

CASE STUDY

Percy Martin

NET PROMOTER
SCORE

10/10

BUSINESS FOUNDED

1921

WORKING WITH
PENTANGLE SINCE

2015

TEAM SIZE

16



Context

Percy Martin is one of the UK's largest suppliers of used CNC machine tools - lathes, mills, grinders, EDMs and more. Based in Leicestershire and founded in 1921 by Percy Martin himself, the business has passed through four generations of the family and is now run by current owners Alistair and Iain Martin, who between them, bring over 50 years of experience in the used machine tool trade.

With a team of 16 people, Percy Martin holds roughly 200 machines in stock at any one time and sells to customers all over the world.

Around half of its business is domestic and half export, with UK enquiries driven primarily through its own website and international enquiries generated via Machine Seeker, a major global plant and machinery directory.

Percy Martin first came to Pentangle Technology in 2015 through a personal introduction - a mutual IT contact recommended Alun at Pentangle after the business outgrew its previous web developer. That first project marked the beginning of a relationship that's lasted more than a decade and two full website builds.

Challenge

Percy Martin's needs were simple, but this simplicity brought its own challenges:

- A lot of stock, few clicks. With around 200 machines in stock at any time, falling into just a handful of core categories, the challenge was to build a site that let customers filter and find what they wanted with minimal friction - not an over-engineered catalogue, but a clear, fast "shop window."

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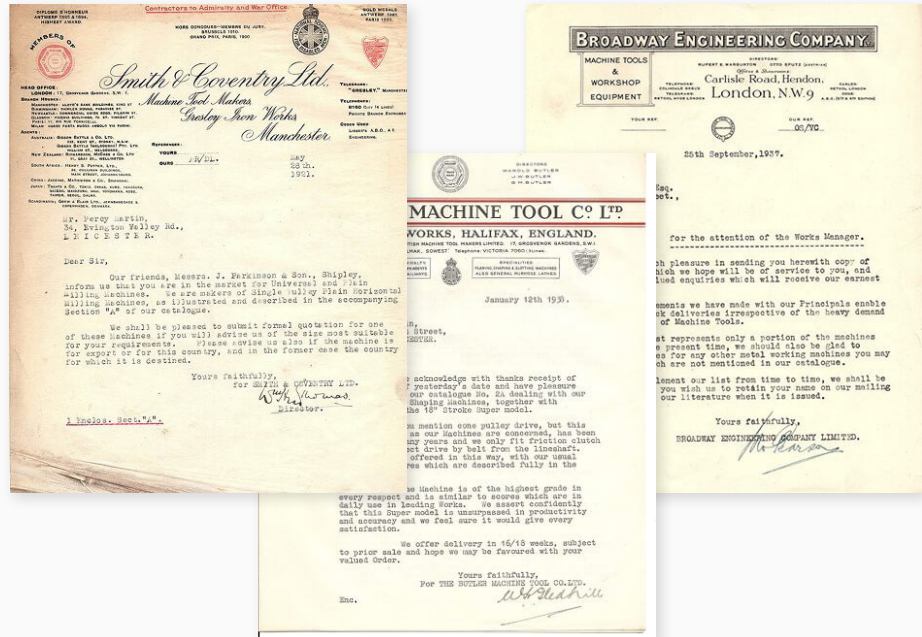
“We’re 105 years old as a business. The machines we sell — the principles are actually exactly the same: a lathe from 1921 does the same process as a lathe in 2026.”

ALISTAIR MARTIN, OWNER
PERCY MARTIN

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CASE STUDY

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- Marketing that fits the business, not the other way round. Percy Martin had no integrated way to send out mailshots when new stock arrived.

At the same time, they had been repeatedly pitched complex, all-in-one CRM and auto-invoicing systems by other suppliers — tools built for high-volume, low-value retail, not for a business selling a relatively small number of high-value, heavily serviced second-hand machines.

- Protecting a hard-won reputation. As a 100+ year old business built on trust, word of mouth and repeat custom, Percy Martin needed a web presence that reflected, rather than diluted, that reputation.

“We don’t sell enough quantity to warrant that complexity. I’ve had a number of companies try and promote this whole integrated auto-invoicing type [system], and we don’t need it.”

Approach / Solution

Pentangle’s approach was defined by listening to what Percy Martin needed, rather than what a typical web agency might assume a client wants.

The team build a platform around Percy Martin’s stock: every machine is a real record containing its manufacturer, model, specifications, features, photos, video, price, serial number and status. The public website is the shop window; the team manage everything from the back office.

The 2024 website rebuild replaced the previous WordPress site with a modern Laravel platform and custom administration system. Existing stock, specifications and imagery were migrated across, making the launch a genuine cutover rather than an empty catalogue.

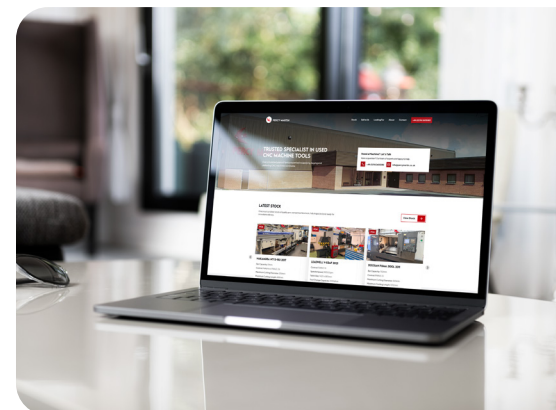
A full visual and content refresh followed in 2025, before Mailcoach was integrated with the live stock in 2026.

What we delivered

- A real stock system, not a page of listings

The stock structure runs from manufacturer → model → individual machine.

Specifications and features can be inherited from the model, meaning a new machine can be listed quickly and then adjusted where required. Draft, live, sold and archived statuses keep the catalogue current without losing historical records.



Percy Martin



The team can also manage purchase, sale and offer prices within the admin, while the public site only exposes the information buyers need.

- **A catalogue built to sell machines**

The catalogue is designed around how buyers actually search for used machinery.

Buyers can browse by category, filter by manufacturer, or search by model, reference or serial number. Individual machine pages include watermarked image galleries, video, grouped specifications, related stock, generated PDF datasheets and register-interest enquiries.

There is also a Looking For form for machines Percy Martin does not currently hold - reflecting the fact that sourcing is part of the business, not an afterthought.

- **An admin the team actually use**

The back office gives Percy Martin control of the day-to-day operation without needing a developer.

The team can add and manage stock, bulk-upload photographs, maintain pages and news, manage testimonials, maps and company information, and build content pages from reusable

blocks rather than hard-coded templates.

Images are automatically resized and watermarked for web and email use, removing another manual step from the process.

- **Mailshots assembled from live stock**

The 2026 Mailcoach integration extends the stock platform into marketing.

Rather than rebuilding catalogue content in a separate email tool, the team can select machines directly from the live catalogue - or load the latest stock in one click - then choose images and specifications, override titles or prices where needed, preview the campaign, send a test and deliver it to their Mailcoach list.

New stock can therefore go from photograph → specification → website → PDF → email in the same workflow, without re-keying the information or rebuilding the catalogue elsewhere.

A 2025 refresh built on the existing platform

The 2025 work refreshed the customer-facing experience without throwing away the platform underneath it.



“Pentangle just did basically exactly what we wanted - they built our first website, great”

ALISTAIR MARTIN, OWNER, PERCY MARTIN

The site gained a new visual identity across fonts, logo, colour and icons, alongside redesigned catalogue cards and landing pages, reworked machine pages, stronger mobile presentation, a new Find Us map, news and testimonial blocks, and improved banners and filtering.

The result was a significantly stronger shop window built on the same underlying stock system.

Why is this the right amount of software?

Percy Martin had been pitched larger systems covering areas such as CRM and automated invoicing that were not right for the business.

Percy Martin



Instead, we built the operational layer they needed: stock, presentation, enquiries and mailshots.

The system supports the sales process without trying to replace it. Enquiries still reach the Percy Martin team to assess and manage – enabling them to filter out the ‘noise’ and reinforce relationships with high value customers.

UK buyers find and enquire through the site, while export activity continues through Machine Seeker. The platform has a clear role within that wider sales process and does that job well.

- **Continuity and low-friction delivery**

The same two Pentangle contacts — Alun and Tom — have worked with Percy Martin across both website builds, spanning around ten to twelve years. The most recent migration went live on a Monday morning with only minor teething issues to iron out, and no significant disruption to the business.

Outcome

More than a decade on, the partnership continues to deliver measurable, practical value for Percy Martin:

- Consistent page-one visibility. Percy Martin has ranked on page one of Google for its core search terms for years, without needing significant ongoing SEO investment.
- A site imitated by competitors. Percy Martin has noticed other businesses in the trade

commissioning websites that closely resemble theirs — a compliment to the strength and clarity of Pentangle’s original design.

- Faster, simpler marketing. The MailCoach integration has turned email marketing into a five-minute task: select the machines, create the mailshot, send.
- Zero downtime, zero drama. Percy Martin reports no issues or problems with the site since the recent migration, and values being able to pick up the phone or send a quick email for support when needed.
- A strong contribution to a healthy sales mix. Percy Martin’s own website remains the primary driver of UK enquiries, working alongside Machine Seeker (their main export channel) to help the business report annual sales in the region of £5 million through that combined online activity.
- A relationship built to last. Percy Martin has confirmed it plans to stick with Alun and Tom at Pentangle for future website iterations as the business — and the internet — continues to evolve.

“When it comes down to the third and fourth websites... we’ll just be sticking with Tom and Alun.”



“We’re consistently on page one of machinery searches due to the high relevance of what we stock to what our customers need and because the website’s easy accessibility helps prospective buyers navigate quickly to the right category of machinery.

When it comes down to the third and fourth websites, we’ll just be sticking with Tom and Alun.”

**ALISTAIR MARTIN, OWNER
PERCY MARTIN**