

National College of Ireland



WhatsOn - Business Plan

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1.0 Introduction and Business Idea

1.1 Concept

WhatsOn is a map based event discovery web application that allows users to decide which events to attend. It emphasizes simplicity, spontaneity and ease of use.

Unlike traditional event management platforms, WhatsOn is singularly focused on event discovery instead of hosting, management, etc.

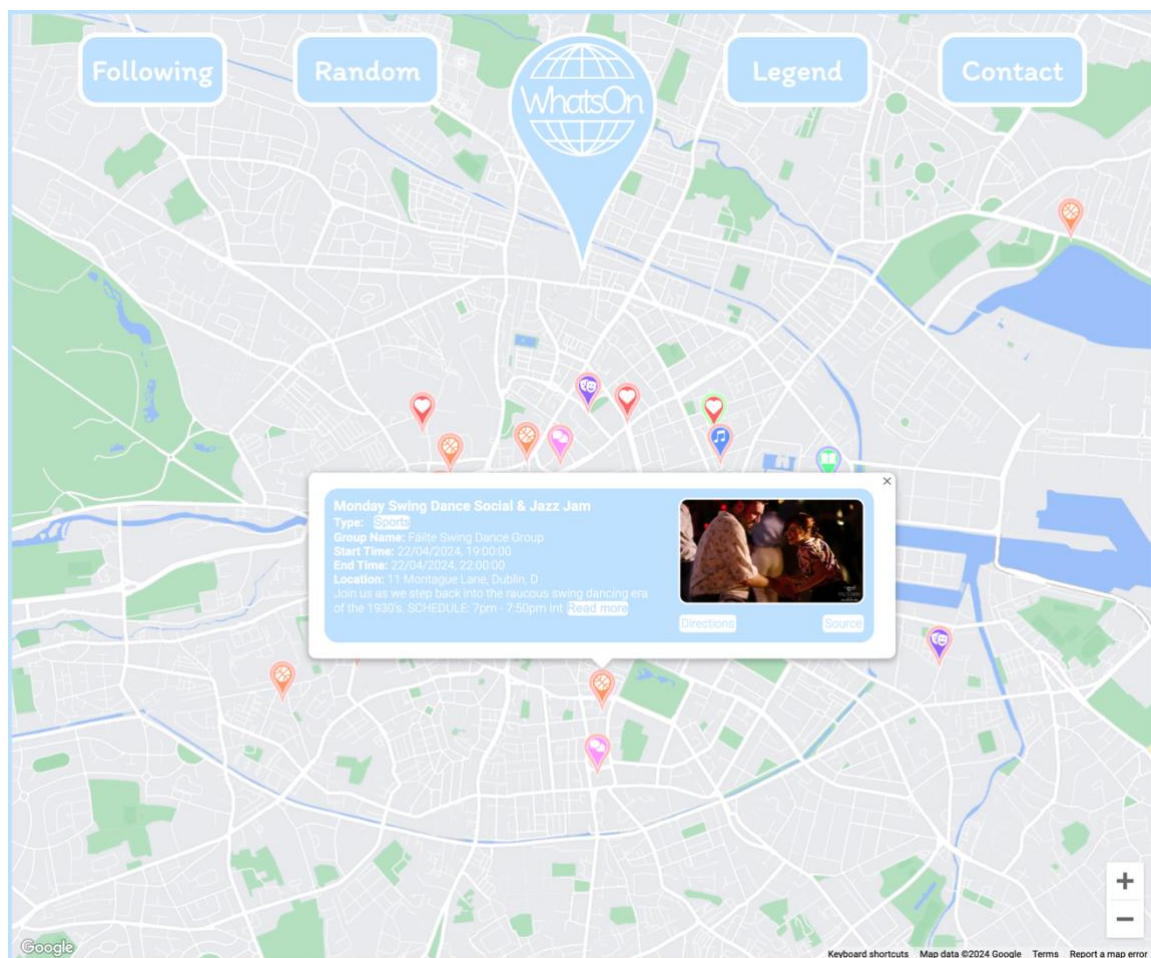
It features only features Real-Time Events that dynamically appear on the map when they are within 24-hours of starting.

This approach encourages engagement by only showing what users can currently do NOW.

Other apps employ a traditional list format with layers of pages and planning expected of the user, usually including signing up for an account.

WhatsOn uses a single, uncluttered and consistent design with events appearing directly on the map itself with only the location permission of the user required.

We believe seeing events on a map makes people realise how accessible and local they are to you, instead of a time and date with an address on a website.



1.2 Target Customers

- **Primary Segment:** Urban adults aged 21-40 in Dublin, including young professionals, students, and tourists.
- **Secondary Segment:** Foreign nationals and tourists in Dublin, leveraging the city's vibrant cultural scene and diverse population.

Problems Identified:

- **Decision Fatigue:** Many users experience difficulty in choosing from numerous event options.
- **Lack of Real-Time Information:** Existing platforms often do not provide real-time updates, making it hard for users to find spontaneous events.
- **Social Isolation:** There is a growing need for platforms that encourage socializing and reduce loneliness and digital anxiety.

1.3 Value Proposition

WhatsOn provides several key benefits to its users and event organizers:

- **For Users:**
 - **Simplified Event Discovery:** A visually engaging map-based interface that makes finding events easy and intuitive.
 - **Real-Time Updates:** Events dynamically appear on the map within 24 hours, promoting spontaneity and immediate engagement.
 - **Random Event Feature:** Reduces decision fatigue by suggesting random events nearby, making event discovery effortless and fun.
 - **Social Impact:** Features designed to promote socializing, reducing loneliness and digital anxiety.
- **For Event Organizers:**
 - **Enhanced Visibility:** Increased exposure for events through a dedicated discovery platform.
 - **Increased Ticket Sales:** More visibility and engagement can lead to higher attendance and ticket sales.
 - **Cost-Effective Promotion:** Lower costs associated with event promotion compared to traditional advertising methods.

1.4 Executive Summary

Porter's Five Forces Model:

- Analysis reveals high competition and significant threats from substitutes and new entrants. However, low supplier power and potential for differentiation offer opportunities for WhatsOn.

Business Model Canvas:

- WhatsOn's business model focuses on event discovery with a map-based interface, targeting urban adults and event organizers. Revenue streams include commission from event click-throughs and paid inclusions.

PESTEL Analysis Summary:

- Favorable political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors support WhatsOn's growth. High internet penetration, government support for tech startups, and urban population growth are key drivers.

SWOT Analysis:

- **Strengths:** Unique event discovery platform, map-based interface, real-time updates, random event feature, social impact, and agility.
- **Weaknesses:** Dependency on external data sources, limited features, initial focus on Dublin, and low brand recognition.
- **Opportunities:** Market expansion, strategic partnerships, feature enhancements, and sellability to competitors.
- **Threats:** High competition, economic fluctuations, regulatory changes, rapid technological advancements, and user resistance.

Strategic Positioning Using Porter's Generic Strategies:

- WhatsOn adopts a Differentiation strategy with elements of a Focus strategy, emphasizing unique features like real-time event updates and a map-based interface. The focus is on urban adults aged 21-40 in Dublin.

Marketing/Sales Strategy for WhatsOn:

- The plan targets urban adults aged 21-40, emphasizing ease of event discovery and real-time updates. Digital marketing, influencer partnerships, and mobile marketing are key tools. The 4 P's of Marketing (Product, Place, Price, Promotion) are strategically planned to align with WhatsOn's value proposition.

Operations Plan:

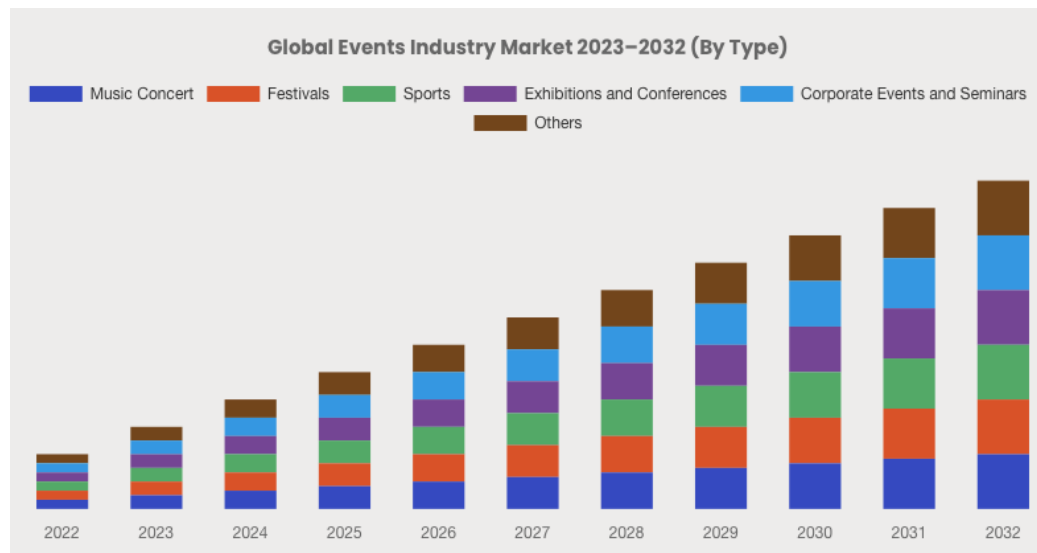
- A detailed 6-month Scrum-based project plan for development, identifying resources, team competencies, technology components, rollout and support requirements, and potential future developments. The plan includes key milestones, sprint goals, and timelines for the design, development, testing, and launch phases.

2.0 Industry Analysis

2.1 Overview

- The global events industry market size was valued at USD 1,190.4 billion in 2022.
- It is expected to grow at a CAGR rate of **12%** from 2023 to 2032.
- By 2032, the valuation is anticipated to reach USD **1,752.9 billion**.

(Custom Market Insights, 2023).



The industry includes various events such as music concerts, festivals, sports, exhibitions, conferences, corporate events, and seminars (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). Growth is driven by increasing corporate spending, the influence of social media, and emerging technologies (Sweap, 2024).

The significant size and projected growth of the industry indicate profitability. However, specific profitability data for the entire industry is not readily available.

Insights into profitability include:

- **Revenue Increase:** Over one-third of meeting professionals surveyed expected up to a 50% revenue increase in event-related business for 2023 compared to the previous year (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).
- **Sponsorships:** The surge in event sponsorships globally drives industry expansion as companies invest in events to promote products and services (Allied Market Research, 2023).

These figures suggest the industry is growing and profitable, with significant revenue generation and investment opportunities driven by sponsorships, corporate events, and public gatherings.

2.2 Porter's Five Forces Model

2.2.1 Rivalry among Companies in the Industry

Number of Competitors (3): The Irish market includes numerous competitors like Eventbrite, Meetup, Townapps, and Tito, indicating high rivalry. Eventbrite hosted over 4 million events globally in 2023, highlighting the competitive intensity in the market (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).

Competitors' Size and Capacity (3): Competitors vary in size and capacity, with smaller Irish firms like Tito and major players like Eventbrite whose annual revenue in 2022 was approximately \$256 million (Eventbrite, 2023). This diversity influences competitive strategies and market positioning (Subscribed, 2024).

Industry Growth (2): The industry in Ireland is growing, driven by digitization and shifts to virtual events post-COVID-19. It is expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.3% from 2023 to 2032 (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). Ireland's 93% internet penetration and government support create a favourable growth environment (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

Opportunity for Differentiation (2): There are significant opportunities for differentiation in the Irish market. For example, while Eventbrite focuses on event ticketing and management, Meetup facilitates group meetings in various localities. WhatsOn's focus on simplifying choices can enhance user satisfaction by preventing decision overload (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000).

Importance: 5 (Strongest of the five forces)

Threat rating: 2.5 (3+3+2+2=10/4)

Weighted Score: 5 * 2.5 = 12.5

Conclusion

The industry is attractive due to its large number of diverse competitors, rapid growth, and differentiation opportunities. However, high competition requires continuous innovation (Mars Startup Toolkit, 2024).

2.2.2 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Suppliers for WhatsOn, can be categorized into two primary groups:

1. Event Data Providers

- **Many Suppliers (1):** Numerous event platforms and sources are available, reducing the bargaining power of any single provider (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).
- **Availability of Substitutes (1):** WhatsOn can switch to other sources like social media platforms or local event listing sites easily, lowering individual provider power (Corporate Finance Institute, 2024).
- **Low Switching Costs (1):** Switching from one provider to another incurs minimal costs, further diminishing supplier power (InEvent, 2024).
- **Quality and Uniqueness of Data (3):** High-quality, exclusive, or real-time data providers might have more power, but this is mitigated by the availability of multiple sources (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

2. Digital Platforms and Services

- **Many Providers (1):** Numerous providers, including AWS, Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure, offer competitive pricing, reducing individual supplier power (Subscribed, 2024).
- **Substitutes and Competition (1):** A highly competitive market with similar services allows WhatsOn to switch providers without significant impact, reducing supplier power (Corporate Finance Institute, 2024).
- **Low Switching Costs (1):** Providers often offer migration support and competitive pricing, making it easy for WhatsOn to switch, thus lowering supplier power (InEvent, 2024).
- **Reliability and Performance (2):** High reliability and performance can give some providers slightly more power, but the competitive market mitigates this (Sweap, 2024).

Importance: 3

Threat rating: 1.4 (1+1+1+3+1+1+1+2= 11/8)

Weighted Score: 3 * 1.4 = 4.2

Conclusion

The bargaining power of suppliers for WhatsOn is relatively low due to the large number of suppliers, availability of substitutes, and low switching costs. Although some suppliers might have slight power due to the quality and uniqueness of their offerings, the overall impact is minimal, making the industry more attractive for WhatsOn

2.2.3 Bargaining Power of Buyers

Buyers in the Event Management Software industry are primarily event organizers, with end-users (event attendees) as secondary buyers whose preferences influence the platforms chosen by event organizers.

Event Organizers as Buyers

1. **Customers' Switching Costs (5):** Switching costs for event organizers are relatively low due to subscription-based pricing models offered by platforms like Eventbrite, Meetup, and Tito, facilitating easy switching (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).
2. **Number of Buyers (2):** The large number of event organizers in Ireland, including corporate planners and community groups, reduces the bargaining power of individual buyers. Over 20,000 events were held in Ireland last year (Corporate Finance Institute, 2024) (Central Statistics Office, 2022),
3. **Customers Want Differentiated Products (3):** Organizers seek unique features tailored to their needs, enhancing their bargaining power by allowing them to choose platforms that best meet their requirements (Porter, 1998).
4. **Ease of Comparing Suppliers (5):** The internet makes it easy for organizers to compare event management software through online reviews, comparison sites, and feature lists (Corporate Finance Institute, 2024).
5. **Cost Proportion (2):** The cost of event management software is a small portion of the total event cost, reducing the bargaining power of organizers as price increases by providers do not significantly impact the overall budget (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

End-Users as Buyers

1. **Influence of Preferences (3):** Attendees influence the choice of event management software by preferring user-friendly interfaces, diverse events, and seamless ticket purchasing processes (European Commission, 2023).
2. **Number of End-Users (3):** Over 1.2 million people attended various events in Ireland in 2022, enhancing the bargaining power of buyers through demand for preferred platforms (Central Statistics Office, 2022).
3. **Ease of Information Gathering (4):** End-users can easily gather information about different event platforms through social media, reviews, and word-of-mouth, influencing the organizers' choice of platform (Corporate Finance Institute, 2024).

Importance: 4

Threat rating: 3.4 (5+2+3+5+2+3+3+4= 27/8)

Weighted Score: 4 * 3.4 = 13.6

Conclusion

The bargaining power of buyers in the Event Management Software industry in Ireland is relatively high due to low switching costs, a large number of buyers, demand for differentiated products, ease of information gathering, and the minimal impact of software costs on overall event budgets. This dynamic makes the industry less attractive for suppliers but more attractive for buyers.

2.2.4 Threat of New Entrants

Economies of Scale (4): Economies of scale are not as significant as in other industries and arguably exhibit diseconomies of scale; software can be distributed widely at low cost (Kitchenham, 2002).

Capital Requirements (4): Initial capital requirements are low, especially for SaaS products. Government grants and tax incentives in Ireland further reduce barriers (Enterprise Ireland, 2023).

Cost Advantages (3): Smaller companies can operate efficiently and adapt quickly (Midaxo, 2023). Ireland's tech startup ecosystem supports innovation (Irish Tech News, 2023).

Buyer Loyalty (3): Event organizers may be loyal to platforms with specific features, but attendees may switch easily (Akinnuwesi et al., 2013).

Government Restrictions (2): The supportive regulatory environment for tech companies in Ireland generally poses low barriers to entry but requires adherence to stringent data protection standards once operational such as GDPR (Inline Policy, 2023).

Importance: 4

Threat rating: 3.2 (4+4+3+3+2= 16/5)

Weighted Score: 4 * 3.2 = 12.8

Conclusion

The threat of new entrants is high. There are few barriers to entry and the industry is attractive in terms of low capital requirements and the absence of economies of scale. The lone challenge would be developing a differentiated product and building brand loyalty.

2.2.5 Threat Of Substitute Products or Services

Number of Substitute Products or Services (4): Numerous substitutes offer event discovery, including social media platforms like Facebook Events and local platforms like Eventful and Time Out Dublin (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).

Relative Quality and Performance (4): Substitute platforms like Facebook Events and Google Maps offer robust event discovery features with the advantage of being integrated into services that users already frequently use.

Switching Costs (5): Switching costs for users and buyers are low. Users can switch between WhatsOn, Facebook Events, and other substitutes without significant inconvenience (Corporate Finance Institute, 2024; InEvent, 2024).

Price-Performance Trade-off (4): Substitutes like social media platforms and Google Maps are typically free for users and relatively cheap for buyers, presenting a strong price-performance advantage (Sweap, 2024).

User Preferences and Network Effects (4): Platforms like Facebook Events and Google have significant user bases and high engagement levels. Facebook had over 3.4 million users in Ireland in 2023. Google Maps is used by over 2.5 million people in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2023; StatCounter, 2023).

Emerging AI Technologies (3): AI-powered platforms like ChatGPT and Gemini are increasingly expanding their capabilities, potentially reducing the need for dedicated event discovery platforms (Irish Tech News, 2023; McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Importance: 4

Threat rating: 4 (4+4+5+4+4+3= 24/6)

Weighted Score: 4 * 4 = 16

Conclusion: The threat of substitutes is high due to numerous alternative platforms, low switching costs, strong price-performance advantages, and emerging AI technologies. WhatsOn must differentiate itself through unique features and superior user experience.

2.2.6 Five Forces Matrix

| Force | Importance (1 - 5) | Threat (1 - 5) | Weighted Score Importance * Threat |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Rivalry among companies in the industry | 5 | 2.5 | 12.5 |
| Bargaining power of suppliers | 3 | 1.4 | 4.2 |
| Bargaining power of buyers | 4 | 3.4 | 13.6 |
| Threat of new entrants | 4 | 3.2 | 12.8 |
| Threat of substitute products or services | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| Total | | | 59.1 |

- Minimum Score = 5 (Very attractive)
- Maximum Score = 125 (Very unattractive)

Overall Conclusion

With a total weighted score of 59.1, the Event Management Software industry in Ireland is moderately attractive. For WhatsOn, the high competition and significant threats from substitutes and new entrants present challenges. However, the low supplier power and potential for differentiation offer opportunities. As a new entrant, WhatsOn must focus on innovation, unique features, and user stickiness to succeed in this dynamic market.

3.0 Business Canvas

3.1 Value Propositions

1. What are you building?

- WhatsOn is building a map-based event discovery web application, emphasizing simplicity, spontaneity, and ease of use.

2. For whom?

- Primary target audience: Adults aged 21-40 living in urban areas, particularly Dublin, and foreign nationals/tourists. (European Migration Network, 2023)
- Primary financial customers: Event industry and event organizers who pay for event click-throughs and paid inclusions.

3. What pain are you solving?

- **For Users:** Addressing decision fatigue and planning anxiety by simplifying event discovery through a map-based interface, promoting spontaneous socializing (Semrush, 2023).
- **For Event Industry/Organizers:** Enhancing event visibility and promotion, reducing costs associated with traditional event promotion

4. What gain are you creating?

- **For Users:** Easy exploration of nearby events, promoting spontaneous socializing.
- **For Event Organizers:** Increased event visibility, higher ticket sales, and reduced advertising costs

5. Who are your customers?

- Financial customers: Event industry and organizers.
- Users: Adults aged 21-40 in urban areas, whose engagement drives value for event organizers.

3.2 Customer Segments

1. Who are my customers?

- Primary: Event industry and organizers.
- Secondary: Adults aged 21-40 in urban areas, foreign nationals, and tourists.

2. Why would they buy?

- **Event Industry/Organizers:** For increased visibility, ticket sales, and reduced advertising costs.
- **Users:** To easily explore events and simplify decision-making.

3. Geographic, Social, Demographic characteristics:

- **Geographic:** Urban areas, particularly Dublin.
- **Social:** People interested in socializing and attending events, including locals and tourists.
- **Demographic:** Adults aged 21-40.

4. Customer Persona:

- **Persona 1: The Local Socialite**
 - Age: 28
 - Gender: Female
 - Location: Dublin
 - Social Tendencies: Extroverted
 - Media Usage: Social media and web apps
 - Marital Status: Single
 - Income: Middle income.

- **Persona 2: The Tourist Explorer**

- Age: 35
- Gender: Male
- Location: Visiting Dublin
- Social Tendencies: Enjoys local events
- Media Usage: Travel apps
- Marital Status: Married
- Income: Middle to high income.

- **Persona 3: The Immigrant Networker**

- Age: 36
- Gender: Non-binary
- Location: Recently moved to Dublin
- Social Tendencies: Networking through events
- Media Usage: Digital media
- Marital Status: Single
- Income: Middle income.

3.3 Channels

1. How does your product get from Value Proposition to Customer Segments?

- Through the web application where users discover events and organizers increase visibility.

2. What distribution channels do you need for that?

- Web application and potentially iOS/Android apps to reach a wider audience (Statista, 2021).

3. How would you use these channels?

- Web application as primary; mobile apps for additional accessibility.

4. Break down your channels by target user and target customer.

- **Users:** Web application and mobile apps to align with mobile internet usage trends.
- **Event Industry/Organizers:** Web application for event listings and promotion.

3.4 Customer Relationships

1. How do I get them to my website?

- Through SEO, social media marketing, and targeted ads (Semrush, 2023).

2. How do I not lose them through attrition and churn?

- Continuous updates, user-friendly interface, and new features based on feedback (User Guiding, 2023).

3. How do I grow my customer base?

- Effective online marketing, partnerships, and positive user experiences leading to word-of-mouth referrals (Iterable, 2023).

3.5 Revenue Streams

1. How do you make money from Value Proposition to Customer Segments?

- Through commission from event click-throughs and paid inclusions by organizers.

2. What value is the customer paying for?

- **Event Organizers:** Increased visibility, ticket sales, and advertising savings.
- **Users:** Indirectly, through their engagement which creates value for organizers.

3. What's the strategy for capturing that value?

- Providing a platform meeting the needs of users and organizers.

4. Revenue Model

Transaction-based revenue model with fees for event click-throughs and paid inclusions (Paddle, 2024).

3.6 Key Resources

1. What do you need to make the business work?

- A robust web application platform, real-time event data, and a skilled team (Browserstack, 2024).

2. Finance- do you need capital or a line of credit?

- Initial capital for development, data acquisition, and marketing; ongoing funding for operations (AccountsIQ, 2024).

3. Physical – do you need manufacturing?

- No traditional physical assets needed; primary assets are office space and computing equipment (Neil Patel, 2024).

4. Intellectual property- do you need to acquire patents?

- Not necessarily patents, but protecting unique technologies or methodologies could be beneficial (WIPO, 2024).

5. Human- software engineers, designers, manufacturing people

- Essential team members include software engineers, UX/UI designers, data analysts, and marketing professionals (BambooHR, 2024).

3.7 Key Partnerships

1. Who are your key partners and suppliers?

- Event organizers, local businesses, tourist organizations, and data providers (Hubspot, 2024).

2. What key resources are we requiring from partners?

- Event data, promotional support, and partnership opportunities (Hubspot, 2024).

3. What activities are they going to perform and when?

- Providing accurate event data and promotional support regularly (Cleverism, 2024).

4. Partnerships for Year 1 vs Year 3+:

- **Year 1:** Focus on establishing the platform and building a user base.
- **Year 3+:** Focus on expansion and diversification (Forbes, 2024).

5. Partnership types:

- Strategic alliances with non-competitors, regular suppliers (event organizers), and promotional partners (Hubspot, 2024).

3.8 Key Activities

1. Web Application Development and Maintenance:

- Continuous development and maintenance of the web application (Browserstack, 2024).

2. Data Management:

- Managing real-time event data (Smartsheet, 2024).

3. User Engagement:

- Marketing activities, user support, and introducing new features (Wallstreetmojo, 2024).

4. Partnership Management:

- Forming and managing partnerships with event organizers and businesses (Hubspot, 2024).

5. Financial Management:

- Revenue and cost management to ensure financial sustainability (SoftwareConnect, 2024).

3.9 Cost Structure

1. What are entire costs to operate the model?

- Web application development, data acquisition, marketing, and general administrative costs (Netsolutions, 2024).

2. What are the most important costs?

- Web application development and maintenance, and data acquisition (MindK, 2024).

3. What are the most expensive resources?

- Web application platform and team salaries (BambooHR, 2024).

4. What key activities are most expensive?

- Maintaining the web application, updating event data, and user engagement (Denis-Oakley, 2024).

5. Fixed costs, Variable costs, Economies of scale?

- **Fixed Costs:** Salaries, office rent, web hosting fees.
- **Variable Costs:** Data acquisition, marketing campaigns.
- **Economies of Scale:** Potentially realized as user base grows (Investopedia, 2024).

4.0 PESTEL

4.1 Political

Government Policy: The Irish government supports technology start-ups with grants and incentives, such as Enterprise Ireland's Competitive Start Fund providing up to €50,000. (Enterprise Ireland, 2023).

Political Stability: Ireland ranks 12th out of 190 economies in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

Corruption: 13th out of 180 countries on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index in 2023, reflecting a favourable environment for business (Transparency International, 2023).

Tax Policy: Ireland's 12.5% corporate tax rate is attractive for start-ups. (Revenue Commissioners, 2023).

Labour Law: Ireland has progressive labour laws ensuring fair treatment of employees, contributing to a positive work environment. (Citizens Information, 2023).

Trade Restrictions: Minimal within the EU, benefiting business expansion.

Conclusion: Favourable political factors support the growth of WhatsOn, with stable governance and supportive policies, and a competitive tax environment aiding business operations.

4.2 Economic

Economic Growth: Ireland's GDP grew by 5.5% in 2022, among the highest in the EU. (European Commission, 2023). Provides a favourable environment for new businesses.

Exchange Rates: Stability of the euro minimizes foreign exchange risks within the EU. (European Central Bank, 2023).

Interest Rates: Low interest rates (3.1%) support borrowing and investment for startups. (Central Bank of Ireland, 2023).

Inflation Rates: Stable at 2.6% in 2022 contributing to predictable cost structures for businesses. (Central Statistics Office, 2023).

Disposable Income: High average household disposable income (€48,476) supports discretionary spending. (OECD, 2023).

Unemployment Rates: Low at 4.3% in 2023, indicating a strong labour market, contributing to consumer spending power. (Central Statistics Office, 2023).

Consumer Spending Power: Consumer spending grew by 7.1% in 2022. (OECD, 2023).

Conclusion: Strong economic factors, including robust GDP growth, low unemployment and high disposable income, create a favourable environment for WhatsOn's success in the events industry.

4.3 Social

Population Growth Rate: Urban population growth is driven by natural increase and international migration (Central Statistics Office, 2023).

Age Redistribution: 25-54 years old is the largest group, making up around 43.9% of the population. This covers the 21-40 target market for WhatsOn. (Central Statistics Office, 2023).

Career Attitudes: Work-life balance is increasingly prioritized by Irish employees, influencing their participation in social and leisure activities (IBEC, 2023).

Safety Emphasis: Post-COVID safety concerns remain a significant factor in event attendance decisions (Deloitte, 2022).

Health Consciousness: Growing trend towards health and wellness can be leveraged by promoting healthy and outdoor events. (Healthy Ireland, 2022).

Lifestyle Attitudes: Rising trend in spontaneous leisure activities among urban dwellers (Mintel, 2023).

Cultural Barriers: Ireland's immigrant population has significantly diversified, necessitating culturally sensitive event planning (European Migration Network, 2023).

Ethnic and Religion Issues: Inclusivity can attract a broader audience. (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2022).

Consumer Leisure Time: Irish workforce enjoys significant leisure time, which boosts participation in social events (OECD, 2022).

Roles of Men and Women: Gender- inclusivity is increasingly recognized in marketing strategies (National Women's Council of Ireland, 2023).

Conclusion: Favorable social factors, such as demographic trends and lifestyle preferences, align well with WhatsOn's offerings.

4.4 Technological

Technology Incentives: The Irish government provides significant incentives for technology adoption, supporting innovation and development such as R&D tax credits of up to 25% for qualifying activities (Enterprise Ireland, 2023).

Level of Innovation: Ireland ranks highly in innovation, with the Global Innovation Index placing it 14th out of 132 economies in 2023. (WIPO, 2023).

Automation: Automation in app development is increasing. Content updates, event data scraping, and user behavior analytics can be used to reduce operational costs (Forbes, 2023).

R&D Activity: Ireland's R&D expenditure was approximately 1.1% of its GDP in 2022, indicating a strong emphasis on innovation and technological advancement (OECD, 2023).

Technological Change: Ireland's tech sector is characterized by high rates of technological change, which necessitates regular updates and feature enhancements (Statista, 2023).

Technological Awareness: 96% of people aged 16-44 use the internet daily, indicating a tech-savvy population (Central Statistics Office, 2023).

Internet and Broadband: Ireland has a high internet penetration rate, with 91% of households having access to the internet and broadband availability. This supports the widespread usage of mobile apps. (Statista, 2023).

Computer Usage and Availability in the Home: High computer and smartphone usage in Ireland supports app accessibility. As of 2023, 84% of individuals in Ireland own a smartphone (Statista, 2023).

Conclusion: Technological factors in Ireland are highly supportive, with advancements and innovation providing a competitive edge for WhatsOn.

4.5 Environmental

Weather: Weather conditions in Ireland are typically mild, with average temperatures ranging from 4°C in winter to 19°C in summer. However, Ireland also experiences significant rainfall, averaging 750-1,000 mm annually, which can influence the scheduling and attendance of outdoor events (Met Éireann, 2023).

Climate: Ireland's temperate maritime climate supports year-round event activities. The moderate climate means that extreme weather conditions are rare, allowing for more consistent planning of events (Met Éireann, 2023).

Environmental Policies: Ireland is committed to environmental sustainability, with policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting green practices. Adhering to these policies, such as the Climate Action Plan 2023, can enhance WhatsOn's brand reputation by aligning with national sustainability goals. (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, 2023).

Climate Change: 87% of Irish people recognize climate change as a serious problem. WhatsOn can capitalize on this trend by promoting green events and reducing the carbon footprint of its operations. (European Commission, 2023).

Pressure from NGOs: Environmental NGOs in Ireland, such as Friends of the Earth and An Taisce, advocate for sustainable practices. By responding to NGO pressures and incorporating sustainability into their business model, WhatsOn can enhance its brand image and build consumer trust (Friends of the Earth Ireland, 2023).

Conclusion: Environmental factors present opportunities for WhatsOn to promote sustainable events, benefiting from Ireland's mild climate and increasing environmental awareness.

4.6 Legal

Discrimination Laws: Ireland has strong anti-discrimination laws, such as the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, which ensure non-discriminatory practices in the workplace. Compliance with these laws is crucial for maintaining brand reputation and ensuring fair treatment of employees (Citizens Information, 2023).

Antitrust Laws: Compliance with European Union antitrust laws, which prevent monopolistic practices and promote competition, is essential to avoid legal complications. These laws can benefit WhatsOn trying to establish itself in a fair competitive environment. (European Commission, 2023).

Employment Laws: Ireland's employment laws are designed to ensure a fair and safe working environment. This includes regulations on minimum wage, working hours, and health and safety standards, as outlined in the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997. (Citizens Information, 2023).

Consumer Protection Laws: Compliance with consumer protection laws builds trust and protects user rights. These laws ensure that businesses operate fairly and transparently, providing a secure environment for consumers. (Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, 2023).

Copyright and Patent Laws: Protecting the unique features and design of WhatsOn through copyright and patent laws can prevent imitation by competitors. The Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 provides a framework for protecting intellectual property in Ireland (Irish Statute Book, 2023).

Health and Safety Laws: Ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations is crucial for event management partners. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 mandates that employers provide a safe working environment (Health and Safety Authority, 2023).

Conclusion: Legal factors require careful compliance but do not pose significant barriers. Adherence to laws and regulations can build trust and protect the company from legal challenges.

5.0 SWOT

5.1 Strengths

Differentiation:

- **Event Discovery Platform vs. Event Management:** Focus on event discovery rather than event management, making WhatsOn distinct from comprehensive management tools.
- **Map-Based Interface vs. List:** A unique, visually engaging map-based interface sets WhatsOn apart from competitors using traditional list formats.
- **Real-Time Events Only:** Displays only real-time events that dynamically appear on the map within 24 hours, promoting spontaneity and immediate engagement.
- **Random Event Feature:** Reduces decision fatigue by allowing users to discover random events nearby, making event discovery effortless and fun.
- **Social Impact:** Features promote socializing, reducing loneliness and digital anxiety.
- **Low Cost/Agile:** Nimble business model allows for quick pivots based on market trends, maintaining low operational costs and high adaptability.
- **Name Value:** Commonly used phrase "what's on" could enhance SEO and organic search results, potentially improving visibility and traffic.

5.2 Weaknesses

- **Dependency on External Data Sources:** Relies on external APIs for event data, which are controlled by primary competitors.
- **Limited Features:** The focus on differentiation means fewer features compared to comprehensive event management platforms, which might be seen as a limitation by some users.
- **Limited Initial Geographic Focus:** Initial focus on Dublin may limit immediate scalability.
- **Resource Constraints:** As a startup, limited resources for extensive marketing and development.
- **Brand Recognition:** New entrant with low brand recognition compared to established competitors like Eventbrite and Meetup.

5.3 Opportunities

- **Market Expansion:** The platform is easily scalable to different locations, potentially broadening the user base.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Opportunities to integrate with other event and social gathering APIs, businesses, tourism agencies, etc., enhancing the platform's value proposition.
- **Feature Enhancement:** Potential to develop advanced algorithms for personalized event recommendations, similar to Spotify's model for music.
- **Sellable to Competitors:** The platform's unique features could make it an attractive acquisition target for larger competitors looking to enhance their offerings.
- **Growing Urban Population:** Increasing number of young adults in urban areas seeking social activities.
- **Tourism Growth:** Dublin's popularity as a tourist destination provides a steady influx of potential users.
- **Technological Advancements:** Leverage new technologies like AI for personalized event recommendations.
- **Social Trends:** Rising trends in spontaneous leisure activities and health-conscious events.
- **Government Support:** Availability of grants and incentives for tech startups.

5.4 Threats

- **Low Barrier to Entry:** The simplicity of the application makes it easy for new entrants to replicate.
- **No Patents:** Lack of intellectual property protection could lead to competitors duplicating features.
- **Competition:** Established event discovery platforms or social media networks might limit their APIs or replicate WhatsOn's features.
- **User Resistance:** Potential hesitancy from users to adopt a new event discovery platform if they are accustomed to existing solutions.
- **High Competition:** Intense competition from established players in the event discovery and management market.
- **Economic Fluctuations:** Economic downturns could reduce disposable income and spending on social events.
- **Regulatory Changes:** Potential changes in data protection regulations impacting operations.
- **Technological Changes:** Rapid technological advancements could require constant updates and innovation.

6.0 Strategic Positioning

Based on Porter's framework, WhatsOn primarily adopts a **Differentiation** strategy with elements of a **Focus** strategy to establish a competitive position in the Irish event discovery market.

6.1 Differentiation Strategy

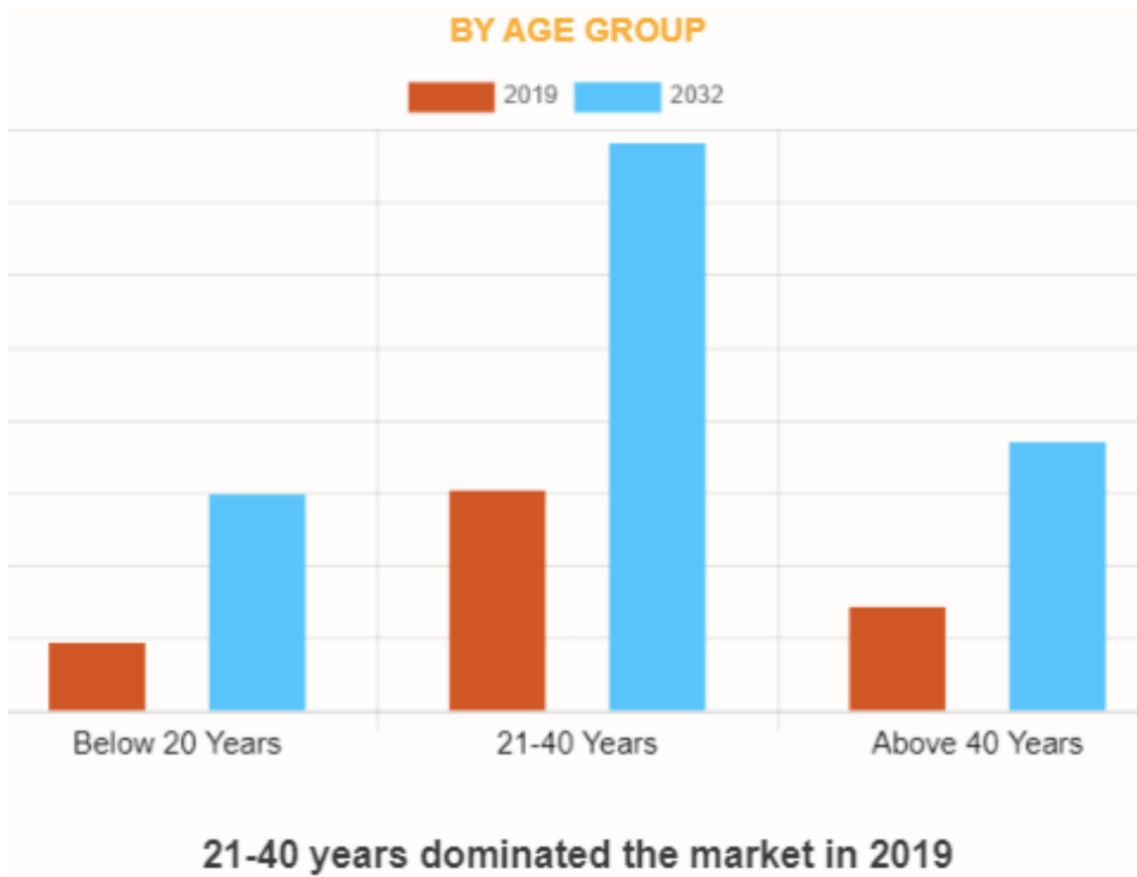
WhatsOn's differentiation strategy revolves around several key aspects:

1. **Unique Value Proposition:** WhatsOn offers a user-friendly, map-based interface for real-time event discovery, setting it apart from competitors like Eventbrite and Meetup (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).
2. **Real-Time Updates:** The platform dynamically updates events within 24 hours, promoting spontaneous socializing (European Commission, 2023).
3. **Random Event Feature:** This feature reduces decision fatigue by allowing users to discover random events nearby, making event discovery effortless and fun.

6.2 Focus Strategy

WhatsOn also incorporates a focus strategy by targeting specific market segments and geographical areas:

1. **Target Market Segments:**
 - **Primary Segment:** Adults aged 21-40 in urban areas, especially Dublin. This demographic is highly active in social events and has higher disposable income (OECD, 2023).
 - **Secondary Segment:** Foreign nationals and tourists in Dublin, leveraging the city's cultural vibrancy and diverse population (Fáilte Ireland, 2023).
2. **Geographic Focus:** Initial focus on Dublin allows WhatsOn to refine its offerings based on localized feedback before potential expansion.



(Allied Market Research, 2023)

6.3 Cost Leadership

Although WhatsOn does not primarily pursue a cost leadership strategy, it incorporates cost efficiency in its operations:

1. **Operational Efficiency:** Leveraging automation for content updates, event data scraping, and user behavior analytics reduces manual intervention and operational costs (Forbes, 2023).

6.4 Value Propositions

1. **For Users:** Simplifies event discovery, reduces decision fatigue, and promotes spontaneous socializing through a visually engaging, map-based interface. The random event feature helps users overcome decision fatigue by suggesting random nearby events.
2. **For Event Organizers:** Enhances event visibility, boosts ticket sales, and saves on advertising costs by providing a platform for event discovery (European Commission, 2023).

6.5 Customer Segments

1. **Primary Customers:** Event industry and organizers who pay for event click-throughs and paid inclusions.
2. **Secondary Customers:** Users aged 21-40 living in urban areas, particularly Dublin, as well as tourists and foreign nationals.

6.6 Channels

1. **Web Application:** The primary platform for users and event organizers.
2. **Mobile Accessibility:** Potential development of iOS and Android apps to cater to users' preference for mobile devices (Statista, 2021).

6.7 Customer Relationships

1. **User Acquisition:** Online marketing strategies such as SEO, social media marketing, and targeted ads (Semrush, 2023).
2. **User Retention:** Continuous updates, user-friendly interface, and new features based on user feedback (User Guiding, 2023). The random event feature encourages frequent use by providing new and unexpected events.
3. **Event Organizer Engagement:** Direct outreach, partnerships, and B2B marketing strategies to attract event organizers (Cvent, 2023).

6.8 Revenue Streams

1. **Commission:** From event click-throughs.
2. **Paid Inclusions:** Event organizers pay for enhanced visibility on the platform (Paddle, 2024).

6.9 Cost Structure

1. **Web Application Development and Maintenance:** Ongoing development and updates to ensure a robust platform.
2. **Data Acquisition and Management:** Continuous acquisition and verification of event data.
3. **Marketing and User Acquisition:** Campaigns to attract and retain users and event organizers.

6.10 Key Resources

1. **Human Resources:** Software engineers, designers, data analysts, and marketing professionals.
2. **Digital Infrastructure:** Robust web application platform and real-time data capabilities.
3. **Financial Resources:** Initial capital for development, ongoing funding for operations and growth (Enterprise Ireland, 2023).

6.11 Key Partnerships

1. **Event Organizers:** For accurate and timely event data.
2. **Local Businesses and Tourist Organizations:** For additional event data and promotional support.
3. **Digital Service Providers:** For hosting and cloud services (Subscribed, 2024).

Conclusion

WhatsOn's strategic positioning leverages Porter's Differentiation and Focus strategies to establish a competitive edge in the Irish event discovery market. By offering a unique, user-friendly platform with features like real-time updates and a random event generator, and targeting specific market segments, WhatsOn is well-positioned to capitalize on the growing demand for spontaneous socializing and real-time event discovery.

7.0 Marketing Plan

7.1 Target Market Characteristics

Demographic Profile

- **Age:** 21-40 years.
- **Location:** Urban areas, particularly Dublin.
- **Occupation:** Young professionals, students, and tourists.
- **Income Level:** Middle to high disposable income.
- **Lifestyle:** Tech-savvy, active social life, preference for spontaneous plans and cultural activities.

7.2 Behavioural Characteristics

- **Event Attendance:** Frequent participants in social, cultural, and recreational events.
- **Tech Usage:** Regular use of mobile devices and web applications for event discovery and social planning.
- **Preferences:** Inclination towards real-time information and convenient solutions.

7.3 Psychographic Profile

- **Values:** Valuing experiences, community engagement, and personal convenience.
- **Interests:** Music, arts, social gatherings, networking events, and local cultural experiences.

Evidence: Central Statistics Office data shows a significant portion of Dublin's population is young adults aged 21-40, making up a large part of the city's tech-savvy demographic (CSO, 2023).

7.4 Needs of the Segment

Primary Needs

- **Ease of Discovery:** Simplified and quick access to relevant events.
- **Real-Time Updates:** Up-to-date information on events happening in their vicinity.
- **Decision Support:** Features like the random event function to reduce decision fatigue.

Secondary Needs

- **Social Integration:** Opportunities to meet new people and socialize.
- **Convenience:** User-friendly interface and easy navigation.

Evidence: According to Allied Market Research, 74% of consumers prefer real-time updates and ease of discovery when it comes to attending events (Allied Market Research, 2023).

7.5 Tools for Marketing

Digital Marketing

- **Social Media:** Use platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter for targeted ads and community engagement.
- **SEO and Content Marketing:** Develop blog content promoting local events, SEO optimization to improve search engine ranking.
- **Email Marketing:** Personalized newsletters and event updates to keep users engaged.

Influencer Partnerships

- **Local Influencers:** Collaborate with Dublin-based influencers to reach a wider audience.

Mobile Marketing

- **App Store Optimization:** Ensure the WhatsOn app is easily discoverable on app stores.
- **Push Notifications:** Timely updates and personalized event recommendations.

Evidence: Statista reports that 92% of internet users aged 16 to 24 access the internet via mobile devices, indicating the importance of mobile marketing (Statista, 2021).

7.6 Assessment of Competitions Position

Major Competitors

- **Eventbrite:** Dominates with a comprehensive event management system but lacks focus on spontaneous event discovery.
- **Meetup:** Strong in facilitating group events but less emphasis on real-time, location-based event discovery.
- **Local Platforms:** Townapps and Tito cater to niche markets but lack the comprehensive, user-friendly interface WhatsOn offers.

7.7 The 4 P's of Marketing

7.7.1 Product

- **Features:** Real-time event discovery, random event function, map-based interface.
- **Quality:** High-quality user experience with reliable and updated event data.
- **Performance:** Fast loading times, intuitive navigation, robust security features.

7.7.2 Place

- **Distribution:** Web application, potential iOS and Android apps.
- **Accessibility:** Easy access via mobile devices and desktop.

7.7.3 Price

- **Pricing Model:** Transaction-based revenue from event click-throughs and paid event inclusions.
- **Competitive Pricing:** Offering competitive rates for event organizers to list and promote their events.

7.7.4 Promotion

- **Digital Marketing:** SEO, social media campaigns, content marketing.
- **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborations with local influencers to drive awareness and engagement.
- **Email Marketing:** Regular newsletters and event updates.

7.8 Approach to Customer Satisfaction

User Feedback

- **Surveys and Reviews:** Regularly gather feedback through in-app surveys and app store reviews to understand user needs and pain points.

Continuous Improvement

- **Feature Updates:** Regular updates based on user feedback and market trends.
- **Customer Support:** Responsive customer support to address user issues promptly.

Community Engagement

- **Social Media Interaction:** Active engagement with users on social media platforms to build a community.
- **User Events:** Hosting events for users to foster a sense of community and gather direct feedback.

7.9 Analysis and Strategic Positioning

Target Market Specificity

- The plan identifies and targets specific market segments, focusing on urban adults aged 21-40 in Dublin, including young professionals, students, and tourists.
- **Demographic Trends:** According to the Central Statistics Office, Ireland's urban population is growing, with a significant portion being young adults (CSO, 2023).

Customer Needs and Market Research

- The needs of the target segment, such as ease of event discovery and real-time updates, are identified through secondary research, including market reports and consumer surveys.
- **Sources:** Reports from Allied Market Research, IBEC, and Deloitte provide insights into consumer behavior and market trends (Allied Market Research, 2023; IBEC, 2023; Deloitte, 2022).

Competitive Advantage and Value Proposition

- WhatsOn's competitive advantage lies in its focus on real-time event discovery and reducing decision fatigue with its random event feature.
- **Unique Selling Proposition (USP):** Unlike competitors, WhatsOn offers a map-based interface and features that cater to spontaneous socializing.

Viral Marketing and Scale Advantage

- Use of social media and influencer partnerships to leverage viral marketing.
- **Differentiation:** WhatsOn targets niches and provides personalized experiences that larger players may overlook.

Customer Experience and Ease of Use

- The user-friendly interface and real-time data are major selling points communicated through marketing campaigns.
- **Ease of Use:** Highlighted as a key benefit to attract users and retain them.

Pricing and Competitor Analysis

- **Competitors' Prices:** Analysis of pricing models of competitors like Eventbrite and Meetup to ensure competitive pricing.
- **Strategy:** Competitive pricing combined with unique features.

Customer Service and Employee Satisfaction

- Ensuring stellar customer service by empowering employees and maintaining a positive work environment.
- **Employee Engagement:** Recognized as critical to customer satisfaction.

Conclusion

This marketing plan for WhatsOn leverages bootstrap strategies to build a competitive edge by targeting a specific market, understanding customer needs, and differentiating through unique features. The plan is grounded in thorough market research and competitive analysis, ensuring that WhatsOn can effectively communicate its value proposition to the target market and achieve sustained growth.

8.0 Operations Plan

This operations plan outlines the necessary steps, resources, team, technology, rollout, support requirements, and potential future developments for the successful implementation and growth of WhatsOn, using a Scrum methodology to ensure an efficient development process within a 6-month timeline.

8.1 Project Plan

Sprint 0: Initial Planning and Setup (Week 1)

- **Milestones:**
 - Finalize project scope and objectives.
 - Set up Scrum framework and tools.
 - Form Scrum team and define roles.
- **Timing:** Week 1
- **Rollout:** Project kickoff and Scrum team formation.

Sprint 1-2: Design and Prototyping (Weeks 2-4)

- **Milestones:**
 - Create wireframes and design prototypes.
 - Develop user journey maps and interface designs.
 - Conduct user feedback sessions and revise designs.
- **Timing:** Weeks 2-4
- **Rollout:** Finalized designs and prototype approval.

Sprint 3-8: Development and Testing (Weeks 5-12)

- **Milestones:**
 - Set up development environment and select technology stack.
 - Front-end and back-end development.
 - Integrate APIs for real-time event data.
 - Conduct internal testing and quality assurance in each sprint.
- **Timing:** Weeks 5-12 (Development)
- **Rollout:** Incremental releases at the end of each sprint for internal review and feedback.

Sprint 9-10: Beta Launch and Iteration (Weeks 13-16)

- **Milestones:**
 - Beta version release to a selected group of users.
 - Gather feedback and identify bugs/issues.
 - Implement necessary changes and improvements.
- **Timing:** Weeks 13-16
- **Rollout:** Public beta launch with active feedback loop.

Sprint 11: Official Launch Preparation (Weeks 17-18)

- **Milestones:**
 - Finalize product based on beta feedback.
 - Develop marketing materials and finalize partnerships.
- **Timing:** Weeks 17-18
- **Rollout:** Preparation for official launch.

Sprint 12: Official Launch and Marketing (Week 19)

- **Milestones:**
 - Launch marketing campaigns and partnerships.
 - Official product release.
- **Timing:** Week 19
- **Rollout:** Official product launch with full marketing support.

Post-Launch Sprints (Weeks 20-24 and ongoing)

- **Milestones:**
 - Establish customer support channels.
 - Regular updates and feature enhancements.
 - Monitor performance and user feedback.
- **Timing:** Weeks 20-24 and ongoing
- **Rollout:** Continuous support and improvement cycle.

8.2 Resources Required

Human Resources:

- **Current Team:**
 - Eoin Fitzsimons: Front-End Developer, Graphic Designer
 - Conor Judge: Front-End Developer, Product Owner, Documentation, Business Dealings
 - David O'Connor: Back-End Developer
- **Future Resources:**
 - Data Analysts (as needed)
 - Marketing Specialists (as needed)
 - Customer Support Representatives (as needed)

Financial Resources:

- Initial capital for development and marketing.
- Ongoing funding for operations and growth.

Physical Resources:

- None is required initially; the team will work remotely.

8.3 Team Members

Eoin Fitzsimons:

- **Skills:** Front-end development (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, EJS), Graphic Design (PhotoPea, PixelMator Pro).
- **Responsibilities:** Developing the user interface, implementing designs, creating graphics.

Conor Judge:

- **Skills:** Front-end development, product ownership, documentation, business dealings.
- **Responsibilities:** Defining product vision, managing product backlog, ensuring value delivery, handling business dealings, and documentation.

David O'Connor:

- **Skills:** Back-end development (Node.js, GraphQL, Morgan, Bcrypt, Crypto).
- **Responsibilities:** Developing server-side logic, integrating APIs, managing databases.

8.4 Technology

Front-End:

- **Languages and Tools:** HTML, CSS, JavaScript, EJS, jQuery.
- **Graphic Design Tools:** PhotoPea, PixelMator Pro.

Back-End:

- **Languages and Tools:** Node.js, GraphQL, Morgan, Bcrypt, Crypto.

Version Control:

- **Platform:** GitHub

API Integration:

- **APIs:** Google Maps API, Maps JavaScript API, Google Cloud Console, Axios.

IDE:

- **Tool:** Visual Studio Code

8.5 Rollout and Support

Rollout Plan:

- **Alpha Release:** Internal testing with developers and selected stakeholders.
- **Beta Release:** Limited release to a controlled group of users for real-world feedback.
- **Official Launch:** Public release supported by marketing campaigns and partnerships.

Support Requirements:

- **Customer Support:** Dedicated team for user assistance and issue resolution (to be expanded as needed).
- **Technical Support:** Continuous monitoring and quick response to technical issues.
- **Feedback Loop:** Regular collection of user feedback to inform updates and improvements

8.6 Potential Future Developments

Feature Enhancements:

- Advanced event recommendation algorithms using AI.
- Personalized user profiles and event suggestions.
- Integration with additional social media platforms for broader event sharing.

Geographic Expansion:

- Rollout to other major cities in Ireland and subsequently to international urban centers.

Strategic Partnerships:

- Collaborations with more local businesses, tourism boards, and event organizers for exclusive content and promotions.

Mobile App Development:

- Launching dedicated iOS and Android apps to increase accessibility and user engagement.

Monetization Strategies:

- Exploring additional revenue streams such as premium features, subscription models, and targeted advertising.

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