

EasyCoffee takes off with plans to open a dozen stores

By Ben Martin

THE LOW-COST coffee shop chain backed by Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, who founded easyJet, is eyeing expansion in London and beyond after receiving approaches from about 200 potential franchisees.

Sir Stelios started easyCoffee earlier this year and the business has expanded to two sites in London and one in Southend-on-Sea in Essex. It aims to undercut giants such as Starbucks and Costa by selling coffee for £1 a cup.

The chain is a partnership between easyGroup and the businessman Nathan Lowry, who has licensed the “easy” brand from Sir Stelios.

Mr Lowry said easyCoffee had so far received about 200 expressions of interest to start franchises and was aiming to open a dozen more owned sites in the next six months, including in Croydon and Wembley in London, and High Wycombe in Bucks. “The gap in the market is in terms of pricing,” Mr Lowry said. “The coffee’s great. We use the same machines that all the big guys use, all our staff are highly trained up to barista level.”

He said the ambition was to expand the chain across “regular high street locations”, adding: “We genuinely feel that people are paying too much for their coffee in the UK.”

The coffee chain is one of a number of businesses that Sir Stelios has pursued since stepping down from the board of easyJet, although none of his subsequent ventures has been as successful as the low-cost airline which he founded 21 years ago and has grown to become a FTSE 100 company.

He now has a host of business interests, ranging from hotels and gyms to pizza delivery, and in February he trialled a budget grocery shop. The easyFoodstore opened off the north circular in London, selling all its grocery items at an introductory price of 25p.



At £1 a cup, the chain is undercutting the giants

