



Supporting Ambitious Women Entrepreneurs

who are serious about growing their businesses



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

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



Kate Scott, HoloToy,
Going for Growth Ambassador



Aimee Connolly, Sculpted by Aimee,
Going for Growth Ambassador



Susan Spence, Lead Entrepreneur, Gráinne Mullins, Grá Chocolates, Jenny Melia, Enterprise Ireland and Olivia Lynch, KPMG

"Enterprise Ireland is committed to increasing opportunities for women entrepreneurs and supporting them at every stage of their business journey. This includes working with colleagues and partners from across the ecosystem, to ensure we foster the skills, ambition and talent, and ensure that Ireland is a great location to start and scale a business. That is why Enterprise Ireland is proud to continue our support for Going for Growth, a programme which supports women entrepreneurs to scale their businesses and realise their growth ambitions. "Over the past 17 cycles, this initiative has demonstrated its impact in helping women-led businesses to increase revenue, create employment, and expand into new markets, and I would encourage all eligible entrepreneurs to apply and to engage with the peer support, expert guidance, and leadership offered through this unique programme."

Jenny Melia, CEO, Enterprise Ireland



"KPMG is committed to championing female entrepreneurship in Ireland, especially in the face of the unique challenges of 2025, including economic uncertainty, evolving market demands, and the need for sustainable practices. Through our unwavering support of Going for Growth, this programme plays a crucial role in empowering ambitious women by providing them with essential resources, mentorship, and a robust community. We proudly celebrate female role models in sports and are equally passionate about fostering women's success in business. With the invaluable guidance from Lead Entrepreneurs, tailored KPMG workshops, and a strong network of peers, participants gain critical insights and the support necessary to navigate these challenges. Together, cultivating a vibrant future for women in entrepreneurship throughout 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 are involved in the current cycle as Lead Entrepreneurs are Anne Cusack, Chupi Sweetman-Durney, Fidelma McGuirk, Jeananne O'Brien, Leonora O'Brien, Louella Morton, Marissa Carter, Oonagh O'Hagan, 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.

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.



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 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

From lab to boardroom, Dr Anne Cusack's journey has spanned medical research, international pharma, and most notably, a bold leap into entrepreneurship. As co-founder and CEO of Critical Healthcare, Anne led the company's transformation from a distribution business into a technology-driven international player in emergency medical services. Following the successful acquisition of Critical Healthcare in 2021, Anne has focused on sharing her experience in scaling businesses, navigating change, and governing for sustainable growth. Anne serves on multiple boards including Bord na Móna, TUS, and the National Maternity Hospital Research Foundation, and is a qualified non-executive director. She also contributes nationally as a member of the SME Taskforce and as Chair of the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan.



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 67 countries. Chupi is proud to be part of the coveted Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year alumni and a Lead Entrepreneur on Starting Strong. To showcase the beautiful jewellery in a physical location, Chupi has opened a 5,000 sq. ft retail and studio space in a prime position in the Powerscourt Centre, Dublin. www.chupi.com



FIDELMA MCGUIRK

Fidelma McGuirk is founder and CEO of Payslip, see 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



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



LEONORA O'BRIEN

Leonora O'Brien is a pharmacist and technology entrepreneur. She is the co-founder of Blazer Ltd, an AI platform and methodology for helping founders scale impact businesses across international markets. Leonora founded Pharmapod a company that developed a global software platform to reduce medication errors and deliver safe, effective clinical services for patients worldwide. Pharmapod launched in multiple international markets including US, Australia, UK and Ireland securing over 65% of the Canadian market and was acquired by Think Research in 2021. Leonora has served on a number of boards, including the Technology Ireland Board, the National Maternity Hospital Foundation Board and was a member of Council for the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. Leonora is an ambassador for women in business and STEM and is the current Jury President of the European region for the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards. She has won numerous awards for business, pharmacy practice and innovation, including WMB Woman in Technology Award, Business of the Year Award (Irish Women's awards), and the Tatler Woman of the Year Award for Entrepreneurship.



LOUELLA MORTON

Following a degree in computer science, Louella gained deep knowledge and experience in the education technology sector. This allowed her to observe trends in the sector, particularly the growing need for assessment tools and simple, easy-to-use online testing for certification. She saw a gap in the market to provide a full end-to-end online exam management system with in-built proctoring, and knew she had enough experience to set up a business to meet this need. And so TestReach was founded in 2014 by Louella and co-founder Sheena Bailey. TestReach employs 120+ people directly, plus over 200 exam invigilators. TestReach's main markets are professional bodies, educational/training organisations, and corporations, particularly those in highly regulated sectors like financial services, pharma and aviation. Over 80% of their business is currently from export markets, mainly the UK and EU. www.testreach.com



MARISSA CARTER

Marissa Carter is the founder and CEO of Cocoa Brown, one of Ireland's most successful and beloved self-tan and skincare brands. Since its launch over 12 years ago, Cocoa Brown has grown into a global brand, stocked by major retailers including Primark (Europe), Superdrug (UK), Lyko (Sweden), Walmart (USA), and many more. In a major milestone for the company, Cocoa Brown began full-scale manufacturing in Ireland in 2024. This move reflects a deep commitment to the Irish economy, supporting local job creation and prioritizing sustainability and reduced environmental impact. Marissa's achievements have earned her some of the country's most prestigious honors, including the Trinity College Praeses Elit Award; the UCD James Joyce Award; and recognition by WXN as one of the Top 25 Most Powerful Women in Ireland. www.cocoabrown.ie



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. 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



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

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 helps ambitious founders cut through complexity and build clarity and momentum in the AI era. She is the founder of NoNee, the trusted companion for small and medium-sized businesses navigating growth. NoNee demystifies AI and digital complexity, giving leaders clear, actionable pathways to scale boldly—without fear of being left behind. With more than two decades of leadership experience, Fiona has guided companies of all sizes across industries including technology, retail, food, media, and gaming. She has scaled businesses to exit, raised venture capital, and served on executive and non-executive boards in roles such as CEO, COO, Chief Digital Officer, VP Marketing, and eCommerce GM. Alongside her work at NoNee, Fiona created The Digital Mindset framework and is a co-host of the Shedding Skin & Blisters Podcast.

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 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 Manverton. <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



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.

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.





**GOING FOR
GROWTH**

GOING FOR GROWTH WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

6 James's Terrace, Malahide, Co. Dublin • +353 1 8450770 • info@goingforgrowth.com • www.goingforgrowth.com • [@goingforgrowth](https://twitter.com/goingforgrowth)

