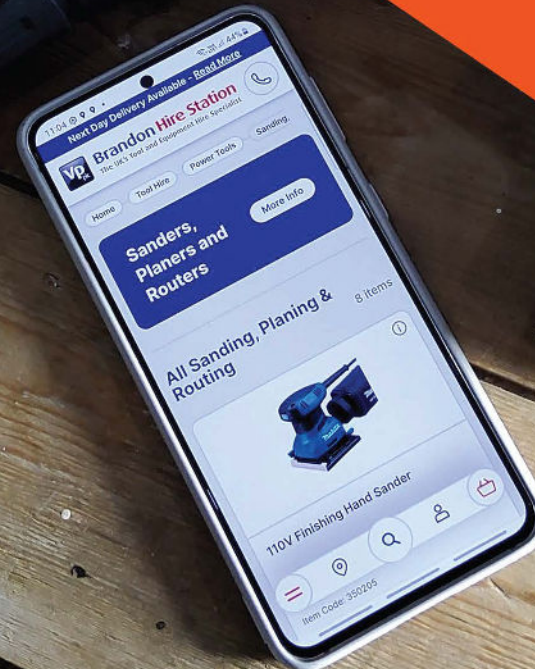# Brandon Hire Station

An Adobe Commerce Case Study

PushON

Background

The Client: Brandon Hire Station

Part of the VP Group of businesses, Brandon Hire Station is a provider of tools and equipment via hire and purchase to the construction industry and homeowners throughout the UK.

Brandon Hire Station -   www.brandonhirestation.com
VP Group -   www.vpplc.com

The Agency: PushON

PushON is an award winning Adobe Solution partner specialising in the delivery of complex eCommerce projects across B2B, B2C and D2C with a global enterprise client base. PushON have been deploying eCommerce solutions on Magento and subsequently Adobe Commerce since 2009.

PushON -   www.pushon.co.uk

The Problem

Brandon Hire Station had a requirement to enable their varied client base to interact with them via eCommerce tools whenever and wherever, crucially, catering for their relative needs and experience.

During workshops held by PushON, we identified 3 major customer segments.

### 1 National Account Users

These are employees of large multi location companies such as Balfour Beatty, who require different functionality from a hiring platform such as retrieving invoices, statements, querying invoices as well as the ability to hire products.

2 Professional trades people

Users who have a history of hiring products from Brandon Hire Station, and due to the more unpredictable nature of their contracts require the ability to hire at short notice and manage their contracts on the go.

3 DIY customers

Home owners who have less specialist jobs to do in the domestic setting and require educating on how to achieve the task they have set themselves and what products are required to do so.
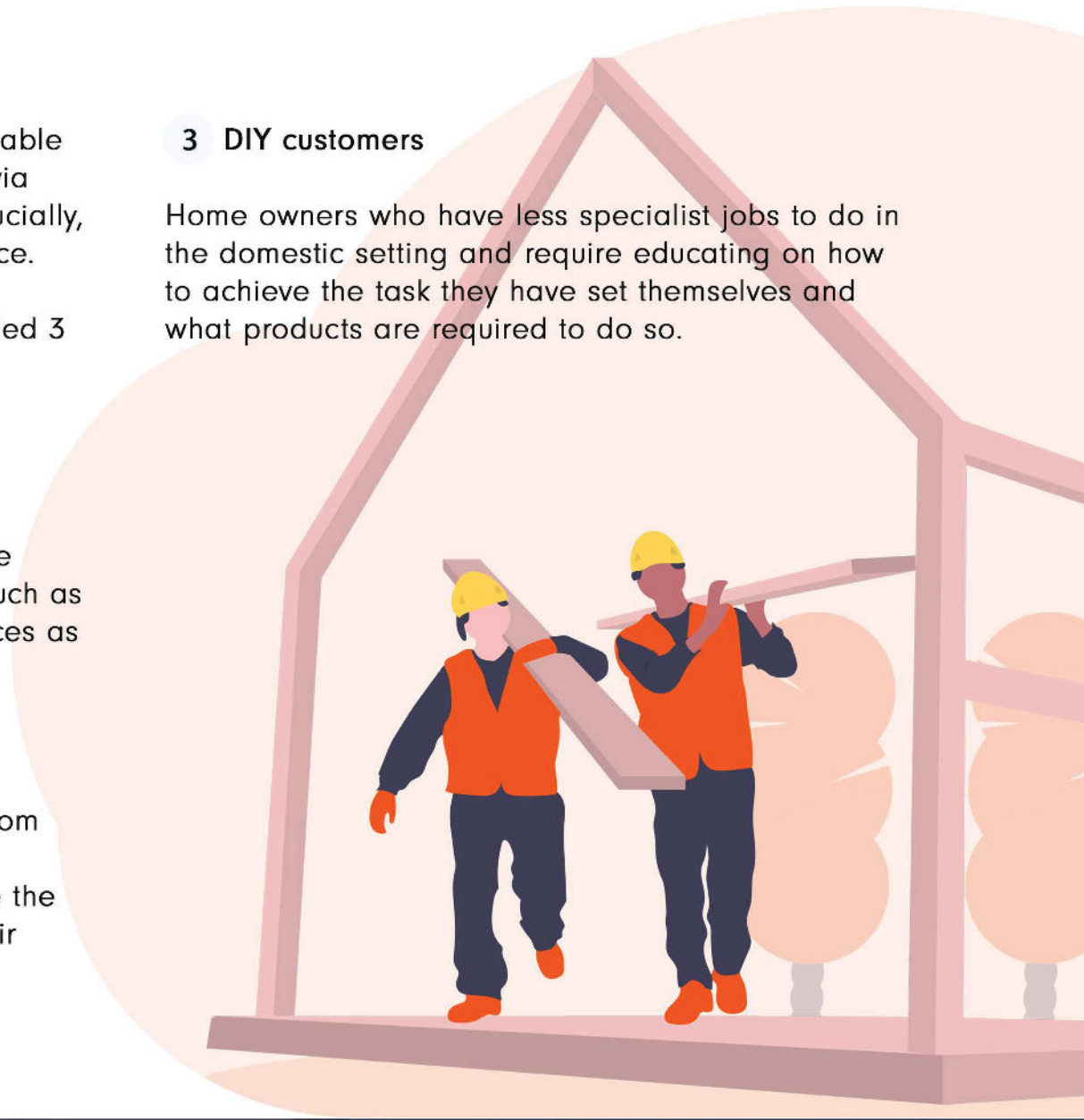
Key Requirements

During the requirements gathering stage of the project a number of key requirements were identified as benchmarks for success.

Those requirements were:

1 Cross-platform for desktop and mobile

The website needed to work across iOS, Android and for desktop browser users, to reduce the overall cost of ownership.

2 Consistent user experience

No matter what device, a consistent user experience was required, so that users didn't need to learn multiple times how to interreact with Brandon Hire Station.

3 Integrate with the existing pricing engine

Brandon Hire Stations pricing engine was highly complex, therefore a direct integration was required, rather than attempting to replicate the logic.

4 Seemless integration with existing ERP

All ecommerce orders had to seamlessly flow into Brandon Hire Stations ERP to be fulfilled by local branches.

5 Future proof and scalable

Whatever solution was proposed would need to cater for ambitious growth plans, new product offerings and the potential for white labelling.
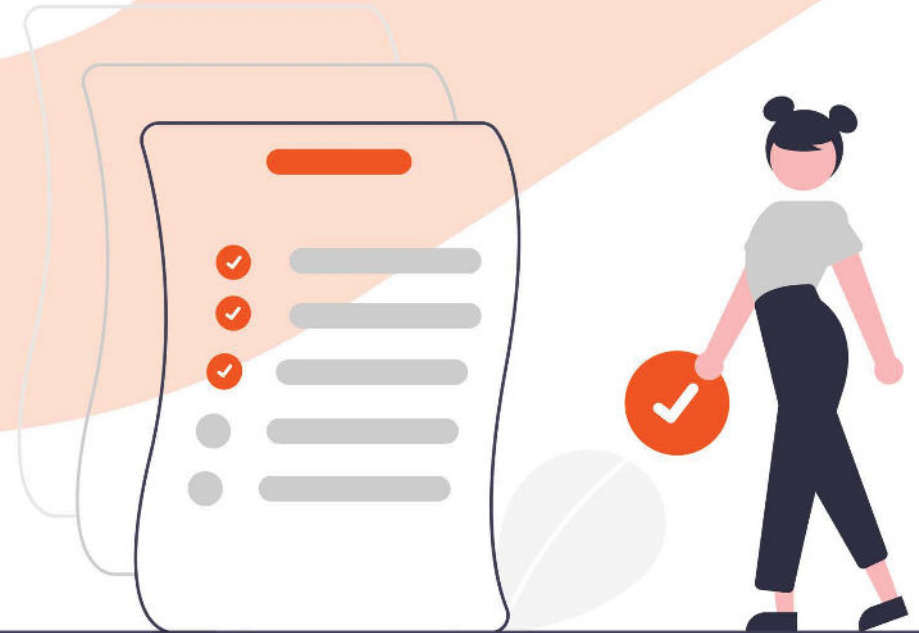
The Solution

Adobe Commerce is the ideal solution for complex enterprise eCommerce. It's market leading native suite of true B2B and B2C functionality is complemented by the ability to customise extensively to meet specific business needs such as the "Hire" functionality key to this project and not usually native to any major eCommerce platform.

Further to that. Adobe Commerce can be deployed as a Progressive Web App (PWA) enabling app like capability without the complexity of developing a separate App. Adobe Commerce is recognised as being a leader in Digital Commerce, critically both in terms of completeness of vision and ability to execute. Or in other words, it has the native capability that you need as well as being deliverable by a competent team.

Adobe Commerce capability enables integration with the current and future tech stack, world leading catalogue management and, crucially, a highly adaptable front end that allows configuration to operate on any device.

The Brandon Hire Station platform was developed as a Progressive Web App or PWA. This gives the website mobile app like usability and means it works beautifully across phone, tablet and desktop from the off.

This solution allows for a consistent user experience regardless of which operating system or device is being used.

A not insignificant, additional benefit, is the lower cost of ownership due to one single platform to update and maintain rather than traditional website, plus Android app, plus Apple iOS approach.
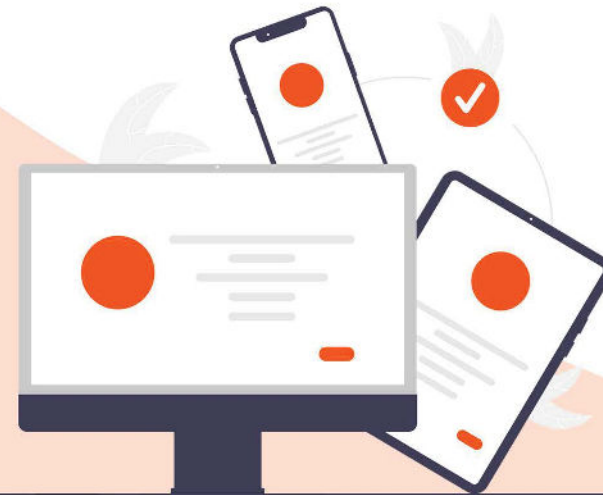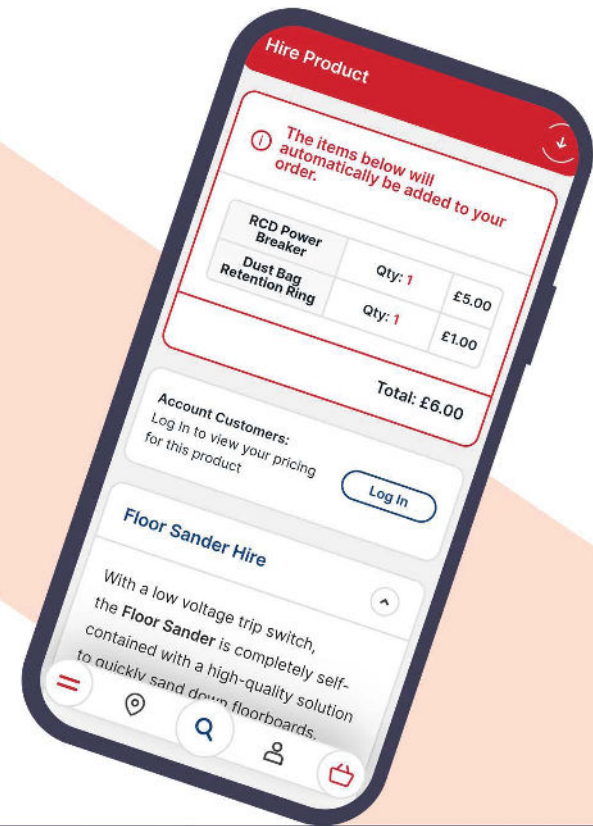
Required Products - Customisation

A large number of Hire Station products, require complementary products to work. Due to how Brandon Hire Stations competition market their products, these items have to be listed separately, as opposed to only being bundled, for Brandon Hire Station to remain price competitive.

Previously the net result of this, was that DIY/home users attempted to hire products without understanding the necessity for additional/supporting products necessary resulting in failed orders.

To resolve this, PushON developed the following custom functionality:

- Required products are displayed with relevant quantities on the product page.

- Required products are automatically added to a users basket.

- Users are prevented from removing required products from the basket, without removing the parent products.

- Users are informed in the basket why an item they may not expect to be there has been added.

Upsells - Customisation

Brandon Hire Station wanted to improve the upsell functionality within their ecommerce journey, for two reasons.

1 DIY users were hiring products without the necessary sundries, to utilise the product, leading to negative reviews.

2 Secondly to improve the average order value (AOV), and thereby profitability of each hire.

Any solution to this issue, had to take into account that professional tradesmen and national account customers would more than likely not require these sundries, therefore disruption to their user journey should be minimised.

To resolve this, PushON developed the following functionality:

- A cross sell function that appears when a user adds to basket.

- Two separate cross sell section were developed to allow Brandon Hire Station to differ the message between necessary sundries and additional nice to have cross sells.

- The cross sell function was built into the user flow in a way that allows users who wish to, to continue their journey with minimal disruption.
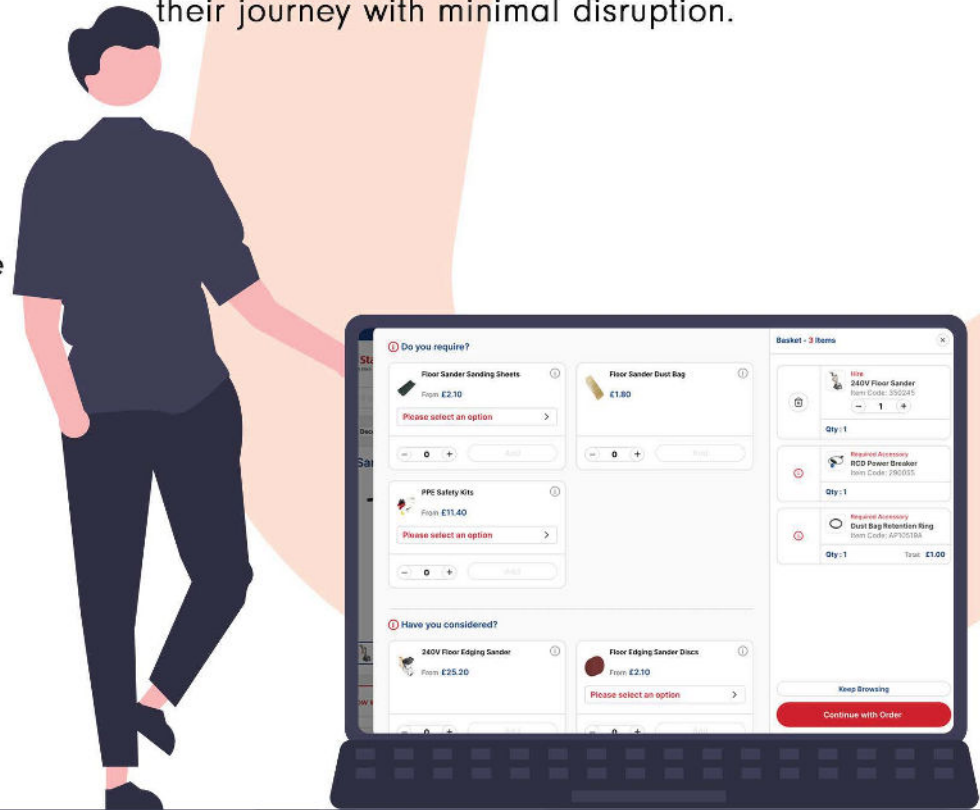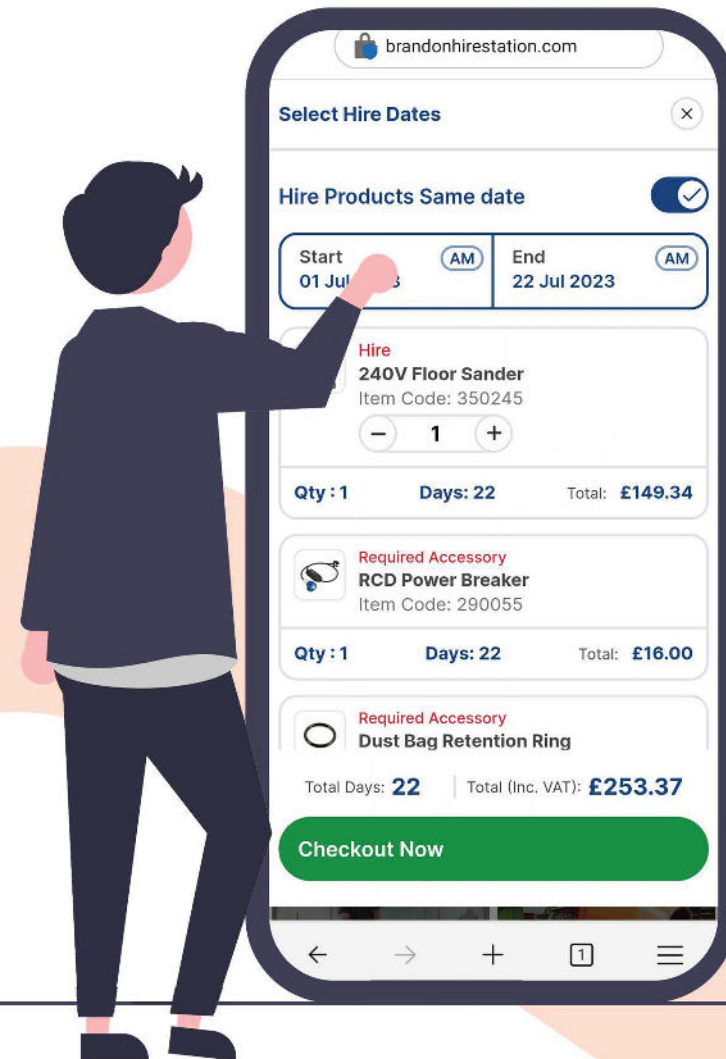
Hire Journey - Customisation

Traditional ecommerce platforms do not cater for the Hiring of products, which require at minimum, a user to define a period of time they require the product and in the case of Brandon Hire Station additional variables such as pickup/drop off time, in order to calculate the cost of an order.

In addition to this Brandon Hire Station had the following complications, that their national account customers required a single order to be hired for different periods of time, that their complex customer specific pricing structure would be hard to replicate accurately in another platform, that they offered multiple delivery options at varying costs and that some products are subject to lead times.

A known customer frustration from their previous ecommerce platforms was that users had to complete a large amount of information in order to get a cost for hiring a product, Brandon Hire Station therefore wanted to reduce this to a minimum in order to remove this frustration.

brandonhirestation.com

Select Hire Dates ✕

Hire Products Same date ✓

| Start 01 Jul 2023 | AM | End 22 Jul 2023 | AM |

Hire
240V Floor Sander
Item Code: 350245

− 1 +

Qty : 1   Days: 22   Total: **£149.34**

Required Accessory
RCD Power Breaker
Item Code: 290055

Qty : 1   Days: 22   Total: **£16.00**

Required Accessory
Dust Bag Retention Ring

Total Days: **22** | Total (Inc. VAT): **£253.37**

Checkout Now

Hire Journey - Customisation

To resolve this, PushON developed the following functionality:

- Developed a custom hire process that seamlessly fits into the ecommerce order process.
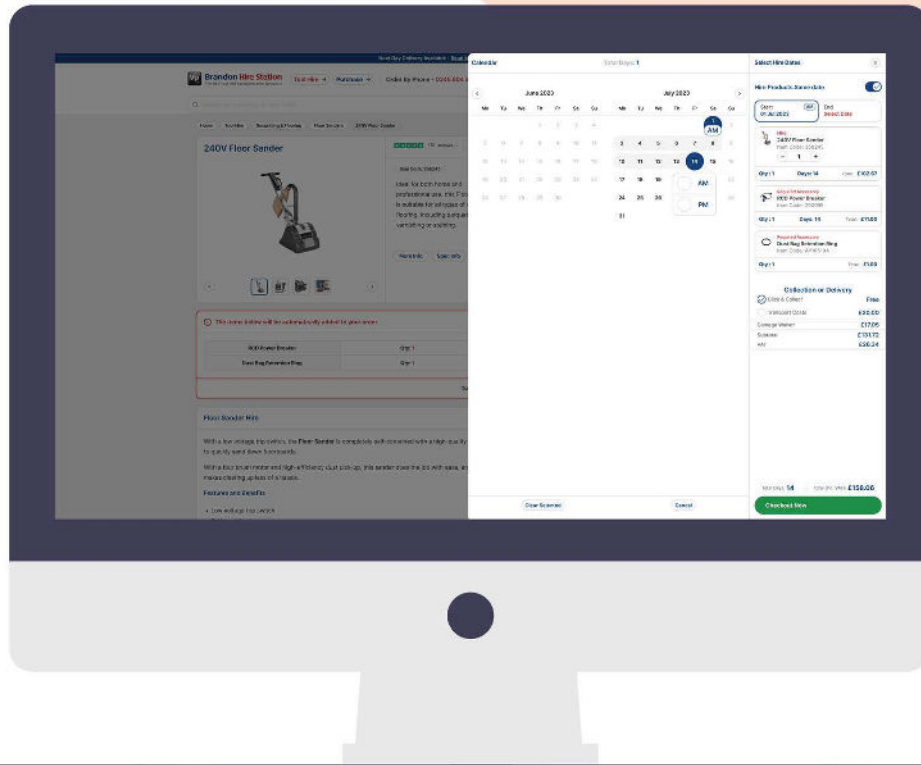
- Allows National accounts to select different hire dates for each item in their basket at the flick of a switch.

- Easily lets users select their preferred date and pickup slot.

- Automatically prevents users from selecting dates within a products lead time, or dates branches are closed.

- Calculates both the delivered & collected or click & collect cost.

- Microservices for calculating pricing directly from the ERP, rather than maintaining two separate pricing engines.

Off Hire / Extend Hire - Customisation

Changing the end date of a hire contract is common practise in the building industry where due to the volume of unknowns, jobs can frequently take shorter or longer than originally anticipated. This would need custom development.

Previously Brandon Hire Station had no self-service functionality when it came to existing hire contracts. They followed historic industry standards whereby all requests to amend hire contracts required a user to phone the national call centre. As the business has scaled, this has scaled the cost of operating such a manual process.

To provide users with the ability to self-serve and help reduce Brandon Hire Stations costs, PushON developed the following functionality:

- New functionality in the customers "My Account" area that allows users to self-serve their current hire agreements.

- The ability to change the end date of a hire, or ask for an order to be taken off hire.

- A Micro Service that sends the requests to Brandon Hire Stations operations team.
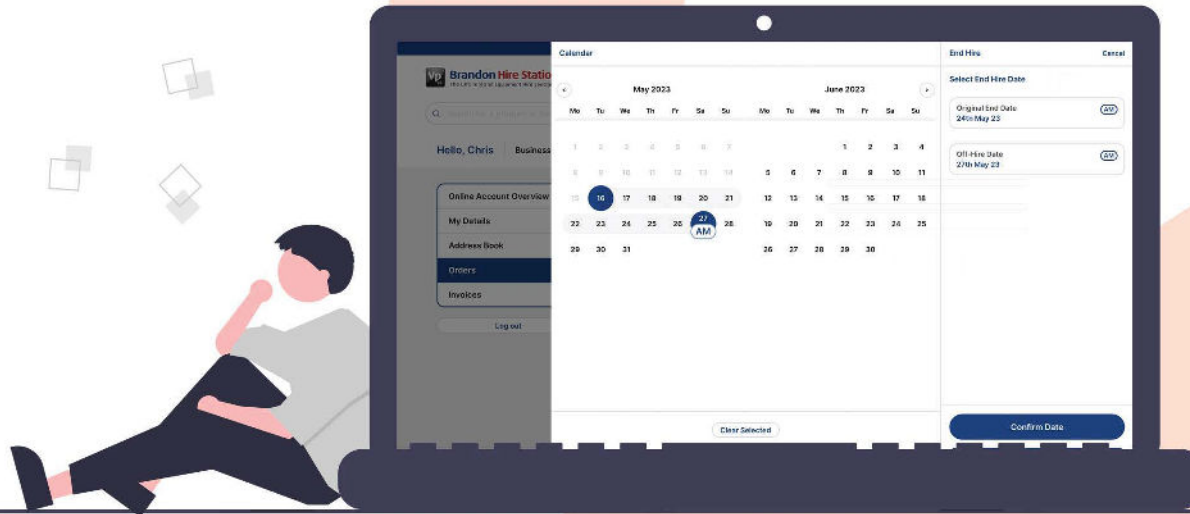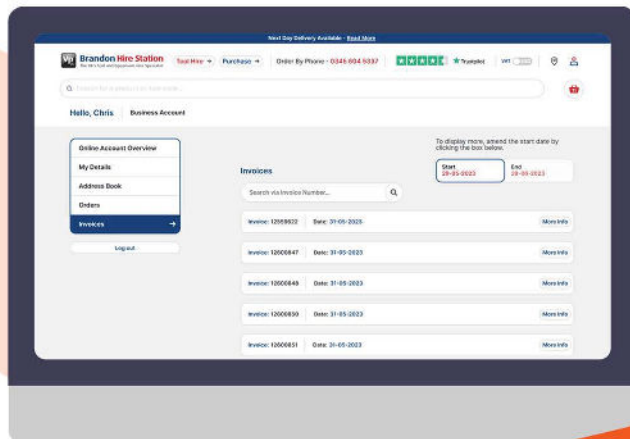
Invoicing / Order Lookup - Customisation

National account customers by their nature have multiple locations and users, meaning that often paper invoices are not provided to the correct individual. The net result of this is additional administration work for Brandon Hire Stations customer service team.

An objective of the website was to improve customers ability to service their own requirements in this area, and reduce the workload of the customer service team.

To provide self-service functionality for orders and invoicing, again helping Brandon Hire Stations reduce costs, PushON developed the following functionality:

- Users have the ability to view all orders and invoices within their organisation, which is key for national accounts with multiple users.

- The ability to filter their order and invoice history by date, address, order/invoice number, and products contained within the order/invoice.

- The ability to download an official invoice copy, which is retrieved from a newly developed micro service.

- The ability to query invoice, with elements prefilled for convenience, which sends the data directly to the operations team.

- All required Micro Services from Brandon Hire Stations ERP.

Price On Application (POA) - Customisation

National account customers by their nature have multiple locations and users, meaning that often paper invoices are not provided to the correct individual. The net result of this is additional administration work for Brandon Hire Stations customer service team.

An objective of the website was to improve customers ability to service their own requirements in this area, and reduce the workload of the customer service team.

To aid the advertisement of these products, and smooth a users journey to hiring such products PushON developed the following:

- The ability for "POA" products to be displayed but not hired online. After additional user testing, it was determined that showing a base price helped encourage POA conversions

- The ability for users to request a quote for a POA product, with required fields already being populated from the product.

Hierarchical Accounts - Customisation

A major part of Brandon Hire Station's customer base is national account customers, who have multiple locations and multiple users with different job roles and requirements out of an ecommerce platform.

To cater for this requirement, and increase engagement in the ecommerce platform PushON developed:

- A unified account system for all users linked to a company within the ERP.

- The ability for users within a company to view and update other users orders and invoices.

- The ability for users within a company to access the pre-negotiated pricing for hire products.
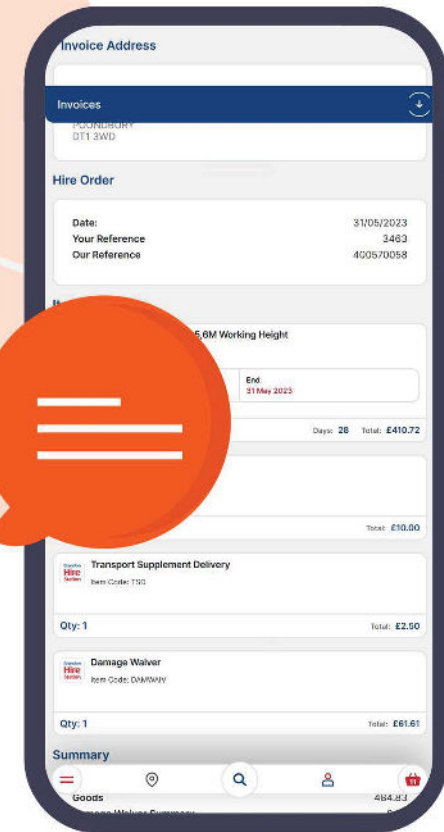
The Technical SEO Challenge

eCommerce technical SEO is a particular skill in itself. Catering for eCommerce Progressive Web Apps (PWA) is even more complex.

We had to carefully think about the site's use of JavaScript and how Google could crawl and access content. This meant working closely with the development team to ensure the right things were in the Document Object Module (DOM) upon first visit.

Similarly, this also meant carefully approaching the website URL structure to ensure we were generating real tangible URLs and surfacing links to those URLs properly.

And of course, we had to prepare redirects between pages in the old website to relevant pages in the new website ahead of time and ensure they went through prerender.

Otherwise, we stuck to our tried-and-tested SEO migration methods of benchmarking current performance, working close with the development team during Quality Assurance (QA) and User Acceptance Testing (UAT) to find and eliminate potential SEO issues.

On launch day and post launch, we test and change as appropriate to ensure that the website is being crawled and indexed as we would hope.
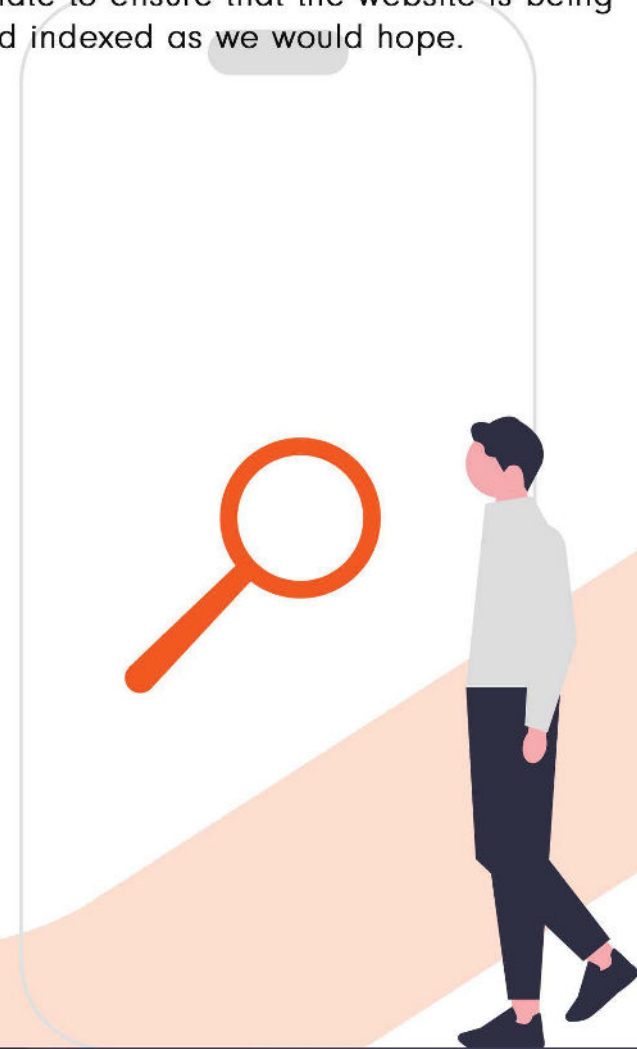
Technology and Solutions Deployed

The premise for the Brandon Hire Station website was to adhere to a set of 'best practice' architecture principles across topics such as Headless front ends, Cloud Native, API first integration patterns where possible, all whilst balancing the commercial and technological reality of the ecommerce marketplace.

Core Platform

Adobe Commerce
business.adobe.com/uk/products/magento/magento-commerce

PWA Studio
developer.adobe.com/commerce/pwa-studio

Technical Partners

algolia
Algolia, for search .
www.algolia.com

loqate GBG
Loqate, for address lookup.
www.loqate.com

fastly
Fastly, for caching.
www.fastly.com

Prerender.io, for prerendering.
prerender.io

Yext
Yext, for store locator functionality.
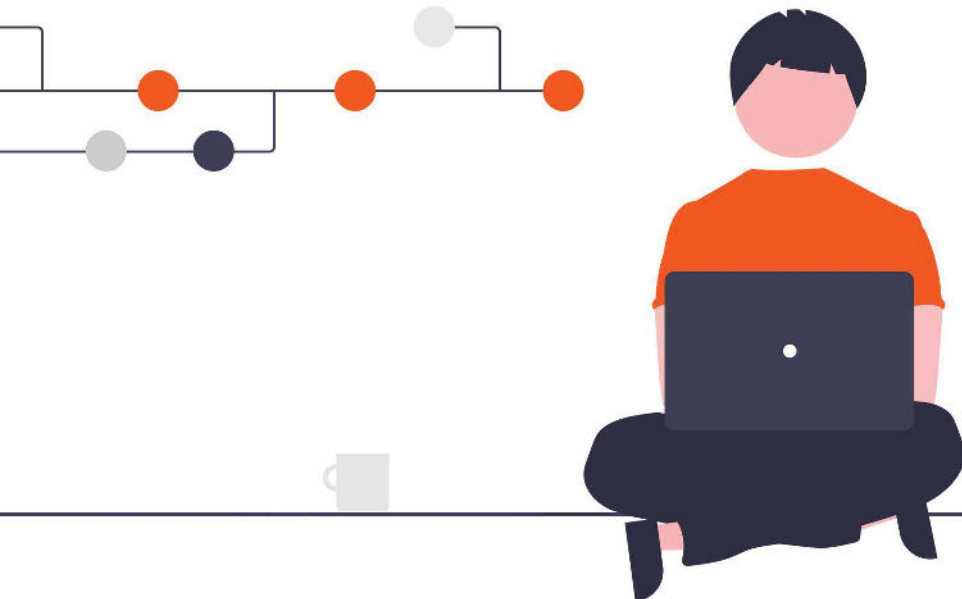www.yext.com

Trustpilot
Trust Pilot, for service/product reviews & product FAQ's.
uk.trustpilot.com

Braintree
Braintree, for payments, Apple Pay, Android Pay and PayPal.
www.braintreepayments.com

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Results

Launching the site in late 2022, we saw a significant increase in user engagement with a near doubling of time on site.

Another indicator was rapid growth in new users.

What did the client say?

"Offering our B2B and B2C customers the best user experience and customer journey was the primary reason that we selected Adobe Ecommerce, with its PWA functionality, as our eCommerce platform of choice. Handling the intricacies of the hiring industry, a complex pricing engine and system communications with over 150 nationwide branches was a challenging job, but PushOn have proven themselves the perfect choice. While technical and technological knowledge is of course vital, successful businesses are built on relationships, and that is why I have a firm belief that Brandon Hire Station and PushON are now ready to take things to a new level of success."

Alex Hannaford - eCommerce Manager - Brandon Hire Station

Recognition

The Brandon Hire Station website was recognised by the leading trade association for the Hire Industry, Hire Association Europe (HAE) and Event Hire Association (EHA) as being the "Website Of The Year in 2023"
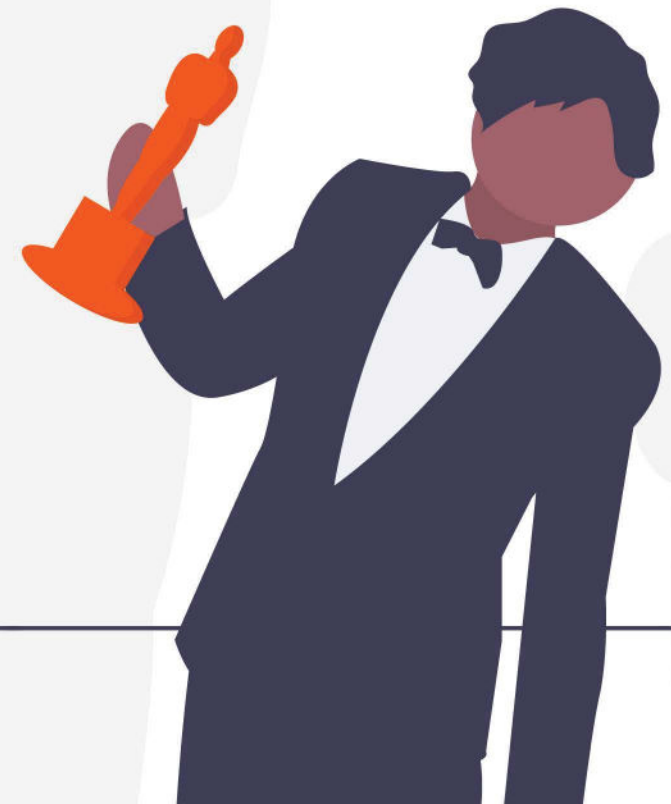
PushON Pedigree

PushON is a time-served, respected, and award-winning eCommerce agency with pedigree, Our eclectic portfolio of merchants span all forms of commerce, whether it's D2C, trade or retail.

We help both large brands and ambitious SMEs optimise their online offering and have watched our clients go from strength-to-strength after implementing or improving online channels. We operate out of 3 offices – Manchester, Edinburgh and Bristol, and been delivering successful work for our clients since 2005.

We've been a certified Adobe Commerce / Magento partner since 2011. We have a strong relationship with the Adobe team and have officially been recognised as one of the best performing partners in the ecosystem. We are also recognised nationally and internationally for our work across development and marketing.

"PushON has been an Adobe (Magento) Partner since 2011. Their ethos is all about focusing on helping their clients drive growth. Their customer testimonials are some of the best we've seen which speaks volumes about their reputation. We are delighted they are an Adobe Partner."

Steph Kershaw - Strategic Alliances Manager - Adobe

Adobe Commerce

PushON