

# CPA Profile

## John Donoghue



**Title:** Chief Executive

**Company:** ifac

**Qualifications:** FCPA

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

I knew I wanted to be in business, and when I looked at the people who led successful businesses, they tended to be from a finance background, so I felt accountancy was a good platform for building a successful career. It was an easy decision to make.

### Why did you choose CPA Ireland as your qualification route?

I discussed the options with friends and colleagues to get a sense of what might be involved in gaining a professional accounting qualification, and then contacted the Institutes. I liked the fact that CPA is an Irish organisation, it felt more local, and the people I talked with in the Institute were warm and welcoming. CPA felt like the right fit for me.

### Please provide a brief history of your career.

I qualified in 2005, having trained in ifac's Carlow office and an accounting firm in Kildare. I was appointed Managing Partner of our Tullamore office in August 2005. I held that role for almost seven years before being appointed ifac Commercial Manager. Our Commercial Manager role is focused on helping our practice teams in thirty locations across Ireland to optimise their business processes and business development. I was appointed ifac Chief Executive in 2015. The work goes on...

### How do you find your CPA qualification has helped you in your role?

The CPA qualification and my studies in Griffith College have been of huge benefit to me. Studying for the qualification gave me a disciplined

and focused approach to work and how I use my time. It also gave me a broad understanding of business principles and strategy, in addition to the core skills of accounting. I met great people along the way, and I wouldn't be where I am now without the qualification.

### What has been your biggest career achievement?

Ifac has gone from strength to strength over the last few years. We have consistently grown the practice at about 10% per year, and we have developed and grown our Tax, Advisory, Food and Agribusiness, Business Support Services and our Financial Planning teams.

Our people are totally committed to helping our clients to achieve their potential and build sound financial futures. We are training, retaining and recruiting fantastic people across the business. No single achievement stands out, we are working all the time to do more for our clients and teams across the country, and that philosophy is paying dividends as our business continues to grow.

### What or who inspires you most in business?

In business, Chuck Feeney set an amazing example and inspired a new wave of Philanthropy and Warren Buffett is inspiring for his success and for his extraordinary communication skills. There are also many inspiring people in ifac, who have faced, or are facing challenging personal situations, we do our very best to support them.

**If you were advising someone just starting out with their CPA qualification, what tip would you give them that would make their**

### journey smoother?

Commit. Don't half do it. Set your timetables, make your sacrifices, understand it's a big commitment and drive on. It will be worth it in the end.

### What do you think are the most pressing issues for accountants?

Keeping up with the pace of change in technology is a big issue for accountants. In ifac we are embracing new technologies to give our people more time to focus on high value activities. The need for firms to have a multi-disciplinary skillset is becoming more obvious with each passing day. Clients need access to a wide range of expertise to help them to optimise their businesses and achieve their potential. Our profession is changing fast. The ability to identify and understand client issues/problems or opportunities and engage experts when needed is the most important and valuable skill that accountants bring to their clients. The numbers are important, advice around the numbers is where we add value.

### How do you unwind?

I spend time with my wife Lorraine and daughters Aoife, Neasa and Tara. They keep me on my toes and put everything in perspective. I love standup comedy; I read a lot and try to keep fit!

### What traits do you admire most in others?

Generosity, which can be underrated and sometimes overlooked. If you are giving your time, expertise or financial support to help other people, you are making a positive difference in the world. And of course, honesty, it's an essential ingredient in building high trust, high impact relationships.