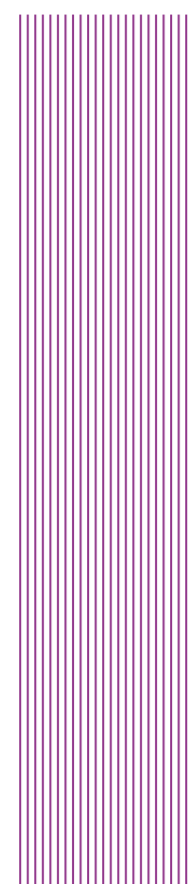


Vital Support

FOR VITAL BUSINESSES



At AIB, our purpose is to back our customers to achieve their dreams and ambitions. We asked a long-time customer of AIB to share their story of the family business and how it has evolved and grown over the years.



Research from the DCU National Centre for Family Business, of which AIB is a Partner sponsor, tells us that Family Businesses account for 64% of all businesses in Ireland (more than 80% when you include the farming community). These businesses are at the heart of the Irish economy and are recognised for their significant contribution to the communities in which they operate.

Oxygen Care Ltd. is a family business that has been providing medical device solutions to the Irish Healthcare sector for almost 50 years. Our equipment can be seen in a range of hospital areas including Theatre and Recovery for anaesthetic and monitoring equipment, ICUs with ventilators and Neonatal Units for incubators for sick babies. Our defibrillators and chest compression systems are also used outside hospitals. Innovation



L to R: Karl Gouling,
Maurice Moran,
Etáin Moran

in the area of Emergency Care is enabling uninterrupted care for the patient from the incident site all the way to the hospital.

The company started off as a home office in Dundrum by my father David Moran and my grandfather Paddy Moran. They specialised in the area of Maternity Care with neonatal incubators, which led to product installs at the Rotunda Hospital. Breaking into the market at Crumlin Children's Hospital led to nationwide access. The company evolved over decades and there is now a team of more than 60 people in the business, with offices in Wicklow and Belfast.

Product support has remained a key focus of Oxygen Care from the outset. The company traded successfully for the first 21 years as a team of engineers before the first salesperson role was advertised! I joined the company in its 32nd year of trading, having held previous marketing roles in Ireland and abroad. My brother Maurice, who is in his final year of a Masters in Leadership and Management Practice in Smurfit Business School, joined a few years later after earning his BA in European Business and Languages and spending some time travelling. He is responsible for Business Development and heads up the Respiratory Therapy Division of the company.

In 2009, we moved to Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow to a premises that would be adaptable to our needs and plans for future-proofing. These plans included an organisational re-structure that saw David stepping back as M.D. to the role of Chairman. The MD role was taken up by Karl Gouling, our then General Manager who has been in the business for almost 40 years. My brother and I became Directors and the wheels were put in motion regarding succession planning. We both took up opportunities to upskill and network and I am very grateful to AIB for putting me in touch with the DCU National Centre for Family Business.

When COVID-19 hit our shores in early 2020, we found ourselves grateful for the strong business partnerships that had been built up over decades. This allowed for very direct and efficient supplier conversations, bearing in mind every country in the world was looking for the same lifesaving equipment as Ireland. Our trusted customer relationships are very important to us, and we did everything we could to keep these intact. We were in a fortunate position to secure necessary products that were urgently required to alleviate some of the pressures on our Health Service.

"ENSURING SAFETY OF OUR OWN STAFF WAS KEY TO US. WE ARE SO PROUD THAT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR TEAM PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ENSURING HIGH LEVELS OF CONTINUED SUPPORT TO OUR CUSTOMERS."

Understandably, COVID-19 presented a range of unprecedented challenges such as conducting our day-to-day business whilst social distancing, and getting these products shipped into Ireland. Ensuring safety of our own staff was key to us. We are so proud that each and every one of our team played a crucial role in ensuring high levels of continued support to our customers. As our Head of Sales Linda Ryan said: "Our mission became not only about supporting our clinicians but providing lifesaving equipment for the patients of Ireland."

We were also on the lookout for other opportunities that could help with the impact of COVID-19 and other products that would fit in with our portfolio and ethos. Our senior management team quickly became acutely aware of the need to look to the future, given some products such as ventilators will, in all likelihood, not be purchased for some time.

We were approached by a supplier called Aerobiotix to consider a partnership to distribute their Illuvia® HUAIRS air decontamination unit. We were already aware of an increasing need for a premium high-quality product in the area of Ultraclean air to lower the risk of viral transmission in healthcare settings and surgical site infections. We were immediately impressed by the technology of the unit, which is strongly supported by strong clinical evidence. Emerging evidence then highlighted the risk of COVID-19 transmitting via air particles. With the Illuvia, we had a mobile solution that can help keep frontline workers and patients safe in the hospital environment, particularly where there were aerosol generating procedures taking place.

As the family business evolves, I often wonder what my grandfather would think of the networking and learning resources such as the DCU National Centre for Family Business that are available to us nowadays. We feel privileged and proud to be working in the dynamic healthcare sector at the forefront of innovation where products and technologies make such a difference to patients and healthcare providers.

This article was written by Etáin Moran, Director, Oxygen Care Ltd. Etáin was an AIB Women in Enterprise Strategic Growth Finalist 2019. Further information on how AIB is supporting its customers can be found at www.aib.ie.