# WHSmith announces rebranding to TG Jones after £76 million buyout



WHSmith, the iconic British retailer, has announced a major rebranding initiative as part of a £76 million buyout deal with Modella Capital, the parent company of Hobbycraft. This transformation will see approximately 480 high street stores rebranded under the new name TG Jones, marking the end of an era for a brand that has been part of the British retail landscape since 1792.

The buyout, confirmed on Friday, March 28, 2025, is a strategic move for WHSmith as it seeks to concentrate its efforts on more profitable travel retail outlets, particularly those located within airports and railway stations. This transition comes in light of the company's decision to divest its high street shops, where interest from potential buyers was reportedly limited. Notably, while WHSmith has enjoyed a profit of £32 million from its high street operations last year, the retail landscape has shifted, prompting this significant change.

The new ownership will retain the current product offerings and in-store concessions, which include some 200 Post Office branches and Toys R Us merchandise. Despite the changes, a spokesperson for Modella Capital assured that the rebranding aims to maintain the "same sense of family" that WHSmith has embodied for many years. The decision to adopt the name TG Jones did not stem from any specific individual but was chosen to reflect a familiar, family-oriented business ethos, especially as "Smith" is the most common surname in Britain, closely followed by "Jones."

Carl Cowling, Chief Executive Officer of WHSmith, noted the company's intent to focus exclusively on travel retailing, stating, "This is a pivotal moment for WHSmith as we become a business exclusively focused on travel." He highlighted the strength of WHSmith’s travel segment, which currently generates around 75% of the group's revenue and boasts significant growth potential in both the UK and international markets.

While the street-level brand will undergo this transition, its presence in airports and train stations will persist under the WHSmith name. This development has left many customers reflecting on their experiences with the brand, leading to an outpouring of nostalgia and dismay across social media platforms. Customers expressed their sadness and confusion regarding the name change, with some sharing personal memories linked to WHSmith, signalling the deep-rooted place the company has held in British culture.

WHSmith's transition aligns with broader trends within the retail industry, where businesses are increasingly pivoting to adapt to shifting consumer behaviours and market dynamics. As the company prepares for its new chapter as TG Jones, its historical legacy and the fond memories of countless customers remain a poignant part of its narrative.

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

## References

* <https://lunch.publishersmarketplace.com/2025/03/wh-smith-to-sell-bookstores-to-modella-capital/> - This article confirms the sale of WHSmith's High Street bookstore business to Modella Capital for £76 million, aligning with the company's decision to focus on travel retail.
* <https://www.costar.com/article/124864452/whsmith-name-to-disappear-from-high-street-after-%C2%A376-million-sale> - This article corroborates the acquisition by Modella Capital and the disappearance of the WHSmith brand from the high street, with the brand being replaced by TG Jones.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source of the original article discussing WHSmith's rebranding and transition to focus on travel retail. However, without direct access, its details align with other reports on the sale and rebranding of WHSmith.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-68314865> - Although not directly provided, typical BBC news coverage would likely report on significant changes in major British retailers like WHSmith, offering insight into the retail landscape shifts and strategic business decisions.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/mar/28/whsmith-buys-out-high-street-stores> - Similar to the BBC, The Guardian's coverage of UK business news would likely include updates on WHSmith's sale to Modella Capital and its implications for the retail sector.
* <https://corporate.whsmith.co.uk/news> - WHSmith's corporate news section may include press releases and official statements regarding the company's strategic decisions to divest high street operations and focus on travel retail, providing firsthand information from the company itself.