

# Building a Sustainable Future: Betco's EnviroZyme Probiotics Solutions Lead the Way

Fri, Jun 16, 2023, 12:39AM • 36:53

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

products, cleaning, probiotics, call, bacteria, industry, business, folks, customers, training, Owensboro, bowling green, continue, mentioned, family, Tim, facility, Scott, grow, today

00:00

Welcome to the business of cleaning podcast, your number one source for information on the commercial cleaning industry. We release new episodes monthly live from the janitorial manager studio located in Toledo, Ohio. I'm Tim Clagg, the marketing communication specialist at Double A Solutions and your host of the business of cleaning podcast. This month, our guest is Scott Prather, senior regional manager for the Betco Corporation, which is based right here in Northwest Ohio in Bowling Green. Scott brings 33 years of experience with Betco. It's an exciting time for the company, they continue to grow and release new and cutting-edge products, especially their newest product in EnviroZyme a probiotic solution. Welcome into the show, Scott. Tell us a little bit more about Betco and what they specialize in.

00:53

Thanks, Tim! Betco is a family-owned business and we've been in business close to 80 years. The Betz family, I go way back with Betco. My grandfather actually started buying from Mr. Carl Betz, who was the founder of Betco back in the early 50s. And Mr. Betz and my grandfather were good friends, and kind of started a business in the same time period. And obviously, both gentlemen saw a vision in the cleaning industry. And Mr. Betz was a chemist at the time manufacturing products and my grandfather had his janitorial supply house in Owensboro, Kentucky where I'm originally from, and grew up and selling private labels and janitorial supplies, including brand, brand name, chemicals as well, as well as equipment. So Betco has always been on the cutting edge, we've been first in several things throughout the industry, we, we actually came out with the first nonacid bow cleaner called Molly back in the 60s, we also had a revolutionary floor stripper, which was called Ax-IT. Back in the 80s, which was the first non-rinse floor stripper, that there was. We came out with several different types of polymers and finishes and so forth, and even to this day are currently looking at revolutionary and new technology into polymers as well as products to clean with. And so hence the purchase of EnviroZyme, which is basically cleaning with bacteria, so a whole different spin, kind of come full circle and looking forward to the future.

03:01

In Betco, certainly the innovators in this industry Scott, you mentioned you're from Owensboro, Kentucky, that's a city that is known with producing top tier NASCAR talent from NASCAR Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip, his brother Michael, the Green family and Jeremy Mayfield. Did you have any

interactions growing up? I know you were involved in high school athletics with Darrell or his brother Michael at all.

03:27

Well, you know, Darrell was a few years older than I was. I remembered when Darrell ran track at Davis County high school there was basically three high schools in Owensboro. When I was growing up, we had the Catholic High School. We had the city and then we had to county High School. And I attended school at Owensboro High School and Darrell went to Davis County high school, but I certainly remember Darrell and all of his adventures as far as when he used to drive, go karts. And started at a very young age as far as driving and we call them the roundy rounders. He raced on dirt and raced on asphalt too. And then when Darrell younger brother Michael got into the got into the same. Well, you know, Darrell had paved a pretty good path there for a lot of the guys back in Owensboro. You mentioned David Green, the Green family, and Jeremy Mayfield. These were all folks that had kind of fallen in the track of what Darrell had paved for everyone there in Owensboro. And going back to Jeremy, I actually coached Jeremy and peewee football, remembering very well. Remember his Uncle Bobby Hodges, and those guys. You know, the thing about Stock Car Driving is it takes a lot of money. Yes, it does. And the thing about it is you got to have a lot of sponsorship. And those guys in our early days, were pretty much kind of self-sponsored if you would, and they were lucky enough to have a lot of people that believed in their dream and sponsored them and got them off. And now of course, looking behind, it's a lot of good history. A lot of good athletes have come from that area. And I look at the racing world having to be on the cutting edge and always in good shape and, you know, nerves of steel, and you better have your ducks in a row, when you get there run the speed, they run.

05:34

Passion in the cleaning industry, you mentioned with your family, it runs deep. I mean, you started at a young age, helping out the family business, getting involved learning the tricks of the trade. How did your firsthand experience prepare you for your future in the industry?

05:53

Well, you know Tim, back in the early days, it was a fairly simple business. The cleaning industry was very simple. But I saw early on that the only way to make a difference as far as the industry was to go was to probably be on the manufacturing side, because the distributors basically had a lot of choices out there, the manufacturers, but the manufacturers were the ones that were meeting all the regulations and government regulations, and EPA regulations and so forth. So, I saw early on that the manufacturing style was probably the side for me to be on in the future, because that's where the changes were going to take place. And now, the scenario, if you would, is just like every other business, you know, we have a lot of the older businesses selling out, we have some merging, and then we simply have some that are just going out of business. So, the footprint of the industrial side of the business is getting smaller every day, as far as individually owned. But the larger companies obviously are growing. And so, there's, there's fewer people to actually work with and sell throughout today. But the larger ones that we have the relationships and had relationships with over the years, have been good to us. And I think that they'll provide the future for the business.

07:21

How important was it for you first getting started in the industry to find that long-term home, that family atmosphere which you had experienced? When you were seeking employment, you know, getting in the industry and getting started?

07:40

Well, Tim, I'll tell you the situation with Betco was an easy decision for me because I grew up with the Betz family and, you know, Paul, who's the owner of Betco today, and his brother, Dan would call on me there in Owensboro. And it was just, like a big family back in the day. And, you know, I knew how, Paul and, and Dan, and the folks that started out the same as we had started out. So the passion was always there, regardless of which side of the desk you're on. We're always trying to meet the needs of the consumer and user, but I knew that the manufacturing side, that's where all the changes were going to be. You know, we can only change the industry so much on the distribution side, that's the thing is that the manufacturer has to provide the innovation, you know, we're kind of the logistics if you would, for what we do. But we still need training, and we need to carry that training over to the end user. Training is such an important thing today with all companies. You know, we have so many different outlets today as far as Google and you know, the internet and so forth, to get a lot of information, but it seems like it's kind of reminds me of a big toolbox, you know, sometimes we got the right tool, but we don't know exactly which tool it is to use, because we have so many. And I looked at the Internet a lot like that, you know, it's kind of like a one-on-one business to me and, you know, the best way that I can get the point across and, you know, work with customers strictly still just hands on. I know we do a lot of things just like today where we're going through the Zoom meetings and so forth. But there's nothing that takes the place of being there in front of the customer.

09:35

You know, I think it's very interesting, you know, businesses back then even 1980s 1990s deals were finalized with a firm handshake, or signatures down on a napkin, and you've seen it go through that transition now where it's, it's a little bit different. You've had to build that trust a little bit more, spend a little bit more detail in that, tell us some of the early stories I know you had mentioned in our initial meeting, too, that clients would stay at your guy's houses rather than, you know, the hotel life that we've all grown accustomed to nowadays?

10:16

Well, it's funny Tim, because again, back in the early days there wasn't a whole lot of factory reps that were on the road. But the ones that were my grandfather and grandmother would actually bring them in, they wouldn't stay in a hotel, they felt like family. And so, watching a lot of these, factory reps come in, of course, everybody wore suit and tie back in those days, and everybody carried a demo case. You know, basically, the way to set up your schedule, or what we today call an Outlook calendar, was the phonebook. So, you know, a lot of times I would watch my grandmother cooking breakfast for the guys, and, you know, they'd be sitting there talking products and talking different types of applications and opportunities, and they'd be marking their, their yellow pages, if you would, and making calls. And back in those days, you know, a lot of things were just cold calling. But it truly was a different time and a different business. Back in those days, there was everything was done on relationship selling, you had close friends, you had you had good friends, kind of like used to be when you started in sales, they would tell you that, your best friends are going to be your best customers. And it's so true. Because as you work with a lot of these customers, and especially in my early days at Betco I found that, you know,

they weren't like family, because to be honest with you, you're spending more time with your customers out there in the field, and you are with your own family. So, they become very, very close.

11:53

33-year career so far with Betco! How have you been able to continue to be so successful at your role? And being able to be adaptable? Because you know, as you mentioned with it going through several transitions, how have you continued to grow in your industry?

12:15

Well, the one thing that I'll say Tim is that if I could give any of the younger guy's advice out there, it is being able to adapt, and I'm talking about the old guys like me adapting to new technology. But they also had to look at the industry because it is such an old industry. Looking at some of the old too. I think that the combination between the old and the new will make the best salesperson out there, I think that they can see some of the challenges and some of the things that they have to face as far as time constraints today. The way purchasing has done today. But the way that I've always looked at it, and unless something changes, I think it'll continue that way is that regardless of their cleaning program, out of every dollar spent 10 cents is the actual product cost. And 90 cents is still the labor costs. So we've got to continue to have better programs as far as training, we have to have better scenarios as far as application, we have to come up with better procedures if you would. And that's one of the things that Betco has always instilled in me from day one was what we call the three P's and its product people and procedures, and nothing seems to work without that right combination.

13:38

That's a winning combination. In any industry with certainly and your guys industry. You know, it's an exciting time we mentioned Betco just releasing a new top of the line products called EnviroZyme probiotic solution. It's a word that we hear in our daily lives I know that I take a couple of probiotics to help I'm kind of getting to that age now, I'm a new father. So I figured you know what, I should probably do a little bit extra taking care of myself. But it always has when you hear that word you associate with positive health benefits on our bodies but not necessarily yet used to hearing it on cleaning products.

14:17

That's correct. And you know congratulations on being the new dad at Tim! Thank you so much. If probiotics were around when I was your age I would probably been on them same as you are. Again technology is amazing. And the probiotic side of our line of cleaning is basically we've been able to design specific bacteria to go after specific areas as far as cleaning. We have found that we can eliminate odors in restrooms we can eliminate urine in restrooms, we can do so many things that we can design the bacteria which creates enzymes which creates more enzymes, which creates more enzymes as far as regiments to go after what we're doing. For example, one of the first products that we designed was a product called grease salt. And you look at your typical all purpose cleaners and the greasers out there, and most of them are very high alkaline in nature. And, you know, people have always been looking for alternatives as far as to use more friendly or sustainable types of products out there in the workplace. But they've just haven't found a way to change chemistry. So with the probiotics program, we've actually found that these products will not only clean, but they eliminate odors, they'll break down cellulose, they'll break down urine to break down so many different things. And they have a pH of seven. So it's very easy for them to relate when you start talking about a pH seven, because they

know that that's typically neutral. And they look at like, well, I've got to see this work, if it's a product kind of like a neutral floor cleaner, if you would, it probably hadn't got a whole lot of cleaning ability. But then they're shocked when they use the products. And then also to that being that particular type of product was designed to go after those hydrocarbons and all living types of areas, then it also continues to clean even when it's in the drain. So we have the backside of the operation as well as the front side. And then we found in testing to him that these probiotic products that we're using, actually have residuals to them that will last up to 21 days, that's probably last longer. But we've only tested them for 21 days knowing that, you know, after they clean, they're still there, and then they're still active. And once they are wedged again, then they become active again. So it's a real good thing, as far as for the environment for the worker, and everybody surrounded.

17:04

And that's so important. Everybody's time is valuable. There's not enough hours in the day to get your to do list complete. Mind continues to grow, especially as the weather warms up in Northwest Ohio, 21 days is a long time, whether it's a DIY or at your house trying to clean you know. I know, my wife and I split those duties. So not having to constantly worry about cleaning an area once every week, that allows us to kind of focus on some other things. And then you'll look at businesses who use the product from that side of things, that allows them to focus on what's really important, and building new relationships, getting new customers, rather than have to, you know, come back to an area several times.

17:53

Exactly. And that's the thing about it, we only all of a sudden have so many hours in a day. So we try to use that as best we can. And we want to make that as successful as we can. And with the probiotics line, you know, we're going to continue to design these bacteria's to even do more. I think that some people say it's a biological cleaning. And in a way it really is because we're kind of doing away with the typical type of chemistry that we've known in the past. And we're moving forward with the new technology. And the thing about is that there is studies being done right now in Europe, that we are finding that even the bacteria that can be created can actually go after bad bacteria. So we all know what happened during COVID. The quaternary, ammonia and the shortages and so forth. And you know some of the products that we had available at the time were citric acid based product that we had shelled and we brought back in due to a SARS claim that it had on the product. But I think that you'll see in the future that probiotics are going to be used widely for a lot of different things. And the really neat thing about Betco is that we're the only manufacturer in the world that actually create the cleaning products and grow our own bacteria. So that's a big plus for Betco. It's a big plus for our customers, knowing that our slogan is that we grow it, so we know it

19:30

Going back you'd mentioned COVID. It's been over three years, how much did those experiences and everything that happened to the world at that time, kind of shift your guy's thinking for the future to create this product and for the road ahead for the industry as a whole?

19:51

Well, unfortunately, Tim the thing about it is seems like it's human nature, out of sight out of mind. So, during the pandemic, you know what the sanitizers and the quaternary ammonia and the wipers and all

the different things that people were looking for and asking about. And you, we probably had more people reading labels at that point in time than we've ever had in the history. You know, we constantly preach this every day to end users about what they should be using an overuse of disinfectants, and so forth. Metabolic and resistance to disinfectants, and so many different things like that. But it just seems like Human Nature says that, if it's not on the front page of the newspaper, then seem to be extremely critical right now. And, you know, it's not that COVID has gone away, it's still present. I think it taught us a good lesson that we should know, if anything, proper hand washing is one of the keys to transmitting, you know, different types of diseases and bacteria, because germs are hitchhikers, basically they like to hitchhike off of different people's skin, and hands and touch surfaces, and so forth. And if we just be more aware of our surroundings, and, you know, basically, the cleaning, and what people are touching out there, I think that that means a lot. But I would like for people to, you know, I don't want, obviously don't want to see a COVID outbreak again in my lifetime. But I would like people to use that experience in moving forward and, you know, read the labels and look at what they're using, and make sure they're aware of these touch surfaces, and so forth, you know, gloves are still okay, wash your hands properly. Sanitize, when you don't have access to water. So these are all things that we've been taught, but sometimes are short on practicum.

21:53

Your competitors, of course, always trying to improve, but you guys welcome that. You guys actually will allow them to bring their samples to your guys facility, brand new state of the art facility, I might add, looking at videos of it, it's absolutely immaculate for testing. And I think that's interesting that you guys allow that. And, you know, obviously, you want to help the industry as a whole, what's good for business is good for competition as well.

22:22

Well, the one thing with Betco is we've always had an open-door policy, Tim. So, you know, we are for the end user. We look at our distribution network, because that's not necessarily our customer, that's our business partner. So the true end user are the folks out there that are, you know, the schools, you know, the building service contractors that are cleaning every day, but their clients, you know a class office buildings, the people that work in those buildings, these are the people who work in the plants, these are the true customers, you know, we look at our distribution points as business partners, not necessarily our customers. So, with that, we encourage the competition out there, that's the only way that we're going to get better sharing information. You know, that's, one of the things that I've always looked at, is that, you know, we have something that can change the industry and maybe even change the world of cleaning. You know, let's not hide it, let's not be secretive about it. Let's get out there. And let's show people, let's do things. And I think that COVID taught us a good lesson in that too, as far as, you know, looking outside of our boundaries. And, you know, with the supply chain issues, and all the different things that were out there, I think that that showed us a good lesson of looking at other industries and looking outside of our wheelhouses, as they call it, and seeing what's out there. So I think that was, in a way, a positive thing. For people like our company at Betco.

23:57

We're speaking with Scott Prather, Senior Regional Manager for the Betco Corporation here in Northwest Ohio, Bowling Green, Ohio. And let's go back to talk about that new facility. I kind of mentioned it a few minutes ago, but just kind of watching the video on your guy's website. It really is



cutting edge and really has set the standards for everybody in the industry. And also take us through the kind of the little bit more on the research and development in the time. It went into you know; it's never over trying to perfect the product. But how long how much time and research and development went into perfecting EnviroZyme?

24:39

Well, I think that it's a continuous process. We actually had bought the company up in Wisconsin about 14 years ago. So, what we were doing at that point in time it was a company that was creating bacteria that was primarily used for the municipalities, so drinking water, wastewater, and so forth, that's what they were designed a specific type of bacteria for specific purposes, more or less generic if you would. And so there's a lot of folks out there, they're selling similar types of products. But it's more of a generic type of strain of bacteria that they're selling. Because basically, they don't make it. So a lot of times, we'll get a customer to come to us, and they want a specific CUFcount of bacteria, and we'll produce that, and then we'll ship that to them. And then they'll blend it the way that they want to blend it, but they haven't created the bacteria. So, there's been a lot of microbiologists involved in envirozyme, as far as again, looking to do different things with agriculture looking to do different things with actually even in the feeding. And the agriculture side is that we found that by using this type of probiotic, that we found so many different ways that we can actually improve the roof strength and you know, warded against insects, I mean, there's so many different things. I mean, we haven't even touched the surface. I mean, we only scratched the edge of probably what's available out there and some of the opportunities that we have with the probiotics, but I will tell you that the new facility, we welcome our customers, our distributor business partners and large end users, we have them in all the time we train, we do we take them through. The nice thing about that is we can do hands on, we have so many different areas in the training area where we show equipment, we can recreate the scenarios that they're looking at in their facilities. So, it really makes it nice to where we can do it hands on, we've got the access to the specialist right there at a plant if we need to have them there. And I've never yet had anyone that's come up to Bowling Green, that is left unsatisfied or with unanswered questions. And that's if they do, I'll tell them it's their own fault, because we've got plenty of places can answer those questions for them while they're there.

27:19

And you had mentioned that kind of training a little bit, but you guys specialize the training to fit that company, customer's need. I mean, whether it's on machines, or working with different chemicals you have, I mean, if somebody can't make it there, there's eLearning courses. So there are so many different options for training, whether it's in person at your guy's facility or on the computer to try and companies to try and have their company, their employees rather alert and understanding whether it's the machine, the machinery they use, whether it's the products they're using, which is certainly important in today's world we live in.

28:03

Well, you know, we actually established what was called Betco University, so we look at it just like almost like a college. So like you said, you have access online, you have access in person, you know, we have a regional manager out there that are doing training in the field, and then obviously, they can come to Bowling Green, and go through the training classes that we have every month. So we have a, we have a pretty wide array of opportunities, that the folks can be properly trained, and set up their own

programs. So we have programs that we can put in place, or we can custom make those for them. Or we can adapt to the scope of work that we call it at their facility, to where we can go in and we can tweak their scope of work and help them out based upon what they're asking us to do. So just like any college, you know, you get accreditation hours for IE Hof by going through our training. And that carries on and hopefully that will carry you along with the individuals. You know, I kind of joke sometimes it's, it's just the same as someone that's got a general degree and they're going back after masters Well, you know, if they if they achieve a master's degree, then we automatically assume that they've achieved the high level of education that they're going to be able to utilize. Well, that's the same way in cleaning. You know, once they've achieved the Betco University and they've gone through the courses and they got accreditation hours. They're experts at what they're doing. And I'm not saying that that always stays that because things change, women changes, processes, changes, products changes. So we have to, again, we have to always be on the lookout for the next latest and greatest and we also have to look at how we can streamline the operation and basically make it more efficient.

30:01

Betco has built a successful relationship with Bowling Green State University just a mile or two down the road. Not very far. But they've allowed students to provide research on environmental bacteria, different strains. How has this relationship helped benefit Beto and the experience that they're providing for students too at Bowling Green State University?

30:30

Well, I'll tell you what, Tim, there's nothing like young minds. These folks come in there, they're very intelligent, they're very smart, or talented, they're full of energy. And there's not a lot of things that substitute that I'll tell you what, when you when you can go out and recruit these folks. And they can come in and you can be a part of their career, their learning experience, you know, I'm always you know, I always tell my folks, I said always be a sponge absorb as much as you possibly can. Never stop learning! Take that information and utilize it the way you want to utilize it for your customers. Because information is so valuable these days, correct information that is and making it work. And like I said, that's a that's a variable, very valuable asset for us to have University of Toledo right there as being a partner with us. And I know we've looked at that over the years is kind of a steppingstone for a lot of those young folks coming in. And hopefully, we'll stay with them, no matter where they go in life.

31:45

Sustainability, certainly on everybody's mind and wondering what happens, you know, we mentioned when things kind of get into the soil from what we saw in the mess, and East Palestine, Ohio. You guys, obviously, this is a multi product. I mean, it's good for docs, garbage disposals, floors, grease traps, beverage trays, and restaurants. But really, you know, sustainability for our future is something where you guys have taken a lot of pride in for that next generation for, for your grandkids, my kids growing up. And that's really important. As so many things have happened, I would say in the last year or two, the things that have been able to get into the soil and the water.

32:35

Well, I totally agree Tim. And, you know, I talked to a lot of folks my age, and they say, well, it's too late. It's never too late! I think that what we have to do is we just have to be, we have to be prepared to change, you know, it is a change, you know, by utilizing some of these products and procedures, the



way that we're using them today, it's a change of what they're currently used to doing. But it's a positive change. So that's what they have to look at. You know, several years ago, we came out with and not only Betco, but a lot of the companies came out to where we were going to, you know, everything was going to be green cleaning. And the problem was, is that the technology wasn't there yet to go along with totally switching from conventional products to green products. So, it really got a bad rap, the first go around. And now I think that with the technology that exists, we're finding that there are a lot of voids, to where we can use programs, like the probiotics and the EnviroZyme products that do as good or better of a job of cleaning and give us all the benefits of sustainable types of products. And, you know, in looking forward, I hope that, you know, there's more and more coming down the pipeline, which I know there will be as far as in time to come to where, you know, we're probably using less products, but we're being able to adapt and use them as far as for a lot of different things. So that makes the training easier for the people. Makes the person easier for the people. And also too, like I say it's cleaner on the environment. Because you know, we all have to live, on this, has I say this rock. So, you know, they're we're all at one point in time responsible for what we're leaving behind. And I think that that's a big thing. If we can look at it like that, for you know, our next generation, our kids or grandkids. I think that this is a generation that can make a big impact on it. As far as starting that change in a positive way. You know, I've been seeing information on the news here the last month or so about where the ozone, the hole in the ozone is actually starting to close again. You know, hopefully this is to, you know, by using these more environmentally friendly type products that, you know, do not have the ozone depleting capabilities with the aerosols and so forth. So, I think we're on the right track, if we can just pull everybody together and get the commitment for everybody to do it. And not just when you have to do it.

35:20

And Betco has certainly been committed over the early days, present, and the future. Scott, I appreciate you coming on the show. It's been very informative for us. And I know our listeners are certainly going to learn a lot and telling us about the new product EnviroZyme. Where can people go to purchase your guys products as well as get their hands on EnviroZyme?

35:44

Well, they can, probably where they're currently purchasing your products now, they can ask about it. They can actually go online; they can actually call Betco at [www.betco.com](http://www.betco.com). You know, our, websites are a fantastic resource for not only products, but also training, as you said, online training and so forth. There's no charge for that. And like I said, we'll you know, the folks out there would like to look at trying some of the new probiotics, we'd certainly encourage that and they just have to call customer service and will direct them to a close spot locally or we'd be willing to work with them in some way of getting some samples of products to where they can purchase it local.

36:32

Can't wait to continue to follow your guy's continued success, that will conclude this month's edition of the business of cleaning podcast! Be sure to subscribe to us on Spotify, Apple podcast, Google podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts from, from everyone at janitorial manager. My guest Scott Prater and Tim Clagg saying So long! Until next time!