

Q & A with Graham Knowles East Coast Regional Manager Career Transition from Ireland to the U.S.



How long have you worked at NEXA? And what inspired you to pursue a career in Life Sciences industry?

I joined NEXA nearly 3 years ago and have enjoyed every minute! My introduction to the industry comes from my brother who has a career in the science and validation area. The biggest “feel good factor” for me was realizing the contributions I could provide supporting our clients in an industry that impacts everyday lives around the world. A great memory was being a part of a team that supported the manufacturing of a new product. Fast forward a few years, and we had the pleasure of meeting one of the patients that was on the product trial, and we learned how it positively impacted their life. This is something I will never forget, and it drives me every day to deliver my best.

What were you responsible for in your previous role as a Project Manager?

As a member of NEXA's Ireland team, I was responsible for most of the projects in Europe—supporting the project scope, on-boarding team members, and the day-to-day operations within the projects. I also had to ensure that we met the clients' deliverables of the project, on time and within budget.

What influenced your decision to relocate to the U.S. to take on this new challenge as East Coast Regional Manager?

Anyone who knows me, knows I love learning new things. And what better time to embrace a new role in a new world in a new year! I have been to the U.S. a few times before and loved it. The people are amazing and have a very positive outlook, and that inspires me. The U.S. is also a leader within the technological world, so the opportunity to be a part of projects on the forefront of life science was a no-brainer for me. On a personal level, I also love the opportunities it offers my wife and two young daughters.

What did you learn in your previous role that will guide you in your new role?

As much as the new role will be a challenge, I also have a unique opportunity to bring my experience to this side of the pond.

It will also afford me the opportunity to improve what I do know, and to learn and grow professionally. The people and project management learnings that I developed in Ireland will serve me well in the U.S.

What are key goals that you are hoping to accomplish as East Coast Regional Manager?

I want to establish a strong base within the U.S. Operations, learn the critical needs within each project, and help to deepen relationships with our clients. NEXA has a very strong team in the U.S., and I want to leverage those strengths and expertise to demonstrate the breath of our company's capabilities.

Do you have a mentor? If so, what advice have they given you that assisted in your professional development?

John Cummins has been a huge mentor for me on my career journey. Having gone through a similar transition from Ireland to the U.S., his insights are invaluable from both a business and a personal perspective. Even down to ensuring I drive on the right side of the road!

What advice would you give a new employee joining the NEXA team?

NEXA has a lot to offer. A core value at NEXA is “continuous improvement”. I would tell them not to be shy about reaching out to colleagues anywhere within the operation, at any level, and to ask for support. We all help each other across the company—from the newcomers to the experienced. You never know what someone might learn from you also.

What's something people would be surprised to learn about you?

I'm the first person in my entire family to ever emigrate.