

PMP Pest Management PROFESSIONAL



GEARING UP FOR GROWTH

**PMPs boost equipment/materials budgets
and plan additional investments in 2021**

Mix & Match Any 4

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Maxxthor SC
Prothor SC 2
Adjuthor



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Vectothor Falcon LED

Area coverage:	538 ft ²
Light source:	15 W ASTRON ECO-LED UV-A™ LAMP
Weight:	approx. 4.5 lb with light tubes fitted
Material:	HDPE chassis with full metal front panel
Degree of protection:	IP 20
Mounting position:	Wall mounted
Dimensions (LxWxD):	19.5" x 5.75" x 6.5"



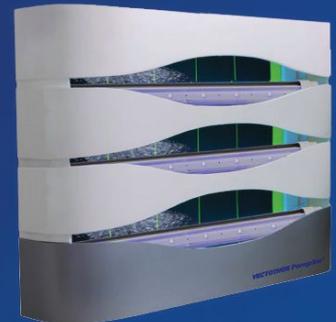
Vectothor Osprey LED

Area coverage:	1076 ft ²
Light source:	2 x 15 W ASTRON ECO-LED UV-A™ LAMPS
Weight:	approx. 9 lb with light tubes fitted
Material:	Coated steel casing, cover/grid ABS plastic
Degree of protection:	IP 20
Mounting position:	Wall mounted
Dimensions (LxWxD):	18.5" x 14" x 4"



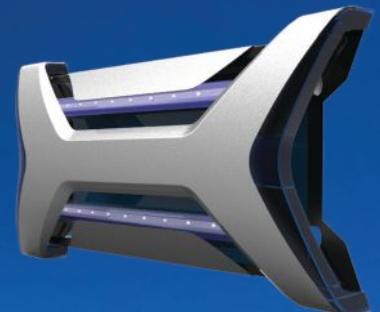
Vectothor Peregrine 3 LED

Area coverage:	1614 ft ²
Light source:	3 x 15 W ASTRON ECO-LED UV-A™ LAMPS
Weight:	approx. 13 lb with light tubes fitted
Material:	Coated steel casing, cover/grid ABS plastic
Degree of protection:	IP 20
Mounting position:	Wall mounted
Dimensions (LxWxD):	20.5" x 14.5" x 6"



Vectothor Buzzard LED

Area coverage:	861 ft ²
Light source:	2 x 15 W ASTRON ECO-LED UV-A™ LAMPS
Weight:	approx. 10 lb with light tubes fitted
Material:	Coated steel casing, cover/grid ABS plastic
Degree of protection:	IP 20 (drip proof)
Mounting position:	Wall or ceiling mounted
Dimensions (LxWxD):	21.25" x 12.25" x 4"



iQ PRODUCTS:

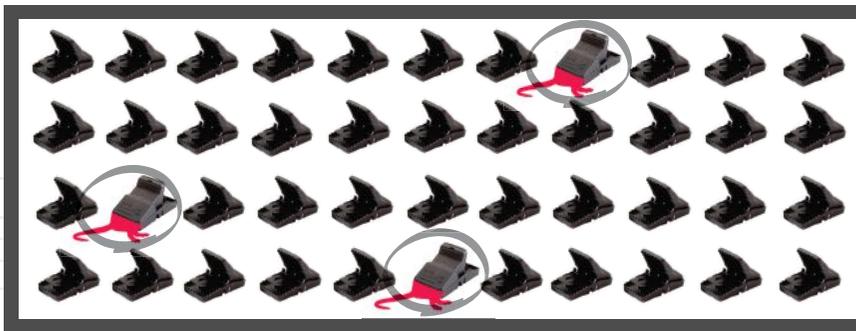
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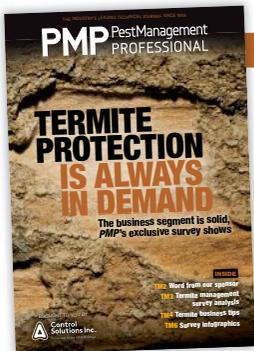
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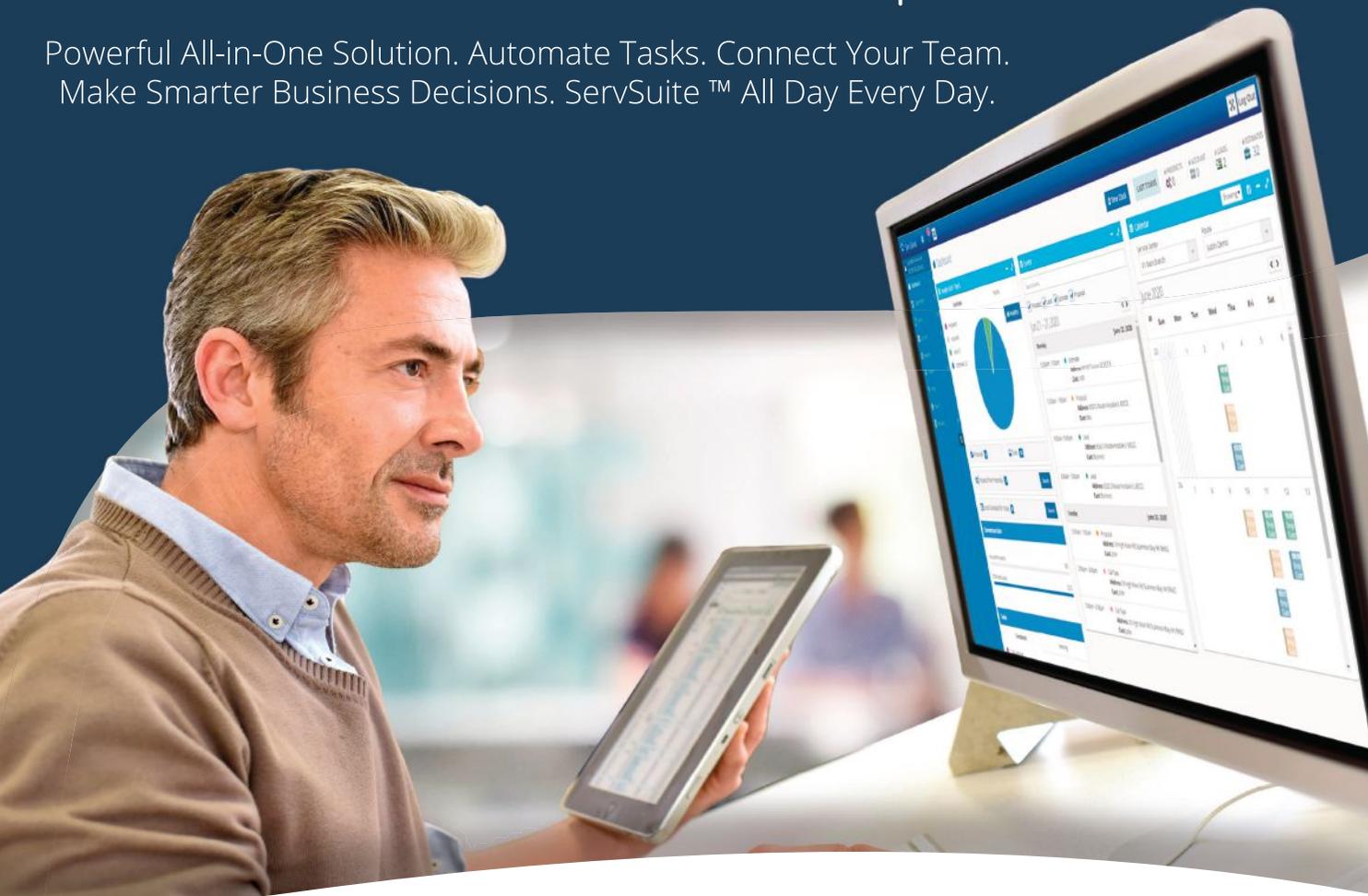
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Make Smarter Business Decisions. ServSuite™ All Day Every Day.



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Express gratitude with gifts

By Heather Gooch

CORRECTION: The May 2020 "Ask the Expert" column (p. 64) should have stated opossums are the only marsupial found in the United States and Canada, not North America. The editors regret the error.

10 Reasons CimeXa[™] insecticide dust

Should Be Your Go-To Bed Bug Product

Actual Picture



Destroys the waxy cuticle - results in rapid dehydration & death.

1

Kills Fast

2

Long Lasting Control

3

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4

Apply as Dust or Wettable Powder

5

Non-Repellent

6

Odorless

7

Non-Clumping

8

Non-Staining

9

Very Low Toxicity



10

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EXTRAS

In Gen-Z parlance, “extra” isn’t always a good thing. For the hip, it can mean being over the top or excessive. But we prefer the old-school definition: More, additional. A bonus.

That kind of extra information is what we have from our cover story sources this month, and it’s all at your fingertips online at **PMPestTalk.net**. There, you’ll find:

- Advice from **Kevin Sherrill**, president of Sherrill Pest Control. He ensured

employee comfort when he purchased three-in-one jacket logowear for his Manchester, Tenn.-based team. During his interview for this month’s cover story, which starts on p. 26, he admitted it was an unplanned expense, but worth it in spades for boosting employee morale. “When COVID-19 hit, we realized we can only focus on what we could control,” he said. “Keeping our employees ready for rain, snow or sun — while at the same time reinforcing our brand — was an easy thing to do.”

- Do you consider footwear as part of your company-issued uniforms for techs? Action Pest Control will this year. The Evansville, Ind.-based firm, a TruGreen company, puts a priority on safety. The thinking is that an investment in top-quality boots ensures technicians will be safer in the field because they are not trying to “get another season” out of worn-out boots that could lead to slip-and-fall injuries on icy lawns and wet ladder steps. “Safety wins, morale wins,” quipped Technical Services Manager **Scott Robbins, ACE**.

- We also have more straight talk from **Josh Handy**, owner of Foremost Pest & Wildlife, Monroe, N.C. When working with a family member, “work is work and home is home,” he advised. “Continue to be thoughtful of one another, and apologize when needed.”

As always, please don’t hesitate to continue the conversation and give us feedback by commenting on our website articles and social media posts, or drop us a line at **pmpeditor@northcoastmedia.net**.

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of the **YES Pest Pros**
of **Elkhart and South Bend, Indiana**
on their recent sale to Rollins.




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407-466-5859 | kemp@kempany.com | www.kempany.com

EDITORIAL STAFF

Marty Whitford, Editorial Director
mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3766

Heather Gooch, Editor
hgooch@northcoastmedia.net
330-321-9754

Diane Sofranec, Senior Editor
dsofranec@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3793

Danielle Pesta, Digital Editor
dpesta@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-7928

Tracie Martinez, Art Director
tmartinez@northcoastmedia.net
216-280-6127

Courtney Townsend, Graphic Designer
ctownsend@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-7931

Olivia Newman, Junior Graphic Designer
onewman@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3780

PRODUCTION/CIRCULATION

Rhonda Sande, Senior Manager of Production Services
rsande@northcoastmedia.net
216-978-9778

Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins, Book Sales Senior Audience Development Manager
asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3750 • Fax: 702-586-2790

List Rental, The Information Refinery Inc.
Brahm Schenkman
bschenkman@inforefinery.com
800-529-9020

Subscriptions & Customer Service

pestmanagementprofessional@omeda.com
847-513-6030

Reprints & Permissions

Wright's Reprints
northcoastmedia@wrightsmedia.com

BUSINESS STAFF

Marty Whitford, Publisher
mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3766

Michael Joyce, Associate Publisher
mjoyce@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3723

Ryan Gerard, Account Manager
rgerard@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-7921

Kelli Velasquez, Classified Sales
kvelasquez@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-3767

Michelle Mitchell, Director of Marketing & Events
mmitchell@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-7922

Margot Kelley, Marketing Manager
mkelley@northcoastmedia.net
216-706-3772

Allison Blong, Events Manager
ablong@northcoastmedia.net
216-363-7936

Pest Management Professional

1360 East 9th St., 10th Floor
Cleveland, OH 44114
216-706-3700
Fax: 216-706-3711
MyPMP.net
pmp@northcoastmedia.net



Kevin Stoltman, President & CEO
kstoltman@northcoastmedia.net • 216-706-3740

Steve Galperin, Vice President of Finance & Operations
sgalperin@northcoastmedia.net • 216-706-3705

Pete Seltzer, Vice President of Graphic Design & Production
pseltzer@northcoastmedia.net • 216-706-3737

Marty Whitford, Editorial Director
mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net • 216-706-3766

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Booming termite business

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor

Is it possible to successfully offer termite management services in the midst of a pandemic? Absolutely, according to the pest management professionals (PMPs) who answered the survey on which our 2021 Termite Management Supplement is based.



Customers working from home because they are unable to go into the office have had a positive impact on business for many PMPs. The phones start ringing when

customers notice swarms or termite damage during home improvement projects. The recent housing boom also has been a plus for pre-sale home inspections.

Ensure termite inspection and treatment referrals with the following tips:

- Provide customers with a detailed explanation of the treatment you are using, and why you are using it. Help them understand what they are paying you for.
- Provide ongoing training for termite control technicians, to ensure quality work.
- Be honest with customers at all times. Remember, your reputation is at stake.

For more tips, check out our Termite Management Supplement, which starts after p. 40. PMP

You can reach SOFRANEC at dsfranec@northcoastmedia.net or 216-706-3793.



'Don't waste winter'

By Heather Gooch | PMP Editor

The winter pest control season is historically slow. But that doesn't deter Alan Feuer, ACE. During an interview for this month's cover story, which starts on p. 26, the technical director of Preventive Pest Control (PCC) in Albuquerque, N.M., explained that this year, winter is a time for training.

"Our rallying cry is DWW: Don't Waste Winter!" he says. "We deliberately overhired heading into the colder months, and made a formal investment in providing even more training and proficiency upgrades available to our developing personnel. All of us on the management team knew this

would cost us a considerable amount in wages, as well as time and emotion to accomplish this task."

While training always has been paramount for PCC, Feuer adds, this winter there is an increased focus on on-the-job observations, as well as development and certification of proficiency sessions for the field and office teams. Classroom-style education on a number of topics is conducted every Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 a.m., via a Zoom call.

"Training is never done by chance, even if it is sometimes dictated by reality, schedules and client needs," Feuer says. He advises colleagues consider this in their own training programs, keeping in mind that a business' work force is its greatest asset. PMP

You can reach GOOCH at hgooch@northcoastmedia.net or 330-321-9754.



ILLUSTRATION: LEO MICHAEL

BAIT ROTATION Prevents BAIT AVERSION

Cockroach bait aversion (roaches no longer eat the bait) is caused by the repeated use of the same or similar baits. At minimum, at least two different gel baits should be rotated in a control program. With baits, the quality and diversity of attractants is as important as the active ingredient.



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Question of the Month

OUR EXPERTS WEIGH IN

WHAT IS YOUR MOST UNCONVENTIONAL BUDGET EXPENDITURE?

"I have two. First, at the end of each year, we award our 'Schopies' to our top talent. We buy beautiful **GLASS AWARDS** (accompanied by paycheck bonuses) for Top Salesperson, MVP, Rookie of the Year, Employee of the Year and our All-Stars. We spend between \$400 and \$500 on our awards. Second, for 2020, our most unconventional expenditure was for more than \$18,000, to have nine **SIDEWALK BOLLARDS** (concrete-filled metal posts) installed in front of our building. We are located at such a busy intersection, three vehicles have either slid or crashed into our building in the past three years."



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Terminix Commercial

Greg Baumann
Nisus Corp.

Judy Black, BCE*
Rollins Inc.

Dr. Jim Fredericks
National Pest Management Association

Dan Gordon
PCO Bookkeepers

Bobby Jenkins
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Jerry Schappert, ACE*
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"**BEER** for making slug traps. Buy the cheap stuff; they are not connoisseurs."



"We have a profit-and-loss expense line item called '**COMPANY FUN**' for team-building events or meals."



"**PENS.** The first time I bought pens to give away, I got the worst pens ever. They were made of such thin plastic, you could practically break with your fingers. The ink never flowed properly, so you were constantly going over every letter. They were so bad you would literally throw them across the room in frustration. I now only purchase quality metal pens with a stylus and flashlight on them. They are so good, I get people reaching out months later asking for more of them."



"It took our financial controller by surprise to see **GATORADE** and **TUMS** show up on a petty cash receipt. They were for an ailing dog in the canine division."



"**MOUNTAIN DEW,** to keep energy flowing in our two-and-a-half-day classes."



MORE ONLINE

For more lessons learned by our experts and to share your own, please visit PMPPestTalk.net.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

An Invaluable Investment

The Bugmaster, which is celebrating its 40th year in business, has undergone quite a transformation over the last several years, according to President Dauphin Ewart. His father, Ned Ewart, founded the Austin, Texas-based pest control company in 1981 with a VW Beetle as its first service vehicle.

Back then, the company focused on commercial accounts like restaurants because Ned could sell to them during the day and service them at night. Today, The Bugmaster serves commercial, residential and multifamily accounts, offering general pest, termite, wildlife and bird control.

About five years ago, Dauphin sought help understanding and tightening up the firm's financials as it evolved. The company's annual revenue has grown from \$4 million when he joined the business in 2005 to approximately \$7.3 million today.

"We grew from a company that had a sales culture — sort of a 'revenue forgives all sins' perspective, where you just go out and grow," Dauphin says. "Having tight financials was never really one of our strengths. We knew fundamentally that we made money every month, but getting into details about how that came about wasn't part of it for us."

He knew that mentality needed to change as the company scaled up, so he turned to PCO Bookkeepers, which works with more than 300 pest control companies across the U.S. to provide accounting, bookkeeping and CFO services; tax preparation and planning; and accounts payable management. Along

with these offerings, PCO Bookkeepers clients receive in-depth monthly benchmarking reports that compare them to other firms in the pest control industry.

The Bugmaster had always employed an internal bookkeeper and an outside CPA, but the company had never had a CFO or someone to provide high-level financial advice.

"My CPA's take was always, 'Whatever you decide to do we can write that into the taxes,'" Dauphin says. "They would definitely keep me out of jail, which is valuable, but it's not helpful financial guidance."

What he needed — and got — from PCO Bookkeepers was a resource for financial planning answers, operational advice and industry benchmarking information.

"I think of PCO Bookkeepers as a virtual CFO," Dauphin says. "Honestly, it was one of those gaps that I didn't know I had before I filled it. I couldn't imagine operating the business now without them."

For instance, in late 2018 the The Bugmaster was having strong growth but poor profitability. It turns out, sales and marketing expenses were too high for the level of growth the firm was experiencing.

Working with Anthony Pepe, managing member of PCO Bookkeepers, Dauphin learned he needed to change his sales process, which previously ran every dollar through the sales organization, driving up commission expenses. That revelation led to training the customer service team to provide quotes over the phone.



Dauphin Ewart

President
The Bugmaster

"Without having a financial dashboard and seeing that this was the most important area to fix our profitability, it would have been harder to commit to the change," he says, adding the company took back several profitability points that year.

"Working with PCO Bookkeepers is an investment," Dauphin says. "Like any investment, you would expect it to pay off. No one has a deeper understanding of what the financials of a pest control company should look like than PCO Bookkeepers. They can quickly look at your P&L and say, 'This is where my concern is.' That's an invaluable conversation to have as a business owner."



BUSINESS BACKGROUND

COMPANY: The Bugmaster

HEADQUARTERS: Austin, Texas

PRESIDENT: Dauphin Ewart

SIZE: Approximately \$7.3 million in 2020 revenue

EMPLOYEES: 70

BEST ADVICE: "Even if you're not planning on selling your business anytime soon, part of the job of a CEO is to make sure the business value grows over time. You're only going to be able to accomplish that if you understand what things add value to the business. We are in no way, shape or form on the market, but I am happy to know that if we were going to market, I have everything in place. Having a partner like PCO Bookkeepers is really valuable for that."

— *Dauphin Ewart*



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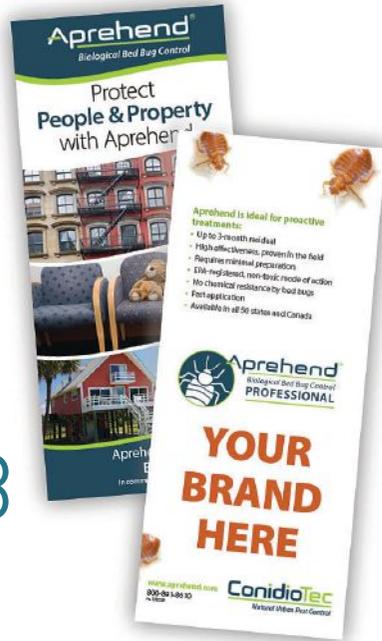
1



2



3



4



1 Companion antibacterial hand soap

Neogen • Neogen.com

Companion Foaming Antibacterial Hand Soap kills 99.9 percent of harmful bacteria, the company says, yet has a light, fresh scent, and will not dry out skin with frequent use. Its active ingredient is benzalkonium chloride (0.13 percent), with a formulation that is free of phthalate and silicone. The product is available in 16.9-ounce containers featuring hand pumps, suitable for use at the sink, and 1-gallon refill-sized containers. It can be used with Neogen's Foam Dispenser Unit, a touchless automatic dispenser that is available for use with a floor stand.

2 Bed bug control power package

GreenTech Heat • GreenTechHeat.com/portable52k

Don't let a lack of electricity at a jobsite

keep you from killing bed bugs. This package brings enough portable power to electrically heat-treat up to 1,400 square feet in one day. It includes everything you need for conducting turnkey, high-power electrical bed bug treatments, regardless of on-site power availability. The ePro 1400 electric heater will increase ambient temperatures to lethal levels within two hours; it heats like propane, but has the lightweight portability of electric.

3 Customized Aprehend brochures

ConidioTec • Aprehend.com

A new, free "Protect People & Property with Aprehend" brochure is now available to Aprehend professionals. It explains the benefits of the biopesticide as a proactive bed bug treatment. ConidioTec will add your logo and contact information to the back of the brochure file so you can then print your own or share it electronically.

Alternatively, the company will send you 50 non-branded copies. Simply request by phone or email orders@conidiotec.com.

4 TechMobile communications service

Voice for Pest • VoiceForPest.com

TechMobile is a service that allows users to mobile-enable their company communications. Business conversations from company smartphones flow through the phone system via the cellular voice channel — letting firms track, record and report on the conversations, as well as control the outbound caller ID and inbound routing. TechMobile uses standard Apple and Android devices, and runs over the networks of multiple existing Tier 1 service providers. By controlling the cellular voice path, users can place calls from any smartphone app, including their chosen pest software mobile app, and the call automatically will route through the system.



5



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7



8

5 Redesigned EZ Klean Station

VM Products • VMProducts.com

Newly redesigned to maximize bait placement, the EZ Klean Bait Station with EZ Service Tray fits securely into tight spaces. Its exclusive baffling system guides rodents to the bait area of the station, providing a protected place for them to feed. Having no unnecessary voids means no harborage for insects, as well as no unwanted water from pooling, which could lead to mold. Mount up to four block baits or eight soft baits with the EZ Service Tray, fitted with four vertical bait rods. The Universal Key that fits other stations from VM Products also works for this new design. Metal bait rods also are included.

6 20-ounce Scion insecticide

FMC • ScionUVXTechnology.com

Scion insecticide with UVX technology, featuring an active ingredient of

gamma-cyhalothrin, is now available in a 20-ounce package, in addition to the original 1.33- and 32-ounce sizes. FMC's proprietary UVX technology is a multi-component formulation engineered to deliver immediate control and a continuous residual, even under extreme conditions such as high temperatures, intense sunlight and harsh surfaces. It offers more than 90-day performance against spiders, ticks, ants, mosquitoes, cockroaches and more.

7 Mini Tube Trap

Wildlife Control Supplies • ShopWCS.com

Tube Trap products are designed to be a natural attractant to rodents that want to run through or hide inside. The latest model in this product line is the Mini Tube Trap, specially designed for small rodents such as Norway rats, roof rats, chipmunks, weasels and flying squirrels. The trap is treated with an electroplating

process that is green in color and rust-resistant. Constructed of 21-gauge steel, it is 3.5 inches in diameter and 11 inches long, with a strong double torsion spring, a zero-clearance strike bar, and a built-in safety latch to prevent premature firing. The Mini Tube Trap can be used either baited or non-baited.

8 All-purpose cleaner, odor eliminator and disinfectant

J.F. Oakes • JFOakes.com

J.F. Oakes is the master distributor of Sniper Hospital Disinfectant, Odor Eliminator and All-Purpose Cleaner. The non-corrosive product complies with volatile organic compound (VOC) laws and does not require rinsing. It has no added fragrance and is mild enough to wash your hands with, yet sanitizes food surfaces within 60 seconds, the company says. Sniper is available in 32-ounce spray bottles, 1-gallon jugs, 5-gallon pails and 55-gallon drums.



FMC announces trivia game winners

FMC Professional Solutions announced winners of its FMC True Champions Trivia Challenge, hosted at the National Pest Management Association's (NPMA's) first virtual PestWorld late last year. Winners showcased their knowledge of urban pest management, FMC products and popular culture. Prizes included Cabela's gift cards and upgraded True Champions Rewards program status. Winners include:

- Cory Goeltzenleuchter, McCall Service, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Kevin Hathorne, Terminix Service Inc., Columbia, S.C.
- Kim Kelley-Tunis, Terminix, Memphis, Tenn.
- Justin Marlowe, McCauley Services in Bryant, Ark.
- David Moor, Dodson Pest Control, Lynchburg, Va.
- Marty Overline, Aardvark Pest Management, Philadelphia, Pa.
- Glen Ramsey, Rollins Inc., Atlanta, Ga.
- Andrew Taylor, Plunkett's Pest Control, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Mark VanderWerp, Rose Pest Solutions, Troy, Mich.
- Jim Zylstra, Tuff Turf Molebusters, Byron Center, Mich.

IN MEMORIAM:



Bart Baker, retired senior VP of J.T. Eaton, Twinsburg, Ohio, passed away Jan. 3 in Leesburg, Fla., from complications from COVID-19. He was 78. Memorial donations can be made to Temple Israel Ner Tamid (TINTCleveland.org) or Temple Shalom of Central Florida (TempleShalomCentralFl.org).



Eleanor "Jo" Cook, matriarch of Decatur, Ala.-based Cook's Pest Control, passed away Dec. 7 at age 92. Memorial contributions can be made to Neighborhood Christian Center (NCCLife.org) or Decatur Heritage Christian Academy (DHCA.org).

MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS & EXPANSIONS

Plunkett's adds two Pennsylvania firms



Ellwood City, Pa.-based Doctor Dead Bug was acquired by Plunkett's Pest Control, Fridley, Minn. The Aust Group, Upper Saddle River, N.J., represented Doctor Dead Bug. From left are Stuart Aust; Plunkett's Scott Steckel and Stacy O'Reilly; Doctor Dead Bug's Sam and Melanie Servick; Dan Aust and Chris Aust.



Plunkett's also acquired Johnstown (Pa.) Pest Control, which was represented by The Potomac Co. From left are Plunkett's Scott Steckel and Mark Goodman with Johnstown's Trina, Don and Carlo Cortese.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

PHOTOS: THE AUST GROUP; THE POTOMAC CO.

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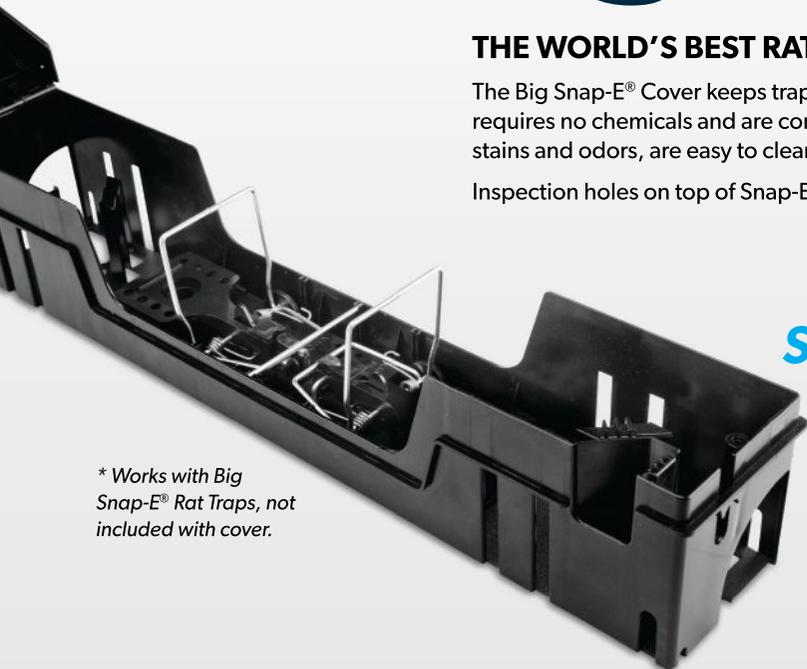
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PRO GRADE
PERFORMANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Pro-Pest Roach & Crawling Insect Trap
PRE-BAITED, READY TO USE



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 Note: black interior

This trap photo is from a residential account, taken by Jeff McGovern, The Pest Coach. We call this kind of catch a Raging Success!!

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Arrow Exterminators acquires DC Scientific Pest Control

The acquisition of DC Scientific Pest Control gives Atlanta, Ga.-based Arrow Exterminators three new Alabama locations in Tuscaloosa, Birmingham and Winfield, that now operate as Stark Exterminators, an Arrow Exterminators brand. DC Scientific's Ann Majcher, second from left, is flanked by, from left, Arrow's Kevin Burns, Emily Thomas Kendrick and Tim Pollard.

PHOTO: ARROW EXTERMINATORS




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— Eric Richmond, Chief Executive Officer



Pictured: Frank and
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16



Waynes purchases P.E.S.T. Inc.

Birmingham, Ala.-based **Waynes Pest Control**, an **Anticimex** company, purchased **Pest Elimination Services of Tennessee (P.E.S.T. Inc.)**. Headquartered in Goodlettsville, Tenn., P.E.S.T. is Waynes' second Nashville-area acquisition in 2020. The company was advised by **PCO M&A Specialists**, a division of **PCO Bookkeepers**. From left are Waynes President **Shawn Hollis** and P.E.S.T.'s **Julie** and **Andy Yant**.

- Guilford, Conn.-based **Certus Pest** purchased Miami, Fla.-based **Santiano Brothers Pest Management Professionals**, which was represented by **Kemp Anderson Consulting**.
- Wrentham, Mass.-based **Mosquito Mary's** signed its first franchisee: **Kris Ancone** of Charlotte, N.C.
- Birmingham, Ala.-based **Conserv Pest & Wildlife Control** acquired a stake in **Apex Wildlife Solutions**, Dallas, Texas.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

● Stockholm, Sweden-based **Anticimex** appointed **David Billingsly, ACE**, to oversee its three newly acquired companies in the Western U.S.:



Billingsly

EnviroPest, Windsor, Colo.; **Northwest Exterminating**, Tucson, Ariz.; and **Pro Pacific**, Escondido, Calif. Billingsly is president of **American Pest**, an Anticimex company based in Fulton, Md.

● Guilford, Conn.-based **Certus Pest** hired industry veteran **Tanya Wittig** as president for its northwest market.



Wittig

● Troy, Mich.-based **Rose Pest Solutions** promoted **George Meacham** from operations manager to district manager of its new offices in Indianapolis and Kokomo, Ind.



Meacham

● **Schopen Pest Solutions** promoted its office manager, **Laura Lentz**, to operations manager. The McHenry, Ill.-based firm is owned by **Pest Management Professional's** "Start-up Diaries" columnist, **Pete Schopen**.



Lentz

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NPMA's Workforce Development program helps growing PMPs

By Dominique Stumpf, CAE, CMP | PMP Contributor

To work in this industry is to love this industry. But many members of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) have lamented that attracting and retaining quality talent is a huge challenge. For some, the No. 1 thing hindering business growth is a lack of skilled employees.

To tackle this obstacle, the NPMA announced the official launch of its Workforce Development Initiative at PestWorld 2020 in October. There, we unveiled the new website [PestControlJobs.com](https://www.pestcontroljobs.com), and the associated social media properties on Facebook and LinkedIn. These digital destinations are part of the NPMA's national initiative to help highlight pest control as a viable and desirable industry with many job opportunities and career paths.

The objectives for this initiative include:

- Position the NPMA as the advocate for prospective and current employees, with a priority on attracting field technicians, among other roles.
- Highlight pest control as a viable and desirable industry, with many job opportunities and career paths.



- Build a pipeline of qualified candidates to meet business demand.
- Increase overall pride and professionalism in the industry, and showcase the value of what pest management professionals (PMPs) do to protect people, food and property from pests to improve the overall quality of life.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With this launch, we have taken the first essential steps by building a foundation on which we can begin to move this forward. This initiative is in its infancy, but we're committed to growing it — and thus growing your businesses. We are competing with like industries looking to attract skilled employees, and they are spending dollars on their digital efforts to do just that.

We all need to come together to support this effort. If you have not yet visited [PestControlJobs.com](https://www.pestcontroljobs.com), I highly encourage you to do so. The consumer-focused website has many features, including information about our industry; suggested career paths; job descriptions and earning potential for a variety of roles; real-life success stories from PMPs who have made promising careers for themselves; a portal for potential candidates; and much more.

Through March 31, 2021, all NPMA member companies can post current job openings at no cost on the live jobs board, which can be found at [Careers.PestControlJobs.com](https://careers.pestcontroljobs.com). After that date, we will offer special member pricing, as well as opportunities to showcase your company. Members of the NPMA Founders Club (see box above) is comprised of companies

Workforce Development Founders Club Members

The following companies pledged a five-year monetary donation in support of the National Pest Management Association's Workforce Development initiative. This list was compiled on Dec. 1, 2020.

ABC Home & Commercial Services (Austin, Texas)
ABC Home & Commercial Services (Dallas, Texas)
Arrow Exterminators
Cook's Pest Control
Edge Pest Control
Lloyd Pest & Termite Control
Massey Services
McCauley Services
Plunkett's Pest Control
Rentokil North America
Rollins Inc.
Rose Pest Solutions (Illinois)
Rose Pest Solutions (Michigan)
Rottler Pest and Lawn Solutions
Sprague Pest Solutions
Terminix Service (South Carolina)
Terminix Triad (North Carolina)

that have pledged a five-year monetary donation to the NPMA's Workforce Development initiative. These companies have the benefit of unlimited job postings throughout their five-year commitment, as well as other exclusive opportunities on both the website and job board. We encourage you to consider joining them as a member.

The support of these founding members enables us to grow this initiative. More information will be available in the coming months, and we encourage you to learn how you can support this effort to grow your business and our industry.

Contact workforce@pestworld.org for details. PMP



You can reach STUMPF, CEO of the NPMA, at dstumpf@pestworld.org.

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Roadtrip Roundup

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor

MORE ONLINE

For additional coverage, please visit PMPestTalk.net.

Coalmarch CO²@Home

Coalmarch, a provider of digital marketing and call center solutions platforms for pest control and lawn care companies, held its fifth annual CO² conference geared to business owners.

The virtual event, dubbed CO²@Home because of the coronavirus pandemic, was held over three half-days Dec. 1-3.

Donnie Shelton, CEO of Coalmarch and owner of Triangle Pest Control, Holly Springs, N.C., introduced the presenters and moderated the panel discussions that followed the presentations each day. Attendees had a chance to learn from one another and network during breakout sessions held at the middle and end of every day. Podium, Slingshot, Vesperis, BASF, Syngenta and PestSure sponsored the event.

Day 1 focused on marketing. Speakers included Coalmarch's VP of digital marketing, Rachel Betterbid; Dan Gordon, CPA, managing

partner of PCO Bookkeepers and Pest Management Professional's (PMP's) "The Bottom Line" columnist; Tim Pollard; VP of marketing, Jason Pelham; and SVP of marketing, Mike Malone, BCE.

Day 2 centered on sales, and featured Massey Services' VP of business development, Ian Robinson; William Blair Equity Research Analyst Tim Mulroney; Fox Pest Control Co-founder and President Mike Romney; and Slingshot CEO Taylor Olson.

Day 3 was about customers, and included PMP's "The ABCs of Growth" co-columnist and ABC Home & Commercial Services' owner, Bobby Jenkins; Eastside Exterminators COO Sharon Roebuck; Podium Director of Sales David Hepworth; and SafeSpray Pest Control President John Carney.

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Gordon led a "CFO Workshop," during which he discussed how to measure the financial health of your business. "Every company should have recurring revenue woven into its core," he advised. "During jolts

to the economy, all the one-time revenue dries up. For the most part, you're not losing as much revenue when it's recurring."

"The Making of a Household Name" was presented by the Arrow Exterminators team. Pollard explained the origins of the company, which began in 1964 and has since expanded to 131 service centers. "Our culture is our No. 1 competitive advantage," he said. "It provides a greater purpose for our team to be involved in something bigger than just doing their everyday duties. However, becoming a household name begins and ends with providing an awesome experience with every interaction."

"Blueprint for a Winning Sales Team" was the title of Robinson's presentation. He shared his 35 years of experience and industry expertise, noting that once you understand the vision for your company, you need people to help turn it into reality. Hiring, onboarding, training and verification are a few of the topics he discussed. "What you measure clearly needs to be communicated," he advised. "Don't let your standards, your objectives, your measurements be the best-kept secrets in your business."

Romney examined "What Digital Can Learn from Door-to-Door" and how his company, which relies on door-to-door sales, has continued to grow since its launch in 2012. The foundation of the company is not about making money, he said, it's about helping its employees grow. "Our ability to teach people leadership principles is fundamental



- 1 The coronavirus pandemic didn't stop Coalmarch from holding its annual conference, which took place online instead of in Raleigh, N.C., where the company is located.
- 2 Coalmarch CEO Donnie Shelton introduced each speaker and moderated panel discussions throughout the event, which focused on business growth.
- 3 Massey Services' Ian Robinson offered tips for those committed to making their businesses better.



to our success,” he added. For Fox Pest Control, this is accomplished through an individualized leadership plan for every employee that helps create loyalty; a company culture with values and principles people can live by that helps make employees good people; and annual leadership summits with leadership training and team-building activities.

Jenkins’ presentation, “Care More than the Competition: Setting Standards for Customer Service,” focused on the importance of company culture on a company that provides a service. He says his

company translates its core values to core behaviors, which are how employees interact with customers, one another, and the community. Transparency helps make the company unique, he said: “We share all the numbers with all of the people who work at ABC. Everybody at ABC knows exactly where we are for the month and year-to-date from a profitability standpoint and from a revenue standpoint ... because ultimately, everybody at ABC is tied in to profitability.” Making employees feel as though they have a vested interest in the

business has a positive impact on company culture, he added. *(Editor’s Note: Jenkins explains how ABC implements this process in his December 2020 column, p. 68.)*

Roebuck presented “Making a Gold-Star CSR: Train, Motivate, Measure” — explaining why a pest control company’s customer service representatives (CSRs) are integral to its success. Hiring wisely and setting realistic expectations are critical. She recommended using a digital or paper form to track and evaluate the performance of a newly hired CSR during the first 30, 60 and 90 days. She also explained why competitive pay and desirable perks are important. “I can’t emphasize enough that you pay your CSRs competitively. I call them the ‘tip of the spear.’ They are the first person that your customers are going to communicate with when they reach out to you for service,” she said. “We need to make sure they are equipped with all the tools that they need to be successful, and that we pay them accordingly. They are important; they need to know that.”

CO² returns to Coalmarsh headquarters in Raleigh, N.C., on Dec. 7-10, 2021. To purchase tickets, visit co2.coalmarch.com. **PMP**

You can reach SOFRANEC at dsufranec@northcoastmedia.net or 216-706-3793.

- 4 Financial analyst Tim Mulrone discussed why the pest control industry outperformed the U.S. economy during the coronavirus pandemic. Reasons include an aging population that prefers to pay for pest control services, strict food safety regulations, and increased pest activity.
- 5 Dan Gordon, CPA, *Pest Management Professional (PMP)* columnist and managing partner of PCO Bookkeepers, explained the importance of recurring revenue. “During jolts to the economy, all the one-time revenue dries up,” he said. “For the most part, you’re not losing as much revenue when it’s recurring.”
- 6 To help attendees get ready for the virtual event, Coalmarsh sent everyone a box packed with supplies courtesy of the event’s generous sponsors. It included coffee and a coffee mug, snacks, and a notebook for jotting down helpful tips and ideas to try.
- 7 Slingshot CEO Taylor Olson recommended using data to map out expectations in 2021.
- 8 Coalmarsh’s Rachel Betterbid focused on digital marketing. Because everyone is addicted to social media, she said, companies with a presence on several different platforms make it easier for potential customers to find them.
- 9 All three days of the event ended with a panel discussion moderated by Coalmarsh CEO Donnie Shelton (center) and featuring the speakers of the day, allowing attendees to ask questions. Pictured clockwise are SafeSpray Pest Control President Jim Carney; ABC Home and Commercial Services Owner and *PMP* columnist Bobby Jenkins; Podium Director of Sales David Hepworth; and Eastside Exterminators COO Sharon Roebuck.

Roadtrip Roundup

By Heather Gooch | PMP Editor

2020 Global Bed Bug Summit

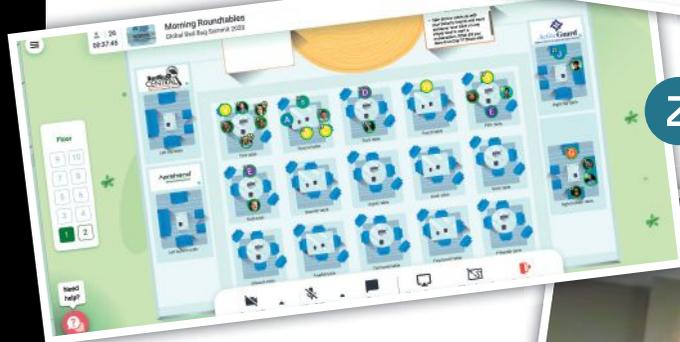
The 2020 Global Bed Bug Summit took place virtually Dec. 1-3. The National Pest Management Association (NPMA) describes its bi-annual event as “designed to provide pest management professionals (PMPs) with the information from legal, technical, business and customer-oriented perspectives, so they can not only eliminate bed bug issues, but also create an environment of trust between themselves and their customers.”

Originally set to take place in-person in Denver, Colo., the NPMA and the event’s premier sponsor, BedBug Central, made the decision to take it virtual based on the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The schedule followed a format of several live presentations over two days, interspersed with breaks so attendees could visit the virtual exhibit hall. Several additional, on-demand presentations also were made available to attendees through Dec. 31, 2020. PMP

You can reach GOOCH at hgooch@northcoastmedia.net or 330-321-9754.

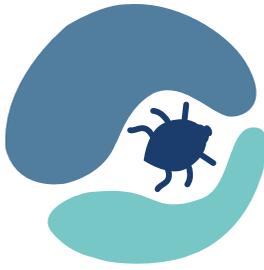
MORE ONLINE

For additional coverage, please visit PMPPestTalk.net.



1 Pest Management Professional was among the exhibitors at the event. 2 Attendees had opportunities to network via video chat during the “Night with the Experts” on Wednesday and morning roundtables on Thursday. 3 National Pest Management Association CEO Dominique Stumpf, CAE, CMP, and her team were on hand to introduce several of the speakers, moderate panels and ensure the event ran smoothly. 4 In his opening remarks, BedBug Central President Rob DiJoseph hinted his company will have a new name and branding in 2021. 5 Dr. Chow-Yang Lee, BCE, the professor and endowed presidential chair in Urban Entomology for the University of California, Riverside, kicked off the Global Bed Bug Summit presentations with a look at the “Global Perspective of Insecticide Resistance in Bed Bugs.” 6 Joey Hoke, ACE, VP of employee engagement for Junction City, Kan.-based American Pest Management, and Jen Fox, the Murrietta, Calif.-based director, service for Terminix, tag-teamed a lively discussion on how to build a top-notch bed bug program.

SCREENSHOTS: PMP STAFF



GLOBAL BEDBUG SUMMIT

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The National Pest Management Association and Premier Sponsor BedBug Central welcomed the following levels of sponsorship for the event:

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7



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9



10



7 Dr. Dong-Hwan Choe, an associate cooperative extension specialist and associate professor of entomology for the University of California, Riverside, teamed up with Bayer Pest Management & Public Health for a new pheromone technology for bed bug monitoring. Interestingly, this technology is similar to what's used for home pregnancy tests. Dr. Choe told *Pest Management Professional* studies continue to be underway, and the product could make its way to PMPs soon. 8 Dr. Karen Vail, professor and extension specialist with the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture's Department of Entomology & Plant Pathology, offered attendees a research overview about optimizing bed bug monitoring, as well as a DNA research project to determine different population strains, and another project that studied how likely it was that pet cats and dogs can transmit bed bugs to their owners (spoiler alert: not likely). She also noted that a treatment cost calculator is in the works for PMPs and property managers. 9 Panelists for a robust discussion of performing bed bug work during a pandemic were Mike Panichi, co-founder and VP of Platinum Pest Solutions, Lansing, Ill.; Darren Van Steenwyck, director of learning and technical services, Clark Pest Control, Lodi, Calif.; and Galvin Murphy Jr., director of business development, Yankee Pest Control, Malden, Mass. Murphy called in by phone due to technical difficulties. 10 Gail Getty, BCE, is president of Getty Entomological Research and Consulting, La Crescenta, Calif.; while Carmelo Torraca is with Cooper Levenson, Attorneys at Law, Atlantic City, N.J. Moderated by the NPMA's Dr. Brittany Campbell, the pair shared advice and insights for PMPs from their longtime pest management industry careers as expert witness and defense attorney, respectively. The bottom line from both? Document, document, document.

GEARING UP FOR GROWTH

**PMPs boost
equipment/
materials
budgets and
plan additional
investments
in 2021**

By Heather Gooch | *PMP* Editor



As the founder of and administrator for PestCemetery, a private group on Facebook where pest management professionals (PMPs) can speak openly about the highs and lows in their day-to-day jobs, Jerry Schappert, ACE, oversees a lot of discussions about purchasing and investments. From flashlights to flashy trucks, software systems to heating systems, all sorts of tangibles — and in the case of marketing and training, sometimes intangibles — are ripe for recommendation and debate.

Schappert, *Pest Management Professional's* “Problem Solvers” columnist, owns The Bug Doctor in Ocala, Fla. He shares many of the concerns fellow PMPs have over whether they’re budgeting and purchasing to the best of their abilities.

“It doesn’t matter how big you are, smart purchasing is just as much a skill as correctly dusting a void,” he point out. And Schappert knows from whence he speaks: “I once overextended myself early in my business pretty severely. It took a few years to put things back together.” (*Editor’s Note: See more of Schappert’s insights on p. 40.*)

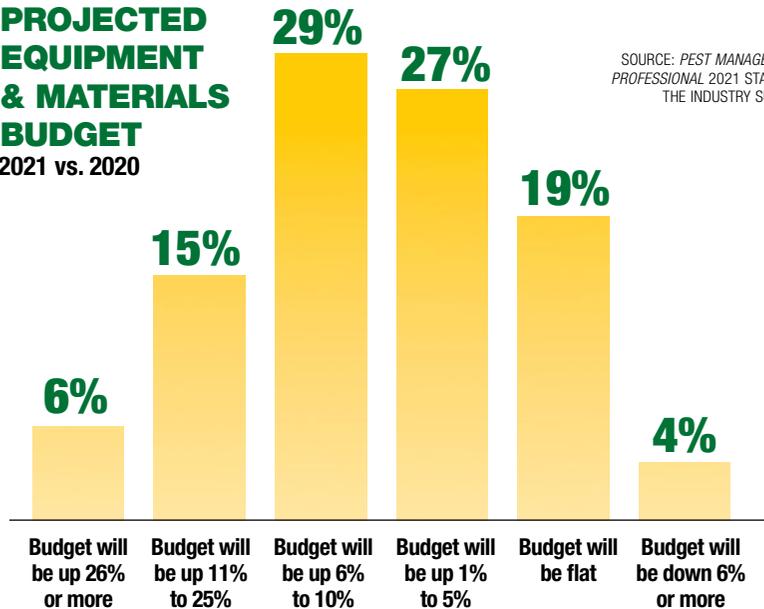
TIME FOR EXPANSION

While not the case for every PMP, many in the industry have seen a major uptick in demand for service. Josh Handy, owner of Foremost Pest & Wildlife, for example, has grown so much in his first year — beating his first-year goal by \$59,000 by July 2020 — that his wife quit her job to join him in their Monroe, N.C.-based business.

“So far, the biggest adjustments have been her learning the accounting software and my way of doing things,” he admits. “The plan is for her to be with me in the field until the spring, and we have

The Bug Doctor’s Jerry Schappert, ACE, checks inventory for the new year.

PROJECTED EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS BUDGET 2021 vs. 2020



SOURCE: PEST MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL 2021 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

divvied up office responsibilities.”

With a customer base that’s about 75 percent residential, Aaron Veal, ACE, has grown Marysville, Tenn.-based Phoenix Pest Control from requiring only a “truck office” to a bona fide building. But the office-hunting process was a long one, and he decided renting wasn’t the way to go like he had initially thought.

“I ended up buying a shed building, so I could partition half of it as an office and half as chemical storage,” Veal explains. “I had been keeping inventory on my truck, but I’ve hired an employee, and we’re getting to the point where we need storage.”

Buddy Herring, owner of Summit Pest Solutions, also says his company is growing. He started his Mills River, N.C.-based business in early 2020, and as a result “more than doubled our expectations for volume within the first nine months of our first year.”

He exceeded his goal, despite the setback he suffered with a herniated disc just days after opening for business. Now fully recovered, Herring is in the process of moving operations from his basement to a rented building with storage.

“We entertained the idea of a lease with a ‘first right of refusal to

purchase’ option once the lease was up, but we are still in our infancy and really want to concentrate our efforts and expenditures on growing our customer base and fleet over the next few years, until we can get better terms with the banks,” Herring says. “The building we are looking to lease will allow us to add a storage building inside the fenced area in the back where we can store chemicals, and we will use off-site structure for trailers, bed bug heat equipment, etc., that is adjacent to the property for a minimal additional fee.”

Andrew Sievers, ACE, co-founded Profishant in 2009, after working with three other pest management firms and learning “a lot about how I want to be treated as an employee.” With that Golden Rule philosophy in place, he’s seen steady growth for the company of at least 25 percent each year. In 2021, he says, the Fairhaven, Mass.-based firm is poised to grow even more. “We added five new staff members in 2020, and bought two new trucks to accommodate work for at least the first few months of 2021,” he reports. “We are able to grow because of the people we choose to hire, and the way we treat them.

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2021 BUDGETS & INVESTMENTS

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Investing more in our staff buys us loyalty and care, and makes it harder for competitors to lure them away.”

MARKETING MANAGEMENT

While Sievers plans to add a little more to Profshient’s marketing budget, the majority of his added revenue is going toward bonuses, salary hikes, and next-level medical and retirement plans. He sees contented employees as the best marketing for his business.

“When folks are happy where they work, the clients see and feel it,” he adds. “This leads to more calls and more work.”

Veal agrees, and reiterates he learned what to do and what not to do early in his career.

“Anytime I make a decision, I like to zig when I know a previous boss would have zagged,” he quips. “For example, most pest control trucks in my market are white or green. That’s why I went with black.”

Veal uses his marketing budget to promote his company brand and YouTube channel. This has the added benefit of reinforcing the information he may have told a customer at a service call.

“For a cockroach account, I might only see the husband during the initial visit,” he offers as an example. “Then his wife comes home and asks ‘What did he tell you?’ Well, there’s a YouTube video he can show her about cockroaches where I basically explain everything I plan to do. It’s good information for potential customers, and for new and existing customers, too.”

Using the videos in this manner gives Veal’s channel more clicks, which raises its profile in the YouTube algorithms, making it more likely to be found in searches for keywords like “pest control.” To Veal, it’s a win-win.

Deanna Kjorlien, ACE, president of Green Dog Pest Service in Gig

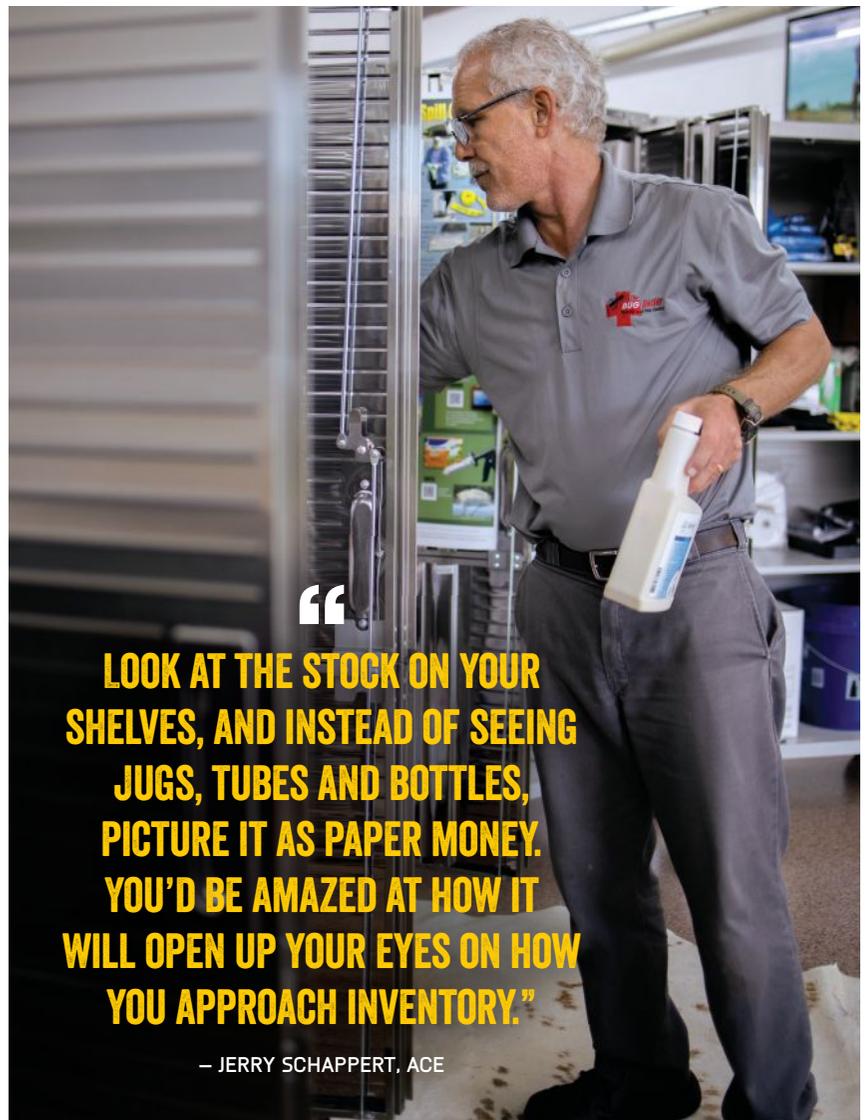
Harbor, Wash., admits that the COVID-19 pandemic affected her marketing plans “quite a bit.”

“We used to sponsor many state and regional educational events,” she explains, noting that more than 90 percent of her business is subcontracting K9 inspections to PMPs. “Meeting with professional pest management teams face-to-face at industry events was really our go-to marketing. We have continued to sponsor some online seminars and events, and I still give classes for continuing education units [CEUs] online, but the budget has changed.”

For 2021, she says, “our marketing budget will be modest until we figure out what is happening with the pandemic and how it will affect our clients.”

Third-generation PMP Kevin Sherrill, president of Sherrill Pest Control, notes the pandemic shifted his Manchester, Tenn.-based company’s focus from working festival events to becoming primarily residential-focused. “Our marketing always has been more community-based, but we do spend some money on web search

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“

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— JERRY SCHAPPERT, ACE

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engine optimization [SEO]," he explains. "We've grown organically, but we knew we needed a process in place to increase our leads. We decided this pandemic was forcing us to take a closer look at our marketing and resolve that we were going to come out of this thing a stronger, better company."

REMOTE WORKING

Sherrill Pest's senior service team lead, Jason Heiser, said the pandemic showed the team they have more flexibility in growth than they realized. Employees can work remotely without a technical hiccup, for example, thanks to the software investment Sherrill Pest made two years before. This led to the idea of bringing on a couple of "flex techs" to supplement the universal technicians already in place at the company.

"Flex techs can handle new leads more quickly," Heiser explains. "We can route them differently throughout the season. Maybe they'll only do mosquitoes for a week, for example. Then the next week, they can cover someone's



JASON HEISER

vacation. We need them to be well-rounded individuals who are prepared to be very responsible and very busy."

Sherrill notes that being in a remote area, he had always assumed that to open another office, he'd have to gain customers along the way from the existing office to the new office.

"But technology systems to allow us to think about things differently," he says.

"We don't need to worry about having X number of accounts down a rural corridor. We can have a technician covering a target area instead. But our top goal is to always refine the way we make a positive customer experience."

Alan Feuer, ACE, says Preventive Pest Control also used some of the downtime early on in the pandemic to "double down" on ensuring all the vehicles and equipment are in good running order, "and that all of the personnel are well trained in the care and use of such." The Albuquerque, N.M.-based firm also added four-way driver cameras and GPS systems to improve driver safety, habit awareness and coaching. In addition, a new phone

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

system installed in late 2019 allowed his team to work remotely as needed while seamlessly providing service.

“Because of this, we are able to bundle more services and utilize route density for even our specialty and advanced efforts, whereas before we would have sent a specialist to support our basic and intermediate techs,” explains Feuer, Preventive’s technical director. “If all goes well, these techs will have advanced to the point that they can handle many of these special services themselves.”

Scott Robbins, ACE, technical services manager for Action Pest Control, Evansville, Ind., says his technicians essentially are spending just one day a week at each branch. “When managers are due to give a ridealongs, they usually are following the techs in their own vehicles and then meeting in the field,” he explains.

But this actually has had the added benefit of managers to check out their vehicles on the road, inspecting it while still performing a quality control check of the visit itself.

The Bug Doctor’s Schappert recommends that when PMPs configure their budgets, they keep in mind that “big purchases and investments in services need big thinking. The biggest challenge I see owners have is not knowing their numbers. Once you know them, you know what and when to buy.

“Look at the stock on your shelves, and instead of seeing jugs, tubes and bottles, picture it as paper money,” he concludes. “You’d be amazed at how it will open up your eyes on how you approach inventory.” PMP

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5. Vehicles and accessories

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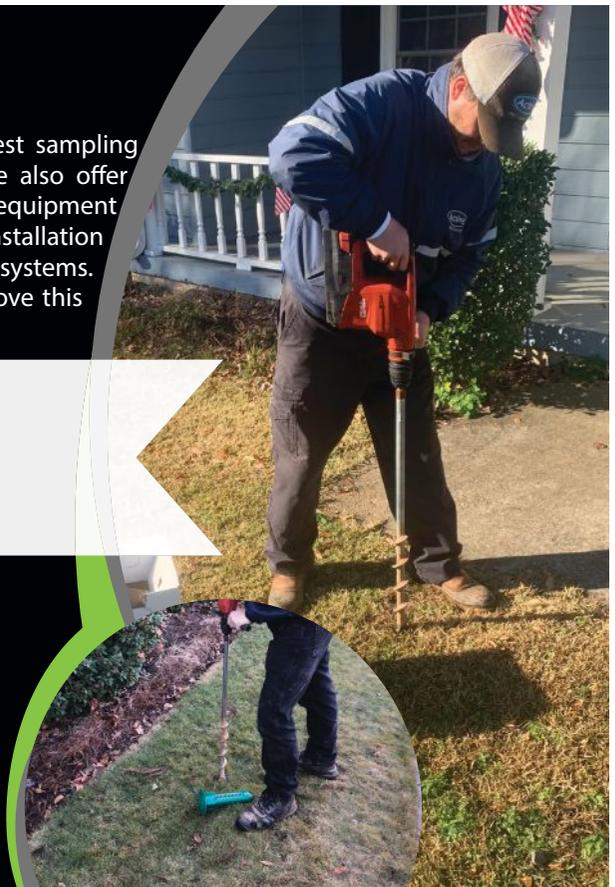
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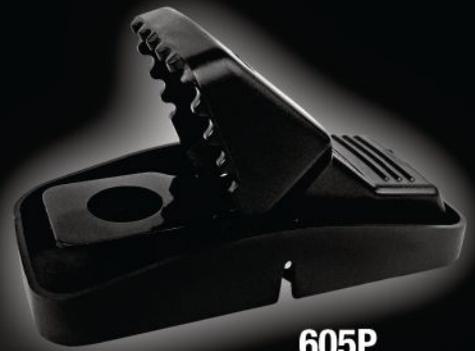


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Budgeting and investing lessons learned



“As many of our mentors have taught us, we have to *have* a budget to mull over. This means we must be aware of our incoming revenue and outgoing expenses, and what drives these metrics. We must know our fixed expenses, and from there we can determine our

daily break-even point (DBEP). Once we know the DBEP, then we can really price for fair and reasonable profit — as well as appropriate fluid expenses, such as wages and materials. A good budget knowledge will show us our waste and leakage, as well as our missed opportunities.

“In addition, I cannot say enough about seeking out a business mentor with whom you meet no less than quarterly; monthly is better. You need to be absolutely transparent with this person, and confess your ‘sins’ at each meeting. A great mentor will, of course, be discreet and fair — but should be allowed to also slap you upside the head when you pull a stupid, impatient or selfish business stunt. As the boss, you must avail yourself to be held accountable by your mentor.”

— *Alan Feuer, ACE, Technical Director, Preventive Pest Control, Albuquerque, N.M.*



“Buy smart. Take advantage of discounts and sales when possible. Develop a relationship with your distribution channels. Talk to your accountants, and get their advice on large purchases. For example, even though I only paid \$8,000 down on my

new work vehicle, my accountant said we could write off the entire purchase price of the vehicle on our taxes.

“You should also surround yourself with a good support team, even if they do not work for you. One of my primary goals was to not only treat the pest problem, but to correct the damage associated with the pest. For termites, that means making the necessary wood and sheetrock repairs. For moisture problems that led to general pest problems, that means repairing the damaged wood and surfaces. For wildlife, that means sealing entry points. I want my firm to be a full-service company — not just the ‘bug man’ who shows up, treats and leaves — so I am investing in professionals and training that can help me reach this goal.” — *Josh Handy, Owner, Foremost Pest & Wildlife, Monroe, N.C.*



“Keep good records. Be sure to save warranty information, keep a good inventory, have solid equipment agreements with your employees so they become good stewards of your assets, and have plenty of notes, mental or otherwise, on spending mistakes so you can try to not make them twice.

“We also try to stick to the old philosophy of expecting the best, but preparing for the worst. That’s not to say we exist in a state of fear, but we certainly try to keep expenses at a tolerable level. This includes keeping a tight inventory of chemicals, materials and supplies. Buying in bulk to take advantage of discounts is great, but if those products are not moving because they are not needed, then that is potential rent, truck payments, equipment upgrades, or principal loan payments that could be made to keep the ship sailing during slower times. Just like a small family should not live beyond their means by spending money before they make it, a smaller business should not worry about having a flashy space that eats away at a chunk of their profits each month. This goes for trucks, too. We have purchased quality, used trucks that other companies have retired, are in excellent condition, and are already equipped for pest control. We have purchased used equipment from other firms as well. Be frugal, but then again, don’t hold up a dollar to save a dime.” — *Buddy Herring, Owner, Summit Pest Solutions, Mills River, N.C.*



“Whether it’s new products, equipment or anything else, I generally am never an early adopter. I prefer to watch what a few others have to say about it first. But when I do make a company purchase, it’s not about price, it’s about efficacy. It’s about cost-effectiveness

and return on investment. The backpack model we purchased for 2021 is probably one of the most expensive units on the market. But on the other hand, it’s not something my homeowner customer can go to a big box store and buy. Based on research, it also will last longer and perform better than its less-expensive competition.” — *Scott Robbins, ACE, Technical Services Manager, Action Pest Control, Evansville, Ind.*

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2021 BUDGETS & INVESTMENTS

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“Invest in hiring the right people, those who will fit your company culture right from the start. Then spend the money on proper training. Employee acquisition and turnover are far costlier than offering loyalty-building perks like

a 401(k) plan or health insurance. Training is more cost-effective than fixing mistakes, and your reputation is priceless.

“Also, outsourcing can be a good thing. Our K9 bed bug inspection line of work really demands zero mistakes, and that’s always our

goal. Our PMP clients range from international corporations to solo operators. Some of our clients used to own their own K9 teams; they recognized the value in the service, but they don’t have the time to deal with the dog training or employee turnover. There are good margins on our services, so our clients make money, free up staff for sales or production work and, because we never perform pest control treatments, we aren’t competition. Other clients just consider us part of their liability protection plan since we are an independent inspection source.”

— *Deanna Kjorlien, President, Green Dog Pest Service, Gig Harbor, Wash.*



“Hire primarily to shore up your weaknesses. Hire honest and nice; teach the rest. Remember, we are in customer service.

Once you realize how bad customer service can be, you will know what you need to do to grow and become successful.”

— *Andrew Sievers, ACE, Co-Founder, Profishant, Fairhaven, Mass.*



“Stop borrowing money! I can’t tell you how many PMPs tell me about their new trucks or equipment, then in the next breath

complain about how they can’t pay their bills. I understand the need to have top-tier equipment — that’s what I buy, too. But this industry’s margins are pretty good; it takes the equivalent of a drunken monkey to really screw things up financially. If you’re struggling, it’s because you’re not doing the math right. First, charge what you’re worth; don’t undercut yourself.



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And second, reinvest in the business, not just your toys and comforts.

“One more thing: I don’t run specials for new customers. If you want the best, you’re going to pay for the best. I do run specials for existing customers to reward their loyalty, however.” — *Aaron Veal, ACE, Owner, Phoenix Pest Control, Marysville, Tenn.*



“Bring in the professionals. We rely on our accountant to ensure our ideas are financially sound. We hire experts to help streamline processes and marketing strategies. We want to grow but in a manageable way. That’s why we rely on industry peers and consultants to help us as we grow the business.”

— *Kevin Sherrill, President, Sherill Pest Control, Manchester, Tenn.*

“When you fly by the seat of your pants, it’s hard to put your wallet away.” — *Jerry Schappert, ACE, President, The Bug Doctor, Ocala, Fla.*



Kjolien and one of her four-legged employees.

Adding a K9 budget line

Deanna Kjolien, ACE, president of Green Dog Pest Service, Gig Harbor, Wash., notes that pest management firms can benefit by adding K9 bed bug inspection to their service offerings. With the pandemic still in play, using a contracted service like hers makes sense for many.

“We touch fewer surfaces (than traditional inspections), and are incredibly fast and less invasive,” she points out. “People are working from home, students are in ‘school’ at home, and the elderly and physically vulnerable populations don’t want service personnel in their spaces for a long time. But everyone who is worried about bed bugs still wants to know whether they have them. As I’ve told customers, the only thing worse than stay-at-home orders is stay-at-home orders with bed bugs. Our service is appealing for those reasons.”

At press time, Green Dog is exploring expansion into other pest detection services, as well. —H.G.

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Purchasing survey says ...

By Marty Whitford | PMP Publisher & Editorial Director

According to *Pest Management Professional's* Purchasing Preferences survey, 93 percent of pest management professionals (PMPs) report they will pay more for control solutions that are fast-acting and long-lasting.

Nine out of 10 PMPs report they buy pest control chemicals year-round. When it comes to purchasing pest control chemicals, they say it's most important that the formulations save them time, followed closely by the solutions being both fast-acting and long-lasting.

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Ninety-two percent of PMPs report it's important the products they purchase have their effectiveness confirmed by other pest management pros. Nearly nine in 10 PMPs also say it's important the products they purchase have their effectiveness confirmed by independent, third-party research.

Nine in 10 PMPs expect the merging of pest control companies, manufacturers, formulators and distributors to continue its brisk pace — although the pandemic in 2020 did change a few plans in that regard.

PMPs' Top 10 criteria for selecting distribution partners are as follows:

- 1 Knowledge of pest control solutions
- 2 Knowledge of pest control techniques
- 3 Courteous, professional service
- 4 Knowledge of industry manufacturers
- 5 Pest identification (biology and behavior) knowledge
- 6 Fast delivery
- 7 Convenient locations, and easy online ordering
- 8 Low prices
- 9 Volume discounts and flexible terms
- 10 Free training

When asked how a distributor can win most or all of their business, three PMPs answered:

"My No. 1 distributor always answers the phone, and always has time for me."

"One distributor won all of my business simply because they consistently do what they say they will do."

"Our family business has partnered with one distributor for three generations — because the distributor has never let us down on advice or delivery." PMP

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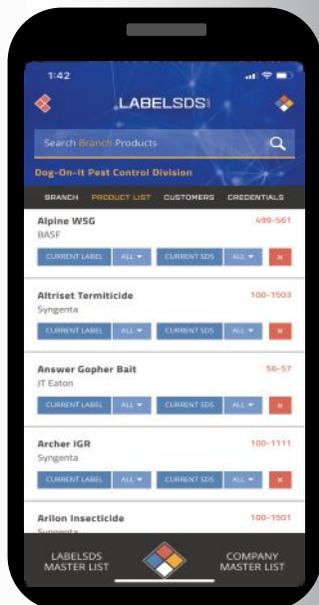
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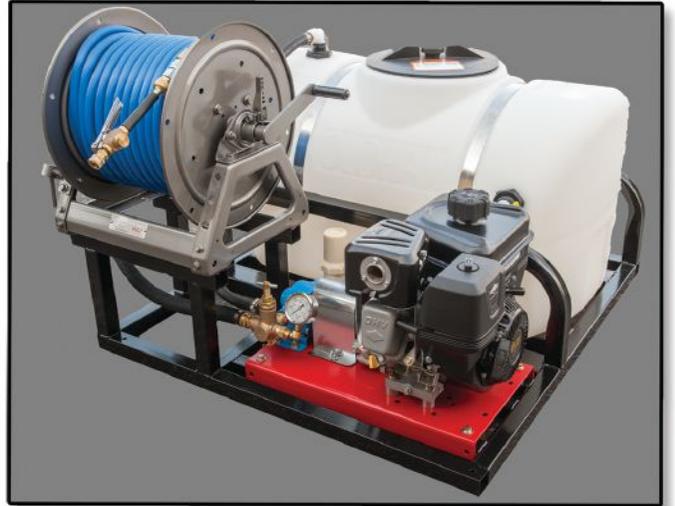
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SCHAPPERT is owner of The Bug Doctor, Ocala, Fla., and administrator for Facebook industry discussion group PestCemetery. He may be reached at bugdoctor@embarqmail.com.

The future looks bright for 2021 industry growth

By Jerry Schappert, ACE | PMP Contributor

While 2020 was a little slow in starting and one heckuva challenge in so many ways for my company, it ended up being a record year in revenue. And since I'm connected daily with more than 10,600 other pest management professionals (PMPs) worldwide via my Facebook group, PestCemetery, I'm thrilled to report I am not alone.

Still, much of the year was fraught with uncertainty, which I believe held some folks back on purchasing products, expansion plans and spending in general. Even our little company paused for a bit to see where things would go. For the first time in a long time, I let my inventory go down to just the basics. I told my techs, "Take care of those trucks, they've got to last."

We had to enact growth plans on the fly — buying new equipment, adding staff, and more in a flurry just to keep pace with customer demand. Considering all the problems that came with 2020, this "problem" was a good one to have. As I write this in

December, my shelves are exceeding normal levels; we've made two acquisitions this year; and we have five new vehicles on order.

So, the new year is upon us and now that we've all caught our breath, just what will our expenditures look like in 2021?

Pest Management Professional magazine recently conducted a reader survey on this subject, and the results were interesting, to say the least.

Twenty percent of respondents said their expenditures in 2021 would stay the same as the previous year, but another 75 percent are ramping up spending. When I posed a similar question to the PestCemetery Facebook group, some of our members are still a bit hesitant. But many others have big plans for vehicles, equipment, new products, training and — most pleasing, at least to me — increased pay and bonuses for staff.

So goodbye, 2020, and good riddance. You were last thought about at midnight, Dec. 31, and I'll not think of you again. Let me close with

my 2021 take on that Robert Burns smash hit from way back in 1788, "Auld Lang Syne." Sing along, everyone, and have a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

*Should auld 2020 be forgot,
And its worst left behind?*

*Lest 2021 be for naught
Let's move on from auld lang syne. PMP*



TIPS FROM THE PESTCEMETERY CREW



"We're spending more on everything: marketing, phone system, answering service, truck/van, all termite equipment, specialty equipment — foamer, aerosol machine, [non-toxic rodent] traps — and bonuses for technicians."
— Anthony Dalto, President, Talos Pest Control, La Jolla, Calif.



"We will spend the next four months investing in cross-training and upgraded training for our technical and CSR [customer service representative] staffs."
— Alan Feuer, ACE, Staff Entomologist and Technical Director, Preventive Pest Control, Albuquerque, N.M.



"We had a great 2020, so in 2021, we plan to expand into new areas. This comes with added expenditures in advertising, and new employees and vehicles. In our current area, our growth continues."
— Jesse Gooch, Owner, Kanga Pest Control, Canby, Ore.



"We're planning on buying a new van, adding a new office location, and opening a DIY storefront."
— Bryan Weiss, Owner, Terminators Pest Control, Pennsauken, N.J.

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TACKLE TERMITES WITH A WELL-EQUIPPED TOOL BOX

By Dr. Janis Reed, BCE

The structural damage termites cause costs Americans millions of dollars each year in treatment and repairs. So, for those who offer these services, termite management is an important part of a pest management professionals' (PMPs') revenue stream. As the saying goes, there are two types of structures: Those that have termites, and those that will.

Digging a little deeper, I've identified four factors — not even related to managing the actual pest — that have an impact on a PMP's decision to offer termite services:

- **Geographic location.** If a PMP operates in a Gulf Coast state, for example, termite control can be a main source of income — and the additional investment and training are justified. If a PMP operates in an area where termite pressure is low and customer calls are rare, it may make more financial sense to outsource the termite work.
- **Brand-building.** If a PMP can provide a full suite of services, continuity with the customer can be maintained. Other PMPs choose to specialize in a particular pest such as bed bugs, birds or rodents, and refer their termite calls to a trusted partner.
- **Liability.** PMPs getting into termite management work must do their homework regarding the extra insurance, contracts and other necessities to keep their liability low when offering termite and termite-related services.
- **Customer service.** Termite management usually means more time invested with each customer. You need to be ready for some tough conversations about the damage

that is there, the timeline, and what you can do about it. This is why many PMPs who offer termite management also offer repair or handyman services so they can bring even more value to customers.

BE PREPARED

My best advice for PMPs who are new to termite work or considering entering the field is three-fold:

- 1 Termite control services mean more responsibility for you and your team. Your work quality should reflect that.
- 2 Learn from someone who is experienced in termite control before you start your first job.
- 3 Ask a legal professional to review your contracts and paperwork.

The year 2020 brought a new set of challenges for PMPs to navigate through, and this is just one piece of a complex puzzle we work on every day. Modern PMPs have many products, techniques and limitations they work within, and these continue to evolve. Additionally, product selection, application techniques and customer expectations continue to evolve and change.

The team at CSI strives to provide PMPs with an ever-growing toolbox to employ during their daily battles in all pest situations, including termite infestations. We wanted to help PMPs get into all those hard-to-reach areas with our latest product, Taurus Dry. With an active ingredient of fipronil, this dry flowable termiticide is used in CSI's exclusive Precision Delivery System to easily reach termites in infested wood, shelter tubes and galleries. It's capable of topical or physical transfer among nestmates, meaning untreated termites can be affected by interacting with treated ones.

In addition to Taurus Dry, CSI also offers several other products for termite control, including Bifen I/T, Bifen XTS, Cyper TC, Dominion 2L, Fuse, Fuse Foam, Permethrin SFR and Taurus SC.

We at CSI are proud to be a part of, and to support, this industry. We look forward to partnering with PMPs to confront any challenge on the horizon, regardless of pest species. Our passion is support and providing these tools every day. **CSI: Innovation you can apply.**



DR. REED is Technical Services Manager, Product Development Team, for Control Solutions Inc.





TERMITE PROTECTION IS ALWAYS IN DEMAND

In a year unlike any other, business is strong for PMPs who provide termite services

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor

Pest management professionals (PMPs) who offer termite control services say business has been better than expected during the coronavirus pandemic.

“During the first quarter of 2020, I never thought I would have said this, but it has been a banner year for termite management work,” says Tim Goeringer, president of JHTG Inc. dba Orkin Pest Control, Prescott Valley, Ariz. “And I expect 2021 to be even better.”

To learn more about PMPs’ experiences in these unprecedented times, *Pest Management Professional’s* (PMP’s) 2021 Termite Management Survey included the open-ended question: What impact has the coronavirus pandemic had on your termite management business? The majority of responses were “minimal to none,” as termite control work remained steady in 2020.

Some PMPs tell us they believe COVID-19 changed consumer behavior. For Goeringer’s customers, funds saved for vacations are being used instead on home improvement projects, as pandemic-related state and local stay-at-home mandates limit travel, he says.

Trevor Jones, general manager of Admiral Pest Control in Bellflower, Calif., agrees, saying customers working from home has been good for business.

“If the trend from 2020 continues, I expect my termite management business to continue to increase,” he says. “Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions,

we have seen a lot of people putting their saved vacation money toward home repairs, including termite treatments and repair work.”

The coronavirus pandemic also had an impact on home sales. The National Association of Realtors’ Pending Home Sales Index shows year-over-year contract signings were up 20 percent as of October. The increase can be attributed to the desire for those working from home to buy their first homes or purchase larger ones, as well as to historically low mortgage rates.

“Home buying has been strong during the pandemic; it’s definitely a seller’s market,” says EcoChoice Termite & Pest Control President Emillio Polce. Business for his Vernon, Conn.-based company has been good during the pandemic. Although last year’s first quarter started off well, the first two months of the second quarter were shaky. Then all of a sudden, he says, it started turning around.

Thanks to strong home sales, Dannielle Nieves, president of A&A Pest Control in Portland, Ore., expects a bit more termite work this year compared to last. “People are buying and selling a lot of real estate here in the Pacific Northwest in the past couple years, and I believe it will only keep going up,” she says.

Nieves is not alone. This year’s survey shows 96 percent of PMPs who responded project termite jobs will increase in 2021. In addition, more than a



Dannielle Nieves



Trevor Jones

CONTINUED ON PAGE TM4

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third of those who answered the survey say existing residential structures account for the majority of their termite management revenue.



Robert Brant

“There are not many other pests that cause the damage termites do. Someone’s biggest investment isn’t going to be structurally compromised by ants or cockroaches,” explains Robert Brant, owner of Hawk Mosquito & Pest in Chesapeake, Va.

“Protecting families from illness, and homes and businesses from damage, should be at the core of every pest control company’s duties. How would your business stay afloat if that wasn’t your mantra?”

TARGETING HOMEOWNERS

PMP’s Termite Management Survey always invites respondents to include their best tips, and working with real estate agents consistently makes the list.

Partnering with real estate agents leads to additional pest control work, according to responses from PMPs. Polce says at first, it was a tough market to enter. That changed when a real estate agent encouraged him to join a tri-county board of Realtors that held an annual meeting where he and other affiliate members could set up a booth, meet Realtors in the area, and hand out literature explaining their companies’ service offerings.

“We’ve offered discounts to every Realtor we’ve ever met, and it’s something we still do every year,” Polce adds. “We’ve really grown our presence in our market.”

He has attended morning meeting and lunch-and-learn events to explain the National Pest Management Association (NPMA)-33 Wood Destroying Insect inspection form. He leaves a refrigerator magnet and brochure in the homes he inspects for real estate agents and new homeowners. When a new homeowner closes on a home his company treated for termites, he will mail or hand-deliver a letter with his company’s information and a copy of the warranty.

“Sharpen your pencils. Real estate agents are not looking for someone who is going to be a dealbreaker,” Polce advises. “They want someone who can be flexible and work with them.”

Working together inevitably leads to additional business, he says.



Emilio Polce

BUNDLING BOOSTS BUSINESS

John Morgan, owner of Signature Pest Control in Wichita, Kan., says loyalty is one of the ways customers show their thanks for the termite protection his company provides.

“None of us much enjoys crawling around on our belly under a house, drilling injection holes through concrete slabs, or digging trenches in rock-hard soil, but we do experience a lot of satisfaction when

TERMITE WORK FOR THE TAKING

Pest management professionals (PMPs) who answered our 2021 Termite Management Survey offer advice that has helped them ramp up their termite control work, making it lucrative and satisfying.

“Before offering termite management services, make sure you have the proper state licenses, and insurance coverage on your policy to perform the work. Conduct a thorough inspection of the structure to identify the entire scope of the infestation. Explain the treatment options to the homeowner so they can make an informed decision. Keep good records and contracts for all services provided.”

— Zac Brown, Manager, Clancy Brothers Pest Control, Braintree, Mass.

“For those considering entering the termite management market, gain a basic understanding of construction practices in your area, particularly foundation construction.



Zac Brown

Perform quality inspections. Thoroughly document your findings, and don’t be afraid to charge based on your time, materials and expertise.” — Tim Goeringer, President, JHTG Inc. dba Orkin Pest Control, Prescott Valley, Ariz.

“When providing bids for termite management work, do not give an estimate when looking at a picture or video. It is very important to be at the property to assess the situation. For example, is the entire home on a concrete slab, or just half of the home? Are there inaccessible areas an inspector or homeowner would not see or know about? Is there a water source or high-water tables in the areas to be treated? With too many what-ifs, the job could go wrong if you do not evaluate the structure with your own eyes. Also, before you start providing termite treatments, assign someone as your termite management person. Send them to seminars, and have them talk to other pest control companies that provide termite control services. Most of my termite work comes from homes being bought and sold, so get to know your real estate agents, too.”

— Dannielle Nieves, President, A&A Pest Control, Portland, Ore.

“Sell the value of prevention to your customers, because an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The

we are able to help someone protect their family's home or the business they poured their heart and soul into," he explains. "When you work hard like that to help someone, they notice. You gain their trust, and when they have another pest problem, they don't hesitate to call you."

Admiral Pest Control's Jones says numerous customers have taken advantage of his company's yearly termite control service plan for decades, some since the 1950s.

"It gives us a lot of pride knowing we have been taking care of these customers' termite issues for decades, often over multiple generations as properties are passed down," he says. "These customers can be very lucrative, as we build trustworthy relationships over years of service. Not only do they provide the best referrals, but they are the easiest to sell additional services to."

Polce says bundling his services has helped grow his termite management business. By charging more for quarterly services, which include a warranty, recurring revenue increases. He promotes his company's bundled services front-and-center on the home page of the company's website, and shows the monthly price and what his services cover.



"WHEN YOU WORK HARD LIKE THAT, THEY NOTICE ... AND WHEN THEY HAVE ANOTHER PEST PROBLEM, THEY DON'T HESITATE TO CALL YOU."

John Morgan

"The more services a customer uses, the longer they stay on the books," he adds. "Because of bundling, we are looking at another year of 20 percent growth."

Brant aims to grow Hawk Mosquito & Pest's termite management services by 50 percent this year. "Our customers love our bundled plans like general pest and termite," he says. "I want to certify more technicians and have them be top-notch at what they do, including termite prevention and control."

EXPERIENCE PAYS

Termite work wouldn't be possible without highly trained technicians. Taz Tyrone, president of Acme Pest Management in West Memphis, Ark., says training is critical because of the liability his company takes on when providing termite protection services and agreements.

Signature Pest Control's Morgan says newly hired termite technicians work with his senior technicians throughout the entire termite management process, beginning with the initial inspection and consultation.

CONTINUED ON **PAGE TM7**

cost of termite damage is astronomical across the United States, so why not have that peace of mind for a small price? There is no second-guessing whether the home is protected. Termites can hide in some very difficult spots to inspect; don't wait for them to show up to do something about them, because it may be too late."

— Robert Brant, Owner, Hawk Mosquito & Pest, Chesapeake, Va.

"When performing termite management work, know your state's requirements and regulations regarding pre- and post-construction treatments, real estate clearance letters, and so on. Decide which of these termite services you wish to perform. Learn about the competition in your area — including general pricing guidelines and types of termite protection plans offered — so you know what you will be up against. Research your termite protection materials, and do not go cheap. Less-expensive products may help save you money short-term, but if they do not work well, re-treatments



Taz Tyrone

and damage repair will cost you more down the road." — Taz Tyrone, President, Acme Pest Management, West Memphis, Ark.

"Never stop learning. Be flexible, and remember that every termite management job is unique. Educate your employees and your customers, and always take the time needed to do the job right. Even if it means your profit on a particular job is a little slimmer than you'd like, being thorough and conscientious always pays."

— John Morgan, Owner, Signature Pest Control, Wichita, Kan.

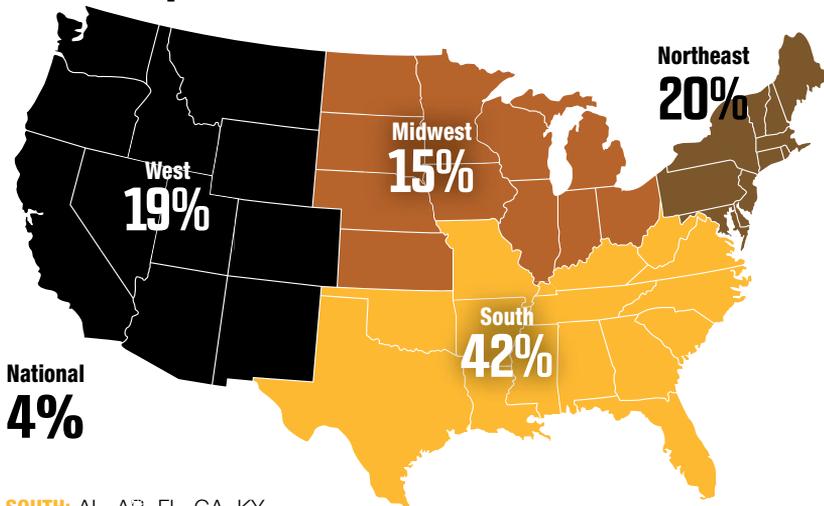
"Termite business varies greatly by region. Our termite services include everything from full-structure fumigation to localized treatments, wood repair, and annual control services. Learn from other PMPs in your area who currently are offering termite control services by getting in the field and doing the work hands-on. There is a lot to learn — from conducting a proper inspection, to performing the proper treatment, to carpentry skills for wood damage repairs — and the best way is to get hands-on experience. Even though we are a 74-year-old business with a lot of experience, we are still constantly learning and improving."

— Trevor Jones, General Manager, Admiral Pest Control, Bellflower, Calif.

2021 TERMITE MANAGEMENT SURVEY

SOURCE: PMP ONLINE SURVEY CONDUCTED OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2020

Area of Operations



National
4%

SOUTH: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV

WEST: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

MIDWEST: OH, IN, IL, MI, WI, MN, MO, IA, ND, SD, NE, KS

NORTHEAST: CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NJ, NH, NY, PA, RI, VT, D.C.

NATIONAL

Number of Termite Techs

17%
11 or more

83%
10 or fewer

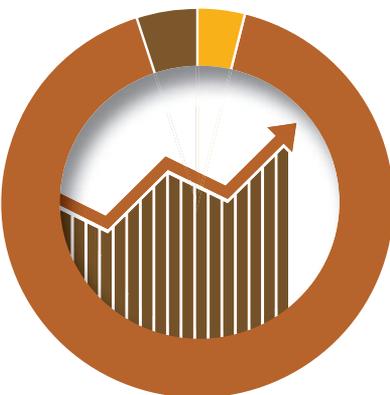
Projected 2021 Average Initial Termite Inspection & Treatment Price

17% expect to charge an average of \$499 or less for initial termite inspection and treatment services.

43% expect to charge an average of \$500 to \$999 for initial termite inspection and treatment services.

40% expect to charge an average of \$1,000 or more for initial termite inspection and treatment services.

Projected 2021 Termite Job Growth Rates



91% expect termite management services to grow at a rate of 1% to 20%.

5% expect termite management services to grow at a rate of 21% or more.

4% expect growth for termite management services to remain flat.

Termite Management Revenue from Existing Residential Structures

56% generate more than half of their termite management revenue by servicing existing residential structures.

16% generate one-quarter to one-half of their termite management revenue by servicing existing residential structures.

28% generate less than one-quarter of their termite management revenue by servicing existing residential structures.



Projected 2021 Average Annual Termite Renewal Inspection & Treatment Price

10% expect to charge an average of \$99 or less for renewal termite inspection and treatment services.

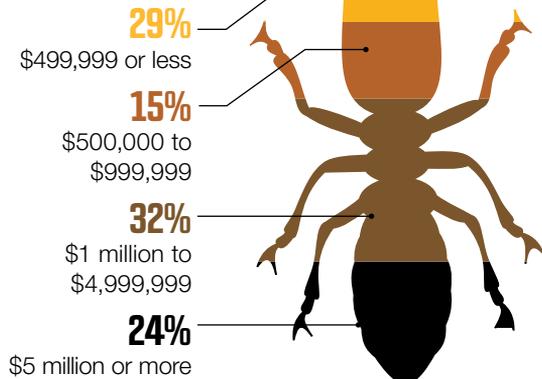
81% expect to charge an average of \$100 to \$499 for renewal termite inspection and treatment services.

9% expect to charge an average of more than \$500 for renewal termite inspection and treatment services.

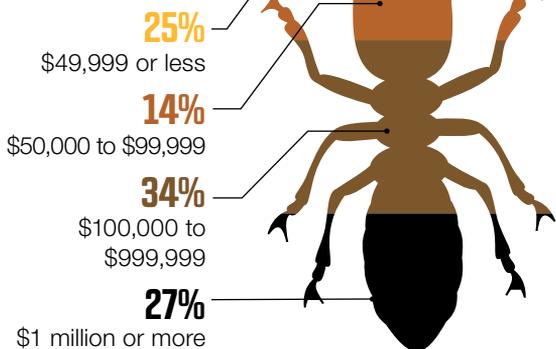
More than **25 percent** of new termite jobs in 2020 were triggered by swarms, say **22 percent** of survey respondents.



Projected 2021 Total Revenue



Projected 2021 Termite Management Revenue



Projected 2021 Termite Management Revenue from Liquid Treatments

49% expect to generate more than half of their termite management revenue from liquid treatments.

16% expect to generate one-quarter to one-half of their termite management revenue from liquid treatments.

35% expect to generate less than one-quarter of their termite management revenue from liquid treatments.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TM5

“Books and online resources can be helpful, but there is no substitute for on-the-job training,” he says. “Experience is the best teacher.”

With that experience comes value. PMPs responding to our 2021 Termite Management Survey recommend charging customers accordingly.

“Termite management is a higher-ticket item; you can charge more for it,” Polce says. “Even in the real estate market where you are giving a discount, you are still making a decent profit.”

Customers may not understand the value of your termite management services, however. JHTG Inc.’s Goeringer says he will not budge on price, and explains to customers why a quality termite treatment is worth paying for — to protect their largest investment — and why the quality of the company offering the warranty matters.

“We will walk away from a job if a potential client insists on a lowball price,” he says. “As professionals, we’re entitled to make a fair profit, and if we have to sacrifice quality to meet a price point, no one comes out a winner. In the end, a good client values our service and is willing to pay for that service.”

The new year seems promising, as many PMPs who responded to our survey expect additional termite management work in 2021.

“The economic recovery from the pandemic should improve the demand for termite management services, because more people will be able to afford these services,” says Zac Brown, manager of Clancy Brothers Pest Control in Braintree, Mass.

As Signature Pest Control’s Morgan points out, termites are not going anywhere, not even during a pandemic.

“One of the things that 2020 reminded us of is that life is unpredictable. But through it all, termites continued to swarm, and to show up in garages and basements and windows and walls,” he concludes. “We’ll continue to watch weather patterns and keep our eyes peeled for termites all year long. When they show up, we’ll be ready for them.” PMP

You can reach SOFRANEC at dsofranec@northcoastmedia.net or 216-706-3793.



**“IN THE END,
A GOOD CLIENT
VALUES OUR
SERVICE AND
IS WILLING TO
PAY FOR THAT
SERVICE.”**

Tim Goeringer

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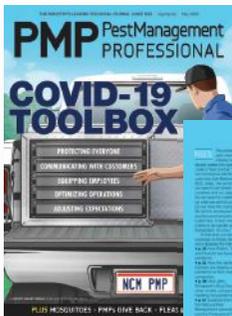
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Check out our special section of COVID-19 coverage



Control Solutions Inc.

By Dr. Janis Reed, BCE

Technical Service Manager, Product Development Team

Ant problems are some of the most complex a pest management professional (PMP) can face. The complexity stems nearly completely from a single factor: *identification*. The choice of products and methods at a PMP's disposal to solve a problem also are complex, but the accurate determination of identification always should be the first step. Correct identification can help a PMP determine:

- Do the ants have multiple- or single-queen colonies?
- How large is the typical colony?
- Is the colony likely to have multiple nesting sites?
- What are the typical food preferences?
- What are the foraging patterns, and the times of day when the ants are most active?
- Do the ants nest indoors, or only forage indoors?

These questions — all generally answerable with an accurate identification — will help PMPs choose the best treatment methods. If there are multiple nesting sites or large colonies, more bait placements in more locations may be required. If nests are primarily outdoors, a complete perimeter treatment may be warranted.



BASF Professional and Specialty Solutions

Dr. Tim Husen, BCE, PHE

Southeastern U.S. Technical Services Representative

You can't identify what you haven't found! Inspection should be a part of every routine service — not just when customers call you about ants in their homes. A thorough inspection should identify structural deficiencies, favorable landscapes or other conditions conducive to ants.

Document everything you see during the inspection, especially:

- **Potential attraction sources:** Food or moisture sources, poor storage or sanitation practices, honeydew-producing insects.
- **Potential access points:** Cracks or openings around

doors, windows and utility lines, and plantings too close to the structure.

- **Potential nesting sites:** Landscape stones, rock walls, downed trees, structural timbers, piles of compost, leaves, mulch or other organic debris.

Even if the customer doesn't have an ant problem (yet), having this information recorded prior to an issue arising or an ant-related reservice visit will help you locate the attraction source, potential entry points, and ultimately the ant trail or nest more quickly.



MGK

By Dr. Ryan Neff

West Coast Technical Field Specialist

Attract and kill. One trick to enhance performance of a liquid concentrate is to bait within the treated area. This will

increase the number of ants that contact the treated surface, as well as the duration of time they stay on the surface. The combination of bait and non-repellent will reach deep into the colony.

Having said that, don't lure them inside if they aren't there. When a colony is nesting on the exterior of the structure, it is important to limit the food sources on the interior, including the use of baits. When a highly attractive food source is found within a structure, the increased level of activity can alarm your customer.



Zoëcon

By Mel Whitson

Senior Field Technical Service Manager

While ants are the No. 1 nuisance pest in the United States, according to the National Pest Management

Association (NPMA), there are a few strategies PMPs can take to determine an effective treatment method to reduce callbacks. Whether the service is for a residential or commercial account, follow these three control tips:

- 1 **Identify the species of concern.** With more than 700 species of ants in the United States, PMPs need to know which species they are facing before deciding how to control them.
- 2 **Focus on integrated pest management (IPM).** Ants can be found in many locations, including kitchens,

bathrooms, bedrooms and outdoor areas. Work closely with clients to reduce ant infestations by identifying and removing the conditions that can attract these insects, such as:

- Keep pantry food in sealed containers; regularly clean food-handling areas.
 - Inspect and properly seal cracks, crevices, holes and door sweeps.
 - Trim vegetation away from buildings to keep ants from foraging structures.
 - Eliminate honeydew-producing insects in landscape plants.
- ➊ **Choose the right products.** Proper treatment and post-treatment monitoring are two key, final aspects of achieving ant control. The types of products to use depend on the type of service, the type of ant problem, and the type of ant involved. Some tips include:
- Pre-bait to stimulate activity and indicate feeding preferences.
 - Consider adding liquid bait stations to the exterior as part of your protocol.
 - Move dead ant bodies and fragments away from buildings, so foragers aren't dissuaded from treatment.



Rockwell

By Dr. Cisse Spragins
Founder and CEO

While bed bugs and disease-carrying pests may get more media attention, ants are the No. 1 nuisance pest in the United States. And while there are thousands of ant species, just a handful are pest species. The pest species vary around the country, so make sure you and your technicians know the main species in your area and their basic habits, and can readily identify them.

Most species nest outdoors, so treating them there before they get inside is the best strategy. In addition to your perimeter spray, apply a proactive perimeter treatment with a long-lasting granular bait in early spring, and repeat quarterly. In cold climates, you can skip the winter quarter.

If you are using a pyrethroid or botanical perimeter spray, apply the bait outside of the spray zone. While the spray provides the last line of defense before entering the structure, worker ants will pick up the bait and take it back to the next — killing colonies before they ever get inside the structure.



Syngenta

By Dr. Eric Paysen
*Technical Services Manager,
Professional Pest Management*

While ant baiting can provide excellent results, it can be frustrating if ants don't accept the bait. It's recommended to have multiple bait matrices and formulations available in your service vehicle, and to perform a bait acceptance test before making a full application:

- ➊ Offer a small amount of gel bait or granule close to existing trails or foragers. Take care not to disturb the ants.
- ➋ Wait for 30 seconds and watch for acceptance. If they don't immediately start feeding after contact, try another bait or formulation.



Neogen

By Casey Prewitt
National Sales Manager

Ants can be a problem year-round, regardless of location. When leaves begin to fall, though, it's a sign to start looking more closely at areas where ants can get into structures. These may be areas contacted by landscaping and trees, or areas where caulking around doors and windows has loosened.

Suggest trimming foliage touching the structure, and sealing potential entry points around doors and windows. Make sure leaves and other debris are removed in a timely manner, to eliminate harborage areas around the structure. Recommending these action items to customers can help eliminate future problems with ants — and other pests, as well.



Nisus Corp.

By Dr. Reid Ipser
Director of Technical Services

Think about conducting your first services of the new year with an emphasis on ants. As the warmer months approach, ants will start to forage and increase their population nest size.

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Particle baits are perfect for this scenario. Use a particle bait that is labeled for other pest insect species to cover a wider gamut. You can combine a particle bait with another insecticide application, as long as the two do not interfere with and compromise the attractiveness of the bait itself. For potential new accounts, try using this as a foundation for the year-long service contract.



Bayer

By Joe Barile, BCE

*Technical Service Lead,
Pest Management & Public Health*

Pest ant activity usually is observed by customers as the foraging activity of workers. PMPs respond and typically apply insecticide formulations that provide relief from that activity quickly. But are you really solving the problem by just managing foraging activity?

Ants are social insects, and statistics tell us the foraging workers we target are only about 5 percent to 10 percent of the colony population. Ant management should be centered on colony management. The workers you controlled yesterday will be replaced tomorrow if you limit your control efforts to just worker ants.

To help prevent this from happening, after performing the appropriate non-chemical controls, choose insecticides that:

- Contain active ingredients that will be transferred to colony members via social behavior.
- Target the queen(s) and brood with baits that are shared.
- Feature premium spray formulations that can survive tough outdoor environments.



Sterifab

By Noel McCarthy

Staff Writer, Sterifab.com

Most ant species hibernate outside during the winter. But there are exceptions. Some species will invade a home during the winter — not to survive those long, cold days, per se, but to forage for food. The big

problem is finding these pests in the first place. Here are some tips for tracking them down:

- Water is a must for ants, so look in the bathroom, kitchen and anywhere else where moisture can build up, such as along water pipes and indoor drains. Look for leaks, which are practically guaranteed to attract ants.
- If the ants have gotten far enough into the house, look for ant bodies and fragments. These you'll probably find at their points of ingress, such as from window seal gaps, underneath doors, via the floorboards or other openings.
- If you find frass (wood shavings) during your search, the problem is likely carpenter ants. Basements or attics are good places to look first.

Also keep in mind that you may not, in fact, be dealing with an ant problem. Many customers can't distinguish between ants and termites, for example.



Innovative Pest Control Products

By Sarah Bernard, MS

Staff Entomologist

Ant species infesting a particular home or yard may change from year to year. Make sure you know which species you are dealing with when deciding how best to treat for your customers. The species you treated for last year may have been replaced or overtaken by a new species this year.

For example, imagine baiting a home for big-headed ants (*Pheidole megacephala*), only to find that six months later, red imported fire ants (*Solenopsis invicta*) have moved in. A sugar-based bait may not be effective on such opportunistic invaders, and your customers may be calling you back to complain when they still see “the ants.”

You may even find that other structural pests, such as subterranean termites, have had their nests or territory re-colonized by an opportunistic species that happened to come along after that area was baited for termites.

Remember that the changing seasons also can affect an ant colony's nutritional needs and foraging behavior. Consider which baits are most palatable and effective to your target pest at the time of year you are treating for them.



Woodstream Corp.

By Mike Goldstein

Sales Manager, Professional Products

To be successful when using a baiting system to control ants, it's imperative that you communicate with your customers what to expect; how the baits work; and directions for what they should and should not do. Share with customers that once the ants locate bait stations, they will see an increased amount of ant activity along foraging trails and at the stations.

Customers must clearly understand the importance to allow the ants to feed undisturbed for several days, in order for worker ants to share the bait properly with other ants in the colony. Make sure they realize they must resist the urge to spray or treat these ants and stations with any pesticide, as it will negatively affect the performance of the baits — and the entire control program.



FMC

By Sam Pass, BCE

Pest Control & Nursery/Greenhouse Market Manager

Across the country and throughout the year, ants are one of the most frequently encountered pests. Because they are so common, it is critical that we know how to manage them and take the time to do so correctly. While the best way to manage an ant infestation is dependent on the species and context, there are some best practices that should apply to any situation.

❶ **When you can, start with prevention.** For example, denying ants access to the structure by trimming landscape ornamentals back from the home eliminates an opportunity for infestation.

❷ **If you encounter an existing problem, start with identification.** Although they may look similar, different species of ants have different behaviors that should be factored into your management program.

❸ **Take advantage of the information the ants give you.** Following ant trails can lead you back to pest entry points, nest sites and conducive conditions in need of correction.



Bug Off Pest Control Center

By Andy Linares

Founder and President

The beauty of deploying ant baits is that we're using the ant's habit of sharing food with nestmates (trophallaxis) against it. All of those foragers act as tiny Trojan horses when they return to base.

The problem is that many PMPs do not use enough bait load to collapse the colony(ies) quickly. If bait placements are depleted before neutralizing the colony, the colony will rebound.

By the same token, most PMPs do not use enough varieties of bait formulations, actives and matrices to compensate for the ant's nutritional predilection at any given moment. Variety serves as a hedge against any rejection of a particular bait.

Finally, ants require fluids. Always supplement solid bait placements with a steady supply of liquid baits.



Amvac

By Dr. Charles Silcox

Product Development Manager

For ant management, the first step is to locate ant trails, nests or mounds, and areas where the ants may be expected to forage. After that, it's all about choosing treatment. Select an insecticide that is non-repellent, may readily be picked up from a dry deposit by foraging workers, and has the ability to be transferred throughout the colony.

The active ingredient fipronil is known to be effective against many ant species, for example. It may be applied to the outside surfaces of labeled structures, into wall voids and as a perimeter application 1 foot up and 1 foot out from where the ground meets a structure's foundation.

CALLBACK CURES

By Dr. Jim Fredericks | PMP Contributor



You can reach **DR. FREDERICKS**, VP of technical and regulatory affairs for the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), at jf Fredericks@pestworld.org.



Exterior pest inspections may require a change in direction

The winter months are a great time to focus on finding and communicating pest exclusion opportunities to clients. For example, the Professional Pest Management Alliance (PPMA) estimates 20 million homes are invaded each winter by mice. We know mice need only a 0.25-inch gap, or a hole the size of a dime, to squeeze their way into a building. By providing thorough inspections and comprehensive recommendations to your clients, you can help seal out winter rodents before they get inside.

But what about the home of a client who has been a regular

customer for many years? What if all the holes have been found, all the cracks have been sealed? When faced with a challenge like this, pest management professionals (PMPs) need to seek a new perspective on the problem.

PMPs often will habitually walk in the same direction around every building. Some prefer a clockwise path; others prefer the opposite. Over the next quarter, challenge yourself to walk a new path. Simply changing the direction you walk around a building to inspect or treat can bring a new perspective, and reveal new exclusion opportunities.

You will see a new side to every object, and a new view around every corner.

Focus on edges and areas where building materials meet. These often are the weakest points in a building envelope, and present opportunities for pests to enter. And don't focus solely on vertical surfaces — check underneath edges, too.

Providing exclusion opportunities to your client can add value to your service, and if your recommendations succeed in keeping curious rodents at bay, you just may be protecting yourself from a costly callback. **PMP**

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Review your knowledge of rats

- ① True or False: Rats can gain entry into a house through broken or abandoned sewer lines within the structure.
- ② Which of the following is characteristic of a dominant male rat?
 - a. Mate for life
 - b. Protect their young
 - c. Construct elaborate nests
 - d. Mark their territory
- ③ True or False: An easy way to tell the difference between an adult roof rat (*Rattus rattus*) and a Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) is the length of the tail, because a Norway rat's tail is longer than its head and body combined.
- ④ A collective group of rats is called a:
 - a. Herd
 - b. Business
 - c. Mischief
 - d. Company
- ⑤ True or False: Rats have excellent vision.
- ⑥ True or False: The concept of a single "alpha rat" in a population group that is extremely hard to catch is a myth.
- ⑦ How do rats regulate their body temperature?
 - a. Using blood vessels in their tails
 - b. Sweating
 - c. Panting
 - d. Finding shade
- ⑧ True or False: After eating rodenticide, rats go outside the structure looking for water and die.
- ⑨ When a rodent is in an attic, you usually can determine it is a rat because:
 - a. Squirrels only are active during daylight hours
 - b. Rats have uniquely shaped droppings
 - c. Rats only eat fruit, so if there is no fruit in the attic, it won't be a rat
 - d. Mice prefer to be on the ground
- ⑩ True or False: Roof rats are confined to areas around ocean harbors, as they frequently are introduced via ships.

Editor's Note: Questions for this month's test were contributed by Greg Baumann; Judy Black, BCE; Michael Broder; Doug Foster; Bobby Jenkins; Mark Sheperdigian, BCE; and Desiree Straubinger, BCE, CP-FS. Want to know your grade? Send your answers to pmpeditor@northcoastmedia.net and we'll let you know how you did.



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ASK THE EXPERT

By Judy Black, BCE | PMP Contributor



BLACK is a PMP Hall of Fame member (Class of 2019) and VP of quality assurance and technical services for Rollins Inc. She may be reached at jblack@rollins.com.

An ounce of precaution prevents a pound of resistance

Q Dear Judy, I feel like I'm pretty successful with my residential bed bug treatments. But how worried do I need to be about pesticide resistance? How do I know whether I'm dealing with resistance?

WORRIED IN WALLA WALLA, WASH.

A Dear W⁴, You probably don't need to be "worried," but you do need to be aware that bed bug resistance is out there. You should have a plan for not being part of the problem.

The first thing you can do to help yourself is become educated on the topic. Attending industry conferences, webinars and other training sessions really can help expose you to the research that is out there.



It's vital that pest management professionals educate themselves to stay a step ahead of bed bug behavior.

Many of these events, in-person and even online, offer great networking opportunities to find out what other industry professionals are seeing out in the field.

Regarding how you can tell whether you are dealing with resistance, here's my advice (with apologies to Jeff Foxworthy and his "You Might be a Redneck" comedy routine, although I mean these in all seriousness):

- If you are doing what you have always done successfully, and it starts failing, you may have resistance.
- If you treat the inside of a vial with a product, let it dry, put bed bugs in there and observe them for however long that product advertises it takes to kill bed bugs, and they live, you may have resistance.
- If you put bed bugs in a vial and treat them directly with a product, and they don't die in the amount of time the product advertises it takes to kill bed bugs, you may have resistance.
- If you are not using multiple classes of pesticides and rotating these products, you may have resistance.

Last but not least, you can help reduce your resistance risk by incorporating non-chemical methods like heat and vacuuming into your bed bug treatment protocols. PMP

➔ Email your questions about insect identification and pest management technologies to pmpeditor@northcoastmedia.net. Your questions most likely will be printed and answered in one of *Pest Management Professional's* upcoming columns.

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CONVERSATION PIECE

By Greg Baumann | *PMP* Contributor



BAUMANN, a *PMP* Hall of Famer (Class of 2013), is VP of technical services and regulatory affairs for Nisus Corp., Rockford, Tenn. He can be reached at gregb@nisuscorp.com.

Cockroach Promotion Board director speaks out

An interview with a cockroach ... representative

Pest Management Professional magazine (PMP): Today, we are focusing one of the most resilient insects on Earth: the cockroach. With me today is the executive director of the Cockroach Promotion Board. So wow, there is an organization to promote cockroaches?

Executive Director (ED): To us, there is nothing strange about having an international board to promote cockroaches. It seems like any group needs to be represented. I mean, *you* have national, state and local associations, don't you?

PMP: Fair point. OK, let's talk about a hot topic right now: Cockroaches are on the list of Public Health Pests authored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2002, titled PRN 2002-1. Why is being on that list significant?

ED: Because products are developed and submitted to the EPA for registration, the agency decided to prepare a list of imminent public health pests that would require a data review to make sure any product claiming efficacy works. By the way, we are not alone. The Public Health Pest list includes other insects, rodents, certain wildlife, and microorganisms.

PMP: Here's the timely part: The EPA recently proposed updates to the list, and we expect a revised list by February. As things evolve, pests such as bed bugs have been added.

MORE ONLINE

To view the 2002 Public Health Pest list, and the latest news on the updates to the 2021 list, visit [EPA.gov/pesticide-registration/prn-2002-1-lists-pests-significant-public-health-importance](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/prn-2002-1-lists-pests-significant-public-health-importance).

ED: That is correct. But we're proud to still be on the list!

PMP: Let's talk treatment. How have the control measures you fear changed in recent years?

ED: Well, your industry definitely has shifted from spraying baseboards to using a targeted approach with baits. It seems like yesterday that cockroach control was the toughest challenge for your technicians. Now, it seems we're more of a numbers game than a true technical challenge.

PMP: Why are cockroaches such a public health concern?

ED: It has been established that cockroaches can be the source of allergens, and can trigger an asthmatic reaction in humans. While most of the public think of cockroaches merely as disgusting and a nuisance, we do pose a serious health issue for asthmatics. We also spread pathogens to everyone, as we run through contaminated areas like sewers and then onto human food.

PMP: Are you proud of your influence on human living?

ED: We have been very successful, and trace our ancestry back perhaps millions of years. We are survivors, and do well in nearly any part of the world. In warmer climates, we thrive outdoors; in all climates, we do well indoors.

PMP: Identifying a cockroach is easy, but narrowing a cockroach down to species so we can understand biology



and habits can be hard. Can you explain?

ED: It is always best to take the time to properly identify, and then go to the sources and carefully apply the preferred product per the label. But our group realizes identifying cockroach nymphs in particular sometimes can be confusing. We even misidentify them as bed bugs sometimes! That's why we recommend that your industry expand its training focus from just adults of the species, to more on what cockroaches can look like during their entire life cycle.

PMP: Gee, you have been very forthcoming. Thank you for your candor.

ED: You're welcome. We're not worried about our population decreasing. If the public keeps feeding us and giving us access to water, we'll always be around. *PMP*

Naturally, the Cockroach Promotion Board holds all its meetings in a public restroom, with offsite trade shows at various restaurant kitchens.

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Growth goals for 2021

What a stressful year 2020 was: forest fires, hurricanes, civil unrest, a hotly contested presidential election and COVID-

19 shutting down everything from high schools to Hollywood. Good riddance to a year that was bad enough to take Mr. Jeopardy and James Bond away from us.

But for every yin, there is a yang. Nickelback made a huge comeback last year ... *psych!* Just kidding! Seriously, though, Schopen Pest Solutions had a record-breaking year in 2020. As you can see in our stats box on p. 64, we were up double-digits again, despite the pandemic hurting our numbers in March and slowing us to a crawl in November and December.

Now, here we are in 2021: The Year of the Ox. I wish I knew what this year has in store for us. Unfortunately, vaccine or no vaccine, I feel like 2021 is this dark, empty highway with danger lurking around every corner. It can't be as bad as 2020, can it? 2020 was a year that had potholes hiding every few feet. Every time I dodged one hole, I swerved right into the next. But now 2020 is in our rearview mirror and 2021 is the open road ahead.

If, and that is a big *if*, we get some normalcy back in 2021, here are the top items Schopen Pest Solutions will be working on for expansion and growth:



● **Staying healthy.** On Election Day, Nov. 3, one of my employees felt sick. We sent her home, but it was too late: Within the week, eight employees were sent home either because of COVID-19 symptoms or because they were in direct contact with someone who tested positive for the coronavirus. My entire immediate family got sick, and we all tested positive, as well. The week we got sick, Illinois was posting record numbers of cases — and the positivity rate was nearly 20 percent. Because of the high infection rate, many of our clients were sick or rescheduled due to the fear of getting the virus.

● **Opening a Wisconsin office.** We have maxed out our McHenry, Ill., location. We no longer have enough office space and parking to accommodate growth. Therefore, we will be opening up a second branch. Our goal is to have it up and running by May 2021.

● **Creating a sales team.** I spent last winter preparing a commercial sales division for the spring of 2020. Obviously, with so many businesses closing their doors in April and May, we didn't get that chance. After I get our Wisconsin branch operating, and if/when COVID-19 slows down, I will finally get the

people in place to create a sales branch of Schopen Pest Solutions. I'm looking at a June 2021 launch.

● **Splitting the corporate office from the McHenry branch.** When I purchased and renovated the McHenry facilities three-and-a-half years ago, little did I realize how quickly we would fill up the 8,000-square-foot building. Creating a Wisconsin office will help ease some of the overcrowding, but I also feel like we need to have some separation from the McHenry branch and upper management. I would love to move my accounts payable and accounts receivable staff, as well as the general manager, sales manager and operations manager, into a separate office space.

● **Creating a working budget.** Three years ago, I gave a presentation in Phoenix, Ariz., on the importance of having a budget. As a result, I worked on my own budget for days. I put together a beautiful pie chart, breaking down all of my expenses. Unfortunately, I haven't touched it since. Three years later, my company is twice as big and a budget is critical. I will be working this winter with my general manager and billing director on a budget. We will never

CONTINUED ON PAGE 64

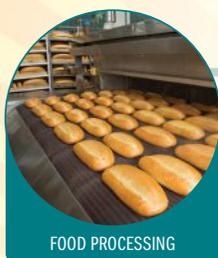
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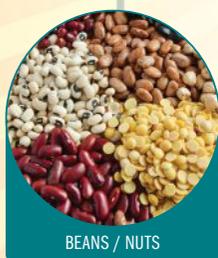
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START-UP DIARIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62

go this long without a financial game plan ever again.

● **Implementing KPIs for office and sales staff.** I have some really good key performance indicators (KPIs) in place for my technical team.

Now it is time to work on KPIs for my office personnel. I have some relevant categories I will begin implementing this month. Once the sales team is up and running, I will have KPIs ready for them, too.

● **Budgeting for outdoor advertising.** I tried billboard advertising in 2019, and I loved it. But in 2020, I didn't renew — just as a cost-cutting measure because the pandemic was in full swing. This spring, I definitely will reinstate our billboards because it helped us a lot with our brand recognition.

● **Celebrating our 15-year anniversary,** April will mark our

15th year in business. We will hold a promotion or contest to celebrate, although I'm still working out the details.

2021 could be another outstanding year for Schopen Pest Solutions. Even with modest growth, we likely will hit the \$3 million mark. Good luck to all of my pest control friends and families. I wish you the best this year, and hope you stay safe and healthy. PMP



SCHOPEN is owner and founder of Schopen Pest Solutions, McHenry, Ill. You can email him at pete@schopenpest.com or reach him via **Twitter:** @schopenpest; **Instagram:** peteschopen; or **Facebook:** schopen pest solutions, inc.

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HEADQUARTERS: McHenry, Ill.

FOUNDER: Peter F. Schopen Jr.

START-UP DATE: April 11, 2006

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 29 (27 full-time, one part-time, one trainee)

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2007 REVENUE: \$172,495

2008 REVENUE: \$203,732

2009 REVENUE: \$243,427

2010 REVENUE: \$325,960

2011 REVENUE: \$425,847

2012 REVENUE: \$489,887

2013 REVENUE: \$572,772

2014 REVENUE: \$687,326

2015 REVENUE: \$858,180

2016 REVENUE: \$1,079,068

2017 REVENUE: \$1,478,600

2018 REVENUE: \$1,877,496

2019 REVENUE: \$2,095,118

2020 REVENUE TO-DATE: \$2,398,367*

NOVEMBER REVENUE: \$356,499**

2020 GOAL: \$2,618,681

* Up 25% from 2019.

** Up 19%, or \$56,562 from November 2019.



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JENKINS, who rotates this column with his brothers Bobby and Raleigh, is president of ABC Home & Commercial Services, Dallas, Texas. He can be reached at djenkins@abcpest.com.

Make new customers, but keep the old

Did you ever hear the nursery rhyme “Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver; the other is gold”? Last month, *Pest Management Professional* asked its columnists and editorial advisory board members to share their New Year’s business resolutions. For me, the answer was easy: To continue to place more of a focus on our existing customer base.

It’s so easy to focus on gaining new customers, and it is so exciting to make new sales. But it’s also easy to become so fixated on making sales that you begin to lose your focus on existing customers.

In the worst case, you may even reschedule or skip an existing customer to make room for a new customer. This is a short-sighted approach. Existing customers are *gold* to our businesses. We need to hold them in the highest regard, and handle their needs in a way that makes them so happy that when the next company or salesperson approaches them, they won’t even listen.

WELCOME THEM BACK

We all lose customers, but if you are tracking it, you will find that “returning customers” also are a big source of new business. That is great, because it means they left for a time and have come back.

After being in business for 31 years, my number

of lost customers is much larger than my number of current customers. Whenever we focus on a “win-back” campaign, though, it always pays dividends. It is an excellent investment to have someone who is talented in sales get on the phone to call former customers, and then pay him or her a commission for winning customers back. After all, it costs loads of money, time and effort to find new customers. If you can do better at keeping them, your business will grow faster.

We have an inside sales force to take calls from potential customers and set them up on service visits. Our team is quite skilled at turning inquiries into sales. We went this direction a few years back because, when we dug into the number of sales our customer service representatives (CSRs) were making and began tracking how many opportunities they missed, it was a ton. CSRs are critical to our business, but rarely are they motivated to make sales.

Thus, with an inside sales force that is paid on commission and not hourly, we have a much higher closure rate. Every call is important to them, and we track their closure rates. We even pay a higher percentage commission for a higher closure rate. They are not able to sell every type of service visit, of course, and they must give certain types of sales over to inspectors who visit homes, but they sell a ton of business.

With all that in mind, this year we’re expanding the number of inside salespeople we have, and we’re also bringing all cancellation calls to these talented folks. We will pay them a sales commission that is equal to the amount we pay for selling to new customers. In other words, we want to make canceling customers just as important as potential new customers.

If you really count how much you spend for a new lead, you will find you have money to pay a sales commission — or should I say, a “save” commission — and still come out way ahead of the cost of the leads you generate. Properly incentivized salespeople will give their very best efforts to keep customers from leaving us. At least that is the plan, and I am counting on it working.

It’s like Dad always said: “You’ve got to dance with the ones that brought you.” PMP



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GORDON owns PCO Bookkeepers, an accounting and consulting firm that caters to pest management professionals throughout the United States. He can be reached at dan@pcobookkeepers.com.

What PPP loan recipients should consider if selling

The mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market for quality pest management companies is now white-hot, after a brief hiatus when COVID-19 first unleashed its ugliness on our population.

With valuations up and tax uncertainty for the future, many pest management professionals (PMPs) are looking to sell. But what if you received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, and it hasn't been forgiven yet? Who is responsible for the forgiveness and the payback? Can you even transfer interest in a company that has a PPP loan outstanding?

SBA ISSUES GUIDANCE

The answer to the last question, at least, is yes: Guidance issued by

the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) describes the procedures required for changes of ownership of an entity that has received a PPP loan. You can download a PDF document at [SBA.gov/document/procedural-notice-5000-20057-paycheck-protection-program-loans-changes-ownership](https://www.sba.gov/document/procedural-notice-5000-20057-paycheck-protection-program-loans-changes-ownership).

This guidance clarifies requirements, and may help businesses that have been trying to go through the forgiveness process quickly because of an impending transfer of ownership. According to the document, a “change of ownership” occurs for PPP purposes when at least one of the following is true:

- At least 20 percent of the common stock or other ownership interest of a PPP borrower is sold or otherwise transferred.
- The PPP borrower sells or otherwise transfers at least 50 percent of its assets (measured by fair market value).
- A PPP borrower is merged with or into another entity.

READY YOUR GAME PLAN

While it may seem like the easy answer is to pay back the loan prior to closing on the deal, it's not the most financially advantageous move. Most M&A deals in the pest control industry are asset deals, which is consistent with the second bullet point above. In this case, to hold onto the funds, the PPP borrower is required to notify the PPP lender in writing of the contemplated transaction, and provide the PPP lender a copy



of the documentation underpinning the proposed transaction. (See “*The borrower's responsibilities*,” at left.)

Some changes in ownership may require SBA review and approval, for which the agency has 60 days to do. Therefore, as the PCO M&A Specialists team and I have seen in some of the transactions we have facilitated, to give our clients (the seller) the best chance to keep the funds, we have been following SBA guidance. It allows for the establishment of an escrow account controlled by the PPP lender in the amount of the outstanding PPP loan balance. This escrow cannot be broken until forgiveness determination has been made; if there is any amount that is not forgiven, that amount will be paid back with interest. Going this route also insulates the buyer from any obligations with respect to fund payback.

If you are thinking of selling your business, or otherwise transferring interest, we highly recommend engaging a broker who has a team with integrated knowledge of all aspects of a transaction, as negotiating the purchase price is only one aspect — albeit an important one. PMP

The borrower's responsibilities

Regardless of a change in ownership, the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) borrower remains responsible for all the following:

- Performance of all obligations under the PPP loan.
- The certifications made in connection with the PPP loan application.
- Compliance with all other applicable PPP requirements.
- Obtaining, preparing and retaining all required PPP forms and supporting documentation.
- Providing the required forms and supporting documentation to the PPP lender or lender servicing the PPP loan, or to the SBA upon request. — D.G.

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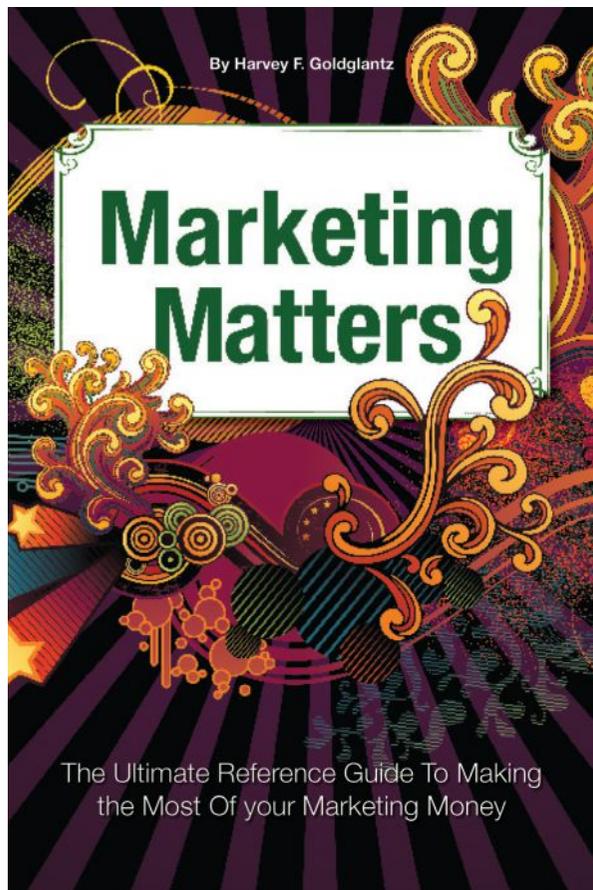
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PHOTO FINISH

By Heather Gooch | PMP Editor

Express gratitude with gifts

A gift is a great way to brighten someone's day, especially in these uncertain times. Many pest control companies opted out of hosting holiday parties last month because of state and local mandates calling for social distancing, staying at home and/or limiting large gatherings, and chose to offer fun or meaningful presents instead. And looking ahead, Valentine's Day is just around the corner!

Have you given or received a humorous and/or useful industry-related gift recently? If so, drop us a line at pmpeditor@northcoastmedia.net.

You can reach GOOCH at hgooch@northcoastmedia.net or 330-321-9754. Additional reporting by Diane Sofranec.



"We love all of our customers; we are so thankful for every single one of them," says **Veronika Joannides**, director of operations for AMVET Pest Control, a company in Houston, Texas, owned by a disabled U.S. veteran. One customer called herself the "bird lady" whenever she contacted the company for service. "She was new to Texas, never knew cockroaches flew, and relied a lot on our company," Joannides says. "I felt we needed to welcome her to Texas." Joannides spent all of \$1.88 to make a coffee mug featuring the woman's nickname. "This customer called it 'priceless,' and that's all that matters," she says. In return, the "bird lady" has shown her appreciation by promoting the company, referring people for general pest control and real estate inspections.



Etsy.com, the online marketplace for handcrafted and vintage items, is a clever place to find workplace-themed gifts. This of-the-moment mug is from **OddiTeasShop**.



Doug Foster, owner and president of Burt's Pest Control, Columbus, Ind., and a *Pest Management Professional* editorial advisory board member, found an unusual gift for employees and clients: Exterminator Gourmet Hot Sauce from J&K Specialty Foods. "It fits right in with our line of work, and customers really enjoy it," he says. "I always get a laugh when they see the label."

Preston and Rebecca Brown, owners of Wheeler Exterminating, gifted employees over the holidays with insulated tumblers emblazoned with the Kinston, N.C.-based firm's logo.



Last but not least, don't forget the gift of knowledge, which will last a lifetime. The *Truman's Scientific Guide to Pest Management Operations* and *Bugs Be Gone* are among several industry-related books available for purchase at **MyPMP.net/shop**.

PHOTOS: VERONIKA JOANNIDES; ODDITEES SHOP; DOUG FOSTER; REBECCA BROWN



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