UpShift

Brand vs Performance in Car Leasing: Who's Winning?

October 2025

TRUSTED BY:

BYD STELLANTIS SELECT CAR LEASING vanarama GRIDSERVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY Peter Vardy YOUR CAR COMPANY

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UpShift

About UpShift

Introduction

Part of the wider **Evolved group**, **UpShift** is a specialised search agency that focuses on building **long-term partnerships** with businesses in the automotive sector.

With a **proven track record of success**, **UpShift** has helped a variety of companies across many sub-sectors in the automotive industry, and has built long-term partnerships with **specialist and global brands**.

Capabilities

- SEO
- STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
- PAID SEARCH
- DIGITAL PR & OUTREACH
- CUSTOMER INSIGHTS & CRO
- AI STRATEGY
- BRAND CONSULTANCY

Who we work with

BYD
STELLANTIS
SELECT CAR LEASING
GRIDSERVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
vanarama
LeasingOptions
NEXTBASE
Peter Vardy YOUR CAR COMPANY
loveelectric
ClickMechanic
motoreasy

CHALLENGES WE SOLVE	OPPORTUNITIES WE REALISE
Reducing reliance on marketing cost by offsetting pain channels and security commercial sustainability	Developing and executing brand propositions and market positioning that underpin performance
Recovering stagnant and/or eroding performance	Data transformation to understand a true ROI, reduce waste, and maximise investment
Provide expert consultancy, insight, and reporting to assist with board and key investor decisions	Developing, executing, and managing marketing strategies that align with key commercial business objectives
Navigating changing industry / market economics by streamlining marketing strategies	Increasing ecommerce sales or generating new leads through marketing optimisation
Challenging industry competitors	Launching a new brand, product or service online
Website migration management / recovery	Upskilling and training inhouse teams to realise marketing potential

Introduction

What if your brand was the real reason your customers aren't converting, not your product, price, or performance?

In a crowded market with near-identical lease deals, slick comparison tables, and endless CTAs, most car leasing brokers have unknowingly slipped into commoditisation. **They look the same. Sound the same. Sell the same.** And that's a problem, because when everyone's shouting, no one gets heard.

At UpShift, we work exclusively with automotive brands. We've seen first-hand how much budget gets poured into PPC, SEO, and performance channels... while the brand itself, the clarity of the message, the emotional pull, the credibility that builds trust, is left to chance.

THIS WHITEPAPER IS DIFFERENT.

We've analysed the top car leasing websites in the UK using our Brand Theory Scorecard, a seven-part framework that evaluates how brands actually show up in the eyes of their customers. From Clarity to Credibility, from Emotional Resonance to Conversion Readiness, we've scored each brand across the metrics that really influence customer decision-making.

Why should you care?

Because in 2025, performance marketing without a brand is just expensive guesswork. When attention is short, and trust is earned in seconds, the winners will be those who:

- Say something **clear** and **relevant** fast
- Show up with confidence, **proof**, and **personality**
- Guide users not just to a product, but to a decision they **feel good** about

If you want to stand out, you need more than a great deal, you need a **great reason to be chosen**.

This report shows who's leading, who's lagging, and what you can do about it.

What to expect / Who is this aimed at?

Within this whitepaper we will be analysing some of the UK's top leasing brokers to understand who is leading and who is lagging and the role their brand, positioning, and messaging has played in that outcome.

To do this, we will be showcasing some elements of our unique agency framework, that helps us understand the brand breakdown.

Ultimately this whitepaper is for **everyone**, but moreover, it is specifically aimed at anyone who wants to delve deeper into their marketing efforts to understand where to find the right levers of change, and how to pull them.

Why a performance marketing agency is leading this conversation

Some might ask why a performance marketing agency is talking so much about brand.

The real question is: **how could we not?**

For years, we've been called in to fix performance problems such as high CPAs, poor conversion rates, low engagement, stagnant SEO. And again and again, we've found the same root cause:

The brand wasn't clear.
The message didn't land.
The experience didn't connect.

We could tweak ad copy, restructure landing pages, or optimise the funnel but if the brand lacked clarity, distinctiveness, or credibility, the results would always be capped.

So we stopped treating brand as "someone else's problem."

Instead, we built the muscle to fix it ourselves, from the inside out.

Brand and performance are no longer separate

Brand isn't a **department**. It's not a **logo**. And it's not a **luxury**.

It's what makes every click cheaper, every conversion easier, every customer more loyal. This makes it our business.

We don't do performance in isolation, we interrogate everything that impacts it.

We’ve been doing this quietly for a while

We’ve helped launch and reposition brands in brutally competitive markets.

We’ve created full propositions from scratch.

We’ve built messaging hierarchies and emotional hooks.

We’ve mapped identity systems to search intent, funnel stage, and user state.

WE JUST HAVEN’T SHOUTED ABOUT IT.

UNTIL NOW.

What do we mean when we refer to ‘brand’?

Throughout this whitepaper, you will see a lot of references to ‘**brand**’.

These references **are not** related to:

- A typical ‘rebrand’
- Aesthetics, theme, and general design
- Logos and slogans

These references **are** related to:

- Clarifying your proposition and market positioning
- Tightening your messaging
- Finding your emotional edge
- Aligning your experience with what your audience actually needs

In many cases, it’s not about reinventing your brand, it’s about revealing its value more clearly and consistently.

THAT’S THE KIND OF BRAND WORK WE DO.

Fast, focused, and designed to improve performance.

Introducing UpShift's Growth Pyramid

We come from the world of performance marketing.

Our DNA is in driving traffic, leads, and ROI through smart, measurable tactics.

But over the years, working with dozens of automotive and leasing brands, we noticed something consistent:

The real problem often isn't the campaign, it's the brand.

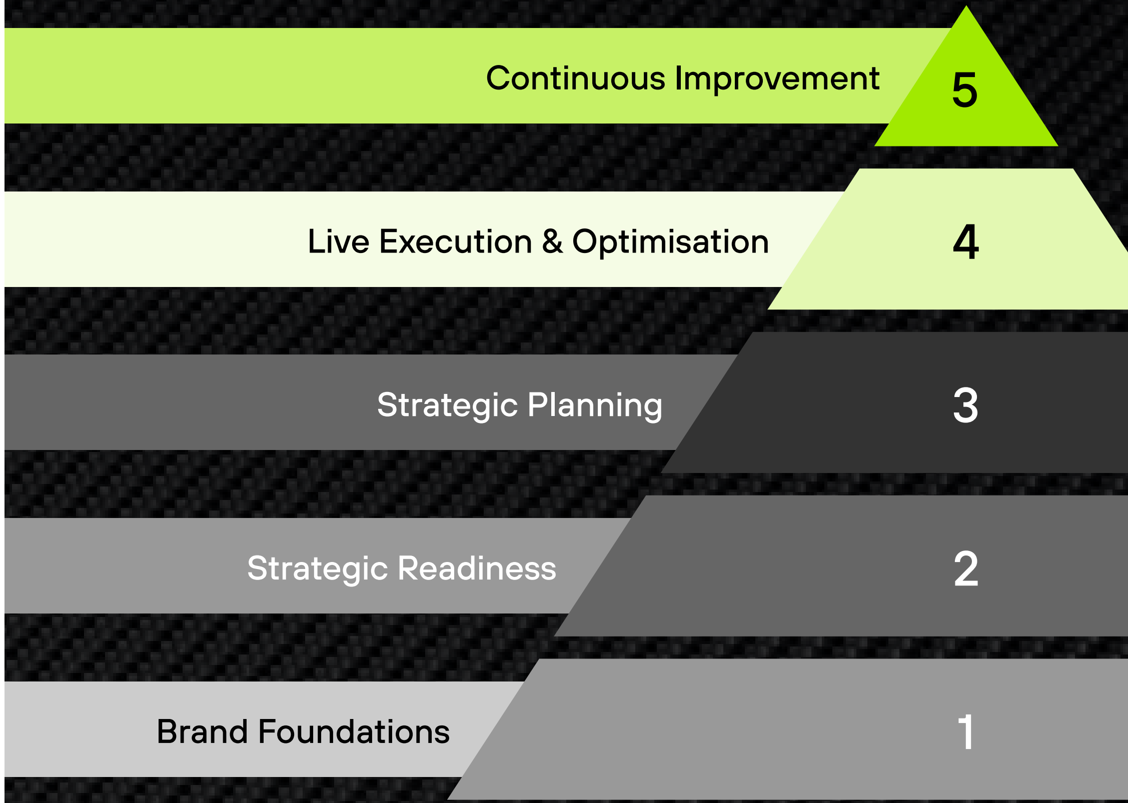
Clients come to us asking for better rankings, better CPAs, better conversion rates...

But behind the scenes, the real issues are often:

- Unclear propositions
- Generic messaging
- Forgettable brand identities
- Sites that convert poorly because they lack trust or distinction

We've seen it so many times, we built a framework to fix it:

The Growth Pyramid.



Why does brand come first?

Level 1 is all about Brand Foundations

Why?

One of the biggest challenges that we consistently face are business' build on weak brand foundations.

We know how to run high-efficiency SEO, PPC, and CRO campaigns.

But we've learned, again and again, that when results stall, it's rarely just about tactics.

The real issue is usually weak foundations:

- The proposition isn't clear
- The messaging doesn't land
- The site feels generic or unsafe
- The brand doesn't mean anything

When you get Level 1 wrong, everything built on top of it is weaker. You can't optimise a funnel that's pointing at nothing.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO SCALE A BRAND THAT NOBODY REMEMBERS OR CONNECTS WITH.

What comes next?

Once Level 1 is strong, we build upward, typically into:

LEVEL 2

Strategic Readiness

Ensuring we have the infrastructure to execute: accurate tracking, a defined funnel, aligned KPIs, and CRM processes that support growth.

LEVEL 3

Strategic Planning

Smart channel planning and budgeting, audience-led messaging, mapped customer journeys, and content that aligns with real search behaviour and intent.

LEVEL 4

Live Execution & Optimisation

Campaigns go live, channels are activated, and continuous optimisation begins, with KPI tracking and learning loops driving performance forward.

LEVEL 5

Continuous Improvement

Strategy, brand, and performance evolve together, powered by data, aligned teams, and confident decision-making that compounds over time.

But without a solid foundation, these levels won’t perform as they should.

They’ll generate cost, not compound growth.

We make brand work for performance

The difference with Upshift is this:

> "We're not a brand agency trying to sell you a six-month rebrand. We're a performance agency that knows brand positioning is often the unlock, and we make it actionable, fast, and commercially focused."

Ian McIntosh, UpShift CEO

Case Study: Introduction

To assess how the Growth Pyramid works in practice, we evaluated the brand foundations of 18 major UK leasing brokers using a unique scorecard method.

Driven by search engines and squeezed margins, brokers have invested heavily in digital performance, but have they neglected the one asset that could multiply their returns: their brand?

To put this to the test, and to demonstrate the importance of brand foundations being the very first level of the growth pyramid, we created a proprietary 7-part framework that would allow us to evaluate each of the selected brands across a variety of key criteria.

Our Methodology: The Brand Theory Scorecard

To assess how effectively UK car leasing brands are showing up online, we used the Brand Theory Scorecard.

The Brand Theory Scorecard is a 7-part framework developed by Upshift to evaluate how a brand is perceived by potential customers during their first digital interaction.

We weren't looking at traffic volume, keyword rankings, or ad spend. We were looking at something far more influential in a crowded market:

HOW DOES YOUR BRAND FEEL IN THE FIRST 30 SECONDS, AND DOES THAT FEELING CONVERT?

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The 7 Elements We Scored

Each brand was evaluated across **seven key dimensions**, with a score from **1 to 10**:

CATEGORY	WHAT IT MEASURES
CLARITY	Is it obvious what the brand offers, who it's for, and why it matters, within seconds?
DIFFERENTIATION	Does the brand feel unique, ownable, or strategically distinct from its competitors?
RELEVANCE	Does it address the customer's real needs, pain points, and motivations clearly?
CREDIBILITY	Are there visible signals of trust, such as client logos, reviews, awards, or proof of delivery?
EMOTIONAL RESONANCE	Does the brand make you feel anything? Is there a tone, personality, or story that connects?
CONSISTENCY	Does the message, tone, and experience align across key pages and elements?
CONVERSION READINESS	Are users guided toward a clear next step? Are the calls-to-action intuitive and persuasive?

Executive Summary: What We Found

Most brokers are operationally capable but brand-deficient.

Only three brands broke through.

57 /70

vanarama

A confident, well-rounded brand with strong emotional presence, clear purpose, and polished execution

55 /70

hippoleasing

The only brand to score a perfect 10 for Differentiation, with a clear proposition and a standout name

50 /70

SELECT CAR LEASING

A high-trust, high-volume player with excellent clarity and credibility, letdown only slightly by generic presentation

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The Middle Market: Competent but Cautious

The bulk of the market, brands like **Synergy**, **Nationwide**, **Rivervale**, **Gateway2Lease**, and **Evans Halshaw Leasing**, sit in the mid-table.

They aren't broken. But they are:

Functionally similar	Visually templated	Emotionally neutral

They do just enough to get shortlisted, but not enough to be remembered.

These brands are one bold move away from leadership, but also at risk of stagnation if they don't sharpen their brand identity.

The Commodity Zone: Interchangeable and Invisible

At the bottom of the table sit brands like **All Car Leasing**, **LeaseCar.uk**, **Britannia**, and **Central UK Vehicle Leasing**.

Their issues are consistent and costly:

- Weak or keyword-based names
- Outdated or templated design
- No ownable positioning or emotional hook

In an increasingly saturated category, these brands **fail to stand out**, **inspire trust**, or **justify their place** in the customer's shortlist.

The Results

	CLAR	DIFF	RELE	CRED	EMOT	CONS	CONV	TOTAL	AVG	
VANARAMA	9	9	8	9	6	8	8	**57**	**8.1**	Leaders
HIPPO LEASING	8	10	8	8	6	7	8	**55**	**7.9**	Leaders
SELECT CAR LEASING	8	6	8	9	5	7	7	**50**	**7.1**	Leaders
SYNERGY CAR LEASING	7	7	7	8	5	6	7	**47**	**6.7**	Contenders
NATIONWIDE VEHICLE CONTRACTS	7	5	7	8	4	7	7	**45**	**6.4**	Contenders
RIVERVALE	7	5	7	8	5	6	7	**45**	**6.4**	Contenders
CAR LEASING MADE SIMPLE	6	5	7	7	4	7	7	**43**	**6.1**	Contenders
GATEWAY2LEASE	6	5	7	7	4	6	7	**42**	**6**	Contenders
LEX AUTOLEASE	6	6	6	9	3	7	5	**42**	**6**	Edge of Contender
PINK CAR LEASING	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	**41**	**5.9**	Edge of Contender
EVANS HALSHAW LEASING	6	4	6	8	4	6	6	**40**	**5.7**	On the edge of 'Commodity Zone'
LEASING OPTIONS	6	4	6	7	4	6	6	**39**	**5.6**	On the edge of 'Commodity Zone'
JURNI LEASING	5	5	6	6	5	6	6	**39**	**5.6**	Commodity Zone
FIRST VEHICLE LEASING	6	4	6	6	4	6	6	**38**	**5.4**	Commodity Zone
CENTRAL UK VEHICLE LEASING	5	3	6	6	3	5	6	**34**	**4.9**	Commodity Zone
BRITANNIA CAR LEASING	5	3	6	6	3	5	6	**34**	**4.9**	Commodity Zone
LEASECAR.UK	5	3	6	6	3	6	5	**34**	**4.9**	Commodity Zone
ALL CAR LEASING	5	2	6	6	3	5	6	**33**	**4.7**	Commodity Zone

Understanding the levels

What makes a Leader?

SCORING

+50/70 or **7.1/10** average score

DESCRIPTION

Differentiation (8–10)
It feels like a brand, not just a broker

Clarity + Credibility (8–10)
You understand it and trust it

Consistency + Conversion (7–10)
Well-executed across every touchpoint

And ideally includes some emotion, the hardest (and rarest) layer

COMMON TRAITS

They own a clear space in the market, whether it's bad credit, trades, trust, or scale

Their names are sticky, their design polished, and their messaging confident

Leaders feel deliberate in the way they present, which reassuring customers in their decisions to convert

What makes a Contender?

SCORING

46–50 or **6.5–7.1** average score

DESCRIPTION

Has a few standout strengths (e.g., **credibility**, **conversion**, **clarity**)

Competent and **trustworthy**, lack emotional depth or clear brand personality

Could become Leaders with focused investment in differentiation

COMMON TRAITS

They're **operationally solid**, you wouldn't hesitate to lease from them

Brand-fragile, they don't feel like brands customers remember or talk about

Most are one **bold** move away from **becoming Leaders**, e.g., a sharper proposition, more emotion, stronger identity

What is the Commodity Zone?

SCORING

Below **40** or below **6 on** average

DESCRIPTION

Has low differentiation (**4 or lower**)

Scores **below average** on emotional engagement or storytelling

Feels replaceable; if they disappeared tomorrow, the market wouldn't notice

Has **low brand memorability**, generic names, templated visuals, dated

Has **weak emotional connection**, purely functional, **zero personality**

Has **minimal distinctiveness**, no ownable tone, proposition, or design system

What does this tell us about the industry?

The industry lacks Emotional Resonance with an average score of 4.2

The highest score for Emotional Resonance within the table is 6, showing that no broker has been able to create a meaningful connection between their brand and their audience.

Why is this happening?

While price is a key driver in any consumers decision making process, there has been an overemphasis on this throughout the industry as a whole: shifting the focus on deals and not properly addressing consumer needs and requirements.

It is entirely possible that this over-indexing on pricing as a competitive lever stems from the fact that many leasing brokers view themselves as a financial services business, before an automotive company. This strategy is certainly more effective in the retail space, and not as effective when the services involve risk, guidance and trust, making them less transactional and more experiential.

How can it be improved?

- Reframe around outcomes and not offers
- Design the experience around life and not segments
- Turn trust and transparency into a competitive advantage
- Make the process simpler for consumers by removing too much choice
- Give the consumers more ways to create positive interactions with you that are more aligned to how they want to interact
- Put more focus on integrating storytelling and more relatable language to personify the product and process

What does this tell us about the industry? cont.

The most inconsistent scoring criteria - with the largest range - is differentiation

The highest score for Differentiation within the table is 10, and the lowest is 2. This suggests a polarised industry where a few brokers are attempting to do something unique, while many others are interchangeable.

Why is this happening?

A lack of meaningful differentiation can likely be traced to structural and market conditions. As the market has grown due to increased awareness and openness to vehicle leasing and finance, businesses where able to succeed by simply following a proven template – especially given the low barrier to entry. For new businesses starting out, replicating the existing model means taking less risk while established businesses do not feel the pressure to innovate or establish a unique market position while demand exists.

In summary, the market conditions have allowed brands to de-prioritise long-term positioning in favour of short-term conversion, which incidentally are conditions needed to encourage a lookalike market.

How can it be improved?

- Develop a unique positioning strategy and embody this through design, messaging, and operation
- Own a specific audience segment or niche
- Develop a distinct brand voice and personality and promote it
- Provide a better experience that aligns with the audience, and be clear how this helps them
- Tell a bigger brand story or mission that will give the audience something else to buy into or care about
- Build a community or content ecosystem that will eventually self-serve

What does this tell us about the industry? cont.

Clarity, Credibility, Consistency, and Conversion are all generally moderate

These four sets of criteria consistently yield similar scores across all websites, both in relation to each other and overall. This suggests that they could be linked together.

Why is this happening?

While each criterion is intended to reflect a distinct aspect of brand, the four criteria above seem to be interconnected through a shared reliance on templated design. This underlying uniformity enables them to score evenly relative to one another but limits their ability to score highly in terms of distinctiveness or brand potential.

In summary, it's clear that while the underlying formula used across these websites is effective, it comes at the expense of distinctiveness.

How can it be improved?

- Move beyond functional effectiveness and take some risks with brand expression
- Utilise strategic variation in tone, layout and messaging to create more memorable and meaningful audience connections
- Combine Credibility and Conversion elements by expanding beyond typical trust signals; use UGC front-and-centre to make the brand and product feel more human, authentic, and purpose-driven
- Avoiding friction can result in avoiding identity. Ensure the brand has a meaningful presence in all interactions.

What do winners do differently?

While they each take a different route to success, they share common traits that elevate them above the rest.

They Own a Position

Every top performer has claimed a piece of mental real estate:

vanarama

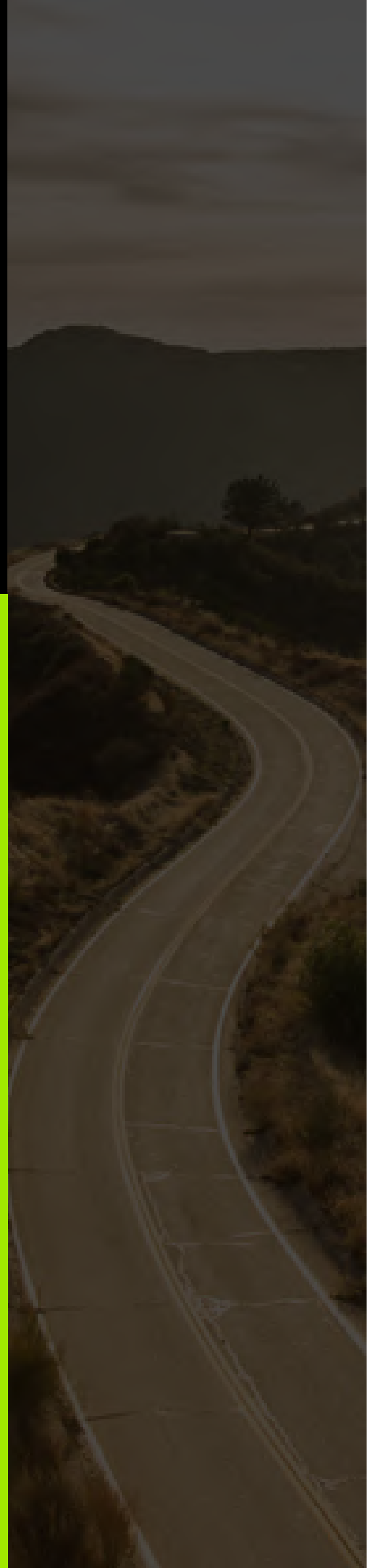
Commercial vehicle specialists, tradespeople, and small businesses

hippoleasing

Customers who want flexible finance, including bad credit or used options

SELECT CAR LEASING

Mass market, clean UX, high-volume trust



Most are not trying to appeal to everyone, they've leaned into what makes them different. Those that do, **Select Car Leasing** for example,ww consistently invest and promote their position as a leader in the market by volume, ergo trust.

Their Position is Supported by their Marketing

Most brokers lead with spreadsheets and stock feeds. The winners lead with positioning. They've built an identity that customers remember, trust, and come back to.

vanarama

Vanarama is a bold, confident brand with sports sponsorships, striking visuals, and a name that aligns with it's position.

hippoleasing

Hippo Leasing owns a distinct space: they offer used leasing, finance options, and bad credit solutions, all under a name that sticks in your head.

SELECT CAR LEASING

Select Car Leasing has carved out leadership through clarity, trust, and brand saturation delivered through mass marketing and investment.

Brand Spotlight: Hippo Leasing

When we scored every major car leasing broker on their brand foundations, **Hippo Leasing** emerged as a standout performer.

Hippo Leasing ended up with one of the highest total scores overall, and a perfect **10/10** for **Differentiation**. Remember the quote from Google last year:

> **"For automotive brands, differentiation is more important than ever"**

Google, 2024

Here's why they stood out, and what others can learn.

1. Differentiation 10/10

Hippo have a clearly targeted emotional proposition. They don't just say what they do, they say who it's for and why it matters. For example,

- They embrace customers who feel underserved (e.g. poor credit, part exchange)
- Their messaging is inclusive and supportive, building emotional trust

This not only differentiates, it resonates.

2. Brand Clarity 8/10

The value prop is simple and strong:

> **"Leasing made simple, flexible and affordable, for everyone"**

It's immediately clear what they offer, who it's for, and what makes it appealing.

3. Relevance & Emotion 8/10 + 6/10

They tap into real user pain points:

- No deposit? No problem.
- Bad credit? They help.
- Want to part exchange? Sorted.

This empathy-driven messaging creates trust and relatability, things that most leasing sites overlook. It backs up the 'for everybody' point. 'For everybody' is not just a wishful position, they genuinely place it at the heart of their proposition.

"No judgement, no stress, just a quick and easy process, even with poor credit."

THIS IS POWERFUL.

FEATURE	WHY IT WORKS
PROBLEM-DRIVEN VOICE	They get the user's pain: poor credit, worry, uncertainty
EMPATHETIC, JUDGMENT-FREE TONE	Makes users feel seen and supported, not sold to
CLEAR NEXT STEPS	"You can still apply" and "Check now, no harm done"

These examples show why **Hippo scores high in both Relevance and Emotion** - they meet the user where they are, and reassure them in a way that's authentic and functional, not fluffy or salesy.

Whilst **6/10** was the highest score received by any leasing site for emotional resonance, there is clearly room for improvement here. Hippo could introduce a lot more customer stories.

THEY TALK ABOUT EMPATHY, BUT THEY DON'T SHOW IT ENOUGH.

What's missing: authentic, specific customer journeys (e.g. "Meet Sarah: got rejected elsewhere, now driving her dream car thanks to Hippo").

In addition to this, they could use video to create connection.

Their Trustpilot reviews are solid, but all text-based. A few simple "talking head" videos of real users would bring warmth and credibility. Even one or two short, low-fi "**thank you**" clips can do more than **100 text reviews**.

This would take the score of **6 to an 8**, but to reach the 9s and 10s, we'd really require an emotional hook in the hero messaging. 'Leasing deals from the experts in bland'.
How about:

"Great cars. Honest deals. For everyone"

(Inclusion & Pride)

"Everyone deserves the freedom to move forward"

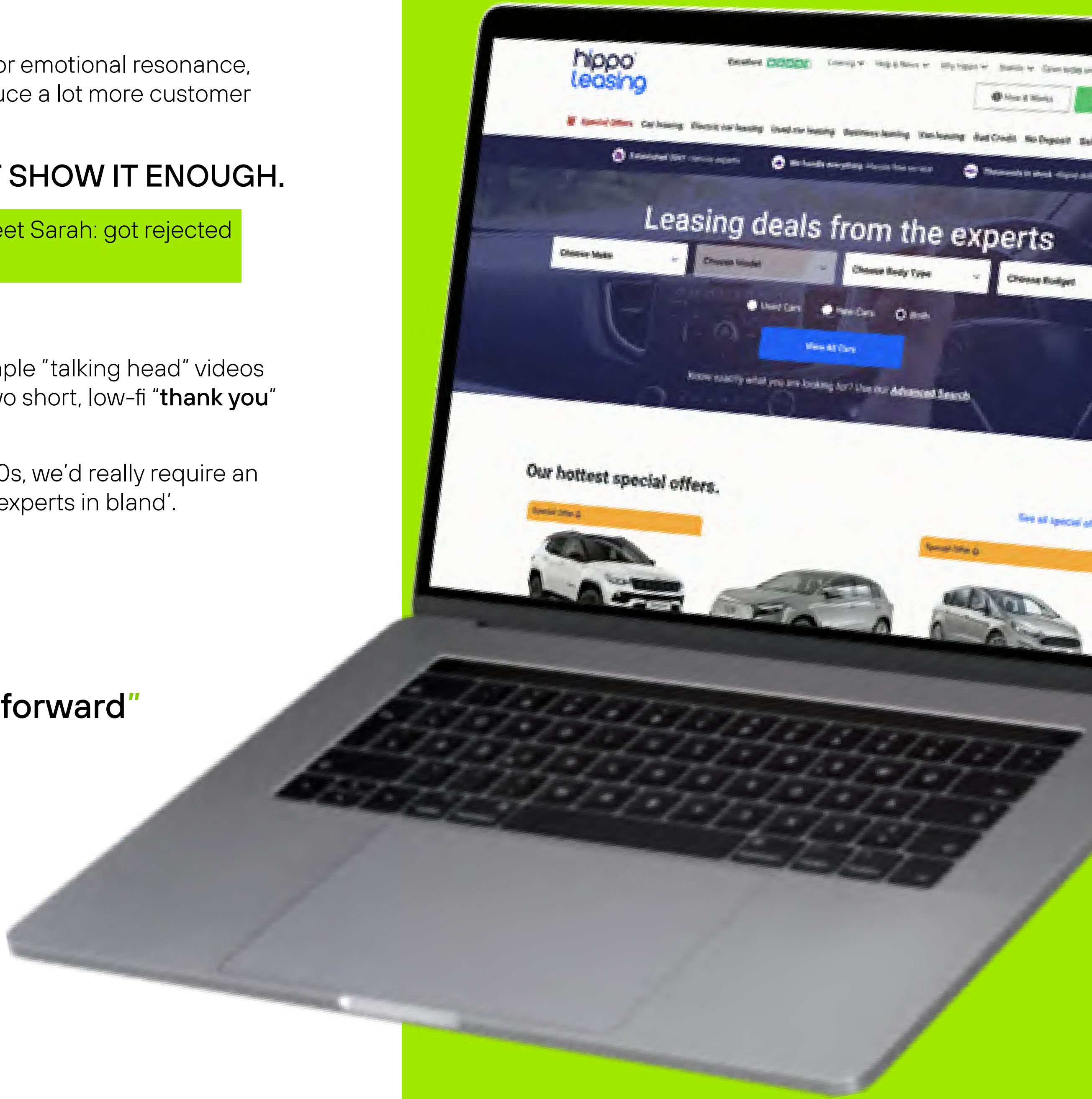
(Support & Empowerment)

"Your next car. Your next chapter."

(Freedom and Progress)

"Drive what you love. We'll sort the rest."

(Confidence and Optimism)



The Brands Stuck in the Middle

Most brokers in the UK leasing space don't have a brand problem.

They have a brand invisibility problem.

They're not bad, they're just forgettable.

These are the brands that sit squarely in the middle of the table. They're competent, trustworthy, and easy enough to use... but if they disappeared tomorrow, most customers wouldn't notice.

We call them the Middle Market Majority, companies like:

Rivervale SYNERGY Carleasingmadesimple

LeasingOptions Evans Halshaw gateway2lease

Each one has strengths:

- Clean UX
- Reasonable trust signals
- Good structure and filtering

But they all share one fatal flaw:

They lack distinctiveness. They don't stand for anything.

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The Brands Stuck in the Middle

Solid Foundations, Missing Personality

- **Rivervale** feels honest and usable, but visually and tonally, it could be anyone.
- **Leasing Options** has the infrastructure, but the brand feels a decade behind the leaders.
- **Synergy** leans on awards and Trustpilot, a good move, but fails to inject any emotion or identity.
- **Gateway2Lease** gets the fundamentals right, but the name and design leave no lasting impression.

THEY'VE BUILT SOLID OPERATIONS.

WHAT'S MISSING IS POINT OF VIEW.

The Risk of Staying Here

Mid-table brands are the most vulnerable in a commoditising market. They're:

TOO GOOD TO FAIL FAST

TOO BLAND TO STAND OUT

TOO SAFE TO EVOLVE WITHOUT PRESSURE

Without intervention, a sharper proposition, stronger creative, or clearer segmentation, they risk being leapfrogged by newer, bolder entrants.

What These Brands Need to Ask Themselves

- Why would someone remember us after they leave the site?
- What do we want to be known for, other than having a good deal?
- Do we look, sound, or feel meaningfully different from the next five brokers?

Until those questions are answered with conviction, they'll remain... stuck in the middle.

The brands at the bottom

At the lower end of the league table, a clear pattern emerges:

These brands aren't just underperforming, they're undifferentiated, uninspiring, and ultimately unmemorable.

They've built functioning websites, but not brands.

They operate, but they don't communicate.

These are the names that fall into what we call the Commodity Zone, and they include:

LeaseCar.uk ALLCARLEASING Britannia Car Leasing

jurni First Vehicle Leasing Central Vehicle Leasing

The brands at the bottom

What’s Going Wrong?

Generic Naming

Names like All Car Leasing or LeaseCar.uk sound like search terms, not businesses.

They’re forgettable, interchangeable, and lack any emotional or strategic hook.

If your brand name could double as a Google Ads keyword, you’ve probably got a brand problem.

Template Visuals and Structure

These sites all follow the same predictable design: logo top-left, cars centre, categories on the right.

There’s no visual flair, no ownable typography, colour story, or creative thinking.

They don’t feel built, they feel filled in.

Zero Emotional Connection

The copy is generic, the imagery is stock, and the tone is purely functional.

There’s no voice, no story, no sense of who the business is or who they’re for.

These brands aren’t bland because they’re quiet, they’re bland because they’re trying to be everything to everyone.

Weak or Hidden Trust Signals

While some have FCA or BVRLA links, they’re often buried or look like afterthoughts.

Review integrations (if present at all) lack context or placement.

This makes them feel more like lead-gen engines than real businesses.

The brands at the bottom

The Danger of Being Replaceable

In a space where customers shop around and attention spans are short, these brands are:

- Easy to scroll past
- Easy to confuse
- Easy to replace

And when a brand is replaceable... it's ultimately unscalable.

What Needs to Change?

To escape the commodity trap, these businesses must make bold moves:

Rebrand with an ownable identity
Redesign for trust and clarity
Reposition to target a specific audience or use case
Rewrite with tone, warmth, and meaning

THE INFRASTRUCTURE MIGHT BE IN PLACE. BUT WITHOUT INTENTION, THESE BRANDS WILL CONTINUE TO BLUR INTO THE BACKGROUND.

How does brand scoring impact each brand?

The Brand Efficiency Matrix: Reach vs Recall

Not all brand issues are created equal, and not all opportunities to improve are obvious. Some brands lack visibility. Others have scale, but little stopping power. A few have both and some, neither.

To make sense of this, we created a simple framework:

The Brand Efficiency Matrix.

It maps each brand across two key variables:

- **Brand Quality** – based on our scoring framework
- **Traffic Volume** – using Similarweb data (May 2025)

The result is a clear view of where brands really stand, not just in isolation, but in context of their reach.

	HIGH TRAFFIC	LOW TRAFFIC
HIGH BRAND QUALITY	**Brand Leaders** Brand doing well at scale	**Brand-Ready Builders** Strong foundation - ready to scale
LOW BRAND QUALITY	**Under-Leveraged Brands** High visibility, but brand not pulling weight	**Early-Stage Bottleneck Brands** Weak brand likely limiting traffic growth

The Brand Efficiency Matrix.

Brand Leaders – Strong brand. High traffic.

These are the top performers, the likes of Vanarama, Hippo, and Select Car Leasing. They've earned reach and built brand clarity. Future gains here come from refinement, creativity, and continuous experimentation, not a fundamental reset.

Under-Leveraged Brands – High traffic. Mid-tier brand.

These brands are getting found, but not remembered. The messaging lacks distinctiveness, or the brand feels interchangeable.

There's major ROI potential here: improving brand clarity, emotion, or identity would reduce acquisition cost and increase lifetime value.

Brand-Ready Builders – Strong brand. Modest traffic.

These would be the emerging contenders. They've done the hard work of brand building but haven't yet scaled. This is the moment to turn on performance activity, their brand can support it.

Early-Stage Bottleneck Brands – Low traffic. Weak brand.

This is where many smaller players sit. These brands often struggle to grow because their proposition, tone, or visual identity just isn't compelling enough. Fixing brand here isn't a luxury, it's a prerequisite for growth. Without it, paid performance is inefficient, and organic visibility struggles to stick.

The Brand Efficiency Matrix:
Reach vs Recall

Where Are the Brand-Ready Builders?

When we mapped brands across our matrix, we expected to see at least a few examples in every quadrant, especially those who had invested early in brand clarity but hadn't yet hit scale.

Surprisingly, not a single brand landed in the "Brand-Ready Builder" zone.

What This Tells Us

This absence speaks volumes about the sector's branding maturity:

- Performance-first mindset dominates. Most brands grow traffic through paid media, affiliate networks, or SEO, often before their proposition is truly sharp.
- Brand tends to lag. Visual identity, tone of voice, and emotional clarity often play catch-up, leading to inefficiency at scale.
- There's little patience for brand-building at earlier stages, many emerging brands go straight to tactical execution, hoping to optimise later.

This reactive model is common in commoditised sectors like car leasing, but that doesn't make it ideal.

BRAND	EFFICIENCY ZONE
Vanarama	Brand Leader
Select Car Leasing	Brand Leader
Hippo Leasing	Brand Leader
Nationwide Vehicle Contracts	Under-Leveraged Brand
Leasing Options	Under-Leveraged Brand
Lex Autolease	Under-Leveraged Brand
All Car Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Britannia Car Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Central UK Vehicle Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Synergy Car Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
First Vehicle Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Rivervale	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Car Leasing Made Simple	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Gateway2Lease	Early-Stage Bottleneck
LeaseCar.uk	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Pink Car Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Evans Halshaw Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck
Jurni Leasing	Early-Stage Bottleneck

The Brand Efficiency Matrix:
Reach vs Recall

The Missed Opportunity

If a brand had scored, say, **70%+** on our Brand Score but was still operating at sub-50k monthly traffic, it would suggest:

- A solid foundation
- Clear messaging and identity
- A real opportunity to scale performance with confidence

We didn't find one. Which means **there's a strategic gap in the market that nobody is occupying yet.**

What This Means for Challenger Brands

This is where the next winners will come from. The first to nail its proposition, design language, messaging, and emotion before it hits scale will likely outperform at every stage of the funnel.

- CPCs will stretch further
- Conversion rates will increase
- Recall and preference will compound

Final Thoughts.
How to win on brand in 2025

Brand isn't a nice-to-have anymore.

In 2025, it's the only sustainable way to stand out, scale up, and protect your margin.

When every broker has the same cars, the same APIs, and access to the same funders, brand is the only lever you control.

IT'S WHAT MAKES SOMEONE CHOOSE YOU OVER SOMEONE ELSE, EVEN WHEN THE MONTHLY PRICE IS THE SAME.

Why Brand Matters More Than Ever

- **Customers are overwhelmed**, they scroll through five identical-looking sites before making a choice.
- **Search and paid media are more expensive and less effective**, attention is fragmented, and trust is harder to earn.
- **AI, comparison sites, and finance platforms are commoditising the front-end journey**, meaning the brand experience must now do the heavy lifting.

PRICE GETS THE CLICK.

BRAND EARNS THE LEAD, AND THE LIFETIME VALUE.

How to Build a Winning Brand in Leasing

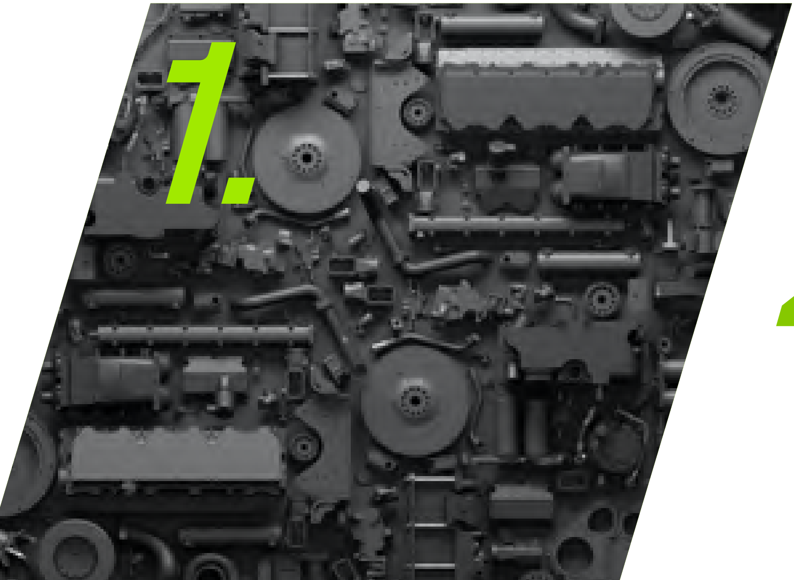
Here are **five strategic moves** every leasing broker should consider in 2025:

Name Like a Brand, Not a Category

Move beyond "**Car Leasing + Keyword.**"

Choose something memorable, emotional, or unexpected, names like Hippo or Vanarama break through the noise.

STAND FOR SOMETHING. DON'T JUST DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO.



Define (and Own) a Position

Stop trying to appeal to everyone.

Focus on a niche, a use case, or a segment, and build a proposition around it.

Bad credit? Business fleets? EV early adopters? Tradespeople?

THE SHARPER YOUR FOCUS, THE STRONGER YOUR SIGNAL.

2.

Design for Trust and Emotion

Your website should feel modern, calm, and credible, not noisy or outdated.

Invest in consistent visuals, authentic language, and brand tone.

YOUR DESIGN IS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION. MAKE IT DELIBERATE.

3.

How to Build a Winning Brand in Leasing

4.

Tell a Story, Don't Just List Deals

Most brokers feel like databases. The best ones feel like businesses.

Use language, imagery, and layout to create a **real user experience**, not just a quoting journey.

ASK YOURSELF: "WOULD ANYONE REMEMBER OUR SITE FIVE MINUTES AFTER LEAVING?"

5.

Lead With Credibility

Don't bury your trust signals.

Put your FCA status, BVRLA membership, reviews, and years in business front and centre.

CUSTOMERS DON'T GO LOOKING FOR REASSURANCE. YOU HAVE TO GIVE IT TO THEM.

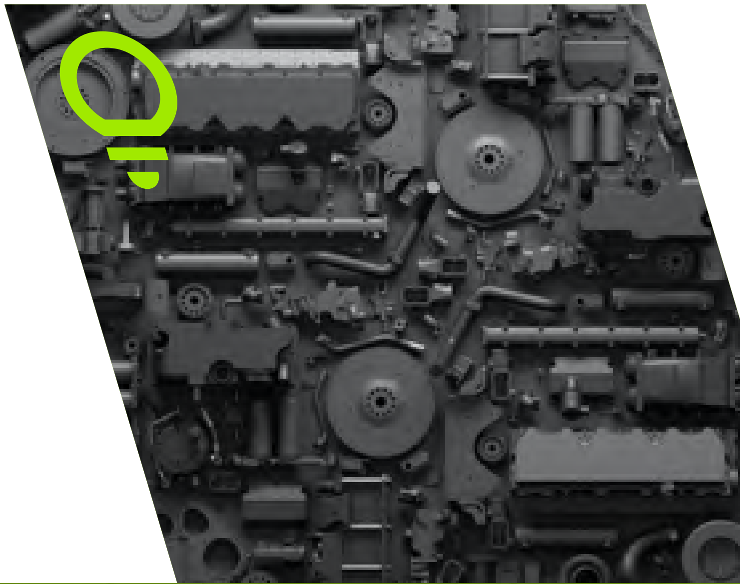
Final Thought

You don't need to be the biggest to win.

You just need to be **the clearest, the most consistent, and the most confident.**

In 2025, brand isn't just how you look.

It's how you **show up, stand out, and stay top of mind** in a market that looks increasingly identical.



Like a breakdown of your own scores?

Get in touch!

TRUSTED BY:

UpShift

Evolved Digital Marketing Ltd
Toffee Factory
Lower Steenbergs Yard
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 2DF

upshift.co.uk
enquiries@upshift.co.uk
0191 375 9170

Appendix

Opportunity data (without aggregators)

	CLAR	DIFF	RELE	CRED	EMOT	CONS	CONV	TOTAL	AVG	
VANARAMA	9	9	8	9	6	8	8	**57**	**8.1**	Leaders
HIPPO LEASING	8	10	8	8	6	7	8	**55**	**7.9**	
SELECT CAR LEASING	8	6	8	9	5	7	7	**50**	**7.1**	
SYNERGY CAR LEASING	7	7	7	8	5	6	7	**47**	**6.7**	Contenders
NATIONWIDE VEHICLE CONTRACTS	7	5	7	8	4	7	7	**45**	**6.4**	
RIVERVALE	7	5	7	8	5	6	7	**45**	**6.4**	
CAR LEASING MADE SIMPLE	6	5	7	7	4	7	7	**43**	**6.1**	
GATEWAY2LEASE	6	5	7	7	4	6	7	**42**	**6**	
LEX AUTOLEASE	6	6	6	9	3	7	5	**42**	**6**	Edge of Contender
PINK CAR LEASING	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	**41**	**5.9**	
EVANS HALSHAW LEASING	6	4	6	8	4	6	6	**40**	**5.7**	On the edge of 'Commodity Zone'
LEASING OPTIONS	6	4	6	7	4	6	6	**39**	**5.6**	
JURNI LEASING	5	5	6	6	5	6	6	**39**	**5.6**	Commodity Zone
FIRST VEHICLE LEASING	6	4	6	6	4	6	6	**38**	**5.4**	
CENTRAL UK VEHICLE LEASING	5	3	6	6	3	5	6	**34**	**4.9**	
BRITANNIA CAR LEASING	5	3	6	6	3	5	6	**34**	**4.9**	
LEASECAR.UK	5	3	6	6	3	6	5	**34**	**4.9**	
ALL CAR LEASING	5	2	6	6	3	5	6	**33**	**4.7**	

Appendix

Opportunity data (with aggregators)

	CLAR	DIFF	RELE	CRED	EMOT	CONS	CONV	TOTAL	AVG
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HIPPO LEASING	8	10	8	8	6	7	8	**55**	**7.9**
LEASELOCO	8	7	8	8	3	7	9	**51**	**7.3**
SELECT CAR LEASING	8	6	8	9	5	7	7	**50**	**7.1**
LEASING.COM	9	6	8	8	3	7	9	**50**	**7.1**
SYNERGY CAR LEASING	7	7	7	8	5	6	7	**47**	**6.7**
NATIONWIDE VEHICLE CONTRACTS	7	5	7	8	4	7	7	**45**	**6.4**
RIVERVALE	7	5	7	8	5	6	7	**45**	**6.4**
MONEYSHAKE	7	6	7	7	4	6	6	**43**	**6.4**
CAR LEASING MADE SIMPLE	6	5	7	7	4	7	7	**43**	**6.1**
GATEWAY2LEASE	6	5	7	7	4	6	7	**42**	**6**
LEX AUTOLEASE	6	6	6	9	3	7	5	**42**	**6**
PINK CAR LEASING	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	**41**	**5.9**
EVANS HALSHAW LEASING	6	4	6	8	4	6	6	**40**	**5.7**
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ALL CAR LEASING	5	2	6	6	3	5	6	**33**	**4.7**

Leaders

Contenders

Edge of Contender

On the edge of 'Commodity Zone'

Commodity Zone