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ROB WALSH

Spud



Rob Walsh moved from Ireland to Toronto, Canada, in 2016 to build his career in the world of experiential events. While he had already been working in the industry in Dublin, he wanted to accelerate his experience by working in a larger, more competitive market.

During six years in Toronto, he worked with two experiential marketing agencies, delivering large-scale brand experiences including transforming Toronto Islands into a French Riviera setting, producing vehicle launches for Porsche, and creating major pop-up brand activations for international clients.

He then decided to bring that experience home to Wicklow, where after two years of working at the Dublin office of Allied Global Marketing, he founded SPUD, a company that designs bespoke journeys across Ireland for leisure travellers and corporate groups. The decision to return was driven by a desire to be closer to family, but also by an entrepreneurial ambition. “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 in Ireland itself, its people and its culture,” he says.

The concept behind SPUD is to showcase Ireland in a more creative and personal way, designing experiences around the interests and motivations that bring people to Ireland in the first place.

Rob says returning to Ireland has been hugely rewarding because the business is so closely connected to the country. “I couldn’t do it anywhere else in the world, but I’m also close to my family and I think Ireland is a very different place to when I left. It’s multicultural, it’s vibrant, it has something for everyone, and I love living here,” he says.

After the usual challenges of starting a business and building a client base, Rob has been delighted with the company’s progress. “I don’t feel like I have a job now. I feel like I get to do what I love every day, and I can build the business in a way that reflects how I want to work,” he says.

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

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

A recent milestone for SPUD has been securing partnerships with leading global tour operators and corporate event planners, allowing the business to scale significantly. “We’re now working with some of the world’s leading travel brands and organisations to design bespoke programmes for leisure travellers, incentive groups and executive teams visiting Ireland. Winning that calibre of business has been transformational because it has given us a strong platform for sustainable growth and international reach,” he says.

Looking ahead, Rob’s focus is on further growing the team alongside the business. “The goal is to build a talented team that shares the same passion for delivering exceptional experiences. As the business continues to grow, bringing in the right people will be one of the most important parts of the journey,” 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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