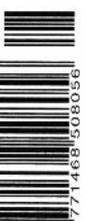


Ireland Takes On Europe Online





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Welcome to the **QUARTER 3 2016** edition of Retail Times

Summer greetings to you all and I hope that the business environment is improving. Whilst most REI members are reporting a pickup in trading conditions it is quite clear that the retail economic recovery is still very fragile. Many members are "buying turnover" through discounted margins and this aligned to increasing staff and utility costs is putting a significant strain on profitability.

There has been much discussion recently about the matter of labour cost inflation. I certainly agree that everyone working in retail deserves an equitable salary but we also need to be cautious. The Government does not appear to understand that when they increase the national minimum wage there is a spiraling effect for every employee in a company as more senior staff also expect a commensurate increase in their wages which is patently unsustainable for most businesses. The increase in the National Minimum Wage in January 2016 led to over 100,000 retail employees receiving a pay increase and this in turn forced employers to reduce labour hours to curb costs. REI suggest that Government must assist businesses to accommodate any further increased labour costs by reducing the employers PRSI from 8.50% to the 4.25% rate. We welcome reference to a reduction in the PRSI rate in the "Programme For Government" and urge the political parties to turn words into actions.

Thank you so much to the many hundreds of members who attended one of the most successful and informative REI Retail Retreats to-date, which was held in May in the Mount Wolseley Estate, Carlow. It really was a great two days which I personally enjoyed and picked up many new innovative ideas that I brought back to my business. It was also a great opportunity to network with fellow professional retailers, corporate partners, IT specialists and the many County Councils who were represented. We are already planning and looking forward to the 2017 Retreat which should not be missed.

We have a lot to look forward to through the latter part of the year. The highlight is the hosting of another iteration of the "Retail Management Programme" to be held in September and October 2016. The previous four day programme was a sellout earlier in the year and the feedback from students was that they found it hugely beneficial. Talent retention is a significant issue in retail and the "Retail Management Programme" allows retailers to invest in their employees and incentivise careers in retail.

I look forward to meeting with many of you at the Retail Excellence Ireland Awards Event being held on 5th November in Galway and wish everyone who has entered the very best of luck in the competition.

Best regards,
Colm Carroll

COLM CARROLL
Chairman Carrolls Irish Gifts
Chairman Retail Excellence Ireland

COLM CARROLL CHAIRMAN, RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND



RETAIL EXCELLENCE IRELAND BOARD MEMBERS

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TRUSTEE: Sharen McCabe, McCabes Pharmacy Group • Kevin Jephson, Ardkeen Quality Food Store • Keith Rogers, Ecco Footwear

Bites

Spotted on a visit to Downing Street recently was none other than Cormac Tobin **McKesson LloydsPharmacy UK** CEO.



Austin Reed UK administrators plan to close 120 stores and make 1,000 people redundant by mid-year.

Online food delivery company **Deliveroo** has recently reported revenues of €166million. The company specialises in delivering takeout food from restaurants and is operational in twelve countries including Ireland.

Debenhams have appointed Sergio Bucher as their new CEO. Mr. Bucher moves from **Amazon** having been their European fashion head.

XL Ireland is planning to open twenty new stores in 2016 according to their parent **BWG Foods**. The news follows the opening of twenty three new stores in 2015.

Sainsburys have announced that their Finance Director John Rogers will move to become the next CEO of **Argos** following their acquisition by the grocery retailer.

Tesco have announced the sale of their **Giraffe** Restaurant business in the UK.

Well done to Gillian Maxwell and Niall Stringer of **Tiger Retail Ireland** who have been selected as finalists for the EY Entrepreneur of the Year awards.

Luxury fashion retailer **Ralph Lauren** has recently confirmed it is to shut fifty stores with the loss of 1,000 jobs. The retailer blamed declining sales and intense competition.



REI sprinkling more magic dust later in the year

REI is delighted to announce that due to overwhelming demand, the Retail Management Development Programme will run again over four days in September and October next. The programme will take place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown, Dublin and will feature, amongst others, James Burke – Retail Expert, Alf Dunbar – You Are the Difference (Customer Service expert), Ken Hughes – leading consumer, shopper behaviourist and many, many more retail experts and member case studies. James will cover topics such as strengthening management skill-sets, developing aggressive sales growth tactics and monitoring and improving store performance. Helen O'Dowd, Head of Education with REI commented: 'The response to the programme which we ran in early 2016 was incredible and we received fantastic feedback from both delegates and their own line managers. The programme is focussed towards owners, managers, supervisors and team leaders with potential and if you have talent which you want to retain and wish to further develop their skills and confidence then this is the programme they should attend'. To register, please go to www.retailexcellence.ie or contact antoinette@retailexcellence.ie. Please note places are limited. Feedback received following the programme earlier in the year included one great testimonial from a member owner who said: 'I don't know what magic dust was sprinkled on all my managers who attended the programme, but it is incredible how positive it has been for them'.

JOHNSTON SHOPFITTERS EXPAND INTO UK

For the past eighteen months Johnston Shopfitters have been operating successfully in the United Kingdom. In order to better support UK customers, the store design and fitting company made the decision to open offices, warehousing and light manufacturing in Doncaster. Commenting on the news Andrew Johnston, Managing Director, Johnston Shopfitters said: "Our main design and manufacturing will always be in Ireland, where we have in the last year added over 26,000 Sq. Ft. to our production facilities. Our overall company expansion has created 10 additional jobs in Ireland and 3 so far in the UK, with an aggressive recruitment drive in both countries ongoing at present. We are really enjoying this opportunity of continuing to bring our unique retail solutions to both our new and existing Irish & UK retailers".



Johnston Shopfitters open in Doncaster, United Kingdom

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GROMÓR PROVING A HUGE SUCCESS



One of many successful GroMór events being hosted nationwide

The 2016 GroMór campaign is in full bloom this year with over twenty events taking place so far across the country. The country is certainly getting out growing this year with hundreds of people having attended the many free events happening in their local GroMór garden centre. The campaign hasn't gone unnoticed with the press getting behind the campaign. Many articles have featured in both national and local press to highlight the benefits of gardening. Keelan Bourke, Member Relationship Manager, Retail Excellence Ireland said: "It is fantastic to see the public really get involved with this initiative. We have developed an avid group of followers who are now interacting in a meaningful way with their local GroMór garden centre. A lot of hard work has gone into this year's campaign by the REI GroMór committee and it's fantastic to see the reward in people getting out and taking an interest in their garden, patio or even balcony". There are many more free GroMór events planned with our expert ambassadors. Visit www.gromor.ie to find your nearest one. The GroMór campaign is operated in partnership with Bord Bia, Bord Na Mona, Westland and a number of nursery growers. There are sixty five participant GroMór garden centres nationwide.

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Aldi and **Lidl** have been named as two of the most trustworthy brands in Ireland. According to the Reputations Agency report both retailers were listed in the top ten. The survey was topped by **Bord Bia**.



What an honour it was at the recent **REI Retreat** to present all prior REI Chairpeople with a medal to say a big thank you. Thank you Kevin, Paul, Damian, Stephen, Sharen, Marian, Keith, Oonagh and Colm!

In a UK survey **Ao.com** was voted as the best retailer to work for. **Topman** ranked second while **Ikea** came in third.

M&S have decided to axe music from all stores with immediate effect. The decision was taken following extensive customer research.

Maxol have recently announced a fuel supply partnership with Munster based **Garvey Group**. The agreement pertains to three **Garvey Group** owned forecourt stores.

Musgrave's sales in 2015 topped €4.4billion and profit grew to €67million compared to a loss of €9.6million recorded in 2014.

Longstanding **Penneys | Primark** executive Breege O'Donoghue is to retire, ending a thirty seven year career with the company. The County Clare native has been instrumental in the emphatic growth of the Irish retailer.

Pizza delivery company **Dominos** have recently announced six hundred new jobs for their Irish operations. The jobs are part of a major recruitment drive which will result in ten thousand new positions in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Primark has opened its latest US store in Danbury, Connecticut. The opening in the Danbury Fair Mall is the brand's third store in North Eastern USA, following launches last year in Boston and Philadelphia.

BOOHOO REVENUE SOARS BY 63%

Online fashion retailer Boohoo has reported an impressive 63% increase in revenue for the 12 months to the end of February 2016. Revenue for the company hit £110million (€138m) while profits trebled to £10.7million (€12.6m). The online retailer headquartered in Manchester also reported that active customers over the period grew by 54% to 2.3million. Commenting joint CEO's Mahmud Kamani and Carol Kane said: "The past year has been an exciting one, and we are very proud of the growth we have seen in both our UK and International markets. The launch of new product categories, investment in our warehouse and IT infrastructure, and of course the investment and development of our teams all support our future growth. The company is well positioned to benefit from its transformation to becoming a PLC after its successful IPO".

Boohoo report impressive sales and profit growth



NCI REI STUDENTS COMPLETE CERTIFICATE IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT

Retail Excellence Ireland and the National College of Ireland are delighted to have had over sixty retail managers complete our Level 7 Accredited Certificate in Retail Management recently. Retail is constantly evolving and it's therefore important to invest in your people to drive future growth. Since September 2015, students have completed modules on such pertinent topics as people management, finance for retail, customer relations and retail operations. The certificate was designed taking into account the work



pressures of retail and thus much of the course content was delivered online allowing students to complete much of the programme from home. Following the successful delivery of the first iteration of the certificate, REI and NCI will be beginning a Diploma in Retail Management and also a repeat of the Certificate in Retail Management in September.

Expressions of interest should be forwarded to Keelan Bourke, Member Relationship Manager at REI at Keelan@retailexcellence.ie.



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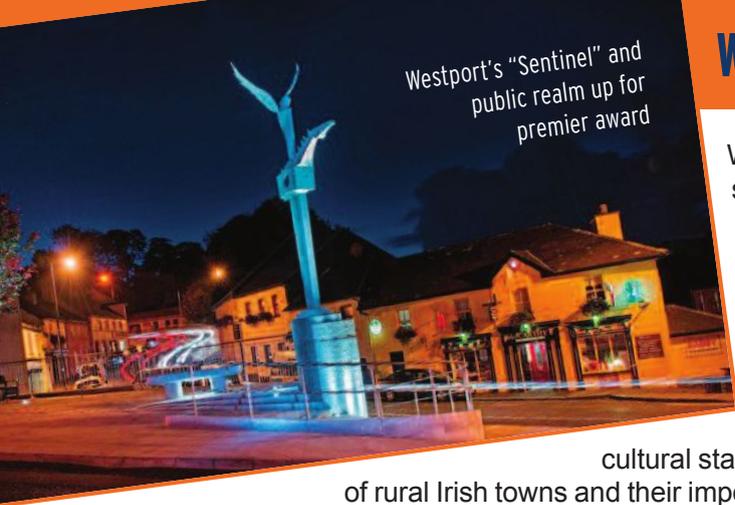
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Westport's "Sentinel" and public realm up for premier award

WESTPORT PUBLIC REALM UP FOR MAJOR AWARD

Westport's new 'Sentinel' sculpture and its surrounding public realm space have been shortlisted for one of Ireland's premier architectural awards by the Royal Institute of Architects Ireland. The project is a collaboration between Achill Island sculptor Ronan Halpin and Mayo County Council's Town Architect to Westport, Simon Wall. The Sentinel was commissioned through a national competition to celebrate Westport winning The Irish Times 'Best Place to Live in Ireland' competition. The finished piece was proudly unveiled recently, by American Ambassador to Ireland, Mr Kevin O'Malley, whose grandparents are from Westport. Commenting on the news, Westport Town Architect Simon Wall said: "The project while small, makes a significant contemporary cultural statement, as to the continued relevance and vibrancy of rural Irish towns and their important contribution to the health of our nation".

SMYTHS TOYS PARTNER WITH FASTCOM

Fastcom, the leading network management company, has helped Smyths Toys reduce its IT costs by €50,000 following a recent €150,000 deal. Over a three-year period, Fastcom will provide Smyths Toys with a complete network management solution giving the leading retailer a complete view of their entire network across 86 stores in Ireland and the UK. Unplanned maintenance costs and number of callouts at Smyths Toys have now been cut by 50%. Smyths Toys IT Network and Infrastructure Manager Seamus Hogan commented: "Before partnering with Fastcom, we didn't have any visibility or control of the network; it just wasn't there. Fastcom allows us to connect the dots all the way through. Very quickly we can see where a specific problem impacts, how it impacts and how it connects. Trade is highly reliant on LAN & WAN connectivity; credit, gift and loyalty card transactions all rely heavily on network availability. On a busy day, a small outage can have significant impact".

Seamus Hogan, Smyths Toys and Ross Palmer of Fastcom launch the new partnership



50TH YEAR CELEBRATION FOR COUNTY BOUTIQUE

On the 14th October, 2016, the County Boutique, Ennis, will mark 50 years in retail with a weekend of celebrations being planned. An in-store birthday party will be held on Friday 14th October. Over the weekend, an exhibition of customer outfits since 1966, together with corresponding photographic display, called the October Exhibition, will take place. Customers are being asked to bring in outfits and photos from the past for the exhibition. An "Afternoon of Fashion" in the Old Ground Hotel on Sunday 16th October, will complete the celebrations and see the store herald the latest era of fashion. With a multiple REI Award winning flagship store in Ennis and new Nenagh store, County Boutique's commitment is to provide unique, covetable pieces and excellent customer care to its customers. A new website has been launched, www.countyboutique.ie, with online retail in the pipeline for early 2017 and with a social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, County Boutique is poised to embrace the future. Maeve Flouch, Director, said: "With the best selection of Irish designer brands in County Clare, a host of exclusive international labels and 50 years in business, we pride our success on keeping the customer at the heart of everything we do".

50th year celebrations planned at the County Boutique



MAXI ZOO OPENS EIGHTEENTH STORE IN CLAREHALL WITH 15 NEW JOBS

Europe's number one pet retailer Maxi Zoo has opened its eighteenth Irish store at Clarehall Retail Park, Malahide Road in North Dublin. The new 8,000 sq. ft. store, owned by Cork couple Tony and Alice Cross opened to the public in April with the creation of 15 new jobs. Maxi Zoo has experienced significant growth in Ireland since opening its first store in Ballincollig, Cork in 2006 and plans to open up to 15 new stores across the country over the next five years. "We love animals and we provide the best advice and products that pet parents can find. We know that happier pets make happier people", said Alice Cross Executive Director of Maxi Zoo Ireland. All staff working at the store have been trained as pet experts and are available to share their knowledge in animal nutrition and welfare with pet parents. "Our in-store pet experts are always on hand to provide customers with exactly what they are looking for and that is why we are such a successful brand," said Alice.



New North Dublin store for Maxi Zoo



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RETAIL BENEFITS: STRATEGIC POS/CRM SMS MARKETING

OBJECTIVE

InteractSMS CRM data integration's main purpose is to bring businesses' overall contact and strategic data to the SMS world. Using this data Phonovation's **InteractSMS** can filter a client's entire database records and automate campaigns to deliver messaging that targets pre-set criteria allowing for a much more enhanced customer communication strategy.

BENEFITS

Phonovation's retail clients, rather than sending a one-fits-all broadcast to all their opted-in client database, retailers now have the option to add "Smart filtering" to their raw data. This will allow a subset of the retailer's audience to be targeted with a more personalised message such as Loyalty Vouchers/Coupons based on past purchasing habits or a very simple "We haven't seen you in a while" message. This form of messaging creates a closer bond between retailers and their customers.

The integration between Phonovation's **InteractSMS** service and the retailer's EPOS & CRM systems will have a direct cost benefit due to a more accurate set of mobiles to send to, while also enhancing more revenue effectiveness by reducing the amount of messages per campaign with a more dedicated and personalised message.

CRM TECHNICAL INTEGRATION, HOW IT WORKS

CRM data integration with **InteractSMS** can be accomplished in two ways: through a daily excel/csv file upload sent to a dedicated secure ftp folder on the internet, or through direct database import. Either of the two ways have the purpose of bringing pre-selected columns

of information to the **InteractSMS** engine. The integration is a daily occurrence that brings the new CRM data from the previous day. If the retailer has multiple stores, all stores data will be uploaded in the same routine.



CRM DATA AVAILABILITY FOR CAMPAIGNS

Each retail business has its own unique metrics to contact their audience. However, there is a common set of columns that are typical in such integration. The usual set of columns on a CRM data integration might be: **Customer First and Last Name, Mobile number, Purchase Date, Purchase Amount, Product Purchased, Purchase Quantity, Store Name/ID, Store County, Brand, Supplier, Male, Female, loyalty member Etc. Etc.** When the retailer requests this level of integration a new List will be automatically available on the platform allowing for messaging to be personalised based on particular criteria.

InteractSMS can filter all forms of customer information and to-date many companies are using the service to link in with existing loyalty schemes making SMS the perfect medium for the delivery of vouchers and coupons which are also linked to the retailers' EPOS systems.

CAMPAIGN FILTERING - WHERE CRM DATA GETS SMART. EXAMPLE

As an example the Retailer wants to send a campaign to both Dublin and Cork counties for all their customers that have paid more than €100 for goods, but have not been back in the retail outlet in the last year:

We call this the "**Campaign Rule**".

Initial set: Masterlist has 150,000 records

Filtering data: Counties = Dublin and Cork

Last Purchase Date >= 1 year ago

Total Spend >= 100

Filtered data: 25,000 records

The **InteractSMS** system filters the data by combining multiple columns of information brought from the external POS systems.

The message can now be personalised to entice the customer back to the store in either of those two counties.

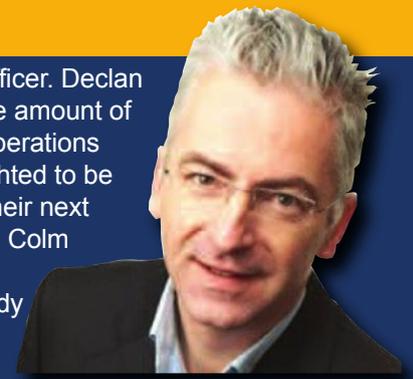
If you haven't already considered integrating SMS into your marketing strategy or if you already use this medium but are unsure of the added benefits of integrating with your CRM please don't hesitate to contact Phonovation for more detailed information on how best to utilise your customer data and enhance your customer communication strategy.

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NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE AT CARROLLS IRISH GIFTS

Carrolls Irish Gifts have recently announced the appointment of Mr. Declan Delanty as their new Chief Executive Officer. Declan commenced in the role in May and succeeds Mr. Ray O'Connell, who retired in 2015. Declan brings with him a huge amount of retail experience having worked as Managing Director of Links of London, Folli Follie Group, and previously held Operations and Finance Director roles in Brown Thomas and Arnotts. Commenting on his appointment Declan said: "I am delighted to be appointed CEO of Carrolls Irish Gifts and have the opportunity to work with this very successful company through their next phase of growth and the retail development of this hugely iconic, Irish gift retailer". Company founder and Chairman Colm Carroll added: "After an exhaustive interview process that attracted applicants from both national and international candidates, we are delighted to welcome a person of the calibre and experience of Declan Delanty. Whilst we already have a highly motivated and efficient senior team in Carrolls, I have no doubt that Declan will be a great leader for the company in the years ahead". The 100% Irish owned company was founded by Colm Carroll in 1982. Carrolls currently employ more than 350 staff throughout their 17 stores based in Dublin, Cork, Kilkenny and Belfast.

Declan Delanty appointed CEO of Carrolls Irish Gifts



TOTALHEALTH PHARMACIES GET ACTIVE IN COMMUNITIES



Oliver McGuinness, McGuinness totalhealth Pharmacy, Roscommon presenting a team first aid kit to the Roscommon under10 soccer team

Leading pharmacy group totalhealth Pharmacies have been busy donating first aid kits to sports clubs in their communities. The kits have been donated to over 500 GAA, Soccer, Rugby, Camogie, Tennis, Golf, Athletics, Cycling and a host of other clubs across Ireland. Commenting on the news John Arnold, totalhealth Commercial Director said: "We recognise the contribution clubs and teams all over the country make in their local communities and are delighted to be able to assist the local clubs in our communities with this very valuable resource. 270,000 volunteers nationwide are involved in making sport happen in towns and villages all over the country. The benefits of sport to the health of the country are well established. totalhealth pharmacies are part of our communities and with over 60 pharmacies across the country we are delighted to support our communities".

TOPAZ ANNOUNCES €6.5 MILLION INVESTMENT IN NEW STATIONS

Topaz has transformed the landscape of Ballysimon, Co. Limerick by undertaking a full redevelopment of the local service station. The unveiling of Topaz's redeveloped site at Ballysimon has created 10 new jobs and an investment of €3million at the site, which is located on the Ballysimon Road in Limerick. The Ballysimon launch comes fresh off the back of a recent announcement by Topaz, that they have invested €3million and created a further 18 new jobs with the development of a state of the art forecourt in Dublin servicing the residents of Citywest and the surrounding locality. Having officially launched last April, the brand new Topaz 'City Avenue' site like Ballysimon features free Wi-Fi access, comfortable café seating, fresh food offers, Ad Blue pumps and hand crafted barista coffee. Seán Moriarty, Retail Director at Topaz, was on hand to unveil the new Ballysimon store and said: "We are delighted to announce the addition of 28 jobs at our new service stations in Ballysimon and City Avenue. Both stations, as part of our Re.Store network, reflect our ongoing commitment to communities by offering a revolutionary forecourt and convenience experience at sites nationwide". REI 1st Choice Suppliers Shop Equipment Limited completed the store fit-out in both locations.



At the announcement were Alan Brogan, Sean Moriarty, Retail Director Topaz, Niall Anderton, Managing Director Topaz and Noel Darcy, Area Manager Topaz

ZINMOBI LAUNCH REI PREFERRED BULK SMS RATE

Leading marketing solutions company ZinMobi have launched a preferred bulk SMS rate for all REI members. The 1st Choice Supplier to REI has launched the rate to better support REI retailers and extend their already impressive retail client base. Commenting on the news ZinMobi CEO Brian Stephenson said: "Consumers read SMS within minutes of receiving them so it's an extremely powerful marketing channel when executed correctly. Our retail clients enjoy stronger sales and higher conversions from our data-driven approach to mobile messaging. We are eager to offer our expertise and support to the wider REI membership through the launch of these rates as well as sophisticated features and services for smarter, more targeted mobile messaging". REI CEO David Fitzsimons said "It is great to partner with ZinMobi. They have proven the support they can offer our members through their work with many retail brands. The launch of a 3.4cent rate to all members is very competitive and ZinMobi's expertise will support our members in growing their sales and enhancing consumer engagement". To avail of the REI member rate please contact Annette Grealish at 066-7185721 or email sales@zinmobi.com.

Retail Excellence Ireland
Preferred Customer SMS Rates

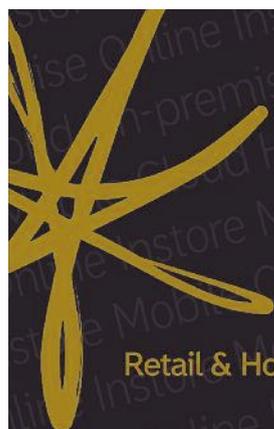
SMS Package	Cost Per Message
100% Direct Routes	3.4c
90% Direct + 10% International/Wholesale Routes*	3.2c
80% Direct + 20% International/Wholesale Routes*	2.9c
65% Direct + 35% International/Wholesale Routes*	2.5c

Volume discounts available for retailers purchasing 500,000 credits or more

* International/wholesale routes are attractive but less reliable routes for sending bulk SMS. Lots of SMS companies send a portion of their messages via international/wholesale routes unbeknownst to their customers. There are still some very good connections but the mobile operators are actively blocking them. We will constantly be monitoring the delivery rates on these routes and advising our clients if there are any issues.

ZinMobi

ZinMobi and REI launch 3.4cent bulk SMS rate



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the NUMBERS

3.8

the percentage growth in the Irish grocery sector for the 12 weeks to the end of April 2016 according to Kantar Worldpanel

67.5

the millions euro profit recorded by grocery retailer Musgrave in 2015

8.5

the percentage like for like growth in clothing sales in 2015 reported by Sainsburys

500

the annual cost in billions STG£ of online product returns in the UK market according to Cantor Fitzgerald

1.3

the billions of STG£ reportedly lost by creditors following the BHS collapse

59

the percentage decrease in EBITDA reported by Monsoon for the 12 months to end of August 2015

193

the percentage increase in profit at Chinese retail giant Alibaba growing to €9.5billion for the year to March 2016

100

the millions of euro growth in the Leicester City local economy as a result of their team winning the Premier League 2015 / 2016

Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) Welcomes First Ever Retail Industry Spokesperson



Ciaran Lynch appointed as Labour Party retail industry spokesperson

Ireland's largest retail industry representative body has welcomed the appointment of Ciaran Lynch as the Labour Party Retail Industry spokesperson. Commenting on the news Retail Excellence Ireland CEO David Fitzsimons said "The appointment of Ciaran Lynch as the Labour Party retail spokesperson is a very welcome development. Retail does not enjoy the level of political support it deserves considering it is the largest industry in Ireland employing over 280,000 people. We hope that other political parties will take note and make similar appointments. Knowing Ciaran personally for many years I am very confident that Ciaran fully understands the issues afflicting our industry and is a great appointment by the Labour Party. We look forward to working with Ciaran in his new role".

REFUELLING THE GIFT CARD INDUSTRY



John Diviney, Director of Food and Trading Systems Applegreen, John Wall, FromMe2You and Joe Barrett, COO, Applegreen

Applegreen, the Irish forecourt fuel supplier, have signed up to be the first fuel station partner in the country to accept a third party gift card – FromMe2You. The FromMe2You multi-store gift card is providing new competition in the gift card market, which is expected to be worth over €1 billion by 2017. Applegreen joins many exclusive retailers that set FromMe2You apart from other gift cards. These include Smyths Toys, Compu b, Omniplex Cinemas, Homestore+More, Louis Copeland, Avoca and many more. Speaking about the development FromMe2You Managing Director, John Wall said: "We very much look forward to working with Applegreen. This is a very exciting addition to FromMe2You gift card's portfolio of retail

partners. We are delighted to be able to offer this to our customers. This is a real game changer". Commenting on the partnership Joe Barrett, Chief Operations Officer at Applegreen said: "We are delighted to kick off our partnership with FromMe2You and to accept their gift cards in our forecourts nationwide and to be the only forecourt retailer to do so. It made perfect sense for us to link up with FromMe2You to open up the doors for our customers to pay the way they want to. From a business perspective with the Small Benefit Exemption Scheme rising from €250 to €500 and of course the Christmas gifting season not too far away, this was an opportunity we had to take up. We look forward to seeing the partnership grow in the future." For more information on rewards & recognition please contact sales@me2you.ie or phone: (01) 554 2000.

ActionCOACH Business Coaching Wins Big

REI 1st choice supplier ActionCOACH Business Coaching Ireland recently picked up not one, but two highly coveted awards at the EMEA Business Excellence Awards hosted in Celtic Manor, Wales. The Business Coaching and Training organisation retained the 'Best Firm in Europe' award for the second year in a row. Business Coach, Rory Smyth was also awarded the highly coveted 'EMEA Business Coach of the Year' award. Both awards honour the outstanding results which ActionCOACH Business Coaching achieved with their SME and corporate clients across all industries. Client results demonstrated an increase in profit of 153% and a sales increase of 34% while client employment numbers jumped by 27%. Commenting on the win, ActionCOACH Managing Director Paul Fagan said: "It's a great honour to accept this award on behalf of my team and our clients. We love what we do, and look forward to helping many more Irish companies achieve their successes".



The ActionCOACH Team picked up two coveted awards



- Welcomed by thousands of Ireland's favourite stores
- Rewards platform to record & monitor employees paid benefits
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RETAIL TRAINING TO SUPPORT CUSTOMERS WITH MEMORY LOSS

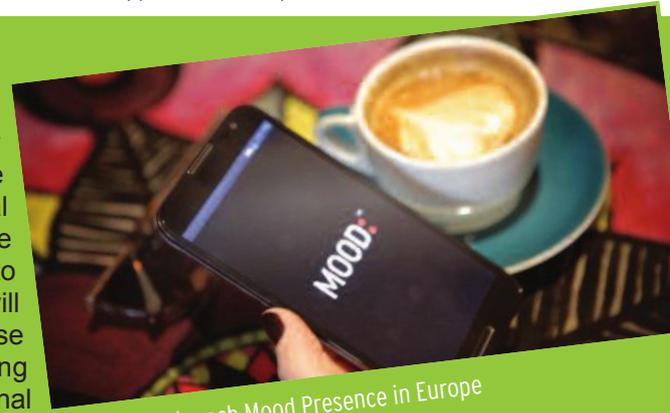
The rise in the prevalence of dementia, due to an ageing population is something we must all face up to. This includes not only families and health services, but also retailers. Two thirds of people with dementia are living in the community and many continue to carry out every day activities such as shopping. Yet, some will face some challenges in carrying out these everyday store visits and will need the support and understanding from retail staff. In response to this issue, the Dementia Elevator team, based at Dublin City University have developed free, online training for front line retail staff to provide some basic skills to support customers with memory loss. Total time required to complete the training is approximately 45 minutes and a certificate is available to those who complete the programme. A resource pack is available for group delivery of the training. There are 48,000 people living with dementia in Ireland and this figure is set to triple in the next 35 years. One in ten of people with dementia are under the age of 65. The programme is freely accessible on the Dementia Elevator website www.elevator-pst.com or contact Ann-Marie Coen at ann-marie.coen@dcu.ie.



Retailer training launched to support dementia patients

T-MOBILE DEPLOYS MOOD PRESENCE IN CZECH REPUBLIC

T-Mobile has been announced as the first business in Europe to deploy "Mood Presence" across its stores. The deployment will take place in the Czech Republic, offering the retailer an innovative channel to deliver personalized messages directly to its customers' mobile devices. Presence is an inaudible digital signal transmitted through the Mood Media global content delivery network of media players. Customers accessing the "My T-Mobile" app while in any T-Mobile store across the Czech Republic will receive special offers that are tailored to the particular store, as well as potentially receiving a gift. "This is a new marketing tool that will help us to better target our customers, and create a truly personalized experience for those walking into our stores. We will also be able use the tool for a range of activities, including recruitment, as well as delivering relevant content straight to our customers, such as promotional discounts, offers and special events" said Michal Dvorsky, Sales Director, T-Mobile.



Mood Media launch Mood Presence in Europe

RETAILERS SIGN UP AND SUPPORT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



April 2016 witnessed the first national campaign of its kind in Ireland for youth homelessness. Supported by the Irish Youth Foundation, the One for Ireland

campaign saw retailers nationwide ask customers to add €1 to their bill when they paid at the till. The campaign hopes to raise one million euro for the 1,700 homeless children living in Ireland today. Approximately 3 million transactions take place in Ireland every day and the campaign targeted to secure a third of all these transactions for the campaign. Created by seven recent graduates from Trinity College, the One for Ireland initiative is supported a large volunteer network divided Ireland into nine regions. All funds donated in each area will be used to improve the lives of homeless children and young people living in that specific area. If you want to sign up for next year's campaign visit www.oneforireland.ie/retailers or call the Irish Youth Foundation or call (01) 676 6535.

TWO DAYS OF POSITIVITY AT REI RETREAT



The Australian baker Tom O'Toole stole the show at the REI Retreat

Over 600 Irish Retail CEO's, Owners, Managers and key team members descended on Mount Wolseley Hotel, Carlow for the annual Retail Retreat on 10th | 11th May last. The two day conference was a resounding success with a huge sense of positivity very obvious amongst all in attendance. Delegates grasped the opportunity to learn from the very best in the industry, to

do business with the REI Corporate Partners and the Enterprise Tech Village exhibitors and also to visit the Town & City Investment Village where much business was conducted. Arboretum hosted an amazing social evening of networking, great food and outstanding hospitality for almost 350 of the delegates. A host of Irish and international presenters shared their inspirational thoughts and vision. The line-up included Ameer Chande of Alibaba, Paul West of Dalziel & Pow and presentations by Twitter, Facebook and Barclaycard amongst a long list. A massive contribution was made to the success of the event by REI Members such as Jennifer Kennedy of The Guinness Storehouse, Michael Walsh of Dubarry of Ireland and Ciarán McCormack of Compu b who all delivered first class sessions. Undoubtedly, the show was stolen by inspirational speaker Tom O'Toole who opened day two of the conference and received a lengthy standing ovation with the conference closing with a packed house remaining on to hear the highly entertaining Francis Brennan.

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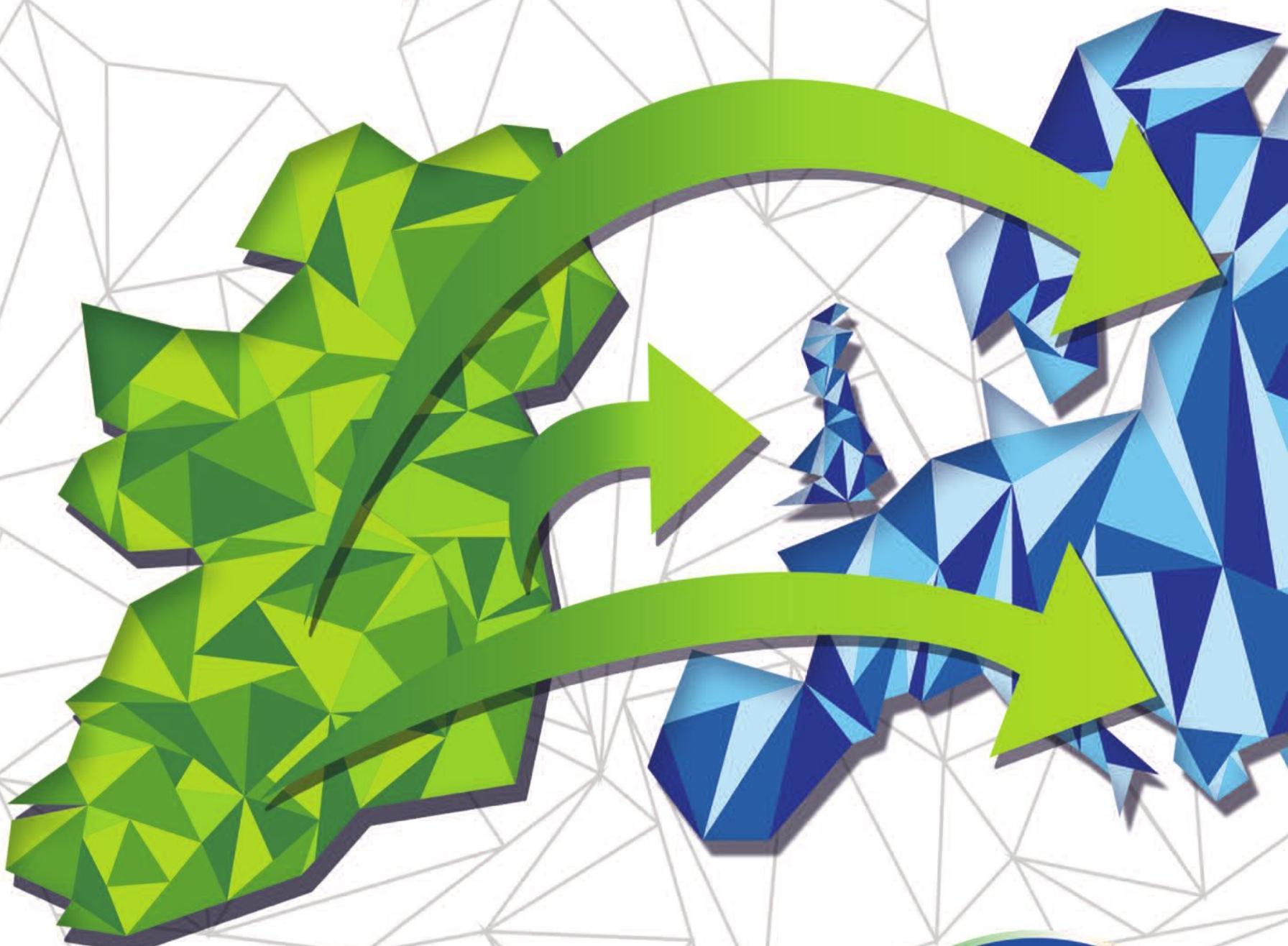
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Ireland Takes On Europe Online



IN 2016 the EU online market is predicted to grow to over €500 billion. In this edition of Retail Times David Campbell, eCommerce Executive at Retail Excellence Ireland explores the international online opportunity and challenges for Irish retailers.

With the Irish eCommerce market enjoying positive YOY growth and expected to surpass €6 billion for 2016 this has encouraged many SME retailers to explore the online opportunity. The UK online market is estimated to be worth a staggering €127 billion this year and many progressive retailers such as Tony Kealys have capitalised on this expanding marketplace.

Retail Excellence Ireland recently attended the Global eCommerce conference in Barcelona. The conference is the largest forum for international eCommerce bodies to come together to discuss the issues affecting cross-border eCommerce. Retail Excellence Ireland highlighted the main challenges facing Irish online retailers including fraud, online education, VAT, market size, logistics and trust.

At the conference it became clear that many nations are experiencing the same issues with the conundrum: What to do about online? Most retailers know the rate of change in the industry is extraordinary and the challenge is to remain relevant to Boomers, Millennials, Generation Z and so on. Come 2020 Gen Z. (born 1995-2009) will account for 40% of the population and online is a fundamental part of the lives of Gen Z customers.

One fundamental way REI can assist retailers with capturing some of the online opportunity internationally is through the launch of the eCommerce Europe Trustmark. "With an estimated worldwide turnover of \$2,205bn in 2015 and a 20.1% annual growth rate, the eCommerce market is booming. The Internet knows no borders and a well-functioning eCommerce market is by definition a global one", said Wijnand Jongen, Chair of the Global eCommerce Round Table and Chairman of the Executive Committee of eCommerce Europe. It is therefore important to work with international retail bodies to assist all retailers to unlock the market's potential and the EU Trustmark is a fantastic initiative to encourage cross-border eCommerce.



Barriers to eCommerce Trade

Across all nations the need to encourage more SME's to sell online was highlighted by all those in attendance at the Barcelona conference. Presently in Europe only 16% of SME's are selling online, with only half of these selling cross-border. This worrying statistic is however not surprising as it can be extremely challenging and costly to create a digital presence. We know that SME's account for approximately 70% of all businesses in Ireland. Therefore it is essential that we devise a national strategy to further assist them to make the transition online. Fail in this challenge now and the landscape of our highstreets in a few years' time will be changed forever.

Throughout the past year the European eCommerce Foundation surveyed over 430 retailers across all European nations including Ireland in order to identify the most common barriers to cross-border eCommerce trade. The results showed that the main barriers highlighted by Retail Excellence Ireland are also affecting eCommerce across Europe.

EU Legal Frameworks

For 59% of the companies that sell cross-border or are planning to do so the different legal frameworks present one of the greatest cross-border eCommerce barriers to overcome. Dealing with 28 different sets of rules for data protection, privacy, consumer and contract law is incredibly burdensome for online merchants. Both businesses and consumers need a single rule to achieve a Single European Market. The survey highlighted data protection, consumer rights and contract laws as the three largest legal barriers.



REI eCommerce Executive David Campbell and REI eCommerce Chairperson Roisin Woods at the eCommerce Europe event in Barcelona

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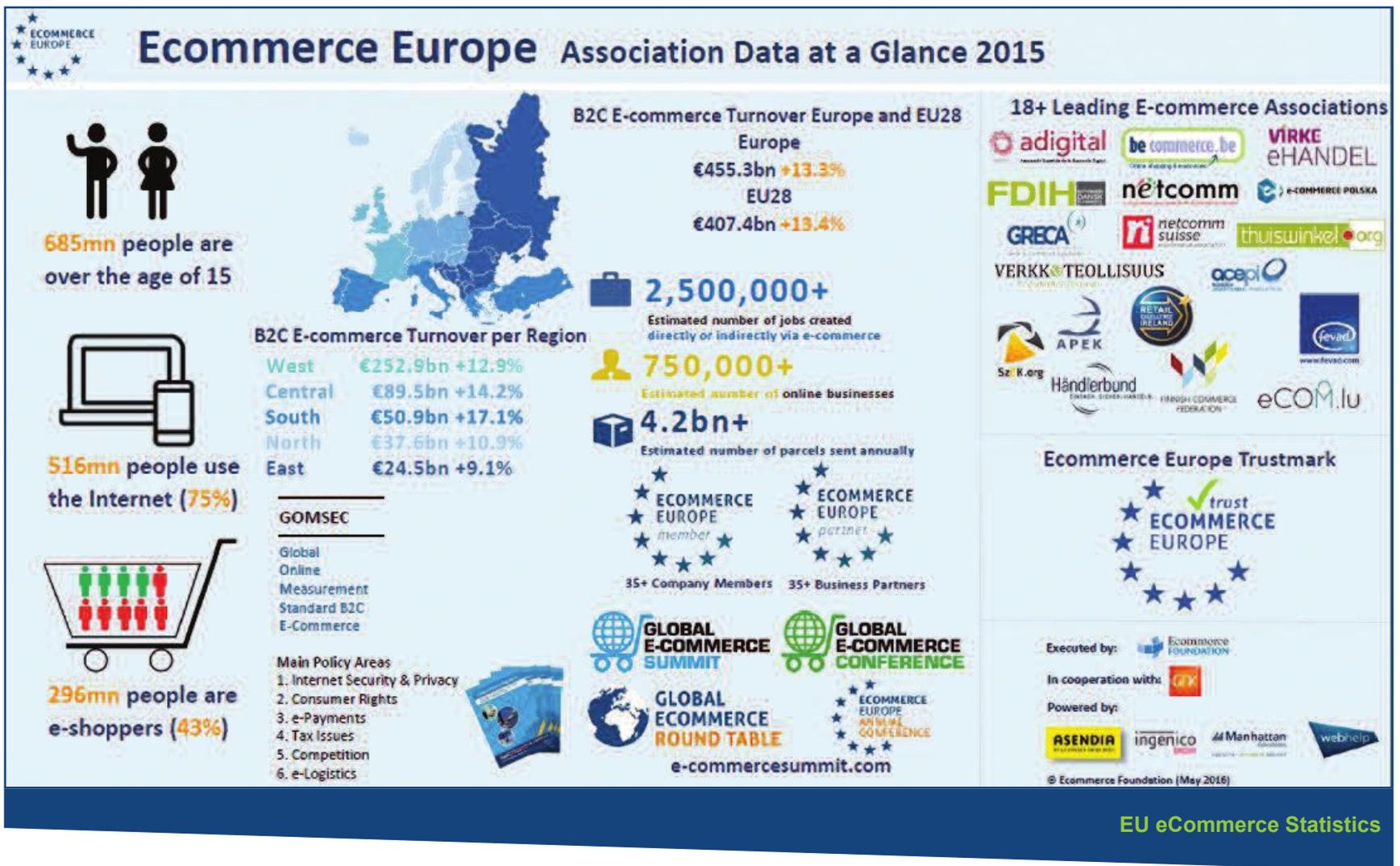
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Patrick McCormack, Managing Director, Sam McCauley Chemists Group

May 2016



The harmonization of data is fully supported by eCommerce Europe but they recommend that any updated legislation must not incur a large cost or administrative burden for retailers and in particular SME's who need full support to enhance their online presence. Any updated legislation should take into account recent evolvments in technology for analysis and data collection in order to keep the EU eCommerce market competitive. This will assist merchants when tailoring their business strategies to the changing consumer demands of the future. A real single market needs standardised regulation for all cross-border sales whether it be offline or online and must include the sale of tangible goods, services and digital content. There is also a need for consumer and contract regulations to be simplified in order to ensure easy interpretation by both consumers and SME's. Typically consumers and retailers are sometimes not fully aware of their relationship within a contract due to the fact that the legal framework is often far too complex.

Taxation Systems (VAT)

VAT rates still represented difficult barriers to overcome for 48% of businesses engaging in cross-border eCommerce activity. Legal uncertainty of VAT rules, high VAT administrative costs and VAT registration were highlighted as the most problematic issues for retailers selling abroad. A harmonized VAT rate in the future would promote cross-border eCommerce as currently there are 75 different VAT rates with the lowest (Luxembourg, 17%) and the highest (Hungary, 27%).

As part of the EU digital market strategy launched in May 2015, a central point made was that a simplification of the VAT rates would have significant benefit for SME's trading online across the EU. A common VAT threshold is needed to promote competition and cross-border trade for SME's. The VAT threshold could potentially have no registration required in other member states and prove extremely beneficial to smaller retailers by removing the need to invest resources in verifying the residence of the consumer & displaying individual prices specific to every jurisdiction and consumer.

With non-EU suppliers able to supply VAT-free goods under the current EU exemption for imports of small goods, European retailers are at a significant disadvantage. From eCommerce Europe's VAT study the results highlighted that €150 million VAT-free goods were imported in 2015 into the EU from non-EU nations!

Logistics

eCommerce has changed the postal and logistics industry forever. Logistics and distribution represent a barrier for cross-border eCommerce for 33% of those surveyed. Retailers have indicated that numerous barriers still remain on issues including quality and transparency of logistics services. eCommerce has now shifted the focus of delivery towards demands of the modern consumer with expectation levels constantly rising.



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Retailers and consumers need a European-wide delivery system with very transparent standards in order to create more innovation and greater transparency in the logistics chains. Additional requirements include affordable delivery options, flexibility and more information from delivery service providers.

A further consideration when it comes to logistics is product packaging. Efficient packaging will save on distribution space and reduce logistics costs as well as delivering significant environmental benefits.

The Irish eCommerce Trustmark

The importance of creating trusting relationships with customers beyond borders cannot be underestimated. The introduction of the National Trustmark by different countries and having accessibility to the eCommerce Europe Trustmark was highlighted as a big step in the right direction in assisting retailers to grow internationally online. To support Irish retailers looking to trade cross-border REI recently launched the Irish eCommerce Trustmark which when awarded also carries the European-wide recognised eCommerce Europe Trustmark. The Irish eCommerce Trustmark will increase consumer confidence and ensures a safe and credible buying experience for all, at home and abroad.

National Trustmark's across Europe have reported up to 26% increases in conversion rates for verified websites with a Trustmark. Up to 92% of consumers in the Netherlands will actively seek a Trustmark logo before purchasing from a website. Lynn Drumgoole, Communications Director of REI commenting on the Trustmark launch said: "Irish online retailers are beginning to focus more on the markets outside of Ireland and the Trustmark is designed to reassure consumers shopping online that the website they are purchasing from complies with all consumer law, data protection and privacy



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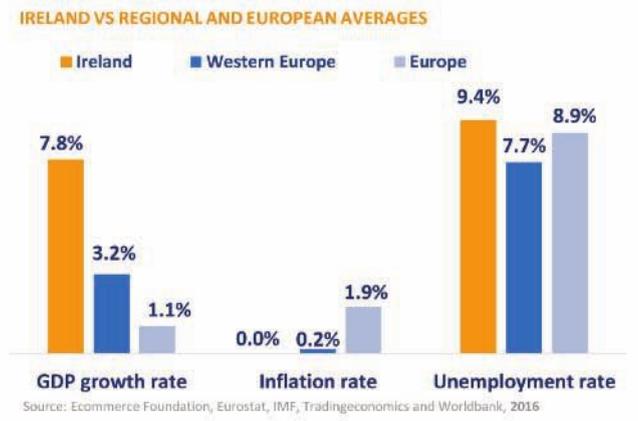
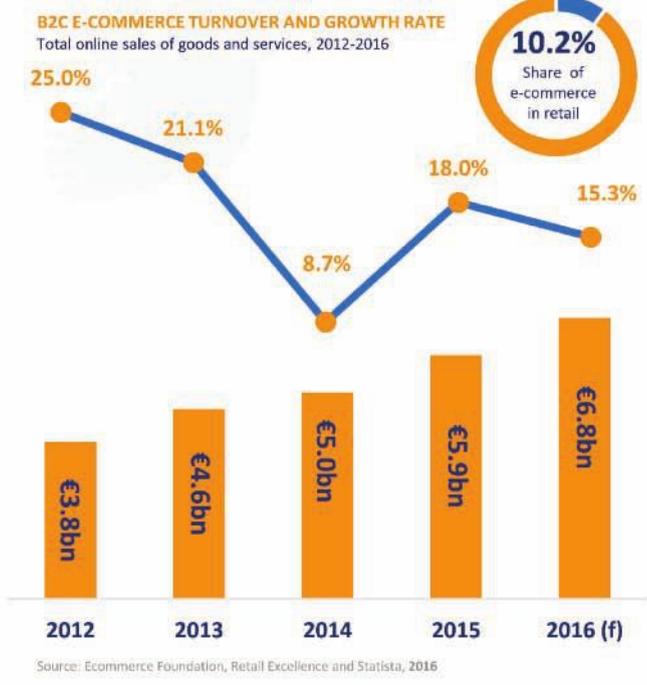
Ireland

E-commerce Markets Western Europe

Population 15+
3.6mn

Internet users
3.0mn (82%)

Number of e-shoppers
1.9mn (52%)



Source: Ecommerce Foundation and Eurostat, 2016



www.ecommerce-europe.eu

The Irish eCommerce market

obligations. Trustmark awardees will be subject to audits throughout the year to ensure ongoing compliance. The net benefit for online retailers looking to trade in Europe will be a direct reduction in barriers to entry for cross-border trade”.

Results from a survey conducted by eCommerce Europe identified that 65% of EU consumers feel that a Trustmark is an important element of any website. This figure emphasises the growing consumer awareness and importance of Trustmarks in Europe, a market where over 25,000 web shops compete.

“ 92% of consumers in the Netherlands will actively seek a Trustmark ”

Ireland takes on Europe in the European Entrepreneurial Awards

As the winner of 2016 Retail Excellence Ireland Website of the Year Award Harvey Norman was nominated on behalf of Retail Excellence Ireland to represent Ireland at the eCommerce Europe Awards. Richard Moyles commenting on his selection said: “I was honoured to have been selected by Retail Excellence Ireland to represent Harvey Norman and Ireland in the European eCommerce Awards and to take to the stage to present the work we are doing. Being involved at the awards provided an valuable insight into the evolving global eCommerce market and the incredible scale of the opportunity for eCommerce across Europe”

One key contributor to the growth of the online businesses showcased at the Awards is the use of social media and engaging with influencer's to drive awareness of their online brand. Some of the Award nominees included a Norwegian retailer who have amassed over €100 million in annual sales globally for a unique range of clothing that they produced and sell online! Another innovative company profiled was a Spanish healthcare marketplace with over €100 million in annual sales being enjoyed across a network of marketplace member pharmacies in Spain. Some of these member pharmacies now derive more sales from online than they get from their store!

Some of the eCommerce Award winners were:

GOLD went to: Aarstiderne of Denmark which was one of five food related businesses nominated this year. Aarstiderne is rising to the challenge of conquering the inherent difficulty of shortening the delivery chain from producer to consumer; and does so in a green, transparent and profitable way.

SILVER went to: One Piece of Norway with its socially engaging approach and ability to identify and understand its market.

BRONZE went to: Chic by Choice of Portugal, the company is involved in the rental of dresses and fashion items across Portugal.



For all queries eCommerce related, please contact REI eCommerce Executive, David Campbell – david.campbell@retailexcellence.ie

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Since its inception in Carlow in 2003, Netwatch has prevented over 40,000 crimes worldwide. The Netwatch Managed Service option provides customers with a cost effective, accountable, visual monitoring solution for any premises. This utilises the latest technologies, proven across thousands of Netwatch customer sites, including Arboretum Home & Garden, Doyle Hardware Group and Centenary Co-operative Ltd.



STAYING AHEAD OF CUSTOMER NEEDS – the next generation of Netwatch Technology

Customer needs have evolved over the years, and our in-house R&D department, Netwatch Visual Labs, have ensured our own evolution to service these needs. We are constantly innovating to improve and extend our services; we have expanded our offerings far beyond CCTV. Niall Kelly, Co-founder & CTO of Netwatch commented “It’s not just about video surveillance anymore. Our core service of remote visual monitoring is always a necessity, but retail operations are demanding more internal monitoring resources, Netwatch can now provide these technologies. From people counting to POS CCTV integration, we can support all your monitoring requirements.”

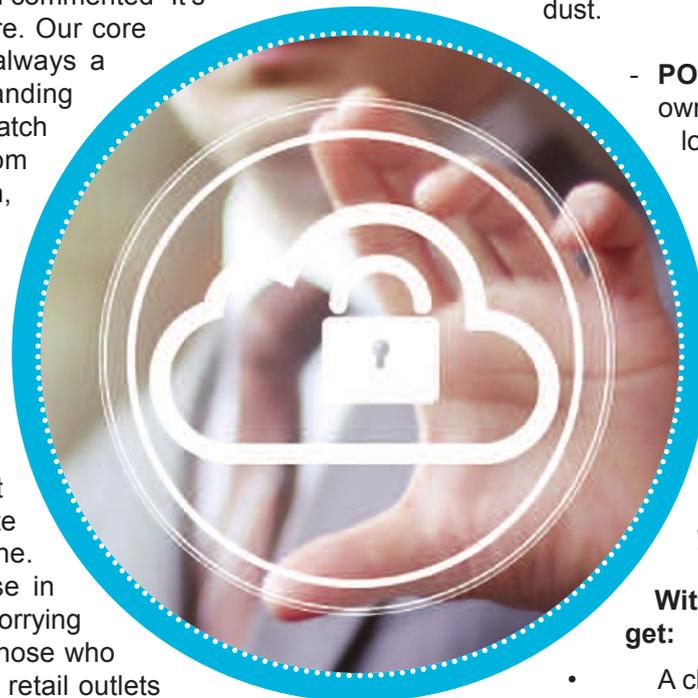
TECHNOLOGY TO COUNTERACT THREATS

CSO crime statistics indicate that many forms of crime and antisocial behaviour are decreasing. We like to believe that technological advances in remote monitoring are assisting the decline. Unfortunately, there was a 20% increase in kidnapping and related offence. This is a worrying statistic for business owners, especially those who are key holders to premises. Thefts from retail outlets are at their highest level for the past ten years.

Netwatch offers many solutions to assist in counteracting the threats.

- Our **licence plate** recognition technology means you can keep track of all vehicles that enter and exit your premises. We can give you access to reports on number of times a certain vehicle has been at your premises. This data can be used for both positive responses e.g. reward best customers as you know they are entering your premises; or negative responses e.g. be made aware of a suspicious vehicle that has been flagged by authorities, or has been loitering in your premises

- **Access Control** monitoring takes you out of harm’s way. The Netwatch Communications Hub can remotely manage access in and out of your premises. There is no chance for intimidation or injury, as this is all done from the safety of our Communications Hub. For out of hour’s deliveries or late finishers, Netwatch can liaise with these people and ensure the area is safe.
- Fire is a very real fear for business owners. The damage can be irreversible. Using our Veritas detection technology, our **Fire & Smoke monitoring** covers huge areas and will ensure the threat is identified before any damage can be done. This allows for greater information for first responders and can keep you at a safe distance from the threat.
- Our **video data analytics** will help you to make informed decisions about your business. Our **people counting, visitor mapping** and **queue control** add ons allow you to analyse staff levels, response to marketing initiatives, busiest doors in store or busiest times of day and week.
- Netwatch provide **IT infrastructure monitoring**. This is real time monitoring to ensure physical aspects of your IT operation are not compromised. We will be alerted to any unauthorised or unwelcome activity, and detect environmental threats such as moisture or dust.



- **POS CCTV integration** allows the business owner to observe and analyse activity at the till location with transaction stamped HD video.

The Netwatch Managed Service

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- Complete service delivery including site design, state of the art equipment, installation, monitoring and any on-going servicing
- Software updates are provided as they become available keeping your security current
- Peace of mind that your site and equipment are always safe
- People who have great experience in your industry, we know the risks and combat these

The Netwatch team would be delighted to discuss a bespoke package to suit your business. Contact us now and we will arrange a no obligation site risk assessment. Contact us on 1890 457 025 or admin@netwatchsystem.com



FEATURE E-COMMERCE



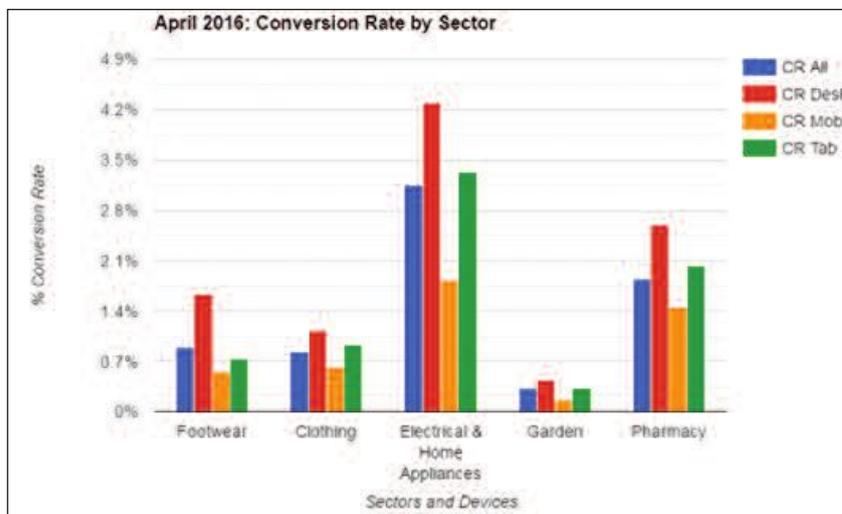
David Campbell, REI eCommerce Executive

REI eCommerce

The Retail Excellence Ireland eCommerce Committee have been extremely active over the past two years and have seen great progress in promoting the Irish eCommerce market. It's fantastic to see Irish retailers advancing online across Europe with the great opportunity to explore the EU eCommerce market valued at over €500 billion for 2016. This section will highlight the latest eCommerce news within REI and the upcoming plans of the committee. David Campbell of REI commenting on the work of the committee in 2016 "I am delighted to be part of a fantastic group of retailers who are passionate about trading online internationally. The launch of the eCommerce Trustmark was a huge breakthrough and I know it will be a great success among our members. I would like to thank the continued support of the committee for assisting me in my role and look forward to another exciting few months ahead within the thriving Irish eCommerce sector".

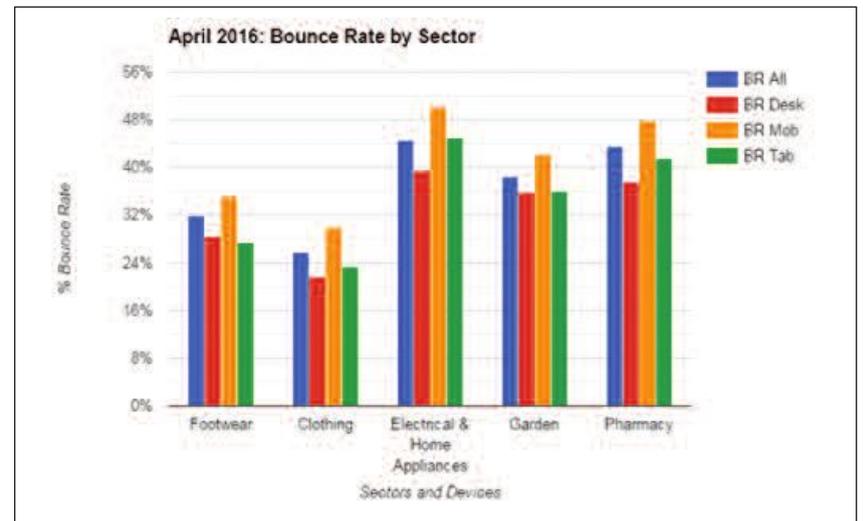
The REI / StudioForty9 Irish eCommerce Dashboard

The Dashboard allows participants to benchmark online performance across a wide range of key online metrics such as Bounces Rates, Session Duration and Conversion Rates etc. This invaluable tool is of significant benefit for members to help monitor their website performance and allows more efficient reporting of their KPIs. The reports are calculated from members Google Analytics accounts by David Campbell of REI and the trends are assessed by Ger Keohane from StudioForty9.



Year on Year (YOY) data is monitored with the original participants to review their online progress over the past 12 months along with the addition of the new members contributing since 2016 "All

Participants". Between April 2015 and April 2016 average Conversion Rates rose from 0.97 – 1.11 (14.4%). Another interesting figure highlighted was the reduction in Bounce Rates from 39.97% - 37.93% (-5.1%). These positive statistics highlight the enhanced performance of the original participants and we hope to see continued growth for all involved this year. This is testament to the participants utilising the REI eCommerce resources through training sessions and the Google Incubation programme.



The eCommerce Dashboard now includes sector reports enabling participants have a more accurate benchmarking tool to monitor their online performance. Currently there are five sector reports published and these will expand in 2016 with increased participation by REI members.

- Footwear
- Clothing
- Electrical & Home Appliances
- Garden
- Pharmacy

For more information on the eCommerce Dashboard report and if you would like to participate please contact david.campbell@retailexcellence.ie

eCommerce Training Sessions

This year REI held three different training days catering for Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced levels. One of the most beneficial aspects of the training was the retailer case studies incorporated into the programme. This allowed attendees to get insights into day-to-day scenarios on effective digital strategies implemented and learn from the success of the various REI eCommerce committee members.

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On **Day 1** online fundamentals, social media strategies and understanding the key metrics were covered in order to give attendees an in-depth overview of the most efficient methods to get your business online. The group work and practical elements by Ger Keohane from StudioForty9 proved very successful and enhanced the overall learning experience.

The Intermediate course on **Day 2** had a fantastic turn-out of members with speakers including Wolfgang Digital, Google and Barclaycard. Wolfgang delivered an excellent session on website personalisation, content creation and efficient marketing tools. Aiden Blake of Google provided expert analysis of clients AdWords & Analytics accounts and explored the most efficient methods for monitoring your online advertising campaigns. With fraud a constant issue for online traders it was a hot topic on the agenda. Alistair Singer from Barclaycard delivered insights into fraud prevention and how businesses can implement multiple steps to minimise risk while creating a more positive user experience.

Day 3 catered for the Advanced level with internationalisation, Google shopping in the UK, exports and live-chat implementation. Chairperson of the REI eCommerce committee Róisín Woods delivered fantastic advice for all attendees on exploring international markets and how the McElhinneys brand now trades internationally in over 63 countries worldwide. With the UK eCommerce market valued at over €127 billion for 2016 Paul Kealy from Tony Kealys highlighted how their business has capitalised on this excellent opportunity through optimising customer service levels at the forefront of their business strategy. DPD delivered key insights into their European export study and highlighted the evolving buying habits of consumers across the EU. Feedback from the sessions was extremely positive and Joe Connolly from Stakelums Home & Hardware commented “The REI eCommerce sessions were very informative, engaging and relevant. Attending the sessions has been a positive experience for us and we are implementing some of the learnings which we have taken from them. One of the more important aspects to these sessions has been the networking which comes from them – gaining insights from other members who are at various stages of the eCommerce journey is extremely valuable. I would highly recommend these eCommerce sessions to any member either thinking of getting in to eCommerce or who is already at some stage on the eCommerce journey.”

Google Incubation Programme

Following the huge success over the past two years REI are delighted to announce they will be partnering with Google again for 2016. The programme provides a fantastic opportunity for retailers to avail of expert analysis from Google account managers. AdWords & Analytics accounts are explored in-depth allowing participants to implement these changes and monitor performance throughout the course duration. Aiden Blake from Google has been a brilliant asset to REI over the years running the programme last year and presenting at multiple events. Keep an eye on the REI eCommerce updates to find out more information on dates for this year’s programme and the application process.



EU Roundtable Dinner

Retail Excellence Ireland will host the European eCommerce roundtable dinner on September 29th in Dublin. Prior to the dinner there will be a highly anticipated conference on e-regulations which the European policy advisor Luca Cassetti will chair. This will be a great opportunity for REI to showcase their involvement within eCommerce Europe and promote Irish retailers trading online globally. REI will also soon launch their eCommerce wiki webpage in conjunction with eCommerce Europe. This resource will be available for all members to avail of and learn from global eCommerce experts enabling retailers to keep up-to-date with the latest online trends across the EU.





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*99.99% ePDQ data, January 2015.

TAX FREE SHOPPING AND TOURISM OVERVIEW



European Tax Free Shopping trends in May were analogous to that seen in April, where transactions increased by 3% in May vs the 2% seen in the prior month, with sales declining by 11% in both months. The primary difference between the months was a steeper decline in France in May, which was offset by improvements in 70% of other destination countries.

Sales to Chinese tourists declined by 29% in the month. Similarly the decline in sales to Chinese tourists was also pre-dominantly attributable to the decline of 47% in France. Such that Irish sales only declined by 2% to Chinese tourists.

 IRELAND	USA	38%	€95	3%
	CHINA	31%	€385	-2%
	CANADA	6%	€90	13%
	AUSTRALIA	3%	€116	6%
	THAILAND	3%	€1,580	41%



There are many factors affecting non-EU travellers shopping decisions, buying power and spend when travelling.

CHINA'S NEW E-COMMERCE TAX

On 8th April 2016, in order to boost domestic consumption & further restrict capital outflows, the Chinese government introduced a new tax regime where cross-border e-commerce purchases are treated as imports, and therefore subject to tariffs and value added taxes.

Whilst some reports indicate that this could have an adverse impact on overseas purchases, it is still not yet clear the degree to which customs officials will look to enforce these rules, for practical reasons if none other.

Paradoxically, this has driven some consumers to 'daigou' items (the term coined for 'personal shoppers' buying goods overseas), where this parallel trading ecosystem of savings from arbitrating lower tax rates overseas and currency movements has also come under increasing scrutiny.

This move is however likely to have short term impact of less and/or smaller value items, but Chinese tourists are already looking for ways to circumvent these rules by putting items in separate packaging to mail or travel with, showing that when there's a will, there's a way.

CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS EFFECT ON TRADING CONDITIONS

For a number of consumers, currency movements can determine both the choice of destination and sway buying decisions,

dependent on the degree of price arbitrage opportunities.

The Euro has rallied since the start of 2016 due to lower unemployment and higher than expected GDP growth in the Eurozone in the first half of 2016, which subsequently adversely affected the purchasing power of a number of tourist nationalities.

However, a number of commentators believe that the strength in the Euro is unsustainable, where further incremental rate cuts and Quantitative Easing measures by the European Central Bank, serve to undermine this perceived strength in the Eurozone.

With the imminent referendum on a potential 'Brexit', resurfacing of concerns on Greek debt issues, and the risk of contagion and subsequent impact to the Euro, there is an inference of a coalescence into choppy waters for the Euro in the second half of 2016.

It is important to remember that while external factors will continue to affect trading conditions, both positively and negatively, there is an increasing imperative on retailers to continue to innovate and personalise the overseas shopping experience.

UPCOMING SUMMER TRAVEL EVENTS

From the Olympics in Brazil, to the European championships in France, and with upcoming Ramadan celebrations, this summer's travel scene is heating up!

A report by Sojern shows that the peak departures period for Arab Gulf countries is June 30 and July 1, the Thursday and Friday before the end of Ramadan.

With a number of public holidays also around this time, long haul travel becomes increasingly widespread where especially to European destinations.

American shoppers continue to hold the top Non-EU nationality for Ireland, increasing numbers are looking to Europe, where according to Skift, hotel and flight bookings are up by 5.5% between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The rise of mobile devices and increased functionality of booking apps has led to a surge

of spur-of-the-moment trips, championed by the Millennial generation's browsing tendencies. A study by Wakefield Research and Priceline found that 49% of Americans who did not take a last-minute vacation last year regretted doing so. The same survey also found that in the upcoming year, 73% of Millennials plan on taking a last-minute trip, as do 58% of the total respondents.

Contact Premier Tax Free for more detailed information on market trends, buyer profiles & behaviours, and future travel movements.

ABOUT PREMIER TAX FREE

With over 30 years' experience, Premier Tax Free is one of the world's leading Tax Free shopping companies, providing international Shoppers with easy, fast and reliable VAT refund and dynamic currency conversion services. Spanning across more than 30 countries, we work with over 150,000 stores worldwide.

Premier Tax Free has the knowledge and expertise to provide an enhanced international shopping experience to both Merchants and Shoppers, which includes an extensive media portfolio enabling Merchants to engage with millions of international Shoppers via multiple touch points; Business Intelligence; Cutting edge solutions that cater to all point of sale systems with features such as credit card recognition, instant refunding and customised instructions; Tax Free, DCC and cultural training which help to improve the speed of processing and the number of successfully completed transactions, resulting in satisfied international Shoppers.



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Strategic Partner (Brand)

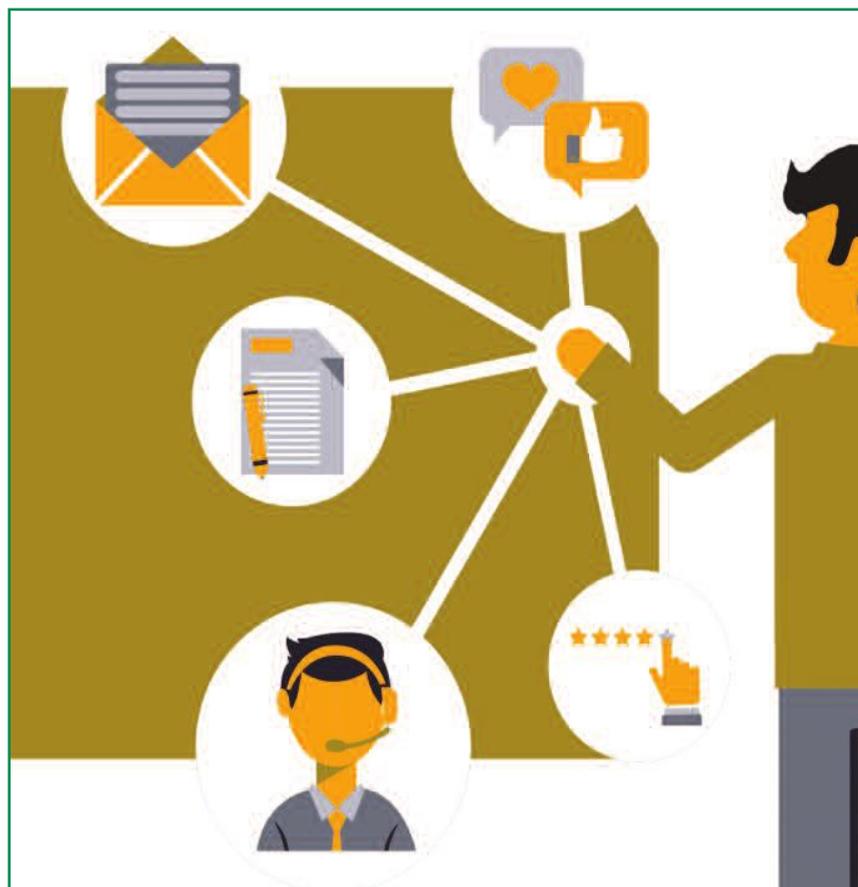
THE CONNECTED CUSTOMER JOURNEY



The digital revolution has raised the bar for retailers. A retailer may offer a smartphone app, same-day delivery, personalised recommendations and, say, mobile payments, but if these capabilities don't blend seamlessly across multiple channels, the customer experience will be inferior to that offered by a retailer who does some or all of these things well.

In the last decade, consumer behaviours, preferences and expectations have changed beyond all recognition. Retailers must now create consistent, personalised customer experiences by optimising all channels and going to market with an integrated strategy. Doing this successfully requires investment in business solutions that are agile and cohesive.

To deliver consistent customer experiences, it's important to...



GET CONNECTED

Today's customers interact with brands across a range of online and offline touchpoints. They react to in-the-moment views and reviews on social media. They research products on smartphones. They expect immediate access to information, and a personalised service. You have to give it to them or they'll move on.

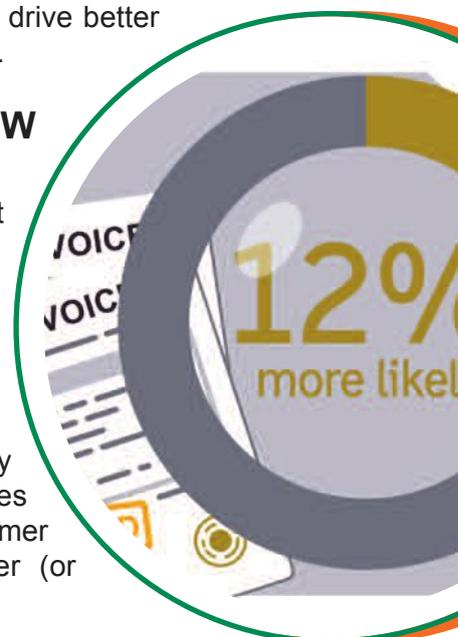


DRIVE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Accurate information is vital to effective decision making. A detailed, holistic view of the business is therefore essential to modern CFOs. Microsoft Dynamics ERP solutions combined with Microsoft Analytics enables insights that drive better ongoing business performance.

OBTAIN A UNIFIED VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER

All staff members who interact with a customer by any means need a unified, at-a-glance view of all interactions to date with that customer. Research shows that in growing companies, customer-facing employees are 12% more likely to have seen all the invoices associated with a specific customer than in companies with lower (or negative) growth rates.



UTILISE CONSISTENT KNOWLEDGE AND DATA

To answer customer questions reliably, front-office personnel need consistent data and excellent knowledge of business processes. We found that in growing companies, staff are 54% more likely to be able to track orders than in businesses with less favourable prospects.

OFFER INTELLIGENT AND PERSONALISED INTERACTIONS

Most growing businesses are good at building an offline rapport with customers. Yet they must become adept at doing this online, too. Personalised interactions are the key. Offering all customers the same thing makes no sense: they are individuals with different interests, tastes, and requirements. Offering them what they want or need can only be achieved via the application of high-quality customer data.

To find out more visit www.k3retail.ie



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Michael Maguire - Head of Retail at EPIC Ireland

like what we do





FEATURE RETAILER UNCOVERED



Name: GRÁINNE KAVANAGH
Company: The Coach House
Position: Owner

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS YOU WORK WITH? The Coach House is a beautiful shop located in Dingle that I opened in late 2014 selling home interior wares, Irish Design & gifts for all of life's occasions. The emphasis is on quality, taste & individually chosen pieces of style. My focus is very much on offering luxurious Irish design from leather goods to cashmere & hand crafted pieces that I source to suit my

client's desires & tastes. I am passionate about having as much Irish product as possible & time & consideration is given to all customers needs including interior design consultations.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY? I always had an eye on the premises I run my business in, it always drew me in to have a shop there someday. When my family sold part of our hospitality business the premises was vacant and I grabbed the opportunity very quickly. After 15 years in the hospitality business I knew I still needed to make connections with the public in my daily work and with 12 years experience in design it felt very right.

WHICH RETAILER (NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL) DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST AND WHY? Simon Pratt for many reasons including his vision, determination and

incredible standards. I truly admire his and his family's decision to sell also having grown up in a family with multiple businesses and seeing succession as a path that is not always an easy one to tread.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE RETAIL STORE & WHY? Brown Thomas, I have warm memories of being brought there as a child, of learning the value of treating customers as they should & in offering care & service at every transaction.

WHO HAS THOUGHT ME MOST IN MY CAREER AS A RETAILER? My parents, whilst not having grown up in retail my hospitality background is my strongest asset in retail, treating customers as you would guests from start to finish & enhancing their day with a positive retail experience in a little oasis of calm.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION? The Great Blasket Island, Peace personified.

WHAT WAS YOUR LAST PURCHASE? A Kinsale Leather tote from my shop, if you're going to sell it you must own it I tell myself!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB? Sourcing new products that I know my customers love & watching the joy they share when they leave with a beautifully wrapped piece of Irish design that I know will be with them for life. Meeting & getting to know the makers enhance the retail experience greatly for my customers and me too, sharing the provenance of an Irish product is very rewarding.

IF YOU WERE NOT IN RETAIL WHAT CAREER WOULD YOU HAVE PURSUED? A tough one as I don't think of what if's I just do. Architecture would interest me but if I won the lotto I would be farming.

I am passionate about having as much Irish product as possible

GRÁINNE KAVANAGH



Name: BERNIE REIDY
Company: Swamp
Position: Managing Director

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS YOU WORK WITH? I am the Managing Director of Swamp, an Irish women's clothing company which operates 9 stores throughout the Republic and an online store - www.swampfashion.com.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY? My first job in retail was a part-time job working in the Boat House when I was fifteen. I always

enjoyed working with people, the buzz of the sale - for me it was a natural enough progression to make retail my career of choice!

WHICH RETAILER (NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL) DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST AND WHY? This is a tough one - because of my job I am that nerd who is constantly studying fixtures and fittings - looking at instore branding and even checking out the bags the clothes come home in. I love that Schuh uses a mobile payment service- customers who are able to pay by card can do so easily and get their receipts emailed directly to them without having to queue for ages at the till. As a result the till on the shop floor is freed up; a win-win for both customers and retailer. I have always enjoyed popping in to Willow when I lived in Ennis for 5 years and I was so excited to see it recently open in Galway where I live now. For me internationally it has to be River Island.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE RETAIL STORE AND WHY? Well it has to be Swamp! Currently employing 86 people, we are proud to be an Irish company. We know our customers - they are very loyal and we always enjoy making them happy and feeling confident about themselves and what they are wearing. I don't just wear Swamp

clothes as part of my job - I look forward to seeing our new styles on a weekly basis and love choosing new outfits. As a close second I do love to shop in Coast - if I'm looking for a glam piece for a special occasion, I will always check out Coast.

WHO HAS TAUGHT YOU THE MOST IN YOUR CAREER AS A RETAILER? I owe a lot to the owner of Swamp, Kieran Coogan. He has always believed in me and inspired me both professionally and personally. It really is Kieran's can do nature and ability to get stuck in which I feel has rubbed off on me.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION? Too many to mention! I definitely got bitten by the travel bug when I was younger and earlier this year I was lucky enough to take a trip to India. This trip was so inspiring for many reasons but I loved the vibrancy of the cities I visited - the food, the people, the temples, and the crazy drivers - memories to cherish. I'm always looking at fashion and style - and I think I can see some of these prints and patterns in our maxi skirts and harem trousers in store right now. Sometimes you just never know when you will be inspired. Now I don't feel so bad for making all those calls to my head buyer.

WHAT WAS YOUR LAST PURCHASE? Anyone who knows me knows that I am a jewellery magnet and am attracted to anything bright and shiny. When Irish designer Chupi opened her store in Powerscourt, I treated myself to one of her feather rose gold necklaces. I'm a huge fan - I love her bespoke sense of style and I'm always keen to support Irish business and in particular Irish designers.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB? The pace - if I'm not in the office catching up on a mountain of paperwork, I'm meeting with our buying team, getting updates on our online store and social media, then back on the road travelling to our stores and meeting with our area managers. I still love to get stuck in and serve at the till! This is still where you will learn the most - the shop floor! No two days are the same at Swamp!

IF YOU WERE NOT IN RETAIL WHAT CAREER WOULD YOU HAVE PURSUED? A Garda!

I always enjoyed working with people, the buzz of the sale

BERNIE REIDY

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FEATURE RETAILER UNCOVERED



Name: MARK GOULD
Company: AIB
Position: Head of Retail Transformation

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS YOU WORK WITH? AIB is a financial services group operating predominantly in the Republic of Ireland and the UK. We provide a comprehensive range of services to personal, business and corporate customers in our target markets and have leading market shares in banking products in the Republic of Ireland. AIB operates over

200 branch locations in Ireland and a market leading online, mobile, tablet and telephone banking service.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY? I joined John Menzies in the UK as a graduate trainee. I enjoyed 12 years in a variety of positions in store operations, buying and marketing roles. It was clear from my first day that the retail industry is dynamic and never dull!

WHICH RETAILER (NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL) DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST AND WHY? Whole Foods. They champion a number of important retail trends: Local sourcing, artisan producers, and eco store design. They even have a rooftop greenhouse growing fruit and vegetables in their Brooklyn store. They are passionate leaders of innovation in the grocery industry.

It was clear from my first day that the retail industry is dynamic and never dull!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE RETAIL STORE AND WHY? B&Q Liffey Valley. It has everything to improve, transform and repair your home. But most importantly they have expertise with ex-trades people on the team, who give fantastic advice and will even teach you (and the kids) how to complete DIY projects in their 'You Can Do It' centre in store.

WHO HAS TAUGHT YOU THE MOST IN YOUR CAREER AS A RETAILER? Charlie Watson. He was my first store manager when I was a young, green trainee manager. He taught me to treat the shop floor like a stage, putting the customer first through leadership of the retail team and obsessive attention to detail.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION? France. For the food, wine, and variety from skiing to scuba diving.

WHAT WAS YOUR LAST PURCHASE? Rechargeable electric lawn trimmer from B&Q.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB? I am in an industry undergoing enormous change and a business that is transforming to meet and lead customer and market challenges. But each day it is the people that I work with that inspire, surprise and challenge me that make it fun and fulfilling.

IF YOU WERE NOT IN RETAIL WHAT CAREER WOULD YOU HAVE PURSUED? Fast jet pilot, but the air force wouldn't take me. Still this career has been pretty fast!

MARK GOULD



Name: SUSAN MOYLETT
Company: Susan Hunter Lingerie
Position: Owner

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS YOU WORK WITH? We sell beautiful, top of the range nightwear and underwear. We specialise in customer care, have a full fitting bra service, with bra sizes 30" to 46" A to J cup. We also focus on natural fibres, pure silk, cotton, wool, cashmere, linen.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY? I originally had a retail clothes shop called No Romance in Aungier Street. When getting married, I tried to buy a matching bra and brief set; none existed in 1980's Ireland. This gave me the idea to open a Lingerie shop. I opened Susan Hunter Lingerie in 1984.

WHICH RETAILER (NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL) DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST AND WHY? I admire any small or medium sized retail business that looks after their customer and sells quality products, no matter what that product is.

I admire any small or medium sized retail business that looks after their customer

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE RETAIL STORE AND WHY? I love garden and hardware shops! I like physical tasks.

WHO HAS TAUGHT YOU THE MOST IN YOUR CAREER AS A RETAILER? I have to say our customers; their requests turn into our sales.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION? I love warm weather (not hot!) so the Mediterranean in Spring or Autumn is the ideal. I have a caravan in Arklow, so when the sun is shining there is nowhere to match it!

WHAT WAS YOUR LAST PURCHASE? A bright red parasol for the picnic table.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB? The contact with people. I love to hear their stories.

IF YOU WERE NOT IN RETAIL WHAT CAREER WOULD YOU HAVE PURSUED? I have a degree in anthropology and am currently completing a Masters in Design Innovation, so could do something else yet!

SUSAN MOYLETT



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JIM MULQUEEN

The seven things you need to know before you decide to sell your business

Should you be contemplating selling your business, the following pointers will help you to achieve the best result. Our Corporate Finance team at Grant Thornton have assisted in advising entrepreneurs on a wide range of business sales, and have experienced all of the issues which can arise before deals get completed.

01

Plan well in advance

Selling your business is not something you decide overnight. In order to ensure a successful sale and obtain the best deal, the planning has to commence well in advance. The business should be groomed so that it is presented in the best possible light. That usually involves managing costs and maximising profits. You may be close to opening new stores or launching new product lines.

02

Hire the right advisors

When contemplating a sale of the business, you need to hire corporate financiers and lawyers who have experience in driving sales processes. The question you need to ask is whether your existing advisors have the required expertise. If they don't, then you are better off appointing someone who does. In hiring the right advisors you should be satisfied that they have the technical expertise required, have relevant and recent experience of deals of your type and size, as well as having access to potential purchasers. Importantly, you also have to know that the chemistry is right and that you can work with the people on the advisory team. Agree the fee structure up front.

03

Tackle any problems in advance

If you have problems within your business such as HR matters, non-performing units, agency relationships, etc then you should deal with these head-on in advance of the deal. Purchasers will not want to take on a business with existing problems. The challenge is that if you don't deal with these in plenty of time, they often manifest themselves into serious problems during a sale process, and can even become show stoppers. Housekeeping matters also need to be tidied up in advance. Make sure that all your paperwork is in order – have all employees got signed contracts in place. Have you a signed copy of all the premises leases? If employees or shareholders have left under bad terms, is there a signed agreement in place. These are the relatively small matters that can delay a deal process no end.



04

Decide what your walk away position is

As you embark on a sale process, you must have a bottom line. Deals often get further negotiated as they progress and it is not unusual that things you haven't considered will come out of left field and impact on price or structure. With this in mind, it is important to have worked out in advance the level at which a deal is no longer of interest in terms of the financial return or the conditions involved. It is very difficult when you have invested time and money and are at advanced discussions, to then decide to walk away. The temptation will always be to proceed and take what is on offer. The best advice is to be disciplined, and if you feel that the deal has adjusted at any stage to a level that is below your predetermined threshold, then it is probably time to walk away.

05

Understand the market and the potential purchasers

Often, shareholders can have an over-inflated view as to the value of their business. Most industries have metrics determining how companies are valued. In the retail sector, these are typically driven off multiples of profits or turnover. Valid adjustments can be made to increase profits for certain non-recurring expenditure. Intangibles such as brands can have a huge impact on valuation, as can store location. Before you decide to sell, you need to get comfortable with these metrics and what likely valuation can be achieved in the market.

Having worked out what your business is likely to be worth, you also need to have an informed view as to who might be in the buyer universe for your business and why would they want to buy it. Many sellers presume that there will be a much higher level of interest in their business than often turns out to be the case. Usually this is because the specific reasons as to why the business may be of interest to a potential purchaser have not been well thought out. For example if you had a small chain of coffee shops and you were contemplating a sale to a global chain of coffee shops, they are less likely to be interested in your local brand, and more likely to look at individual shop locations, lease terms and store performance. However, consider selling the same business to a private equity fund or group of investors and suddenly the brand becomes relevant again.

06

Keep driving the business during the sale process

The process of selling the business can be drawn out and at times will be intrusive and all consuming. Purchasers will always look for the most recent set of management accounts or performance reports just before the deal completes. If the business has underperformed because you took your eye off the ball during the process, then you can expect a conversation around adjusting the price downwards. This is why using advisors is important and you should let them drive the deal process as much as possible on your behalf.

07

Remember it's a long road...

There may be purchasers that you dismiss early in the process who you might need in the end! You could also decide to abort the process and you might want to engage with the same purchasers again in the future. By being upfront and transparent in your dealings, and being professional in your approach, you are more likely to maintain relationships keep your options open as regards future engagement. You never know what might be around the next corner!

JIM MULQUEEN, Partner – Corporate Finance, Grant Thornton
jim.mulqueen@ie.gt.com



SOME RESULTS OVER THE PAST YEAR



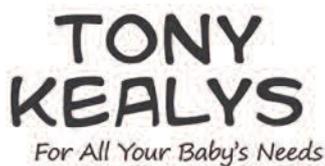
Building on past growth, in 2015, **revenue grew by an additional 42%** on the UK site.



Monthly turnover on SteamlineLuggage.com **more than doubled** since StudioForty9 relaunched the site in Nov. 2015.



Click & Collect was added to Homefocus.ie in Oct. 2015 - **8 out of 10 Click & Reserve orders made are picked up in 24 hours** and lead to additional in-store sales.



There has been a **900% increase in UK turnover** in the 12 months since StudioForty9 began work.



Results in 2016 show that on-site **revenue has grown by 154%** since StudioForty9 takeover DID.ie



FEATURE HUMAN RESOURCES

STRESSED OUT



TOMMY SMYTH

STRESS, to varying degrees, is a part of everyday life. Individuals have different tolerance levels and a variety of life events can cause stress such as kids, moving house, financial worries, marital issues etc.

Absenteeism costs Irish business €1.5 billion per annum. This translates to 14 million workdays (IBEC 2004) or indeed 9 workdays per employee per annum (SFA 2006). The cost for a typical small company may be in the tens of thousands, whilst large corporate company costs run in excess of millions. The indirect costs are higher on productivity, quality, administration, staff pressure and morale. Stress and other mental health conditions are now among the main cause of employee absence, according to the CIPD absence management survey (2006). The Health and Safety Executive estimate that stress costs business £3.8 billion a year in the UK.

Employers have an obligation to reduce the likelihood of work related stress and its effects. There is a general moral obligation to ensure that all employees are respected and have an enjoyable experience at work. Employers must also be conscious of the legal position with regard to both employment and personal injuries legislation to avoid onerous legal awards and fees. Finally, a productive workforce makes commercial sense so it is financially smart for employers to ensure their team is happy and motivated to succeed and add to the bottom line.

From our experience over the past 25 years, the general causes of work related stress amongst Irish employees include;

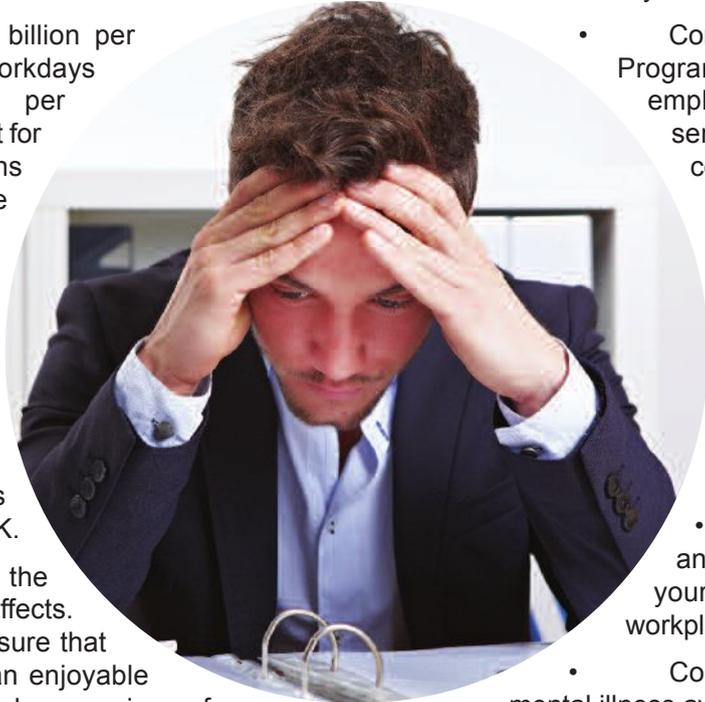
- Conflict with their line manager
- Conflict with a work colleague
- Workload issues
- Job insecurity
- Employer initiating a performance management process.
- Failure to secure preferred annual leave dates!!

Employers therefore are advised to actively manage the health and wellbeing of their employees because it is the smart thing to do but also because it can legally protect the employer in the event an issue arises.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- All employers should ensure that comprehensive written policies on managing stress and dignity at work have been prepared and are always available to employees. These documents should be updated as any statutory instrument or code of practice necessitates.
- It is important that there is early intervention if workplace performance or conduct issues arise with an employee. The

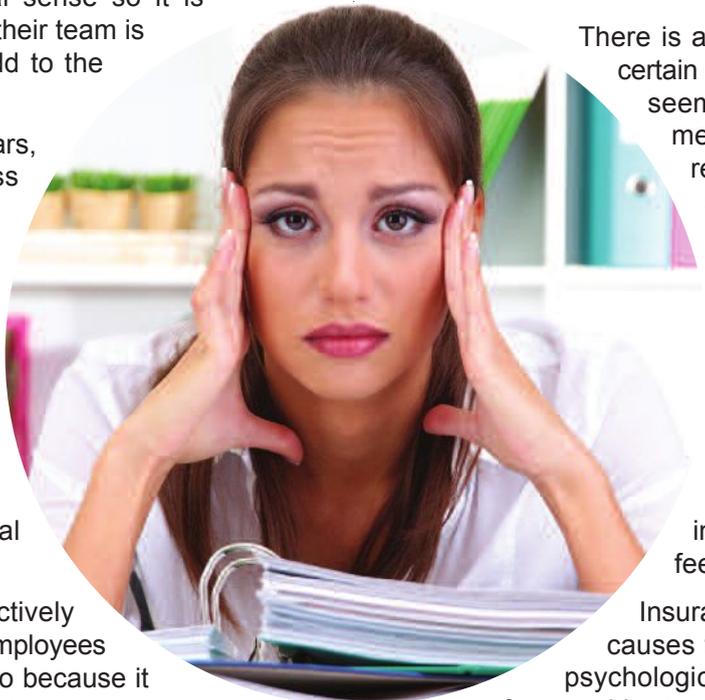
longer an employer waits, the more likely an intervention will cause conflict as frustration has been building. Employers should ensure line managers know how to fairly and constructively manage their team.



- Consider introducing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to have supports available for employees should they require it. These services generally provide confidential counselling support to employees.
- Conduct dignity at work training for all employees so they are made aware of the contents of the workplace policies and what type of behaviours are acceptable or not towards their colleagues. It is important for employees to know that either ignorance of the law, or the 'only having a laugh' excuses are simply not accepted.
- Introduce healthy workplace initiatives and encourage a positive work/life balance in your place of work. When it comes to workplace stress, prevention is better than cure.
- Conduct management specific training on mental illness awareness.

COMPANY DOCTOR

There is a real frustration amongst employers with certain members of the medical profession and the seeming abandon with which they produce medical certificates for stress and work related stress. I have never seen a medical certificate for 'kids' or 'spouse' related stress yet Doctors are very happy to put 'work' on a medical certificate based solely on what their patient tells them. We would always recommend having a reasonable occupational, company Doctor available to refer employees to. Employers have a chance to give preliminary information to this Doctor and should aim to get more thorough information about the issues the employee feels are stressing them out.



Insurance costs are rising rapidly. Amongst the causes for this is the increase in legal claims for psychological injuries caused by reasonably foreseeable stressful scenarios at work. Whether employers win these claims or not, or whether the insurers will fight these claims or not, the employer's premium tends to get loaded!

It makes financial, HR and moral sense to take the stress levels on your employees seriously. If employees reach out to you, take their concerns seriously. Not everyone has the same stress tolerance levels as the business owner or senior management!

If you have any queries on how to fairly set up and review employee probation periods please call our REI HR Advisors Tom Smyth & Associates on 021 4634154

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Does your breakfast cuppa come from a papery parcel of powder? Directly into the cup or even, Saints preserve us, a mug? Stop right now or risk missing out on the biggest new thing around. Sprinkle some dried leaves of the shrub *Camellia sinensis* into a pre-warmed ceramic pot. Add boiling water and leave to infuse. Pour, inhale the steamy aroma, then take that first sip - preferably without milk, certainly without sugar. At last! You're in the vanguard of vogue. Yes, loose tea is BIG! It's the new Champagne without the expense or the hangover.

CREST MYSTERY SHOPPING went to find out what's brewing in the new rash of tea shops rapidly multiplying around Dublin. Our Mystery Shopper paid a visit to three of the new breed - all, interestingly, doing a little café business along with the tealeaves and all in relatively modest sites although still within easy reach of the well informed and the well-heeled.

All three stores were visited on 15 June 2016.

GURMAN'S TEA & COFFEE WORLD STEPHENS' GREEN SHOPPING CENTRE, DUBLIN 2.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Perfect tiny tea room. Pale-coloured spindly tables, matching wooden chairs. Chap in off-white linen jacket sipping tea just inside the window whilst indubitably working on the next great Irish novel.

STOCK AND SELECTION:

Lots of teas in squat glass jars, each one labelled on the front and some with an extra golden label round the neck. Names like Nine Treasures, Dreams of Saouth (sic) Sea and Gurman's Magic Tea. Intriguing, if slightly showbiz.

SERVICE AND STAFF KNOWLEDGE:

Immediate and charming attention from svelte young staff member who turned out to be one helluva salesperson. The Mystery Shopper asked for a large-leaf breakfast tea and was offered beguiling sniffs from several likely lids. Was almost sold a three-pack variety gift set but remained strictly professional and selected a tea called Gurman's Irish Cream - hey, maybe not a name to conjure up images of the Ancient Silk Road, but it really did smell like Baileys.

SELECTED ITEM:

Gurman's Black Tea - Irish Cream
100g at €6.50

AMBIENCE:

Nifty little tea shop. Great selection of coffee/tea/hot chocolate, at reasonable prices. However, the alcove at the rear is lined with fake book wallpaper - enough to turn the Mystery Shopper away forevermore.

MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING:

Slick operation. Plenty of variety. Not completely convinced about product knowledge.



OOLONG FLOWER POWER 4 STEPHEN'S STREET LOWER, DUBLIN 2

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Mixed messages. Top fascia announced Oolong etc. on a long ribbon in two typefaces against a pale background with green flowery flourishes to add to the confusion. Below that, in white-on-dark-green, "GOURMET PIZZA SANDWICHES SOUP SALADS CAKES".

STOCK AND SELECTION:

Serious tea selection. Carefully categorised and signed by section. Black Tea, Green Tea, Rooibos, Oolong, Mate. All in shining glass jars with old-style tie-on labels. Huge variety, definitely needing expert explanation.

SERVICE AND STAFF KNOWLEDGE:

The slim young man in black behind the counter appeared totally distracted by the coffee machine at first but when engaged turned out to be knowledgeable beyond expectations, almost beyond belief, concerning every possible aspect of tea from Nepalese Golden First Flush (stronger than neighbouring Darjeeling) to Argentinian Mate (intense hit, stronger than coffee).



SELECTED ITEM:

Golden Nepal First

AMBIENCE:

Odd-looking outside. Quiet and peaceful within but how to reconcile serious tea retailing with salads and sandwiches. Croissants or sticky buns maybe, but pizza and soup? Not really.

MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING:

Terrific selection backed up by staff's outstanding expert-teas. Ambience and overall menu a little off.



HOUSE OF TEA 67 MAIN STREET, BLACKROCK, CO. DUBLIN.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Funny-looking place from the outside. Single-storey add-on to older 3-storey building. Glass-panelled aluminium-framed frontage. Unexciting black-on-white store name overhead saying "Purveyors of fine loose teas and accessories". Inside, an enchanted space with potted palms, genuine wood floors and intriguing eclectic furniture.



STOCK AND SELECTION:

Shelf upon shelf (at least five tiers) of great-looking old-style black tea caddies, each with its Imperial red symbol and white printed card explaining what treasure lies within.

SERVICE AND STAFF KNOWLEDGE:

The young woman who presided over this array of magical containers came across as unassuming but impressively well informed. The Mystery Shopper cheated a little by steering the conversation toward their favourite Lapsang Souchong but still got an impressive mini-tour of tea-world.

SELECTED ITEM:

China Black Lapsang Souchong

AMBIENCE:

Loved the interior here. Great décor on two levels (always nice) but, again, how can you serve tapas along with gourmet teas and coffee?

MYSTERY SHOPPER RATING:

Great looking interior, lovely atmosphere but what are tapas doing in a tea room?





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★	BRANDING, STORE DESIGN, E-COMMERCE	IDEA	Ciaran Flanagan 01 2500050	info@idea.ie www.idea.ie	Insomnia, Bord Bia	39
	BUSINESS INSIGHTS	Gamma LTD	Ronan O'Connor 01 7079888	ronan.oconnor@gamma.ie www.gamma.ie	Bank of Ireland, SuperValu	39
	BUSINESS TRAINING, COACHING, MENTORING	Business Coaching Ireland	Paul Fagan 01 891 6220	info@businesscoachingireland.com www.businesscoachingireland.com	Gerry Browne Jewellers, The Italian Tile & Stone Studio	39
★	CASH LOGISTICS SERVICES	GSLs	Siobhan Plunkett 0862507048 Denise McCarthy 0871465085	splunkett@gsls.ie dmccarthy@gsls.ie www.gsls.ie	Applegreen, O'Briens Wines and Spirits	39
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	CREATIVE SERVICES, PRINT MEDIA, RETAIL ENVIRONMENTS, TECHNOLOGY	The Smart Group	Tom Ryan 086 780 1626	tom@thesmartgroup.ie www.thesmartgroup.ie	Euronics, FromMe2You	39
	CUSTOMER SERVICE PLATFORM	Pubble	Shane O'Leary 087-6843811	shane@pubble.co www.pubble.io	Tony Kealys, Horkans Lifestyle and Garden Centres	40
★	DECISION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE FOR RETAILERS	Real World Retail	Conall Lavery 01 427 0349	Conall.lavery@realworldretail.com www.realworldretail.com	Allcare Pharmacy, Pamela Scott	40
	DESIGN AND SHOPFITTING	Vivid Retail Design	John McFarlane 087 374 8888	john@vividretaildesign.com www.vividretaildesign.com	Premier Publishing, Fast Fix Jewellery	40
	DISPLAY STANDS, CONFERENCE BACK DROPS	Focus Visual Communication	Carmel Kikkers 051 832742	carmel@focusonline.ie www.focusonline.ie	LAYA Healthcare, BWG, Siemens	40
	DOMAIN NAME REGISTRATION	IE Domain Registry	Registration Services 01 236 5400	registrations@iedr.ie www.iedr.ie	Software Design Ltd, Matrix Internet	40
	E-COMMERCE	RetailResale.IE	Sean Field 066 4010101	info@retailresale.ie www.retailresale.ie		40
★	E-COMMERCE - DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & OPTIMISATION	StudioForty9	Ger Keohane 021 239 2349	ger@studioforty9.com www.studioforty9.com	Meaghers Pharmacy, DID Electrical	40
	E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, MAGENTO SOLUTIONS PARTNERS	Monsoon Consulting	Stephen Kenealy 01 475 0066	hello@monsoonconsulting.com www.monsoonconsulting.com	Heatons, One4All	40
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	EMPLOYEE TIME RECORDING SYSTEMS	Timepoint	Colin Ryan 021 4232865	colin@timepoint.ie www.timepoint.ie	Tiger, SuperValu, Applegreen	41
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	ENTERPRISE RETAIL SOLUTIONS	Vision ID	Padraic O'Brien 052 6181858	pobrien@visionid.ie www.visionid.ie	Dairygold Co-Op Superstores, Musgrave Group	41
	EPOS, MOBILE RETAIL AND PAYMENTS	Eirpoint	Niall Cannon 065 686 8880	ncannon@eirpoint.com www.eirpoint.ie	Patrick Bourke Menswear, Dubarry Ireland	41
	EPOS AND INTEGRATED E-COMMERCE	Positive Systems Solutions	Damien O'Driscoll 01 6296058	damien@pss.ie www.pss.ie	Croom Cycles, Conns Cameras	41
	EPOS / RETAIL IT SERVICES	Total Retail Control Ltd	Steven Maguire 086 2050 711	smaguire@trcepos.ie www.trcsolutions.eu	Horkans Lifestyle and Garden Centres, Carroll's Irish Gifts	41
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	MARKET RESEARCH	Behaviour & Attitudes	Luke Reaper 01 205 7500	luke@banda.ie www.banda.ie	RTE, Meteor	43
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	MESSAGING & LOYALTY	ZinMobi	Brian Stephenson 087 777 5558	brian@zinmobi.com www.sinmobi.com	Musgraves Shaws Department Stores	44
	MYSTERY SHOPPING, STORE ASSESSMENTS	Crest Mystery Shopping Ireland	Michele Cawley 065 684 6927	michele@crestireland.com www.crestireland.com	Retail Excellence Ireland, Harvey Norman	44
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	SHOPFITTING AND RETAIL DESIGN	Shop Equipment Ltd	Martin Hendricken 087 284 6464	mhendricken@sel.ie www.sel.ie	Woodies, The Garvey Group	46
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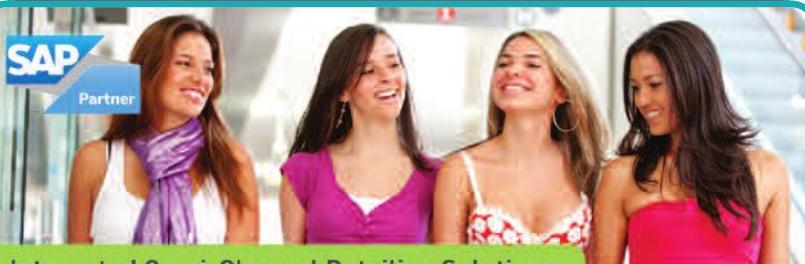
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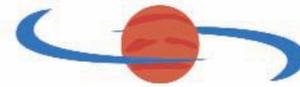
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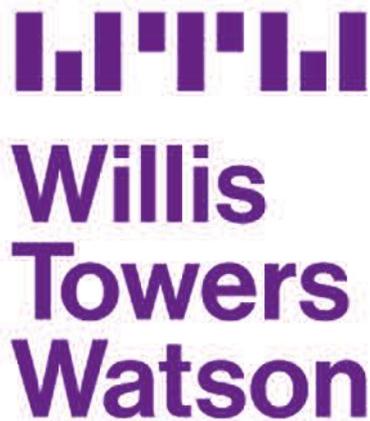
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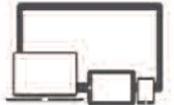
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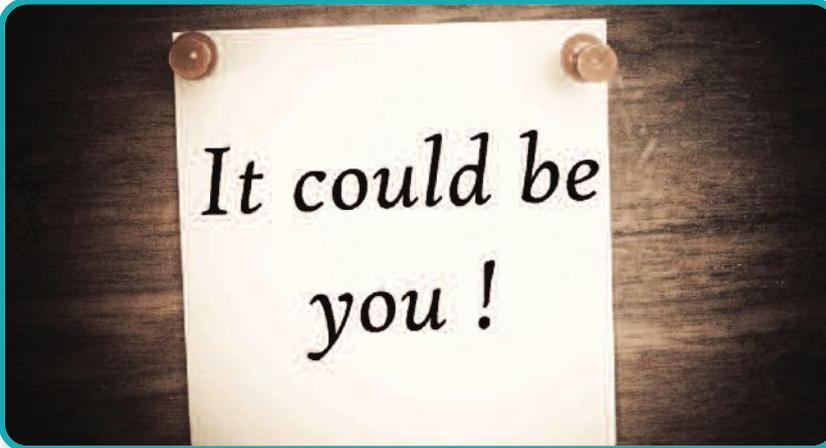
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Learning Programme

Launches September 2016

Retail Management Programme

Following our most successful programme to date earlier this year, we are running another 4 day Retail Management Programme. The course focuses on refreshing and enhancing the skills of managers and those aspiring to be managers to enable them to raise the performance of their store, their teams and themselves. The course is innovative and engaging with content designed to challenge conventional thinking. Some of the topics covered include;

- Understanding KPI's
- Strengthening Management Skill Sets
- Measuring the Customer Journey
- Developing Aggressive Sales Growth Strategies
- Monitoring and Improving Store Performance – Understanding Key Financial Measures

The course will be delivered by retail experts including retail expert James Burke, Ken Hughes and Alf Dunbar author of *You Are The Difference*, as well as case studies from leading Irish retailers.

“*The programme is fantastic, the ‘magic dust’ sprinkled over our managers who attended has had an incredibly positive effect on them and the business***”**

Certificate in Retail Management

The Certificate programme is suitable for all those working in retail wishing to formalise their training in the industry. It is a practical course underpinned by academic best practice. The following modules give students the necessary skills to succeed in a management position.

- Introduction to Retail Management
- People Management and Development
- Finance for Retail
- Customer Relations in Retail
- Retail Operations

The programme is validated by Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

“*As the course progressed I have a better knowledge of what I can and cannot do and I know how to react in situations and I know what to expect of others as well as myself!***”**

Diploma in Retail Management

The focus for the Diploma moves from the shop floor towards regional management, with key preparation for career progression. The Diploma will follow a similar schedule to the Certificate in applying the theory to real life examples and people working in the retail world have been brought on board as tutors. The course covers the following subjects;

- Multi-Site Retail Management
- Technology For Retail
- Advanced People Management
- Management Accounting

“*All our staff who’ve attended have benefited hugely from their participation. The practical and theoretical content, from People Management to Finance and Customer Relations has given them the valuable knowledge to further their careers. We are excited about the next steps in their development to the Diploma as well as sending a new cohort of managers and staff on the Certificate course in September***”**

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