

Guide To Labor Savings

With high inflation adding stress to pest control companies, it's more important than ever to run an efficient ship. Learn how PCOs have focused on hiring, culture, routing and more.



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A ServiceTitan Product

Automate. Optimize. Grow Profitably

It's not about working harder. Or faster.

No, finding the most efficient ways to empower your pest control team to be more productive is about working *smarter*.

Fully embracing the right technology available is the smarter way to find labor and cost savings, get technicians to the ideal number of stops and provide the most complete service to customers.

You'll see these opportunities highlighted in PCT's annual Guide to Labor Savings, which FieldRoutes is proud to sponsor.

With consumer confidence challenged in 2025, protecting profits is even more vital.

A true end-to-end software solution, like FieldRoutes, simplifies processes and automates communications with customers. The FieldRoutes Mobile app, for example, makes onboarding a customer easy for them and for you.

"You can enter the contract right there in the field," said Jeff Simmons of Malang Pest Control. "Your technicians can get a signed contract with the customer. They can collect a form of payment. They can process it. It's simple."

Technology also goes to work when it's time to provide service. FieldRoutes' 2025 State of the Pest Industry Report, surveying more than 1,000 companies, found that only 48% use routing software.

"Some companies think, 'Now I've got to hire somebody to do that,'" said Bob McElhannon, a FieldRoutes senior account executive. "Not if the software will do it for you."

The right software will do it, and it will deliver much more.

"One of the biggest needle-movers in our company for profitability to keep up this growth is making sure we have dense routes," said Kyle Selbach of All "U" Need Pest Control, which ranks No. 51 in the PCT Top 100.

Efficient operations also free time to train teams to perform even better.

With 25 years in the industry, Ross Pest and Lawn's Kevin McKee prioritizes learning for himself — and his team.

"Whether you come here with 20 years' experience or no experience," McKee said, "the opportunity for you to learn is still there. We're going to do everything we can to teach you, to train you."

It's not about working harder. Or faster. It's about working smarter.

We know you'll find PCT's Guide to Labor Savings informative. FieldRoutes appreciates the opportunity to partner with PCT, and we'd love to show how we can be a strong partner for your company, too. ♦



Dylan Henryson

Dylan Henryson

General Manager, Pest and Lawn
FieldRoutes

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Amid rising costs, pest control companies are focusing on training, routing and clear communication to increase productivity.



Inflation seems to be all around us. Just about everything costs more these days. And while it may be challenging for the average person to afford everyday items, running and maintaining a small business can be just as tricky — if not more.

Within the pest control industry, labor continues to be one of the highest expenses for PMPs. And labor issues can be a multipronged problem that's even more troublesome when other costs, like gas and rent, continue to rise.

Though there's an emphasis on the importance of finding and retaining the right people, it continues to be a tough sell as potential employees have a preconceived notion of what it means to work in pest control.

"It's hard for people to understand that a career in pest control can be such a positive career. It can give you a ton of growth opportunities and pay you well," said Aly Silva-Mulgrew, president of Plunkett's Pest Control in Minneapolis, Minn. "I wish it was easier to communicate the unique perks of the job, like the flexibility of your schedule and how you get to engage with different people."

Highlighting that a job in pest control can be a rewarding, long-term career option can become even tougher when you're competing with factors like other industries that may pay more per hour or figuring out how to appeal to different

generations of workers.

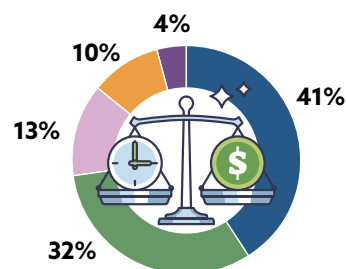
"The problem we've been facing lately is finding people who actually want to stick around and learn the industry," said Noah Ingalls, branch manager at Real Pest Solutions in Olathe, Kan. "There's a pretty big gap in the new folks entering the industry. You have some who are really enthusiastic about starting their careers as a pest management professional, and then sometimes it feels like people want to treat this like a part-time job in college. That's a difficult hurdle to overcome as time goes on."

And it puts even more stress on PMPs to find additional ways to keep productivity in the forefront. A May 2025 survey of pest control company owners, executives, managers and technical directors conducted by Readex Research on behalf of PCT showed that over the last 12 months, 54% reported an increase in productivity at their locations. They cited an emphasis on training, increasing route density and clearly communicating productivity goals.

"People are working to live and not living to work," said Billy Olesen, president of Pest Stop Services, in Olympia, Wash. "That's why it's important for employers to be approachable and to be flexible with employees on all aspects of their job from time off to their schedule. It's going to be more beneficial for companies in the long run." ♦

Mission Control

How important to your service location is reducing task completion time in order to improve labor savings?

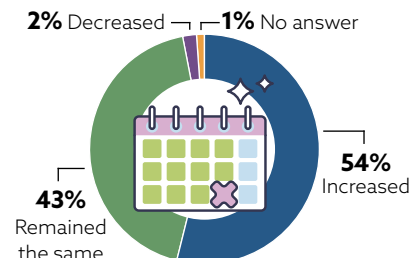


- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Not that important
- Not at all important

Source: Readex Research; Respondents: 182

Well Done

How has productivity and efficiency changed at your service location over the past 12 months?



Source: Readex Research; Respondents: 182



Team Building

Being fully staffed with employees who understand and champion your company's goals can lead to an uptick in productivity and efficiency.

“Productivity” and “efficiency” — these buzzwords can create a sense of panic and anxiety for many pest control companies, especially ones that struggle to find qualified candidates.

We know that having a solid team — from sales to customer service to technicians — who all understand their roles can help improve your firm's productivity.

But that's easier said than done. There isn't one single way to improve efficiency — and it doesn't happen overnight.

“Implementing changes or new processes takes time. It takes persistence,” said Julie Fredlund, director of technology and office operations at ABC Home & Commercial Services in Austin, Texas. “Thinking about the employee experience is constant. You have to keep poking it.”

PMPs across the country share how they're finding, keeping and rewarding their employees to keep their companies running efficiently.

Invest time (and money) into finding the right people

While it can be challenging to get people to respond to an online job posting or even show up for an interview, PMPs say that employee referrals continue to produce quality candidates.

“The most effective way to find a strong candidate is to leverage the relationships of our existing team members,” said Aly Silva-Mulgrew, president of Plunkett's Pest Control in Minneapolis, Minn. “It's so powerful when an existing technician tells their neighbor, their friend or their family member about their job and paints

a realistic picture of what the role is.”

Companies like Thomas Pest Services in Schenectady, N.Y., have had a challenging year with hiring. But they've found that having a referral bonus program in place was key to meeting their hiring goals for the year.

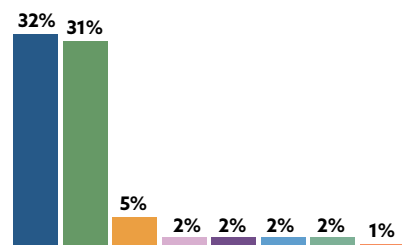
“Our employees know our company culture the best and can determine if a person is going to be a great fit,” said Megan Thomas-Kurek, director of employee experience. “They're having a lot of the conversations before they even get to me on what to expect and what a day in the life of a technician is. So, that's great.”

With results like that, it's easy for Thomas Pest Services to see the benefit of having referral bonuses — and to keep up the program.

“We decided to use what we might pay

Finding Employees

What is your service location's preferred method for attracting new employees?

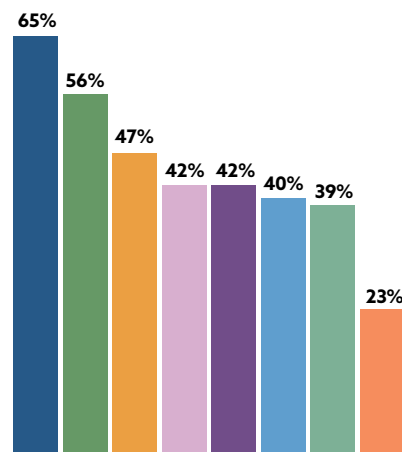


- referrals from current employees/providing a bonus for referrals
- online job sites (Indeed, ZipRecruiter, etc.)
- social media job postings (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- clear path to advancement
- state and national pest control associations
- local networking groups (Rotary, Chamber, etc.)
- strong/compelling job descriptions
- job fairs

Source: Readex Research; Respondents: 182

Keeping Employees

What is the most effective tool or method your service location uses to retain employees?



- paying a competitive salary
- enabling work-life balance/flexible schedule
- fostering a family work culture
- offering incentives to earn more
- driving service vehicle home
- acknowledgment/recognition of achievements or meeting KPIs
- providing competitive benefits
- using new technology



Source: Readex Research; Respondents: 182;
Respondents could select multiple answers

our recruiter as the referral bonus,” said Sarah Thomas-Clark, vice president. “We might as well give that money to a current team member who’s doing us a favor by recommending someone.”

It also can pay off to think about the type of candidates you’re looking for and to tailor your job posting and accompanying material to them.

“This industry is primarily male, so we’re really trying to focus a lot on finding females as well. Females make fantastic technicians — it’s our job to find them,” said Fredlund, ABC Home & Commercial Services. “We’ve made a lot of our

recruiting videos that feature both men and women. Seeing a female technician in a video helps women think that this is something that they could do. It catches their eye.”

Think about how you communicate

How you cascade information to your employees continues to be a focus for PMPs, with 54% reporting that clear communication about productivity goals is vital to an efficient workplace.

Start by thinking about how your team likes to communicate. Is it in-person?

Email or an app? Fredlund said she’s seen more engagement with employees by using text as the main mode of communication.

“People don’t pay attention to the email quite as much as they used to. If there’s a way to communicate by texting, that’s the way to go,” said Fredlund. “We focus not only with employees but specifically with recruiting applicants. We have so much more luck with hiring by texting someone instead of emailing or a phone call.”

For Thomas-Kurek, implementing the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) helped Thomas Pest Services streamline its

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process. It also lets employees have weekly check-ins with their supervisor and then quarterly conversations with their department director.

“During these meetings, supervisors are reviewing a scorecard with employees,” said Thomas-Kurek. “Employees can see how they’re performing and it guides the conversation. For instance, if their service effectiveness is below the bar, supervisors can guide those training conversations to focus on process.”

However you choose to interact with your team, it can be a daily struggle. Beyond just focusing on communicating clearly to employees, there needs to be guidance and training on how employees talk and respond to customers — and how they relay that information back to their co-workers, said Nathan Dowless, general manager of Down East Pest Control in Bladenboro, N.C.

“I don’t know what my technician may have said to a customer, unless he puts a note in our system. For example, should we follow up with the customer in two weeks?” said Dowless. “Our admin staff has taken the initiative to look at those notes right after an appointment — and then clarify with the technician if there are any questions.”

Treat them like family

No, this isn’t an ad for a popular Italian restaurant. But one way that PMPs work on retaining employees is making them feel like part of a team — or a family. It’s a little more nuanced than “company culture.”

So, while it can include team-building activities like axe-throwing or a company party, it’s instilling a feeling of togetherness and trust that can’t be manufactured or faked.

“If my guys need something, whether it’s getting to their kid’s T-ball game on time or if they have a flat tire, I want them to come to me,” said Dowless. “I want them to know they’ll be treated like a person and not just an employee.”



At Thomas Pest Services, Thomas-Clark goes all out for employee birthdays and bakes their favorite treat for the occasion (there’s even a question on their onboarding form to help detect the exact treat). She also organizes a potluck for Thanksgiving and cooks for a popular “grilled cheese and tomato soup” day. It’s her way of showing appreciation to her 67 employees.

“I’m a huge mama bear. I like to joke that while I have my own children, I also have 67 children,” said Thomas-Clark. “Our team is so special to me, and I’m so thankful for each one of them. Any time I can find an opportunity to show my appreciation, I will absolutely try to.”

It all comes back to knowing your employees well and also being open and vulnerable yourself. That can be as simple as taking a moment here and there to listen about someone’s weekend plans or offering advice if someone is going through a tough time.

“Everybody knows everybody here, and everybody talks every day. We’re not perfect, by any means, but it works for us,” said Dowless. “When we had two or three employees, communication wasn’t a huge deal. But as we grow, it’s more important to know each other well. There’s not one person on our team that’s not approachable.”

Make it competitive

While many companies use a commission-based structure to incentivize their sales and technician teams, don’t overlook other opportunities to spark a little friendly competition within the workplace.

Silva-Mulgrew said she’s seen the

benefit of technicians at Plunkett’s Pest Control having access to their data and seeing how they perform compared to their coworkers.

“Every one of our technicians is trained, encouraged and almost expected to sell, and when they do so, they earn a sales bonus,” said Silva-Mulgrew. “We also try to gamify it so that someone will know how they’re ranking in sales results compared to people in their area, as well as across the whole organization. It really encourages people to take ownership of their route and know that the more that they can build it, the more they win and are rewarded.”

Having transparency and access to how an employee ranks among everyone may spur more production, but it also gives those employees control of how to manage their workload.

“It gives people the ability to pace themselves and know how much they need to do each week to hit the goals they set for themselves,” said Silva-Mulgrew. “It’s been a fun, friendly, competitive way to motivate people.”

For Noah Ingalls, Real Pest Solutions in Olathe, Kan., competitiveness is more about celebrating wins as a team.

“Commission has been the go-to for ages. We still do that,” said Ingalls. “But the biggest thing we have done is success sharing. We come up with our projected numbers for the year. And if we go above our projected numbers, we take that amount and split it into a bonus for our team. It’s something to push and drive for — and something that thus far, we’ve hit pretty much every quarter.” ♦

Level Up

Ongoing training plays a critical role in your company's productivity and long-term success.

Knowledge is power — and that's especially true for pest control companies.

While there may be many levers PMPs can pull when they're trying to increase productivity, continuing education can be a game-changer. In fact, 58% of PMPs point to training as having a positive impact on their productivity and efficiency.

Ready to focus on training? Here are a few tips from peers:

Start with realistic job exposure

Sure, onboarding new hires isn't a new concept. But *how* you onboard can make or break their experience.

"We have every new hire spend their first three days with their supervisor in the field, and that has been very helpful," said Aly Silva-Mulgrew, Plunkett's Pest Control. "It supports retention. First, it validates that this is a job that the technician is comfortable with. Secondly, it starts creating a relationship between the technician and their supervisor."

A few times a year, Plunkett's Pest Control also hosts "rookie camps" where all new hires gather to reinforce the basics of pest control. It's an opportunity to deepen their learning and form connections with other new technicians.

Put an emphasis on continuing education

Training doesn't — and shouldn't — stop after that initial period. All technicians — regardless of their expertise or seniority — can benefit from continual training. But how often you offer training sessions can depend on your company's size and needs.

For companies like Real Pest Solutions

in Olathe, Kan., training happens pretty frequently. "We'll do training sessions about once a month, and then have a weekly sit-down meeting," said Real Pest's Noah Ingalls. "During our continuing education, we like to focus less on how to treat the bugs and more on how the bugs work and why our products work for them."

And don't overlook the power of ride-alongs, said Sarah Thomas-Clark, vice president of Thomas Pest Services.

"Our supervisors do quality control ride-alongs with their team members throughout the month," she said. "So they're getting that support on the road and getting that hands-on experience."

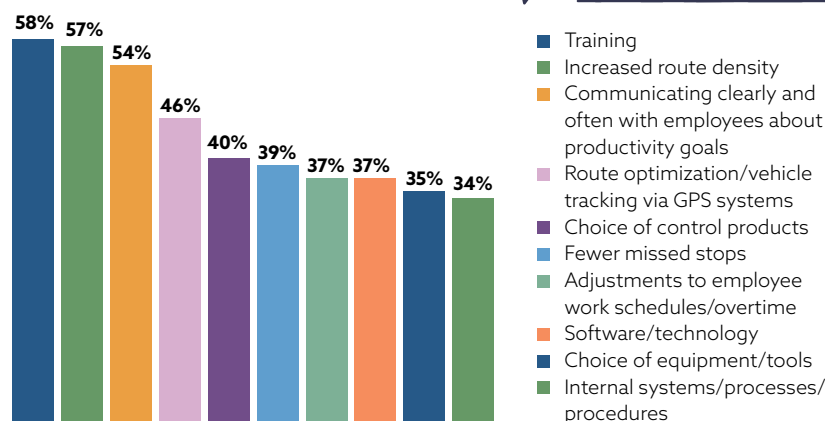
Leverage data

Companies track a lot of data — think attendance, callbacks, hard braking and more. Doing this gives PMPs a broad picture of technician performance. It also helps technicians see for themselves where they can improve.

"We use a program called Driven. It tracks all of these different schematics. Technicians have their own portal, so they have access to their scores," said Billy Olesen, Pest Stop Services in Olympia, Wash. "That means they're not surprised during performance reviews. And it even allows them to self-adjust if they see their score starting to go down. And it also gives our supervisors an opportunity to coach them earlier if they're struggling on a certain aspect of their job." ♦

Brain Gains

What factors have positively impacted productivity and efficiency at your service location over the past 12 months?



Source: Readex Research; Respondents: 99; Respondents could select multiple answers





SIMPLICITY **DRIVES RESULTS**



Simplify
with an easy-to-use interface



Scale
with time-saving automation



Grow
with powerful features

“One word to describe FieldRoutes: Simple.”

– Kyle Selbach, Chief Operating Officer, All “U” Need Pest Control, Fort Myers, FL



Ready to simplify your operations, grow quickly, and scale seamlessly—without the hassle?

Scan the QR code to explore FieldRoutes.