

Objective One case study business support



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The Objective One Business Task Force's vision is to 'Make Cornwall the place to do business in the 21st Century' and its aim is to 'establish Cornwall as a model for sustainable prosperity by creating foundations that support innovation and best practice'.

The projects in the Business Support investment cluster provide support, advice and investment for mainly, but not exclusively, small and medium sized businesses.

This cluster also includes a number of funds that provide tailored services to individual small and medium businesses to assist them with development and growth.

Small and medium sized businesses are essential to the development of the economy of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Wildlife Clothing

A family run clothing business has expanded across Cornwall and launched its own, award winning organic clothing brand.

Wildlife has grown from a former Army and Navy surplus store in Penzance to six branches across Cornwall and also supplies national outlets.

The three brothers who run Wildlife, David, Neil and Leigh Chadwick, are trying to combine ecologically friendly methods with their sales success and have launched their own organic clothing brand - Seasalt. In doing so they became the first fashion brand to have clothing certified to Soil Association standards. They also won the Green Business Cornwall Sustainability Award 2005 for the Seasalt label.

The clothes made under the Seasalt brand include sailing jackets, caps and T shirts. Seasalt is not only sold in Wildlife but is distributed nationally. Seasalt organic cottons are grown without the use of chemical pesticides, and all subsequent processes such as ginning, washing, dyeing - even warehousing - have been assessed.

"We are trying to be an environmentally aware business," said Neil. "A couple of years ago we decided we should design and import our own clothing, which meant establishing a supply chain and developing our own brand, Seasalt. Originally, the principal reason behind this was to protect our business in the face of growing competition. Over the last 12 months we have trialled Seasalt in our Wildlife stores. The trial



Seasalt - the first fashion brand to have clothing certified to Soil Association standards

has been hugely successful and Seasalt now accounts for over 15% of our sales.

"We are also interested in selling other brands that are environmentally responsible, so we are trying to take the initiative rather than just be led by what our suppliers give us. It is up to large, multi-nationals to really make the difference and the change is going to be demand driven and we want to be helping to increase public awareness."

Since 2002 Wildlife has benefited from ongoing support and advice from Business Link Devon and Cornwall. Business Link, which in Cornwall receives investment from Objective One, has provided a range of support including the assistance of Personal Business Adviser Dick Stead and the specialist IT know how of Mike Robertson. As a result Wildlife has achieved a threefold increase in its sales whilst more than quadrupling its staff over the past five years.

Father Don Chadwick founded General Clothing Stores, in Penzance, in 1981. That evolved into Wildlife, which now employs 47 staff at stores in Penzance, Falmouth, St Ives, Truro, Fowey and Padstow. The company has won several awards including the Orange Best Family Business Award 2004. The website - www.wildlifeonline.com - was named runner up in the Sage & The Daily Telegraph Business Awards for Best Website. Wildlife has also been named the "UK's Best Family Business" after winning the national final of the Yell Best Family Business Awards 2006 run by the publisher of Yellow Pages directories.