

Klara Heron meets two Irish entrepreneurs who've taken their businesses to the next level by opening online stores

MOSASTUDIO.IE

Siobhan Burke sources furniture and interiors pieces around the world for her business, Mosa Studio. She uses her online store to reach customers and showcase these unique items.

What inspired you to start an online business? I created Mosa from my passion for sourcing and creating unique pieces, especially recreating salvaged items into unique furniture pieces. So often people would admire the unusual pieces I have used in my home or on jobs that I worked on, but would say they wouldn't have the confidence to buy them for their home. Although I loved the idea of setting up a retail outlet to sell my products, I didn't want the financial and time constraints tied to setting up a store, so I created Mosa as an online gallery to showcase my products. It gives people a taste of the unique pieces I buy, with many other products that I source on demand. I want Mosa to inspire people to be a bit more creative with their thinking on interiors, mixing modern, antique and salvaged pieces to create a unique, eclectic look in their homes and commercial spaces.

What are the challenges of setting up an online store?

There are so many challenges at the initial stages. Firstly, the expense of a website designer. With a limited budget I found it difficult to get someone that covers both the technical and creative areas – I learned the hard way. Looking back you need to know exactly what you want, how you want your product portrayed and how you want it to work technically. This is difficult to do on a tight budget. I worked with a few different people before I found one that covered all these areas. I was also lucky enough to have a talented friend, founder of Detail Design, who gave his honest, critical opinions along the way.

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ate their own ideas. I love when people email me to say they fell in love with a piece shown on the website. I'm always nervous when they see it for real, in the studio, but so far people haven't been disappointed.

A website is an ongoing project, I find this challenging as each time I get new pieces I have the expense of photo shoots, and the item could be sold from the studio floor before I even get the image online. I would advise people starting out to get a good photographer or, even better, take a photography class themselves.

How do you reach your customers? I am lucky that we have a lot of clients from all different fields that visit the studio and will then follow or subscribe online. We then send occasional emails to keep them updated on new stock, sales, etc. My website is more of a gallery to showcase the pieces I have bought but I have an array of contacts to source other pieces. Usually if people are very interested in a piece they will arrange a visit to the studio.

What are the best things about having an online store?

The flexibility of it is great. I'm an early riser so I can get a lot done before the family has even surfaced. Then I can be very flexible during the day and check back in the evening. I find I need to be stricter with myself on days when I'm busy in the studio, to keep the website customers updated too.

What is your favourite thing about what you do? I love travelling to source new products. I have great contacts and love visiting the warehouses to see all the bizarre pieces. I get interesting clients that pop into the studio, from architects, interior designers, movie prop buyers and set designers to people that share my passion for unique pieces for their home. I love that Mosa is based within a salvage yard so for me there is inspiration all around me. www.mosastudio.ie

