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Tapping INTO SUCCESS

BEING NICHE AND NIMBLE IS TAKING GALVIN ENGINEERING – A THIRD-GENERATION COMPANY CELEBRATING ITS 90TH ANNIVERSARY – COMFORTABLY INTO THE FUTURE, SAYS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **CHRIS GALVIN**.

WORDS LISA SCHOFIELD • IMAGES MARIE NIRME

Executive Directors Chris (pictured) and Paul Galvin describe Galvin Engineering – their almost 90-year-old third-generation business – as “simple”, but their business smarts in carving out a niche stronghold is anything but. In fact, it’s pure genius.

Founded in 1930, Western Australia-based Galvin Engineering operates under two brands: Galvin Specialised and Galvin Machined Castings. Galvin Specialised designs, manufactures and supplies commercial tapware, water management systems and fixtures. Galvin Machined Castings is an original equipment manufacturer delivering machine casting solutions for pumping, mining, rail and defence. It operates one of the few remaining foundries in Australia.

“Galvin Engineering is where our values and history reside,” says Chris. “Every day our people come to work and think about how they can provide water solutions for safer communities and a healthier environment.” »

FAMILY TIES

“Paul and I bought half the business from our father in 1992, and then worked with him for five years,” remembers Chris. “It was great to work with Dad.”

The brothers bought the company outright from their father, Jim Galvin, in 1997. “I love working with my brother. We’ve worked together for 27 years,” Chris says proudly. “We shared a room together until Paul was 19, so we got to know each other pretty well,” he laughs. “We actually work in the same office now. We sit side by side. People talk about the challenges of working with family, but I think it’s like any issue – you just need to tackle it properly.”

In 2019, Chris stepped away from the role of Managing Director, with General Manager Peter Adam stepping in to manage the company’s day-to-day operations. As Executive Directors, Chris is focused on offshore business and product development while Paul focuses on the supply chain, technical and offshore manufacturing side of things.

The brothers were thrilled when Tim Galvin, Paul’s son and the fourth generation of the Galvin family to enter the business, joined the company three years ago to manage the IT&C department.

STRATEGIC SUCCESS

A defining moment for Galvin Engineering came in 1992 when the two brothers had a long hard look at the direction the company was heading. “We decided to focus on what we could be best at,” remembers Chris. “We didn’t want to be reliant on only one or two major customers in Western Australia. The big Australian manufacturers were too powerful in the domestic area and their turnover and resources were always going to be difficult for us to compete against in the longer term. So we made the decision to specialise in commercial micro-niche markets, which are more difficult to produce and require smaller batch runs.

“With Western Australia accounting for only 10 per cent of the Australian population, our second strategic decision was to expand into Australia’s eastern states,” he adds.

Today, Galvin Engineering has branches and warehouses in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, and teams in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

“Although the majority of our people are still in Western Australia with our manufacturing base, the eastern states now account for around 60 per cent of our specialised tapware business,” says Chris. “We’re also expanding into the UK, the US, New Zealand and South-East Asia.



Chris (left) with General Manager Peter Adam

“WE LOVE SEEING GREAT LEADERS EMERGE FROM OUR ORGANISATION.”

“Our strategy is simple: we seek out the areas where the big boys don’t want to play,” explains Chris. “As a smaller business, it’s a great opportunity to become a market leader in these fields.”

Galvin Engineering’s niche markets focus on the health and safety of the user and the community. Behavioural and mental health facilities, clinical health in hospitals, correctional centres and schools are where the company is making the most impact. “We identified mental health as a growing market that we could make a difference in and ultimately lead,” Chris explains.

“Galvin Engineering provides robust, anti-ligature products that are aesthetically pleasing and homely. This helps with the healing process of the patients while looking after their safety and wellbeing. Patients aren’t going to get better if they’re sitting in a room that looks like a prison cell.”

The clinical health areas of hospitals are another area of focus for Galvin Engineering, including scrub bays and laboratories, and managing the overall health of the water system inside a hospital.

“Working with the Galvin group is very rewarding. At Galvin Engineering, there is a clear focus on family values and this is evident in all our dealings. The team definitely makes you feel a part of the family.” – Stephen Bushell, Managing Partner, DFK Gooding Partners

The company also provides schools and universities with drinking water, handwashing and showering facilities. Galvin Engineering was the first in the commercial sector to bring out ranges of lead-safe tapware. “We want to deliver water that’s extra safe,” Chris adds. “In correctional centres, our focus is on anti-ligature products to maximise the safety of the inmates.” The success of the patented GalvinCare Anti-Ligature Mental Health Safe-Connect Shower Head with Hand Shower has resulted in the product being launched in the US, UK and Singapore markets.

The company has ISO9001 Quality System and ISO14001 Environmental System accreditation.

PEOPLE POWER

“We have an amazing group of people who love doing what we do,” Chris says. “Although we’re a family business, the whole team feels like family. We have staff who’ve been with us for 10, 20, and even 30-plus years.

“Paul and I lead from the back; we’re the chief cheerleaders,” he chuckles. “We love seeing great leaders emerge from our organisation.

“The Galvin Engineering Way’ captures our three values of pride, accountability and a ‘will do’ attitude. We’ve really tried to be seen as reliable in the marketplace. We’re probably a bit old-fashioned; if there’s anything we’re fearful of, we’ll just give it a crack,” he laughs.

“The team has a very strong sense of community and everyone gets involved in charity events such as Vinnies CEO Sleepout, Movember and IGA Purple Bra Day. Our biannual profit-share lunch and recognising the national days of our multicultural team are important for celebrating who we are as an organisation.

“Strong strategic partnerships are paramount to our growth. We’ve partnered with Wallgate, a UK company that makes special toilets, basins and handrails for prisons and mental health facilities, which mean we can offer a full room solution,” Chris explains.

“CONTI+, our Swiss partner, is recognised globally for its innovative technology, superior materials and range of very reliable, aesthetic electronic tapware, and Italian company Idral makes our specialised push-button tapware and componentry.”

AUSSIE MADE

“We’re very proud Australians. We have a solid balance sheet. The products speak for themselves and we’ve got a good story to tell,” Chris says. “We believe in delivering products that provide better health and safer communities, and we’re proud to be designing and manufacturing products locally. I love showing up to work each day to be a part of that.” ■

Endless Possibilities

Is your business positioned to realise its full potential in 2020?

Could your business benefit from a strategic review? This often uncovers new opportunities to be explored and it’s where our deep knowledge across many industries becomes an advantage.

We’ve been operating in the heart of Perth for over 21 years. Our success is anchored by both our expertise and a commitment to living our core values of respect, trust, integrity and family.

We’d welcome a conversation to explore how we can change your business story for the better.

Contact Us

PH: +61 8 9327 1777

E: info@dfkgpca.com.au

W: www.dfkgoodingpartners.com.au

