



Derval O'Rourke

Derval.ie

GOING FOR GROWTH PROFILE

NAME:

Derval O'Rourke

BUSINESS

Derval.ie

POSITION

Founder

WHAT WE DO

We are a healthy lifestyle platform where our community has unique access to experts sharing practical, reliable information and advice about food, fitness and wellness.

CONTACT US

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As a three-time Olympian and former world champion, Derval O'Rourke certainly doesn't need any introduction to an Irish audience. And her background in world of athletics uniquely positions her to have a voice of authority in the world of fitness, food and wellness.

Established in 2017, Derval.ie is a healthy lifestyle platform where she shares her learnings from her former professional career as well as life as a busy mother and business-owner.

The website is an innovative subscription-based model that offers members an affordable platform where they gain access to expert advice and community support. While other online platforms focus on either food, fitness or wellness, Derval.ie has a unique blend of advice from a range of experts on all three.

As an athlete, Derval was operating as a sole trader and always knew she wanted to be an entrepreneur. After she retired, she worked for two years as a player development manager with the Munster rugby squad.

"I had lots of ideas for a business going through my head during this time. I wrote a cookery book, which was more of a passion project than a business idea, but it was successful and that was where the seed was sown," says Derval, who was on the 9th cycle of Going for Growth with Caroline Keeling as her Lead Entrepreneur. She also participated in Going for Growth's follow-on programme, Continuing the Momentum, in 2020 with Breege O'Donoghue as her Lead.

"The key to the business is building a community of people that support each other. Our aim is to be the biggest online community in the country and to keep delivering real value at a relatively low price. Going for Growth massively helped me to grow and develop the business. It pointed out to me where the gaps in my business were and I loved that as, where there are gaps, there is room to grow."

Derval has taken on a business partner, Greg O'Gorman, who was former Marketing Director of the Kilkenny Group to help her develop the business. There are now five full-time staff members and the business has a subscription base of 8,000.

During Covid-19 pandemic, the platform continued to thrive, and, at the end of 2020, Derval launched an online shop selling her own products, including her cook book and a lifestyle journal. She has plans to add good quality Irish products from other suppliers to the shop and to extend her own line of products.

"In a way, we were lucky because our business was already online, so we were already in that mindset when everyone started to go online. Covid has made us look at our finances and day-to-day operations to see how we can become leaner and manage sales better. But we are delighted to be coming out of 2020 with all our staff intact and to feel confidence for the future."

Looking ahead, Derval.ie is hoping to hire another two to three staff members in the next 12 months and to heavily invest in technology to improve its offerings. *"In 2021, we plan to launch a new app and we want to really up the game in terms of the tech side of things so that we can give our customers the ultimate user experience."*

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