



Where owner managers



....do the business!

# PLATO

MONAGHAN, ARMAGH  
AND TYRONE



Project part financed by the European Union  
Peace and Reconciliation Programme



Special EU Programmes Body  
*Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An Ae*



**Border Action**  
*Part of Tradition, Making a Difference*



**Armagh**  
*the heart of the border*



Plato Monaghan, Armagh and Tyrone is an initiative of the Monaghan County Enterprise Board, Armagh City & District Council, & Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council. This project is part financed by the European Union through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the Cross-Border Consortium.

**BOSE**  
Better sound through research.

**POWERSCREEN**

**dunbia**  
naturally better...

Bank of Ireland

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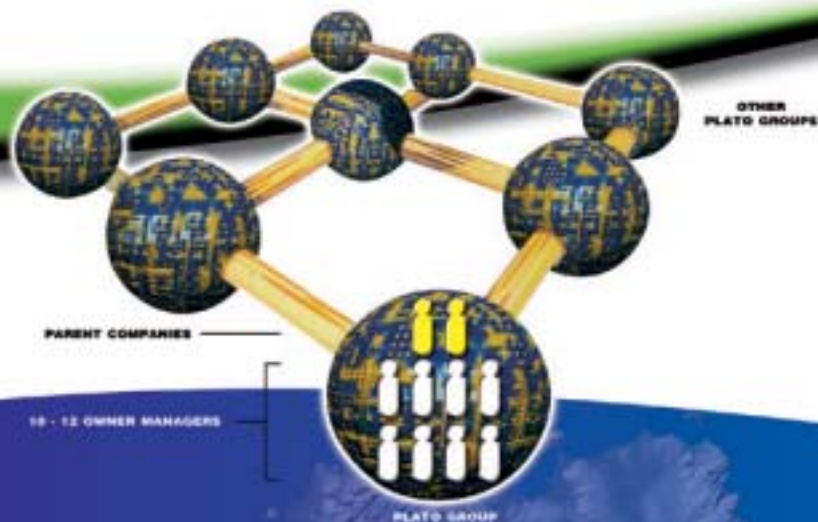
**LAKELAND**  
HEALTHY

Monaghan Mushrooms

Ulster Bank

**CBM**  
Ireland

**Kinispán**  
**CENTURY**



**PLATO** enjoys a unique partnership with large local companies that offer Plato participants access to the full range of Management Expertise. Each participating large (parent) company releases its Executives on a part-time basis to serve as Plato Facilitators and offer Expert Advice. Parent companies benefit from new linkages to local supply sources for products and services, as well as the opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to the economic development of the local region.



**PLATO**

“In over 20 years of business this is the first time that I have come in contact with a group of people who, without any other agenda, want to help me to develop my business. The underlying principles for running any business are the same and the group discussions have proved to be invaluable for developing my company and have saved me both time and money.”

Malachy McEneaney | Managing Director | McEneaney Mobility Services Ltd. Armagh & Dublin

# What is Plato?

PLATO is a non-profit all island demand-led business development network, dedicated to supporting small to medium sized business in every area of commercial activity.

Business can take you many different directions and I'm sure you find yourself asking:

- I wonder has anyone tried this before?
- Would it make sense to offer this to our customers?
- Am I being over-charged for that service?
- I don't know anyone in that market, so where do I start?
- I won't do that just yet, until I see what someone else thinks of it first...

Are these familiar sounding phrases?

- **If so, let PLATO help you to help yourself.**

➤ **Increase**  
your annual  
**turnover**

➤ **Access**  
new management  
**skills**

➤ **Conquer** regular  
business **problems**  
with the expertise  
of larger corporate  
companies



“Plato has been instrumental in helping Castlecool to apply policies and procedures enabling us to attain various best practice and quality standards, including commercial winner in the Coordinated Energy Management programme in 2005.”

Paul Shorts | Managing Director | Castlecool



“PLATO has given our company a great networking opportunity with companies in the North East that otherwise would have taken years to build up. It is also unique I believe in that it provides an environment where business people can meet and discuss problems, issues and achievements in a non-competitive environment. Unlike other networking groups, there is no pressure to provide sales leads for the group, but business generated comes from personal knowledge, good products or services and hard work! I would recommend PLATO to any business, established or new, as many businesses seem to experience the same problems on different scales.”

*Siobhán McGuigan | Area Business Services | [www.plato.ie](http://www.plato.ie)*

## How does Plato Work?

The first PLATO Monaghan, Armagh & Tyrone programme was set up in the year 2000. Each programme lasts 2 years. There are many strands to the support and assistance that PLATO provides, the three core activities are:

### ➤ Monthly group meetings

Members are formed into groups based on similarity of need. Each group typically comprises of 10-15 owner managers who meet once a month for 3-4 hours. Meetings are facilitated by two experienced senior managers from large companies in the region. These 'parent' companies provide their expertise/support on a voluntary basis. Meetings are focused on business development and are strictly confidential.

### ➤ Tailored training

Specialised training modules, tailored to the needs of the small to medium business, are provided every 2 months. These modules are designed through feedback from the groups, which ensure they meet specific requirements and are practical and relevant. In addition, business experts are regularly brought into group meetings to advise on topics selected by the members most relevant to their needs.

### ➤ Structured networking

Opportunities to network on a regional, inter-regional, national and international level are provided throughout the programme. These include bi-monthly regional events, inter-regional quarterly networking events, and a national and international networking event each year - to incorporate structured and social networking.

PLATO allows you to meet with businesses that have already conquered many of the problems that your business faces.

Access to professional and operational expertise means you are not alone as you strive to develop your business. By sharing management experience in the areas of financial planning, sales & marketing,

production, employee training and motivation, performance and productivity will be enhanced. PLATO gives you the potential to increase your turnover, through meeting new customers.

It also gives you a place to discuss the common strains and stresses of owning and managing a business.

## Benefits to you

➤ Increased **turnover & profit**

➤ Increased **customer database**

➤ Share **ideas, best management practice**

“Over the past 4 years, I've been able to utilize the training programmes which are delivered by people who really know what they are talking about, and can provide insight and direction. With PLATO, it's the company that becomes the member - not an individual. Therefore, I've sent several staff members on different courses where they required sharper skills in order to take on a role and run it, which leaves me more time to focus on other areas of the business. The national networking event is a real eye-opener to the business opportunities out there. For me, the training alone justifies taking up membership.”

Monica McGeary | IMH - Tailored Market Development | [www.integratedmarketingmanagement.com](http://www.integratedmarketingmanagement.com)



“I strongly recommend that businesses in the Border area join PLATO. As well as being a network source, I found that Plato Blackwater, through it's enthusiastic management structure and membership, encouraged me in growing my business to the extent that since joining PLATO, we have opened a cross-border office in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. We have also extended the services which we provide, from legal to property investment. It is through the interactive business sessions that I have learned to 'think outside the box'. I will be continuing my membership of PLATO.”

Brian Morgan | Morgan McManus Solicitors | [www.morganmcmanus.com](http://www.morganmcmanus.com)

## expanding your horizons



### NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

LOCAL	REGIONAL	INTER-REGIONAL	ALL IRELAND	INTERNATIONAL
Local Monthly Group Meetings	Networking with companies from other local regions	Networking with companies from other Irish regions	All Ireland Networking Event	Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, UK, etc.
2004 - 2005	2004 - 2005	2004 - 2005	2004 - 2005	2004 - 2005

“Initially, the most important aspect of PLATO was to show me the importance of taking time out to think. Thinking is the best way to improve the business and how to do things better; by doing this, I could contribute more to the company. It was also important to realise that many of my problems had been encountered and dealt with by other members of the group.

Membership of Plato has benefited this company. We have grown in a competitive environment by introducing business planning, systems and procedures set with the help of PLATO and this has allowed us to grow significantly without the pain normally associated with growth.

I have met some brilliant people who have the expertise and are willing to help me and others succeed in business. I would say that Plato has helped this company significantly.”

John Kelly | Kelly Brothers Ltd | [www.kellybrothers.ie](http://www.kellybrothers.ie)



M:TEK Building  
Armagh Road  
Monaghan  
Co. Monaghan  
T: 047 72690  
F: 047 84786  
E: [plato@plato.ie](mailto:plato@plato.ie)  
[www.plato.ie](http://www.plato.ie)



together, everybody achieves more