

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

# Talent for finding the right talent

Áine Brolly, head, Executive Search Ireland, Penna

## Career

In her role as head of executive search with Penna plc, Áine Brolly is responsible for all of the company's executive recruitment and interim executive activities in the Irish market, north and south. She joined Penna's Dublin office in 2000 as a consultant.

Following the company's acquisition of the James Black Partnership in Belfast, Brolly established Penna's executive recruitment practice in Northern Ireland. She has worked across the public and private sectors and possesses a global client portfolio.

Brolly is experienced in employment legislation, recruitment and diversity best practice issues. A graduate in law from Queen's University Belfast, she also has a postgraduate diploma in professional recruitment and is an accredited psychometrician.

## Golden rule

Treat people with respect.

## I bring to the table

A strong track record, a genuine desire to attract top talent on behalf of clients, a hunger to excel and integrity. I am highly competitive.

## One to watch

Krishna De, founder of business strategy and development consultancy One Ocean and the Association for Coaching in Ireland. She is one of the most inspirational and creative women in Irish business. She was the first woman ever to be appointed to the board of Guinness in its 250-year history.

## In her own words

I fell into recruitment really. After I finished college, I went to a couple of agencies in Dublin looking for work and was eventually offered a job as a trainee recruitment



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## career LINES

consultant with Reed Employment.

After six months, I was asked to establish Reed New Media Recruitment to recruit new media professionals. At the time, the dotcom industry was exploding in Dublin.

After about a year, I was approached by Penna to move into executive recruitment or, to put it bluntly, headhunting.

What I like about the industry in Ireland is that it is small with just a few credible players. Its size gives you a genuine opportunity to add value to businesses.

However, I would like to see less of the old boys' network and a more professional approach taken towards search. My own role is always a matter of balancing business development and delivery.

Typically, I spend my days out and about meeting either clients or potential candidates for the roles I am working on. I also spend quite a bit of time coordinating and managing projects.

I think strong leaders need to be capable, inspirational and able to make things happen. It is very difficult to find true

leaders in industry. Some organisations obviously place more weight on academic qualifications but I believe that what people have achieved in business is more important.

My advice to capable candidates keen to rise to the top, is to be focused on where you want to get to – never take your eye off the ball.

There is nothing more off-putting to a future employer than someone who has made quite a few wrong decisions in their career. People need to be conscious of the impact of their decisions on their next move. Always think about career progression and development.

Employers do tend to promise the world to get talented people on board, especially now that there is a war for talent in Dublin. Candidates need to be much more canny about the decisions they make.

Before making a move, investigate the stability of an organisation, what type of ten-year strategy it has and whether it is currently in profit. Then make an informed decision.

Business in Ireland is still buoyant. The challenge for employers now is to attract executives from outside Ireland as the market is fairly saturated here. We need fresh thinking and new blood. More and more, we are looking for candidates in Britain and the US to fill executive positions in Ireland.

We look for people who can bring something fresh to the table, who will be able to add value to an organisation and to the business community in Ireland as a whole.

There is less movement at the top of organisations in Ireland than there was five years ago. Irish business needs 'maverick' leaders to help sustain growth in the market.

While others are talking about a downturn in the market, I see current trends more along the lines of consolidation.