European Entrepreneurship Case Study Resource Centre

Sponsored by the European Commission for Industry & Enterprise under CIP
(Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme 2007 – 2013)

Project Code: ENT/CIP/09/E/N02S001
2011

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DAVID LYSAGHT[1]

Introduction

David Lysaght understood from the very moment that his business idea was conceived that starting a new enterprise would be a very challenging prospect and that the possibility of failing would be quite high. During the late summer of 2010, the economic recession that Ireland was suffering had taken its toll on many local businesses, and David wondered if he should abandon his early plans to establish a not-for-profit business that would organise hill-walking climbs and mountain trekking to raise funds for charitable organisations. The charity market had recently become extremely competitive in Ireland because (1) there was substantially less funds available from the public and private sectors to give to charities, (2) there had been a sharp decline in philanthropic activity because the wealth of high-worth individuals had been badly hit by the recession, and (3) there was also a large increase in the number of not-for-profit organisations seeking to secure funding. David also faced an additional challenge that few other entrepreneurs have to face, he has cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy means that due to an injury to a person's brain (cerebral), they are not able to use some of the muscles in their body in the normal way (palsy). It is generally characterised by an inability to fully control one's motor functions, particularly muscle control and coordination. While David had a very positive attitude to life, he wondered if organising hill-walking climbs was a good business choice for someone with his condition. He was also thinking that he should get a business partner as people frequently changed their behaviour when they met him and see his disability. He had arranged a meeting with his Business Mentor in seven days time, and David decided that he needed to consider all of the positive and negative aspects to his personal and business situation in preparation for this meeting. This analysis would help him and his Business Mentor to decide what would be his next step in the development of his business idea.

[1] This case is written with thanks and respect to the late John Butler of Centaury Management

David's Background

David Lysaght is 29 years of age and lives in the picturesque village of Blackrock, close to the large town of Dundalk. He is the youngest of five children and by his own admission he was spoilt somewhat by his brother and sisters. He also recognises and appreciates the hugely positively influence they have been on his life, and how his family had always pushed and encouraged him to fulfil his potential. His father Lisle was an engineer by training and had a varied career before he established his own business in the late 1970s. While he was not a constant presence in his life, David was deeply affected by his unexpectedly death in 2009. Without doubt, the most significant influence upon David's life was his mother Rosa. For the past 35 years she has run her own business, a Pre-School Nursery that she hosts in her refitted home. She was the person who gave David his greatest strength and who continually urged him to find different ways to succeed despite his disability. She would coax and support him to achieve little goals that he might have initially thought were beyond him. She also persuaded him to live his life to its fullest and while he will experience many upsets in his life, he should never give up. David strongly believes that he is now a player in the game of life and not someone who simply watches the game from the sidelines.

David went to the local primary school and later received his secondary education at Dundalk Grammar School. As part of his studies in his 4th Year of secondary school he had to develop a mini-company; he choose Christmas decorations and toys as his business opportunity, an experience that turned out to be highly profitable from many different perspectives. After his Leaving Certificate (A Levels), he undertook a two-year Post-Leaving Certificate diploma course in Computers and Information Technology, which was immediately followed by a Business Administration degree course at the Dundalk Institute of Technology where he achieved an Honours Degree. As part of his studies he undertook subjects such as Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Economics. As such, he was well-educated and heading into the booming Irish economy of the time, he eagerly anticipated a rewarding career. Unfortunately, since completing his degree in 2004, David has failed to establish a steady career and instead has held a variety of jobs both in paid and voluntary positions. He has worked as an Assistant Accountant, Stock Equipment Manager, Resource Worker and Hill-Walking Guide. He is currently employed on a temporary basis by the Delphi

Adventure Centre on the west coast of Ireland. He has struggled to identify what he his favourite job might be, and so has been unable to settle into any particular career path. However, he has noted that he has a keen interest in hill-walking and he loves the outdoor environment. Now he wonders if he could turn this passion into a permanent job as he is aware that any office work seems to bore him after a relatively short time.

David Lysaght was born with cerebral palsy. During pregnancy, his mother contracted a virus and was starved of oxygen for a short time which caused a difficulty with David's condition. As well as having cerebral palsy, David also has a cleft palate (a cleft palate is a split or opening in the roof of the mouth) and suffered from epilepsy when he was younger (his last epileptic seizure was when his 15 years old). Cerebral palsy is an umbrella term for a group of disorders affecting body movement, balance, and posture. Loosely translated, cerebral palsy means 'brain paralysis'. Cerebral palsy is caused by abnormal development or damage in one or more parts of the brain that control muscle tone and motor activity (movement). The resulting impairments first appear early in life, usually in infancy or early childhood. Infants with cerebral palsy are usually slow to reach developmental milestones such as rolling over, sitting, crawling, and walking. Common to all individuals with cerebral palsy is a difficulty with controlling and coordinating muscles. This makes even very simple movements difficult. Cerebral palsy may involve muscle stiffness, poor muscle tone, uncontrolled movements, and problems with posture, balance, coordination, walking, speech, swallowing, and many other functions. The severity of these problems varies widely, from very mild and subtle to very profound, as for David he has some speech difficulties and also has trouble with muscle movements in his hands (primarily) and in his legs. As David explained:

> *"One of my main difficulties is that I can get confused or muddled up, which is a very common symptom of cerebral palsy. The effect of this has caused me great frustration as I know that I am not stupid, but I can appear stupid sometimes. When I am speaking I can forget what I am saying or say only one part of the sentence. It can also become apparent when I am reading or writing where I might leave out words thinking that I had already read or written them. Basically sometimes my brain works faster than my hands and eyes. Another issue is that I sometimes can't predict my tone and could say*

something total innocent but it is taken up harshly as I say it in a negative tone although it is quite rare that it happens now."

One of the results of David's condition was that during his school years David was hyperactive in terms of his behaviour. This conduct would regularly lead to him being physically and psychologically bullied by other children / teenagers whom he felt took this action to ensure that he would leave them alone. However, most times he was bullied simply because he was different as he was an easy target for teenagers looking to get attention from their peers.

When he was 8 years old, his parents separated, and this event caused him a great deal of mental and emotional pain over many years. He believes that the combination of his disability, the bullying at school and the break-up of his parents' marriage caused him to suffer from depression and low self-esteem for long periods throughout his young life. In addition to the normal traumas of adolescence, and the particular difficulties that he was enduring in starting a relationship with girls, he was also privately shouldering the anguish of his disability and for many years he blamed himself for the break-up of his parents' marriage; therefore suffering private agonies that his peers could never understand. However, he readily admits that he was frequently difficult to be with and that he was also prone to outbursts, but he often felt that this was his way of expressing his frustrations. David was a disruptive influence in many different environments and repeatedly caused difficulties for those who were trying to help him. He developed an arrogance which he feels was simply a survival mechanism, nevertheless in more recent years, he has turned that mindset into a positive attitude to life, a move that he has found much more rewarding. In recent years he has seen his relationships with his mother and siblings flourish, he has found it easier to maintain friendships, and he is an active contributor to his local community. It has been a challenging upbringing, but he now wishes to channel his learning experience into helping others.

The Business Concept

The basic idea that David conceived was to establish a not-for-profit business called Charity Voyage. Through this business he would arrange hill-walking / mountain trekking events which would allow people to raise money for a charity of their choice. The idea is that each person that takes part in one of the events will have to raise a

minimum amount of money, of which some would go to Charity Voyage to cover the cost of organising the event and the remaining amount (the majority) would go to the chosen charity. This form of fundraising had become very popular in recent years as it enabled individuals to undertake a personal challenge while simultaneously raising substantial sums of money for charities across the country. Indeed, the idea had become so popular that a number of commercial businesses had been established in Ireland to organise such events and the scale, type and location of activities had grown beyond all recognition. A quick browse of the internet had shown David that a person could now do a challenge in many countries across the world in many different activities and almost for any charity that one preferred to support.

After some initial research on the internet, David wanted to maintain the charitable nature of the activity and so he decided to establish a not-for-profit organisation rather than a commercial business. He also decided to stay focused on organising events in Ireland and that the only activity offered would be hill-walking and mountain trekking. The reason for these choices was because he had had little money to get started and it was the only activity in which he had expertise and experience. He then decided that he would have four types of events:

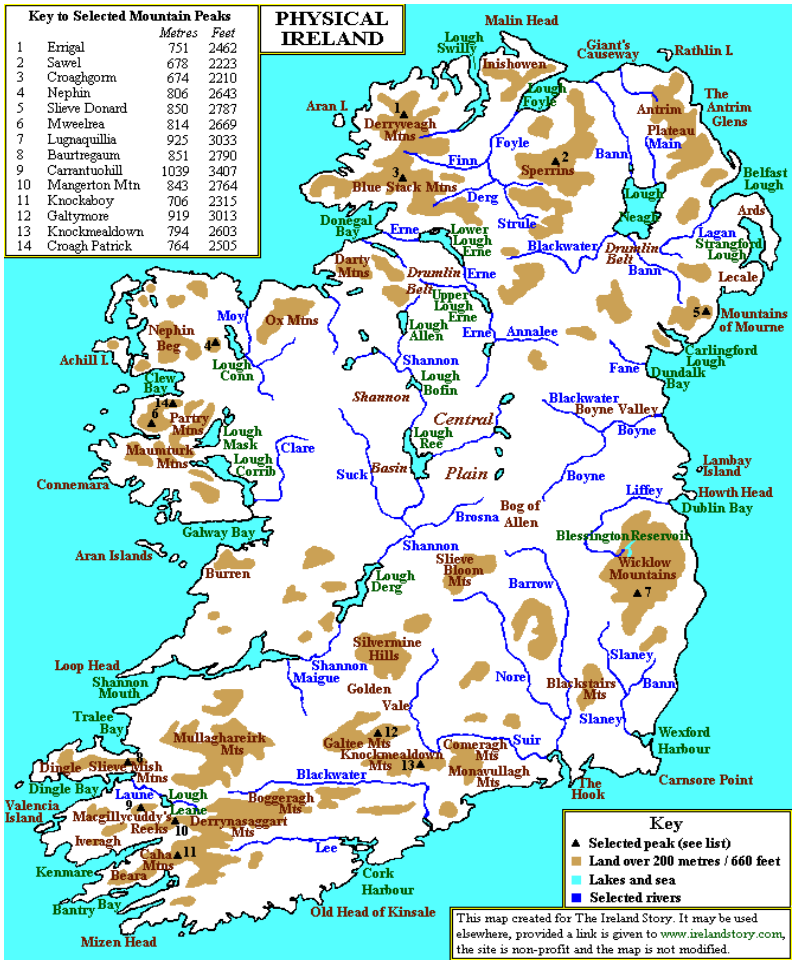
1. 'Six of the Best' – climb six mountains within 3 days
2. 'Six of the Best (Deluxe)' – climb six mountains within 3 days in comfort
3. A two day event (yet to be decided upon)
4. A one day event (yet to be decided upon)

There was still much more research and thinking required before he could make a final decision on the one-day and two-events. Additionally, once the organisation is established he will probably start a 'Six of the Best Winter Series'; organise some events for disabled people; and diversify into other types of events such as running, swimming and sailing or cannoning.

The 'Six of the Best' would be his main event and the one which he would expect to be the most popular. In this event participants would take part as teams of three to five members and climb six mountains around the island of Ireland, including Carrantuohill (highest mountain in the Republic of Ireland) and Slieve Donard (the highest mountain in Northern Ireland). However, he recently starting having some alternative thoughts about how to organise this event and considered instead that it

should be made up of 20 individual members all doing it for their own charity and they would only have to pay the cost of doing the event. Instead of paying a minimum sponsorship fee, each member would decide with their own charity how much money they needed raise in advance of the event. David needed to clarify about these options.

Figure One: Physical Terrain of Ireland



The schedule for the challenge would be as follows:

1. Day One: Slieve Donard (No 5 in Map) and Slieve Commedagh in Down
2. Day Two: Lugnaquilla (No 7 in Map) and Mullaghcleevaun in Wicklow
3. Day Three: Carrantuohill (No 9 in Map) and Mount Brandon in Kerry

It was envisaged that the other events would be shorter versions of this schedule and that each would be managed from his base south of Slieve Donard and overlooking Dundalk Bay.

It should be noted that the six mountains to be climbed were not the six highest mountains on the island of Ireland, but have been selected for their location. It should also be highlighted that the difference between the 'Six of the Best' event and the deluxe model is basically that 'Six of the Best' is more of a self-supported race between the teams where there is only a minimum of accommodation and food provided and the teams would have to provide all other requirements themselves. However, the deluxe model is catered towards those who want to do the challenge, but have a choice of three different paces at which to do it and with luxuries such as meals and full accommodation included.

Organising Fundraising Activities

To help him understand the budgets for his business, David undertook some initial research to identify what kind of money they were charging for such events. He could find no data on Irish companies, but he did obtain some details on a couple of English companies who organised fundraising treks to places such as the Inca Trail (Peru), Everest Base Camp (Nepal), and the Atlas Mountain trek (Morocco). He found that the companies who organised these treks would generally charge participants 45 percent of the minimum required sponsorship to help pay for the cost of the fundraising event. For example, one company required a minimum sponsorship of £4,175 (£1,878 to the organiser and £2,297 to the charity), while the minimum sponsorship required by another company was £4,280 (£1,926 to the organiser and £2,354 to the charity). This meant that the charity would only receive 55 percent of the minimum sponsorship, however if a person was successful in raising more than the minimum required, then the charity would receive 100 percent of the extra amount raised.

For the events that would be organised by Charity Voyage, David believed that he could offer lower rates both in terms of sponsorship required and in the percentage that he would take from the minimum amount. He estimated these rates as follows:

- 35% - 'Six of the Best'
- 40% - 'Six of the Best (Deluxe)'
- 40% - Two day challenge
- 45% - One day challenge

For the ‘Six of the Best’ event, David believed that he could offer a minimum rate of €4,500 (equivalent of £3,820 sterling). The charity will then receive the remaining percentage of the minimum sponsorship raised by each team and 100 percent of the money that each team raised above the minimum sponsorship.

To help people to participate in his events, David knew that a website was an essential requirement. A friend of his could build a basic website for €2,500, but he felt that he would need to include additional features to it that would probably cost him extra. He believed that he would need to create a simple Step-By-Step process on the website that would enable people with any level of computer literacy to follow quite easily. In his notes for the meeting with the Business Mentor, he used a process that he found on www.charitychallenge.com to quickly outline a seven-step approach to fundraising via his website. The steps were as follows:

Step 1: Select the Challenge

Choose the activity, duration, challenge grading, payment option, and charity to support. People should read the challenge specific itinerary and Q&A’s thoroughly to ensure that they fully appreciate what is involved in the challenge.

Step 2: Book the Challenge

David intends that the quickest and easiest way will be to book online. A person will need to provide personal contact details, medical information, next of kin, dietary requirements and any allergies. Once they have booked their chosen challenge, they will be asked to pay the deposit through our secure server.

Step 3: Charity Authorisation

Once Charity Voyage has received the booking and deposit payment, they will email the chosen charity to seek authorisation for the person to fundraise on their behalf. Charity Voyage cannot proceed any further with the booking until the charity officially authorises it.

Step 4: Online Challenge Pack

Once authorised by the charity, Charity Voyage will then email the participant with login details to their personal member's area where they can access their online

challenge pack: sponsorship forms, fundraising ideas, fitness training notes, itinerary, kit list, Q&As, health notes, online fundraising page, and lots more.

Step 5: Sponsorship Deadline

A person will need to have raised and sent to their charity all of the minimum sponsorship (under the flexi and minimum sponsorship options) at least ten weeks before the event takes place.

Step 6: One Month Update

With only one month to go before the event, Charity Voyage will upload all final joining instructions to the online members' area. This document will include where and when to meet the team, emergency contacts, and any other necessary information.

Step 7: Take Part in the Challenge

Having raised lots of money for charity and got incredibly fit, all a person now needed to do is to complete the challenge itself. Once they returned from the challenge with photos and stories of their event, people should ideally send a ‘Thank You’ note to all those that sponsored them.

David knew that the process that he had outlined still needed much more additional thought as many questions remained unanswered (for example, what happens if someone arrives at the event but has not raised the minimum amount of sponsorship required?). However, he found it helpful as it gave him a sense of structure about how the events would be organised and what he would need to do throughout the process. He also wanted to automate as much of the administration work as was possible, although this would require a more sophisticated website than he had the money to build.

Looking at the www.mycharity.ie website David was able to ascertain that there were about 270 charities in Ireland that people had raised money for over the past year by setting up their own fundraising page. This is not a comprehensive list of all charities, but it does provide him with an initial sense of what the market-size might be for his business. He was having great difficulty in getting figures regarding how much

money was contributed by Irish people each year to charitable causes and also on the profiles of the different market segments. He could find no recent report on charities in Ireland that would help him to develop his marketing strategy, and so far, almost any person with whom he talked could not give any detailed information about finances. What he did know was that he needed to know more!

Following David's initial research of the market, he started talking to people who were responsible for fundraising for charities. The purpose of these discussions was to gain a better understanding of the type of people who might become participants on these events and who saw them as exciting personal challenges that could also bring benefit to people in need. The discussions proved very beneficial as it helped him to identify three market segments that he needed to target:

1. College Students who were interested in doing a challenge for charity and having a fun day out - he would address these customers by sending a letter to the student unions and the college clubs in universities and institutes of technology informing them about the Charity Voyage and the four types of events that the non-profit organisation organises, and this letter would be followed-up with a phone call two weeks later.
2. Small charities and clubs who want to put forward a team made up from members or associates of the charity or club - his plan was to send a letter and leaflet to a hundred charities and clubs per month explaining the background to Charity Voyage and the four events that he organises. He would follow-up the letter with a phone call to ensure that they had received the letter and to assess if they would be interested in doing the challenge.
3. Big Irish charities such as Barnardos, Irish Cancer Society, AWARE and The Simon Community – approach a number of these in person to establish a recurring contract with them as repeat customers.

David knew that this segmentation of the market needed to be broken down even more. He also understood that he would need to prioritise his target customers in some way, but he still had no idea regarding what criteria to use or where he might find the information to help him decide.

SWOT Analysis of Charity Voyage

To help him understand the challenges that might lie ahead for him, his Business Mentor had asked David to prepare a SWOT analysis for their meeting. David found this to be a very difficult task and he had not generated as many points under each heading as he was required to achieve. He considered talking to some friends who might do some brainstorming with him, but instead decided just to make some brief notes. The following are the notes that he made:

<u>Strengths</u>

My main strength is that the 'Six of the Best' challenge is different to the 4-Peaks challenge organised by the charity Focus Ireland because of the additional peaks that each team has to climb in the same time period. I think this would make it more challenging, particularly for people who have already done the 4-Peaks challenge.

Another strength might be that, unlike the Focus Ireland 4-Peaks challenge, the 'Six of the Best' is not tied down to one charity but rather a selection of charities. This means that I could set-up one event up for charities such as the Irish Cancer Society, and other events for the likes of Simon Community, Barnardos, etc. I feel that this would give me a competitive edge over Focus Ireland as it would allow people to do a challenge, but to do it for a charity that they might have a personal interest in.

I can also hold events as an entirely 'Open Event' or 'Multiple Charity' event; the definition of an 'Open Event' is that the event itself is not dedicated to any particular charity but the teams within the event are acting on behalf of a charity. So I might have eight teams doing the event but each team is doing the event for a different charity, or in some cases for no charity, in which case, they would just have to pay for cost of the event. This particular strength is one of the main reasons why I want to establish Charity Voyage as it would allow people to raise money for small charities and sports and social clubs around the country who cannot afford to do international treks, and also because the bigger event organising companies do not deal with them due to their relative small size of their support base.

A personal strength of mine is my own experience in doing challenges for charity, giving me an understanding on how to raise money so I can help and advise any teams that sign up to do the 'Six of the Best'.

Weaknesses

Obviously my main weakness is it that I am new to the market and in relative terms I would be a small entity within the industry. This would prove to be a problem when I try to publicise the challenges and Charity Voyage as people may be concerned about the authenticity of the company due to a lack of awareness.

Another difficulty I will encounter is my limited financial resources as Charity Voyage is a new business. As with most new companies, my budget would not be substantial, in comparison to the competitors previously mentioned. This would pose difficulties in all areas obviously, but it will be a big concern when it comes to publicising the events, and it could impact on the service I would like to provide from the start.

I'm not sure if I should include my disability as a weakness because it is not something that I view as a weakness, but other people might view it as such. I can certainly run the business without any difficulty and generally I can do all of the hill-walking and mountain-trekking that the business hopes to operate. However, I know that people view me differently when I meet them as they just see the physical disabilities and not the person. I am considering getting somebody else to front the business while I would actually make things happen in the background.

Opportunities

With contacts in the mountain leader industry I feel that it would provide me with the opportunity to tap into their resources & skills to provide a safe and interesting 'Six of the Best' event. In the future Charity Voyage can offer a wider range of activities and could expand to international treks.

One of the big opportunities that I feel is being untapped by companies who organise these fundraising activities is the market for sports and social clubs. These small organisations need to fundraise every year just so that they can survive and yet there is no business specialising in this opportunity.

I could also organise an event for disable people, in which able and disabled people could compete in against each other.

I may be able to secure a sponsorship deal with one or two major sponsors, such as Red Bull, Lowe Alpine or Outdoor Exchange, companies which are linked to the outdoors and endurance events. If I manage to attain €12,000 from each sponsor, this would mean I could allocate €3,000 to each of the four types of events.

Threats

The most obvious threat at the moment is the recession that Ireland is currently experiencing. This poses a threat for the simple reason that in a time of recession the majority of people in Ireland has less disposable income than they did during the boom years, and although people may wish to contribute to a charity and would love to do the challenge, they simply do not have the same amount of money or time available in these difficult times. Even though this may seem bleak I know that we are going to get through this and we will have the ability to help others again in the next year or two, so I think that this is the best time to enter the industry, to get my name out there and become well-known. When the good times come around again, and I'm confident that they will, Charity Voyage will be well positioned to compete in the market.

The competition is an additional treat that will challenge Charity Voyage throughout the years, but particularly during the early years as they currently are able to offer a wider range of services and treks, and have a lot more power than we will have during the early days of the business.

As David completed his notes, he knew that there were many more points that he should be making to the SWOT analysis. He decided that he would make a more detailed listing when he met his Business Mentor, as that was one the roles that the Mentor was meant to play in the Mentoring Programme of which he was a participant. David felt that it was better to take this programme than to take a Start Your Own Business programme which was being held locally by an Enterprise Support agency. After his first two meetings with the Business Mentor, David believed that his

Business Mentor had a very good understanding of David's background and what he was trying to achieve. So far, the relationship was working extremely well.

Finances

Like any business, David understood that there would be many costs involved in managing Charity Voyage. He was fortunate in that he could start the business from his mother's house which meant that there would be no costs for rent, rates, heating, lighting or initial furnishing requirements. He would however have to pay for company insurance, promotional activities, telephone calls, petrol, etc. He estimated that his mobile phone calls would cost €80 a month and that this figure would include personal and day-to-day phone calls. For the running of the business he has allocated no more 75 percent of the total bill to be spent on business calls, although his Business Mentor had argued that his phone bill could be at least three times higher per month than that figure suggested, particularly if one takes internet charges into account.

In addition to these on-going costs, David intended to promote the business initially by sending an introduction package to the 270 charities that he identified in his analysis of the Irish charity market. This initial package would include a letter explaining the background of Charity Voyage and its business philosophy, together with an explanation of the main events being offered. The package would also include a colourful leaflet with a menu of the four events and the website details, plus a business card with his contact details. He had not gathered any projected costs for the promotional materials and support activities, but he estimated that €5,000 would be a minimum requirement. He planned to cover all of his fixed costs by splitting them as a percentage over the four types of events that Charity Voyage would organise.

As he began to prepare projected costs for each individual trip, David knew that keeping budgets very tight would be critical to the success of his business. Basing his figures on challenges on which he previously was a participant, he estimated that the costs for the Deluxe version of the 'Six of the Best' event was as follows (based on 40 participants and 4 mountain leaders):

Table One: Estimated Costs of 'Six of the Best – Deluxe'

Item	Unit	Cost
Hostel @ 25pn pp	Two nights	€2,200
Petrol	1 Bus	€200
Mountain Leaders	360	€1,080
Water	480 Litres	€160
Tea	1 box	€4
Coffee	1 box	€4
Sandwiches	€5 per head x 3 days	€660
Stew	€5 per head x 3 days	€660
Apples	1 box of 100	€20
Oranges	1box of 100	€20
Bars	2 boxes of 48	€45
	Total	€5,713

However, a brief review of these figures by an accountant who was a friend of David's highlighted that the table did not include the cost of hiring the bus, that the cost of the mountain leaders on a daily basis seemed very low (€90 per person per day), and that for a Deluxe model he was offering very little comfort, particularly when it came to accommodation. He also highlighted that based on a minimum sponsorship fee of €4,500, with 40 percent going to Charity Voyage; it resulting in each participant contributing €1,800 to the organisation of the event. Given the figures that David was presenting, it suggested that if he had 40 people on the trip then Charity Voyage would make a gross profit on each event of €66,287 (72,000 – 5,713). The accountant suggested that either this was a really exciting business opportunity or that David needed to re-examine his figures again.

However, in his discussions with the accountant, David explained that the figures were reasonable. There would certainly only be a needs for just two nights' accommodation as the event would be starting on a Friday morning at 10am after a safety briefing, there would be nine hours allotted to do both peaks which would provide plenty of time for the slowest teams to complete both peaks (given that they are in a modestly fit condition), which then allows time for them to be driven to the next destination where they will spend the night. David estimated that there was an approximate 3 hours drive from one location to the next. Given that the event would

be completed on Sunday evening at 8pm, this would allow teams to either make their own way home at that time or to leave for alternative accommodation nearby which they would have to arrange for themselves. After phoning some hostels in the preferred locations, David was able to confirm that the average price per person was €25.

After looking into the matter of transport, David decided that the best option for the basic 'Six of the Best' event was not to provide the transport and to allow each team to provide their own transport under the strict condition that no drivers are allowed to compete in the event due to safety reasons. He felt that the problem with providing the transport was that:

- It was too expensive;
- It meant that teams are tied down to one location at a time and are unable to get on to the next mountain which would remove the competitiveness of the event;
- If he was to provide a bus it would mean that there had to be a specific meeting place and this would add time to the whole event. He would also have to find a place where people could meet which had ample free public parking during the weekend.

After considering these points he felt that it was much simpler to take the same approach as Focus Ireland and leave transport to the responsibility of each team.

David had been frugal with his money over the years and had managed to save approximately €5,300, although he had hoped to use that money to buy a new car as his existing one was quite old. He had made some enquiries to the local Enterprise Support agency regarding the possibility of securing financial support for his business and had discovered that there were no soft loans or grants for which he was eligible, although he had not ruled out the possibility that Tourism Ireland might give him some seed funding (although he was told that such support was also unlikely). In the current economic climate, he would have great difficulty in persuading a Bank Manager to give him a loan on such a risky business proposition, particularly when he had no collateral which he could offer as security against his loan. His family had always been very supportive of him, and so, his only real hope of raising money was through them. He estimated that, at best, he might get €6,000 from his family; which

potentially left him with a maximum investment of €11,300. He did not know if this would be enough to get him started.

Operations

The principal event that Charity Voyage would provide would be the 'Six of the Best' event. This would take place over the course of three days and in three main areas, these locations being in counties Down, Wicklow and Kerry. The other events would probably take place in either county Down or Wicklow as these were closest to his base near Dundalk, although he was also looking at the potential of holding an event in the West of Ireland so as to capture organisations and participants from that side of Ireland.

As the majority of his communications will be via e-mail or by mobile phone, David's office hours and location had yet to be determined. However, he believed that it was a business in which there would be no set hours and that instead he would have to work very hard coming-up to events and then take some time-out shortly afterwards. He also realised that he would have to be quite disciplined in his approach to work as it would be easy for him to become distracted in his mother's house, particularly as she would also be using it for her business.

During each event Charity Voyage would provide refreshments such as water, tea and coffee. The business will also be providing a team of professional Mountain Leaders who will be on-hand to provide guidance and safety instructions to groups of approximately 10 people. David is also exploring the possibility of establishing a team of experienced volunteers to assist the Mountain Leaders and the teams during the event. The Mountain Leaders must be fully qualified in the Qualification and Assessment standards as set down by Mountaineering Ireland. Each Mountain Leader must have an up-to-date First Aid qualification, so that they can respond to an emergency immediately until further help (in the form of Mountain Rescue) arrives to relieve the Mountain Leader. In terms of Mountain Rescue, David would liaise with each team that is in charge of each location of operations prior to the event. He will inform them of what Charity Voyage are doing and the date and time of each part of the event, together with the numbers of people who are participating in the event.

Conclusion

David felt that he was making good progress with his Business Planning, even if he felt that there was still much work to be done. He was not fully confident about the viability of his idea, particularly when the accountant asked him to reconsider the figures. He was also uncertain about his funds in order to get the business started and where further funding might be sourced, although it appeared that his own savings and money from his family might be all that he could secure. David additionally needed to decide what other types of events he might organise, what organisations and participants he should target first, how much he should spend on his website development and promotional materials, and what transport and accommodation he should provide. More importantly, he was wondering if he should get a partner to help him because of his disability (although he felt that it would be for the sake of others rather than himself), but maybe he could find a partner who would bring entrepreneurial experience and some money to the business.

As David was preparing his plans for the meeting with his Business Mentor and trying to determine what other information he needs, he received a phone call from the Manager of the Mentoring Programme giving him some terrible news. His Business Mentor had died unexpectedly on the previous day leaving behind a wife and a young family. His Mentor was a successful businessman in his early fifties who had recently begun to enjoy the fruits of his many years of hard work. It came as a terrible shock to David and it reminded him once again that he needed to make the most out of life as one never knew what might happen next!