

THE Hardware JOURNAL

THE VOICE OF THE IRISH HARDWARE INDUSTRY

DECEMBER 2013 / JANUARY 2014



Hardware Association Ireland welcomes Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme

Fast-tracking implementation of the scheme has been a very positive development.

Ironman Nick pushes the limits

Nick Friel, Ganly's Hardware Athlone is preparing for the ultimate full Ironman triathlon in Austria next year.

The Hardware Show 2015

Planning is already well underway for the definitive trade show for our industry.

January... it is not an afterthought

Retailers are busy getting ready for Christmas, one of the main selling months of the year, but, once Christmas is over, then what? Our retail expert looks at strategies for the New Year.

The HR guide to a happy Christmas

Some perennial HR issues can rear their head around this time.



Go west -

A visit to award-winning builders merchants outlet, Nioclás P. Ó Conchubhair Teo in Casla, Connemara

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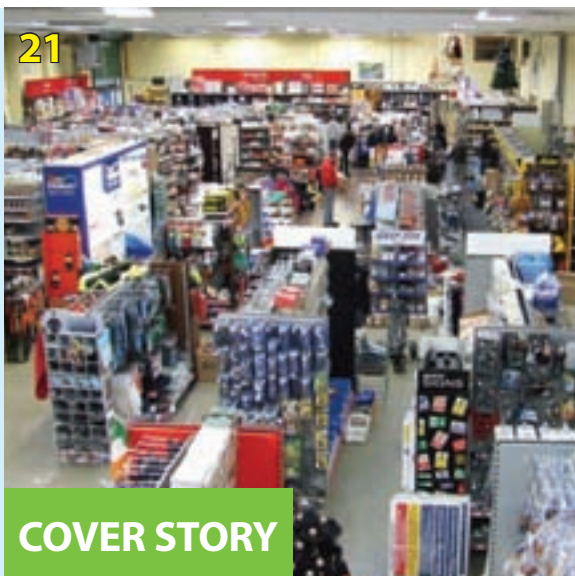
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ENTREPRENURIAL SPIRIT KEY TO SUCCESS OF Ó CONCHUBHAIR TEO

Nioclás Ó Conchubhair of Nioclás P. Ó Conchubhair Teo, in Casla, Connemara talks about steering his business on a steady course of sustainable growth through good times and bad.

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COVER STORY



Dear Reader

As we come to the end of 2013, there are tentative but tangible reasons to be optimistic for the year ahead. One is the evidence of a growing awareness at policy level of the importance of our industry to the national economy, as shown by the introduction of the Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme which has the potential to impact positively on hardware businesses in particular and on the construction sector in general. Having played our part in achieving delivery of this incentive, HAI will continue to lobby on your behalf on all fronts in 2014. You can read more about the incentive scheme in this issue (p.26).

Another cause for a more positive outlook is increasing feedback from building suppliers of a nudge upwards in construction activity, particularly in the larger urban areas. For example, leading suppliers anticipate that this trend will give a lift to sealants and adhesive sales (p. 28). Of course, the most encouraging reason to look with hope to the year ahead is the proven resilience of Hardware Association Ireland Members around the country and the subject of our hardware retailer profile in this issue, the redoubtable Nioclás Ó Conchubhair, is an inspirational example of the entrepreneurial spirit of builders merchants throughout Ireland (p.21).

We hope you enjoy this issue and we wish all our Members and Readers a Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2014!

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Elmville, Kilmacud Road Upper,
Dundrum, Dublin 14, Ireland
t:+353 1 298 0969
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Editorial Board

Paddy Kelly, President HAI
Hugh O'Donnell, Vice President HAI
Alex Taylor, Hon Treasurer, HAI
Paul Thompson, Director, HAI
Jim Copeland, CEO, HAI



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Editor: Bernard Potter

Design and Production: Ciarán Brougham

Advertising Manager: Bryan Beasley Administration: Sue Nolan

Chief Executive: Rebecca Markey Printers: KPS Colour Print

IFP Media, 31 Deansgrange Road, Blackrock, Co Dublin, Ireland.
Tel: +353 1 289 3305 Fax: +353 1 289 6406.
E-mail: BernardPotter@ifpmedia.com

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Shoppers value brick over click

Hardware Association Ireland Members will be very interested in some recent research from consumers in the US and UK indicating they value the retail store experience over online retailers and continue to make the vast majority of their purchases in stores, writes Jim Copeland

The new study from global management consulting firm, A T Kearney, entitled "Recasting the retail store in today's omnichannel world" surveyed more than 3,000 customers in the US and UK to understand how and why consumers use different channels at each stage of the shopping process. The report encourages retailers to further promote their bricks and mortar stores and use these assets to drive increased customer traffic, brand loyalty and improve performance. The study found that consumers spend the majority of their time shopping in stores (61 per cent), followed by 31 per cent online, 4 per cent in catalogues, and 4 per cent on mobiles.

Preferred choice

The research indicated that the physical store is the preferred choice across all ages and household income levels. It also pointed out that having a physical store is more important in some categories than in others. Online retailers for example have an advantage when it comes to selling books, CDs, movies, etc. But home improvement, grocery, clothing, office supplies, cosmetics etc., are sectors where the physical store outlets are still the venue of choice.

The report noted that consumers shop in different stages, beginning with research, followed by testing, purchase, pick up or delivery and after sales experience. Digital/online plays the largest role in the research phase of the process, as shoppers read online reviews and find recommendations through social media.

Physical stores can, and should, play some role in all shopping stages. However, they need not play a central role in each to generate sales across all channels. Regardless of where a product

is purchased, the product can be tested, picked up or returned to the physical store. There is a great opportunity for store owners to capitalise on impulse purchases during these customer visits. The results of the consumer study show that stores can, and should, play key roles for consumer engagement across every product category and found that 40 per cent of consumers spend more money than they had planned in stores, while only 25 per cent reported online impulse shopping. In a recent Irish Independent article, columnist Mary Kenny also makes the case for physical shops. Her research indicated that only 57 per cent of people in Ireland made web purchases last year, as opposed to 82 per cent in the UK and 77 per cent in Germany. She cited recent research from UK charity Age Concern, indicating that older people felt very negative about shopping online, they said that it made them feel lonely. They much preferred going out, entering the shop, browsing around and talking to other human beings in the course of the purchase.

More than a purchase

Their shopping wasn't just about acquiring purchases, it was also about interaction. It was even, for some people, about making the effort to get out of the house. Her opinion piece, read by many thousands of readers, said that Irish people and those in Latin countries are less inclined to be enthusiastic web shoppers. It is partly because these societies are generally more sociable. In conclusion, the article states that it wasn't just the social side of shopping that will always have a fundamental appeal. There are many categories that are better suited to real life shopping, shoes for example, where there is a certain pleasure in trying on six to eight pairs of

shoes or boots; fresh food shops, where people go and choose their freshly baked bread and pastries; speciality shops like fish and cheese retailers; also pharmacies and beauty shops, who provide a service, because shoppers may want and need advice from a human being, not a web site. Surely, hardware and builders merchants fall into this specialist category, where people come in, expecting knowledgeable staff and a wide variety of product. There will always be people who will buy some product online. But real shopping will never die because it is so much part of social intercourse. Shopping is conversation and communication as well as trade.

*Jim Copeland
CEO, Hardware Association
Ireland*





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Taoiseach celebrates 100 years with the Glennon Brothers

Timber processing firm, Glennon Brothers, has celebrated 100 years in business at a gala event, held in Croke Park, Dublin. An Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny TD, delivered the keynote. Over 500 people attended the event, including the Minister for Forestry, Tom Hayes TD, British Ambassador to Ireland, Dominick Clincott, key customers and industry stakeholders from Ireland and the UK.

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, said: "I was pleased to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Glennon Brothers. The company has grown and developed immensely and, since its foundation by William and James Glennon in 1913, has expanded and thrived further under the leadership of Pat and Mike Glennon and, by any measure, can be

regarded as a genuine Irish success story and an intrinsic part of the rural economy."

Pat Glennon, Glennon Brothers stated: "Glennon Brothers has a legacy of great contributions from great people, some of whom are not with us today. These people invested their blood, sweat and tears in the business over many years, through good times and through bad. Without the contribution of these people, Glennon Brothers would not have navigated its way through the many challenges it has faced over the last 100 years. "I have confidence that the people who are in Glennon Brothers today, have the capacity to create more extraordinary memories, as we move forward into our second century."

Optim-R Insulation rewrites the rulebook

Kingspan Insulation has launched a new product Optim-R Insulation which the company says reflects its heritage of listening to the needs of architects and specifiers.

The product has been designed to reduce the physical space that insulation typically needs to occupy, as well as act up to 5 times more efficiently than traditional insulation products.

Alan Macklin, Technical Manager, Kingspan Insulation, said at the launch of the new product: "Optim-R Insulation rewrites the rulebook for architects. Now you don't have to worry about trying to squeeze insulation into plans, with Optim-R, the products can be applied virtually anywhere within your design without impacting on space or performance".

According to the company, Optim-R bridges the gap, where space is often outstripped by demand, allowing architects to maximise useable working and living area within each building without having to sacrifice space in every room for insulation.

"When it comes to retrofitting commercial and domestic premises, Optim-R can be easily installed in previously inaccessible spaces due to its minimal thickness."

CRH Ireland re-certified with Business Working Responsibly Mark

CRH Ireland is one of only 4 companies in Ireland to be re-certified with the Business Working Responsibly Mark at an event in Dublin attended by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Burton TD. The mark, which certifies excellence in responsible and sustainable business practices across company operations, was achieved for a second time by CRH Ireland, Microsoft Ireland, ESB and Intel. Announcing the recipient countries, Minister Burton said: "An important part of our plan to create sustainable jobs is ensuring that our businesses are well run, treat their staff well and act responsibly towards the communities in which they operate. Business in the Community does excellent work in promoting and encouraging responsible corporate activity, and I am very happy that my Department, through the NSAI,

supports this mission and provides recognition to companies who fulfil this mandate.

"I congratulate all those involved. I am determined to ensure that we continue to incentivise companies to act responsibly as this will play a key role in creating the sustainable jobs we need."

Speaking at the event that acts as Ireland's premier corporate arena for discussion surrounding corporate responsibility and sustainability, Tina Roche, CEO, Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) said: "Responsible and sustainable management is an investment in the intangible - reputation. Leaders need to understand that building deeper relationships with employees and other key stakeholders is a must and not for the PR value but because it is the most effective way of running a business."



TECHNICAL ACADEMY

Today's lesson:



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Saint-Gobain Technical Academy offers regular training courses to upskill and educate trade professionals in the theory, practice and application of systems for new build and retrofit.

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SAINT-GOBAIN

Octabuild Builders Merchant Awards Northern Ireland – enter now!

Entries are now being sought for the 2014 Octabuild Builders Merchant Awards Northern Ireland. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, December 18.

Judging will take place from mid-January 2014 through February with the awards event taking place in Belfast in March 2014.

Entry forms are available from info@octabuild.ie

Current holders

The current Octabuild Northern Ireland Builders Merchant of the Year is JP Corry, Lisburn. The judges of the competition were lavish in their praise, not just for JP Corry in Lisburn, but also for the high standard among the 36 builders merchants visited. According to the judging panel, there were just 4 percentage points separating the top six merchants. Other awards presented on the night to a mixture of independent and group stores, included:

- Best Family Business

- Award to B. McNamee, Strabane;
- Best Customer Service Award to Belfast merchant Peter Woods Building Supplies;
- Best Merchandising Award to Newry Building Supplies;
- Innovation Award to N.G. Bell & Son;
- Marketing Award to Omagh-based P McDermott & Sons;
- Best Trade Counter to Antrim Building Supplies; and,
- Best for Heavy Goods Award to Newry's

Haldane Fisher branch. In addition, two other JP Corry branches, Carrickfergus and Newry, won the Best Housekeeping and Best Management Systems Awards respectively.



Pictured (l-r): Michael O' Donohoe, Octabuild Chairman; Gary Hunter, JP Corry, Lisburn; and Shane O' Donoghue, CNN Golf Presenter and guest speaker.

Flynn's of Lackagh help out with some troublesome birds

Flynn's of Lackagh had an unusual task at the beginning of November, when they provided free barley to help out local Galway man, Martin Shaughnessy with the exotic birds that turned up outside his house. Two emus, the large Australian exotic birds, which Martin christened Fidelma and Eugene, had managed to escape from Martin's new neighbours that are renting nearby. Martin initially thought that the birds were a joke but soon realised that they weren't. Eventually, Galway and Claddagh Swan Rescue were able to assist. Vets from Dublin Zoo were called and recommended feeding the emus cabbage and barley, which is when Martin's local agri-store, Flynn's of Lackagh stepped up to help. "One of Martin's sons came to us after the birds had shown up and explained the situation to us. We were happy to help them out and we provided barley for the two birds. It was a very strange situation considering where we live, and for any one to find two emus outside their door is a bizarre circumstance," said Julien Flynn, Co-Owner and Managing Director of Flynn's of Lackagh.

Dulux Design Hub Trend For Design Week

In November, Dulux opened their Dulux Design Hub for design week to bring interior colours and trends for 2014 to life in Dublin's city centre. The centre was located at 51 Dawson Street for Design Week (4 - 10 November), and hosted free lunch time and evening talks on 'Unlocking your Interior Design Potential at Home' by RTE's 'Design Doctor', Denise O'Connor. The talk aimed to give people the skills to work on home interiors as well as keeping them updated on trending colours for 2014. The 40-minute talks were free to attend and were open to all that were interested in improving their home, both in terms of colour and design. The hub was open for anybody to drop in and get up-to-speed on all the latest trends, and Dulux experts endeavored to bring out the 'inner designers' in those who attended.

Design Doctor Denise O'Connor said: "The Dulux Design Hub brought people up-to-speed on what's trending in terms of colour and equipped them with some must-know tricks to help them achieve their own look at home. We gave practical advice on working space, developing a style and seeing it through as well as unveiling colours and looks for 2014."



Olivia Kearney from Dulux (centre) welcomes Catherine Crowe and Denise O'Connor, Optimise Design to The Dulux Design Hub during Design Week.

Flexible plastic push-fit plumbing systems from Wavin

Hep2OAcorn is the premier flexible pipes and push-fit plastic plumbing system from Wavin. Hep2OAcorn is suitable for domestic hot and cold water supply including potable water and central heating. It is available in both imperial and metric dimensions.

The system comprises flexible straight coil polybutylene pipework connected to polybutylene fittings that incorporate an integral push-fit mechanism. Hep2OAcorn is fully compatible with existing copper pipe systems too. The product's plumbing is easy to fit, and includes groundbreaking features such as the secure HepKey demounting system and In4Sure technology that indicates when the pipe's fully inserted.

Unlike other forms of flexible coiled plastic pipes, Hep2OAcorn pipes utilising straight coil technology do not return to a coiled state when uncoiled from the convenient SmartPack™ dispensers. Instead, it remains straight, with no loss of flexibility. These characteristics provide a significantly faster, safer and more cost-effective installation when compared to rigid plumbing pipe systems.

According to Wavin, Hep2OAcorn continues to set the pace in product development, with innovation responding rapidly to careful research into changing market requirements. It is the most comprehensive, sophisticated flexible push-fit plumbing range available and, uniquely in the industry is backed by a



50-year guarantee.

Wavin states it is also now running a competition to win One Direction premium level concert tickets to see the band in Croke Park in May. The promotion starts on December 2, and runs until the end of March 2014. Participating merchants will be supplied with a POS pack. One Direction postcards will be given to installers when they purchase any plumbing or fitting product, with each post card directing the user to the promotion entry page. Throughout the duration of the competition, two sets of tickets will be won each month. For more information on this range or competition, go to www.hep2o.ie or, contact Wavin directly on 01 8020202.

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Decking solutions from Cuprinol

Unfortunately, the task of treating decking, coupled with the unpredictable Irish weather, means that people's decks are often less than cheery. Now, for the first time ever, people will be able to clean, revive and protect their decks in less than a day thanks to Cuprinol's new Total Deck product. This unique formulation is the first of its kind for the decking category and will hit the market in March 2014. It requires nothing more than a garden broom to apply. It is simply scrubbed onto grey weathered decking and once dry will transform decks back to their original beauty. According to Cuprinol, over 40 per cent of people don't know the difference between a stain and oil in the traditional system, and this easy-to-use product is sure to capture the attention of many.



Fleetwood's specialist hygiene coating

Fleetwood has developed a range of specialist hygiene coatings, Bio-Tec, for use in a range of areas where hygiene protection is needed. "Bio-Tec silver ion is the latest in cutting-edge technology developed by Fleetwood Paints' chemists in conjunction with their many worldwide material suppliers," explains Fleetwood Paints spokesman Tom O'Connell.

The advanced coating has been proven to significantly reduce the spread of disease and infection – from MRSA and Salmonella to E. Coli – alongside regular cleaning procedures. Quick-drying to reduce disruption, the coating has been developed with advanced acrylic to be durable and capable of withstanding constant washing. Key to the effectiveness of Bio-Tec coating is silver ion technology. The coating contains antimicrobial agents including elemental silver molecules embedded within paint. When microbes come into contact with a painted surface, water molecules encounter the elemental silver, producing silver ions (Ag⁺). These silver ions will rise to the surface of the painted area, attaching themselves to microbes and inhibiting growth.

Under the Japanese JIS Z 2801:2000 test, which simulates real life conditions by introducing live

bacteria and monitoring under ambient temperature and humidity conditions for 24 hours, the coating showed dramatic success in containing potential infection. Bio-Tec significantly outperforms standard paint in containing a range of harmful bacteria, including MRSA, E. Coli and pseudomonas aeruginosa.

Outside the laboratory, Bio-Tec coatings have been successfully deployed in top-class Irish hospitals. "Bio-Tec has been on the market for six years now," says Tom O'Connell. "Both the Holles St Maternity Hospital and St James' have been using this product for many years in its many different versions." Other recently completed projects include applications in the Beacon Hospital, Galway Clinic, Castlerea Prison, Boston Scientific, Elan, Allergan Pharmaceutical and the Department Of Defence. Thanks to an acrylic resin system, Bio-Tec is a scrubbable, durable coating, with an excellent abrasion resistance that can withstand repeated cleaning cycles. A water base ensures quick drying, which also reduces the disruption caused by painting. "The implementation of Bio-Tec coating lengthens the maintenance cycle for facilities, a major consideration when pressure is continually applied to budgets," said Tom.

Bigger Totally Shows for 2014

The 2014 Totally DIY: Totally Tools Shows will be bigger than 2013, show organiser Brintex confirmed at the beginning of December.

Exhibition director, Paul Grinsell commented: "Trade shows have broadly been a reflection of what is happening in the market place, and we're delighted that, as the market has improved and seen renewed consumer and retail confidence, so the Totally Shows have also grown and attracted more exhibitors. The shows will be bigger in 2014 and offer more choice and variety of companies and products for retailers and buyers to see."

The overall number of exhibitors has already passed 2013 levels, and the team is busy taking more enquiries for the shows which run from February 16 to 18 inclusive at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. The latest confirmed exhibitors include Bob Mills, Darlac Garden Tools, Dekor Tools and JFA Brightspark which have all appeared at the show in previous years, and two 'new to the show' companies: SM Construction, showing its 'SplashStopper'; and Toolfix Joinery & Construction Supplies, showing the US Toggler Anchor System. Registration for the show is now live at www.totallydiy.com and www.totallytools.co.uk

WEEE Recycling Cage

Trolleys designed to transport the ill-fated e-voting machines have received a new lease of life courtesy of WEEE Ireland. Remodelled into a recycling unit for electrical, battery and lighting waste, the WEEE Recycling Cage is mobile and can be secured indoors and offers a simple, tidy solution for small waste electrical and electronic equipment. The unit is free to suitable locations and facilitates collection of small electrical waste in hardware outlets, retailers, schools and offices. A trolley measures approximately 155cm tall, 65cm wide and 98cm from front to back.

The cage comes with:

- a supply of battery recycling boxes (which help generate funds for the Laura Lynn charity for each portable battery that is recycled - www.lauralynn.ie);
- a box for CFL and energy saving light bulbs; and,
- a box for fluorescent tubes, if required.

The cages are designed for small electrical appliances e.g. computers, toasters, kettles, DVD players, hairdryers, toys etc.

See www.weeeireland.ie for more details.

The cage is permitted to accept "anything with a plug or a battery from the household". Business-to-business equipment or items deemed for professional use e.g. mainframe servers, professional catering equipment, laboratory equipment etc. can not be accepted.

Any larger electrical items such as televisions, washing machines, fridges etc. can be left alongside the cage for collection.

To arrange delivery or collection of a Cage contact WEEE Ireland's Operations Department on 1890 253 252 or

operations@weeeireland.ie

WEEE Cages will be distributed and collected as a free recycling service. Cages are available in WEEE Ireland territories only and service is subject to operational feasibility.

Please allow 14 days for delivery or collection of a cage.

All material collected is recycled at KMK

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Details of all permits and licences are available.

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www.weeeireland.ie or visit:

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THE 60 SECOND INTERVIEW



John Burke,
Managing Director, Burke's Hardware & DIY Ltd.
Rathnew, Co. Wicklow

1. **Are you an optimist?** Yes
2. **Business leader you most admire?** Ferdinand Piëch
3. **Biggest lesson learned in business?** It can take weeks, months or years to gain a customer, but only seconds to lose one.
4. **Best business book you've read?** You are the Limiting Factor
5. **Advice to entrepreneurs starting out?** 2 ears, 1 mouth; there's a reason!
6. **What single thing helped you most?** My father
7. **What type of phone do you have?** iPhone
8. **Your most used phone app?** HBR Tips
9. **Tablet or laptop?** Tablet
10. **Favourite pastime?** Motor Sport
11. **Favourite movie?** Senna
12. **Favourite part of the world (other than Ireland)?** Italy
13. **Greatest regret?** None!

Fleetwood come to the rescue



Pictured (l-r): John Brennan, Tom Byrne, Fleetwood, Steven McQuillan, Fleetwood and Francis Brennan.

The hugely successful RTÉ “At Your Service” TV programme follows Francis and John Brennan as they try to make a difference to people’s lives. Every year they do a Christmas special and this year Francis and John have come to the assistance of fifteen year old Conor Dillon.

Conor, who has quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy appealed to the Brennan’s to revamp the CASA Respite Centre in Malahide.

CASA (Caring and Sharing Association) is an Irish Charity that provides respite for disabled people. The Brennan’s took on this task and contacted Fleetwood Paints to ask if Fleetwood would consider contributing the paint for this project.

The response from Fleetwood was “Fleetwood would would Fleetwood.”

The recently completed programme will be transmitted in a prime slot on RTÉ 1 over the Christmas period.



Conor Dillon and the Brennan brothers say thanks to all for their hard work.



The newly revamped garden designed by the Brennan brothers.

An advertisement for Hep2O Acorn Plumbing Systems. It features a QR code in the top left corner. To the right of the QR code is a circular photo of a smiling woman. Below the QR code is a list of prizes: "8 pairs of premium level One Direction concert tickets to be won!". At the bottom, there is a logo for "Hep2O ACORN Plumbing Systems" and a website address "www.hep2o.ie".

50 YEAR

8 pairs of
premium level
One Direction
concert tickets
to be won!

Thanks for purchasing Hep2O Acorn. Please register online at www.hep2o.ie to be entered into the prize draw. We will send you a free beanie hat as a thank you for participating!

Good luck!

WGVN
Visit www.hep2o.ie

Hep2O ACORN
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View T&Cs @ www.hep2o.ie

ISOVER INSULATION GETS TOP EUROPEAN AWARD FOR INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Isover's new G3 insulation has received the highest award for indoor air quality – the Eurofins Indoor Air Comfort 'Gold Standard' certificate. Isover G3 insulation achieved this by using new technology to manufacture its next generation mineral wool.

The Eurofins Gold standard combines all relevant European regulations and voluntary labels, which measure the effect of products on indoor air quality – combining the most stringent requirements in any EU country into one label.

This makes Indoor Air Comfort Gold the most ambitious label for low-emissions in the whole of Europe, according to Isover.

Eurofins is well known as a leading independent international provider of emissions testing, analysing a wide range of products and building materials such as flooring products, adhesives, insulation materials, paints and varnishes. In addition to its ISO 17025 accreditation, Eurofins is recognised and accredited by national authorities throughout Europe, particularly in Germany and France, as well as in California. It is also a member of the USGBC (US Green Building Council) and DGNB (German Sustainable Building Council).

"The Gold Certificate means that Isover mineral wool is certified as an outstanding material in terms of indoor air quality emissions regulations," said Dr Roland Augustin, Director Certification Chemical Safety, Eurofins Hamburg.

"The Eurofins Indoor Air Comfort Gold includes more than simply testing. These programmes include an internal quality program at the production site for ensuring continuous manufacture of low-emitting products, on-site audits, re-testing and certification – all together giving a very high level of reliability in the statement on indoor air quality."

Brian Dolan, Isover Ireland, Managing Director, said:

"The Eurofins certification is independent verification of



Pictured at the ISOVER Ireland presentation of Eurofins Gold Standard award: (l-r) Fintan Smith, Building Physics Manager ISOVER Ireland; Rob Morgan, Business Development Manager, Eurofins Ireland Ltd; and Brian Dolan, Managing Director, ISOVER Ireland.

our environmental credentials and recognises Isover's commitment to providing sustainable insulation solutions to all our customers. We are delighted that the products we tested have met such a high standard.

"Considering the need for Ireland to build more low energy buildings, which necessitate high levels of insulation and excellent airtightness, it is ever more important to consider the effect of products and systems used on the indoor air quality of these buildings."

The Eurofins award was made possible following the introduction of the latest in mineral wool manufacturing technology by Isover, called G3. "This revolutionary technology allows us to introduce more natural ingredients to our processes, thus Isover insulation will be even better than before in environmental terms."

Last September, Isover introduced G3 Touch for its Attic Insulation range and from September G3 Touch will be extended to all its insulation products, meaning all Isover insulation will come with three guarantees:

- great performance;
- gentle to use; and,
- good for the environment.

"The G3 Touch range has been highly successful to date, and we want to thank all our customers for their loyalty and support in launching it," concluded Brian Dolan.

Review of WEEE regulations

A consultation on draft WEEE regulations has been launched by the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan. The aim of the original WEEE Directive was to ensure that EU Member States prevent or minimise the levels of discarded electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) within the general waste stream, and reduce the environmental impact of EEE at end of life. The new WEEE Directive, which was published in July 2012, will replace existing regulations.

The main changes included are:

- a wider scope for the range of products covered;
- an increased emphasis on re-use;
- the introduction of the concept of a producer's authorised representative in an effort to lower the regulatory and cost burdens on business;
- the pursuit of measures to fight the illegal export of WEEE more effectively;

- the introduction for the first time, of a one-for-zero take back requirement with respect to small items of WEEE and retail outlets of a certain size;
- the introduction of higher Member State collection and recovery targets; and,
- a changed methodology for calculating the WEEE collection rate.

Hardware Association Ireland has made a submission to the consultation and has met with officials from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. Members around the country are currently involved in take-back procedures of WEEE and are very involved throughout the WEEE supply chain, with particular interest in the small appliance category, batteries and bulbs. A range of marketing and promotional material will be available during 2014 from WEEE Ireland and Hardware Association Ireland designed to inform consumers regarding their WEEE take back options.

Study to help reduce pollution from residential heating

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan announced earlier in the year a joint North-South study on all-island air quality to examine air pollution from residential solid fuel, in particular 'smoky' coal, to consider the potential policy options to reduce such emissions with consequential environmental and human health benefits.

The joint North-South study was agreed between Minister Hogan and Alex Attwood M.L.A, Environment Minister for Northern Ireland, at a the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Environment Meeting in Dublin. Minister Hogan said: "The health benefits in areas where the ban is already in place are well-documented and an All-Ireland ban is the next phase I anticipate in this area".

From May 1, 2013, Greystones, Letterkenny, Mullingar, Navan, Newbridge, Portlaoise and Wicklow were all added to the smoky coal ban designated areas. Hardware Association Ireland will participate in and make a submission to the study, as solid fuel is an important category and footfall driver for hardware retailers in the heating season and any disruption or potential distortion to this supply chain could have a negative impact on Member companies. Further information is available from Jim Copeland, Hardware Association Ireland, +00353 1 298 0969.

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Guide on safe construction work in the home

Hardware Association Ireland Members will be interested to know that the Health & Safety Authority have published a new guide for home owners on having construction work done safely in their homes. The guide outlines what home owners need to know and do when having construction work done in their home. This is produced in light of new responsibilities for home owners under the Safety Health & Welfare at Work (Construction Regulations 2013). The regulations apply to construction work that home owners pay to get done in their home. They do not apply to DIY jobs. In light of the recently announced Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme, this guide could be an important piece of information for members' customers around the country. The regulations require home owners to appoint competent people to carry out construction work and, in some cases, where the project is large, to appoint competent project supervisors to oversee and co-ordinate safety.

The new regulations aim to reduce the number of people killed and injured while carrying out construction work. The construction projects covered include:

- building a new house or extension porch or garage;
- converting an attic;
- refitting a kitchen;
- reslating a roof;
- fitting solar panels or skylights; and,
- rewiring the house.

It also addresses legal responsibilities on home owners, such as requiring them to:

- determine the competency of people doing paid construction work for them;
- appoint project supervisors, if necessary;
- keep a safety file for the work, as appropriate; and,
- let the Health & Safety Authority know if the project is going to take longer than 30 days or more than 500 person days ('person days' means the number of days the work takes multiplied by the number of people doing the work).

Some common sense and safety precautions included in the guide for home owners when they are having construction work done, and builders are in their home, is that the home is now the 'workplace of the builder'. This can affect the home owners' safety and that of their families, and a range of precautions are advised, including the following:

- employ the right people for the work (contractors, tradesmen and builders);
- discuss safety with your contractor or builder before the work starts;
- warn children of the dangers and make sure they stay

- away from the work;
- separate works from your home life, where you can; and,
- make sure that the work area is secured at the end of each day by the contractor.

A checklist of questions to help with being in general compliance with the legal requirements is also available. Further information can be obtained from the Health & Safety Authority, tel:

1890 289389 and www.hsa.ie or Hardware Association Ireland, Jim Copeland, +00353 1 298 0969..



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HAI CLIPBOARD

Jim Copeland, HAI Chief Executive. Tel: +00353 1 298 0969 ; email: jim@hardwareassociation.ie



As part of Hardware Association Ireland's commitment to further enhance our responsiveness to Member's concerns, the Clipboard reports on topical news and issues of relevance to Members around the country.

Hardware Association Ireland Membership

As you will be aware, HAI has undertaken a major programme of reform and change over the last twelve months to make your association more relevant to you, our member. The work of the national representative association for the hardware sector has never been more essential. Our national industry study conducted during the year, identified areas of most concern to members, key issues and priorities, which has formed the basis of an active advocacy and communications plan for 2013/14. That plan is already delivering for us. Most recently we were successful in lobbying Government to get the Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme in place, to help both merchants and suppliers drive sales and innovation. We have also seen a substantial increase in our media presence with appearances on RTE's *Prime Time*, interviews on national and local radio and HAI commentary on topics relevant to our industry being reported in both national and regional print media. This strategy will continue throughout 2014 and our objective is to leave no stone unturned to progress the cause of all businesses within our sector. We will continue to publish *The Hardware Journal*, the official bi-monthly publication of HAI, in both print and digital formats and detailed planning is already underway for The Hardware Show in February 2015.

In order to achieve these goals and more, we need and greatly appreciate, your continued support by payment of your HAI annual subscription. We always welcome any feedback you may have and look forward to working with you over the next 12 months to continue to drive forward the collective interests of our industry. As well as our advocacy role representing you nationally, we also provide **exclusive member services**, including advice on Human Resources and Commercial Rates, and access to a major utility and cost reduction service provider that will drive cost reductions and savings in your business. Further information available from Jim Copeland, Hardware Association Ireland, tel: +00353 1 298 0969.

Jim Copeland, Chief Executive and Director, HAI.



(L-r): Bob Boxwell, Commercial Director, Tucks O'Brien and President HAI, Paddy Kelly.



(L-r): Owen Power, Waterford Stanley, with Hugh O'Donnell, Chief Executive, Amalgamated Hardware plc. and Vice President, HAI at the breakfast briefing to announce details of Hardware Association Ireland's official Trade Show, 'The Hardware Show 2015'.

HAI CLIPBOARD

Jim Copeland, HAI Chief Executive. Tel: +00353 1 298 0969; email: jim@hardwareassociation.ie



HAI Breakfast Briefing

The Hardware Association Ireland was delighted with the support it received at its recent breakfast briefing to announce details of 'The Hardware Show 2015'. The show will take place, as in recent years, at the Citywest Hotel Conference and Event Centre on February 15 and 16, 2015. It is timed to coincide with The HAI President's Ball. These flagship biennial events in 2015 will give a spectacular focal point for our sector. This show will be organised by Eventhaus Ltd, our new event partners and will be launched officially in January 2014. The wide range of support from key decision-makers within our sector, for the Hardware Show 2015, was very obvious with over a hundred supply companies in attendance at the breakfast briefing.

The event also officially launched our new trade publication, *The Hardware Journal*. Having successfully published five well-received issues, and this being the sixth, HAI are pleased to announce the appointment of IFP Media as our new publishing partner for *The Hardware Journal*. As one of Ireland's leading publishing companies, with an array of high-profile clients and flagship publications, we are delighted that IFP Media have agreed to work with the HAI on our sector's premier communication tool, which is read by all key decision-makers in our industry.

HAI's brief to IFP Media is to establish *The Hardware Journal* as an essential read for our members, setting a new standard for strong editorial content, expert advice, thought-provoking features, current news and new product information. In short, future issues will aim to always inform and inspire readers. Please contact our colleagues below for further details of how we can help you reach your customers, our members and readers. We always need product news and information as well as ideas and suggestions for features and articles in future issues of the trade's own publication, *The Hardware Journal*.

Editor - Bernard Potter

Tel: +00353-1-2893305;

Email: bernardpotter@ifpmedia.com

Advertising Manager - Bryan Beasley

Tel: +00353 1-2893305;

Email: bryanbeasley@ifpmedia.com



(L-r): Tom Frawley, H Tec, Waterford; John Keegan, Xtratherm; Kieran Burke, Purchasing Director, Grafton Merchanting ROI and HAI Board member; and Tom Kelly, Blacksmith Stoves, Waterford at the breakfast briefing.



(L-r): Paul Thompson, Joint Chief Executive, United Hardware and HAI Board member with Joe Flynn, Wood Concepts, Swords at the breakfast briefing.

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E: jim@hardwareassociation.ie

THE HARDWARE SHOW 2015

HOME - GARDEN - BUILD - DIY

THE HARDWARE SHOW 2015 THE COUNTDOWN HAS ALREADY BEGUN



As the year draws to an end and signs of recovery in our sector are emerging, Hardware Association Ireland (HAI) are looking to the future with the launch of an enhanced and exciting signature show for the industry

With this in mind, we are delighted to announce confirmation of the largest and most important event in our diary, the HAI Hardware Show 2015, which will take place once again at the Conference & Event Centre, Citywest Hotel, Co Dublin on February 15 and 16, 2015. The biennial Hardware Show which will be officially launched in January 2014 - more details of which will be available at that time on www.haishow.ie - is our sector's biggest networking, learning and promotional platform. It is a showcase for innovation and new product launches and a perfect opportunity to meet new

and existing customers.

The Citywest venue has proven in the past to be very popular with both visitors and exhibitors due to its accessible location and size; it was the obvious choice again for HAI's 2015 show. There will be four key streams to the show - Home, Garden, Build and DIY. There will be no better place to find out about the latest products and services on the market for each of these sectors than at our official HAI show. Indeed, HAI's success in convincing the government to introduce a Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme has

given an added boost to all participants in our sector and by extension to our show.

Tom Finn, Commercial Head, Amalgamated Hardware plc.said: "Amalgamated Hardware is delighted to commit its full support behind Hardware Association Ireland's Hardware Show 2015. As this will be the Association's official tradeshow, we will be encouraging all Topline members to attend and use this unique occasion to meet with existing and new suppliers, evaluate new product opportunities, and network with fellow Topline members and other merchants in an informal setting. Hardware Association Ireland is the 'official voice' of our sector and an increasingly essential support for all companies operating within it; we are very pleased to back its plans for a great event in February 2015."

HAI President's Ball

The show also coincides with Hardware Associations Ireland's premier social

event, the HAI President's Ball. This is a great opportunity to meet and greet old friends and new in an informal, social setting, and it is always a very enjoyable occasion for everyone associated with the industry and their partners, both merchants and suppliers.

An all-industry event

The Hardware Show 2015 is an event organised by the industry for the industry. Its organisation is being driven by an influential and informed trade show committee, which has already begun planning on making The Hardware Show 2015 an unmissable event for both merchants and suppliers. Niall Nugent, Sales & Marketing Director, Ames True Temper Europe, says: "True Temper Ltd proudly support the 2015 HAI trade show at the Citywest Conference & Event Centre. The very best opportunity to showcase your brand and meet with the key decision-makers, all under one roof. Innovation plays a huge part in our sector and

there's no better way to present new products and concepts to your customers, both existing and potential, than exhibiting at the Hardware Association Ireland show. In particular, we welcome the initiatives proposed to attract a wider range of companies in various sectors such as gardening and pets, etc. This is our industry show for our industry".

Meet our new partners

With a team that has over 25 years experience in event management, EventHaus has a reputation for delivering innovative, professionally organised events with a focus on visitor value and exhibitor satisfaction. The company is highly skilled in managing events of every scale, domestically and internationally, in both the consumer and trade arenas. Notable events relying on their expertise include Bloom, Catex, The World of Coffee and Plan Expo.

Octabuild welcomes HAI's Hardware Show 2015

Octabuild welcomes The Hardware Show 2015 and urges support for the event from all sectors within the trade. Hardware Association Ireland and Octabuild has had a long and successful partnership and share many common objectives. Octabuild represents eight of the strongest brand names in the trade, all of whom are important manufacturers in Ireland. "HAI is the key association for bringing together retailers, distributors and manufacturers. Therefore The Hardware Show 2015, it's official trade show, is an important business-focussed event for all these groups". Jim Loughran, Chairman, Octabuild. The building material manufacturers who make up Octabuild are: Dulux Paints, Evo-Stik, Gyproc, Irish Cement Ltd., Kingspan Insulation, Sanbra Fyffe, Tegral, and Wavin.

Octabuild was established in 1984. The objective of Octabuild is to promote the benefits of high quality, Irish manufactured products. While the Octabuild companies all conduct their business independently of each other, they profess to a number of important attributes in common including manufacturing bases in Ireland; operation to the highest technical and management quality standards; market leadership in their business sectors and the use of builders merchants as their primary sales route to the end-user. Their manufacturing plants are spread throughout the country providing significant employment (over 1,400 employed directly). The companies between them make over 20,000 products available every day.

The HAI Hardware Show 2015 Committee

The committee comprises:

HUGH O'DONNELL, Vice President Hardware Association Ireland, and CEO, Amalgamated Hardware plc (Chair);

CHARLIE HAMILTON, Managing Director, Canadia;

DONAL MOULTON, Product & Marketing Director, Tucks O'Brien;

NIALL NUGENT, Sales & Marketing Director, True Temper;

SEAMUS O'DONOGHUE, Sales Director, Dulux Paints Ireland Ltd

ROBERT MASSEY, Managing Director, Bostik;

JIM COPELAND, CEO, Hardware Association Ireland;

GARRET BUCKLEY, Managing Director, EventHaus; and,

LOUISE MCLOUGHLIN, General Manager, EventHaus



Go west – entrepreneurial spirit drives Ó Conchubhair Teo

The Hardware Journal recently visited award-winning builders merchants outlet, Nioclás P. Ó Conchubhair Teo, in Casla, Connemara, as it headed into the pre-Christmas sales period. Journal Editor Bernard Potter had the opportunity to talk to Proprietor Nioclás Ó Conchubhair, a man of many parts – a pioneering businessman, an experienced politician and a former gaelic footballer – who has steered his business on a steady course of sustainable growth through good times and bad

Nioclás Ó Conchubhair greatly prizes his South Connemara heritage and the unique business he has developed on the beautiful landscape that faces the Atlantic and where the next parish is New York! He says: “We pride ourselves on being a local, family business. We’re very much part of the fabric of life in the area. Most of our business is transacted through the Irish language, as over 95 per cent of my customers are Irish speakers. I know the vast majority of my customers and they’ve been coming through our doors for years, and, in many cases, decades.”

Getting started

Nioclás’s own background is in finance, having studied accounting in the College

of Commerce, Rathmines, Dublin in the mid-sixties. After working in a financial role in Dublin, Nioclás returned to Galway to work for Corbett & Sons, one of the largest businesses in Galway, with approximately 150 employees, in 1968. As well as getting a solid grounding in the hardware business, Nioclás was member of Corbetts’ gaelic football team which won the All-Ireland Inter-Firm Final in 1969. He also played U-21 and junior for Galway in 1966. Nioclás stayed with Corbetts until 1977, when he decided to go into business on his own. He bought an old Gaeltarra Éireann knitting factory in his native Leitrimoir measuring 800 sq. ft. Nioclás P Ó Conchubhair Teo first opened in April 1977. “There was just two employees in the company on the day

Pro-active member of Associated Hardware

Nioclás is a highly valued member of Associated Hardware, according to Paul Thompson, Chief Executive, Associated Hardware plc

Paul comments: “Nioclás can only be described as a pro-active and constructive member of Associated Hardware. Recently Nioclás said to me ‘the issues of the day are what sell’. His comment is very true and has resulted in some new initiatives and products for all Associated Hardware Group members.”

He adds: “They say you get out of life what you put into it. This is very true when you look at Nioclás and his business. The energy and creativity that Nioclás has driven into his business is very evident in how it continues to perform and is reflected in the way customers are met every day by his staff. The fact that Nioclás is willing to help and share his experiences with members of Homevalue and the trade in general is a real reflection of the character of the man.”

we opened our doors for the first time. It was a tough time to launch a business but it gradually found its feet.” From modest beginnings, he built a major outlet providing building materials, hardware, plumbing, electrical equipment, fridges, washing machines, TVs, furniture, a garden centre and a large range of other goods. With 12 people employed and ever-increasing trade, Nioclás purchased a building on the Industrial Estate in Casla in 2007, opening a state-of-the-art premises there.

Strong team

A strong team of employees has been vital to his success in developing the business in Casla and Nioclás is proud of his dedicated staff. “I’ve got a great

bunch of hardworking people here. They’re attentive to detail and they realise the importance of making the customer feel welcome. Everybody works together and we have a great team spirit.” Nurturing a loyal customer base has played a vital role in ensuring that the business has weathered a variety of economic storms over the years: “Since I first opened a hardware business in Leitrim in 1977, we have been very careful to ensure that the local customer remained our priority at all times.” Even during the so-called boom times of the last decade, Nioclás stayed true to that philosophy. “I was approached by developers during the building boom with offers of large contracts but the offers felt too good to be true. So we turned them down and continued

to concentrate on our established customer base.” That approach proved to be prudent and was vindicated by the events of the last six years. Today, in the wake of much disruption in the wider economy, both in the west and nationally, Nioclás P. Ó Conchubhair Teo remains a vibrant and viable business. What strategic principles underly his approach to business? “We try as much as possible to cater to every need. We like to think that somebody can walk into our shop and get whatever they need for their home or their business. A diversity of products is essential.” A tour of the 35,000 sq. ft. premises in the Casla Industrial Estate, consisting of a 15,000 sq. ft. shop, a 20,000 sq. ft. storage area and two and a half acres of yard space emphasises the breadth of product on offer.

Family first

Strong roots in the local community give any business a competitive edge and Nioclás Ó Conchubhair, has a heritage of enviable longevity and distinction – locals in South Connemara have been shopping with Nioclás’s family for over 200 years. In 1740, Nioclás’s great, great grandfather, Martin Farrell from Abbeyknockmoy married Sheila Coinnín from Salthill. Their daughter Margaret married Patsa McDonagh, a boatbuilder. The couple lived near the pier in Leitrim where they opened a shop. Their daughter Barbara married the first Nioclás Ó Conchubhair from Moycullen, who had lived and worked in the US. He was a remarkable man, according to his grandson. “His experiences in the US had honed his business acumen and as well as running the shop in Leitrim as a grocer and general merchant, he was a travel agent for the White Star Line.” The shop in Leitrim remained in business down through the generations, moving to the main road in 1973, and continues in business to this day as a supermarket which is owned by Nioclás’s brother, Rory. Nioclás’s grandfather was a committed Republican and Pádraig Pearse was



Nioclás Ó Conchubhair (centre) with son, Nioclás and daughter Ailish.

a regular visitor to the family home, Bayview House, where Nioclás still lives today. In fact, two of Nioclás’s uncles, Petie and Miko, attended Pearse’s school, Scoil Eanna in Dublin. The first Nioclás Ó Conchubhair was staunchly Republican, as were all his family, except for one son, Paddy, a doctor, who was pro-Treaty and who is reputed to have treated Michael Collins. Nioclás’s grandfather died in 1941 and his father – also Nioclás Ó Conchubhair – took over the business and married Lily Murphy from Co Down. When Down won the All-Ireland in 1960, Nioclás had four first cousins in the winning team, Sean O’Neill, Kevin

O’Neill, James McCartan and Dan McCartan. Nioclás’s father retired from the business in 1972. Family is clearly important to Nioclás. And, after the tragic death of his wife, Cathy Mullen, a few years ago, he is particularly proud that his daughter, Ailish, a science graduate has returned from Australia to work in the business and his son, the fourth Nioclás Ó Conchubhair has also come home to work for the business. “I’m fortunate that at a time like this when so many families are seeing sons and daughters having to go abroad that my family are in a position to return home.

Overview

The business is divided into seven major sectors: timber/DIY; plumbing; gardening; household goods; appliances; an energy centre; and animal feed.

Nioclás says: "As regards timber, we try to provide for all types of customers, from the tradesman to the DIY enthusiast to the complete DIY beginner. Our products include: rough and treated timber; PAO timber doors and floors; skirting; architrave and window board; plain and antique sheeting; plywood; doors and floors; paint; and varnish."

Since its opening a few years ago, the garden centre has been particularly successful: "It's been a very effective addition to the business drawing a lot of women customers who tend to browse more than their male counterparts and, given the wide range of products we have, this has been very positive, not just for the garden centre, but for the business overall."

Plumbing and sanitary products are a

core part of the business, of course, and the product range includes: brass, GB and crimp fittings; pumps and valves; boilers (standard and condensing); oil tanks, water tanks and septic tanks.

In addition, household goods and appliances are crucial ingredients in the product mix at Nioclás P. Ó Conchubhair Teo, Nioclás explains:

"We have a newly refurbished furniture showroom displaying our extensive range of products. We offer everything for the home from beds, mattresses and headboards to dining tables and chairs; from kitchenware to wardrobes; from lighting to fireside accessories. This showroom is a whole additional floor for us and we are confident that it will prove a strong draw for the business in the medium term."

"As far as appliances are concerned, we've got all the leading Irish and international brands in washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, cookers and fridge and fridge freezers. We also have comprehensive ranges of kettles,



toasters and sandwich makers as well as televisions (LED and HD Ready) in sizes ranging from 19" to 50".

As Nioclás walks through his shop, his enthusiasm is evident, as is his pioneering spirit and openness to new ideas. "I'm always looking to try new

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things. I'm particularly interested in encouraging all local products and ideas."

His attachment to bricks and mortar retailing is unshakable but, Nioclás is also aware that online retailing is a key factor in the future of his business and the hardware sector as a whole: "I think we need to study what other retailing sectors are doing and what online giants like Amazon are doing. There are opportunities in the online sector and we must grasp them."

Presentation is an important part of communicating with the customer, Nioclás feels and he is constantly looking at ways of improving layout and shop design: "We recently had a new floor laid, which made a big impression on customers and helped refresh the overall look."

Networking

Always on the lookout for opportunities, Nioclás believes that maintaining a strong network of contacts in the trade is particularly helpful in this regard. A long-time member of Hardware Association Ireland, Nioclás says it is an invaluable support: "It gives me a great opportunity to network with my peers around the country and is a great forum for the exchange of information and ideas."

He has been a member of Associated Hardware since 1989: "That's been a productive relationship over many years and I want to give particular thanks to Frank Glynn, of Milltown, Tuam, who introduced me to the group."

Community values

Even after over forty years in the business, Nioclás Ó Conchubhair remains obsessed with detail, retains an eye for a bargain and is constantly on the lookout for new ranges to add to his offers. On a whistle-stop tour of his shop, he can point out individual items and tell you where they were sourced. Many of the items on display, including paintings and a meticulously detailed model of the iconic boat indelibly associated with the local coastline, the Galway hooker, are produced by local craftsmen and women, reflecting his keenness to support local initiatives



where possible. "We pride ourselves on our support of local and Irish produce and business, and have won awards in recognition of this. For example, we won the Best Small/Medium Enterprise Award at the Octabuild Builders Merchants Awards 2011."

Nioclás believes it's important that the business contributes to the local community in any way it can: "We regularly get involved in fundraising for local initiatives ranging from helping raise money for a pitch development in a local secondary school in Carraroe to organising events for the elderly. As a native of the area, I'm conscious of the importance of making a real contribution."

The depth of his commitment to the locality is underlined by his years of public service. He was a Fianna Fail County Councillor for many years and was appointed a senator in the eighties by the then Taoiseach, Mr Charles Haughey. He was a member of the board of The Heritage Council and was Chairman of Radio na Gaeltachta.

"I have always identified strongly with the South Connemara area and I see both myself and the business as being tightly woven into the fabric of the community here."

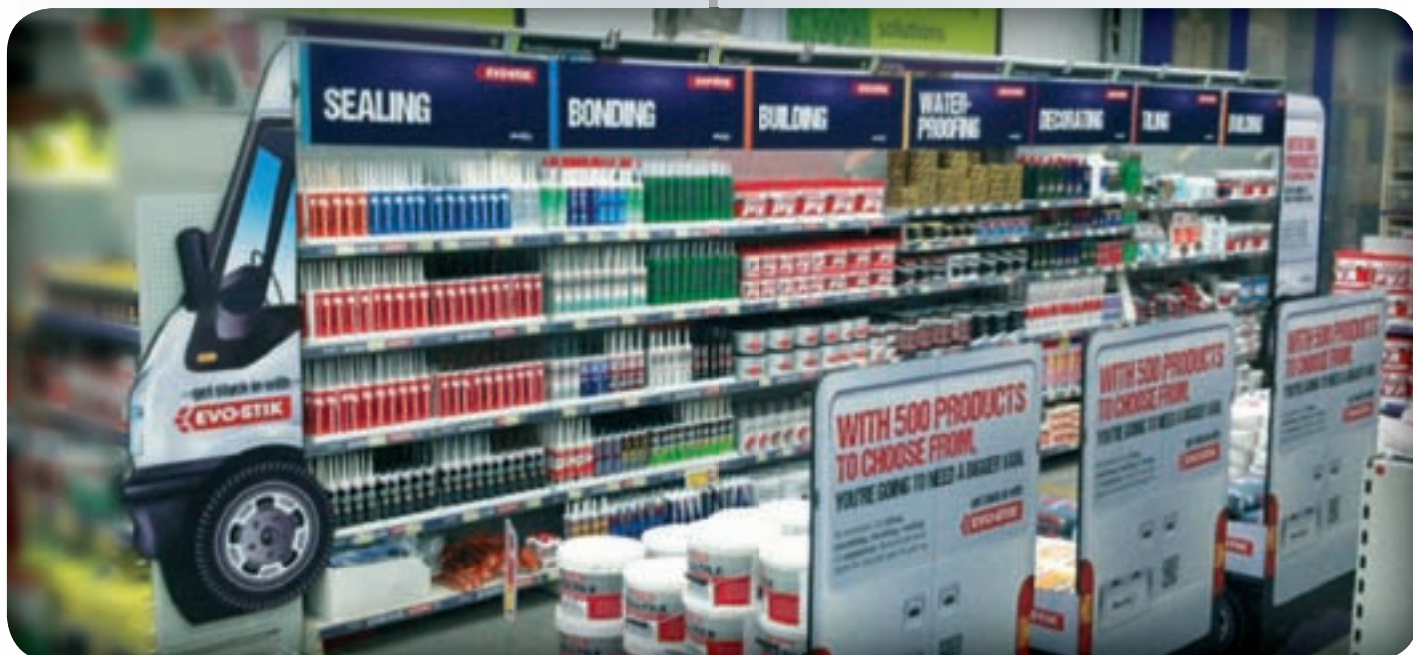
Ultimately, it's that seamless integration – between loyalty and a sense of adventure, between family and locality, between business and community – that gives Nioclás P Ó Conchubhair Teo its distinctive individuality. And after the economic pressures of the last few years, Nioclás is looking to the future with optimism: "The west of Ireland has, of course, been hit hard

by the downturn but the people here are resilient and resourceful. Already, there's a sense of a cautious optimism growing here and, in our industry in particular, I think people are regaining their confidence, lifting their heads and identifying new opportunities. We haven't emerged from the downturn yet, but I think we're on our way."

Three wishes for Ireland

The Hardware Journal asked Nioclás, who has always been deeply committed politically, what three policy initiatives he would implement, if he were Taoiseach...

- 1 "I would introduce a housing grant for those on low incomes. For many years, we had a very effective scheme of that sort here in the Gaeltacht. Over time it would reduce pressure on the public coffers as it would lessen the need for local authority housing."
- 2 "I think we should look at finding a way to sustainably grow our fish farming industry. It has huge potential. In Norway, the fish farming sector is second only to oil, in its importance to their national economy."
- 3 "Wind power can give us huge savings in energy bills but the turbines should be located offshore. On shore, they have implications for our tourism industry and for our image as a green island exporter of food."



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HAI welcomes Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme



Hardware Association Ireland (HAI) has welcomed the new Home Renovation Tax Incentive Scheme

Having called for such a scheme in its pre- budget submission and been successful, to have seen the fast-tracking of its implementation from October 25, 2013, is a very positive development. This supported the spirit and intention of the scheme by promoting activity within the sector immediately, and not creating a vacuum, which had seriously concerned Members.

The early start date allowed projects to begin and, in some cases, be completed in time for Christmas, which would have been a determining factor for the work to proceed in the first place. Traditionally, a substantial amount of work, such as replacement kitchens, bathrooms, windows, new flooring, wall and attic insulation and painting – jobs

which can be completed during a 4-6 week period or less – is carried out during the run up to Christmas. Retail merchants and suppliers have now had an opportunity to drive sales and innovation before year end, and start progressing the scheme into the new year.

As outlined in HAI's Budget Submission, the economic impact of such a scheme could lead to €300m in additional spending on home repair, maintenance and improvement in 2014, without any significant downside costs and create up to 4,000 extra jobs, making a very positive return to the Exchequer. HAI believes that the proposed tax incentive scheme will help to create employment at a local level all over the country through bringing much needed spend

to local hardware retailers as well as builders, plumbers, electricians and sub-contractors. This stimulus also has the major advantage of bringing construction activity out of the shadow economy, with huge benefits for the formal economy, given that the European Commission has estimated that between 16 per cent and 17 per cent of all construction and household repair work is undeclared.

HAI also welcomes the proposed introduction of a 'Register of Builders and Contractors', announced by the Minister for the Environment, Phil Hogan TD, but cautions that rigorous enforcement is required. The Register of Contractors is a positive development as it seeks to tackle the shadow economy and bring in contractors

and projects to the legitimate trade, which benefits all. However, rigorous enforcement must be prioritised to ensure that compliant builders are not penalised over those who don't support the initiative. It should be a positive point of difference for those registered. Hardware Association Ireland provided a Members-only briefing note on the Home Renovation Tax incentive scheme in early November to coincide with the early implementation of the scheme from October 25, 2013. The response from members to date has been very positive indicating that there is already increased engagement from customers and contractors alike requesting more information and details of projects and products covered. The scheme will be fully functional when revenue have their online registration system in place, as yet no date has been identified. Revenue are advising that the scheme will operate as detailed below in

advance of the online system being established.

Homeowners must ensure that:

- the building contractor has a VAT number (it should be on documentation such as an invoice), an up to date (within the last 30 days) Notice of Determination of RCT rate tax of zero or 20% or an in-date Tax Clearance Certificate.
- the work qualifies (refer to the information on the Revenue website on type of work, dates, amounts, etc.)
- they retain copies of all supporting documentation such as the building contractors Tax Clearance Certificates or Notice of Determination of RCT rate tax of zero or 20%, copies of quotes/ estimates, invoices, payment receipts;
- they provide to the Building Contractor, their LPT Property

ID only (not the PIN which was provided for LPT purposes or their PPSN).

Building contractors must:

- provide to the homeowner, their VAT Number, an up to date (within the last 30 days) Notice of Determination of RCT rate tax of zero or 20% or an in-date Tax Clearance Certificate;
- retain details of work showing the location of the work, start/end date for the work, the type of work, the cost excluding VAT, the VAT amount as well as the VAT rate/s for the work;
- retain details of payments received showing the payment amount excluding VAT, the VAT amount as well as the VAT Rate/s; and,
- upload details of work and payments within 21 days of the new online system becoming available.

Cuprinol

NEW for 2014
FOR THE 1st TIME
IN DECKING....
1 Product, 1 Day,
1 Beautifully Restored Deck.

Total Deck brings grey weathered decks back to a natural finish in one easy step; simply apply with a garden broom and watch as our unique formula cleans, nourishes and protects decks back to life.

Speak to your Dulux rep for details.

Scan here to see it in action

CHEER IT UP!

Construction industry sticks with adhesives

The sealant and adhesive sector is a busy one at the moment, with evidence of a potential rise in construction work around Ireland creating a need for high-quality sealant and adhesive products on the market. *The Hardware Journal* looks at some of the trends, best sellers and new products that are available in this sector, and talk to some of the biggest names in the industry right now

MS polymers increasingly popular

Bostik is a market leader in the sealant and adhesives sector. "In the last number of years, a move to high performance 'MS polymer' has been the overall trend in the adhesive and sealants sector. Gripfill is the number-one selling brand in the country, and 2013 saw a return to strong growth for this well-established brand," says Robert Massey, Managing Director, Bostik. A multi-purpose, gap-filling adhesive, Gripfill bonds almost any surface, including wood, metal, plasterboard, cement composite boards, stone breeze blocks etc. It has excellent strength, including vertical applications, and it is suitable for both interior and exterior usage, provided that the bond is covered.

Bostik recently launched its new 007 Crystal Clear product, a new line that is an MS polymer, which is clear in colour. The sealant is solvent and silicone free, has a low odour and is non-yellowing so it will not deteriorate in colour over time. A high-performance product, 007 Crystal Clear is able to seal and bond even in wet conditions.

Gun-O-Prene, synthetic rubber resin adhesive for interior use that bonds most building materials, remains a

strong brand in trade outlets. It has high initial grab and bonds permanently. Gun-O-Prene comes packaged in a 350ml cartridge.

Bostik has launched a number of products in light of the growing interest in MS polymers, including innovations such as Evo-Stik 007, Sticks Like, Waterstop, Serious Stuff and Superfix. The Evo-Stik 007 in particular is notable for its versatility as it can be used in more than seven specialist fields such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical, glazing, metal fabrication, tiling and decorating. Serious Stuff is also one of the items which offers an extensive multi-purpose usage, as it has a high initial grab, is fast-setting and has



A high performance product, the new 007 Crystal Clear is able to seal and bond even in wet conditions.



a permanent, flexible bond that means you won't need screws, bolts or rivets.

Construction sees rise

Andrew D'arcy, Marketing Manager, Contech comments: "There has definitely been an uplift in the building sector over the last few months mainly within the larger counties throughout the country. A lot of small-to-medium builds have gotten under way, which have benefitted the sealant and adhesive industry. Rumour has it that this trend is set to continue with houses in some areas starting to sell from the plans."

Contech supply a full range of products in the sealant and adhesive category, with Tec7, Roof7, Pur7 Expanding Foams, GT7 Penetrating Oils and Tec7 Filler being the top-selling products from the company. "This period of the



Released last September, the Tec7 Foam Spray Cleaner is a professional, all-purpose cleaner.

year, covering October, November and early December is a busy time for the sealant sector with people doing up their homes for the Christmas period." Described by Contech as the number-one choice for the trade person or DIY enthusiast, Tec7 offers strength, flexibility, sealing and mounting quality, and sticks to almost all building materials, including most plastics. With each 310ml cartridge of product, customers are getting better value compared to most other MS polymers on the market, according to Tec7. Customers expect high quality from the Tec7 range, and its all new Foam Spray Cleaner is no exception. Released last September, this new member to the Tec7 range is a professional all-purpose cleaner, that can be used on any job, be it tiles, counter tops and glass, as well as for general use around the house for windows, cooker hobs, shower doors, stainless steel and mirrors as it does not contain abrasives. It will remove nicotine and pencil marks from a wide range of materials too.

Need for multi-purpose products

Larsen Building Products has introduced its specialist trade range, a range of high-performance sealant and adhesive products which are instantly recognisable for their modern, fresh packaging and feature all of the key facts and features of each line on the label. Every product has a powder colour panel and a QR code. According to Larsen, these changes are being well-received by tilers and retailers. The range is compact and is focused towards the hardware and builders merchant sector, combining performance and versatility with a competitive edge.

Peter McGill, Managing Director,

Larsen, explained: "In modernising our packaging, Larsen have looked closely at the changing needs of the tiling sector. This new, distinctive packaging helps build our brand and distinguishes our specially formulated EN12004-compliant fast, flexible and standard set adhesives which are produced at an ISO 9001/14001 accredited, purpose-built manufacturing facility."

Larsen's FX1 range is a specifically formulated range for contractors and DIY users. These sealants and adhesives are high-quality, single-part, long-lasting, multi-purpose products. These advanced neutral curing products provide excellent adhesion to most plastics, wood, stone, ceramic, mirrors and metal. They are multi-use products, which according to Larsen is something that the market needs at the moment in order to cut down on holding multiple types of sealant in stock. Its versatility ranges from sanitary ware and kitchens to bathrooms and showers. The FX1 range is also usable on external gutters. The range is available in white, clear, black and grey and is suitable for overpainting with most paints.

Upward sales curve

Laydex Building Products is one of the market leaders in the supply of a range of building materials, including sealants and adhesives. "Our sealants, adhesives and building chemical ranges have been on a continuous upward curve in sales recently, and continue to be, due to an increase construction work, in Dublin especially," says Gerry Callan, Sales Director, Laydex. Gerry explains that in-store displays are hugely important and that the unification of building products and DIY products has been the most pronounced feature of the sealants and adhesive sector recently. "The repairs,

maintenance and improvement (RMI) sector looks for clear, unambiguous packaging and user-friendly, multi-purpose usage. Our biggest seller in the last six months has been the Bond It GB Pro, a hybrid polymer sealant and adhesive that can be used underwater, and it is used to seal leaks and adhere to impervious materials."

Bond It GB Pro is a totally neutral sealant, which is for use in areas that require a tough elastic rubber joint or an adhesive with a superior bonding strength. The product is non-staining, non-shrinking, and contains no isocyanates, solvents, silicone or phthalates and it is odourless. It can be painted over and is suitable for sealing and bonding interior and exterior applications in all weather conditions. GB Pro is also resistant to water, UV radiation, mould and chlorine. The company also supplies Xtreme Construction Adhesive, which is described as a huge success for the company since its arrival into the Irish market. The superior strength, instant grab, gap-filling adhesive was designed to meet and exceed the expectations of the professional tradesperson. According to Laydex, the product combines excellent creep and slump resistance with superb long-term strength. It is ideal for bonding both porous and non-porous materials.

Overall, the sector consensus is that there is a lift in demand for product, driven by signs of growth in the building sector, particularly in the larger counties. As we look to 2014, there are optimistic signals of demand for sealants and adhesives, if the building sector can continue on its path to recovery.



The Bond It GB Pro is a popular, hybrid polymer that can be used underwater, and is used for sealing leaks and adhering to impervious materials.





January

"I do not believe retailers should be looking on January as an afterthought"
- John Stanley.



... it is not an afterthought

Retailers are busy getting ready for Christmas, one of the main selling months of the year, but, once Christmas is over, then what, asks John Stanley

In the northern hemisphere retailers often hunker down for January as there is a chance of bad weather and consumers staying at home. In the southern hemisphere it is vacation month and going shopping is not on most people's minds. In my early days in retailing we prepared for the post-Christmas sales and January was the sales month. In 2014, that does not work as the consumer now expects a sale every time they walk into the store. The result is that many retailers now look on January as the forgotten month and look forward and prepare for the next selling season. With retail in general being under pressure and the increasing growth in online shopping, I do not believe retailers should be looking on January as an afterthought.

Your point of difference

While many retailers are not focused on making January an event for their customers, I would argue that is an opportunity. I would be getting the Christmas trimmings down quickly and planning a fresh look for January. I accept that sales figures will be lower than many other months, but it is better to increase sales growth in a quiet month and have a healthy bottom line than be in negative territory.

Look at the opportunities

There are fewer customers walking into most stores, this means that your team have more time to engage with individual customers. A well-run retail operation will find that in a quiet month the customer count goes down, but the average sale goes up. If the average sale does not go up in January, you

need to analyse why. If team members are engaging with more customers, they have the time to provide the full customer service offer to the customer and solve more problems by offering better solutions.

The 'weekend project'

Consumers are still looking for a project to do over the weekend and it is often easier to promote the idea of a 'weekend project' during January. I realise that project selling should be a year-long promotional campaign, but it is easier to sell the idea in a quieter month. Ace Hardware in the USA have "Event in a Box" as a promotion. What can you literally put in a box for a weekend project for your customers?

Workshops for Customers

Not only do you have more time for the consumer, but often the consumer has more time as well. This is an opportunity to build customer loyalty by providing workshops to engage the customer in projects. These workshops could be held during the evening when the consumer has more time to develop projects themselves.

January as a fun month

Many retailers cannot think past a 'sale' as a promotion, take a different journey and promote the fun things that can happen in January. For example, develop a promotion that links the store with your media and social media marketing, if appropriate, based on ideas such as "49 things you can do in your garden in January" or "49 ways to improve

your home in January". One of the life bloods of retailers is stock turn and progressive retailers are always looking for an opportunity to develop stock turn. January should not be a month that stock turn is ignored, use the month to make a difference in your business and in your customers' lives.

Put the familiar with the unfamiliar

Are customers walking past your displays or are they stopping and buying off your displays? If they are walking past the display and not picking product up, why are they doing that? The chances are the display is not catching their eye. The role of a display should be to make people stop and look. If they look, the chances are they may make a purchase. If they are not looking, they are telling you that in their eyes the display has no appeal. Next time you go around a local shopping centre take a look at the shop windows and watch customers eyes, many customers will often walk past shop windows and not even notice what is on display. These retailers have forgotten one of the golden rules of retailing. If you want the customer to stop you have to put "the familiar with the unfamiliar". I recently worked with a jewellery store where the window display looked okay. There was nothing technically wrong with how the display was built or managed, it just looked okay. When I asked how effective the window was working with sales I was told that the earrings on display were not selling. I got the window merchandiser to think outside the box. She started being creative and she introduced some irons

into the window and displayed the earrings hanging from the irons. As a result the sale of earrings went from basically zero to one pair a day. Why? She remembered that you have to display the familiar with the unfamiliar. There are some rules that need to be adhered to:

- displays have to be changed regularly, as soon as the unfamiliar and familiar become familiar in the customers eyes, it is time for a change of display;
- you can be as crazy as you like with a display as long as you do not offend your target market;
- collect old scrap material that can be used as unusual props, they can be painted to look more appealing, if required;
- you are building a display to attract the customer, not to please the retail owner – I come across a lot of situations where the merchandiser has said to me "we do not do that because the boss does not like it" – if it is selling product and the customer likes the display, surely that is what matters; and,
- measure success and monitor the sales pattern so you can see what is working and what is not working.

It is time to be more adventurous with displays. Make your displays stand out from the crowd, the aim is to get people interested either by 'word of mouth' or by 'word of click'.

In closing, I want to wish all my readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

John Stanley is a retail consultant and conference speaker and can be contacted at john@johnstanley.com.au



As soon as the unfamiliar and familiar become familiar in the customers eyes, it is time for a change of display.

THE HR GUIDE TO A HAPPY CHRISTMAS



Tom Smyth is Managing Director of Tom Smyth & Associates, a HR consultancy, established in 1991, that gives Irish employer's practical advice on HR, industrial relations and employment law issues. The firm has a strong link to the wider retail sector and prides itself on giving advice that is compliant with legal requirements while offering practical solutions to the employer.

This time of the year is a critical one for your core business of selling goods to customers, but there are some perennial HR issues that can rear their head around this time also. Tom Smyth, Managing Director, Tom Smyth & Associates offers some useful tips to help avoid HR dramas this festive season

The Christmas party

Unfortunately, employer liability does not stop at the front door of the workplace. If an employer plans and organises a staff night out over the Christmas period then they could be vicariously responsible and liable for the actions of employees on this night. Claims of sexual harassment, bullying or assault can, and do, arise from these events. Ensure employees are aware that the behavioural expectations you have of them in the workplace extend to work related events.

I would suggest that you review any documentation or policies (e.g. sexual harassment and bullying) to ensure that they:

- extend to cover work related and social events;
- allow for full investigation should an incident occur; and,
- provide for potential disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

If you are having your Christmas social the night before a working day, ensure that all staff are aware of their start time the following day!

Employees 'under the influence'

Employees will be socialising more over the next few weeks and this may include the evenings before a work shift. Are you prepared to deal with an employee who you suspect may be under the influence when they report for work or when they return from a festive lunch break? While it is an awkward situation, if you suspect an employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, it is incumbent on a reasonable employer to investigate the matter. I would recommend that, while the matter is sensitive and discretion is favoured, employers would ask another appropriate person for their opinion both to act as a witness to any meeting

but also to confirm the suspicion in the first place. You should privately enquire with the employee as to any alcohol consumption before reporting to work. You should do an assessment of them and if you deem them unfit for work ask them to go home, with pay at this stage. You could also refer the employee immediately to a medical professional for a test. However this may be made more difficult where there is no specific alcohol policy outlining this right. I would recommend seeking professional HR or legal advice at this stage as you will need to take statements, maintain evidence and write to an employee regarding a formal meeting upon their return to work for their next shift.

Seasonal Employees

If you need to hire seasonal employees please ensure that they are given a Contract of Employment which confirms their status to them. The style of contract that you give such recruits will generally be of a fixed term or specified purpose nature meaning that they are hired specifically for the Christmas period and there is clarity on their end date from the outset. If you are advertising and hiring on a short term basis for the Christmas period keep in mind that Social Welfare payments for those on the live register can be suspended for up to six weeks without the need to reapply having completed a temporary contract.

Public Holidays over Christmas/ New Year 2013

Over the holiday season, there is often confusion over what is a Public Holiday, a Bank Holiday or no holiday at all!

- December 24, Christmas Eve – this is not a Public Holiday, there are no additional entitlements;
- December 25, Christmas Day and December 26, St. Stephen's Day – these are Public Holidays and employees are eligible to an entitlement as with any other Public Holiday during the year. Bear in mind that these holidays do not fall on a Monday which may change the calculation of entitlements for certain part time employees;

- December 31, New Year's Eve - this is not a Public Holiday, there are no additional entitlements.
- January 1 New Year's Day (Wednesday) – this is a Public Holiday and qualifying employees get appropriate entitlements

All other days during the festive season are regular working days, as per your normal rosters should you choose to open.

Absenteeism over Christmas

Christmas is a time of the year when many employees want to take time off work. It is also, however one of the busiest times of the year for many industries, retail hardware included. It is suggested that you have a look over your policy (ideally this will be written) on Annual Leave. Does the policy clearly state how to apply for leave, how many employees can be out at one time and does it reference Christmas as a 'blackout' period.

This is also a time of the year when absenteeism levels mysteriously increase! The majority of employees may be genuinely ill, however employers must always be alert to suspicious sick days. Ensure you have clarity in your policies and procedures on the reporting of sick days, entitlement to sick pay (if any), referrals to the Company Doctor, return to work meetings etc.

Important policies to have in place

While we hope it will remain the season of goodwill, below are some policies that should help set the record straight in terms of employee entitlements and your expectations of them.

Staff purchases

Are employees aware of their, or indeed their friends' and families' entitlements regarding discounts? Is there a limit to staff purchases? Can staff check out their own transactions? Where do employees keep their purchases until leaving the store? Do you retain the right to search employees, and are they aware of this?

Supplier and customer gifts

What happens if a supplier or customer drops in some gifts for the owner, manager or staff? Who is to receive these and how are they to be distributed? As an employer you are entitled to do what you wish with these gifts, however, it is important to have a clear policy to avoid awkward situations. Make it clear to employees what they should do once they receive any such gift and how you plan on distributing gifts, if at all.

In conclusion, I wish all HAI Members a prosperous trading period over the next few weeks and look forward to assisting you throughout 2014.



If you need to hire seasonal employees, ensure that they are given a Contract of Employment which confirms their status to them.

Excellent year for the Hardware Association Ireland Golf Society

Society President Jim Cuddy and Captains Joseph Wallace and Dolores Colman wish all Members and friends a very Happy Christmas and a successful New Year. A big thank you to Gus Mullarkey and Willie Dixon from all Members for their tireless work and dedication as usual throughout the year

This has been another excellent year for the Hardware Association Ireland Golf Society. Outings took place at the Heritage Golf Club on April 26 for HAI President Paddy Kelly's Prize (sponsors - Crown Paints). Next up was the Denis Burke Memorial Cup played at the Mount Wolseley Golf Course on Friday, May 31 (sponsors - Bostik). Captain Joe Wallace had his Captain's Prize at the Rosslare Golf Club on Friday, June 28 (sponsors - Irish Abrasives) and, finally, President Jim Cuddy had his Golf Society President's Prize on September 6 at Carton House Golf Club, (sponsors - Tucks O'Brien). The Golf Society would like to thank all our kind sponsors for their ongoing support and indeed for sponsoring the very successful overseas tour to Portugal in October. A big thank you also

to Overseas trip organiser and committee Member, Frank McKeon, from all those who were on the recent trip which was a great success. The unanimous verdict of those attending was that it should be an annual event. In order to meet the needs of those participating in future such events, there will be a Member's survey seeking views on future venues and times. Frank would also like to thank all of those who helped in the organising and running of the overseas tour, which helped to make the event the success it was.

Dates for next year's outings are already set and begin with HAI President Paddy Kelly's Prize at his home course, Athy Golf Club, on Friday, April 25. All are welcome and Paddy wishes all Members of the Golfing Societies a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

2014 OUTINGS

HAI PRESIDENT PADDY KELLY'S PRIZE

Venue: Athy Golf Club.

Date: Friday April 25.

Sponsor: Crown Paints

DENIS BURKE MEMORIAL CUP

Venue: Ballykisteen Golf Club, Limerick Junction.

Date: Friday, May 30.

Sponsor: Bostik/Envode

CAPTAIN JIM COPELAND'S PRIZE

Venue: Lucan Golf Club.

Date: Friday June 27.

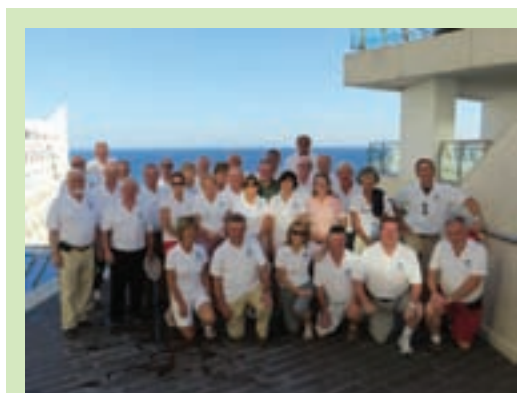
Sponsor: Irish Abrasives

SOCIETY PRESIDENT JIM CUDDY'S PRIZE

Venue: Carton House Golf Club.

Date: Friday August 29.

Sponsor: Tucks O'Brien



Taking the sun before heading for the golf course – the Hardware Association Ireland Golf Society Members on their overseas tour to Portugal in October.

Keep calm... there is a little more to learn about Facebook



Kathryn Mason, principal of Kathryn Mason PR & Marketing is highly experienced in digital and social media. She has worked across many industry sectors, including hardware retailing, and can be contacted at km@kathrynmason.co.uk

In the previous part of our series we learned how to set up a Facebook for Business Page. Would you believe, in that short space of time, Facebook have amended their Pages rules and terms along with a few other key amendments. Never fear, Kathryn Mason, Principal, Kathryn Mason PR can help you make sense of the changes! Read on....

Facebook are extremely strict about how to run competitions on your page. However, recently they did relax them ever so slightly. It's really worthwhile reading the rules carefully. Don't forget they can close your page if you breach them and all your hard work is gone! For more info, go to: https://www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php

An important rule most people should make note of is in E. Promotions 3:

Promotions may be administered on Pages or within apps on Facebook. Personal Timelines must not be used to administer promotions (example: "share on your Timeline to enter" or "share on your friend's Timeline to get additional entries" is not permitted).

I can't explain how many times a day I see this in my feed and how every time I do I know they are breaking the rules. I hear you thinking, well everyone is doing it so why don't we...well just let me remind everyone it is a rule they can enforce and they do!

What to do?

It's only a matter of time when the serious offenders will have their pages closed. How do we get around it? From my understanding using the comments box below a photo or a post is the easiest way around this. If you do want to run a competition there are a number of paid for services that you can use

within Facebook that are legitimate and adhere to the guidelines. The ones I can recommend are:

- <http://www.wildfireapp.com/products/pages> ; and,
- <http://northsocial.com/apps/> .

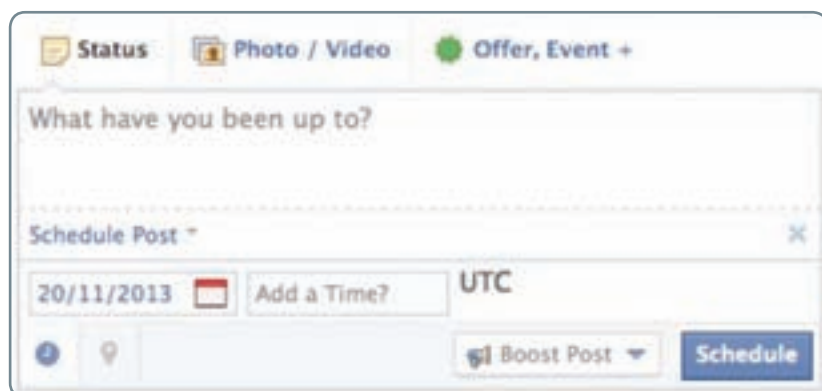
Managing a page may seem a daunting task as there is a lot to do each week but with a little planning you can make it super-easy for the bulk of the posts. On your page there is a very useful little tool (see below) which means you can sit once a week for an hour and schedule all your week of posts. You can even say a time you'd like to post at and it really is simple. It will automatically appear in your Page feed at the time and on the date you choose. This tool will make life very easy. However I do recommend you still watch the page for any questions or comments your Fans may ask. To access the tool, click on the clock dial logo when you want to write a post, the calendar and times will then appear so you can schedule.

An Editorial Calendar is the starter that will get your posts together. In our last article, I asked you to keep an eye on content and start building. The Editorial Calendar will help you place all this at the right times and make searching for future content much easier. Break an Editorial Calendar down by the days – say five to start off with and when you

Social Media

get more accustomed then go to six. I'd recommend posting at weekends as Ireland has a high usage of Facebook on Saturdays and Sundays. For example, the calendar would look like this:

- Monday: have a little fun and perhaps share a funny quote about DIY, say hello for the start of another week.
- Wednesday: ask a question – to your fans – e.g. What DIY project are they planning this weekend?
- Thursday: make this a seasonal post for example it may be about a new product for your lawns in the summer or around Christmas give suggestions on outdoor lights. This post could be more based around products you stock rather than just advice.
- Friday: every week make a suggestion for some DIY advice – fix a tap, mend a hole in a wall.
- Sunday: do a “meet the staff” article. Each week feature a different staff member.



Editorial Calendar.



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*based on DPI ex-factory sales 2013 v 2012

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ANOTHER SIDE OF... ... Nick Friel



Nick crossing the finish line.

Ironman Nick pushes the limits

With 28 years' experience in retailing, Nick Friel, Internal Operations Manager with Ganly's Hardware Athlone, is known throughout the industry for his many business accomplishments. What may not be as well known is his equally impressive achievements in a sporting arena that tests even a hardened hardware retailer!

The 'day job'

Nick Friel started in Dunnes Stores in 1985 part-time and worked up to the position of store manager at 23 years of age. He opened three stores for Dunnes Stores in his time with them. Going to work for the Grafton Group in 1998, he opened an Athlone store for the group as Designate Store Manager. He went on to manage the Athlone branch for five years.

Nick started working with Ganlys in 2003, joining the company to design and open its flagship Athlone store. The store won numerous awards over the years. He designed and assisted in the project management of the opening of the Longford Branch in 2005 and designed and project managed the opening of a third store in Mountbellew in 2011.

Apart from his family and friends, Nick's biggest interest outside of work is taking part in triathlons. A triathlon is a test of endurance involving a swimming, cycling and running in sequence.

Fundraising

"I took up the triathlon in 2007 as part of a fundraising event on behalf of Westmeath Hospice," Nick explains. "Myself and local Councillor Aengus O'Rourke formed Team Hospice."

Nick gave up smoking and drinking, and spent six months in training from Christmas 2007 up to the event. Team Hospice completed the triathlon and raised over €20,000 for the charity. "At that stage, I was really bitten by the bug."

Nick continued to support the hospice the following year on a solo event and raised €3,000: "I have now competed in over 50 triathlons moving up through different stages of intensity and endurance from Sprint to Olympic to half-Ironman."

The distances covered in these events have been as follows:

- Sprint event - 750m swim, 20k bike and five km run;
- Olympic event - 1500m swim, 40k bike and 10k run; and,
- half Ironman - 1.9km swim, 90k bike and 21.1km run.



Full Ironman

Nick completed the half Ironman event in five hours, 52 minutes and 45 seconds! Now, there's no stopping him: "My next challenge is the ultimate full Ironman in Austria in June 2014. This is the most gruelling of all triathlon events. This event consists of 3.86 km swim, a 180km bike and ends with a full marathon of 42.2km run raced in order without a break. Most Ironman events have a cut off time of 17hrs. My goal for this event is completion and to do it in under 13 hours would be a bonus. Anyone who completes this event within the 17hrs is classed as a Finisher. Outside the cut-off time and your time will not register.

"Someone once explained to me that for any athlete, a marathon is a gruelling, excruciating, painful event, but, for an Ironman, it's a cool down. I laughed and told him I hope so..."

After this event is done will he keep racing?

"Absolutely. It's a space I have where the head is cleared of the daily challenges that the day job brings and the mind is free to start fresh the next morning."

Safety costs vs. safety pays – health & safety and the bottom line

A central function of those who direct, manage, supervise or operate a business is to ensure that the assets of the business are protected. Whether this is in accounts, operations, production or sales, the key element is to ensure the business grows and is protected from that which would damage it. Many businesses in Ireland today are leaving themselves open to a direct attack on their assets and they choose to do little nothing to guard against it, warns Brendan Hanratty

It has been said by many employers that their greatest asset is their staff – the key people who make the business work. We would all agree that it is very important to protect this valuable asset and ensure that it operates to its fullest potential. There is another company asset which those in control of a business must be mindful of protecting – the bottom line – without a healthy bottom line there is no business. So how does health & safety affect your bottom line? There are two common attitudes which prevail, that of safety costs – “in my small business, I’m too busy trying to survive, we can’t afford all this” and safety pays – “managing safety is pure common sense, we cannot afford an accident, fine or claim that digs a hole in our profits and is unbudgeted for, comes off the bottom line, causes poor productivity and low

morale.”

The costs of a poor safety management system can be extensive. By failing to effectively manage safety in its business, an organisation may be liable through an action taken by the enforcing authorities – the HSA (Health & Safety Authority) in Republic of Ireland or the HSENI (Health & Safety Executive) in Northern Ireland. Fines for breaches of Health & Safety Legislation can be extensive, up to €3,000,000 per indictment under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Fines

Recent cases have seen serious accidents involving fatalities following which a bus company was fined €2,000,000 and a haulage firm fined €1,000,000; whilst these are the exception and the size of the fine is proportionate to the turnover and financial viability of the business, even a relatively small fine of €20,000 could have a major impact on the organisation. In addition to the fines which may be levied against the company or corporate entity, there are also many cases where fines and convictions

have been



Brendan Hanratty, is a Business Safe Consultant with Peninsula Business Services.

handed down to individual directors or managers for their negligence or part in the events surrounding the accident. We have seen cases where directors have been handed suspended sentences for manslaughter following fatalities in the workplace.

In addition to the criminal case brought by the state against the organisation, inevitably there is also a civil case taken to gain compensation which follows. Typically, the awards in these cases are far higher than the fines and they are not always insured. Many of you will have employer’s liability and public liability insurance but, if you are clearly negligent and reckless in your management of safety in the workplace, your insurance company may well decide to withdraw cover on the grounds that you are failing to manage your workplace effectively and within the requirements of the statute. In order to reduce the likelihood of litigation against your business, or you personally, you will need to have the following in place: risk assessments on all tasks or aspects of the business; a safety statement to reflect the management of safety in your business; a competent workforce; certification of equipment; certificates of training; documentation on all matters relating to safety; and a management willingness and desire to promote a positive safety culture.

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