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Chamonix hires fast as data revolution rolls on

CAMERON ENGLAND

ONE of the cornerstone tenants of the Lot Fourteen business incubator says it has already hired 35 new staff since moving in, and is looking forward to further growth and collaboration as the precinct matures.

The Chamonix group is made up of four businesses: digital consulting business Chamonix itself, augmented and virtual reality business Cortex Interactive, big data company Expose, and cyber security company SecMatters.

Co-founder Geoff Rohrsheim said across the group, which has been running for 20 years overall, they had a strong period of growth, adding 35 people since August, and more were needed. Total staff numbers were about 120.

"And there would be more if we could find them," Mr Rohrsheim said.

Mr Rohrsheim said with his four businesses operating under one roof, plus already fellow companies such as satellite firm Myriota also tenants in Lot Fourteen, employees had the capacity to learn and work across various areas, and cross-pollinate ideas.

Mr Rohrsheim said once the coworking tenderer for the space was announced, and more start-up businesses started flooding in, this would only increase.

The Chamonix group runs a graduate program, including creating opportunities for indigenous staff through the First People Digital program.

Mr Rohrsheim said tra-



GROWING: Chamonix Group Co-founders Scott Grigg and Geoff Rohrsheim.

We think data is the new oil, as the saying goes

ditionally some firms had found it hard to bring on graduates and get them up to speed quickly, so they could work with clients.

The Chamonix business, which was providing managed services for customers here and interstate, was able to bring in students to work on these projects, and had dedicated a staff member to connect with universities and smooth their path into the business.

"He's had 100 people in his program," Mr Rohrsheim said.

The program involves mentoring, interning and placements with a view to getting graduates job-ready.

Chamonix had hired nine graduates since moving to Lot Fourteen and was aiming to double its 35 overall hires this year.

Mr Rohrsheim said computer science and computer systems engineering graduates were in high demand.

The Chamonix business,

which accounts for about half of the group's employees, "helps customers stay up with technology".

This could mean helping businesses move their data to the cloud, building mobile apps and websites, through to robotic process automation.

Cortex Interactive is a relatively new business, and Mr Rohrsheim said there was huge scope for tech such as augmented reality to be used in areas such as training.

Cortex had already spun

out a product called LAAMP (Learning and Assessment Management Portal), which could be used to simulate dangerous working environments, and train staff about how to deal with such situations, in a safe and replicable manner.

Global mining services company Thiess had picked up the product, which was a big win for the company.

"It will save them millions of dollars," Mr Rohrsheim said. Expose was focused on data, with companies now having access to "more data than any human could consume, so you need technology to help you with that".

And they needed to be able to react quickly to changes in the business environment, meaning machine learning was crucial to sifting through that data and being able to understand and present it in a way which was usable for a business.

"We think data is the new oil, as the saying goes," Mr Rohrsheim said.

That business also has a new Melbourne office.

SecMatters, as the name suggests, concentrates on cyber security, which Mr Rohrsheim said would naturally remain a crucial part of any business going forward, especially since new privacy laws demanded businesses report any breaches of personal data.

"We are starting to see organisations that are perishing because of this," he said. "Businesses can't keep up with this stuff so there's a role for us to do that for them."

This involves providing a chief security officer "as a service".

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