

SPECIAL REPORT

Grow your business by availing of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme

MINISTER DENIS NAUGHTEN, TD

Ireland's economy relies heavily on its small businesses. They support hundreds and thousands of jobs and livelihoods in towns and villages across the country.

In turn, the digital economy is critical to the success of small businesses. No business can afford to be disadvantaged in a digital Ireland. As the digital economy grows – it is predicted to be worth at least €21 billion by 2020 – it is essential that the benefits are felt in every city, provincial town and rural area.

The reality is that 9 out of 10 Irish consumers use the internet to research and buy products and services. Companies that remain offline are in danger

of being left behind – in danger of missing out on a huge opportunity to benefit from the €14,000 worth of business transacted online every minute, up to 70pc of which goes overseas.

Irish small businesses need to be part of the online conversation, especially traditional businesses. Customers are looking for brands they trust and products and services of quality and value. This is a huge opportunity that must be grabbed.

My Department, working in partnership with the 31 Local Enterprise Offices, is helping businesses to embark on their digital journey. With a strong focus on skills training, mentoring and networking, combined with financial support, the Trading Online Voucher Scheme is making an impact

right across this country.

You too can be part of it and avail of the right advice and financial assistance.

By the end of this year, some 6,000 small businesses will have benefitted from training and advice under the Scheme. The key ingredients for business success in trading online are having an online trading strategy, getting expert advice, and making time to engage with customers online. With this mix, any small business can expect to see increased sales, jobs growth and real export potential.

We have measured the impact of the Scheme and according to my Department's surveys, businesses grow on average by 21pc, employ 35pc more people, and 60pc export for the first time.

The provision of high-speed broadband to every city, town, village and individual premises in Ireland is a key priority for me. This will happen. It goes far beyond the provision of the National Broadband Plan network, covering 100,000 kilometres of road and 96pc of the land area of Ireland, which I maintain is akin to rural electrification in the last century.

All three bidders involved in the tender process for the National Broadband Plan are proposing a predominantly fibre-to-the-home network solution to connect rural Ireland. What this means is that the vast majority of people in rural areas will have access to 1,000 Mbps broadband. This will radically transform the economy of provincial towns and rural areas.



The National Broadband Plan will place Ireland at the forefront in Europe and internationally in terms of connectivity and quality of service, further underpinning Ireland's thriving digital economy.

To date, the Trading Online Voucher Scheme is attracting small businesses from across a wide range of sectors including, for example: 24pc retail, 16pc domestically traded services, 14pc professional services, 9pc manufacturing, 8pc arts, crafts and design, and 6pc food, plus a wide array of various other

types of business including many sole traders.

I firmly believe we can position Ireland to be an example in trading online and continue to outpace our European counterparts in realising the benefits of digital selling.

I encourage all small business owners to contact their Local Enterprise Office to grow their business with the help of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme.

Denis Naughten, TD is Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment

TRADING ONLINE VOUCHER SCHEME

Grow Your Business

Through Online Trading



Training, support and a grant of up to €2,500

This Government scheme is actively supporting small businesses to trade online and boost their sales. For more details contact your Local Enterprise Office (LEO) today:

www.localenterprise.ie

"Brilliant scheme" B Petit, Co. Mayo - Craft

"Doubled our sales" P O'Neill, Co. Waterford - Manufacturing

"Easy to apply for" S Steele, Co. Cork - Design

"Huge LEO support" C McGeady, Dublin - Food



Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaidhe ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil
Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office

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