

Pest Control – Prevention is Key

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Pestokill's roots go back to 1985 when Dave Clements started out on his own as a 'man in a van'. Four decades and an acquisition later and Pestokill is the UK's largest independent pest controller.

With qualified technicians local to every town and city in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Pestokill is a well-established business proud of the solid reputation they've built up over the years.

Dave Clements, Managing Director of Pestokill, took some time out recently to chat to FM Director about the company's journey so far, the transition from traditional pest control methods to more digitally-led strategies, and what facilities managers should keep in mind when it comes to protecting their buildings from pests.

"I founded the company by myself back in 1985," began Dave. "It grew steadily and by 2020 we had 260 staff spread across the UK. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit and brought with it lots of changes within the industry. Like many companies, we were concerned about the impact those changes would have on the future of the business. After significant discussion, it was eventually decided that it made good sense to be acquired by ANTICIMEX, a Swedish pest control company with a rich history dating back to 1934."

Since the acquisition, Pestokill has evolved in its pest control practices, now using digital technology to provide a more preventative approach.

"We are a commercial pest controller dealing with preventive measures," explained Dave. "Traditionally, pest control was basically tempting the pests in, letting them breed for a few weeks until we knew they were there and then killing them with poison.

"That's now changed. Today we use digital devices to monitor buildings 24/7 and to spot any pest entry. We know within five minutes if a mouse or a rat has entered anywhere in the building and we're able to

deal with that one – without poison – before it's had chance to breed and multiply."

Speed is of the essence in pest control with one pair of rats producing up to 1,000 babies in just one year. In addition, one mouse can produce between 60 and 80 droppings in one day, and so from a hygiene perspective, it's vital to catch them as soon as possible. Thanks to these new technology-driven methods, pest controllers are now able to help facilities managers do just that.

Challenges

As with any industry, the pest control sector is not without its own unique challenges. So, what challenges are keeping Dave and the team on their toes at the moment? "We are at constant threat from pests," Dave said. "There are more and more invasive species being found in different countries. There are different flies and insects that are arriving in countries where they've never appeared before. This means that we're now not only dealing with traditional pests, but we've now also got invasive species from around the world to contend with.

"Take the Asian Hornet for example. It's a huge wasp that attacks other wasps and bees usually found in mainland Europe that's now invading parts of the UK. We now have to factor them into our pest control strategies and be as prepared as possible. There's always another pest looking to take advantage of humans and our inability to protect ourselves.

"Apart from that, probably the biggest challenge we have right now is educating our clients; getting them to trust that the conventional methods that have been used for the last 30 years aren't working, and that they can be done better with technology," Dave said. "It can be tricky getting the clients accept and adopt digital systems when they've always been used to it being done one way.

"But it's backed up by logic and we are steadily winning clients over on what we're doing because not only are we solving problems we couldn't solve in the past, but we're also getting to the root of the problem – finding pests earlier before they can become a real problem."

What can facilities managers do?

So, what can facilities managers do to help in the fight against pests? It's fairly simple according to Dave. "Facilities managers need to be aware of what pests can use to their advantage and then guard against it. They should regularly walk around their building to check out any holes, gaps or voids that could potentially provide an entrance to a pest. Keep in mind that a mouse only needs a hole as wide as a pen to get in!

"They should also remember that food scraps and waste are pure temptation for mice and rats and should remind all occupiers of their building to put any food away securely to avoid pests turning up for a feed.

"We've got to be smarter than the pests. We have to try to prevent them in the first place or detect them as early as possible."

For more information, please visit <https://new.pestokill.co.uk/>