

ClubZap's winning formula for sports clubs

The founders of Clare-based ClubZap have turned their passion for sport into a business and in doing so they have made social media and e-commerce effortless and less stressful for sports clubs around the world.

Hailing from Sixmilebridge in Clare where they are both members of the local hurling team, Declan Murphy co-founded [ClubZap](#) with Aidan Quilligan.

Like the best of start-ups, it began with a real need and, as they say, necessity is the mother of invention. "We started off as just a service for our own local club in Co Clare and it grew organically from there. We had friends who were members of GAA clubs as expats overseas in places like Singapore, Vietnam and San Francisco and today we are serving 16 regions around the world."

Would ClubZap does is it fosters greater communication within clubs without having team managers run the gauntlet of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and various legal issues, especially when dealing with minors, as well as facilitating the collection of membership fees, also a pain point for club managers."

The app is free to download for a basic version and subscriptions are charged based on the package and other capabilities that are selected. Additional capabilities include e-commerce, for example, and clubs can raise money through club shops selling merchandise or tickets for events.

Tap and collect

"In essence Ireland was our testbed and a fantastic place to start when you consider the grassroots passion behind sports clubs from GAA to rugby. This let us figure out how the product would best work and now we are looking at scaling it overseas in the US and the UK in particular."

Explaining how ClubZap works, Murphy said: "It is a communications and payments platform for sports clubs to engage with their community, simplify membership collection and drive fundraising revenues. Our target audience would be volunteers in clubs. It's all about simplifying how clubs are ran.

"If you are fundraising, it allows you to develop a campaign, gather support and be transparent about how the money will be used. That alone helps to drive further support.

"Club managers can communicate news, events, fixtures, results and whatever else is happening

in the club. It works community-wide so anybody can follow the club.

“The second key piece is around team or group communications, including private communications. While a lot of clubs do use apps like WhatsApp, our app provides better visibility and clear communication.

“The biggest runway for a club is at the start of the year when registrations and membership payments are due. We simplify that whole process for the club and we allow them to run a fundraising campaign, club shop or any events through the system.

“Our value is that we tie that all together under a single platform and also integrate with existing social media channels like Facebook or Twitter. So, it means content is uniform across all your platforms.”

Growing organically

Looking back on the origins of ClubZap, which originally traded as Clubify, Murphy said: “When we started the whole idea was around helping out our own club with the communications issues it was having. Since then the company has grown organically from there and now we’re working on this full-time with four or five staff members.”

The next phase of growth for ClubZap will be focused on the UK where the company has deployed business development staff. “The Irish and UK markets are very similar but obviously the UK is a much larger market.

“We feel we have the opportunity to really make a difference and compete with legacy solutions that don’t have the flexibility to move with the way consumers use mobile apps.

“The reality is that all of these managers and club administrators are volunteers and they too have busy lives and rely heavily on their mobile devices for doing admin tasks like collecting payments, changing venues of games and more,” Murphy concluded.

“ClubZap simplifies that and allows volunteers and club managers to focus on their passion for the game. With a single click on the app you can update the app, your website, your Facebook and Twitter. The whole focus is about simplifying the role of a volunteer in a club and their time is of the essence.”

Pictured above: ClubZap co-founder Declan Murphy. Image: John Kennedy

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