



At the AHEAD annual spring seminar held at Dell, Citygate, Mahon, were clockwise from above: Anna Geary, Dell; Geraldine Collins, do; former Irish Rugby international and guest speaker David Corkery; Mary Quirke, Asst Director AHEAD and John O'Meara, Director of Finance, Dell; Mary O'Grady, Head of Disability Services, UCC with Niamh Carew, Trueability, Dell and James Northbridge, Project Officer WAM and GetAhead and Caroline McGrotty, Project Officer WAM and GetAhead and Geraldine Collins from Dell.

Picture: Howard Crowley



Felicity's advice on digital marketing

FELICITY McCarthy is a leading digital marketing professional who has gained her expertise with some of the largest tech companies in the world including Dell, eBay and Facebook. In January 2014, Felicity, right, set up her own digital agency, Spark Digital. We sat down with Felicity to gain an insight into her successful career to date.

How did you begin your career in digital?
In 2000, I worked as an Online Marketing Manager in Dell. My role was to drive eCommerce growth through site optimisation and driving traffic to the site. Although there were less online marketing channels available to use the ethos at Dell is truly results-oriented marketing. After eight years with Dell, I moved to eBay where I led the marketing team championing innovation within existing channels and embracing new channels, to drive high growth business.

In early 2010, I took up the position of Marketing Manager at Facebook, working with small to medium sized businesses across Europe. Facebook has been a game changer for marketers, effectively leveling the playing field by giving all businesses access to the same tools to grow their businesses. Suddenly reaching a high volume of prospective customers is not exclusively reserved for the largest budget holders in the market.

To anyone starting a career in digital today, what piece of advice would you give?
You must continue to learn and evolve. The pace of change in the digital arena is intense and keeps things exciting. If I think back to when I studied Marketing in NUIG, digital marketing wasn't even a topic. Digital channels are constantly changing as well as tools and technology so you need to learn to



embrace the change. It's not just a skill, it's an attitude too. You could say the only thing that's constant is the change.

How important is it for a business to have social media presence?
Honestly, I think businesses who are not embracing new technologies to acquire new customers and build relationships with existing customers, are at

high risk of losing out to companies who are doing so. Small businesses have the same access to the same tools that the world's largest companies use.

What are the most common mistakes organisations make when it comes to creating and managing their social media campaigns?
Social media needs to be a part of the core marketing strategy. The most impact is achieved when social media is fundamental to the campaign or initiative and of course, where the approach is consistent with the business objectives.

The perception that only teenagers use social media. 60% of the Irish population on Facebook are between 25-54, according to Social Bakers December 2013 report.

Being afraid of negative comments. Being able to collect, address and moderate the feedback in a forum that is within your control is the best way to do so. My advice is always to be responsive and proactive to all comments, good and bad.

How has social media developed in the last one to two years and how do you see social media evolving in the future?
One of the biggest developments in the past few years impacting digital behavior and social media is the usage of mobile phones. Furthermore, social media platforms have allowed us to use advanced targeting capabilities to reach customers on mobile. The evolution of Twitter ads, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+ are platforms which I will be monitoring closely.

Felicity McCarthy will be lecturing the Social Media Marketing module in the upcoming Professional Diploma in Digital Marketing course starting March 5 at the Clayton Hotel, Galway.

Tandem to offer tailored accounting solutions

RECENTLY launched Tandem Accounting Group, an Irish company set up by Olga Halpenny and the partners of GBW, Statutory Auditors and Business Advisors, offers Professional Contractors, freelancers and ISPs's simplified and tailored accounting solutions.

With offices in Dublin and Cork, the Tandem Accounting Team, made up of over 20 accountants and administrative personnel, strive to work in tandem with their clients, through face to face and online interactions.

Tandem merges comprehensive knowledge of the professional contracting world with more than 100 years accounting expertise. This synergy results in a company that is dedicated to providing financial solutions for Contractors, in a manner that is not only user-friendly and compliant but tailored to each Contractor's individual requirements. Tandem provide their contractors with an Electronic Shoebox into which they simply drop their timesheets and expenses for processing, thus ensuring the solution requires as little time as possible.

Tandem provides a prompt, cost effective and money saving accounting solution. Tandem utilise their wealth of knowledge from working for many years with clients in Ireland and Internationally across a broad spectrum of industry sectors including Engineering (incorporating Life Science), Pharmaceutical, Construction Management, ICT (Information & Communications Technology), Aviation and Medical to provide an efficient accounting solution.

Thus, becoming a contracting partner, dedicated to saving contractor's time as well as maximising their financial retention. Their 360° view of the requirements enable Tandem to provide a professional solution in an efficient and simplified manner to their clients.

Olga Halpenny, Managing Director, Tandem Accounting Group said of the new venture: "Having first worked with Professional Contractors in 1986, I take great personal satisfaction in offering compliant financial services to Professional Contractors. One of the biggest lessons I have learnt is that there are very few people who can speak the specialist language of accountants."

"There is an obvious need for a service that provides a clear, concise and compliant accounting solution which is totally focused on the needs of the Contractor."

"Tandem Accounting Group was established based on this simple premise, and it is at the centre of everything we wish to deliver to our clients. Tandem's aim is to bring a simplicity to the contracting process of timesheets and expenses by the introduction of an Electronic Shoebox, into which you simply drop your documentation for us to process."

"This ensures that you spend as little of your time as possible dealing with your accounts. In short, we will never complicate what we can simplify," she continued.