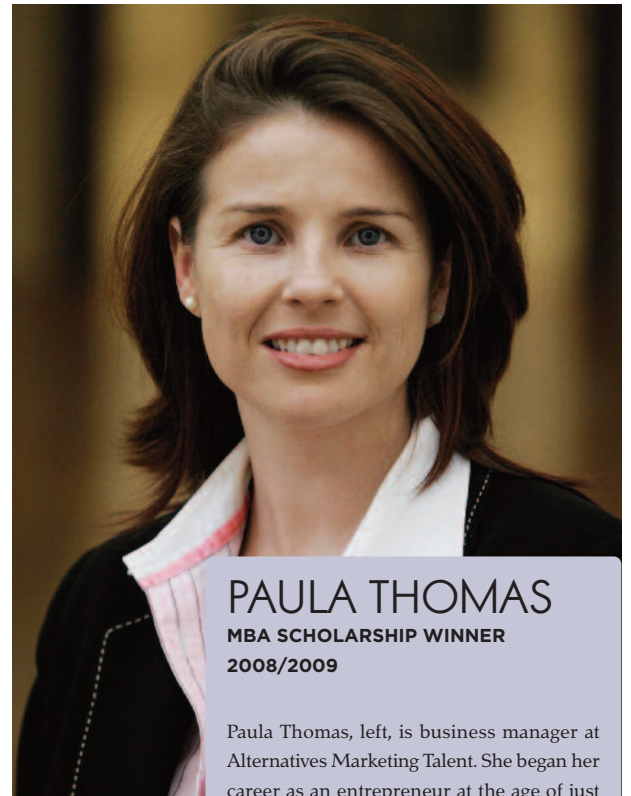


# CLASS ACTS

UCD Michael Graduate Business School has a reputation for producing the best of the best in the world of business. As IMAGE once again teams up with them in offering the chance to win an MBA scholarship, worth €15,000, we meet a student in the thick of the MBA experience, as well as one of the school's leading success stories.



**PAULA THOMAS**

**MBA SCHOLARSHIP WINNER  
2008/2009**

Paula Thomas, left, is business manager at Alternatives Marketing Talent. She began her career as an entrepreneur at the age of just 19, when she opened her own nail salon in Rathmines and a second in Tallaght. Although a successful enterprise, Paula decided, after a number of years, that she'd like to gain further business experience and so emigrated to Dubai where she began a career with British Airways, later moving on to Emirates, followed by ebookers (which took her back to Ireland), Pigsback.com and CashCollector, where she had progressed to the position of marketing manager.

After winning the scholarship, Paula began the part-time MBA in September. "I've been planning to do this course for about ten years ... building myself up psychologically and every other which way. Without the scholarship I could not have afforded it this year and I thought that it would be another year of waiting. Why did I want to do the MBA? Well, I've built up a lot of business experience over the years and, of course, intuition gets you a long way, but a friend of mine who did the MBA gave a great analogy when I asked if the course was worth it. She told me that it gives the kind of confidence you get from wearing very nice underwear. I had to laugh, but that's exactly what it's doing. I'm learning the fundamentals of business and being pushed beyond my comfort zone of sales and marketing. I really enjoy being able to read a financial report now, which I couldn't do before. It's so exciting thinking about where the MBA will take me in my career at Alternatives and in my life in general."



## GINA QUIN

**MBA ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR 2008**

Gina Quin, above, is Chief Executive Officer of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. Her position centres around the development of the Dublin business environment, focusing in particular on infrastructure, transport and the importance of a knowledge economy. She started her career with Lansdowne Market Research, moving through the Irish Export Board, the Rehab Group and Gandon Enterprises, on the way to her current position. She has a degree in psychology and entered into the part-time MBA while working for Rehab. "I wanted to move beyond marketing, to more of a general management standpoint and the MBA allowed me to add planning and development, as well as financial understanding, to my skills. I think you get most from doing an MBA when you already have work experience behind you. That way you are aware of your strengths and weaknesses and can contextualise with your own past experiences. Initially, I entered the course hoping to fill any gaps in my own training, but I got a whole lot more. Even just looking at the network of colleagues I built among my fellow students ... it's been immensely beneficial.

"It was such an honour to win the Alumnus of the Year Award. Why was I chosen? Well, I see the award as recognition for everything the team I've led at the Dublin Chamber of Commerce has achieved over the past 15 years - in making the Dublin business environment a better one. My goal for the future is to make the voice of the business world, which is often maligned - and especially so, at the moment - better heard. It's an important citizen in society that should never be neglected