

Getting The Most From Your Trading Online Voucher Application

TOP 10 TIPS

This document lays out the basic criteria that must be met by a business wanting to apply for the Trading Online Voucher. The criteria are straightforward and apply nationwide.

This funding is available to small businesses and is provided by the Irish Government (Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment - <https://www.dccae.gov.ie>). The Trading Online Voucher is facilitated nationwide through Local Enterprise Offices. FCR Media have no affiliation with Local Enterprise Offices, DCCAE or the Scheme.

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This is a significant opportunity for small Irish businesses. You could get as much as 50% of your investment reimbursed. To qualify, businesses should:

- Maximum of 10 employees
- Have products OR services clients to trade online
- Be trading for at least 6 months
- Have little to no online trading presence
- Be in an area covered by your Local Enterprise Office
- Turnover less than €2m per year

1. Don't Just Attend – Learn!

The requirement that you attend an information session can seem like it's a box that needs to be ticked before your application can be submitted. However, at FCR Media we would strongly urge that you take a different approach to these sessions; they are usually delivered by engaging, knowledgeable speakers. While the content is naturally quite general when catering for a diverse group of businesses, there is undoubtedly something there for everyone to learn.

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2. Ask If You Can Visit a Neighbouring Event

If you can't find a TOV session on the upcoming events section, email or call your local LEO office to find out if one is planned soon. If there is no session planned in a time frame that works for you, or the date doesn't suit, it is possible to ask your local LEO office if you can attend the LEO session in a neighbouring area and use the attendance at this session to support your application. As the sessions in different areas are broadly similar, we have generally found the LEO offices to be flexible and practical in allowing this.

[*LEO Office Finder*](#)

3. Take Notes and Ask Questions!

The coffee and croissants are not the only free aspects to the TOV Sessions, you can also pick up some great free advice. When you attend the session, take notes and ask questions; the speakers are used to dealing with small businesses and are able to offer simple solutions to problems you may have or point you in the direction of further help. They have dealt with several businesses in your situation and are well positioned to deliver great advice.

4. Network

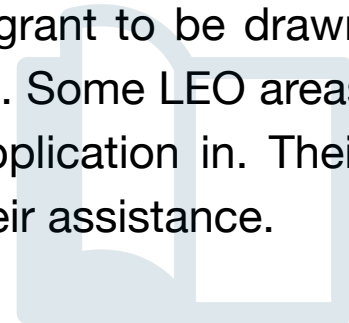
At the TOV Seminar, you will find many other businesses in your area dealing with similar challenges to you. Networking is great for sharing ideas and knowledge. Whether it's asking for feedback or discussing your point of view, it will help you expand your knowledge and allow you to see things from different perspectives.

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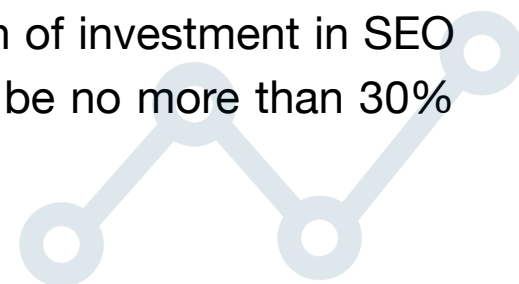
5. Don't Forget To Do Your Homework!

Do your application soon after the workshop, ideally within a couple of weeks. You still get 4 months for the work to be completed and the grant to be drawn down, but it is best to get the application in as soon as you can. Some LEO areas will have a mentor who will reach out to help you get the application in. Their advice can be very helpful and you should take advantage of their assistance.



6. Think Strategy, Not Just Website

When deciding what to invest in, think about your digital strategy - not just allowing your website to take online payments. The TOV Scheme recognises that a website is only as good as the traffic that can be generated to it, there is scope within the application to provide for delivery of traffic to your site and this should form part of your thinking. The grant allows for the inclusion of investment in SEO and search advertising in your application. Advertising can be no more than 30% of the total spend and must be paid for up front.



7. Choose Someone Who Can Deliver a Full Service Solution

While it is possible to use multiple suppliers to deliver upon your application, the fewer conversations you need to have with different prospective suppliers, the easier it will be to get your digital goals delivered via this scheme.

Look for a supplier who can build eComm websites, help you manage the site and also help you to deliver traffic to that site. It is also worth asking prospective suppliers if they can help you manage your local digital presence as this can be a vital but often overlooked element to a complete digital solution.

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8. Cheapest Isn't Always Best

If you do not have an existing web supplier who is clearly best placed to deliver on your digital strategy, then you will be required to get 3 quotes. While you need to supply these along with your application, you are not obliged to go with the cheapest if you feel that one particular supplier will better meet your needs. However, you will need to explain why you believe this to be the case.

9. Ask Your Supplier For Help

If your chosen supplier has experience in dealing with TOV applications, then they will be able to help you frame your investment plan in a way that makes best commercial sense for your business. This can include looking at the total charges that will apply for the first year of running your website and generating traffic to it, by incorporating these amounts as part of your application you can ensure you maximise your return on the grant.

10. Reach Out to FCR

FCR Media are Ireland's largest website provider and have helped a large amount of small businesses access their Trading Online Voucher. We have a dedicated eCommerce and financial support team who are always happy to use our experience to guide you in your TOV application. Don't hesitate to contact us on 01 618 8000 or email sellonline@fcrmedia.ie. We can arrange a free one-to-one consultation to discuss the finer details of what's included in your web build, such as a .ie domain, hosting, HTTPS & SSL, and more.

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