

Opticians looking ahead in Leith



A father-and-son team have bought their fourth optician practice thanks to funding from RBS, with a clear vision of expansion for the future.

The pair, both named Christopher McGregor, have bought JP Optometrists in Great Junction Street, Leith, bringing the total number of their outlets to four. They have owned the business for eight years and also own shops in Airdrie, Armadale and Whitburn with the latter also housing a glazing laboratory specialising in frames and lenses.

With an eye on the future and ambitious expansion plans for a further three practices by the end of 2015, the pair approached Stuart Bell, relationship manager at RBS. Together they were successful in securing a loan of £116,500 to enable them to buy the latest shop.

The funding also enabled the pair to upgrade their testing equipment and to establish better working relationships with frame suppliers. It has also helped them to provide job security for the 11 staff and to add at least one new staff member at the beginning of 2015.

The addition of the latest practice is expected to add 20% to the current combined turnover of £890,000

Christopher (junior) said: "As a company, our ambition is to be a close health liaison for expert customer care. We want customers to benefit from our family ethos and be confident that their eye health is in safe hands with someone they trust.

“We have taken ownership of two optical practices within the past two years with plans to expand further.

“Most optical businesses are there for the initial sale and quick health care, but we don’t believe that is the key to success or longevity. We take our time, listen to the patient and provide exactly what the customer requires.

“The buying process was made simple and affordable through the great business loan from RBS that enabled us to progress and allow us to continue to provide our expert optical care to further areas.

“We’ve been with RBS for seven years and we have a great rapport with our business manager Stuart Bell and nothing is ever a hassle or a problem. We always feel that we are his number one priority regardless of the question or task we ask of him.”

Stuart Bell from RBS, added: “The family-run CM Opticians focus on customer service and professional health care and here at RBS we were delighted to have been able to help the company achieve their vision.”