

BUILT FOR THE TRADE

The role of creativity in driving
action in construction marketing

EDITION 1 / 2026





IN THE TRADE WORLD, LOYALTY RUNS DEEP

Ask a decorator about their favourite paint brand or a plumber whether they're a copper or plastic fan, and the answer often comes back with the same passion you'd expect when discussing football teams. These are decisions shaped by years of experience, trusted recommendations, and the realities of working on site. They're also decisions that help protect a hard-fought reputation.

If loyalty is so strong, surely this raises an uncomfortable question for brands who want to attract the attention of trades – does creative marketing actually make a difference when it comes to selecting products, materials or equipment?

The assumption has often been no. Trade purchasing is seen as rational, practical and driven by price, availability or habit. Creativity has been more closely associated with consumer brands or those with the deepest pockets... until now.

NICKY JEPSON

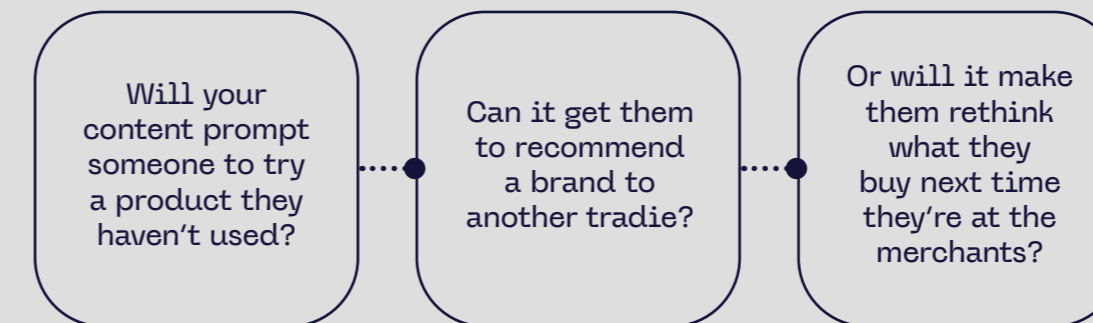
Director
Workhouse Creative Agency

Tradespeople are not operating in a vacuum. The same person who takes time selecting and quoting for materials or products is also consuming content on the sofa at home, scrolling feeds in the queue for the trade counter and forming opinions about brands in exactly the same way as any other consumer.

The lines between 'work' and 'consumer' behaviour are blurred, which is why the role of creative is changing.

Creativity in the trade sector isn't simply about entertainment or aesthetics. It's about provoking action.

WE NEED TO BE ASKING:



THAT'S THE BAR. AND IT'S A HIGH ONE.

Built for the Trade takes a deeper dive into whether creativity in the trade is currently clearing it or falling flat.

CREATIVE*

* WE KNOW BOTH CREATIVE AND CREATIVITY CAN BE HIGHLY SUBJECTIVE. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT, WE'RE REFERRING TO COMMUNICATION THAT GOES BEYOND SIMPLY CONVEYING INFORMATION. IT'S ABOUT PRESENTING A MESSAGE IN A WAY THAT MEANINGFULLY CHANGES HOW IT IS NOTICED, UNDERSTOOD, REMEMBERED OR ACTED ON WHEN COMPARED TO STANDARD OR EXPECTED COMMUNICATION.

OUR APPROACH

To understand content consumption habits across trades and how they perceive brand creativity, we surveyed 250 UK tradespeople in February 2026 with the support of independent accredited research consultancy, Censuswide.

WE SURVEYED
250
UK TRADESPEOPLE



THE RESEARCH EXPLORED

- ① How tradespeople engage with brand content
- ② What types of content they value most
- ③ Who they trust to deliver that content
- ④ The actions brand content drives

Responses were analysed to identify patterns in how different parts of the sector behave. This analysis was then supported by qualitative interviews with a range of tradespeople to gain a deeper understanding of emerging trends.

The goal was simple: move beyond opinion and start understanding what action sparking creative actually looks like and how to deliver it.

THE UPSHOT IS... CREATIVE CONTENT MATTERS BUT DOES IT DELIVER?

Our data tells a clear story. Tradespeople believe brand content can influence their decisions. That's one big hurdle overcome. In fact, 86% of those surveyed say brand content is 'quite' or 'very likely' to influence future purchasing decisions or brand loyalty. Those findings ring true across all our demographics, signalling strong potential for the future of the trade.

That's a huge vote of confidence in the potential of brand comms to drive action.

86%

OF THE TRADE SAY THEY ARE INFLUENCED BY BRAND CONTENT

BUT ONLY
51%

BELIEVE BRAND CONTENT IS 'VERY EFFECTIVE'

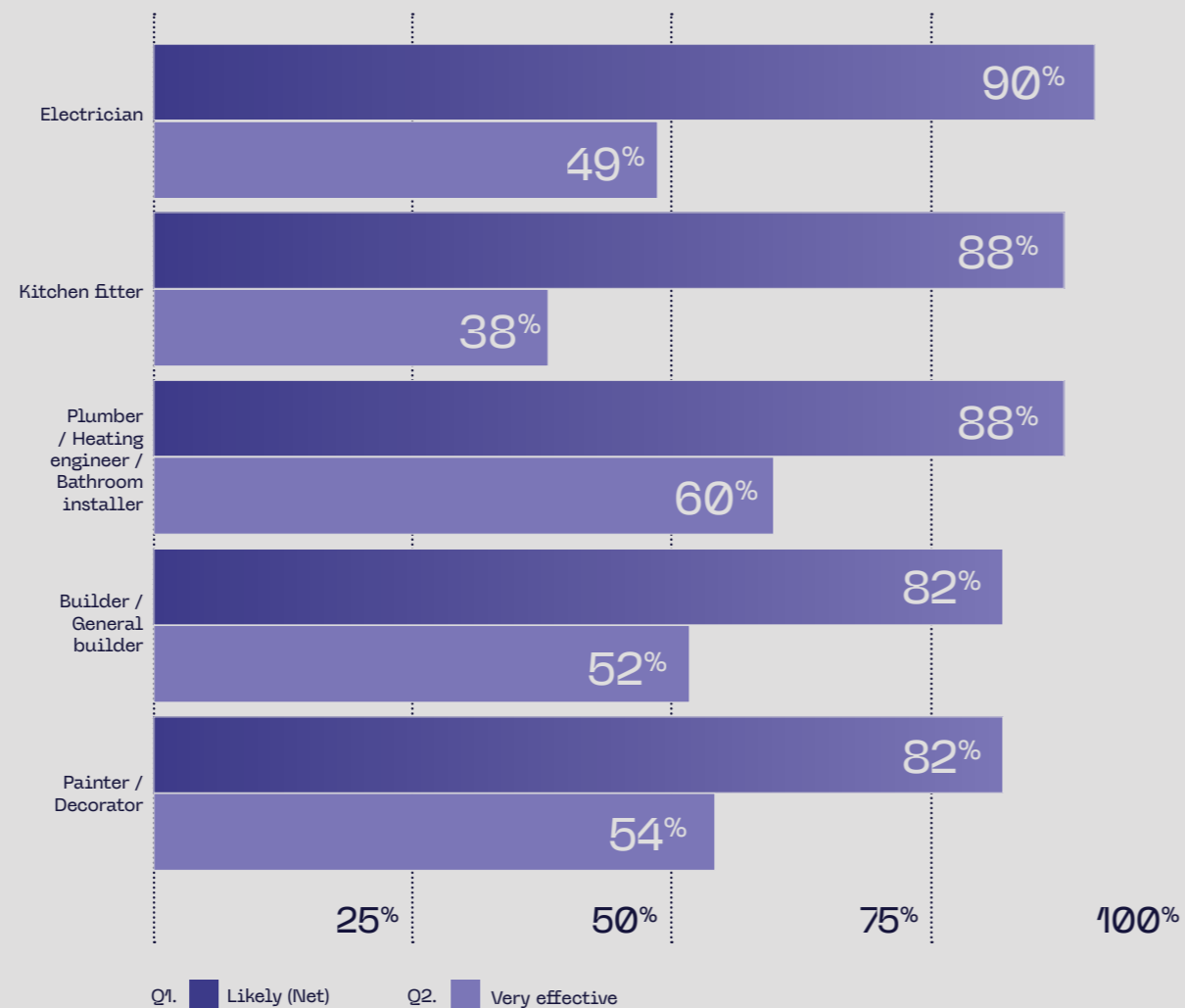
But there's a catch. When asked how effectively brands are currently doing this, only half believe brand content is 'very effective'. Therefore, the gap between the potential and actual effectiveness of creative content presents a significant opportunity for brands.

IN OTHER WORDS, TRADESPEOPLE BELIEVE BRAND COMMS CAN WORK

They just don't think many trade brands are getting it right. And you can see why. The bar is set so high with this new blurred line between content for work and content for consumers that both the standard and the playing field have materially shifted.

Q1. To what extent does the branded content you engage with (like, share, or comment on) influence your purchasing decisions or brand loyalty?

Q2. Overall, how effective do you think brands are at creating content that genuinely resonates with people in your trade?



MIKE WILSON

Joiner and Builder, Silversprings Construction

"I have Milwaukee tools and I will not have anything but Milwaukee."

"But if there's anything that pops up on say social media about a new tool for example, you do go and have a little Google of it after to find out more and you'll probably end up buying it."



DAVID CHALLENGOR

IDS Services

"We have a building company that specialises in reactive and refurbishments for commercial premises. What I'm always looking for is new, innovative products. Because in our industry, it's all about energy, it's all about cost savings, it's all about efficiency. I'm always looking for a new, more interesting product that is better than what's out there now."

"If I was on a platform and something caught my attention that impacts what we're dealing with, then I would look at it. Especially if I knew that it was from a brand that was constantly coming up with new ideas and new products."

"I mean, that's the whole point of marketing, isn't it? To show what you can do."

WHERE ATTENTION EXISTS

Solid creative strategy always starts with a proper understanding of your audience.

We all know even the best idea will have little or no impact if it doesn't land in the right place at the right time. So, it's important to first sense check and benchmark where our audiences are currently spending their time and what's making them tick when it comes to creative content.

TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE

The good news for brands who are looking to engage audiences with solid creative content is that time is very much on your side. Almost half (49%) of those asked are spending between 30 minutes to an hour per day looking at trade specific content. That audience increases to 60% of 25- to 34-year-olds when you take a deeper dive into the data, suggesting that age group is primed for receiving content.

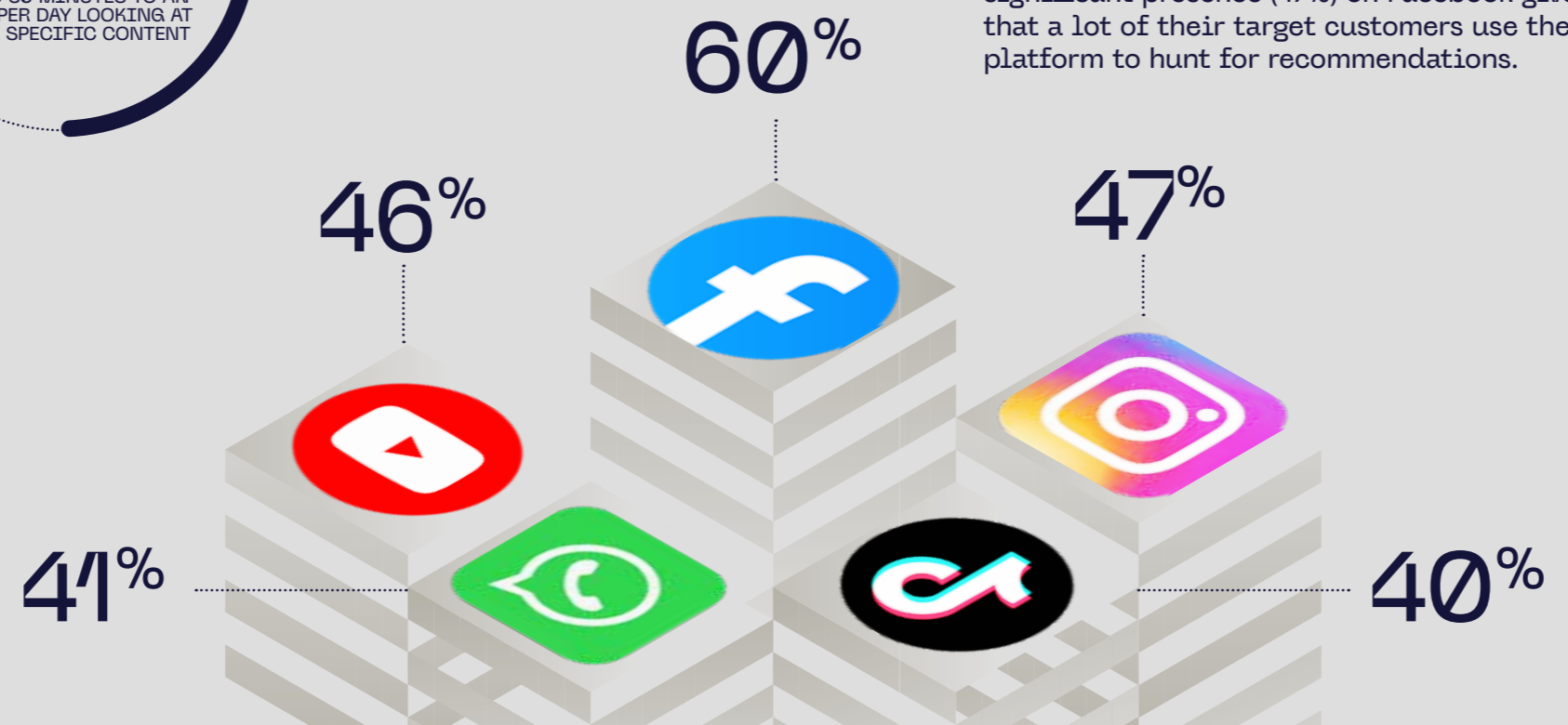


FACEBOOK REIGNS

Facebook is still the headline act for our trade audiences when it comes to consuming content for work purposes with a substantial 60% of the audience using the platform.

Instagram comes a close second with 47%, YouTube sits at 46%, and WhatsApp groups or industry chats still command the attention of 41% of the people we spoke to, proving that peer-to-peer interactions and recommendations still carry weight.

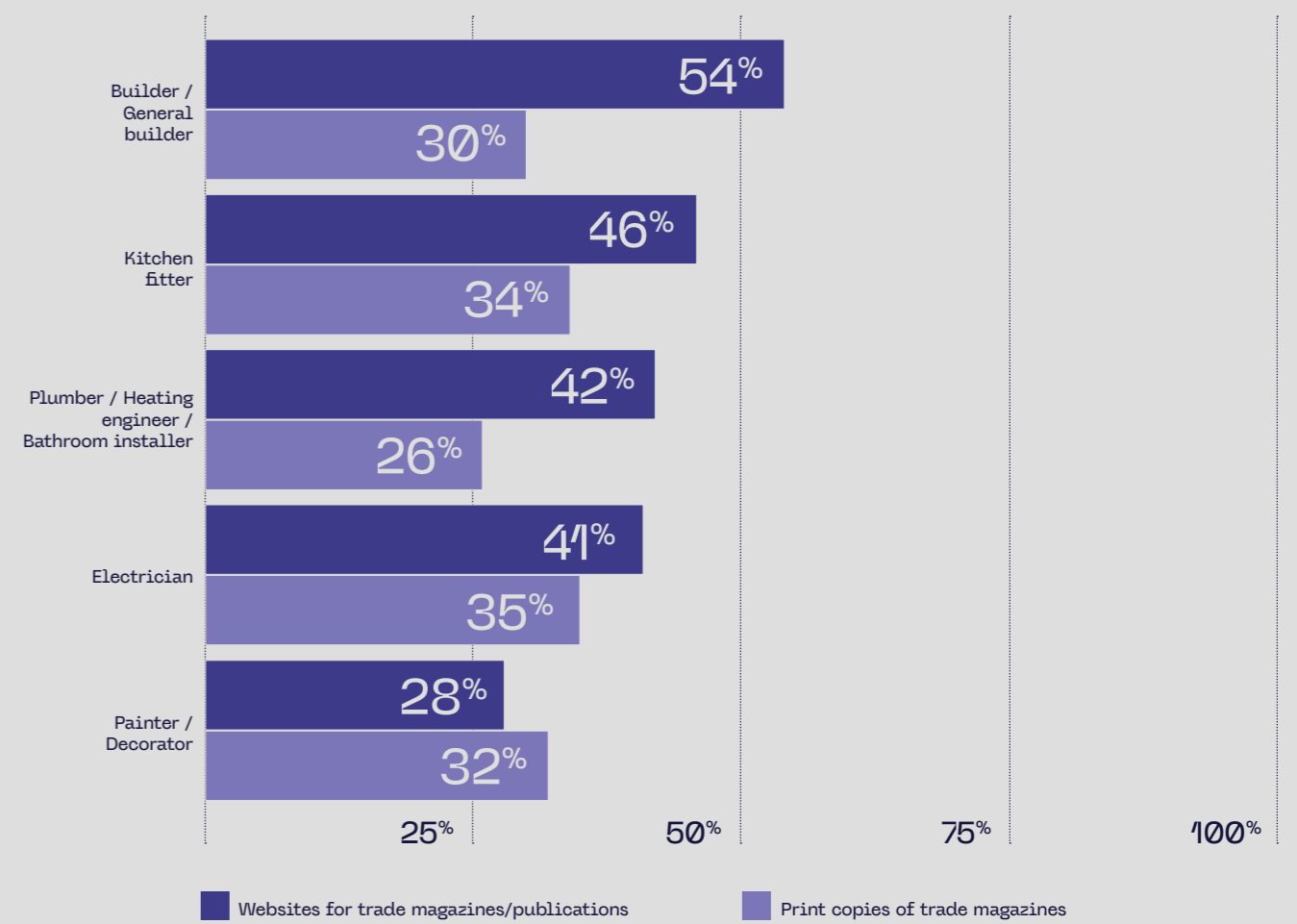
As you'd expect Instagram and TikTok are doing some heavy lifting for the 18 to 24s with 51% and 53% of the audience in that bracket respectively, but they do still have a significant presence (47%) on Facebook given that a lot of their target customers use the platform to hunt for recommendations.



DIGITAL OVER PRINT FOR MOST

Moving away from social media, digital is still leading print, with websites for trade publications ranking more highly than the printed magazines themselves. While 42% of the audience is getting trade publication content online, 31% still grab a hard copy. Brand and product websites are a rich source of information too, with 40% of the people we spoke to visiting those sites for work-related content.

What type of publications or websites do you read or visit to find content related to your job, if any?



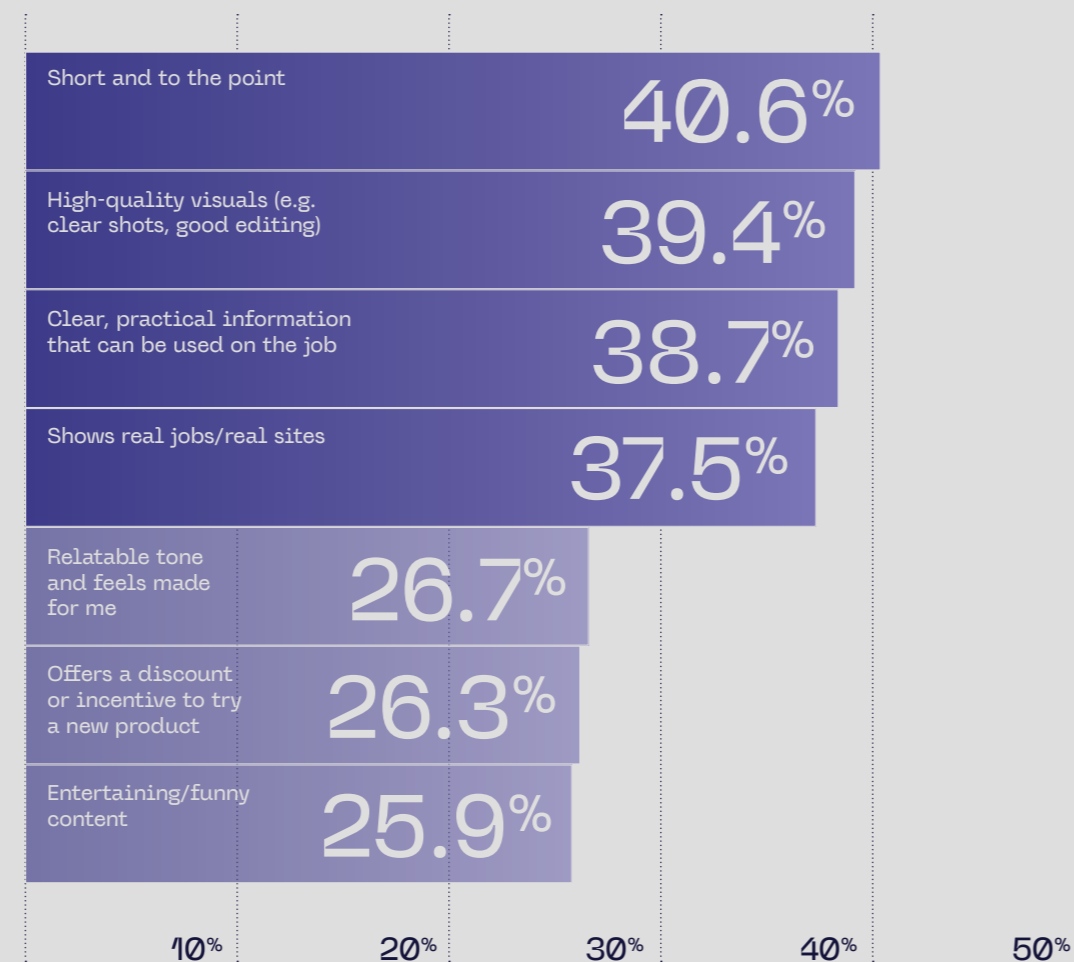
WHEN HUMOUR FALLS SHORT

Now that we've established the building blocks, it's time to look at the types of content that are getting eyeballs and driving conversion.

One of the most surprising takeaways from our research comes when you look closely at the factors that tradespeople believe makes content 'good' or worth their time.

Given that whole communities and very successful social accounts are populated with content that leans into site humour and pranks, you might think that being entertaining or funny would be a top priority. Think again. It ranks at the bottom of the list with only a quarter of the audience valuing that approach when it comes to content they see as worth their time.

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT DO THEY PREFER?



What factors, if any, make content related to your job feel "good" or worth your time?



DAVID CHALLENGOR
IDS Services

"The whole point of receiving content for me is actually learning something from it and understanding it."

"I can read three different marketing materials and if it's not giving you new information, then it's all doing the same thing."

"I don't need to see someone joking around, it's more about getting the information for what we deal with and learning something new."



CALLUM SPAVINS
Trade Brand Manager at Crown Paints

"It's difficult to straddle between entertaining trade audiences and selling products to them – and we need to do both at the same time. It all has its place, and you have to look at the funnel to see where it all fits."

"Humour is more about fitting in with communities and so at that point you can bring in branding here and there to generate awareness. That's also where influencers who are more on the jokey side fit in and can provide that always-on approach."

"However, when you're trying to sell, it needs to stand out more as content but still be well received. If we are looking to sell a specific product or launch a new range then we need content, often fronted by their peers, which can really influence the choices they're making. That trust is so important."

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS

WHAT ALL THIS TELLS US IS THAT WE HAVE TO PARK THE STEREOTYPES IF WE WANT TO CREATE CONTENT THAT DRIVES ACTION, RATHER THAN JUST AWARENESS.

While there might be a time and a place for lighthearted content to portray life on site and challenges with customers, it's time to start properly respecting the intelligence and craft that goes into becoming a successful tradesperson – especially if we want to move people down the funnel.

We're not saying content should be dry and boring, or overly functional with brands just issuing spec sheets to trades to give them what they need.

The research suggests creative content must balance practicality, quality and value - standing out to grab attention, then quickly signalling its worth through mental shortcuts and brand cues to make differentiators stick. That's where true creativity excels.



IT'S TIME TO
SPOTLIGHT
PROBLEM-
SOLVING
SAVIOURS

TRADESPEOPLE PLACE THE HIGHEST VALUE ON CONTENT THAT HELPS THEM DO THEIR JOB BETTER...

...whether that's clearly demonstrating how a product works in practice, explaining how to avoid common installation issues, or showing ways to save time on site.

Creative content that properly answers practical questions or demonstrates a clear solution or product benefit is far more likely to earn attention. By contrast, messaging that focuses purely on brand claims or product features without context often struggles to resonate.

For brands, this means shifting the emphasis from promotion to problem solving in a creative way.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE
CREATIVE WORK DOESN'T
SIMPLY TALK ABOUT
PRODUCTS; IT TAKES A
CREATIVE APPROACH TO
SHOWING HOW THOSE
PRODUCTS PERFORM
IN REAL WORKING
ENVIRONMENTS.



CASE IN POINT

Pronto LVT

Make it easier to choose

LVT was the fastest-growing hard flooring category. At the cheap end, sheds were piling in, while at the premium end, Karndean and Amtico owned the specialist fitter market. In the middle were confident DIYers and time-poor tradespeople wanting stylish flooring without being a flooring specialist. No one was speaking to them. Enter Pronto.

PRONTOTM
LUXURY VINYL TILES



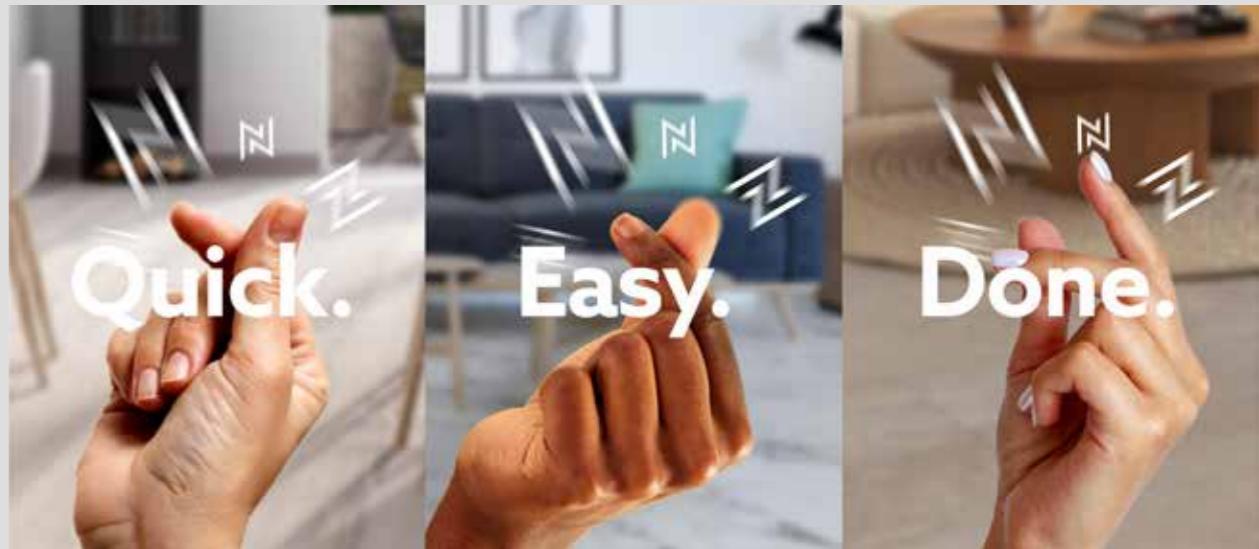
CASE IN POINT

Pronto LVT

Pronto repositioned private label flooring as a brand in its own right, shifting the focus away from specs and proof points towards a simpler, more emotionally compelling idea - ease.

Instead of listing features, the creative tapped into a feeling trades actually care about: making the job quicker, smoother, and less of a headache. The name, the lightning bolts, the finger clicks, all brand signals layered into the product's value.

It's a reminder that even in a functional category, it's not the information alone that drives action - it's how that information is framed, and whether it resonates on a more human level. That's good creativity in a nutshell.

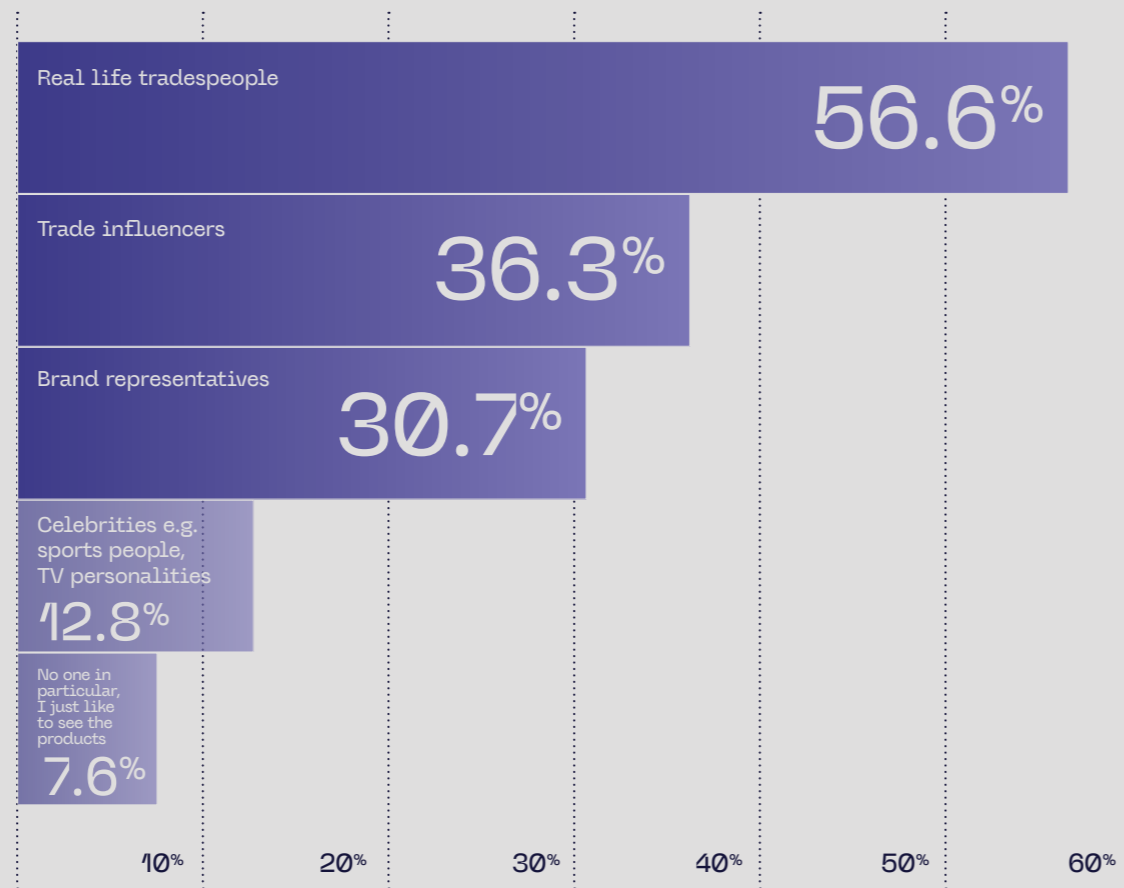


REAL PEOPLE WORK

Here's where trade marketing seems to be following in the well-trodden footsteps of consumer brands by entering the creator economy, which is currently valued at a huge \$250 billion globally and that's due to double by 2027.

A study by Sprout Social cites that 61% of consumers trust recommendations from creators more than they trust brand advertising and our research shows that content for trades is following a similar pattern.

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE MOST LIKELY TO BELIEVE?



When you consider the content related to your job that you engage with (like, reshare or comment), who would you prefer to be the face of that content?



MIKE WILSON
Silerssprings Construction

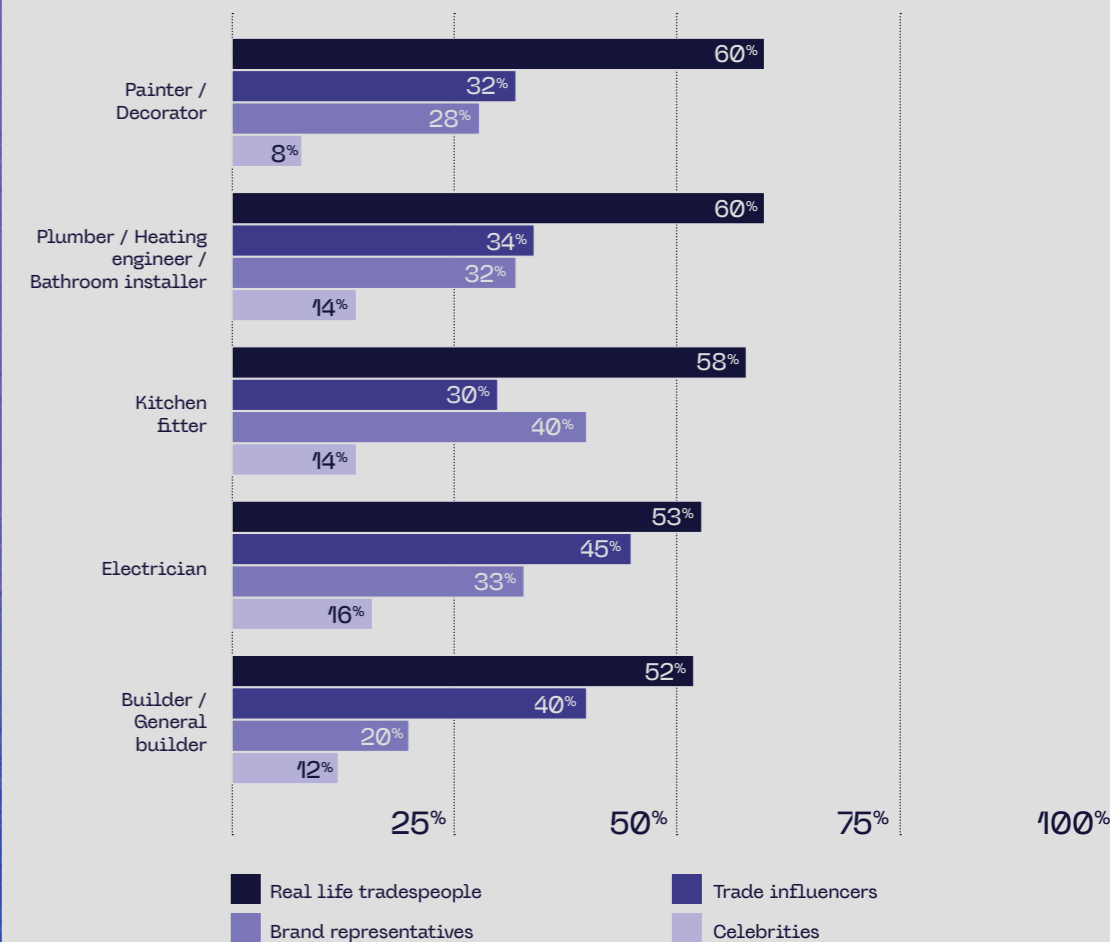
"I have seen videos fronted by TV personalities and influencers who clearly no longer spend much time on the tools. I want more of the hands-on, proper tradespeople. It's because they're in the trenches like the rest of us, using products and tools all the time rather than just for TV or social media, doing it now and again."



ANDREW HOLDEN
Andrew Holden Electrical

"I want to see other tradespeople. If they're using a product or tool, you can see them using it and you think 'wow that looks easy, that looks good' then you'd think about trying it. You get some good content on YouTube where people will show you a day's work and what faults they've come across, and you can tell they know what they're talking about and you'd listen to their opinion."

When you consider the content related to your job that you engage with (like, reshare or comment), who would you prefer to be the face of that content?



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS

THIS IS ALL GOOD NEWS FOR POTENTIALLY SQUEEZED BUDGETS AS YOU DON'T NECESSARILY NEED TO BE SPLASHING OUT ON CELEBRITIES OR BIG-NAME PERSONALITIES TO BE THE FACE OF YOUR BRANDED CONTENT.

Only 13% of those surveyed selected celebrities as a preference for content they would like, reshare or comment on.

IT'S TIME TO TRY REAL TRADIES TAKING CENTRE STAGE

TRUST REMAINS A CENTRAL FACTOR IN TRADE PURCHASING DECISIONS.

Our research shows a clear preference for content fronted by people who understand the realities of the job.

They want to hear from others who have used a product on site, encountered the same challenges and can speak from experience. That authenticity is difficult to replicate through polished brand messaging alone.

While influencers play a part, it's also worth taking the time to have a good trawl of socials to see which trades might be creating their own content on jobs with the sole intention of winning more work or sharing advice with their peers. Reach out to them to get them involved because that authenticity is hard to manufacture.



KIM BOOT-ELLISON
Creative Lead at Clifton Trade Bathrooms

"Creative content needs to be honest and straight to the point. Landing the right tone of voice is essential. Our audiences are time poor, they're often self-employed and results driven. Time is literally money for them, so they need the quickest, most reliable solution."

CASE IN POINT

Howdens

Putting the right people in the frame



PROUD TO FIT HOWDENS

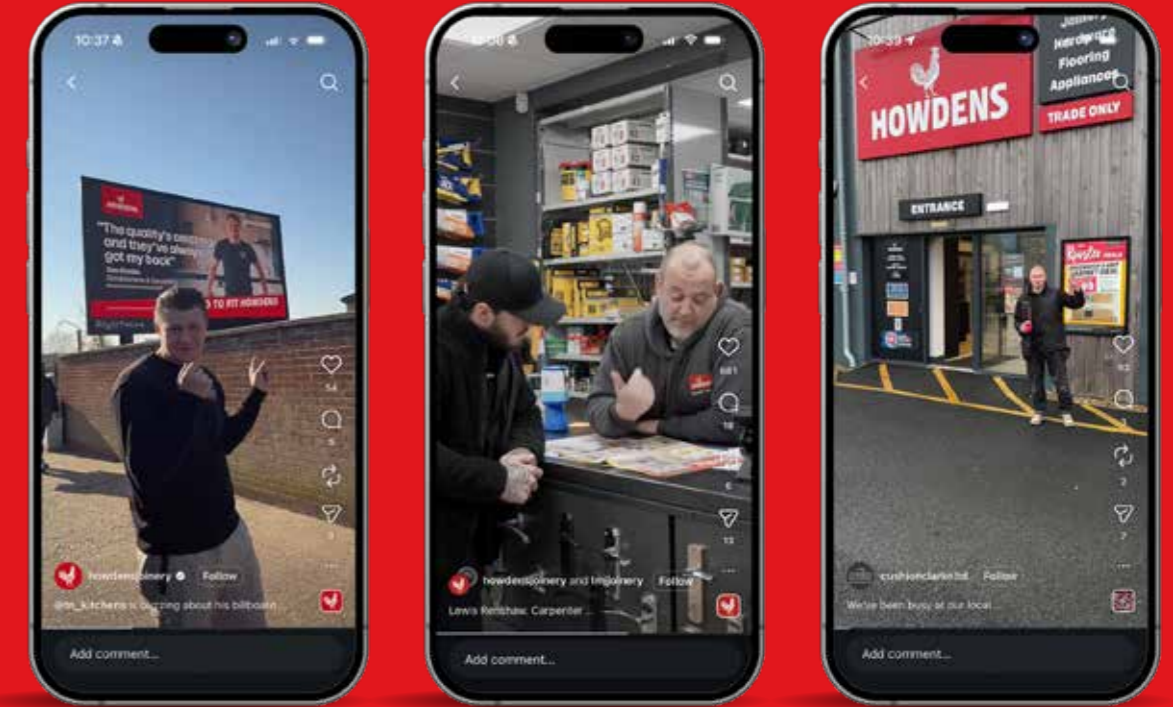
CASE IN POINT

Howdens

One example we love is Howden's 'Proud to Fit' campaign, featuring real tradespeople, their skills, pride and role in delivering quality work on site.

It works because authenticity isn't treated as an afterthought - it's built into the casting, the storytelling, and the way the work is art directed, giving real tradies the presence and stature they deserve.

When you combine credible voices with real craft, the work feels authentic, which in turn, earns attention and respect.



READY FOR ACTION

We know what trades want content to focus on, and we know how it needs to look, but what does it make them do? Let's face it, the whole point of brand content is to get people to do, think or feel something. We asked our trades that very question and the results are ground for optimism.

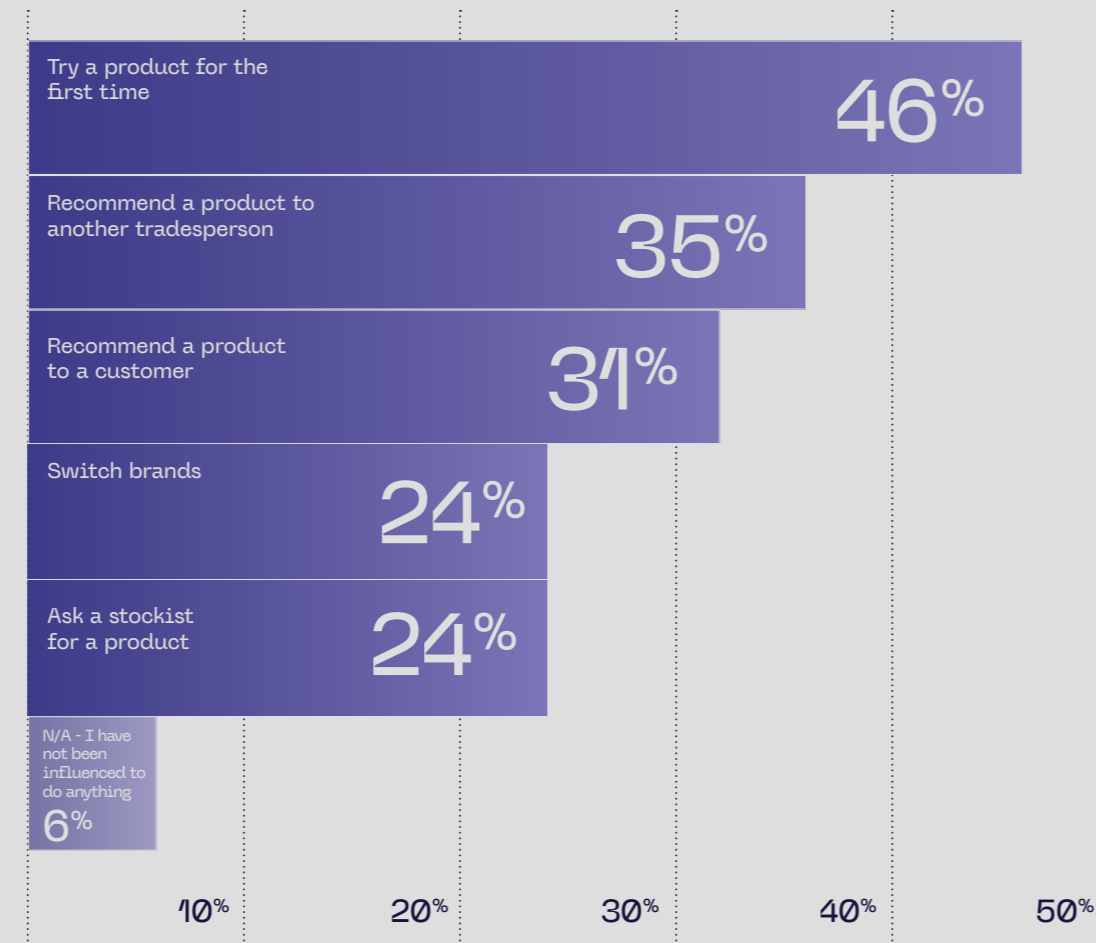
Almost half (46%) said brand content had directly influenced them to try a product for the first time.

Over a third (35%) said it had led them to recommend a product to another trade and 31% said it had resulted in them recommending a product to a customer.

The content that actually shifts behaviour doesn't look or sound like everything else in the category.

Yet most brand content is built to blend in. Creativity isn't a layer you add at the end, it's what turns content from noise into something effective.

WHAT ACTION DOES CREATIVITY PROVOKE?



What, if anything, has content from a brand ever directly influenced you to do?

This confidence to try something new or make a recommendation is absolute gold when it comes to creative marketing and it all lies on a foundation of trust.

Content needs to capture attention through creativity, but it also needs to convey a message of trust so that trades are willing to stake their reputation on it.

Building that trust happens in different ways throughout the marketing funnel.

DISCOUNTS AND DEALS ALONE
DON'T ALWAYS CUT IT

ONLY
26%

OF TRADESPEOPLE THINK
A DISCOUNT MAKES
CONTENT FEEL WORTH
THEIR TIME



ANDREW HOLDEN

Andrew Holden Electrical

"I've learned which brands I can trust and which brands I can't. The dialogue with wholesalers is also so important and the trust I've built with them. If they recommend something to me, I'll give it a try and share feedback with them. If a product is a winner, that product pushes itself to the front of our minds and then we'll just use that product going forward."

"I also have a community of other trades I speak to and pick their brains – some of them are friends and some of them are people I regularly see in the wholesalers. The word gets around on products, particularly the ones that make all our lives easier."



CALLUM SPAVINS

Trade Brand Manager at Crown Paints

"Social media and digital content are great for creating a buzz and a breakthrough for brands but there's another key part of the puzzle – trust. Tradespeople rely on trust when it comes to trying something new whether that's from peers or the people behind the trade counter."

"The teams in merchants and decorating centres are really influential. If you can get them bought into a new product or concept, then they'll share that with the people that come through their doors."

"There's an assumption that trades use what they've always used and they're habitual, but it can be easy to break that cycle. You need to start by getting their attention with creative content. Then you need to work with the teams in branches or through peer-to-peer content to help build the trust in your brand so that when the time is right, they'll make a switch and try something new."

TRADE DECISIONS AREN'T MADE IN ISOLATION

It would also be naive to view these decisions as purely trade-led. While creative brand content has the potential to tip tradespeople into consideration and then action, consumer demand is an important factor too.

For brands which work across B2B2C, you can't underestimate the importance of also attracting the attention of consumers who will then go on to influence or direct the choices of their tradesperson.



JIM NOLAN

Landscaper

"The main job is making sure the customer is happy. Because of the internet, they've looked at it a lot and thought about it a lot. They've sat there at night on their phone and got really excited about the job, and they've done their research on price which they want to talk to you about. They've got a dream in their head, and they've earned the money to pay for it."

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BRANDS

THE ULTIMATE TEST OF CREATIVE CONTENT IS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

Does it stand out enough to encourage someone to try a product for the first time?

Does it prompt a conversation with a colleague or a recommendation to a customer?

THE FINDINGS IN THIS REPORT SUGGEST THAT BRAND CONTENT ALREADY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO INFLUENCE THESE BEHAVIOURS – BUT TOO MUCH IS STILL JUST WALLPAPER AND BACKGROUND NOISE.

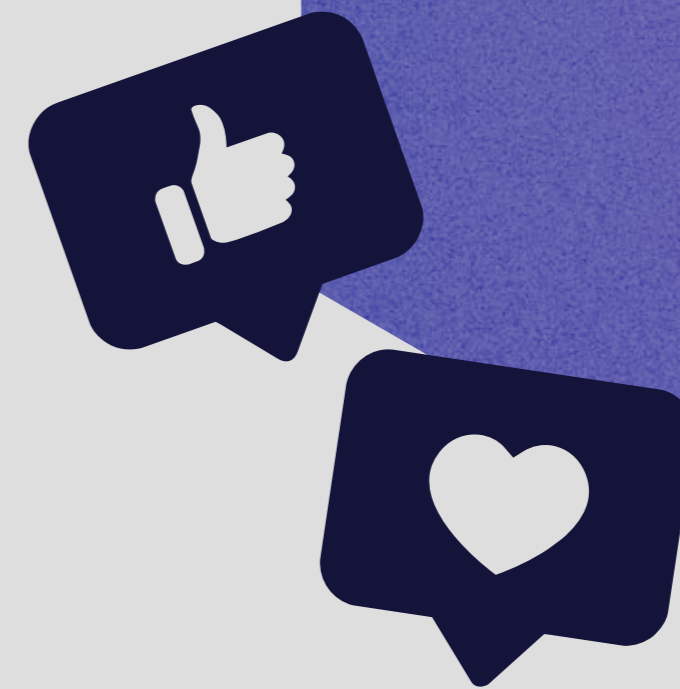
However, many brands still prioritise visibility metrics such as views or engagement over signals that indicate real commercial impact.

Shifting the focus towards content that drives trial, recommendation and consideration can help ensure creative work contributes directly to business outcomes.

IT'S TIME TO FOCUS ON PROVOKING ACTION

For marketers operating in a competitive and loyalty-driven environment, the challenge is not simply to stand out, but to produce creative content that earns its place in a tradesperson's working day.

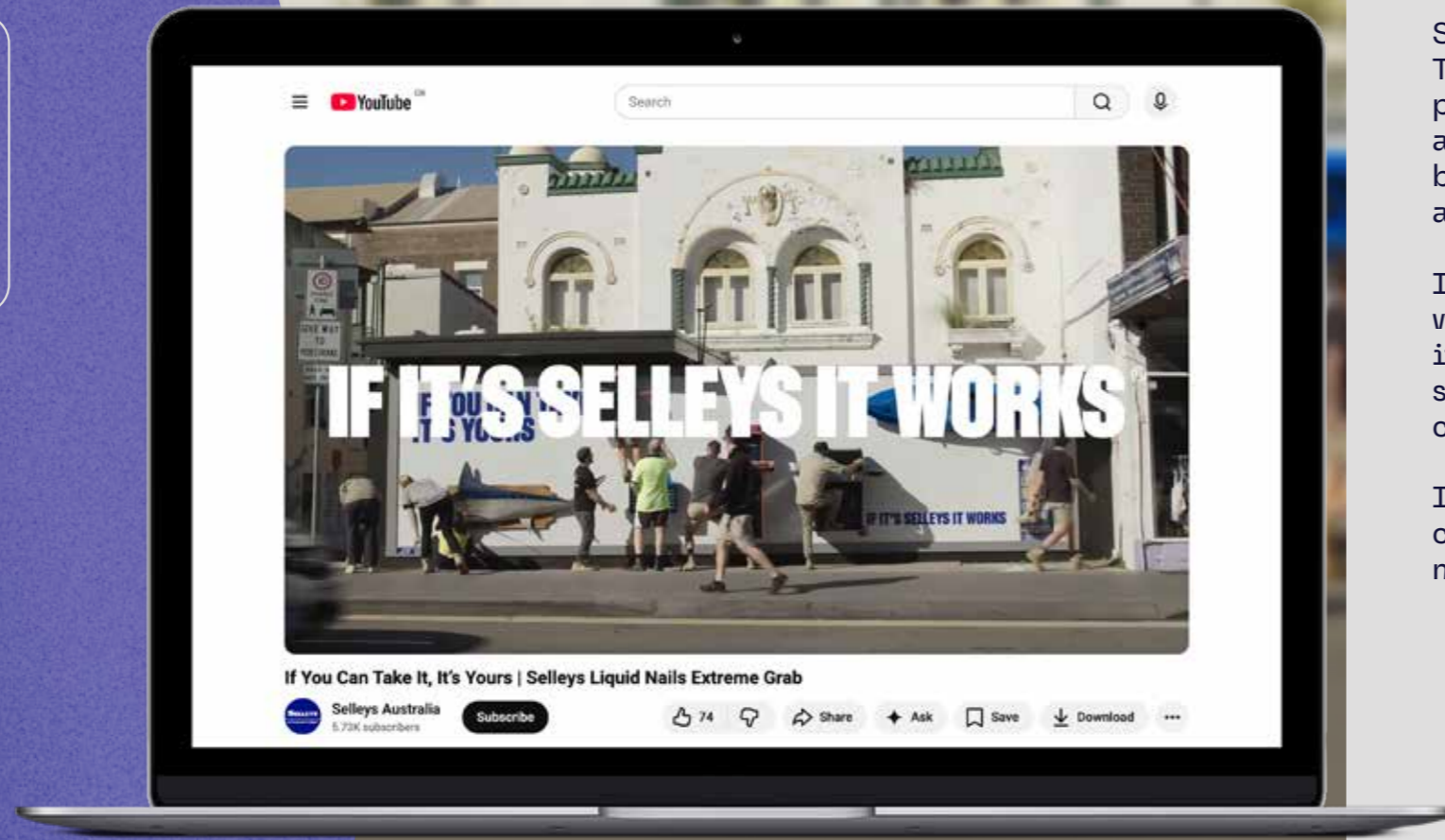
Those that succeed will not only capture attention; they will build trust in their brand, influencing decisions where they matter most: on site, at the trade counter and in conversations between tradespeople.



CASE IN POINT

Selleys

Make it impossible to ignore



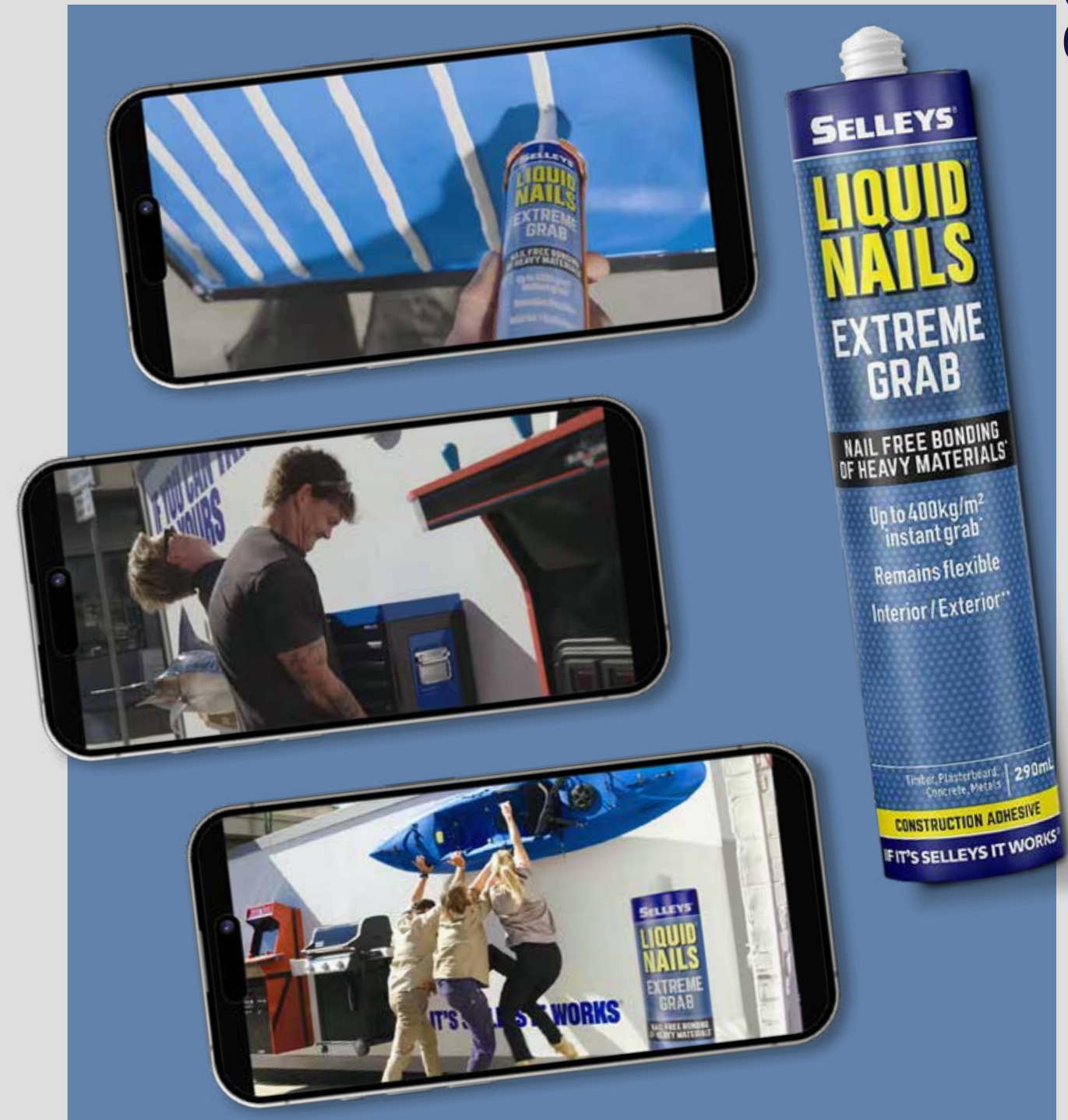
CASE IN POINT

Selleys

Selleys is another example we love. They turned a product demo into a public challenge, gluing objects like a kayak and an arcade machine to a billboard and inviting people to try and rip them free.

Instead of telling people the product works, the idea compelled them to test it - pulling in crowds, attempts, and shared experiences that proved the claim in real time.

It shows that the most effective creative doesn't just communicate a message, it gets people to act on it.



CONCLUSION

GETTING IT RIGHT

Our research highlights a simple truth, creative work in the trade sector is most effective when it does three things well:

1

PROVES ITS VALUE

Does the content provide practical value that tradespeople can apply to their work on site?

2

PROVIDES AUTHENTICITY

Does the message feel credible and grounded in real experience?

3

PROVOKES ACTION

Does the content prompt tradespeople to do something differently or try something new?

SOUNDS SIMPLE, RIGHT?

While many brands are already investing in content and digital engagement, our findings suggest that much of that activity isn't yet hitting the mark.

The opportunity for brands isn't simply to produce more content, but to focus on the types of creative work that tradespeople actually find useful and ultimately persuasive.

WANT TO TAKE YOUR BRAND
TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

LET'S TALK.

W: www.workhouse.agency

E: Nicky@workhouse.agency

P: 01254 878956

BUILT FOR THE TRADE

The logo for Workhouse creative agency features a stylized 'W' icon composed of three dark grey triangles pointing towards the center. To the right of the icon, the word 'Workhouse' is written in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font, with 'creative agency' in a smaller, lighter blue sans-serif font below it.

Workhouse
creative agency