



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

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Mary B. Walsh began her career in banking with AIB in the 1980's, 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 Shea and I thought it was a mistake to refuse business. Almost overnight, we decided to go for it ourselves and set up on our own. Shea 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 and food and drinks industries. Mary and Shea recently celebrated 25 years in business.

Based near Gorey, Co. Wexford, the company leased a premises for their first ten years in business. Fifteen 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 a 60,000 sq. ft. ventilated store for ideal storage of kiln dried timber and pallets."* Ire Wel Pallets grew fast initially with the support of their local bank and Wexford County Council. *"During our early days, Shea 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."*

Speaking of her experience on the Going for Growth round tables, Mary 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 over the last 25 years, Mary has found running her own business isolating. *"It can be quite a lonely place when making difficult decisions. Begin part of the Going for Growth Community allows you to connect with other business women to brainstorm, share ideas and get advice."*

Over the last eighteen months, almost €1 Million has been invested into Ire Wel Pallets. 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 Ireland."*

To help achieve their goals, Ire Wel Pallets currently employ a team of 34 staff and are expanding. *"The team are extremely supportive. Many have been with us for years, while others have joined more recently. I love working with people and making a difference is important. Over the last 25 years, it has been a great privilege to provide employment and contribute to the local economy in Wexford."*

Mary truly loves being an entrepreneur and would recommend it to anyone who is up for the challenge. *"Running your own business enables you to try things you wouldn't have otherwise. It pushes you out of your comfort zone. Knowing you have made the right call and seeing it pay off is incredibly rewarding and exciting."*

