

Clintons: The Greetings Cards Chain Welcomes a Cost-Effective Future

CLIENT:	Clintons
SECTOR:	Retail
ADDED VALUE:	Waste, Laundry, Janitorial, LPG Waste Management, Stationery & PPE, Packaging, Helium Gas, Insurance, Telecommunications, Point of Sale.

THE CLIENT

An icon of the British high street, Clintons was founded in 1968 to provide customers with a straightforward way of purchasing greetings cards and gifts. It offered something not seen by consumers until that point: an extensive choice of high-quality products at affordable prices.

As part of their mission statement, "Clintons believes in enhancing relationships through the expression of personal emotion and the celebration of sincere connections."

Today you will find 231 stores in the UK, still offering the high quality choice that customers have come to expect.

THE CHALLENGE

Despite its extensive choice of high-quality cards and gifts, Clintons is not blind to the rise of e-commerce and personalisation offered by competitors. Furthermore, like many of our beloved high street stores, Clintons felt the full force of Covid-19's arrival, temporarily closing a high proportion of its premises and seeing its sales fall considerably.

It was at that point that Esquire Retail's Head of Finance Dominic Green engaged the services of Expense Reduction Analysts' Senior Principal Consultant St John Rowntree and his team of specialists.

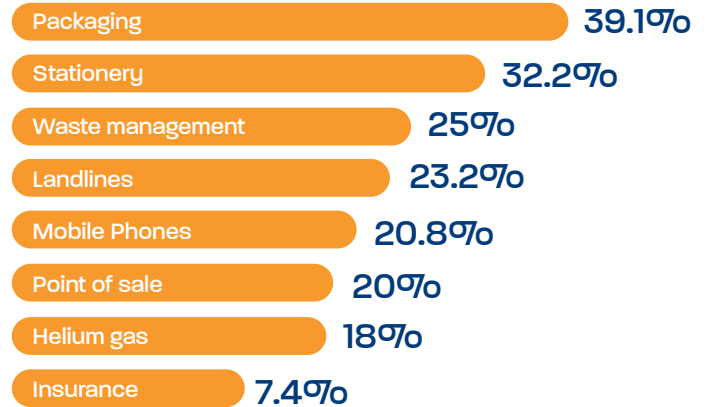
Their simple objective was to optimise procurement to free up capital to allow Clintons to survive and grow.

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS:

Dominic was, understandably, a little hesitant - at first - about using the services of an external procurement organisation. Despite the abundant and positive testimonies from similar clients, he felt apprehensive about the potential disruption sometimes caused by outside consultants.

Therefore, to test the waters, Dominic entrusted ERA with two categories of spend: waste management and stationery & PPE. It became clear that substantial savings were ready to be made, and ERA's work could be carried out unobtrusively and off-site. Having shown the value of their knowledge, experience and methods, St John and his team of specialists were given a further six spend categories to review.

SUMMARY OF SAVINGS



Clintons

"ERA was able to exceed our expectations, and we remain delighted with the outcome."

DOMINIC GREEN
HEAD OF FINANCE, ESQUIRE RETAIL

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THE SOLUTION

ERA was able to deliver substantial savings in all reviewed cost categories.

In the words of St John, "I knew ERA would do a good job. With the help of my talented colleagues, we were able to soothe any concerns about disruption and focus our attention on finding savings and adding value."

In each of the core cost categories, the relevant specialist provides a little more detail:



"Approximately 100 billion plastic carrier bags are used in Europe every year, requiring 12 million barrels of oil to produce. Eight billion of those bags end their life as litter. What if, instead of going to landfill, the bags could be recycled again and again? That was the packaging procurement challenge set by Clintons. The company said goodbye to virgin plastic bags, reduced their carbon footprint and made tangible savings in the process."

RICHARD ANSON,
PACKAGING SPECIALIST
EXPENSE REDUCTION ANALYSTS

"We undertook two projects. The first was an assessment of Clintons' stationery procurement. 60% of clients choose to remain with their incumbent supplier. However, for Clintons that wasn't possible. Instead, by switching suppliers, it was able to make savings of 32%. Point of sale print was our second project. Again, we went to the market and found a 20% saving with a new supplier. Clintons was keen to allow the incumbent supplier to improve their pricing, so I invited them to do exactly that. They did, so the greetings cards and gifts company was able to remain with their existing supplier."

KEITH COPESTAKE
STATIONERY, OFFICE SUPPLIES & PRINT SPECIALIST
EXPENSE REDUCTION

"One of Clintons' highest selling items is its helium-filled birthday balloon. Children and adults alike are delighted by the novelty of its presence at a birthday party or celebration. Despite the delight one brings, global helium prices regularly pass through crunch periods, during which the price increases dramatically. By carefully analysing the feedback on a detailed survey sent to store managers, ERA was able to recommend the optimum size of helium cylinder that could be safely delivered, stored and handled at every site. The project achieved savings of 18.2% at a time when helium prices were being squeezed. As well as the helium gas project, our communications team worked closely with Clintons' head of IT to reduce the number of lines required in each store. This resulted in savings of 23.2%."

ST JOHN ROWNTREE,
PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT,
EXPENSE REDUCTION ANALYSTS