

# Innovation & Competitiveness Conference



In today's globally competitive environment, no business, large or small, can survive without innovating.

One of the key priorities of the Lisbon agenda is the creation of a more sustainable economic base within Europe, through the encouragement and support of initiatives focussed on innovation and competitiveness, including, in particular, the growth of the knowledge economy. There is an inextricable connection between innovation and competitiveness - innovation enhances a company's capacity to gain competitive advantage, increase wealth generation, and, thus create the resources necessary to support future business growth and development.

The 2006 Annual Report of the National Competitiveness Council points out that the productivity of indigenous industry is pivotal to Ireland's future international competitiveness. Domestically trading firms account for about 85% of employment (over 90% of businesses in Ireland are micro-enterprises). Whilst many of these companies underpin the competitiveness of internationally trading companies, the challenge is to grow a

cohort of these companies to identify and exploit overseas market opportunities. Actions to increase competitiveness and to be innovative transcend all areas of a business, and must be an unremitting, continuous, and integral part of the business process.

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 states that the development of the knowledge economy constitutes one of the key challenges facing the economy. Knowledge is power - and a key objective must be to focus on realising the potential of all-island collaboration so as to maximise our combined competitive strength internationally. The unique opportunities presented by the global growth in the services sector presents special challenges for policymakers and support agencies as to how to promote and support services innovation.

Mr. Vincent Reynolds  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cavan County Enterprise Board

## AGENDA

9.15am	Coffee & Registration <b>Mr. John Murray</b> <i>Presenter, RTE's "The Business"</i> Conference Chairman	11.45am	<b>Mr. Barry Winkless</b> <i>Service Improvement &amp; Innovation Manager</i> EBS Building Society Practical Lessons
9.45am	<b>Mr. Vincent Reynolds</b> <i>Chief Executive</i> Cavan County Enterprise Board Welcome Address	12.30am	<b>Mr. Peter Quinn</b> <i>Director</i> Peter Quinn Consultancy Services Ltd. Small Business Innovation Report Launch
9.55am	<b>Mr. Sean Quinn</b> <i>Chairman &amp; Managing Director</i> Quinn Group Keynote Address Innovation: The Quinn Way	1.00pm	Lunch
10.15am	<b>Mr. Jim Power</b> <i>Chief Economist, Friends First</i> The Irish and World Economy... What's around the corner and How Small Businesses can Prepare	2.00pm	<b>Professor Ian Robertson</b> <i>Professor of Psychology</i> Trinity College Dublin Manage Your Mind
11.00am	Tea & Coffee	2.45pm	<b>Mr. Tom McEnaney</b> <i>Business Editor</i> Irish Independent How to get your Business Noticed by the Media
11.15am	<b>Mr. Martin Cronin</b> <i>Chief Executive, Forfas</i> Innovation: the view from Government	3.30pm	Conference Close

## Mr. Sean Quinn



*Chairman & Managing Director, Quinn Group*

Sean Quinn started in business in 1973 extracting and washing sand and gravel from the family farm and selling it to local builders and farmers.

It was from there that the business expanded rapidly into what is now a multinational Group involved in quarrying and extraction, the manufacture of cement and concrete products, insulation products, container glass, plastics and packaging, and radiators and employing 7000 people. In 1996, the Quinn Group entered the Irish Motor Insurance market with the founding of Quinn Direct Insurance Limited, a company that has grown to become one of the largest and most successful insurance companies in Ireland.

More recently, Quinn entered the Health Insurance market with his acquisition of BUPA Ireland Ltd.

## Mr. Tom McEnaney



*Business Editor, Irish Independent*

Tom McEnaney is Business Editor of the Irish Independent. He was previously Deputy Business Editor of both The Sunday Times and Business & Finance Magazine.

He set up the Sunday Business Show on Today FM and, in the early years, was its Presenter and Editor. Originally from Shercock, Cavan, McEnaney has an honours degree in civil engineering from Trinity College Dublin and a Masters in Journalism from DCU.

## Mr. Jim Power



*Chief Economist, Friends First*

Jim Power is Chief Economist and Director of Investment Strategy at Friends First Group. He was previously Chief Economist at Bank of Ireland and Treasury Economist at AIB Group. Power holds a B.A. in Economics and Politics, and a Master of Economic Science Degree from University College, Dublin. He is a frequent contributor to Irish and UK media on economic, financial and housing market issues, and writes extensively on these issues for various publications.

## Professor Ian Robertson



*Professor of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin*

Professor Ian Robertson is Professor of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin and Director of Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience, posts he took up in 1999 after eight years in Cambridge, England as a Fellow of Hughes Hall and a Senior Scientist at the internationally-renowned MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit. Robertson is a renowned speaker in neuropsychology and is at the forefront in the development of training methods for improving brain function.

## Mr. Martin Cronin



*Chief Executive, Forfas*

Martin Cronin is Chief Executive of Forfás, the Irish Agency for policy research and advice in the fields of Enterprise, Trade, Science, Technology and Innovation. He is a member of the National Competitiveness Council, the Advisory Science Council, the Higher Education Authority, the Management Board of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Board of Tyndall National Institute. Cronin was Director of Operations in IDA Ireland from 1994 until 2002.

## Mr. Peter Quinn



*Director, Peter Quinn Consultancy Services Ltd.*

Peter Quinn is the founder and Managing Director of Peter Quinn Consultancy Services. He is a former President of the GAA and former member of the ICAI Council. Quinn was recently appointed Chair of the Social Finance Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation, which aims to make the financing of social and community development more affordable.

## Mr. Barry Winkless

*Service Improvement & Innovation Manager  
EBS Building Society*

Barry Winkless is Service Improvement and Innovation Manager at EBS Building Society. He has worked in numerous sectors including finance, medical devices, food and drink, consulting services and semi-state organisations. An expert in the areas of innovation (planning, training and product development), process improvement, business excellence and customer centricity, Winkless has published numerous articles and holds a Black Belt in Six Sigma.

## Mr. John Murray



*Presenter, RTE's "The Business"*

John Murray is a regular presenter of RTÉ Radio One's flagship current affairs programme, Morning Ireland. He also presents Radio One's weekly business and personal finance show, The Business, which looks at business and enterprise in Ireland.