

## Enterprise Strategy Group Report recommendations warmly welcomed by Plato Ireland.



**The Plato Network at work!**

The Enterprise Strategy Group report 'Ahead of the Curve – Ireland's Place in the Global Economy' published in July contains within its pages a clear vision that will enable Ireland's enterprises to grow successfully over the coming ten years. For Micheál Martin, the new Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment, the strategic recommendations provide an excellent platform upon which new policies can be built.

The ESG vision of providing for enterprise development an 'overarching strategy for Ireland' that will 'develop strengths across the entire value chain' is a very achievable aspiration should the reports recommendations become policy. In particular the ESG clearly articulates the value of strong enterprise-led networks. As Ireland's premier all-island network with strong links to international SME networks Plato fully endorses the report's findings that networks facilitate knowledge transfer, foster innovation and disseminate market

knowledge in a most effective and cost efficient manner.

Over the past 10 years the Plato Network has worked with over 2,500 SMEs enabling them to develop more rapidly and efficiently, creating many new jobs and sustaining existing employment. Some 450 Senior Managers from over 140 of Ireland's leading large companies have contributed significantly to the success of the Network.

Business networks can articulate the management needs of members and can also act as a focal point for the delivery of services. The report recognises that 'Historically state intervention has been undertaken primarily through the enterprise development agencies.... State supports should be rebalanced over time between interventions at the firm level and those responding to requirements articulated by networks'. Plato has always enjoyed strong stakeholder relationships with the CEBs, FAS and InterTradeIreland and we look forward to both further developing and increasing the range of interventions and supports. As the

ESG report states 'In the coming decade, well developed business networks will become increasingly important mechanisms for driving success'. The report also recognises that 'From the states perspective, strong, coherent business networks can provide a clear articulation of enterprise priorities...state supports through networks will have wider impacts...such initiatives should help small companies overcome the problem of small scale'.

Plato Ireland looks forward with optimism to the reports recommendations being integrated into policy. The ESG report is a well-researched and inclusive report with recommendations that have the potential to provide Ireland's enterprises with the wherewithal and support required to maximise their potential over the coming decade.

Mr. Alf Smiddy, Chairman – Plato Ireland thanks the Chairman of the Enterprise Strategy Group, Mr. Eoin O'Driscoll and all its members for producing such an in-depth and well structured report.



**Mr Alf Smiddy,  
Chairman Plato Ireland**

# Plato Belfast - A New Beginning

**A submission has been made to InterTradeIreland, the Cross Border Body with a remit for All Island Trade Development to support the continued development of the PLATO Belfast network. The establishment of a PLATO Belfast programme will provide an important link in the PLATO Ireland network, facilitating and encouraging all-island trade development, business linkages and strategic alliances and encouraging the owner/manager to view cross border opportunities as a normal part of business.**

PLATO Belfast was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2000 and ran for two years until Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2002. It was an initiative of the Northern Ireland Chamber Of Commerce and Industry with the financial assistance of the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and the International fund for Ireland. Seven Parent Companies were involved in the programme: DCC Energy Ltd, Delta Print and Packaging Ltd, Grant Thornton, Hamilton Shipping, J&J Haslett Ltd, Maxol Oil Ltd, Sangers (NI) Ltd.

The programme involved 53 SME owner managers from 48 companies. At the closing event of the programme Mr

Sam Chambers, Chairman of PLATO Belfast and chief executive of DCC Energy Ltd said 'there is a strong commitment amongst its members to be part of a strong business network' and that the Parent Companies wanted to see PLATO have a 'future in the local economy'.

An information evening for Belfast SMEs took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> September in the Europa Hotel, Belfast.



Speaking at the event were past Plato Belfast participants (left to right) Mr Robert Kelly (Proprietor), RoCa Systems Ltd and Mr Pat Grant (Managing Director), James Grant & Company Ltd

A large number of SMEs attended this very informative event. There was an overwhelming positive response from all those present. Over the coming months a new Management Board will be estab-

lished. A number of Belfast's leading large companies have indicated that they will act as Parent Companies to the Network. Plato Belfast is a vital link in the all Island chain of networks. There are significant trading opportunities that will be created and exploited to the benefit of SMEs and large companies throughout the island. Over the past few years InterTradeIreland have created a whole new environment within which SMEs throughout Ireland can develop and we look forward to the future.

Mr. Frank Hewitt CEO of Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce spoke of the great value to the Belfast economy that the Plato Belfast initiative will create. He encouraged all those present to take advantage of the opportunity that Plato Belfast will provide.

**If you are interested in finding out more (or know of someone who might be) please contact :-**

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**Joe English**  
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## Micheál Martin T.D.- New Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment

*Plato Ireland welcomes the recent appointment of Micheál Martin TD as Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment. Minister Martin has always been very supportive of the Plato Network. He has often stated that the indigenous enterprise sector is a vital component in Ireland's overall economic well-being.*

*We look forward to working with the Minister and his officials over the coming years and we wish to acknowledge the support of his predecessor An Tanaiste Mary Harney in the development of the network..*

## PLATO SKILLNETS PROGRAMMES

SMEs from all six Plato regions in Ireland are benefiting from the Skillnets funded programmes that have commenced during the past few months.

The funding provided by Skillnets is enabling a large number of Plato companies to meet their training needs in a number of clearly defined ways. Details of these programmes are available from your local Plato office.

Plato has worked closely with Skillnets over recent years and following on from the recommendations of the Enterprise Strategy Group report we look forward to further developing the successful range of programmes already completed.

## HOW TO NEGOTIATE .....

We all negotiate for things at one time or another, whether it is for a wage increase with our employer, maybe with the kids to turn the television off, to buy a new car or even a printer for the office. It is obvious then that Negotiation Skills are required by all of us in many aspects of our lives.

The following are some skills, tips and techniques to help you handle these and other negotiating situations more effectively.

### **BUILD TRUST**

Negotiation will not work without trust and if there is no trust there will be no communication. Instead you will have manipulation and suspicion of each side by both parties involved. Always honour your commitments and tell the truth and you will have a more fruitful and worthwhile negotiating process.

### **PRACTICE DOUBLE & TRIPLE THINK**

You need to know what you want out of negotiation but also what the other party wants (double think). If you are a smart negotiator you will also try to predict what the other party thinks you want (triple think).

### **NEVER ACCEPT THE FIRST OFFER**

There may very well be a better offer behind it! The other party will instinctively open leaning towards their ideal position but probably with room for manoeuvring. Also be careful not to accept too quickly.

### **DON'T NEGOTIATE UNLESS YOU NEED TO**

If possible, never negotiate, as it always requires compromise, which will always cost you.

### **NEVER DISCLOSE YOUR BOTTOM LINE**

Not before you start, not during the discussions and never after a successful win-win conclusion. Keep the other parties guessing as to what your no deal position was

### **DO YOUR HOMEWORK**

Know who you are negotiating with before you begin. What is his/her reputation as a negotiator? What is their style? What will be their priorities? Answers to these questions will help you decide on how you will approach the negotiating process and how hard you will push.

### **KNOW THYSELF**

When you go into a negotiation take a few minutes to look at yourself and how you feel about negotiation. What is your own negotiation style? Do you tend to give in easily? Do you like negotiating? Do you just want to get it over and give in too quickly? Do you give away too much in the process?

### **ENJOY THE PROCESS**

Negotiation is a process, not an event. There are predictable steps such as preparation, creating the climate, identifying interests and selecting outcomes that you will go through in any negotiation. With practice you will become skilled at each step of the process and as you improve you will discover that negotiating can actually be fun!

## FAS/Plato Group Leader Training

*FAS* and *Plato* are pleased to announce they are undertaking a new joint initiative to train some 60 Senior Managers from Ireland's leading companies as Group Leaders/facilitators for new Plato Network groups in the South West/South East/Dublin/North East and the North West. The programme will be completed by end of November 2004.

Participant companies across all Plato regions including Cork (South West), Waterford (South East), Dublin, Dundalk (North East) and Cavan (North West) will benefit.

In addition to the Group Leader programme, Plato is promoting use of the FAS Net College Portal. This is a very comprehensive on-line training service offering a range of practical courses at minimum costs.

Some regard private enterprise as if it were a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look upon it as a cow that they can milk. Only a handful see it for what it really is - the strong horse that pulls the whole cart.

Winston Churchill

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LAYOUT & DESIGN:  
URSULA RYAN

PRINTING:  
PS4

Plato Cork

# Plato Golf Scramble

An 18 Hole Golf Scramble held at Cabra Castle, Co. Cavan on Tuesday 7 September provided an opportunity for a “Bit of Social Networking” for local companies involved in the PLATO Blackwater and Louth Newry & Mourne regions and attracted companies from Monaghan, Armagh, Dungannon, Louth, Newry & Mourne, Belfast, Cork and Dublin. Entrepreneurs, both golfers and non-golfers were given the opportunity to mix with other entrepreneurs and State agency representatives from both sides of the border including InterTradeIreland, Co-operation Ireland, FAS and Enterprise Boards while still enjoying a relaxing round of golf. The day concluded with a BBQ and Prize giving.



**Pictured (left to right):-** Deirdre Goss—Plato Louth, Newry & Mourne, Paul Mellon—Co-operation Ireland, Joe English – Plato Louth, Newry & Mourne, Carolyne Murphy—Co-operation Ireland, Tricia Keeley—Plato Blackwater, and Kevin Kerr Co-Operation Ireland



**Pictured (left to right):-** Jimmy Keely—GymFix, Una Keegan—Business Matters, Ann Bowe—Monaghan Physiotherapy Clinic, and Bill Phelan, Plato Dublin



**Pictured (left to right):-** Liam Nellis, Peter Grand. Aidan Monaghan, and Desmond Oliver of InterTradeIreland



**1st Prize Winners, pictured (left to right):-** Michael Curran, Louth County Council. Kevin Kerr, Co-operation Ireland. Hugh Reilly, Meath County Enterprise Board. Gerry Murphy, FAS.



**Pictured (left to right):** Gerry Murphy - FAS, Michael Curran - Louth county Council, Hugh Reilly - Meath County Enterprise Board, and Kevin Kerr - Co-operation Ireland



**2nd Prize Winners, pictured (left to right):-** Jimmy Keely, GymFix. Ann Bowe, Monaghan Physiotherapy Clinic. Una Keegan, Business Matters. Bill Phelan, Plato Dublin.



**3rd Prize Winners, pictured (left to right):-** Paul Shortt, Castlecool. Phelim Wakely & Sheila Wakely, Wakely Engineering. Michael Byrne, FAS.



**Novelty Prize Winners, pictured (left to right):-** Brian Morgan, Morgan McManus Solicitors. Francis Murphy, James Murphy & Sons. Carolyne Murphy & Paul Mellon, Co-operation Ireland

# Plato Regional News

## Plato Blackwater

### Group Leader Presentation Evening

A networking evening was held in August to honour our group leaders, both past and present, for the contribution they have made to the Blackwater programme. The level of their commitment and support was measured by the large turn-out of companies on the evening. Presentations were made by our Chairman and previous Group Leader, Gerry McCaughey, Century Homes. Both Gerry and John McEntaggart, Monaghan County Enterprise Board CEO, on behalf of the Plato Blackwater Board, thanked all the Group Leaders involved for the pivotal role they play in making the programme a success. We look forward to continuing these partnerships in the future.



Pictured at the Group Leader Presentation Evening were (from left to right):- Paul Shortt, Castlecool. Peter Judge, Lakeland Dairies. Pat Freeman, Kingspan Building Products. Breda McGuigan, Aura Internet Services. Robin McCormick, SONI. Gerry McCaughey, Century Homes, and Malachy McElmeel, McElmeel Mobility Services

### Quaver Technologies makes environmental strides

Monaghan based 'eco-friendly technologies' company have had three major breakthroughs in recent months:

1. The trials from the fish-farm in Cavan. We treated the water and fish-feed. The testimonial from the farmer shows astonishing results. More importantly this farm was awarded the Eco-pact certificate for Environmental Excellence. The award was given by the Department of the Marine.
2. Odour control form Mushroom Compost. The mushroom industry spent over 800 million Dollars over the past 15 years seeking a solution. We found the solution for 15, 000 Euros in just ten days.

3. Lime scale problems. As an unforeseen consequence of energising water we have also solved the necessity of replacing elements in emersion heaters, and or replacing the electrical kettle. Present clients using the technology include top hotels and prestigious golf courses.

For more information please contact:  
Quaver Technologies, Burdautien, Clones  
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General e-mail: [info@quaver.ie](mailto:info@quaver.ie)  
See Reviews:  
[www.quaver.ie/coastersreview.php](http://www.quaver.ie/coastersreview.php)

### InterTradeIreland Awards for Two Blackwater Companies

We would like to extend our congratulations to Blackwater Parent Company Lakeland Dairies who won the overall "All Island Trade and Business" Award, and Member Company Morgan McManus Solicitors who were nominated for the "Best Newcomer" Award at the Inter-TradeIreland All Island Trade and Business Awards held in Belfast.

Lakeland Dairies operates across fifteen counties, on a cross-border basis, processing over 700 million litres of milk annually into a range of value added dairy products and food ingredients. The company engaged in a major expansion programme between 2002 and 2004 acquiring major dairy processing facilities in counties Tyrone, Down and Cavan. Lakeland also won significant new business during that period.

An expert panel of judges cited Lakeland as an exemplary firm whose commitment to cross-border business development had realised highly beneficial results. The Award was presented by Northern Ireland's Enterprise Development Minister, Mr. Barry Gardiner, M.P. and Barry Fitzsimons, Vice-Chairman, Inter-TradeIreland at a Gala Awards Ceremony in Belfast.

### Nomination for "Best Newcomer" Award at the All Island Trade and Business Awards.

Morgan McManus Solicitors were one of only four businesses nominated for the "Best Newcomer" award at the All Island Trade and Business Awards held at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast on the 3 June 2004. In receiving the nomination with High Commendation it was recognised that, in providing legal advice to businesses in both jurisdictions, Morgan Mc Manus "has shown a strategic approach to seeking opportunities and has demonstrated the ability to reach significant milestones and overcome

barriers".

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

### Monaghanonline.ie launch



Pictured at the awards ceremony (left to right) are members of Morgan McManus: Seymour Major, Brian Morgan, Fergal McManus (Barry Fitzsimons of InterTradeIreland), Mary B. Duffy and Dolores McMahon

On Monday May 31st Ceann Comhairle Dr. Rory O'Hanlon launched Monaghan's first online business directory – [www.monaghanonline.ie](http://www.monaghanonline.ie) in the County Enterprise Board's M:TEK building on the occasion of Enterprise Board's 10th anniversary celebrations.

Monaghan businesses can register on the website free of charge as the whole project is funded by the Peace and Reconciliation Fund 2 and administered by ADM/CPA.

"We're delighted to mark a decade of service with the creation of the free online forum for Monaghan companies", said John McEntaggart, CEO Monaghan County Enterprise Board.

"Working closely with small enterprises over the years, we've realised that they often feel hampered with the cost and time constraints of getting a presence on the web – this task is often seen as a non essential chore. [www.monaghanonline.ie](http://www.monaghanonline.ie) is direct response to this need. A business person can log on and create their own profile in minutes – a simple and effective way of gaining an internet presence at no cost.

## Plato Dublin

### Plato North Dublin Graduation

The Plato North Dublin Graduation for the 2002 – 2004 programme took place at the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin on the 19<sup>th</sup> April. The event marked the successful completion of the latest two-year programme by almost 100 owner managers.

The Graduation began with an introductory speech by Greg Swift. Mr Swift described the function as a "celebration of success" and remarked that the programme would never

# Plato Regional News

have been possible without the strong support of the many North Dublin businesses involved.

Guest speaker at the Graduation was Mr. Peter Stokes, Managing Director of Viking Splash Tours. In keeping with the PLATO motto, "everyone in life is a teacher", Mr. Stokes shared some valuable business experience and tips with Plato members, urging all owner managers to continue being persistent with regards to the daunting business hurdle of over regulation.



**PLATO North Dublin Graduation held in April at the Guinness Store House (left to right): - Gerry Macken-CEO Dublin City Enterprise Board, Alec Drew-Baseline, John McNerney-Chairman Readymix PLC, Jean Doyle - Diageo, Peter Stokes - Viking Splash Tours**

Other speakers at the Graduation included Jean Doyle, Diageo; John McNear, Directory of Readymix Plc and Gerry Macken, CEO Dublin City Enterprise Board.

The Graduation was followed by a drinks reception kindly sponsored by Diageo.

## Plato South Dublin Graduation

The Burlington Hotel was the venue last May for the Plato South Dublin Graduation Dinner. The Guest Speaker for the evening was the charismatic John Teeling, Chairman of Cooley



**Pictured at the PLATO South Dublin Graduation Dinner at The Burlington Hotel (left to right):- Michael Kenny, Michael Kenny Fashion Agencies, Peter Flanagan, Flanagans of Buncrana and John Teeling, Chairman Cooley Distilleries**

Distilleries Plc who spoke about his experiences as an entrepreneur. He encouraged and motivated owner managers and praised Plato for its continued support of small businesses.

A presentation was made to Bill Phelan, Regional Manager who was retiring from Plato by Tom Byrnes on behalf of the Board of Plato South Dublin. Mr. Byrnes also thanked Bill on behalf of the Plato South Dublin members. The presentation was followed by a standing ovation and applause by the members of the programme. Bill thanked the board, the funders - Dublin City, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Enterprise Boards and Deirdre Batye for her support during the programme.



**Pictured at the PLATO South Dublin Graduation held at The Burlington Hotel - Group F: Peter McNamara, PMac - David Johnston, Norwood Technologies - Colm Brennan, Cast Bronze Foundry - Damien Warwick, Philip Warwick & Co - Nessa Walsh, Margaret Gowan & Co - Ivan Scott, Motherboard - David Carroll, System Video, Bernie Walsh, PLATO Group Leader - David Cordial, BioFuture - Ted O'Sullivan, Universal Products - Roy Van Maanen, Technical Equipment Company - John Moane, BWG - Tony Malone, Philip Warwick & Co**

Over 100 owner managers successfully completed the 21 month programme. The certificates were presented by Tom Byrnes, Plato South Dublin Chairman and MBA Lecturer at the Smurfit College, Blackrock.

A great night was had by all.

## BILL RETIRES

Bill Phelan, the Plato South Dublin Regional Manager (pictured above) recently retired. Bill originally participated within Plato as a Group Leader. As a Senior Manager with Maxol Ireland he gave unselfishly of his time and energy to his Plato group. On taking early retirement from Maxol he took up the position of Plato Regional Manager and oversaw 2 consecutive and very successful programmes in South Dublin. Bill brought his boundless energy, enthusiasm and considerable business experience into Plato Ireland and everyone benefited. We wish Bill all the best of health

and happiness and thank you sincerely for all your effort, and we know he will continue to play his part in the Plato golf outings.



## Plato South East

PLATO South East took to the high seas over the summer - well not quite literally but we did go as far as the Quays in New Ross on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July for the launch of the **PLATO Skillnet Platinum Programme** onboard the Dunbrody Famine Ship. The PLATO sea farers in attendance were given a very entertaining history and tour of the boat before feasting on a tasty Barbeque washed down with some fine wine from Susan O'Leary, Vineyards of Bordeaux. A wonderful evening was had by all !



**Pictured on board the Dunbrody Famine Ship are Carlow participants from PLATO South East**

The **Platinum programme** will commence with its first module on September 16<sup>th</sup> in Mount Juliet and will run until March 2005. We wish the participants a happy learning experience over the course of the programme.

**PLATO South East** is beginning to recruit for a **4<sup>th</sup> programme** this Autumn. Preparations are well under way with a series of information evenings being held throughout the region over September.

On a sad note we were all shocked and deeply saddened by the sudden death in July of one of our **Group Leaders Corry O'Regan from Oglesby & Butler**. Corry was extremely enthusiastic about his participation on the programme and was very popular with his Carlow group. He will be greatly missed by all those he worked with in PLATO South East.

# Plato Regional News

## Plato Louth Newry Mourne

### **EUROLEC SUCCESS IN ARCTIC!**

Eurolec's NEW Pro-Com series thermometers and probes are already being supplied to a wide variety of markets and industries, in Ireland and abroad, for a huge range of applications

These compact, cost-effective instruments have already been put under test in one of the harshest environments in the world!

In May 2004 an international climate research team returned from a two week test expedition to the Arctic in preparation for 'Poletrack', a 1000 KM climate research expedition next year. Various sensors and probes were used in the recording of data including a Eurolec portable thermometer, The PC Temp PT1, to measure snow temperature. The PC Temp PT1 uses a high accuracy PT1000 sensor which is particularly stable at low temperatures but can also provide accurate readings up to 200 C. The PC series were designed and manufactured for demanding applications and were chosen for the test expedition for their accuracy, reliability and robustness. Data from the expedition will be used for weather forecasts, and research purposes including the World Climate Research Programme.

Models PC Temp PT1 (with detachable probe) and PC Temp PT2 (with integral probe) in particular offer very high system accuracy at a competitive price:

BETTER THAN +/- 0.2 C BETWEEN - 30 AND +100 C with the PC Temp PT2 - COMPLETE WITH SYSTEM CALIBRATION CERTIFICATE TRACEABLE TO NATIONAL STANDARDS (UKAS).

For further details, please contact:

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## Plato Cork

### **Bookbar: Silver Medal Winner at the Salon International Des Inventions de Geneva**

Bookbar Ltd a member of Cork Plato has launched their new award-winning product for readers. The product marketed as 'The Reader's Friend' is best described as an all-in-

one bookmark, page holder, and bookstand. According to Managing Director Alan Brogan 'the Bookbar is a very different concept than anything consumers have seen before. This is a lifestyle accessory that stays on your book at all times, carries practically no weight and yet provides this complete service.'



In April 2004 the Bookbar picked up the **silver medal at the Salon International Des Inventions in Geneva**, the biggest exhibition worldwide for new and innovative products and to receive such recognition was a huge endorsement of the product. 'It is a real recognition to us that we have created something different and something new. At the awards ceremony it was referred to as the 'greatest innovation ever for readers'. This is what we set out to do and at least someone thinks so.' The Bookbar design has also put great emphasis on making the product fashionable. 'Sometimes I think people like it more for its appearance than it's functionality.'

The company has received offers from several international companies to distribute the product. 'We have received interest from companies from France, Switzerland, the US, UK, Australia and many more but to date we have not been in any particular rush to push through a deal. We know at this stage the product will sell and the key for us is finding the right partners not the quickest partner.'

Bookbar are currently selling the product from their website on [www.bookbar.com](http://www.bookbar.com) and are in the process of arranging terms with some of the major book retailers and clubs in Ireland and the UK to avail of the Christmas market.

### **EasEbiz Ltd**

**Traceability Software** — Cork based Plato participant, software company *EasEbiz Ltd* has launched a new system to enable food companies to comply with EU legislation coming into force on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2005.

*EasEtrak* is the perfect solution for introducing new technology and automation while complying with the new law. *EasEtrak* also offers the benefits of enabling electronic links with trading partners for exchanging details of goods being shipped - automatically checking a whole shipment into stock, with full traceability details. This cost effective modular Traceability

and Stock Management solution has the flexibility to link with existing equipment and systems.

*EasEtrak* operates in Real Time and uses scanning, electronic tagging and bar-coding to track products on the move - including modules for Receiving, Storage, Production and Shipment as well as Mobile Sales.

Contact is John Hassett, *EasEbiz Ltd*, 24-25 South Mall, Cork.

Tel: 021 4877495. Website [www.easetrak.biz](http://www.easetrak.biz).

### **Amocom launches WISP in a Box**

In August 2004 Amocom Technologies launched its WISP (Wireless Internet Service Provider) in a Box solution. The high level of technical expertise and experience that is required to build and operate a wireless network has posed a significant barrier to entry into the wireless market for those entrepreneurs or organisations who would like to deploy a commercial wireless network.

Amocom's low cost WISP in a Box solution overcomes this barrier to entry by offering a complete package to the network owner that includes everything from the provision of network equipment, to the training of local operators, and the provision of business processes in the early stage of network deployment. Once the network is up and running Amocom continues to perform a set of centralised functions that includes the provisioning of customers, management of bandwidth for customers, 24 x 7 emergency support, automated billing, etc. These are all the functions that can be divorced from those that have to be executed at local level. The outsourcing of many of the costly high skill technical functions results in a corresponding reduction in overheads that allows the new or emerging WISP to concentrate on customer acquisition and network deployment, secure in the knowledge that the technical operation of the network is being attended to by experienced team at Amocom.

Amocom's WISP in a Box is a commercially proven and tested solution. Amocom owns and operates a highly successful commercial wireless network in Cork. According to John O'Hare, CEO Amocom, "Amocom's WISP in a Box enables rapid deployment of commercially viable wireless broadband networks in urban and rural areas alike. Here in Ireland, the government's recent initiative under the Group Broadband Scheme has resulted in an overwhelming demand for Amocom's Wisp in a Box solution. However, hunger for broadband is not just an Irish problem - we have also had a number of enquiries from the UK and international markets".

For further information please visit [www.amocom.com](http://www.amocom.com)  
Telephone: +353 21 730 4635  
Email: [info@amocom.com](mailto:info@amocom.com)

# Plato Regional News

## **PLATO CORK MANAGEMENT NETWORK FORUM 2004-2005**

Plato Cork have recommenced their Management Network Forums for 2004/2005. The topic for the September session was Objective Setting/Goal Planning and was presented by Bob McCarthy, Leadership Management Ireland. Full details of future dates and topics available on the Plato web site and from the Plato Cork office.

## **LANSA Looks Forward to the**



**Attendees at the recent Plato Cork Management Network Forum**

## **New Millennium**

LANSA has recently signed Millennium Software, based in Cork, as a strategic partner for the Republic of Ireland. This partnership will enable Millennium to expand their IT consultancy to include the complete range of LANSAs software products which fall into the four business areas of Application Development, e-Business Solutions, Technology Integration and Data Access.

Brendan McMahan, Managing Director of Millennium says "LANSA is an ideal choice for Millennium because the technology compli-

ments our existing offering of bespoke software design and development, specifically in the iSeries market. It is also very quick to learn. LANSAs allows our developers to write bespoke software more quickly using their 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Language, RDML, which allows us to speed system implementation for our customers. Once the LANSAs skills are learned, they can be deployed across all platforms, databases and interfaces. This is a great opportunity for the Irish market to take advantage of the flexibility and agility of the LANSAs products"

Brendan continues "Millennium's primary area of expertise is in the Irish pharmaceutical and manufacturing industries. We already have a lot of experience within these industries through working with companies such as Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. With LANSAs, we can go back to these companies and see if there are other strategic business areas that we can help them with, such as web development and integration".

Charlotte Richardson, LANSAs Partner Manager, UK and Ireland, said, LANSAs is excited at the prospect of working with Millennium. She said "partnering with Millennium is a great bonus for LANSAs as they are highly skilled in industries that we are currently trying to develop in the Irish market. As a strategic partner, we will be giving them support as well as keeping them up to date with developments with our suite of software".

A presentation to launch LANSAs for Millennium Software will take place in Cork on October 28<sup>th</sup> 2004. Anybody wishing to attend this event should contact Brendan McMahan or Kieran O'Hagan at either of the email addresses below.

Brendan.McMahan@millsoft.ie  
Kieran.O'Hagan@millsoft.ie

## **PLATO CORK 700 PROGRAMME**

The Plato Cork 700 Programme was launched on 30th September. Plato Cork is the first region in the country to launch 7 successive programmes. Some 450 SMEs and over 500 owner managers have participated in Plato since the first programme. Five new Parent Companies have joined the programme—these are Project Management, Ulster Bank, Bord Gais, EMC, and Premier Conferencing.

Mr. Frank O'Mahony, CEO PepsiCo Ireland, and Plato Cork board member was warm in his praise of all of the parent companies that continue to support the network. In particular he praised the Group Leaders for their voluntary commitment and boundless energy. He also acknowledges the on going support of the Cork City, South Cork and West Cork Enterprise Boards, and clearly stated that the funding the Enterprise Boards provide is pivotal to the networks success.



**Pictured at launch of Plato 700 in Cork were pictured (left to right) Deirdre Maher, West Cork Enterprise Board; Ursula Ryan, Plato Cork; and Dave Cody, CEO - Cork City Enterprise Board**

## **PLATO Dublin poised to become Largest Plato Region in Europe**

**E**ven years on, Plato in Dublin has merged the North and South regions into one Dublin Region. In the greater Dublin area Plato has successfully completed 11 programmes with over 800 SME's having graduated in the Dublin region alone! With this success of the Plato programme in the Dublin area we are excited at the prospect of taking Plato in Dublin to new heights. We intend to expand and grow the existing resource with this sizable resource of local support, knowledge and know-how for those involved in running their business, by offering

new services to the companies that have graduated. We are also delighted to announce that an all new Plato Dublin Programme will be launched the first 100 to kick off this October. Our new programme, once up and running, will have a total of 200 SME's on an on-going basis which will make it one of the largest regions in Europe!

We are very proud that many of the existing parent companies will remain actively involved in this new programme along with the new Parent companies i.e. AIB, Maxol, Wavin, UCD, DCU, TSB, Ericsson, ESB, Diageo, Readymix, Pfizer, Eagle Star, IBM, Shamrock Foods, BWG Foods, Jury's Doyle, Sage Ireland and Johnson & Johnson.

Benefits of our new greater Dublin programme will include access to a larger network, more parent companies and better access to all meet-

ing venues throughout the county. New offices with meeting room facilities. The new Management Committee will be Chaired by John Mc Nerney, Director of Readymix Plc, and made up of the four Dublin Enterprise Boards, the Parent companies, Small companies, FAS, The Chambers of Commerce, and IBEC.

In addition to the core Business Development Programme for 100 SMEs commencing in October two Advanced Programmes and a Succession Planning programme will be launched. Regular seminars will also be running parallel to these programmes. For further details please call the Plato Dublin office. Plato Dublin would also like to acknowledge the four enterprise boards for their excellent continuing support— Venturepoint, South Dublin, Dublin City and Fingal who have and are taking a active role in the development of Plato Dublin.

# 6th InterTradeIreland Plato All Island National Networking Event

The 6th InterTradeIreland Plato All Island National Networking Event will take place on **Wednesday 20th October 2004 at the Burlington Hotel, Dublin** building on the success of the previous five years, where over 50,000 business introductions have taken place. This year like last, the event is being sponsored by InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body formed under the Good Friday Agreement of March 1999.



This promises to be an excellent opportunity to meet with other PLATO participants and Parent Company personnel on both a formal and informal basis. 250 SMES are expected to attend the event and 30 Purchasing Managers from Parent Companies. The event will include companies from all Plato regions in Ireland and international Plato companies are also being invited to participate in the event. The format of the day has been altered to facilitate greater interaction between companies based on suggestions from previous attendees.

At last year's event

- €2 million of business was done on the day and €7.5 million in follow on business
- 15000 business introductions took place among 363 SMES and 35 Large Company Purchasing Managers



Mr. Liam Nellis, CEO InterTradeIreland

**98% of participants said they achieved their desired outcomes and results from the day and 99% said they would attend another networking day**

If you are interested in finding out more please contact your local Plato region or Marion Walshe on 00 353 (0) 1 6763960 or at marion.walshe@plato.ie

## Time Management

Time Management is a paradox really, in that we have all of the time that is available to us and yet, we do not have enough of it. Sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in an hour, twenty four hours in the day, and three hundred and sixty five days in a year. That's it!! No more!!

*Time is unique, and in this perspective:*

*You can't stop it*

*You can't save it*

*You can't borrow it*

*You can't slow it down or redirect it*

The only thing you can do with time is spend it. But it's how you spend it that is important. Time is a resource and like any other resource we have, it needs to be managed effectively in order to get the maximum benefit out of it. In business we manage such resources as materials and money, methods, machines and people. We have a certain time available for this, usually 39 hours a week, but it's what we do in the time available that's important.

Just to show there are no hard feelings, we have other demands in our 24 hour day as well as work. Mental health may be

described as having the capacity to work, having relationships and renew oneself, with relative freedom from internal stress with-out causing stress to others.

In addition to managing time at work, wherever that is, we need to extend time



"You have appointments lined up right until you leave for vacation in 2008."

management into other areas of our lives as well, so that we get the maximum benefit for ourselves and those that are important to us.

Why would we want to manage time at all? Put simply, it allows us to achieve our objectives by concentrating on priority items and achieving them. This means we must have objectives, we must plan to meet these objectives, and we must implement the plan. Then we must deal with interruptions and keep the focus on the objectives.

Peter Drucker (author of various management titles, including Frontiers of Management) says that the successful manager needs to acquire five habits of mind as follows:

- Knowledge of present time use
- Effort being geared to results rather than work
- Building on the strengths of oneself and others
- Concentration on priorities
- Diverting effort towards making executive decisions

To understand the principals of time management, the Urgent and the Important must not be confused. Time management is a condition of mind, and it is the way to achieve your goals.

# Succession Planning

**A** planned Transference Strategy is essential to the long term success of all businesses, particularly Family Business.

31 of Ireland's Top 50 private companies are family owned. The private company sector dominates Irish business. The net worth of the top 50 companies alone is €3.2billion ('03). With such a high proportion of the Irish business community populated by family owned and family run businesses it is vitally important for the well being of the economy that the managers of these businesses have the ability to successfully manage the issue of transference.

Over the recent past there have been a number of high profile cases involving family disputes over ownership, wealth, control of assets. Once things go this far very little attention is paid to family well-being, relationships, security and love. Family businesses are successful because of family relationships and it is somewhat ironic that the wealth that families created together can become the instrument of the family's destruction.

Time is the one key driver of change. The one thing that is certain for all of us is that at some time in the future we will cease to exist. Since we are certain that this day

will come it is only prudent that we plan for this eventuality. It is difficult enough for family members to cope with the loss of a loved one. By proper planning one can minimise the anxieties surrounding income and security for surviving family members and employees. All too often events overtake circumstances. Crisis can quickly emerge through ill health, death, inappropriate behaviour within the family or other such events that can throw a family into turmoil. When anxiety is high awareness is low and high anxiety creates circumstances that are sometimes exploited by others. This all too often throws families in to open conflict.

Over the past ten years Plato has worked with a number of family businesses to put in place robust transference strategies. In undertaking this work we have developed a number of practical models and tools to facilitate the process, and it is a process. We have an elite unit of highly skilled professionals with the legal and financial expertise to manage the issues. In addition we pay close attention to supporting the psychological well-being of those involved. The key members of this team are Dr. James Urquhart, Head of the Graduate Business School at DIT, Gerard O'Mahoney Managing Partner Deloitte & Touche, David Donegan, Henry P.F. Donegan Solc., Martin Brennan, MD

Proactive Management, J.J. O'Connell Plato Ireland, Bob McCarthy MD Leadership Management Ireland and John Brennan, Psychologist and IR specialist.

Some 30 Plato SMEs are currently completing a comprehensive Business Transference Programme in Cork and Dublin. Skillnets are funding up to 75% of the cost of this programme and their practical support is very much appreciated. If you are an owner-manager that has not looked closely at or planned for the future we encourage you to do so. Over the coming editions of the Plato Post we will be looking in more detail at this very important issue.

Should you wish to know more about the up-coming programmes please contact J.J. O'Connell, Plato.



J.J. O'Connell, Director - Plato Ireland

## FAS Programmes for Small Businesses

Small companies continue to report favourably on the wide range of training and company development programmes made available through the Services To Business units in FÁS.

Over 500 small firms have now participated in one or more of the various programmes on offer.

The courses that make up the FÁS Competency Development Programme continue to prove very popular, as does the Excellence Through People Programme for companies wishing to achieve Ireland's national standard for human resource development.

The FÁS Management Development Programme has been particularly successful.

An independent survey carried out in South Dublin and Wicklow of companies who took part in this programme recently, recorded an increase of 23 jobs in the 11 participating firms, with all companies remaining solvent despite the high failure rate of small businesses.

Owner/Managers who had detailed technical knowledge of the company's product or service, but were

often lacking in broad based management skills - a common problem in small businesses - were the main participants in the Programmes.

Information on all the FÁS programmes for small businesses is available on the Website [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie) - click on Training Programmes.

If you wish to be kept aware of training and development programmes available in your area, send your company Weblink or an e-mail address to [info@fas.ie](mailto:info@fas.ie) and ask about STB services in your area.

# Developing a Business Plan

**As talk of the Celtic Tiger recedes, the realization that, as Bob Dylan would put it “The times, they are a changin’” is quickly setting in. Have you noticed the remarkable reduction in the number of Job Advertisements in the main newspapers in the past year or so? It doesn’t seem that long since it was rumoured that some large companies (particularly in the I.T. sector) were finding it so difficult to get staff that they were paying a finders fee to those who locate suitable new employees. Not any more.**

So times are a changing, and we’d better get used to it. There is no denying the fact that the Irish Economy is currently experiencing a noticeable downturn so it’s time to plan accordingly.

For those of you who are in the happy position of having a Business Plan in place, now is the time to review it. Perhaps your projections were based on too optimistic a forecast than is now likely. If so, it’s time to assess the effect this will have, and adjust accordingly.

If you don’t (yet!) have a business plan, then it’s time you gave serious consideration to developing one. Remember the saying – “failing to plan is like planning to fail” – well this applies unilaterally to business, but even more so when the business climate becomes more demanding. In times like these, one needs to be very confident of making the correct decisions in adapting to increased competition, or a slowdown in demand in certain markets.

Remember what Alice in Wonderland said:

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where”, said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go”, said the Cat.

A Business Plan will develop for you a “road map” for your business. It will help identify where you want to take your business, and show how to get there. Not only that, it’ll identify places you don’t want to go, and help you ensure you avoid wasted journeys. It’ll put the steering wheel in your hand, and turn the lights on when times are dim.

Concerned about the future of your business? You ought to be. Have any idea where your business is likely to be in a few years time? Will it be bigger and better? Will your profit have grown or dropped? Will you need to borrow money in order to expand or even survive? Are you sure that borrowing money is the right thing to do? Will you have to find yourself having to deal with new competitors? Tough questions? Perhaps. But you need to answer them honestly and realistically. Life has a nasty habit of hitting us with some unwelcome surprises that might change the way we want things to be. Just think about those who used to make money from selling plastic bags!



**Pat Meehan, Group Planning  
Manager, Maxol Ireland**

Want to progress developing a business plan or review your existing plan? Of course you do, and Plato can help. As a participant in the Plato programme Plato offers worthwhile assistance in the development of business plans. Although all Plato Participants will have completed or at least considered the key aspects of a Business Plan, your Group Leaders will be happy to arrange a “review” or “group refresher” course should you need any further help.

[Mr. Pat Meehan, Planning & Development Manager, The Maxol Group](#)



*Are you searching for funding?*

*Are you searching for research partners?*

*Do you know about expertiseireland.com?*

The emergence of the knowledge society is bringing about a fundamental reshaping of the global economy. The creation, dissemination and exploitation of knowledge are the keys to unlocking the potential of the island’s economy; expertiseireland.com provides the gateway to Ireland’s knowledge base. expertiseireland.com has been primarily designed to facilitate the identification of expertise and to serve as the first point of contact with the island’s knowledge capital. By providing a single access point, the portal facilitates and encourages industry-academic linkages and business to business connections.

expertiseireland.com is an online portal which has up-to-date details of academic expertise, funding information and collaborative opportunities for Ireland. The portal was launched on July 1, 2003 and currently has in excess of 2800 expert profiles from all nine universities and the Dublin Institute of Technology. It is anticipated that by the end of 2004 all institutes of technology will be contributing to the portal. It is driven by a powerful database which is populated directly from the knowledge management systems of the island’s public universities. The information supplied through the portal is of a high quality, reliable and updated regularly.

The profiles contain comprehensive information on research interests, projects, publications, conferences, patents and consultancy history. The portal also incorporates a free searchable funding database, which provides registered users with information on relevant sources of funding on a local, national and European level. Users also receive the additional benefit of email alerts of targeted expert profiles and funding opportunities. The latest news section provides up-to-date information regarding the world of R&D, education, finance and funding; it also has a large searchable archive of articles.

If you require further information please contact Dr. Celia Gallagher at [celia.gallagher@expertiseireland.com](mailto:celia.gallagher@expertiseireland.com).

# Getting to the top.

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