

Ezio Fusco Publishes Big Business, a Book for Young Entrepreneurs Starting With Little Money

IRELAND, September 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

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Irish businessman Ezio Fusco has [published](#) *Big Business*, a first-hand account of how he started, ran and sometimes lost businesses in Dublin and County Kildare. The book is written for young people who have an idea but very little money and want to know what starting out really involves.

Ezio describes it as a way to plan the road into business and to decide whether business is right for the reader at all. He wrote it as a record of where he came from and where he is going, for his family. He suspects younger readers will find it interesting and older readers will recognise an old road.

"Sharing 'how I did it' is always useful and stimulates the brain," Ezio said.

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Ezio left his father's employment at 23 and took over a fish and chip shop in Tallaght, a Dublin suburb, for six months while the owner went on holiday. He went on to run a pub in Newbridge, County Kildare, and a small shop on Thomas Street in Dublin that also housed a post office.

The book describes how he then took over a leasehold restaurant next to the Olympia Theatre on Dame Street. It was first priced at €60,000. Ezio paid €15,000 and agreed to cover the equipment payments himself, using borrowed money, savings and the proceeds of selling his car. The restaurant, It's Natural, was one of the first vegetarian restaurants in Dublin. He later turned it into Da Lorenzo's, a pasta restaurant named after his son.

After that came the Cafe Ritz, a 260-seat self-service restaurant on Abbey Street that he bought from his father. Later he drove a crane truck for a small family firm and became an owner-driver

in Dublin's waste removal trade, buying his own truck and working on building sites across the city. He also spent about eight months as a cook on a gas platform off the coast of Cork.

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The book does not leave out the hard parts. In Newbridge, a dispute with the owner of the pub ended with an uncontested court order to leave the premises within twelve hours. Everything, down to the pool table, was moved to his house. "Trust is a very difficult thing to earn, and it has to be respected very carefully," he writes.

Later, the Irish banking crisis pushed the mortgage on the Abbey Street building above its value. The building was sold, and Fusco eventually lost his house too. He writes about the strain this placed on his family and about going back to steady work as a driver.

"Usually it's just a truck driver buying his own truck, getting a contract and working like hell," Fusco writes, in contrast to the big breaks often shown on television.

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A section of the book compares starting a business in Dublin in 1983 with starting one now. It lists the supports open to young founders today, including student enterprise programmes and university startup hubs, along with the difficulties that remain, such as the cost of living, early funding and regulation.

Ezio points out that some of these supports favour university graduates. He never went to university, and he notes that many young people leave school after the Intermediate or Leaving Certificate. He observes that the lists do not say what to do when none of the suggestions work. "Running out of steam is not an option in any business," he writes.

He is clear that the book is not professional advice. "I'm not a business coach," he writes. "What I am is someone who has spent a lifetime involved in a variety of businesses." He hopes anything in it that sparks a new way of looking at a challenge makes the effort worthwhile.

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Ezio Fusco is 70 and lives in Ireland. He has worked as a restaurateur, shopkeeper, publican and haulage subcontractor, and he now drives a limousine in Dublin. He describes himself as retired but still in business.

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