

Agnes Maher

The Thoughtful Shopper



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Agnes Maher admits to taking a somewhat circuitous route to entrepreneurship with her personalised shopping service, The Thoughtful Shopper.

The native of Portarlington, Co. Laois, followed an undergraduate degree in archaeology and politics with a Master's in business and tourism. That qualification took her to Boston where she worked with a US tour company designing upmarket package holidays for American tourists. On returning home, she studied to become a schoolteacher before marrying her husband and having four children.

"It's an eclectic mix of experience but it's all served me very well up to now," says Agnes.

"I had been eager to start my own business for a long time, but it wasn't until Covid hit that I finally had time to focus on it. Friends would often say that I have great taste and ask me to buy gifts for them. I realised then that this was a very credible business idea and set up The Thoughtful Shopper in June 2021."

She confesses that the business has grown in ways she did not expect over the past two years. After developing her website and fostering relationships with corporate clients and suppliers of Irish-made luxury products, she has found that the most sustainable path forward is to focus her offering on personal shopping rather than the labour-intensive area of corporate gifting.

She continues: "I'm going to concentrate on that niche going forward. Although I've had great successes, like when a client engaged me to find a gift for King Charles for his coronation day, I don't think that I could endure another Christmas like my last, packaging 400 individual gifts for a corporate client."

Agnes hails the "phenomenal" influence of ACORNS on the growth of her business.

"The other female entrepreneurs in my group have the same problems. The group support is fantastic. All the women are invested in each other's success," she adds.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
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