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BARRA KELLY

SHD Consulting Engineers



Barra Kelly was working on a project for BP in South Korea when he got the call from his wife, who was at their home in Scotland, to tell him she was pregnant. It was then he realised that he no longer wanted to live so far from home and the couple set the wheels in motion to move back to Ireland.

Barra had been working as a structural engineer in his hometown of Dublin, when the construction industry in Ireland fell to its knees, as a result of the economic crash in 2008/2009.

He went to Scotland to ride out the recession and completed a Master's in Civil & Structural Engineering in Aberdeen University. Then he started working on some of the world's largest engineering projects, employed by companies such as Shell and BP.

“It was great and exciting. I was designing and managing huge multi-million projects. But when I got that call in South Korea, I wondered what I was doing half way around the world from everyone I loved. Family suddenly became hugely important,” says Barra.

After their first child, Finn, was born, the couple moved home in 2016 and since then have had another son, Ollie. Barra started working on projects for Irish Water, Google and EirGrid but he had a desire to go out on his own and set up SHD Consulting Engineers in 2018.

The company is a structural & civil engineering consultancy that specialises in providing expert analysis, design and project management services for both the residential and commercial sectors.

“I always admired entrepreneurs and wanted to create something myself. However, making the jump from full-time employment is a daunting experience. When I joined Back for Business, I was suddenly surrounded by all these people who were building their own businesses and sharing their experiences.

“Setting up a business is nerve-wrecking, however the support from Back for Business was amazing. Being able to work with such inspiring Lead Entrepreneurs on a very real level really opened my eyes and provided me with great networking support.”

While Covid did hit the construction industry badly during 2020, Barra says: “we were energetic, agile and all worked hard to find new ideas and revenue streams. Fortunately, some of these ideas worked and I am delighted to say that, by being very client focused, we were able to grow during Covid.”

“I encourage entrepreneurship within the business, I believe if people are given opportunities and the company is willing to listen that great things can happen, I want SHD to be a different kind of consultancy.” Since being part of Back for Business, Barra co-founded Archly.ie (in 2019) with a colleague. There are now five people employed full-time in SHD and Barra has plans to double that by the end of 2021.

“We have plans to grow revenue and workforce in 2021 and want to double both so that we can take on larger private contracts and more government projects. At the moment, we are in a growth phase establishing SHD within the industry. We are really fortunate to be in this position and are looking forward to the future.”

POSITION

Founder and Director

WHAT WE DO

We are a design led structural and civil engineering consultancy who provide services for the construction industry.

CONTACT US

Nutgrove Enterprise Park,
Nutgrove Way, Rathfarnham,
Dublin 14

T: +353 (0) 1 6852266

E: info@SHDeng.ie

W: www.SHDeng.ie