

The Nb1 approach: 20 years in the making

In the last 20 years Noel Brady has worked with countless organisations from right across all business sectors, offering strategic expert advice and guidance.

He's the founder and managing director of his own limited company, Nb1. He's a renowned expert in public sector tendering, sales and marketing and is a highly experienced chairman and non-executive director in organisations in both the private and public sectors.

This year, he is marking 20 years working with a host of major indigenous and international businesses and firms with global reach. But where did all of this begin?

After more than 30 years working in organisations in both the public (NICS) and private sectors (Fujitsu and Sx3), Noel set up Nb1 – with the aim to assist companies across a raft of areas, including strategic advice, business growth, sales and public and private sector tenders.

"It began at the age of 46", he said. "I had offers to go back into the corporate world again, but I wanted to try something completely different, I thought I had noticed a niche market for the type of services I could offer, and it wasn't long before I established this to be true.

"Now, 20 years later and I'm still here. It was a bit of a leap of faith but I felt that I was offering something unique at the time – executive or director level services as an individual to companies who had a need at that level."

Noel continues to work with a raft of companies from across industry – including helping bring new name firms into Northern Ireland, helping to grow their sales pipeline, providing support on major tenders and networking into individuals and organisations



Noel Brady

that will help obtain their strategic goals.

"Part of my job is market opening, looking for the right opportunities, helping firms to win large bids and tenders by providing experience, guidance and knowledge to assist them with a successful campaign. I have lost count of the value of successful tenders I have worked on but it is certainly more than £2bn." Some of Noel's clients include Expleo, Continu, BT, Fujitsu, CGI, Serco, APCOA and TerraQuest, among many others.

"In basic terms Nb1 is about offering strategic input to a client from an experienced executive-level individual who has come from both a business and public sector background. When people engage Nb1 they engage me, I give them my undivided attention.

"Getting out and networking is a key strand in developing and making business work and develop. You must network, tell people what you do. I'm also a great fan of social media."

Noel also stresses how important business development activity is for your own company. "You must leave some time for business

development – if you only fill your days with work, when current contracts end, you'll be left with unwanted downtime.

"Customer care is essential in a consultancy business – you need to look after your customers, treat them properly and that will develop mutual respect."

In addition to his services to clients Noel also holds several non-executive positions – ministerial appointments in the public sector as chairman of the **Construction Industry Training Board** for Northern Ireland and finance non-executive director for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. In the not-too-distant past he has been a Belfast Harbour Commissioner and a non-executive director with the Driver and Vehicle Agency. In the private sector, he is chairman of Continu Ltd, a leading battery storage and UPS systems provider, and in the third sector he is a trustee on the board of the HMS Caroline Trust.

"I really enjoy what I do and while people continue to value my help, I will continue to work with clients right across Northern Ireland and beyond." ■