



The Responsible
Business Network
Northern Ireland



Claire Gordon

Director of Education and Employability

Introduce yourself. Where do you work? What is your job role?

I'm Director of Education & Employability at Business in the Community NI. I oversee our work aimed at getting business involved in helping raise aspirations of young people and to support people to develop the skills they need for work. I've been with the company for thirteen years. I previously headed up our community work with charities and was in project management roles before that.

What does your job entail?

- A bit of everything, which is why I like it!
- Designing education and employment projects to help people prepare for the changing world of work
- Identifying/ securing funding for impactful projects in schools, colleges, and communities
- Setting and managing project budgets
- Managing and supporting teams
- Meeting different people within business, government, and charities with an interest in education and helping move people into jobs
- Working in collaboration with others to achieve success
- Giving presentations on our work

Outline your career to date

- This wasn't the job I saw myself doing when planning my career - I didn't know it existed back then!
- I wanted to do a Masters in Occupational Psychology (psychology in the workplace) upon graduating, but the course wasn't running that year at Queens
- Instead I did the Premier Graduate Management Programme and was placed with NI-CO, an international project management company that worked throughout Europe and surrounding areas
- NI-CO offered me a permanent post when I finished the placement. I worked for them for 5 years on exciting community development and education capacity building projects overseas
- I then secured a job with Volunteer Now managing their befriending and transport volunteer projects supporting isolated older people living in Belfast
- From there I moved to Business in the Community to work on their community engagement campaign. I was inspired by the thought that NI businesses could be a force for good in society and was able to bring my project management and community experience to the post
- With a good work ethic, relevant skills and a real passion for what I was doing, I worked my way up to my current role

Tell us about your qualifications and training

- 10 GSCE's and 3 A levels
- BSc Psychology, Queens University Belfast
- Advanced Diploma in Social Enterprise
- ILM Level 5 in Leadership and Management
- Part-time lecturer in strategic leadership & management, South Eastern Regional College

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

- An interest in responsible business behaviour and education/world of work initiatives
- Leadership and people management skills
- Interpersonal, communication, negotiation and influencing skills
- Project management and budgeting/financial management skills
- Ability to think and plan strategically
- Ability to work collaboratively with others internally and externally
- Ability to multitask

What is the best advice you have ever received?

It's an overused saying but it's often so true: Fail to Prepare, Prepare to Fail

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I've a young family so outdoor walks/mini adventures, travelling/seeing new places, catching up with friends, yoga and sometimes a good binge watch on Netflix!

Who has inspired you most in your life?

My Mum. She managed to hold down a challenging full time job, raise a family whom she loved fiercely and still found a little bit of time for her own hobbies. No, she wasn't super woman, she was however a great role model for a young female. She also taught me the importance of kindness.

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

- Be brave and follow your passions
- It's ok if you don't know exactly what you want to be when you are older. Just don't let the good opportunities pass you by. Seize them.
- Embrace failure, learn from it. Often it offers the biggest chance to grow
- Respect others and bring a positive attitude to everything you do. It will take you far

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