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IS SOCIAL MEDIA BECOMING TOP TOOL FOR TRADESMEN?

Though traditionally a 'hands on' sector, Screwfix is predicting a 'social revolution' within the trade as almost half (48%) of tradesmen reveal they are winning new business through social media channels.

Tradesmen are increasingly turning to social media sites to reach more customers and increase their brand awareness. Eight out of 10 tradesmen use social media as a free way to reach more customers and two fifths (43%) believe having a page on a social media site makes their business look more established.

With a quarter of tradesmen now using sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to promote their business, the channel is set to become even more popular. Sixty-three per cent of tradesmen say their social media use is more than last year and a third (33%) believe they will use it more next year.

This upward trend supports a recent study from the internet Advertising Bureau UK* which found that nearly 80% of consumers would be more inclined to buy because of a brand's presence on social media. And for small firms, knowing how to capitalise on this is crucial, as John Mewett, marketing director at Screwfix, explains:

"Technology is empowering consumers. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are today's equivalent of the telephone directory - members of the public are now more likely than ever to go online to find and research local tradesmen in their area.

"As tradesmen increase the amount of business tasks and transactions they undertake online, social media should be seriously considered as a cost-effective way to market themselves to more and more customers."

Interestingly, a third of tradesmen (32%) also use social media to check on their competitors and what services and prices they are offering.

John adds: “We know tradesmen are increasingly using smartphones and laptops during the working day to communicate with colleagues and clients as well as speeding-up the purchasing of essential products and tools.

“The use of social media for business is set to continue – the Screwfix Twitter page has more than 16,500 followers, our Facebook page has over 76,500 fans and we have more than 1.2 million posts on our forum.

“Our mobile site receives more than 200,000 unique visits every week from tradesmen browsing and buying items while on the go, so it’s clear there is an appetite for traditional business tasks and transactions to be completed online.”

Screwfix’s award-winning mobile site enables tradesmen to purchase products online for next day delivery or collection in store. For customers who are reluctant to buy through a mobile website, the site makes it possible for them to create their order online and complete it by calling the contact centre to process payment.

For more information on Screwfix’s new range of products, visit www.screwfix.com, call 0500 41 41 41 or pick up a copy of the new catalogue at your local Screwfix store or order it online.

* <http://www.iabuk.net/blog/unlocking-the-power-of-social-media>

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Note to editors

About Screwfix:

Screwfix is recognised as being “where the trade buys” offering a straightforward and transparently-priced retail experience that enables busy tradesmen to shop 14,000 products over the phone, online, via their mobile or from their local store.

- From power tools and workwear to cables and pipe fittings, more than 11,000 products are available to collect from the national network of over 290 stores. An

extra range of over 3,000 products can be ordered over the phone, online or from a local store for next day delivery, with orders taken up until 7pm to home or site.

- screwfix.com attracts 1 million visitors per week and the Screwfix *Click & Collect* service means customers can conveniently purchase supplies online and then collect from store just five minutes later.
- Customers can contact the UK-based Screwfix call centre free 7 days a week (plus bank holidays) on 0500 41 41 41, or on the mobile-friendly 01935 414141.
- Screwfix stores are open 7 days a week – see screwfix.com for local opening hours
- 94 per cent of customers would recommend a friend to Screwfix.

PRESS information:

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