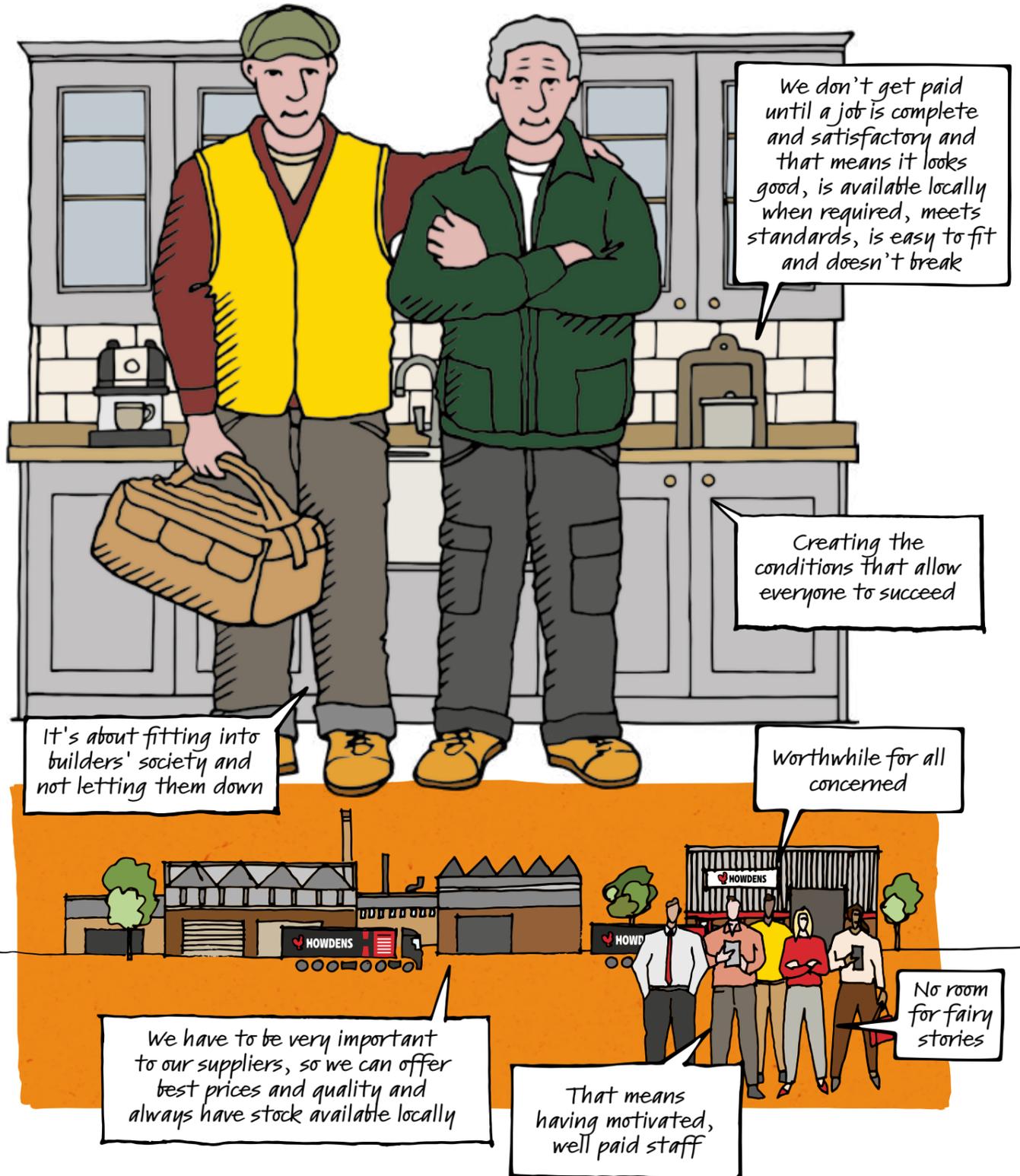


Our Culture and Purpose



To supply from local stock nationwide...

WORTHWHILE FOR ALL CONCERNED

Howdens was founded on the principle that its business should be worthwhile for all concerned – customers, prospective customers, homeowners, tenants, local communities, our suppliers, our investors, our staff and their families.

This founding principle has shaped our business model and our strategic decisions for more than 20 years. We believe in local profit-sharing and incentivisation for our staff, as well as looking after the fundamentals of the trade relationship and offering trade terms that allow the builder to run a business and make a living. In short, creating the conditions that allow everyone to succeed.

Since Howdens opened its doors in 1995, we have grown in a balanced way, investing sensibly and ensuring we are prepared for all market conditions. Underpinning our success has been a lowest-cost and flexible approach to our production, a low break-even point for our depots and an entrepreneurial spirit.

Howdens solves problems for small builders doing joinery work. It's about fitting into their society, not letting them down and associating with people who run their own business. Builders don't get paid until a job is complete and satisfactory; that means our products must look good, be available locally when required, meet standards, are easy to fit and don't break.

We offer builders trade accounts which give them up to eight weeks before payment is required; we give them a confidential discount, swap items on the spot, provide a welcoming trade environment, exclude retail, and retain staff. Customers always see the same faces. It's about trust with our customers – we do what we say.

To achieve this we have to build strong and enduring relationships with our suppliers, and work closely with them so we can offer best prices and quality and always have stock available. It means having great suppliers who share our philosophy.

It also means having motivated and well-paid staff. This is an entrepreneurial, manager-driven business with low central overheads. Tradespeople are entrepreneurs. They are not interested in, and don't benefit from, a big central office. Howdens does not offer a huge corporate hierarchy – rather, an extremely satisfying, well-paid job for committed individuals.

Howdens has grown from nothing - no name, no product, no building, no staff. Today it has more than 690 depots, 460,000 accounts in the UK and over 9,500 staff. A winning formula that everyone connected with can call their own and a model that can grow.

Andrew Livingston
Chief Executive Officer

...the small builder's ever-changing, routine, integrated kitchen and joinery requirements...