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TIMES

Q1 2020

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WELCOME



W elcome everyone to the first 2020 edition of Retail Times. I very much hope that you all enjoyed a robust trading period over Christmas. While feedback is mixed, I do know that we are now hopefully entering a phase in the economic and consumer sentiment cycle where we can potentially enjoy a period of normality without any more shocks and concerns. I wish all of our home interiors and furniture members well over the next few weeks in January, for what is their Christmas.

Looking back on 2019, Retail Excellence achieved a lot, that said, we cannot rest on our laurels. The Board of Directors, Leadership Council, Partner Council and Executive team have a very clear plan as to what we need to achieve on your behalf in 2020. Looking back for a moment, for me, the highlight of 2019 was the successful launch of the online retail scheme with Minister Heather Humphreys and the great team at Enterprise Ireland. It gave me some personal pleasure to present the Minister and the EI team with our retail industry advocate of the year award. This was presented on your behalf and I am delighted to see so many members of Retail Excellence succeed with their applications to Enterprise Ireland. While the grant received is not to be sniffed at, the fact that so many members are now Enterprise Ireland clients is a real win for them individually, but is also a very significant win for the retail industry as a whole.

As profiled in this magazine, the retail destinations across the globe who are breaking the mould and enjoying like for like footfall and revenue gains are those that operate a collaborative turnover based rent agreement. Such agreements ensure that all parties have very active interest in the commercial success of the tenant. Westfield Shopping Centres in Stratford and London, UK are a great case in point. Both locations enjoyed significant footfall and revenue gains throughout 2019, all down to having a partnership approach to scheme management. In that regard the Board of Retail Excellence have agreed that we will recommence our popular Shopping Centre and Retail Park Reviews in

2020. The Reviews will be published annually and will celebrate the best schemes in Ireland. They will also reference where improvements are required. Scheme's who are implementing a collaborative approach with tenants will score well. Schemes which simply collect rent, wont.

I note that the main feature in this edition is the remarkable story of how the senior leadership team at An Post have turned the business around from a precarious financial position to one of sustainable and substantial profitability. Led by David McRedmond, the transition achieved at An Post can teach us all some clear lessons about retail and business generally. Retail is always changing, we need to be willing to adapt and if we have a clear and focussed plan and a determined and agile team, we can all succeed in retail.

Looking to the next few months, we are excited to start our seventh iteration of the highly successful Retail Management Development Programme. It is a simply brilliant programme and a great way to develop talent in your organisation. I look forward to meeting all the successful participants when we present certificates to so many brilliant retail managers later in the year.

Another very important event is the 2020 Retail & Digital Summit on May 19th and 20th in Citywest. I urge you all to take some time out of your business, come and learn and network with your peers.

Recent years have witnessed some challenging trading conditions primarily caused by Brexit and significant political uncertainty. Now that the United Kingdom will commence an orderly exit from the EU, hopefully the future will deliver far calmer conditions and I wish you all a very successful 2020.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Barrett

*Chief Operations Officer, Applegreen PLC
Chairman, Retail Excellence*

THE NEWS



Ciaran McCormack
leading significant
growth at B.Ionic

APPLE RESELLER DOUBLES DOWN WITH UK ACQUISITION

B.Ionic, the Irish owned parent company of Irish Apple reseller CompuB, has announced it's acquisition of UK Apple reseller Stormfront. The UK retailer has revenues of €66million and employs three hundred people across its twenty-three stores and its business to business sales division. Commenting on the acquisition, Group Chief Executive at B.Ionic Ciaran McCormack said: "This is a landmark acquisition for the B.Ionic Group. The United Kingdom is an important market for our business and this deal allows us grow our presence significantly in this market."

B.Ionic operates seven CompuB locations in Ireland as well as operating the Bang & Olufsen brand and the tech accessories brand Juku. In most recent accounts filed, CompuB Ireland reported profits of €1.1million to the end of March 2019.

CHOICE BOUTIQUE OPENS EIGHT STORE

Irish retailer Choice Boutique recently opened a new store in Castleknock, Dublin, bringing their total number of stores to eight nationwide. The new opening being their fourth Dublin store to date. The retailer has a successful history of offering directional ladieswear fashions, ensuring they are a "destination shop" when looking for

something a little different. As well as carrying Irish designed brands, the boutique carries a strong selection of brands from the UK and Europe, offering the customer a diverse selection of collections to choose from. To mark the occasion, Castleknock resident actor and model Vivienne Connolly joined the Choice Boutique team and customers to officially launch the boutique and cut the ribbon last October. In keeping with their niche boutique feel, the new boutique is fitted out in a modern and minimalist style. Light wooden flooring with high ceilings and feature lighting give the boutique a bright and spacious feel. The new boutique carries collections from Peruzzi, Soya Concept, Rene Derhy and Art to name a few. Castleknock is their first boutique to offer a selection of products from Chalk, which is a luxury collection of scented toiletries and candles adding to the boutique shopping experience.

ROSES 'WOOL' THE WORLD WITH NEW ARAN STORE

Rose of Tralee Roses from Dublin, Kilkenny and Wexford, together with stylist and influencer Emily O'Donnell, stepped out to officially launch The Aran Store last December. Aran Knitwear specialists, The Aran Store are to bring the best of Irish design to Dublin's O'Connell Street with their newly opened store which showcases great Irish gift options. Managing Director, Peter Hyland said that The Aran Store represents an exciting new chapter for Carroll's Irish Gifts. "The Aran Store has the best of Irish design, from Tipperary Crystal Christmas giftware and fashion accessories, to handmade traditional Aran clothing and Irish jewellery. We are delighted to add The Aran Store to the group in such a superb location. This will be our third new Aran store to open in the city this year. The store is steeped in Irish tradition and allows both tourists and local shoppers to shop local and buy Irish giftware for their loved ones this Christmas." The Aran Store is a sister store of Carroll's Irish Gifts which has been in



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Vivienne Connolly was on hand to cut the ribbon on the new Choice Boutique



Emily O'Donnell joined Peter Hyland, Managing Director Carroll's Irish Gifts and three roses for the store opening



Significant profit and revenue growth at Insomnia led by Harry O'Kelly

Dublin since 1982 and is now nationwide with fourteen Irish Gifts stores and three Aran Stores across Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork and Belfast.

LVMH SEALS DEAL TO BUY TIFFANY

In one of the largest retail acquisitions ever, the owners of the Louis Vuitton brand, LVMH, have agreed terms to buy renowned jewellery brand Tiffany for €14.5 billion. The LVMH stable of brands include Christian Dior and Don Perignon and this acquisition is thought to mark a move by LVMH into

the jewellery industry. The all cash Tiffany deal will bolster LVMH revenues which were last recorded at €50 billion before the Tiffany transaction.

PROFITS GROW AT INSOMNIA

2018 pre-tax profits at Insomnia, the leading coffee chain, grew to €3.69 million while revenue for the period grew by 7.5% to €30.9 million. The company said: "Revenue in 2018 was driven by new store openings in both the UK and Ireland as well as new product launches including the new Voyager

medium roast coffee. By the end of 2019 we will have 182 stores and 420 sites with self-service machines. In 2020 we will open our 200th store and our first store outside of Europe. We currently employ 560 staff directly and a further 320 within our franchise community." Analysis of the group's income for 2018 show that Irish revenues increased from €26.7 million to €28.5 million while United Kingdom revenues increased from €2 million to €2.38 million.

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IKEA HITS €200M IN IRISH REVENUES

IKEA has reached the €200million mark in Irish sales after ten years in operation here. The Swedish retailer recorded revenues of €203million for the financial year to 31st August 2019. According to Peter Jelkeby, IKEA UK & Ireland County Manager the future strategy at IKEA is to put a hold on physical expansion while it focusses on becoming more accessible by selling a greater range of product online. The €203million milestone is a €22million rise in like for like revenues. IKEA's Irish online sales grew by 86% for the period to €32million or 16% of overall revenues.

MINISTER HEATHER HUMPHREYS AND ENTERPRISE IRELAND RECOGNISED WITH AWARD

Following the launch of the very successful online retail scheme to enable Irish retailers to take on the world online, Minister Heather Humphreys and Enterprise Ireland have been awarded the Advocate of the Year award at the recent AIBMS Retail Excellence Awards. Commenting on the award Joe Barrett, COO Applegreen PLC and Chairman Retail Excellence said: "Every year the Board of Directors at Retail Excellence decide on a retail industry advocate of the year. It is a person or an entity which the Board deems to have

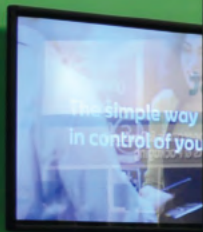
contributed most to the Irish Retail Industry over the past twelve months. In light of the launch of the successful online retail scheme, which saw our members being awarded with close to €1m in grant supports, the Board unanimously agreed that Minister Heather Humphreys and the team at Enterprise Ireland are most deserving winners. I would personally like to thank the Minister, the senior team at the Department of Enterprise and Julie Sinnamon and Stephen Hughes in Enterprise Ireland for all their help and support. This initiative will see many members internationalise their businesses and our award winners deserve ever credit for the launch of this innovative scheme."

MORE PROBLEMS ARISE AT TED BAKER

Ted Baker have recently confirmed that the fashion brands stock levels have been overstated by between €23million and €29million. The Ted Baker Board of Directors have appointed independent solicitors and accountants to assess the situation. Law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer plan to undertake a review of the situation and report their findings back to Sharon Baylay, the Ted Baker Head of Marketing who joined the Board recently.



Minister Heather Humphreys accepting her Retail Industry Advocate of the Year award from Joe Barrett, COO Applegreen PLC and Chairman Retail Excellence



Fáilte
Welcome

5





an post

.....operation

TRANSFORMATION

In recent years there has been some very significant progress made by the senior team at An Post, Ireland's largest retailer. Back in 2015 the semi-state was predicting future losses of €160m per annum, instead today, following a remarkable turnaround, the company is delivering significant profits. David Fitzsimons sat down with Garry Doyle, An Post's Network Transformation Director for Retail to find out more.

It is a rainy Friday in late November and I am due to meet up with Garry Doyle to interview him for this main feature. Garry texts me to suggest that we meet in the Butlers Chocolate Café at the top of Henry Street and we will then run across to the GPO trying best to avoid the rain. Minutes later we are in Garry's office sipping on our delicious flat whites.

I have known Garry for over ten years and watched on as he forged a stellar career in retail. As we settle in for a two-hour chat, I ask Garry where his career in retail began. "It all started in Let's Talk Phones. I was lucky enough to have known Jonathan Stanley and Don Maher. They founded Let's Talk Phones and this is where I cut my teeth in retail. After that I served as Commercial Director in Carphone

Warehouse for six years and then progressed on to the role of Sales Director at eir for a further five years. Then this opportunity arose with An Post."

I am eager to find out how the move from private industry into the public sector has gone for Garry. He is quick to explain that sometimes the perception of An Post and indeed other semi-state organisations is not all that accurate. "I am exactly a year in my role with An Post and to be frank it is amazing how overtly commercial and entrepreneurial An Post actually is. The mind-set of colleagues in An Post is probably the most like a start-up than in any other organisation I have worked with. We have a very clear transformational plan to deliver and it has been a very demanding but enjoyable year in the business."

“He realised that the business had a limited time to run before insolvency hit”

NEAR INSOLVENCY

We are now settling into our conversation and I ask Garry to explain how the business is trading. “We are trading very well” he explains. “That said it could have been a whole different story. Back in 2015 David McRedmond was appointed as CEO at An Post and within days of commencing the role he realised that the business had a limited time left to run before insolvency hit. David negotiated with Government for a loan of €30m. He clearly had the skillset and a plan

As I sit back and listen to Garry speak, I am struck with the fact that a semi-state of this size was so close to insolvency. I can recall the media attention in the day with many commentators stating that An Post was unsavable. I have prepared for the interview and was aware that prior to David McRedmond’s arrival the business was predicted to lose the State €160m a year for the foreseeable future. I have also read the 2018 An Post financial accounts and note that the business delivered a €40m profit for the period. I ask Garry how this remarkable



The An Post Money Debit Card, one of many new financial services launched

to turn the business around. First he stabilised the finances and then set about transforming the company.”

“Put it this way, every year it is pretty likely that €10m will be shaved off our revenue due to declining stamp sales and reduced social welfare recipients”

turnaround was achieved. “To be honest the transformation is constant. Put it this way, every year it is pretty likely that €10m will be shaved off our revenue due to declining stamp sales and reduced social welfare recipients. That creates a real sense of urgency in the business as each year that lost €10m revenue needs to be found somewhere else. One of the first things David did was split the business into two. One division looks after Mail and Parcel delivery and the other is our retail business looking after the 950 Post Offices nationwide. The two divisions require very different skillsets. Garrett Bridgeman is Managing Director of the An

Post Mail and Parcels division and Debbie Byrne is Managing Director of An Post Retail. I report into Debbie and my principle role working with the team here is to drive retail transformation.”

CONSOLIDATION AND CO-LOCATION

Garry continues to expand on the recovery. “One of the first things the Retail Management team did was to implement two Cs – Consolidation and Co-Location. Consolidation saw over one hundred and fifty post offices close back in 2018. They had naturally come to the end of their licence agreements and the net effect was that over seventy percent of their business transferred to other post office locations. This gave over 300 Post Offices a shot in the arm to help them build for the future. The second strategy is co-location. This involves moving some post offices from secondary locations to better and busier locations. It is remarkable, but at that time over fifty percent of all post offices were in standalone locations with limited footfall and no real opportunity to trade. The primary strategy here is to partner with local symbol grocery stores such as Musgraves, BWG or independent outlets and relocate the post offices to these busier and more vibrant locations. These locations enjoy better footfall and have repeat and frequent spending customers. I guess it offers a win-win solution to both parties. We access more customers and the local store enjoys enhanced footfall of customers who have money in their pockets. Over 1.3m customers visit a post office each week and annually these customers transact €14bn across the Post Office counters. This has an obvious positive impact on spending in these local grocery stores.”

NEW STORE FORMAT

I am eager to get into the detail of how the turnaround has been achieved and Garry is happy to share. “We have implemented a four-pillar approach to retail” he explains. “Pillar one is to extend our product mix into a broader range of financial services. We have launched and extended our offerings in personal credit cards, personal loans, current accounts, foreign exchange and much more. We are also planning to launch SME loans and we are working to be able to offer our customers mortgages in the future. Since we launched the new An Post branding in March 2019 we have started to change the public perception regarding who we are and what we do. I guess to be successful in financial services we knew we had to change



“Consolidation saw
over one hundred
and fifty post offices
close back in 2018”

Garry Doyle, An Post
Network Transformation
Director Retail



Postmaster Derek Merrins & Debbie Byrne, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar & David McRedmond

the look and feel of our network of stores. Thus, we have commenced the roll-out of a next generation Post Office. In newer offices we have removed the counters and the banded security glass. We have introduced Self Service Kiosks which allow customers to self-serve their own postage and retail purchases. We also introduced meeting rooms to allow customers consult with our team in a private setting in relation to all aspects of our business but especially our Financial Services offerings. The new offices are trading very well and allow our teams to consult with customers, assisted selling if you like. We do have a huge store transformation programme ahead of us. With over nine hundred locations there will be a fair amount of work involved. That said, we are extremely bullish and I am personally delighted with the results being achieved in Thurles and Newbridge, our first two stores trialling the new format design.”

We pause for a moment and I ask Garry to explain this new way of selling to their customers. “We are a very unique business with close to two million customers. One of the first things I learned when I joined the organisation is that An Post has a clear strategic advantage, we know every single one

of our customers by name. This lends itself to a relationship of trust that is priceless. In addition to this we are now seeing people who previously never set foot in a Post Office enquiring about our new range of services. Previously counters and banded security glass prevented us for forging customer relationships. That is now all changing and our new ways of selling to customers is working really well. Refurbished Post Offices are seeing growth in revenue, margin and CX outcomes.”

eCOMMERCE

I am conscious of time as we are an hour in and we still have to chat through the three other pillars. I ask Garry to explain the second pillar. “Our aim is to be the leading eCommerce business which is the first choice for business and consumer customers for their deliveries and we have a branch network of over 950 outlets that we can leverage to achieve this aim. Basically, we used to be a bricks and mortar retailer but realise, like the rest of the retail industry, that customers also want to shop online. Thus, we launched a number of eCommerce solutions to make customers lives easier. An example is that today a customer will receive an alert on

their phone the day before their delivery is due and choose to deliver a package to their home or a convenient place but also to any of the Post Offices or to one of our parcel lockers. We have twenty parcel lockers in place but soon plan to announce a significant locker rollout plan. In addition, facilitating customer returns to the originating retailer is a big focus area for us. We also have our very successful Address Pal service which allows customers to shop abroad and we deliver the item home for them or to their local Post Office.”

It is at this point that I have to pose an awkward question. The AddressPal service has been a point of significant frustration to many of our members, who balk at the idea of a semi-state company actively promoting shopping outside the state. I personally agree with our members on this point. Anytime I see the Address Pal service being advertised, I also instantly get frustrated with the idea. I ask Garry if he is comfortable with the service and the potential negative impact it has on the Irish retail industry. “I understand people’s frustrations and I am a huge supporter of Irish Retail – we provide employment for over 3,000 people in our Retail network - however An Post is a

“I think I have just heard the greatest business turnaround story in the history of the Irish State”

commercial entity and we see the Address Pal service as a natural extension of our logistics market offer. If we didn't do it, someone else would.”

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

We move onto the third pillar of transformation and this is when I sense an element of frustration creep into our conversation. Garry goes on to explain: “An Post provides many important Government services such as social welfare payments, dog and TV licences, collection of court and garda fines and passport application processing. We see a significant opportunity to expand these services and do much more. There is no reason why we cannot collect motor taxes, process driver licences and support ID verification. We have been pushing successive Governments to extend our range of services provided with minimum success. It is frustrating as with over nine hundred locations nationwide we could offer significant convenience to customers by offering these expanded services.” I suggest to Garry that his plight would seem to be very similar to that of our extensive pharmacy membership who are all very eager to do more for patient healthcare in the community, but Government are slow to change. He agrees. “We should be leveraging our network of post offices better, but for some reason Government don't see the opportunity as we see it.”

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

My time is close to running out so we quickly move onto the fourth and final pillar of transformation. Garry explains: “I guess

this pillar is one that we are investing most time in today. At An Post, my team and I are very eager to support every Postmaster to be the very best and derive a fair commercial return for their work invested. Thus, we have established a business development service involving seven Business Development Managers and seven Business Excellence Officers. Their job is to support our network of stores and drive them to be the very best. We have recently launched KPIs for all stores and underpin these with supports and

build a sustainable post office network. To do this we will continue to expand our product range, modernise the network and equip our postmasters with the KPIs, capability and supports they need to grow.”

I suggest to Garry that one of the greatest achievements made by An Post is now that the Post Offices are changing and the extensive team at An Post are engaging in meaningful conversations with 1.3m customers every week, surely this is something to be proud of. Garry pauses: “Yes, while there is a significant migration online, for many of our customers the only conversation with a person they might have in any given day is their interaction with an An Post team member. While we can deploy technology and launch new services, we can never forget that retail is all about human to human engagement.”

I thank Garry for his time and as he leads me to the exit of the GPO we chat about meeting up for a pint sometime soon.



An Post Newbridge with Martin Heydon TD and An Posts Debbie Byrne

training so that each location has every chance to be the very best it can be.” I suggest to Garry that this is where his telecommunication industry skills will come into play. “Absolutely, I grew up on KPIs in telecommunications and now the time has come to apply the same supports in An Post.”

We are wrapping up our conversation and I ask Garry try and give me some sense of what the future holds for An Post. “It is simple really. Our primary objective is to

I walk out onto Henry Street and dash over O'Connell Street bridge and up to Grafton Street, all the time trying to avoid the incessant rain. I meet my wife for a coffee and she asks, “well, how did it go”. I take a sip of my second flat white of the day and pause.... “I think I have just heard the greatest business turnaround story in the history of the Irish State.”

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7.2

The reported percentage increase in UK like for like November 2019 Black Friday sales according to Barclaycard

The pounds sterling spent by a local hardware store in Wales on their Christmas ad. The ad went viral with hundreds of thousands of views

100

23.7

The millions of euro profit recorded by Supermacs in 2018

20

The number of years ALDI have successfully traded in the Irish market

The euro amount paid by Irish consumers in tax on every bottle of wine bought according to the latest Irish Wine Market Report

3.19



The millions of euro to be invested by BWG Foods in the Londis brand up to 2022

10



FISHERS
of newtownmountkennedy
Boutique Department Store Est. 1979

FISHERS

of newtownmountkennedy

Boutique Department Store Celebrates 40 Years in Business

The renowned county Wicklow store, Fishers, saw it's 40th Anniversary recently and used the occasion to thank its loyal customers, team, suppliers and the community that have supported them in reaching this milestone. They hosted a 6-week long programme of events and promotions.

"We wanted to offer lots of different opportunities to all those who have supported us over the last 40 years. We kicked off in style with a party in store, ran a series of workshops and master-classes, fashion shows and talks alongside a whole host of promotions." Explained Rebecca Harrison, the current and third managing director of the family business. "We were overwhelmed with the turnout at the party. It was very much a celebration, with entertainment on the night including some live local music from the award-winning band Carron, a fashion showcase with glimpses of the current looks, a really exciting fashion retrospective, where we showcased clothing bought from Fishers over the last 40 years – a fantastic insight into fashion trends but also the durability in terms of both quality and style of the pieces.

One of our other highlights on the night for the guests was the opportunity to go away with an illustration of themselves. Linda Byrne was on hand to do live illustrations and capture our guests' style on the night." Another highlight was their Wine, Rugby and Menswear evening where guests were regaled with stories from Irish rugby legend, Ollie Campbell's rugby playing days along with his insights to the current game, had their taste-buds tingled with wine tasting from Peter Crosse and Lynn Temple Chairman of Magee, that stalwart of Irish clothing, entertained with an amusing insight into the world of fabric and fashion. Their other events included a Style Confidence sential Skincare" Masterclasses and fashion shows.

HISTORY

Founded in 1979, by the three Hughes siblings and partners, Fishers of

Newtownmountkennedy has grown from a small country-clothing outfitter, to an 11,000sq ft boutique department store with a wide range of clothing and more on offer. The business is now run by Rebecca Harrison and Charlotte Errity, daughters of two of the original founders.

Their heritage of country clothing now only forms a small part of their product offering. It is a hub of retail activity with a menswear shop, ladies boutique, gifts, homeware and accessories departments and children's clothing department. There are 4 other businesses at Fishers adding to the experience; a hair salon, bed and bedding store, artists workshop/gallery, an award-winning café, and a self-catering cottage. A little bit of something for everyone. "My Aunt and uncle bought out the other founders in the early 1980s and grew the business over the next 20 years, introducing quickly a ladies department and then expanding their ranges to include more lifestyle collections." Shares Rebecca.

They also expanded the business physically, buying the premises and building on several extensions. In 2000, Rebecca's parents bought the company back and further grew the business through the Celtic tiger years. Expanding the ranges further to offer even more clothing with broad appeal and creating some fantastic experiences and initiatives for their customers. Rebecca joined the company first in 2002.

"We had a great period of growth and then of course hit the recession in 2008, turnover halved within 12 months and we had to take serious action to stay in business, it was a very stressful time, especially with 20 staff members livelihoods also on the line. We had to look at every aspect of the business and cut costs where we could, but also look at the way we did business. There were 2 key strategic decisions that made a huge impact, both of which we still do today. The first was to work more closely with our suppliers and we attracted several concession brands, giving us the access to stock without needing the upfront capital to do so. The other was to attract other businesses on site – giving customers more reasons to visit, us a rental income and also allowing us to work together and pool marketing resources and running costs. Both worked extremely well"

But if there's one constant in Fishers it is that of change! "There is constant evolution here, but I think in retail you have to have that, otherwise you won't survive. We're lucky to be small enough to be able to pivot when



The dynamo that is Rebecca Harrison



necessary.” Over their forty years Fishers has managed to navigate two recessions, a flood that engulfed the shop, foot and mouth disease which meant people did not travel to the countryside at all and a road bypass of the village.

SIZE AND DESIGN THEME

The store is a little tardis-like now, the original building was a one room school-house and housed the first shop in its current location, but various showrooms have been built on and now you wander from one open-plan room to the next, offering natural division between each department.

From the entrance through the listed building, through this multi-roomed space there is lots of character, a nod to the country heritage alongside a bright and airy interior offering a neutral pallet and perfect backdrop to display the clothing. The new LED lighting offers a brilliant back lit canvas with spotlights to highlight where necessary.

There’s an eclectic mix of fixtures and fittings with a good solid Wall grid system that fades into the background with accents of antique tables, some fashion quotes and signage that aids the customer.

The brands they stock are prominent and as you walk through you can see sections for

each one, our eye catches on Magee, Brook Taverner, Bruhl, Eden Park, Hoggs and Columbia in the menswear department and Olsen, Part Two, Joules, Seasalt, Ireland’s Eye and Bianca in the ladies.

FOOD AT FISHERS CAFE

All routes in the shop ultimately lead to the café, Food at Fishers is a cosy café with a mouth-watering display of treats and a menu that is perfectly pitched for the daytime customers it attracts. Everything is made on site daily and you can tell the quality of the food is what brings people back again and again.

“We’ve had a café on site for about 25 years, and it’s really important, both to serve our customers but also to attract people to the store. We’re pretty much full everyday for lunch and get a good crowd in the morning, after school drop off and with different groups meeting. And our afternoon tea is really gorgeous, as I don’t make it, I’m allowed say that!” Rebecca Harrison opened Food at Fishers six years ago, previously the cafe was leased out. “It was a tough decision to take on another business but one that was 100% correct and thankfully the café has gone from strength to strength since then, my Mum ran a catering and event management company previously so I suppose it was in the blood!”

CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMME & IN STORE EVENTS

As well as the initiatives mentioned already, Fishers like to learn from best practise in other businesses and has always offered more than just products. They’ve had a loyalty programme for 35 years and have found it to be vital to their success. “We communicate directly with our loyal customers and reward them so they have also rewarded us with their business” Rebecca explains. “Our programme revolves around special instore events and promotions throughout the year”.

They host about 8 instore fashion events each season with complimentary refreshments for guests which Rebecca says are a very important part of their sales strategy. They also offer extra services like personal shopping, image and style consultations, alterations in store and a special-order service.

FISHERS OWN-BRAND

Fishers launched the “Fishers Inspired Collection” of own-brand products for their 40th Celebrations, allowing for greater control over margin and input into style and production, using their 40 years of experience to create exactly what their customer is looking for. They will expand this range over coming seasons.



ONLINE STORE & DIGITAL MARKETING

Fishers.ie is an area of growth-focus this year. Rebecca is pursuing a strong marketing campaign in this area, using the online store to increase sales but also drive in-store footfall. Their social media and digital marketing strategy have already made an impact and she expects this to be a key driver especially with the opportunities in attracting more Irish online consumers away from UK sites with Brexit looming.

TOURIST MARKET

Surprisingly Fishers are not currently strongly attracting tourists, however this is a market they fully intend on tapping into in

the next year. With a strong location in Wicklow to attract tourists, this is a key strategy for 2020.

SUSTAINABILITY

Rebecca explains “This is another area I’m really passionate about. At Fishers we have always focused on durability and the timeless style of our collections – we have never supported disposable fashion! But we are now very consciously sourcing our ranges where there are good sustainability and eco-credentials – using organic and less environmentally impactful materials, renewable and recycled fabrics etc. We’re also encouraging recycling, upcycling or reuse of clothes, we’ve partnered with SVP’s

Vincents charity shop, offering customers a €10 Fishers Voucher for each sack they donate in store. And at our Fashion shows, demonstrate how to upcycle your existing wardrobe. We absolutely have to lead the way in making a difference, and our customers really appreciate it”

MORE EXPERIENCES

At Fishers they have always seen the importance of offering our customers more than just products. “We feel now that we are half retailers, half event managers!” quips Rebecca. “We have a whole host of events each season, such as fashion shows, stylist workshops, make up demos etc. But we feel these events and educational workshops are a crucial part of our growth and we plan on upping the frequency and variety of topics on offer.”



Some of the team
behind Fishers
success

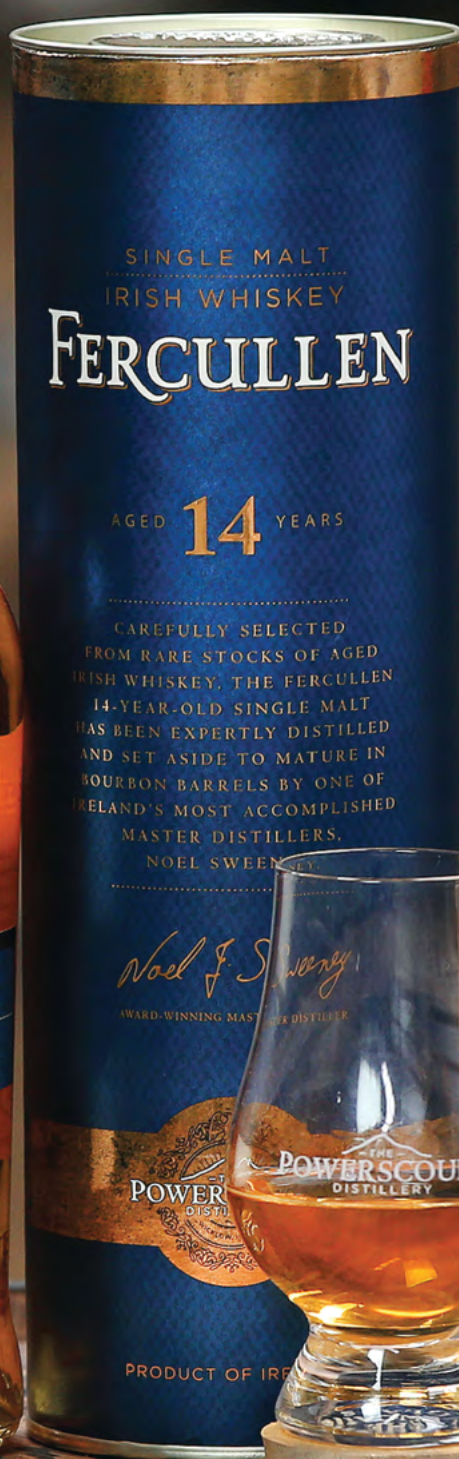
Number of Employees: 22

Year Established: 1979

One sentence to describe the store: Fishers of Newtownmountkennedy is an Award-Winning, Family-Owned Boutique Department store nestled in the Wicklow countryside offering customers a day out to enjoy shopping their wide range lifestyle collections, and lunch in their renowned café.

Owners: Rebecca Harrison & Charlotte Errity

Fercullen 14 year
old single malt



POWERSCOURT DISTILLERY

...a welcome new addition

The most recent IWA (Irish Whiskey Association) report states that Irish Whiskey Sales show no signs of slowing down. Irish Whiskey is set to continue to be the fastest growing whiskey category in world in coming years. From a base of only 4 working distilleries in 2010, over 26 distilleries are now in operation. This represents positive news for both Irish tourism and retail.

Irish Whiskey exports are once again flourishing and is predicated to takeover Scotch in the US by 2024. The US is the largest market for Irish whiskey (43.5% of all sales). However, it is not only the US which attracts Irish Whiskey sales, growth in Australia, Canada and Central Europe led by Germany, Russia, Poland, Czech and Slovakia – offer strong prospects for near term growth also.

Armed with very persuasive numbers and a serious appetite for risk – the initial concept for development of a distillery on Powerscourt Estate was born. Two local entrepreneurs Ashley Gardiner & Gerry Ginty put together a team in order to build the business case for a distillery that embodied the heritage and style of Powerscourt Estate.

Recognized as the jewel in Wicklow's crown, the "Garden" of "The Garden County", Powerscourt Estate is a timeless place of history and exploration. Welcoming over 500,000 tourists a year and enjoying a long heritage of dedication and craftsmanship, Powerscourt has become one of Ireland's most treasured estates – an inspiring location where the extraordinary is possible.

Once planning permission was granted for the project the Slazenger family, owners of the Powerscourt Estate came on board as investors, persuaded by industry experience and belief in the project from the other key investors Mike and Alex Pierce. Having previous involvement with Isle of Arran Whisky Distillery in Scotland they knew scalability was key for long term success.

The facility embraces one of the oldest buildings on the estate, The Mill house, dates back to 1730 and like a time portal one emerges from the ancient entrance building into a light, bright contemporary 20,000sq Distillery and the modern visitor centre which has been thoughtfully designed to seamlessly blend old with new.

The emphasis on the Visitor Centre and the customer experience in Powerscourt is key to



Master Distiller
Noel Sweeney

the viability of the project. According to most recent figures nearly 923,000 people visited Ireland's distilleries and brand homes in 2018 and according to the industry, figures are targeted to reach 1.9 million visitors by 2025, making distilleries among the fastest growing visitor attractions in Irish tourism.

In terms of the design and fit out of the distillery, a very classic/contemporary angle was taken, so that the distillery, would complement the existing estate. The fit out which was project managed by DDC Shopfit & Design and revolves around the customer experience, with a large retail area, café, bar, high-end AV lounge and six carefully appointed individual tasting rooms available for private and corporate hire.

Overhauling the 19th century venue to meet the modern functionality for the Distillery's product, tasting tours and corporate events required an expertise and delicate project management working closely with the client to create a uniquely Irish experience. The whole space exudes an overall feeling of timelessness, sophisticated elegance and attention to detail, fitting so seamlessly with the setting of Powerscourt estate and the already established whiskey brand of Fercullen Irish Whiskey.

Recognizing that many tourists may wish to purchase whiskey, but maybe precluded from doing so because of flight restrictions, the Distillery offers an online facility within the retail section where tourists can purchase and ship the whiskey directly anywhere in the world.

What immediately sets Powerscourt Distillery apart from the many new distilleries opening on the island is the influence of master-distiller Noel Sweeney who is, one of only two Irish Master Distillers to ever have been inducted into the World Whiskey hall of fame.

The Distillery also process produces significant amounts of hot water in the production process. The opportunity was taken to harness and redistribute this 'waste' heat, to heat the Distillery Visitor Centre, using an under floor heating system, thus reducing the costs and CO2 Emissions. The production facility is complimented by onsite warehousing that provides ideal conditions for maturation and offers another unique aspect to a visit to the Distillery and Visitor centre.

Powerscourt currently produces four lines of the Fercullen brand of whiskey. 'Fercullen' is the anglicized version of 'Fera Cualann', the ancient Gaelic name for the estate and its surrounding lands. First off the shelves was their Fercullen Premium Blend Irish Whiskey, followed by the Fercullen 10-Year Old Single Grain and the distillery's flagship Fercullen 14-Year Old Single Malt. Powerscourt will added to their range this November with the premium 18-Year Old Fercullen Single Malt.

For more information please visit www.powerscourtdistillery.com

Stats & Innovations

- The Project has seen over 20million euro investment- a 22,000 sq. ft.
- Powerscourt Distillery has 26 employees.
- First distillation commenced on June 13th 2018, and we have been laying down our own stock for over a year with nearly 3,000 barrels resting in our warehouse currently.
- The Distillery Visitor Centre welcomed its first visitors in May of 2019
- One sentence to describe the business – "Ireland's leading premium Whiskey experience"

THE NEWS



Fire only a temporary issue for J. Barter Travel

FORTNUM & MASON ENJOY REVENUE BOOST

Luxury retailer Fortnum & Mason has reported growth in like for like sales of 12% to €150million to July 2019. The Royal grocer stated that enhanced sales of tea and biscuits was one of the key contributors to the enhanced trading, the seventh consecutive year of double-digit growth. The retailer also said that revenues were also boosted by recent product innovations including its sparkling tea range and chocolate caviar. Online sales grew 13% over the period. Fortnum & Mason opened their first ever store in Hong Kong in late 2019 and despite political unrest in the country, the store is reported to be trading well.

FLYING TIMES AT J. BARTER TRAVEL!

When J. Barter Travel had an office badly hit by the fire in Douglas Village Shopping Centre in Cork, there was much worry about how they were going to bounce back. However, after a few weeks of confusion, J. Barter Travel has now opened an alternative branch at Clermont, Douglas Road. Hoping to be a temporary arrangement, all staff have

been able to maintain their jobs and make sure their clients can still plan their perfect holidays! The shop has had a revamp and the team are looking forward to continuing success in the new office! Contact Details: T: 021 489 4084 E: info.douglas@travelnet.ie. We wish George and team all the very best in their new temporary home.

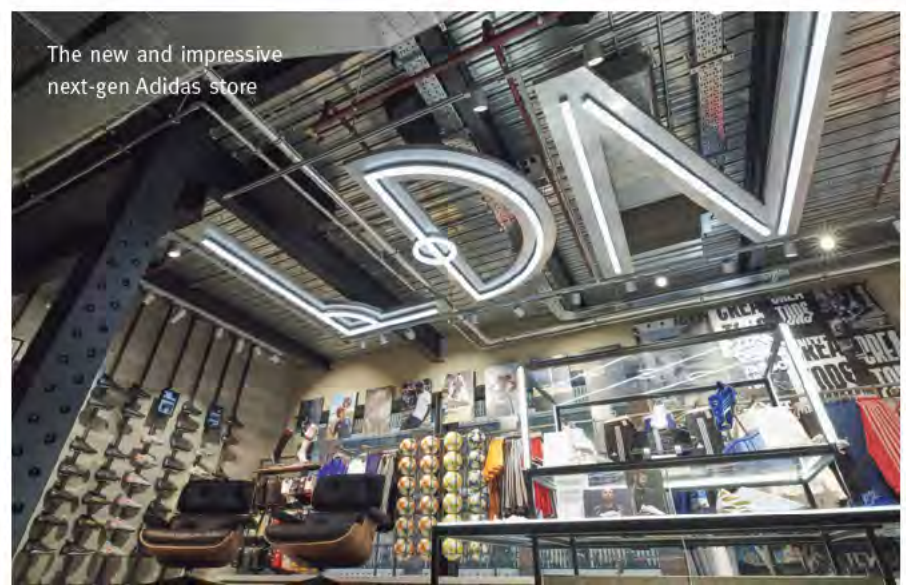
ADIDAS GOES LARGE IN OXFORD STREET LONDON

German sports brand Adidas has launched a next generation store in London's Oxford Street. The flagship format, almost

300,000sq. ft. in footprint, boasts a focus on experiential digital innovation and an abundance of customer services. One of the design highlights is "The Base", a space surround covered with LED floor and wall lighting and which will act as an events space. The store has also rolled out the first Adidas MarkerLab in the United Kingdom, which will allow customers customise any item they buy. A further innovation is that the store is in effect cashier-less with no cashier counters. Instead customers can pay from one hundred and twenty mobile devices instore.

WESTFIELD UK SURGE AHEAD WITH INNOVATIVE LANDLORD PRACTICE

The owners of Westfield London and Stratford have recorded a 5.2% increase in footfall for the first nine months of 2019 with tenant revenues and rental levels also trading up. This is in stark contrast to many other schemes in the UK and Ireland. The recent BRC-Springboard footfall index for shopping centre performance across the UK showed declines of 3.2%. Central to Westfield's success is the implementation of turnover based rental agreements with all tenants. Such agreement ensure that both landlord and tenant work together to better understand what works and there is a partnership approach to the tenancy. Another strategy implemented is to constantly review the tenant mix with underperforming tenants moved on, thus performing tenants enjoy best in class adjacencies. While this strategy has led Westfield to have higher than average vacancy rates, 8.7% as opposed to a market average of 4.5%, the strategy seems to work with tenant revenue up 7.1% for the first nine months of 2019. Commenting on the news David Fitzsimons, Group Chief Executive at Retail Excellence said: "In Westfield there is a very clear and common goal amongst all parties. Westfield are simply not just interested in collecting the rent. They have taken an active and deep interest in the



The new and impressive next-gen Adidas store



HMV owner Doug Putman opens Europe's largest music store

wellbeing of their tenants and this strategy is paying off for landlord and tenant alike. Turnover based rent agreements have spread from the US to most of Europe. The time is right for Ireland to adopt a similar practice.”

KILKENNY SHOPS LAUNCH GREEN FRIDAY

In a break from the sometimes-tiresome Black Friday events, the senior team at the Kilkenny Shops came up with a novel approach to the event, Green Friday. The campaign centred on supporting Irish Retail and Irish made products and communicating the powerful impact of spending money

locally. The campaign caught the Taoiseach's attention with Leo Varadkar tweeting his support for the campaign. The campaign went viral with many hundreds of Irish businesses getting behind the campaign. Commenting on the Green Friday campaign Kilkenny Shop, Finance Director, Conor Lynch said: “Green Friday really struck a chord with Irish businesses and Irish consumers. Encouraging Irish people to shop local under the Green Friday banner, successfully highlighted the value that shopping locally and buying Irish represents for communities all over the country. The 2019 Green Friday movement was a great start, and working with our partners such as

Retail Excellence, we have ambition to take it to a new level in 2020.”

EUROPE'S LARGEST MUSIC STORE OPENS IN BIRMINGHAM

Who said music retail is dead? Nine months after buying HMV out of administration, new boss Doug Putman is promising a return to profitability as he opens Europe's largest retail store, The Vault. At 25,000sq. ft. the new Birmingham based HMV store concept, The Vault, is certainly a break from the music store mould. Filled with 100,000 vinyl records and 60,000 DVD titles the new store offers an emporium of all thing's



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Impressive revenue and profit growth at JD Sports Ireland

entertainment. The store also boasts a live performance area which enjoyed live shows by One Direction member Liam Payne on opening day. Commenting on the new concept store, new owner of HMV Doug Putman said: "The opportunity to experience the biggest acts live in our stores and our ability to offer a platform to new artists in communities where we operate, as well as opportunities for fans to come together and share their passion for music is what it is all about." The Canadian retailer also owns Sunshine Records, which acquired close to eighty HMV stores in the Canadian market in 2017. Putman continues: "We believe there is a huge population who want to be part of an authentic culturally relevant store."

SANTA'S CHRISTMAS POST BOX APPEARS ON CECIL STREET LIMERICK

For the second year in a row, Limerick based boutique Amees of Cecil Street have installed a novel post box on the street, in partnership with An Post. The post box allows Children post their letters to Santa. The installation proved a great focal point for Christmas and also offered a wonder photo opportunity for young children as they sent their letters to Santa.

DOUBLE DIGIT REVENUE GROWTH FOR JD SPORTS IRELAND

JD Sports Ireland, which operates eighteen

stores in the Republic of Ireland recently reported revenue growth of 13.6% in the twelve months to February 2019. Over the period revenues grew from €95.26million to €108million, whilst profits increased 2% to €12.9million. The company also has a connected company, Champion Sports Ireland Unlimited. The Champion operation reported a 13% increase in profits to €2.3million over the same period. The company operates two Champion stores in Ireland and the Directors are on record as stating that they intend to continue the programme to re-facia the Champion stores to the JD Sports brand.



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eCommerce Insight

from an expert from both sides of the fence ...

Alice Goodwin, Digital Retail Strategist – Retail at Core Optimisation looks at how to achieve online success.

Moving from an in-house eCommerce team to an agency team was both a welcome change, and a new challenge. When you're used to managing one ad account that you know like the back of your hand, to taking on a number of new retail accounts, it's an exciting change and a real test of skill.

Having spent some years working between eCommerce, Marketing, commercial and product teams, I've come to know the balancing act that is required in order to get the best out of product-led digital marketing, in particular across search campaigns. There are some interesting learnings to take from moving from strategizing across one product-focused account in-house, where pressure from commercial and buying teams can dictate how you market products, to moving to a performance marketing agency.

PROFITABLE RETURN ON AD SPEND

Retail companies, naturally, place such a strong focus on profitability but this approach can get lost when it comes to marketing. Traditional marketing tended to mean that no real return could be calculated. As someone who's developed their career in a completely digital capacity, I'll never forget the shock I felt when discovering the formula to calculate the reach of a print advert. Thankfully, when it comes to digital, you can be much more precise. ROAS is a term we're all familiar with when

it comes to digital marketing, but when you're working in an eCommerce environment with tight budgets and margins, this is no longer enough to justify the spend. Depending on your business, you may be investing in digital marketing and looking for an ROI of €20 overall. While this is an extremely strong return, across a large account with campaigns spanning a number of different product categories and margin levels this model becomes less and less effective, as you sacrifice control of your profitable return.

The way around this problem is careful segmentation of your products within your campaigns. By spending a little extra time on set-up, you can create an ad account that is streamlined for profitability. To give you an example of this, if you are working across an account with product margins varying from 10% to 40%, it makes more sense to segment these into campaigns product with a split by low margin, middle margin and high margin. If you are working with a lot of brands or product categories, where margins don't vary a lot within each category, you can segment in this way for the same level of control. By segmenting in this way, we can track profitable return on advertising spend at a category level and follow the CPA of each campaign at a much more granular level. By swapping from reporting an overall ROI number, to this category-led, profitability-focused model, we can ensure total profitability across the entire account. We can then report on an overall %CPA and represent cost as a percentage of revenue, allowing us to clearly see how much of the

margin is being taken up by advertising costs.

This level of reporting detail allows us to maintain an extremely profitable account, and monitor profitability with ease. We can set budgets/goal CPAs/CPCs for campaigns with profitability and margin in mind, at a product category level.

This same approach can also be implemented, in a more simplified fashion, across google shopping campaigns through the use of custom labels, allowing us to segment these products into high, medium and low margin products. This then allows us to single out and upweight spend across higher margin products. Through this, we can prioritise these high margin products for relevant product searches, increasing overall profitability of the campaign.

MATCHING BUDGETS WITH CONSUMER DEMAND

The other aspect of maximising conversion & profitability across an account is maximising performance of campaigns by weighting spend across campaigns seasonally. This can be done by mapping demand for your product set monthly and weighting your budget accordingly.

For example, within an ad account that has multiple product-led campaigns, we can use consumer demand data to weight a monthly budget across multiple campaigns, or to forecast an annual budget.

Through use of the Google keyword planner,

Want to grow your business?

59% of Irish consumers say that it is important to them to be able to make a purchase online.

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IE Domain Registry

we can identify peaks in search activity for particular product groups within certain months. In many accounts, we would see 'always on' activity with budgets that don't change from month to month, with the exception of peak periods, or budgets that are based completely on the previous year's spend.

With budgets set in this way, it will be difficult to capitalise on peaks in customer demand, as consumer search fluctuates while the budget remains static. These fluctuations may mean that on some months, search impression share drops as budgets aren't sizeable enough to match demand & competition, and other months it is not spent as the demand does not exist.

By matching budget to monthly consumer search patterns, we can avoid this capping of impression share due to insufficient budgets on busy months by forecasting the

demand based on historical metrics, therefore increasing online revenue. Instead, we re-allocate spend from campaigns that are unlikely to spend budget to months that are likely to require additional budget. This allows us to maximise on impression share over months that demand is high, and cut back budgets over months when we know that demand will be low.

We have endless amounts of consumer data at our fingertips now, and online retailers are obliged to start leveraging some of this invaluable data to start informing their businesses. My advice is to start small. Identify the key product categories you want to pursue as a business and start utilising search demand data to justify investment in these areas, or to identify

alternative areas & new trends that your business can capitalise on.

In an increasingly competitive online marketplace, it's more vital than ever that online retailers are leveraging the wealth of data that is at their fingertips and start demanding more profit-driven marketing with stronger results than they've been able to achieve before





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THE YEAR

.....AHEAD

at retail excellence

We have an exciting year ahead at Retail Excellence. Our successful Retail Management Development Programme will kick off in March and run over five days culminating in the final day being at the Retail & Digital Summit in May. The programme is facilitated by retail expert James Bourke and it includes many brilliant expert speakers such as Paul Cunningham, Cunningham's Pharmacy, Anthony Gallagher, Petstop and our retail manager of the year Eamon Kelleher of Co-Op Superstores.

This year's Retail Retreat has been rebranded to be the Retail & Digital Summit which is being hosted at Citywest on May 19th and 20th. The two days will be packed with excellent presentations, discussions and lots of networking opportunities. We will soon launch tickets for the event.

Our Leadership and Partner Councils met in late 2019 and one of the key actions that came from their deliberations was the reinstatement of the Retail Excellence Shopping Centre and Retail Park Review.

Thus, in February we will commence collation of data to rate each primary shopping centre and retail park across the country. Members invest a significant amount in commercial rents and it is extremely important that they derive a return for that valued investment.

A further initiative that came from our Council meetings was the requirement to launch a complimentary legal advice service. Having gone to the market to select a leading legal partner, Sherwin O'Riordan Solicitors was chosen as our partner for the foreseeable future. We urge all members to utilise this service. In your member packs which you received in late December are details of this and many other benefits to membership.

We plan to launch the AIBMS Retail Excellence Awards in March 2020. The new flagship award of Retailer of the Year helps to celebrate all aspects of retail in-store and in the digital world. Every congratulations to

Brown Thomas who scooped the award back in November.

A further development in 2020 will be the launch of a "Thought Leadership" pillar in Retail Excellence. We plan to work with leading global retail experts and bring a monthly ezine to all members detailing retail trends and new formats across the globe. This complimentary report will provide all members with ideas and innovations in the world of retail and we hope members use it to provide some direction as to the future plans for your retail operations.

We are planning many other great events and opportunities for members to come together, network and learn from one another.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

JP Kennedy,
Commercial Director,
Retail Excellence



how can TECHNOLOGY help boost

With Christmas behind us, Retailers generally take time to reflect on the previous year, and plan for the year ahead.

Retail is an industry that is more than ever reliant on Technology that boosts the customer experience, improves cross channel selling and streamlines the supply chain. Unified Commerce is where the best retailers in the world are strategically focused.

The oldest and best strategy is to stop and listen to your customers. After all, they are the ones who determine what technology enhances the shopping experience and is worth keeping.

So now the question is: what do customers want and what do retailers need to do, to give them that want?

CUSTOMERS WANT ALWAYS ON ACCESS TO PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Customers want to be able to purchase what they want whenever they want by linking your physical and virtual retail business.

Loyalty should work online just as easy as in store, your webstore should be seamlessly linked to your Retail Management System. Click and Collect needs to be a strategy and returning physically should be part of that.

What should you do? Investigate new technology and pick the one(s) that will help you offer customers original and inventive ways to shop when they want, outside of traditional retail timeframes and spaces.

CONSUMERS WANT IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Shopping online can be extremely immersive and engaging. It's a one-to-one relationship with the screen, and the shopper is in complete control over what items to view, or which sounds to hear (or mute). How can

you offer the same kind of totalizing experience in your store? This is not a place for shopping – it's a space for playing and enjoying life, surrounded by and immersed into the spirit of the brand.

What should you do? Forget the old concept of store as a place to display items on racks and ring up sales. Instead, think of how you can surprise shoppers with a unique experience. Even technology as simple as loudspeakers playing weather sounds can help enhance the way people interact with the store environment. Music and visual exposure are how we are programmed, use this to your advantage.

CONSUMERS WANT EXCLUSIVITY

Mass production has lost its appeal. Modern consumers feel unique and they reward brands that give them products and experiences that are tailored to their tastes. And what better way to do that than letting them make or edit their own products? Simple old school techniques like adding logo's, initials or some design element that is your customers will add value. Encourage,

some alterations, build a relationship with an alteration company if you don't have this on-site, make it easy for your customer and give them something unique.

What should you do? Offer special products and experiences that consumers won't find elsewhere. Make them feel special, and give them a unique souvenir (be it a memory or an actual, personalized product) to take home.

CONSUMERS WANT SOCIAL SHOPPING

Retailers have been using social media as a marketing and communication tool, a sounding board for new ideas, a source of information on consumer tastes, and even a shop window to sell products. The smartest retailers are taking full advantage of the potential of social media. It can be as easy as encouraging customers to take a snapshot and share it on social media.

What should you do? Offer incentives for customers to post on social media and use these incentives to market more through your social channels. Think about the clever retailers you noticed over Christmas that do this well. Weir's

OLOGY

your Retail Business

jewellers always springs to mind when I think of this. A little kiss under the mistletoe in from of the store, a great idea, and a powerful social media message.

METRICS THAT MATTER – Use a solution that measures and alerts you to the indicators below

- Sell-through rate (sales, number of transactions, number of units, average transaction value, average number of products per transaction)
- Product lifecycle curve
- Stock availability and size fragmentation
- Store capacity and showrooming
- Markdowns

FINAL THOUGHT, PHYSICAL RETAIL IS NOT DEAD.

Retail is not dead. What is happening now is what some call the 'Blur' this concept is where there should be no difference between the experience in store and that online. We in Positive call it Unified Commerce, It's imperative that you can offer this experience to your customers. The key word in that last sentence "experience" and this is the differentiator between average and great. So, if at all possible, do something slightly different than your competition, there are thousands of good to great stores still opening every year all of the great stores have "experience" as part of their strategy for gaining and retaining customer.

If you need any advice on the above or would like to speak on the Unified Commerce Solutions Positive Solutions supply, please contact us on 01 6296058 or visit www.pss.ie / www.ppretail.ie for more information.

Damien O'Driscoll,
Positive Systems





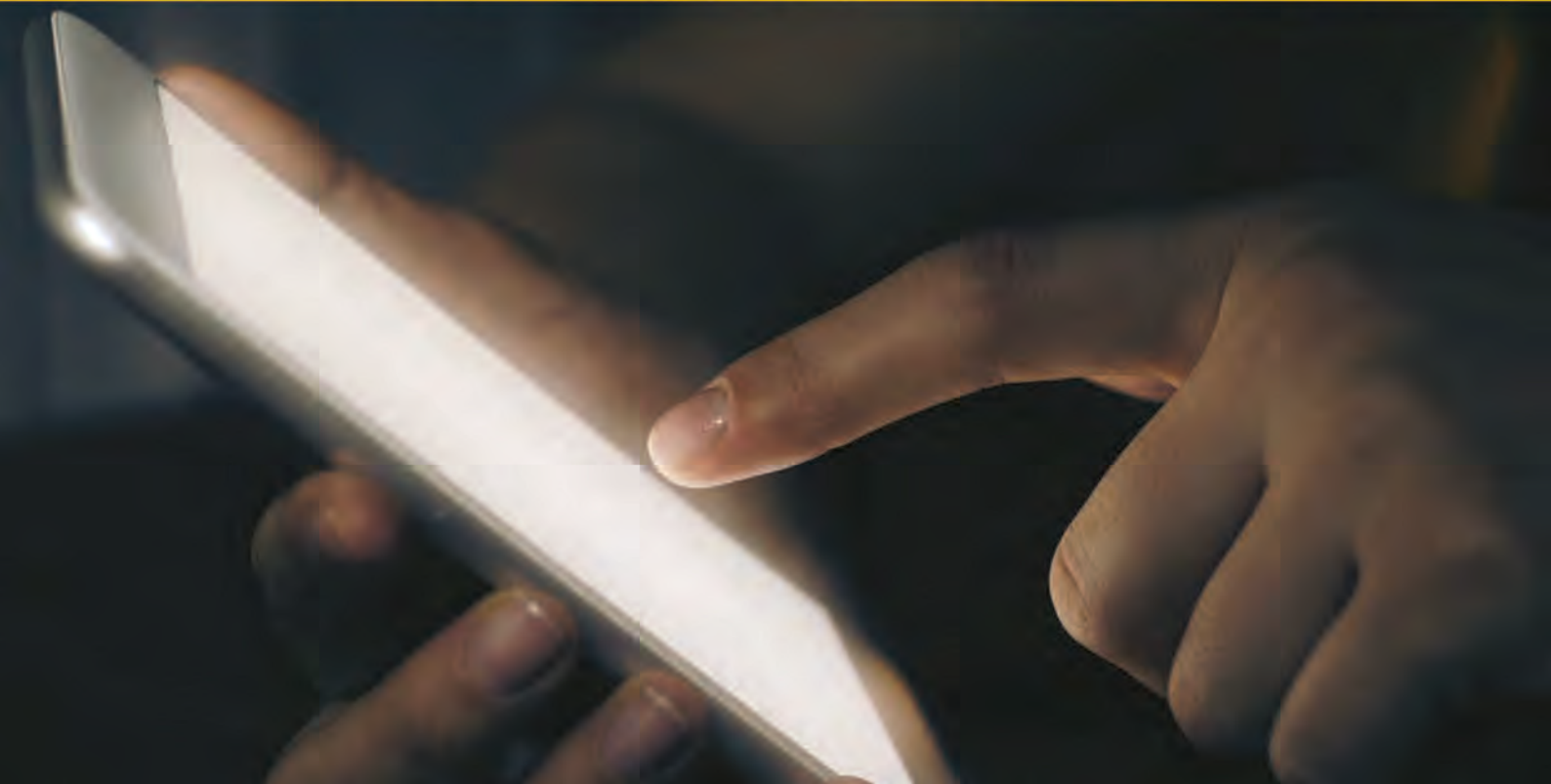
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WHY OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS EXPRESS SHIPPING OPTION?

- YOUR CUSTOMER’S EXPECT MORE CHOICE AND SPEED
 - 68% OF MILLENNIAL’S WOULD CHOOSE RETAILERS BASED ON DELIVERY OPTIONS
 - CUSTOMERS CHOOSING EXPRESS DELIVERY OPTION HAVE A HIGHER BASKET VALUE (UP TO 70% HIGHER)
 - COMPANIES THAT OFFER INTERNATIONAL EXPRESS SHIPPING GROW 1.6 TIMES FASTER THAN THOSE WHO DON’T
 - EXPERIENCE GREATER CUSTOMER LOYALTY, 20% INCREASE IN RETURNING CUSTOMERS AFTER USING EXPRESS DELIVERY
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International businesses need to partner with an express logistics provider that mirrors the principles of their own business. A sale does not end with the monetary transaction and the delivery company you choose to deliver to your customers will act as an extension of your own company brand. Little Bow Pip, an Irish children's hair accessory brand discovered this when they switched their import and export requirements to DHL in November 2018 – just in time for the Black Friday rush!

Little Bow Pip import high quality fabrics and manufacture their handmade bows in Swords! The fabrics are sourced specifically to meet the needs of delicate baby heads and fluffy soft hair. Little Bow Pip was founded by Nikki Whelan and is a family run business. Nikki is the proud mammy of Jayden & Pippa – the inspiration behind the creation of her business. The hairbands that were available for babies fell short of both

fabric quality and design, and she was left searching the internet. This was the beginning of Little Bow Pip's journey to a successful Irish business that has an incredible team of mummies putting their loving touch to each and every Little Bow Pip product.

Since meeting with our eCommerce sales team in 2018 and taking onboard the

consultative sales advice that DHL were able to offer, Little Bow Pip has continued to go from strength to strength – both nationally and internationally. Founder Nikki says "DHL have been an excellent support to our business in many different avenues. The support and transition to set up our account was brilliant - we had 2 members of staff on site with us. If there are ever any issues there is always a rep at the end of the phone to assist. DHL go over and above to ensure the customer's package is received. Thanks to DHL we now have a service we are confident in for our customers!"

What advice would Nikki offer to a small eCommerce business in its start-up phase? "It's not always about shopping for the cheapest price. It's more about the service you want to offer your customers. You get what you pay for and the benefits speak for themselves. With DHL we receive a next day delivery, a local Swords based customer service team to deal with tracking and collection queries, consistent support from our dedicated sales rep and the security of knowing that our bespoke products are in safe hands!

Speed of delivery is now a top priority for online shoppers and if you are entering an established market you need to be able to compete on a level playing field - partnering with DHL allows your business to reach over 220 countries and territories. Our network, coupled with our trusted brand can support you in taking your business global!

For more information please contact ie.ecommerce@dhl.com.

Sonia Broughall, DHL Express



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reasonable ACCOMMODATION

for employees with disabilities



The Supreme Court decision *Nano Nagle School v Daly* [2019] arose from the failure of Nano Nagle School to reasonably accommodate a paraplegic Special Needs Assistant. The

Claimant in the case (which was initially brought before an Equality Officer) had sustained serious injuries having been involved in a car accident.

The Claimant's role within the school was to provide assistance to teachers, but she also had a number of non-academic functions such as light cleaning duties and assisting children with their daily routines. In order to establish the Claimant's ability to continue in her role, she was examined by an occupational therapist on behalf of the school. A report was compiled which confirmed that as a result of her injuries, the Claimant would only be in a position to carry out 9 of the 16 duties assigned to her. On the basis of that report, the principal of the school, without consultation with the Claimant, determined that she could not be accommodated.

The case was initially heard by an Equality Officer, who found in favour of the school. The case was then appealed to the Labour Court, which held that the school had failed to reasonably accommodate the Plaintiff and awarded her the sum of €40,000. The High Court affirmed this decision, but it was

appealed to the Court of Appeal and reserved. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court to consider Section 16 of the Employment Equality Act. This section states as follows:-

“a person who has a disability is fully competent to undertake...any duties, if the person would be so fully competent and capable on reasonable accommodation.”

The obligations on an employer to provide reasonable accommodation are limited so as not to impose a disproportionate burden on the employer. The Court found that the obligation on an employer is to consider all appropriate measures which could be undertaken to provide reasonable accommodation. When considering reasonable accommodation that should be made employers should take real steps to identify their financial and other costs related to such accommodation before determining whether or not that accommodation can be made.

This consideration includes the removal of, or redistribution of, certain duties of the employee. If this could not be done, the employer would need to demonstrate disproportionate or unduly burdensome preventing. The Supreme Court held:-

“the test is one of reasonableness and proportionality: an employer cannot be under a duty entirely to re-designate or create a different job to facilitate an employee”

It was found that the steps taken by the employer to consider all reasonable accommodations had not been properly examined by the Labour Court, and the case was remitted for that purpose.

For Retail Excellence Member complimentary legal advice contact Sherwin O’Riordan Solicitors call David O’Riordan on 01 212 0451 or email doriordan@sor.ie





Tom Ryan
The Smart Group

WHAT IS ONBRAND?

A technology platform to empower your team to create on-brand, agency standard marketing across all touch points from social media to printed collateral. We're on a mission to help retailers with multiple locations to build and scale their marketing efforts. Similarly to how e-commerce retailers "personalise" their marketing, bricks and mortar retailers need to "localise" their marketing or continue to lose ground.

YOU HAVE SPENT 3 YEARS DEVELOPING ONBRAND, WHY?

Working in retail for the past 15 years, I have seen literally thousands of missed opportunities for retailers to build their brand and grow their business because the head office marketing team didn't have the tools to empower other people in their business to become self-marketers. There has always been a major challenge ensuring brand integrity and controlling costs, with OnBrand we remove these obstacles so you can scale marketing initiatives like never before.

WHAT ARE THE KEY BENEFITS OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY?

Short lead times and fast to market with campaigns, big savings on agency and marketing production costs, incredible analytics to measure and improve marketing performance. OnBrand will become your

why.... OnBrand™ is taking the RETAIL industry by storm

virtual brand guardian, we know a strong consistent brand delivers serious long term value to your business.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2020?

In January, we're launching with Ireland's largest Hardware & DIY Group. 70 locations using our platform to manage everything from their social media campaigns right down to their price ticketing. We're also excited to be opening our London office in Q1 2020 as we expand into the UK market with a large furniture retailer.

We will continue to educate retailers that the traditional head-office 'push down' marketing approach is making way for de-centralised localised marketing campaigns.

WHAT ARE 3 BENEFITS OF YOUR SOFTWARE THAT MIGHT SURPRISE PEOPLE?

With our platform you can set up and manage your entire marketing supply chain. One really cool feature is a tool to set up group-wide Buying Windows where you can consolidate orders. We're seeing savings of up to 40% on marketing production costs with this feature alone.

Using our platform is environmentally-friendly! Now stores can order what they need, not what head

office thinks they need. We all know a significant amount of printed collateral is unused and dumped for most large campaigns.

You can input your entire stock file – images and descriptions – and use this data to populate your designs. Type the product code and hey presto!

WHO SHOULD BE USING ONBRAND?

Any retailer who wants to empower their team to do more at store level. If your business craves more control, greater productivity and reduced costs – you should investigate our solution.

If you want to find out more, contact Tom Ryan: tom@onbrandhq.com



3

new-year ... **PLANNING**TIPS ...for busy retail owners

With the uncertainty of Brexit, the impact of disruptive technology and the increase of e-commerce, there are a lot of balls in the air for retail business owners to consider as we start the New Year. It is a useful time to dig out your business and personal plans to ensure that you are on track to meet both your long and short-term goals for 2020. The following are three tips to help you get started.

1 BUSINESS PLAN

• **Cash is king**

Stress test your financial forecasts to ensure you have sufficient cash to meet your needs in the event of a debtor default or an unexpected increase in your cost base resulting from the current turmoil.

• **Diversification**

Ensure you have sufficient diversification in your business model to cover a concentration risk in terms of customers, regions and products.

2 PROTECTION

• **Keyman and shareholder insurance**

Insurance only becomes valuable when and if the event insured against occurs. It is only then that the real value of the premiums is highlighted. These types of policies are designed to inject cash into the company to help deal with the loss of a key person.

• **Backstop / rainy day fund**

When times are good, put aside a pool of assets that will meet the day-to-day expenses should fortunes change. Segregate this capital from the business to ensure that it is protected in the event of an unforeseen event.

3 SUCCESSION PLANNING

From a tax perspective there are a few reliefs that allow the assets to pass to the next generation tax efficiently. Meeting the conditions for these reliefs and avoiding any Revenue tax avoidance rules requires careful planning. Some sensible structures to consider are:

• **Separate investment company**

Having a separate investment company / partnership can achieve the same outcome as the holding company but from an estate planning perspective, it creates a separate pool of assets. It can also ensure the effective transfer of the business to the next generation as many of the tax reliefs only apply to trading assets.

• **Pension**

The pension structure is an alternative to the above and can bring additional benefits such as tax-free growth, creditor protection for trust-based schemes, and the creation of another pool of assets that can assist with the equalisation of estates for the next generation.

SUMMARY

For time-poor business owners, finding the opportunity to address these issues is often the biggest challenge. By working with your key advisers in a coordinated way, you can delegate the production of a personal financial plan which overlays a business plan. This strategy should allow you to act as a CEO of your overall wealth and ensure you'll meet your and your family's objectives.

Brian Walsh is a Director of Financial Planning in Davy Private Clients. He works with business owners and their advisors to ensure that any investment strategy is considered in conjunction with an overall financial plan and is structured in a tax efficient manner.

Please note that this article is general in nature and is not intended to constitute tax, financial or legal advice. It does

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	Graphic Design, Printing, Delivery	Sooner Than Later	Mark Finney +353 (0) 1 284 4777	mark@soonerthanlater.com www.soonerthanlater.com	Domino's Pizza, The Suitable Clothing Company

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	Shopfitting and Retail Design	IIS Space	Nick Fitzgerald +353 (0) 87 125 1774 nickfitzgerald@iisspace.com www.iisspace.com	Centra, Eir
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