



# 21 Stores

## Well Worth A Visit





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**RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND AND THE IRISH RETAIL INDUSTRY**



# Welcome to the **QUARTER 2 2015** edition of Retail Times

While trading remains relatively soft we are seeing some welcome signs of growth in the industry and particularly in home improvement and renovation. This is most welcome as DIY, furniture, flooring and consumer electronics sectors have had to withstand a more aggressive recession than most other sectors in Irish retail. While the trading environment is improving it is terribly important that we don't get ahead of ourselves and that Government frame budgetary and fiscal policy in the context of a recovering economy. Talk of an increase in the national minimum wage is to my mind premature. Most retail operators pay above the minimum wage. That said any increase is likely to have a ripple effect on all pay grades. Government must set policy in the context of the retail landscape across provincial Ireland and not be misled by other economic indicators such as Dublin hotel prices.



I am really looking forward to this year's REI Retail Retreat. The two day event in Carton House on May 12th and 13th will include lots of interesting expert presentations, member case studies and panel discussions. Of greatest benefit is the opportunity to meet up with fellow members. The Retreat will be used to unveil a new REI campaign called "This Is Retail". REI has designed the campaign to better profile Retail as a viable career choice, a hugely important economic contributor and a leading industry for innovation and technology. We plan to communicate what is great about retail to many stakeholders including our members, the wider industry, employees and Government. We look forward to sharing the campaign with you in May.

In March we were delighted to launch a co-sponsored report investigating retail on the island of Ireland. In partnership with our Northern Ireland colleagues NIIRTA, we commissioned primary research investigating what can be done to support our industry on the island. The study was funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Reconciliation Fund. A central finding was the need for an all-island retail forum to be established. The purpose of the forum will be to formulate more strategic support for the industry on either side of the border and to promote enhanced collaboration. The report also contains some very interesting findings relating to visitor perceptions of the Dublin and Belfast retail offer.

I would like to sincerely thank our Corporate Partners and Preferred Suppliers who have kindly agreed to support REI over the next twelve months. Without their support we would not be able to so fulsomely support our members and the industry generally. I urge all REI members to support our partners. I work with many REI partners in my own business and find that they are the very best. Please also remember to use the preferred supplier directory at the back of the magazine.

Finally, we will be launching the Retail Excellence Ireland Awards in partnership with Barclaycard in April. We have made a number of important and exciting changes to the awards format. Some such changes include the launch of sectoral awards for twenty different retail sectors, using store assessment as the first measurement criteria in place of mystery shopping and awarding a special REI Mark of Excellence to stores which achieve a score of 80% or more. We very much hope that you will support the awards and in turn enjoy the many benefits which will prevail from entering.

Yours sincerely,  
*Oonagh O'Hagan*  
 OONAGH O'HAGAN  
 Managing Director, Meagher's Pharmacy Group

**OONAGH O'HAGAN**  
 CHAIRPERSON, RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND



## RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND BOARD MEMBERS

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**TRUSTEE:** Sharen McCabe, McCabes Pharmacy Group • Kevin Jephson, Ardkeen Quality Food Store • Paul Candon, Topaz Energy





**Topaz** has been recognised as one of the Best Workplaces in Ireland for the 10th time. To mark the achievement the company was presented with a special Laureate award. Paul Candon, Marketing and Corporate Services Director at Topaz (L) is pictured receiving the award from Liam Kavanagh, Managing Director of The Irish Times.

Well done to the team at **Sketchers** who recently completed a race in the Phoenix Park all in aid of the Marie Keating Foundation.

The **UK Low Pay Commission** has recommended a 20p increase in the UK national minimum wage taking the proposed rate to £6.70.

The **REI** Shopping Centre and Retail Park Review 2015 will be unveiled on April 17th. The review surveys tenant's opinion regarding scheme productivity.

**JD Sports** have decided to shut the company's recently opened eleven store menswear facia **Open**. The company will instead focus on its sports offering.

**Gap** has parted company with Creative Director Rebekka Bay. It is thought that the retailer is under extreme competitive pressure following the global expansion of **H&M**, **Zara** and **Uniglo**.

## SHANNON AIRPORT AUTHORITY TO REVOLUTIONISE OLDEST DUTY FREE IN THE WORLD



Patrick Hesnan, Chief Operating Officer of TRC Solutions, Neil Pakey, Chief Executive Officer of Shannon Group, Andrew Murphy, Chief Commercial Officer of Shannon Group and Suzanna Kelly, Retail Manager of Shannon Duty Free.

Shannon Airport Authority has modernised the world's oldest duty free with cutting-edge technology and innovation from Dublin based IT services provider, TRC Solutions. TRC Solutions worked with Shannon Airport Authority to enhance the airport's internal retailing systems. The system implemented provides Shannon Airport Authority with a single retail platform, and a seamless customer experience. TRC Solutions implemented the iVend Omni-Channel Retail Platform solution for Shannon Airport Authority, across the duty free retail stores incorporating bonded and non-bonded warehouses. The systems put in place incorporate iVend Terminal POS, Contactless Chip and Pin Technology, iVend ecommerce, iVend Loyalty, iVend Passes and iVend Analytics. It also included Duty Free specific interfaces to the Lockheed Martin Chroma Airport Operating System and the US Customs and Border Protection. Founder and CEO of TRC Solutions, Gavin Peacock, said: "Like a lot of other organisations in Ireland, Shannon Airport Authority lacked one single database for the growing number of applications essential to retailers. Instead, they

relied on connecting numerous disparate systems, which naturally resulted in increased complexity and cost. The new solutions we put in place give Shannon Airport Authority a very clear understanding of its retail business, leaving it perfectly placed for future growth." Andrew Murphy, Commercial Director of Shannon Airport Authority said, "We were delighted to partner with TRC Solutions. They identified key issues facing Shannon Airport Authority and offered us real solutions that benefit our business every day. We are the world's oldest duty free, so we're particularly proud that such state-of-the-art technology and innovation will drive our business forward for many more years to come."

THEY IDENTIFIED KEY ISSUES  
FACING SHANNON AIRPORT  
AUTHORITY AND OFFERED US  
REAL SOLUTIONS THAT  
BENEFIT OUR BUSINESS  
EVERY DAY

## NEW MCDONALD'S RESTAURANT OPENS IN CORK

McDonald's Restaurants of Ireland recently opened a new drive-thru restaurant on Old Fort Road, off Main Street in Ballincollig, County Cork. McDonald's has created 75 new jobs as part of this €3.2m investment. Ireland and Munster rugby stars John Hayes and Alan Quinlan were on hand to officially open the new restaurant, which features technology such as self order kiosks and Samsung Galaxy Tablets as well as an interior play area, in-keeping with the 'Spirit of Family' restaurant theme. The restaurant can accommodate 170 diners at any one time, with a further 40 seats in an outdoor dining area. McDonald's Owner Operator, John Blake, commented: "We are delighted to officially open the new Ballincollig restaurant and I would like to thank the people of Ballincollig and the locality for their support. The construction work was carried out by a number of local sub-contractors, supporting 30 additional jobs, and was completed 2 weeks ahead of schedule. We're especially proud of the strong family focus we have created in the restaurant." McDonald's Ireland MD Adrian Crean added: "The opening of this new restaurant in Ballincollig highlights our on-going commitment to Ireland, not only with the development and refurbishment of our restaurants but also in our commitment to Irish suppliers. We are pleased to deliver 75 new positions with the opening of this restaurant." The new McDonald's restaurant in Ballincollig will bring the total number of McDonald's restaurants in Ireland to 87, with a nationwide workforce of over 4,500 employees.



eCommerce delegates learned how best to internationalise online.

## SO THERE REALLY IS A MICK AT MICKSGARAGE.COM!

Bright and early on the 18th of February last, MicksGarage.com played host to 80 of the most progressive Irish e-tailers. Attendees braved the cold of the MicksGarage.com Parkwest warehouse to hear from the Crean brothers, Mick and Ciaran on how they achieved international success online. Commenting on the event, Jayne O'Driscoll, REI e-Commerce Executive stated "It is great to see such enthusiasm for online from Irish retailers who recognise that there is a lot of potential to grow their online business at home and abroad. Our latest dashboard report shows that there is an appetite for Irish produce internationally. Today's case study gave us great insights into a business that is successfully exporting to international markets."

## GOODS ONLINE PUSH

Goods of Kilkenny have announced that they are taking a digital leap forward and launching an online presence for their award winning Lingerie Department. After positioning themselves as a leading force in the lingerie retail arena, they felt it was time to reach beyond the South-East of Ireland, and to offer their product to women around the country. The www.goods.ie site aims to offer the same level of service that their physical presence offers. As well as an extensive range of lingerie which includes well known brands in the industry, Goods are HSE approved to fit and supply mastectomy bras and surgical products.

Goods of Kilkenny have launched a transactional online presence with specific emphasis on the lingerie market.



## The case for contactless

It takes less than a second to pay by contactless card. Which means you can process more customers in less time. And, when Chelsea FC enabled contactless payments on match day, their average transaction values shot up by 50% compared to cash."

Visa predicted that by the end of 2013, two million contactless payments would be made in Ireland; plus they estimated that 70% of Irish cardholders would have a Visa Debit contactless card by the end of that year." Don't get left behind.

\*Chelsea FC, 2014. \*\*Visa Europe, 2013

To be known as a place that accepts contactless cards has increased sales.  
Andy Chalkin  
IT Director, Pret

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To find out more about contactless payments, contact: [Peter.Sweeney@barclaycard.co.uk](mailto:Peter.Sweeney@barclaycard.co.uk)

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01 614 6066 | [emily.mason@cpl.ie](mailto:emily.mason@cpl.ie)

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Areas of the Retail Industry



It is reported that **Amazon** are in discussions to acquire some of the stores from under pressure electronics retailer **RadioShack**.

Five Irish businesses have reached the finals of the 2014/15 European Business Awards. **RSM Farrell Grant Sparks** are seeking businesses to enter the European Business Awards for 2015-2016. For further information please contact Aidan.Scollard@rsmfsgs.ie

**Enterprise Ireland** has kindly sponsored a technology village at the REI Retail Retreat 2015. The village will be home to some innovative Irish start-ups who sell tech solutions into the retail industry.

Well done to the team at **Boots Ireland** who have raised a very impressive €500,000 since 2012 for the Irish Cancer Society.

**Spar** has recently signed a deal to become the official convenience store partner to the Football Association of Ireland (FAI).

It has been reported by Nielsen Data that **Dunnes Stores** increased its TV advertising spend in Q4 2014 by a whopping 585%.



**Whistles** has apologised for any unintended offence caused by the use of a controversial mannequin at one of its stores. The mannequin was made with a protruding breast bone and caused offence as it was deemed to promote an unhealthy weight.

According to **GfK** the German discount grocery sector shrunk by 1.4% in the first eleven months of 2014. It is believed that other competitors in the market have become more expert at competing with the discounters.

**Boots Ireland** has recently reported an increase in revenue of 5% to €298million for the period March 2013 to March 2014.

A new 18,300 square foot retail area recently opened in terminal 1 Dublin Airport. The investment in **The Loop** is well timed with passenger numbers increasing by 8% to 21.7 million people last year.



Seán Murphy, REI Deputy CEO, Minister for North South Co-operation Seán Sherlock and Glyn Roberts, CEO, NIIRTA recently launched the first REI NIIRTA report.

## ALL ISLAND RETAIL TOURISM REPORT

REI and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) recently launched the first-ever report on Building Retail on the island of Ireland. The Minister for North South Co-operation Seán Sherlock kindly launched the report. Commenting on the report Seán Murphy, REI Deputy CEO said: "We are now working to activate the report's recommendations. These include working to establish a North-South Retail Forum bringing together key retail business groups and relevant Ministers to ensure effective communication and policy changes; Promoting Cross-Border Weekend Shopping Breaks for Dublin, Belfast and other shopping destinations on the island; and including the promotion of town centres and Retail as a core part of the Tourism Strategy of both Tourism NI and Fáilte Ireland. We also recently hosted a joint reception on the matter with NIIRTA at the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in Derry." The report was supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's Reconciliation Fund.

## FIFTY SHADES OF SALES

It has been reported that sex toy and lingerie retailer Ann Summers has enjoyed a very robust trading period since the launch of the Fifty Shades of Grey movie. Sales of ticklers, handcuffs, eye masks and nipple covers are reported to have all enjoyed triple digit growth. The retailer reported that whilst it normally experiences a dip in demand following Valentine's Day, this year sales rose following the romance weekend thanks to the exotic movie.



Ann Summers have reported strong sales following the release of the movie Fifty Shades of Grey.

## TIGER STORES ARRIVES AT CRUISES STREET, LIMERICK

Tiger Stores, described as a variety store selling low cost high value items, ranging from €1 to maximum €30, recently opened its doors at 11 Cruises Street, Limerick, employing 12 staff. When the Danish brand announced its imminent arrival in Limerick back in December, the positive response online was phenomenal. But for Tiger Stores Ireland and Northern Ireland Operations Manager, Gillian Maxwell, who brought the brand to Ireland just three years ago, Limerick was an obvious choice for a new store. "We knew Munster had truly embraced the Tiger concept already as our store on Cork's Patrick Street, opened in early 2014 as the inaugural store outside Dublin, has consistently been one of the highest performing of all Tiger Stores in Ireland. Limerick, as the retail capital of the Mid-West, and as a vibrant young city with a thriving student life, was a natural next step," says Gillian. Commenting on Tiger's new store, Limerick Chamber Interim CEO Dr Órlaith Borthwick said, "Limerick Chamber is delighted to welcome yet another innovative, exciting and expanding company to our region. Already 30 plus retailers have located here in the last year. Limerick Chamber is very happy to be part of the momentum in attracting these investments to Limerick, particularly through the work we do with our retail specific function, the Limerick City Business Association." With 14 stores in Ireland since its arrival just three years ago, the Limerick store being the most recent, Tiger is a brand in the ascendancy recently winning the REI National Company of the Year 2015 Award.



The new Tiger Store in Limerick has enjoyed very robust trading since opening.

## LIMERICK, AS THE RETAIL CAPITAL OF THE MID-WEST, AND AS A VIBRANT YOUNG CITY WITH A THRIVING STUDENT LIFE, WAS A NATURAL NEXT STEP



Pictured at the presentation of the Sleep Pink cheque. From left: Robbie Auckram, General Manager Harvey Norman Bedding; Linda Keating, Director of Fundraising, Marie Keating Foundation; Blaine Callard, CEO Harvey Norman Ireland and Áine O'Reilly, Product Coordinator Harvey Norman.

## HARVEY NORMAN RAISE €37,000 FOR THE MARIE KEATING FOUNDATION

For the fourth year running, Harvey Norman supported the Marie Keating Foundation through its "Sleep Pink" campaign. Sleep Pink runs throughout September and October in Harvey Norman stores nationwide. During the campaign a percentage of the sale of selected bedding products is donated to the Marie Keating Foundation, the Sleep Pink range includes selected mattresses, divans and pillows. Customers were also invited donate to the foundation by 'Adding a Euro' to their purchase amount at the checkout. The total amount raised during the 2014 campaign amounted to €37,000. Speaking at the presentation, Robbie Auckram, General Manager for Harvey Norman Bedding said: "Sleep is vital to good health and wellbeing therefore we are delighted to have supported the Marie Keating Foundation once again this year. I would like to thank our terrific customers, staff and suppliers for their support in making this campaign possible. In particular I would like to thank our Irish manufacturers Kaymed, Briody, Comfi-zone and The Soft Bedding Company." To date, Harvey Norman has raised over €97,000 for the Marie Keating Foundation.

## WOMEN IN RETAIL TAKING STOCK

In our busy working lives it is very rare that people pause and take stock of their life. On Thursday 6th March last, the REI Women In Retail network joined together to take part in an interactive session on the topic of how to embrace change and opportunities. Deirdre Connolly, MD and Life & Business Coach at AFRESH opened up about how this can be done. During an interactive session the group discussed ways to identify areas in their personal and professional life that need focus and how to create a roadmap to improve these areas. Speaking after the event Alison Hodgson, Country HR Director, McDonald's Restaurants of Ireland and Chairperson REI Women in Retail said "It was a really beneficial session. It was great to be able to walk out knowing that you have a roadmap of improvement in your back pocket."



REI Women in Retail focus on improving work life balance.

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**Poundland** have been reprimanded by the UK Advertising Standards Authority for claiming everything it sells is £1. The authority found that the retailer sold products above £1 and have ordered Poundland to remove it's everything for £1 claim.

It has been revealed that a security breach at **Target** USA in 2013 has cost the retailer \$162million. The retailer reported the cost as "breach related" expenses.



British pub chain **JD Wetherspoon** is planning to cut coffee and breakfast prices in a bid to treble sales over the next 18 months. The company currently trades in Dublin's Blackrock and Dún Laoghaire with more pubs planned for Swords, Blanchardstown, Camden Street, Dublin and Cork city centre.

**Home Retail** delivered a weak finish to the year at both its **Argos** and **Homebase** chains. The company said that cost controls and improvements to its margin had helped the bottom line. Like-for-like sales at Argos fell 5% in the eight weeks to the end of February, while Homebase dropped by 0.9%.

British retailer Philip Green has confirmed the sale of struggling department store chain **BHS** to Retail Acquisitions. Losses at BHS had widened in 2014 to £21m from £19.3m the year before.

**John Lewis Partnership** has posted a 9% fall in underlying profit after an grocery price war hit its **Waitrose** supermarket business, forcing it to cut its staff bonus payout for a second year in a row.

**REI** will host a Town Investment Village at the REI Retail Retreat on May 12th and 13th. The village will be home to fifteen progressive towns who would like to profile retail investment opportunities.

## ECCO OPENS ON GRAFTON STREET

ECCO shoes recently unveiled its new flagship store on Dublin's iconic Grafton Street, creating 15 new jobs in the city. Model and fitness advocate Roz Purcell was on hand to cut the ribbon on ECCO's 14th stand-alone store in Ireland. The 1,000 sq. ft. store stocks an array of ECCO Ladies, Men's, Sports and Handbag ranges. ECCO plans to further expand its presence in Ireland with the opening of additional stores and major investment in refurbishing up to 6 stores throughout 2015. Speaking about the new store, Managing Director of ECCO Ireland, Paul Lyons said "We are delighted to join a host of fantastic stores on the most iconic shopping street in Ireland. This is ECCO's 14th standalone store in Ireland and we have plans to expand further throughout the next two years. I am excited to introduce the new store and indeed collections to Grafton Street shoppers." Founded in Denmark in 1963, ECCO footwear has since grown into a global brand with factories and retailers across the world.



Roz Purcell was on hand to cut the ribbon on ECCO's 14th standalone store in Ireland.

## GOVERNMENT RETAIL CONSULTATION FORUM MEETS

The recently established Retail Consultation Forum, which is chaired by Super Junior Minister Ged Nash, met in Dublin on 11th March. REI was represented by Aidan Candon of Euronics, Keith Rogers of ECCO and Seán Murphy. One of the priority issues for REI was the need to inform Government and the public sector representatives of the anxiety created by recent Government statements regarding wage costs. We noted that both Minister Ged Nash and An Taoiseach have been 'talking up' the need for an increase in wage costs and to a certain extent pre-empting



The Government Retail Consultation Forum has brought focus to a number of pertinent retail industry issues.

the 'deliberations' of the Low Pay Commission have raised concerns. Speaking at the Forum Seán Murphy said: "Recent CSO numbers indicate only a marginal increase in the value of goods sold - when cars are excluded. These underline the reality that jobs will be affected if sudden and significant changes in rates are mandated by Government". Other issues highlighted by REI Nominees included the negative impact that anti-water charge and other protests are having on footfall in Dublin City Centre and the need for these to be ended as soon as possible. Speaking after the Forum Seán Murphy said: "We are determined that Government recognises the increases in employment costs that have been foisted on employers over the past number of years and their real impact on the business case for creating new jobs. We will work to draft a common position in the Forum on these matters in the context of creating an agreed set of priorities for Budget 2016."

RECENT CSO NUMBERS INDICATE ONLY A MARGINAL INCREASE IN THE VALUE OF GOODS SOLD - WHEN CARS ARE EXCLUDED

## SIX-FOLD INCREASE IN CARPHONE WAREHOUSE IRELAND PROFITS

Carphone Warehouse, employing 700 people across 95 stores nationwide, recently reported a 13.3% increase in revenues for 2014 over the same period last year. The communications retailer, who will launch a new mobile phone operation this summer, reported a return to profitability for its financial year 2014. Pre-tax profits for Carphone Warehouse Ireland in 2014 was €2.1 million, a six-fold increase from its 2013 loss of €9.6million. The 2014 results highlights included a series of new partnerships between Carphone Warehouse Ireland and leading communications and retail companies, including Sky, UPC, Harvey Norman and Clerys. Commenting on the results, Peter Scott, Managing Director of Carphone Warehouse Ireland said: "Our 2014 performance represented a 'sizeable turnaround in its Irish operations, providing the basis for fresh investment from the Group in Ireland. Carphone Warehouse Ireland has weathered the retail downturn and returned to profitability. We have focussed on getting the key fundamentals right, and expanding our partnership portfolio with leading brands. Our in-store technology and entertainment expertise, coupled with our consumer insight on mobile, has been central to our return to profitability. The focus of our management team and growing employee base on getting the business in good shape is delivering. We must stay focussed on our competitiveness, particularly when it comes to fundamentals like retail rental agreements." The company recently outlined a €30 million investment in its own new mobile phone operator which will launch to Irish consumers this July. 2014 also saw Carphone Warehouse officially merge with Dixons. The new Dixons Carphone now has 119 stores nationwide and employs 1,050 staff in Ireland.



Carphone Warehouse Managing Director, Peter Scott has led a reshaping of the Irish business.

## ENERGIA FUNDING OF UP TO 30% OF ENERGY SAVING PROJECTS

Energia is offering businesses funding for their energy efficiency projects, helping them to realise significant savings by using cutting edge technology which is now available in the marketplace. The scheme provides businesses with funding for up to 30% of the cost of energy saving projects. Replacing lighting, upgrading heating systems and refrigeration, variable speed drives and air compressors are all part of the funding scheme. The typical savings that can be achieved for each project include reducing lighting costs by up to 75% by switching to LED, reducing heating costs by 25% by installing modern controls and upgrading refrigeration delivering savings of up to 30%. In addition, Energia will also provide expertise and assistance with implementing efficiency projects. Whether you are installing the project yourself or you require assistance from their carefully selected group of partners, Energia can help to get your project underway with safety and quality at the core. Full details of this offer for any business can be found on [www.energia.ie/funding](http://www.energia.ie/funding).



Keelings recently benefited from an energy efficiency upgrade project. Pictured are Denis McCarthy, Energia and Wasim Haskiya, Keelings' Energy Manager.

## TOPAZ OPEN 2 NEW OUTLETS WITH 110 JOBS

Fuel and convenience retailer, Topaz, is opening two new outlets in Clonsaugh and Laois with the creation of a total of 110 new jobs. On hand to unveil the brand new stores were Topaz ambassador, former Munster and Ireland star Alan Quinlan and Irish footballer and FIFA Puskas Award finalist Stephanie Roche alongside Store Manager Agnis Punculs and Paul Candon, Group Marketing Director at Topaz. Speaking of the store openings, Paul Candon said: "We are delighted to announce the addition of a further 110 jobs at our new service stations in Clonsaugh and in Laois. The Clonsaugh service station, as part of our Re.Store network, is helping to revolutionise the customer experience with the highest quality artisan foods on offer as people refuel both their vehicles and their bodies. We're looking forward to welcoming our new customers to Clonsaugh and want to thank and wish our staff all the very best as they continue to deliver top quality customer care to the local community and road users travelling through the area."



Topaz continues to increase their national footprint and recently added new stores in Clonsaugh Dublin (pictured) and County Laois.

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# 21 Stores Well Worth A Visit

Over the past few months the Retail Excellence Ireland team has travelled the country in search of some of the best and most unique stores worth a visit. We tried to find stores which stand out from the rest and captivate customers through difference. We also endeavoured to select stores you might not have visited to date. We were limited to twenty one stores, and thus could not list many other great stores, most of whom are Retail Excellence Ireland members. Here are our suggestions..... Please feel free to add to the list by posting any of your selections on our Twitter account @RetailExIreland.

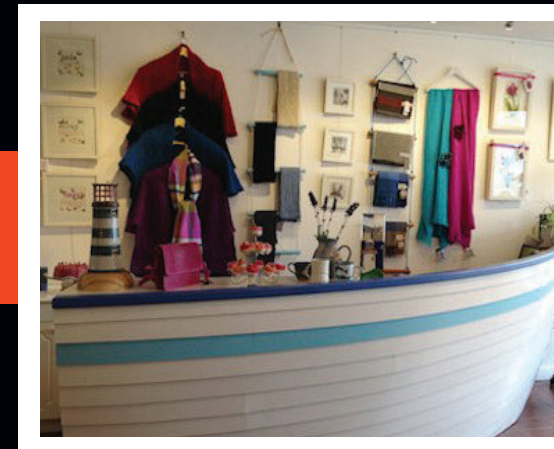
**WHICH:** Industry  
**WHERE:** Drury Street, Dublin



## WHY:

Within seconds of passing over the threshold you are transported to a warehouse apartment in downtown Manhattan. Gritty and rough flooring, stark lighting and fittings are the perfect canvass for some uber-chic product ranges. This is a store with lots of personality and well worth a visit.

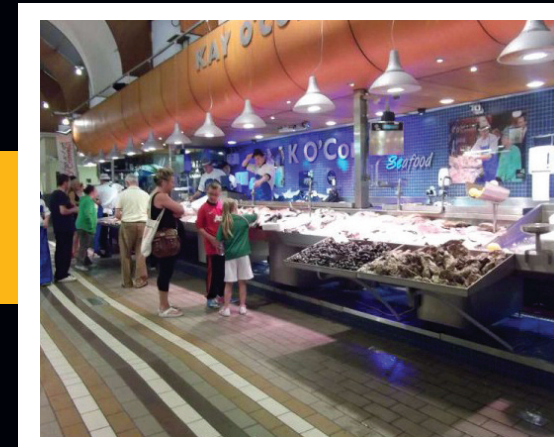
**WHICH:** The Beach House Gallery  
**WHERE:** Dungarvan, Waterford



## WHY:

There is so much to like about this store located on O'Connell Street in the vibrant Waterford town of Dungarvan. What really stands out is the innovative approach taken to visually merchandising an incredible array of arts, crafts, gifts and paintings. The store is an Aladdin's cave of the creative arts. The creativity does not stop at the product; some of the store design features are outstanding, such as the store counter which is actually half a boat!

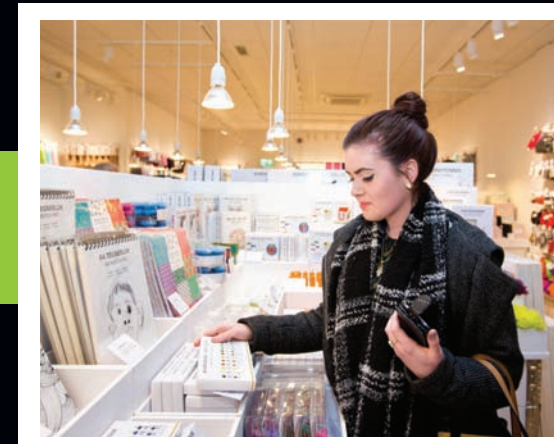
**WHICH:** Kay O'Connell Fish Merchants  
**WHERE:** The English Market, Cork



## WHY:

Fit for a Queen, this majestic store is located in Cork's bustling English Market. Superb lighting brings an array of well stocked and merchandised angled shelves to life. What is best about the store is the owner, Pat O'Connell. You can hear Pat before you see him. He never stops laughing and his positivity permeates throughout the market. While many customers visit the store to buy that evening's dinner, in reality many visit to enjoy their daily positivity boost from Pat.

**WHICH:** Tiger  
**WHERE:** Cruises Street, Limerick



## WHY:

We are delighted that Tiger has come to Limerick. One of thirty five new store openings in the City in the past year! Tiger has really captured the attention of the Irish public. Beautifully designed products presented with absolute clarity. If there was one stand out feature to notice in Tiger, it has to be the great lighting. The lighting makes the product the star. The owners of Tiger will be profiling their business at the REI Retail Retreat May 12th and 13th.

**WHICH:** Sawers, The Good Food Shop  
**WHERE:** Fountain Arcade, Belfast



## WHY:

This store exudes a rustic and artisan feel. It stocks a wide variety of foods from around the world. Established in 1897 the store is owned by Kieran Sloan who began work at the store as a trainee fish boy at the age of 16! The store is filled to the brim with today's fresh vegetables and food stuffs. That married with chalk boards and wicker baskets delivers a message of real retailing credibility and authority.



**WHICH:** The Burren Perfumery  
**WHERE:** Fahee North, Carron, Co. Clare



**WHY:**  
This store is simply inspirational. The store does not just sell perfume and creams, but it curates and tells the perfume story with passion and expertise. Learn how perfume is made, stroll in the gardens, have some lunch in the restaurant. A great day out and well worth a visit if you are travelling out West.

**WHICH:** Galvin Tullamore  
**WHERE:** William Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly



**WHY:**  
The store has undergone a redesign transformation which has delivered a bright and appealing oasis of brilliantly merchandised men's clothing, footwear and accessories. The store uses flooring, lighting and fixturing to divide up the space and deliver an environment best aligned to each product category. The store has ample seating to ensure an experience which revives and does not drain.

**WHICH:** Avoca  
**WHERE:** Monkstown, Co. Dublin



**WHY:**  
Without doubt all readers of Retail Times agree that Avoca has set a new benchmark for retailing, not in Ireland, but globally. We are fundamentally aware that retail is now all about the experience and not many do it better than Avoca. Add in one of Ireland's finest butchers, Pat Whelan of James Whelan fame, and you have the perfect blend of retailing excellence.

**WHICH:** Hook & Ladder  
**WHERE:** Sarsfield Street, Limerick



**WHY:**  
Hook & Ladder "Living Café" is an Irish owned family business, with stores in Limerick and Waterford. It offers customers a variety of store concepts under one roof - a café, a cookery school, and a furniture and home accessories store. We really like the creative design, innovative product range and delicious food. If you are looking for retail inspiration, you cannot go wrong with this store.

**WHICH:** Topline Wards  
**WHERE:** Goff Street, Roscommon



**WHY:**  
We can sometime limit our praise of retailing excellence to food and lifestyle retailers. Not this time. We really like the new look Topline stores. Take this one in Roscommon which is owned by the Ward family. It is professionally laid out, easy to shop and offers real clarity to consumers. The retailer brings the adage of "stock less to sell more" to life.

**WHICH:** The Natural Bakery  
**WHERE:** Ranelagh, Dublin 6



**WHY:**  
We really like this relatively new addition to the Irish retail landscape. While the product is the star; freshly baked breads, cakes and pastries; we really like the store design and colour scheme. The store draws you in off the street through tempting window displays and once inside your senses come alive. The owners of The Natural Bakery will be profiling their business at the REI Retail Retreat May 12th and 13th.

**WHICH:** Mellerick's Pharmacy  
**WHERE:** Patrick Street, Fermoy, Co. Cork



**WHY:**  
This is one of Ireland's newest pharmacies. We like the design and branding applied in store. The space is very well laid out with clear categories and lots of space available to browse at your leisure. Another feature is the professional consultation areas. The owners of Mellerick's Pharmacy will be profiling their business at the REI Retail Retreat May 12th and 13th.

**WHICH:** Nolan's of Kilcullen  
**WHERE:** Main Street, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare



**WHY:**  
Nolan's of Kilcullen recently won the "Champion of Champions Award" in the Countryside Alliance in Britain. The store is one of the finest around and marries cutting edge retail design with the finest meats and delicatessen products. The store has a reputation for making some of Ireland's finest sausages. Well worth a visit!



**WHICH:** The Orchard  
**WHERE:** Celbridge, Co. Kildare



**WHY:**  
The Orchard offers a really engaging customer experience. It has everything the customer needs for the home and garden, and a few other surprises along the way. The restaurant is first class and the overall business provides a truly engaging experience. We are witnessing a growing trend amongst Irish consumers who seek out weekend experiences and this certainly is one. The Orchard is kindly hosting the REI Retail Retreat dinner and store tour on the evening of 12th May.

**WHICH:** Mulligan's Pharmacy  
**WHERE:** Ardkeen, Waterford



**WHY:**  
There is much to like about all of the Mulligan's pharmacies but the one in Ardkeen stands out from the pack. Why you ask? Well it is home to Ireland's first ever pharmacy drive through. The drive through is targeted at customers who embrace convenience and accessibility. Whether it is an elderly patient or a mum with kids, customers can simply reorder their prescription online and click and collect, all without getting out of their car. Oh and by the way the store is very impressive too!

**WHICH:** TechStar  
**WHERE:** Henry Street, Limerick



**WHY:**  
These are the new guys on the block. They have opened two TechStar stores, the first in Galway and more recently in Limerick. The store offers a one stop shop for everything tech. They service and repair computers, tablets, smart phones and much more. Personal and friendly expertise and help is always at hand. What is best about this store is how well it communicates what it offers to consumers. You will see TechStars popping up around the country soon.

**WHICH:** Dressed  
**WHERE:** South Main St., Bandon, Co. Cork



**WHY:**  
One of the first things you notice as you walk in the door, after your senses have been seduced by the fragrance from the scented candles and fresh flowers, are the innovative clothing rails. They are so unique and unlike anything you'll have seen before. The custom-designed sculptural rails, which set this boutique apart from others, add a real sense of fluidity to the boutique. The memorable interior of Dressed was created through a collaboration between Fiona O'Keeffe, Interior Designer Cork and store owner, Josephine, and is certainly a must see!

**WHICH:** Greenacres Gallery  
**WHERE:** Wexford Town, Wexford



**WHY:**  
There are so many things to admire about Greenacres including some incredible interiors and beautiful design touches. The store is home to a fabulous restaurant, an art gallery and retail store where you can buy tempting artisan foods and hampers. The O'Connor family are behind most of what is great about Wexford and Greenacres proves they are passionate about retail.

**WHICH:** Arboretum  
**WHERE:** Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow



**WHY:**  
If you have not been to visit Arboretum you have to go. It is sensational. You will find everything from plants to fashion; homewares to food and lots more besides. Each department is retailed with passion and innovation. The store deservedly won the REI National Store of the Year Award 2015, and when you get there you will see why. The owners of Arboretum will be profiling their business at the REI Retail Retreat May 12th and 13th.

**WHICH:** Kay's Kitchen  
**WHERE:** Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, Dublin 15



**WHY:**  
The Glover family have revolutionised shopping centre dining. The company invests heavily in fully trained and qualified chefs in each store with the end result being an exceptional range of freshly prepared meals. The Kay's Kitchen stores have been recently redesigned and provide a relaxing and welcoming oasis for the weary shopper. The owners of Kay's Kitchen will be profiling their business at the REI Retail Retreat May 12th and 13th.

**WHICH:** Gallery Crafts  
**WHERE:** Kilworth, Fermoy, Co. Cork



**WHY:**  
Artist and designer Fiona Turley has created something very unique in her store - it's like a refreshing break from the bustle of life! We loved that customers can see Fiona painting and designing in her studio in the back of the store as they browse through the eclectic and beautiful creations from the very best of Irish and international designers. The store just emits an air of calmness and you can sense Fiona's passion for all things beautiful. Bring the credit card!



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## FEATURE HUMAN RESOURCES

Clare Dowling,  
Head of REI HR Advisory Services

# RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND AND NCI TO OFFER ACCREDITED EDUCATION FOR THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

REI is in the final stages of developing an accredited educational programme with National College of Ireland (NCI) that incorporates all the elements today's retail manager needs to know. The Certificate in Retail Management will commence in September 2015.

Commenting on the course, Clare Dowling, Head of HR Advisory Services in REI, "Employers are looking for ways to develop, incentivise and retain talent in the retail industry in 2015. This course will offer them a cost effective way to do so."

The content is honed to a retail environment and all projects will be 100% retail related. The programme will feature modules in the following areas: Retail Operations, Finance for Retail, Fundamentals of Management, Customer Relations in Retail and People Management.

According to Paul Candon, Group Marketing and Corporate Services Director with Topaz Energy, and a member of the REI Working Group developing the Certificate "This course is unique in Ireland in terms of content and format and has been specifically designed to meet the needs of retailers. The REI Working Group has worked closely with NCI over a number of months to ensure the content is relevant and applicable to today's retail setting."

While the content will be at an accessible level, it will have immediate relevance and ready for on-the-job application. The course is aimed at employees already in a supervisory role or ready to take their career to that level. No prior qualifications are



required to take the course. On successful completion, participants will receive a Certificate in Retail Management. This will satisfy the requirements for a well-rounded graduate entering into a supervisory position or needing to gain academic qualifications to further their confidence in an existing supervisory role. A major advantage of this Certificate is that it offers graduates a pathway to academic progression. Graduates will be able to progress on towards further qualifications at diploma or degree level.

Alison Hodgson, HR Director with McDonald's Restaurants of Ireland who was also involved in developing the content, said "A major advantage of this Certificate programme is that it offers graduates a clear pathway to onwards progression to a Diploma or Degree, if they wish. It is important that our employees are provided with this opportunity to grow and develop. We see this course as providing the participants with the competence and confidence they need in order to successfully manage their retail teams"

The course will commence in September 2015 with two terms - September to Christmas and February to May. The course fee is €1,560. The Certificate will be delivered by way of blended learning comprising of sessions both in the lecture theatre (one Saturday per month) and online (one evening per week). The online element of the course is fully interactive i.e. the participants experience a similar quality of learning as if in the classroom. Depending on regional demand, it may be possible to deliver the course in areas outside of Dublin.

Members who are interested in this course are advised to register their interest by sending your name, number(s) to be enrolled (and your preferred location if outside Dublin) to Clare Dowling, Head of HR Advisory Services at Retail Excellence Ireland ([clare@retailexcellence.ie](mailto:clare@retailexcellence.ie)).

A MAJOR ADVANTAGE OF THIS CERTIFICATE  
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CLEAR PATHWAY TO ONWARDS PROGRESSION TO  
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"We live in a world of processed food, environmental pollution and chemicals which in turn clogs our bodies with toxins. These toxins slow our internal functions, both in body and mind and can eventually produce symptoms of illness." Here at "CREST MYSTERY SHOPPING" we are only too aware of our Mystery Shopper's lifelong delight in impurities of all kinds and we felt the time had come to toss those toxins into the cleansing fires of Spring. To this end we sent the Mysterious One out into previously unexplored territory, the greenly good-for-you world of vegan and vegetarian friendly juice bars. While not actually attempting the full-on three-day total juice diet, our Mystery Shopper was ordered to take no other form of food on any of the three separate days making up the research phase of this retail experiment. Solemn assurances have been received that those conditions have been observed and the crankier than usual tone of the following feedback tends to confirm the truth of those assurances. All of the visits were carried out in the last week of February or first week of March 2015.

## THE LADY BIRD

Merchant's Arch, Temple Bar, Dublin 2.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** A small unit that cleverly manages to pack in some customer seating. A considerable plus on cold Dublin days. However, the whole veggie-virtuous impact was spoiled by a ground-in old cigarette butt on the welcome mat.

**GREETING AND SERVICE:** Cheery and polite from two young female staff members. Immediate attention but the Mystery Shopper was the sole customer.

**EXPERTISE EXHIBITED:** Neither of the two delightful young women behind the counter seemed to understand the Mystery Shopper's question. The response was politely smiling puzzlement and a tentative recommendation of one juice option as "very nice taste".

**THE JUICER'S RECOMMENDATION:** Yellow Sunshine (€3.40) – mango, pineapple and orange juice. Attractively presented, pleasant-tasting but served at room temperature, not cold enough for the Mystery Shopper's palate.

**GOOD POINTS, BAD POINTS:** Prompt, cheerful service and good value for money. That off-putting, unwelcoming cigarette stub on the mat.

**MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING:** Underachieving, Must try harder.



## BUBBLICITY

George's Street Arcade, South Great George's St, Dublin 2.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** Another outlet with strictly limited floor space. Bubblicity came across immediately as a serious place with a mission to bring joy through juice. No obvious place to sit or even linger but the George's Market itself is a comfortably covered interest-filled space in which to dawdle over a drink.

**GREETING AND SERVICE:** Gravely attentive as befits such a serious subject. No keeping the customer waiting but no other customers present.



**EXPERTISE EXHIBITED:** The solemn Bubblicity Juicer rose to the challenge with relish. Within two minutes the Mystery Shopper had learned more about cold-pressing, Spirulina and Wheatgrass than in the previous two decades and was, if no wiser, then certainly better informed.

**THE JUICER'S RECOMMENDATION:** Liquid Lunch (€5.50) – spinach, cucumber, avocado, apple, pineapple, spirulina, lime and wheatgrass. Looked awful (a septic tank green) but tasted great and was curiously filling for a juice concoction.

**GOOD POINTS, BAD POINTS:** Excellent product information and the best-tasting product of the three purchased. The juices were pre-bottled rather than zizzed up before the customer's eyes.

**MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING:** A bit jucier-than-thou but seriously informative and peddling a great product.



## SEVEN WONDERS

CHQ, IFSC, Dublin 1.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** CHQ is a big dreary building full of what appear to be dying stores and start-ups struggling to break the curse of post-Tiger apathy. Amid that retail twilight this one restaurant had a queue out the door, bright lights blazing and over a dozen high-energy staff trying to keep ahead of a blizzard of orders.

**GREETING AND SERVICE:** Greeting and order-taking were smiley, slick and smart as a whip. Service was by way of numbered dockets with fast-moving slim young people rushing out from the prep area yodelling the lucky customer's number.

**EXPERTISE EXHIBITED:** The young woman taking orders and money (at incredible speed) kept her smile professionally intact while trying to figure out what this nutcase was talking about. "Our healthiest juice option?" Glazed desperation as revenue-collecting seconds ticked by. "Well, they're all healthy but you might like to try the Morning Sunshine – will that be small, medium or large?"



**THE JUICER'S RECOMMENDATION:** Morning Sunshine (€3.95) - carrot, apple and orange. Looked good but the consistency came across as too thin and the overwhelming flavour was carrot.

**GOOD POINTS, BAD POINTS:** To all appearances a red-hot success story – always a welcome thing in the current shopping climate. Too fast and too focused for the Mystery Shopper's comfort zone.

**MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING:** Not the Mystery Shopper's cup of carrot juice but the business buzz is irresistible.





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# ALGORITHMIC HIRING TO EXCEL RECRUITMENT



**BARRY WHELAN** is the Managing Director of Excel Recruitment. To contact Excel Recruitment email [barry@excelrecruitment.com](mailto:barry@excelrecruitment.com) or call 01 814 8747.

Excel Recruitment has always been keen to use the most up to date technology in the world of recruitment. As a business, we feel embracing the latest technology can only improve our business and whilst the company doesn't doubt the role of the recruitment or Human resource manager as crucial and irreplaceable, over the last number of years we have explored the use of Algorithmic recruitment software, trialling this software fully in 2014, with a complete implementation from the beginning of 2015.

Excel has always used a battery of Psychometric and Aptitude tests to assist our recruiters in the recruitment process; however, the business has sought to further integrate technology in the recruitment process having observed trends particularly in the US that demonstrated the success of Algorithmic recruitment software.

The first example of this was back in 2009, When Bon Ton stores, the

large high volume America textile retailer began using recruitment algorithm based software to screen and interview all candidates for staff and warehouse positions within their distribution centres. The company was looking to sift out applicants who were dishonest or suffered from high levels of absenteeism. Candidates sat a 40 minute survey which asks questions based on principles of honesty and reliability. Only candidates that reached a certain score were then recruited. For instance the questions would focus on attitudes to drugs and alcohol, 'In the past four years I have not driven after I have been drinking?'

Xerox is another excellent example of where a company has embraced this type of software to their advantage. When looking for call centre staff, Xerox, like most companies screened applicants based on their level of experience. But poor retention rates drove a sea change and it was decided that experience didn't matter. What mattered was that it arrested churn and recouped the cost of training. Xerox analysed the data on which recruits stayed, performed and excelled in the role and what they

## PERSONALITY TESTS HAVE A LONG HISTORY IN HIRING

found was creative staff stuck around, inquisitive staff did not.

Xerox took the approach of ignoring the CV, as candidates experience made little difference to churn, but inquisitiveness, turned up by personality testing was a negative.

Xerox by putting applicants through a series of tests and then tracking their job performance, developed a model for the ideal call-centre worker. The data says that person lives near the job, has reliable transportation and uses one or more social networks, but not more than four. He or she tends not to be overly inquisitive or empathetic, but is creative. This person stays with Xerox and



performs well.

After a 6 month trial Xerox found attrition cut by a fifth. The company now leaves all hiring for its 48,700 call-centre jobs to software that asks applicants to choose between statements like: "I ask more questions than most people do" and "People tend to trust what I say."

'Personality tests have a long history in hiring' Comments Barry Whelan, Managing Director of Excel Recruitment, 'what's new is the scale. Powerful computers and more sophisticated software have made it possible to evaluate more candidates, amass more data and peer more deeply into applicant's personalities and attitudes.'



Having trialled this software over 2014, the results have been impressive leading to a full introduction in 2015.

This offers a real glimpse in to the future of recruitment. Companies looking to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment process can find value in the newest wave of advanced technology significant.

Is it wrong to place the recruitment process completely in the hands of a computer and an Algorithm? Or should we accept blindly that future recruitment processes will be conducted via a PC.

We believe the role of the recruitment or Human Resource Manager in the recruitment process is crucial and cannot be replaced but having used psychometric screening tools and online aptitude tests for many years, we also believe the new recruitment software available can increase the accuracy of a successful hire, whilst increasing efficiency greatly.





# A BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CASE STUDY

# ALLCARE PHARMACY

## APPLY BUSINESS ANALYTICS TO IMPROVE PROFITABILITY IN THE 70 STORES THEY SUPPORT

### About Allcare:

Allcare Management Services, established in 2010, is a company which specialises in supporting Community Pharmacies to deliver excellent personalised care to their community. Allcare supports pharmacies by providing expertise in the buying, marketing, technical, retail standards business analytics as well as back office services, to allow pharmacists focus on their core skill of providing expert medical care, advice and value to their patients and customers.

Key areas Allcare provides support that are relevant to this case study include:

- Professional standards and procedures
- Leveraging the buying power of the 70 Pharmacies they support
- Operational and Financial Controls.
- Development of New Services and Ranges.
- Business analysis
- Category Management.
- Information Technology Development.

Allcare has implemented the changes outlined in this document across 70 pharmacies over a period of just 24 months which has transformed their business.

### Problem Recognition

The Allcare management team quickly recognised the requirement for the community retail pharmacy sector to adopt the disciplines that are long established in the general retail space. What was immediately apparent was that the complex nature of income and margin streams in retail pharmacy drove a requirement to be able to critically analyse every aspect of the business activity and the margin constituents. **This need became even more mission critical in response to the radical reduction in income from the HSE through FEMPI reviews and the ongoing Reference Pricing reviews.**

**Tony McEntee, Allcare:** “rwr are all about real world business. Their technical ability along with their retail background ensures they understand the commercial nature of their customers request and they deliver results that exceed management expectations”

The Allcare Group recognised that Retail Pharmacy was data rich through their transactional dispensing & EPOS systems but had very little analysis of this data and how they collectively converted to profit margin. Allcare management's wider retail experience dictated that there was a requirement for a highly effective Business Intelligence (BI) platform. Having reviewed the various offerings in the market place Allcare chose to partner with retail data analysis experts Real World Retail (rwr). Allcare chose rwr because of their technical

### Results

At the first live demonstration, Allcare were delighted with the grasp that rwr had of their requirement and rwr's ability to convert the vast amount of data that the EPOS and dispensing systems produced into simple to follow insightful business information. Allcare's expectations were exceeded both in terms of time to deliver and the quality of what was delivered. **Allcare have indicated that the payback on the initial investment was in the region of 3/4 months and that the continued development of the**

### Solution Required:

- A comprehensive but simple to use business solution that would turn its data into actionable insights
- KPI monitoring to ensure results are delivered
- Claim Management is a complex process and the claims leakage needed to be measured and eliminated
- Nursing Homes is a significant proportion of Allcare's business and they needed real profit control and centralised billing
- On the Front of Shop; Allcare needed a comprehensive but simple to use category management solution to generate margin growth with less working capital
- A robust reliable and accurate system that was affordable and which did not require expensive in-house expertise to manage
- A system that was capable of analysing every margin related activity

ability and their real world experience as a retailer. They have found them to think like retailers firstly and then apply their technical knowledge and skills to the retailer's requirement. The working relationship is excellent with their grasp of real retail issues shortening the timelines for the development of the analytical reports. In fact, rwr frequently take the basic requirement from Allcare and deliver reports that are more content and analytically rich than Allcare were expecting.

**analytics further multiplies the return on their investment on an ongoing basis.**

Once implemented, the results of the project were quickly evident from the bottom line results at the pharmacy level. The quality and timeliness of the business analytics provided through rwr have helped to greatly improve the Allcare decision making process and allows them to immediately measure the effectiveness of these decisions.

**Tony McEntee, Allcare:** “rwr has greatly assisted us mitigate the impacts of FEMPI and Reference pricing and ensure that we maximise the return on our pharmacies activity. The ability to measure supplier participation and compliance has also greatly assisted in improving our commercial arrangements with our suppliers”

As a business Allcare operate on the following basis:

**“WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE!”**

The use of the rwr solution greatly improved the speed and accuracy of their measurement of the key components of their business.

Samples of key areas that result in improved returns for Allcare are:

### Dispensing

- Customer loyalty
- Generic penetration
- Customer compliance
- Brand compliance
- Generic tendering
- Phasing
- Pro-active claims management
- Real time margin analysis

### OTC / Retail

- Sales analysis
- Category planning
- Promotion monitoring
- Store grading

### Additional gains came from:

- Tighter Claim Management
- Stock Reduction
- Better Availability
- KPI Monitoring

Allcare initially chose rwr because of their retail experience and now their experience with rwr has been very positive because of rwr's responsiveness and the fact that the rwr solution effectively measures what is being done against pre-determined standards.

Allcare's use of rwr enabled them to achieve:

- Improved understanding of their underlying business
- Accelerated decision making informed with real time information
- Drill down to reveal what was happening, and why, on a weekly, monthly or annual basis and how to fix the problem or maximise the opportunity
- Better understanding of the worth of every area of their business to drive strategy together with KPI's to measure the success of their implementation.
- Develop a range of what if scenarios that allow them effectively plan for future developments

### THE SOLUTION

rwr implemented their standard set of modules and reports for Allcare:

These enable implementation of numerous best business practices such as:

- CEO Dashboard to track KPIs and Trends across dispensing and front of shop
- Dispensing generic drugs instead of branded drugs
- Claims support
- Supplier Modules to support buyer negotiation
- Patient retention with Overdue Patients module
- Patient Conversion into loyal regular business
- Patient Recruitment strategies to compete very effectively in the market
- Centralised control and billing for Nursing Homes
- Retail control to support category management and Store Grading
- Trending sales insights to ensure top selling items are available in all stores
- Cashier upselling at point of sale
- Security and Fraud detection for profit protection
- Control of leakage at the tills
- Basket analysis to support store layout

### Technical Solution

All stores are linked to the McLernons' head office server CEDAC, and data is collected each night from each store where McLernons MPS for dispensing and MARS for EPOS Front of Shop. Overnight data of the previous day's transactions is transferred to the rwr server. Budgets and Store Linear Meterage and other data sources are imported into the system from Excel and other data bases as required.

As the rwr systems takes its data directly from the transactional EPOS & dispensing systems there is no requirement for expensive and often inaccurate re-keying or importation of sales data.

Analysis results are augmented with suggestions for immediate action and future consideration are delivered in a browser to the head office user.

Store Managers get reports with their KPIs automatically emailed to them on a weekly and monthly basis. Area Managers (AMs) are equipped with iPads or other tablet devices and can go through any detail required to resolve problems with Store Managers onsite.



### About the Author

Conall Lavery is the CEO of Real World Retail (rwr). The company provides head office solutions to retailers with multiple stores. There is no need to change the existing EPOS in the stores and is available to many retail sectors.

Conall previously founded Entropy which was the leading IT security company in Ireland. In 2000 Conall was a finalist for Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year (EoY). He was voted HBAN Angel investor of the year in 2011.

Conall is a graduate of the Marketing Institute of Ireland. In September 2008 Conall completed the Diploma in Corporate Governance (UCD).

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FEATURE

## RETAILER UNCOVERED



**NAME: KEITH DALY**

**COMPANY: VODAFONE IRELAND**

**POSITION: HEAD OF CONSUMER SALES**

### A brief description of your business

I work for Vodafone which is Ireland's leading Telecomms provider. We are involved in the provision of Total Telecommunications Services to Ireland (Fixed Mobile and Landline) covering multiple customer Segments. We provide more to our customers through our superior networks, our retail experience, our range and choice of handsets, our worry-free price plans and roaming and our new technologies and partnerships.

### How did you get started in the retail

**industry?** My first role was with SuperValu when I was about 16, following this I worked for Smyths Toystores through College.

**Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why?** In Ireland I admire Brown Thomas and SuperValu. Their performance through the recession was remarkable and I really believe they are differentiating in a smart way. Investment is key to this, and they keep investing. For SuperValu I think the purchase of Superquinn was a clever strategy, rolling out the best parts of the Superquinn into their stores allows them to continually differentiate on product quality.

**What is your favourite retail store and why?** Our own Vodafone stores in Dundrum Town Centre (well I would say that). We have some of our best people working in them and it is a superb location. When you walk in you can sense there is a lot of energy and passion which is reflected in our Customer Satisfaction scores. Eddie and Janet do a super job in managing this store and are fantastic ambassadors. Outside of the world of Total Telecomms I would say my favourite store is the Disney Store on Grafton Street. While it is a little small and cluttered, the staff make a personal difference and I think it can be a great shopping experience. I also admire

the focus on single minded propositions. The messaging is very clear.

**Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer?** America, I worked as a bartender in New York for a stint and this is where I learned how service and staff empowerment can make a significant difference to the bottom line.

**Where is your favourite holiday destination?** Spain as it's great for kids, close and has some top golf courses.

**What was your last purchase?** We just came out of Christmas so it was Kids presents and Mobile Phones (yes I have to pay!)

**What do you love most about your job?** Variety. Vodafone covers both Consumer and Enterprise segments and now as a serious player in Fixed line it offers great challenge. This year is a big year for us as we launch TV and superfast Fibre to the home services. For me the challenge will be making the dream become a reality in our stores and ensuring we are set up to win in this new converged world.

**If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued?** God knows, golfing or football, but I would be stone broke.

**How do you achieve a work life balance?** My kids are young so this is great balance in itself. The hardest part of my career was balancing an MBA with my job and kids.



**NAME: AONGHUS GIBBONS**

**COMPANY: CLOUGHJORDAN**

**TOTAL HEALTH PHARMACY**

**POSITION: SUPERVISING PHARMACIST**

**A brief description of your business?** Cloughjordan Pharmacy is a community retail pharmacy located in Cloughjordan, North Tipperary. In October 2014, the pharmacy was rebranded as a totalhealth Pharmacy. Cloughjordan totalhealth Pharmacy. totalhealth is a group of independent pharmacies who have come together under the symbol brand of totalhealth. The group consists of over 50 independent pharmacies nationwide working together to give all the benefits of being part of a large retail brand to our customers. Customers benefit from our commitment to being rooted in our local communities in conjunction with benefitting from being part

of a national brand. In February 2010, Cloughjordan Pharmacy had the Consis A3 robotic dispensing system installed in conjunction with a complete shop refit. This has allowed for increased accuracy in the dispensary process and allows the pharmacist to spend more time with customers. In March 2012, the pharmacy was shortlisted as one of three finalists in the Business Development Category (Independent Pharmacy) at the Irish Pharmacy Awards and in July 2012 it was nominated as a Retail Excellence Ireland Top100 Retail Store.

**How did you get started in the retail industry?** While in the first year of my degree in Trinity College in 1999, I began working on Saturdays in Peter Fox totalhealth Pharmacy Birr to gain experience of what community retail pharmacy entailed. I have worked in retail ever since.

**Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why?** Applegreen. I think they offer an innovative experience when it comes to forecourt retailing. I always find their shops and forecourts to be bright and spacious and synonymous with an excellent customer experience as well as really competitive fuel prices. I think their Cashel location is a really prime example of this.

**What is your favourite retail store and why?** Galvins for Men, Tullamore. It is so well merchandised with high end clothes brands. There is a wide range of clothes on offer all of which are of high quality. I find the staff

to be most helpful and patient. It is a really unique retail experience.

**Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer?** Peter Fox of Peter Fox Pharmacy in Birr. He has been a fantastic mentor to me over the years teaching me how to merge our dual roles as health care professionals with that of retailing. I admire his ability to adapt to the ever changing landscape of community retail pharmacy. He is always seeking new customer service offerings and has the tenacity to implement them where others might hesitate.

**What was the last book you read?** Mortal Causes by Ian Rankin. It is one of the Inspector John Rebus series of novels.

**What is your favourite Film?** Seven Pounds with Will Smith. Powerful viewing.

**What is your favourite Restaurant?** The Derg Inn in Terryglass. Superb location and top notch food.

**Where is your favourite holiday destination?** The Galapagos Islands. Sailing, snorkelling, hiking and scuba diving. A unique experience.

**What was your last purchase?** FIFA 2015 for my PS4. I am still a big child at heart!

**What do you love most about your job?** I love the human interaction with staff and customers. I get a real sense of pride that through my work I make somewhat of a difference in people's lives. The gratitude we receive from customers for the service we provide makes the long hours and hard work worthwhile.

Since I finished that it is a bit easier to balance!

**What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business?** Taking customer experience seriously! Reading every comment and acting on it. I also ensure those who go the extra mile here are rewarded. We are lucky as we have a real time view of what our customers are saying, I make sure to dedicate the time to this and it's worth it.

**What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business?** Low Pricing from competitors while we continue to invest heavily in the Irish market, investing over €550m in Ireland's fixed and mobile network infrastructure over the next 3 years. Converged solutions are coming quickly and we have the platform to continue to win in this market. We know we have the right strategy so we will succeed!

**What advice would you give one starting out in retail?** It is all about mind set. Are you playing from a 10 today? (mood on scale from 1 to 10). If you aren't, this is not the fault of the customers or your co-workers! It's something I think of every morning. You need to be highly aware of the impact your mood and behaviour can have on people and customers.

**If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued?** A history teacher.

**What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business?** Being involved with the totalhealth group since 2009 has had such a beneficial effect on our business. Prior to our involvement we were somewhat isolated as a single independent business but our association with totalhealth has allowed us to offer our customers a much slicker and pleasing store environment in conjunction with better value products in our front of shop offering. The group has also made our purchasing and operations to become more streamlined and efficient. This has been so valuable in the face of a very challenging environment for us as pharmacy retailers.

**What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business?** It has to be the HSE policy of blindly implementing cuts, rather than engaging with the pharmacy profession in order to work together to offer better value for money to both the State and public alike.

**What advice would you give one starting out in retail?** Seek the advice of experienced retailers in your area before starting out. Theory is great but you cannot beat bouncing concepts and ideas off people who are operating in your chosen retail field.

**Whats on your 'bucket list'?** I really want to follow a British and Irish Lions tour to one of the southern hemisphere countries (preferably New Zealand).





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Our REI team regularly advise retailers on the full range of issues they are likely to face in running their businesses.

For a different perspective, contact:

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**Kevin Harnett, Litigation**  
kevin.harnett@maplesandcalder.com



## FEATURE RETAILER UNCOVERED



**NAME:** JASON POWER  
**COMPANY:** TOP OIL  
**POSITION:** MARKETING MANAGER

**A brief description of your business?** Top Oil is a 200 year old Irish owned family business with a growing nationwide network of 180 Top Oil Service Stations, 6 Motorway Service Areas, 100's of Top Oil Fuel Card locations and 21 Top Oil Depots. We serve the local communities of Ireland with fuel products they know they can trust. We deliver a true end-to-end solution, from port to pump, ensuring the absolute best quality motor fuel, home heating oil, commercial, agri and solid fuels for consumers and businesses.

**How did you get started in the retail industry?** I started my career in retail as a teenager in our local bar during the Galway Races. It was a

lot different back then with no official closing times but I really enjoyed working there, I was given plenty of responsibility and the job taught me the true value of honest team work and literally what rolling up the sleeves hard work was.

**Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why?** Amazon because they are continuous innovators, were the first true pioneers of online shopping and knew the value of growing big, fast.

**What is your favourite retail store and why?** Lawlor's Butchers Rathmines because of the fantastic quality of their meat, their staff are genuinely friendly, helpful and will happily give advice on how to cook something properly. Lawlor's always have tempting special offers, 3 for 2, steak of the week, etc. making them extremely price competitive. Their store is inviting and well designed, complete with a lobster tank and play area for children. Their offering is completed with their loyalty scheme rewarding repeat business. Lawlor's do everything right, they are continuously improving and they understand the idea of customer experience and execute it brilliantly.

**Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer?** I was lucky enough to have plenty of jobs in retail growing up but my experience working with the Three Brothers Restaurants in the United States taught me how important it is to value customers, especially the loyal ones and how to strive to continually exceed their expectations and treat them like royalty

to ensure repeat business.

**Where is your favourite holiday destination?** I love Connemara, Las Vegas and Disneyland but my favourite place is Tenerife, especially Los Cristianos, I go there with my family regularly and I find it very interesting that due to the amount of local competition vying for the tourist trade all the retailers have upped their game and improve their offerings, year on year.

**What was your last purchase?** In January, with great intentions, I purchased a new pair of Nike runners, they unfortunately remain unused in their lovely box but it is still early 2015 and I am well known as being an (eternal) optimistic individual!

**What do you love most about your job?** The variety! We keep the majority of our marketing activities, including social media, in house so trying to market our various business channels and develop our Top Oil Fueling Ireland brand ensures that every single working day is crazy busy with lots of exciting projects being continuously worked on.

**If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued?** Top Oil support Junior Achievement Ireland and for six weeks our Top Oil staff teach in disadvantage schools endeavouring to inspire the students to value education and strive to reach their full potential. This is the highlight of my working life, so definitely a teacher would be the answer to this question.

**How do you achieve a work life balance?** I start work early so that I spend quality time with



**NAME:** JEAN TOUHY  
**COMPANY:** PANASONIC STORE  
**POSITION:** MD

**A brief description of your business?** Panasonic Store opened its doors in Limerick in November 2003. Panasonic Store specialises in the retailing of everything Panasonic. Our range includes, Panasonic TV's, Audio including Soundbars and Wireless Audio, Digital Camera's and Camcorder's, Tough Books, Panasonic Power Tools, Panasonic Washing Machines, Fridge Freezers, Microwaves, Bread-makers and DECT Home Phones. We are the only store of its kind in Ireland and we are based in Limerick City Centre.

**How did you get started in the retail industry?** Retail has been in my family since 1959. I am the third generation to work in the business. In 2005 the Panasonic Store Manager took ill and I was asked by Mum and Dad to step in

temporarily (3 months at most) until the Manager recovered. Thankfully the manager recovered but didn't want to return to retail. I had just left college and other than working part time in our family business Savins Music Centre and didn't have any experience. I have been managing the Panasonic Store since May 2005. I took over the ownership of the business in May 2011 and somehow the team and I have managed to keep the doors open and customers happy.

**Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why?** The Pratt Family of Avoca hand weavers. They have been in business a long time and I really admire their ability and foresight in developing and growing their business. They don't stand still. They adapt to market demands. They are always developing new and distinctive ranges of fashion garments and accessories and they continue to develop unique food markets and cafe operations.

**What is your favourite retail store and why?** My favourite retail store in Ireland is Avoca at Rathcoole, Dublin. I love this store because of their product range and their ability to continuously change the store in terms of product range, display and layout. Every time I visit Dublin Avoca is always fitted in especially around lunch time.

**Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer?** It has to be Mum and Dad. They have over 60 years of retail experience between them. Their key message over the years has always been 'Be customer focused' and everything else will happen. It seems like

a simple message but when you break it down there is a lot to it. Somebody recently told me that retail is detail and when I thought about it they were right. There is an awful lot of detail in retail and staying customer focused I believe will help you deliver this detail.

**Where is your favourite holiday destination?** I have travelled to a lot of places but I've a lot more to see and do. My favourite destination so far has been New Zealand. I've been twice and will go back again. It's very like Ireland. The people are really laid back and friendly. It's like a home from home.

**What was your last purchase?** I'm happy to admit I am a spender and not a saver. My last purchase...was a small shopping splurge in the January sales around Limerick City. I couldn't resist the value and the wardrobe was in need of some nourishment. Two pairs of jeans, two tops to match and two shirts for work.

**What do you love most about your job?** Meeting people and two days are never the same. Retail is very constant and demanding. If you were to stand still you could be left behind very quickly. So I suppose I like keeping busy too.

**If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued?** There is only one thing I would do if I wasn't in retail and that's breeding and training horses. Unfortunately I am allergic to horse hair and so it's never going to be a reality. But I do have one horse and in my spare time I ride out and occasionally compete when I get the chance.

**How do you achieve a work life balance?**

family around evening meal time and then when my kids are in bed I will log on again mainly to keep an eye on social media, I will be online Friday and Sunday nights but on Saturday's I try my best and usually succeed in switching off.

**What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business?** I believe creating win win relationships with successful brands that complement our own Top Oil brand. This year we have started working closely with Connacht Rugby and to date this developing relationship has far exceeded our initial expectations.

**What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business?** Like every business in Ireland Top Oil faces many challenges and being a customer focused, socially responsible and flexible business puts us in good stead for whatever challenges the future may hold, right now, bar the obvious falling oil prices, I would say that the competition in our industry is intensifying but challenges have always galvanised Top Oil and this challenge will be addressed no differently.

**What advice would you give one starting out in retail?** Focus on your customer, make them central to your decision making process. Be prepared and look forward to long hours of hard work. You must possess a "can do" attitude. When you are hit with a seemingly insurmountable problem, break it down into small manageable pieces and always remain creative.

I would like to think I work to live and not live to work. Retail is seasonal and for November and December I don't have a work life balance but there are quieter times in the year and I certainly make up for it during the spring and summer months. I have plenty of hobbies that include horse riding, tennis and tag rugby. These different hobbies all help keep my mind off the business and I would definitely recommend a game of tennis if you've had a bad day.

**What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business?** That's simple.....My website. Because Panasonic Store is limited to one brand I must reach a wider audience than Limerick City and County. Other than opening multiple stores around the country at an enormous expensive the internet was our only way of penetrating the market at an affordable cost. It takes a lot of my time and we are always changing and upgrading our site to make it more user friendly. Panasonic is a very strong brand name and having that in our web site name (www.panasonicstore.ie) certainly helps drive traffic to our site.

**What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business?** Managing our expansion plans with sustained growth in the existing business and finding and retaining the right teams.

**What advice would you give one starting out in retail?** Find something niche but profitable, bite the bullet and go for it. Don't get in over your head, start small and grow the business. I believe small is beautiful and if you have a unique offering people will purchase from you.





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# WOMEN IN RETAIL



Alison Hodgson,  
Country HR Director,  
McDonald's Restaurants of  
Ireland and Chairperson of  
the REI Women In Retail  
(WIR) group discussed  
diversity in retail.



As we face the year ahead, it is fair to say that the world of women in business has reached some dizzy heights globally!

Here in Ireland and under the strong commitment of Retail Excellence Ireland – we continue our journey of building stronger organisations through having a higher level of participation by women in retail.

It is fair to say that increased awareness and recognition of the benefits of diversity at the decision-making levels of organisations are needed. Diversity is proven to be more productive and profitable for organisations.

This means accepting different perspectives and skills rather than conforming and diluting women's contributions.

Globally there is a move away from the male oriented autocratic "command and control" directive leadership style to a more collaborative approach. This is a positive development and enabler for women.

Research has shown that the dominant style for women leaders is collaborative, balanced with autocratic, the ability to make decisions and to work independently.

Not a day goes by but yet another article features in both mainstream and social media on this issue – it has become very fashionable to support "the cause" (please note the irony in my tone!!) Nonetheless, my favourite article was in the Daily Mail on 16th October. Confidence is integral to a women's ability to assertive about her performance, to promote herself, apply for promotions, advocate for herself and to seize opportunities. The deputy Prime Minister's wife in the UK said that "If you have it, fake it. Women fake lots of things, No? So why not confidence"

Alison Hodgson will address the REI Retail Retreat on the topic of the benefits to your company of female board participation.

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## INTERNAL LEARNING – TRAINING WITHOUT THE COST

Internal Learning – Training without the cost. Over recent years, budgets have been tight for all Retailers. Discretionary budgets for such things as staff training, if existing at all, have been significantly trimmed.

One thing that is very clear to our consultancy from 24 years of supporting Irish Retailers is that employers who invest time, and or money, in competent, relevant training for their employees suffer a lower turnover rate, develop less HR problems with their employees and where issues do arise, the recorded training generally gives the employer a good starting point in managing the situation.

This may seem very simple logic but it cannot be underestimated how many Retailers in Ireland provide little or no training to new recruits and either presume that 'their colleagues will show them' or perhaps have the presumption that the new recruit will not last very long so 'why bother?'.

I can see why smaller Retailers, or those with a naturally high turnover, would be reluctant to invest large sums, and arrange external trainers, to develop new recruits, but with a bit of planning and effort a proper induction can be prepared, perfected and established to at least educate colleagues on the basics of their role and how they can go about their work to minimise issues and maximise income for their employees.

At a basic level, consider a booklet of standard operating procedures (SOP's) related to the following;

- Customer Service Standards
- Product Knowledge
- Till/Transaction Management
- Linkselling and upselling
- Stockroom Management and Housekeeping
- The culture of the business

It should not be too difficult to prepare concise but relevant summaries of each of the above with the particular personal twist that each operator will have. Use your existing start performers and delegate the task to them to prepare the company standard. Employees either have to sign off on the training manual or they get a dedicated training session from the relevant star performer. This is simple to prepare and is cost effective to execute. It has the potential to increase the performance of your colleagues and add to the bottom line of your business.



There are certain areas where no shortcuts are allowed on training for legal reasons. Manual Handling training is required by law and must be to a standard set by the General Application Regulations 2007. Recent case law reinforces the importance of this if we look at the €85,255 given in the case of Reus v Dunnes Stores (High Court record 2009 6682 P). This is worth looking at if you think that a simple demo of lifting with the knees and not with the back is an acceptable standard of training.

External providers will generally quote between €30-€50 per person for this mandatory training so Retailers at a certain scale could look to train an internal candidate, via the 5 day instructor course, so they can take over the internal training permanently.

Retailers should also be aware of any restrictions that exist on the sale of certain products and the responsibilities on them and their employees to manage the sale of such products. This would include, but is not limited to alcohol, cigarettes, gambling products, age specific DVD's or video games. Employers

could face significant penalties and bad publicity for breaches of the law in this area so relevant employees must be trained to the highest standards, and the employer must be able to prove it.

If the economy is starting to move and customers are beginning to have a more positive outlook and are interested in spending a bit more money, make sure that your store has a well-trained, professional body of employees who will offer customers a positive shopping experience they will remember. You do not require a large training budget to achieve this, simply harness the existing knowledge you have with learning documents on topics such as those outlined above, and distribute it amongst everyone!



You can contact Tommy Smyth at  
Tom Smyth and Associates on Ph: 021-4543506 ,  
or email info@tsaconsultants.ie

Tom Smyth & Associates offer a complimentary advice service to REI members. For details contact REI Head of HR Advisory Services, Clare Dowling at 065 6846927





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FEATURE  
**FINANCIAL**

## RETAIL STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE



John Duffy, Director,  
RSM Farrell Grant Sparks.

John is a Director in Audit, Advisory and Assurance, RSM Farrell Grant Sparks. For further information, please contact John at [John.Duffy@rsmfgrs.ie](mailto:John.Duffy@rsmfgrs.ie), or +353 1 408 6922.

## HOW RSM FARRELL GRANT SPARKS CAN HELP YOUR RETAIL BUSINESS?

Our team of advisors are passionate about the retail space and have real experience of supporting growing retail businesses to achieve their objectives. Underpinning all of our client relationships is a commitment to delivering a quality service. We are in it for the long term.

We can add real value and help advice your retail business in the following areas:

**Business Improvement Services** – Cost-cutting strategies remain the number one focus for retailers. There are opportunities to save money across the business, particularly in the areas of supply chain and distribution. Using a process optimisation approach we can help you do “more for less” and deliver material savings.

**IT Advisory** – We know that for a growing retailer, an effective IT strategy is key to multi-channel success and international expansion. We can help to define and implement an integrated retail IT strategy, covering EPOS/e-commerce, to ERP and WMS.

**Business Modeling** – The lifeblood of any business is the ability to forecast and plan cash flows accurately. Through development of cash flow models, we are helping businesses to employ flexible systems designed for their organisation; not just an amalgamation of previous versions.

### Funding Growth

– However you view your business's future, standing still is not normally the right option. Domestic or international growth needs a careful strategy and adequate funding. There is money available from banks and investors alike but only for the best plans. We help our clients to create a convincing business strategy to satisfy funders and generate the necessary capital for growth.

**International Expansion** – Moving into new markets is now a core strategy for many retailers. Failure to achieve this can be due to a lack of diligence.

**Disposal of non-core assets** – Unloved elements of a business are a continuing distraction to management but could have value in the hands of others. We assist our clients to sell off their non-core assets, however marginal it may seem to do so.

**Compliance** – We provide compliance and regulatory services covering tax compliance, payroll and company secretarial which allows management teams to concentrate on the bigger picture.

**Small Businesses** – For many years we have provided business and financial advice to emerging retail businesses, supporting them as they have grown. In many cases these names have gone on to great success.

ACHIEVING  
A STRATEGIC  
ADVANTAGE  
IS A  
COMPLEX  
CHALLENGE







Karl McKeever, Managing Director, Visual Thinking

# GREAT RETAIL TAKEAWAYS HONG KONG STYLE



Western tourists seemingly shopping elsewhere. This may or may not be a direct impact of recent student demonstrations, but the shift in shopper demographic was immediately clear.

For many years, those visiting Hong Kong in search of premium shopping experiences had to make the inevitable trek out to Hong Kong Island, with the areas around Central, Admiralty, and Causeway Bay boasting the city's retail riches. But in recent times, Hong Kong has seen a surge in the number of suburban malls, which have sprung up all around. These offer more choice and further opportunities to indulge, but have also signalled a step-change in retail standards as competition has become increasingly fierce.

In the sprawling residential areas of Kowloon and Mong Kok there is now a good choice of other places to shop including the Elements Mall in Kowloon and Festival Walk in Mong Kok.

stores. Whilst the layout is somewhat confusing, once you have found your bearings the choice and quality of stores is impressively high. The retail mix is heavily biased towards international fashion, accessories and beauty brands and almost all are within the luxury sector, with flagship stores for Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Salvatore Ferragamo, Fendi, etc., and a host of major brands which compete together on the prestigious international retail stage.

Given that this mall is part of a larger development which also houses the Ritz Carlton Hotel and Hong Kong W Hotel this is of no great surprise. If shopping is not the only attraction, there are also a good range of eateries and food and beverage outlets on site including a large outdoor public space which gives unprecedented views across Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour.

**HONG KONG IS THE MOST CROWDED CITY ON THE PLANET. OVER SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE VIE FOR A MERE 1,000 SQ KM OF SPACE.**

## Festival Walk

Like the Elements Mall, Festival Walk is conveniently located on an MTR train line, part of Hong Kong's commuter transport system. This makes accessing the shops very convenient and possible to do without even going outside.

Festival Walk may be one of the older Malls but it is still very popular, despite its uninspiring design. Despite the environment being somewhat plain compared to the Elements Mall – seven levels of bland, all white, nondescript design that lack character – the choice of stores is equally good.

Brands in the mix here are much more mainstream and sit within everyday lifestyle segments including fashion, sport, electronics, and home goods. Brands are



## Elements Mall

The Elements Mall, as its name would suggest, is themed around the five Chinese elements of Earth, Water, Metal, Air and Fire.

Now in its seventh year, it boasts an impressive array of international brand



IZZUE

loosely arranged into sector areas for each category – although this is not fully successful as new brands have filled unoccupied spaces and do not always flow together seamlessly, as originally intended.

These two malls are just an example of the various retail developments, which now circle Hong Kong's traditional retail areas. Each of these challenge for superiority, but in their own way offer something convenient and quite relevant for the immediate neighbourhoods and consumers they serve.

Walking around Hong Kong's malls, and witnessing the growing aptitude for effective

brand delivery amongst brands with Asian origins, such as Izzue, shows how getting this right is not the sole preserve of Western nations.

Whilst overall the retail mix in Hong Kong is heavily biased towards international fashion, accessories and beauty brands, Izzue stands out for its simplicity. There's a huge amount to like about this store, with its single-minded and unified approach to the retail design concept. As a brand it does not try to copy any of the European models and in many ways it has more of a USA feel to its roots, akin to Armani AX. In itself, it does not create any new rules or rewrite the book on how to create an engaging fashion retail concept. But what it does do, it does very well and to an extremely high standard that has to be applauded.

As the influence of China and retail within the region continues to grow, this brand has demonstrated its ability to create a new concept in a little under 20 years and roll it out to over 130 store locations with great



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expertise and financial success. Undoubtedly, it's a brand to watch and one that, I'm sure, will soon be branching eastwards as it continues to expand.

North is the lucky direction in the Year of the Goat. For me, this should act as a warning shot across the bow of UK retailers. With the upwardly mobile, wealthy, globetrotting Chinese continuing to be attracted by shopping destinations abroad, surely our Chinese counterparts will soon begin to eye our domestic market as fertile ground for international growth opportunities.

**A STEP-CHANGE IN RETAIL STANDARDS AS COMPETITION HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY FIERCE**





## RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND PREFERRED SUPPLIER DIRECTORY

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## 1<sup>st</sup> CHOICE SUPPLIER LISTING 2015 | 2016

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★ <b>BRANDING   STORE DESIGN   E-COMMERCE</b>	Bradley Brand and Design	Andrew Bradley 086 258 4368	e: andrew@bradleybrand.ie w: www.bradleybrand.ie	Keeling's   Kay's Kitchen   Fields Jewellers	40
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★ <b>DECISION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE FOR RETAILERS</b>	Real World Retail	Conall Lavery 01 427 0349	e: conall.lavery@realworldretail.com w: www.realworldretail.com	Allcare Pharmacy   Pamela Scott	40
<b>MUSIC   DIGITAL SIGNAGE   SCENT MARKETING</b>	Mood Media Ireland Ltd	Rose Macari 01 284 7244	e: r.macari@moodmedia.com w: www.moodmedia.ie	Dunnes Stores   An Post   Bank of Ireland	40
<b>DISPLAY AND POS SYSTEMS   SPECIALIST SHOPFITTERS</b>	Allied Retail Innovations and Solutions Ltd	Patrick Keating 046 948 1983	e: patmkeating@gmail.com   sales@alliedgroupretail.com w: www.alliedgroupretail.com	Corry's Ironmongery   Cuisine De France	40
<b>DISPLAY STANDS   CONFERENCE BACK-DROPS</b>	Focus Visual Communication	Carmel Kikkers 051 832742	e: carmel@focusonline.ie w: www.focusonline.ie	LAYA Healthcare   BWG   Siemens	40
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<b>E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES   MAGENTO SOLUTIONS PARTNERS</b>	Monsoon Consulting	Stephen Kenealy 01 4750066	e: hello@monsoonconsulting.com w: www.monsoonconsulting.com	Heaton's   One4All	41
<b>E-COMMERCE LOYALTY PROVIDER</b>	Webloyalty	Guy Chiswick +44 20 7290 1654	e: enquiries@webloyalty.ie w: www.webloyalty.ie	Retail Excellence Ireland	41
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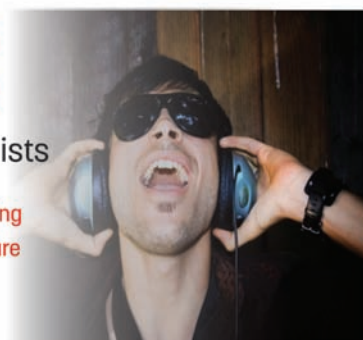
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- THE BIG DEBATE: INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH DELEGATE PARTICIPATION EXPLORING MANY PERTINENT RETAILING MATTERS
- AVOIDING THE WILDERNESS OF IRRELEVANCE. EXPERIENTIAL RETAIL – WHAT TOMORROW'S SHOPPER WANTS
- WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF RETAIL?
- GLOBAL RETAILING TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS – APPLICATIONS FOR THE IRISH MARKET
- THE LATEST TRENDS & INSIGHTS IN RETAIL RISK AND LOSS PREVENTION
- A WINDOW INTO IRELAND'S BEST TOWN – VISION, PLANNING, DELIVERING A TOWN OF THE FUTURE
- THE FUTURE IRISH CONSUMER

## BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

- TRANSFORM YOUR RETAIL TEAM INTO A SALES TEAM!
- ONLINE SECURITY & CYBERCRIME – LEGAL DO'S & DON'TS
- CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT – WINNING THE HEARTS, MINDS & WALLETS OF YOUR CUSTOMERS
- LEADING WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ) – PRACTICAL TIPS & INSIGHTS FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS
- THREE STEPS TO DATA-DRIVEN RETAILING – MAKE IT EASY, VISUAL AND ACTIONABLE
- HOW RETAILERS WIN THROUGH VISITOR ENGAGEMENT
- REDUCING ONLINE CART ABANDONMENT – HOW DO I STACK UP?
- FOODOLOGY – THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SELLING FOOD
- HOW ENTERPRISE IRELAND IS WORKING WITH IRISH COMPANIES TO SUPPORT JOBS AND EXPORT GROWTH
- THE POWER OF FEMALE BOARD PARTICIPATION
- HOW TO MEASURE YOUR ONLINE MARKET AND ASSESS YOUR COMPETITION
- THE E-COMMERCE DASHBOARD AND INSIGHTS TO GROW YOUR ONLINE REVENUES
- BRITAIN'S GREATEST FRAUDSTER – PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS FROM BEING IN THE FIRING LINE

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