

## **Antikytera: From Italian steakhouse to global success**

**Antikytera was started in late 2017 at a steakhouse in Italy by Kris Karà and Paula Guimarães. The two decided to relocate to Ireland to start the business and it proved to be a good decision.**

**Firstly, why did you decide to start the business in Ireland?**

KK: I made then decision to start [Antikytera](#) in Ireland. When it came to deciding where we wanted to set up, Ireland appealed to me because the economy was good and it has a very strong technology sector. Ireland is also highly ranked when it comes to the best countries to start a business and I'm really happy we came here. There are lots of big IT companies and multinationals based here so it's also great to be so close to them.

PG: At first I wasn't sure, but I have to agree with Kris – it was a really good choice to come to Ireland with the business. English was never an issue and we understand the culture here now. People are very supportive here.

**What is the business?**

KK: When we started, the first thing we decided was to make it a service company. We wanted to offer our innovative AR, VR and AI service to SMEs and in the first few months of the business, it was very challenging because SMEs didn't really understand our offering and how it could benefit them. We then made an adjustment and we decided to target bigger companies and multinationals, basically companies with revenue of more than €100m in revenue. It started to pick up and our early clients were delighted with our service and we began to develop clients in Germany and France.

**What do you offer?**

PG: We currently have one main product and it's something we developed for remote assistance. Basically, you can video call someone using our app that allows you to draw on the environment you are in. It helps solves situations much quicker and it doesn't require calling a service centre. If you can imagine an electrician opening a big fuse box and he is not sure which parts to work on, he can call someone to get assistance and the other person can use our features to draw on what needs to be worked on. This will also avoid a lot of errors being made because a specialist is communicating what needs to be done and drawing on where to do it exactly.

KK: Our main asset is the creativity within our product. We are solving a problem in a different way to everyone else and it's also simplifying the user's work. We built this by putting ourselves in the

shoes of the potential user and that has been the key to our success.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_uJvyTf3b2g&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_uJvyTf3b2g&feature=youtu.be)

### **What has been the biggest challenge so far?**

KK: When you start a new business, the most difficult thing is convincing business owners that your offering will greatly benefit their business. Having nothing to go off and having to take you at your word, business owners can be very reluctant to do business with you, mainly because people aren't always comfortable with change.

PG: To add to Kris' point, this is something that a lot of companies are investing in but are not getting the intended results. Companies like Siemens and Microsoft have invested a lot of millions into this and still can't get it right. What we offer guarantees results and greatly improves productivity and reduces costs.

### **How can businesses use your technology?**

Our price plan is very affordable and starts from €18 a month per user and it's a matter of installing an application on your smartphone. You just have to sync your contacts to the application. It doesn't require training either, it's very simple to use and doesn't take long to get a grasp of all the different features.

### **Were you always confident it would work out?**

PG: We were always confident that we would be successful. When you start a business, you'll always have days where you question your decision, but they quickly pass, and you motivate yourself to go again.

KK: As Paula said, you sometimes have bad days, but the key is to never give up. We've made so many sacrifices and risked everything, so that is what motivates me every day. The great thing about running a start-up is you are always forcing yourself to learn. It's impossible to know everything and every day I am improving my knowledge.

### **Last year you received huge investment, how was that?**

KK: According to Enterprise Ireland, we were the most valuable start-up in Ireland in 2019 and I'm so proud of that. We are now valued at more than €10m and we expect this figure to grow. This is only the start of Antikytera's journey, and we are hungry for more success. It's ironic, all the doors that were closed two years ago, are now open. It was made even sweeter because we never took a penny from anyone, the company was completely self-funded.

PG: We are very lucky because we found brilliant investors who fully support our business and believe in what we are trying to achieve. Over the next five years, we want Antikytera to be the global leader in this market and we are confident that we can do this. This was our vision from the start when we had no clients and we have never pivoted from that.

### **How important has the Bank of Ireland workbench in Grand Canal Square been?**

PG: I remember the first time we heard about the workbench, we were fascinated because this is something we never heard of before. Having a desk space with WiFi and not having to pay a monthly fee was so important to us starting off. We couldn't afford to rent an office in the beginning, so this space allowed us to grow the business at a fast pace while costing us nothing. It's in a great location in the city centre and we learnt a lot working alongside other entrepreneurs.

We caught up with Darko Knezevic, manager of the Bank of Ireland workbench in Grand Canal Square.

### **Tell me about the workbench here**

Workbench is here just over five years now and I've been working here the last three years. We've had more than 30k people enter the premises for outside of banking activities. In that time, we've had over 950 events and around 150 start-ups working in this space.

### **It must be great to have a company like Antikytera start here?**

Antikytera is without doubt the most successful company to come out of workbench and it's a testament to the work Kris and Paola have put in over the last two years. They came here with an idea, and now their company is worth several million. It's a great story.

When you look at the start-up scene here in Ireland, the numbers for success stories are not always great. It's a tough environment and more often than not companies will fail, but to be able to use Antikytera as an example to aspiring entrepreneurs is great for us. These two came to Ireland with just an idea, and now they are working with clients all over the world.

*By Stephen Larkin*

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