

# QEF Global - 21 Years of Success

**QEF Global** has been serving the electronics, assembly, automotive, pharmaceutical and engineering industries since 1989. Founded in Cork by Mike Nolan, this successful company is now celebrating 21 years in existence.



QEF Global's facility in Antrim, Northern Ireland

**C**elebrating 21 years in business this year, Irish based company QEF Global seem to be bucking the credit-crunch trend of downsizing and consolidation, and are poised to become one of the leading pan-European players in the fastener and value chain disciplines. The company is preferred supplier to the world's most successful companies, and now a worldwide provider of engineering-driven, solution-based products.

Established in 1989 by Mike Nolan in a small premises near Cork Airport, Quality Electronic Fasteners, now QEF Global, began by identifying inward investment companies as having needs not then serviced

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by existing fastener companies.

### **Supply Partnership**

Mike's knowledge of international fastening specifications gave his young company an edge when dealing with new arrivals like EMC, a supply partnership that endures to this day. QEF Global established the first fastener Kanban in Ireland, and offered faxban and VMI programmes from an early stage. Serving companies such as the burgeoning multi-nationals, QEF gained new supply and manufacturing alliances in the USA, Europe and Asia. Higher value B-Class items were sourced and supplied, underpinned by QEF Global's C-Class core com-

petency.

### **Environmental Recognition**

Having established a foothold in Cork, Mike expanded his offerings and footprint to Dublin and Antrim, and installed continuous improvement programmes that led QEF Global to be the world's first fastener company to achieve ISO Environmental 14001 recognition.

Scotland and the UK, as well as Hungary, Russia and Poland were the next areas of expansion, and QEF Global is currently bringing it's existing Chinese sales office to full facility status. Now employing nearly 100 people around the globe, QEF Global, through it's

## Supply Chain

many facilities, is committed to providing a totally reliable, competitively superior, global supply of high-priority goods and components that require rapid, time-certain delivery.

### Pro-Active Company

"The past few years have been very exciting for everyone at QEF Global," says Greig Callan, Managing Director, QEF Global Kft, Hungary. "As a global supply partner we need to be ready to fulfil our partners requirements at any time and in any location. Sometimes the nature of the business allows us to offer remote services. Today, we service customers in Brazil, The Dominican Republic and Mexico from our existing locations Ireland and Europe."

QEF Global is a proactive company and every solution is calculated with the customer in mind to ensure they get exactly what they need. "This year we will be opening an office in Shenzhen in Southern China with warehousing



Founder, Mike Nolan

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ing support in Hong Kong, Taiwan and in Kushan in Southeast China," says Greig. "We are also developing our supply routes into Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam from these locations to give ourselves a larger footprint in Asia. This will ensure QEF Global's presence on all three major manufacturing continents."

### Future Growth

The company's future growth is driven by the company's dynamic structure and everyone in the company is focused on the common goals and objectives QEF Global plans to achieve. "Manufacturing is constantly evolving, products and designs are always changing and new technologies are always just around the corner," says Greig. "Ensuring that we work closely with our supply partners and our customers at manufacturing, design and management levels, we can offer flexibility in the supply chain that is not always possible in our industry."

### Challenges

According to company founder Mike Nolan, the challenge for QEF Global and many other SMEs is survival.

"The challenges for most companies in Ireland will be survival, circle the wagons and regroup, cut their cloth to suit their measure. But with interest rates hikes coming and little credit for SMEs from the banks, a lot of companies won't make it," says Mike.

"For QEF Global, we have to control our budgets also and continue our strategies to be a global company. In Ireland, the challenge is to leverage the business we have and to diversify into new products and markets such as medical, chemical and environmental. There are not many Irish global companies and we have been growing our global footprint for the last eight years, by increasing our investment in China and the US and we see the next three to five years as extremely exciting," Mike concludes.



QEF Global's future growth is driven by the company's dynamic structure

### 21 Years of QEF Global

- 1989: Quality Electronic Fasteners (QEF) founded in Cork by Mike Nolan
- 1990: QEF offered the first Kan Ban service for fastenings and 'C' class items in Ireland
- 1991: QEF move to a purpose built facility in Cork and achieves ISO9002
- 1997: QEF open facilities in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- 1998: QEF open second Irish facility in Dublin
- 1999: QEF Group becomes the first fastening company in the world to retain ISO14001
- 2004: QEF open their first continental facility in Budapest, Hungary
- 2005: QEF change their title to QEF Global to reflect their growth in the international market
- 2007: QEF Global (Asia) established in Hong Kong
- 2008: QEF Global establishes a facility in Moscow in Russia and agrees a strategic merger with MLM Fasteners in England
- 2009: QEF Global begins operations in Katowice in Poland
- 2010: 21 years in operation in Ireland