



# PMP BUSINESS PLANNER 2017

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# Why your business isn't growing

PMP's "Marketing Matters" columnist offers reasons for, and solutions to, this common industry problem.

By Harvey Goldglantz | Contributor

**M**any years ago, when I first began writing for this magazine, one of my first columns was titled, "Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail."

These days, many of the questions I receive for my monthly Q&A column still relate to how to get from point A to point B. Therefore, I will focus once again on a question I am often asked, but can't answer in detail in my monthly Q&A column due to space limitations. That question is, "Why isn't my business growing?"

The question is simple. The answer, not so much. What follow are 15 common growth pitfalls and how to overcome them.

## 1. YOU DON'T HAVE A BUSINESS AND MARKETING PLAN.

Operating without a written plan is a prescription for maintaining the status quo, or worse. A lack of planning is your competitor's best friend — and a major reason for growth stagnation. While your competition is projecting, analyzing and preparing, you are worrying and trying to figure out what went wrong and why.

Sustained growth, budgeting, cost containment, increased profitability, market penetration, and efficient and productive advertising all require planning.

Without planning, predicting the future is left entirely to chance. Running your business "by the seat of your pants" does not work. If that's how you continue to operate, stop complaining. Stop blaming the business climate, the weather, competitors and everything else for your failure to get ahead. The reason is *you*.

## 2. YOU'RE NOT SYSTEMATIZED.

Systems save time and allow you to monitor the different facets of your business. To facilitate growth, a growing business needs systems in place that:

- Track weekly, monthly and quarterly production and revenue (broken down by technician).
- Compare production, production and sales goals, and performance with data from prior years.
- Develop an advertising and marketing budget, and track its performance.
- Track leads and closure rates.
- Track customer cancellation and retention rates.
- Screen prospective employees to help predict their success.
- Monitor customer satisfaction levels.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66

### 3. YOU FAIL TO DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM THE COMPETITION.

If you or your employees can't answer the question, “How are we different from our competitors?” then you have just uncovered a major reason why you're not growing.

Take time to come up with the answer to that question and then drum it into your staff. The answer should be automatic. It's key to selling value over price and closing that elusive big account.

### 4. YOU'RE NOT BUDGETING ENOUGH ON ADVERTISING AND MARKETING.

It takes money to make money. However, many small- to medium-size companies underspend when it comes to advertising and marketing. The growth of your business is directly related to how much you allocate in this area. Seven to nine percent of projected annual revenue is what small- to medium-size pest management companies should spend.

### 5. YOU'RE NOT STAFFED SUFFICIENTLY.

You say, “I don't have enough money to hire help.” I say, “You will never have enough money to hire help if you don't take a risk and get help with duties that distract you from growing your company.” Without enough staff support, you'll remain stuck.

### 6. YOU PROCRASTINATE.

When procrastination impedes forward progress, meeting your goals can be difficult, if not impossible. Often, procrastination is the accomplice of perfectionism. Waiting until the last minute gives perfectionists the ideal excuse: They just didn't have enough time. You can tell yourself that putting off one step in a long process is merely a deviation, but this behavior becomes the rule rather than the exception, and the project is never finished.

### 7. YOU ARE COMPLACENT.

Inertia can be deadly to a business. Let me give you one example: Your search engine optimization (SEO) company is not producing a good return on your investment (ROI), yet you are afraid to switch because you fear doing so could produce even worse results. Failure to act is the foundation of preserving the status quo. I recently recommended to a client that they make this change. Initially they resisted, but eventually decided to make the switch. They are now getting a 4:1 ROI on their SEO vs. the 1.5 to 1 return they were receiving.

### 8. YOUR ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (A/R) IS OVERDUE.

Start reminding your customers of their past-due

status at 30 days. This includes commercial accounts. Put a structured program into place that begins the dunning process ASAP. After 60 days, the likelihood of collection dramatically decreases. Consider putting a mandatory credit-card-on-file billing system in place.

**9. YOU DON'T DELEGATE.**

People don't delegate because it takes a lot of up-front effort. By doing the work yourself, however, you're failing to make best use of your time. Meaningfully involving other people in a project allows you to develop your employees' skills and abilities. This means that next time a similar project comes along, you can delegate the task with confidence it will be done well, with less involvement from you.

**10. YOU LIE TO YOURSELF.**

When organizations stop growing, leaders start blaming and telling themselves, "We don't really want to grow any more than this." The reality is that you are the problem. Outgrowing leadership is common, and when it happens we should just admit it. Quit lying to yourself about why your company isn't growing. Look in the mirror and say, "This has outgrown my capabilities and leadership, but I'm going to hire someone who can help me grow." If you keep blaming, you'll remain stuck.

**11. YOU'RE NOT LEADING.**

Growth and leadership go hand-in-hand. Companies that grow have strong leaders at the helm. If you run your company with an iron fist, chances are your employees are efficient, but not necessarily effective. Leaders inspire their staff. Companies with strong leadership have low employee and customer turnover. Consequently, they have greater growth and profitability.

**12. YOU'RE NOT GRASPING TODAY'S MARKET.**

Today's consumers are multi-generational and require an in-depth understanding of their buying habits. Yesteryear's sales techniques, once used across the board, are ineffective on Gen Xers and Millennials. If you're still using a

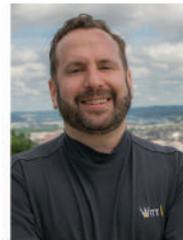
**3 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL DELEGATION**

Sometimes it's difficult to trust someone else with an important task. But delegating duties to your employees can be critical to company growth. Here are three steps to ensure success:

1. Assign the right task to the right person.
2. Provide clear and concise communication.
3. Provide supervision (more so in the beginning). *-H.G.*



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— Cassandra Mills



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— Stanford Phillips



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one-size-fits-all sales approach, you're missing the majority of your market. Do you know which customers prefer a phone call, which favor email and which would rather text?

### 13. YOU'RE NOT INVESTING ENOUGH IN YOUR BUSINESS.

Whether it's for additional inventory, new technology, more employees or extra equipment, growing companies suck up more cash than non-growing companies. Getting this cash may require borrowing money or using up whatever funds are on hand. Some owners tire of the financial demands and decide to slow down the investments — and that slows down growth.

### 14. YOU'RE NOT MAKING GOOD HIRING DECISIONS.

You cannot build a company without the right people. You need a great hiring protocol and the stomach to make the changes that become necessary as the company grows. This is easier said than done, especially when it turns out that people who were "right" for their roles in the beginning are no longer "right" in those roles as the company grows. If you want to grow, hire smart and let go of those who are dragging you down.

### 15. YOUR TURNOVER RATES ARE UNDERMINING YOUR SUCCESS.

Employee turnover and customer turnover are directly related. Your employees are your greatest asset. Although salary and benefits play an important role in keeping employees happy, they're not the deciding factor whether an employee stays or leaves. Employees' primary reason for leaving is the lack of feeling valued or appreciated. Today's generation is motivated less by money and more by quality of life. Remember to say "thank you" often. It's a great motivator. Happy employees mean happy customers.

Finally, if you're business isn't growing, don't simply maintain the status quo. This is what is referred to as insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. A course-correction in growth occurs when you alter what you're doing or how you're doing it. It is almost impossible to maintain the status quo. You either grow or wither. PMP

You can reach GOLDGLANTZ, president of Pest Control Marketing Co. and author of *Marketing Matters*, at hgpcmcinc@aol.com.

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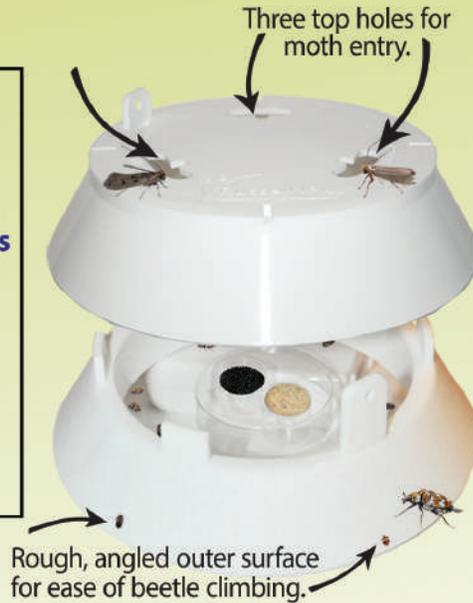
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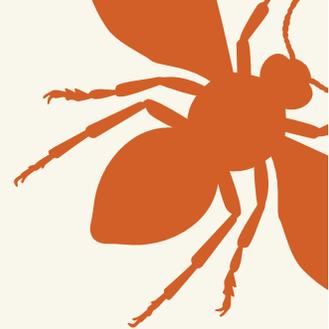


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## Optimize your office

Pest management work is done in the field, but profits are made in the office.

By Daniel Gordon, CPA | Contributor

**A**fter working with several hundred pest management professionals (PMPs) nationwide, I've observed very successful companies as well as companies in need of improvement. It's abundantly clear that profitability starts with effectively handling the administrative functions in the office.

The owner of a growing company not only has to be an



expert in pest management, but also an expert in business management. He or she must be able to manage people, a growing customer list and the detailed information that flows in and out of the firm.

Let's focus on how to manage the information and back-office work in an organized manner to allow the growth that interests many owners.

### A RELATIONSHIP BUSINESS

Pest management is not a high-margin business. Rather, it is a moderate margin business, where you generate high profits from customers who use your service on a scheduled, recurring basis. In other words, you don't hit a home run with each customer and move on to the next, as perhaps a car salesman or

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## HOW TO DEVELOP A CHECKLIST

Checklists can be used for managing any project or ongoing procedures. The best way to develop a checklist is to:

1. Determine a timeframe in which all tasks must be finished (daily procedures, weekly procedures, monthly procedures, etc.).
2. Determine which tasks need to be completed over the timeframe (customer entry, service entry, financial entry).
3. List specific procedures that must be completed in order to finish the project.
4. Execute: Complete each task on the list, and have the person who completes the task put their initials on it, thereby creating accountability and giving ownership of the task to that person.

Daily office routines that keep the machine humming must be proceduralized and consistent. In certain respects, the repetitive nature of this type of work can make it boring. However, boring is good when it comes to daily office work. It means the system is working and there are few problems. Here's an example of a daily procedure checklist:

### DAILY PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

- Check all technician paperwork or mobile information from jobs performed for the current day.
- Enter new customers and sales prospects into the computer.
- Deactivate customers who have canceled service.
- Enter sales commissions for technicians or sales reps who work on commissionable sales.
- Enter work orders for new jobs that have been sold.
- Make sure renewals are set up for any renewable work that has been sold.
- Print service orders and technician appointment listings for the next workday. Determine whether the amount of work to be performed is adequate.
- Post work to computer for work completed the prior day.
- Reprint service order forecasts by technician for the prior day. On a daily basis, no service orders should be outstanding, except for technicians who hand in their work weekly and estimate tickets.
- Apply customer payments as payments are received. —D.G.

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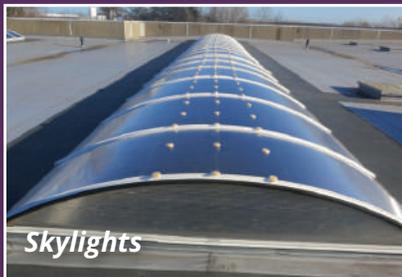
## What Birds See

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 74

real estate agent might. You foster a relationship with your customer that is ongoing, based on your ability to meet their needs in terms of quality and perceived value.

Many PMPs maintain that you lose the personal touch as you

grow. But it doesn't have to be that way if you manage your customer list correctly, and develop office procedures to manage the growth.

A pest management firm is not unlike a manufacturing business where machinery is used. The firm's "machinery" is its customer list. As

this list builds, it must be treated in a prudent manner like any other asset used in business. Therefore, the back office work in a pest management firm should focus on building, maintaining and nurturing this customer list to facilitate growth.

Each customer on this list should be serviced properly in terms of fieldwork. But it is just as easy to lose a customer because of poor office work — overbilling, incorrect scheduling, not returning phone calls in a timely manner, etc. — as it is to lose a customer for poor field service.

### CAPITALIZE ON TRENDS

If we continue the machinery comparison, we know that a well-tuned, well-maintained machine produces at a more efficient level, allowing greater output. A well-maintained customer list would also produce more output by showing key statistics about a customer — such as dollars per hour, types of services provided to a customer, renewal dates, etc. Having this type of information at your fingertips allows you to determine whether other services might be appropriate for a customer, or whether a particular customer might be a candidate for a price increase.

By manipulating your customer information, you can spot certain trends. For example, one firm with which I've worked was able to capitalize on an outbreak of cicada killer wasps (*Crabronidae*) that were tearing apart customer lawns with their nesting habits. The PMP noticed he was receiving calls from this particular neighborhood, and was able to contact his other customers in the area to offer additional service to control the outbreak.

By querying his customer list and formulating a quick letter, this PMP was able to generate several thousand dollars in new business.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82

## How can I get the information I need to manage my business; even when I am out of the office?

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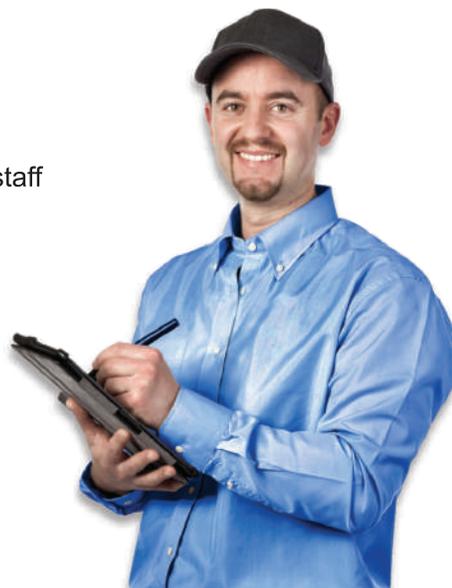
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**G**aby Terrazas, CEO of Lynwood, Calif.-based U.S. Superior Fumigations, has been an Ensystem Zythor customer since 2010 — and a happy one, at that.



Gaby Terrazas

know right away he will find out for us, right there and then. There's no ifs, ands or buts — only yes."

Terrazas says Wilson's support is reinforced by Tom Estill, ACE, who is Ensystem's Western regional stewardship and training director.

"Tom sets everything up, which is a big plus for us. They offer us training twice a year, depending on what we need," she adds. "I love their flexibility: Whereas other companies tell us what days *they* have available for us to work around their schedule, Tom works around *our* schedule."

The duo have even patiently waited an extra hour or two for U.S. Superior Fumigations crew to come back from a tough job, she points

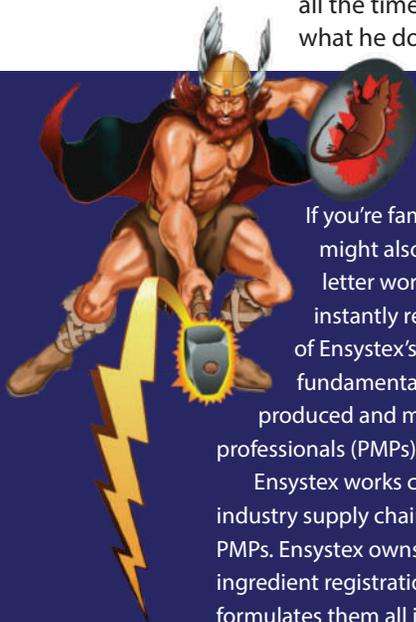


*Gaby Terrazas is a third-generation pest professional with 21 years of industry experience, including eight with U.S. Superior Fumigations.*

out: "We are very appreciative of that. They go above and beyond."

"Being both the supplier and distributor, Ensystem really provides us full benefits and a one-on-one relationship for Zythor," she says, noting that her Ensystem rep, Ed Wilson, offers U.S. Superior Fumigations steady, knowledgeable support. "Ed is always on his game,

all the time, and what he doesn't



## THOR'S QUEST CONTINUES

If you're familiar with Ensystem products, you might also be familiar with a favorite four-letter word of theirs: THOR. More than just an instantly recognizable icon and part of many of Ensystem's brand names, Thor represents a fundamental shift in how these products are produced and made available to pest management professionals (PMPs).

Ensystem works completely outside the traditional industry supply chain, selling manufacturer-direct to PMPs. Ensystem owns the technical and end-use active ingredient registrations for all its Thor products, and formulates them all in-house.

The concept of Thor is to provide PMPs with three advantages:

- 1. Immediate attention.** When you buy Ensystem products, you are dealing directly with your supplier. If you want to talk directly with upper management about a situation, all you have to do is pick up the phone or send an email.
- 2. Continued innovation.** Ensystem's smaller size allows it to maneuver quickly in the marketplace whenever there is an opportunity to market a new product or improve upon an existing product.
- 3. Personal service.** Direct field representatives are positioned throughout the United States to help you maximize your investment with Ensystem products and systems.



## GIBSON PEST CONTROL BENEFITS FROM THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION IT RECEIVES FROM ITS ENSYSTEX REP.

“Anytime I have questions about products, orders, etc., he always makes the time to speak with me.”



*Greg Gibson, owner of Gibson Pest Control, stands with his general manager, Chris Helton.*

“It is a pleasure doing business with Scott Tolbert,” summarizes Chris Helton, general manager of Gibson Pest Control, Arden, N.C.

Tolbert is Gibson Pest Control’s Ensystem representative, and it is from him that Helton orders several of the company’s general pest and termite offerings (see page 90).

Helton points to Tolbert’s communication skills and availability, which make him “stand out from the competition.”

“Anytime I have questions about products, orders, etc., he always

makes the time to speak with me,” continues Helton, who has been with Gibson Pest Control for almost two years. “Scott also makes routine visits to our office. During his visits, he always checks up on how business is going, what is working or not working for us, and how he can further assist the growth and success of our business.”

Because Ensystem sells directly to pest management professionals (PMPs), Tolbert can address any questions or issues quickly, Helton says. “The major benefit of dealing directly with a manufacturer rep



for us is product knowledge,” he says. “I believe this is due to him being solely responsible for only the products his company provides and sells.”

The Gibson Pest Control team, comprised of eight technicians, has been using Ensystem products for more than a decade.



## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON MAXXTHOR

Gibson Pest Control shares just two of several testimonials that showcase how Ensyslex products help it provide better service to its customers:

**Gibson Pest Control has provided our home service** for two years now and has been nothing short of outstanding during that time. We purchased our home and moved into the area two years ago, and immediately were presented with major issues with insects and rodents. They have succeeded in reducing our incidence of both almost completely by using a product called Maxxthor! (Fact: we live in the middle of over 5,000 acres of conservancy forest and mountains, so it would be unreasonable to expect ZERO pests!)

In addition to our regular visits, they have come back on a couple of specially requested visits and addressed those problems promptly and successfully, as well. As always, we have been supported by a knowledgeable tech that is on time, prepared, does a thorough job, explains what was done, and who answers any questions we have about the treatment! You can do no better than choosing Gibson for your pest control needs. We are so pleased to have them as our pest control company. — *William, Zirconia, N.C.*

**Our technician did a service call** to handle a new issue with carpenter bees in the fence. He did an outstanding job! He identified the problem, discussed treatment methods utilizing the product Maxxthor, gave me an education on carpenter bee behavior, answered all my questions, and provided recommendations for prevention in the future.

I've been a customer of Gibson Pest Control for almost four years. My plan is to be their customer for life. The technician represented everything that I've experienced with this company: professionalism, in-depth knowledge of products and pest, respect for the property and pets, great communication skills, patience in answering all my questions and outstanding customer service. I highly recommend this company. — *Patti, Asheville, N.C.*

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### MAXXTHOR SG



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### PROTHOR SC2



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### PROTHOR WSP



Water-soluble packets are ideal for termite treatments around buildings.



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# Why your business isn't growing

PMP's "Marketing Matters" columnist offers reasons for, and solutions to, this common industry problem.

By Harvey Goldglantz | Contributor

**M**any years ago, when I first began writing for this magazine, one of my first columns was titled, "Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail."

These days, many of the questions I receive for my monthly Q&A column still relate to how to get from point A to point B. Therefore, I will focus once again on a question I am often asked, but can't answer in detail in my monthly Q&A column due to space limitations. That question is, "Why isn't my business growing?"

The question is simple. The answer, not so much. What follow are 15 common growth pitfalls and how to overcome them.

## 1. YOU DON'T HAVE A BUSINESS AND MARKETING PLAN.

Operating without a written plan is a prescription for maintaining the status quo, or worse. A lack of planning is your competitor's best friend — and a major reason for growth stagnation. While your competition is projecting, analyzing and preparing, you are worrying and trying to figure out what went wrong and why.

Sustained growth, budgeting, cost containment, increased profitability, market penetration, and efficient and productive advertising all require planning.

Without planning, predicting the future is left entirely to chance. Running your business "by the seat of your pants" does not work. If that's how you continue to operate, stop complaining. Stop blaming the business climate, the weather, competitors and everything else for your failure to get ahead. The reason is *you*.

## 2. YOU'RE NOT SYSTEMATIZED.

Systems save time and allow you to monitor the different facets of your business. To facilitate growth, a growing business needs systems in place that:

- Track weekly, monthly and quarterly production and revenue (broken down by technician).
- Compare production, production and sales goals, and performance with data from prior years.
- Develop an advertising and marketing budget, and track its performance.
- Track leads and closure rates.
- Track customer cancellation and retention rates.
- Screen prospective employees to help predict their success.
- Monitor customer satisfaction levels.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68





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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66

### 3. YOU FAIL TO DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM THE COMPETITION.

If you or your employees can't answer the question, “How are we different from our competitors?” then you have just uncovered a major reason why you're not growing.

Take time to come up with the answer to that question and then drum it into your staff. The answer should be automatic. It's key to selling value over price and closing that elusive big account.

### 4. YOU'RE NOT BUDGETING ENOUGH ON ADVERTISING AND MARKETING.

It takes money to make money. However, many small- to medium-size companies underspend when it comes to advertising and marketing. The growth of your business is directly related to how much you allocate in this area. Seven to nine percent of projected annual revenue is what small- to medium-size pest management companies should spend.

### 5. YOU'RE NOT STAFFED SUFFICIENTLY.

You say, “I don't have enough money to hire help.” I say, “You will never have enough money to hire help if you don't take a risk and get help with duties that distract you from growing your company.” Without enough staff support, you'll remain stuck.

### 6. YOU PROCRASTINATE.

When procrastination impedes forward progress, meeting your goals can be difficult, if not impossible. Often, procrastination is the accomplice of perfectionism. Waiting until the last minute gives perfectionists the ideal excuse: They just didn't have enough time. You can tell yourself that putting off one step in a long process is merely a deviation, but this behavior becomes the rule rather than the exception, and the project is never finished.

### 7. YOU ARE COMPLACENT.

Inertia can be deadly to a business. Let me give you one example: Your search engine optimization (SEO) company is not producing a good return on your investment (ROI), yet you are afraid to switch because you fear doing so could produce even worse results. Failure to act is the foundation of preserving the status quo. I recently recommended to a client that they make this change. Initially they resisted, but eventually decided to make the switch. They are now getting a 4:1 ROI on their SEO vs. the 1.5 to 1 return they were receiving.

### 8. YOUR ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (A/R) IS OVERDUE.

Start reminding your customers of their past-due

status at 30 days. This includes commercial accounts. Put a structured program into place that begins the dunning process ASAP. After 60 days, the likelihood of collection dramatically decreases. Consider putting a mandatory credit-card-on-file billing system in place.

#### 9. YOU DON'T DELEGATE.

People don't delegate because it takes a lot of up-front effort. By doing the work yourself, however, you're failing to make best use of your time. Meaningfully involving other people in a project allows you to develop your employees' skills and abilities. This means that next time a similar project comes along, you can delegate the task with confidence it will be done well, with less involvement from you.

#### 10. YOU LIE TO YOURSELF.

When organizations stop growing, leaders start blaming and telling themselves, "We don't really want to grow any more than this." The reality is that you are the problem. Outgrowing leadership is common, and when it happens we should just admit it. Quit lying to yourself about why your company isn't growing. Look in the mirror and say, "This has outgrown my capabilities and leadership, but I'm going to hire someone who can help me grow." If you keep blaming, you'll remain stuck.

#### 11. YOU'RE NOT LEADING.

Growth and leadership go hand-in-hand. Companies that grow have strong leaders at the helm. If you run your company with an iron fist, chances are your employees are efficient, but not necessarily effective. Leaders inspire their staff. Companies with strong leadership have low employee and customer turnover. Consequently, they have greater growth and profitability.

#### 12. YOU'RE NOT GRASPING TODAY'S MARKET.

Today's consumers are multi-generational and require an in-depth understanding of their buying habits. Yesteryear's sales techniques, once used across the board, are ineffective on Gen Xers and Millennials. If you're still using a

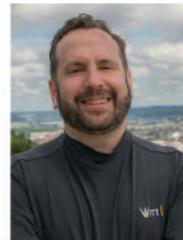
### 3 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL DELEGATION

Sometimes it's difficult to trust someone else with an important task. But delegating duties to your employees can be critical to company growth. Here are three steps to ensure success:

1. Assign the right task to the right person.
2. Provide clear and concise communication.
3. Provide supervision (more so in the beginning). —H.G.



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— Adam Witt



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— Marc Dykstra



"ACES directly addresses the continued security concerns that most homeowners have. Ultimately, ACES qualifies us as the premier, professional pest management company in our service area"

— Cassandra Mills



"With ACES, we are creating an instant bond with our customers. Our team loves it and the customers appreciate knowing who is coming out to their home."

— Stanford Phillips



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one-size-fits-all sales approach, you're missing the majority of your market. Do you know which customers prefer a phone call, which favor email and which would rather text?

### 13. YOU'RE NOT INVESTING ENOUGH IN YOUR BUSINESS.

Whether it's for additional inventory, new technology, more employees or extra equipment, growing companies suck up more cash than non-growing companies. Getting this cash may require borrowing money or using up whatever funds are on hand. Some owners tire of the financial demands and decide to slow down the investments — and that slows down growth.

### 14. YOU'RE NOT MAKING GOOD HIRING DECISIONS.

You cannot build a company without the right people. You need a great hiring protocol and the stomach to make the changes that become necessary as the company grows. This is easier said than done, especially when it turns out that people who were "right" for their roles in the beginning are no longer "right" in those roles as the company grows. If you want to grow, hire smart and let go of those who are dragging you down.

### 15. YOUR TURNOVER RATES ARE UNDERMINING YOUR SUCCESS.

Employee turnover and customer turnover are directly related. Your employees are your greatest asset. Although salary and benefits play an important role in keeping employees happy, they're not the deciding factor whether an employee stays or leaves. Employees' primary reason for leaving is the lack of feeling valued or appreciated. Today's generation is motivated less by money and more by quality of life. Remember to say "thank you" often. It's a great motivator. Happy employees mean happy customers.

Finally, if you're business isn't growing, don't simply maintain the status quo. This is what is referred to as insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. A course-correction in growth occurs when you alter what you're doing or how you're doing it. It is almost impossible to maintain the status quo. You either grow or wither. PMP

You can reach GOLDGLANTZ, president of Pest Control Marketing Co. and author of *Marketing Matters*, at hgpcmcinc@aol.com.

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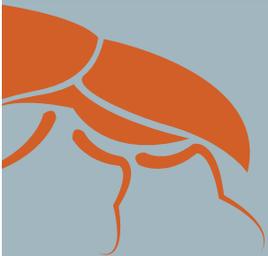


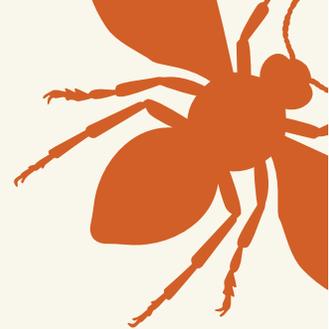
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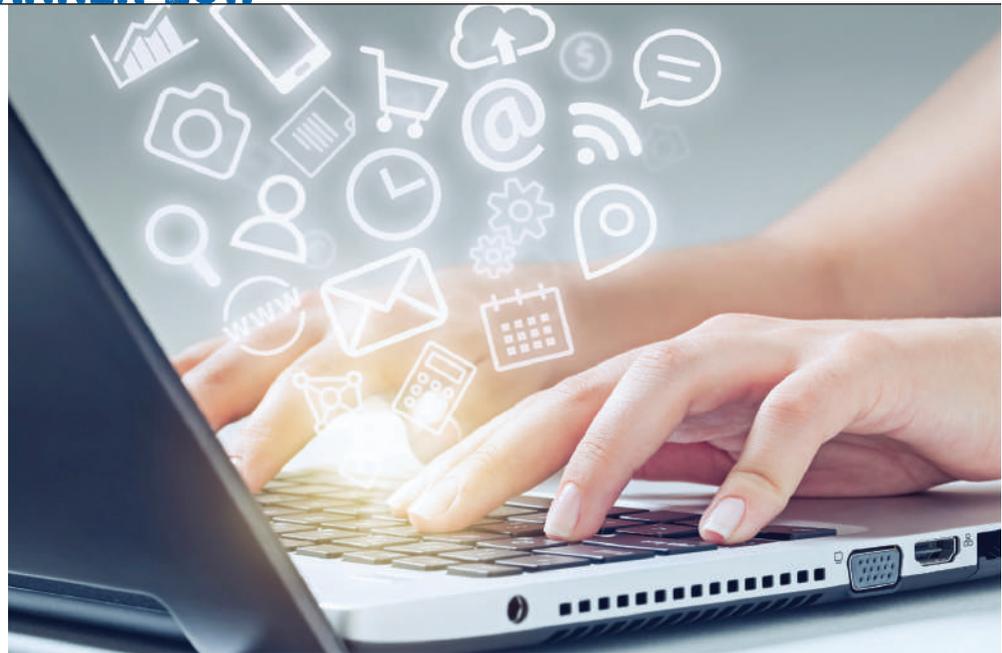
## Optimize your office

Pest management work is done in the field, but profits are made in the office.

By Daniel Gordon, CPA | Contributor

**A**fter working with several hundred pest management professionals (PMPs) nationwide, I've observed very successful companies as well as companies in need of improvement. It's abundantly clear that profitability starts with effectively handling the administrative functions in the office.

The owner of a growing company not only has to be an



expert in pest management, but also an expert in business management. He or she must be able to manage people, a growing customer list and the detailed information that flows in and out of the firm.

Let's focus on how to manage the information and back-office work in an organized manner to allow the growth that interests many owners.

### A RELATIONSHIP BUSINESS

Pest management is not a high-margin business. Rather, it is a moderate margin business, where you generate high profits from customers who use your service on a scheduled, recurring basis. In other words, you don't hit a home run with each customer and move on to the next, as perhaps a car salesman or

CONTINUED ON PAGE 76

## HOW TO DEVELOP A CHECKLIST

Checklists can be used for managing any project or ongoing procedures. The best way to develop a checklist is to:

1. Determine a timeframe in which all tasks must be finished (daily procedures, weekly procedures, monthly procedures, etc.).
2. Determine which tasks need to be completed over the timeframe (customer entry, service entry, financial entry).
3. List specific procedures that must be completed in order to finish the project.
4. Execute: Complete each task on the list, and have the person who completes the task put their initials on it, thereby creating accountability and giving ownership of the task to that person.

Daily office routines that keep the machine humming must be proceduralized and consistent. In certain respects, the repetitive nature of this type of work can make it boring. However, boring is good when it comes to daily office work. It means the system is working and there are few problems. Here's an example of a daily procedure checklist:

### DAILY PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

- Check all technician paperwork or mobile information from jobs performed for the current day.
- Enter new customers and sales prospects into the computer.
- Deactivate customers who have canceled service.
- Enter sales commissions for technicians or sales reps who work on commissionable sales.
- Enter work orders for new jobs that have been sold.
- Make sure renewals are set up for any renewable work that has been sold.
- Print service orders and technician appointment listings for the next workday. Determine whether the amount of work to be performed is adequate.
- Post work to computer for work completed the prior day.
- Reprint service order forecasts by technician for the prior day. On a daily basis, no service orders should be outstanding, except for technicians who hand in their work weekly and estimate tickets.
- Apply customer payments as payments are received. —D.G.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 74

real estate agent might. You foster a relationship with your customer that is ongoing, based on your ability to meet their needs in terms of quality and perceived value.

Many PMPs maintain that you lose the personal touch as you

grow. But it doesn't have to be that way if you manage your customer list correctly, and develop office procedures to manage the growth.

A pest management firm is not unlike a manufacturing business where machinery is used. The firm's "machinery" is its customer list. As

this list builds, it must be treated in a prudent manner like any other asset used in business. Therefore, the back office work in a pest management firm should focus on building, maintaining and nurturing this customer list to facilitate growth.

Each customer on this list should be serviced properly in terms of fieldwork. But it is just as easy to lose a customer because of poor office work — overbilling, incorrect scheduling, not returning phone calls in a timely manner, etc. — as it is to lose a customer for poor field service.

## How can I get the information I need to manage my business; even when I am out of the office?

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Blu Star integrates all of your administrative and field activities into easy to use formats and easy to understand reports. You (as well as your Techs and admin) can access the needed information whether on a phone in the field or a desktop computer in the office.

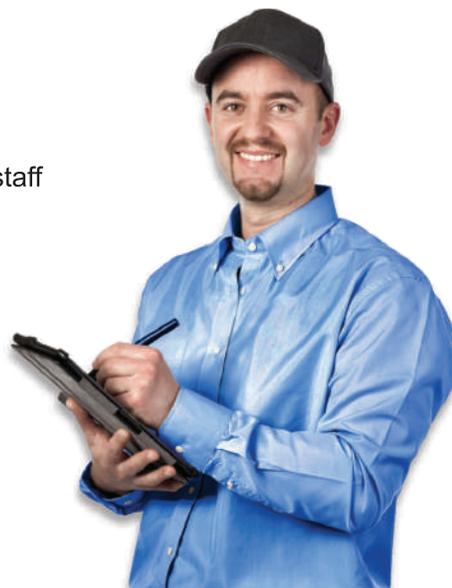
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### **CAPITALIZE ON TRENDS**

If we continue the machinery comparison, we know that a well-tuned, well-maintained machine produces at a more efficient level, allowing greater output. A well-maintained customer list would also produce more output by showing key statistics about a customer — such as dollars per hour, types of services provided to a customer, renewal dates, etc. Having this type of information at your fingertips allows you to determine whether other services might be appropriate for a customer, or whether a particular customer might be a candidate for a price increase.

By manipulating your customer information, you can spot certain trends. For example, one firm with which I've worked was able to capitalize on an outbreak of cicada killer wasps (Crabronidae) that were tearing apart customer lawns with their nesting habits. The PMP noticed he was receiving calls from this particular neighborhood, and was able to contact his other customers in the area to offer additional service to control the outbreak.

By querying his customer list and formulating a quick letter, this PMP was able to generate several thousand dollars in new business.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82



# Ensystem's support and quality make the difference for PMPs

**U.S. SUPERIOR FUMIGATIONS APPRECIATES BOTH THE RELIABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY OF THEIR ENSYSTEM TEAM PARTNERS.**

**G**aby Terrazas, CEO of Lynwood, Calif.-based U.S. Superior Fumigations, has been an Ensystem Zythor customer since 2010 — and a happy one, at that.



Gaby Terrazas

know right away he will find out for us, right there and then. There's no ifs, ands or buts — only yes."

Terrazas says Wilson's support is reinforced by Tom Estill, ACE, who is Ensystem's Western regional stewardship and training director.

"Tom sets everything up, which is a big plus for us. They offer us training twice a year, depending on what we need," she adds. "I love their flexibility: Whereas other companies tell us what days *they* have available for us to work around their schedule, Tom works around *our* schedule."

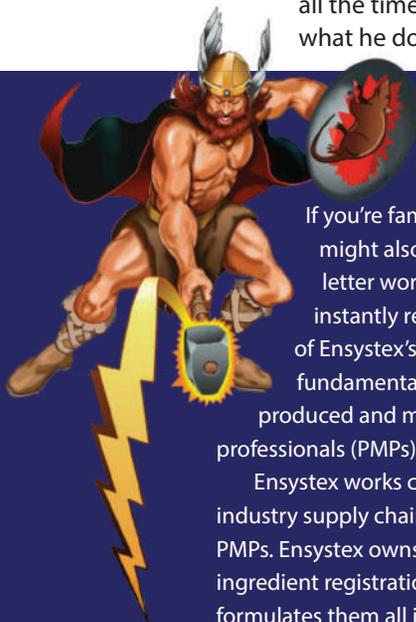
The duo have even patiently waited an extra hour or two for U.S. Superior Fumigations crew to come back from a tough job, she points



*Gaby Terrazas is a third-generation pest professional with 21 years of industry experience, including eight with U.S. Superior Fumigations.*

out: "We are very appreciative of that. They go above and beyond."

"Being both the supplier and distributor, Ensystem really provides us full benefits and a one-on-one relationship for Zythor," she says, noting that her Ensystem rep, Ed Wilson, offers U.S. Superior Fumigations steady, knowledgeable support. "Ed is always on his game, all the time, and what he doesn't



## THOR'S QUEST CONTINUES

If you're familiar with Ensystem products, you might also be familiar with a favorite four-letter word of theirs: THOR. More than just an instantly recognizable icon and part of many of Ensystem's brand names, Thor represents a fundamental shift in how these products are produced and made available to pest management professionals (PMPs).

Ensystem works completely outside the traditional industry supply chain, selling manufacturer-direct to PMPs. Ensystem owns the technical and end-use active ingredient registrations for all its Thor products, and formulates them all in-house.

The concept of Thor is to provide PMPs with three advantages:

- 1. Immediate attention.** When you buy Ensystem products, you are dealing directly with your supplier. If you want to talk directly with upper management about a situation, all you have to do is pick up the phone or send an email.
- 2. Continued innovation.** Ensystem's smaller size allows it to maneuver quickly in the marketplace whenever there is an opportunity to market a new product or improve upon an existing product.
- 3. Personal service.** Direct field representatives are positioned throughout the United States to help you maximize your investment with Ensystem products and systems.



## GIBSON PEST CONTROL BENEFITS FROM THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION IT RECEIVES FROM ITS ENSYSTEX REP.

“Anytime I have questions about products, orders, etc., he always makes the time to speak with me.”



*Greg Gibson, owner of Gibson Pest Control, stands with his general manager, Chris Helton.*

“It is a pleasure doing business with Scott Tolbert,” summarizes Chris Helton, general manager of Gibson Pest Control, Arden, N.C.

Tolbert is Gibson Pest Control’s Ensystem representative, and it is from him that Helton orders several of the company’s general pest and termite offerings (see page 90).

Helton points to Tolbert’s communication skills and availability, which make him “stand out from the competition.”

“Anytime I have questions about products, orders, etc., he always

makes the time to speak with me,” continues Helton, who has been with Gibson Pest Control for almost two years. “Scott also makes routine visits to our office. During his visits, he always checks up on how business is going, what is working or not working for us, and how he can further assist the growth and success of our business.”

Because Ensystem sells directly to pest management professionals (PMPs), Tolbert can address any questions or issues quickly, Helton says. “The major benefit of dealing directly with a manufacturer rep



for us is product knowledge,” he says. “I believe this is due to him being solely responsible for only the products his company provides and sells.”

The Gibson Pest Control team, comprised of eight technicians, has been using Ensystem products for more than a decade.



## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON MAXXTHOR

Gibson Pest Control shares just two of several testimonials that showcase how Ensystem products help it provide better service to its customers:

**Gibson Pest Control has provided our home service** for two years now and has been nothing short of outstanding during that time. We purchased our home and moved into the area two years ago, and immediately were presented with major issues with insects and rodents. They have succeeded in reducing our incidence of both almost completely by using a product called Maxxthor! (Fact: we live in the middle of over 5,000 acres of conservancy forest and mountains, so it would be unreasonable to expect ZERO pests!)

In addition to our regular visits, they have come back on a couple of specially requested visits and addressed those problems promptly and successfully, as well. As always, we have been supported by a knowledgeable tech that is on time, prepared, does a thorough job, explains what was done, and who answers any questions we have about the treatment! You can do no better than choosing Gibson for your pest control needs. We are so pleased to have them as our pest control company. — *William, Zirconia, N.C.*

**Our technician did a service call** to handle a new issue with carpenter bees in the fence. He did an outstanding job! He identified the problem, discussed treatment methods utilizing the product Maxxthor, gave me an education on carpenter bee behavior, answered all my questions, and provided recommendations for prevention in the future.

I've been a customer of Gibson Pest Control for almost four years. My plan is to be their customer for life. The technician represented everything that I've experienced with this company: professionalism, in-depth knowledge of products and pest, respect for the property and pets, great communication skills, patience in answering all my questions and outstanding customer service. I highly recommend this company. — *Patti, Asheville, N.C.*

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### MAXXTHOR SG



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### PROTHOR WSP



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