

The Galway Voice

Whatever goes on, goes in

A DAY IN THE LIFE

BEST BUILT WEB

Richard Moyles, MD of Furniture.ie recently won Best Commercial Website at Digital Media Awards. With a keen sense of business, he also won an Internet Entrepreneur Award in 2006.

"I STARTED the company myself initially. I did a project in college called 'The 'e' in Furniture', and I suppose the whole business developed from there. I have a background in Fine Woodwork and Design, then I did a Bachelor of Science in Furniture Technology. So I graduated in 2000, and I registered the company name that year but I held onto it for a while. I set up the company myself in late 2002, and 2003 was when it really started coming together. That's when I took on a designer, and we worked on developing the site. This took a bit longer than I had planned, but that's because we were very particular about it, we wanted it to be just right. It progressed from there, which led to me taking on my first employee. And it kept on developing. Now there are five members of staff here.

What inspired me to set up Furniture.ie were my own experiences of sourcing products and seeing the difficulties and frustrations of shopping around. I thought that shopping online would be a much more efficient way of going about it, allowing people to save time and money. It's all about finding the right product and then finding out where to purchase it from. And our website means visitors can source products, services, and information for the home from a single location.

Furniture.ie allows companies to advertise and promote their products online, so it's really placing their products and services in a position where consumers have direct access to them. Our focus then is to grow the awareness of our own online brand, and to also continually develop and enhance our website. It's very much a consumer driven site. Our focus would be on the users of our own site, making sure it is usable, and that as much detail and information as possible is available. As well as information on products and services, we have a 'Get Inspired' section which gives people decorating ideas and inspiration. We also always feature a lot of information about what's going on in the market, allowing people to keep up to date with what's

happening.

Last year I made the decision to make sure that every product we put up had a price on it, because otherwise it's very frustrating for a visitor to the site. We also take note of the feedback we get from our visitors through the surveys that we do.

The booming property market has resulted in continuous growth for the site. Over 70,000 people visit our site each month, and we have over 14,000 registered members. There's a great interest in the home these days. The look of their home is a big decision for people to make. They like to take time over it, and make sure that they end up with the products that are right for them. It's not always about the price, people also want to make sure the product fits in with their style and the style of their home.

My routine changes every day. Generally, I'd be in the office at around half eight or nine, dealing with e-mail queries and things like that. Then from eleven o'clock onwards, I might have meetings with accountants or at banks. Then after lunch, I might have client meetings in relation to sales. In the evenings I have quite flexible hours. Sometimes I return to the office to check things, but I often check my emails from outside the office. I'm always accessible online which means I have a twenty-four hour office really. But I do make an effort to switch off in the evenings, and try to do something else.

I'm very keen on sports, especially swimming. During my free time, mainly at the weekend, I like to stay outdoors, and don't spend as much time in front of a computer screen. I do a lot of farming. At the beginning, when I first started out, I was working very long hours but now I keep more regular hours because of the increased staff numbers. I don't ever really stop thinking about the business, my mind is constantly ticking over about it and I sometimes check on things in the evenings but I prefer it that way. I'm very happy with what I'm doing, so it doesn't bother me to spend time thinking about it."

College... It all started from a college project called 'The 'e' in Furniture'

