Over a century in the making

Success doesn’t happen overnight. We may be a small island, but we’ve made a big impact internationally. Our heritage has helped us forge an identity rich in culture, with great achievements, and political landmarks that put us on the map. As we set our sights on an ambitious future as a global medtech hub, we remember some of the milestones that helped get us here.
Abbott establishes a commercial operation in Dublin.

The Industrial Development Authority (IDA Ireland) – Ireland’s inward investment promotion agency, is established.

Rosalind Franklin was a chemist and X-ray crystallographer who made vital contributions to the modern understanding of DNA.

Johnson & Johnson (Ireland) have been in Ireland since 1935, opening their Tallaght head office (shown) in 1952.

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is a founder member of the International Federation of Surgical Colleges.

Peter McLean, Billy MacGowan and Anthony Walsh (all Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland) perform the first cadaveric kidney transplant in Jervis Street Hospital.

Anthony Walsh appointed Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland Professor of Surgery.

December 1948

Ireland officially leaves the Commonwealth and becomes a Republic through the Republic of Ireland Act 1948.

April 1942

The Federated Union of Employers (FUE), the forerunner of the Federation of Irish Employers, is founded in response to the Trade Union Act, 1941.

Various groups making up the Federation of Irish Manufacturers included:

- Agricultural Implements Group
- Glove Group
- Handkerchief and Household Linen Group
- Halley Group
- Marble and Granite Group
- Men’s Protective Garments Group
- Photo Engraving Group
- Shirtings Group
- Women’s and Children’s Light Clothing
- Stout and Cotton Lining Group
- Irish Pharmaceuticals Association
- Irish Structural Steel and Ironworkers Association
- Irish Waterproof Raincoat and Leather Garment Manufacturers Association
- The Perambulator Manufacturers
- Milk Group

1946

The Industrial Development Authority (IDA Ireland) – Ireland’s inward investment promotion agency, is established.

1949

Ronnie Delany wins an Olympic gold medal in the 1,500 metres at the Melbourne Games.

1951

December

Rosalind Franklin was a chemist and X-ray crystallographer who made vital contributions to the modern understanding of DNA.

1952

New Siemens Healthcare factory in Swords is declared open by Taoiseach Sean Lemass, T.D.

Manufacturing output grew 6% annually making Ireland’s industrial take-off between 1958-1963.

1953

James Watson and Francis Crick publish work on DNA.

1955

Ireland joins the United Nations along with 16 other sovereign states.

1956

The Irish Defence Forces carry out their first peace-keeping mission when 50 officers are assigned to the United Nations observer group in Lebanon along the Armistice Demarcation Line between that country and Israel.

1957

Filming of John Ford’s The Quiet Man, featuring John Wayne and Maureen O’Hara, begins in Cong, Co Mayo.

1958

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is a founder member of the International Federation of Surgical Colleges.

1959

Taoiseach Sean Lemass introduces tax breaks and grants for foreign firms wishing to set up in Ireland.

1960

March

President John Fitzgerald Kennedy becomes the first serving American president to visit Ireland.

1963

Ireland moves towards free trade, signing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, a worldwide agreement to reduce tariffs.

1964

Frank Cotton invents the first commercially available oral contraceptive.

1965

The first portable defibrillator is develop by Dr James Francis ‘Frank’ Pantridge in partnership with NASA.

1966

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CII organised a delegation of 330 representatives from firms, accompanied by Minister for Industry and Commerce Jack Lynch TD to travel to New York to promote Irish goods in 1963. They were received by President JF Kennedy only weeks before his assassination.

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January 1973  Ireland joins the European Community along with Britain and Denmark.

1970  IDA Ireland encourages industry in export-oriented growth sectors such as electronics, engineering and pharmaceuticals to set up in Ireland. These developments foster a much more open economy and a strong growth in exports.

1970

Peter McLean performs the first kidney transplant in Jervis Street Hospital.

Baxter opens manufacturing operations in Castlebar, Co Mayo employing nine people.

Abbott Ballytivnan site in Sligo (which will become AbbVie) begins manufacturing hospital products including infusion sets, IV catheters, anaesthesia kits, ICU kits and pumps.

Maurice Neligan performs the first coronary artery bypass in the Mater Hospital.

Abbott (Ireland) factory goes into production in Cootehill, Co Cavan.

1972

Abbott Ballybunion site in Sligo which will become AbbVie begins manufacturing hospital products including infusion sets, IV catheters, anaesthesia kits, ICU kits and pumps.

Maurice Neligan performs the first coronary artery bypass graft in Ireland.

1973

Dana gives Ireland its first victory in the Eurovision Song Contest with ‘All Kinds of Everything’.

Patrick Flanagan performs the first 'live' kidney transplant in Jervis Street Hospital.

Baxter completes Phase 2 expansion in Castlebar, Co Mayo employing nine people.

Maurice Neligan performs the first coronary artery bypass graft in Ireland.

1974

IDC opens a handbook for industry on efficient energy use in the wake of the 1973-1974 oil crises.

1975

Robert S. Ledley invents first whole-body CAT-Scan.

1976

Baxter completes Phase 2 expansion in Castlebar, Co Mayo.

Travenol opens a plant in Swinford, Co Mayo. With 14 employees initially, the plant starts manufacturing the QuickCath-IV Catheter.

Abbott, Ballybunion, Sligo.

1977

1978

1979

Shannon Coiled Springs Ltd, one of Ireland’s leading innovators in the field of high performance spring technology, is established in Limerick.

September 1979

On a visit to Ireland, Pope John Paul II tells the audience at a youth mass in Galway, “Young people of Ireland, I love you.”

1978

Over 86% of Irish firms employed less than 100 people and accounted for over 30% of jobs.

1979

Creganna is founded by Ian Quinn in Galway. The company opens a 3,000 sq ft facility offering specialist medical fabrication and coating technologies.

IDA Ireland encourages industry in export-oriented growth sectors such as electronics, engineering and pharmaceuticals to set up in Ireland. These developments foster a much more open economy and a strong growth in exports.
First heart transplant in Ireland carried out in the Mater Hospital by Maurice Neligan and Freddie Wood.

The Health Research Board, a statutory agency under the aegis of the Department of Health, is established to fund health research teams.

Travenol Laboratories SA formally changes its name to Baxter Healthcare SA following a merger with American Hospital Supply Corporation.

SCI, an electronics manufacturing services provider, starts operating in Fermoy, Co Cork with 16 employees.

Baxter commences manufacturing Viaflex containers in Castlebar, Co Mayo.

Nypro Healthcare establishes operations in Wicklow and Waterford providing customers with a comprehensive process for large scale manufacture of medical devices.

October
Boy is the debut studio album by Irish rock band, U2.

CII lobbied for the reduction of the corporation tax rate in its pre-budget submission. In 1981 the Government introduced 10% tax rate for manufacturing industries.

September
Probably the most famous All-Ireland Football Final of all time, Seamus Darby’s late goal denies Kerry’s team five All-Ireland titles in a row.

Baxter Castletub starts production of Twinbag, a product that allows the patient to undergo a complete solution exchange without having any need to carry an empty bag on the body.

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1990

June
David O’Leary scores the winning penalty and Packie Bonner makes a crucial save, helping Ireland beat Romania to reach the quarter-finals of the World Cup.

December
CR Bard in Galway files its first patent, for a device for use with a catheter.

1991

CR Bard in Galway announces an R&D facility in Galway.

1993

January
IBEC is established through the merger of the Confederation of Irish industry and the Federation of Irish Employers.

1994

January
Ireland enters the Celtic Tiger period which marks great economic growth for Ireland. It continues until 2007.

October
Sean Fitzpatrick wins the Nobel prize for Literature, the first Irish winner to do so. "The Spire" (1928), Shaw (1925) and Beckett (1969) also win the prize.

November
The divorce referendum passes.

December
Mary Robinson becomes the first female president of Ireland.

1995

CR Bard in Galway

1996

Enterprise Ireland, the Irish Government agency responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets, is established.

Puritan Bennett Ireland establishes ventilator R&D facility in Galway.

Apricot, a manufacturer of interventional cardiology equipment, is founded by former employees of CR Bard in Galway. John O’Shaughnessy, Paul Gilson and Don Taylor.

Puritan Bennett Launches PB740 ICU Ventilator, the first R&D product from its Galway facility.

DePuy Synthes establishes plant in Ringaskiddy, Co Cork.

Boston Scientific acquires a site in Galway to establish its first Irish facility with an initial investment of US$24 million.

Cook Medical begins construction of a manufacturing facility on a Greenfield site adjacent to the University of Limerick.

Contech Medical International moves from Menlo Park to a 4,000 sq ft facility in Parkmore Business Park West in Galway.

Clearstream started as subsidiary of AngioDynamics, in Enniscorthy, focused on coronary stents and catheters.

April 1994

The interval performance during the Eurovision Song Contest by Riverdance becomes a global sensation.

Medtronic, a medical device design company, opens in Dublin.

Howmedica acquires an orthopaedics manufacturing facility in Limerick.

1997

Puritan Bennett files its first patent, for a device for use with a catheter.

A facility is established in Cork with 13 employees, which will be acquired by eye care employees, which will be acquired by eye care company Alcon in 2000.

Olinet, an Irish medical device design company, opens in Dublin.

1998

April
Howmedica acquires an orthopaedics manufacturing facility in Limerick.

December
Packie Bonner wins the "keyhole" surgery.

It heralds the era of surgeons in Ireland.

1999

Enterprise Ireland, the Irish Government agency responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets, is established.

Medtronic establishes a state of the art facility in Galway, which is a centre of excellence for the development and manufacture of a number of the company’s key medical technologies for the treatment and management of cardiovascular and cardiac rhythm diseases. Boston Scientific completes the build of a new 17,000 sq ft facility in Cork.

Medtronic technology is showcased at the American College of Cardiology medtech conference in New Orleans.

Guidant, a vascular care company, is officially opened in Drogheda.

Baxter introduces Viaflo to its Carlsbad plant in US. In less than 10 years the plant will be making in excess of 80 million units of intravenous solutions from the new Viaflo department.

Stryker establishes two new greenfield manufacturing facilities in Cork (orthopaedics and cutting accessories) and through the acquisition of Howmedica acquires an orthopaedics manufacturing facility in Limerick.
Science Foundation Ireland is established by the Irish Government to fund research in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland is the first to develop an online surgical education programme (BeST) globally.

Tech Group Europe in Dublin starts intranasal device programme.

Clearstream Technologies Ltd is formed following a management buy-out.

DePuy Synthes establishes global supply chain function at its Cork plant.

Boston Scientific Galway announces new product development expansion.

Samina, an electronics manufacturer, merges with SCI in Cork. The facility expands its services to include the manufacture of medical devices.

Operations for Medtronic’s cardiac rhythm and disease management business were added to the growing operations in Galway.

Seroba Life Sciences launches the first venture capital fund dedicated to life sciences – the Irish Biosciences Venture Capital Fund, with €20m for seed and early stage investments.

Repairing Ireland secures their first Triple Crown in 19 years.

Google opens offices in Dublin’s Docklands and is later followed by Facebook, the area becomes known as ‘Silicon Docks’ afterwards.

February

Tytex completes the first medical device using its biocompatible BioTrax material at its facility in Galway.

June

Boston Scientific in Cork has shipped 1 million units and employs over 1,000 people.

Creganna opens its first dedicated medical device facility in Parkmore, Galway.

Creganna Design Group is established and grows to become the world’s largest design partner for minimally invasive devices. A second Creganna facility opens in Parkmore, Galway.

Euro banknotes and coins are introduced in Ireland on 1 January 2002

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March 2004

Ireland becomes the first country in the world to introduce a smoking ban.

Caradyne acquired by Respironics Inc.

Tech Group’s Dublin facility completes major expansion, which adds an additional 40,000 sq ft of manufacturing capacity.

Boston Scientific Galway launches Taxus Express stent system into the US market.

Tyndall National Institute, one of Europe’s leading research centres in ICT research and development, and the largest research facility of its type in Ireland, is established.

2000

The Irish Medical Devices Association (now the Irish Medtech Association) is established as part of Ibec.

Euro banknotes and coins are introduced in Ireland on 1 January 2002

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Boston Scientific in Cork has shipped 1 million units and employs over 1,000 people.

2004

No smoking is against the law to smoke in these premises.

Google opens offices in Dublin’s Docklands and is later followed by Facebook, the area becomes known as ‘Silicon Docks’ afterwards.
Contech Medical International expands Galway footprint to 36,000 sq ft.

Baxter in Ireland receives Excellence Through People Award.

Tech Group becomes a wholly owned subsidiary of West focused on providing innovative development and manufacturing solutions for both the pharmaceutical and medtech markets.

Dolmen achieves its first international design award for a medical device — for market disruptor Ash Quicklook, the first in the global market of digital magnification for low vision.

Abbott invests €36m in the establishment of Diabetes Care in Donegal Town.

Boston Scientific acquires Guidant and continues its manufacture in Clonmel. Abbott takes over the vascular side and invests €30 million in a new state-of-the-art facility in Clonmel.

Cook Medical commences production of its AcrySof intra-ocular lens.

Creganna opens first design and manufacturing facility in the US.

Crospon, an Irish gastrodiagnostics company, is founded in Galway.

First Chair in Medical Education in Ireland at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

DePuy Synthes establishes Innovation Centre in Cork.

Dolmen receives medical design award for Cook Medical Scopectos.

Teleflex, a provider of specialty medical devices for a range of procedures in critical care and surgery, establishes an operation in Athlone, Co Westmeath.

Creganna’s Galway campus expands with the opening of a third facility at Parkmore, Galway.

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland establishes first Chair in Translational Medicine in Ireland.

DePuy Synthes establishes Innovation Centre in Cork.

Akorn Inc’s completes the first phase of its €415m expansion of its Irish operation and Akorn Laboratories Ireland Limited is opened in Cork.

Dolmen receives medical design award for Cook Medical Evolution Gun.

Cook Medical’s Limerick plant is chosen as the global manufacturing base for its new ground-breaking drug eluting stent technology for the treatment of Peripheral Artery Disease.

Crospon’s EndoFLIP lumen imaging system is CE marked and launched in Europe.

Baxter Healthcare wins the inaugural Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2007

Abbott Ireland wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2008

Crospon wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2009

Scientists create embryonic stem cells from human skin

Cork becomes the European Capital of Culture for 2005

March

The Ireland rugby team, captained by Brian O’Driscoll, wins the Grand Slam.
Abbott’s Longford site manufactures its one billionth medical diagnostic test.

Contech Medical International in Galway is rebranded to Advant Medical.

Boston Scientific Galway launches Mustang catheter into global markets.

Dolmen begins partnership with BioInnovate.

Teleflex Medical announces plans to expand its manufacturing capability in Annacotty, Co Limerick and create up to 80 new jobs.

Dolmen receives a medical design grand prix award for the Vasorum Celt ACD, which is used to close arterial puncture holes.

Abbott completes separation of research-based pharmaceuticals business. The site in Sligo is named AbbVie’s centre of excellence for medical device manufacture.

Advant Medical integrates Conexx 350 3D printing to support innovation and development in Ireland.

Stryker establishes a new neurovascular manufacturing facility in Cork, following Stryker’s acquisition of Boston Scientific’s neurovascular division.

Cook Medical opens 800 sq.m state-of-the-art innovation centre in Limerick.

Cappella Medical Devices wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2010

Aerogen wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2013

Lake Regional Medical wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2012

Advant Medical wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2011

Creganna acquires Tactx Medical, deepening its catheter capabilities and adding new facilities in California, Minnesota and Singapore.

Cook Medical wins Irish Medtech Awards Company of the Year Award 2011

President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso; Danny McCoy, CEO of Ibec; and An Taoiseach Enda Kenny at the Ibec CEO Conference.
October 2015

Ireland becomes first country in the world to introduce same-sex marriage through a public vote and the Irish Government passes the Same Sex Recognition Act.

Creganna opens a new 100,000 sq ft facility in Minnesota, supporting growth in structural heart and electrophysiology therapies.

Multi-Color Corporation enters the Irish labelling market acquiring New Era Packaging.

2015

DePuy Synthes opens second building at Cork site.

Boston Scientific’s Galway launches SYMBRYO® company stem cell system in the US.

Abbott Medical increases employment to 150 worldwide.

Abbrev in Ireland expands with US$44m investment. Its Ballyknain site has 150 employees and achieves ISO 14001: OHSAS 18001 and ISO 9001 certifications.

System Label wins the Print Business Innovation Award at the Irish Print Awards for the Incoreb neonatal ECG sensor.

Abbott Finance Shared Services opens in Cherrywood, Dublin in December 2015.

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Abbott’s diagnostics manufacturing facility in Longford is the second Abbott facility to receive the prestigious Shingo award.

Cork Medical gets planning permission for a new building for its European Shared Services Centre from Limerick County Council and An Bord Pleanala.

Creganna Medical is acquired by TE Connectivity, a US$30bn global technology leader.

Multi-Color Corporation enters the Irish labelling market acquiring New Era Packaging.

Tech Group opens its extension in Dublin. The increased footprint (from 80,000 sq ft to 92,000 sq ft) facilitates the commencement of two major contract manufacturing programmes which include four automation lines.

2016

The Health Innovation Hub is officially launched with the aim of driving collaboration between the health service and enterprise, leading to the development of new healthcare technologies, products, and services.

Multi-Color Corporation acquires System Label and Casker Print to provide the healthcare market with complete labelling and booklet solutions.

Launch of the Irish Medtech Excellence Awards 2016 marking ten years celebrating innovation and excellence in the sector.

Craven Group gets its tenth US patent.

Boston Scientific opens a new process development laboratory in Cork and its new European Capital Repair Centre in Clorret. Every 5 seconds one of the 9 million Boston Scientific devices designed and manufactured in Ireland is used in a life transforming procedure somewhere in the world.

September

Abbott wins the Irish Medtech Excellence Awards Company of the Year Award 2014.

October

The Irish Medtech Association launches its 2020 strategy ‘The Global Medtech Hub’ internationally at AdvMed 2016, 17-19 October, which sees as many as 2,500 medtech professionals and 1,000 companies attend.

TREG and AMBER announce the creation of a multi-layered 3D porous scaffold called ChondroColl designed to help the body’s own cells regenerate damaged joints.

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February

David Hurte is named 2016 goalkeeper of the year by the International Hockey Federation having helped Ireland qualify for the Olympics for the first time since 1988.

June

The IRFU recently advises in favour of Brazil. Ibec calls for Ireland to be involved in negotiations to reflect our unique relationship.

August

Brothers Gary and Paul O’Donovan win rowing medal for Ireland at the Olympics with silver medal in the lightweight double sculls.