

Commerce

Ireland and its cosmopolitan capital city Dublin in particular has firmly established itself as a serious player in the European finance field. Dublin has a long history of trade due to its advantageous coastal port town location from the Viking times to the present day. In recent times, Ireland has been at the hub of European economic activity with many international businesses choosing Dublin, Galway and Cork as prime locations to set up their European headquarters. The impact of this generation of new foreign business combined with a growth in national confidence on the Irish economy has been immense. This unprecedented 'economic boom' in the country which kicked off in the mid nineties has been well documented and is now referred to as the 'Celtic Tiger'.

The change in flow of direction of people to Ireland had myriad effects upon the nation and its people. No longer was Ireland a place local people wished to abandon 'to better themselves abroad', now we were the host nation welcoming people from all over the world. A new breed of highly skilled foreign labour force, attracted by national government and EU funded incentive packages to set up their enterprises, began to move in and settle down.

Not only is Dublin's location as a trading port an advantage for conducting business abroad but as Ireland is an English language speaking country, which is the international language of business there is no issue with a language barrier in business negotiation. Indeed the language of business has its own vocabulary and language schools design courses for the business learner's specific needs. In order to succeed in international business non native speakers are highly recommended to perfect their language skills to increase opportunity for employment in the labour market not only in Ireland but anywhere else in the world.

Where once Ireland was a place foreigners came to as tourists, and they continue to do so in their thousands every year, it is becoming the business home and hearth for many diverse nationalities. The demographic of the Irish workplace has changed dramatically. With this new blend of international employees and employers working in Irish businesses in all spheres of the community from the space of the local amenities in the corner shop to the international IT enterprise Intel alongside local Irish people, both the newcomers and host nation are faced with incredibly exciting new opportunities and unparalleled challenges. Cultural diversity in the commercial and financial setting often reflects the social situation within the wider community. Unfortunately it has not all been plain sailing and the transition from a predominantly homogenous state to a multicultural in a very short span of time has unsettled some and several incidents of racial discrimination in the workplace have been reported. In order to tackle this serious issue, intercultural training is being implemented in many companies and business environments throughout the country. The chief aim is to increase awareness of, for example different communication styles across cultures, sensitivity towards other peoples' cultural beliefs and values and overall to promote mutual respect for difference. Two years ago a new post within the Irish government was established to deal with issues in relation to

immigration. Recently, the current and first Irish Minister for Integration, Conor Linehan acknowledged that one of the key tasks to facilitate not only the successful integration of newcomers to Ireland but moreover to secure a stable prosperous Irish economy for many years to come, is that we do not neglect to tap into the exceptional talent and specialised skills of our new Irish. It seems that if Ireland in this current climate of economic recession we should heed this view and rather than pull investment in 'people who aren't going to stay' encourage them to do to do by nurturing and valuing their contribution to Irish commerce,