



ERIN NIXON

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

**THE
FOUNDATION**

What is your role in The Foundation?

I am the Commercial Director in The Foundation. My role is varied and I love it – I focus on developing new business opportunities, working with key clients on their brand and marketing strategies, and making sure we provide an excellent service and experience for our customers.

What has been career your journey?

I graduated with an Economics degree 20 years ago (eek!) and without a clue what I wanted to do, I went to work in a web agency, Tibus. Looking back, it was the best experience of my career – I learned a LOT about managing projects and clients, mainly through making a mess of it a few times! I moved around a couple of times in sales roles, and then moved to AV Browne, another top agency, this time in digital advertising and left there as an Account Director after 5 years. I then moved on maternity leave to a dream role in a global firm Baker McKenzie – a fantastic role in a global marketing team and had the opportunity to travel and work in a corporate environment which was a real steep and brilliant learning curve on how to deal with and manage different people. Covid hit and it was time for a change after my second baby, and here I am at The Foundation!

How do you get experience?

My experience has always been quite general in the sense that I am not a qualified anything! I gained experience in managing projects by getting stuck in, learning from other people and learning by making mistakes. Same with managing people, or managing 'up' in an organization, or working with clients – in a role like mine, it is about prioritizing people and relationships; being confident enough to simply listen and curious enough to ask more questions.

What other types of work have shaped your career?

If you can call being a parent a 'type of work' then that would be it! Becoming a mum has given me a focus and a clarity around my career that I didn't have previously – I am more productive with my time, generally more understanding of people and it genuinely has helped my decision-making and confidence. If you can handle all the sleep-deprivation, homeworks and tantrums you can pretty much handle anything that work throws at you with ease! A healthy dose of perspective comes along with being responsible for other people and I do think it has made me a better person in and out of work.

Quickfire Questions

What do you do in your free time?

Two kids keep us busy outside of work, and they are fantastic! In the last few years I have prioritized fitness and really enjoy going to the gym, and getting out into the mountains when I can. We are lucky enough to live near the Mourne and it is a beautiful area with loads to do. I'm also on the board of a local youth charity which is something I really care about and enjoy doing.

What's the best piece of advice you've received?

"Everyone is fighting a battle you know nothing about." It isn't really advice, but it is something that I have found to be true – we all have different experiences and reactions, and it is easy to take things personally, but the reality is, it is rarely about us, and we should be a bit kinder...not always easy!

What advice would you give your 16 year old self?

I'm not sure I would have listened to it! When I think back, I worried so much what people thought of me that it really did

stop me from going for some opportunities because I wanted to just blend in. I really admire the people who stepped out from the crowd back in those days – and I'm just glad there was no social media to remind me of anything now!

Who has inspired you?

My dad Will McKee was the greatest man in the world – I may be a bit biased, but I still hear stories now from people who he impacted in their journey, over 10 years after he sadly passed away. He was the ultimate business inspiration as he was a real entrepreneur and a champion for the small business owner. He had been there and bought the tshirt, from leaving school with nothing, working in a quarry, to being a leading sales director, starting businesses, losing businesses, serving as a high profile board director, and everything in between! All with a twinkle in his eye, massive love for his family, and a zest for life that I have yet to see in another person.