

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

# THE HAI HARDWARE JOURNAL

THE VOICE OF THE IRISH HARDWARE INDUSTRY



**WILL HRI EXTENSION AND  
RECENT BUDGET MEASURES  
PROVIDE SECTOR STIMULUS?**

**ALSO INSIDE:**  
**HAI MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION SURVEY 2015**

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# DEAR READER,

The run up to Christmas is well and truly underway and we've got a timely piece on the HR issues that can arise around this time on page 35. Another concern over the next few weeks is the increased likelihood of retail crime and there's some useful advice from a *Garda Síochána* National Crime Prevention Officer on page 36.

Looking beyond Christmas, 2016 will reveal whether the two-tier recovery that we've seen to date accelerates into a nationwide rise in footfall and sales. We look at the potential impact of the HRI Scheme and Budget 2016 measures on the builders merchants and hardware sector and outline the work HAI has been doing to drive policy changes (page 16).

Finally, on behalf of all at *The Hardware Journal* and HAI, I wish all our readers a happy, peaceful and prosperous Christmas and New Year!

Bernard Potter, Editor

## FEATURES

### 16 THE POST-BUDGET OUTLOOK

What does 2016 hold for the hardware sector and builders merchants?

### 18 MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION SURVEY

A look at some key findings from this year's survey.

### 21 GRASS IS GREENER AT DS SUPPLIES

Annemarie Harte, CEO of HAI, visited DS Supplies at their new offices in Rathcoole.

### 25 TEAMWORK BRINGS NEW IMPETUS TO CHADWICKS KILKENNY

A profile of the store that won both the National and Leinster category awards in the Octabuild Builders Merchant Awards 2015.

### 29 BE SMART CAMPAIGN

Free HSA online tool helps risk-assess your store.

### 32 BUILDING REGS: AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION FOR YOUR ADMIN HEADACHES

DPL and MCS Computers have come up with an innovative solution for the paperwork involved in meeting the requirements of the Building Control Regulations.

### 40 GROWTH FORECAST FOR FASTENINGS SECTOR

There are some positive signs for growth in the fasteners sector in the next 12 months.

### 45 POSITIVE OUTLOOK IN IRONMONGERY

The extension of the HRI scheme and, in the medium to longer term, the pressure to increase Ireland's housing stock suggest a positive outlook for the sector.

### 47 TOOL PRICES OFFER VALUE FOR CONSUMERS

CSO figures indicate that many categories of tool prices are well below the average rate of inflation.

### 48 REBUILDING THE MARKET FOR CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS

A recovering construction sector augurs well for demand levels for construction products in 2016.

## REGULARS

### MARKET INTELLIGENCE

### 4 BUSINESS INDEX

Strong revenue growth for Members in Q3.

### 6 NEWS AND PRODUCTS

Bord na Móna puts sustainability at heart of its business. New Crown Trade Fastflow Gloss sets the pace.

### BUSINESS SUPPORT

### 23 TRAINING: SALES

Maximise sales and deliver excellence in customer service.

### 24 TRAINING: FUEL

HAI and METAC training have joined forces to promote a new solid fuel awareness training initiative.

### 28 MEMBER OFFERS/DISCOUNTS

HAI negotiate special offers and discounts on standard business services so you don't have to.

### 30 E-LEARNING PLATFORM

HAI has launched an E-Learning Platform offering New Employee Induction training.

### 35 HR

Christmas brings with it a unique cocktail of HR issues.

### 36 PREVENTING CRIME IN YOUR STORE AND YARD

Sergeant John Crosse, National Crime Prevention Officer with *Garda Síochána*, speaks to *The Hardware Journal* about the Garda strategy to deal with retail crime.

### 38 CASH FOR KILOWATTS

HAI members can get cash back on energy expenditure.

### 39 CREDIT MANAGEMENT

Declan Flood, aka The Credit Coach, continues his series of articles offering practical advice on credit management.

### 54 DIRECTORY

Suppliers and services.



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# STRONG REVENUE GROWTH FOR MEMBERS IN QUARTER3

The HAI Business Index, which continues to attract new participants, shows rise in revenue for members in third quarter.

A total of 150 branches now take part in the Business Index with 57% trading in 'urban' areas and dominated by multi-branches with 85% of participants providing results for more than one branch. Total member revenue YTD Q3 2015 shows a 14% increase on the same period last year. The rise is evident across all types of member firms, peaking in urban and larger branches.

Sector revenue rose sharply in September 2015 (up 14% on August). The month-on-month rise in September was evident across all member groups, peaking among rural branches. The 2014 Index confirms that Quarter 3 accounted for the highest percentage of members' revenue in 2014. September and October were the highest grossing months last year. Quarter 3 was consistently the highest grossing period for members – particularly for branches with less than 10 employees.

The Index presentation of overall monthly revenues confirms that September and October were the months where revenue most exceeded the 2014 monthly average. December, January and February were the weakest months in 2014 for revenue. The top grossing revenue months in 2014 exhibit greater variation when reviewed by size of branch/number of employees.

## Move to quarterly collection of results

In an attempt to encourage participation and a speedier turnaround of results, we are now collecting results quarterly instead of monthly. Absolute confidentiality is guaranteed in this process. The results are treated in the strictest confidence and only reported in summary anonymised form as you can see in the infographic. The next collection of results will be at the beginning of January 2016 when we will have collected results for a full 12 months.

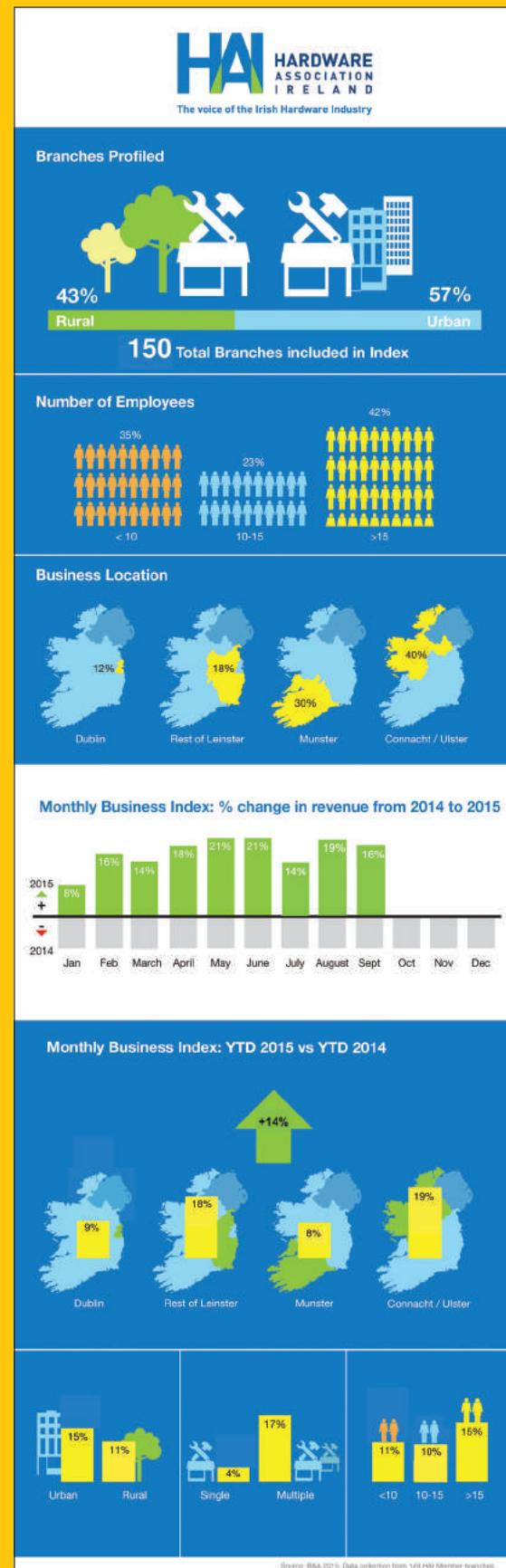
## How to get involved

If you agree to participate, you will receive an email from B&A, our research partner, asking for several pieces of information that will form the benchmark:

- number of employees;
- location of business;
- what type of area your business operates in, i.e. to assess urban/rural mix;
- 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 0969 or [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie) for more details.



# BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRENDS

Table 1: Dwellings by region (Floor Area Planned '000m<sup>2</sup>)

Region '000m <sup>2</sup>	Jan - Jun 2013	Jan - Jun 2014	Jan - Jun 2015	+-%
Dublin	251	203	383	89%
Border	79	59	91	54%
Mid East	61	65	183	182%
Midlands	27	32	36	13%
Mid West	39	52	56	8%
South East	121	66	79	20%
South West	96	85	129	52%
West	57	70	73	4%
Total Dwellings	731	632	1030	63%

Source: CSO. Courtesy of Tegral.

There has been an increase in floor area planned in all regions over the first half of 2015. The regions experiencing the most significant growth include the Mid East, Dublin and Border regions. The overall increase is significant at 63%. The West region's growth rate has slowed in the 2nd quarter of 2015. In quarter 1, it experienced a 25% increase on 2014, but in quarter 2, this showed a decrease of 34% on quarter 1 in 2014.

Table 2: Detailed Wholesale Price Indices (excluding VAT) for Building and Construction Materials

Materials	Index					Annual % Change
	Aug 2015	Sep 2015	Jul 2015	Aug 2015	Sep 2015	
Stone, sand and gravel	137.0	135.6	-0.3	0.1		6.5
Stone	136.3	134.9	-0.4	0.1		9.3
Sand and gravel	140.7	139.0	0.1	-0.4	-1.2	-6.3
Cement	100.6	100.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ready mixed mortar and concrete	101.2	100.9	-0.4	-0.1	-0.3	-2.4
Concrete blocks and bricks	108.9	108.9	0.8	-0.6	0.0	0.1
Other concrete products	100.7	101.0	0.7	0.0	0.3	1.9
Precast concrete	93.1	94.2	0.0	0.0	1.2	2.6
Other concrete products (Excluding precast concrete)	101.9	101.9	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.3
Structural steel and reinforcing metal	104.7	104.6	0.9	0.0	-0.1	1.4
Structural steel	103.1	103.1	1.7	0.0	0.0	3.4
Fabricated metal	104.2	104.2	2.1	0.0	0.0	4.1
Other structural steel	95.3	95.3	0.0	-0.1	0.0	-1.4
Reinforcing metal	107.1	107.0	-0.6	0.0	-0.1	-1.7
Other steel products	104.2	104.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
Rough timber (including plain sawn)	111.0	111.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hardwood	145.6	145.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Other	107.8	107.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3
Other timber	99.2	99.2	-4.2	0.0	0.0	-4.2
Windows and doors	100.3	100.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	97.8	97.8	-9.0	0.0	0.0	-9.0
Bituminous macadam, asphalt and bituminous emulsions	149.0	148.9	-1.1	-0.1	-0.1	6.4
Bituminous macadam and asphalt	151.7	151.6	-1.2	0.0	-0.1	7.4
Bituminous emulsions	96.6	93.4	-0.2	-2.8	-3.3	-20.4
Electrical fittings	107.2	107.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.3
Lighting equipment	109.4	109.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Protection & communication equipment	96.9	96.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
All other materials	111.0	110.8	-0.2	0.2	-0.2	1.1
Plumbing materials incl. sanitary ware	102.5	102.1	0.0	0.0	-0.4	1.4
HVAC (heating & ventilation equipment)	99.4	99.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Insulating materials	123.0	123.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.7
Pipes and fittings	121.5	121.5	-0.7	0.0	0.0	2.1
PVC	106.6	106.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9
Copper	127.2	127.2	-0.9	0.0	0.0	1.8
Plaster	107.3	107.2	-0.3	0.9	-0.1	4.6
Paints, oils and varnishes	103.0	103.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.2
Glass	128.3	128.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
All other metal fittings	100.4	100.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
All other products	108.8	108.4	-0.2	0.2	-0.4	0.6
<b>All materials</b>	<b>109.4</b>	<b>109.2</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>

All materials prices increased by 1.1% in the year since September 2014. The most notable yearly changes have been increases in Stone (+9.3%), Lighting equipment (+5.0%), and Plaster (+4.6%), while there were decreases in Other timber excluding windows and doors (-9.0%), Sand and gravel (-6.3%) and Ready mixed mortar and concrete (-2.4%).

All materials prices decreased by 0.2% in September from the previous month. See the table for more information. Source: CSO Detailed Wholesale Price Indices (excluding VAT) for Building and Construction Materials Oct 2015.

## ARMSTEAD OFFERS QUALITY OPTION TO DECORATORS



According to AkzoNobel, its new brand, Armstead, is a portfolio of essential trade products for the decorator looking for quality paints at a competitive price. Decorators will be familiar with the formulations for both the Glidden range of emulsions and Uno range of high gloss and undercoat, which have now been brought

together within a single brand, Armstead.

With a very strong presence in-store, and a pack which is clearly colour coded by product, this range has become a decorator's essential since its launch in the early part of this year, AkzoNobel report. Products in the range include Vinyl Matt & Soft Sheen, Acrylic Eggshell, Gloss, Undercoat & Eggshell, as well as some new products such as QD Wood Primer Undercoat and Red Oxide Primer.

## NEW ADDITIONS TO 7 SERIES COMBATS HEATING SYSTEM LEAKS

Contech Building Products, pioneer of the 7 Series of products, has launched a new solution to stop leaks in all types of heating systems.

Contech says one bottle of Plumb7 can be used to seal leaks in closed as well as open heating systems in both household and industrial applications. Contech advises that Plumb7 offers effective solutions for leaks in radiators, convectors, circulation pumps, central heating pipes and underfloor heating systems, among others.

According to a Contech spokesperson: "Plumb7 provides a quick and permanent seal that does not impair flow. Not only that, but in line with the innovative 7 Series, Plumb7 is simple to use, prevents rust and corrosion and enhances the pump lubrication.

"It is perfect as either a fast and effective solution to stop a leak or as preventative action to stop the occurrence of leaks in the first place. Plumb7 is the latest addition to the 7 Series, with Tec7 respected as the number one choice for those working in the construction trades."



## ABRACS EXTENDS PRODUCT RANGE IN BUSY 2015



Abracs has spent a large part of 2015 adding more products to its range of abrasive consumables.

Abracs has spent a large part of 2015 developing, innovating and rebranding, adding more products to its extensive range of abrasive consumables, according to its product development team.

Early 2015 saw the introduction of the Inox 115mm x 0.75mm ultra-thin cutting disc, the thinnest and fastest cutting disc in the range to date, Abracs says. Shortly after came the launch of the hybrid range, a

collection of products which includes the '5 in 1' multi-material disc, the '3 in 1' multi-use disc, and the 'Plus 20' flap disc which boasts 20% increased performance over a standard Abracs flap disc.

Spring saw the launch of the new Jigsaw blade range which has proven a great success among both existing and new customers. A re-developed range of electrician and plumber Hole Saw kits were released in early

summer, loaded with extra products and re-packaged to target the consumer with great success, Abracs says.

The most recent development has been the new and improved Diamond Blade Range.

The redeveloped range includes a healthy amount of new product innovations, a more comprehensive range of sizes and specs and a completely new and unique 'look and feel' to the consumer focused packaging, which was very much aided by customer input.

Abracs points to the Universal Construction Range, the Construction Blade Twin Pack, the new Core Complete range (a selection of dry diamond cores which come packaged with all accessories pre-fitted and ready to use) plus a comprehensive range of XL super-sized diameter blades as innovation highlights in the Diamond Cutting Tools range.

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## NEW CROWN TRADE FASTFLOW GLOSS SETS THE PACE



Crown Paints says it has invested heavily in research and development to ensure this new product offers the trade the right paint for both indoor and outdoor use.

Crown Trade reports that the results achieved by decorators testing its new water-based Fastflow Quick Dry Gloss led to calls for the product to be rolled out into full production as soon as possible. Now the wait is over, with Crown Trade Fastflow Quick Dry Gloss – complemented by Crown Trade Fastflow Quick Dry Primer Undercoat – on sale in Ireland. Crown Paints has invested heavily in research and development to ensure this new product offers the trade the right paint for the job for both indoor

and outdoor use.

Kevin Whelan, Crown Marketing Controller, said: "Reports from the decorators carrying out the trials were outstanding. Initial thoughts from the testers were that it looked like a full-bodied product. They felt Crown Trade Fastflow Quick Dry Primer Undercoat flowed well from brush to substrate, with real covering power, and that the application of Crown Trade Fastflow Gloss gave a nice, thick feel, which flowed well and offered a bright white finish."

## SNICKERS LAUNCHES NEW GENERATION OF WORK TROUSERS

For more than two years now, Snickers Workwear has been developing an entirely new generation of work trousers for professional craftsmen. Behind the launch lies immensely precise preliminary work involving in-depth interviews, workshops and tough tests to discover the properties that craftsmen really want and need. The result is a totally fresh concept featuring different trouser families that will set an entirely new benchmark on the market. The first of the latest range to hit the market are the RuffWork and FlexiWork work trousers.

RuffWork trousers are hardwearing and developed, Snickers says, for tough jobs in demanding environments. There is also a denim version for those who like the jeans look. FlexiWork are extremely flexible high-tech trousers in a stretch material for maximum freedom of movement. With the new trousers, comes a whole range of new solutions for enhanced comfort and function. Everything from new combinations of materials and stretch fabrics to smart ventilation and KneeGuard Pro.



FlexiWork, Ruffwork Denim and RuffWork Trousers, Flexiwork Hoodies and 1/2 zip Wool Sweater.

## UNITED HARDWARE ANNOUNCES CEO APPOINTMENT



United Hardware Ltd has announced the appointment of Patrick Cassidy as its new Chief Executive Officer. As CEO of one of Ireland's largest hardware groups, whose members primarily trade under the Homevalue and Arro retail brands, Patrick will

be responsible for developing a new strategy to grow the Group and enhance its business functions into the future.

Having pioneered Ireland's first DIY superstore through the Woodies retail group, Patrick went on to hold a number of senior positions including Country Manager of Homebase Ireland, Chief Executive Officer of ESB Retail Ltd, and most recently Director of Operations, Procurement, Property & Facilities Management of Certus. "I am honoured and very excited to have taken up the position of Chief Executive Officer at United Hardware

and I look forward to working with the existing team, and our members, as we focus on growing our network of members and strengthening the overall business," said Patrick.

Padraic Glynn, Chairman of United Hardware, commented: "Patrick brings a wealth of experience and I am delighted to welcome him to United Hardware. While the group's primary objective is to enhance the purchasing power of independent hardware retailers across the country, Patrick has a fantastic opportunity to significantly grow the size and scale of the business."

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## BORD NA MÓNA PUTS SUSTAINABILITY AT HEART OF ITS BUSINESS

Speaking at the launch of Bord na Móna's *Sustainability 2030 report*, CEO Mike Quinn announced the biggest change of use involving Irish land in modern history. By 2030, he said, 125,000 acres of bog land now being used to provide energy peat to three power stations will transition to new sustainable businesses and activities.

Mike Quinn, who was joined by Minister for Energy, Communications and Natural Resources, Alex White, commented: "For the past eight decades, we have underpinned Ireland's energy security by supplying peat from Irish bogs to power stations. We will use the land to continue to underpin Ireland's energy independence, only now we will be using green sustainable energy sources such as wind, biomass and solar power.

The company's fuels business will continue to supply the iconic peat briquette to its customers but is also developing new lower carbon, low smoke fuels, many of which will use the company's new supply of biomass."

Speaking on the plans to expand the company's product range, Bord na Móna Head of Fuels, Eddie Scaife, said: "This is about giving our customers more choice. Bord na Móna has embraced the migration to smokeless solid fuel in the 25 years since the Dublin ban, leading the market with a high-quality



At the Launch of Bord na Móna's *Sustainability 2030 report*: Eddie Scaife, Head of Fuels, Bord na Móna, and Minister for Energy, Communications and Natural Resources, Alex White.

smokeless solid fuel range, and we are continuing to develop and invest in the supply of high-quality, smokeless coal and bio-mass enhanced 'ovoids'." The proposed smokeless and biomass-based solid fuel manufacturing facility at Foynes, Co. Limerick, supports this strategy. Bord na Móna's investment in the development is estimated to be in the region of €25 million. The development will generate up to 140 jobs during the construction phase and approximately 60 jobs in the operation phase.

## FORTESSA WINNER

John Fitzgerald was the winner of a recent Fortessa competition organised by Laydex, exclusive distributors of Fortessa in Ireland. The competition was open to all who purchased Fortessa products during the summer. Pictured are: Tommy Lambert, Fortessa Sales Advisor, Heiton Buckley Santry; the winner John Fitzgerald; and Gerry Callan, Sales Director at Laydex Ltd.



## ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY PARTNERS WITH PETER MCVERRY TRUST

The electrical industry has joined forces to support the Peter McVerry Trust. Under the umbrella of the Construction Industry Federation, Winthrop Engineering Ltd., Schneider Electric and Rexel Ireland (M.Kelliher) have come together to help refurbish twelve houses for homeless people. Over the past year, the number of people in Dublin accessing homeless accommodation has been steadily increasing. By Q2 2015, there were over 3,000 individuals who had accessed homeless accommodation in Dublin. Joe Crawford, Customer Marketing Manager at Schneider Electric Ireland commented: "With Ireland's Environment Minister Alan Kelly announcing that Dublin's housing crisis was 'the single biggest issue facing the country' earlier this year, it was clear that something vital needed to be done. We're both proud and excited to be involved in such a worthwhile project which will help some of Dublin's most vulnerable residents this winter.

"It's a collaborative effort, led by the Peter McVerry Trust and Winthrop Engineering Ltd., who have led on the electrical installation of the project. Other contractors and companies, alongside Schneider Electric, up and down the country, have kindly donated both time and supplies to cover the cost of the build. This includes the demolition of the original site, fixtures like windows and doors and assistance with the plumbing and flooring at the site."

## SMOKY COAL BAN WELCOMED WITH CAUTION

Further to Minister Kelly's announcement about the introduction of a smoky coal ban nationwide by 2018, Hardware Association Ireland feels that this hasn't been fully scoped out in terms of the economic impact on the indigenous solid fuel industry.

Annemarie Harte, CEO of Hardware Association Ireland comments, "Whilst we welcome the inevitable health benefits of this announcement and we don't doubt the motivation, 2018 is an aggressive time frame for implementation. The announcement doesn't come as a huge surprise but solid fuel alternatives are simply not available in volume to cope with the outcome of the ban and there is no manufacturing capacity at present to support introduction of this ban in three years time. Furthermore we feel that this will only encourage the continuation of fuel smuggling from the North which continues to damage trade for our members and steal revenue from the Government". She continues "We look forward to the consultation process and outlining our members concerns to Government so we can come up with an industry agreed plan".

## EPA CLEAN AIR CONFERENCE



Head of Fuels, Bord na Móna, Eddie Scaife with Alan Kelly, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, and Laura Burke, Director General, Environmental Protection Agency, at the Environmental Protection Agency Clean Air Conference in Wood Quay Dublin, where the Minister announced the extension of the ban on bituminous coal nationwide.

## UPPERCROSS APPOINTMENT



Uppercross Enterprises have recently appointed Paul Thompson as their new Finance Director. Thompson was most recently CEO with Associated Hardware and previously worked with other companies within the Hardware sector including KAL and Mulveys Dundrum. Looking forward to his new role, Paul said: "I am very excited about this new position and the opportunities that exist for both Uppercross and Niko Ireland within the Irish hardware industry".

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Business: Hardware/DIY/Electrical

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Business: Builders Merchant, Hardware/DIY

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- ✓ Educational opportunities – dedicated courses, tutorials and online learning to upskill and develop you and your colleagues
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Regular surveys and intelligence about the industry – we are the only providers of hardware specific trends and developments including our monthly business index, wage survey and business confidence monitor.
- ✓ Business support services – HR advice, compliance information, member discounts and affinity schemes.



To find out more  
about how we can help you,  
visit [hardwareassociation.ie](http://hardwareassociation.ie)  
or call Jim on 01 298 0969  
or at [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie)

## HAI GOLF SOCIETY: HAIGS PRESIDENT'S PRIZE

Hardware Association Ireland Golfing Society President Frank McKeon's Prize event took place at Killeen Castle Golf Club, Dunsaney, Dunshaughlin, Co Meath, on Friday, 28th August, 2015. The event was again kindly sponsored by Tucks O'Brien.



HAIGS President Frank McKeon presenting winner Jim Copeland with his first place prize.



Donal Moulton, Tucks O'Brien, sponsor, presenting Michael McBride with his second place prize.



Donal Moulton, Tucks O'Brien, sponsor, with Frank McKeon, President, HAIGS and Mary Grennan, winner of the ladies' first prize with Ladies' Captain, Cathy O'Gorman.



First day team winners in Poland: Tom O'Connell, Willie Dixon, Barbara O'Connell and Dan Lynch.

GENTLEMEN'S PRIZE		POINTS	HANDICAP	
First Place	Jim Copeland	36	15	
Second Place	Michael McBride	35	15	
Third Place	Tony Anderson	32	8	
CLASS 1				
First place	Tim Lodge	33	11	
Second place	Martin Rowe	31	6	
CLASS 2				
First place	David Bolger	30	15	
Second place	Tom O'Connell	29	15	
CLASS 3				
First place	Michael O'Donoghue	29	28	BB9
Second place	Willie Dixon	29	25	
LADIES PRIZE				
First place	Mary Grennan	29	15	
Second place	Marian Kelly	25	30	
FRONT NINE				
First place	Kieran Burke	18	12	
BACK NINE				
First place	Eddie Kelly	16	14	
VISITORS				
First place	Seamus Ward	34		BB9
Second place	Paddy Kingham	34		

## HAI GOLF SOCIETY'S TRIP TO POLAND

The Hardware Association Ireland Golf Society trip to Sopot in Poland which took place from 21st to 28th September was a great success. Three days organised golf, a stay in the four-star Haffner Hotel and ideal weather was enjoyed by all. Special thanks to our sponsors Bostik, Crown Paints, Grafton Merchanting ROI and Tucks O'Brien for their kind support and also to Frank McKeon for organising the trip with our colleagues at Killester Travel.

## INTERNATIONAL HARDWARE FAIR

In March 2016, leaders in the hardware industry from around the world will meet in Germany at the International Hardware Fair. The International Hardware Fair will take place March 6th to March 8th in Cologne, Germany, and is organized by Koelnmesse, the group responsible for the world-renowned garden show, spoga+gafa. [eisenwarenmesse.com](http://eisenwarenmesse.com).

# PESTICIDE DIRECTIVE - KEY POINTS



The latest of our articles on how the Sustainable Use Pesticides Directive will impact on hardware retailers and builders merchants offers some handy reminders on key points relating to the regulations.

## Professional Use or Amateur Use Products

Plant Protection Products (PPPs) are categorised as either professional use or non-professional/amateur use products. Professional use products are products that may only be applied by Professional Users (PUs) who must be registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) from **26th November 2015**. Non-professional/amateur use products are those which may be used in a home garden situation by any person. Labels generally

indicate whether a product is for professional use or non-professional/amateur but the status of all registered products can be checked at [www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/pest.asp?searchType=prod](http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/pest.asp?searchType=prod)

## Training and registration

From **26th November 2015**, a registered distributor must be available, at all times, at the point of sale to ensure that adequate information is provided to customers about pesticide use and health and environmental risk and safety. In order to register as a Pesticide Distributor (PD), you must first be appropriately trained.

## Storage and display

Wholesale and retail premises involved in the storage and distribution of PPPs must comply with specific requirements depending on the category of PPP being handled. A maximum of 500 litres professional use PPPs may be stored in a retail/display area.

## Advice

Advice given by a PD is limited to general information regarding the risks posed by pesticides to human health and the environment, on storage requirements and on handling and safe disposal.

## Record keeping

Details of record keeping requirements for retailers of professional use PPPs can be accessed at [www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/pesticidedistributors/](http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/pesticidedistributors/). Detailed information available from [www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/](http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/)

Pesticides courses will continue to be organised by MBE Skillnet on a regional basis subject to demand and availability of funding into 2016. More details about courses coming to your area from Michael Lynch on 087 3594116 or [info@mbeskilnet.ie](mailto:info@mbeskilnet.ie)



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# POST-BUDGET 2016

## – Implications for hardware sector and builders merchants



HAI have welcomed the extension of the Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) scheme to December 31st, 2016.

**Looking ahead to 2016, the welcome extension of the Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) is accompanied by a number of measures in Budget 2016 that will impact on the hardware and builders merchants sector.**

Hardware Association Ireland welcomed the extension of the Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) scheme to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 at September's National Ploughing Championship by Minister Noonan. There were no further announcements in relation to the scheme when the Budget was formally announced on the 13<sup>th</sup> October, two years since the scheme was introduced, and which, to date, has seen over €624 million (as at 22<sup>nd</sup> October) spent on 40,477 works involving 28,911 properties with those taking up the scheme spending an average of €15,430 mainly on home extensions and general repairs and renovations.

Annemarie Harte, Chief Executive of HAI commented on the extension of the scheme saying: "We called on Government to extend the scheme by 24 months until the end of 2017 to allow greater penetration into rural areas as the majority of works, almost 70%, are being carried out in Dublin and surrounding counties. "We're disappointed that we didn't get the full 24 months; however, another 12 months of the scheme will support both consumers and our retailers and merchants, and indeed our whole supply chain. We believe this will allow the rest of the country to catch up and benefit from this incentive, and continue to boost our sector so badly affected by the downturn and construction crash." There were three other main points relevant to members from the announcement of Budget 2016:

### 1. Supporting retailers by reducing costs and incentivising electronic payments

Minister Noonan stated: "Retailers in Ireland currently face excessive fees for accepting card payments. A new EU regulation is halving the interchange fees faced by retailers to 30 basis points for credit cards. The corresponding fee for

debit cards is to be halved to 10 basis points. These changes come into effect on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December this year."

### 2. Reduced transportation costs

The simplification of commercial motor tax rates was announced, The 20 existing rates will be replaced with just five rates of commercial motor tax, ranging from €92 to €900, with effect from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The most significant reductions are concentrated on the larger goods vehicles. The maximum rate of commercial motor tax will be €900 per annum, down from €5,195.

### 3. Employer PRSI increase of the entry point to the top rate

The lower 8.5% Class A rate of employer PRSI is being extended, from January, to weekly earnings up to €376 (up from €356). HAI will continue to campaign over the next 12 months for the other items we recommended to Government in our Budget 2016 manifesto including:

- Introducing a voucher system for winter fuel allowance;
- Combating cross-border fuel smuggling;
- Commercial rate reduction/relief for yards/temporary structures;
- Promoting Prompt Payment;
- Bring the Construction Contracts Bill into law;
- VAT back in rural areas for one-off houses of <1200 sq. ft.; and
- Corporation tax allowance on profits <€50,000.

HAI collaborated with other representatives of industry through the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation's

Number of works	40,477
Number of properties	28,911
Total estimated value of works	€624,589,405
Average value of works	€15,430
Total number of contractors	6,341

Table 1: General HRI statistics

Retail Consultation Forum (RCF) chaired by the Minister for Business and Employment, Ged Nash TD. The Forum was established in May 2014 under the Action Plan for Jobs 2014, to provide a platform for the retail sector to engage with relevant Government departments on issues relevant to the sector. It is aimed at identifying issues of concern, particularly those preventing the sector from achieving growth in jobs, and to assist the sector in identifying future opportunities to pursue.

Members of the Forum produced a joint submission that was sent to the Minister for Finance and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in advance of the Budget in June. The Forum meets approximately four times per year and the most recent meeting in October established a number of working groups including one for online retailing and e-commerce infrastructure for the retail sector. The digital economy is transforming the retail sector and the RCF believes that it is essential that the Irish retail sector maximises the opportunities presented by the digital economy in order to survive, revive and thrive over the coming years. Adapting to the new ways of retailing is a key challenge for all members of the retail sector. It is particularly challenging for small retailers and for retailers across the many towns and villages in Ireland, none more so than hardware and builders merchants, a sector lagging behind some others, notably fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) and the travel industry, with their online offering. Is it a case of not having the time or the inclination to get involved with online? Is it not for you but for someone younger in the business? Or maybe it's the case that retailers and merchants don't understand where online 'fits' with its traditional business?

Whatever the answer, in the meantime, Screwfix.ie will feature in yet another ad on the radio or TV. The next edition of *The Hardware Journal* will focus on the threat of Screwfix.ie to traditional business in Ireland and whether consumers will stop making that trip to their local hardware store.

## Implications of 2016 Budget for the construction sector

Budget 2016 introduced a number of significant measures to the construction sector including: the aforementioned extension of the Home Renovation Incentive, tax equalisation between the self-employed and employees with the phased introduction of earned income credit which will benefit self-employed and proprietary directors; NAMA's target to deliver 20,000 residential units before 2020; as well as Minister Howlin's announcements in respect

County	Number of Properties	Number of Works	Value of Works €M
Carlow	219	309	2.99
Cavan	181	221	2.67
Clare	487	645	7.69
Cork	3,278	4,668	66.35
Donegal	201	264	3.56
Dublin	13,604	19,250	343.48
Galway	1,198	1,691	24.66
Kerry	547	745	9.52
Kildare	1,574	2,180	27.23
Kilkenny	421	556	7.65
Laois	177	240	2.97
Leitrim	105	125	1.71
Limerick	904	1,285	15.66
Longford	103	145	1.46
Louth	445	561	7.07
Mayo	358	484	6.4
Meath	1,008	1,388	17.38
Monaghan	111	147	1.7
Offaly	222	293	3.5
Roscommon	251	361	3.58
Sligo	302	441	6.93
Tipperary	683	897	12.09
Waterford	518	708	9.56
Westmeath	411	573	6.72
Wexford	540	738	9.4
Wicklow	1,118	1,555	22.62
Total	28,966	40,470	624.53*

Table 2: Breakdown of the number of properties registered, works carried out and their estimated values by county.

of continued investment under the Government's Social Housing Strategy. The reduction in the three rates of USC is intended to benefit employees and the self-employed in the sector.

An earned income tax credit of €550 is being introduced to better the position of the self-employed, while a reduced Capital Gains Tax rate of 20% will apply to the disposal in whole, or in part, of a business up to an overall limit of €1million in chargeable gains. An expansion to the funding limits from €5million to €10million for the Employment and Investment Scheme was also announced.

In addition, cuts were announced to all three levels of the USC. The top rate will reduce from 7% to 5.5% for income earned in excess of €18,668 and up to €70,044. The 3.5% rate will reduce to 3%, for income earned between €12,012 to an increased threshold of €18,668, while the 1.5% applying to income on the first €12,012 will reduce to 1%. These cuts reduce the marginal rate of tax to below 49.5% for all earners under €70,044 for the first time since 2009.

# MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2015

A look at some key findings from this year's survey. Thanks to all those members who kindly completed the member satisfaction survey which was open between September 24<sup>th</sup> and October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Your participation is very important to us as a member-driven association. We have spent the last year researching, devising and implementing a three-year strategic plan for the Association and are almost at the end of the first year business plan, so monitoring it to see if it's making a difference is very important to us.

## In summary

- Member participation was up 51% from 2014 particularly among distributors/suppliers and manufacturers. In total, 125 members completed the survey, 42% of all members.
- Regional participation increased in Dublin and Connacht/Ulster but dropped in Munster.
- Industry information remains the most important service provided.
- Representation/lobbying has dropped in importance since last year and training/skills development and market intelligence have increased in importance.
- The monthly business index is the most popular new service. In all, 75% of respondents have seen a noticeable improvement in services/communications since 2014.
- Recommendation of the Association to others has increased by 15% to 84%.
- *The Hardware Journal* remains the most important communications tool.

## New look magazine

Given your feedback both from the survey and in answer to what improvements you would like to see in this magazine, we have already initiated a number of changes. From the next edition, the January/February edition of The Hardware Journal, we will have a fresher look and feel and a new masthead to bring it in line with our HAI logo. This will ensure that those picking up, reading and advertising in the magazine understand that it is the official publication of Hardware Association Ireland. We are also introducing more trends and developments in retail, merchanting and manufacturing, as well as interviews with industry leaders and innovators from home and abroad. These were the two most popular items of improvement according to the survey that could be made to the magazine.

## Adding more value

Although we are delighted that you have increased your faith in the Association to recommend it to a colleague, we have some way to go to get to 100%. Next year, we will work on adding more value to the Association for all our members

including introducing a new sector specific conference (see page 19 for more details) and providing you with more statistics for planning and training for your needs. If there is any specific aspect of the Association that you'd like to discuss in more detail, please contact Annemarie on 083 186 4135 or email: [Annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:Annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie)

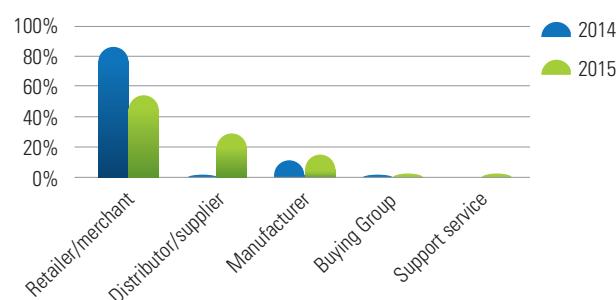


Figure 1. Composition of members who completed the membership satisfaction survey.

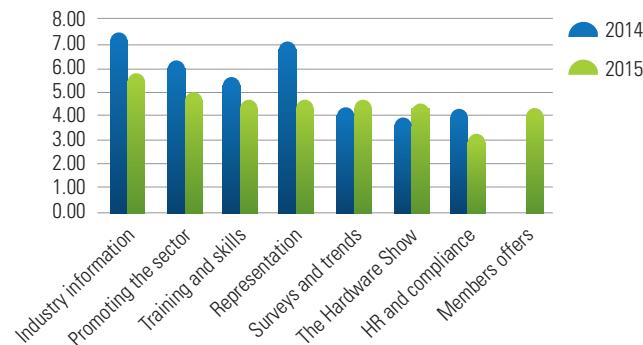


Figure 2. Services that are important to Members in order of importance.

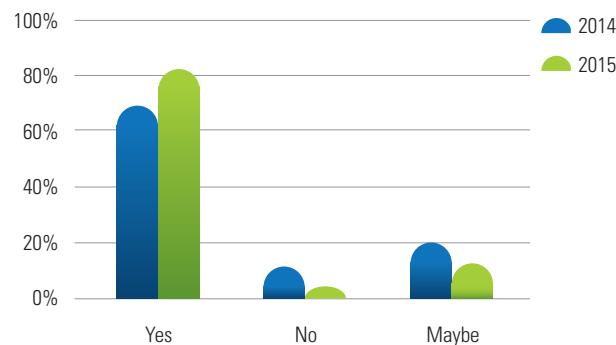


Figure 3. Would you recommend membership of the Association to your colleagues in the industry?

# SAVE THE DATE

## 6<sup>TH</sup>/7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL



Thanks to the support of our sponsors, Ames True Temper, Bostik, Dulux, Glennon Brothers, Gyproc, Irish Cement, Kingspan, Sanbra Fyffe, Tegral and Wavin, we are able to bring you the first dedicated conference for hardware and builders merchants titled 'Your future - opportunities and threats'.



HAI brings you a host of industry and best-in-class speakers who will be talking about your sector and providing you with specific advice about the future of the sector – what you need to be prepared for and what you need to be aware of. Located in the beautiful setting of the Lyrath Estate Hotel in Kilkenny, the Conference will run from the evening of Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April until 4.30pm day Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April. PUT THE DATES IN YOUR DIARY!

### Location:

The luxury, sophistication and style of the Lyrath Estate Hotel are unsurpassed. Set in 170 acres of mature parkland, complete with picturesque lakes, the Estate is the definitive country resort. Located just 1.2 km from Kilkenny City, the 139-bedroom and multi-award winning, five-star hotel with spa offers some of the finest accommodation, dining and

conference facilities in Ireland.

Mid-way between Cork and Dublin with a journey time of approximately 90 minutes either way and with the same journey time from Galway, it is conveniently located off the M7 motorway and beside the cobbled streets of Kilkenny City. The city, overlooked by the majestic towers of Kilkenny's 12th century castle, is on the banks of the river Nore and home to the National Craft Gallery. Those looking to extend their stay for some adventure can follow well signposted cycling trails and scenic loop walks.

### Speakers

The Conference will begin on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April with evening dinner and a guest speaker.

The following day, the Conference starts at 9am with a number of dedicated speakers outlining opportunities and threats, including the founder of the highly successful customer service coaching programme 'You are the difference', Alf Dunbar, and leading consumer and shopper behaviouralist, Ken Hughes.

### SPECIAL OFFER:

**Book before 31<sup>st</sup> January and be entered into a draw for overnight accommodation on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April in the Penthouse suite at The Lyrath. It features separate sitting and reading rooms with massage chairs and a dining room. Special touches include fresh flowers, wine and chocolates, and a gas fire. This is an opportunity not to be missed, all you have to do is book early!**

### Delegate registration fee

To register for the Hardware Conference, please visit

[www.hardwareassociation.ie](http://www.hardwareassociation.ie)

- Members fee: €150
- Non-members fee: €250

(The fee includes dinner the evening before and the conference the following day).

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*Bob Jeffery*  
ROB JEFFERY  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

## 2015 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, WHAT A YEAR!

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A section of DS Supplies' new showroom.



Derek Doyle, Managing Director of DS Supplies Ltd.

# GRASS IS GREENER AT DS SUPPLIES

Annemarie Harte, CEO of HAI, visited DS Supplies at their new offices in Rathcoole and found an innovative organisation with a portfolio of quality products ranging from Trojan flooring to green and white artificial grass.

DS Supplies, importer and distributor of high quality flooring and accessories along with DIY products and garden materials moved into their new offices in June. The neat showroom, which also functions as a reception area, is pristine and a walk up to the first floor offices displays brand new laminate on the open plan space with selected point of sale starting to occupy the fringes. "We're being clever with the extra space we have since the move. Utilising the space so that our customers can see and touch our products first hand," says Derek Doyle, Managing Director of DS Supplies Ltd.

## Longstanding HAI member

DS Supplies has been in business since 1998 and has been a member of HAI all that time. Derek, who has been in the trade all his career, including stints with Basta, Chadwicks

and Woodies, likes to be a member of several business associations so that he can cherry pick the best bits of each: "When the banks stopped lending we had to look for alternative sources of finance so we started talking to Intertrade, Microfinance Ireland and Bluestone, a multi-national financial services business. We wouldn't have known what was available to us without the support of the trade bodies."

Innovation has played a major role in managing the business through the recession. "The flooring market was becoming a six-month 'year' so we started looking at outdoor products and moved into artificial grass and hedging under the GreenFx brand," comments Derek; this was when I was introduced to white artificial grass. I suddenly started thinking of the endless possibilities for use of white grass – in shop fronts, ice rinks, even fashion shows! The more traditional green artificial grass has also caught

Trojan Combi-One flooring.



my eye, and Derek tells me they've just taken an order through their partner for The Wright Venue (a very large night spot in north Dublin). This grass is realistic-looking enough and perfect for dog owners who don't have the time or inclination to cut the grass but can easily scoop up poo with no unsightly discolouring. Derek says that since the crash, they monitor their top products. Seeking new markets and looking for exciting new products is now at the forefront of prospering in business.

## Flooring the opposition

DS Supplies' registered flooring brand, Trojan, is over 11 years old and is a recognised brand within the flooring trade. "We are constantly delivering innovative solutions such as the recently launched one-for-all system, Combi-One floor profile, which is suitable for a wide range of wood floor types from 7mm-21mm thickness and acts as a reducer and/or level transition strip, therefore bridging different floor heights and reducing stock holding for our retail customers." DS Supplies visited its first show in the UK in 2008. Derek says he needed to give his reps mental therapy if nothing else when the depths of the recession started to take hold here and was astounded that, by mid-morning on day one that, they had numerous enquiries including one from a large multi-branch business. Derek is now a regular show-goer. He chooses them carefully, but rates the International Hardware Show in Cologne and Spoga, the garden trade fair, also in Cologne next September, as must-attend events.

## Innovative marketing

Innovation continues to be the buzzword when it comes to marketing although Derek admits that they still produce printed brochures in volume, mainly because many customers prefer them to a PDF download.

He notes: "Despite the advance of social media, sales reps are still a very valuable part of our business." In this respect the market in Ireland is very traditional and hasn't adopted many of the marketing and communications techniques that other sectors have.

"That hasn't stopped DS Supplies, who have a responsive website, catering for customers both on a local and global

perspective. "We forget sometimes that the internet allows us to display our product to the world. It is an essential part of spreading awareness of our business mix to help ensure that we may never again be caught in hard times, the likes of which we have experienced in recent years," says Derek. DS Supplies' website is attractive and uncluttered with some excellent photography of product and Derek says that this will be an investment area for 2016. "We aim to take on someone full-time as the role is currently appended to someone else's job and we want to maximise our capability of supporting existing customers and reaching prospective



A winter wonderland made of white artificial grass.

customers." As well as creating content for the website, Derek uses this content and photography to help his customers with their websites. So what does Derek see as an opportunity and a threat in the New Year? "Our customers becoming competitors is definitely worrying as they buy direct from manufacturers and increased competition in the marketplace." Despite these concerns, he is confident in the future potential of the business: "We feel we have increasing opportunities to grow as we continue to serve our customers by providing added value support. And, now that we have created our showroom, we are also finding that more buyers are visiting us."

**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.**



# MAXIMISE SALES AND DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

In spring 2016, HAI will be running two one-day customer service and sales skills courses.

These are two highly interactive workshops tailored to the needs of the hardware trade. There will be two streams of each workshop; one tailored for Hardware Retailers and Builders Merchants, and the other for Suppliers. Demonstrations, as well as individual and group exercises and discussions, along with participant practice, will be used to reinforce learning.

## CONSULTATIVE SELLING SKILLS

### Aim:

To equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills in order to maximise every selling opportunity with a customer.

### Content:

- How to positively open a sale using a greeting and a leading statement.
- Using open and closed questions to effectively establish customers' needs and wants.
- Defining and giving examples of the features, advantages and benefits (FAB) of products and services sold.
- Explaining how to match the products and services sold with customer needs and wants.
- How to turn customer objections in to a reason for buying.
- Demonstrating the five main ways to successfully close a sale.
- The Five-Step Process of Consultative Sales Techniques.

## MEMORABLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

### Aim:

To equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver excellence in customer service.

### Content:

- Define 'customer service'
- The meaning and significance of memorable customer service to a business.
- What Customer Service 'is not.'
- The three pillars of customer satisfaction (product, convenience and human factors).
- The role of an employee in meeting the three pillars of customer satisfaction.
- The 'ABC' of face-to-face memorable Customer Service (attitude, behaviour and competence).

### CONSULTATIVE SELLING SKILLS

Suppliers: 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016

Retailers and Merchants: 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2016

### MEMORABLE CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Suppliers: 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2016

Retailers and Merchants: 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2016

### LOCATION:

Citywest Hotel, Dublin

Cost: Per Day: Members €200, Non- Members €250

To book your place please contact Amanda Creane on [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie) or 01 298 0969, places are limited please book early to avoid disappointment.

### About the Trainer



Susan Madden is a highly experienced trainer, with a particularly high level of experience in the hardware sector. Susan holds an MSc in Human Resource Development and Performance Management and is a graduate of the Babson Strategic Planning and Retail Management Programme with the Babson School of Executive Education in the US. In 2007, Susan developed the first major FETAC award in retail at Level 4 and Level 6. From 2009 to 2011, Susan was responsible for the development of various FETAC Common Award Modules at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

In addition, Susan has worked with a number of Irish and international retail companies on bespoke consultancy-based projects including the development of Standard Operating Procedures and Performance Management Systems. Susan participated in the making of

the Television series, Feargal Quinn's Retail Therapy in 2010 and 2011. In 2012, she designed and developed Ireland's first certified eLearning Courses with City & Guilds for the retail sector.

## SOLID FUEL AWARENESS TRAINING – DISCOUNT TO HAI MEMBERS

HAI and METAC training have joined forces to promote a new solid fuel awareness training initiative.



At the recent launch of the solid fuel awareness training initiative: Owen Power, Commercial Director, Waterford Stanley; Hugh O'Donnell, Chief Executive, Amalgamated Hardware plc and President, HAI; Eddie Scaife, Head of Fuels, Bord na Móna; and Kieran Burke, Commercial Director, Grafton Merchandising ROI and Vice President, HAI.

The training has been developed as a result of a collaboration between METAC Training, Waterford Stanley, Bord na Móna and Grafton Merchandising ROI. Together, they identified a need for Hardware Stores and Builders Merchants to be better informed about the sale of solid fuel appliances and to have enhanced awareness of the information they can provide to customers purchasing solid fuel appliances, which are a large investment.

METAC Training is the largest energy training and assessment centre in Ireland and the UK and trains approximately 2,700 people annually. Based in Mountrath, Co. Laois, with hands-on practical workshops and training rooms, it is easily accessible just off the M7. All courses are independently run, certified and verified by external agencies.

Martin Meade from Telfords, Portlaoise has already used the training for his staff: *“Our sales staff found the solid fuel awareness course not only very beneficial but a necessity when engaged in the sale of solid fuel appliances. The course delved into all aspects of solid fuel awareness in great detail including legislation, fuel types, carbon monoxide and ventilation to name but a few sections covered by the training. The training course has made the staff more confident in addressing any query a customer may have on solid fuel appliances and has helped in increasing sales of add-on products.”*

The solid fuel awareness course is a one-day training programme aimed at providing participants with the knowledge to enable them to assist customers in choosing the correct solid fuel appliance and to recognise installation and fuel requirements. This course is available at METAC Training centres around the country and incorporates the following units of learning:

- Unit 1:** Show an awareness of the solid fuel legislation that applies to work in dwellings.
- Unit 2:** Know and be able to identify solid mineral fuels and the factors affecting fuel selection.
- Unit 3:** Know the basic operating principle of solid fuel appliances.

- Unit 4:** Show an awareness of the factors that affect the selection of solid fuel appliances and be able to identify appliances and determine minimum operating efficiencies.
- Unit 5:** Know the principles of safe combustion of solid fuel.
- Unit 6:** Show an awareness of the ventilation requirements for solid fuel appliances in dwellings.
- Unit 7:** Show an awareness of the standards applying to chimneys and flue systems.
- Unit 8:** Show an awareness of the requirements of the hearth and fire surrounds.
- Unit 9:** Show an awareness of the different methods of linking solid fuel fired appliances with existing appliances.
- Unit 10:** Show an awareness of unsafe solid fuel situations.

**HAI members are offered 10% off the standard course cost of €150 making the cost €135 for the one-day training.**

Two other courses are on offer that Hardware and Builders Merchants might like to recommend to their trade customers:

1. The dry solid fuel stove installer course is a five-day training course for construction professionals and aims to provide participants with the knowledge and understanding to enable them to install dry stoves to meet customer requirements, building regulations and standards. On successful completion candidates will receive an OFTEC 18-108-IRL (Dry) certificate.
2. The wet solid fuel stove installer course is a further three-day training course for plumbers with an OFT15-108 IRL certificate. This course includes open heating systems and interlinking heating systems. These courses are designed to meet current demands as advised by industry leaders who are directly involved in the development of all three courses.

METAC's Training well-appointed training rooms utilise the most up-to-date equipment and materials on the Irish market in line with existing standards and regulations, including various styles of stoves, air ventilation requirements, fixed and mobile flues constructed to allow the participant full examination of correct installations.

**Next course dates are: December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>  
January 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>**

Further dates will be organised as these dates fill. And alternative dates and locations will be set to meet demand. Enquiries for these courses can be made to METAC Training on 057 8756540 or [info@metac.ie](mailto:info@metac.ie) Please mention your HAI membership to avail of your discount. Further information is also available on the METAC Training website, [www.metac.ie](http://www.metac.ie)

Chadwick's Kilkenny has achieved a remarkable turnaround in the last five years.



# TEAMWORK AND FRESH IDEAS BRING NEW IMPETUS TO CHADWICKS KILKENNY

**Chadwicks, Ormonde Retail Park, Kilkenny won both the national and Leinster category awards in the Octabuild Builders Merchant Awards 2015. Manager Tony Duggan spoke to *The Hardware Journal* about the remarkable turnaround that the store has achieved in the last five years.**

Tony took up his role as Manager of Chadwicks Kilkenny at the end of 2009 just as the downturn was at its sharpest. Prior to taking charge in the Kilkenny store, he had been Manager with Heiton Buckley in Callan. Moving to the Management position at Chadwick's meant taking on responsibility for a larger business, but that was the least of the challenges he faced: "Demand from the construction sector had collapsed and the throughput of business that was being done just couldn't support the scale of the operation."

## Dramatic transformation

The only remedy was radical change. "It was a very difficult period for everyone involved. The numbers employed went from 36 to 14. The whole nature of the business mix had to be rethought and a new whole new approach had to be taken."

With a customer base made up predominantly of builders and tradespeople, it was critical in the changed market conditions that the store developed a strong appeal to the female customer.

From a layout perspective, there were three major phases in the store's dramatic transformation. The first phase took place in March 2010. "At that time, there was no dedicated retail showroom for floors and doors and I knew that had to change." An extensive refurbishment introduced a dedicated showroom space and created a more open and accessible layout. "That had a noticeable impact on the retail customer

footfall, drawing a lot more customers to visit the store." The second major layout change, which was initiated in 2012, was part of an overall strategy to increase business with the trade sector, particularly plumbing businesses: "Demand from the plumbing trade was steady and consistent and we identified that area as having significant potential. We held a special reception for our plumbing contractor clientele and over 80 turned up. We asked them what improvements they'd like to see in the store. At the time, our plumbing product ranges were integrated within our overall building materials department, and they asked us if we could split them up. From the customer point of view, a dedicated plumbing department would be faster and more efficient.

"We looked at the feasibility of separating the two and developing a dedicated area for plumbing products. We re-organised our layout and developed a large Plumbing Centre within the store. All our plumbing products are now organised in a dedicated space that aims to make the purchasing experience as streamlined, efficient and fuss-free as possible for plumbing customers."

The third major phase of change came about in 2013 as a result of a meeting with staff where ideas for improvements were brainstormed. "Out of that meeting, we looked again at our shelving arrangements throughout the shop. We threw out the existing shelving and introduced lower shelving, with an emphasis again on ease of accessibility. The new shelving design added to the shop's visual appeal



The sales desk.

and was more practical and easier to use for customers and staff alike."

The culmination of an intensive period of change for the store came with the amalgamation of the hardware retailer, Universal Providers, with the Chadwicks store to create a single, stronger business at Ormonde Retail Park.

## Positive signs

The effectiveness of the changes is evident in the store in 2015 with footfall now ranging between 150 and 300 people per day and a strengthening of staff numbers, which are now up to 19. "We've seen definite signs of improvement. We now have a situation where people are coming through the door consistently throughout the day. Are we where we

want to be? No, but we're moving in the right direction." Tony is particularly proud of the team that's in place at the store. "They're smart, hardworking and constantly looking for ways to improve the store and the services that we provide." Staff training is a continuous process and the store works closely with all its major suppliers to ensure staff are up to date with regulatory issues and product innovations. "Staff members are regularly invited to factory facilities where products are manufactured so they can see for themselves the processes and materials involved and deepen their understanding of a particular product's spec and features."

The support of Chadwicks was an important factor in the store's resurgence, Tony says: "It was a real advantage to have the backing of Chadwicks as we went through the

### LESSONS LEARNED

**Looking back on what has been a challenging transition for the store, Tony sees some key lessons that must not be forgotten, even as Chadwick's Kilkenny continues to grow and as the wider industry recovers.**

#### 1. CUSTOMER SERVICE

"The customer has to be your number one priority. Attention to detail is important. Our staff make a point of greeting everyone who comes through the door. And it's important that the store is well laid out, neat and tidy. The customer has to be able to find what they want quickly if they're in a hurry and if he or she wants to browse, they must be able to do so in comfort."

#### 2. CREDIT MANAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL

"It's vital to manage credit effectively and rigorously.

**We stick closely to our credit deadlines. We also do a lot of checking and cross-checking before we offer credit terms."**

#### 3. RETAIL IS A VITAL BUSINESS STREAM

"Developing our appeal to the female customer and focusing on our retail consumer business was a survival strategy during the downturn but that side of the business will only become stronger in the future. Attractive layouts, attentive staff and imaginative promotions are key elements in developing this side of the business."



The yard has been re-organised for greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

whole process. It instilled confidence, both in the team instore and in our customers."

As a fundamental principle of the business, Tony stays close to his customers and ensures that there's plenty of communication back and forth. "You've got to keep in close touch with your customers, to know what they like and what they don't like in the store. I like to keep in informal contact on an ongoing basis but we also have structured events in place such as our two annual open days in spring and autumn."

The most recent open day was on Saturday, October 3rd. "We had the Liam McCarthy Cup on the premises throughout the day and we organised a wide range of discounts and special offers. The open days create a real buzz around the place and on the October open day, we recorded over a thousand transactions."

Tony consults regularly with staff to get their feedback on any store initiatives. "A lot of our best ideas for the store have come from the staff. For instance, one of the team suggested that we have a dedicated van parking area in our yard. That's been a really useful addition, improving our use of space and allowing vans to access and exit the yard with much greater ease."

## Busy yard

The yard is busy again, although not at its pre-2008 levels. "We've outsourced our transport fleet requirements with a view to increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our delivery system. All our trucks are generally loaded and out of the yard by 9am with their first deliveries. The trucks average 12-13 deliveries per day. Of course, we'd like to be busier but we're growing steadily from a low level."

Tony says it's very much a two-tier recovery and counties like Kilkenny and Carlow have still to see an emphatic lift-off in demand. "Things are improving, but slowly."

The store has two reps travelling all over Kilkenny and Carlow to ensure that Tony and his team are fully informed on trends in demand across the region. "They're both steeped in the industry. One has more than 25 years' experience, the other has been over 40 years in the business, so between them that's a lot of knowledge and a lot of long-established relationships and contacts. They keep us up to speed on any new projects starting up and on what's happening on the ground generally."

One trend that Tony doesn't see changing in a hurry is

the slow growth in housebuilding: "Financing is still a big issue and the scale of the deposits that are required from prospective home buyers is onerous. No one wants to go back to the craziness of the boom, but Government will have to recognise that without some innovative policy developments, the housebuilding sector will take a long time to get back on its feet."

One way or another, Chadwicks Kilkenny will continue to look for opportunities for growth wherever it can find them, he says: "This sector is extremely competitive. You have to constantly make the calls. You have to be out there chasing business all the time. It's certainly not going to come looking for you. We're fortunate that we have a strong team in place that's ready and willing to fight for every scrap."

## NATIONAL OCTABUILD WINNERS 2015



Tony Duggan, Manager, Chadwicks, Ormonde Retail Park, Kilkenny (right) receiving the Octabuild National Builders Merchant of the Year Award from Tadhg Donohoe, Chairman, Octabuild.

"We were delighted to be chosen as the national award winners at the Octabuild Builders Merchants Awards this year," Tony Duggan says. "It's

tremendous recognition for what the Chadwicks Kilkenny team has achieved through their hard work and commitment, and the platform provided by being part of the larger Chadwicks family."

"We're fortunate to enjoy great customer loyalty, built on excellent customer service, comprehensive stocks and competitive pricing. We're mindful that we're just one store within a larger organisation. Chadwick's, as part of the Grafton Group Plc, gives us the benefit of being part of Ireland's largest builders merchants, but, crucially, they are focused on serving the local market and understand what it takes to be a success at a local level."

# HAI MEMBER OFFERS AND 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.

Our Member offers and discounts are exclusive to Members of HAI. You can access the list by logging into the Members' Area (please register if you have not already done so), entering the 'Business Support' page and clicking on 'Member Offers'.



## Energia

HAI has partnered with Energia in the provision of an Energy Efficiency Funding Scheme 'Cash for Kilowatts' that gives retailers up to 30% of the cost of the project. Replacing lighting, as well as upgrading heating systems, refrigeration, variable speed drives and air compressor, is all included in the funding scheme. For further information, please contact Jim or Amanda on 01 289 0969.



## HMCA

Hospital & Medical Care Association (HMCA) is now offering HAI Members up to 25% off the following plans: Care Cash, Life, Dental, Travel, Personal Accident and Vehicle Breakdown. Please call Donna or Lisa on 01 613 0316 for an informal chat or go to [www.hmctaireland.ie/hai.htm](http://www.hmctaireland.ie/hai.htm)



## Promopos

Promopos is offering 20% off to HAI Members who become 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@documation.ie](mailto:bill@documation.ie) or 01-653 5008 [www.promopos.com](http://www.promopos.com)



## Imagine

Imagine will provide a free audit of your current phone bill. HAI has also negotiated discounted rates available to all

## Discounts

We are currently negotiating discounted rates on the following: Merchant Terminals & POS Systems and insurance, and we will continue to source other discounts relevant to your business. If you have any suggestions or enquiries, please contact Amanda Creane on 01 298 0969 or [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie)

members. Contact David Walsh at email: [david.walsh@imaginegroup.ie](mailto:david.walsh@imaginegroup.ie) or 086 173 8243



## Repak

HAI negotiated competitive Repak membership rates for the hardware and building materials' sector. Repak are also offering HAI members new to Repak 5% off their rates until February 28th, 2016. Find out more at [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) or call 01 467 0190.

## Networking and Training



HAI Supplier Members can avail of discount advertising rates in *The Hardware Journal*, as well as discounts on stands at The Hardware Show. HAI hold a busy training schedule throughout the year; both online and offline member training rates are heavily discounted. The classroom schedule for the first quarter of 2016 includes Social Media, Sales, Customer Service and Credit Control. Until January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016, Members can also exclusively access free New Employee Induction Training on HAI's e-Learning platform. In April 2016, HAI will be holding The Hardware Conference, see further details on page 20.

Not a HAI Member?  
For membership enquiries, please contact Jim on 087 667 1361 or [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie)



# FREE HSA ONLINE TOOL HELPS RISK-ASSESS YOUR STORE

The HSA has launched a new, improved version of its online risk assessment tool, **BeSMART.ie**, which now includes risk assessments for Builders Merchants and Hardware Stores. Can you afford to have an accident in your workplace? Will your business survive it? The last thing that any small business needs is a worker or customer getting hurt on their premises. Unfortunately, 15,000 small businesses in Ireland experience a workplace accident each year – that's one in six – with an average cost of over €9,000 to each business involved, and an average compensation pay out of €32,000. Add to that the fact that small businesses often rely on one or two key employees, and the impact following the loss of a key employee due to prolonged absence after a workplace accident can be devastating.

## Proactive safety management

So how do you protect yourself and your employees and thereby protect your business? It's simple – you need to proactively manage health and safety to minimise the chance of an accident occurring.

Under Irish health and safety law all employers, including the self-employed, must prepare written risk assessments and put together a safety statement for their business. But what does this actually mean? It means looking at your workplace and your work activities and deciding what could cause harm, who might be harmed, how serious could that harm be and what is the likelihood of it happening.

To help businesses comply with this legal requirement, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) launched an online risk assessment tool called **BeSMART.ie** in 2011.

**BeSMART.ie** allows business owners and managers to prepare risk assessments specific to their business in a way that is user-friendly, available 24/7 and free of charge. The benefits of using this unique service include:

- fewer accidents;
- less paperwork;
- less cost;
- less absenteeism; and,
- simplified health and safety.

**BeSMART.ie** is a confidential service that aims to save you time and money and help you identify measures to protect you and your workers and reduce the chances of an accident.

## Simple and straightforward

**BeSMART.ie** guides you through the risk assessment process in a way that is simple and straightforward. Not only is this method easier than starting from scratch, a safety statement produced using **BeSMART.ie** already contains relevant information and templates, so it saves valuable time.

**BeSMART.ie** is written in plain English and guides you through a four-step process, starting with searching for your business type, e.g. Hardware Store, and ending with printing

off your safety statement. **BeSMART.ie** does all the hard work for you – you simply register, select your business type and then work your way through the system answering 'yes', 'no' or 'not applicable'.

You then need to walk around your workplace, consult with your workers and make sure all the hazards have been risk assessed. Talking to your workers about any hazards they have encountered will help you identify any hazards specific to your workplace that may not have been covered by **BeSMART.ie**. You can then search for these in the 'Browse Hazard Database', complete the risk assessment and add them to your safety statement. Alternatively, there's even a blank risk assessment template to use. After all, you and your employees know your workplace better than anyone else.

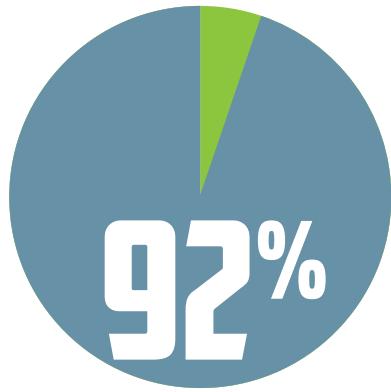
When you have finished you can download, edit and print your Safety Statement. You can add in your own emergency procedures, detail welfare facilities, add training records, name responsible people and, of course, sign the document. Initially **BeSMART.ie** was developed to assist the retail, hospitality, service industry and small manufacturing sectors. Now, in 2015, the HSA has taken this one step further – launching a new, improved version of **BeSMART.ie** that includes risk assessments for the construction industry. There are now 244 business types covered on **BeSMART.ie** including:

- Hardware Store;
- Builders Providers;
- DIY Store;
- Garden Equipment Sales and Repair;
- Domestic Electrician;
- General Builder;
- Insulation;
- Internal floor and Wall Finishing;
- Painting and Decorating;
- Domestic Plumber; and,
- Windows, Doors & Glazing.

In addition, **BeSMART.ie** has a whole library of guidance material in the 'Learn More' section which you can use to help you manage health and safety, and which can also be used for employee training.

You can also access the HSA's e-learning portal from **BeSMART.ie**. Here you will find introductory health and safety courses for employees, employers and business start-ups. These short courses inform learners as to their responsibilities when it comes to health and safety, and what actions they can take to keep themselves and their colleagues safe. Successful completion of each course allows learners to download a certificate. While not a formal qualification this certificate can form part of an employee's training record.

Like everything on **BeSMART.ie**, it's free.



of members who completed our Training Needs assessment survey in March 2015 would consider E-Learning beneficial to their business.

Hardware Association Ireland offers "New Employee Induction Training" on their E-Learning Platform which has been specifically tailored for the needs of Hardware Retailers & Merchants.

# FREE ONLINE NEW EMPLOYEE INDUCTION TRAINING FOR HAI MEMBERS

As a part of our continued expansion of member services, our E-Learning Platform will allow you and your colleagues to train and upskill at times which are convenient to the running of your business. The first course available on the platform is New Employee Induction training: a 6-module programme which will get your staff up to speed quickly and aid you in complying with some of your requirements as an employer under the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994 and 2001. All you have to do is request login details for the number of staff you require to be trained and the new staff are ready to complete their induction.

Once your new member of staff has a username and password they will be able to access the login page of the platform from the Education area of our website: [hardwareassociation.ie/education](http://hardwareassociation.ie/education) (see Figure 1).

When an employee logs in they are presented with a new

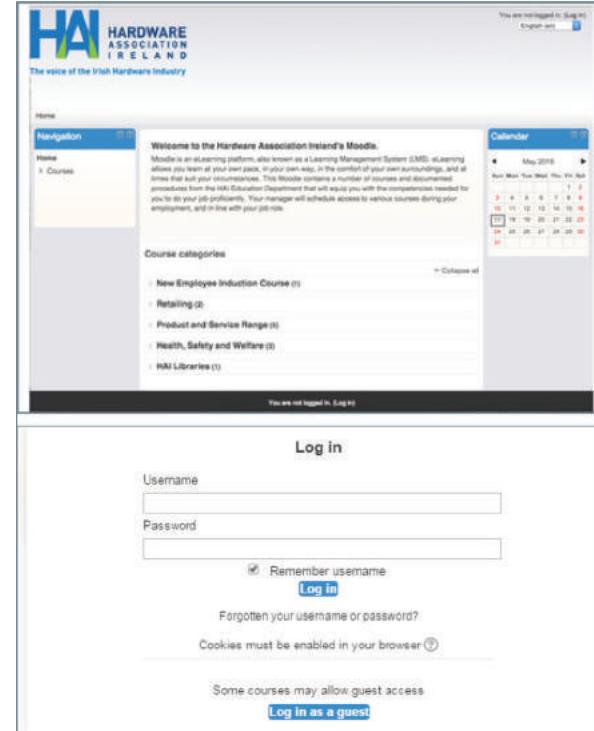


Figure 1

The HAI Wage Rate Survey 2015 tells us that 58% of HAI member Retailers and Merchants who completed the survey intend on hiring this year.



employee form and induction checklists for you both to fill out (see Figure 2). They then complete 7 modules and 5 exams, at a time convenient to your business. Topics range from general day-to-day HR policies on workplace requirements according to Irish Employment Law (disciplinary procedures, holidays and absenteeism etc.) right through to how to merchandise and sell hardware goods, and, an introduction to Health and Safety to complement any required H&S training. The topics are:

- Topic 1: Introduction to Hardware Retailing in Ireland**
- Topic 2: Things I Need to Know on Day One**
- Topic 3: Basics of Merchandising**
- Topic 4: Customer Service and Up-Selling**
- Topic 5: Housekeeping in Your Store**
- Topic 6: Introduction to Health, Safety and Welfare**

 <b>HARDWARE ASSOCIATION IRELAND</b>		<b>New Employee Record Form</b>										
<p>Surname: _____</p> <p>First Name(s): _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Telephone Number(s): _____</p> <p>Email Address: _____</p> <p>Date of Birth: _____</p> <p>PPS No: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> P45 Attached <input type="checkbox"/> 12A Form Attached</p>												
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Figure 2

## DID YOU KNOW?

HAI provides free HR management resources to aid you in the HR management of your business. These can be found in the Members' Area of the Hardware Association Website [hardwareassociation.ie](http://hardwareassociation.ie). The resources include a template Employee Handbook and Contracts of Employment, and, updates on Employment Law. As a member you can also avail of a free consultation on a HR issue with Tommy Smyth & Associates. Please log in to the Members' Area of our website for further details. Please contact Amanda on 01 298 0969 for Members' Area registration details.

Along with the advantage of flexible and independent learning, employers can receive reports which monitor time actively spent by employees on each module, and on their performance in online assessments.

New Employee Induction Training will enable you to assess whether a new employee sufficiently understands what is required of them in their new role. The New Employee Induction Course is just one of a number of online training initiatives. Also available on the platform is Retail Theft Prevention tools (p36) and a Credit Management Handbook (see p39).

Keep an eye out for the HAI monthly email newsletters for more updates.



Now we are going to look at the 5 stages involved in Merchandising. You must complete each stage in order to ensure your display area is designed and laid out correctly.

- Stage 1** • Shelf Preparation
- Stage 2** • First In First Out (FIFO)
- Stage 3** • Product Placement
- Stage 4** • Facing Off
- Stage 5** • Signage, Pricing and Labelling

The basics of merchandising, Topic 4 on the Platform.

All HAI members will receive unlimited access to our New Employee Induction Training until the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2016. To receive COMPLIMENTARY logins for your employees for the HAI New Employee Induction Training, please contact Amanda on 01 298 0969 or email [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie)

# INNOVATIVE TOOL EASES REGULATORY ADMIN BURDEN FOR ALL

As we are all well aware, the Building Control Regulations require detailed record-keeping and documentation work from builders merchants. This can be a significant extra burden and the DPL group decided to proactively address the issue by finding an innovative solution that would make the additional work more manageable, less onerous and less time-consuming. In this article, we talk to DPL and MCS Computers about their innovative Irish centralised document management storage solution.

The Building Control Regulations that came into effect on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, are aimed at ensuring that only approved materials and products are utilised and quality assurance can be traced through the supply chain. Each professional body is required to produce certificates of all products planned and utilised in the build per site. This is also relevant for products requiring special storage or handling under MSDS directives. The regulations place additional administrative demands on builders merchants, manufacturers/suppliers, architects, engineers and building professionals. The DPL Group when confronted by these additional demands decided to meet the challenge head on. John Peare, Managing Director, DPL Group Ltd comments: "When the legislation changed we wanted to find the most efficient way to ensure that we fulfilled the regulatory requirements and we had to achieve this with the most efficient use of our resources, both in terms of manpower and time. We engaged MCS Computers to develop a cost-effective solution that would work effectively within our group network. Having worked with MCS for about 30 years, we were confident that they understood our business and what we were looking for." Extensively tested over several months, the solution is now 'live' and will reach full implementation with all the group's suppliers on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. John adds: "We're delighted with the solution that MCS developed with us as it enables us to minimise the additional administration work effectively and also helps consolidate the strong relationships we have with our suppliers and customers."

## How it works

By providing a database of products, specifications and valid certification, the solution developed by MCS Computers for DPL allows efficient access to relevant information and enables the user to remotely collect relevant documents simply and efficiently. According to Conor O'Connell, CEO of MCS Computers and the software innovator who created the Builders To Compliance solution, it addresses the administrative and time burdens for all parties.

It consists of two portals under the banner Builders To Compliance. The first portal allows manufacturers to upload certificates/product specifications against their products to a specific distributor based on product number and/or barcode. Each product the Merchant sells will therefore have a

certificate available on the storage system. The Builders Merchant can manage the manufacturer's progress regarding the uploading of the certificates. It is in the interest of manufacturers to provide certificates to the portal for each of their products that comply with CPR and DOP requirements so building professionals may procure approved products. The second portal enables the building professionals to select and store specifications and certificates purchased from the merchant as well as upload other site documents, e.g. commencement notices, ancillary certificates. Storage can be in the merchant's cloud facility or the builder's server. The solution is a centralised document management storage solution and the user can then download all documents per site for inspection by the local authorities.

## Benefits

Conor O'Connell, says there are benefits for all concerned, the builders merchant, the manufacturer/supplier and the building professional. "The tool has been designed with the DPL Group in mind, but it streamlines and creates an easy to use framework within which to handle all the documentation requirements."

**Michael O'Donohoe, Country Director Ireland, Wavin commented on Wavin's experience in using the tool: "As a supplier, we have found the user interface to be simple and unfussy to operate but comprehensive and reliable in facilitating the recording of all relevant information. It's a secure system to work with while providing exceptional ease of access. The power of the tool is evident when you take into account that a Builders Merchants business has tens of thousands of products to keep track of and this tool makes that task manageable. For an industry that is sometimes seen as traditional in its approach, this welcome initiative is a genuine, cutting-edge solution." "Unfortunately, there is still an issue over lack of policing of the Building Regulations and until enforcement measures are strengthened, uncertified products will, regrettably, continue to be offered and supplied. Complete prevention of the use of uncertified products will only take place when innovative solutions such as Builders to Compliance are backed up by stronger enforcement measures."**

## Who Should Use Builders to Compliance

Are You An Individual Or Entity Involved Directly Or Indirectly In The Provision Of Products And Services To The Construction Industry?

If so you now have a **mandatory legal obligation** to procure, maintain and supply relevant documentation to the appropriate bodies in the construction industry.

**Builders to Compliance** makes the task of being compliant with these new regulations quick and easy!

• Builders • Architects • Engineers • Specifiers  
• Construction Professionals • Importers • Merchants

### For the merchant:

Merchant staff can focus on selling products and reduce time chasing documentation. Merchants can provide invoices and all associated documents and certificates, further assisting builders. Merchants are enabled to add value and enhance relationships with their customers.

**EJ have been using the system for several months.**  
Daithi Regan, Business Development Manager, EJ comments: "DPL are a reputable supplier of our product range around Ireland and the software solution they have rolled out makes the job of the purchaser/contractor easier, providing a centralised location for certification and specification information relating to the products being purchased. The role of a procurement officer or contractor in the selection of manhole covers and drainage gratings is hugely significant. It is very important to have easy access to high quality product backed up with all the relevant certification."

Philip Doyle, Director, Denphi Construction, a company with 25 years of construction experience has also used the **Builders To Compliance** tool: "It's a real step forward and substantially cuts down on the paperwork. It's a simple, easy to use system. Everything for a particular job is sourced in one file and it's easy to track each product via site reference and invoice reference. And that file is there as an archive of certified products for a specific project that can be referred to as often as needed and I can forward a file to, for example, a design team, as required."



**HAVE A LEAK?**

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**PLUMB7** Stops leaks in all heating systems

## For the manufacturer:

The assurance that the merchant is only selling approved products. Provides the professional builder easy access to correct certification/specification sheets. More visibility to the building professional of the manufacturer's product range.

## For the building professional:

Building professionals can specify approved products, pre-order and download necessary certificates and specifications. The construction professional builds a complete business relationship with the merchant as the products,

prices and documentation is in a single location. They can rely on the products the merchant is selling them. Overall, merchants, building professionals and manufacturers will spend less time sharing documents on a per case basis, reducing workloads for all in the business chain.

**Sanbra Fyffe** were delighted for this opportunity to work with John and Conor in perfecting the software's usability and functionality from a supplier perspective according to Noel Conroy, Commercial Manager, Sanbra Fyffe. He commented:

**"Considering Sanbra Fyffe offer over four thousand products to the construction industry, the process needed to be supplier friendly. The software has enabled the uploading of our products technical specifications and certifications as a seamless process, and we are confident that all DPL suppliers and customers alike will find the data base extremely workable and beneficial.**

**"Sanbra Fyffe applaud this innovation DPL and MCS have provided as a portal to product information unseen in our industry to date. The DPL Product Data Base will empower our construction industries architects, engineers, builders merchants and tradesmen, allowing all access to a products technical information and certification all at one point. This provides for greater efficiency when selecting and specifying materials, while allowing each respective stage of a development transparency and peace of mind with regard to a products quality conformity and standards."**



### HOW TO ORDER



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GE TECHNICAL SUPPORT:  
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& ASSOCIATES

# CHRISTMAS IS COMING... AND HR ISSUES COULD BE ON THE WAY

**As winter sets in, the Christmas decorations are on the shelves and we're in the midst of another festive season. This time of year brings with it a unique cocktail of HR issues so the purpose of this article is to forearm employers with some information to consider before the Christmas songs take over the airwaves!**

If you need to hire seasonal employees, ensure that they are given a Contract of Employment which confirms their status to them. The style of contract that you give such recruits will generally be of a fixed term or specified purpose nature, meaning that they are hired specifically for the Christmas period and there is clarity on their end date from the outset. One critical factor with temporary staff, especially in the hardware and builders merchant fields, is not to avoid induction, safety and manual handling training just because they are short-term employees. The very fact that they are only getting temporary work from the employer would make it more important that they are not bypassed for basic training on how to stay safe. This is essential to avoid workplace injuries, costs and consequent legal actions.

## The Christmas party

A party night at the end of the year was one of the first sacrifices of the recent recession. If an organisation was challenged financially and seeking wage cuts or redundancies, it was not seen as reasonable to continue with such celebratory events. The department secretly delighted with such news was HR. An employer liability to its employees does not stop at the front door of the workplace. If an employer plans and organises a staff night out over the Christmas period then they could be responsible and liable for the actions of employees on this night.

Claims of sexual harassment, bullying or assault can, and do, arise from these events. Ensure employees are aware that the behavioural expectations you have of them in the workplace extend to work-related events.

If you are considering reintroducing such an evening to your social committee diary, we would suggest that you review any documentation or policies (e.g., sexual harassment and bullying) to ensure that they:

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

I also recommend you produce a communication to all employees prior to the event reminding them of behavioural expectations and that dignity, respect and acceptable conduct extend to the event!

## Social networking

Social networking sites allow the thoughts and opinions of employees to be shared publicly with their friends and family but also create the possibility of their posts being 'liked' by, or 'shared' with, a wider audience. People will post opinions on most elements of their life and this includes how they feel about their employer and/or work colleagues. At this festively lubricated time of the year, a well prepared social networking policy may alert employees to:

- acceptable and unacceptable references to their employer on their social media profiles;
- acceptable and unacceptable employee access to company social media profiles of their employer; and,
- reference to other relevant employer policies such as confidentiality, bullying/harassment (cyberbullying) and the use of company equipment.

## Absenteeism over Christmas

It is accepted that most people may be more susceptible to illness during the winter months but absenteeism does appear to mysteriously spike at Christmas. As this time of year can be a critical one for so many organisations, it is recommended that employers ensure they have clarity in their policies and procedures on the reporting of sick days, entitlement to sick pay (if any), referrals to the company doctor, return to work meetings etc. Also make sure that all your line managers are aware of the allowable annual leave slots at this time of the year (if any) to ensure that as many employees are available for the roster as possible.

Merry Christmas, and a prosperous season to all at Hardware Association Ireland and their Members from Tom Smyth & Associates.



*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.*

# PREVENTING CRIME IN YOUR STORE AND YARD

As anxiety about the incidence of crime intensifies throughout rural Ireland, builders merchants and hardware retailers are not immune to rising concerns about break-ins, burglaries and theft. Sergeant John Crosse, National Crime Prevention Officer with An Garda Síochána, speaks to *The Hardware Journal* about the Garda strategy to deal with retail crime and offers some tips on crime prevention measures for builders merchants and hardware retailers.

Sgt Crosse encourages builders merchants and hardware retailers to get involved with Business Watch, a crime prevention programme designed by An Garda Síochána. He says: "It is founded on the same principles as Neighbourhood Watch. The only difference being that this scheme focuses on the business community. It starts from the premise that you and your neighbours in business can play a vital role in the fight to prevent losses to the business community and society caused by crime."

## Business Watch in action

The size, location and population of a business centre, coupled with the problems particular to the location, dictate the form a Business Watch Scheme will take. Regardless of the form taken by a scheme, members of each scheme will share common activities, Sgt Crosse says. Members' key activities include:

- being on the lookout for crime or any suspicious situation;
- reporting what they see or suspect immediately to the Gardaí and other members of Business Watch; and,
- working closely with local Gardaí to ensure their premises are secure.

To find out more about Business Watch, go to: the Members' Area of the HAI website and our E-Learning platform to find this document. Contact Amanda on 01 298 0969 for more details

## Preventing burglary

Sgt Crosse has some important tips on burglary and vandalism prevention: "The physical protection of a retail premises from burglary and vandalism follows the crime prevention principle of 'protect from the perimeter inwards'."

Key actions that may be considered, according to Sgt Crosse, include:

- premises should remain well-illuminated after closing;
- an intruder alarm system to standard (EN 50131) should

be installed and connected to an approved monitoring station to standard (IS 228/97); and,

- CCTV cameras should be strategically positioned, in line with operational requirements.
- The above are initial suggestions but Sgt Crosse urges builders merchants and hardware retailers to go to the Members' Area of the HAI website and our E-Learning platform to find the *Retail Security Guide*, which he describes as 'the security bible' for owners of builders merchant and hardware stores. Contact Amanda on 01 298 0969 for more details.

## CRIME PREVENTION DAY OF ACTION, DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

A Crime Prevention Day of Action is scheduled for December 8th and is intended to coincide with the busy pre-Christmas period, traditionally a high risk period for retail crime including internal and external theft, card fraud and issues relating to increased cash handling etc. A range of events are being organised around the country involving Garda Crime Prevention Officers.

Visit [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) for more information

## THE NATIONAL RETAIL THEFT FORUM

The main objective of this Forum is to get stakeholders and An Garda Síochána "working together to reduce the opportunity for retail theft and fraud". Bi-annual meetings are held with stakeholders on issues surrounding retail theft and fraud.

The establishment of the Forum was one of the outcomes of An Garda Síochána's Theft from Shops: Crime Prevention & Reduction Strategy. For details of the strategy go to: the Members' Area of the HAI website and our E-Learning platform to find this document. Contact Amanda on 01 298 0969 for more details. HAI will represent the concerns of builder merchants and hardware stores at the Forum.

## INCREASES IN THEFT FROM SHOP OFFENCES AND BURGLARY

CSO stats for burglary and theft for the 12-month period up to the end of Quarter 2, 2015.

There were 28,830 recorded burglary and related offences in the 12-month period ending in Q2 2015, representing an increase of 2,241 (+8.4%) when compared with the corresponding period ending in 2014. Comparing the same periods, aggravated burglary offences rose by 1.6% while recorded burglary (not aggravated) offences increased very slightly, from 25,619 to 27,890. Possession of an article (with intent to burgle, steal, demand) offences decreased by 5.3% to 625.

In the 12-month period ending in Q2 2015, theft and related offences rose by 1.8% to 78,885. When considering the subgroups, recorded theft from person offences decreased by 22.6% to 5,019, and theft from shop rose 11.2% to 22,493. The CSO resumed the publication of recorded crime statistics in June 2015 following the Garda Inspectorate report on Crime Investigation. When interpreting the statistics, the CSO advises that the findings of the review should be taken into account (see [www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/crimejustice/2015/reviewofcrime.pdf](http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/crimejustice/2015/reviewofcrime.pdf))

# NSAI, the National Standards Authority of Ireland, Certify Sanbra Fyffe Instantor® Plumbing Fittings to I.S. EN 1254-2

Sanbra Fyffe Ltd, market leaders in the supply of plumbing and heating products in Ireland, is celebrating the renewal of its licence to use NSAI's Irish Standard Mark in the manufacture of its Instantor® range of brass compression fittings.

Awarded by the NSAI, this certification is a true statement of quality and highlights Sanbra Fyffe's commitment to the manufacture and supply of superior plumbing fittings and validates that Instantor® conforms to I.S. EN 1254-2.

During September 2015, the Instantor® range of brass compression fittings underwent a rigorous and thorough certification audit with the NSAI to International Standard EN 1254-2. The successful outcome of this resulted in the renewal of Sanbra Fyffe's original licence number 1.8.1 in connection with the manufacture of Instantor® fittings.

Sanbra Fyffe is the ONLY Irish Supplier and the ONLY Irish Manufacturer to achieve the NSAI standard on Compression Fittings up to and including 2"/54mm.

The I.S. EN 1254-2 certificate was formally presented to Noel Conroy, Commercial Manager of Sanbra Fyffe by Sean Balfe, Director of Sustainability and Built Environment, NSAI at NSAI headquarters on 12th October 2015.

Commenting on the success, Noel Conroy said: "This is a great achievement for the company. Since the introduction of new building regulations, and a heightened awareness of standards and the importance of using quality products in construction, this certification serves to assure our customers of Instantor's quality, durability and total reliability."

"Sanbra Fyffe are the only Irish company to be awarded this certificate by the NSAI for fittings up to and including 2" / 54mm. The industry has seen so many Irish importers in recent years offering fittings with a stamping reading EN 1254-2 on



Pictured at the presentation of the NSAI Certificate were (L-R) Aidan Murphy, Sean Balfe Director NSAI, Noel Conroy Commercial Manager Sanbra Fyffe Ltd, Martin Wilson, Philip Duffy.

their products. With NSAI Certification up to 2" / 54mm Sanbra Fyffe can differentiate completely from certain competitors misleading claims. The NSAI certificate provides a confidence and reassurance for the Builder Providers, Plumbing and Heating Stores and the Plumbing Trade as a whole that Sanbra Fyffe Instantor® products conform to the EN Standard while endorsing Sanbra Fyffe's reputation as the market leading supplier of quality plumbing and heating products in Ireland."

Noel paid tribute to his Sanbra Fyffe colleagues involved in achieving the standard and thanked Sean Balfe and Martin English for their cooperation with Sanbra Fyffe engineering and quality control staff during the certification testing process. Sanbra Fyffe Ltd, part of the Northstone group, are committed to the supply of superior plumbing products hence the company motto is "Quality without compromise"

The extensive range of plumbing and heating products provided by Sanbra Fyffe include other brands of note such as Tucson Pumps, Eirline Taps, Rangemaster and Leisure sinks. Sanbra Fyffe also provide OEM services as specialists in the stamping, casting and machining of brass and copper alloy components, Sanbra Fyffe manufacture both part and fully finished components for many industries today.



The makers of INSTANTOR®

Sanbra Fyffe, Conex Works, Santry Avenue, Dublin 9, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0)1 842 6255 | Fax: +353 (0)1 842 6134



# CASH FOR KILOWATTS SCHEME- CASH BACK ON ENERGY UPGRADES FOR HAI MEMBERS

**Members of Hardware Association Ireland can receive cash back on capital expenditure on energy saving projects thanks to a new scheme on offer from Energia.**

Annemarie Harte, CEO, Hardware Association Ireland said: "We are delighted that HAI has joined forces with Energia to promote the Cash for Kilowatts Scheme. Keeping costs such as energy under control is important for our members, and the scheme is a great way of enabling businesses to undertake energy saving projects." As a leading provider of energy to thousands of Irish businesses, Energia know that controlling costs in the sector is vital. Identifying where your business can save energy is a good place to start particularly as the season for even higher energy usage is here. For example, switching the lighting in your premises from conventional fluorescent lighting to LED's can reduce your lighting costs by up to 75%. Although the savings can be substantial, it can be a costly exercise in the short term to implement.

## Get up to 30% Funding for Energy Efficiency Projects

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

Energia will also provide expertise and assistance with the implementation of projects. Whether you are implementing the project yourself or you require input from our carefully selected group of partners, Energia can help to get your project underway with safety and quality at the core. Not only will your business benefit from the funding provided by Energia but with the additional cost savings from the reduction in energy usage means that these projects can literally pay for themselves. It's win win; save



At the recent launch of HAI and Energia's Affinity deal: Daniel Wolverson, Energia; Kieran Burke, Commercial Director, Grafton Merchandising ROI and Vice President HAI; Hugh O'Donnell, Chief Executive, Amalgamated Hardware plc and President HAI.

on the costs of implementation and save substantially on your energy bill.

Examples of the typical savings that can be achieved include:

1. Lighting: Reduce your lighting costs by up to 75% by switching to LED.
2. Heating: Installing modern heating controls can save at least 25% of annual fuel costs.
3. Carrolls Irish Gifts is one of the many retailers that have availed of the project funding. Carroll's Irish Gifts conducted lighting projects

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

Contact Amanda [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie) or Jim [jim@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:jim@hardwareassociation.ie) or call HAI on 01 298 0969 for further information.

# WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

The second in a series of articles by Declan Flood, aka The Credit Coach, offering practical advice on training. In this article, Declan focuses on the importance of staff working as a team in pursuit of a clear, common objective.



Pat Shalvey, Cavan; Teresa Shanahan, Ennis; and Ronan Kelleher, Bandon, attended the recent HAI 'Credit from start to finish' presentation, delivered by Declan Flood at the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel, Dublin.

Far too often when I go into companies, I find that there are so many different departments and so many different people with so many different agendas – all pulling in opposite directions. Each is convinced that what they are doing is for the best.

Sometimes a working day can seem like a battle, and credit controllers are well aware of this. Most see their role as being 'the bad guy' or 'the enforcer'. Many people spend more time during their working week playing politics and covering their own backs than they spend on doing the job they are paid to do. If this sounds familiar, I ask you to read the title of the article again.

## A clear goal

It is the job of management to make sure every single person in the organisation knows and is committed to the goals. For this to happen, the goals must be written down in clear and unambiguous language and have to be something everybody can buy into.

Goals like 'to be our customer's supplier of choice' are absolute rubbish. Who is doing the choosing? How can we have any control over it?

Our goals should be stated in present tense that everyone can understand: 'We are selling and collecting €200k per month' is a far better goal. Now everyone knows what we have to do and it is up to everyone to work out how we can work together to achieve it.

### TOP TIP

**Why not break the mould and offer a bonus to your staff this year? The bonus could be based on the amount of debt that is cleared out of your three-month column between now and the end of the year. The more you have to pay out, the more you will have collected. Be very careful how you frame this.**



Paul Harrington, Castletownbere; Margaret Brett, Ballymote; and Barry Moran, Ballyconnell, attended the recent HAI 'Credit from start to finish' presentation.

## A challenge to your business...

I tell a story of John F. Kennedy's visit to NASA when he asked a janitor: "What do you do here?" The man replied, "Sir, I'm putting a man on the moon." What a wonderful answer. In that case everybody in the building was there for one reason only and that was to put a man on the moon. Each made their own contribution based on their role and level within the organisation. This article has a challenge to issue to all business people and senior managers – what is your 'man on the moon'?

The clearer we are able to define this, and the better all our staff understand it, the more successful our business will become. Failure to achieve this seemingly simple task will add more cost, more wasted time and more inefficiency and, in today's competitive world, we cannot afford the luxury of any such distractions.

As we move to middle management – they too have to define their role within the organisation with equal clarity and constantly communicate it to each and every member of staff.

I have heard the saying that 'cash is king', I have also heard 'the customer is king'. Our success depends on our ability to reconcile these two priorities and deliver accordingly.

The key action point from this month's article is that effective credit management is not just one person's problem. Everyone has to work together to make it happen. It is the boss's job to set the score and to get everyone working to the same agenda.

Remember if money is important to your business, your KPIs should include cash collection.

*With over 20 years' experience, Declan Flood has developed the Six Step Credit System, a method for managing credit, which is practical and comes with a step-by-step guide available Online at the HAI E-Learning Platform for all HAI Members. In order to access this and other resources, contact Amanda for further information: [amanda@hardwareassociation.ie](mailto:amanda@hardwareassociation.ie) or 01 298 0969.*

# GROWTH FORECAST FOR FASTENINGS SECTOR

There are some positive signs for growth in the fasteners sector in the next 12 months. Worldwide demand for industrial fasteners is forecast to climb 5.4% annually through to 2018, to US\$93.8 billion (approximately €78.1 billion), accelerating from the 2008-2013 pace, according to the latest world industrial fasteners report from researcher group, Freedonia.

Although it is comparatively small, the construction market will register the fastest growth through 2018, spurred by acceleration in construction expenditure worldwide.

In the UK it is estimated that, by value, construction accounts for some 15-18% of mechanical fastener demand. Conditions for mechanical fasteners in the UK are expected to continue to improve in 2015.

Here in Ireland there are some positive signs for likely areas of demand growth in 2016, with Budget 2016 allocating €347 million for public transport investment, including essential investment in areas such as the maintenance and renewal of the rail network and the Luas Cross City line.

## High service levels



Tucks Fasteners & Fixings has always specialised in supplying European Approved Fixings (ETA) and CE marked products.

Tucks Fasteners & Fixings has earned a reputation for extremely high service levels which include same day delivery in Dublin, next day delivery guaranteed in all 32 counties and a consistent availability rate of over 97%, according to Gary Hogan, MD of Tucks Fasteners & Fixings. Tucks Fasteners & Fixings has always specialised in supplying European Approved Fixings (ETA) and CE-marked products and, according to Gary, has been at the forefront of informing the market of the necessary technical approvals and documentation required in order to comply with Building Regulations. "We have a fantastic range of fasteners & fixings, power tools and power tool accessories and associated products. The range has grown substantially recently supported by our new advertising campaign entitled 'You'd be Nuts to go anywhere else!'"

Customers, Gary believes, are looking for more than just a supplier, they are looking for a strategic partner: "One who has been around for a long time and, more importantly, one who will be around for a long time - Tucks Fasteners & Fixings ticks all these boxes."

## TIMco expands C2 range

Following on from the success of the C2 screw, TIMco, one of the UK's largest independent suppliers of screws, fastener and fixings, as well as power tool accessories, has launched the new C2 flooring and medium-density fibreboard (MDF) screw.

The new C2 flooring screw has been designed for fixing

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# Tucks Fasteners & Fixings

## WE TICK ALL THE BOXES!

	FASTENERS SPECIALIST .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	SPAX SCREWS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	REISSER SCHRAUBENTECHNIK .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	POWERS APPROVED ANCHORS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	PASLODE .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	THORSMAN PLUGS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	JUBILEE HOSE CLIPS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	MASONRY NAILS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	COPPER NAILS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	POSAMO CHAIN & ROPE .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	RAPID STAPLES .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	tillex® TILLEX ROSETTES .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	ACTION CAN AEROSOLS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	DEWALT .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	BLACK & DECKER .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	STANLEY BOSTITCH .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	PANASONIC .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	BE PRESSURE WASHERS .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Unit 10, Century Business Park, St. Margaret's Road, Finglas, Dublin 11

Tel: (01) 884 5100 Fax: (01) 864 8344 Email: [Sales@tucksfasteners.ie](mailto:Sales@tucksfasteners.ie)

Website: [www.tucksfasteners.ie](http://www.tucksfasteners.ie)

wooden boards such as MDF, hardwood, softwood and chipboard, according to TIMco. It has been specifically designed for use in flooring and offers a number of features, including a partial thread to assist with pulling the two substrates together. The head is also countersunk to reduce the likelihood

of damaging any floor covering. It has been designed for easy removal if any repair work is required below the floorboards. The launch of the new screw follows best practice guidance that now suggests screws are better than nails in securing wooden flooring.

"The C2 screw is one of our



The new C2 flooring screw has been designed for fixing wooden boards.

most popular products so we're very excited to launch

the new C2 flooring screw," said Simon Midwood of TIMco.

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**OUR OUTSTANDING RANGE  
OF PRODUCTS INCLUDE:**

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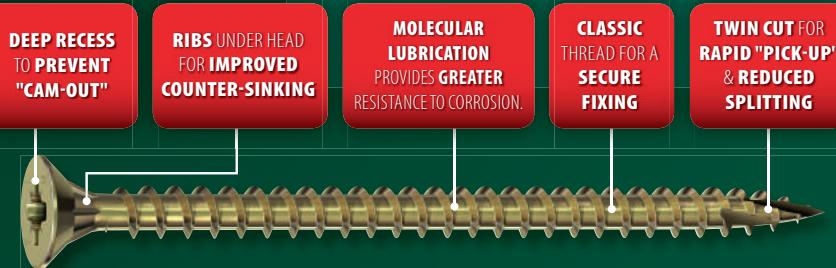


The Rawlplug trade range contains high-quality certified products with European technical approval.

The new trade range from Rawlplug allows easier product selection by the consumer and better stock control for the retailer. The new Rawlplug trade range offers innovative ideas and solutions for the traditional builder's merchants as well as DIY stores. Rawlplug manufactures and supplies various types of fixings and fasteners intended for use in different substrates. Numerous surveys carried out show that consumers hesitate over which product is best and look for advice. In order to meet these expectations, Rawlplug is introducing a colour-coded system on its new trade range to categorise products for use in various substrates and applications. Since it was founded, Rawlplug has placed great

# C2® ADVANCED TWIN CUT SCREWS

## HIGH PERFORMANCE SCREWS



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UP TO 43%\*  
QUICKER

52%\*  
LESS  
TORQUE

\* Compared against standard woodscrew

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NOW AVAILABLE IN ZINC

Selected sizes. Only in tubs.



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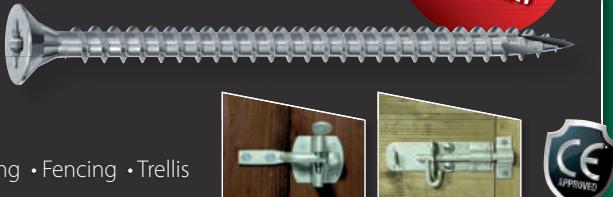
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ORGANIC  
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1,000  
HOURS  
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### C2® TONGUE-FIX FLOORING SCREW

#### DESIGNED FOR TONGUE & GROOVE FLOORING & PANELLING

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The C2 Tongue-Fix gives a secure fixture through the tongue allowing a flush fit with the next board.

T10™ DRIVE DRIVER BIT INCLUDED IN EVERY TUB

REDUCED HEAD  
FOR CONCEALED  
COUNTERSINKING



TWIN CUT FOR RAPID "PICK-UP" WITH NO SPLITTING

### C2® FLOORING & MDF SCREW

#### DESIGNED FOR MDF & CHIPBOARD FLOORING.

**C2 Flooring & MDF:** • T™Drive • Rapid Pick-Up • Secure Fixture • Flush Finish  
The partially threaded shank pulls the two substrates together without the need to clamp.

T20™ DRIVE DRIVER BIT INCLUDED IN EVERY TUB

RIBS UNDER HEAD  
FOR IMPROVED  
COUNTERSINKING



TWIN CUT FOR RAPID "PICK-UP" WITH NO SPLITTING



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emphasis on quality and innovation, developing research centres across Europe in the quest to design products for use in a range of substrates.

Rawlplug is the only manufacturer in the world with European technical approval on its range of Rawlbolts. The new range provides easy product selection, while ensuring more accurate stocks in-store, the company said.

## Building on tradition

Building on its strong tradition in fasteners and fixings, dating back to when John Murphy set up the company in his garage, John Murphy (Castlerea) Limited now has access to sister company Martyn Price (Bolts and Nuts) Limited, which maintains 50000ft<sup>2</sup> full of fasteners and fixings. Both companies share their buying, which facilitates a better offering to customers, through the Allgrip brand.

In recent years, John Murphy (Castlerea) Limited has expanded its range within the hardware store, however it says the core business is still very much fasteners and fixings. Brands offered include Paslode, Heller, Rapier Star, Thorsman and Mikalor. The company also offers fasteners and fixings in pre-pack format, which it expects to be an exciting trend going forward. In the coming months its new marketing trailer will be available to customers to view the full range in their own car park. The trailer will



Fasteners and fixings remain the core business for John Murphy (Castlerea) Limited.

be on a roadshow throughout the year. The company has also recently installed a new IT system, which it says will strengthen its ability to service its customers.

## Confidence is key



Dublin footballer Philly McMahon and BW Hardware's Derek Byrne at a recent Reisser trade day with the Sam Maguire Cup.

A company spokesperson for Reisser Ireland, the high-performance woodscrew and power tool accessory distributor, identifies confidence as a key market characteristic at the moment.

"If I had to pin-point one key factor that has emerged once again in our market, it would be how confident our distributors are currently," he said. "The beauty about 'confidence' is that it is infectious. It can be felt at all levels in the supply chain, from manufacturer right down to end user."

"This has huge benefits, with merchants and store owners now saying, 'Listen, I can't be out of stock on any size anymore. It's better to be looking at it than for it.'

"At Reisser, we have invested heavily in stock. We pride ourselves on offering the broadest range of sizes and finishes in our high-performance woodscrew ranges of Cutter and R2."

There has been a massive shift in the high-performance screw market, according to Reisser, with an upsurge in demand for its tubs.

"What started off as one of our many promotional concepts has, due to demand, turned into the tradesman's number one choice. The appeal is in the durability and practicality of the tub, along with the value and single price point no matter what size or finish of screw."

**Allgrip™** John Murphy  
Castlerea Ltd

**Rapierstar**

**Plasplugs**

**Heller**

**Allgrip**

**Simpson Strong-Tie**

**Mikalor**

**Paslode**

**Thorsman**

**Fasteners & Fixings**

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# POSITIVE OUTLOOK IN IRONMONGERY

Both at local and global levels, there are optimistic signals for growth in ironmongery products in both the builders and cabinet hardware categories.

At a global level, growing population and the subsequent increase in demand for housing units is expected to offer sizeable growth opportunities in the market, according to a recent research report Builders' and Cabinet Hardware: A Global Strategic Business Report from Global Industry Analysts Inc.

The report analyses the market by product segments such as builders' hardware (door locking devices, door hinges and closers, window hardware and other builders' hardware), and cabinet hardware (cabinet locks, cabinet knobs, pulls and catches, cabinet hinges and other cabinet hardware). As a mature market characterised by intense competitive pressures, manufacturer focus is on product innovation as a key factor for product differentiation in a crowded marketplace, the report notes. Novel styles and designs are continuously launched as manufacturers strive to establish new benchmarks.

Materials such as nickel, copper, bronze, brass, steel, stainless steel and wrought iron are some of the most commonly used materials. Brass finishes, which lost momentum some years ago, are once again gaining attention. Other hardware finishes that are gaining ground



include bronze finish, brushed nickel finish, polished brass finish, antique brass finish and brushed nickel finish.

Demand for builders' and cabinet hardware generally follows the trends in the construction industry. Here in Ireland, the extension of the HRI scheme and, in the medium to longer term, the pressure to increase Ireland's housing stock suggest a positive outlook for the sector.

Two well-known names in the ironmongery sector here, Corry's and Laydex, are particularly confident about the sector's future.

## Corry's

Corry's Ironmongery Limited specialises in general light ironmongery under the Phoenix label. The two main categories of ironmongery products it supplies are the Euro



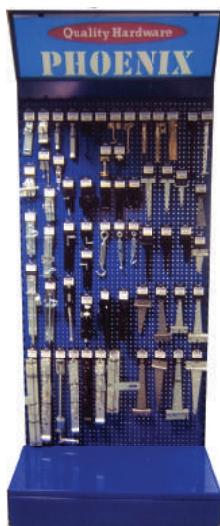
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Corry's Ironmongery Limited specialises in general light ironmongery under the Phoenix label.

and can personalise the offering by providing the customer with core product ranges under their own brand name and corporate identity.

Hanger range and its pre-packed Trade Pack range. Corry's also supply a comprehensive range of cabinet furniture including knobs, handles, concealed hinges etc.

In the past couple of years, Corry's has expanded its non-ironmongery product offering. One range that has been extremely successful is electrical products. According to a company spokesperson: "Just like our very successful Trade Pack range the electrical products are packaged in eye-catching, retail-friendly poly bags in which the products can be easily viewed and are displayed in our attractive and easy to use tilt bins. Other ranges include uprights and brackets, chain and rope, tubing and garden tools."

Corry's can tailor the product to the specific needs of the customer

## Laydex extends Fortessa offering

Laydex has recently launched new additions to their Fortessa range of door handles and accessories. The new models comprise of three lever on plate handles namely, Versailles Polished Brass, Versailles Polished Chrome, Versailles Antique Bronze and the Achilles Antique Bronze Lever on Rose.

All of these models come in box sets comprising the set of handles, a three lever lock and three ball bearing hinges and are presented in the distinctive Fortessa Design Box. This offering is complemented by a tidy in store display unit which sits neatly in less than a sq metre area and holds 10 box sets of each model. The Fortessa Style Catalogue has been updated and provides the merchant with an extra selling tool.

Gerry Callan of Laydex says that the increase in new house building activity together with the extent of the refurbishment market has seen an increase in the demand for quality door furniture and that consumers are looking for design-orientated products which enhance the appearance of their living spaces. When given a choice, he says, between the old jaded standard door handles which have been the norm for many years and the stylised look of the Fortessa Range, "the house owner and builder will chose the style most suited to the integrity of the modern interior".



# Timeless Elegance and Design



Discover the **Fortessa™** collection today

Model shown - Achilles; Antique Bronze



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[www.fortessa-handles.com](http://www.fortessa-handles.com)

# TOOL PRICES OFFER GREAT VALUE FOR CONSUMERS

CSO figures indicate that many categories of tool prices are well below the average rate of inflation suggesting there are some real value options for the consumer.



An example of the Cetaform range of hand tools.

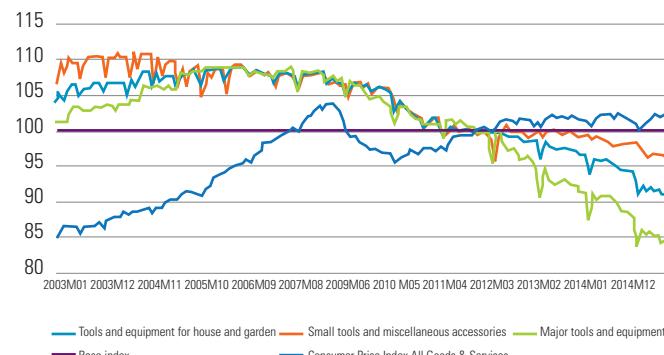
Figures from the CSO show that the rate of inflation is negative for a range of categories related to tools, namely: 'tools and equipment for house and garden', 'small tools and miscellaneous accessories', and, 'major tools and equipment'. The Consumer Price Index is designed to measure the change in the average level of prices paid for consumer goods and services by all private and institutional households in the country. When compared to the average rate of inflation, recent figures (for September 2015) show that the largest difference is seen between Major Tools & Equipment which is nearly 18 points below, Tools & Equipment for House and Garden is 11 points under, and small tools and miscellaneous accessories is six points below (see historical data in graph on the right).

## Rhino charges into 2016

It's been a good year for several tool suppliers and, in particular, for Rhino Distribution. So far, 2015 has been a very busy year for the company which has seen a strong upturn particularly on the east coast, though this is now starting to filter to other population centres such as Galway, Limerick and Cork. Rhino says it has been well placed to take advantage of this upturn with a major investment in stock, warehouse facilities and IT. A company spokesperson commented: "We are the exclusive distributors of the Cetaform range of hand tools specialising in VDE products. This together with the arrival of many strong international brands in hand, power tools and associated products, including Stanley, Eclipse, Arrow, Bosch, Johnson and Monument to name a few, assures continued growth. Rhino has a programme of continual investment in people, product and brands to ensure we offer innovation and competitiveness to our customers. "The Rhino sales team has been expanded to cover the island of Ireland and with the support of our customers, continues to outperform the market. We have recently launched our biggest and best autumn promotion campaign

with a wide range of offers and deals across our many brands and this has been well received by new and old customers alike. We would like to thank all our customers for their support and look forward to finishing 2015 strongly and this continuing on into 2016."

Consumer Price Index - 2003 to September 2015 (Baseline 2011=100)



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# REBUILDING THE MARKET FOR CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS

## A recovering construction sector augurs well for demand levels for construction products in 2016.

The construction sector is widely reported to be experiencing recovery – output has now risen in each of the past 25 months. According to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), Production in Building and Construction Index, the volume of output in building and construction increased by 5.5% in the second quarter of 2015 when compared with the preceding period (compared to an average -0.7% change in the Euro area). Supply and demand of housing has been a hot topic of late. The latest CSO figures for planning permissions for dwelling units up to the end of Q2, 2015, showed an increase of 87.4% compared to the same period in 2014 (see page 5 for more planning permission statistics).

The Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) scheme has been a great success to date. More than 40,400 works have been registered with the scheme across more than 28,900 individual properties nationwide since it began, accounting for a massive €624.5 million being spent, an average of nearly €6 million per week. See page 19 for a further breakdown of the latest HRI statistics.

## Pioneering plumbing solutions



Brett Martin supplies products to over 70 countries worldwide.

**Brett Martin Plumbing & Drainage** is a multi-site manufacturing company that specialises in the manufacture of plumbing and drainage systems, plastic roof lighting and glazing materials, architectural roof light systems and semi-finished

### substrates for the sign and display industry.

Established in 1958 and based on a 35-acre site in Mallusk, Northern Ireland, Brett Martin supplies products to more than 70 countries worldwide, with 50% of turnover derived from export sales. Described by the company as Europe's only roof light manufacturer of all the main plastic roof light glazing materials – polycarbonate, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and glass reinforced plastic (GRP) – Brett Martin has over 50 years' industry experience and a global customer base.

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**Intelligent vapour check and airtight membrane**

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Intelligent Airtight and Windtight building systems

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# Vertigo

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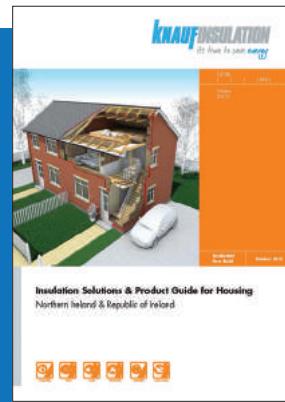
**Tegral**

## Handy guide to housing

In order to help builders design energy-efficient houses, Knauf Insulation has created a new Housing Guide for Ireland. The guide is intended to help those designing houses to select the optimum insulation solution in accordance with either the Republic of Ireland (ROI) or Northern Ireland (NI) building regulations.

With an array of whole-house solutions available, Knauf Insulation recommends the most suitable solution for a variety of applications throughout the guide – for roofs, walls and floors.

All solutions explained within the guide meet the regulations in Technical Guidance Document L (Conservation of fuel and energy in dwellings) and Technical Guidance Document E (Sound) for the ROI. The solutions also meet the following regulations for NI: Technical Booklet F1 (Conservation of fuel and power in dwellings) and Technical Booklet G (Resistance to the passage of sound).



Knauf Insulation recommends the most suitable solution for a variety of applications throughout its new Housing Guide for Ireland.

## The right match



Larsen and Dural have linked up to provide colour-matched expansion joints, sealant and grout.

Manufacturer, Larsen, has linked up with expansion and matting

specialist, Dural, to provide colour-matched expansion joints, sealant and grout. Since 1981, Dural has been continually developing and manufacturing innovative profiles and skirting.

Larsen Colourfast 360 grout and sealants have been received exceptionally well and achieve substantial growth with their grout offering, according to the company. The Larsen Colourfast 360 range already benefits from matching premium grade silicone but, with this new partnership of leading manufacturers, they now have an increased offering of

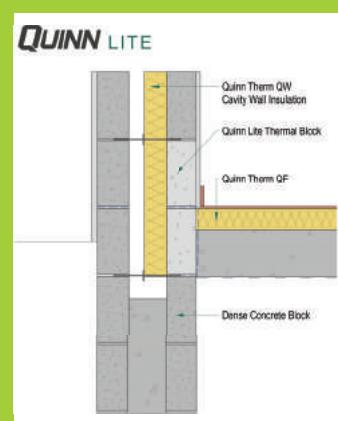
products which complement each other.

Larsen Colourfast 360 grout is a specially formulated, flexible, rapid setting tile grout. This advanced formulation uses Colourfast technology to ensure uniform joint colour, free from efflorescence. Professional Colourfast 360 is suitable for use as a flexible wall and floor grout. The fine texture provides a smooth finish that is, stain, mould and water resistant and suitable for use on most tile types including glazed and unglazed ceramic, porcelain, natural stone and glass tiles.

## Bespoke thermal bridging designs

Thermal bridging is a much talked about but little understood phenomenon in building design. Thermal bridges occur at all junctions in the building, as well as when penetrations of the thermal insulation envelope occur. Thermal bridges in a BER assessment can account for 35-50% of overall fabric heat losses when standard values are used. At present, typical new dwellings achieve an A3 BER rating; however, many clients find themselves having to design to lower U-values in order to achieve this, or spend significant amounts on renewable energy systems in order to comply with part L of the building regulations (2011).

Quinn has developed a bespoke set of junction designs, each with its own unique thermal bridging value calculated by an NSAI-accredited thermal modeller, in order to reduce heat loss by thermal bridging down to less than just 10% of fabric heat loss. Guaranteeing zero mould growth risk, and using conventional construction methods combined with its range of Quinnlite blocks, the use of the company's freely-available details can allow designers and contractors to more easily achieve compliance with part L, and in some cases reduce the amount of renewable energy resources specified, ensuring significant capital savings, the company says.



Quinn has developed a bespoke set of junction designs.

PLUMBING & DRAINAGE PRESENTS

# MONSTER NEW DEEPSTYLE 170

**Colossal Drainage  
Capacity**



**Mega Snow Loading  
Capabilities**



**Iconic Sealing  
Performance**



Tough, reliable and big enough to defy epic challenges, Brett Martin's Deepstyle 170 rainwater system stands up to everything the elements throw at it. An extra deep 170mm gutter profile delivers drainage capacity to the max for bigger buildings. Robust design ensures mega snow loading capability to BS EN 1462 Load Class H and UV-resistant PVC means looks that last. The iconic factory fitted CLIP & SEAL locks the gutter securely in place for a strong, totally watertight king of the rain.

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

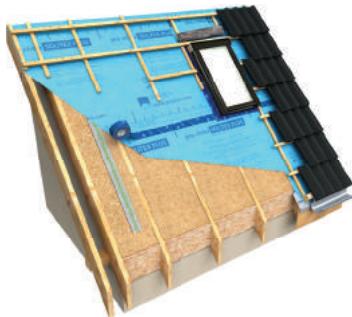
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[www.brettmartin.com](http://www.brettmartin.com)



Plumbing & Drainage

## An intelligent approach to roofing



External windtightness with pro clima SOLITEX PLUS diffusion open membrane sealed with pro clima tapes and seals.

MacCann and Byrne import and distribute a complete range of pro clima, high-performance, intelligent air and wind tightness membranes tapes and seals. Its pro clima Solitex Plus membrane is a wind-tight, yet diffusion-open, vapour-permeable membrane, suitable for pitched roofs.

Niall Crosson, Senior Engineer at MacCann & Byrne, outlines the key features of Solitex Plus: "Unlike many conventional

breather membranes, which use an air-permeable micro-porous technology, Solitex Plus features an integrated reinforcement netting and employs a closed cell vapour permeable layer." This provides a combination of key benefits, Niall says, including: extreme resistance to wood preservatives, wood treatments or natural wood resins; and complete resistance to air penetration Niall sums up: "As the

roofing membrane is the second line of defence for the roof, it is absolutely essential that it provides optimum resistance to wind-driven rain, which we are accustomed to in Ireland, as well as minimising condensation risk."

## New dimension in slates

Tegral has recently launched a new architectural facades system, specifically developed in response to the growing trend towards using fibre cement slates across the whole building envelope.

Vertigo is the first range of fibre cement slates specifically designed for use on vertical facades, as well as the roof facades, as well as the roof, so this opens up a host of unique creative possibilities for architects. The small 600mm x 300mm slates follow the shape of a building like a second protective skin.

Available in eight different colours, from blue/black to terracotta, the new range of Vertigo slates offers multiple possibilities for both new build and refurbishment projects. The fibre cement slates come in three different product types, including two types of nail holed systems specifically created for use on the facade, with invisible fixings that create both a modern panel and broken bond application. As part of Tegral's fibre cement range, Vertigo boasts superb sustainability credentials, the company says, helping to achieve environmental credits with a 'very good' BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing accreditation.



Vertigo fibre cement slates are specifically designed for use on vertical facades, as well as the roof.

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## Timber solutions

Wood Concepts is a distributor of panel products and softwood timber to the Irish market. All its panel products (plywood, OSB3, MDF) are stamped in accordance with mandatory Construction Products Regulation (CPR) regulations and are EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) compliant. Its softwood timber, including long lengths up to 8.4m, is stamped to current building regulations C16/24. Its Steico trade and I-joists accommodate all services (wiring, pipes, etc.) while providing a significant cost saving over competing products, according to Wood Concepts.

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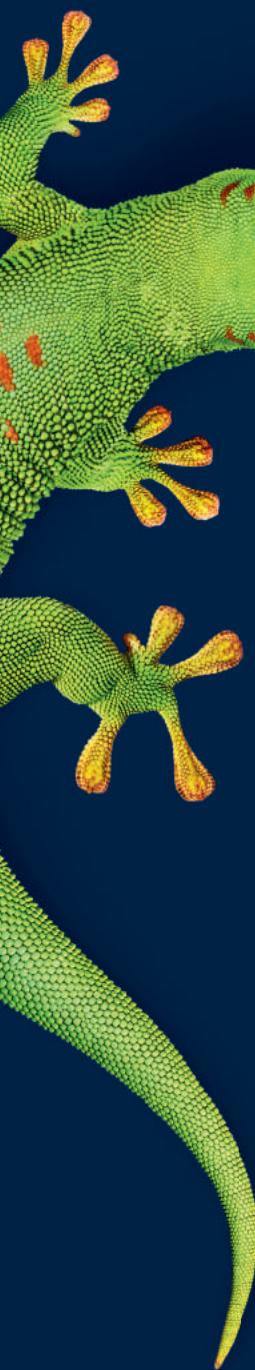
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