

HOMES UNHOOKED

2023-2024

YOUR ESSENTIAL PR & MARKETING
GUIDE FOR THE HOME INDUSTRY

UNHOOKED
COMMUNICATIONS



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WELCOME TO HOMES UNHOOKED

Your essential PR and marketing guide for the home industry.

Unlocking the potential of businesses in construction, property, home tech, and interiors, this guide, crafted by Unhooked Communications, offers invaluable insights and tips for promoting and selling your products or services.

Backed by new market research, commissioned by Unhooked Communications, this report delves into:

- Current market opportunities
- Consumer behaviour and the decision-making process
- Influential factors shaping buying decisions
- Key sources of inspiration and information
- Leveraging PR, marketing, and content to tap into emerging trends

From building projects to home improvements, technology, and sustainability concerns, this must-read guide equips businesses and brands with the knowledge to seize upcoming market opportunities.

In a challenging landscape marked by rising costs, interest rates, evolving lifestyles, and sustainability pressures, this guide highlights how to engage effectively with target audiences who are considering buying your products or services.

With Unhooked Communications' expertise in PR for the construction, property, and home interior sectors, we bring you decades of experience and actionable advice. Let our research and insights empower you to inform and inspire customers, propelling your business growth over the next year and beyond.

Claire

**Claire Gamble,
MD, Unhooked Communications**



ABOUT THE RESEARCH

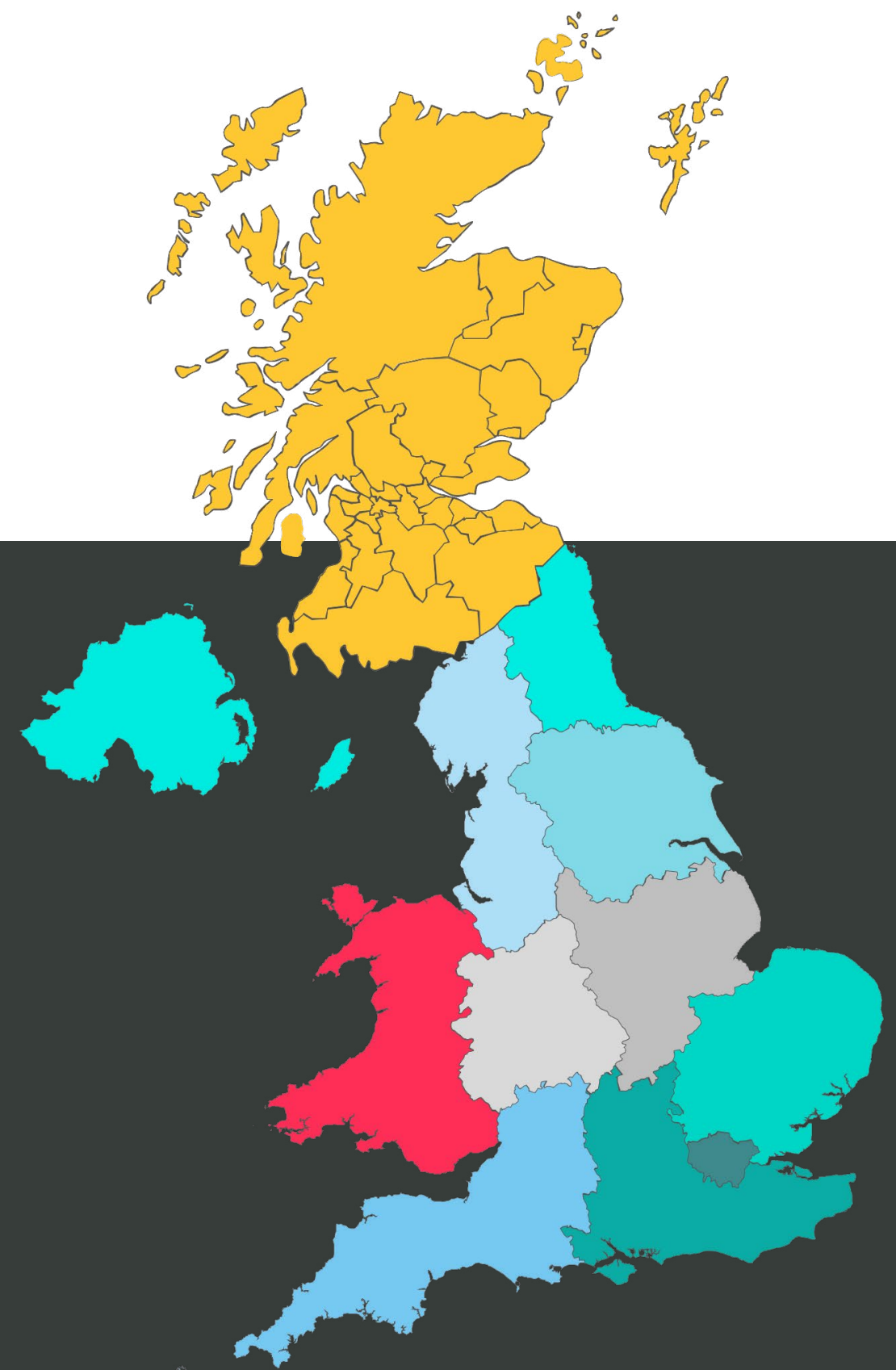
Commissioned by Unhooked Communications, the market research for this report was carried out in July 2023 and questioned 2,015 adults across the UK.

HOME IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In the next 12 months, 53% of people plan to do 'soft' home improvements – such as decorating or buying new products for the home – while 16% plan to do building work and/or external improvements.

Regionally, Greater London, West Midlands and the North East are the hot spots for building work and external improvements, while Northern Ireland and Scotland are the hot spots for 'soft' home improvements.

39% of people would like to or need to move house, but the current situation with the property market, interest rates and general costs relating to moving means they'll focus on improving their current home instead.



KEY

Building work / external improvements

'Soft' home improvements

What are people's motives for making home improvements?



Improve how I feel in my home

35%



Fix broken fixtures / features / items

24%



Add value to my home

16%



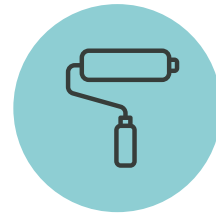
Create more space

14%



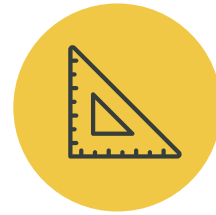
Changing household demographic
(e.g. new baby, parents moving in with you)

9%



Update the look and style

32%



Make better use of existing space

22%



Improve the energy efficiency of the home

15%



Choosing to improve rather than move home

13%



Impress / inspire other people
(friends / family / social media followers)

7%

PR TIP

Understanding the motivations behind home improvement can aid brands in crafting targeted messages. Key drivers include updating style, fixing broken features, optimising space, adding value, and enhancing energy efficiency. However, the most significant motivation is the desire to improve how people feel in their living environment. vv

FROM PAINT AND PLANTS... TO FURNISHINGS AND FURNITURE

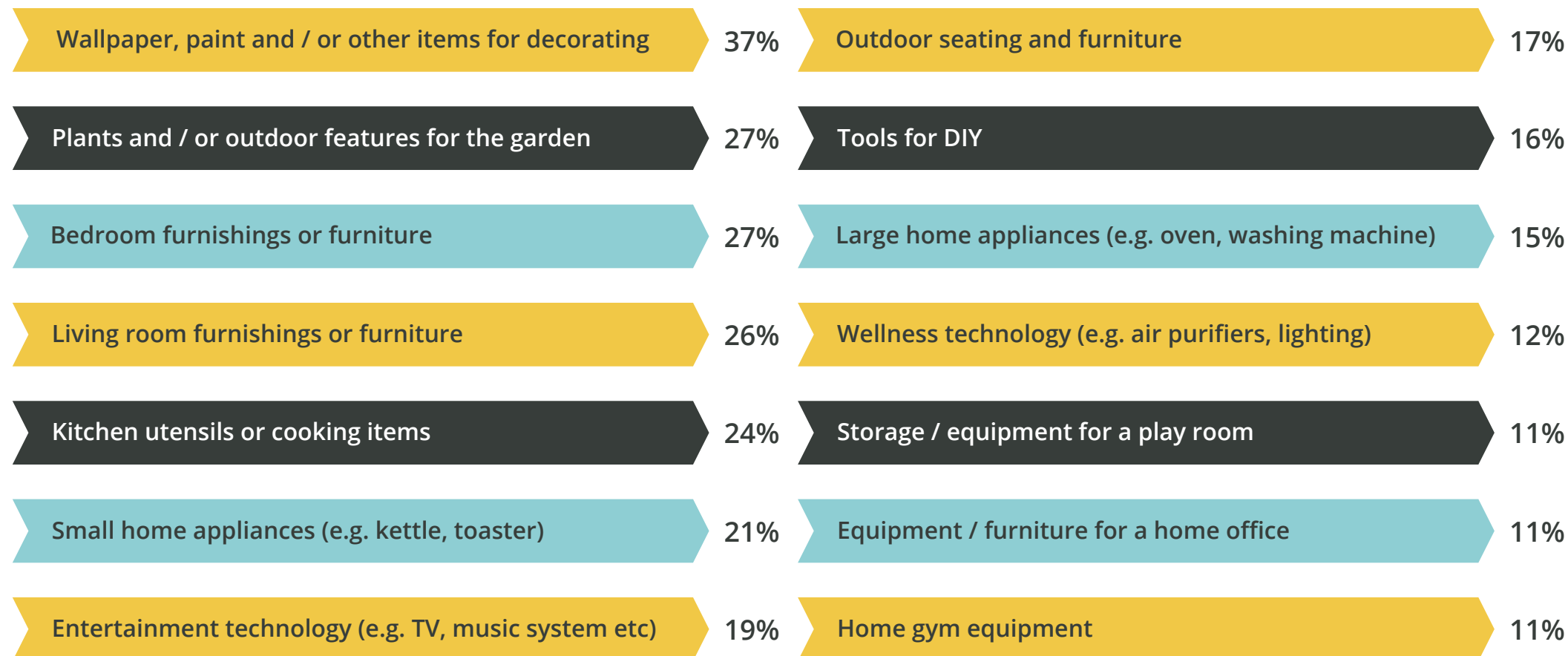
The most popular products people are planning to buy over the next year for their home are related to decorating, for example wallpaper and paint, plants and outdoor features, as well as furniture or furnishings for the bedroom and living room.

In the kitchen, nearly a quarter of people are planning on purchasing utensils or cooking items (24%). A fifth (21%) are planning on buying small home appliances, such as kettles or toasters, while 15% plan to buy large home appliances, like ovens or washing machines.

On top of this, more than one in ten (12%) plan to buy technology or products to help improve their wellness, such as air purifiers or lighting.

Find out more about what smart technology for the home people are planning on purchasing over the next year and what information they may want from manufacturers, suppliers and retailers on page 10.

In the next 12 months, what, if anything, are you planning on buying for your home?



BUILDING A PIPELINE OF HOME IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

When it comes to building work and external improvements, there are clear opportunities for those manufacturing, supplying or selling key products and building materials. Additionally, those offering services such as architecture, design, installation or other trades can also capitalise on the upcoming opportunities.

In the next 12 months, over 40% of people plan on decorating at least one room, 17% intend to landscape their garden, 17% would like new flooring and 15% have their sights set on renovating their bathrooms.



The research suggests there will also be a demand for home improvements that enhance the energy efficiency and sustainability of properties. As part of this trend, individuals are planning to undertake projects such as installing new windows or doors, improving insulation, installing solar panels, setting up electric vehicle charge points, and adopting heat pumps or wastewater recovery systems.

In the next 12 months are you planning any of the following home improvements?

Decorating at least one room	41%
Landscaping the garden	17%
New flooring	17%
New bathroom	15%
New windows or doors	14%
New kitchen	12%
Outdoor dining / entertainment area	10%
New insulation	10%
Home office / space to work	9%
Solar panels	8%
Hobby area	8%
Play area / space for children	8%
Electric vehicle charge point	5%
Loft conversion	5%
Heat pump and/or wastewater recovery pump	5%
Home gym / area to exercise	5%
Double storey extension	5%
Zone / room for pets	5%
Single storey extension	5%
Garage conversion	4%

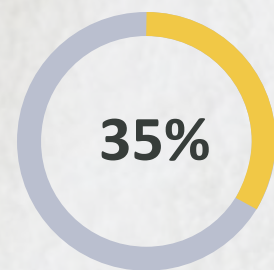
PR TIP

In anticipation of people's plans to purchase new home products or undertake significant renovation projects in the upcoming year, it is vital for businesses to proactively market their products and services. By staying ahead of the demand curve, companies can seize valuable market opportunities.

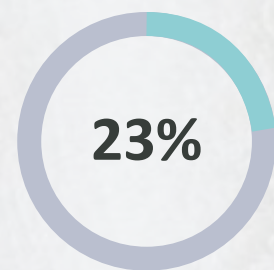
PRICE-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS ARE LOOKING FOR VALUE AND QUALITY

In this price-sensitive climate, it's perhaps no surprise that consumers are seeking products that offer the best value for their money, coupled with long-lasting quality. While sustainability may not always be the number one decisive factor, it's still a consideration for many consumers – as we'll explore in more detail on page 8.

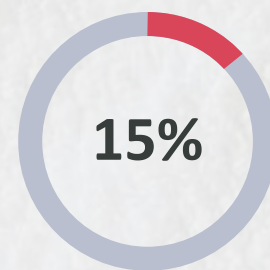
When buying products for your home, what is the main factor that influences your buying decisions?



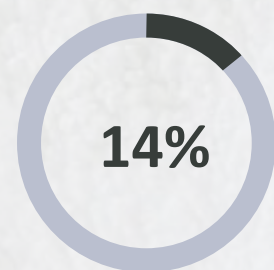
Cost / value



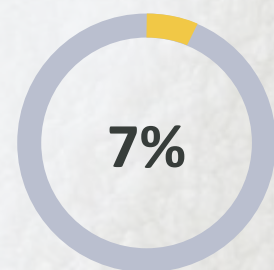
Quality and how long it will last



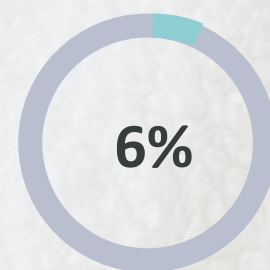
Functionality / how well it works



Style / look / trends



Sustainability / environmental credentials



NA/ other



58% of consumers would be happy to pay more for products or materials for their home if they're good quality and will last.

SUSTAINABILITY IN FOCUS

How consumers are making informed choices for their homes

While sustainability may not be the top determining factor in consumer buying decisions for products and materials for the home, as we saw on page 7, it's still an important factor for many people.

Our research shows nearly half of consumers (47%) say that when buying products or materials for their home, it's important for them to buy from sustainable businesses that reduce their impact on the environment.

Examining specific product categories, we can see that most consumers would assess the sustainability and environmental impact of different items before making a purchasing decision:

APPLIANCES

63% said they would be likely to check the sustainability or environmental impact of appliances before buying them.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Over half (54%) of consumers would check the sustainability or environmental credentials before buying building materials for their home.

HOME FURNISHINGS

Similarly, 53% would check this information before buying home furnishings.

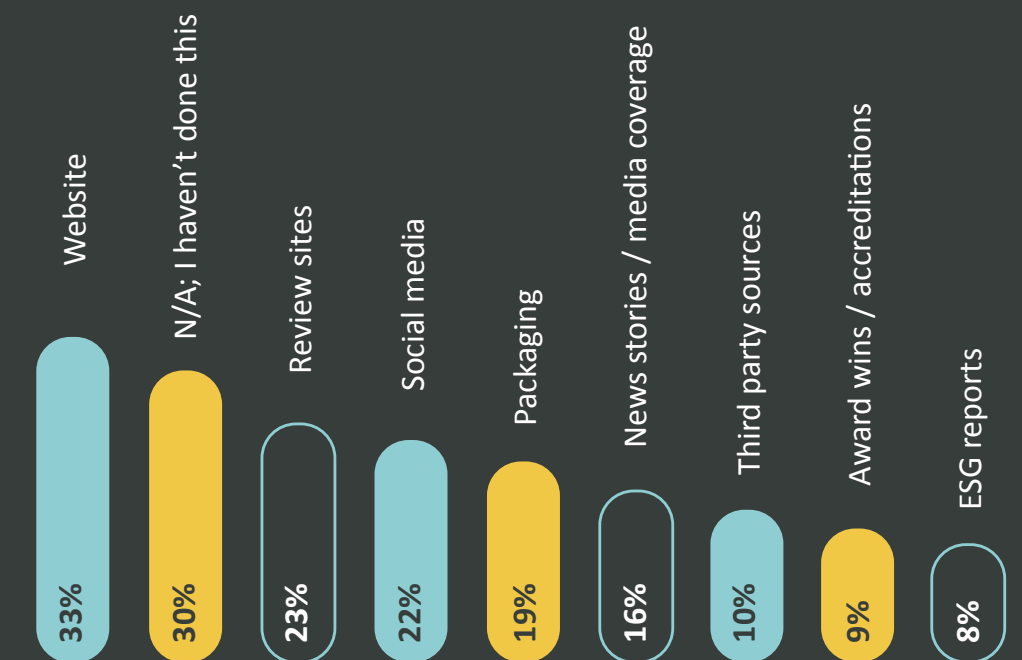
PR TIP

Content is key when it comes to explaining the sustainability credentials and environmental impact of your products. You need consistent messaging across multiple channels, including your website and social media, as well as third party platforms such as review sites and media outlets. Even awards and accreditations form part of consumers' research journey when selecting the right products.

Over a quarter (27%) of people are worried that their home in its current state is having a negative impact on the environment.

When it comes to checking information about the sustainability or environmental impact of products, there are multiple sources consumers use. A third would check a brand's own website, nearly a quarter (23%) look at review sites, 22% social media, 19% packaging, and 16% news stories.

Where do you go for information about the sustainability / environmental impact of a brand's products before you buy them?





Our research shows there is some confusion and worries from consumers around making the right, sustainable choices for the home.

COST

52%

...would like to buy products or materials for their home that are sustainable and have a positive impact on the environment but think these products are more expensive.

SOURCES

27%

...don't know where to check the information and proof of sustainability claims for products or materials for their home.

GREENWASHING

50%

...worry that a company's claims around the sustainability credentials of their products or materials for their home may be misleading or inaccurate.

JARGON

23%

...don't understand the language and terminology used by businesses when they're explain the sustainability credentials of their products or materials for the home.

Beyond greenwashing: How to genuinely communicate sustainability credentials

/ DO IT

You can't have a communications strategy around sustainability if you're not actually doing anything that genuinely benefits the planet and people. From your business operations and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies through to your manufacturing methods and investment strategies, make sure that sustainability is integrated throughout your business.

/ PROVE IT

Whether its testing and data to back up the energy efficiency claims of your products and materials, or regularly monitoring and measuring improvements in other areas of your business, such as recycling and reducing your carbon footprint, make sure you have clear evidence to back up what you're doing. Introducing an annual ESG report can show your commitment and continuous improvement across all areas of your business.

/ SAY IT

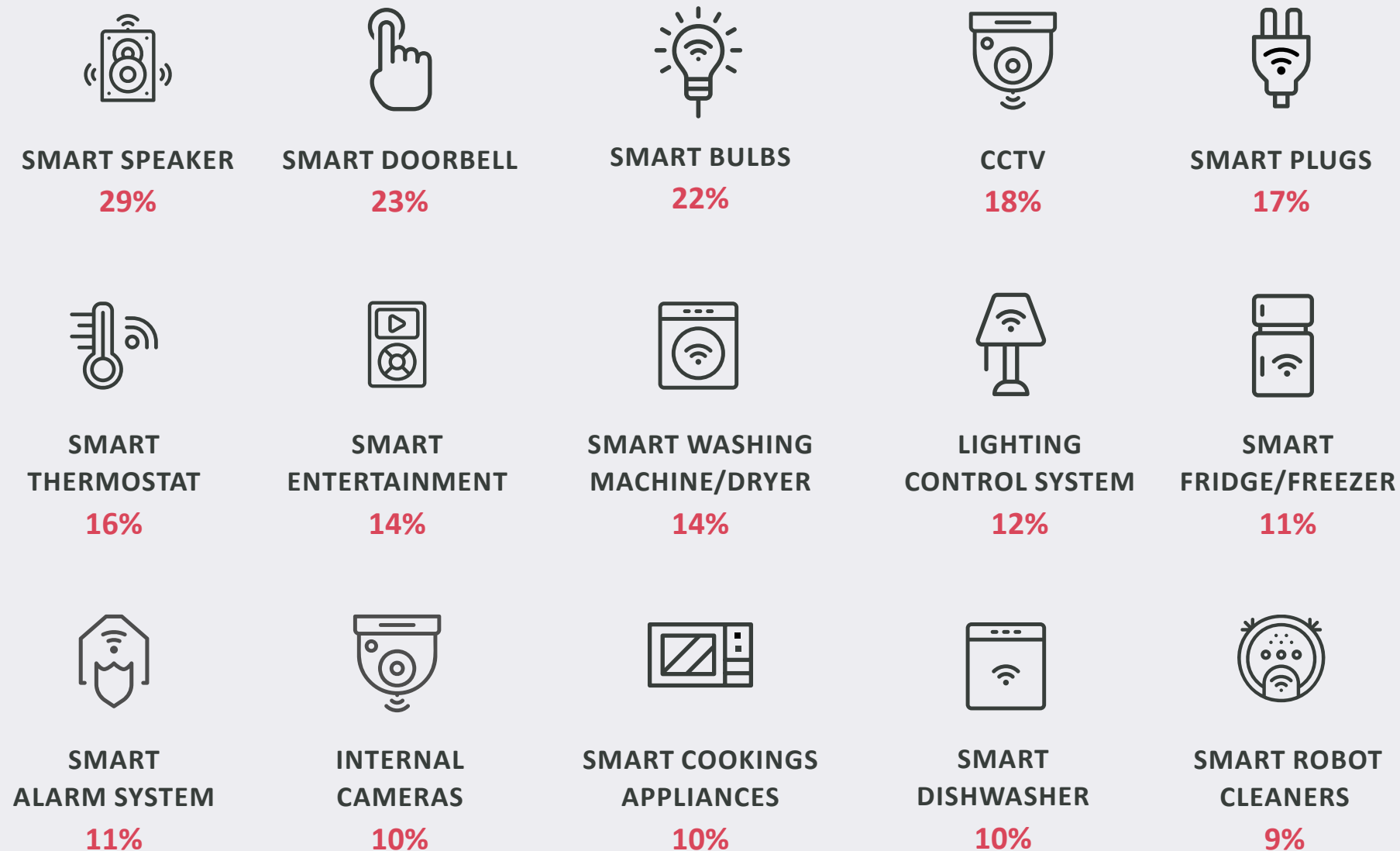
Once you've done it and can prove it, then you can start shouting about your sustainability efforts and achievements. Rather than a standalone strategy, sustainability should be part of your wider PR and communications strategy to target and engage with your audiences, from customers and employees to investors and other stakeholders.

HOME TECHNOLOGY TRENDS:

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSUMER SENTIMENTS

With technology rapidly advancing, it's an exciting time for businesses manufacturing, supplying and selling smart home products and services. As part of our research, we wanted to explore what market opportunities there are for businesses in this industry. But above and beyond that, our main aim was to delve into the minds of consumers to examine their thoughts and perspectives when it comes to home tech. Understanding what motivates or holds them back when it comes to investing in technology for the home allows us to refine our PR and communications for businesses and brands in this area.

Our research found that over two-thirds (69%) of people currently have smart technology in their home. The most popular products they have are:

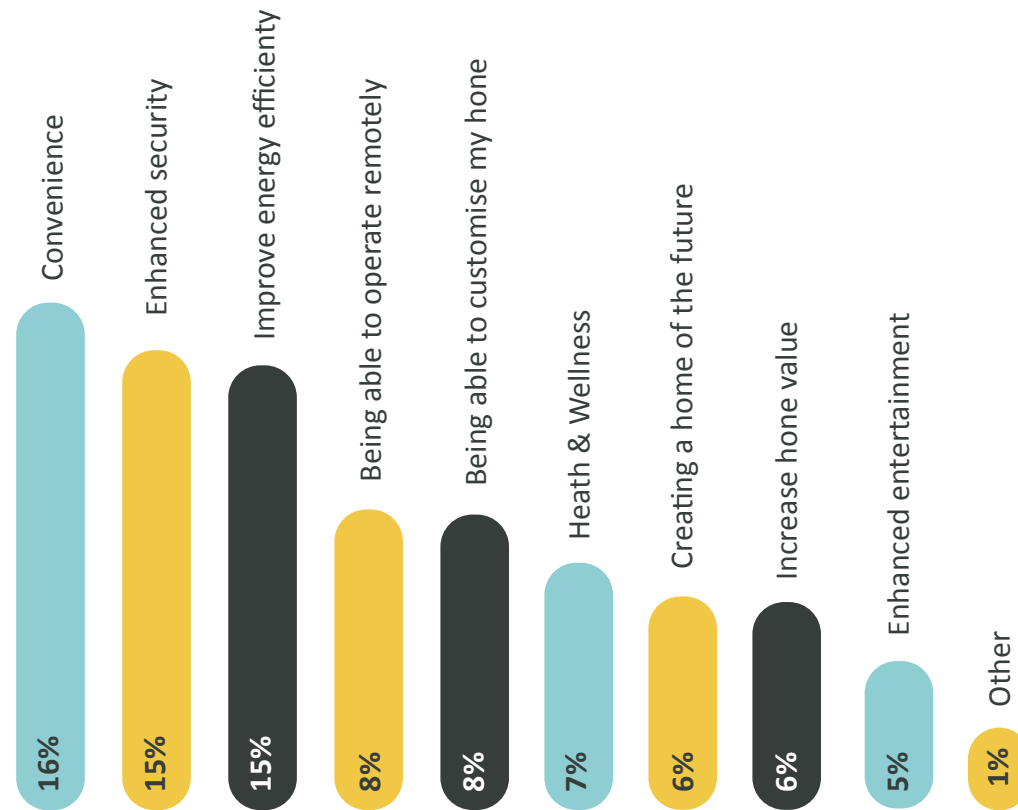


Over half of people (53%) plan on buying new smart technology for their home in the next 12 months. The most popular items they're planning on buying are:

Smart doorbell	23%
Smart bulbs	18%
External cameras / CCTV	17%
Smart plugs	14%
Smart alarm system	13%
Smart lock	13%
Lighting control system	13%
Smart speakers	12%
Smart speaker	12%
Robot vacuum cleaner / smart robot cleaners	12%
Smart thermostat	12%
Smart shower	12%
Smart entertainment systems	12%
Internal cameras	11%
Smart air purifier	11%

What is your main motivator for investing in new home technology?

Convenience, enhanced security and improved energy efficiency are all the top motivators for investing in new home technology.



While some consumers are already on board with investing in and using smart tech for the home, there are clearly some who have their hesitations. So what factors are potentially putting off people from buying smart home tech?

COST

43% ...are worried about the cost.

OVERWHELM

39% ...are overwhelmed with information and choice.

PRACTICALITIES

39% ...are worried about how to install and / or operate smart tech in the home.

SECURITY

37% ... are worried about the risk of smart technology in the home being hacked.

PR TIP

You can negate consumers' concerns with carefully crafted messaging in your PR and marketing content. Whether it's your website, packaging, point of sale displays, news articles or features, make sure you're clearly communicating benefits such as value for money, ease of installation and use, security, and other product credentials such as awards, testimonials and case studies.

BEHIND THE BUYING PROCESS

Where shoppers go for expertise, ideas and recommendations for the home

Online shopping is a common habit for many of us today. But when it comes to purchasing products and materials for the home, turning to digital channels is only part of the decision-making process.



According to our research, **60% of people prefer to research products or materials for their home online** before making a purchase. More than half (54%) emphasised the importance of reviews, case studies and testimonials in their buying decision.

However, 64% said they would like to see these products or materials in person before buying them. This highlights the continuing importance of brick-and-mortar premises in this sector.

Over a third (37%) would like to speak to specialists such as architects, designers, retailers or merchants before buying products or materials for their home.

Supporting a local business is also a priority for more than half (51%) of respondents when buying products or materials for the home.



When it comes to choosing a business to buy from, recommendations, seeing products or materials in person, reputation, and a wide product or service offering are all top considerations.



64% of consumers would like to see products or materials for the home in person before buying them.

When choosing a retailer, supplier or business to purchase products / materials for your home, what is important for you to consider?



When creating content, it's important to go beyond product details and specifications. Shoppers want to see evidence of quality and performance, so case studies, testimonials and accolades are also handy to have.

Interestingly, people still value the opportunity to physically interact with products, as well as engage with experts. This presents a huge opportunity for businesses that can provide showroom or in-store experiences with knowledgeable staff. In a predominantly digital world, this can be a powerful differentiator to help you stand out from competitors, build trust and boost sales.

PR TIP

There are multiple sources that consumers refer to when researching products and materials for the home. It's therefore important to have a clear PR and marketing strategy that covers everything from your own digital channels, such as your website and social media channels, through to third party sources, like review sites and media outlets.

THE TOP CHANNELS FOR INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

...and how PR can help

As part of our research, we went into more detail into the channels that consumers use to find information and insights for different products and services for the home.

For each category, the top source was: 'A general online search'. This highlights the importance of certain PR tactics, including:

YOUR OWN WEBSITE & SEO

Make sure that you're focusing on the right keywords and search terms when creating content for your own website to make sure that you rank and potential customers can easily find you online. As well as clear product or service information, your website should include relevant blogs, design advice, case studies, testimonials, accolades, and – most importantly – great images and video to bring it all to life.

MEDIA OUTLETS

Many media outlets, especially national and consumer media, have high domain authorities and invest a lot into their own SEO. This means they often rank well for certain keywords and phrases. As a brand, if you can get your products, services and expert comments included in relevant articles online, this will help you get in front of the right audience and drive interest.

As a test, we searched on Google: 'How to plan a home extension'. The first page results included several magazines that we've got relationships with and regularly get coverage in for clients, including Homebuilding & Renovating, Real Homes, Ideal Home and Build It.

REVIEW SITES AND FORUMS

Review websites like Which? and Expert Reviews, as well as forums such as Money Saving Expert, Reddit and Mumsnet also tend to have high domain authorities and rank highly for keywords and phrases. Building a strong reputation, turning your customers into advocates and looking at ways to get your products or services reviewed can all help raise awareness, develop trust and credibility, and drive enquiries and sales.

PR TIP

Influencer marketing can be an effective tactic as part of your PR strategy for your business. Although we may often think of 'influencers' in the sense of either celebrities or people with large online following, we can also consider other organisations or brands who can add credibility, provide new insights and help to amplify your message. Brands and businesses in their own right can become trustworthy sources of information and inspiration, highlighting the importance of investing in your brand, PR and content. It's also interesting to note that media outlets, including magazines and TV shows, are mentioned as influential sources for information and inspiration.

1 in 10

consumers will go directly to magazines for home décor and furnishings information and inspiration.

The top channels consumers use for information and inspiration for different home categories



HOME RENOVATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS (e.g. extensions, building materials)

- General online search 21%
- Recommendations 14%
- YouTube 13%
- TV (live) 13%
- Instore / retailers 11%



HOME APPLIANCES (e.g. ovens, kettles, washing machines)

- General online search 29%
- In store / retailers 19%
- Review websites 17%
- Company / brand websites 15%
- YouTube 11%



SMART TECHNOLOGY FOR THE HOME (e.g. smart thermostats, smart speakers, smart air purifiers)

- General online search 21%
- YouTube 13%
- Review websites 12%
- TV (live) 11%
- Recommendations 11%



HOME DÉCOR & FURNISHINGS (e.g. furniture, paint, soft furnishings)

- General online search 22%
- In store / retailers 18%
- Instagram 13%
- TV (live) 13%
- Pinterest 12%



HOME ORGANISING / DECLUTTERING (e.g. storage, ways to keep the home organised)

- General online search 17%
- YouTube 13%
- Instagram 12%
- TV (live) 12%
- Facebook 11%



DIY PROJECTS FOR THE HOME (e.g. decorating, DIY home improvements)

- General online search 22%
- YouTube 17%
- TV (live) 13%
- In store / retailers 13%
- Recommendations 12%

We also asked an open question to the 2,015 respondents to see what organisations and/or public figures, such as celebrities, influencers and industry experts, they go to for information and inspiration, or follow online.

Although we received thousands of different responses, there were some brands and names that were mentioned time and time again:

HOME INTERIORS:

B&Q
BBC
Dunelm
Facebook
Good Housekeeping
Grand Designs
Home and Garden magazine
Homebase
House Beautiful
Ideal Home
Ikea
Instagram
Kelly Hoppen
Kevin McCloud
Kirsty Allsop
Laurence Lewellyn Bowen
Mrs Hinch
Pinterest
Sarah Beeny
Stacey Solomon

GARDEN DESIGN :

Alan Titchmarsh
B&Q
BBC
Gardeners' World
Charlie Dimmock
Dobbies
Dunelm
Facebook
Garden centres (generic)
Homes & Garden magazine
Homebase
Instagram
Magazines (generic)
Monty Don
Pinterest
Royal Horticultural Society
TikTok
TV (generic)
Which
YouTube

ABOUT UNHOOKED COMMUNICATIONS

We hope you've enjoyed our Homes Unhooked 2023-2024 report and found it useful!

If you want support with turning these insights into actions to deliver success for your construction, property, home tech or interiors business, we'd love to chat to see how we can help.

Unhooked Communications was set up in 2017 to offer businesses a creative, flexible and results-driven PR service to help them manage their reputations, get in front of the right people and achieve their business objectives.

What makes us the best fit for our clients...

Specialists

We're all specialists in your sectors, meaning you get a higher level of expertise and consultancy.

Experts

We choose the best PR and comms specialists with sector and/or tactical experience to work on your day-to-day activity.

Innovative

Transforming the outdated traditional agency model, we only work with senior practitioners with 10+ years experience.

Creative

We have a creative campaign approach to PR and marketing, focusing on developing informative and inspiring content.

Leaders

We invest in our own research and insights, as well as deliver talks and workshops with organisations and universities, including Google Digital Garage, Brighton SEO, Digital Institute of London, Manchester Metropolitan, University and University of Salford.

Learning and development

We're committed to investing in our learning and development on key topics such as ESG, carbon literacy and technology use in comms.

Award winning

We were named Best PR Agency at the 2022 Construction Marketing Awards and we have multiple other award wins and shortlists.



WHO WE WORK WITH

Here are just some of the brands that we've worked with since Unhooked was founded:

H'AFELE


Marshalls


SAINT-GOBAIN

JEWSON

 **Polypipe**

Artex

ANWYL
thoughtful homes


POLYFLOR™
COVERING THE WORLD

 **forget me not
children's hospice**

BAYFIELDS
— OPTICIANS & AUDIOLOGISTS —

 **FLETCHERS SOLICITORS**
Serious Injury Specialists


**FLOORING
SUPERSTORE.COM**

YMCA

 **Hearing
Direct.com**

Jack Badger
TRADITIONAL JOINERY COMPANY

Training, workshops and events

We've also delivered training, workshops and events with organisations, businesses and universities including:

Google
Digital Garage

University of
Salford

 **Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

 **LONDON
DIGITAL
INSTITUTE**

Blogon

OUR SERVICES



PR strategy

Strategic insights to work out the best approach for your PR and marketing, teamed with effective measurement.

Media relations

Coverage in print, broadcast, online. News, thought leadership, products and more.

Copywriting and content

From blogs to brochures, we craft your copy and manage the creative and design for impactful content.

Creative campaigns

Make your PR go further with creative, multi-channel campaigns that meet several objectives.

CPDs and e-learning

Inform, educate and inspire your target audiences through CPDs, e-learning and training.

Launches

Whether launching a new brand, product or service, we can help you build awareness and drive interest.



Data-driven campaigns

Bespoke market research to fuel campaigns and feed into inspiring and informative content like reports, events and PR to amplify the insights.



Media training

Working with former journalists and producers, we can train your teams to make them confident in interviews and when presenting.



Sustainability and ESG

Identify your messaging, collate the evidence and share your values and activity in a meaningful way.



Award entries

We have a great track record of getting businesses shortlisted (and winning!) reputable awards.



Crisis comms

Planning the strategy and managing the comms for the worst case scenarios to look after your brand.

To set up a call or to request our full credentials, please email Unhooked Communications MD, Claire Gamble, claire@weareunhooked.com



For more information or to arrange a meeting to see how we could work together, please contact Claire Gamble, Unhooked Communications MD:

claire@weareunhooked.com

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