

The following article is from The Sunday Business Post 19 July 2009.

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST
BUSINESS 2000

Business 2000 aims to give students real-life experience

By Dick O'Brien

Teaching packs for this year's Business 2000 initiative are being assembled for schools and colleges around the country. Now in its 13th year, Business 2000 is a learning resource that aims to draw on the expertise of the private sector to provide real-life working examples of the practices and theories being taught to business, economics and accountancy students.

Backed by the Department of Education, it assembles a wide range of case studies from well-known Irish businesses, with each case study intended to illustrate certain aspects of the school curriculum. *The Sunday Business Post* is the media partner of Business 2000.

According to Dave Campbell, product director for Business 2000, contributions from businesses are being sought, and the pack will be delivered to schools in October.

The programme was originally designed to cater for business students but is now also being used by teachers of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme as well as teachers of business courses in a variety of third-level institutions.

The Business 2000 pack is distributed to every second level school on the island of Ireland free of charge – a total of 1,150 schools with 570,000 students. It is also sent to more than 80 third-level institutions.

The pack comprises of an A4 binder containing case studies and associated teaching materials, along with a CD-Rom loaded with interactive learning features, as well as all the material contained in the pack.

Campbell said that, while one pack was sent to every school, extra packs were produced allowing teachers to request further packs if necessary. Business 2000 also actively encourages people to make copies of the pack or CD, or to download the material from its website at www.business2000.ie.

Siobhan O'Sullivan, a business studies teacher at Malahide Community School and a member of the Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland, has been using the resource for the last 12 years.

"What I find terrific about it is that it really brings your teaching to life and the areas covered are so topical," she said.

"Usually the companies featured in the pack are well-known Irish brands, and that helps the students to better relate to the issues that are explored in the case studies."

O'Sullivan usually makes copies of the CD-Rom for each student. "You can find the material on the website but, while most students would have the internet at home, some wouldn't," she said.

One of the companies that has been involved in the initiative since the beginning is CRH. According to the firm's human resources director, Jack Golden, the company prepares a different case study every year, focusing on areas as diverse as preparing financial statements and managing human resources issues.

Golden said that CRH had always been conscious about the need to put something back into the community. "Education would be one of the areas we try to engage in, particularly engineering and business studies," he said.

"The Irish economy is going to need good quality people in the years ahead, and there is no better way to help with that than to give students and appreciation of what is involved in the business world."



Siobhan O'Sullivan, business studies teacher at Malahide Community School.