

# EU Presidency Is a Business Development Opportunity

Ireland's leadership role will create valuable visibility for the country's professional services firms, writes **Mary Cloonan**

**F**or law and accounting firms, moments of international attention can create visibility, relationships and future work.

While Ireland holds the EU presidency this year, attention from across Europe has briefly turned in our direction. For managing partners in professional services firms, that creates a rare and time-limited opportunity to raise their profile with exactly the clients and target markets that matter most.

Ministers, regulators, trade bodies and business leaders are travelling here for meetings, negotiations and industry gatherings. For the government, the EU presidency is about policy and diplomacy. For Irish professional services firms, it creates something equally valuable. Visibility.

"As professional services firms, we sometimes underestimate how powerful visibility can be," says Mary Cloonan, founder of Marketing Clever. "When attention turns towards a country, even briefly, it creates natural opportunities to build relationships and start conversations that may not have happened otherwise."

Alongside the formal programme, a second layer of activity always emerges. Sector discussions, client gatherings and informal introductions begin to take shape around the same themes. The business community, in effect, creates its own parallel calendar.

The firms that benefit most are rarely those that simply attend events. They are the ones that are intentional about where they show up, who they want to meet and what they want to be known for.

This points to a broader truth that applies well beyond the EU presidency itself. Professional services firms often think of business development as something



Mary Cloonan, founder, Marketing Clever

that happens when a proposal is submitted or a pitch is delivered. In reality, much of the groundwork happens long before that. It is built through familiarity, credibility and relationships developed over time. Moments of national attention simply accelerate that process.

Deciding where to be visible is the natural starting point. The EU presidency will spark conversations across technology, financial services, energy, regulation and international trade. Firms already advising clients in these areas have a natural opportunity to contribute through commentary, articles or participation in industry discussions. Each contribution reinforces their standing with the clients and prospects they most want to reach.

More deliberate networking follows naturally. Visiting delegations, trade associations and European professional bodies all create openings for introductions. Firms that think carefully about which relationships they want to develop are far more likely to leave this period with meaningful connections in their target markets.

Some firms will go further and create their own moments, hosting small roundtables or breakfast briefings that allow them to introduce contacts, share insights and demonstrate genuine understanding of the market. A well-chosen group around the table can do more for visibility than any number of large events.

**T**he EU presidency will come and go, but the networks formed during it can last for years. For firms working across borders, those relationships often become referral partnerships, collaborative projects or new client opportunities. The six-month window matters less than what is built within it.

"In professional services, work rarely begins with a pitch," Cloonan says. "It usually begins with a relationship, a conversation or a moment when someone becomes aware of your firm and what you stand for."

The EU presidency gives Irish law and accounting firms the chance to create more of those moments. The ones that engage deliberately, and invest in their visibility now, will still be benefiting long after the presidency ends.

*Mary Cloonan is founder of Marketing Clever, advising professional services firms across legal, accountancy and professional services on visibility, client development and market growth.*