




Local Enterprise Office
Making It Happen

Start: BIA AT HOME

BIA AT HOME IS BUILDING A NATIONAL PROFILE WITH THE HELP OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE MAYO

Making It Happen: Michelle Kerrigan, who runs Bia at Home

Taking the step from becoming an employee of a business to running it singlehandedly can be pretty daunting, but Michelle Kerrigan has succeeded in doing it.

Having worked for Bia at Home for some years, she took it over in 2018 when the original founder decided to emigrate.

While she knew the business well, she wanted to focus on increasing sales and brand recognition for the business. Aware that Bia at Home had already received grant funding towards equipment, she looked to Local Enterprise Office Mayo for further support.

Building a resilient business

Bia at Home produces healthy homecooked meals in Ballinrobe and delivers them nationwide. It currently offers 24 main meal options and four soups.

While the business was well known in Mayo, Michelle wanted to expand its reach.

“Having met with Michelle over a period of time, we identified a number of strategic goals for her business, including increasing capacity for production to meet a likely growth in demand,” says Elaine Moyles of Local Enterprise Office Mayo.

“Local Enterprise Office Mayo helped with doing this through a Business Expansion Grant, which enabled Michelle to purchase equipment to facilitate this.”

Buying equipment is a typical use of a Business Expansion Grant, says Elaine, along with upgrading existing equipment, facilitating the hiring of new employees and, in some cases, funding specialist consultants to help grow a business.



Making It Happen: Elaine Moyles of Local Enterprise Office Mayo.

“We work in a developmental capacity with businesses,” she said, “and try to identify their current and future needs to help them prepare for the next stage.”

Mentoring to drive sales

Bia at Home also benefitted from mentoring organised by the Local Enterprise Office, which was aimed at helping Michelle to boost her sales and marketing activities.

She says this mentoring proved invaluable to her business. “The mentoring really helped me hugely. I had no sales background and the mentor really enhanced that side of things for me. I knew my stuff, but that gave me the confidence to promote my business.”

Working towards growth

In 2020, Michelle plans to expand her business further, with the addition of a vegan range of meals and by employing a new staff member.

As a sole trader, Michelle also appreciated how the Local Enterprise Office enabled her to seize various opportunities.

“It can be hard to grow the business while you’re running the business, but I have a great relationship with the Local Enterprise Office,” says Michelle. “They come straight back to me with answers to any questions I have.”

“They also understand how different supports work. They know my business and they know what will work for me.”

Local Enterprise Office Mayo has also invited Michelle to take a place on its Facebook for Business Advanced course, having identified this as another opportunity for her to expand the reach of her marketing.

“The sales and marketing mentoring from LEO Mayo really helped me hugely.”

Michelle Kerrigan, Bia at Home.

Taking the first step

For would-be or current entrepreneurs interested in emulating Michelle’s success, Elaine says their Local Enterprise Office should be their first stop.

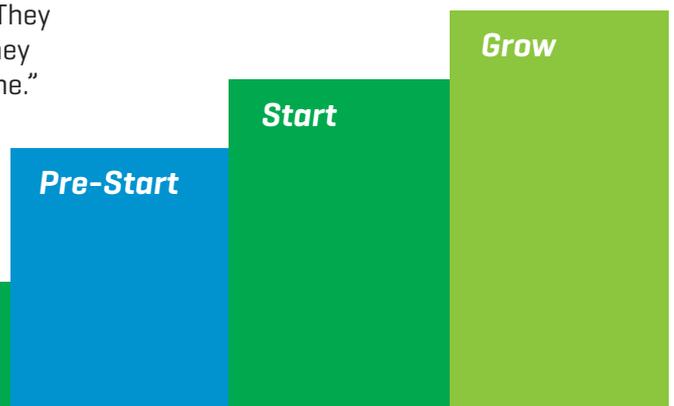
“If you are interested in setting up your business, we can help you with Start your Own Business training and, if you decide to go ahead, we can provide specialist mentoring, as well as financial assistance in certain situations to help you get started,” she says.

“If you are thinking of expanding your business, we can equally provide guidance and financial assistance to help you achieve your business development goals. The main thing is to get in contact with us and have a chat.”

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

TOP TIPS FROM BIA AT HOME

- Remember the Local Enterprise Office is a huge asset to your business and can support you from the very start.
- If you’re starting a new business, do not be frightened of the paperwork that may be involved at the outset. When you’re working with the Local Enterprise Office – they are there to help you with it.



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