



The State of Our Future



2022 FALL NEWSLETTER

THE PEST DISPATCH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Matt Lang, Belle City Pest Solutions, LLC • bellecitypestsolutions@gmail.com

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Our company just completed our first year in business this August. I certainly learned a lot! It has been proven to me over and over that creating excellent communication, on-time performance, and just being personal can grow a business extremely quickly.

I believe that positive word of mouth has been better advertising than Belle City Pest Solutions could ever have bought. If you enjoy meeting new people and can create an atmosphere that is positive, I feel every one of us could have the same results. Even as a technician, by creating these factors you can grow your route – which, in return, creates more revenue for your company and yourself in production.

I also want to share the importance of balancing work with family. Tom Brady (like him or hate him) from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers has been totally inspirational to me. The “Goat” is very open about how he balances football with his home life. It’s important to have that assurance and support for happiness day-to-day. I’m very lucky to have my family deeply involved with Belle City Pest Solutions. This allows us to continue to balance and to grow rapidly.

As the busy season starts winding down, now’s the time to think about taking a break for yourself and recharging. Plan a

(Continued on next page)



The Cattail Mosquito:
An Unusual Creature Indeed

PRESIDENT, CONT.

short-notice vacation with your family, get caught up on chores you've had to put off because there wasn't enough time in the day, or just sit back and take a breath. Making time for yourself is not only good for your mind and body but also your job performance and professional growth.

The slow season also provides you with time to review your daily operations with fresh eyes.

- Tech Performance – How did they perform in the field, complaints/compliments from clients, what did they struggle with, where did they succeed beyond your expectations, what products worked the best?
- Sales – How well did the advertising work this season, what help could the sales team use, any new ideas or strategies for next year?
- Warehouse – How did shipping/receiving do, were there any issues with employees getting the equipment or product they needed, any new ideas of organizing?

- Customer Service Reps – Is there anything that could make their job any easier, what were the most complaints/compliments they were hearing from clients, how did the season do overall?

I hope you all had a wonderful season and are able to take advantage of some time to recharge.

“In this game, everyone needs a break to refuel, recharge and jump back in full throttle.”

–Helen Edwards

What You Need From the People Who Know

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I'M CERTIFIED

Lyncee Zuehls, Pesticide Program Manager, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection • lyncee.zuehls@wisconsin.gov



Do you find yourself, your employees, or your customers using the terms “certification” and “licensing” interchangeably? Certification and licensing are two separate steps needed to apply pesticides legally as a commercial applicator in Wisconsin.

Who exactly needs certification and licensing?

- Anyone who applies or directs the use of restricted use pesticides, even to their own or their employer’s property.
- Anyone who applies any pesticide for hire, or directs applications for hire – either as an independent contractor or as an employee of an independent contractor.

If you fall into one of those categories, here are the steps you need to follow:

STEP ONE: CERTIFICATION

The purpose of certification is a competency test to show that you, as an applicator, understand how to handle and use pesticides. To start the certification process, you will have to purchase training material for each category you want to be certified in from the UW PAT Store at <https://patstore.wisc.edu/secure/default.asp>. The UW PAT Program also hosts trainings in the winter and early spring that you can attend and take the exam while you’re there, or you can study on your own and schedule your exam with Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

There are 20 categories of pesticide certification an applicator can choose to take. Each category will require its own training manual and exam. Other than the 7.1 Structural category, the most common certifications that applicators get in the structural pest control industry would be 5.0 Aquatic and Mosquito, and the 3.0 Lawn and Turf Control.

Once you have received your training material and are ready to take the exam, you have two options.

- You can take the paper based test at DATCP’s proctored locations, found at [https://pestexam.](https://pestexam.datcp.wi.gov/Welcome.aspx)

[datcp.wi.gov/Welcome.aspx](https://pestexam.datcp.wi.gov/Welcome.aspx).

- You can take a computer-based test with Pearson Vue for a convenience fee of \$45. There are 54 technical colleges that you can choose from to take this exam or, if you have all the computer and space requirements, the exam can be taken from your home or office. More information about this option is available at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/wi/agriculture>.

Either testing option grants you certification for five years. However, if you get several certifications at different times, the expiration dates will all follow that of the first certification expiration date.

STEP TWO: LICENSING

Once you are certified, you will need to apply for an individual license to use, or direct use of, restricted use pesticides. The application form for a commercial applicator license is available online at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Licenses_Permits/CommercialApplicator.aspx. The license is good from January 1st to December 31st and must be renewed every year.

You cannot apply pesticides until you have paid your fees and have both certification and license in hand. You need to carry your license and certification card whenever you’re using pesticides, or directing their use, commercially.

If you own a pesticide application business, it also needs an annual license. This is true even if you are the only person working in the business and you are certified and licensed as an applicator. Businesses must list individual applicators on the business license application form, and they need a separate business license for each location you operate. If you add a location or move during the year, notify DATCP.

As always, if you have any questions please contact me.



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THE CATTAIL MOSQUITO: AN UNUSUAL CREATURE INDEED

Captain Stan The Mosquito Man
VP, Technical Products and Services, Catchmaster

This article spotlights one of the most unusual, and most pestiferous, mosquitoes that PMPs might have to deal with—the cattail mosquito *Coquillettidia perturbans*. Even the name indicates that this is a bad actor. Here is the lowdown.

There are about 60 species of *Coquillettidia* worldwide but only one in the United States; the cattail mosquito. This species occurs throughout Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. It is widely distributed across the eastern U.S., southern Canada, and several areas in the west. And it is found throughout Wisconsin and all surrounding states.

They prefer to breed in permanent freshwater sources, such as along the edges of lakes and ponds.

Much like the common house mosquito (*Culex* spp.), individual eggs are glued together by the female as they are deposited to form a floating raft near emergent vegetation. She can lay between 150-350 eggs after just one blood meal—so the numbers of pesky, hungry mosquitoes can build up quickly. The eggs hatch in 2-3 days and initially are elongate and white in color but darken within one to two hours after being laid.

The larvae and pupae do not obtain their required oxygen at the water surface via the siphon (air tube) as almost all other mosquito species do. Instead, their siphon is heavily sclerotized (hardened) and resembles a short, pointed saw. This modified structure is then used to pierce the hollow roots or submersed stems of aquatic plants for respiration—kind of like a ‘mosquito snorkel!’ (*Figure 1*)

Adults are medium-sized and have a ‘salt and pepper’ coloration due to the colors and patterns of scales on the wings (*Figure 2*). The life span of the adults is approximately one to two months, although

this can vary depending on environmental conditions. Females tend to outlive the males.

Female cattail mosquitoes are persistent and painful biters of humans as well as wild and domestic animals.

They have been reported to feed on chickens, quail, cattle, rabbits, armadillos, and opossums. They actively seek hosts during early evening hours but will also bite humans in shady places where adult mosquitoes are resting during the day. They can penetrate clothing with their mouthparts, and they are able to fly up to about 5 miles from their breeding sites. Ouch!

In addition to being just a biting nuisance, they are known to transmit West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalomyelitis virus to humans and animals.

So, what to do about them, you say? Good question! These mosquitoes are very difficult to control with conventional larvicides. Barrier sprays may have some effectiveness, but remember that adults can fly onto a customer’s property from long distances and may not land on treated surfaces before attacking. Removal of excessive cattail growth (source reduction) often is the only effective and economical long-term method of control. When all else fails, use an insect repellent with an EPA-registered active ingredient. Good luck!



Figure 1



Figure 2

WANDERING WEEVILS: SUMMERTIME INVADERS

PJ Liesch, Extension Entomologist,
UW Madison Insect Diagnostic Lab • pliesch@wisc.edu

One thing that stands out to me at the UW Insect Diagnostic Lab is that no two years are exactly the same. Sometimes we can anticipate insect issues (such as heavy rains and floodwater mosquitoes), but in other cases insects seem to pop up out of the blue. One surprise this year has been the sheer number of reports of broad-nosed weevils I've received at the UW Insect Diagnostic Lab—from pest management professionals and homeowners alike.

FIRST OFF, WHAT'S A WEEVIL?

Out of the 100+ different families of beetles, the weevils (Family Curculionidae) are extremely diverse with over 50,000 species in this group alone. In terms of their appearance, most weevils remind me of Gonzo from the Muppets with their very pronounced “snouts”. In the pest control industry, species such as granary and maize weevils fit that profile quite well.



However, some members of this group lack the pronounced snout. One such group, the subfamily Entiminae, is commonly referred to as the broad-nosed weevils. Their “snout” is much less pronounced, hence their name. Our common broad-nosed weevils tend to be small (around one-eighth to one-quarter inch long) and have pear-shaped bodies with a very hard, crunchy

exoskeleton; they also have “elbowed” antennae similar to ants. The color of the broad-nosed weevils can vary by species, but many are blackish or grayish.

When it comes to broad-nosed weevils, we have over 100 species in the Midwest alone. In general, these are “outdoor” species associated with plants. The larvae tend to feed on the roots of plants while

the adults often chew small notches out of the edges of foliage. Interestingly, a few species in this group have the habit of wandering indoors during the summer months. Indoors, these insects are completely harmless but can be a minor nuisance as they slowly walk on walls or floors.



Conditions in Wisconsin over the last year and a half must have been just right for some of these species, since I've had a flood of requests to help identify broad-nosed weevils in homes and other structures this summer. Often when I see “weevil” cases it'll be a handful of weevils indoors, but this year I've also seen plenty of reports of large numbers of weevils (hundreds or thousands!). The top three species I've been seeing in Wisconsin have been the strawberry root weevil (*Otiorhynchus ovatus*), the imported longhorn weevil (*Calomycterus setarius*), and the black vine weevil (*Otiorhynchus sulcatus*). There are a number of other species in this group that can invade structures as well. Due to the similar appearance of these beetles, it's often necessary to get a sample under the microscope to help confirm the exact species. Pest management professionals are always welcome to submit samples to the UW Insect Diagnostic Lab for diagnostic assistance (insectlab.russell.wisc.edu).

For pest management professionals, management of these insects is similar to other “invaders.” In the grand scheme of things, good physical exclusion can go a long way to help prevent broad-nosed weevils from getting indoors. Exterior treatments with pyrethroids can also help prevent entry. For the weevils that make it indoors, insecticide generally aren't necessary and I typically recommend that clients simply sweep or vacuum up these slow-moving pests.

NEW PRODUCT RELEASES

Advion MicroFlow Insect Bait

Tackle tough pest infestations with Advion® MicroFlow insect bait. Featuring the same active ingredient and targeted MetaActive™ effect found in other Advion brand products, this dry flowable bait can be applied deep within hard-to-reach voids and harborage areas for outstanding control of ants, cockroaches and more. It contains varying particle sizes and a highly attractive bait matrix that pests transfer to each other during grooming. The 8-oz. jar can also thread directly onto an Exacticide



power duster, and included scoops are sized for popular bulb and bellows dusters.

Now through Sept. 30, 2022, pest management professionals can enter to win an Exacticide duster to apply Advion MicroFlow in cracks, crevices and voids. To enter and view official rules, visit SyngentaPMP.com/AdvionMicroFlow.

Discreet Insect Monitor

The Discreet Insect Monitor is an effective, low-cost, low-maintenance IPM tool for professional pest control operators. The low profile device was designed to provide dark, protected voids and crevices that insects like cockroaches, silverfish, centipedes and bedbugs find attractive. This discreet monitor is moisture resistant and designed to be placed in areas where insects frequent. It provides PCOs the ability to identify exactly which pest is present in their accounts while keeping the intruders out of sight. Use in conjunction with the Catchmaster #701 Roach Lure Tab for optimal results.

The device was designed with small, narrow troughs on top to allow for the application of pesticides labeled for “crack & crevice” applications if desired. Using the Discreet Insect Monitor in this way allows PCOs to make precise applications in protected, confined areas away from pets and children.



We highlight products released within the past six months for use by pest control professionals. Companies must be WPCA members or advertisers. Inclusion of a product should not be seen as an endorsement by WPCA. For full submission guidelines, or to submit a product for consideration, contact dana@barefoot-marketing.com.

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STORED PRODUCT INSECTS: STAYING IN FOR THE WINTER

Anna Berry, BCE, B&G Equipment



As temperatures start to cool down, the likelihood of dealing with some pests also decreases. That's reflected in our equipment and service frequency. Insect light traps, which we typically associate with flies, may not be serviced as frequently in the winter because we anticipate a decrease in fly activity. Typically that's true. Large filth flies are usually coming from the exterior, which may

become too cold for their survival. But not all flying insect pests will necessarily decrease in the winter. In fact, some infestations will grow in the winter without our knowledge, in part due to decreased service.

Small fly populations are a great example of this. As most facilities (including homes) are climate-controlled, the winter inside is much warmer than the winter outside, and populations can propagate when food is available. Stored product pests work much in the same way, but are typically not as visible as small flies, resulting in a hidden infestation.

FOOD

Stored product insects are primarily moths and beetles. They undergo complete metamorphosis so the adult and juvenile stages look and behave differently from each other, and are often found in different areas. The larva has one job—to eat. It has to eat enough to sustain the rest of its development, so that it can emerge as a healthy adult ready to find its mate.

Because stored product insects are so small (most are about 1/8"), they do not need much food to

sustain their tiny bodies and they get all the water they need from the moisture in the food. This means they can happily feed off of a small amount of food, usually in a place we don't think to check (or clean). Larger food sources can hold generations of populations without us even knowing they're there until they leave their food source or we notice them in the food. Those larvae hide out—eating, growing, reproducing, and continuing the cycle—all without us knowing. What they eat will vary by species, but in general stored product insects like grain-based foods (baking mixes, cereals, flour, pet food, etc.).

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

If food and, with it, water is readily available, then the other hugely important factor for insect growth is temperature. Stored product pests are tropical in nature, they're happiest when we're happiest—at around 70 degrees plus or minus 15. When it gets cold, they slow down, eventually stop eating and reproducing and, at lower temperatures, die. Winter should be a rough time for them in the northern United States, but we tend to keep our buildings nice and warm in the winter, making it the perfect habitat for stored product insects.

Humidity can impact both the insect itself and the food it eats. Many stored product pests prefer moldy grains—they'll eat the fungi that grows on the grain. Reducing the humidity through a dehumidifier, fans, or ventilation will typically will reduce the likelihood that mold will grow on stored food and will make the environment less hospitable to the insect.

CLEANING AND INSPECTION

Whether it's a home pantry or a commercial bakery's ingredient storage area, the key to minimizing stored product insect activity is sanitation, inspection, and monitoring—all year long.

Too often, equipment in a commercial facility is put away with food debris on it and forgotten in storage. The infestation goes unnoticed until it creeps into the rest of the facility, putting the food at risk. Spillage in cracks and crevices of pallet racks, shelving, drawers, and wall/floor junctions can collect and provide an adequate food source. Regular cleaning will remove this debris, effectively removing the food and habitat of the stored product insects.

Forgotten bags of pet food, flour, or other grain-based ingredients left in the back of a pantry or warehouse can be caught through inspection and following first-in first-out product rotation. Even if we cannot clean and inspect as thoroughly as we'd like, using light and pheromone-based monitoring tools will let us know that some stored product insects have stayed for the winter.

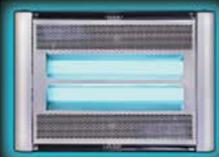




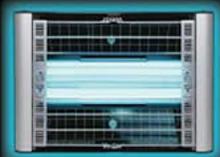
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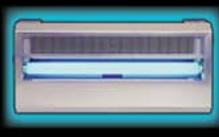
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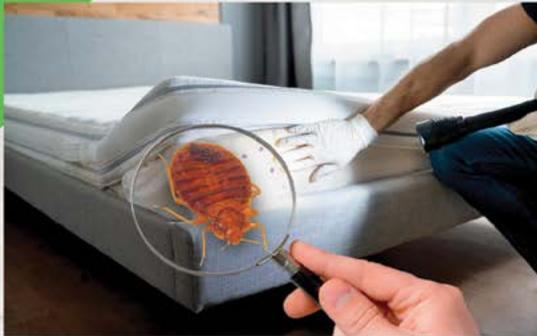


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CHAT APPS ARE YOUR NEXT SALES CHANNEL

Anne Nagro, reprinted from PCT Magazine

Chat is the next big thing for commerce, with 8% of millennials wanting to make purchases via chat apps like the ones they use to talk to friends and family, according to a recent survey by Clickatell, which helps companies engage customers through SMS, WhatsApp and other social channels.

Already, 88% of smartphone users aged 26 to 39 years old use chat to communicate with businesses.

The survey of more than 1,000 U.S. millennials conducted by Dimensional Research underscored the desire of younger consumers to move to chat not only for customer service but to also complete business transactions.

The report revealed that 93% of millennials identified significant benefits to doing business on chat. These included the ability to:

- Save time and easily get a quick response: 48%
- Respond when it is convenient for them: 43%
- Keep all conversations in the same place: 41%
- Use an app they are already using on a regular basis: 38%
- Keep conversations in one place so any agent can pick up with all history immediately: 36%
- Not have to install other apps: 34%
- Easily have businesses verify their identity or personal information: 25%
- Have businesses send offers specific to them or their account: 24%
- Not have to speak to a live person: 19%

MEETING CONSUMERS WHERE THEY ARE.

A full 71% of millennials use chat apps daily, led by Facebook Messenger, Apple iMessage, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram Chat, the research shows. This is occurring at a time when more than 6.1 billion monthly active chat users outnumber the more than 4.6 billion internet users, according to Statista 2021.

“Younger consumers have moved to chat and are ready to do business on chat,” said Pieter de Villiers, CEO and co-founder of Clickatell. “Businesses will gain a competitive edge by meeting this increasingly influential group of consumers where they are, which is on chat.”

While millennials are ready, businesses have work to do, the research reveals. Only 10% of millennials say brands “always” offer the digital communication channel of their choice—including chat app, social media and phone.

Other results of the research show that:

- 89% of millennials want to do business on chat.
- 54% of millennials have received a message through a chat app about an order pickup, delivery or package arrival.
- 38% have received a link via chat to make a payment.
- 41% have used a link via chat to book or confirm an order, appointment or a reservation.

De Villiers explained, “Consumers are broadly using chat apps with friends and family. They want to do the same with businesses, and leading brands are experimenting. We’ll see increasingly rapid uptake ahead. In the not-so-distant future, chat apps and commerce will be indelibly linked.”

What You Need From the People Who Know

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Creature Feature House Mouse

The house mouse probably originated around northern India and stowed away in grain supplies as people migrated around the world. It is now a worldwide pest and, in most cities, it is the top rodent pest. In addition to being transported to new areas as stowaways, house mice are able to enter smaller structural openings than rats and require very little living space. They also require less water than rats because, if necessary, they are able to meet their body's moisture requirement by producing metabolic water from food. Once indoors and a food resource is established, they can breed throughout the year.

House mice contaminate our food and environments with their saliva, urine, and feces. They may spread food-borne illnesses by leaving pathogens on food, preparation surfaces, or utensils. Allergic reactions, including asthma attacks, can occur from repeated exposure to mouse urinary proteins. House mice are the primary carriers of a virus, lymphocytic choriomeningitis (LCM), which occurs in about 9% of wild populations and may cause neurological disease in people. Fortunately, they do not carry hantavirus or rabies.

Mechanical traps are the ideal strategy for large house mouse infestations because they provide quick kill and a better ability to remove dead mice from an area. The best placement for traps is along frequently used routes near rub marks and on droppings. The further away traps are placed from mouse activity, the less likely they are to trap mice. When using rodenticide baits in a management program, the active ingredient cholecalciferol (vitamin D3) is an option for anticoagulant-resistant rodents and organic accounts. It also has a lower risk of secondary poisoning for birds and mammals than most anticoagulant baits.

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SPRAYER MAINTENANCE REMINDERS

Kevin White, Contree Sprayer & Equipment Co., Inc.
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As the seasons change, it's good to have a few reminders about key maintenance procedures you can do to help you save money and get a longer life out of your spraying equipment.

Here is a list of things that you can and should do on a regular basis:

- Check to make sure that your strainer is clean and that the o-ring fits the strainer bowl correctly. Doing so will help you pump last longer.
- Check your engine oil and make sure it is at the proper level and is not black in color. Also check the odor of the oil to make sure it does not smell like gasoline. If it does, change it. If it is a 5 hp

engine 160CC, it most likely will take 20 ounces of SAE 30 motor oil (or check your owners manual). Clean oil adds years to your engine life.

- When you are not using your sprayer, shut off the fuel valve and run the engine until it dies. This will help prevent varnish building up in the carburetor. It is also wise to use stabilizer in your fuel during storage. You can also use Seafoam.
- Use 91 octane fuel or fuel without ethanol in it for your small engines.
- If you have a diaphragm pump you should change out the diaphragms every 500 hours or every other year. The best practice is to change them at the end of each season and then winterize the sprayer. Now you know you will be ready for the upcoming season, and proper maintenance means less down time and more profit for you!
- Once a year, take the handgun hose off of your reel and turn it end for end. By doing so you will get twice the life your of the hose.
- The cold will be here soon! Sprayers can freeze very easily in cold weather and remember wind chill. We fix many sprayers due to freezing every fall and winter.
- Rinse out your sprayer with fresh water whenever you can. This really adds an inexpensive maintenance issue in the long run.

These are just a few of the important maintenance procedures you can do to help you end up more profitable and fewer headaches.

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TRAINING BEST PRACTICES TO BUILD SUCCESS

Griffin Voltmann, Certification Manager, Qualitypro
reprinted from *PestWorld Magazine*

If the past few years have taught us anything, it's the resiliency of the pest management industry, and the importance of solid training practices. We've seen QualityPro companies thrive during complicated circumstances by holding to the same battle-tested standards of excellence that have marked our program from the beginning. As we move into the new year, we sat down with Nancy Troyano PhD, BCE, Director of Operations Education and Training for Rentokil, to learn more about how her company applies QualityPro's standards and training best practices to build success from the individual up to the company level.

BUILDING IN CROSS-TRAINING EARLY

In the pest management industry, "cross-training" can have several meanings. While we'll be discussing training across multiple departments in a company, Nancy was quick to point out the value in also training technicians across multiple areas of specialization—her example being termite specialists training in other areas so they can continue to work during the winter. This applies to other specializations as well, since not only can a basic understanding of general pest management help build expertise in the specific services technicians are licensed to perform, it also opens them up to continue working between being called to perform their specialized services.

Beyond training technicians to perform services, Nancy emphasized the importance of showing new hires the "full picture" of company operations as part of the onboarding process. "It essentially does two things: it shows the new colleagues how all of the moving parts work together toward the common goal and it also provides them with an appreciation for the roles that their coworkers play." Tensions can rise in any work setting where the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, and Rentokil is not the first company we've spoken to who's seen value

in showing technicians what happens in the office, and sending office employees and CSRs out into the field on ride alongs. Communication and cohesion build productivity and retention and the best time to set these practices in is during the training and onboarding process. "Training and development of all colleagues in an operation should take place at regular intervals. While the focus will be primarily on development in a specific role, it is important to show colleagues how their role fits into a bigger picture."

TRAINING AND RETENTION GO HAND-IN-HAND

QualityPro's Career Pathway Model relies on identifying employee strengths, moving them along a training path that reinforces and capitalizes on those strengths. We suggest this approach because it works, primarily by emphasizing an employee's confidence and investment in what they're doing for the company. This is not to say that once an employee has identified a strength or specialty they'd like to pursue that other paths should be closed to them—on the contrary, exposing employees to new possibilities for them within the company is an excellent way to retain talented, trained employees.

Nancy sees this as an upfront investment in an employee and emphasized that "providing opportunities for cross training can be an engagement tool for employees—especially those who have mastered their current roles and are looking to diversify their skill sets or take on additional responsibilities." You want your teammates to know how they can chart their whole career inside your company, otherwise, when they are looking for a change, they might look outside.

We asked to what extent Rentokil reinvests in employees and specifically their training, and Nancy told us that the two keywords they live by are training and communication. Training all employees to a set standard improves the sense of group cohesion "as

these colleagues experience the same challenges and can build relationships with one another, providing a sense of camaraderie and the security of knowing that they are not alone in their day to day.”

The communication element exists across specializations and departments—if the company begins providing a new service, it doesn’t just impact the technicians providing it. CSRs will need to understand how to communicate it to customers, and other technicians will need to understand the service to see if it’s one they’d like to train for. Breaking down silos between departments opens employees’ eyes to further possibilities within the same company, increasing both team cohesion and retention down the line.

LESSONS LEARNED

We asked Nancy if there were any lessons learned from her training program that other businesses could use to assess their own employee training and career pathway. Her advice broke down along these lines:

Don’t train too much at once. The first priority should always be the basics needed to perform services effectively (basic training) and then efficiently (advanced training). Giving too much training upfront may overwhelm the learner and will impact how well they retain the material. Spread the training out over the first six months to a year. Keep adult learning principles in mind—regardless of the topic. Remember that adults learn best through hands-on practice, so whether it’s servicing customers or using new software in the office, it’s essential to incorporate practice. While online learning and classroom instruction holds value in a training program, having a structured and robust practical component with identified critical skills to be demonstrated by the learner is essential to ensure they are ready to perform work independently and effectively. “A trainee who is comfortable in their new skills is more likely to be successful and therefore retained.”

Don’t make the training pathway too complicated. Including basic and advanced level training is a good framework, then add in cross training and supervisor or manager training. Don’t have too many layers or levels because it becomes hard to track and may discourage employees from finishing their training.

Train for the next level, for when a supervisor or manager position opens up. Be prepared with trained employees ready to move up the path once positions open up, and make sure that institutional knowledge is preserved among multiple employees in similar jobs. The same goes for cross-training. Have employees cross-trained in positions that require competent staffing at all times so that you are not in a compromised position if someone leaves the company. And know that not everyone is cut out for managing people. It’s best to help someone discover that about themselves in a training environment, rather than after they have been promoted. Especially if you are a small business owner wearing all the hats, think about responsibilities your employees can take on for the company that don’t involve managing their peers. Things like safety, fleet management and inventory can offer opportunities for advancement without needing to be a supervisor of colleagues.

Continue to develop your employees. “Remember that training is lifelong and that regardless of how good someone is at their job there is always room for improvement.” When employees have mastered their role, consider cross-training them to maintain their engagement and to strengthen your workforce. Have routine check ins and annual goal setting so you are sure to take time to know what strengths each individual wants to work on and utilize.

Even as companies are continuing to keep people separate, all of the principles here still apply. You may have to be creative, incorporating videos to replace some of the experiences that used to be side-by-side. Building a team through mostly online training can be difficult, but the effort is worth it for the retention and employee satisfaction benefits. Make sure that your company is using the training resources and the employee career pathway available through QualityPro to give your team a strong foundation, flexibility and room to grow.

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 U.S. and Canada. QualityPro is endorsed by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA). For more information, contact QualityPro@pestworld.org.



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