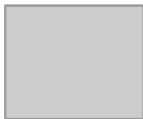




## WH Smith name to disappear from High Street after sale

### Description



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## WH Smith name to disappear from High Street after sale

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**The name WH Smith, a staple of UK town centres since the Victorian era when it became the country's principal newspaper distributor, is set to disappear from the High Street after the firm agreed to sell its shops to Hobbycraft-owner Modella Capital.**

The sale does not include the WH Smith brand, its travel shops at airports and railway stations or its outlets in hospitals.

The new owner will rebrand the High Street chain as TGJones, but said it would keep the Post Office outlets that operate in many branches.

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Modella Capital will take over 480 stores in retail parks, shopping centres and on High Streets including 5,000 staff.

Modella said it would be "business as usual" while it worked on changes to the store chain including adding new ranges. However, the new owner said the Post Office and Toys "R" Us outlets currently in WH Smith stores, would remain.

It would not comment on whether jobs would be cut following the takeover.

The private equity firm specialises in retail and consumer businesses and, as well as buying Hobbycraft, has also invested in Crafters' Companion and The Original Factory Shop.

It said the TGJones brand carried "the same sense of family" as WH Smith, which it described as an "iconic" retail business.

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WH Smith's first shop was in Little Grosvenor Street, London. It opened its first travel retail store in London's Euston station in 1848.

It still sells papers and magazines, alongside books, sweets and snacks and art supplies.

WH Smith group chief executive Carl Cowling said the £76m sale, was "a pivotal moment" for the company, which would now focus exclusively on the travel-related side of the business.

"High Street is a good business; it is profitable and cash generative with an experienced and high-performing management team," he said.

"However, given our rapid international growth, now is the right time for a new owner to take the High Street business forward."

The travel division operates more than 1,200 stores in 32 countries.

Nicholas Found at the consultancy, Retail Economics, said conditions on the High Street were “increasingly unforgiving”.

As a result in recent years WH Smith’s travel arm had become its “engine room”, he said.

WH Smith’s travel business contributed 75% of the group’s revenue and 85% of its trading profit in 2024.

“Its product mix, which includes food, beverages and tech, is better suited to higher-margin, impulse-driven purchases in busy transit hubs,” he added.

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## Banzai Japan Social Media



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Idol



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