STORY 2 - QUARTER 2, 2022

MY JOURNEY TO SELF EMPLOYMENT

Thomas Murphy, Teem Lens

Please introduce yourself and your business...
My name is Thomas Murphy. I have always had a great passion and love for working with a camera. A few years ago, I invested in professional equipment to take up a new hobby in photography and videography.

Soon after, family and friends contacted me to photograph and video local events within the Claremorris community, and I began getting more involved with community events myself. I noticed I was receiving a lot of good feedback on social media and through word of mouth my skills were noticed.

Why did you go into self-employment?
Like many others, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I became unemployed. At this point in my life, I decided to become self-employed. Others were commenting and encouraging me about my photography and videography work, and I felt it would be a missed opportunity if I didn't give this a shot.
I believed there was a gap in the market for a professional media service and I decided to take the leap and invest in my skills and myself.

What supports did you receive on your journey to self-employment?
I began researching online on how to set up a business. It was daunting and finding the correct information was difficult, but I remember I was in the kitchen with my mother and we heard about the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance scheme on the radio. I got in touch with Intreo Castlebar and was referred to the SICAP enterprise team in South West Mayo Development Company (SWMDC). The direction and clarity they shared with me was so beneficial from what seemed like a daunting task. Their ongoing support really eased my journey into self-employment.
I engaged in business training programmes and one-to one mentoring opportunities within the SWMDC SICAP and Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Mayo. I also engaged with other people who were starting their new careers too. I began researching different marketing strategies and looking at other media companies around the world to gain inspiration.

THOMAS' TOP THREE TIPS

1 Back yourself
2 Keep learning
3 Connect with agencies and other business people

South West Mayo
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY CLG
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I used many online resources to improve my knowledge of business development and learn the necessary skills to progress my career.

I began to network with other people across Ireland who were involved in media production to develop my knowledge and skills further and to support me in my self-employment start up. This journey has been challenging, and I am only one year into self-employment and I love the career path I have chosen. It has brought great opportunities for me. I get to meet and work with a variety of people and projects from commercial, music and arts schools, interviews, business promotional content, drone work, travel & tourism and many more. I want to build a successful career and keep pushing myself to grow my business.
With support from SWMDC SICAP, I developed my business plan, registered with revenue as self-employed and was approved for the Intreo funded Back to Work Enterprise Support Scheme. Also, I received support from LEO Mayo to help me build my Teem Lens Media social media presence.

What advice/tips would you give someone thinking of starting their own business business?
Knowledge is power. Reach out and seek advice. From people I have met through different stages of self-employment, I got great advice. They gave me the time and opportunity to ask for advice such as what they did and what they would do differently.
Most self-employed people want us all to progress well and help each other. There is a fantastic range of courses and supports. Keep connected with support agencies such as South West Mayo Development Company, Local Enterprise Office Mayo, Intreo, and training and networking programmes such as Reboot for example.
There is a lot of work to be done when you are relying on yourself to create job opportunities. It can be difficult, but also an exciting challenge. There are ups and downs but overall, the benefits and the journey is really something you do not want to miss out on, especially if you have an idea, and it has been resonating with you in the back of your mind for some time. You should take your first step. Develop a business plan and be clear on your visions and goals. I benefitted greatly from training courses available and mentorship programmes, working with professionals to help set up my own business. I worked off a business plan template supported with in-depth advice on what to fill out in the allocated areas. They really helped me along the process of getting up and running. I received constant guidance to make sure I had all the correct documents and hit deadlines when setting up my business.

GET IN TOUCH...

Sample Work: Teemlens media showreel at **https://youtu.be/cP_oN_0ZMRo**

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