



2021

***CONSUMER PEST
CONTROL PURCHASING***

Report



Welcome

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 from August 23 to September 15 using Lucid's sampling software. The study 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.



Table of Contents

- 4 Executive Summary
- 5 Overall Market
- 6 Why Customers Switch
- 8 The Path to Purchase
- 11 Key Decision Factors
- 15 Purchase Preferences
- 17 Final Thoughts

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.

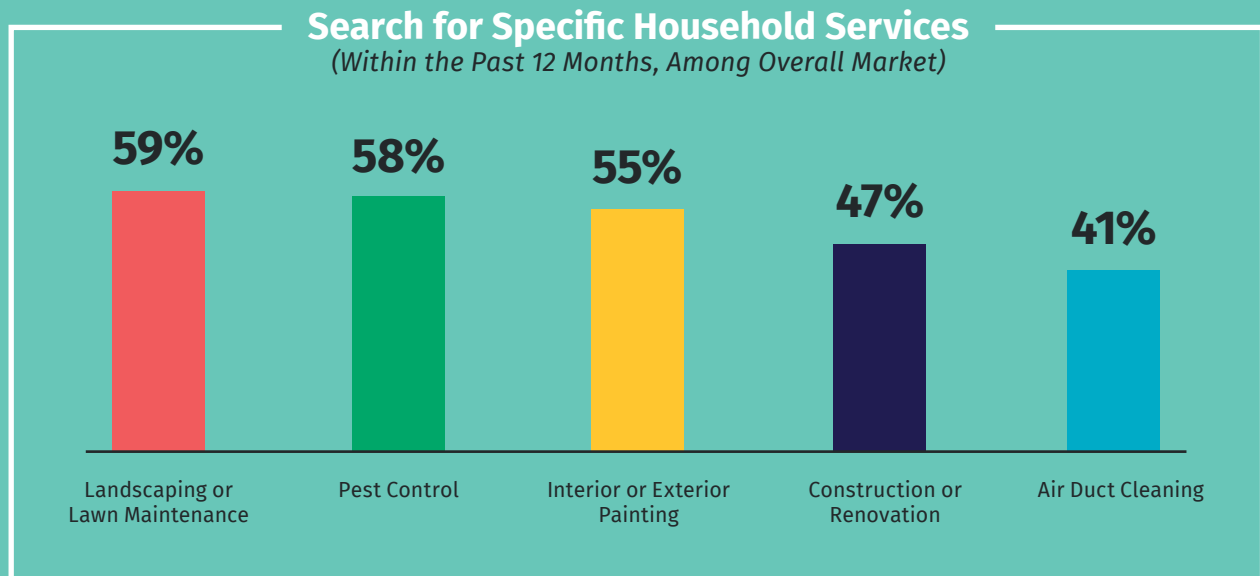
Influencers

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.

Overall Market

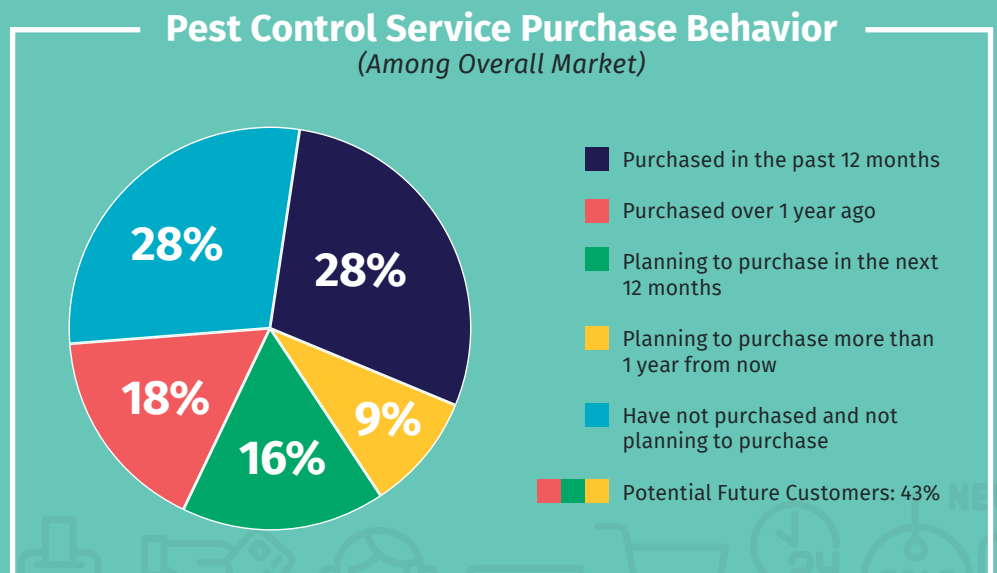
With many people either working from home or enjoying a flexible work schedule, it's no surprise that many prospective customers have spent a lot of time on the hunt for household service providers in the past 12 months. Most notably, over half of respondents searched for pest control services, indicating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



1

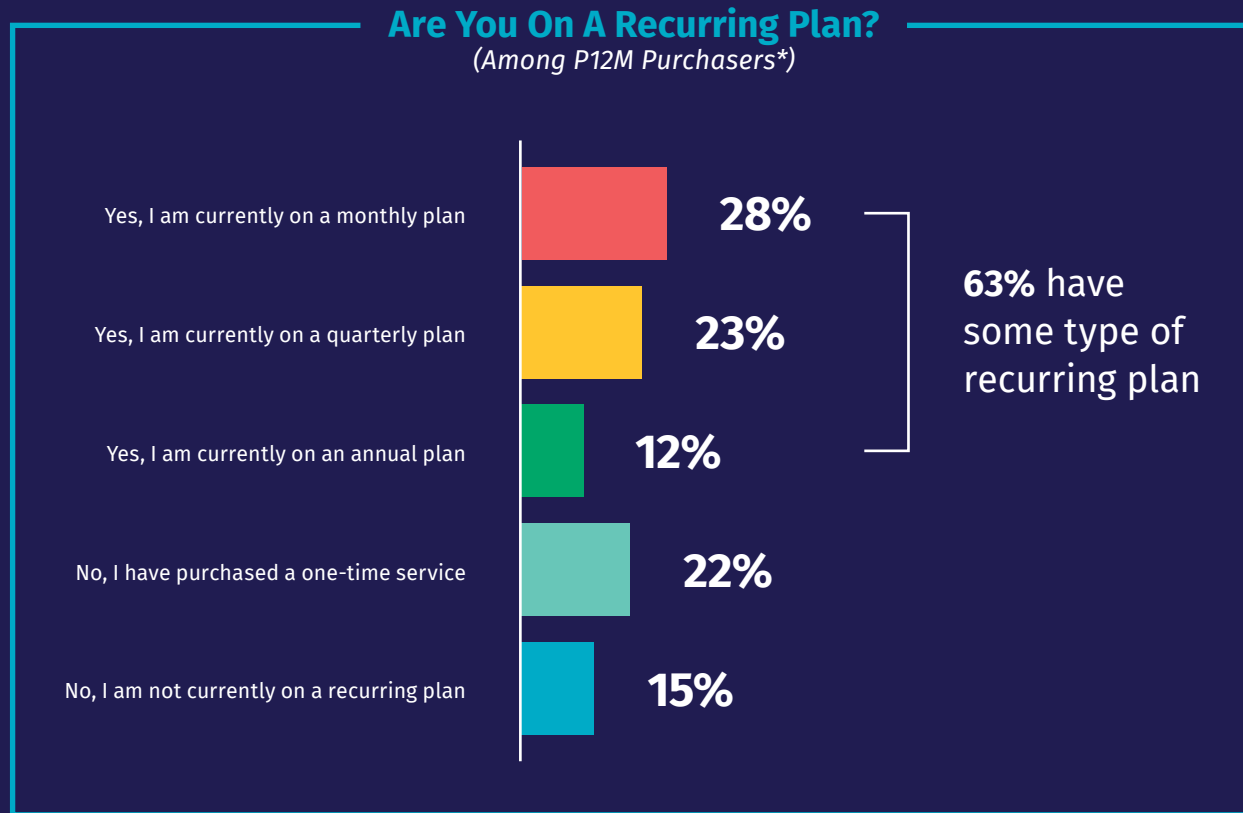
Landscaping and pest control were the most purchased household services over the past year, with approximately three in 10 homeowners or renters purchasing each type of service.²

At any given time, 43% of the homeowner and renter market have either purchased pest control services over a year ago or are planning a future purchase. This group can be identified as potential pest control customers.

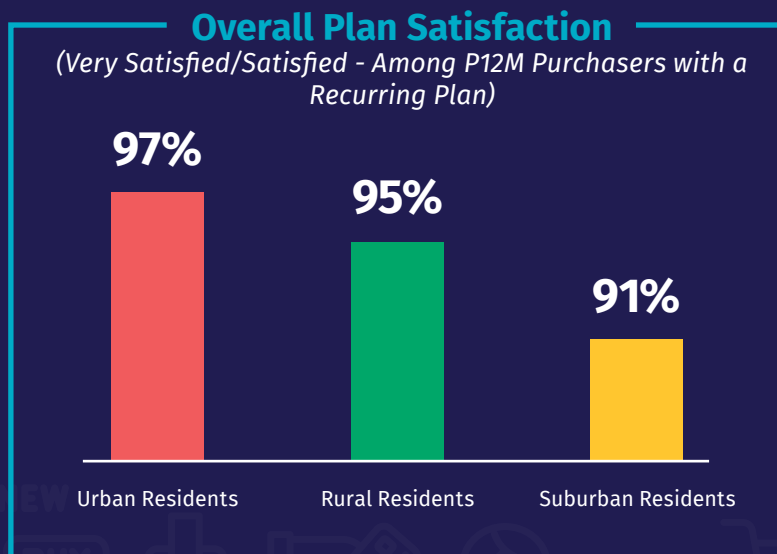


3

Why Customers Switch

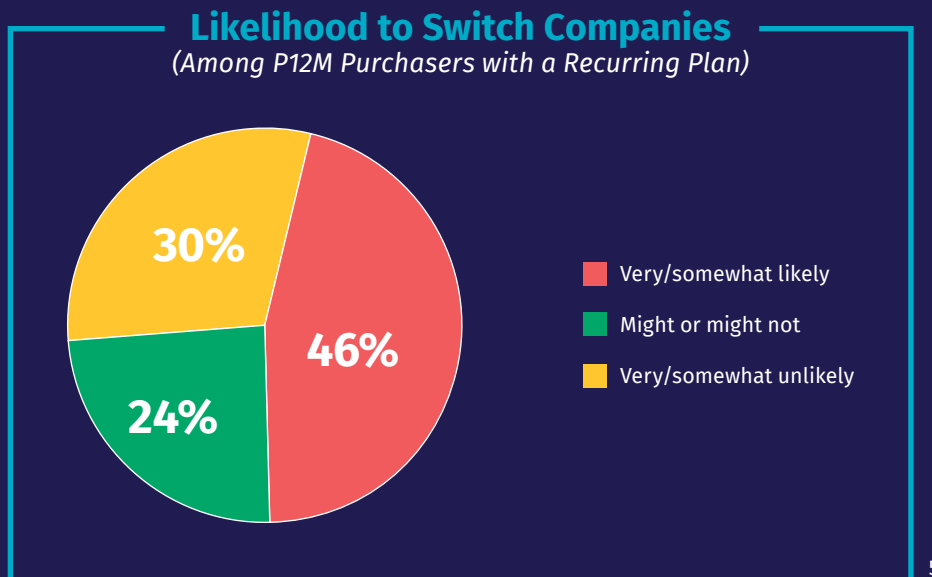


Among those who purchased pest control services in the past 12 months, six in 10 have a recurring plan they are satisfied with, particularly those residing in urban areas.



* P12M: Surveyed customers who purchased pest control in the past 12 months.

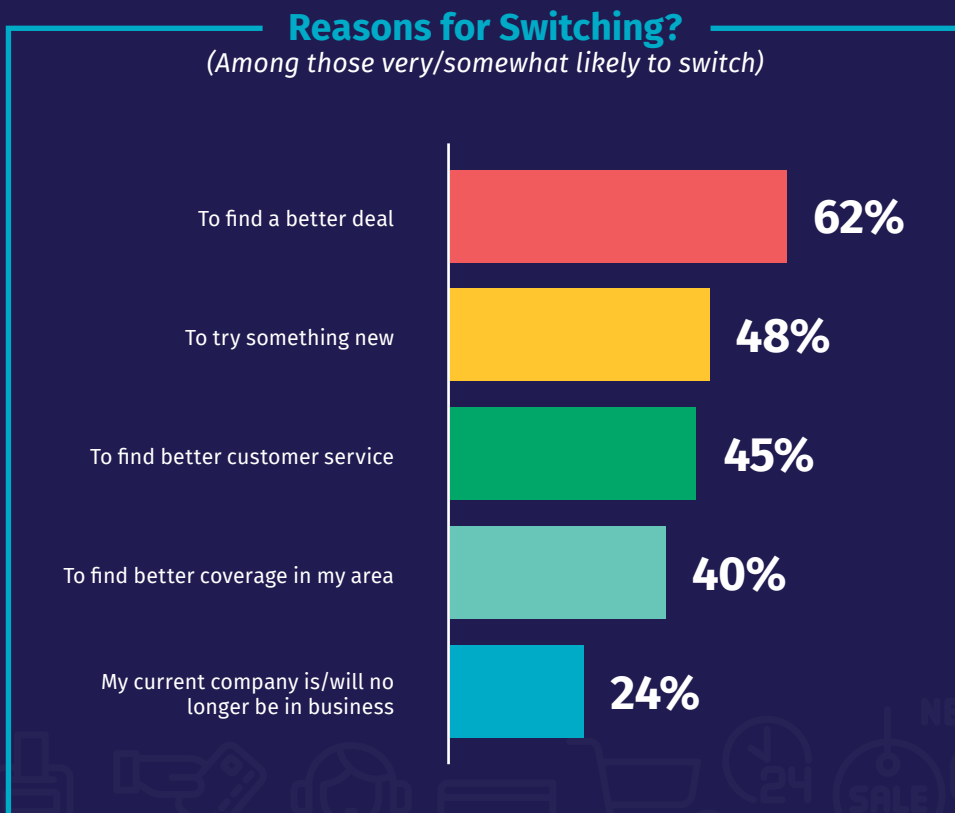
Surprisingly, despite the high satisfaction across the board, 46% of respondents said they are very/somewhat likely to switch companies. This suggests low levels of company loyalty among pest control customers.



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

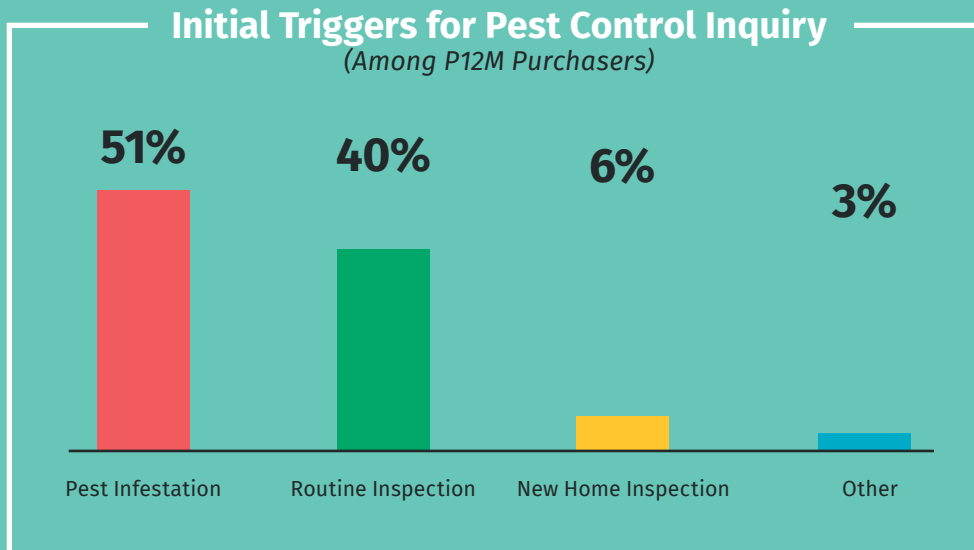
Among the most price sensitive were 45–54-year-olds (67%), those residing in the West (69%), and those with \$50K - 99,999K incomes (70%).⁵

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%).⁵



The Path to Purchase

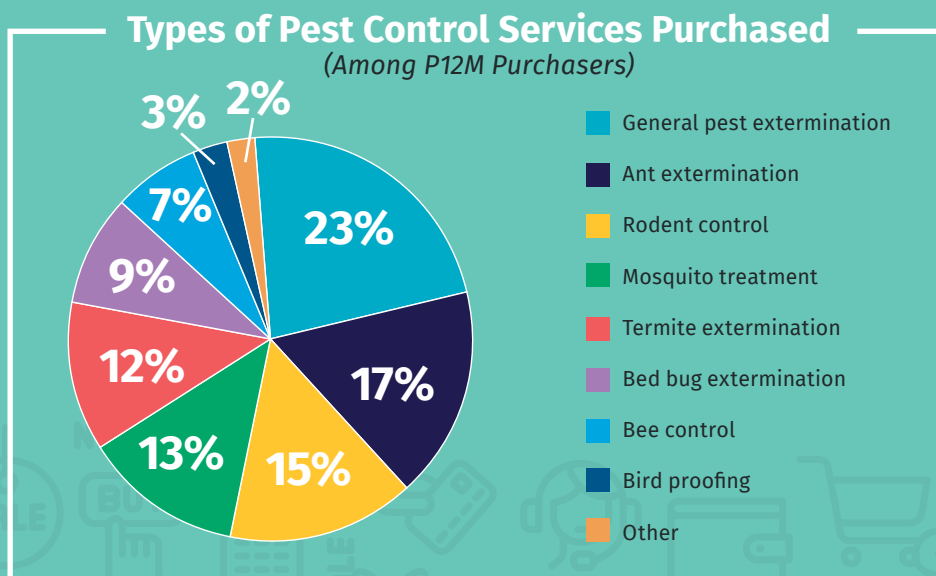
There are no surprises here. Most respondents (51%) decided to purchase pest control services after an active infestation. While 46% take a more proactive approach, purchasing services as part of a routine or new home inspection.



6

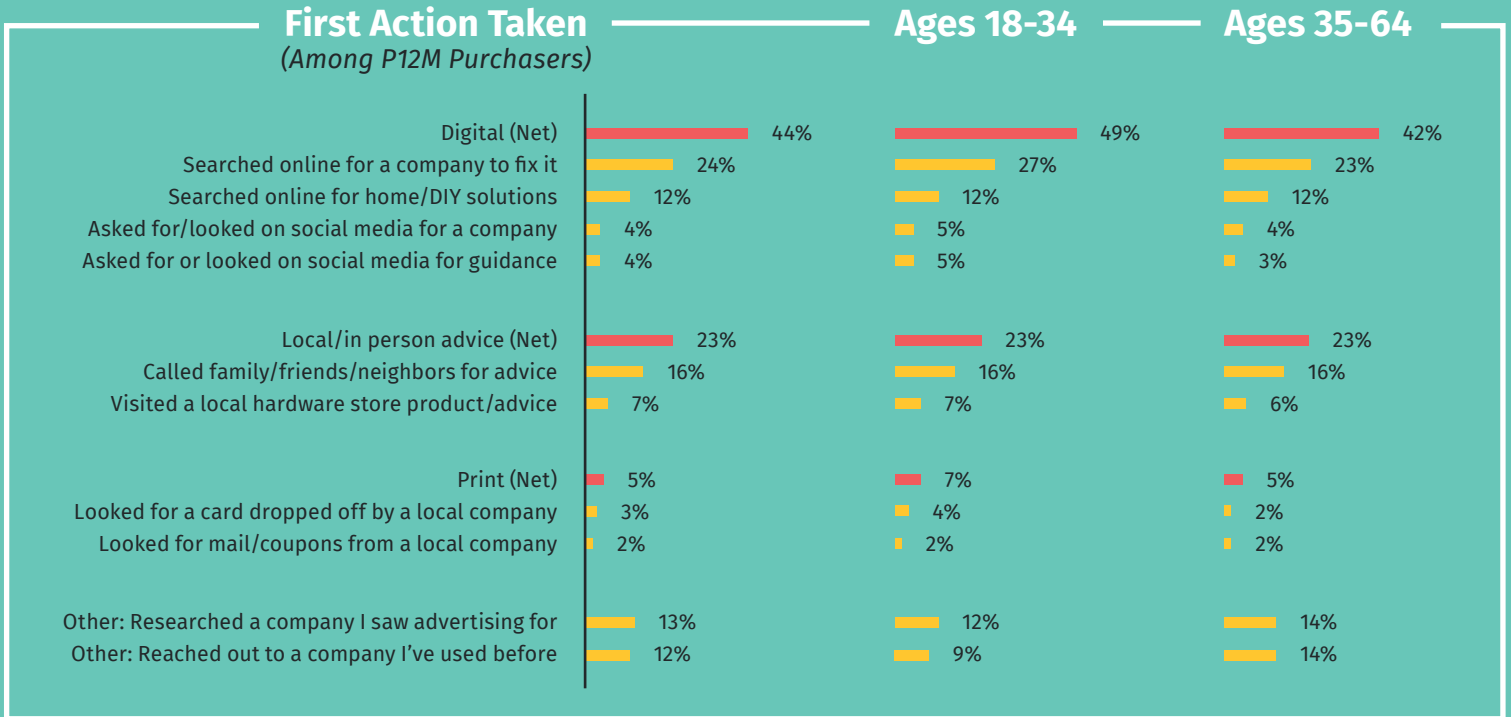
61%—or approximately four in 10—of those surveyed purchased services for the first time in the past 12 months.⁶

The most common pest control services purchased were general pest extermination, ant extermination, and rodent control.



7

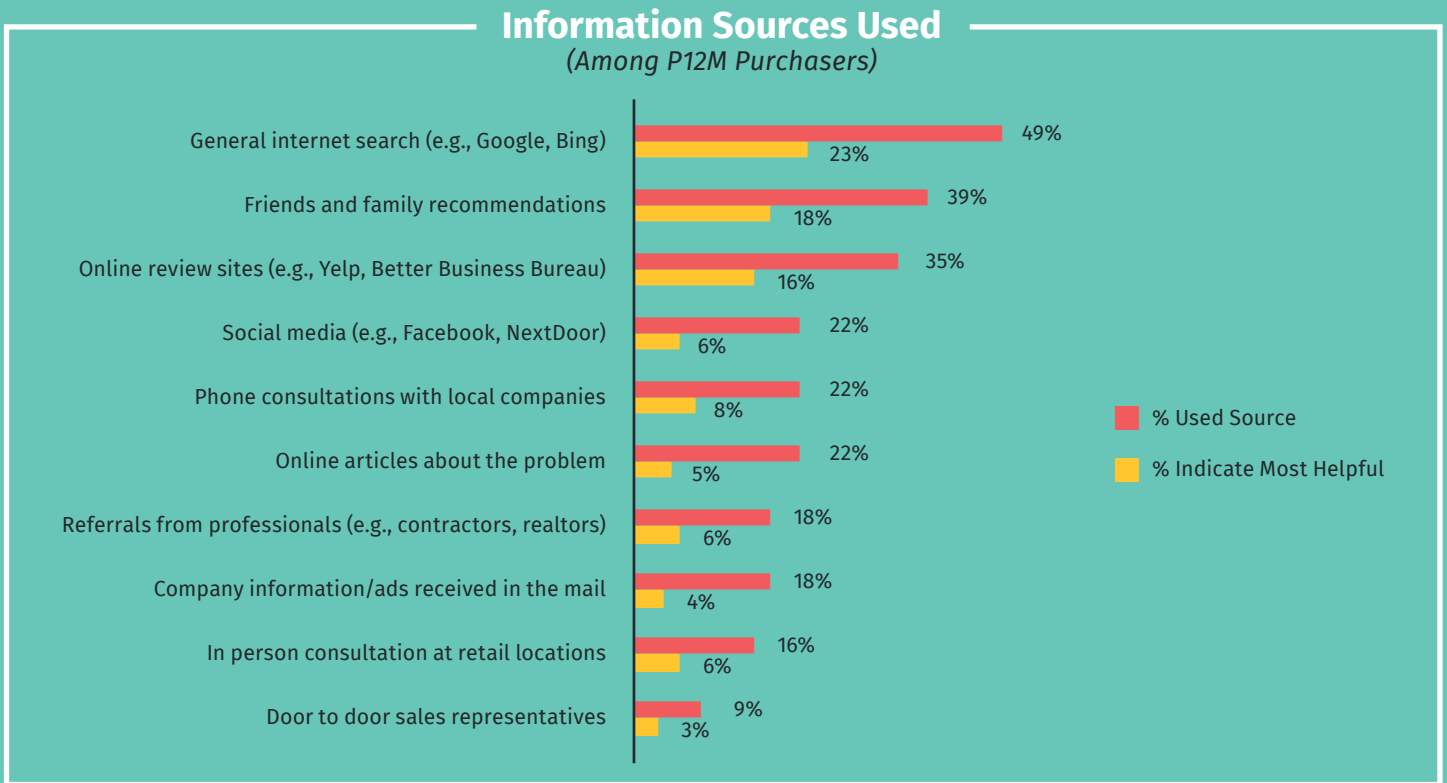
When prospective customers identify the need for pest control services, the first step for many is an online search. This is mostly driven by younger customers (18-34 year olds); however, regardless of age, the first steps are often digital.



8



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

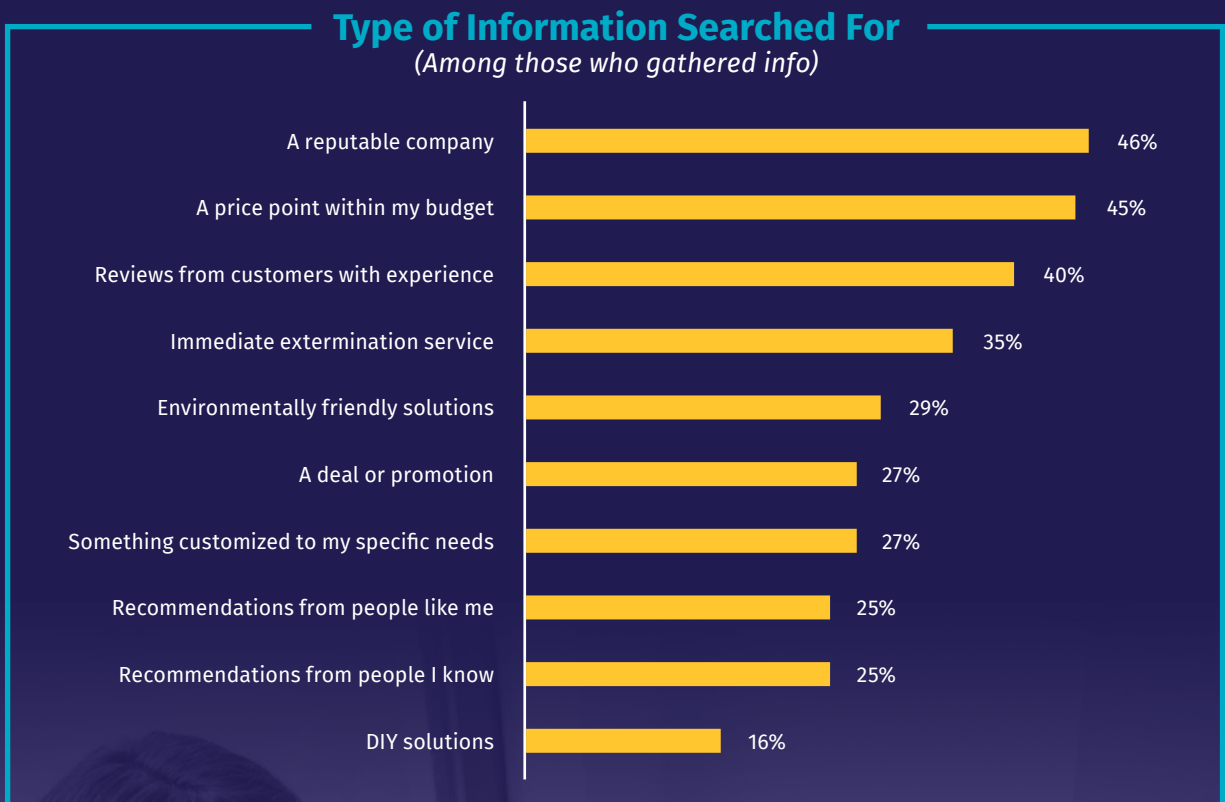


Among those who used a review website to make a decision, the most popular choices are ranked as follows (the percentage indicates those who used that source)⁹:

- 77% - Google
- 44% - Yelp
- 38% - Facebook
- 33% - HomeAdvisor
- 32% - The Better Business Bureau
- 25% - Angi
- 21% - Yahoo

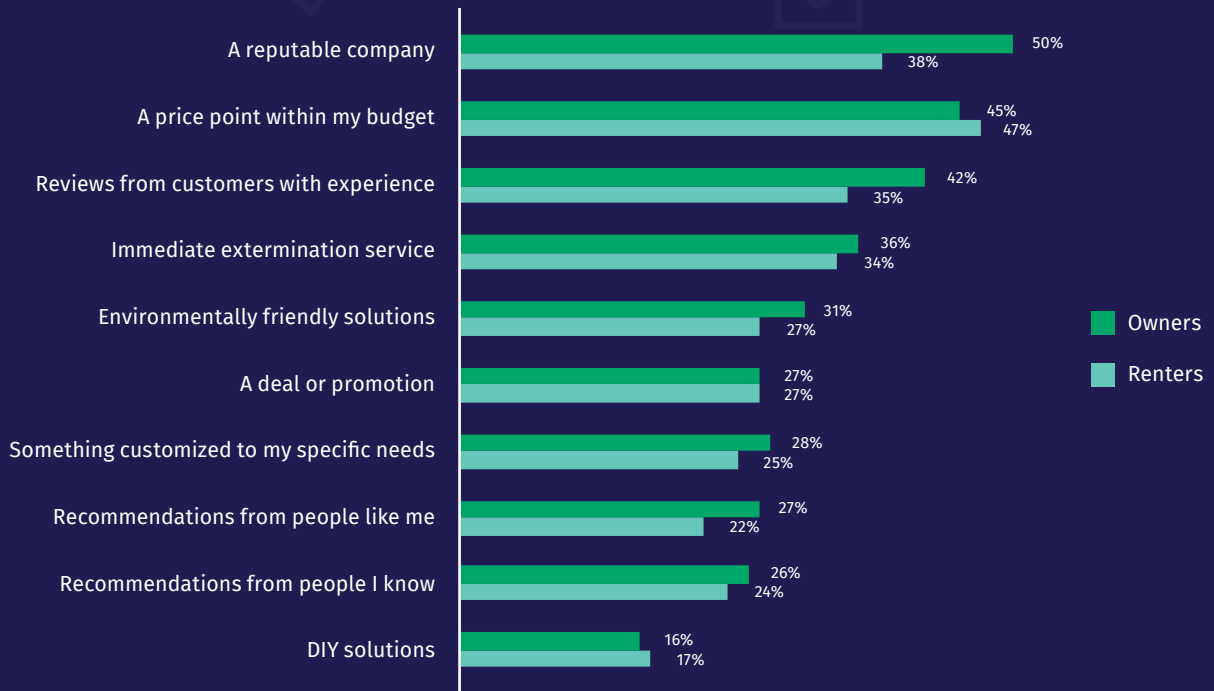
Key Decision Factors

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.



10

Owners vs. Renters

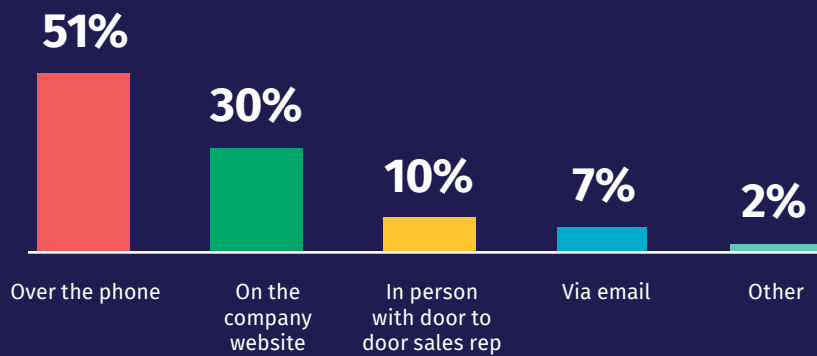


10

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.

Method of Booking Services

(Among those that gathered information)



11

Only 3% of P12M purchasers indicated they did not gather information prior to selecting a pest control service. How they proceeded:¹¹

48%

Called a company I knew to book services

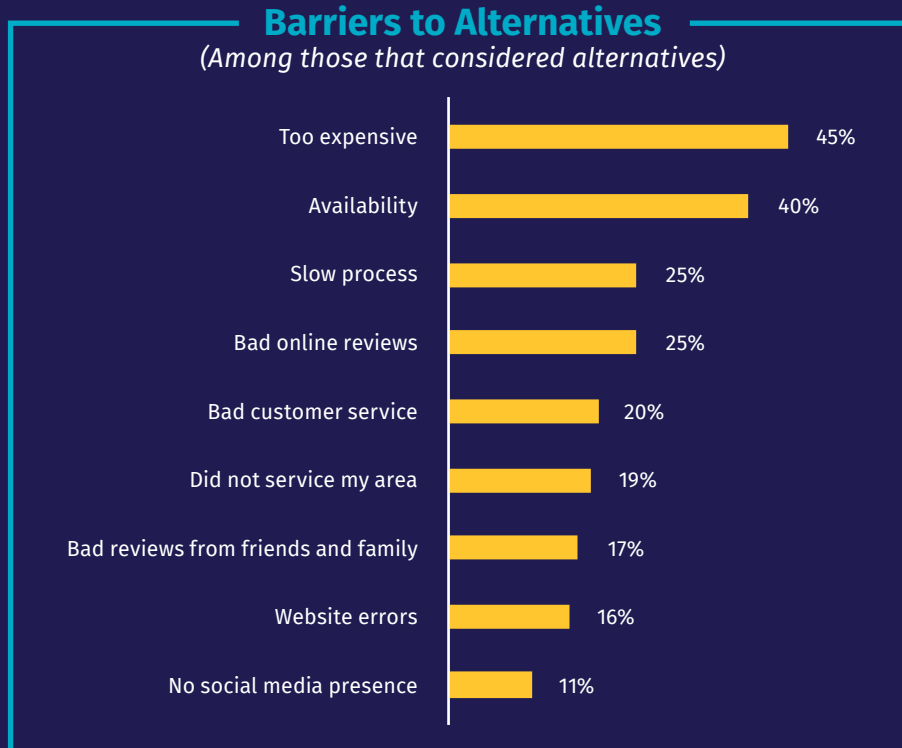
16%

Booked services online from a company I was aware of

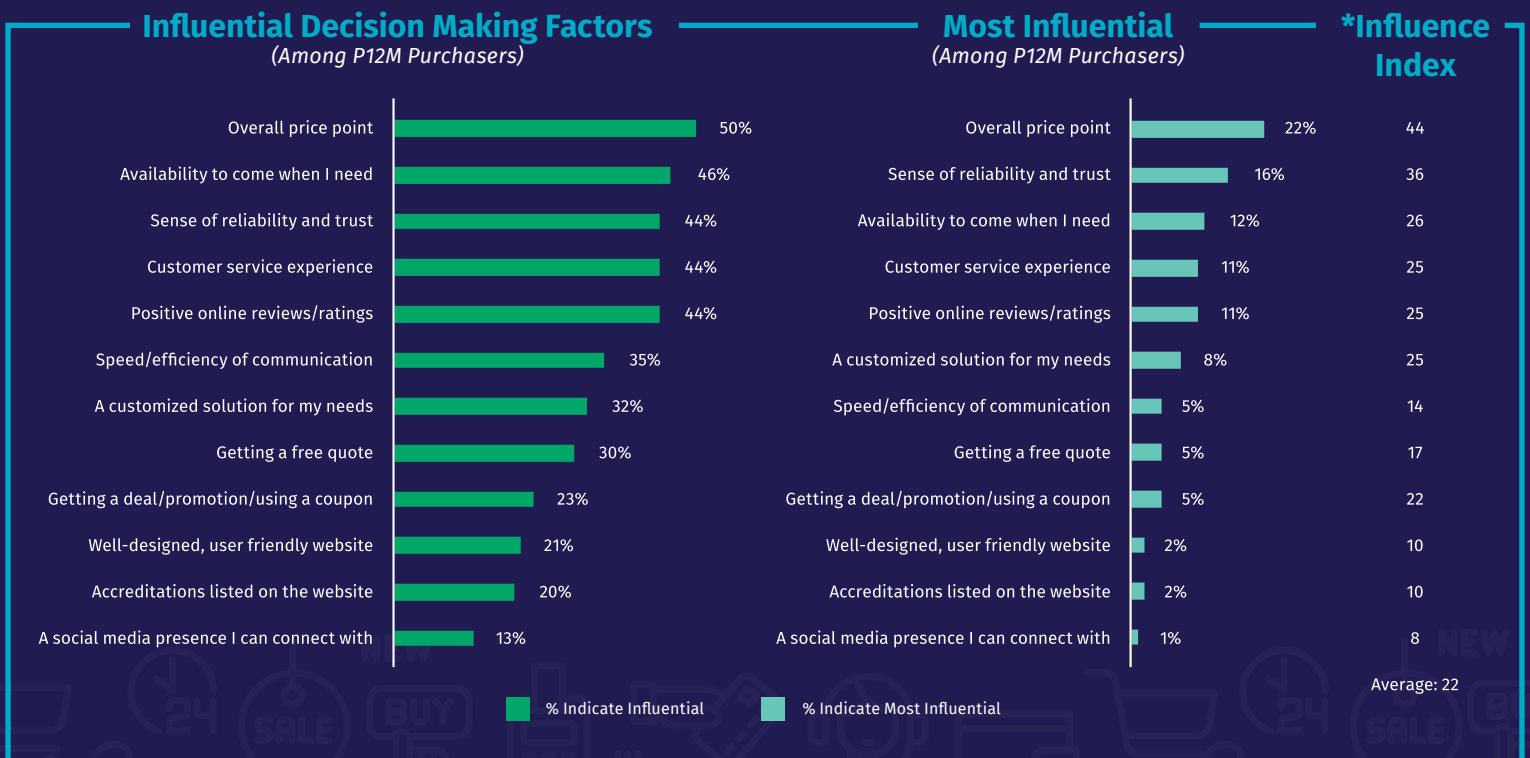
5%

Booked in person with door-to-door sales rep

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.



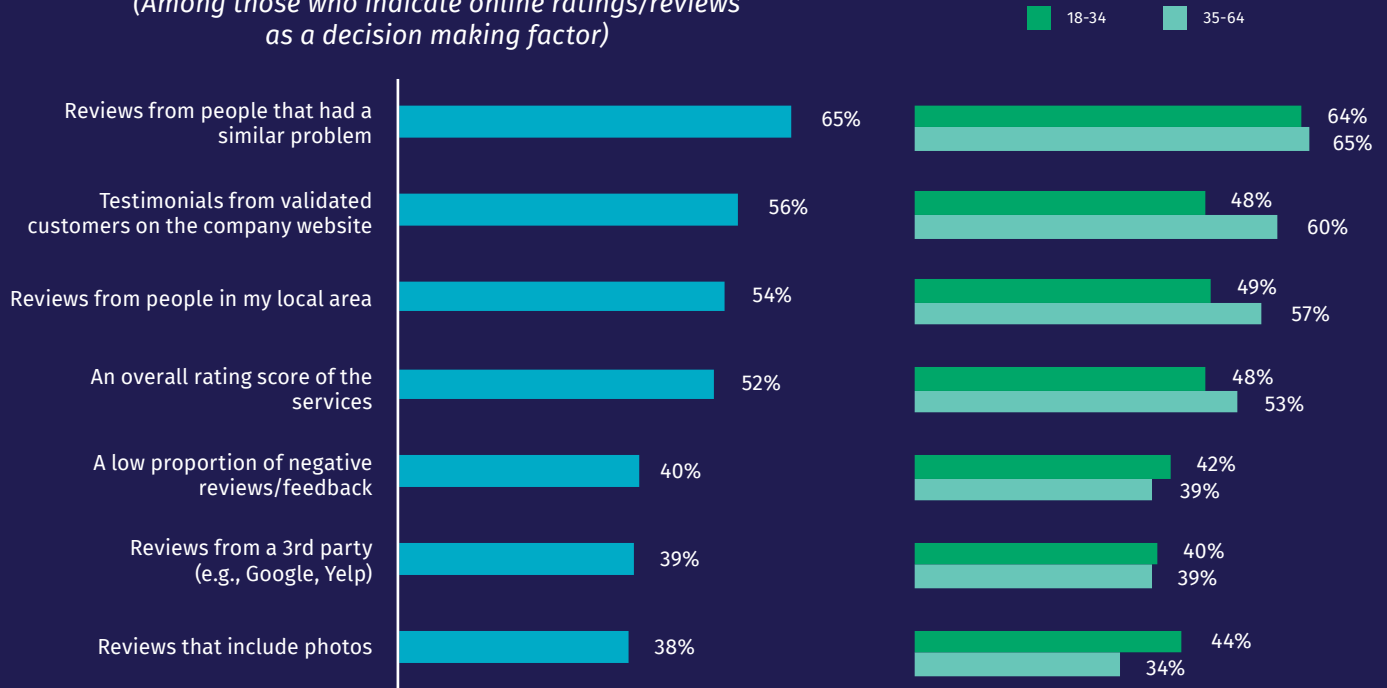
Beyond cost, the most influential decision-making factor appears to be a sense of reliability and trust. This indicates that positive reviews and a consistent customer service experience remain important.



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? — Ages 18-34 vs. Ages 35-64

(Among those who indicate online ratings/reviews as a decision making factor)

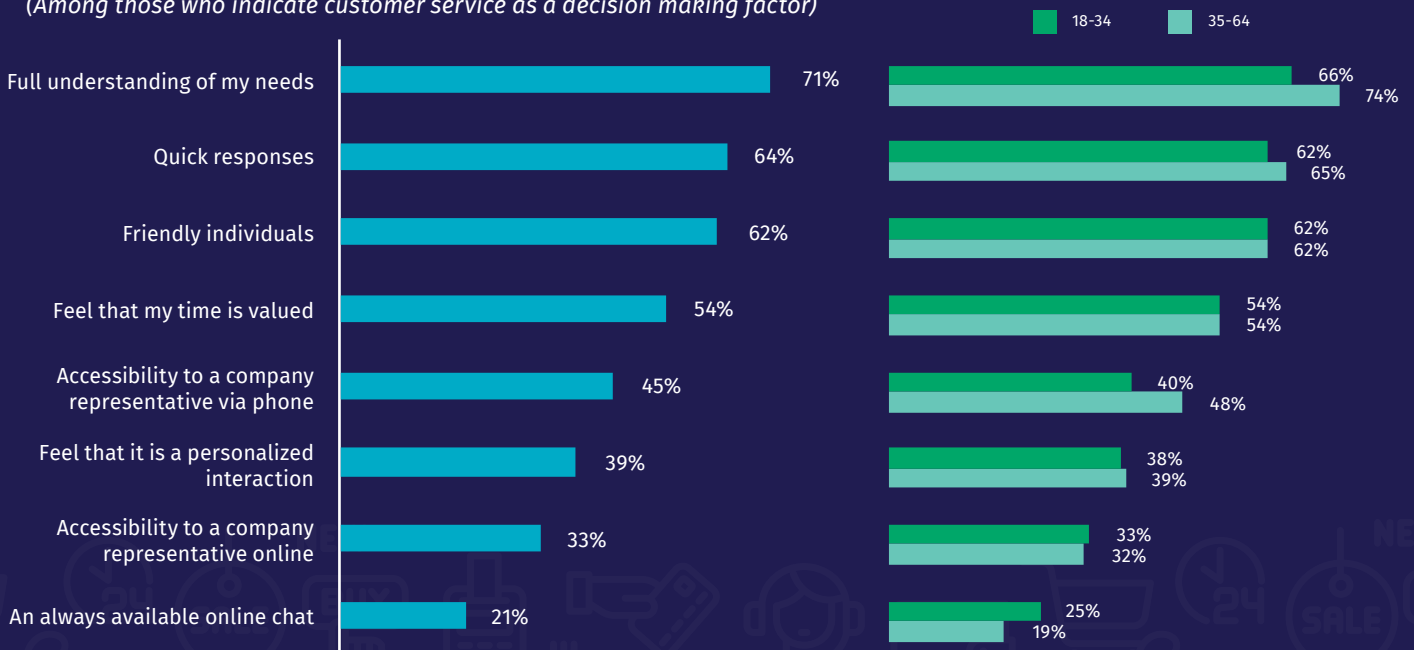


14

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? — Ages 18-34 vs. Ages 35-64

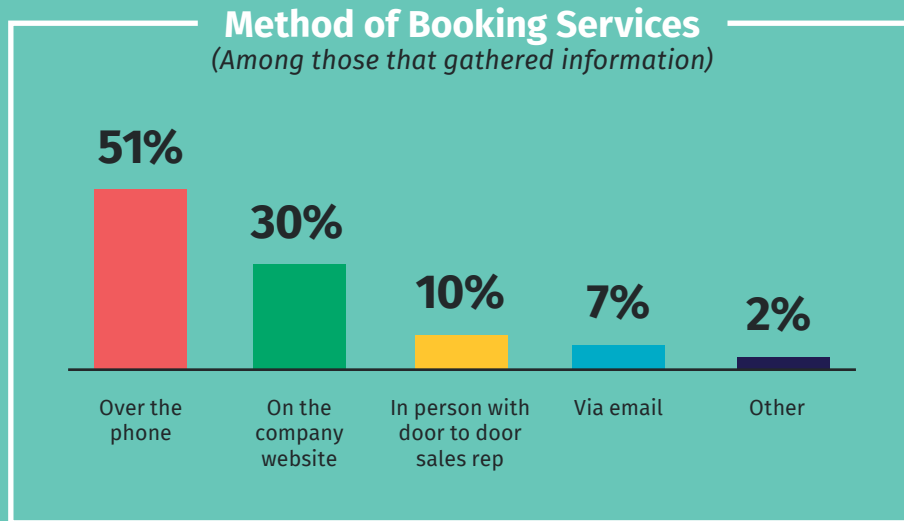
(Among those who indicate customer service as a decision making factor)



15

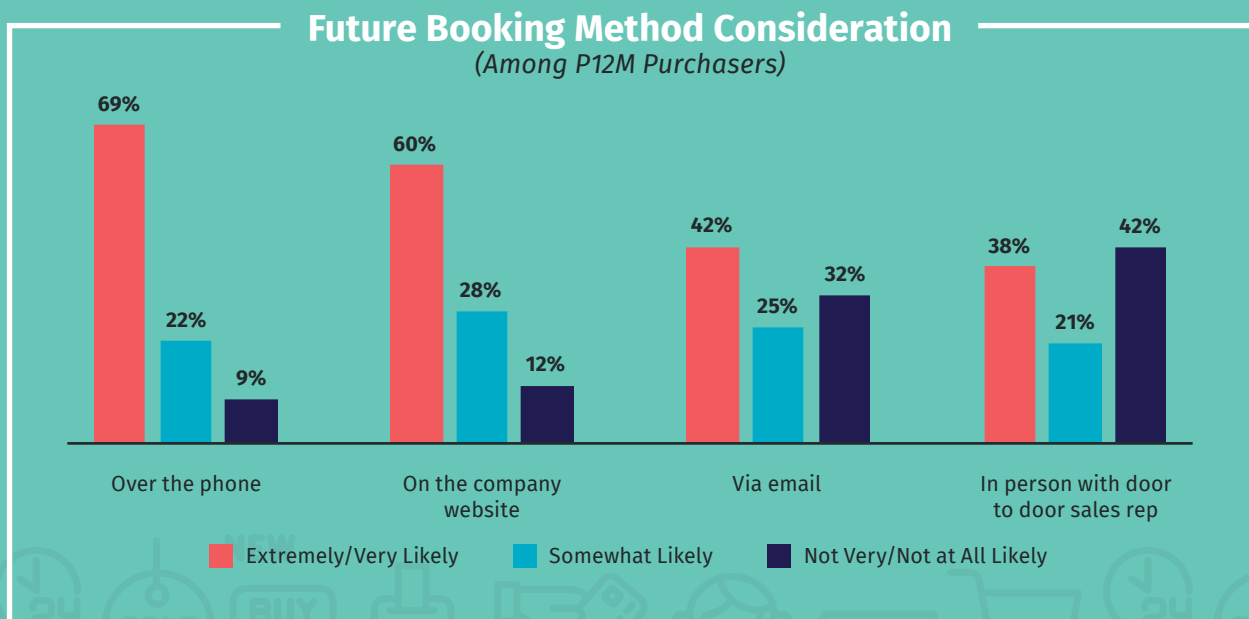
Purchase Preferences

Pest control customers prefer to book services over the phone; however, there are many who also prefer to purchase online. Both methods are preferable over in-person sales reps or via email.



16

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.



17

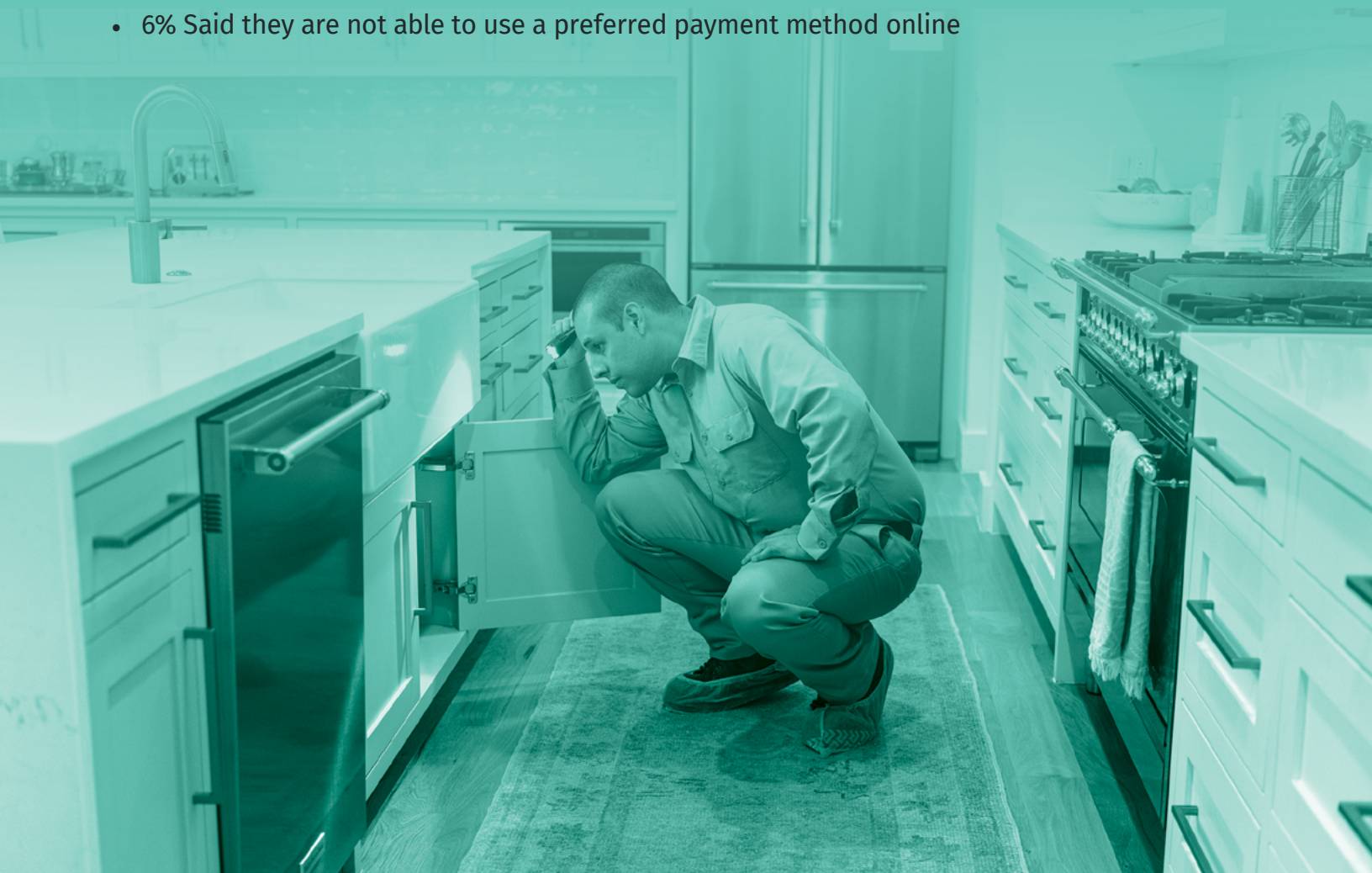
The highest likelihood levels for website booking are as follows¹⁷:

- 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 online¹⁸:

- 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.

Call for a Demo at 214.466.1765

Join the growing number of thriving businesses using FieldRoutes to acquire new customers, improve automation, and crush the competition.



Contact the experts at **FieldRoutes** to schedule your demo.

Works Cited

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?

10 Base: Total who gathered info (n=1,937), Owners (n=1,270), Renters (n=667)

Q10. What kind of information were you looking for?

11 Base: Total who gathered info (n=1,937), Total did not gather info (n=64)

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?

12 Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (N=2,001), Total Who Considered Alternatives (n=969)

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).

13 Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers Sample (N=2,001)

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

14 Base: Total who indicate online ratings/reviews as a decision-making factor (n=877), Ages 18-34 (n=289), Ages 35-64 (n=588)

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

15 Base: Total who indicate customer service as a decision-making factor (n=873), Ages 18-34 (288), Ages 35-64 (n=585)

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

16 Base: Total who gathered info (n=1,937), Total did not gather info (n=64)

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?

17 Base: Total P12M Pest Control Purchasers (n=2,001)

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

18 Base: Not very/Not at all likely to book future services online (n=232)

Q15. You mentioned you are not at all likely/not very likely to consider booking pest control services on a company website. Why are you not likely to do so?



SIMPLIFY • SCALE • GROW

214.466.1765 | FieldRoutes.com