



CAVAN / DUBLIN
NETWORK

Members profile - 5 minutes with Lisa McKenna

Lisa McKenna is our first member to be profiled as part of the Cavan/Dublin Network members profile. Lisa owns the all female led law practice McKenna & Co. Solicitors, specialising in Property Law. Lisa was born and raised in Cavan and is involved in many charity organisations, during the summer months she loves to attend Breffni Park to support Cavan.



“Starting my own business was one of the best decisions I have ever made.”

Q. What is the Cavan connection?

A. I was born and raised in Cavan, until moving to Dublin over 10 years ago but Cavan will always be home.

Q. How did you get to where you are now? (School, university, law qualification, etc)

A. I went to Dernakesh National School in Maudabawn, Cootehill, County Cavan and then to St Louis Secondary School in Monaghan. After I moved to Dublin, qualified in Law and was admitted as a Solicitor by the Law Society of Ireland in 2014.

Q. When did you know you wanted to start your own firm and what was your inspiration?

A. Always - I grew up as part of a family business so I was familiar to the world of business from a very young age. I knew I wanted to open my own law firm since I started out in law as an intern. I remember the first day I walked into a law firm in Monaghan, which was a female led firm that was a recent start up by a newly qualified solicitor, and it was at that moment I said to myself, this is what I want. It was always on my mind since then, it was just a matter of the right time.

Q. What was your main aim when starting out?

A. My aim was to help others, make a change for the better and breaking the glass ceiling for women in law.

Q. In your first year in business what surprised you most about being a small business owner?

A. I was surprised by the lack of support by then government and other organisations for start-up law firms. There are grants and assistance at government level for start-up companies but they are no such grants or supports (financial and otherwise) for law firms.

Q. What was the biggest lesson from your first year in business?

A. Not be so hard on myself, I tend to put high expectations on myself and if I don't meet them I would equate that as failure.

Q. How did you decide your brand colours and why?

A. Initially my logo colour was gold and there was no science behind my choice, I thought it looked like a strong colour. As the firm started to make money and grow, I got an expert brand consultant who assessed the firm's ethos and values and based on that came up with a brand colour of teal and the two '&s' together. The logo now denotes an innovative law firm that works hard on its client's behalf.

Q. What do you find is the best way to advertise your business?

A. It depends on your business and client base, you should have a website that is authentic and accessible. If your client base are



on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter then that's the best platform. However, be cautious as it can be difficult to monitor all platforms and you want to be memorable. I would suggest that you choose the one that suits your business best and work on that one, so that when people think of your business, they think of that platform and they can refer you by referencing it.

Q. What book should every business owner read ?

A. I think every business owner should be a good leader and with that will come growth and value, so I would say '*How to become a good leader*' by John C. Maxwell. I always go back to it to read a particular section.

Q. Do you have any business regrets since starting out?

A. No regrets, starting my own business was one of the best decisions I have ever made. When I take on anything I am tenacious and committed, I never took the venture on lightly.

Q. Was there a time you wanted to quit?

A. No, never and that is something that would ever enter my mindset. I give everything I do 110% and that applies to the running of McKenna & Co. Although, funny story, I received an email from a recruitment company to ask if I was interested in working for a particular law firm, that I was perfect for the role, etc and I politely declined advising them that I was happy with my current employer.

Q. What is your favourite or least favourite thing about being a business owner?

A. My least favourite would be the accounts, solicitors tend to shy away from figures. My favourite would be getting to be a solicitor and running a case, as a business owner you tend to get wrapped up in a lot of decision making and it takes away from your day job.

Q. If you were going to start another business what would it be and why?

A. I would set up a counselling service, I was always intrigued by what goes on in someone's mind and the rationale for their thinking.

Q. How big do you want to get?

A. I would like to grow and grow, there are no limits so far.

Q. What advice would you give to people who are starting out on their own?

A. Don't do it (joking!) - I would say don't do it unless you have a burning desire to be an entrepreneur and you have assessed how different your life will be both financially and from a personal perspective. Always ask yourself why you are doing it and if your why aligns with your values then it's the right thing to do.

Q. What is the best piece of advice in business you were given?

A. To surround yourself with positive and encouraging people.

Q. What advice would you give someone starting out in business who may be worried about growing the business?

A. I would say work hard, be patient and you will get there, it's hard being a business owner but if you are doing what you love every day you are half way there.

**Quick fire round
Tea or coffee?**

Coffee - I am a bit of an addict and not very approachable in the morning without it.

Starter or Dessert?

Starter - I could live without dessert.

City or countryside break?

Countryside - I live in the city so its always nice to go back to the country lifestyle.



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 **Lisa McKenna**

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