

# THE RETAIL RETREAT 2025

Lyrath Estate Hotel

MAY 27

REI

Retail  
Excellence  
Ireland



MAY 27

09.00

STAGE 1

Opening Address | Jean Mc Cabe, CEO Retail Excellence

09.15 - 09.45



Human + AI: The New Formula for Peak Performances | Edoardo Bortolato, *Director with Google Ireland*

09.55 - 10.25



The 360° Marketing Play Book  
Scott Shashua,  
*Co-Founder of The Couture Club*

STAGE 2



Thriving Online: Trading Through Turbulent Times  
**Panel Discussion** with Brad Kearns, *StudioForty9*; Sean Gleeson, *McCabes Pharmacy*; Hannah Moran, *McElhinneys*; Fiona Dillon, *O'Brien's Wines*

STAGE 3



How Independents can Stand Out Amongst the Crowd Ed Fitzgerald, *Independent Retail Consultant*  
**Panel Discussion** with Ruth Roberts, *Cogs, Toys and Games*; Aoibhín Garrihy, *BEO*; Paul Harvey, *Windyridge Garden Centre*

10.30 - 11.00



Mastering Social Media: The Subtle Sell | Holly Hayes, *Former Social Media Manager for The Diary of a CEO* with Steven Bartlett

11.00 - 11.15

Minister of State for Small Business, Retail & Circular Economy, Alan Dillon

11.15 - 11.40



Coffee & Networking

11.40 - 12.10



Talent Tug-of-War: Culture, Costs, and the Future of Irish Retail HR  
**Panel Discussion** : Barry Whelan, *Excel Recruitment* with Hillary Collins, *PHX*; Jean Marten, *Applgreen*, Sharon Kelly, *Woodies*; Caroline Browne, *Dairygold*

STAGE 2



Understanding the How, Where and Why of Irish Shoppers *with the latest Consumer research*  
David O'Kelly, Partner, Head of M&A, *KPMG Ireland*

STAGE 3



Retail moves fast - and Petstop is staying ahead by turning insight into action  
*with Anthony Gallagher, Petstop, John Clancy, Founder, Galvia*

12:15 - 12.45



How Embracing Setbacks and Failures Can Become the Foundation to Success | William Diamond, *Diamond Furniture National Retailer of the Year Winner 2024*

12.45 - 12.55

SEAI Energy Grant Update Announcement

13.00 - 14.00



Lunch & Networking

14.05 - 14.35



Think Outside the Aisle: Untapped Resources that can Transform Your Retail Landscape | Gerry Duffy, *International Speaker*

14.40 - 15.10



Every Sale Tells a Story: Making it Simple Across All Channels  
Eric Horgan, *CPO Elavon*  
**Panel Discussion** with Paul Dunne, *Elavon*; Sinéad O'Sullivan, *Fifth Avenue*; Seamus Stapleton, *Applegreen*

STAGE 2



What's the Difference? Leadership v Management  
Tommy Smyth, *Tom Smyth & Associates*

STAGE 3



Culture as Strategy: Great Place to Work Visionaries Reshape Retail  
**Panel Discussion** with Sharon Kelly, *Woodies*; Michele Ryan, *Carrolls Irish Gifts*; Cathal Divilly, *Geat Place to Work*

15.15 - 15.35



Coffee & Networking

15.40 - 16.10



Best of Big Apple Retail! : *Learn the latest innovation and emerging retail trends in New York*  
Matthew Brown, *Leading Retail Futurist, EchoChamber*

16.15 - 16.55



From Zero to Billions: The JD Sports Growth Story  
Peter Cowgill, *Former CEO & Chairman, JD Sports*

17.00

Final Wrap Up & Thank You!

# OUR HOST

## ALAN SHORTT

**It's our pleasure to introduce Alan Shortt, as the host for The Retail Retreat 2025.**

Alan is an Executive Communication Coach with over two decades of experience empowering leaders across industries. His expertise in refining presentation, leadership, and interpersonal skills has made him a trusted partner for senior executives, entrepreneurs, and retail leaders alike.

Alan has worked with a wide range of clients, from high-profile media personalities to top brands, including BBC, RTÉ, and Sky News.

His dynamic approach, rooted in emotional intelligence, helps individuals build confidence, manage conflict, and communicate more effectively. Known for his engaging personality and hands-on coaching style, Alan brings a unique blend of expertise and energy that will make this retreat an unforgettable experience.

Get ready for a day of insights, inspiration, and a few laughs along the way with Alan at the helm!



**“GET COMFORTABLE  
WITH BEING  
UNCOMFORTABLE!”**

**Alan Shortt**

Host for The Retail Retreat 2025

CEO & Founder, Media Skills Ireland;  
Executive Communication Coach

# MEET THE SPEAKERS

## Get Ready to Be Inspired!

We're thrilled to welcome an incredible lineup of speakers to this year's Retail Retreat,. These industry leaders, will take to the stage to share real retail stories, practical insights, and bold ideas that are shaping the future of our sector.

Through dynamic panel discussions and thought-provoking keynotes, you'll hear directly from those driving success on the ground - from independent retailers to global brands.

Across a series of engaging panel discussions and keynote sessions, our speakers will cover the most relevant and pressing topics facing the industry today, including:

- **Retail leadership and resilience in a changing world**
- **Driving in-store innovation and digital transformation**
- **Enhancing the customer experience through data and design**
- **The future of retail employment and workplace culture**
- **Marketing that connects: storytelling, brand building & omnichannel success**

Expect honest conversations, valuable takeaways, and the kind of inspiration that can only come from real-world experience. This is your opportunity to learn from the best, ask big questions, and leave with fresh perspective and renewed energy for your retail journey.



**Peter Cowgill**

Former CEO & Chairman,  
JD Sports

"From Zero to Billions: The JD Sports  
Growth Story"



**Edoardo Bortolato**

Director, Large Customer Sales at  
Google Italy & Iberia

"Human + AI: The New Formula for  
Peak Performances"



**Holly Hayes**

Former Social Media Manager for  
The Diary of a CEO with  
Steven Bartlett

"Mastering Social Media: The  
Subtle Sell"



**Matthew Brown**

Retail Futurist & Founder,  
Echochamber

"Best of Big Apple Retail! Learn the  
Latest Innovation and Emerging Retail  
Trends in New York"





**William Diamond**

Founder, Diamond Furniture

"How Embracing Setbacks and Failures Can Become the Foundation to Success"



**Gerry Duffy**

International Speaker

"Think Outside the Aisle: Untapped Resources That Can Transform Your Retail Landscape."



**Scott Shashua**

Co-Founder, The Couture Club

"The 360° Marketing Play Book"



**Tommy Smyth**

Director, Tom Smyth Associates

"What's the Difference? Leadership v Management"



**Barry Whelan**

CEO, Excel Recruitment Group

"Talent Tug-of-War: Culture, Costs, and the Future of Irish Retail HR"



**Eric Horgan**

Chief Product Officer, Elavon Europe

"Every Sale Tells a Story: Making it Simple Across All Channels"



**Sharon Kelly**  
Chief People Officer, Woodies



**Aoibhín Garrihy**  
Co-Founder, beo



**Hillary Collins**  
People & Culture Director,  
PHX Ireland



**David O'Kelly**  
Partner, Head of M&A, KPMG Ireland  
  
"Understanding the How, Where  
and Why of Irish Shoppers"



**Jean Marten**  
Head of Human Resources,  
Applegreen



**Ruth Roberts**  
Co-Founder, Cogs Toys & Games



**Brad Kearns**

Sales & Business Development,  
StudioForty9

"Thriving Online: Trading Through  
Turbulent Times"



**John Clancy**

Founder, Galvia

"Retail Moves Fast: Petstop is  
Staying Ahead by Turning  
Insights into Action"



**Anthony Gallagher**

Director, Petstop

"Retail Moves Fast: Petstop is  
Staying Ahead by Turning  
Insights into Action"



**Fiona Dillon**

eCommerce Manager,  
O'Brien's Wines



**Paul Harvey**

Co-Owner, Windyridge  
Garden Centre



**Paul Dunne**

Country Manager Ireland,  
Elavon Europe





**Seán Gleeson**

Digital and E-Commerce Leader,  
McCabes Pharmacy



**Caroline Walsh Browne**

HR Manager, Dairygold Agribusiness



**Seamus Stapleton**

Managing Director, Applegreen



**Michele Ryan**

Head of People, Carrolls Irish Gifts



**Sinéad O'Sullivan**

Owner, Fifth Avenue



**Hannah Moran**

Marketing Manager,  
McElhinneys Department Store





**Cathal Divilly**

CEO, Great Place to Work®

"Culture as Strategy:  
Great Place to Work Visionaries  
Reshape Retail"



**Edward Fitzgerald**

Independent Retail Consultant

"How Independents Can Stand  
Out Amongst the Crowd"



**ALAN DILLON**

**Minister of State**

**for Small Business & Retail  
& Circular Economy**

# LOCATION

## LYRATH ESTATE HOTEL

**This magnificent venue seamlessly blends historic charm with contemporary elegance.**

Lyrath Estate Hotel in Kilkenny offers 5-star luxury, scenic parkland, and world-class facilities - the perfect setting for relaxation, inspiration, and connection at The Retail Retreat 2025.



### Venue Details

A luxury 5 star hotel in the medieval heart of Ireland, Kilkenny. Lyrath Estate is celebrated for its gorgeous grounds that are spread across 170 acres of Irish countryside, complete with picturesque lakes, historic gardens, and emerald woodlands.

Attention to detail is key throughout, from international service, indulgent pampering treats, first class events and entertainment venues, an award-winning spa, exciting onsite outdoor pursuits and activities to sumptuous food and wine.



#### Address

Paulstown Road, Lyrath,  
Kilkenny, R95 F685



#### Phone

(056) 776 0088



#### Website

[www.lyrath.com](http://www.lyrath.com)

# MEET OUR PARTNERS

**More than just an event - it's a unique chance to connect directly with our trusted partners and solution providers who are here to support you in every aspect of your retail journey.**

From tech and payments to logistics, HR, eCommerce, marketing and more - they're ready to help you drive growth, solve challenges, and excel in today's competitive market.

Whether you're an independent retailer or a multi-site brand, this is the place to:

- Discover the latest tools and technologies shaping the future of retail
- Build partnerships with suppliers who understand your business
- Gain insights and practical solutions tailored to your retail needs



**TITLE**  
PARTNER



**PLATINUM**  
PARTNERS



**GOLD**  
PARTNERS





# BECOME AN REI MEMBER

**Retail Excellence Ireland is Ireland's largest retail industry body, representing over 2,000 of the most progressive and innovative retail companies operating in the Irish market.**

Established in 1995, we are a not-for-profit, member-owned organisation committed to supporting Irish retailers to be the best they can be. Everything we do is driven by the needs of our members. Our mission is to enhance the retail experience for consumers by promoting excellence in retail standards, developing industry skills, and championing a vibrant, competitive, and world-class retail sector in Ireland.

## **Why Become a Member?**

As a member of Retail Excellence, you gain access to expert support, exclusive insights, national advocacy, training programmes, networking opportunities, and best practice sharing with Ireland's leading retailers. Join a trusted community that empowers you to grow, innovate, and succeed in today's fast-changing retail environment.



**Powerful  
Representation**



**Comprehensive  
Updates**



**Complimentary HR  
and Legal Support**



**Networking  
Opportunities**



**Learning and  
Development  
Initiatives**



**Day-to-Day  
Support**



**Expert Retail  
Advice**



# THE RETAIL RETREAT 2025

## BOOKING INFORMATION

### Date

Tuesday, May 27th

### Location

Lyrath Estate Hotel,  
Kilkenny



### Book Through our Website

[www.retailexcellence.ie](http://www.retailexcellence.ie)

### For Further Information



[info@retailexcellence.ie](mailto:info@retailexcellence.ie)



+353 (0) 65 684 6927



[retail\\_excellence](https://www.instagram.com/retail_excellence)



[retail-excellence-ireland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/retail-excellence-ireland)

### CHANGES TO BOOKINGS:

All cancellations must be made in writing to [info@retailexcellence.ie](mailto:info@retailexcellence.ie) on/before May 15th.  
No fees will be reimbursed after this date however substitutes may be made at any time.

### CANCELLATION OR ALTERATION:

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.  
Retail Excellence Ireland will not be held responsible for any transport, accommodation, or other cost incurred by delegates.

