

Member Spotlight: Anne Brady

# A Passion for Numbers and a Desire to Help Others



*Anne is a member of Chartered Accountants Ireland and the Irish Taxation Institute. She is also a member of the Institute of Internal Auditors and the Life Insurance Association (LIA). Prior to starting her own practice in 1992 Anne both worked and trained with KPMG. She is an expert in advising business start-ups, fund-raising, implementing internal controls and assisting with the restructuring and reorganisation of companies.*

A father's love of numbers and a determination to inspire the same in his daughters.

This was the family environment that gave Anne Brady a very clear and early desire to study accountancy, setting her on the path to becoming a successful businesswoman.

Anne grew up in Dublin as one of nine children and the daughter of a chartered accountant. Her father worked hard on a daily basis to make sure all his children understood the value of numbers and the power of maths as the international language. She recalls with fondness all the ways in which he made sure they were immersed in that language throughout their daily lives.

"We did times tables at home around the dinner table. He would just start up and you had to join in, dropping out if you got one wrong, while everyone else continued. He would also ask us to add up the numbers on registration plates when we were in the car, or bring bills home from the supermarket and make us check they were added up correctly."

He clearly left a deep impression, because all nine children grew up to become involved with maths in some way; with four going on to study accountancy. Anne believes numbers were always in her genes,

eventually leading to qualification as a chartered accountant and a job at the big four firm KPMG.

The KPMG role was a great grounding, giving Anne exposure to foreign direct investment into Ireland from the USA. This early career experience provided vital skills, knowledge and contacts that she has leveraged to mould her own successful practice.

A large proportion of the clients at Anne Brady McQuillans DFK are foreign entities investing in Ireland. They are attracted by the low corporation tax rates, highly educated English-speaking workforce and the country's reputation as an established gateway to Europe.

Anne focuses on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but does have a few larger clients who are still establishing a base in Ireland. Her practice specialises in business advisory alongside audit, taking care of management accounts, tax and corporate governance for clients.

She says: "We have four different departments; audit, tax, advisory and corporate governance. The tax team deals with transfer pricing, international tax and specialist schemes for technology, R&D and holding companies.

"If a business comes to Ireland we can set up their company or branch, register them with the Revenue Commissioners and set up bank accounts. We will look after all their accounting requirements until they are ready to take some in-house; we even have meeting rooms they can use."

Anne and her team are focused on growing the practice further and are planning on adding another six staff in 2018. She says revenues increased by 20 per cent last year, driven by a stronger economy and helped, to an extent, by the prospect of Brexit.

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"We are seeing companies setting up here that might not have if the UK had not chosen Brexit. I recently met a group of Spanish people at a function in Ireland and spoke to them in Spanish. They were delighted to meet an accountant fluent in their native language and I soon had eight new Spanish clients."

Away from core accounting work, Anne is Vice President of DFK EMEA and is heavily involved with helping younger professionals to develop their leadership and communication skills, which she believes can be lacking in highly qualified accountants. She helps to run conferences and workshops emphasising the importance of these skills to young people.

"We often find that people who are great at technical things do not always have the communication skills that are needed. We set up role plays that teach them how to prepare a quote for a client or handle a client interview. We also teach soft skills such as people management."

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She is a big believer in developing face-to-face relationships with clients and doing detailed homework on their businesses before a meeting. A recent client survey surprisingly revealed that fees were not the greatest concern, but rather clients feeling their accountant didn't always know enough about their businesses.

"This is so easy to do these days, since you can look online for sector reports, or view a LinkedIn profile. If you are prepared to talk to the client about things relevant to their business, it is far more valuable than talking about your own services," she says.

Anne also has a passion for voluntary work and gives some of her free time to several educational charities. She spent eight years working fulltime at one charity after leaving KPMG and now serves as company secretary. The charity runs hostels, youth clubs and hospitality schools.

Her experience in corporate governance, payroll and company accounting is invaluable to organisations often staffed by unskilled volunteers, many of whom are on community employment schemes, to develop their skills and confidence levels.

As a woman at the top of an industry dominated by men, Anne is a role model for younger female accountants and actively supports women's events. She says her own personal experience during many years as an accountant has not been one of discrimination, but often the exact opposite.

She cites one example of pitching for a job at a local football club, where the senior team needed help with their management accounts. She got the contract and duly attended the AGM, only to be informed she was the first woman to attend their annual meeting since the club was formed in 1872!

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"I honestly think I got that contract because I was a woman. There may be discrimination at larger companies, but I haven't experienced it with smaller firms. My experience has always been that men and women complement each other in the workplace because they bring different skills to a project. Whenever I put together a team I try to make sure I follow that rule."

Anne is unmarried, but as you might expect coming from a family of nine siblings, she has plenty of nieces and nephews that she loves to spend time with. It's a fair bet that she is repeating some of the lessons taught by her own father all those years ago, and a fairer bet that the next generation of Irish accountants are already being carefully nurtured.



## Anne Brady McQuillans DFK

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Anne Brady McQuillans DFK is a progressive firm of chartered accountants and registered auditors that views its relationship with its clients as being central to its success. The firm's partners, Anne Brady and Natalie Kelly, lead a team of professionals who are dedicated to consistently surpassing the expectations of their clients whether it is helping them to achieve their business objectives or keeping their tax affairs up-to-date.