

# 130 Years of Empowering Small Businesses and Supporting the High Street: From Historic Beginnings to Modern Innovations, Morplan Continues to Empower Retailers Amidst High Street Challenges

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London, 22 October 2024 — In an era where high street giants are falling by the wayside and small businesses face mounting challenges, Morplan (<https://www.morplan.com/>) stands as a rare success story, having not only survived but thrived for 130 years. As other household names have disappeared, Morplan's ability to adapt and innovate has seen it endure through wars, recessions, and the rapid rise of e-commerce. This year, as the company celebrates its 130th anniversary ([https://www.morplan.com/gb\\_en/retail-help-and-advice-blog/london-gts-turns-130](https://www.morplan.com/gb_en/retail-help-and-advice-blog/london-gts-turns-130)) at its iconic Great Titchfield Street, London location - it reflects on a rich legacy of supporting retailers through the highs and lows of the ever-changing retail landscape.

## A Legacy of Resilience and Adaptation

Founded in 1845 by Mr. Morrish in Camberwell as a printworks company, Morplan has a rich history of adapting to industry shifts. From its early days as Morrish & Chalfont, specialising in stationery and printing, the company has grown into a key player in the garment and fashion sectors. The transition to Morplan in the 1970s marked a new chapter of expansion and innovation, solidifying its role in supporting retailers through both prosperous and challenging times.

## The State of the High Street

According to the Centre for Retail (<https://www.retailresearch.org/retail-crisis.html>) research, over 48,000 retail businesses closed their doors in 2023 alone, impacting more than 140,000 jobs in the UK. Despite this, small businesses remain the backbone of the UK economy, accounting for 61% of total employment and contributing GBP 2.3 trillion to the private sector economy. These statistics underscore the importance of long-standing allies like Morplan, which continue to offer vital support to businesses navigating the fluctuating retail landscape.

## Celebrating 130 Years of Innovation

### The 130th-anniversary celebrations

([https://www.morplan.com/gb\\_en/retail-help-and-advice-blog/london-gts-turns-130](https://www.morplan.com/gb_en/retail-help-and-advice-blog/london-gts-turns-130)) featured a special mannequin display in the store's front window, showcasing key milestones in Morplan's history alongside the broader narrative of London's retail evolution. The month-long celebration culminated in an in-store event, inviting customers to join Morplan in commemorating this significant milestone.

As Morplan reflects on its history, the evolution of mannequins highlights not only changing fashion but also societal shifts. From early dress forms used to model the voluptuous figures of the 19th century to today's dynamic, diverse, and inclusive mannequins, the industry continues to adapt to reflect contemporary body shapes, fashion trends, and technological innovations. However, with constant innovation comes challenges, such as sustainability and embracing new materials for a modern era.

## Supporting Small Businesses Amidst Challenges

In today's dynamic retail environment, marked by online competition and economic uncertainties, Morplan remains committed to helping small businesses thrive. The company's longevity is a testament to its ability to support and adapt alongside its clients. With the high street facing ongoing challenges, alongside the Labour Party's (<https://labour.org.uk/change/kickstart-economic-growth/>) GBP 1 billion pledge to revitalise the high street, Morplan's dedication to small business success has never been more critical.

Mark Chatterton, Managing Director of Morplan, stated: "Retail is an industry that thrives on resilience and adaptability. While we've seen unprecedented challenges—from economic shifts to the rise of e-commerce - our mission at Morplan has always been to provide the solutions retailers need to succeed, no matter the circumstances."

He further added: "Morplan's history is intertwined with the evolution of London's retail scene. Our 130th anniversary is not just a celebration of our past but a reaffirmation of our commitment to supporting retail businesses. As the high street navigates new challenges, we remain dedicated to providing the tools and resources that our clients need to adapt and succeed."

## Expanding and Innovating

Over the decades, Morplan has continuously expanded and modernised its offerings. From the expansion into mail-order in the 1960s to launching an online presence in the 2000s, the company has embraced innovation to meet the evolving needs of its customers. Recent efforts include a focus on eco-friendly products, reflecting its commitment to sustainability and the future of retail. Fund the Planet ([https://fundtheplanet.net/sustainability/environmental-sustainability-influencing-businesses-and-consumer-behavior/#:~:text=](https://fundtheplanet.net/sustainability/environmental-sustainability-influencing-businesses-and-consumer-behavior/#:~:text=81% of consumers feel strongly that businesses should help improve the environment, a sentiment that drives Morplan's sustainable product offerings.)) shows that 81% of consumers feel strongly that businesses should help improve the environment, a sentiment that drives Morplan's sustainable product offerings.

As the conversation around the future of the high street continues, Morplan stands as a symbol of resilience and support for retail businesses. The company's regional stores in Bristol, Birmingham, and Glasgow, along with its London flagship, are central to its mission of empowering retailers across the UK. "As we look ahead, sustainability and innovation will be at the core of Morplan's journey. We are committed to pushing boundaries in design and materials, ensuring that we continue to offer retailers the tools they need to stay ahead in an ever-changing marketplace," reaffirms Mark.

## About Morplan

Founded in 1845, Morplan ([https://www.morplan.com/gb\\_en](https://www.morplan.com/gb_en)) is a leading supplier to the retail and fashion industries. With a legacy of supporting retail businesses and adapting to industry changes, Morplan provides a comprehensive range of products and services to help retailers succeed. The company operates flagship and regional stores across the UK, offering both in-store and online shopping options.

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Notes to editors

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