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MAKING WORKING WITH DISTRIBUTORS WORK
Selecting, winning over and motivating distributors

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€280,000 Seedcorn prize fund for best early stage companies

Irish entrepreneurs could get a cash boost for their business, thanks to a prize fund of €280,000 being offered by InterTradeIreland’s Seedcorn All-Island Business Competition 2010.

The competition is the largest on the island in terms of the prize fund available and in the past has helped give fledgling firms such as Limerick based company, Cauwill Technologies a ‘lift-off’.

This year, the two top categories – Best High Growth Company and Best Emerging Company – stand to win €100,000 and €50,000 respectively. There are also six regional prizes of €20,000 each and one Best Spinout prize of €10,000.

Following the scoring of written business plans, the top entries from each region and category are selected to make a short presentation to a panel of judges, followed by a question and answer session. Winners are selected in each category in each of the regions and will be asked to make their presentation again to a separate panel of judges at the final in Belfast on Tuesday, November 30, 2010. The panel will then select the overall all-island winner in each category.

To register for the competition, visit www.intertradeireland.com/seedcorn. Business plans must be submitted by 1pm on Friday, September 17, 2010.

Business

Occupying Pole position

Some 41 Irish companies travelled to Poland this May as part of a trade mission to strengthen business relationships.

Irish companies are one of the largest national groups of investors into Poland, with significant business investments from Irish multinationals, including CRH, Kingspan, AIB, Smurfit and Clondalkin.

According to the Polish statistical office, there are 383 Irish companies registered in Poland, 38 of them with share capital exceeding €1 million. Figures for the total investments by Irish companies in Poland, excluding real estate investments, are in the region of €1.5 billion. Meanwhile, sales of Irish products and services in Poland were worth €618 million last year.

“It is a hugely important market for Irish companies in Central Europe and is Ireland’s largest trading partner among the twelve recent members of the EU,” commented Minister for Trade and Commerce Mr Billy Kelleher, T.D., who led the mission. “There is huge potential for accelerating and deepening the level of trade interaction between the two countries in key sectors such as telecommunications, financial services software, industrial products, logistics, agri-business, power generation, infrastructure projects and environmental products and services.”

France offers opportunities for Irish construction sector

Irish construction firms should look to France for future opportunities, according to accountants and business advisors, Mazars.

The Mazars Irish Construction 2010 Outlook survey highlighted that over 80 per cent of construction firms in the Irish market rely on indigenous work. As investment in infrastructure continues to contract in Ireland, both in the public and private sectors, and the UK continues to stabilise, but, with significantly reduced margins, industry players are being forced to look at wider markets. France is one country which has most potential according to Roger Alexander, head of Mazars’ Project Finance, and of the Mazars Belfast Office.

Alexander said that, unlike Ireland and the UK, France has remained immune to a collapse of its commercial property market and has a strong pipeline of public sector projects which offer opportunities for Irish construction firms. “It is forecast that the French construction industry will still be valued at around €166 billion in 2010, as opposed to €177 billion at its peak in 2007,” he said. “Indeed, France has one of the most dominant pipelines of PPP (public private partnership) and infrastructure projects in Europe, by way of transport, social accommodation and renewable energy,” he said.

Alain Porcher, French market construction consultant, Enterprise Ireland, adds: “The main projects defined by the ‘Grenelle’ Talks (in the construction, transport, energy and waste management sectors) will require almost €460 billion of investment by 2020, of which €308 billion will be in construction. This will be split into €205 billion for housing/buildings and €103 billion for transportation. About 40 per cent of the funds will be provided by the French government and local authorities and up to 600,000 new jobs should be created as a result. Greenhouse gas emissions will be 24 per cent lower by 2020 as part of France’s commitment to ‘green growth’, which will also create numerous investment opportunities for French and foreign companies.”
Targeting the UK public healthcare spend

With the aim of helping Irish companies win business in the UK healthcare sector, Enterprise Ireland, London, is this September planning to bring over a group called the IT Council, which represents senior IT people from the independent healthcare organisations in the UK – ranging from groups of clinics and hospitals to care-home companies. The aim is to identify pockets of IT-for-healthcare innovation in Ireland and arrange an itinerary for the group, providing introductions for key companies in the sector.

Separately, the public sector team within Enterprise Ireland, London, is running a programme of activity called BiP Solutions for technology companies who want to be more effective in selling into the UK public sector.

For further information, email gavin.mcwhirter@enterprise-ireland.com

Companies pitch for green business in North America

With a cluster of Irish companies in the green building space, Enterprise Ireland is leveraging that experience with the Green Building 2010 Initiative, which aims to help Irish companies gain an understanding of the opportunities for new green buildings and retrofits in the United States as well as its local US competition and emerging trends. Equally, it aims to raise awareness within the US construction industry of the capabilities available in Ireland.

Phase one of the Green Building Initiative 2010 took place in March when 14 Irish companies travelled to the States for an information-sharing seminar and panel discussion with key opinion leaders and decision makers steering the US green building movement. They also visited the headquarters of the Green Building Council, a LEED Platinum certified commercial office, and met with RTKL Architects, a Washington D.C. based architectural firm with offices throughout the US.

Meanwhile, 10 Irish cleantech companies travelled to Vancouver, Canada, also this March, to showcase their technologies at Globe 2010 – a major environmental expo with attendees from over 70 countries, including Germany, France, United Kingdom, China, South Korea and Japan.

Some Irish companies have already won ‘green’ business in Canada. For example, Openhydro is working with the leading Canadian utility Nova Scotia Power to create a tidal demonstration project in the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia.

According to Marina Donohoe, Manager of Enterprise Ireland’s Cleantech division, the Canadian renewables market alone is expected to grow in the coming years to reach a value of $50 Billion, and the country has dedicated $1 billion to a five-year, nation-wide Green Infrastructure Fund.

EI’s Toronto office has produced a briefing and analysis document ‘The CleanTech Sector in Canada: The Landscape and Opportunities’.

For further information, email heather.thompson@enterprise-ireland.com in Toronto.

OECD economic indicators point to continued recovery

The latest OECD composite leading indicators (CLIs) – for February 2010 – continue to point to economic expansion, albeit at a different pace across countries and regions. Strongest signs of increasing economic activity were recorded in the United States and Japan, with a rise in CLI of 0.9 point in both countries. The CLI for the OECD area increased by 0.7 point in February 2010 and by 0.5 point in the Euro area. At the same time, tentative signals of a slower pace in economic expansion are emerging in China where CLIs remained unchanged in the first two months of 2010. Similar, but weaker, signs of slower growth are also emerging in France and Italy. Meanwhile, the CLIs for India, Brazil and Russia recorded moderate increases, pushing the indicators close to, or above, their long-term levels.

Separately, in its Spring forecast, the European Commission has predicted that Ireland’s economy will return to a growth rate of 3 per cent next year, following a contraction of 0.9 per cent this year

For further information, email gavin.mcwhirter@enterprise-ireland.com
Lincor wins major contract with Great Ormond Street Hospital

Cork-based Lincor Solutions has won a significant contract to install MEdIVista, its bedside point-of-care solution, to provide entertainment and education to children at Great Ormond St. Hospital in London.

MEdIVista is a fully digital solution providing a suite of triple-play entertainment services for patients across internet, TV and telephone, as well as access to clinical applications such as electronic patient records and x-ray images. Lincor has installed more than 15,000 such systems in over 60 hospitals worldwide.

The first phase of the Great Ormond Street project, which will see Lincor’s technology deployed at 220 bedside, will go live in mid-2010 and will deliver enhanced entertainment and education services to patients – with the flexibility at a later date to deliver secure access to hospital information systems at the point-of-care.

Entertainment services will include free-view TV channels; internet; instant messaging; movies; and radio, including Radio Lollipop and it will also allow the GOSH School to enhance its delivery of educational programmes to patients.

Explaining why the hospital choose Lincor, Peter Wollaston, Head of Corporate Services commented: “The hospital has very good feedback from patients and parents, with 94 per cent of them saying they were very satisfied or satisfied with the care they receive. However, some issues are persistently less satisfactory with bedside-entertainment being one of them.

We both need to ensure that children and young people are entertained, because boredom is a big issue for them, but also for longer stay patients, we can work with our on-site school to keep up their education.”

Cork and US companies partner to tackle new track and trace regulatory challenges in the pharmaceutical industry

Cork-based Crest Solutions, which provides solutions to the pharmaceutical industry, has collaborated with the US pharma equipment manufacturer Eisai Machinery USA Inc to launch a new track-and-trace packaging system that supports changes in local and international regulatory requirements for the pharmaceutical industry.

The companies say that the ‘PharmaMarker’ system has been designed to integrate easily into pharmaceutical production and packaging lines to support more stringent industry regulations in the areas of coding and traceability. It works by coding, verifying and tracking up to 450 pharmaceutical cartons per minute to ensure that they can be fully traced along any point in their production lifecycle.

France, Turkey and California have already introduced their own individual regulation plans for the labelling and traceability of packages, and other regions are expected to follow shortly, leading to a more secure supply chain management system in production and delivery to end-users. Crest Solutions and Eisai Machinery say they are currently in discussions with several companies to roll out the product globally.

Servecentric helps Tesco Diets slim down its IT costs

Servecentric, a Dublin-based data centre managed services company, has won a three-year, €140,000 managed hosting deal with Tesco Diets, the subscription-based weight-loss website. The site, which provides personalised diet plans and fitness programmes to members across Ireland and the UK, receives over one million visitors per week. Servecentric’s solution has reduced Tesco Diets’ hosting costs by 34 per cent, and through its virtualised server environment, it expects to reduce power consumption by 70 per cent.

HELGA MUIR, SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER, SERVECENTRIC AND DENIS FINNEGAN, IT MANAGER, TESCO DIETS

To Russia with love

Technology from Dublin-based OpenJaw, which provides high-performance travel distribution solutions to the global travel industry, is now live on www.amargo.ru, Russia’s latest online travel website.

As a result of the deal, Amargo.ru’s customers can book a range of travel options, including flights and hotels, or they can create personalised holiday packages online by combining flights with accommodation using OpenJaw’s Dynamic Packaging technology. Customers can also opt to receive automatic flight reminders via SMS in advance of travel, and the new selling platform enables quick online purchase of travel ancillaries such as insurance and visas.
ICON expands Asia-Pacific footprint and invests in European acquisition

The Dublin-headquartered global provider of outsourced development services to the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device industries, is to expand its footprint in Asia-Pacific with the opening of an office in the Philippine capital Manila. The announcement follows the recent expansion of ICON’s operations in Seoul, Korea and Icon Central Laboratories’ move to a larger laboratory facility in Singapore.

“Asia-Pacific is a key market for ICON,” commented CEO Peter Gray – the company currently has a presence in 14 countries in the region and a local workforce of 800.

“The Philippines’ large population, coupled with the country’s well-established network of hospitals, physicians and investigators has made it an attractive location for our clients, and one which we have supported for a number of years through home-based employees,” he said. “Investing in local support and infrastructure will ensure that we can support future client demand as they increasingly look to include Asia in their drug development programmes.”

ICON has conducted a wide range of clinical studies across all therapeutic areas in Asia-Pacific, and has particular expertise in managing oncology, cardiovascular, CNS and metabolic disorder trials in the region. Current studies range from small local trials to pan-Asia-Pacific and large global programmes and are supported by two fully-owned ICON central laboratories, strategically located in Singapore and Bangalore, India.

Meanwhile, in a separate move, boosting its European and US operations, the company has acquired Timaq Medical Imaging, headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland, and a leading European provider of advanced imaging services to pharmaceutical and biotech firms.

“The acquisition will complement our existing US operations by giving ICON a European base for our medical imaging operations,” commented Ted Gastineau President, ICON Medical Imaging. “Alongside the immediate access to an experienced imaging team, Timaq’s strong links to leading medical institutions gives us access to important scientific expertise in the imaging field that will bring significant benefits to our clients.”

Irish diaspora website launches in New York

A new social and business networking site, RendezVous353, has been officially launched in New York, aiming to harness the goodwill amongst the 80 million people who claim Irish heritage.

Features include Irish videos, blogs, miniSites and news from contemporary Ireland – and similar to other social networking sites, members can become friends and share news and tips on living abroad and business opportunities. Since the test-site was created in February, 5,000 members worldwide have already signed up in a number of countries including Ireland, US, Canada, UK, Australia, Argentina, Sudan, Oman, China, Singapore, Qatar, Jakarta, and all major European cities. Members have arranged meetings in Kampala, Uganda, South Africa, Chile, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Its founders say RendezVous353 was created in response to modern-day emigration, providing a resource for Irish people all over the world to stay connected with each other and to provide a link between those in Ireland and the Irish-connected people, outside of Ireland.

The concept was born out of the personal experience of co-founder, Galway man, Terry McLoughlin, who worked on extended contracts in Qatar. His co-founder, Limerick man Richard O’Donnell, shared this vision and is applying his 25 years experience of the international software and technology to the project.

They have privately funded the website, together with a small number of other Limerick based investors.
PM Group cements Belgian operations through life science alliance

After more than five years of successful cooperation, PM Group and Grontmij Industry (formerly BnS) have entered into a formal strategic alliance to jointly provide a full range of project delivery services to the Belgian pharmaceutical, biotechnology, medical technology and R&D sectors.

The alliance brings together the PM Group’s expertise in the design and project management of life science projects, and Grontmij’s local design, construction and project execution capabilities. Grontmij has over 750 people and six offices in Belgium.

Together, the two companies have executed a range of life science projects in the Belgian active product ingredient (API), fill/finish, biotech and secondary pharma sectors. Clients include Genzyme, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, GSK Biologics, Schering Plough, UCB and Pfizer.

Cúram Software increases focus in APAC

Cúram Software, a Dublin-headquartered social enterprise management (SEM) software specialist, has announced significant momentum in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. The Queensland Department of Communities has selected Cúram to support its ‘Growing Stronger’ disability services delivery reform programme, which aims to provide simpler, fairer and more transparent access to specialist disability services across the state. Additionally, Cúram has appointed a managing director for Australia/New Zealand and a director of sales in New Zealand.

Cúram’s enhanced focus on Australia and New Zealand follows a series of contract awards and customer "go-lives" with Australia’s Department of Veterans’ Affairs, South Australia’s WorkCover programme, and the Ministry of Social Development of New Zealand, among others.

The company has also recently celebrated 10 years in India, announcing a newly appointed country manager and continued investment in that market. “By expanding the operation, Cúram Software plans to leverage the extensive domain expertise and highly technical skills available in India to extend our lead in the social enterprise management market,” the company commented.

Olas wins €400k in software and training deals

Stillorgan-based software training specialist Olas has announced a number of deals over the last six months worth close to €400,000. Founded in Dublin in 1981, Olas provides industry and government with software training on SAP, Microsoft and Adobe.

The latest deals are for SAP training and software services and include customers such as the International Criminal Courts in The Hague, CMC Coal, and MSI Signs as well as a major Irish food company. Olas has also announced that SAP has awarded it the sole Education Partner for its SAP Business Objects portfolio in Ireland.

Daon software selected to power Mexico’s personal identification programme

Daon, the Denis O’Brien-backed provider of biometric identity assurance software and services, has been selected by prime contractor Unisys to power the Government of Mexico’s SNIP (National Service of Personal Identification) programme. The Daon platform is to deliver multimodal biometrics fusion, combining iris, finger and face records to maximise accuracy.

With Mexico’s population of 110m, this is set to become the world’s largest multimodal and fusion project of its type, according to Daon’s CEO, Tom Grissen. Currently securing more than 460 million identities around the globe, Daon provides a centralised platform and client biometric infrastructure for a variety of uses, including employee credentialing, government benefits programmes, trusted identity services, border management, national ID, airport e-gate systems and immigration control.
**Tango Telecom allows Middle East and African operator to offer dynamic pricing for mobile customers**

Limerick-based Tango Telecom has been chosen by the Zain Group, a leading telecom operator with 71.8 million mobile voice and data customers across the Middle East and Africa, to implement its new pre-paid tariff, Zain Flexxy. In terms of country footprint, Zain is the third largest mobile operator in the world, with a commercial presence in 24 countries.

The crux of the deal is that Tango's dynamic pricing service will enable Zain to apply discounts to voice services across networks and vary the level of discount depending on the traffic in a particular cell, subscriber plan, subscriber activity and time of day. With an initial launch at Zain Uganda, Zain Flexxy will offer pre-paid customers discounted call rates depending on location and time of day.

**Heavey RF expands into UK Market**

Irish-owned Heavey RF, which supplies IT solutions to the logistics and retail sectors, has opened an office and hired three new employees in the UK, on the back of a number of business wins from existing and new customers. The company enables supply chains to use the latest technology to select warehouse stock more accurately and quickly, thereby helping to reduce the cost of distribution and returns or re-deliveries. It has won deals valued at over £250,000 since opening the office in January, which is well ahead of expectations, according to MD Ronan Clinton.

“The new office serves to strengthen our relationships with key Irish clients, which have operations in the UK, as well as winning lucrative business in the UK marketplace,” he said. “Our main strength is our technical ability and our understanding of all the components needed to deliver cost-effective and operational solutions. We believe there is a gap in the UK market for a company like us that has a track record of delivering a first-class, 24/7 after-sales service, and this will be a key differentiating factor between us and established UK competitors.”

**Irish companies signed €15m in new business during Australia trade mission**

Irish companies concluded contracts and agreements of just under €15m during a trade and investment mission to Australia this May. The mission saw 44 Irish companies, from a range of sectors such as software, financial services, telecoms, e-learning, life sciences and environmental services, visit Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra.

- Galway company Health Care Informed secured a €200k deal with The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne.
- Folamh, the Dublin-based recycling company, announced a €3.5m deal with Sony Australia to reduce the number of mobile handsets that end up in landfill.
- Louth e-learning company Learnosity secured a €100k contract with Queensland’s Association of Independent Schools for the implementation of Learnosity’s voice assessment and learning solution.
- Irish financial software companies Norkom and Trintech each secured a significant contract with two of Australia’s leading banks, National Australia Bank and ANZ Bank, respectively.
- Dublin company Fineos announced it secured new contracts for the installation of its claims processing platform with a number of clients.

In addition, Galway dynamic currency conversion (DCC) provider Fintrax celebrated ten years of business with Australian Customs, and the Dublin start-up Currency Fair, an internet-based marketplace for currency exchange, made its global launch in Sydney.
Enterprise Ireland Chairman Hugh Cooney outlines why Irish banks need to change their thinking.

Ireland’s growth model of the past decade – one driven by consumption and construction – has run its course. Ireland, its banks and its businesses now need a competitive economy based on sound fundamentals – not trading assets between ourselves in a limited domestic market but real and substantial sales to other markets.

Ireland’s economic recovery and growth will be driven by the export-focused, high-value-added, knowledge-led companies in sectors such as clean technologies, medical devices, software, financial services, prepared consumer and specialist functional food, life sciences and high level manufacturing. They are our high-value medical devices manufacturers such as Creganna in Galway; our leading-edge software companies, such as Dublin’s Norkom Technologies and our internationally traded services companies such as Abtran in Cork.

**CRITICALLY IMPORTANT SECTORS AND HIGH-GROWTH REGIONS** During the boom years, these types of businesses and sectors remained somewhat under the radar of the banks. When there was so much hay to be made in servicing traditional domestic markets such as the property sector, the banks under-exploited the opportunity available in servicing our knowledge-led exporting base.

This is understandable to some degree: ideas, innovation and intellectual property are by their nature intangible and appear to carry greater risk than traditional, asset-backed businesses. However, it is now clear that this concentration on certain sectors and the resultant narrower risk base, is one of the factors that led to our current difficulties.

The banks now must widen their focus to encompass these critically important sectors. This is essential for two reasons: firstly because these high-value-added, export-focused businesses need a supportive banking system to succeed internationally. These are the sectors that will be bringing the much-needed real value added and foreign income into this country. Without access to sufficient finance, the platform for our recovery will be unbalanced, structurally unsound and the recovery slower than is possible and needed.

Secondly, there is little growth potential in the domestic market. The banks will stymie their own growth potential by operating in areas that are either stagnant or in decline. Furthermore, becoming involved in several of these areas would spread the risk for banks at a strategic level across a broader range of sectors. Overexposure to the property market played a significant part in our current situation, whereas Irish entrepreneurial activity encompasses a range of sectors that are affected to varying degrees by the ebb and flow of economic fortunes.

It is true that our knowledge-led, high-tech sectors are different from traditional business; they do require greater knowledge and understanding of the particular business, the sector and its dynamics. However, it is possible to acquire expertise in these
sectors and then to develop new revenue streams servicing them. Furthermore, by aligning themselves with the companies that will spearhead real wealth generation, Ireland’s banks can also capitalise on their success.

This will mean a significant change of focus for the banks; a move away from large transaction funding to providing more business funding. It also requires a change in banks’ approach to risk, but this, as I have argued, will ultimately benefit them in the longer term.

In addition to looking beyond property, Irish banks must also take a wider view of the new economy. Currently, around 50 per cent of Irish exports are to the UK, a market that is very familiar to us – indeed, many of the banks have experience in this market. However, Enterprise Ireland’s client companies are increasingly focusing elsewhere. This is a necessary and welcome development; in the new global financial landscape, the high-growth markets are the Middle East and the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China. Naturally, this is uncharted territory, but Irish banks must think about how to best serve the companies addressing those markets, either directly or through forming alliances with local partners.

**COLLABORATION AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING**

Collaboration and knowledge-sharing is the way forward. Over the last 12 months, Enterprise Ireland has put increased effort into working closely with the Irish banks. This initiative has included an exchange/secondment programme between Enterprise Ireland and Ireland’s main banks whereby personnel from Enterprise Ireland have been seconded to the banks and vice-versa in a knowledge and skills sharing exercise.

This exchange of complementary skills and knowledge sharing is further aligning Ireland’s banks to Ireland’s innovative exporting sector and ensuring greater insight into the sectors on which our future entrepreneurial efforts depend. Closer collaboration from all sides will help to de-risk future involvement by the banks in what they might perceive as unfamiliar sectors. For that loop to be completed, the banks must become more involved with high-growth firms.

And there are other synergies that can be exploited. Banks’ traditional access to high-net-worth individuals can also be further exploited. As they become more knowledgeable about some of the high technology industry sectors, Irish banks can act as a conduit to link potential investors with companies at various stages of their growth. This activity can have a positive multiplier effect that results in true wealth creation rather than the wealth redistribution model of the past.

While some of the growth areas we have identified may be unfamiliar to some banks, I would offer one example of one sector with which banks should be very familiar. We have a growing number of indigenous companies operating in financial services, such as Abbey Capital and Quintillion. We would like to see more start-ups emerging from within the IFSC structure and from the traditional banking sector. Just as the high-tech multinationals that came here in the 1980s ultimately spawned an ecosystem of innovative start-ups, there are significant opportunities for innovative start-ups in the financial services sector. At Enterprise Ireland, we are actively working to support financial services entrepreneurs to embark on a new venture.

In short, our fortunes will be decided on our own efforts, and our knowledge-led, high value enterprises are the base on which Ireland’s future wealth depends. Finance is a critical component of the structure to support indigenous businesses – and by extension the economy as a whole. The banks can choose to be an observer or a key player in the development of this opportunity by becoming more involved in our wealth-generating sectors. By placing themselves at the centre of economic activity, our banks will make a real contribution to Ireland’s economic recovery and secure their own future growth.
## What's on

### JUNE

#### Protecting your intellectual property in China

**June 14**
Enterprise Ireland morning event with case studies and expert advice on protecting your business IP in China.

L: Dublin  
E: cathy.holahan@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +353 1 7272907

#### EGR Live

**June 14-15**
Free-to-attend conference for the online gaming industry organised by eGaming Review.

V: London  
W: http://url.ie/5rtc

#### Seminar on Gulf cleantech opportunities

**June 16**
Half-day seminar with key speakers from the region, addressing opportunities and barriers.

L: Dublin  
E: anthony.cahill@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +9 714 3298384

#### Go2Tender

**June 16**
Workshop and mentoring to aid SMEs to tender successfully for public sector contracts, especially cross-border, organised by InterTrade Ireland.

L: Galway  
W: http://url.ie/5ru1

#### Managed services and solutions – partnerships in the cloud

**June 16**
Seminar aimed at helping companies plan their future offering and partnering strategies.

L: Dublin  
E: niall.bolger@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +353 1 7272821  
W: http://tinyurl.com/38cmhdt

#### Telecoms insight for resellers

**June 16-17**
Showcasing Samsung, Siemens, Panasonic and NEC kit, organised by UK distributors Nimans and Rocom.

L: Dublin  
W: http://tinyurl.com/38k3z5f

#### OMTEC, orthopaedics market study visit - USA

**June 16-17**
Event providing an opportunity to meet orthopaedic market decision-makers and set up meetings with relevant prospects.

L: Chicago  
E: sean.davis@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +1 212 5460468

#### New Zealand agri-business event

**June 16-19**
New Zealand National Agricultural “Fieldays” is the largest agri-business exhibition in the southern hemisphere.

L: Hamilton  
E: maria.maguire@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +61 2 82336206

#### Madrid trade dinner and partnering event

**June 17**
Networking opportunity for companies to develop further partnerships in the Spanish market.

L: Madrid  
E: john.roche@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +34 91 4364090

#### Doing business in Slovakia: Slovak consultation day

**June 17**

#### 10th European conference on eGovernment

**June 17-18**

L: Limerick  
W: http://url.ie/5ruw

#### InaChem 2010 - Indonesia

**June 17-19**
Indonesia international chemical and petrochemical summit 2010 - exhibition and conference.

L: Jakarta  
E: pat.o’riordan@enterprise-ireland.com  
T: +65 6733 2180
High-growth markets - financial services
June 18
Seminar on financial services and e-commerce opportunities in key high-growth markets, including the BRIC and Gulf States, in association with IBEC.
L: Dublin
E: michael.browne@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +353 1 727 2795

PAC World Conference – smart grid
June 21 to 221
Focusing on how the widespread penetration of alternative energy sources, and the foreseeable availability of millions of electric vehicles will introduce additional challenges for PAC professionals and move the industry towards the development and implementation of a 'smart grid'.
L: TCD, Dublin
W: http://conference.pacw.org

Dublin Web Summit
June 24
Insights and predictions from internet visionaries, plus networking opportunities. Speakers include Michael Birch, founder of Bebo; Bill Liao, founder of Xing, and Ray Nolan, founder of WR1.
L: Dublin
W: www.dublinwebsummit.com

Building collaborative networks for innovation
June 28-29
The theme of the InterTradeIreland 2010 Innovation Conference is 'Building Collaborative Networks for Innovation'.
L: UCD, Dublin
W: http://tinyurl.com/2u4y3yv

Smart Metering UK & Ireland 2010
June 29-30
L: London
W: http://london2010.smartmetering.eu/

EPA climate change conference
June 30
This EPA conference promises to provide a unique perspective on key developments in climate science and policy.
L: Aviva Stadium, Dublin
W: www.epa.ie/news/events

JULY
The essential guide to Irish food labelling
July 7-8
Course on regulations and official recommendations, including labelling for nutrition and health claims.
L: Teagasc, Dublin
W: http://url.ie/5rv1

Food and drink innovation – US study visit
July 1-21
A group of eight to ten Irish export- and R&D-focused food and beverage companies will attend the International Food Technology (IFT) show.
L: Chicago
E: martin.fleming@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +353 51 333525

SEPTEMBER
Clean tech partnering US-Europe
September 1
Global partnering event to facilitate partnering opportunities with potential US-European cleantech customers, research institutions and VCs.
L: Dublin
E: karen.conroy@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +353 1 727 2846

Pharma sector: UK Embassy Dinner
September 1
An opportunity for companies across the drug discovery, delivery, manufacturing and pharma services sectors to network with senior executives and key strategic influencers in the UK pharma industry.
L: Irish Embassy, London
E: sheila.oloughlin@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +44 207 438 8721

Financial services Consulate Dinner – Scotland
September 1
L: Edinburgh
E: christine.esson@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +44 141 332 3015

Channel management within the eurozone
September 6
Geared towards the electronics sector - networking and learning event with consultancy support.
L: Dublin
E: barry.odriscoll@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +353 1 727 2272

Multi-sector trade mission to China
September 6-10
It is anticipated that this mission will be led by An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen T.D.
L: Beijing and Shanghai
E: alan.buckley@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +86 10 84488080

Irish Sustainable Building Show
September 7-9
Promises to include country market briefings from embassy officials as well as opportunities to meet with private sector experts.
L: RDS, Dublin
W: www.sustainablebuildingshow.com

Services sector study visit to China
September 12-18
Including one-to-one meetings for Irish companies with their prospective customers; networking with local business communities and high-level briefs from local government officials.
L: Guangzhou and Hong Kong
E: tony.wang@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +86 20 8666 2450

Agricultural exhibition - France
September 14-17
SPACE 2010, expo for the international agricultural industry, attracting Irish companies doing business in the livestock industry in France and internationally.
L: Rennes
E: anna.ketterick@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +33 3 534 312 26

International education - conference and exhibition September 15-18
The EAIE (European Association for International Education) conference and exhibition, attracting over 3,500 delegates from around the world.
L: Nantes, France
E: terry.mcparland@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +353 1 727 2952

International Markets Week September 20-24
International Markets Week provides an opportunity for client companies to meet with Enterprise Ireland’s overseas market-based staff to discuss international growth strategies.
L: Dublin and a regional location tbc
E: evelyn.smith@enterprise-ireland.com
T: +353 1 727 2717

Medtec-Ireland September 22-23
Expected to attract in the region of 1,500 leading suppliers to the medical device manufacturing industry.
L: Galway
W: http://tinyurl.com/33xel7o

Email details of your forthcoming events to: the.market@enterprise-ireland.com
Over half the Irish winners at this year’s Punchestown Festival were fed on equine feed from Connolly’s Red Mills. Now the Kilkenny company is learning that a move from ‘opportunism’ to more strategic overseas market selection can improve its own business win rate in exports. Mary Sweetman reports.

THE WINNING FORMULA

“Many Irish companies are opportunistic when it comes to selecting export markets,” believes Michael Connolly, export manager with the Kilkenny animal nutritional specialists Connolly’s Red Mills. Elaborating on this point, he explains that businesses sometimes end up with export sales spread thinly across a patchwork of different markets, simply because they met distributors at trade shows who offered to represent them or they responded to unsolicited orders from a mismatch of different territories. “But they never get market penetration; they end up with a bridgehead position,” he says. “Getting a small percentage of niche markets is easy; the difficulty is growing beyond that point.”

Connolly should know: this, his says, was how his own company once operated. However, these days, a far more considered strategy is the order of the day. Connolly terms this “planned opportunism” – an approach that is guiding the company towards its target of doubling exports over the next five years, with a strong focus on Asia.

LONG PEDIGREE Over a hundred years old, Connolly’s Red Mills is a family business with a deeply embedded history and business culture. In the 1846, Michael’s great-grandfather left the country when his parents and family were evicted from their small farm because they couldn’t pay the rent. Returning in 1866 from America, where he had trained horses in Long Island, he set up an auctioneering business. And in 1908, sixty years after the repeal of the Corn Laws, which had devastated the Irish grain industry, he picked up the “Red Mills” in Goresbridge, County Kilkenny, for what even back then was a rock-bottom price of £400.
Further economic challenges stalked the country in the century ahead, and Michael’s own father remembered leaving the table hungry during the 1930s. But by the 1950s, he took over as MD of the business, and his conversations with his school friend — champion horse trainer Paddy Mullins — got him thinking about developing a nutritionally balanced feed to improve racehorse performance. Horses — like humans — have quite a small stomach, so with a balanced diet of proteins, with the correct amino-acid profile, cooked cereals, fibre, ash and water, they reasoned that it should be possible to seriously improve condition. Soon the proof followed.

In 1961, Mullin’s star racehorse, which had been fed on the newly formulated feed from Red Mills, raced and won twice during Cheltenham festival. “Up to then such a performance was unheard of, and, as a result, the Irish horse food business was born,” Connolly says. “It became obvious there was business potential in providing high-quality nutrition to the emerging race and thoroughbred market.” In this respect, Ireland is, even today, quite advanced. Globally, Connolly reckons, horses are still largely fed on oats and “a bit of this and that”.

For Red Mills, the winning streak has continued. Also nourished on feed manufactured by the Kilkenny company, last year, the John Oxx-trained Sea the Stars made racing history, winning six international classics, one after another.

**MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT** The company, which today operates in three key sectors — agri-feeds, extruded pet foods and horse nutrition — is still very much a Connolly-driven family business. Older brothers, managing directors and shareholders, Joe and Bill and have been involved since the seventies and have led the company since 1997, while Michael came onboard to develop export markets in 1993.

In addition to continued R&D investment, management is central to success and “change inside a company needs to be faster than change outside,” Michael quotes his brother Joe, who contends that attracting world class outside expertise to meet the needs of a global market is one of the major challenges for family businesses, particularly in what is perceived to be a “non-sexy sector like ours”.

Over the years, Red Mills has brought in essential know-how from outside, especially in finance, sales, engineering, laboratory, operations and marketing, and although there have sometimes been culture clashes, “we have grown and learned”, he says. Now the brothers find that, in terms of loyalty and long-term gain, they get a better return by investing in management development and training for the existing workforce. Three of the management team have completed Trinity College Dublin’s MSc in International Business, including Michael himself, and he and a colleague have completed the Internationally Selling Diploma, developed by Enterprise Ireland in conjunction with DIT. On top of that, Red Mills has invested in 23 additional courses for senior to middle management in the technical and operational side of the business, and even among contractors.

“It has changed us,” Michael says, adding that for him, the quantum leap in thinking came with the MSc in International Business. “I had come into the company at the request of my father from a journalism background and with a BA in English Literature and Philosophy. I was put into exports because I was family member, but without proper training. Despite making many mistakes over the years, we had managed to build the business to some million euro, so I was an ideal candidate for the course.”

For one thing, the company sealed a series of deals directly as a result. “At the time, we had the difficulty in Sweden that we couldn’t get into all the retail outlets that sell feed stuffs, because they were controlled by the Swedish farmers co-operative Lantmaenen Group, which had its own feed company. We had had the same problem previously in Germany, where we had had an interest from the shops, but a big company who manufactured for the same group blocked us. So this time, we created new packaging, and we co-branded with the manufacturing company, which literally came from an idea that came up on the course. That alliance has become over €1m worth of new business, which, at the time, led to a 40 per cent increase in our exports. We have now taken over 25 per cent of the premium Swedish muesli horse feed market.”

Another outcome was a change in focus. “In 2005, after significant investment in R&D, packaging and process development, we were mad keen to get our super premium pet food [division] going: we thought that was the way forward, especially for exports. What we were doing was right from the profitability point-of-view – you can get very high margins in premium branded pet foods, but it wasn’t until we got into the market that, without scale, we discovered margins were indeed very tight. We didn’t have the pockets to compete with the
“Irish companies can compete best in large but niche markets...a huge benefit in our management development was in swallowing that bitter pill – if you don’t do it at home – you won’t be able to do it abroad.”

multinationals head-on.” So while the company competes successfully in Ireland and supplies into the own-label UK and Irish pet-food market, Connolly has seen that creating a mass-market brand in exports is a costly business. In contrast, high-performance nutrition for horses and greyhounds is a specialist market, yet to be invaded by the bigger players. “Irish companies can compete best in large but niche markets,” he says, “for me, a huge benefit in our management development was in swallowing that bitter pill – if you don’t do it at home – you won’t be able to do it abroad.”

**STRATEGIC MARKET SELECTION** But perhaps the biggest impact has been a shift from ‘opportunism’ to what Connolly calls ‘planned opportunism’, whereby Red Mills will still consider propositions as they arise, but only if they make sense in terms of the company’s overall strategic framework.

Existing markets include Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Benelux, France, Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Switzerland, Austria and the Middle East. Now further penetration into the East is seriously on the company’s radar. “Asia doesn’t have as much competition, it doesn’t have much arable land, and as long as people are buying in goods from China, we will be able to get goods back to Asia very competitively,” Connolly says. “I can currently get cargo to Tokyo cheaper than I can get to Sligo, although obviously with declining imports, prices can fluctuate hugely, so in the long-term we would have to look at manufacturing out there or in Australia.”

Already, the company has an impressive 40 per cent of the small Singaporean market, and 5 per cent of the much larger Japanese market. “But,” he says, “we will also this year target Hong Kong, the emerging Chinese market, and India, which will be the big ones; Malaysia, because we are in Singapore; Korea, which I think is a slow-burner; Thailand and Vietnam, which are small markets; the Philippines, and Indonesia, from which we have already got our first order.”

Connolly’s team quantifies and prioritises each market opportunity through a series of key performance indicators (KPI). These include cost-per-day to feed a horse, tradition of feeding, expectations of the customers, general condition of the livestock and so on. The cost-per-day KPI, for example, has allowed Red Mills to calculate a threshold figure. This allows markets where the average cost-per-day is lower to be ruled out and markets where it is significantly higher to be prioritised. The approach requires significant desk-research coupled with visits to the market to consider additional factors such as the impact of regulations or the prevalence of bribery.

For Michael, the biggest drawback associated with a looser approach to market selection is the time wasted going after the less attractive markets. “Like any business, you can only afford to compete where you have the greatest advantage and opportunity – where you can win. In this market, all it takes not to do the business is to come second.”

He concedes that the Irish market has been difficult over the last year and a half, with business being impacted across the board. But he sees some light at the end of the tunnel: while not back to the high of 2008 levels, there has been some pick-up in business in the last two months across dog food, agri-business and horse feed sales.

“Our growth in exports has cushioned much of the negative growth domestically but we have still lost ground,” he says. “What we have to do is to make sure that our exports become a much bigger slice of the cake. They are now about 10 per cent of our business, and we are hoping that by 2015 – 6, it will be 20 per cent of what we do or possibly even more.”
International sporting events like the Soccer World Cup and Olympics are big business. In the run-up, they give host nations an economic lift and require massive infrastructural investments on a predictable, repeatable basis at changing locations round the world, writes Brian O’Grady.

GAME ON: HOW THE WORLD’S MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS = MAJOR BUSINESS

Every fourth summer, gardens the world over become neglected as families are lured indoors by the beautiful game’s world championship. Even without Ireland’s presence, South Africa’s 2010 World Cup will prove a major distraction for households here and elsewhere as an estimated 30 billion viewers sit down to watch soccer’s “mega event”, the term marketers use for global sports occasions that generate massive viewing figures and resulting advertising spend. Adidas is expecting $1.3bn (£1.05) in sales this year on the strength of its World Cup sponsorship; rival Nike is spending $64m (£52m) to sponsor the French team alone, plus equivalent sums for the US, Dutch, Brazilian and Portuguese teams, while brands like Coca-Cola, Visa, Hyundai and Sony are each paying to be official sponsors. Organisers FIFA has taken 2,500 legal cases to protect brand infringement in the run up to the event and has seen its revenues exceed $1bn this year from branding and TV rights. The frequency and massive spending power such sporting events command are now providing businesses with opportunities that extend far beyond sponsorship, however.

“This is work that had to be done with an absolute deadline, which you have to have when the whole of the world is watching.”
Sporting events are big business, representing huge capital expenditure in infrastructure, construction, security, technology and a plethora of related services. The 2010 World Cup has been described by South Africa’s President Zuma as “the greatest marketing opportunity of our time”, and will, he claims generate 3.6 million “job opportunities”. South Africa’s government spend of $4.6bn (£3.5bn) has triggered a splurge in spending on construction, security and infrastructure with 33bn rand or €1.6bn being spent improving transport alone, including doubling capacity in the country’s four main airports.

Such sporting “mega events” attract investment for a reason. Germany’s 2006 World Cup brought 2 million visitors, who helped generate the highest level of national business confidence there in fifteen years, but the event has been especially valued since as an international showcase for the country and region. China spent $40 billion (€32.4bn) on its 2008 Olympics, which successfully communicated a turning point in the country’s transformation towards being a first world economic power. The success and return on investment these events have generated now sparks fierce competition among potential host nations. Vladimir Putin for instance, has promised to spend 39 billion (€7.3bn) on Russia’s 2014 Winter Olympics. In the preparation just for its bid for the 2020 Olympics, Delhi is already adding 125 kilometers of metro, 6,000 buses, and a massive traffic control system this summer as it hosts The Commonwealth Games. And such events are scheduled fast and frequently over coming years: Poland will host the 2012 European Cup, the same year as the £9.3bn (£10.9bn) London Olympics, while Rio de Janiero is currently preparing its tendering procedures for work on the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, and will need to spend at least $34bn (£27.5bn), according to The Financial Times.

In addition to the prestige and PR opportunities, knock-on benefits for the broader economy are also considerable. South Africa’s Olympic spending has been a major factor in returning its economy to growth in the third quarter of last year. In the UK, British Telecom has launched £2.4bn (£2.8bn) investment in a blanket fibre broadband network in time for the event. FIFA, the World Cup organisers, calculate this year’s event will generate £2.86bn (£2.31bn) of impulse spending, while research group Minitel, claims an extra 60 million litres of beer will be consumed in England if their team reaches the finals. For Ireland, a single stop over in the Volvo Ocean Race, is estimated to be worth €55.8m to Galway’s local economy.

A new report from consultants Deloitte predicts yet more increasing competition for such international sporting events, as they fulfill so many social, political and economic needs. The level of competition between host countries is now such, that the consultancy estimates the four cities bidding for the 2016 summer Olympics each spent in excess of £250m (£202m) just on preparing their bids. “Hosting a major event gives a city or country permission to move quickly and decisively on a wide range of issues and activities that would normally be mired in endless debates and bureaucracy,” Deloitte claims. “It provides a rigid deadline that accelerates infrastructure development and other large-scale improvement activities that otherwise might take decades to complete ... Since the event requirements and date are set in stone, the host and everyone involved has no choice but to rise to the challenge. Failure is not an option.” According to Harry Goddard, a partner at Deloitte Ireland, such events “… provide a great opportunity to give a positive momentum to a community or nation.” The organising of such events, he believes is still far from being a clear cut business proposition, however: “Ultimately it’s up to the nation itself to take responsibility,” he believes.

irish players

In a world economy recovering from recession, such high spend opportunities can offer companies an untypical oasis of calm by providing lucrative, long-term projects with
budgets protected from any hiccups in the local economy, as regardless of any spending cuts that may be applied elsewhere, these are shows that must go on. Donseed is an Enterprise Ireland supported business based in Tralee, which has supplied mobile biometric devices for five companies working on the London Olympic project, which enables them to manage staff and meet safety requirements. According to Donseed’s operations director John Gannon, the work in London’s Olympics was both unusual and very timely as over the recession of the last two years; other clients were in constant danger of postponing jobs: the Olympics projects however simply had to go ahead. “The timing was fantastic over the last eighteen months while these were running at a time when a lot of other projects would have been delayed, though the UK is now picking up,” says Gannon. “This is work that had to be done with an absolute deadline, which you have to have when the whole of the world is watching.”

The need to expand infrastructure in time for such events, also enabled ESBI, the ESB’s international division to win a €4.5m consultancy contract in South Africa with the state utility, Eskom through the infrastructural spend leading up to the World Cup. ESBI has an ongoing consultancy contract with the state power agency, signed following an Enterprise Ireland trade mission in 2008, as part of South Africa’s national effort to increase and stabilise electricity output in time for the World Cup. “We had worked with Eskom before,” says senior project manager Paul O’Duffy, “but this opportunity enabled us to deepen our relationship with what has now become a flag-ship client for us.”

Since that trade mission, Dublin technology business Daon has also been working on a massive security project for the South African Department of Home Affairs to manage the records and biometric identification for 50 million citizen identities, a project accelerated in the run up to the World Cup. While details of the job are confidential given its sensitive nature, it has involved transforming the state organisation from a paper-based to a “21st century” border control and visa application systems, combining civil registry and voter registration.

London’s 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games illustrate the breadth of commercial possibilities that such events represent. The London Olympics has already drifted well over its original £2.4bn (£2.8bn) budget with a newly estimated final spend of £9.3bn (much of which is being funded by sponsorship) – and it’s not all con-
**NEXT STOP BRAZIL**

For any businesses seeking gold and silver in the world sports event market, all eyes must turn to Brazil, which has successfully won itself both the World Cup in 2014 and the 2016 Olympics. The success of Brazil’s economy over the last decade, averaging near 4 per cent growth since 2000 – and 6 per cent this year – means the two events will trigger a major capital expenditure programme aimed at developing the nation’s infrastructure. Research agency Frost & Sullivan envisages up to $19.5bn (€15.7bn) being spent on rail transport, with a further $75.5bn (€61.1bn) being spent on urban infrastructure in the run up to the games, in addition to the specialist services the two events will require.

According to Colin McCullagh, at Enterprise Ireland Brazil’s office, EI is currently engaging with the appropriate Ministries in Brasilia and the Special Secretary in Rio with responsibility for the World Cup 2014 and the Olympic Games 2016.

“The intention is to bring the appropriate persons to Ireland in Q3 this year to present the key investment areas for the games,” says McCullagh, who expects such areas to include construction and infrastructure; energy; the environment and sustainability; education; health; waste management; security; water treatment; and telecoms. The Brazilian Government will be creating a portal for the Games that suppliers can access for tenders, but it will not be launched until later in the year, he says.

“Enterprise Ireland is also organising a trade mission to Brazil in November, which will present an opportunity for client companies to familiarise themselves with the market and explore the opportunities both within and outside of the games,” says McCullagh.

For further information, email: colin.mccullagh@enterprise-ireland.com in Brazil or garry.forde@enterprise-ireland.com in Dublin.

For any businesses considering the opportunities presented by such international sporting events, the London Olympic Delivery Authority website gives a valuable insight into the sort of business activities on offer, and the shopping list that any world sporting event will require. While most of the contracts have been awarded at this point, tenders have been requested for activities such as soil monitoring, stakeholder management systems, compliance evaluation, copywriting, film services and photography, call centre support and many more. To date, ten Irish companies have won contracts worth in excess of $200m from preparation for the London Olympics.

Clear Power is a Wicklow-based firm, which founder Simon Dick describes as being “a systems integrator” for renewable energy projects, and which has won the contract for providing heating for the East London Olympic Park. Dick describes the tendering process for London as being “very competitive”, but which recognised Irish companies’ edge in the use and application of renewable energy solutions, something he attributes to government initiatives in Ireland. “This is a great job to win in terms of reference and profile raising, especially at this point in the company’s development, as we plan to move into being a developer,” says Dick. “We’re a little further ahead of the UK in many respects because government grants have helped the market here, while in the UK they have been less prevalent on account of prioritising the gas grid there, this is a great opportunity for us to show that.”

Sisk Construction won a £78m (€91.6m) contract for the Olympic Athletes Village, having already proven its capabilities on sports projects like Croke Park and the Aviva Stadium. According to Ian Wright, National Business Development Manager, John Sisk & Son UK, competition for work on the project was as competitive as any other high-profile project. “Speaking from our own experience on similar projects, it’s really about highlighting what you can uniquely offer to the client,” says Wright. “I also think it’s important to have the people who will ultimately deliver the project involved at the initial stages of bid preparation and the presentation to the client.”

Deloitte report available on:
– http://tinyurl.com/38xutjf
While only a handful of Irish businesses won direct business from the World Cup, Irish investment in South Africa suggests an eye to the longer game, with growing mobile penetration becoming one of the red-hot opportunity areas, writes Mary Sweetman.

THE IRISH IN SOUTH AFRICA

Close to 150 Irish companies are currently active in South Africa, exports total about €50 million per annum and up to 10,000 people are employed locally by Irish companies, estimates Fred Klinkenberg, one of Enterprise Ireland’s market advisors for the region. “There is high company traffic to the market,” he says. “We have on average two to three client companies visiting every week and one company [per week] for whom we do paid consultancy.”

One of the major Irish employers there is Top Security, with a 4,500-strong local workforce. Other significant players include Kentz, the engineering group, which is currently working on a major power generation project, and Dawn Farm Foods, with four factories in South Africa, employing 1,000 people and a supplier to the Woolworth Group. De La Rue Smurfit prints all South Africa’s passports, while other smaller players include the telecoms infrastructure company Obelisk, investment services specialist Information Mosaic, and the wireless antenna solution provider Taoglas.

According to Fred Klinkenberg, the rapidly burgeoning mobile area is an emerging hot-bed of potential, with the South African market itself experiencing rapid growth, but also providing a gateway into sub-Saharan Africa. “A lot of people on the telcos side would argue that after China and India, Africa is the last growth region in the world, with 900m potential subscribers,” he says, pointing out that Limerick-headquartered Tango Telecom has just signed a deal with Zain Telecom in 20 countries. Other Irish telco solution providers in South Africa or looking further into sub-Saharan Africa include Easons Electronic, CR2, Adaptive Mobile, Altobridge, Newbay and Openet.

This April, consultant Paul Dinsmore was appointed by Enterprise Ireland as a ‘business accelerator’ to help open doors and create initial engagement with the major mobile operators in the region. A native of Northern Ireland, Dinsmore has been in South Africa for over a decade. “The mobile licences for Vodacom and MTN were only issued in 1995, so when I went down to South Africa with one of the big ISPs in 1997, they were still small fledging organisations, and we have known each other over the last 12 years,” he told The Market. These relationships, Dinsmore says, enable him to set up initial meetings for Irish companies, saving them time and money.

Also offering to help companies in the broader ICT space, is Anton Smith, CEO of Hambisana, which specialises in the DVB (digital video broadcasting) niche. Smith was in Dublin last month to meet with IDA Ireland to discuss headquarters and registering his company here. The intellectual property protection regime; language and time-zone compatibility, and proximity to major US and European customers are his main motivators, he says.

If Hambisana makes the move, then the current headquarters in Pretoria would become a branch office, and Smith believes that the combined Irish and SA set-up means that his company would be ideally positioned to offer incubation and support services to Irish companies signing deals in South Africa. “We can provide their local representation up to the point where it actually makes sense for them to start rolling out more people and office space. Once companies have signed contracts, they will need to concentrate on the design, the deployment and the ongoing support, and it will be much more cost-effective having a company in South Africa do that than bringing their own team down or trying to do it remotely.”

Hambisana currently has a full-time team of 30 in Pretoria, and, importantly for potential Irish partners and their customers, it is Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) accredited. “We have a 24-hour call centre, support services and development and integration services. We can potentially provide a company with a one-stop-shop,” Smith says, adding that fees or revenue-sharing could be negotiated on a deal-by-deal basis.

He see the relatively healthy financial services market as one potential niche for Irish companies, since currency controls effectively prevented South African banks from becoming embroiled in the subprime crisis. But like Klinkenberg and Dinsmore, Smith believes the rapidly unfolding African telecoms sector is the big opportunity. “Currently, we have about 350m mobile subscribers in Africa, and by 2012, they reckon that will grow to 700m,” he says.
How do you think your childhood influenced your attitude towards money?
Growing up in Ireland in the Fifties, things weren’t going particularly great and there wasn’t a lot of money around. People were very cautious and careful with what little they had, and our family was no different, even though as time went on the country became more wealthy, especially after joining the EU. I came from a very middle-of-the-road background and went to a state school. My mother controlled the purse strings in our family. She wanted us to have the best things we could afford on what little we had. We were never on the brink - I just considered us to be a normal family who had to be quite frugal.

Why did you forego going to university to start working right after you left school?
I had several passions (I’d considered dentistry, while my parents wanted me to be a priest), so I asked myself did I want to spend time and money at university or did I want to start making money myself? My parents could possibly have managed to put me through uni, but it wasn’t cheap at the time - there were no loans, so you had to pay for everything yourself. I decided to get my experience a different way. I joined the Bank of Ireland as a clerk, and did the Institute of Bankers and cost accountancy along the way. It was the most efficient and cost-effective way I could think of - I was able to study and do my exams, while having a disposable income.

Nowadays, would you consider yourself a saver or a spender?
A spender. I’ve always been like that. Have I got worse as I’ve got older? Probably, though I’d like to think I’m not irresponsible, but if there’s something I see and want, then I’ll get it. My mum has a great expression: “There’s no hem in that garment.” What she meant was that you can’t put money in the hem of the garment as it was the place that little old Irish ladies would hide their money. Whatever money I’ve made, I want to use, while not dying in a poor house. I don’t want to leave money littering the place when I go, where people have rows with each other.

What’s your main money weakness?
Skiing trips. I’m a reasonable skier, even though I didn’t start until I was 40, but I enjoy it. In the summer, I like other outdoor sports, like golf or sailing, so buying new equipment or boats is a drain on my capital expenditure. I have Snapper [a 37-metre Sunseeker] and a motor yacht, and I’m a member of the oldest yacht club in the world, which is in Cork. My wife’s a more serious golfer than me and beats me all the time.

What’s been your worst period of debt?
The early Nineties when we’d just started off in Formula 1. When you set up a new team, the financial constraints are very demanding. I’d started it in my twenties, when I was young and didn’t give a damn. My first year in Formula 1 was proving hugely daunting. I’d spent £5m designing and making the car, which was a sizeable amount back then, and sponsorship brought in around £12m.

At the end of the first season, I’d lost the original £5m and owed £5m. The banks came down heavy and assured me they didn’t cash promises, even though I knew things would get better.

I was being hounded to pay back my debts and there was High Court trouble, so the bailiffs were sent in, but they were friendly chaps and would quietly tell me when they’d be visiting, so I wouldn’t be in. It was nevertheless a very strained time for my family and me. Luckily, some very generous benefactors bailed me out, and I pulled myself back on top.

I was lucky I had the gift of the gab, when it came to sponsors. People say I didn’t kiss the Blarney, I stole it. The sponsorship boost of £18m made it possible for us to stay in business. Because I’d been in banking, I understood balance sheets and had kept money back for taxes and VAT, which kept them at bay.

How did you manage to focus and plough on regardless of the serious financial noose that was looming?
I probably had blinkers on. I was so determined that I’d survive and I was going to finish what I’d set out to achieve that a little problem of finance wasn’t going to get in my way.

There are always going to be certain levels of stress in your life. You just need to decide what you can withstand. Financial stress is devastating and it eats away at you, but I kept this well cloaked up inside. All these people were relying on me to find the capital and I couldn’t let them down.
Multi-millionaire former Formula 1 team owner, business guru and television pundit Eddie Jordan, 62, knows all about the yo-yos of rags to riches, having staved off bankruptcy in the early Nineties. He talks to Sarah Ewing.
What’s the biggest lesson you learnt from that period?
You can never spend the money you have twice. But I always had the money to pay everyone. Everything that came in from sponsorship, I’d hold back 10pc as a contingency.

So what do you think has been your best business decision?
People always assume it was winning this race or that one, but keeping everything afloat and surviving Formula 1 was the top. Any accolade pales into insignificance. My gift of the gab was vital for our survival, but it doesn’t actually give you a contract, and these are cool, calculated guys who want performance.

We were always honest in our presentations to potential sponsors and said: “We cannot and will not guarantee who wins.” Integrity counts for a lot. We started with a negative and worked back and it worked. I’d show from a marketing standpoint that whatever you spend we can deliver five times in value, along with careful advertising and media plans. Every part of the chain knew their role and pulled together. We were one of the best sponsored teams on the circuit.

Do you have any decisions you regret?
Well, I’ve always said: “Just because you’ve made money in a certain business, do not assume you can do the same thing twice and with the same result.” If you’ve made money in one sport, don’t be foolhardy and think you’ll succeed in something completely different. No one is invincible. I’d be wary of getting into the property business. If you proceed with caution and are sensible, then you can be OK, but so many property businesses have crumbled because they leveraged themselves to the hilt. Whether it was their greed or the bank’s fault or the general economic situation, it’s not for me to say. Those that were only leveraged up to 65pc-70pc are riding out the storm.

How do you prefer to pay for things - cash, card or cheque?
I’m Irish, everyone carries cash! If I didn’t go out without pounds in my pocket, I’d feel naked. I don’t use the hole in the wall a lot. I only have one credit card and one debit card. If I had more, I wouldn’t be able to remember the numbers.

What’s your investment strategy?
I’m not as prolific as I used to be, but I’ve kept hold of my shares, so hopefully they’ll return to their previous levels. I keep a fairly active eye on mining and oil. I invested a bit in gold mines, some of which have turned out much better than others. I don’t follow a trend, but I’m risk oriented. If I wanted to make 3pc to 5pc, I’d be looking at banks or bonds, but I’m more aggressive than that.

Do you bank online?
No, I don’t know anything about it!

How often do you speak to your financial adviser?
I’ve always kept a qualified accountant close by my side - he’d be the last person to turn the lights off if I went down. I speak to him constantly. He’s been with me for 12 years so he knows how my mind works and keeps me under control.
Global heavyweights have identified investment in clean technology as a means to provide economic stimulus during the current recession while improving their longer term environmental sustainability. With the global ‘green’ stimulus market now worth an estimated €380 billion, Gerard O’Dwyer looks at prospects for Irish companies in three key markets.

**GOING FOR GREEN**

The increasing importance of ‘green stimulus’ solutions and strategies in lifting global monetary performance was forcefully flagged by the leaders of the world’s 20 biggest economies (G20) in April 2009 when they met in London to discuss collective actions to promote recovery within domestic and international trade and industry markets. Of the G20 nations, the United States (US), China, Japan, Germany and Britain have discharged the most ambitious economic recovery programmes (ERP) that contain robust ‘green stimulus’ dimensions ranging, on average, from 10 to 15 per cent of their projected ERP spend.

Irish cleantech companies can, through effective partnering strategies, access some share of this business, while gaining an important foothold in potentially lucrative overseas markets, believes Marina Donohoe, head of Cleantech at Enterprise Ireland. The best prospects are in areas such as energy efficiency, green buildings, water treatment, waste management and related services, she believes.

The value of global ‘green’ stimulus plans has expanded from €350 million to €380 billion since January 2009, with China and the US leading the charge to drive investment in vital infrastructure, such as power grids, water treatment, renewables, and energy conservation solutions for buildings, according to Nick Robins, the head of HSBC Bank’s Climate Change Centre of Excellence (CCCE) unit, based in London.

“In China’s case, it has its tradition of central planning, and it has large financial reserves. Those two things put together means that it was able to respond quite quickly and with cash. In a sense, it was able to bring forward some of the infrastructure spending on rail, water and so on, which it would have done later on,” Robins told The Market.

“The green market globally will be huge,” agrees Shelly Xiong, a Partner in the Dublin-based law firm HaoLiWen Attorneys. It will present significant opportunities for suppliers who can deliver the right technology at the right price. China’s green market is very big, and there will be lots of potential for Irish companies there. But it will be a highly competitive market.”
China launched its €475 billion economic recovery programmes (ERP) initiative to much fanfare in November 2008. Significantly, around 40 per cent of this spend is allocated to ‘green’ capital investment projects and programmes, with a focus on power grids, water infrastructure, environmental improvements and rail communications. The country has adopted an energy-efficiency target and is examining how it could position itself as a low-carbon economy. This proposal may open the door to China becoming a manufacturing base for low-CO\(_2\) technologies, HSBC’s Nick Robins says.

In line with the rest of the world, China also plans to levy a CO\(_2\) tax in 2012. So technologies that reduce carbon emissions will be needed as demand in the economy shifts to green technologies, HaoLiWen’s Shelly Xiong adds.

Airtricity, which exited China’s wind-power generating market in 2009, after a €2.1 billion buyout of the company by Scottish and Southern Energy, is once again looking at investment opportunities in China, while BioTector Analytical Systems, a Ringaskiddy-based environmental monitoring technology systems provider, plans to scale-up its business in China.

Accessing China’s substantial cleantech market has both an upside and downside, says Xiong. On the upside, stimulus policies provide for a range of attractive incentives. These include price compensation and feed-in tariffs for electricity produced using renewable energy. Additionally, the government has introduced tax incentives for ‘green’ technologies, while some imported ‘green’ products qualify for tax incentives or subsidised loans.

The stimulus package also gives foreign cleantech firms access to regional financial supports.

Attending trade fairs and exhibitions will give Irish companies a valuable “feel and sense” for the Chinese market and the demands of the marketplace, Xiong says. Specific areas where this country’s cleantech suppliers could make an impact include energy efficiency, municipal and industrial wastewater treatment, waste recycling, industrial solid waste treatment (including hazardous waste treatment) and desulphurisation systems, she believes.

“For Irish companies, the most attractive export opportunities are in water treatment and waste management. The situation with wind power is that this market is saturated. The targets for 2010 have been largely met for wind farms and equipment manufacturing. There are still quite good opportunities in solar power, but price is a barrier.”

Although the Chinese government hopes to reach its overall 65 per cent recycling goal by year-end 2010, the efficiency levels remain weak in key segment areas, including plastics (25 per cent), paper (20 per cent), glass (13 per cent) and rubber (47 per cent).

“There is a lack of industrial operations in the recycling industry,” Xiong continues. “This is evident in obsolete equipment and poorly managed recycling parks, so there are opportunities in the management and supply of quality recycling systems.”

Of course, there are not insignificant hurdles in doing business in China. On the legal side, Irish businesses should ensure they have adequate intellectual property protection. “This is vital for companies wanting to export products or technologies to China,” says Xiong.

Businesses that need to undertake market research and access up-to-date information on contracts and opportunities may need to engage temporary consultants competent in Chinese or hire Chinese-speaking personnel to support their research initiatives, she adds.

Although there are lots of websites, most of them are mainly in the Chinese language, including the international projects contracts bidding website. The information in English on such sites wouldn’t be as adequate or up-to-date.”

Xiong also advises going the partnership route. “What we see happening in China is that the major players are all very big players, and the top international companies are there. This means Irish companies must be competitive, and it may be advantageous for some to consider partnerships or joint-ventures. The challenge is to find a good partner, and in this situation references are very important as is validation, face-to-face meetings with possible partners, and visits to inspect their capacity and facilities.”
Irish companies hoping to access the US cleantech market will need to “work smart” and adopt measures to market their products and services in a way that emphasises their uniqueness, says Michael Flood, a vice president in O’Neill and Associates, the Washington-based local, state and federal government relations specialist.

The US Government’s $800 billion Stimulus Bill (The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), which was enacted in February 2009, envisages spending on ‘green’ programmes of around $74 billion. Moreover, the stimulus package also includes $20 billion for green tax incentives.

Securing a share of this expansive ‘green’ market will require careful planning; long-term commitment; an understanding of the political landscape, and a sharp awareness of how the market operates, locally and nationally, says Flood. “There is a host of activities one will need to do in order to gain market share in the US, whether under the stimulus package, or other opportunities. Basic elements include identifying work by monitoring government websites. There will also be specific actions that one will need to take, such as developing a capture plan that sets your company apart by emphasising your uniqueness,”

The stand-out cleantech projects for Irish companies include the $4.5 billion spend to modernise and bolt-on smart-grid technologies to the electricity grid; a $6.3 billion spend on state energy-efficiency and clean-energy grants, and $2 billion in loans to manufacture advanced batteries and components for a range of applications such as plug-in electric cars, he believes.

The US market can be a “goldmine” for Irish cleantech companies, Flood says. However, to strike the “motherload”, they must design and execute a business plan that has a two-to-five-year outlook, and, which, not alone, incorporates the cost of capturing contracts, but also has a well-funded long-term market-focused capital investment strategy.

One warning light, Flood notes is the move by Democratic senators in March to add a ‘Buy American’ amendment to the Green Stimulus package. The Senatorial-group, headed by senators Charles E Schumer, Bob Casey, Sherrod Brown and Jon Tester, claims that over 50 per cent of contracts within the stimulus package are going to foreign cleantech companies. If successful, the amendment would force the Department of Energy (DoE) and the US Treasury to restrict stimulus funding to cleantech projects that preserve and create jobs in the United States.

As much of the funding for developing and using new green technologies and services will come from the Administration and Congress, the political reality is that members of Congress will be thinking locally, says Flood. “Congress members will ask how projects benefit them, or how projects will get them re-elected. They will ask how ‘does a project like this benefit my district?’” This, once again, emphasises the need for Irish companies to look at having a local presence and/or at partnership and sub-contract opportunities – which, in any case, is the route most Irish companies would take – unless their product or service is particularly unique.
The UK Government’s Environmental Transformation Fund (ETF) aims to spend £400 million promoting low-carbon energy and energy efficiency technologies in the UK by 2011, with key projects being managed by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), the Carbon Trust and the Technology Strategy Board.

The primary goals behind Britain’s industry-focused ‘green’ stimulus programme is to establish a first-mover advantage in key cleantech industries such as offshore wind and marine energy, says Alice Waltham, the head of the Edinburgh-based IPA Energy’s Sustainable Energy & Carbon Team. “Britain wants to establish a supporting industry, which can export the technology and services worldwide. The goal is to achieve a 15 per cent renewable energy capacity by 2020. This is a very large and ambitious plan, and solutions are focused on market-driven demand,” she told The Market.

Despite the planned large-scale investments by Britain in onshore and offshore wind-farms, this is a market area where Irish companies will have difficulty accessing, given the increasing level of international competition in this sector and the scarcity of home-grown mature wind-turbine makers in Ireland capable of supplying multiple-megawatt units to large onshore or offshore projects, she believes.

Offshore wind is becoming a bigger market opportunity than onshore going forward in Britain. Initial exclusivity agreements have been awarded for an unprecedented level of offshore wind-power projects. These, if fully realised, would have a total capital value of around £100 billion by 2020.

“Almost nobody will employ somebody in the offshore wind sector unless they have a track record. Ireland hasn’t had much of a chance to build this segment up yet. Unless companies have had the experience in Ireland or abroad, they will find it very difficult to enter the UK market straight away. The emphasis here is on selecting proven firms with referenced projects and proven track-records,” Waltham says.

However, she is more positive about prospects in other areas. “There will be potential to win business in certain areas, such as the production of micro-generation devices, transmission cables, water and waste-water infrastructure, port development infrastructure and energy and water efficient products.”

Echoing other market observers, she believes joint-venture partnerships represent a logical means of accessing the UK’s cleantech market. “The market is looking for companies with experience and who can also provide international reference projects,” she says.

The depart-station for firms will generally be networking through trade fairs and exhibitions, she adds. “There is no substitute for good preparation and personal contacts. Also, the importance of having a presence in the target market should not be underrated.

“Ultimately, for Irish companies, success will be about having the right product, at the right time and at the right price. The right time to get involved is now. There is going to be a huge amount of investment over the next 10 to 15 years, and this is an exciting time.”
Lucille Redmond caught up with leadership author and expert Gareth Jones during his recent visit to Ireland to talk about the challenges of motivating and leading a growing company.

IT’S TOUGH AT THE TOP
Leading people takes more than a leader. Gareth Jones, who was recently in Ireland presenting a workshop to business leaders, says leadership is a two-way process. “If it’s a relationship, our knowledge about how it works should be informed as much by sociological concepts as by psychological ones,” he says.

Jones and his colleague Rob Goffee, founders of the consultancy Creative Management Associates, started out as sociologists who became fascinated with leaders and leadership, and wondered why psychologists, rather than sociologists, were the source of study on this.

Jones was an academic in the economic and social studies department of the University of East Anglia – a university famous for its creative writing course, which fostered such writers as Kazuo Ishiguro and Anne Enright. He moved on to the London Business School – part of the University of London and one of the most highly regarded MBA colleges in the world – to direct the accelerated development programme, before being poached by Polygram for a top job in industry.

His and Goffee’s books, The Character of a Corporation: How Your Culture Can Make or Break Your Business; Why Should Anyone Be Led by You, and Clever, are corporate bibles. “Psychologists had produced a lot of data about leaders. But we were interested in leadership, which is the relationship between leaders and the led,” he told The Market.

Jones and Goffee set up their firm Creative Management Associates to focus on organisations where creativity was an advantage. “I did a lot of work for Polygram, which was then the world’s largest music company. Out of the blue, Alain Levy offered me a job as global HR director.” Jones found himself in the position of the people he had been advising – having to lead and inspire a worldwide group in one of the fastest-changing and most creative industries. He was later director of human resources and internal communications at the BBC.

Growing pains Jones was recently in Ireland to present a workshop co-ordinated by Enterprise Ireland’s scaling team, which aims to help targeted Irish businesses grow into international companies of scale. With one or two very high-profile and noticeable exceptions, Jones says, this is not a society that has a long economic history of growing sizeable businesses. “That’s a challenge – addressing some of the very practical issues that growing businesses face, around understanding cash-flow, beginning to invest in creating a middle management structure, growing people, picking talent, being able to retain talent – as always, even in these difficult economic times, the most talented are potentially the most mobile. And if you really want to grow your business, you’ve got to keep your best people.”

He had spent two sessions with Enterprise Ireland during the week when I spoke with him. “The first was with small and medium-sized companies – some start-ups with a turnover of just about €1 million, and some larger and more established companies of between €10 million and €30 million turnover. The Enterprise Ireland scaling team is aiming for these to grow to €50 million to €100 million businesses, which of course is absolutely vital to the Irish economy.”

ALL-ROUND REVIEW One of Jones’s favourite tools is 360-degree feedback – an assessment of an executive’s qualities by a wide range of people who deal with him – his peers, suppliers, customers, even himself. This can reveal more than any other method of assessment, he insists. It is ruthlessly accurate, because of the variety and range of sources. It is not always gentle on the ego, but if its findings are taken on board and the subject uses them for change, it can revolutionise a leader’s style. Jones and his colleagues aggregate the data in the assessments to find the patterns; the feedback is an accumulation of opinions that, taken together, give an accurate picture of your work and style.

“Here’s a typical problem: a partner in a professional services firm got very disappointing feedback, which told him that he didn’t know what was going on in his firm,” said Jones. “He said: ‘I’ve never got feedback like this before!’” The partner had 60 people working for him – but he obviously was not leading them effectively, given the feedback. “When I went and looked at the office, I saw that he entered at the top of the room and went straight to his PC.” The people working for this executive were seated all the way down the room, but he did not have to pass through their space to get to his office. “I suggested that he move his office down to the other end of the room, so he’d have to walk to his desk through the room where everyone was working. Of course, when he was walking through, he stopped to chat about people’s work and find out how they were doing, if they had any problems, if they needed any help.”
Six months later, when Jones and his team did another 360–degree exercise, the feedback was radically different. Now the boss was a communicator and a leader, and the staff were inspired and working to meet that inspiration.

The best thing about 360–degrees is that it’s true, says Jones, and it shows you where your abilities and lacks are. “Not everyone can be brilliant at everything – it’s just not possible. So if your big addition is that you’re creative, but you’re disorganised, I’d say ‘Don’t work on organisation, get someone else to do it for you’.”

**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS** There is no single style of leadership, Jones stresses. “A sawmills and a law firm need different kinds of leadership.” Styles also have to change as a business grows. A boss whose personality was inspiring when his company was tiny can find himself out of his depth as it grows.

“For SMEs, you’re hopeful they’ll be high-growth,” he says. “But growth brings lots of leadership challenges: integrating new people – even, sometimes, weeding out some of the founders because things have changed.

“Historically, SMEs have had bigger growth rates than big companies, because they can move faster. One of the things associated with this growth is leadership – exceptional leadership inspires people to exceptional performance. And right now, exceptional performance is a survival technique.”

While there are different styles, there are some defining characteristics, says Jones – first among them the ability to excite people.

“Even if you look at very big organisations, the quality of exciting people is a defining characteristic of leadership – as important with small numbers as with a staff of 150.”

Jones cites Paul Polman – now leading Unilever, and formerly of Procter & Gamble and Nestle – as an inspiring leader. “He knows FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods), but also he’s edgy, ambitious. He wants to double the company’s size – while keeping its carbon footprint the same. And while Unilever is a global empire, Paul Polman thinks a bit like an entrepreneur with a small company. He’s interested in trading and growing the company’s market share.”

Big business fascinates Jones. “I’m interested in the complexity of running global business – but one of the things you have to hang on to, even in big companies, is small-business thinking – being nimble, not waiting for head office’s master plan.”

**RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME** If there is one quality that is intrinsic to clever organisations and successful leaders, it’s serendipity, he says. “Viagra is a heart drug – but a young PhD student noticed one day that heart patients taking the drug were a lot happier.” Now Viagra is a multi-million-dollar moneymaker as a solution for erectile dysfunction.

“Glaxo had a strategy to be the biggest cardiovascular company.” Then the company invented the ulcer cure Zantac. “It made them the world’s greatest pharmaceutical company.”

Serendipity and creativity are the centre of success, says Jones. It is not always obvious what marketing ploy will work for a product, even when that product is artistic. Take Shania Twain’s music. When she started her career, she was a gently folksy singer, backing her mountain music with a traditional guitar. “She is probably one of the most beautiful people you could ever see,” says Jones. “But she played country music. Then we were listening to some of her songs, and a marketing guy said: ‘Listen to this – this is the recording with electric guitar instead of acoustic’. It was transformed. And so was her career.”

Great companies, Jones says, treat the recession as an opportunity. The 1930s were a disastrous time for America, but some of the most successful companies of all time were founded in those years.

Texas Instruments was founded in 1930, Porsche and Clairol in 1931, Cadbury Ireland in 1932. The Boeing 247, first of the airliners, was introduced in 1933. Ford’s brilliant innovation in mass-producing a V-8 engine in one piece revolutionised auto production. For Ireland, the current difficult times are a chance to use our muscle. “The issue of growing an entrepreneurial culture, which encourages businesses to grow and flourish, is absolutely central to Ireland’s success,” says Jones. “Encouraging risk-taking, creating space for people to act as entrepreneurs, maybe the state moving in to help companies through the early stages of growth, are absolutely vital to societal recovery. I’m an optimist about this. This is a well-educated society, full of people who could be entrepreneurs.”
We all love those stories of wonderfully funny or double-meaning translations of English we encounter abroad or in marketing material on the web or in print. “Our manager has personally passed all the water in this restaurant” is a perennial favourite.

Yet when it comes to selling into international markets, some companies make the same mistake, presenting marketing material with less than perfect translations, or – and it’s hard to know which is worse – not even translating their brochures and websites into their consumers’ language at all, presumably under the assumption that knowledge of English is almost universal.

THE BUSINESS CASE This can be a big mistake if the Massachusetts-based market research company Common Sense Advisory is to be believed. In a 2006 study, the group surveyed over 2,400 consumers in eight non-Anglophone countries (Brazil, France, Germany, Japan, the People’s Republic of China, Russia, Spain, and Turkey) about their buying experiences at English-language websites.

Here are some of their findings (published on www.chiefmarketer.com):
– Nearly 90 per cent of people who have no or little English ability spend most or all of their time on sites in their own language.
– Most people buy from sites in their own language. Just 10 per cent of the participants with little or no English make most or all of their online purchases from Anglophone websites. Among those who do speak English, the number jumps to 37 per cent. But that still means more than 60 per cent of those who can read English prefer buying from sites in their own language.
– Most people will pay more for products in their own language. Nearly 65 per cent of the respondents who spoke little or no English said they would pay more for information they could read in their own language. Those with English proficiency were split nearly 50/50 on this proposition.
Are you talking your customers’ language or are you losing them in translation?
Leslie Faughnan looks at the importance having marketing collateral in target customers’ own language and at the wealth of professional translation providers here on Irish business’s own doorstep.

MESSAGE UNDERSTOOD: OVER AND OUT?

BUSINESS BUYERS To see if similar trends emerged in the b2b sector, the company subsequently polled 351 business-people. The eight non-Anglophone countries they choose, in this case, constituted a representative mix of the countries for which companies frequently localise their products (France, Germany, Japan, and Spain), attractive developing markets (China and Russia), and locales for which English is often thought to be sufficient for most offerings (Sweden).

Writing on chiefmarketer.com, Common Sense Advisory’s chief research officer Don DePalma noted: “We asked our survey respondents to agree or disagree with the statement, ‘Having printed marketing and other collateral material in my language makes my organisation more likely to purchase a software product’.”

The results were striking. Across the entire sample, more that 80 per cent indicated that they agreed with the statement; the outlier being Sweden, with just 60 per cent of respondents preferring marketing materials in their own language. However, as DePalma notes, if marketers accept the conventional wisdom that English is good enough for Sweden, they still leave three out of five buyers on the outside looking in. More significantly, the other seven countries all came in at 80 per cent or higher. Clearly, if you’re not providing marketing information in your customers’ language, you’re haemorrhaging business potential.

DePalma’s research (more of which can be found online) also illustrated that the need for translation and localisation becomes even clearer as you drill down into other elements like documentation, installation and administrative instructions, and troubleshooting, support information, and localised user-interfaces. “Our respondents told us that having information in their languages, from first contact to post-sales support, made them more likely to purchase a product,” he wrote.

“Our respondents told us that having information in their languages, from first contact to post-sales support, made them more likely to purchase a product.”
Fortunately, business translation services have become highly competitive, not least because with today’s communications, clients can buy from anywhere in the world. Moreover, top-quality translation is simply not a problem in Ireland. Professional translation services have been in existence since our first export success era in the Sixties – to the extent that we have developed a rich sector in business translation and software and media localisation over nearly two decades, which is now an export success story in its own right.

Tony O’Dowd is a translation and localisation veteran and now chief executive of Alchemy Software Development. This Irish company was initially set up in 2000 by O’Dowd and some other ex-Corel and Lotus managers. It was bought by US group Transperfect in 2008 but continues to operate as an autonomous company. “Localisation began here quite simply as an aspect of manufacturing,” he says. “Over time, lots of young engineers threw their energies into it in several software multinationals here. We all learned through the school of trial, error and hard knocks. Essentially, as we eventually came to realise, the task was to industrialise the process of getting as many language editions out the door as possible using the same set of processes.”

That brought in workflow, standards and a degree of automation, he says. “De facto standards evolved and became best practice, and eventually we were able to offer guaranteed speed and deliverables to our senior managements in head office in the USA or wherever. Those early developments became sort of self-fulfilling, as Ireland became the recognised centre for software localisation, based on the methodologies and systems that had been developed here.”

The modern translation bureau is a highly evolved organisation, agrees chief executive Jennifer Walsh of 21-year old Dublin-headquartered Eurotext Translations: “We combine the core language skills with often quite complex project management and the use of smart ICT across the board.”

These systems automatically check the agreed glossary of terms for the specific business sector, client and project. There are obvious efficiencies in identifying any elements that have been done before, from technical terms or phrases to whole sentences and even larger segments. But Walsh points out that it is even more important for the quality of the work to ensure that there is consistent terminology management across all of the client’s published content.

“Every client will have deadlines, often quite tight, which will usually mean all of the languages set for the specific project,” she continues. “The team of professional translators for that project could be scattered worldwide and the project managers have to steer the work through the first translation phase, editing and then final proofing for accuracy, consistency and quality.”

One of the governing factors in translation is that professional translators are, by and large, self-employed specialists in specific knowledge domains, from IT to pharmaceuticals or engineering to cookery. Translation is almost exclusively into the person’s native language and international best practice is that the translator be currently living in the target market region. That all means that almost all business translation
projects essentially involve distributed working, explains Nana Luke of eTeams, another Irish translation services company headquartered in Scariff, Co. Clare.

The spread of languages the company deals with is probably not untypical, with what the translation business generally calls FIGS (French, Italian, German, Spanish) as the most common requirements and about 40 mainstream languages covering the vast bulk of the work. “We have handled a total of 182 languages so far and currently have about 1,300 professional translators on our books, with whom we have worked or tested,” Luke says. On top of this is another tier of experienced and trusted editors who proof and check all output for quality.

“This business does not require particularly powerful computing, but it does depend totally on smart technology to manage the content, the projects and processes and the communications. We have a client portal so that they can log in and see their own account, including project progress. Some multinational clients have in-house translation departments, which can seamlessly participate in working within our teams on their own projects.”

“We would seldom split a language translation between more than about four translators,” she continues. “But the technology is excellent at enabling them to work as a virtual team, moderated by an editor. It seldom takes more than about an hour to get a new translator up to speed on using the system, which is a very valuable feature.”

Another Irish company in this space is Vistatec, which was founded in 1997. Initially aimed at IT localisation, it now provides a set of language, technology, testing and workflow solutions in over 130 languages to major corporations not only in IT but also life sciences, e-learning and clean technology.

According to chief sales officer Gráinne Maycock, Vistatec is very active in assisting clients to serve the fast changing requirements of the web. “Our business is based on global content release by our clients. Our language teams focus on value-added services such as trans-creation and multilingual search engine optimisation, which help our clients ensure their web content is compelling, on-brand and encourages more clicks towards buying or engaging,” she explains.

Vistatec is a mature localisation expert, she adds, which adopts technologies and invests in new ways to meet challenges and change. “Examples would include an increased focus on Machine Translation and post-editing, optimised translation workflows and technology platforms to ease doing global business in product and content release.”

The key to Irish success in this sector, it seems, is the combination of technology, workflow and standards with essential native translators and the watchful eye of professional editors to oversee the process. Cheap or free tools like Google, Babelfish, and others might be great for holidays in the sun or even doing background research. But think of the Austrian mountain lodge warning “Not to perambulate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension” – surely the result of an early version of Web language translation! When it comes to customer communication, maybe its best left in the hands of the experts.

– For more about Common Sense Advisory’s research on the business case for translation, see http://tinyurl.com/34swl79

– For further information about Irish companies providing translation services, email catherine.grant@enterprise-ireland.com
Think Italy and you might well think shoes, handbags, pizza, football, red wine and Berlusconi. But what Irish companies may not have considered is that Italy is also a strong market for financial services, pharmaceuticals and medical device among other thriving sectors.

Richard Byrne-Price, Vito Garolfalo and Kevin Buckley at Enterprise Ireland's Milan office provide the background, while journalist Cian Molloy speaks to external market consultants and Irish companies on the ground.

GRAB A PIAZZA THE ACTION

Did you know that an Italian company, Luxottica, makes most of the sunglasses in the world? Or that ENI – the world’s largest integrated energy company, active in 77 countries with a staff of 78,000 and revenue of €4 billion – is an Italian company? Italy has a highly diversified economy, populated with global leaders, be it medical devices, automobiles, white goods, telecoms, banking, oil and gas or tourism. With a population of 58m and a GDP of $1.8 trillion, this is the eleventh biggest economy in the world.

That said, competition and longer than usual credit terms are just two of the hurdles companies may face. The market can be extremely competitive, and the bottom-line will always be important to buyers. Realistically, Irish companies need to be offering something new, high-quality or cost-saving to spark interest.

Enterprise Ireland has found that a partnership approach has been very rewarding for its clients operating in this market. Access to decision-makers, understanding of the way things are done in Italy and where the opportunities lie are crucial keys to success and have proven to shorten the time-to-market dramatically.

In January this year, the value of Irish exports to Italy was up 11.5 per cent on figures for January 2009. Italy is now Ireland’s eighth largest export market for merchandise, accounting for 3 per cent of the total, and our fifth largest export market for services, accounting for 7 per cent of the total, according to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
The Italian pharmaceutical industry is the fifth largest in the world and the third largest in Europe, according to Vito Garofalo, Enterprise Ireland’s Italian medical and pharma senior market advisor. Some 37 per cent of Italian high-tech exports are pharmaceuticals, while exports and domestic sales are roughly equal.

In 2008, the total value of the Italian pharmaceutical production was €22,729 million. The industry employs 69,500 people, of which 6,230 are in R&D activities. Pharmaceuticals are the leading sector in Italy in terms of research intensity (compared to manufacturing, they account for 1.5 per cent of total employment and 13.5 per cent of R&D). They also lead investment in Italy and employ productivity levels well above the Italian average. Just under 60 per cent of the employment in the sector is in headquarters and production personnel.

Oddly, for one of the world’s most industrialised countries, with Europe’s fourth largest domestic pharma market, Italy does not have a major pharmaceutical company of its own, with all the big players being multi-nationals headquartered elsewhere. That said, some of those multi-nationals have a very significant presence, with Eli Lilly, for example, producing insulin for the global market solely at its facility near Florence. Other major players include Pfizer, Novartis, Sanofi Aventis, Glaxo, Roche and Bayer.

“In many cases, the decisions about who to partner in the pharma industry are made outside the country,” says Massimo Radaelli, an Italian pharma expert. “There are a lot of smaller companies manufacturing and distributing generic drugs, but the key factor in partnering with them is price. Specialty pharma and niche therapeutic treatments are more exciting – the market may be smaller, but the profit is higher. Like most of Europe, Italy has an aging population, and there will be a growing demand for treatments for Alzheimer’s, diabetes, cardio-vascular disease and so on.”

One company that is successfully exploiting its own niche is Kenilworth Products, part of the Clondalkin Group’s Specialist Packaging Division, which has been supplying the Italian pharma industry with labelling and packaging solutions for several years now. “It wouldn’t be our biggest market,” says European sales manager Joe Monteiro. “But Italy would account for 10-15 per cent of our turnover, and we are definitely interested in growing our business there.

“Because most of the large pharma companies stipulate that their managers must have English, there has been no real language barrier. I don’t speak Italian, but I’ve had no language problems growing the business. That said, we do have Italian-speaking staff in our customer support office in Dublin to make things easier for clients when trying to sort out any issues that might arise.

“We don’t have an office in Italy, nor do we employ anybody full-time there, but Enterprise Ireland gave us great support when we started to research the market and helped provide us with an independent agent to set up introductory meetings.

In terms of competing in Italy, Monteiro says: “You need to understand your own competitive advantage very well – you need to give a customer a good reason for choosing you instead of a local supplier.”

He also recommends that exporters entering the Italian market focus on a particular region. “Don’t go for the whole market at once, look at those places where your industry is concentrated; it is much more efficient to do that than to be flying up and down the country. Once you have two or three credible clients, you can then start looking to expand your portfolio elsewhere. In our case, the two regions that we concentrated on were Milan, in the north, and Latina, near Rome.”
The Italian banking industry is one of the oldest in the world, with a tradition reaching back to the height of the power of Florence and beyond. A traditionally conservative industry, it has proven a tough nut to crack for Irish companies. This traditional conservatism, however, has served Italy well of late, with Italian banks emerging from the recent crisis more or less unscathed by the huge losses that have crippled the Irish banking system, says Kevin Buckley, Enterprise Ireland’s Italy manager.

The industry in Italy has gone through an amazing transformation in the last 15 years. Large, internationally active players have emerged from a period of mergers and acquisitions that have transformed the banking landscape in Italy. According to senior management of ABI (Association of Bankers in Italy), the internal workings of the Italian banking sector have also changed dramatically in that time also. English is much more widespread at middle management level and there is a greater willingness to look outside Italy for solutions and inspiration. In fact, UniCredit uses English as the corporate language, even in Italy. This is an illustration of the sea change that has occurred. All of this change brings with it lots of new opportunities for companies with staying power.

“Three banks – Intesa Sanpaolo, UniCredit and Monte dei Paschi di Siena (MPS) – control 80 per cent of the market,” says Claudio Cornini, a consultant with Cornhill & Harvest, currently advising Enterprise Ireland in the banking sector. “Because of this consolidation process, senior management attention wasn’t diverted as much towards some of the fantasy products that have created problems for banks in other countries, and they have money to invest in ICT. But the ICT solutions they are looking for are very much about improving inter-operability rather than customer-related solutions, which they will, no doubt, invest in at a later stage.”

“For Irish companies, the greatest opportunities are in payment systems and in business process solutions, but the key selling point for senior management is solutions that improve compliance. Irish companies need solutions that fire the imaginations of the IT managers, but that also convince senior managers that they are worthwhile – in military terms, you need boots on the ground, plus air cover!”

One recent Irish entrant into the Italian financial services solutions sector is Monex, the Killarney-based company that has become a world leader in dynamic currency conversion (DCC) software, which converts credit card transactions into a cardholder’s chosen currency at the point-of-sale. In return for giving users real-time price transparency, Monex gets a proportion of the credit card company’s revenue – so the bigger the sale, the bigger the income to the Irish company.

Monex has been eyeing the Italian market for almost a decade, says chief executive Frank Murphy, partly because Italy is home to some of the largest banks in Europe, but chiefly because it has a large premium tourist market with well-heeled visitors using their credit cards to purchase luxury accommodation and Italian designer goods. “Our real break into the Italian market came when Enterprise Ireland found us an exceptionally good partner, BEE Consulting, which already has most of the major financial institutions as their clients. BEE will do the ground work for us, instead of us having to set up a local office, which we have done in other countries.”

At present, Monex operates in 26 countries and processes more than 53 million credit card payments, worth in excess of €10.6 billion, a year. Murphy said: “Although Italy is a start-up market for us, we expect it to account for 10-12 per cent of our global turnover in the next two or three years.”

Italy is also a good springboard for entering other financial services markets, says Cornini, because, in the last ten years, Italian banks have opened subsidiaries across eastern Europe: “You will find Italian banks in Poland and Kazakhstan and everywhere in between.”

In financial services, Cornini recommends that Irish companies partner with Italian-based companies like BEE to ‘leverage the existing trust that the partner company has already achieved’.
The majority of the Italian biomedical companies, and nearly half the total workforce, are located in the Mirandola industrial district.

**MEDICAL DEVICES**

In recent years, the Italian healthcare system has changed from a highly centralised system to one in which the regions have increasing responsibility for determining local priorities and managing their financial and human resources to meet these priorities, says Enterprise Ireland’s Vito Garolfalo. This is driving the system to reduce costs to achieve budgetary balance through more efficient practices, including purchasing policies. On the other hand, there is a need to provide adequate healthcare as befits an advanced country with a growing demand for better services.

According to Assobiomedia, the Italian medical devices and diagnostic products association, the total healthcare expenditure in 2008 (public and private) was estimated at around €120 billion. Within the healthcare sector, the medical devices market was estimated by Assobiomedia to be worth €10 billion in 2008.

The Italian medical devices manufacturing base is made up by more than 300 companies, employing over 10,000 people. Some 80 per cent of these companies have a turnover between €5 and €20 million. The largest Italian company is Sorin S.p.A. Other important producers are Gambro, Fresenius, B.Braun, Mallinkrodt-Tyco, Invatec, CID and Belico.

The majority of the Italian biomedical companies, and nearly half the total workforce, are located in the Mirandola industrial district, near Modena in the Emilia region. Since the mid ’60s, this district has specialised in the production of sterile disposable and medical equipment: haemodialysis, cardio surgery and respiratory products account for more than two-thirds of its revenues.

The total turnover of the Mirandola district is estimated at around €700 million in 2008. Approximately 70 per cent of these revenues are generated by subsidiaries of multinational groups. These companies have found that the district provides adequate technology, infrastructure and transport links and highly skilled employees: factors that have been catalysts for growth for the whole region.

After Germany and France, Italy is Europe’s third largest market for medical devices, with biomedical worth €5,000 million, in-vitro diagnostics worth €2,100 million and laboratory products worth €630 million, says Paolo Poggioli, another consultant to EI. While the Italian government is seeking to introduce centralised purchasing, or at least regional purchasing, Poggioli says that practically each hospital buys its supplies independently from one another.

He adds: “There are many, many small medical-device companies who are supplying larger Italian companies. While these companies are technically competent, often their products do not have a ‘CE mark’, so there is an opportunity for Irish companies with CE-marked products.”

Poggioli strongly recommends that Irish firms work with an Italian partner, especially in the south of the country where relationship-building is particularly important. He also says that to work with the SME sector, you need someone fluent in Italian, as many SME managers do not speak English. “I always recommend finding a reliable distributor, because the terms of payment can be very long in Italy – they vary from 90 days in some parts of the north to, maybe, two years in some parts of the south.”

Although this is an accepted challenge in doing business in Italy, interestingly, both Kenilworth and Monex say they haven’t found late-payments a problem. Kenilworth’s Monteiro says to The Market: “We would use the same payment terms in Italy as we would use in Ireland.”

“Ilaly is one of the easiest European markets to work in without being able to speak the local language,” adds Lorraine Eagleton, sales and marketing manager for Galway-based medical-device manufacturer Contech Ireland. “Nearly everyone speaks English but, that said, everyone likes it when sales speak the local language or at least make an effort with a few words.”

Italy is one of Contech Ireland’s largest overseas markets; it currently accounts for 6 per cent of revenue, but this is likely to grow to 10 per cent this year, as the company brings ‘Centurion’ a new stent/balloon protector to market.

“We don’t have an Italian office,” said Eagleton. “If we need one, normally, we can use Enterprise Ireland’s facilities in Milan.

“We have found it very easy to do business in Italy – the Irish and Italians seem to get on particularly well. We share a lot of the same attitudes.”

**ASSISTENZA IN THE ITALIAN MARKET** Enterprise Ireland’s Milan office has key contacts who can help client companies in the following areas:  
– Medical Devices  
– Financial Services & Software  
– Telecoms  
– Systems Integrators  
– Equine  
– Pharma – IT, Engineering, Drug Discovery & Development  
– Tourism

Furthermore, the office is currently expanding its network to include the rail and energy sectors as well as gaining ground with utilities providers and large engineering firms.

[Richard Byrne-Price]

Contact kevin.buckley@enterprise-ireland.com for further information about opportunities in financial services, and talk to Vito Garolfalo@enterprise-ireland.com to find out more about the Italian pharmaceuticals and medical device sectors.
Many companies encounter problems working with distributors. While there is no one single ‘right approach’, there are some basic rules and a new workshop series aims to give Irish companies the tools and templates to build their own solutions.

In theory, it sounds easy: “Having a distributor means they will absorb 100 per cent of the cost and time of marketing and pre-sales activities – I can just sit back and wait for the orders to come in!” In practice, this is just one of the myths that abound in dealing with channel partners – a tricky area, where even the biggest and most experienced companies can trip up – and where many Irish companies end up disappointed with performance after a short period of time.

**SETTING AND AGREEING EXPECTATIONS**

One of the key reasons relationships fail is because companies don’t take the time to agree expectations with their distributor upfront, believes Martin Hurson, European Sales Manager with the crushing and screening equipment manufacturer, Terex Finlay in Germany.

Hurson, who has 20 years experience in this area, managing over 30 distributors across Europe, recently spoke at part-one of a new Enterprise Ireland workshop series, aimed at helping Irish companies targeting the Eurozone to manage their distributor relationships.

His views are supported by findings from international consultants Forrester Research, who identify three key problems in partnership relationships as “failure to define shared market opportunities,” as well as “lack of agreement and investment in GTM (go-to-market) strategies” and “inability to align the whole organisation with a mutual partnering agreement”.

The types of details companies may want to lock-down upfront include sales objectives, pricing, margins, discounts, and payment terms – through to sales reviews, training, joint-marketing plans, and other resource commitments – on both sides.
Having to go back after several months and change key terms such as price or margin can sour relationships.

However, Hurson says that companies can really only agree realistic terms and expectations with their distributor after they have researched their target market.

This means understanding how your potential customers buy, as well as their operating environment, says Jonathan McMillan, a Marketing Advisor with Enterprise Ireland in Düsseldorf. It also requires knowledge of the addressable market size/ potential, segments and structure; who your competitors are, how they sell and how you will compete, at what price points, etc. In all of this, the classical advice applies: don’t confine the exercise to desk research, go visit the market and challenge your own assumptions; lots will change.

SELECTING A DISTRIBUTOR AND SELLING YOURSELF

Having taken the trouble to identify realistic expectations, another vital factor is not to just accept ‘anyone who will take you’ as a distributor. The above research will go some way towards helping to build a profile of your ‘ideal’ partner before assessing, shortlisting and meeting potential distributors.

Part of the difficulty here is that every company is different, so one-size-fits-all solutions simply don’t exist. But Hurson believes that a good distributor will be someone who:

– Knows the market and understands economic conditions in the country/region
– Has an adequate sales force in terms of size and experience
– Is financially stable, trustworthy and ethically sound
– Has knowledge of importing products – preferably your type of product
– Has good communication skills
– Can cover the territory in question
– Can hold stock/holds adequate stock
– Has technical capabilities
– Handles complementary or related products
– Can provide a marketing plan
– Has experience in dealing with foreign companies

To attract a distributor of this calibre, McMillan advises: “be prepared to ‘sell’ your company” in other words, explain why the distributor should be interested in you and want to carry your products. In channel-management language, this means developing a partner value proposition – i.e. a clearly defined set of messages developed to attract the right partners with the right message at the right time. Typically, this could consist of:

– Defining the market opportunity for the partner
– Aligning your messages to the partner’s strategic objectives
– Providing evidence that your represent a “low-risk engagement”
– Outlining why the partnership is going to work

ONGOING MANAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION

Even after you’ve signed your contract and agreed what needs to be done by both sides, it’s still, unfortunately, not time to sit back and smell the roses. Effective relationships with distributors require ongoing management and motivation.

Again each company’s solution will be unique, but Martin Hurson offers the following pointers for keeping a good distributor motivated:

– Reply to all distributor correspondence immediately – don’t have them waiting…. (calls/emails)
– Visit the distributor – personally and not just to collect orders
– and invite him/her to your office/factory/facility.
– Share advertising/promotion costs
– Modify your product to suit their market specifics
– Keep the distributor up-to-date about happenings within your company – products; people; changes – and develop the distributor’s identity within your company
– Include them in future developments (new projects etc…) and publicise recognition in your company newsletter
– Hold regional distributor conferences
– Do a training session at their facility
– Offer incentives for increased sales and reward good performances with plaques/ certs, etc

Essentially, working with a distributor, like any partnership, means that there is ‘get and give’ and on both sides. Enterprise Ireland recently conducted a survey among a group of European distributors whose partnerships with Irish companies had broken down. Many of the distributors felt that the exporting company was to blame for the breakdown because there was no information forthcoming from them; no contact was made by them; no training was provided; no marketing collateral was given and even because their respective websites were not kept up to date. These findings underline the fact that communications and teamwork are the lifeblood of successful business relationships. They wither in their absence.
Companies can really only agree realistic terms and expectations with their distributor after they have researched their target market.

Enterprise Ireland is currently running a new programme of workshops to help client companies get their distributor(s) in eurozone markets right first time. It also aims to help where unsatisfactory distributor arrangements already exist – either to rebuild those relationships or disengage and find new partners.

- The first workshop in the series, held this March, focused on the often under-estimated but critical phase of research into the target market as well as recruiting and activating the distributor.
- The next step involved a market validation visit. Over the two months following the first workshop, each client had the opportunity to use best practice approaches to conduct their target customer and market research. Then a second workshop, in May, focused on using the market intelligence and a ‘long list’ of potential partners gathered to review best-fit partner criteria to analyse and score prospective distributors; define a joint partner value proposition and negotiate the deal.

According to Angela Byrne, Senior Advisor with Enterprise Ireland's Client Management Development programmes, 20 companies have engaged with this programme across the first two workshops and now are being assisted in the implementation of the proposed tools and techniques by EI’s Eurozone market advisory teams.

- Once terms have been successfully negotiated, it is envisaged that companies will attend a third workshop with their new distributor in September. Workshop three will be focused on best practice sales partnerships, setting expectations for both sides of the partnership, agreeing performance measures, training and support planning, regularity of communication, sales pipeline and capturing market intelligence.

For further information, email: angela.byrne@enterprise-ireland.com or contact Alice Guinan on 01 727 2567, email alice.guinan@enterprise-ireland.com
As deals go, it might not rank with selling ice in the Antarctic or sand in the Sahara but Cibenix’s recent €2 million contract with Bharti Airtel still counts as a coup. Airtel’s home market of India is one of the primary global centres for low-cost, high-quality software development and the country’s biggest mobile provider could have had its pick of indigenous firms to build the software it needed. Instead, it chose a 25-man Dublin-based firm to provide a strategic piece of technology.

The significance of the deal is not lost on Cibenix chief executive Mike Brady, but his feeling is “an enormous sense of relief” at landing a deal that took 18 months to complete. The key to doing business in India is what was described to me as the ice cream effect. “It should be a simple transaction: ‘Here’s your ice cream’, but in India they ask you to explain the chemical composition of the ice cream. They want to know everything,” says Brady. He believes this may be related to India’s strong outsourcing business culture, where the success of such deals often lies in the fine details of a contract.

NEGOTIATIONS

The lengthy duration of contract negotiations were unusual and probably unique to Airtel, he believes. “The company are masters of outsourcing – they more or less wrote the book on it.” During the negotiations, Cibenix worked with three different systems integration firms and Infosys was the one that finally won the contract to provide the Dublin firm’s software.

Unsurprisingly, Brady says good partner management is an essential part of doing business in India. “The partner was almost as important as the Cibenix product and technology,” he says. The technology, in this case, is called on-device services (ODS) software. It runs directly on mobile phones, providing users with a portal for accessing services. Airtel is using the ODS to promote its music, apps and internet access services.

It’s a strategic technology for Airtel, because it offers the company the chance to gain extra revenue from customers. “Mobile operators are stuck between internet brands and device vendors. They are terrified of becoming a ‘bit pipe’ just like a broadband provider. Customers are asking what value is the operator adding, and that’s where we become strategic. They need to have a presence on the device, which is what we deliver,” Brady explains.

In India’s mobile market, people buy a phone in one shop and then visit another to buy the SIM card. Airtel provides the latter, and it gave Cibenix a list of the top 200 phones on its network. Of that number, Cibenix’s ODS could run on 160. This gave the Dublin company a vital edge. “Writing software for phones is bloody hard,” says Brady. “In India, the competition on the vendor side is so tough. Whatever the customer wants, they give it to him.”

Cibenix deliberately pursued a strategy aimed at
gaining support for the project at the level where it would be implemented, rather than just concentrating on winning over Airtel’s senior management. “We did the reverse of what you’re supposed to do – I put in all my effort at the ground level, although I also met the CFO, CTO and CMO during the talks,” says Brady. “We’re a technical organisation. Of our 25 people, there are only two of us who sell part-time. When we come to a customer, we can talk to them at all levels. That’s the benefit of being a small, focused company.”

In the early talks, Cibenix was keen to establish its credentials as a provider that could meet the demands of very large operators. Brady recalls a meeting with the chief technology officer’s team. “Someone hurled the question at me: ‘Can your software scale?’ I feigned insult and said we had deals with the likes of Vodafone in the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy, with more than 15 million customers. The guy just smiled at me and said: ‘In India, we don’t call that scale’.”

Airtel boasts more than 120 million customers and it is adding around three million more every month. The company is currently ranked as the third largest operator anywhere in the world. According to Brady, Cibenix made one adjustment to the ODS database to accommodate that extra scale but otherwise the product sold to Airtel was unchanged.

**REVENUE MODEL**

The Cibenix-Airtel deal is not based on a revenue-sharing model, whereby the operator pays no upfront fee and the software provider earns a percentage of the income generated through its product. This is unusual in India, says Brady, but it works to Cibenix’s advantage. The Dublin company received a significant upfront project fee and the overall value is expected to be more than €2 million over two years. The final amount could be higher still depending on how many customers use the on-device software. Brady says this is the type of deal he will try to negotiate with other firms, because upfront product licence fees are better suited to meet the company’s cash-flow requirements.

Airtel’s size is what makes Brady believe the deal was worth it – even though he isn’t sure he would have the stomach for such a drawn-out process again. Like many Irish software companies, over the years Cibenix has had to supplement income from product licensing with professional services, which offer the chance to make some recurring revenue. In a business where partners are key, it’s better for a company not to get involved in both, Brady says. “If you go to the market with partners, you’ve got to be prepared to give up your services work,” he reasons.

There will be other deals in Asia – of that Brady is certain. Airtel’s high profile has given Cibenix added credibility there, and, at press time, the Dublin firm was in the latter stages of negotiations with another Indian mobile provider. And this time, it knows all about the ice cream effect.
It’s little surprise that the world’s exporters are enthusiastic about Asia. Mainly, thanks to heavy stimulus spending by China, the region’s exports and employment are largely back to levels seen before the global recession. World Bank data shows GDP growth in developing East Asia rising to 8.7 percent in 2010, up from the 7.0 per cent rate recorded for 2009. Across the region exporters like Korea recovered well from an initial dip in economic growth, thanks to strong exports to China, whose US$580 billion stimulus package announced in 2009 continues to drive domestic growth. With GDP growth in 2010 predicted to be in excess of 10 per cent, it’s not surprising that Irish firms are also capitalising on Chinese prosperity.

**China** Earnings in China of indigenous Irish firms climbed 35 per cent in 2009, explains Alan Buckley, China director at Enterprise Ireland. He points to success for Irish firms in education, financial services and telecommunications. The Irish corporate footprint in the world’s largest developing economy has grown from 114 firms with a permanent presence (albeit sometimes a simple one-man operation) in China, compared to 40 companies five years ago.

Among the latter, dotMobi, whose novel systems for bundling internet domain names with mobile phone keywords have proven a hit in China, where mobile marketing is popular, says dotMobi spokesman Vance Hadderel. The Dublin-based firm’s partnership with local mobile marketing specialist Huarui is significant given that more than 50 per cent of China’s 1.3 billion people use mobile phones. “These figures will increase,” says Hadderel.

Other firms exploiting a thriving Chinese telecoms market include Kerry-based Altobridge, which entered China through its acquisition of ADC Mobile Solutions marketing transport software from its new Asia Pacific headquarters in the northern Chinese city of Dalian. The firm will distribute Avego’s Shared Transport and Futurefleet solutions across Asia, where rapid urbanisation demands innovative traffic solutions. Avego is one of two nimble Cork-based firms with solutions for two of Asia’s most pressing issues: transport and the environment. Cork-based firm Biotector is marketing its BioTector On-Line Analysers, which gauge water quality, through agents in seven different countries.

**Asia-Wide** Irish firms enjoying Asia-wide momentum include financial services firm Norkom, which has worked hard to turn global recognition for its software solutions to prevent money laundering into a client base in China. The firm’s deals with Australia’s ANZ Bank and Standard Chartered have given Norkom valuable access to China given both banks’ ongoing expansion across Asia, but the firm is keen to supply mainland Chinese banks, among the world’s largest in market capitalisation terms.

Also in finance, Killarney-based currency exchange specialist Monex has been using a blue-chip European client list to generate business among increasingly internationalised Asian corporations. Aside from servicing the Hong Kong branches of the Bank of China, a top-four financial institution in China, the firm also counts the continent’s leading low-fares airline and hotel chain, Air Asia and Shangri-La Hotels as clients.

Irish investors targeting Asia are, like counterparts elsewhere, finding opportunities in the region’s emerging markets. While growth has been defined and driven by the rise of China, the region’s traditional economic powerhouse, Japan, remains a “huge economy,” but given years of stagnant growth, it’s lately being bypassed for more growth-likely markets like China, explains Matthew Connolly, co-founder of Tokyo-based Eire Systems. “Foreign firms have realised that Japan is not such a big growth opportunity.”

Membership of a local Irish Chamber of Commerce is heavily weighted by Japanese
firms with investments in Ireland, explains Connolly, whose firm has traditionally employed Irish graduates to service the IT needs of multinationals across Asia, some at Eire’s newer offices in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore.

While Japan offers stability, it struggles to compete with comparatively low-tax Hong Kong and Singapore on costs. Hence Irish firms are choosing to work out of the latter locations. Head of the local Irish Chamber of Commerce, McDonald sees “a real sense of growth in the Irish business community in Singapore.”

SOUTH-EASTER ASIA
Singapore, home to the regional headquarters of Norkom and Irish e-learning firm Intuition, is a good base for a rapidly developing South-East Asian market. Thailand and Vietnam have both stimulus-spent their way out of recession. Vietnam’s sizeable population of mobile users enticed Cork-based software developer Glandore Systems to become the first Irish firm with a full-time presence in Vietnam when it opened a software centre in Saigon on St Patrick’s Day this year.

Saigon’s attractions are understandable. While Vietnam will likely post 6.5 per cent GDP growth for the year, a battering from falling exports in the recent recession is prompting the country to move away from a dependency on export-oriented manufacturing and infrastructure projects, explains Irishman Brian O’Reilly, manager of Continuing and Executive Education at the Saigon campus of RMIT International University Vietnam.

A quest by Vietnam for more value-added businesses could mean more opportunities for Irish business. ICT and software topped the agenda at the second annual Vietnam Ireland Business Forum, held in April under the auspices of VICC and Enterprise Ireland. Held in Saigon, the country’s financial capital, the forum drew ten Irish firms seeking local distributors.

Among them was Digitech 3D (D3D), a Dublin firm using cutting edge software and mobile devices in geo surveying and mapping.

There’s been no firm deal done aside from the Glandore opening yet, but O’Reilly is confident that more Irish firms will find opportunities here. He also points to opportunities for Ireland in a strong local demand for education services.

AUSTRALIA
Also in the Asia Pacific region, the ninth-placed destination for Irish exports, Australia signed for almost €15m worth of business with Enterprise Ireland client companies during a recent Irish trade mission to the country.

Australia has been receptive to Irish firms offering software, financial services and telecoms, says Paul Burfield, local Enterprise Ireland representative. Having largely escaped the recession, Australia is seeing particularly strong growth in its services sector, explains Burfield. “We are not going anywhere but up.”

Among the firms announcing deals were Dublin company Fineos, which secured new contracts for its claims processing software platform. Meanwhile, in the cleantech business, Folamh, the Dublin-based recycling company, announced a €3.5m deal with Sony Australia to reduce the number of mobile handsets that end up in landfill.

Asia’s big event of 2010, the Shanghai Expo, has given a chance to Irish animation firms to show their wares: among those taking part in a showcase at the Irish pavilion is Oscar-nominated Brown Bag Films.

Irish businesses’ visibility will also be helped by a June visit to China by President McAleese. A full-scale Irish trade mission led by the Taoiseach is expected in the Autumn.

Asian demand has shored up order books for Western companies but the region is not without complications, none less than in China, where recent innovation policy promoting local products over imports has worried foreign business. Yet no region matches Asia for growth potential.

Good news for Irish businesses seeking contacts, the Government has grant-aided the compilation of a directory of Irish businesses and networks in Asia. Set for launch at the October meeting of the Asia Pacific Irish Business Forum in Hong Kong, the publication will be invaluable, suggests Connolly. “Contacts and networks are the most vital element for success in Asia.”
Client Knowledge Services

Market intelligence

Enterprise Ireland’s Information Centre hosts Ireland’s most comprehensive collection of business information and is staffed by specialists who can aid quick and effective searches. The team can help clients of Enterprise Ireland find information on markets, products, companies, technical standards and management.

The centre subscribes to a wide range of databases, including
- Datamonitor Profiles
- Espicom
- Frost & Sullivan
- Mintel

Here is just a sample of the types of research and reports to which the centre has access.

ICT/SOFTWARE

The Social Networking Market Opportunity: Quantifying market reach, scale and monetization across the value chain, 2010-15
*Business Insights*
April 2010
The online social networking market is emerging from an immature period of competitive dislocation to one of market maturity, in which clear user needs and platform value propositions have emerged, paving the way for incumbency, scalability and successful monetisation. This report qualifies and quantifies the commercial opportunities that are available and will emerge in the near term in online social networking for brand owners, advertisers, content providers, apps developers, hardware and software providers, as well as the social networking platforms themselves and their user communities.

The Future of Digital Home Entertainment: Key trends and drivers shaping devices, content and services
*Business Insights*
April 2010
This report analyses the trends, technologies and business models of the enablers and providers of digital content in the home. Furthermore, it defines six ‘meta-themes’ that can be used as a template for defining and considering the future shape and growth of the digital home entertainment market, which are then applied to each of three main digital home entertainment markets: TV and video; music and audio content and gaming.

The Future of Digital Gambling: The impact of regulation, the rise of online services and the evolving competitive environment
*Business Insights*
March 2010
This report examines developments across the rapidly evolving digital gambling sector. It underlines the challenges facing companies operating across this space, considers the potential opportunities available, provides market-sizing and forecasting by sector and geography, and provides actionable insight with regards to how to best approach this fast-changing market.

Real-World Insights Into SaaS Implementation Success: Satisfied SaaS Buyers Share Their Do’s And Don’ts
*Forrester*
May 2010
Forrester recently spoke with several satisfied SaaS clients about their deployments in order to get details about the selection process, their reasons for moving to the cloud, and the successes and challenges they’ve faced thus far. These cases offer actionable advice for sourcing and vendor management (SVM) professionals who are deciding whether SaaS makes sense for their solution needs and wondering how to make SaaS deployments successful.

UK Plastic Cards: Outlook to 2011
*Datamonitor*
May 2010
This report provides an up-to-date assessment of the difficulties affecting the UK plastic cards market as a result of the economic downturn, and provides an in-depth analysis of likely future trends, and potential strategies for success.
**The Future of High-Potency Sweeteners: Natural sweeteners innovations, and developments in sweetness potentiators**

*Business Insights*

April 2010

Recent regulatory approvals for the stevia-derived sweetener rebaudioside A (reb-A) and an extract of the Chinese fruit luo han guo have provided opportunities to manufacture products that can be marketed on a ‘naturally sweetened’ platform. These developments are driving much of the innovation in new product development in countries where approvals have been granted. Future development of other natural sweeteners, such as monatin, and innovative effective sweet taste enhancers will continue to shape new product development to ensure that consumer demands for naturally sweetened products are met.

**Economic and Social Impact of the 2010 World Cup, UK**

*Mintel*

April 2010

This report examines viewing and spending preferences in some detail, as well as assessing attitudes towards the World Cup and how these impact on consumer behaviour around the competition. It also compares consumers’ views of the World Cup with their opinions of London’s hosting of the 2012 Olympic Games and tests the hypothesis that “Britons’ love of sport and interest in following major events means the UK’s self-styled ‘golden decade of sport’, in which the country will host the Olympic and Commonwealth Games, Rugby World Cup and possibly the football World Cup, will be as beneficial to the health of its economy as its people.”

**European Retail Briefing**

*Mintel*

April 2010

European Retail Briefing is a monthly briefing providing news and analysis that includes company results, store openings, cross-border moves, M&A activities, executive changes and property developments. The month’s retail news is further analysed sector-by-sector.

**Western European Online Retail Forecast 09-2014**

*Forrester*

March 2010

Online retail sales in western Europe reached €68 billion in 2009 and are projected to grow to €114 billion by 2014. The European online retail market, which includes the EU-17, will increase at a growth rate of 11 percent over the five-year forecast period. These business-to-consumer (B2C) online sales are continuing to rise at this double-digit growth rate because most western European countries’ online retail sales are still relatively immature. Meanwhile, those that are more mature like the UK are seeing continued growth due to the strong online value proposition. Europeans spent an annual average of €483 per person in 2009, and this is forecast to grow to €601 in 2014.

**Innovations in Ready Meals: Market drivers, NPD and alternative sales channels**

*Business Insights*

May 2010

This report analyses market data on the value growth of the ready-meals market, with the aim of enabling manufacturers to identify the emerging trends and growth opportunities. It analyses innovation and new product development by region and category and illustrates emerging market trends.

**Opportunities in Global Medical Devices & Diagnostics**

*Health Research International*

April 2010

The global medical device and diagnostics industry experienced negligible growth in 2009 as the worldwide economic downturn produced cutbacks in hospital capital budgets. Uncertainty regarding changes in the US healthcare system, coupled with continued severe cost constraints on global health care systems in general, have sustained this trend into early 2010. Although demographics and the growing prevalence of age-related diseases would appear to support resumed market growth, device suppliers are understandably concerned about the timing and magnitude of market recovery. This report offers expert analysis of the critical trends and developments impacting sales through 2014, providing individual market, geographic and competitive assessments for 20 major technology segments

**US Point of Care Testing Markets**

*Frost & Sullivan*

March 2010

This research analyses the market for point-of-care testing within the United States. The market is divided into 13 segments and covers testing performed by healthcare professionals in the physician office lab, hospital, clinics and patient self-testing environments. Each segment covers the market overview, competitive structure, market share analysis, revenue forecasts and market trends. It also explores key challenges and strategies for the total market.

**Biomarkers in Late Stage Clinical Trials: Applications, opportunities and activities of leading players**

*Business Insights*

April 2010

Biomarkers reduce the attrition rate of late stage clinical trials by assessing drug potential in terms of efficacy and toxicity at the early stages of the clinical development. Thus, they significantly increase productivity, lower the cost and duration of the clinical trial and help researchers complete the drug development process at a faster pace. This report reviews various biomarker technologies and therapy area applications. Market drivers and restraints are viewed in the context of biomarker activity of leading innovator companies as well as contract research organisations.

**Global Small Wind (50-350kW) Power Market Analysis and Forecasts to 2015.**

*Global Data*

February 2010

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the global small wind power market, with information on key current and upcoming plants and major companies in the 50-350kW power sector, with forecasts up to 2015. It includes analysis of key regions, such as the Americas, Europe, and Asia, and key countries in these regions such as the US, the UK, Spain and Italy. It also explores producers’ share and geographic distribution of generation and installed capacity and provides historical and forecast statistics, along with growth estimates for production from medium wind power generation from 2001 to 2015.
Trade regulations, information and negotiations

Enterprise Ireland’s trade regulation update service is now available at www.enterprise-ireland.com/export regulations.

Easier international arbitration as a result of new act

The Arbitration Act 2010 will come into force in Ireland on June 8, 2010. In applying the UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) Model Law, the act will align Ireland’s existing arbitration rules and procedures with international standards. According to the Irish law firm William Fry, the act is intended to create a more streamlined, cost-effective and user-friendly arbitral system and should present a genuine alternative to litigation for domestic and international parties alike. For further information on the new provisions, see the ‘Latest news’ section on the company’s website at http://tinyurl.com/258ofg2

US FDA takes steps to increase safety of foods during transport

The US Food and Drug Administration is asking commercial food transporters to follow new guidance, which the agency is issuing to reduce the chances of physical, chemical, biological and other risks during transportation of foods while the agency reviews current food safety transportation regulations.

“Our aim is to look at every component of the system to assess hazards, and to take science-based action, where appropriate, to maximise the safety of our food from farms all the way to consumers’ tables,” said FDA’s associate commissioner for food protection, Jeff Farrar. “Although contamination of food products during commercial transport is relatively infrequent, the potential harm can be widespread and serious.”

EU launches major new trade relationship with Latin America

The EU is stepping up its economic engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean through a range of trade deals tabled at the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean Summit in Madrid on May 18. Leaders have decide to re-launch negotiations for an EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement, to give political approval to the conclusion of a comprehensive trade agreement between the EU, Peru and Colombia and to conclude negotiations between the EU and Central America.

Most significant is the decision to re-launch the negotiations for a EU-Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) trade agreement, following a breakdown in 2004. In 2009, EU-Mercosur trade represented nearly as much as EU trade with the rest of Latin America taken together.

The EU is Mercosur’s first market for its agricultural exports, accounting for 19.8 per cent of total EU agricultural imports in 2009. EU goods exports to Mercosur focus largely on industrial products including machinery, transport equipment and chemicals.

Admitting negotiations will be challenging, the EU is to strive for full liberalisation for a very large part of trade in goods and concessions for all major industrial sectors. It will also aim at major liberalisation of service sectors. Other EU demands will relate to public procurement, intellectual property, geographical indications and provisions on sustainable development.
Ireland implements new rules for challenge to public contracts

Ireland has now implemented the EU Remedies Directive, which gives greater protection to parties seeking to challenge the award of public contracts, but significantly reduces the time limit within which they may do so. The new rules apply to all decisions taken from March 25, 2010, regardless of when the procurement process commenced. One source of information on the new rules, which had originally been due to be implemented into Irish law by December 20, 2009, is the Matheson Ormsby Prentice website; see http://tinyurl.com/2covd9

New fish labelling rules for Britain and the North

New rules for fish labelling have come into force for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Fish Labelling Regulations 2010 replace the previous regulations, add new commercial designations (the names of fish) for species of fish that have recently come onto the market and give extra options for some others that were already listed. The purpose is to ensure that fish are labelled correctly and consistently at the point of sale, so that purchasers know exactly what they are buying, whether it was caught at sea, in inland waters or was farmed and, if caught at sea, in what sea area.

Check the latest EU VAT rates online

The VAT rates applicable in the EU Member States as of May 1, 2010, are now available at the Europa Taxation and Customs Resources website: http://tinyurl.com/2sj4hc

New requirements for Indian livestock product imports

All imports into India containing animal and/or dairy products must, with immediate effect, be covered by an Animal Quarantine clearance certificate issued by a duly authorised officer in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. See www.infodriveindia.com

New electronic system to monitor the movement of excise goods

On April 1, 2010, a new electronic system for monitoring and controlling the movement of excise goods (alcohol, tobacco and energy products) within the EU became operational. The Excise Movement and Control System (EMCS) will make intra-Community trade in excise goods cheaper and simpler for operators, while also making it quicker and easier for Member States to tackle excise fraud. Designed to replace the current paper-based system, the EMCS is a computerised structure for recording in real-time the movement of products for which excise duties have still to be paid. Member States’ authorities and economic operators can join the system progressively until January 1, 2011, after which the EMCS will be fully applied throughout Europe.

EU to issue duties on more commodities imported from US

The European Union (EU) has begun charging 15 per cent in additional import duties on more US products, as of May 1, 2010. In addition to the original products, which include footwear, furniture made of plastics, mobile homes, paper products of different types, pens, and textile products, the additions expand into wearing apparel, clothing accessories and prefabricated buildings. The products that will be subject to the additional 15 per cent import duty are listed by their eight-digit product classification codes in Annex I to Commission Regulation (EU) No. 305/2010.

WTO questions Canada over local-content requirements in Ontario’s energy programme

At a meeting of the World Trade Organisation’s (WTO’s) Council for Trade in Goods this May, Japan expressed concern over what it said were local-content requirements in a renewable-energy programme in Canada’s province of Ontario. It asked Canada to explain the consistency of the requirements with various WTO agreements, including the GATT 1994 provision on equal treatment for imports, and the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures. The European Union and the United States also expressed interest on this matter. Canada said that its trade officials are reviewing the programme, and that Japan’s questions had been forwarded to Ontario.

WTO panel to examine US complaint on Philippine taxes on spirits

At its meeting on April 20, 2010, the WTO Dispute Settlement Body agreed to refer the US complaint on Philippine taxes on spirits to the panel, which is examining a similar complaint by the EU. The US said spirits distilled in the Philippines were taxed at a low rate, while other distilled spirits were taxed at rates from approximately 10 to 40 times higher.

FDA to issue new requirements for medical device information

The US Food and Drug Administration is to begin implementing a requirement that device manufacturers provide readily available information in certain premarket applications on paediatric patients who suffer from the disease or condition that the device is intended to treat, diagnose, or cure, even if the device is intended for adult use. The requirements, contained in the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007, are also aimed at improving the agency’s ability to track the number of approved devices for which there is a paediatric subpopulation who could benefit and the number of approved devices labelled for use in paediatric patients. See http://tinyurl.com/296ntap
In an era when corporate responsibility is increasingly under the spotlight Lucille Redmond highlights two books that argue corruption isn’t inevitable and look at how to make honesty the best policy.

ETHICS AND PROFIT

It was the worst of times in Colombia. The country was famous for three things: corruption, murder and drugs. The epicentre of horror was Bogota - the third highest city in South America in altitude, but in drug terms this was the highest in the world. Cocaine ran the place.

Bogota was way out of control. Like a dealer’s house, the city was chaos. Litter and filth strewed the streets, drivers and pedestrians vied for road space, and citizens routinely slipped bribes to underpaid police.

Then in 1995, university dean Antanas Mockus was elected mayor of Bogota. A mathematician and a philosopher, he was the son of Lithuanians who emigrated for a better life.

In *Economic Gangsters*, Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel tell his story. Is it better to work on the square, or through bribes and influence - whether you’re a company or a country, they ask. Corruption’s effect on countries is little different from its effect on companies - it is the macro version of what happens when a company goes wrong.

Colombia had a huge water problem. The only solution was a radical cut in water use, in the shower and in cooking. Mayor Mockus went on TV, filmed in his shower, soaping himself up - and then turning off the shower and asking everyone to save water. It worked: water usage dropped 40 per cent. Four thousand community groups were formed on the mayor’s suggestion.

Mockus took to the streets dressed as ‘Supercitizen’. He hired 420 mimes to mock people who broke traffic laws, and everyone laughed - but they stopped bribing cops and started driving carefully. He issued 350,000 thumbs-up or thumbs-down signs for people to use to approve or disapprove of street behaviour.

Bogota’s murder rate, once an unenviable world record, plunged by 70 per cent. Most startling, he requested that citizens would pay a voluntary 10 per cent extra tax - and 60,000 people did so. It worked because Mockus was known for his honesty. If people had doubted him, even though his eccentric schemes worked, they might have put the success down to *usce fao thalamh* or behind-the-scenes deals. But everyone knew Mockus was straight up.

Reputation is central. But not only does your, and your country’s, reputation affect how others deal with you - it may also influence your own behaviour. Another of Fisman and Miguel’s studies involves the traffic fines levied on diplomats in New York. They found that diplomats from countries with little corruption paid their fines, while those from corrupt countries invoked ‘diplomatic immunity’.

The authors also discussed an experiment to find out what makes road builders honest. The study used a ‘sting’ trying out community involvement, auditing and other methods of oversight. The roads built were examined for diluted materials and shoddy practices. Auditing is what worked, it turned out, rather than the community involvement that NGOs love.

Fisman and Miguel found an absolute link between corruption and poverty. It’s an old saw that crime doesn’t pay; they discovered that this is true for countries as well as for businesses: corrupt countries are poor, and fail to climb out of poverty.

Their fascinating book is full of teasing nuggets of information. Perhaps the most memorable is this: “Al Capone is remembered as a gangster and a brutal, cold-blooded killer. It is perhaps less widely known that Capone was also an accountant for a Baltimore construction firm before joining and eventually leading Chicago’s North Side Gang.” The early pages of Anna Bernasek’s *The Economics of Integrity* asks ‘if honesty is profitable, how do you make it the norm for companies?’

“There’s a tendency to throw up our hands when it comes to integrity and appear sceptical that it can, in fact, be encouraged,” writes Bernasek. “The truth is that we have the tools right under our nose, and by understanding the DNA of integrity, we can multiply it.”

She rejects the conventional approach (“catch the bad guys”), and says what works is to change the situation so the understanding is “do right and you’ll benefit”. To examine how this works, Bernasek looks at a succession of businesses where honesty has proved the best policy — the American milk industry, the now universal ATMs that we trust with our money, and multinational brands like Coca-Cola and LL Bean, where the companies’ integrity is key to their sales.

Perhaps the most interesting case is the first – the milk business. Bernasek points out that milk, today an icon of purity and trustworthiness, was once known as “white poison” for the bacteria it harboured, often causing diseases fatal to children. “Illness from milk made up one quarter of all illnesses caused by contaminated food or water.”
at the beginning of the 20th century, she writes. “Today that number is less than 1 per cent.”

Bernasek peels back the layers of trust between farmer and milk-drinker and finds seven — from the farmer who maintains healthy cattle and clean milk, through drivers, to the plant where the milk is pasteurised and homogenised, to the distributor, shop and purchaser. “It’s not just milk that depends on relationships of trust,” she writes. “Every aspect of modern life does too.”

Integrity, according to Bernasek, is a set of relationships, rather than a personal value. “The first [component] could be described as trustworthiness — that someone is following the rules, telling the truth and being careful on the job. The second is trust — believing the seller’s trustworthiness.”

In one example, she tracks eBay’s growth, showing how a bulletin board for buyers and sellers gradually instituted a series of checks and balances to enforce honesty. At first, eBay used a feedback system to give a measure of sellers’ trustworthiness. “The feedback system effectively brought everything out into the open. Users couldn’t hide bad behaviour, and good behaviour was rewarded.” But soon sellers learned how to fiddle the system, getting others to leave good feedback, and using bad feedback against competitors. eBay then tied feedback into transactions — and the system worked well again.

Amazon used a similar system in asking customers to rate reviews for helpfulness. An author’s self-review — “Stupendous! I have never read such wondrous prose!” — is no longer possible, because any review is subject to rating by readers who have themselves loved (or hated) a book.

In the last chapter of the latest edition, Bernasek looks at the current crisis and its solutions. “The aftermath of a crisis provides a unique occasion to re-imagine the details of the financial system and put the economy on a firm footing,” she writes optimistically. Her solutions are varied but linked: open financial reporting by banks, funds, insurers and individuals with high net-worth; bringing players such as hedge funds under the scrutiny of regulators.

She calls for absolute and stringent regulation of banks, with open access to regulators, and supervisory authorities assigning a rating to the commercial banks in relation to their capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings, liquidity and sensitivity to market risk. The future will show whether her cure is the medicine chosen to heal the world’s sick banks.

Reputation is central. But not only does your, and your country’s, reputation affect how others deal with you — it may also influence your own behaviour.

_Economic Gangsters_ by Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel, published by Princeton University Press

_The Economics of Integrity_ by Anna Bernasek, published by HarperStudio
Travel News

Business travellers get smart

Eoghan Corry reports

There’s a scene in the film Up in the Air when George Clooney’s character instructs his young travelling companion on how she should pass through airport security. He eyes up the security queues and tells her not to join the queue with the carry cot, commenting he has never seen one that takes less than 25 minutes to dismantle. It sums up the dilemma of the business traveller. There are avoidance strategies which we all have learned that we use to get to that important business meeting. They include car park strategy and how to use the right-hand channels in Dublin airport during the early morning rush hour, from 6am to 9am. Sometimes educating ourselves has been painful, the result of mistakes and miscalculations, but word-of-mouth has meant that the up-in-the-air community is good at sharing its collective wisdom.

Avoiding security queues is the start of a complex process. You learn to avoid airports, such as Chicago O’Hare (or ORD, as Clooney and other frequent fliers will refer to it) during ice storm season, going through Atlanta instead. You learn to avoid days of the week or times of the year, Thanksgiving in the USA, mid-term in England, August in France. You learn to play connection times at big airports against each other, Amsterdam or Copenhagen rather than Heathrow or Charles de Gaulle.

You make compromises and take risks. Everyone knows how convenient the Cityjet service to London City Airport is, but that must be balanced off against the prospects of fog on a November morning. Many a businessperson has booked several Ryanair flights out of Stansted on the same day as his London City departure to make sure he gets home.

Over recent months, there was an additional factor to consider: Icelandia’s Ashes. Nobody would run a self-respecting business the way that Europe ran its airspace during the recent ash crisis, before or during the crisis. The 27 different air traffic control systems reacted in different ways to the crisis. There was no threshold when the cloud first emerged, nothing to determine a safe level of flying.

When a threshold was eventually introduced – at the end of a six-day shutdown – it proved too low. Then the weather charts proved too inaccurate for anyone to make a coherent decision about events.

Almost unanimously, airlines all called for reform to the system of VAAC forecasts, nine different Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres around the planet issuing advice. One English tabloid ran the headline: The Ash Cloud That Didn’t Exist.

The threshold was subsequently doubled in mid-May, even before this had happened, airlines said it should be trebled.

In theory, all airlines were required to accommodate passengers and feed them, but the regulations are so loose and untested that nobody is sure how this one will end. To help clarify the situation, the National Consumer Agency has set out travellers’ rights and entitlements. See www.consumerconnect.ie or visit the European consumer centre website at www.eccireland.ie.

New website allows UK rail tickets to be bought online from Ireland

MyTrainTicket.com is a new website that sells train tickets for all UK train companies to all National Rail destinations, London Underground stations and over 275 Plusbus locations. The company also promises to help users find the best fare and the best route for the journey they need to make, claiming that travellers can save as much as 80 per cent compared to buying at the station on the day of travel.

While the site will only deliver tickets to UK addresses, Irish users can use the ‘Ticket on Departure’ option.
Liquids to be allowed back onboard

Good news for travellers who like to take their own cosmetics and drinks onboard. The EU has announced a clear deadline of April 2013 for the lifting of restrictions of liquids in cabin baggage. By this date, all EU airports must have new screening equipment so that screened liquids can be allowed in carry-on luggage.

In the meantime, from April 29, 2011 at the latest, duty-free liquids purchased at third country airports or onboard third country airlines and carried in tamper evident bags will be allowed as cabin baggage and will be screened. Up to now, only duty-free bags from selected countries were allowed.

Google launches mobile point-and-click translation tool

Can’t decipher what’s on a foreign menu? Try Goggling it. The newest version of mobile application Google Goggles (image recognition technology) enables automatic text translation using the phone’s camera. From translating street signs to navigating foreign menus, people can now use their Android mobile devices for easy on-the-spot translation using the technology of Google Goggles plus the engine behind Google Translate.

Here’s how it works:
– Download Google Goggles from the Android Marketplace
– Point your phone at a word or phrase. Use the region of interest button to draw a box around specific words
– Press the shutter button
– Goggles will recognise the text, and give you the option to translate
– Press the translation button to select the source and destination language.

Current languages supported include English, French, Italian, German and Spanish.

Google Goggles v1.1 also features a larger database of recognised objects and the ability to initiate visual searches using images in your phone’s gallery. Point your phone at a building that takes you eye in Paris or Rome, for example, and be connected to search results telling you all about it.

In brief:

Sick of cramped legs? Airline review website Seatplans.com promises to help users ‘find the best seat on the plane’. See www.seatplans.com

Bmi has unveiled a refurbished lounge at Heathrow T1 for passengers travelling within the UK and Ireland.

Aer Arann’s Kerry-Manchester service has officially re-launched and the airline has increased the frequency of its routes from Waterford to both Galway and London Luton.

Air Baltic has launched a four-times weekly service from Vilnius (Lithuania) to Dublin.

Ryanair is to launch a new service from Kerry Airport to Düsseldorf (Weeze), starting this July.

Blue Insurances is offering a specific annual business travel policy for the corporate sector in Ireland. The product is based on the number of business trips taken in a year by all employees in the company rather than the number of employees. Cover starts from €339.

Emirates Airlines’ e-visa service is to allow passengers from 35 countries to apply for a visa to the UAE online by logging on to the ‘manage booking’ section of Emirates.com.

Ryanair has increased checked-in baggage fees for July and August to €20 per bag, for all bookings made after April 7.

Aer Arann is increasing its checked-baggage fee and allowance for travellers on flights to the UK and France. The company is also increasing its fees on amendments to bookings, such as route, time or date changes and the name on the ticket.
The back page

CITY GUIDE: JOHANNESBURG

SUNSHINE IN THE RAINBOW CAPITAL

by Tony Clayton-Lea

We all know by this stage that Johannesburg (official nickname: Jo’burg) is one of the host cities for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, but when the fans have gone, what’s left? Well, as the largest city in South Africa (and the world’s biggest city not situated on a river, lake or coastline), Johannesburg isn’t shy in coming forward. It is the hub of SA’s industrial, financial, commercial and mining businesses, making it one of SA’s most modern and moneyed cities. It is home to some of SA’s tallest structures, it is one of the ‘greenest’ cities on the planet (six million trees!), and has a population in the region of 3,500,000. In short, it’s a happening place for business.

FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE CITY:
While Johannesburg is something of a sprawling city, most major parts are about 30 minutes from the international airport (OR Tambo International), and are accessed either by taxi (some metered, some not; all expensive) or (perhaps the best option, economically) shuttle bus services from your hotel. Make sure to book your seat when you make your hotel reservation.

SLEEP:
1st Choice: Hyatt Regency, 191 Oxford Road, Rosebank, is located less than 30km from OR Tambo International Airport, and is one of the primary business hotels of choice, courtesy of its 24-hour business centre. www.johannesburg.regency.hyatt.com

2nd Choice: 93 on Jan Smuts, Jan Smuts Avenue, Saxonwold, is a swish 5-star lifestyle hotel that offers contemporary luxury suites will all mod-cons and amenities. An 18-seater boardroom is available, as is complimentary WiFi. www.93onjansmuts.co.za

EAT:
Lunch: At La Cucina de Ciro, you will encounter an open-plan kitchen, attentive waiting staff and an ever-changing menu packed with seasonal ingredients. The mood is informal and cheerful, and the prices are reasonable. 17 Fourth Avenue, Parktown North. www.lacucinadiciro.co.za

Dinner: Moyo is one of the best-known restaurants in the city (if not in South Africa). Big (it seats up to 600) and award winning, its menu is largely African, incorporating influences from across the continent. A perfect place for a post-meeting evening, this is a must-visit place for a sophisticated African experience. Melrose Square, Melrose Arch. www.moyo.co.za

THREE THINGS TO DO IF YOU HAVE A FEW HOURS TO SPARE:
Museum: The Apartheid Museum is Johannesburg’s leading tourist attraction, and remains for visitor and resident alike, a must-see. It isn’t all a happy experience, however, but its graphically assembled story of apartheid is in equal measure powerful and profound. Open Tuesday-Sunday, 10am-5pm. www.apartheidmuseum.org

Sights: Johannesburg Zoo is the city’s most popular public venue; it’s situated on an expansive 54 hectares in central Parktown and boasts water features, tranquil walks and an impressive collection of over 2,000 animals (representing over 360 different species). www.jhbzoo.org.za

Gallery: The Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) is one of the most prestigious in the world, due to a trust fund that enables it to collect new works. Interestingly, the gallery’s initial collection was pieced together by Sir Hugh Lane; some of the pre-eminent artists featured here include Picasso, Monet and Degas.
### Enterprise Ireland International Network

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<td><strong>Milan</strong></td>
<td>+(39 02) 880 0991</td>
<td>+(39 02) 880 0243</td>
<td>Via S. Maria Segreta 6, 20123 Milan, Italy</td>
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<td>+(966 1) 488 1094</td>
<td>c/o Embassy of Ireland, PO Box 94349, Riyadh 11893, Saudi Arabia</td>
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<td>+(52 55) 5250 8311</td>
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<td><strong>Sao Paulo</strong></td>
<td>+(55 11) 2847 4518</td>
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<td>Avenida Paulista, 2300 - andar Pilotis, Cerqueira Cesar, Sao Paulo, 01310-300, Brazil</td>
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<td><strong>Silicon Valley</strong></td>
<td>+(650) 204 4081</td>
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<td><strong>Toronto</strong></td>
<td>+(1 416) 934 5033</td>
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<td>2 Bloor Street W, Suite 1501, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2, Canada</td>
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<td><strong>Asia-Pacific</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Beijing</strong></td>
<td>+(86 10) 8448 8080</td>
<td>+(86 10) 8448 4282</td>
<td>Commercial Section, Embassy of Ireland, CS12A Office Building, Beijing Lufthansa Ctr., No. 50 Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100125, China</td>
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<td>+(86 20) 8666 2171</td>
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<td>+(852) 2845 9240</td>
<td>2107 Tower 2 Lipco Center Admiralty, Hong Kong</td>
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<td>+(60 3) 2164 0619</td>
<td>Ireland House, 5th Floor South Block, The Amp Walk, 218 Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</td>
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<td><strong>New Delhi</strong></td>
<td>+(91 11) 424 03 178</td>
<td>+(91 11) 424 03 177</td>
<td>Commercial Section, Embassy of Ireland, 230 Jor Bagh, New Delhi 110 003, India</td>
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<td><strong>Seoul</strong></td>
<td>+(82 2) 755 4767 8</td>
<td>+(82 2) 757 3899</td>
<td>Ireland House, 13th Floor Leema B/D, 146-1 Suseong-Dong, Jongno-Ku, Seoul 110-755, Korea</td>
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<td><strong>Shanghai</strong></td>
<td>+(86 21) 6279 7088</td>
<td>+(86 21) 6279 7066</td>
<td>Commercial Section, Consulate General of Ireland, Suite 700A, Shanghai Centre, 1378 Najing Road West, Shanghai 200040, China</td>
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<td><strong>Singapore</strong></td>
<td>+(65) 6733 2180</td>
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<td>Ireland House, 541 Orchard Road #08-00, Iat Towers, Singapore 238881</td>
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<td><strong>Sydney</strong></td>
<td>+(61 2) 927 38505</td>
<td>+(61 2) 928 49869</td>
<td>level 21, 1 Market Street, Sydney 2000, NSW, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tokyo</strong></td>
<td>+(81 3) 3263 0611</td>
<td>+(81 3) 3263 0614</td>
<td>Ireland House, 2-10-7 Kojimachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 102-0083, Japan</td>
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