
From the Washington Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2021/04/08/emmes-ceo-christine-dingivan.html>

Executive Profile

The pandemic revved up business for Emmes CEO Christine Dingivan. So she found balance with yoga.

Apr 8, 2021, 2:15pm EDT

Christine Dingivan's first job delivering newspapers in junior high school was "a terrible experience," she said, requiring a 2 a.m. wake-up call and, at times, her dad when her bike proved inefficient in Long Island, New York. Her dream to become a professional athlete also didn't pan out, causing her family to encourage a pursuit in academics instead.

So she became a physician and started a career at MedImmune, followed by posts at North Carolina research company PPD Inc. and Switzerland pharmaceutical giant Novartis International. And she never looked back.

Today, Dingivan leads Rockville contract research organization Emmes, which was founded in 1977 and reached \$155.7 million in 2020 revenue — and is now targeting another 30% jump in sales. Since her start in September, she's led the life sciences services firm through its first acquisition, the creation of a new biopharma business unit and an aggressive hiring push that could add another 200 people globally to its 1,000-person roster, up from 650 people last fall.



EMAN MOHAMMED

Dr. Christine Dingivan is president and CEO at Emmes.

The company, which conducts research and runs clinical trials for a growing roster of government, biopharmaceutical, nonprofit and foundation customers, has only ramped up in the age of coronavirus, including providing data and statistical support for the first phase of Moderna's Covid vaccine trials. "I have the opportunity to really help make a difference, add something to this effort to overcome the pandemic," she said, "and I'm grateful for that."

How has the pandemic affected your growth? The pandemic has had two main impacts on our business. One is, it's actually grown our business. About 15% to 20% of our staff work on Covid-related studies. That's a lot. We have close to 175 people that work on our Covid portfolio. No. 2 is supporting the remote workforce. We had to basically, overnight, procure and hand out over 500 laptops.

How did 2020 change you as a leader? It has made me lean more on empathy and supportive behaviors with people, just trying to meet them where they're at. Maybe not being as highly direct and demanding, because maybe I have been in other roles. Because you do have to take into account everything your team is juggling and managing, in a way that you didn't have to before. It kind of humanizes you a lot more as a leader, because you have those same challenges yourself.

What has helped you get through this period? I finally, after all these years, took up yoga. It's something I have always had my eye on. I finally found the right teacher, and I've been doing that a couple days a week every week, religiously, for a year. It's been wonderful.

What changes have you made over the past year? We got a puppy! A Cavapoo. I think we were all just looking for something joyful, kind of new in our lives, so that was part of it. And it's a way to socialize with your neighbors when you're walking the dog and all of a sudden you have a new social network.

What's something most people don't know about you? I love photography. I'm crazy about taking pictures and adventure travel, to allow me to take interesting pictures of different places.

What else? I own an RV now and I'm quite capable of operating it. It's shocking to people because I am such a hotel brat. I'm very self-reliant, but when I go to a hotel, I want to go to a really nice hotel. I just want to live the dream, because my day-to-day life is not like that. But when people hear that I'm now driving and maintaining an RV, they just break out in laughter.

How do you spend your free time? I really love the arts. Most people think of me as a science and math person, but I love the arts, music. I'm really so impressed with people who have those gifts, that they can play an instrument or their voice or their ability to act. That's largely what I do in my free time, before the pandemic of course, to take in the arts.

How has Covid affected that part of your life? I've missed it. I'm on the board of the Kennedy Center and they offer these streaming events and they've opened up their historical library that you can access remotely, so I've done a little bit of that. But it's really not the same as being in the concert hall. It was always such a special experience to go there, and I really miss that.

Have you found another outlet? I finally took on a family project to organize all of our pictures. Going back to my grandparents. It's a massive undertaking — there are thousands of these in boxes, and some of them are in slide format because that was really popular for a while in the '50s, '60s and '70s even. So that was my artistic expression, because I'm now putting together photo albums.

What was your last flight before the pandemic hit last March? I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a flight from my house in Naples, Florida, to DCA on JetBlue. We came directly from the airport, dropped off our suitcases and went out to eat, and that's the last time I ate in a restaurant. Capri, in McLean. I still have the credit card receipt.

What's on your post-pandemic bucket list? I dream about it all the time. I have a voucher for a trip I booked to take a cruise to Antarctica. It also had to be canceled, so you had two choices: You could get your money back or they gave you all these incentives if you took a voucher. I just want to hop on a plane and go to Europe again. Go to Italy, because I'm dying to have some Italian food in Italy. And visiting family, because we really have missed each other.

The basics

Dr. Christine Dingivan

Title: President and CEO, Emmes

Age: 54

Education: Bachelor's in bioengineering, University of Pennsylvania; M.D., Dartmouth College's Geisel School of Medicine; trained in general surgery at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine

Residence: Naples, Florida; since taking the job at Emmes, she's been working from McLean.

First job: Delivering newspapers in junior high school

Sara Gilgore

Staff Reporter

Washington Business Journal

