effie Awards Australia

2026

# Case Study




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1659

**Agencies**
Howatson+Company

**Client**
Selleys

**Title**
It's Selleys and it's work that really, really works

**Category**
A05. Other Consumer Goods

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## Q1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & WHY DOES THIS CASE DESERVE AN AWARD?

Would you hang two tradies off a cliff or subject your product to a public torture test just to prove it works?

For Selleys, it was a no-brainer.

Because to revive this stagnating legacy brand, we needed to give it serious grunt, get our hands dirty and under the hood of our problem.

Selleys is an iconic Australian brand, serving both tradies and DIYers. It dominates Bunnings' shelves with a 61-SKU portfolio that covers every job and need.

However, by 2024, cracks were showing. Growth lagged the category 2:1, brand equity had been eroding for years, and global competitors were closing in.

This wasn't a surface issue - it required a structural reset.

Deep analysis revealed four hard truths:

- **Selleys was focused on the wrong audience.** Tradies not only drive 88% of category value, but they are also vital endorsers of the brand. And they had gone cold on it.
- **It lacked tradies' respect.** On-site, we saw Selleys used for small jobs, while high-stakes work went elsewhere.
- **Our own marketing caused it.** Years of DIY-led marketing made the brand feel unfit for serious jobs.
- **Fragmented campaigns fragmented the brand**. Decades of product-led marketing reduced the brand's ultimate asset, "If it's Selleys, it works", to a punctuation point.

We didn't launch a campaign - we reset the brand.

"If it's Selleys, it works" was elevated from a faint echo, to a loud shout.

Communications were rebuilt to earn tradie respect: tougher, louder, and grounded in proof.

We modernised the portrayal of tradies; from ocker to meticulous.

Crucially, we prioritised our toughest products - even at the expense of showcasing cash cows.

We shifted from product specs to brand demonstration - we even made a live "tradie torture test" that turned a billboard into a public arena.

The results? Decisive.

Our seismic strategic pivot:

- Outpaced a flatlining category by 1.7x
- Reversed an eight-year brand decline with tradies AND younger DIYers, sparking double-digit growth - on every single measure.
- Went viral, generating +60.2 million impressions
- Delivered a net-profit ROI of $2.03.

So, why is this paper worthy of an award? Because when it's Selleys, it really, really works.


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## Q2. WHAT WAS THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE?

Selleys is an Australian household name, famous for adhesives, sealants and its long-running platform: "If it's Selleys, it works."

It's the brand you grow up with - in the shed, under the sink or holding a broken mug together.

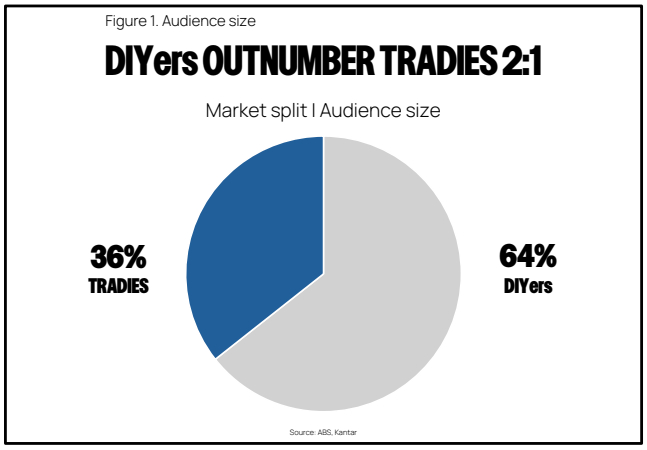
Established by Martin Selleys in the 1930s, the business has grown to 61 sub-ranges (like Liquid Nails, No More Gaps and Storm Sealant), dominates shelf spaces and commands a 10–20% price premium over the rest of the category.

Its market is split into two distinct worlds: DIYers, where Selleys holds 40% market share; and 'Professional Users' (tradies), where Selleys hold 13% market share.

Whilst they make products serving both, DIYers have been the businesses historical focus due to their audience size (64% of purchasers).

(Figure 1)

Figure 1. Audience size

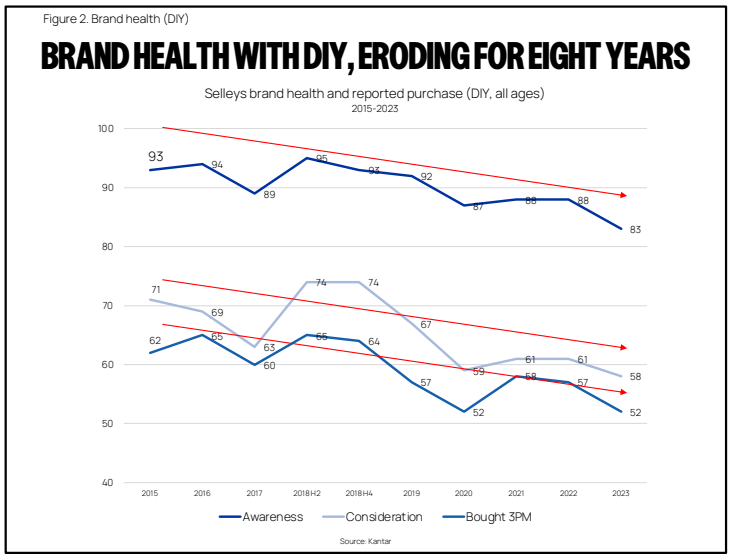



Selleys seemed to have an enviable position, but underneath, cracks were forming.

**CHALLENGE #1 - A decade of brand decay**
Selleys' had been suffering with both DIYers and tradies for nearly a decade.

Among DIYers, awareness, consideration and reported purchase had slipped by 10-12 ppt since 2015 *(Figure 2)*.

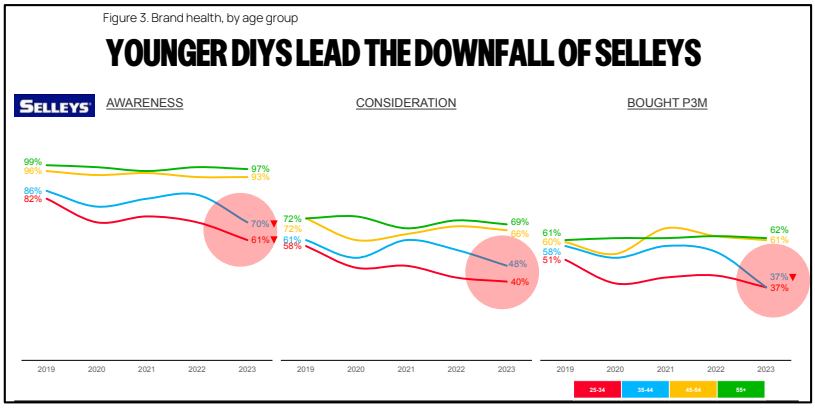
Figure 2. Brand health (DIY)



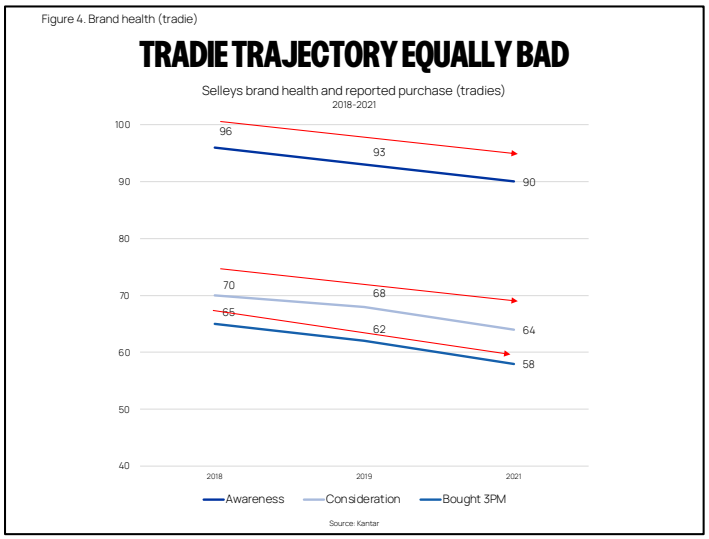


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Most concerningly, this was driven by the younger audiences (25-45 year-olds) - Australia's future home owners and renovators (*Figure 3*).

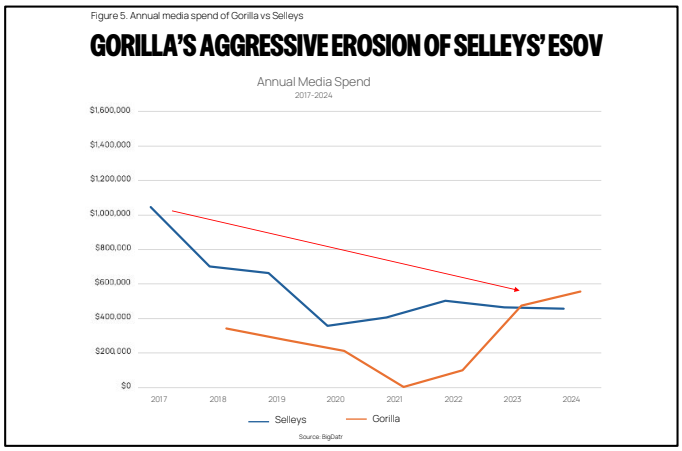



The tradie trajectory was no different. They'd been deprioritised as an audience, but the most up-to-date research (2021) showed similar slides in awareness, consideration and reported purchase (*Figure 4*).




**CHALLENGE #2 - International invasion**
For the first time ever, foreign brands were closing in.

US-based Gorilla was gaining ground fast with DIYers and for the first time, eroding Selleys' eSOV advantage (*Figure 5).*

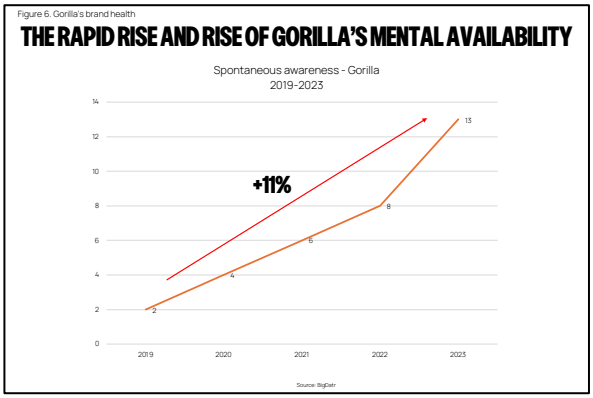




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The result? Their mental availability was on the rise, whilst ours was under attack (*Figure 6*).

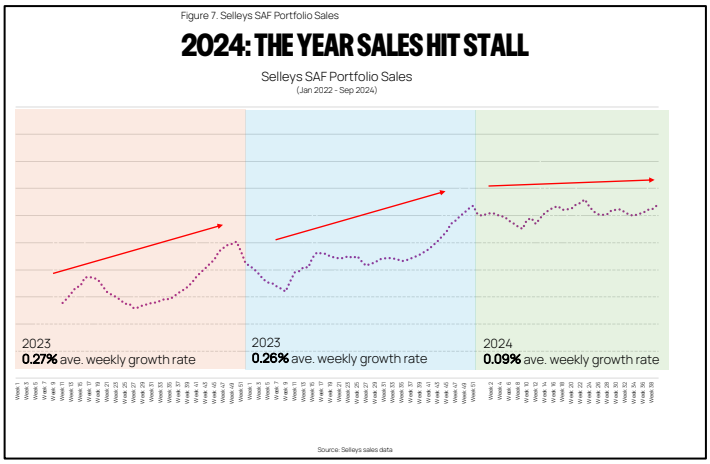
Figure 6. Gorilla's brand health




**CHALLENGE #3 - Sales were stalling**

By late 2024, Selleys' sales were stagnating, slowing to a worrying weekly growth rate of just 0.016% *(Figure 7).*

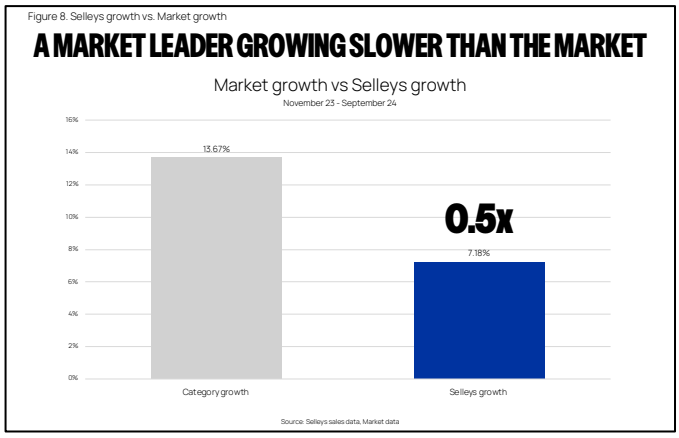
Figure 7. Selleys SAF Portfolio Sales




Bunnings, our major channel, closely guards access to competitors' market share figures, but we do know category growth rates.

And ours were concerning: half the rate of the wider category *(Figure 8).*

Figure 8. Selleys growth vs. Market growth




**THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGE: A LEGACY BRAND RUNNING OUT OF ROAD**

Nearly a decade of eroding brand equity and an increasingly competitive landscape had resulted in Selleys being outpaced by the very category it helped build.

Our challenge was to rebuild brand and business foundations - and fast.

This wasn't a tactical paint job; it was a structural reset.


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## Q3. WHAT WERE YOUR OBJECTIVES? State specific goals.

Our task was to act before stagnation led to decline.

But how?

The category's post-COVID boom was stabilising, distribution was ubiquitous and our 61 SKU-portfolio covered every need.

So, the burden fell entirely on marketing to reverse stagnation and outpace category growth.

**BUSINESS OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE 1. Outpace category growth**
Drive total portfolio sales growth that outstrips the post-COVID category average.

**OBJECTIVE 2. Accelerate priority SKUs**
Unlock immediate, sustained sales uplifts for mature products and high-performance trade lines.

**OBJECTIVE 3. Increase tradie market share**
Increase tradie market share from the 13% baseline (you'll see why this was vital shortly!)

**BRAND OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE 4. Reverse masterbrand decline**
Claw back the eight-year decline in equity and increase brand health amongst the two most critical audiences: professional tradies and younger DIYers (ages 25–45).

**COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE 5. Exceed creative benchmarks**
Surpass Kantar global norms on metrics that drive memorability and maximise media spend; distinctiveness, branding and enjoyment.


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## Q4. WHAT WAS YOUR STRATEGY AND HOW DID YOU GET THERE?

Our strategy was built on four foundational insights.

**INSIGHT #1 - TRADIES WERE THE APEX PREDATOR OF DIY - ECONOMICALLY, ATTITUDINALLY AND INFLUENTIALLY**

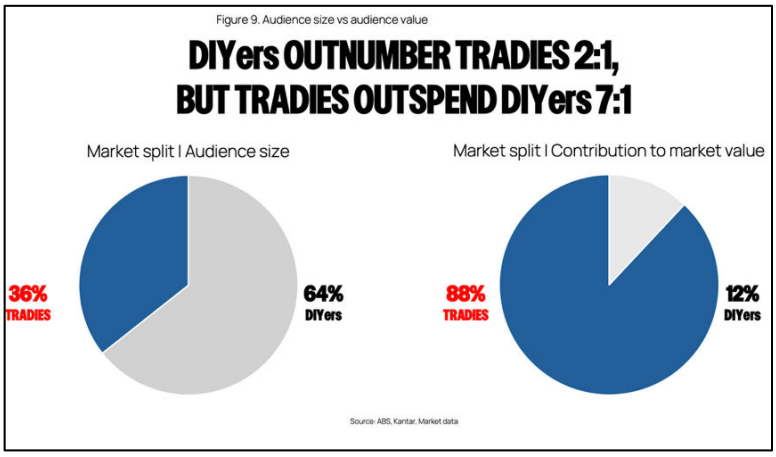
As sales stalled, the business was forced to reflect on its source of growth.

*For the first time ever,* Selleys conducted its own market analysis amongst both its DIY AND tradie audiences.

The finding? The two were not made equal.

Despite their market size being half of DIYers, tradies drove *88%* of market value. With only 13% market share of tradies, Selleys' headroom for growth was 7.5x that of DIYers *(Figure 9)*.

Figure 9. Audience size vs audience value




Winning them was essential, but also difficult.

Despite declining consideration, Selleys still won out on DIYers' drivers of choice - confidence and efficiency.

But for the drivers of choice that mattered to tradies, Selleys was losing to Sika - the Swiss chemical giant *(Figure 10)*.

Figure 10. Tradie drivers of choice

**TO TRADIES, SIKA IS THE DOMINANT CHOICE. IN EVERY METRIC THAT MATTERS.**

| Contribution to consideration | Driver of choice | Selleys | Sika |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7.6% | Are better quality than others | 50 | 71 |
| 7.6% | You would recommend to others | 75 | 81 |
| 7.2% | Create innovative products that addresses my needs | 63 | 66 |
| 7.0% | Give me the confidence to do the job | 69 | 70 |
| 6.5% | Offer superior performance | 59 | 83 |

Source: Kantar, 2024

Convincing tradies also had a final benefit. They'd provide powerful social proof of Selley's efficacy to our DIYer audience. Tradies are potent endorsers generally, but particularly in Australia where they carry real cultural weight.


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**Our first problem was abundantly clear: the Selleys brand was over-orientated to the wrong audience. Tradies needed to be reprioritised, not deprioritised!**

So, all sights were set on understanding how we could earn back the respect and business of this pivotal audience.

**INSIGHT #2 - SELLEYS DIDN'T PASS THE TORTURE TEST**

Having neglected tradies for years and discontinued audience research with them in 2021, we needed to understand them. Fast.

Like any studious planner, we conducted six focus groups with tradies on Zoom to understand how Selleys could win back their respect.

Unfortunately, the findings did not bring us any closer to the problem *(Figure 11)*; people played back that they knew the brand and thought it worked just fine (even quoting "If it's Selleys, it works" to us unprompted).

Figure 11. Tradie focus group quotes




Delightful to hear, but inconsistent with brand tracking and our market share.

Perplexed, we went where no callus-free advertising strategist has dared to go before: on site.

We spoke to cabinet-makers, carpenters and everything in between - their time paid for in slabs of Great Northern, of course.

Observing their work and conversations on site revealed the inconsistencies behind the polite Zoom answers.

Firstly, Selleys products were widely present on site *(Figure 12)*.

Figure 12. Ethnographic learnings




But when we started to interrogate what Selleys was used for, we uncovered a psychological ceiling being placed on the brand.


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Selleys was used for small jobs inside the house, like architraves or trimmings.

“But, when would you use Sika over Selleys?” we asked.

The answer? Any job of consequence. Think the steel frame of an elevator that could fall down on passers-by at any moment; the timber holding up a patio a family convenes on *(Figure 13)*.

Figure 13. Ethnographic learnings

**TRADIES DIDN’T TAKE SELLEYS SERIOUSLY - IT COULDN’T HANDLE THE ‘GUTSINESS’ THEY REQUIRE**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| “For serious endeavours, people always use Sika.<br><br>Liquid Nails like only gets used for inside jobs that aren’t very important - like the trim around the door.” | “The Sika stuff we use - SikaFlex - we’d use that for the gutsy stuff.<br><br>I don’t even know the Selleys equivalent of Sikaflex though, so I can’t compare.” | “The average tradie is buying Selleys products.<br><br>But they do bathroom silicones and that rubbish, I don’t think they do the extreme grabs or **the really gutsy stuff**” |
| Carpenter, 32 years-old | Carpenter, 40 years-old | Cabinet-maker, 55 years-old |

So, we asked if this was based on genuine product experience; had Selleys let them down in the past? Where did they learn it all?

*(Figure 14)*

Figure 14. Ethnographic learnings

**SELLEYS’ INFERIORITY WAS NOT FROM EXPERIENCE - IT WAS JUST TRADIE FOLKLORE**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| “This is a general theory for the common man builder. Because Sika has a reputation for being much higher quality.<br><br>I’ve just been told and it’s just so known.” | “That’s my thinking, because that’s just the general thinking.<br><br>If you asked everyone in here what they think, they’d say Sika over Selleys.” | “I actually have no idea whether it’s better.<br><br>It’s just something I was always taught – to use Sika.” |
| Carpenter, 32 years-old | Plumber, 28 years-old | Carpenter, 28 years-old |

Selleys’ inferiority was simply tradie folklore, passed down from boss to apprentice.

And so we had our second problem: Selleys’ challenge in winning tradies wasn’t one of affinity - it was respect; tradies didn’t think it could handle the level of gutsiness they require.

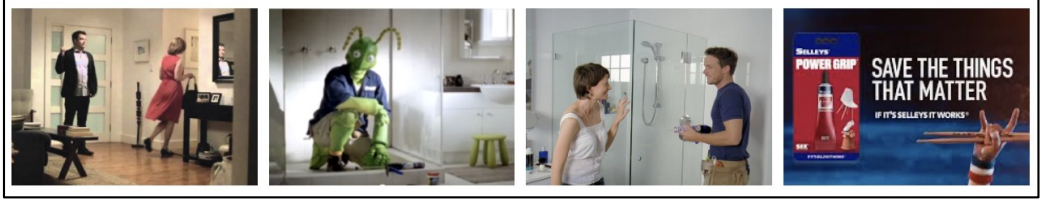
**INSIGHT #3 - WE HAD TRAINED THE MARKET TO UNDERESTIMATE US**

Historical advertising had reinforced this perception: decades of communications focussed on winning the DIYer had positioned Selleys as the solution for little jobs around the house.

*(Figure 15)*

Figure 15. Previous Selleys advertising

**DECADES OF SELLEYS POSITIONING ITSELF IN THE WORLD OF ODD JOBS FOR THE PUNTER, NOT THE PRO**





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At best, communications helped people fix small jobs (quite literally a child's drumstick). At worst, it diminished the role of the tradie entirely, reducing them to eye candy and innuendo ("Do it yourself, before someone does 'it' for you").

We had made the brand so domestic and comfortable, little wonder the conclusion had been that Selleys can't handle jobs of consequence.

**INSIGHT #4 - FRAGMENTED CAMPAIGNS WERE FRAGMENTING THE BRAND**

Our final hurdle was self-inflicted: product specs had completely overpowered our organising brand idea.

Historically, Selleys focussed on building strong sub-brands within its portfolio through product-led campaigns.

This resulted in decades of isolated, fragmented campaigns that had reduced our ultimate asset, "If it's Selleys, it works", to a sign-off. We had turned a powerful promise into a punctuation point.

*(Figure 16)*

Figure 16. Previous Selleys advertising




To crack a sceptical trade market, we had to stop using our tagline as an afterthought and make it the centrepiece of the campaign.

**THE STRATEGY THAT BROUGHT IT ALL TOGETHER**

Selleys needed to radically change its brand and communications strategy with three imperatives:

1. Re-orientate the brand to the most commercially valuable, hard-nosed and influential audience.

2. Un-do decades of communications that placed Selleys in the world of odd jobs, instead proving it can handle the level of gutsiness tradies require.

3. Transform the latent asset of 'If it's Selleys, it works' into an active, unifying promise capable of driving the entire portfolio.


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## Q5. HOW WAS YOUR STRATEGY BROUGHT TO LIFE?

### TRADIE-PROOF COMMUNICATIONS

Selleys didn't just launch a campaign, it reset how the brand showed up.

People had gotten too comfortable with "If it's Selleys, it works", rather than something we had conviction in. So we made it a bold declaration that the brand was willing to stand behind, publicly.

In everything we did, the brand showed up with guts, volume and proof it bloody backed itself.

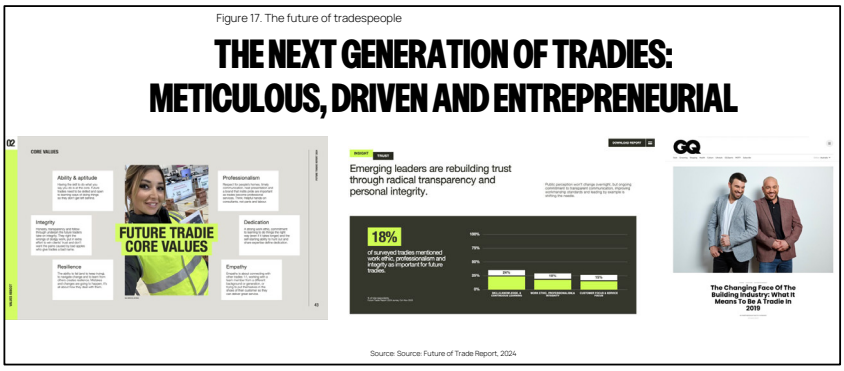
Passing the tradie torture test. Every. Single. Time.

### TONAL OVERHAUL TO REFLECT THE MODERN TRADIE

To win both tradie and younger DIYers, we needed to discard outdated, lazy stereotypes of "ocker" tradies slacking off on smoko.

Cultural research showed modern tradies are meticulous, highly professional, entrepreneurial craftsmen facing severe economic and labour pressures *(Figure 17)*.

Figure 17. The future of tradespeople




Source: Source: Future of Trade Report, 2024

The creative treated them with respect, framing Selleys as the partner for flawless efficacy.

### FOCUSSED MEDIA STRATEGY

We put tradies at the heart of the plan - focussing on tradie-oriented placements trickling down to DIYers.

From targeted social and BVOD around shows like The Block, to proximity out-of-home around Bunnings stores, we comfortably covered both audiences without forgetting either.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP: PRIORITISING PRODUCTS THAT PASS THE TRADIE TORTURE TEST

Selleys' dominance is underpinned by its diverse, expansive portfolio and household names.
The world was too comfortable with these.

To win tradies, we needed to sweat the toughness, high performance and relevance of Selleys' products - even if it came at the expense of promoting their most commercially important ones.

**Chapter 1: 650 FC, 'Do It Once'**

Sika's crown jewel was 'SikaFlex'; found and revered on every job site.

> *" I don't actually know if they do the extreme sorta stuff or have a SikaFlex equivalent - I know they do all the bathroom rubbish." - Plumber, 27 years-old*


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Three years ago, Selleys had launched a functional equivalent, “650FC”, but it held only 7.7% of portfolio sales due to low tradie trust.

Unimportantly commercially. Critical for perception.

So we made a bold decision: go head-to-head with SikaFlex to spearhead category takeover.

We launched the new positioning with a campaign highlighting Selleys' 650FC in high-jeopardy scenarios where failure wasn't an option.

The hero creative featured tradies calmly working on a cliffside residential build, relying entirely on Selleys.

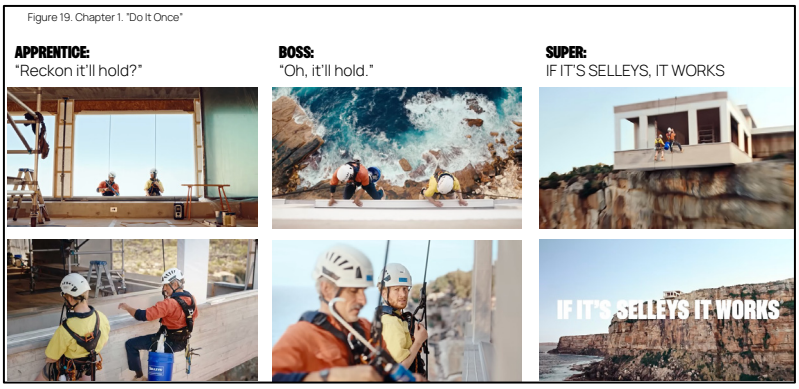
A mile away from the innuendo and superficiality of previous work, the creative was confident and composed - like the mindset of our modern professional audience.

*(Figure 18-19)*

Figure 18. Chapter 1. "Do it Once"




Figure 19. Chapter 1. "Do it Once"




**Chapter 2: Liquid Nails, ‘If You Can Take It, It’s Yours’**

Then next priority SKU was Liquid Nails. But far from the SKU that fixes drum sticks - the industrial strength kind.

In research, tradies had issued us a dare: “If they want to go head to head in the market place with Sika, they need to prove it.”

We knew words would be no good with them. So with the platform established, we doubled down and proved just how well Liquid Nails worked.

We made a literal tradie torture test.


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We issued a direct challenge to the industry's ego by constructing a live, real-world billboard torture test. Items every tradie wants their hands on, like an outdoor BBQ, a kayak, and a 2.8-meter marlin, were bonded to a public billboard using only Liquid Nails.

The rules were simple: If you can take it, it's yours.

A one-day billboard turned social content, where we invited tradies, influencers, and the public to try. The billboard became an interactive arena where people used brute force, levers, and team tactics, but nothing budged.

Every failed attempt was captured as authentic social content that spread organically.

The content was so effective that it became the advertising asset for the entire masterbrand.

*(Figure 20-22)*

Figure 20. Chapter 2. 'If You Can Take It, It's Yours'

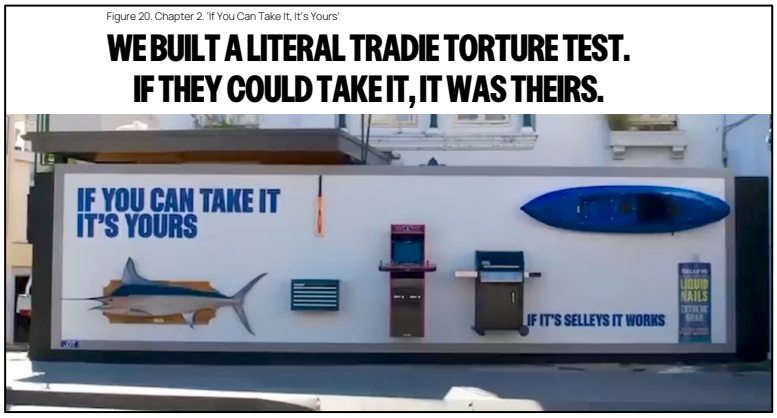



Figure 21. Chapter 2. 'If You Can Take It, It's Yours'




Figure 22. Chapter 2 'If You Can Take It, It's Yours'





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**PRODUCTS TO THE BACKGROUND, BRAND PROMISE TO THE FOREGROUND**

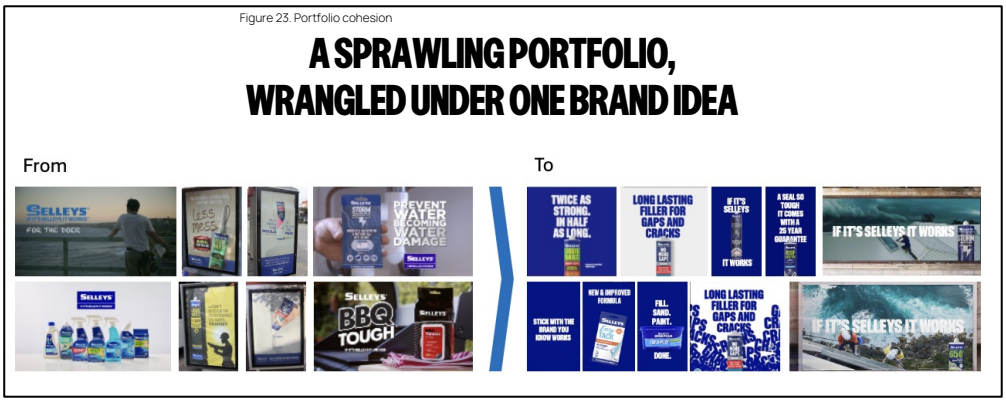
Despite having to retain the business' focus on product comms, we couldn't keep fragmenting the brand.

In every piece of communication, 'If it's Selleys, it works' became the beginning and end. No more product specs. Just a bold brand promise.

The product became an excuse to make the brand talk; a functional alibi. Every touch point was treated with absolute consistency, composure and a sense of jeopardy.

*(Figure 23)*

Figure 23. Portfolio cohesion




## Q6. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOUR CAMPAIGN WAS SUCCESSFUL?

**BUSINESS RESULTS: FROM STAGNATION TO SUSTAINED GROWTH**

**OBJECTIVE 1. Outpace category growth. Done.**

Selleys blew past the post-COVID market slowdown, shifting from stagnation to immediate acceleration.

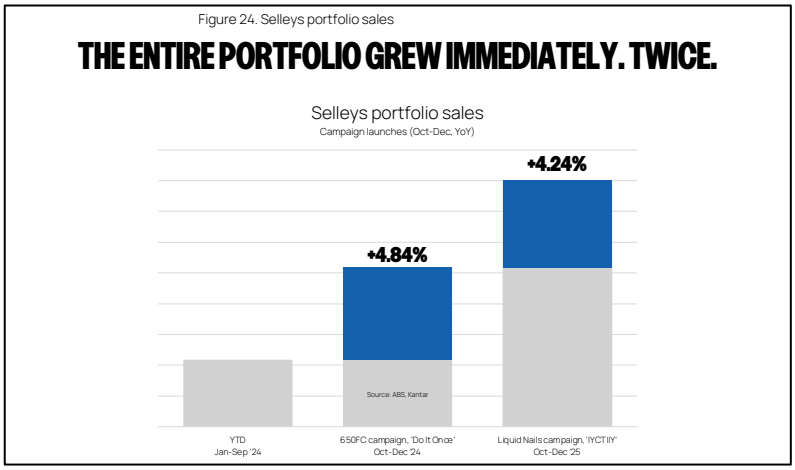
**The entire portfolio grew immediately.**

Chapter 1 ('Do It Once' for 650FC) delivered an immediate +4.84% sales increase year-on-year (YoY) in its first burst in the market.

Chapter 2 ("If You Can Take It") beat that new baseline again, driving an additional +4.24% uplift.

*(Figure 24).*

Figure 24. Selleys portfolio sales

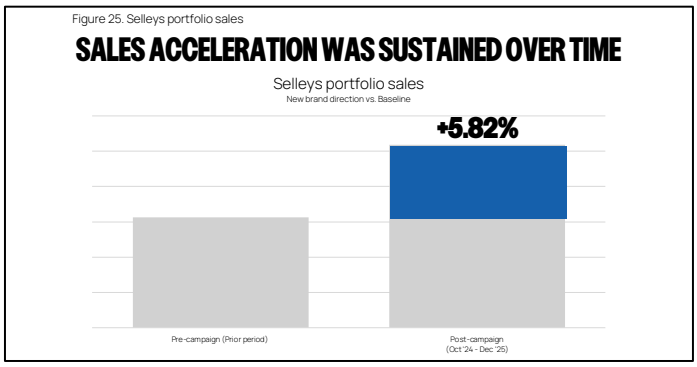




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**Sales acceleration was sustained.**
Crucially, these sales spikes were not temporary - as the campaign pulsed every few months, we saw sustained uplift across the entire portfolio.

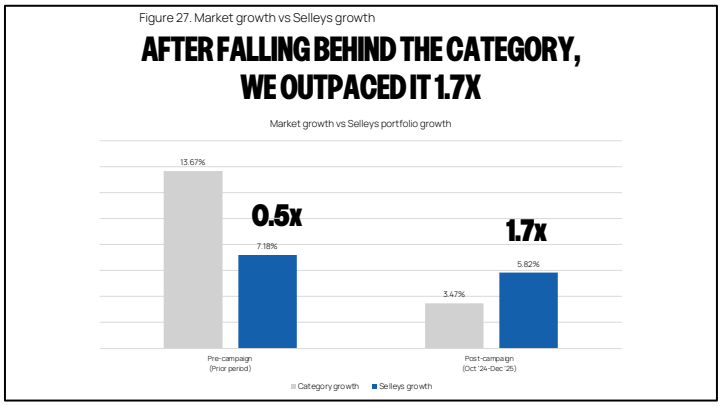
*(Figure 25-*[redacted]




**We beat the market.**
As anticipated, the category's growth continued to stabilise.

Since we launched the new brand direction, the total Selleys portfolio has grown 1.7x the category.

*(Figure 27)*




**A higher sales floor.**
This sustained uplift has created a permanently elevated baseline with a **+7.51% uplift in average weekly sales** across the portfolio.

**OBJECTIVE 2. Accelerate priority SKUs. Done.**

Not only did the more cohesive brand expression drive total portfolio sales, it unleashed the performance of its star SKUs.

**The potential of 650FC was unleashed.**

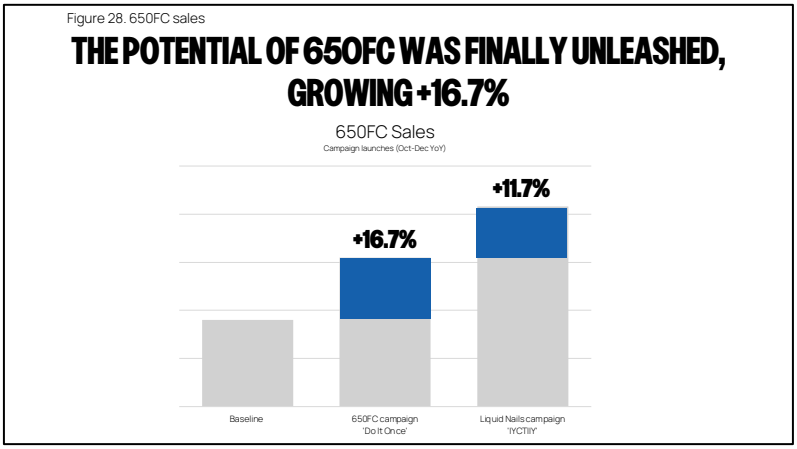
650FC finally saw the market uptake that the brand had been hoping to see since its launch in 2023.

In the months following the launch of 'Do It Once', sales grew a whopping **+16.7% YoY**.

Proving the power of a more unified master-brand, sales for 650FC were turbo-charged during the second chapter of work focussed on Liquid Nails, growing **+11.7%** YoY during the campaign period – smashing its already record-breaking baseline.

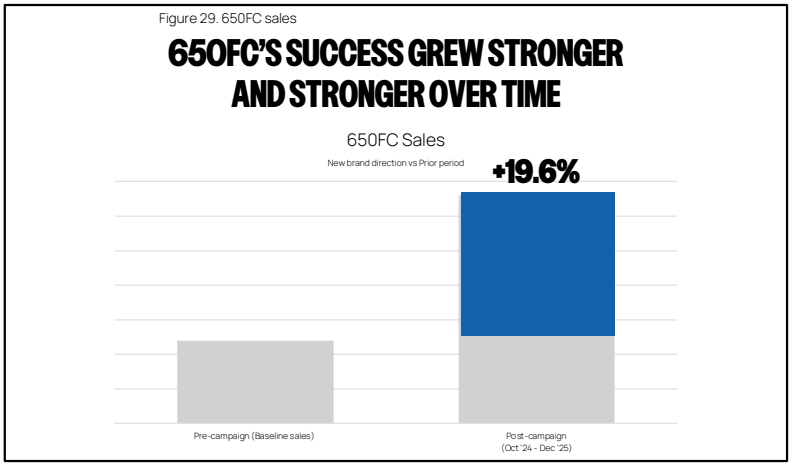

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*(Figure 28)*




Again, this was not fleeting - growth was sustained. Across the entire 13 month campaign exposure, the SKU has seen **+19.6% growth**, significantly improving its role in the portfolio.

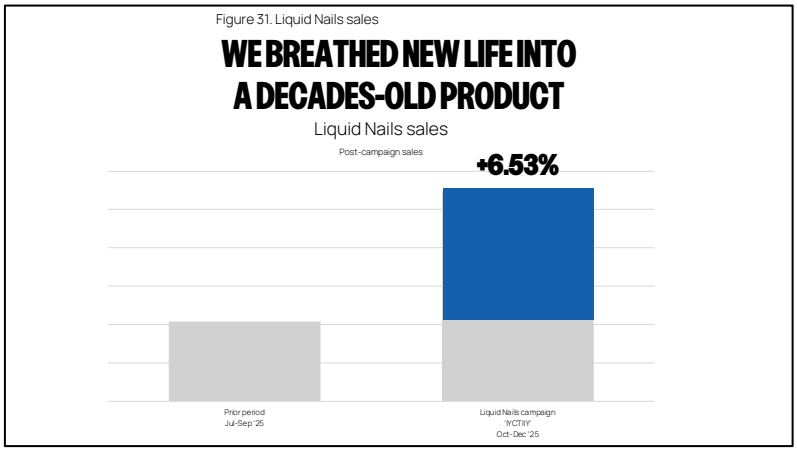
*(Figure 29)*




**Liquid Nails was revitalised.**
'If You Can Take It, It's Yours' breathed new life into a mature product.

During the campaign period, sales grew **+6.53%.**

*(Figure 31)*





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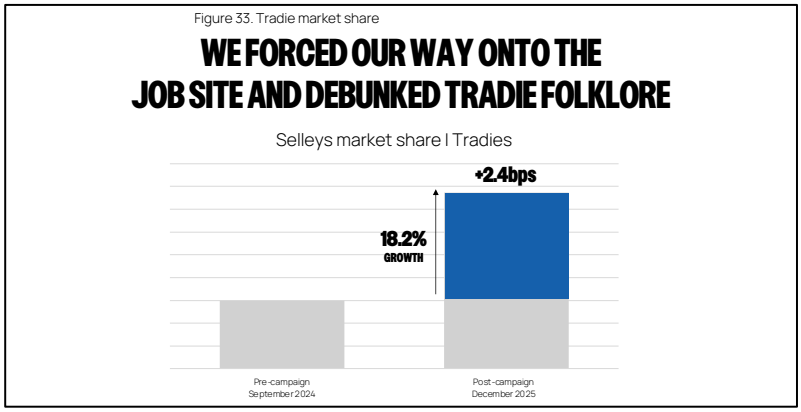
**OBJECTIVE 3. Capture trade share. Done.**
We successfully forced our way onto the trade site, debunking the folklore that had locked us out for years.

Selleys' market share of tradie purchasing rose from 13.0% to 15.4% by December 2025.

In a mature, low-growth category, this **+2.4% absolute gain (+18.2% relative growth)** represents a direct, highly profitable transfer of volume straight out of the hands of entrenched competitors.

*(Figure 33)*

Figure 33. Tradie market share




**BRAND RESULTS: THE RESPECT OF OUR TOUGHEST AUDIENCES, EARNED.**

**OBJECTIVE 4. Reverse Masterbrand Decline. Done.**

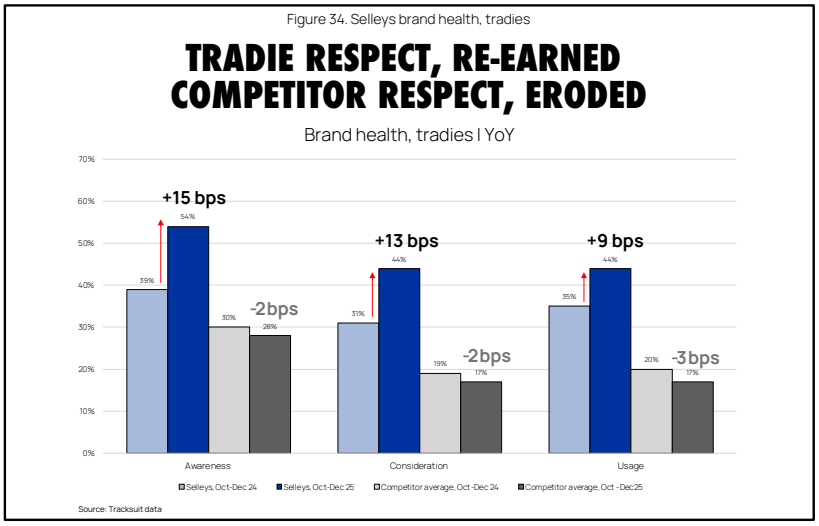
Winning the respect of Australia's most cynical audience flipped the brand's entire trajectory, turning an eight-year slide into a clean sweep across the funnel.

**As intended, we clawed back the respect of tradies,**
Amongst tradies, Selleys smashed its competitor's performance, seeing massive growth at every stage of the funnel:

- Awareness: +15% uplift (39% relative growth)
- Consideration: +13% uplift (42% relative growth)
- Usage: +9% uplift (26% relative growth)

*(Figure 34)*

Figure 34. Selleys brand health, tradies





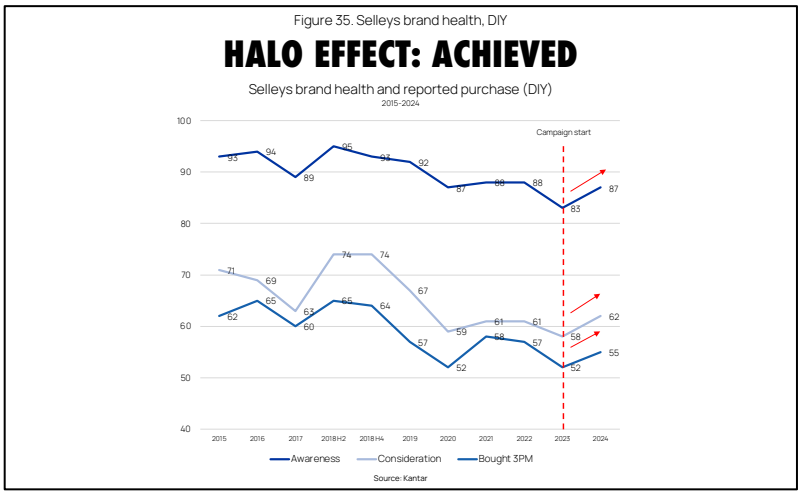
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**As predicted, we won back younger audiences.**
Importantly, credibility gained with the most sceptical audience translated into broader brand equity gains, rather than fragmentation.

- Awareness +4%
- Consideration +4%
- Purchase (P3M) +3%

*(Figure 35)*

Figure 35. Selleys brand health, DIY

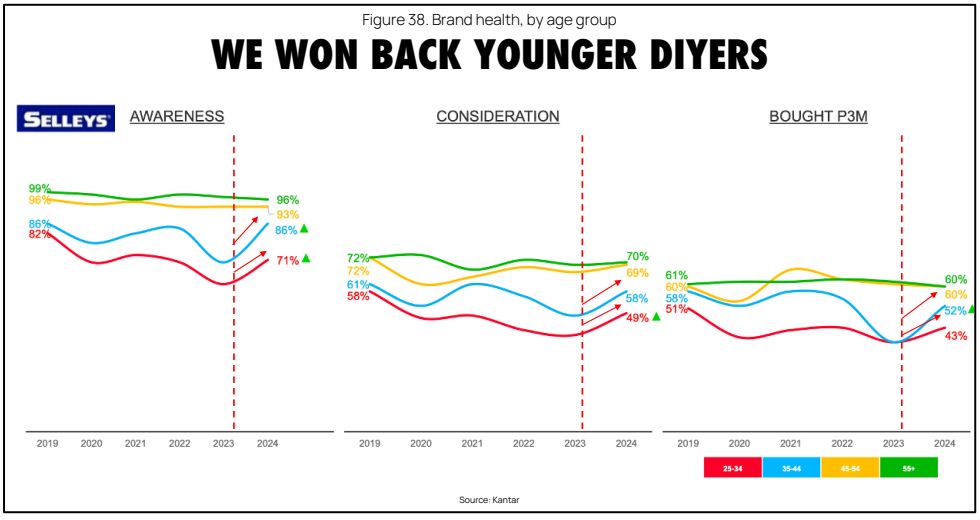



Notably, growth was led by 25–44-year-olds, strengthening the brand's future demand base.

- Awareness +10%
- Consideration +9%
- Purchase +6%

*(Figure 38)*

Figure 38. Brand health, by age group




**COMMUNICATIONS RESULTS: PROOF THAT WORKED HARDER THAN WORDS EVER COULD**


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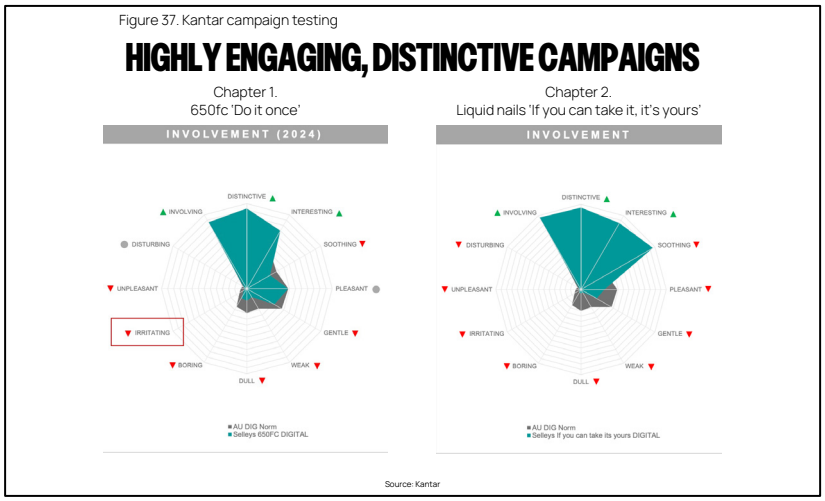
**OBJECTIVE 5. Exceed creative benchmarks. Done.**
We traded domestic humour for unvarnished proof, ensuring our media spend punched far above its weight.

**We didn't just beat creative benchmarks - we smashed them.**

Both campaigns performed incredibly strongly on Kantar's involvement metrics - those that deem whether the ad is worthy of attention.

*(Figure 37)*

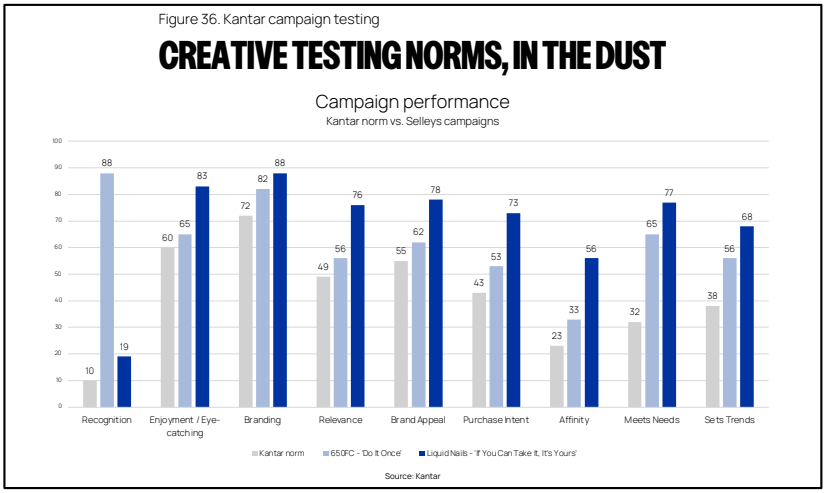
Figure 37. Kantar campaign testing




Both campaigns over-delivered on every critical metric in creative testing with tradies – **138%** above the norm on Enjoyment, **70%** above the norm on 'Active Involvement' scores, **140%** above the norm on 'Meets Needs', **70%** above the norm on 'Purchase Intent' and a whopping **7.8x** the norm on Recognition.

*(Figure 36)*

Figure 36. Kantar campaign testing




Audience takeaways from Kantar campaign testing were perfectly in line with business objectives. The top three message recall with tradies being:

1. "Selleys products can be relied on to work"
2. "Selleys makes high performance products"
3. "You can trust Selleys / You can rely on Selleys in extreme situations"


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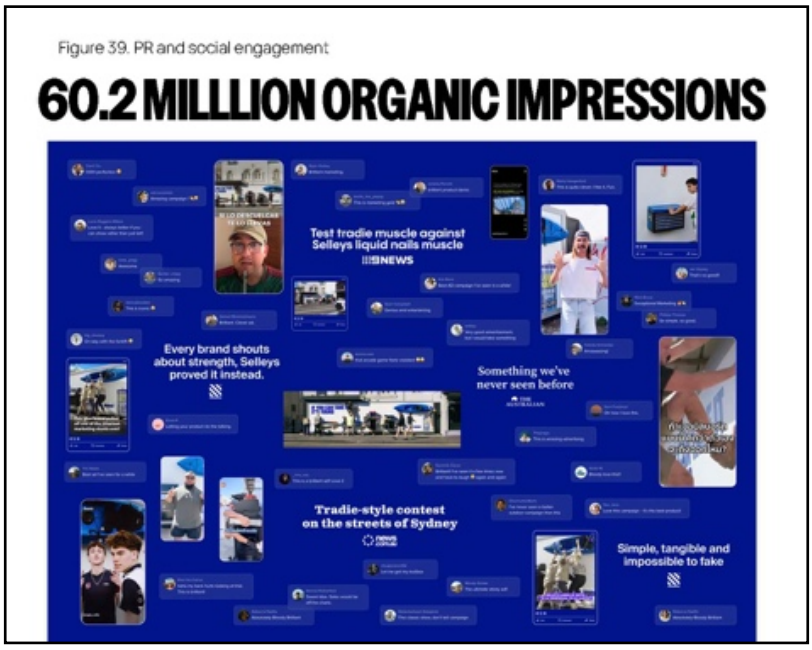
**“If you can take it, it’s yours” wasn’t just compelling - it went viral in Australia and globally.**

The campaign’s social content delivered a whopping +60.2 million impressions, generating coverage across national mastheads like News.com.au, The Australian and 9News.

Demonstrating the power of not just understanding your audiences’ buying behaviour but their culture and mindset.

*(Figure 39)*

Figure 39. PR and social engagement




## Q7. WAS THE CAMPAIGN A GOOD INVESTMENT?

[redacted]


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## Q8. DEMONSTRATE THAT THE RESULT WAS NOT DUE TO OTHER FACTORS

**Category growth?**
No. We outpaced category growth as shown by 1.7x.

**Seasonality?**
No. Tradies are less seasonal as an audience. Plus we've shown portfolio uplifts across time and compared like-for-like periods YOY.

**Distribution?**
No. Bunnings' footprint has only marginally grown.

**New products?**
No. No major innovation in the portfolio.

**Pricing?**
Selleys' maintained its price premium of 10-20% across this period. So also no.

## Q9. GIVE CONTEXT TO BUDGET IN COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS.

## Q10. GIVE CONTEXT TO THE BRAND'S OVERALL BUDGET.

## Q11. MEDIA BUDGET ELABORATION

## Q12. DESCRIBE OWNED MEDIA ACTIVITY

## Q13. OUTLINE ANY SPONSORSHIPS

## Q14. OUTLINE COMMUNICATION TOUCHPOINTS


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