



Geraldine O'Leary

TITLE:
Off Premise Commercial Analyst

COMPANY:
Heineken

QUALIFICATIONS:
Qualified as CPA in 2003

Your Career

Why did you become a CPA?

From my early days in secondary school I always loved accountancy and maths and decided then that I wanted to become an accountant. CPA was my preferred qualification as it offered so many opportunities in different industries and transferrable skills.

What route did you take to become a CPA?

I commenced my studies with the Institute of Accounting Technicians in CIT whilst working in finance and progressed to pursue my goal to become an accountant by following through with the CPA qualification. I initially studied with CIT and then moved to Griffith College where I attended weekend classes, which suited better whilst working full time.

What Advice would you have for someone consider becoming a CPA?

CPA is a fantastic qualification which opens up so many opportunities within a multitude of business sectors whether it be Practice, SME's, Multinational and Shared Services as well as the qualification being internationally recognised. The qualification spans all aspects of business be it financial, commercial, management accountancy, tax or advisory/legal areas. CPA's knowledge base covers a multitude, which can be applied in both business and personal situations.

CPA Profile Geraldine O'Leary

Describe your working life?

My working life is busy, challenging and rewarding at the same time. No two days are the same working in Commercial Finance especially where the market place can dictate what will land on my desk. Within my role as Off Premise Commercial Analyst in Heineken- Business Partnering has become a critical part of my day to day. Not alone does my role require that I provide financial data and support to my stakeholders, but also to deliver outstanding business partnering to them. Business partnering is evolving so that we as finance providers can also deliver our information in the right format and our communication styles are tailored to our stakeholders requirements.

My role involves such tasks as performing month end close, Variance analysis & commentary, latest estimates on business unit performance, Annual Budgets, support in Business scenarios for innovation, Customer, Brand and Sku profitability P&Ls and to support the commercial team with their decision making. My role is quite varied and involves interaction with several departments within the business from Commercial, Marketing to Customer Service & Logistics. This in turn allows a huge bank of knowledge to be gained from individuals across the business making my job so interesting. It also involves going out into Trade with our internal stakeholders to experience their roles and the challenges they face with our external customers so that we can get a view of the bigger picture of what we do as a company.

We also participate in "MIT" (mission in trade) days where we get away from our desk jobs and help merchandising etc., especially around new product launches. As Heineken professionals we are also required to complete specific courses within our Heineken Finance online training academy such as refresher courses in financial practices, Business partnering, Anti-bribery & best practices within our OpCos worldwide, CPI-Lean processes and Health and safety to name but a few.

What is your biggest career achievement to date?

Biggest achievement to date would be on receipt of my CPA Qualification I was made Company Financial Accountant with Cork

Bonded Warehouses where I started out as an accounts assistant some years prior to this.

On commencing my first role in Heineken I was part of a team which oversaw the transition of the PtP process from Heineken Ireland to Our shared service Centre "HGSS" in Krakow. This was a completely different experience which involved overseeing the training of our shared service personnel and implementing "going live" of this stream in Krakow and the following ramp down and full transition of the process. Being classified as "Best in class" for the whole process start to finish of all the Heineken OpCos which transitioned to Krakow shared services. This was a fantastic experience for me, which involved building new relationships with our Polish colleagues in Krakow and ensuring the success of this new way of working to the Heineken Ireland entity and ensure the development of relationships between Heineken Ireland and our new Finance department in Krakow.

How has being a CPA helped you in your career?

It has opened many doors of opportunity for me allowing me to hold different roles from Financial Accountant roles in SME businesses to my current role of Off Premise Commercial Analyst in Commercial Finance within a multinational.

Life

How do you unwind?

Being a mum to two young boys and working full time makes for a busy life so to unwind I like to take my boys swimming or they also like to cycle alongside me while I get to enjoy my run. For some real "me time" I chill out by practising yoga, which provides complete relaxation and a guaranteed good night's sleep after a busy day at work.

What traits do you admire most in others?

No matter where we land in life, respect, honesty and politeness are the most important traits that I admire in a person. They don't cost anything, but are such great traits to have as they have a positive impact on those that they come in contact with. At the end of the day we are all equal as beings!