

Ruben Hamilius: All signs pointed to Ireland

Stephen Larkin speaks to Ruben Hamilius, founder of Business Games, about bringing the company to Ireland and the importance of continually training employees throughout Covid-19.

Having spent a number of years working with American multinational consumer goods company, Procter and Gamble, Ruben Hamilius developed a strong passion for employee learning and team building.

The Belgian native started out as a brand manager for laundry brands and products, before moving to Singapore in 2014 to take up another role within the company.

However, despite enjoying his time working with the multinational, Hamilius knew it wasn't the career he wanted to pursue.

Prior to joining Procter and Gamble (P&G), Ruben served as president of his university's highly-regarded student association Ekonomika, and when he was asked to host a large corporate event for 450 P&G employees, he deployed the skills he had honed as part of Ekonomika.

<https://soundcloud.com/thinkbusinessie/episode-23-ruben-hamilus>

He was given this opportunity after P&G struggled to source an agency that had the capabilities to host an event in the manner the company desired. Ruben orchestrated a game that encompassed the strategic objectives outlined by senior management while providing a fun and immersive experience for the staff involved, culminating in a team-building exercise in which people were tied together in groups of ten on a beach, carrying out teamwork-specific tasks and challenges.

For Ruben, this highlighted his passion for new experiences both on a personal and a professional level, as well as his talent for transforming a company's learning and training objectives into a tangible, fun and memorable experience.

"I was already passionate about creating these types of experiences and P&G was a great playground for me," said Mr Hamilius. "I wanted people to learn something from this event that they could take back to the office."

Without realising, this would be the start of Ruben's entrepreneurial career, because just a few years later, he would receive a call from a former P&G colleague requiring help for an event, and Ruben quickly realised he could turn his knowledge into a business, and so, Business Games was

born.

“Going into business wasn’t something I always wanted to do, but Business Games was very much aligned to what I felt made me tick. I always liked being in environments where I could take a lot of ownership, and the magic was that you could be creative in this space. It was a good fit.

“Business Games, at its essence, is all about learning by doing. We create custom experiences where people go through situations in order to experience how they react. We then confront them based on their reaction and this gives the client a lot of data to work with,” he added.

Hamilius says that setting up Business Games in Ireland “made sense right across the board”, from both a geographical standpoint, and also because of the thriving business sector here.

“A number of big companies are based here and chose Ireland to be their European headquarters, and generally speaking Irish people are very good to do business with. It’s a nice place to be.

“When you start a new venture, it always comes down to a combination of timing and opportunity, and I think both were there in Ireland at the time.”

Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, 85 per cent of Business Games’ operation was offline, with companies preferring to hold their shared experience events in person, but this changed overnight with staff forced to work remotely throughout the pandemic.

“A couple of weeks into the pandemic, companies began to reach out for our help in employee experiences, and we worked incredibly hard so that we could deliver Business Games 100 per cent virtually.

“We were very fortunate because a couple of our existing clients trusted us to share our experiences virtually when we hadn’t trialled it, and we were able to deliver on all of our promises.

To find out more about what Ruben had to say, you can [listen to the rest of the interview here](#).

By Stephen Larkin

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