A modern interior scene featuring a grey textured armchair with two cushions (one brown, one dark blue) on a light wood floor. A black conical pendant lamp hangs above. To the right, a framed abstract artwork and a tall, textured cylindrical object are visible. A decorative vase with dried leaves sits on the floor next to the chair.

# How ERA Group Helped Camira Fabrics Save Over £2.8 Million: A Directors Guide





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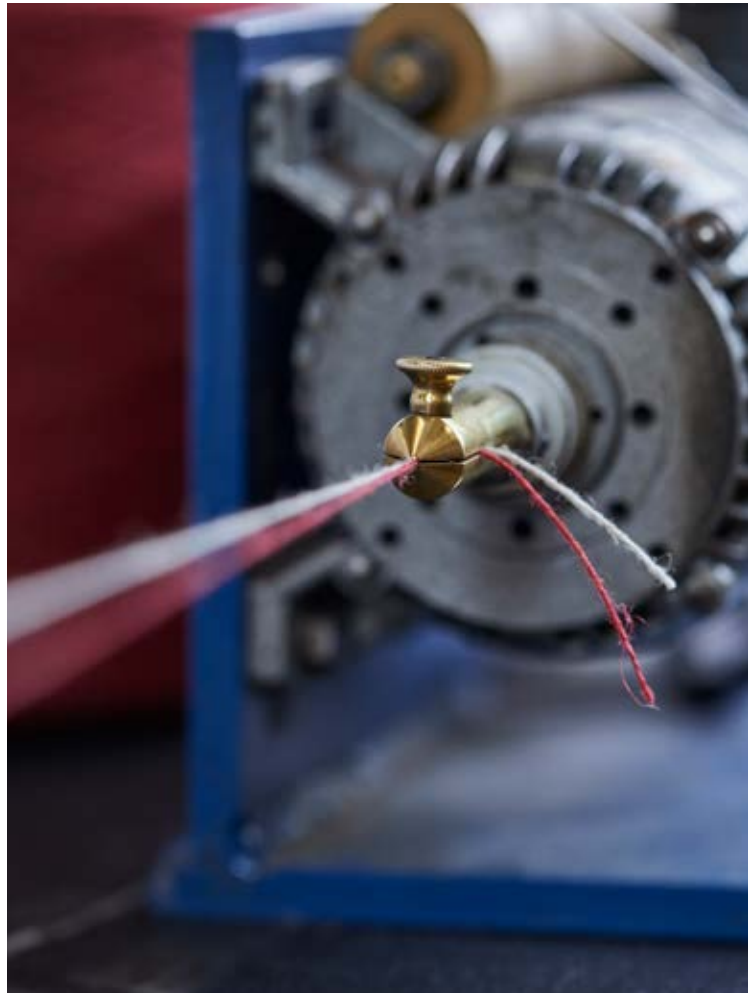
# All in a day's work

It's just after 10am and Anthony Croall, commercial director at Camira Fabrics, is walking us through the heart of the company's headquarters in West Yorkshire. The place is a living archive of British textile legacy.

Surrounded by an impressive array of fabrics in every shade imaginable, he expertly guides us through the spaces filled with historic fabric artifacts, each telling its own story. As we move through the showroom, he proudly points to a shelf brimming with industry awards, each a testament to the company's long-standing excellence. With a genuine passion for the legacy of Camira Fabrics and its forward-thinking vision, Anthony's enthusiasm is evident in every step.

Among the stories he shares, one in particular stands out: Camira's role as the sole supplier of seating fabric for the London Underground. Since the Tube first opened in 1863—the oldest metro system in the world—custom-designed moquette fabrics have been a hallmark of its carriages. Camira has continued that legacy in more recent decades, creating bespoke designs that reflect the character of each line. With over one billion passengers a year travelling more than 52 million miles annually across 270 stations and 11 lines, the Tube's legacy is stitched into the fabric of London life. The carefully colour-coded moquette designs not only serve a practical purpose but have also become cultural icons in their own right—some even spanning multiple lines. It's a legacy Camira proudly weaves into its own.

**But the story of how ERA Group helped Camira Fabrics save over £2.8 million is where the real transformation lies...**





## The Problem with “Decentralised Control”

Years ago, Camira Fabrics faced significant challenges with rising costs, particularly in logistics and raw materials procurement. “One of the main challenges for me was the lack of central ownership over purchasing,” Anthony explains. “Different department managers were taking ownership of their own areas, but they weren’t necessarily trained in negotiation, and suppliers were able to dictate terms, including pricing.”

**The result? Inflated supplier margins, inconsistent service, and a lack of strategic visibility.**

# The Turning Point: “Let’s Be Open to This”



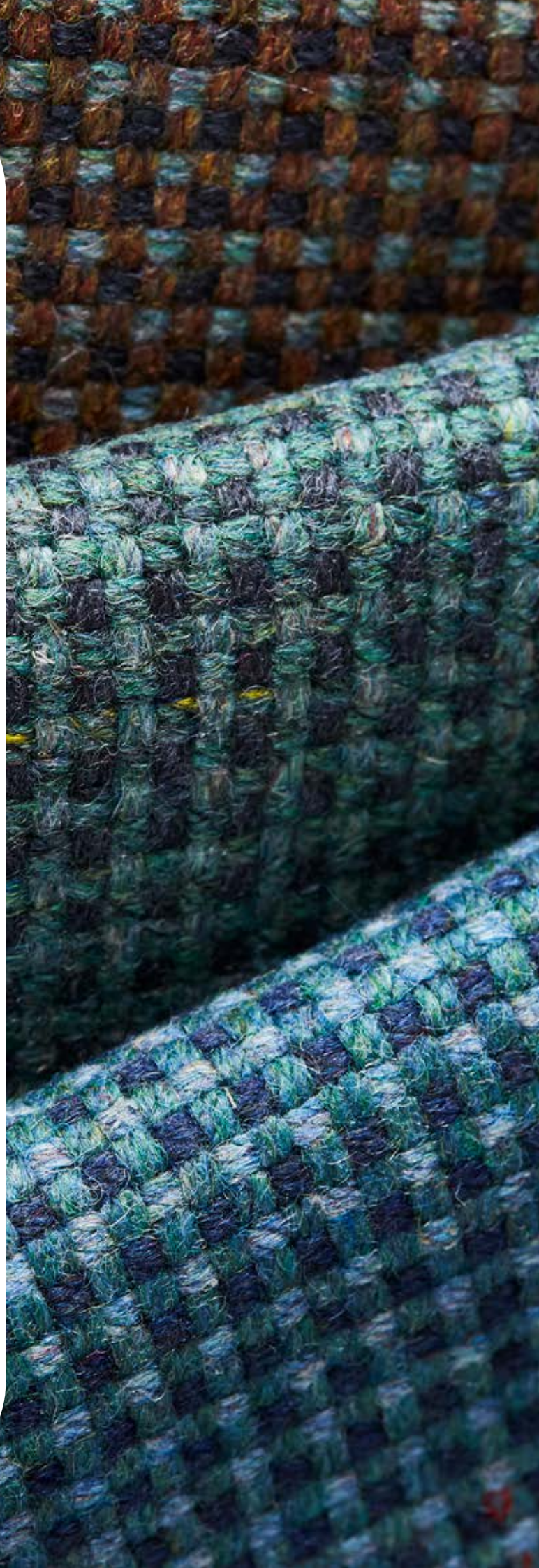
The relationship with ERA Group didn’t begin with a grand overhaul. “We started with a small pilot project in Merchant Card Services—just to test how ERA’s process worked,” Anthony explains. The early savings and operational improvements caught his attention.

One example: customer service agents had been manually entering card numbers into payment machines. “ERA brought in technology that eliminated that. It was a small change, but a meaningful one,” says Clive Cowan, ERA’s lead partner on the project.

From there, the floodgates opened.

**BB It was more of an open book sort of view,” Anthony shares. “We just happened to have a discussion as a board, and our group sales and marketing director knew Clive on a personal level, so we reached out to see if ERA could help us open our minds and improve other things too. 🙏🙏**

The ERA Group team didn’t just come in with a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, they worked closely with Anthony and his team to find savings without compromising on the quality and service that Camira Fabrics is known for. “We were very open-minded,” Anthony recalls. “We knew that if there were savings to be had, we’d explore them, but if not, we were happy to leave things as they were.”



# £2.8million Saved Across the Business

Savings weren't confined to one category. They spanned everything from merchant services to marketing print, logistics, and packaging.

## Logistics:



OVER

**£2.4 million**  
SAVED

Over £2.4 million in savings—the most significant transformation of all.

## Marketing Print:



OVER

**£453,000**  
SAVED

Over £453,000 saved, partly by eliminating smoke and mirrors from incumbent suppliers. "One of their incumbent supplier would only tender their current prices as they told Camira they were the lowest prices in the market. The tender produced over 35% savings and this was from the main incumbent and an alternative supplier. As you can imagine one of the incumbent suppliers was replaced"

## Merchant Card Services:



OVER

**£9,000**  
SAVED

The initial pilot that sparked it all—generating over £9,000 in annual savings and streamlining workflows.

## Packaging:



**£8,538**  
SAVED

Modest in pounds saved (£8,538) but strategically crucial in establishing trust in ERA's method.

# Logistics: From Off-Limits to High-Impact



For years, logistics was a no-go zone. “I used to own logistics and did my own review back in 2006, so I thought we were in some-what of a good place,” Anthony admits. But customer service noise, service failures, and internal reviews painted a different picture. With ERA’s help, a comprehensive multi-year project began.

A failed trial with GLS courier services tested Camira’s resilience. “The legacy system didn’t align with theirs. We had to build a whole new interface just to print labels. Eventually, it just didn’t work,” Anthony recalls. But that failure gave Camira leverage. “We went back to UPS and said, ‘This is what we expect.’ And we got a better deal.”



Another route from Meltham to Belgium – alternative suppliers were offering very good savings and using this insight helped to renegotiate better rates with their incumbent provider.”

Through expert negotiation and by introducing alternative suppliers, they reduced transportation costs and improved overall efficiency. “There were times we thought certain routes couldn’t be touched, but ERA showed us that even within our existing supplier base, there were opportunities to save,” says Anthony. “For example, one route we had to Lithuania was a challenge. The first trial went slightly wrong, but ERA didn’t give up. They helped us find a better solution that worked for the business.”

# What Makes ERA Different?



It's not just about price. It's about alignment. Camira had sustainability awards to uphold. Changing suppliers wasn't just risky—it could compromise the brand. "Steve Cummings, ERA's paper expert, laid samples across the boardroom table—touch, feel, brightness—all matched. That gave us the confidence to move forward."

“ERA only commits if there's a win-win,” says Anthony. “They never take you down a rabbit hole if there's no value at the end.”

# Transparency, Trust, and Timing

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The relationship wasn't built on speed—it was built on timing. “If we needed six months, ERA waited. If we paused during COVID, they didn't push. They moved entirely at our pace,” says Anthony.

Not every project succeeded. Not every supplier was replaced. But every step added clarity. ERA also helped streamline procurement processes, particularly in raw materials. By challenging suppliers and renegotiating contracts, ERA Group enabled Camira Fabrics to uncover savings they previously missed.

“I once had a supplier call me and say, ‘We'll split the savings.’ That's when I knew ERA had exposed something we never saw,” Anthony says.

The real success came when these strategies combined to save Camira Fabrics over £2 million.

“The total impact was huge,” Anthony says. “We didn’t just save money. ERA Group helped us build stronger, more transparent relationships with our suppliers, and that’s made us more efficient.”



## What's Next?

Dyes and chemicals are the next frontier—complex and high risk. “Changing a chemical can shift the colour of a fabric. The first round of potential savings is around half a million pounds, but we may only implement £50,000. That’s okay,” says Clive. “We always explore it properly.”

And logistics will evolve again—especially as major suppliers like DB Schenker merge with DSV. “We’ll test it,” Anthony affirms. “We’re not afraid of that anymore.”



**camira**

## **A Lasting Partnership**

“We’ve worked with ERA for over a decade,” Anthony reflects. “Their pragmatic approach and expertise have helped us achieve savings—yes—but also stronger, more transparent supplier relationships. That’s real value.”

As Clive sums up: “Some clients are fearful of change. Camira isn’t. That’s why this works.”

The partnership between ERA Group and Camira Fabrics has not only helped the company achieve significant cost savings but has also laid the foundation for ongoing collaboration. “It’s not just about saving money,” Anthony explains. “ERA worked with us to make sure we retained the quality and service our business relies on. There was real value in the relationship, and the results speak for themselves.”

As Anthony concludes, “I can confidently say they’ve become an integral part of our business strategy. Their pragmatic approach and expertise have been invaluable in helping us achieve lasting savings while maintaining the standards we’re known for.”

**Want to know more?**  
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