wrapping up the product design, especially when it came down to choosing colors, I finally became fully convinced of the significance of communication in the office. I'm glad the idea that communication spaces in society are necessary is still holding strong.

At that time, the terms "innovative" and "innovation" had become keywords, and innovation centers and co-working spaces were starting to gain popularity in the office scene. Despite shifts in people's working styles and office requirements from the pre-COVID period through the pandemic, the concept of "communication" continued to play a central role for these products.

TAPIS TRIOS, expressing the harmony between people through the stable form of triangles.

► Nakamura

When we think of a typical carpet tile, it often comes in a 500mm square shape, with visible joint lines and a pattern that fits tightly within that structure. However, I felt that these square lines, especially when combined with the grid ceiling, tended to give the overall space a somewhat rigid and distinctly "office-like" appearance.

Instead, we started with the idea of creating a pattern with gradations in multiple directions, breaking away from the confines of the conventional square frame, and infusing a bit more diversity and freedom into the office space with carpet tiles. We were curious to see if we could design a carpet tile pattern that would encourage a sense of freedom, especially in collaborative spaces where diverse ideas come to life.

A triangle is a stable shape with good balance. From the very beginning, we had the image that the collective harmony among people with diversity should not be a square, but a triangle with multiple directions.

► Asada

At first, you introduced the idea of "harmony between people," and based on that, we made samples and presented them to you. We exchanged information, such as "we might not achieve that specific expression, but we have an alternative method to create a gradation," and so on. We then integrated those ideas into the actual products.

► Nakamura

I shared my vision with you as inputs for creating something through a certain approach, and you presented various technical variations and expressions, producing numerous prototypes. There were quite a few, weren't there?

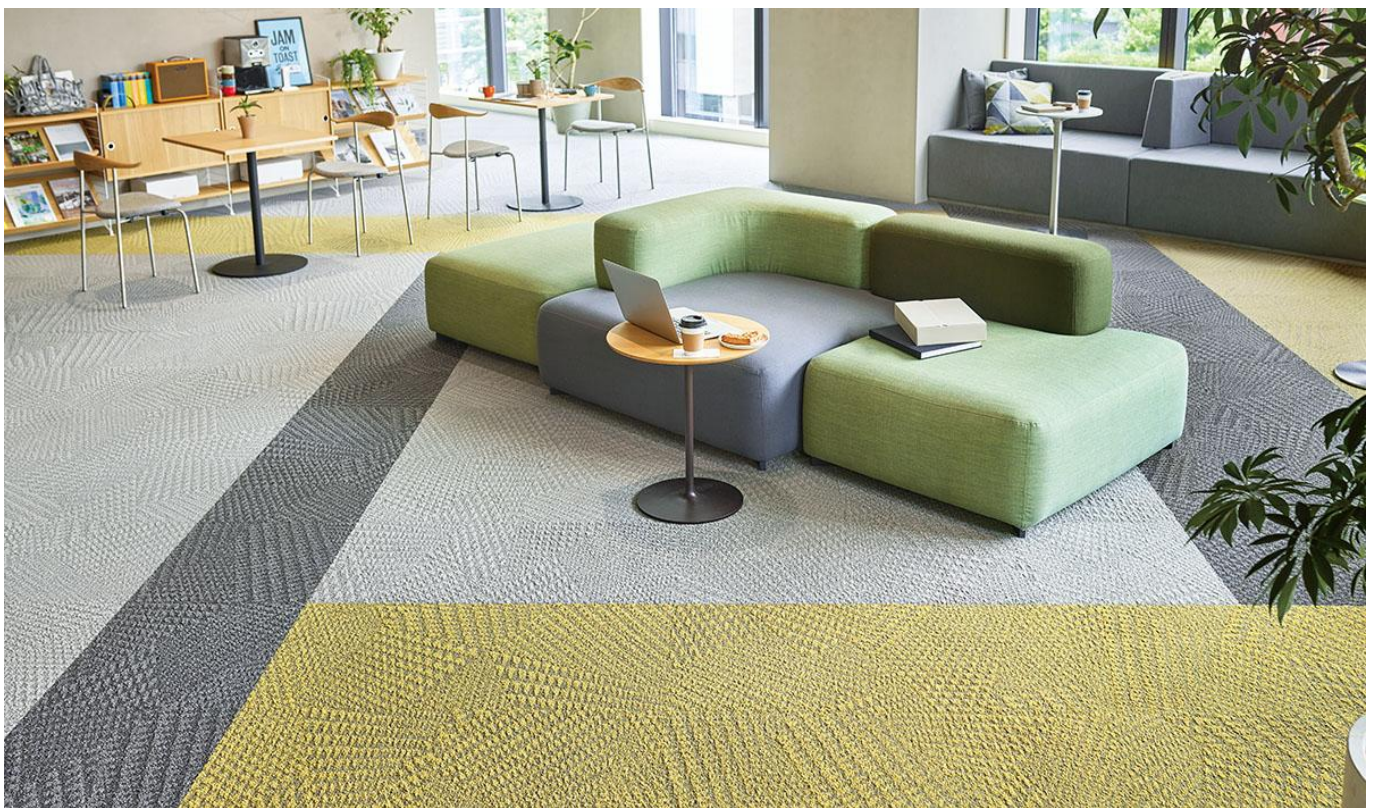
► Asada

Right, we presented you with actual samples, aiming to find the one that closely matched your vision in terms of size and gradation.

►Nakamura

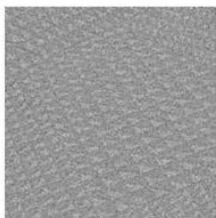
When the initial prototypes came out, I already felt like, "Wow, we're going to create something very new and interesting!" As for the colors, I thought it would be good to incorporate three shades in a stable gray gradation. Additionally, I wanted to include blue, which I believe is typical of TAJIMA, and a yellowish color. Specifically, I aimed for a yellow shade that would complement the brighter, medium to high-lightness grays.

Well, we had several other possibilities, didn't we? Such as a powdered-tea-like green, colors inspired by Japanese-style pickles, green tea, Japanese nightingale, and more. Although we did discuss the concept of "Japanese style," we eventually settled on the current colors, which have a bit more of a sporty, dynamic, and energetic feel.

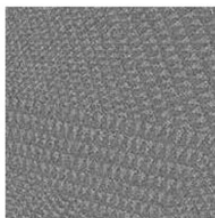


TAPIS TRIOS TZ10-681,682,684

TAPIS TRIOS



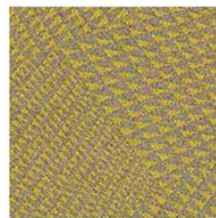
TZ10-681



TZ10-682



TZ10-683



TZ10-684



TZ10-685

Since its launch in the spring of 2022, TAPIS TRIOS has been so well-received with customers rating it as "a truly new concept and pattern". In an era where office fixtures are leaning towards simplicity, TAPIS TRIOS has been chosen in many places where customers seek a single-color carpet tile for a cohesive look while setting it apart from generic products.

"TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI," aiming for a fusion of organic and digital

The key and what we focused on, was the expression of circles.

►Nakamura

I also requested "Space Dye" for TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI. I can't recall how many times I shared my vision of the color gradation with you. Regarding the pattern, you gave such deliberate consideration to realizing those rhythmical and clear circle patterns. It began with the idea that I wanted to make something from integrating digital and organic.

*Space Dye: A single yarn is dyed in multiple colors. This type of yarn can express more depth compared to single-color dyed yarn

►Asada

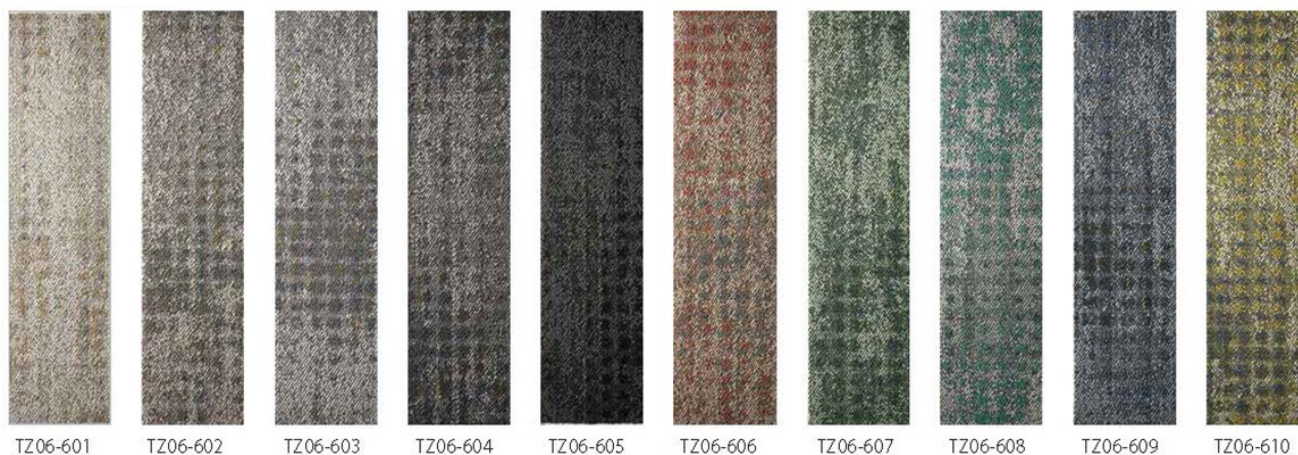
In the beginning, we struggled to realize those circles. We applied all of TAJIMA's know-how, from weaving to yarn processing.

►Nakamura

In terms of color, grayish tones have been trending not only in building materials but also in furniture over the past few years. So, we decided to start with a variation of gray, and I requested the creation of grayish gradations. Later, we added the other color variations with a subtle gray nuance remaining, aiming for something that had never been done before.

When I think of TAJIMA, I always associate it with blue, so I considered blue to be a must. I'm impressed with the carpet tiles of the DENIM series, and I find it difficult to capture the same atmosphere in other company's products. I believe it's a distinctive and original characteristic of TAJIMA.

TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI



Incorporating the essential elements needed for today's office environment into the design

►Nakamura

Though the COVID-19 pandemic came between the initial stages and the launch of this project, the significance of the headquarters office, the purpose of going to the office, and the communication required in the office were things I had been thinking about even before the pandemic.

And considering the importance of "diversity," I found that there were some factors which office users often had mentioned, such as patterns that aren't necessarily confined to square designs, and the need for "flexibility" to enhance user convenience ensuring rooms can be used even if the usage purpose shifts slightly.

I believe this new carpet product, which takes these factors into consideration, is perfectly timed to meet the current demands.

►Asada

After understanding your vision for the space clearly and recognizing its suitability for people's needs, we became determined that we must take your strong commitment into account. Our challenge was to find a way to get you to say "yes" to the technical aspects of the project.

►Nakamura

Recently, in spaces frequented by a large number of individuals, like common areas in offices, it seems that nature-related themes are commonly adopted. Incorporating concepts related to nature, such as the ocean or wind, aligns well with the idea of creating a product concept for spaces where people spend their time.

For this TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI, we aimed to create an image that is a fusion of "digital," which expresses a high-tech and advanced image, and "organic," which gives a sense of nature. We also tried to incorporate that expression of the boundaryless nuances in color variations.



TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI TZ06-603,608,609

Moving toward further innovation seeking for the future office

►Nakamura

When I think about the keywords for the future office image, I think it is impossible to ignore the recently centralized keywords "environmentally friendly" and "sustainable".

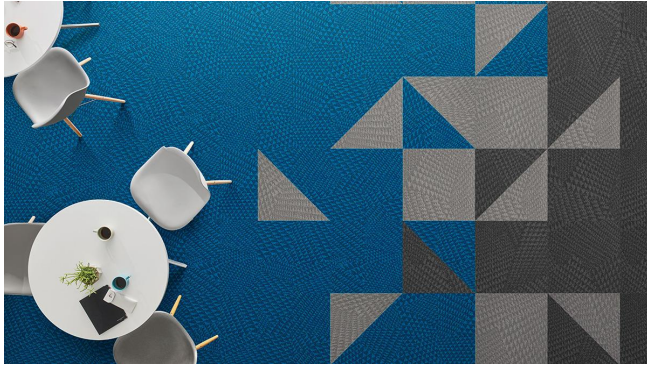
It is like in the office renovation, the customers say "The building materials are of course more eco-friendly than before, right?" I suppose that the clients will expect or even take it for granted that new building material should save energy more and approach to carbon neutral more closely. So I feel we need to elevate our environmental considerations one step further.

I believe that "communication" will continue to be a key aspect. Companies expect people engaging in conversations when they step into their offices, so I see this as an ongoing and essential theme.

Then, "flexibility." Being a part of diversity. There would be many interpretations of this word, such as multi-purpose use or it can be perceived in various ways. It can be comfortable for various people, and so on. How we incorporate this term into product development... though it can be a bit tricky because it is so conceptual.

In my view, at least these keywords cannot be off the table. Additionally, I believe people want a "wow!" factor when they step into the office. Sometimes our clients express this, saying things like, "We want more of a WOW feeling in this perspective." They aim for students visiting their office for recruitment to experience a sense of "Wow, this is cool" as soon as they walk in.

The office is branding- no doubt about it. I believe the office will play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping a brand. Now, our task is to consider, 'What should the space look like to fulfill this purpose?



TAPIS TRIOS TZ10-682,683,685



TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI TZ06-602,603,607,610

►Nakamura

This time, I had the opportunity to be part of the carpet tile product development, and I thoroughly enjoyed the entire process. I worked on it with a sense of "fun, fun, fun" all the way to the end. I believe the excitement and enthusiasm I experienced during the project have been translated into the final product.

At the same time, this project made me recognize the effectiveness of experimenting with new processes, collaborations, and systems that haven't been explored before in the quest to create something novel. I see this process as the essence of innovation.

TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI, rooted in the concept of blending the digital with the organic, has received a good reputation, such as "standing out well (Instagrammable)," "creating the contemporary atmosphere space just by installing it," and "fitting in well with an office with a biophilic design." Office innovation is expected to continue in the future. We are really looking forward to seeing how TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI will be accepted in such scenes.

TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI is installed, using four colors, at the entrance of TAJIMA's headquarter building. Please take a look when you stop by the showroom or our offices.

TZ Series Catalog - Capturing the essence of carpet tiles and designed for user convenience.



►Nakamura

I felt that this navy-blue color truly embodied the essence of TAJIMA. Seeing this catalog brought me as much joy as seeing the actual product.

It felt like it fulfilled a quiet wish I had one day: "Wouldn't it be nice if we had a catalog like this, with elegance?"

Overall, it's very user-friendly. You can check out the entire lineup and see available colors in the first section. There are plenty of visuals, almost like flipping through a magazine, and, in any case, numerous floor simulations. The office plans on the page are also handy for making proposals.

I'm also impressed with the embossing on the cover page. It's something you can't fully experience in a digital catalog, which is why I encourage people to request a printed one, so that they can see this embossing.

►Asada

We had color charts for vinyl tiles, but oddly, we had only a few for carpet tiles, so we planned and made it in this project.

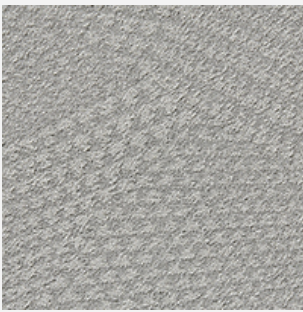
When we explain how to use them to designers, they often say, "Wow, this is really new." While some people work from home, and digital catalogs are convenient, we've also received positive feedback about the paper version, letting people touch and feel the product.



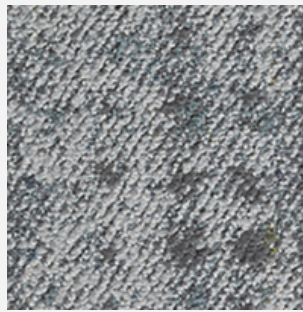
[TZ Carpet Tile 2023](#)



Floor materials introduced in this article.



Carpet Tile
TAPIS TRIOS



Carpet Tile
TAPIS PLAYFUL DIGI