

March/April 2016

# THE HARDWARE JOURNAL

The Official Magazine of Hardware Association Ireland

## STRONG RESURGENCE IN HOME DÉCOR

ALSO INSIDE  
1916 – the hardware connection

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## New design on the outside. Ultimate Durability on the inside.

This year we're excited to launch both our new Dulux Weathershield pack design and our Ultimate Durability Formula, featuring Superior Flexibility for protection against cracking and flaking.

**Dulux Weathershield.**  
As tough as the Irish weather.





# A message from the CEO

**As we all try and recover from election fever, HAI is running its own temperature-raising event at the beginning of April. And knowing the fine detail, The Hardware Conference is one not to be missed! We've got a couple of surprises up our sleeves which will make it a very memorable occasion for the sector.**

In the last number of months we have put extra effort into preparing training courses that are relevant to our retailers/merchants and suppliers and, by all accounts, we seem to be striking a chord. The Credit Management course will be running again in April, making it the most popular course to date and we return to all things internet too, following on from initial training almost 12 months ago. We are conscious that we should support our classroom training with relevant online tools, refreshers and courses, where appropriate, that can be consumed at a time that is appropriate to you and doesn't involve travel time or cost. We've called this support service our Education Hub and we'll soon conduct a training needs analysis to ensure we continue to prepare a training programme that is sector specific and valuable to you.

Patterns are emerging within the monthly business index, now that we have a full 12 months set of data from 2015. It's clear that the small rural single branch retailer is the most vulnerable component in our sector and that the last three months in the annual cycle are the least likely to increase revenue. Why is this? Do we need to look at products that

could potentially increase margin during these weaker months or does it depend on the weather? One we may be able to control, the other we certainly can't.

The Hardware Show is also starting to take shape as stands are already selling and we are devising a variety of informative educational areas to maximise the opportunities presented by the extra space we have at RDS Simmonscourt. This will be the biggest Hardware Show ever produced but it will take the support of the industry in its entirety, supplier and retailer/merchant alike, to make it the best.

It's always important to note that we are here for you as your industry partner and we need your feedback to understand where we direct our limited resources. As a result of recent member visits and calls, we have looked into cash in transit options as well as payment card rates, please keep an eye out for our new HAI Bulletin posted to you each quarter for specific value-added member services and, if we're not covering something you feel we should, get in touch by calling Jim on 01 298 0969 or emailing [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie)

**Annemarie Harte**  
Chief Executive Officer – HAI

# contents



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## news

**9 NEWS & PRODUCTS** Dairygold Co-op Superstores joins Allied Merchants Buying Association Ltd. United Hardware announces plans to grow Homevalue and Arro network.

## regulars

**3 A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO** Annemarie Harte discusses HAI's commitment to training supports, the implications of the latest findings in the Business Index and what promises to be the largest ever Hardware Show in Ireland.

**50 LAST WORD** Digital Digest with Sinead Cashin, Marketing Manager, Wallaces of Wellingtonbridge. Plus Event Calendar.

## features

**24 INTERVIEW** *The Hardware Journal* spoke to Padraic McGuinness, Chief Operating Officer of The Albany Group, home décor specialists with 30 stores nationwide.

**32 UNDERSTANDING THE FAMILY BUSINESS LIFE CYCLE** The factors that affect the long-term sustainability of family businesses through the generations.

**36 1916 – THE HARDWARE CONNECTION** Builder merchant involvement in the rebellion and its impact on the industry at the time.





## market intelligence

**6 BUSINESS INDEX** Total member revenue for Quarter 4, 2015 shows a 7% increase on the same period last year.

**8 BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRENDS** Overall, materials prices increased by 1.3% in the year since February 2015.

## business support

**28 CREDIT MANAGEMENT** Ensuring efficient administration.

**29 HR** Key developments to expect in 2016.

**30 LEGAL** Public procurement - an overview of the process.

## training

**34 THE HARDWARE EDUCATION HUB**, HAI launches a one-stop shop for all your training needs.

## directory

**49 SUPPLIERS AND SERVICES DIRECTORY**



19

## profiles

**19 STORE PROFILE: STREET SMART**

Weirs of Baggott Street has built a unique profile and grown a diverse clientele led by a female customer demographic.

**22 COMPANY PROFILE: ITC**

New opportunities beckon.



22

## COMMERCIAL FEATURES

**37 ADHESIVES SEALANTS**

The global market for sealants and adhesives is expected to grow at 4.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in the seven years to the end of 2018.

**40 ECO PRODUCTS**

Innovative eco-technology is driving the development of green products.

**41 DECKING AND FENCING**

Recent statistics have shown that a third of homeowners will make improvements to their garden each year by either landscaping or adding fencing or decking.

**44 PAINT AND ACCESSORIES**

The consumer focus on home improvement and home décor has benefited the paint sector.



## RESULTS FOR END OF Q4 2015

A total of 150 branches throughout the country take part in the monthly business index and since the third quarter of 2015, we have been collecting the results quarterly. We now have our first full year's results and they make for some interesting reading.

Total member revenue for Quarter 4 2015 shows a 7% increase on the same period last year. The sector Quarter 4 year-on-year rise is driven by larger, urban member firms. The sector overall saw a 13% rise in revenue in 2015, peaking among urban member firms. Sector revenue was reasonably stable in October and November, and dipped sharply in December (as in 2014). The month-on-month decline in December was evident across all member groups, peaking among urban branches.

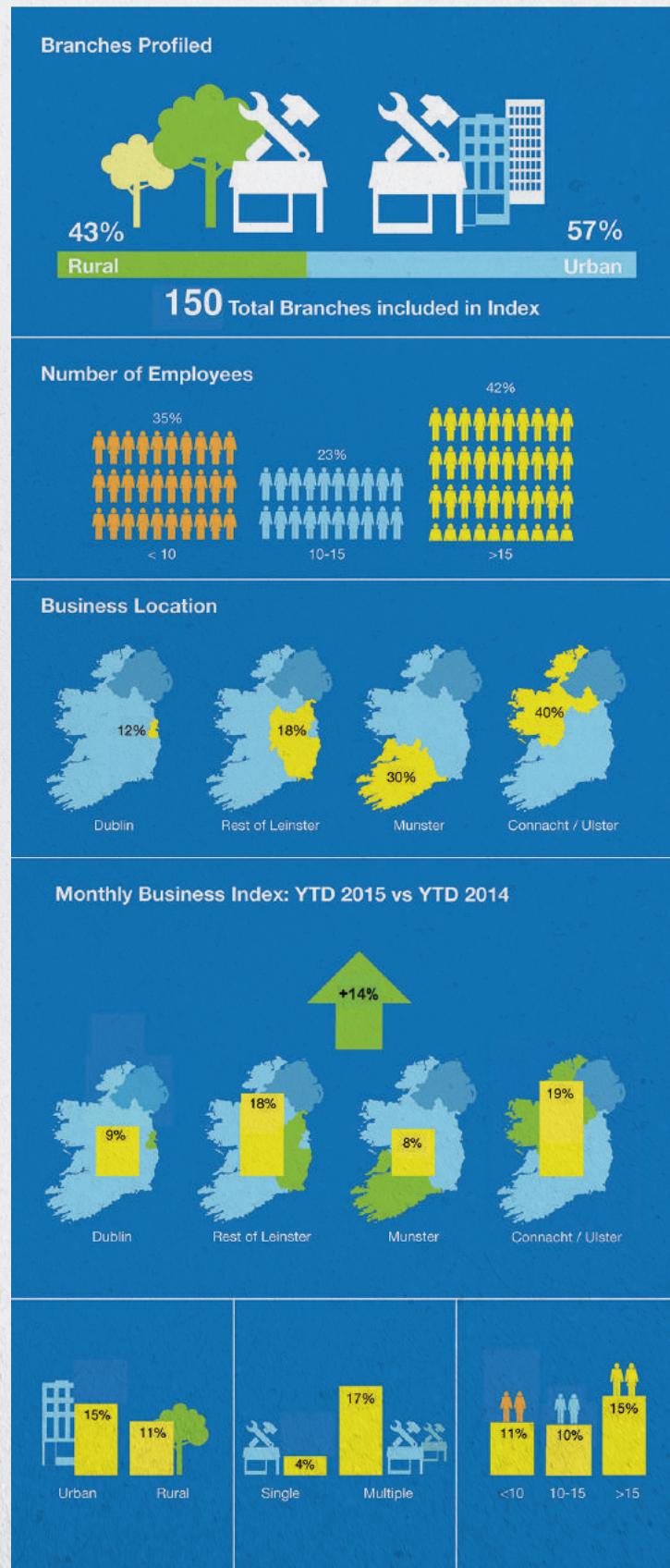
The 2015 Index confirms that Quarter 3 accounted for the highest percentage of members' revenue in 2015. As in 2014, September and October were the highest grossing months last year. Quarter 3 was consistently the highest grossing period for members in 2015. The Index presentation of overall monthly revenues confirms that September was the month where revenue most exceeded the 2015 monthly average. The top grossing individual revenue months in 2015 are mostly within Quarter 3.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

All raw data is kept confidential and never revealed to HAI. If you agree to participate in the monthly business index, you will receive an email from Behaviours and Attitudes, our research partner, once a quarter (usually at the start of the second week), asking for several pieces of information that will form the benchmark survey:

- number of employees;
- location of business;
- what type of area your business operates in, i.e. urban or rural;
- annual sales turnover (less VAT) for your business for 2015 broken down by month; and,
- sales turnover per month for 2016.

Once this benchmark is complete you will only be asked for one piece of information each quarter thereafter, sales turnover per month for the quarter. Once collated, the results will be shared with you as soon as possible. Please contact Jim on 01 298 0968 for more information and to participate.



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## OVERALL MATERIAL PRICES SHOW INCREASE IN 2015

Overall, materials prices increased by 1.3% in the year since February 2015. The most notable yearly changes included increases in Sand and gravel (+18.7%), Stone (+8.3%) and All other metal fittings (+5.1%), while there were decreases in Other timber excluding windows and doors (-9.0%) and Reinforcing metal (-3.2%).

Detailed Wholesale Price Indices (excluding VAT) for Building and Construction Materials.

Materials	Index		Monthly % Change			Annual % Change
	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	
Stone, sand and gravel	132.5	133.9	-2.8	-0.4	1.1	10.0
Stone	129.9	129.5	-3.8	-0.5	-0.3	8.3
Sand and gravel	146.5	157.6	2.0	0.8	7.6	18.7
Cement	100.6	100.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ready mixed mortar and concrete	102.8	101.5	0.0	0.5	-1.3	-0.2
Concrete blocks and bricks	107.7	107.5	0.2	-0.6	-0.2	-1.2
Other concrete products	100.8	100.8	0.0	-0.2	0.0	1.2
Precast concrete	94.2	94.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
Other concrete products (Excluding precast concrete)	101.4	101.4	0.0	-0.5	0.0	0.8
Structural steel and reinforcing metal	103.9	104.8	-0.1	-0.4	0.9	1.9
Structural steel	103.6	104.9	0.0	0.0	1.3	5.4
Fabricated metal	104.7	106.2	0.0	0.0	1.4	6.2
Other Structural steel	95.1	95.1	0.0	-0.1	0.0	-0.7
Reinforcing metal	104.5	104.6	-0.4	-0.8	0.1	-3.2
Other steel products	104.2	102.5	0.0	0.0	-1.6	0.6
Rough timber (including plain sawn)	111.0	111.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Hardwood	145.6	145.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	107.8	107.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Other timber	99.2	99.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	-4.1
Windows and doors	100.4	100.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
Other	97.8	97.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	-9.0
Bituminous macadam, asphalt and bituminous emulsions	158.6	154.7	0.7	5.0	-2.5	10.9
Bituminous macadam and asphalt	162.1	158.1	0.7	5.3	-2.5	11.7
Bituminous emulsions	88.3	86.9	-0.8	-3.2	-1.6	-11.1
Electrical fittings	108.1	108.2	0.0	0.5	0.1	2.6
Lighting equipment	109.4	114.7	0.0	0.0	4.8	10.1
Protection & communication equipment	96.8	96.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1
All other materials	110.9	109.5	0.0	-0.2	-1.3	-0.2
Plumbing materials incl. sanitary ware	102.6	102.6	0.0	0.5	0.0	2.1
HVAC (heating & ventilation equipment)	100.1	100.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Insulating materials	122.5	124.1	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.8
Pipes and fittings	120.3	115.9	0.0	-0.4	-3.7	-2.9
PVC	106.6	106.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Copper	125.6	119.4	0.0	-0.5	-4.9	-4.6
Plaster	108.1	108.4	0.0	0.8	0.3	3.8
Paints, oils and varnishes	104.8	105.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5
Glass	128.3	123.1	0.0	0.0	-4.1	-4.1
All other metal fittings	105.2	105.2	4.0	0.0	0.0	5.1
All other products	108.9	107.4	0.0	-0.2	-1.4	-0.1
All materials	109.3	108.9	-0.3	0.0	-0.4	1.3

Source: CSO



John O'Carroll,  
Head of Retail at  
Dairygold Co-Op  
Superstores.

## DAIRYGOLD CO-OP SUPERSTORES JOINS ALLIED MERCHANTS BUYING ASSOCIATION LTD

Building on the success of Allied Merchants Buying Association (AMBA) in 2015, Dairygold became the newest member to join AMBA, growing the association's membership to 14 members with 78 stores nationwide. Its unique business model has seen AMBA grow turnover with its select list of Approved Suppliers from €45m in 2014 to €75m in 2015, and will surpass €120m in 2016 with 140 Approved Suppliers. John O' Carroll, Head of Retail at Dairygold Co-Op Superstores said: "We are delighted to become a member of AMBA. As a co-operative society, Dairygold are committed to offering value to our farmer members as well as to our extended customer base. We believe that by adding much of our own volumes to those of this well established buying group, the benefits of collective negotiations with our suppliers will manifest themselves in improved terms to all our customers. As part of our continuous improvement culture in our business we have taken this opportunity to review and improve our buying strategy, particularly in the building area. We are well-positioned to avail of opportunities in a rising market as the building and RMI sector continue to grow." Keith Giblin, CEO of AMBA, stated: "The addition of Dairygold's retail division affirms our progressive approach, dedication and strategic intent to achieve our mission of being the leading low cost, highly professional group with strategically-placed members that work with partnered suppliers. AMBA's strategy ensures we grow by adding suitably qualified members that add turnover, volume and expertise to product categories across the range within our sector. Dairygold joining our group is an example of how our unique business model continues to attract leading Independent timber, building supplies, plumbing, hardware, décor, garden, agricultural trade and homeware retailers in Ireland. The integrity and professionalism of Dairygold will complement our growing member network across the country and validates the strategic direction and strength of AMBA."

## News & Products



The new Shield Builders Wipes from TIMco.

### TIMCO LAUNCHES RANGE OF BUILDERS WIPES

TIMco has launched a range of builders wipes through its Shield range of protective products. The new Shield Builders Wipes are designed to remove paint, glue, adhesives, PU foam, silicone, sealants, fuel, oil and grease from skin and other surfaces.

The range extends TIMco's product offering to more than 5,000 different lines. The Shield Builders Wipes are available in tubs of 100 and have been designed for ease of use with a pop-up lid and an easy-tear feature between the wipes.



United Hardware  
CEO Patrick Cassidy.

## UNITED HARDWARE ANNOUNCES PLANS TO GROW HOMEVALUE AND ARRO NETWORK

Leading hardware group United Hardware has announced plans to grow its network to over 130 stores in 2016 by adding 10 new Homevalue and Arro stores, as part of the Group's strategy to grow and develop its brands across the Republic of Ireland. United Hardware has successfully added 15 new stores in strategic locations since January 2015 and intends to continue growing the Group through a combination of new member recruitment and existing member expansion.

The growth strategy forms part of a new overall Group strategy, led by United Hardware's new CEO Patrick Cassidy, which is aimed at significantly enhancing each of the Group's business functions including buying, marketing and distribution. Commenting on the announcement, Patrick Cassidy said: "Over the past year, United Hardware has been focused on growing member numbers and adding high quality new stores to the Homevalue and Arro brand networks. An enlarged group based on mutual benefit will continue to facilitate greater efficiencies and improved member performance going forward. Our strategy, combined with the improving performance of our members, has seen us trade ahead of the market with double digit growth recorded across the Group in 2015. We believe that through continued store growth we can deliver even greater value add to our members and their businesses in 2016 and beyond."

The total combined retail sales of the Group are in excess of €300 million per annum.



# SONAS BATHROOMS SPONSORS BRAY WANDERERS

An early bath for Conor Kenna, the Bray Wanderers Captain. Also pictured at the showroom of the club's new Principle Sponsor, Sonas Bathrooms, are: Mick Cooke, Manager, Bray Wanderers FC; Dermot Usher, Director, Sonas Bathrooms; and Richard Sloan, Managing Director, Sonas Bathrooms.

Sonas Bathrooms, Ireland's leading supplier of bathroom products recently announced its sponsorship of Bray Wanderers FC. "We are very excited about this partnership with such a prestigious club as Bray Wanderers" says Dermot Usher, owner of Sonas Bathrooms.

The sponsorship means the Sonas Bathrooms brand will feature on the club's kit, for both home and away games. Dermot adds: "We share many of the same values in striving to achieve excellence in our field, so it felt like a good fit for Sonas Bathrooms both to help us build our brand and, at the same time, support footballing talent. It felt like a good fit all round." Operating from its state-of-the art warehouse facility in Blanchardstown, the company supplies bathroom products to the retail and construction trade. Catering for every type

of bathroom, the company supplies projects all over the country through a local dealer network.

Its product range includes everything from residential and domestic bathrooms to healthcare and commercial washrooms.

Denis O'Connor, Chairman, Bray Wanderers FC comments: "The club is delighted to have secured such a prominent sponsorship deal. The company has been involved in business for a long number of years. More importantly, it is a very successful business and the ambitions of the club sit perfectly with such a sponsor.

"We look forward to a prosperous year on the pitch and hope that the benefits become part of the ongoing success of Sonas Bathrooms. Many thanks to Dermot and his team."

## GRAFTON REVENUE UP

In its recently announced final results for 2015, Grafton Group plc, the builders merchanting and DIY Group with operations in Ireland, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, reported that revenue was up 6% to a record £2.21 billion (8.9% in constant currency).

Gavin Slark, Chief Executive Officer, commented: "We expect to deliver organic growth in the year ahead and to also benefit from recent development activity as well as exposure to the strengthening economies in Ireland and the Netherlands."

## THE GLOVES ARE ON AT MAXIFLEX

Keypoint is delighted to announce the launch of the innovative MaxiFlex Ultimat with AD-APT, the world's first glove to feature ATG's All Day Anti-Perspirant Technology (AD-APT).

ATG says its MaxiFlex Ultimate is the best-selling general purpose work glove in the world today. The patented AIRtech technology platform that provides 360° breathability works in partnership with the AD-APT technology platform to keep hands cool, dry and productive even in tough conditions, according to ATG.

AD-APT is aluminium free and made from natural ingredients.

It is designed to last for the life of the glove and can be laundered, making it excellent value for money.

Working with the Skin Health Alliance, ATG says it has ensured that the AD-APT technology platform is dermatologically accredited. This accreditation serves as a guarantee that the technology is completely skin safe. The MaxiFlex Ultimate with AD-APT is available now and will replace the outgoing 34-874. The new code for the MaxiFlex Ultimate with AD-APT technology is 42-874 and it will be available in both bagged and retail packaging. A spokesperson for ATG added: "We are also delighted to advise that this new improvement to the MaxiFlex Ultimate comes at no additional cost to you or your customers. It is available exclusively from Keypoint."



## MAJOR EXPANSION FOR ARC BUILDING PRODUCTS

Arc Building Products, one of Ireland's leading manufacturers of tile adhesives, grouts and levelling compounds, has purchased a new 100,000 square foot premises in Arklow, Co. Wicklow.

The site will house the company's new manufacturing plant, warehousing and distribution centre, laboratories and offices.



Loctite 60 Sec. is an all-purpose glue.

### LOCTITE 60 SEC. WINS PRODUCT OF THE YEAR 2016

In a survey of more than 11,000 people in the UK and Ireland, Henkel reported that consumers voted Loctite 60 sec. the Product of the Year 2016 within the DIY category.



Arc Building Products has purchased a new 100,000 square foot premises.

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## THE ULTIMATE DOOR PACK

Locks & Hardware and Carlisle Brass have combined forces to produce what they call "the ultimate door pack".

A spokesperson for Locks & Hardware said: "We have brought together a combination of products with CE Marking as European conformity is at the forefront of everyone's mind in the building industry. This is the only door pack on the Irish market that suits these legal requirements and is backed up by a 10-year mechanical guarantee."

Carlisle Brass has been designing and manufacturing architectural quality ironmongery for over 29 years. A spokesperson for Carlisle Brass said: "We want you to choose us for your next purchase because of our quality, service and innovation."

## IITC APPOINTS NEW MD

The Board of Directors of Irish International Trading Corporation (Cork) Plc (IITC) has announced that David Heffernan has been appointed Managing Director. David joined IITC as Financial Controller in 1999 and was appointed Finance Director in 2009. A qualified chartered accountant, David has over 20 years of business experience across a wide variety of sectors. As IITC approaches its 100th year in trading, the Board and David are looking forward to working together to grow and develop IITC's business and maximise its potential.



David Heffernan.

## SPAX DEVELOPS NEW COATING

Spax has developed Wirox coating, which offers corrosion protection that is 20 times higher than the conventional blue zinc coating. Spax with Wirox coating is ideal for use outdoors on structures that are not directly exposed to the elements, the company stated. A spokesperson said: "Spax with Wirox coating has a higher surface hardness and is thus more resistant to mechanical stress. For the surface treatment on a fastener, particular attention must be paid to its protection capacity against corrosion. Surface treatment thus not only helps keep the screw itself from rusting, but prevents rust that forms on the screw from staining the wood around it." Spax with Wirox coating is distributed by Irish Wire Products.

Spax with Wirox Coating.



## PROTECTING BUILDINGS FOR OVER 50 YEARS



A still from the Sandtex TV advert.

The Crown Paints Family

## NEW ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS FROM CROWN PAINTS

Crown Paints has two new advertising campaigns to kick off the painting season in 2016. The Sandtex Exterior Paints campaign features TV, as well as national and local radio starting in April. Crown's storytelling 'Inside This Tin' campaign also starts in April with a campaign across national terrestrial and multi-channel TV.

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## HAI VOICES CONCERNS ON COST IMPLICATIONS OF LOCKSMITH LICENSING

In response to the recent call for Public Consultation by the Private Security Authority (PSA) on the proposed licensing of the locksmith sector of the private security industry, HAI voiced concerns over competitiveness and increased costs of doing business for our members.

HAI believes that it is important that the regulations produced by bodies such as the PSA have regard to the Government's broader policies on better regulation and that these policies and regulations are developed having regard to all relevant impacts. Having made a submission to the earlier consultation in 2014 calling for a Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA), we are delighted to see its inclusion on this occasion, however, it is necessary that impacts on business competition and consumers be further examined. Members of HAI have been involved in the duplication of keys in general, with the obvious exception of restricted and security keys, for as long as the technology has existed. Members of the Association and other legitimate retailers around the country have invested a great deal financially in machines and technology to provide their customers with an excellent and secure service locally. To our knowledge to date, this service has been supplied without any security issues for the customers involved and, in fact, given the local and community nature of the service, hardware retailers have been very vigilant and careful about how they administer their process of key duplication and supply of keys for domestic and commercial property, to the advantage of the consumer both financially and from a security perspective. HAI has no issue with the locksmith industry being fairly regulated. However, we believe that if these proposals were to go ahead in their current format, it could create a monopoly and certainly would create a shortage of supply and options for consumers.

HAI has requested further consultation with the Private Security Authority during the pre-licensing process to further explore some of these important areas.



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## BRETT MARTIN NAMES COMPETITION WINNER

Brett Martin Plumbing & Drainage is delighted to announce that CRS Building Supplies of Somerset has won a trip for two to New York, as part of a promotion to mark the launch of the new super-sized Deepstyle 170 Industrial Rainwater System.

Rolled out across builders merchants in GB and Ireland during Autumn 2015, the 12-week competition gave merchants 12 chances to win for every order of £500 (net sales value ex VAT) placed for the new Deepstyle 170 Industrial Rainwater System and 110mm Industrial Downpipe System.



Mark Furner, Brett Martin Plumbing and Drainage Sales Representative, presenting the prize to Richard Liddle, Director of CRS Building Supplies.

## B&Q COMMITS TO 30-DAY PAYMENT TERMS IN THE UK

B&Q in the UK has recently written to many of its suppliers advising them of 'New principles governing their supplier relationships and shorter terms for small UK businesses'. The set of principles laid out in the letter from its finance department, includes the implementation of 30-day maximum payment terms for its UK-based, small business suppliers. This approach applies to all companies who supply Kingfisher, B&Q or Screwfix with turnover of less than £1 million per company. If the company supplies more than one Kingfisher business, the limit is £1 million per company, not an aggregate of £1 million. The hardware retailer's other commitments include the payment in full and on time of 100% of all undisputed invoices and their intention (in line with new UK legislation) to publicly report on their payment practices. Could this be a trendsetting initiative that catches on in Ireland?

## The Ultimate Door Pack



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For more information on Brett Martin's Deepstyle 170 blockbuster:

Tel 048 9084 9999 or Email [sales@brettmartin.com](mailto:sales@brettmartin.com)

[www.brettmartin.com](http://www.brettmartin.com)



Plumbing & Drainage

## HAI IS DELIGHTED TO WELCOME ITS NEWEST MEMBERS

### Brian Hughes Hardware

74 Market Street, Cootehill, Co. Cavan  
**Ph:** 049 5552717  
**Contact:** Brian Hughes  
**Business:** Builders Merchant/  
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### Bryko Ltd

Edmonstown, Blessington, Co. Wicklow  
**Ph:** 045 865101  
**Business:** Supplier of bagged  
 aggregates & building materials

### Birkdale Sales

Granville House, Wallingford Road,  
 Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 2RW, UK  
**Ph:** 0044 7808 067909  
**Contact:** Raymond Pearce  
**Business:** Supplier of gate and fencing  
 hardware & accessories

### Classic Hardware Ltd

67 Broomhill Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24  
**Ph:** 01 4596588  
**Contact:** Paul O'Brien  
**Business:** Supplier of ironmongery  
 products

### General Hardware Supplies Ltd

Station Road, Newcastlewest,  
 Co. Limerick  
**Ph:** 069 77978  
**Contact:** Jarlath Mullane  
**Business:** Builders Merchant/  
 Hardware

### Halo Tiles & Bathrooms

Main Street, Camolin, Co Wexford  
**Ph:** 053 9383700  
**Contact:** Amanda Whitmore  
**Business:** Tile and Bathroom  
 Distributor

### Hygeia Chemicals Ltd

Carrowmoneash, Oranmore,  
 Co Galway  
**Ph:** 091 794722  
**Contact:** Mary Lynskey  
**Business:** Supplier of agricultural,  
 veterinary and gardening products

### KCR Builders Providers Ltd

26 Ravensdale Drive, Kimmage,  
 Dublin 12  
**Ph:** 01 4908283  
**Contact:** Dave Gavin  
**Business:** Builders Merchant/  
 Hardware

### Lynch's Paints & Wallpaper

Kilclare, Carrick on Shannon,  
 Co. Leitrim.  
**Ph:** 071 9641029  
**Contact:** Padraig Lynch  
**Business:** Paint and wallpaper store

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- Keep up to date with the industry through our website, bi-monthly magazine **The Hardware Journal**, monthly email newsletters, **LinkedIn** page, **Twitter** feed and events.
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 or call Jim on 01 298 0969  
 or at [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie)

# Weirs Home Gift & DIY



Johnny and Maeve Plower outside Weirs on Baggot Street.

# Street smart

## A STORE WITH A DIFFERENCE

The owners' willingness to experiment, coupled with an unwavering focus on the needs of its customers, has helped Weirs of Baggot Street build a unique profile and grow a diverse clientele led by a female customer demographic. Maeve and Johnny Plower talked to *The Hardware Journal* about their approach to developing a convenience hardware store close to the heart of the capital.

**Weirs of Baggot Street has a distinctive product mix of homeware, hardware, gifts, toys, gadgets and electrical goods. These are carefully selected by owners Maeve and Johnny Plower to appeal to a diverse customer base ranging from local residents in Baggot Street and Dublin 4 to the employees of the large, multinational tech and finance companies such as Sky, LinkedIn and Bank of Ireland, located nearby.**

### NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Maeve's father, Ronan Brocklesby, gave the premises a new lease of life when he revived the hardware/ironmongery business in the four-storey Georgian building (which is a protected structure) in 1977 (see panel, Preserving a hardware heritage).

While the hardware retailing gene is in Maeve's DNA, she also had an extensive amount of wider retailing experience to rely on when, after her father's retirement, she took the helm at the store. Having obtained a BBLS degree from UCD, she worked in the buying office at Dunnes Stores and subsequently developed her own giftware distribution business. Her retailing experience has shaped her approach to the design of the shop and its emphasis on customer service.

Taking on the responsibility of the store couldn't have come at a more challenging time, as Maeve recalls: "It was in 2009, when the whole economy was falling off a cliff and, of course, this sector was one of the hardest hit. For the first couple of years, it was all about survival and making the business viable. The priorities were cost-cutting, minimising outgoings and taking control of every detail of the business." As the business found its feet, Maeve looked to add additional areas of

## UNEXPECTED TREASURES

Maeve and John seek to ensure that product lines, particularly in the high profile front-of-store departments are quirky and appealing. For example, they have expanded the children's section to include a range of books from children's publisher Usborne. "The books are beautifully produced and a high quality product. Customers are surprised to see them and they're a very appealing impulse purchase for mothers."

The gifts section, is continuously developing and the range now reflects the strong coffee break, lunchtime and post-work footfall the store is attracting from the offices of nearby multinationals. One of the gift section's latest additions is a handy wallet in which to keep all your passwords for digital services and devices.

expertise and, in 2013, Johnny joined her in the business. With a degree in marketing and 17 years' extensive experience in the financial sector, Johnny's skill set is a useful complement to Maeve's retailing focus, she says: "I was delighted when Johnny came on board. He brings a different perspective to the business and currently is developing the whole technology side of the business. We're aiming to introduce a dynamic, e-commerce website later in the year. On a personal level, when you're looking to try new concepts and approaches, it's great to have someone to bounce ideas off. I think we each act as a useful sounding board for the other's ideas."

After a few years of rationalisation and consolidation, Maeve and Johnny saw opportunities to look strategically at the store and its longer term development. Maeve comments: "We were trying to work out what would be the best direction or directions the business should take. In the beginning, we were responding to a crisis situation and the business had developed fairly organically but we wanted to see what impact we could proactively have and to experiment with the layout and the product mix. We really wanted to create a new vision of what the shop could be."



Maeve's retailing experience has shaped her approach to the design of the shop.

A fundamental element in shaping that new vision was resolving the most effective layout and design for the store front. Of course, the layout of a store front is always important but it is particularly crucial at Weirs of Baggot Street, given the shop's unique spatial 'footprint' and the regulatory constraints dictated by its protected building status. While the store's street frontage has an average-looking width, its interior stretches back several hundred feet from the street. As such, there's a lot more to the store than what can be seen by the casual passerby and making the right choice of product and 'look' to highlight front-of-store was a pivotal decision. The challenge and the opportunity was to create a look and feel to the front of the shop that would entice customers into what Johnny and Maeve intended to be an Aladdin's Cave of discovery for the customer.

After a lot of planning and soul searching, Maeve and Johnny completely overhauled the shop's layout, positioning the hardware section front-of-store, moving the gifts and children's sections toward the back and then measuring customer response, which led to them 'flipping' the layout again and going back to the original layout. Maeve comments: "It was a





process of trial and error, and a huge amount of work to undertake, but it clarified for us how important it was to have our giftware and children's sections at the front. It meant that we sharpened our focus on creatively developing those departments with a new-found confidence and commitment based on what the whole process had taught us."

John echoes that view: "Although, the overall process was disruptive in the short term, it gave us a much clearer understanding of what worked for the business.

"Most important of all, while we learned specifically what product mix worked best at the front of the store, the biggest lesson we learned was to be willing to try different things. Having gone through the changes, we saw that even if a major change didn't work, it wasn't the end of the world. It made us realise that it was important not to be afraid to shake things up."

Both agree that this willingness to experiment has been vital in developing the business. As Maeve puts it: "The key is to measure what you're doing, and, if it's not working, to respond quickly."

### BALANCING FAMILIARITY AND FRESHNESS

They don't just indulge in change for change's sake, however, Johnny explains: "We've worked hard to see where change is important and where consistency is important. We have identified the best locations in-store for our traditional hardware lines and the strong brands that customers rely on and we stick to them. Our key counter, for example, is located towards the back of the shop. It's a steady, stable performer and a service that anchors our 'convenience hardware' business. Our reputation for this service is well-established and has been built by an experienced team with an extensive knowledge of key cutting. We've invested substantially in our key cutting equipment and our key board has 797 key types, so we can work with 90% of all keys. There's a sense of familiarity for customers. People know what to expect from our key counter and have come to rely on it."

Maeve adds: "By contrast, we have lines that are essentially fashion-led and which require monitoring to ensure that they're on trend, such as jewellery, bags and scarves. These lines are a strong draw to the casual passerby and the regular customer, so we pay a lot of attention to updating the ranges and refreshing and changing the presentation and layout of these products." While major layout changes are not something to be engaged in lightly or often, Maeve notes, the willingness to experiment regularly in a managed way is vital. Within its 3,000 square foot area, the shop packs over 7,000 SKUs which provide plenty of opportunities to refresh layouts of individual sections and product lines. Maeve says: "We've got a strong cohort of customers who would come in everyday or close to everyday. It's crucial to keep the experience of visiting the store interesting and

fresh. A large proportion of our customers are female so we work hard to create an atmosphere that will engage them. We aim to ensure that the customer doesn't just get the item they're looking for, they get an experience that they'll enjoy and tell other people about."

Maeve and Johnny seek to maximise the potential of every square foot of the store. "As a smaller outlet, a convenience hardware store, we have the scope to drill down to the smallest detail of every aspect of the business. The layout is designed to entice the customer deeper and deeper into the store. The gifts, kids and homeware sections lead through the more typical hardware ranges such as paints and electrical goods to the key cutting counter towards the back.

"We've chosen our colour schemes very carefully and looked to have a clean, well-designed look throughout. We want people to feel relaxed here and to spend time browsing. One of the most frequent comments we hear is 'I came in looking for such and such a product and ended up leaving with a present for my nephew, a gadget for the office and a can of paint as well'. If we can give people that sense of discovery and attract them to make additional purchases, we're getting it right." To enhance the customer experience further, they've been looking to create special spaces in the shop for promotions and events. The children's section has become something of a regular destination for local families on a Saturday morning: "The parents can have a browse through the shop and the children's section turns into a play area for the younger family members! With three young children ourselves, we're fully aware of the importance of ensuring that we've got a good selection of product that will appeal to children of different age groups and interests. We've developed this children's space further by organising occasional events for children. For instance, we've worked with the Irish Fairy Door Company on a very successful event where 'fairies' visited the store!"

The year ahead will see continued innovation and change at the store, with one of the key planned developments being the opening of a new rear entrance to the premises. "Double access will make it more convenient for customers from offices on that side of the premises to access the store and it will allow us to have a second 'front' that we can use to attract additional footfall." Another exciting development proposed for 2016 is the expansion of the paint offering and the introduction of a high-end premium brand.

### PRESERVING A HARDWARE HERITAGE

The ultra-modern, 21<sup>st</sup> century store can trace its historical origins to 1791 when Richard Lord, Viscount Fitzwilliam, gave Thomas Carroll Esq permission to build the four-storey building at 21 Upper Baggot Street. Almost a century later, in 1885, William Weir, then 27 years old, took over and opened for business as William Weir, Ironmonger and Sanitary Engineer. He had 12 children, seven of them boys and all of whom, in their time, worked in the landmark shop with its distinctive front bow window. The Weir family continued to operate the store right through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until, in 1956, William Charles Weir (born in 1891) died. With no one to carry it on, the shop closed. A year later, in 1957, the landmark hardware/ironmongers became a supermarket. Twenty years later, in 1977, Curust Industries and Ronan Brocklesby, father of Maeve, restored the premises to its rightful retail heritage. Ronan approached Catherine Weir, widow of Charles A Weir, who agreed to the use of the Weirs of Baggot Street name and performed the official opening.



IITC is strongly focused on the high end of the plumbing and heating market and its showroom display includes an impressive range of bathroom and sanitary ware.

# New opportunities beckon for IITC

In her continuing series, **Annemarie Harte**, CEO of HAI, visited the headquarters of Irish International Trading Corporation (Cork) plc (IITC) and spoke to the company's new Managing Director, David Heffernan, about its strong heritage in both steel distribution and in supplying premium plumbing and heating products, as well as its ambitions for the future.

**Arriving on a sunny but cold morning in Cork, I was surprised to see that IITC has a showroom and trade counter at its large seven-acre site on the Tramore Road. IITC is both a merchant and supplier – a merchant in Cork, and wholesaler to merchants nationwide which is its principal business. Divided into five key diversified areas – plumbing and heating, hardware, steel, wire and salt – IITC has been trading for 95 years and is a public limited company with distribution centres in Tivoli, Cork and Ballymount in Dublin.**

### OVERCOMING PRECONCEPTIONS

David Heffernan has recently taken over as the new Managing Director and one of his main objectives is to overcome preconceptions about the company: "We want to enhance our market profile and inform our customers and the public of the full range of products and services we provide. IITC has been trading for close to 100 years and is a very successful company.

"This success is attributable to our loyal and supportive customers and also the excellent people who work for IITC. We didn't let one person go during the downturn and that's something we're very proud of. We started as a family business and in many respects still operate as a traditional business. However, we are well-gearred for the opportunities and challenges that this fast-changing industry presents and we have ambitious expansion plans for the future."

### STEELY DETERMINATION

An area of the company's business that has expanded dramatically has been its steel distribution business. Over the past four to five years, IITC has gained substantial market share in this sector and the company foresees further growth opportunities. It stocks an extensive range of steel at its seven-acre site in Cork where its custom-built warehousing is equipped with specialist cranes to facilitate the fast and safe loading and unloading of stock. While the main driver of growth in this sector in

## UK MERCHANTS ALERT TO PROFIT POTENTIAL IN FEMALE CUSTOMER BASE

Historically, the gender bias in the DIY market could be accounted for on a socio-cultural level, with women traditionally delegating DIY projects to their partners, families or professionals. However, Verdict's research in the UK indicates that male consumers currently make up 55.6% of all DIY shoppers, which is not a particularly strong proportional share, considering that men make up 49% of the total UK population and DIY is thought of as a traditionally male-dominated industry. Moreover, according to Verdict, female DIY shoppers are on the increase to the tune of 1.5 percentage points (between 2013 and 2014). Rather than the female consumer being a new opportunity for the DIY market, what this research actually shows is that retail initiatives taken in the UK to encourage the female DIY shopper are already showing results.

Take, for example, Homebase, which has already cut back significantly on DIY products in order to focus on more home décor merchandise, such as carpets and made-to-measure curtains, as well as Habitat and Laura Ashley concessions. Their new format store in Worcester (opened in 2014) which I visited, has positioned Homebase as a design centre with a focus on inspiration. The Costa café, revamped home offer and clearer signage are all designed to appeal to the female shopper, and the retailer actively encourages influential networking site NetMums to hold meetings in Homebase stores. While there is a movement in this direction by some of the larger retailers here, the Verdict research raises the question as to whether Irish retailers and merchants have sufficiently adapted their presentation over the last number of years to accommodate a variation in customer base?

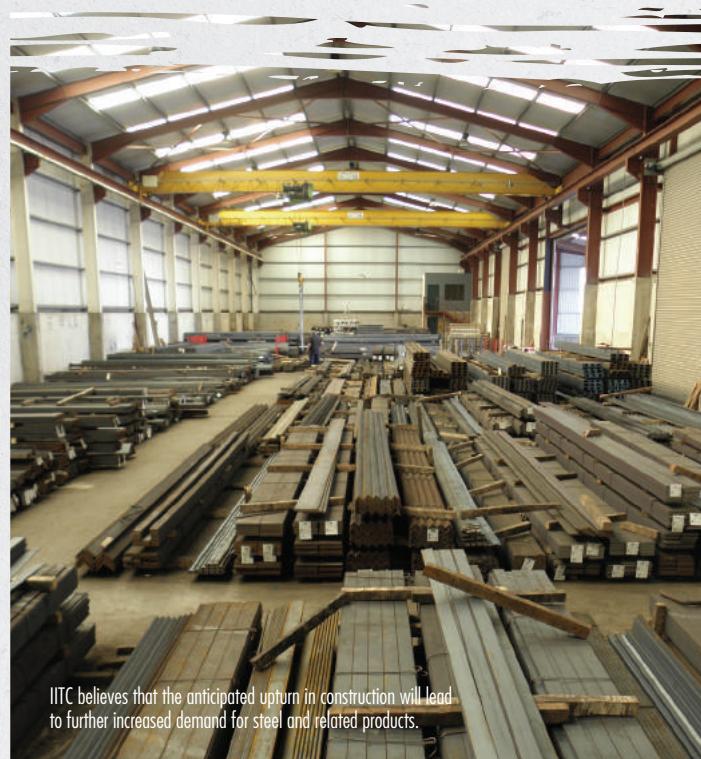
the recent past has been in agricultural buildings and dairy farm upgrades, IITC believes that the anticipated upturn in construction over the next two to three years will lead to further increased demand for steel and related products.

### BATHROOM BLISS

Equally, IITC is also focused on the high end of the plumbing and heating market as was evident when David showed me a selection of the showers, radiators, bathroom and sanitary ware on display in the showroom. I always feel that whether your bathroom needs a makeover or not, by the time you come out of a place like this you certainly want one! That led to a discussion about the importance of the female customer in the decision-making process and the unmistakeable division of the trade counter and consumer-oriented sections of the floor. The trade counter may well be perceived as 'the Berlin Wall' by women walking in the door, yet many of the products displayed in this section are useful sales add-ons and are just as relevant to the head of the household irrespective of gender (see panel above).

IITC was recently selected as a finalist in the Cork Company of the Year 2016 Award by The Cork Chamber of Commerce. Having gone through a rigorous vetting process, IITC was shortlisted from hundreds of other applicants to be one of the three finalists in the SME category for this prestigious award. The winners were announced at a gala awards night in February hosted by the Cork Chamber of Commerce and attended by more than 1,000 of Cork's leading businesses.

Although IITC were not successful on the night, David believes the whole process was very beneficial for the company. "Being selected as a finalist in the Cork Company of the Year awards has raised the company's profile throughout Cork and Munster. We have received very positive and encouraging feedback from the judging panel and we have learned a lot about ourselves and our company during this competition. In particular, we appreciate even more what a good company IITC is, the tremendous people that we have working with us and the potential we have to grow and expand further."



IITC believes that the anticipated upturn in construction will lead to further increased demand for steel and related products.

If you have a story to tell as a supplier or manufacturer in the Irish market, please contact Annemarie on 01 298 0969 or [annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie) for more information.





Padraig McGuinness, Chief Operating Officer of The Albany Group, the home décor specialists.

**The Hardware Journal: Could you give your overall assessment of the home decor sector in Ireland at the moment?**

**Padraig McGuinness:** The home décor sector in Ireland is in an interesting place at present. In trading terms the sector has made a significant rebound from the darkest days of the recession which witnessed a contraction of some 40% in values in certain product categories between 2007 and 2012/13. While some higher end consumer items in the furnishings and fabrics category were hit very hard, the paints and general decorating categories were not as severely impacted as the general hardware and building materials sector was. I believe that Albany Home Décor's strong dependence on paints has been a positive over the past number of years. However, other interiors goods and soft furnishings, particularly blinds, have become strong categories for the Albany group and help combat the seasonality of paint sales. Overall, across our 30 stores we have had three consecutive years of growth in all product categories including paints, wallpapers, curtains and blinds, lighting and décor accessories.

Also, the home décor sector in Ireland has emerged from the recession in better shape than before. There is a greater emphasis on the quality end of the business with interior design and colour consultancy playing key roles. Product innovation and design has been a key feature in textiles and furnishings as well as in decorative paints. The consumer is more confident and informed now, and we see more unique requests for products than before.

**We're increasingly being told about how busy people's lifestyles are becoming. Do you find that people are still making time for DIY decor or do they tend to employ trade professionals more these days?**

It is an interesting question and on balance I believe both trends are evident. On the one hand, trade professionals are much busier in the past year to 18 months with domestic private work and, simultaneously, more

# Albany chief sees strong resurgence in home décor

The Hardware Journal continues its interview series sharing the insights, opinions and insider knowledge of leading figures drawn from all sectors of the hardware industry, ranging from merchanting to distribution. In the second of the series, The Hardware Journal spoke to Padraig McGuinness, Chief Operating Officer of The Albany Group, the home décor specialists with 30 stores nationwide.

and more retail customers are taking on décor projects also. In particular, we have seen a growth in specialist and hobbyist tasks like furniture painting and upholstery. The chalk paint movement has been a major fashion trend and people are more informed and aware of the possibilities with paint these days. Another major DIY trend has been the application of bold colours to exterior fixtures like garden furniture and fences and sheds.

**Do you see the popularity of home improvement, as indicated by the proliferation of design and home improvement TV programmes, translating into sales in your stores?**

Most definitely... There is a much greater sense of style confidence and awareness of the possibilities of achieving 'that designer look' among the buying public. The media and TV attention to décor has been a great boost for the sector. We are in the fashion game ultimately, so décor and design celebrities drive public interest.

**At Albany what's the balance in your customer profile between the DIY-ers and the trade?**

Our customer base is split roughly 70% retail and 30% trade but this can vary from location to location. The Albany stores have traditionally been a go-to supplier for the trade, especially in rural towns where there are no trade centres. We have been able to appeal to both customer segments as specialists décor stores offering service, product expertise and specialist ranges.

**Do you have any informed estimates on the values of total national sales in the the key sectors within the home décor market?**

These are our approximate figures for retail sales values in key categories in the Republic of Ireland (see table, top of page 25). I would stress that these are estimates only.

Paints	€230 million to €250 million
Wallpapers	€12 million to €14 million
Lighting	€50 million to €60 million (very difficult to track as the sector is diverse in its distribution and generally not a primary category in its own right)
Window Furnishings	€80 million to €100 million*
Decorating Accessories	€30 million to €40 million

\* Includes curtains, blinds, poles, tracks and accessories

**Taking each sector, and based on the over-the-counter data/experience at your stores, could you highlight the most significant consumer trends in each of the above sectors?**

- **Paints** – neutral colours combined with accent trims and feature walls; higher performance finishes and discerning finishes, e.g., flat matt and acrylic eggshell; environmental paints and anti-bacterial formulations; craft and hobby DIY painting projects, e.g., chalk paint applications and furniture painting. Generally, in paint there is a growth in the market share of designer and premium paints as customers are focused on quality and fashion-led colour palettes.
- **Wallpapers** – like paints, wallpapers are selling in greater volume in the designer end of the market. Also, more paper is being sold from sample books rather than stock collections. Innovation and design and branding in the wall coverings industry is also driving sales in the sector with examples like faux finishes and high resolution murals providing much greater choice for wall fashion.
- **Lighting** – low level lighting especially lamps are more popular; there is also a greater diversity of style in ceiling and wall light fitting design; light shades tend to follow fashion in colour and texture.
- **Window furnishings** – most notable trend in this category has been the growth in blinds over curtains, especially quality roller blinds and, more recently, in roman blinds. The trend has been towards the more minimalist and sharper look that blinds provide over the bulkiness of curtains and the greater colour choice available also. However, curtains have come back with better quality ready mades and greater design diversity. The custom-made curtain market is also showing signs of a resurgence as consumer confidence grows.
- **Decorating tools** – this category is not very prone to trends as it is very practical in its nature. However, from a market perspective there continues to be consolidation through acquisitions in the decorating ancillaries business with key brands like Purdy and Geocel being brought under the Sherwin Williams umbrella. Product innovation in brush and roller performance also continues to keep the category healthy and competitive.

**Paints and lighting have clearly seen extensive design and technological developments in recent years. In terms of staff and sales training, does the increasingly sophisticated nature of the product create new challenges and how are leading companies such as your own meeting these training requirements?**

In short, yes. There is always a challenge in meeting training and development needs to stay ahead of the standards and specifications in product innovation, especially in a technical sense but also in a customer service sense. The customer is now better informed, which is a positive thing but it also means that the queries are becoming more complex. This suits operators like Albany as we are specialist retailers, geared towards spending time with customers and helping them with their project rather than a 'self-service' model. We tend to largely rely on training and development support from suppliers and manufacturers

for technical expertise and some are better than others. We are also fortunate in that we have extensive expertise within our network and there is a strong culture of sharing information and knowledge between members of the Albany Group.

**The wallpaper sector has been perceived as fashionably retro in recent times. What has been done to revitalise this sector and what innovation have you witnessed in it?**

Well, if I interpret the question correctly, we are talking about retro design styles from the 1970s being popular and fashionable in wallpapers, as opposed to the whole wallpaper market suffering from backwardness! It is true that these bold patterns and colours have taken the wallpaper market by storm in recent years. We are now seeing clothing and accessory designs being brought across to wall coverings, like Orla Kiely for example. Also very intricate geometric designs are popular, which can have a retro feel to them and heavy Italian vinyls as a wallpaper type are also selling very well. All of this re-engineered 'retro' design code is helping wallpaper to be fashionable and current and it is working. The wallpaper market has also seen a value shift. While actual volumes of rolls are nowhere near what they used to be 20 years ago, the average selling price for wallpaper is much higher. I guess many consumers are figuring that it is worth putting a high quality and classy paper up, given the big cost will often be labour and not the paper, at least in relative terms.

**In its first 100 days, what one action could the next Government take to improve the business environment for the home decor market?**

The formation of a stable Government will be critical to the economy and consumer confidence. Once that is in place I believe a targeted house building programme in a Public Private Partnership model with strong local authority involvement will be the number one priority. In addition to this there is value in the VAT back Home Improvement Scheme and this should be extended. Finally, anything that can incentivise first-time buyers through mortgage interest relief and other improvement measures through the tax credit system. This could also be applied to derelict premises and buildings in our declining towns and villages for dual benefit.

## TIME OUT

### HOW THE ALBANY COO UNWINDS

- **Favourite (or least favourite!) DIY project:** Favourite DIY activity is gardening and least favourite is painting.
- **Last book read:** *Le Freak*, Nile Rodgers' autobiography.
- **Favourite movie:** *Sideways* – with Paul Giamatti. It's almost a documentary about wine, but very funny and moving throughout.
- **Favourite TV series/boxset:** Probably *The X-Files*, the 1990s original.
- **Favourite holiday destination:** Spain or Italy, hard to call it between them.
- **iTunes or Spotify?** I have to say iTunes as I have so much time and cost invested in it, but I guess I will eventually become a Spotify geek!

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THE  
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IRELAND



The 2015 Show, with over 150 exhibitors and almost 2,000 visitors, clearly signalled a renewed confidence in the industry.

# THE HARDWARE SHOW 2017

Home - Garden - Build - DIY

**Exhibitions work! They are a powerful, cost-effective marketing medium. Top marketers in virtually every industry have known it for years. The right exhibition is the only marketing medium that:**

- Brings your most active prospects and customers to you; and,
- Allows you to demonstrate products, answer questions, overcome objections and meet your market face-to-face.

These are just two benefits that exhibitions, and exhibitions alone, bring to your marketing efforts in a measurably cost-effective way. Of course, exhibitions are only part of the entire marketing mix. But, they're the most effective part: the better your customer knows you – the more likely you are to make that first sale and the increasingly profitable sales that follow.

## CONCENTRATED MARKETING

Given the value of their time, what does it say about a prospect who invests a day to visit an exhibition? It says they're motivated. It says they have a reason to be there. It says they're serious buyers in active buying mode. This is the power of exhibitions: no other medium concentrates your efforts on the most active buyers in your market at any given time.

## INTELLIGENT MARKETING

No-one would say that exhibitions should be the only medium in your marketing plan. But many would agree that exhibitions are the pinnacle of the marketing pyramid. They deliver fully what other media can only get you a step closer to: personal interaction with real buyers. Are you using your most powerful marketing medium as much as you ought to be?

Want to be part of the biggest ever trade show organised by Hardware Association Ireland? Never exhibited before and a bit nervous? Well, read on to understand how exhibiting at a show will enhance your brand and develop relationships not just with new customers but existing ones too...

## COST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING

Exhibitions deliver measurable value. A key fact generated by a recent Association of Event Organisers research study is that 80% of all trade show visitors are personally involved in buying the products or services on show. And 29% never see sales reps other than at exhibitions. So how can you convert your commitment to exhibit into real sales and real clients? The three most important elements of any exhibition measurement system are goals, goals, goals! You need to have a clear statement of what your company wants to accomplish before you can find out whether you've succeeded. Counting sales leads is the easy part – but leads are not the only thing that you could be measuring.

The following are some specific goals that exhibitions can help you to achieve:

- Create lasting impressions, if done right;
- Host face-to-face marketing events;
- Generate new sales leads;
- Increase your customer base;
- Launch new products;
- Monitor industry trends;
- Network with industry peers; and,
- Utilise exclusive sponsorship opportunities.

The Hardware Show 2017 is your opportunity to be part of the industry's premier trade event. Set your goals and book now to avoid disappointment, visit [www.thehardwareshow.ie](http://www.thehardwareshow.ie)

# Under control: MAKING SURE YOUR ADMIN IS EFFICIENT

Declan Flood, aka The Credit Coach, looks at a vital ingredient in your credit management function that, in his experience, is either overlooked or done very badly — the whole area of administration.

You have to send your invoices out as soon as possible after the delivery has been made. Waiting until the end of the month to send them is giving your customers a month's credit before you even start! The rule here is that daily is best and, at worst, you should invoice weekly.

## FOUR RULES

It is not good enough just to get the invoices out; there are four rules you must adhere to:

- **Your invoices must be correct** – correct prices, correct quantities, correct products and correct invoicing address.
- **Your invoices must be complete** i.e. correct order numbers, if required, correct contact name and correct delivery address, if different from the invoice address.

- **Your invoices must be from the customer's perspective – not yours.** You might know what a CB4567324X is – chances are your customer won't. If they don't know what it is, it could take longer for payment to be processed.
- **You should also keep an eye on your uninvoiced dispatches.** That is where you have generated a delivery docket and no invoice. If there are some orders in this category either the goods haven't been delivered, which is not good from a customer service perspective or, worse still, the goods have been delivered and the docket has gone missing! The longer you wait to invoice for goods, the higher the number of queries and the higher the risk of not being paid at all.

Cash should be entered and allocated to the correct invoices on a daily basis, and all bank statements should be checked first thing every morning to ensure your information is always up to date. If you have any cash accounts, you should check that the balance is zero every day.

## ACCURACY IS VITAL

Now you may think that stock control and credit control are polar opposites, in my experience the accuracy of your stock reflects the accuracy of your invoicing. If your stock takes regularly throw up discrepancies, chances are there is a problem with your invoicing. Even if you find you are up on one item and down on another, chances are you are shipping one product code and invoicing another. That could have serious implications for the correct recording of your margins, so make sure you monitor and manage this area tightly.

On the standard stuff, your statements should be sent to customers who want them on the first working day of every month. Excessive delays cause payment delays.

Having a structured collection process is vital and accounts should be collected according to value and risk, we'll go into this in more detail in the next instalment. Keep it simple and keep it consistent; your success will follow.

**The next Credit Management course is on 21<sup>st</sup> April – please contact Amanda on 01 298 0969 for more details.**



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**Declan Flood: "In short, your credit terms should set out clearly and exactly when you expect to be paid by your customer."**



# The HR landscape ahead

Last year saw several changes and amendments to employment law and, in the wake of the election, kites are being flown for further changes in the near future. In this article, Tommy Smyth reminds HAI members of some of the key changes already in place and looks at possible future changes.

## NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

From 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2016, the minimum wage for an experienced adult worker in Ireland increased from €8.65 to €9.15 per hour. There are rates below this for under-18 workers and for adult workers with less than two years' work experience. This is an increase of almost 6% when, anecdotally, employers who are in a position to give wage increases of late, even in unionised environments, are giving between 2% and 3% for between 12- and 24-month periods.

## HOLIDAY ACCRUAL DURING SICK LEAVE

Since 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2015, employees out on sick leave will continue to accrue Annual Leave entitlements. This has long been on the cards due to a European Courts decision but it has taken some time for our own Organisation of Working Time Act to be amended to reflect this legal decision.

It may mean that employers will actively manage employee absences more efficiently than before to ensure that employees on longer term absences return to work as quickly as possible.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

For nearly 10 years, collective bargaining matters have been effectively frozen due to Ryanair's Supreme Court case which questioned exactly what constituted an employer 'collectively bargaining' with its employees. The outgoing Government introduced legislation in late 2015 which has paved the way for Trade Unions to bring non-Union Employers to the Labour Court, which can enforce enhanced terms and conditions on them if it feels that their current terms and conditions are not reasonable when benchmarked with other similar employers.

The Company will always have the right to remain a non-Union Company but the Labour Court can insist they pay Union wages, sick pay, holidays, bonus etc.

An employer which can show it already allows collective bargaining with its employees via an internal mechanism or 'Excepted Body' can dispute the Labour Court's ability to do this, as it can claim it already negotiates with its employees collectively.

This is still a new development and the precedents that emerge over the next few months will be important. Larger employers, who have no Trade Union but possibly have employees who are 'in the Union', would be most affected by such a process.

## PATERNITY LEAVE

Fathers are going to get two weeks' statutory leave upon the birth of their child. Employer payment will not be compulsory for these weeks, similar to Maternity Leave, and welfare will likely be available for the Father to claim while off work. This is likely to formally commence in Autumn 2016.

## EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE (ECJ) DECISION ON TRAVEL TIME

If an employer has employees with no fixed place of employment, e.g., Sales Reps or Delivery Drivers, they may be affected by a decision of the ECJ against Tyco, a Spanish security firm. The ruling related to employees with no fixed commute to their place of work and indicated that travel time to and from work counts as work time. This could have implications for the wages of such individuals and the time in the morning and evening they start/stop getting paid. This ruling, similar to the annual leave accrual one mentioned above, has been made in Europe but as good EU members we are expected to take it and amend our own laws to ensure this is enshrined. This is another one to keep an eye on!

## WAGE INCREASES

Anecdotally, private sector employers, where possible, are looking at wage increases of between 1-3% over periods from 12-24 months. Trade Unions seem to be asking for 5% but, following negotiations with employers, are accepting deals in the 2-3% bracket. Of course, it depends on ability to pay but these are the figures that are being reported to our offices.

**Tom Smyth is Managing Director of Tom Smyth & Associates, a HR consultancy, established in 1991, that, in association with HAI, gives Irish employers practical advice on HR, industrial relations and employment law issues.**



# Public procurement

Siobhan Kenny of Frank Murphy Solicitors provides an overview of the public procurement process.

**Public procurement is the process whereby government and state agencies acquire goods, services and works. Under EU legislation all such contracting parties are subject to strict rules and procedures in respect of large scale 'above threshold' acquisitions and, in lesser or 'below threshold procedures' to a body of law which has developed around principles of fairness, transparency, and equality of treatment.**

The fundamental driving force behind EU procurement law is to ensure freedom of trade within the EU – so that bidders from across the EU will have the opportunity to market their goods, services and products throughout the EU and to the state agencies of all member states. The fundamental characteristics of the law which has developed in this area is that, in awarding these contracts, the state agency involved is required to act in accordance with the principles derived from that fundamental driving force – i.e. fairly, openly, transparently, proportionately and to afford equal opportunity to all interested bidders.

In Ireland, public procurement is governed by the rules set out in the procurement directives which have been transposed into national law by the Public Sector Regulations <sup>1</sup>. There are separate Directives and Regulations for Utilities and Security and Defence Contracts, but they are, broadly speaking, similar in terms to those for all other types of publicly procured projects.

The rules require, for example, that such contracts be advertised on an EU-wide basis, that the instructions to tenderers are clear and unambiguous, that everyone bidding for the contract knows and understands the basis on which the decision will be made. The rules are complex and rigid, and in the years since first introduction have been the subject of a substantial number of judgements at both European and national level, as a result of which the rules set out in the directives have been interpreted, and a body of law based on authority and legal precedent has developed.

In 2014, new Public Procurement Directives were passed at European level, and are required to be brought into national law by member states by April of this year. One of the main aims of the new Directives is to bring fresh clarity to the rules in light of some of the judgements which have been delivered over the years.

The new Directives have been incorporated into UK law already – the Irish government has not as yet passed the necessary legislation. The new Directives will bring about a number of substantial changes in the way the state conducts its business, but the fundamentals of the Procurement environment remain the same.

The EU procurement rules apply in full to all 'above threshold' procurements, which means that where a state agency wishes to obtain goods, works or services valued in excess of these thresholds, it must comply with the rules laid down in the Directives. A failure to comply can lead to challenges by unsuccessful tenderers, or sanction by the European Commission. The thresholds are updated periodically and were last updated in January of this year. See Table 1, above.

## BELOW THRESHOLD COMPETITIONS

The full rigours of the procurement rules and directives do not apply to 'below threshold' competitions – being those contracts valued at

Table 1

Works		
Contract notice	€5,225,000	Threshold applies to Government Departments and Offices, Local and Regional Authorities and public bodies
Supplies and Services		
Contract notice	€135,000	Threshold applies to Government Departments and Offices
Contract notice	€209,000	Threshold applies to Local and Regional Authorities and public bodies outside the Utilities sector

less than the levels set out above. This does not mean, however, that state agencies are free to award contracts as and where they choose. An enormous amount of state procurement takes place at levels far below the threshold levels and, in the period since introduction of the Regulations, a body of law has developed around these contracts, under which the courts – at both EU and national level – have recognised that whilst a particular competition may fall below the prescribed level, the state agency involved is nonetheless required, in its decision-making, to apply principles of fairness, transparency and equality of treatment. This is particularly so where contracts have cross-border appeal. A contract having 'cross-border appeal' in Ireland, usually means one which looks equally appealing to tenderers from north and south of the border. In such contracts the level of attention that must be paid to the broad EU principles is particularly high. The legal basis for the application of these principles to below threshold competitions lies in the provisions of Treaties entered into by member states, under which they agree with each other that they will foster and encourage free movement of goods and services, and freedom of trade. Discriminatory practices do not align with the principles of those Treaties.

## SME INVOLVEMENT

It is recognised at both national and EU level that, having regard to the amount of state procurement which takes place on an annual basis, and the amounts of money involved, it is in the interests of both the public purse and the broader health of the economy, to encourage as much competition for state agency contracts as possible. With this in mind, proactive and positive measures have been taken at EU level and by successive Irish governments, to encourage SME involvement in tendering for state work and contracts.

## CIRCULARS 10/10 & 10/14

Circular 10/10 was issued by the Department of Finance in August 2010, and was intended to encourage the participation by SMEs in tendering for government work. It established procedures to be followed by state agencies in procuring below-threshold works, services and supplies, and set out a range of objectives to be achieved by same. Agencies were required for example to advertise lower value

contracts, were encouraged to use open tendering procedure (which means that anyone can bid for the contract without going through a 'pre-qualification process'), were directed to be proportionate in requests for detail and financial qualification criteria, and were informed of a requirement to provide meaningful debriefing. That circular was issued for immediate implementation in August 2010. In August 2014, Circular 10/14 was issued and replaced Circular 10/10. Its purpose was to reinforce the determination on the part of the Government to encourage SME involvement in tendering for contracts. A failure to comply with the terms of a Circular is not and cannot be used as the basis for an allegation of breach of contract or duty. It is an expression of the intentions of the government and a statement of government policy. Failures on the part of state agencies to abide by the guidelines and the circulars may well have internal consequences for the parties responsible within such organisations and the decisions they make and, in the case of Local Authorities, may amount to a breach of statutory duty or obligation (arising under the Local Government Act 2001 (section 49).

## OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) was established by the Government in 2014. According to the Office the reason for its establishment is as follows: Reform of public procurement is one of the major projects of key strategic importance in the Government's Public Service Reform Plan. The State spends around €9 billion on goods and services each year. This represents a very significant portion of overall spending and it is, therefore, essential that the public service achieves maximum value for money and operational efficiency in its approach to public procurement.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the OGP is to co-ordinate the manner in which the state acquires its goods, works and services, and to the extent possible, streamline it so that state procurement can be as cost effective as possible.

## TENDERING AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Tendering for state contracts can be a complex and expensive process – both in terms of money and resources deployed in what is essentially a speculative venture. No-one will reimburse you for the time and money spent in putting the bid together – successful or not. We are informed by the OGP, and by review of the circulars mentioned above, that it is the aim of the government to ensure a much higher level of SME involvement in the process, and that to do so, they will take steps to make the process as proportionate and supplier friendly as possible.

Under the new Directives for example, it is intended that all tendering will ultimately take place online – that process, once successfully implemented in the larger contracts will undoubtedly filter into the below threshold environment as well – and in some sectors is already a reality.

The new Directives will seek to standardise some tender documents – so that it will no longer be necessary to adapt template documents into different formats for every new competition. Again, this is a sensible development, which makes all the more sense in a below threshold environment.

A number of other innovations and streamlining processes are proposed in order to make it easier to get involved in these competitions, and developments are awaited. In the meantime, of course, there is a wealth of information already available which might prove to be of immediate

benefit to your existing business. Courses teaching companies how to approach tendering and increase their success rate are readily available. The website of the OGP offers general guidance on procurement in general, and how to go about engaging in the process for all classes of suppliers. It is possible to register your interest on that website (which is linked to Etenders) in respect of the kind of contracts or projects that you might be interested in bidding for. Etenders also publishes details of competitions being run by state agencies, and is updated almost on a daily basis – it is the one place where all above threshold, and the vast majority of below threshold tenders, are published.

In addition of course, Etenders publishes information about competitions which have concluded, and contracts which have been awarded. It may well be that you are ideally placed to approach a successful tenderer with a particular product or suggestion which will assist them in performing and delivering the contract which has just been awarded to them. According to the OGP website, as quoted above, every year the Irish government awards contracts for the supply of goods and services to a value of approximately €9 billion.

*It is not intended that the content of this article be treated as, or considered to be, legal advice. It is provided for general information purposes only.*

**You can contact Siobhan Kenny, Frank Murphy Solicitors on 01 283 5252 or at [skenny@fmlaw.ie](mailto:skenny@fmlaw.ie)**

### References

- 1 The European Communities (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations 2006, SI No 329 of 2006.
- 2 Source – Office of Government Procurement.



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# Understanding the family business life cycle

Dr Eric Clinton, Director of the DCU Centre for Family Business discusses the factors that affect the long-term sustainability of family businesses through the generations.

In long-lived family businesses, only one certainty exists: the minefield that is intergenerational succession cannot be side stepped. For the fortunate minority that overcome the dangers, the dubious reward is the prospect of negotiating it all over again once the generational cycle comes full circle.

## THE SECRETS OF SURVIVAL

Research from Professor Ward of the Kellogg School of Management estimated that 30% of family businesses will survive to the second generation; only 12% will survive to the third. Optimising the likelihood of business survival requires family businesses to lay forth a workable plan in securing next-generation involvement.

The normative family business life cycle encompasses four distinct phases, according to Professors Moores and Barrett, who developed the 4Ls Framework and identified these four phases as: Learning Business (L1), Learning Our Family Business (L2), Learning to Lead Our Business (L3) and Learning to Let Go Our Business (L4).

The first two phases, known as the apprenticeship stage, involve individuals working 'in the business'. During the final two phases or stewardship stage, individuals work 'on the business'. Each phase has a set of priorities, paradoxes and pathways.

In 'Learning Business', the business aspirant discovers both practical and theoretical skills required for leadership but where best to do so is a topic of universal debate. In the first phase of the cycle, learning sourced outside the family business can prove advantageous. The skills and knowledge acquired outside could later be transposed to the family business. The caveat, of course, is that once outside, the individual may not desire a return to the family firm.

## PROTECTING CORE VALUES

While concentration is focused on preparing the successor for eventual leadership, it must be noted that not everyone will be 'the leader'. During the phase, 'Learning Our Business', (L2) preparing the successor may run concurrently with planning the incorporation of other family members in the business, possibly by appointment to leadership roles in a non-operational capacity.

Continuity of these core business values is essential for upholding a long standing, business image, which both external and internal stakeholders will recognise.

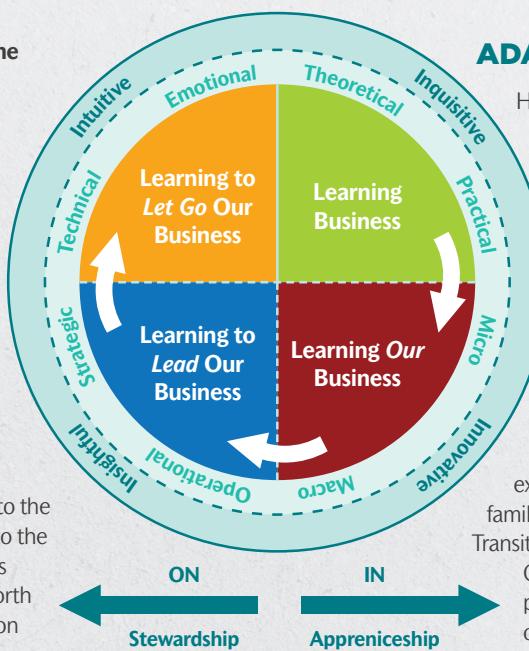


Figure 1: Moores and Barrett's 4L Framework.\*

## ADAPTING TO CHANGE

However, business leaders must adapt to the continuously changing market, especially when products or industries become obsolete. The next generation must consider how they will 'continue differently' in the business. Acquiring business knowledge and knowing how best to implement it are two different things. However, the gap between the two is bridged by what is called 'a special perspicacity'; which is the insight upon which the third phase 'Learning to Lead Our Business' (L3) is based. Leading any company is a difficult undertaking, but due to the increasingly expansive family system, leading a company with family involvement is exponentially more challenging. Transitioning to the final phase, 'Learning to Let Go Our Business' requires a degree of foresight and preparation. Adequate planning is a pre-requisite of a smooth transition, as is the willingness of the incumbents to lead their own departure, rather than

simply to acquiesce to it. There are three main guidelines to follow when stepping out of a leadership role:

- develop a defined timeline for retirement;
- create management development systems; and, most importantly,
- stick to the plan.

Family businesses that embrace the learning curve set out in Moores and Barrett's 4Ls model position themselves as 'families in business' or 'business families', according to Professor Justin Craig of the Kellogg School of Management in Chicago. They do this, he says, "by signalling to the next generation that, while we, the incumbents, have concentrated on a particular business which has served the family well, the leaders appreciate that this industry or this particular business may not be as attractive or have the same meaning to following generations."

## THE DCU CENTRE FOR FAMILY BUSINESS

Through leading research and engagement, the DCU Centre for Family Business facilitates the advancement of family businesses in Ireland. From its workshops and round table discussions, it supports family businesses by translating knowledge into practice. The centre's national conference on "Talent in Family Business – Attracting and Retaining Family and Non-Family Talent in your Business" will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> April in The Helix DCU. For more details or to book your place, please email [familybusiness@dcu.ie](mailto:familybusiness@dcu.ie) or go to: [dcu.ie/centreforfamilybusiness](http://dcu.ie/centreforfamilybusiness).

# Sanbra Fyffe's first for Ireland

Sanbra Fyffe Ltd, market leaders in the supply of plumbing and heating products in Ireland, is celebrating being the first Irish company to be awarded NSAI's Licence to use the Irish Standard Mark in connection with its new INSTANTOR® PEX-AL-PEX Multilayer Pipe and INSTANTOR® Press Fittings range.

Awarded by the NSAI, this certification is a genuine statement of quality and highlights Sanbra Fyffe's ongoing commitment to the manufacture and supply of superior plumbing fittings. It also verifies that Sanbra Fyffe's INSTANTOR® Press System conforms to EN ISO 21003, the defining standard and benchmark manufacturers strive to achieve in multi-layer piping and press systems.

Following two years of intensive product development and testing, the INSTANTOR® Press System underwent a rigorous and thorough certification audit with the NSAI. The successful culmination resulted in the NSAI granting licence number 1.153.001 for International Standard EN ISO 21003 to Sanbra Fyffe.

Commenting on the success, Noel Conroy said: "This is a great achievement for the company. Sanbra Fyffe are the only Irish company to be awarded a licence for this standard by the NSAI. The industry has many similar product offerings that claim to be manufactured to the standard, but are not necessarily certified to the standard by a recognised Standards body. With our NSAI Certification, Sanbra Fyffe can differentiate completely from the competition. The NSAI certificate provides proof for the Builder Providers, Plumbing and Heating Stores and the Plumbing Trade as a whole that Sanbra Fyffe's INSTANTOR® Press System conforms to the EN Standard while underscoring Sanbra Fyffe's reputation as the market leading supplier of quality plumbing and heating products in Ireland."

This is a more cost effective pipe system when compared with conventional piping systems in that it requires less fittings than traditional methods. The metal core within the pipe means it can maintain its rigidity under temperature when installed in hot water applications and with noticeably less expansion, an advantage when being used in exposed pipework in central heating systems.

**INSTANTOR® PRESS**



Pictured from Sanbra Fyffe are (L-R) Deirdre Byrne, Assistant Commercial Manager, Philip Duffy, Maria Fowler, & Padraig Corcoran, Sales, Noel Conroy, Commercial Manager.

Quick to install in three simple steps – Cut, Calibrate & Press, saving on time and costs as less fittings are required when compared with traditional plumbing methods. INSTANTOR® Press fittings are designed for use in sanitary water supply and heating systems and are available in sizes 16mm, 20mm, 26mm and 32mm.

The extensive range of plumbing and heating products provided by Sanbra Fyffe include other brands of note such as TUCSON® Pumps, Motorised Valves & Expansion Vessels, EIRLINE® Taps, IMMERTEC® Immersion Heaters, SANKEL® Central Heating Chemical Treatments, and LEISURE & RANGEMASTER sinks.

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# THE HARDWARE EDUCATION HUB

HAI launches a one-stop shop for all your training needs.

As part of our continuous expansion of member services, HAI launches a one-stop shop for all your training needs. This includes both relevant classroom training and online training through The Hardware Education Hub. HAI is bringing you a series of training programmes to equip you and your staff with the knowledge needed to strategise and compete in the digital era. First in this series is a seminar entitled: "Accessing The Online Potential Of The Hardware Sector". This half-day seminar will give you a great understanding of the Irish digital landscape and show you how you can use it to sell more hardware products. The goal of the session is to demystify the digital marketing world and show you how you can build an effective online presence with limited resources and without huge time

investment. By the end of the session you will have a clear knowledge of what digital components are best for your business and even be able to build a website.

Following this workshop, the series of social media and digital marketing training courses will continue with Digital & Social Media Bootcamp which is a two-day course taking place in May and June, to be followed by advanced digital strategy and e-commerce events in autumn 2016. Declan Flood a.k.a 'The Credit Coach' has become a regular fixture in our training schedule following two very successful courses in October 2015 and January this year. The next date for "Credit Control – from Start to Finish" will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> April in the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel. See page 28 for the latest in the series of Credit Advice articles from Declan.

#### Training schedule

Date	Course Title	Course Duration	Location	Cost
19th April	HAI Seminar: Accessing the Online Potential of the Hardware Sector 10am-2pm	3 hours	Louis Fitzgerald Hotel	€40 members €60 non-members
21st April	Credit Control from Start to Finish	1 day	Louis Fitzgerald Hotel	€100 members €150 non-members
5th May	Consultative Sales Training for Suppliers	1 day	Louis Fitzgerald Hotel	€200 members €250 non-members
17th May & 14th June	HAI Social Media Bootcamp for Hardware Suppliers	2 days	Louis Fitzgerald Hotel	€300 members €350 non-members
19th May & 16th June	HAI Social Media Bootcamp for Hardware Retailers and Merchants	2 days	Louis Fitzgerald Hotel	€300 Members €350 non-members

**Want to sign up employees for training?**

Contact: [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie) or telephone 01 298 0969

# Online Product Knowledge Modules

**Suppliers, Provide Online Product Knowledge Training to your customers:**

Ray Savage, National Sales Manager for IKO Ltd in Ireland has already experienced the benefits of e-learning in the sector, having rolled out product knowledge training to hundreds of trainees across multiple branches to which IKO supply in the UK. "Our experience of our e-learning project in the UK was positive from both our point of view and from our customers' perspective. Retailers and merchants liked the flexibility which is inherently provided by the fact that their staff could complete training online. From a suppliers point of view, e-learning complemented classroom training by providing another avenue for ongoing and flexible learning in an engaging manner."

IKO are the pioneer suppliers using The Hardware Education Hub to provide online product training to HAI members. Ray continues: "IKO Ltd was well known in the market for over 60 years as Irish Roofing Felts Ltd. In late 2014, we rebranded as IKO Ltd and first appeared to the marketplace as IKO Ltd at The Hardware Show in 2015. Since the success

of the show we are continuing our rebranding process by looking to fresh and modern avenues to increase familiarity with the IKO product range. E-learning is one of the methods we are using. Our tagline is 'setting the standard', a crucial element of this is going to the market with a factual approach. E-learning is one of the ways we achieve this as it provides us with another avenue to continuously increase end-users' knowledge of our products."

The IKO Product Knowledge e-learning module consists of four parts:

- introduction,
- flat roofing products,
- pitched roofing products, and,
- liquid-based roofing and weather protection.

There are examinations after each topic, and the course takes under half an hour to complete.

## Interested in providing an e-learning Module?

Member suppliers who want to provide an e-learning Module, should email: [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie) or telephone 01 298 0969

## Member Offers & Discounts

Member services are at the heart of adding value to your business. HAI will negotiate special offers and discounts on standard business services so you don't have to. We can do this because of the strength of our membership numbers. A full list is available on our website.

### PROMOPOS

Promopos are offering HAI members 20% off to new customers to their service. Promopos supply a large range of pre-designed templates which are customisable and printable for individual in-store marketing requirements. For information on how to avail of this offer contact: Bill McConnell at [bill@documentation.ie](mailto:bill@documentation.ie) or 01-653 5008



### IMAGINE

Imagine will provide a free audit of your current phone bill. HAI have also negotiated discounted rates available to all members. Contact: David Walsh at [david.walsh@imaginegroup.ie](mailto:david.walsh@imaginegroup.ie) or on 086 173 8243



### CASH IN TRANSIT

We have negotiated a member's rate with RMS Group Services, [www.rmscashservices.com](http://www.rmscashservices.com) for their cash handling and management requirements. Contact: Jim Copeland on 087 667 1361 or [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie) for further information



### Not a HAI member?

For membership enquiries, please contact Jim on 087 667 1361 or [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie)



### MERCHANT SERVICES

AIB Merchant Services are offering HAI Members an exclusive offer on card terminal and transaction rates. Contact: Jim Copeland on 087 667 1361 or at [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie) for further information



Merchant Services

### INSURANCE PREMIUM ROCKETED THIS YEAR?



HAI has partnered with Thompson Insurances to offer members a FREE, no obligation, risk management survey. This includes: A full review of existing covers, advice on any gaps in cover, and technical Support in relation to the understanding of policy wordings. For further information please contact [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie) on 01 298 0969

### FOR SUPPLIER, DISTRIBUTOR AND MANUFACTURER HAI MEMBERS

HAI supplier members can avail of discount advertising rates in *The Hardware Journal*, as well as discounts on stands at The Hardware Show.

# 1916 - The hardware connection

As the country looks back on the 1916 Rising, we look at builder merchant involvement in the rebellion and its impact on the industry at the time.

**The Irish Volunteers contingent from Maynooth was led by Domhnall Ua Buachalla, who owned a hardware business in the town. Lieutenant Eamonn O' Kelly of the Volunteers arrived in Maynooth on Holy Thursday. O' Kelly told Domhnall Ua Buachalla (later the Governor General of the Free State) to assemble his men on Easter Sunday in Maynooth town, and from there to proceed to Bodenstown Churchyard, to meet with other Kildare Volunteers.**

Today, in the town square, a monument commemorates the Volunteers who assembled in Maynooth in 1916. Domhnall Ua Buachalla was elected a Sinn Féin TD for Kildare in 1918. The family hardware store in Maynooth, founded in 1853, remained in operation until 2005. Buckley's Lane is named after him today ([comeheretome.com](http://comeheretome.com)).

## TAKING NO PRISONERS

The shooting of unarmed civilians during the Easter Rising arose from British orders that soldiers should not take any prisoners, according to War Office files released at the Public Record Office in London. A War Office document from June 1916, marked 'very confidential', written by Sir Edward Troup, who was permanent secretary to the Home Department, for the British prime minister, Herbert Asquith, refers to several cases of civilians shot by British soldiers during the Easter Rising in Dublin. One case referred to the shooting on April 28<sup>th</sup> of Peter Connolly, a member of the Redmondite Irish National Volunteers and the owner of a hardware shop (*The Irish Times*, January 2001).

## THE WEST'S AWAKE

The Bureau of Military History 1913-1921 (BMH) Collection at Military Archives, is a joint initiative of the Military Archives and the National Archives. Part of the research and witness statements includes the following: WS Ref #: 1173, Witness: Michael Hynes, Member Irish Volunteers and IRA, Galway, 1915-1921: "Father O'Meehan addressed the company, saying that the Rising was on in Dublin and that our company would very soon be engaged in the fight and that very likely some of us would be going to our deaths. He then said that if any Volunteer wished to leave he could do so and that nobody would think bad of him for doing so. 'Any man who now wants to leave', said Fr O'Meehan, 'let him step out of the ranks.'

"Nobody stepped out of the ranks. Fr O'Meehan then gave us General Absolution and told us to collect all the arms and ammunition we could in the town of Kinvara and neighbourhood. We marched into the town of Kinvara and collected all the shotguns in the town. Most of the owners gave them up willingly and Mr Johnson, a hardware merchant, gave us all the guns and ammunition he had in his shop – about half a dozen guns."

## UNFORESEEN IMPACT

One of the less obvious consequences of the Rising was a further slump in the already slack demand for coal. A history of Heitons, *Heitons - A Managed Transition*, written by Tony Farmar in 1996 records the following with regard to the events around the rising: "The Easter Rising came at a time of relatively slack demand for coal, though, not surprisingly, the staff committee minutes record a temporary hiccup in activity. For the week ending 20th April 1916 Custom House and Spencer Docks between them



The monument that commemorates the Volunteers who assembled in Maynooth in 1916.

sold 2,631 tons of coal; there is no record for the following week, and for the week ending 5<sup>th</sup> May it was a mere 920 tons. By the next report, covering the week to 12<sup>th</sup> May, activity in the two docks was back to 2,978 tons. One W. Roache, a clerk in the George's Quay office, was reported as 'continuing absent'; the staff committee agreed that he had forfeited his job. In August, he wrote to the board, but he was not re-employed. No doubt many casual workers, politicised by the events of 1913, also took part."

## FRONTLINE REPORTS

In the *Irish Independent*'s reproduction of important Irish newspapers from that time, reprinted exactly as they appeared 100 years ago, *The Revolution Papers*, there were advertisements for several well-known hardware and builders merchants promoting their wares, but more importantly the fact that they were still in business or not! Among those lucky enough to still be open were:

- Brooks Thomas & Co Ltd, Sackville Place (reported that "Premises and Stock are intact");
- Dockrell Ltd, South Great Georges Street ("all departments working as usual");
- Keenan & Sons Ltd, Fishamble St, Fence & Gate Iron Works and Stores;
- Baxendale & Co Ltd, Hardware, Lead & Paint, Capel St and Great Strand Street ("Premises intact and business as usual");
- Maguire & Gatchell Ltd, Enamelled Baths and japanned Water Cans, 7, 9, 10 and 15 Dawson St (advised customers to "place orders early due to the War crisis");
- T Henshaw and Co. Ltd, Garden Tools, 3-12 Christchurch Place; and,
- W & L Crowe Ltd, Timber, Slate, and Cement Merchants, 50 -51 South Richmond Street ("Premises and Stock escaped damage in the recent disturbances").

Among those not so fortunate were:

- The Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd, 94-96 Middle Abbey Street ("completely destroyed by fire");
- P Donnelly & Sons, Coal Merchants, 16 D'Olier Street ("new address due to previous premises having been demolished"); and,
- the Irish Commercial Travellers Association, which advised that all communication should go to The Secretary, Mr. J V Mac Conville, Glasnevin until further notice.



Thomas Heiton established a coal and iron business in Dublin in 1818.

# Growth in adhesives expected to stick over next three years

According to a report from global market research company, Transparency Market Research (TMR), the global market for sealants and adhesives will grow at 4.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in the seven years to the end of 2018.

The report expects that the adhesives and sealants market, which stood at US\$22.70 billion (€20.4 billion) in 2012, is projected to be worth US\$31.64 billion (€28.43 billion) by the end of 2018. This could mean a promising future for Ireland's adhesives and sealants market with the launch of various products over the next year.

## NEXT GENERATION

Bostik launched their next generation, professional range of adhesives and sealants in February. "This launch has been hugely successful and has spurred major activity in the adhesives and sealants market. The range has been very well received by both the retailer, and the trade professional and is outperforming all of our expectations," according to Robert Massey, Managing Director, Bostik Ireland. Bostik Ireland says it is committed to delivering innovative and high performance products to the trade with 2016 shaping up to be another busy year for the company due to the launch of new, advanced technology products.

"Bostik will be launching its new MSP 109 Turbo Bond adhesive which is a fast bonding, high performance polymer adhesive that sets in 15 minutes. It is an excellent addition to the Bostik MSP range and ideal for the trade professional," a company spokesperson said.

Bostik will be supporting this product, and the rest of the MSP range this year with numerous trade campaigns including the 'Win a set of tyres for your van' promotion and the 'Win a bike' promotion, in conjunction with the Tour de France.

Bostik are also due to launch a TV advertising campaign this year supporting the brand and the new adhesive and sealant range.



MSP 109 Turbo Bond.

## CLEAR DIFFERENCE

Everbuild Clear Fix is a new, completely clear adhesive that is set to make a clear difference to the market, according to Sika Everbuild.

A spokesperson for Sika Everbuild commented: "Clear Fix is a clear hybrid polymer grab adhesive that has the ability to bond just about everything, in both interior and exterior applications. With added UV stabilisers to ensure the product doesn't yellow over time, Clear Fix is the ideal choice for applications where you may see the colour of the product. Quick-curing, resistant to temperature extremes, over-paintable and totally water-and-



Everbuild Clear Fix.

# THE DIFFERENCE IS CLEAR

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- **HIGH BOND STRENGTH**
- **BONDS VIRTUALLY ANY MATERIALS - INTERNALLY OR EXTERNALLY**
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weather-proof, Clear Fix is clearly the best choice adhesive on the market!" Sika Everbuild says that Clear Fix is a versatile product which can be used in almost every application imaginable, even when immersed under water. The company adds that Clear Fix comes in a completely clear cartridge to illustrate the quality of the product and look great on the shelf.

### CUSTOMERS' CHOICE

According to Contech, Tec7 is the 'customers' choice' because it offers better value, extra product, and is stronger and trusted. "Tec7 has become the number one choice for the trade person and DIY enthusiasts because they know 'it gets the job done first time every time' – even under water," a company spokesperson said.

"Because of its overall strength, flexibility, sealing and mounting quality, customers know that Tec7 sticks to almost all building materials, including most plastics and, with each cartridge containing 310ml of product, they are getting better value compared to most other MS polymers on the market," the spokesperson added. "With customers expecting high quality from the Tec7 range of products, the new Plumb7, introduced last August as part of the range, is no exception."

The company claims that this new product is a permanent fix to all heating system leaks.

"Simple to use, the can will come with an applicator making it easy to pour in to any radiator. If you have an open heating system, no problem, Plumb7 is ideal for use in both open and closed heating systems," the spokesperson said.



Tec7.

### NEW FROM GEOCEL

Geocel have announced that their new product, the Works Multi-Use Sealant and Adhesive, tackles tough jobs usually impossible with a traditional solvent or water-based adhesive and, unlike solvent-based adhesives, the Works will not attack synthetic material.

The company have promised quick-curing along with no shrinkage or staining, there is no need for additional fixings for most applications.

"The Works Multi-Use Sealant and Adhesive is environmentally and user friendly, as well as being non-hazardous, inflammable and odourless, meaning this product can be used in confined spaces or in areas open to the public," a company spokesperson remarked.

"The Works Multi-Use Sealant and Adhesive can be applied to both wet and dry surfaces and in any weather conditions where a seal or bond is needed, it also resists mould growth and can be painted over with water-based paint," he added.



The Works Multi-Use Sealant and Adhesive.

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# Bright future ahead for an eco-friendly Ireland

Innovative eco-technology is driving the development of green products.



Osram's app Lightify allows users to adjust lighting from their tablet or smartphone.

**According to the Irish Green Building Council, 53% of manufacturers plan on bringing innovative green products to market in the next few years.**

Sustainable products are a hot topic for Ireland, the EU and the world. Products with minimal environmental impact are becoming sought after by governments, corporations and consumers, who are becoming

more socially responsible in purchasing decisions due to both changes in behaviour and regulatory pressures.

Building materials specifically are experiencing an increase in demand for sustainable products which can be attributed to the implications of EU Directives such as the European Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) which requires a move to nearly zero energy buildings by 2021, this means that the embodied energy and carbon of products will be become a larger percentage of the overall impact of new buildings.

Added to this are several voluntary EU instruments such as Green Public Procurement and the increasing use of Building level certifications.

A recent report entitled *Better Buildings-A National Renovation Strategy for Ireland* states that solutions are needed to achieve targets for more than 1.6 million homes, 109,000 commercial buildings, 10,000 buildings in the public sector and another 4,300 industrial sites. The Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland (SEAI) estimates that an average investment of €21,000 per home would be required to upgrade every home in the country to a minimum BER rating of B3; suggesting a total investment requirement of around €35 billion.

## LIGHT BULB MOMENT FOR IRISH ECOLOGY

With electricity costs affecting both homeowners and businesses, people are looking for energy-efficient lighting more than ever before. Osram, one of the world's leading lighting manufacturers, has been focusing on lighting for over 100 years. According to a spokesperson, the company is strongly focused on providing ecological and innovative home lighting. Its energy-efficient lamps and light bulbs reduce carbon consumption and cost by up to 90%, while offering consumers a creative experience in their own homes, the company says.

"Osram has invested in research to make a difference in the energy-efficient lighting sector and developed Lightify, a sustainable mobile revolution," the company spokesperson said. "Lightify brings the future of lighting into homes and gardens – light controlled by a free mobile app for smartphones and tablets. The app allows users to control networked LED products such as lamps, luminaires, flexible LED strips and garden lights, and adjust the colours and intensity of lighting. Homeowners using Osram's Lightify system can benefit from energy-efficient and creative home lighting like never before."

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# All decked out for summer

Following the upward trend in recent years, the indications are that Ireland's decking and fencing market is set to grow again this year.

Recent statistics have shown that a third of homeowners will make improvements to their garden each year by either landscaping or adding fencing or decking. Added to this, homeowners look to renew patios and decking six times on average during their adult years.

Research by Bord Bia has shown that Irish people spent €614 million on their gardens last year, up 22% since 2011, and, as trends in general would suggest, this will increase in 2016. Other research has shown that hard landscaping, including decking and fencing, accounts for a chunky 30% of total gardening spend. There is a massive opportunity for suppliers and merchants to benefit in the area of decking and fencing as Irish consumers start to spend more. In this commercial feature we will discuss some of the products you can stock in your store to drive summer sales.

## THE NATURAL LOOK

Whiteriver Group has reported very positive sales growth for its composite decking range in 2015. This success has been built on service and being customer-orientated, together with offering the largest range of composite decking and accessories in the marketplace, according to Whiteriver's Iain Wogan.

"Composite decking is for the homeowner who wants a decking product with a natural look, uniform colouration and will not need any annual oil treatment, like conventional wood decks," Iain said. "Whiteriver composite decking is low maintenance and has a long lifespan, which saves time and money, now and in the future." Whiteriver composite decking was developed by Whiteriver Group to meet the exceptionally high standard required for outdoor living today. The Irish climate can be harsh on traditional wood decks and it is a constant struggle for owners to maintain and treat decking each year. "Whiteriver composite decking products are made using high-density polyethylene (HDPE) and wood, creating a revolutionary composite of improved, user-friendly material that outperforms other traditional pure wooden and plastic materials," Iain said. "The resulting product is a deck with a natural look that will hold its colour and does not need any further treatment, apart from an occasional clean with a power washer or hose. There will also be three new, composite deck products launched for 2016, which will feature new design technology for the most realistic timber look. "Whiteriver composite decking is ideal for the construction of domestic and commercial decks, board walks, marinas, pool sides and other landscaping applications. It is environmentally-friendly and is 100% recyclable, perfect for the forward-thinking architect or local authority planner. The demand for composite decking is growing year on year and there is a great opportunity for hardware stores to add a product to their range which will increase their sales and margins." Whiteriver says it plans to continue investing in its business, and its new website demonstrates this commitment.

## TREATING TIMBER WELL

John Murphy (Castlerea) Ltd has unveiled a wide-ranging spring product offering. It is the exclusive distributor to the retail trade in Ireland for Protim Wood Preservative, which comes in three colours – clear universal, green and brown – in 1-litre, 5-litre and 25-litre sizes. Protim is a





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THE HARDWARE JOURNAL March/April 2016

41

solvent-based product used for the treatment of timber in the construction industry, decking, garden sheds and garden fencing, as well as general DIY situations.

Protim requires only a one-coat application to protect timber against wood-destroying fungi, insect infestation and dry rot, according to John Murphy Ltd.

The company also distributes Bondex Wood Stain, available in clear and satin finish, in 750ml, 2.5-litre and 5-litre sizes in a range of colours.

Bondex Wood Stain is used to protect timber doors and windows, timber decking and any other timber structure in the garden environment, and may also be used internally.

Bondex Wood Stain has excellent penetration properties, no flaking or blistering along with UV and water protection, according to the distributor.

John Murphy Ltd also distributes a wide range of garden tools and wire netting under its Allgrip brand. Included in this range is a selection of digging spades, digging forks, and lawn-care tools as in leaf and garden rakes, lawn edgers and hoes.

In the wire-netting range, John Murphy Ltd offers galvanised wire netting in 12mm, 25mm and 50mm dimensions, in 10-metre and 50-metre rolls.

A range of galvanised weld mesh and green PVC-coated weld mesh is also available in a range of different dimensions and roll sizes.

John Murphy Ltd also distributes the all-in-one range of moss and algae remover along with fungicidal cleaner, concrete cleaner and PVC cleaner.



The Allgrip brand is distributed by John Murphy (Castlerea) Ltd.



Ultimate Decking from Ronseal.

## TOUGH ENOUGH FOR THE JOB

Ronseal has several tough-acting, easy-to-apply products to cover a range of outdoor areas, protecting everything from fencing to decking. The latest Ronseal fencing product, Ronseal Fence Life Plus, gives guaranteed protection for rough and smooth sawn wood for up to five years, according to the company.

“Its formula allows it to be applied on all types of woodwork and will be showerproof in just one hour – offering protection from the elements in all weather conditions.

Ronseal’s Ultimate Decking range keeps wood looking better for longer, and is available in a range of colours,” a spokesperson said.

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### A WIDE RANGE OF COLOURS AVAILABLE

# Bright outlook for paints and accessories sector

The consumer focus on home improvement and home décor has benefited the paint sector.

The British Coatings Federation (BCF) says that due to the proliferation of home decoration magazines and TV programmes there has been a boom in DIY decoration, with Britain now having about 30 million 'domestic' DIY painters and the coatings industry selling about 165 million litres a year for this market alone. Here in Ireland, a similar influence has been evident with the success of programmes such as *Room to Improve*, *Home of the Year*, and *The Design Doctors*.

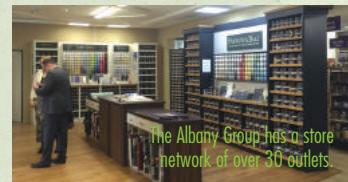
Woodcare products, for interior and exterior use, have taken on a new lease of life, according to the BCF, as homeowners realise the high cost of replacing windows, doors, garden furniture and conservatories. Even those with PVC are finding newly developed paints useful for colouring the white or masking the grey effect of some plastics.

Estimates from home decor specialists Albany Group (see interview with Albany Group MD on page 24) suggest that paint sector sales in Ireland are in the region of €230 million to €250 million. Albany also says that customers are increasingly focused on paint quality and fashion-led colour palettes. The sophistication of the Irish consumer and the extensive TV and print coverage of home improvement and home décor sectors augurs well for sales of paint in hardware retailers and builders merchants around the country.

## PROMISING TRENDS

The Albany Group, with a store network of over 30 outlets and a customer base covering both retail and trade segments of the market, sees much to be positive about in the year ahead. According to Albany Home Décor, 2015 saw a rise in paint, and paint-related business, of 8% across the group. The best category performances were in premium and designer paints, up 15%, and the also the ancillaries category (applicators, preparation products and speciality paints), up over 20%.

"This trend is a very promising indicator for the decorating market in that it shows a greater propensity from both retail and trade customers to decorate more often," said Padraic McGuinness, Chief Operating Officer of the Albany Group. "It also shows a greater degree of consumer confidence in making expenditure decisions relating to the home and that they are actively seeking out premium products and colour and design advice." There is a noticeable trend towards premium and designer brands increasing their market share, the company says. Albany stores are now looking to the interiors category, including soft furnishings, design textiles, homewares and some giftware, to complement their established paints and wall-coverings business.



The Albany Group has a store network of over 30 outlets.

## ENDURING ELEGANCE

Crown Paints has announced that it has relaunched the 'Period Collection' from what was previously named 'Period Colours'. The Period Collection consists of classically muted and heritage shades in flat matt and eggshell finishes, designed to suit any style of home. Crown Paints has been in the business since 1777, so it has a good perspective on which colours have successfully stood the test of time. "Everything learned over the years has been put into the beautiful Period Collection to create an enduring line-up of elegant shades that will never date," a Crown Paints spokesperson said.

The palette has expanded from 30 to 48 colours, including 29 brand new shades, and has been refreshed to include more choice in the neutral, lighter end of the spectrum, as well as introducing a more muted tonal choice for the deeper heritage shades.

"This mirrors the trend for the home enthusiasts who want to embrace a classical interior style yet update it by fusing it with a softer and more sophisticated palette, a step away from the traditional bold classic colours," the spokesperson said.

The Flat Matt Emulsion palette consists of 48 eye-catching colours and is a water-based emulsion, suitable for interior walls and ceilings.

The eggshell range consists of 10 shades and is suitable for interior wood and metal. It is a water-based eggshell with a low sheen finish designed to complement the Flat Matt Emulsion.

All paints in the Period Collection have 'Breatheasy' technology, a 99% solvent-free formulation with a low emissions level that is kinder to the environment, according to Crown Paints.



Crown Paints has relaunched its Period Collection of classically muted and heritage shades.

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## OUTDOOR DÉCOR

Dosco has advised that, in addition to adding to its range of decorating products, outdoor decorating is being given some added focus this year. "The masonry roller set is perfect to freshen up any masonry or house front and is just the ticket after an Irish winter," a Dosco spokesperson said. "The garden is not forgotten. The shed and fence range includes both brush and roller for the application of all wood treatments and preservatives for timber sheds, timber fences and decks."

The Dosco range of paint brushes aim to cover all other decorating and painting jobs.

"Every Dosco brush is made with 100% bristle to give maximum performance. Dosco is very proud to carry the Guaranteed Irish logo on all its paint brushes.

"The introduction of the ProDex range of polyester/nylon brushes has been a huge success. These brushes are suitable for use with all paints. The huge advantage of synthetic paint brushes is that they result in almost zero shedding."

Rollers and accessories complete the range. Roller sets come in both seven-inch and nine-inch sizes, and many sets are complete with complementary accessories and additional sleeves. General paint accessories available include decorating tools, sandpaper, masking tape, extension handles, dust sheets and more.

The ProDex range of paint brushes from Dosco.



## ULTIMATE DURABILITY

This year sees the introduction of the new Dulux Weathershield pack design, in which the company highlights its next-generation 'Ultimate Durability' formula innovation.

"The 'Ultimate Durability' formula offers superior flexibility, allowing

the paint film to move with the natural contraction and expansion of walls from heat and cold," a Dulux spokesperson said. "No matter what the Irish weather throws at it, Weathershield simply offers superior protection against cracking and flaking." Dulux Weathershield features an advanced slow-release biocide technology which combats the moulds and algae associated with the outdoors, according to the company. "The biocide technology is encapsulated to release anti-mould and algae agents over a long period of time, ensuring exterior paint jobs look new for longer. When buying masonry paint, people often forget about colour retention. Superior colour retention means the integrity of the

chosen colour stands the test of time, allowing your customers to enjoy their masterpiece for longer. Dulux Weathershield now comes in 39 ready-mixes and a choice of over 400 mixing colours, which are guaranteed to remain beautiful no matter what the Irish weather. "Painting the outside of a home is a job that merits the very best formula, so the job not only looks good today but stands up to both the test of time and the tough Irish weather."

Dulux Weathershield features a new pack design and innovative formula for durability.



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## PROTECT AGAINST BLACK MOULD

The 'Forever White' range from Everbuild, a Sika company, is expanding with the addition of Forever White paint, a hygienic paint designed to protect against black mould growth in bathrooms and areas of high humidity. "For use on walls and ceilings, Forever White hygienic paint is ideal for showers, bathrooms, wetrooms and kitchens, and contains 'SteriTouch' antibacterial protection," according to the company.

"Forever White hygienic paint is fast-drying, allowing two coats to be applied in one day, and dries to an exceptionally hard-wearing finish that resists cracking

and flaking. Highly versatile, this paint can be applied on a variety of substrates, including concrete, brick, timber and ceramic tiles."

The product is available in 2.5-litre tubs, in 'Arctic White' in a satin and matt finish.

Forever White from Everbuild protects against black mould.



## SMOOTH OPERATORS

Lowe Rust Paint for Metal and Machinery combines the original Lowe Rust Primer formulation with an attractive range of smooth colour finishes, according to the company. As with Lowe Rust Primer, the Rust Paint can be painted directly to rust. The first coat is designed to neutralise any existing rust, as well as binding to the surface. The second coat, and any subsequent coats, will act as a barrier to prevent any new moisture penetrating and causing further corrosion, according to Lowe.

"Coverage is approximately 10 square metres per litre and a minimum of two coats must be applied to give a combined thickness of at least 75 microns," a company spokesperson said. "It can be applied by brush, roller or spraying (thin by up to 10% with Douglas White Spirits). This is a very versatile product as it will adhere to most surfaces, including not just metal, but also plastic and wood.

This makes it ideal for giving a uniform finish to garden furniture, railings and gates, as well as items of machinery, water butts, steel and wooden shelving, compressors, etc. It is heat-resistant to 70-80°C, which also makes it suitable for hot-water pipes. It is available in eight popular colours across five sizes from 250ml up to 5 litres."

Lowe Metal & Machinery Paint protects metals from rust.



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## COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

The Mark John range includes paint brushes, rollers and painting accessories.



Fully Irish-owned business, Mark John Ltd, has been supplying its brand of paint brushes, rollers and painting accessories to retailers and builders providers throughout Ireland for over 40 years. As specialists in the painting and decorating accessories market, Mark John Ltd is focused on producing a premium quality range of products and providing excellent service to its customers.

"Retail store managers inform us that the end users buying in their retail stores demand high-quality, superior brushes and decorating tools," a company spokesperson said. "Mark John Ltd supplies its own branded range of paintbrushes, rollers and accessories, and implements ongoing quality checks to ensure we consistently deliver on our quality promise. "Mark John offers a product range to suit all the needs of our customers, from budget brushes to trade quality. Using new paintbrush technology, the MX range of brushes offers leading quality at extremely competitive prices. The 'Mark' range of rollers offers roller sleeves for

every application and is available in all sizes."

According to Mark John Ltd, based on customer feedback, 2016 will see the introduction of a new range of brushes, in addition to the development of its range of rollers and decorating accessories to retailers and the market.

## COMPREHENSIVE RANGE

This season will see additional lines being added to the Varian catalogue, which will be complemented with an array of promotional activity aimed at stimulating and maximising retailer sales during the season.

"With the new paint season almost here, Varian is ready and waiting for the kick-off," a company spokesperson said. "Supplying a comprehensive range of paint accessories and sundries, its portfolio caters for the professional tradesperson and DIY enthusiast alike."

Varian reports consistent growth in sales of its 'sets' in recent years, from brush multi-packs to roller and tray sets. Key to this growth, according to the company, has been retailer support in terms of store-space allocation, display and location.

"Sales of sets are driven by impulse purchase, and the allocation of promotional display space will pay dividends. Alongside this, there has been the continued success and growth of our professional quality, premium synthetic paintbrush range, 'Pro Decor'. With its tapered nylon filament it provides an optimum and smooth application and can be used with both water and oil-based paints. The packaging for the range is being updated this year with a new eye-catching red sleeve."



Varian's professional quality, premium synthetic paintbrush range, 'Pro Decor'.



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## PANTONE COLOURS OF THE YEAR 2016

Roisin Lafferty of Lafferty Kingston Design spoke to *The Hardware Journal* about the Pantone Colours of the Year for 2016, Serenity and Rose Quartz: "Blue is a colour close to my heart. For me it is so diverse and adaptable. Previously seen as a cold and sterile colour, it can provide warmth, depth and mood, if used correctly. The tone of Serenity is exactly as the name states – serene and calming. The perfect colour to surround yourself with to escape from the world and allow your worries to fade away."

"It is interesting this year that Pantone have selected two colours of the year. The second colour Rose Quartz is a dusty, feminine, soft pink. This colour has been influencing the interior market for some time so I am delighted to see it as colour of the year. Similarly to blue, pink can be misinterpreted. Men tend to see it as a 'girls' tone' and to steer clear of it. However, subtle pinks provide a warm and tranquil environment. The earthy base tone avoids any candy floss or Barbie-pink hues. Instead you end up with a pink neutral effect."

Roisin adds: "What I particularly like about them both is that when used together, there is an unexpected harmony of colour. The warmth and coolness is balanced, creating a Scandinavian feel. There is a sense of freshness and Spring."



Roisin Lafferty.  
Photo credit: Al Higgins.



Rose Quartz frame on Serenity Blue wall.

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## 2016 Dates for your Diary

6th - 7th April



Lyrath Estate Hotel,  
Co. Kilkenny

12th April

DCU Centre for Family  
Business Conference.,  
The Helix, DCU

13th April

Solid Fuel Awareness  
Training, Metac Training,  
Mountrath, Co. Laois

19th April

HAI Seminar: Accessing  
the Online Potential of the  
Hardware Sector,  
10am-2pm with lunch,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

21st April

HAI Training Credit Control  
from Start to Finish,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

29th April

HAI Golf Society.  
HAI President Hugh  
O'Donnell's Prize  
sponsored by Crown  
Paints, Carlow Golf Club,

11th May

Solid Fuel Awareness  
Training, Metac Training,  
Mountrath, Co. Laois

17th May

HAI Social Media  
Bootcamp for Hardware  
Suppliers Day One,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

19th May

HAI Social Media  
Bootcamp for Hardware  
Retailers and Merchants  
Day One,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

25th May

HAI Executive  
Committee Meeting,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel  
HAI AGM,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

27th May

HAI Golf Society. Denis  
Burke Memorial Cup  
sponsored by Bostik,  
Mount Juliet Golf Club,  
Kilkenny.

8th June

Solid Fuel Awareness  
Training, Metac Training,  
Mountrath, Co. Laois

8th-9th June

Global DIY Summit,  
Waterfront Congress  
Centre, Stockholm

14th June

HAI Social Media  
Bootcamp for Hardware  
Suppliers Day Two,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

16th June

HAI Social Media  
Bootcamp for Hardware  
Retailers and Merchants  
Day Two,  
Louis Fitzgerald Hotel

24th June

HAI Golf Society.  
Captain Hugh Taylor's  
Prize sponsored by Irish  
Abrasives, Old Conna Golf  
Club, Bray, Co. Wicklow

29th July

HAI Golf Society, Faithlegg  
Golf Club, Waterford

26th August

HAI Golf Society President  
Frank McKeon's Prize,  
Forest Little Golf Club,  
Swords



## Digital Digest



Sinead Cashin,  
Marketing Manager,  
Wallaces of  
Wellingtonbridge

**Name:** Sinead Cashin

**Position:** Marketing Manager

**Company:** Wallaces of Wellingtonbridge

**Website:** [www.wallaces.ie](http://www.wallaces.ie)

### 1. What was your main objective in developing a social media presence for Wallace's Homevalue?

Wallace's Twitter and Facebook pages were set up initially to put 'a face' on brand Wallace and our staff, while our original website was being re-jigged. Our primary focus now is to expand our customer base, grow profits, highlight our product offering and improve our interaction with both customers and suppliers alike. We didn't want to be left out of the social selling conversation that is digital marketing. Social media is visual. Photos and image collection are essential as people like to look before the purchase.

### 2. What role does it play in your marketing strategy for the business?

Social media is now our main marketing tool and is supported by PR and sponsorship, as well as print and radio advertising. While we now use a mix of strategies, our aim is to move away from more expensive traditional forms of marketing towards budget-savvy, interactive social media. Capturing customer contact details through sign-ups to our E-Newsletter has seen our mailing lists treble which has provided us with another platform to promote products and store events.

It gives the customer choice, they can see and buy online, or come in-store better informed. Functions, such as customers being able to check in online at our premises, raise awareness around our village location. Interaction with customers online adds to the customer service experience as they can ask a question and get an immediate answer or reply to their query which aids actual sales.

### 3. How do you plan to develop your use of platforms further in the future?

**Wallaces.ie** is currently being reconstructed and our new look E-Commerce website is planned for a relaunch this June. It's all about the blog these days in order to keep search engine optimisation (SEO) rankings and company recognisability at the top of customers' online agenda. Our new website will be driven mainly by daily blog posts and we also hope to grow our use of videos more on YouTube. It's easy to use and product videos showcasing offers, ideas and our people have proved engaging and effective to date.

### 4. What advice do you have for hardware retailers and merchants who are starting to embrace social media?

Just get started. Don't be afraid. Social media isn't going away so all businesses need to get online! Be consistent in updating and maintaining your social media platforms in a timely fashion. The payback for writing colourful and informative content is fourfold in terms of keeping you connected with your customers' needs and lifestyle, facilitating the telling of your business story, selling your services and introducing potential customers to the people behind the business. This is one way to differentiate yourself from your competition in a cost-efficient way. Have some fun too. Special offers aren't the only tactic to raise a smile on a customer's face, so engage and interact with local clubs, charities and events too. Community and connections are key. People become loyal to other people, not brands. Lastly, you don't need to be active on every platform. Research first and pick the right ones for you! Gain insight and tips from your fellow industry players – click and see what the others are doing and do it better yourself!

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