

double-decker trailers that maximise load efficiencies. Hauliers' clients get a 24 hour delivery service in Ireland and a 48 hour service to the UK that is accessed through a TPN agreement with an 88 member Pallet Network in the UK."

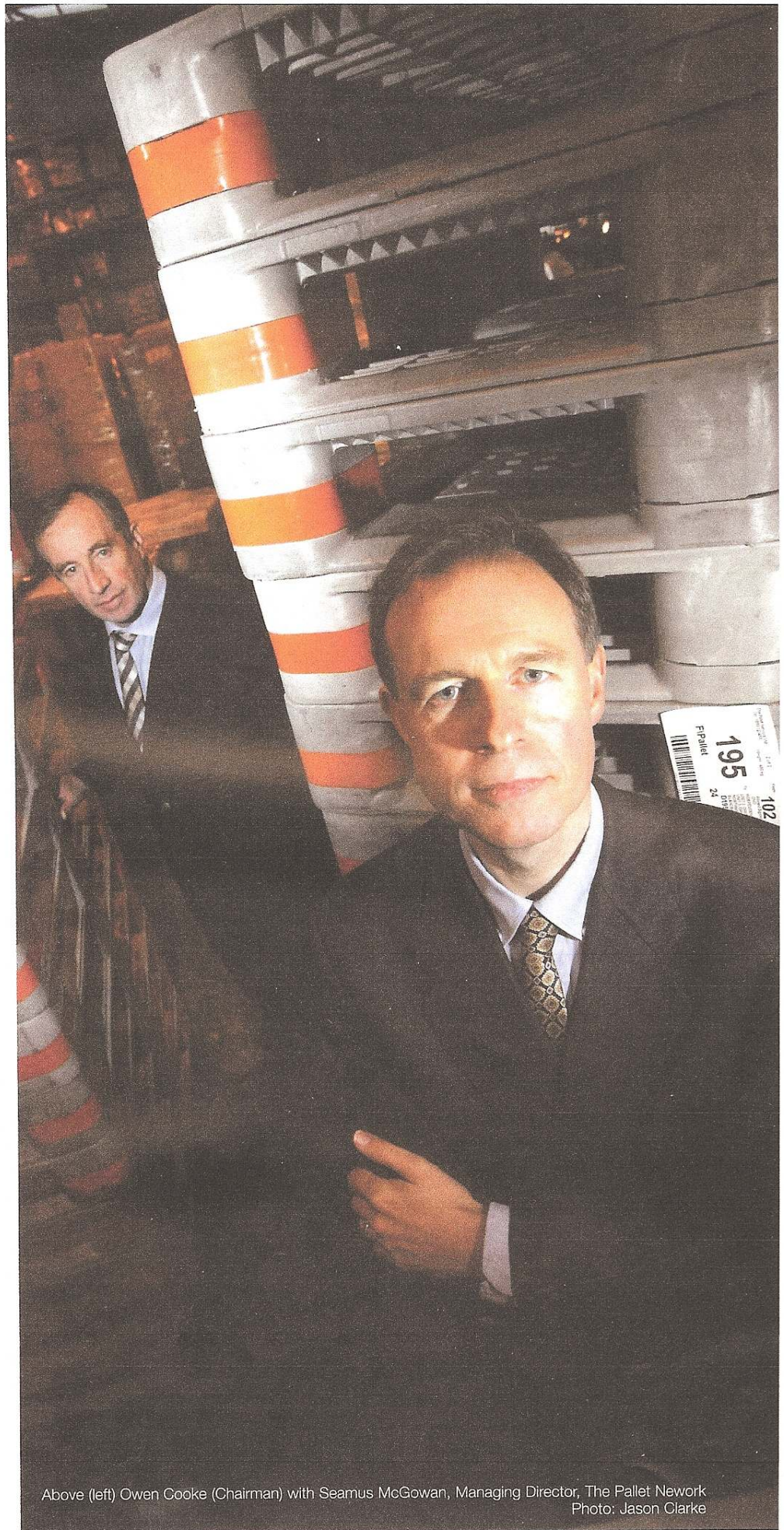
The type of service TPN is offering has never been done before for heavy freight. Information technology is key and TPN has done a lot of work to make sure that their scanning and tracking are state of the art. In a company model built on members being part of a network and relying on each other, people skills are also important. Quarterly meetings are the forum for thrashing out issues that arise between the hauliers.

"We, for example, review our on-time performance and how we can continue to improve upon it. We also review proof of delivery completeness and talk about other key performance indicators, which we constantly monitor through our customised network software. This internal monitoring system was the foundation for all our members achieving an ISO 9001 accreditation across the network, something we are very proud of because we are the first and only pallet network operation in Ireland and the UK to achieve this."

Asked to what extent TPN has benefitted from the growth in Irish consumption, Seamus says: "There's a certain amount of our growth coming from people who are used to getting only a two to three day service who can now get an overnight service. The traditional model is being eroded by doing things in a more efficient, environmentally-friendly way. We're actually growing at 40% per annum. We have a good product, we're low cost and we're high quality."

"What we have done is to copy a UK model. We have been evangelical about getting the hauliers to work with the model. We provide a good environment for the night crew drivers in our hub. By joining the network, regional haulage companies can increase their profits, employ more staff, reduce driving time and increase efficiency."

As we wrap up the interview, Seamus is keen to mention the environment. TPN has plans to run their trucks off bio-ethanol fuel which will mean fewer emissions and their double-decker trucks help reduce traffic on Ireland's congested road network.



Above (left) Owen Cooke (Chairman) with Seamus McGowan, Managing Director, The Pallet Network
Photo: Jason Clarke

