

# Seeing Sustainably

How Coral Eyewear utilised LoCASE funding to market to new audiences and grow their business

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**European Union**  
European Regional  
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## Introduction

Coral Eyewear, a groundbreaking father-son venture, embarked on an ambitious journey in 2019 to revolutionise the eyewear industry. With a unique approach to sustainability, they create high-quality eyewear from recycled materials, such as abandoned fishing nets, aiming to set new standards in both environmental responsibility and product excellence.

## Background

Identifying a significant gap in the market for sustainable eyewear, Calvin Bailey, leveraging his extensive experience in optical retail, and his son George, saw an opportunity to meet the growing consumer demand for environmentally friendly products. This vision led to the creation of Coral Eyewear, a brand that combines sustainability with high-quality design.

## Objectives and why LoCASE

Coral Eyewear's mission was clear from the outset: to produce sustainable, high-quality eyewear and establish a strong presence in both the consumer and business-to-business markets. However, as a young company, Coral faced the challenge of effectively marketing their unique products to a wider audience and expanding their retail footprint beyond direct-to-consumer sales.

George Bailey said:

**We might have already had all the materials and contacts in the eyewear world to make the sunglasses but we still didn't know how to sell them.**

**Being only three years old as a company and sustainability being at the core of everything we do, we saw the LoCASE funding as an amazing opportunity to enhance our marketing budget and to tell better stories of our environmental impact and forge new partnerships, particularly in the sporting world."**





## Application to LoCASE

The turning point for Coral Eyewear came with the opportunity to apply for LoCASE (Low Carbon Across the South East) funding, which provided the necessary resources to enhance their marketing efforts.

This funding enabled Coral to:

- Expand their marketing budget significantly
- Forge new partnerships, particularly in the sporting world, to amplify their brand's visibility and reach
- Engage large retailers and buyers, encouraging them to stock Coral Eyewear in stores, thereby addressing the preference for in-store purchases in the prescription eyewear market

George said:

“It was such a simple process, in which we felt really well supported to complete our application. It wasn't a chore for the LoCASE staff and you got the sense that they wanted to help you get the funding, which is refreshing!”

## Results

The impact of the LoCASE-funded marketing campaign was transformative for Coral Eyewear:

- Retail revenue quadrupled, marking a significant milestone in the brand's growth trajectory
- The number of stores stocking Coral Eyewear expanded dramatically, from a handful of independent stockists to partnerships with large optical groups, totaling around 1000 stores by the end of the calendar year, including expansion into the Australian market
- The partnership with sports brands and athletes generated international interest, further positioning Coral Eyewear for global expansion

George said of the results of the campaign:

“Well, because over 90% of prescription eyewear is still bought in-store, the campaign that LoCASE funded was about engaging buyers and large retailers to consider stocking us in-store. The outcome of this campaign is that, in the past year, we have quadrupled our revenue from retail!”

## Impact and future directions

The success of Coral Eyewear's marketing initiatives, supported by LoCASE funding, underscores the potential for sustainable brands to achieve significant growth and market penetration.

Looking ahead, Coral Eyewear aims to:

- Continue expanding their retail and international presence, leveraging the momentum built through their successful marketing campaigns
- Forge new partnerships and explore opportunities in additional markets, with a particular focus on further international expansion
- Remain committed to their core mission of sustainability, aiming to set new industry standards for environmentally responsible eyewear

In conclusion, George added:

**At the start of the LoCASE funding process we were in around 150-200 stores, but by the end of this calendar year we are looking to be in around 1000 stores, both here in the UK and across in Australia. We're hoping that growth will continue again next year, as we seek to create more partnerships that have all come from the funding we received through LoCASE. That kind of positive impact might not be quantifiable by a marketing campaign, but we can see it and are thankful for it."**

## Conclusion

Coral Eyewear's journey from a visionary startup to a key player in the eyewear industry exemplifies the power of innovative, sustainability-driven business models. With the support of LoCASE funding, Coral has not only achieved remarkable growth but has also set a precedent for the eyewear industry, proving that sustainable practices can lead to commercial success and wider industry impact.

## Coral Eyewear

**Location:** Started in 2019, UK-based with global aspirations

**Founders:** Calvin and George Bailey

**Mission:** To create high-quality, sustainable eyewear from recycled materials, transforming the industry's approach to environmental responsibility

**Vision for the Future:** To continue expanding globally, establishing Coral Eyewear as the leading brand in sustainable eyewear, and forging partnerships that amplify their environmental impact

