

# Ex-Navy Seabee Cleans Up in Environmental Restoration

Vetpreneur's revenue jumps \$1.7 million in 2 years.

by Matthew Pavelek

**Story Summary**

- MEC<sup>x</sup> specializes in environmental cleanup and hazardous materials management solutions.
- MEC<sup>x</sup> has seen steady growth in revenues, with \$5 million in 2006, \$6 million in 2007 and \$6.7 million to close 2008.
- MEC<sup>x</sup> President Doug Carvel said potential vetpreneurs should take time to get some experience and learn about the industry before starting a business.

IN 1979, WHEN DOUG CARVEL was working full time during the day and going to night school at Tulsa University in Tulsa, Okla., 52 Americans were taken hostage by Iranian militants who stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Carvel felt compelled to take action.

"I just made up my mind that I needed to go do something about it," said Carvel, who was studying engineering management. "I went home and told my wife I was going to enlist in the Navy."

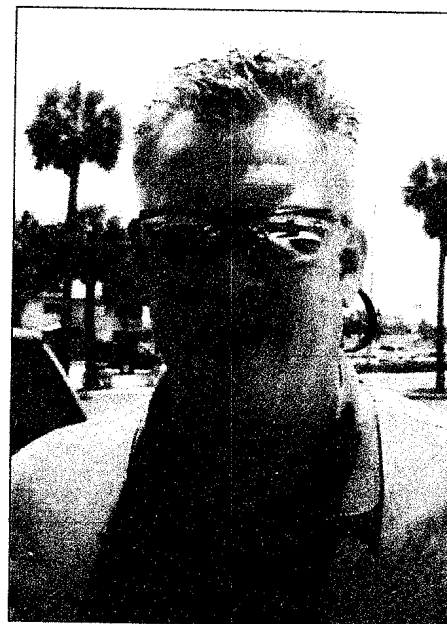
Carvel earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1976 from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa. He joined the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps and served 23 years. He also was a commanding officer of the Navy's Environmental

Engineering Unit and left with the rank of captain (O-6).

In 2002, the civil, environmental and structural engineer was working for ManTech International and was approached about starting his own business.

"After 9/11, they decided that they wanted to be exclusively in the intelligence and security side of the federal government," Carvel said. "They decided to go public in 2002 and were told by Wall Street that they should get out of the commercial side of the business, which is what I was running."

Carvel said executives at ManTech offered him a chance to buy the business and he accepted. There was a problem however — he didn't have enough money. >>



## Vetpreneur Info

Name: Doug Carvel  
 Age: 54  
 Military Service: U.S. Navy, 1979-2002  
 Highest Rank Attained: Captain (O-6)  
 NaVOBA Member Since: March 2007



Carvel served as a commanding officer in the Navy's environmental engineering unit.



## Company Info

Company: MEC<sup>x</sup> LP  
 Location: Houston, Texas  
 Year Founded: 2002  
 # of Employees: 35  
 Web site: [www.mecx.net](http://www.mecx.net)  
 2006 Revenue: \$5 million  
 2007 Revenue: \$6 million  
 2008 Revenue: \$6.7 million

“You never give up. You always have that positive, can-do attitude. Be humble; ask for an opportunity and the money will come later. And then you can start your business when you learn how to be a businessman.”

“As part of the deal before they would sell me the company, they told me that I had to have a half-million dollar line of credit in place,” Carvel said. “And if you go to a bank and you don’t have any history, trying to get a half a million dollar line of credit is a challenge.”

Carvel had done work with Wells Fargo and had established some contacts. An acquaintance who also happened to be a senior vice president with the firm agreed to co-sign the loan and Carvel had the credit line he needed.

MEC<sup>x</sup> specializes in environmental cleanup and hazardous materials management solutions and has government contracts with NASA and the Army Corps of Engineers. MEC<sup>x</sup> also serves corporate clients such as UBS and Behringer Harvard.

The firm was launched Feb. 2, 2002, by Carvel and other key members of the ManTech Environmental Corporation (MEC) management team. These key figures, who had worked together for more than a decade, needed to distinguish the business from MEC but also wanted to retain the core values the business had operated under for so long. So they added the “power of X.”

Carvel said it’s crucial to be able to trust the people he works with and for them to reciprocate that trust.

“I know everybody that works for me,” Carvel said. “They know if anything bad happens, we’re going to be watching each other’s rear ends. We want to keep an en-

vironment where everybody knows they’ll be looked after.”

Carvel said the unofficial motto of the Seabees, “Can Do!” guides his business philosophy.

### Carvel’s Keys to Success:

- 1) Honesty
- 2) Unequaled quality
- 3) Responsiveness

“You never give up,” Carvel said. “You always have that positive, can-do attitude. Be humble; ask

for an opportunity and the money will come later. And then you can start your business when you learn how to be a businessman.”



Carvel believes the Navy “Seabees” motto “Can-do” is the formula for success in business.

## Quick Q&A

### Q: Education:

1976: Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa.  
 1979: Post Graduate Studies, Business Administration, Tulsa University, Tulsa, Okla.  
 1981: Post Graduate Studies, Civil Engineering and Construction Management, U.S. Navy, Civil Engineer Corps Officer School.

### Q: Favorite Sports Team:

Philadelphia Eagles and Texas Tech Red Raiders.

### Q: Words of Advice:

Have some patience and humility. The money will come.

### Q: Dream Vehicle:

Dodge Ram 1500 quad cab.

### Q: Favorite TV Show:

“Band of Brothers.”