

Celebrating



years

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF LINESIGHT'S COLLABORATIVE AND RESILIENT SPIRIT

Over the past five decades, Linesight has transformed from a small cost consultancy practice into a global leader in construction consultancy. With over 1,500 people across 33 offices, our growth story is a testament to our collective resilience, ambition, and unwavering dedication.

Linesight began with a small team fuelled by a passion and commitment to excellence. I joined in 2002, and straight away was struck by the fact that we were not just regular colleagues – we shared a bond that went beyond professional duties. This authentic culture of camaraderie and togetherness has kept us united through challenging times, and remains the defining feature of Linesight today. That is something I, along with the rest of the Executive Committee and Senior Leadership teams, am immensely proud of.

Our growth has brought about necessary changes. We've become more professional, established robust structures, and implemented efficient processes to support our expanding business. Yet, amidst this evolution, we have preserved our core values—the essence that made us great initially. These values continue to guide us as we navigate the complexities of the global landscape.

Together, we have weathered significant challenges, including global recessions and a pandemic, emerging stronger each time. Our resilient spirit and adaptability have been great assets, enabling us to thrive in the face of adversity.

This commemorative publication acknowledges the exceptional contributions made by our people, both past and present – our people have been instrumental in our success and in enabling us to reach this important milestone. We celebrate our collective achievements and take pride in what we've accomplished together. As we move forward, let's keep doing what we do best—working collaboratively, supporting each other, and striving for excellence to continue to make Linesight great.

Thank you, and here's to 50 more years of growth and success!



Paul Boylan

Paul Boylan, Group CEO

01

INCEPTION AND EARLY YEARS



INCEPTION AND EARLY YEARS

In 1974, Peter Bruce and Roy Shaw came together to form a new quantity surveying practice called 'Bruce Shaw Partnership'. Initially operating from 51 Camden Street in Belfast, the partnership developed a solid list of clients in the early years, including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Belmont Club and Nobles Hospital. This roster was further solidified with the beginning of the partnership's long-standing relationship with Queen's University Belfast in 1976, as well as beginning work on the redevelopment of Belfast Airport. In 1978, the Partnership expanded to London under the leadership of Bill Dick and Ian Bond. Jeremy Bruce would join them a few years later.

The business was keen to expand to Dublin – enter Brendan O'Mara. Brendan was working in Desmond MacGreevy & Partners – a QS business in Dublin – but was getting itchy feet and becoming intent on setting up a company of his own. Brendan was introduced to Peter Bruce and the two hit it off straight away. They decided to partner and established an office in Dublin in 1979. *"Peter said to me: 'I'll supply the finance, you get the business';"* recalls Brendan. *"And so the journey began."*

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Peter said to me: 'I'll supply the finance, you get the business'. And so the journey began.
recalls Brendan O'Mara



01

Brendan O'Mara (centre) signing the initial agreement with Bruce Shaw Partnership



Gerry and Brendan meeting a client in Fitzwilliam Square

04

02

The Bruce Shaw team in the early 1980s, on the steps of the Fitzwilliam Square office

Brendan was keen to hit the ground running, and knew that he would need support to do so. He turned to his colleague in MacGreevy's, Derry Scully, and asked him to come on board. The pair didn't waste any time, and the Dublin office of Bruce Shaw Partnership was opened in a beautiful Georgian building at 20 Fitzwilliam Square in January 1980. Peter Bruce was determined that the correct image be created for the business and insisted on leasing the whole building, even though the staff complement was just three at that stage – Brendan, his secretary, Pat Mullett, and Derry.

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It was an enormous space for us at the time and we were rattling around for a bit, says Derry.

They weren't rattling around for long.

Brendan's boundless enthusiasm and business development prowess secured a number of hospitality and industrial clients to get the ball rolling, while Derry focused on the delivery

03

Derry Scully





05

| Gerard McConnell, Primark

of the highest quality service. Having previously worked with Penneys in another organisation, Derry brought the account to the new business. Penneys, now best known as Primark outside of Ireland, was still a relatively small business, but it was on a growth trajectory – something that dovetailed neatly with Bruce Shaw’s own ambitions.

Initially, Primark asked Bruce Shaw to carry out work on a new store in Limerick, but the teams got on so well that soon enough they were working together across Ireland. Many long-standing Linesight faces have worked on the account over the years, including Des O’Broin, Richard Joyce, Colm Buckley, Niall Cox and Jamie McDonagh. Gerard McConnell, who initially joined Bruce Shaw as an office assistant in 1987, departed to join Primark upon gaining his qualifications, working with Martin Coffey, who later joined Linesight. Gerard now holds the role of Primark’s Construction Director, overseeing projects from the US to Eastern Europe.

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I think it comes down to personalities. We’ve always got along, but like I said, it really is about performance as well.

Gerard McConnell, Primark



The original Cannock’s Clock on O’Connell Street in Limerick (left), and the world’s largest Primark in Birmingham (below)

06



Over the years, Primark has been one of Bruce Shaw's and later Linesight's longest-standing clients, with the relationship spanning 44 years to date. This says a lot about the quality of Linesight's work and its commitment to partnership working, both of which would become recurring themes.

As the years went by, Bruce Shaw would go on to follow Primark as it expanded into the UK, mainland Europe and then the US. *"They've had a massive expansion and we've expanded with them,"* notes Derry. Keeping control over costs for new stores is fundamental to Primark's business. *"For an organisation like Primark, where we're spending hundreds of millions every year on new stores, and existing store upgrades and extensions, the financial management of that spend is all important,"* says Gerard. *"We needed experienced surveyors managing the account."*

According to Gerard, it is that consistency of service and the positive culture that Bruce Shaw brought to the table that made it a valuable partner and trusted advisor to Primark. *"But at the end of the day, it's about business. It's about getting stuff done and making sure like any other service provider that they get the job done. To be frank, if they didn't do the job, they'd be gone. I think it comes down to personalities. We've always got along, but like I said, it really is about performance as well."*

Work was hard to find in the early 1980s but persistent business development by Brendan brought in projects like the Rose Hill House Hotel in Kilkenny, the Ardmore Hotel in Newry and Sachs Hotel in Dublin. During this time, the Dublin office was also appointed to manage costs for the Coca Cola Bottling Plant in Dublin, the Offray Ribbon plant in Roscrea, as well as pharmaceutical projects for Avondale Chemicals, Newport Pharmaceuticals, Clonmel Chemicals and Oral B Healthcare. These projects laid the groundwork for Linesight's current expertise in the life sciences sector, which will be covered in later chapters.

Gerry Campbell joined the office in January 1981, just in time for the first Christmas Party and other notables in those early days included Kevin Parsons, Tom Cleary, Joe Gissane and Nigel McKenna. They were ably supported by Pat Mullett, Caroline Twiss and Anne Gallagher, who continues to work with Brendan to this day.

However, it is safe to say that the early 1980s was a difficult time to establish a new business and the Dublin office wasn't exactly booming: in 1984, for instance, the office had a total of 11 staff and a turnover of just £1r185,000. Brendan started chasing down opportunities abroad, including five hospitals in Nigeria, which will be mentioned in the next chapter. It was a geo-diversification strategy that would be repeated some 25 years later.



07

Brendan
O'Mara

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In a sense, the recession also helped us. We did a huge amount of groundwork during that period.

Brendan O'Mara

“That work helped us through the recession,” says Brendan. “But in a sense, the recession also helped us. We did a huge amount of groundwork during that period.

“

I'd say that about 25% of our time was spent on speculative work, by which I mean that it didn't really pay, but it did establish relationships that we hoped would lead to work in the future, says Brendan.

Indeed, one of the company's big breaks was just around the corner in the form of the Custom House Docks development.



A selection of photos of the team from the 1980s and early 1990s

02

GROWTH AND EXPANSION



GROWTH AND EXPANSION

In 1987, the Irish government and city authorities held a competition for the regeneration of what were at the time redundant Dublin docklands. A meeting Brendan had in Luton Airport led to an invitation to join a bidding consortium, headed by Hardwicke, with partners British Land and McInerneys. After months of hard work, the bid was submitted and the Custom House Docks Development Company became the successful bidder.

The idea was to transform the area into a mixed-use neighbourhood including offices, retail, restaurants and “all that good stuff”, as Gerry puts it. “We were lucky to get on board with the winning consortium,” he says. “That was very much our big break and it put us on the map in many ways. It was by far and away the biggest commercial project in Ireland for a long time. It was the redevelopment of the whole docklands area, and it got us started and established us on that growth path.”

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Winning a prestigious project like that makes people sit up and take notice, notes Brendan.

“Other clients want to use you as a result. You become fashionable and suddenly everything gets a bit easier.”

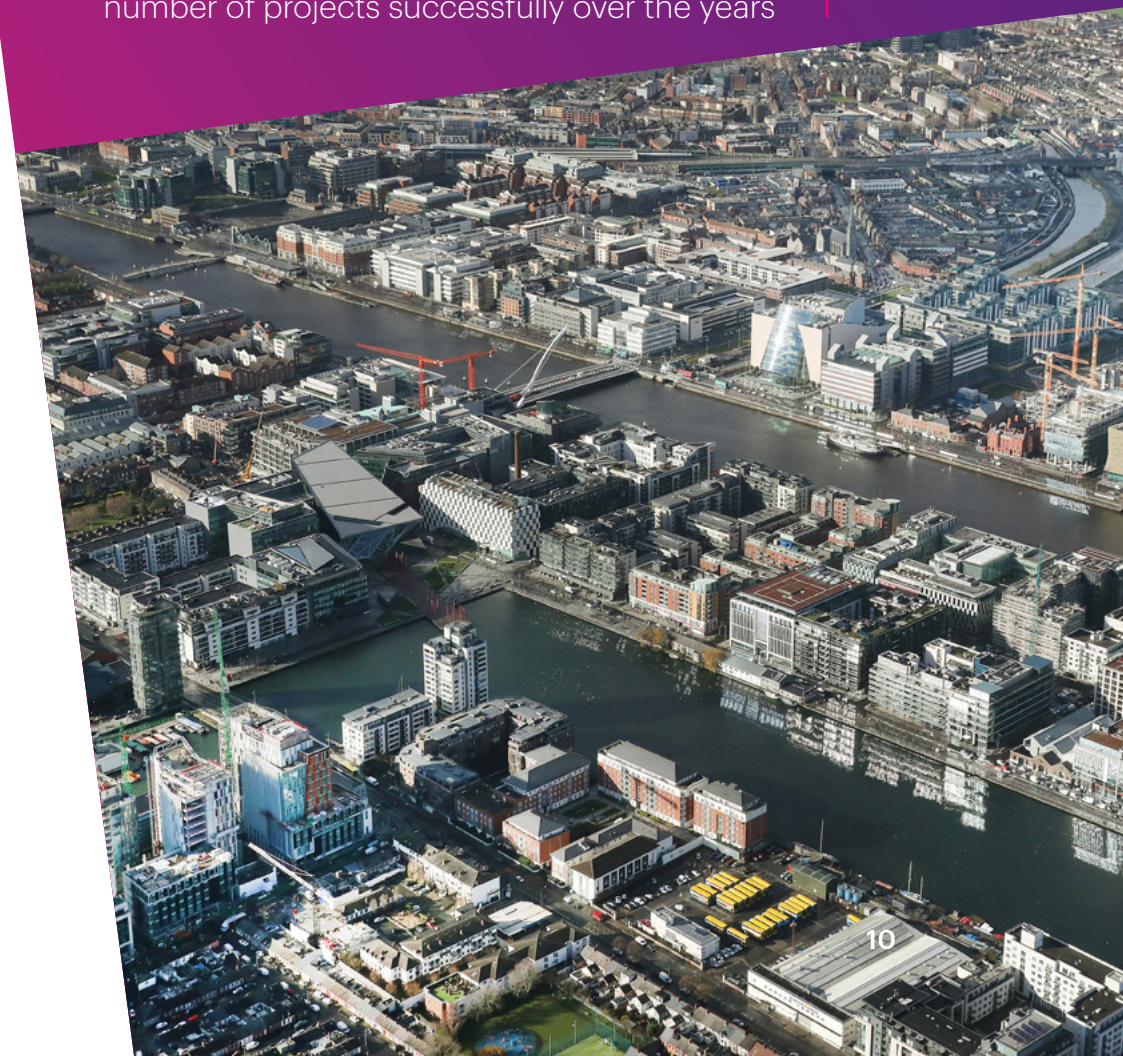


01

Gerry
Campbell

An aerial shot of the Dublin Docklands, where Linesight has successfully delivered a large number of projects successfully over the years

02





Peter McHale | 04

03

An illuminated model of the IFSC development

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We've had similar wins like that over the years, but that was the first big one,
Brendan continues.

In what was a highly competitive and exhaustive tendering process, the team still suspects that the inclusion of working lights on the physical model presented to the Docks Authority, a major innovation at the time, was the tipping point in the bid!

1989 was also a significant year for Bruce Shaw as it was when the company first started working with Microsoft.

The story perfectly illustrates why putting in the time and effort on speculative work is worth it. *“I got a call from a well-known architect,”* says Brendan. *“He was well known in the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and did quite a lot of foreign direct investment work. I'd invested a lot of time in building the relationship with him. He called to ask if we would like to discuss involvement in new offices for Microsoft. That was the start of our long-standing relationship with them.”*

As a result of its work on Custom House Docks, led by Gerry Campbell and supported by Michael Scollard at the time, Bruce Shaw needed to bring in more people, many of whom went on to play leading roles in the company's expansion in the decades to come. A prominent example is Peter McHale, who joined Bruce Shaw in 1988 and retired from Linesight in 2021 as Chairman of the Ireland business.

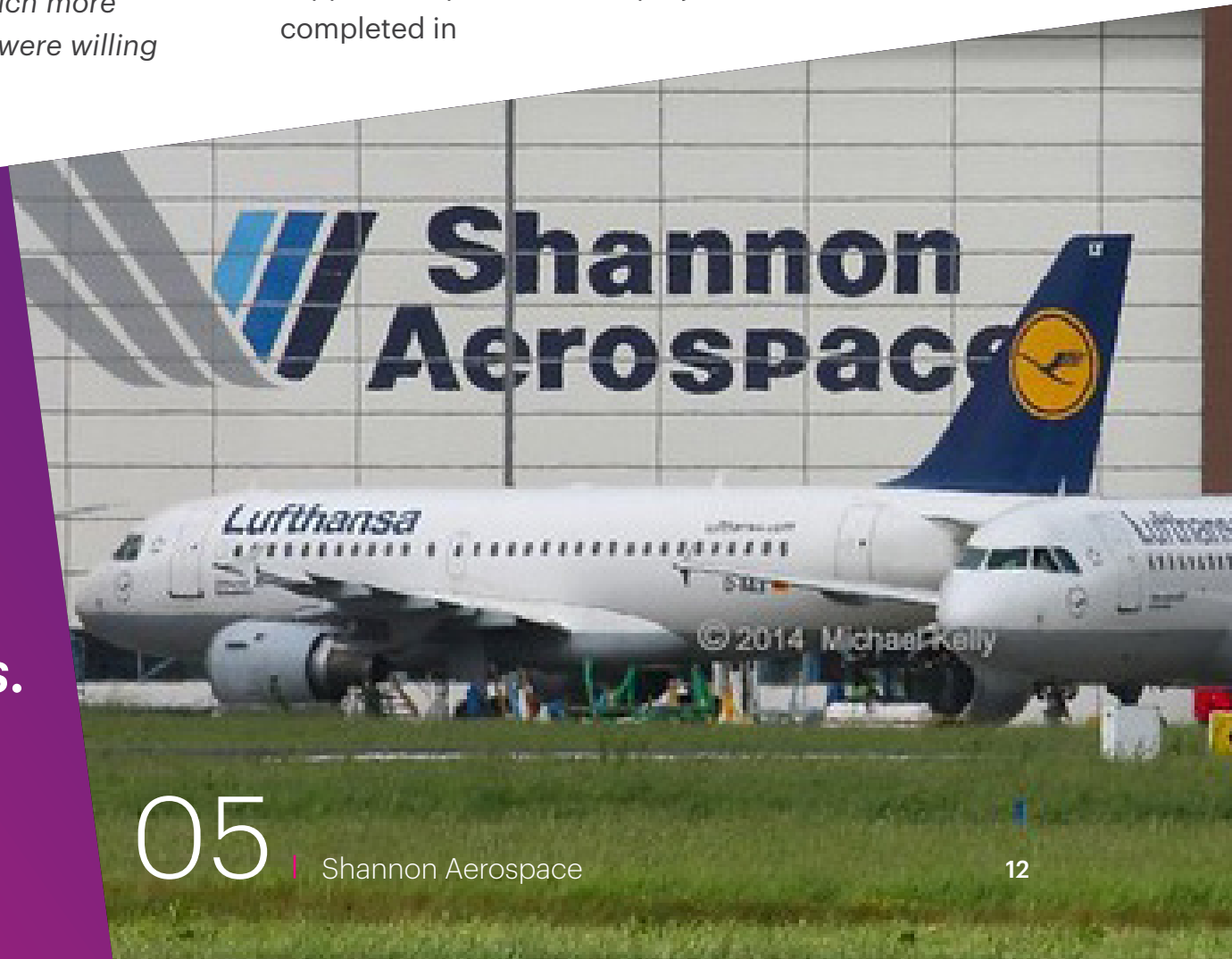
“I sent in my CV because they’d got their foot in the door with the Custom House Docks Development and the project was hugely prestigious,” says Peter. “It offered the opportunity to become involved in a large, international mixed-use regeneration project in the city centre, which was unique in Ireland at the time. It also greatly raised Bruce Shaws profile in the industry, as a progressive and ambitious firm.”

He adds: “I settled in really well. The team was dynamic, very driven, client-centric and determined to hit deadlines. That marked the business out as quite different in those days. We were just so much more proactive than other firms at the time. We were willing to step outside of the traditional QS role, which set us apart”.

**“
Ireland was a
country in recession
and suddenly we
were building these
huge aircraft hangars.
Peter McHale**

Soon enough, the Fitzwilliam Square office didn't feel so empty, and the partners were able to dedicate more time to looking out for the next big opportunity.

In short order, Bruce Shaw was appointed to work on Shannon Aerospace, a huge aircraft maintenance facility based at Shannon Airport, set up as a joint venture between Lufthansa and Swissair, and supported by the IDA. The project was completed in



1992 and its success led to further work in the aviation sector with an appointment to work on the Shannon Turbine Technologies project following on quickly.



That put us on the map for large-scale industrial projects, which very much became the bread and butter for Bruce Shaw going forward, says Derry.

“It was a large high-profile project, such that when we were finished it, we actually got together a group of architects and engineers, clients and everyone else involved to travel down there for a day just to have a look at it. It was pretty spectacular.”

Peter also has fond memories of the project. *“It was a massive job to get in multiple ways,”* he says. *“Ireland was a country in recession and suddenly we were building these huge aircraft hangars. There were these massive structures and it was really interesting from an engineering point of view. It was pretty ground-breaking for Ireland at the time.”*

The team then started to look for growth opportunities further afield, and took on its first projects in Africa around this time, working on five hospitals in Kwara state in Nigeria, funded by the Danish Overseas Development

Corporation. Working on the contractor side, the Bruce Shaw team for the project was headed up by Joe Gissane.

“Later on, as we matured, we learned to say no to things,” says Gerry. *“But at that time we were up for anything and had a policy of never saying no.”*

In Belfast, the practice continued to flourish and when Peter Bruce retired in 1990, the leadership of the Belfast office was taken over by Brian Gallagher and Brian McShane.

By 1991, Bruce Shaw was in a financial position to grow by acquisition rather than relying on organic growth, and spotted an opportunity to acquire a business from the German government in Berlin, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Led by Stephen Bruce, I.V.B. Gmbh of Thuringia, was acquired and opened up opportunities to work in the former GDR refurbishing Soviet era apartment blocks. The onward charge led the business to Romania in later years, following a number of Irish developers who were establishing a presence there, and Mark Keane led operations on the ground, working on the Park Plaza Shopping Centre.

In 1995, the opportunity presented itself to acquire a practice a bit closer to home in Cork, PF Coveney, which the company seized with both hands, knowing that otherwise it would be difficult to break into the market. *“Cork was a funny place at the time,”* says Brendan.



A selection of photos of the team from the 1980s and early 1990s

"It was a pretty hard place to do business unless you were based there and had people who were known there." Following the success of this venture, Bruce Shaw went on to acquire another practice in Limerick a few years later, from Frank O'Sullivan.

Indeed, 1995 shaped up to be a key year in Bruce Shaw's development. At pretty much the same time that it was acquiring the Cork business, the company also won its first major foreign direct investment commission, from global tech behemoth Hewlett Packard (HP), for a large inkjet cartridge manufacturing facility on the outskirts of Dublin.

It was another project that would stand Linesight in good stead in future years - and again underlines its dedication to building client relationships. Off the back of that first project in Ireland, Linesight has gone on to work with Hewlett Packard around the world.

Indeed, they played an instrumental role in Linesight establishing itself in several territories, something that proved invaluable in the years following the 2008 global financial crisis.



06

George Ross presenting Derry Scully with an award for Linesight's work on the Hewlett Packard project

07

Brendan O'Mara in Kuala Lumpur



Clearly, that sort of enduring business relationship is based on delivery and mutual respect, but in the case of Hewlett Packard, it is also demonstrably the case that lifelong friendships were formed. *“The client, design team and contractors, got on so well that we’ve all kept in touch ever since the Dublin project,”* says Derry.

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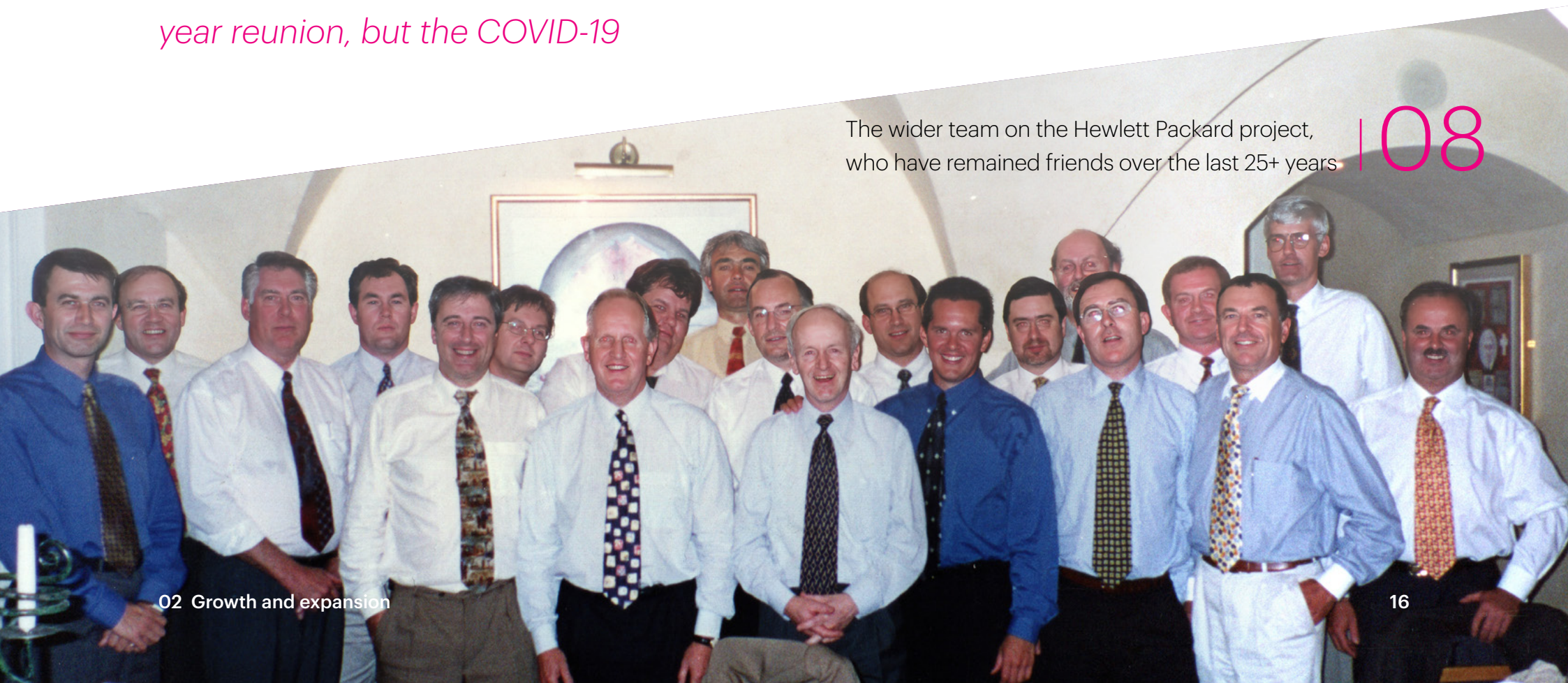
We had a ten-year reunion with the client, the architects, engineers, contractors and so on in Dublin, and we had a 20-year reunion in New York. We were meant to have a 25-year reunion, but the COVID-19

pandemic came along and scuppered those plans. We’re reducing the time period from ten years to five years on the basis that none of us are getting any younger!

Enduring relationships were also critical to Bruce Shaw’s first project in Asia, when one of its fellow consultants on the Shannon project made an introduction to a developer in Malaysia that was building a state-of-the-art stadium for the 1998 Commonwealth Games in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur.

The wider team on the Hewlett Packard project, who have remained friends over the last 25+ years

| 08



“At the time, we’d never been anywhere near Malaysia and hadn’t built a stadium,” says Derry. “But we just got on with it and it was very successful.”

Similarly, Bruce Shaw had no experience of working in the Middle East at this stage, but that didn’t stop the company picking up work for French contractor, Oger International, which was engaged by the Saudi Arabian government to deliver a series of huge projects in the Kingdom. It was an interesting time, as the government was moving from a completely cost-reimbursable model to lump sum contracts. *“All of a sudden, costs mattered,”* says Derry. *“At peak, we had a team of ten people based out of Oger’s design office in Paris.”*

In the same period, Bruce Shaw also picked up other international business, including helping with the reconstruction of the Falklands following the war.

“*All the materials for the reconstruction of the islands after the war had to be shipped from the UK, so you can imagine how important it was to get the quantities right,* says Gerry.



09

Welcoming newly appointed Partners to the fold in 1995 - L-R: Des O’Broin, Gerry O’Reilly, Gerry Campbell, Brendan O’Mara, Derry Scully, Peter McHale and Michael Scollard

10

Austin Hickey and Brendan O’Mara on-site in 1993





11 | Brendan O'Mara and Stephen Bruce
in East Berlin

12 | The Island of Ireland Peace Park,
Belgium



The Island of Ireland Peace Park in Belgium was another big international project, which opened on Armistice Day 1998, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of the first World War. Bruce Shaw undertook this project on a pro-bono basis.

This dovetailed nicely with the business beginning to look at service expansion opportunities beyond Quantity Surveying. Project Management seemed a natural progression to extend the organisation's role and this was spearheaded initially by Gerry O'Reilly.

During this time, the Irish construction industry was also becoming more safety conscious. Recognising this, the business established Bruce Shaw Safety Management, led by Niall Harrington. Consulting, overseen by Willie Aherne, and bank monitoring, which was headed up by Pat McDevitt, are also examples of where the organisation began to diversify its service portfolio, and generally seek out more holistic project opportunities.

In retrospect, all this looks perfectly natural given Linesight's global presence. But the reality is that it was genuinely remarkable for what was still a relatively small Irish business and speaks to the partners' entrepreneurial spirit. As we shall see, that attitude proved to be lifesaving during the decades to come.

03

**RECESSION AND
GEO-DIVERSIFICATION
(2000s)**



RECESSION AND GEO-DIVERSIFICATION (2000s)

By the mid-2000s, Bruce Shaw had started to spread its wings internationally, but it was still at heart an Irish business, albeit a dominant one within its home market. Then the music stopped. The global financial crisis (GFC), as it became known, was quite simply a bolt from the blue and turned out to be the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Not everywhere was affected to the same extent, of course, but Ireland was among the worst affected. The timing couldn't really have been worse. After all, in 2007 Ireland was in the midst of a construction boom, both in terms of prices and volume.

It wasn't so much that the market deflated; more that the bubble burst almost instantaneously.

Construction volumes – not only in the housing sector, but also across the industry - collapsed.

According to a paper by the Central Bank of Ireland, *“almost one in every two workers who lost their jobs in Ireland in the five years from 2007 to 2012 had previously been employed in construction”*. What's more, the recovery was to be slow: the number at work in the industry as of Q2 2017 was 46 percent lower than in 2007.

“GDP fell by six or seven percent during this period,” remembers Peter. “But if you look at the construction industry, output fell by 50%. It was extraordinary and it happened pretty much overnight. Work dried up and maintaining any kind of positive cashflow became a huge challenge.”

In 2008, the team at Bruce Shaw had no way of knowing that the fallout from the GFC would last so long. But what was immediately obvious was that business had dried up overnight. This was an existential inflection point for the company. *“It was a horrendous time,” says Brendan. “Business just fell off a cliff and we had to come up with a new strategy – and fast.”*

Other companies might have acted like the proverbial rabbit in the headlights, but not Bruce Shaw. Instead, the business doubled down. If work wasn't going to be available in Ireland, it would have to be found elsewhere. As a result, the partners devised a new strategy.

They would concentrate their efforts on geo-diversification by whatever means necessary, to ensure the business survived.

“We realised that while Ireland is a dynamic country with an open economy, really the market is tiny,” says Brendan.



A selection of photos of the team from the 2000s

“Today, GDP is back up at around \$460bn, but in the UK it’s \$2.3tn and in the US, it’s around the \$22.3tn mark.



So, it made sense to go overseas. We were the biggest QS firm in Ireland by a country mile, and we probably wouldn’t have done it to the same extent without the recession. It was a game changer, continues Brendan.

Bruce Shaw wasn’t quite starting with a blank sheet of paper, however. As a result of the partners’ efforts to win work in Ireland with major multinationals, such as IBM, Microsoft and Hewlett Packard, Bruce Shaw did at least have contacts in other territories. *“All those clients turned out to be instrumental in our ability post-2008 to work abroad,”* says Gerry.

“We had the ability to talk to those clients about what was going on in the outside world. If we hadn’t had all that experience with those inward investment clients, it would have been a much more difficult journey for us when we went abroad. I’m not saying that we wouldn’t have managed it, but it would have been far more difficult.”

With the benefit of hindsight, the strategy looks like the obvious decision. After all, what is now Linesight went on to become a truly global consultancy. But such a view fails to appreciate quite what a bold move this was at the time. Entering new territories where the company had little to no experience was a highly risky and expensive move. If it had gone wrong, Bruce Shaw would have shrunk considerably and seriously struggled.

That it didn’t is testament to the ‘road warriors’, as many of the leadership team of the time still dub them, sent forth to conquer. As the following few chapters will make clear, all the individuals involved came up with innovative approaches to business development in their respective regions.

But they all exhibited a number of shared characteristics that enabled them to thrive: tenaciousness, creativity, charisma and a remarkable capacity for sheer hard graft.

“We had a serious challenge on our hands,” says Gerry. *“But it turned out that we had these great people who were up for the challenge. When there were hard decisions to make, they were prepared to make them.*

“

We decided that we weren't just going to survive the recession; we were going to survive and grow our way out of the recession, recalls Gerry.

Steven Cooke was still in his 30s when the crash hit. Nevertheless, he had already proven himself at Bruce Shaw over a period of eight years and was duly dispatched to the Middle East, with his now-wife, Michelle Cooke, who was Marketing Manager of Bruce Shaw at the time and had joined the business in 1999.

“I was a director at the time and all of a sudden, I became managing director for the UAE,” says Steven, clearly amused at the

memory. *“This was in spite of the fact that we had no people and virtually no history there. But we set off to start a new life and hopefully start a family in the heat of the desert. It was scary and a little lonely at times, but it was also exciting.”*

The challenge, of course, was how to build a business from scratch. In order to do so, Steven decided that he would play on Bruce Shaw's Irishness. There is an irony here, given that Steven is actually Scottish - and now reinstated in Edinburgh - although the origins of his accent these days appear to be located somewhere in the Irish Sea! However, a network of other Irish businesses was already in place in the region, and it made for an excellent starting point.

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All of a sudden, I became managing director for the UAE...it was scary and a little lonely at times, but it was also exciting.

Steven Cooke

01

Steven
Cooke





“They were very good at helping make connections,” says Steven. “We all tried to help each other. There were a lot of other businesses trying to get jobs and keep the lights on back in Dublin. At first, we didn’t have an office or anything, but I remember moving from table to table in one hotel lobby meeting people. I was just telling them who we were, what we’d done and what we were hoping to do.”

The networking paid off. Soon enough, Steven won a job, delivering the W Dubai hotel on the city’s famous Palm. The introduction was made via the architecture firm on the project. *“I got an invitation and I remember doing all the interviews by myself,”* says Steven.

“But we had done the Four Seasons hotel in London. It was all about saying to the client, ‘listen, I know we haven’t done hotel work in Dubai, but we know how to put the structure, the rigour and the processes in place. We know how to look after the money on your behalf’. We were up against our usual, much larger competitors, but we just hung in there and stayed in the fight, and then they eventually awarded the project to us. Ciaran McCormack and Damien Gallogly were both instrumental in delivering our services on that project and across the region.”

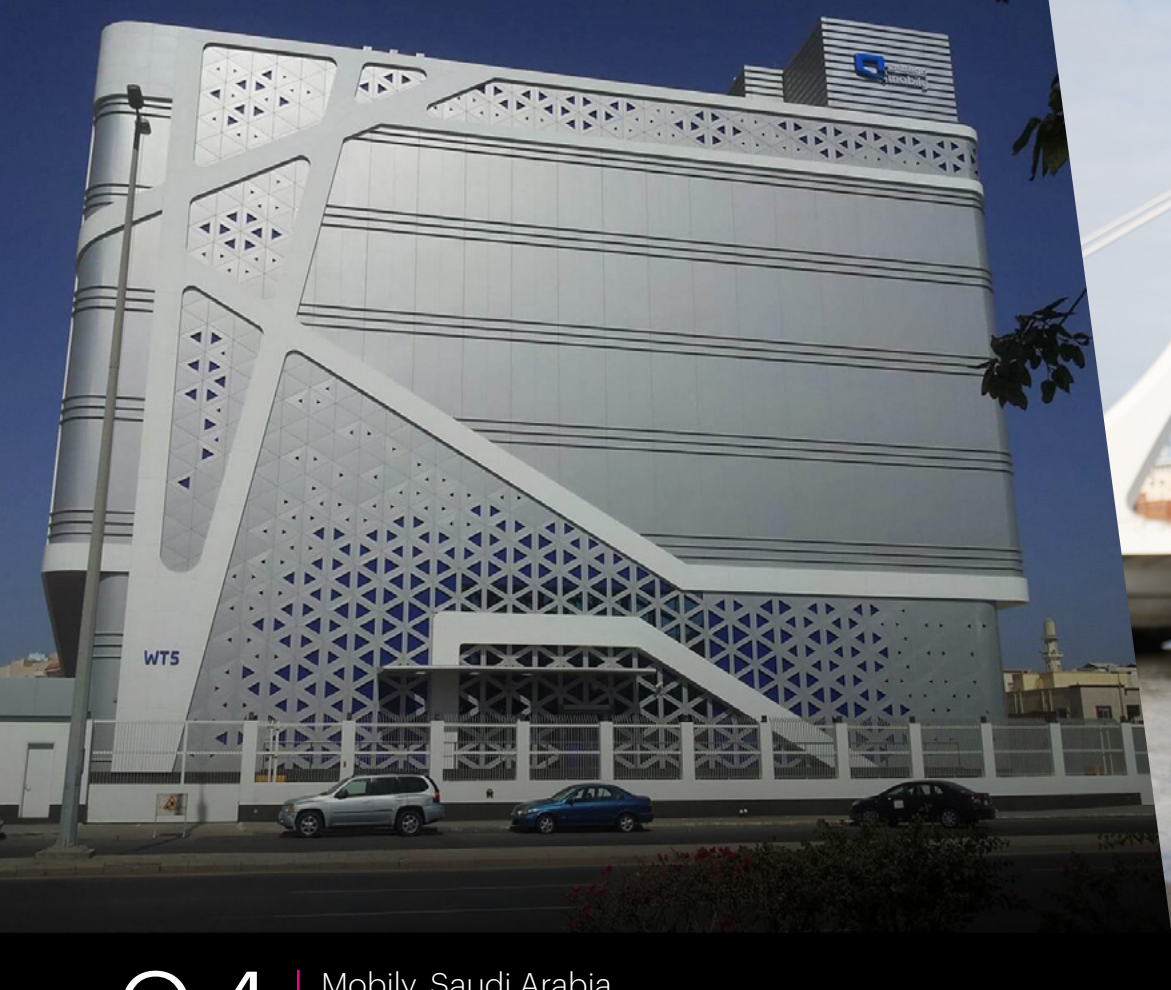
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An aerial view of W Dubai - The Palm

An interior shot of the impressive light installation in the lobby of W Dubai - The Palm

03





04 | Mobily, Saudi Arabia

Winning the job proved transformational when it came to wider business development in the Middle East. All of a sudden, Bruce Shaw was no longer an unknown entity.

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It gave us a lot more credibility. We were able to say ‘we’re working on the W on the Palm’, says Steven.

“It was just about building a rapport with people and trying to help them. Then suddenly the ripple effect of having those relationships kicked in and we just gained a bit of momentum. It was also a real game changer because it was at the very start of the project. We were on that job from the very first cost estimate, all the way until the job was finished seven or eight years later.”



Niall Greene | 05

Niall Greene, now Senior Director – Europe, was a Partner in Ireland at the time and was also chucked in at the deep end, sent to establish and lead a new business in Bahrain. Having travelled back and forth to Saudi Arabia in 2008/09 working on large projects remotely, he had some experience of the Middle Eastern culture.

Again, Bruce Shaw’s work on the Four Seasons in London proved instrumental. The client contacted Bruce Shaw and said that they were about to start work on another project, this time in Bahrain. Niall went out to meet them and won the project. “So, it wasn’t a complete ‘jump on the plane and figure it out’ situation,” he says.

However, it was still something of a baptism of fire. Niall recalls arriving at the airport in Bahrain, en route to his new life. “I got into a taxi and got ripped off,” he says. “The taxi driver charged me five times what it should have been. Then I had to work out how to set up



11 | KAUST, Saudi Arabia

Bahrain Marina | 12



a company. It was a whole new experience and a brand new culture as well."

In his new role as Managing Director of Bahrain, Niall got the business up and running, quickly understanding and negotiating the local administrative hurdles. Unfortunately, at that point Bahrain experienced what he describes as "a bit of a recession". As a result, he started looking to Saudi Arabia in order to continue growing the business. "We decided that I needed to start flying in and out of Riyadh and Jeddah, as well as driving across the causeway, in order to start networking there and developing business, effectively," he says.

"And that's what we did. We went in there and met various clients. And we gradually started building up relationships. I suppose that the key thing that we were saying was that, unlike other folks, we were already in the Middle East and delivering successfully. It meant that if a potential client called, we could be there the next day. They knew that we were actually serious about doing business in Saudi Arabia."

The presence on the ground also allowed Bruce Shaw to build trust with potential clients in the Kingdom, something that Niall emphasises is crucial to doing business in the country. *“I think they are very much about trust - they want to see you. There were a lot of other competitors during the recession, flying in, but then flying straight back to Ireland or the UK.”*



Being on the ground helped us build a rapport, which also helped in terms of getting paid on time.

In particular, Niall was successful in winning work on data centres in Saudi Arabia, something that enabled him to rapidly grow the business. *“Once we had got a bit of momentum, we got a very big data centre client, called Mobily. Obviously, the data centre sector is now phenomenal and it’s huge within our business today.*



We ended up doing about 20 different data centre projects across Saudi Arabia, and it gave us a really good springboard elsewhere in the world, recalls Niall.

Bruce Shaw was entirely responsible for the delivery of Mobily’s data centre programme, and at its peak, supplied design managers, project managers, cost managers and schedulers, all embedded in Mobily’s offices in Riyadh. The team also strengthened Linesight’s commercial CV, gaining valuable experience on large-scale mixed-use developments and high-rise towers.

Around the tail end of 2010, Bruce Shaw’s partnership model started moving to a more corporate structure, with a number of people across the business and in corporate services, in particular, stepping up to support the transition. Long-standing team members, such as Stephanie Dunne, Anne Lee, Caroline Dunworth and Mary Whitehead were instrumental in this transition, while the Finance team, at the time all based in Dublin and headed up by Paul Kehoe, were heavily leaned on to enable the geo-diversification. The new era for the organisation was gathering pace, and as Steven, Niall and their teams bedded down in the Middle East, other ‘road warriors’ were making moves in APAC.

04

THE MOVE INTO APAC



THE MOVE INTO APAC

John Butler, Managing Director, APAC and GCC, also remembers the 2008 crash all too well. Business, he says, seemed to be going well, with the Celtic Tiger still roaring away, but *“all that changed very quickly. It was literally falling off a cliff.”*

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We’d have a project meeting on a Monday morning and be reassured that everything was going ahead. Then, the next Monday would roll around and the client would be yelling ‘stop, just stop work’. The projects just fell like dominoes.

John had a period in Paris working on the aforementioned Oger International account, but then found himself back in Dublin. *“I wondered whether I could weather the storm and just get through, but things still weren’t very good in Ireland,”* he says. In the background, Derry Scully and Paul Boylan had been visiting some of Bruce Shaw’s key clients, including, critically as it turned out, Hewlett Packard. *“They flew out to HP’s headquarters in the US and said ‘we’re mobile, just let us know what your next project is and we can help.’”*



01 | John Butler

“

...we’re mobile, just let us know what your next project is and we can help’

John Butler



02 | TNT, Sydney

As it happened, that next project was another data centre in Sydney, Australia. Bruce Shaw was invited to tender for the project, but the actual pitch would have to be done in Australia. At that time, John was the only person in the business who had actually worked in the country. *“I spoke to Paul Boylan and said ‘look, I’ll put my hand up. I’ll get out and pitch for the project’. At that point, we had no business entity in Australia, so, we set up a joint venture with a local company and agreed to split the fees.”*

The pitch went well enough, but then the months rolled by without hearing anything. John assumed that he had been unsuccessful. He was wrong about that. *“It was about five o’clock in the morning and my Blackberry rang,”* he recalls. *“I picked up the phone and it was Paul saying ‘John, we’ve won the job in Sydney’.”*



Domain, Sydney | 03

In the normal run of things, delivering that news could have waited a few hours. This, however, was far from being a normal situation.

“*I was expecting that there would be a two or three-week lead time on the job. But Paul said ‘mate, I’ve already booked your flight and you need to leave tomorrow’. That is literally how we set up in Australia,* says John.

Within a relatively short stretch of time, the company opened an office in Sydney, and began to grow the team in Australia, establishing itself as a leading data centre specialist in the country. *“I think our original plan was to go out and do the project, to do a good job, and then head back to Ireland,”* says John.

“But then obviously when I got there, we realised that there was quite a lot of work on offer. Data centres were booming, so we were able to use the HP project as a launch pad for the business.”

In turn, Australia became the launch pad for a push into the wider Asia Pacific region. Work in China and Malaysia soon followed, and by 2013, John was pondering setting up another office in-region, with the leadership team settling on Singapore as the location. John and his family relocated to Singapore to establish this regional office, and John Carleton took up the reins in Sydney. John had worked with Bruce Shaw in Dublin, but had relocated to Australia with another company initially. When the opportunity came about to rejoin Bruce Shaw and take over the Sydney office, he jumped at it (following some gentle persuasion from John Butler!), and now heads up Linesight’s operations throughout Australia, which includes a second office in Melbourne since 2021.

Singapore, however, turned out to be no walk in the park. *“It was really hard for one or two years, because we were practically unknown and it is a very competitive market,”* says John. *“Nobody knew who we were. We would meet people and they would say, ‘Why are you here? What is it that you are going to do differently?’ It took a long time, a lot of grind, and a lot of lonely days walking the streets to try drum up some business.”*

04 The move into APAC



04 | Digital Connexion, Chennai

05 | Moderna mRNA vaccine manufacturing facility, Melbourne





06 | Kerry Foods, Singapore

Burning all that shoe leather ultimately paid off, though. Ironically, the first big break came through an Irish company, Kerry Foods, that wanted to build a new factory in Malaysia. At the time, Bruce Shaw didn't have an office in the country, but nevertheless managed to secure the contract. *"We convinced the client to give us the work, and then on the back of that, started setting up an office,"* says John. *"In the end, we delivered that project really well and ended up winning repeat business with the client."*

That job laid the foundations for Bruce Shaw's Asian business. As ever, it is easier to win work if you already have work, although John emphasises that each new territory the company entered had its own challenges and involved a steep learning curve.

“*It takes a little bit of time to appreciate the nuances of working in Asia. Each country is different,* notes John.

03

Life Sciences project, China |

"Japan, for instance, took a while, but we now have a country lead there, and we're very busy in the data centre and life sciences sectors."

Establishing a presence in Asia took a great deal of time and hard work, but John is clearly proud of what he and his team have achieved to date.

“*There were some tough days, but it's been really good fun. It was all about having that entrepreneurial spirit. That's crucial - and I continue to nurture that in our people out here.*

As well as Singapore and Australia, Linesight now has established offices and country leads in China, Japan, India, Malaysia and Taiwan.



A selection of photos from recent years of the APAC and GCC team - clockwise from top left, the Sydney team, the Taiwan team and the Dubai team

05

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC



CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

When the global financial crisis hit, Patrick Ryan, now Executive Vice President, Americas, was working in the Limerick office, where he and Aidan Walsh had built the team to a headcount of 27. Within a matter of months, that number had reduced significantly. Clearly the situation wasn't sustainable and the Limerick office couldn't support both of them.

Following a conversation with Paul Boylan, Patrick ended up working on the Oger contract, living between Ireland, Paris and the Middle East, and working everywhere from Beirut to Riyadh. The arrangement was initially planned to be short-term, but ended up lasting five years.

In 2013, an opportunity came about to work with a large construction firm in Qatar, sitting on the main board for the country. Like many others, however, he was soon to rejoin Bruce Shaw - something that had been openly predicted would happen at his leaving party. *"I got a call about 18 months later from Derry and Paul asking if I would go to New York and run the business there."* At this point there were two people in the New York office, and around 15-20 people scattered across the US, such as Gary Devenney, all working on a major data centre account.

“

I had to rethink everything... we realised 'okay, we need to be an ally to these organisations and prove that we are their protection'.

Patrick Ryan





02

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA),
New York

03

Guinness Open Gate Brewery,
Baltimore



“

I was basically a fish out of water. I'd never been to the States. I had to rethink everything and for a while, maybe a year, we weren't really sure how it was going to work, says Patrick.

And yet, things did gradually fall into place, with Patrick recognising the potential of networking opportunities in New York, and capitalising on the strong links between the city and Ireland. *“I would be out two to three nights a week at least and relentlessly attending events,”* says Patrick. *“Through that network I got in touch with a guy who was with Citibank and he introduced me to the head of commercial real estate.”*

This was to prove transformational. Through talking to the bank's property lead, Patrick realised that the culture in New York was such that companies would depend on their main contractor for everything, including cost management, and the need for governance and independent cost advice was clearly evident. *“Once we realised that, we thought ‘okay, we need to be an ally to these corporate organisations and prove that we are their protection,”* he says. *“That kind of started the journey on the cost side of things. It started to snowball after that.”*



As the business grew, Bruce Shaw had started offering more services, which certainly helped, as did concentrating on sectors such as data centres and life sciences, where the company had an existing client base in other parts of the world. Employing more US citizens was also key to the growth in the US.

“We went from being around 80% expat to 60-70% American. Being Irish helped open doors in New York, but it didn’t necessarily translate into revenue,” added Patrick.

Patrick’s work growing the business out of New York was already yielding strong results in 2015, but the senior leadership team realised that Bruce Shaw’s limited geographical coverage in the US was less than ideal. After all, by this point the company had regular work with several tech giants, and yet at the same time had no physical presence on the West Coast where most big tech firms have their headquarters. Once again, it was time to call upon Steven Cooke.

“I was back in Dublin for a board meeting and the guys suggested that we get a pint,” he says. *“They said ‘listen pal, how about San Francisco?’ I remember thinking ‘oh, alright, here we go again’.”*

Fast forward to 2016, and Steven and his family had touched down on the West Coast. *“It was definitely less isolated than when we landed in the Middle East.”* At the same time, he had to contend with the issues familiar to all of Bruce Shaw’s road warriors – there was no office, no team and, critically, no work. Patrick was on the east coast running the business, but given the size of the US, they might as well have been in a different country. *“We joined forces and ran the country as one, which was the best thing that we did.”*

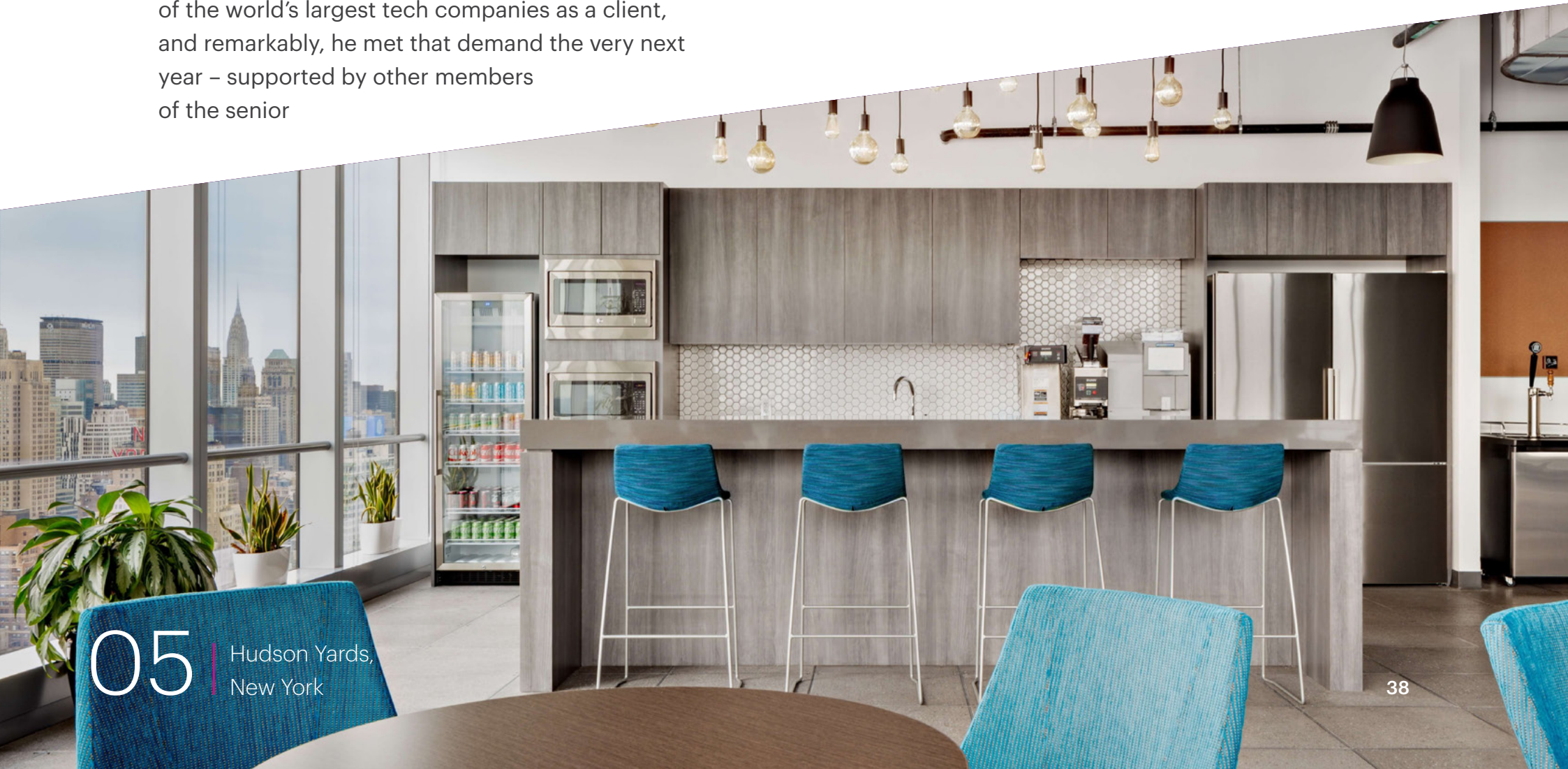
On his arrival, Steven was tasked with landing one of the world’s largest tech companies as a client, and remarkably, he met that demand the very next year – supported by other members of the senior

leadership team. *“I obviously led the pitch, but it was a really big pitch, so Paul Boylan and John Butler flew in, because we wanted them to know that we had capacity in Asia. Anyone who was senior in the US also joined us, so I think we had about 10 or 11 people in the room. We had the best pitch deck ever, as far as I was concerned.”*

“Together, Steven, John Fitzgerald and I worked closely with Michelle Cooke to raise our profile across the States,” Patrick recalls. *“Michelle really understood the need to articulate our unique selling point and how to position us for success.”*

05

Hudson Yards,
New York



Having won the work, Steven had to set about building the business in order to deliver on the successful pitch. While Bruce Shaw had an existing client in Washington State, it had no existing clients on the southwest coast.

“

I had to build an entire new business and get new people in. That was just the way that we ran the business at the time, says Steven.

“But all of a sudden we had much more credibility. That tech giant is now one of our largest customers.” The regional presence continued to gather pace in the ensuing years, with offices since opening in Seattle, Dallas, Philadelphia, Vancouver, Phoenix and Boston.

Again, putting in the groundwork on data centres and life sciences, in particular, proved immensely valuable when the pandemic arrived in 2020. Indeed, Patrick says that the company managed to record double digit growth throughout the period. *“Our data centre work in the US was classified as vital infrastructure, so it was given an exemption from being halted,”* he says.

“And the life sciences work absolutely went into hyperdrive with all the vaccination conversion

programmes and the physical environment needed to roll out the vaccines. We almost over communicated with clients and set up exchanges of information in terms of what was going on, not just in New York City, but across the board. It was about how people were keeping things moving in the supply chain.”

That expansion involved going wherever the company was needed. *“Parts of America started to open up before others,”* says Patrick. *“California and New York were pretty much locked down, but a lot of our clients were in other states that were more open. I physically drove to go and see clients, and have conversations.”*

“

Having ‘exception’ status, I did around 10,000 miles on the road over a couple of months in one period, and I also never stopped flying. People had things they needed to get done and we were always flexible. It was testament to Linesight culture, notes Patrick.

For Steven, the pandemic collided with a deeply personal tragedy, as his mum had fallen ill. He knew that leaving California would be problematic for the business – *“I was a shareholder at this stage, but really I didn’t have a choice,”* recalls Steven, and he made



A selection of photos from recent years of the Americas team - clockwise from top left, San Francisco Summer Bash, New York CSR Sandwich Making and New York Summer Bash



02 | Life Sciences program,
multiple states

03 | WTW, Dallas



a plan with the executive team to move home to Edinburgh, which he did at the end of April 2020, to spend some quality time with her. Now, Steven holds a role in the global leadership team as Group Director for Strategic Growth, and continues to drive client engagement and consistency of service delivery, globally.

As for leadership, it was soon decided that Patrick would take over operations for the entire US. That was fortuitous for all involved. After eight years in New York, he was ready for a change of scenery, and felt that he could better serve both the East and West Coasts from Texas, where he is now based.

“I think you can become a little bit institutionalised when you live in a place like Manhattan, because you don’t even go to Jersey or Brooklyn. I said to Paul, ‘why don’t I base myself in the middle of the country?’ It’s easier for me to bounce between the different states, and my second son was just graduating from high school, so the timing worked.” It was one of those moments when the practicality of running a business - one that was now truly pan-American - and family requirements dovetailed neatly.

06

LINESIGHT REBRAND

One Linesight

Our drive to go beyond and

proven ability to deliver,

the commitment to innovating



LINESIGHT REBRAND

By the mid-2010s, Bruce Shaw was very much back in growth mode. In fact, the business was virtually unrecognisable from the company that entered the global downturn in 2008. Certainly, the Directors had enjoyed some lucky breaks along the way, but the transformation was underpinned by a core strategy aimed at geographic diversification, as well as concentrating efforts on fewer clients and specialising in terms of sectors.

“

It was a global approach. We changed our whole business philosophy to do more work with fewer customers and to focus on global opportunities. We followed our expertise into the sectors where we were strong, with clients that had a global reach and a pipeline of work in our specialist areas. We changed dramatically in that five-to-six-year period and massively increased our headcount, says Paul Boylan





02 | Singapore

And yet, despite experiencing such success, the Directors realised that the legacy Bruce Shaw brand had its drawbacks, not least in prohibiting growth into certain geographical markets. Moreover, the Bruce Shaw brand clearly represented what the company used to be - an old school quantity surveying partnership - rather than the global consultancy that it was rapidly becoming.

Ultimately, it was decided that a rebrand was needed. The problem was that all involved recognised that such a hugely significant change required time, and that was exactly what the Directors no longer had, given the growth trajectory that the company was experiencing. *"We started thinking about the rebrand but obviously we were busy,"* says Paul.

Mumbai | 03

"It was hard because it's a big decision, but then around 2015, we said 'that's it; we're changing; we're a completely different business now'. It was the right time to refresh our story and to rebrand. We brought in a brand consultant and worked with him between 2015 and 2016. Then, in late Q3 2016, we launched Linesight."

The brand has evolved since then and come to be associated with clear, strategic thinking, and an acute focus on delivering service excellence when it comes to the management of construction projects and delivering on safety, quality, cost and programme. The company, after all, is known for having a clear line of sight when it comes to the work it takes on and its clients know that the team will throw itself into delivering optimum outcomes in every instance.

However, the key criteria back in 2016 were slightly more prosaic. *"We wanted a name that we could trademark,"* says Paul. *"We wanted something that was*

easy to say. And we wanted something that was generic enough and made sense if we wanted to change or expand our service lines, or work in different sectors.”

These were all factors within the Directors’ control. But what they couldn’t know was how the new brand would go down with clients. According to Paul, the senior team was “petrified” that clients wouldn’t immediately get the Linesight brand or understand why the rebrand was necessary in the first place. There was, he points out, a real danger of succumbing to that old adage beloved of former US president Ronald Reagan, that “if you’re explaining, you’re losing”.

Clearly, rebrands don’t always go so well. As it turned out, however, neither Paul nor the rest of the senior team needed to have worried about how Linesight would be received externally. Not only was the reasoning for the rebrand easy to communicate and readily understandable, it was also the case that the leadership team were able to tell a story about the future of the brand.

“Once we shared our story of growth, that the business had evolved to become a global business, that we wanted to be flexible and nimble, our

big customers in particular picked up on that very quickly, says Paul.

“I think they see that kind of change all day every day, whether it’s inside their company or outside with a supplier. In our biggest markets, data centres and life sciences, Bruce Shaw wasn’t a household name in the way that Linesight now is.”

In fact, the rebrand itself was just the start. “We had a vision and mission; we had a strategy,” says Paul.

“We also started to professionalise the business, and we brought in both consultants and non-executives. We started to think differently.

“We actually clearly defined a business plan for the following three-year period. We presented that internally to our employees, but we also presented it to our customers, to demonstrate that we were focused on strategic growth and becoming a leading global consultancy firm.”

He adds: “We’ve instilled into our own teams internally, but also into our customers, that we are serious about growth; that we’re serious about long-term relationships;

“

The real acceleration happened after 2016. The rebrand is one of the best things that we ever did. I think it enabled us to say to the world ‘we’re not this little QS practice and we’re not just Irish-centric’.

Richard Joyce



Richard
Joyce

04

and we’re serious about saying no to opportunities if it means it’s going to impact on the work that people have in front of them with those key customers in those key sectors.”

So far as Richard Joyce, now Managing Director, Europe, is concerned, the rebrand supercharged the business. *We were at last able to tell people that we were a global consultancy; that we were a multi-service line advisory business. For Europe, it also allowed us to properly grow the business in the UK. That was a watershed moment and enabled us to start opening other offices across the continent.”*

In the years that followed the rebrand, with a more defined growth strategy, the organisation amplified its expansion efforts, in terms of locations, services lines, sectors and employee numbers. In the five-year

period between late 2016 until late 2021, Linesight opened an additional 12 offices. The senior team really honed in on introducing some key expertise into the business to grow target areas. One of the prime areas that was of increasing interest to some of the organisation’s largest clients was Project Controls, against a backdrop of large-scale developments with sizeable financial and reputational risks, and uncertainty hampering effective decision-making. Spotting the opportunity, a dedicated Project Controls function was born, and continues to thrive, with a defined Project Controls Pathway to support participants in obtaining a formal and internationally-recognised qualification in this discipline in-house now established.

While the organisation had worked in the life sciences sector previously, it recognised that it was a relatively unknown player in that space, where sector-specific expertise and experience is often sought. So the team set its sights on bringing highly experienced individuals

into Linesight to support strategic growth into the sector. A number of key appointments were made in those years, such as Jeff Peragallo in the US and Nigel Barnes in Europe, to reinforce the team already in place, such as Michael McCabe who had been with the company since 2004. Fast forward to today, where the company is the partner of choice for nine of the top ten Fortune 500 pharma companies, with US\$23.4 billion of projects globally in the sector.

Meanwhile, a foothold had been established in the data centre sector in the years leading up to the rebrand, and the aforementioned road warriors had pushed the charge forward in their respective locations too, meaning that Linesight had become a key player in the data centre vertical, which remains the case today – seven of the top ten Fortune 500 technology companies are counted as clients, and 13,750MW of capacity have been delivered across 477 facilities worldwide.

The company was becoming more sophisticated and evolving, and this was reflected across the organisation. The role of COO was introduced, firstly with Ken Cribbin's appointment, then Tom Dempsey, and the professionalism of the corporate services functions was also ramped up in this period. The growth trajectory had accelerated, and it wasn't long before Linesight's expansion and strategic approach were noticed, as we'll cover in Chapter 8.



04

Ken Cribbin

05

Life Sciences

Linesight

07

POST-REBRAND PUSH INTO EUROPE



POST-REBRAND PUSH INTO EUROPE

Michael Riordan, now Managing Director, UK and Senior Director, Europe, was another road warrior at the hands of the economic meltdown in Ireland. In 2008, he was dispatched to London and for the first eight years, was based in the legacy Bruce Shaw office.

"I was asked to go by our CEO at the time, Gerard Campbell," says Michael. "He said to me 'I need you to go to London for six months'. Honestly, my initial reaction was 'what are you talking about? I'm not going to London'. And yet, a week later I was in London! It took me a while to settle down and it was a bit of a shock to the system, but it was one of the best things career-wise that ever happened to me, because it took me out of my comfort zone."

"It was challenging personally," he says. "But a lot of people made a lot of sacrifices in that period. There was a cohort of us that had come up through the ranks, and suddenly we were in a different part of the world trying to grow the business against a very challenging landscape."

So, the early years in the UK weren't easy for Michael, but the Linesight rebrand at the end of 2016 changed that. All of a sudden, he was free, to all intents and purposes, to build a new business with a new brand in the UK.

“

A lot of people made a lot of sacrifices in that period... we were trying to grow the business against a very challenging landscape.

Michael Riordan



Michael Riordan

01

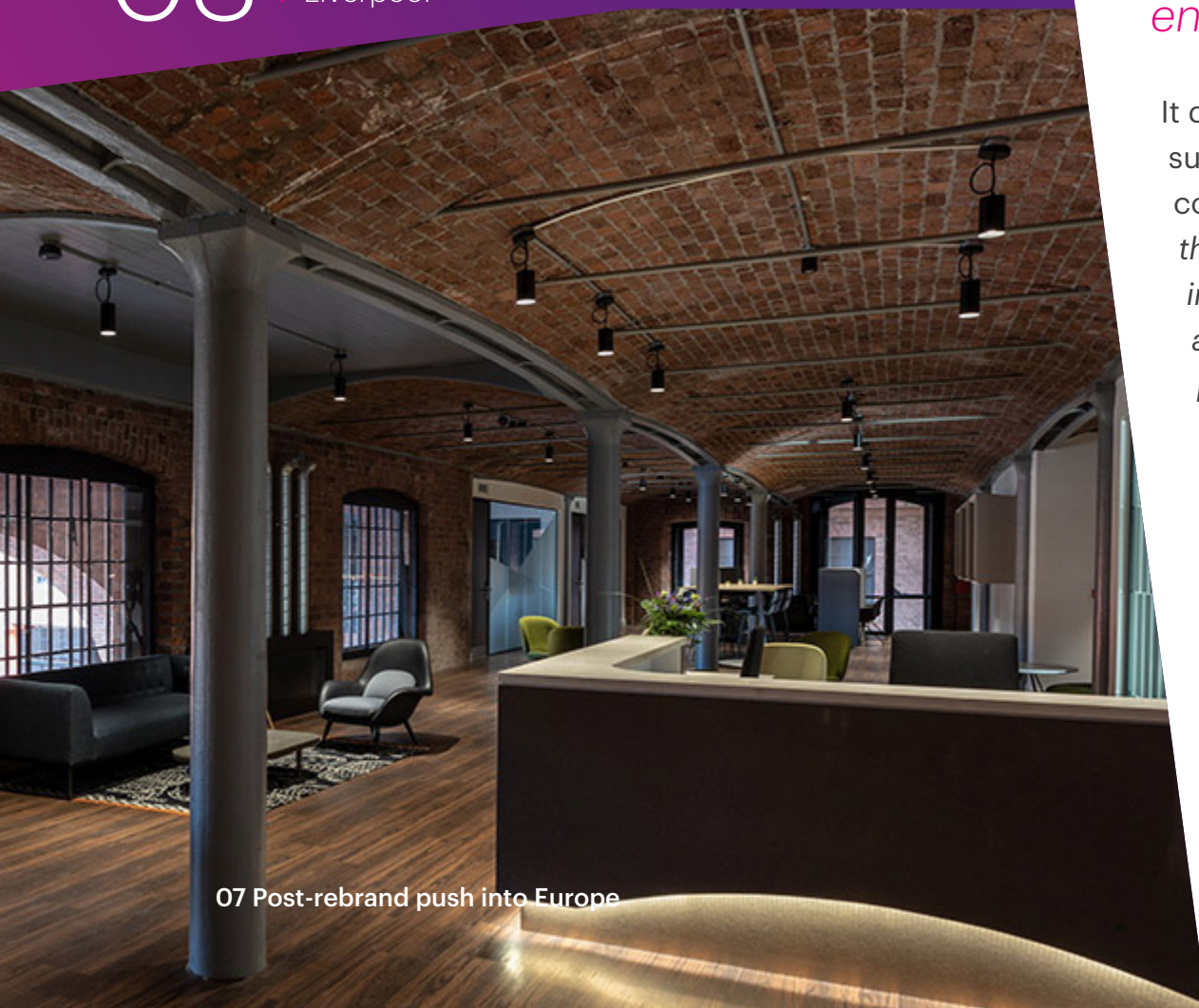


Strand Palace Hotel, London |

02

03

Clockwise at Edward Pavillion,
Liverpool



07 Post-rebrand push into Europe

“There were only three of us in the beginning, based out of serviced offices in London and Manchester,” he says. “Obviously, we had some existing contacts, so we weren’t completely unknown, but nobody knew Linesight. It wasn’t on anybody’s radar.”

“

Myself, Andrew Callaghan and Callum Faulds spent the first couple of years running around town to get the word out. We’d go to the opening of an envelope!, laughs Michael.

It didn’t help that the market in London for quantity surveyors was, if not saturated then, at the very least competitive in the extreme. *“London probably has the highest concentration of QSs per square mile in the world,”* says Michael. *“To break into that with a brand that nobody knew was near impossible, particularly with new clients.”*

After a year or so targeting pretty much every sector in the property market to limited success, the senior European team decided to pivot the business model. *“We made a conscious decision to focus on a small number of key accounts at that stage in the UK and Europe - in the first instance, Microsoft, Equinix and Digital Realty,”* notes Richard.



Linesight

London office |

04

“Working with these data centre clients proved a key springboard for the business into Europe, and today, a significant share of Linesight’s work in Europe is within that sector, with the balance largely represented by life sciences, commercial real estate and retail”.

In other parts of Europe, the expansion was also gathering pace, buoyed again by relationships with multinational organisations. Tel Aviv was one such example, where a huge opportunity arose with a global semiconductor business, and was spearheaded initially by Ken Cribbin and Paul Boylan. The team there has since grown significantly, headed up by Shay Dahan, delivering a major body of work for the aforementioned client and paving the way for that relationship to extend into other regions. In the years that followed, a local

footprint has been established in the Netherlands (Haarlem – just outside Amsterdam), Germany (Frankfurt and Berlin), Belgium (Ghent) and the Nordics (Stockholm and Copenhagen), as well as expansions in Ireland (Galway) and the UK (Manchester and Edinburgh).

According to Richard, growth in Europe has been, and continues to be, very strong.

“

Even in the last couple of years, the acceleration has been huge. We’re in Spain, we’re in Italy, we’re in Finland. Right now, we have a lot of work in Milan. We’re opening new offices all the time.



High-tech Industrial
Project

| 05

06

| Brian McClinton



07 Post-rebrand push into Europe

Critically, however, Richard adds that Linesight is only opening offices in Europe to service those key clients. *“Clients say to us ‘if you had a presence here, we will give you work;’ he says. “We’ll always meet their needs, but then we can look at other opportunities once we’re on the ground and have the right set up. It works really well.”*

Then in 2020, the pandemic hit, and at first glance, it should have provided more than a small bump in the road. Much like Patrick’s experience in the US, however, from a business perspective, those years proved remarkably fruitful.

“It was actually one of the biggest growth spurts that we had,” says Michael. “We hired around 110 people in Europe in 2020. Our data centre sector absolutely exploded and just went astronomical.”

The life sciences sector soon followed once effective vaccines had been developed and mass manufacturing plants were required, and the proportion of Linesight’s work in life sciences globally has effectively doubled since the start of the pandemic.

The business in Europe was restructured to respond to the increasing maturity of the organisation globally and the strategic business plans across the regions. *“I was the Head of*



A selection of photos from recent years of the Europe team - clockwise from top left, the Project Management team, the Dublin team, the Dublin team at a Women in Construction event and the London team

Project Management at the time, and then in 2021, the European Leadership team was formed,” notes Brian McClinton, Senior Director, Europe. “We migrated from a structure based around a combination of business units, services lines and locations, to a more consolidated and joined up European approach. We recognised that the future of the European business would need to focus on having a real presence on the ground in locations determined by our strategic plans”.

Richard, Michael and Brian, are joined by long-standing Linesight team members, Stephen Ashe, Paul Butler, Kim Hegarty, Niall Greene and Damien Gallogly on the European Leadership team, and all have been with the business for significant tenures, playing fundamental roles in the organisation’s growth and expansion over the years.

From that point, the team set about establishing offices in key European locations, to have a localised, on-the-ground presence. *“We had an initial strategy of primary access from Dublin, London, Amsterdam and Frankfurt, which was backed up by analysis we had done with our clients and staff,”* continues Brian, *“There was a realisation that in order for us to be more robust and competitive, and to continue expanding, we needed to have cornerstones across the region”.* This is further supplemented by boots on the ground in locations such as Paris, Manchester, Edinburgh, Madrid, Milan, Stockholm and Copenhagen.

As a result, the headcount for Linesight in Europe currently stands at around the 830 mark. *“It’s a really dynamic team and very diverse,”* says Michael. *“Ultimately, it’s a really, really good culture and the teams are very close-knit.”*

And this is a sentiment that is echoed by Brian – *“We’ve fantastic teams delivering big projects in great locations, but for me it’s the people aspect that stands out. There’s a great bunch of people and I think the culture and our DNA is where we come into our own. There’s also a lot of exciting emerging talent in the business, who are highly engaged and embedded into the organisation.”* That is evident across the business, with a distinct mix of long-tenured employees – such as Brian McCay, Cathal Phelan, Christopher Matthews, Eoghan Tangney, Gerard Franklin, Jonathan Cooke, Kevin Kinsella, Matt Grace, Paul Brady, Saran O’Byrne and Tony Madden – and newer team members, collaborating closely, cultivating enduring relationships and delivering exceptional project outcomes for clients.”

“

We compete against consultancies much bigger than us and punch well above our weight, says Richard



New Biologics Facility J.POD, Toulouse |

05

"We compete for clients against some of the biggest businesses in the industry, despite the fact that we're a much more boutique operation," says Richard.

In large part, that success is down to embracing the wider Linesight strategy of concentrating on fewer, but bigger clients - and working hard to maintain and enhance those relationships. *"It's very much in line with what Linesight does globally," says Michael. "We're replicating what the business does around the world. We're a very connected organisation across our key accounts and the cross-selling opportunities are huge. We all help each other out."*

There is a much more pronounced focus on strategy, and operationally, there is a huge amount of work being done in the background to support the business' ongoing expansion.

06

| Spencer Place South, Dublin



07 Post-rebrand push into Europe

08

ACQUISITION



ACQUISITION

By the late 2010s, Linesight's growth trajectory was beyond doubt. The shareholders felt it was the right time to focus on scaling for growth, and recognised the need to bring in specific, strategic expertise with global experience. That thought process led to the appointment of John Williamson, Group CFO, who had many years' experience in a multinational environment. The timing of the appointment, in November 2019, was unfortunate, albeit that nobody could have predicted at the time that the world was about to go into lockdown, as the pandemic struck.

In addition to the existing need for a CFO, following many approaches over the years, the shareholders began to feel that now was the right time to consider selling the business in order to secure its future, going forward in a consolidating global market. After so many years of hard work, the business had been transformed and was a compelling proposition.

Senior leaders in the business had proven their ability to win and retain blue chip clients, and to establish operations anywhere in the world where opportunities presented themselves, but few had any experience of readying a company for acquisition, so John's experience in this regard was highly beneficial.

John already had his work cut out – the original idea was that Linesight could be ready for sale within eight weeks, although he had cautioned that it would take at least six months – but,



01 | John Williamson



02 | Tom Dempsey

as he puts it, the COVID pandemic “*put the kibosh*” on selling the company any time soon. “*We were forced to hunker down,*” he says.

“At that time, none of us could travel. As a business, we had to figure out what the pandemic meant for us, how it would affect cashflow, what it meant for salaries and all that jazz. Quite quickly, prime infrastructure projects were designated as critical in most of our big jurisdictions. That meant that work in a lot of our main sectors, like data centres and life sciences, could continue, which gave us a safety net, but really that initial period was about looking after our people.”

The same was true for most companies. It also wasn’t at all clear when business as usual would resume, with seemingly ubiquitous lockdowns. With an unprecedented lack of clarity, valuing a business, however successful and resilient, was for all practical purposes, an impossibility.

However, by the tail end of 2020 – and despite the fact that much of the world remained in lockdown – a path out of the pandemic slowly, painfully started to gain focus, if not absolute clarity. Combined with the fact that Paul Boylan was due to take over as Linesight’s CEO on 1st January 2021, the situation meant that it was once again possible to start planning for a possible sale.

Obviously, that involved a thorough analysis of Linesight’s financials, but it also involved further

developing and enhancing the company’s strategy for the next three to five years, so that potential buyers could immediately see where growth was going to come from and have the confidence that Paul was the person to deliver on that strategy.

The Executive team was further strengthened by the appointment of Tom Dempsey in early 2021 to the role of Group COO, bringing with him a wealth of experience in senior operations roles in blue chip companies.

“

Some of those companies employed 100,000 to 250,000 people. So, no matter what role you have, you’re really just a small cog in a huge machine. Joining Linesight allowed me to play a more strategic role and have a real impact, says Tom.

Remarkably quickly, IPS emerged as a potential buyer, and by July 2021, the companies were in exclusive discussions. In part, that was down to the fact that in terms of both service offering and sector specialism, the two firms clearly complemented each other well. But it was also due to the fact that the respective leadership teams saw eye to eye.



A selection of photos of the team - clockwise from top left, members of the European Management and Tel Aviv teams, the Mumbai team, the Frankfurt team and the Dublin team

Like Linesight, IPS benefited from “very proactive individuals”, according to John, adding that the teams “got on from the get go. If it wasn’t quite a ‘match made in heaven’, it was certainly a match that could work for everybody involved”. There were huge synergies between the businesses, and once again, Linesight was entering into a partnership that made sense on a strictly business basis, but also one that benefited from close personal relationships and, critically, trust.

An additional benefit was that both parties quickly understood that because the businesses complemented each other so well, there would be no need for cost savings, or, more bluntly, layoffs. “It was quite the opposite, in fact,” says John.



It was about putting the businesses together, and seeing to what extent we could collaborate and grow together.

“Because the anticipated growth was so strong, there was no need to reduce headcount when it came to corporate services, for instance. Those people would be needed.”

Ultimately, the deal was announced in October 2021, which given the fact that the world was still emerging from COVID-19, was genuinely remarkable. Just as remarkable is the fact that nobody in the newly merged business took time out to pat themselves on their backs

or rest on their laurels; something that was undoubtedly aided by the fact that some Linesight executives took on senior enterprise roles in both companies. Rather, global growth was once again the priority and it was full steam ahead. “It’s been a great story ever since,” says John. “It has worked out 100% how we thought it would.”

Speaking at the time, Dave Goswami, who is now Group CEO and Chairman of IPS Enterprise, stated: “This is a transformational transaction for both IPS and Linesight and we are excited to embark on a new growth journey together. By leveraging both companies’ strong track records and combining our skills and management horsepower, we expect to make a meaningful positive difference in the industries we serve. Led by Paul Boylan and a strong leadership team, Linesight is a highly sought after company.”

There can be no doubt that the merger has been a tremendous success.



When I joined in January 2021, we had 615 people and this had grown to greater than 750 at the point of sale. Now, we’re up over 1,400. So, we have more than doubled in little more than three years, notes Tom.

“That is really quite incredible growth. It’s all been about developing those strong relationships with clients; about focusing on the job and delivering for clients. All employees have a clarity of purpose and share in a common goal, while having fun along the way.”

The Executive team has been further bolstered with a broad range of extensive expertise to support future success and the continued expansion of the business. Led by Paul and sitting alongside Tom, John, Richard, Patrick, John and Steven, are Niamh Moore (CMO), Jane Cassidy (Group General Counsel), Anne Rush (CPO), John Doherty (CIO), Heather Dooley (Non-Executive Director) and Fiona D’Arcy (Non-Executive Director).

As for the future, it’s all about further growth, but also sustainable growth.

“*What we’ve been doing over the last number of years is building up and strengthening skill sets, systems, processes, tools... all the muscles within a business that enable strong, global growth,* says Tom.

“You can get to a certain size, but if you want to grow further, you need to build those muscles.”

Relatively quickly in 2022, following the initial acquisition in October 2021, Berkshire Hathaway acquired Alleghany Capital, of which IPS was a subsidiary. Linesight had moved from being an independent Irish practice to being part of one of the largest and most successful companies in the world. A new enterprise structure was established, with three businesses reporting into Berkshire Hathaway with clear and different strengths – IPS and Linesight were joined in 2023 by Springtide, an entity which was established to specifically address the semi-conductor market, providing EPCM services.

Most importantly for Linesight and its employees, business has continued as before with little to no impact on day-to-day business. Linesight continues to grow with employee numbers increasing to over 1,400 at the time of publication.

The acquisition has enabled Linesight to scale and grow with strong financial backing, while operating as an independent entity and leveraging the advantages of being part of a wider enterprise structure.

09

OUR APPROACH TO PEOPLE



OUR APPROACH TO PEOPLE

As detailed earlier in this publication, the strategy in the period after the global financial crisis had been – out of necessity – to focus on geographical diversification and preserving as many jobs as possible.

However, as the market stabilised and growth resumed at Linesight, the company had indeed evolved to become a very different beast and was rapidly becoming a global consultancy, with growing offices in all major real estate markets. Implementing a comprehensive people strategy had become a necessity, albeit one that none of the Directors had time or the specific expertise to concentrate on. After all, Linesight was still growing rapidly and they were focused on business development and service delivery.

It was recognised that the business had transformed from its humble beginnings as a small cost consultancy practice in Ireland, to a multinational construction consultancy, and that the organisation's strong culture had been instrumental in that transformation.

One Linesight

Our **drive** to go beyond and **proven ability to deliver**, together with our commitment to cultivating **meaningful relationships** is what sets us apart.

01

Our Culture Statement



Kim Hegarty |

02

As Senior Director, Europe, Kim Hegarty says, *“Back when I initially joined in 1991, the wins, milestones and achievements were always celebrated, and we were a unified team. The sense of camaraderie was remarkable, and that is something we have nurtured over the years as the business has grown.”*

However, as Linesight grew, the leadership team was conscious of the potential for that culture, which had been built up organically and yet nurtured purposefully, over the years, to become diluted, inconsistent, or to ultimately be lost in the midst of rapid expansion. So in 2018, the Board decided to leverage external expertise to explore employee engagement with the culture, and ultimately, to clearly and concisely articulate the authentic culture that existed, from the perspective of those who lived it daily.

The insights and outputs from that exercise were extensive, but it quickly became apparent that the Board themselves could not action some of the key pieces in a meaningful way. They remained committed to taking the feedback and actions arising from the exercise forward, and to progress people-centric initiatives for the business.

Anne Rush, Chief People Officer, was brought on board in 2019. She describes a situation where the executive



03 | Anne Rush

“
*There is a genuine desire
to do the right thing.*

Anne Rush

team was “just going at it at 100 miles an hour” – a description that may be figurative, but is far from an exaggeration.

“It was usual for people to just pack a suitcase, land in a country and then do everything from business development to finance and HR – the whole lot. There wasn’t always a full suite of formalised systems or processes in place.”

Anne knew all this when she took on the job, but rather than feel intimidated by the challenge, she regarded it as an opportunity. Soon enough, she was putting in place the sorts of structures and processes that were already needed, but that would also be of paramount importance in order to support further growth.

“The gender balance wasn’t great,” says Anne. “And even in teams in other countries, we had predominantly Irish or British people in place. Around 70% of people were born in Ireland, rather than being second or third generation immigrants. That was the case in places as far apart as Singapore and Australia. It wasn’t sustainable.”

It was also recognised that a broad spectrum of perspectives held great value, and so, the team started to develop a strategy for increasing the diversity of Linesight’s employees. *“We started the conversation around diversity and why it’s important that companies do this,”* Anne says, *“before continuing on to an*

anonymous company-wide survey that provided key insights into where we were culturally, and helping people understand what diversity really means. In turn, that led to key performance metrics being put in place for the entire executive team. The reason I’m still here is because there is a genuine desire to do the right thing,” she says. *“Paul, our CEO, is committed to addressing any gender gaps, and ensuring pay and benefits are equitable across all our markets.”*

In terms of the organisation’s commitment to personal and professional development, that has been at the core of the culture from the outset. The company has always been known for the mentorship it champions, and that remains today, albeit in a more formalised structure with a dedicated Learning and Development programme. There are now numerous learning pathways in-house to support employees in upskilling towards certifications, accreditations and charterships.

Perhaps the one the company is best known for is its Assessment of Professional Competency (APC) programme, as the first corporate educational program globally to receive the RISE Corporate Support Scheme badge from The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Boasting a 92% pass rate, internal candidates benefit from the extensive network of counsellors and assessors. This is not surprising given the organisation’s close ties with the RICS and the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI) over the

years – Linesight has had five team members serve as the President of the SCSi to date – Brendan O’Mara, Derry Scully, Brendan Sheridan, Ken Cribbin and Des O’Broin.

One of the recurring themes throughout this publication has been mobility, from the time that the ‘road warriors’ were dispatched to diversify the business geographically, to more recently, where employees are given the opportunity to travel and gain experience in various offices around the world.

Angeline Pang, now an Associate in the Dubai office, is a good example. She was first recruited in 2006 while living in her native Malaysia and flown over to Dublin, where she worked for several years. Then, following the crash in 2008/09, Angeline worked on a placement with Aramco in Paris, before heading to help set up operations in the Middle East, as referenced in Chapter 3.

Angeline says that she really appreciates the opportunity to travel and work in different places, but also the fact that she has always been looked after by the company. *“When we went to Paris, we were put up in a hotel while we looked for an apartment,”* she says. *“I had the comfort of knowing that if I couldn’t find somewhere, I could stay on and it would be taken care of. There’s a lot of support that goes behind the scenes. We always have very, very good support.”*



04 | Harrison O’Gorman



05 | Angeline Pang

For now, Angeline says that she is happy in Dubai, but she adds that she would consider taking up an opportunity with Linesight elsewhere in the world at some point. *“Right now, we are happy in Dubai with the kids and so on,”* she says. *“But I’m very open to move anywhere in the world with Linesight, because I know that if I do relocate my family, they will make sure that everything is taken care of.”*

Harrison O’Gorman, now an Associate Director – Cost Management in the New York team, echoes that sentiment. Having joined in 2013 and worked in Dublin initially, he has worked in Tel Aviv and San Francisco too, before relocating to New York a couple of years ago. On his initial decision to gain experience abroad, Harrison recalls his interactions with Paul and Derry very clearly: *“They placed a big emphasis on making sure I was comfortable with the move, and that I was very well looked after in terms of the package and the logistics.”*

For Harrison and many others that relocated, the move presented an exciting opportunity. *“It gave me the chance – and maybe even a bit of a push – to quickly advance my career and level of responsibility,”* he notes. *“And I always get the sense that there is a huge appreciation and acknowledgement of those willing to take those opportunities.”*

There is quite a cohort of ‘road warriors’ (both currently and formerly Linesight) that have held roles in multiple

locations, similar to Angeline and Harrison – Adam Tai, Damien Gallogly, Michael Murphy, Lisa McIntyre and Gavin Flynn, to name just a few.

And that is not to mention the significant proportion of employees who leave and come back in relatively short periods.

“

I’m a double boomerang myself. But I have been drawn back by the teams we get to work with, the bonds we build, the clients and projects we support, and the general environment, says Kim.

“There’s a willingness now more than ever to have real conversations, and ultimately, we care about the success of our employees and the clients we work with.”

And lastly, when discussing the Linesight approach to people, it is impossible to eschew the social side of Linesight, and the fact that the culture centres around its people building enduring, long-term relationships.

Brian Mattson, who has worked with Linesight and Bruce Shaw on the client side across a number of roles over the years, is a great example of this. Having joined

Microsoft from Intel, Brian took over construction management, and quickly became impressed with the quality of the team's work and its diligence, with Bruce Shaw having already been appointed to a major project in Dublin by the tech giant.

“

They were like no other company I'd worked with before. They were just very focused. They listened to me and really tried to understand what I needed. Many companies will push what they already have

“

They were like no other company I'd worked with before. They were just very focused. They listened to me and really tried to understand what I needed.

Brian Mattson

and sell that to you. Linesight would listen and then bring solutions to me for what I needed. And that, believe it or not, is very rare in this business.

In those early days of the relationship, Brian recalls working with the likes of Paul Boylan, Derry Scully and Steven Cooke, all of whom impressed. *“The people were very genuine, very honest. Paul always refers to me as Linesight's greatest advocate and harshest critic. It's*



06

Brian Mattson |

something that I am actually proud of, in doing my part in emphasising excellence in delivery. They were all very client focused, even to the point of telling me things that I may not have wanted to hear, but that I needed to hear”, Brian says. “They delivered it in a way that was genuine. We built a bond, both as a company and as individual relationships as well, over time.”

The relationship with Neil Doyle, then a senior cost manager with Bruce Shaw, was so strong that he ended up going out to the US to work directly for Brian. “I needed help on some capacity planning, so I asked if they could bring Neil over for a couple of weeks to help me,” he says. “A couple of weeks became a couple of months and that eventually led to Neil joining Microsoft.”

Today, Neil is global cost management lead at Microsoft and continues to work with the Linesight team. “At the moment, Linesight is probably supporting half of the work we have in Europe and I would say around 80% of it in America,” says Neil. “And these days they are working with us in APAC as well. They work with us all across the world.”

“For me, it’s all about the sheer consistency in terms of the quality of the work,” Neil continues. “The success that we get from Linesight comes from the culture of the business and that comes from the top. They understand

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The success that we get from Linesight comes from the culture of the business and that comes from the top.

Neil Doyle



06

Neil Doyle |

what's expected of them, they're always at the end of the phone and they think long term. It's about working hard and playing hard. That culture filters down through the business."

Following the Dublin project, Bruce Shaw - and later Linesight - ended up working with Microsoft all over the world, something that continued after Brian left the company right through to the present day. Indeed, Brian's moving on actually worked in Linesight's favour. After joining Ragingwire, he asked Eoin Byrne to work on one of his first projects.

"He had the same stuff - he was genuine, he was honest, he listened and he brought me solutions," he says. "We're still great friends to this day. Like me, he lives in Phoenix now. We have lunch or pints once a month or so."

And in terms of his involvement in the Linesight success story, Brian is pretty humble.

“

All I did was provide the opportunities. They did the work. If they hadn't been who they are, they would not have grown, they would not have succeeded in the way that they have,

says Brian

This sentiment is echoed by all those interviewed for this commemorative publication. The team is willing to always go the extra mile for one another and their clients, but they pride themselves on the ability to also have fun. This has not only led to life-long friendships, but according to those with lengthy tenures within the business, proved to be the critical glue that has held them together through difficult times.

"It is a source of great pride to me and so many of us, that we have weathered significant challenges including global recessions and a global pandemic, and yet, we continue to thrive," says Paul.

“

We have managed to maintain our core essence, and such an authentic, people-centric culture as the business has grown – that is what still defines and differentiates Linesight today.



A selection of photos of the global team from recent years

DEDICATION TO OUR PEOPLE

A small sample of Linesight people, both past and present, have been interviewed to bring this publication to life, and offer some first-hand accounts of the organisation's journey to reach 50 years in operation. This book is dedicated to all Linesighters, both present and past, who have each played an important role in our success.

In celebrating this milestone, we also take a moment to remember our colleagues who have passed away – may they rest in peace.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Brian Donnellan
Claire O'Broin

Derry Scully
Jane Cassidy

Niamh Moore
Adam Branson