



Ruth Monahan

appassionata flowers

GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

NAME:

Ruth Monahan

BUSINESS

Appassionata Flowers

POSITION

Managing Director & Founder

WHAT WE DO

Creative floristry business

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Ruth Monahan started out working behind the scenes as a researcher in the television industry. She had studied Communications in DCU and completed a Masters in multimedia in Trinity College, but decided to change career while travelling in Australia with her husband Ultan. *"I felt I had nothing to lose by coming back and training as a florist. So I studied the art of floristry in McQueen's London, starting on my 30th birthday."*

Creative floristry and Appassionata Flowers represent Ruth's second career. She has shown that through sheer passion for what she does along with hard work, innovation, integrity and eye for design that it is possible to follow a dream and see it through as a commercial business.

Ruth, originally from Rosses Point in Sligo, grew up around flowers. "I always had an interest in flowers and spent lots of childhood days rambling around the garden with my granny. She traditionally used cuttings to create her garden and was a great imparter of knowledge of botanical names and growing tips."

After time working in London, Ruth moved back to Dublin in 2004 and started Appassionata Flowers from her kitchen but now it is 12 years old & based in Dublin 2. Appassionata is unusual in its setup. There is a physical front to the business with a pretty shop at 29 Drury Street, a boutique shopping street in Dublin 2 filled with stylish blooms, plants and more BUT then Appassionata are unique in that with a studio below Merrion Square where most of the flower magic happens and indeed 80% of the flower work is made.

Together with her talented team, Ruth has created a business that produces beautifully crafted quality flowers with a concentration on design. The company prides itself on its dynamism, efficiency and ability to make inspired flowers to suit the smallest of personal requests to fulfilling the largest of huge scale events. The company's client list is a testimony to the diversity and high quality of Appassionata's work from producing imaginative displays for weekly contracts & brand events & also full photoshoot sets to largescale corporate events and launches yet they also produce beautiful blooms for weddings & personal occasions of all shapes & sizes. Ruth has also created a dedicated following in the social media world with a fanbase who enjoy the blooming adventures of Appassionata each day.

Appassionata Flowers is called after the passionflower Flora Appassionata and I think that our name truly reflects the love myself and my team have for our flowers, craft and what we do. *"I love the passion flower! I remember reading an article about it and felt that if we were going to create a flower business with a luxury edge, the name of the business should have a luxury feel to it."*

Some of Ruth's most memorable and exciting projects over the last 12 years include arranging the floral displays for the state visits of US President, Barrack Obama and Britain's Queen Elizabeth in 2011, to more unusual requests, like producing a floral replica of the Aviva Stadium. *"We filled College Green in Dublin with flowers for Obama's visit, possibly on the windiest day of the year. We used Irish and American colours. We dressed the Convention Centre in Dublin with flowers during Queen Elizabeth's visit in 2011 and we presented a bouquet to her. It was a huge honour."*

In 2015, Ruth participated on the 7th cycle of Going for Growth and benefited from the support of her Lead Entrepreneur and peers. *"I found the confidentially in the group really boosted my confidence. I was surrounded by fantastic business women. We all wanted to help one another and see each other succeed. The round table meetings enabled me to step back and look strategically at my business. They helped me identify what I needed to improve on and change in my business."* I was so lucky to have a wonderfully inspiring mentor in Louise Phelan of Paypal whose holistic creative & practical view of business and how it all should work is amazing. Through this programme I had access to meeting so many women in business creating amazing enterprises around the country.

Appassionata has seen a positive raise in turnover and margin in 2016. By marrying customer expectations of creative quality flowers and market trends, Appassionata is on a positive path. A recent redesign of the retail shop has already resulted in positive feedback and sales. Shop sales grew by 30% last year with online sales up by 55%. The company is delighted to have maintained loyal staff and customers along the way. We are trying to better everyday at what we do, we have a wonderful team of 20 with fantastic talents and are planning a few different ways for everyone in Ireland to have more Appassionata flowers in their lives.

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