Consumer Pest Control Purchasing Report
Taking the time to understand your customers benefits your entire organization and can give you a strategic advantage over your competition. Learning who they are, what they care about, and why they decide to do business with one pest control company over another one can help you tailor your marketing messages, provide better service offerings, and take advantage of emerging opportunities when they have the most impact. Unfortunately, there’s just not a lot of data out there about the average pest control consumer.

That’s why we commissioned Lucid to conduct an independent research study using Lucid’s sampling software. The study, conducted in 2021, included more than 7,000 field service customers and over 2,000 pest control customers who purchased services within the last 12 months. The sample included men and women ages 18-64 who rent or own their primary residence and are actively involved in household service purchase decisions.

The purpose of this research was to explore the average pest control customer’s decision making journey in order to support our own product development efforts. Specifically, we wanted to know which solutions to prioritize to help give our pest control clients an edge going forward.

After evaluating the data, we noticed some interesting insights for the entire industry. We thank you for your interest in this report and hope the information comes in handy as you continue to grow your business and find new ways to better serve your community with pest control services.
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Executive Summary

Let’s kick things off with a quick summary of our findings.

There’s A Lack Of Customer Loyalty
Three out of 10 homeowners or renters purchased pest control services in the past 12 months, indicating there’s plenty of room for the industry to grow. Of those with services, many have a recurring plan they are satisfied with. Despite this, many are willing to switch providers for a better price or to try something new. This indicates a lack of company loyalty among pest control customers.

General Purchase Journey
Customers are more likely to be reactive – meaning they begin to actively look for services when an infestation occurs – rather than taking a more proactive approach. Once a solution is needed, the first step for many – especially those aged 18-34 – is to perform an online search. Pest control customers prioritize companies with a good reputation and a reasonable price point above all else. They look for online reviews and recommendations from family and friends to validate a company’s reputation.

Customers primarily book services over the phone but expressed a high willingness to purchase services online. This indicates there may be an opportunity for pest control operators to take advantage of e-commerce solutions – like the ones provided by FieldRoutes. Among the 12% of respondents who are unlikely to purchase services online, the top barriers are interpersonal, meaning they would rather talk to a person than do business online.

Influencers
Beyond cost, the most influential decision-making factor is a sense of reliability and trust. Since many prospective customers go online to conduct research, online reviews are quickly becoming a key factor in the decision-making process. Prospective customers who rely on online reviews typically look for testimonials from others in the area who faced similar issues. Younger customers prefer online chat, while customers who are 35 and over prefer to be helped over the phone. In the pages that follow, we’ll take a closer look at the specific responses and key details of our research.
With many people either working from home or enjoying a flexible work schedule, it’s no surprise that many prospective customers have spent a lot of time on the hunt for household service providers in the past 12 months. Most notably, over half of respondents searched for pest control services, indicating solid opportunities for the industry.

**Search For Specific Household Services**
(Within The Past 12 Months, Among Overall Market)

- **59%** for Landscaping or Lawn Maintenance
- **58%** for Pest Control
- **55%** for Interior or Exterior Painting
- **47%** for Construction or Renovation
- **41%** for Air Duct Cleaning

Landscaping and pest control were the most purchased household services over the past year, with approximately three in 10 homeowners or renters purchasing each type of service.²

With many people either working from home or enjoying a flexible work schedule, it’s no surprise that many prospective customers have spent a lot of time on the hunt for household service providers in the past 12 months. Most notably, over half of respondents searched for pest control services, indicating solid opportunities for the industry.

**Pest Control Service Purchase Behavior**
(Among Overall Market)

- **28%** purchased in the past 12 months
- **28%** purchased over 1 year ago
- **18%** planning to purchase in the next 12 months
- **16%** planning to purchase more than 1 year from now
- **9%** have not purchased and not planning to purchase
- **16%** potential future customers: 43%
Why Customers Switch

Are You On A Recurring Plan? (Among P12M Purchasers*)

- Yes, I am currently on a monthly plan: 28%
- Yes, I am currently on a quarterly plan: 23%
- Yes, I am currently on an annual plan: 12%
- No, I have purchased a one-time service: 22%
- No, I am not currently on a recurring plan: 15%

63% have some type of recurring plan

Among those who purchased pest control services in the past 12 months, six in 10 have a recurring plan they are satisfied with, particularly those residing in urban areas.

Overall Plan Satisfaction (Very Satisfied/Satisfied - Among P12M Purchasers With A Recurring Plan)

- Urban Residents: 97%
- Rural Residents: 95%
- Suburban Residents: 91%

* P12M: Surveyed customers who purchased pest control in the past 12 months.
Surprisingly, despite the high satisfaction across the board, 46% of respondents said they are very/somewhat likely to switch companies. This suggests low levels of company loyalty among pest control customers.

Of those who were likely to switch service providers, the majority were primarily motivated by price rather than customer service or coverage concerns.

Among the most price sensitive were 45–54-years-old (67%), those residing in the West (69%), and those with $50K - 99,999K incomes (70%).

Those who were most open to trying something new included 35–44-year-olds (61%), those residing in urban centers (58%), and those with $100K+ incomes (58%).

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**Reasons For Switching?**

(Among Those Very/Somewhat Likely To Switch)

- To find a better deal: 62%
- To try something new: 48%
- To find better customer service: 45%
- To find better coverage in my area: 40%
- My current company is/will no longer be in business: 24%
There are no surprises here. Most respondents (51%) decided to purchase pest control services after an active infestation. While 46% take a more proactive approach, purchasing services as part of a routine or new home inspection.

61% – or approximately four in 10 – of those surveyed purchased services for the first time in the past 12 months. 6

The most common pest control services purchased were general pest extermination, ant extermination, and rodent control.
When prospective customers identify the need for pest control services, the first step for many is an online search. This is mostly driven by younger customers (18-34 year olds); however, regardless of age, the first steps are often digital.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Action Taken</th>
<th>Ages 18-34</th>
<th>Ages 35-64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital (Net)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searched online for a company to fix it</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searched online for home/DIY solutions</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked for/looked on social media for a company</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked for or looked on social media for guidance</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/in person advice (Net)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called family/friends/neighbors for advice</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited a local hardware store product/advice</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print (Net)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked for a card dropped off by a local company</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked for mail/coupons from a local company</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Researched a company I saw advertising for</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Reached out to a company I’ve used before</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As prospective customers look for more information, many turn to online searches, recommendations from friends and family, and online review sites.

### Information Sources Used
(Among P12M Purchasers)

- **General Internet search (e.g., Google, Bing)**: 49% Used Source, 23% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Friends and family recommendations**: 39% Used Source, 18% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Online review sites (e.g., Yelp, Better Business Bureau)**: 35% Used Source, 16% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Social media (e.g., Facebook, NextDoor)**: 22% Used Source, 6% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Phone consultations with local companies**: 22% Used Source, 8% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Online articles about the problem**: 22% Used Source, 5% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Referrals from professionals (e.g., contractors, realtors)**: 18% Used Source, 6% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Company information/ads received in the mail**: 18% Used Source, 4% Indicate Most Helpful
- **In person consultation at retail locations**: 16% Used Source, 6% Indicate Most Helpful
- **Door to door sales representatives**: 9% Used Source, 3% Indicate Most Helpful

Among those who used a review website to make a decision, the most popular choices are ranked as follows (the percentage indicates those who used that source):9:

- 77% - Google
- 44% - Yelp
- 38% - Facebook
- 33% - HomeAdvisor
- 32% - The Better Business Bureau
- 25% - Angi
- 21% - Yahoo
Here, we see some key differences between owners and renters. According to the data, those who own their home are more likely to gravitate toward companies with a solid reputation and seek customer reviews for validation. Meanwhile, those who rent their home appear to care more about having a price point that fits their budget.

### Key Decision Factors

Here are the top reasons consumers search for pest control information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Of Information Searched For</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A reputable company</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A price point within my budget</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews from customers with experience</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate extermination service</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally friendly solutions</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A deal or promotion</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something customized to my specific needs</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from people like me</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from people I know</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIY solutions</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While most customers turn to online sources to gather information about pest control services, the data indicates that a majority still decided to call a company to book services.

Only 3% of P12M purchasers indicated they did not gather information prior to selecting a pest control service. How they proceeded:

48% Called a company I knew to book services
16% Booked services online from a company I was aware of
5% Booked in person with door-to-door sales rep

Owners Vs. Renters

Method Of Booking Services
(Among Those That Gathered Information)

- Over the phone: 51%
- On the company website: 30%
- In person with door-to-door sales rep: 10%
- Via email: 7%
- Other: 2%
Approximately half of the respondents (52%) considered alternative companies. Price and availability are the key reasons why those other companies were not chosen. It appears that specific company concerns such as speed, errors, and reviews are less likely to drive prospective pest control customers away.

**Barriers To Alternatives**  
*Among Those That Considered Alternatives*

- Too expensive: 45%
- Availability: 40%
- Slow process: 25%
- Bad online reviews: 25%
- Bad customer service: 20%
- Did not service my area: 19%
- Bad reviews from friends and family: 17%
- Website errors: 16%
- No social media presence: 11%

Beyond cost, the most influential decision-making factor appears to be a sense of reliability and trust. This indicates that positive reviews and a consistent customer service experience remain important.

**Influential Decision Making Factors**  
*Among P12M Purchasers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Influence Index</th>
<th>% Indicate Influential</th>
<th>% Indicate Most Influential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall price point</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability to come when I need</td>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of reliability and trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive online reviews/ratings</td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed/efficiency of communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A customized solution for my needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a free quote</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a deal/promotion/using a coupon</td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-designed, user friendly website</td>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditations listed on the website</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A social media presence I can connect with</td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most Influential**  
*Among P12M Purchasers*

- Sense of reliability and trust: 16%
- Availability to come when I need: 12%
- Customer service experience: 11%
- Positive online reviews/ratings: 11%
- A customized solution for my needs: 8%
- Speed/efficiency of communication: 5%
- Getting a free quote: 5%
- Getting a deal/promotion/using a coupon: 5%
- Well-designed, user friendly website: 2%
- Accreditations listed on the website: 2%
- A social media presence I can connect with: 1%

Average Influence Index: 22
When it comes to reviews, different age groups look for different things. Those aged 35 and over appear to look for testimonials from customers who faced similar pest control issues in their local area. Prospective customers aged 18-34, on the other hand, look for reviews that include photos. Keep this in mind when showcasing reviews on your website.

**What Do You Want From Online Ratings/Reviews?**  
*(Among Those Who Indicate Online Ratings/Reviews As A Decision Making Factor)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You Want</th>
<th>Ages 18-34 Vs. Ages 35-64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reviews from people that had a similar problem</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimonials from validated customers on the company website</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews from people in my local area</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An overall rating score of the services</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low proportion of negative reviews/feedback</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews from a 3rd party (e.g., Google, Yelp)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews that include photos</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18-34</strong></td>
<td><strong>35-64</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>64%</strong></td>
<td><strong>65%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>56%</strong></td>
<td><strong>60%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td><strong>57%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>52%</strong></td>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>38%</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents who factor customer service into their decision need to be assured that their problems are fully understood and can be solved in a friendly and efficient manner. When it comes to communication methods, customers aged 18-34 place a stronger value on online chat services, while those who are 35 and over prefer to be helped over the phone.

**What Do You Want From Customer Service?**  
*(Among Those Who Indicate Customer Service As A Decision Making Factor)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You Want</th>
<th>Ages 18-34 Vs. Ages 35-64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full understanding of my needs</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick responses</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly individuals</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel that my time is valued</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to a company representative via phone</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel that it is a personalized interaction</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to a company representative online</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An always available online chat</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18-34</strong></td>
<td><strong>35-64</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>66%</strong></td>
<td><strong>74%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>62%</strong></td>
<td><strong>65%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>62%</strong></td>
<td><strong>62%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>45%</strong></td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
<td><strong>38%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>33%</strong></td>
<td><strong>39%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purchase Preferences

As prospective customers look for more information, many turn to online searches, recommendations from friends and family, and online review sites.

With so many people going online to conduct research on pest control, it makes sense that many of those surveyed expressed a willingness to finalize their purchase online. This indicates that the number of those booking online could increase as more pest control providers incorporate e-commerce solutions in addition to more tried-and-true methods.
The highest likelihood levels for website booking are as follows\textsuperscript{17}:

- Those residing in the West (71%)
- Those with $100K+ incomes (71%)
- Those residing in urban centers (69%)
- Those aged 35-44 (69%)
- Those who work entirely from home or have a flexible work arrangement (69%)

*Extremely/Very Likely Scores Shown

Among the 12\% unlikely to purchase online\textsuperscript{18}:

- 43\% prefer to have a conversation
- 29\% prefer all purchasing to be done in person
- 22\% need more information that can usually be found online
- 18\% didn’t want to create a required account
- 17\% expressed concern over unexpected charges when buying online
- 17\% Don’t trust online purchasing in general
- 13\% Said it takes too long to input information
- 8\% Said the checkout process was too long/complicated online
- 6\% Said they are not able to use a preferred payment method online
Final Thoughts

The pest control buying journey typically begins once an infestation occurs or as part of a routine inspection. Once the need is identified, many prospective customers go online to conduct research. Specifically, they look for a solutions provider or a DIY solution. When looking for a provider, they often search for companies with a solid reputation backed up by positive testimonials and reviews from existing customers with similar issues.

Most pest control customers prefer to pick up the phone to book appointments, but many express a willingness to purchase online in the future. When deciding between multiple companies, price and availability are the key determining factors as to why customers choose one provider over another. Nevertheless, reliability, reputation, and trust remain important to the decision-making process.

At first glance, the low levels of customer loyalty may set off some alarm bells. However, this information can be used to your advantage, especially when trying to take business from competitors. While price is always a factor, offering services your competitors don’t and providing fresh experiences may help your company stand apart and attract customers from competing providers. Although more data is needed to determine exactly what steps can be taken to improve loyalty, it’s pretty clear that outstanding service is a must. Likewise, finding new ways to improve the customer experience could prove to be crucial.

Notably, the data collected in this study indicates that the key to capturing younger customers is in improving your online presence. That can mean adding pictures to your testimonials, incorporating live chat functionality, and/or adding the ability to purchase services online. While not expressly stated in the data, the ability to make electronic payments through an online payment portal may also play a role here.

Whether you’re looking to add time-saving efficiencies, improve your customer service experience, or make the most of your online presence, FieldRoutes has the tools and expertise to help you get there. Our ability to let you sell pest control services online is an absolute game-changer, helping you capture new business when and where your potential customers look for solutions. Once a customer signs up, they’re instantly added to an available technician’s schedule, making things quick and easy for everyone involved.

Schedule a demo today and let’s talk about how our operations software and integrated sales and marketing solutions can help you achieve the growth and success you’ve always dreamed about.
1  Base: Total Overall Market View (N=7,052)
QS9. When was the last time you shopped or looked for information on the following household services?

2  Base: Total Overall Market View (N=7,052)
QS11. Which of the following household services, if any, have you made a purchase or planning to purchase for your primary residence?

3  Base: Total Overall Market View (N=7,052)
QS9. When was the last time you shopped or looked for information on the following household services? – Pest Control
QS11. Which of the following household services, if any, have you made a purchase or planning to purchase for your primary residence? – Pest Control

4  Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (n=2,001), Total P12M Purchasers with a Recurring Plan (n=1,251), Urban (n=528), Suburban (n=525), Rural (n=198)
Q2. Are you on a recurring plan with a company for pest control services?/Q3. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with the company that provides your recurring pest control services.

5  Base: Total P12M Purchasers with a Recurring Plan (n=1,251), Total Very/Somewhat Likely to Switch (n=570)
Q4. How likely are you to switch to a new company for recurring pest control services?/Q5. You mentioned you are very/somewhat likely to switch to a new company for recurring pest control services. Which if any, describe your reasons for wanting to switch?

6  Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (n=2,001)
Q1. Thinking specifically about this experience, which of the following best describes what prompted you to inquire about pest control services?/Q1a. What this the first time you looked into pest control services?

7  Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (n=2,001)
Q6. And, which type(s) of pest control services were included in your last purchase?

8  Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (n=2,001), Ages 18-34 (n=669), Ages 35-64 (n=1,332)
Q7. When you first realized you needed a pest control solution, what was the first thing you did?

9  Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (n=2,001), Total Used Online Review Sites (n=709)
Q8. Which of the following sources of information did you use as you gathered information on pest control solutions?/Q9. And, which information source did you find the most helpful?/Q11. You mentioned you used online review sites as a source when searching for pest control services, which of the following did you use?
Q10. What kind of information were you looking for?

Q13. Once you finished gathering information, how did you book your pest control service?/Q12. You mentioned you did not gather any information prior to selecting a pest control company. Which of the following step did you take?

Q22. Other than the company you chose, did you consider any alternative pest control companies?/Q23. Please indicate your reasoning for not choosing the alternatives(s).

Q18. Overall, which of the following factors are influential to your final decision on which pest control company to choose/?Q19. And what is the single most influential factor to your final decision? *Influence Index = Most Influential/Influential Decision-Making Factors

Q21. What do you want to see from online reviews/ratings?

Q20. What do you want from a customer service experience?

Q14. If you needed pest control services again, how likely are you to consider booking any future services in the following ways?

Q15. You mentioned you are not at all likely/