

## Case study



**Expedite & Fresca**  
Multichannel Retail Specialists

# One small step for the supply chain system, one giant leap for the business

## Thomas Pink brings international retail, franchise and wholesale stock management together

Every Thomas Pink shirt is an exercise in perfection. And when you have a perfect product, you can't make do with shoddy stock management. So it's no wonder the retailer is so keen to make sure that the systems and processes behind the scenes work as smartly and efficiently as possible. This means using technology to help tackle the big challenge faced by retailers today – managing stock in a multichannel, international marketplace.

Thomas Pink has a strong track record of investment in technology to help move the business forward. The most recent example of this is the implementation of a new stock order processing module within its stock management system, Mercatus. Like many retailers, Thomas Pink is looking to new technology to help manage stock, reduce costs and remove supply chain inefficiency. But all of this depends on getting a system in place that can cope with all the different channels catered for – including its retail, wholesale, franchise and international flavours.

The company's Global Merchandising, Buying, Wholesale and Franchise Director, Melanie Traub explains: "It's all about the changing demands of multichannel and international working. We needed to address how these factors have changed the business and how we can improve our systems to meet the new challenges they bring."

Working with technology partner BT Expedite, Thomas Pink implemented a new sales order processing module within the stock management system. It builds on the integration of web and store – pulling the wholesale channel into the system for the first time.

Melanie says: "Before, wholesale wasn't on the Mercatus system – we managed it externally. Now, by working with BT Expedite, we've got one pool of stock managed within one system."

Profile: Mr Pink was an 18th century London tailor who designed the iconic hunting coat worn by Masters of Foxhounds, whippers-in, huntsmen and other hunt staff. The coat was made of scarlet cloth but was always referred to as PINK, in honour of its originator. Meticulous attention to detail, exclusive fabric and exquisite craftsmanship were the hallmarks of a PINK coat. Today **Thomas Pink** carries on the name and tradition of Mr Pink, crafting shirts which enshrine the British heritage of the iconic PINK coat.

Thomas Pink is part of the luxury goods group LVMH, with 81 stores in the UK, US and 11 other countries across the globe.

**PINK**  
THOMAS PINK  
JERMYN STREET LONDON



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“We knew what we needed the system to do because there were certain constraints put on us by third parties. Our wholesale and franchise customers have to meet strict regulations so we had to be sure the system would achieve this. We sat down with BT Expedite and mapped out what it had to do – and what we wanted.”

BT Expedite’s Robin Coles says: “Thomas Pink really helped drive how the system would work, and how it would manage the stock across wholesale, retail and e-commerce channels. We listened and worked with them to make sure that they got what they needed.

“Together we came up with a solution that meets the needs of Thomas Pink’s wholesale channel from one pool of stock.”

### One stock pool, one stock system

Working from one pool of stock wasn’t in itself a massive change for Thomas Pink.

“We’d always worked from one pool of stock, but the way we worked didn’t allow any input from wholesale or franchise customers,” says Melanie. “So it wasn’t sufficient for all channels and we were spreading ourselves too thin.

“We knew what stock we had, but trying to hold it, and redirect it to different customers, was tricky. Someone had to manually intervene and remember what was happening and who it was for.”

### Getting everything in place

The implementation went remarkably smoothly, considering the tight schedule, arriving on time and within budget after just five months. There was no room for error, as Melanie describes: “We had to get everything in by December because that’s when we get the new orders in for the following season.

“It went live and it was remarkably successful. We’ve already seen a result, with our biggest wholesale customer going from 49 per cent fulfilment last year to 91 per cent this year.”

### Doing more with more

While the new system has improved efficiency, it’s also boosted sales and set up new opportunities. As a result, Melanie’s team has actually expanded since the new module was introduced.

She explains: “We’re doing more with more people. It’s made us take the next step. We hadn’t planned it, but we can now offer a replenishment service to our customers. That’s given us significant extra business and we’ve taken on an extra person but we can justify this because of the additional sales.”

### Taking the business to the next level

“Before, all we were trying to do was get orders in, fulfil them and send them back. Now we’re being much more proactive. We can look at our international and wholesale customers’ sales and stock and offer what we think they need. And they’re taking it, so we’re increasing our own sales as a result.”

Melanie believes it’s clear that Thomas Pink now needs to do more merchandising planning. She wants to move the company away from planning at an overall business level, to plan by channel.

### Learning to trust the system

The biggest difference with the new system for Melanie’s team has been to believe the data and trust the system. It’s no longer a question of intuition, guesswork or playing safe.

The whole merchandising team has become more analytical as a result. And they’re now looking at the system to help them get to the next stage.

“It’s becoming a business management tool, rather than a stock recording tool,” says Melaine.

“It’s made us aware of what you can and can’t run a business on, in terms of stock levels. And now that we believe the information, we want to get the system to do the analytical and reporting aspects now.”

And Robin is keen to take on this next challenge: “When we started with Mercatus we were a software provider. Now we’re part of a community, providing a forum for informed debate and discussion. We want to create software that gives our customers exactly what they want.”

For more information on our Supply Chain solutions, contact [www.btexpedite.com/supplychain](http://www.btexpedite.com/supplychain), or call us on **0870 850 6880**.

### About us

BT Expedite and BT Fresca together make up the retail solutions division of BT. We provide products, services and solutions for some of the UK’s leading retailers, with expertise across all areas of retail, from e-commerce to supply chains.



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