

FORCE OF WILL

Roisin Cahill is director and chief operations officer at IT Force. She has been a member of the IoD since 2009

Can you tell us about your current role and what it involves?

My current role is director and chief operations officer at IT Force, an indigenous Irish ICT company. IT Force provides a full range of ICT services with expertise across the board, from desktop and server estates to networks and telephony.

Our success is built on a deep knowledge and understanding of infrastructure services. We believe in a partner relationship and work hard to make sure we understand our client needs. My responsibilities include strategy formation and execution, managing company operations and delivery, change management, human capital management, and customer care.

What about any non-executive roles?

I currently act as chair/director on a pro-bono basis for an inner city childcare centre that provides quality, affordable childcare for parents returning to work, education or training. I actively participate in all aspects of the board's remit, including strategic planning and outlook, governance, fundraising, HR and ongoing operations.

Can you highlight some milestones in your career and why they were significant?

In my career, I have been fortunate to have worked in both large corporate and SME environments. My industry experience is quite varied and has included banking, software and ICT. Within these companies, I have had the opportunity to change positions many times with roles varying from project and team management to operations and human capital management.

As I progressed through the various roles and changed track, I supplemented my knowledge by completing certifications ranging from diplomas in project management and employment law to an MBA and, most recently, the IoD certificate and diploma in company direction.

What do you think are your main attributes/skills that have helped you to get to where you are?

I like to multitask and I am a lateral thinker. I like change and am adaptable, flexible, competitive and not afraid of hard work. I try to act with integrity and to do the right thing. I have a genuine interest in developing others and always try to treat people fairly.

How important is ongoing education?

I am an advocate of life-long learning. I consider education to be an enabler and have completed various degrees, diplomas and professional certifications to keep my knowledge current and to broaden my horizons.

I subscribe to the notion of the learning organisation and, as an employer, I facilitate staff members' continual learning and actively

encourage everyone to keep their skills updated, whether through attending courses and seminars, completing certifications or simply reading to keep their knowledge current and relevant.

As IT Force is a tech company, we must keep astride with what is happening in the industry. This enables us to tailor our services and offerings to meet clients' needs and to anticipate their future needs.

Can you define your leadership style?

I try to have an open and participative leadership style. In the past number of years as IT Force has grown, we have built a capable team on whom we rely to persevere with the company strategy and make suggestions for improvement. I believe in hiring the best available talent, setting goals and objectives and allowing everyone the space and latitude to excel.

What have been your biggest lessons in business?

Every now and again, you get lucky – everything goes your way. Most of the time however, you have to make it happen. Hard work reaps rewards.

It's important to give customers what they need, not what you want to give them.

Relentless communication pays dividends.

Who or what are your main influences?

I admire those who persevere even when the situation is bleak; people who can work out alternatives and options and make a decision even in adverse circumstances.

What is your philosophy in business?

I think that it's important to have an understanding of who you are and where you are. Setting and aligning team and company goals is a powerful tool to focus attention on where you would like to be.

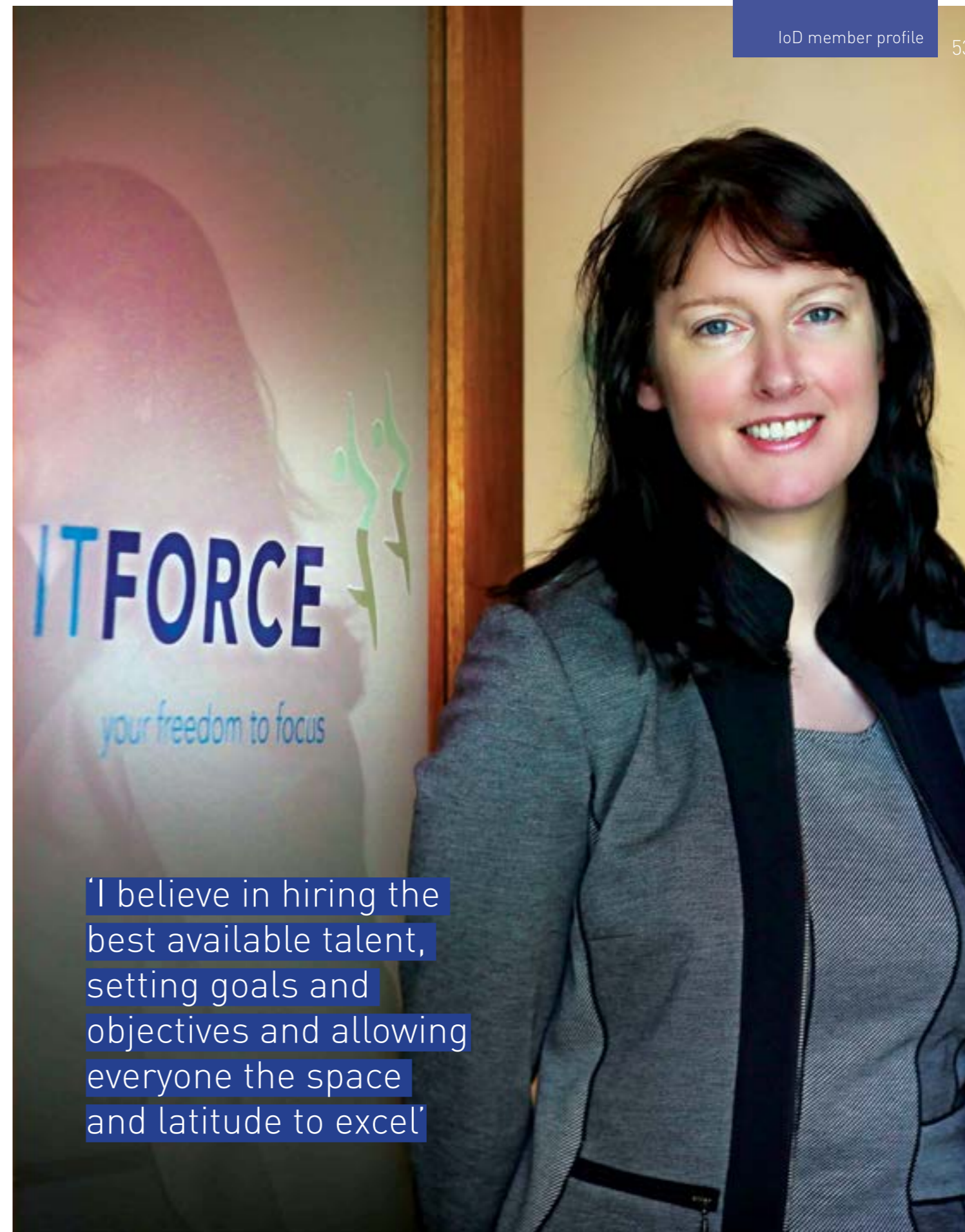
It's always valuable to look both internally and externally for alternative and different perspectives that will enable learning and growth while, at the same time, ensure that competitive advantage is maintained.

What are your interests outside of work?

I have three active school children who keep me busy. I also enjoy horse racing, rugby and socialising.

Do you have plans for the future you'd like to share?

I enjoy all aspects of business and of my role at IT Force. I feel that I have the scope and competence to contribute as a non-executive director to the strategy, growth and operations of another business and would welcome this sort of interest in the future.



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