

Irish Pressings Project Wins Let's Do Business Competition

Donegal County Enterprise Board (DCEB) launched a National schools competition called 'Lets do Business', as part of a range of programmes based on a learning-by-doing principle. DCEB believes that it is never too early to begin developing enterprise capability in young people. The competition aims to foster enterprise skills, attitudes and knowledge within young people, with the aim to encourage young people to be entrepreneurs in the future. They are encouraged to learn from real entrepreneurs and business people in order to gain the knowledge and skills required for business and enterprise. DCEB assists businesses by providing grant aid for new enterprises as well as training and management support, Business Information Services and the facilitation of business networks for established businesses.

Irish Pressings has a successful history of involvement with DCEB events being previous winners in a DCEB competition for their companies marketing plan. Declan and Brendan Ward established Irish Pressings in 2005. The company designs and manufactures press tools, prototypes and metal pressed components for the automotive industry. The company which was recently approved as a supplier to Bentley Motors has steadily increased its presence within the automotive industry by winning an increasing number of new contracts and adding continually to the range of services offered to customers. Declan and Brendan are always delighted to get involved with community events and the development of young business minds of the future. So when one group of students approached them about basing their entry for 'Lets do Business' on Irish Pressings, they were delighted to facilitate.

The group of students from Scoil Mhuire, Belcruit consisting of Megan Ward, Aisling Sharkey, JJ Mc Cann and Oisín Mc Dowell decided to base their project on Irish Pressings, as they were very interested in the idea of such a company operating in rural Donegal. They visited the premises and asked questions to gain as much information as possible to aid with completion of the project.

This is a collection of photos from their visit which were used in their project.



During their visit the students got the guided tour with Declan and Brendan Ward. The visit consisted of a visual session with Jitto John, tool designer, who showed the children some 3D designs for tools and prototypes on CAD. "The group got to see the process involved in the design of a tool and also how tooling is manufactured on the factory floor" said Jitto John. He continued by saying "when the students saw one of the 3.5 metre tools we had manufactured they were amazed by the size of it and it helped them to understand better what we do here at Irish Pressings" They also got to see the machines in action and were particularly taken with the robot weld cell.

Declan Ward said, “It is great to see young children showing such enthusiasm for business. The group were very thorough in their research and had obviously studied our website before their visit as they had a full list of questions prepared for us”. Brendan Ward added, “The group enjoyed their tour around the factory and were very interested to hear that our end customers include companies such as Rolls Royce, Jaguar and Aston Martin.”

The official presentation of the Student Enterprise Awards for the competition was in the offices of Donegal County Enterprise Board based in Letterkenny on Saturday the 14th November 2009, where the Irish Pressings Ltd project received first prize for their entry. Declan concluded by saying, “We are very proud of the achievement of Megan, Aisling, JJ and Oisin, they put a lot of effort into their project, it is encouraging to see such a level of interest in local businesses from schools in the area.” Brendan added “Our tool making apprentices have all come to us direct from the local schools and it is important for us to foster a level of interest in what we do here at Irish Pressings so we were very happy to be able to help the group and who knows maybe some of them will be back to work with us in the future, they definitely all have entrepreneurial skills”



Photo (Left to Right): Aisling Sharkey, Declan Ward (Managing Director of Irish Pressings), JJ McCann, Megan Ward, Crona Houston (Class Teacher) and Oisin McDowell.