
Brexit is just like any other challenge facing business owners

Bernard Gallagher is the owner of CBM Signs in Letterkenny and he expects Brexit to have a massive impact on his business, but he is ready to capitalise on the opportunities that will come.

CBM Signs

The company will be 11 years old in August and we are a traditional sign company, working on shop fronts, vehicle graphics, warning signs and estate agent signs. We operate all over Ireland and we also work in the UK with shop fronts and interior fits. Rally car graphics is also another area where we work with people travelling from all over Ireland for it. The company is broken down into four departments basically and we work with everyone from the local plumber to large multinational companies and airlines.

Brexit

I don't really know if anyone is prepared for Brexit because it seems like it's changing every day. But it is a worry because 20% of our sales last year came from the UK, and then there are other areas of the business where we rely on the UK so it could possibly impact as high as 50% of my turnover. But we'll just have to wait and see what actually comes from it because no one seems to

know. I think Brexit will work itself out. Initially there may be problems but the money will keep circulating no matter what. That never changes. Every business owner is faced with difficult challenges and this is just another one to the list. We'll find a way to overcome it.

Impact on CBM

Our deliveries will be most impacted as things stand. Anything that goes to the UK now takes two days but we don't know what's happening with the border so there are all sorts of implications. When we do daily orders, we'll deliver to a number of different counties at once, so now we don't know if we'll be stopped and how long it will take each time, so it's really going to affect us. It's going to increase our costs and we'll have to train our staff on both sides of the border now.

Measures in place

We attended a tradeshow in Germany recently to see if we could find other markets to get supplies from and we found that the Europeans are more than happy to sell. But the downside to that are the extra shipping costs and the timeline that goes with it but price wise it's pretty much the same. Interesting times lie ahead for us but we will keep going like we always do. The good thing is that it creates opportunities for everyone because we all have to deal with it, so it means we all need to work to improve. It's a level playing field for everyone affected by Brexit.

Diversifying

We have a broad base and we are always looking to expand and find new opportunities. We're in a prime location here in Letterkenny and we have upped our social media and use that to identify as much as we can. Ireland is a small market with a small population so we'll keep looking at other markets to keep growing.