

CPA Profile

Áine Kiely O'Donnell



Title: Managing Director

Company:
Accountable Advisors

Qualifications:
FCPA, MBA, MIATI, AM

Currently doing a Diploma in Data Analytics and Diploma in Forensic Accounting

Why did you decide to start out in a career in accountancy?

The simple answer is that business entrepreneurship is in my DNA, it goes back generations. Growing up we saw first-hand national and international business research my parents conducted into the influencers of change on how to improve and develop business. With a flair for business and accountancy during my formative education years and with finance being at the heart of business, it was an easy decision to choose this career journey.

Why did you choose CPA Ireland as your qualification route?

The Accounting Technicians qualification provided a pathway to progression in accountancy. How could I do it while working? I needed the right formula to achieve success. The formula being course content, a two-structure approach so I was not limited to either industry or practice focussed and recognition of the qualification. CPA had international recognition over all of the courses at the time especially in industry and so I could travel with it. The course location was the next issue and if I moved roles how was the course facilitation, and Griffith College provided both urban and rural locations, superb lecturers and course structure.

Please provide a brief history of your career.

I started my accountancy career in the treasury department for Dairygold. I then spent time in Hays DX in Dublin in Finance & Logistics, which ignited my interest in Management and Technology.

The really progressive role was with Guinness Store House (HopStore), a role that had everything, ERP systems, Y2K, business analysis, online payments, retail, restaurant, tourism

and financial operations.

A company so far ahead in tech and management systems, it was a leader in innovation and standards.

Moving back closer to home after 6 years in Dublin, I worked with LIT in Thurles in Procurement Management. In 2000/2001 I worked in Ronan Industries as Financial Controller and Management Information Systems and Business Structures and Process Efficiency.

I established Accountable Advisors (AAL) 2007 with a focus on the SME's. I completed an MBA Corporate with the University of Limerick in 2012/2013 and qualified with Friary Law as an Approved Mediator in 2016.

What one word describes what your CPA qualification has given you?

Flexibility.

The knowledge platform for flexibility. The options are endless. The CPA CPD Programme to develop and evolve meant that the qualification stayed relevant and up to date. The knowledge platform enabled my curiosity to exploit the knowledge in its development and continual learning to broaden my approach and technique.

What has been your biggest career achievement?

There are many but the biggest is in enabling change in every role I undertook over the 30 years.

The change to structure and support systems for clients/employers which enabled informed decisions resulted in better business performance.

The teaching and guiding of many business owners to successfully steer their business through the recession and pandemic. The achievement of teaching and developing students to successfully qualify as accountants with CPA and high earning industry roles.

What or who inspires you most in business?

My entrepreneurial parents and my kids, my forward-thinking father and business savvy mother who inspired my ambition and drive to achieve. Business management and partnership of equality was inspiring from an early age. The respect and integrity of their values, their advice and guidance over the years and their ability to manage life's curve balls with dignity and strength. The leadership shown at home from an early age of how to make decisions, be it good or bad, the ability to adapt and learn from those decisions and experiences and to stand up again and move forward. Also, it helps when you love what you do.

How do you unwind?

Sport and music are probably my two passions outside of my family and work. Raised in a GAA household, I coach club camogie underage and county underage teams with success. I am currently County Tipperary Camogie Board Treasurer. I firmly believe based on many years coaching and developing players, that sport is an integral part in the development of our business leaders of the future, it's that drive and passion to achieve and succeed in their chosen environment.

What traits do you admire in others?

The traits I most admire in others are respect, integrity, positivity and people who inspire and motivate others around them. Listening is an art, and with that curiosity, the why, what, where, and when questions. The ability to empathise is admirable and goes hand in hand with the emotional intelligence of people. This can inspire and motivate those around you and build trust.