

How Dotser has joined the dots

With two decades of experience behind it, the Tullamore-based firm has built itself up as both a jack-of-all-trades and a master of its own platform, writes **Quinton O'Reilly**

If you're a business that's been around for two decades – a period that saw a major recession and now a global pandemic unfolding – and going from strength to strength, you're doing something right.

Tullamore-based Dotser has developed a reputation for putting its head down and focusing on the work. The software development company main focus is on cloud and mobile application although a glance at its site suggests it's more than that.

Services like digital shows, waste management, and digital marketing are part of its portfolio, but delve a little deeper and Dotser's evolution is in line with the needs of its clients and the modern business. It's taken a long-term approach to the market as a whole and considering the current circumstances, it's done well.

Supporting clients who generate and process millions of euro worth of revenue by offering a flexible platform that's continuously evolving, infrastructure that supports businesses online services 24/7, and managing both customer-facing and administrative processes of over 400 companies across different sectors, it's developed a strong foundation.

Last week alone, Dotser received a reorder for the system that sold €500,000 in ten days, and also signed contracts with a major show in Australia.

Now, more than ever, all businesses need to have that level of flexibility in their business, especially in the area of e-commerce where Dotser's years of experience has allowed its platform to thrive. And it has the results to back it up.

"We have a full e-commerce platform and that's running 80 e-commerce stores generat-

ing significant revenue," said Loughnan Hooper, managing director of Dotser. "We know our system is robust and scalable as we've been at it a long time: we just had the head down investing in research and development of our core platform."

A big draw of Dotser's platform is that it uses its own IP. That means every line of code has been written by the company and built from the ground up.

Instead of a situation where it works around the limitations of a third-party application, the company is in the position to facilitate any request or alteration from a client. Its experience in sectors like agriculture, retail and other areas fold into each other and make it more than the sum of its parts.

Compare this to third-party website makers which can rely on plug-ins and other elements from external developers, most of which the business doesn't have control over, and it becomes a more tempting proposition.

"We don't have to go read the manual as we're not limited, or handcuffed [to a third-party platform]," said Hooper. "We've haven't had a situation where we're asked if we can do something and we say we can't."

"It mightn't be simple, but we can deliver it, as very line of code is our own. We know exactly how it's structured and how we can adapt it."

"With your own software and code, you can be much more flexible and faster, which can create a competitive advantage quickly."

Long game

It's that focus on the long game that has seen Dotser stand the test of time. Its 11-strong workforce is lean and has built up a



Loughnan Hooper, managing director, Dotser

strong core over the years. Hooper has a lot of pride in how he's built up the business, focusing on hard work, honesty, and ensuring that the focus is always on long-term gains instead of quick and easy wins.

Even elements that might not catch the eye, like SEO which may be an afterthought for some companies, is given the long-term treatment. No stone is left unturned and it's why many of its clients are often ahead of well-recognised household brands in their respective areas.

Having a unique system instead of relying on a major website maker like WordPress can make all the difference, as you

have total control over every element and can customise it to take full advantage.

"It's a combination of building a platform with Google in mind and search engine-friendly pages, every little bit that goes into it, page structure, image naming, scripts, tags, server speed, and then a little bit of expertise and experience along with dogged persistence all combines to get a business get there," Hooper said.

"That's huge as far as offering to sell a solution to someone, because people will tell you, the natural results in three to six months' time are going to pay dividends to the business and get you ahead of the competition. It's all about

being fair and having a long-term objective in mind."

Sorting out the waste

As it grew and developed over the years, Dotser became involved in several different industries with e-commerce as its core.

For one, its work with Toolbank, the British leading tool supplier, saw it develop a fully integrated e-commerce system which supplies over 10,000 outlets in Britain and Ireland with over 25,000 products supported.

In another vein, it runs an event management platform called SuperShow, designed with

agricultural shows like the Tullamore Show and FBD's National Livestock Show Ireland in mind.

Having secured a number of shows in Great Britain last year paired with strategic hires such as Geoff Liffey, a former sports governing body chief executive who brings a wealth of experience to the membership management and events space, Hooper believes Dotser can make inroads in these areas.

This area gained extra importance with virtual shows filling the gap left by the cancellation of live shows. August saw the Irish Shows Association Virtual Show take place, with more than 1,700 entries and eight-hour programme



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streamed live.

Yet one of its fastest-growing verticals for the company is its waste management offering, a topical product offering considering how sustainability and climate change is at the forefront of people's minds.

Having launched this product three years ago, it's been steadily growing in popularity and is also based on Dotser's core platform. Much like its other offerings, based on mobile browser-first principles, it can be customised and developed with clients needs if required but even then it's comprehensive.

Managing part of the lean process that recycles 75 per cent of Ireland electrical and electronic waste, it brings with it end-to-end process workflow management that deals with the process: managing the orders, customers, contracts, container and weight management, invoice

creation and processing, just to name a few.

A comprehensive mobile-first system creates an electronic paper trail which allows businesses to help analyse their waste management and plan.

"Essentially, they're getting mixed waste of electrical equipment," said Hooper. "That is being broken up into its individual components of stainless steel, cables, circuit boards, copper, aluminium, different metals and components."

"It all comes down to the weight of containers, different materials, orders and loads and our system is tracking the various stages of the process and producing all the essential documentation for compliance."

"On a given day, you can say how many tons have been processed and how much money did we make today based on global market prices. We can tell that figure."

Ultimately, there's a level of consistency and stable building that has held Dotser in good stead. Hooper mentions that it's always about looking at what can happen a couple of years down the line, and that sustainable values and work ethic will always win out.

"The long game is key. Your team has to be consistent and truly believe in what we're saying otherwise you're going to be caught out," he said.

"When the boom was happening, I wasn't in any boom. I had my head down and just focused on making sure we have a stable platform, going through the problem hands-on and reinvesting everything back into our software. All to deliver competitive advantage, at scale, and to excel in a growing number of customer-focused verticals."