



# Green queen still cleaning up

■ Nick Sas



A lot has changed since Perth-based Enjo queen Barb de Corti began distributing the green cleaning product out of her Bull Creek home.

In 1994, the yellow mitts that are familiar to so many today were like something out of a Jetsons cartoon.

The concept of cleaning with no chemicals sounded like the prelude to a Ponzi scheme.

Fast forward to 2014 and Enjo is celebrating its 20th anniversary in Australia. Today, it is rumoured to be selling up to \$100 million of products a year. Ms de Corti would not confirm a figure—the only available Australian Securities and Investments Commission figures show a turnover of \$20 million in 2006.

Enjo is also three months into an ambitious expansion into the US.

While Ms de Corti, now the sole shareholder of Enjo in Australia, is comfortably a multimillionaire, she told *WestBusiness* it had not always been happy times.

“What I didn’t know at the time (when I bought the Enjo licence) was that I would have to sell my house in the process . . . that was

tough,” Ms de Corti said from the company’s boardroom in Melville, labelled the Room of Gloves.

“And what I didn’t know at the time — and thank god I didn’t — is that it would take about three years (to become profitable).

“But I believed in the product and that people would take it on. And the moment I knew it would work came when I managed to sell \$50,000 worth of Enjo products in a month during 1997. I thought I had made it. . . I was so happy, I could pay my phone bill.”

During its 20 years, Enjo has grown to become a niche force in the cleaning scene, with analysts estimating it takes up to 3 per cent of the market in Australia.

The product is sold directly to customers by a team of consultants called “Enjo-preneurs”.

And though Ms de Corti said the company was committed to its Tupperware-style selling program, times were changing.

Last year, Enjo belatedly expanded into the online sphere. It is part of a trend that appears to be pulling away from the Enjo-preneur structure.

In 2010, the last time *WestBusiness* spoke to Ms de Corti, she was spruiking an expansion in the Enjo-preneur army from 1500 to 4000.

Today, there are 924 (three of whom are men) while the com-

pany’s expansion to the US, with the backing of Azure Capital, is purely online.

But according to Ms de Corti, the current business model has definite longevity.

“I truly believe there’s a time for everything,” she said, describing Enjo’s delayed entry into the online environment.

“And I don’t think that we had enough customers that were pre-

pared to order online. They actually relished their relationship with the Enjo-preneurs . . . and they will continue to.

“But there’s a younger generation coming through using

things such as Facebook and Twitter, which is totally different to when I started it 20 years ago.

“We’re getting busier and busier (online) . . . and I think we need to have the opportunity to purchase Enjo products at midnight.”

Summing up the feeling of hitting the milestone, Ms de Corti said “pride” sprang to mind.

“Eighteen out of the 20 years I’ve been in the business have been profitable, not many companies can say that,” she said.

“But I’ve been supported by some amazing people. We have a common goal, we believe in what this product does and we believe in the people who sell it.”





West Australian, Perth  
24 Feb 2014, by Nick Sas

Business News, page 3 - 633.26 cm<sup>2</sup>  
Capital City Daily - circulation 178,385 (MTWTF--)



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ID 238692100

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**Magic mitt milestone: Businesswoman Barb de Corti this year celebrates 20 years of Enjo in Australia.** Picture: Michael O'Brien



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**Enjo Australia boss Barb de Corti**