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# Access to finance tops challenges facing Irish entrepreneurs, new bunq research finds

- Access to finance is the most commonly cited start-up challenge, identified by 27% of Irish entrepreneurs surveyed
- Almost two-thirds (62%) say starting a business is difficult, yet 70% would do it again
- Almost half (49%) have used AI to support their business in the past year, but knowledge and trust remain the biggest barriers to wider adoption

**Dublin, 29 September 2026** – Access to finance is the biggest challenge facing Irish entrepreneurs when starting a business, according to new research from bunq, the world's first GenAI-powered bank.

The survey of 510 Irish respondents who have launched a business found that 27% identified finding finance as their biggest start-up challenge, followed by getting their business up and running (24%) and the amount of time required (20%).

The findings show a contrast between the challenges of entrepreneurship and the willingness to do it again. Almost two-thirds (62%) describe starting a business as difficult, yet seven in ten (70%) say they would create another business if given the opportunity.

For many, the reality of entrepreneurship was also different from what they expected. Almost half (49%) said they had no idea what the process would involve when they first started out. Of those respondents, three in ten (30%) said they would not have become an entrepreneur had they known.

AI gains ground, but knowledge and trust hold back wider adoption
As entrepreneurs deal with the demands of running a business, almost half (49%) say they have used AI to support their business in the past year. More than four in ten (43%) already pay, or would be willing to pay, for AI to help manage their business.

Yet willingness to use the technology does not necessarily translate into confidence in it. Lack of knowledge and/or trust is the most commonly cited barrier to wider AI adoption, identified by 36% of respondents. Cost follows at 27%, while 18% point to security concerns.

*“Being sceptical about a new tool until you see the actual value is good business sense,”* said **Joe Wilson, Chief Evangelist at bunq**. *“Entrepreneurs juggle everything: finance, logistics, red tape… and that’s where AI needs to win them over, by taking the admin off their plate and giving them back their time to focus on their actual business, not paperwork. Tech should fit around the business you’re building, not the other way around."*

The time entrepreneurs spend on administration illustrates the operational pressures they face. Almost three-quarters (74%) estimate that administrative tasks take up at least a quarter of their working week, while almost one in five (19%) spend more than half their week on them.

## About the survey

The survey was conducted among 510 Irish respondents who have launched a business.

## About bunq

bunq, Europe’s second-largest neobank, has built the first user-centric bank. By developing a product rooted in its users’ wants and needs, bunq makes life easy for location-independent people and businesses, starting from the way they manage money: how they spend, save, budget and invest. As the world’s first GenAI-powered bank, bunq offers its users safe, secure and simple 24/7 financial support — user-centricity at scale.

Pioneering many things considered impossible, bunq was the first bank to get a greenfield European banking permit in over 35 years, raised the largest Series A round ever secured by a European fintech (€193 million), and was the first EU neobank to achieve structural profitability. As part of its mission to build the first global neobank, bunq has also received its US broker-dealer

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