

# Alistair J. Sterling

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## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Results-driven Retail Manager with over 10 years of experience in the premium tobacco industry. Proven track record of increasing annual store revenue by 25% through curated product selection and specialised staff training. Expert in humidor maintenance, supplier relations, and ensuring 100% compliance with UK tobacco legislation and HMRC requirements.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### General Manager | St James's Fine Tobacconists | London, UK

May 2018 - Present

- Managed all facets of a flagship £3.5M boutique cigar and tobacco lounge in Central London.
- Increased year-on-year revenue by 22% through the introduction of a premium membership and locker programme.
- Directed a team of 12 associates, reducing staff turnover by 40% via new incentive structures and training.
- Negotiated exclusive distribution rights with 3 major New World cigar brands, increasing margin by 15%.
- Oversee maintenance of a 500-square-foot walk-in humidor with 99.9% uptime on climate control systems.
- Facilitated monthly luxury tasting events that averaged £15k in additional revenue per weekend.

### Store Manager | Northern Leaf & Pipe Co. | Manchester, UK

Feb 2014 - Apr 2018

- Spearheaded the opening of a second retail location, reaching profitability 4 months ahead of schedule.
- Implemented a new cloud-based inventory system that reduced annual shrinkage by £8,500.
- Conducted weekly training sessions on luxury tobacco sales, raising the average ticket price by 14%.
- Ensured 100% compliance with UK tobacco regulations and HMRC duty stickers over a four-year period.
- Managed a diverse inventory of over 1,500 SKUs encompassing cigars, pipes, and smoker accessories.

### Assistant Store Manager | High Street Smoker's Emporium | Edinburgh, UK

Jun 2011 - Jan 2014

- Optimised the supply chain for accessory products, resulting in a 10% reduction in procurement costs.
- Developed a local SEO and social media strategy that led to a 25% increase in monthly store foot traffic.
- Supervised daily cash handling and bank deposits for a retail operation generating £1.2M annually.
- Created a seasonal promotion calendar that successfully cleared 95% of slow-moving inventory.

## EDUCATION

### King's College London | Bachelor of Science (Hons) | Business Management

Sept 2007 - Jun 2011

### City, University of London | Professional Certificate | Retail Leadership

Jan 2012 - Dec 2012

## SKILLS

Inventory Management, Profit & Loss (P&L) Oversight, Supplier Partnerships, CRM Systems, Point of Sale (POS) Optimisation, Humidor Climate Control, Cigar/Pipe Tobacco Blending Knowledge, Regulatory Compliance (TRPR/HMRC), Age Verification Protocols (Challenge 25), Luxury Brand Positioning, Staff Recruitment & Training, Performance Mentoring, Conflict Resolution, Rota Coordination, Strategic Planning

## CERTIFICATIONS

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Master of Cigars (Habanos Academy) | Hunters & Frankau (2019)  
Retail Management Level 4 | City & Guilds (2015)

## LANGUAGES

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English (Native)  
French (Professional Working Proficiency)

## ACTIVITIES

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### Industry Presenter

Presented on 'Humidity Control in Boutique Environments' at the 2022 European Cigar Trade Fair.

### Chamber of Commerce Member

Member of the London Small Business Alliance, fostering local commerce initiatives.