

24 businesses leading the rise of online shopping in Ireland

The Covid-19 crisis has focused attention on online shopping out of necessity. Here are 24 Irish businesses both pioneering and embracing digital commerce nationwide.

Despite the evidence of how big the digital commerce revolution was going to be and the fact that Ireland plays host to some of the world's biggest tech giants, Ireland's embrace of e-commerce prior to Covid-19 was lamentable.

Rigid social distancing restrictions and the closure of various types of businesses focused consumers' minds on where to get their products and services online and while many traditional businesses were already online, others have had to catch up fast.

Prior to the crisis an only an estimated 3.5 retailers out of 10 were able to take an online order through their website in Ireland. Post-lockdown that situation may have changed significantly.

Jade O'Connor, vice-president of Product & Marketing at [FCR Media Ireland](#), the firm behind Goldenpages.ie pointed out this week that an online presence is not only essential for businesses now but also for how they will be positioned as the nation emerges from lockdown.

"According to the latest figures from the CSO, there are 248,344 small medium enterprises active in Ireland and only 32pc can take an online sale," said Jade O'Connor, vice-president of Product & Marketing. "The ability to trade online is becoming increasingly important with the impact of Covid-19 as customers change how they interact with businesses across Ireland.

We have compiled a list of 24 businesses consisting of both pioneers and standard bearers, but also firms that have pivoted and transformed rapidly to survive and also thrive online in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis. The list is by no means finite but serves as taste of the kind of ventures that exemplify the current standard of Irish businesses that trade online.

It follows as part of a series that last week saw us list [21 Irish platforms enabling the digital commerce revolution](#).

Airmedica

Cork and Mayo-based Cosmetic Creations is best known for producing cosmetics and skincare products as well as around half of Ireland's consumption of fake tan. But when the Covid-19 crisis hit the company pivoted to include the manufacture of a range of hand sanitisers under the [Airmedica](#) brand. The company sells these products online and in shops around Ireland as well as donating to the HSE as well as various hospices, hospitals and charities. It will soon complement its sanitisers with a range of soaps and moisturisers to enable consumers to cleanse, sanitise and protect their skin.

Ardkeen Quality Food Store

Waterford-based [Ardkeen Quality Food Store](#) serves quality, artisan and locally-produced Irish produce in-store and online, delivering nationwide, and building upon 48 years of heritage.

Bó Rua Farm

Fermoy, Cork-based [Bó Rua Farm](#) produces award-winning cheese from its own herd of cows on the rolling pastures of east Cork. Products that can be bought from stockists as well as its online shop include cheese, crackers and chutneys. It offers free deliveries on orders over €40.

Beechlawn Organic Farm

[Beechlawn Organic Farm](#) is an organic fruit and vegetable supplier in Co Galway that has had to increase production to fill gaps created by production falls in Italy and Spain. Founded by Padraig Fahy, the company had to recently temporarily close its online home delivery service after orders quadrupled. The business is flourishing and the company is set to grow its workforce by a fifth to meet demand.

BeerCloud

[BeerCloud](#) was established at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak and sells craft beers online from a dozen regional brewers. The platform was established by Liam Tutty of Dead Centre Brewing after he found his pub and restaurant clients were shutting their doors. It now sells cases of beer to consumers from more than 50 labels including Dead Centre, Ballykilcavan, Black Donkey, 12 Acres, DOT Brew, Boundary, Dungarvan, Kildare Brewing Company, Lineman, Reel Deal, St Mel's, Third Barrel, Western Herd and Scott's Irish Cider, to name a few.

Burgerhut

Among the many restaurants that used the internet smartly to keep business flowing is Cork-based [Burgerhut](#), which will fry up a burger of your choice and deliver it directly to your front door within an hour or you can collect it within 15 to 25 minutes.

Buymie



[Buymie](#) was founded in 2015 by Devan Hughes and Artavazd Sokhikyan as a mobile app for on-demand groceries where customers can order goods and have them delivered within an hour.

Buymie has created a platform using artificial intelligence (AI) technology, that enables consumers to access multiple large grocery retailers and receive short notice delivery to their chosen destination in as little as an hour. Currently, the Buymie service is available to more than 490,000 households across Dublin as well large towns in Kildare and Wicklow.

In recent weeks, it emerged Buymie [raised €2.2m](#) from existing and new investors as well as entering into a multi-year partnership with Lidl Ireland. Consumers are also able to use their Buymie application to shop from Tesco in Ireland. The business is expecting to hire 200 personal shoppers over the next six months – including 30 drivers – due to increased demand during Covid-19 restrictions. It has also expanded into the UK and has teamed-up with [Co-op](#) to offer same-day home grocery deliveries and full personal shopping services across Bristol as a first UK

city deployment.

ClickandCollection.com

clickandcollection.com offers existing businesses an opportunity to put in place a “click and collect” method in a way that is safe, secure and totally in keeping with Covid-19 restrictions. It starts with a 30-day free trial and is €19.99 per month after that. This new online platform has been designed to work with the widest cross section of businesses, all that business needs are products to sell and a physical location address to allow for collection.

Mark Hooper, the man behind the idea, explained: “We can have a business back up and trading within the next 24 hours once they have a Stripe payment solution in place and the good news is the business does not need an existing website or any technology in place. We set out to find a solution that would enable a business to trade during these difficult times without breaching any of the regulations in place. We have already trialled the platform with a number of small businesses and they have been delighted.”

He also makes the point that even if a business cannot open right now due to the current

restrictions, that the platform can enable it to be ready to go when restrictions start to be lifted.

Dublin Meat Company

A craft butchers with decades of experience and with six successful retail shops, [Dublin Meat Company](#) prides itself on keeping overheads low to pass on savings to customers. Its online ordering platform allows customers to choose between delivery or in-store collection and its online store boasts a broad menu of fresh meats, ready meals, summer BBQ products, cooked products, value packs, sides and more.

Doorstep Market

[The Doorstep Market](#) is a new initiative launched to help small businesses with no e-commerce presence to get selling online. The initiative, which was launched by Joe O'Connor and Grace Tallon and has already garnered the support of more than 150 businesses and offers more than 500 Irish-made products with credit and debit payments enabled by PayPal and Stripe.

Healthwave

A digital pharmacy service called Healthwave has developed a Carebot digital assistant that helps

indicate if you need to be tested for Covid-19. [Healthwave's CareBot](#) is a virtual assistant that uses AI and natural language processing to process prescription orders and other health related queries. The CareBot also features an online assessment tool that will indicate whether the user is potentially eligible for COVID-19 testing thereby potentially reducing calls to GPs. The new Covid-19 feature could also be [implemented in GP surgeries](#) that are looking to prioritise phone callers.

Fresh

[Fresh](#) The Good Food Market is a high-quality grocery and delicatessen supermarket group with its own distinct range of authentic food for now and take-home grocery as well as wines and craft beers.

The Fruit People

As well as pivoting from delivering fruit to offices to homes instead, [The Fruit People](#) also sell a range of milk, bread, eggs, breakfast cereals and treats that can be ordered online for home delivery.

The Green Grocer at Home

Stoneybatter-based [The Green Grocer](#) has achieved a great following and many positive reviews since it began selling online and offers deals on a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables delivered straight to your home. The store launched its new online site in recent weeks, however loyal followers can still order through Facebook Messenger and by phone.

Hederman

One of the finest providers of handmade Irish smoked salmon [Frank Hederman](#) has brought 35 years' of experience to the online world by providing a click and collect service as well as delivering to anywhere in Ireland.

Lean on Me

[Lean on Me](#) is a Limerick-based not-for-profit initiative whereby people can purchase vouchers for businesses that are currently closed due to Covid-19 to assist with working capital requirements, with the vouchers being redeemed once they recommence trading. The initiative was devised by a group of local volunteers and the movement has spilled over into neighbouring Clare with more counties due to follow suit.

RashR

Since 2017, [RashR](#) has been a leading supplier to luxury resorts across the world such as the Four Seasons, Sixth Sense, and Richard Branson's luxury resort, Necker Island, with its sustainable clothing and accessories for surfers and sailors. In an effort to think outside the box as a result of a temporary decline in its core business, and in the pursuit of helping out the ILFA as well as the people of Ireland as a whole in the fight against Covid-19, Cork-based RashR is now producing washable eco-friendly facemasks with filters. Each mask is €19.99 and includes one filter (with €2 per mask donation going to the Irish Lung Fibrosis Association). A Pack of five filters is available also at €7.50.

NudieFoods

Set up by brothers Paul, Brian and Andrew Hughes, [NudieFoods](#) originally specialised in fresh fruit deliveries to offices all over Dublin. But with everyone working at home the logical next step was to focus on home deliveries and the company provides a contactless service delivering fresh fruit to homes all over Dublin.

Roasted Brown

Independent Irish coffee roaster [Roasted Brown](#) was established in 2010 by Fergus Brown and supplies restaurants, businesses and independent cafés across the land. With orders coming to a standstill following the closure of many of the businesses it supplies, the company moved to sell its coffee online, offering a delivery service and has made more coffee products available for sale online. In just a few weeks, the Delgany-based business saw a 1,400pc increase in coffee orders. In addition, and to support businesses across the country, Roasted Brown launched the 'Our Shop is Their Shop' initiative which allows customers buying online to nominate their regular coffee shop and buy from them, via Roasted Brown, who process the sale on behalf of the cafés.

Shop Now

Golden Pages has launched [Shop Now](#), a new online storefront to help SMEs move easily into online sales and promoting their services digitally. Originally planned for Q3, the [Goldenpages.ie](#) team fast tracked this service in light of Covid-19 as many SMEs pivot to online selling in order to survive. The platform is available free until 31 July. After that plans will range from €18 to €36 per month including VAT.

The Shop Now platform includes an easy set-up for online storefronts and includes social media and Google Shopping capabilities as well as the ability to add products, manage inventory, conduct live chats with customers and integrate Stripe and PayPal payment services.

Thriftify

[Thriftify](#) specialises in connecting charities with buyers and this could prove to be essential at a time of economic uncertainty. Thriftify recently partnered with the National Council for the Blind of Ireland. It has expanded beyond selling books, CDs and vinyl into fashion items as well.

Veganic

Best known for its organic and plant-based food shop in St Stephen's Green, Dublin, [Veganic](#) offers a range of 100pc organic meat-alternative and dairy-alternative food as well as drinks and fruit and veg via next-day delivery nationwide.

Velvet Cloud

Mayo sheep dairy business [Velvet Cloud](#) had to pivot fast when the Covid-19 crisis hit as most of the restaurants it supplied closed overnight. Within weeks it had its online store and nationwide delivery service up and running offering consumers everything from sheep's milk cheeses to milk and yogurts with free delivery.

Wineonline.ie

Founded over 14 years ago by Anne Mullin and Gerry Fitzsimons to sell wine over the internet, Wineonline.ie has established a loyal following by bringing a world of wine to the doorsteps of Ireland. They claim to offer great value by cutting out the middleman and use their expertise and knowledge combined with their love of wine to educate and delight the Irish palate.

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