



Gala Performance

Every few months, Gala visits a standout store. This month, they visited Flora Crowe of Crowe's Gala in Sixmilebridge, Co Clare

Can you tell us about your store and how long you have been with the Gala Group?

Our store has been part of the Gala Group for ten years. Crowe's Gala is a family run business based in Sixmilebridge, Co, Clare. We have a 3,000 square foot convenience store, which has recently been refurbished, and we have a scratch bakery that produces yeast breads, traditional breads, scones, apple tarts and confectionery items that are all handmade in-store by our bakery team. We have five full-time bakers who bake every days of the week. We employ a team of 30 people in total from the local area.

What attracted you to become part of the Gala Retail Group?

We joined the Gala Retail Group 10 years ago, and more recently we have teamed up with M&P O'Sullivan our local wholesaler in Cork. We feel that Gala Retail and M&P O'Sullivan share our ethos of a family-run business. Gala Retail is an organisation where everyone is connected and approachable, from the CEO of Gala Retail, Gary Desmond, to our Retail Operations Executive, Sandra Nicholson, who offers support, advice and guidance that we find invaluable. We are a huge part of our local community and we find that this resonates with the values of Gala Retail. Supporting local and supporting the community has been at the forefront of everyone's mind over the last 18 months and Gala have enabled us to safely provide the highest level of service for our customers. The fresh look and feel of the Gala brand and its concept range was also a big draw and we have received phenomenal feedback from our customers about the bright colours and contemporary design of the updated Gala branding in-store.

How has the support from Gala evolved since you joined the group?

Retailer support has always been a strong point at Gala, with support and advice being readily available from the Gala team, including the Retail Operations Executives, senior management, the fresh food innovations team, and our local wholesaler. In addition, Gala's app for retailers and the GROW network on the Gala website provide instant access to up-to-date information about everything from in-store promotions and guidance on

implementing safe shopping during the Covid-19 pandemic, to information that can help retailers deliver more for their customers while driving sales. The marketing team in Gala are very hands on, supporting our promotions via Gala social media platforms to help maintain and increase footfall in our store.

What Gala concepts have you implemented and what impact have they had on your store?

Coffee Junction was the first concept that we introduced about six years ago and we noticed a significant increase in our sales through a combination of great marketing and a really great coffee. During our recent store refurbishment, we refreshed the branding, and this has also led to a bump in sales. We also have an in-store bakery, which is hugely popular with customers, and being able to offer fresh handmade products to our customers on a daily basis is a great footfall driver. The Galato ice cream concept has been a big winner for us over the past two years. Our most recent addition is the Distill off-licence concept. The Distill branding elevates our offering and centralised marketing and special offers have driven sales for us in this area.

What would you say to retailers who are considering joining the Gala Group?

Do it! The Gala Retail group, backed by family-run wholesalers like M&P O'Sullivan, is exactly what you need in today's fast moving grocery sector. The Gala Group's ability to adjust quickly to the market changes that we have experienced over the past 18 months demonstrates why retailers need to be part of a group like Gala. When it comes to innovation, Gala is at the forefront with new concepts and offerings for its retailers and stores.

What Gala systems have most benefited the day-to-day running of your store?

Having a dedicated Retail Operations Executive that regularly visits the store has been of huge benefit to us, as we can discuss our plans and potential business opportunities and avail of their advice and support. The Gala app for retailers is a fantastic resource that allows us to stay connected with everything that is going on in the sector, including promotions, new products and national marketing initiatives. ■

