# Joe Wall grows Cress Co from £3,000 loan into £45 million food distribution empire



Joe Wall, a businessman from Dunfermline, exemplifies the spirit of entrepreneurial grit and determination. From a humble beginning with a mere £3,000 loan from The Prince’s Trust, he launched The Cress Company at the young age of 19, opting for the unpredictable path of self-employment over a traditional university education. With a second-hand van and a small storage unit, Wall embarked on a journey that, more than two decades later, has transformed Cress Co into a leading food distributor with an annual turnover of £45 million and a dedicated workforce of 216 staff.

Initially, in 2004, Wall collaborated with only a handful of Scottish food producers, but today, Cress Co has expanded its partnerships to include several renowned brands such as Yeo Valley, Fever-Tree, and Pipers Crisps. This significant growth reflects not only Joe’s business acumen but also captures a broader trend in the food industry, where a surge in local and artisanal offerings has reshaped consumer preferences. The current demand for high-quality, locally sourced products has created fertile ground for companies like Cress Co, which effectively bridges the gap between producers and consumers.

In 2023, Cress Co marked a pivotal moment in its expansion by acquiring Adamsons Drinks, another Fife-based wholesale company. This first acquisition not only diversifies Cress Co's product range but also reinforces its commitment to growth, particularly in the dynamic drinks sector. Joe is optimistic about the potential to tap into Adamsons’ established customer relationships, hoping to enhance the distribution footprint even further.

Despite the success, Joe Wall remains refreshingly grounded. He operates with a philosophy of teamwork, fiercely valuing his role as part of the collective rather than positioning himself as a distant leader. His daily routine involves everything from managing staff rotas to answering customer queries, demonstrating a hands-on approach that he considers essential for remaining connected to the business's pulse. “I’m at my most comfortable at work,” Wall comments, reflecting a dedication that stems from his upbringing. The influence of his parents—a hardworking vet and GP—instilled in him the values of diligence and community service, which continue to guide his leadership style.

The move from Perth to Dunfermline was a strategic one, made five years after the company’s inception, as it allowed for greater warehouse space and a larger labour pool. Wall attributes a portion of his growth to the mid-2000s ‘farm shop boom’, driven by EU diversification grants that spurred interest in local produce. This shift in consumer behaviour has been a catalyst for Cress Co’s expansion, leading to further depots in England, including Milton Keynes and Bristol. Although entering the English market was fraught with challenges—including increased competition and rising fuel costs—this gamble has culminated in remarkable success, with revenue soaring from approximately £11 million in 2019 to around £45 million today.

At the heart of Cress Co’s operations is an unwavering focus on building strong customer relationships. Wall’s philosophy is rooted in trust and communication, as he believes that satisfied clients are more likely to maintain partnerships, even amidst fluctuating costs. “If people trust you and can pick up the phone to you, they will continue to work with you—even if costs rise,” he explains. This customer-centric approach, combined with a commitment to quality, has established Cress Co as a reputable name in the wholesaling industry.

While Joe Wall is undoubtedly successful by financial standards, he emphasises that wealth was never his primary goal. Instead, his focus is on sustaining and expanding a business he is passionate about. “I don’t really have a lot of time to look back and say, ‘gosh, look how far I have come’,” he admits. His commitment to reinvesting in the company illustrates a dedication not just to personal success but to the continued prosperity of the communities and networks that Cress Co serves. With plans for further growth and potential acquisitions on the horizon, Joe Wall exemplifies the determination of modern entrepreneurship, intertwining personal passion with keen business strategy.

### Reference Map

1. Articles 1, 2, and 3 informed the article on Joe Wall's background, journey, and business philosophy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/business-environment/business/5244472/cress-co-wholesaler-dunfermline/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data