

Ecological Consulting Specializing in Field Investigations and Studies



Marty Hilovsky
CEO

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EnviroScience Inc.
www.enviroscienceinc.com

CEOCFO: Mr. Hilovsky, what is the basic concept for EnviroScience?

Mr. Hilovsky: We are an ecological consulting firm that focuses on things like wetland delineation, stream restoration, endangered species studies, scientific and commercial diving-really almost anything that has to do with water and the environment. More than most environmental companies, we take a hands on approach and specialize in field investigations and studies.

CEOCFO: What might be some of the basic understandings you have working with the environment and working with water that perhaps others do not?

Mr. Hilovsky: I’m a biologist by education, but couldn’t find work as an ecologist when I got out of graduate school 30 years ago. I was fortunate to be hired by a regulatory agency and spent the first eight years of my career as a regulator writing water pollution control permits and inspecting a wide range of industries. What’s interesting is that over the last 30 years, environmental regulation and solutions to many of our nations’ most pressing water problems are now driven by the biology. When I started my career, there were few opportunities for field biologists. Fast forward 30 year and now I’ve got a successful business that combines biology and environmental regulation to provide practical and real-world solutions to complex environmental problems.

CEOCFO: Would you give us one example of something that you might glean from the hands on approach?

Mr. Hilovsky: Some of our largest clients are railroads. Typically, an industry that as you might expect is kind of conservative, is so very slow

to change. They have found a great deal of value in having our people-trained field biologists- out managing emergency response incidents. When a derailment occurs and hazardous materials are released in a stream or wetland we are among the first responders. While we don't clean up the contaminants or put out the fires, we direct the people that do with an eye towards protecting the natural resources that are being threatened. The regulatory personnel who respond typically have the same education and experience that we do. Therefore, we know what they are going to be concerned about and we can proactively address many of those issues.

CEOCFO: *What should people be concerned about with the environment and the areas, particularly where you work, that people do not understand today?*

Mr. Hilovsky: As mentioned, most environmental regulation, at least in the water area, is driven by the biology and a desire to protect fish and other organisms that live in our nations' waterways. Therefore, from our standpoint and many of our clients, it is very important to understand the biology and to focus on that first. Having said that, though, ecosystems are complex and we are only just beginning to understand the inter-relationships that make them function.

CEOCFO: *How do people find you?*

Mr. Hilovsky: Much of it is word of mouth. One client that we have been working with for a while spreads the word to others. We also do a fair amount of web advertising, but typically not a lot of traditional advertising, nor do we advertise in the Yellow Pages or do much in the way of traditional media. As a science-based company, perhaps one of the most effective ways for us to develop new clients is attending a wide range of professional conferences and tradeshow.

CEOCFO: *What is the competitive landscape? Are there many companies with the depth of EnviroScience?*

Mr. Hilovsky: Although we have many and much larger competitors, there are few with the depth of experience and equipment that EnviroScience has. Because of this experience and our capabilities, we often work as subcontractors to many of the largest engineering and consulting firms in the country.

CEOCFO: *Are you able to ramp up if a lot of people come to you at the same time or do people wait for when you are available?*

Mr. Hilovsky: We put a lot of emphasis on cross training our ecological staff and most of our staff has worked in multiple groups on a wide variety of projects. Because of this cross training, we have adequate staff to respond to multiple simultaneous emergency response incidents and quick response projects. EnviroScience played a very significant role in the BP-Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2009. Despite having to add a large number of staff relatively quickly, we were careful to maintain our quality standards and we invested heavily in training those people. Likewise, this year we are staffing the field portions of the National Coastal Conditions Assessment for USEPA, United States Environmental Protection Agency. This effort involves coordination and sampling of 1,200 sites. We have been fortunate to be able to identify people with the necessary skill sets, get them on board and getting them trained for this summer's field work.

CEOCFO: *Is safety a big concern and if so, what are the issues that people would not normally think of?*

Mr. Hilovsky: It may sound like a cliché, but safety is always Job One. I'm mindful that our people are frequently in dangerous situations, including working near burning tank cars, diving in high-current or confined spaces, and frequent exposure to venous plants and animals. We invest heavily in a full time Health and Safety Officer and specialized training, particularly for our railroad work. Because equipment fails and the unexpected happens, we also invest heavily in backup and safety systems.

CEOCFO: *I see on your site that you participated in an MS fundraiser event. Why is giving back important for you and for the company?*

Mr. Hilovsky: Since its' founding, EnviroScience has a strong track record of community support and involvement. We've been active with area schools and universities by sending staff to attend career days, speak to classes, judging at local and regional science fairs and providing monetary support for individual projects when needed.

In 2010, a grass roots, staff-led corporate responsibility committee was formed to provide EnviroScience employees with volunteer opportunities and ways to make a difference in our community. Approximately half of our staff are members of the CRC. Each year they pledge both dues and hours to a wide variety of causes including, Habitat for Humanity, Access Women's Shelter, North Coast Community Homes, March of Dimes, Children's Miracle Network and the Monk Seals Foundation.

A particular interest for the CRC over the past few years has been support for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. This is a cause that is particularly near and dear to us because we have two employees who suffer from the effects of this disease which currently has no known cure. In both 2013 and 2014, we sponsored teams of at least 12 riders and raised more than \$10,000 for research. In 2014, we hope to increase both participation and our fund raising goal.

CEOCFO: *Are there particular types of projects that you would like to work on, given an opportunity and given a choice?*

Mr. Hilovsky: Our favorite projects are those where we are either working in a new geographic area or learning additional skills. When our employees learn new skills and are doing it in new locations, they are growing professionally and we are adding to our qualifications and capabilities as a company. I recently finished our annual employee reviews, and one thing that most of my staff mentioned was how important it was to work on a variety of projects, learn new things and stretch their own abilities and capabilities.

CEOCFO: *Are there new technologies that you are able to take advantage of? If so, how do you stay on top of what is in use, what is coming down the pike and what might fall by the wayside?*

Mr. Hilovsky: What is important to us are software and hardware that will make us more efficient and produce a better work product. As an old-school biologist, I'm always surprised how computer-intensive our work has become. Geographic information systems (GIS) that integrate large databases with GPS information has become a critical tool in our business. Our stream and wetland restoration work requires survey and survey-grade GPS equipment to make our operations more efficient and

more accurate. We continue to invest in this software and hardware to produce a better work product for our clients.

CEOCFO: *What might be different a year from now for EnviroScience?*

Mr. Hilovsky: We are definitely in a growth mode, and I'd expect us to increase our staff and revenues 20% within the next 12 months. We will also be adding to our geographic footprint by opening another office in the Mid-Atlantic region.

CEOCFO: *Why is this the time?*

Mr. Hilovsky: Well it's always a good time to grow, right? Significant annual growth in employment and revenues is the only way we can provide new opportunities for our staff.

One defining thing about EnviroScience's growth is that relatively little of it is driven by senior management or from strategic planning. Most of our growth is fueled by our staff and group managers who are encouraged to think and act as entrepreneurs. I always try to encourage our people to take a chance when they see a need or would like to develop work around their personal areas of interest. I challenge virtually every new employee to figure out what their passion is and go out and pursue it. We always hire people to fill a certain role, but I'm happiest when a team member outgrows the position for which they were hired and goes on to create their own position or 'niche' within the company. One of my favorite examples is the president of our company, Jamie Krejsa, who started out washing dishes 20 years ago in our laboratory. While doing that, he answered a phone call from a large client. Without speaking with me, he told the client that we could conduct a type of survey that we had never done before. I trusted him to go out and do it, and to make a long story short, he built a whole division of the company around that first project 20 years ago. Now that division is by far the largest and most profitable part of EnviroScience. Time after time we have had employees that have taken initiative to start a new area or new business area; most of the time they work out and sometimes they do not. However, I am always going to be willing to take a chance and bet on my people.

CEOCFO: *The fact that you enjoy what you are doing comes through. How have you maintained that level enthusiasm?*

Mr. Hilovsky: Well, I love what I do and I'm excited to see what develops next. Because much of our direction and growth is staff-led, I often don't see the next 'big thing' coming. As a result, I'm pleasantly surprised by their new initiatives and the end result of their hard work.

CEOCFO: *What should people take away when they read about EnviroScience?*

Mr. Hilovsky: That it is truly an employee-driven company. I provide some overall direction and work to maintain a certain culture that so that our people enjoy working here. I never forget that they are our most important asset and that's the reason that fully one third of our net income goes back to our employees by way of bonuses.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine
