

JEWSON

TRADE TRENDS.

**UNDERSTANDING THE
NATION'S TRADESPEOPLE**



WELCOME TO OUR FIRST TRADE TRENDS REPORT.

More than ever, we're listening to the experiences and views of tradespeople and builders so we can support their businesses and make their working lives easier.

For many years, we've been speaking with tradespeople to better understand their needs and how we can support them. For the first time, we've brought these insights together and launched Trade Trends. We spoke with over 500 tradespeople to find out their thoughts, the trends they're noticing and the opportunities to grow their business. Some of the findings are summarised here in this Trade Trends 2023 report, along with information and advice on how to navigate challenges, streamline business and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Although some of the data shows there are concerns around material costs, we're pleased to see this is stabilising. On top of that, we heard about a rising trend for homeowners purchasing their own materials directly, rather than tradespeople sourcing them on their behalf. We have explored what that might mean, as well as the growing opportunities for tradespeople to make homes more energy efficient.

Thanks to our unique structure, we can offer much more than just a wide range of products. From our timber and brick experts and the way we're helping you build more sustainable homes, to helping you save time on quoting and estimating with Build Aviator or getting the equipment you need through our tool hire service, we're committed to helping you succeed in your business.

NADINE MATTHEWS,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, JEWSON



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DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS.

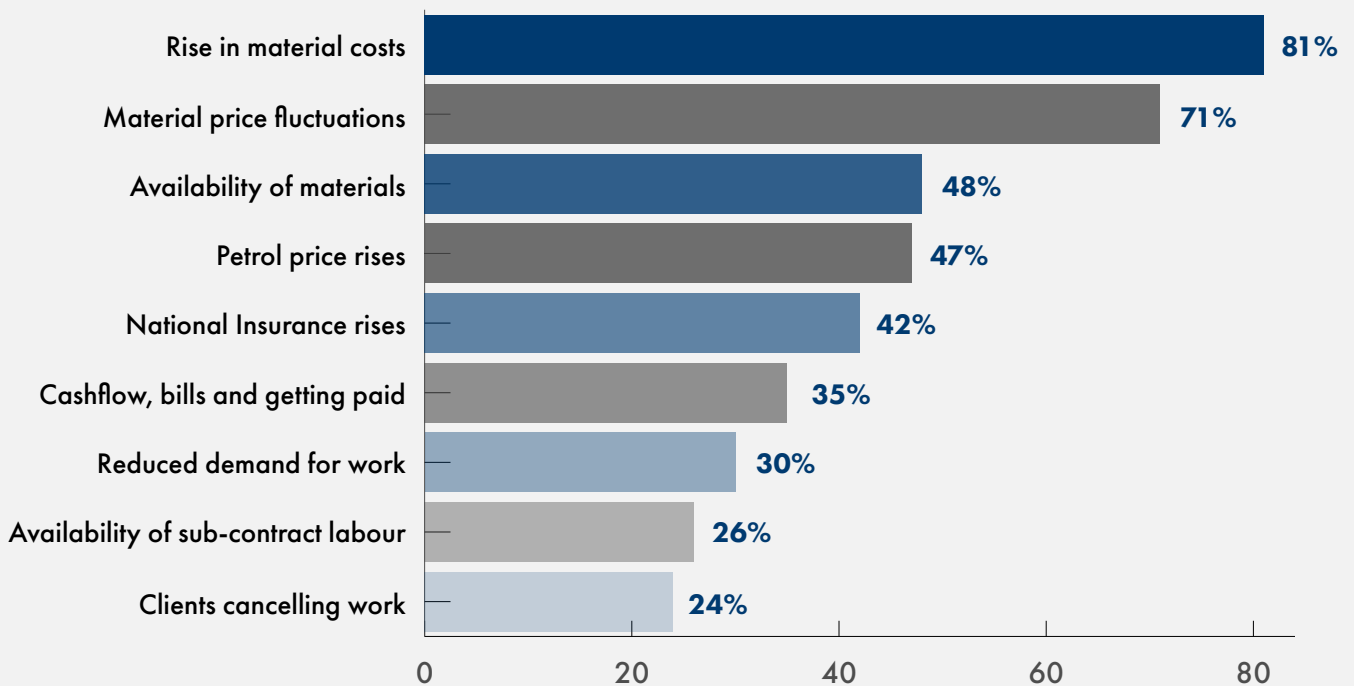
The rise in material costs has been headline news for several months, so it's no surprise that it was ranked the main concern for 81% of tradespeople, up 10% compared to the year before. Similarly, price fluctuations on materials are a concern for 71% of tradespeople.

Although the availability of materials was a worry for 48%, last year this was higher at 63%, signalling a positive sign that across the industry the supply chain is strengthening.

Additional concerns included cashflow, bills and getting paid (35%), reduced demand for work (30%), the availability of sub-contract labour (26%) and clients cancelling work they have previously committed to (24%).

Wider worries that are likely to impact tradespeople's day-to-day business include petrol price rises (47%) and tax and National Insurance rises (42%).

WHAT TRADESPEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT



CASE STUDIES

“Price fluctuations have been frustrating, especially as we often quote for jobs around a year before work starts. Our customers know that we’ll need to update them on the costs nearer the time, but it can be a big difference. Thankfully Build Aviator is really accurate when it comes to costs, which is a big help, and there’s still plenty of work around despite the higher prices. Some changes we’ve made ourselves include reducing our labour rates slightly to remain competitive and balance the material costs. We’ll also often advise our customers to work directly with other trades like electricians and plumbers as it saves time for us and makes it cheaper for them as we’re not adding mark up.”

“Because of the price increases, we’re more likely to return materials we don’t use or need. We used to hold on to them for the next job, but when you’ve got stock lying around or you’re moving it from one place to another there’s a risk it’ll get damaged. It’s much better for us to take the time to return what we don’t need.”

SIMON WHITE, WHITESPACE CONSTRUCTION



Whitespace Construction Ltd – Town House Renovation

“We’re listening to our customers and doing what we can to help them navigate any challenges they may face in their day-to-day work. This includes investing in technology to help us assess and manage stock levels and have products delivered in line with project timetables, to help make sure you have the materials you need, when you need them. We also have our estimating service, powered by Build Aviator, which takes the hassle out of pricing up a job.”

NEIL GRINDLEY, OPERATIONS AND SALES DIRECTOR, JEWSON

“I’ve felt 100% supported by Jewson and Build Aviator over the last few months when it comes to price fluctuations. Our contacts do a great job at finding the best price for us so we can manage the costs of projects. It’s not just material costs that are impacting projects though, labour rates have increased too. On top of that, consumers are more conscious about what they’re spending money on. In some cases this means they’re looking for the cheapest option, but in others we’re seeing people wanting to make sure that their home improvements are done to a high standard with quality materials so they last. Rather than just focus on extending their properties, homeowners are also looking to improve the existing interiors of their homes to transform their day-to-day life and wellbeing.”

KARL NICHOLSON, K DESIGN AND BUILD

STREAMLINE YOUR BUSINESS IN FIVE STEPS.

When time is money, you need to be able to work efficiently. Here are five ways you can streamline your business.



1: EASY ESTIMATING

Do you find that you're spending your evenings and weekends on paperwork? You're not alone. Last year, we found that builders spend up to 40 hours a month estimating jobs. Estimating tools, such as Build Aviator, can help you claim back more of your time. Simply submit your plans and materials, then you'll get a full breakdown of the costs for you, and a customer-facing report to help you secure the work. As well as easing the estimating process, because the material costs are kept up to date you save time navigating any price increases and get the most accurate quote.



2: AUTOMATE ACCOUNTS

There are lots of great tools to help you automate your accounts, such as FreeAgent, Xero and Quickbooks. Through these you can manage your invoices, bookkeeping, VAT returns, end of year reports and more. If you have an accountant, they can have log ins to these sites to help keep your records up to date too.



3: TAP INTO TRENDS

Our report found that homeowners are driving the trend for making seasonal and sustainable home improvements – more on this later. Getting ahead of these trends and encouraging your customers to plan in advance can help you to schedule work for the year. Consider advising them on energy efficiency before the colder months and improved ventilation for the increasingly warmer summers. Helping them to plan for seasonal projects and adding them to your own pipeline of work is a win-win.



4: MARVELLOUS MARKETING

It can be hard to prioritise marketing your business when you're busy, but spending just a few hours on this each month can make all the difference. Start by asking for reviews and testimonials from happy customers, as well as taking photos of projects you're proud of. Share them on your website and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram – potential customers will love to see examples of your recent work. Local Facebook groups are often a great place to find work as often people will ask for recommendations. You can also sign up to free or low cost social media scheduling tools like Buffer that will save you even more time posting your content online.



5: A WHOLE LOT MORE

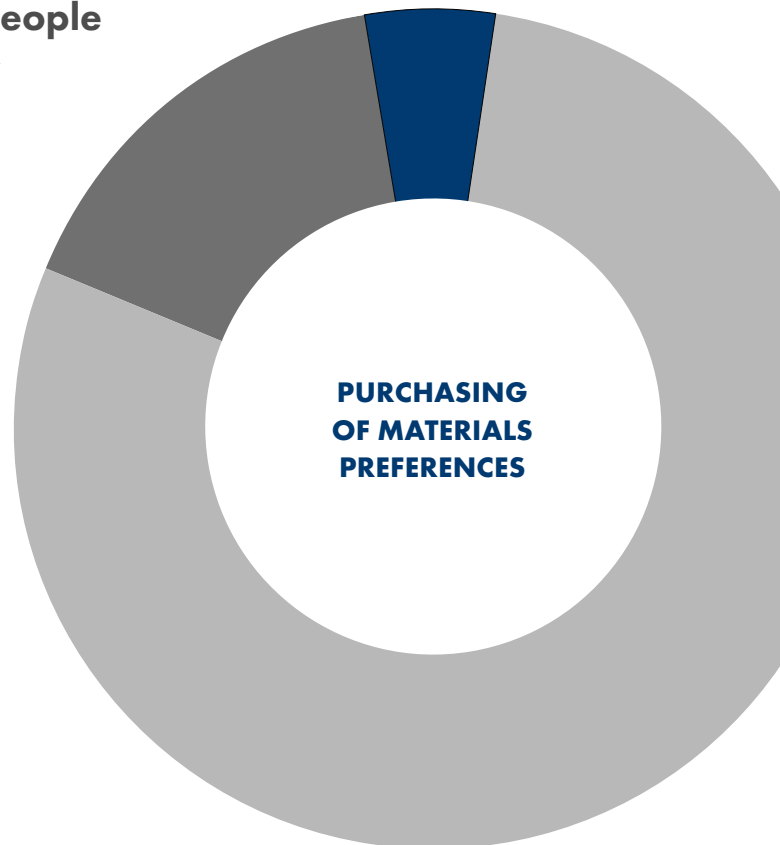
When it comes to offering a wide choice of products that are available when you need them, we can help. We take away the time and hassle of shopping around by pricing competitively for the entire project, small or large. On top of that, our expert team includes specialists in all kinds of solutions, from brick and timber to sustainable building materials. Whether you prefer to go into a branch to speak to your local branch manager or go online while you're on site, we can help you identify what you need, offer clear and consistent pricing, and make sure it gets to you in time. Open an account and you'll benefit from personalised pricing and free delivery on orders more than £100 ex VAT.

HOMEOWNER MATERIAL PURCHASING.

Our research showed that more tradespeople are seeing homeowners wanting to buy materials directly themselves.

Nearly half (48%) of the tradespeople we spoke to agreed that homeowners are now more likely to purchase some materials and supplies – up from 40% the year before.

However, only 5% of tradespeople are in favour of homeowners buying all the materials for a project, with 79% stating they prefer to do this themselves, and 16% wanting to buy at least some of the materials themselves.



- 5% in favour of homeowners buying all the materials for a project
- 79% want to buy all the materials themselves
- 16% want to buy at least some materials themselves

K Design and Build – Luxurious Bungalow Conversion in Sandhurst

CASE STUDIES

“We won’t work on projects unless we’re able to source and buy the materials ourselves as we want to make sure that they’re the right specification and quality. Consumers who want to get their own materials are often very price conscious so will be looking for the cheapest way of carrying out their projects. However, this means that they can’t necessarily guarantee the quality.”

KARL NICHOLSON, K DESIGN AND BUILD

“On the whole, our customers still expect us to purchase materials as they know we’ll be able to get better prices than they can. In the few instances when customers want to buy their own products, I tell them that although we’ll guarantee the fit and installation, we can’t guarantee the products themselves because we’ve not sourced them. We know the materials and products from Jewson can be trusted so we’ll always guarantee them when we buy them ourselves.”

SIMON WHITE, WHITESPACE CONSTRUCTION



“It can be a divisive question – should homeowners bypass tradespeople to buy materials themselves? The majority of tradespeople we spoke to said they prefer to purchase materials themselves, while some are happy to share the load with their customer. Some homeowners may want to see materials in person and have control of what they’re spending. Price fluctuations can also make homeowners want to research and shop around for the best quote too. However, often homeowners don’t have access to the choice, quality and prices that tradespeople do. Some of our customers have also voiced frustrations that homeowners might not order materials and products that are as readily available, leading to delays on site.”

LISA YOUNG, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, JEWSON



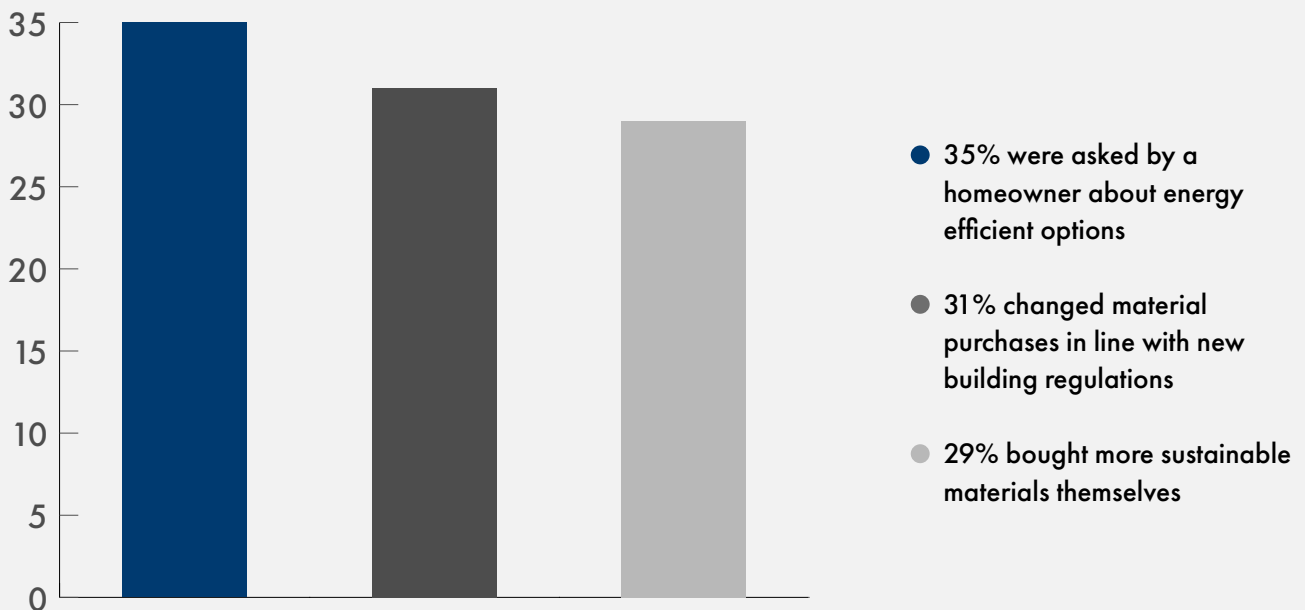
K Design and Build – Luxurious Bungalow Conversion in Sandhurst

GOING GREEN.

Half of tradespeople are concerned about the environment and sustainability, according to our research. And when it comes to their work, there are several factors influencing a focus on greener, more sustainable building practices.

Over a third (35%) said they'd recently been asked by a homeowner about energy efficient options. On top of that, 31% said in the last three months, they had changed their material purchases in line with new building regulations, and 29% had purposefully bought materials that are more sustainable.

FACTORS INFLUENCING SUSTAINABLE BUILDING PRACTICES



CASE STUDIES

“We often talk to our customers about the options to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. For example, they might be interested in getting an air source heat pump, but if the rest of the house needs work doing like better insulation and windows, it might be the wrong thing to prioritise. We specialise in Victorian properties, which have their own challenges when it comes to improving energy efficiency, but we’ll always advise on the best options. The recent changes to the Building Regulations mean that materials like insulation need to perform better. This comes with a higher price tag, so it’s important for us to have access to up-to-date material costs as well as have the knowledge required to advise homeowners on the best home improvements for their needs and the property type.”

SIMON WHITE, WHITESPACE CONSTRUCTION

“An important part of our role is to educate homeowners on different ways to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Often, they will have done some initial research themselves, but the right solution will always depend on each individual project. Basic improvements tend to be replacing windows and doors, as well as wall and loft insulation. Once we’ve improved the thermal performance of a building, we can then explore more energy efficient heating options. It’s positive that consumers are asking more about eco home improvements and it’s a good time to educate people on how their properties can play a crucial role in helping the environment, as well as enhance their comfort and quality of life.”

KARL NICHOLSON, K DESIGN AND BUILD



K Design and Build – Family Home



Whitespace Construction Ltd – Town House Renovation

“Increasingly, tradespeople are seeing their customers ask how they can improve the energy efficiency of their home to help manage rising energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint. On top of that, in June 2022 we had several changes to Building Regulations, which included increased insulation in walls, floors and roofs, and a greater focus on renewable energy technology, which is driving purchasing in this area further. We know from our research that 61% of tradespeople are looking for support from their builders merchant on energy efficient building solutions, which is why we’re continuing to improve our Making Better Homes product range. It features the latest innovations to help tradespeople maximise quality, productivity and profit, while building comfortable, energy efficient spaces that their customers will love.”

ANDREW CUSHING, CUSTOMER DIRECTOR, JEWSON

HOW TO HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS MAKE THEIR HOMES MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT.

You can help your customers save hundreds of pounds a year on energy bills, as well as reduce the carbon emissions of their properties with our Making Better Homes range. Here are just some of the materials and products available.



RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGIES:

There are plenty of choices when it comes to renewable technologies. Harness the power of the sun through solar PV, which is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to generate renewable energy, or solar thermal systems, which can be easily incorporated into new or existing heating systems to provide hot water. Alternatively, air source heat pumps can turn outside air into a low-carbon heat source.



UNDERFLOOR HEATING:

Up to 40% more energy efficient than traditional heating and offering a more consistent level of heat throughout a property, underfloor heating is becoming a firm favourite for households across the UK. Choose from electric or water-based systems for easy, safe installation.



INSULATION:

According to the Energy Saving Trust, an insulated home can lose a quarter of its heat through the roof. As well as insulating lofts, attics or flat roofs, don't forget to check the floor and wall insulation too to maximise the energy efficiency of a home all year round.



DRAUGHT PROOFING:

Don't let heat escape and cold air in by making sure that door seals and draught excluders are fitted to protect against the elements.



K Design and Build – Two Storey Extension

ARE YOU UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST BUILDING REGULATIONS?

Check what materials you need [here](#).



Although we continue to live and work in uncertain times, there are clear opportunities for tradespeople and builders.

Whether helping homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes or finding ways to streamline your day-to-day work, at Jewson we're committed to helping you succeed. By giving you access to our team's expertise, sharing the latest trends and insights, investing in technology, and making sure we've got the best products and materials at competitive prices, we're here to help strengthen your business this year and beyond.

JEWSON