

A SUPPLEMENT TO

# PMP

Pest Management  
Professional

## Buckle Up

**STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY**  
PMPs predict growth in 2024 —  
despite a roller-coaster first half

BROUGHT TO YOU BY





# Bell Labs helps PMPs navigate the industry's peaks and valleys



The past few years have been quite the roller coaster ride. Yet this ride has taught us the key to success is being able to navigate the peaks and valleys, as well as any sharp turns that quickly come at us all.

We expect the professional pest management industry will continue to face challenges. Whether through rising costs, tight labor markets, financially stressed customers or an active regulatory environment, it will be important to use your best business acumen and remain agile.

At Bell, our commitment is to provide you with the tools, knowledge and expertise to meet these dynamics and enable your business to thrive.

## HELPING YOU TODAY AND TOMORROW

Bell's commitment to being a world leader in rodent control is driven by the everyday demands of pest management professionals (PMPs) in the field. We work diligently to develop and deliver products that help technicians problem-solve at accounts, offering support along the way. Some examples of these activities include:

- Using a broad spectrum of active ingredients, we continually formulate, register and support products to ensure you always have options.
- Now, more than ever, we are working collaboratively with national and state organizations to assist in safeguarding and protecting industry rights.
- We provide a large variety of bait forms, such as pellets, meal, and liquid baits, to complement our widely used blox and soft bait formulations.
- We continue to develop our full line of smart rodent sensing devices, which PMPs across the world have been using to save time and effort at their accounts.

## A PARTNERSHIP WITH SOLUTIONS

Although no one can be quite certain what the future holds, to ensure success, it is critical to be surrounded by partners who have a thorough understanding of your business and can provide access to the best resources available. Whether through embracing new technology, navigating changing regulatory environments, or reducing labor costs through enhanced efficiency, we are here to help you.

Please get in touch with your Bell technical reps so they can go over the full range of solutions available and discuss how these tools can benefit your company. We wish you success in 2024, and we sincerely appreciate your support and business.



**BY STEVE LEVY**  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
Bell Laboratories

For more information,  
visit [BellSensing.com](https://BellSensing.com).

The T-Rex, right, and Express, below, are just two of several Bell products available in an iQ variant that seamlessly syncs with the Bell Sensing Technologies smart phone app and portal.



**EXPRESS** 



## 2024 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY SURVEY

PMPs predict growth in 2024 —  
despite a roller-coaster first half

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor

**F**or many pest management professionals (PMPs), the pest control industry may seem more like a roller-coaster ride as business climbs to exciting new heights for some, and then suddenly drops at alarming speeds for others.

Inflation, rising fuel costs, inability to retain employees, and extreme weather have PMPs hanging on for the ride, *Pest Management Professional's* (PMP's) 2024 State of the Industry (SOI) survey responses show.

"PMPs may face a roller coaster ride due to the impact of inflation and fuel costs," says Rakshit Advani, BCE, VP of Pest Management Sciences in Elmhurst, N.Y. "Rising operating costs, pricing challenges, labor issues, changing consumer behavior, and supply chain disruptions could create a complex and unpredictable environment for the industry, requiring strategic adaptation to maintain profitability and service quality."

PMPs are buckling up for the ride, however. All U Need Pest Control's director of operations, Kyle Selbach, says he seeks to continue the rigorous growth rate the Fort Myers, Fla.-company achieved over the past few years.

"There will be some challenges, such as those related to labor and the economy, but we have positive solutions," he notes. "We will continue to offer the

same services, as we believe we found our niche as a premier pest control provider in Florida. We are keeping our services simple and direct; less is more."

### Running hot

Extreme heat in cities across the country had PMPs scrambling to serve customers during unprecedented heat waves. This summer was the Earth's hottest since the recording of global temperatures began in 1880, revealed scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies.

Solaris Pest Solutions President Giancarlo Fernandez says the weather presents more opportunities for his Santa Clarita, Calif.-based business,

### 2024 Outlook

4.5 out of 5 stars



### INSIDE

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as Southern California has had more rain than usual.

“The rain may be a speed bump for many, but this weather increases calls for mosquitoes, occasional invaders and rodents,” he says. “The rise in revenue has been steady.”

### Playing politics

Another unknown next year will be the 2024 presidential election, which likely will have an impact on the economy. Although it's too soon to predict which candidate will be the next president of the United States, PMPs are hanging on tight.

PMPs who answered our 2024 SOI survey have a more positive outlook than last year's “slightly optimistic” viewpoint. The majority said they were “extremely optimistic” about the pest control industry.

Joe LaTour, manager of Hunts Quality Pest Control in Queensbury, N.Y., says PMPs are seeing more invasive pests, thanks to the extreme weather.

Many PMPs predict an economic slowdown in the first half of 2024.

“It's predicted to be a cold winter and the summers are getting hotter,” LaTour adds. “Couple that with the economy slowly failing and what's set to be the craziest and most polarizing presidential election in history, 2024 is already looking like a wild ride.”

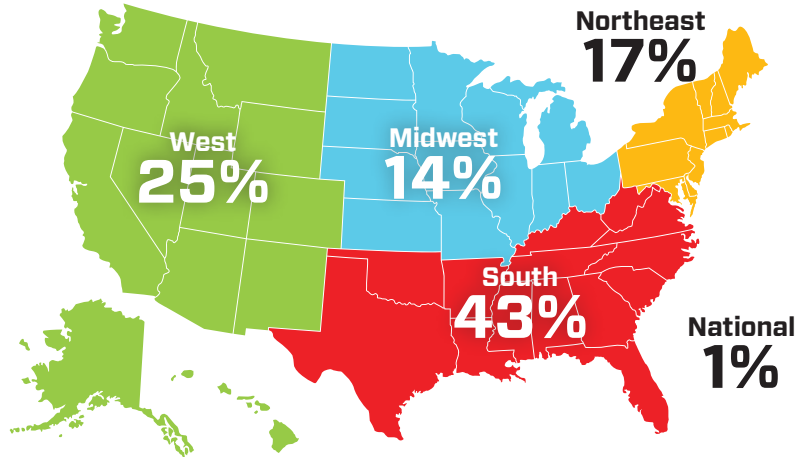
Keep reading for more on PMP's 2024 projections. Our exclusive 2024 State of the Industry supplement, sponsored by Bell Laboratories, includes benchmarking data, infographics and analyses that highlight key pest management industry trends. **PMP**

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## PMPs hang on for the ride

In August and September, 208 pest management professionals (PMPs) — primarily company owners and presidents — completed our 33-question State of the Industry survey. Here is some background on their companies:

### Area of Operations



**WEST:** AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

**MIDWEST:** OH, IN, IL, MI, WI, MN, MO, IA, ND, SD, NE, KS

**SOUTH:** AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV

**NORTHEAST:** CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NJ, NH, NY, PA, RI, VT, DC

### Number of Employees

**8%**

More than 100 employees

**18%**

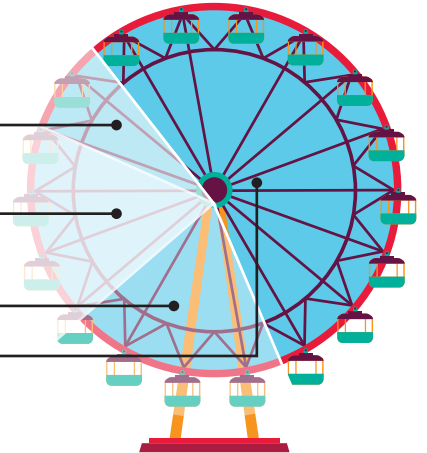
26 to 100 employees

**20%**

11 to 25 employees

**54%**

1 to 10 employees



### Fleet Size

1 to 10 vehicles

**59%**

11 to 25 vehicles

**19%**

26 to 100 vehicles

**14%**

More than 100 vehicles

**8%**





# In line for the ride

PMPs grow their businesses while experiencing employee and customer retention issues

By Diane Sofranec | PMP Senior Editor



**P**est management professionals (PMPs) who answered our 2024 State of the Industry survey shared the reasons for their employee and customer retention challenges, and many offered similar responses.

The economy is having an impact on customer retention, as increasing costs for housing, fuel and food leave households and businesses little money for pest control services. Of course, PMPs already know that eliminating pest control is a mistake, as most pests will stick around until professional control measures are implemented.

“With inflation a concern for many people, money will continue to be tight,” says Kent Smith, owner of A+ Quality Pest Control in Oskaloosa, Iowa.



Kent Smith

“The pests will still be there, but customers will be looking to obtain effective services for their money.”

## The main attraction

Despite the economy, Smith plans on 10 percent to 15 percent growth in 2024. “As long as you provide a quality service, there will always be a need for your services,” he adds.

PMPs get the business by conveying the value of their pest control services. Honor Services’ director of pest prevention, Jacob Morehouse, strives to educate customers about the services his Melbourne, Fla.-based company offers.

“I endeavor to educate customers, spend time with them, and make sure to be transparent,” he explains. “This may take quite a few reminders, documenting these conversations, and even taking pictures of conducive conditions the customers may be able to remedy.”

Letting customers know pest control is a team effort helps prevent complaints, which are nothing new to service industries such as pest control. But that’s not the reason Morehouse takes the time to explain the

process. “I do this because I want people to be educated about pest control. There are so many misunderstandings and so much misinformation about our industry,” Morehouse says. “I want to clear these up for as many as I can, even if it is just one customer at a time.”

## Workers wanted

Finding reliable employees who will take the time to provide exemplary customer service has been a challenge for many of the PMPs who answered our survey. But PMPs are finding ways to beat the odds.

Dan Fleischer, owner of Pestex Inc. in Framingham, Mass., says hiring employees is his biggest impediment to growth. With 17 technicians, he seeks honest, hard-working candidates who are looking for careers, not just jobs. The company has made adjustments to attract workers, including offering flexible hours and four-day workweeks.

“We prefer people with no experience because we hire for

attitude and train for technique,” he says. “I can train someone on rodent control, but not to be on time, and I can’t train someone to be nice and respectful.”

Slug-A-Bug’s Pest Division Training Manager Randy Darrah also seeks workers interested in staying



Randy Darrah

on, and shares advice that works for the Melbourne, Fla.-based company. Continually training employees is key, but that’s not all.

“Hire employees with the same values as your company, and empower them to make decisions in the field,” he says. “These two strategies have a tendency to make teammates feel they belong, and usually results in long-term employment.”

Training is key for Giancarlo Fernandez as well. The president of Solaris Pest Solutions in Santa Clarita, Calif., says he tends to hire employees who are able to follow a detailed training program.

“Referrals from current employees are the best,” he notes. “Recognition of the employees’ efforts and accomplishments makes for a good working environment.”

Rakshit Advani, BCE, offers advice for recruiting and retaining all-star employees. The VP of Elmhurst, N.Y.-based Pest Management Sciences recommends creating clear job descriptions, and investing in ongoing development and networking opportunities.

While offering competitive compensation and good benefits will help attract potential employees, it will take more than that to keep workers happy and eager to please customers.

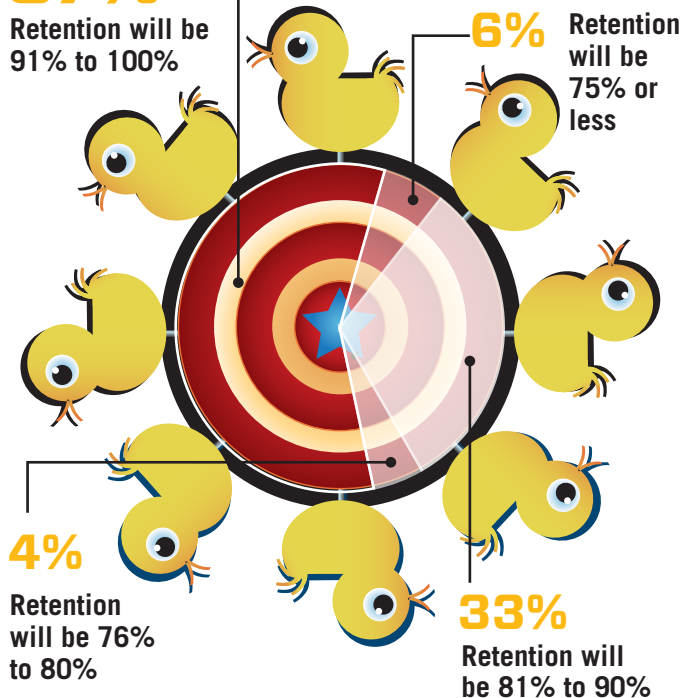
“Listen to your employees,” advises Joe LaTour, manager of Hunts Quality Pest Control in Queensbury, N.Y. “Use their mistakes as an opportunity to teach them, as well as acknowledge what they’re doing right.” **PMP**

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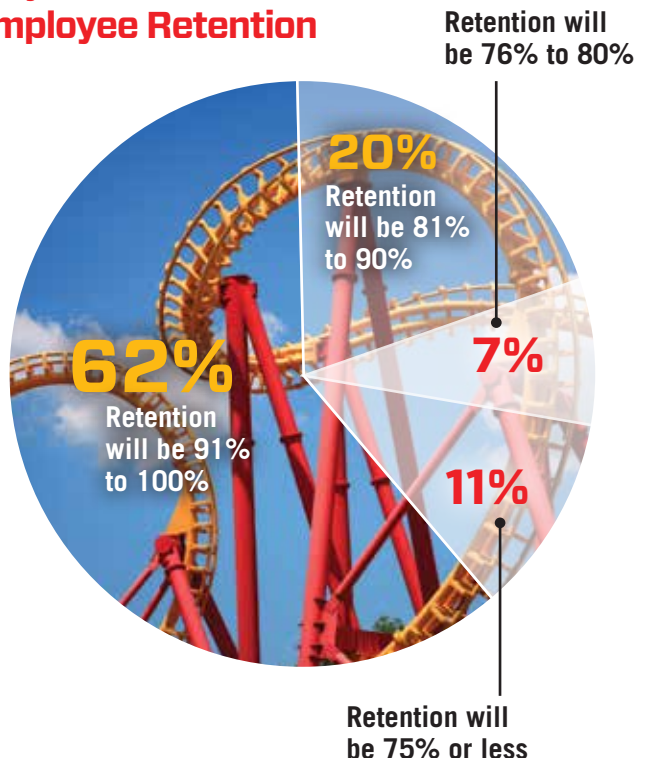
## Projected 2024 Customer Retention

**57%**

Retention will be 91% to 100%



## Projected 2024 Employee Retention







# The snack counter is open

In the amusement park that is pest control, many PMPs will have a little less money to throw around in 2024 — but they are still ready to invest **By Heather Gooch** | *PMP* Editor-in-Chief

**F**or many pest management professionals (PMPs), budgeted expenses for equipment and materials will be up in 2024, despite revenue increases not keeping pace. Still, the average PMP is “hungry” enough to plunk down some hard-earned cash to get something good in return.

So say the respondents of our 2024 State of the Industry survey: A full 81 percent say their 2024 budgets are bigger than in 2023 — and 15 percent are up by at least 26 percent. But as impressive as these numbers are, they’re down from our 2023 survey, when 94 percent

of respondents reported making a bigger budget.

What they’re spending their money on has not changed much in 12 months. Baits, traps and insect growth regulators (IGRs) still rank high on the

list. Vehicles and accessories, for which 57 percent of 2023 respondents were planning to purchase, increased to 64 percent this year.

Some PMPs need additional vehicles to keep up with staff expansion. Others just need to replace worn-out trucks and cars. Dan Fleischer, CEO of Framingham, Mass.-based Pestex Inc., falls into both camps. What compounds things is the lack of dealership inventory, especially for hybrid vehicles, he says. In the meantime, Fleischer keeps a spare truck with a base amount of materials on-site of his trusted mechanic shop, and once every 17 weeks, one of his 17 technicians takes the



spare while his or her individual truck is given the onceover at the garage.

Fleischer says he gets about five years out of a work vehicle before he trades it in. That, plus an expanding team, means fleet maintenance is paramount.

“Vehicle down time is death,” he points out. “With our regularly scheduled appointments, the mechanic is going to give each truck a safety check, an oil change and whatever else might be needed.”

Jim Pond, co-owner of The Bug Guys, based in Port St. Lucie, Fla., also is battling vehicle availability issues — even before the 2023 United Auto Workers strike began, which continues at press time in late September and is affecting vehicle supply in many parts of the U.S. While waiting yet another year for some hybrids on back order, he’s keeping fuel

expenses down by compressing service areas, monitoring the least-expensive gas prices, and keeping the fleet in top shape.

What’s top of mind for Pond in the coming months, however, are plans to convert a sales office into a full-service branch in late 2024. He’s also eyeing iPads for his sales team to reduce paperwork, and adding new jacket options for The Bug Guys uniforms.

Pond says he feels good about making investments in 2024 overall. “We are excited about the future of the pest control industry, and the growth opportunities that exist,” he says.

Fleischer agrees, noting there is just one rule before opening your wallet: “Do your homework before making any major purchase.” **PMP**

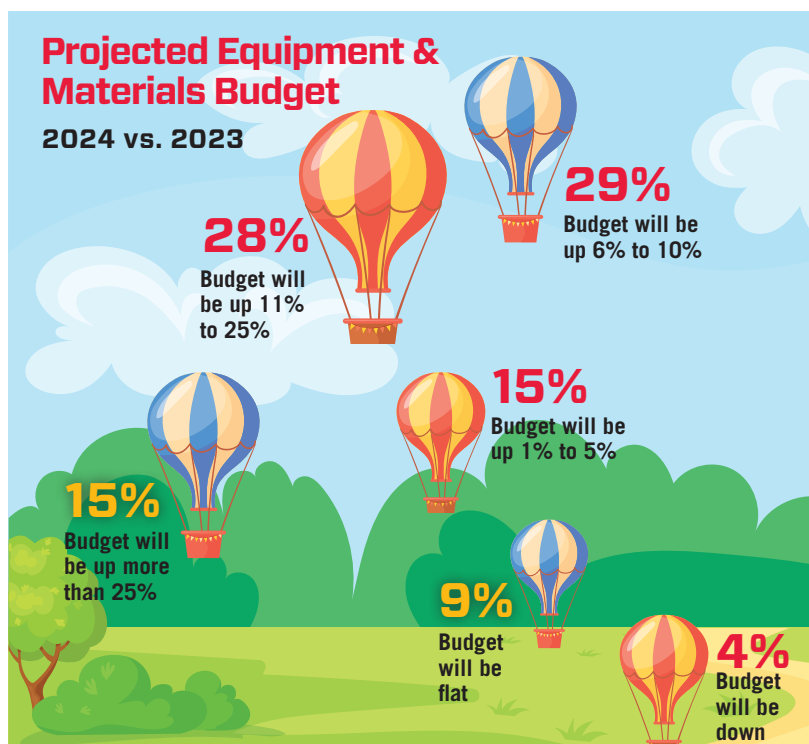
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## 2024 Planned Purchases

Bait stations	79%
Rodent traps	79%
Ant bait	78%
Cockroach bait	77%
Granule insecticides	75%
Aerosol insecticides/applicators	74%
Glue boards/trays	74%
Insect growth regulators	74%
Spray concentrate insecticides	72%
Personal protective equipment	69%
Safety equipment	69%
Dust insecticides	66%
Wax block rodenticides	65%
Vehicles & accessories	64%
Insect monitors	61%
Backpack sprayers	60%
Insect traps	59%
Soft bait rodenticides	55%
Dusters	52%
Exclusion solutions	49%
Insect light traps	49%
Pheromone traps/attractants	49%
Termite bait/installation tools	49%
Insurance services	44%
Bait guns/applicators	42%

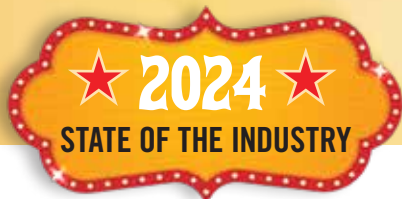
## Projected Equipment & Materials Budget

2024 vs. 2023



GETTY IMAGES: S-S/SISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS (HOT AIR BALLOONS);  
ROBB LANUINI/ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS (COASTER)





# Step right up

The top pests are the same old sideshow characters PMPs have been dealing with for years

By Heather Gooch | PMP Editor-in-Chief

**W**hen it comes to the strongmen and dancing ladies of the pest control “sideshow,” it’s the usual gang of suspects for the top rodents, ants, and termites and other wood-destroying insects and organisms. In fact, the only change in our 2024 State of the Industry survey responses vs. last year’s is in the cockroach arena, where smoky brown moved from No. 5 to No. 4, and brown-banded knocked the Australian species off the list.

The change is hardly news to Jim Bartley. “Given our subtropical climate in south Florida, conditions are perfect for brown-banded, and they continue to thrive,” says Bartley, owner of Platinum Pest Management, Jupiter, Fla. “We do encounter other species in this area, of course, but German, American and brown-banded easily make my Top 3 list.”

Grady Jones, who operates Honest Termite with his son, Colton, reports construction activity in their market of Las Vegas, Nev., is higher than he’s seen it in his 35-year career. As a result, the rate of displaced animals becoming pests is intense.

“The homes are extending far into the foothills and disturbing natural habitats,” Jones reports. “Gophers are benefitting from lawns, parks and other unnatural root systems and irrigation being brought into homeowner association and master-planned communities. We are seeing more kit foxes, coyotes and snakes as well.”

Bartley notes that constant pest identification training, especially for newcomer species, has helped his team keep pace with control. Termites are a prime example. “Not only do we encounter drywood, eastern and Formosan termites, but we also see dampwood, Asian, conehead and now hybrid-species termites,” he adds. “We’re very fortunate to have great cooperation with the University of Florida and the many researchers there.”

Jones agrees that education is key, helping pest control firms succeed despite fluctuations in the weather and the economy. “There always will be bugs, and there always will be trained professionals to help the public keep them under control,” he says. **PMP**

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Grady Jones



Jim Bartley

## TOP 5 Revenue-Generating Species

### Rodents

1. House mice (*Mus musculus*)
2. Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*)
3. Roof rats (*Rattus rattus*)
4. Deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
5. Moles (Talpidae)

### Ants

1. Carpenter (*Camponotus* spp.)
2. Odorous house (*Tapinoma sessile*)
3. Pavement (*Tetramorium caespitum*)
4. Fire (*Solenopsis* spp.)
5. Argentine (*Linepithema humile*)

### Cockroaches

1. German (*Blattella germanica*)
2. American (*Periplaneta americana*)
3. Oriental (*Blatta orientalis*)
4. Smoky brown (*P. fuliginosa*)
5. Brown-banded (*Supella longipalpa*)

### Termites & Other WDI/WDO

1. Eastern subterranean termites (*Reticulitermes flavipes*)
2. Carpenter ants (*Camponotus* spp.)
3. Carpenter bees (*Xylocopa* spp.)
4. Drywood termites (Kalotermitidae)
5. Formosan termites (*Coptotermes formosanus*)



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# Staying on the carousel

Which services have you riding high, and which need maintenance?

By Heather Gooch | PMP Editor-in-Chief

**A**ccording to respondents to *Pest Management Professional's* 2024 State of the Industry survey, the top industry services by volume are still ants, rodents, cockroaches and spiders, although stinging insects knocked fleas and ticks off the list this year. In fact, that category slipped in at No. 8, after occasional invaders and flies.

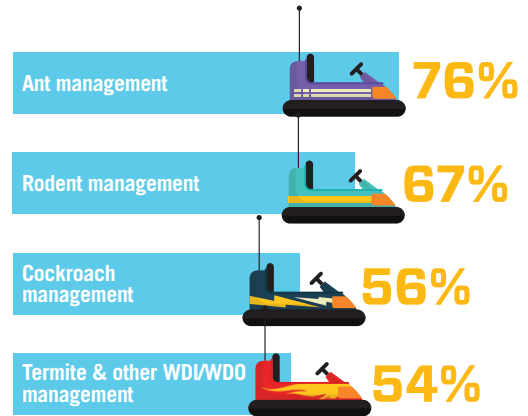
Bed bugs, which used to make the Top 5 as recently as the 2022 survey, have dropped to No. 11 on the list — sandwiched between termites and other wood-destroying insects and organisms (WDI/WDO) and mosquito management.

As far as top revenue- and profit-generating services, ants still rule both lists, followed closely behind by rodents. Cockroach service brings more revenue than termites and WDI/WDO, but it is not as profitable.

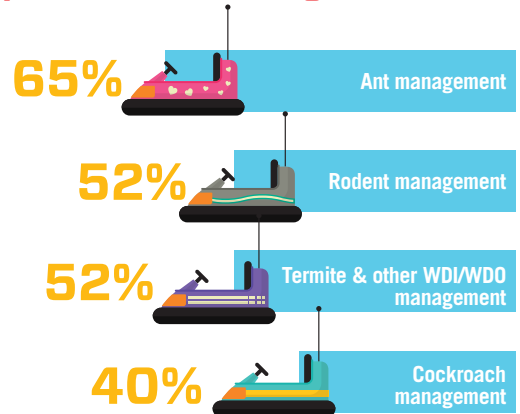
Out-of-the box services offered by some of our survey-takers include moisture control, handyman services and pond management.

Chad Highley, ACE, owner of Environmental Pest Control in Lawton, Okla., says the key to staying on the ride, as it were, is to diversify your services. In addition to the regular general pest offerings, he offers sanitization, lawn care and house cleaning, which comes in handy when taking care of some

## Top Revenue-Generating Services



## Top Profit-Generating Services



pest control accounts. In 2024, he plans to offer insulation services.

"Some areas are more resistant to various economic issues than others, but you have to ride the wave you are on," he explains. "Just be aware of other waves that are better. Be ready to switch. Diversify as much as possible."

As his company name implies, Benjamin Hunt, owner of ProTech Pest Control & Insulation in Everett, Wash., is already offering insulation services. In fact, for 2023, it was his fifth-highest revenue segment. For 2024, Hunt plans to offer mosquito management. His recession-proof strategies include buying in bulk, educating clients, and giving quotes on general pest control services over the phone, saving windshield time.

"We plan to add employees, expand our fleet, increase our pay rates and increase our budget for online and billboard ads," he adds. "We're also building employee loyalty with profit sharing, good pay and an 'old school' atmosphere." **PMP**

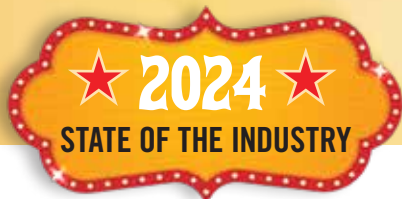
Gooch can be reached at [hgooch@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:hgooch@northcoastmedia.net) or 330-321-9754.

## Current Services Offered

Ant management	85%
Rodent management	85%
Cockroach management	85%
Spider management	82%
Stinging insect management	79%

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# As the wheel turns

Like a Ferris wheel, the state of PMPs' revenues and profits seem to be in a cycle, for better or worse **By Heather Gooch | PMP Editor-in-Chief**

**T**he respondents to *Pest Management Professional's (PMP's)* 2024 State of the Industry survey gave similar answers to all revenue- and profit-related questions as those who answered the year before.



**Doug Foster**

It seems the more things change — an election year, wild weather, an uncertain economy — the more things really stay the same.

That doesn't stop most company owners from hustling to make it an even better year than 2023, of course. Doug Foster, owner of Burt's Pest Control in Columbus, Ind., and a *PMP* Editorial Advisory Board member, revealed the mantra for his team: GSD, for "get stuff (or other 's-word' of your choice) done."

"We raised prices 10 percent across the board, hired two new technicians and streamlined routes," he explains. "We also implemented raises and landed several large commercial accounts. We finally quit talking about what we 'should' do and started taking action."

Jennifer Blythe, president of Bug



**Jennifer Blythe**

Commander Pest Control in the appropriately named town of Prosper, Texas, says owners shouldn't be timid about charging what their services are worth.

"Our technicians are tasked with being proactive in the field — to not just be problem-solvers, but investigators and educators who provide customers with the education to prevent future infestations, while taking care of their current pest issues," she adds.

Jacob Morehouse agrees. "I hear on a daily basis about pest control companies losing valued customers due to unrealistic expectations on the customers' end," says Morehouse, director of pest prevention for Melbourne, Fla.-based Honor Services. "Miscommunication could be the culprit. Remember, it may take more than one conversation to get customers to understand, but it's worth it in the long run."

Foster emphasizes making sure your team understands their value, too. "Just like a sports team, sometimes we need to try new things and different ways to get out of a 'slump.' For example, now we're not just giving incentives on new accounts, but also just for turning in leads. It has brought a new level of enthusiasm to our team." **PMP**

Gooch can be reached at [hgooch@northcoastmedia.net](mailto:hgooch@northcoastmedia.net) or 330-321-9754.



## Projected 2024 Revenue

**49%**

Less than \$1 million in revenue

**39%**

\$1 million to \$9,999,999 in revenue

**12%** \$10 million or more in revenue

## Projected Revenue Change 2024 vs. 2023

**13%** Revenue will be up more than 25%

**46%** Revenue will be up 10% to 25%

**27%** Revenue will be up 9% or less

**9%** Revenue will be flat

**5%** Revenue will be down

## Total Revenue Change 2023 vs. 2022

**13%** Revenue was up more than 26%

**41%** Revenue was up 10% to 25%

**27%** Revenue was up 9% or less

**12%** Revenue was flat

**7%** Revenue was down



# Not all fun and games

When faced with obstacles and opportunities, PMPs have learned you win some and you lose some **By Diane Sofranec** | *PMP Senior Editor*

**P**est management professionals (PMPs) who answered our 2023 State of the Industry (SOI) survey were spot-on when they predicted fuel costs and inflation would be their Top 2 obstacles this year.

Their responses reveal labor costs and the economy moved ahead on the list, whereas material and equipment costs dropped two spots.

Because costs have increased for just about everything, especially fuel, Giancarlo

Fernandez, president of Solaris Pest Solutions in Santa Clarita, Calif., recommends reviewing your pest control operations.



**Giancarlo Fernandez**

“Take a second or third look at your routing to determine whether it is optimized and your fleet maintenance is on schedule,” he advises. “Make sure you are using pesticide products at recommended rates, and your team is trained how to do this.”

## Control costs

Kent Smith, owner of A+ Quality Pest Control in Oskaloosa, Iowa, suggests fighting inflation by shopping around to compare equipment and material features and pricing. PMPs should learn how to use their pest control products efficiently and effectively, and price their services correctly.

“Looking for the best prices on materials from multiple sources takes time, but the savings are worth it,” he says. “This has reduced my material costs 6 percent so far.”

Fred Willey, ACE, president of Invader Pest Management in Glendale, Ariz., advises PMPs shop wisely and control costs as much as possible.

“Raise rates accordingly; don’t avoid it,” he says. “Market more than you think is necessary. Knowing that money might be tight with customers, more marketing is needed to touch more potential buyers.”



**Fred Willey**

## Emphasize value

The economy can be a boon for business, depending on where your pest control company is located. For Slug-A-Bug Pest Division Training Manager Randy Darrah, people who are relocating for better options have been good for the Melbourne, Fla.-based company.

“Some regions will have an influx of new residents driving up the need for services, and some regions will see jobs reduced, lowering the ability for residents to afford pest control services,” he says. “I am based in Central Florida, and the influx of people moving to our area has helped the housing market, which in turn has increased business.”

Other opportunities PMPs expect to encounter include upselling their services and increasing repeat business. Interestingly, improving customer retention did not make last year’s list of projected opportunities, but it made No. 3 this year. Emphasizing the need for services that protect health and property ensures customers know why pest control is essential.

“The average consumer is not aware of the education, training and licensing required to be a PMP,” says Jennifer Blythe, president, Bug Commander Pest Control, Prosper, Texas. “We need to change consumer perception on the value and services we provide.” **PMP**

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## Projected Top 2024 Obstacles

- 1 Fuel costs (tie)
- 1 Inflation (tie)
- 2 Labor costs
- 3 General economy
- 4 Material & equipment costs
- 5 Healthcare costs

## Projected Top 2024 Opportunities

- 1 Increase referrals
- 2 Increase repeat business
- 3 Improve customer retention
- 4 Upsell services
- 5 Improve employee recruitment

