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“Totally astonishing.”

“Massive die-off of bedbugs.”

“Groundbreaking.Revolutionary

Aprehend® Case Study: Effective pairing with Heat Treatments

BUG BAKERS

When you need the job “Well Done”

Bug Bakers™, Columbus, OH
Greg Osborne, President

ABSTRACT

This case study describes the effective pairing of Aprehend® with heat treatments to offer competitive solutions in price-sensitive markets. By offering Aprehend® as an alternative or an add-on service to heat, Bug Bakers™ has experienced a 10-15 % increase in profits.

BACKGROUND

Prior to using Aprehend®, Bug Bakers™ exclusively used heat treatment on all their jobs. Chemical applications were only used in basements and other areas unsuitable for heat. Bug Bakers™ uses a diesel powered 38 KW pull behind (3 phase) generator that supports up to nine Pest Pro® heaters (Figure 1). The system accurately controls the temperature to maintain 135° to 145° F for 8 or more hours. Up to 2500 sq./ft can be heated at one time. Fans with a capacity of 3400 cfm provide additional air

movement. Using this system and careful protocol, Bug Bakers™ received no call backs following their standard heat treatments. However, as more and more heat-treating operatives established in their area, offering services at lower rates, the competition for clients became more intense. Bug Bakers™ chose not to offer their higher quality service at lower cost and found that they were being priced out of a few jobs by companies offering a cheaper, but less thorough service.

Figure 1: Bug Bakers™ generator and heating equipment



Aprehend® to the rescue

After learning about Aprehend®, Bug Bakers™ evaluated the product and established a treatment protocol that enabled them to offer an effective alternative to heat treatment at 75% of the heat treatment cost. Customers welcomed the lower cost, chemical free approach, and Bug Bakers™ were able to offer this service at a lower price than their 'budget heat-treatment' competition. Bug Bakers™ are now using their heat rig about 50% of the time, while Aprehend® treatments represent 40% of their bed bug jobs, with pesticides at 10%.

Figure 2: Simplified logistics and setup with Aprehend®!



When quoting a bed bug service, Bug Bakers™ offer a choice of treatment options. The customers decide whether their priority is to have immediate eradication using heat, or if they are willing to wait a few days for Aprehend® to take effect, in which case they might opt for the less costly Aprehend® treatment. A third and most expensive option is to have Aprehend® applied 2 or 3 days after the heat treatment to provide 90 days protection against introductions. This option is recommended for very bad infestations.

Aprehend®-only treatments are offered at a fixed price, regardless of the bed bug density or level of clutter in the premises. Pricing is based on a single application of Aprehend®. In extreme infestations, customers are informed that their situation may require a second treatment, which would incur an additional cost.

Aprehend® treatments have been effective. Occasionally customers call 7 to 10 days after treatment with reports of bed bug activity. They are advised that the process of spores spreading in the population needs time to have maximum effect and that any active bugs will die within a day or so. Customers are asked to call back 14 days after treatment if bed bug activity is still noticeable. After the 14 day wait period, no further calls are received.

An excellent tool for managing customers' concerns during the first few days after treatment is to explain how to test bed bugs for exposure to the fungus using the Zip-lock "bag" test. See details at the end of this document.

Bug Bakers™ believe that Aprehend® is going to become the next big thing in bed bug treatment and will eventually become the No. 1 treatment choice for bed bug infestations. As with any new technology, there is a learning curve, and even 8 months after their first use of Aprehend®, Bug Bakers™ feel that they are still learning and will need more experience to perfect the treatment in every situation.

Figure 3: Another satisfied customer. Greg with Aprehend®



The greatest advantage of adopting Aprehend® has been the ability to compete on cost with the low-cost heat treaters in the area AND offer a 90-day warranty. With respect to margins, Bug Bakers™ has experienced a 10-15 % increase in profits since adopting

Aprehend®. Outlays in fuel and labor have reduced the overall cost of treatments, increasing profit margins, and the company can now cover more jobs per day.

Will Aprehend® put my heat-treating business out of business?

No. In many states the heat-treating industry is suffering from a lack of licensing requirements and an increase in the number of low-cost operatives, who not only undercut high quality heat treatment operations, but also damage the reputation of heat treatments due to frequent failures. For Bug Bakers™, Aprehend® has been an asset to counter this competition, and rather than damaging their core business, it has improved their competitiveness while continuing to maintain their excellent reputation for complete eradication of bed bugs.

The zip-lock bag test

It is easy to verify whether a bed bug (living or dead) has been exposed to Aprehend®. Bed bugs that are found during follow-up visits can be placed in a zip-lock bag on top of a wet paper towel.

- 1) The paper towel should be wetted under the tap and squeezed to remove excess water.
- 2) Place the moist paper towel in a zip-lock bag and place the live or dead bed bug on the paper towel.
- 3) Zip up the bag and leave it at room temperature for three or four days.
- 4) Inspect the bed bug. If it was sick or dead from the fungal disease in Aprehend®, the bed bug will have become white and fuzzy with the fungus (*Figure 4*)

NOTE - this will only happen at 100% humidity. “Fuzzy” bed bugs will never occur under normal room conditions.

Figure 4: Bed Bugs with external sporulation after the “zip-lock” test



ConidioTec
Natural Urban Pest Control

2440 Earlstown Road, Suite 600, Centre Hall, PA 16828

www.conidiotec.com • 800.891.8610