

# PMP

## BUSINESS PLANNER

### 2016

# GROW YOUR PROFITS

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# Leap over the growth wall in 2016

Why do some companies grow, while others flounder? Here are 10 ways you could be stagnating your business without even realizing it.

By Harvey F. Goldglantz | Contributor



**A**s you grow, challenges will become larger. These challenges appear as growth walls. Thus, hitting a growth wall is a phase where operations reach out-of-control proportions: cash tightens, revenues flatten, and key employees may leave.

What follow are 10 common impediments to sustained growth, and the keys to clearing the hurdles of your own growth wall in 2016.

**1 RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS FROM THE FIELD.** While this business strategy might work when you start out, and keeps the profit in your pocket, it won't be long before this shortsighted approach impedes your ability to see and manage the bigger picture. **FIX IT: GET OFF OF THE STREET, ASAP!** Running a thriving, progressive, sustainable, growth-oriented business is a full-time job. It's imperative that you devote the time necessary to plan and manage growth.

**2 FAILURE TO DELEGATE.** Stagnate companies almost always have difficulty assigning tasks to subordinates for a number of reasons, including lack of trust and a "nobody-can-do-it-like-I-do" philosophy. **FIX IT: DELEGATE!** Successful delegation requires

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assigning the right task to the right person, providing clear and concise communication, and providing supervision.

### 3 UNWILLINGNESS TO HIRE HARD AND FIRE EASY.

Most small companies do a poor job of screening and interviewing employees, which is a recipe for high turnover. Keeping underperformers or problem employees on the payroll for too long also has a negative impact on growth. **FIX IT: HIRE HARD, FIRE EASY.** Hiring the right people is critical for sustaining growth. Screen thoroughly and interview intensely. Employees are your most valuable assets. At the other end of the spectrum is the termination process. Do not accept mediocrity. Keeping mediocre (or worse) employees will hamper growth. *(Editor's Note: See p.62 for improving your hiring strategies.)*

**4 INADEQUATE ADVERTISING BUDGET.** An insufficient advertising budget can be directly linked to revenue inertia. Being overly circumspect in this area is a prescription for stagnation. **FIX IT: LINK YOUR ADVERTISING BUDGET TO PROJECTED REVENUE GROWTH.**

There's a direct link between the amount you invest in advertising and your growth rate. Most companies base their budget on the last year's revenue. Growth-oriented companies use the coming year's projected growth. I suggest a budget of approximately 8 percent.

**5 FAILURE TO INVEST.** Lack of adequate capitalization will strangle a company's ability to grow. Keep enough reserve cash on hand to invest in your future.

**FIX IT: INVEST IN GROWTH.** According to Warren Buffet, reinvesting is the best way to build wealth. If you are a business owner, reinvesting is crucial to your company's growth and success. According to Buffet, "It does not have to be all of your profits, but a significant amount of financial resources, when targeted effectively, can dramatically improve your bottom line." While this sounds counterintuitive, a loan can be an excellent catalyst for overcoming growth walls — when done carefully and in line with a strategic plan for expansion.

→ **WANT MORE BUSINESS TIPS FROM HARVEY GOLDGLANTZ?** Check out his Marketing Q&A column this month on p.98, and visit our blog at [PMPpesttalk.net](http://PMPpesttalk.net) to see his tips on closing the sale.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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**6 INADEQUATE PLANNING.** Companies stagnate because they don't plan for growth. **FIX IT: PLAN, PLAN, PLAN.** For the most part, growth should be predictable from year to year. Strategic planning is essential to surmounting growth walls. Progressive companies, large or small, have business *and* marketing plans.

**7 POOR EXECUTION.** Employee incompetence and lack of follow-through negatively affect growth. **FIX IT: EXECUTE AND FOLLOW-THROUGH.** Develop systems and processes for how tasks should be accomplished and create internal controls to monitor them.

**8 INADEQUATE TRACKING.** Prudent tracking is important for growth. Without an accurate, in-depth understanding of historical perspectives and how they equate with industry barometers, it's impossible to create a clear roadmap. **FIX IT: TRACK EVERYTHING.** Income and expenses, marketing and advertising (in and out), leads, close ratios, cancellations, customer behavior, etc., should all be monitored. The more solid data you have, the better your decision-making process will be.

**9 FAILURE TO EMBRACE CHANGE.** The ability to recognize opportunities — and be flexible enough to adapt — is crucial for sustained growth. **FIX IT: CHANGE.** Managed change can be predictable, and should be your objective. If you accept and embrace change, it will pave your way to the Promised Land of growth.

**10 UNWILLINGNESS TO ADMIT, "I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE."** At various revenue levels, different processes and skill sets are required. The knowledge that allowed you to get where you are might not be enough to take you to the next level, thus you continue banging against that wall. **FIX IT: SEEK OUTSIDE HELP.** There is no magic trick to traversing the growth wall. Others have done it before you. If you find you can't do it yourself, get help. There are plenty of experts available to guide you. The cost of not doing anything will far exceed your investment in seeking professional help. PMP



You can reach **GOLDGLANTZ**, president of Pest Control Marketing Co. and author of *Marketing Matters*, at [hgpcmcinc@aol.com](mailto:hgpcmcinc@aol.com).



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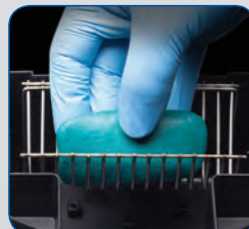


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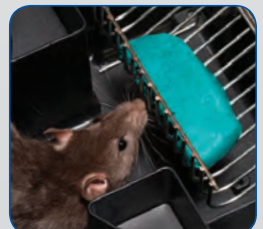
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# Assembling All-Stars

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The '27 Yankees included seven future MLB Hall of Famers: pitchers Herb Pennock and Waite Hoyt, infielders Lou Gehrig and Tony Lazzeri, outfielders Babe Ruth and Earle Combs, and manager Miller Huggins. With a lineup commonly referred to as "Murderers' Row," the Yanks lost just 44 games in 1927. It's no coincidence they swept the Pittsburgh Pirates in the World Series that year.

So, how many Babe Ruths and Lou Gehrigs are on *your* company's roster?

## 8 STEPS TO HIRING SUCCESS

Assembling a team of all-stars is accomplished one hire at a time. Here are eight steps to building a championship roster of your own:

**1 CREATE A COMPELLING CAREER OPPORTUNITY** by crafting a detailed, yet succinct, eye-catching job description.

**2 CAST A WIDE NET** by leveraging several marketing platforms (print, online, social media, targeted phone calls and emails, etc.) to attract the most qualified candidates.

**3 SEPARATE THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF** by closely reviewing all resumes and culling candidates who are not proven all-stars (at least on paper, at this point).

**4 RACK AND STACK** by assigning each candidate a value (a score ranging from 90 to 100 for all-stars), based on how well their education and experience match key elements of the job description.

**5 PRESCREEN CANDIDATES** by calling the Top 5 with a focus on the "C<sup>3</sup> + E<sup>3</sup> = The Perfect Hire" formula (see p.72).



**6 INTERVIEW THE TOP 3**, and make sure your human resources manager and other key staff (would-be supervisors and direct reports) interview them, too.

**7 MAKE A DECISION** by gathering assessments of each of the Top 3 candidates from all interviewers and, as a group, discuss the prospects and select the all-star who best fits your placement needs.

**8 MAKE THE NO. 1 PROSPECT AN OFFER** after conducting thorough reference and background checks; after he or she accepts, begin the training process as soon as possible.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62

## CALL IN A SPECIALIST

Many successful businesses partner with professional recruiting firms to ensure their key openings are filled by all-stars. While you may think you

can't afford to contract staffing specialists, the costs of *not* doing so sometimes exceeds related contracting expenses, especially for key placements. To determine what a bad hire will cost you:

- add up the time and money

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## Scouting talent

As a corporate recruiter, I've juggled as many as 20 open positions at a time. Depending on the job requirements, I've received as many as 500 resumes for each position.

How do all-stars first stand out? Their resumes scream: "I possess the necessary education and experience, plus the *IT* factor."

IT isn't easy to define. You know IT when you see it. Babe Ruth had IT. Lou Gehrig had IT. The '27 Yanks had IT.

In my daily search for all-stars, I've learned many of the same things professional teams have:

- Players with IT work overtime to hone their chosen crafts every day.
- Players with IT put their teams first.
- Players with IT help their teammates become all-stars.
- Players with IT find ways to win.
- Players with IT shine brightest at the darkest moments.

Most importantly, players with IT *can* be overlooked. Roger Staubach wasn't drafted by a National Football League (NFL) team until the 10<sup>th</sup> round. NFL teams selected 128 players before Staubach that year. A U.S. Navy veteran, Staubach was at the helm when the Dallas Cowboys won two Super Bowls, and he became an NFL Hall of Famer.

The lesson: Be the guy who hires the Staubachs, not passes on them.

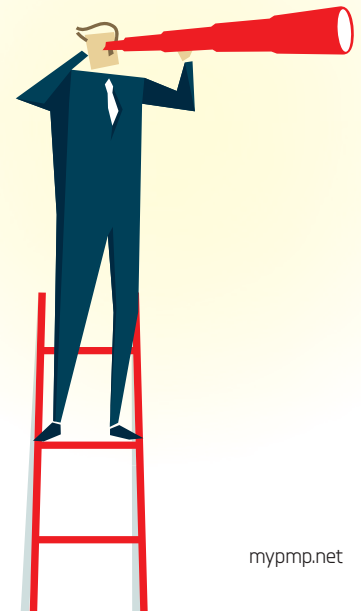


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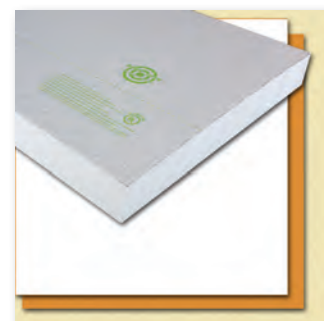
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expended on the aforementioned eight steps to hiring success;

- include the new employee's three- to six-month learning curve and related training investments;
- factor in all of the negative impacts on service, sales, margins, management and morale; and

## **“IF YOU THINK IT’S EXPENSIVE TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL TO DO THE JOB, WAIT UNTIL YOU HIRE AN AMATEUR.”**

— ATTRIBUTED TO PAUL “RED” ADAIR

- consider the headaches: the need to “rinse and repeat” (perform the eight hiring steps) until you get it right.

Here’s another incentive to partner with outside staffing specialists for key hires: If, within 90 days,

you feel the new hire isn’t working out, typically the search firm will find another qualified candidate at no additional cost.

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When weighing the costs of outsourcing key searches, remember that labor and recruiting experts tend to agree that as much as 80 percent of employee turnover stems from poor hiring decisions. As oil well firefighting icon Paul “Red” Adair is said to have quipped: “If you think it’s expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur.” PMP

PALM is a talent-acquisition professional with more than 10 years of experience placing candidates with the federal government, private sector and non-profit organizations. A retired U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer, Palm won a Navy Achievement Medal for his myriad recruiting successes. You can reach him at [tony@tony-palm.com](mailto:tony@tony-palm.com) or 571-318-2936.



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# C<sup>3</sup> + E<sup>3</sup> = The Perfect Hire

Candidates look most at *compensation, commute* and *culture*, whereas employers screen applicants for *education, experience* and *enthusiasm*.

By Tony Palm Jr. | Contributor

**M**aking the perfect hire is simple math: Most job candidates focus on “C cubed” (C<sup>3</sup>) — compensation, commute and culture. Most hiring professionals focus on “E cubed” (E<sup>3</sup>) — education, experience and enthusiasm. When a company meets a job candidate’s C<sup>3</sup> needs, and the candidate meets the company’s E<sup>3</sup> needs, the six stars are aligned for the perfect hire.

## C<sup>3</sup> BREAKDOWN

- **COMPENSATION** – “Show me the money ... and the benefits” continues to be a top requirement of qualified job candidates. Prospective new hires want solid salaries and comprehensive benefits packages. For example, their wish list might include competitive medical, dental and vision coverage; ample holidays, sick days and paid time off; short- and long-term disability coverage; and tuition assistance.
- **COMMUTE** – To work close to home, if not from home, is a deep desire many job candidates possess. Many professionals are putting in record overtime and, after that, are connected to work around the clock, thanks to the Internet and smartphones. With free time and gas at a premium, limiting commute time has never been more important.
- **CULTURE** – Even if a company offers competitive compensation and an ideal commute, candidates often walk away from job offers if they question the corporate culture. What does the organization do, and how does it do it? What are the leadership styles of the owners and management? Is there a career development program — concrete steps and resources to help each employee reach his or her full potential? Is there a true team environment from top to bottom, throughout all departments? Do the



values of the candidate and prospective employer match? Can the job candidate visualize spending the remainder of a career with the organization, and perhaps even see his or her children happily doing the same?

## E<sup>3</sup> BREAKDOWN

- **EDUCATION** – Many employers prefer to hire professionals with a degree of success in the higher-education field. Academic successes come in all forms — from associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees to industry-related training and credentials. The Board Certified Entomologist (BCE) and Associate Certified Entomologist (ACE) certifications from the Entomological Society of America are two industry examples.
- **EXPERIENCE** – Sometimes the mouse gets the cheese on its second (or third) try. On-the-job training, correctly provided first by another company, can help minimize mistakes and optimize efficiency. There’s an old adage: “Good judgment is the result of experience ... And experience is the result of good and bad judgment.”
- **ENTHUSIASM** – Does the candidate have a can-do attitude? Do his or her actions and words make this abundantly clear? **PMP**

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# It's all about accountability

By Daniel S. Gordon, CPA | Contributor

**I**t's lonely at the top. Every day I have to make decisions that affect my company, customers and employees. I have no one to tell me whether these decisions are right or wrong. My gut is my guide. This is the plight of most business owners.

In March, I wrote about the benefits of peer group participation (see p. 92 of the March 2015 issue). This month, I interviewed one of our peer group members for his take on peer groups. Donnie Shelton of Triangle Pest Control in Raleigh, N.C., has been participating in our pest management peer group for two years and continues to benefit from it by receiving ideas and affirmation of many of the policies, procedures and other initiatives he uses to build his business.

**DAN GORDON (DG):** Tell me about Triangle Pest Control.

**DONNIE SHELTON (DS):** Triangle operates in the Raleigh market providing residential services and is on a high growth trajectory. We have a great team, as well as an expanding book of residential customers.

**DG:** How did you enter the pest control business?

**DS:** Several years ago, I was getting tired of the corporate grind. I wanted to do something entrepreneurial. In looking for something, I came across

a pest management professional (PMP) who was retiring, so I bought his business. Armed with a degree in computer programming, and trained as a military pilot, I began my journey as a PMP. While I had great skills from the past, I had no formal training in pest management. But I had the desire to succeed.

**DG:** How were the early years?

**DS:** They weren't easy, but I have fond memories. I knew I needed to get up to speed quickly or else we were not going to succeed. Very early in the game, I reached out to several PMPs to look at their operations and get ideas about how success is built in the industry. As I immersed myself in the industry, I noticed there are many PMPs who started their businesses after working for a larger competitor, laying the groundwork for systems and processes to get things done. This path provided many of the tools needed to succeed.

Then there are many successful people in the industry who have grown up in family businesses or come from other industries to start with little or no experience. In many cases, these owners never worked for other pest management companies. That was me. With no industry experiences to draw upon to tell me right from wrong, I had to go with my gut. But like

many of us who never worked in the industry, we harbor certain insecurities: No matter how successful we are, we've never worked for another PMP, so there are questions about how to do things correctly in the most effective manner.

**DG:** What made you join a peer group?

**DS:** I sought out help from others in the industry. But it was nothing formal — just an office visit here and there. The peer group format that you've crafted allows members with similar backgrounds and daily issues to address those issues while getting input from others. I get some great ideas from the key wins and losses of others in the group.

Being with people who are in similar situations, in terms of position in business and in life, gives me the feeling I'm not alone and that there are others who walk the same path and also need answers to many of the same questions. They also can provide answers to issues we all face.



**DONNIE SHELTON**

**DG:** Give an example of a specific benefit you've derived from your membership.

**DS:** It's all about accountability. When I was in the Air Force, we received clear instructions and were held accountable. I was a pilot and there was no room for error because people's lives depended on my actions.

When you're the CEO of a business the accountability is different. Many times as the boss,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 78

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 76

you're only accountable to yourself. While holding yourself accountable for the goals and objectives you set is helpful, verbalizing those objectives to others who will hold you accountable is powerful.

The format of the meetings encourages members to become close friends. We talk about issues going on in our personal and professional lives. We update one another about our businesses' goals and we decide on at least three items we'll be implementing in our businesses by the next meeting.

I love that I'm held accountable in this group. I don't want to fail to achieve the goals I've set and then have to face the group and tell them so. This makes me work hard to ensure I achieve what I set out to do. It's important to

be accountable to other business owners who can give you unbiased and unfiltered feedback.

**DG: What goal did you set for which the group kept you accountable and on track?**

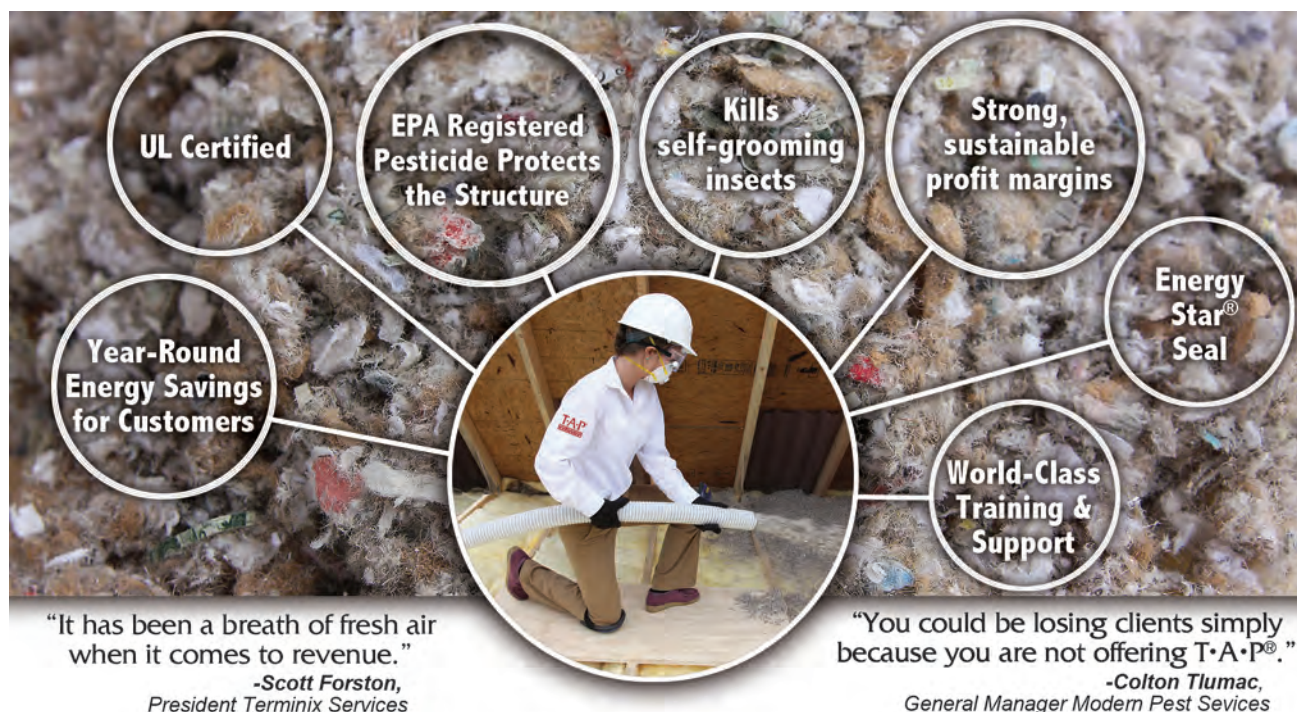
**DS:** Websites have become the lifeblood of the marketing machine. But there are so many decisions that go into designing and updating a site. Last spring, I told the group that by the winter meeting my company was going to redesign and simplify its website to make it more effective and help us capture more leads. Those seem like worthy objectives, but that's all they were. A group of objectives only become a goal when we put a timeline on accomplishing them.

And that's exactly what we did. We were able to preview the new and

improved website for the peer group at the winter meeting. Knowing the site *had* to be completed by the winter meeting put the onus on me to make sure it was or I would have felt I failed the group. PMP

*Editor's Note: To read more about Triangle Pest Control, visit [PMPpesttalk.net](http://PMPpesttalk.net), where Senior Editor Will Nepper discusses his recent ridealong with the company.*

**GORDON** is a CPA in New Jersey, and owns an accounting and consulting firm that caters to pest professionals throughout the United States. He also leads several peer groups that meet semi-annually. Visit [www.pcobookkeepers.com](http://www.pcobookkeepers.com) for information about his firm, PCO Bookkeepers. Gordon can be reached at [dan@pcobookkeepers.com](mailto:dan@pcobookkeepers.com).

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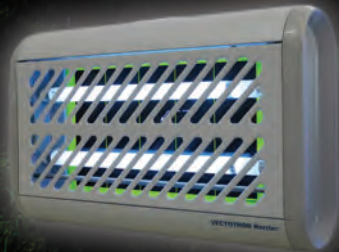
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# Outreach builds bridges



## Black Knight Termite & Pest Control

The Temecula, Calif.-based company donated labor and funds to build a custom backyard for 8-year-old Kane, who was diagnosed with osteosarcoma (bone cancer) in his left femur in 2013. Black Knight first learned about Kane because he was a student in the first-grade class of the daughter of Owner Jim Pinneo. Kane's cancer is in remission, after an above-the-knee amputation. Contractor and former Black Knight termite repairman Justin Heilman designed and built a special San Francisco 49ers-themed fort for Kane, and the company continues to raise funds and awareness for swings and other equipment. Pictured are Kane and Justin before the fort was painted; inset is the fort in its red-and-gold glory.

## Epcon Lane Pest Control

Based in Akron, Ohio, Epcon Lane Pest Control spells out in its core values that it will support and engage in programs that help children with cancer. Its team follows through with that pledge regularly, chronicling the projects (and sometimes crazy fun stuff) on the company's Facebook page. In September, employees came prepared each Friday in special gold shirts to honor Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Throughout September, Epcon Lane donated \$25 from the first service of each new sign-up for its Home Protection+ Plan to Project Ed Bear, which provides comfort items, technology and other items for the oncology department at Akron Children's Hospital.



As our regularly occurring department "Giving Back" underscores time and again, when a pest management company does something good in the community, it receives much more in return — brand awareness, increased employee morale and strengthened local ties.

Here are six companies that went above and beyond the norm to help their communities. If you take a page from their books in 2016, see what happens in your business. Don't forget to drop us a line, too, so we can share your project with others for inspiration.



## Hoffer Pest Solutions

Big Dog Ranch Rescue, the largest no-kill dog rescue in the Southeastern United States, has received several donations from Hoffer Pest Solutions, Coral Springs, Fla. These donations will help the Wellington, Fla.-based rescue group save more than \$5,000 a year of much-needed funding, which can be used to care for the dogs. Hoffer has donated equipment as well as flea and tick services to prevent infestations and protect the many dogs that are rescued from all over the United States.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 84



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 82

## McCloud Services

Each year, the South Elgin, Ill.-based company's Employee Incentive Program rewards those who exceed production and sales goals for the fiscal year by giving them the opportunity to select a qualified non-profit organization to which the company will make a donation on their behalf. Recognized employees also receive a company-paid trip. This year's non-profit recipients include Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross and the Humane Society. Award winners are pictured with Chris McCloud, president and CEO, and Stephanie Dickson, vice president, business development. Clockwise from top left are Mike Colombo, district manager, Kansas City; Amir Shehata, service specialist, South Elgin; Robbie Heisner, service specialist, Nashville; and Jennifer Peterson, service specialist, Davenport, Iowa.



## Mosquito Joe

This Virginia Beach, Va.-based mosquito control franchisor celebrated National Mosquito Control Awareness Week (June 21-27) in an unusual way. For the third year, through its Beat the Bloodsuckers campaign, Mosquito Joe locations across the country partnered with local blood banks to raise awareness about mosquito-borne illnesses and the importance of mosquito control. This year, 40 out of 78 franchisees participated, partnering with 20 different blood banks. They helped organize blood drives and donated 10 percent of new customer sales that week to local blood donation centers — \$7,100 was raised. At left, Franchise Business Coach Jake Vinluan has a little fun during his donation for the Beat the Bloodsuckers campaign.

## Turner Pest Control

The Jacksonville, Fla.-based company is a participant in the Stadium Home by Dream Finders Homes at EverBank Field project. Turner donated its comprehensive termite pretreatment services for the new structure, which is inside Gate 4 in the Fan Entertainment Zone at the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars stadium. The home will be on display for two years, and then will be moved off-site and donated to a local military veteran. Turner also sponsors the Jaguars' Gatling T-shirt gun during the first half of game play, and has a booth in the Fan Entertainment Zone with giveaways for attendees. The company also regularly distributes free home game tickets to its customers, clients and employees.





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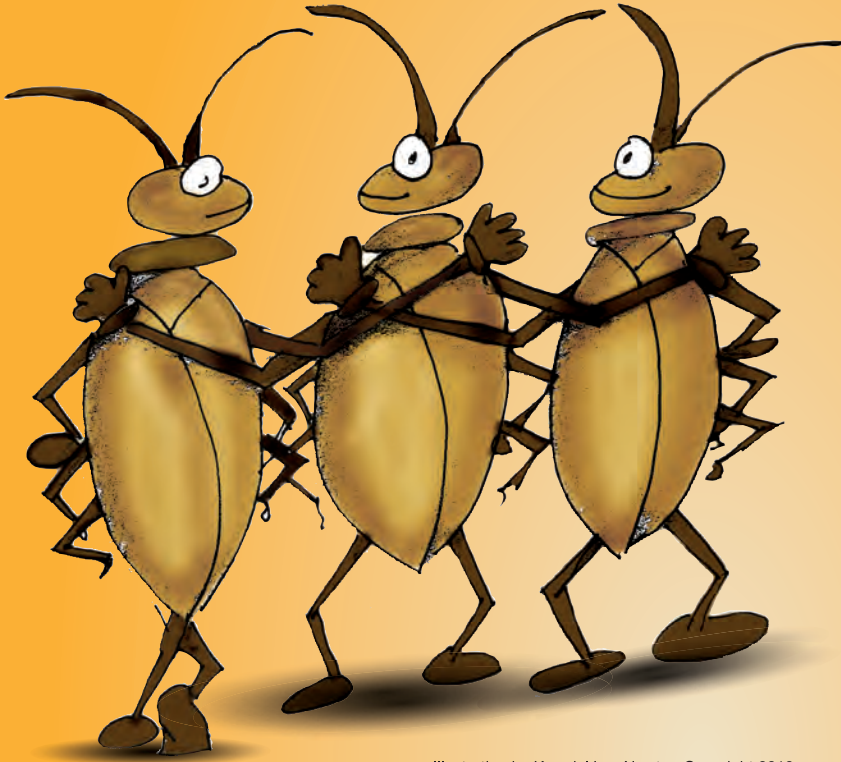


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# Happy Birthday, Big Pete

By Pete Schopen | Contributor

Birthday Boy  
Pete Sr. (left)  
with the  
author.



**D**ad will turn 69 this month. As I get closer to the big five-o, 69 doesn't sound so old anymore. But he's not a healthy 69. Too much fast food and too many jumps out of airplanes as a paratrooper have wrecked his body. On top of that, he's hard of hearing and has leukemia. Despite these problems, though, he gets up every day and wants to do pest management. He always has a smile on his face, and he's always willing to listen (as long as the talker is really loud).

His body won't let him climb ladders anymore, but Dad loves

to talk about pest management and, more importantly, he loves to *sell* pest management products and services.

Dad's birthday is in October, and I don't know how many more Octobers I'll have with him to tell him how proud I am to be his son, how impressed I am with the way he can train a green technician and how happy I am there are *three* generations and *two* companies of Schopens performing pest management services. It's a little early for eulogies, but instead, here is a toast to my dad on his 69<sup>th</sup> birthday — to a man who really could sell ice to Eskimos.

Pete Schopen Sr., was born Oct. 20, 1946, the fifth of six kids born to Peter and Eugenia Schopen. All six kids and two parents lived in a two-bedroom home with one bathroom. He grew up a good Catholic in Wilmette, Ill. At the tender age of 17, he joined the U.S. Army, which took him to Germany, where he eventually became a staff sergeant. After leaving the army, he met Jeannie Little, fell in love and eventually produced yours truly in 1969. Pete Sr. worked a number of dead-end jobs until he found his career with Orkin in 1970.

Orkin was just what the doctor ordered. Dad had found his calling! Not only was he a good technician, he was a fast learner. He quickly earned his licenses and

started selling. He was a one-man revenue stream.

After a year as a service technician, he was the top seller in the office in Glenview, Ill. He was promoted to a salesman and became a charter member of the \$100,000 Club in 1972.

He got another promotion and became the manager of the Glenview office in 1973. Dad loved working at Orkin. He would come in early, get the coffee ready, and have morning training sessions with the technicians. Eventually, he decided to try his hand at running a pest management company. In January 1974, Dad started Mid Central Pest Control, which was an instant success. Within a year, he hired his first technician, opened up his first office and had Mom helping him with the paperwork.

Very few stories are perfect, and my dad's is no exception. Within a couple of years of starting his business, my parents divorced. But despite the emotional conflicts he was facing at home, his business continued to thrive. He moved to a bigger location and continued to hire more staff and sell more.

By the time I was in high school, Dad and Mom had each remarried and Mid Central was a regional powerhouse. My dad had 12 to 15 employees, depending on the season,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88

## SCHOPEN'S OPEN BOOK

**START-UP:** Schopen Pest Solutions Inc.

**HEADQUARTERS:** McHenry, Ill.

**FOUNDER:** Peter F. Schopen Jr.

**START-UP DATE:** April 11, 2006

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** six full-time, two part-time

**2006 REVENUE:** \$97,235 (one employee)

**2007 REVENUE:** \$172,495 (one employee)

**2008 REVENUE:** \$203,732 (one employee)

**2009 REVENUE:** \$243,427 (two employees)

**2010 REVENUE:** \$325,960 (three employees)

**2011 REVENUE:** \$425,847 (four employees)

**2012 REVENUE:** \$489,887 (five employees)

**2013 REVENUE:** \$572,772 (six employees)

**2014 REVENUE:** \$710,000 (six full-time and one part-time employees)

**AUGUST 2015:** \$85,292 (31% increase over August 2014)

**2015 YEAR-TO-DATE (AUGUST):** \$502,117 (31% increase over 2014)

**2015 GOAL:** \$887,000

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 86

generating close to \$1 million in sales annually. Dad had me work for him the summer following my 1987 high school graduation.

Although I was the first of his kids to work for him, all seven — Brenda, Anita, Eric, Drake, Sonja, Dayle and

me — spent time at Mid Central. The longest tenured are Drake and Eric, who have a combined 37 years experience working there. I worked for Dad while I was in college and again from 2000 to 2006.

Dad has always believed that the company was built for his family.

Over the years, he's hired one daughter-in-law, one son-in-law, three grandkids, one brother, one nephew, two grandsons-in-law, and his first and second wives. When another pest management company made a significant offer to buy the business, he turned down a ridiculous amount of moolah so that Mid Central would remain family-owned.

Dad is my best friend. I inherited his sales genes and work ethic. Unfortunately, we disagreed on how to run his company. So, with his blessing, I left and started up my own company in April 2006. We still maintain a great relationship and often refer clients to each other.

In 2004, Dad finally sold his company to my brother Drake. He still helps with termite inspections and the occasional wasp nest, but he mostly runs errands and helps me with service meetings for my techs. The leukemia has slowed him down considerably, but he remains busy.

Recently, I hired my brother Eric to come work at Schopen Pest Solutions. That pushes me up to six full-time techs, including three Schopens (Eric Sr., Eric Jr., and me). Dad is excited his sons and grandson can work for a company that bears his name.

Just think, if I can continue to grow Schopen Pest Solutions for another five years, the name Pete Schopen will have been affiliated with pest control for 50 years! We'd be joining the family ranks of the Rollins, Dold and Noble families, among others.

Thanks for indulging me this month so I could brag about my dad. Happy Birthday, Big Pete. I love you. PMP



SCHOPEN is president of McHenry, Ill.-based Schopen Pest Solutions. You can reach him at 847-529-BUGS or [pete@schopenpest.com](mailto:pete@schopenpest.com).

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# Fleas be gone

## Kentucky PMP turns to Harmonix to use at residential and sensitive accounts

Matt Blake, service manager for OPC Services in Louisville, Ky., put the figurative bug in his Bayer rep's ear about flea control. Blake was looking for an effective product that provided quick knockdown and long-lasting residual for residential accounts, some of which are sensitive. The day after his rep got Harmonix in his hands, it was in Blake's.

Launched about two years ago, Harmonix is a botanical insect spray that contains pyrethrum, which is derived from the chrysanthemum flower. It's labeled to control 60 common household insects and can be used indoors and out. It's ideal for sensitive accounts, such as schools and childcare and health-care facilities. It also has no heavy odor and is non-staining.

OPC, which employs 100 people, is a locally owned family business established in 1972. Its business is split equally between residential and commercial accounts. Its service area stretches from Southern Indiana to Bowling Green, Ky. Its technicians will travel as far as two hours away from the home office.

"We pride ourselves on great customer service," says Blake, a third-generation pest management professional (PMP) who has been in the industry for 12 years.

OPC's technicians use Harmonix primarily on residential accounts. Blake has been using the botanical solution for just a few months on about a dozen jobs. He has used Bayer products – Maxforce Quantum ant bait, Maxforce Impact cockroach bait and Temprid for bed bugs – before, so he knew using another Bayer product would be a pleasant experience.

"I have nothing but good things to say about these products," he says. "With Harmonix, I was looking for a broader spectrum insecticide for flea control and something that lasts a bit longer than what we were using. Bayer's research and development department suggested we try Harmonix for pet-related infestations. I tried it in my own home first because I accidentally took fleas home from a job. I tried it once and haven't seen a flea since."

Before using Harmonix, OPC's technicians were using several other insecticides.

"We had okay luck with them," Blake says, adding OPC averages about three flea jobs a week.

At first, Blake admits he was skeptical of Harmonix because of its formulation.

"I'm a field/experience type of guy," he says. "But there have been no callbacks on the jobs we've used it on. We tested it for two months, and now I will use the rest of the two cases we have in stock. It's turning out to be our go-to product for flea control. Our techs think it's great. They've had no callbacks either. As a result, it saves us time and money."

Blake likes Harmonix's very low odor and non-staining properties, especially when he uses it on porous surfaces such as carpet and hardwood floors.

"It's a big plus because customers' belongings are our No. 1 concern," he says. "It's always a plus when something works this well."

Blake is focused on using Harmonix solely for fleas right now, but he says he can foresee using it to control other pests.

"Flea control has a lot to do with customer cooperation, such as vacuuming thoroughly and cleaning pets," he says. "But people don't always cooperate, so the longer residual with Harmonix really helps."



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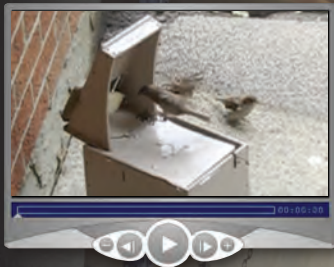


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# The art of the business blog

Blogging for your business needn't be an overwhelming undertaking.

By Will Nepper | Senior Editor

The first time I heard the term *blog* was in the mid- to late 1990s. It was defined by an online magazine as “basically a diary, but online.” The term is a portmanteau (smush name) of *web* and *log*. They started as online diaries and remained that way for years.

The especially clever and informational blogs developed followings, and many blogs from those early days still exist. However, it didn't take long for organizations, from non-profits to Fortune 500 companies, to understand what an effective marketing tool a blog could be.

## CORPORATE VS. PERSONAL

Blogs have evolved during the past two decades. You probably know several people who have one. Think of a topic, and chances are an entire daily blog is devoted to it, whether it's needlepoint or horror movies. But beyond personal transmissions, the Internet is rife with corporate blogs.

Most companies use their blogs to communicate directly and informally with their customers and potential customers (take *PMP* magazine's own newly launched **PMPPestTalk.net**, for example). It's another branch of social media, but unlike Twitter or Facebook, there are virtually no constraints on what you communicate, or how many words or characters you can use to convey your message.

A blog post makes for great time-killing reading for clients who make their mobile devices one of their top sources of information and entertainment. Blog entries can be read while standing in line at the store, on the commuter train to work or during a mind-numbingly lengthy airport layover. Small businesses that develop blogs of their own might be lucky enough to have their core prospects bookmark the blog — or, better yet, subscribe to it. Readers who bookmark your blog will be

more likely to return to it, thereby increasing your chance of being part of their daily Internet surfing routine.

To create a blog that attracts an audience, you have to consider your audience, or rather, the audience you want. What kind of information can you type up on the fly that would interest readers enough to want to come back for more at a later date?

It helps to ensure a blog stays on topic to some degree. That said, don't impose unnecessary rules on yourself or whomever you designate the keeper of your business blog. The best pest management industry blogs provide information that's both interesting and related to the industry and/or your business somehow. If you read something interesting online, catch a news segment on TV or come across a particularly interesting YouTube video, use your blog to share it with your customers. But more than sharing what you found, offer your own commentary and consider asking your readers to contribute their thoughts. This might sound like more work than it actually is so consider this: The best business blog entries are no more than five paragraphs long, and they can be even shorter. Unless your topic is exceptionally compelling, the longer your blog post, the less likely your audience will read the entire entry.

Next month, I'll focus on how to set up your company blog and highlight important factors to consider before going live. In the meantime:

**1** Familiarize yourself with industry blogs — such as those from manufacturers, distributors and other pest management companies (Northeastern Exterminating, for example, does exemplary work at [Bedbugs-Brooklyn.com/Our-Bug-Blog.html](http://Bedbugs-Brooklyn.com/Our-Bug-Blog.html)). See what you like and don't like about these sites as you gather ideas for your own blog presence.

**2** Work on an editorial calendar of topics you know you can riff on quite easily. Knowing that you're going to talk rodent-proofing in November and holiday sales in December, for example, will take some pressure off you when your self-imposed deadline comes and you think, “What should I write about?” **PMP**

You can reach **NEPPER** at [wnepper@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:wnepper@northcoastmedia.net) or 216-706-3775.





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# Six steps to fine-tune sales

By Ray Johnson | Contributor

**P**rofessional sales consultants perform at an advanced level of proficiency and skill. They're able to react quickly and effectively in any sales situation. They're fueled by the knowledge that what they do can make a difference in people's lives.

As an industry, we often don't take the time to properly train and educate our sales staff, or arm them with proven sales techniques to ensure the entire sales experience is comfortable for the buyer and seller. With that in mind, here are six skills your sales team needs to make their paychecks bigger and your company more profitable:

**1 LEARN YOUR COMPANY PROGRAM, AND ALL OF THE SERVICES OFFERED.** Don't get caught off guard if the customer asks, "Can I get a discount if I pay a year in advance?" Become familiar with all the forms, contracts, methods of payment and service intervals offered. I advise having your sales team practice regular mock sales presentations to hone their skills and learn from one another.

**2 FOLLOW A PLANNED SALES PRESENTATION.** If your company doesn't have one, get started right away researching what must be included in a structured sales presentation to which everyone can learn and adhere. Success in this critical step will put your sales professionals on the same page. Practice this in your mock sales presentations.

**3 OVERCOME AND ANSWER OBJECTIONS.** You will always have objections or questions from your prospective customers. How you handle them will be vital in getting those prospects to sign your agreement. Some salespeople are scared to death when a customer brings up a concern or objection. But most of the time,



the customer is really communicating that they need to know more about the offering. They're looking for more information before making a buying decision. We'll take a more in-depth look at overcoming objections in a future column.

**4 KNOW HOW TO GET REFERRALS.** Some companies use the Five Card system, in which customers give out the names of five friends and/or relatives who might need the company's service. You might even want to offer customers a discount for each person who signs up as a result of their referral. Remember, if you don't ask, you'll lose. If you do ask, you might win.

**5 LEARN HOW TO SELF-GENERATE LEADS.** Attend local chamber of commerce events, lead clubs or other networking groups. You also could canvass the neighborhood of the folks to whom you just sold, and start business-to-business prospecting.

**6 SET GOALS AND CREATE ACTION PLANS.** You can't hit a target if you don't have one. Set the bar high. PMP

You can reach **JOHNSON**, a past president of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), president of Sevierville, Tenn.-based Johnson Pest Control, and founder of ACES for Business at [ray@johnsonpestcontrol.com](mailto:ray@johnsonpestcontrol.com).



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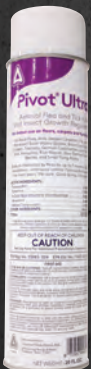
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By Harvey F. Goldglantz | Contributor

### Q I'm considering purchasing banner ads on social media sites. What are your thoughts?

At least for now, social media website visitors aren't paying much attention. Data show these ads have little direct impact on sales. Multiple studies confirm that click-through rates on social media ads are just 0.01 percent, and four out of five users (80 percent) have never bought a product because of a Facebook ad.

### Q In your opinion, which are the most relevant social networking websites?

According to eBizMBA.com, a well-respected web-ranking site, the Top 7 social media websites, ranked in relevance, according to its estimated unique monthly visitors (as of Sept. 1, 2015), are:

- 1 Facebook: 900 million
- 2 Twitter: 310 million
- 3 LinkedIn: 255 million
- 4 Pinterest: 250 million
- 5 Google+: 120 million
- 6 Tumblr: 110 million
- 7 Instagram: 100 million

### Q Which Web metrics should I be following?

There are six that I find to be indispensable:

- 1 **UNIQUE VISITORS** represent the count of individual people that visited your site, regardless of how often.
- 2 If your **REPEAT VISITOR** number is growing, it means people are visiting your site once, and then deciding to return.
- 3 **REFERRALS** track users as they click on links in search engines, social media sites, other blogs and other websites.

4 The **BOUNCE RATE** is the percentage of visitors who visit your site and immediately either click the back button or close the browser tab.


5 The **EXIT RATE** is the percentage of visitors who visit multiple pages and then leave your site. Are potential customers not finding the information they need?

6 By contrast, the **CONVERSION RATE** is the percentage of visitors who achieve a goal, such as completing a purchase or filling out a contact form. **PMP**

You can reach **GOLDGLANTZ**, president of Pest Control Marketing Co. and author of *Marketing Matters*, at [hgcpcmcinc@aol.com](mailto:hgcpcmcinc@aol.com).



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