

# QUALITY, SERVICE AND VALUE GO A LONG WAY

**... in fact, thirty-eight years and still counting**

Tony Connolly, founder and owner of the Connolly Man Group, is celebrating his thirty-eighth year in the menswear retail industry. He tells us his longevity in the business is down to one simple principle: 'taking care of the customer full stop'.

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Tony Connolly celebrating 38 years in business.

**M**y interview with Tony Connolly was fixed for 2 p.m. I arrived at his Connolly Man store on Patrick Street several minutes early, which gave me time to indulge in a spot of browsing. A frequent visitor to the store, I have always been impressed by its well-laid-out interior, its wide choice of top label menswear and

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its friendly, helpful staff. Now, walking back and forth in customer mode (couldn't be helped), I positioned myself in front of a particular jacket and stepped a little closer upon inspecting the price tag. I had to forget about that fine jacket when Tony appeared at the door.

Tony Connolly has come a long way in one regard; in another way he has remained perfectly stationary all these years. 'I started out as an apprentice in this very building almost four decades ago,' he explained as I sat in front of his desk, still turning the pages of my notepad, 'when Kingston's Clothing was here. It's strange to actually have

moved on, to have started and developed the Connolly Man Group and still find myself treading these floorboards.' When I asked my first proper question – how had he managed to stay in the business so long, especially through the bad times? – the reminiscing was shoved carefully to one side and an ever so slightly puzzled expression became etched on his face. 'Sometimes I can't quite work it out. Today, with the financial crisis playing out across the world and a recession looming in this country, I hear some businesses talking about the importance of giving value for money to the customer. It's as if now is the time to

give more – these things didn't matter before. I don't agree with this. You start off with a strong foundation – whatever the economic climate: good, bad or indifferent – and you stay with it. Why has Connolly Man lasted all these years?

**'Because we've given our customers quality clothing, a personal service and value for money. Not just now. Always.'**

The Connolly Man Group currently has

seven menswear outlets - situated in Limerick city centre, the Crescent Shopping Centre and Clonmel. These stores are well established in their respective areas, each enjoying a reputation for providing leading label menswear at keen prices, each having a loyal customer base. When asked if there are any other secrets to the Group's success, Tony brushed off my choice of words. 'The secret to success,' he laughed, 'is don't complicate matters with phrases like "secret to success". It's not about special formulas or waving magic wands. It's something far more straightforward than that. At Connolly

Man we listen to our customers, we go out

of our way to understand what their clothing requirements and desires are. What matters is satisfying the customer, pure and simple, and we make no apologies whatsoever for parading that as our primary objective at all times.'

**'What matters is satisfying the customer, pure and simple ...'**

Before I had a chance to respond, there was an afterthought. 'In thirty-eight years I've learned that building close relations with individual customers is the be all and end all. If a gentleman in

the Midwest, young or old, knows from experience that he can drop into his local Connolly Man store at any time and receive the choice and attention he wants, not to mention the right price, we know we're doing our job right.' There was a slight pause, a moment's hesitation. 'I don't want to tell you how to write your article,' Tony Connolly remarked politely, 'but maybe you'd also include a few thank yous. My thirty-eight years in the clothing business would never have been possible if not for the fine people I have had working with me. I'm glad to say the current team at Connolly Man are second to none, and I owe them a debt of

gratitude. Also, I'd like to sincerely thank our many customers. They, of course, have made us what we are.'

**'... I'd like to sincerely thank our many customers.'**

Interview over, pleasantries exchanged, I stepped lightly down the stairs. The street beckoned, only a certain thought entered my head and obliged me to turn in the opposite direction. I found that jacket of mine and began examining it a second time. Work could wait.

Connolly

**Quality,  
Service  
& Value**

For 38 great years we say  
**Thank You**

**20%  
OFF  
Everything**