



CASE STUDY

# Strategic media planning pushes plumbers to connect with SharkBite



**elevation**marketing

## BACKGROUND

# RWC: water control systems manufacturer

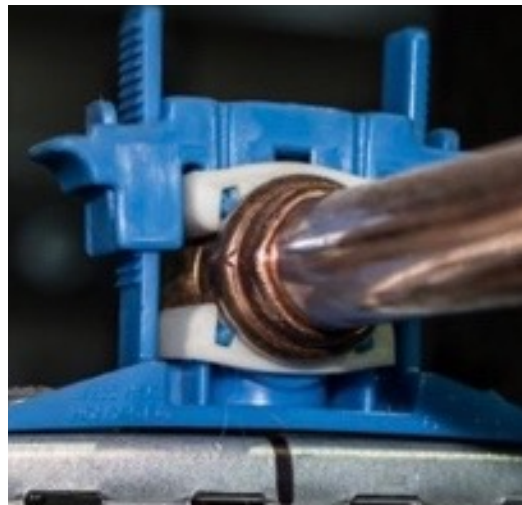
Reliance Worldwide Corporation® (RWC) is a global leader and manufacturer of water delivery and control systems for residential, commercial and industrial applications. A pioneer in push-to-connect plumbing technology, RWC sells a wide range of fittings, valves, PEX pipe and accessories under its SharkBite® brand.

SharkBite push-to-connect products enable the easy installation of entire new build plumbing systems, as well as fast emergency repairs, without the need for highly skilled craftsmen, expensive tools, soldering or glue. As the name implies, users simply attach a SharkBite coupling to each end of a pipe and push to join them for first-time installation.

## Pushing back against innovation

Despite its innovative approach and convenience, the SharkBite brand faced pushback. While the next generation of plumbing professionals was more open to the modern solution, old-school plumbers had concerns about the longevity of push-to-connect fittings compared to traditional soldering methods. Others viewed SharkBite as more of a DIY emergency repair product. All audiences needed to be educated on the use and advantages of the products.

RWC needed to connect with tenured and young plumbing professionals without alienating the DIYers who make up a large percentage of sales. For this, RWC asked Elevation Marketing for some B2B media expertise to help them meet the customer wherever—and whomever—they are.





## CHALLENGE

# Maximize an underutilized asset

The primary challenge for RWC and SharkBite was educating target audiences on the proper installation technique and proven high-pressure performance. The company needed to positively influence the perceptions of tenured plumbers while generating awareness and engagement with a new generation of plumbers and DIYers.

RWC's in-house agency produced excellent creative work but did not have the B2B media buying and reporting skills to track ROI.

## Leveraging social media influencers

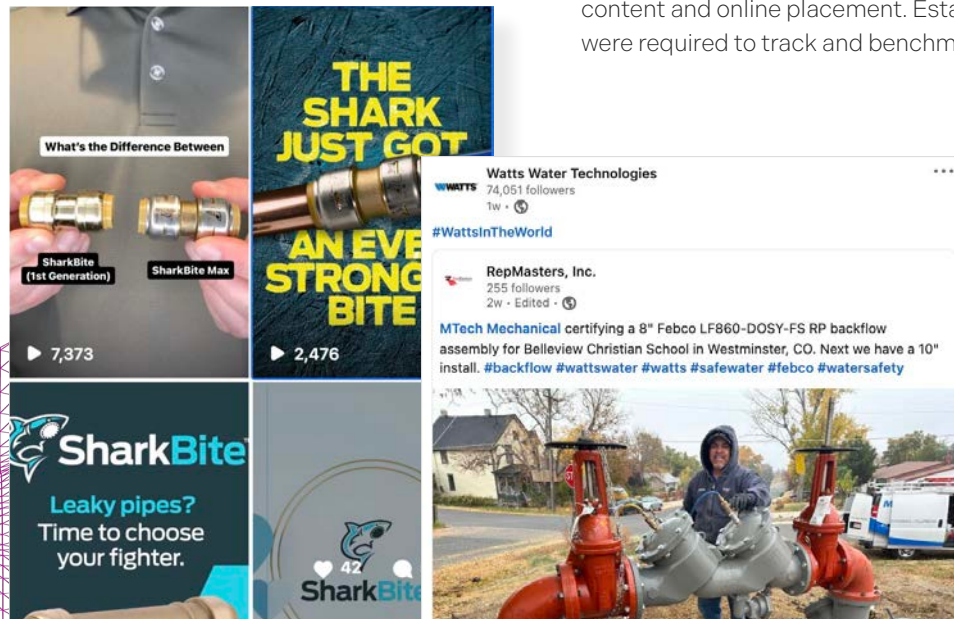
Meanwhile, several SharkBite users had been posting content on social media about proper use, installation tips and applications for push-to-connect plumbing technology. RWC wanted to better leverage these independent champions to demonstrate proof points through hands-on use of the products. These types of endorsements build trust among professionals, while how-to advice attracts DIYers.

However, RWC lacked an overarching strategy to effectively manage and shape influencer content and online placement. Established KPIs were required to track and benchmark success.

Elevation's expertise would help establish a structure and control over what would become known as the SharkBite Influencer Campaign.

The primary challenge for Elevation Marketing was twofold:

1. Develop a process for selecting influencers and assisting with the production of content to ensure videos are branded, messaging is on target, product language is standardized and leads are captured—elements that were previously missing.
2. Build and execute a B2B paid media plan that combines influencer video content and static advertising to cost-effectively reach RWC's professional and DIY audiences. To gauge ROI, the plan would recommend tools to measure views and cost per view (CPV).



## APPROACH

# A data-driven strategy to expand reach and strengthen brand leadership

### Meet customers wherever they are

Elevation's research into the U.S. plumbing market and RWC target audiences revealed multiple distribution channels and audiences with different personas, proof points and media consumption habits. Demographically, older professionals are drawn toward websites that provide unbiased research and recommendations (Display and paid search), younger plumbers seeking validation and installation tips favor trusted paid social sites (Facebook and Instagram), while DIYers search the web for videos with step-by-step plumbing instructions and examples. The media strategy needed to meet each audience wherever they were in their buying journey, on their preferred channel(s).

### An opportunity to broaden RWC's reach

Until Elevation was engaged, RWC's marketing strategy was largely location-driven with geographic and seasonal targeting. For example, a "Beat the Freeze" campaign targeted plumbing professionals in southeastern cities every fall with solutions for burst pipes and renovation work. However, its potential target

audience is much larger, encompassing new home builders, commercial contractors, OEM purchasing agents, as well as DIY enthusiasts. RWC was leaving a lot of money on the table.

RWC needed to expand its reach to capture previously untapped audiences while simultaneously improving engagement by introducing behavioral targeting—enabling more precise delivery of messages through the channels and formats most likely to resonate.

Based on these findings, Elevation built a comprehensive integrated marketing plan to:

### Drive a consistent brand experience across all communications (ads and influencer videos).

Messaging used key touchpoints along the path to conversion with multiple opportunities to drive audiences to SharkBite landing pages to capture lead data.

**Utilize advanced analytics tools to determine return on ad spend (ROAS).** Routinely analyzing results against industry benchmarks—factoring in marketing spend and sales data from retail and eCommerce platforms—enabled us to arrive at a true ROI.

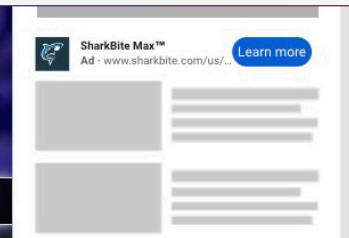
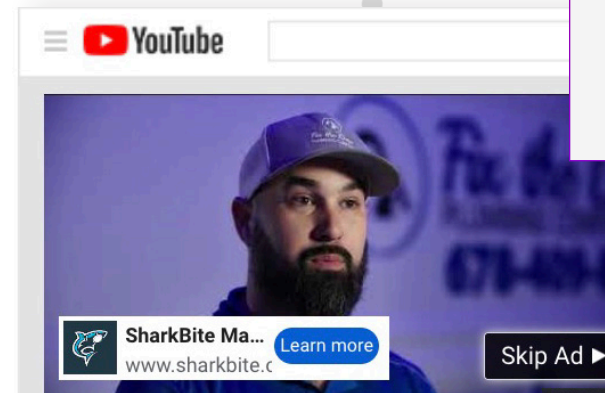
### Leverage SharkBite to build equity

**across all RWC brands.** Leveraging the established reputation, trust and recognition of the core brand, the plan enhances overall RWC market awareness as the company continues to diversify.

Our marketing strategy aimed to position SharkBite products as a transformative alternative to traditional plumbing methods, clearly establishing RWC as the innovator behind push-to-connect technology that surpasses industry standards for longevity and reliability. It would also ensure strong alignment between RWC's sales and marketing teams to drive greater awareness across all RWC brands and future product launches.

### The 4-step Elevation media strategy approach

- 1. Target.** Find customers by segmenting RWC's target audience and geolocations with accurate, validated data.
- 2. Engage.** Connect with RWC's top audience segments through an omnichannel approach to yield the best results.
- 3. Analyze.** Leverage data, automation and analytics to gain ongoing, actionable insights and learnings.
- 4. Optimize.** Apply those learnings across channels to improve KPIs and refine planning to drive sales.



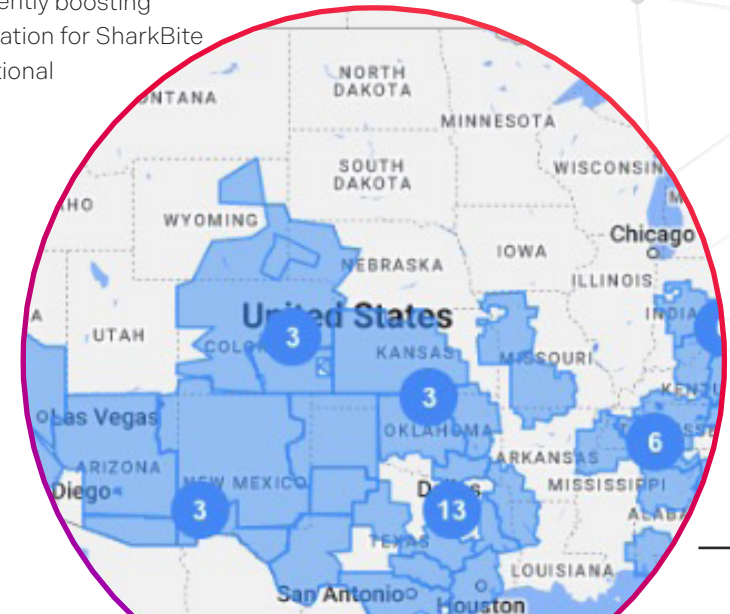
# Expanding reach and driving ROI through smart segmentation and targeting

## Mapping behaviors to media channels

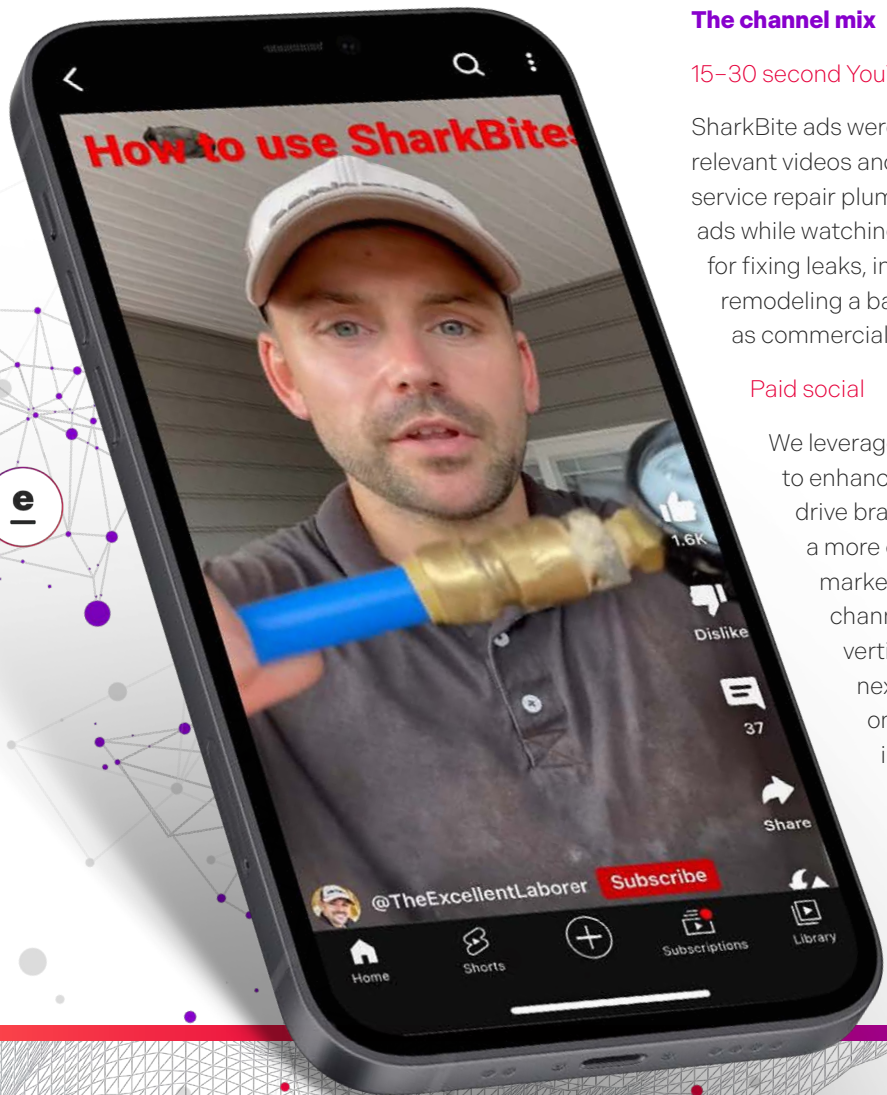
The approved media plan stemmed from a thorough examination of RWC's audience characteristics. Opting for a more behavioral targeting approach, we engaged service repair plumbers, plumbing contractors, mechanical contractors, specifiers/engineers and DIY enthusiasts based on their media consumption and browsing habits in addition to geographic data to paint a complete picture. We looked at:

- **Demographic data** – segmenting audiences and markets by age, gender and Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) score. HHI is a measure of market concentration used to assess the level of competition within a given area. The higher the HHI, the more concentrated the market, indicating less competition and potentially more market power for RWC.
- **Psychographic data** – scanning for commonalities in personality, lifestyle, social status, activities, interests, opinions and attitudes to craft messaging and identify pain points.
- **Behavioral data** – glean insights about audience browsing habits and histories (search terms used, sites visited, length of time on page, purchases, etc.) to place relevant SharkBite ads, offers and influencer videos on the most popular vehicles.
- **Geographic data** – taking RWC's existing geo-centric strategy a step further, we poured a full year's point of sale (POS) data into our location targeting tool to identify the top revenue-producing zones, called designated market areas (DMA). When layered over demographic, behavioral and psychographic data, we were able to precisely target the best DMAs to achieve a higher reach and frequency across all audiences, optimizing spend. This also helped RWC pinpoint additional growth markets for future expansion.

This data-driven strategy enabled us to deliver fine-tuned messages to each audience while maximizing exposure. We created a carefully weighted channel mix to yield measurable outcomes while concurrently boosting awareness and consideration for SharkBite along with cross-promotional opportunities for RWC's expanding product portfolio.







### The channel mix

#### 15–30 second YouTube ads

SharkBite ads were placed on contextually relevant videos and content. For example, the service repair plumber audience saw SharkBite ads while watching videos on new techniques for fixing leaks, installing water heaters or remodeling a bathroom. The ads were shown as commercials during other videos.

#### Paid social

We leveraged Meta’s unique capabilities to enhance customer engagement, drive brand awareness and create a more cohesive and impactful marketing approach across channels. Using in-stream, vertical video ads, we targeted next-generation plumbers based on job titles and DIYers with an interest in plumbing, limiting placements to RWC’s highest revenue-performing DMAs.

#### Display advertising

We used programmatic and Native ads to enhance the overall customer experience and optimize ad spend based on real-time data and insights. This included different tactics to retarget customers based on known behaviors and intent data:

We used behavioral data to identify and retarget prospects by industry and job function. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) data and Lookalike (LAL) audiences are powerful tools for targeted advertising and customer acquisition. CRM allows for highly personalized campaigns by segmenting customers based on their collected data. LAL leverages CRM insights to find new targets who share similar characteristics with existing high-value customers, enabling RWC to expand its reach and improve campaign performance. Custom “Bombora” segmenting, a tool that collects data on company search histories, was used to target businesses with high purchase intent.

We scheduled weather-triggered targeting (programmatic and in-app) to run “Beat the Freeze” messages only during cold-weather-related instances in key DMAs.

We leveraged Custom Retail Media Network Segments to advertise to highly relevant audiences shopping at Lowe’s and Home Depot.

#### Paid search

We utilized search engine marketing (SEM) to maximize visibility, directing professionals and DIYers to landing page content that provided proof points for SharkBite’s reliability. This involved refining keyword lists to optimize spend and reduce incorrect search results, and incorporating missing CTAs into SharkBite ads to boost interaction. We added extra links to landing pages and callout extensions with extra text that focused on features to make RWC ads more appealing to potential customers.

We completely restructured the existing program in both Google and Bing to redress any deviations from established industry best practices, vetting keywords for optimized spend.

Using Remarketing Lists for Search Ads (RLSA), we tailored search campaigns to target previous website visitors with customized ads and bids through Google search.

We used Gmail ads to reach specialty audiences and perform cross-campaign remarketing to drive interest with SharkBite images and clear calls to action.

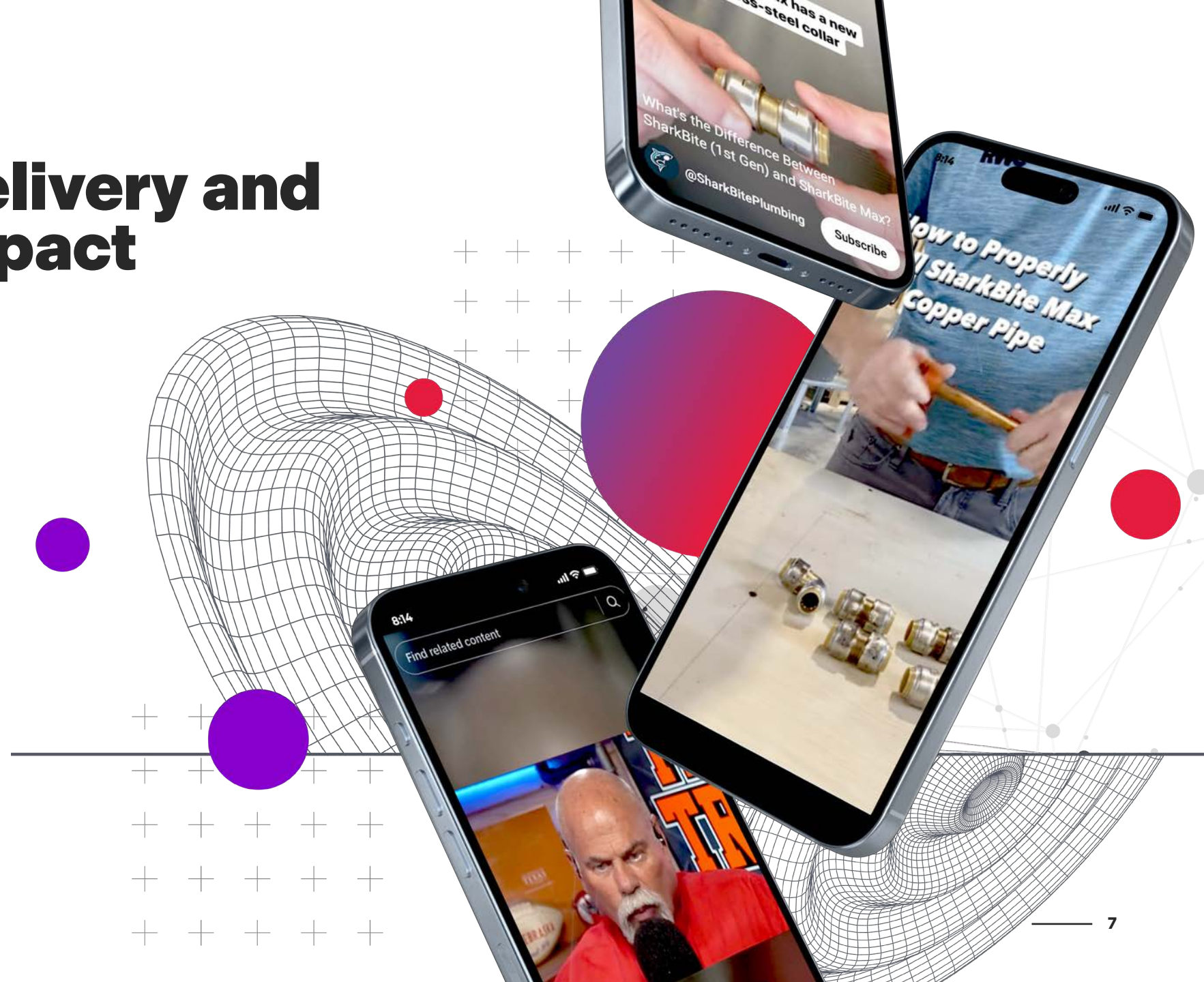
## DELIVERABLES

# Campaign delivery and projected impact

Elevation provided media planning, budgeting, negotiating, buying and campaign reporting services. RWC's in-house creative agency produced ad creatives and handed them over to Elevation for distribution to the selected media platforms.

The SharkBite Influencer Campaign started in pre-freeze November/December, ran through the winter and ended in July after peak home building season. The budget was paced to spend 100% of the allocation each month in the U.S. market, with a focus on the highest revenue DMAs as identified by our location targeting analysis.

Over the eight-month flight, Elevation estimated the campaigns would generate a total of over 97,000,000 impressions and over 200,000 clicks on SharkBite content or links to landing pages.





## BUSINESS OUTCOMES

# Making RWC's marketing dollars work harder

As a result of Elevation's strategic, highly disciplined B2B media planning and behavioral targeting approach, RWC was able to dramatically increase its reach and frequency among high-intent prospects without increasing its overall B2B marketing spend. Instead, we made its investment work harder.

Scheduling influencer videos alongside paid search, paid social and in-app advertising created a holistic campaign. The media plan effectively touched prospects at every stage of the sales funnel, from awareness to adoption, providing multiple opportunities for viewers to connect directly with RWC.

The most pivotal outcome was the transformation of SharkBite influencer videos from an ancillary element to the cornerstone of RWC's outreach and awareness program due to the laser-focused media plan that put millions more eyes on SharkBite content than RWC ever anticipated. The program placed the brand front and center in the world of push-to-connect plumbing solutions.

Elevation had forecast over 97,000,000 impressions and 200,000 clicks during the SharkBite Influencer Campaign. **Actual results eclipsed total impression and click expectations by a factor of about 5:1.** Highlights of performance numbers for individual channels include the following:

### Influencer videos

25.6M+ views

CPV outperformed industry benchmarks by 10X+

### YouTube videos

Nearly 150M impressions

CPV 33% of benchmark

### GDN

270M+ impressions

CPC 10% of benchmark

### Paid search

12M+ impressions

99K+ conversions

CPC 20% of benchmark

### Paid social

14.1M+ impressions

7.2M+ video views

CPC ~50% of benchmark

With Elevation raising awareness for RWC, the SharkBite brand is now top-of-mind among seasoned professionals, up-and-coming plumbers and DIY audiences. Today's customers ask and search for push-to-connect plumbing fittings by the SharkBite name, recognition earned by the company that pioneered the category.

Millions upon  
millions of views

## Impressions

Estimated: 97M

Actual: 449M+

## Clicks

Estimated: 200K

Actual: 1.5M+



ABOUT ELEVATION

# Full-Funnel Marketing Solutions for Today's B2B Buyers.

Elevation Marketing creates meaningful customer engagements and sustainable results through data-driven, digital-first solutions that inspire change, motivate action and deliver predictable outcomes. Whether it's brand, demand, ABM, channel or sales enablement, we are experts in connecting brands to people and performance through end-to-end B2B marketing programs.

By looking at your brand through the lens of your business, we help you break through the obstacles that stand between you and greater sales, increased market share and increased revenue for maximum return on your investment.

**Ready to discuss your project?**

**CONTACT US**

sales@ElevationB2B.com  
275 East Rivulon Blvd., Suite 411  
Gilbert, Arizona 85297

**480.775.8880**



elevation marketing | [elevationb2b.com](https://elevationb2b.com)



**Business Journal**  
**Top 20**  
Interactive Marketing Firm