



Pictured left: Michael Horgan, Director of Enterprises, Rehab Group.

Man with a Mission

Michael Horgan, Rehab's Director of Enterprises, speaks to *Rehab News* about his exciting expansion plans and his aim to double the number of people with disabilities employed by Rehab Enterprises over the next three years.

MICHAEL HORGAN is not your average shopkeeper. While Rehab's Director of Enterprises has ultimate responsibility for its network of six retail shops in places as diverse as Dáil Éireann and Ulster Bank in Dublin, he also has responsibility for a host of other innovative businesses, including Rehab Recycle, Rehab Logistics, and Workability, which incorporates Rehab Retail, Rehab Packaging, Access Ability and Mediability.

Michael took charge of the Rehab Enterprises division in March 2007. Since then, he has, along with his

impressive and dynamic management team, introduced a host of new innovations and service developments. Michael has already presided over the introduction of Rehab's first recycling facility for expanded polystyrene in Navan, the buying out of the City Recycling Company in Dublin, Galway and Mayo which collects glass recyclables from businesses, and the launch of the new ABLE award for business excellence which sets disability standards for companies.

Rehab Enterprises is the commercial division of the Rehab Group and is the world's first company to provide truly integrated social employment opportunities for workers with

disabilities. Approximately 430 people are currently employed in Rehab Enterprises' range of businesses, more than half of whom are people with disabilities.

Born in Dun Laoghaire in County Dublin, it was after a stint in Dublin's College of Marketing and Design and several different roles in leading Irish and international companies that Michael joined what was then Gandon Enterprises in October 2000 as Business Development Manager. "Would you believe back then in our facility in Tallaght we used to make jams and biscuits – everything from chocolate chip to shortbread! We have moved away from that and, of

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course, today our Tallaght operation is home to one of the country's biggest waste electrical and electronic recycling facilities which has the capacity to recycle some 50 tonnes of material every day.”

People might be surprised to learn that Rehab Enterprises is not only in Ireland, but also has operations in Poland and the Netherlands. How did Rehab end up in these far-flung locations? “We were invited!” says Michael. “We do a lot of work for Dell in Limerick and when Dell decided to open a new facility in Poland, they asked us to come along and set up a similar logistics operation there. It was a challenge to get up and running in six months but we jumped at the opportunity. I guess you could say that they are a very satisfied customer. It was a similar situation with Microsoft in the Netherlands who invited us to set up a reverse logistics facility there, taking back unsold and out-of-date products for recycling.”

Michael also regularly meets colleagues from other organisations in Europe and worldwide, through Workability International. “That's an incredibly useful network, and we have seen many tangible benefits in terms of contacts with big companies which have bases in a number of different countries,” he told *Rehab News*. Rumour has it, that the language barrier causes no problems for Michael, whose command of French is *magnifique*.

So is the talk of economic difficulty worrying? “While we have seen our bottom line develop considerably in recent years, like everyone else, we would have concerns about the economic environment but we are working very hard to minimise the effects. Needless to say, there is a big emphasis on sales at the moment and we are looking very closely at all the costs across the range of businesses. We are certainly confident for the future that we will be able to weather the storm and we have some exciting plans.

“In the next few years, we aim to increase the number of retail units we have at the moment to 10 and to move into handling new products such as household goods in our logistics division. We are planning to expand our glass recycling facilities and looking at venturing into recycling other types of materials such as plastics and wood. We are in the process of developing a total waste management solution for companies, which will incorporate everything from cardboard to wet waste, and we are also planning to offer contract services in areas like cleaning, gardening and maintenance.”

Michael takes great pride in the fact that more than half of Rehab Enterprises' employees are people with disabilities. “There is a tremendous feelgood factor in working in Rehab Enterprises and we take great pride in seeing our people develop and fulfilling their potential. In fact, we plan to double the number of people with disabilities in our workforce in the next three years. It may be somewhat clichéd to say but in the case of Rehab Enterprises, it really is true, we do make a difference.”

So after all of that, is there any spare time left in Michael Horgan's schedule? “I'm a keen sailing enthusiast and was an instructor in a previous life. I love nothing better than to hit the waves whenever I can – it certainly clears the mind!” Given his ambitious plans for Rehab Enterprises, it's hardly surprising to know that Michael, competitive as ever, has competed in the round-Ireland yacht race and has represented Ireland on a number of occasions in various competitions.

It's just a pity there isn't a marina near Rehab's head offices in Sandymount so Michael could beat the traffic on his commute. Perhaps, another exciting new venture for Rehab Enterprises to think about. ■



Pictured above (left to right): Sinead Cafferky, Hugh Whitla, Paulo Piper Segurado and George Nikov at the launch last June of the ABLE Business Excellence Award.

The ABLE Business Excellence Award

The ABLE Business Excellence Award is a new award for disability in the marketplace organised by Rehab and the Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA). A mark of quality and distinction, this award is a key tool for businesses to demonstrate their commitment and achievement as employers of, and providers of services to, people with disabilities.

Ten per cent of our population has a disability and it makes good business sense for companies to make sure that people with disabilities are being provided for appropriately.

The Categories

Companies will be assessed on four main criteria as part of the ABLE award:

The "Employment and Career" category will look at companies' approach to recruitment and career development for people with disabilities within an organisation.

The "Built Environment" category will review the issues of accessibility to the company's premises, goods and services. For example, criteria such as access to buildings and the provision of lifts that can assist in making the workplace more "disability-friendly".

The "Customer Services" category will review how a company and its staff interact with customers with

disabilities. For example, are staff trained in disability awareness and does the company's website have a "AAA" approval rating for people who are visually impaired?

The "Leadership" category examines the organisation's commitment to providing equality to people with disabilities, and whether there are action plans and resources in place to implement this. The organisation's compliance with disability legislation and codes of practice is also reviewed along with the promotion of equality of service delivery, opportunity and accessibility.

The Assessment

Following the submission of a self-assessment form, a site assessment will be arranged and carried out by ABLE representatives after which the company will receive the results and feedback in the form of a report, which provides key learnings for further development.

Businesses can apply for the ABLE Business Excellence Award at any time and the process takes approximately 12 weeks from application to assessment. The ABLE award is issued by the EIQA and is subject to re-assessment every two years.

Companies can register their interest on www.able.ie to receive a full information pack.