

The business case for encasing

By now, you've heard about the benefits of mattress encasements, and there's a good chance you're using them. After all, anything that makes the telltale signs of a bed bug infestation easier to spot while creating a bed bug entry, escape and bite-proof barrier between your customers and the bloodsuckers is a good thing, right?

However, one chapter of the encasement story that isn't told as often is how encasements can help business operations. A bed bug job can be one of the most labor intensive services a Pest Control Operator offers. The difficulty of identifying and killing the insects, coupled with the necessity for multiple visits and disciplined participation by the client can shoot labor costs through the roof.

Generally, PCOs ask three questions when evaluating the future of their bed bug programs, and encasements are part of the answer for each of them:

- How can I reduce the amount of effort associated with addressing infested bedding?
- How can I fit in more bed bug jobs each day?
- How can ensure my customers are following directives necessary to make treatment successful?

Mattress encasements are one of the few products that can make PCOs money while also saving them money. In addition to always including an encasement in an overall bed bug management plan, our experience shows that by simply utilizing encasements, operators save roughly 90 minutes of inspection time on a single room during the course of a three-visit treatment. This translates to about \$125-150 in labor cost savings. Over time, this can make a difference for a PCO's bottom line, making it possible to turn bed bugs into another profit category.

However, the best laid plans can be foiled by an uncooperative, uneducated or clumsy customer. Encasements that are escape, entry and bite-proof on all six sides, are made of a heavy grade fabric that doesn't tear easily, and have a mechanism to prevent tampering can help ensure the encasement is doing its job. A mechanism that indicates tampering is particularly valuable, as it lets PCOs know they should void any bed bug-free guarantees for customer non compliance.

Finally, a strong bed bug program featuring mattress encasements should employ products that...

- Are bed bug entry, escape, and bite proof;
- Completely seal the mattress against outside bed bug infestations, preventing them from either hiding or laying eggs in the mattress or box spring;
- Have a locking mechanism that's been independently laboratory tested, certified and field proven;
- Offer various depths to ensure an appropriate fit; and,
- Are bite proof on all six sides since the majority of hotel and resort bedding is double-sided (flip-able).

Remember that a product is only as valuable as the amount it adds to your bottom line. With the many benefits encasements offer, PCOs can be happy with their decision to encase.

James Bell is the CEO of Protect-A-Bed, a leading provider of mattress and box spring encasements to the Pest Control, Hospitality, and Rent-to-Own industries. To learn more about Protect-A-Bed and its products, visit www.protectabed.com or call your local pest control distributor.