

'I'd have been a lot braver' - Nicola Byrne, Cloud90

Serial entrepreneur Nicola Byrne set up Cloud90 two years ago. The live digital media monitoring agency is now used by some of the country's biggest businesses to manage their brand reputation online. She is also the founder of 11890, the independent directory enquiry service and employs 53 people.

If I were to do it again, what would I do differently? A lot! I'd slow down for a start, think more and strategise more. As a result, I'd minimise the amount of time I'd gone off down the wrong road.

I'd have been a lot braver too. I would stand up for myself more, against customers and shareholders, and I would trust myself more.

I'd recognise my flaws quicker, my weaknesses. Not to change them - trying to be perfect is a fools game - but just to be aware.

But most of all I'd have more belief in myself. For example, the telephone directories industry is dying. If I could turn back the clock, I'd have accepted earlier that, in business, nothing lasts forever the way it is now.



When you're changing direction you have to drag people with you, and that takes courage. Sometimes you don't have the money to make the changes you know you need to. On top of that, telling people that a cliff is coming in your industry is hard, it scares them. You don't want everyone to think your business is dying either but I should have been stronger sooner.

What I wouldn't change is my staff. They have been terrific and have taken everything I've put in front of them and run with it.

It helps that I've never been afraid to fail. Even though there are days you wake up panicking, you have to realise it's an awful waste of energy and very often the only difference between success and failure is hard work.

I wouldn't let myself be talked out of things either. Your peers give you all the reasons why you shouldn't do something, often it's because they are simply scared of change. But when you push

back, they begin to think, maybe she can do it. In the meantime, you'd be left doubting yourself.



I used always to think, maybe they're right, maybe they know more than me. If I were to do it all again, I'd learn to doubt myself last. The whole tech thing is eating everything and it's easy to get caught up in that fear. But the bottom line is 'let's make some money' and that's what I've always done.