



Evelyn O'Toole
Founder,
Complete Laboratory
Solutions

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

IN THE TIC INDUSTRY

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COMPLETE LABORATORY SOLUTIONS

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE TIC SECTOR?

I am a science graduate, who grew up in the West of Ireland and was later employed by a food group monitoring their product release testing in microbiology and food safety. When their plant caught fire, I was made redundant. From that point I tried to develop a business for scientists, initially to give myself security and a job, to allow me to live and work in a place that I loved, and also to have a career in science.

And so Complete Laboratory Solutions (CLS) began. We started in the food and environmental industries, and later moved into MedTech and pharmaceuticals. We developed a really strong training ability to provide colleagues onto client sites after we'd built on their graduate skills to become industry-ready and provided them into all the markets that we work in through our Analysts On Contract offering.

The environments that we work in are very heavily regulated, so in parallel to building methods and people, it was a continuous journey of achieving recognitions and accreditations, such as ISO 9001, ISO 17025 (108T), and ISO 15189 (400MT). We are also GMP licensed by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

We're continuing to build our business to meet very high technical regulatory requirements. It is very much a service business, and a business that is led, managed, and grown by our people – our colleagues and our clients – and always supported very well by our suppliers.



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CAN YOU SHARE WITH US A SPECIFIC PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF AND WHY?

I'm particularly proud of our ability to reach across such varied industries and bring our experience and value in testing and training into each one - from food to environmental, MedTech, pharma, medical and healthcare. This has probably been our biggest achievement. And in a global sense it's very much aligned with large multinationals in TIC, where really robust businesses are built by having multiple channels into different markets.

CAN YOU SPEAK TO THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR CAREER AND HOW YOU OVERCAME THEM?

We are celebrating 30 years in business now in 2024, and there have been plenty of challenges over the years, and there continue to be new challenges - I think that is part of career building, business building, and life in general. One of the biggest initial challenges when we were in the early stages of the business was being a start-up, indigenous company based in the West of Ireland, without any brand weighting yet and having to compete against international competitors on resourcing, licenses, client relationships, finances, and scaling. It was difficult to survive in the market then. Later on, it continues to be one of the aspects I'm most proud of about our business, as we are now a mature company with our own brand recognition and in many cases are the go-to brand for multinationals for setting up their sites in Ireland and supporting them on ongoing testing and resourcing.



**WE CREATE OUR FUTURE
WE WRITE OUR OWN BUSINESS PLANS
WE MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS ON THE
DIRECTION OF THE MARKET THAT
NEEDS US NEXT**

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR AFFECTING THE TIC INDUSTRY AT THE MOMENT?

In my opinion winning and retaining top talent in the space is one of the areas in which the TIC industry has been most affected, especially in Ireland where the life science industry is so successful. With in excess of 100% employment, the TIC industry is constantly competing with multinational brands for talent. Most of these competitors are manufacturing plants with very high margins, sometimes with much higher terms. Most in that market don't recognize TIC, as it is not as well-known as an industry. I anticipate it will continue to be blended in across Pharmaceutical, MedTech, and Life Science companies in general.

WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT?

I would like to think that I'm a democratic leader. I seek support and consensus where possible in my teams - I like to bring people with me. I've always been extremely aware of inclusion, including equity inclusion and the economic welfare of my colleagues. Being able to do well and be competitive, while also sharing wins throughout my organisation. I've always worked really well with people who are driven and like to have space and quite a lot of autonomy, while also being able to lean on me for support or views. It has always been easier to work with leaders who are people-orientated and have a genuine interest in the welfare of colleagues, clients, and suppliers with have an overarching respect for people. We have an innovative environment at CLS.

We create our future, we write our own business plans, we make our own decisions on the direction of the market that needs us next, and where we fit. So there's a real-life experience of leading a business into the future with CLS, with a lot of client contact, financial responsibility, regulatory responsibility. We work in an environment that is continuously changing and adapting. Being agile is critical to continue a growth curve on a company like ours.

HOW DO YOU PRIORITIZE AND MANAGE YOUR WORKLOAD TO ENSURE SUCCESS?

As a self-appointed CEO, like many other entrepreneurs, we can pick the style and type of CEO we want to be. My choice has always been on the growth side of the business, as more of a sales-orientated CEO, rather than a purely operational CEO. I tend to look outward onto the market and have a lot of external engagements. This needs to be combined with time to also engage and focus internally, and communicate and bring people with you, and to ensure that you've got a really good tactical team that manages the day-to-day business. This has been the way I've designed my role, probably based on what I feel are my own strengths. I enjoy time with people, and that includes clients, advisors, and associates, learning from all different aspects of our ecosystem.



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HOW DO YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?

I've had a fabulous career, which I continue to enjoy. But my weekends have always been the part of my week I look forward to most. So a Friday evening is my favourite evening of the week, and I adore being off. I love walking, especially where there isn't much traffic. I like a bit of cold swimming. I love yoga, and I love socialising with friends and spending time with family. So in total, I love life. I need to ensure I get enough sleep and nutrients that I have the energy, and that my social battery isn't flashing. Relaxing is generally easy, but sometimes, often through the excitement of trying to work out new opportunities, trying to turn off my mind can be a challenge. I try to grade things in priority which can help.

IN 3 WORDS ONLY - WHAT IS THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

**RELEVANCE,
RELATIONSHIPS, AND
INNOVATION**