

# Case Study

B2B ecommerce for the partner of choice for hair & beauty professionals.



**alan howard**  
the partner of choice for hair and beauty professionals



Established in 1973 by Alan Crawford, and Howard Littler in Stockport, Alan Howard has grown rapidly over the last 50 years, opening sites across the North West, over the Pennines to Yorkshire and down into the West Midlands. Today, and still chaired by its original founder, Alan Howard is one of UK's largest trade hairdressing and beauty suppliers.

## Project Highlights



### B2B Ecommerce

Host of B2B functions like user management, view and pay invoices online, saved baskets, quick order forms and more.



### Single customer view

Customers can keep track of all orders, both online & offline, in their account meaning they can see their entire order history in one place.



### Bundle builder

Innovative bundle builder enabling customers to create their own unique product bundles with just the items they want.



### Advanced fulfilment

Mixture of nationwide courier delivery, local delivery from stores via Alan Howard vans, and click & collect from stores with orders routed accordingly.



### Integration

Two-way integration with Sparkstone ERP including companies, users, products, pricing, stock, categories, bundles and orders.



### Call centre

Built-in call centre allows admin users to setup/view customer accounts and process orders on their behalf as well as aiding customer service to provide support.



### Click & Collect

Click & Collect from a choice of 25 stores across the UK.



### Loyalty

Points-based loyalty scheme via Alan Howard Rewards.

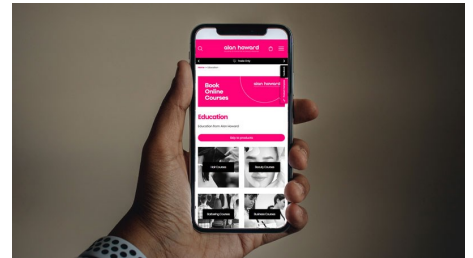
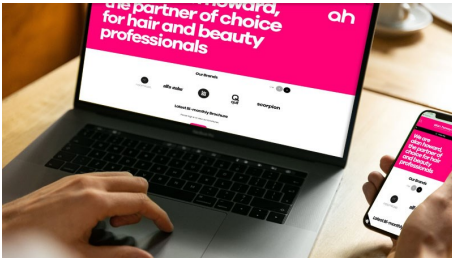


### Advanced promotions

Exclusive promotions and deals to trade account holders.

## Project Overview

Alan Howard had already begun to consider a new ecommerce platform when COVID-19 hit. Their existing system had got them to a certain stage but had started to become quite restrictive, with development very slow. When the pandemic drove all their customers online (with stores temporarily closed), it just exacerbated these problems further.



The decision was made to replatform and after an in depth review of a number of platforms and providers, they decided on tradeit and Red Technology. They wanted to increase online turnover and were particularly aware that their new site needed to offer customers more value through the web, with better product support, and more community features. They were particularly impressed with Red's proven track record of delivering similar sites, particularly in the B2B space.

Like any modern B2B ecommerce site it needed to support advanced B2B functions like financial statements (including paying invoices online), saved baskets, master & sub accounts, quick order forms etc... but also include some of the functions associated with retail ecommerce like click & collect, loyalty points, advanced promotions engine and much more.

With a vast range of products to choose from, Alan Howard often group items together into bundles to make purchasing easier for their customers. However, unlike traditional bundles they wanted to provide much more flexibility, so have developed the Bundle Builder, an industry first. Having understood that not every customer will want exactly the same mix of products this allows them to offer a range of different items, all with a range of variations, but still group them together as part of a bundle.

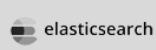
With 25 stores, each offering local delivery, fulfilment was more complicated than on a standard ecommerce store. They need to route orders accordingly to allow for click & collect from any store, nationwide delivery via courier, or local delivery from stores using their own vans.



*Red could "DO" everything we asked for. Rather than saying it is possible, they had actually done the things we were after on other customer sites so we felt much more comfortable.*

**Managing Director, Alan Howard**

## Project Integrations



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