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MAY 2024

Volume 52 /// Number 5



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Our Sponsor

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Paul's Termite & Pest Control has built a friendly comradery among technicians, proving successful business growth and relationship building can generate revenue.

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New to the List: **Brooks Pest Control**

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PCT Top 100 Awards Ceremony & Executive Summit

On June 25-26, PCT will welcome Top 100 companies to Nashville, Tenn., for the seventh in-person PCT Top 100 Awards Ceremony and Executive Summit, hosted by Syngenta.

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Moxie founder Jason Walton threw his hat in the ring to represent Utah in the U.S. Senate.

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A sound marketing plan doesn't 82 have to be daunting. Taking it one step at a time is a good place to start.











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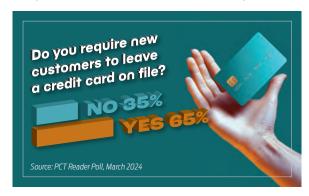
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READER POLL RESULTS

PCT keeps a pulse on the industry with our timely Reader Poll guestions. Here is a look at results from a recent poll.



PCT's LinkedIn page is a go-to source where industry professionals gather to network and share personal and professional updates. Follow the PCT LinkedIn page at www.linkedin.com/ company/pctmagazine.



Nominate a Technician of the Year Online

PCT recently launched nominations for its annual Technician of the Year awards program. The awards recognize



a trio of standout service professionals in the residential, commercial and termite categories. Be sure to nominate your company's service professionals. You can nominate a Technician of the Year online at www.pctonline.com/tech24.

Video Coverage from NPMA Legislative Day

At this year's NPMA Legislative Day, the PCT staff conducted video interviews related to this year's event, including interviews with:

- Dwight Reynolds, the 2024 FMC Policy Person of the Year
- Timson Green, an NPMA **ELP Graduate**
- Jeff Keller, the 2024 David Cooksev PestVet of the Year
- The 2023 PCT/BASF Technicians of the Year

Watch these and other videos at bit.lv/3x8CXZZ.



Interactive Top 100 Map

PCT Online's Top 100 coverage includes an interactive map that shows the locations of each of the headquarters of PCT Top 100 firms, all of the demographic data included on the list and live links to each of the companies' websites. View the map online at bit.ly/4c4Gcoe.



HIGHLIGHTED SECTION: Entomology Features

Be sure to check out the Entomology Features section on www. pctonline.com. This resource includes the latest news, features and research findings from leading university entomology programs. Check them out at bit.ly/414LZ76.

ENTOMOLOGY FEATURES



Gut Check

Purdue University research finds that nicotinoid and fungal disease team up to break down termites' tough

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Top 100 Takes

lacktriangle he last time Rollins wasn't No. 1 on the PCT Top 100 list, Taylor Swift was still performing country music; Tom Brady had only won three Super Bowls (he ended up with seven); Teslas were expensive sports cars for tech bros; and your main means of communicating with customers probably was still a landline phone.

Atlanta-based Rollins finally passed Terminix International for No. 1 on our list in 2012, after coming in second the year before (and the year before that, and the year before that — all the way back to the first list in 2002).

If you're keeping score: Terminix was No. 1 for 10 years, Rollins (Orkin) for 12 years. (This year's list is the 23^{rd} — you do the math.)

Now, Terminix is back on top. Sorta. Rentokil Initial completed its acquisition of the company in October 2022, resulting in a combination of the two firms that had occupied Nos. 2 and 3 on Top 100 lists dating back to 2016.

What's as notable is that Rollins is *just* \$722 million behind Rentokil Terminix for No. 1 this year. I know that sounds like a lot (and it is), but think about it: The third-biggest company bought the second-biggest company, and the distance between them and Rollins is nearly our total estimated revenue for Ecolab, which has been Nos. 3 or 4 on the list since every year since 2002. As writer Frances McKim noted in "The More Things Change ..." on page 36, a big part of Rollins keeping pace is the acquisition of Fox Pest Control, which was No. 13 on last year's list.

There are additional fascinating stories unfolding further down the list as well.

For example, Senske Services, Kennewick, Wash., jumped from No. 22 to No. 13 after going on a private equity-backed acquisition spree during the last couple years. After debuting on the list last year at No. 87, Ridd Pest Control, Lehi, Utah, jumped 27 spots to No. 60.

Two other companies that were new to last year's list made notable leaps as All U Need Pest Control, Fort Myers, Fla., and Native Pest Management, Tallahassee, Fla., jumped out of the 90s and into the 60s. Both companies are led, in part, by a younger generation of PMPs who are active in the industry. In fact, another younger generation-led company made a big leap: Pest-End, Plaistow, N.H., jumped from No. 98 to No. 80.

I prefer to see that level of success as another example that younger PMPs in the industry can bring fresh ideas and new ways to potentially solve old problems.

Taking a wider view of the overall list, one thing that's hard to miss is that the top of the list keeps getting bigger, while Nos. 99 and 100 are under \$8 million a year in revenue.

But there's a lot more to this year's Top 100 coverage than the list. McKim's story also highlights the state of the global mergers and acquisitions market. In "Under Cover," page 42, Publisher Jodi Dorsch takes a fun look back at some previous PCT covers that help us understand the rise of Rentokil and more.

We also profiled three companies that are new to the list this year: Kilauea Pest Control, Kailua, Hawaii, which is the third company from the island state to be on the list since 2002; Brooks Pest Control, Orem, Utah, which reported a whopping 209% revenue growth in 2023 compared to 2022; and Paul's Termite & Pest Control, Tallahassee, Fla., a family-run business that started in 1971.

Our coverage also has plenty to offer companies who aren't on the list (yet). "Face the Change," page 50, has advice on how making continuous improvements can lead to success. "Count On It," page 62, digs into why your accounting team shouldn't wall itself off from the rest of the company.

In "Happy Place," page 58, Erin Richardson, CEO and owner of All-American Pest Control, Nashville, Tenn., shares how her company focuses on employee morale to create a work environment that prioritizes flexibility, develops leaders and gives back.

"Understanding that workplace culture can directly affect customer satisfaction and, ultimately, your bottom line, it's probably a good idea to make sure you boost your team's morale," Richardson wrote.

Top 100 company or not, that kind of advice never goes out of style. PCT

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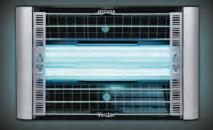
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First Record of Asian **Subterranean Termites** in California Confirmed

SAN DIEGO — In recent years, California pest management professionals have been on alert for Formosan subterranean termites as infestations have become established in a variety of locations throughout Southern California. California PMPs can now add the Asian subterranean termite (AST) to its list of invasive pests.

Vincent Chargualaf, field representative, Harbor Pest Control, San Diego, discovered the termites in March while inspecting a 72-foot sailing yacht at a Southern California harbor. Typically, when Chargualaf receives service calls about termites on boats, they are for



The Asian subterranean termite (*Coptotermes* gestroi) has only one pair of hair (circled).

drywood termites. "When I questioned the [worker] at the gate, he told me they were subterranean termites," he said. "I thought, OK sure, whatever, but he was right. When I inspected the hull, I saw

remnants of cartons in the wall. I started collecting specimens and taking pictures."

Chargualaf thought the termites might be Formosan subterranean termites (FST). He contacted Harbor Pest Control owner Greg Augustine, who reached out to Dr. Chow-Yang Lee at the University of California, Riverside. Upon viewing the photos, Lee thought the damage might have been caused by FSTs, but he also was able to identify three soldier termites as Coptotermes. He asked Chargualaf to make a return trip to the boat, collect more specimens and mail them to him.

"When the specimens arrived, my Ph.D. student, Joanne Chen, examined a specimen under a microscope, and found only one pair of hair on the fontanelle," said Lee. The Formosan subterranean termite. Coptotermes formosanus, has two pairs of hair on the fontanelle, while the Asian subterranean termite, Coptotermes gestroi, has only one pair of hair. Lee added, "Joanne further examined the specimen using mitochondrial DNA analysis and it is evident that the termite species infesting the boat is C. gestroi (Asian subterranean termite). This is the new record of AST and the first in California."

The boat had been in international waters in Central and South America, which is where Augustine believes the termites originated. Chargualaf estimated that 70



Harbor pest control has experience fumigating large yachts.

to 80 percent of the boat's wood (which is teak) was damaged by the termites, which may end up costing the owner tens of thousands of dollars. Harbor Pest Control treated the yacht by fumigating it.

Will ASTs become a well-established species in California? Lee said at this time it is "unlikely"; however, "with higher temperatures [due to climate change] and a well-irrigated landscape, this species can become established especially in Southern California, particularly in the coastal area." - Brad Harbison

PMPs Have Their Voices Heard on the Hill

WASHINGTON — While there were many new issues at this year's NPMA Legislative Day, held in early March in Washington, D.C., the main rallying point was a familiar one: making legislators aware of the importance of codifying state lead agencies as co-regulators (along with EPA) of pesticides.

NPMA and others have long argued that pest control oversight is best handled jointly by each state's lead agency

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All U Need Pest Control has expanded to Melbourne, Fla.

All U Need Pest Control, Fort Myers, Fla., announced it has expanded into Melbourne, Fla., and surrounding communities, with the opening of a new office. This expansion marks a significant milestone as it is the company's 10th location.

Building upon its success in other regions of the state of Florida, the company is eager to extend its services to the residents of Melbourne and the Space Coast area, said Kyle Selbach, director of operations at All U Need Pest Control.

"We are excited to be growing into another region in Florida. This will make our fourth major region in Florida and our 10th office in the state," Selbach said. "Our growth is possible due to the excitement and willingness from our employees who are eager to relocate to bring the AUNP values with them. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish on the Space Coast!"



Bill's Home Service co-owners Bill (left) and Ryan Bennett, grandsons of founder Bill Bennett.

Bill's Home Service, Tucson, Ariz., is celebrating 60 years. The company was founded in 1964 by Bill Bennett and is co-owned today by his grandsons, Bill and Ryan Bennett. The family business is now one of the largest providers of pest, weed and termite control in southern Arizona.

'Our team is made up of the best people out there. They're kind people with integrity they see the bigger picture and put themselves in the customer's shoes. They're going to be honest, tell you what we're going to do, and why. Our team still delivers that oldfashioned customer service." said Bill.

Today, Bill's Home Service employs more than 25 team members serving more than 8,000 customers every year throughout southern Arizona.

The company contributes to multiple local community organizations, schools, senior adult programs and youth athletics, including the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, Sahuarita Unified School District, Amphitheater Unified School District, La Posada Community Services, Copper Hills Little League, Tucson Conquistadores and CDO Little League.

Ecologic Entomology, Boston, announced a refresh to its brand identity, featuring a new logo that the company said symbolizes Ecologic's mission of transforming the link between effective pest management and sustainability. The company was founded in

"We formed Ecologic Entomology with the belief that integrity matters," said Ken Spen-

cer, president. "I'm proud to say that statement holds true today. We look forward to what the



future holds for our company as innovators in the industry."

Cook's Pest Control, Decatur, Ala., held its annual Keystones award dinner on Jan. 26 in the newly renovated Saturn Ballroom of Huntsville's Von Braun Center.

Before celebrating 78 President's Club members, the company recognized 27 managers and supervisors who surpassed 2023 goals, and five office specialists chosen to receive a President's Award.

In addition, 14 Keystone awards were presented; six for top performance in key areas and eight for those who best modeled Cook's core values. View the list of award winners at bit.lv/3Um3M9t.



Cook's Pest Control President Brian Cook (left) presents a Keystone Award to Tyler Cooper of the Cook's Huntsville, Ala., branch.



and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Currently in 45 states, the lead agency (which is usually each state's department of agriculture) co-regulates pesticides with EPA through longstanding cooperative agreements.

PMPs who operate in states without

preemption (Alaska, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota and Nevada) are burdened with having to comply with different laws and regulations in each of the communities they service. Additionally, NPMA and others are concerned that states with preemption will repeal or roll back the



NPMA's Jackie Ramsey (standing, right) strategizes with Florida attendees.

preemption they currently have in place. As previously reported by PCT, this Congress intends to re-authorize the Farm Bill, which includes language to codify the role of state lead agencies as co-regulators of pesticides alongside EPA.

The goal of Legislative Day visits was for pest management professionals to remind their congressional representatives that codifying the exclusive role of state lead agencies as pesticide co-regulators with EPA is crucial to protecting American health, food and property from pests.

In addition to Capitol Hill visits, Legislative Day included presentations from leading political pundits and the presentation of the Policy Person of the Year Award to Dwight Reynolds, group compliance manager for the Western U.S., Rentokil Terminix, and the 2024 David Cooksey PestVet of the Year Award to Jeff Keller of Burns Pest Elimination.

PCT will have additional coverage from NPMA Legislative Day, including a photo review, in an upcoming issue.

In Memoriam: Dr. Eric Smith

LYNCHBURG, Va. — The pest control industry mourns the loss of Dr. Eric Smith, the longtime director of technical services

at Dodson Pest Control, Lynchburg, Va. Smith passed away on April 3 at 80. Smith was highly regarded by colleagues and co-workers alike for his pest control knowledge and abil-



ric Smith

ity to communicate this information via training presentations, ID workshops and writing

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director of technical services in August 1989, and during the next 24 years he led the company's training program, while also handling a wide range of technical questions of importance to customers, regulators and others.

"Eric brought a higher level of techni-

cal knowledge to our company," said Bert Dodson, president and CEO of Dodson Pest Control. "He was extremely detailed and driven to perfection. Our company improved because others in the company strove to meet his expectations."

Smith's training impacted many others

in the industry outside of Dodson. He was a speaker at industry and association meetings, past president of Pi Chi Omega and a member of Copesan's and NPMA's technical committees. One of his notable contributions was as principal author of the NPMA Field Guide to Structural Pests. This 800-page reference source includes detailed information on nearly 200 different structural pests and can likely be found in offices and service vehicles throughout the country.

Learn more about Smith and read colleague remembrances at bit.ly/3vSqtbU.— Brad Harbison

Terminix Service Launches 'We Work With Pests' Ad Campaign

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Terminix Service, Columbia, S.C., recently launched a new ad campaign, "We Work With Pests," which the company touts as a unique approach to pest control aimed at changing the industry's narrative.

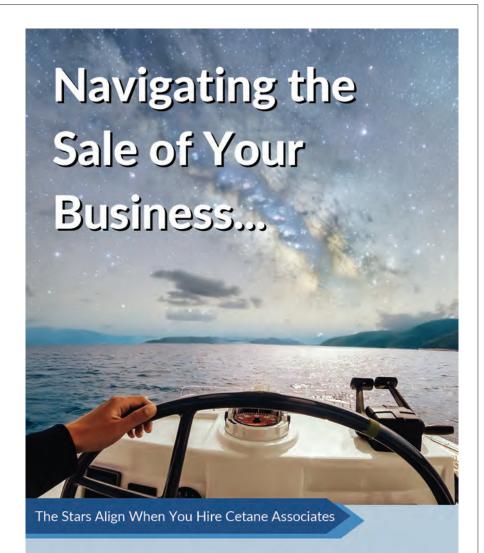


Terry the Termite is asked to be mindful of the company's "pencil budget."

Terminix said it believes that "the best bugs are the ones that stay outside your home." To support this stance, the company said it provides employees with more than 160 hours of training from entomologists and industry experts. Instead of simply eradicating pests, it focuses on preventing their return by understanding their behavior in the home.

To showcase this approach, Terminix has partnered with Buffalo Groupe to create short documentary-style skits.

These spots feature everyday pests such as termites, mosquitoes, cockroaches and rodents as employees at Terminix's corporate headquarters in Columbia, S.C. Real pest behavior has influenced the ads, making them authentic and attention-grabbing.



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News /// MAY

The ads highlight termites eating cellulose wood, mosquitoes crowding around water and rodents running along the walls.

Each scene is filled with minor details that capture the essence of pest behavior. The campaign aims to create engaging and relevant content.

In Memoriam: Gary Muldoon

TORONTO — Gary Muldoon, longtime leader of Orkin Canada, passed away on March 15, at 71. Muldoon's storied pest control career included helping integrate PCO Services

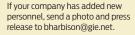


Gary Muldoon

into Orkin, which purchased the company from S.C. Johnson in 1999.

Muldoon began his career in pest control in 1974, running commercial routes in

Comings & Goings

















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The National Pest Management Association announced the promotions of **Allie Allen**, B.C.E., to vice president of membership and certification, and **Dan Nappi**, CAE, to director of certification. Allen will spearhead efforts to support and expand both NPMA membership and the companies earning and maintaining QualityPro credentials. Nappi will support the credentialing organization for the structural pest management industry.

Massey Services, Orlando, Fla., announced the Orlando Business Journal selected **Suzanne Graham**, director of government affairs, as one of its Women Who Mean Business award winners. The annual award honors women who exceed expectations in their roles.

Lajaunie's Pest Control, New Orleans, announced the addition of **Jeremy Clark** as director of operations. Clark is the former owner and operator of Dugas Pest Control of Baton Rouge, La.

Control Solutions Inc. (CSI) announced **Kevin Behrens** as the north central territory manager for the Pasadena, Texas-based company's pest control division. He has more than 30 years of industry experience in distribution.

JT Eaton announced the addition of **Isabelle Lucero** as education and compliance officer for the Twinsburg, Ohio-based manufacturer. Lucero will focus on educating PMPs and consumers on the importance of pest control.



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ACCESSORIES



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MERV 11 MEGA DRY CS75 FILTER

MEGA DRY WI-FI CS75 DEHUMIDIFIER (featured left)

The Mega Dry CS75 Wi-Fi Connected Dehumidifier features digital controls with Wi-Fi capability so you can adjust the unit from your smart phone without having to enter the crawlspace. The easy-to-use unit removes up to 75 pints of water from the air each day in a closed crawlspace

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News /// MAY

Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, for PCO Services. He worked his way through the ranks at PCO Services, including roles as general sales manager for the company's Toronto office, general manager of operations for Ontario and vice president of operations Canada-wide. In 1987, PCO Services was purchased by S.C. Johnson, one of the world's largest consumer products companies, and in late 1999, Orkin negotiated with S.C. Johnson to acquire PCO Services for \$25 million. Under Muldoon's leadership, Orkin/PCO Canada flourished, realizing strong growth and profits as well as excellent coworker and customer retention rates.

In 2001, Muldoon and his family moved to Atlanta, where he headed Orkin's North America commercial division. In this position, Muldoon introduced Canada's Gold Medal program to the U.S. In 2005, Muldoon and his family moved back to Canada, where he served as president of Orkin Canada until his retire-

ment in 2017. Rob Quinn, president of Orkin Canada, worked closely with Muldoon upon his return. "Gary had a calming effect," Quinn said. "If the walls were burning down around you, Gary would come into a room, and all was right with the world. He commanded a room when he walked into it, and you knew he was the leader, not because of his title, but because of the way he treated people."— Brad Harbison

UF/IFAS Unveils Online Interactive Termite Distribution Map

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. — As PMPs know, termites cause billions of dollars a year in damages to homes, trees and other wooden structures across America.

In Florida, termite infestations are a year-round risk for properties and trees. While they are not swarming year-round, they consistently forage and develop new



UF's Rudy Scheffrahn collecting termite samples. Termite samples were used to create the new interactive termite risk map.

colonies, leaving signs of their presence.

Scientists at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) have developed ways to show risk with an online interactive termite distribution map. This tool helps residents, property owners and pest management professionals know the risks of infestations and how to limit that risk through proactive science-based approaches.

Through the accumulation of more





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News /// MAY

than 6,500 termite samples over the years, the map provides instant access to a general location where each termite species is known to be established. This gives Florida residents, pest control companies and UF/IFAS Extension agents a way to determine the termite risk at any given location within the state. A companion resource to the online termite distribution map and Extension Ask IFAS document provides detailed information on termite prevention and control.

Massey Services Joins NPMA's Key Partners Program

FAIRFAX, Va. — The National Pest Management Association (NPMA) announced the inclusion of Massey Services, Orlando, Fla., as its newest Key Partner.

"The strength of the pest management industry lies in the strategic alliances forged between visionary leaders. We

M&A News



Please send press releases about your firm to bharbison@gie.net.



Jared Lajaunie and Ashley Quirk

Lajaunie's Pest Control, New Orleans, announced the acquisition of Skeeter Force, a pest control service provider in Slidell, La.

More than 20 years ago, Jared Lajaunie, the founder of Lajaunie's Pest Control, and Ashley Quirk, the founder of Skeeter Force, began their careers in the pest control industry on the same day at a large national pest control company. Their careers have now come full

"We are beyond excited to bring Skeeter

Force into the Lajaunie family," said Lajaunie. "This is not just a business move; it's a reunion of two professionals who share a deep passion for excellence in pest control. Together, we are poised to offer unparalleled service to

Adam's Pest Control, Medina, Minn., announced it has acquired Brooklyn Park, Minn.based Midwest Pest Management.

We chose Adam's because of their commitment to customer satisfaction. It's the perfect home for both our customers and our technicians," said Jon Hagel, owner of Midwest Pest Management.

Todd Leyse, president of Adam's Pest Control, said it's an honor to continue the relationship he and his father, Harold, built with Hagel throughout the years. "We strive for a win-win-win in all our acquisitions — a win for the seller, a win for the buyer, and importantly, a win for the seller's employees who will have increased access to benefits, training and more upward mobility," Leyse said.

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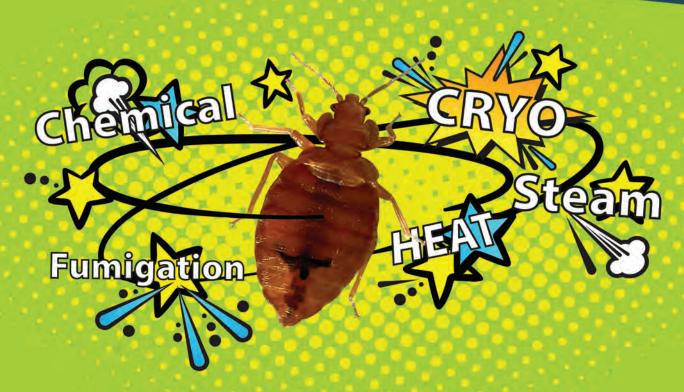
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News /// MAY

proudly welcome Massey Services as our newest Key Partner in the ongoing pursuit of excellence. I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone at Massey Services for embracing this commitment to collaboration, innovation and mutual growth," said NPMA CEO Dominique Stumpf.

Tony Massey, president and CEO of Massey Services, said, "Our company has been a proud supporter of the NPMA for 40 years, with several of our team members serving on boards, participating in new program initiatives and volunteering on special committees. Our participation in the NPMA Key Partner Program is one more example of our commitment to growing and supporting the association and the pest management industry."

Announced at PestWorld 2023 in Honolulu this past October, NPMA said the Key Partners fosters an unprecedented level of support, volunteerism and leadership to benefit the industry as a whole.

New Reference Book on Formosan Termites Now Available

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — A new termite reference book, "Biology and Management of the Formosan Subterranean Termite and Related Species," has been published.

Edited by Drs. Chow-Yang Lee and Nan-Yao Su, it is one of the first comprehen-

sive reference books compiling literature on this termite pest species since Tokuichi Shiraki described it in 1909.

As noted in the book's preface, "The Formosan subterranean termite, *Cop*-

totermes formosanus, holds the notorious title of being the most destructive termite species. It is the only termite species listed among the world's 100 worst invasive alien

species in the Global Invasive Species Database."

"Biology and Management of the Formosan Subterranean Termite and Related Species" covers the global distribution of C. formosanus, its biogeography and the mechanism by which it has spread from its native range in southern China and Taiwan to other parts of the world.

The book also addresses inspection and monitoring and various control options against this species. Additionally, two chapters are dedicated to discussing another highly destructive species, *C. gestroi*, and the recently discovered *C. formosanus/C. gestroi* hybrids. The final two chapters offer valuable laboratory techniques to study rhinotermitids, including *C. formosanus*, and highlight unsolved questions that warrant further investigation.

Seventeen authors contributed to this book, and each chapter was reviewed by leading global termite researchers. The book can be ordered at bit.ly/3SrfIod. **PCT**





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THINGS TO KNOW

You can't stop bed bug introductions, but you *can* stop them from becoming infestations. Here are 10 things to know about how *Active*Guard can help.

Labeled for prevention:
Active Guard's label states the liner works as a preventative tool for bed bug infestations when used as part of an IPM program. This allows the product to be used in absence of the target pest.

Long-term strategy:
Active Guard prevents
infestations for two full years once
installed. Active Guard, as the last step
of your bed bug strategy, allows you to
lengthen your service warranty while
limiting callbacks.

Prevents infestations:
Active Guard works by
inhibiting a female bed bug from
laying its eggs by restricting blood meal
intake. Active Guard is the only product
that outlasts the life cycle of a bed bug.

Recurring revenue potential:
Optimal use of *Active*Guard requires replacement every 24 months, providing a predictable stream of reoccurring revenue.

Easy upsell opportunity:

Active Guard is an easy upsell opportunity for non-bed bug related jobs. Since it is labeled for prevention,

Active Guard can be sold to a client that is not presently experiencing bed bugs but is seeking prevention.

Field durability: *Active* Guard works even when ripped or torn, making it nearly maintenance-free.



Perfect positioning:
ActiveGuard is effective when installed on either a box spring or a mattress. The liner can be installed on either box spring or mattress, depending on the type of bed set. 85 percent of bed bugs are typically found within a 5-foot radius of the bed, making ActiveGuard's placement ideal for addressing a bed bug introduction.

8 Easy to install: ActiveGuard can be installed by a single person. ActiveGuard's zipperless design allows for simple installation — as easy as installing a fitted sheet!

Works discreetly: Active Guard has no odor and does not release any active ingredients. When placed on a mattress or box spring, Active Guard visually blends with the bedding.

Only four sizes are required: Active Guard comes in single/twin, double/full, queen and king mattress sizes. All sizes can stretch to fit extra long mattress lengths and up to 18 inches in depth. Active Guard liners simplify inventory control thanks to its limited number of SKUs.





Bed Bug Prevention

/bed bəg prē'ven(t)SH(ə)n/

noun

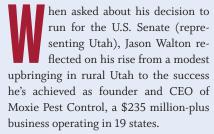
The act of using ActiveGuard® as the centerpiece of a strategy to stop a bed bug introduction from becoming an infestation... for two years.



From Entrepreneur to U.S. Senate Candidate

Moxie founder Jason Walton threw his hat in the ring to represent Utah in the U.S. Senate.

By Brad Harbison



"My wife, [Kristen], and I both received accounting degrees from BYU [Brigham Young University], and then afterwards we started a pest control company literally out of our garage," Walton told PCT, recalling the days of technicians showing up every morning to their house to pick up products and fill up sprayers. "So, without taking on outside investors, we've now built it into a family of pest control companies that is one of the largest in the United States."

That story is what Walton thinks resonates with voters. "What they are saying is 'The last thing we need is another politician.' They want a businessperson who knows something about budgeting, and bootstrapping, and starting something out of the garage and making it into something."

Walton's journey is not unlike other PCOs in that he didn't plan on a career in pest control. He paid his way through college working for Eclipse Marketing, which contracted with other pest control companies to sell services using door-to-door sales professionals. While in college, he moved through the ranks at Eclipse, becoming vice president and making six figures by the time he graduated.

Walton considered pursuing his MBA immediately after college, but, he said, "I grew up poor and didn't want to end up with crushing debt, so I started a pest control company." He and Kristen moved to Dallas and founded Mayday Pest Control, which he co-owned/operated before selling to his partner. In December 2000, he launched Moxie Pest Control. "I took everything I learned in three years and — now that I was on my own — did it better within four months. It was the first time I self-actualized as an entrepreneur," he said.

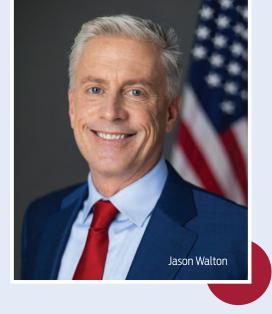
Walton launched the first Moxie location in Dallas and quickly expanded to Austin, Houston, San Antonio and Atlanta. Along the way, he instituted a shared ownership model whereby employees could open branches with Walton. Loyal, hard-working employees became his business partners with their own sweat equity funded by Walton. Together, they built pest control branches one location at a time. "The goal was not to build a big pest control compa-

ny — it was to give back to employees who were loyal to me," Walton

who were loyal to me, Walton said. "The main focus over my 30-year career is principle-centered leadership. I like to think I'm making the world a better place not just because of pest control, but because I get

to interact with, train and mentor all these wonderful people."

As anyone who has ever pursued political office can attest, there is never a perfect time personally and professionally to take this leap, but Walton is confident that Moxie Owner Tim Headrick can take



the reins should he be elected. "We have unbelievable people at Moxie," Walton said. "Tim is exceptionally competent and we have multiple people who can take on those leadership roles. So, I am in a very, very good position to move forward and help this country."

And Walton said he wants to help the pest control industry. As the longtime leader of Moxie, he has had a front-row seat in dealing with "overly burdensome" pesticide regulations and other government decisions that have impacted pest control businesses. "During COVID, we put out over 1,000 job offers and couldn't hire because the federal government was paying people more money not to work. I never thought I would compete against my own government, which was paying people not to work and not to be productive."

The pest control industry has had some past representation in Washington, D.C., including U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX) and U.S. Rep Bob Dold (R-IL), PCOs who served in the U.S. House of Representatives. If elected, it is believed Walton would be the first to serve in the U.S. Senate—something that is not lost on him.

"It's been great knowing that all my brothers and sisters in the pest control industry are on my team," Walton said, "and will help send one of their own to Washington." **PCT**

The author is senior news editor of PCT.

Editor's Note: Walton was a declared candidate as of press time. The Utah Republican Party's nominating convention was April 27.



PCT's 23rd Annual List of the Industry's Largest Companies

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Congratulations to All PCT Top 100 Companies

ne of the key themes for us at Veseris is "momentum," and it clearly reflects how this industry operates, where service and quality are the hallmarks of success. For any company to reach the Top 100, let alone appear in it across multiple years, is an accomplishment to be recognized and celebrated. It is a testament to the excellence within our industry and should instill confidence in all of us for what the

within our industry and should instill confidence in all of us for what the future holds.

For Veseris in 2024, we continue to strive to be your Preferred Choice partner for your products, solutions and continuing education needs. To this end, the past year was one of growth and progress for our business, with investments made in People, Infrastructure, and Digital solutions that are intended to strengthen the value propositions we offer both today and into the future.

What this means is making it easier for you to do business with us in the manner you choose. We are continuing to invest in our local footprint and operational capabilities, through our 70+ ProCenters across North America which ensure we are able to offer the best possible product offer-



Ken Bradley

ing, service, and convenience, provided by professionals who understand and value your business and your people. At the same time, significant investments are being made to Veseris.com to differentiate it as the leading self-service industry resource to Pest Management Professionals. With new features and benefits being deployed each month, and access to best-in-class business solutions like ProTraining Online and Veseris Inventory Manager, we aim to redefine what it means to serve the needs of our valued partners in the manner you choose.

Our every endeavor aims to strengthen the value we can provide and give you time back to focus on what matters most for your business and your people. In doing so, our responsibility is to listen to your needs and operate as a true partner for success, going above and beyond to ensure you are able to make the dreams and visions for your business a reality.

Again, I congratulate everyone who achieved this distinguished PCT Top 100 status and recognition. And to all those who aspire to take their business to new heights in 2024, we at Veseris are ready to help you unleash that potential. Ro

Ken Bradley, CEO, Veseris

Kin Budl

U.S. Structural Pest Control Market Nears \$12 Billion

he United States structural pest control industry generated total service revenue of \$11.723 billion, a 6.2 percent increase from the \$11.042 billion measured in 2022, according to the latest market report, "A Strategic Analysis of the U.S. Structural Pest Control Industry" from Specialty Consultants LLC. There were nearly 17,500 pest control firms operating in the U.S. this past year, two-thirds of which operate from a single location. "Respondents reported an average of 5.9 service calls per residential account," said Rich Kalik, partner. "Following robust service charge increases in 2022, the average residential service charge increased by less than 1 percent this past year."

Service revenue derived from controlling cockroaches edged out the revenue from controlling nuisance ants for the second year in a row. However, the revenue from controlling all ants (i.e., nuisance, carpenter ants and fire ants) increased 7.8 percent and totaled nearly one-quarter of the total industry revenue. "Revenue generated from controlling bed bugs increased more than 10 percent following the decline experienced in 2021," said Kalik.

More than 12.6 million residential customers received a professional pest control service this past year. Recurring revenue accounted for 85.9 percent of the residential pest control service revenue generated this past year, essentially unchanged from the 85.8 percent measured in 2022. The commercial segment continued to expand with an 8.2 percent increase in service revenue this past year. "It's interesting to note that the frequency of service calls to commercial accounts has been trending higher over the past five to six years," added Kalik. "After the commercial sector declined three years ago for only the second time in 23 years of measurement due to the pandemic, growth rates have rebounded with 6.7 percent growth in 2021, 5.7 percent in 2022 and 8.2 percent this past year. For 2024, we project the commercial market segment to increase by 4.7 percent."

The 2023 season market report is the 24th edition of "A Strategic Analysis of the U.S. Structural Pest Control Industry." A total of 800 owners or managers of pest control companies were surveyed for this study. More than half of the respondents to this year's survey were members of the National Pest Management Association, and more than 60 percent were members of their state or local association. The syndicated market report is available for purchase only by subscription, sold in its entirety.

Learn more at www.spcresearch.com. №

The commercial segment continued to expand last year. After the commercial sector declined three years ago for only the second time in 23 years of measurement, growth rates have rebounded with 6.7 percent growth in 2021, 5.7 percent in 2022 and 8.2 percent this past year.



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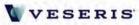




TUP 100 2024 Commemorative Poster

About this List





COMPANY	RANK		PROVINCE	REVENUES	OVER 2022	FOR 2024	GPC		OTHER		COM	# EMP	# OFFI
Rentokil Terminix	2,3	Reading	PA	\$3,795,000,000	8%	5%	70%	20%	10%	68%	40%	17,500	600
Rollins	1	Atlanta	GA	\$3,073,278,000	14%	n/a	80%	20%	0%	67%	33%	19,000	800
Ecolab	4	St. Paul	MN	\$747,807,000**	11%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0%	100%	n/a	n/a
Articimex	5	Basking Ridge	NJ	\$600,000,000	20%	n/a	75%	10%	15%	75%	25%	3,800	100
Aptive Environmental	6	Provo	UT	\$450,474,000	9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	99%	1%	n/a	n/a
Arrow Exterminators	7	Atlanta	GA	\$400,680,000	11%	9%	50%	37%	13%	89%	11%	3,279	176
Massey Services	8	Orlando	FL	\$381,052,364	7%	15%	47%	24%	29%	87%	13%	2,813	188
Moxie Pest Control	n/a	living	TX	\$235,000,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	35
Cook's Pest Control	9	Decatur	AL	\$200,000,000	7%	6%	60%	40%	0%	80%	20%	1.725	42
Terminix Service	10	Columbia	SC	\$155,635,714	5%	2%	45%	45%	10%	90%	10%	1.058	56
ABC Home & Commercial Services	11	Austin	TX	\$147,000,000	8%	11%	37%	3%	60%	80%	20%	1,050	5
Truly Noten of America	12	Tueson	A7	\$133,130,569	6%	7%	70%	21%	9%	79%	21%	1,098	59
Senske Services	22	Kennewick	WA	\$125,000,000	58%	10%	17%	1%	82%	89%	11%	849	33
Greenix Pest Control	14	Orem	UT	\$123,000,000	16%	n/a	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	750	32
PestCo	15	St. Louis	MO	\$124,000,000	11%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0/8	72%	28%	725	40
Abell Pest Control		St. Louis Etobicoke		\$114,100,000	12%				192	12%			
	16		ON MN			n/a	95%	1%	4%		88%	650	30
Plunkett's Pest Control	18	Fridley		\$101,000,000	10%	6%	90%	0%	10%	30%	70%	725	2
Home Paramount Pest Control	17	Forest Hill	MD	\$100,500,000**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/s
Dodson Pest Control	20	Lynchburg	VA	\$73,125,000	7%	3%	72%	28%	0%	68%	40%	n/a	38
Certus	19	Tampa	FL	\$70,000,000	NC	15%	78%	7%	15%	81%	19%	497	20
Terminix Co. of North Carolina	21	Fayetteville	NC	\$89,500,000**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	680	22
Entorno Brands	31,37	Charleston	SC	\$84,270,000	3%	9%	57%	35%	8%	95%	5%	387	21
Saela Pest Control	23	Orem	UT	\$61,808,786	1%	-6%	83%	2%	15%	95%	5%	275	17
Sprague Pest Solutions	24	Tacoma	WA	\$48,000,000	13%	12%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	300	20
Lloyd Pest Control	25	San Diego	CA	\$44,700,000	7%	5%	75%	25%	0%	70%	30%	310	10
Green Pest Solutions	27	West Chester	PA	\$43,526,162	17%	21%	28%	6%	66%	92%	8%	304	7
Rose Pest Solutions	26	Troy	M	\$43,526,162	n/a	21% n/a	28% n/s	n/s	n/a	22%	78%	355	20
Terminix Triad	28	Greensboro	NC MC	\$39,900,000	9%	8%	50%	50%	0%	78%	22%	286	16
Rottler Pest Solutions	29	St. Louis	MO	\$38,181,592	15%	10%	80%	10%	10%	70%	30%	280	10
Alta Pest Control	56	Round Rock	TX	\$37,800,000	40%	30%	75%	5%	20%	99%	1%	n/a	15
Advanced IPM	33	Roseville	CA	\$34,521,164	10%	10%	n/a	n/a	n/a	38%	70%	215	- 11
Hulett Environmental Services	32	West Palm Beach	FL	\$33,650,000	4%	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a	85%	15%	n/a	2
ABC Home & Commercial Services	34	Houston	TX.	\$32,727,644	12%	17%	63%	5%	32%	68%	40%	256	3
ABC Home & Commercial Services of DFW Maheu & Maheu	30	Lewisville	TX:	\$31,303,897	-5%	12%	63%	2%	35%	62%	38%	261	4
Maheu & Maheu	35	Quebec City	QC	\$29,431,899	9%	5%	90%	0%	10%	10%	90%	160	8
Pacific Coast Termite	36	Orange	CA	\$27,476,814	6%	10%	6%	77%	17%	90%	10%	148	2
Clegg's Termite and Pest Control	38	Durham	NC	\$26,945,702	5%	6%	60%	35%	5%	65%	35%	328	12
Knox Pest Control	39	Columbus	GA	\$25,721,836	9%	10%	80%	30%	10%	45%	55%	240	20
Go-Forth Pest Control	45	High Point	NC.	\$24,824,379	17%	n/a	71%	25%	4%	70%	30%	141	11
Servall Termite & Pest Control	43	Clarksville	TN	\$24,624,379	7%	8%	40%	35%	25%	75%	25%	245	7
The Pest Group	40	Pompano Beach	FL	\$24,000,000	n/a	n/a	5%	95%	0%	90%	10%	n/a	9
Black Diamond Pest Control	42	Jeffersonville	IN	\$23,759,357	4%	10%	60%	30%	10%	70%	30%	165	14
Braman Termite & Pest Elimination	44	Agawam	MA	\$22,552,000	8%	8%	90%	10%	0%	10%	90%	195	7
Romex Pest Control	52	Plano	TX.	\$22,551,783	31%	15%	91%	9%	0%	99%	1%	149	5
Pestmaster	46	Reno	NV	\$20,865,471	11%	7%	75%	5%	20%	10%	90%	180	65
Breda Pest Management	51	Loganville	GA	\$20,146,207	21%	10%	50%	50%	0%	98%	2%	169	3
Deans Pest Control	49	Leesburg	FL	\$20,140,338	17%	10%	26%	16%	58%	99%	1%	176	- 1
Insight Pest Solutions WA	47	Federal Way	WA	\$19,900,000	9%	5%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	140	12
Adam's Pest Control	50	Medina	MN	\$19,278,000	14%	9%	96%	1%	3%	60%	40%	140	3
Everareen Pest Solutions	57	Ogden	UT	\$18.871.957	31%	33%	85%	13%	2%	90%	10%	110	8
Brooks Pest Control	n/a	Orem	UT	\$18,478,311	209%	150%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	170	6
	54			\$18,397,850		17%						116	6
Versacor Enterprises	60	Southlake	TX CA		17%	38%	98%	2%	25%	65%	100%	116	10
Quality Pest Services		Anaheim		\$17,672,170				75%					
Liberty Pest Control	55	Brooklyn	NY	\$17,477,700	15%	20%	100%	0%	0%	10%	90%	102	- 1
Frontline Pest	59	Orem	UT	\$16,578,890	14%	20%	75%	10%	15%	100%	0%	98	7
Lewis Pest Control	48	Thomasville	AL	\$16,089,197	n/a	n/a	20%	25%	55%	68%	40%	n/a	9
MosquitoNix	53	Austin	TX	\$15,530,202	-3%	5%	2%	0%	98%	97%	3%	108	8
Al-Flex Exterminators	61	Miami	FL	\$14,740,179	5%	8%	24%	48%	28%	48%	52%	97	- 1
West Termite Pest & Lawn	65	Lowell	AB	\$14,552,544	9%	10%	38%	39%	23%	75%	25%	76	8
Ridd Pest Control	87	Lehi	UT	\$14,549,748	57%	50%	95%	5%	0%	99%	1%	88	12
Meerkat	67	Albany	NY	\$14,500,000	20%	10%	95%	5%	0%	90%	10%	60	1
Economy Exterminators	66	Apex	NC	\$14,489,786	15%	10%	76%	11%	13%	67%	33%	104	5
All U Need Pest Control	94	Fort Myers		\$14,125,710	70%	60%	91%	5%	4%		7%	103	9
All U Need Pest Control Cingo	62	Fort Myers Marietta	FL GA	\$14,125,710	70%	6%	91% 40%	40%	20%	93%	10%	103	6
Hofman's Exterminating	68	Mantua	NJ	\$13,600,000	10%	15%	75%	20%	5%	48%	52%	97	6
Nozzie Nolen	69	West Palm Beach	FL	\$12,907,583	10%	10%	62%	19%	19%	80%	20%	90	5
Anthem Pest Control	64	Duluth	GA	\$12,730,353	-7%	10%	95%	5%	0%	95%	5%	65	2
Native Pest Management	97	Tallahassee	FL	\$12,474,374	56%	40%	50%	30%	20%	88%	20%	85	5
Fast Action Pest Control	79	Elk Grove	CA	\$12,446,641	25%	25%	90%	7%	3%	90%	10%	103	2
All-American Pest Control	71	Nashville	TN	\$12,442,500	12%	12%	63%	37%	0%	97%	3%	64	4
Catseye Pest Control	72	Latham	NY	\$12,400,000	13%	10%	n/a	n/a	n/a	80%	20%	70	4
Big Blue Bug Solutions	70	Providence	RI	\$12,300,000	7%	12%	89%	6%	5%	68%	40%	97	5
The Buoman	75	Anaheim	CA	\$11,314,490	11%	10%	60%	40%	0%	70%	30%	71	- 1
Nelon-Cole Termite & Pest Control	78	Shelby	NC NC	\$11,314,490	10%	n/s	33%	20%	47%	90%	10%	92	- 5
Scherzinger Pest Control	73	Cincinnati	OH	\$11,182,900	2%	5%	70%	30%	0%	80%	20%	102	5
Senate Termite and Pest Control	80	Gaithersburg	MD	\$11,182,900	14%	13%	76%	24%	0%	98%	20%	56	- 5
	74	Gathersburg Metairie	LA	\$11,096,399	14%	13%	35%	24% 65%		65%	35%	69	3
DA Exterminating									0%				3
Swat Pest Management	82	Evansville	IN	\$10,763,248	11%	3%	25%	11%	64%	75%	25%	65	3
Canady's Services	81	Lumber Bridge	NC	\$10,700,000	13%	15%	40%	30%	30%	80%	20%	90	6
Pest-End	98	Plaistow	NH	\$10,156,000	29%	24%	85%	5%	10%	55%	45%	87	2
Bug-N-A-Rug Exterminators	91	Wilmington	NC	\$10,080,000	16%	15%	45%	30%	25%	90%	10%	89	- 4
A-1 Termite & Pest Control	n/a	Lenoir	NC	\$10,047,750	21%	18%	66%	16%	18%	88%	20%	83	6
Southern & Sovereign Pest Control	75	Virginia Beach	VA	\$9.858.302	-3%	1%	50%	45%	5%	100%	0%	65	12
American Pest Control	83	Hanna City	IL.	\$9.824.061	6%	3%	60%	40%	0%	50%	50%	76	1
Horizon Pest Control	90	Midland Park	NJ NJ	\$9,624,061	12%	9%	95%	2%	3%	65%	35%	65	
													-
All Natural Pest Elimination	75	Medford	OR	\$9,634,948	-5%	10%	60%	20%	20%	80%	20%	70	4
Ecola Termite & Pest Control Services	86	Mission Hills	CA	\$9,624,163	1%	2%	25%	70%	5%	90%	10%	64	7
The Bug Master	88	Austin	TX.	\$9,616,748	10%	10%	90%	10%	0%	53%	47%	82	3
Paul's Termite & Pest Control	n/a	Tallahassee	FL	\$9,600,000	12%	15%	54%	38%	8%	78%	22%	53	2
Town & Country Pest Solutions	100	Rochester	NY	\$9,022,500	16%	18%	100%	0%	0%	40%	60%	52	1
Animal Pest Management Services	92	Chino	CA	\$8,775,000	5%	5%	2%	10%	88%	5%	95%	42	1
B & B Exterminating	99	Jacksonville	FL	\$8,700,000	n/a	5%	40%	40%	20%	70%	30%	50	
Kilausa Pest Control	n/a	Kaiha	H	\$8,700,000	20%	18%	55%	45%	0%	70%	21%	91	
				\$8,630,000	20%	18%	98%			99%		91 50	
Aimvo Pest Control	n/a	Blackfoot	ID III					2%	0%		1%		7
National Exterminating	85	Newport News	VA	\$8,494,309	-9%	5%	40%	40%	20%	68%	40%	65	1
	93	Vista	CA	\$8,451,854	1%	30%	70%	5%	25%	1%	99%	62	2
Innovative Pest Solutions			NC	\$8,420,000	5%	10%	20%	1%	79%	98%	2%	112	12
No More Bugs	96	Raleigh											
	96 n/a	Virginia Beach	VA	\$8,296,517	15%	15%	65%	15%	20%	95%	5%	70	4
No More Bugs				\$8,296,517 \$7,700,000	15% 12%	15%	65% 70%	15%	20%	95% 75%	5% 25%	70 52	4 2

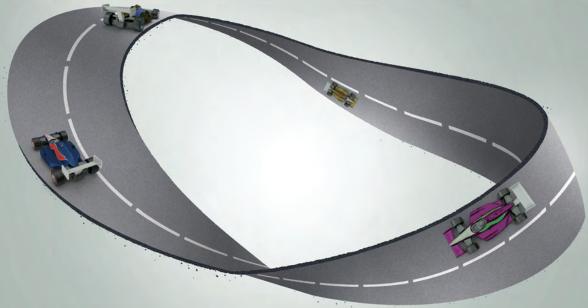








The More Things Change ...



BY FRANCES MCKIM

While there's a major shakeup at the top of the Top 100 this year, the value of the 2023 mergers and acquisitions market remains at about the same level as in 2022. What has changed is who's doing the buying.

ood news: The growth of the global pest control market continues, from an estimated value in Research and Markets' "Pest Control Market Analysis Report 2023" of \$21.17 billion in 2022 to \$24.9 billion in 2023. It is forecast to grow to \$32.8 billion in 2028 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.7 percent.

In a recent report produced by Specialty Consultants, the value of the U.S. pest control industry was estimated to be \$11.723 billion in 2023, a 6.2 percent increase

from the \$11.042 billion measured in 2022 and \$10.42 billion in 2021. According to these figures, the U.S. market makes up a little less than half of the global total.

Reviewing the entire economy on a global scale, the International Monetary Fund, in its January 2024 report, estimated global growth to be 3.1 percent in 2024 and predicts a rise of 3.2 percent in 2025. As for the U.S., the Bureau of Economic Analysis says real gross domestic product (GDP) increased 2.5 percent in 2023 and predicts a growth of 2.4 percent

in 2024. Looking at these comparative figures, you can quickly appreciate investors' continued interest in the pest control industry.

There also is the fact that pest control is a largely non-discretionary and essential service protecting public health, as we all learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for the service is driven by a variety of factors, such as increasing globalization, population growth and urbanization, climate change, and increasing regulation, particularly in the food sector. Add to this an ever-growing intolerance to pests in domestic situations, leading homeowners to act in a preventive manner, rather than reactive.

The pest control industry is viewed



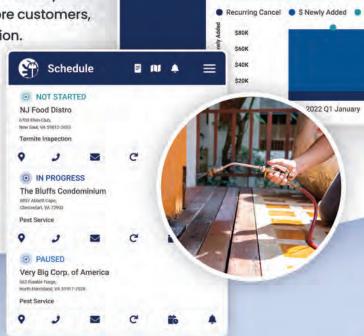
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2022 Q1 January

Revenue Growth





as a growing, virtually recession-proof, high-margin and largely non-cyclical market. These factors add to the attractiveness of this industry to private equity (PE) investors looking to build their portfolios for potential long-term growth.

On the negative side, labor, or rather its lack of availability, poses a problem. Similar to other industries, a significant proportion of the pest control workforce is due to retire in the next 10 years. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence or remote digital monitoring systems, could help recruit a younger workforce.

CHANGE AT THE TOP. Since 2012, Rollins has held the pole position in the PCT Top 100. Last year, its revenue was nearly double that of Rentokil's (No. 3 on last year's Top 100). However, with the latter's acquisition of Terminix (No. 2 on last year's list), their combined sales revenue has propelled them into the top spot—but not by *that* much (relatively speaking).

In 2023, Rollins, through its HomeTeam

Pest Defense subsidiary, acquired Fox Pest Control, Logan, Utah, which was No. 13 on last year's Top 100 list. That acquisition is part of what helped keep Rollins within \$722 million of Rentokil Terminix. And that \$722 million gap is just shy of the estimated total revenue for Ecolab, which is No. 3 on this year's list.

"Our growth in 2023 was driven by a balanced mix of strong organic growth and solid M&A growth, including Fox Pest Control," said Matthew Whiting, vice president, corporate development, Rollins. "We have had a long-term relationship with the owners of Fox and watched them grow a business with a dynamic culture, growth mindset and a focus on providing exceptional customer service. We anticipate a highly complementary relationship between Fox and our HomeTeam business. Fox's unique ability to open new markets provides an efficient entry point for Home-Team. Additionally, HomeTeam's expertise in termite treatments will allow Fox to offer new products to its existing customers."

In 2023, Rollins completed 24 acquisitions valued at \$367 million. The largest, by far, was Fox Pest Control, which accounted for more than \$300 million. The rest covered 23 acquisitions in markets where the company has an established business, such as the U.S., Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

As for PE influence, Whiting said that the current level of activity by private equity firms is certainly a new factor in the industry.

"However," he said, "we continue to enjoy a robust pipeline of opportunities thanks to our long-term presence in the industry and well-known focus on outcomes for the acquired employees, customers and brands."

According to data submitted by both companies for this year's Top 100, Rollins has more than 19,000 employees and more than 800 offices, compared to Rentokil Terminix's 17,500 employees and 600 offices.

Although Rentokil Terminix and Rollins



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Tale of the Tape

Rentokil Terminix and Rollins are now No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, on the Top 100 list. Here's how they stack up with each other in the U.S.

	RENTOKIL TERMINIX	ROLLINS				
PCT Top 100 List Placement:	No.1	No. 2				
North American Headquarters:	Reading, Pa.	Atlanta, Ga.				
2023 Revenue:	\$3,795,000,000	\$3,073,278,000				
Revenue Growth from 2022-23:	8%	14%				
Service Mix:	70% general pest control; 20% termite control; 10% other	80% general pest control; 20% termite control				
Customer Mix:	60% residential; 40% commercial	67% residential; 33% commercial				
Employees:	17,500	19,000				
Offices:	600	800				
High-Profile/Recent Acquisitions:	Action Pest Control, Evansville, Ind.; RK Environmental Services, Westwood, N.J.	Fox Pest Control, Logan, Utah				

Sources: Rollins; Rentokil Terminix

occupy the two top spots in the U.S., the positions are different on a global scale.

Parent company Rentokil Initial is, by far, the world's largest pest control business. In its 2023 annual report, total pest control revenue amounted to \$5,330 million, accounting for about 80 percent of the company's global revenue, an increase of 50.2 percent over the previous year. These figures, for the first time, benefit from the addition of the Terminix revenue. Rentokil operates in 89 countries and is the largest global operator, enjoying first place in the majority of those countries, including 98 of the world's largest cities by GDP.

Despite an active international M&A program, only 8 percent of Rollins' revenue comes from outside the U.S.

In North America, Rentokil Terminix's organic revenue growth for 2023 fell below expectations at 2 percent for the second half of the year and 3.5 percent for the full year. During the company's annual results presentation in March 2024, CEO Andy Ransom explained this shortfall saying, "At the heart of this was a reduction



Matt Turek (right), Orkin International, and Kristian Dales. Orkin UK. at PestEx 2024.

in inbound sales leads, contributed to by a range of factors, including the performance of our own digital marketing channels, the impact of our ongoing integration activities, increasing spend by a number of competitors and a softer consumer market."

While Rentokil had its hands full integrating the Terminix business, that did not prevent the company from continuing to undertake an active M&A program. In 2023, 34 new pest control businesses, val-

ued at about \$248 million, were acquired, 13 of which were in the U.S., including Action Pest Control, Evansville, Ind., and RK Environmental Services, Westwood, N.J.

A targeted global spend of \$311 million is forecast for 2024, some of which has already been spent with the acquisition in February of Allstate Pest Control, the largest family-owned company in Australia. This was followed in April with the acquisition of HiCare in India, the second-largest pest control company in that country. Interestingly, HiCare was purchased from PE company True North.

OTHER SHIFTS. Globally, many insiders agree the amount spent on mergers and acquisitions in 2023 remained much the same as was recorded in 2022, running at a total spend value of \$1,153 million, excluding the record-breaking \$6.7 billion paid by Rentokil Initial to acquire Terminix.

However, there was a considerable shift in which companies were actually doing the acquiring.

Paul Giannamore, managing director of M&A adviser Potomac Co., explained:

"In 2022, there was a slowdown from the strategic acquirers and a dramatic increase from financial sponsors, better known as the private equity (PE) firms," he said. "In 2023, we saw that transition in full effect. Approximately 90 percent of our transactions were done with private equity firms, rather than strategics, something I haven't seen in my 20 years in the industry.

"Private equity firms accounted for a lion's share of the deals in 2023, and this market is very opaque."

According to Giannamore, in the first quarter of 2024, Potomac closed 10 transactions with private equity firms, and he said he expects they'll do about 50 more in 2024 that will be a mixture of platform and tuck-in acquisitions as private equity firms jostle to add increasingly scarce platforms.

"Private equity continues to be dominant in all of our sell-side processes and where we typically invite 50 to 60 private

growth and cross-selling between their different industry platforms," he said.

PE IN THE TOP 100 LIST. Two of the most active PE-backed Top 100 companies in recent years have been PestCo and Certus.

PestCo, based in St. Louis, Mo., and financed by investor Thompson Street Capital Partners, comes in at No. 15 this year. In 2023, PestCo made five acquisitions followed by the purchase of PestShield, also based in St. Louis, in February 2024 with more add-on acquisitions forecast to close within the first half of this year.

Commenting on the rise of PE investors, Jay Keating, CEO of PestCo, said: "We too have noticed more private equity entry in the last 12-18 months as more investors have come to appreciate the attractive attributes the pest control industry possesses from an investor's perspective. PestCo and its investor, Thompson Street, continue to remain excited and



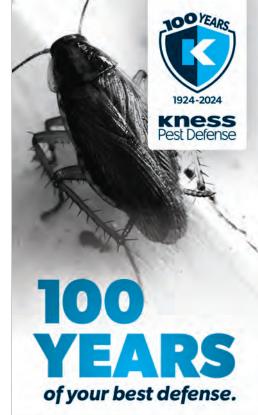
While Rentokil Initial continues to integrate Terminix, which it officially acquired in October 2022 for \$6.7 billion, the company still plans to be active in global M&A in 2024.

equity firms into the bidding process," he said.

Franco Villanueva-Meyer, vice president, Potomac Co., said there's another aspect to keep in mind.

"There has also been a shift in appetite for door-to-door (D2D) companies and those that cover wildlife, as private equity investors understand the upside of rapid committed to what we have built.

"With more bidders competing to acquire the same companies, valuations may see an uptick in broad auction processes. We will continue to focus on the acquisition of founder-owned businesses and strive to be their top choice as we strive to take care of their employees and customers."



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Under Cover

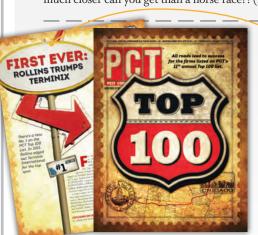
There's only so much room on a magazine cover but there's often a subtle (or complicated!) story to tell. With a new No. 1 on this year's Top 100 list, PCT Publisher Jodi Dorsch takes a look back at four covers that show how PCT has covered big industry moves over the past 20 years.





Did you notice the subtlety of the No. 2 on the Orkin jockey's sleeve? And look at the muscles on the horse!

April 2004 Former PCT Publisher Dan Moreland was great with headlines. (His favorite? "Canary in the Coal Mine.") This cover was all Dan. Much like this month's cover, we wanted a way to graphically show how close Rollins and Terminix were after Rollins' 2004 purchase of Western Pest Services. We hired an illustrator to bring our imaginary "Horse Race" to life. How much closer can you get than a horse race?! (Maybe a car race?!)



FUN FACT:

While Rollins became No. 1 in 2012, No. 2 Terminix remained the industry's largest brand with four Terminix franchisees on the PCT Top 100 List that year.

May 2012 For the first time in the 11 years PCT had published the Top 100, Rollins edged out Terminix for the top spot (by \$12 million). We covered that news inside the magazine but the cover tied into PCT's second Top 100 Awards Ceremony & Executive Summit in Chicago. Since Route 66 starts (or ends?) in Chicago, we took inspiration from the classic highway shield and tied the "100" and the event together.



FUN FACT:

Yes, PCT staffers broke out their calculators to convert the distance between J.C. Ehrlich's Pennsylvania home and Rentokil Initial's England-based headquarters from miles to kilometers.

April 2006 Rentokil had a relatively modest presence in the U.S. but its acquisition of J.C. Ehrlich, one of the industry's "crown jewels," formally announced the company's intention to become a major player here. I recall Dan Moreland wrote the headline, but I was the push behind the British street signs image. This is one of my all-time favorite covers because I think the combination of the text and illustration tells a great story.





FUN FACT:

The third article in this series was in December 2017, titled "M&A in the U.S.A." That cover story featured coverage of how major U.S. firms were countering the entry of global players into the North American pest control market.

September 2017 This cover story was the second of three in 2017 about industry mergers and acquisitions. The first was about Anticimex entering the U.S. market. (That cover featured an image with a resemblance to Slim Goodbody — if you know, you know.) This article discussed how rapidly Rentokil had grown in the U.S. over the past 10 years.



Andrew (left) and Deb Green (middle), Vermatech Pest Control, with Pennie Gadd, Safeguard Pest Control, a Rollins subsidiary. Rollins acquired Oxfordshire, U.K.-based Vermatech in 2023.

Founded in 2019, Certus, Tampa, Fla., is funded by Imperial Capital Group. The company is No. 20 on this year's Top 100 list and has completed more than 60 pest control acquisitions in the last four years.

NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED. Anticimex moves up one spot this year to No. 4.

The company was acquired by EQT Future and four other institutional investors in 2021.

Founded in Sweden in 1934, Anticimex is one of the world's top four global players and now operates in 21 countries across the globe and in more than 20 U.S. states. They entered the U.S. market in 2016 with the acquisition of Bug Doctor, Paramus, N.J., and American Pest, Fulton, Md.

Commenting on activities within the global pest control market, Jussi Ylinen, president and CEO of the Anticimex Group, said: "We think the M&A market for pest control businesses continues to be robust, and we have a solid pipeline of companies that we would like to acquire in almost all the markets we operate in. In most of these markets, we have had a consistent presence for many years, which has enabled us to foster long-term relationships with owner-operators, so we are often the preferred acquirer when

an owner is ready to divest."

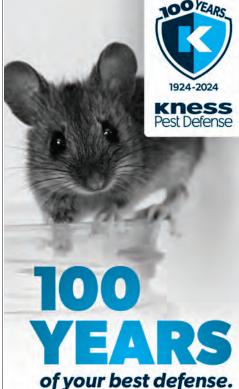
Ylinen said Anticimex completed 53 acquisitions in 2023, investing a total of \$150 million. About half of those investments were in the U.S., a third were in Europe and the rest in Asia-Pacific.

"The number of completed acquisitions was slightly up on 2022, but the amount invested was lower, as we focused on tuck-in acquisitions to existing businesses," Ylinen said. "The larger amount spent in 2022 (\$400 million) reflects three large entries into new markets—namely the U.K. through Pestokill, Southern California through Corky's Pest Control, and Seattle through Eastside Exterminators."

Ylinen also said that the increased investments in pest control from other firms isn't expected to impact the company's overall strategy when it comes to acquisitions.

"It is only natural that this market — with good growth, good profitability and a high share of recurring customers — will attract interest from new entrants," he said. "For 2024, the market should expect more of the same from Anticimex. We will continue acquiring great companies in all markets we are in." №

The author is a U.K.-based freelance journalist covering the pest control industry.



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Rentokil Closes Paragon Professional Pest Control Products Business

The closure was the result of Paragon losing a partially exclusive supplier relationship.

BY BRAD HARBISON

n April 1, Rentokil shuttered distribution business Paragon Professional Pest Control Products.

Rentokil noted in its March 7 earnings report, "As part of the Terminix merger, Rentokil acquired a small product distribution business, Paragon, with revenue of \$68 million and profit of \$4 million in 2023. This business is largely dependent upon a single, partially exclusive supplier relationship, which will be discontinued with effect from April 1, 2024. As a consequence, the decision has been taken to close this business."

Paragon was the master distributor for a number of suppliers, according to David Helt, president of distributor Target Specialty Products, also a part of Rentokil. "Paragon was an option for distributors to purchase product. Paragon did have, across several suppliers, some proprietary products, and for those products, distributors had to buy through Paragon."

One of those suppliers was BASF, which, according to industry sources, sold non-agency products to Paragon — so distributors had to then source these BASF products from Paragon. However, BASF agency products like Termidor were handled directly with distributors. Several industry sources told PCT that BASF was the distributor whose decision to end its supplier relationship with Paragon led to its closure. A BASF spokesperson provided PCT the following statement: "As a leading supplier, we are committed to delivering innovative solutions and continuing to strengthen our ability to drive growth for both BASF and our distribution partners. We appreciate Paragon's support for the pest control industry over the years."

Paragon's history dates back to 1981, when it was formed by Terminix. Throughout the years, manufacturers like BASF benefited by selling to a master distributor, primarily from only having to ship products to one location and only having to invoice a single distributor. Paragon became part of Rentokil when it acquired Terminix in 2022. Since that merger, there

For Paragon employees, the news was bittersweet. Craig Smith, who has served as division manager of Paragon the past two years, told PCT he was surprised by the decision. "We were looking to add more sales reps to really create more energy. Paragon is somewhat well known, but there was a lot more potential, a lot more that could have been done in terms of developing better relationships and better sales strategies. I was very excited. There

PCS Integration Update

Another Terminix legacy distribution business that became a part of Rentokil when it acquired Terminix is Pest Control Supplies (PCS), Kansas City, Mo.

David Helt, president of Target Specialty Products, said the original plan was to integrate PCS into Target Specialty Products soon after the Rentokil-Terminix merger (October 2022), "but that business was performing quite well, and we didn't want to disrupt it. We started back up again with the integration. I don't have a final date, but the goal is to have the majority of it integrated before the busy spring season."

Helt said the integration is going well and that all PCS employees will have a place at Target Specialty Products. "No surprises so far, and I expect it's going to be a positive addition to the Target Specialty Products business."

was speculation within the pest control industry as to whether or not Paragon and Target Specialty Products could co-exist within Rentokil.

Helt said it is important to distinguish that Rentokil's decision to close Paragon is *not* related to Target Specialty Products. "This is not a start of anything like distribution starting to close down businesses again," he said. "That was absolutely not the strategy. With the supply agreement ending, and what was left of the Paragon business, the board made the decision to close the business."

was ample opportunity to grow."

Helt said that Paragon employees "are actively exploring opportunities within Rentokil."

Sources told PCT that the major industry impact will be on smaller suppliers because other distributors that bought through Paragon could "mix and match" pallets, which allowed them to order smaller or larger quantities as needed. The former set-up provided more flexibility for customers ordering fewer products. [89]

The author is senior news editor of PCT.

NEW TO THE LIST

NO. 93

Kilauea Pest Control

John and Jennifer Speed have built Kilauea Pest Control into one of the largest pest control businesses in Hawaii.

BY HALLE DRAY AND AMANDA JOERNDT



The Speed family (from left to right) Ethan, Jennifer, Jeanne, John and Brent.

Editor's Note: A version of this story appeared in October 2023's PCT Convention Extra under the headline "Full Speed Ahead."

hen John and Jennifer Speed launched Kilauea Pest Control, Kailua, Hawaii, in 2002, they did so with the hopes of supporting themselves and their family.

But the company, which is No. 93 on this year's Top 100 list, evolved to become much more. Kilauea has grown by leaps and bounds - mostly organically.

John Speed started in the pest control industry as a door-to-door salesman in Southern California for Eclipse Marketing Group, representing Orkin.

He knew that his strengths lay in the business side of things, as he had studied information systems and business at

Brigham Young University (BYU) Hawaii. His combined love for the island state and previous experience in the pest control industry led him to start the company "from scratch," he said.

Speed said a lot of the credit for the company's success goes to wife Jennifer. As another BYU Hawaii business graduate, Jennifer works with the administration team and on financial matters.

Early inspiration also came from Speed's brother, Paul, who founded Talega Pest Control in San Clemente, Calif. Paul helped John get started in Hawaii with a door-knocking program. "I learned some great lessons from him, including how to keep it fun for the team as you scale," Speed said.

KILAUEA TODAY. Like many growing

companies, Kilauea aims to take good





care of its employees, who in turn try to take good care of its customers.

This philosophy has proven successful. Today, the company has about 90 employees and services more than 8,000 accounts on Oahu, Maui and Molokai. Kilauea does about 45 percent termite work and 55 percent general pest control. The company doesn't perform any fumigation work.

"We're by far the largest local pest control company that doesn't do fumigation," Speed said.

According to Speed, Kilauea Pest Control places value on subcontracting fumigation work to reputable firms and nurturing those relationships.

Rather than creating different compa-

aled in, then we can do all these other services and continue to sell these other services," Speed said.

EARLY YEARS. At first, Kilauea Pest Control primarily serviced residential customers.

The company started providing termite services about five years into the business. Eventually, Speed hired Keli'i Gibson as his termite manager. Gibson was able to grow the team, who have been a great help to Kilauea Pest Control, Speed said.

He later hired Ashley Ortogero as Kilauea's office manager. Ortogero's resourcefulness and hard work have been an "incredible asset" to the company, said Speed.



Kilauea Pest Control has grown to employ more than 90 employees.

ny branches, Kilauea has several separate subdivisions.

"We have separate commercial, residential and termite divisions, and they work very independently of each other," Speed said. "Part of my role is to bring us all together under the one umbrella and make sure the service is consistent. We also have an HR director and marketing director at the table. I think our executive team is the secret sauce."

Recently, Kilauea's rodent exclusion work has become a more important part of its business. Speed said that's because the firm has hired more people with exclusion experience and is continuing to cross-sell services. The company also added a mosquito program in 2023.

"If we have our people component di-

Ortogero is responsible for starting the Professional Women in Pest Management Hawaii chapter. "It really showcases her ingenuity, pushing the limits of what's available in our industry," said Speed.

The company offers to pay for its employees to receive their MBAs, which Gibson has completed and Ortogero is working towards. Ortogero is using the skills she has picked up in her MBA pursuit in her role as general manager, Speed said.

"My goal is to give our team all of the tools they need to help scale the business," he said.

CONTINUED GROWTH. Commercial work has been a highlight for Kilauea in the past year. The company made a conscious decision to split its residential and

commercial divisions three years ago. "That's a completely different marketing effort with the commercial side, and it's really bearing fruit," Speed said.

In terms of non-organic growth, Kilauea Pest Control acquired Bug Man Termite & Pest Control and Nexgen Termite & Pest Control in 2023.

"That really put our team to the test, but they were remarkable and have done an amazing job of welcoming customers and employees into the Kilauea Ohana (family)," Speed said.

According to Speed, a challenge when it comes to acquisitions — as the business expands — is ensuring that there is a cohesiveness that remains steady.

"Within the last five or six years is when we've ramped up to having an executive team having regular meetings ... to all be on the same page and to have goals and to move towards those goals as a team," he said.

Kilauea also continues to expand its suite of service offerings and hopes to double the size of the company within the next five years.

"I think that's very reasonable," said Speed.

He said the recent hiring of an HR director has placed a focus on employee engagement and company culture. The company has hosted more online training courses, has a more efficient onboarding process and created consistencies between its divisions as a result and have seen employee retention continue to improve.

Speed said employee retention and hiring have always been a problem in Hawaii because of the higher cost of living, which is 50 percent higher than the national average and leads people to move to the continental U.S. for work.

"It's a disincentive to stick around Hawaii, but retention has been better for us because of this new role," he said. "It's harder for people to move here, and you can't recruit easily."

Halle Dray is a former intern at PCT. Amanda Joerndt is digital editor of PCT.

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BY SENESTECH, THE LEADER IN FERTILITY CONTROL TO MANAGE ANIMAL PEST POPULATIONS



Paul's Termite & Pest Control

Paul's Termite & Pest Control has built a friendly comradery among technicians, proving successful business growth and relationship building can generate revenue.

BY AMANDA JOERNDT

very technician at Paul's Termite & Pest Control, Tallahassee, Fla., starts out as a "water boy." Once they start scoring higher customer sales, they may move up the depth chart to "lineman" or "quarterback."

With only one outside salesperson, co-owner Kent Edmunds said he relies heavily on his technicians. To increase their competitiveness, he started the football lingo-based sales contest between the technicians designed to increase sales.

The contest resulted in a 6 percent increase in revenue after one year. In the second year, growth reached 13 percent, he said. Edmunds' goal for 2024 is to surpass 15 percent.

"They talk on a group chat and brag about what they've sold," he said. "It's changed the growth of our company. Nobody wants to stay the 'water boy.' You can move up and everybody can be the head coach if they want to be, but it's kind of a motivator."

The contest has created a friendly, competitive culture at Paul's, which is No. 89 on this year's Top 100 list, helping both business and individual success, Edmunds said.

"We really do take interest in individual employees and what their dreams are and



From left to right: Franklin Guevara, termite manager; Josh Sims, technician; and Caleb Jackson, sales consultant, are part of Paul's Termite & Pest Control's more than 50-member team.

NEW TO

THE LIST

believe very strongly that if we help others build their dreams, [we've achieved our dreams]," said Edmunds, who, along with his brother-in-law and co-owner, Blair Burton, has led this 57-player team to success for nearly 25 years.

FAMILY FIRST. A third-generation company, the business was started by Paul

Nicholson in 1971 with doorto-door sales. In 1989, Nicholson recruited his sons-in-law Edmunds and Burton to work in the field as technicians. Edmunds and Burton took over the

business after their father-in-law passed away in 1999.

"When we first came to work for Paul, we were very involved in residential apartment work, and we did a lot of convenience stores," Edmunds said. "As business has evolved, we've looked at who we want our core customer to be, which is really residential pest control."

Edmunds said he trains employees to drive the family-first message when interacting with customers and assures customers that if they come across a problem, they're able to speak directly to him.

"Part of our marketing strategy when

talking with customers on the phone is saying, 'Our owner will call you back,'" he said. "We know a lot of our customers, and we're active in our community, as [are] our technicians."

Edmunds' son, David, and Burton's son, Matt, have played a more active role in leadership over the last few years. Looking for continued growth opportunities, David

> and Matt were given the opportunity to bring back the company's door-knocking program, creating a full-circle moment.

> "Door-to-door has risen to the top of the ways that we can

control our geographical densities," Edmunds said. "Both of them are talented and capable, but whenever you're the son in a third-generation business" you may have doubts about your own skill set.

The initiative is a great, if nervewracking, opportunity for both David and Matt to make their mark on the company.

"It's also a risk for them as well, because there could be different levels of success between the two of them," Edmunds said, "but it is an opportunity for them to say, 'This is mine." [8]

The author is digital editor of PCT.



"There are some things you can do yourself, but navigating the sale of your life's work is not one of them"

"We are extremely happy with our choice to have Kemp Anderson Consulting represent us in the sale of our business. Kemp Anderson Consulting operates with a very high level of professionalism, competence, and thoughtful communication. Their ability and willingness to help us understand the process, from beginning to end, was very important to us. There are some things you can do yourself, but navigating the sale of your life's work is not one of them. I highly recommend Kemp and his Team."

Dale Larnder Co-owner of Exodus Exterminating

"We are forever grateful to Kemp Anderson Consulting for guiding us through one of the biggest decisions of our life. When we decided it was time to sell, we could not imagine a better team to represent us as Kemp Anderson Consulting. They came highly recommended from many respected people in the industry, and were very helpful educating us on understanding the process, and guiding us every step of the way. We feel blessed to have Kemp Anderson Consulting represent us and are extremely satisfied with the results."

Gary Kozlowski

Co-owner of Exodus Exterminating





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BY ANNE NAGRO



Face the CHANGE

Pest management companies of all sizes can achieve big gains by learning how to identify and prioritize areas for improvement.

mproving efficiency and productivity are essential for companies of every size. But it's particularly challenging for smaller operations, whose owners often work in the field in addition to leading essential business functions.

With days so full of tasks, little time is left for continuous improvement — also known as the practice of working "on" the business.

"When you find yourself working in the business so much, then you are, what I consider, colorblind as to any issues that could be arising and that you could address before they become big problems," said DeLisa Clift, who mentors small business owners through the SCORE Association, a free resource of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Clift also operates a consulting agency in Savannah, Ga., that provides human resources, accounting and business strategy support to small- and medium-sized companies.

She and experienced pest management professionals (PMPs) shared how to identify and prioritize areas of the business for change.

CARVE OUT TIME. The suggestion to find time to work on the business when you don't have enough time to begin with

may seem ludicrous to company owners.

And yet, doing this is essential to catch problems before they overwhelm the company.

"The need for continuous improvement requires you to take a step back — at least one day out of the week or one day out of the month, whatever your schedule might allow — and do a deep dive into what's working really well" and what is not, said Clift.

GET INPUT. A direct and effective way to identify areas of your business that need fixing is to ask your employees directly.

It's especially important to get input



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from technicians, who produce income for the company. "Ask them, what do you see as a burden on your route?" said Cory Goeltzenleuchter, Florida area technical director, Northwest Exterminating, a Rollins company (No. 2 on the PCT Top 100).

Ask this question often, because sometimes small changes in one area of the business create unintended consequences in another.

Likewise, employees who perform customer service and back-office jobs will have ideas to streamline operations and reduce daily frustrations.

You can ask employees for input individually or in group meetings. Surveys can generate honest, transparent feedback, but it's best to use a third-party survey provider to ensure anonymity so employees don't fear retaliation, said Clift.

It also is important to recognize the company culture. "Do you have a top-down way of communicating?" asked Clift. "Is there also a bottom-up way of communicating with your employees to make sure that they feel seen, heard and valued?"

This is the key to retaining employees. "Your internal customers are probably one of your most important customers because if you didn't have your staff, you wouldn't be able to deliver the services or products you're delivering," she said.

In addition to employees, get input from customers. How well are your services being received by customers? What are their complaints? You can do this through surveys and review platforms or simply calling customers to ask about their experience and if you could have done anything different.

"Carve some time out to ask those questions of the people you're already serving and allow yourself the time to create some type of response" to address their feedback, Clift said.

COLLECT AND COMPARE DATA. When technicians at McCall Services, a division of Northwest Exterminating, identify a burden to the job, a group of operations,



By reviewing data and implementing changes, PCOs can improve efficiency and productivity.

sales and call center/scheduling employees meet to determine the source of the problem — routing, scheduling or some other issue — and how to address it, since fixing the issue may affect multiple business functions.

"Get everybody working together to try to understand what everybody else is dealing with," said Goeltzenleuchter.

Todd Simpson, president, HTP Termite & Pest Control, Huntingdon, Tenn., meets monthly to get employee feedback and promotes an open-door policy to encourage employee sharing.

"They know they can come in and talk to me about anything," he said. "We get into the nuts and bolts of what they're doing during the day just to see if there's anything that we can do to improve that to make their day as smooth as we can make it."

If the same issue is raised a few times, it gets flagged for a deeper dive by HTP management, said Simpson.

Another way to identify problem areas is to have employees assess their key per-

formance indicators (KPIs) individually and then bring them together to analyze how the company's overall KPIs align with company goals. It's a way to start conversations about which issues need to be addressed, said Clift.

Benchmarking has been helpful for Gerry Marsh, owner, Patton Termite & Pest Control, Wichita, Kan. He's a member of a group of non-competing pest control companies that share metrics with each other. Comparing his company to others has proven insightful.

"That's helped us identify some places we need to improve," he said.

SET PRIORITIES. With limited time and many possible projects to improve the business, how do you know which one to take on first?

"Doing a SWOT analysis for your business will help you flesh out exactly what is the top priority for you to work on first," said Clift.

By analyzing the company's strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), you can identify and fix the issue with the greatest potential to threaten the business, whether that's losing customers or employees to competitors, treatment or training failures that bring regulatory scrutiny or something else.

Sometimes these are big projects to undertake, so divide them into smaller, achievable tasks so employees experience small wins and earn recognition. This will help maintain their motivation and engagement through project completion, said Clift.

EMPOWER EMPLOYEES. Incentives can help encourage employees to identify problem areas and initiate continuous improvement efforts.

Employees at Advance Pest Control, Hutchinson, Kan., for instance, earn bonuses for improving company efficiency and productivity.

A strong culture of ownership at the company, however, has had an even greater impact. Take for instance, the Advance office employee who took it upon herself to optimize the route of a technician who does rodent control and monitoring.

Her changes produced "a huge improvement in time savings" that let the technician take on 100 new service visits each month and freed up several of his days to assist with general pest services, said Vice President Jeff Wells.

Her motivation, however, was simply to ensure that customers got their rodent issues resolved in a timely fashion, he pointed out.

Advance office employees have longterm relationships with customers — "these are their people" — and they don't want to let them down, explained Wells.

It can be challenging for entrepreneurs to give employees the autonomy they need to pursue continuous improvements.

Taking a team approach to collecting data (e.g., time studies, KPIs, etc.), researching solutions and learning how other companies address these issues,

however, can help build owner confidence, as well as employee skills and buy-in.

SHED FALSE NARRATIVES. If you find yourself thinking, "This is how we've always done things" or "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," just stop.

If you want your business to exist 20 years from now, you need to think about how you're going to sustain it, said Clift. This likely involves embracing new pest control approaches, as well as new employee and technological resources.

"Identify what some of those trends are and see how you can implement them in your business model now so that you can create a sustainable business model for the future and can continue to grow and expand your business," said Clift.

Simpson, HTP Termite & Pest Control, agreed.

"I've been in this business for 20 years, and every day is a different day. I don't get locked in on saying, 'This is how I'm going to do things.' I learned a long time ago if you do that, your company will start gradually going in the other direction," he said. "You have to be open-minded to innovations and technology."

Still, change is hard — for both employees and owners.

"Everybody's resistant to change unless you can show the benefit," said Adam Woodard, technical director, J&J Exterminating, Lafayette, La. The benefit may be greater profit, work-life balance, personal earnings or having fewer frustrations or menial tasks. "You have to let people see how the change is beneficial," he said. "Then they're more likely to embrace it."

A company always has room for improvement, said Wells, Advance Pest Control. "There are still those moments where you don't feel like you can get enough done throughout the course of the day," he said. "Those are the things that create a desire in us to want to make it better."

The author is a regular contributor to PCT.







Brooks Pest Control

Brooks Pest Control's co-founders took lessons from their first iteration and grew a flourishing pest control company.

rooks Pest Control co-founders lif., in Eric Campbell, Braxton Davies ing a and Parker Bass enjoyed owning a pest control company so much that after selling the majority of their first firm to Clark Pest Control in 2021, they decided to start from Jose scratch and do it all over again.

Campbell, Davies and Bass started the company as friends and entrepreneurs. They moved from Utah to Livermore, Ca-

lif., in 2018 with their sights set on growing a company they could eventually sell.

But the first few years of business were tough. Although they built quite a following, with a service

area that spanned 120 miles from San Jose to Sacramento, door-to-door sales weren't turning over as large of a profit as they had hoped. And trying to operate out of a single call center while managing technicians in the field proved difficult.

"We just had a small call center out of our branch in California, and it made it hard," said Campbell. "We didn't have anyone directing the call center, so it kind of got neglected. We were just putting out fires all the time, trying to make sure everything was running smooth."

Perez, who was a field technician, is now service manager in Brooks' San Diego branch. From left to right: Hayley McCafferty, lead technician; Justin Harris, branch manager; and Jerry Perez, service manager, are part of Brooks Pest Control's 230-employee staff.

Despite their difficulties behind the scenes, Brooks continued to grow, drawing interest from Clark Pest Control, which acquired the company's lone branch and its 45 employees in 2021.

As part of the deal, was able to keep the Brooks name and brand.

FAST FORWARD. Rather than take the money and move on to start other proj-

ects, Campbell and his team moved back to Utah to build an executive team and call center and start Brooks over again.



NO. 51

The new Brooks, which is based in Orem, Utah, and is No. 51 on this year's Top 100 list, now boasts 230 employees across 10 branches in Oregon, California, Texas and Washington.

This year alone, Brooks has opened four new branches in three states: Sacramento and San Jose, Calif.; Dallas; and Spokane, Wash.

"We've built an executive team who has expertise in service, an expertise in customer service, an expertise in marketing and expertise in finances," Campbell said. "We're hiring branch managers every single year. I feel like when they come on, they can see very early on that they can expand here, and they can grow."

As the second iteration of Brooks has grown beyond its earlier version, Campbell's focus has evolved as well. Rather than building something just to sell it again down the road, he's more interested in growing a trusted brand that's rooted in sales and strategic growth.

"We'll continue to expand through California, Oregon and Washington," said Campbell. "The opportunity to grow here is [great]." №

The author is a writer and editor based in Cleveland. Ohio.





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Happy Place

No matter the size of your pest management firm, monitoring and improving employee morale should be at the top of your to-do list.

BY ERIN RICHARDSON

e're in the business of helping people — whether it's a customer or someone on our own team — and happy customers start with happy employees.

Understanding that workplace culture can directly affect customer satisfaction and, ultimately, your bottom line, it's prob-

ALL-AMERICAN

PEST CONTROL

ably a good idea to make sure you boost your team's morale. Here are some of the strategies and tools we have developed over my 19-plus years of leadership

at All-American Pest Control to boost morale, improve team retention and inspire leadership development.

BE FLEXIBLE. Work-life balance is a key term in the job market, even more so after the pandemic. With so much on hold, people were given a unique opportunity to spend more time than ever in their homes and with their families. Now, they want to work for a company that offers balance.

Work-life balance is often the first thing ends, and we offer a four-day workweek.

Lives and family dynamics change over time, sometimes dramatically and unexpectedly, like when a child or a parent becomes ill. We realize that some team members will be with us for a season of life, and others will be with us until retirement. We don't want to lose a good team member during a rough patch of

> life. In addition to a fourday workweek, we offer alternative schedules to respond when life needs even more flexibility.

PRIORITIZE TEAM BUILDING. It takes great leadership and patience to grow a team that feels more like a family. Like in any family, trust and respect are integral in everyday interactions, and the best way to build trust and respect is by working together. Just as important as working together is having fun while doing it!

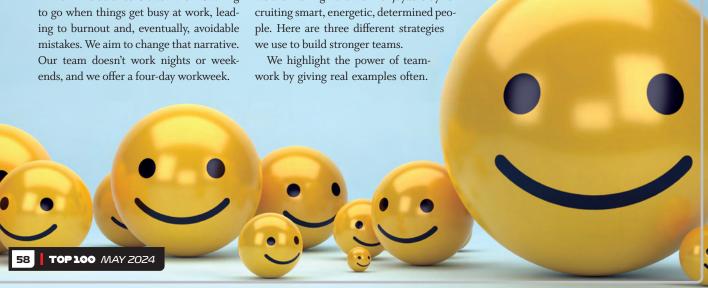
It is vital to find ways to keep hard work light and enjoyable. We aren't recruiting team members afraid of hard work, but we are making hard work enjoyable by reple. Here are three different strategies we use to build stronger teams.

For instance, true teamwork is what powers our four-day workweek. More time off wouldn't be possible without reliable team members and on-call days.

We set big goals that require teamwork, creative ideas and innovative problem-solving. We aren't just looking for better ways to eliminate pests. Together, we are looking for innovative solutions for all aspects of our organization. Our EOS structure empowers all team members to contribute ideas despite roles or tenure.

We are intentional about making meetings more enjoyable. This includes the time we hosted jumbo Jenga and Connect 4 tournaments during regular business meetings! Communicating clearly and early regarding what to expect in the meeting, so that all team members feel comfortable when they arrive, is a requirement.

BUILD A RHYTHM. Team members value clear and ongoing communication



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regarding their job performance, growth, company goals and progress. This can be accomplished through regular check-ins, reporting and company updates. What we have found to be even more valuable to the company's future health and our team's

leadership development is a rhythm of communication that goes both ways.

Weekly, we ask each team member to share what's working, what's not and what customers are saying. We take these comments and feedback and share them with the appropriate team or department to discuss and make meaningful

changes to our systems and processes. As a leader, it is not enough to listen to your team and show that you care; nurturing an environment where you gather feedback that can only be found in front-line experiences and interactions is essential.

Erin Richardson

By training teams to work together through a structured, nurtured rhythm of communication, you build a sense of pride and ownership that empowers team members to be an integral part of the company's future progress.

DEVELOP SYSTEMS. Our team has shared feedback that the mentorship they receive from peers and leaders remains helpful to their continued growth, both personally and professionally.

A mentorship program encourages growth for the mentee and the mentor it's a win-win. It was a pivotal point when I realized that to continue to grow fast, we

> would be outnumbered by new team members from then on. That realization helped us to accept that we had to become an exceptional training company. Years later, I realized that as we continued to grow, we would be bottlenecked by a lack of quality leadership if we didn't fine-tune how we developed servant leaders



within our organization.

Today, we have created an environment where all leaders are hungry to get better at the hard and soft skills of leadership. Our teams learn how to coach well, build teams, conduct "stay interviews," give sincere feedback, believe in their people while helping them succeed, manage their time and create leveling-up and succession plans.

Monthly, each leader with direct reports presents the specific skills and experiences they are nurturing with their team members. They also are responsible for naming and mentoring two to three team members who will be prepared to take their current role when it comes time for the leader to be promoted.

GIVE BACK. Employees appreciate a workplace that cares — not just for its business and employees, but for the community. When job searching, company values are commonly sought out and considered by potential employees. We value our community and know we wouldn't be where we are without our neighbors and customers. Recently, we ran a donation drive with our employees for Operation Stand Down Tennessee and spent a morning volunteering with Wreaths Across America.

We also host an annual Hometown Hero Award, encouraging our community to nominate their local heroes for a chance to receive free services from us for the year. It's something the team consistently looks forward to, and it lets us share our love and talent with those who most deserve it!

When employees don't feel valued, their work will show it. There's no better time than now to emphasize how important your team truly is to you. Creating a job environment people want to show up for is something to be proud of. I know I am! №

The author is president, CEO and owner of All-American Pest Control. Nashville. Tenn.. serves on NPMA's Board of Directors and founded the Tennessee Chapter of Professional Women in Pest Control.



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UNFAIR ADVANTAGE"



Count On It

What happens in accounting shouldn't stay in accounting. Here's how your accounting team can partner with your operations team.

BY PETER BERARDI

lame it on universities and CPA firms, but accountants are trained to be accountants first and business people second. While accounting culture is geared towards public accounting and taxes, most accountants, controllers and CFOs work for privately owned companies, including family-owned ones.

I've experienced too many accountants and their respective departments simply working behind the scenes and alienating themselves from the operations and customer service functions of the companies for which they work. This is unfortunate since accounting and finance are essential to the success of an organization and provide highly valued skills such as a familiarity with IT, tools such as Excel and a business acumen that can help the entire organization.

Financial statements are treated as sacrosanct documents that are too complicated for non-accounting personnel to understand and therefore are only presented to a few key executives each period. In other words, most financial reporting that is designed for external shareholder interests, as in publicly traded companies, is not designed to capture the internal drivers, key performance indicators (KPIs) and overall business acumen that operations require to improve quality, control costs, measure performance and improve margins.



BEST PRACTICES. At Braman Termite & Pest Elimination, we've opened our accounting function for business — not the CPA kind, but the operations kind. By building a culture of planning and continuous improvement, we've empowered general managers, department heads and — of course — the executive/ownership team to perform important advisory roles.

It first starts with taking a strategic look at your management information systems, specifically your enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, payroll and customer relation-

ship management (CRM) systems.

At Braman, we emphasized communication and learning by replacing legacy systems with modern programs such as ERP; CRM integration; and human resources and payroll systems. These systems empowered our management team to monitor and report key business drivers as well as improve productivity through streamlining data entry, managerial reporting

and data analytics needed to optimize management decision making. It is important to understand that an investment in smart data systems is an investment in your employees. Employees are your company's most important asset. (You won't see that on your balance sheet!)

In business, decision making is not always about what's right or wrong, but what's

best or better concerning solutions and assessing risk and outcomes. Business planning, including budgeting, cash flow and working capital, adds value in terms of improved

margins, utilization, EBITDA and pricing strategies. This is the function that your financial and operations people can work on in conjunction with your company's long-term goals.

Time spent performing busy work is time *not* spent on managing the business. Your CRM and ERP systems can eliminate manual tasks, thus reducing errors and freeing up time for efforts on creating ef-

BRAMAN

NO. 43



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"We really feel great about our choice to merge with the Arrow family. Their team impressed us. We know we made the right decision for our employees. Arrow really cares about how customers and employees are treated, and those were the two things we were really concerned about when we started to think about a sale. We are so happy to be able to offer our long-time customers an expanded range of services."

Marty Gagnon

Tropicare Termite and Pest Control Land O'Lakes, FL

Falcon Lawn & Pest



"We first met Emily (Emily Thomas Kendrick, CEO of Arrow) in the 1990's, and we had talked with other members of the Arrow management team over the years. We always believed they would be the best fit for our employees, so this is a dream come true for us. Arrow is dedicated to hiring, training and retaining the best people, and we are so happy that this experienced team we've built over the years will be a part of the Arrow culture and have additional opportunities for growth."

Louis Witherington Falcon Lawn & Pest Orlando and Wildwood, FL

Boltin Pest Control



"We feel very fortunate to have connected with Arrow. We've talked to many companies over the years, and we know Arrow will take the best care of our employees due to their very strong family culture. They have greater opportunities for growth. After meeting Emily (Emily Thomas Kendrick, CEO of Arrow) and her team during the diligence phase, we knew we were selecting the right company."

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In business, decision making is not always about what's right or wrong, but what's best or better concerning solutions and assessing risk and outcomes.

fective managerial reporting to your management team.

We continued to work with our CRM team to customize KPI reporting, such as revenue per production hour and tracking utilization for both commercial and residential segments. We designed a sales spreadsheet that uploads sales to our ERP system. The same was done for our payroll entry. We were able to reduce the monthend reporting schedule from weeks to days, thus giving us time to prepare internal management reports and review performance with our management teams.

You may discover the process of planning

is more valuable than the plan itself. This is known as value engineering, where the discovery of eliminating processes or busy work enhances productivity as opposed to finding new ways to increase productivity.

The goal is to learn the business from an operational focus. You will learn and understand the key performance indicators, and you will learn cost structure and industry standards to measure your company's performance. In my personal experience, I've learned the business, especially the operations side, by "costing" the business and aligning myself with the operations team.

Building budget committees and holding monthly financial reviews with reliable and accurate information is paramount to the planning and success of your organization. One intangible and highly beneficial result is your organization will develop employees who can solve problems though teamwork. Through this, you will discover the next generation of leaders who will run your business.

Building the infrastructure with ambitious people and the financial planning function becomes far more effective as a tool to running your operation.

Of course, give much thanks to the hard-working people, vendors and outside consultants who make your company smarter and a great place to work. №

The author is the former CFO at Braman Termite & Pest Elimination, Agawam, Mass.

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NEWS

News & Notes

From high-profile mergers and acquisitions to new hires and anniversaries, here's a round-up of the latest Top 100 news.

CenterOak Partners Acquires PestNow and Forms Entomo Brands

enterOak Partners, a Dallas-based private equity firm, in August 2023 announced its port-

folio company, Palmetto Exterminators, acquired Pest-Now and formed Entomo Brands (No. 22 on this year's

Top 100 list). Entomo Brands manages multiple pest control companies operating under well-established regional and local brands. The company maintains its corporate headquarters in Charleston, S.C., and Palmetto Exterminators CEO Brian Butler serves as CEO of the combined business. PestNow and Palmetto Exterminators retain their existing trade names and contin-

> ue to serve customers across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic.

> Founded in 1995 and headquartered in Sterling, Va.,

PestNow serves customers through eight branches providing residential and commercial pest control services across Virginia, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia. Entomo Brands employs more than 350 team members and operated more than 20 branches across six states with a concentrated footprint in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic.

"The PestNow acquisition is a great example of our theme-driven investment strategy focused on sourcing highquality, closely held companies," said Jason Sutherland, co-managing partner of CenterOak Partners.





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New Digs for Liberty Pest Control

iberty Pest Control (No. 54 on this year's list), Brooklyn, N.Y., recently moved into a new 11,000-square-foot office and warehouse.

The building, located at 850 Third Ave., in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, is an important milestone for the firm, which recently broke 5,000 accounts (servicing New York and New Jersey).

"We're bringing everything under one roof," said Joe Temperino, co-owner of Liberty Pest Control. "There is a portion of it for our chemicals, and we also have sales, accounts receivables and the service department all under one roof. We also have plans to add a learning center."

The facility was a long-time goal of

founder and co-owner Rich Cappa. Like many NYC pest control firms, most of Liberty's routes are serviced by foot. Each technician has a dropbox where they will pick up chemicals and supplies. Cappa wanted a place where all technicians could gather for training, team-building and other functions. — *Brad Harbison*



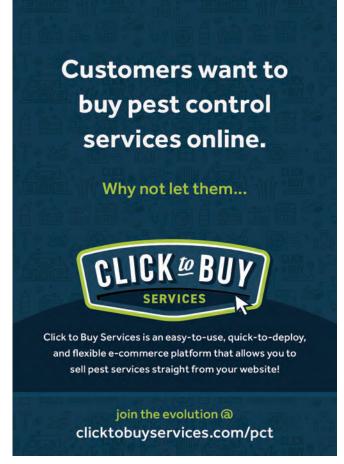
Joe Temperino (left) and Rich Cappa

Scherzinger Expands in Columbus, Ohio

cherzinger Pest Control (No. 75 on this year's list), Cincinnati, announced the acquisition of Aimvo Ohio Pest Control, Columbus, Ohio. The transaction was completed March 1, 2024.

Both Scherzinger and Aimvo have operated in Central Ohio for about six years. As part of the deal, Aimvo Ohio's Columbus team will become Scherzinger employees. In sharing the news, the companies noted that personnel, services and pricing will remain unchanged. "Columbus has been a great market for us for several years," said Kurt Scherzinger, president of Scherzinger Pest Control. "The addition of Aimvo Ohio's operations will give us greater scale in Columbus."







Kurt Scherzinger

Scherzinger serves homeowners and businesses in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton and northern Kentucky.

Abell Pest Control Celebrates 100 Years

bell Pest Control (No. 16 on this year's list), Etobicoke, Ontario, is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2024. Founded in 1924 by Earl F. Abell

in the basement and garage of his Toronto home as a pesticide manufacturer, the company's legacy spans four generations.

"As we commemorate a century of excellence, we honor the legacy of Abell Pest

Control, a journey marked by steadfast commitment and exceptional service. Additionally, we celebrate my father, Ralph, who led the company for four decades and is celebrating his 99th birthday this year," said John Abell, owner. "We acknowledge our storied past and are embracing our future celebration of new horizons. My daughter, Elizabeth Abell, represents the fourth generation in our legacy and symbolizes our commitment to continuity and progression."

To mark this milestone, John and Elizabeth Abell embarked on a series of meet-

ings spanning North America, starting in Nanaimo, British Columbia. It will conclude in St. John's, Newfoundland, in June. During these meetings, they've engaged with Abell team members to articulate the

> company's vision for the future and express gratitude for their dedication and contributions to Abell's success. Abell's branches across Canada and the U.S. also

are focusing on giving back to communities where employees live and work.

PCT Technicians of the Year All from Top 100 Companies

he 2023 PCT/BASF Technicians of the Year all were from PCT Top 100 companies. Last year's Com-

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mercial Technician of the Year was Tom Kuligoski, Rose Pest Solutions (No. 27 on this year's list), Troy, Mich.

Matt Hall, Rottler Pest Solutions (No. 29 on this year's list), St. Louis, Mo., was our Residential Technician of the Year.



Marvin Dalton, PCT's 2023 Termite Technician of the Year, is from Top 100 newcomer Accel Pest & Termite Control.

Marvin Dalton, PCT's Termite Technician of the Year of the Year, is from Accel Pest & Termite Control (No. 98 on this year's list), Virginia Beach, Va., a pest control firm that is new to the PCT Top 100 list in 2024.

Nominate your company's service pro-

fessionals for the 2024 PCT Technician of the Year Awards at www.pctonline.com/ tech24.

Certus Appoints Lee Thompson as Vice President of M&A

n October, Certus Pest (No. 20 on this year's list), Tampa, Fla., promoted Lee Thompson to vice president of mergers and acquisitions.

Thompson joined Certus as director of sales enablement, where he helped facilitate the efficiency of sales teams across all Certus brands. Thompson highlighted the development of frontline field marketing tools and the implementation of a sales training platform at Certus as his proudest achievements while in that position. "At

Certus, we're in the process of building something special," Thompson said. "And I'm honored to be a part of the leadership team that lays the pillars for its success."



Lee Thompson

Thompson added that he aims to help Certus expand its footprint across the Southeast.

Top 100 Map

Curious about where this year's Top 100 companies are located in the U.S. and Canada? Check out the digital version of the May issue on pctonline.com to see our interactive map with plots for all 100 companies.

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Awards Ceremony & Executive Summit

June 25-26, 2024 **Loews Vanderbilt Hotel**

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PCT Top 100 Awards Ceremony & Executive Summit to be Held Next Month

n June 25-26, PCT will welcome Top 100 companies to Nashville, Tenn., for the seventh in-person PCT Top 100 Awards Ceremony and Executive Summit, hosted by Syngenta. The event will be held at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel.







Matthew Bertram



Loews Vanderbilt Hotel

The a day-and-a-half program will feature a mix of networking and educational sessions geared specifically towards Top 100 firms, culminating with a reception, dinner and plaque presentation on the second night.

The keynote presentation, "Exploring the AI Frontier — Demystifying a Rapidly Changing Landscape," will be presented

by technology consultant Matthew Bertram. His presentation uses interesting and humorous anecdotes from his work as an emerging technology leader,

CTO and consultant to provide practical illustrations for integrating AI into your organization.

He'll discuss how generative AI works, how fast AI is progressing and what the months and years ahead look like from a business and technology perspective.

Other sessions and speakers include:

- "Human-Centered Success: Developing Your Team and Growing Your Business," presented by Brandon Bell, Diversity and Inclusion lead, Syngenta North America
- · "Artificial Intelligence 201 in Pest Man-

- agement," presented by Todd Leyse, Adam's Pest Control
- "What Sales Lessons Can Be Learned From Door-To-Door Companies?" panel discussion, featuring Preston Peterson, Alta Pest Control; Andrew Barrows, Greenix Pest Control; and Byron Gifford, Evergreen Pest Solutions.
- "Lessons From Top 100 PMP Peers" panel discussion, featuring Jed D'Arensbourg, DA Exterminating Co.; Chase Hazelwood, Go-Forth Pest Control; and Stanford C. Phillips, Northwest Exterminating

Qualifying companies have previously received invitations.

Editorial coverage of the sessions will be featured in future issues of PCT, so the entire marketplace can take advantage of the information presented in Nashville. №

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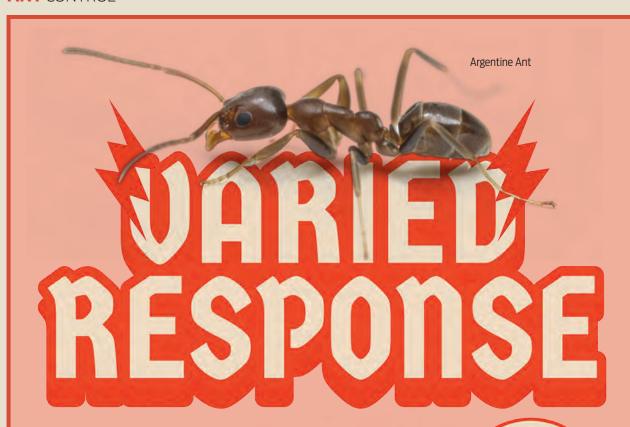
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Proper ant bait selection isn't always cut and dry. In fact, a recent formulation study shows that bait effectiveness can depend on the season or ant species, so the more options,

the better.

hough most ants are important for the work they do in nature, some are serious pests. Many pest control companies reported ants to be their No. 1 pest both in difficulty to control and the costliness of re-services technicians must make. In the 2023 PCT State of the Ant Control Market Report, 52 percent of pest management professional (PMP) survey respondents reported they treat pest ants year-round, with 19 percent responding they treat seasonally.

The PCT Ant Control Market Report also reported that 93 percent of the PMPs surveyed reported that pesticide application is their primary

control measure for a variety of ant species, with baits being one of the most common methods employed. Ant baits can be very effective, but proper bait selection can have many technicians scratching their heads. Proper bait selection depends on several factors, including what type of ant (or ants) are at the account. Most ants are small and challenging to identify. Misidentification may lead to little or no ant control for the customer.

As if ant identification were not difficult enough, effective bait selection also can depend on the time of the year for the application. Baits are a mixture of an attractant (food) matrix and an insecticide often applied in either a liquid, gel or granular formulation. Though most ants will eat anything, their preferences can vary throughout the year depending on the specific nutritional needs of the colony. Often, protein baits are a popular food source in the spring and summer for queen egg production. For summer into fall, carbohydrate baits may be preferred. Beyond the type of food preferred by season, the formulation type, such as liquid, gel or granule, also may vary seasonally in preference depending on the ant species. All this information leads to technicians asking questions regarding what

By Jinbo Song,

Eric Benson,

Brittany Ellis and

Kristen van den

Meiracker

Carpenter Ant





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/// ANT CONTROL

formulation of bait may be preferred by specific ant species at different times of the year.

The goal of this study at Clemson University in South Carolina was to test the attractiveness of liquid, gel and granular bait formulations to urban pest ants in the field at three times of the year — spring, summer and fall. The ant species included acrobat, Argentine, dark rover, little black, field, odorous house and Asian needle ant colonies at different locations around the Clemson University campus.

MATERIALS & METHODS. Bait products were presented to foraging ant trails using a blank compact disc (CD) divided into three equal sections. The baits selected included Advance 375A Granular Ant Bait manufactured by BASF, Maxforce Fleet Ant Bait (gel) and Maxforce Quantum Ant Bait (liquid) both manufactured



Bait formulations were presented to ant trails using a blank compact disc.

by Envu. A quarter-sized amount of gel and liquid bait was applied to the CD, along with one teaspoon of granular bait. Each species was exposed to the baits three times, rotating the CD by each trail to provide each bait the same proximity to the trail. The edge of the CD was placed 5

centimeters or less from each ant species and ants were counted for 30 minutes after initial contact with any of the baits. Evaluations for all ant species and all replications occurred between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on clear days during the spring, summer and fall in Clemson, S.C. Spring evaluations were done in April and May when the average temperatures during the observations ranged from 58-74 degrees Fahrenheit. Summer evaluations were done from early June to late July when the average temperatures ranged from 75-87 degrees Fahrenheit. Fall evaluations were all completed during October when the average temperatures ranged from 61-74 degrees Fahrenheit.

RESULTS. After baits were discovered, most of the bait formulations offered were contacted by most of the ant species over the three seasons during the 30-minute







recording periods. While some bait formulations used in this study were more frequently visited by an ant species, the visits were not always significantly higher than one or both other bait formulations (Table 1). The bait formulation most selected by

an ant species for each season is summarized in Table 2 (page 80).

The most bait contacts were by Argentine and odorous house ants in the summer. Little black ants had minimal contact with gel bait in the spring and no contact

with gel bait in the summer and fall. Asian needle ants also had minimal contact with the gel and liquid baits, preferring granular bait during all three seasons. Dark rover ants also preferred granular bait during all three seasons. Field ants had

Table 1. Mean number of ant visits at a bait formulation, by season, after 30 minutes.

SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
	Granule	Gel	Liquid	Granule	Gel	Liquid	Granule	Gel	Liquid
Acrobat	21.67	11	23	132	2	15.67	26*	2.66	0.33
Argentine	54.67	35.33	71	277.33	150.67	195.67	77.67*	5	0
Asian Needle	39.33*	3	1	78.67*	0.67	1.67	44.33*	0	0
Dark Rover	142.67	51	64.33	163.67	21	53.33	39.67*	4.67	19*
Field	21	32.33	70	37.67	33.67	34.67	8.33	0.33	18.67*
Odorous House	93.33	87.33	70	173	168	256	91.67	70.67	85
Little Black	320.67*	3.67	241.33*	265*	0	74.33	89.67*	0	0.67

^{*}Indicates mean values that were different using Fisher's LSD test (α =0.05) within a species and season. n=3



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the most diverse bait selection, preferring gel bait in the spring, granular bait in the summer and liquid bait in the fall. Acrobat ants preferred liquid bait in the spring and granular bait in the summer and fall, but overall, they did not forage on the baits in large numbers. In general, all ant bait interactions by foragers decreased in the fall even though the fall temperatures were very similar to the spring temperatures during this study.

SUMMARY. Being mindful that ant species, seasonal weather and temperatures will vary greatly across the country, we must be careful not to make broad generalizations on ant bait preferences based on our study in Clemson, S.C.

Content of the types of food in a bait matrix is also very important depending on the time of year and species of ant targeted for control.

Table 2. General trend of most selected bait formulation by species and season.

SPECIES	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	
Acrobat	Liquid	Granule	Granule	
Argentine	Liquid	Granule	Granule	
Asian Needle	Granule	Granule	Granule	
Dark Rover	Granule	Granule	Granule	
Field	Gel	Granule	Liquid	
Odorous House	Granule	Liquid	Granule	
Little Black	Granule	Granule	Granule	

However, we do feel these data and this study demonstrate that no one bait formulation is the best selection with every ant species in every season of the

Ant species vary. Seasonal conditions vary. Thus, PMPs should be ready to have variable bait formulations at their disposal. PCT

Song, Benson and Ellis are part of the Clemson University Urban Entomology Lab, Clemson, S.C. van den Meiracker is a board certified entomologist in the Technical and Training Department at Terminix Service, Columbia, S.C.

Author's Note: The authors would like to thank Envu and BASF for providing the products used in this study.





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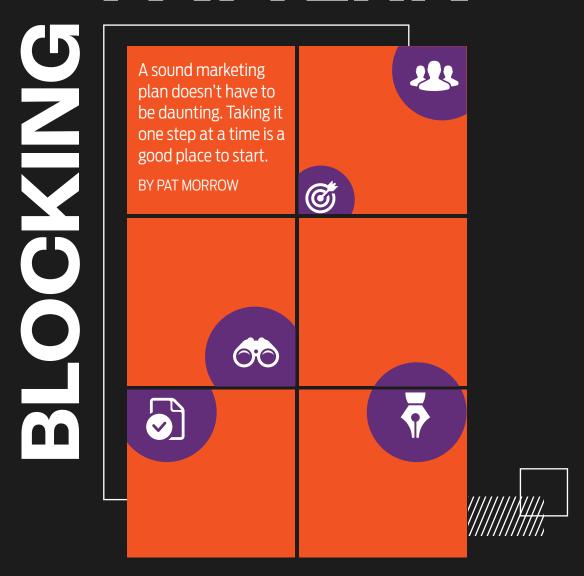




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PATTERN



Editor's Note: In a series of articles this year, Pat Morrow, former senior marketing manager at Envu, will write about how pest management firms can strengthen their marketing approaches. What follows is the first in the series. oo often we jump into tactics, such as creating advertising or brochure content, without establishing a customerfocused rationale or foundation. The result is a waste of money with off-target messaging or marketing tactics that miss the mark. Investing in a proper foundation with

strategic building blocks will lead to messages and strategy that will resonate with your current and future customers and grow your business.

As Harvard professor and business strategy expert Michael Porter once said, "A strategy delineates a territory in which a company seeks to be unique."

/// continued on page 96

2024 MOSQUITO State of the CONTROL MARKET



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AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF A COMPANY'S OVERALL REVENUE DERIVED FROM MOSQUITO CONTROL SERVICES IN 2023

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201





ore people wanted mosquito-free yards last year. According to the 2024 PCT State of the Mosquito Control Market survey, sponsored by MGK, 61 percent of pest management professionals (PMPs) said demand for mosquito control services increased either somewhat or significantly in 2023 from the year prior.

It's no surprise then that 58 percent of PMPs said revenue from mosquito control services increased in 2023 at their locations. On average, this work accounted for 17.4 percent of overall company revenue last year, though this was down from 19.3 percent in 2022.

Uncooperative weather caused the decline, reported PMPs in follow-up interviews.

For J&J Exterminating, based in Lafayette, La., mosquito revenue was "way down from normal" due to drought, said Technical Director Adam Woodard. "It was so dry for so long, there was no water for those mosquitoes to hatch out in. There's always going to be some mosquito pressure down here in Louisiana, but as far as getting a lot of new services, we just didn't have a whole lot of that," he said.

Heavy rain in New England was the challenge for Ultra Safe Pest Management. "In 2023 we got a ton of rain. It was unseasonably wet," said President Vic Palermo.

This caused the Boston-based company to miss about 15 percent of mosquito treatments. As such, this service line only saw single-digit growth in 2023, compared to 25 precent growth in 2022. That year, drought extended the summer season and "we didn't miss a single treatment. In fact, we got some extra treatments," recalled Palermo. An extra 400 or so treatments "really adds up," he said.

Despite inhospitable weather in Arizona, Mosquito Joe of North Phoenix experienced significant growth.

"Last year was the hottest and driest year on record for Phoenix, and we grew our business by 40 percent," said Denis Logan, franchise owner.

Mosquitoes in Arizona? Yep. "We do have a pretty healthy mosquito problem here in the valley, Phoenix in particular," said Logan. The area gets enough rain and consistently warm temperatures to sustain container-breeding Aedes mosquito populations about 11 months of the year, he said.

"They are super resilient. The fight is real."

According to the PCT survey, 86 percent of pest control company locations offered mosquito control services last year, up from 74 percent in 2023.

MORE PERFORMING MOSQUITO



Does your company location offer mosquito control services?



86%

yes



14%

no

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 233

HIGHER DEMAND

Compared with 2022, how did the number of requests for mosquito control services at your location change in 2023?

increased significantly | 15%

increased somewhat | 46%

remained the same | 26%

decreased somewhat | 10%

decreased significantly | 3%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents offering mosquito control services before 2023: 187

GREATER \$ IN 2023

Compared with 2022, how did the revenue derived from your location's mosquito control services change in 2023?



58%

increased

34%

remained the same



9%

decreased

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents offering mosquito control services before 2023: 186

About The Survey

Sponsored by MGK, the 2024 PCT State of the Mosquito Control Market survey was conducted by Readex Research, a privately held research firm based in Stillwater, Minn. A sample of 4,275 pest control company owners, executives, technical directors, general managers and managers was systematically selected from the PCT circulation file. Data was collected from 233 respondents – a 5.5 percent response rate – via online survey from Feb. 5-16, 2024, with 201 respondents stating their company location offered mosquito control services. The margin of error for 201 respondents is plus or minus 6.8 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Charts may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.







he average price charged for a recurring residential mosquito control service in 2023 was \$110, found the 2024 PCT State of the Mosquito Control Market survey. Fifty-six percent of PMPs said they expected to raise prices for the service in 2024.

The danger of doing so: Customers can "quickly be put off by the cost," said David Joles, who leads operations in Florida and Georgia for Purcor Pest Solutions, a Certus company owned by private equity firm Imperial Capital.

He said the cost of mosquito control can really add up, depending on the length of the season and treatment frequency. As a result, customers may question the value of your service — as it may exceed the cost of quarterly general pest control — and cause them to start shopping for lower-priced alternatives.

Purcor Pest Solutions had the most success selling recurring mosquito services to existing customers who "already have a relationship with us," said Joles. It's easier to explain the benefits of mosquito service and how it works when employees are interacting with customers on the property.

Customers who add on mosquito control are more likely to remain customers for the long term, added Joles. "They tend to stick more and stay with you because

you're offering more."

It is far more difficult to convert price-conscious consumers who are shopping for mosquito service by phone.

"Pricing and selling the value of it to customers is the challenge, especially when you're trying to do it over the phone," said Joles. He said Purcor Pest Solutions was taking steps to capture more sales from inbound mosquito calls this season.

The majority of PMPs — 85 percent — said mosquito control was offered as an add-on service, while 23 percent said it was included with general pest control service and 13 percent said it was the company's primary service. ●







\$110

The average typical price charged by company locations for a recurring residential mosquito control service visit in 2023

Thoughts on Starting Mosquito Service

What makes for an effective, profitable mosquito control service? "The key to success is definitely route density," said Vic Palermo, Ultra Safe Pest Management.

This is important for all pest control services, but even more so for mosquito control, he explained. A typical mosquito treatment takes about 20 minutes. If technicians can perform 10 to 15 mosquito stops in the same neighborhood, they'll have high production value. As a result, mosquito technicians can earn nearly the same income during the season as experienced employees performing more complex work, he said.

Training requirements are not always overly extensive, either. "We're able to use entry-level techs and they're able to perform very good mosquito service with minimal training. We could never do that with a wildlife tech or a termite tech. They need extensive knowledge and training," said Palermo.

Some pest control companies could benefit by creating a separate division or sister company that uses mosquito in its name. "In hindsight, I almost wish I just spun it off and started a separate mosquito company," said Palermo of starting his mosquito service. This would have let him advertise more specifically and hire seasonal technicians. He sees "a lot of benefits" to this approach.

At Ultra Safe Pest Management, customers sign a contract for the mosquito season, which typically involves five to seven treatments spaced three to four weeks apart. "It's pay as you play, so people only are charged when we come and do the service," he explained.

MAINLY AN ADD-ON

How does your location offer mosquito control service?

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201; Respondents could select more than one answer

85% as an add-on service



5.3%



Source: Readex Research: Number of respondents: 201 Average callback rate for mosquito control services

GOING UP!

Do you expect your location to increase the price it charges for recurring residential mosquito control service visits in 2024?

35%

No

56% Yes

I do

8% I don't know



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201

EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR MOSQUITO CONTROL

As families and communities begin their migrations to more outside activities, Pest Management Professionals will have the opportunity to be the first line of defense in controlling mosquito populations. Beyond the nuisance of these biting pests, your customers have now also become more aware of the growing public health concerns that mosquitoes may transmit viruses and diseases.

For effective mosquito control solutions, experts recommend using an IPM approach that starts with surveillance and moves towards chemical treatments that target the mosquito at various life stages. This approach includes the use of an adulticide, synergist and insect growth regulator (IGR).



Effective Mosquito Control Throughout The Season

With an IPM approach, Pest Management Professionals proactively control mosquitoes over the long-term, so customers enjoy the outdoors and communities feel safe from vector-borne illnesses.

Surveillance and Exclusion

Inspect the entire area for harborage and breeding sites. Remove all sources of standing water and any other potential breeding sites. It is important to include the customer in this process and communicate the importance of correcting all conducive conditions.

Chemical Treatments

ADULTICIDE

Adulticides are important because they provide immediate relief from an adult population of biting mosquitoes. For best results, choose an adulticide with microcap technology. Microcaps provide controlled release of the active ingredient, thereby providing control for an extended period of time on difficult surfaces.

SYNERGIST

Synergists are not insecticides by themselves but they enhance insecticide efficacy. Synergist use combats insecticide resistance present in the mosquito population. Piperonyl butoxide, commonly referred to as PBO, is one of the most common synergists used in insect control today. It prevents the breakdown of the insecticide in the insect which leads to increased efficacy at lower concentrations.

Mosquitoes are capable of producing many generations in a short time. One female mosquito may produce between one thousand and three thousand eggs in her lifetime. Within a few weeks, thousands of eggs will have become adult females laying eggs. The high numbers of individual mosquitoes in field populations combined with rapid reproduction results in an increased potential for insecticide resistance making a synergist an important part of mosquito management.

INSECT GROWTH REGULATOR

Insect growth regulators (IGRs) have a very different mode of action than adulticides, affecting the hormonal system of the insects rather than killing them outright. One type of IGR is a juvenile hormone (JH) mimic. Pyriproxyfen is a JH mimic and can prevent the transition of larvae into adults, effectively ending their life cycle in the pupal stage. It remains bioavailable after applied. What does that mean for you? It means when you use an IGR to treat a potential breeding site surfaces like tires or ceramic pots, the IGR will still work to prevent emergence of the biting adults for an extended period of time. This is also true of areas that don't have standing water today, but will collect water after a rain event.

Choose The Right Mosquito Control Product

MGK is unique in the insect control industry. For over 100 years, we have been a leader in the lab and in the field, developing innovative and effective products, including a broad portfolio of mosquito control products for residential and commercial structures. Partner with us to get the results you need in the fight against mosquitoes.

Featured Product

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For more mosquito control solutions, visit MGK.com/mosquito-control









hat motivates customers to buy mosquito control? In interviews, PMPs said clients mainly want to spend time outdoors without being attacked by the pests.

"When they've got mosquitoes buzzing them, they want to get that taken care of so they can enjoy their patios. It's mostly just because they're a nuisance," said Adam Woodard, J&J Exterminating.

Vic Palermo, Ultra Safe Pest Management, agreed. "It's a very short summer around here, so people want to maximize that time in the yard or around the pool."

Owners of single-family homes in suburban settings tended to be Palermo's typical mosquito customers. According to the 2024 PCT State of the Mosquito Control Market survey, most PMPs — 97 percent — said their locations provided mosquito control services to residential accounts.

For Backwoods Pest Control in Spokane, Wash., typical mosquito customers live near bodies of water or own acreage. They want mosquito populations on their property reduced, but they don't want conventional pesticide applied to every inch of the property to achieve this, said owner Brian Gibson.

As a result, the company has a control program that relies heavily on the use of mosquito traps and less frequent or no applications of adulticide. The approach proved successful at a horse farm, where the client didn't want expensive horses potentially eating grass treated with a residual pesticide.

"I'm really finding in my market, being able to offer a safe alternative, we're finding a better outcome," said Gibson.

In other markets, such as Phoenix, Ariz., fear of mosquito-borne disease motivates people to sign up for service.

"There are specific neighborhoods where the impetus is going to be a concern for mosquito-borne diseases. A good amount of our clientele does reflect that

population," said Denis Logan, Mosquito Joe of North Phoenix.

According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, about 100 human cases of West Nile virus are reported each year in the state, except for in 2021 when 1,710 cases were reported.

This outbreak, which coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, really heightened awareness and concern about mosquito-borne illness, explained Logan.

According to the PCT survey, 62 percent of PMPs said they believe their customers understand the risks of mosquito-borne disease.

For some pest control companies, the challenge isn't the customer's motivation; it's making them aware that the company offers mosquito control service.

Woodard said he has some customers who use J&J Exterminating for quarterly pest control but have hired mosquito-only companies for mosquito control.

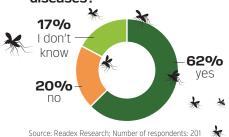
When asked why, "the customer will





WORRY ABOUT RISK

In your opinion, do your customers understand the risks of mosquito-borne diseases?



say, 'Well I didn't know you all offered that,'" he said. Woodard urged PMPs to boost awareness of the service with existing customers to keep this revenue from walking out the door. An even bigger risk: potentially losing quarterly pest control to a competitor who offers both services.

This is a key reason why Ultra Safe Pest Management began offering mosquito control in the first place. About 80 percent of its mosquito customers also use the company's pest, termite or wildlife service, said Palermo.

The top three most effective ways to promote mosquito services, according to the PCT survey, were word of mouth (67 percent), online promotions (49 percent) and service vehicle decals (31 percent). Most pest control company locations — 41 percent — began marketing their mosquito control services in March.

In follow-up interviews, some PMPs said they offered the first mosquito treatment for free or at a discounted price as using paid digital and traditional advertising is expensive and doesn't always work.

"It's very hard to compete advertising-wise with the stand-alone mosquito companies," said Palermo.

"That's all they have to focus on is advertising for mosquitoes. They can save their money all year round, just to spend it all in these warm months. It's hard to compete with that if you're a full-service pest and wildlife company and you're trying to advertise all the above," he said.

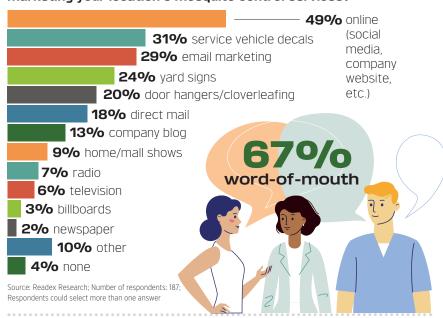
KICK-OFF TIME

What month does your location begin marketing mosquito control services to its customers?



SPREADING THE WORD

What types of advertising have been most effective in marketing your location's mosquito control services?



POPULAR SPOTS

For which types of accounts does your location offer mosquito control services?

- residentialcommercial
- governmentinstitutional
- other

75% 20% 20% 3%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201; Respondents could select more than one answer











Tipping and Tossing is Job No. 1

ccording to the 2024 PCT State of the Mosquito Control Market survey, the most commonly offered mosquito control services involved regular, targeted applications via mister-blower or sprayer (92 percent), special event services (67 percent) and larval control (66 percent).

Products used in these services typically were liquid adulticides (77 percent), insect growth regulators or IGRs (66 percent) and larvicide (58 percent).

But the most essential activity, said PMPs in follow-up interviews, was eliminating the places where mosquitoes breed on the property.

"If all you do is walk around the house and do a mister blower treatment, it's not going to solve it," said Adam Woodard, J&J Exterminating, of a customer's mosquito problem.

PMPs said they instruct technicians when walking the property to pour out and turn over containers that hold water and to educate customers to do so as well. This step is key to successful treatment and to reduce reservices.

"We're always looking to break the breeding cycle," explained Denis Logan, Mosquito Joe of North Phoenix. "We will tip and toss any standing water." He

WHAT PMPs OFFER

What types of mosquito control services does your location offer?

regular, targeted applications via mister, blower or sprayer	92%
special event services (outdoor weddings, community events, etc.)	67%
larval control	66%
ongoing monitoring and/or maintenance	38%
habitat modification	29%
mosquito surveillance	14%
automatic mosquito misting systems	13%
other	7%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201; Respondents could select more than one answer

then may apply BTI (Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis) or an IGR, followed by an application of adulticide using a mister blower.

Finding the breeding source isn't always obvious because mosquitoes don't need much water in which to lay eggs.

At Purcor Pest Solutions, technicians have found that metal fire pits, which are hugely popular at the moment, are often the culprit. They fill up with water, with or without wood and ash inside them, sitting for weeks between use. "That little fire

pit over time can hold a lot of mosquito larva," said David Joles.

For Vic Palermo, Ultra Safe Pest Management, "the biggest thing is the gutters. They're backed up, full of leaves. That's a big driver of mosquitoes that people don't focus enough on." Standing water in gutters can lead to tens of thousands of mosquitoes hatching, he said. His technicians use pole cameras to evaluate gutter conditions.

Palermo previously offered gutter cleaning service, but his technicians didn't







like doing it. Still, he thinks it could be an attractive add-on if provided by a stand-alone gutter team. "I can see how that could be a good combination for cross selling."

It also pays to be weather aware and somewhat flexible when it comes to scheduling mosquito treatments.

Brian Gibson, Backwoods Pest Control, often has to adjust the schedule when it's time to apply his combination of adulticide and IGR to knock down mosquito populations.

"We really pay attention to our weather. If it's projected to rain, we don't apply. We make sure we have a 24-hour period after a service. We will not reservice within 21 days unless we have a torrential downpour," said Gibson.

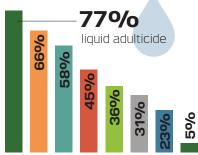
"Playing the weather game" can be difficult in spring, he noted. It's a reason why he incorporated mosquito traps into his service. More than one-third (36 percent) of pest control company locations used mosquito traps in their control programs, found the PCT survey.

The average callback rate for mosquito control service was 5.3 percent. ●

WHAT PRODUCTS PMPs USE

What type of products does your location use for mosquito control?

- insect growth regulator (IGR)
- larvicide
- misting/ULV adulticide
- traps/baits
- granular adulticide
- botanical spray
- other



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201 Respondents could select more than one answer

2024 is Looking Good

he outlook for mosquito control service this season is positive.

According to the 2024 PCT State of the Mosquito Control Market survey, 72 percent of PMPs expect the amount of revenue generated from mosquito control services at their locations to increase this year.

"I'm expecting a huge increase in 2024," said David Joles, Purcor Pest Solutions. He anticipates this revenue stream to grow 20 percent, mainly by making existing customers aware of the service and increasing sales to new customers who contact the company's call center.

Mosquito control offers an opportunity to grow recurring service revenue, compared to one-time insulation or wildlife jobs, as well as a way to retain customers, said Joles. "If you do good work, and you communicate effectively, they'll come back year after year. We know that."

Lin Ellis, owner of Eco Friends Pest Control, serving Dallas-Fort Worth, expects her green mosquito control service to grow in 2024. "I base that on using different equipment and different product," which helped her secure new customers last year, including a high-end condo association. As a result, she expects word of her effective green treatment to spread.

Greater awareness and concern about disease-carrying mosquitoes — among consumers and scientists — positions the service for growth.

"I think [the need for it] is only going to grow," said Vic Palermo, Ultra Safe Pest Management. "You're hearing and reading more and more from the world-renowned entomologists that are working for governments and big universities; you're seeing it come out that we're ill-prepared for a lot of these mosquito- and tick-borne diseases."

The PCT survey found that 57 percent of PMPs were concerned about different or invasive mosquitoes becoming established in their service areas. •

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

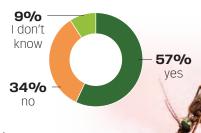
Compared with 2023, how do you anticipate the revenue generated from your location's mosquito control services to change in 2024?



ON THE MOVE

Are you concerned about different or invasive mosquito species becoming established in your market?

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 201





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/// MARKETING TACTICS

/// continued from page 82

BUILDING BLOCK OVERVIEW. Let's

look at the process, which is really broken down into five marketing building blocks. On their own, each of these building blocks can help your business. But like any good team, they're even better together. And, with a dedicated team of individuals, this process can be completed in as quickly as a few months.

The good news is that if done well, the outcomes have a pretty long shelf life — maybe five years. You may need to tweak a few pieces as time goes by. Revisiting the entire process is usually necessary only if there is a significant change in the marketplace, a new competitor, or a shift or new offering from your business. The bad news: If you skip one building block or miss the mark on one, you can wind up with a less-than-optimal result.



The first step is to identify your ideal customer. What keeps them up at night? It's important to spend the time to accurately identify a few key customer-focused insights at the beginning. These will be the basis for everything going forward.

The second step, assessing your competition, will allow you to clearly identify the competitive scene, such as other pest management providers and homeowner DIYers, among others. Knowing your competition will give you an opportunity to look for a unique space for your business.

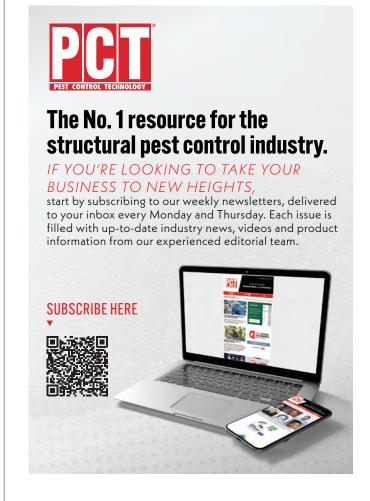
Next, position your business to focus on identifying a place that it can occupy in future customers' minds. This tends to be the intersection of where "what customers want" meets "what you offer."

Once you have a clear position, you can develop your key messages. These are "what you say" and "how you say it." The messages should clearly resonate with future customers and create that space in your customers' minds.

Finally, we get to the fun part! The execution and measurement phase is where the brochures, marketing materials and advertising come to life! During this phase, keep an eye on how well things are going on a regular basis, and look for areas to improve and refine.

BUILD A CORE TEAM. If you're ready to get started, establish a consistent core





team that can focus on the building blocks process from beginning to end.

The team should include the president/CEO, who has the big picture and vision for the business. The head of marketing, who knows how to communicate to the future customer, also needs to be there. You need to bring in your head of sales, who knows what sells; technical director, who will have the scientific expertise on products and services; and finally, a customer service leader, who knows the good, bad and ugly of the business.

Each member brings a unique perspective to the table. What does this mean? Tech may clash with marketing, and sales may want to run the show. All of this means that they will undergo all the phases of a new team - forming, storming, norming, conforming and, finally, performing! It is important to help get the team to performing as quickly as possible.

Consider team-building activities that are outside the box (or at least outside the office) to break down barriers and move the team to the performing phase. Whatever the activity, getting out of the office and out of the comfort zone requires the team to rely on one another. While the team-building is not a magic bullet, it will help open lines of communication among team members and prevent you from getting mired in disagreement.

Follow that up with a business meeting that reviews the process and time needed and roles/responsibilities of each core team member. It is critical to obtain commitment to the goal from each core member! If everyone gives 110 percent, you can trust the process to create a strong marketing plan with these building blocks.

It is also ideal to work with an impartial experienced facilitator who will keep

things on track, manage the process and help optimize input from each member. Oftentimes, the CEO or head of marketing may want to be the facilitator, but this comes at the sacrifice of their full participation as a core team member, and can result in a less-than-optimal outcome.

BUILDING BLOCK NO. 1. Now, here are some steps to help you identify your future customers. Often, this is confused with a target market or target audience, which are broader groups. A source of business is a true future customer, whereas a target market or audience are larger groups of people who may or may not be receptive to your message. You can see the difference.

While the target market and audience will see your message, and you may pick up some business from them, it's important to focus on future customers, where the most opportunity lies.





Let's turn to a few specific steps to identifying your future customers.

The best place to start is with existing customers. Review your database and extract as much as you can from that - geography, current pest control purchases and demographics. Talk to your technicians who serve current customers. They know them and may be able to offer additional insights. Talk to current customers about why they chose your service over others, what their concerns are about pest management and what keeps them up at night. You may find that your richest source of future customers is with existing ones, as you could provide them with more services!

Develop a list of demographics for future customers. Which should include as much information as possible on age, gender, geography, income, profession, marital status, children, etc. Your existing



Doing an audit of your social media following will give you insights into who they are.

customer database and publicly available census data can provide some information on these.

You also should do a social media audit. If you have a presence on X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn and/or Facebook, look at your followers. Document their interests, influencers they follow and hobbies. It also will give you insight into who they trust and what they read/watch.





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/// MARKETING TACTICS

Create a persona profile, which is a great way to drill down into understanding your future customers. Personas are created based on data, surveys, digital engagements and any other information you can find to give a more complete picture. The personas of Cost-Conscious Carl and Perturbed-About-Pests Paul will be different. It is ideal to develop a few profiles to discover which are future customers and which are not. When developing a persona, rather than "women aged 21-35 with two children and a dog, living in a three-bedroom home," the profile should paint a picture of the future customer, based in fact and insights, and most importantly, be memorable. Here's an example:

· Open-Minded Mary: Mary is a married 32-year-old. She is a college-educated professional who chose to be a stay-athome mom with her three young children and their dog. She is the primary purchase decision maker. Mary engages on X frequently, subscribes to and reads the local daily newspaper online and follows CNN closely. Neither she nor her husband have time to do their own pest control and believe that a professional is needed. Her family's health and safety are her No. 1 priority. She shops at Whole Foods and tries to use organic food and cleaning products. But, she is open to learning more about how a professional pest operator can safely protect her family and home.

Once you have some future customer personas, you may find that you have a few that would be viable. It's important to ensure that you have no more than three of these, as it can become overwhelming to create positioning and messaging that effectively resounds with more than that.

There will be some personas that are not customers. Some may just not be interested in professional pest management because they prefer organic, natural or DIY. This person is not going to be swayed by any safety statements on chemicals or the use of them and magically change their opinion. It's best to not expend resources on this person.

Finally, stay flexible. The pool of future customers may shift, and it's important to revisit this. Changing trends, social media and new innovations in pest management can shift the landscape. Regularly analyze data from customer engagements, evaluate current buyers and purchases and optimize future customer profiles as new information is revealed. **PCT**

The author is a marketing professional in the pest, turf and agricultural industries.

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MOSQUITO CONTROL

SUPPLEMENT



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/// MOSQUITO CONTROL SUPPLEMENT



The Puerto Rico Department of Public Health issued a declaration of public health emergency on March 25 due to the spread of dengue with a registered 549 cases reported.

BY AMANDA JOERNDT n March 25, Puerto Rico's Secretary of the Department of Health, Carlos Mellado López, issued a declaration of public health emergency due to the spread of dengue fever.

With this action, López said, it will be possible to guarantee the necessary resources to strengthen surveillance, detection, prevention, vector control and clinical management, among other efforts, in order to address the spread of the disease with the promptness and efficiency that it deserves.

"This year, dengue cases have exceeded historical figures. The teams have been working on the integrated plan for prevention and control in response to arbovirus, and we are going to expand the implemented response," López said. "It is important to note that the increase in cases has not only been reflected in Puerto Rico, but we have seen it throughout the region of the Americas."

The administrative order took effect immediately and extends for a 90-day period. According

to the Department of Health, "the increase in dengue cases requires that all components of society join forces in order to prevent contagion and the spread of this virus."

According to a surveillance update, there were 549 registered cases as of March 25. The health region with the highest number of reported cases was the San Juan region with 270 cases (49.18 percent), followed by the Bayamón region with 75 cases (13.66 percent) and the Mayagüez region with 61 cases (11.11 percent).

Dengue is transmitted by mosquitoes, especially *Aedes aegypti*, and can cause serious symptoms and even be fatal. It is crucial that citizens take immediate and proactive measures to control the spread of the virus, according to the Department of Health.

Visit www.salud.pr.gov/dengue for additional and updated information on dengue and preventive measures. **PCT**

The author is digital editor of PCT.

For more stories about mosquito control, head to pctonline.com/tag/mosquito-control/.







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Trevor Jones, General Manager Admiral Pest Control | Bellflower, CA



Last year, The New York Times Global Health Reporter Stephanie Nolen documented the reversal of progress made in battling malaria around the world. PCT caught up with her for a Q&A on why it's happening and what can be done.

he spread of mosquito-borne illnesses and invasive species has created a growing public health concern that has public and private stakeholders seeking new and innovative solutions.

Unfortunately, some of the strategies for thwarting mosquito-borne illnesses have had the unintended consequence of reversing years of progress, reported The New York Times Global Health Reporter Stephanie Nolen in her "Tiny Insect, Giant Menace" multimedia series published last fall in The New York Times (bit.ly/48TgEJ0). Climate change, barriers such as bed nets, insecticides becoming less effective because of overuse and a lack of foundational funding for mosquito-borne disease strategies are just a few factors Nolen found in her travels to

five countries in Africa and Latin America for this project.

PCT caught up with Nolen for a one-on-one interview to discuss her multi-dimensional series on the rapid evolution of mosquitoes, scientists using genetic engineering to block malaria-carrying species from spreading the disease and her personal journey following insects into drainage pipes, bedrooms and rainforests.

PCT: How did this story idea come together? Why did you and the Times editors decide this was a topic worth pursuing?

Stephanie Nolen: I did not begin with any ambition [for such a large project]. I was really going to write a pretty short, straightforward story—the kind of thing that you folks might publish—like new control innovations. And



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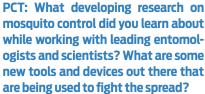
then I started talking to people and quickly realized that it was a lot more complicated than I thought. There were these quite urgent, new concerns around malaria and a perception that we're not winning, necessarily. I was among the people who have been writing pretty positive stories about malaria for a while, and so it was alarming but interesting to learn about that. Kind of quickly, this grew from being an 800-word news story on some cool new technologies to all kinds of really big things happening in the world of mosquitoes.

The New York Times

I [traveled] to Colombia to look at the Wolbachia method of using bacteria to control mosquito-borne viruses. I really would have liked to have done that

story from Indonesia or Laos, but both governments — it's really hard to get permission for a filming permit, especially because we knew we wanted this to be a visual kind of multimedia piece. I went to Kenya to look at clinical trials. A lot of the big clinical trials of some of the new technologies are happening in Kenya. I went to São Tomé and Príncipe [in the Gulf of Guinea] to look at genetic modification. I really liked that project because I felt like the scientists working on it were really transparent that it might work or might not. I went to Tanzania to look at housing. Most of the researchers are really smart, young Tanzanian women. I was really impressed with them and

how they're taking a bit of a maverick approach. I really appreciated these kinds of scrappy Tanzanian women who were like, "No, we need to be having a different conversation."



SN: I learned that there has been an incredible amount of progress, and it's really encouraging to see malaria deaths have been cut in half over the last 20 years, and that's an enormous win. Although the series is kind of scary, I think it's important to recognize that it reflects that there has been a huge amount of investment, research and knowledge, and a real effort to get that knowledge into the communities where people are vulnerable. That was really heartening, but also mosquitoes evolve incredibly quickly, and we may have rested on our laurels too early in thinking that we had a solution to malaria. While we were all focusing on malaria, dengue and Zika viruses really surged, and now you have



Above: A trapped mosquito at the Kenya Medical Research Institute in Kisumu. Left: Tamirat Debele, who was diagnosed with malaria, received treatment at the Goro Health Center in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. these massive dengue outbreaks all over the world in places that have never had it before. The Wolbachia stuff is exciting. The genetic modification just has enormous potential, but you spend a bunch of time with researchers and then you are reminded that there's time between when something shows some promise in a small clinical trial and when it actually reaches the people who are vulnerable. And during all of that time, mosquitoes and parasites and viruses are evolving.

PCT: What climate and environmental factors are playing a role in the spread of mosquitoes?

SN: It's a hotter, wetter world, and that's broadly good for mosquitoes, but also climate makes us vulnerable in other ways. Malaria cases shot up in Pakistan last year. That's partly because after they had those crazy record-breaking floods, there

It's a hotter, wetter world, and that's broadly good for mosquitoes, but also climate make us vulnerable in other ways." — Stephanie Nolen, Global Health Reporter, The New York Times

was a lot more standing water around. Eight percent of global malaria cases happen in refugees, and it's because those people don't have access [to proper barriers] since they are living in tents and sleeping outdoors. Climate disasters are making more and more people vulnerable because they're displaced or they're in lower-quality housing.

PCT: You reported, "The malaria parasite is increasingly resistant to the once highly effective drugs used to treat it." What new drugs have you come across that are being tested to treat mosquito-borne illnesses?

SN: All the mosquitoes around the world basically are resistant to varying degrees

to the insecticides we use, and we need a whole bunch of new insecticides and basic chemical research on molecules that kill mosquitoes in a new way. They're not just resistant to individual chemicals, but they're resistant to the whole method of action. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is obviously very deeply resourced and, for now, they're very committed to it, but it's not great if private sector companies are relying on foundations to give them the money to do this research and the work [for] getting new products. I know there's mounting evidence of [parasite] resistance to the drugs, and now we're seeing real signs of that resistance. Now is when we need the new drugs, but we don't have any. I think there's some





/// MOSQUITO CONTROL SUPPLEMENT



A member of a research team in São Tomé and Príncipe dusts mosquitoes with fluorescent powder before a sunset release.

experimental work happening around whole new classes of treatments, but I think the hope was really that better drugs, better diagnostics, bed nets and insecticide spraying would get us to elimination, and you wouldn't need something else. There hasn't been the effort to have another thing on the shelf for when this thing stopped working. That combination of things brought deaths way down, but it didn't get us to the finish line at all.

PCT: You also noted that entomologists are skeptical about how much long-term progress can be made in underdeveloped countries that don't use strategies like those in high-income countries (for example, larviciding, draining breeding sites and building better houses). Have there been calls for foundational funding for these strategies?

SN: Malaria funding has really plateaued. I think a lot of people who work in that field are worried about it because the need for funding has increased, but the amount that's available is not rising. There's real concern, I would say, in the malaria world; the amount of money that's going into the arboviruses generally is not nearly commensurate with the

size of the problem, but all of a sudden you have dengue in France, Spain and the southern U.S. I think that's going to change things, because when rich people get [the virus], suddenly people are interested in funding it. I think poorer places like Bangladesh and Peru are going to benefit from the money; the question is, where is the money going to come from? So much of the money for mosquito-borne disease comes from philanthropy and, in particular, from the Gates Foundation. It's amazing that they do it, and, on the other hand, it's probably not healthy when one organization has the ability to shape the conversation so completely.

PCT: PCT's readers are primarily pest control business owners/operators, entomologists and university researchers. What do you think they will find of interest in your articles?

SN: It was interesting to me that even a lot of people in the mosquito world are not aware of *Anopheles stephensi* [a malaria-carrying species of mosquito that arrived in the port city of the tiny East African nation of Djibouti a decade ago that was largely ignored by public health officials] and its appearance in

Africa. I think if you work on mosquito-borne illnesses, but not in Africa, then maybe you aren't aware that much of the focus for controlling and responding to the disease is rural and that people are used to dealing with it as a certain kind of threat. If you blow that up, and you say now it's in cities and it can breed in an old Coke bottle, and it's totally insecticide resistant, that's a huge problem, even for countries that have excellent malaria control programs. If your current malaria control program is focused on super rural areas and mosquitoes that breed in streams or ponds or whatever, then a mosquito that is breeding in trash and living in alleyways in the middle of densely populated cities is a huge problem.

PCT: Did you ever consider — or would you consider — a follow-up article exploring how the professional market is partnering with local municipalities and/or the work they are doing to control mosquitoes and what can be learned from them?

SN: We just look for things that are good stories and that are news. We're kind of agnostic on who's involved. There are, as you alluded to earlier, a lot of players in this space. There's clearly a lot of work being driven by the private sector.

PCT: Did you leave this project more optimistic or pessimistic about the ongoing global battle to control these mosquito-borne diseases?

SN: I'm mostly pretty pessimistic. I appreciate the innovation, and I see the progress that we've made so far, but I also see the ground littered with missed opportunities. I have some faith in the human capacity for ingenuity, but I feel like the smart money is on the mosquito at this moment. **PCT**

The author is the digital editor of PCT.

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IPM Insights

/// BLAIR SMITH



How Low Can You Go?

low-impact approach to pest management is not a new concept. Doing more with less accurately describes our industry's evolution. Yes, our environmental impact has reduced over time, but what does the next generation of residential service look like as we prepare for increased restrictions from the regulatory or legislative arenas?

A research project in California seeks to answer this question. The Pest Management Alliance Project (funded by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation) is currently testing the efficacy of low-impact treatments so PMPs can adopt them with confidence. UC Riverside urban entomology researchers Dr. Dong-Hwan Choe, Dr. Chow-Yang Lee and Dr. Michael Rust are collaborating with product manufacturers and pest management companies to test commercially available products for ant control. The research aims to reduce the amount of pesticide applications to control ant populations, a pest contributing to a high volume of callbacks for most PMPs.

As a member of a service company partnering in the Alliance project, here are three key takeaways I've learned so far that can help you improve your service quality at your company.

USE NARROW-SPECTRUM PRODUCTS.

Some of the most innovative products to hit the market in recent years are extremely specialized for certain pests. Though these materials may not boast a broad-spectrum label, their impact on customer satisfaction can be significant depending on your region's unique pest pressure.

At face value, one may look at a product like a pheromone adjuvant and write it off, thinking, "Our customers don't pay for Argentine ant control, they pay for pest control! Why focus so much on one pest when our service agreements cover a whole host of invaders?"

It is a fair question, but our initial findings show that that conclusion may be misguided. As part of our initial trial within the Alliance, we split a Southern California technician's

route with half low-impact adjuvant treatments and half conventional services. We saw a three-fold difference in callbacks, with the low-impact protocol accounts coming in on top. The difference? A strategically timed application featuring a pheromone adjuvant to draw Argentine ants to the treatment area.

Instead of thinking, "Why would I invest in a material targeted for just one pest?" perhaps we should say, "Wow! Focusing on a major pest had a significant impact on my service quality and callback percentage."

FOLLOW THE 80/20 RULE. Some service protocols instruct technicians to apply the material in consistent bands as a preventive measure for crawling pests on the exterior, keeping callbacks at bay until the next service. This blanket approach is simple for new technicians to understand and easy to apply to a variety of residential homes, but it is not in line with the principle of performing an inspection and assessment-based service.

We all are familiar with the Pareto principle, which states that roughly 80 percent of consequences come from 20 percent of causes. Applying this concept to a residential service, it is safe to say that a majority of the material applied around a home is placed in a subpar spot or degrades from the elements and may never have the chance to come in contact with a pest. This blanket approach is also our security blanket — why change it, reduce the coverage and risk an uptick in

We must apply the Pareto principle for low-impact treatments and become extremely deliberate about product placement to maximize success and improve our stewardship. This goes beyond the basics — we already know pests will be in areas that provide harborage, moisture and a food source. Choe has collected data to determine which interfaces have the greatest chance of delivering our materials to a pest. For example, does lawn to concrete, mulch to concrete or soil to concrete interface with more ant activities? These findings will help to provide much greater specificity to technicians in a service protocol beyond a general directive to make

applications based on inspection.

Though all technicians should use materials based on inspection, directing a large workforce to apply materials based on inspection relies on the human eye, which is tough to control at scale. These key learnings can provide us with actionable information to fine-tune our service protocols with clarity.

CHALLENGE YOUR TECHNICIANS. The critical thinking process in the technician's mind is an essential aspect of achieving success with low-impact treatments. So, how do we elevate this level of critical thinking in our field staff today?

You don't need to be a partner in a research project to apply these concepts in your company. Take a technician who is a self-proclaimed "bug nerd" and give them a challenge. How targeted can they become in their approach to serving their residential customers this season? Run a contest in your branch with the theme "How Low Can You Go," incentivizing technicians to do more with less material. With laser-sharp focus and precise product placement, how little material can be used on a property while still providing excellent service? We prioritize route efficiency and production to our technicians, so we should provide an incentive for providing a high-quality, low-impact service, too.

Speaking personally as a director of quality assurance, rarely is my guidance to our field staff to "do less" to better serve our customers. While counterintuitive, this direction is necessary to prepare for navigating the long road of regulatory and legislative challenges ahead. This isn't cutting corners; it's cutting down on unnecessary placements of materials we know we'll have to use sparingly in the future.

So, how low can you go? PCT

Blair Smith is director of technical and quality assurance for Clark Pest Control in Lodi, Calif. She is the public relations chair for the Pest Control Operators of California and serves on the organization's regulatory and legislative committees. Smith is also a member of the Urban Pest Management Technical Committee (upmtc.org).

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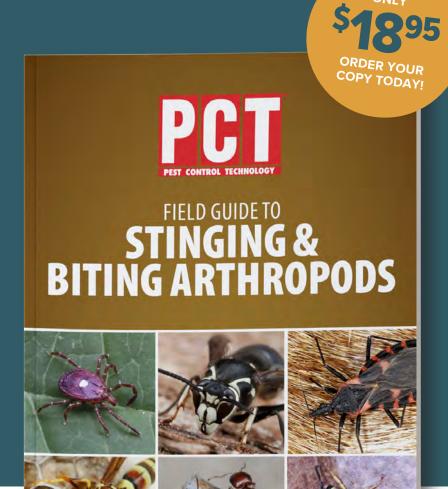


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From the Field



Revolutionizing Pest Control: Embracing Innovation

nnovation is more than just a buzzword for pest control. Innovation is emerging as the key driver of growth in our business. As we confront the challenges of a rapidly changing world, the pest control industry is adapting and evolving to meet the demands of a more eco-conscious and technologically driven society. I'd like to highlight some of the exciting developments in pest control innovation and their potential to revolutionize the way we approach pest management.

THE NEED FOR INNOVATION. As ironclad as most of life's certainties, pest infestations will continue to pose significant threats to public health, agriculture and the environment. The pest control industry has historically relied on traditional chemical pesticides, which can raise environmental and health concerns and can lead to the development of pesticide-resistant pest populations. The urgent need for more effective, sustainable and environmentally responsible pest control solutions has driven a wave of innovation within the industry.

ADAPTING AND ADOPTING IPM. In the 1950s, one of the most promising innovations in pest control was the development of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies. Unlike traditional methods that rely heavily on chemical treatments, IPM integrates various approaches to minimize environmental impacts and enhance longterm effectiveness by combining biological, cultural, physical and chemical control methods.

However, as urban environments emerged and structural pest control customers became increasingly involved in service success, IPM has evolved to include methods that are more hands-off and proactive than described by foundational IPM methods. IPM will always provide a holistic and sustainable approach to pest

management, but scaling these practices to meet today's customer is innovation.

SMART PEST MONITORING SYSTEMS.

Climate change and increased urbanization have created a recipe for more pest activity. As warmer weather pushes the boundaries of traditional seasons, and as more land is developed to accommodate growing populations, there is an increased risk that rodents will attempt to infest man-made

Smart pest monitoring systems can be used to tackle this growing problem. These smart systems, such as rodent capture and bait devices outfitted with sensors, have the ability to detect and record rodent movement and can even send alerts through cellular technology. This technology helps provide technicians with the immediate information needed to react quickly and investigate concerns before they develop into infestations.

By leveraging the advanced sensors and data analytics of smart pest monitoring systems to provide real-time insights into pest activity, these systems enable early detection, allowing for more targeted and timely interventions. The data collected also can be utilized to optimize control strategies, reducing the reliance on broadspectrum pesticides.

MORE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS. From

digital pest control to non-toxic solutions, innovation — sparked by extensive research and development — is not only reshaping the methods of pest control but also the formulations used. The goal is to find more sustainable solutions that reduce environmental impact and contribute to the overall health and safety of ecosystems.

Sustainability in pest management starts with looking at current tools through a different lens. The development of ecofriendly and biodegradable pesticides is one example of this, as researchers continue to

explore plant-based formulations, utilizing natural compounds with pest-repelling properties.

ENERGY-SAVING DEVICES. Insect light traps (ILTs) have been used in the pest management industry for decades as a method to attract and control flies. However, ILTs can be energy intensive and have traditionally relied on fluorescent bulbs that contain mercury vapor or mercury. With raising concerns over the use of fluorescent bulbs, consumers are beginning to look for more sustainable solutions.

Through innovation and technology, product designers have made great strides in creating more effective, energy-saving devices, especially in regards to fly control. Some insect traps are now equipped with LED bulbs to attract and control flying insects hygienically. These devices include active lighting technology that adapts UV light output based on the available light in the environment, further reducing energy consumption.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

While the innovations in pest control are promising, widespread adoption is a challenge, much like the adoption of new technology in any industry. Uneasiness related to change, cost considerations and regulatory hurdles can impede the integration of new technologies and approaches. However, the benefits of embracing innovation far outweigh the challenges

Increased investment in research and development is essential to drive continuous innovation in the pest control sector. From Integrated Pest Management and smart monitoring systems to more sustainable solutions and energy-saving devices, the industry is at the forefront of a transformation that prioritizes environmental conservation, human health and food security. The best is yet to come! PCT

Cassie Krejci, Ph.D., B.C.E., is head of science and innovation for North America at Rentokil Initial.

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New Products /// MAY

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Streamlight recently introduced the Strion 2020, the latest in its line of everyday carry work lights. The rechargeable light was developed to provide technicians



with a powerful tool for use during inspections, Streamlight said. It uses a high-power LED to deliver up to 1,200 lumens, 28,000 candela and a 335-meter beam distance.

The head and tail switch offer full control independent of one another and provide one-handed operation of the light's momentary, constant-on or strobe modes. Positioned in line with the head switch, the thumb-accessible, three-position mode selector allows for toggling through the light's high, medium or low outputs. The Strion 2020 is powered by a 3.6V, 3450mAh lithium-ion battery and can be charged with any existing Strion charger.

Voice for Pest

www.voiceforpest.com

Voice for Pest, a provider of phone solutions for the pest control industry, announced the launch of its AI-powered features. The AI-powered X-rai Platform and Call Summary and Industry CRM Noting Feature were developed through a partnership with Signalbox Analytics.

The X-rai Platform offers insight into customer interactions by utilizing AI algorithms to analyze call data and provide actionable intelligence. This platform empowers pest control businesses to uncover hidden opportunities, streamline their sales process and enhance customer retention with data-driven strategies, said Voice for Pest.

The Call Summary and Industry CRM Noting Feature automates the documentation process. Calls are summarized and integrated directly into the CRM, along with full recording and full redacted transcription links.

Innolytics

www.ovocontrol.com

The OvoControl Automatic Feeder, a ready-to-use bait dispenser for flat rooftops with an automatic wildlife feeder, recently received an upgrade, according to Innolytics. Due to a supply shortage of the original metal feeder feet, the company developed its own made from stainless steel. Each foot attaches to a leg with a machine bolt.

The new feet are more stable than the original version, said Innolytics, and will accommodate a cinder block or brick if installation requires. If installed on the ground, each foot has a hole for stakes. The OvoControl Automatic Feeder Kit includes the new stainless steel feet and the hardware needed to attach them. A set of new feet also can be purchased via OvoControl's webstore. **PCT**



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RearView /// MAY





(Left) Eclipse photo taken by Kenneth Vance, Pest Control Excellence, Bryan, Ohio.

(Top) Eclipse above the Rentokil Terminix Innovation Center, Irving, Texas.

(Bottom) Eco Serve Pest Solutions, Orchard Park, N.Y., held an eclipse party.



Eclipsing Expectations

n April 8, a narrow path of the U.S. (from Texas through the Midwest to Maine) experienced a total solar eclipse. For those in the path of totality, including most of the PCT staff (headquartered in northeast Ohio), it was a celestial event. We were treated to incredible light displays as the sun was briefly covered by the moon, then reemerged. We also experienced the phenomenon of a temperature drop of 9 degrees Fahrenheit.

The pest control industry paid attention to animal and insect behavior during the eclipse. Kenneth Vance, owner of Pest Control Excellence, Bryan, Ohio, took his family to the Toledo Zoo on eclipse day. "Once it got darker, the animals seemed to be hunkering down," Vance recalled. "They went from being in a very active state to being very still and not sure what was going on. We also heard birds chirping."

Pest control companies from one end of the eclipse's path to the other took in the event.

On PCT's Facebook page, Cassie Krecji and Kyle Dill shared a photo of the total solar eclipse high above the new Rentokil Terminix Innovation Center in Irving, Texas. At Eco Serve Pest Solutions, Orchard Park, N.Y., the company closed the office at 1 p.m. for a party in the parking lot. President Audrey Hall posted on Facebook: "We celebrated with an assortment of space-themed snacks, Mark Pickhardt did an awesome job on the grill, and we all got to witness the darkness together with snippets of the eclipse afterwards. Breathtaking for sure and grateful we got to spend the afternoon together! Space is so cool."

If you took photos during the eclipse or have any interesting stories, send them to bharbison@gie.net. **PCT** — *Brad Harbison*

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