

PENNENGINEERING® EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT SERIES

HOW I THINK INSIDE THE BOX™

An interview with Mary Ann Fleming Fergus, President of PennEngineering® Fastening Technologies Europe & Global Operations Director of Haeger® Machine Division

Tell us about your career journey at PennEngineering®?

34 years ago, I joined Precision Steel as a receptionist. Armed with a love of learning, hard work, and determination, I worked my way up through 10 different roles, to where I am today.

In 2001, Precision Steel was purchased by PennEngineering®, after which I was promoted to the role of Managing Director for PEM® Europe. This coincided with the completion of my MSC Masters in Management Practice, in Trinity College Dublin, where my final-year thesis became the roadmap for the strategic restructuring of PEM® Europe.

With the support of the board, I began implementing strategic changes, creating a move 'up the value chain' by adding R&D, sales, supply chain, warehouse, applications engineering, heat treatment, and plating to the business. This structural reengineering secured the longevity of the business in Ireland and laid the foundation for sustainable long-term growth. This pivotal point in PEM® Galway's history led to significant investment in equipment, buildings, and people. The workforce has grown from 80 people in 2001 to over 200 today.

My current role is President of PEM® Europe, which involves the management of the PEM® business in Europe across the 27 EU countries as well as the global Haeger® Machine group, with facilities in Oakdale California, Oldenzaal Holland, and Galway. In addition, I sit on PennEngineering®'s global executive leadership team.

What does success mean to you?

Success, both personally and professionally, derives from knowing that you gave it everything you could to make things happen.

To me, being successful means that everyone's job is secure now and in the future, that our customers' needs are met, and the business is strengthened for the long-term.

My drive for success and excellence is borne out of a desire to continuously improve both myself and the organization, so we can be a world-class leader in our field.

What advice do you have for individuals who want to follow your career trajectory?

In my experience, adopting a learning approach to life and work is the key to realizing your full potential, and it is endlessly fulfilling. Continuous learning, whether formal or informal, when applied to the development of ourselves, our jobs, and our organization is what creates a successful career.

My advice is that whether your past experience with learning was positive or negative, improving your knowledge at work with further education will always bring a positive outcome.

Seek out good mentors to support your career choices and surround yourself with people who are nurturing and encouraging. I was blessed with many excellent mentors along my journey who were instrumental in my success.

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Mary Ann Fleming Fergus
President of PennEngineering®
Fastening Technologies
Europe & Global Operations
Director of Haeger® Machine
Division.

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As a manager, surround yourself with great people who have a positive attitude and can make things happen. Our teams in Galway, Oakdale, Oldenzaal, and across Europe strive to be the best in the world and work at world-class levels of excellence. The results then speak for themselves, and we then create a positive work environment where people enjoy their jobs and the people they work with.

Finally, I have learnt that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

What are you most proud of?

I am most proud of how we have developed as a team to collectively drive the success of the Galway facility. We deliver a level of excellence in quality and service to our customers; we have a 'can do' attitude and we strive to continuously improve across all departments. This has led us to achieve the results which will sustain our business and peoples' jobs into the future.

- We drive for excellence – managing a lean, continuous improvement work environment. We have the highest level of quality standards, supplying the industrial and automotive markets in Europe – all from the west of Ireland. To say that our customers are surprised to find this level of excellence when they audit our facility is an understatement.
- We have an amazing team in Europe with an incredible level of talent and ability. I am proud of their ability to solve problems and to use techniques like Six Sigma and lean tools, at all levels of our organization. I see this every day on the factory floor, and I enjoy the GEMBA walks where the teams explain their approach to solving a

problem and the successful end result. I likewise see this level of success with our customers where our sales, technical, and applications teams work with our customers to solve their problems and build positive, lifelong relationships with all our customers and partners across Europe. Each and every team member contributes to our success, and a number of them hold global roles within Penn Engineering®.

- I take great pride in our focus on training and development. I am extremely proud of the Excellence in Training award we just received from our West of Ireland Enterprise and Development Government Agency for our commitment to training at all levels, particularly at the operator level, within the company. We developed and designed this accredited diploma in Engineering college course with our local training agency in Galway, specifically for operators, and it is now being used by many other companies across Ireland. Fifteen of our own operators have graduated from this course, with huge success.

Who do you admire and why?

I admire my daughter, Eimear. She is a final-year pharmacy student in Trinity College and currently completing her pre-registration training on the front line, in an inner-city pharmacy in Dublin. She loves the caring side of her role which enables her to help many people with the complications of their medications while providing helpful, friendly advice. She has worked diligently to get to this point in her journey and I admire her intelligence, determination, and resilience. Like many of her peers, the road has had challenges but she always comes through and has some fun along the way.