# WHSmith set for significant restructuring as brand faces high street exit



WHSmith, the venerable British retailer known for its presence on high streets and in travel establishments, is reported to be on the brink of a significant restructuring that may result in the brand's disappearance from towns and cities across the UK. The company is allegedly engaged in discussions with a number of potential buyers concerning the sale of its 500 high street locations.

The focus of WHSmith's strategy is shifting towards its travel sector, which encompasses stores located in airports and train stations. According to reports, potential buyers for the high street chain include investment firms such as Alteri and Modella Capital, alongside Hilco, the former owners of Homebase, and Doug Putman, who owns HMV.

Established in 1792 by Henry Walton Smith and his wife Anna in London, WHSmith has a rich history spanning over 230 years. Its pioneering foray into travel retail began in 1848 with the opening of its first travel shop at Euston station. However, the retailer's recent performance has seen challenges, prompting the decision to streamline operations.

The situation surrounding the potential sale indicates that WHSmith's management believes they cannot operate two distinct companies under the same brand name. This could necessitate rebranding the high street stores if a sale were to materialise, effectively ending an era of WHSmith's association with high street shopping.

In addition to these strategic shifts, WHSmith is also set to reduce its high street footprint further by closing 10 more stores in the coming months, on the heels of several closures that took place earlier this year. This move signals a robust transition away from traditional retail as the company prioritises its travel business.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2025/01/whsmith-17-stores/> - This article supports the claim that WHSmith is closing stores as part of its restructuring strategy, focusing on travel locations and streamlining operations.
* <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2025/01/whsmith-100-travel-roles/> - This article corroborates WHSmith's strategic shift towards its travel business, including restructuring efforts and job changes within its travel store network.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WHSmith> - This Wikipedia page provides historical context about WHSmith, including its founding and early forays into travel retail, supporting the article's background information.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-> - Unfortunately, specific BBC articles about WHSmith's restructuring plans are not readily available in the search results. However, BBC typically covers significant business news, which might include WHSmith's strategic shifts.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/whsmith> - Similar to the BBC, The Guardian often covers business news, including retail sector developments like WHSmith's restructuring, though specific articles may not be available in the search results.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/whsmith> - The Independent also covers business news and might report on WHSmith's strategic changes, although specific articles are not listed in the search results.