

News story: Wakefield 'Willy Wonka' opening chocolate factories around the world

David Greenwood-Haigh, who trades under Coeur de Xocolat, has received support from the Department for International Trade (DIT) to help grow revenue as a result of exporting from 40% to 80% by 2020.

He has worked with advisers to improve Coeur de Xocolat's website search engine optimisation (SEO), which has driven international business leads as a result.

The company distributes a 'chocolate factory in a box', a shipping container that holds all the equipment needed to launch a production facility. David recently went out and set up a chocolate factory in São Tomé and Príncipe off the West African coast known as the 'chocolate island' for its cocoa farming.

Coeur de Xocolat is also seeing interest in the Caribbean. David recently visited Haiti to meet potential buyers and to consult on cocoa farms.

To support growing international trade, David is hiring another permanent member of staff locally to support UK activities. The firm has been increasing its international corporate event activity too, with David delivering team building exercises on the art of chocolate making to:

- Evian in France
- Al Ghurair Group – a major manufacturing, real estate and financial investment conglomerate – in Dubai

David Greenwood Haigh, founder at Coeur de Xocolat, said:

It's an exciting time for the chocolate industry worldwide. Consumers are becoming more interested in premium chocolate, and are increasingly conscious of where their chocolate comes from.

We're now seeing a similar trend to the explosion of barista made coffee, or how craft beer has taken off in the UK and abroad. It's being coined as the dawn of craft chocolate! It's creating a lot of opportunities overseas for me in my consultation work, and for corporate events too.

Previously, international clients were difficult to come by, but working with DIT to make my website more internationally accessible and utilising better SEO has resulted in a lot of inbound business enquiries from across the globe. It's an inexpensive way for firms to grow their exporting success.

One key thing I've learned from taking a bigger leap into exporting

is to always do thorough due diligence on new customers. By investigating whether new clients are serious, and definitely exist, can save a lot of hassle, money and reduce risk too. DIT advisers are on hand to help with this, so if we can do it other can too.

Mark Robson, Head of Regions, Yorkshire and The Humber, said:

David's work proves how revered British food artisans are worldwide. Wakefield isn't typically seen as the home of master chocolatiers, but with charisma and expertise, Coeur de Xocolat is fast becoming a world-renowned chocolate consultancy.

We're calling all artisans, whether your craft's coffee, wine, beer or cheese to get in touch with one of DIT's 29 advisers in Yorkshire and the Humber and show the world what food and drink expertise the region has to offer.

For more information or to access online support, including the find a buyer, and export readiness tools, visit great.gov.uk.