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Locate East Sussex is the official inward investment and business growth support service for East Sussex. Our dedicated team support business based in the county and companies moving into the county to access funding to help grow our economy and create jobs in local communities.

I first spoke to Gary Stevens, MD of Focus SB against the backdrop of Brexit with many businesses worried that supply chains would be affected. Focus SB predominantly supplied into the UK construction industry and were vulnerable to slowdowns in the sector. Gary had set out with his team to investigate how to diversify their portfolio of work.

Focus SB were clear that they never felt that they had to compromise their own high standards to meet the growing Chinese market and increasing demand for its premium ranges - designed to complement elegant period properties and to meet aesthetic demands of UK architects and interior designers. However, to win contracts, the company needed to develop a range of products to meet stringent Chinese standards ('CCC'), this involved having their factory audited by Chinese representatives from the Chinese Quality Certification authority ('CQC').

In order to prepare for the audit, I helped the company to secure funding through East Sussex County Council's grants and loans programme. The company was then able to introduce a testing facility and hire five new staff to run this facility.

It was risky, Focus SB had to design a range from scratch, which is quite an investment but accessing the huge Chinese market was worth the risk. They successfully passed the audit to become the first and only manufacturer of electrical accessories to be licensed to sell into China

Focus SB are now representing Britain in China and at the same time providing the company and its 60+ workforce with security following the Brexit vote, as well as creating opportunities for other companies in East Sussex to work with them.

It was great to work with a management team who had the foresight to spot the opportunity, and for Locate East Sussex to help them in the process.

Regards  
Adam Berger

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