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CREATE A CULTURE OF TRAINING
By Amy Bell

It’s no secret that pest management is an ever-evolving field. The rules, regulations and best practices are constantly changing, and it seems new technologies and innovations emerge every day. As a result, ongoing training is particularly important for pest management businesses…which is why it’s critical for PMPs to build and foster a culture that focuses on learning.

TRAINING INNOVATIONS
By Amy Bell

Study after study shows Millennial workers crave creative training opportunities, suggesting that “professional growth and career development” as the #1 driver of engagement and retention. But, if you keep serving up the same bland, flavorless brand, your team will eventually refuse to eat it. So how do you keep your pest management company’s training program from going stale?

HIRING THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB
By Alison Loughlin

Bad employees may be out there but after a string of good hires, it’s easy to become confident in our own ability to know the good eggs from the bad ones.

That could be a mistake, when you consider that the service industry has the highest level of liability next to a hospital in making sure that an employee will not cause harm to others. So what’s an employer to do?
The old saying goes, “it can’t work smoothly with square wheels”. Many of us are so busy caught up in meeting goals and objectives as defined by our business that we generally do not have the time to stop, step back and look for obvious better ways of doing things.

The reality is, in any organization, the critical themes of communication, leadership, motivation, quality, and managing and leading change, must be addressed to make real progress forward.

This May 18–20, NPMA is taking a concerted look at itself to ensure that we are not riding on square wheels. We are embarking upon a facilitated strategic planning process with other industry leaders that includes understanding member needs, reviewing our mission and values, refining our vision and setting our strategic direction.

And, while NPMA has the capacity and capability to support and protect your company’s interests, maximizing our effectiveness is a difficult task that must involve all of us. Your involvement is critical.

Involvement means that you acknowledge your ability to make change. And it’s your ability to make change that impacts our world.

As your organization, NPMA is committed to representing you and your interests in the most professional manner possible. But, to represent you, we must be able to hear your voice clearly. For that reason, I hope that you will take this opportunity and my invitation to become increasingly involved in your organization.

Each member has different talents and has reached his or her level of success by different paths. You have a hands-on reality and know the bumps of the journey. It is by sharing your talents and experiences with your colleagues that we can each make our future more secure and stable as we each move toward the future that we all desire. But if you don’t feel like you are involved in the decisions that your leadership is making, becoming and staying motivated and engaged is difficult.

The fact is we cannot do it without your help. If you have not become involved in your association yet, there is no better time like the present. Sign up for a committee. Send a letter to your congressman.

Participate in an NPMA event. Sign your staff up for a webinar or online training program. There are many ways for you to get involved…and we need you to do so. As has been true for more than over three quarters of a century…your involvement is our lifeblood. We would not exist without it.
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CREATE A CULTURE OF TRAINING

BY AMY BELL
Aristotle once wrote, “Excellence is an art won by training and habituation.” This may explain why the most exceptional companies have at least one thing in common: They all offer a comprehensive and continuous training program.

In fact, organizations that offer top-notch training programs enjoy higher employee retention rates and bigger bottom lines. Companies investing $1,500 or more per employee per year on training average 24% higher profit margins than companies with lower annual training investments, according to an American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) study.

This is why it’s critical for pest management companies to build and foster a culture that focuses on learning.

**Keeping Pace in a Dynamic Industry**

It’s no secret that pest management is an ever-evolving field. The rules, regulations and best practices are constantly changing, and it seems new technologies and innovations emerge every day. As a result, ongoing training is particularly important for pest management businesses.

“Things are constantly evolving, as we know,” says Leila Haas, PHR, Director of Human Resources for Sprague Pest Solutions. “Technology evolves, society evolves, new tools and studies come out. It’s important for people to become critical readers and constantly challenge the status quo—and you can only do that through ongoing learning.”

Nancy Troyano PhD, BCE, Entomologist / Director of Technical Education and Training for Rentokil North America echoes that sentiment. "Pest management is a dynamic industry, producing a steady stream of new technologies, emerging pests and changes to laws and regulations,” she emphasizes. "Ongoing training is essential in order to stay current as well remain in compliance with the law.”

In fact, she believes training is more important than ever for pest management businesses. “The pest management industry has come a long way in the past few decades, evolving into a science-based profession, where education on pest biology has become the backbone of our management strategies,” she explains. “Therefore, the work environment at a pest control company must foster a culture of learning, because the answers to solving most pest problems will come from a book, rather than a spray container. And with so many pests out there, the reality is there is always more to learn!”

Rentokil places a heavy emphasis on training because the company believes well-educated technicians correlates with service quality, Troyano explains. "We also recognize that learning never stops, and foster a culture of education and training for every technician throughout the duration of their career,” she adds.

She says in this day and age, pest management technicians are no longer “exterminators,” but true professionals. “Gone are the days of the ‘baseboard jockey’ who was programmed to make pesticide applications along every available baseboard, regardless of whether or not there were even pests present,” she says. “Present day technicians are professionals who are required to have extensive knowledge on everything from pests, to pesticide applications and equipment, to laws and regulations, in order to perform their services safely and effectively.”

This is why it’s critical for modern-day technicians to have access to a wide variety of training materials and professional development opportunities.
Tried and True Training Tips
So how can pest management businesses create a culture of training to ensure future growth and success? Here are a few tips and suggestions from pest management pros who specialize in training and development:

Create a cycle of knowledge.
As you build your company’s training program, it’s critical to collect feedback and information from your technicians. “If you think about it from a technician level, they’re out there in the field seeing and doing,” says Haas. “It’s important that there’s a cycle of information that occurs between the technicians and the managers. You have managers and senior managers and CEOs who are helping to create that strategic vision, but they can’t create that vision unless they understand the reality of the world every day from the technician’s eyes. So one part of development is to give knowledge to those people, and another part is to gather data from them as well.”

Set clear expectations from the get-go.
Troyano says it’s critical to inform employees about your training expectations from the very beginning—even as early as the interview process. “Let new prospects know up front what they will be mandated to complete by your company (and possibly by the state) in order to become a pest management professional,” she explains. “Most people new to our industry are surprised when they learn about the amount of education necessary to successfully and legally manage pests.”

Always encourage questions.
If you want to foster a culture of learning, you have to create an environment where technicians are comfortable asking questions. “Many people are reluctant to ask questions because they think it may reflect negatively on how they are viewed at being capable of performing their job. But, due to the nature of pest management, questions are inevitable,” points out Troyano. “Let [technicians] know that the only bad questions are the ones not asked. Allow time for questions before or after company meetings. Consider placing an anonymous question box in the office, and post the answers to questions nearby.”

Don’t forget about soft skills.
The vast majority of pest management companies focus all their training efforts on technical pest control skills. However, soft skills—such as communication, personal habits and leadership—are equally important.

“‘We focus a lot on communication, understanding one another,” says Haas. “We believe in comprehensive development. We don’t just want to make people better technicians or better at customer service; we want to make people better. Better for their families, better for their community, better for them to contribute to the world.’

Provide some form of compensation.
Most technicians will be more enthusiastic about training if you offer them some form of reward—

On the other hand, companies with a culture of training see development as a top priority. “In our organization, the technician’s job is to constantly develop themselves and do pest management,” Haas explains. “It’s a totally different mindset. We focus on development first. Everyone knows coming into this organization that it’s an expectation that you are constantly evolving, engaging yourself in development opportunities and creating that increased knowledge base as you grow with the organization. We have year-long development programs, and it starts the day the person walks into the organization. A lot of people see training as an event; we look at development as an ongoing opportunity—from our new hires all the way through our ten-year technicians. Everyone in the organization is expected to engage in development.”
Nancy Troyano PhD, BCE, Entomologist/Director of Technical Education and Training for Rentokil North America offers the following training best practices for pest management companies:

**STRUCTURED ON-THE-JOB TRAINING:**
While textbooks and e-learning courses are important, the majority of learning takes place on the job. Most pest management companies recognize this and send their new employees to ride along with their experienced technicians as part of their training. However, the reality is that not much thought is given to how learning is actually taking place during this time. Often, the experienced technicians “train” by having the trainee watch them work, or may view the trainee as an extra set of hands, sending them off to do the mindless tasks in order to get the service done faster. As a result, learning is haphazard and slow to take place, among other things.

This is why it’s important to offer a structured on-the-job (OJT) training program, which should consist of a list of specific tasks the trainee must perform. If possible, the tasks should mirror what the trainee is learning in their academic assignments, including textbook reading, e-learning courses, classroom training, etc. The trainer should be familiar with the program and educated on training techniques. Both the trainee and trainer should sign and date the task lists to verify the training has occurred.

Having a structured OJT program ensures critical skills are being taught in an efficient manner. As a result, learning is accelerated, while safety risks and costly mistakes are minimized. Structured OJT also reduces the variability in task performance among the technician workforce. As a result, the technicians will be performing services safely, and in a manner consistent with the mission and values of your company.

**ONLINE TRAINING:**
From e-learning courses to smartphone apps, online technology is a superior training platform. Among other benefits, training delivered using this platform is:

- **Convenient:** Anyone who runs a service route knows schedules can be quite unpredictable. Online training allows technicians to access their education when it’s convenient for them.
- **Engaging:** With the vast amount of training technicians are required to have, it’s important to provide engaging material. An interactive e-learning course will hold the learner’s attention much better than black and white text on the page of a textbook.
- **Powerful:** Using online learning tools in the form of videos, interactive courses, etc. will increase retention rates, as adult brains generally process visual and auditory information much quicker than reading it as text. A video of someone inspecting a crawlspace will have a much greater impact compared to reading instructions about how to inspect a crawlspace in a textbook.

**SOCIAL LEARNING:**
Most technicians learn best by watching each other. Create a place online, such as a private website or within your own learning management system, to give technicians an opportunity to share their ideas anytime they want. Encourage technicians to share videos of their own ideas or innovations that will enhance the professional skills or knowledge of their colleagues and/or result in better customer service. This also sparks a healthy sense of competition and generates job-related enthusiasm—not to mention an endless supply of ideas!
whether monetary or non-monetary. “Even when fun and engaging, there are some individuals who don’t see the value in spending their time training, when they could be out making money servicing accounts,” Troyano remarks. “Therefore, training programs should have monetary compensation or other benefits tied into them, to motivate technicians to continue their education. For example, pest management companies should consider utilizing a career advancement program that provides pay increases as technicians complete specific training requirements.”

**Offer a variety of training methods.**

Because everyone learns differently, it’s important to incorporate a variety of training styles. This is particularly important for younger generations who generally rely on smartphones and tablets as their primary source of information. “Pest management companies have to get creative when it comes to effectively training this younger generation of technicians,” says Shay Runion, Chief Human Resources Officer and Senior Vice President of Professional Development for Arrow Exterminators. Arrow has a dedicated Training and Professional Development Team known as Arrow University, which is responsible for creating, developing and implementing training programs throughout the entire organization.

“We all do some type of on-the-job training, but having a blended method of training for those who learn differently can help reiterate key points,” Runion adds. “It is important for our companies to evaluate different adult training methods. Not everyone is going to learn by simply reading materials your company provides or participating in an online module or sitting in a lecture. Including hands-on training, peer learning and a variety of methods can appeal to more learners.”

**Keep it convenient.**

Technicians are more likely to fulfill their training requirements if you make materials and classes easily accessible. “Online training programs provide the flexibility pest management professionals need, so they can fit training into their busy schedules,” Troyano says. You should also provide technicians with the tools and resources they need for ongoing education. “Give them a list of pest apps for their smartphones as well as some trusted websites for pest biology and management information,” Troyano suggests. “Have a ‘library’ at the office, with textbooks, industry magazines, etc. for technicians to increase their knowledge on a subject or to investigate a topic in order to solve a pest problem in one their accounts.”

**Make it fun.**

Ensure your training sessions are engaging and fun. “Not only will technicians be excited to learn, but there’s a better chance that they will retain the information,” Troyano explains. “When learning as a group, make a game out of the topic.” She says a fan favorite in her technician training class is a game called “Stinging Insect Jeopardy,” modeled after the popular game show. “We divide the group into teams and ask them questions on stinging insect biology and control.”

**Looking to the Future**

As the industry landscape continues to shift and evolve, pest management companies cannot afford to view employee training as box to check. If these businesses want to survive and thrive, they must fully incorporate training and development into their company culture.

“In the pest management industry, we must become life-long learners,” says Runion. “The industry is always evolving, and staying abreast of changes to technology, inspection and application techniques and equipment is a necessity. Building a culture of learning today is helping to train for success in the future.”

Amy Bell is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to PestWorld. She can be reached at amy@writepunch.com.
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SPEAKERS
4:30 p.m.–6:00 p.m.
Opening General Session: Creating a Vision
Steve Donahue
In this groundbreaking presentation, Steve Donahue draws upon the emerging field of Narrative Intelligence to guide leaders toward epic results. He shows how to create the type of vision that enthralles employees, captivates customers and builds a healthy bottom line. Attendees will learn why stories matter more than statistics and how to leverage their own unique narratives to make a difference in the world while being a success on the balance sheet.

Back by Popular Demand
Generational Expert Jason Dorsey
Centering on a theme of change and growth, Jason will center his workshop on creating a generational advantage. You will walk away with an understanding of how you can leverage the different generations you have working for you to help you grow your business and create customer—and employee—loyalty.

Who Are You Becoming As a Leader?
Jonathan Fanning, Author
A year from today, will you be a better leader . . . or not? The answer affects every aspect of our lives This session introduces four pillars the greatest leaders all have in common and a simple

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formula for enhancing these pillars in your own life and organization. A favorite of audiences across the country, Jonathan shares “The Simplest and Most Effective Leadership Development Plan”, borrowing powerful and practical lessons from the greatest people developers in all walks of life.

SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

Learning Labs
New for 2016! Dive deeper into the topics that are meaningful to you. The NPMA Learning Labs give attendees an opportunity to share ideas and gain new perspective on how to better manage their businesses or employees. These are interactive dialogues with other Academy attendees interested in the same topic. Sessions will be repeated on Thursday and Friday allowing attendees an opportunity to attend two different topics.

Learning Lab Topics:
- Best Marketing Practices
- Hiring Good People
- Coaching Methods That Work
- Cultural Development
- Technology to Advance Your Business
- Managing Sales

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Fee for golf $150/player—please at https://personal.npmapestworld.org/RegisterToday.aspx?ID=1292

ABOUT THE HOTEL

Academy 2016 will be held at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek in Orlando, Florida. Call 888-353-2013 for reservations and mention “NPMA” to receive the group rate of $159.00 per night. Please note, the hotel is located 20 miles from Orlando International Airport (MCO).

Presented by NPMA’s Leadership Development Group, Academy is focused on identifying, motivating and developing the industry’s leaders by providing a networking opportunity; teaching skills that are applicable to your business; and facilitating the information exchange between generations of managers and owners.

Event sponsor Dow AgroSciences has truly helped NPMA and the LDG bring this event to the next level and we are tremendously appreciative of all they have done to support the Academy.
Spice up your training program with four flavorful strategies.
Employee training is a lot like cereal: If you keep serving up the same bland, flavorless brand, your team will eventually refuse to eat it. So how do you keep your pest management company’s training program from going stale?

“It has to be fun and engaging, that’s the bottom line,” says Phillip Cooper, RPA and CEO of Cooper Pest Solutions, Inc./BedBug Central in New Jersey. Cooper says creative training strategies are especially important if you want to resonate with younger workers. “I don’t care what industry you’re in, if you’re not using innovative training tactics, you’re not going to reach Gen Y. That’s what they yearn for. It’s critical that you do it and you do it well. I don’t care if you’re in pest control or widgets. It’s important for every industry.”

Study after study shows Millennial workers crave creative training opportunities. According to a Quantum Workplace survey, Millennials rated “professional growth and career development” as the #1 driver of engagement and retention. Additionally, 35% of Millennials feel that excellent training and development programs are essential when considering a potential employer, according to a study by PwC, the world’s leading professional services firm. To top it off, Millennial Branding reports that 72% of Millennials value the chance to learn new skills as compared to 48% of Baby Boomers and 62% of Generation X employees.

“We’ve always known that everyone learns differently, but our younger generations coming into the workforce really require a diversified training perspective,” explains Kevin Lemasters, A.C.E., President and General Manager of EnviroPest in Colorado. “Our smartphone driven culture has created an expectation in society that we really can have it our way. Being able to provide a training program that has all different facets of learning gives our staff a better chance at success.”

Plus, an effective training program is absolutely essential when it comes to employee retention. According to Go2HR, 40% of employees who receive poor job training leave their positions within the first year.

Whether your staff consists mostly of Millennials, Gen X’ers, Boomers or mix of all three, your company will reap the benefits of incorporating innovative training tactics. Here are four clever ways to spice up your training program and keep your employees engaged, energized and going strong:

1. Educational Videos & Awesome Apps

Many pest management companies are tapping into technology to create training videos for their teams. For example, Lemasters says EnviroPest recently created short three to five minute videos of their technicians providing services in the field.

“This video corresponds with a short written protocol as well, so we have the visual and kinetic aspects of learning,” Lemasters explains. He says they review these videos with their staff at monthly meetings to ensure everyone is consistent in their service delivery. “We can talk about our training protocols during new hire training and monthly training meetings, but in the past it hasn’t shown to be an effective way to ensure everyone really understands what it ‘looks’ like.” Unlike a long, boring lecture or a series of static PowerPoint slides, these videos give technicians a clear view of what EnviroPest expects of them when they’re out in the field. “It also provides an easy benchmark for our supervisor staff as they follow up in the field on our service delivery,” Lemasters adds.

Cooper Pest Solutions also offers educational videos to its employees. In fact, the company posts a new training video on its custom app each and every day. “Everybody in our company starts their day exactly the same way,” Cooper explains. “They hop on their computer or iPhone or iPad and bring up an app that we created. They watch a three-minute video on what we call WOW, which is a methodology of communication I developed. The video is followed by four questions about what they just watched.”

Because pest control technicians are always on the go, Cooper says this training app is the perfect way to touch base with their team remotely and offer them guidance at the beginning of each workday. “At Ritz Carlton, every day they gather their shifts together,” Cooper explains. “Well, our people are remote. They’re not all together, they’re in vehicles. So we use...
this technology to emulate what Ritz does. It’s a really cool and unique technology.”

2. Interactive Team-Building Meetings

Although apps and videos are effective training tactics in today’s digital age, in-person training is also still critical. This is why most pest management companies round up the troops every month or so for a team-building meeting.

“Every other month, we bring the company all together for an hour and 20 minutes,” says Cooper. “We give everybody quick updates from different departments. Then we spend 25 minutes basically applauding each other. We get out and ‘WOW’ each other; or if one of our clients gave us an unsolicited WOW, whether it’s an email or a voicemail, we acknowledge that praise and we applaud our victories.”

Cooper Pest Solutions also holds an annual meeting. “It’s a very fun, interactive and upbeat team-oriented event,” Cooper remarks. “Anybody who’s ever been to it says it made their jaw drop. We offer a tremendous amount of information about the goals and objectives of the company. At the same time, we do a lot of team-building exercises, we give a lot of awards and a lot of recognition and praise.”

EnviroPest also holds monthly meetings where they celebrate personal employee accomplishments as well as company achievements and milestones.

3. Employee Involvement

If you want to spice up your educational opportunities, it’s important to give employees an opportunity to lead training sessions. “You have to involve everyone,” Cooper says. “If you only include senior leadership, and those are the only people who are talking, then you’re not spicing up anything.”

For instance, Cooper Pest Solutions recently held a contest as part of its annual meeting. “We broke the company into groups of three, and they had to create their own WOW videos and submit them,” he says. “Then we picked a winner. So instead of having to watch me every morning, they watched their teammates.”

4. Leadership Training Programs

According to a ClearCompany study, more than two-thirds of workers want opportunities for career growth. In fact, career development is one of the top three non-financial motivators for today’s employees. This is why it’s important for pest management companies to offer leadership training to workers who want to expand their careers.

“In January 2015, we launched a very aggressive leadership program,” says Cooper. He explains the two-year course includes one program for senior leaders and one for entry-level leaders. “Our senior group is made up of six people. Our entry leadership group, people who have never been in management, is made up of 10 people. They meet for three hours every other week and they do a lot of reading. It’s amazing to watch how excited they are about it and the knowledge they’ve gained.” At the end of the course, participants receive a certificate and a lot of praise from their teammates. Most importantly, these employees are well-prepared to move into management positions as the company continues to grow.

Boundless Benefits

The benefits of an innovative training program are practically endless—from higher employee retention to greater customer satisfaction to a bigger bottom line.
“We benefit from our training techniques in a million and one ways,” says Cooper. “Number one is our 90 percent employee retention rate. We also have incredibly reinforced culture—everybody understands our culture and our values. They understand the 27 steps of WOW, and that’s really our special sauce.”

Cooper says it all comes together to create a solid infrastructure to support the company’s growth. “In the first three months of 2016, we intended to grow 10%, but we actually grew 20%,” he explains. “A lot of companies wouldn’t have the management infrastructure to handle it. We’ve got eight people in the entry level just waiting to become managers, so that group could handle 80 more employees without blinking. They could even handle 120 more people. So we’re set for the future.”

To top it off, the company receives consistently high customer satisfaction ratings. Cooper believes this is in large part because of their innovative training tactics. “We measure our customer service with NPS, a measure of customer satisfaction. The question we ask is, ‘How likely would you be to recommend us to your family or friends?’ So a 1 being you would never recommend us and 10 being you would absolutely recommend us. Most companies will get 6s and 7s. Anything above 8 is extraordinary. We’ve been running between 8.4 and 8.6. That’s because everybody gets it—and I think it has a lot to do with our training tactics.”

EnviroPest also reaps the benefits of the company’s creative training tactics. “As a growing company, and one with most staff having a tenure of seven-plus years, we want to ensure that we are delivering consistent quality service,” says Lemasters. What advice would he offer to other companies looking to spice up their training programs? “Create a culture of fun and then DO IT!”

Amy Bell is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to PestWorld. She can be reached at amy@writepunch.com.
In a world where information flows 24/7—with instant news sharing from the media and consumers alike literally at our fingertips—businesses and their marketing teams are faced with both advantages and disadvantages when handling their reputations in the online arena. What’s more, the online space is a very public arena fraught with emotion, strong opinions and empowered users who are not afraid to flex their muscles.

The Internet has opened up the ease and speed of two-way, open communication, a concept that brands often pride themselves on when they can successfully achieve it. But, keep in mind that only one way in the two-way communication is controlled: the way in which brands communicate to their followers. The alternate way, the public consumer response, can be a mixed bag of uncensored information that can open Pandora’s Box and sometimes even incite a flurry of negative social media attention.

While communicating with consumers online is a definite must, marketers should also be aware of the volatility in the digital world and understand the negative effects it can have on brands, in addition to the positive influence it can have when leveraged and managed correctly.

Cringe Worthy Moments
There are countless, cringe worthy moments in the media of companies who have made online faux pas followed by severe consequences. From an insensitive Tweet leading to job termination to outrages from disgruntled consumers exposing a company’s poor customer service, and everything in between, these blunders are prime examples of why marketers must be properly trained to handle online reputation management.

It may seem melodramatic to think that a reputation can be made or broken with a simple tweet, but it’s not too far from the truth. Do you remember when the topic of domestic violence in the NFL was primetime news? The hashtags #WhyIStayed and #WhyILeft were trending on Twitter to encourage an open dialogue about the realities and complexities of domestic violence amid criticism of why a woman would stay in an abusive relationship. DiGiorno Pizza blindly tweeted, “#WhyIStayed You had pizza,” and the Twitterverse reacted . . . angrily. Within mere minutes, DiGiorno issued a Tweet apologizing and stating that the company was unclear of the hashtag’s significance. But the damage was done and this Twitter misstep now lives on in infamy.

Yet this is a teachable moment. Every brand wants to be a social media superstar, but you have to be smart and also sensitive when appropriate. Take time, even if it’s only a few extra minutes, to evaluate a hashtag or post to ensure its message isn’t insensitive and that it’s in line with your brand voice and image. Being timely and relevant can be a beautiful, creative process—but it can also be a nightmare if you don’t do your due diligence to confirm the content is not offensive before the whole world sees it.

Of course, there are also the times when negative social media attention seems to be completely unprovoked. This can be through an unfair and unexpected negative review online or direct post to your page. In an industry where exceptional customer service is paramount, it would be ideal if every one of your pleased customers would take to social media to sing your praises (and don’t be afraid to ask for those testimonials!). However, more often than not, it’s human nature to use social media to air grievances.
Unappealing reviews or social posts are bound to happen from time to time, but it’s how the company handles the situation that determines how industry peers and consumer followers will perceive the brand. It’s important to show you care and are interested in working to do everything possible to have a positive, meaningful experience with each individual.

Respond publicly in the same forum, and always remain calm, friendly and professional when engaging with a frustrated consumer. Being transparent and sharing solutions that are in the works are all thoughtful ways to address their concerns. Furthermore, if possible, provide a phone number or alternate direct message forum.

In essence, managing an online reputation requires a similar skill set and thought process that any good marketer should already be implementing in their customer service programs. The difference is that it needs to be handled even quicker, yet with the same amount of consideration before acting.

**A-Ha! Moments**

In the same vein that the Internet can quickly create chaos for a business, it can also swiftly yield success. The key is to understand how.

A large part of reputation management is having a healthy general brand awareness. It’s important that people not only perceive your company in a positive light, but also that they are aware of it at all. This is especially important in a service industry such as pest management, where establishing trust and making connections are vital to long-term customer relationships. So get out there and be active!

According to a study from Ipsos, a leading market research firm, 38 percent of people have recommended a brand they “like” or follow on a social network. The same study also found that on average, almost one in four people worldwide, 22%, said they bought a brand because a friend recommended or followed the brand online.

These findings show that marketers should make a conscious effort to highlight what makes their brand so special in the online space.

Take Coca Cola for example, a brand that forged its path to specializing in spreading happiness—who doesn’t love a soda bottle with their own name on it? The company’s “Share A Coke” Facebook app lets people customize their own label, creating a personal experience for each consumer. According to EConsultancy, this led the Coke Facebook site’s traffic to grow by 870 percent, and page ‘likes’ climbed by 39 percent.

Whether it is tweeting, blogging, using an app in a creative way, or posting online videos, marketers can leverage the Internet to their advantage by using it as a platform to share controlled, positive content.

In the pest management industry, these options can vary, including: positive customer testimonials, corporate social responsibility initiatives, a themed video series such as “the day in the life of a pest professional” or “how you can help keep this pest away between our home visits,” fun, custom content and more. Don’t be afraid to infuse your personality in these posts, too.

Approaching consumers online in a proactive, beneficial way will increase brand awareness, and ultimately parlay recognition into loyalty.

**Engage, Engage, Engage**

In an industry charged with protecting public health, food and property from pests, the stakes can be high if a customer is dissatisfied with a service. And, in the online universe, companies are held to an even greater level of scrutiny. If you turn a blind eye to online reputation management, you are forfeiting the chance to diminish any concerning conversations, not to mention you are running the risk of a negative situation spiraling further out of control.

What’s more, you could also be missing exceptional opportunities to demonstrate your company’s value as a trusted partner helping to protect both health and home. Share what you do, why it’s important, and always take the opportunity to engage with customers, opening up that two-way communication.}

*Want to become involved with PPMA? Contact cmannes@pestworld.org.*
When it comes to safety engagement, every company has just three kinds of workers: Non-Compliant, Compliant, and Committed. Every leader’s goal is to get the culture from compliance to commitment. And there is only one way to do that, through positive reinforcement, delivered on a daily basis by the leadership team. If you are a leader, your success in life will depend on your ability to deliver this reinforcement and it is the primary focus of the “PR+ Leadership™” workshop that I teach around the world.

But, how precisely do you get more positive reinforcement in your management system? And how do you shift your culture from “I have to do it or I’ll be in trouble” to “I want to do it because I believe in it.” How do you empower your employees to put safety first in the moment of choice, when nobody is watching?

To answer this question, I’d like us to take a little trip back in time. The year is 1981. OSHA had been formed back in the 1970’s and by 1981 it was really picking up speed as it began to enforce safety regulations and punish unsafe companies with fines and penalties.

During this time of heavy government regulation, I got a call from Donna Prejean, the newly appointed safety director of a highway construction firm in Mississippi. To make matters worse, she was a female, and she had the daunting task of getting her macho male construction workers to change their behavior.

“Bill, I feel like I’m having a nightmare. Every day I come to work and I can’t get my guys to wear their PPE. I come home hoarse every night from yelling at them to put on their hard hats, and wear their fall protection. It isn’t working, and I’m not changing their behavior.” Donna lamented.

“Why don’t you just fire one or two of them and the others will comply with your rules?” I asked her.

Donna laughed and said that the owner of her company didn’t even wear his PPE on the projects. He valued production over safety every time. She was powerless to enforce rules that her owner didn’t follow himself.

What had happened to Donna? She had fallen into the rut of using punishment and negative reinforcement in her attempts to modify behavior. Leave Alone/Zap was her default method of management.

“Donna, why don’t you try a little positive reinforcement?” I asked her.

“Some what?” she responded.

“Try reinforcing people for what they are doing right, instead of only focusing on what they do wrong.” I told her.

I sent Donna my “Care Package” which included everything she needed to conduct her own experiment using R+ (Aubrey Daniels’ term for positive reinforcement).
I sent Donna a large cooler chest similar to this one . . .

I reasoned that during the hot summer days, a road construction worker would use and appreciate a nice cooler to keep some ice and cold drinks handy.

Next, I told Donna to find one worker wearing their hardhat and smile, thank them, and present this gift to them in front of the other workers.

The next day she showed up unexpectedly at a construction site. Following my suggestion, she singled out the only worker who was demonstrating the desired behavior.

Of the 17 guys on the project, only the newest employee was wearing a hardhat (apparently nobody had yet told him that wearing his hardhat was uncool).

Donna walked over to the new employee in front of everyone, while she ignored those who were not wearing their protective gear. She publicly thanked him (that was a little risky but it worked out well this time) for wearing his hard hat, telling him, “Joe, I really appreciate your taking safety seriously. I sometimes lie awake at night worried that one of you won’t go home to your families safely, and your taking the time to follow our new safety rule means a lot to me. This gift is for you.”

As the 16 rough, weathered construction workers watched, Donna presented to Joe the cooler chest I had sent her. Joe responded: “Thanks Donna! I’ve never won anything in my whole life, and nobody in safety has ever told me I did it right.”

Now the 16 other construction workers asked Donna a question: “Where’s our cooler chest, Donna?”

“Well guys, where are your hardhats? Maybe during my next safety audit, if I see you with your hardhats on, then we’ll talk about cooler chests.”

The impact on the other employees was immediate and powerful. On the next trip to the site, she was greeted by the entire crew smiling at her and pointing at their hardhats.

Positive Reinforcement Rocks!

Not only does this true story underscore the power of positive reinforcement, but it also prompts another question we are wise to ponder.

This is very similar to the age old question of the “Chicken or the Egg—which came first?”

In my next article, I will explore the answer to what really prompted the change in behavior, based on research from the University of Waterloo. We’ll also examine research that helps uncover the true nature of positive reinforcement.

The End . . .

Bill Sims, Jr., is President of The Bill Sims Company, Inc. For more than 40 years, the Bill Sims Company has created positive reinforcement systems that have helped large and small firms to inspire better performance from employees and increase bottom line profits. He is a world renowned keynote speaker and also conducts leadership workshops globally.

Bill’s first book, entitled Green Beans & Ice Cream—The Remarkable Power of Positive Reinforcement, has garnered rave reviews. He has built more than 1,000 recognition programs at firms including Dupont, Siemens VDO, Coca-Cola, and Disney, to name a few. Visit www.greenbeanbook.com to learn more.
Hiring the Right Person for the Job

Are Employee Background Checks a Good Idea?

Bad employees may be out there but after a string of good hires, it’s easy to become confident in our own ability to know the good eggs from the bad ones.

That could be a mistake, when you consider that the service industry has “the highest level of liability next to a hospital in making sure that an employee will not cause harm to others,” according to Deb Keller an expert on background screening and Vice President of Operations for Reference Services, Inc.

So what’s an employer to do?

Do Treat All Applicants Equally and Consider the Position You Are Hiring For

Not only must applicants for the same job receive the same treatment at the same time, the requirements of the position should be considered in the hiring process. To avoid charges of discrimination based on gender, race, religion, or any other protected category, you will need to run the same checks at the same stage for each applicant every time and consider in advance what skills are important to being successful in the job.

Not running a criminal background check on female applicants might make sense to you, but it could easily be seen as discrimination and get you in legal trouble. If a clean criminal record is important for your technicians, run the check for everyone. Also be careful to avoid background reports that might result in rejecting or hiring one class of employees over another. For example, credit checks have recently come under scrutiny by the EEOC because some races have higher rates of bad credit. If the position will not be handling financial transactions, consider whether a credit check is even relevant.

Do Hire a Reputable Screening Company

True, the internet has made it seemingly simple to run background checks. What you may not realize is that standards for the industry vary widely and many of those screens pull up old data, bad data, or even worse, no data. Under negligent hiring liability standards “applicable in every single state,” according to Keller, “employers are accountable and if you could have known, courts consider you should have known.” Statistics show that employers lose over seventy-five percent of negligent hiring cases.

To improve the odds, NPMA negotiated for Reference Services, Inc., the firm that Keller represents, to become a preferred provider to NPMA and offer a substantially reduced member rate. NPMA members can run the recommended base searches (see sidebar) for under $25.00.

Do Obtain Written Permission To Run Checks

Before conducting background checks, you will need to create the permission form to use when hiring. Any employer who engages an outside company is required by law to both notify job applicants that there will be a check, in a written document separate from other employment application documents, and to obtain each applicant’s signature as authorization to conduct the check. An incorrect form could result in a lawsuit, in fact, non-compliant lawsuits have been settled for millions, so be vigilant about what you use. (Reference Services provides clients with all of the necessary forms.)

Do Comply with Laws—On Notification, Record Retention and Record Disposal

Once the reports are in, and before a decision is made based on background reports, you will need to notify applicants or employees, provide them with a written copy of the report within five days if requested and give them...
an explanation of any negative information. If applicants or employees are rejected based on background reports, you must notify them and cite the company that provided the report. Occasionally disputes may arise when an employee or applicant believes the report is not accurate. When this happens the credit reporting agency must handle the dispute within 30 days.

Good record keeping is also important. Records for personnel, (including rejected applicants) must be kept for one year or until any discrimination charges are resolved. After a year, dispose of records properly so that they cannot be read or accessed.

With a little forethought, you can easily manage this process. The investment pays off with employees who are successful for the long term and in creating a safe environment. “One of the challenges of being in a home service industry is not only attracting and retaining the best talent, but also ensuring that we have all of the information we need to make the right hiring decisions,” says Kevin Pass, former NPMA President and owner of Indiana-based Action Pest Control. “We just can’t risk putting our clients in danger.”

Alison Loughlin is the Membership Marketing Manager at NPMA. She can be reached at aloughlin@pestworld.org.

Recommended Background Searches*

**Nationwide Criminal Search**
This report is compiled from over 490 million criminal records from over 1,000+ sources, including the U.S. Sex Offender Report, OFAC Global Threat List files and FBI Fugitive List.

**Social Security Number (SSN) Trace**
The SSN Trace provides the state and year of SSN issuance and validates the SSN, in addition to an expanded address history for the life of the SSN.

**County Criminal Search**
This report includes a jurisdictional hand search of the county court records in any one of the 3,347 counties in the U.S. These records provide the most up to date information available, including pending charges. A Nationwide Criminal Search only captures convictions, making county searches essential in obtaining information about pending charges. Cases held at a county level include felonies and misdemeanors, as well as traffic offenses.

**Motor Vehicle Report (MVR)**
Reports include DUIs, suspended and revoked licenses, felonies and minor traffic violations. Unless otherwise specified, records go back three years.

**Employment Credit Report**
This report provides public records information along with a financial summary. Record searches can include bankruptcies, liens, judgements and collections. For employment purposes only and complies with FCRA

As conducted by Reference Services, Inc.*
APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS HEATING UP, NPMA NEEDS YOUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION
The annual appropriations process is heating up in Washington D.C., and now is the time to continue the positive momentum gained during NPMA’s Legislative Day towards achieving our policy objectives.

Our Congressional representatives have all returned from spring recess and a series of appropriation bills, which fund our government, are beginning to be debated and amended through the nuanced appropriations process in both chambers.

The looming 2016 elections creates a condensed legislative calendar and this will be one of the most important times to communicate with your elected officials. Whether it be overtime, NPDES permits, Zika virus, pollinators, or tax issues, this is when we need your continued engagement and assistance. If you have not already please sign-up to receive our grassroots alerts at https://npmapestworld.org/public-policy/take-action/ and be ready to participate over the coming weeks.

ANTI-OVERTIME LEGISLATION INTRODUCED
In March, Senators Tim Scott (R-SC) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Representatives Tim Walberg (R-MI) and John Kline (R-MN) introduced the Protecting Workplace Advancement and Opportunity Act, which requires the U.S. Department of Labor to conduct a comprehensive economic analysis on the impact of mandatory overtime expansion to small businesses, nonprofits, and public employers before issuing any final rule.

In no small way can NPMA thank the hundreds of NPMA members who conducted meetings with their legislators to urge the introduction of legislative action to stop the drastic proposed overtime rule. During your 440 meetings with your congressional representatives, the voice of the pest management industry was heard loud and clear and resulted in the first substantive legislative proposal that would block the implementation of the proposed rule.

Our mission is protecting your business and we will continue to advocate on your behalf to stop any overarching legislation that will negatively impact your success. As always, if you have any questions, please contact publicpolicy@pestworld.org.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE TO ZIKA, NPMA ENGAGEMENT
The Zika virus remains a priority topic for the Executive branch and Federal lawmakers in anticipation of warmer temperatures throughout the nation. Recently, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explained Mosquitoes that can carry Zika have spread much faster in the United States, and the virus has greater health impacts than previously thought. CDC officials now believe mosquitoes carrying the virus may be in 30 states, up from 12 states and have also linked the virus to pregnancy complications beyond microcephaly and that Zika may also be associated with acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, a neurological condition that affects the brain in a manner similar to multiple sclerosis.

CDC officials again stressed the need for additional funding to combat Zika, warning that the nearly $600 million in Ebola funds the Obama administration redirected to Zika efforts last week would not be enough. The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in new funding for Zika.

On Capitol Hill the House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers stated that the Committee is rapidly working on a supplemental bill to provide additional funding to fight Zika but cautioned that the committee
is waiting on the administration to provide more details about what it needs to combat the virus outbreak before authorizing $1.9 billion in funding.

Also on Capitol Hill, the House overwhelmingly approved legislation (H.R. 4400) which would add Zika to a key U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) program called the Priority Review Voucher Program, which encourages the development of treatments for neglected tropical diseases. The bill has already passed the Senate (S.2512).

Since January NPMA has met with countless legislators in both chambers of Congress and also provided educational briefings to several prominent committees including: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, House Committee on Agriculture and House Committee on Energy and Commerce. NPMA is continuously communicating the important role of the structural pest management industry in mitigating exposure to Zika carrying mosquitoes and that the pest management industry is a built-in pest defense network and resources should be used to coordinate efforts and educate the public on available services and common sense approaches to minimize exposure from Zika-carrying mosquitoes.

HUD PUBLISHES UPDATED NPMA 99A & B Forms

Recently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reissued HUD-NPMA-99A and HUD-NPMA-99B with updated expiration dates “5/30/2018”. Besides the new expiration date, the forms retain the same OMB Approval Number and as expected no substantive changes were made to the forms.

Moving forward the new forms should be used, and NPMA has ordered the new versions to be made available on the NPMA Bug Store. 

Andrew Bray is NPMA’s Director of Public Policy. He can be reached at abray@pestworld.org.
Introduction
Throughout history, mosquitoes have transmitted some of the most important and deadly diseases to humans. Their role in vectoring diseases such as malaria, West Nile, dengue, and chikungunya make mosquitoes arguably the most dangerous animals in the world. Worldwide, malaria alone accounts for more than 600,000 deaths each year, most of them are children under the age of five. Recently, the outbreak of another mosquito-borne illness, Zika virus, has dominated national headlines. With the number of confirmed cases in the Americas on the rise, the public demand for wide-spread mosquito management has never been greater.

Zika Virus Disease
Zika virus disease (Zika) is caused by an emerging mosquito-borne virus that has no specific medical treatment or vaccine. The virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito in the Aedes genus, the same mosquito responsible for transmitting yellow fever, dengue fever and chikungunya viruses. The symptoms of the illness are generally mild, but Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects including microcephaly. In addition, infection may also be linked to neurological disorders such as Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Zika virus was first isolated in 1947 from a rhesus monkey in Uganda’s Zika forest, but the first human cases of Zika were not detected until 1952. In 2007, a large epidemic of Zika virus was reported in Yap Island and Guam, Micronesia. In 2013 and 2014 multiple epidemics were reported in several Pacific Islands. By May 2015, the Zika virus was reported in Brazil as well as several countries of South and Central America and the Caribbean. Only eight months later, Brazil totaled nearly 30,000 reported cases of infection. The virus is now widespread in Brazil, and is continuing to spread throughout the Americas as well as the Oceania and Pacific Islands. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that Zika virus disease has been confirmed in 42 states, but there have been no locally acquired mosquito-borne cases reported as of April 2016.

Zika Virus Vectors
The yellow fever mosquito, Aedes aegypti, is a small to medium-sized mosquito, approximately 4 to 7
millimeters in length (Fig. 1). It can be identified by the pattern of white scales on the dorsal surface of the thorax that form the shape of a violin or lyre. Additionally, the hind legs have bands of white scales that appear to be stripes. The yellow fever mosquito is the principal mosquito vector of Zika and it is present in the United States. It prefers to feed on humans over other animals. As the common name suggests, this mosquito is also the primary vector of yellow fever as well as a vector of dengue and chikungunya. The yellow fever mosquito is a tropical mosquito species that thrives in warmer, humid conditions typical to the southern United States (Fig. 2).

The Asian tiger mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*, is medium-sized (2 to 10 mm in length) and closely resembles the yellow fever mosquito (Figure 3). These species can be distinguished by differences in scale patterns on the thorax of adults. The Asian tiger mosquito has a prominent single stripe of white scales down the middle of the dorsal surface of thorax that differs from the violin shape of white scales seen on the yellow fever mosquito. The Asian tiger mosquito has been implicated as a competent vector of Zika in other countries and could pose a similar risk in the United States. It is also capable of vectoring other viruses including dengue fever and Eastern equine encephalitis virus. The Asian tiger mosquito has adapted to survive in a broader temperature range and at cooler temperatures than the yellow fever mosquito. As a result, the Asian tiger mosquito can tolerate more temperate climates and has a broader distribution in the United States than the yellow fever mosquito (Figure 2).

The yellow fever and Asian tiger mosquito live in close association with humans, largely due to their preferences in breeding sites. Both species seek out natural and artificial water-holding containers such as tree holes, bird baths, or plastic containers to lay their eggs. They can complete their lifecycle in as little as one half inch of water, making nearly any sized container a potential breeding site. After taking a blood meal, the female lays 100–200 black eggs (0.5 mm in length) in small batches, across multiple sites. Each egg is glued to the inner wall of a container, just above the waterline. Following a rain event, the water level rises, submerging the eggs, triggering them to hatch. If the container dries out, the eggs can survive desiccation for eight months or more. Larval development is temperature dependent, but both species can reach adulthood in as little as seven days under ideal conditions.

The virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito in the *Aedes* genus, the same mosquito responsible for transmitting yellow fever, dengue fever and chikungunya viruses.
The basic approach to controlling container-breeding mosquitoes involves a three-step process: inspection and surveillance, source reduction, and chemical control. When executed properly, this integrated strategy can provide effective and continuous management of mosquitoes in a given area by eliminating breeding sites and reducing adult populations. The following information will provide direction on conducting this three-step process when managing yellow fever and Asian tiger mosquitoes. These two mosquito species are particularly well suited for local control on properties serviced by pest management professionals because of the mosquitoes’ propensity to breed in areas associated with humans and their limited dispersal range, rarely flying further than 100 meters from their larval development site.

Source reduction focuses on eliminating mosquito breeding sites. For these container-breeding mosquitoes, primary breeding sites can include many items that are commonly found in residential backyards. If water is present in a container for more than seven days in a row, mosquitoes can complete development and the container has the potential to breed mosquitoes. Inspect the property frequently for items such as bottles, barrels, old tires, or other vessels that may hold water and remove them if possible. Tipping over any water containing items regularly that cannot be removed will prevent larvae from making it to adulthood.

Chemical control of container-breeding mosquitoes plays an important role in reducing both larval and adult populations in an area. Products intended to control the immature stages of mosquitoes are known as larvicides, while products used to control adults are known as adulticides. Larvicides such as methoprene or Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti) can be applied directly into water-holding containers. Methoprene, an insect growth regulator, prevents mosquito larvae from maturing, drastically reducing the number of adult mosquitoes that will emerge. The best indication that a site is producing mosquitoes is to confirm the presence of mosquito larvae. Begin by identifying water-holding containers that could serve as potential breeding sites such as empty pots, children’s toys, bird baths, pets’ water bowls and tree holes. Once found, containers can be visually inspected for larvae. If containers are hard to reach or too dark to inspect, a clear turkey baster can be used to siphon out water samples. Ovitraps are another effective surveillance tool that can be used to confirm the presence of mosquitoes in an area. Ovitraps are small water-holding containers designed to mimic the mosquito’s preferred breeding sites in order to attract egg-laying females. This type of trap can easily be constructed by placing a wooden tongue depressor in a small plastic jar or cup that is partially filled with water. A hole should be punched or drilled in the container to prevent the water level from rising too high. The tongue depressor should be inspected every few days for the presence of eggs. It is important to note that if ovitraps are left unattended they can become ideal breeding sites for mosquitoes, and therefore their locations should be mapped and they should be removed if not inspected every few days.

While the risk of Zika virus and other viruses transmitted by these mosquitoes is low, to prevent mosquito bites in general, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommends applying EPA registered insect repellents containing the active ingredients DEET, picardin, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), or IR3535 to exposed skin according to label instructions.
growth regulator, does not kill mosquito larvae, but prevents them from developing into adults. Bti is a bacterium that produces a toxin that is lethal to larvae upon ingestion. Adulticides can be applied using a gas-powered backpack mist blower to treat adult mosquito resting places such as shrubbery and other vegetation with an appropriately labeled residual insecticide. Mist blower applications allow for the deposition of insecticide onto the underside of leaves and interior architecture of shrubs more effectively than compressed air sprayers. Use caution to avoid treating plants that are in bloom and attractive to pollinators. Foundation walls and the undersides of decks may also be treated, as adult yellow fever and Asian tiger mosquitoes (as well as others), may rest there as well. Always read and follow all label instructions.

Personal Protection
Managing mosquitoes requires pest management professionals to spend time in areas where mosquitoes are active, which can increase the risk of mosquito bites. While the risk of Zika virus and other viruses transmitted by these mosquitoes is low, to prevent mosquito bites in general, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommends applying EPA registered insect repellents containing the active ingredients DEET, picardin, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), or IR3535 to exposed skin according to label instructions. When also using sunscreen, apply it before the repellent.

Additional Information
- For the latest information on the distribution of the yellow fever and Asian tiger mosquitoes in the United States, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/resources/vector-control.html
- For more information on the history of Zika virus, visit: http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/timeline/en/
- For more information on the health effects of Zika virus, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/symptoms/index.html
- For the latest information on the global spread of Zika virus, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html
- For more information on insect repellents, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html
ONBOARDING AND TRAINING WITH NPMA TESTING

BY ALLIE TAISEY, BCE, MAT

For more than 10 years, NPMA member companies have used the exams at www.npmatesting.com as part of their employee onboarding process. The exams were created to set a national standard for technician and salesperson proficiency and the certificates the program issues are proudly held by more than 30,000 professionals in our industry.

Including this convenient, online certificate program in your company’s onboarding process can help document your company’s commitment to professionalism. Not only will your employees take pride in demonstrating their knowledge, your customers should feel more comfortable knowing you are only sending trained technicians to their doors.

At the NPMA testing site, you will find four exams, each with its own study guide:

- QualityPro: Tests a PMP’s knowledge of customer relations; pesticide application techniques & equipment; pesticides; and pests
- Pest Management in Food Plants: Covers the Pest Management Standards for Food Plants
- QualityPro Schools: Ensures PMPs are aware of unique challenges of pest management in schools
- GreenPro (formerly QualityPro Green): Tests knowledge of integrated pest management (IPM) tools and techniques

NPMA recognizes companies that utilize these exams through QualityPro service certifications:
- If all of your employees who perform or sell service in food plants have passed the Pest Management in Food Plants exam, you can earn the QualityPro Food Safety service certification for your company.
- If all of your employees who perform or sell service at K-12 schools have passed the QualityPro Schools exam, you can earn the QualityPro Schools service certification for your company.
- If all of your employees who perform or sell GreenPro service have passed the GreenPro exam, you can earn the QualityPro Food Safety service certification for your company.

NPMA Testing FAQs

How do the exams work?
Employees can visit www.npmatesting.com and click on the exam they wish to take. Each will register individually with their name and company code. Each exam consists of 50 randomly selected questions. Test takers have an hour to complete the exam. A passing score is 40 out of 50 correct. If the employee fails, he or she should study and then re-test. Contact the NPMA Certification Program Manager (qualitypro@pestworld.org) if you need help.

Do the exams cost money?
The QualityPro, GreenPro and QualityPro Schools exams are free to QualityPro certified companies and those that are working toward certification. The Pest Management in Food Plants exam is $25 per exam.

Designing a Training for PMPs

PMPs are adult learners. To teach them effectively, answer the following questions before you open up PowerPoint:

What problems do audience members face in their daily lives that I can help them solve?
If your learners can’t use what you tell them within a week, they probably won’t remember it.

What misconceptions or misunderstandings might the audience members have that would make them doubt what I am saying?

What do I want the audience to remember from or be able to do after the training?
These learning objectives will determine the content you present and what you emphasize.
Does the certificate generated by the system mean that your company is certified?
No. The QualityPro training standard is just one of 16 standards a company must meet to become QualityPro certified. GreenPro, QualityPro Schools and QualityPro Food Safety are service certifications for QualityPro certified companies. Learn more at npmaqualitypro.org

Does the certificate expire?
No. The certificate indicates that you completed the course. It is not a license or certification that needs renewing.

Is the certificate transferrable to another company?
Yes. The results speak to the knowledge of the PMP, regardless of employer. Your certificate of completion is valuable to any company that is trying to earn or maintain a certification from QualityPro.

The exams at www.npmatesting.com are a tried-and-true part of professional development in the pest management industry. We encourage you to use them to credential employees both new and old. Having the most educated team in the field will benefit both your customers and your company and ultimately raise the level of professionalism expected of our industry as a whole.

QualityPro is administered by the Foundation for Professional Pest Management, an independent organization that develops good business practices and standards. Designed specifically for pest management companies in the US and Canada, this certification is available to companies that are currently members of the National Pest Management Association. For more information, please contact Allie Taisey at ataisey@pestworld.org or visit www.npmaqualitypro.org.

Help an employee advance her career with the PWIPM Empowerment Grant
PWIPM is now accepting nominations for their annual Professional Empowerment Grant. This grant will be awarded to one female who is interested in advancing or securing a career in pest management. This grant may be used by the recipient to defer costs related to advancing their career or education in the pest management industry. Learn more at www.npmapestworld.org/pwipm-grant

Deadline for submission:
August 1, 2016

No adult learner is a blank slate. Each comes to you with experiences that will influence how he or she interprets your information. Getting audience members to question their understanding is a powerful teaching tool.

What are the logistics of the training: size audience, seating arrangement, AV equipment, pens & paper, etc.?

If you have a say in these factors, great! If not, you will need to design your training activities accordingly.

Answering these questions will help you pick the content that your audience needs and design the training that they want.

For more on the topic of adult learning, visit teal.ed.gov/resources
Our company has recently started to service a few food processing facilities and we are trying to get a handle on the different third-party audit requirements for pest control service. Is there a good way to compare the different third-party audit schemes?

NPMA’s commercial committee recently developed a resource that compares the requirements of eight of the leading third-party audit schemes’ pest management requirements. The matrix includes AIB, BRC, FSSC 22000, NSF-Cook & Thurber, Primus GFS, Silliker, SQF, and NPMA Pest Management Standards for Food Plants in a single, easy-to-reference, document. In it, you will find information about important requirements including device spacing, service frequency, bulb replacement for insect light traps, service documentation, as well as website and contact information for each audit organization. You can locate this helpful resource at http://npmapestworld.org/members/food-safety-audit-scheme-quick-reference-guide/.

How can I tell the difference between a German cockroach and an Asian cockroach?

The German cockroach (Blattella germanica) is one of the most ubiquitous pests on earth. The species’ predilection for warm, humid environments make human structures, particularly areas where food is prepared, the perfect habitat for infestation. Anywhere that humans are found, cockroaches are probably present too. The Asian cockroach (Blattella asahinai), not to be confused with the Oriental cockroach (Blatta orientalis), has a more recent history of association with humans compared to German cockroaches. To the casual observer, and even the seasoned pest management professional, the Asian cockroach looks nearly identical to the German cockroach. They are closely related, but there are some key differences in behavior that make management methods different for the two species.

Asian cockroaches have longer and narrower wings compared to German cockroaches, along with a few other minor morphological differences. The most obvious difference is the ability of Asian cockroaches to fly. They are often attracted to lights and are most commonly found outdoors. In North America, the Asian cockroach is currently known to be established in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas, but has the potential to spread further throughout the United States because it can be established indoors.

What mosquitoes are capable of transmitting Zika virus?

Zika fever, caused by the Zika virus, has been detected in every country in North and South America with the exception of Chile and Canada. The symptoms of the illness include fatigue, joint and back pain, fever, skin rash, headache and eye redness. Most people infected with Zika fever show no symptoms. Most alarming is the association between Zika infection in pregnant women and a certain birth defect in infants called microcephaly, or reduced head size due to incomplete brain development. Microcephaly can result in a range of problems in children including developmental delays and intellectual disabilities. It’s important to remember that mosquitoes are not the cause of Zika fever. Instead, certain mosquitoes are capable of transmitting the virus that causes the disease. Zika transmission is most commonly associated with the yellow fever mosquito (Aedes aegypti), but the Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus) is also believed to be a competent vector of the virus. Both of these mosquitoes are present in the United States and the Caribbean and are aggressive daytime biters. The distribution of the yellow fever mosquito is restricted to tropical and subtropical climates. In the United States, it is primarily found in the Southeast and Gulf states with pockets in the Southwest and California. The Asian tiger mosquito, on the other hand, is better adapted to cooler climates and has a much wider distribution, ranging into coastal regions of the southern New England states and into the Midwest, Southwest and California. In addition to residual treatment of adult mosquito resting sites, any potential breeding sites on a client’s property should be identified and eliminated, including clogged roof gutters and drain pipes leading from downspouts.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 2, 2016
GLOBAL BED BUG SUMMIT
JW Marriott Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana

OCTOBER 18-21, 2016
WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER
SHERATON SEATTLE HOTEL
Seattle, Washington

JULY 28-JULY 30, 2016
CAROLINAS/MID-ATLANTIC SUMMER CONFERENCE 2016
Holiday Inn Resort Wrightsville Beach
Wrightsville Beach, NC

AUGUST 27-29, 2016
PESTWORLD EAST INDIA
Grand Hyatt Goa
Goa, India

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE OR OTHER NPMA EVENTS, PLEASE VISIT WWW.NPMAPESTWORLD.ORG.
MYTHBUSTERS: MUST YOU TALK TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN FOR YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD?

T his annual event—now in its 29th year—sends industry members to Capitol Hill to visit with their elected representatives to share position papers and start a dialogue.

The experience of walking through the Rayburn House Office Building or Hart Senate Office Building—especially for first-timers—can be both thrilling and a little intimidating.

Securing a meeting—even a photo opportunity—with an actual Senator or House member is quite an achievement considering how tight their schedules are and seeing how many other groups are vying for the same privilege. This is why most visitors end up meeting with a member of their Senator or Congressman’s legislative staff during their time on the hill.

Working with an elected official’s staff—at any level of government—is part of the political process but it can lead to a feeling that your voice might not really be heard by the Congressman, Senator or a state assemblyman. After all, who better to talk with when you have a concern than the person in charge?

Knowing the lay of the land on Capitol Hill or in your state capitol, is it a myth or a fact that your voice in a 10 minute sit down with a staffer really carries some weight?

Myth Busters asked Mike Katz of Western Exterminator/Rentokil North America in Anaheim, California, a long-time member of NPMA’s Public Policy Committee and the Pest Control Operators of California’s Government Relations Committee, to shine some light on the subject.

“A Senator, Congressman and state assemblyman’s legislative staff is very important because they are the ones briefing and advising the elected official on the issues,” says Katz. “Their job is to know the issues and make recommendations.”

Katz says in most instances you have a better chance of getting your point across in a 10-minute one-on-one meeting with the legislative staff rather than a two-minute, drive-by handshake encounter with the elected official.

“There are so many pieces of legislation in front of elected officials that it is impossible for them to devote significant time to each and every one and their schedules are very tight,” says Katz. “This is why they rely on their staff to gather the necessary information and make a recommendation.”

Katz, who has attended 28 of 29 NPMA Legislative Day events, says in all those trips he has met in-person with one of his California Senators once and met with his representative only a handful of times. The lack of face-to-face meetings, however, does not mean those treks through the halls of Congress and meetings with staffers were for naught.

He points to a case a couple of years ago where a federal agency was attempting to enforce a mandate that would not allow real estate agents to use pest management (termite) companies to perform required termite inspections during the home sale process.

Katz met with the legislative assistant for his Congressman (Rep. Ed Royce, CA-R-39) and the staffer took up the case for the industry. The staffer made introductions to other Congressional members’ offices that served on the committee overseeing the agency and in the end the industry gained relief from this potentially prohibitive mandate.

“None of that would have happened had we not taken our meetings with the staffer seriously and developed that relationship,” says Katz. “We never spoke to the representative in-person about the issue but we were able to secure a positive outcome because of our connection and the staffer’s diligence.”

The pest management industry has experienced it shares of wins and losses over the years when it comes to regulatory and legislative efforts—veteran observers like Katz will tell you that’s the nature of the beast.

“If you never take the meeting with a staffer when visiting Washington, your state capitol or when visiting their district office you won’t be able to make an impact,” says Katz. “You can’t dictate who you meet with so always be ready to express your concerns and deliver your message to whomever you meet with.”

Myth Busted: The myth that your voice won’t be heard because you didn’t meet face-to-face with your elected official is false. The industry has enjoyed legislative and regulatory victories because pest management professionals had a simple, short meeting between a staffer and started a dialogue.

Jeff Fenner is a partner at B Communications and can be reached at jfenner@b-communications.com

By Jeff Fenner

At the NPMA’s recent Legislative Day event in Washington, D.C. pest management professionals from across the country gathered to take the industry’s story to the halls of power and share their concerns about legislative and regulatory issues impacting the industry.
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