

Off the Record

with Laverne McGuinness



Becoming a CPA

Why did you choose the CPA accountancy route?

I chose the CPA accountancy route as having completed the IATI exams I wanted to continue my studies to qualify as an accountant. I chose CPA as it is recognised world wide and its membership was growing.

How did you become a CPA?

I initially did my IATI course in Plunkett College in Whitehall and then I went on to do my CPA course in Business and Accounting Training College in Morehampton Road – this college has long since changed its name and indeed has expanded greatly to Griffith College Dublin.

Benefits of Being a CPA

How has being a CPA benefited your career so far?

The benefits which CPA has provided me with are so vast that it is hard to quantify. I needed an accountancy qualification for my first "real" finance job as an Assistant Auditor. After that I was really blessed in that my career totally blossomed. Every day I use my analytical skills which were part of my training.

As finance is such a key factor for the Health Service which has a budget of €16billion – being comfortable with financial budgets, cash profiles and value for money business cases has assisted me greatly in my career to date and is a daily "must" for me. Even leaving aside the strict financial aspects of the qualification – the training also gives you a structured methodology which can be applied to all types of business processes and projects.

What's the most valuable piece of advice you could give to someone starting out in the accountancy profession?

Although you qualify as an accountant you should continue to "Think outside the box" and think about how you could use your financial accounting skills in many different situations and roles.

Your Career

What's the best career decision you've made?

The best career decision I made was to become an accountant as this opened the gateway for me to the Health Service which is my career path of choice.

What's the most rewarding aspect of your job?

The most rewarding aspect of my job is knowing that working with other dedicated and committed people you can make a difference to the lives of others.

Life

What motivates you?

Life itself motivates me, I love life, I love nature, I love being active.

What motto do you live by?

My motto is always try to do the right thing.

What's the trait you most admire in others?

The business traits I most admire in people are loyalty, and commitment. The personal traits I admire are kindness and thoughtfulness.

If you were starting all over again what would you do differently?

I feel that I have been very blessed in the opportunities which have come my way - but given the opportunity to start over – I think I would go to America and Canada to work firstly and then bring that broader experience base back to Ireland.

What are your "Top Tips" for surviving this recession?

My top tip or piece of advice would be to look after your mental health and the mental health of your loved ones. At any time in Ireland 1 in 4 adults will experience a difficulty with their mental health. Recent research shows that it is thought that during times of recession greater strain is put on ones mental health. There is no shame in seeking help.

Vital Statistics

Name: Laverne McGuinness

Title: National Director,
Integrated Services
Performance and Financial
Management

Company:
Health Service Executive

Qualifications:
Institute of Accounting
Technicians IATI, FCPA,
MSc – management and
application of IT in
Accounting