

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015

THE **HAI** HARDWARE JOURNAL

THE VOICE OF THE IRISH HARDWARE INDUSTRY

HARDWARE MERCHANTS SEE GROWTH IN BUSINESS - HAI MEMBER SURVEY

ALSO INSIDE:
- RISE IN PARTICIPATION IN HAI BUSINESS INDEX

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DEAR READER,

There's a busy autumn ahead for HAI as the organisation further intensifies its commitment to a range of activities aimed at supporting members across the country. In this issue, you can find out more about groundbreaking research work initiated by HAI and the Smurfit Business School to map objectively the value of the Irish hardware industry (page 7).

In addition, work has been completed on the HAI Members Survey 2015 and the results are in. Read all about it on page 16.

With each passing month, the range of services to members continues to expand. Learn about a host of new offerings including:

- in-depth management training courses (page 30);
- a one-day course in Excellence in Credit Management (page 33); and,
- a series of new Member Offers and Discounts (page 49).

Of course, there's also the usual mix of news, product information, and commercial features, as well as the launch of a new Directory (page 54), offering smaller companies a cost-effective opportunity to promote their businesses in Ireland's leading hardware publication. Enjoy the issue!

Bernard Potter, Editor

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JOHN GORMAN RETIRES FROM IRISH ROOFING FELTS



John Gorman of Irish Roofing Felts.

Irish Roofing Felts, part of the IKO Group, have announced the retirement of John Gorman after a remarkable 45-year career with the company. John started his employment in April 1971 in Jamestown Road, Finglas, working in the office doing admin, sales ledger work and payslip management. Soon after, he moved into sales and with the additional responsibilities of transport, provided a vital link between sales and production, including oversight of two production lines. Tarmac (part of the Thomas Witter Group PLC) purchased the company in the early eighties, which led to significant investment including the opening of a state-

of-the-art facility and modern warehouse. Throughout the eighties, John oversaw the work at the facility until it was forced to close in 1990 as a result of a construction downturn in the late eighties. The equipment in the facility was re-homed at the IKO sister site in Wigan, where it still operates today, and felts produced by that equipment continue to be sold through IKO's Dublin warehouse. By the nineties, John had become more established in sales and he was appointed sales manager in 1996.

In 2000, the different trading divisions within the UK and Ireland were purchased by the IKO Group. This created access to a huge range of products and waterproofing systems, and IKO's continuous research and development provided enhanced commercial impetus to the business. John has seen huge changes in the products used within the Irish construction industry. Today, he remains an expert and influential voice supporting best practice in the installation of roofing products. Among the most significant changes in his view has been the move from bitumen fibre-based hessian underslating to geotextile breathable membranes. Flat roofing too has changed, from fibreglass-based felts being bonded in hot bitumen to polyester-based products now being applied by heat activation using a torching system.

Looking back on his work across five different decades, he is particularly proud of having helped to successfully steer the company through several recessions and of his management role in the changeover from bitumen felts to textile breathable membranes.

Outside of work, John is a keen golfer. His other interests include DIY, keeping fit, reading and history. He plans to split his retirement time between community activities and golf.



IRISH CEMENT FIRST IN IRELAND TO GET BES 6001 'EXCELLENT' RATING

Irish Cement Limited, the leading manufacturer of quality cements, has recently become the first company in Ireland to achieve the BES 6001 'Excellent' rating for its cement products.

The BRE Environmental and Sustainability Standard, BES 6001, focuses on responsible sourcing and product stewardship, addressing the social, economic and environmental impacts of construction products throughout the supply chain.

In 2011, Irish Cement became the first company in Ireland to be independently certified to BES 6001. Continuous investment and focus on sustainable development has resulted in the company's range of bagged and bulk cement products now being awarded the Standard's highest rating.

Irish Cement Limited recently became the first company in Ireland to achieve the BES 6001 'Excellent' rating for its cement products.

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HOW MUCH IS IRELAND'S HARDWARE INDUSTRY WORTH?



Tony Foley, Economist, DCU.

HAI and UCD's Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School are together conducting the first all-Ireland economic impact study on the hardware industry this autumn. Members of the School's Marketing Development Programme will be talking to a cross-section of members from across the four provinces with a view to supplying the collected data to Tony Foley, an economist with Dublin City University.

Work has already started over the summer on the survey, the students have been carrying out extensive secondary research of existing data to identify gaps that the survey questions

will cover. Resources such as the CSO website, reports and trade journals on Euromonitor and Mintel are being analysed although much of this data is in relation to the UK as there is limited information available on the Irish economy.

WARC, another data gathering service, has been used to view industry insights into the effects of the economy on independent retailers and changes to consumer behaviour and the effects of online retailing. The students have also reviewed HAI produced research including member confidence reports and business index data.

The collection of data through telephone and face to face surveying of members will start at the end of September with the commencement of Dublin fieldwork, followed by the rest of the country at the beginning of October.

Tony Foley commented: "I'm happy to be working with HAI and Smurfit students, in developing an economic profile of this large and significant sector the role of which will become more significant as we get to grips with the need to build thousands of new houses annually for the next several years and as personal incomes

increase with the improved economic situation".

The survey will seek to cover areas such as:

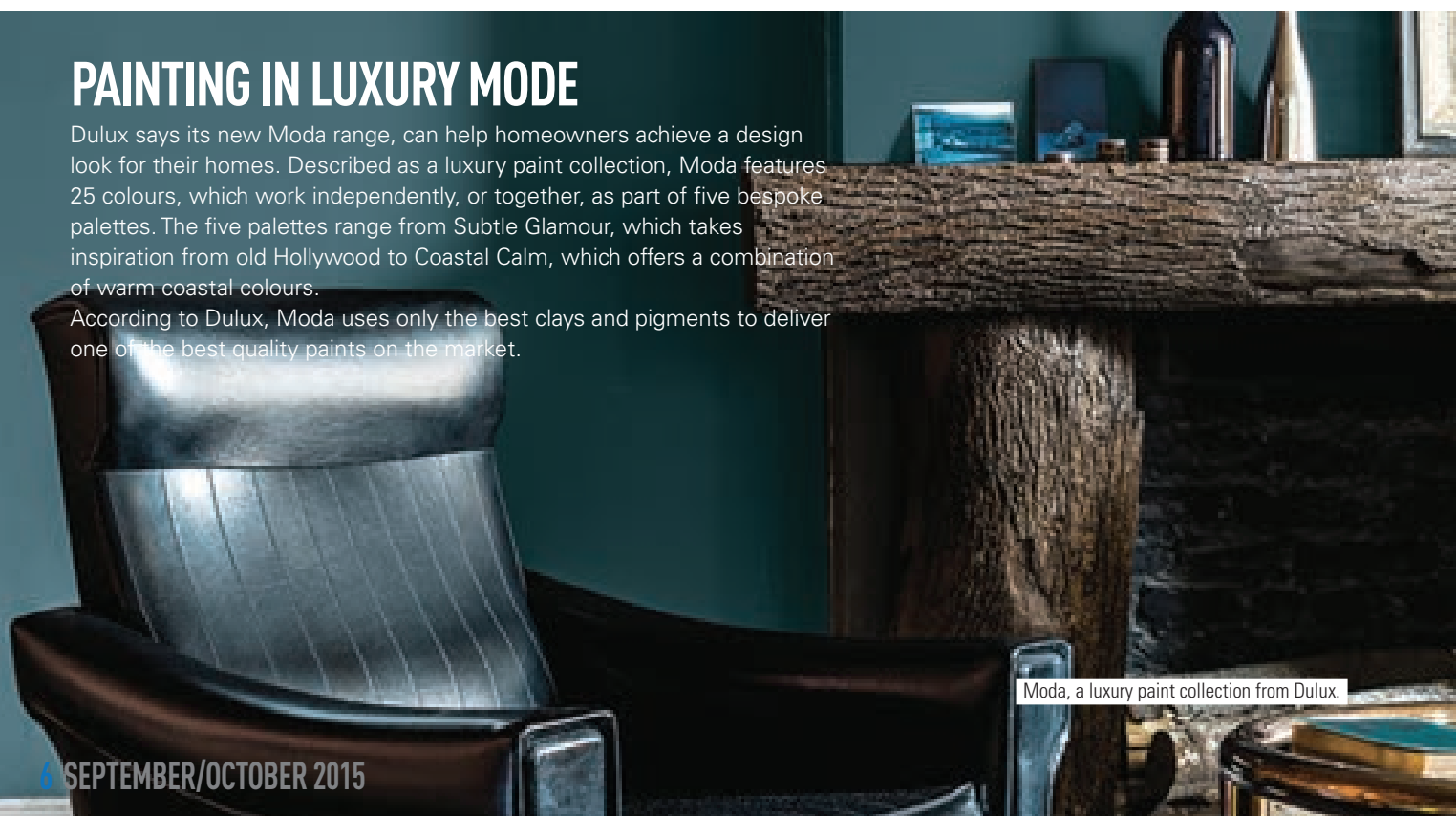
- tax revenues from the industry and the size of the market;
- exports across the border to Northern Ireland and to the rest of the UK;
- the economic divide between urban and rural businesses;
- the number of employees within the industry; and
- number of outlets within each category of retailer/merchant, supplier and manufacturer.

Annemarie Harte, CEO of HAI commented: "We have wanted this general market overview for some time. As an Association we are at the forefront of providing our members with top quality market intelligence that re-enforces our position as the voice of the Irish hardware industry. We know that there are data suppliers who claim to have this kind of authentic data but no one else is collaborating at this level with a top university and leading economist to do such a comprehensive survey. We are delighted to be working with UCD and Tony Foley and are eager to see the results."

PAINTING IN LUXURY MODE

Dulux says its new Moda range, can help homeowners achieve a design look for their homes. Described as a luxury paint collection, Moda features 25 colours, which work independently, or together, as part of five bespoke palettes. The five palettes range from Subtle Glamour, which takes inspiration from old Hollywood to Coastal Calm, which offers a combination of warm coastal colours.

According to Dulux, Moda uses only the best clays and pigments to deliver one of the best quality paints on the market.



Moda, a luxury paint collection from Dulux.

NEW MARKETING APPOINTMENT FOR FLEETWOOD PAINTS

After over 40 years in the business, including 17 years as Marketing Manager for Fleetwood Paints, Steven McQuillan is about to start a well-earned retirement. Steven has been a fountain of business knowledge, according to Fleetwood, and a great character too, well-known and admired throughout the industry. His Fleetwood colleagues will miss having him in the office and being able to rely on his experience. All at Fleetwood wish him many years of happiness. Stepping into his shoes will be Derek Byrne. Derek has over 10 years' marketing experience in retail and publishing. He will be working closely with Alex Doyle, Commercial Manager, and Paul Byrne, Key Account Manager.



Passing the torch to a new generation: Steven McQuillan and his successor at Fleetwood, Derek Byrne.

ROUNDING: 28TH OCT.

The Central Bank will send out packs (stickers, till wobblers, posters) directly to HAI members who wish to participate in rounding. Please note that while rounding itself is voluntary both for retailer and customer, a national education campaign will be rolled out in advance of the 28th October roll-out so for those who can be ready for this date, consumer awareness should be heightened.

HAI is acting as an intermediary for the Central Bank. If you would like to receive a pack please email **Annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie** with your appropriate contact name and number of packs required.

ALL PURPOSE ADMIXTURES



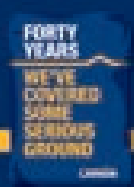
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HAI BUSINESS INDEX – 67% RISE IN PARTICIPATION

A total of 149 branches completed both the May and June Monthly Business Index of net sales for 2015. This was an uplift of 67% in member branch participation since we started producing the Index in January of this year. In this edition we showcase more of the results.

We also asked some of the participant members to tell us of the benefits to their business of both participating in the Index and what it means to get first access to the detailed analysis of the information provided, including year-on-year comparison; month-on-month comparison; and Index comparisons by region, area and number of employees. HAI uses an independent research firm, Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A), to undertake this research every month. Absolute confidentiality is guaranteed in this process and the results are treated in the strictest confidence and only reported in summary, anonymised form as you see in the infographic to non-participants. HAI strongly encourages your participation in the Index, please contact Jim on 01 2980969 or jim@hardwareassociation.ie

How to get involved

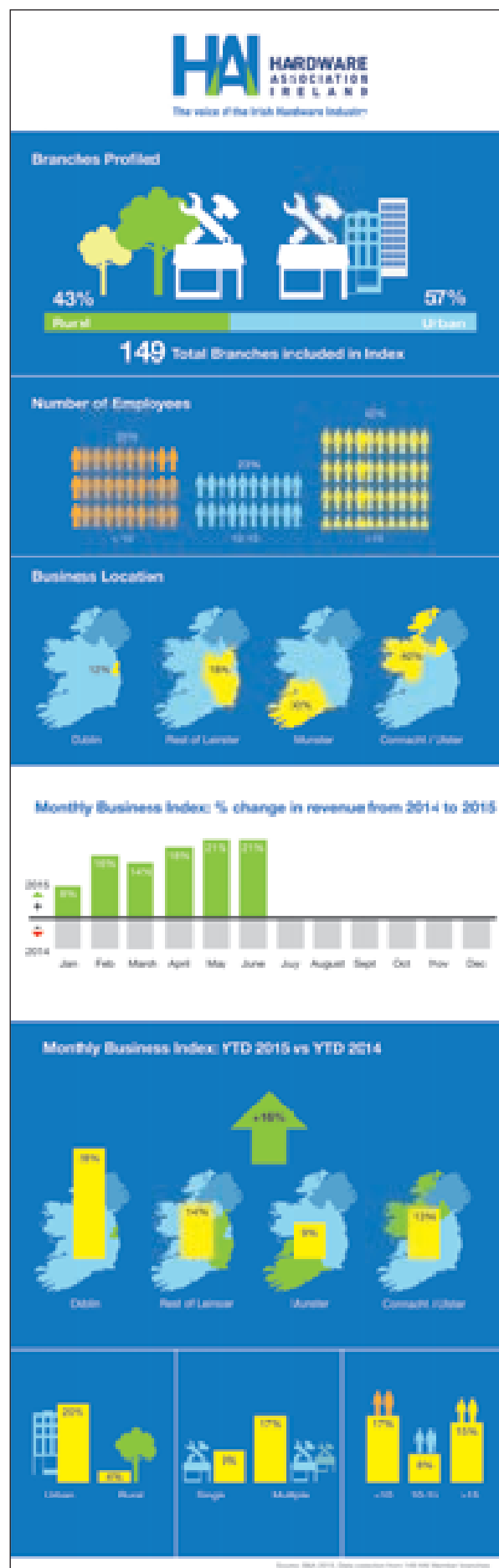
If you agree to participate, you will receive an email from B&A asking for several pieces of information that will form the benchmark:

- number of employees;
- location of business;
- what type of area your business operates in, i.e., to get an urban/rural split;
- annual sales turnover (less VAT) for your business for 2014 broken down by month; and,
- sales turnover per month for 2015.

Once this benchmark is complete you will only be asked for one piece of information each month thereafter, sales turnover per month. Once collated the results will be shared with you as soon as possible and, in 2016, we will consider expanding the research to include categories.

Summary of 2015 half-year

Total member revenue YTD 2015 shows a 16% increase on the same period last year. The YTD rise is evident across all types of member firms and peaks in Dublin and urban areas. Sector revenue in June 2015 rose 6% month on



month. The month-on-month rise in June 2015 is apparent across all groups of member firms. 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.

TAKING PART IN THE INDEX: THE BENEFITS

Members participating in the Business Index explain why they got involved.

SEAN MORAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, HPC GROUP



"Traditionally it has been very difficult to get an accurate picture on sales trends in our industry. Various sources of information have proven to be somewhat unreliable and the information cumbersome and difficult to collate. The HAI Monthly Business Index has changed all that. This Index, which is calculated using sales information as reported by HAI members provides a very useful indicator of changes to industry revenues on a monthly basis. It highlights information on changes to sales in the sector versus last year and tracks revenue trends on a month by month basis, identifying the best/worst performing months in the year etc. It also provides this information on sales trends on a geographical basis for the sector.

"In the HPC group we eagerly await receipt of the HAI Monthly Business Index report and we study it very carefully. We find it a very useful source of information which we share with our management and sales teams throughout the group. Obviously the information becomes more representative of precisely what is happening in the sector and, consequently, more reliable the more members participate in the survey and provide the required summary information on sales. I would encourage all HAI members to provide the requested sales information on a monthly basis to allow the Index to be promptly and accurately produced. Members are not giving away any state secrets and are not disadvantaging their businesses by providing such information. In return, all members get the benefit of receiving accurate information on revenue trends on a monthly basis which will allow them assess and benchmark their business performance against the industry."

PADRAIC ROGERS, OWNER TOPLINE ROGERS, BALLYMOTE, CO. SLIGO:



"We at Topline Rogers are finding HAI's Business Index a great help to our business. It's a great help being able to compare our business performance against people in our region with a similar size business. It helps us plan and project for where our business is going. "It's very timely for our industry; pity it didn't happen years ago!"

STEPHEN BLEWITT, AGRIBUSINESS HEAD OF SUPPLY CHAIN, AURIVO:



"With 35 retail outlets spread geographically across eight counties and three provinces, we find the breakdown of regions very useful in the report. To be the best you need to compare yourself to the industry and the monthly benchmarks help us decipher the areas we are over or underperforming in versus the industry.

"The fact it is completely anonymous gives us the confidence to be totally open with the figures we provide."

JOHN WEBB-O'ROURKE, FINANCE DIRECTOR, CAHILLS HOMEVALUE HARDWARE:



"The Index results are very informative, they give a sense of connection and support to us as retailers and as members within the HAI. I think some additional information could be secured, for example, providing participants with an opportunity

to comment when answering the sales question. When answering for a month, we would check sales for past years for that month automatically and it brings to mind events such as good or bad weather that may have affected or supported sales. "The Index now established should be developed further. It gives a sense from the results of a recovery and that's good but does highlight the divide of a 2- or 3-tier economy. That divide is a bit of a downer! The information can't but be helpful to the retailers that study it. Further development of the Index in an agreed manner would be most helpful."

HARDWARE HIGH FLIERS AT BOSTIK'S AIRCRAFT LAUNCH



Bostik held a customer event on 17th July, 2015, to celebrate the arrival of the Bostik Airplane to Dublin and to highlight the current trade activity including

Bostik's sponsorship of the Tour de France and the new Bostik adhesives and sealant range of products. In a statement, Bostik thanked all the trade for attending and supporting the event. Pictured at the launch were: Pat Moore, Director, Grafton Group; Robert Massey, Managing Director, Bostik Ireland; Hugh O'Donnell, President, HAI and Chief Executive, Topline Hardware; and Eamonn McHugh, Grafton Group.

NEW T80 FROM TRITON



The T80Z Fast-Fit.

Triton has announced the arrival of the T80Z Fast-Fit, the latest generation of Triton T80, which the company says combines great features for homeowners and installers alike.

Designed with easy shower replacement in mind, the T80Z Fast-Fit (RRP €220) is packed with features to simplify installation, featuring eight water and six cable entry points, including Swing-Fit left or right wiring terminal and Swivel-Fit left or right water inlet connection. The size and shape of the T80Z Fast-Fit unit also means it can be positioned neatly over existing holes for an attractive finish, and can be used to replace most electric showers, even other manufacturers' models. The T80Z Fast-Fit is available in two finishes, chrome and chrome/white in 8.5kW to 10.5kW models.

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Maynooth, Co Kildare
Contact: Francis Barrett
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Business: Builders Merchant, Plumbing & Heating.

Topline Murtaghs

Ashbourne
Co. Meath
Contact: Colin Murtagh
T: 01 8350106
Business: Builders Merchant, Hardware/DIY

Rathcoole Hardware

Rathcoole
Co. Dublin
Contact: Gordon Davis
T: 01 4589735
Business: Hardware/DIY

Topline Providers

Richmond Street, Longford
Co. Longford
Contact: Eoin McGinnity
T: 043 3346277
Business: Builders Merchant, Hardware/DIY

Newtown Supplies Ltd

Malahide Road, Coolock
Dublin 17
Contact: Paddy Robinson
T: 01 8474582
Business: Builders Merchant, Hardware/DIY

Cahills Homevalue Hardware

Kilmallock Business Park, Kilmallock
Co. Limerick
Contact: John Webb O'Rourke
T: 063 98397
Business: Builders Merchant, Hardware/DIY

McDonogh Trade Home & DIY

Bothar Na Mine, Ballybane Ind. Est,
Ballybane, Galway
Contact: Matthew Jennings
T: 091 779200
Business: Builders Merchant, Hardware/DIY/Garden

Origo

Magna Drive
Citywest, Dublin 24
Contact: Julie-Anne Hanley
T: 01 4666817
Business: Supplier/Distributor

Height For Hire

Ashbourne Business Park
Ashbourne, Co. Meath
Contact: Fergus McArdle
T: 1800 434448
Business: Access Platform Rental Company

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Blackthorn Business Park, Coes Road,
Dundalk
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Contact: Mark McArdle
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Business: Accounting and Business Management Software

WE NEED YOU... AND WE WANT YOU TO NEED US TOO!

HAI provides the following benefits to member companies:

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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.
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or at jim@hardwareassociation.ie

GYPROC SPONSORS MEDALLION OF EXCELLENCE WINNER AT WORLDSKILLS COMPETITION



Mentor Joe Clarke, with Irish apprentice plasterer and Medallion of Excellence winner at the WorldSkills Competition in Brazil, John Murray, who was sponsored by Gyproc.

Irish apprentice plasterer John Murray from Dunmanway, Co. Cork won a Medallion for Excellence in Plastering and Drywall Systems at the WorldSkills

Competition in Sao Paulo, Brazil. With Gyproc sponsoring him, 22 year-old John was part of an Irish team of apprentices from around the country

competing in Brazil.

The talented Irish WorldSkills team were pitted against apprentices from around the globe in a range of skills including cookery, brick laying, aircraft maintenance, painting and decorating, carpentry and plastering. John was among 1,200 apprentices from around the world competing for a range of prestigious world titles. The WorldSkills Competition was established with the aim of challenging apprentices to achieve world-class standards and competencies in commerce, services and industry and took place at in Sao Paulo in Brazil from 11th August to 16th August 2015.

"Gyproc was delighted to be involved in such an important event for our skilled youth and to lend our support to John. WorldSkills presented a great opportunity to showcase the high level of skill that still exists within Ireland, " commented Kieran Holohan, Marketing Director, Gyproc.

NEW FROM ABRACS



The new and improved Diamond Blade range from Abracs.

The new and improved Diamond Blade range from Abracs has arrived on the Irish market. It comprises five categories to suit different applications, spanning three quality levels aimed at expert, professional and trade users. The new and improved range is divided into the following categories: general construction materials, dual construction materials, hard construction materials, abrasive

construction materials and the brand new range universal construction materials.

The New Universal Construction Materials range has been designed to be 'all in one' and can cut any construction material with ease. Abracs has a new Construction Blade Twin Pack with a 300mm Expert Construction Materials Blade, with a 300mm Expert Dual Construction Materials Blade inside and a full range

of XL floor saw blades to take on the big jobs with ease. All blades come with a 10mm segment as standard and the know-how of over 25 years of manufacturing and product design experience. The full Diamond Blade range, the new Diamond Tools catalogue, a launch pack and in-store POS and marketing material, are all available directly from Abracs or through their key Irish distributor, Tucks O'Brien.

RECYCLE LIGHT BULBS: GET FLOWER POWER FOR YOUR GARDEN

Gardens across Ireland are set to get even brighter with the launch of WEEE Ireland's latest recycling campaign – The Great Bulb Exchange. Whether you are a gardening guru or new to the green scene, The Great Bulb Exchange aims to give everyone the chance to brighten up their garden while also responsibly recycling their energy saving, compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) light bulbs compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).



At present, WEEE Ireland only receive 30% of CFLs, which are placed on to the market for recycling, with the missing two-thirds going into general rubbish or being hoarded at home. Almost 3 million waste lamps were collected by WEEE Ireland for recycling in 2014 and this number is set to rise greatly

this year, if people get on board and recycle for free with the Scheme in 2015. To be part of The Great Bulb Exchange, participants simply bring back waste CFL/energy saving bulbs to local participating hardware stores (Woodie's, Arro, Homevalue, Expert

Hardware and Topline) and exchange each light bulb for a beautiful flowering bulb – free of charge.

Speaking at the launch, CEO of WEEE Ireland, Leo Donovan said: "It is our hope that The Great Bulb Exchange grows the awareness of recycling

when people are changing energy saving bulbs in the home and that these unwanted bulbs end up being recycled and not thrown into the bin."

For more information on The Great Bulb Exchange, please log onto: **www.bulbexchange.ie**



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CROWN LIFTS THE LID ON ITS TV CAMPAIGN



A still from Crown's new TV campaign.

Crown Paints is championing its heritage, quality and colour expertise with a new TV campaign 'Inside This Tin.'

Representing a major investment in the brand, at the core of the campaign



Crown also recently launched a new 250ml sample pot size of its Sadolin Superdec range.

is a 30-second advert which is being aired on national terrestrial and multichannel TV from Monday, 5th October.

This will focus on Crown Paints' three core messages: its history spanning more than 200 years; its authority on colour trends; and its commitment to innovation, which is represented in the advert through its exclusive Breatheasy formulation.

The advertisement has been developed to enable Crown Paints to create an even deeper emotional engagement with its audience. It combines a compelling poetic narrative with a series of lifestyle stories which underpin the strong bonds people have to colour and its ability to reflect their personality. The advertisement is central to an integrated campaign, which Crown Paints says will reach approximately 82% of adults and will include video on demand, home-interest press, alongside digital activity. Kevin Whelan, Marketing Controller of Crown Paints Ireland said: "The campaign represents a significant investment in communications from our business and truly demonstrates our continued and growing ambition for the brand."

BRETT MARTIN DEVELOPS NEW RAINWATER SYSTEM



The new Deepstyle 170 system.

The new Deepstyle 170 high-performance rainwater system from Brett Martin Plumbing & Drainage, combines increased drainage capacity with design flexibility to provide reliable, effective and efficient drainage for large commercial, industrial, agricultural and residential roofs.

Specifically developed with a super-sized 170mm profile to accommodate the increased volumes of rainwater on large roof areas with a capacity of 11.54 litres per second, according to Brett Martin, the new Deepstyle 170 system requires fewer discharge points

reducing the number of downpipes to provide both material and installation savings. Designed with the installer in mind, the system also features new and innovative, factory-fitted 'clip & seal' technology on all fittings to ease installation and provide exceptional long-term sealing reliability.

A unique addition to Deepstyle 170, the clip & seal fully integrates with the fitting so that the specially designed captive seal is held securely within the fitting whilst the clip locks the seal firmly in place. When fitting the gutter, the clip provides just enough flex to allow the

gutter to locate within the fitting, while a reassuring click locks the gutter securely into position, compressing the seal for superior sealing.

Deepstyle 170 integrates seamlessly with Brett Martin's 110mm Industrial Downpipe System to complete the company's high-capacity offering. Comprising 110mm plain-ended or single-socket downpipe options, with high-quality PVCu fittings, including bends, branches, access pipes and clips, the system retains the adaptability essential in planning an industrial rainwater scheme.

"Combining an efficient installation with exceptional reliability and increased capacity, Deepstyle 170 perfectly complements our existing range of rainwater systems," said Hayley Lowry, Brett Martin Marketing Manager.

"With continued investment in product research and development, our range satisfies every variety of roof drainage from the smallest domestic property to much larger agricultural and commercial buildings."

HAI GOLF SOCIETY: THE CAPTAIN'S PRIZE

The Captain's Prize competition was held at Castlecomer Golf Club on 26th June, hosted by HAIGS Captain Martin Rowe and kindly sponsored by Irish Abrasives.

First Place	John Phelan	41 points	handicap 11	
Second Place	Eddie Battersby	38 points	handicap 14	BB9
Third Place	Tim Lodge	38 points	handicap 12	
CLASS 1				
First place	Eddie Kelly	37 points	handicap 13	
Second place	Peter Morrissey	30 points	handicap 11	
CLASS 2				
First place	Tom O'Connor	34 points	handicap 20	
Second place	P J Gunn	33 points	handicap 16	
CLASS 3				
First place	Willie Dixon	33 points	handicap 25	BB9
Second place	Paddy O'Leary	33 points	handicap 23	
LADIES PRIZE				
First place	Kathleen Lynch	29 points	handicap 15	
Second place	Barbara O'Connell	27 points	handicap 22	



Winner of the Captain's prize (Gentlemen), John Phelan, being congratulated by Captain Martin Rowe with Sponsor Jim Cuddy, Irish Abrasives.



Cathy O'Gorman, Ladies' Captain, presenting Kathleen Lynch with the Captain's Prize (Ladies).

JOHNSTONE'S CELEBRATES 125 YEARS WITH 125 PRIZES

To mark its 125th anniversary, Johnstone's is giving away 125 prizes in 125 days.

Customers will be given the chance to win a prize every single day up until 12th December. Not only that, but everyone who takes part will also be automatically entered into a grand prize draw at the end of the year to win a holiday worth £1,250.

The huge prize fund includes iPad Minis, Sony PlayStations, Acer Aspire laptops, Nikon Coolpix cameras, Apollo bikes, DAB radios, Amazon Kindle Fires, as well as cinema tickets, restaurant vouchers and much, much more.

To enter, visit **www.125prizes.com** and enter your contact details, along with the barcode from any Johnstone's product bought from Johnstone's Decorating Centres or participating trade stockists. Every entry received will go into all subsequent draws until 12th December, giving multiple chances to strike it lucky.

Jane Clough, National Marketing Coordinator for Johnstone's, said: "We've done so much to celebrate our 125th anniversary so far and we wanted to end the year with a bang by giving our customers hundreds more chances to win. We hope you've enjoyed the celebrations – here's to the next 125 years!"

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HARDWARE MERCHANTS SEE GROWTH IN BUSINESS ACTIVITY

DECLINE IN PROFITABILITY DESPITE PRICE HIKE

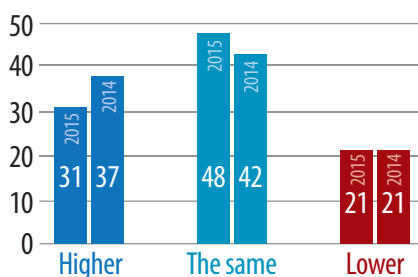
SLOWLY BEGINNING TO TAKE ON MORE STAFF

Hardware merchants across the country are seeing continued growth in business activity since tentative signs of recovery were indicated last summer for the first time since the onset of the recession. So say the results of HAI's Member Confidence Survey, conducted during June and July, for the third year running.

Member firms in Dublin saw the strongest rise in business activity, as was the case in 2014, and are more likely to have raised prices compared to their rural counterparts. HAI CEO, Annemarie Harte commented 'Cross-referencing this sentiment with the half-yearly results from our business index shows that Dublin is powering ahead of the rest of the country, in some cases by a ratio of 3:1. Whist I acknowledge population density and higher disposable income are contributing factors, this isn't California or London, we are too small to have a two-tier economy and the divide is only getting wider'. The time series analysis of the survey on business performance indicates the progress of member firms since 2013 across all metrics. In the survey of HAI members, carried out by Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A), 51% of merchants reported a better

performance in the past 12 months, almost double the figure recorded in 2013 when the monitor was first completed and only 27% reported an improvement.

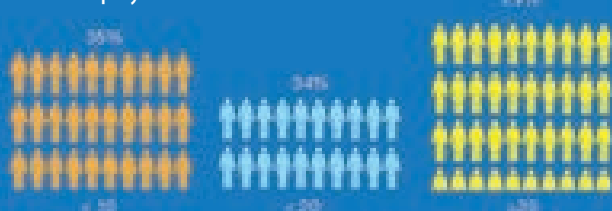
However, there has been a decline in business profitability, with 31% of members indicating a change since the same time in 2014 when 37% felt profitability was up. This hasn't impacted on taking on new staff as 26% have taken on new staff since the same time last year.



In total, 47% of members have increased prices. That's an increase of 39% on the previous year and over double that of the national average, 47% as opposed to 21%, according to B&A's Business Barometer. Commenting on the survey, HAI CEO Annemarie Harte said: "While it is encouraging to see a continued increase in activity in our sector, there is a clear need to rebalance economic activity with a greater focus on rural Ireland. Though we have seen national economic growth and positive signs of increased consumer spending in 2015, there is also an imperative to energise rural economic conditions with the inevitable benefit of increasing employment."

Survey Demographics

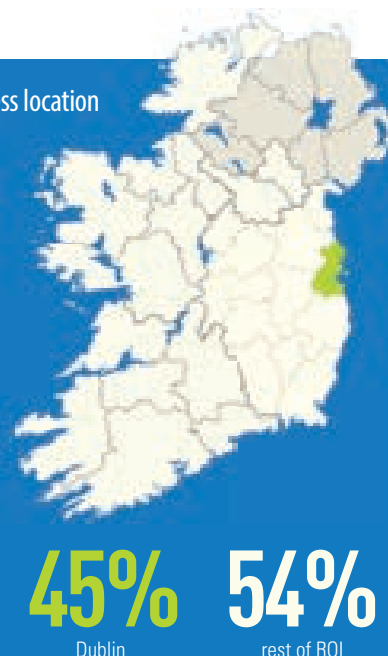
Number of employees



96 members profiled



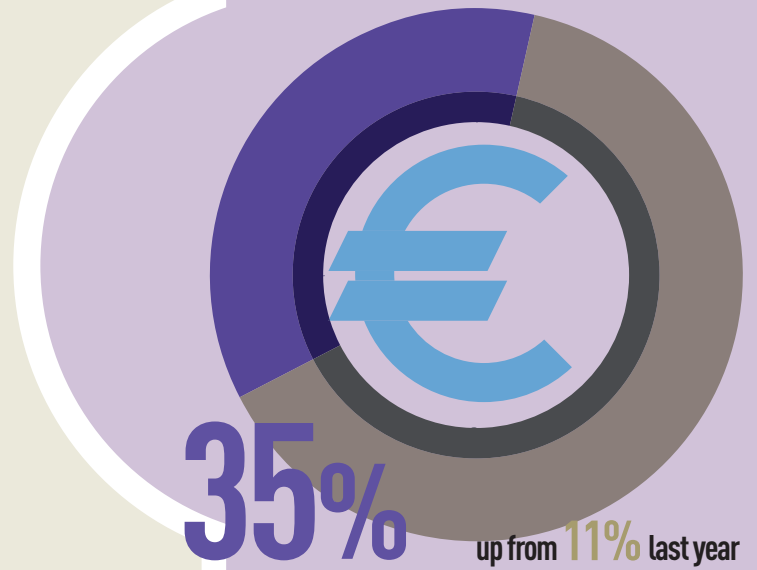
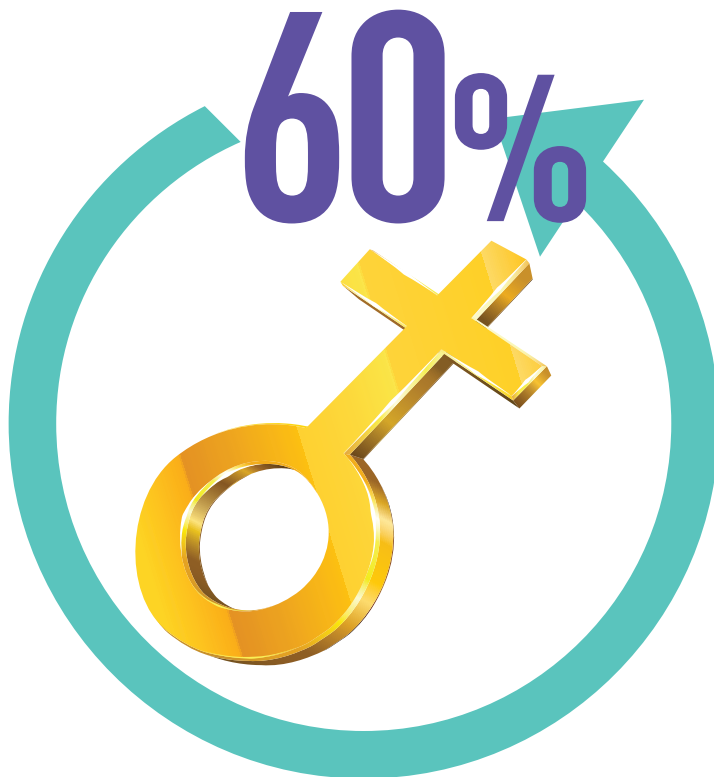
Business location



Business Performance: next 12 months

59%expect higher business activity (+3%
percentage points on last year)**51%**expect to raise prices (+17% on last
year)**48%**expect higher profitability (no change on
last year)**19%**

expect to hire more staff (+4% on last year)

Increases in
remunerationPercentage of all
retail customers
that are female

Female retail customers continue to rise in importance as a result of an increase in the level of home improvement activity.

32%awarded salary increases
to staff**14%**awarded performance-related
bonuses/profit sharing**6%**reinstated/increased
benefit packages

SOME KEY FINDINGS

Trade customers' payments
Cash /Cards vs Online

Trade cash and credit card customers have again seen a rise in importance in the past 12 months. In terms of types of retail customers, the biggest rise relates to the importance of online customers.

Future Challenges

There is a slight increase in optimism, however

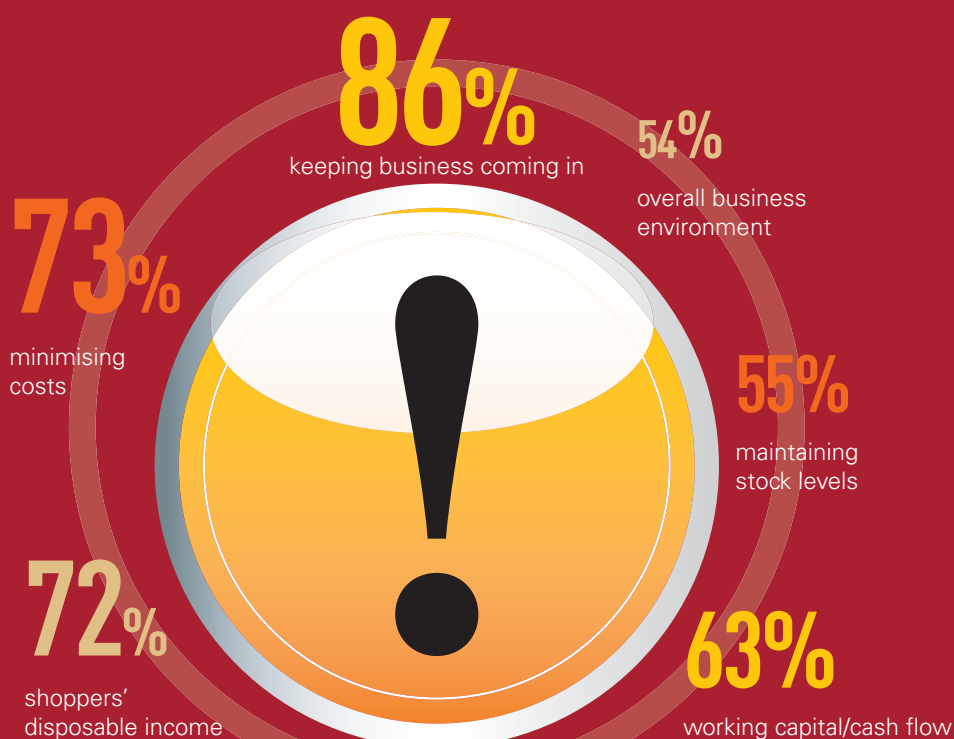


40%

remain concerned both for the general business environment and their own businesses.

Critical issues

According to the research, the top 6 challenges facing the industry are

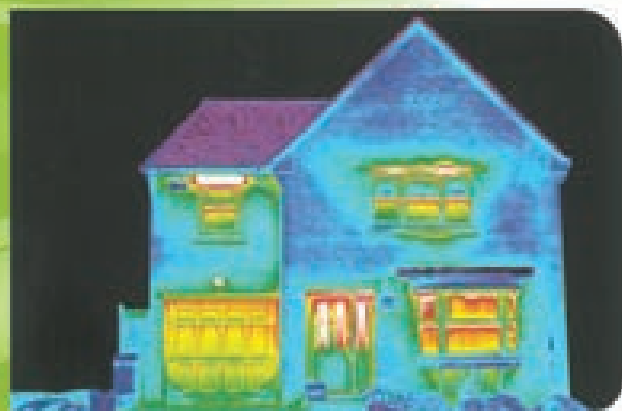


The HAI members' survey was conducted by B&A among 96 retail and merchant members in June/July 2015. Full details of the survey can be accessed via the Members' Area of the HAI website, www.hardwareassociation.ie

Registration details available by contacting Amanda on 01 2980969, or Amanda@hardwareassociation.ie

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Grange Builders Providers Homevalue occupies over 140,000 sq feet of warehouse space in the Baldoyle Industrial Estate.

“IF YOU NEED IT, WE’VE GOT IT”

- ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT THRIVES AT GRANGE BUILDERS PROVIDERS HOMEVALUE

Grange Builders Providers Homevalue is a family-run business based in Baldoyle for almost 30 years. Founder Peter Cosgrave, has steered the business safely through good and bad economic conditions, continuously adapting and updating the services and products he offers, while expanding and developing his range of businesses.

Peter admits that he more or less ‘fell into’ the hardware business: “I started out working in development, selling and hiring tipper trucks and JCBs.” But he has always had a keen eye for a business opportunity and when a farmyard site became available in 1986, he bought it and set about, as he puts it himself, selling a few building materials. The business took off and Peter’s knowledge and experience grew with it: “I had no previous experience so I was self-taught, learning as I went along. I always invested back in to the business but I tried to stick to the principle that we wouldn’t over-extend ourselves.”

Today, Grange Builders Providers Homevalue occupies 13 buildings with over 140,000 sq. feet of warehouse space in the Baldoyle Industrial Estate and employs more than 70 people. It is at the centre of a nexus of businesses that Peter operates from Baldoyle. While it hasn’t been easy, Purchasing Manager Liam Phelan says that the builders providers business emerged from the downturn relatively unscathed: “We still employ essentially the same number of people that we had back in 2008. Our philosophy was if somebody’s job was in danger, we found something new and more productive for that person to do.”

Not your typical builders providers

The result he says is that Grange is not your typical builders providers: “We’re not a conventional business in that sense. We have a very diverse range of product lines. And, while

Grange Builders Providers is at the heart of what we do, we’ve developed a range of other businesses around the main store.”

The first impression of the premises in the Baldoyle Estate is its sheer scale and the range of products and services on offer, everything from building materials to home improvement lines to pet care products. Peter sums up his attitude: “If you need it, we’ve got it. Whether you’re looking for building materials, hardware or homewares, we can provide it.”

Peter has always been open to developing new businesses and this stood him in good stead during the downturn: “We are always monitoring what’s selling and what isn’t and we aim to move quickly to make changes if a product line or an area of business isn’t performing. For example, we built a second floor in our store during the downturn and it was very important in helping us get through the challenges of that period.”

While those were difficult years, it also was a time when opportunities opened up and Peter saw prices falling on some valuable sites. “The downturn made it possible for us to purchase additional sites and gave us real scope to expand. I wouldn’t say that we always necessarily got the very best prices but we did find some real value.”

Entrepreneurial spirit

Grange Builders Providers Homevalue is now at the core of



Liam Phelan,
Purchasing
Manager.



Daniel Cosgrave,
the latest member
of the family to
get involved in
the business,
who works on the
store's website and
social media.

a group of complementary businesses that show Peter's appetite for new challenges. For instance, in 2012, he opened an electrical wholesalers store, Grange Electrical Homevalue, across the road from the main store. "An electrical retailer in the area had closed and we saw an opportunity to develop a real presence in that category. I'll always look positively at any business idea that I believe will generate a profit. This business is managed by Liam King, who has over 30 years' experience in the electrical industry." Among the other businesses that Peter developed in neighbouring locations in Baldoyle Industrial Estate is Grange Recycling, which provides a waste recycling service with trucks on the move all over Dublin every day. Ultrakabin, managed by Peter's son, Nicholas, and Anthony Johnson, is a sister company of Grange and manufactures portable accommodation such as containers, schools and welfare units for hire or sale. Grange Tool Hire and Sales opened only a few months ago and is growing steadily under the guidance of Manager Noel Stokes, who has worked in the tool industry for most of his life. "While we've diversified by developing several other businesses, they are all a good fit with Grange Builders Providers Homevalue and they enable us to provide enhanced, additional services to our existing customers in the store, while attracting new customers." Grange Builders Providers Homevalue is at the centre of all these growing businesses, and Peter sees its membership of Homevalue as a vital factor in maintaining and growing

the main store and the electrical goods store. Grange Builders Providers Homevalue joined Associated Hardware in 2002. Being part of Homevalue has been an invaluable help, according to Peter: "They're very flexible and they've always been supportive when I've looked to diversify, develop additional businesses or try new approaches. The signage, branding and marketing know-how that Homevalue provides has been crucial in the development of our store layout and design and adds to the distinctive look of the premises. It helps us to stand out from the competition."

Family business

All of the family are involved in the business: "There are six other directors in the business: Mary, my wife; and my five sons, Peter; Tommy; Nicholas; Noel; and Mark." Peter is the General Manager of the business; Tommy is IT Management Supervisor; Noel manages the retail stores and, with the help of a team of yard managers, supervises the yard; Nicholas works both at the builders providers and with Ultrakabin; and Mark works as a buyer in the main store, specialising in paints, interiors and homeware. "They all have a passion for the business and all got involved as soon as they were out of school. It seems it's in our genes and the latest family member to get involved is my grandson, Daniel, who works on our website and social media."

The hardware industry is evolving all the time and, Peter



A second floor was built in the store during the downturn.

notes, there are now real opportunities in the sector for talented people with a variety of skills, from sales to IT to financial management. "The merchandising business is much more sophisticated these days and IT systems have played a big part in this. Our system here allows us to track our margin on an hourly basis. Every morning I can get an overview of the business on my phone, with details of all key performance indicators. That information is vital to running the business efficiently."

Effective management is crucial in running a business of this size. "The fully integrated IT system is at the heart of our management approach, keeping us informed of how the business is performing throughout the day. Every morning, Noel outlines the plan for the day, communicating with his team across the premises via Skype and email." Given the scale of the premises, security management is an essential part of running the business: "Our yard managers monitor the yard constantly and we have 46 cameras on the premises."

Paying the right price for product at the start is a key element in delivering eventual profits, Peter adds. "Our Purchasing Manager, Liam Phelan, is constantly looking for competitively-priced products, not just in Ireland and the UK, but all across Europe and the Far East. Getting value on what you pay for your products is priority one. We have established relationships with excellent suppliers worldwide who understand this principle and its importance to us. I'm not saying we get it right every time, but our aim is to source our product lines at the most attractive prices possible."

Training

At Grange Builders Providers Homevalue, there is an ongoing commitment to staff training: "This business is changing all the time, with new technologies and new ways of getting things done. We have a schedule of training at

the beginning of each year. This year for instance, we had training programmes for staff running from the beginning of January right through to the end of February. In addition, our suppliers provide training for groups of our employees throughout the year. Basically, training is ongoing; something is happening all the time."

Future outlook

Looking to the next three to five years and what it holds for the wider industry, Peter is confident that the recovery we've seen to date will continue: "For the foreseeable future, I think growth in hardware will come from the home improvement side of the business. We've already seen that people are spending more on their homes in terms of building extensions and in investing in areas like plumbing and insulation. People are interested in spending money on their homes where they can see it will add value."

This is the area where he sees growth being achieved in his own business as well: "We have a strong focus on the home. Whatever a customer wants for his or her house, we aim to supply it, from the sturdiest building materials through to fine items of homeware. In the unlikely event we don't have it, we'll order it in quickly."

At the same time, Peter is conscious of not wanting to have stock on-shelf for too long. "We look to hold a wide range of stock but specifically in categories we are confident will sell. Equally importantly, we look to purchase that stock at the best possible prices."

Peter continues to remain very much hands-on in relation to the running of the business: "I'm here all day, everyday. You have to be." What keeps driving him on? "The same thing that always has – the challenge. The challenge of making the business work, of discovering new product lines with genuine sales potential, of finding new technologies and methods that will help us become more efficient and grow the business."



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HEALTH RISKS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

An outline by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) aimed at informing builders providers about some of the key health risks facing construction workers.

The HSA has identified occupational health and hygiene (OH) issues as areas of key focus for the construction sector. Construction workers are particularly exposed to developing diseases from their work activities. UK research has shown that 40% of all work-related cancer deaths occur in the construction sector.

Construction Dusts:

Silica dust

Lung cancer and silicosis can be caused from exposure to this type of dust. Safe systems of work need to be implemented to control this risk including wetting down the material, local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and appropriate respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

Other Dusts

Wood dusts from softwood, hardwood and processed wood material such as MDF can cause respiratory diseases and cancers. Controls such as LEV and RPE must be in place when working with these materials. The British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) is currently running its 'Breathe Freely' campaign targeted at the UK construction industry; see www.breathefreely.org.uk/, for useful resources and case studies.

Other Occupational Cancers:

Skin Cancer

In Ireland, we are approaching nearly 1,000 cases of melanoma cancers and almost 10,000 cases of non-melanoma cancers annually. About 140 people die from these types of cancers each year. Employers should risk-assess their work and ensure, where required, controls are put in place such as limiting worker exposure (particularly in very sunny weather), ensuring workers wear appropriate clothing, consider providing sun glasses, sun screen etc.

Diesel Engine Exhaust Emissions

Evidence indicates that significant exposure over a period of

time to harmful diesel fumes increases risk of lung cancer. These fumes can emanate from several sources including generators, lorries, excavators, dumpers etc.

Other OH Issues in Construction:

Musculoskeletal Disease (MSD)

Construction employees are often engaged in a significant amount of manual handling. The HSA has produced a guidance specific to the construction sector outlining how to assess the risks and implement necessary controls. The HSA has also produced some task specific guides for handling roof panels and for handling of glazing units (free to download at www.hsa.ie).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where employers cannot avoid certain risks, and where they have been unable to combat the risk at source or reduce it any further by other means, then they must provide additional individual protection to their employees by the provision of appropriate PPE.

Important note for retailers of PPE

The European Communities (Personal Protective Equipment) Regulations 1993 provide that PPE may not be placed on the market or brought into service unless it complies with basic health and safety requirements. It is deemed to be in conformity with the Regulations if it bears the CE mark. A particular problem on many sites are 'nuisance dust masks'. These should not be used as they do not protect workers sufficiently from dusts and they do not conform to the required standards and are not CE-marked.

Note: The information provided here is given as guidance only, based on guidelines produced by the Health & Safety Authority. This information is not, and is not intended to be, a legal interpretation of the Regulations or Act and does not constitute legal advice. For further information, please see www.hsa.ie or contact the HSA on 1890 289 389.

CONDUCTING WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

In partnership with



Tom Smyth's HR firm assists and advises Irish retailers on the human resources issues that arise in their workplaces. In this article, Tom provides an introduction to the correct procedures to follow when carrying out workplace investigations.

On the face of it, workplace investigations may seem straightforward. Sometimes they are and other times, once you address an initial complaint, they become much more complex. From the outset, it is important to have procedures in place to allow for disciplinary, grievance and bullying/harassment investigations in the workplace. These policies must be fit for purpose and, at a minimum, in line with:

- Labour Relations Commission Code of Practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures; and,
- Health and Safety Authority, 2007, Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work.

Commencing an investigation

How do you commence an investigation once an issue occurs, or is reported to you? Firstly, address the complaint (grievance or bullying) or issues (disciplinary) immediately. Do not ignore the matter in the hope that it will simply go away, or resolve itself. It very rarely does. Meet with, and write to, the employee concerned and where they have raised an issue to you, outline to him/her the options available to them, e.g., a formal or informal route. If it is a possible disciplinary matter write to the employee and make her/him aware of why you need to meet and what she/he is accused of. In the background you should consider who should be involved in any such investigation. Do you have appropriate, competent individuals available to be involved in this investigation? Is there any element of perceived or actual bias? When you consider what would be involved, who would be best suited to conduct either a formal or informal investigation?

If the matter under investigation is a grievance or bullying matter the employee may choose from two investigative approaches:

- **Formal:** a formal investigation involves a lot of box ticking. There are a number of elements to this style of investigation. You must take statements from each party, furnish each party with the statements and meet with any witnesses as required. While it can be laborious as an employer, you cannot be seen to encourage an employee down either the formal or informal route.
- **Informal:** this is informal in many ways. However, there are formalities that still have to be considered. An informal investigation often takes the guise of a mediation-style session where both parties sit with a facilitator (who can be internally sourced, provided there is no risk of bias) and discuss the complaint. Both

parties are given an opportunity to state their case and respond accordingly.

You must inform the employee of the alleged wrongdoing or complaint of which she/he is accused. This must be given in writing and be signed by the complainant. At this stage, the respondent should be informed of the route of investigation that the complainant wishes to follow. It is the complainant who decides whether a formal or informal route should be taken. Do not place any party on paid or unpaid leave until you have considered whether you can reasonably and justifiably do so.

Once the investigation begins, it is important to carry it out thoroughly; seek statements, comments, witnesses, evidence and/or documentation that will corroborate either party's version of events. It is vital that any information received from one party is shared with the other party. Witness statements must be signed, and evidence such as this must be given to both the complainant and the respondent.

Natural justice

The concept of natural justice must underpin every investigation. This is the right of the parties to be heard, to put forward their case and to defend themselves. Ensure transparency and fairness prevails at all times and that there is no scope for bias on the part of the investigator. Never assume that each party will maintain confidentiality. Make this an explicit requirement of the investigation and even include it in the terms of reference (rules of engagement) for the investigation.

Once a thorough investigation has been concluded and each party has been afforded the opportunity to state her/his case and present proof of her/his version of events, the formal report, or conclusion can be issued.

Conducting workplace investigations can take from just a number of days to several months. The purpose of this article is to introduce employers to the strict rules that exist at present in relation to work investigations. If you are ever in doubt about the steps involved please seek advice as, under employment law, irrespective of the merits of an issue, an employer must hold a fair investigation.



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.

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CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT REGULATIONS – ARE YOU COMPLYING?

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Under the Construction Products Regulations ('the Regulations') direct legal obligations are imposed on Manufacturers, Importers and Distributors of relevant construction products. As a builders merchant, you are a 'supplier' of construction products; do you know what your obligations are? Siobhan Kenny of Hussey Fraser explores some of the key implications of the regulations.

In July 2013, the Regulations became part of Irish law. They provide for the harmonisation of conditions for the marketing of all construction products to be incorporated into construction projects within the EU. The Construction products covered are those products for which a harmonised European Product standard (known as a 'hEN') is in force and are intended to be incorporated into the permanent works. Other products may be covered by other standards but, in the main, most construction products are covered by hENs. The idea behind the Regulations, (per Department of the Environment information booklet), is to "overcome the technical barriers to trade which arise where different countries in Europe have different standards, testing and labelling approaches for the same construction products". By harmonising the language, the standards and the labelling of such products it is intended that products may more freely and readily be available for use throughout the EU area.

Affected categories of products

The range of products covered is extensive. The information booklet lists 35 different categories of products covered by the Regulations – ranging from pre-cast concrete and steel products to chimneys and flues, from insulation products to doors and windows and from fire retardant products to cladding and curtain walling.

Economic operators

The Regulations directly affect Manufacturers, Importers and Distributors of relevant construction products – all of whom are expressly required by law to ensure that relevant products are compliant with the Regulations. They indirectly affect designers and builders who are required, by law and contract, to ensure and certify that the works which they have designed, specified or built, are completed using materials and goods, which are reasonably fit for their intended purpose, and comply with Building Regulations.

Manufacturers

The heaviest burden is placed on the Manufacturer of a relevant product who is required to provide a detailed Declaration of Performance ('Declaration') and affix the CE mark to each product.

The Declaration will contain detailed information about the

product including the product type, its intended use, a list of its essential characteristics, and the performance level of at least one of its essential characteristics by reference to the hEN.

Manufacturers must:

- draw up and keep (for at least 10 years) all the technical data and testing information;
- ensure that their manufacturing systems are sufficient to maintain the declared performance levels;
- carry out periodic testing to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the declared performance.



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Products must be labelled and identifiable with batch numbers where possible and full contact details. Safety information and instructions must be provided with the product – in a language suitable for the relevant market.

Importers

Importers are obliged to place “on the Union market only construction products which are compliant with the applicable requirements of these Regulations.” It is not open to an Importer to market non-compliant construction products.

A compliant product will have a CE mark, a Declaration and will be properly labelled and identifiable. The Importer must add his own contact details to the label. The product must be accompanied by instructions and safety information, and be stored in a way that will not impact on declared performance levels. Sample testing to verify actual performance against declared levels may be required.

Distributors/Suppliers

The Supplier must satisfy himself that the Manufacturer/Importer has provided all relevant documentation for the product and that it is properly marked and labelled. The products must be stored properly to avoid impact on declared performance levels. If the product is not properly marked or labelled, or the documents have not been provided, the product is non-conforming.

Note: if a Distributor places a relevant product on the market under his own name or modifies a product, he will be treated as the Manufacturer of that product and will assume full Manufacturer’s obligations in respect of that product. If a Manufacturer, Importer or Distributor has reason to believe that a relevant construction product does not conform, for whatever reason, with the Declaration or with any other requirement of the Regulations, they are under an express legal duty to take corrective action and bring the product into conformity, or to withdraw or recall it.

Designers and builders

By law, designers and builders involved in construction projects must ensure, and will probably be required to certify, that the completed building is, or will be, compliant with applicable law, including, of course, the Building Regulations. The Building Regulations require that all works should be carried out using “proper materials...which are fit for the use for which they are intended and for the conditions in which they are to be used”.

Designers when specifying products, and builders when selecting products which comply with the contract specification, will be concerned to ensure that selected products meet certain standards. They rely on the information provided to them about the product in question. The purpose of the Regulations is to allow the designer or builder to assess competing products from throughout the EU on the basis of similar information, similar technical

language and similar declarations of performance in respect of each individual item.

Consequences of breach of the Regulations

Competent national authorities (e.g., local authorities/government departments) have far-reaching powers under the Regulations to monitor the market and ensure compliance with the Regulations. They can serve notices, require testing, seek information, direct removal of a non-compliant product from the market or order its recall and/or destruction.

In addition, failure to comply with the Regulations can lead to criminal prosecution and will almost inevitably also have substantive commercial implications.

Commercial Consequences

The commercial consequences of a product recall or withdrawal are clearly serious, impacting all concerned in bringing the product to the market. In addition, the commercial consequences of supplying a non-compliant product, which is, in fact, incorporated into the permanent works, may be substantial.

The Regulations provide a series of checks and balances, through the imposition of serious legal obligations, to ensure that non-conformity can be and will be corrected at an early stage. Those obligations are imposed on Manufacturers, Importers and Distributors of relevant products. Most, if not all, commercial contracts contain express or implied obligations that the parties to it will comply with legal obligations – a breach of which might lead to an action for damages.

If each party involved in the process of bringing a relevant construction product to the market complies with their legal obligations, the information provided to the end-user, informing his decision as to whether or not the product is a suitable one to meet his requirements, will be reliable, understandable, accurate and verifiable. Each person in the chain therefore relies on the person above them to comply with those obligations.

Compliance with the substantive legal obligations imposed by the Regulations requires an understanding of those obligations and the introduction of proactive systems designed to ensure that legal obligations can be met, information can be provided and appropriate records can be maintained.

Additional information can be found at:
[**www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/BuildingStandards/#ConstructionProductsRegulation\(CPR\)**](http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/BuildingStandards/#ConstructionProductsRegulation(CPR))

[**www.nsai.ie/Our-Services/Standardization/About-Standards/Construction-Standards.aspx**](http://www.nsai.ie/Our-Services/Standardization/About-Standards/Construction-Standards.aspx)

[**www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2013/en.si.2013.0225.pdf**](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2013/en.si.2013.0225.pdf)

PLUMBING & DRAINAGE PRESENTS

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Capabilities**



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Performance**



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

Tel 048 9084 9999 or Email sales@brettmartin.com



www.brettmartin.com

Plumbing & Drainage

HAI OFFERS BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAMME FOR HARDWARE SECTORS

Hardware Association Ireland in association with the Management Works initiative from Skillnet, are offering a pilot Business Growth Programme for members who are Builders Merchants, Hardware/DIY Retailers, Distributors and Manufacturers.



The Business Growth Programme will help you to build your skills as an owner or manager so that you can develop and grow a profitable and sustainable business. Using a proven combination of group workshops and one-to-one coaching, you will learn to take positive action and drive improvements in your business. This heavily subsidised, high-impact programme is available nationwide and is delivered by leading business coaching and training providers.

Who should attend?

Owner Managers, Managing Directors, Business Development Managers and other members of the Senior Management Team who want to develop and grow a profitable and sustainable business. To date, hundreds of business owners and managers from every industry and service sector have taken part in this programme. The Business Growth Programme is for those who want to drive their business on now.

What does the programme consist of?

Action-focused programme delivered over six months; company diagnostic, includes a three-hour, one-to-one session with your coach;

Six highly practical one-day workshops with other business owners and managers:

- Financial planning;
- Time management;
- Sales & marketing;
- Building a successful team;
- Customer service;
- Systems.

These workshops allow for peer-to-peer learning between Owners/Managers, which is always very beneficial as similar challenges can be shared and solutions found. Each session is highly practical with a focus of driving growth in the business; and, six hour-long, follow-on coaching sessions focused on delivering results for your business.

How will your business benefit?

The programme is designed for business impact, it will improve your overall business performance by improving your management capability, to drive the business forward. The focus is on the daily, weekly and monthly activities that are key to developing and growing your business. Together with a group of similarly motivated business owners and managers, you will:

- further develop your management capability and business skills;
- identify, understand and track the key numbers that will deliver your business success;
- develop your sales and marketing expertise in order to increase sales and profits; and,
- learn how to build and lead a highly-motivated, effective team, who will look after your customers and build your business.

Throughout the six months of the programme, you will be given practical solutions that can be applied immediately to your business. You will have the support of a professional Business Coach. And you will share your learning journey with other Business Owners and Managers who face similar challenges.

What is the cost of the programme?

The programmes are all heavily subsidised at €1,800 per participant (payable over six months). However, for HAI, the subsidised cost to members will be **€1,700 per person**. This includes all training, coaching, course materials, lunches and refreshments.

Where is this programme available?

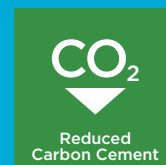
This programme is currently available in locations throughout Ireland. To check on the next available dates for the programme in your region, or to register an interest in having it made available locally, please contact Jim Copeland, at 087 667 1361/01 298 0969, or by email, jim@hardwareassociation.ie

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PESTICIDE TRAINING - DEADLINES ARE LOOMING

As a pesticide seller, you need to be aware of, and fulfil, the requirements of the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD), a European Directive aiming to reduce the health and environmental risks related to plant protection products (PPPs). Here, we outline the Directive and its requirements, plus details of where you can find more information, as well as the all-important upcoming deadlines for compliance.

The SUD focuses on four key requirements: training and registration; storage and display; advice; and record-keeping. PPPs are categorised as either for Professional or for non-Professional/Amateur use. Professional use products may only be used by farmers, landscapers, etc. These individuals must be registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) from **26th November, 2015**.

Labels generally indicate whether a product is for professional use or non-professional/ amateur. The status of a product may also be checked at <http://www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/products/>

Amateur use products can be used in a home garden situation. There is no restriction on use and no requirement for such users to be registered with the DAFM. Categorisation of products may be checked at www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/products/

Training & Registration Requirements

From 26th November 2015, a registered distributor must be available at all times at the point of sale to ensure 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 be appropriately trained.

i) For Professional use products:

- To register as a PD (Professional use products), you must successfully complete the QQI/FETAC Level 5 Handling and Distribution of Pesticides (Code 5N2466) or equivalent. Then, you can apply to register as a PD online at www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/
- To maintain registration, trained distributors (Professional use products) will be required to maintain Continuous Professional Education (CPE), see www.iasis.ie

ii) For non-Professional/Amateur use products:

- To register as a PD (Amateur/home garden products only), you must successfully complete the online course for PDs of non-Professional/Amateur products. This course can be accessed at www.iasis.ie

Subsequently, you can apply to register as a PD online at www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/

N.B. Completion of the non-Professional/Amateur distribution course does not allow a PD to distribute professional use pesticide products.

Storage and Display

All premises storing or distributing PPPs must register with the DAFM before the 26th November, 2015. From this date, only a registered premises can be used for storage of pesticides for purposes of sale or supply. Details of minimum storage standards are available at www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/sud/

In registering, the owner of the premises commits to ensuring that the store will comply with these standards. Distribution stores will be inspected on an ongoing basis by DAFM officers.

PPPs classified as very toxic or toxic may not be stored in an area to which the public has access, i.e., a retail area. A list of such products is available at www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/products/

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. Since 26th November, 2013, advice or recommendations in relation to product selection or the use of a PPP for any purpose may only be given by a registered Pesticide Advisor.

Record-keeping

Details of record-keeping requirements for retailers of professional use plant protection products can be accessed at www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie/plantprotectionproducts/ Since 1st January, 2014, records must be maintained of all sales of professional use PPPs made at retail level. These records must include a herd number or professional user number, where available, and must be maintained for a period of five years from date of sale.

Record keeping requirements for retailers of amateur use PPPs is limited to details of records of purchases, i.e. goods in documentation.

MBE SkillNet is organising nationwide two-day training courses subject to demand, availability of funding and trainers. Contact Michael Lynch 087 359 4116 or info@mbeskillnet.ie

For more information: Pesticide Control Division, DAFM, tel: 01 615 7552; fax: 01 615 7575; email: pcs@agriculture.gov.ie; or log on to www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie

HA LAUNCHES CREDIT MANAGEMENT ADVICE SERIES

A new series of articles by Declan Flood, aka The Credit Coach, offering practical, straightforward advice on credit management, begins with a guide to effective customer credit assessment.



Declan Flood.

Welcome to the first of a series of articles on the thorny topic of credit that I hope you will not only read, but put into practice, for the benefit of your business. The one thing that determines the success of any venture is the amount of profitable sales that are made on a regular basis. Now, read that again, it says "profitable sales" – anyone can sell at a loss, and anyone can sell if they don't

get paid for the goods.

My definition is that profit is only realised at the point of getting paid. Some accountants record the profit at the point of sale, I disagree, and because of my definition I believe you should always invest in your credit control function to make sure it is up to scratch to make sure your sales are profitable, otherwise there is no point.

Know your customer

When some people think of credit control and credit management, they immediately think of debt collection, and while this can be a part of the process, it is only a small part, as long as all the other pieces are in place. In this article, we will focus on what should be the first step in the process – assessment. In simple terms, you have to know who your customer is. You need to know the exact entity you are trading with, and more importantly you need to know that they are creditworthy and you need to know that they are good for the amount of credit you are going to extend to them. So, without a crystal ball, how can you do this?

Step 1

Have a proper new account application form and get it filled out in full for every new account. This will ensure that you have the correct information and you know exactly what every customer wants and expects from you.

Step 2

Review all your existing accounts, to make sure you have assigned proper lines of credit and correct credit terms to every account. When reviewing accounts it is best to print off a list around the 27th of the month when the balances are at their highest rather than at month end when they are at their lowest.

Step 3

Have a proper mechanism for getting trade references,

financial information and details of all other relevant information to assist you in making your decision. These are valuable additions to whatever other credit checking procedures you have in place. Keep details of all references with the new account application form for future reference.

Step 4

Consider different ways to mitigate your exposure, which could include: personal guarantee, parent company guarantee, bank guarantee, credit insurance or charges over assets, all have a place in an actively managed ledger. There are clever ways to use your payment methods, discount structures and credit terms to substantially reduce your exposure.

Step 5

Have a simple system to review existing customer accounts, particularly looking at the line of credit you are prepared to extend to them. The last thing you want is for orders to go on hold and to have to spend lots of time releasing them. The solution is having accurate information at all times.

If all this seems too complicated for a small Hardware Store to cope with, I can assure you it is not all that complicated, and, if integrated with your current systems, it can become a profit-generating and business growth tool that will bring visible results over time.

With over 20 years' experience, Declan has developed the Six Step Credit System, a method for managing credit, which is practical and comes with a step-by-step guide. Declan will be holding a training day later in the year (see panel overleaf).

Five steps to effective customer credit assessment

► STEP 1

An account application form, filled out in full

► STEP 2

A review of all existing accounts, to ensure proper lines of credit and correct credit terms are assigned

► STEP 3

A proper mechanism for getting financial information to assist decision-making.

► STEP 4

A range of different ways to mitigate your exposure

► STEP 5

A simple system to review existing customer accounts

Excellence in Credit Management – one-day course

This course is specially designed for Hardware Stores dealing with companies and individuals. It concentrates on delivering excellence in credit. It includes walking the fine line between finance and sales, working together to keep customers happy, and, paying and buying more.

Date: 29th October, 2015

Location: Louis Fitzgerald Hotel, Dublin

About the trainer:

This one-day course is being delivered by Declan Flood, Irish Credit Management Training. Declan is a recognised expert on all aspects of credit management in Ireland and beyond. He holds over 20 years' experience. Any credit problem that you could encounter he either has the solution or knows the best person available to help you. He is recognised as a thought leader in credit worldwide for his total business approach to credit. He believes that credit is not only about getting paid in full and on time, it is also about maintaining excellent customer relationships and finding a way to deliver every order.

Who should attend?

This one-day training course is designed for Owners, Credit Controllers or Managers of Builders Merchants and Hardware Retail Stores who are responsible for the collection of the money due from both companies and individuals.

Course Content:

- Your credit policy – a simple document that sets out your approach to risk, especially high-risk, potentially profitable accounts.
- Your credit terms – are they clear, are they communicated, are they enforceable and are they enforced?
- Setting lines of credit for new and existing customers.
- Opening new accounts – the dos and the don'ts.
- Managing your ledger – making sure every balance has a method of collection assigned to it.
- Correct approach for collection calls – different for companies and individuals.
- Applying the correct method of collection – including letters, calls, texts, visits etc.
- Cash control – a foolproof system to account for every cent.

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- Cash flow forecasting – it is easier than you think when you have all the information in place.
- Understanding and mitigating risk – 10 things you can do right now.
- Dealing with disputes and queries – and putting procedures in place to eliminate them.
- What to do when it all seems to be going wrong – the last thing on the list is legal action, which can be time consuming, expensive and ineffective.

Learning Outcomes:

- The knowledge and confidence to make a positive difference in your business, to maximise the profits generated.
- A clear action plan to tackle your existing balances, irrespective of age and to deal with new business.
- You will receive a number of valuable tools, calculators and meaningful KPIs to measure your success.

Cost:

Members: €100

Non-Members: €150

To book, contact Amanda Creane: tel: 01 298 0969 or email: amanda@hardwareassociation.ie

Free Credit Management Resources available Online at HAI E-Learning Platform for all HAI Members.

In our last edition, HAI launched the E-Learning Platform with "New Employee Induction Training". This was just the first of a number of planned online training initiatives, which will be rolled out to members over the coming months.

There is now a Credit Management Handbook available to members of HAI. This includes a number of resources including an account application form.

In order to access this and other resources, you need to register to receive a username and password. Contact Amanda for further information: amanda@hardwareassociation.ie or 01 2980969.



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Convention Centre
Dublin and Samuel
Beckett Bridge.
Picture: Ecocem Ireland.

MIXING IT WITH THE BEST – ECOCEM LTD BUILDS FOR A GREENER FUTURE

Annemarie Harte, CEO of HAI, reports on a recent visit to a business park north of Dublin Port where she met with a HAI member, Ecocem Ltd, which is taking on the cement industry at home and abroad.

Tucked away in a business park north of Dublin Port is a member of HAI making waves within the Irish cement industry. Ironically you don't have to walk too far from the Port before you come across examples of the cement in action – at the base of the Samuel Beckett Bridge in the Docklands, in the Convention Centre (the world's first carbon neutral convention centre no less!) and in the recent resumption of works at what will be the new headquarters of the Central Bank.

Conor O'Riain, MD of Ecocem, says: "Ecocem is often used by engineers to maximise the durability of concrete structures. For example, the NRA specify Ecocem in the splash zones on all bridge structures in Ireland as de-icing salts will eat into normal concrete very quickly, causing costly repairs. Using Ecocem will double the lifespan of those structures."

Ecocem Ireland is an independent, specialist producer of (Ground Granulated Blastfurnace Slag) GGBS cement. To the untrained eye it looks like creamy sand and the finish looks more like Miami than Maynooth. The marketing messaging from Ecocem is very much about the performance of the product. Merchants and end users need to be assured that the product is as good or better than existing products on the market. When buying cement, people traditionally want

two things: strength and durability. Another feature is the lighter, brighter finish of the product, and the elimination of efflorescence.

Given the name of the company and product, it's interesting that its environmental impact is the third selling point. It claims to be the best available technology to reduce the carbon footprint of cement. This claim is reinforced by Ecocem's Environmental Product Declaration, an independently assessed Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) of their product to the highest international standards. In fact, Ecocem's bags were awarded Product of the Year at this year's Green Awards.

Ecocem's technology is contributing to the de-carbonation of an industry that, worldwide, emits more than 5% of global CO₂ emissions. This may sound huge, but bear in mind that cement is the main ingredient in concrete, the world's most popular construction material, and after water, the world's most consumed substance.

With the now infamous inclusion of the requirement for 'passive house' new housing and commercial buildings in the drafting of the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016 – 2022, cement companies' environmental credentials will likely grow in importance. In fact the government's long awaited policy on Green Public

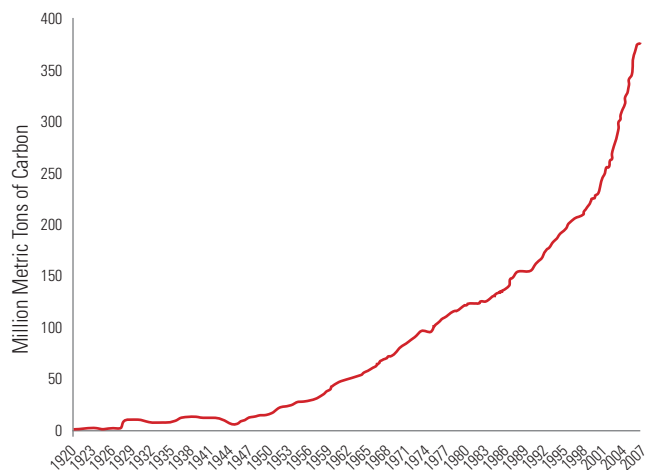


A South Dublin residential property displays the whiter, brighter finish available when using Ecocem in render. Picture: Kingston Lafferty Design.

Procurement promises to make specific mention of cement, and Ecocem is confident this will further accelerate growth. Ecocem entered the hardware sector in 2013, offering their product in bags for the first time. This move was prompted by the downturn in the construction industry, forcing Ecocem to diversify its product range, and widen its focus towards export markets. The result is that cement technology previously reserved to readymix concrete users is now available in bags. "We invested €2.5 million in infrastructure to get this project up and running so after a challenging first year, it's great to see our market share grow and our efforts come to fruition. Every month so far this year we've set a new record in sales," says Conor.

As the Irish economy continues its road to recovery, Ecocem has been quick to take advantage of our island's proximity to the UK, and more recently the strength of sterling. Around a third of the company's output now goes to the UK to be sold through a growing network of builders merchants, including the giant Travis Perkins. The location of their production

Global Carbon Emissions from Cement Production



facilities in Dublin Port also enables exports further afield, including France, Germany and the Benelux.

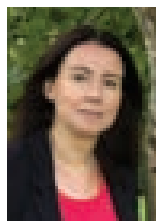
So what's next for Ecocem? Conor says: "First of all, we need to grow our market share in the Irish market. We are confident that we have the best product on the market, both in terms of performance, and critically, user experience, and the feedback confirms that. Our geographical position means that we are right in the centre of the Irish market where distribution is cost effective, so we can offer very keen prices. After that, the UK offers significant potential, they are more people in Greater Manchester than in the whole of Ireland! And after that, I'm afraid you'll have to wait a bit, but we have some very exciting announcements to make before the end of the year!"

Ecocem Ireland is a subsidiary of Ecocem Materials, a wholly owned Irish company with subsidiaries in Holland and France. The group is headquartered in Dublin and their annual capacity currently stands at around 1.4 million tonnes.



The whiter brighter finish available when using Ecocem in render

If you have a story to tell as a supplier or manufacturer in the Irish market please contact Annemarie on 01 289 0969 or Annemarie@hardwareassociation.ie for more information.



HAI LAUNCHES MEMBER OFFERS AND DISCOUNTS

In the last edition of *The Hardware Journal*, we announced a new range of online services available to all members in our Members' Area including an E-Learning Platform. We continue to expand on the services available to our members and in this edition we are launching member offers and discounts.



Member services are at the heart of HAI 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'.

Currently, we have the following offers available to members:

Promopos 20% discount

Promopos are offering HAI members 20% off as new customers to their service. Promopos supply a large range of pre-designed templates which you can customise and print yourself for your in-store marketing requirements. For information on how to avail of this offer contact Bill McConnell: bill@documation.ie, or call 01 653 5008, or go to www.promopos.com

5% off Repak membership

Repak are offering new HAI members 5% off their rates until 30th September. HAI have also negotiated competitive Repak membership rates for the hardware and building materials' sector. Find out more at: www.repak.ie or call 01 467 0190.

Phone Bill Audit & Discount Call Rates

Imagine will provide a free audit of your current phone bill. HAI have also negotiated discounted rates available to all members. Contact: David Walsh 086 173 8243, or david.walsh@imagegroup.ie

Group Health Insurance

HAI has negotiated group deals on health insurance with both VHI and Laya. See Members' Area of website for further details.

Cash for medical expenses

Hospital & Medical Care Association (HMCA) provide a number of packages exclusively to members of Trade Associations. Plans available to members include: Cash for Medical Expenses, Dental, Life Plan, Personal Accident & Vehicle Breakdown. For further information call Lisa on 01 613 0316.

Also, HAI supplier members can avail of discount advertising rates in *The Hardware Journal*, as well as discounts on stands at The Hardware Show. We are currently negotiating discounted rates on the following: merchant card payments terminals and POS Systems, electricity and other utilities, 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

Not a HAI member? For membership enquiries please contact Jim on 087 667 1361 or jim@hardwareassociation.ie



Don't Forget: If you still haven't signed up to the Member's Area please do so – you can find the link to register on the home page of our website, www.hardwareassociation.ie.

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INSULATING PROPERTIES WORTH THE ENERGY

Insulation is one area where homeowners, both in Ireland and across Europe, are spending their hard-earned cash. Here in Ireland, homeowners' desire to add value to their dwellings through enhancing insulation has also been incentivised by an increase in grants for energy efficiency upgrades announced by the Government earlier this year.

Energy efficiency is one of the central objectives of the EU 2020 Energy Strategy and this has had a positive impact on the insulation market EU-wide, according to analysts at Ceresana (www.ceresana.com/en/market-studies/industry/insulation-europe/), who expect total revenues to rise to more than €21 billion in 2021. They also reported that the most commonly used insulation materials in Europe in 2013 were mineral wools, as these products can be used in a wide variety of applications. Glass and rock wool reached a combined market share of 56% with, predominantly, glass wool being used.

The Irish market has had a much-needed injection in the

domestic sector since 2009 from the Better Energy Homes grant scheme. Insulation works account for over €130 million of the total grants paid out, or 73% of the total. In March of this year, higher grant values and bonus payments were introduced and the scheme is now available for previous applicants to get additional works completed, and, with many works applied for but not completed, a large opportunity remains.

Coupled with the implementation of the Building Regulations, and a gradual recovery in new construction, there is evidence to suggest a positive outlook for the insulation market, which in turn stimulates market



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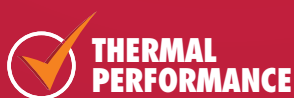
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Keen to trial an alternative product to existing flexible slabs and rock mineral wool rolls, if it meant that handling would be easier and the products softer to touch?

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Application	Earthwool OmniFit Slab	Earthwool OmniFit Roll	Earthwool OmniFit Stud
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Loft		✓	
Timber frame walls	✓		✓
Steel frame walls	✓		✓
Internal partitions	✓	✓	
Internal floors	✓	✓	
Separating floors	✓	✓	
Ground floors	✓	✓	



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innovation. This can be seen in the product offerings in the sector within Ireland.

Natural offerings



Therma Fleece Cosywool boasts superior technical properties.

"When considering the energy efficiency of buildings you cannot under-estimate the positive contribution that natural insulation materials offer on many levels," says Niall Crosson, Senior Technical Engineer at Ecological Building Systems. Importers and distributors of natural insulation products, Ecological Building

Systems (a division of the McCann and Byrne Group) offers unique solutions for new builds and for the refurbishment of existing buildings with natural products that include Thermo Hemp and Thermafleece Cosy Wool. These products possess key characteristics that help to create a healthier, more comfortable, energy-efficient, and durable construction. Natural insulation materials often outperform many manmade products in a range of areas, and, in addition, are renewable and sustainable materials which meet key sustainability criteria, according to Niall. He also adds that indoor air quality, building health, and comfort are not compromised by increasing the thermal performance within buildings.

No escape

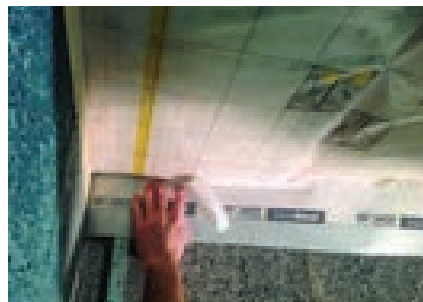


Thermoflex is a specially formulated, highly flexible PU foam.

With great efforts focused on heat retention and energy efficiency, the last thing anyone wants is the potential for heat to escape through a window, door or other wall breakthrough points. Everbuild says its Thermoflex is the answer to this. Thermoflex is a specially formulated, highly flexible PU foam that absorbs component movement, creating an air-tight seal to reduce heat loss and improve energy efficiency in buildings. The powerful bond strength and flexibility of Thermoflex gives excellent long-term thermal and acoustic insulation by inhibiting cracks from occurring during the contraction of building materials, such as window frames to wall bonds, giving a hermetically sealed barrier.

Thermoflex is temperature resistant from -40°C to +80°C (short-term exposure to +100°C), and is fire rated to ISO13501 (Class E).

Airtight



Vario Bond is an innovative, high performance, plasterable, airtightness tape.

July saw the launch of a new product by Isover, designed especially for the Irish market. Vario Bond is an innovative, high-performance, plasterable, airtightness tape with an SD value of 0.03-20m.

The 25m long roll is available in two widths – 100mm and 150mm – and is a multi-functional solution for a variety of applications, including around windows, doors and timber to block connections.

Due to its innovative fleece material, Vario Bond is also suitable for internal and external use and, in addition to its airtightness, it is windtight and rainproof. It can also be plastered or rendered over. With the ability to bond to bricks, blocks, PVC, sand and cement or timber, Vario Bond's high adhesive strength makes it an indispensable tool. The tape also has handy pre-splits with finger-lift function for easy installation. Isover also provides a full range of high-performance, mineral wool insulation products.

Insulating standards



Kingspan provides two levels of service depending on needs and project type.

Aiming to ensure insulation standards are at the highest levels, Kingspan offers a service to both building professionals and homeowners called Premium® and Premium Plus® Service. These support packages were developed to help the building professional and homeowner feel secure

in the knowledge that the insulation installed on site is to the highest standard.

Kingspan provides two levels of service depending on needs and project type. To qualify for the Premium Service, a design must achieve a <0.15W/m².K weighted average U-value and use Kingspan Kooltherm Insulation in at least two building elements (eg. wall, roof). The Premium Plus Service requirement is a U-value of <0.13W/m².K while using Kingspan Kooltherm Insulation in at least three applications. The Premium Service includes: consultation service; pre-tender KoolSpec check service; and project specific warranty, and more. The Premium Plus Service includes: five site inspection visits; performance specifications; and pre-design assessment, and more.



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moisture control
system



* See our detailed installation guide for more details



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Fitter-friendly



Knauf Insulation's Earthwool OmniFit range provides outstanding thermal, acoustic and fire performance.

Following extensive research with trade specialists, Knauf Insulation's Earthwool OmniFit range has been designed

for multiple applications and provides outstanding thermal, acoustic and fire performance across three products: Earthwool OmniFit Slab; OmniFit Roll; and OmniFit Stud. This fitter-friendly, multi-purpose insulation has been created with the installer in mind.

Earthwool OmniFit Slab is suitable for both timber and metal stud applications and is available in either 400mm or 600mm wide variants. The multi-purpose roll product, Earthwool OmniFit Roll, has been designed specifically for loft insulation, internal partition walls, internal floors and separating floor applications.

Meanwhile, Earthwool OmniFit Stud has been designed with a high level of thermal performance (0.034W/mK), which is ideal for use within rafters and both timber and light steel frame walls.

All three products have been manufactured with a revolutionary bio-based technology (ECOSE Technology), that has no added formaldehyde and is based on rapidly renewable materials, which results in a soft, easy-to-cut and easy-to-handle product.

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SALES OPPORTUNITIES IN FUEL FOR WINTER MONTHS

Fuel has the potential to be an effective customer draw in the coming winter months.



New packaging will enhance visibility of the Bord na Móna smokeless coal range at point of purchase.

The solid fuel market in Ireland is estimated in volume terms by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to be 410,000 tonnes (t) of coal products; 203,000t of peat briquettes; and 700,000t of sod peat.

HAI's Business Index shows that the winter months in 2014 were the quietest trading periods, with January, February and December of 2014 on average 19% below the yearly average. With the summer months being traditional DIY months and outperforming winter by up to nearly 35% in revenue, fuel presents a valuable opportunity to retailers to increase footfall into stores during this period. Here, we look at some of the fuel products available this winter.

Driving innovation

For over 80 years, Bord Na Móna has led the way in designing a range of quality solid fuel solutions for Irish consumers. Patricia Mulligan, Customer Activation Manager, Bord na Móna comments: "Solid fuel remains a source of heat for over 58% of Irish homes. This season, Bord Na

Móna, the largest supplier of solid fuel in Ireland and the category market leader, continues to drive innovation in the sector. We are revamping our smokeless coal range with 10 new products and exciting new look packaging."

Following last season's launch of its Kiln Dried Hardwood range, which provided both convenient carry home packs and larger crate formats, Bord na Móna is now extending the handle concept for easier carrying across its 10kg extended smokeless coal range. The 10kg range now includes smokeless Lignite Nuggets, Lignite Blend and new Premium Ovoid Nuggets, a high quality, easy-to-light, smokeless coal.

"The new polypropylene packaging will enhance the product's visibility at point of purchase and will be available across the 10kg and 20kg smokeless coal range. The new look incorporates more defined descriptions as part of the product name, for example 'Premium Ovoid Gems', manufactured in Ireland to a large, ovoid shape. The new look smokeless range launches in the market from late September. Bord na Móna is also introducing a 20kg Premium Stove Ovoid fuel as a smaller, more convenient format following on the success of the 35kg already available.

Patricia adds: "We will be running an advertising campaign across TV, radio and outdoor media this winter to support our customers as well as a range of Point of Sale material and merchandising solutions that will facilitate a more informed consumer shopping experience."

Custom-made solutions

Calor LPG has a range of applications in Irish homes, including central heating, instant hot water, controllable



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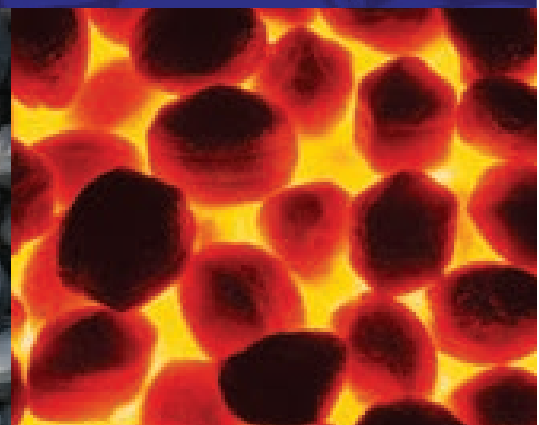
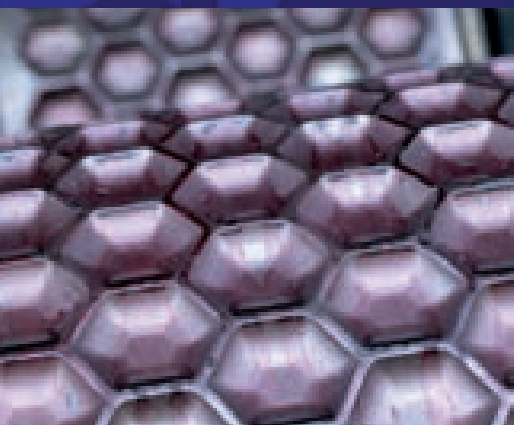
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cooking, flame fires and efficient tumble drying. Calor has one of the largest distribution networks for cylinder gas on the island of Ireland and builders merchants and hardware retailers can choose from a wide variety of cylinder sizes, from 5kg up to 47kg, including Calor's lightweight cylinder range, according to their requirements.

According to Calor, the company aims to create a complete custom-made solution for each retailer. In addition, it says its retailers enjoy excellent marketing support, point of sale and technical support, as well as a dedicated sales representative. Calor provides training to retailers, so that they can maximise Calor LPG for the benefit of their business. In order to ensure the integrity and quality of its product, cylinders are filled only by Calor in its Belfast and Cork facilities. Calor is part of SHV Energy, a distributor of LPG worldwide, fuelling industry, businesses, vehicles and homes in more than 27 countries. This guarantees access to a secure supply of fuel.

Cost-conscious heating

In the wake of what was probably the worst summer



The Flogas Superser Catalytic model.

weather of the past few years, retail customers will be urgently seeking cost-effective solutions to control their home heating bills, Eoin O'Flynn of Flogas Ireland, the exclusive distributor for Superser in Ireland and the UK, believes. He continues: "Flogas Superser heaters are the perfect solution for cost-conscious customers. They are extremely useful as an instant, economic and portable way to 'spot-heat' a room quickly, as many customers find it far cheaper than turning on the central heating for an hour or two."

Flogas supplies two mobile heaters, the Superser Radiant and Superser Catalytic. The Superser Catalytic burns without a flame, has lower touch temperatures for enhanced safety and is fitted with easy glide castors, which allow for trouble-free movement from room to room. Flogas Gaslight cylinders, launched last year, have been a great success, Eoin reports, and are getting an excellent response from customers. "Not only are the Flogas Gaslight cylinders about half the weight of the traditional steel cylinders, the semi-translucent exterior allows customers to see exactly how much gas they have left. The Flogas Gaslight cylinders are as safe as steel cylinders and won't leave rust marks on patios or decks. They fit all leading brands of LPG appliances, making them ideal for caravans, camper vans, motor homes, barbecues and patio heaters." The cylinders are available in 5kg and 10Kg sizes in selected outlets nationwide.

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The Portwest name has been proudly associated with Ireland's leading hardware businesses, large and small, for 30 years. A family run Irish business based in Westport, County Mayo, they are committed to investing in the people, technology and resources behind their trusted brand name. This has been a key part in the company's success along with understanding the needs of their customers as Rachel Davoren, General Manager of Portwest, (Charles Hughes Ltd.) describes as "diverse as our range of products. We are always listening to our customers and their feedback is vital for us as a business."

Portwest, Charles Hughes Ltd., forms part of the Hughes Group of companies that employs almost 2,000 people worldwide and sees customers wear their clothing in the deserts of Dubai, the oil rigs of the Sakhalin Island and the Panama Canal. The Irish wing of the PPE and work wear business employs over 70 people at their Westport based head office from where they have firmly established themselves as one of the country's most trusted and enduring brand names in the industry.

2015 saw the company introduce new approaches and techniques with the results on the ground being positive as work wear and PPE sales are steadily on the increase - their new 528 page catalogue is proof of this. All of the markers within the construction industry are pointing towards economic growth of an estimated 4% - 6%. Portwest have displayed a strong commitment in playing their part to bringing growth and employment to the sector, particularly to their customers.

Portwest customer, Barry Johnston of **Ted Johnston's**, Naas, County Kildare explains:

"Over the past year, we felt a need to begin looking at our high-vis requirements as the industry seemed to be picking up steadily. There are lots of companies providing high-vis clothing, but for us, Portwest was the obvious choice. They are the only ones who provide a full range from yellow to orange colours to long jackets or waterproofs. The consistency with one supplier has really made a difference as we always have the same product on hand for our customers. The range is moving very well for us and Portwest have really hit the nail on the head in terms of price and supply."

Portwest are the largest Irish manufacturers providing fully certified PPE and work wear which offers customers a consistent and reliable source of products. They develop, design and manufacture all of their ranges which allows customers to take advantage of what are the most competitive trade list prices within the industry.

Continuing to stay on top and diversify, the company proactively anticipates the needs of the industry, and their enduring relationships with customers is a testament to their knowledge of the sector. Consultative stock forecasting, market leading service delivery processes and extensive portfolios allow them to deliver the optimum product mix to suit budgets and requirements. "We are always listening to our customers and more importantly taking their feedback on board. This is invaluable for us as our customers are the most important people we need to service. The ranges of products we develop,

design and manufacture are created with their needs in mind. All of our sales staff work closely with head office making sure customers avail of all of the benefits of doing business with Portwest. We're always on hand to assist with any enquiries and value customer feedback." continues General Manager of Portwest, Rachel Davoren.



Doyle's Topline in County Carlow have stocked Portwest for over 10 years and Michael Doyle, explains:

"What sets Portwest apart is the fact that they seek to improve on everything that they do - they constantly strive to be proactive. Together with Portwest, we recently worked on a new merchandising plan for the store and since then, we have seen a huge difference in sales and the response from customers has been great. We at Topline Carlow make it a priority to support Irish companies and are delighted to stock a brand such as Portwest which has made such a name for itself both here and abroad."



Many years of experience in design and manufacturing along with a committed nationwide sales team means Portwest provide tailored service solutions suited to the customer's requirements. Their innovations in how products are delivered to customers has seen them introduce the new fully merchandised and dually branded 'Portwest Work Wear Safety Centre' concept.

Each work wear centre is a one-stop shop with stock tailored to the individual store's needs showcasing the advanced and cutting edge products which are designed by the in-house team of specialist product developers. "Over the past few months, we have rolled out a number of our new work wear safety centres across the country. All merchants without exception have seen significant increases within their PPE and work wear sales and we anticipate this to grow further over the peak Winter months. A properly merchandised area sells more products and we are really looking forward to seeing



Our team of experts check every roll of high-visibility fabric and retro-reflective tape.

further results." explains Martin Foran, National Sales Manager.

From the pioneering PW Safety Fall Arrest Range to specialist chemical protection lines, Portwest have strongly positioned themselves against other competitors. Maximising on cost efficiencies is paramount and this is achieved across a wide range of areas such as speedy order processing, delivery and logistics, vendor managed

inventory systems along with logo-ing and embroidery services - all of which form competitive packages.

From Westport, Co Mayo, the head office dedicated graphic design team are tasked with providing in-house sign and merchandising solutions, specifically designed to enhance store visuals where Portwest is a feature. Customers benefit from merchandising support for shop fit-outs keeping with marketing and PR strategies which are ever strengthening and form an integral part of business models for customers to promote their brand in conjunction with Portwest.

Portwest provides an extensive range of work wear which is not just for those who need their products to work on a day to day basis but for customers who need durable high quality certified safety wear. Contact Portwest today to be part of the new approach to work wear and PPE or to find out more on how Portwest can help your store.

Figures from a recent Ulster Bank Construction Purchasing Managers' Index® (PMI®) [a seasonally adjusted index designed to track changes in total construction activity]



PORTWEST.

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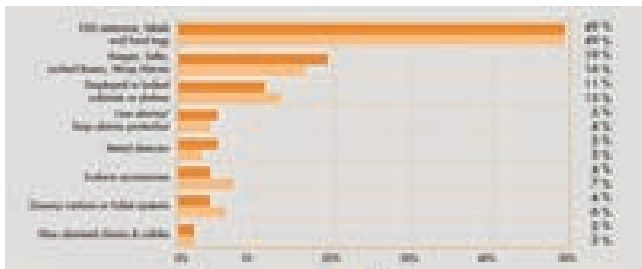
SHRINKAGE CONTINUES TO AFFECT HARDWARE SECTOR

Shrinkage remains a significant factor in the hardware sector with recent research indicating that Irish business losses due to shrinkage increased in 2014.

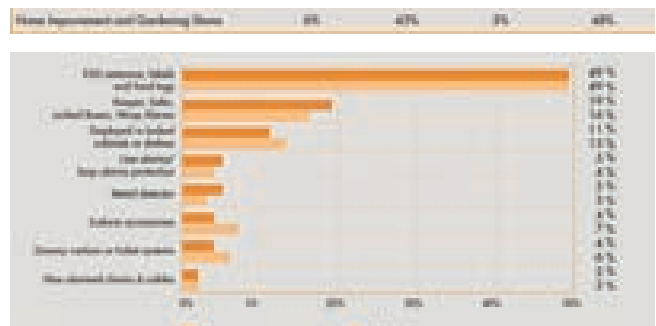
The average global shrinkage rate was 1.29% of retail sales, amounting to a shrinkage value of \$128.51 billion according to the Global Retail Theft Barometer 2014. The reporting period was January-December 2014. This was a 4.8% decline over last year when the average shrinkage rate was 1.36%. Shoplifting was the main cause of shrinkage across most countries, apart from the UK and Norway, where

	Apparel and Fashion Accessories	DIY/Home Improvement	Electronics	Food and Beverage	Health and Beauty
1st	Children's accessories	Power tools	Mobile accessories	Wine and spirits	Skincare products
2nd	Jewellery, footwear	Batteries	Phone/tablet phones	Alcohol bottles	Beauty products
3rd	Footwear/accessories	Tools and hardware	Electronic games and mobile navigation/GPS	Food meat and general food	Beauty and fragrance

Most-stolen merchandise globally, in 2013-2014, in DIY/Home Improvement and other leading retail sectors.



Popular loss prevention practices in Europe.



Hardware DIY sources of loss – Ireland.

administrative and non-crime losses were the primary reasons. Europe-wide, the season witnessing most shrinkage was the Christmas/End-of-Year Holiday time accounting for 63%, with sales periods coming second, accounting for 19% of losses due to shrinkage.

Irish research

In separate research on the Irish market, carried out by Detectag Retail Services Ireland and sponsored by Checkpoint, Ireland showed an average shrinkage rate of 1.45%, an increase of 9% on 2013. The shrink rate for Europe as a whole was 1.13%, with Ireland, Greece and Portugal having the worst rates in Europe, according to Detectag's findings.

Netwatch's advanced tech aims to prevent theft

Established in Carlow in 2003, Netwatch, is a leader in remote visual surveillance and monitors in excess of 33,000 security cameras across the globe preventing, it says, more than 40,000 crimes from taking place to date. The Netwatch system deploys advanced video processing technologies to alert intervention specialists in its communication hub to unacceptable behaviour on a clients' property, live personalised audio warnings are then issued to intruders, preventing criminal activity. Netwatch provides bespoke business continuity services to many clients in the hardware industry across Ireland, Europe and the USA, working with internal auditors and risk managers to identify potential risks, at every level throughout an organisation, that could cause the company serious reputational damage and have significant financial consequences. Netwatch identifies vulnerabilities and mitigates risk in areas of the business such as

facilities management, production processes, critical IT infrastructure and risk to employees and management.



Advanced video processing technologies alert intervention specialists in Netwatch's communication hub to unacceptable behaviour on a client's property.

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MAKING WORKWEAR WORK FOR YOU

When a job requires functional workwear, it can be difficult to find the right type of clothing that is practical for everyday use. In an increasingly competitive market, companies are combining durability, comfort, protection and safety, as well as style, in their workwear product range offerings.

Changing consumer demand in terms of fashion and quality has sustained the development of the mature and saturated workwear and uniforms market in Western Europe. *Analysis of the Western European Workwear and Uniforms Market*, by Frost & Sullivan finds that the market earned revenues of €6.77 billion in 2012 and estimates this to reach €7.43 billion in 2017. The research covers general workwear, corporate workwear and uniforms.

Keeping up with emerging fashion styles and leveraging novel fabric technologies have enabled workwear manufacturers to witness revenue growth in the Western European workwear and uniforms market.

According to Frost & Sullivan Research Analyst, Aparna Balasubramanian, new trends are prompting workers to look for fashionable workwear, which can also be worn

outside working hours. "Manufacturers must address such requirements to stay competitive. Understanding various fabric preferences and offering a broad range of cost-effective fabric choices are crucial for succeeding in the competitive market."

In fact, cost-effectiveness is a huge success factor in this price-sensitive market. The slow acceptance of performance fabrics and the wide use of basic, low-cost polyester have hampered price growth. Nevertheless, the market in the region is witnessing gradual entry of high-performance materials like antimicrobial fabrics. This commitment to develop new and more effective materials and designs is evident in the Irish market too, with companies striving to offer wider choices to the customer.



Experience meets expertise

A family-run company, Regatta Hardwear is a strong and growing part of the Regatta Group. With over 30 years' expertise in outdoors performance clothing and workwear, the Regatta Group provides a reliable workwear product range, which meets the durability needs and comfortable protection standards, which their customers have grown to expect.

The company uses a range of technologies and fabrics incorporated into different styles and designs, so consumers can feel stylish and comfortable before, during and after work hours. Remaining competitive on the market is essential to the company's growth and Regatta Hardwear maintains its commitment to suit every worker's needs through its product ranges.

An example from the Regatta Hardwear range.

Putting safety first

Mayo-based company, Portwest, one of Europe's leading workwear and personal protective equipment manufacturers, will be launching its new Farm Safety Centres over the coming months. The concept has been developed to enhance its new line of workwear, safety footwear and personal protective equipment (PPE), offering suppliers a one-stop-shop to meet their customer needs. In conjunction with the launch of their Farm Safety Centres, the family-run business, which employs over 200 people in Ireland, has developed a new line of safety wear for farmers.

Portwest conducted extensive research into its first farm safety range and has invested heavily in developing the design for the safety and comfort of farmers. "Awareness in other industries as to the importance of proper safety workwear is much higher when compared with the agricultural community," said Owen Hughes, Director at Portwest. "With over one in 10 Irish farms reporting a farm accident annually, we felt an onus to specifically promote products designed for safety and comfort of farmers and we are committed to playing our part in reducing incidents and fatalities occurring on Irish farms."

Portwest have liaised with farm agencies in Ireland throughout the product development process and the garments, designed to meet the specific demands of the farming environment, have been fully certified in line with the most up to date European legislation.



Portwest farm safety workwear meets the needs of those in the agricultural sector.



Hands-on approach

ATG gloves are imported and distributed exclusively in Ireland and the UK by Keypoint, an Irish-owned company based in Dublin. According to ATG Country Manager, Chris Busby, the ATG glove range has an interesting selling point. The glove manufacturer has a dedicated handcare programme, which means that all ATG products are allergy tested to ensure they meet the same standards as many well-known consumer skincare products. "If the primary function for gloves in work situations is hand protection, people should also consider that they are in close contact with your skin, so whatever chemicals are used in their manufacture could potentially still reside within the glove and cause a nasty reaction to your hands.

"When selecting gloves to protect your hands, whether it's for use in the work place or simply while you do some DIY around the home or garden, you should consider your skin health in the same way you would when you buy a shampoo or moisturiser," said Chris. "ATG can give that guarantee that our gloves are fresh out of the packet!"

MaxiFlex is the best-selling work glove worldwide and is available at all leading hardware, builders merchants and DIY stores nationwide.

The ATG glove range is dedicated to providing skincare and overall hand protection.

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Combining safety and comfort with technical functionality and a sporty design, Snickers Workwear recently launched Solid Gear and Toe Guard footwear. Solid Gear markets itself as the ultimate utility footwear for professional workers. The new Griffin, Atlas and Apollo models focus on durability, comfort, flexibility and style. The new models come with the new oil- and slip-resistant Vibram outsole. This is an extra durable and rugged rubber sole, which offers outstanding grip on all kinds of surfaces and in very low temperatures, according to Snickers. It is also heat-resistant and can withstand temperatures of up to 300°C. In addition, premium full-grain impregnated leather ensures great water repellence and breathability, while a fiberglass toecap and composite plate provide additional comfort, flexibility and, most importantly, safety.

Meanwhile, the company's Toe Guard brand aims to provide safety, timeless design and affordability through its new range. The Runner, Trail and Nitro models each have their own individual selling points. An oil-resistant antistatic sole and metal free design, the Runner also boasts a toe bumper. The Trail shoe and Nitro boot are equipped with endurance features, proven to withstand the harshest environments, while also keeping you safe.

Snickers new Solid Gear footwear offers an oil- and slip-resistant Vibram outsole

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