



Dynamic duo

OPENNESS TO CHANGE AND RENEWAL IS WHAT BROUGHT O'PHEE TRAILERS AND QUBE LOGISTICS TOGETHER IN 2011 TO EXPLORE HOW PBS-APPROVED EQUIPMENT COULD BENEFIT THE EMERGING BUSINESS. THE RESULT IS A VEHICLE THAT HAS ALL THE POTENTIAL TO REVOLUTIONISE ROAD TRANSPORT ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD.

Sooner or later, all businesses, even the most successful, run out of room to grow. Faced with that reality, they are compelled to reinvent themselves periodically. The ability to pull off this difficult feat – to jump from the

maturity stage of one business to the growth stage of the next – is what separates high performers from those whose time at the top is all too brief. Qube Logistics is one business that has

truly mastered the art of staying relevant in Australia's ever-changing logistics industry since it was founded in 2010 after investment trust KFM Diversified Infrastructure and Logistics Fund acquired Kaplan Equity and became the standard operating company we now know as Qube. In the trailer building industry, the ability to reinvent oneself is equally crucial, and many a company struggled to do so when the complex Performance Based Standards (PBS) scheme arrived in Australia. Brisbane's O'Phee, however, embraced it from day one, transforming itself into a leading PBS expert on the eastern seaboard. "The main thrust of the PBS scheme is and was to create a breeding ground for innovative engineering, so adapting to the new system was relatively easy for us," says Mick O'Phee, who pioneered the idea of

introducing high-productivity transport in the Brisbane area. "In our industry, it's absolutely vital to renewing our capabilities regularly and allow for change to happen."

On the quest for continuous improvement, O'Phee chose to upgrade the company's operational abilities instead. The result is a leading position in the contested PBS market and a sound reputation for being able to push down bureaucratic boundaries if necessary. For instance, it was Mick and Sharon O'Phee who first conducted trials with QTMR between Toowoomba and the Port of Brisbane, paving the way for the route to be validated under the PBS scheme. "Most people who get involved in PBS don't want to reinvent the system – they just want to execute," says Kent Barton, Operations Manager at Qube Logistics in Queensland. "But O'Phee is different, they get actively involved."

"We have been working with O'Phee for a long time – even before Qube existed in its current form – and they have always taken initiative to make our organisation more efficient. While Mick will always stick to his knitting when it comes to build quality and preparation, he has that flair for new technology when it is still in its infancy." Already operating a fleet of 145 trailers bearing the green O'Phee logo, Qube started

introducing the A-double concept between Toowoomba and the Port of Brisbane in 2012. "The 40'/40' A-double is the next logical step in the high productivity game, so we asked O'Phee to help us bring it to Qube," says Kent – admitting that the Qube management is always "hunting for innovation" to improve on performance. "More than a year in, I have to say that O'Phee's A-Double combination is simple, low-maintenance, and safe to operate – including full EBS with roll-over stability function. We now run 10 of them and we never had any issues regarding stress cracking, which is vitally important in the container industry."

In fact, Kent says O'Phee's robust design is just right for the gruelling impact loading that is everyday business at the wharf. "What makes O'Phee equipment so efficient is core strength. In the container industry, we measure gear upon the ability to endure what we call impact loading," he points out. "When you have a standard B-double, you load goods pallet by pallet which gradually increases your weight with each loaded pallet. But in a waterfront situation, the load goes straight onto the trailer in one hit. So the trailer must have enough strength to sustain that type of impact loading." According to Kent, Qube is handling a

significant volume of containers in Brisbane alone, and the freight task is rising by the day. "Considering the constant increase in container traffic, PBS certainly is the way of the future. Standard equipment won't be able to handle it," he says – pointing out that savvy engineering alone won't decide which brand will win the PBS race going forward.

"PBS or not, it's all about what happens after the sale," he explains. "And Mick O'Phee is one of a kind in that regard. He has always been looking after us very well and kept us updated on new developments in the industry to ensure we could react right away. It's much more than aftersales service in the original sense."

On the quest for future growth, both Qube and O'Phee remain open-minded and are committed to constantly re-invent themselves along the way. But according to Mick O'Phee, a welder by trade, that attitude is not a high-faluting business philosophy. "It's just a simple form of business insurance."

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