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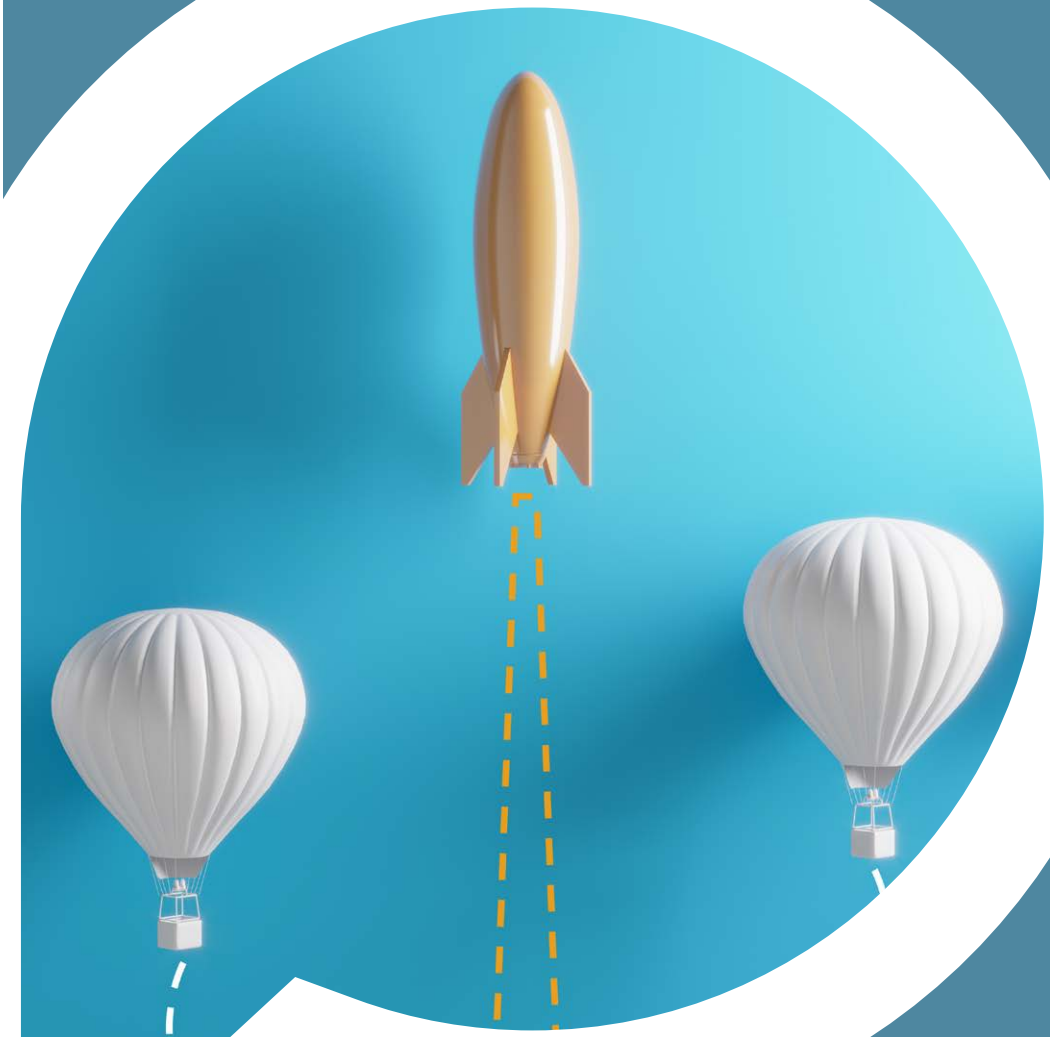


WHY ANALYST RELATIONS IS PIVOTAL TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a time of major structural shifts across the economy, technology, society, and the environment. While disruption is a way of life in technology, the scale of change is unprecedented.

Business leaders are continuously navigating rapidly changing markets, and while this means new opportunities are being created, these opportunities often go hand-in-hand with uncertainty. These dynamics make analyst relations (AR) more important than ever as tech buyers lean on analysts, as expert third parties, to guide their strategies and buying priorities.

There is a massive opportunity for technology vendors to increase revenues through analyst relations. By building two-way relationships with analysts, vendors can gain a competitive advantage by better understanding their customers' pain points and priorities. Such knowledge can significantly speed up the sales process by making marketing more relevant and presenting your solutions in the right way. And if that isn't enough, you can benefit from direct recommendations when analysts speak to prospective customers.

This report, based on in-depth interviews with many leading analysts in tech today, gives an inside track on how you can leverage analyst connections, including:

- The changing landscape of AR.
- How to get the most out of AR.
- What an AR programme looks like.

Please drop us a line if you'd like to discuss any of the points in this report or want to find out more about what AR can do for your business.

David Lawrence
Managing Director

Paul Davies
Senior Account Director

Key Takeaways

- **Effective AR is more important than ever for tech vendors due to increased reliance from tech buyers on analyst advice.**
- **This dependency has come from global economic, social, and environmental factors causing structural shifts in several industries, as well as ongoing disruption brought by disruptive technologies.**
- **More boutique and independent analysts with niche specialisms mean analyst relations is no longer the exclusive domain of large organisations.**
- **Companies can miss out on the benefits of analyst engagement if they don't prepare in the right way.**

1 THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Across the board, the analysts we spoke to told us they are busier than ever as they help their clients gain the insight they need to make strategic decisions.

> **Our job is to help our clients navigate complex changes. We're busiest when there's uncertainty in markets, and in tech uncertainty is a common trait, not least because buyers across the board are experimenting with new ideas.**
> - Guy Bisson, Research Director, Ampere Analysis

Karsten Weide, Program Vice President at IDC, explained the view of many tech buyers at the moment: "There is a realisation that you have to be on top of things. You cannot afford to be complacent." This feeling is driving companies towards analysts for help.

Companies turn to analysts because of their ability to provide a full market view, as veteran analyst Paul Erickson explained: "Analysts are able to take an industry-wide view or a sector-specific view of an issue, and these views are augmented by being able to communicate with many companies in the market. This is something that a company's own internal research, analysis, and strategy resources cannot typically perform with credible impartiality - or with the perspective provided by unfettered access to speak with competitors."

A misconception about analyst engagement is that it is solely the domain of big companies - this isn't true. Across the board there are more independent analysts and boutique firms that are specialists in their field. Even the biggest firms are helping small companies gain a competitive advantage, as Maria Rua Aguete at Omdia points out: "Smaller tech vendors can really benefit from AR support as they are looking to find their place in the market. We work with lots of medium size and small size vendors - they rely on our help as much as big tech vendors do."

With these factors in mind, if you're a tech vendor, can you afford not to invest in building better relationships with analysts when they speak to your customers every day? Put another way, if your competitors are successfully relaying their key messages to customers through analysts, are they gaining a critical advantage over you?

> **No matter what part of a business you're in, you need to take a step back and take a look at what you've been doing from a distance with a fresh eye. You need to imagine what market changes might be persistent, what it will mean to your business if you continue as you did before, and what changes you need to make to remain competitive and performant. That is the opportunity to reach out to analysts and bring better clarity to decision-making.**
>
> Karsten Weide, Program Vice President, IDC

2 HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INVESTMENT

A common mistake in AR is to treat analysts as one big group. Or, worse still, treat them like journalists. Analysts have market specialisms and will be looking for different kinds of input at different times.

They will primarily be focused on the big picture. They will want to know about your strategy and where you see the industry going in the next five years. They will want to understand your business priorities and your growth plans.

> **From my point of view, the most important thing when a company is communicating with analysts is availability and responsiveness. I want to get underneath the public announcements and explore the underlying rationale that drives decisions.**
> - Tom Morrod, Research Director, Caretta Research

For a specific report, an analyst may be looking for deep-dive input on your technology, product features and specifications. They will need to understand your product roadmap, where your latest innovations sit in the market, and how they compare to competitor solutions.

A successful AR programme should align with what each analyst needs. Guy Bisson explains that one way a tech vendor can achieve this is by having, "a range of executives on briefings to cover the different sides of the story. It's useful to be able to ask questions that go beyond what the device or product does and get the information you need from a senior spokesperson, without having to take the conversation offline or arrange a separate follow-up."

Paul Erickson describes the depth of insight needed to provide analysts with the input they need: "Analysts are more knowledgeable than the press and in turn vendor representatives briefing them should be equipped to field questions beyond what the press would typically ask." Craig Matsumoto, a Senior Research Analyst at S&P Global and former Editor-in-Chief at Light Reading, expands on this point: "I do need to talk to them about the competition on a pretty frank basis. If there's some 800 pound gorilla in a company sector, then we absolutely have to talk about how they're going to position themselves against that company. It's part of the back and forth relationship with an analyst because as we get an understanding of a company's position, and their go-to-market strategy, we can give them intelligent feedback because we've been covering that particular sector more thoroughly than a journalist."

Analyst relationships take time to build and the benefits of engagement come in different shapes and forms. The analyst community is your customers' trusted advisor. Your company and value proposition must be front of mind for analysts when they speak to tech buyers. Analysts can make the difference between closing your deal now or ending up with a missed sales opportunity.

> **As a former journalist, part of the job was just to spew out content as fast as possible. So the understanding of what a company does and who they compete with was a lot more shallow. As an analyst, the core of the job is to build an understanding of where a company fits in their sector, and what their strengths and weaknesses are when you compare them to competitors.**
> - Craig Matsumoto, Senior Research Analyst, S&P Global

3 WHAT DOES AN AR PROGRAMME LOOK LIKE?

> **Companies that have solid AR programmes know what the analysts are doing and who to engage with or not. If you're working with an outside firm, you can leverage them to help drive that extra visibility by linking to my content agenda.**
> - Peter Jarich, Head of GSMA Intelligence

To make AR deliver the input you need, it's essential to be clear on your objectives. No two programmes are the same, but there are three key pillars of activity to consider.

1. EARNED

You need to take the time to find the right analysts that are relevant to your products and your audiences. You then need to create regular opportunities to speak with them and get a good grasp of their view of the market. That way, you can deliver the right information and have the most useful dialogue.

Timing matters, too. What reports are they planning? When will they need your input? And when is the best moment to share your business/ product updates?

And what events are they attending? There is an opportunity to get ahead of your competition if you're well prepared, as Peter Jarich at GSMA Intelligence points out: "There's nothing like getting on my calendar early. Getting to me early, before my calendar is filled up seems like a very basic thing, but many companies are not organised."

As relationships build, briefings will become valuable two-way conversations. There's a golden opportunity to gain unique insight into competitor activity and strategy, market opportunities, or test your messages before presenting them to the market.

Generally speaking, the better an analyst understands what you do and how you address challenges in the industry,the more you will get out of them. You can earn valuable third-party endorsements with analysts through their reports, consultancy, or media coverage.

3

2. PAID

> **Outreach to industry analysts is a bit less measurable but no less impactful because we are connected to a lot of different people, quite senior levels who are influential and are asking our opinion on things.**
> - Guy Bisson, Research Director, Ampere Analysis

Paid relationships can serve different purposes, depending on your strategic goals and budget. We've identified two main groups:

Marketing-led

- Buying reports that are favourable about your company, for sales purposes.
- Commissioning bespoke reports that give an expert third-party view on the potential usage/ uptake/ value that a particular type of technology might create.
- Partnering with analysts for speaking opportunities or webinars to build your audience and include impactful third-party opinion.

Strategy-led

- Buying selected reports or gaining 24/7 access to key market data.
- Commissioning research to help with strategy (market sizing and product positioning).
- Consultancy with an independent market expert on trends and strategy.

3. SHARED

Creating targeted engagement with analysts on social platforms is a great way to boost your brand and show that you are a leading voice in your market. As independent analyst Ben Keen notes: "I actively use LinkedIn as a publishing platform. As an independent, it is my main platform along with Twitter. I don't often publish my research anywhere else. So that's my primary outlet and generates significant levels of interest and engagement."

Platform's social influencer programmes enable executives to create powerful engagement strategies. We help clients generate thought-leadership around key trends and identify the right online discussions to be part of.

Being part of discussions with top industry influencers boosts visibility and shows your customers that you are providing solutions for the major challenges and opportunities in the market.

4 BUILD AN AR PROGRAMME THAT WORKS FOR YOU

There is no one-size-fits-all approach; we create tailor-made AR campaigns. Here are some examples of the services we offer:

Priority analyst engagement:

Select a list of priority analysts relevant to your company and take a strategic approach to building relationships with them. Ensure you speak to these analysts regularly and know what reports they're working on so your company is covered. Depending on your goals, the list can consist of anywhere from 3-30 analysts.

Reports monitor:

Monitor the latest analyst reports for up-to-date market insight to support your business. Receive recommendations on which reports are most relevant.

Analyst partnerships:

Creating partnerships with analyst houses to achieve specific business goals. We can identify the right partnerships and manage through to delivery. Activities include setting up special reports that provide crucial market insights, such as market sizing or the potential of new markets and technologies.

Social influencer programme:

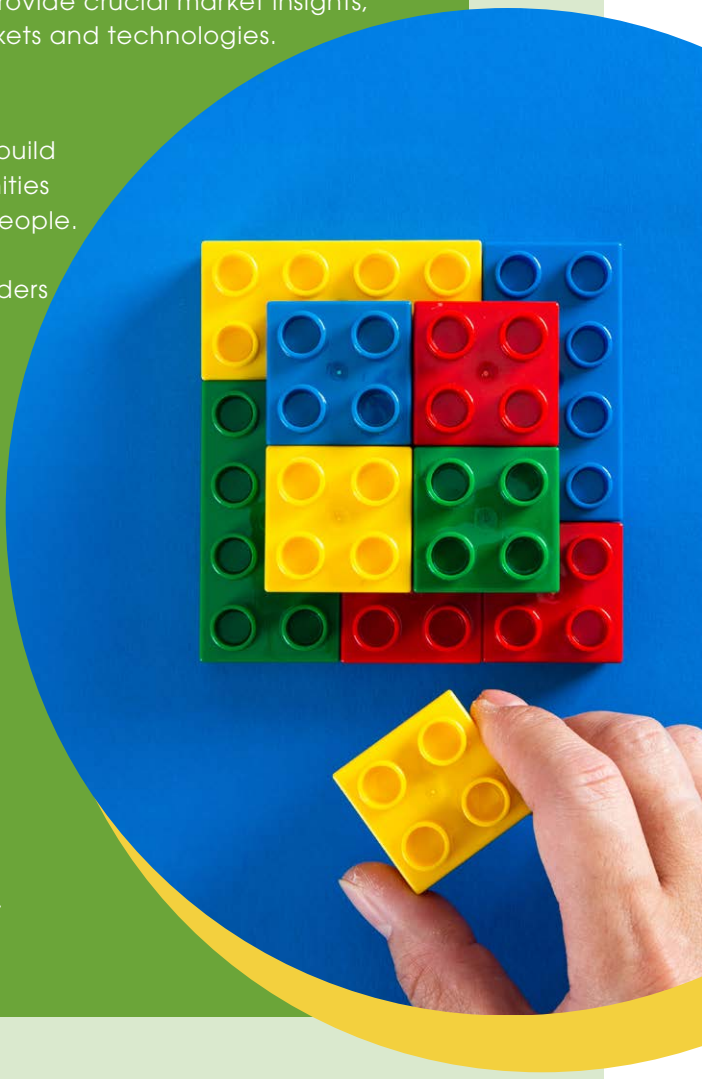
Be involved in conversations that add value and build your company's presence. Help identify opportunities to connect priority analysts with your key spokespeople. Engage with the insights they're sharing online to position your company executives as thought leaders and open up business opportunities.

Bespoke market analysis:

Receive monthly/ quarterly reports that are easy to digest and deliver the information you and your team need. Ensure you're up-to-date with:

- Competitor analysis, presenting what their financial, company growth, customer/ partner news reveals about their strategic goals.
- Industry trends in your product areas.
- The global market: where you should focus your sales efforts.

You can use these services together to form a complete programme or use them in a modular way, depending on budget and resource.



5 IN SUMMARY

The landscape is changing

At times of uncertainty, be it economic or disruption within a specific sector of an industry, tech buyers turn to analysts.

Good input = good output

It's important to provide analysts with the information they need in briefings. They are less interested in the bells and whistles of your products, and far more keen to learn about a company's position, vision, and view of the market.

Remember: you're relationship-building

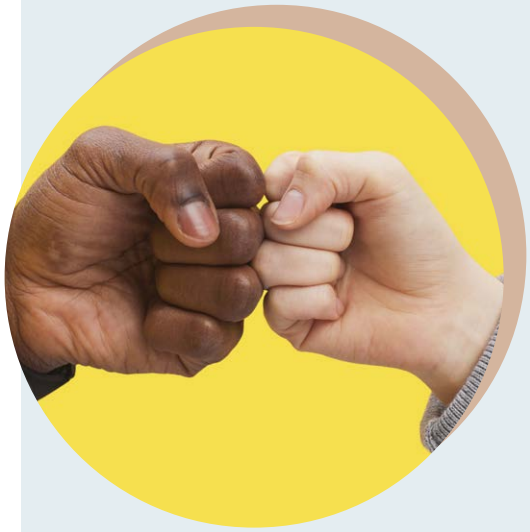
Analyst relationships take time to build so don't expect an immediate return. The benefits of engagement come in different shapes and forms, not least in what you learn from the conversations themselves.

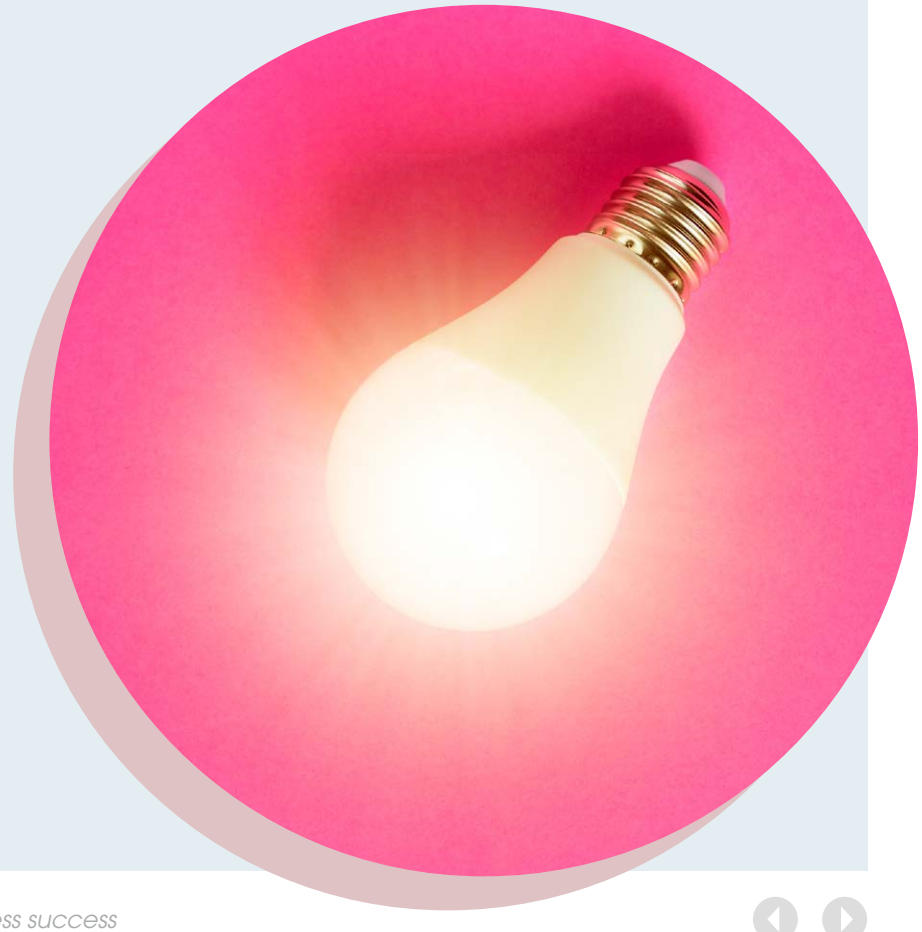
AR is open to all

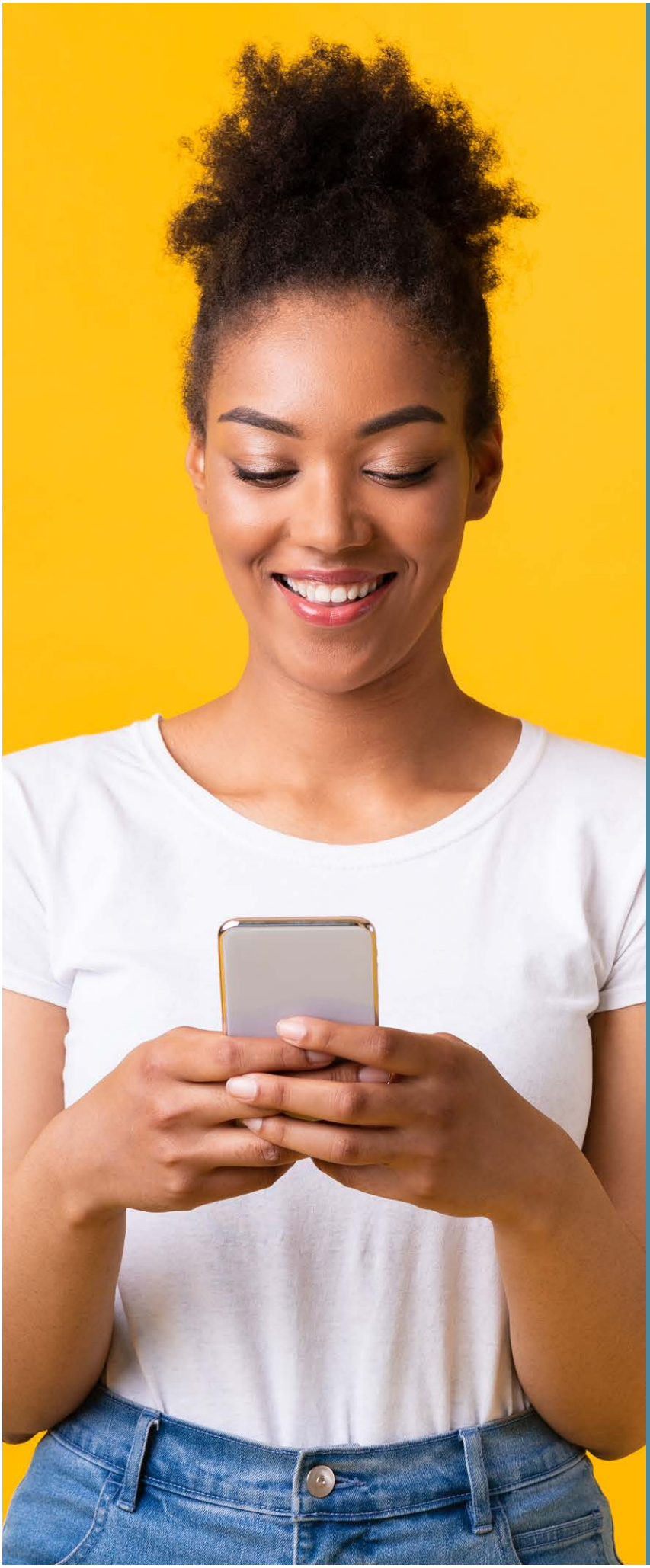
A common misconception is that AR is the domain of big companies, but this is not the case. Every industry has independent specialists who are highly respected in their field and make AR accessible to all.

Build an AR programme for you

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Find the right one for you, within your budget, that supports your business objectives and helps speed up the sales process.







FIND OUT MORE

We'd love to tell you more about our AR work and discuss how it could benefit your business.

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