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.

East of England
13% 50%

Greater London
21% 58%

East Midlands
12% 57%

West Midlands
18% 51%

North East
18% 51%

North West
16% 54%

Northern Ireland
13% 59%

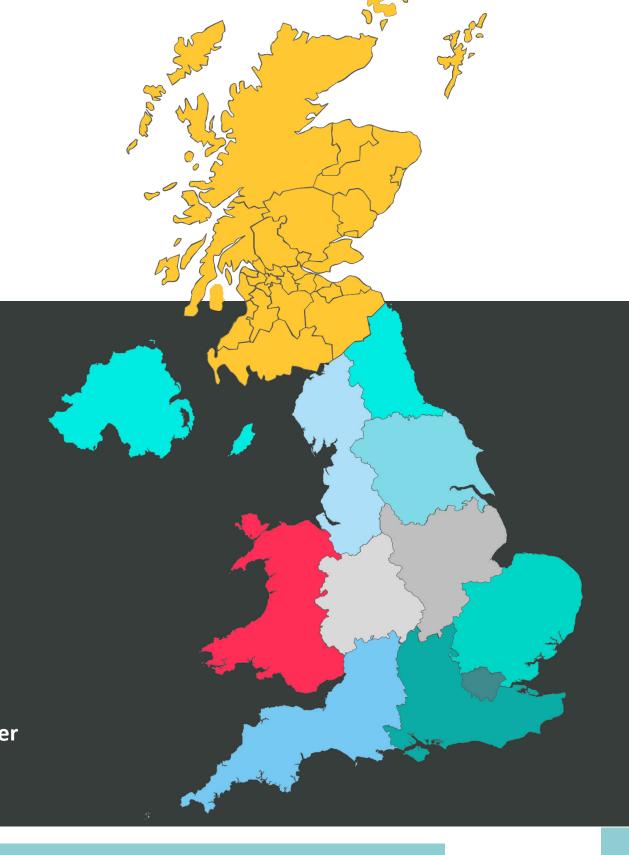
Scotland
13% 59%

South East
14% 47%

South West
12% 45%

Wales
16% 48%

Yorkshire & the Humber
18% 56%



What are people's motives for making home improvements?



Improve how I feel in my home

35%



Update the look and style

32%



Fix broken fixtures / features / items

24%



Make better use of existing space

22%



Add value to my home

16%



Improve the energy efficiency of the home

15%



Create more space

14%



Choosing to improve rather than move home

13%



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

9%



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

7%



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. This focus on wellbeing in our homes has emerged as a prevailing trend since the pandemic. For businesses offering products and services that contribute to an improved home experience, highlighting this aspect in PR and content is crucial.



FROM PAINT AND PLANTS... TO FURNISHINGS AND FURNITURE

The most popular products people are In the kitchen, nearly a quarter of 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.

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.

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

| Wallpaper, paint and / or other items for decorating | 37% | Outdoor seating and furniture | 17% |
|--|-----|--|-----|
| Plants and / or outdoor features for the garden | 27% | Tools for DIY | 16% |
| Bedroom furnishings or furniture | 27% | Large home appliances (e.g. oven, washing machine) | 15% |
| Living room furnishings or furniture | 26% | Wellness technology (e.g. air purifiers, lighting) | 12% |
| Kitchen utensils or cooking items | 24% | Storage / equipment for a play room | 11% |
| Small home appliances (e.g. kettle, toaster) | 21% | Equipment / furniture for a home office | 11% |
| Entertainment technology (e.g. TV, music system etc) | 19% | Home gym equipment | 11% |

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.



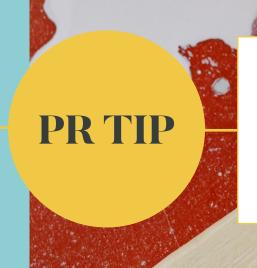
BUILDING A PIPELINE OF HOME IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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 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.

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% |
| | |

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?





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

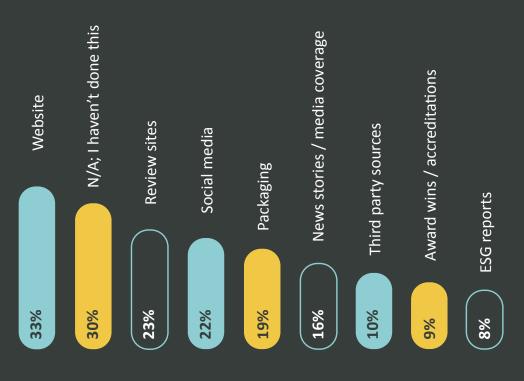
Similarly, 53% would check this information before buying home furnishings.

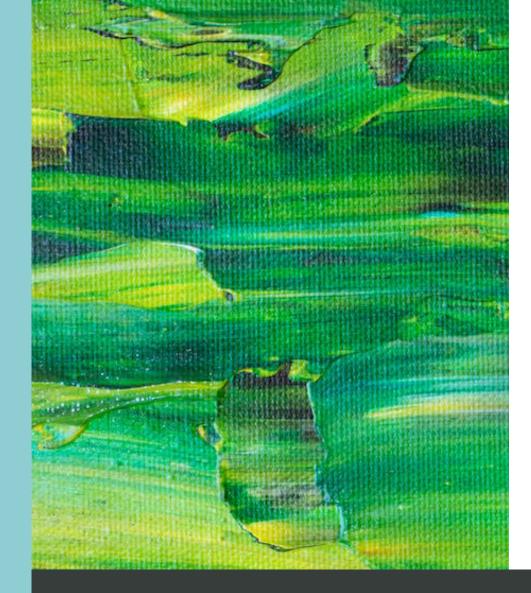
Content is key when it comes to explaining the sustainability credentials and environmental impact of your products. You need consistent messaging across multiple channels, including your website and social media, as well as third party platforms such as review sites and media outlets. Even awards and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



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

GREENWASHING



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

JARGON



...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:



SMART SPEAKER
29%



SMART DOORBELL 23%



SMART BULBS 22%



CCTV 18%



SMART PLUGS 17%



SMART
THERMOSTAT
16%



SMART
ENTERTAINMENT
14%



SMART WASHING MACHINE/DRYER 14%



LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM 12%



SMART
FRIDGE/FREEZER
11%



SMART
ALARM SYSTEM
11%



INTERNAL CAMERAS



SMART COOKINGS
APPLIANCES
10%



SMART
DISHWASHER
10%



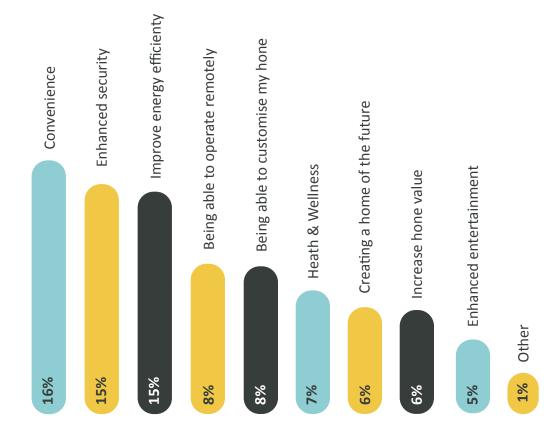
SMART ROBOT
CLEANERS
9%

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



...are worried about the cost.

OVERWHELM



...are overwhelmed with information and choice.

PRACTICALITIES

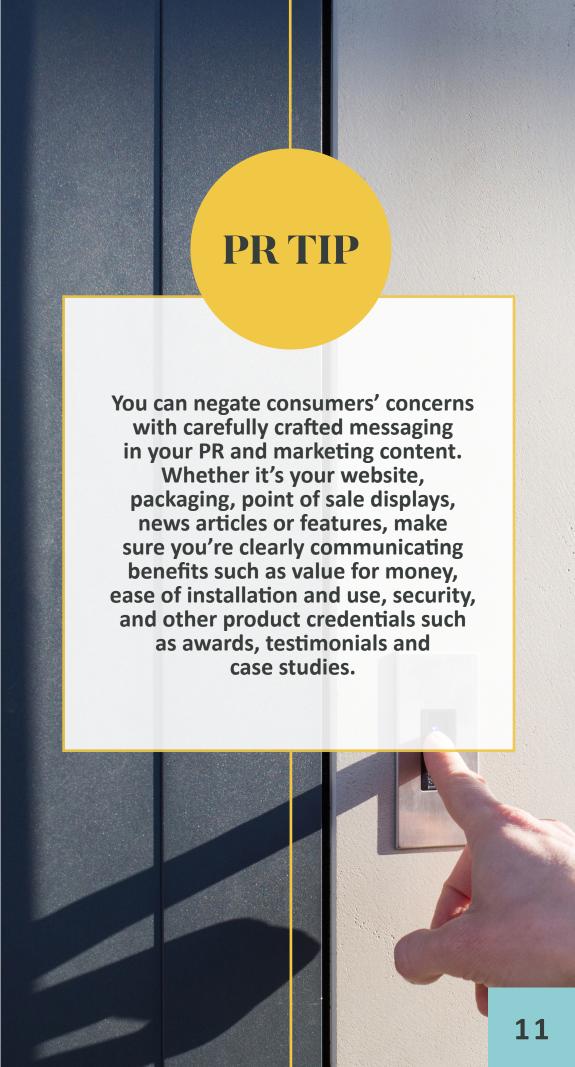


...are worried about how to install and / or operate smart tech in the home.

SECURITY



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



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.



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.

1 in 10 consumers will go directly to magazines for home décor and furnishings information and inspiration.

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.



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 | 1/% |
|---|-----------------------|-----|
| • | 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: GARDEN DESIGN:

B&Q Alan Titchmarsh

BBC B&Q
Dunelm BBC

Facebook Gardeners' World
Good Housekeeping Charlie Dimmock

Grand Designs Dobbies

Home and Garden magazine Dunelm

Homebase Facebook

House Beautiful Garden centres (generic)

Ideal Home Homes & Garden magazine

IkeaHomebaseInstagramInstagram

Kelly Hoppen Magazines (generic)

Kevin McCloud Monty Don
Kirsty Allsop Pinterest

Laurence Lewellyn Bowen Royal Horticultural Society

Mrs Hinch TikTok

Pinterest TV (generic)
Sarah Beeny Which

Stacey Solomon 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 resultsdriven 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:

HÄFELE































Training, workshops and events

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

Google Digital Garage









OUR SERVICES



PR strategy

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



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.



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



Media training

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



Copywriting and content

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



Sustainability and ESG

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



Creative campaigns

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



Award entries

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



CPDs and e-learning

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



Crisis comms

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



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

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

We believe there is huge value in focusing on and specialising in PR and content services for our clients. But we know briefs often require or would benefit from additional services to ensure they achieve maximum impact.

Just as we select the best PR and comms talent for our client briefs, we also work with other key partners who specialise in complementary services. Whether our clients require video, photography, design, web

creation or social media, we regularly work with expert agencies and consultants to deliver briefs.

What's more, we can also act as lead agency to help streamline the process for you – because we know busy marketing teams often don't have time to manage multiple agencies.

Find out a bit more about our partners here...

"On The Tools is thrilled to partner with Unhooked Communications in order to offer the brands we work with even more value, distribution and insight. Our partnership makes us even stronger."

Lee Wilcox, Co-founder & CEO | On The Tools

Introducing...



On The Tools is connecting the construction industry to improve the lives of UK tradespeople.

Millions of people watch, read and engage with On The Tools' content across social and digital platforms each and every day. As a trusted community, On The Tools is able to talk to UK tradespeople and collect in-depth insight and give construction a voice. On The Tools works with brands to distribute relevant, engaging content to over 7.5 million followers.

On The Tools creates partnerships to showcase the most valuable products and services for tradespeople whilst helping brands to build fame, get new customers and keep them. By combining community, in-house expertise and a data driven approach, On The Tools' partners get industry leading social first content and access to millions of engaged Tradespeople.

They can aid with:

- Awareness
- Data capture
- Traffic
- Insight
- Content creation
- Paid social
- Social media management

On The Tools has worked with a variety of partners, in construction and beyond - from The Cabinet Office, to food brands and banks. On The Tools provides the ultimate way to put your brand at the heart of our community. Whether its awareness, traffic or data, On The Tools makes their partners part of the conversation day in, day out.

Introducing...

Huddle

"Huddle is proud to partner with Unhooked Communications to offer a combined PR, copywriting, web design and development service. Having worked together for a number of years, we trust Unhooked to deliver the same level of care, quality and straightforwardness to our clients as we would."

Tom Parson,
Client Services Director & Founder

Huddle is a boutique web agency that enables businesses to get more value from their website.

Huddle enables clients to achieve key business goals - increased website revenue, decreased admin and service time, improved brand presence, and continued digital innovation.

Huddle's services include:

- Digital consulting and strategy
- Digital transformation, integrations and automation
- Custom web development and website maintenance
- Web design, prototyping and bespoke graphics
- Usability, accessibility, testing and research

Huddle has worked with a select range of clients, including a leading North West interiors magazine, a national property consultancy and several London-based commercial estate agents. Huddle's diverse client base, further including international b2b agencies, early-stage startups and retail ecommerce stores, enable a diversity of thought to deliver truly creative and original outcomes for any new client.

Introducing...

LEYLA ALEXANDER

Branding & Design

"I love working with Unhooked Communications they are always collaborative and really great at what they do. I am excited to partner with them to offer a fully bespoke brand and design service."

Leyla Alexander, Founder Leyla Alexander is a versatile and passionate multi-disciplinary graphic designer specialising in branding and web design. With a flair for playful and effective design solutions, Leyla is dedicated to helping her clients attract new customers and establish a strong brand presence across both print and digital platforms.

Leyla's services include:

- Branding
- Graphic design
- Design for print
- Bespoke web design
- HTML email design
- Brochure design
- Motion graphics and explainer videos

While Leyla has had the privilege of working with renowned brands like The Coop, On The Beach, and Universal Pictures, she is also passionate about supporting smaller businesses and the positive impact they make. Whether it's photographers, marketing agencies, private chefs, or independent publishing houses, Leyla is committed to helping her clients elevate their brand, generate leads, and increase revenue.



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

UNHOOKED COMMUNICATIONS