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SINCE 1958, COPEBAN HAS GROWN TO A \$650 MILLION GROUP WITH 5,500 EMPLOYEES AND 350 SERVICE CENTERS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

Copesan's 50-year history lays foundation for aggressive growth strategy.

BY ANNE NAGRO

■ Fifty years ago, seven regional pest management leaders with the desire to compete for national commercial accounts formed a unique partnership. Today, Copesan Partners account for more than \$650 million in revenue, employing more than 3,500 full-time service specialists and 2,000 support staff at 350 regional service centers across North America.

The organization shows no signs of slowing: It recently unveiled aggressive plans to recruit new Partners to support its growing national account client base.

"We want to make sure we have redundant quality service capabilities in all market areas," explained Copesan President Deni Naumann. "It's something no other company in the industry can offer customers."

Copesan is targeting companies in specific geographic regions to complement its 60-plus Partner organization. It recently added 12 new Partners to its ranks: JP McHale Pest Management, Buchanan, N.Y.; EnviroPest, Windsor, Colo.; Poulin's Pest Management, Winnipeg, Manitoba; J&J Exterminating, Crowley, La.; Diagnostic Pest Solutions, Havre, Mont.; Bug Doctor Pest Control, Great Falls, Mont.; Braemar Pest Management, New Bedford, Nova Scotia; American Pest Management, Takoma Park, Md.; ProGuard, Columbus, Ohio; Horizon Termite & Pest Control, Midland Park, N.J.; Viking Termite & Pest Control, Bridgewater, N.J.; and BC Pest, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Having secondary and tertiary back-up Partners eases the potential for service disruptions and offers alternatives should a client require a different pest management approach in a specific market. It's a fail-safe preferred by clients.

"Changing suppliers is a challenge for our clients," said Alfie Treleven, Sprague Pest Solutions president and CEO, and chairman of the Copesan board. "If there's any question, we can switch out the service provider with another quality Partner who is a back-up in that area." Otherwise, he said, a client may be forced to bring in another supplier for all locations, even if 90 percent of the service was first-rate. "Clients very much like this concept of redundant, quality service availability."

"They get a lot of flexibility," agreed Plunkett's Pest Control President Stacy O'Reilly, Minneapolis. "The accounts get taken care of very well."

"Customers get the best coverage by far of any pest management company" in North America, explained McCloud Services President Chris McCloud, Hoffman Estates, Ill. "We have technicians that cover every county in the nation," as well as in Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

Without Copesan "we would not be able to sell larger accounts that can be serviced across the nation," added Bernie Holst Sr., president, Horizon Termite & Pest Control, Midland Park, N.J.

Partners with proven, quality track records provide the best service in their markets, and Copesan provides leadership and support, explained Wil-Kil General Manager Dale Bauerkemper, Sun Prairie, Wis.

Local restaurant, hotel or food processing plant managers can speak



MANAGERS OF LARGE, CORPORATE CLIENTS GET A "LOCAL, HIGH-TOUCH RELATIONSHIP" WHEN THEY WORK WITH COPESAN PARTNERS.

face-to-face with an owner, yet account information is consolidated for billing, reporting and quality assurance to help clients improve service quality and protect their brand, explained Treleven. Clients get "a local, high-touch relationship" not easily duplicated in a large corporate world, he said.

A real strength of the organization is the professional pride involved, explained Bauerkemper. "Is there peer pressure? Absolutely. You do not want to let the team down. More important, you don't want to let the client down."

Ultimately, Copesan cares deeply about "making the customer happy," observed Robert John, J&J Exterminating, Crowley, La., and it "goes far beyond anyone's expectations to do that. We became part of Copesan because of its tremendous reputation as a quality company," he said.

"Customers want the best value they can get," summed up Waltham Services President Clarke Keenan, Waltham, Mass. With Copesan, "they get Partners they can trust not only for quality service, but for providing specific information when needed."

PARTNERS FOR GROWTH

For Partners, Copesan advantages are three-fold. First, there's work to be had, said Keenan. "You can service national account locations you wouldn't be able to service otherwise." Plunkett's O'Reilly agreed. "I could never call on a large coffee chain because their headquarters is 2,000 miles away, but my Partner out there does, and I service all of those facilities in my particular territory," she explained.

Second, the network allows Partners to sell national accounts. "With Copesan's support, there's no business too large for me to call on," O'Reilly explained. The organization's North American reach opens up a huge playing field, added Sprague's Treleven. "We've had a number of our sales associates over the years sell million-dollar business" that would be impossible to sell as an independent.

Opportunities abound for new Partners, said Treleven. If a Partner sells an account with locations in their territory, they have the first opportunity to service those locations, even if they are a secondary Partner. Service Partners in other markets who receive locations to service then

pay a commission to the selling Partner. "The great way to develop your Copesan opportunity is go out and sell new business," said Treleven.

Copesan also helps local pest management professionals retain large accounts. "When clients shift to buying centrally, if you're not affiliated with someone larger, it gets tough to convince clients to buck the system and stay with a local PMP," O'Reilly said.

Treleven agreed. "Many times, those of us in the local market would get a notice of cancellation from an account because the client decided to do a regional or national buy that was beyond our local service capabilities."

Assured Environments' President Andrew Klein, New York City, experienced this first-hand. A prestigious high-rise developer wanted a pest management solution for its properties across the country. With Copesan, Klein retained his New York business and was "able to solidify a relationship with a very big customer. We were able to give them a one-stop solution nationally."

Jerry Shuck, director of sales with Sprague, had this to add: "If you're a local or regional company and you run into a national opportunity, your boundaries have essentially ended your ability to pursue the account. By being a Copesan Partner, you can take a look at the national opportunities."

"ProGuard knew that in order for us to grow and to sell national accounts, we had to be aligned with an organization like Copesan," added Jim Vaive, president, ProGuard, Columbus, Ohio, "and Copesan has matched what we were looking for."

"Keeping our clients satisfied is our number one objective," affirmed Naumann.

In addition to being service Partners, firms can acquire an ownership position in Copesan by becoming stockholders.

RECRUITING BEST IN CLASS

Potential Partners undergo approximately six months of interviews and on-site visits by Copesan quality assurance experts and management. Their clients and business references also are scrutinized.

"We are looking for Partner companies with exceptional reputations in the local marketplace," explained Copesan Vice President of Operations Mike Campbell. "They must know how to effectively service commercial clients, be comfortable with the rapidly changing high-technology

COPESAN: 50 YEARS STRONG

Copesan was founded on March 22, 1958. Since then, it's weathered many industry changes and has evolved into a North American pest management powerhouse.

In 1978, Copesan's yearly sales exceeded \$1 million. Shareholder Partners turned down an offer to buy the organization in 1985. Three years later, sales exceeded \$4.9 million, and Copesan continued to expand its business by attracting blue-chip clients like Nestlé, Kraft and Amtrak. Due to refined sales initiatives and growth strategies, 2007 revenues are expected to exceed \$56 million.

At one time, 150 companies were affiliated with Copesan. Industry consolidation and Partner companies' expanded geographic reach reduced this number while increasing client coverage. Today, Copesan has 60 Partners, with aggressive plans to expand in North America and beyond.

Copesan bought Wil-Kil Pest Control in 1961 and Holder's Pest Control in 1983. The organization also purchased firms in New Orleans, Portland, Ore., Conroe, Texas, and Appleton, Wis., which were eventually sold or rolled into the Wil-Kil or Holder's operations.

Originally based in Chicago, Copesan eventually moved to Milwaukee and briefly operated from a trailer behind Wil-Kil headquarters. In 1985, seven people were members of the Copesan corporate staff. Two years ago, the organization moved into its state-of-the-art Copesan International Support Center, which houses 70 corporate, administrative and customer service professionals in Menomonee Falls, Wis.

Copesan held its first national sales meeting in Atlanta in 1974, and first national conference in Phoenix in 1991.

"The group's history is as unique as the organization," said McCloud Services CEO Phil McCloud. He plans to publish the Copesan story in late 2009.



COPESAN WAS FOUNDED ON 1958. FIFTY YEARS LATER, IT CAN CLAIM BLUE-CHIP CLIENTS LIKE NESTLÉ, KRAFT AND AMTRAK. TODAY, COPESAN HAS 60 PARTNERS, WITH AGGRESSIVE PLANS TO EXPAND IN NORTH AMERICA AND BEYOND.

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environment, and have a reputation for executing quality service.”

“It’s a very detailed process,” assured Naumann. “We look at their financial and organizational profiles. We also assess the cultural fit with Copesan, which is critical.”

That fit is essential in an organization fueled by group effort. “You need the mutual collaboration of all the Partners

to provide clients the best and most consistent service,” said Copesan Director of Marketing Jon Bain.

New Partners bring a fresh infusion of skills and energy to the organization, said Waltham Services’ Keenan. Copesan’s Campbell agreed. “The vibrancy and entrepreneurial zeal Partners bring to Copesan is a big deal, and clients benefit

from it,” Campbell said. Partner diversity “is the strongest asset Copesan has to offer,” added Assured Environments’ Klein.

“To me, I see being a part of the Copesan organization as a strategic partnership,” said Randy Hobbs, Braemar Pest Control Services, St. John, New Brunswick. “We feel it’s a real win/win to be part of Copesan.”

Copesan Partners are like family, explained Phil McCloud, McCloud Services. “We’re part of something bigger and we’re proud of that,” a sentiment echoed by Scott Steckel of ProGuard, Columbus, Ohio. “It’s a family,” he said — an organization that will praise you when you do well, but like any good family, also will hold you accountable.

Said Wil-Kil’s Bauerkemper: “Copesan is unique to the industry and is really going to shake things up down the road.”

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COPESAN INTERESTING FACTS

- Copesan was founded in 1958 by Dr. H.K. Steckel, B.W. Eldredge, J.E. Sameth, Henry Turrie, J.C. Redd, Harvey Sturgeon and I.B. Carncross.
- Copesan is an acronym derived from COordinated PEst Management and SANitation.
- Twenty-two past NPMA presidents have been part of the Copesan organization.
- Twenty Copesan Partners are ranked in PCT magazine's Top 100 listing.
- Copesan Partners represent more than \$650 million in revenues.
- Copesan Partners have been in the pest management industry an average of 76 years.
- Copesan has at its service more than 5,500 employees, including more than 3,500 full-time service professionals.
- Copesan is 60-plus Partners strong, and growing.

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NETWORKING TOPS LIST OF COPESAN BENEFITS

■ Partners agree: Networking with peers tops their list of Copesan benefits.

“One of the original goals of Copesan is to make each of our Partner businesses better,” explained Tom McCloud, chairman emeritus of McCloud Services, an early Copesan Partner. “The active exchange of ideas is one of the strengths of Copesan.”

Sprague Pest Solutions President and CEO Alfie Treleven agreed. “Copesan gives us the opportunity to sit across the table from successful companies from throughout North America” and share best practices.

It’s given Assured Environments of New York City a road map to grow its business, affirmed CEO Andrew Klein.

For Plunkett’s Pest Control President Stacy O’Reilly, talking with local competitors about operations, human resources, marketing and technology to improve business is impossible. “At Copesan, I have a partnership of companies in the same business to brainstorm with. And even though we sometimes overlap territories and compete, we share everything.”

Partners can mirror successful programs, explained Wil-Kil General Manager Dale Bauerkemper. “You often don’t have to start from scratch to get a program off the ground. It’s a give

and take situation.”

“Partners feel they can really learn and share ideas with some of the finest pest management professionals in the industry,” said Copesan President Deni Naumann. “You have a lot of opportunities for networking and learning from best-in-class organizations.”

“I’ve been involved with Copesan for a number of years and the networking opportunities and the resources that are available are endless,” said Billy Blasingame, Arrow Exterminators, Atlanta.

Copesan benefits include:

Copesan National Conference — Held in late January, the three-day event combines networking, client and business speaker presentations, Partner awards and Copesan’s vision for the coming year. The popular Vendor Expo features nearly 50 product manufacturers, distributors, equipment makers, and software and professional service providers. Break-out sessions of Copesan’s finance, sales, technical, marketing, education and operations committees share best practices.

RapidTrax™ — Copesan’s proprietary electronic data reporting system integrates hand-held technology and barcode scanning.



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Copesan University — The online training environment offers programs for specific pests and account protocols, as well as customer service and office skills courses that can be customized for individual companies. Some courses are available to non-Partners through a partnership with PCT magazine.



“One of the great things that we have found with Copesan is the training for all of our salespeople and the training with Copesan University just goes beyond anything else that we’ve been able to capture and anything else that is available to us,” said Ed Bradbury, president, Viking Termite & Pest Control, Bridgewater, N.J.

Buying Power — Cooperative purchasing of service vehicles, phone service, promotional marketing materials and, soon, travel and office supplies such as thermal paper for in-field printers, saves Partners money. Alone, O’Reilly couldn’t get a fleet discount for 45 service trucks. As a Copesan shareholder Partner, she realizes a significant rebate. “That’s just tangible money that drops to the bottom line.”

International Support Center —

Client satisfaction is the goal of the 70 corporate, administrative and customer service employees at Copesan’s state-of-the-art facility in Menomonee Falls, Wis. “The organization focuses on a national layer of account management to find solutions for clients and Partners,” Treleven explained. The central office also generates service orders, and handles billing.

PestSure Insurance Company —

An early Copesan initiative, PestSure is a leading insurance provider offering cost-effective programs to the pest management industry. Copesan is a shareholder of the PestSure operating company.

CONCLUSION

“The biggest benefits, by far, have been the training, the various tools Copesan provides, and the opportunity to network and learn from other Copesan Partners,” said Emily Thomas, COO, Arrow Exterminators, Atlanta.

Copesan is an ideal fit for a company like Plunkett’s Pest Control, an early Partner of the organization. “My grandfather saw the opportunity when the organization was just being founded,” said O’Reilly. “Plunkett’s has been involved ever since and we’ve clearly benefited from Copesan every year since then.” ✦




Congratulations Copesan on your 50th Anniversary!



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'FIELD LABS' TEST AND REFINE PROTOCOLS, TECHNOLOGY

■ Wil-Kil Pest Control, based in Sun Prairie, Wis., and Holder's Pest Control in Houston are more than Copesan Partners. They're wholly owned operations and unique field labs that let Copesan refine technology and service protocols before applying them organization-wide.

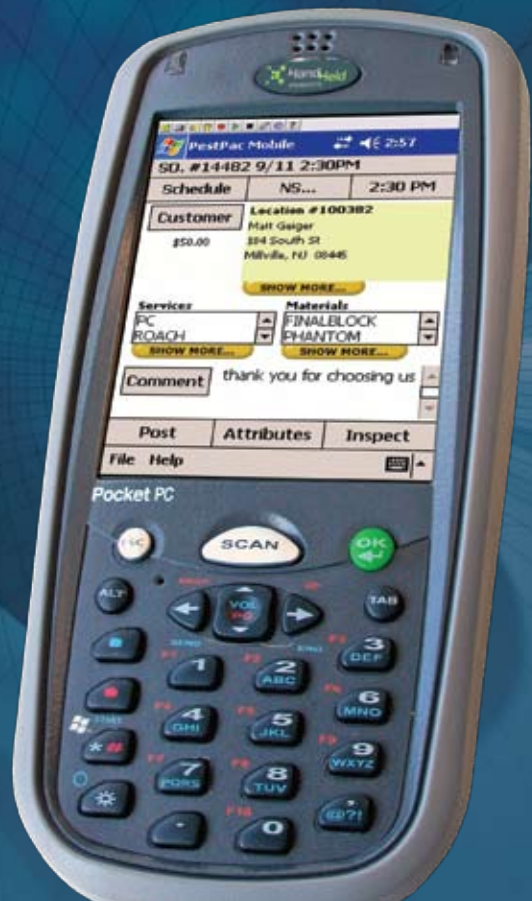
Wil-Kil's involvement in the development of the RapidTrax™ hand-held electronic data collection system and its recent alliance with Marathon Data Systems to consolidate the best features of RapidTrax™ into Marathon's PestPac™ Mobile hand-held software application demonstrate the value of this unique relationship to Copesan and its Partners.

Early in the development of the RapidTrax™ system, Wil-Kil was involved in software brainstorming meetings to determine how electronic data collection could better serve clients, recalled General Manager Dale Bauerkemper. Once the software was developed, "we worked out a lot of the kinks in the field, fine-tuned it to make it more user-friendly for technicians, and made sure it was recording data important to the client."

Processes were developed to help office and field specialists go from paper to electronic record keeping. The company determined how to convert geographical maps of facilities containing pest management devices into computer language, Bauerkemper explained. The resulting computer "tree map" system allows technicians to find and scan devices and report pest activity and control measures in a timely and effective manner.

Wil-Kil helped identify costs and hardware needs, explored the practicality of printing hard-copy reports from vehicles, and developed training modules. "Wil-Kil personnel worked with Copesan's corporate staff and provided valuable feedback on RapidTrax™," said Mike Ruland, director of IT. Today, RapidTrax™ is an important and critical part of Copesan technicians' daily routine that provides clients with meaningful information verifying Integrated Pest Management services performed and noting outstanding deficiencies.

"New Partners embrace the opportunity to move into hand-held technology, a key requirement of our national account clients," said Copesan President Deni Naumann. With PestPac and Marathon Data now onboard to manage the data collection aspect of RapidTrax™ and oversee all future software development, Partners have an extensive support



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system to get them up and running, and train them on new applications.

"With Marathon Data Systems' expertise in the software arena, and the personnel resources they can utilize for further development of the software, we see such positive benefits of this alliance that will provide for even further enhancements and maintenance of the software application," Naumann said.

"By consolidating the best features of Copesan's proprietary data collection application, RapidTrax™, with our PestPac Mobile hand-held software application, everyone benefits," added Mike Ayars, president, Marathon Data Systems, Tinton Falls, N.J. "We already have gained some valuable new insights about the pest control market through our association with Copesan, which will allow us to continue to improve our PestPac Mobile product offering, so it's a win-win-win for Copesan, the rest of the PestPac community and the industry as a whole."

"We had the opportunity to show the rest of the partnership how it could be done," added Bauerkemper. "The luxury



COPESAN PARTNERS READILY SHARE THEIR TECHNICAL EXPERTISE WITH EACH OTHER.

of having an operational company within the umbrella of Copesan is to share ideas and expertise."

Other programs Holder's and Wil-Kil have been involved with bringing to fruition — and have modified for national accounts

— include programs on quality and sanitation, ants, bed bugs, and organic pest management for food processing and warehousing facilities.

"Holder's developed an emergency response program that was utilized following Hurricane Katrina by a number of Partners. Our Technical Director J.B. Howell integrated his expertise working with field-based U.S. military to design the program and this provided Partners needing to service those geographies impacted (by the storm) a proven program and approach," commented Ed Knight, general manager of Holder's.

And, both Holder's and Wil-Kil have been involved with the initial introduction of Copesan University and have Web portals for company personnel to access. Every Partner has the opportunity to add training modules to Copesan University, said Bauerkemper.

"This type of activity occurs throughout the Partner network to provide training and track the training in order to develop and enhance our employees' skills," Bauerkemper said. ✦

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