



## Ann McGee

### McGee Pharma International

#### GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

**NAME:**

Ann McGee

**BUSINESS**

McGee Pharma International

**POSITION**

Founder and Managing Director

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**A**nn McGee started her business in 2004. Since then she has successfully grown McGee Pharma International into one of the leading providers of technical solutions to a growing number of Irish and international pharmaceutical companies. Her vision has been clear right from the beginning. *I wanted to help bring medicines of the absolute best quality possible to the population. And I believed the way to do this was to work in close collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry in helping them find creative solutions to the many complex issues they face right across the product life cycle.*

From the early days working from a bedroom in her home, the company has grown steadily. *McGee Pharma now employs 11 people directly and we have 50 associates working with us that bring in specific expertise for client projects across the globe. We can pull in a team that can work with clients across a whole range of challenges, from developing new medicines, running clinical trials, manufacturing and distributing product, to accessing new markets.*

Ann qualified as a pharmacist from Trinity College Dublin, where she also obtained a research M.Sc. She spent six years working as a regulator with the Irish Medicines Board. Later she worked as Registrar and Secretary (CEO) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. *My initial motivation in going out on my own was frustration at bureaucracy and at how long it can take to get things done. Setting up McGee Pharma was the obvious next career step for Ann. In a way, it was about doing what I knew best – I knew the sector, the issues, the people and the companies.*

Getting the business up and running was challenging and getting that first sale is always a major milestone for any new business. Luckily, Ann had built up contacts in the pharmaceutical sector in Ireland over the previous years and by the time the limited company was set up in 2006, Ann had over 20 clients on her books, simply through word-of-mouth referrals.

But contacts and networks are only part of the equation. *Our company success is built on two key foundation stones – clarity of vision and our people. Every business decision we take is guided by our vision. And everything we do is underpinned by the people we work with – our colleagues in the company, and our clients.*

There is much to be learned from Ann's experience of starting and growing a business. According to Ann, in the early stages careful planning, the ability to listen and learn, and a degree of humility can go a long way. *Don't be afraid to fail fast, and to move on. Learn as you go along, be open to change and be ready to recognise your own limitations and respond to the ideas of others. It's about working with people, harnessing the ideas of your colleagues, and implementing them.*

In terms of growing the business, innovating and diversifying are key strategies. In October 2016 McGee Pharma identified a critical need in the pharma sector for specialist recruitment services and has gone into partnership to set up Clarity Recruitment, a diversification strategy that links right into their core business. A key strategy for further growth is providing specialist support for companies, particularly in the US, that are coming into the EU for the first time. And further growth is expected in 2017 in the whole area of looking at human reliability in the pharmaceuticals production cycle, and possibilities for new products and services to help companies plan for this.

Ann was a participant in the 3rd cycle of Going for Growth and has been a committed member of the Going for Growth Community ever since. *When you are the Managing Director of an SME, you can feel isolated. Going for Growth has been a great opportunity for me to look at where I want the company to be. It has enabled me to define some very clear goals, tracking and monitoring them over time. Ann considers the biggest benefit has been getting the opportunity to step back from the day-to-day running in order to focus on growing her business. Going for Growth allows you to do some forward thinking, by sharing your experiences and challenges with the other participants in your group.*

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