# Comet to relaunch with £10m backing from OnBuy in bid to challenge online retail giants



Comet, once a prominent name in the UK electrical retail sector, is poised for a significant revival as it has been acquired by the Dorset-based online marketplace OnBuy. The acquisition is set to rejuvenate the brand and re-launch its website in the latter part of this year, bolstered by an investment of £10 million from OnBuy. This strategic move aims not merely to revive the Comet name, but to reimagine its presence in a digital-first economy, as stated by OnBuy’s chief executive, Cas Paton.

In a bold assertion, Paton remarked, “We're not just reviving a name; we're reimagining what trusted electronics retail looks like in a digital-first economy.” By integrating Comet into OnBuy's expansive marketplace, the company claims it will emerge as a formidable challenger to giants like Amazon and Currys, reaffirming Comet's legacy as a marketplace leader in e-commerce.

For a brand that once dominated the high street, the revival comes after a tumultuous past. Comet entered administration in November 2012, a decision that culminated in 6,500 job losses and the closure of 240 stores. The company had been grappling with significant financial challenges, accumulating losses of over £30 million in just five months prior to its administration, largely attributed to shrinking consumer spending and the burgeoning competition from online retailers. This downward spiral correlated with a £95 million loss for the fiscal year ending in April 2012. In a bid to salvage operations, Deloitte, as administrators, opted for a firesale approach to liquidate stock, showcasing the extent of Comet's financial distress as other market players like Dixons and Argos gained ground amid the fallout.

The government, in the aftermath of Comet’s collapse, faced a hefty £50 million bill to cover unpaid taxes and redundancy costs associated with the redundancies. As the retailer's financial troubles unfolded, the ramifications extended beyond immediate job losses, affecting the broader retail landscape as the industry witnessed shifts in market dynamics. The advent of online shopping had already begun to reshape consumer behaviour, and the decline of Comet highlighted the vulnerabilities of traditional retail models.

In the ensuing years, Comet was acquired by Miso Technologies, which attempted to breathe new life into the brand as an online-only entity. This approach garnered some success, allowing Miso to support existing customer queries and solidify a foundation for the brand's future. Adam Muir, managing director at Miso Technologies, expressed optimism about handing over the brand to OnBuy, stating, “We’re delighted to be leaving this household name in the hands of one of Britain’s leading technology businesses.” He emphasised OnBuy's ambitious plans to redefine Comet's image as an e-commerce powerhouse, signalling a new era for the brand.

OnBuy has demonstrated significant growth since its inception, reporting an impressive 50% year-on-year sales increase. For the financial year in 2024, the company facilitated transactions totaling over £150 million, resulting in gross profits exceeding £20 million. Paton had previously articulated aspirations of challenging major online retailers. As the company revives Comet, it seeks to merge the brand's storied past with modern technological capabilities, paving the way for a seamless shopping experience tailored to today’s consumers.

As Comet prepares for its anticipated return, the narrative of revival is intricately linked to the lessons learned from its past failures. The challenge now rests on OnBuy to not only restore Comet's reputation but to ensure sustainability in an ever-evolving market landscape that is increasingly favouring digital platforms.

The path ahead is fraught with challenges, yet the reinvigoration of Comet under OnBuy's stewardship could signify an important chapter in the brand's history, marrying legacy with innovation in the competitive realm of online retail.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14735417/Popular-electronics-retailer-collapsed-2012-revived.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
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5. Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/9652085/Comet-collapse-Deloitte-blames-internet-and-lack-of-first-time-home-buyers.html), [[3]](https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-2226299/Comet-officially-enters-administration-stores-open-firesale.html), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/01/comet-website-crash), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/01/comet-boss-warns-staff-administration)
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-14735417/Popular-electronics-retailer-collapsed-2012-revived.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/9652085/Comet-collapse-Deloitte-blames-internet-and-lack-of-first-time-home-buyers.html> - In November 2012, Comet, a UK electrical retailer, entered administration, leading to 6,500 job losses and 240 store closures. Deloitte, appointed as administrators, cited factors such as increased online competition and reduced consumer spending as primary causes of the collapse. The company had accumulated over £30 million in losses in the five months leading up to administration, following a £95 million loss in the year to April 2012. The government faced a £50 million bill to cover unpaid taxes and redundancy costs for the affected employees.
3. <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-2226299/Comet-officially-enters-administration-stores-open-firesale.html> - In November 2012, Comet, a UK electrical retailer, officially entered administration, leading to 6,500 job losses and 240 store closures. Despite the administration, stores reopened for a 'firesale' to liquidate stock. The company had struggled against competition from supermarkets and online retailers, resulting in significant financial losses. Administrators Deloitte sought potential buyers for the business, but the collapse had a significant impact on the UK retail sector, with other retailers like Dixons and Argos benefiting from the reduced competition.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/dec/16/comet-collapse-bill-government> - The collapse of UK electrical retailer Comet in 2012 left taxpayers facing a £50 million bill to cover unpaid taxes and redundancy costs for 6,600 employees. Administrators Deloitte reported that Comet had accumulated over £30 million in losses in the five months leading up to administration, following a £95 million loss in the year to April 2012. The government agreed to cover these costs to support the affected workers and manage the financial fallout from the retailer's downfall.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-20274129> - In November 2012, Comet, a UK electrical retailer, entered administration, leading to 6,500 job losses and 240 store closures. Administrators Deloitte announced 330 redundancies across Comet's head office and support centers, with no redundancies among shop staff. The company faced challenges due to increased competition from online retailers and supermarkets, resulting in significant financial losses. Deloitte was in discussions with potential buyers to salvage parts of the business, but the collapse had a substantial impact on the UK retail sector.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/01/comet-website-crash> - In November 2012, following Comet's announcement of entering administration, the company's website crashed, causing concern among customers regarding deliveries, warranties, and gift cards. The website displayed a message stating it was unavailable, leading to uncertainty about the status of customer orders and services. Consumers were advised to contact customer service directly to address their concerns, highlighting the challenges faced by customers during the retailer's financial turmoil.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/01/comet-boss-warns-staff-administration> - In November 2012, Comet's management confirmed plans to enter administration, putting 6,500 jobs at risk. The company filed an intention to appoint an administrator, with a view to entering administration the following week. The board stated they were urgently working with advisers to seek a solution to secure a viable future for the company. Deloitte was prepared to handle the administration of the 240 stores, which would remain open for business in the meantime.