

Manufacturing in Ireland 2023

Unlocking Ireland's manufacturing potential for the next manufacturing evolution

Boston Scientific
case study 2023



A hub of talent and impact

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Conor Russell, Vice President of Operations for Boston Scientific in Clonmel, talks about how Boston Scientific has evolved over the years and why Ireland is a good place to start and grow a manufacturing business.

A hub for talent and impact

In the last few decades, Ireland has cemented its reputation as a hub for medtech innovation. This evolution is due to the abundance of talent, proactive government support, a thriving education ecosystem, and the increasing presence of global medtech giants. Today, Ireland is widely regarded as one of the top 5 medtech hubs in the world.

At the heart of this hub of innovation lies Boston Scientific, a global medical device company. The company was founded in 1979 by John Abele and Pete Nicolas with a vision to transform lives through less invasive technologies. Today it is a global medical technology leader, with over 45,000 employees worldwide, providing a broad range of solutions that reduce the cost of healthcare and address the unmet needs of over 33M patients every year. Last year, Boston Scientific generated over \$12 bn in global sales and supports the treatment of diseases as diverse as heart failure, atrial fibrillation, vascular diseases, gastrointestinal conditions, chronic pain and specific types of cancer.

The journey of Boston Scientific began in Ireland in 1994 when the company started up operations at their Galway site. Very shortly afterwards 2 other sites were added in Cork and Clonmel. After almost 30 successful years, they employ over 6,500 people across mainly manufacturing and research and development.

Conor Russell, vice president of Operations for Boston Scientific at the Clonmel site, says “Boston Scientific has been a leader in innovation and our

best ideas are as a result of the diverse perspectives of our people and of course insights from our customers and their patients.

“From drug-eluting stents to implantable defibrillators and from imaging scopes to stroke prevention, we are always innovating and advancing the way we deliver healthcare. In fact, one-third of our revenues came from products released on the market over the past three years, which include those that were acquired through strategic acquisitions.”



Nurturing talent for tomorrow

For Boston Scientific, Conor says talent and culture are “what sets us apart and what will define our long-term success”. For the company, people development isn’t just a strategy, it’s an essential part of the DNA.

“It’s become a much more competitive market in recent times,” says Conor. “We focus a lot on developing our people. The company places a strong emphasis on supporting continuous education, to help our employees hone their skills and work toward advancing their careers in our manufacturing and R&D teams. Skills like data analytics, software, additive manufacturing, and automation are in short supply and are critical to our continued success”.

“This strategy has been hugely successful. We encourage managers to promote from within, which leads to strong retention, as well as high engagement and employee satisfaction.”

From internal talent development to forging partnerships with universities, Conor says Boston Scientific is committed to nurturing the next generation of innovators. “We have also furthered our recruiting efforts with a very strong graduate recruitment programme in combination with the Irish Medtech Association’s apprenticeship programmes, which have had tremendous success in introducing new technical apprenticeship qualifications into our industry.

“Our employees enjoy being a part of a company that has a positive impact on people’s lives. The work we do impacts patients and healthcare systems around the world in the most profound way and that is a huge factor in our ability to attract and retain the best talent in the industry,”

The company’s relationships in the country extend deep into the heart of local communities. There’s not only the economic benefit of the salaries from the employees and companies that support the site, but the team also support local charities and volunteer organisations. From fundraising for charities that support cancer care, suicide prevention, and autism to promoting STEM education and supporting local LGBTQ+ organisations, the company’s commitment to community engagement is unwavering and has been a constant theme since it started operations here more than 25 years ago.

“It is hugely rewarding for our employees to be able to help out and give back to our community in meaningful ways - a community that supports us as much as we support them.”



A great place for business

With a significant concentration of industry players and a wealth of talent coming out of its universities, Ireland is undoubtedly a global hub for medtech.

Overall, there are 260,000 people employed in the Irish manufacturing sector, accounting for over 12% of total employment in the economy. Nine of the world's top 10 medical device companies have operations in Ireland. The medtech industry in Ireland exports medical devices to over 100 countries with 80% of stents used across the world manufactured in Ireland.

Conor says, "The opportunities are immense in Ireland. In the medtech sector, we already have a world-class manufacturing base. Our goal is to build on this platform, expand our R&D capabilities, and focus on how we can add even more value through product development and innovation."

Conor says government policies have played a pivotal role in making Ireland a hub for innovation. "We've seen the direct impact of this in Clonmel, from a decade ago where we had only manufacturing on-site to today where we have a strong multifunctional R&D team developing the next-generation technologies for patients and physicians."

But Conor says the need for continued focus on education is critical to ensure Ireland remains competitive as a manufacturing leader. "Investment in STEM skills and our public research infrastructure is crucial. Our graduates need to be equipped to compete globally. An investment in education is an investment in the next generation and in our future economy."

The company's vision for its operations in Ireland is to continue to transform even more lives, in more meaningful ways. With the right talent and culture and with an unwavering focus on the patient, we can be confident in continued success and a very exciting future.

Conor Russell,
Vice President of Operations for Boston Scientific



About Ibec

Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby group and business representative. We campaign for real changes to the policies that matter most to business. Policy is shaped by our diverse membership, who are home grown, multinational, big and small and employ 70% of the private sector workforce in Ireland.

With 39 trade associations covering a range of industry sectors, 6 offices around Ireland as well as an office in Brussels. With over 300 employees, Ibec communicates the Irish business voice to key stakeholders at home and abroad. Ibec also provides a wide range of professional services and management training to members on all aspects of human resource management, occupational health and safety, employee relations and employment law.

Ibec Trade Associations

Representing your industry

Representing your industry Ibec understands that every business is different. There are the general issues which face all businesses operating in Ireland and then there are the issues specific to individual sectors or categories of the economy. To reflect the distinct interests of all our members, there are 39 business associations within the Ibec group. Ibec's trade associations identify and champion issues of importance to their respective members and provide great knowledge sharing, networking, and training for all these industries.

Ibec's trade associations are strong brands in their own right and those that represent the manufacturing sector include:

- BiopharmaChem Ireland
- Irish MedTech Association
- Technology Ireland
- Property Industry Ireland [Building Materials Federation]
- Engineering Industries Ireland
- Food Drink Ireland
- Drinks Ireland

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www.Ibec.ie/manufacturinginireland



Ibec Offices

Ibec Head Office

84/86 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2.
T: +353 1 605 1500
E: membership@ibec.ie

Galway Offices

Ross House,
Victoria Place,
Galway.
T: +353 91 561109
E: galway@ibec.ie
www.ibec.ie/west

Cork Offices

Second Floor,
Penrose One,
Penrose Dock,
Cork.
T: + 353 21 4295511
E: cork@ibec.ie
www.ibec.ie/cork

Limerick Offices

Gardner House,
Bank Place,
Charlotte Quay,
Limerick.
T: + 353 61 410411
E: midwest@ibec.ie
www.ibec.ie/midwest

Donegal Offices

3rd Floor,
Pier One,
Quay Street,
Donegal Town,
Donegal.
T: + 353 74 9722474
E: northwest@ibec.ie
www.ibec.ie/northwest

Waterford Offices

Waterford Business Park,
Cork Road,
Waterford.
T: + 353 51 331260
E: southeast@ibec.ie
www.ibec.ie/southeast

Brussels Offices

Avenue de Cortenburgh 100,
1000 Brussels,
Belgium.
T: +32 (0)2 740 14 30
E: europe@ibec.ie
www.ibec.ie/europe

Web
www.ibec.ie

Twitter
[@ibec](https://twitter.com/ibec)