

FOCUSING ON THE BUSINESS OF PEST MANAGEMENT

PEST WORLD

MAY | JUNE 2022

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INSIDE:

**RAISING EMPLOYEE
AWARENESS CRITICAL TO
PREVENT CYBER-ATTACKS**

**TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS
FLEET MANAGEMENT
BEST PRACTICES**

**FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES
RESULT IN INCREASED
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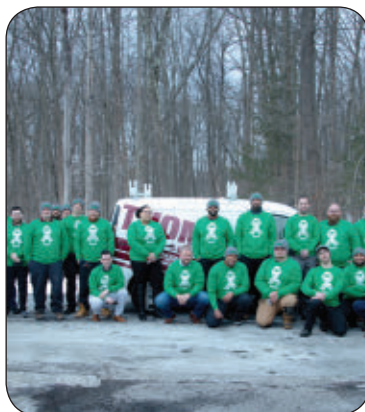
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HELPING PEST CONTROL COMPANIES REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN THEIR SEARCH FOR SKILLED, QUALIFIED CANDIDATES



WHY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT?

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Start recruiting now! All pest control companies located in the U.S. and Canada that are members of NPMA receive one free 60-day job listing per year on the industry-exclusive job board at **Careers.PestControlJobs.com**.



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Visit www.NPMAWorkforce.org and log in using your NPMA member credentials to get started today.

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- "In the Know" monthly data with analysis of the project

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- Access to all resources in Workforce Toolkit
- Recognition at NPMA events

View the current club members at NPMAWorkforce.org! Their involvement and financial support helps strengthen our industry for current and future generations.



Meeting Current Challenges Head-On

BY SCOTT STECKEL, PLUNKETT'S PEST CONTROL, INC.

We're almost halfway through 2022! Back in March, NPMA wrapped up another successful Legislative Day, the first in-person DC gathering we've had in two years. Thank you so much to our sponsors and participants—there are many pressing legislative issues facing the pest management industry in 2022, and our unified voice was invaluable in letting our concerns be known to legislators. A special thank you to NPMA staff for top-notch organization and execution.

Beyond legislative concerns for 2022, the industry—and the world in general—also faces unprecedented challenges on the employment front. As I've mentioned in previous issues, there is a growing need to attract and retain employees, and NPMA's Workforce Development Program is working to confront this issue head-on. Resources available to your company include a toolkit that contains sample job descriptions, website badges, customizable recruitment brochures and more. NPMA members also receive an annual complimentary job posting on our job board, <https://careers.pestcontroljobs.com>. And it's still possible for your company to become a sponsor—beyond just showing your support, sponsorships come with increased benefits, exclusive resources and special recognition at NPMA events. It's a win-win for you, NPMA and the industry as a whole.

Another challenge, as the world moves to an increasingly digital environment, is technology. This issue of *PestWorld* magazine focuses on the latest tech trends, with articles on safeguarding against a cyber-attack, as well as using technology to promote efficiency in fleet management. Staying on top of the latest tech is vital to our industry's continued success—please join me in reading how others are doing just that.

My deepest thanks to NPMA's board and staff for meeting this year's challenges head-on and working so hard to provide excellent resources for our members. The industry benefits greatly from your hard work—thank you. ●

“My deepest thanks to NPMA's board and staff for meeting this year's challenges head-on and working so hard to provide excellent resources for our members.”

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**RAISING EMPLOYEE AWARENESS
CRITICAL TO PREVENT**

CYBER

A hand holding a shield with binary code, symbolizing cyber defense. The shield is white with a keyhole in the center and is surrounded by a glowing blue and red binary code. The background is a blurred image of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard.

ATTACKS

BY CATHY LANDRY

WHILE MANY THINK OF THE BANKING SYSTEM, the electric grid and major retailers as the target for cyber-attacks, all companies—including pest-management firms—can find themselves in the crosshairs of a cyber-criminal, said Ari Rogoway, IT director of Sprague Pest, the largest commercial-only pest control company in the Western U.S.

“It isn’t a matter of if you are going to face a cyber-attack, it’s a matter of when,” said Rogoway, who has boosted Sprague Pest’s cybersecurity in recent years in response to a couple of computer phishing attacks that had the potential to tarnish the company’s reputation. Phishing is when a cybercriminal sends an email to a user—or often a host of users within a company—in hopes that a few will open an attachment, giving them access to all the information on the users’ computer. In Sprague’s case, the cybercriminals entered the system through a phishing scheme, accessed the user’s email contacts, and sent a fake bill—using the compromised employee’s email address—to a customer. “Phishing happens every day,” Rogoway said. “In a successful phishing attack, the criminal has access to all files, including email contacts, and, in some cases, sensitive information, like employee information and the billing system.”

While many companies seem most afraid of a ransomware attack—when cyber-criminals enter a company's computer system, shut it down and demand payment before returning access and control of the system to the company—phishing schemes are a far greater threat, he said. "Frankly, ransomware attacks are some of the easiest to combat. If you are using a shared-file systems with automatic backup, IT can recover virtually all files relatively easily," Rogoway explained. "But phishing is very difficult to combat. Statistically, it's 64 times more common than ransomware, and the average cost of a single successful phishing attack is \$130,000 per incident."

That's why Sprague has focused heavily on working with every employee to ensure they are all doing their part to prevent a cyber-intrusion. "The biggest threat to our computer systems is our own people," he said. "We don't need a smarter IT group; we need a smarter team of employees."

The good news is that there are proven techniques to help employees learn to protect the company and themselves from cyber breaches, he said. "It isn't just about having a firewall or preventing a denial-of-service attack, it's about making sustained efforts to protect individual users and teaching them how to guard themselves from attacks," Rogoway said.

Sprague's focus is employee awareness, he said, including cybersecurity training for all new and existing employees, regular emails on emerging cybersecurity threats and tips to avoid attacks, town halls and routine tests to simulate fake emails. "If they click the link, they automatically get additional training," Rogoway explained.

Companies looking to set up cybersecurity training should try to make it transparent and supportive, he added. "You don't want to be punitive. You want to use test failures as a teaching moment. And you need all employees—from top management to an



intern—to know that it is imperative not only for the company, but for them, to prevent cyberattacks. There has to be trust between the company and its employees," Rogoway continued.

The consequences of a successful cybersecurity breach are enormous. Individual employees can lose money or fall victim to identity theft with a successful cyber intrusion, he said. The company risks ruining its reputation, paying out money to cybercriminals, higher insurance rates and losing employee time (the administrative costs) to detect, remediate and investigate an attack, Rogoway explained.

"If cybercriminals are sending out fake bills to your customers, you can be sure that those customers are going to be angry," he said. "The job of a pest control company is to safeguard their client's reputation. Their reputation is damaged if a customer sees a roach or rat in a restaurant. They are going to question your professionalism and your ability to do your job if you can't protect your computer systems." While many companies and industries are affected by cyberattacks, that will not matter to your customer if it becomes a victim because of a fake bill sent from you, Rogoway explained.

Sprague found the best way to encourage its workers to take cybersecurity seriously was to link it with its ongoing safety program. "Safety is a major priority for our company. We want fewer safety problems, so we measure that and reward on that," Rogoway said. "Cybersecurity is now bucketed with safety, so our employees are measured and rewarded on that too." He explained that a safety incident can cost \$20,000 to \$100,000 based on the incident;

TOP TIPS TO AVOID A CYBER ATTACK



Cybercrime is a fast-growing threat around the world. It impacts business from all industries. Unless you want your firm's name in headlines, your company's reputation tarnished or a financial hit from a security breach, you need to pay more attention to cybersecurity.

Some actions an **IT department** should take to maintain their company's computer-system security include:

- Keep hardware and software up-to-date, or make it simple for employees to do so.
- Install anti-virus and anti-malware systems on all computers.
- Set up password managers, so employees don't duplicate passwords and are forced to routinely update passwords.
- Institute a secure file-sharing solution.
- Install two-factor authentication to provide another layer of security.
- Invest in security upgrades.
- Install encryption software on machines containing the most sensitive information, so that if a laptop is stolen, the criminal can't access the data.
- Research the latest cyber threats and solutions.
- Use a VPN to secure and privatize your network. VPN will encrypt the connection and protect private information—even from your internet service provider.
- Institute employee training.

Key actions by **employees** include:

- Avoid opening suspicious emails.
- Check links before you click: Links can easily be disguised as something they're not so it's best to double-check before you click on a hyperlink. On most browsers, you can see the target URL by hovering over the link.
- Don't be lazy with your passwords; use unique passwords or a password-management system.
- Don't store important information in non-secure places.
- Avoid using public networks: When you connect to a public network, any information you send or retrieve on the network is vulnerable. Stay away from public networks or use a VPN when you're connected to one.
- Avoid the "secure enough" mentality. Employees need to stay up on threats and practice diligence to prevent attacks.

the cost of a cybersecurity breach can be equal or greater.

While starting up a cybersecurity program can seem daunting, it's important to remember that it's a process, and that you must take it one step at a time, Rogoway said. "I believe in stacking. Because not one thing is a silver bullet, you can implement changes and technology gradually," he said, adding that having "some sort of cadence"—whether once a week or once a month—is important.

Developing a roadmap for a cybersecurity program is also imperative. The company should build that roadmap after doing a threat assessment, he said. "You want to look at all the assets you have, what you want to protect, where the greatest threats are, and what information would have the greatest impact if systems are compromised," Rogoway said. "For me, it's email. Everyone in the company uses email. Email is a huge target, and if there is a breach, it can be very damaging." When a company does a threat assessment, it may decide that protecting the field-service system is down the list of

“ The job of a pest-control company is to **safeguard their client's reputation**. Their reputation is damaged if a customer sees a roach or rat in a restaurant. They are going to **question your professionalism and your ability to do your job** if you can't protect your computer systems.”



—ARI ROGOWAY, IT DIRECTOR, SPRAGUE PEST

priorities, but email and accounting systems are higher up, he explained. A company may want to pay special attention to the systems of executives or others with access to the most sensitive and confidential documents, Rogoway added.

Rogoway also recommends that the IT department conduct plenty of research as it steps up its cybersecurity protocols. "If you are having email problems, there are solutions. If you do a little research, you can easily find out the best fixes," he said, noting that the Compliance Center component of Microsoft Office 365 includes an enormous

help library, including best practices. "It's been a great tool for me," he said.

The final step is to educate and train consistently. "Cyber threats evolve and change every day," Rogoway said. "Not only do you need to keep abreast of the latest dangers, but you must ensure that your users—the employees—know about them and how to avoid them." ●



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TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS FLEET MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Address fuel expense, driver behavior and maintenance to control costs

BY SHERYL S. JACKSON

IT DOES NOT MATTER IF A PEST control company is large with a fleet of service vehicles in the hundreds or small with a dozen or fewer trucks, the reality is that the fleet is one of the most significant investments for the company and a key to successful, sustained growth.

Not only is a company's fleet one of its largest investments, but it is also the only way a service company can provide services to customers, said Brooke Freeman, corporate fleet manager for Arrow Exterminators. "Service professionals in any industry make multiple stops during the day, travel urban and rural roads, and need to know that their vehicle is in good working condition," she explained. Just as important, company owners and

managers need to know that employees are driving safely, taking care of the vehicle while it's in their possession and representing the company well while they are on the road, she added.

Ashley M. Marratt, CEO of Red Coat Pest Solutions, considers her fleet to be one of her marketing tools. "Branding is the other piece of the return on investment puzzle that is often forgotten," she said. "Our vehicles are on the road all day with our company name clearly displayed."

Because the fleet is a traveling advertisement, Marratt does not want company vehicles to be dirty or in disrepair. Technology is used to track maintenance for all vehicles. Red Coat

technicians are responsible for simple maintenance such as oil changes, tire rotations and vehicle cleaning, so an app on their phone that tracks mileage and maintenance records for each vehicle alerts a technician when maintenance is required.

"We all are focused on providing services and during busy times, and it is easy to put off maintenance as a lower priority," said Marratt. "The phone app reminds technicians so that maintenance is added to their schedule for the week." Technicians have the information on service centers or mechanics that the company has contracted with to provide maintenance and repair, so they know where to take the vehicle. "We also require technicians to wash the vehicles weekly to maintain our professional image."

Marratt also relies on technology for her fleet of vehicles and large trailers to maximize route density to save on fuel expense. "GPS technology lets us know where all of our technicians are during the day, which gives me the opportunity to add new service calls to the person who is closest," she explained. In addition to location, the device, an OBD reader that is plugged into the vehicles, also tracks



Arrow's fleet

“GPS technology lets us know where all of our technicians are during the day, which gives me the opportunity to add new service calls to the person who is closest.”

—ASHLEY M. MARRATT, CEO, RED COAT PEST SOLUTIONS



and documents speed of vehicle, idle time, fuel level, battery life and time onsite for service.

“We track idle time because technicians who leave the truck running while servicing customers are literally burning the company’s money,” said Marratt. “We also had another cost savings when we replaced a battery, then saw reports that the newly-installed battery was low on power.” The documentation from the OBD reader report supported her claim when she asked for a new battery to replace the “lemon” she was sold, she added.

Arrow’s fleet is significantly larger than many pest control companies—155 service

centers throughout 12 states with a total of 2,800 vehicles on the road. A staff of five people manage fleet operations for the company, but technology plays a critical role in fleet management.

“Our fuel costs are over \$500,000 per month, so we encourage service professionals to find the lowest priced gas in the area,” said Brent Purcell, SVP of risk management and shareholder relations for Arrow. The company utilizes a third-party tool that tracks fuel prices by zip code for each team member. In addition to the tool, the company also runs a quarterly contest at each service center to change behaviors, looking for lowest price versus most convenient, with gift cards awarded to those who consistently found the lowest priced gas for the quarter. The contest is effective at changing behavior, not because of the value of the gift cards, but because, “everyone loves competition,” he added.



A Red Coat Pest Solutions service vehicle

Even when maintenance records automatically generate alerts for routine maintenance or when a vehicle needs major repairs, there is always the need to verify charges for services. “We have two team members who review about 2,000 invoices each month to compare charges to the rates we negotiated, and dispute them if prices are incorrect,” said Freeman. “We have just implemented technology that will automatically integrate information from service contracts we’ve negotiated with the software authorizing service or repair to compare invoiced amounts with contracted prices.” Once the technology is fully deployed, team members will only have to review invoices that are from small service partners without the capability to integrate and invoices that require follow-up or dispute.

The fleet management software also automatically updates vehicle records, supports routine vehicle inspections by service center managers and produces reports on driver behavior, among other features.

Because Red Coat’s smaller staff has been 100% paperless since 2005, and employees were accustomed to using software, phone apps and digital communications throughout the day, there is no hesitation to use of new technology. However, Arrow’s conversion to a more robust fleet management technology required more effort to create awareness of the benefits.

“For 57 years we’ve done things the same way, but we had tons of buy-in to move to a digital, automated process to manage the fleet,” said Freeman. Several corporate teams comprised of multiple departments and disciplines were involved in the evaluation and implementation phases. “We wanted to make the transition comfortable for service professionals, service managers, safety coordinators and all other team members,” she said. “The group reviewed different applications and made sure that all of the components they needed were included.”

Finding the right technology and creating the best processes for fleet management takes time, but is worth the effort, said Marratt. She often turns to NPMA colleagues from her 2019 NPMA Executive Leadership Program class as well as other members on the NPMA Online Community for help. “I like word-of-mouth recommendations—or warnings—from people who are using technology the same way I do,” she said. “When I am on the hunt for a specific product, I talk to my peers and explore the vendors at PestWorld conferences.” ●

The Importance of Personal Messaging in Marketing

BY CINDY MANNES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PPMA

Developing a marketing strategy and sticking to it is essential to successfully market your business and reach key customers. The strategy you use can mean the difference between who decides to support your business and who doesn't. Before developing your business strategy, think about what sets your company apart from others and what your end goal is as these can help guide your messaging.

WHY PERSONAL MESSAGING IS IMPORTANT

Put yourself in your customer's shoes. There are a lot of options in the pest control industry and they likely don't have the knowledge to know what differentiates a great company from a bad one. What makes a company stand out from others can be how you communicate with them.

According to Epsilon, 80 percent of consumers are more likely to purchase a product or service from a brand who provides personalized experiences. With data being available on almost every marketing platform out there, customers are expecting you to know who they are. The sense of a personalized message will show them they are valued as a customer.

HOW TO CREATE A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

It can be difficult to find the balance between invasive and personal when communicating with your customers. Consider the following when developing your next marketing plan:

INVEST IN SMS AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media has become more than paid advertisements. It's a way for businesses to

connect with their audience in a way they never have before. Customers of all generations are using social media and, luckily for business owners, platforms allow you to gather data about your customers to use in your marketing efforts. According to Statista, 91.9 percent of U.S. marketers in companies larger than 100 employees were expected to use social media for marketing purposes in 2021. Whether it be to promote new products or connect quicker with customers via direct messages, companies are embracing this new tool to help them grow their business.

Choosing the right platform for your business will depend on your goals and what your company is capable of producing. Twitter is the easiest to manage, as it is mostly text-based messaging and requires only relevant hashtags to get eyes on your content. Facebook is great for sharing current events and video.



Nowadays, video content is king. TikTok rose in popularity over the last few years, becoming the most popular iPhone app downloaded in 2021 and resulting in an increase in demand for video content. As a result, Instagram now encourages creators to use Reels alongside in-feed posts. Instagram and TikTok users can also leverage hashtags to help connect with the right audience.

Another way to connect with customers on a personal level is using text messaging or SMS. Unlike social media, which can be busy and sometimes overwhelming, SMS doesn't require competing for attention and is a good way to identify interested customers as they will have to opt in to receive your messages. According to Finances Online, among the channels preferred by consumers for receiving loyalty updates from brands, the top spot went to SMS, at 48 percent.

CONSIDER EVERY DETAIL ABOUT YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Believe it or not, qualities such as location and age can greatly impact your tone and method of messaging. Companies need to modify their messages and their method of communication

“ Before developing your business strategy, think about what sets your company apart from others and what your end goal is as these can help guide your messaging.”

to ensure they are appropriate for that specific audience. Messaging will also depend on if you are reaching repeat, new or potential customers. Review your marketing lists and separate them into categories that make sense for your business to help you target your audience more effectively.

PUT A FACE TO YOUR BRAND

In a digital world, your company can offer customers a more personal experience by putting its owner, CEO or president on marketing materials. Whether you're sending an email blast featuring a letter from the owner or posting a graphic on social media that shares details about what you are working on behind the scenes, this level of personal messaging gives customers someone at your company to connect with, which in turn helps your brand resonate with customers as they have a face to recognize.

LinkedIn is a great way to leverage the messaging of your key employees, elevate thought leadership and make that connection between your business and who is running it. Offering this level of transparency is a great way to position your business as one of authority in the industry.

KEEPING UP WITH BEST PRACTICES

Technology is changing every day. While you might not need to change your marketing plan as a result, it is important to keep up with what is happening in the industry to ensure you are reaching your customers in the most effective way. There are various websites and free newsletters that can keep you updated on new marketing tools and strategies. •

Cindy Mannes is the executive director of the Professional Pest Management Alliance. Visit www.npmapestworld.org/ppma for more information.



Form I-9: The Employment Eligibility Verification Form



MEHANOI/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

BY GRIFFIN VOLTMANN, CERTIFICATION MANAGER, QUALITYPRO

QualityPro's recently unveiled Version 6 (V6) came with some exciting updates to the program. Accreditation is not only intended for established companies but for younger companies trying to build a brand as well. Our program is designed to outline best practices for all businesses, and make sure that those best practices are codified and standardized. Through the standards, companies are led to pay attention to parts of their business they need to improve to scale-up. One of the new standards in V6 is about the Form I-9. The Form I-9 is required by the federal government for all new employees and is part of any QualityPro company's best hiring practices. Availability online makes Form I-9 more accessible than ever, and since it's a new requirement of our program, we wanted to take some time to discuss QualityPro's expectations and suggestions.

WHAT IS FORM I-9?

Form I-9, more accurately the "Employment Eligibility Verification Form," was designed to satisfy the requirements of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) that all employers verify newly-hired employees presented valid documentation verifying the employee's identity and legal authorization to accept employment in the United States. The form is provided by the federal government specifically to meet that purpose. Form I-9 is designed for use with every paid, non-contracted employee hired after November 1986, and employers are responsible for both forms being filled out correctly during an employee's first three days. Form I-9 is a vital measure against employment discrimination since it verifies an employee's authorization to work and prohibits an employer from discriminating against work-authorized individuals or attempting to interfere with eligibility

verification by trying to limit which documents an employee may present to establish identity.

STORING FORM I-9 AND ALL EMPLOYEE RECORDS

Form I-9 serves as an employee's record of identity and place and serves as a bridge between a potential employee and a potential employer. Employers need to retain an employee's original I-9 for three years after the date of hire, or one year after the date employment ends, whichever is later. The forms should be stored separately from other personnel files and made available for inspection by authorized government officers. Separate storage is not required but encouraged to make it easier to meet the standard three-day deadline for official inspection. Ensuring clear and easily-navigated recordkeeping will make employers' lives much easier.

Some best practices for storing employee records are universal—personnel files should be kept in a locked cabinet, confidential files should be kept in a locked cabinet with limited access (potentially the same as the former) and I-9s should be kept somewhere accessible by whoever would need to submit them in the event of an inspection. We suggest using a binder with dividers separating active vs. inactive employees so that, once the required retention period has ended, inactive employee documents can be safely separated and shredded. The binder method makes life easier for office personnel providing records for a Department of Labor inspection—the I-9 binder can be handed to the inspector rather than the entire personnel record, cutting down on excess work and avoiding potential issues if the inspector sees anything extraneous in the personnel file they feel requires a further inspection.

QualityPro's HR partner Seay Management Consultants has provided numerous resources to QualityPro accredited companies, including a webinar on employee file retention practices. This webinar and others from Seay are made available to companies earning or who have earned QualityPro accreditation—contact the QualityPro team to learn more.

WHY IS QUALITYPRO REQUIRING FORM I-9?

On the one hand, QualityPro now requires Form I-9 because the federal government requires Form I-9. More to the point, QualityPro now includes a standard requiring all employers with four or more employees to complete Form I-9 as part of our hiring process standards. For larger, more established companies this may seem like unnecessary review, but our argument has always been that taking time to cover the basics of processes serves to shore up business practices early and ensure standardized service as the business grows. We want to make sure that smaller or newer businesses have all the tools necessary to build a solid foundation with scalable solutions to foster growth.

QualityPro exists to serve companies of all sizes, at all stages of their lifecycle, to help them succeed and continue the important work of professionalizing the pest management industry. Form I-9 is available to all companies through various sites online and our goal is to make sure all hiring processes are iron-clad and above reproach. QualityPro companies attract qualified potential employees because candidates prefer to work with companies whose practices are sound, and who treat employees with professionalism and respect. We encourage companies,

“The Form I-9 is required by the federal government for all new employees and is part of any QualityPro company's best hiring practices.”

QualityPro accredited or not, to take some time to review their hiring practices and make sure that they're doing the best for their potential employees they could be.

As we move confidently forward into the next phase of QualityPro, we invite all companies, past and present, to join us in embracing the modernization of our standards. •

QualityPro is administered by the Foundation for Professional Pest Management, an independent organization that has been developing good business practices and standards since 2004. Designed specifically for pest management companies in the US and Canada, we are proud to certify over 500 of the best companies in the pest management industry. QualityPro is endorsed by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA). For more information, contact us at QualityPro@pestworld.org.

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BY BRITTANY CAMPBELL, PHD, BCE, DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES, NPMA



Q What is a HACCP program?

A HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. HACCP programs are implemented for food safety where a facility has to analyze risk from the raw material all the way to consumption, including the handling, production, manufacturing and distribution processes. HACCP is required for the processing of most foods, with the FDA requiring a food safety plan in the Food Safety Modernization Act. Pest control is an important component of a HACCP program since pests can carry a variety of pathogens that can contaminate food and make people sick. Having an IPM program in food facilities meets a requirement of a HACCP program by preventing pests from contaminating food, as well as proper use and storage of chemicals that could also be hazardous if used incorrectly.

Q How do you maintain a handheld sprayer so that it lasts for years?

A Before you begin using your sprayer each day, do a quick inspection of your tank, gaskets and valves to ensure there are no leaks and no cuts in your hose. Temperature extremes are very dangerous for handheld sprayers, so keep an eye out for any weather changes and be sure to release the pressure in your tank between jobs. Do not store

your tank in your vehicle overnight in freezing temperatures or on extremely hot days. You should routinely clean your tank with a detergent, or a soap provided by the manufacturer of the sprayer. Clean the tank with a long-handled brush and clean nozzles and other parts with a soft brush. Don't use wire brushes for cleaning and do not use bleach on stainless steel. Reach out to your manufacturer for any cleaning or maintenance questions, as well as kits and equipment available for routine replacement of parts.

Q How can you avoid cockroach bait from drying out on a surface and becoming an eyesore for customers?

A We have all seen the dried brown globs of bait from previous services and while it can be removed, it's a pain to scrape and try to wash off. First of all, if your cockroach population is not significant, try smaller placements in more areas where you are finding activity. Additionally, you can use bait trays or a method designed by Dr. Dini Miller, professor of entomology at Virginia Tech, called bait tacos. Create your bait tacos by cutting 2x2 inch squares of wax paper and placing your bait right down the middle. Then fold your wax paper into a taco, not too tight because you don't want to completely squish the bait and close the paper—leave a gap for the cockroach to enter. You can create your wax papers before you go out on the job and keep them on hand for easy bait placement, sliding them under appliances and deep into cabinets, and then they can easily be removed to prevent having to remove dried bait from surfaces between service. •

LEGISLATION

COMPLIANCE

REGULATION

Connecting Policymakers and the Industry

When you think of public policy, you probably do not think of technology (outside of perhaps email). Politics is very focused on relationships, after all—whether someone knows a Senator or whether they have the cell phone of a key staffer. Those relationships are incredibly important, but especially in the post-COVID world of Zoom, Teams and GoToWebinar, technology has become incredibly instrumental in policymaking.

NPMA was leveraging technology in public policy long before COVID forced everyone to change. VoterVoice is a grassroots platform that NPMA has used for many years to connect our industry with policymakers on specific issues.

Let's say a bill gets introduced in a state legislature. Our State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR) might be able to go testify at a hearing or perhaps meet with a sponsor, but most members of the industry in that state can't drop everything on a few days' notice and head to the state capital. Their voices are still powerful when lobbying for or against legislation, but how can they be heard if not in person?

Enter our electronic grassroots tool, VoterVoice. This program allows us to reach out to everyone in a given state, region or even the whole country and help them submit a message directly to their

“Grassroots tools like VoterVoice help ensure our industry is heard in every state capital and on Capitol Hill.”

representatives. We can flood legislatures with hundreds of messages opposing a poorly written bill or supporting a great one. This tool allows us to leverage the united voice of the industry and directly connect NPMA members with their representatives.

Recent state campaigns have included pushing back against legislation in states as diverse as Colorado, Rhode Island and West Virginia. It's not just at the state level either. Recent federal campaigns included pushing specific COVID legislation and fighting back against the ILLICIT CASH Act.

Public policy moves incredibly quickly, and our industry has to keep pace. Grassroots tools like VoterVoice help ensure our industry is heard in every state capital and on Capitol Hill.

To get involved with public policy at the state or federal level, contact NPMA Vice President of Public Policy Ashley Amidon at aamidon@pestworld.org today. •



FOR OUR **FUTURE**

You work hard every day to grow your business. Why? For yourself, for your family, for your colleagues, for your community — you know that your company's success will mean a better, brighter future for all those you care about. The Professional Pest Management Alliance (PPMA) agrees. For the past 25 years, PPMA has been steadfastly dedicated to growing, promoting, protecting and defending the professional pest control industry nationwide through consumer marketing and education programs. Working side-by-side with all kinds of businesses — from family-owned to corporations, suppliers to distributors, PPMA drives market growth today to ensure a strong and vibrant future for everyone tomorrow.

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Sarah Thomas-Clark,
Vice President,
Thomas Pest Services, Inc.

Flexible Work Schedules Result in Increased Benefits for All: Thomas Pest Services, Inc.

BY JENNIFER J. JOHNSON, CAE, VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, NPMA

Sarah Thomas-Clark, vice president of Thomas Pest Services, Inc., based in Schenectady, NY, is a third-generation pest control professional. Thomas-Clark worked for her father’s business before establishing her own with her husband in 2010. Her grandfather and uncle also owned their own pest control companies. With this long history in the business, Sarah understands the opportunities and challenges that come with being a small business owner, whether it is sustaining growth, serving customers or supporting and developing employees.

When asked to describe her company culture, Thomas-Clark points to the work they did two years ago, going through the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) program. “Having experienced our best year of business in 2020, we knew we needed to make some improvements to sustain that growth. EOS allowed us to truly identify who we are as a company and what we needed to do to be positioned for further growth.”

Through the EOS program, the company firmed up their management team and defined roles to increase organizational efficiency. They

also outlined their core values that are now ingrained as part of their culture:

1. Be the part
2. Service above all
3. Forthright
4. Humble
5. Better than yesterday
6. Resourceful

With these values now defined, Thomas Pest Services could also focus on specific initiatives vital for survival in today’s job market—finding and keeping talent.

The company piloted a new flexible work schedule in Fall 2021, allowing employees to work four 10-hour days instead of a traditional 5-day 9-5 schedule. From that initial pilot with one technician, they rolled it out in January 2022 to all staff and have seen 65% of their technicians opt to take advantage of it.

Thomas Pest Services has found that a flexible work schedule not only helps to retain their current employees, it is a key part of the company’s recruiting strategy and highlighted prominently in their job postings. With their most recent hires, half have taken advantage of the benefit right from the start. And the

new flexible schedules also came with another unanticipated benefit—steadier hours for technicians and a decrease in unexpected overtime. The program has been such a success that Thomas Pest Services and their scheduling flexibility were recently profiled on their local news station, WNYT.

Thomas Pest Services also offered the option to their office team, but while they had less interest in that program, their staff did ask to take advantage of flexible start and stop times each day. This had an added bonus for customers, with a live person now available for calls earlier in the morning, rather than going to the company’s answering service.

Thomas Pest Services continues to explore other opportunities to benefit their employees, and already offers other unique incentives like their \$250 “Get a Life” program that supports employee growth, whether it’s ski lessons, a fishing license or online classes. With these forward-thinking ideas and a well-defined understanding of who they are as a company and what they value, Thomas Pest Services is in a position to achieve their goals for further growth. ●

“Having experienced our best year of business in 2020, we knew we needed to make some improvements to sustain that growth. EOS allowed us to truly identify who we are as a company and what we needed to do to be positioned for further growth.”

—SARAH THOMAS-CLARK, VICE PRESIDENT, THOMAS PEST SERVICES, INC.





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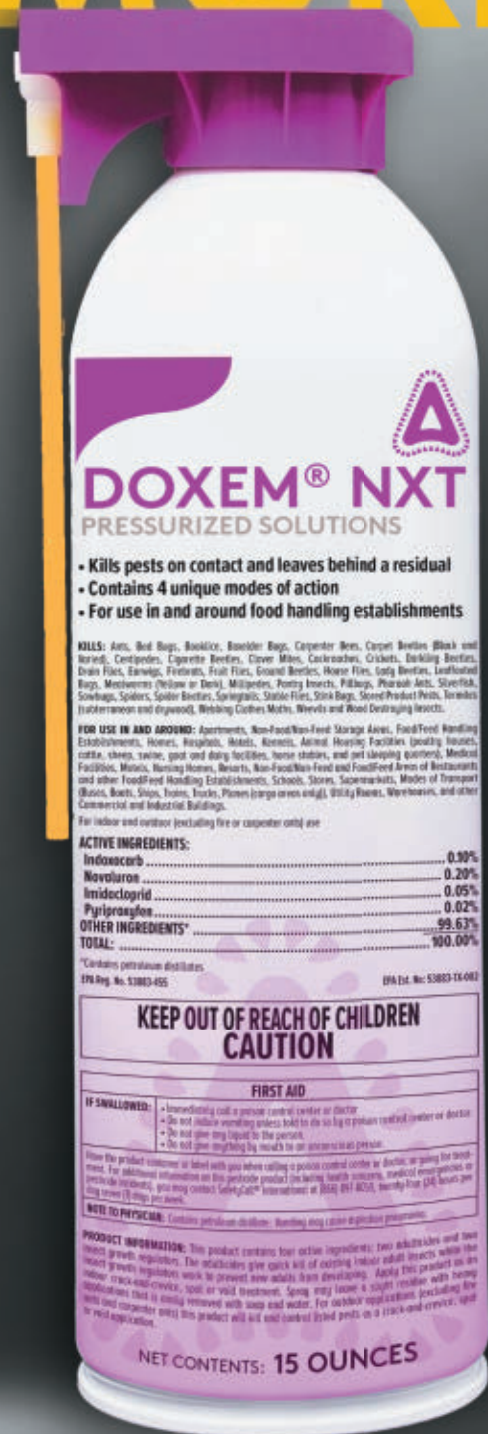
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For indoor and outdoor (excluding fire or carpenter only) use.

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*Contains petroleum distillates.

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- Immediately call a poison control center or doctor.
- Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by a poison control center or doctor.
- Do not give anything to drink.
- Do not get anything on your face or in your eyes.

Keep the product container or label with you when calling a poison control center or doctor, or going for treatment. For additional information on this pesticide product (or active health concerns), provide emergency personnel with the name of this pesticide product. For more information, call 1-800-878-8842.

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