



Case study

Aspire Furniture

How Aspire Furniture scaled their business and expanded sales using Linnworks.



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Aspire Furniture is a unique furniture wholesaler, specializing in beds and mattresses. Established in 2013, they have gone from strength to strength wholesaling their products, and they've now opened their own UK manufacturing facility.

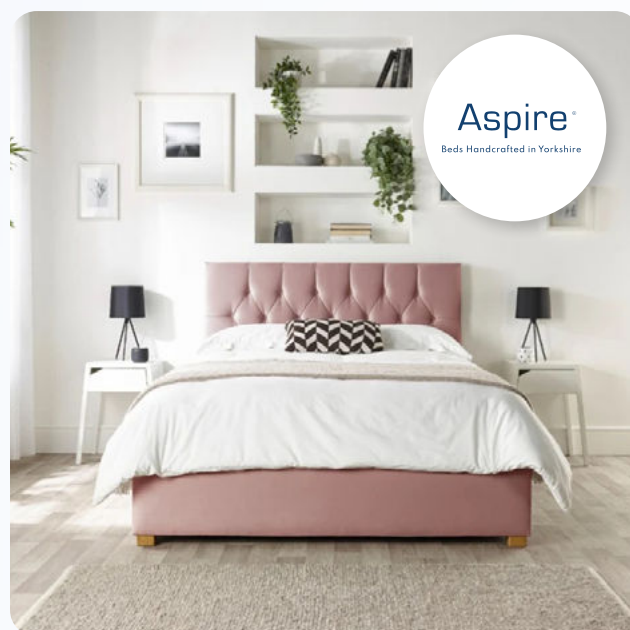
One of the main reasons for their growth was the COVID-19 pandemic, where ecommerce sales skyrocketed. Aspire Furniture was better set up for online sales when compared to some of their competitors. During this busy period, the team quickly realized they needed a system to keep up with demand, and also set them up for future expansion.

Challenge: Existing system holding them back from business growth.

Aspire Furniture was previously using a system called Ordoro. Matthew Gaskell, Operations Coordinator, explained, "It was good for what we needed at the time, but it didn't quite have the capability that we needed for the expansion that we were seeing within the business, and the customers we were working with."

The team also noticed that the system was more focused on the American market and integrated with US-based couriers, which didn't align with their current needs.

A tipping point for Aspire Furniture was during an especially busy period, which was challenging for the entire team — from customer service through to manufacturing — when the need for a more sophisticated inventory and order management system was made clear.



Solution: An inventory management system that's geared for growth.

Once the need for change was identified, Matthew, and his manager Ben Dobson, Operations Director, began the hunt for a system that would both allow and support their expansion. Matthew and Ben compared various systems, considering reviews and capabilities along the way, and ended up starting a trial with Linnworks.

As Aspire Furniture has a reasonably specific business, it was important that Linnworks had the necessary capabilities to support it. The company has a wide ranging business as parts of their products are manufactured in the UK, including beds and mattresses which can have a long lead time — sometimes as long as eight weeks.

By contrast, some products are imported from suppliers in the UK, others are imported in containers from China, which have limits to the stock that they can hold. As the items are so large, it's challenging to store a large volume of inventory to a point where they can be guaranteed not to run out of anything.

Matthew explains, “When you sell a phone case or something small it’s not an issue because you can stock thousands and thousands of them; but it’s a different story for beds and mattresses. You have to always keep to a minimum stock level due to the space they take up, and so you have to make sure you’re constantly replenishing stock.”

It was important for Aspire Furniture to implement a system that would accommodate this, and make the team’s lives easier when it comes to managing stock. This is where Linnworks came into the picture. Matthew summarizes, “Linnworks has a great capability to be able to manage inbound containers as well as forecasting, so we’re never holding too much stock in the warehouse at once.”

One of the other deciding factors for Aspire Furniture was the volume of channel and shipping integrations that Linnworks has available. Matthew states, “What attracted us the most to Linnworks was the courier integrations and the ability to be able to print labels.” Prior to Linnworks, Matthew and his team were manually creating and printing labels with couriers externally, meaning they had to import all of the tracking information into their legacy system from the courier separately, which quickly became messy and time-consuming. Matthew explains “We had to have two or three people working on printing and labeling every single day just to make sure it worked.

Whereas with Linnworks, everybody that needs to be able to print labels, and make orders can — they can do all of the parts that previously only one or two people could do.” Having this functionality already in place in Linnworks, and being able to manage this process from one single platform, has enabled Aspire Furniture to hit the ground running and migrate swiftly from their previous system.

As well as Linnworks having integrations with marketplaces that Aspire Furniture was already selling on, it has also allowed the business to expand onto new marketplaces. Matthew reiterates, “We’ve had a lot of success with using Linnworks and other third party companies — such as Mirakl — to build new integrations, which has helped us expand our customer base and has also taught us more about ecommerce that we didn’t know before. We’ve all learned a lot by using Linnworks.”

By integrating with Fulfillin’s third-party Mirakl app, Linnworks users can connect with over 190 Mirakl marketplaces and sync inventory and order routing alongside all other selling channels. Aspire Furniture uses this integration to sell through well-known UK household brands, including Debenhams and B&Q.

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Matthew is impressed with how easy the integration setups were, “It has worked pretty seamlessly and the onboarding was really easy, the whole process was very smooth. Debenhams sales are looking healthy, and we’re excited to see where it goes.”

Matthew is always keen to see what other channels Aspire Furniture could be selling on with recommendations from Linnworks. Matthew states, “My whole workday revolves around Linnworks in every single part of it. It’s definitely opened my eyes to what’s possible, and helped us as a business grow.”

Results: An inventory system they can rely on during busy periods.

Aspire Furniture has gone from strength to strength with ongoing expansion and selling opportunities. They sell through customers such as Debenhams and B&Q, marketplaces such as Wayfair, with interior designers, and also through their own website.

Matthew and his team believe Linnworks was a factor in this growth and has contributed significantly to where they are as a business today. "If we didn't have Linnworks, we wouldn't have managed to get through the winter period of 2021."

The transition was smooth, despite everything that was involved, and the team having to adapt to a new system. After the company's busy period between November 2021 and January 2022, the impact that moving systems had made dawned on Matthew and the team. "If we didn't have Linnworks during this busy period, we would have let a lot of people down and would not have been able to do half the things that we wanted to do. Linnworks has enabled us to free up time and have the capital to be able to invest and look into moving the business forward. We've experienced short and long term benefits as a result of using Linnworks."



Matthew also appreciates the constant support from Linnworks, "We've always felt supported by Linnworks and we have bi-weekly catch-ups to discuss ideas and improvements". Matthew loves the challenge of bringing on new customers and selling channels, "There's always things to learn, stuff is always changing, and we feel supported going through that. We've managed to resolve a lot of issues in the past using live chat."

Future: Expansion into the United States.

Looking ahead, Aspire Furniture has big plans to expand into the United States. It's early days but the team are keen to use Linnworks to continue their global expansion and explore the options available. Matthew summarizes, "We're still in the testing phase and need to get a lot sorted, but this will be our biggest expansion yet. We're looking forward to seeing how we can build on what we've done in the UK on a larger scale and hopefully with Linnworks playing a part in that."

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