



Company Name

Muddy Souls

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Muddy Souls is about Wellbeing Escapes in nature. Paul is an expert nature and mountain guide bringing people on amazing hikes up some of the most amazing Irish mountains while at the same time helping them improve their mental health.

Mental health and well being is a key part of Muddy Souls experiences, Paul believes true healing occurs in the natural environment. He brings people where they can feel free, feel the benefits of nature and learn and appreciate all its beauty and complexity. Paul ensures his customers feel like they have accomplished something they never thought they would. He makes sure they feel a real sense of pride getting them out of their comfort zones and helping them overcome a challenging adventure battling all the elements, terrain and pushing their physical capabilities to the max.

Paul's Tours cover any mountain within the 32 Irish counties. He tells amazing stories and educates his customers about nature, wildlife, history and the area. He makes sure to bring guests to amazing panoramic views where their breath is taken away and they truly feel alive and invigorated.

Click to Read My Blog and My Story [Irish Born, Leitrim Bred but Reared in Nature](#)



WHAT WAS **THE TRIGGER** FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ENTREPRENEURIAL IDEA?



I had myself gone through some mental health and depression periods of my life. I soon realized how powerful nature was, after a few adventures it allowed me to heal by escaping and immersing myself in nature and let go of everything. The health benefits were so important for my mental health too. It improved my physical wellbeing, boosted my mood, reduced my stress, calmed my anxiety and I was able to stop overthinking.

When I talked to other people, especially men I realized they were going through the same thing and felt helpless like I did. I wanted to show them and other people the power of nature, being in the outdoors, discovering waterfalls, animals and forests, seeing amazing panoramic view how the benefits of these beautiful places and the expedition would help them in a profound way even regardless if they were going through a bad time or not.

HOW DOES THE BUSINESS HELP TO ADDRESS REGIONAL **CLIMATE CHANGE OR SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES?**



I live by the Leave No Trace 7 Principles and Guidelines to protect and enjoy the outdoors for generations to come. These simple measures mean everyone can still enjoy the outdoors but so can others, and of course future generations to come. Making a difference even very small and with the simplest of actions can make such an impact on our environments. When I am organizing a trip, tour or expedition I always inform my customers about how they can minimize impact on the environment e.g., come by carpool, don't leave any rubbish behind, don't go where you're not supposed to go and respect other peoples land, don't be noisy, let others pass, don't disturb or take away from heritage and cultural sites. Here is one of the Leave no Trace guides I follow so I am up to speed, have the skills I need and know what I can to sustain the environment.

Check out a preview of one of my Darkness into Light adventures;





Wander Deep Into Nature and Understand Everything Better!

Paul Rooney

Founder and Owner of Muddy Souls

HOW IS YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE **INNOVATIVE**? WHAT GAP IN THE MARKETPLACE DOES IT FILL?



I believe my hikes provide the best medicine going – nature and the outdoors. I believe nature is an untapped source to improve particularly mental and physical health. People have said to me after one of my trips ‘I feel like I have taken my first ever proper breath’. I work with other tour companies and adventure guides. Creating this network is so important to all of our businesses. We work together to develop packages and most of our bookings are done online. We offer packages that include foraging, glamping and wellbeing therapies. We educate our guests and make sure they feel the magic of nature and are hungry to come back for more or tell others.

Digital wise [Wix](#) website builder was a game changer for me. Its API capability meant developing my own website has been so easy, especially when I had no idea how to build a website. I have even added in a book tours section, events and merchandise store etc. I also use [Canva](#) for video production and designing my marketing collateral. My drone is my go-to tool for the ultimate videos and images, making my experiences visually come to life.

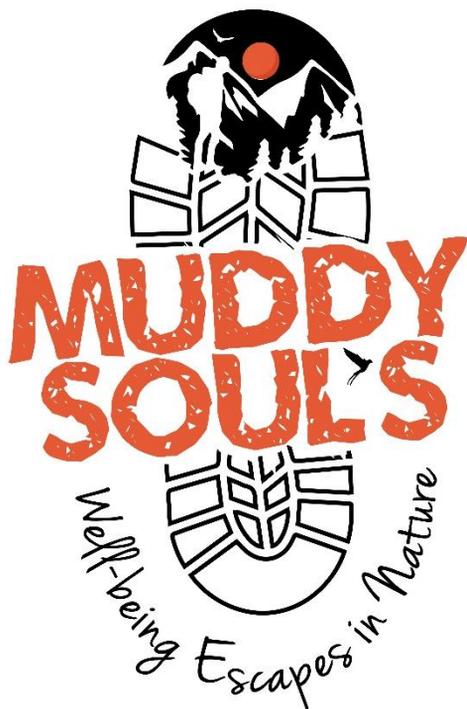
WHERE DID YOU SOURCE THE MAIN **SUPPORT AND RESOURCES** (E.g. Grants And Other Support)?



To date I have self funded Muddy Souls. My company is only a year old, but I am currently talking to my local enterprise office in Leitrim. I have received some highly valuable mentoring, advice and business training that will can assist me in developing my business in a sustainable way while still achieving my business objectives. They have given me great advice on how I can develop as an entrepreneur, funding supports, awards and who to contact for any of my business needs. I am a firm believer in getting all the help I can and getting all the information I can before I make a decision that will impact the future of my company. The Leitrim Enterprise Office will remain one of my main go to for support and resources.



The Biggest Thing Between You and That Mountain is You!



WHAT **ADVICE** DO YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE ACCESSED WHEN YOU STARTED?



As I said I am only a year in business, so I am definitely still learning. So far, I have learned to get the right advice and information from recommended or referred sources in order to make good business decisions. I have found the information and advice I have needed so far by tapping into as many sources as I can through people, meetings, phone calls to complementary companies, tourism organisations, joining networks, other companies, experts, trainers and my local enterprise office. The learning never stops for me.

So, in essence I would say set up and build a support network that fits your business needs. Covering anything from marketing, packaging strategies, insurance, funding etc. As a result, before I make any decisions, I ensure to contact my network of expertise beforehand so that it is an informed decision.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN **OBSTACLES OR BARRIERS** YOU ENCOUNTERED?



The main obstacles and barriers were how to set up my company properly e.g., should I set up as a Sole Trader or Limited company, how to register my company name. By talking to the right people, I was soon sign posted where to go and who to talk to. LEO were key to getting this right.

I also work full time; I have to work around that and schedule in my company. I am on my own, so I have had to learn a lot of new skills outside of my comfort zone; how to use a drone, build a website, write blogs and write digital marketing campaigns. I found by starting with my logo and getting that perfect the rest fell into place. I was apprehensive to learning all these new things at first, but they are now my saviors and save me huge expense as I don't need to outsource. I also enjoy getting creative and seeing my brand come to life.



HOW SUCCESSFUL HAS IT BEEN?

My business has been successful so far because I believe I am trying to do something different and beneficial to people's overall health. I have remained focused on this competitive advantage and of course the business side of things can't be neglected. My success to date has been based on a mixture of many things; building my skills through training and mentoring. As a result I am able to run a more sustainable profitable business learning good management skills; ability to plan, ask for help, develop pricing packages, organize events, manage and control my finances, and not cut corners on my marketing and business needs. I also make sure I am constantly evolving my marketing skills. For example; I am learning about SEO to make sure my customers can find me. I optimise Google My Business, regularly refresh and develop engaging content and videos, upload new itineraries, blogs and other SEO compatible requirements. I believe my success is I am always striving to become a better 'experience entrepreneur'. My reputation is also priority, I make sure my customers are happy but also safe and try to develop good relationships, partner and work with other businesses and networks. Looking at my future progression I would like to look and learn more about digital tools and technologies, use more sustainable and green practices in order to strengthen my ethics, mission, brand and how I run my business.



WAS SUCCESS A RESULT OF INDIVIDUAL WORK OR COLLABORATION (OR BOTH)?

Definitely collaboration and getting the right people around me to support me, teach me and gel with. I couldn't have done it all on my own. I didn't for example know how to set up a website, design a logo, write itineraries and content so I had to get people I knew to refer recommended people.

Working with other businesses like tour provider [Nourished in Nature Ireland](#) allowed me to improve my packages and experiences. I was able to learn from Lou and she was able to learn from me, we pooled resources and were able to expose ourselves better by promoting each other in front of each others' audiences.

Working with local enterprise offices, communities and of course my followers I was able to build much needed support, gain recognition and get connected to other potential partners. By working with local enterprise office and the local tourism organisation I was able to gain new connections and partnerships with other tourism providers. We constantly synergise so we can collectively gain great outcomes by sharing our experiences, broadening our knowledge, and activating our ideas. My support network has also been key to staying in touch and keeping informed, not feeling alone, accessing resources such as funding, learning about training so I can reach my business goals e.g., innovative packaging, promotional techniques, tendering for grants or funding. All of these measures have given me huge leverage and power.