

## **Circulate is changing music marketing's tune**

**Having client like Faithless, Virgin Media, Universal and Warner Music must be a good feeling. Irish-formed creative agency, Circulate started small and is going global. Here, founders David De Valera and Marcus O'Sullivan talk business with ThinkBusiness.**

### **Describe what you do?**

[Circulate](#) is a creative agency bringing music and people together. We are a one stop marketing agency for musicians. We look after everything, from social media to experiential marketing, branding and design. We've been in business since May 2014.

### **What was your journey to this point, did you always want to be in the music industry?**

*Marcus (left):* I wanted to be an architect, then a management consultant. Then common sense prevailed.

*David:* I wanted to be a mechanical engineer, but I always knew music was my path.

### **What's your ambition now?**

*Marcus:* Our ambition is to continue to grow Circulate on an international level. Our first [Shorty Award](#) win in New York this year was a significant milestone. (Circulate's campaign for a non-stop marathon set from UK garage act DJ EZ in aid of Cancer Research, reached the equivalent of 60% of the UK's population).

*David:* We aim to follow that up with further success over the next twelve months. We also have a new venture on the way to grow our scope further outside of music.

### **'Can't get no sleep'**

In 2015 Circulate started working with Faithless to develop the worldwide marketing strategy for the band's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary comeback album. The agency did the whole campaign including the social media campaign and photography.

### **Any standout lessons learned along the way?**

*Marcus:* In the service industry, people appreciate when you deliver on what you have promised. Alongside that is the fact that you can have some of the greatest ideas in the world, but if you don't back it up with very hard work, it will never get off the ground.

## **Any painful mistakes?**

*David:* Taking things personally. We're incredibly involved in what we do at Circulate, and both music and marketing are part of our lives. However, it's important to be able to separate the two from time to time and keep a healthy work/life balance.

## **Who inspires you in the business world?**

*Marcus:* Elon Musk is someone who seems to be two steps ahead of everyone else constantly. He's not to everyone's taste, but the progress he's made in both electric vehicles and Space exploration is incredible.

*David:* Richard Branson. He discovered some of the biggest artists in the world, and we all know the rest of his story, and he makes it look easy.

## **What aspect of Ireland's business culture would you change?**

*Marcus:* It's no secret the tech sector is booming here with plenty of investment and support for those with new businesses or ideas, but that same enthusiasm is not as forthcoming for those providing a service. Irish people have the talent and personalities to operate one a global level, but they need the right backing and support to do it.

## **How did you initially finance the business?**

*David:* We were self-funded when we started, which was tough but proved valuable in the long run. We've since taken a small bit of investment privately.

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