



Aspinal, from London to the World

The story of one boutique brand's global expansion supported by Sanderson every step of the way.

A name synonymous with luxury and fine quality leather, Aspinal of London, is no ordinary boutique brand. Having begun its days, back in 2000, entirely online, selling guest books and photo albums to gift shops, Aspinal of London has come a long way since. The brainchild of serial entrepreneur Iain Burton, the company was founded on an inspiring vision to revive the English leather goods industry. Together with a designer fresh from St Martins College of Art, Burton set to work finding craftsmen to make unique leather gifts. Distributed through a network of museums, art galleries and cultural institutions, the products quickly gained recognition for their exceptional quality and distinctive heritage feel.

With six stores across London, concessions in top department stores Harrods, Selfridges and

House of Fraser, and an increasingly global presence, Aspinal has grown exponentially over the past decade and has no plans on slowing down. Having expanded its range to include beautiful handbags, men's bags, wallets, purses, writing journals, portfolios, diaries and a popular travel range, selling online, through mail order and in store, Aspinal has made a name for itself as a British luxury brand. Supporting Aspinal's global expansion is Elucid - the multi-channel retail software solution from Sanderson.

With double digit growth year on year; the recent opening of its sixth store in as many years; and plans to open shops in America and Asia, it's hard to believe that just five years ago, the organisation was run almost entirely on paper. Like any young business, systems were yet to be established; orders were

Case study at a glance

About Aspinal of London
World-famous British luxury leather brand

Challenges

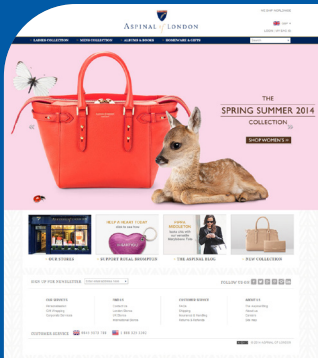
- Replace manual paper system
- Implement a software solution to support global expansion across all channels
- Increase visibility of customer and stock information throughout the business
- Single view of the customer
- Introduce data capture at customer touch points

Solutions

- Elucid multi-channel retail solution
- Elucid EPOS system
- Elucid CRM
- Integration with retail systems
- Token-based payment gateway

Benefits

- Rapid sales order processing
- Accurate stock information across all channels
- Improved customer satisfaction and increased order values
- Greater warehouse efficiency through improved inventory control
- Ability to accurately profile multi-channel customers



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Head of Technical Operations

being printed out and passed around, customer records were non-existent and cross-department visibility impossible. Peter Strike, Aspinal of London’s Head of Technical Operations, explains: “With the amount of business we were doing, the paper based system became unmanageable. We needed a solution to support the growing business.”

Aspinal requested and received tenders from numerous ERP vendors, but it was Elucid, the multi-channel retail solution from Sanderson, that impressed. “We had a demonstration and we liked what we saw,” says Strike. “We implemented three core areas; mail order, website integration and customer service management straight away.”

With sales order management up and running, Aspinal immediately had the rapid processing it was looking for; from access to key information for all sales activity within a couple of clicks, accurate

stock information with instant alternative product suggestions, through to automatic out-of-stock data. The launch of a token-based payment gateway, provided Aspinal with a reliable and secure transactional platform to link its website and merchant bank for real-time payments. “Before we were too dependent on manual processes which relied on individual knowledge. Now everything is automated and processes are seamlessly integrated with our website, we have a very fast system that saves us a lot of time.”

In addition, Elucid CRM presents a single view of the customer, capturing all the information Aspinal needs to strengthen customer relationships, increase customer satisfaction and grow order values.

“As the business has grown the Sanderson system has continued to support our expansion plans,” explains Strike. “including the launch of our first high-street stores in Westfield and Canary Wharf where



we implemented the Elucid EPoS solution.”

The integrated EPoS solution gave Aspinal immediate access to accurate customer and stock data across all channels. The benefits of which, need little explanation. “Elucid has allowed us huge economies,” says Strike. “We’ve seen benefits in terms of efficiency and processing in the warehouse, through improved inventory control. And the integration with various carriers and services, including the Royal Mail and DHL, means when an order is placed whether through the call centre, web or in-store, we can provide flexible delivery options to meet our customers’ individual needs.”

When it comes to multi-channel visibility, the Sanderson system has that covered too. “Our Elucid EPoS software has been recently upgraded so we can capture customer data at the till point,” explains Strike. “Now we can identify all our customers in-store

and provide the highest levels of service. It’s the key to multi-channel retailing, joining up your customer interaction points and recording the entire customer journey. That’s what Elucid is all about.”

But it’s not just the core modules Aspinal is making use of: “The system provides a comprehensive platform for our operations and one that is flexible enough to accommodate future requirements. In fact, I wouldn’t like to think what would happen without the support of the Sanderson team.”

A case in point comes with Aspinal’s concessions and franchises. Elucid integrates seamlessly with the systems of big department stores like Harrods, Selfridges and House of Fraser, which means the company can rely on getting accurate sales data information from the individual retailer. To streamline this process, Aspinal needed its software to work with the retailers’ own. “The great thing about Elucid is its flexibility with these other systems. As and when we’ve got third parties we want to integrate with Sanderson always provides a solution.”

And there was no better time to test the system’s flexibility than with the recent opening of its Gatwick airport store. Strike explains: “We needed modifications, including dynamic currency conversion and flight verifications to determine whether an item should be VAT free or not.”

With the steady expansion of its network of boutique stores, Aspinal is constantly innovating and using more of Elucid’s functionality. “We’re always looking to improve processes; as and when new challenges appear we can speak to Sanderson and they’ll provide support and recommendations.”

Next on the list for implementation, is the Bill of Materials module. “It will allow us to forecast inventory and track raw material inventory. For example

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based on current sales of wallets, the module can forecast how much of each of the five materials that makes up the wallet will be needed over the coming period. At the moment all this is done in spreadsheets, so obviously once it's set up we will gain accuracy

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in our forecasting as well as speeding up workflow in the production department. It offers us the ultimate efficiency. That's fundamental, especially in today's climate; we're always striving to increase our productivity.”

And it's not just efficiency across its London stores and online. Aspinal

is now looking to Sanderson to support its international expansion. “We've opened up franchises in the Middle East and now we're looking at America and China. As we plan our sales strategy in international territories Sanderson is helping us use Elucid to best expand in to these countries; whether that be maintaining the distribution centres over here – or incorporating a different distribution centre in another country.”

Elucid also integrates seamlessly with Aspinal's new, more comprehensive website, which was launched last year. “The second phase of the website will be to branch into native languages. Elucid will process these international orders as they come through the system,” says Strike.

So as Aspinal of London continues to enjoy sustained growth, supported by Elucid, what's the best thing about the system? “It's simplicity and flexibility,” says Strike. “There are other systems out there that are hugely complicated with a lot of internal and external third party experience required. Elucid gives us the ultimate flexibility to develop simple workflows and support our processes, as our business grows.”

About Aspinal of London



A name synonymous with luxury and fine quality leather, Aspinal sells beautiful handbags, writing journals, portfolios, wallets, and diaries to customers across the world. Having begun its days, back in 2000, entirely online, Aspinal of London has come a long way since.

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