



Justin McInerney, chief executive and Ken O'Shea, managing director, Accuflow  
Picture: Diane Cusack



Tom Keane, founder of RetailEverywhere

# The business minds creating fresh experiences

In the second instalment in a two-part series, we profile 12 emerging companies whose founders are taking part in the upcoming Entrepreneur Experience event, write **Colette Sexton** and **Dearbhla Gavin**

The Entrepreneur Experience, an annual event for emerging and seasoned company founders to learn from each other, will take place this year on April 15 and 16. The Sunday Business Post is the media partner of the event, which

was created by the CorkBIC organisation. Last week, we profiled 12 of the 24 participants. This week, we look at the remaining 12.

## Pursue

Pursue manages online influencers who post content on platforms like YouTube.

The company was set up by 17-year-old Conor O'Flaherty, who created a 29-slide presentation to convince his parents to let him drop out of school in the middle of his Leaving Cert year and set up his own company.

In the same way that traditional celebrities need managers and agents, Pursue helps individual brands secure advertising deals with influential YouTube stars. O'Flaherty is one of only two licensed YouTube talent managers in Ireland. Pursue works to build its influencers' business and brand, along with enabling them to tap into commercial opportunities.

O'Flaherty reckons traditional advertising is dead, and influencer marketing is the future.

Clients include Canadian beauty vlogger Elaine Mok, who has nearly 360,000 subscribers to her channel, and over 50 million views on her videos. The business was launched in September 2015 after a year of development.

## FlexiBod

FlexiBod has developed a unique office chair to reduce back pain and muscle tightness while sitting. It was designed in conjunction with physiotherapists, doctors, chiropractic neurologists and professional athletes.

The active chair was designed around the human body, fitting itself to people's natural movements. It aims to reduce stress on the spine and back muscles, increase blood flow and circulation (which helps to prevent heart disease and diabetes), improve the flexibility and range of motion, engage your core muscles, and even improve mental function, all while you sit.

FlexiBod aims to develop more products that improve the performance and biomechanics of the body. Damien Mason came up with the idea with Elizabeth Kenny after he suffered injuries while training for and competing in marathons and triathlons. Mason graduated as a mechanical engineer from the University of Limerick in

2002 and worked for CRH for ten years in technical, commercial and managerial roles. He qualified as a chartered management accountant in 2014.

## Ashleigh Environmental

Ashleigh Environmental is a cleantech start-up which develops bioenergy solutions for pig farmers. It aims to create a renewable energy solution that will enable farmers to generate their own electricity in a more environmentally sustainable way.

The company was founded by Ken McGrath, who first became interested in agriculture as a child on his family farm in Waterford. After completing a bachelors and masters degree in business information systems, he worked in investment banking, where he managed technology change programmes. After speaking to his father about the potential in the renewable energy sector, McGrath moved home to dedicate himself to the area full-time.

Ashleigh Environmental's smart technology uses a microwave system to pre-treat pig manure before it enters an anaerobic digestion process.

The technology can generate up to 20 per cent more methane than traditional anaerobic digestion methods, increasing the electricity yield and making it a viable renewable energy solution for the big farming industry.

The company secured €1.36 million in funding from Horizon 2020 Fast Track to Innovation programme, which promotes the harnessing of new technologies. The investment allowed it to develop the technology from prototype to an industrial-scale pilot.

## SRL

SRL is a sensory and consumer research provider to academia, governments and industry.

Based at University College Cork, SRL specialises in gathering sensory data in the area of pharmaceuticals to give companies a competitive advantage. Margaret Shine set up SRL in 2002 after a career of research and development in the pharmaceutical sector.

In 2013, SRL merged with local company ISS to create links with the SME sector and give it a strong foundation to grow.

Last year, it launched a pharma company due to the growing demand of pharmaceutical sensory research support. To help create a centre of excellence, it set up strategic partnerships with the school of pharmacy in UCC and the clinical research facility at the Mercy hospital in Cork.

It also partnered with several pharmaceutical companies, their contract research organisations and academic institutions in the areas of taste-masking, new flavour research/optimisation and drug palatability.

Some of its past research projects include developing patents for taste-masking technologies and taste diagnostics.

Margaret Shine is a sensory science professional who has worked globally in research and development involving food and pharmaceuticals. Her experience



Margaret Shine, founder of SRL  
Picture: Clare Keogh

spans pharmaceuticals, OTC medicine, foods/beverages, personal care products, oral care products, cosmetics, household products, and pet food.

## KM Medical Software

Cork-based KM Medical Software offers cloud-based informatics solutions in real time to healthcare professionals.

It provides electronic medical records for physicians and surgeons and many other healthcare professionals.

In addition to clinic-based software, KM Medical supplies clinical outcome software solutions. These solutions have been used in a range of international studies across specialities such as gynaecology and oncology.

KM Medical Software was founded in 2001 by orthopaedic surgeon Karuppiyah Mahalingam in response to the challenges he experienced in updating and sharing critical medical information at a moment's notice.

The company operates a number of key software modules, including iMedDoc, a cloud-based practice management software system that streamlines how patient information is stored and updated in a private medical practice. It also runs iMedOutcomes, which uses analytics to show clinical outcomes of a surgery in real time and manages clinical audits for fast capture and input of patient data.

It has over 250 clients in Ireland, Britain, the US, Australia and Europe. The company has secured contracts with several NHS Hospital Trusts in Britain and private hospitals in the United States.

In 2015, John Clancy joined as man-

aging director after a career in telecommunications. He previously worked in the South Pacific for Digicel, Denis O'Brien's telecommunications company. He worked as executive director at Highland Radio from 2012 until he joined KM Medical Software.

## Accuflow

Accuflow is a Cork-based global manufacturer of wireless home heating control products, promising increased efficiencies and savings for consumers.

Justin McInerney, chief executive of the Accuflow Group, has been working in heating technologies since 1988. Having sold his previous two companies, he set up Accuflow in 2013.

As market demand shifts more towards sustainable energy solutions, at the end of 2015, it announced details of heavy investment and plans to expand its reach and workforce.

Its smart-technology tool has features like predictive analytics to prevent wastage and enables residents to turn off central heating remotely.

The analytics platform is being developed in conjunction with the Nimbus Centre at Cork Institute of Technology.

Accuflow has set up a smart home technology hub in Togher, Co Cork, and plans to expand its team to six to become a major player in the European market by 2018.

It sells directly to mainly heating and plumbing contractors and is actively targeting social housing agencies across Ireland and Britain.

Its head office is located in Cork, with satellite offices in London, USA, Italy, and China.

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