



7 Key Moments that Built our Business

ECOMMERCE CAMP MANCHESTER 2025

Who Are We?

18 years+ dancewear brand
and ecommerce retail

- **£15–20m** turnover
- **No. 1 retailer** in UK & Europe
- 60% sales are **own brands**
- 70% **retail** / 30% **dance teachers**
- Leotards, ballet shoes, tights & leggings, warm-ups, ballroom shoes, everything, and now dance costumes

Move
Dance

“

*Decathlon
for dancers*





Here are **7 moments** that
changed our business and
created a **pivot** in our journey

Moment 1

• We launched
• when we
• already
• had a shop

2007



How Did We Start?



John Cormack

Engineering roots (Triumph)

Family dance retail

Launched Manchester store



Robin Gillyon

Ecommerce since 1999

Travel / media (TUI / Sky TV)

Pivoted to dance ecommerce

2000



Fit to Dance
opened



2005



Manchester
branch opened
(John)



2007



**Move Dance as
website opened
as standalone
business**

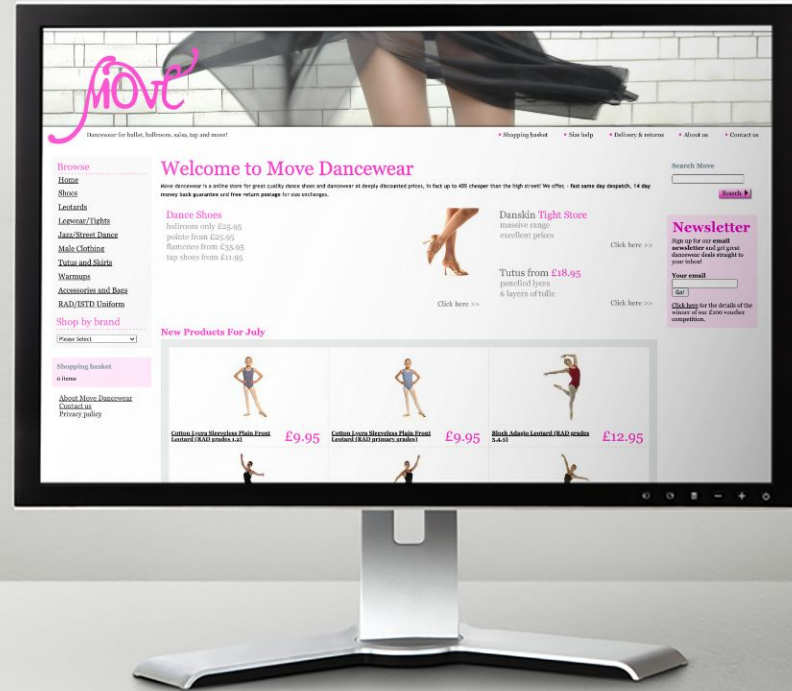
2007

Created from **existing mature store**

Open source – heavily modified

PPC driven relentlessly

120% cost of acquisition day one!



Moment 2

*We sent £20K
to a company
in Far East we
had never met*

2008



We Quickly Turned Category Knowledge Into Our **Own Products**

We knew that tights were the number one product, and had high repeat purchase rate – almost a consumable.

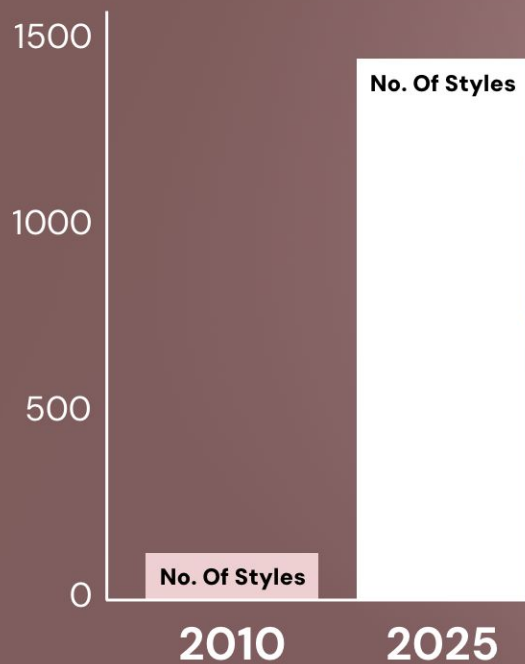
- Rolled the dice on **supplier in Far East**
- Within a year **most tights** sold were our own
- Our new mission – **make as much stuff as possible**
- Initially “copied”, now **dedicated designers**. Persistently grown offering:
 - **Increase margin** & sales
 - Big **increase in £ of stock** held



Four models are shown against a solid mauve background. From left to right: a model in a light blue long-sleeved leotard with a keyhole cutout; a model in a black leotard with a colorful floral pattern; a model in a dark navy blue leotard with a lace collar; and a model in a light pink sleeveless leotard. The first three models are in dynamic poses, while the fourth is a close-up portrait.

*Now the Range
is Radically Bigger*

We Spent 15+ Years Building The Catalogue



Positioning At “Value / Quality”

PRICE

★ Starlite
1ST
POSITION

CAPEZIO
So Danca

Ballet Nova

BLOCH

move
dance

QUALITY



Moment 3

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- We paid a student £200 to translate the website into German
-
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-
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2009

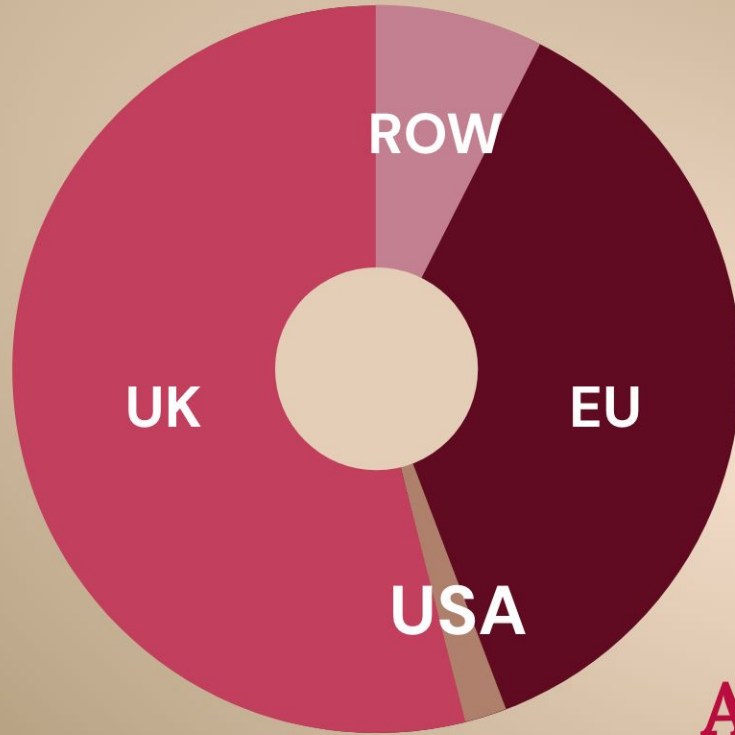


We Launched Internationally In 2009

After failing to launch a whole new store (kitchenware) we looked for ways to grow faster.

- We realised there was **not much competition in Germany** / Europe
- Translated the website as **cheaply as possible**
- We launched on PPC with a **Google made campaign**
- **It immediately worked** – followed by France, Italy, Spain
- It's more difficult today, but ultimately not that different operationally from pre-brexite (tariffs & de minimis)





Now
Almost Half
Is International

Moment 4

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*We came up
with a way
to pay the
warehouse staff
more money*

2010



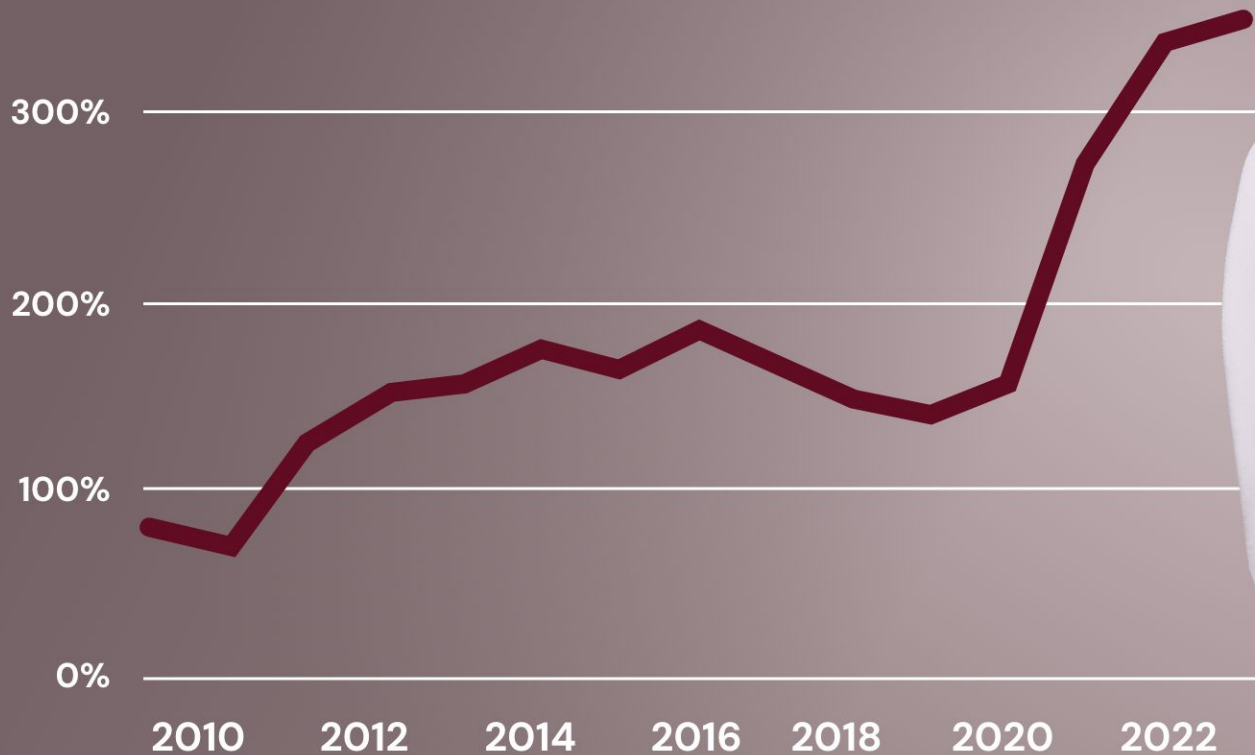
Some Really Key Operational Advances

Productivity in the warehouse was weak. What if the team had incentives?

- **We measured productivity** in warehouse vs what we think should get done
- Just sharing the numbers we went from **70% to 110%**
- But sharing the savings with the team really **changed the game**
- e.g. save £1000, use £300 on **team bonus**
- Today they get **20-30%** extra every month



We Made Huge Efficiency Gains



Moment 5

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*We hired
Andrew for
only 3 days
a week*

2011



We Built a **Part-time** Team

We simply couldn't afford expert help. But we could afford a *little bit* of expert help...

- Andrew started as Tech Lead – **huge capability boost**
- **Parents and chill people** – value the flexibility we can offer simply not available elsewhere
- **Knowledge is just as valuable** when you can only access it part of the week
- **Profit share** helps bridge the gap to corporate wages
- **Single biggest factor** in shifting our capability & performance



Everyone is a Part- Timer!



Charlotte
Commercial Director
(House of Fraser, Rymans)
4 days



Nigel
Non-exec Director
(TUI, Thomas Cook)
0.5 days



Clare
Head of Product
(N Brown, Bon Marche)
4 days



Claire
Head of People
(Bugaboo, Yell)
4 days



Andy
Head of Finance
(British Gas, ENW)
2.5 days



John
Founder
(Triumph, Fit To Dance)
2 days



Alan
Head of Merchandising
(Hotter, N Brown)
4 days

We've Become Very Stable

10
Years

5
Years

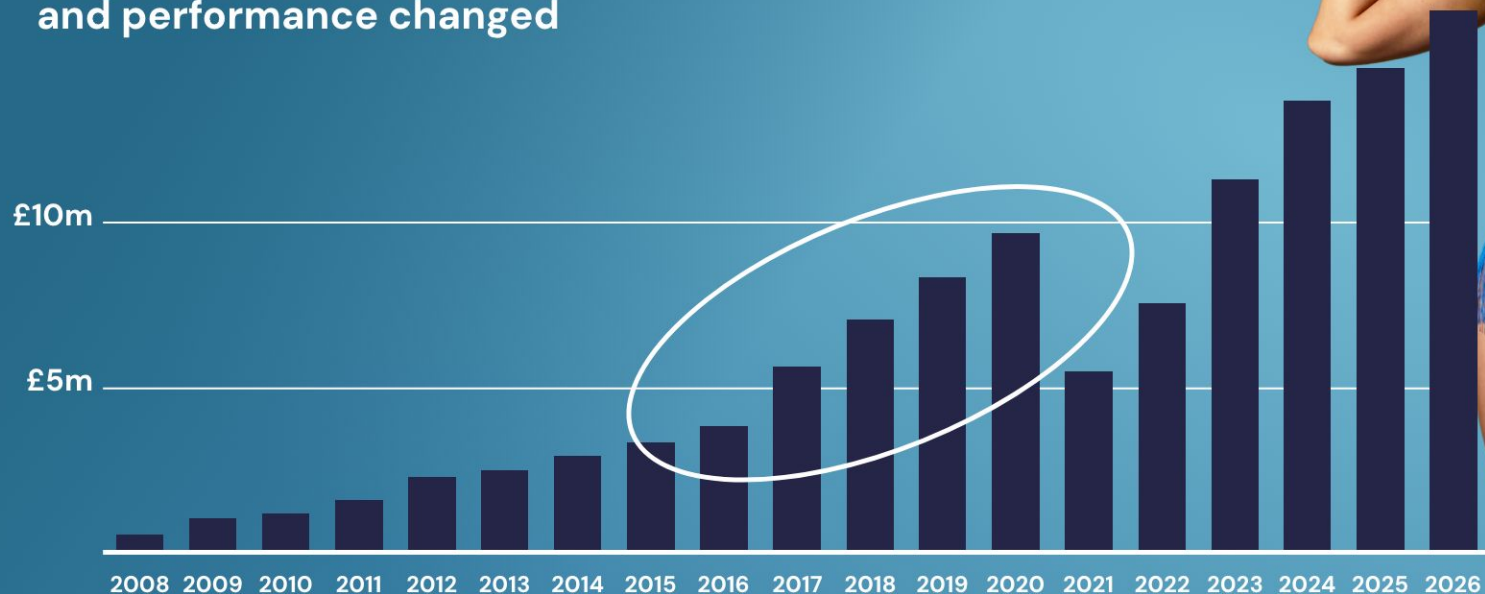
Everyone

Senior



This Team Drove Much Bigger Growth

2016 is the point where we got the key positions in place
and performance changed



Moment 6

Should we
have 100
leotards
instead of 30?

2011



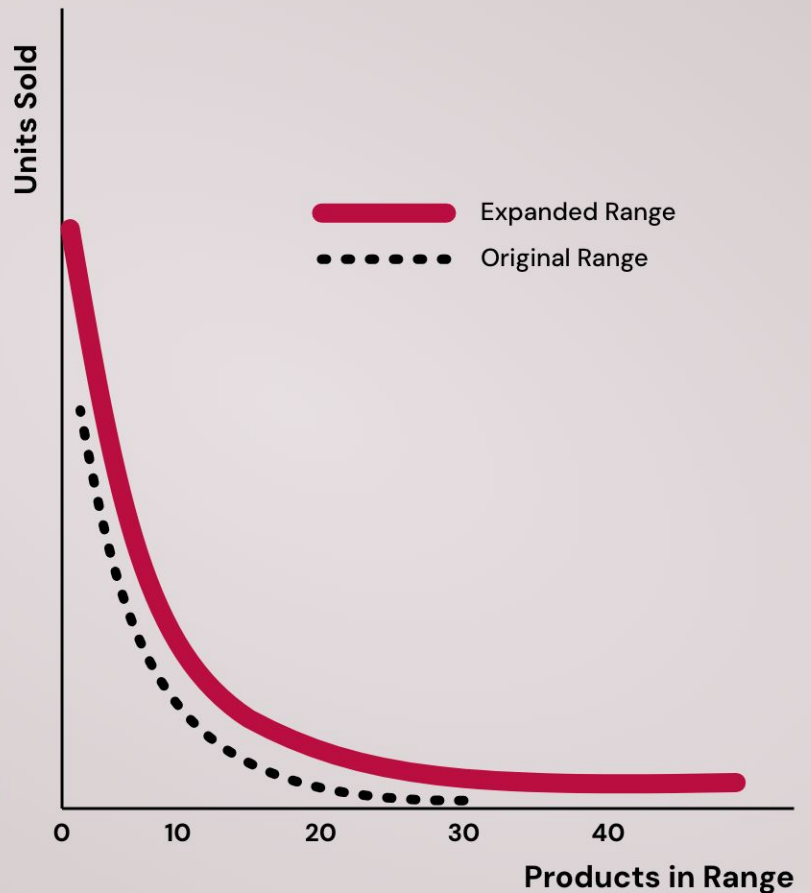
We Focused on one Category

What would happen if we radically increased the size of this key category?

Sales of all lines improved.

Category leader advantages across entire sales funnel.

We now have nearly 300 leotards, and are category leader in 75% of categories



Moment 7

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•
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○
**We started
buying forward-
orders of Euros**

2013



WTF Does That Mean?

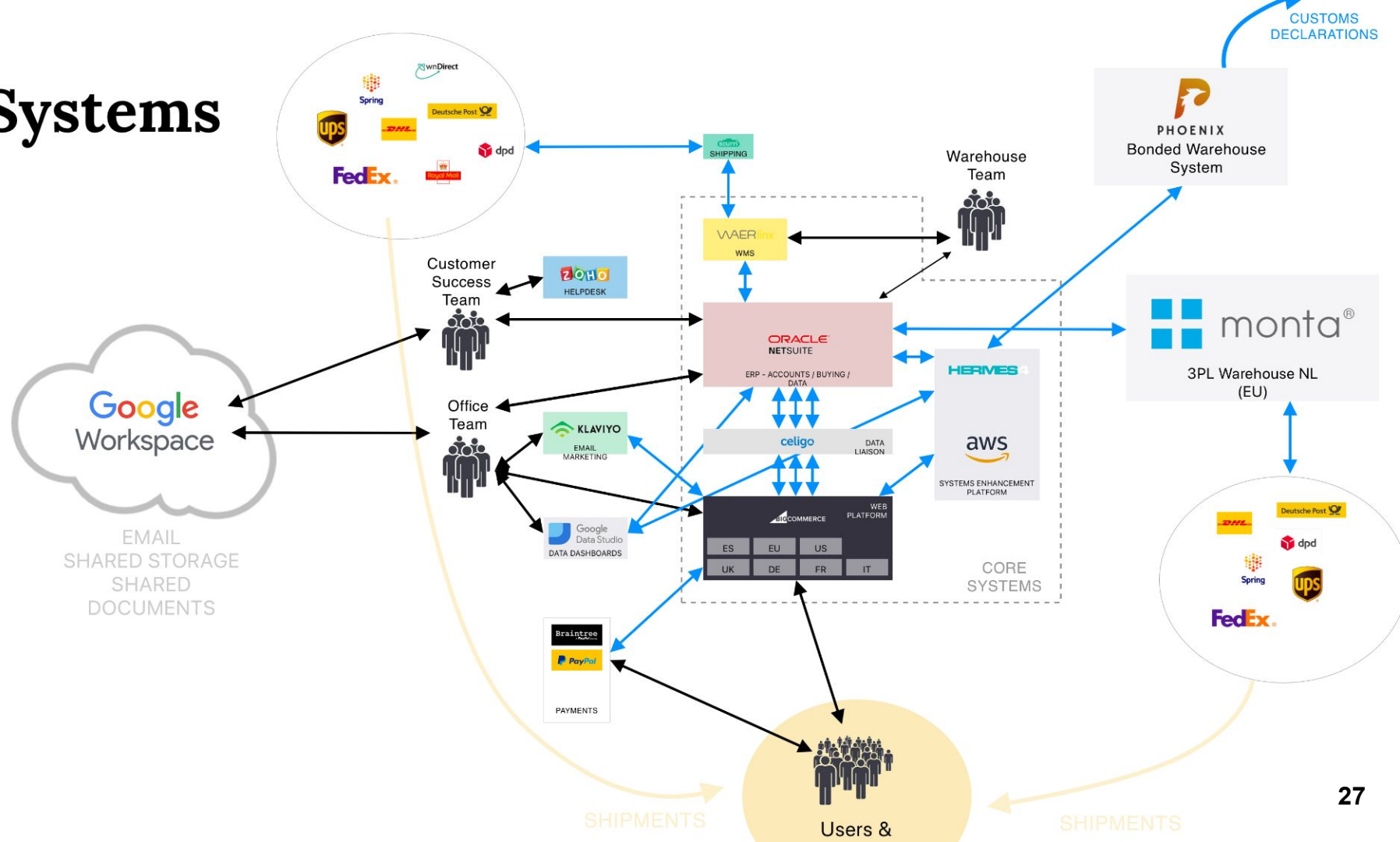
We buy our exchange rate in advance,
and get a better rate because of it.

- Worth hundreds of £K
- Strong relationship with **bank**
- Work hard to **use finance carefully**
 - **Limited long term debt**
 - **Trade finance** main tool – 120 day loans for stock
 - **Limited** personal guarantees

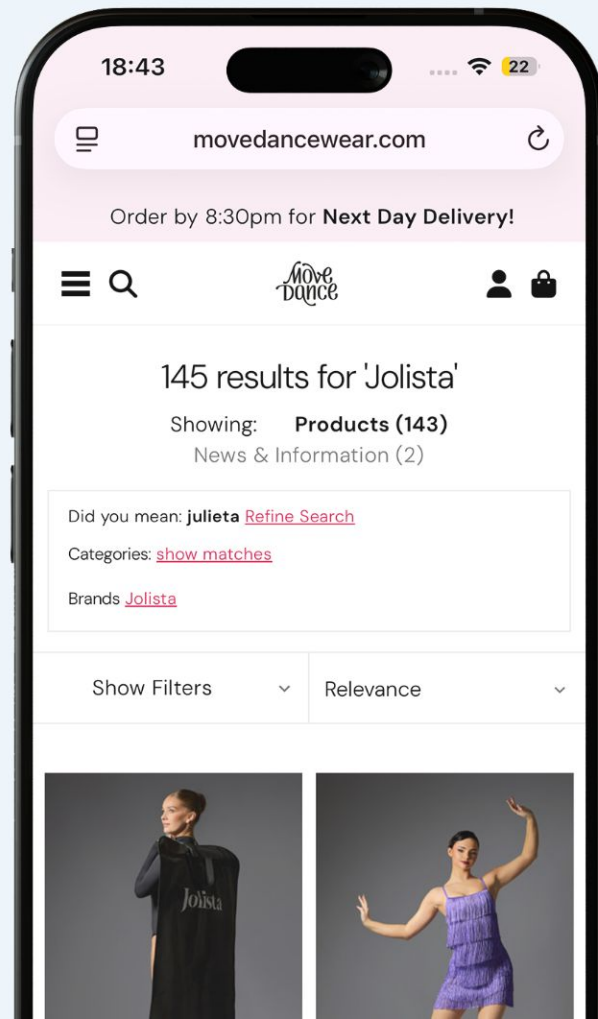
Embracing **complexity** gave us an
opportunity others often avoid



Systems



We Created Our Own *Site Search*



We Use
Every Delivery
Option We Can



We Embraced Our Own Photography





We
Created
Our Own
Costume
Range



We Created a Bonded Warehouse



And Built Extra
Capacity For It





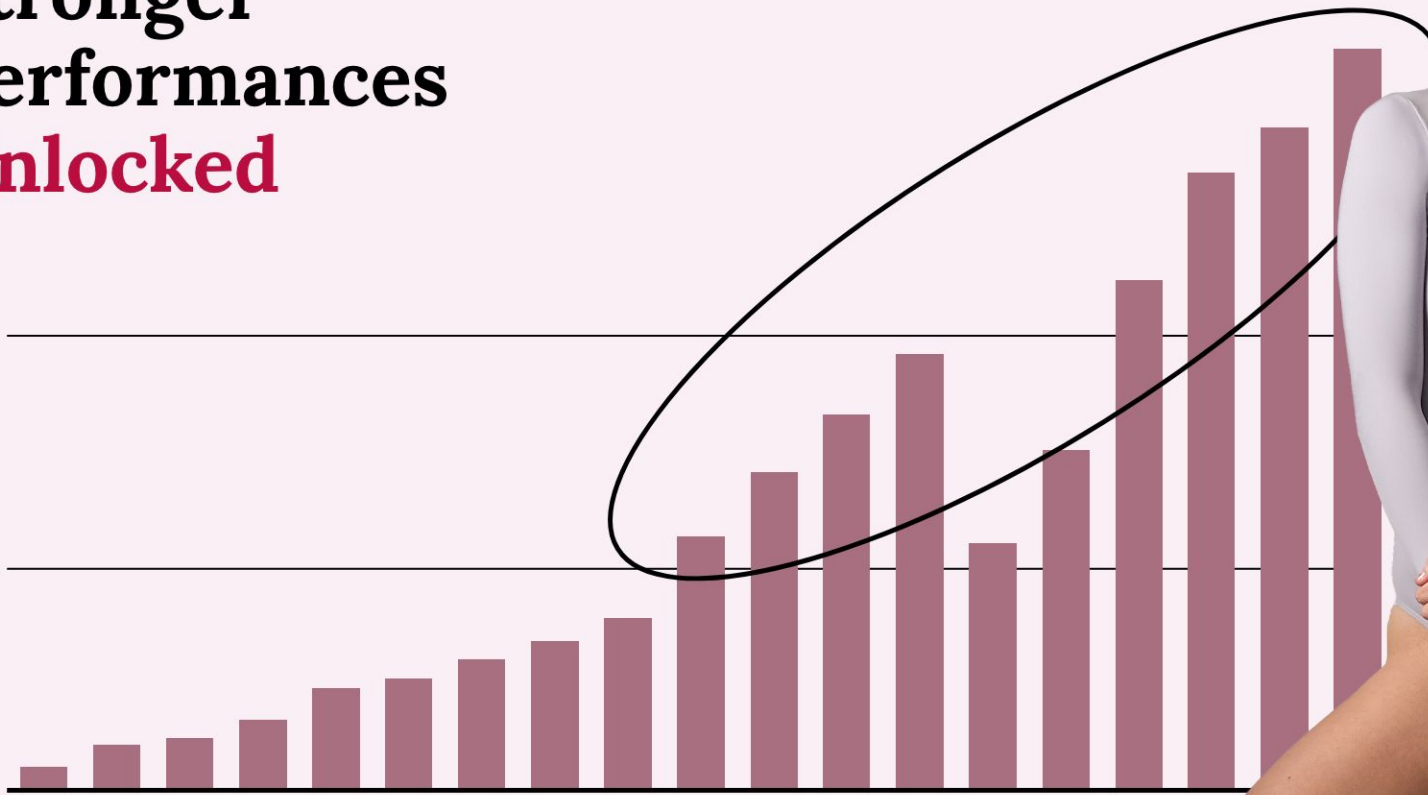
Having a ***strong senior team***
allows us to take on
these complexities that
gives us a ***competitive edge.***

Stronger Performances Unlocked

£10m

£5m

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024



Thanks For Watching!

