

## Environment Engineering Company Specializing in Innovative Ways to Remediate Contaminated Sites including Residential Heating Oil Spills, Gas Stations and Environmentally Sensitive Properties



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“JK Environmental is a company that cares about our clients and we can come up with innovative ways to manage any environmental problem.”  
- Kevin Brien, P.E.

**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Brien, would you tell us about JK Environmental Services?*

**Mr. Brien:** JK Environmental Services is an environmental engineering company founded in 2010. We specialize in developing innovative ways of remediating contaminated sites. Typical clients range in size from residential heating oil spills through banks that need help with real estate transactions on environmentally sensitive properties, and gas stations on up through super Superfund sites.

**CEOCFO:** *When you are looking at a problem, what do you take into consideration that allows you to come up with something innovative as opposed to a more standard solution?*

**Mr. Brien:** It depends on budget, which plays an important part. Just because you have contamination does not mean you have to spend a great deal of money remediating the site. There are a wide variety of ways to remediate a site depending upon how quickly you want it done, how aggressive you want to be and what your budget is. The requirements and regulations do allow some flexibility and the key for our business is finding the right solution for individual clients.

**CEOCFO:** *Would you walk us through a couple engagements?*

**Mr. Brien:** The majority of our business today is with gas stations, retail petroleum facilities. They may have had a release from their underground storage tank system or someone has hit a dispenser and a petroleum product has spilled on the ground. They will call us when they receive a notice from the DEP or in some cases the EPA, asking for our assistance in helping them remediate the site and comply with regulations. We would then send our engineers and geologists to the site. We would typically do some testing and come up with a range of options for them to remediate and resolve those issues.

**CEOCFO:** *What might be an innovative solution?*

**Mr. Brien:** Historically, contamination was dug out or pumped out (if it was a water issue). In many cases that caused major disruption to business so rather than do that we utilize different technologies for injecting chemicals in the ground to remediate sites.

**CEOCFO:** *When you say technology, what are techniques and materials you might use?*

**Mr. Brien:** It depends on the client. For smaller homeowner type projects, we simply go in there and we will remove all the contamination we can because it is not as expensive as it is on the big industrial sites. For a typical gas station or a typical mid-size project, we would use some kind of injection technology, such as ozone injection, soil vapor extraction and our

engineers would design a remediation system which will be in a small trailer out of the way, safe and secure. Many gas stations have this type of remediation system, you just do not notice them. Those are the typical sites that we work on. Other clients we work with include agricultural clients where instead of digging impacted soil out and hauling for disposal we would blend clean products, clean soil, clean water with the existing contamination to reduce the concentration.

**CEOFCO: *Would you license these technologies to others or share?***

**Mr. Brien:** We have a Sister company that specializes in landfill work and for some of those remediation designs we do have patented technologies but the typical stuff we do every day at gas stations in the greater Philadelphia area is not patented. Our engineers are experts in the field and know how to put together several different technologies to make them work in sync.

**CEOFCO: *What is the competitive landscape?***

**Mr. Brien:** I have seen a big shift over the last few years. I started off working with one of the bigger companies in the country on larger projects and I saw that their business model does not seem to be working. The company was not doing so well because the days of spending a lot of money on remediation and basically taking as long as you can on a project while spending an unlimited amount of time and money on projects was not working. I have seen a lot of the bigger companies struggle because of large overheads. We do not have a lot of competition in this field, there are a couple of companies, but it tends to be the smaller companies who are doing best.

**CEOFCO: *Are there some problems that cannot be solved?***

**Mr. Brien:** There is a solution for everything but for most projects we do not have an unlimited budget. On the projects where the budget exceeds the value of the property, I have seen cases where the client just declares bankruptcy because they cannot afford to do the cleanup work. There is always a solution and we are always happy to find the solution but we understand the client's needs and their financial restrictions.

**CEOFCO: *Are there more problems today or is it somewhat static?***

**Mr. Brien:** There are still many sites that need to be remediated.....there are many historic problems that still have to be addressed.

**CEOFCO: *Are there newer or more organic methods that you are able to use rather than chemicals or microbes in the ground?***

**Mr. Brien:** There are ways of addressing contamination without chemicals and digging or pumping. It is a very expensive process and you need to have a very good understanding of not only the contamination you are working with but also the various aspects of the media you are trying to treat. If you are going to put bugs in the ground, not only do you have to think about what the bugs are going to do with the contamination, you have to look at the type of soil that is there, the type of nutrients in the soil, the amount of oxygen in the soil and whether or not those bugs will survive and multiply. A few years ago it was very popular to use microbial technology because everyone thought it was the next big thing but what we have seen is you cannot justify the amount of money you spend on that technology for the results it produces. Keep in mind, when we inject chemicals in the ground we are injecting stuff that is not harmful. It would be counterproductive to inject something harmful to take care of one problem and cause another.

**CEOFCO: *The company is about seven years old. You have been recognized in the 50 on Fire in Philly and recognized Future 50 Awards. How have you done it?***

**Mr. Brien:** We started in 2010 and we have grown considerably over the last seven years. Our key to growth has been our employees. We started off misfiring by hiring people because we needed them and without being able to pay the right people what we wanted to pay them so we got what we paid for basically. Over the last couple of years our focus has been on developing a team and letting them build a company and run projects. I am very happy with the team that we have. That has been the key to our success. I now have a group of people here that I can trust to do a fantastic job and I am happy to hand off projects to them.

**CEOFCO: *What do you look for in your people, over and above technical expertise?***

**Mr. Brien:** The key to my business and to our employees is that the clients are the number-one focus. We do not care about the couple of dollars here and there and that is what drove me away from the bigger companies.....they were too focused on the bottom line. We understand that our clients may not have a lot of money to spend on these projects. We understand that an environmental related cleanup is something that is not going to get them anything. While it may improve the value of the property, typically these people do not want to spend money on these projects. Our quality does not change because of who we are working for and we treat every client the same way whether you are a Fortune 500 or

whether you are a homeowner. I make sure my employees know that. Everyone is treated with the same respect. If someone comes to me and they cannot afford to pay what we are asking, we can work something out whether it is different terms, reduced rates, and I think that has been the key to our success as a small business.

**CEOCFO: *How do you reach potential clients?***

**Mr. Brien:** At first we did a lot of marketing and I went and met a lot of people and took a lot of people to lunch and dinner. I got involved in various trade organizations. Thankfully, our work speaks for itself and we are very well respected in the area. We are recommended by a lot of the trade organizations in this field and we have some great contacts with regulators. The company takes care of itself for marketing. We do get some stuff from the website but at this point in time we are very happy with our repeat business.

**CEOCFO: *What is ahead for JK Environmental?***

**Mr. Brien:** We are going to continue to grow. As you pointed out we were recently recognized by a couple of business publications for our growth over the last three years. We bought a nice office just outside Philadelphia a couple years ago, thinking that was going to last us for ten years and we subsequently have outgrown that office and need more space. We have identified northeastern Pennsylvania as the area that we want to set up an office in so we are currently looking for offices in the Allentown area to set up a second location. We are going to continue to keep growing.

**CEOCFO: *What should our readers remember about JK Environmental?***

**Mr. Brien:** They should remember that all environmental companies are not the same. There are environmental companies out there that are only interested in the bottom line and getting the most money out of a particular project. JK Environmental is a company that cares about our clients and we can come up with innovative ways to manage any environmental problem.

