

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 a Trade Online Voucher. The criteria are straightforward and apply nationwide.

Eligible businesses can apply for a voucher to invest in developing their eCommerce capability, of up to €2,500 matched by own funding.

Local Enterprise Office

ONLINE TRADING VOUCHERS



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

- Have less than 10 employees
- Have products to sell online OR services clients can pay for online
- 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 that the LEO hire. 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. They are usually quite good at coming back to you. 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 SMEs 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

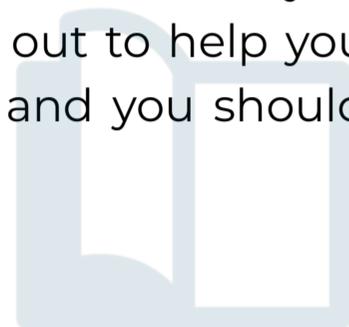
These sessions also offer a great networking opportunity where you can connect directly with people doing business in your area. Sharing similar experiences and challenges is a great way to uncover potential business opportunities and there is a coffee break that provides an ideal chance to network.

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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 and allows for the inclusion of investment in SEO and Google Ads in your application. While Google Ads can be no more than 30% of the total spend and must be paid for up front, there is scope within the application to provide for delivery of traffic to your site and this should form part of your thinking.



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 eCom websites, help you manage the site and also help you to deliver traffic to that site. Ideally look for a Google Premier Partner if you are including Google Ads in your plan. 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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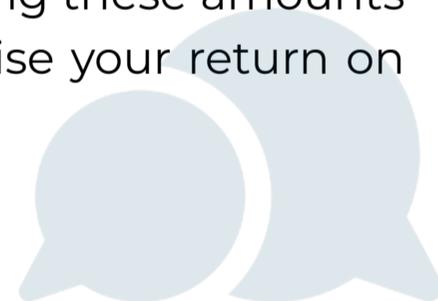
8. Cheapest Isn't Always Best

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 LEO 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 delivered more TOV Scheme projects than any other Irish digital agency. We have a dedicated eComm and LEO Grant team who are always happy to use our experience to guide you in your application. Don't hesitate to contact us on 01 618 8000 or email leogrant@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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