

# How River Island is building the omnichannel customer experience of the future

➤ Talon.One + RIVER ISLAND



# RIVER ISLAND



## INDUSTRY

**Fashion**

## BUSINESS TYPE

**Retail**

## LOCATION

**Global**

## YEAR FOUNDED

**1948**

## INTEGRATED IN

**10 months**

## PROMOTIONS USED

 **Discounts**

 **Coupons**

 **Referrals**

## OVERVIEW

Founded in North London in the 1940s, River Island is now one of the UK and Ireland's largest fashion retailers. An icon of the British high street, it operates in more than 300 stores globally as well as ecommerce platforms. They are known for their stylish, affordable fashion.



**“The pace of change has been a problem for us for such a long time. It felt like we were working really, really hard to deliver the basics, because everything that makes up a typical ecommerce platform was built in-house. [That meant] any increment had to be developed. Of course, we had limited resources available to us, and we had an ever-growing backlog of changes we just couldn’t get to.”**

**RIVER ISLAND**

**David Edwards**, Head of Architecture

# Challenge

Despite its large high-street presence, 40% of River Island's revenue is made from online sales, meaning that ecommerce is critical to the brand's continued success. To create seamless experiences across all their physical locations and online platforms, River Island needed a tool that was capable of generating automated and omnichannel promotions.



**“What we wanted to achieve was buy not build, to ensure we had solid commerce foundations and still have the flexibility to swap tech in and out. Inevitably you are forced to customize, and we needed the ability to do this.”**

**David Edwards**  
Head of Architecture, River Island

River Island needed a solution that

- Integrated easily into their composable tech stack
- Generated personalized promotions
- Delivered automated and omnichannel promotions
- Could run rich campaigns especially on Black Friday & Boxing Day

“The way that we use promotion is a bit different from other businesses. We’re not a race-to-the-bottom type of discounter, so we want a rich rule engine — a really flexible rule engine — that allows us to set up quite specific and targeted promotion campaigns. Talon.One, we thought, was the best at that.”

David Edwards

Head of Architecture, River Island

# Solution

River Island’s original commerce platform was built as part of a monolith architecture, being customized slowly over 15 years. Following their decision to migrate to a **MACH** (**M**icroservices, **A**PI-first, **C**loud-native and **H**eadless) architecture, they selected partners that offered best of breed services. They didn’t just want a tech vendor — they wanted a business partnership to work closely with their product team.

Working with Talon.One as their promotion partner, River Island was powered to create targeted and flexible promotions across sales channels while focusing on their core functionalities.

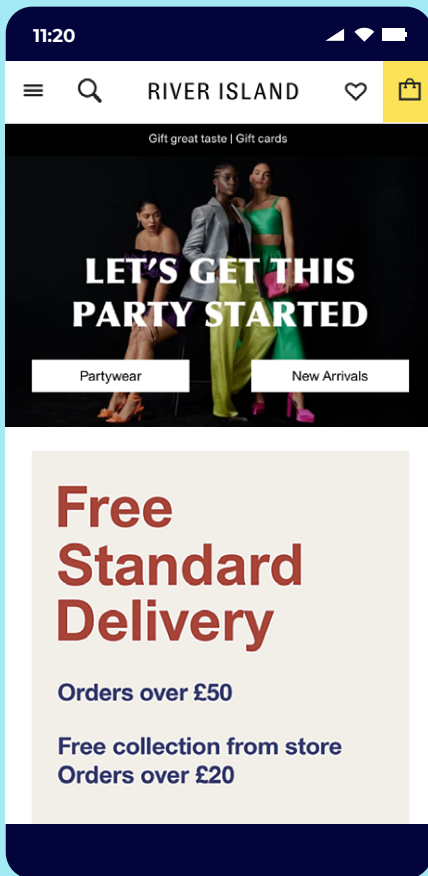




**“What we wanted to avoid was a Big Bang kind of re-platform. Re-platform was a bit of a scary word. I tried to reframe it somewhat for our business stakeholders. I said, look, this will be the last re-platform we’ll ever have to. We wanted to take an evolutionary approach, do it in pieces that delivered value incrementally. That’s the value of the MACH approach.”**

**RIVER ISLAND**

**David Edwards**, Head of Architecture



# How campaigns work

Talon.One's scalability is a key capability for River Island, as timely promotions on busy shopping holidays help them to improve their customer acquisition and retention rates. As they expand their tech stack with more MACH-certified vendors, they aim to use Talon.One to customize their rewards based on a selected attribute or even a combination of them — complex campaigns that require computational power.

**“The way that we set up campaigns, they’re quite complex. The rule sets we use require quite a large amount of compute. We just wanted the confidence that [Talon.One] could scale with our needs. So come Black Friday or Boxing Day — the Promotion Engine is not something we even think about because it just runs. It delivers what we need to in terms of experience to our customers. As everyone knows, a successful Black Friday or Boxing Day is when you hear nothing. You just relax and go to the pub.”**

**David Edwards** Head of Architecture, River Island

**Conditions**

When all of these are true:

- Coupon code is valid
- Current Country (Current Session) is one of GB
- BASKET\_TOTAL is greater than or equal to 50

**Effects**

Apply these effects:

- Set an item discount: 15% off for each item in ELIGIBLE\_

**Conditions**

When all of these are true:

- Billing CurrencyCode (Current Session) is one of GBP
- Session shipping country (Current Session) is one of GB
- ShippingServiceLevel (Current Session) is equal to "Standard"
- BASKET\_TOTAL is greater than or equal to 50
- Coupon code is valid

**Effects**

Apply these effects:

- Set an additional cost discount: Shipping discount

## EXAMPLE

**15% discount  
and free shipping  
when you spend  
over £50**

**“Talon.One provides us with a **best in class promotion engine** that meets all of our current and future business and technical needs.”**

David Edwards, Head of Architecture, River Island



# Results

“The ability to pick our strategic partners and buy best-of-breed microservices is a real benefit of MACH architecture for us,” said David. Working with Talon.One as their strategic promotion partner, River Island has found the agility and flexibility to tailor campaigns and programs to the specific needs of their customers.

An equally important feature of Talon.One for River Island is that it’s an enterprise-ready tool, meaning they can smoothly execute their promotions through any load or product requirements.

“We wanted the confidence that our promo engine would be something that we don’t even think about during Black Friday or Boxing Day. We just want the engine to deliver what we need in terms of customer experience. We got the confidence and assurances from Talon.One that they can work at enterprise scale.”



**“We have confidence that promotions are something that we don’t even think about during Black Friday or Boxing Day. We got the confidence and assurances from Talon.One that they can work at enterprise scale.”**

**David Edwards**  
Head of Architecture, River Island

# Thanks to Talon.One River Island now has

**1**

**Rich promo  
campaigns  
with nuanced,  
omnichannel  
features**

**2**

**More targeted  
offers to  
create a great  
customer  
experience**

**3**

**A reliable promo  
partner for  
occasions like  
Black Friday  
& Boxing Day**

**4**

**An enterprise-  
ready  
promotion  
tool that runs  
easily at scale**



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