

An experience LIKE NO OTHER



Take 24 of Ireland's most prominent entrepreneurs, pair them with 24 of Ireland's brightest up-and-coming entrepreneurs and subject them to 24 hours of intense mentoring. The results can be life-changing, as **Pete Smyth** of Broadlake explains



Each year, a limited number of places are made available to international entrepreneurs to attend, adding another dimension to the program. To date, entrepreneurs have come from across the globe including Britain, Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Chile, Rwanda and the US. The program has also attracted a number of Social Enterprises in recent years, including well-known Irish businesses Foodcloud and Recreate.

The experience

The Experience takes the entrepreneurs on a 24-hour journey of reflection and analysis, critiquing themselves as entrepreneurs and their businesses. Many have never stopped to spend time working "on" their business, as opposed to "in" their business before. The seasoned entrepreneurs get into the souls of the individuals and ask the often uncomfortable but essential questions.

It can be a rollercoaster for the entrepreneurs. Words frequently used to describe the emotions of the experience include intense, open and honest, revealing, relieving, liberating, engaging, insightful and real. But at the end of the Experience, all 24 emerging entrepreneurs will take implementable changes back into their businesses.

From tweaks to radical changes, from greater focus to less fear, the learnings make a real and lasting difference.

The emerging entrepreneurs

No two entrepreneurs are the same, but the successful ones often share common characteristics and traits. Every year we find common characteristics across the final 24 selected for the programme.

They share a self-belief that helps them overcome setbacks and adversity on their journey. They believe in making things better and doing things differently. They embrace change and see the opportunities that change presents. They share an impatience and drive to make things happen quickly adopting a "less talk and more action" approach. But, most importantly, they want to win and realise the personal pain that failure would bring.

The seasoned entrepreneurs

To date, leading Irish entrepreneurs including Jim Barry (Barry Group), Johnny Walker (Health Founders), Peaches Kemp (Itsa), Larry Bass (ShinAwil), Donal Garrihy (2468 Group) Pádraig Ó Céidigh (formerly Aer Arann), Gráinne Kelly (Bubblebum), Michael Hoyne (Merlyn) and Mary McKenna (Tour America) have all given their time generously to the program. Their commitment to helping emerging

In the coming weeks, a large number of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs will gather for the annual pilgrimage that is the Entrepreneur Experience. The location of the 2018 Experience is the retreat-like setting of Ballymaloe House in Co Cork. The annual event, now in its eighth year, has helped more than 200 emerging entrepreneurs to scale their businesses to date.

While the location is tranquil, the agenda is demanding. The format is simple: take 24 of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs, match them up with 24 of Ireland's most talented emerging entrepreneurs and put them together for 24 hours of intense mentoring. The results can be life-changing.

The competition

This year, the competition has been fierce for the 24 places among the emerging entrepreneurs with over 100 entrepreneurs competing for a place in the final 24. The class of 2018 has now been selected and the process of matching them up individually with some of the country's leading entrepreneurs is now completed.

More than 60 of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs

have given their time and energy to mentoring the next generation of Irish stars since the program was established by Cork BIC and entrepreneur Jim Breen in 2011.

The event is recognised internationally as one of a kind, drawing entrepreneurs annually from sectors as varied as technology, food & beverage, engineering, leisure, medical, pharma, biotech, retail, healthcare and services. Although the sectors are varied, it is remarkable how common the challenges are for the emerging entrepreneurs looking to build world-class businesses.



Above: Caroline Birch of Wild Adventure Way



Left: Liz and Lorna Farrelly of The Brow Artist