

Better business

Rentokil Initial is one of the world's largest and most diverse support services companies, and is helping to create safer, healthier, and more hygienic places to work and live.

Images by Scott Ehler

Rentokil Initial is an integrated business that comprises three business units: Rentokil Pest Control, which tops the residential and commercial pest-control market in Australia; Initial Hygiene, which is Australia's leading hygiene-solutions supplier; and Ambius, which grows, installs, and looks after indoor plants in Australian commercial premises.

Rentokil Initial Pacific is the Asia-Pacific branch of the global Rentokil Initial Group. The group operates in Europe, North America, Africa, and of course the Asia-Pacific, forming a group of more than 66,000 employees in over 60 countries. Rentokil Initial Australia uses this global knowledge to its local advantage, tapping into knowledge, innovation, and expertise.

Alain Moffroid is Managing Director of Rentokil Initial Pacific. Alain moved from Unilever Australasia to join the company in January 2013 as it was undertaking one of the largest operational restructures in its history, with all three business units being aligned with a single management, sales, and operational structure. Alain's background in the FMCG sector and his strong philosophies around transparency

helped the company to execute the restructure in record time and with company-wide support.

Given that brand reputation and hygiene are so high on companies' agendas these days, the opportunities for Rentokil Initial seem enormous. *The CEO Magazine* sat down with Alain to discuss the company's recent operational restructure, its global support and expertise, and how Rentokil Initial looks to sustainability to continue to make Australian businesses better.

The CEO Magazine: One of the first projects you oversaw in your role as managing director was an operational restructure of the business. How did that play out?

Alain: When I joined Rentokil Initial in January 2013, my aim was to position the business as the essential partner to all its customers. I understood that the services the business provides its clients are critical, and therefore I wanted to make sure they were receiving the most efficient service possible.

Each of the three separate business units was successful in its own right. However, each was talking to the same customer base and this was not being communicated across the business. It was the case that one

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customer would see three different sides of the business—not one strong, centralised business. I saw there were further opportunities to create more synergy and efficiency within the business that would further benefit customers.

Led by the single view of the customer, there was an opportunity to reframe Rentokil Initial's service offering to strengthen and grow our customer service capabilities and competitive performance. This would be achieved through an operations restructure that would see the three business units brought together in the one core business.

As with any restructure, there were changes, and some people would leave the business. My business philosophy centres around transparency, and I felt it was important to put a strong emphasis on respect and communication. This lowered anxiety and increased engagement and staff morale during the process.

The leadership teams were chosen and trained based on real merit, and we took the time to ensure they understood why their work was important and vital to customers. Unlike the FMCG sector, our people are truly our product and without them we wouldn't be the company we are >



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today. The leadership team today is aligned in the same direction and delivers the best customer service possible, which means we can continue to be the essential partner to our customers.

Our guiding mission and vision is to be the business that helps other businesses. To do this, we need to be the best business possible—and I know we are because we are the market leader in the Pacific region, and I can only foresee this continuing.

What have been the results of this operational restructure?

The most important result is we're now an integrated business, which has made us stronger. It's now easier for us to deliver the critical services our clients require and to be their essential business partner.

We've also now got a team that is aligned and remains engaged with the importance of customer service and puts a real focus upon providing critical support for Australian businesses.

The restructure was a challenge, of course, but it is one that has created opportunities for our customers. Simply put, we made our business better, and I know this has helped and will continue to help make our customers' businesses better.

You've mentioned that Rentokil Initial is in the business of making other businesses better. You've also spoken about criticality in relation to this. How do you protect and enhance the bottom line of Rentokil Initial, but also its partners, suppliers, and customers?

Our key aim is to create safer, healthier, and more hygienic places to work and live in. We focus on safeguarding and enhancing the bottom line of our customers through providing exceptional pest-control and hygiene services, as well as indoor plant services.

For example, a food contamination issue from a pest problem could

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very easily destroy a brand and the reputation of the manufacturer. By providing an expert service that aims to prevent any of those issues from arising in the first place, we minimise risk and reputational damage. We are in effect helping business to be better and stronger by protecting their brand and reputation.

Another side of this, which is more related to hygiene and environment, is that we help make the business and workplace more attractive for customers and employees. We've conducted pioneering research into how hygiene can affect a business, which showed there is a very strong correlation between how an employee perceives an employer and the environment in which they work, including the bathroom. An unhygienic workplace can have a strong effect on staff retention. Even through

offering a product like indoor plants, as we do with Ambius, we are able to raise staff productivity and employee engagement in the workplace. Whether you look at the attractiveness of the workplace or the productivity of staff, we are helping businesses with employee satisfaction and productivity, therefore improving their bottom line.

For us, it's as simple as going the extra step to not only understand a business but also the needs of its customers and employees. For many businesses, as we've seen, getting hygiene and pest control right the first time is critical—mistakes in this sector are costly, both from a financial and a reputational point of view. Our global knowledge and expertise has helped us to understand this, making us the experts. And it's important to work with experts because we



know how to do it right, the first time.

You've mentioned Rentokil Initial Asia-Pacific is backed by global expertise, research, development, and innovation. How do you work with suppliers and partners to develop the most innovative products and deliver the best service?

We are the market leader in the Pacific region, so suppliers naturally look to us when it comes to innovation that they've either developed or are thinking of developing. We use the experts we have in our business to work with suppliers on testing ideas and finding leading-edge solutions.

We certainly have a close relationship with some of our key suppliers when it comes to the likes of chemicals or mechanical traps for rodents. We've worked with some of them for decades, and we use regular contact to make sure that if joint innovation

can be achieved, we are their preferred partner to do it with.

We also have a strong focus on sustainable innovation. We believe businesses are increasingly responsible for their social and environmental practices, and we are focused on helping businesses achieve this sustainability.

In 2013, we partnered with leading recycling technology provider Relivit to provide cost-effective, environmentally sustainable absorbent-hygiene-waste recycling. It's a country-first for Initial, and it's a partnership that will help businesses reduce the environmental and financial impact of their waste. For us, the partnership with Relivit is a practical investment in the future of waste management in Australia.

Where do you see Rentokil Initial going in the future?

I believe that what we are offering today is more relevant to the

customer than it was yesterday, and it will be more relevant tomorrow than it is today. What I mean by this is that 20 years ago, when you had an issue with hygiene in the bathroom of your restaurant or a cockroach in your manufacturing plant, it was a local issue. Today, it's a national, or sometimes international, issue.

I only see that intensifying. On one hand, social media will make businesses more accountable for their hygiene standards. On the other hand, stronger regulations around food safety will make it vital for businesses to get hygiene and pest control right. Being the experts in the field of pest control and hygiene places us in a unique position to be an essential partner to all our customers. I really believe that with the quality of the service and products that we're offering, we can only grow in the future and continue to help make businesses better. •



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