



Mary B. Walsh

Ire Wel Pallets Ltd.

GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

NAME:

Mary B. Walsh

BUSINESS

Ire Wel Pallets Ltd.

POSITION

Founder & Managing Director

WHAT WE DO

Pallet & Packaging Manufacturer

CONTACT US

Wells, Gorey,
Co. Wexford
T: 053 9130095
www.iwppallets.com

Mary B. Walsh began her career in banking with AIB in the 1980s, having studied Business and Accountancy in Waterford Institute of Technology and later Accountancy through CIMA. Coming from a family of entrepreneurs however, Mary always knew that she was destined to run her own business, but did not know what area it would be in.

The Walsh family run a saw mill in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. Often, they were asked if they could supply packaging and pallets to local manufacturing businesses. The family had no interest in the packaging business at all. "My husband Shay and I thought it was a mistake to refuse any business. Almost overnight, we decided to go for it ourselves and set up on our own. Shay left the family business and I left AIB. We formed Ire Wel Pallets in May 1990."

Ire Wel Pallets is Ireland's leading pallet and packaging manufacturer, supplying pallets, boxes and crates to specifications for their customers. The company's customer base includes organisations in the medical devices, pharmaceutical, electronic, food and drinks industries. Mary and Shay are looking forward to celebrating 30 years in business in 2020.

Based near Gorey, Co. Wexford, the company leased a premise for their first ten years in business. Twenty years ago, they bought a ten-acre site and developed the first purpose-built pallet manufacturing facility in Ireland. "We have grown steadily year on year to where we are today. We now have 200,000 sq. ft. ventilated store for ideal storage of kiln dried timber and pallets." Ire Wel Pallets grew fast initially with the support of their customers, local bank and Wexford County Council. "During our early days, Shay and I were also fortunate enough to be able to share our thoughts and ideas with a local Wexford businessman. He was a fantastic mentor and role model."

Coming out of the recession in 2013, Mary felt that Ire Wel Pallets could survive anything and truly believed it was the right time to focus on growing the business. She successfully applied for a place on the 6th cycle of Going for Growth. "The programme was perfect timing. We were looking to bring the company to the next level and we wanted to explore potential export markets." Getting accepted onto the programme was a 'game changer' for the company.

Speaking of her experience on Going for Growth, Mary says that she discovered a new way of doing business. "Going for Growth has generated new ideas and possibilities for my company. I now have a more structured approach to my business; concentrating more on the strategy and direction I want to bring the company in. The programme allowed me to engage with like-minded people in a confidential and safe environment."

At times Mary has found running her own business isolating. "It can be quite a lonely place when making difficult decisions. Being part of the Going for Growth Community allows you to connect with other business women to brainstorm, network, share ideas and get advice from like-minded equally successful business women."

Over the past three years €2.5million has been invested into Ire Wel Pallets, with a further €2million investment to come over the next 6 months. New technology on site has given the company more control of their production quality and stock. Mary now hopes to focus on export markets. With customers nationwide throughout the island of Ireland, she believes Ire Wel Pallets' presence in Northern Ireland is a key stepping stone into the UK market. "Over the next five years, we want to keep the business growing and begin exporting into mainland UK. We also aim to be the most successful pallet manufacturing company in Europe."

To help achieve their goals, Ire Wel Pallets currently employ a team of 50 staff and are expanding. "The team are extremely supportive. Many have been with us for years, while others have joined more recently."

Mary believes in giving back and is a voluntary Lead Entrepreneur on the highly successful ACORNS Programme, a Board Member on TIMCON (The UK Pallet & Packaging Association) since 2015, on Hospice Homecare, LoveGorey, and County Wexford Chamber. Mary was the Wexford Ambassador on NWED 2019.

