

Limerick start-up Huggnote wows judges on Two Minute Drill

Irish start-up [Huggnote](#) wins \$50,000 after wowing judges during gruelling live pitch event on US TV show Two Minute Drill.

Limerick-based start-up Huggnote has won the top prize of \$50,000 on a US TV show called the [Two Minute Drill](#), a *Dragon's Den* style show that airs on Bloomberg TV and Amazon Prime, reaching 100m homes in the US and globally.

The show, which is hosted by entrepreneur, investor, and best-selling author David Meltzer, saw Huggnote founder Jacqui Meskell, compete against four other entrepreneurs from an array of industries, whereby each have just two minutes to deliver a winning pitch that convinces four esteemed judges their business has what it takes to become the next big thing.

Founded by Jacqui Meskell and her sister Perry, Huggnote enables users to combine a heartfelt personal greeting over the soundtrack of the perfect song - that truly impacts the emotions of the recipient – a literal virtual hug!

Pitch perfect

Two Minute Drill is a passion project of Meltzer, who wanted to create a medium whereby founders could not only hone their pitching skills under extreme pressure, but also inspire and educate other businesses on what it takes to effectively communicate their businesses, whether on TV or in the boardroom.

After the pitch the contestants also receive practical feedback on the highs and lows of the pitch and gain insights into what they can improve in the future.

Meltzer was joined on the panel by three other top US entrepreneurs/investors Rory Cutaia, CEO of Verb Technologies, Jayson Waller, host of the True Underdog Podcast and CEO of POWERHOME Solar, and Rusty Youngblood COO and co-founder of The Outpost and Outpost Ventures, a multi-million dollar business and fund.

During her pitch the Limerick-based founder stressed Huggnote's strong traction and global user adoption.

Drill instruction

However, of her performance on the night Meskell said she didn't get to fit everything in. "It's definitely a lot harder than it looks! Trying to cover all key elements of the business, while fighting a

ticking clock on live TV (the show was recorded as live) is a lot of pressure.

“And then of course there’s always the possibility you’ll be torn apart by the panel – so it’s not for the faint hearted. But I just focused on communicating our vision for Huggnote and tried to connect as authentically as I could, not just with the panel but the viewing audience at large and thankfully it paid off,” she said adding that she was particularly delighted with the feedback from the panel.

“You never know how these things will go. You just have to be yourself. And so, to get such positive comments was really gratifying,” she said.

“You had me at hello and 250,000 beta users, nobody has that,” said host David Meltzer – referencing a famous quote from the movie *Jerry Maguire*, which was inspired by the renowned Leigh Steinberg Sports & Entertainment agency, of which he is former CEO.

He praised Huggnote’s branding as “excellent” and as someone who “backs the jockey” was particularly impressed by Jacqui herself calling her “completely illuminating and honest. That’s someone I want to invest in. That gives you brownie points. A really, really quality pitch ... I appreciate your honesty, humility and charisma,” he said.

The \$50,000 prize also includes mentorship from the panel, which the founders consider the most valuable aspect of winning on the show, citing David Meltzer in particular, who is also a top 100 business coach and host of entrepreneur podcast *The Playbook* - as a major inspiration.

“The panel are all very mission oriented and and we love for example that ‘doing good whilst making money’ is a stated aim of judge Rusty Youngblood of Outpost Ventures, who generously provide the financial investment for the prize” says Jacqui. “So we’re very proud to work them and also Mr Waller and Mr Cutaia who are highly experienced and influential business leaders,” she said.

“Having David Melzter, in particular, as a mentor has been a long-standing goal of ours. We’re deeply impressed by his integrity and obviously we’re very aligned with his mission of empowering 1bn people to be happy. Huggnote is in the happiness business at the end of the day and a huge platform like this – reaching 100 million homes – that’s potentially a lot of hugs, putting smiles on a lot of faces,” she said adding “And yes, him saying ‘you had me at hello’ was a real pinch me moment. We couldn’t have hoped for a better outcome.”

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