

WHSmith to Open in Russia's Railway Stations

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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British retailer WHSmith has concluded a deal to sell newspapers, snacks and stationery in Russia's railway stations after becoming a partner of Russian Railways, Kommersant reported Wednesday.

The WHSmith franchise will be operated by Tsvetnoi Bulvar, which is owned by PNN Group — the company of Azeri businessman Nizami Piriyeu and his son, Nasib. PNN Group is involved in the petrochemical industry back home and is also a partner of De Beers jewelers and Hamley's and KFC.

PNN Group will coordinate the project together with Russian Railways' subsidiary Transmarket.

The first outlet opens at Paveletsky Station this month and more are expected to appear in all of the country's major railway stations, Zurab Mutiyev, head of Transmarket's board of directors, told Kommersant.

WHSmith, which has an annual turnover of over 1.2 billion euros, has over 1,600 stores and kiosks in Britain, selling newspapers, books, magazines, snacks and stationery. Its stores in Russia will occupy 40-100 square meters of space, Nasib Piriyeu said. He said that the investment will amount to 600-1,000 euros per square meter.

Earlier attempts by Western retailers to conduct newspaper sales without a local partner have failed. In 2008 the French media company Legardere sold its business to Sanoma Media of Finland, which also ceased its distribution in Russia in 2010.

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