

## everywoman stream Tech Forum to Ireland in partnership with Women in Business NI to add global context to conference



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Roseann Kelly  
Chief Executive, Women in Business NI



### Partnership Overview

<b>Audience</b>	Women in business networks, women in tech
<b>Services</b>	Live conference streaming
<b>Initiation</b>	2018
<b>Region</b>	UK

### Highlights

- Women in Business share everywoman’s goals to advance the development of women at all levels of business
- Live streaming from the everywoman in Tech Forum in London
- 300 men and women in Belfast joined global network of ‘virtual’ delegates
- Interactive app allowed Belfast delegates to put questions to speakers in London
- Innovative and cost-effective way of organising conference with local and global themes

### Background

Women in Business NI is the largest and fastest-growing business network for female entrepreneurs and business leaders in Northern Ireland. Founded in 2002, the organisation is committed to developing the professional skills, connections and confidence of its 2,500 members through events, tailored programmes and peer support.

Every year, WIB organises a total of more than 70 workshops, industry expert masterclasses, formal networking events and conferences with inspirational speakers. But, as a small organisation it’s tough. “Organising a big conference on our own is difficult,” said Women in Business’s Chief Executive, Roseann Kelly. “We have some very generous supporters and partners, and a large membership but we simply can’t afford to get as many speakers over here to our conferences as we would like.” That was the challenge facing WIB when they were planning a conference in 2018 to champion women in technology.

### Partnership

Instead of going it alone, Women in Business NI teamed up with everywoman to organise a joint Women in Tech Conference. Held at the Titanic Belfast visitor centre in February 2018, it featured panel discussions and breakout sessions with local business leaders, and a closing keynote speech by Irish technology entrepreneur and angel investor Mary McKenna MBE.

The twist, however – and the area where everywoman was able to add real value – was the live streaming of the morning session of the everywoman in Tech Forum from London’s Hilton on Park Lane. The everywoman in Tech Forum is firmly established as an empowering one-day event that brings together global male and female role models who have achieved great success across the sector. The partnership enabled them to take an international event with an international agenda to Northern Ireland, and wrap it with local speakers. With everywoman providing an “event in a box” toolkit it meant Women in Business NI had all the tools they needed to create a seamless event.

## Shared agenda

“Women in Business is very similar to everywoman in the way we equip women with the skills they need to develop their careers,” said Roseann. “But, of course, they’re a much bigger organisation than us, and have more resources for organising their fabulous Tech Forum.” The obvious answer, she said, was to sign up for the exclusive online streaming of the everywoman in Tech Forum and make it an integral part of the Women in Business NI event.

It’s a tried and tested method of reaching wider audiences. Since 2017, everywoman has been inviting companies and organisations to join the forum ‘virtually’ by streaming it live to their offices or venues. The four forums to date have each attracted thousands of women and men to learn from inspirational role models who innovate, challenge and embrace technology, and to network with like-minded individuals from across the tech sectors. Just as significant have been the thousands of delegates who have ‘tuned in’ from more than 15 countries around the world, listened to keynote speakers and joined interactive panel sessions.

## Seamless and innovative

In Belfast, 300 women and men joined the global network of virtual delegates. “As well as our main partner, Fujitsu, we invited 12 tech companies to sponsor the event and gave them each 20 places,” added Roseann.

“Being able to tap into the everywoman event was a great success. It was seamless, and the fact that we were using technology at a technology conference, definitely added an extra element to it all.”

As with any event of its kind, there will always be potential delegates who will not be able to make it to London. While, the streaming option is a great opportunity to take part, there may be some people who question whether being a virtual delegate is second best. Roseann disagrees. In fact, she goes as far as suggesting that delegates at the organisation’s Women in Tech Conference may actually have experienced the best of both worlds – exposure to global success stories from influential entrepreneurs and inspirational women, as well as opportunities to network at a local level, and explore topical tech issues from a local perspective.

## Verdict

“I was very surprised at how well it worked,” said Roseann. “At first, I was concerned that it would just be a group of people in Belfast sitting looking at a screen. I thought it would be hard to feel part of it. After an opening address in Belfast, we went live over to London. Our delegates were able to download an interactive app that allowed them to put questions to the speakers in London and take part in the discussions. We all felt very engaged.”

Would WIB do it again? Absolutely, says Roseann, who believes that joining forces with everywoman is an innovative and cost-effective way of adding value to their own conference. “It was all very, very positive,” she said. “It helped raise our profile with tech companies in our area.”

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Chief Executive, Women in Business NI

