

OUT *on your* OWN

Talking POINT

Marketing package geared to tech start-ups

News of an interesting new marketing venture landed in my inbox last week aimed squarely at start-ups and SMEs. Mayo woman Eimear McCormack was bitten by the marketing bug during her time with food delivery website Just-eat.ie.

She established her new business, B*Different, two months ago to offer creative marketing services to businesses, particularly start-ups in the burgeoning technology sphere.

McCormack has designed the so-called "B*Beta" marketing package specifically for this market. B*Beta is designed to help start-ups manage all aspects of the marketing process, from brand creation to digital and traditional marketing.

"With the explosion of people setting up start-up businesses in Ireland, especially in the tech sector, I felt it was an untapped area," she told me.

B*Different is situated on Dublin's Barrow Street, where it employs three people, and McCormack plans to create five more jobs in the coming months.

"I established B*Different to add something different to the digital and traditional marketing landscape in Ireland," she said.

"I had thought about the prospect of working for lots of brands across different genres and I always had it in the back of my head that I would do something, but I didn't know if it would be in general business or something else.

"It dawned on me one day 'this marketing stuff, I'm quite good at it'. I had done a lot of work and had a lot of success with Just-eat, where my localised marketing campaigns were having an impact of 30 per cent on the business and so on."

B*Different's digital marketing services include



Elaine O'Regan

everything from search engine optimisation and pay-per-click advertising to social media training, affiliate marketing management and online monitoring and engagement.

McCormack's more traditional services include branding, merchandising and related areas, like PR and communications.

"The creativity is a big thing for me. When you are working with so many different companies, no two days are the same and I'm learning as I go along," she said.

"What people often don't consider after they've created something is: 'How do I market this? How do I get it in front of people? How do I get it in front of the press? How do I get it in front of investors?'"

"A lot of people are fixated on the product or service alone and don't take that into consideration, so on foot of that, I thought: 'Hang on a minute, I think I could fill a gap here'."

"My own background is in start-ups. Having joined Just-eat in the start-up phase, I literally built everything from the ground upwards and I love that because it presents challenges, opportunities and it's a fantastic thing to work on.

"I'm passionate about it."

Spotlight on drive-in movies

By Elaine O'Regan

Want to make money in movies? It's all

in the popcorn. So says Ellie Redmond, the French-born mother-of-one who has opened Ireland's first drive-in cinema in east Cork.

"People don't realise that, in the cinema business, you have to pay a fee to film distributors to get movies and then, when you get them, you can pay them up to 60 per cent of the ticket sales," said Redmond.

"For every €10 I make, for some movies, over 60 per cent of that goes straight to the distributor. The cinema industry is very different from the retail industry in that way, so popcorn and sweets and other food is really where you make your money."

Redmond opened her first screen on the cinema's Carrigrohilly site in November 2010, with support from her husband Stephen, who runs the construction business RBR.

It was after the couple had their first child, more than four years ago, that the idea for a drive-in cinema, suited to the Irish climate, first took root.

"Like all new parents, we got a huge shock and realised 'we can't go out any more'. That was a big issue for us because we were young – I was 30, I'm now going on 35 – and Steven and I were saying 'there has to be a better way for parents than having to pay a babysitter to mind the children at home if you want a night out'."

"You pay for the cinema and buy a meal anyway, so we looked at the outdoor cinema idea and said: 'there's something more to this, if we make it weatherproof' – which for Ireland, is a big issue. People could enjoy the latest movie in their own car and bring their children along."

Movie Junction opened a second screen in May 2012. It employs ten staff and has annual revenues of over €200,000.

"When we started, we employed 18 or 20, but we have a better structure now because we now have one staff member for 10 or 12 cars," said Redmond.

Screen two is open-air, and can be adapted to fit between 100 and 140 spaces. Screen one has 100 spaces, each with a private



Ellie Redmond, owner-manager, Movie Junction: 'Each parking bay has a silent electric heater – it will keep the car and passengers warm and the windows clear'

canopy to protect the windscreens from rain.

"Each car bay has a direct, clear view of the screen," said Redmond.

"Most drive-in theatres are on a flat surface, which means that some cars obstruct the view from others. At Movie Junction, the whole site slopes towards the screen and each car bay is also reclined so you never need to strain your neck to see the screen."

The cinema has separate FM radio stations set up for both screens, providing customers with their own in-car audio, and there is also a food menu with popcorn, hot and cold drinks, sweets and hot food such as pizza, chips, burgers and chicken dippers.

"We've tackled one of the biggest problems with drive-in theatres, fogging up windscreens," said Redmond.

"Each parking bay has a silent

'Each car bay has a direct, clear view of the screen'

electric heater. When customers park up, they can reach out, pull the heater into the car and pop it on your dashboard –

it will keep the car and passengers warm and will keep the windows clear."

Tickets cost from €16 per car for two passengers and €20 for three or more. The cinema offers a student rate and a super-saver deal. Admission is free for children and pets.

To help market the business, Redmond has teamed up with local businesses, including Fota Wildlife Park, Titanic Experience and Leahy Open Farm, to offer special combination deals. It has a colourful and informative website with sections on local attractions, movie news and testimonials.

"We don't have daytime showings, but we open all year round except for Christmas Day, New Year's Day and New Year's Eve," said Redmond.

"Because we only have two screens, we can't have all the movies. We have to choose two, and I try to have a new

movie every week. Last month, we had The Hangover 3, next week we will be showing Man of Steel, the following week it will be World War Z and the week after that, another big movie."

Redmond's long-term plan for the business is to open four more drive-in cinemas in Ireland and Britain by 2020. She is looking for a suitable site in Dublin around the M50 close to the Red Cow interchange and Punctestown.

"That would be our preferred location, but we are looking for site owners and possible business partners in Co Meath as well. We need to hear from people who are serious, because the investment is very sizeable," she said.

Redmond, who was recently named New Business Cork Business Woman of the Year by Network Cork, moved to Ireland 15 years ago, aged 20.

She completed a business degree at Dublin City University and higher diploma in business and French language teacher education at UCD and an advanced diploma in French, French language and literature at UCC.

"I moved to Cork after my Leaving Cert in France. I had come here to meet my Irish penpal and when I went out one night, she introduced me to my husband and I never looked back," she said.

"I have always been a driving force behind his work and supported him when he started his own company, but this is the first time we've worked together."

"We are both directors of Movie Junction, but it is pretty much my baby. I would manage the business from day to day, but I do discuss things with him because it is better to have two opinions than one."



Eammon Sayers, manager Guinness Enterprise Centre, Michelle Clarke, Dublin Launch48 ambassador and Des Fahey, chief executive of Dublin Business Innovation Centre

It's time to meet your mentor at Launch48

By Post Reporter

One hundred entrepreneurs from around the country are expected to attend a special start-up event taking place in Dublin later this month.

The Dublin Launch48 Weekend will be held in Guinness Enterprise Centre from June 28 to 30, aimed at those – both technical and non-technical – who have an entrepreneurial side but have yet to take the leap.

The event will bring to-

gether investors and 20 mentors offering advice on getting a new business off the ground. They will include Robin Blandford, chief executive of Decisions for Heroes, Micks-Garage founder Ciaran Green and Michael Culligan, consultancy manager of Dublin Business Innovation Centre and national director of Halo Business Angel Network.

There will also be a Launch48 software goodie bag worth over €3,500.

"I first participated in an incredible Launch48 weekend in Britain. Immediately I thought

I had to volunteer to bring this event over to Dublin," said Michelle Clarke, ambassador, Dublin Launch48.

She approached the Dublin Business Innovation Centre to be a partner with her in getting it off the ground. "With their huge support the idea took off. At a time when Ireland badly needs to create indigenous businesses, this weekend is the ideal vehicle to guide Irish people towards creating their own successful start-ups."

See dublin.launch48.com for more information

The LOWdown Tips for start ups

Networking for growth

"If he can do it, then so can I." This is what one business owner said to me recently, referring to his plan to take a two-week holiday without the need to 'check in' daily to make sure that the office was running okay without him.

Forget the fact that I'd been encouraging this person to do that very thing for 12 months. Hearing someone else in his shoes say he'd done it had a much more powerful effect.

It is a phenomenon I have observed again and again working with business owners over the past 14 years – the power of the group. But the critical thing is that the group needs to be made up of the right people.

Can you remember a time when you met someone who brought out the very best in you? Have you ever been in a room with people who inspired you to make significant changes?

Group psychology

There are two main branches of psychology: individual and social (or group) psychology. One is ten times as powerful as the other.

The reality is that when you are with a group of



Shane Cradock

people who are all doing the same thing, it is almost impossible not to do it with them. It turns out that social or group psychology is impossible to resist.

On a simple level, it turns out your mother was right all along. Who you hang out with has a huge affect on your attitude, behaviour and, ultimately, your results in work and life.

Most people don't take this aspect of being human and use it to their advantage.

We tend to think that 'following the herd' is a bad thing because we hear stories about how people went

with the flow and ended up hurt or worse.

Most of the time, however, following the group can save us a lot of time and bring us many benefits. So, how can you use social psychology to your greatest advantage? Simple. Surround yourself with the kind of people you want to emulate.

The power of group psychology goes to work, and you very quickly start picking up the things they do and using them in your life. If you want to be a great comedian, the best thing to do is hang out with great comedians.

An Olympic-level athlete? Spend time with the best athletes and the coaches who taught them.

Social network

Our social network has been shown to impact strongly on our level of wellbeing. For example, a 2007 study on obesity showed that, if one of your close friends becomes obese, you're 57 per cent more likely to do the same.

In fact, a mentor of mine once said to me that you are the average of the six closest people to you.

I believe this principle applies in business. There are two groups of business

owners in Ireland at present: those who believe this is a time of great opportunity and those who see it as a great struggle.

Which would you rather spend your time with? Have you got mentors and role models around you to help you grow your business?

It is essentially impossible to build a great business without the benefit of strong teachers, mentors and role models.

You can learn more by sitting with a business owner who has built a profitable business than by attending a hundred classes on business with someone who has yet to build one themselves.

Mentor support

Despite this, it is often only when times get really tough that business owners are 'forced' to seek out a mentor and, by then, it could be too late. The best have mentors when they are not in pain because they're aware that there is always something they don't know and they are continuously learning.

Here are some steps worth considering:

■ Find a mentor
Find someone who's ahead of you, in terms of where you want to be, and approach them with a view

to mentoring you. This could involve something as simple as meeting once every month or quarterly for lunch.

Above all else, be prepared with questions and make sure you respect their time.

■ Form your own mentor group

Some people call these "mastermind alliances". The premise is simple. Get a group of like-minded people together and arrange to meet regularly. The focus should be on challenging, learning and supporting one another.

■ Join an existing peer group

These groups are becoming all the more common, where people like me facilitate regular structured meetings with like-minded business owners.

My own mentors and teachers have given me priceless insights and guidance that have directly supported my own business and personal growth.

If growth is what you are after, consider the people you spend time with. 'The power of we' is growing.

Shane Cradock is a business adviser who runs the business growth forum Thrive. For more, see shanecradock.com