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COMMERCIAL CONTENT

IMI leads by example with its Professional Diplomas

The Professional Diplomas in Leadership and Management from IMI offer real insight into how leaders can enhance their leadership impact, as well as covering a broad range of topics such as business strategy, marketing, finance, communications, strategic HR and organisational behaviour, writes Lorraine Courtney

Leadership and management skills will be high on the agenda for organisations in the post-pandemic world as they tackle the challenges of the 'new normal'.

Skilled people who have the potential to drive economic growth and inspire their teams will always be in demand, which is why Dylan O'Neill, sales leader at Indeed, took the IMI's Professional Diploma in Leadership, awarded by UCC. He said that he found the course a great re-entry point to return to academia with a busy work-life balance.

"I quickly saw the value of the IMI's Master of Business framework, and I felt the Professional Diploma in Leadership was the next most attractive route to help me in my career at that point," he said.

"The beauty of the IMI's flexibility is that it allowed me to focus on the areas where I wanted to advance for a concentrated six months. This was a massive draw. I found it so valuable to be able to take what I learned on the course and, in real time, implement it and share it in my organisation practically."

The addition of personal coaching sessions on the Professional Diploma in Leadership meant there was support to develop goals and hold yourself accountable for your development at both the beginning and end of the course, said O'Neill.

"I was impressed that the IMI offered the opportunity to complete a Myers-Briggs psychometrics survey and 360 Feedback review. Your coach would help translate the findings into strengths to build upon and areas of focus as part of your leadership journey. The real key for lending yourself to the Professional Diploma in Leadership journey is to ensure you look inward



and allow yourself to be the test subject for discovery."

The variety of programme participants was a huge plus for David O'Brien, professional services manager at Philips. O'Brien took the Professional Diploma in Management and is currently taking the Professional Diploma in Leadership at IMI.

"You've got people from arts, banking, business and construction," he said. "Everybody's very open to getting together and creating a team atmosphere. With the virtual programme, the study groups we've had, interestingly, have been more frequent than we had on the face-to-face diploma."

O'Brien said that the fact the Management programme touches on so many subjects, gave him a real basis

to build on in his career and to look at other aspects that he hadn't considered previously.

"One element I loved was the HR piece. It was an eye-opener for me. The content on the HR side was really good. It made me more knowledgeable when speaking to HR in my role. The overall touch points we had across the subjects were great too."

"On Leadership, we've learned different ways to interact with people, different techniques to be a better leader," he said. "There's so many ways to lead and to manage teams. Up to now, an awful lot of what I had been doing felt natural to me as a person and as a manager. The diploma has allowed me

to put a new structure into my managerial style and has enabled me to look at

other ways to move forward as well."

He said that taking the Professional Diploma in Management made him more comfortable in his role and allowed him to grow and become a better manager. "On Leadership, the key takeaway has been the different aspects of leadership," he said.

"One thing I never looked at was the follower side of it; you look at how you as a leader behave, but now I'm more understanding of where my team is coming from and how to lead them to be the best they can be."

Ashling Cronin, technical director, Scott Cawley Ltd, studied the Professional Diploma in Management at IMI after she was promoted to a new role. "Although I had some experience managing people throughout my career,

I had no formal people or business management training, and I felt that to help lead a team and business through an exciting period of change and for the team to have confidence in my abilities, I needed to formalise some training in management," she said.

Cronin said that the online-facilitated workshops are run in such a way that there is a lot of opportunity to work in smaller groups in breakout rooms which facilitates networking, as well as everyone being assigned to a study group of about five people.

The course has altered her decision-making and thought process. "But it has also reassured me that most of the challenges we face as a business are not uncommon and are even generally accepted to occur at certain phases

in a business life cycle and they can be overcome".

"If you sign up for the Professional Diploma in Leadership at IMI, you'll be signing up for a journey on which you'll gain the language and understanding of leadership as a concept, but you'll also discover who you are as a leader, and how others experience your leadership," said Phillip Matthews, programme director, Professional Diploma in Leadership.

"You'll gain real insight into how you can enhance your leadership impact as we guide you through applying the theory to yourself, and through contemporary organisational contexts such as leading teams, leading change, leading in a virtual world and leading an ethical organisation."

The Professional Diploma in Management is a great place to start the journey to achieving a Level 9 Master's Degree, said Susan Duggan, programme director, Professional Diploma in Management.

"The content introduces participants to a broad range of topics such as business strategy, marketing, finance, communications, strategic HR and organisational behaviour. The delivery is focused on discussion and practical application of best practice in these areas and participants gain great benefit from working with their peers from different organisations and backgrounds."

Leadership and Management are two of a suite of twelve Professional Diplomas awarded by University College Cork and are at level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications, with the option to build to a Master of Business.

For more information, visit [imi.ie](https://www.imi.ie).



Ashling Cronin, Technical Director (Professional Diploma in Management)



David O'Brien, Customer Service Manager (Professional Diploma in Management & Professional Diploma in Leadership)



Dylan O'Neill, Sales Leader (Professional Diploma in Leadership)