

THE BUSINESS OF PEST MANAGEMENT

PESTWORLD

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2026

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THE LEGISLATIVE ISSUE

Strengthening pest management through
political advocacy

INSIDE:

DRIVING POSITIVE POLICY

DEFENDING THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

VETERANS: A SKILLS-GAP SOLUTION

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT



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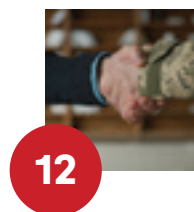
Driving Positive Policy

New presidential administrations often usher in a wave of regulatory change, sometimes without understanding the impact on industries like professional pest management. Critical advocates like NPMA remain at the center of these conversations, ensuring operators' voices are heard.



Defending the Tools of the Trade

Rodent control policy has become one of the most politically charged issues facing the pest management industry, with no signs of slowing down. Collaboration among the NPMA, statewide pest management associations, and industry leaders will be critical to maintain science-based regulations and policy.



Veterans: A Skills-Gap Solution Hiding in Plain Sight

Military and pest management roles share a similar set of skills, yet veterans and their spouses are often overlooked in the recruiting process. Here's why military veterans might just be the best hiring investment you didn't know you were missing.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



A Call to Service— In Advocacy and Employment

EMILY THOMAS KENDRICK, Arrow Exterminators

As we begin 2026, I'm struck by how service defines what our industry represents. Whether protecting public health through professional pest management or supporting those who've served our nation, commitment to a greater purpose runs deep in our community.

This issue highlights two critical areas where NPMA continues to lead: advocacy and workforce development. Both require the dedication and strategic thinking that make our industry successful.

Our public policy team tracked nearly 300 bills affecting our industry in 2025, with rodent control legislation emerging as a particularly challenging battleground. From Massachusetts to California, we've seen proposals driven more by emotion than science, threatening access to essential tools that protect public health.

The good news? Our State Policy Affairs Representatives (SPARs) are making a difference. Through coordinated grassroots efforts and persistent education of lawmakers, we're shaping policy rather than simply reacting to it.

With the 2026 midterm elections approaching—narrow margins in Congress and gubernatorial races in 36 states—the political landscape will shift. We must be ready. **Join us March 15–17, 2026, for Legislative Day**, where you'll engage directly with lawmakers on Capitol Hill and help advance critical priorities like state pesticide preemption. Your presence amplifies our collective voice when it matters most.

While we defend our industry through advocacy, we're also strengthening it through strategic workforce development. Military veterans and their spouses represent an exceptional talent pool that aligns remarkably well with our industry's needs. Their problem-solving abilities, attention to detail, reliability, and leadership capabilities are transformative.

Programs like PestVets and SkillBridge provide structured pathways to connect this talent with our industry. The success stories speak for themselves, from entry-level technicians to executives like Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jacob Kulzer, last year's David Cooksey PestVet of the Year Award recipient.

Both advocacy and workforce development require commitment, strategy, and action. I'm proud of what we're accomplishing together and optimistic about where we're headed. Thank you for your continued engagement in building an industry that protects communities while creating meaningful careers. ○

THE BUSINESS OF PEST MANAGEMENT

PESTWORLD

PUBLISHED FOR:

National Pest Management Association
10460 North Street, Fairfax, VA 22030
703.352.6762 or 800.678.6722
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PROFESSIONAL AND MEMBER WEBSITE:
npmapestworld.org

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PUBLISHED BY:
YGS Association Solutions
3650 W. Market St.
York, Pennsylvania 17404
ygsassociationsolutions.com

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LAYOUT/COVER DESIGN: Tara Smith

PUBLISHED January 2026

COVER: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/Alan Crosthwaite

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PestWorld is the bimonthly publication of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA).

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DRIVING POSITIVE POLICY

New presidential administrations often usher in a wave of regulatory change, sometimes without understanding the impact on industries like professional pest management. Critical advocates like NPMA remain at the center of these conversations, ensuring operators' voices are heard.

MEGAN STRIEGEL, SENIOR DIRECTOR
OF PUBLIC POLICY, NPMA

NPMA remains firmly committed to advocating on behalf of the professional pest management industry as President Donald Trump's second term reaches the end of its first year. From sponsoring the Bipartisan Inaugural Agriculture Ball last January to supporting key nominees for political appointments, NPMA has ensured our industry is known to decision-makers in Washington.

The events of 2025 emphasized the importance of a strong, strategic voice for professional pest management in our nation's capital. Our navigation of a shifting regulatory landscape brought on with a new administration, in addition to influence around budget decisions and preparation for the eventual introduction of the Farm Bill, showcases NPMA's continued promise to be at the center of critical conversations that will have the power to impact our industry nationwide for the year ahead and beyond.

2026 Federal and State Elections: How Will They Impact Our Advocacy?

The midterm elections on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026, could significantly reshape the political landscape at both the federal and state levels. While midterms typically experience lower voter turnout than presidential years, the stakes in 2026 are unusually high. Narrow margins in both the U.S. House and Senate mean that even minor shifts in voter sentiment could dramatically impact the balance of power—and with it, the direction of regulatory and legislative priorities that affect the pest management industry.

In Washington, Republicans are focused on defending their current trifecta while seeking to expand their majorities in the House and Senate. A larger cushion in either chamber would allow them to pass legislation more easily, removing internal divisions that slowed their efforts in 2025. Meanwhile, Democrats are focused on flipping control of at least one chamber of Congress to bring the president's legislative priorities to a halt and regain power in setting the legislative agenda.

Several Senate races are already shaping up to be competitive, particularly in Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas. The future of the Senate will be determined by just a handful of these toss-up races.

On the House side, a record number of retirements are accelerating political turnover. At least 21 members have announced their intent not to run for reelection. These open seats present both risks and opportunities as new and unfamiliar legislators will come into play.

For members of the professional pest management industry, changes in the makeup of Congress can directly influence key issues, including:

- State pesticide preemption
- Small business tax reforms
- Federal and state pesticide regulation funding
- Labor and workforce policy

While all eyes are often focused on Capitol Hill, the real action lies in the states. In the 2026 elections, 36

states will hold gubernatorial elections, including 15 open-seat races, where no incumbent is running due to term limits. As governors play a direct role in state policymaking by signing or vetoing legislation and setting regulatory priorities, these races could have a direct impact on our industry.

Even in states where we have historically enjoyed stable, science-based regulatory environments, that stability is not guaranteed moving forward. Incoming governors, regardless of their party affiliation, will bring their own priorities and beliefs into office. Whether it's a major deregulation effort like we've seen in Indiana over the past year by Gov. Mike Braun, or an attempt to move away from critical pest management tools like we saw in Colorado, our industry must be prepared to engage wherever we find ourselves.

Before a bill reaches the governor's desk, it must first pass the state legislature. With more than 80% of the nation's state legislative seats up for election, this November will be significant as we see state governments increasingly becoming the drivers of meaningful policy change where federal government is inactive. Last year, state legislatures introduced more than 200 bills that would have affected the pest control industry, and we expect to see more bills in the 2026 session.

From restrictions on pesticide use and licensing requirements to proposed regulations around wildlife management and integrated pest management standards in schools, states are the testing ground for aggressive pesticide policy. This is why the work of our state associations and, specifically, the State Policy Affairs Representatives (SPARs) is so critical. As the front-line advocates for the industry, SPARs build relationships with lawmakers, monitor key developments, and position themselves as trusted subject matter experts throughout the legislative process.

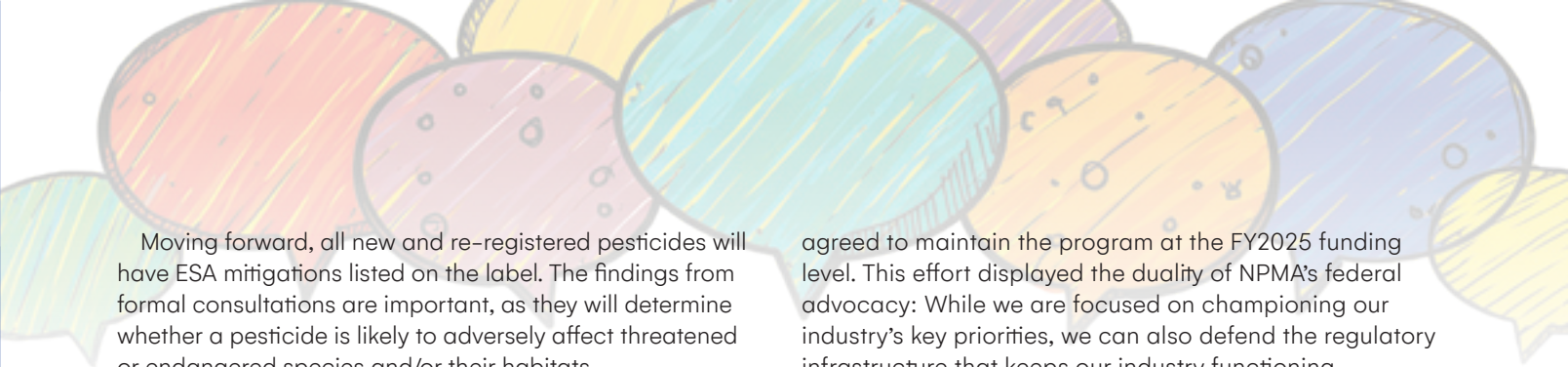
THROUGH THE REGULATORY LENS

NPMA is actively engaging with newly appointed officials across several key federal agencies, including the White House Office of Public Liaison, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). These efforts ensure that decision-makers are informed about the realities of the pest management industry before introducing policies that could directly affect business operations and regulatory compliance.

The administration's transition during the early months of Trump's second term resulted in temporary slowdowns

in major regulatory decisions. Two significant reviews, of rodenticides and of sulfuryl fluoride, were among those delayed. These products are critical tools in the pest management toolbox, especially for urban rodent control and fumigation for stored-product pests.

Rather than wait for activity, NPMA adapted by expanding our advocacy beyond our traditional channels. This included establishing new relationships with the USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy and with USFWS personnel responsible for carrying out formal Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations on pesticide use.



Moving forward, all new and re-registered pesticides will have ESA mitigations listed on the label. The findings from formal consultations are important, as they will determine whether a pesticide is likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species and/or their habitats.

To date, consultations have been completed on chemistries used in agriculture and turf or ornamental settings. The upcoming rodenticides consultation will be one of the first completed for chemistry used by our industry, and the outcome will dictate how and where these products can be used.

It is critical that regulators understand our industry's use patterns before making these decisions, and NPMA is positioned to be a trusted and credible resource—an essential move to safeguard our members' ability to operate.

FROM THE HALLS OF CONGRESS

Over on Capitol Hill, the Senate has been navigating a high-stakes confirmation process, resulting in a wave of key political appointments. Of particular importance to NPMA and the pest management industry were the confirmations of several top officials:

- Lee Zeldin, EPA administrator
- Brooke Rollins, USDA secretary
- Dudley Hoskins, USDA undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs

These agency leaders will be responsible for executing pesticide law under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and other regulatory statutes. Their perspectives on environmental regulation, agriculture, and chemical safety will shape how policies are written, implemented, and enforced. NPMA will continue engaging with these government agencies, ensuring that new leadership knows the importance of the professional pest management industry and understands the real-world impact of federal policy decisions, especially when it comes to product registrations and enforcement priorities.

One of the most important victories of the year came when NPMA successfully opposed a proposed elimination of State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) funding from the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, which was proposed in the president's fiscal year 2026 budget request. This funding is vital for supporting pesticide oversight and enforcement at the state level. Without it, state agencies could lose the capacity to ensure compliance, offer license testing and certification training, investigate misuse, and maintain public trust in pest control practices.

Because state agencies are legally prohibited from lobbying Congress, NPMA stepped in as the voice of reason. Through targeted outreach and coordination with key lawmakers, NPMA successfully argued for the restoration of STAG funds. Ultimately, both chambers

agreed to maintain the program at the FY2025 funding level. This effort displayed the duality of NPMA's federal advocacy: While we are focused on championing our industry's key priorities, we can also defend the regulatory infrastructure that keeps our industry functioning.

Late in the summer of 2025, Congress passed the sweeping reconciliation measure known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which concluded months of intense negotiations. The bill included more than \$1 trillion in cuts across federal programs and deeply affected certain nutrition assistance initiatives overseen by the House Agriculture Committee. However, it also extended funding for core agricultural programs through 2026. As both parties look for policy wins that will earn favor in the midterm elections, momentum is growing behind a full reauthorization of the Farm Bill—an opportunity that could benefit a wide range of stakeholders, including NPMA.

NPMA is focused on advancing our top legislative priority, which is the inclusion of state pesticide preemption language in the next Farm Bill. Such language would help ensure that pesticide regulation remains consistent nationwide, reinforcing the authority of FIFRA.


State pesticide preemption ensures that regulatory authority within a state remains at the state agency level, preventing a patchwork of conflicting local ordinances, which would disrupt consistency, hinder science-based regulations, and create significant compliance challenges for pest management professionals.

As we start the second year of the Trump Administration, NPMA will continue to advocate for regulatory clarity and science-based policy, working closely with federal agencies and lawmakers to ensure that the pest management industry's voice remains at the table in every critical conversation.

MAKE OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE HEARD

NPMA's annual March Legislative Day Conference is a premier federal advocacy event that brings together hundreds of pest management professionals from across the country to engage directly with lawmakers and advocate for policies that protect our industry and public health.

As we finalize preparations for this year's event, we encourage both returning attendees and first-time participants to join us in Washington, D.C. This is a unique opportunity to strengthen the valuable connections we've made with elected officials and ensure that issues like state pesticide preemption remain a top priority on Capitol Hill.

In past years, our presence in Washington has helped elevate this issue and shape the policy conversation. Let's make sure our voice continues to be heard. 

DEFENDING THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Rodent control policy has become one of the most politically charged issues facing the pest management industry, with no signs of slowing down. Collaboration among NPMA, statewide pest management associations, and industry leaders will be critical to maintain science-based regulations and policy.

MEGAN STRIEGEL, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY, NPMA

As members in our industry know all too well, rodents are more than just a nuisance. Their infestations threaten public health by spreading diseases, compromising food safety, and, when left untreated, causing extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure. In recent years, these infestations haven't been limited to homes and businesses but have found their way into statehouses across the country.

Fueled by a stalled federal registration process, rising environmental advocate pressure, and growing calls for local control, rodent control policy has become one of the most widespread and politically charged issues facing today's structural pest management industry. What once was a highly technical matter is now at the center of heated legislative debate, with bills introduced in nearly every region and rhetoric increasingly shaped by emotion over science.

While bills were seen across the country, the Northeast, especially New England, became a focal point. In 2025 alone, NPMA tracked 26 bills in the region, the majority of which aimed to restrict or ban second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs).

Massachusetts stood out as a critical battleground. Not only did it see the highest volume of rodent-related legislation, but many of these proposals also threatened NPMA's priority of maintaining state-level pesticide preemption. Nearly half of all rodenticide-related bills

tracked by NPMA originated in Boston, including more than 10 municipal petitions aimed at gaining local control over pesticide regulations.

Fortunately, despite the volume of proposals, none gained significant traction in the legislatures. This outcome reflects a broader commitment by lawmakers to uphold a consistent, statewide regulatory framework for pesticides and underscores the importance of advocacy. NPMA's work, alongside the New England Pest Management Association (NEPMA), ensured that the industry's voice remained part of the policy conversation.

THE POWER OF COORDINATED EFFORTS

Our industry's advocacy did not stop in Massachusetts. Through our partnerships with state associations, our voice was at the table, proactively engaging state lawmakers to shape and influence legislation.





What Does It Take to Be an NPMA SPAR?

A State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR) is a dedicated pest management professional who volunteers to advocate for the industry at the state level. SPARs help support NPMA's mission while ensuring our industry's voice is heard where it matters most.

Representing both their state association and NPMA, SPARs are essential to ensuring that science-based, practical, and effective pest control policies are advanced and that all harmful or misguided legislation is stopped before it can disrupt our industry.

As the direct link between our industry and policymakers, SPARs are not just observers of their state's legislative process; they are active participants bringing real-world expertise and professional credentials into policymaking spaces.

WHAT DO SPARS DO?

SPARs serve as the front-line defenders of the professional pest management industry, engaging directly with policymakers and staying alert to developments that could affect how our businesses operate. Their responsibilities include:

- Attending in-person industry events such as Legislative Day, PestWorld, and the Association Impact Meeting to build relationships and receive specialized advocacy training.
- Developing strong relationships with state legislators, agency staff, and regulators, positioning themselves as trusted resources and subject matter experts.
- Educating policymakers about the role of pest management in protecting public health, food safety, infrastructure, and the environment.
- Mobilizing grassroots advocacy by coordinating action alerts, encouraging fellow association members to contact their elected officials, and testifying at public hearings.
- Monitoring state legislation and administrative rules that could affect pest control operations, including bills related to pesticide use, licensing, rodent control, pollinator protection, and more.

- Participating in monthly NPMA SPAR calls to stay informed on emerging policy issues and coordinate nationwide advocacy efforts.

On occasion, SPARs may also draft letters, make phone calls, or testify before legislative committees, bringing their unique experiences to decision-making processes that would otherwise lack our industry's perspective.

WHO CAN BE A SPAR?

SPARs are typically seasoned professionals who understand the importance of advocacy, but the role is open to any committed member who is passionate about the industry and the importance of engaging in public policy. To become a SPAR, an individual must:

1. Be a current member of both NPMA and their state pest management association.
2. Be passionate about promoting science-based policies that protect public health and the industry.
3. Have, or have a willingness to develop, a working knowledge of their state's legislative and regulatory process.

SPARs are nominated by their state association boards and serve two-year terms. There are no term limits. SPARs typically work full time in the industry while fulfilling this vital volunteer role, balancing day-to-day operations with the higher calling of advocacy.

WHY BECOME A SPAR?

Being a SPAR is more than just a volunteer title; it's a leadership role for pest management professionals who care deeply about shaping the future of our industry. As a SPAR, you can be proud knowing that you are part of a growing force that keeps our industry safe, credible, and future-focused.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

If you're ready to make a difference, talk to your state pest control association about becoming a SPAR or vice SPAR. Whether you're a seasoned professional or rising leader, this role offers a platform to amplify your voice and defend the tools that protect public health. SPARs don't just respond to change—they lead it.

Here are two examples that illustrate the power of our coordinated efforts:

Connecticut: In Hartford, a long-running effort to ban SGARs was reintroduced in 2025. The original legislation remained unviable, but when leadership signaled an interest in moving language that would reclassify SGARs as state restricted use pesticides (RUPs) in a larger, must-pass piece of legislation, the Connecticut Pest Control Association (CTPCA) worked quickly to determine if the change would have a drastic impact on members. Once confirmed it would not, CTPCA not only removed opposition to the legislation but gave support

to its passage. This strategic decision positioned the association as a reasonable, solutions-oriented partner for future legislative discussions.

Rhode Island: In Providence, a sweeping proposal aimed to implement a pilot program for integrated rodent pest management, paired with a ban on both first- and second-generation anticoagulants. The bill was debated in both chambers and drew testimony from multiple stakeholders. Thanks to timely and coordinated engagement from NEPMA, the measure was ultimately defeated, highlighting the importance of rapid, organized advocacy when complex legislation emerges.



“ While our industry is being challenged on multiple fronts, we are not just defending our tools—we are shaping the future of pest management policy. As we move into 2026, continued engagement, unity, and proactive communication will be key. ”

RESTRICTIONS ON GLUE AND ADHESIVE TRAP BANS

While anticoagulants, specifically SGARs, continue to be the focus of most rodent-control legislation, 2025 also saw a rise in proposed bans on glue and adhesive traps, tools that are frequently used for monitoring pest populations and often used in sensitive environments. These bans are typically led by animal welfare groups and have gained traction as part of a broader effort to restrict professional pest control tools. NPMA is closely monitoring these developments, recognizing that even seemingly narrow bans can and will set dangerous precedents.

We see this playing out locally on the West Coast, with several California cities exploring local bans on these traps being used on public property. State-level legislation to restrict or ban specifically rodent glue or adhesive traps was also introduced in New Hampshire and New York but failed to advance. Still, with this being the second year that legislation like this has been introduced, we know this issue isn't going away.

SPAR PROGRAM EDUCATES LAWMAKERS

Beyond restrictions on rodent-control methods, our industry has played an active role in broader legislative discussions involving pesticide preemption, product bans, neonicotinoid regulations, public notification requirements, and school integrated pest management (IPM) policies. NPMA tracked close to 300 bills in 2025, and we anticipate more legislation to be proposed at the state level in 2026. As such, it is more critical than ever that lawmakers understand the professional pest management industry and the science-backed work we do.

This is where NPMA's State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR) program comes into play. SPARs are on the front lines of legislative engagement—often working behind the scenes before a bill is introduced to ensure our industry's voice is heard. They don't work alone; they bring the voices of their state association members with them. In 2025, three state grassroots campaigns powered by SPARs generated nearly


500 messages to state legislators, showing the collective strength and unity of our industry.

Outside of state capitols, NPMA SPARs continue to drive meaningful change by fostering strong relationships with regulatory agencies. They do this by inviting regulators to state association events, volunteering to serve on state stakeholder boards to provide practical insights from the applicator's point of view, and supporting associations in submitting clear, well-reasoned comments on proposed rules.

In South Carolina, for example, the South Carolina Pest Control Association created coordinated responses during the state's comment period on the emergency classification of SGARs as a state RUP. Through constructive dialogue and a well-organized comment effort, the association helped regulators better understand the real-world implications for certified applicators—ultimately leading to a productive conversation between state regulators and the industry before the classification was finalized and implemented.

Meanwhile, NEPMA is actively engaging in Massachusetts' third-party scientific review of rodenticide use and regulation, ensuring that the industry's perspective is represented and the work is grounded in real-world experience as the review process moves forward. By serving on the state's pesticide advisory council and maintaining open lines of communication with regulators, NEPMA leaders ensure that science and field experience guide policymaking.

These collective efforts—at both the legislative and regulatory levels—demonstrate the essential role NPMA and our SPARs play in shaping the future of pest management policy across the country, as the pace and scope of legislative activity around rodent control and pesticide regulation shows no signs of slowing down.

While our industry is being challenged on multiple fronts, we are not just defending our tools—we are shaping the future of pest management policy. As we move into 2026, continued engagement, unity, and proactive communication will be key. Now more than ever, lawmakers need to hear from professionals who understand both the science behind and the real-world benefits of professional pest management. 

A SKILLS-GAP SOLUTION HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

Military and pest management roles share a similar set of skills, yet veterans and their spouses are often overlooked in the recruiting process. Here's why military veterans might just be the best hiring investment you didn't know you were missing.

ELIZABETH BICER, M.ED.H.D., DIRECTOR OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, NPMA

When most pest management companies consider their hiring challenges, they focus on familiar solutions: job boards, referral programs, increased wages. But there's a talent pool perfectly suited for this industry that many companies overlook: military veterans and their spouses.

The hands-on, problem-solving nature of pest control work can be fulfilling and aligns well with the skills developed in military service. And that includes military spouses, whose adaptability, management skills, and ability to handle pressure are traits our industry is looking for.

We know that military experience offers skills that align remarkably well with pest management needs. Yet many companies haven't developed systematic approaches to attract this talent. That's a missed opportunity that forward-thinking competitors are already seizing through programs like NPMA's Military Hiring Program and PestVets.

SKILLS THAT MATTER MOST

Problem-solving under pressure becomes second nature when you've been trained to assess threats, develop action plans, and execute solutions in high-stakes environments. A technician identifying entry points, determining pest pressure levels, and recommending treatment protocols uses the same analytical framework a service member applies to mission planning.

When Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jacob Kulzer completed his 21-year military career, including service as a field artillery

officer and civil military operations leader in Iraq, he brought these problem-solving skills to Ecolab. Today, he is the vice president of operations for North America, leading 3,000 associates across 200,000 locations. His success demonstrates what veterans can achieve in pest management. His recent recognition as the 2025 David Cooksey PestVet of the Year by NPMA's PestVets Council acknowledges both individual excellence and the broader value veterans bring to the industry.

Attention to detail separates adequate pest control from exceptional service. Military training emphasizes precision in everything from equipment maintenance to mission execution. Veterans understand that thoroughness isn't perfectionism—it's professionalism. They conduct complete inspections, follow treatment protocols exactly, and document work accurately because cutting corners isn't in their vocabulary.

Reliability and accountability matter profoundly in an industry where missed appointments damage reputations and cost revenue. Military culture emphasizes punctuality, follow-through, and mission completion. Veterans understand that showing up on time isn't just a professional courtesy; it's fundamental to success. This reliability extends to following safety protocols, maintaining equipment properly, and completing documentation thoroughly.

Trent Kucherka, board-certified entomologist with Vesperis, understands this firsthand as a military intelligence officer.



“As a service member myself, I know how important it is to have resources and support to prepare for life after the military,” he explains.

Customer service excellence

surprises many employers who don’t associate military service with interpersonal skills. Yet veterans have extensive experience working with diverse populations in stressful situations, often crossing cultural and language barriers. They’ve learned to maintain professionalism under pressure, communicate effectively with people from all backgrounds, and de-escalate tense situations. When a customer is upset about a pest problem, these skills prove invaluable.

Leadership capability accelerates career advancement. Veterans often move quickly into supervisory and management positions because they’ve already proven their ability to lead teams, manage resources, and accomplish objectives under challenging conditions. They understand how to motivate diverse teams, delegate effectively, and maintain accountability. For growing companies, this leadership pipeline is invaluable. You’re not just hiring technicians; you’re hiring future managers and executives.

Adaptability and learning agility define military experience. Service members constantly face new challenges,

environments, and technologies. They’ve mastered the art of learning quickly and applying new knowledge immediately. This adaptability means veterans excel during training periods and continue developing throughout their careers.

THE MILITARY SPOUSE ADVANTAGE

Military spouses bring equally valuable but often overlooked capabilities. Years of managing households during deployments, navigating frequent relocations, and maintaining careers across multiple states develop exceptional organizational skills, resourcefulness, and emotional intelligence.

Flexibility and resilience define the military spouse experience. Spouses have mastered working effectively despite disrupted routines, unexpected challenges, and changing circumstances. In pest management—where weather affects schedules, customer emergencies arise unexpectedly, and seasonal demands fluctuate—this flexibility is essential.

Communication and relationship-building skills develop through years of creating new professional networks, establishing household services in unfamiliar locations, and advocating effectively across various systems. These skills translate directly to customer relationship management, team collaboration, and business development.

Strong work ethic and commitment characterize military spouses who’ve maintained career progression despite geographic instability. When they find employers who value their contributions, they demonstrate exceptional loyalty and dedication. They understand what supportive employment means and reciprocate accordingly.

THE BUSINESS CASE BEYOND SKILLS

Individual capabilities tell only part of the story. Veterans and military spouses also bring operational benefits that can improve your bottom line, including:

Lower turnover rates: Veterans typically demonstrate higher job retention than average hires. They understand commitment, appreciate stable employment, and seek long-term career opportunities rather than temporary positions. Military spouses, once they find supportive employers, show similar loyalty. Reduced turnover means lower recruitment costs, preserved institutional knowledge, and consistent customer service quality.

Faster training curves: Military personnel learn quickly and follow procedures precisely. They're accustomed to technical training, understand the importance of compliance, and take certification requirements seriously. What might take civilian hires weeks to master, veterans often grasp in days. This efficiency reduces training costs and accelerates productivity.

Safety consciousness: Veterans bring ingrained safety awareness from military service. They understand that proper protective equipment isn't optional, that shortcuts create hazards, and that safety protocols exist for critical reasons. This mindset reduces workplace accidents, workers' compensation claims, and associated costs.

Technology adoption: Modern military service involves sophisticated technology, from GPS navigation to complex information systems. Veterans typically adapt comfortably to the digital tools transforming pest management, such as routing software, mobile reporting applications, and data analytics platforms. They view technology as enabling rather than threatening, facilitating smoother implementation of new systems.

Values alignment: Both military service and pest management share a fundamental mission: protecting people and communities. Public health officials attribute much of our modern quality of life to better sanitation, better pharmaceuticals, and better pest control. For veterans accustomed to serving a higher purpose, this mission-driven work provides the same sense of meaningful contribution they experienced while in uniform. This values alignment drives engagement, performance, and retention.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO BUILD RECRUITMENT

Success in veteran recruitment doesn't happen by accident. It requires intentional strategy and consistent execution. Here's how to build an effective program.

Start by looking inward. Your best recruiting assets may already be on your payroll. Conduct an internal audit to identify veterans and military spouses currently employed by your company. Many companies are surprised to discover they already employ military-connected individuals who never mentioned their background because they weren't asked or didn't think it was relevant.

Create opportunities for these employees to self-identify through voluntary surveys, in casual conversations during

team meetings, or by adding optional military service fields to human resources (HR) records. Make it clear you're asking because you value their experience and want to leverage it for recruitment, not for any compliance or tracking purpose that might make them uncomfortable.

Turn veterans into ambassadors. Once identified, your veteran and military spouse employees become your most credible recruiters. They speak the language, understand the concerns of transitioning service members, and can authentically describe what working for your company means. Their testimonials carry far more weight than any corporate recruiting message.

Feature these employees in your recruiting materials, on your careers page, in job postings, at hiring events, and on social media. Let them share in their own words what attracted them to pest management, how their military skills transferred, what surprised them about the industry, and why they've stayed. Video testimonials are particularly powerful, but even written profiles can create connection.

Create a veteran employee resource group or informal network where military-affiliated employees can connect, share experiences, and coordinate recruitment efforts. These groups often develop creative recruitment strategies that HR departments would never consider because the participants understand both military culture and your company's authentic selling points.

Develop a veteran-specific employee referral program. Standard referral bonuses often fall flat with veteran recruitment because the networks don't overlap naturally. Create enhanced incentives specifically for referring veterans or military spouses, such as higher bonuses, recognition programs, or other meaningful rewards. Make it clear you're actively seeking these referrals and explain why.

Your veteran employees maintain connections to military communities that civilian employees simply don't access. When they know you genuinely value veteran hiring and will treat their referrals well, they'll activate these networks.

Partner strategically with military organizations. Connect with local veteran service organizations, military installations' transition assistance programs, and military spouse employment networks. These organizations exist specifically to facilitate veteran employment but often lack awareness of opportunities in pest management.

Build relationships with career counselors at nearby military bases. When service members begin transition planning, these counselors guide them toward career options, but they can only recommend industries and companies they know about. Regular engagement, facility tours, and information sessions make pest management visible to transitioning service members who might never otherwise consider it.

Participate in military hiring events and job fairs, but approach them strategically. Simply setting up a booth accomplishes little if your representatives can't speak credibly about veteran employment. Send your veteran employees to these events whenever possible; they'll have more

“The hands-on, problem-solving nature of pest control work can be fulfilling and aligns well with the skills developed in military service. And that includes military spouses, whose adaptability, management skills, and ability to handle pressure are traits our industry is looking for.”

substantive conversations and make stronger connections than recruiters without military experience.

Optimize your job postings for veteran audiences. Many veterans struggle to translate military experience into civilian job qualifications. Your postings should explicitly connect military skills to job requirements. Instead of requiring three years of “customer service experience,” for example, you might specify “experience working with diverse populations in high-pressure situations, military service strongly preferred.”

Highlight mission-driven aspects of the work. Veterans often seek meaning, not just paychecks. Emphasize how pest management protects public health, serves communities, and makes tangible differences in people’s lives. This messaging resonates far more than salary alone.

Include clear statements welcoming veterans and military spouses. Add your PestVets affiliation prominently. List your SkillBridge participation if applicable. These signal to veterans that you understand their value and have infrastructure to support their transition.

Create veteran-friendly interview processes. Train hiring managers to recognize how military experience translates to civilian competencies. A logistics coordinator managed supply chains in challenging environments. A squad leader has extensive personnel management experience. Help interviewers ask questions that allow veterans to demonstrate relevant capabilities even when their experience doesn’t match civilian job descriptions exactly.

Consider including veteran employees in interview panels when hiring for positions where you’re actively seeking veteran candidates. They help translate between military and civilian contexts, making both interviewers and candidates more comfortable.

Build onboarding that acknowledges transition challenges. Veterans and military spouses need different onboarding support than civilian hires. They may struggle with more casual work environments, need help decoding unwritten civilian workplace norms, or require guidance on terminology differences. Pairing new veteran hires with veteran mentors, those ambassadors you identified earlier, dramatically smooths this transition.

Be explicitly clear about expectations, feedback processes, and advancement pathways. Military culture provides structure that civilian workplaces often leave ambiguous. Veterans perform better when they understand exactly what success looks like and how to achieve it.

Maintain connections with SkillBridge and other pipeline programs. Don’t treat participation in the Department of Defense’s SkillBridge program as transactional. Build ongoing relationships with transition assistance programs, maintain consistent participation, and stay engaged even when you’re not actively hiring. This consistency builds a good reputation and ensures you’re top of mind when strong candidates emerge.

Report success stories from your SkillBridge participants and veteran hires back to military organizations. When they see proof that pest management careers work well for transitioning service members, they’ll recommend the industry—and your company—more actively.

TAKING ACTION

The pest management industry needs skilled professionals. Veterans and military spouses need meaningful civilian careers. The infrastructure connecting these needs, PestVets, SkillBridge, and military-specific recruiting resources already exists. What’s required now is company commitment.

Contact NPMA’s Workforce Development team to discuss PestVets participation and SkillBridge opportunities. Connect with existing PestVets companies to learn from their experiences. Designate someone internally to champion veteran recruitment and integration, ideally a veteran employee who understands both military and company cultures.

As Kulzer’s trajectory demonstrates, the skills and dedication that make someone an excellent service member translate directly into excellence in pest management. In an industry built on protecting public health and safety, veterans and military spouses can find a natural fit for their talents and an opportunity to continue serving their communities in a new, equally important way. ○

Learn more about SkillBridge and NPMA’s Military Hiring Program by emailing workforce@pestworld.org or at npmapestworld.org/skillbridge.

The New Generation of Homeowners: How Millennials and Gen Z Are Reshaping the Pest Control Industry

DR. JIM FREDERICKS, Executive Director, Professional Pest Management Alliance

The pest control industry stands at a transformational crossroads. As the millennial and Gen Z generations emerge as dominant homeowners and decision-makers, their distinct preferences, behaviors, and expectations are fundamentally reshaping how pest management companies must operate, market, and deliver services. This isn't just about staying current with today's trends; it's about understanding an emerging paradigm shift that will determine how companies will thrive in the coming decades.

Comprehensive research from the Professional Pest Management Alliance reveals striking generational differences that go far beyond simple demographic categories. Younger homeowners are rewriting the rules of customer discovery, service expectations, and communication preferences in ways that demand immediate attention from industry professionals.

THE DIGITAL DISCOVERY REVOLUTION

Generational research from the Alliance shows that internet searches have become the leading discovery method for younger homeowners, with 33% of Gen Zers and 24% of millennials turning to search engines as their primary method for finding pest control services. For Gen Zers, this represents a 74% increase over their second-most-used method (recommendations from friends and family at 19%). This data signals a fundamental transformation of the customer acquisition funnel and requires pest control companies to rethink their marketing approach.

Gen Z consumers specifically search for services “near me” and “nearby,” indicating their preference for immediate, location-based results. Despite their digital sophistication, these consumers typically use surprisingly basic search terms like “pest control” and “pest control service” rather than specific pest-related queries. This behavior pattern reveals several critical insights: broad search engine optimization, or SEO, strategies focusing on core service terms

remain essential, local search optimization has become nonnegotiable, and speed and convenience outweigh many other facets of their decision-making process.

The review platform landscape also shows generational stratification. While Google Reviews serves as the universal trust-building platform across all generations, millennials show higher engagement with Facebook page reviews, while Gen Xers and baby boomers still reference the Better Business Bureau more frequently than younger generations. This multiplatform approach means pest control companies must maintain consistent, positive online presence across various review platforms rather than focusing solely on one channel.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

The biggest business opportunity comes from understanding how different generations approach hiring professional pest control services. The data reveals an interesting contrast: Millennials show the strongest preference for hiring professionals across home services, while Gen Zers take a more selective approach that changes as they gain experience as homeowners.

Millennials lead all generations in professional service utilization, with 37% reporting they “almost always” hire professionals for home services. This contrasts sharply with Gen Zers; 33% report they rarely hire professionals, preferring to attempt do-it-yourself (DIY) solutions before engaging professional services. However, 67% of Gen Zers “almost always” hire professionals or hire professionals for unfamiliar tasks, suggesting they’re not against professional services. They’re just more strategic, opting for DIY when they feel confident and bringing in pros when needed.

Among regular pest control users, 76% of millennials maintain ongoing service relationships, with one-third opting for monthly service visits. This preference for regular preventive care aligns perfectly with their broader life-stage priorities around homeownership and financial

stability. For pest control companies, this represents the sweet spot for building predictable revenue streams through subscription-based service models.

The primary barriers to regular pest control service adoption remain consistent across generations: not seeing a visible need and cost concerns rank in the top three reasons for more than half of consumers in all generations. Successful subscription models address these concerns through educational marketing that demonstrates the hidden risks of pest infestations and the long-term cost benefits of prevention versus reaction, transparent pricing structures that allow for easy cost comparison, and flexible service levels that accommodate seasonal needs and budget considerations.

A NEW ERA OF COMMUNICATION

The communication preferences of younger homeowners represent perhaps the most dramatic departure from traditional pest control service models. While phone calls remain the most preferred communication method across all generations, younger consumers demonstrate a strong appetite for digital interaction options. More than half of consumers find interactive communication options appealing, including text reminders, mobile alerts, and online booking and payment systems. However, adoption rates vary significantly by generation, with over 50% of millennials and Gen Zers expressing interest in pest activity remote-monitoring services using smart devices, while less than one-third of boomers find remote monitoring appealing.

The most successful communication strategies embrace omnichannel approaches. Text messaging appeals to younger consumers' preference for quick, nonintrusive communication for appointment reminders and service updates. Mobile apps provide self-service capabilities for scheduling, payment, and service history that align with younger consumers' expectations for digital control. Email serves informational needs for detailed service reports and educational content, while phone calls remain important for complex issues and relationship-building. Social media platforms also play distinct roles across generations.

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE

Beyond demographic data, understanding the deeper motivations and values of younger pest control customers

provides crucial insights for effective engagement strategies. Their personal values emphasize growth and recognition over traditional values like safety, and they prefer flexible learning formats that accommodate their lifestyle preferences.

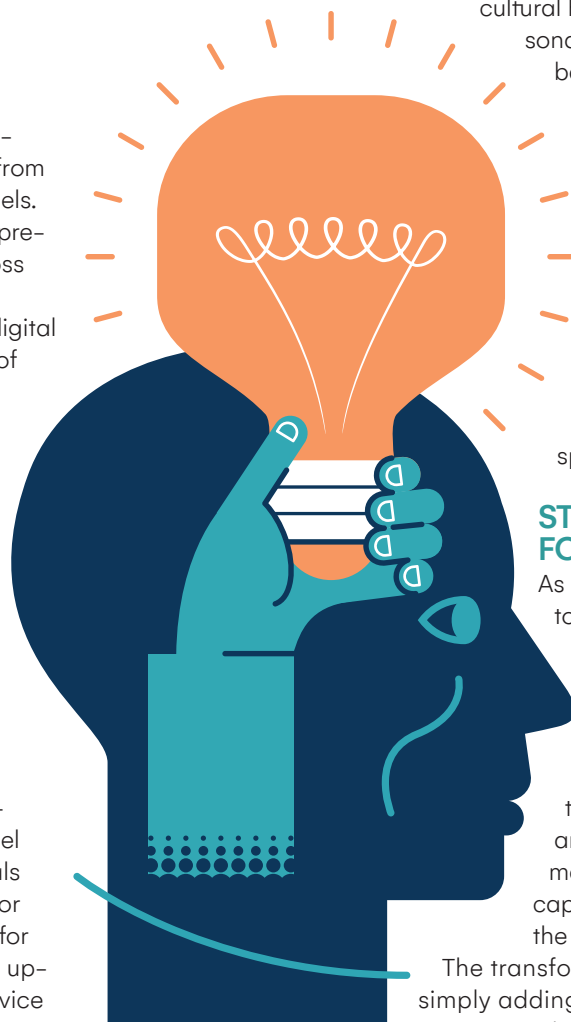
This achievement-oriented pragmatism suggests that marketing messages should position hiring pest control services as a smart, informed decision that supports broader life goals. Marketing should also emphasize the time-saving aspects of professional service that allow younger customers to focus on career and educational pursuits, while educational content marketing respects their desire for information and control over their decisions.

Millennial pest control users demonstrate a strong focus on education and career advancement. They value cultural heritage significantly, and their personal values show mixed prioritization between autonomy and safety. For millennials, successful marketing frames pest control as essential infrastructure for the stable, healthy homes they're building for their families. Messages should emphasize the financial wisdom of preventive care and the peace of mind that comes with professional service, connecting pest control to their values around creating safe spaces for family life.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION FOR SUCCESS

As millennials and Gen Zers continue to mature into primary homeowners and decision-makers, their preferences will increasingly define industry standards rather than represent niche market segments. Companies that adapt their marketing, service delivery, and communication strategies to meet these evolving expectations will capture considerable market share in the coming decade.

The transformation requires more than simply adding digital features to traditional service models. It demands fundamental rethinking of how pest control companies create value, communicate with customers, and deliver ongoing service relationships. The most successful companies will bridge the gap between traditional pest management expertise and modern service expectations while maintaining the professional competence and trust that define excellent pest control service. Companies that embrace this change will find themselves well-positioned to serve the next generation of homeowners, who will represent the industry's growth engine for decades to come. ○



STANDARDS

Investing in Yourself: Why Professional Credentials Are Your Best Career Move

BRADLEY DUNCAN, M.Ed.H.D., Senior Director of Certification, NPMA

In a job market where hiring managers are often flooded with hundreds of applications and responses to a job posting, those who hold industry-specific certifications are more likely to stand out. Certifications and credentials signal credibility, mastery of skills, and investment in not only the industry, but also in their careers.

Professional certification is a chance for employees to build on existing knowledge or skill sets and distinguish themselves from uncertified peers. Compared to traditional credentials such as college degrees, industry-specific certifications demonstrate a more precise and applicable skill set, while the college degree is based on broad general education requirements and generic courses to indicate a major.

STANDING OUT IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET

Your certification becomes your professional differentiator before you ever walk into an interview. While others may claim they know the material or have years of experience, your credential provides objective, third-party validation of your expertise. This is particularly valuable for professionals who might not have traditional four-year degrees but do possess deep, specialized knowledge in their field.

Consider the practical reality of modern hiring: Recruiters and hiring managers often spend less than a minute on an initial résumé review. Certifications create immediate visual markers that catch the eye and signal serious professional commitment. They transform your résumé from just another application into evidence of verified competence.

In professional pest management, where technology is driving rapid advances in required knowledge and skills, certifications you've earned demonstrate your commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth. Your certifications get your résumé past the first cut and onto the desk of a decision-maker.

OPENING DOORS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond simply landing interviews, credentials unlock opportunities that might otherwise remain invisible to you. Many specialized positions, supervisory roles, and advancement opportunities have certification requirements built into the job description. Without the credential, you're not just less competitive, you're ineligible entirely.

Certifications also position you for lateral moves into specialized niches within your industry. In pest management, this might mean moving into commercial accounts, specializing in integrated pest management consulting, or focusing on specific pest categories that require advanced knowledge.

Each of these specializations typically commands higher compensation and offers more interesting, complex work that keeps you engaged and growing professionally.

For those with entrepreneurial ambitions, credentials are even more critical. Starting your own pest management business or working as an independent contractor requires not just the technical knowledge, but the credibility that credentials provide. Clients hiring independent professionals want assurance that they're working with someone who meets industry standards, and credentials provide that assurance immediately.

CLIENT TRUST STARTS WITH CREDENTIALS

Clients enjoy an array of benefits when working with pest management professionals who hold certifications. Perhaps the most underrated benefit of professional credentialing is the confidence it builds. When you've studied the theory, practiced the applications, and passed rigorous examinations, you know your stuff. This knowledge translates into confidence that not only your employer and colleagues but also your clients can sense.

You can explain treatment options clearly, answer technical questions authoritatively, and provide recommendations backed by verified expertise. Clients notice the difference between someone who's guessing or relying solely on experience versus someone who can cite best practices, explain the science behind treatments, and discuss integrated approaches with authority.

Clients also enjoy risk mitigation, which is especially important in an industry where public health is at stake, through not only the mitigation and prevention of pest issues but also proper application and storage of potentially dangerous chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency regulates and oversees pesticides by issuing guidance and warnings on proper usage, and certifications can verify that professionals are up to date on proper application techniques and safe usage.

SAFETY AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The pest management industry carries unique responsibilities. You enter people's homes, businesses, and food preparation areas. You use products that, while essential for pest control, require careful handling and application. One mistake can result in health consequences, property damage, or environmental harm.

Successfully completing certification programs ensures you understand not just how to eliminate pests, but how to do so safely and responsibly. This includes understanding

proper mixing ratios, application techniques, personal protective equipment, storage requirements, and emergency response procedures. In these programs, you learn about nonchemical alternatives, integrated pest management strategies, and how to minimize environmental impact while achieving effective results.

This knowledge protects everyone: your clients, their families and employees, the environment, and you. It transforms pest management from simply “killing bugs” into a professional practice grounded in science, safety, and ethical responsibility.

THE EMPLOYER’S PERSPECTIVE

You may think that because a certification can make an employee more valuable that employers would discourage earning them, likely for fear of losing the employee to the competition. However, certification increases available skills, which contributes to increased productivity, not just from certified employees but through the opportunities it gives to other staff members who can learn by osmosis and direct knowledge-sharing.

Supporting certification achievements catalyzes trust and loyalty for employers. Due to their highly structured and repeatable nature, certifications can be a valuable tool for helping employers expand their supply of available skills, particularly in industries experiencing a shortage of workers in critical areas.

Forward-thinking employers recognize that investing in employee certification creates multiple benefits that far outweigh any risk of losing talent. First, certified employees make fewer mistakes, reducing liability exposure and potential costs from callbacks, complaints, or regulatory violations. In pest management, where improper application can result in significant fines or legal action, having certified technicians isn’t just nice to have—it’s risk management.

Certified employees also enhance the company’s reputation and marketability. Companies can promote their certified workforce in marketing materials, bid proposals, and client presentations. For commercial accounts, property management companies, and institutional clients, working with a team of certified professionals often is mandated. Companies with more certified staff can compete for higher-value contracts that less-qualified competitors cannot pursue.

Employee retention improves when companies support certification. Paying for employee certification shows appreciation for the work employees already do and demonstrates trust in their abilities. Employees who receive this support feel valued and invested in, creating loyalty

that’s difficult to replicate through salary alone. The cost of certification is minimal compared to the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training replacement employees.

Additionally, obtaining the certificate often involves attending some form of classes or seminars alongside other professionals in the field, allowing employees the chance to talk to their peers and come back with new ideas for how to make the company function better. This exposure to industry trends, best practices from other companies, and innovative approaches provides value that extends far beyond the individual employee’s knowledge gain.

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Earning credentials transforms how you see yourself professionally. It’s the difference between having a job and having a career, between being a worker and being a professional. This shift in identity affects everything from how you present yourself to the standards you hold yourself to and the trajectory you envision for your future.


Your credentials become part of your professional story. They are evidence that you’re someone who sets ambitious goals and achieves them, who values excellence, and who takes their career seriously. This narrative resonates not just with current and future employers but also with clients, colleagues, and yourself.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Professional credentialing requires commitment, time, and often financial investment. However, it is one of the most powerful tools available for career advancement in the trades and professional services. Most professional certifications can be earned in months for a fraction of the cost of a college degree, providing immediate, practical returns.

Start by researching the specific certifications most valued in your segment of the pest management industry. Talk to certified professionals about their experiences and the doors that opened after earning their credentials. Investigate whether your employer offers support for certification, as many companies will cover exam fees and study materials or will provide paid study time for employees pursuing industry credentials.

YOUR CAREER DESERVES THIS INVESTMENT

Professional credentials represent more than just another line on your résumé. They’re a commitment to excellence, a demonstration of expertise, and a powerful differentiator in competitive job markets. The combination of practical benefits (career opportunities, client trust, and employer value) with personal rewards (confidence, professional identity, and achievement) makes credentialing one of the most impactful investments you can make in your career. 





Navigating Regulatory Compliance

ROBBIE HOBBS, Chief Product Officer, WorkWave

Q Pest management professionals (PMPs) frequently face significant concerns regarding regulatory compliance and liability. How is WorkWave advancing its intelligent operating platform to help customers navigate industry-specific regulations around topics like integrated pest management (IPM) and the security of customer data?

A Compliance is a nonnegotiable aspect of the pest control industry. From chemical usage reporting to data privacy laws, PMPs have to navigate a complex and evolving regulatory landscape. PestPac by WorkWave is designed to be a powerful, unified tool in this effort, with features built to simplify compliance and mitigate risk.

PMPs are all familiar with the regulatory forms they need to submit to maintain chemical compliance, especially when it comes to IPM. Tracking chemical applications, along with how they're used as part of a larger strategy, can be demanding, especially when paper forms are involved. Streamlining that process with digital forms builds everything into a technician's service process and ensures critical compliance forms are always filled out and submitted.

Financial compliance is another critical area for PMPs. Integrated payment processing solutions that are payment card industry (PCI) compliant ensure that every credit card transaction is handled according to the industry's highest security standards. This secure environment protects your business and your customers from financial fraud.

Q WorkWave is committed to developing an intelligent operating platform that harnesses the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and data. For the typical PMP owner-operator, what are the practical implications of this, and which AI-native workflows will deliver the most substantial benefits in terms of operational efficiency and growth?

A WorkWave's philosophy is that AI should be intuitive and indispensable. Pairing that technology with pest control industry expertise allows PMPs to solve problems better, faster, and cheaper than we could before. Instead of bolting on confusing AI features, we build AI-native workflows directly into our platform. This means the intelligence works for you behind the scenes, without requiring a steep learning curve.

For a PMP, this translates to smarter, more efficient operations. By using AI to analyze data for improved performance at virtually every step, users can identify patterns in pest activity across specific neighborhoods or seasons and launch targeted marketing campaigns in areas where customers are most likely to sign up. WorkWave's proprietary algorithm provides true route optimization to save time, fuel, and vehicle wear and tear when servicing customers.

By freeing up their teams to focus on high-value activities, PMPs simultaneously create a more efficient environment and build strong employee satisfaction.

Q How does WorkWave ensure that its platform remains intuitive and purpose-built for the distinct workflows of the pest control industry while simultaneously integrating financial tools that immediately enhance a PMP's cash flow and improve the customer experience?

A Pest control today is a recurring service, but it wasn't always. PestPac has been critical in moving end consumers to subscription contracts with monthly billing arrangements, even when service is provided at different frequencies. Building the product to make it easier to run a subscription-based pest control business model is also a huge reason why M&A is so common for PestPac customers. Our customers are better at running these types of business models, for which investors pay a premium. We're constantly thinking like that as we evolve our product. Our payments product includes tokenization and Account Updater functionality, which prevents involuntary churn and keeps subscriptions active. Our data product helps our customers identify which of their clients are highly likely to move to auto-pay arrangements.

That all comes from working directly with PMPs to dive into their day-to-day processes and create a platform that feels natural and logical to use. Seeing a gap in payment integration, we've created a suite of tools that allows PMPs to get paid faster with less effort, improve financial security for their clients, and even close on sales they wouldn't otherwise.

Disconnected billing and invoicing processes are a major drain on time and resources. A customer portal where clients can view their service history, pay invoices, and request new services at their convenience, along with a suite of other accepted payment options, keeps clients more satisfied and your cash flowing. Autopay and Account Updater make the process even smoother.

By focusing resources where customer needs are greatest and ensuring technology is put to work in the right places, PMPs have the potential to deliver service that satisfies clients in ways that simply weren't attainable in the past and drive their businesses to new heights with data-driven insight. 

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NPMA EVENT CALENDAR

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?



GET TO KNOW

ASHLEY HEAVRIN

Director of Customer Experience
Rottler Pest Solutions
St. Louis

How did you get started in the industry?

I graduated from college in 2008 with a degree in interior design during an economic downturn and couldn't find a job in my field. While waiting for the market to rebound, I started working in customer service and landed at American Pest in the Washington, D.C., metro area. I knew the cousin of the owner—pretty much the classic “how did you get into pest control” story.

What's the most unusual item in your office or workspace?

Our pet rat, Tapioca the Destroyer. She's 2 years old, a complete menace, and lives up to her name.

Did you have any mentors along the way? Who are they, and how did they influence your career path?

So many, and that's honestly what has kept me in the industry. Early on, I commuted to work with my neighbor, David Billingsly, who at the time was preparing to be president of American Pest. If you know D.C. traffic, then you can imagine the hours of invaluable (and sometimes forced) coaching I received. David is still one of my biggest cheerleaders and has been instrumental in helping me find my way. I also had incredible peers at American, Jen Blondo and Kevin Poland, who constantly pushed me, challenged me, and helped me discover my focus. It was an inspiring environment to grow in.

What's the biggest learning experience you've had?

Be brave. When American joined Anticimex, there was a lot of change, and I kept hearing that advice. Stepping into the uncomfortable is where things get interesting—and more fun.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

“Keep it simple, stupid.” Not original to Billingsly, but he said it to me often whenever I was overthinking. I still hear it in my head whenever I'm problem-solving.

What's your secret talent?

I grew up on a farm, and my family owned an excavating business, so I can drive tractors and most excavating equipment. My spouse worries that one day I'll rent a backhoe and dig a pool in the backyard.

What life skill do you wish you had cultivated or were better at?

Cooking. I can make a few of my grandma's recipes, but without my spouse (a great cook), I'd live on cereal.

What are you most excited about these days?

Watching my kid's interests grow as they navigate middle school. It's a blast trying to keep up.

What's the best compliment you've ever received?

Recently, my kid told me I'm a great teacher and suggested I should teach middle school. (No thanks!) Compliments from your kids hit differently.

What keeps you awake at night?

Dreaming up home renovation projects.

What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

Be a flexible thinker.

What was one of the best parties you've ever been to?

My birthday in September. I invited friends and family, told them to bring headlamps, and cut the power to the house. We ate pizza, drank wine, and swapped all 20-plus light switches to vintage push-button ones to match my Second Empire home. At the end of the night, the power came back on, the house didn't catch fire, and everyone left with tools and a tool belt.

Who would play you in the film of your life?

Ashley Judd. Because 1) she's an Ashley, and 2) she's amazing.

What is your guiltiest pleasure?

Pie and watching “The Real Housewives”—preferably at the same time.

What's one thing you had to learn the hard way?

To speak up.

Describe your perfect day.

Breakfast at The Mud House, lunch at Blues City Deli, cocktails at Frazer's, and dinner at Peacemaker with my closest friends and family. Then we'd head to Venice Café for live music. Very St. Louis!

Finally, what do you want to be when you grow up?

My mom. She's a fantastic person. ☺

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Your influence matters. Legislative Day unites pest management professionals to speak with one powerful voice as we showcase our essential role in protecting public health, food, and property.

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TOGETHER, WE MAKE OUR INDUSTRY STRONGER AND OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER.

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NPMA Board of Directors Meeting

SUNDAY, MARCH 15

Full Program Begins

Committee & Council Meetings

Welcome Reception

MONDAY, MARCH 16

Committee & Council Meetings

Kids' Program

Luncheon & Keynote Presentations

Issues Briefing

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