



# Supporting Ambitious Women Entrepreneurs

who are serious about growing their businesses



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AWARDED GOOD PRACTICE BY THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF GENDER EQUALITY (EIGE)  
HIGHLIGHTED BY THE OECD AND EU AS AN "INSPIRING PRACTICE"  
WINNER OF THE EUROPEAN ENTERPRISE PROMOTION AWARDS 2015 - INVESTING IN ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

# WHAT IS GOING FOR GROWTH?

## ABOUT GOING FOR GROWTH

Going for Growth is an initiative to support female entrepreneurs who have been trading for at least two years and are strongly focussed on growth. Most owner managers agree that it can be a very isolating experience and it can be difficult to find someone on your wavelength who understands the issues involved in successfully growing a business. The Going for Growth round table initiative is designed to address these challenges. At Going for Growth, we believe that entrepreneurs learn best from each other. Accordingly, the initiative is based on interactive round table sessions that are facilitated not by consultants, academics or professional trainers, but by successful entrepreneurs.

Participants are offered a unique learning environment with a peer led approach based on the shared experiences of both the Lead Entrepreneur and the other participants facing common challenges. Participation is free of charge.

The Going for Growth initiative is supported by Enterprise Ireland and KPMG.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

Going for Growth is for ambitious female entrepreneurs across all sectors who are located in the Republic of Ireland. The entrepreneur should already be the owner manager of a business of which she is a major shareholder and key influencer. Suitable applicants need to demonstrate significant aspiration for growth and should be working full time in the business. It is expected that the business will have been trading for at least two years.

Applications will also be considered on an exceptional basis from candidates who have more recently set up businesses that are highly innovative and demonstrate significant ambition and expect to be selling in export markets or have raised significant equity investment.

Find out more at [www.goingforgrowth.com](http://www.goingforgrowth.com)

## GOING FOR GROWTH COMES STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Over 1000 women entrepreneurs have already participated in a cycle of Going for Growth. In almost every case the round table sessions translated into practical changes within their businesses; they got great benefit from the National Forum and they felt nearer to achieving their growth goals as a result of their participation in Going for Growth.

Some of the many testimonials from previous participants may be read in this brochure or on the website - [www.goingforgrowth.com/testimonials](http://www.goingforgrowth.com/testimonials)



Kate Scott, HoloToyz,  
Going for Growth Ambassador



Aimee Connolly, Sculpted by Aimee,  
Going for Growth Ambassador



Carol Gibbons, Enterprise Ireland, Klara O'Leary, Care Box Co, Louella Morton, TestReach and Olivia Lynch, KPMG

"Enterprise Ireland is committed to increasing opportunities for women entrepreneurs and supporting them at every stage of their entrepreneurial journey. We strongly believe that key to Ireland's economic success is a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem which utilises the skills, ambition, and talent of a diverse population. Our partnership with Going for Growth is an important element in fostering a supportive ecosystem, as this programme provides excellent support to our incredible women entrepreneurs and leaders on their business journey, as they scale and grow and work to achieve their global ambition. With the excellent resources, learning and networking opportunities, we would encourage anyone considering this opportunity to engage and wish the next cycle a fruitful and rewarding experience."

**Leo Clancy, Former CEO, Enterprise Ireland**



"KPMG is dedicated to championing female entrepreneurship in Ireland. Through our continued support of Going for Growth, this programme empowers ambitious women with the resources, mentorship, and community they need to elevate their businesses. Just as we proudly support female role models like Leona Maguire, Rhasidat Adeleke, and Rachel Blackmore in sports, we are equally passionate about helping women excel in business. With invaluable guidance from Lead Entrepreneurs, KPMG workshops and strong peer networks, participants gain the insights and support needed to drive inclusive, innovative growth—fostering a thriving future for women in entrepreneurship across Ireland."

**Olivia Lynch, Partner, KPMG**



# WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A CYCLE?

A cycle of Going for Growth involves a time commitment of about three hours a month over a period of six months. Those selected to participate in Going for Growth are expected to attend all monthly meetings, and must be available to attend a full day National Launch Forum at the beginning of the cycle.

## SUPPORTING GROWTH IN A UNIQUE MANNER

- **Peer support:** Going for Growth is based on peer support. The monthly meetings are led by experienced Lead Entrepreneurs, who give of their time on a voluntary basis. Each Lead Entrepreneur selects up to eight participants to join her at a round table to look at common issues, share experiences and explore ideas and strategies for growing their businesses.
- **Lead Entrepreneur:** The most important attributes of the Lead Entrepreneurs are that they have experience of growing a business and have personal experience of the growth journey on which the participants are embarking.
- **Collaboration:** In a spirit of collaboration, the Lead Entrepreneurs act as role models to the selected participants and share their knowledge and experience with them. Each participant will find a group of like-minded women around the table. The businesses will be different but many of the issues will be similar. A circle of trust develops around the table and all matters discussed remain confidential.

The initiative has been endorsed by successful business women. Those who were involved in the most recent cycle as Lead Entrepreneurs were Anne Cusack, Chupi Sweetman-Durney, Fidelma McGuirk, Hannah Wrixon, Jeananne O'Brien, Leonora O'Brien, Marissa Carter, Monica Flood, Oonagh O'Hagan and Tara Beattie and Susan Spence. These busy and successful business women agreed to give their time on a voluntary basis to support women entrepreneurs to achieve their growth ambitions.

Going for Growth is action and results oriented and goes beyond class room style learning and the usual inputs of professional trainers, consultants and academics. The roundtables are designed not to be theoretical or academic, but to be based on real experience of what has worked and what hasn't worked in real life situations.



Niamh Ryan, Ella and Jo, Nicki Hoyne, Nicki Hoyne, Aoibhin Garrihy, BEO, Laragh Standún, Standún, Oonagh O'Hagan, Lead Entrepreneur, Adrienne Magnier, Zarasyl, Sorcha Gillett, The White & Gold, Lisa Sisk, This is Knit

## THE ROUND TABLE SESSIONS

Participants are expected to attend all meetings. They take place once a month over a period of six months at a location convenient to the Lead Entrepreneur. As successful applicants will be placed with an appropriate Lead Entrepreneur, it may be necessary for participants to travel to attend the round table sessions. Unnecessary travel will be minimised, however. The arrangements for the monthly meetings (time and place) are agreed by the Lead Entrepreneur with participants at their first meeting. On successful completion of a cycle, participants will be given the opportunity to join the Going for Growth Community.

## A COMMON AGENDA FOCUSED ON GROWTH

The focus of this initiative is on the growth challenge.

The questions to be explored over six monthly sessions will include –

- Why go for growth?
- Is your business model fit for purpose?
- What are your KPIs?
- How to increase profitability through increased sales?
- What resources/capabilities do you need to underpin growth?
- What is the best growth path for your business?
- How can you make sure that profitable growth is the result of all your effort?

Going for Growth roundtables will explore this series of relevant questions with the Lead Entrepreneur sharing her experiences and thoughts on the question under discussion. The other participants will similarly share their experiences and learn from each other. For each session an agenda will be provided to reflect these broad areas. On successful completion of a cycle, participants will be given the opportunity to join the Going for Growth Community.

## THE NATIONAL LAUNCH FORUM

Each cycle of Going for Growth starts with a National Launch Forum designed to allow participants and Lead Entrepreneurs to explore a number of relevant topics and to have their first round table meeting. All participants must attend this full day event.

As well as providing more in-depth coverage of key topics, the National Launch Forum provides an opportunity for attendees to network with participants and Lead Entrepreneurs from other roundtable groups.

Previous participants derived great benefit from attending the National Forum.

"The programme covered big picture issues such as strategy and goals, but also practical areas, crucial for a growing business such as recruitment, finance, and pricing."

**Aoife Matthews, SISTERLY, Going for Growth Ambassador**



# THE LEAD ENTREPRENEURS

The Lead Entrepreneurs are not, and cannot be, experts in every area of business but they have first-hand experience of facing the challenges of growing a business. They all agree that if such support were to have been available to them when they were growing their business, they would have found it most beneficial. The following will facilitate the round tables for the 16th cycle.



## ANNE CUSACK

In 1999 Anne co-founded Critical Healthcare, a leader in the Emergency Services market providing healthcare solutions at the front line. As CEO, Anne brought Critical Healthcare through many milestones, the winning and retaining of multiple public and private contracts including the NHS, and Falck Europe, the largest provider of Emergency Services globally, the design and patenting of innovative new products, the creation of an own brand portfolio of medical consumables & medical devices and the design & development of their own software procurement platform adopted by multiple Irish & European emergency service providers. A qualified Non-Executive Director from the Institute of Directors, Anne has served on a number of boards, including the Governing Body of TUS (Technological University Shannon). In 2019, Anne was invited by the then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, to serve as Chair of the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee, 2019-2020 and again recently, 2020-2024. In 2021 Critical Healthcare was acquired in a management buy-in and Anne is now pursuing her many other interests.



## CHUPI SWEETMAN-DURNEY

After a decade of working in the giants of commercial fashion, Chupi founded her eponymous jewellery line in 2013. Her creative and strategic vision has scaled Chupi to a luxury jewellery brand selling into 65 countries. Part of the coveted EY EOY Alumni and a Lead Entrepreneur on the KPMG Enterprise Ireland backed Going for Growth program, Chupi is one of Ireland's leading female founders and is regularly featured in the press. Chupi designs timeless pieces to mark life's most precious moments. Her award-winning jewellery is destined to become your future heirloom. [www.chupi.com](http://www.chupi.com)



## FIDELMA MCGUIRK

Fidelma McGuirk is founder and CEO of Payslip, see [www.payslip.com](http://www.payslip.com). Payslip is a Global Payroll platform that automates the management of international payroll. Payslip enables HR Directors to consolidate global payrolls, achieve centralised reporting compliance and data protection, and deliver useful insights and real control to the business. Payslip clients are multi-national employers, growing aggressively in more than five countries. Prior to Payslip, Fidelma has over 18 years' experience in international business. Fidelma studied her Bachelors in Business & German and Masters in Business in Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland & University of Regensburg, Germany. Fidelma trained as a certified Data Protection Officer. [www.payslip.com](http://www.payslip.com)



## HANNAH WRIXON

Hannah Wrixon is a serial entrepreneur, having started and sold three businesses. Hannah was named Image Magazine Digital & Technology Businesswoman of the Year 2019 and Network Ireland's Businesswoman of the Year in 2019. Hannah has over 25 years' experience working in business at all levels and in particular startups, technology, people management and HR. She has recently completed Strategic Leadership in the University of Limerick. Hannah has invested in several companies and is committed to supporting founders in their startup or scaling journeys. She previously spent six years in Perth and understands the returning emigrant's challenges. Hannah recently completed a Diploma in Corporate Governance.



## JEANANNE O'BRIEN

Jeananne O'Brien is Founder and Director of Artizan Food Co and Eatto. Artizan Food Co, a leading boutique corporate catering company, was founded in Dublin in 2005. Artizan has led the way in 'Cloud Kitchen' solutions having established their first cloud kitchen in 2008 and currently operate from their state of the art 26,000 square foot kitchen offering innovative digitally driven in-house and flexible workplace catering solutions. Jeananne also founded Eatto.ie, a sustainable frozen food ready meal brand, which launched in April 2020. A direct-to-consumer e-commerce model, Eatto.ie delivers handmade meals nationwide, using locally sourced Irish produce, with no additives or preservatives. Jeananne is hugely passionate about sustainability and holds it at the core of both Artizan and Eatto who are proud members of Bord Bia's Origin Green. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce from UCD and MSc in Marketing from Smurfit Business School, UCD. [www.artizancatering.ie](http://www.artizancatering.ie)



## LEONORA O'BRIEN

Leonora qualified as a pharmacist and worked in pharmacy practice, regulation and policy development in Ireland and across the European Union. She founded Pharmapod in 2012, having noticed a gap in the market for inter-pharmacy interaction in respect of the reporting of critical incidents. Pharmapod developed a global software platform to reduce medication errors and deliver safe effective clinical services for patients worldwide. With Leonora as CEO, Pharmapod was widely adopted across 10,000 pharmacies and Long Term Care facilities by corporate clients such as Pillpack by Amazon in the US, CareRx in Canada as well as independent pharmacies and Pharmacy regulators. Pharmapod launched in multiple international markets including US, Australia, UK and Ireland, and secured over 65% of the Canadian market. In 2021, Pharmapod was acquired by Think Research in Canada and Leonora is now pursuing other business and charity interests. Leonora has won numerous awards for business, pharmacy practice and innovation, including Laureate for the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards, and the Tatler Woman of the Year Award for Entrepreneurship.



### MARISSA CARTER

Marissa Carter is the founder and CEO of two globally successful brands, Cocoa Brown and Carter Beauty. Her keen focus on export is evident from the expansive list of international stockists which include Primark – Europe, Superdrug – UK, Lyko – Sweden, Walmart – U.S.A, Hudson Bay – Canada and most recently The Dubai Mall – U.A.E. Earlier this year, Carter Beauty won three separate awards at the Global Beauty Awards; Most Sustainable Product; Best Primer and Best Foundation. Marissa herself has received numerous award accolades including the Trinity College Praeses Elit Award; the UCD James Joyce Award; and named by WXN in the TOP 25 Most Powerful Women In Ireland. She is passionate about sharing her knowledge and expertise with the Going For Growth and Starting Strong communities. [www.carterbeautycosmetics.com](http://www.carterbeautycosmetics.com)



### MONICA FLOOD

Monica Flood established an IT training and consultancy business in 1981. Olas has developed as one of the premier IT training companies in Ireland and is the sole appointed education partner for SAP. Monica completed the sale of Olas to a French public company, Assima plc. and has retired from the position of CEO to pursue other business and investment interests. Monica's experience of building a service business and a loyal customer base in a very competitive market provides an important perspective for growth and success. A great supporter of the arts in Ireland, Monica is a Patron of The Model in Sligo, home of the Niland Collection and one of Ireland's leading contemporary arts centres. Monica has recently been appointed as a non-executive Director to the Projects Arts Centre, which began in 1966 as a small, artist led collective and is now evolving into Ireland's national centre for the contemporary arts.



### OONAGH O'HAGAN

Oonagh O'Hagan is the owner and Managing Director of Meagher's Pharmacy Group. A qualified pharmacist, she was in her late 20s when she bought the landmark Meagher's Pharmacy on Dublin's Baggot Street from Pierce Meagher in 2001. She has since gone on to grow the business to nine pharmacies and a thriving online store [www.meaghers.ie](http://www.meaghers.ie). She now employs 150 people with further growth planned this year. Meagher's has been named as a Deloitte Best Managed Irish Company for the past seven years and has been awarded Platinum Status these past two years. The Meaghers Pharmacy Group have represented Ireland in the European Business Awards and collected the two top business awards at the Irish Pharmacy News awards ceremony, taking away the Business Development of the Year award and the OTC retailer in the same year. Oonagh herself has picked up many business awards and was named as Image Magazine's Entrepreneur of the Year in 2016, was shortlisted for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards in 2021, and most recently was named Irish Tatler Businesswoman of the Year 2022.. [www.meagherspharmacy.ie](http://www.meagherspharmacy.ie)



### SUSAN SPENCE

Susan Spence is the co-founder of SoftCo, one of Ireland's most successful software companies and a leading procure-to-pay solution provider globally. SoftCo was recently acquired from its founders by Keensight Capital, in one of the largest Irish technology transactions. Susan is also co-founder of Manverton, which over the last 10 years has invested in property and extensively in the Equine industry including Breeding, Development, and Racing. In addition, Susan chairs the Dublin Regional Enterprise Plan, a Department of Enterprise initiative. Susan supports Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and has a long-term association with Going for Growth, an organisation that helps female entrepreneurs develop, and scale their business. Susan is an Entrepreneurial Ambassador for TU Dublin, working specifically with the School of Marketing and Entrepreneurship Susan was the Irish Tatler Entrepreneur of the Year 2018 and is a former recipient of the Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman of the Year.



### TARA BEATTIE

In 1998, Tara and her husband Brian founded Mange Tout, initially a fine dining restaurant, then becoming an event catering business which grew to include 8 SI Cafés across Leinster. Whilst running and growing this business they saw a gap in the market for a professional hospitality staffing company and established The Caterwaiter. This grew to a recruitment company with prestigious clients such as Facebook, William Fry, Google, Aramark, etc. In 2019, they sold this business. In 2021, Tara and Brian set up their new SaaS company, Prepsheets.com. Prepsheets has investment from Enterprise Ireland and is part of the NDRC start up ecosystem. Tara's career has enabled her to gain deep insight in business from start up, growth, multi site operations, closure as well as sale. [www.prepsheets.com](http://www.prepsheets.com)

The following Lead Entrepreneurs will facilitate Continuing the Momentum round tables.



### ÁINE DENN

Following a degree in Computer Science from Trinity College, Áine served in senior executive and board director positions in public and private companies, including The SCO Group, NewworldIQ, Prudential UK and Accenture. Áine then discovered the world of SaaS start-ups and spent 14 years building the global B2B SaaS business she co-founded, called Altify. Áine's insight in establishing and growing Altify was informed by many years' experience in enterprise software, business development, operations, and customer engagement before she became an entrepreneur. Following the company's successful acquisition at the end of 2019 by Upland Software (UPLD), Áine exited the organisation. Áine is a credentialed coach, holds a Dip IoD, and was named in Ireland's top 30 women in tech for 2021. Áine serves on the boards of Technology Ireland and the Irish Writers Centre.



### FIONA O'CARROLL

Fiona O'Carroll is a globally recognized expert on Leadership Mindset, Digital Transformation and eCommerce. She is a former C level executive with a variety of leadership roles including CEO, COO, Chief Digital Officer, VP Marketing, eCommerce GM in: Technology, Online Retail, Consumer Goods, Education, Media, Food, Computer Gaming sectors. Fiona has successfully scaled global businesses to exit, raised venture capital funding and held executive & non-executive board roles. She is the creator of The Digital Mindset & The Self-Aware Leader. She is the co-host of the Shedding Skin & Blisters Podcast. Fiona holds a BSc in Marketing and MSc Business Management from Trinity College Dublin, and she is a graduate of Leadership for Growth Executive Programme at the Business School at Stanford University, California.

# EXTERNAL RECOGNITION OF GOING FOR GROWTH

Going for Growth is the brainchild of Paula Fitzsimons who put it forward in response to an initiative on women and entrepreneurship proposed by the NDP Gender Equality Unit in the then Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. *'My mission in Going for Growth is to support women entrepreneurs to achieve their growth ambitions and to get more women entrepreneurs into a growth frame of mind'.*

Since 2009 the merits and excellence of *Going for Growth* have been recognised repeatedly by the EU, OECD, and European Institute of Gender Equality. In 2015, *Going for Growth* was awarded the European Enterprise Promotion Award, Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills. In 2016, the initiative was included by the EU and OECD in a compendium of examples of innovative initiatives. The entrepreneurship tool for policy makers, recently released by the EU and OECD, includes Going for Growth as a case study.



## COMPLIMENTARY INITIATIVES

### STARTING STRONG

Starting Strong is designed for ambitious female entrepreneurs who are at an earlier stage in the development of their business than traditional participants on the Going for Growth programme. However, the application process is the same with those interested registering on [www.goingforgrowth.com](http://www.goingforgrowth.com) in the first instance. To be considered the businesses will have moved well beyond the concept and prototype stages and will have made some initial sales or have raised significant equity investment. Starting Strong is aimed at exceptional female entrepreneurs whose length of pre-revenue development, degree of innovation and growth potential are all significantly greater than the norm. They should also expect to be exporters. Starting Strong participants have a specially tailored programme including round table sessions with Lead Entrepreneurs and relevant topic based workshops. This is made possible by the contribution of the following Starting Strong Supporters – Beauchamps, Glandore, KPMG, PayPal and SoftCo. <https://goingforgrowth.com/starting-strong/>



### CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM

On successful completion of a cycle, participants can stay connected by joining the Going for Growth Community. Members can apply to participate in Continuing the Momentum round tables, take part in topic based workshops, and are invited to attend the annual Community Forum. Continuing the Momentum was developed following a clear demand by many participants for continued participation on Lead facilitated round tables in order to continue their growth journey through a focus on goals and milestones and the benefit of an advisory panel of peers. Supported by Enterprise Ireland and KPMG, the activities of the Community are tailored to deliver focused developmental support to the individual member and her business, together with enhanced networking opportunities. <https://goingforgrowth.com/continuing-the-momentum/>



### ACORNS INITIATIVE

Several members of the Going for Growth community, who have started and grown businesses in rural Ireland, are now acting as voluntary Lead Entrepreneurs on ACORNS, an initiative to support early stage female entrepreneurs in rural Ireland. As past participants of the Going for Growth programme all have first-hand experience of the round table peer learning approach and of its benefits. Going for Growth Lead Entrepreneurs also give of their time in a voluntary capacity to facilitate ACORNS Plus, a growth-focussed round table initiative. Over 500 female entrepreneurs have taken part in ACORNS to date. ACORNS was designed and developed by Fitzsimons Consulting and is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. [www.acorns.ie](http://www.acorns.ie)



## OUR SPONSORS

**Enterprise Ireland** (EI) is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. EI works in partnership with Irish enterprises to help them start, grow, innovate and win export sales on global markets. In this way, EI supports sustainable economic growth, regional development and secure employment. You can find detailed information on Enterprise Ireland's activities, strategy and performance on [www.enterprise-ireland.com](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com)

**KPMG** in Ireland is a provider of professional services, offering a range of audit, tax, advisory and consulting services to a broad range of domestic and international clients across all sectors of business and the economy. We operate on an all-Ireland basis and have 117 partners and over 4,000 people in offices in Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Galway. KPMG works with entrepreneurs and start-ups to support the early achievement of business objectives and has a reputation for continuing these strong relationships as organisations evolve and grow. KPMG's reputation for excellence is based on passion for business and an unrivalled understanding of key industry issues in all sectors of the economy. Find out more at [www.kpmg.ie](http://www.kpmg.ie)





**GOING FOR  
GROWTH**

# GOING FOR GROWTH WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

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