



BUSINESS PROFILE:
Jackie Cummins

Jackie Cummins is the well-respected coach and mentor behind J21 Coaching who spent her younger years being educated in a private boarding school in Dublin, as well as Birmingham. Living in Sutton Coldfield and married to Dave Dougan, she has two grown-up daughters, Jenny and Francesca. Jackie boasts 30 years' experience working within the corporate, charitable and personal development sectors where she has advised, mentored and coached individuals through to management and trustees. A prolific networker and a familiar face to many, we find out more about this woman who is truly passionate about her work, clients and life in general...

Interview by Katie McPhelimy

“*Don't underestimate how powerful a coach and mentor like myself can be and what a significant impact we can make to your business and personal goals.*”

Jackie, how did you arrive at your consulting role today?

Being solution focused and results driven, my Irish family background certainly helped. My charismatic and successful father instilled a strong work ethic in me from a young age. My upbringing was a superb foundation.

I grew up in Birmingham and Dublin as my parents had businesses in both cities. I've had a varied career, which included being an Airline Supervisor for Egyptair configuring flights, group travel and working directly with professionals, overseeing travel arrangements for VIPs and diplomats. Working within the industry enabled me to travel extensively, exploring amazing places and cultures, fulfilling my own personal goal to see the world.

During a career break I trained as a Magistrate and served on the bench at the Victoria Law Courts in Birmingham for six years. As chair of the local school's PTA I was involved in planning most of the fundraising activity, which led to a new career within the charitable sector as Fundraising & Marketing Manager for four different charities during a 13-year period. I also worked as a consultant advising charities on governance and income generation and also sat on boards as a grant assessor. So a wealth of experience has led me naturally to where I am today.

Education versus work experience; where do you sit in the debate?

It depends on the industry/job role. For example, doctors, lawyers and engineers would require a specific degree for their chosen profession, whereas in other arenas such as technology, experience is deemed more important. Bearing in mind Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg... and err me, I don't have a degree... [smiles]

The ideal balance would be to invest in higher education whilst also gaining work

experience alongside your studies, so you not only have a good qualification, but are also more employable when entering the working arena. It's the application of knowledge that's the key!

How would your clients describe you in three words?

Inspirational, results-driven, successful.

Summarise the service you offer?

I support successful professionals, CEOs and entrepreneurs to excel in their business and personal life – to achieve their goals. Every successful leader needs a coach to ensure they always play at the top of their game. Because no one size fits all, I provide bespoke coaching and mentoring services within the areas of business, career and relationship. I'm very focused on results so tailoring my services ensures clients get a substantial ROI. I'm proud of my track record of achieving on behalf of clients, enabling them to achieve, grow and leverage their contacts, which ultimately results in a greatly improved turnover and a sound strategy.

What's the most valuable piece of advice you've ever been given?

My parents really were a great influence and they advised me that it's essential to always remain true to my values, respect others, that 'honesty is the best policy' and to always be grateful for what you have. This advice has been instrumental for developing long-term relationships in business and gaining respect for my integrity.

You're a prolific networker and 'connector', are you selective with regards to what you attend?

I have to be selective about the events I attend; I tend to dip in and out of three or four specific events where the attendees will be decision makers or business owners. I like to request a delegate list prior to an event to see whom I would like to be introduced

to or be seated next to in order to explore business opportunities for both. Networking really is about building long-term relationships, which is essential for cultivating an enviable contacts portfolio and is definitely not a 'quick fix.' I'm delighted to have been nominated for 'Networker of the Year' award, later this year!

Describe in brief your 'fantasy 24 hours'.

My 'fantasy 24 hours!' 'Indecent Proposal' with Robert Redford springs to mind. [Laughing]

It would be New York based, staying at the 'Four Seasons Hotel' as it's steeped in grand tradition. I would start my day with a hearty breakfast overlooking the stunning views of Central Park, following this I would go to 'Dance Manhattan' for some intense tango dance workshops. I would skip lunch and head to Madison Avenue and buy a little black dress and accessories and have my hair styled and nails painted! Back at the hotel I'd get ready, leaving enough time for a quick glass of Champagne before my driver picks me up at 7pm to transport me to 'The Waldorf Astoria' for dinner. But who is waiting for me? Yes, Al Pacino [swoons]. He greets me with a cheeky smile and leads me to our table. We eat, drink and laugh so much... and of course dance the tango, what an incredible experience to meet my idol!

What are you currently reading?

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People [powerful lessons in personal change] by Stephen R. Covey.

What one piece of advice would you offer to anyone who feels that they need to take their career to the next level?

Invest in a reputable coach and mentor, as you will gain a fantastic return on investment. Not only will your confidence and self-belief be improved, you will be propelled to the next level. You'll benefit from a professional and experienced sounding board who will fully support you on your journey, assist you to reach your goals, achieve your ambitions and realise your true potential.



Here's your chance – you have 40 words for your plug...

Don't underestimate how powerful a coach and mentor like myself can be and what a significant impact we can make to your business and personal goals. Whether it's to significantly grow your business or to reach a goal you've always wanted but not yet achieved, I can help. Do you want more leads, profit and time to overcome your biggest challenges? Are you a business who wants to achieve peak performance? If yes, then it's time to take action and get in touch with J21Coaching. ■