



Mark Gargan

TITLE:

Partner

COMPANY:

Niall Byrne & Company

QUALIFICATIONS:

CPA, ACCA

Qualified as a CPA: 1999

Why did you choose the CPA Qualification?

My father is an accountant, and I had decided that I was going to go down a similar route. Having completed my degree, I was fortunate to find employment in a CPA practice. So, between the encouragement received from Niall Byrne, a Past President, and the flexibility in how the syllabus was structured, this allowed me to study while working full time. At the time you were able to split your sittings of the Professional 2 exams, therefore it enabled me to be more focused on individual subjects.

What route did you take to become a CPA?

I completed a BA in Accounting & Finance, from there I commenced work as a trainee in Niall Byrne & Company and I then commenced my studies for my professional examinations at Griffith College, Dublin.

Profile Mark Gargan

Can you provide a brief history of your career?

Starting off in Practice, I spent about 18 months doing all the things that a trainee does. I was then sent out on secondment to an advertising agency for three years in the role of Financial Controller. This role entailed all aspects of the financial function from ordering, invoicing, debt collection, all aspects of banking, monthly management accounts to reporting to the board. I then returned back to the office for another 18 months. A second secondment period followed in a recruitment agency for two years. This involved a similar role to the advertising agency, but in a different market. When I returned back to Practice I was working in auditing. It was after these experiences that I came to realise that I preferred Practice rather than Industry. I then progressed to office manager, and moving on from there to becoming a Partner.

Describe your working life.

Busy! Every day is different. As a Partner, I am involved in all aspects of how the practice is managed and run which can involve long days. It can start with Debtors collections then on to planning and scheduling jobs, reviewing files, meeting clients, ensuring compliance between Revenue and Companies Office, and all of this before you receive a phone call.

What is your biggest career achievement?

Passing my exams as a CPA has opened many doors, however, being lucky enough to be able to lead the Practice into a new era, would have to be it. I have been heavily involved in the continual upgrading of our internal processes. This has been through the original installation of an IT infrastructure back when I took up the role of office manager, right through to a couple years ago when we made the investment of

moving to digital audit programmes through the introduction of Caseware. During this time, we have seen the benefits to our clients as they have grown and evolved.

How has CPA helped you in your career?

From the initial skills and knowledge that I obtained through the exam process to the continual professional development courses provided, followed by the support that I have received from the Institute, these have all proven to be valuable. Post qualification, I have been a member on several committees within the Institute and these have been great for networking and meeting other members. This is a great resource to have access to.

What in your view are the most pressing issues for accountants?

The ever-changing landscape of the Regulatory environment and how this gets dealt with both as a practitioner, and as a client. Also, trying to be relevant to clients' needs and how to stand out or differentiate oneself from other practices.

How do you unwind?

I have three young kids (Joshua 10, Juliet 7 and Luca 5) so I don't have too much "free time". I used to be a rugby referee and since I have stopped being an active referee, I have taken to golf to utilise what little recreational time I have left. As any parent can attest to, weekends are no longer my own. I spend Saturdays and Sundays ferrying the kids to their respective activities, and/or birthday parties.

What traits do you admire most in others?

Honesty, not taking yourself too seriously and fairness.