

The Super Fungi; Story of a Start-Up

Just this week Hugh McCarthy and Martin Condon of ['The Super Fungi'](#) graduated from Cork Institute of Technology after completing their BSc in Herbal Science.



In the coming weeks, the pair are launching The Super Fungi functional food range. Introducing high quality products derived from medicinal mushrooms into the Irish Market.

The future looks bright for these super guys, but it hasn't been easy. Starting-up businesses rarely are.

There are several stage to starting a business, each of which present their own trials and tribulations.

So, let's have a look at the 5 stages in the 'Story of a Start-Up'

1. Finding your idea

This can happen in the blink of an eye, or wracking your brain for years and years to find something innovative and new.

But no matter how you come about the idea for a start-up, the good one's stick in your mind like chewing gum. They're hard to get rid of and don't budge unless you get up and do something about it.

The idea for Super Fungi came about when Hugh and Martin were in college.

The pair met each other when studying [Herbal Science in CIT](#). They instantly became friends and both had a huge passion for human health and performance.

Their particular interest was in medicinal plants and super-foods and through research for various college projects, Hugh and Martin found information about medicinal mushrooms and their health benefits.

The results excited them.

And idea was born.

2. Solving a Problem

Passion, drive and an idea is what propels a business.

However, to sustain a business your idea needs to be solving a problem.

There needs to be a gap in the market, an untapped resource, a need that is not yet satisfied.

Excited by possibilities that were presented to them through their research into medicinal mushrooms, Martin and Hugh we went searching for these mushrooms in Health Food and Supplement shops around Cork.

They were surprised to find a lack of mushroom supplements especially high quality ones being

produced in Europe.

Eventually they found a supplier for mushroom extracts but they were in a powder form and found it difficult to fit these powders into daily eating habits.

The pair ended up mixing them into all sorts of foods and drinks and came up with a few recipes that they really liked.

They were onto something...

3. Start to Make the Idea a Reality

This is the defining moment of starting your own business. It is taking that leap of faith and believing in yourself, your idea and your research. It takes courage and persistence.

It can be a daunting prospect as there are so many nuances to starting a business but you can't know until you try.



There are also many resources available for entrepreneurs at this stage of business development, with people actively supporting the transition from idea to reality and people who really want you to succeed.

The Super Fungi duo found this support in the Rubicon centre as part of the [Student Inc. program](#) offered through CIT.

“The Rubicon centre was pivotal... it gave us all of the skills and mentoring to complete a fully developed business plan and to begin product testing. But, more importantly it gave us time and a space

to critique and develop our idea and turn it into a real business plan.” – Hugh McCarthy, co-founder of The Super Fungi.

The Super Fungi business was nourished in an environment of co-working entrepreneurs with an array of skills and experience.

4. Adapting, Refining and Learning

The next stage of starting your business is realising the limitations of the resources available at hand.

The only way to progress past this stage is adapting your plans and strategies, based on what you have learned so far to meet more realistic goals and outcomes.

This can be very difficult at the helm of your own business as you may feel that you don't want to compromise your ideas based on imperfect circumstances but sometimes this just means adapting your route so that you can successfully arrive at your final destination.

Martin and Hugh originally wanted to run The Super Fungi business solely between the two of them. They wanted to do everything themselves. They want to grow their own mushrooms, produce the functional foods supplements and distribute them.

They even began to grow mushrooms in the office of the Rubicon centre, during their time in Student Inc. This was a particularly popular attraction to the other businesses working in the Rubicon and they were frequently greeted with intrigued visitors.

However, this just wasn't realistic.

It was a difficult idea to let go of as there was so much interest in the mushrooms themselves.

But as Hugh said;

“If it wasn't difficult then it wouldn't be worth doing,”

And after hard work and good advice they now have a product and a plan that they can implement.

5. Moving Forward

The key to success is when you fall down, get back up again.

Mistakes are one of the greatest things to happen, as you can learn and come out stronger.

As an entrepreneur you must work, learn, reflect, and then work, learn, reflect and continue to build upon what you have experienced and achieved so far.

The Super Fungi business is about to launch their first range of functional foods in the coming weeks.

They will be starting off “lean and mean” selling their great tasting products at farmers markets around Cork. But, they have plans to be in independent Health Food shops all over the country in the not too distant future.

I will conclude with some advice from The Super Fungi partners to other budding entrepreneurs that are thinking about starting their own business?

“I would say ask for help and advice early and often, people have been so generous with their time and knowledge and we wouldn't be where we are today without having asked for help many times; also don't take drawbacks or criticism to heart, at the end of the day it is a learning process and everybody will make mistakes along the way. If you have the opportunity to apply for The Student Inc programme then go for it, you have absolutely nothing to lose and all to gain.”



Make sure to follow these guys on Facebook to keep up to date with their Start-Up Story

[The Super Fungi](#)