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ROB WALSH

Spud



Rob Walsh moved from Ireland to Toronto in Canada in 2016 to develop his expertise in working in the world of creating and managing experiential events.

He had been working in a similar role in Dublin but wanted to get experience faster in a larger market.

During six years in Toronto, he worked at two experiential marketing event agencies where he turned islands off Toronto into French Riviera experiences, curated car launches for Porsche and pop-up shops in Tokyo for South Park.

He then decided to bring his experience home to Wicklow where he founded Spud, which creates bespoke journeys in Ireland for tourists and corporate groups.

The decision to return to Ireland was to be close to family but there was also an underlying entrepreneurial motive. “The longer I was away, the more I knew I wanted to be at home in the long term, but I also knew that at some point I wanted to create a business in Ireland that was rooted

to Ireland itself and to the people and its culture,” he says.

The concept is that Spud shows Ireland in a unique way that’s more experiential and more creative and more tied to the interest and the reasons people have in choosing to come to Ireland in the first place.

Rob says being back in Ireland has been amazing in part because his business is so tied to Ireland itself. “I couldn’t do it anywhere else in the world, but I’m also close to my family and I think Ireland’s a very different place to when I left it. It’s multicultural, it’s cool, it’s got everything for everybody. And I love living here,” he says.

After the initial typical challenges of setting up the business and acquiring clients, Rob has been very pleased with how the business has gone so far. “I don’t feel like I have a job now. I feel like I get to do what I love to do every day, and I can design every day based on how I want to do it,” he says.

He found the Back for Business programme to be a great benefit both for networking and mentorship. “It was also great to have a cohort of people that experienced similar

ups and downs in setting up businesses but who also have a unique perspective because of having lived outside of Ireland for a period of time and therefore had to rebuild their networks. I think that was a particularly strong part of it,” he says.

A recent major milestone for Spud was the NFL weekend in Dublin in September when the Pittsburgh Steelers played the Minnesota Vikings in Croke Park. “We hosted the board of a global fast food company in Ireland for the NFL game for four days and created immersive experiences tied to sport and their business. We also hosted a high-end leisure group for the game. Securing those two pieces of business has been transformational for the business,” he says.

Having recently hired his first employee, an operations manager, Rob plans to grow the team sustainably to another three people by the end of 2026. “I’d like at least two people servicing clients and I would love to get a sales and marketing person on board as well. The aim would be to increase revenues by four times in the next 18 months. I think that’s doable,” he says.

SPUD
 Culturally Rooted Experiences.

POSITION

Founder

WHAT WE DO

We create bespoke experiential journeys in Ireland for tourists and corporate groups.

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