



Local Enterprise Office  
Making It Happen

## Grow: ANNASCAUL BLACK PUDDING

CULTIVATING GROWTH: HOW LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE KERRY CONTINUES  
TO HELP THIS GOURMET FOOD COMPANY GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

**Making It Happen:** Eileen and Thomas Ashe of Annascaul Black Pudding, with a range of their products.

*Not every food brand can claim its product is made from the same family recipe for over 100 years. The Ashe family has been making black pudding on the Dingle peninsula in Co Kerry since 1916.*

Today, Thomas Ashe, the grand-nephew of founder Michael F Ashe, continues the family tradition with his wife Eileen over 100 years later.

The company produces and sells a wide range of meat products in addition to its flagship black pudding, and supplies many high-end restaurants.

### **An eye on expansion**

Annascaul Black Pudding first worked with Local Enterprise Office Kerry (then the Kerry County Enterprise Board) almost two decades ago.

“Annascaul Black Pudding had been made on the premises since 1916,” says Eileen. “Around 2001, we had started to retail the black pudding in Dingle.

“We wanted to grow to add to this product range and also to increase retail distribution, but this wasn’t possible with the production facility we were operating from at the time.”

The company received business expansion funding to renovate its production premises and then received a further grant that helped to fund new equipment.

### **Accessing further funding**

A further Business Expansion Grant in 2013 enabled the business to further improve its production facility and adopt up-to-date software.

“The financial support we have received to help us purchase equipment has been invaluable,” says Thomas. “In our case, it meant the difference of being able to add to our product range and, as a direct result of this, increase employment, adding four full-time employees and a further one to two during peak periods.”



**Making It Happen:** Tomás Hayes, Head of Enterprise with LEO Kerry.

Tomás Hayes, Head of Enterprise with Local Enterprise Office Kerry, explains that it can't always offer funding to a business, but can always advise on options.

"We can point people in the direction of other funding sources such as LEADER, FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Groups) and Enterprise Ireland," he says. "We also talk through grant applications with clients and offer support in completing their grant application."

"We can advise businesses about new programmes that may be coming down the track, such as GradStart, which enables a business to take on a graduate for two years. These supports may be the thing that takes the business to the next level."

#### Embracing digital education

Annascaul Black Pudding may be a heritage business, but the Ashes are acutely aware of the value in digital marketing and ecommerce for their business.

Through Local Enterprise Office Kerry, they have completed training in Facebook marketing, Instagram marketing and video marketing, while also availing of mentoring specifically related to social media.

Other non-financial supports the company has embraced have included HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control point) mentoring and family succession planning.

#### Making the most of mentors

"Being able to chat with someone in the Local Enterprise Office and confidentially discuss options is a huge asset," says Eileen.

"Mentoring is incredibly important. Being matched with a relevant expert is invaluable. Small businesses are often caught up with the operational side of things and the Local Enterprise Office is a fantastic resource to help us focus on the strategic side of business."

#### Partnering for the long run

Annascaul Black Pudding has been engaged with the Local Enterprise Office Kerry team for almost 20 years. "Thomas and Eileen have set their own growth strategies and identified opportunities, but dip in and out of the services available from us," says Tomás.

**"Small businesses are often caught up with the operational side of things and the Local Enterprise Office is a fantastic resource to help us focus on the strategic side of business."**

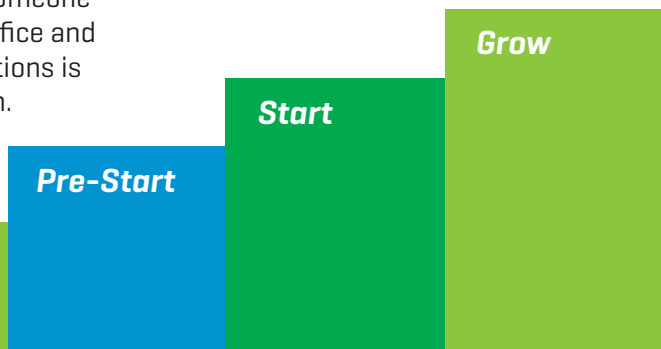
*Eileen Ashe, Annascaul Black Pudding*

"They return regularly to be informed about the supports on offer and even to offer suggestions on how we improve our services. It is testament to them that this relationship has been maintained for such a long time. It is encouraging to see a business return over time for support and advice."

**TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN. TALK TO YOUR LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE TODAY**

## TOP TIPS FROM ANNASCAUL BLACK PUDDING

- Pick up the phone and ring your Local Enterprise Office. Even if you're not sure what they can offer or what you might need, they will know! They offer a really warm welcome and wealth of knowledge, and they are on your side.
- You can't do or know everything. Any individual business has its strength in developing its core product or service and won't always have all of the other expertise necessary to survive in business. Your Local Enterprise Office can help you access the right support and expertise.



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