

working WEEK

Maura Quinn is chief executive of the Institute of Directors, a representative body for senior business professionals in Ireland. Incorporated in 1993, the institute has 1,400 members. Its primary objective is to improve corporate governance standards by providing development programmes for company directors. It also operates the Boardroom Centre, a resource for companies seeking independent, non-executive, directors to act on their boards.

What are the main responsibilities of your job?

I am responsible for developing and building the business of the Institute of Directors by positioning it as a key source of information and training in corporate governance and company direction. I execute our business strategy and ensure that we meet our financial targets while maintaining appropriate internal controls. I see my role as providing positive leadership and direction to the organisation.

What are your professional motivators?

I am ambitious for the Institute of Directors and mo-

tivated by a desire to grow the business, increase our influence and build our brand.

How would you describe your work-style?

I am dynamic, proactive and responsive. I assimilate and process information quickly. I value communication and I am clear about performance expectations.

What is the best decision you have made in business?

When I was head of Unicef Ireland from 1996 to 2007, I initiated the global campaign Unite for Children, which sought to combat HIV and Aids worldwide. We worked with a range of partners, including other UN agencies, governments and donors, and were credited with lowering the number of HIV infections in children in many countries, and reducing the human and monetary cost of HIV and Aids.

What is the most valuable professional lesson you have learnt?

You have to be focused on achieving results and never dwell on the past. The sheet is wiped clean at the beginning of each year.

Who do you admire in Irish industry?

I admire Ray Nolan. He is co-founder of the phenomenally successful company Web Reservations International (WRI), owner of Hostelworld.com. Having



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formed his first company at 22, Nolan went on to become a serial entrepreneur. In my opinion, he is one of the most successful and admirable business people that Ireland has ever produced.

What are your expectations for Irish businesses in the months ahead?

Trading conditions will continue to be difficult. This year will be all about delivering better value and services across all sectors to retain existing customers and build new business.

What is your ultimate professional goal?

I would like the Institute of Directors to play a growing role in ensuring that Irish businesses adhere to the highest standards of corporate governance. This will be good for business and will help to restore the reputation of Ireland Inc.