



SERVICES

SKY BUSINESS CENTRE 57 Clontarf Road, Dublin 3.
Telephone: 01 8330380.



The sky's the limit

Sky Business Centre offers temporary or ongoing business facilities to clients with all the benefits of a permanent workplace

'Our whole approach is hands-on and about meeting our clients' needs'



Also finalist for Outstanding Small Business category

Pat Walsh



As a leading provider of serviced and virtual offices and meeting rooms in Dublin, Sky Business Centre aims to go the extra mile in customer care. A dry cleaning pick-up service and a hotel and golf booking facility are among the ways in which clients are accommodated.

Established in 1998 by Pat Walsh, who previously worked in the IT industry for 12 years, the business started with one centre in Clontarf, Dublin. It expanded to Blanchardstown in 2002 and to the National College of Ireland IFSC campus last year. The company's mission is to offer world-class business services that enable clients to operate successful enterprises in the knowledge that all day-to-day needs are professionally managed.

The serviced centres provide a four-star turnkey solution to companies, according to Walsh. Some 50pc of clients are overseas companies, with Amgen and Balfour Beatty UK among them. Others include Vodafone and Maybin Resource Ireland. "We provide a phone system, Wi-Fi broadband, furniture, office cleaning, a cafe and catering as well disabled access, CCTV, an alarm security system and free private car parking," says Walsh. IT training and support is also available. "It is a comprehensive service that allows companies to walk in and start doing business straight away in comfortable surroundings, with all their essential business needs looked after."

Flexibility is key, with the ergonomically designed offices

and meeting rooms available on an hourly, daily, yearly or longer basis. Walsh works on an ongoing basis to add a 'wow' factor and a fun element to Sky Business Centres' services. Xbox games consoles in the cafes is just one way of creating a relaxed environment during breaks. Break-out areas are also provided. Quarterly networking events are organised to help businesspeople get to know their office neighbours.

The communal reception areas are manned five days a week. Secretarial services include bookkeeping/payroll and accountancy services, binding and presentation of material. Three receptionists are employed by Sky Business Centre and everything else is outsourced to professional companies. The company is audited to the ISO 9001:2000 quality system and the emphasis is always on attaining the highest standards.

Client evaluations are carried out bi-monthly to determine the level of service. A formal questionnaire is circulated to clients, with a rating system, and the feedback is seen as very important and acted upon, according to Walsh. "We are always coming up with new ideas. Already we have mobile phone chargers and digital cameras at reception and we add to our services all the time," he says.

"Many businesses try to simply rent offices. Our whole approach is hands-on and about meeting our clients' needs," says Walsh, who won the Esat BT Best Services Award 2003. "A lot of serviced centres are not manned, but ours are managed day-to-day. It's like a 9am to 5.30pm hotel. It's all about

business, property and technology fusion." An intranet connects the three centres and a client relationship management system shares information.

The virtual office provides a personalised phone answering service and business address for those who require a professional business presence without the need for physical office space. It is a solution that appeals to a wide range of businesses especially mobile SMEs, Walsh says. Air-conditioned meeting rooms and offices can also be rented as and when needed. According to Walsh, demand for the facility is growing rapidly. "A lot of small companies want a presence in Ireland at a low cost."

Sky Business Centre is part of Buronetwork, which facilitates it in setting up virtual offices globally. It has also partnered with a business centre in Shanghai to offer Irish businesses a virtual presence in China. The centre there also refers Chinese businesses to Sky Business Centre.

A member of the SFA since he established the business, Walsh sees taking part in the competition as an opportunity to increase the business profile. With a highly successful business model up and running, he plans to open a fourth serviced office centre in the capital this year.

While keen to expand, Walsh wants to retain the strong element of personal involvement in the business: "We want to make sure our own internal systems are state of the art while looking after clients' needs and adding that sense of fun."