



Retail
Excellence
Ireland

Industry
Insights
+
Workshops

Leadership
Skills
+
People
Management

RETAIL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2026

RETAIL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2026

5 DAY COURSE

- Thursday, April 2nd
- Wednesday, April 15th
- Wednesday, May 6th
- Wednesday, May 20th
- Wednesday, May 27th

INCLUDES

Our Inspiring
Dublin City Retail Safari

+
Exclusive ticket for

**THE
RETAIL
RETREAT 2026**
Ireland's Largest Retail Conference

We're excited to invite you to the Retail Management Development Programme — a dynamic, high-impact experience created exclusively for Retail Excellence members who want to lead a winning team with confidence and drive a successful business.

Designed for ambitious Store Managers, Concession managers, Multi site managers and senior Assistant Store managers, this programme will empower you with the skills, insight, and mindset needed to thrive in today's fast-changing retail world.



As a small business owner running a toy shop both in-store and online, I found this course with Retail Excellence Ireland to be incredibly valuable. The mix of expert advice, industry insights, and hands-on learning gave me practical strategies I could apply straight away.

The Retail Safari was a real highlight - it was inspiring to see how other retailers operate and to take away ideas that I could implement in my own business.

Ruth Roberts, Cogs, Toys & Games

WHAT MAKES THIS PROGRAMME STAND OUT?

- **Expert-led sessions** from top retail advisors and industry specialists
- **Engaging, practical workshops** that you can apply immediately in your store to achieve instead results!
- **Up-to-date HR Legislations insights** ensuring you stay informed, compliant, and confident in managing your teams
- **An inspiring Retail Safari** to spark fresh ideas, innovation and best practice thinking
- **Complimentary ticket** Ireland's largest **Retail Conference**
- **Completed Sales Growth Plan** to support both your personal development and your stores performance

This programme isn't just about learning — it's about connecting with other businesses and managers and learning from them, investing in yourself, building your confidence, and bringing fresh energy and direction to your retail career.

Join us on this exciting journey and unlock the tools, connections, and inspiration to become the leader your team and your business deserve.

The only way to do great work is to love what you do.

 Steve Jobs





COURSE FACILITATOR

James Burke

A prominent and influential Retail Advisor in Ireland, James brings extensive experience in delivering growth solutions and facilitating exceptional learning. With his expertise, he will lead you through the programme, fostering discussions and providing support for your personalised Sales Growth Plan.

Retail Excellence Ireland has designed this Five-day Retail Management Development Programme, delivered over eight weeks, to equip managers - whether from large corporations, independent retailers, or newly appointed leadership roles - with the skills to excel. Ideal for both new and experienced managers, this programme provides **practical tools, strategies, and insights** to enhance confidence, effectiveness, and leadership in retail.

All participants receive a **complimentary ticket to The Retail Retreat 2026**, Wednesday May 20th, at the 5-star Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny. This premier event features industry leaders, global speakers, and invaluable networking with top decision-makers, offering key insights into the future of retail. We conclude the programme with an **inspirational Dublin City Retail Safari**.

**This is more than a programme - it's a career game-changer.
Join us and take the next step in retail leadership.**

DAY 1

THE ADDRESS HOTEL, CITYWEST

2nd April 2026

09.30

Registration / Coffee

10.00

Welcome! And let's get started



Introduction and round table discussion led by James Burke, James Burke & Associates and Jean McCabe, CEO of Retail Excellence Ireland.

10.15

What's Happening in Retail today, in Ireland and Worldwide?

Discussion led by Jean McCabe

11.00

Strengthening Management Skillsets & Understanding KPI's

Facilitated by James Burke



This interactive workshop lays the foundation for effective business management, enhancing core leadership skills essential for success. Key areas covered include:

- Defining management and understanding its role
- Motivating teams and setting structured daily/weekly objectives
- Balancing shop floor operations with administrative tasks
- Managing unexpected challenges and maintaining performance goals

We will also explore heat mapping and key performance indicators (KPIs), which are how to set, measure, and align them with business strategy to drive success. Understanding and applying the right KPIs ensures clarity, focus, and effective decision-making.

11.15

Coffee I Networking

11.30

Strengthening Management Skillsets & Understanding KPI's contd.

12.00

Manager of the Year Award Winner 2025

Ericka Hennessy – Three Ireland



Ericka will share her personal retail journey, highlighting her career progression and the experiences that shaped her leadership style. She will talk through the journey leading up to winning the 2025 Manager of the Year Award, including the challenges she faced, key milestones, and the strategies that drove success. Erica will also discuss how she builds, motivates, and develops high-performing teams, manages performance on the shop floor, and creates a positive culture that delivers strong commercial results and an exceptional customer experience and why retail is her chosen career!

13.00

Lunch

DAY 1

THE ADDRESS HOTEL, CITYWEST

2nd April 2026

14.00

You are the Difference

Alf Dunbar



A renowned performance coach, international speaker, and creator of the "You Are the Difference" customer service coaching program. With a background in business and coaching, Alf has helped thousands of individuals and organizations improve their customer service, leadership, and communication skills.

"You Are the Difference" is a highly effective, practical coaching method designed to empower frontline staff and managers to deliver outstanding customer experiences. Through simple yet powerful techniques, Alf inspires teams to build confidence, enhance interactions, and drive customer loyalty, making a real difference in both business results and workplace culture.

15.45

Kilkenny Design Manager – My Retail Journey

Donna Byrne



This session will explore the journey to date, outlining how training and people development have evolved within the business and the impact this has had on performance and culture. It will highlight what has proven to be most important when training teams and how learning is embedded on a day-to-day basis.

The speaker will also share insight into their team profile and management approach, focusing on how they lead, motivate, and empower their people. Attendees will gain practical examples of how strong leadership, clear communication, and a culture of trust drive engagement, ownership, and long-term team success.

16.15

A Gathering of Thoughts

16.30

Q&A | Conclusion of Day 1



The retail management programme provided a great opportunity to network and engage with other retail managers, discuss practices they implement and also give suggestion on things we have tried, it has helped me as a manager broaden my own view on things, in addition to this there were a range of speakers who were all excellent and motivating - able to help you to see things from a different perspective while keeping your own business growth goals as the key objective, I would highly recommend this programme to any retail manager.

John Meade, Store Manager for Junction 14

DAY 2

THE ADDRESS HOTEL, CITYWEST

15th April 2026

09.30

Registration / Coffee

10.00

Making it Happen! And let's get started



James Burke will talk through key outcomes from the previous session – group discussion on what delegates have put into action and what the outcome was. What KPIs are seeing the most significant improvement? Participants work in groups to encourage interaction and sharing of information.

10.30

Manager of the Year Winner 2021

Karl Fitzgerald

Store Manager of Applegreen – award winning Rathcoole with over 100 people on his team what he does on a day to day basis to keep his teams focused and drive business. Karl will bring us on his retail journey.

11.15

Coffee / Networking

11.30

Leadership by Design: The Leader You Are and the Leader You Choose to Be

Brian Battles from Pharmacy Success

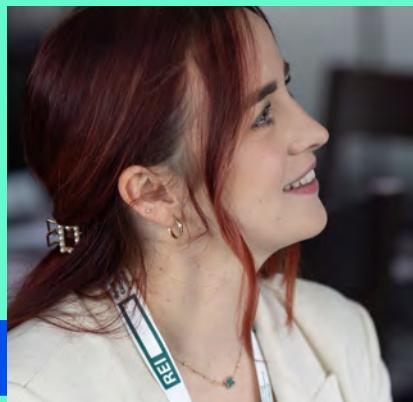


Brian began his career over 20 years ago on the retail floor of a family-run pharmacy, where he quickly learned that strong leadership, clear processes, and quick wins with your team can transform performance. His experience spans hospital pharmacy, the HSE, the PCRS, and senior operational roles giving him a deep understanding of both people and business.

Passionate about retail leadership, and works closely with owners to develop confident, high-performing teams, drive sales growth, and run efficient, successful stores. He works with leaders to implement practical strategies, engage their staff, and create a culture that delivers both excellent customer service and strong business results.

13.00

Lunch



DAY 2

THE ADDRESS HOTEL, CITYWEST

15th April 2026

14.00

Interactive HR Masterclass

Tommy Smyth, Managing Director, Tom Smyth & Associates



This highly interactive and practical session with Tommy Smyth will give attendees a clear, up-to-date understanding of HR best practice, tailored specifically to the realities of small and medium retail and pharmacy teams.

Designed to be conversational and hands-on, the session will actively encourage questions, discussion, and real-life scenarios, with plenty of time dedicated to an open and intensive Q&A.

Key Topics Covered

- Essential HR documentation every business must have in place
- The most common workplace issues—and how to handle them correctly
- Leave entitlements and statutory obligations
- Managing absence and lateness effectively
- Dealing with legacy staff: what new managers need to know
- Handling difficult team members in a small working environment
- Performance appraisals that actually drive improvement
- Simple, practical tips for running your HR function smoothly
- Real-world case studies and examples

Attendees will leave with practical guidance, greater confidence in managing people issues, and clear actions they can apply immediately in their business

15.15

Monitoring & Improving Store Performance continued

James Burke

Including a follow up on heat mapping and key performance indicators (KPIs).

16.15

A Gathering of Thoughts | Evaluations

16.30

Q&A | Conclusion Day 2



Enrolment in the Retail Excellence management development programme has been a game-changer for me.

I have learned how to develop my leadership skills, and effective growth strategies, and gained invaluable insights into optimizing operational efficiency.

This course has equipped me with the tools and knowledge to thrive in this dynamic industry.

Gordon Lucas, McElhinney's

DAY 3

THE ADDRESS HOTEL, CITYWEST

6th May 2026

09.30 Registration / Coffee

10.00 Making It Happen! And let's get started

James Burke will talk through key outcomes from the previous session – Key outcomes from the previous session: a group discussion on what delegates have put into action and what the outcome was. Participants work in groups to encourage interaction and information sharing.

10.30 Developing Aggressive Sales Growth Strategy

By its nature, growing retail sales has to be an aggressive process. This demands a high level of energy, focus, and planning from managers, and this session will allow delegates to gain insight into the tools that will help them grow sales.

The workshop will cover topics such as:

- Creating a target-driven sales culture within the business
- Exploring the dynamics of setting accurate sales targets using weekly management meetings to review progress and action on new initiative
- Driving sales through promotions
- Highlighting promotional activity
- Developing a marketing plan
- Using local PR to raise brand profile Understanding the importance of targeting
- Ready for business best practice Managing out of stocks and lost sales opportunities
- Harnessing the staff element in sales growth

11.00 Coffee | Networking



DAY 3

THE ADDRESS HOTEL, CITYWEST

6th May 2026

11.15



Relationships and People Development in Retail Management

Gerry Duffy – The Performance Mindset: Resilience , Focus and Consistency

This is a highly interactive, practical workshop designed for retail managers who want to get the best from their people — every day, on the shop floor.

Retail success is driven by relationships, not just results. Through discussion, real retail scenarios, group exercises and reflection, this session will challenge managers to explore how they lead, communicate and develop their teams to drive stronger performance and engagement.

In this interactive workshop, managers will:

- Explore the relationships that matter most in retail leadership and how to strengthen them
- Gain insight into their personal leadership impact through emotional intelligence
- Practise creating psychological safety so teams feel confident to speak up and contribute
- Share ideas, learn from peers and apply practical tools to develop skills within their teams

Managers will leave with clear, actionable approaches they can apply immediately to improve team motivation, trust and performance in store.

13.00

Lunch I Networking

14.00

Loss Prevention

Patricia Maw, former Loss Prevention Woodies



Patricia Maw is a former Loss Prevention Manager with Woodie's, bringing extensive experience in loss prevention, shrink reduction, and retail risk management. She is known for her practical, people-focused approach, working closely with store teams to embed strong controls while maintaining a positive customer experience. Patricia will share real-world insights on creating a culture of awareness, accountability, and engagement that supports both performance and profitability.

15.15

Developing Aggressive Sales Growth Strategies contd.

16.00

Q&A I Conclusion Day 3

DAY 4

THE RETAIL RETREAT, KILKENNY

20th May 2026

08.30

Breakfast Synergy : Morning Meet & Learn

Kick off the day with an energizing breakfast session designed to spark insight and connection. Delegates will take part in small-group discussions to reflect on key takeaways from previous sessions, sharing the actions they've implemented and the results achieved. This highly interactive forum encourages collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and fresh perspectives. Each delegate will also receive a personalized agenda outlining the day ahead.

09.30

Meet in the manager programme room get your programme for the day ahead

10.30

Morning and Afternoon sessions

The day's schedule includes a mix of International Keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and fire side talks tailored to address critical areas of retail management. Each delegate will have a pre-assigned list of sessions, with a focus on capturing at least one actionable takeaway from each talk to share with their teams and implement in their stores. James Burke will facilitate breakout sessions throughout the day, offering opportunities to regroup, discuss key insights, and deepen the learning experience.

13.00

Lunch & Networking

Enjoy a delicious lunch while networking with fellow delegates and speakers. During lunch and breaks, take advantage of the exhibition area to explore innovative solutions and build valuable connections with peers and industry experts

16.00

A Gathering of Thoughts

Wrap up the day with a Q&A session and a review of the key learnings. Together, we'll create actionable "to-do" lists to bring these insights back to your teams and stores.

16.45

Q&A | Conclusion Day 4



DAY 5

RETAIL SAFARI DUBLIN CITY

27th May 2026

09.30

Morning Coffee

On day 5, the Retail Safari will commence, our exploration will take us to premier destinations in Dublin, encompassing both locally rooted establishments and international retailers. During our thoughtfully curated Retail Safari, managers will be guided through Dublin's finest outlets, each highlighting unique selling propositions. This tailored experience aims to motivate managers by offering valuable insights that can be applied to enhance their stores and teams.

13.00

Lunch | Networking

16.00

End-of-Programme Projects

Delegates will have the opportunity to present their end-of-programme projects, showcasing the practical application of their learnings and insights gained throughout the course. This session will also include an in-depth discussion on the impact of KPIs and heat mapping in your business, exploring how these tools can drive performance, identify opportunities, and enhance overall decision-making. Participants will have the chance to share real-world examples and exchange ideas on how to implement these strategies effectively within their own organizations.

16.45

Bouncing Back!

Mattress Mick



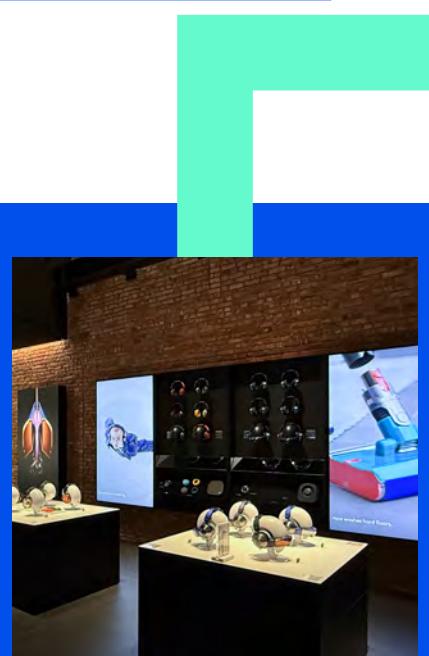
Our final speaker of the programme - Mattress Mick, entrepreneur and author of Bouncing Back! shares his powerful journey of resilience, leadership, and overcoming adversity, offering practical lessons for today's managers.

15.45

Presentation of Certificates

16.00

Conclusion of Programme



Elevate Your Retail Career.

SECURE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

RETAIL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2026

BOOKING INFORMATION

Book online at retailexcellence.ie

For Further Information:



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Bookings:

- Payment must be received prior to programme commencing.
- All cancellations must be made in writing to Amy@retailexcellence.ie on/before March 21st 2026.
- No fees will be reimbursed after this date however substitutes may be made at any time.
- Retail Excellence Ireland reserves the right at any time to cancel or alter the date of the event or change the venue or speakers. In these circumstances, any liability will be strictly restricted to the delegate fee paid.

Price:

Member €995 (+VAT)

Non Member €1,495 (+VAT)

The fee includes course material, refreshments, and lunch for each day of the programme and a Complimentary ticket for The Retail Retreat 2026.

[BOOK NOW](#)