

Carbon Group: Suppliers of chemicals and

John Daly

Carbon Group has its manufacturing headquarters in Ringaskiddy, with distribution and warehousing facilities located in Dublin and the UK.

Operating on a business ethos of 'Intelligent Solutions. Delivered', the company specialises in the supply of chemicals, food ingredients and specialist high-end paints, and has evolved to become a progressive business with a global outlook.

"Our clients want solutions that achieve the most efficient, effective and flexible approach for their business," stated Brian Walsh, Carbon Group managing director. "For that reason, we don't just furnish them with the right products — we provide for clients' total service needs."

Carbon Group: Providing for clients' total service needs

Carbon Group is geared towards giving customers more choice combined with best practice across sourcing, compliance, manufacturing, storage as well as mobilisation.

"We continuously invest time, money and resources to deliver better solutions, with the latest products and approaches," said Brian Walsh. "And, because we can take control of the full supply chain, we give our customers peace-of-mind, helping them to work with flexibility and ease."

Established over 50 years ago, the Cork site deals mainly with the company's chemical and food ingredients business, with a focus on manufacturing and distribution.

"We represent a number of international companies and manage the sale and distribution of their products on the Irish and UK markets," Brian said. "We also have invested significantly in our site where we have the ability to bring in bulk loads, manufacture, blend and pack products to meet stringent customer demands and tight specifications."

Carbon Group's quality procedures, quality assurance and sourcing teams, together with its global contacts built up over the past five decades, ensures its ability to source very specific specialist products to meet its customers very unique requirements.

"Most importantly, we understand our customers' validation, testing and reporting requirements and work in partnership with them to meet these needs." It is a highly skilled workforce, with specialists in VACCP, HACCP, CLP, ADR, Reach and ICorr-certified inspectors.

"We also have a dedicated team who are specialists in the import and export of hazardous materials throughout Europe and around the globe. We ensure specialist product handling, tamper-proof protection, lot tracking, customs declarations and specialist bulk logistics," he adds.

Catering to diverse needs

Carbon Group's core competencies include: Global sourcing of international markets for the latest and optimum performing products



Carbon Group MD, Brian Walsh, with some of the staff members at the company's Ringaskiddy plant.

Pictures: Dan Linehan

on the market; Technical Knowledge from continuously trained teams to ensure intelligent, relevant solutions; and Specialist Storage facilities designed to handle a range of technical product requirements including bonded warehousing, temperature control, food safety, product segregation, ATEX compliancy.

The company also offers on-site bulk storage facilities, giving customers full flexibility and supply security for last-minute orders.

As well as producing its own ranges of chemical cleaners, detergents, and sanitisers, Carbon Group also manufactures customised chemical blends which are packaged to meet the customer's specification, including batch specific containment packaging and re-packaging.

"Our manufacturing business is growing steadily, especially our offerings to the food and pharmaceutical sectors, who demand high standards in quality product supply chain and strong management controls from us. Often, these customers require us to repackage products into batch specific requirements for their own processes, allowing just-in-time and lean manufacturing at their own sites."

Currently employing a workforce of over 50 people, the company has expanded considerably from its original base in Ovens with just 15 people.

"We work very closely with our customers' R&D. Quality and Procurement teams, sourcing, evaluating and approving new products and constantly reviewing and improving our processes as we evaluate changing needs."

The company maintains close links with Enterprise Ireland and the third-level education institutions on a variety of R&D projects, as part of its role in finding solutions to client needs.

Carbon Group is also part of a working group which evaluates cleaning processes within the pharmaceutical industry as well as assessing how improvements can be made in conjunction with the pharmaceutical industry and third-level institutions.

Quality standards and constant innovation

Carbon Group began 2018 by announcing its success in achieving the new upgraded ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems

Certification. Awarded as a result of the company's ongoing commitment to the delivery of outstanding products and services using exceptional quality management systems, the award also reflects the firm's consistent emphasis on providing first-rate customer service and customer satisfaction.

ISO 9001 is the International Organization for Standardization's flagship quality management system. It is considered the most sought-after standardised quality system of its kind.

"For any business, the adoption of a quality management system is a strategic move which helps to streamline activities and improve overall performance," explains Brian. "As our business centres on the supply of chemicals, food in-

gredients and specialist paints, it is particularly important for Carbon Group to provide customers with the confidence that comes with attaining the ISO 9001:2015 QMS standard. Internally, the certification also holds significance for the business — ISO standardisation provides a strong framework for on-going development initiatives within our company, enabling us to ensure that Carbon Group continues to offer the very highest standards in all aspects of our business processes."

In 1998, Carbon Group was first certified to ISO 9001:1994 and has maintained certification to the various upgrades right up to the present day.

While Carbon Group supply a broad range of chemicals, including a wide variety of acids, solvents, ethanol and speciality products, it is continuously seeking out new product solutions and expanding its product range for its customers and the markets it serves.

An example of the company's ongoing innovation, its R&D team has recently developed Low Chlorate Sodium Hydroxide as a response to emerging international dairy industry and food industry trends. Chlorate residue in milk products is an emerging food safety concern for the international dairy industry, with particular concern around infant formula manufacture.

With the ultimate aim for processed milk and dairy products to be free of chlorate residues, Carbon Group's innovative solution has produced a concentration which has been independently tested and found to contain low traces of chlorates.



Carbon Group managing director, Brian Walsh, pictured at the company's plant in Ringaskiddy, Co Cork.

food ingredients



Declan O'Hanlon, senior quality analyst, and Richard Barrett, quality analyst, in the QC lab at the Carbon Group plant in Ringaskiddy, Cork. Pictures: Dan Linehan

Group's sustained success built upon excellence of its people

In tandem with Carbon Group's dedication to innovation and operational efficiency, Brian Walsh has no hesitation in underlining the company's greatest asset — its people.

"Whatever about the investment we have made in our facilities, systems, warehousing and manufacturing capabilities, our most important asset is undoubtedly our people," said Brian Walsh. "We have a great team, a fantastic team spirit and a great working environment that ensures we give our customers great service and support."

Carbon Group, he points out, is very much part of the indirect industry which creates jobs based on the growth of its multinational customers.

"It is critical that we in Ireland continue to attract these companies that support our growth and continue to give them the infrastructure they require," he emphasises.

Located in the bustling heart of Ringaskiddy, Carbon Group wears its Irish-owned credentials proudly as it continues to grow and expand with the opportunities emerging on the commercial horizon.

"Carbon Group is different to many of the other companies operating out of Ringaskiddy," he notes. "While there are many foreign owned multinationals in the locality, we believe that our ongoing success stems from a remarkable dedication to providing the most relevant and the most advanced products and services in supporting these multinationals in the life sciences sectors of pharma, bio-pharma, medical device, food and beverage sectors."

"My predecessors at Carbon Group would have been developing new product ranges and formulations in response to the new technology and increased production associated with that progressive era of Irish farming — Irish dairy farming was changing



Carbon Group, a leading Irish-owned business in Ringaskiddy, Co Cork.

Journey from local beginnings to global ambitions

Looking back over a half century from its earliest beginnings in 1967 as a no-nonsense supplier of essential farm detergent products to Irish dairy farmers, Carbon Group has grown to become a dynamic business with a global outlook, supplying chemical, food and pharmaceutical products to an international customer and client base.

"As an Irish company entering into the marketplace in the late 1960s, we were very much growing with the Irish dairy farming sector and responding to the requirements of a changing marketplace," Brian outlines of those rural beginnings.

"While we are frequently presented with headlines that assert the overnight success of the latest IT or bio-pharma business, those of us who have worked for a small business venture will know for certain that success doesn't materialise unless it is coupled with dedication and innovation, along with a sincere commitment to getting to know the wants and needs of your target market."

and our business was there to evolve alongside the farming community at that time."

With much of the company's business development background linked to the co-operative movement, it grew in tandem with the sector.

"Initially, we grew with the co-operative movement; now, as we embark on a 52nd year that sees the Group established as a well-recognised supplier to the pharmaceutical industry, we're proud to be deep routed in the continued development of the cutting-edge life sciences sector in Ireland and further afield."

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Painting a new picture

A reorganisation in 2017 saw the Group's paint business moved to a dedicated centre in Dublin.

"Our aim for the innovative walk-in paint centre in Finglas is to make another stamp in the industry in Leinster," said Brian Walsh.

"We pride ourselves on the vast range of products we supply at unbeatable value and stock a full range of Rust-Oleum, Sikkens, Cromadex, International Paint, Dulux products and much more."

Carbon Group's new location also prides itself on being Ireland's one-stop supplier and distributor in all areas of paint, coatings, application equipment and pre-treatment chemicals, and has

partnered with many well-known brands.

Going the extra mile

Carbon Group's willingness to go the extra mile — literally — for its clients is illustrated by one client request during the summer.

"One of our key customers contacted us to explain that they were under sudden pressure to get a crucial delivery out to the UK, an order comprising four pallets of raw material.

"Without a second thought, one of our team members personally accompanied the Interpon D powder delivery to ensure that the order made that vital shipment — no questions asked, just part of the job," said Brian Walsh.



Carbon Group has a fantastic team spirit and a great work environment.