

BUG OFF®
Pest Control Center

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The Accidental Distributor

It might not have been his original plan, but Andy Linares has embraced his role as a distributor to the pest management industry.

Andy Linares didn't always plan to run a distribution company. His educational training was in international affairs and diplomacy, and he worked at the United Nations.

"I hit a brick wall in my career advancement at the U.N., and had to move on," he says.

Before starting Bug Off, Linares also spent time as a teacher and an on-air personality at a classical music station. He worked at his uncle's pest management company to earn extra money while he was in school. Thanks to serendipity, Linares' career at the U.N. stalled

at the same time his uncle was ready to retire. Linares gave himself a deadline: If he couldn't find a job by Dec. 31, 1986, he'd take over his uncle's business. In the weeks leading up to his decision, Linares had three promising interviews with J.P. Morgan. The letter arrived on the last day of the year. It was a rejection.

"I tore it up and on Jan. 2, 1987, grabbed my uncle's keys," he says.

Back then, the company was called Matador. His uncle offered traditional pest control service and sold supplies over-the-counter to the general public.

While a career in diplomacy might seem diametrically opposed to one in pest management, there are some similarities.

"I'm overseeing the events and sharing my knowledge with students," Linares says.

"All of those experiences melded into what Bug Off is all about."

During the next few years, Linares built up his over-the-counter business, started working toward direct distribution and began to pursue industry training programs.

"I methodically weaned myself away from the service side," says Linares, noting the approach helped his

distribution business.

Not only was he able to deliver his distribution customers leading-edge products, he also was able to provide many of them with clients. As important as distribution is, it's not solely what Linares wanted Bug Off to be.

"I wanted to ensure we tied that in with sharing knowledge and having diversified and eclectic training to elevate the industry," he says.

With training and education, Linares leads by example, making sure his salespeople are more than just talking heads.

"Everyone on my staff is experienced and licensed," he says. "Any one of us can direct customers to the correct control products and techniques. People come to us not just for what we sell but also for what we know."

Linares has a reputation in the industry as a hard worker and educator. Even those who've never met him are aware of him, or as Linares puts it, "People who don't know me, know me."

New York state of mind

Pest management professionals (PMPs) in New York know Bug Off, which is the only industry supplier in Manhattan,

Andy Linares, President of Bug Off Pest Control Center



according to Linares.

"We've played a very important role in regenerating the industry," he says. "We're creating new generations of PMPs. I've trained hundreds of licensed individuals and helped establish dozens of new companies through our initiatives."

To help companies, Linares must stay up-to-date with what's going on in the business world, including social media. But as much as he believes in technology, there's one area where he prefers to be old-fashioned.

"I'm a big proponent of

live training. We currently don't offer an online training program," he says. "As an educator, I have difficulty finding the benefit of sitting in front of a computer viewing slides when you can ask questions and interact face to face."

Linares isn't ruling out online training outright; it's just not in his immediate plans. But if anyone knows things change, it's Linares.

"I've always said this is an industry that's capable of recreating and regenerating itself," he says. "The pest management industry has

been written off so many times, but it just keeps getting stronger. Now, more than at any other time in the industry's history, we have more educated, better trained members. PMPs have more information at their fingertips, and they have better skills."

Linares doesn't expect the need for education to end anytime soon because there will never be a scarcity of pests to control.

"Bed bugs are a big deal right now," he says. "Every year we learn about new invasive species we have to

deal with."

Success means constantly adjusting to new conditions.

"We have to change," Linares says. "I'm more diversified. I've added new product lines, and we constantly launch programs and events."

"We've always tried to be a hub of innovation and knowledge," he adds. "I'm always thinking about where we can expand. These are things that keep me interested in my company and the industry. It's never stale, boring or routine. Being highly structured and organized is what allows us to pull off all of this."

Bug Off Pest Control Center exclusively distributes Cryonite in the U.S.

When Knäred, Sweden-based Silvanderrsson, a longtime leader in glue-based pest management products, decided to bring Cryonite, an environmentally friendly product that freezes bed bugs and other structural pest insects dead in their tracks, to the United States, it needed a distributor and selected New York-based Bug Off Pest Control Center. Cryonite was introduced to the U.S. market in 2008 at Bug Off Pest Control Center's Green Pest Management Summit. Bug Off President Andy Linares signed an exclusive distribution agreement with Silvanderrsson in 2012.

Silvanderrsson's Cryonite system uses carbon dioxide to create and spray dry ice — at temperatures at or below -108°F — directly onto bed bugs, cockroaches, wasps and stored product pests. Cryonite knocks down all lifecycles of the pests. The product can be used almost anywhere, including food establishments, hotels, hospitals and schools, according to Silvanderrsson. Pest management professionals (PMPs) can spray Cryonite directly onto furniture and bedding — even electrical outlets and electronic equipment — without harming assets, Linares says.

On July 30, Linares celebrated his relationship with Silvanderrsson by staging "A Celebration of Sweden," at Coogan's Restaurant in New York City. While the technical side of the event giving attendees recertification credits was handled by industry consultant and *Pest Management Professional (PMP)* contributor Jeff McGovern, Linares coordinated the party. Attendees enjoyed Swedish appetizers and vodka, prizes, and grooved to ABBA's greatest hits — a wintry scene designed to help PMPs beat the New York City heat.

Linares (right) and Silvanderrsson's Henrik Bjorkqvist demonstrate the Cryonite system at the 2012 New York Pest Expo.

