

## No Room for Pigeons in the Hospitality Industry

By R.W. Delaney, Business Writer

### Bird BLazer

As founder of American Maintenance Supply, Inc., an industrial wholesaler with headquarters in Canyon Country, California, Osvaldo Mercado knows a maintenance issue when he sees one. "Pigeon droppings," he says, "are a major problem." Especially vulnerable, he notes, are hotel restaurants, food courts in shopping malls, and anywhere that food is plentiful. "Pigeons seek shelter, water and food," he itemizes. Wherever there's food, there's a potential pigeon feast.

In business for 15 years, American Maintenance Supply sells industrial supplies nationwide to hotels, governmental agencies, and other industries. "We can provide 90 percent of what a hotel needs, including bird control products," Mercado says. Since it's inhumane to maim or destroy birds - a highly sensitive issue in California and elsewhere - Mercado has found other means to deter birds without harming them.

### A Worst-Case Scenario

One of the most objectionable infestations that Mercado has encountered occurred at a large hotel in the very visible central tourist section of a city in Southern California. "Pigeons were nesting on the window ledges of an 800-room hotel," Mercado recalls, "and cleaning up the bird droppings was a *major* issue." Keeping the window ledges clean gave the hotel's maintenance crew a tough time because the windows were made so they couldn't be opened easily. It was not a pretty sight for hotel guests as bird droppings piled up on what was supposed to be a scenic overlook.

Mercado's solution was to recommend "Spikes® Needle Strips" to his customer. Spikes, produced by Bird-X, Inc. in Chicago, are clear plastic strips of branch-like protuberances that adhere to ledges and other architectural outcroppings to disrupt birds' roosting patterns. The tightly packed Spikes prevent birds from landing and squeezing onto their favorite perches. They make it too uncomfortable, if not impossible, for birds to alight. Spikes come in one-foot strips that can be glued to most flat surfaces on buildings, warehouses, loading docks, overhangs, ledges, fences, and similar perches preferred by pigeons.

### Case Study II

Mercado describes another serious infestation of pigeons - this time around a high-rise commercial office building. It was a complex situation, Mercado explains, so he suggested a combination of approaches. First, he recommended that his customer use Spikes on the building's garage and on the fence that bordered the office property. Then they installed coiled wire under the beams inside the garage and a tacky substance on the balconies and patios. "Different locations require different solutions," he says. "Spikes work to discourage pigeons from landing. And," he adds, "they're less expensive than sound generators and other electrical devices."

### Trial Run is Visible Proof

In 15 years of owning and operating his maintenance supply business, Oswaldo Mercado has learned much about customers. Many are skeptical about "miracle cures" and advertising hype. So Mercado undersells: He invites a reluctant customer to give Spikes a "try-out period." He suggests that they use Spikes in a small section for a few weeks. "They'll see right away if they work," he says sagely. For most customers, Spikes do the job. The trial period leads to full-fledged use and satisfied customers, he believes.

For more information on Spikes, head over to [www.bird-x.com](http://www.bird-x.com)