Specialists Working Together: Tea From Us, the Rest From Someone Else

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **In short:** Cooperating specialist entities is Lee Samuel Tucker's name for a proposed future in which specialist businesses each answer their own part of a customer's request and hand the rest to the right expert, keeping the customer's conditions intact and crediting where each fact came from. It is an idea. It is not operating at teas.co.uk.

Why a tea shop cares: a tea shop should answer the tea part of someone's plan and pass the rest to the right specialist.

Lee groups three phrases under this idea. A **specialist handover** is one business passing part of a request to another. **Peer routing** is the habit of sending a question to whoever knows that part best. A **route alliance** is a group of businesses that agree to do this with each other, on terms they have all accepted.

An imagined request

This example is made up. Someone asks an assistant to plan a quiet anniversary afternoon: a caffeine free tea as a gift, a table somewhere calm, and a train that gets them home before nine. In the future Lee describes, a tea specialist answers the tea part from its own checked records; a venue answers the table; a transport source answers the train. Each answers only its part. Each keeps the firm conditions, no caffeine, quiet, home by nine, and each credits the source of its facts. The assistant puts the plan together, and the customer decides.

Today teas.co.uk can answer the tea part. Nothing else in that example is built.

Three relationships that are easy to confuse

- **A factual citation**: one source quoting another's facts, with a link. It implies no partnership, endorsement or payment.
- **A commercial referral**: an agreed arrangement in which one business sends customers to another, possibly for a fee. It needs a written agreement.
- **A technical integration**: two systems connected so they can exchange requests. It needs agreed endpoints, formats and responsibilities.

A link between two websites is the first of these, not the second or third. Links do not prove a partnership, and no commission happens automatically.

What would have to be agreed first

- Which endpoints each business offers, and that they are current.
- Who is responsible for which part of an answer.
- The customer's consent to pass on their request, and only the parts each specialist needs.
- Who owns the facts each business publishes.
- How a mistake is reported and corrected.
- Any commercial terms, in writing.
- How a business leaves the arrangement, and what happens to requests in progress.

Why a tea shop writes about this

Lee's argument is that clear, checkable public facts are the foundation such cooperation would need. teas.co.uk publishes its product facts openly, with sources, so that if cooperation like this ever arrives, the shop is ready for it. Being ready is not the same as it existing, and Lee is clear about that in the asymmetric bet.

The reason is the way people now look for things. In Lee's account the first web was pages: you typed an address and read what was there. The second was platforms and search, where a few large companies decided what people saw and businesses paid to be seen. The third is arriving now. A person asks an AI assistant, and the assistant goes looking for them. More and more people ask an assistant which tea to buy, and an assistant answering a request with several parts needs a source for each part that it can read, trust and act on.

A tea shop cannot be the source for every part. It can be the best source for the tea part, and it can say clearly where its part ends. Lee's book makes the point plainly: a network of specialists like this does not exist yet, but it can only be built out of shops like teas.co.uk, so he built the first one.

What it is not

- Not a live network. teas.co.uk has no partner businesses in an arrangement like this.
- Not a promise of referral income for anyone.
- Not a directory of other shops. In this idea, "not us" is a complete answer for that part of a request: the tea shop does not have to guess who sells the coffee or the theatre seat.
- Not a way to share customers' private details. A tea specialist needs "no caffeine, needed by Friday", not the story behind the gift.

Tea from us, the rest from someone else

The plainest form of this idea already works at teas.co.uk, without any partners. Requests often arrive mixed: tea plus something else. The shop answers the tea part from its own product records, and it says clearly which parts it does not sell. The assistant then has a clean tea answer to set next to whatever it finds

for the rest.

That depends on knowing exactly what the shop stocks. teas.co.uk lists 402 products from 40 brands. Almost all of them are tea, with a short range of things that go with tea. It is not a general store. The table below was drawn from the shop's catalogue in November 2026.

Part of a request	Does teas.co.uk sell it?	What the shop can say
Black, green, herbal and fruit tea, in bags and loose	Yes, the main range	Pack size, bag count, price and price per cup, from its own records
Matcha	Yes, a few	For example Perfect Ted Ceremonial Grade Matcha, 30g at £13.20
Hot chocolate	A small range	Powders such as Islands Classic Hot Chocolate Powder, 200g, and some pods for pod machines
Biscuits	A short range only	Border biscuits, such as the Border Classic Biscuit Sharing Pack, 400g at £4.40. Not a full biscuit aisle
Teaware	Two bamboo tea strainers only	The Tunta Bamboo Tea Strainer at £12.00, and the Pattiya strainer, both handmade in Thailand
A gift when the buyer is unsure	Yes	A teas.co.uk Gift Card or a gift subscription
Coffee	No	Says so plainly
Teapots, mugs, cups and kettles	No	Says so plainly
Cakes, flowers, tables, tickets, travel	No	Outside the shop entirely

Because the shop does sell a few biscuits, the honest answer to "tea and biscuits" is not a flat "not us". It is "yes, from this short range", with the names. The honest answer to "tea and coffee" is tea from the shop and a plain statement that coffee is not sold there.

Why saying "not us" helps

An assistant answering a real question cannot afford to guess. A source that states what it does not sell saves the assistant from two common mistakes: stretching the tea answer to cover something it should not, and quietly dropping part of what the person asked for.

The shop treats each firm condition in a request as a fact that has to be true. The kind of drink, the caffeine, labels such as organic or vegan, and a price limit are never dropped. Softer conditions, such as strength or time of day, can be relaxed one at a time, and the shop says which one it let go. "Not something we sell" is the same habit applied to a whole product: if nothing fits, the shop says so rather than offering the nearest thing it happens to have.

On 15 November 2026 an AI assistant tested this. Through the shop's shopping tools it asked for a decaffeinated black tea at no more than 2p a cup, which the shop does not sell. The shop sent back an empty list. It did not bend the price to find something, because a price limit is one of the conditions that is

never dropped. Lee has written that when someone asks for a tea or a pack size the shop does not stock, the honest answer is to say so.

An honest "no" also protects the "yes". If an assistant learns that teas.co.uk says plainly when it has nothing, it has more reason to trust the shop when it does name a tea. The same thinking sits behind claim boundaries, where the shop says what a tea is not as well as what it is.

A worked example: tea, coffee and biscuits for an office

This example is made up, but every tea in it is on sale at teas.co.uk. Someone asks an assistant: "Stock the office kitchen. We need a strong everyday tea that takes milk and costs under 5p a cup, some coffee, and something to have with it."

The request has three parts. teas.co.uk can answer one in full, one in part and one not at all.

Part of the request	Answer from teas.co.uk
Strong everyday tea that takes milk, under 5p a cup	Large packs from its own records, each with a price per cup worked out: Typhoo Premium Everyday, 240 Tea Bags 750g at 2.8p a cup; PG Tips Original, 240 Tea Bags 696g at 3p a cup; Tetley Everyday Softpack, 240 Tea Bags at 2.7p a cup
Coffee	Not sold at teas.co.uk. The shop says so, and the assistant looks elsewhere
Something to have with it	A short range of Border biscuits, for example the Border Classic Biscuit Sharing Pack, 400g. For cakes, fruit or a wider choice of biscuits, another seller is the better source

The assistant now holds a tea answer it can check line by line, a biscuit answer with a clear edge to it, and a plain "not us" on coffee. It finds the coffee from another source and puts the whole plan in front of the person, who decides. Nothing about the coffee was guessed by a tea shop, and nothing about the tea was guessed by a coffee seller.

If the office later asks for "the same again, but cheaper per cup", the tea part stays with teas.co.uk. The shop holds the bag count and price of every pack, so the assistant can tell the person which box gives the cheapest cup without working it out from a product photo.

A bigger example from the book: a proposal in London

Lee's book, "Under the Bonnet: Year One", finished on 15 November 2026, describes the larger version of this idea. A man planning to propose in London tells his assistant about the woman he hopes to marry. She loves the theatre and dislikes being the centre of attention, and he wants the day to feel made for her. One giant website cannot answer that well. It takes a theatre that knows its seats, a restaurant that knows its menu and a hotel that knows its rooms. It also takes a small tea shop that leaves a good tea in the room for the morning after.

Each of those is a specialist holding its own checked facts, and the assistant joins them into one plan. The tea shop's part is small and exact: a caffeine free tea, needed by a set date. From the shop's range that could be:

- Twinings Camomile and Honey, 20 Tea Bags 30g, at £3.60

- Pukka Organic Three Chamomile, 20 Tea Bags, at £4.40
- Tick Tock Original Rooibos, 40 Tea Bags 90g, at £3.60
- or a teas.co.uk Gift Card, if the couple would rather choose for themselves

The tea shop does not need the story behind the gift. It needs "caffeine free, one small box, needed by Saturday". Everything else stays between the man and his assistant. That network of theatres, restaurants, hotels and tea shops does not exist yet. Lee's point is that it can only be built from specialists like teas.co.uk, each holding its own facts in good order before anyone asks.

Open standards that let specialists be read side by side

For a tea answer to sit next to a theatre's answer in one plan, the assistant needs a common way to talk to both. Large technology companies are building that in public, as open standards. They do different jobs, and having one does not mean a business has the others.

Standard	What it does	teas.co.uk in November 2026
MCP (Model Context Protocol)	Connects an assistant to a shop's tools and data	Shopping tools documented on the shop's public shopping page. See Model Context Protocol
A2A (Agent2Agent)	Lets separately built agents find one another, exchange information and work together	An A2A connection is documented
UCP (Universal Commerce Protocol)	A common language across finding, buying and order support, designed to work alongside MCP and A2A	A UCP profile is published
Agent payment standards	Carry proof that a person gave an agent permission to pay	Not live. The person checks the basket and pays on the shop

A2A is the one closest to this entry's idea. It is how a tea specialist's agent and a venue's agent could one day recognise each other and work on the same request. In November 2026 the shop's public shopping page documented 26 MCP tools, a UCP profile and an A2A connection, and an assistant could already find tea, compare teas and prepare a basket. What the shop does not have is a partner on the other end of that connection. The standards make cooperation possible; they do not create it.

Not every assistant can use tools. For those that can only read web pages, the shop keeps plain pages at /ai/ and a summary for AI systems at /llms.txt. Through them, any assistant that can open a page can search the tea range, compare two teas side by side and build a link that fills a basket. How an assistant asks, and what it may do for a person, is covered in buying tea by voice, photo or AI assistant.

The same first step applies to any specialist, whether it sells wine, fixes boilers or books tables: hold your own facts, keep them current and give the assistant a working next step. How the method carries across trades is explained in built for tea, ready for any trade.

How the tea part got ready: a timeline

Date	What happened

18 November 2025	The first order arrives at teas.co.uk, at 13:24
10 May 2026	Version two of the shop goes live
6 October 2026	The shopping tools open to AI assistants, so the shop can be used without opening a web browser
15 November 2026	An AI assistant tests the shop. A request for decaf black tea at no more than 2p a cup returns an empty list rather than a stretched answer
15 November 2026	Lee's book records the shopping page's MCP tools, UCP profile and A2A connection, and describes the network of specialists as a plan
Not yet	Any working arrangement with another specialist business

Paid orders so far: 241. The shop has never paid for advertising. The live figures are on Under the Hood.

What this means when you buy tea

- Ask for the tea part with your real conditions: caffeine, a budget per cup or per box, milk or no milk, bags or loose. The shop keeps firm conditions and tells you if it relaxed a soft one.
- Expect a plain "not sold here" for coffee, teapots, mugs and kettles. That is a correct answer, not a fault.
- Biscuits, hot chocolate and strainers are a short range. If you want more choice than that, another seller is the better place.
- Give only what the tea choice needs. "No caffeine, needed by Friday" is enough; the occasion can stay private.
- You stay in charge of paying. An assistant can prepare a basket, but you check it and pay on teas.co.uk.
- Prices and prices per cup come from the shop's live records, so the product page is the place to check before you buy. Free delivery threshold: £35.

Common questions

Does teas.co.uk sell coffee?

No. It sells tea, plus a small range of hot chocolate, Border biscuits, two bamboo tea strainers, a gift card and a gift subscription. Hot chocolate pods for pod machines are sold; coffee is not.

If the shop does not sell something, will it tell me who does?

The shop has no arrangement with other businesses, so it does not refer customers anywhere. It says plainly that the item is not sold there, and the assistant or the customer finds the rest.

Why not stock everything a tea drinker might want?

Depth is the point. A specialist knows which of its green teas are decaffeinated, how many bags are in each box and what each cup costs. Spreading into coffee and kitchenware would make those facts thinner. More on this in wide versus deep.

Can an assistant put tea and other shops' goods in one basket?

Not today. Each shop has its own basket and checkout. An assistant can put together a plan that includes tea from teas.co.uk and other things from elsewhere, but the tea basket is filled and paid for on teas.co.uk.

Is the network of specialists live?

No. teas.co.uk has built its own side: checked tea facts, tools assistants can use and published connections. The cooperating network is a plan, and the shop keeps a strict rule about built versus planned.

Quick reference

Detail	Information
Term	Cooperating specialist entities (route alliance, peer routing, specialist handover)
Meaning	Specialists each answering their own part of a request and handing the rest on, with conditions and sources kept intact
Status at teas.co.uk	Proposed. Not operating
Working today	The tea part: the shop answers tea requests from its own records and says plainly what it does not sell, such as coffee or teapots
Used by	Lee Samuel Tucker, founder of teas.co.uk
Related	Route hygiene, truth entity, the asymmetric bet, built versus planned

Related

- Route hygiene
- Three days that have not happened yet
- Your "only" might be the whole trade
- What's inside a tea shop built for AI to read
- Lee Samuel Tucker's builder vocabulary

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