

# Proudly Pental

As the only Australian-made and -owned large bar soap manufacturer, Pental has a host of heritage brands in its portfolio.

Images by Estelle Judah Photography

**W**ith brands reaching over 100 years old, homeware and personal care manufacturer Pental has an impressive record of longevity and heritage in the Australian market. Charlie McLeish, CEO of Pental, recently spoke to *The CEO Magazine* about his plans for Pental as the 100-per-cent Australian-owned manufacturer competes in the tight local market.

***The CEO Magazine:* When assuming the role of CEO in January, how did you approach it? What were your main objectives?**

**Charlie:** Tasked to lead the company into new territory, my first priority as CEO was to make sure I took the entire team on the journey and that everyone was on board. We framed 2013–2014 as a year of building on our base. Our sales team needed to focus on customer and channel plans, and the marketing team needed to live and breathe the three key priorities we had determined would take us where we needed to be.

Equally important were our capital plans, which I quickly evaluated. As a manufacturing business, it was critical to ensure both our engineering and our operations teams were on track. As the CEO of a publicly listed company, I believe it is imperative that we deliver on our market and budget plans. I needed to know everyone on the team understood our goals and that we were working

cohesively towards them. It helped having our half-yearly results audited, and through this the team had a deeper understanding of what was required of them for the next six months.

**Over the past two years as general manager, how has the company evolved under your leadership?**

My leadership skills were put to the test early, and my first priority was to secure the business. The company was at risk and we faced some serious business issues. Many Australian manufacturers, both big and small, have been at risk recently. Over the past few years, many companies, including us, have been forced to spend much of their time on securing their operations and building strong business models that will move them forward.

We created dynamic brand plans and developed initiatives that would further cement our Australian-made and -owned positioning. Our category plans also went under the microscope. And as the only large bar soap manufacturer in Australia, we undertook a complete manufacturing audit to ensure that we would continue to stay competitive on every level.

I also saw the importance of benchmarking ourselves against international players, especially in the liquids area. We've spent the past two years working extremely hard on manufacturing and logistics efficiencies. At the same

time, being a branded business, I made sure that we had a team that understood the role of private label in the marketplace. We had to embrace private label growth and put strategies in place to play in the sector as well as maintain our own brand portfolio.

**With many manufacturing companies moving offshore, what drives Pental's passion to remain Australian manufactured?**

It's our strong heritage that drives us. We have brands in our portfolio that are between 52 and 110 years old; even our latest brand acquisition, White King, has been in the Australian market for 52 years. Australian consumers are passionate about heritage, and we believe the majority of Australians want, more than ever, to keep local manufacturing alive and will support it. I think there is a very strong position for brands that continue to pay respect to this.

We're not just Australian made; we're also Australian owned. Many of our brands have been around for three generations and have traditionally been manufactured in Australia. From a heritage perspective but also as a point of difference, it's in our best interests to continue to be a leading supplier of FMCC that are made in Australia.

**What are the core values that form Pental's culture?**

We have our customer at our core and they drive our values. Our customers want quality, innovation, >



As featured in  
*The CEO Magazine*  
For more info visit  
[theceomagazine.com.au](http://theceomagazine.com.au)





and consistency, and they want us to listen. These, alongside other longstanding values, form our corporate culture and guide our team.

On top of customer-driven values, Pental's management team is focused on commitment and accountability. This comes down to accepting responsibility for our own actions and those of the team, as well as a commitment to achieving company goals and objectives. With that goes working together and cultivating productive and diverse internal and external working relationships.

We must not forget celebrating and rewarding success. We

*"It's a privilege to supply an Australian company who has demonstrated commitment to local manufacturing. Pental is a loyal customer whose brands have been supplied through our products for decades. We are proud to be associated with such a reputable company." - Steve Toner, National Business Manager HPC and I&I, Albright & Wilson (Australia) Limited*

**"Australian consumers are passionate about heritage, and we believe the majority of Australians want, more than ever, to keep local manufacturing alive and will support it. I think there is a very strong position for brands that continue to pay respect to this."**

- Charlie McLeish

recognise the achievements of teams and individuals. Most notably, we recognise achievements in the tough times. We've had some tough times recently; our people have been tested and they have been rewarded for stepping up.

**How do you draw on the longevity and prestige of Pental's brands and products?**

One way we are bringing our Australian heritage-brand values to life is via our packaging. Our marketing team has worked closely with our designers to incorporate creative elements that express our Australian-made and -owned positioning. Soon consumers will see the familiar outline of the map of Australia on all our packaging. This taps into the Australian heritage and our customers' desire to vote for Australia with their dollar. To further support this, we have also put together one of the most substantial marketing programs

we have ever run—exciting times for Pental.

**As a leader, what is your vision for Pental in the coming years?**

My vision is for Pental to become a household name in household products. This vision is echoed through our organisation, and we continue to strive to provide Australians with high-quality products that are made locally.

Our vision incorporates our key values—one of which is listening to our customers. We are working on some revolutionary new products that will meet the changing needs and wants of our customers. Fresh and innovative ideas with a focus on sustainability and the average household's environmental footprint are at the forefront of our plan. Customers are also focused on simplicity, products that look good and that they don't want to hide away in cupboards—these factors all contribute to our vision. •



# Integrating our knowledge into your business

- Oil and gas multi discipline specialists
- Strategic advisors
- Technical expertise

Providing specialists with extensive international oil and gas experience in onshore and offshore project and asset development, and asset support including operations and maintenance.

Delivering practical wisdom with integrity, innovation, people talent, and professional management.




## A TRUSTED BRAND for 75 years **POWERS ON**

➤ **Albright & Wilson** commenced operations in Australia in 1939 with its first manufacturing site at Yarraville in Victoria in 1940. A second manufacturing plant was established in 1978 at Wetherill Park in New South Wales to service the growing household and personal care markets.

Today, despite significant competitive pressures from China and elsewhere, Albright & Wilson remains committed to a sustainable manufacturing future in Australia.

Pental has been a long-term, loyal customer and we sincerely value our relationship with them. We look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in the Australian market, and we stand ready to assist them in any practical way we can to enable them to achieve this success.

*"Our formidable brand has been synonymous with integrity in the way it conducts its business, a passion for quality and reliability of service. In today's fast and fickle world, experience matters."*

- Tony Girgis, Managing Director and Chief Executive.

➤ **It is these factors that have stood the test of time, and have proven why customers trust the Albright & Wilson brand.**



Perth Office:  
Suite 3, 7 Kintail Road  
Canning Bridge WA 6153  
Tel: **+61 8 6310 5888**

[info@imsconsulting.com.au](mailto:info@imsconsulting.com.au)  
[www.imsconsulting.com.au](http://www.imsconsulting.com.au)

