

WHSmith to open 18 In Motion tech stores in UK

During its trading update last week, WHSmith PLC Group announced the winning of 18 technology and accessories stores across a number of significant UK airports, including London Heathrow, London Stansted, Manchester, London Luton, Birmingham and East Midlands.



As part of WHSmith's planned opening of 100 travel stores in the next three years, the company is taking 18 of the 35 locations previously run by Dixons Carphone

These 18 stores represent a significant portion of the 35 airport outlets being shuttered by electronics retailer Dixons Carphone.

Operating under the "In Motion" brand that WHSmith acquired in 2018 with the intention of expanding markets beyond North America, especially in the electronics category. In Motion currently operates at 117 stores across 43 US airports, with a presence in nine of the top ten and 22 of the top 25 busiest US airports.

	% of 2019 Revenue		
	Q1	Q2	18 weeks to 3 July 21
High Street	88%	84%	86%
Travel	39%	34%	48%
Group	59%	58%	62%

The Group stated that, though sales both in and out of travel retail have been impacted by the current environment, in recent weeks have risen from 32% of 2019 figures up to 38%. “Combining our learnings and expertise from North America, these stores will provide passengers with a superior customer service experience and a combination of premium products from brands such as Apple and Samsung, as well as an extensive range of tech accessories. In a fully recovered travel environment, we anticipate that these stores will deliver sales of c. £60m per year,” the company stated in its update.

This is undoubtedly the beginning of more acquisitions, as earlier this year WHSmith announced it would open 100 travel locations in the next three years.