

## Easier Than Fillers



A top quality, water-based all-acrylic or siliconized acrylic caulk is a great substitute for conventional hard fillers when sealing hairline cracks or covering small holes in sheetrock or plaster. Not only are these caulks easier to use than conventional fillers, but they can also cut surface preparation time in half.

While paste fillers or joint cement must dry thoroughly and then be sanded before being painted, all-acrylic or siliconized acrylic caulk can simply be smoothed with a wet finger and painted right away if a top quality paint is used. (Customers using a lower quality paint should let the caulk cure for 12 hours before painting.)

Unlike hard fillers, which can crack with building movement, these top quality caulks remain soft and flexible, allowing them to accommodate the movement of building materials, whether the cause is settling, or expansion and contraction due to temperature changes.

One caveat: When dealing with *large* holes and cracks in sheetrock or plaster, a more rigid material is still the best remedy. Candidates include Spackle®, plaster or wallboard joint compound.

In any event, when recommending paint for walls which have imperfections, bear in mind that dead flat paint will help conceal irregularities better than paints with higher sheen.

## “Finish” Work



In virtually any room, quality water-based all-acrylic or siliconized acrylic caulk can be used to fill gaps or cracks in and around mitered joints, baseboards, chair rails or crown molding to give the room a visually pleasing, “finished” look.

These caulks are real time-savers when planning to paint wood molding — especially when the molding has gaps because it does not fit flush against the wall or door frame, or because the mitering is inexact. Of course, as wood dries, it can also change dimensions slightly, creating or widening gaps.

If your customer were to use a less flexible material (e.g., wood filler) to give a finished look to wood molding, it might eventually pull away from the substrate, creating new cracks and gaps. But an all-acrylic caulk is flexible enough to adapt to minor fluctuations, expanding to fill gaps that widen slightly over time.

## Clear Caulks



Many of your customers may be unaware of the aesthetic value of clear caulks, which can be beneficial in a variety of circumstances.

Clear formulations of water-based all-acrylic and siliconized acrylic caulks are transparent when dry, providing an invisible barrier against moisture or outside drafts. These unobtrusive caulks provide a watertight seal without detracting from the color, texture or grain of the materials to which they are applied.

If a customer is looking for a caulk formulation that is compatible with the tile in his or her bathroom, for example, he or she may not be satisfied with the limited range of hues that are offered. If so, the invisible seal of a clear caulk is a great alternative.

Likewise, if a customer wants to keep water from getting behind wallpaper above the kitchen sink, applying a clear sealant to the seam between the wallpaper and the backsplash will provide a moisture-proof barrier that won't interfere with the pattern of the wallcovering.

Similarly, customers who want to use caulk for exterior sealing may have difficulty finding a color that matches their siding. Here, too, a clear caulk can seal out moisture and energy-draining drafts around window and door frames — while letting the beauty of the siding show through.

Although silicone caulks are also available in clear formulations, they remain cloudy after curing. Water-based all-acrylic or siliconized caulks, on the other hand, dry completely clear.

## Unusual Applications



You may also be able to build caulk sales by telling your customers about some of the more unusual, yet effective, ways caulk can be used to protect a home.

Caulking the junctures between the wood columns and concrete pads that support a deck or portico will help prevent the bottom of the columns from absorbing moisture and rotting out. If the columns are painted, but not sealed with caulk, this moisture can work its way to the outside of the columns and blister the paint.



Assuming that your customer has a post lantern in front of the house, he or she may be interested in learning that caulking the seam between the post and lantern will prevent moisture from seeping inside and corroding the electrical wiring.

Likewise, sealing the edges of an electrical outlet or a light fixture on an exterior wall will keep moisture from seeping down into the wall and penetrating the interior wiring.

Caulk can also be used around spigots and other protrusions to create a watertight seal in exterior walls.

Another way your customers can use caulk to protect their homes is to apply the sealant to gaps between the roof shingles and the eaves. This will prevent unwanted moisture from finding its way inside, and keep bees or wasps from entering to build nests.

## Recommending Quality

The best caulk to recommend for all of these applications is a top quality all-acrylic or siliconized acrylic caulk. In addition to their superior flexibility, these caulks have excellent adhesive properties which enable them to adhere to a wide range of building materials, including wood, aluminum and vinyl siding, ceramic tile, concrete, glass, plaster, bare aluminum, brick and plastic — even under wet conditions.

But it's not enough for a caulk to have good initial adhesion and flexibility. It is important that the product maintain these qualities over time, or the caulk could crack and pull away from the surfaces to which it is applied.

Tests show that top quality water-based all-acrylic and siliconized acrylic caulks excel in long-term durability, making them a great investment in terms of cost per year of service.

By familiarizing yourself with the performance characteristics of these quality caulks and the many uses they have both inside and outside the home, you will be providing your customers a valuable service that is sure to boost your sundry sales. ■

