
JAMIE MURRAY WELLS

Founder of Glasses Direct and current Industry Head of Retail at Google

LONDON
SPEAKER
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Topics

- Branding
- Entrepreneurship
- Retail

Jamie Murray Wells attended University of the West of England from 2000 to 2004 and graduated with BA Hons. English. It was while still at university that he researched and launched Glasses Direct.

In 2004, the global optical market had yet to establish any presence on the web. Over the ensuing ten years, Wells grew the business into Europe's largest online glasses retailer shipping over a thousand pairs of glasses a day. In doing so, he overcame strong industry opposition as he drove down glasses prices online, in what used to be a market offering few price and fulfilment options to consumers.

From the beginning, Wells directly managed the development of in-house software to handle the back-end processing and logistics of both a bespoke physical product and consumer front-end web product. For a period in the noughties, Glasses Direct was a path-finder in retail innovation launching world-first products such as CustomEyes (2005), the first commercialised virtual try-on software, and their 4 pair free Home Trial box (2006).

During the business's growth phase, Wells oversaw the acquisition of SunglassesShop.com in 2010 extending the product line into sunglasses, and LensOn.com in 2012 taking it into contact lens retail.

In 2013, the business was sold and Wells joined Google UK where he is currently Industry Head of Retail.

Outside of business, Wells served as an advisor to the then Shadow Chancellor George Osborne on his New Enterprise Council from 2007 to 2010, going on to co-found StartUp Britain, a campaigning initiative announced in the Chancellor's 2011 budget speech. He helped create and manage this organisation, incubating it at No.10 and launching it with the Prime Minister to promote UK entrepreneurship.

Wells speaks and advises widely on enterprise as well as mentoring and angel investing in emerging businesses and entrepreneurs. In 2009 he was named in the Queen's birthday Honours list as receiving Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion. In 2015, he was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE).