



BACK FOR BUSINESS

FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURIAL
ACTIVITY AMONG RETURNED
IRISH EMIGRANTS



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

This innovative initiative is funded through the Emigrant Support Programme by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

BACK FOR BUSINESS

“Working abroad opened my eyes to the size of potential markets for an Irish headquartered business.”

Julie Currid, *Initiafy*,
Lead Entrepreneur



ABOUT BACK FOR BUSINESS

Back for Business is an initiative to foster and support entrepreneurial activity among returned emigrants or those returning to live in Ireland. The development programme is aimed at assisting them to start and develop a business. It addresses the challenges that all early stage entrepreneurs face, with a particular focus on the additional barriers and challenges faced by those who have been out of the country for some time.

Back for Business is based on a model of peer support, entrepreneurs supporting entrepreneurs. This approach is well proven as being effective in bringing about increased motivation and confidence among entrepreneurs and having a positive impact on their enterprise development.

The initiative will be run from February to July 2019. It will provide the opportunity for up to 48 committed early stage entrepreneurs from across the country to take part.

Back for Business has been developed and is delivered by Fitzsimons Consulting. Thanks to the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the voluntary contribution of time by the Lead Entrepreneurs, there is no charge to those who are selected to participate.

“Back for Business provided the focus and experience necessary to get my business off the ground. It is a great programme.”

Aidan Mehigan
Gortinore Distillery



WHO IS IT FOR?

Back for Business is for returned emigrants who have lived abroad for at least a year and have returned to Ireland within the last three years, or those currently living abroad who are planning to return to live in Ireland in the near future.

Their experience of living and working abroad will often bring significant advantages for starting a business, such as having a strong network of international contacts, fluency in foreign languages and greater cultural understanding of foreign markets.

Suitable applicants will be (i) those who have recently started a new business in Ireland, either on their own or with another business partner, (ii) are at an advanced stage of setting up a business, or (iii) they are becoming/have become entrepreneurs through the acquisition of an existing business. If the business is newly established, it will not have generated sales before the end of October 2016. If acquired, it will not have been acquired before this date.

In respect of the business whether new or acquired, the returned emigrant will be a major shareholder and key decision maker in the venture. Furthermore, they will have the ambition and expectation of becoming an employer of others within three years. There is no restriction on the sector in which the new business is focussed.

If selected, participants must be available to attend the Launch Forum and first round table session on 14 FEBRUARY 2019 in Dublin.

HOW TO APPLY

Those interested in receiving an application form should register their interest in the first instance on the website www.backforbusiness.com and they will be sent an application form by email. The form should be completed and returned by email attachment to info@backforbusiness.com.

If there is any difficulty registering online, please phone us on (+353) 1 8450770 or email us on info@backforbusiness.com

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms is 25 JANUARY 2019.

“Back for Business provided structure for our start-up business, access to knowledge and a network of peers for motivation and inspiration.”

Tracy Armstrong
KO Kombucha



SELECTION PROCESS

As it is expected that there will be many more applications than there are places available, it will be a competitive selection process. The Lead Entrepreneurs will play a key part in selecting the successful candidates. They will be seeking those who are prepared to fully engage with the initiative over its six months duration; demonstrate a determination to advance their fledging businesses; are prepared to work hard in pursuit of their entrepreneurial goals; and expect to become employers.

There are up to 48 places available for suitable candidates.

The Back for Business Lead Entrepreneurs will meet in late January to assess the applications received and candidates will be notified in early February.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

The Back for Business initiative is a tailored entrepreneurial development programme. It is based on peer support – entrepreneurs supporting entrepreneurs.

This applied learning model involves a series of round table interactive sessions that are facilitated by volunteer Lead Entrepreneurs who have experience of successfully starting and growing a business. The sessions are focused on the achievement of goals and milestones and the exploration of relevant themes. The Lead Entrepreneurs will work with groups of up to eight participants each in a series of round table sessions, supporting them to address the challenges they face in starting, developing and positioning their business for sustainability and growth.

The cycle will start with a full day Development Forum on 14 February 2019 in Dublin. This will include the first round table session.

Participants will then meet with their groups and Lead Entrepreneurs in three separate round table sessions between March and June. The dates and locations of these three and a half hour sessions will be agreed with the Lead Entrepreneurs on the first day.

A full day support workshop will take place on 22 March in Dublin.

A finance and tax workshop, which will be facilitated by KPMG, will take place on 30 April.

The cycle will finish with a full day, which will include a final round table session on 2 July 2019 in Dublin.

Selected candidates are expected to attend all events.

“Living overseas gave me the perspective and confidence to see the potential of international markets.”

Ian Keogh
IKEO Group



Areas covered in the course of the programme will include: Establishing Good Foundations; Checking the Fundamentals; Knowing and Reaching Your Customer; KPIs and Financial Management (session to be facilitated and hosted by KPMG); Management, Leadership and Building a Team; and Roadmap to Progress your Business.

The support workshop in March will provide an opportunity for participants to meet representatives of the development agencies and to take part in relevant mini workshops.

Networking opportunities at the launch and final events and at the Support Workshop will have the additional benefit of increasing participants' professional and personal networks.

If you have any queries contact info@backforbusiness.ie or phone (+353) 1 8450770.

THE BENEFITS

Back for Business participants will:

- Have a strong network of peers and role models from whom to draw inspiration and guidance.
- Have a reduced sense of isolation.
- Experience the benefits of 'good' peer pressure.
- Be motivated and have increased confidence to execute their plans for their business.
- Have a SMART Action Plan for their business, setting out a six-month roadmap to move new business forward.
- Have practical ideas and solutions to help them overcome key challenges facing them as they settle back into Ireland and start their new business.
- Have a repository of information about supports, which may be available to their business.
- Have free membership of the Irish International Business Network (IIBN) for 2019.

THE LEAD ENTREPRENEURS

The Lead Entrepreneurs who facilitate the round table sessions are the backbone of the Back for Business initiative. They are not, and cannot be, experts in every area of business, but they bring valuable and personal experience of starting and growing a business. Several of them have returned to Ireland having lived abroad for a number of years before starting their own business.

They believe strongly in the principle of entrepreneurs supporting entrepreneurs and are giving their time on a voluntary basis. Their open and full involvement gives the participants an opportunity to get to know and learn from successful role models and to benefit from their wide and varied entrepreneurial experience.



ÁINE DENN

Áine Denn co-founded Altify in 2005. Altify is the digital sales transformation company, accelerating sales performance for the world's best sales teams. Working with Altify, sales teams win the opportunities that matter, grow revenue in their key accounts and improve sales execution with guided selling. Built natively on the Salesforce platform, Altify helps salespeople, sales leaders and executives achieve sustained revenue growth and sales success. Altify customers include Autodesk, Bell Canada, BT, GE, Honeywell, HP Enterprise, Johnson Controls, UnitedHealthcare, Optum, Salesforce and Software AG. Áine has been a key contributor to the direction of the company since its inception and now works directly with a number of global customers and leads many strategic programs within the organisation, contributing to both customer and company success. Áine's insight is informed by more than 25 years' experience in enterprise software, business development, operations and customer engagement. Prior to Altify, Áine has served in senior executive positions in public and private companies. Her career spans business, technology and consulting organisations including The SCO Group, NewworldIQ, Prudential UK, and Accenture. Áine has been a Lead Entrepreneur for three cycles of Going for Growth and for the inaugural cycle of Back For Business. Áine holds a Computer Science degree from Trinity College Dublin. www.altify.com



JULIE CURRID

With a background in sales and marketing, returning from London in 2012, Julie set up Initiafy with her business partner, Sean Fennell. Together they had recognised the need in the market for a product which would focus on the challenge of delivering inductions to large numbers of short-term workers. Initiafy is a contractor management software company headquartered in Dublin and with offices in London, Madrid, New York, California, Texas, and Toronto. Initiafy's customers are typically companies which use a large number of contractors and operate in heavy industries such as construction, energy and mining. Their client base now includes Sisk, ESB, CBRE and five of the top 20 construction companies in the world. The company employs 30 people and is set to double headcount through 2019 and 2020. Having helped drive the initial growth of the company in the US market, Julie is now returning to Dublin. In 2014, Julie took part in the 6th cycle of Going for Growth. www.initiafy.com



MARY MCKENNA

Mary McKenna is a well-known Donegal based Irish technology entrepreneur and angel investor. She co-founded successful Northern Irish e-learning company Learning Pool, following a long public sector career and a spell as a Silicon Valley *dotcommer*. She exited from the business in 2014 so that she could return to working with earlier stage start-ups. Mary is interested in helping start and grow indigenous Irish and UK tech companies and especially in working with female entrepreneurs. She has invested in 6 early stage tech start-ups to date, 3 with female founding teams. She is one of the Entrepreneurship Experts with the Entrepreneurship Centre at Saïd Business School (University of Oxford), Entrepreneur in Residence at Catalyst Inc (the Northern Ireland Science Park in Belfast), an advisor to government, a trustee of the Centre for Acceleration of Social Technology and an active member of Tech London Advocates. Mary was awarded the MBE by Her Majesty the Queen in the 2014 New Year's Honours for services to digital technology, innovation and learning.



MICHAEL HOYNE

Michael began his career by founding a plumbing distribution business in his home town of Kilkenny. In 1986 he launched Somerby, a shower tray business. In 1988 alongside Somerby, Michael began a complimentary business, Image Showering, which he ran successfully until he exited in 1999. This experience fuelled his drive for the manufacturing industry and in 2000 he founded MERLYN SHOWERING. Michael's ultimate goal was to challenge the existing traditional manufacturers with an innovative quality range of products, supported by leading customer service. MERLYN BATHROOMS grew to be No 1 in U.K. and Ireland, and designed ranges for markets across Europe and Middle East. It subsequently became one of the most innovative and progressive bathroom companies in Europe, and won numerous awards over the years for quality, design and customer service. Michael was a finalist in Entrepreneur of the Year in 2015. MERLYN BATHROOMS was sold in 2017 to Norcross PLC for €70 million.



NIKKI EVANS

Nikki's moved to Australia in the late 1990s where she worked in the IT industry, before moving to London where she completed an MBA in London Business School. She then started working as a Strategy Consultant in the banking sector in London for high profile clients such as Visa. Moving home in 2005, Nikki set about creating a business that would bring together her passions for IT, finance and employee happiness. She founded PerfectCard, a retail gift card for shopping centres, using pre-paid debit cards to eliminate the need for costly software installations at checkout, quickly winning clients like Dundrum Town Centre, Blanchardstown Centre and Swords Shopping Centre. Refocusing the strategy on the corporate market, PerfectIncentive was launched, a new type of pre-paid debit card product, which uses PerfectCard technology to bring the next generation of employee rewards and incentives to businesses. With a growing client list including Dell, Salesforce, Dublin Bus, Allergan Pharmaceuticals, AWP Health and Life, and 123, global ambitions and a growing team in Dublin and Galway, PerfectCard has recently become part of the EML Group, an Australian based PLC. Nikki and the team look forward to taking the business global. www.perfectcard.ie



THOMAS ENNIS

Thomas Ennis, founder and CEO of the Thomas Ennis group, is an award-winning Irish retailer, recognised for his innovative approach to convenience food. Thomas has over 30 years' experience working in all aspects of Irish food retailing. He headed up Superquinn's foray into the Convenience World - Superquinn Select, before opening his first store in 2005, the award-winning flagship Spar on Merrion Row, Dublin. Since then Thomas has opened eleven more stores spread across Convenience, Forecourts and Artisan Delicatessens. Thomas attributes the success and growth of his businesses to date to a continual commitment to excellence in customer service and turning his stores into destinations in the convenience food sector. He currently employs over 200 and is committed to staff development, with his senior management team recruited internally. Seeking to be continually innovative in the food offerings within his stores, Thomas has welcomed Irish franchises into the stores. Committed to helping others, Thomas has worked with Bord Bia in the past highlighting the passion and creativeness artisan suppliers can bring to the market and has helped numerous start-ups over the years.



CHRIS WINNING

SPECIAL ADVISOR ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO RELOCATION AND RETURNED EMIGRANTS

Chris Winning set up Corporate Care in 1997 as a response to her own experiences relocating to Chicago for a year with her husband for a 12 month assignment. With first hand experience of the challenges of such a move, Corporate Care's focus is to look at the individual needs of the clients. This holistic approach is the differentiating hallmark of Corporate Care, which operates on a business to business model, offering multinationals operating in Ireland the chance to make the relocation of their employees as smooth as possible. Today 90% of Corporate Care customers are based outside of Ireland. For these corporate clients the company provides an extensive range of relocation and immigration services throughout Ireland and, through their extensive network of carefully selected partners, manages the relocation process for their clients as they expand globally. Chris sold Corporate Care Relocation as a going concern in 2018 and set up Winning Solutions to continue her Global Mobility consultancy business.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS

Following the successful completion of the Back for Business pilot, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is once again supporting the initiative in its drive to promote entrepreneurial activity among the community of returned and returning emigrants.

Thirty eight participants completed the Back for Business Pilot. They had spent an average of six years out of Ireland. Networking and re-establishing contacts was the barrier most frequently cited by applicants, when asked to identify what for them constituted the main barriers that posed a challenge to them returning from abroad to develop a business in Ireland. This barrier is very unique to this group.

In recognition of this situation, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in association with the Irish International Business Network (IIBN), is making available membership of IIBN for a year to each of those still engaged with their new business to facilitate them in building out their networks.

The progress made by participants over the course of the programme gives a flavour of their experience and of their progress.

- All who completed Back for Business were very positive in their end of cycle feedback and 100% would recommend participation in the initiative to others.
- At the start of the cycle, the majority were pre-revenue, with just one in four having generated some sales. Over the six months of the programme a further ten began to trade. At the end of the cycle over half were trading (52%) with others planning to generate sales in the coming months.
- Reflecting the fact that the participants businesses were at a very early stage, just four of the thirty eight participants were employers of themselves or others at the start of Back for Business. Over the six months, fourteen of the participants became employers and 46 (27 full time and 19 part-time) were employed by them at the end of the cycle.
- One of the advantages of time spent out of Ireland is contacts developed internationally. At the start of Back for Businesses five of the participants already had some export sales. There were six first time exporters over the course of the cycle. The strong export orientation is evident with the great majority (78%) expecting to have customers in export markets in five years' time.



Participants of the Back for Business Programme are pictured with Ciarán Cannon TD, Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, at the celebratory event in Iveagh House to mark the end of the pilot.

“Back for Business has been the single most important thing that I have done for our business. Without it I really do not think our business would be where it is today.”

Lisa Caffrey, *Cabochon & Co. Diamonds*



“Back for Business has allowed me to open a new door, walk through and make my dreams come closer to reality.”

Adam Kennedy-Ripon, *Surfster*



SPONSORS

The Back for Business initiative is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Its objective is to encourage a greater level of entrepreneurial development among emigrants who have recently returned or are returning to live in Ireland in the near future. Following a competitive tendering process, the Back for Business initiative, as developed by Fitzsimons Consulting, was selected as most suitable to achieve the stated objectives. It is designed to positively and effectively tap into the entrepreneurial talent of returned and returning emigrants and to equip these early stage entrepreneurs with the knowledge, confidence and networks to successfully start and develop sustainable businesses.



Welcoming the return of Back for Business, Minister Coveney said: “I am delighted that my Department is once again supporting this exciting initiative, following a very successful pilot. Irish people who have travelled, or spent a number of years out of the country, often have exceptional entrepreneurial skills. The challenge is to maximize this potential for the benefit of the individuals who have recently returned and their families and also for the benefit of the communities in which they are locating across the country.”

SIMON COVENEY TD, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE.



Minister Cannon also welcomed Back for Business, saying: “Global Irish – Ireland’s Diaspora Policy, is committed to facilitating, in practical ways, those who left Ireland and want to return home. Back for Business reflects this commitment. As we have seen in the pilot, it is an initiative that can make a real difference to returned and returning emigrants who have a keen desire and ambition to be entrepreneurs. It is designed to support them to go beyond just creating a job for themselves and to aim higher and create a thriving business that can provide employment for others and value added in their local community.”

CIARÁN CANNON TD, MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE DIASPORA & INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

ABOUT FITZSIMONS CONSULTING

Fitzsimons Consulting (www.fitzsimons-consulting.ie) specialises in areas related to entrepreneurship and growth. Paula Fitzsimons, founder and managing director of Fitzsimons Consulting, is a recognised expert on entrepreneurship. She has been the national coordinator for GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) for Ireland since 2000, a former President of the consortium of GEM national teams, and a former Director of GERA, the governing body for the Global Entrepreneurship Research Association. Fitzsimons Consulting has been central to the design and development of award winning initiatives, which focused on specific demographic groups to maximise their entrepreneurial potential: Going for Growth (www.goingforgrowth.com), Senior Enterprise (www.seniorenterprise.ie), and ACORNS (www.acorns.ie). Fitzsimons Consulting developed and delivers Back for Business in response to a call by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Fitzsimons Consulting is most grateful to KPMG who on a voluntary basis are hosting and facilitating workshops on Finance, Tax and KPIs for participants of Back for Business.

CONTACT US: Email: info@backforbusiness.com or Tel: (+353) 1 845 0770
Fitzsimons Consulting, 6 James’s Terrace, Malahide, Co. Dublin, K36 Y972 Ireland.





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• **BACK FOR BUSINESS**
• Fitzsimons Consulting
• 6 James Terrace
• Malahide
• Co Dublin
• T: +353 1 8450770
• info@backforbusiness.com
• www.backforbusiness.com
• [@backforbusiness](https://www.instagram.com/backforbusiness)
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