



## **NO FEAR FOR NEW YEAR FOR BUILDERS AND PLUMBERS**

Resolutions won't be necessary for the building and plumbing trade this year, as the industry tentatively takes a turn for the better - with almost half (48 per cent) saying they were busier than expected over the last few weeks.

Tradesmen are reporting that homeowners seem to be more willing to spend as we approach the traditional home improvement season and are frequently 'calling someone in' to assist on bigger projects.

According to Screwfix's Trade Pulse Index, which measures activity levels and confidence, tradesmen are much more confident about the economy than they were 12 months ago, with the index up from -55 points in December 2008 to 13 points in December 2009.

This is matched by confidence in activity levels, with a year on year increase of 65 points up to 37.

December saw tradesmen ending the year on a high, working right up to Christmas Eve to finish jobs as activity levels outstripped expectation, with the pulse turning positive for the first time since April 2008.

Although the index shows that many won't be sad to see the back of 2009 – with one in four tradesmen admitting they were short of work throughout the challenging year – optimism in the industry means many have no fear for the New Year.

While overall confidence has increased, tradesmen have reported increased competition when quoting for work and the need to promote themselves more and

the need to make tough decisions in making redundancies have forced them to adapt to survive in 2009.

John Mewett, marketing director at Screwfix said:

“Tradesmen are gearing up for a much better year, with confidence levels up significantly in both the general economy and opportunities for work. This reflects the buoyancy of the final quarter in 2009, compared to the dismal end to 2008.

“Our data shows that builders and electricians were the busiest of the trades in the last few weeks of the year, with plumbers getting an additional boost thanks to the heating season and severe weather.

“2009 certainly ended on a much more positive note than it began – long may it continue.”

ENDS

### **About Screwfix**

Screwfix is the UK's leading supplier of tools, accessories and hardware products to the trade, delivering millions of products to building professionals and serious DIY enthusiasts every year.

Customers can shop at any local Screwfix branch, via the web or by phone via the Screwfix National Contact Centre.

The Screwfix operation is supported by the famous Screwfix catalogue – the key reference source of the trade - which is updated on a quarterly basis. The catalogue is the most comprehensive resource for products – from screws to roofing materials to power tools – in the UK.

The latest catalogue, which includes over 14,000 product lines, features exclusive products as well as leading brand names. Fully committed to customer care and support, Screwfix offers a 30-day no quibble, money-back guarantee on all unused products and all prices are inclusive of VAT.

### **CALL**

With over 30 years experience in the industry, Screwfix offers next-day parcel delivery to tradesmen, building sites, handymen and serious DIY professionals throughout the UK, dispatching over 15,000 parcels per day.

At Screwfix, customer service is a major priority. The Screwfix National Contact Centre won the European Call Centre 'Best Customer Experience' Award in 2006.

### CLICK

The Screwfix website, [www.screwfix.com](http://www.screwfix.com), and national call centre, 0500 41 41 41, offer swift, professional access to products for next day delivery.

The Screwfix website also features the famous tradesman's forum, where building professionals and serious DIY enthusiasts share information and technical advice on a wide range of topics.

Follow Screwfix on twitter: [twitter.com/Screwfixdotcom](https://twitter.com/Screwfixdotcom)

### VISIT

A national network of over 150 local Screwfix branches offers tradesmen – and serious DIY enthusiasts in the know - immediate access to an enormous range of building essentials at unrivalled prices.

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