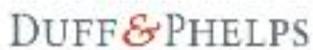


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Welcome to the **QUARTER 4 2015** edition of Retail Times

Hi everyone, it is with a heavy heart that I write this my last editorial for the Retail Times magazine as your REI chairperson. It has been a fast but very exciting two years - simply because there has been so much going on within REI with some truly brilliant successes!! The most exciting of all these new ventures is the launch of our very own "FromMe2You" Gift Card in mid-October. I would ask you all as members to fully support the card by accepting it from your customers in your business at very competitive rates and indeed by buying it for your team this Christmas should you intend to issue a Christmas bonus.

Our next big learning event in REI is our annual Symposium on the 15th October. This promises to be a great day with a fantastic line up of speakers in the Crowne Plaza in Blanchardstown, followed by a trip to IKEA to hear all about how they run their business. I'd like to say a special thank you to Marsha Smith MD IKEA for hosting us and sharing what I think you will all agree is best practice in our industry.

We await Budget16 with anticipation in REI and have been busy making representation on your behalf for a number of measures which will help support our industry. We have called for a reduction in PRSI to 4.25%, a reduction in the higher VAT rate and retention of the 9% VAT in the hospitality sector. We will be hosting with Ivan Yates, a post budget briefing that evening October 13th in The Kilkenny Shop, Nassau Street to consider what has been unveiled. Thanks to Marian and her team for kindly inviting us once again this year. Please do come along as it is always a great evening to catch up with each other before the Christmas rush begins!! (Here's hoping!!)

Then to finish off the year we always save the best event to last and that is our annual awards ceremony, where we will recognise the very best retailers in Ireland. The awards will be held once again in the Radisson Blu in Galway on the 7th November. A big "Well done" to all the finalists - they really are the best of the best in our industry and the judging panel have a tough job ahead in the coming weeks to select the overall winners.

So, on a final note I would like to say a very big thank you to all the team in REI in both the Dublin and Ennis offices for supporting me in my role these past two years, thank you to the REI Board who are a most wonderful collection of brilliant retailers and from whom I have learnt so much, thank you to our most passionate and committed CEO David Fitzsimmons whose energy knows no bounds and who acts every day on behalf of all of us REI members representing our industry to the highest degree and driving us all to demonstrate innovation and excellence in our businesses every day. And a final thank you to all of you the members who have been truly wonderful and so supportive to me these past two years. I am so proud to have led such a wonderful organisation and to have met so many new and truly inspirational people on this journey.

I leave you in the most capable of hands as I will be handing over to Colm Carroll of Carrolls Irish Gifts who is a brilliant retailer with great plans for the organisation. I will offer my full support to Colm, the REI Board and to the REI team in any way I can for the future.

I wish you all a great final quarter of 2015 and I hope you all have a bumper Christmas and I look forward to catching up with many of you at the upcoming events.

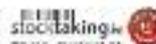
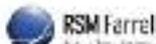
Warmest regards,

Oonagh O'Hagan

OONAGH O'HAGAN

Managing Director, Meagher's Pharmacy Group
Chairperson Retail Excellence Ireland

OONAGH O'HAGAN
CHAIRPERSON, RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND



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BOARD: Oonagh O'Hagan, Meaghers Pharmacy Group • Keith Rogers, Ecco Footwear • Paul Kealy, Tony Kealys • Jacquie Marsh, The Butler's Pantry • JP Kennedy, TileStyle • Colm Carroll, Carrolls Irish Gifts • Paul Cahill, Carphone Dixons • David Myers, Heatons • Patrick McCormack, Sam McCauleys • Roisin Woods, McElhinneys • David Fitzsimons, Retail Excellence Ireland

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



The Card Company has acquired the **Fun Place** store on South King Street in Dublin as a going concern. Fun Place has traded for close to 40 years as a costume and joke shop as well as being a favourite for all actors and theatre groups throughout the country.

Coca Cola has come out top in the **Checkout | Nielsen** Top100 Brands research for the 11th year in a row. The ranking is based on sales value.

Maxol has recently announced a €4million investment in the company's largest forecourt store to date. The Mulhuddart store on the N3 will cover 2.5 acres and employ 50 people.

It has been reported that **Amazon** is planning to sell groceries and fresh food in the UK market. The company is reputed to have acquired a 300,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Surrey.

A number of retailers are planning to review their airport VAT practices following recent media coverage of the matter.

LloydsPharmacy UK has recently acquired 281 **Sainsburys** pharmacies across the United Kingdom. The CEO of Celesio, LloydsPharmacy parent company, Cormac Tobin described the acquisition as "a fantastic fit".

Dixons Carphone recently announced a robust 8% growth in Q1 like for like sales across all markets in which the retailer trades.

NEW M8 TOPAZ MOTORWAY SITE WINS PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL AWARD



Topaz Ballacolla wins big

A state of the art service station at Ballacolla in Co. Laois, which was only recently opened by Topaz has won a leading international retailer award. The Topaz Manor Stone Ballacolla service station, which is situated at Junction 3 on the M8, was awarded the NACS Insight 2015 International Convenience Retailer of the Year Award. NACS is the Association for Convenience and Fuel Retailers and represents retailers and suppliers worldwide. The win is seen as particularly significant given the strength of this year's competition and the fact it is voted on by suppliers and industry peers. In total there were nine finalists from a range of countries including the UK, Norway, Switzerland and Argentina. In addition to its striking stone cut appearance the service station also features Re.Store, Topaz's new retail food and coffee offering. Topaz has invested €5.5m in the site which employs 65 people in total and services 50,000 motorists who use the M8 daily. The site also includes a Supermacs outlet and a Papa John's pizza restaurant. Sean Moriarty, Company Operated Stores Director at Topaz said: "It was fantastic for a new service station like Ballacolla to win such a prestigious international award. I'm really thrilled for our team at Ballacolla who have worked so hard to make the station the success it is. But this is also a huge vote of confidence for the company as a whole and our exciting new Re.Store concept."

IT WAS FANTASTIC FOR A NEW SERVICE STATION LIKE BALLACOLLA TO WIN SUCH A PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Contactless: the new normal

Last year there were over a billion contactless payment purchases in Europe. Across the continent there are now 131 million contactless cards that can be used at over 2.6 million terminals. By 2020 all European payment terminals will accept tap-and-pay payments.

With supermarkets and restaurants currently making up nearly half of all contactless payments, there's a clear opportunity for other sectors to catch up. This, combined with the recent increase of the contactless transaction limit from €15 to €30, will help drive growth even further.

The uptake of contactless spending is a win-win for consumers and businesses alike.

Tami Hargreaves
Head of Contactless,
Barclaycard

To find out more about contactless payments, contact Peter.Sweeney@barclaycard.co.uk

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EUROPEAN E-COMMERCE TURNOVER GREW BY 14.3% TO REACH €423.8BN IN 2014

The European B2C e-commerce sector had another successful year in 2014. Even though the growth rate of the e-commerce turnover decreased somewhat, it still achieved double digits. In total, European B2C e-commerce sales increased by more than 14%, reaching €423.8bn. The 28 member states of the European Union together experienced a similar growth, resulting in a EU28 B2C e-commerce turnover of €368.7bn. Wijnand Jongen, Chairman of Ecommerce Europe's Executive Committee, stated: "It is great to see that B2C European e-commerce is performing so well. On a global scale, the European market ranked second last year, only behind Asia-Pacific, which is mainly driven by the unleashed Chinese e-commerce market. Europe is expected to experience another double-digit growth in 2015. According to our forecast European B2C e-commerce sales will increase by 12.5% and amount to €477bn in 2015. With this, Europe will increase its lead on third-ranked North America."



TIGER OPENS IN BLANCHARDSTOWN!



Number seventeen for Tiger Stores

Danish brand Tiger Stores recently opened its seventeenth Irish store at Blanchardstown Centre in West Dublin creating 25 new Jobs. Tiger Stores has announced the opening of its newest store at Blanchardstown Centre, Ireland's largest shopping, leisure and retail park destination, creating 25 new jobs. Stocking an abundance of products for kids and big kids alike, Tiger is a welcome addition to the family oriented centre, where everyone from mums and dads to teens and tots can have a great day out. For Tiger Stores' Operations Manager Gillian Maxwell, the location provided the perfect opportunity for a new store. "Blanchardstown Centre is renowned for bringing in premium brands and has really proved itself as a leading shopping destination," Gillian explains. "We know we can offer a great experience for families at Blanchardstown Centre, complementing the rest of the offering here. Spanning 198 square metres and with a great location, it also helps that we will have a fantastic standout position in the centre. We're really excited about opening in Blanchardstown."

WOODIES WORKING ON WISHES

Colleagues from Woodies recently completed a nationwide fundraising event for Make-A-Wish@Ireland, the charity that grants the wishes of children living with life-threatening medical conditions such as cancer and Medullablastoma. The fundraiser included a gruelling 1,500KM road cycle as well as a static nationwide in-store bike challenge where store colleagues will "tag team" on static bikes. Woodie's ambition was to raise enough money to grant 37 children's wishes, the equivalent of one wish for each of the 37 Woodie's stores nationwide. The road cycle started in Woodies Tallaght and ended in Woodies Limerick City. Declan Ronayne, Chief Executive of Woodie's who led the challenge said "We expect the cycle to push us to the limits of our ability. However, we are taking on the challenge to work together for a great cause to grant wishes to children living with life-threatening medical conditions. It's a team effort to support the amazing charity Make-A-Wish and the children they serve. This will give us the determination to drive on during the tough moments I'm sure." Well done to all involved!



The team at Woodies completed a gruelling fundraiser

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UK grocery retailer **Morrisons** has warned it would take a long time to recover after a 35% slump in first-half profit in 2015 to its lowest level in nine years.

Clothing retailer **Next** have announced like for like sales gains of 7% for the first half of 2015. The retailer pointed to better sell through rates at full RRP as a key contributor to their growth.

Subway has recently celebrated it's 50th anniversary in the UK and Ireland! The company recently opened it's 2,000th store in Hemel Hempstead UK.

Danish fashion retailer **Bestseller** recently launched five brands at **Arnotts Department Store**. **Vero Moda, Vila, Only, Noisy May** and **Pieces** are now available in store.



Spotted in an opticians in Amsterdam recently! Now that is one way to capture the consumers attention.

Walmart, Amazon and **Sears** have all agreed to stop selling realistic looking toy guns. The move follows a New York State ban on the sale of authentic looking toy guns.

Hamleys, the UK toy retailer, is reputed to be for sale with significant interest being expressed by Middle Eastern company Gulf Greetings, owners of a rival toy retail facia **The Toy Store**.

JD Sports are expected to report strong like for like sales growth for the first half of 2015. The retailer has commented to the market that it had generated like for like sales "in excess of management forecasts".



David Fitzsimons, CEO Retail Excellence Ireland, Minister Ann Phelan, Company Founder Sam McCauley and Patrick McCormack, MD Sam McCauleys at the new Kilkenny store

SAM McCAULEY RELOCATES TO NEW PREMISES IN KILKENNY HIGH STREET

Sam McCauley Chemists has recently moved into the Sherwood's Electrical store on Kilkenny High Street. The new unit occupies 6,000 sq. ft, promising to be the biggest pharmacy in Kilkenny. Sherwoods has recently relocated to Kilkenny Retail Park. Beauty brands including Benefit and Bare Minerals will make their debut in Kilkenny city and will join current brands, Clarins, Clinique and Lancôme to make an impressive cosmetics hall at the entrance of the new store. The pharmacy chain has invested heavily in the new expansion and it will bring the total number employed by the

company in Kilkenny to 25. Managing Director, Patrick McCormack said "We are delighted to be relocating to a bigger premises on High Street. We will be making an investment of over €500,000 in the new premises and increasing the number employed to 25. This is a huge vote of confidence in Kilkenny city and our many loyal customers." The group now have 28 stores nationwide and an online store www.sammccauley.com with further new openings and expansions planned.

ESQUIRES COFFEE GROWS FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH



Significant growth at Esquires Coffee Ireland

Esquires Coffee, a subsidiary of Cooks Global Foods, a New Zealand head quartered company, has added a further three stores to the chain over the last four months. The new openings are located in Mullingar, Navan and Galway. Commenting on the openings Tony McVerry who heads up the Esquires operation in Ireland said: "We are very excited about these wonderful new openings. The customer response to

each has been magnificent. We have significant plans for Esquires Coffee in Ireland and plan a further three store openings later this year in Dublin."

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REAL WORLD RETAIL (rwr) INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

Irish data insights company Real World Retail (rwr) has recently announced plans to expand internationally. Since the start of the year rwr has added over seventy international stores to the five it analysed at the start of the year. rwr provides a data analytics driven head office decision support solution for retailers with multiple stores. At the push of a button users can get the information they need to make informed decisions to control inventory, increase sales/margins and control costs. New customers announced by the company include two pharmacy groups in Northern Ireland, one of which has fifty four stores (Medicare) and the other has three stores (Coopers). A seven store pharmacy group in Wales (Mayberry Pharmacy) is the most recent customer. A fashion store chain in Scotland (Wilkie's) with ten stores started using the solution earlier in the year. Commenting on the expansion, Conall Lavery Co-founder and CEO said: "UK customers have been just as impressed as Irish customers in the power of rwr's Cloud based Decision Support Solution. At this rate of take up, our export business could exceed our home market by the end of 2016."



UK CUSTOMERS HAVE BEEN JUST AS IMPRESSED AS IRISH CUSTOMERS IN THE POWER OF **rwr's** CLOUD BASED DECISION SUPPORT SOLUTION. AT THIS RATE OF TAKE UP, OUR EXPORT BUSINESS COULD EXCEED OUR HOME MARKET BY THE END OF 2016



Shaws add to their fashion mix

MENSWEAR FASHION BRAND TO LAUNCH EXCLUSIVELY IN SHAWS DEPARTMENT STORES

Shaws Department Stores recently announced that Springfield Menswear has arrived in six of their stores from September 2015. Springfield Menswear will be available exclusively at Shaws, as the Irish-owned retailer becomes the first in the country to stock the menswear brand. The Spanish based fashion brand is currently available in 67 countries across 4 continents and offers a leading menswear range for today's fashion conscious man in which to feel good and look great. Springfield Menswear is now available at Shaws Ballina, Drogheda, Portlaoise, Limerick, Tralee and Waterford stores with plans to roll-out the brand to all Shaws stores in 2016. Commenting on the announcement, Jonathan Shaw, Managing Director said: "The addition of Springfield Menswear demonstrates our commitment to continually enhancing our product offering. I am delighted that Shaws has been successful in attracting Springfield Menswear to Ireland and I'm excited about the plans to extend the brand to our remaining stores from 2016."

BOYERS TO CLOSE IN JANUARY

Dublin will lose another high profile retail facia when Boyers closes in North Earl Street in January. The closure will follow that of Peats and Clerys. The decision to close the store was taken by new owners Fitzwilliam Finance Partners following a review of the business. Responding to the news David Fitzsimons, Retail Excellence Ireland said: "While it is sad news for the employees, it must be stated that the manner in which the new owners of Boyers have dealt with the matter is entirely professional. They have consulted staff, given a good notice period, ring-fenced redundancy payments, protected concessionaires and much more."



The closure of Boyers, while sad, was dealt with professionally



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Electrical goods are forecasted to become the biggest eCommerce market by surpassing fashion sales this year, according to **Mintel** research.

IKEA, the world's biggest furniture retailer, recently reported an 11% increase in full-year sales to a record €31.9 billion. The company said comparable stores accounted for 5% of sales growth in its fiscal year that runs up to August.



Choice Homestore has recently appointed Darren Rennicks as their new marketing manager. We wish Darren all the very best in his new role. Choice Homestore operates six stores in the North East and Midlands.

Home Retail Group said sales at its **Argos** business decreased again in its second quarter, as weak demand for electricals such as tablets and TVs continued. Argos, which makes 70% of group turnover, saw sales at stores open for over a year fall 2.8% in the 13 weeks to August 29th.

The Irish **Central Bank** recently unveiled plans to introduce "Rounding" from 28th October. Rounding will involve the removal of €0.01 and €0.02 coins in the ROI market. A consumer education campaign is being launched by the Central Bank in mid-October.

LOW PAY COMMISSION INCREASING EMPLOYMENT COST

Following the recent determination of the Minister Ged Nash appointed Low Pay Commission to increase the minimum wage to an hourly rate of €9.15, REI has responded seeking an equal and proportional reduction in employment costs. David Fitzsimons, CEO Retail Excellence Ireland said: "Whilst REI supports a fair salary for the 272,000 people working in the Irish retail industry, it is incumbent on Government to take cognisance of the fragile state of our industry. According to the REI commissioned DKM Economists report investigating the cost of employment in retail in Ireland, employment costs have increased in recent years by over €1 billion per annum. Continued cost increases are simply not sustainable with many retailers and especially those located in provincial Ireland continuing to experience turnover erosion. We are pleased that Government has expressed a willingness to consider a cut in the employers PRSI rate for lower paid workers and we look forward in anticipation to Budget16."



Any increase in the minimum wage must be met with a proportion decrease in employment costs

PENNEYS | PRIMARK ARRIVES STATE SIDE



Penneys | Primark opens stateside!

Thursday 10th September 2015 marked the day that Penneys | Primark opened their first store in the United States of America. The store, located in the Downtown Crossing district of Boston, is a huge 77,000 square foot and the opening has caused quite the reaction. The retailer hosted a launch party and,

in keeping with the tradition of the retailer, no money was spent on advertising, instead influential bloggers were invited to the launch to get the word out to all Bostonians. The retailer has played down their ambition for the US market but many commentators Stateside believe that the ultra low pricing strategy that Penneys | Primark is best known for, will win market share from established players such as Walmart, Target and Old Navy.

CC WILL WIN MARKET SHARE FROM ESTABLISHED PLAYERS SUCH AS WALMART, TARGET AND OLD NAVY



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TEN YEARS OF DESIGN AND STYLE AT DESIGN HOUSE BARNA

Design House Barna has recently added a number of leading designers to their mix including Mat De Misaine and Armor-Lux from France. The store which has been refurbished to celebrate their ten years in business, recently hosted a fashion showcase to mark the occasion. Galway's own Síle Seoighe hosted the evening. "We are so delighted to have invited all our customers to help us celebrate our tenth birthday. It has been a very fast and enjoyable ten years and we love bringing our favourite lines and collections to the DHB customer," said Regina Cunnane owner of Design House Barna. The boutique based in Barna Village, Galway carries international labels including Evelin Brandt, Bianca, Alpha Studio and Penny Black.



Celebrating 10th birthday in style



Celebrating the launch of iD are (l-r) Paul Walsh, Head of Operations, Hamish White, General Manager, and James Gray, Consumer Director

iD, IRELAND'S NEWEST MOBILE OPERATOR LAUNCHED BY DIXONS CARPHONE

For the first time, Irish consumers can build their own mobile plan, choosing exactly how many minutes, texts and data they want, as Ireland's newest mobile operator, iD, is launched in the Irish market. This means that customers can choose their plan based on the minutes, texts and data that they need, thereby avoiding unnecessary wastage. In a recent report by KillBillier, the Irish mobile phone plan recommendation service, the average SIM-only plan on iD will cost customers just €20.81 per month; this is €166 less per year than the average billpay cost across the Irish market currently. Hamish White, General Manager at iD, said: "iD is all about individuality; when it comes to mobile plans, we know that one size doesn't fit all. At iD, we are giving customers a completely personalised experience. They are getting a network that treats them like an individual, and gives them maximum control and flexibility. Customers can choose plans that adapt and change with their needs. Most importantly, our plans are completely transparent – we give customers everything they want, and nothing that they don't want."

DUNNES STORES HAVE PLAN FOR SIGNIFICANT UK EXPANSION?

Retail Week, the UK retail trade journal, is reporting that Dunnes Stores is planning to double its store number in the United Kingdom's ultra competitive grocery market. According to Retail Week the retailer is mulling over store locations being sold by retailers such as Marks & Spencer and BHS. It is reported that the retailer might open as many as forty new stores to add to the thirty four they currently operate in the UK and Northern Ireland. It is not known if the new stores will include a grocery mix. As it stands Dunnes Stores only retails textiles and clothing from its UK portfolio of stores.



Speculation that Dunnes Stores might open forty new UK stores

POINTY GETS SHOPS ONLINE

Dublin start-up Pointy has a new service that makes it much easier for retailers to set up and maintain a website. With over 200 stores now using the service, it's proven to be a hit. The Pointy device connects to the barcode scanner and automatically puts scanned items on a website for the store. With consumers increasingly using their smart phones for information before making even smaller purchases, being online is more important than ever. A recent report from Google showed consumer searching for "near me" items have increased a massive 34 times since 2011. Pointy exhibited in the Enterprise Ireland Village at the 2015 REI Retail Retreat last May.



Pointy hits 200

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the NUMBERS

- 15** The date in October of the REI Symposium
- 125** The millions in UK£ which LloydsPharmacy paid to acquire 281 Sainsbury pharmacies
- 12,000** The number of Tesco self-service checkouts which will be updated with a friendlier voice
- 50** The increase in cent of the minimum wage which is likely to be announced on Budget Day
- 13** The date in October on which Budget Day is scheduled
- 1.7** The billions of servings of Coca Cola which are consumed globally every day
- 15** The number of companies which have stopped doing business with Donald Trump over his comments about Mexico
- 1.49** The billion monthly active users of Facebook in Q2 2015
- 550** The number of Irish Retailers who will attend the REI Awards on 7th November

FromMe2You GIFT CARD HITS 2,500



The new REI launched FromMe2You Gift Card has recruited over 2,500 stores in which the card can be spent this Christmas. Commenting on the news, John Wall, FromMe2You Managing Director said: "Having researched the corporate market it was clear that large companies, who invest in people rewards initiatives, wanted more choice as to where gift cards purchased can be spent to motivate their teams. For that reason we have recruited motivated acceptance partners in new spending environments including grocery, fast food and coffee. We are delighted that progressive retailers including Butlers Chocolate Cafés, Esquires Coffee, The Butlers Pantry, Insomnia, Supermacs, Ardkeen Quality Food Store Waterford and Joyces Supermarkets Galway, to name but a few, have all agreed to accept the FromMe2You Gift Card. While many recipients of gift cards do want to treat themselves to a new TV, sofa or outfit many others want to use the gift card for day to day spending". The FromMe2You Gift Card will launch with a €2.2m advertising campaign in mid October.

FromMe2You will be accepted in many day to day spending environments

FOODOLOGY AMSTERDAM STYLE



The food experience Amsterdam style!

REI recently led a Foodology case study visit to Amsterdam. The trip was a huge success with many of Ireland's leading food retailers learning about new food trends in one of Europe's most progressive food cities. The case study visit investigated visual merchandising techniques, store design and environment trends and explored the theme of experiential retail. The major point of discussion was as to whether food retail is about selling a product or selling an experience. From what the delegation saw the consensus was that food retail is all about selling an experience. A very clear trend identified was the move by many grocery retailers to merchandise product around tonight's dinner menu. The retailer would suggest a number of meal ideas and merchandise all the products required to prepare each meal together. The visit was led by EchoChamber Managing Director Matthew Brown. Matthew works with many of the largest food retailers and FMCG brands in Europe.

HARVEY NORMAN IRELAND ENJOYS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE

Harvey Norman, the Australian owned Home and Electronics retailer, recently enjoyed an important milestone. The Irish division of the company earned its first quarter of profitability since the economic collapse in 2008. Commenting on the development, Blaine Callard, Harvey Norman Ireland CEO said: "This is certainly not "mission accomplished" for the Irish Harvey Norman business, but was nonetheless a significant milestone along the way. It was an important moment for everyone here, and a tribute to the hard work and persistence of our teams. The Irish business is now in its 6th consecutive year of loss reduction, and 4th year of sales growth. So we are close now, and remain focused on breaking even in the Republic of Ireland in the current financial year". The company's Australian parent recently reported an annual net profit of AUS\$268.1million (€170m), up from \$211.70million (€134m) last year. Commenting on the impressive numbers Harvey Norman Chairman, Gerry Harvey said: "The outlook for the property market in Australia remains positive, particularly new starts, renovation expenditure, and secondary market clearance rates."



Harvey Norman enjoys quarterly profitability in Ireland

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GOAL, REI, DAA, TOPAZ, TURKISH AIRLINES AND MASTERLINK LAUNCH SYRIAN APPEAL

The Irish public is being urged to support Syrian refugee families this winter by donating blankets, quilts, sleeping bags and other items towards a series of humanitarian aid flights from Dublin to Turkey, organised by GOAL, the DAA, Retail Excellence Ireland, Topaz and Turkish Airlines.

Members of the public are being prevailed upon to donate the following specific, and preferably new, items: blankets or quilts (single or double); sleeping bags; bed sheets, pillow and quilt covers; adult and children's jackets; thermal socks, hats, scarves and new underwear; plastic floor carpets; and adult and children's waterproof boots. The items should be dropped to any one of Topaz's participating service stations across the country in the coming days. The goods will be couriered from each of Topaz's stores to Dublin Airport by MasterLink Logistics, where they will be warehoused temporarily by the DAA. MasterLink will also be responsible for transporting the items from Istanbul to GOAL's partner organisations.



David Fitzsimons, Retail Excellence Ireland, Barry Andrews, CEO GOAL and Paul Neeson, Dublin Airport at the launch of the Retail Syrian appeal

"GOAL has been working inside Syria since late 2012 and we are supporting almost one million people every month with food, water and other essential aid," said GOAL CEO, Barry Andrews. "However, the Syrian people need all the help we can give them, particularly as the cold months approach. There are millions more in dire need of similar assistance, both inside the country and on the Turkish border."

CEO of Retail Excellence Ireland, David Fitzsimons, said: "Retail Excellence Ireland is delighted to be involved in this important initiative. The retail industry is best positioned to support GOAL both in terms of our day to day communications with our customers and our network of leading retailers who can also assist with donations." DAA retail spokesperson, Paul Neeson said: "horrific scenes seen recently have galvanised us to all join forces to take action. We're delighted to announce this partnership with GOAL to utilise their global expertise in dealing with this humanitarian tragedy." "Irish people are well known for their generous spirit and I have no doubt that we will get a fantastic response," Mr Neeson added.

WE BELIEVE THAT THESE STORES ARE WELL PLACED TO CAPITALISE ON A POSITIVE CHRISTMAS SEASON

People who will not be able to provide any of the above items, but who would still like to support families affected by the Syria conflict, can do so by donating to GOAL at www.goalglobal.org/donate; by telephoning 01-902 9444; or by posting a cheque, cash or bank draft to GOAL, PO Box 19, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

REI ANNOUNCES 2015 RETAIL EXCELLENCE AWARDS FINALISTS

There is significant anticipation in the run up to the 2015 Retail Excellence Ireland Awards in association with Barclaycard. The Retail Industry body recently announced the Top30 Store of the Year Finalists. Speaking at the launch REI Chair Oonagh O'Hagan stated: "I want to congratulate these progressive retailers for being selected. They are exemplars of the retail industry. Their success shows what can be achieved from the application of a strategic vision for retail in Ireland. All have been selected as finalists because they have shown a consistent commitment to excellence in meeting and exceeding customer expectations. The Irish shopping experience continues to match the best that retail can offer around the world. We believe that these stores are well placed to capitalise on a positive Christmas season," she concluded.

Achill totalhealth Pharmacy	Davitt Quarter	Achill Sound	Mayo
Ardeen Quality Food Store	Dunmore Road	Waterford	
Butlers Chocolate Café	Lower Liffey Street	Dublin	
Candy Cloud	Terminal 1	Dublin Airport	Dublin
Carraig Donn	Jervis Shopping Centre	Dublin	
Donnellan & Co	Main Street	Roscommon	
Esquires Coffee	Harbour Place Shopping Centre	Mullingar	Westmeath
Galvin Tullamore	William Street	Tullamore	Offaly
Great Outdoors	Chatham Street	Dublin	
Harvey Norman	Blanchardstown Retail Park	Blanchardstown	Dublin
Hickey's Pharmacy	Ballincollig Shopping Centre	Cork	
Hook & Ladder	Sarsfield Street	Limerick	
Horkans Garden & Lifestyle Centre	Turlough	Castlebar	Mayo
James Whelan Butchers	Avoca	Monkstown	Dublin
Joyces Supermarket Headford	Church Road	Headford	Galway
Kay's Kitchen	Blanchardstown Shopping Centre	Blanchardstown	Dublin
L'Occitane en Provence	Oliver Plunkett Street	Dublin	
Maxi Zoo Liffey Valley	Liffey Valley Retail Park	Cork	
McDonald's Restaurant	Ballincollig	Dublin	
McElhinney's of Donegal	Main Street	Cork	
McInerney's SuperValu	Loughrea Shopping Centre	Ballybofey	Donegal
O'Donnell Boutique	Catherine Street	Loughrea	Galway
The Kilkenny Shop	Whitewater Shopping Centre	Limerick	
The Lab	Dundrum Town Centre	Newbridge	
The Natural Bakery	Lower Rathmines Road	Dublin	
The Store @ Guinness Storehouse	St. James's Gate	Dublin	
TileStyle	Ballymount Retail Centre	Dublin	
Tony Kealys	Boucher Crescent	Ballymount	Dublin
Topaz	Waller's Lot	Belfast	
Whelehans Wines	Silver Tassie	Cashel	Dublin
		Loughlinstown	Antrim
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WHO BENEFITS FROM **EMPLOYEE** REWARDS AND INCENTIVES?

As the economy picks up an old problem from the Celtic Tiger starts to make an appearance, you said it... employee retention. Staff are beginning to gain confidence in the job market and look for opportunities elsewhere. The problem here is that many employees have remained on a little longer in the same role than they might have done before and in doing so, they have much more experience under their belts. Replacing them and training new employees is an issue, staff retention is now firmly on the table and must be addressed.





John Paul L'Estrange
 HEAD OF CORPORATE SALES
 FromMe2You Gift Card



Job satisfaction is critical for employees and employers want their employees to stay and give a return for the training that has been invested in them. The employee is now capable of moving job for extra reward elsewhere or even just a change. It should be a business priority to hold onto good employees. There are many ways to improve staff retention but it starts with communication.

The direct effects of considered employee engagement are numerous but just to take a brief overview of some key outcomes; higher sales, increased profits, reduced staff turnover, increased customer satisfaction and increased productivity.

The cost of employee rewards can be an issue for some businesses; however, many employees will be of the opinion that “money speaks louder than words”. This can create a challenge for the employer if the employee does not think they are fairly compensated already. The challenge is to find the balance between the two.

Everyone likes to be acknowledged for doing something well or being a positive influence on the general working environment. A sense of belonging is so important in the work place. Employee reward and recognition only works if it is handled right. The reward must be

appropriate to the recipient and that is where the first challenge starts.

Motivating employees should not be a chore, you should enjoy it and the benefits for doing it right are significant. It is much nicer to do business with a company where employees are happy and motivated and this shows in their interactions with other employees and of course, customers. You must firstly understand what you want to achieve. A motivated, engaged workforce that maximises effort to achieve both their and the company’s objectives is the perfect outcome.

FIRSTLY, IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WANT TO REINFORCE

This can include job performance, such as achievement of sales targets or exceeding project goals or timetables. You can also choose to reward behavior, such as exceptional customer service or team work or leadership. Mark Fenton of MFenton People and Organisation Support says “You need to decide, do you want to reward good performance so that employees strive to succeed? Do you want to reward great behavior that serves the best interests of the company? Do you want to reward employees who improve the way the company functions or saves the company money? Do you want to

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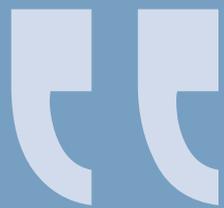
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We are delighted to see competition come to the Irish Gift Card market. We will embrace customers with FromMe2You gift cards in all our stores.

**BLAINE CALLARD, CEO,
HARVEY NORMAN
IRELAND**



The level of support for this new gift card by the Irish retail industry is very obvious. The retailer will be charged significantly reduced commissions and in return will actively accept the FromMe2You gift card. There will be no confusion amongst customers as to where they can spend their FromMe2You gift cards!"

LIAM DINEEN, MD, EZ LIVING

reward individuals or teams? Once you decide what you want to reward, that or those things need to become the focus of the initiative". Mark outlines the following key points:

MOTIVATE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Your reward programme objectives can only be met if you get staff to "buy in" or participate. Explain to them that you are establishing a recognition program and tell them what you want to achieve. Outline that the budget is tight but it is important for you that there is recognition of their good work and above and beyond efforts. One of the best ways to find out what motivates your employees is to ask them and that may also help you determine what types of rewards to offer. "Staff loyalty that is generated through recognition of the little and not-so-little contributions from employees is one of the best side effects of a reward programme".

HIGHLIGHT

Create an employee of the month award that is presented before their peers. A reward must be attached to this and it could be a gift card, a special company parking space or their choice of restaurant for a team lunch.

OPPORTUNITY

Bring a stand out employee to join you for lunch with an important client to help them learn more and see that their opinion really does matter.

FLEXIBILITY

A good understanding of the work/life balance that employees are trying to achieve is essential. Allowing an employee some flexibility to start earlier and leave earlier or vice versa could be a small adjustment which can make a big difference.

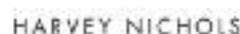


Replacing them and training new employees is an issue, staff retention is now firmly on the table and must be addressed

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The cost of employee rewards can be an issue for some businesses; however, many employees will be of the opinion that “money speaks louder than words”.



GIFT CARD REWARDS

Use a budget for employee rewards that allow the employee to choose what they would like to get. The best way to do this is with a gift card that can be used to buy virtually anything that they want from food and beverages to that item of clothing or sports equipment that they’re coveting. The great thing about giving the employee this level of personal choice is that it is the reward that does fit all occasions. Even better, as an employer, you are acknowledged as being the reason that they have managed to buy that thing they wanted.

All employers should avail of the special Irish Revenue’s Small Benefits Exemption scheme. This allows employers to reward employees with one non cash gift each tax year, completely free of Income Tax, USC and employer’s & employee’s PRSI. The best way to use this benefit is with a gift card.

The most important thing is this; when you decide on the route that you want to take with employee rewards, commit to it and be consistent. One thing is for certain, if your employees feel appreciated for the work they do and are rewarded appropriately, they won’t be going anywhere.

The desire to have a positive impact on others for the good of an organisation is the key motivation when retaining employees.

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As a leading provider of energy to 1000s of Irish retailers, Energia knows that controlling costs in the sector is vital. Identifying where your business can save energy is a good place to start. For example, switching the lighting in your premises from conventional fluorescent lighting to LED's can reduce your lighting costs by up to 75%. Although the savings can be substantial, it can be a costly exercise in the short term to implement.

Get up to 30% Funding for Energy Efficiency Projects

Now, Energia have an Energy Efficiency Funding Scheme "Cash for Kilowatts" that gives retailers up to 30% of the cost of the project. Replacing lighting, upgrading heating systems and refrigeration, variable speed drives and air compressors are all part of the funding scheme.

Energia will also provide expertise and assistance with the implementation of projects. Whether you are implementing the project yourself or you require input from our carefully selected group of partners, Energia can help to get your project underway with safety and quality at the core.

It's WIN WIN for Retailers

Not only will your business benefit from the funding provided by Energia but with the additional cost savings from the reduction in energy usage means that these projects can literally pay for themselves.

It's win win, save on the costs of implementation and save substantially on your energy bill.

Examples of the typical savings that can be achieved include:

1. Lighting: Reduce your lighting costs by up to 75% by switching to LED.
2. Heating: Installing modern heating controls can save at least 25% of annual fuel costs.
3. Refrigeration: Upgrading refrigeration can bring savings of up to 30%.

Frank Keane BMW on the Naas Road in Dublin and Carrolls Irish Gifts are just two of the many retailers that have availed of the project funding.

The project at Frank Keane BMW was part of a major refit and large numbers of fluorescent tubes and spotlights were replaced with energy efficient LED lights. These changes have reduced their annual electricity use by 85%, cutting their carbon footprint by 39 tonnes of CO2 and generating yearly cost savings of almost €12,500.

Mark Bradley, Head of Business, Frank Keane BMW commented, "We are delighted with this energy efficiency work by Energia. It is helping us to significantly reduce our energy usage, which benefits the environment through a big CO2 saving. It also makes strong business sense as we save significant amounts on our energy costs."



Cormac Mannion Energy Services Manager Energia & Frank Keane BMW



Cormac Mannion Energy Services Manager Energia & Lorcán O'Conner Property and IT Director, Carrolls Irish Gifts,

action, the annual cost savings are really significant. It is helping us to substantially reduce our energy usage, which benefits the environment through a big CO2 saving. It also makes strong business sense as we save large amounts on our energy costs."

Carroll's Irish Gifts conducted lighting projects at two of their Dublin city centre stores and has reduced its annual electricity use for lighting by 76% as a result of the lighting refits. This means that they've shrunk their carbon footprint by 18 tonnes of CO2 each year, generating cost savings of almost €5,800.

Lorcán O'Conner, Property and IT Director, Carroll's Irish Gifts, commented, "Given how easy the lighting upgrade was to

For full details on the new funding scheme from Energia and how you can avail of the scheme, email energyservices@energia.ie or log on to www.energia.ie/funding.



id



Clare Dowling,
Head of REI HR Advisory Services

IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL TIME FOR REI MEMBERS



The REI Member Council, a forum of eighty CEOs and Directors of member companies has been instrumental in leading the learning policy of REI. Some months ago the Council suggested the establishment of a better standard of accredited learning in the Irish retail industry. Based on this advice, the REI team constructed a new Retail Management Certificate in partnership with National College of Ireland.

Speaking at the launch of the newly developed REI NCI Certificate in Retail Management, Paul Candon Director of

Topaz and Chair of the REI HR Network welcomed the high level of interest in the course. "We are delighted to say the response to this Certificate has been astounding. There are now over 80 students enrolled on the Certificate in Retail Management which commences at the end of September. The participants come from a variety of retail environments and locations which ensures there will be a rich mix of knowledge and expertise being brought to the course."

REI will work very closely with both the participants and NCI to quality assure the

programme throughout the content is relevant, practical and accessible.

The NCI students will be invited to attend key REI events and case study visits such as the visit to IKEA in Dublin which takes place as part of the REI Symposium on the 15th October.

Welcoming the commencement of this accredited learning course, Paul said "This is about elevating the expertise in our stores, enhancing the experience we deliver to our customers and improving the working lives of our employees."

THIS IS ABOUT ELEVATING THE EXPERTISE IN OUR STORES,
ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE WE DELIVER TO OUR CUSTOMERS AND
IMPROVING THE WORKING LIVES OF OUR EMPLOYEES



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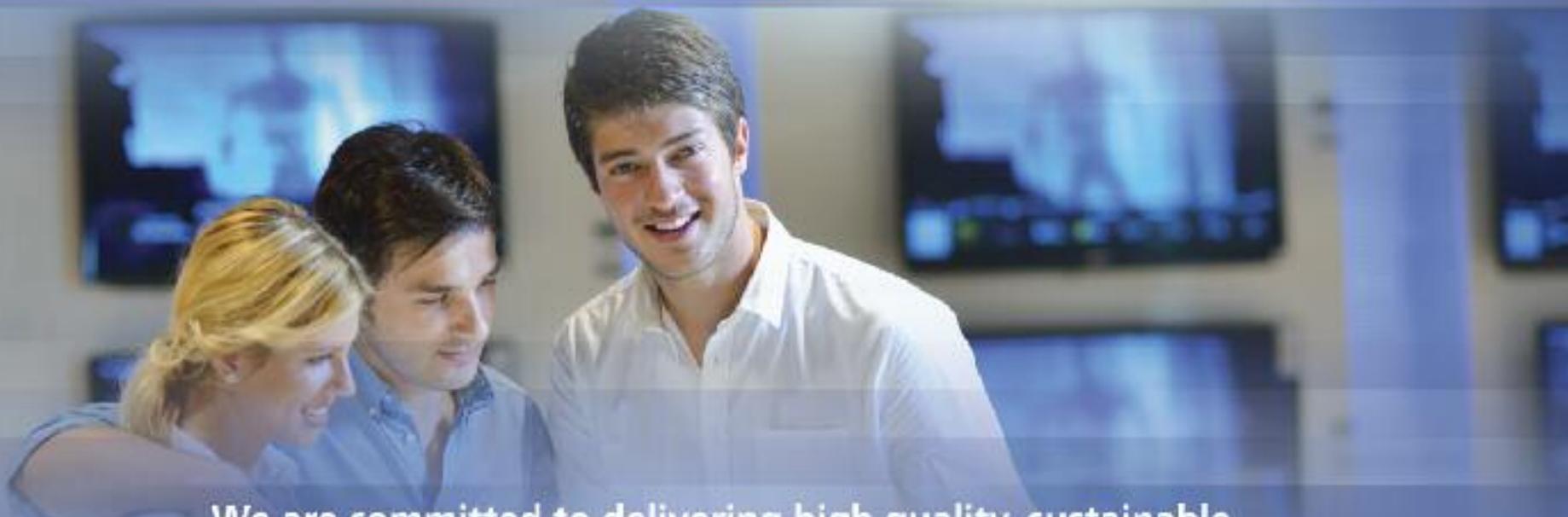
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"We would like to thank all our members; The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the WEEE Register Society, the EPA, local authorities, retailers, waste contractors and the general public for embracing the spirit and ethos of the WEEE Directive to make it such a success in Ireland and recycling their electrical waste over the last 10 years."

Martin Tobin, Chief Executive Officer, ERP Ireland



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RETAIL CRIME IN IRELAND



The past ten years have seen massive changes to the retail landscape in Ireland. The threats posed by criminals have become more organised and sophisticated. Retailers must now contend with new types of crime such as data breaches, online fraud, the use of social media by criminals to sell stolen goods, insurance scams and even metal theft.

The advent of new technologies has helped retailers get a clearer picture of their business operations and the improvement in CCTV has improved the quality of evidence but crime still poses a real threat to the Irish retail sector. Retailers must also look at other cost effective ways of reducing losses such as the following:

1. Instigate a proper Loss Prevention training programme to up skill all retail managers and staff. Education and prevention are the keys to reducing losses. This will help quickly identify areas of concern. A properly trained workforce will also be less likely to make false theft accusations which have a financial and a reputational cost to the company.
2. Communicate with others in your sector. Share experiences and highlight new trends and solutions.
3. Design a report where all incident of theft, fraud, abuse and other such incidents are recorded. When this is analysed centrally it can help quantify the issues and identify problem stores or departments much earlier. It will also identify areas where more training is needed.
4. Report all crime to the Gardai! Many retailers are not reporting crime which gives the false impression that retail crime is not a major issue.
5. Engage with your local Garda Crime Prevention Officer. They can give good advice and inform you of local ongoing issues.
6. Train staff to monitor social media to identify stolen product being sold. The retailer can then check their CCTV and identify the person stealing the stock. Report all these thefts to the Gardai.

7. Carry out regular Loss Prevention spot audits in stores. Sometimes the problem can be within. Unannounced spot audits are a proven method of identifying such issues.
8. Clear guidelines must be issued and enforced on refunding, sale returns, staff purchases, staff bag searches and key holding procedures.

Retail Excellence Ireland has now a Loss Prevention Forum where members come together to discuss new trends and come up with solutions. We invite industry experts to present to improve our knowledge base. If you feel your business might have LP issues please come along to the advertised meetings!

**Michael Neary, Loss Prevention Manager,
Harvey Norman Trading (Ireland) Ltd &
Chair of the REI Loss Prevention Forum**



FEATURE E-COMMERCE



David Campbell, REI eCommerce Executive

REI ECOMMERCE NEWS

INTRODUCTION Retail Excellence Ireland is passionate about eCommerce and delivers essential resources to members to enhance their online knowledge and increase their competitiveness. One of the most valuable resources is the REI Dashboard which aggregates key metrics for online retailers calculating the industry averages and allows benchmarking capabilities which are an invaluable tool published each month. Within this article there is an evaluation of the Dashboard from a current participant outlining the primary benefits to be gained from utilising this eCommerce tool.

REI has developed a very positive relationship with Google where our eCommerce Executive David Campbell brings a selected group of REI members over to Google HQ once a month where they can avail of expert advice and learn the most efficient methods of targeting consumers online. Overall feedback has been extremely positive from all participants and this is emphasised in the Google Incubation extract from Philip Sullivan from EZ Living who is a current participant in the programme.

avail of expert advice and learn the most efficient methods of targeting consumers online

Being members of eCommerce Europe we are committed to representing our members in a European wide context. REI and eCommerce Europe recently jointly hosted dinner where leading eCommerce organisations including Amazon, PayPal and Ryanair attended. Finally, REI have implemented a new blog service on their website where they will post regular articles of current eCommerce trends.

BRIAN HOWE, Carrolls Irish Gifts writes on Preparation for online selling in Christmas 2015

I would recommend that you follow the advice below to help you prepare for online selling during Christmas 2015, don't forget about the customer!

The Customer is the Centre

When I think about Carroll's Irish Gifts, what I see is a customer service company that happens to sell Irish gifts. I try to use this vision to focus the decisions that I make. Remember to put the customer front and centre in everything that you do.

4 Key Customer Requirements/Needs

Your 4 key customer requirements/needs are (1) a reliable and functioning website, (2) available stock, (3) delivery as per your stated delivery times and (4) available and knowledgeable customer support -- if you do these 4 things correctly for your customers, you shouldn't go too wrong.

Planning and Monitoring are Key!

To assist in structuring your Christmas preparation and thought



process, see the below timeline that you can follow as a guide.

TIMELINE

Before Christmas

(from September onwards)

- Review last year's Christmas notes
- Look at last year's analytics and product sales
- Forecast this year's sales for each week
- Staffing review and plan
- Technology review and plan
- Review dispatch area space and make any necessary modifications
- Bulk order dispatch supplies
- Liaise with freight companies re: collection/delivery schedules
- Update website with Christmas delivery cut-off times for all zones
- Develop comprehensive marketing calendar
- Christmas kick-start meetings
- Ensure buyers have Christmas specific stock scheduled to land on-time
- Pre-load marketing and website content

During Christmas

(October-December)

- Monitor trending products early and order in back up stocks of the biggest movers, while trimming down on slow movers
- Review sales v's staffing ratios weekly
- Review marketing campaigns daily and tweak
- Remember the 4 key customer requirements/needs
- If your sales exceed your forecasts, don't let this positive turn into a negative -- communicate openly and regularly with key stakeholders -- be flexible and adaptive

After Christmas

(early January)

- Write up Christmas 2015 notes
- Schedule a post-Christmas de-briefing with key stakeholders
- Be prepared for returns/exchanges in early January
- Thank staff for all the great work!!

In conclusion, here in Carroll's Irish Gifts we are certainly extremely excited about Christmas 2015. By documenting our Christmas experiences internally and using regular, open communication we get better at Christmas retail every single year. I hope the above acts as a useful guide for all of my fellow retailers, particularly those operating in the e-Commerce space. Best of luck to you all for Christmas 2015 - I hope you use this Christmas season to create a hugely positive customer experience and to catapult growth into 2016! The full article can be viewed on the REI website under the Blog section.



PHILIP SULLIVAN, EZLiving introduces the Google Incubation Programme

The Google Incubation Programme is of huge benefit to the EZ Living's e-commerce team and senior management. The course is being taught by Aiden Blake from Google whose passion for AdWords and how it can benefit your business is evident at every lecture. Each incubation session is very open, practical and interactive which allows each business to discuss their AdWords account and issues openly. Each business also has the opportunity to get their account analysed by Aiden. The course content started with the fundamentals and has worked its way up to advanced campaign/account management level. During the course of the programme, all participants gain an in-depth knowledge of AdWords, which covers both the search and display network. Aiden also provides advice on best practices and techniques so that you can get the most out of AdWords. Over the course of this programme, we have learned how to implement, measure and optimize our account. It has allowed us to develop an effective AdWords strategy to maximise our Return on Investment (ROI). Putting what we have learned into action has enabled us to almost triple our Click-Through-Rate (CTR) and improve our Return on Ad Spend (ROAS).

PHILIP SULLIVAN talks about the Benefits of the REI eCommerce Dashboard

Before the REI eCommerce Dashboard, we had no way of accurately bench-marking how our store was performing in comparison to other Irish online retailers. We had to rely on viewing both generic and niche-related e-commerce activity reports from the UK. As eCommerce activity and participation is much higher in the UK this data was still not entirely accurate and reliable but rather a best-effort for us.

Since the introduction of the REI Dashboard, we now have timely and accurate national data that we can use to benchmark our own Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against. This is an invaluable asset which provides great insight into how the market is performing and evolving and also allows us to analyse which areas we are performing or under-performing in against the national average.

The detailed report which accompanies the data and graphs is very insightful. The data also allows us to see which KPIs we need to concentrate more on and also provide us with realistic targets. The eCommerce dashboard is an invaluable asset for both our e-commerce team and senior management.

MARILYN DONKOR of eCommerce Europe explains the Round Tables for eCommerce professionals

The Round Tables are jointly organized by E-commercefacts.com and eCommerce Europe and take place in a dinner setting several times a year. National eCommerce associations that are members of Ecommerce Europe such as Retail Excellence Ireland are invited to organise a Round Table in their home country.

Two eCommerce professionals are given the opportunity to give a speech and concentrate on a certain topic relating to cross-border online sales. The meeting enables national eCommerce professionals to discuss matters concerning cross-border eCommerce and thereby provide an ideal platform for directors of European online retailers to network and exchange knowledge.

Moreover, it is an exceptional opportunity for national e-commerce professionals to talk about issues such as logistics, payments, legislation, marketing possibilities and market data. All Round Tables will explore the same theme of cross-border eCommerce. The meetings are especially pertinent for leading retailers who want to do business outside their own borders. The Global E-commerce Summit is the leading international event in global eCommerce, Cross-border trading and Omni-channel retail. It is jointly organized by Ecommerce Europe, BBP Media and Shop.org and takes place once a year in Barcelona. While the Round Tables provide a national platform for networking and exchange of knowledge on cross-border eCommerce, the Global E-commerce Summit offers a unique international networking forum for eCommerce professionals around the globe.

For more detail regarding REI eCommerce supports please contact david.campbell@retailexcellence.ie



FEATURE RETAILER UNCOVERED



Name: DAVID WHELEHAN
Company: WHELEHANS WINE
Position: DIRECTOR

A brief description of your business? Whelehans Wines is a large format wine, beer and spirit retail space with a complementing café / wine bar.

How did you get started in the retail industry? I worked for a brief time for Quinns which left a lasting impression. A further 10 years was served in a family company where I was

on the road calling to retail pharmacy. Yet another 10 years was spent with O'Briens Wines - so I have been in the retail space for a considerable time!

Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why? If I was to single out one operator it would definitely be Avoca. Their use of design in their retail space and how they manage their brand is quite unique.

What is your favourite retail store and why? This is an almost impossible one to answer akin to what is my favourite wine. Apple store in Belfast would be in a close tie with Avoca in Kilmacanogue.

Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer? This is a long list. I have had the opportunity to be inspired by some of the best. Cormac O'Connell, Patrick McCormack, Brendan O'Brien.....

Where is your favourite holiday destination? Italy.

What was your last purchase? Miena's handmade Irish nougat €2.79

What do you love most about your job? Discovering exciting wines, shipping them to Ireland and tasting them with our customers. Also the buzz of working with an energised team.

If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued? Law.

How do you achieve a work life balance? I don't at the moment. My family visit me at work.

What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business? Recruiting some really great people and instilling a philosophy of getting things done.

What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business? Managing costs.

What advice would you give one starting out in retail? Have a vision, be dogged and enjoy the trip.

What's on your bucket list? Lots of travel, tasting and long restful sojourns by the sea.



Name: JOSEPHINE WHELEHAN
Company: DRESSED BOUTIQUE
Position: OWNER

A brief description of your business: Dressed is an independent fashion store in West Cork. We employ 3 people supplemented by family members at busy times!

How did you get started in the retail industry? Through working in my Mothers boutique and going on buying trips with her, I developed a love for

both fashion and retail. Having pursued a career in Hotel Management after College, I returned to retail once my children began secondary school.

Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why? I would say that I admire Victoria Beckham the most, due to the fact that she reinvented herself personally and broke into the fashion industry. I visited her Dover Street store - she really brings innovative design to her retail offering, I have found this inspiring.

What is your favourite retail store and why? Brown Thomas, I love their constantly evolving choice of brands, innovative customer relations management and...it's a great store design.

Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer? Stella McCartney inspired me a lot, when it came to my store design. I really tried to recreate her stores look in "Dressed". I learned a lot regarding CRM from Brown Thomas. Whilst style diversity was highly influenced for me by Diane Von Furstenberg, due to her evolving use of prints, colour and design.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? South of France.

What was your last purchase? That would be my Victoria Beckham Dress bought for a family wedding. It was a big splurge but the quality and fit made it worthwhile.

What do you love most about your job? Getting to interact with my customers and inform them of new season trends. Finding new brands and charting their success.

If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued? I would have pursued a career in Hotel management as per my qualifications. There are a lot of parallels between hotel management and fashion retail.

How do you achieve a work life balance? I have three daughters who help with both in store work and on the many buying trips so this really gives us the best of both worlds during the very busy periods.

What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business? Refining my buying strategy to better suit my customer buying trends.

What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business? The challenge of competing with large multinational retail outlets.

What advice would you give one starting out in retail? Fashion sense needs to be combined with keen business acumen.

What's on your bucket list? To run a marathon, to travel and to not need to have a sale rail!!!!

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FEATURE RETAILER UNCOVERED



Name: SUSAN MOYLETT
Company: SUSAN HUNTER LINGERIE
Position: OWNER

A brief description of your business?

Ladies lingerie specialising in natural fibres, silks, cottons, cashmere nightwear and dressing gowns, and of course our full fitting bra service, sizes 30" - 46", A to J cup.

How did you get started in the retail industry? I started off with the punk shop called No Romance in the late 70's and

developed from there.

Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why? All the small independent shops throughout Ireland and Europe, where it actually makes a difference to them if you shop or not.

What is your favourite retail store and why? Place in Gorey, Maven on Wicklow Street. Both are little shops and 'owner occupied'.

Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer? My customers!

Where is your favourite holiday destination? Anyway warm...not hot...just warm.

What was your last purchase?

A gorgeous skirt.

What do you love most about your job? Helping people look their best and of course getting to buy (for the shop of course) the most beautiful silks and underwear from all over Europe.

If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued? I have a diploma in Interior Design and a degree in Anthropology so something to do with people and their locations I suppose.

How do you achieve a work life balance? I am my work, so it's perfectly balanced.

What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business? Smile.

What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business? The lack of passing trade through the Westbury Mall. We are in a fabulous location, unfortunately the powers that be don't seem to be as enthusiastic as the shop owners in promoting our gorgeous little Mall.

What advice would you give one starting out in retail? If you have a good product and LISTEN to your customers you should do well. It's difficult but if you really want to, nothing will stop you.

What's on your bucket list? Travel, and to get to know cities properly, and not just as a weekend thing.



Name: BRIAN FOX
Company: REGATTA GREAT OUTDOORS IRELAND
Position: COUNTRY MANAGER

A brief description of your business?

Regatta Great Outdoors (RGO) Ireland is Ireland's biggest outdoor clothing brand. We have achieved this through two main distribution channels; supplying sports and outdoor shops plus department stores nationwide and the development of 3 of our own "Regatta Great Outdoors" shops in Dublin, Limerick and Athlone. We will have 3 more of these stores open by the end of October. A

measure of the strength of our brand is the 17 [and growing] concession partners with whom we have a solid affiliation. We offer affordable and super quality outdoor clothing, footwear and equipment to kit out the outdoor enthusiast, the entire family and even the dog walker!

How did you get started in the retail industry? It was merely a continuation of my involvement in sport. I was heavily involved in water skiing and snow skiing. My dad was an electrical retailer and I suppose both retailing and outdoor products are part of my DNA.

Which retailer (national or international) do you admire the most and why? NEXT. They offer great value in store. Their visual merchandising is excellent and most stores have an element of theatre. This is something I try to aspire to in our shops and I guess this is why I appreciate what NEXT do so well. Plus their on-line platform is excellent.

What is your favourite retail store and why? Hollister in Dundrum. However, the reason why I have chosen this may surprise you. Hollister create a laid-back, minimalist atmosphere in their stores whilst focussing on a specific target market. For me, this reinforces why their strategy would not work for RGO as we have a more mass market appeal plus we try to encourage the family shopping experience.

Who has taught you the most in your career as a retailer? It is hard to suggest any one person in particular. I am still learning and I am a great believer in "having a go".

I am supported by a very good team whose opinions I value very much.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? Saint Cyprien in the South of France.

What was your last purchase? A "Double Decker" chocolate bar. Father and son time.

What do you love most about your job? Everything. The variation. My wholesale customers, setting up new shops, the thrill of the chase and the 2 people I work closely with in our Cork office.

If you were not in retail what job would you have pursued? I have no idea. I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up.

How do you achieve a work life balance? By having a terrific home life. I love to go to work and I love to come home. Regardless of the number of overnights it is always good to get home. I train in Crossfit 3 times a week [next door to our Cork Showroom] Happy days!

What is the one thing that you have done that has had a profound and positive effect on your business? I have learned to embrace the skill set of those around me and trust in them to deliver. This stops me from being the control freak I was [or so I am told] and allows me to focus on my areas of strength. This results in a more efficient and focused team.

What is the greatest challenge currently facing your business? Competition from copy-cat brands and the escalating costs of doing business on our wonderful island.

What advice would you give one starting out in retail? 168 hours..... These are the amount of hours in one week.....Use each one wisely..... ..Play to your strengths and believe in your strategy.

What's on your bucket list?

To see the Seven Wonders of the World.....

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REI GARDEN GROUP NEWS

SANDRA DORAN,
GARDEN GROUP MANAGER



GroMór "Get out, Get Healthy, Get Growing"

One of many GroMór demonstrations at Bloom



from social media, particularly the GroMór Facebook page (32% or over 13,000 clicks) and in light of this, there will be a much greater focus on social media activity in 2016.

Sandra Doran, Retail Excellence Ireland Garden Group Manager says "this is a great result for a new initiative and it's a solid foundation to build on. It is our intention to improve the website with added features, to capitalise on the success of the GroMór social media activity and to create an exciting calendar of events which will benefit GroMór centres across the country next year".

The GroMór Autumn campaign is well underway, with practical advice on the GroMór website for the month of September – it's all about planting spring flowering bulbs right now. Look out for the Autumn signage in your local GroMór centre and ask your local expert for more advice on what to do in your garden this Autumn.

REI Garden Group Visits the UK

More than 30 Garden Group members visited two of the most progressive and innovative Garden Centres in the UK – Barton Grange in Preston and Bents in Cheshire. Here, they heard from Managing Directors, Guy Topping and Matthew Bent about the voyage their stores have undertaken to become the leading businesses that they are today and the group were inspired with fresh ideas which can be implemented in time for the season next year.

Much was achieved during the inaugural year for GroMór. The garden centre industry was brought together to include independents, multiples, co-ops, nurseries and suppliers and the concept that was initiated this time last year, was brought to life in the spring with the aim of getting the country growing. GroMór has 65 garden centre and 20 nursery members in 23 counties, so a GroMór centre with experts on hand to offer advice, is never too far away. There has been huge support for GroMór in year one and with a membership waiting list for next year, the

initiative looks set to build upon its' success in 2016.

this is a great result for a new initiative and it's a solid foundation to build on

In addition to reaching out to over 19,000 people at Bloom and to 100,000 Irish Independent readers, GroMór invested significantly in radio, digital and social media advertising, to create awareness of the movement on a large scale. This investment has paid off with over 42,000 sessions thus far on the GroMór website.

Much of the website traffic has been generated from the GroMór target demographic of 35-45 year olds (36%) and

If you are interested in becoming a garden group member next year, please contact Sandra at sandra@retailexcellence.ie www.gromor.ie





The three steps to INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

1 STEP ONE EXPLORING international expansion opportunities

International expansion is one of the ways a company can increase its sales, profitability and continue developing.

International expansion and alternatives:

- There are alternatives to investing abroad, such as expanding product range, investing in bricks-and-mortar stores and so on.
- It is important to take an analytical approach such as a risk and reward analysis to map out the alternatives.
- A retailer considering expanding abroad must be sure that its brand stands out enough in the foreign market and that this uniqueness can be played to its strength with the local population.

Choosing where to expand:

- The internet allows the company to analyse traffic from overseas countries, but it is important to treat this data only as an estimate of the market demand potential.
- A business going abroad must understand the country specific trading conditions, e.g. the popularity of the cash-on-delivery payment option in Russia.
- Alignment of the business model and country business infrastructure is also important. For example in Italy mail order can be challenging due to the unreliability of courier services.

Assessing competition

- Mapping and analysis of competitors is the best way of obtaining a general picture of the market competitiveness landscape. This should be supplemented with local consultants.
- In order to get a personal 'feel' of the market, consider sending employees on trips to the foreign market to explore local shopping channels and their characteristics.

2 STEP TWO CREATING international expansion opportunities

A company expanding into a new market will face new challenges such as how much money should it devote to the process, how to promote its brand and managing growing pressure from shareholders.

Initial challenges:

- It is inevitable that certain issues of difference will emerge. A business must be responsive and remain flexible in order to deal with them.
- At the beginning it is recommended to keep the supply chain as short and simple as possible, to increase responsiveness and flexibility.

Managing risk effectively:

- It is advisable to set an amount of cash that the business is prepared to lose while investing abroad and make sure that this limit is adhered to.
- For the first few years, the business may be loss making, hence it is important to manage shareholder's expectations by setting realistic goals.

Building the brand overseas:

- A unique brand proposition is required to catch customer's attention and provide a basis for differentiation amongst the established brands.
- A business should focus on success-related fee models for digital channels.
- Fashion retailers, which require a lot of media exposure, cannot ignore the importance of PR.



3 STEP THREE EXPLOITING international expansion opportunities

The last major stage in international expansion is about evaluating the success of past and current operations abroad and using the lessons learned to evaluate further expansion plans.

Adapting to different market needs:

- Different markets require different approaches to evaluating success, for example product returns in Germany are higher on average than in France.
- When devising a product strategy, a business needs to consider local market variations such as taste, but also other factors such as different climate. For example it is advisable to treat the US as a collection of 50 different markets, rather than a single one.

Navigating the red tape:

- Foreign markets have their own legislation, which is not always in line with the business model operating in a home market. It is therefore recommended that a company uses specialist advice.

Measuring success

- Success is relative, given numerous market variations, but certain metrics in an ecommerce operation such as contribution per customer, contribution per order and cost per new customer acquisition can be critical in analysing success.

Learning and advice:

- A newly established business can benefit from having flexible and scalable systems as well as processes in order to be able to take advantage of any upcoming opportunities.
- Focusing on what the business is great at doing is essential, for example, it can focus on offering a bigger range size, which will differentiate it from the competition.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of international expansion and the implications for your business please contact John Duffy, Head of Retail at RSM Farrell Grant Sparks on +353 (1)408 6922



Tom Smyth & Associates

KEY HR POLICIES - GET THE CONTENT RIGHT

The Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994 sets out the basic statutory contents that employers must reference in their terms and conditions of employment in order to be legally compliant.

These are:

- The full names of the employer and the employee
- The address of the employer
- The place of work or, where there is no main place of work, a statement indicating that an employee is required or permitted to work at various places
- Job title or nature of the work
- Date of commencement of employment
- If the contract is temporary, the expected duration of employment
- If the contract is for a fixed term
- The rate of pay or method of calculating pay
- Whether pay is weekly, monthly or otherwise
- Terms or conditions relating to hours of work, including overtime
- Terms or conditions relating to paid leave (other than paid sick leave)
- Any terms or conditions relating to incapacity for work due to sickness or injury
- Any terms or conditions relating to pensions and pension schemes
- Periods of Notice or method for determining periods of notice
- A reference to any collective agreements which affect the terms of employment

While the above nuggets of information ensure legal compliance, in truth employers set out their requirements and expectations of employees via further contractual clauses or an accompanying handbook of policies and procedures. It is critical that an employer references any accompanying documentation such as a Handbook, a Safety Statement or perhaps Food Safety documentation as forming part of the contractual relationship in the Contract of Employment.

There are a large number of possible policies, procedures, rules, terms or conditions an employer could publish but in this article we are reviewing some must have policies, and recommend content that can prevent issues arising with employees

Absence/Illness

In a Contract or handbook we recommend you have a policy relating to absences from work for illness and that this policies addresses or references the following;



- Who does an employee contact if they will not be reporting for their shift?
- How can they make contact with their employer? What is acceptable; phonecall, email, text message etc
- When must a medical certificate be provided for an absence?
- In what circumstances can the employer refer an employee to a Company Doctor?
- What (if any) are the sick pay entitlements for employees?

Annual Leave

Employees are legally entitled to accrue annual leave. It is reasonable however for employers to have certain conditions in place with regard to how leave is applied for, and taken, by employees. Points to consider include;

- Are there peak business times when the granting of leave is not possible? (eg Christmas)
- How many days leave can an employee take at one time?
- Can an employee carry leave over from one year to the next and build up their days?
- How many employees from each department or work area can an employer have out on leave at the one time?

Disciplinary & Grievance

The content of these policies should match the practice on the ground when a disciplinary or grievance process is triggered. The procedures should, at a minimum, comply with the LRC Code of Practice but should also reference;

Disciplinary

- The level of Management authorised to issue each stage of warning
- The length of time each stage of warning will last on the employees file
- The time an employee has to appeal each warning
- Who an employee is authorised to have attend meetings with them at each stage of a process

Grievance

- Who does an employee contact in the first instance when they have a problem
- To whom does the grievance escalate if the employee is not satisfied with an outcome
- Who are the employee entitled to have with them at any grievance meeting.
- When is the employee required to put their issue in writing
- What options are available for either a formal or informal review of a grievance.

Social Networking

Social networking sites allow the thoughts and opinions of employees to be shared publicly with their friends and family but also creates the possibility of their post being 'liked' by or 'shared' with a wider audience.

People will post opinions on most elements of their life and this includes how they feel about their employer and/or work colleagues. A well prepared Social Networking Policy will alert employees to;

- Acceptable and unacceptable references to their employer on their Social Media profiles
- Acceptable and unacceptable employee access to Company social media profiles of their employer
- Reference to other relevant employer policies such as confidentiality, bullying/harassment (cyber bullying) and the use of company equipment.

Other Policies of Note that should be comprehensive and clear;

- Employee Discounts and Purchases
- Timekeeping Standards (start/finish and restbreaks)
- Data Protection
- Use of CCTV

As always, working in conjunction with Clare in REI, we are happy to advise and assist members with their HR queries, including the correct, relevant content of Contracts and Handbooks.



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John Duffy 01 408 6922 or email John.Duffy@rsmfgrs.ie

www.rsmfarrellgrantsparks.ie

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The Mystery Shopper is taking action! No more excuses - and that includes procrastination. Subtle reminders that exercise produces resilience and acts as a buffer to stress have been plentiful. And that, as well as the resulting feel-good factor, regular exercise should assist in the dropping of kilos and getting in shape. An absolute must before she takes a trip down the aisle for the second time, next year. To kick-start her new regime, the **MYSTERY SHOPPER** visited stores specialising in suitable footwear. The aim was to find comfortable walking and jogging shoes that will coax her to maintain daily exercise. The visits took place during the first week of September.

ELVERYS SPORTS

DUNDRUM TOWN CENTRE, DUBLIN 14

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Located in the Town Centre's 'Dublin South' building on Level Three, this spacious store boasts two floors. Extensive, well laid out ranges of sportswear, footwear and sports equipment strongly encourage browsing.

SELECTION: An excellent selection of women's running shoes, including Asics, Nike, New Balance, Adidas, Pro Touch and other brands.

GREETING & SERVICE: Warm greeting on entry, followed by proactive offer of assistance. The staff member was keen to assist the Mystery Shopper, investigating problems encountered when exercising, and what had made them stop. *Footbalance* analysis was explained and offered. The Mystery Shopper stood barefoot on a podoscope and had three images taken.

STAFF KNOWLEDGE: *Footbalance* findings showed that ankle movement was good, but slight pronation to the right foot. To support and correct foot alignment custom made insoles, moulded to their feet; available in-store within ten minutes. Structured gel cushioning were explained, along with shock absorption and other features. The staff member imparted in-depth product knowledge with ease.



RECOMMENDED: Recommended as best for the Mystery Shopper were Asics Gel-Zone 3 shoes for €84.99, adding custom made *Footbalance* insoles for €47. Alternatively, Asics Gel-Cumulus 17, for €138, without custom made insoles. Also New Balance 760 shoes for €79.99, for use with custom made insoles. A belt with built-in water bottle holder, €17.99, was recommended – as was daily exercise!

GOOD POINTS / BAD POINTS: Exceptionally good customer service. Excellent product ranges. Great store to browse!

MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING: A splendid visit; the Mystery Shopper left feeling highly motivated.



JD SPORTS

DUNDRUM TOWN CENTRE, DUBLIN 14

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: This spacious store, with mezzanine, is located on Level Two of the Town Centre. Colourful clothing displays dominate the ground floor. The store is not particularly inviting, appearing darker the further one ventures.

SELECTION: Mainly sports fashion and footwear items, with a reasonable selection of women's running shoes, including Nike, Asics, Adidas and others.

GREETING & SERVICE: Despite browsing alongside three staff members, no greeting or offer of assistance was forthcoming. Having waited several minutes, assistance was sought.



STAFF KNOWLEDGE: Very little product knowledge was divulged; brief interaction was half-hearted. The staff member immediately recommended Asics running shoes, as being 'very good' and 'gel filled'. On further questioning, these were deemed to 'give good support'.

RECOMMENDED: Asics Gel - Cumulus 17 running shoes for €138 were recommended, with stock availability and sizes confirmed. Before resuming other duties, staff member indicated Nike footwear and advised the Mystery Shopper to find themselves a pair that fitted.

GOOD POINTS / BAD POINTS: Initial recommendation was unwittingly appropriate. Disappointing service and small selection of running shoes tempted the Mystery Shopper to run – from this store. Bypassing the nearby handmade chocolate outlet!

MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING: Nothing to prompt a return visit.



LIFESTYLE SPORTS

DUNDRUM TOWN CENTRE, DUBLIN 14

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: A large, brightly lit store, located in the Town Centre's Level One, crammed with stock. Good category signage.



SELECTION: Wide selection of sportswear, footwear and accessories. Good variety of women's running shoes, including Adidas, Asics, Nike and Puma. Large footwear chart displayed.

GREETING & SERVICE: Cheery greetings by friendly staff members whilst browsing. Prompt, friendly offer of assistance.

STAFF KNOWLEDGE: Knowledgeable staff member discussed foot pronation, mid-foot support and benefits of extra gel cushioning, in detail. Gave good product demonstrations. Enquired about any possible foot concerns. Suggested extra cushioning as best solution.

RECOMMENDED: Adidas Energy Boost esm running shoes for €100, offering additional mid-foot support. Alternatively, Asics Gel-Cumulus 17, €130, with extra cushioning and moulded memory foam heel. A neoprene phone carrier, €17, with adjustable armband was offered.

GOOD POINTS / BAD POINTS: Good product selection. Very good customer service and product knowledge. Lack of space in footwear area.

MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING: A most pleasant visit. Helpful advice offered. Food for thought, perhaps. Exercise looms!





Karl McKeever, Managing Director, Visual Thinking

THE BRAND BUILT OUR

I have a confession to make: a growing number of cities that I visit around the world leave me unfulfilled and uninspired. It's not something that is easy to admit. I'm fortunate enough to travel a lot, thanks to my agency's work with several leading international retailers. I get to see and experience a lot that many others do not. And to make such a claim may appear more than a little unappreciative. But it's a statement that's not without strong foundation.

Many bemoan the fact that globalisation now means there is often little difference in the retail mix between malls in Westfield Stratford or Westfield Sydney. For all the positives that have come from retail's globalisation in recent years, one negative effect of this, and something that has affected many developed countries, is the lack of new retail landmarks that act as focal points in international cities. Sure, the world is now a smaller place. But does that mean that cityscapes and retailers have to become undistinguishable from one another?

In truth, too many cities around the world seem determined to tear all their buildings down and start again in the rush to develop the next retail behemoth. The result is a loss of characteristic shopping streets, with the landscape besieged by

Today, new examples of truly iconic retail developments are few and far between.

faceless retail developments. My favourite cities combine retail schemes that serve the needs of the modern shopper with genuine landmarks that speak to our eyes and our minds, and build the right foundations that will, ultimately, become tomorrow's retail legacy.

The great retail spaces of the past left a legacy much greater than the sum of what they offered instore – creating cathedrals to retailing, in buildings that befitted the grand nature of the retailer's offer. Think Macy's in New York, which has stood proudly in the city since 1858, or Selfridges on London's Oxford Street, which opened in 1909, not to mention

Conran's home in the iconic Michelin Building. These buildings have become iconic in their own right and in many ways epitomise the concept of destination retailing much better than many of the modern, mega-malls that claim to achieve the same goal.

Today, new examples of truly iconic retail developments are few and far between. Although Dubai's ability to exert a flair for the breathtaking and the surreal will no doubt deliver another game-changer when construction of its proposed "Mall of the World", complete with climate-controlled streets, eventually gets underway.



SELFRIDGES



MACY'S

In the main though, retail tenants to third party landlords have overtaken the desire for proprietary property ownership. Many of the world's cities are becoming less individual or recognisable. Anonymous big box retail schemes and shopping centres have created a deluge of flat-pack stores that sadly, in some cases, are as nondescript as the products they sell.



CONRAN



HEALS

DS THAT CITIES



Whilst this is a sign of the times, with retailers keen to roll-out uniform brand messaging across all of their stores, I feel as though the soft power that exists in a stores' exterior architecture to reflect the retailers' own design ethos has been lost. Not to mention, perhaps even more worryingly, some level of community integration.

exterior store architecture says as much about the brand as the products instore. The space that Selfridges occupies in Birmingham's Bullring mall, although over a decade old now, still remains an interesting architectural destination within its own right and an iconic city landmark.

Some retailers, such as Apple, have a precedent for expending large sums of money putting its flagship stores in iconic buildings. Whilst it is not creating something new, locations

The process of branding through architecture-created destinations, landmarks and meeting points in a city. They formed part of everyday conversation and gave many cities a distinctive identity. Now convenience and efficiency has, for the most part, taken over any sense of providing a true 'home' for a brand's values and the desire for community engagement. And that's a real shame.

That's not to say that retailers are no longer creating these brand-defining spaces. There are still some modern day examples, such as the retail development that's home to Casa Palacio in Mexico and The Micasa store in São Paulo, Brazil. The latter is a truly stunning example of a retailer whose

such as the Opera store in Paris and 5th Avenue in New York have become modern landmarks in their own right – a piece of high street furniture that those cities would now be much poorer without. Taking its minimalistic, clean-cut vision of luxury, Apple has used swathes of glass and metal to modernise parts of buildings, leaving little doubt in the mind of the consumer as to which brand owns the shop.

This change throughout our city centres is just a by-product of the times, but I do personally look around at buildings on my international travels and miss the architectural branding that once made them so instantly recognisable. So as you next journey around your favourite city, take a minute to look up and around you, and

rather than being easily wowed by the latest 'me-too' retail development, try instead taking time to appreciate some of the iconic buildings that were once as recognisable as the brands they were made for.



MICASA



CASA PALACIO

