Optimise Labs

CASE STUDY · LUXURY FASHION RETAIL

One version of the truth for a multi-channel luxury brand.

How we are replacing manual leadership reporting with a governed reporting platform built around twelve existing systems, without replacing any of them.

SECTOR	HEADQUARTERS	CHANNELS	SCOPE
Luxury fashion	London	Stores in UK, Europe and US, global e-commerce, wholesale	Leadership reporting and commercial transformation

AT A GLANCE

12
source systems mapped, none replaced

66
reported figures traced back to their source

760,899
historic sales rows migrated and verified to the penny

1,200+
automated checks across 42 test suites

THE CLIENT

A founder-led brand at a turning point.

A London luxury fashion brand trading through its own stores in the UK, Europe and the US, international e-commerce and wholesale. The founder was handing day-to-day leadership to a newly appointed managing director, who needed to see the business clearly from day one.

The business had recently moved onto a new commerce and point-of-sale platform, region by region. Trading history now sat across the new system, the old one and years of spreadsheets.

THE CHALLENGE

The numbers existed. Nobody could see them in one place.

Leadership reporting was assembled by hand every week, exported from separate systems and rebuilt in Excel. Each department had its own version of the truth.

- Warehouse and store stock only reconciled at stock take
- Finance had no link to the commerce platform
- Core definitions, such as what counts as a sale, differed between teams
- Returns had no clear owner or route back into stock
- Key reporting knowledge sat with one or two people

12.8 pts

What the audit uncovered

One store's trading variance against last year moved by up to 12.8 percentage points depending on which system it was read from. The leadership team had been making decisions on figures that could not be relied on, and no one had measured the gap until now.

OUR APPROACH

Audit. Evaluate. Deploy.

Every stage was signed off before the next began. Nothing was built on an assumption that hadn't been checked with the person who owns it.

1

OPERATIONS AUDIT

Understand how reporting really worked

We worked alongside the leadership team across finance, technology, merchandising, marketing and digital, and retail. We ran a full diagnostic of the commerce systems and traced every figure leadership relied on back to where it came from.

- 66 reported figures mapped to their source system, extraction route and owner
- Business definitions agreed and confirmed in writing by the owning director, from sales and sell-through to availability, discount codes and price bands
- Blockers logged openly with a named owner, rather than assumed away

2

DESIGN AND EVALUATION

Prove it before building it, then prove the build

We built a working prototype and refined it with each department head over more than thirty versions until it matched how they run their area. It became the signed-off specification for the build.

- Sixteen views designed, from a board-level heartbeat to individual store managers
- 760,899 historic sales rows migrated and reconciled to the penny against the live platform
- A fifteen-stage verification pipeline and 1,200+ automated checks guard every number
- A published period never changes after the fact, so last week's figures stay last week's figures

3

DEPLOYMENT

Going live inside the client's own environment

The platform reads from the existing systems and is being deployed into the client's own Microsoft cloud in the UK, behind their existing Microsoft sign-in, so their data never leaves their control.

- Read-only beta for the leadership team, run in parallel with existing reports before switch-over
- An AI question layer lets leaders ask about the numbers in plain English. It passes all 35 of its evaluation tests and is deliberately held back until the last edge cases are closed and leadership approves spend controls

HOW IT FITS

Built on top. Nothing replaced.

The client's systems remain the record of truth. We added a governed layer that reads from them, applies the agreed definitions and checks, and presents one version of the numbers.

EXISTING SYSTEMS

- Commerce and point of sale
- E-commerce
- International checkout
- Finance
- Third-party warehouse
- Payments
- Email and CRM
- Customer service
- Reviews
- Web analytics
- Wholesale
- Historic archive

GOVERNED REPORTING LAYER

Agreed definitions
One meaning per metric, signed off

Reconciliation
Sources checked against each other

Verification
Fifteen stages, 1,200+ checks

Audit trail
Published periods locked

ONE VIEW FOR EVERY LEADER

Business heartbeat	Weekly trading meeting	Finance
Retail and store manager	Merchandising	Marketing and digital
Trends	Sales summary	Brand health

What the team received

- A signed-off reporting specification and data dictionary
- A verified data layer, built for their own cloud
- Sixteen reporting views, fourteen built ahead of beta
- A weekly meeting system with a written CEO report
- A runbook so the platform isn't dependent on any one person

Alongside the platform

- IT managed service procurement, five tenders evaluated with a board decision paper
- Business continuity planning
- An OKR programme for the leadership team
- Handover preparation for the incoming managing director

THE IMPACT

What it delivers on cost, risk and growth.

Cost removed

- Replaces weekly report building in Excel with reporting that refreshes itself
- Frees finance and merchandising time for analysis instead of rebuilding spreadsheets
- A production-ready specification that any developer can build from

Risk reduced

- One agreed definition for every metric, confirmed in writing
- Hidden variances found and measured for the first time
- Less dependence on single people, with a runbook to match
- Data stays inside the client's own cloud and sign-in

Growth enabled

- Gives a new MD a clear view of every store, channel and category
- Sell-through, availability and margin visible by location
- Faster, better-founded decisions in the weekly trading meeting
- A tested foundation for AI questions on live numbers

Why it worked

We didn't start with technology. We started by sitting with the people who use the numbers, agreed what each one means, and only then built. Every figure can be traced to its source, every stage was signed off by its owner, and the AI was held to the same standard of evidence as everything else.

Where it stands

Fourteen of sixteen views are built and verified. A read-only leadership beta starts in October 2026, running alongside the existing reports so every number can be compared before switch-over. Measured time and cost savings will be reported at the end of the parallel run.

Is your leadership team working from numbers it can trust?

Book a 30-minute call. We'll talk through your operation, your systems and where AI will genuinely pay back.

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