



Local Enterprise Office
Making It Happen

STARTUP STORIES: QUALITAS ELECTRONICS

GETTING A QUALITAS START: HOW LEO MEATH HELPED
ONE LOCAL ELECTRONICS FIRM POWER UP, FAST

Making It Happen: Joe English of Local Enterprise Office Meath (on the right) with Alan Jackson of Qualitas Electronics.

IRISH MANUFACTURERS ARE USED TO TURNING TO THE FAR EAST FOR LOW COST MANUFACTURING. IT'S A WELL TRODDEN PATH - BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS SUIT.

For those looking for electronic assembly services for items such as printed circuit boards, at the early stage of a product's life cycle, the order volumes required are often prohibitively large.

Alan Jackson set up Qualitas Electronics to help companies facing just such a dilemma.

From its base in Duleek, Co. Meath, it offers a bespoke, high quality, cost effective solution that allows companies in Ireland to extend their manufacturing capabilities without having to make a major investment early on. It allows customers to develop

prototype boards using its fully automated assembly line with designated SMT engineer.

Jackson has worked in the electronics sector since 1993 but had a longstanding ambition to start his own business.

"It was always at the back of my mind," he explains.

"Going out on your own is always a big step but what I'm doing required a lot of investment in equipment, so it was even bigger. But I had worked in engineer management roles, had looked after new product introductions and had found a niche - so I went for it."

The prototype stage is what Qualitas Electronics specialises in while also

taking a product up to low-to mid-volume production. If it moves into mass production after that, we can also offer viable options for this stage."

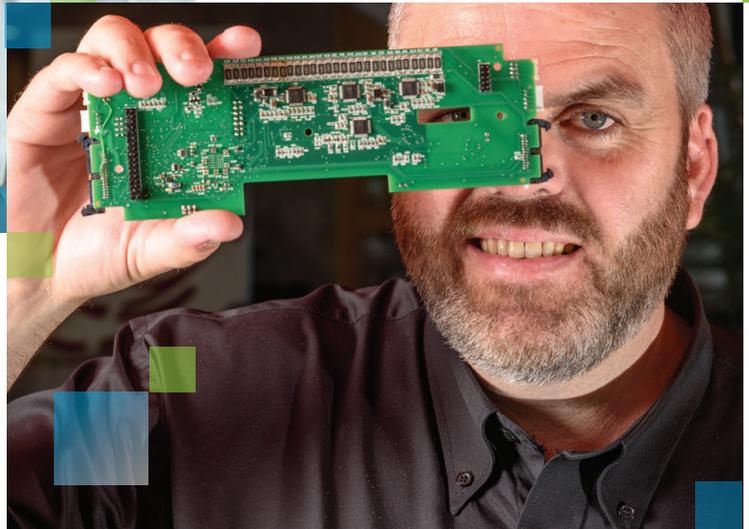
The business started in 2017, with just him. He found premises and invested in equipment. He got in touch with his Local Enterprise Office, LEO Meath, for help and it provided him with a Business Priming Grant, money which can be used for equipment, salary costs or general overheads.

"The mistake I made was not to go to the LEO earlier. By the time I did I had already invested significantly in equipment but it all helped grow the business further," says Jackson.

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Alan Jackson of Qualitas Electronics

“I thought it would be a very formal meeting but I met with Joe English in LEO Meath and he was great. He just said ‘tell me your story’. I must have talked about the business for half an hour straight so he got more than he bargained for! But Joe has an engineering background himself and he ‘got’ it.”

As Qualitas Electronics grew, it secured a Business Expansion Grant enabling him to take on a specialist design engineer.

He also received training, including participation in a LEO Accelerate Management Development programme.

“LEO Meath also put me in touch with Microfinance Ireland, from which I got a loan. My advice for anyone thinking of

starting their own business is that as soon as you have an idea, get in touch with your LEO. It really helped me start my business.” As well as providing financial supports LEOs provide an invaluable sounding board, especially at startup stage.

“It’s someone who is prepared to listen and engage with you at a time when friends and family may be fed up listening to you. With clients, who you are trying to impress, you can’t talk openly and freely,” says Joe English of LEO Meath.

Having someone who will listen to you as you thrash out your startup ideas will pay dividends later.

“You don’t have to have a fully formed business plan. It’s very easy to come in

and have a chat with us first,” says English.

One of the earliest financial supports a LEO can offer is a Feasibility Study Grant.

“Alan had already moved beyond that point but for anyone out there with the germ of an idea, but not sure whether it will fly either commercially or technically, a Feasibility Study Grant is a good way of testing the market,” says English.

Anyone with an idea is invited to come in and “kick the idea around,” with their Local Enterprise Office, he says. “It’s what we are here for.”

TALK TO US TODAY. TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN FOR YOUR STARTUP.



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