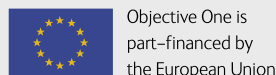


# Objective One case study knowledge economy



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The projects in the Knowledge Economy investment cluster include those developing the Combined Universities and activities that support the development of much stronger links between Higher Education and business.

Developing the Combined Universities in Cornwall is considered so important to the development of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly it was the only project specifically outlined in the Single Programming Document contract. Prior to commencing the Objective One Programme in 2000, there was no such university opportunity in Cornwall.

University level provision in Cornwall and its links with business encourages graduates to start their own businesses, attracts new business and encourages innovation and knowledge transfer, thereby increasing the overall wealth of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

## Seasalt - Sophie Treloar

Unlocking Cornish Potential graduate Sophie Treloar has been involved in the total rebrand of a successful chain of clothing stores in a bid for the company to lead the way in environmentally and socially aware trading.

Wildlife, set up by the Chadwick family, has recently had its name changed to Seasalt – after the organic clothing range it designs and sells. In 2005 Seasalt became the first clothing brand to be certified to Soil Association standards.

The business began with a single shop, set up in Penzance in 1981 by Don Chadwick. His sons David, Leigh and Neil have since opened seven other shops – in Falmouth, Truro, St Ives, Fowey, Padstow, Totnes and St Mary's – and employ more than 50 people. The shops sell a mixture of Seasalt and other brands including Oska, White Stuff, Keen and Camper. Seasalt clothes are also distributed nationally.

Sophie graduated in Textiles and Fashion from Winchester School of Art. She was initially employed to assist in the design and production of Seasalt clothing. This role includes researching clothing trends and predictions, choosing colours and fabrics and helping with range planning and design.

Unlocking Cornish Potential is a Combined Universities in Cornwall initiative that has received Objective One investment and is run by Cornwall College. It places graduates with companies and provides support for up to 12 months.



Unlocking Cornish Potential graduate Sophie Treloar displays some of Seasalt's products.

Since joining Seasalt Sophie has also worked with graphic designers to create the new brand image and with marketing and sales departments to ensure the successful launch of products. She was also involved with interviewing and recruiting PR employees and with selling to wholesale customers and the general public at trade shows and has become one of Seasalt's main buyers.

The company's expansion is also aided by an extremely successful website. Neil Chadwick said: "Everyday we receive online orders from around the world and seem to have found a real gap in the market. Not everything we sell is organically produced but we're trying to increase the percentage year on year (currently it's 20%)."

"We've had our busiest ever year so far, so the rebrand has proved really successful. Our national publicity because of our organic clothing has definitely paid off with visitors to the area.

"Sophie has brought along excellent design skills, an edge to our range over competitors. Our own brand has increased profit margins and has brought added security to our business. Unlocking Cornish Potential is a fantastic scheme and I really look forward to working with more, high calibre graduates."

Ben Leonard, Unlocking Cornish Potential project Officer, said: "It has been immensely satisfying to be involved with Seasalt over the last year. They have a great talent in Sophie, we are proud to have worked with her and she has accomplished a lot for the business in a very short time. This really does show the flexibility of the UCP scheme in that we can

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effectively support projects in industries as diverse heavy engineering to organic clothing. Our partnership with Seasalt is now ongoing with further projects in place focussing on graphic design and the environmental policies of the business, we are sure that they will have an equally positive impact on the business.”

Carleen Kelemen, Director of the Objective One Partnership, added: “Unlocking Cornish Potential has been a huge success. It gives graduates experience in the business world and supports them as they work and businesses profit from the knowledge and fresh ideas from the graduates. This combination serves to drive wages up in Cornwall.”

And Sophie said: “I have learnt a great deal during the last year. I trained predominantly as a textile designer and so the whole process of production and retail was new to me. It has been a real learning curve of which I have enjoyed every minute. Being involved with the buying of other brands for our stores and with selling of Seasalt to wholesale customers has meant that I have gained an insight into all aspects of the rag trade, from all angles. Thanks to Unlocking Cornish Potential I was employed by Seasalt full time to work on the very first collection. Being involved from the beginning has meant that I have helped to shape the brand and its look. Our Seasalt range is growing season by season as our knowledge and success increases. It is an exciting brand to be a part of.”

Seasalt has developed its own environmental and purchasing policies and tries to use local suppliers. The company also carries out community initiatives - such as buying recycling bins (on the Isles of Scilly) and developing ‘visitor charter’ postcards containing environmental tips - and regularly visits the farms and factories where Seasalt garments are produced.

The company has won several awards including the UK’s Best Family Business (after winning the national final of the Yell Family Business Awards 2006); 2005 Cornwall Sustainability Award for Best Environmental Initiative (in recognition of the Soil Association certification); Neil Chadwick was named as Cornwall’s Entrepreneur of the Year in the Cornwall Business Awards 2006; Best Family Business in the Orange Small Is Beautiful Awards in 2004.

As Wildlife the company also received support from Business Link Devon and Cornwall, which manages two Objective One gateway funds.



A Seasalt product designed by Sophie Treloar.

**For more information about Unlocking Cornish Potential visit [www.unlockingcornishpotential.co.uk](http://www.unlockingcornishpotential.co.uk).**