



YAK WAX

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Johnny Wallbridge, co-owner of Yak Wax

When Robin Ozanne identified a gap in the Guernsey market for a shop, which served the serious surfer, he decided to turn his passion into a career.

“I guess I’m an old school surfer and wanted somewhere that gave those who are serious about surfing somewhere to buy the things they needed. There are places that cater for the more well-known brands but I wanted something different,” he said.

Since Yak Wax opened in 2002, Robin and his business partner Johnny Wallbridge, who joined in 2006, have transformed the business from a small shack into a shop that now stocks over 2,500 items for surfers and skateboarders, has an online presence and its own Surf School.

Yak Wax, which is just a stone’s throw away from Portinfer, one of Guernsey’s most popular surfing spots, doubled the size of its premises in 2008 and at the same time began to build www.yakwax.com which now ships to all over Europe and the UK and also has customers as far afield as America and Australia.

Lloyds TSB, which has been supporting Yak Wax since it was first established, helped the company with finance when it experienced problems with its website.



"We had to rebuild the website in 2011 due to a problem with the company which hosted it. Lloyds TSB helped us fund it, which has enabled us to grow the online business. As a result, the sales from the new website are rapidly catching up those from the shop, especially over the last two months," said Johnny.

Following the initial support given by Lloyds TSB in setting up Yak Wax, additional funding was then provided to expand the company when Robin and Johnny decided to purchase the Guernsey Surf School.

"The Surf School, which is based at Vazon, was run by a couple of guys from Jersey who had a four month licence each year and they decided to sell it. It was perfect for us as everything was already in place and was the right time for us to expand as it complements what we do here so well," said Robin.

The Guernsey Surf School www.guernseysurfschool.co.uk was relaunched in 2011 and Robin and Johnny used the profits from the season to purchase new wetsuits and equipment. In 2012, Guernsey Surf School moved to a new beachside location and is already planning on what improvements it can make in 2013 and beyond.

"Lloyds TSB has been a really good banking partner for Yak Wax. They see the bigger picture and their experience has been invaluable to us in making sure the decisions we have made, have been the right ones," said Johnny.

Lloyds TSB Relationship Manager Kara Lucas said that Yak Wax had done exactly what all successful business do.

"Robin identified a need locally and together with Johnny has grown the business steadily over the past 10 years," she said.

"They have taken strategic decisions to extend the company and identify further business opportunities, for example going online extended their customer base beyond the geographical constraints of where they are based. Lloyds TSB is ideally suited to working with companies like Yak Wax as we want to support them in their initiatives and ensure that the business decisions they make are well thought out to give every chance of success."



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Kara Lucas, Lloyds TSB Relationship Manager

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