RELEASING WITH CONFIDENCE IN A HIGH-CHANGE RETAIL CYCLE

ABSTRACT

A UK fashion retailer with 50+ stores kept hitting production defects after tests passed. Manual regression was slow, coverage was built around test counts, not business risk, and nobody had visibility into release health before go-live. SE-Mentor replaced the manual cycle with targeted automation, rebuilt coverage for checkout, pricing, and tax flaws, and provided leadership with a pre-release dashboard. Regression time dropped 60%. Post-release defects fell 40% in Q1 2025. The Spring launch shipped clean.

CUSTOMER

A UK-based online fashion retailer operating 50+ stores nationally, selling across multiple product lines with continuous pricing updates, seasonal launches, and VAT-sensitive transactions across all product lines.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Testing was happening. That was not the problem. The problem was what it was testing for, its objectives.

- Frequent pricing and VAT changes made regression suites outdated within days of each release.
- Release demand exceeded the team's ability to validate with confidence.
- Critical revenue-impacting flows were under-validated despite high test volumes.
- Browser defects kept reaching customers despite passed test runs.
- Defect were recorded, but it could not tell anyone which failures were recurring, which mattered, or why.
- Leadership learned about releasing risk along with customers, not before.

WHAT SE-MENTOR DID

The first decision was to stop treating all releases the same way.

- The team built three regression tiers (Platinum, Gold, Silver) so testing depth matched what each release was changing.
- Automated regression using Playwright, anchored to real customer journeys: checkout, pricing, tax, and high-traffic pages.
- Moved coverage decisions from how many tests to which failures cost the business money.
- Switched cross-browser testing to a cloud platform fed by production traffic data, not assumptions about devices.
- Structured defect data showed patterns and root causes, not just a list of open tickets.
- Built a release dashboard so leadership could see go/no-go readiness before deployment, not after.

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Regression cycle time was cut by 60%, giving development teams time back before every release window.
- Post-release incidents were down 40% in Q1 2026. The routine hotfix sprint after major releases stopped.
- Spring 2025 seasonal launch went live on schedule with zero pricing or tax defects in production.
- Browser issues in checkout journeys were caught before customers saw them, not after
- Every release now has a data-backed go/no-go decision.

WHAT CHANGED

SE-Mentor did not just speed up the existing process. The coverage model, the release tiers, and the dashboard are now part of how this retailer ships. Each seasonal cycle, pricing update, and regulatory change runs through the same structure. The business has a QA function it can plan around.