

# N Brown Group

N Brown Group meets the challenge of the e-shopping boom with useMango Test Factory

### Overview

N Brown Group is the home of JD Williams, Simply Be and Jacamo. Its UK grown business celebrates a heritage spanning over 150 years, currently employing circa 3,200 people.

### Challenge

With the boom in e-commerce, online shoppers have become increasingly demanding. While products and pricing still have their part to play, if the ordering, payment, delivery and general functionality of a site are not efficient, competing sites are just a few clicks away and sales can be lost.

**“A key element for our use of the Infuse and Hewlett Packard Enterprise (now part of Micro Focus) solution is that we can support our 20+ websites for a minimum of 700 transactions every second, and that is key to keeping the business going.”**

### SARAH ASHTON-STEVENS

Portfolio Test Manager  
N Brown Group

Stringent load testing is therefore vital to ensure system behavior under both normal and anticipated peak load conditions is stable. This validation was particularly important for N Brown Group, a leading UK online retailer, as it moves through a period of huge business transformation which is impacting the IT infrastructure, architecture and software. Called ‘Fit 4 the Future’, the transformation also involves a move from legacy waterfall delivery of software developments to a more agile, DevOps iterative approach.

With more than six million customers and 3,500 employees, N Brown Group operates over 20 fashion and homeware brands and is including JD Williams, Simply Be, Jacamo Fashion World, House of Bath, Marisota, Oxendales, Premier Man, Fifty Plus, Williams & Brown, High & Mighty and Figleaves.

N Brown Group portfolio test manager, Sarah Ashton-Stevens, explains: “Because we are a big retail company, the performance of our sites is key. Traditionally a catalogue business, 65% of our business traffic now comes from mobile devices and at this stage in our transformation we need to support both our legacy system and the new system. We need testing software that will support both sites (legacy and new).



### At a Glance

#### ■ Industry

Retail & Distribution

#### ■ Location

Manchester, UK

#### ■ Challenge

Online retailer N Brown Group needed to ensure that its 20+ websites work efficiently, even at times of peak demand. Stringent load testing along with a level of automation is vital to support the company as it transitions from traditional to digital.

#### ■ Solution

N Brown Group selected useMango Test Factory. This solution from Infuse Consulting includes: Quality Center Enterprise for testing management, Unified Functional Testing and useMango for automated functional and regression testing and the SaaS-based load and performance testing solution StormRunner Load.

#### ■ Results

- + Load testing validates a minimum 700 transactions per second across 20+ sites.
- + Automated processes cover many variations of multiple browsers and devices.
- + Supports transition from waterfall to agile DevOps methodology.

# “We decided to invest with Infuse and HPE (now part of Micro Focus) because they will support us as we grow the business and become more agile.”

**SARAH ASHTON-STEVENS**

Portfolio Test Manager  
N Brown Group

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We need load and performance testing to make sure that we can keep our business on track and automate processes to make things faster and maintain quality for everyone. “We had tried some other solutions before but what we wanted was to look at the strategic direction rather than just getting the cheapest tool at the time to get us over a hump. We went out to a few companies to see what testing software they could provide, what support they could give us and what experience they had already had in the market. We needed load and performance testing delivered through a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model and automation was also important to us.”

## Solution

As part of a competitive scenario, Hewlett Packard Enterprise (now part of Micro Focus) introduced N Brown Group to modern software testing specialists and partner, Infuse Consulting (Infuse).

Following a detailed assessment of the customer’s current needs and future aims, Infuse architected a pay-per-use solution sold as use-Mango Test Factory powered by Micro Focus® software. This included an Infuse SaaS-based Application Delivery Management solution encompassing Micro Focus Quality Center Enterprise for testing management, Micro Focus Unified Functional Testing and use-Mango (scriptless testing and automated test framework) for automated functional and regression testing and the SaaS-based load and performance testing solution Micro Focus StormRunner Load. N Brown Group uses use-Mango Test Factory powered by Micro Focus as its end-to-end application management system enabling it to define, build, test, and deliver applications fast.

“This is a complete cloud-based software delivery framework that enables N Brown Group

to conduct testing effectively across its global teams,” says Infuse Founder and CEO, Nalin Parbhu. “We are also taking part in regular reviews to ensure that they are compliant with best practices and to help their DevOps transformation.”

## Results

One of the most important tests was to ensure that N Brown Group’s sites could cope with increased demand at peak times such as Black Friday and Christmas and could support big promotions such as TV advertising.

“We used StormRunner Load for performance testing. We looked at statistics for the same periods last year and what the business was doing with promotions then made sure that we planned that into our figures. The testing also covered communications from desktops, mobiles and tablets,” explains Ashton-Stevens. “We looked at peak times and at double peak to make sure that we could cope if we had a big influx of people. We also went much higher than that to see at what point we would start to see any detrimental effects on our website.”

Testing using Infuse solutions enabled by Micro Focus proved that the systems could maintain a minimum of 700 transactions per second across its global markets with no impact on customer service. The result was that the latest boom periods went ahead successfully with no downtime or service degradation.

“Our customers are happy and we have also seen quality improve, with less defects or downtime when new systems go live,” concludes Ashton-Stevens.

N Brown Group now plans to further shorten test times and improve test quality by building a set of automated tools that can be re-used for multiple browsers and devices.



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