



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
For more info visit
theceomagazine.com.au

Innovation for the Future

In a fairly new market, Chatoyer Environmental has gone from strength to strength, growing its Australian business remarkably in the past decade.

Images by Scott Ehler

When Ben Twynham, Managing Director of Chatoyer Environmental, joined the company in 2006, it had three employees and a 100-square-metre warehouse. Just eight years later, the business has grown so much that it has a purpose-built manufacturing plant, national offices, and more than 20 staff.

Part of this success is due to Ben's previous experience in the banking world, where he learned a lot from a young age. "When I left school, I went to university and did a Bachelor of Business degree. Not long after, I got a part-time undergraduate role with ANZ in their corporate lending arm. This was dealing with companies between \$10 million and \$100

million in revenue. I was placed as the assistant to the BDM. This was a great experience, becoming familiar with financial statements and undertaking industry and business analysis.

"I was with ANZ for about three years while I was completing my studies. I then moved into the investment banking side of the ANZ bank where I worked in the private equity team. This taught me an incredible amount about cashflows, understanding financial structuring, evaluating strategy, and writing new strategy to help these companies continue to grow.

"I think my understanding of finance and cashflows has been really important. It is critical as you are trying to steer a company through the good and the bad times."

"I think my understanding of finance and cashflows has been really important. It is critical as you are trying to steer a company through the good and the bad times."

- Ben Twynham

After working with ANZ for a number of years, Ben realised that instead of being in banking, he wanted to be on the other side of the desk working in business. The decision to move into the environmental space came from his passion for protecting Australia's waterways.

"When I left banking, I set down a couple of things that were important to me. I was living on the Northern Beaches in Sydney, and I've always done a lot of water sports. For me, having clean waterways and the ability for people to enjoy them the way I did was important.

"I travelled extensively as a student, so I saw in South-East Asia and other areas how pollution was affecting these people's lives and how we're lucky here to have our >



clean beaches. That was something that I felt strongly about, and that was the reason for me to move into the environmental space.”

For the past eight years at Chatoyer Environmental, the focus has been on growth in a relatively new industry, and looking for more opportunities and innovative products to generate revenue. “The spill-control industry only really started in the 90s, so it was quite new when I got into it. Since then, we have expanded further into stormwater management, silt and sediment control, and a series of onsite services to assist our clients with their environmental compliance requirements.

“Our clients are government agencies from federal to local levels, including water and electrical utilities, Tier 1 and Tier 2 construction firms, and general industry, particularly food-processing companies. We’re a small organisation and we’ve enjoyed pretty strong and steady

growth. We continue to keep building our core revenue, but we haven’t had much financial backing; we’re sort of just doing it as we grow.”

Chatoyer Environmental not only sources products for the Australian markets, but looks to create innovative new products that will be useful to clients. “We run an innovation committee monthly where we meet and we talk about markets that we might not be dealing with. We try to identify any unmet client needs or improvements we can make to existing products.

“We have a technical manager who has been in the business for a long time with a lot of hands-on experience and I work closely with him. He has lots of practical and innovative ideas, and part of my job is to try to filter through the ideas and come up with plans to implement them. We’re trying to get the right ideas and then work as a team to push them through.”



One of the recent Chatoyer products available is changing the way Australia treats contaminated soil. “We have an innovative and patented soil remediation product called EKO/GRID Remediation. Currently, soil remediation is treated using relatively expensive methods, causing interference to the site. Working with this European technology, we are able to treat a wide range of

contaminates or tank sludge in situ, with minimal interference to the site.

“With other remediation approaches, the operation of the site is affected and the remediation process can be fragile, meaning it doesn’t always work. Using low-voltage pulses at a high-frequency rate, we can be remediating the contaminated site using mains, solar, or wind power. It’s been around for a long time in Europe, and we have successful case results from around the world. Chatoyer is now introducing it into the Australian market, allowing for remediation at a significant cost reduction.”

For a business like Chatoyer Environmental, it knows its success cannot come without great relationships with its suppliers. “I think the strong relationships that I have with suppliers come over time, and they have to have a similar proposition to us. We only really partner with suppliers that have a similar set of values and standards to what we have; I think this makes it easier for us to present our core values to the market.

“Our value propositions are around high-quality and reliable products, matched with strong customer service. As a result, we work with suppliers that provide a quality material or a quality product, and also who have a customer service ethic which matches what we have—because if we’re relying on them to supply our product, for us to appease our clients, we all need to be on the same page. We have worked with our key suppliers as an average for over five years, so we have really solid and trustworthy relationships.”

Ben has also taken the company’s relationships with suppliers to the next level, turning them into partners with the business. “I have a great relationship with one of our key suppliers, Lamor, but we’ve taken it to another level than that. It has shown me how you can turn a supplier into a

“We only really partner with suppliers that have a similar set of values and standards to what we have; I think this makes it easier for us to present our core values to the market.”

- Ben Twynham



partner and how that can be really potent in the market, because you get the support, you get different knowledge, you get the experience, and we’re learning a heap from it.

“I have implemented that learning into a number of other relationships that I have domestically, where we have nice two-way business going and some very solid relationships. I think when you’re competing out in the market, it’s comforting to know that these partnerships are there and they’re backing you up. Often, these companies are bigger than ours and they’ve been around for a long time, but they have the same proposition as us, so it’s encouraging to know that we’re all in it together.”

Values and culture are also important to Ben, especially within a small company. “We look at being reliable, accountable, trustworthy, positive, and respectful across the organisation. As a small organisation, the culture and mood of the team is really felt throughout the company. I try to exhibit the values as best I can and make my decision-making

transparent with respect to these values, so that people can understand how these five elements can be integrated into our day to day.

For the future, Chatoyer Environmental is looking to expand into Asia, where Ben believes there is a real market for its products. “We have such a strong, quality proposition that stems not only from the product itself, but also through our engineering, case studies, project management, and technical support. We have a good reputation in Australia, but I want to position the company to introduce these systems and products into Asia.

“My goal is by the end of 2016 to have direct exposure into the region, and my thinking is that it will probably be a market that would pay a premium for our reliable products—possibly Singapore or Japan. Currently, our products are sufficiently differentiated from those coming out of other parts of Asia, and that’s where I really want to be. So, on the growth front, this is a great opportunity.”

LAMOR

Your oil spill solution expert

Lamor Corporation offers solutions for optimal oil spill response and recovery

With offices, staff and equipment strategically located around the world, Lamor is able to deploy on scene rapidly and effectively to best serve the environmental needs of governments, corporations and the general public, minimising environmental footprints and salvaging eco-systems. The company develops, manufactures, and supplies best available technology oil spill recovery equipment, training and services.

Chatoyer and Lamor working together to protect and preserve the unique and precious Australian land and seas from accidents and contamination.



LAMOR CORPORATION
Urakoitsijantie 12, 06450 Porvoo, Finland
tel: +358 20 765 0100 • fax: +358 20 765 0129 • info@lamor.com

CHATOYER ENVIRONMENTAL PTY LTD (Lamor Agent)
Australia tel: 1300 880 623
International tel: +61 2 9620 7444
sales@chatoyer.com.au • www.chatoyerenvironmental.com.au

www.lamor.com