

## Business Banter

### **Sewage innovation leaves firm flushed with success**

**Iain Doherty**, is an entrepreneurial engineer whose company **ID Systems UK Ltd.** has developed an innovative response to a problem that affects sewage pipes around the world and managed to overcome the kind of collateral damage that can be sustained when customers go under.

Combining several disciplines such as mechanical, electrical, control and automation engineering services to the water, gas and industrial sectors, the company has achieved some great feats over the decade in developing innovative ways to overcome the problems that affect sewage systems. For example, in 2011, IDS identified a solution to resolve pump ragging, which basically means pumps getting clogged by sewage. Their solution, the Deragger II, clears any clogging without the need of emergency callouts that use up manpower and time so it helps their clients improve their environmental performance, energy efficiency, reduce costs and increase customer satisfaction. Its effectiveness has led the company to win a number of innovation awards.

There were also times when the company had gone through a rough patch. One such incident was in 2009, when a client of theirs couldn't pay up their invoices because they were in dispute with their own client. That was the start of a very stressful 18 months that took the company from 117 staff down to 20 and cost ID Systems about £1.2 million.

Doherty's ambition is to create a sustainable Scottish SME that is valued and trusted by their clients and this is clearly visible from the achievements and praise the company has gained over the years.

In the end, when asked what are the **lessons he had learned** over the course of time he briefly stated "Cash flow management is the lifeblood of any business and not something to be embarrassed about. If you don't learn quickly you are likely not to be in business long."