



## Hardworking and Successful: The Modern White Van Man

**Date: April 2014**

Business is looking up for the UK's tradespeople. A recent survey, aimed at busting the White Van Man myth, has revealed that trade professionals are in fact hardworking and highly skilled with an entrepreneurial spirit that is helping them to recover from the recent economic downturn.

The in-depth research, which was a study of over 10,000 people working across a range of trades, reveals that tradesmen are three times as likely to be their own boss and employ on average two additional staff. A large proportion are also keen to progress their development and improve their skills to boost business, with 58% of tradespeople saying they have a professional qualification and 13% having undertaken a degree.

When asked to best describe how they operate, 67% responded that they are highly trained and skilled, while 93% said they take pride in doing a good job, demonstrating their hardworking nature.

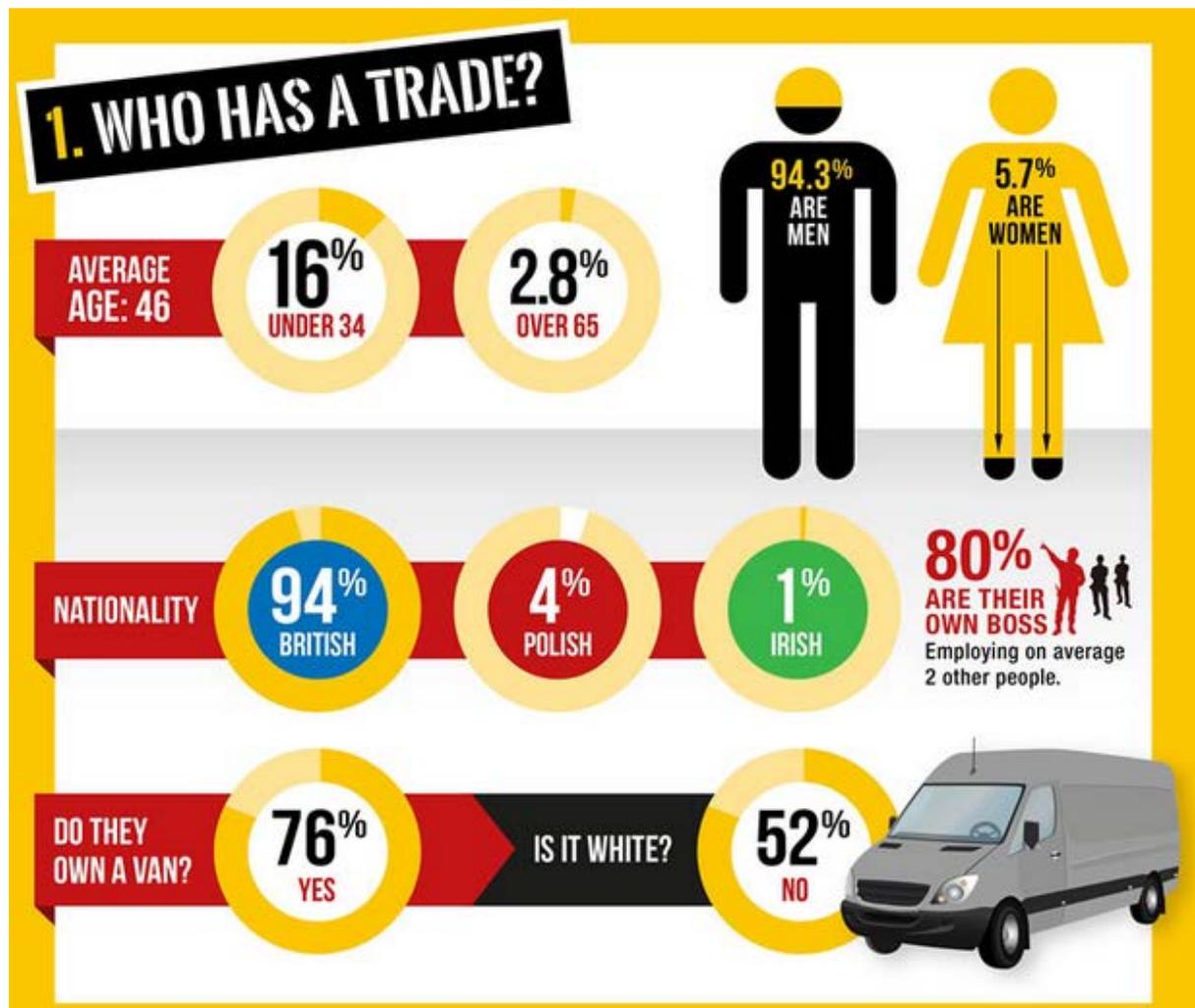
The study has also revealed that over half of the UK's trade professionals are happy with current business performance. With 40% of tradespeople responding that their current income is 'comfortable' (compared to 32% of the general population) and 14% said that business was 'going well' or 'booming' (compared to just 10% of the UK public), the results signal an upward trend for the industry and is a good barometer that sectors such as house building, shop fitting and domestic spending on home improvements are also on the rise.

The survey highlights how trade professionals are becoming increasingly more tech-savvy to keep up to speed with the latest industry developments and meet the demands of their customers. 75% use a smartphone at work, while a tablet device is now considered essential to a growing number of tradespeople for ordering supplies on site (31%) and on-the-go.

How are tradespeople driving their business forward? Trust is still high among trade professionals with 84% gaining new business through word of mouth. With 74% of tradespeople responding that they always turn up on time and 82% giving honest and accurate advice, their reliable and professional nature is helping to ensure future recommendations.

The report also reveals that tradespeople are amongst the happiest workers in the UK. Asked to rate how much they love their job, tradespeople gave an average score of over 8 out of ten, 16% higher than the general population's average score of 6.9 out of 10.

The comprehensive research was carried out by IronmongeryDirect, the UK's biggest online and mail order supplier of ironmongery products to the trade. The poll surveyed tradespeople about their work practices, background and tastes to build the broadest picture ever into what makes our tradespeople tick.



Wayne Lysaght-Mason, managing director at IronmongeryDirect, said: “We conducted this in-depth research to gauge the current feeling of the industry. It’s great to see tradespeople not only performing well, but feeling so happy and confident about the future.

“The results show that their success can be attributed to their own hard work and determination to weather the recent recession. We’ve found that the outlook for tradespeople is resoundingly positive and, as such, they aren’t worried about future business. This is a good indicator for the wider economy, as tradespeople are a barometer of wider investment and an upturn in domestic spending.”

Recent figures from the Office of National Statistics also support the findings of the study and the hard working nature of our tradespeople, revealing that 60% of self-employed trade professionals are more likely to work a 45 hour week or more[1]. What’s more, its figures also highlight how the construction industry grew by 0.2% in the last three months of 2013, as house building increases by almost 20%[2].

[1] Office of National Statistics, February 2013

[2] Office of National Statistics, February 2014

## 2. WHAT MAKES THEM TICK?



### ROMANCE

Tradespeople are happiest spending quality time with their partner.

53%



Said this was what they most enjoy doing in their free time.

### BREAKFAST

Keeping an eye on their waistlines.

30%



Start the day with a healthy bowl of cereal.

### RADIO

Big fans of ABBA and Sally Traffic rather than football chat.

47%



Making Radio 2 their top listening choice.

### TV & FILM

Films and documentaries are the top telly choices, some way ahead of sport.

48%  
Sport

63%  
Documentaries



### DAILY NEWSPAPER OF CHOICE

22%  
LOCAL PAPER

14%  
DAILY MAIL

More likely to read The Guardian.....

3.4%

Than the "Ooo Aaahh Daily Star".....

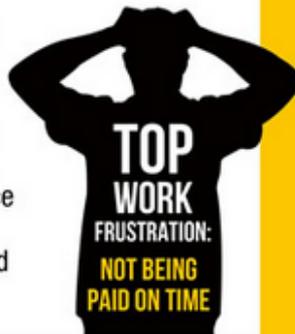
2.5%

### 3. GETTING THE JOB DONE



#### A TRADESPERSON'S TOP WORK PRIORITIES ARE:

1. Taking pride in doing a good job
2. Giving honest and accurate advice
3. Turning up on time
4. Charging a fair price
5. Being highly trained and skilled



### 4. WHITE VAN MAN IS A MYTH!

#### TRADESPERSONS AND THE PUBLIC AGREE THAT NONE OF THESE MYTHS ARE TRUE:

Tradespeople **DO NOT**:

- Wolf whistle at people of the opposite sex
- Drive badly
- Eat unhealthily
- Drink too much
- Have poor education and training
- Do an unprofessional job



### 5. WHAT A CAREER!

**GOOD JOB:** The average tradesperson rates their love for their job as **8 out of 10**.



**40%** Of tradespeople described their current income as 'comfortable'.

**32%** Compared to 32% of the general population.



**14%** Said that business was 'going well' or 'booming'.

**10%** Compared to just 10% of the UK public.

#### **GOOD TRAINING:**

Tradespeople are more likely than other careers to keep improving their skills through professional qualifications and ongoing training.

**2.3x**

**MORE LIKELY THAN THE UK POPULATION**

