

Category:
CUSTOM
REPORT

Brand:

Relay

CONFIDENTIAL /
DO NOT DISTRIBUTE



CREATIVE EDGE IN SMB FINTECH

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METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Period

- **Timeframe:** October 29, 2025 - January 29, 2026 (3 months)
- **Total Content Analyzed:** 4,685 data points across multi-platform landscape

Data Source Distribution

- **Meta Ads:** 687 paid advertisements
- **Reddit:** 3,313 posts
- **YouTube:** 225 videos
- **Instagram:** 221 posts
- **Website Pages:** 170 pages
- **TikTok:** 69 posts

Analytical Framework

- **Creative Convention Analysis:** Visual tropes, messaging patterns, and narrative structures
- **Social Listening:** Reddit sentiment analysis for pain points, switching behaviors, and unmet needs
- **Platform-Specific Strategy:** Content performance and engagement patterns across channels
- **Competitive Positioning:** Message differentiation, target audience analysis, and market gap identification

Competitive Landscape Analysis

- **Primary Focus:** Relay business banking platform
- **Direct Competitors:** Novo, Mercury, Bluevine, NorthOne
- **Indirect Competitors:** Quickbooks, Square, Gusto, Ramp, Chase for Business

Strategic Assessment

- **Visual Strategy Evaluation:** "Old vs New" frameworks, industrial aesthetics, interface-as-hero approaches
- **Messaging Analysis:** Simplification claims vs. advocacy positioning, founder identity validation
- **Market Opportunity Identification:** Authentic grit representation, predictive capabilities, merchant advocacy gaps

The category relies on three tropes that sanitize entrepreneurship

Insight: The category signals efficiency but creates a sanitized version of entrepreneurship that lacks the grit of the actual user experience.

The Old vs. New Binary

Traditional business banks	
up to \$16 monthly fees	\$0 / month
up to \$5,000 Minimum balance	\$0 Minimum balance
up to \$10 Overdraft fees	\$0 Overdraft fees

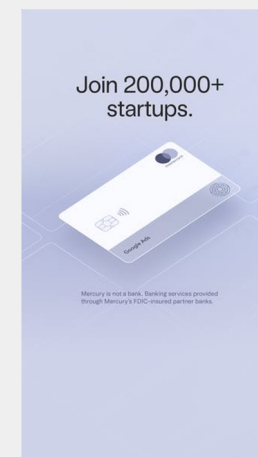
Competitors contrast “Before vs. After” to signal speed. Used by Novo (19.2%) and Mercury (13.2%).

The Sanitized Workshop



Industrial backdrops with curated lighting. Signals “we understand makers” without showing the grit of actual labor.

Interface as Hero



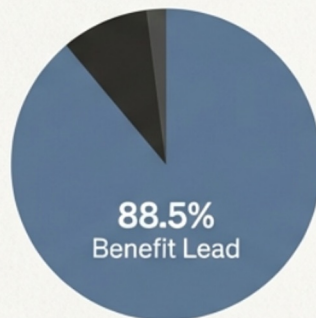
Floating cards in minimalist voids. Clean UI. Treats the card as an “Identity Upgrade” rather than a utility.

Competitors are saturated with promises of simplification and speed.

We analyzed the 'Competitor Promise' across the landscape.

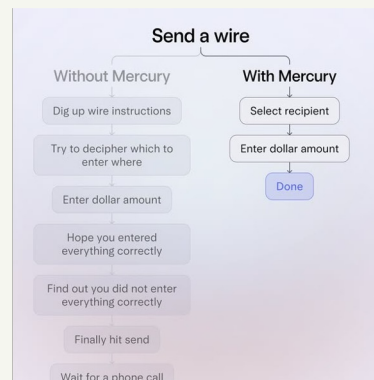
Strategic Insight: The market is proficient at highlighting Simplification Claims, but ease of use does not always equate to control of capital.

Novo: The Benefit Lead



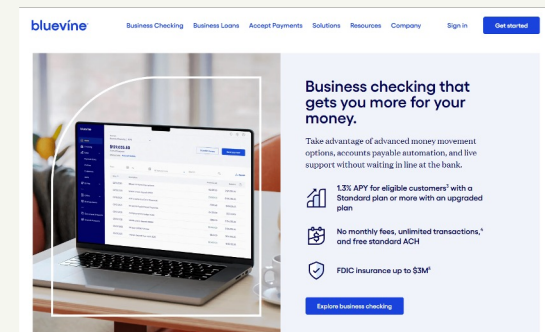
88.5% of Novo Meta Ads uses Benefit Lead hooks. Focus on Price Anchoring (\$0 vs \$10) and Growth Enablement.

Mercury: Visual Brevity



Selling "Cognitive Load Reduction." Drastic contrast between traditional complexity and 3-step flows.

Market Trust Signals

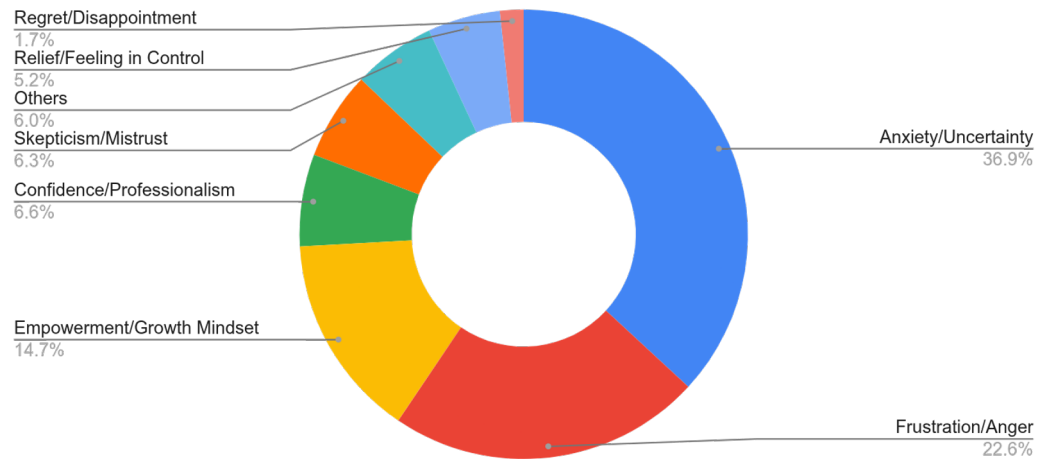


FDIC Insurance: \$3M-\$5M via sweep networks.
Integrations: QuickBooks & Xero.
Signal: Safety for businesses outgrowing the \$250k limit.

Users aren't just tired; they are anxious about the 'Admin Disaster'

Emotional Drivers

Source: Social Listening Reddit



The Friction: Social Listening Data

- **Sentiment:** Dominant emotions are Anxiety and Uncertainty.
- **Reality:** Users are doing "Excel babysitting," not enjoying automated magic.
- **Compliance Friction:** Successful blue-collar businesses alienated by "Social Media Proof" requirements.

Insight: There is a massive disconnect between the simple app interface and the messy reality of back-office reconciliation.

We must bridge the Trust Gap through active Advocacy

Takeaway: Simplification is table stakes. Advocacy is the differentiator.

The Friction: Betrayal

47% of users switch due to Pragmatic Switching.

31.4% switch due to "Trust/Safety" failures (e.g., trapped in chatbot loops).

Chargeback Fraud: Users feel betrayed when banks side with customers over merchants.

"It's so disheartening knowing you did everything right and still being blamed."

Loyalty & Switching

Incentive-Driven Switching

4.3%

Eligibility/Compliance Switching

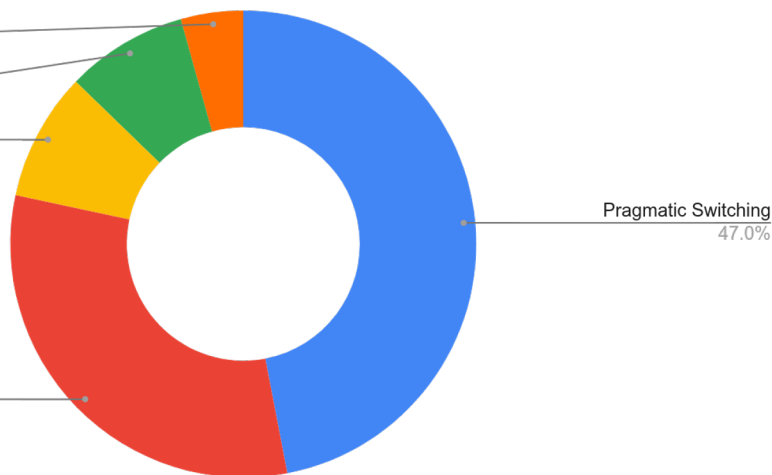
8.4%

Others

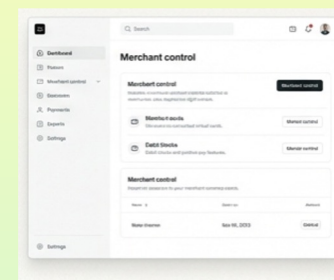
8.9%

Trust/Safety Switching

31.4%



Source: Social Listening Reddit



Our Solution: The Merchant Advocate

- Merchant-locked virtual cards.
- Debit blocks and positive pay features.
- Granular control for the operator.

Strategic Pillar 1. Embracing 'Authentic Grit'

Moving from Sanitized Workshops to The Sunday Night Sacrifice.



The Shift

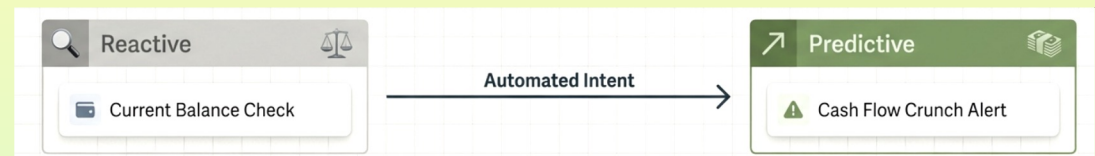
Competitors show curated warehouses. We show the reality of the "Maker" who is holding the emergency brake on spending.

Why It Works

- Resonates with the "Operator Mindset" (84.6% resonance on TikTok).
- Validates the bootstrap identity.
- Acknowledges the resentment and burnout found in user feedback.

Strategic Pillar 2. Agentic Authority and Automated Intent

Moving from Sanitized Workshops to The Sunday Night Sacrifice.



The Insight

- Users reject "AI Washing" and generic chatbots.
- They want systems that act on their behalf to prevent the "growth trap."

The Identity Line

- "A business checking account is the line between hobby and CEO."
- We validate their professional sophistication.

Execution Strategy

1. **Predictive Cash Flow:** See the crunch before it happens.
2. **Profit First:** Automated allocations that turn good habits into software rules.

Executing the 'Operator' narrative across our channels

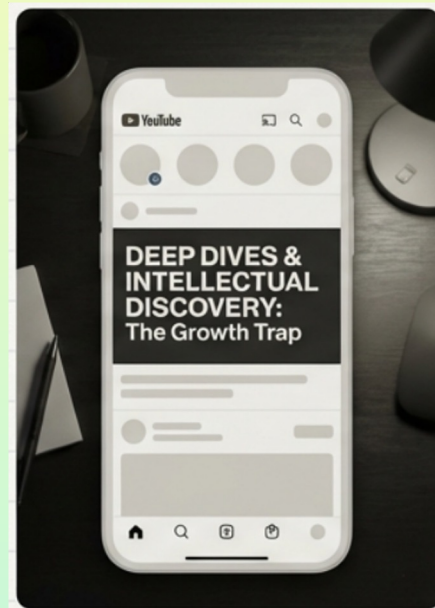
TikTok

Identity Building



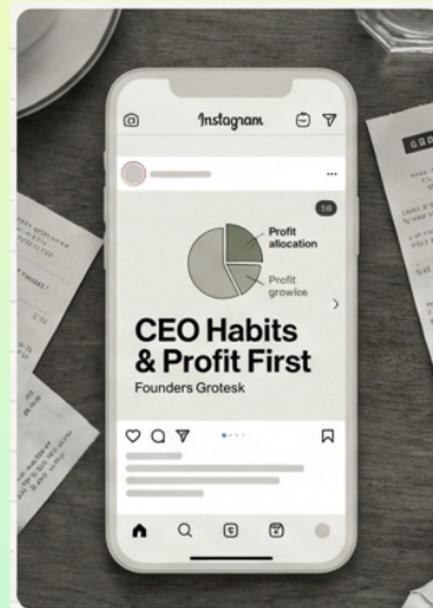
YouTube

Intellectual Authority



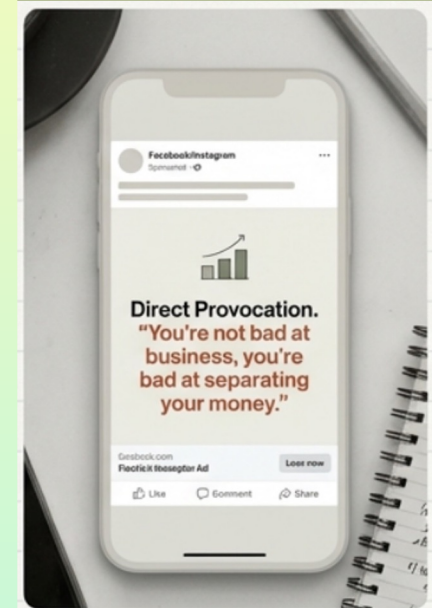
Instagram

Aspirational Habits



Meta Ads

Direct Problem Solving





The Way Forward: The Bank for the Self-Made Nation

We are defining a new standard:

1. Competitors fight for '**Simplification**' (The Illusion).
2. We stand for '**Clarity**' and '**Advocacy**' (The Reality).

The Relay Difference:

- Visual Brevity vs. **The Clarity**
- Sanitized Ease vs. **Authentic Control**
- Holding Money vs. **Validating Identity**

We are the partner for the operator who knows that spending Sunday evening chasing invoices isn't "running a business", it's a trap. **We are here to set them free.**

CREATIVE CONVENTIONS DRIVING THE CATEGORY

*How fintech brands consistently
signal efficiency and modernity*

Data cut-off: Jan 29th, 2026

The visual and narrative strategies in small business fintech rely heavily on specific approaches designed to communicate efficiency. These conventions often present a sanitized version of entrepreneurship, creating opportunities for more authentic representations.



The "Old Way vs New Way" Framework

This remains the dominant narrative structure across the category.

By the Numbers:

- Relay uses "Before vs After Shift" in 33.3% of content
- Novo employs this approach in 19.2% of content
- Mercury utilizes it in 13.2% of content

Common Execution Pattern:

Traditional Banking	Modern Fintech
\$10 monthly fees	\$0 fees
\$1,000 minimum balance	No minimums
Branch visits required	Mobile-first
Complex processes	Simple flows

Novo typically uses stark color coding - deep red columns for "Traditional business banks" against bright royal blue for their solution. This visual shorthand uses price anchoring to emphasize savings potential.

Mercury takes a different approach, focusing on time and cognitive load rather than just fees. Their "Send a Wire" creative uses a vertical flowchart to represent the burden of traditional banking:

Without Mercury: Nine grey boxes including steps like:

"Try to decipher which to enter where"

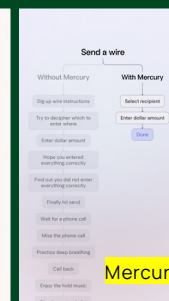
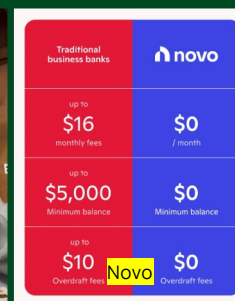
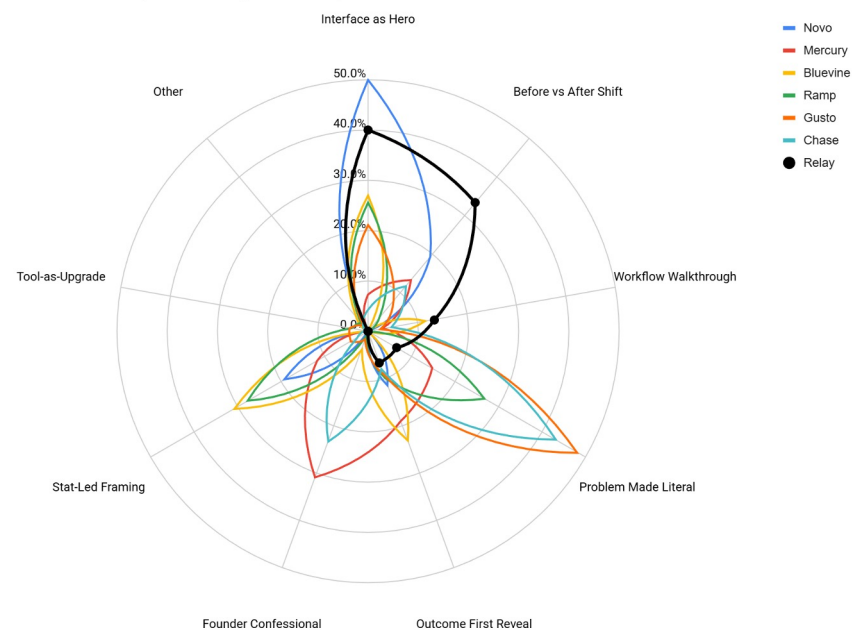
"Practice deep breathing"

"Enjoy the hold music"

With Mercury: Three simple steps ending with a satisfying blue "Done" button.

This "visual brevity" serves as a powerful trigger for efficiency-seeking founders.

Creative Concept Trends (Meta Ads)



Source: Meta Ads

The Industrial Workshop Aesthetic

Grounding digital products in "real" work environments

Relay, Mercury, and Chase for Business frequently showcase workshops, warehouses, and manufacturing sites as backdrops. The strategy aims to prove these aren't just tools for tech startups, but for businesses that "make things."

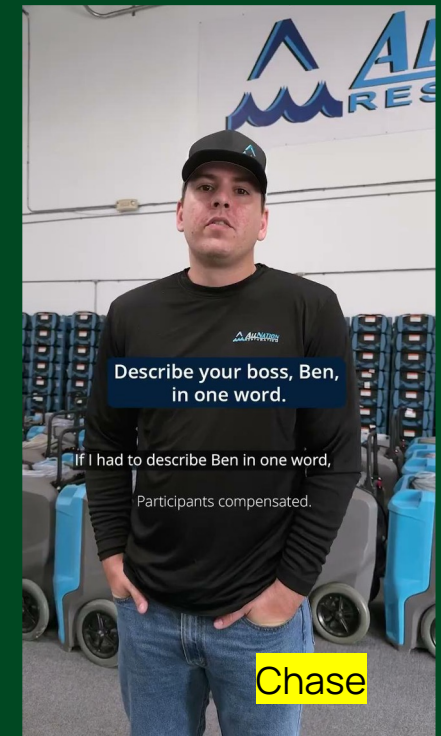
Common Elements:

- Handheld camera work for authenticity
- Raw lighting in organized workshops
- "Maker" personas in grey hoodies
- Warehouse settings with inventory displays
- Construction environments and safety gear

The Message: These banks understand the "grind" of physical production and manual labor.

Example: Relay's ad features a man in a grey hoodie working in an organized workshop, establishing credibility with the maker community.

Mercury uses Dan, a founder surrounded by fitness equipment inventory in a warehouse, to establish "real-world business" context. Chase for Business features Ben, a restoration business owner, in construction environments wearing hazardous



Source: Meta Ads

Interface as the Hero

When the product becomes the protagonist

The digital product itself - specifically mobile apps and debit cards - often acts as the central character in creative content.

Prevalence by Brand:

- Relay: 40.0% of Meta Ads use "Interface as Hero"
- Novo: 50.0% of content features this approach

Visual Execution Patterns:

- High-quality 3D renders of dark-colored cards
- Minimalist void backgrounds with warm lighting
- Directional lighting creating realistic shadows
- Cards "floating" to suggest prestige and control

Relay's creative often shows a dark green business debit card floating in a warm cream space, using sophisticated lighting techniques to create depth. This convention transforms the card from a utility into a symbol of "Identity Upgrade" - representing financial control and business mastery.



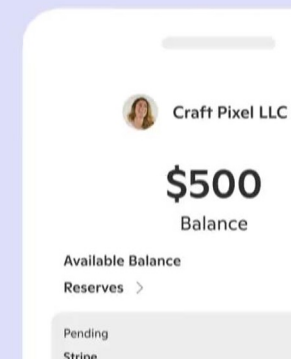
Get access to
working capital

Congrats!

Your business is approved

 novo

Novo



Source:
Meta Ads

Identified Strategic Gaps

Where current approaches fall short

While the category excels at highlighting "Simplification Claims" (73.3% for Relay), several elements remain underrepresented:

The Missing Middle Ground

Most ads show rapid transitions from stress to order, but there's little representation of the ongoing reality of managing a business that hasn't achieved total automation.

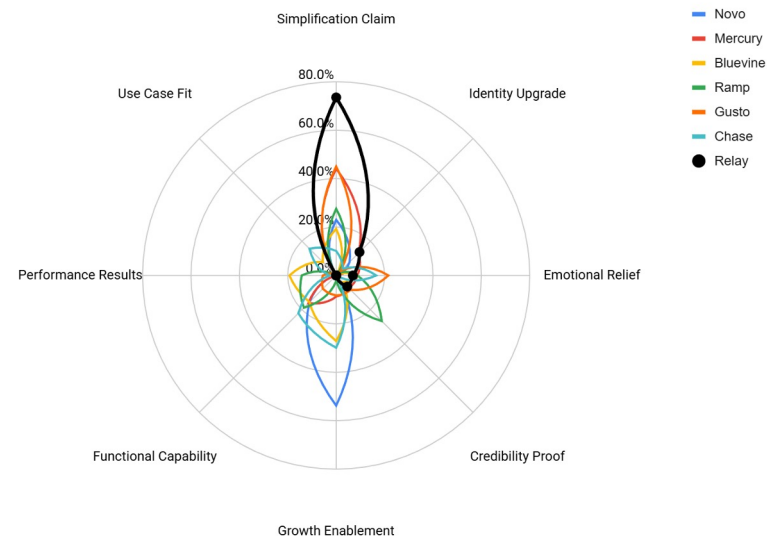
Personal Life Impact

Content touches on "Founder Reality" (92.3% for Relay on TikTok), but visual storytelling rarely addresses how financial stress affects family, health, or sleep beyond abstract terms.

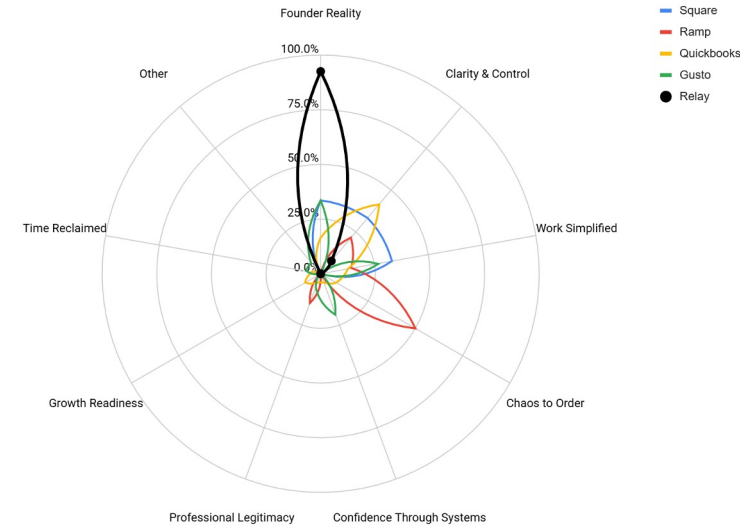
Authentic Labor Representation

While workshops appear in content, they're often curated and clean. The visceral experience of true manual labor and the "uncomfortably cheap" early stages remain largely unrepresented in visual advertising.

Primary Key Message (Meta Ads)



Content Theme (TikTok)



Source: Meta Ads & TikTok Organic

TRUST AND CREDIBILITY SIGNALS

How established businesses evaluate financial partners

For growing small businesses, trust extends beyond security to include the ability to support scaling without operational friction. Leading competitors signal reliability through technical safeguards, ecosystem integrations, and high-level social proof.



Technical Safety Markers

FDIC Insurance Coverage:

- Relay: Up to \$3 million through deposit sweep program with Thread Bank
- Mercury: Up to \$5 million (positioned as 20x standard coverage)
- Bluevine: \$3 million through Coastal Community Bank partnership

These high figures specifically target growth-ready businesses that have moved beyond the initial \$250,000 individual account limit.

Security Features:

- Two-factor authentication (2FA)
- Biometric logins
- Data encryption
- Dark web monitoring (Mercury)
- Granular user permissions for team access

Relay emphasizes that logins are "protected by 2FA and biometrics to keep your banking information and connections completely protected at all times."

Mercury highlights "next-level" security including dark web monitoring and granular permissions that allow owners to control who can view or move funds.

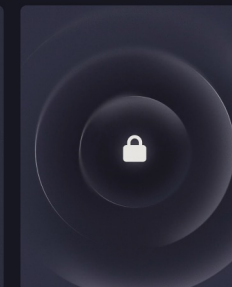
YOUR MUST-HAVES, COVERED

- No hidden fees or minimums that tie up cash flow
- Savings with up to 2.68% Annual Percentage Yield (APY)¹
- All the payments you could need —ACH, check and wire
- 20 checking accounts for meticulous organization
- Up to 1.5% cash back* on credit card spending
- FDIC insurance up to \$3M for funds on deposit²

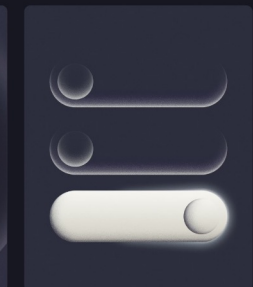
Standard protection stops short. Mercury goes further.



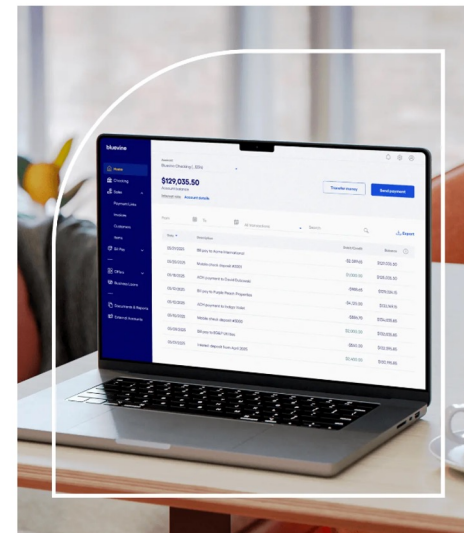
20x the usual coverage
Get up to \$5M FDIC insurance through our partner banks and their sweep networks³ to ensure eligible deposits are protected.



Next-level account security
Know your account is safe with tech-forward fraud and phishing protection, MFA verification, dark web monitoring, and more.



Controls at your fingertips
Decide who can view, move, or debit funds — with approval flows, locks, and permissions that keep you fully in control.



Business checking that gets you more for your money.

Take advantage of advanced money movement options, accounts payable automation, and live support without waiting in line at the bank.



1.3% APY for eligible customers² with a Standard plan or more with an upgraded plan



No monthly fees, unlimited transactions,⁴ and free standard ACH



FDIC insurance up to \$3M⁵

Explore business checking



Credibility Through Integration

Playing well with essential business tools

Modern business banking credibility ties directly to ecosystem integration capabilities. Relay positions itself as a "centralized hub where accounting and payroll data converge."

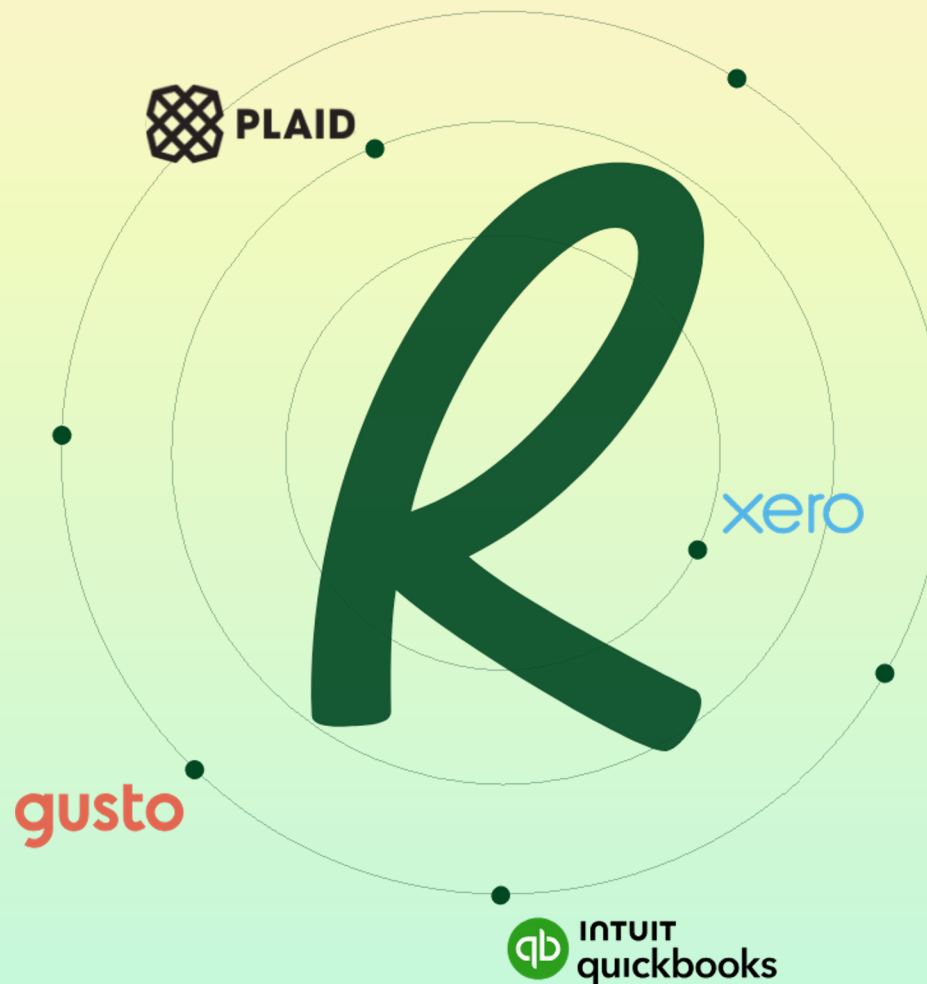
Key Integration Categories:

Integration Type	Primary Players	Value Proposition
Accounting	QuickBooks Online, Xero	"Meticulous organization" of transactions
Payroll	Gusto	Avoiding "shortfall warnings" and team management
Expense Management	Ramp	Automated categorization and reconciliation

Professional Legitimacy Signals:

- Clean, standardized vendor data
- Auto-categorization for card purchases
- Automated "decoding" of team purchases
- Multi-person spend environment management

These features signal sophistication beyond solo freelancer tools, targeting businesses with complex operational structures.



Growth-Oriented Infrastructure

Moving from fee-saving to capital-enablement messaging

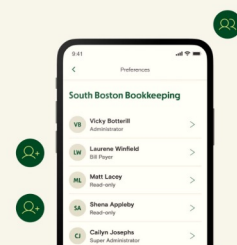
As brands target established businesses, messaging shifts from cost savings to growth enablement.

Scalable Features:

- **Account Architecture:** Relay markets opening up to 20 checking accounts for "meticulous organization"
- **Team Empowerment:** "Effortlessly issue cards to your team—as many as you need"
- **Role-Based Access:** Specialized logins for accountants and bookkeepers
- **Cash Flow Strategy Alignment:** Official support for "Profit First" methodology



WORK TOGETHER WITH SECURE COLLABORATION



Accountants & Bookkeepers

Give your accountant or bookkeeper role-based logins so they help out with money management, safely. They can also directly access the data and documents they need to take care of your books.



Invite Team Member

Work Email*

Permission level*

Request user address

Invite team member

Read-only

Cardholder

Deposit-only

Team members

Assign your employees the right level of access they need to assist you with everyday banking tasks like paying the bills. Plus, give team members cardholder roles so they can access debit cards and keep track of their spending.

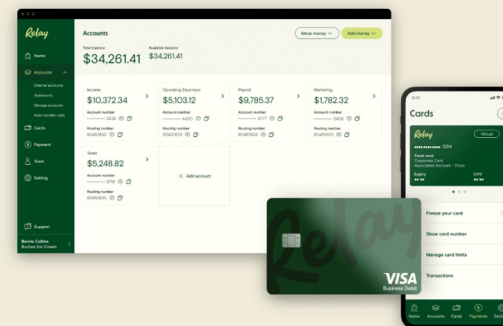
Strategic Positioning:

These banks position themselves as partners in specific financial methodologies rather than generic service providers.

PROFIT FIRST + RELAY = TOTAL CASH FLOW CLARITY



Together, Profit First and Relay ensure that every dollar is allocated according to plan—be it paying down debt, reinvesting in your business, or taking a profit.



- ✓ Instantly open up to 20 accounts with no hidden fees or minimums
- ✓ Name your accounts (Income, Profit, Owner's Pay, Tax, OpEx)
- ✓ Set up auto-transfer rules to put allocations on auto-pilot

SOCIAL LISTENING FINDINGS FROM REDDIT

Raw insights into the gap between fintech promises and founder realities

Dominant Subreddit:

r/smallbusiness
r/smallbusinessUS
r/fintech

+ search terms data scraping

Data cut-off: Jan 29th, 2026



The Promise vs Reality Gap

When "simplification" claims meet professional challenges

Users frequently express frustration when fintech platforms fail to deliver on simplification promises. A key finding: **clarity matters more than automation.**

User Quote:

"I thought automation would save time. Turns out clarity mattered more... Replies were too long, inconsistent, and sometimes answered the wrong question. Once I standardized answers... message volume dropped on its own" - [Reddit](#)

This suggests businesses need tools that provide clear mental models of their finances, not just automated manual tasks.

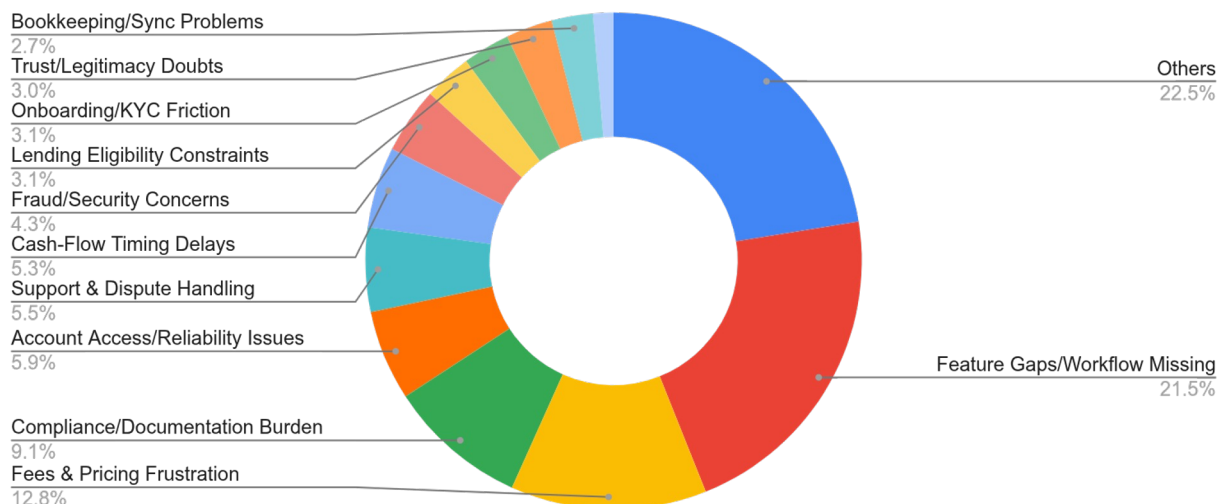
Compliance Friction: Social media verification requirements create significant friction for traditional businesses.

User Experience:

"The proof they are requesting? Social media pages. Not my business license, my EIN, or anything official. Social media pages... This is a business that generates decent revenue, but there isn't a need for any social media" - [Reddit](#)

This highlights a disconnect where fintech compliance systems designed for online startups alienate traditional or blue-collar businesses.

Pain Points



Source: Social Listening Reddit

The "Excel Disaster" Pain Point

Manual reconciliation nightmares driving platform switching

Manual reconciliation remains a dominant concern among small business owners.

Case Study: A post titled "A 6-hour Excel disaster made me rethink my whole career" detailed how one broken formula "screwed up literally everything downstream." - [Reddit](#)

Core Frustration: Jobs becoming "Excel babysitting" rather than strategic business management.

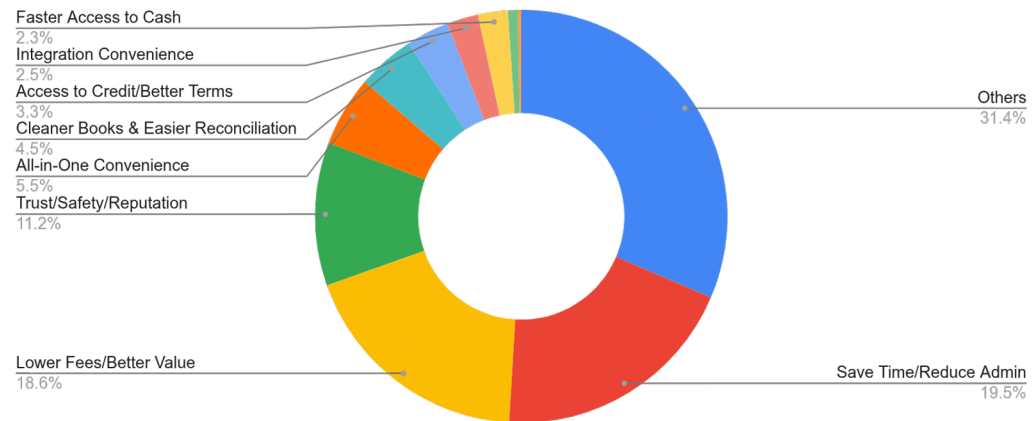
Demand Indicators:

- Real-time settlement visibility
- Automated reconciliation at scale
- All-in-one systems eliminating manual workflows

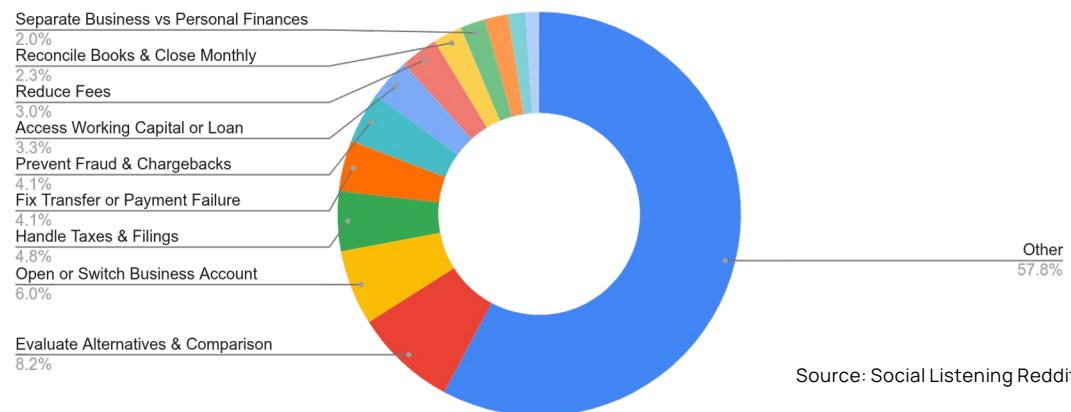
Pain Point Rankings:

- Feature Gaps/Workflow Missing: 21.5% (leading specific pain point)

Purchase Motivations



Primary Use Case



Source: Social Listening Reddit

Anti-Fraud and Support as Switch Drivers

Reliability concerns triggering platform changes

Switching Behavior:

- Pragmatic Switching: 47.0% of loyalty shifts
- Trust/Safety Switching: 31.4% of cases

Required Anti-Fraud Features (User Request):

- Virtual credit cards restricted to specific merchants
- ACH Protection like Debit Blocks
- Real-time payment notifications
- Merchant-specific transaction controls

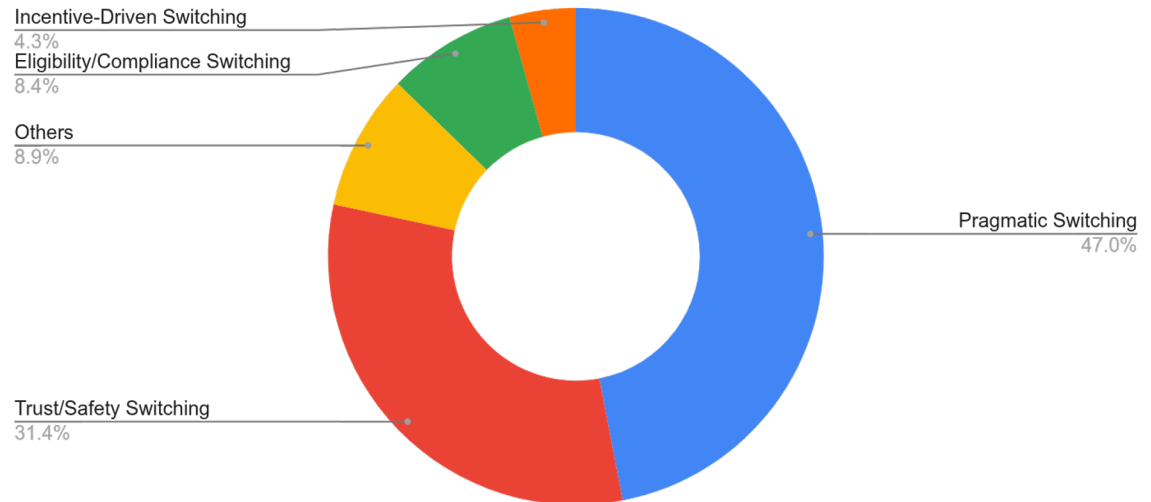
Support Failures: Lack of human support during critical moments drives mistrust.

User Experience:

"I've called them, emailed them, chatted with the bot on the app and cannot get ahold of anyone. I was on hold for over an hour and the phone just told me to call back again later and hung up" - [Reddit](#)

This level of operational failure triggers significant trust erosion and platform switching.

Loyalty & Switching



Source: Social Listening Reddit

DEEPER PATTERNS IN FOUNDER FRUSTRATIONS AND DESIRES

The "One Number" Visibility Problem

Fragmented financial data creating decision paralysis

Core Issue: Founders often don't know which clients are profitable or when cash will run out.

User Quote:

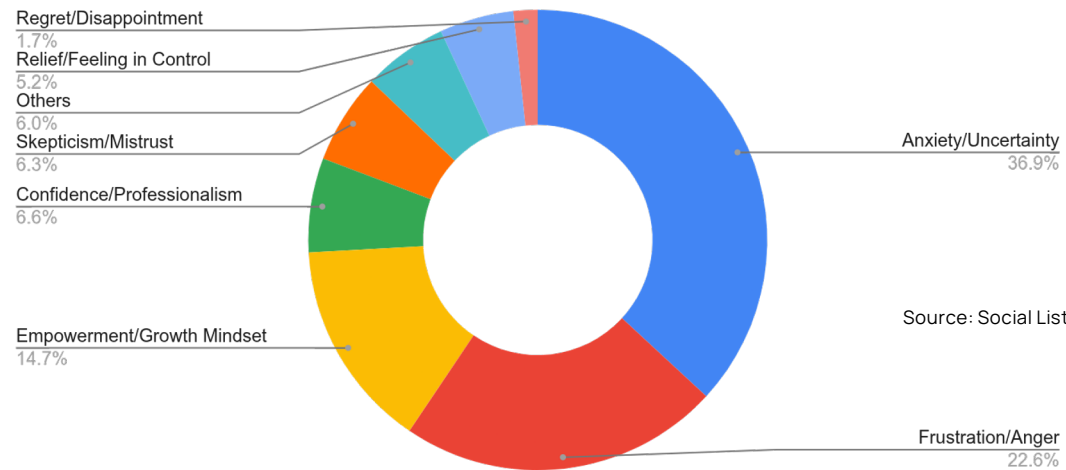
"Not because they're bad at business, just because everything is scattered across emails, bank apps, and spreadsheets. If you could see one number clearly about your business right now, what would it be?" - [Reddit](#)

Strategic Implication: Established businesses seek predictive tools rather than just balance displays.

AI Banking Discussion:

"I need a vendor that can help us predict a user's cash flow crunch before it happens, not just show them a balance" - [Reddit](#)

Emotional Drivers



Source: Social Listening Reddit

Demand for Programmable Security

Self-service control beyond basic fraud alerts

Specific Feature Requests:

- **Merchant-Specific Virtual Cards:** Lock cards to single vendors preventing unauthorized overcharges
- **ACH Protection:** Features like "Debit Blocks" and "Positive Pay" for solo businesses
- **Push-Notification Monitoring:** Real-time transaction alerts for psychological cash flow control

User Requirements List:

"Can anyone recommend a good bank with these features? Virtual Credit cards that can be restricted to specific merchants... Debit card lock/unlock... Good customer support" - [Reddit](#)

DEEPER PATTERNS IN FOUNDER FRUSTRATIONS AND DESIRES

Chargeback Fraud Vulnerability

Emotional toll of customer disputes on small businesses

Small business owners express deep frustration when banks side with customers despite proof of delivery.

User Experience:

"As a small business owner it's just so disheartening knowing you did everything right and still being blamed for the customers mistakes. It makes it even worse knowing the customer lied to us multiple times!" - [Reddit](#)

Strategic Opportunity:

Banking partners offering stronger merchant-side advocacy during disputes.

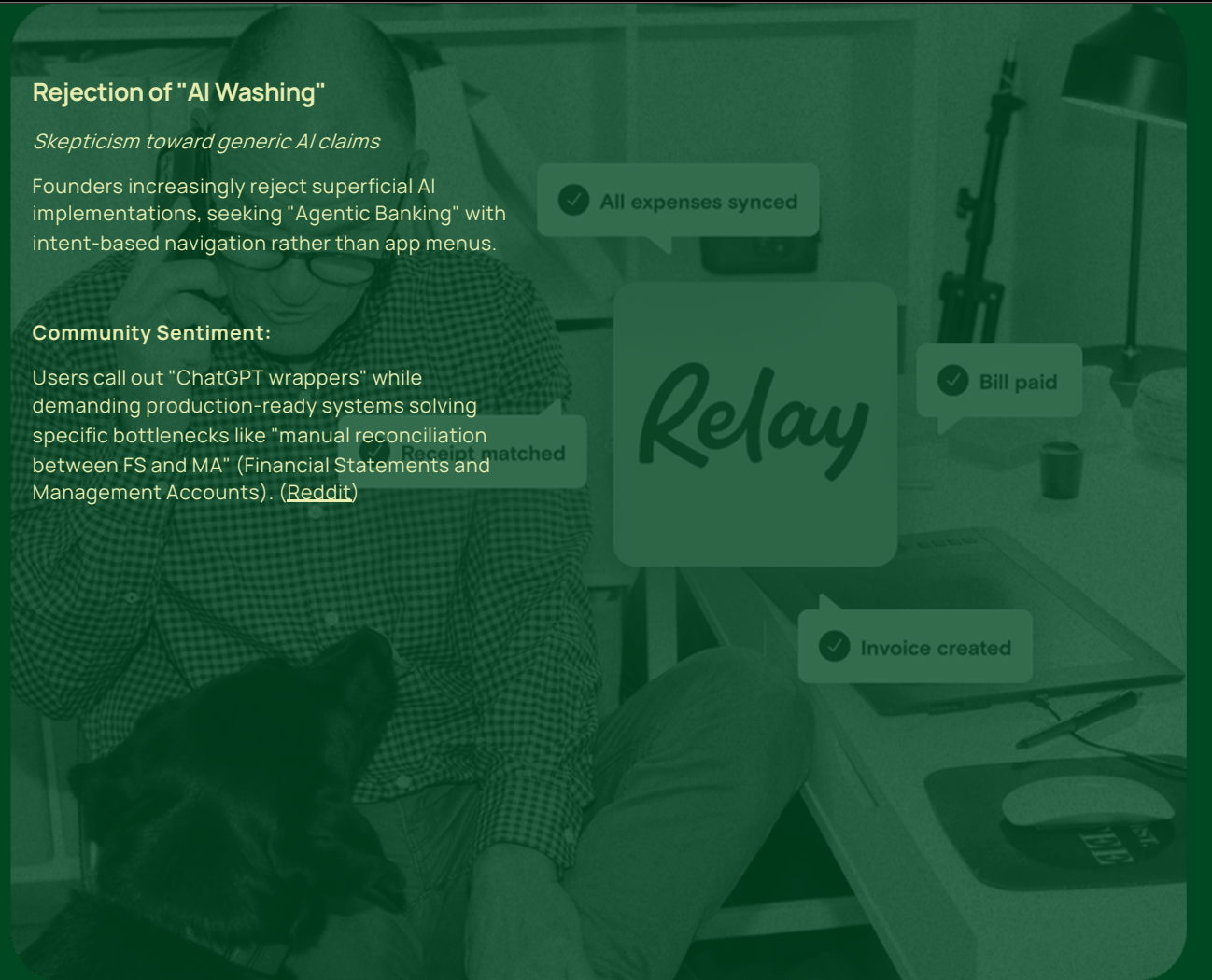
Rejection of "AI Washing"

Skepticism toward generic AI claims

Founders increasingly reject superficial AI implementations, seeking "Agentic Banking" with intent-based navigation rather than app menus.

Community Sentiment:

Users call out "ChatGPT wrappers" while demanding production-ready systems solving specific bottlenecks like "manual reconciliation between FS and MA" (Financial Statements and Management Accounts). ([Reddit](#))



PAIN POINTS IN HIGH-PERFORMING CONTENT

*Functional and psychological
triggers driving engagement*



Operational Pain Points

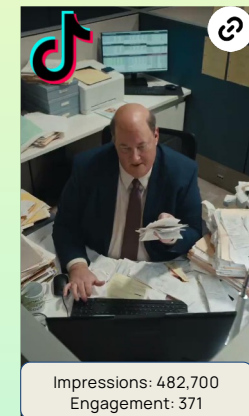
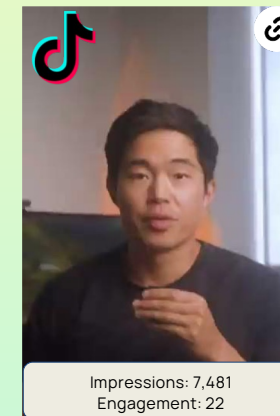
The In-Person Banking Requirement: Relay's provocation: "Ever notice how big business banks want you to show up in person?" addresses frustration with branch-dependent basic tasks.



The "Worst Hour of the Month": Ramp and Mercury target expense reporting nightmares. Ramp's Eric Glyman: "You might be used to it's the worst hour of your month doing expenses. For them, they tap a card, it does itself."



The "Sunday Evening" Trap: High-performing content addresses personal time loss: "Spending your Sunday evening chasing unpaid invoices isn't 'running a business.' It's a trap."



Psychological and Identity Pain Points

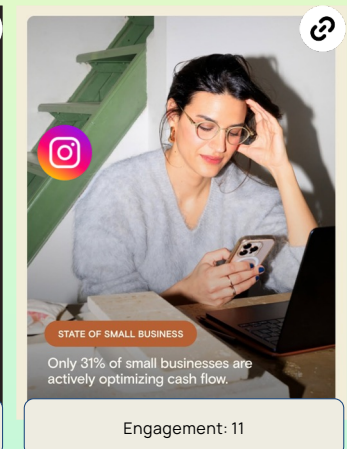
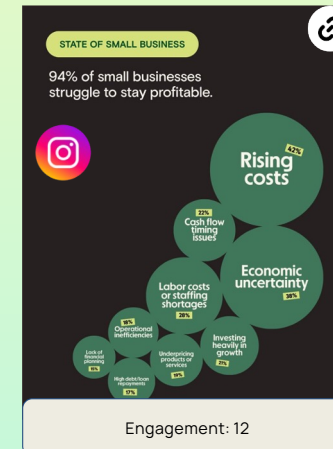
The Identity Line: Relay's powerful positioning: "A business checking account is the line between hobby and CEO."



The Agency of Burnout: Relay's Yoseph West reframes burnout as agency loss: "A lot of what people say burnout is, is like fatigue... But at least for me, it's fundamentally a function of agency. How much agency do you feel in the moment?"



Growth Trap Anxiety: Carousel ads highlighting: "94% of small businesses expected growth last year" but "growth outruns cash" due to "lag between expenses and revenue."



STORYTELLING FORMATS DRIVING ENGAGEMENT

*Platform-specific approaches
building authority and connection*



The Podcast Interview Format

Building intellectual authority through expert conversations

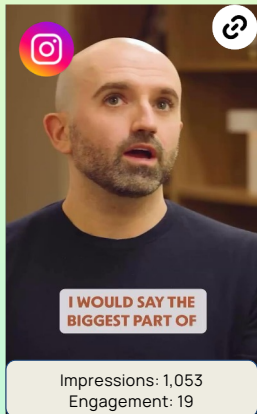
Relay's "Becoming Self Made" Podcast Strategy:

Vulnerability Hooks: Brian Scudamore opening: "I needed to fire my entire company"

Uses "School of Hard Knocks" narrative for emotional connection through shared failure

Strategic Empowerment: Yoseph West focusing on "definition of scale" and "how do you find leverage?"

Polished studio aesthetic establishing authority

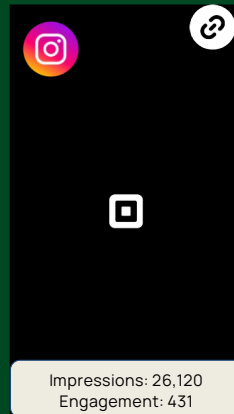


Documentary-Style Neighborhood Narratives

Positioning brands as silent community enablers

Square's Approach:

- Katz's Deli and BIGFACE Coffee ads featuring Jimmy Butler III
- Focus on "neighborhood success" and "reciprocated love"
- High production value associating brand with established business cultures

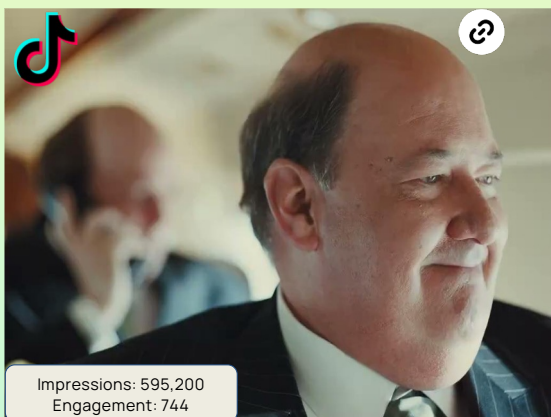


Problem Made Literal Visual Metaphors

Demonstrating platform efficacy through visual storytelling

Ramp's Multiplier: Brian Baumgartner literally "multiplies" to show platform as force multiplier

Chase's Transformation: Man in 1970s kitchen viewing phone as room "morphs" into luxury kitchen, representing vision realization



Walk and Talk UGC Guides

Low-fi peer-to-peer recommendation feeling

Gusto and Relay: Relatable talent walking through urban neighborhoods discussing premium increases and HRA strategies

Builds trust through peer recommendation rather than corporate announcement



PLATFORM ANALYSIS & WHITESPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Note: Labeling stats in this section represent prominence data (the percentage of each brand's content that features specific messaging approaches, visual styles, and content hooks, rather than performance metrics).



Meta Ads

Direct Competitors Content Prominence

Novo leads in growth-focused messaging, with **46.2% of content targeting "Growth Moments"** - significantly higher than Relay's 0% in this category. Their creative strategy emphasizes:

- **Benefit-led hooks:** 88.5% vs Relay's 13.3%
- **Clean UI demonstrations** featuring high account balances (\$25,000)
- **"Get serious about your business"** messaging approach
- **Interface-as-hero creative concepts:** 50.0%
- **Professional legitimacy and business scaling focus**, positioning their product as the upgrade path for ambitious founders

Mercury takes a **problem-first approach** with:

- **Problem reveal hooks:** 42.6%
- **Business legitimacy messaging:** 23.5%
- **Founder confessional formats:** 30.9% - real business owners discuss pain points with traditional banking
- **UGC lifestyle capture:** 35.3% - authentic business contexts while maintaining professional credibility through strategic credibility signals

Bluevine differentiates through:

- **Stat-led framing:** 30.8%
- **Performance results messaging:** 19.2% - highlighting specific funding amounts and approval timelines
- **Text-forward design:** 38.5% - using data visualization elements to communicate lending capabilities and business impact metrics

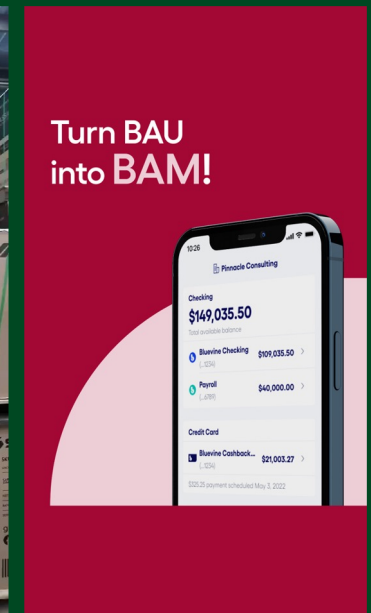
Meta
Ads



Novo



Mercury



Bluevine

Indirect Competitors Content Prominence

Ramp dominates with:

- **Time recovery messaging prominence:** 51.1%
- **Functional capability positioning:** 18.9%
- **Operational friction pain points targeting:** 15.6%
- **Problem-made-literal scenarios:** 26.7% - visualizing expense management chaos through relatable business scenarios

Gusto excels in:

- **Operational friction messaging prominence:** 42.7%
- **Problem-made-literal creative concepts:** 48.2% - showing payroll/HR complexity through visual metaphors
- **Founder overload targeting** - positioning platform as comprehensive business infrastructure

Chase leverages:

- **Contextual in-use scenes prominence:** 50.5%
- **Future security messaging:** 30.9%
- **Enterprise-grade stability emphasis** and established banking relationships
- **Real business environments** and professional contexts showcasing institutional trust



Ramp



Gusto



Chase

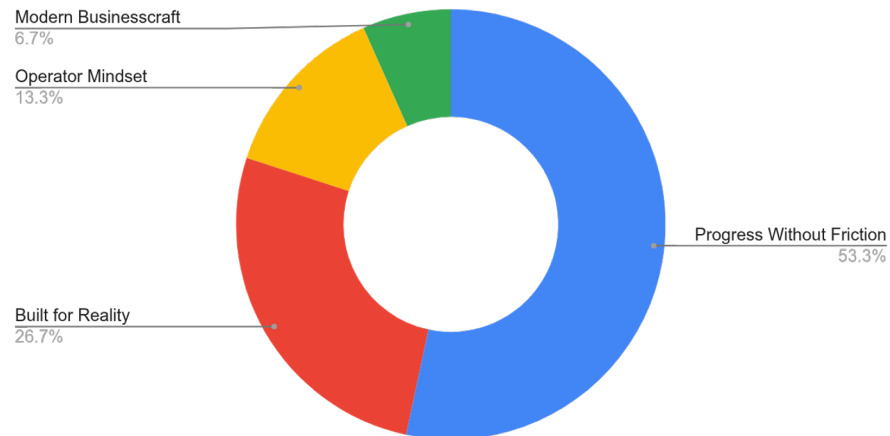
Meta
Ads

Relay's Strategic Position on Meta Ads

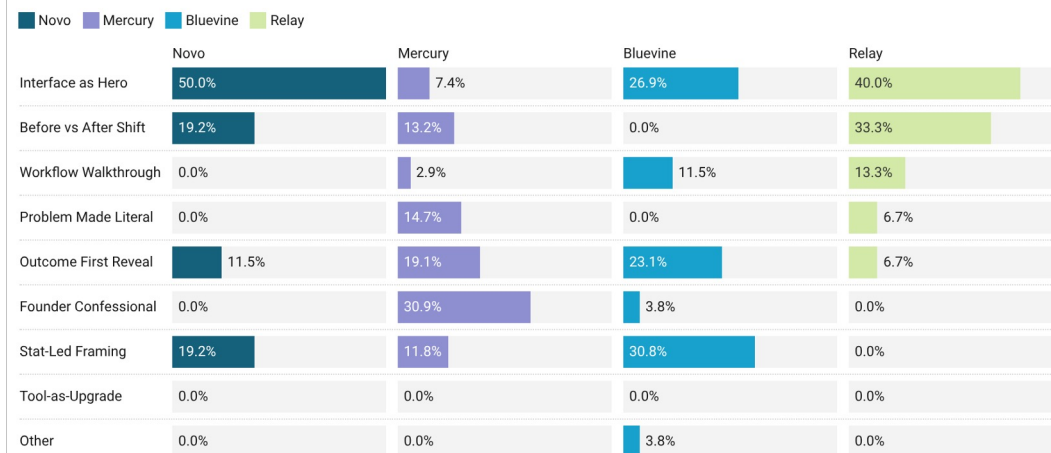
Relay holds a **unique position** with:

- **Highest direct provocation prominence:** 46.7%
- **Strong UGC lifestyle capture:** 40.0%
- **"Progress Without Friction" pillar dominance:** 53.3% of messaging
- **Clear differentiation** from growth-focused competitors
- **Zero presence in growth moments messaging** - representing significant whitespace opportunity

Relay Communication Pillar (Meta Ads)



Meta
Ads



Source: Meta Ads

Frictionless Growth.

Frictionless
Banking Infrastructure
That Scales With You.

TRADITIONAL BANKING:
Administrative Burden,
Friction

RELAY:
Automated Scaling,
Financial Control

Relay
Financial control for the long run

Watch My Progress Without Friction



Smarter Decisions, Not Just Bigger Numbers.

The Financial OS for Forward-Thinking Operators.

Relay

Financial control for the long run

Strategic Whitespace Opportunities for Relay:

Meta
Ads

Relay can capture significant market share by addressing **three key whitespace areas** on Meta:

Growth Moments Gap (0% vs competitors' 46.2%)

- **Largest opportunity** - target scaling businesses frustrated with traditional banking friction
- **"Frictionless growth" messaging** rather than just operational simplicity
- **Bridge core positioning with expansion narratives** for businesses experiencing rapid growth
- **Banking infrastructure that scales without administrative burden**

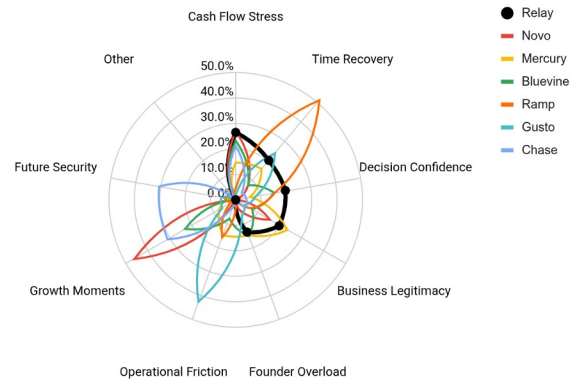
Interface-as-Hero Creative Expansion (currently 0% usage)

- **Maintain authentic UGC approach** while showcasing product screenshots
- **Demonstrate multi-account organization, automated money movement, real-time cash flow visibility**
- **Visually prove "Progress Without Friction" claim** through actual UI demonstrations

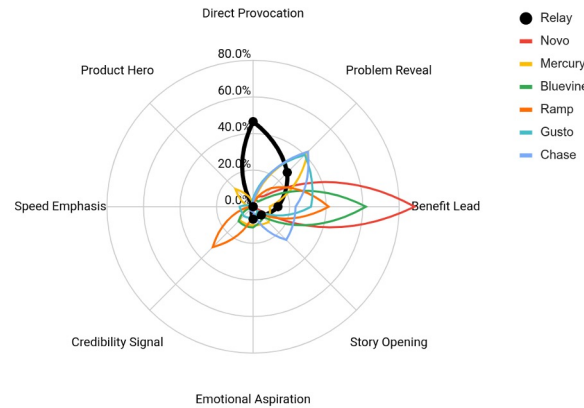
Emotional Aspiration Gap (6.7% vs competitors' 11.5%)

- **Aspiration-driven creative** positioning Relay users as forward-thinking operators
- **Target ambitious founders seeking operational sophistication tools**
- **Aspirational positioning around business intelligence and financial clarity** vs traditional growth metrics

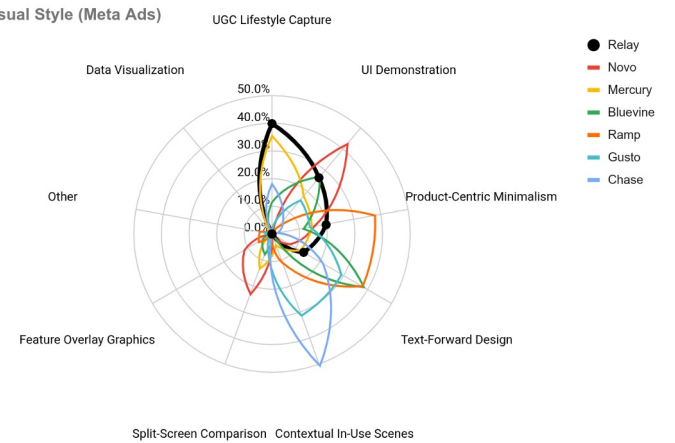
Category Entry Points (Meta Ads)



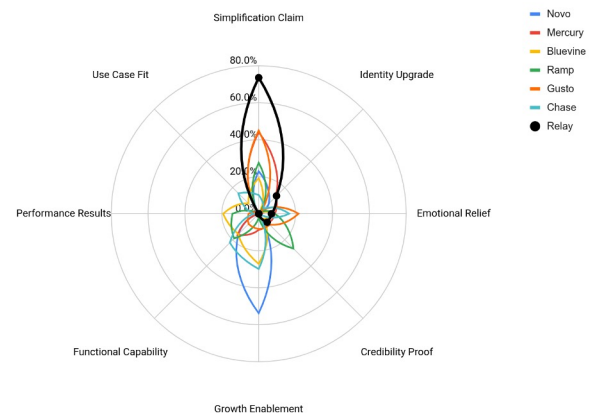
Hook (Meta Ads)



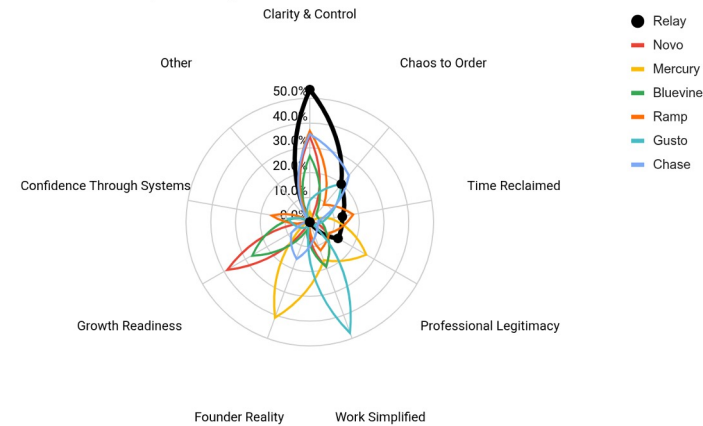
Visual Style (Meta Ads)



Primary Key Message (Meta Ads)



Content Theme (Meta Ads)



Meta Ads

Source: Meta Ads

Instagram

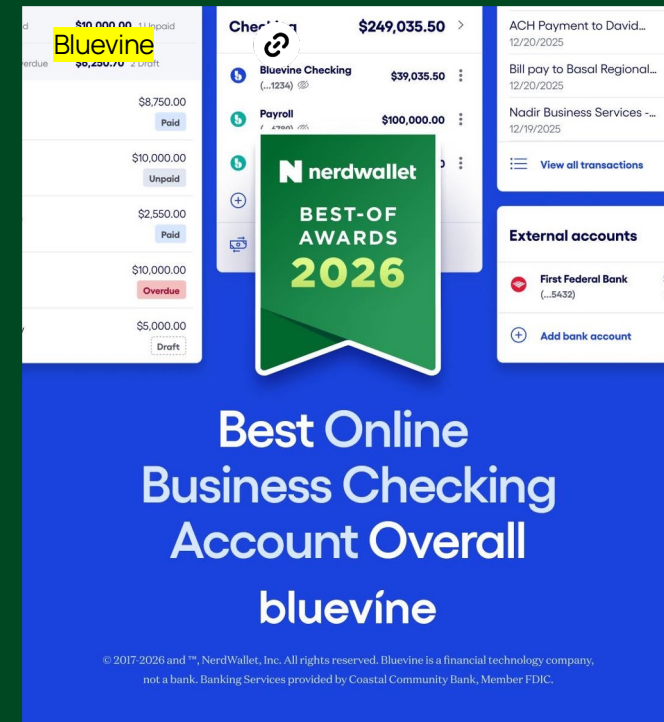
Direct Competitors Content Prominence

Mercury shows:

- **Growth enablement focus:** 50.0%
- **Identity upgrade messaging:** 37.5% - targeting founders ready to professionalize business operations
- **Balanced visual strategy:** UGC lifestyle capture (25.0%) + product-centric minimalism (25.0%)
- **Aspirational yet approachable positioning**

Bluevine leverages:

- **Credibility signals:** 33.3%
- **Benefit-led messaging:** 40.0% - featuring testimonials and business success metrics
- **Data visualization approach:** 20.0% - differentiates in lending space through transparent funding information



Engagement: 16

Indirect Competitors Content Prominence

Square dominates:

- **Growth moments:** 57.1%
- **Contextual in-use scenes:** 50.0% - real merchant environments and payment processing in action
- **Story opening approach:** 64.3% - small business owner journeys and success narratives

Quickbooks maintains:

- **Decision confidence messaging:** 47.3%
- **Contextual scenes:** 46.9% - positioning accounting software as essential business infrastructure

Gusto emphasizes:

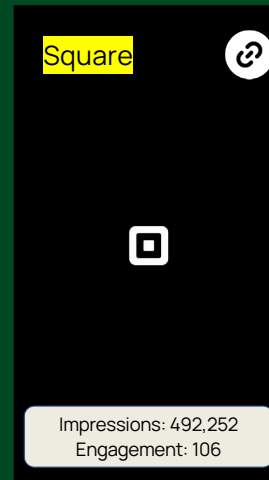
- **Future security:** 24.4%
- **Emotional relief:** 24.4% - targeting HR/payroll anxieties
- **UGC lifestyle content:** 39.0% with supportive messaging

Chase focuses on:

- **Future security:** 42.3%
- **Balanced messaging** across growth enablement and emotional relief
- **Institutional stability** in business contexts

Ramp shows:

- **Heavy operational friction focus:** 44.8%
- **Functional capability messaging:** 41.4% - targeting expense management pain points
- **Direct problem-solution presentations**



Relay's Strategic Position on Instagram

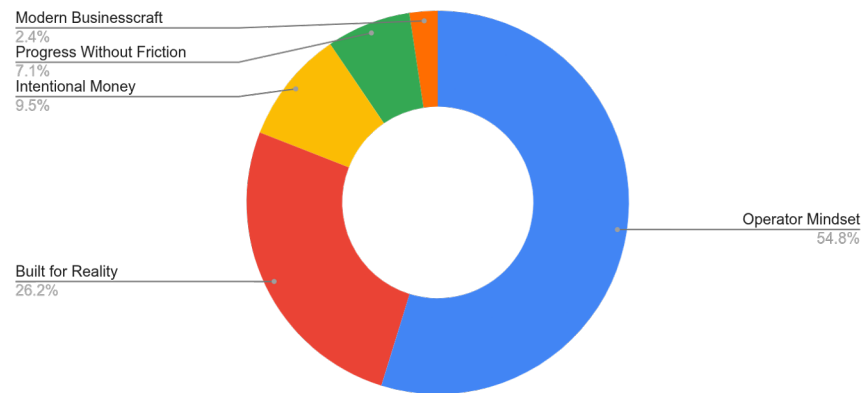
Relay maintains **exceptional positioning** with:

- **Text-forward design prominence:** 88.1% - **nearly 4x higher than nearest competitors**
- **Founder reality content theme:** 64.3% - authentic connection with business owners
- **Growth enablement messaging:** 26.2% - solid foundation for scaling narratives

Performance Data Available:

- **Podcast-style video content performs significantly stronger:** 38 likes, 1,207 plays, 42 total engagement (**3.48% engagement rate**)
- **Donald Miller leadership podcast excerpt demonstrates strongest performance** in the dataset

Relay Communication Pillar (Instagram)



Source: Instagram

	Relay	Mercury	Bluevine	Square	Ramp	Quickbooks	Gusto	chase
Founder Confessional	71.4%	37.5%	13.3%	21.4%	3.4%	21.9%	29.3%	15.4%
Stat-Led Framing	9.5%	0.0%	20.0%	7.1%	13.8%	3.1%	22.0%	11.5%
Outcome First Reveal	7.1%	12.5%	13.3%	3.6%	3.4%	3.1%	2.4%	11.5%
Other	2.4%	37.5%	13.3%	39.3%	10.3%	12.5%	12.2%	30.8%
Problem Made Literal	2.4%	12.5%	0.0%	3.6%	58.6%	12.5%	17.1%	7.7%
Interface as Hero	2.4%	0.0%	33.3%	10.7%	3.4%	6.3%	12.2%	3.8%
Workflow Walkthrough	2.4%	0.0%	6.7%	14.3%	0.0%	15.6%	4.9%	15.4%
Before vs After Shift	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	21.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Tool-as-Upgrade	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	3.8%

Strategic Whitespace Opportunities for Relay:

Video Content Prioritization based on performance data:

- **Founder/leadership content** shows strongest performance metrics
- **Educational podcast-style content** creates authentic engagement while showcasing expertise

Contextual In-Use Scenes Gap (0% vs competitors' average 35%):

- **Real business environments** where banking solutions operate seamlessly
- **Behind-the-scenes footage** of successful Relay customers managing cash flow during busy seasons
- **Processing payments in retail environments** or organizing finances in co-working spaces
- **Demonstrate practical application** without losing authentic founder focus

UGC Lifestyle Capture Expansion (7.1% vs competitors' 25% average):

- **Day-in-the-life content** from diverse business owners using Relay's multiple account structure
- **Managing different revenue streams** through natural usage scenarios
- **Founder separating client payments** into dedicated accounts, automatically transferring tax reserves
- **Managing contractor payments** through virtual cards
- **Maintain founder reality authenticity** while demonstrating product functionality

Speed Emphasis Messaging Gap (2.4% vs competitors who don't emphasize speed):

- **Own rapid financial operations messaging** - instant account setup, immediate money movement
- **Real-time transaction visibility** as competitive advantages
- **Time-conscious founders** who need banking that matches their business pace

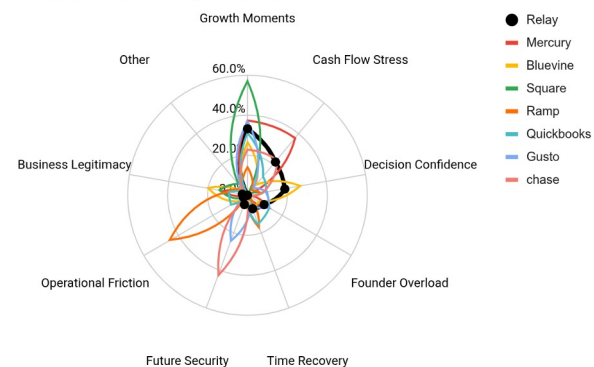
Credibility Signal Opportunity (2.4% vs competitors' 16% average):

- **Customer testimonials, business outcome metrics, founder success stories**
- **Validate approach** while maintaining authentic positioning
- **Recognizable business leaders** who use Relay
- **Customer growth trajectories** enabled by better financial organization
- **Specific operational improvements** achieved through account structure approach

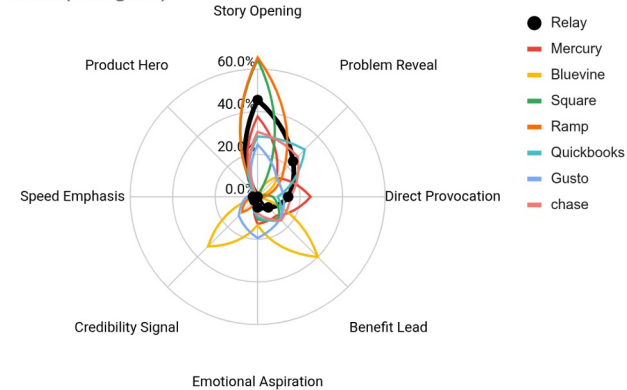
The collage features several key marketing elements:

- Top Left:** Video thumbnails for "Founder's Perspective" (Leadership Insights: Building Financial Resilience) and "Educational Podcast" (The Relay Playbook: Mastering Business Operations).
- Top Center:** A video title "Relay Video: Prioritizing Founder Wisdom & Expert Education. Financial Control for the Long Run." with the Relay logo.
- Top Right:** A grid of social media-style posts showing various business scenarios like "Moving your client payment in, tax savings" and "Paying the crew on the go with virtual cards."
- Middle Left:** Three vertical panels titled "RETAIL RUSH", "CO-WORKING CLARITY", and "ON-THE-GO OPS", each illustrating a specific business use case.
- Middle Right:** A large image of a woman walking while holding a smartphone displaying the Relay app interface, with the text "Banking at the Speed of Your Business."
- Bottom Left:** A "Founder Success Story" featuring a quote from a founder: "Relay's multi-account structure gave us the clarity to scale without the chaos." and a line graph showing "2.5x Revenue Growth in 12 Months".
- Bottom Right:** A section titled "Real Founders. Real Growth. Validated Results." showing "Reduced admin by 40%" and "Automated tax savings, no stress." with a final stat of "Reduced admin by 40% -24%".

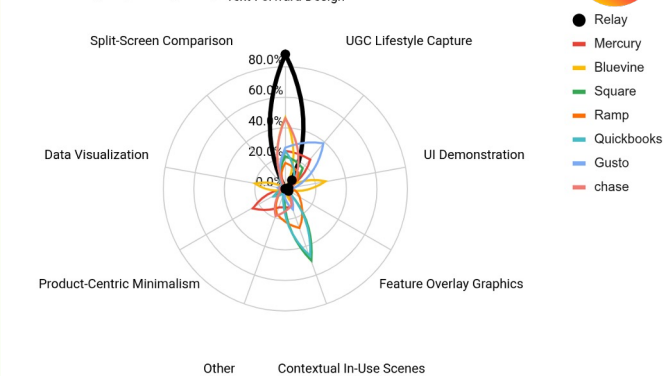
Category Entry Points (Instagram)



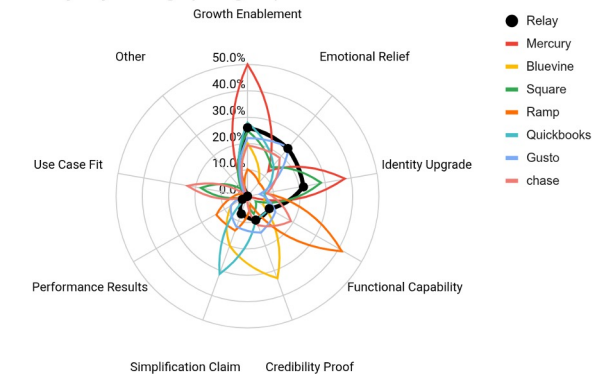
Hook (Instagram)



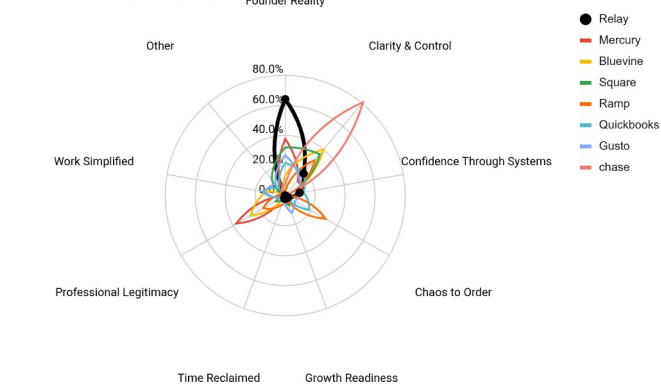
Visual Style (Instagram) Text-Forward Design



Primary Key Message (Instagram)



Content Theme (Instagram)



YouTube: Direct Competitors Content Prominence



Mercury utilizes:

- **Direct provocation hooks:** 54.5%
- **Identity upgrade messaging:** 36.4% - featuring founder interviews and business transformation content
- **UGC lifestyle approach:** 36.4% - authentic business owner experiences

Bluevine focuses entirely on:

- **Growth enablement:** 100%
- **Emotional aspiration:** 100%



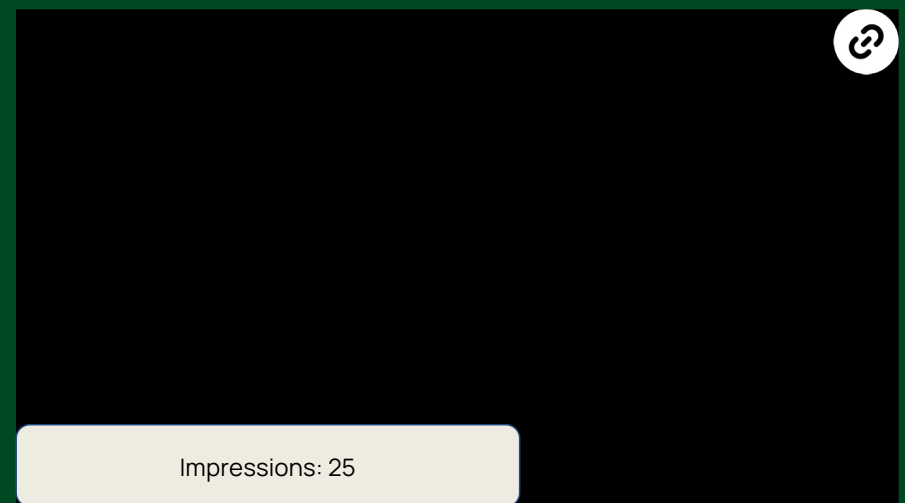
Impressions: 3,648
Engagement: 16



Impressions: 520
Engagement: 3



Impressions: 215
Engagement: 1



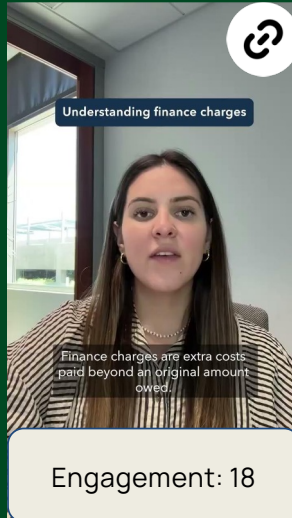
Impressions: 25

Indirect Competitors Content Prominence



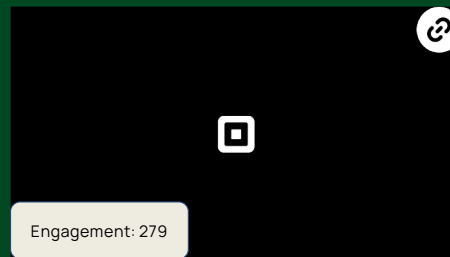
Quickbooks leads in:

- **Decision confidence messaging prominence:** 47.3%
- **Simplification claims:** 41.8% - educational content and business process tutorials
- **Text-forward approach:** 70.9% - aligned with informational video formats
- **Performance data:** educational content achieving 7 likes/7 engagement



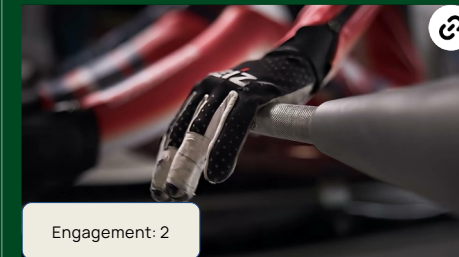
Square balances:

- **Growth moments prominence:** 24.2%
- **Decision confidence:** 33.3% - merchant success stories and business education content



Gusto maintains:

- **Balanced messaging** across multiple entry points
- **Strong contextual scenes:** 29.4% - HR and payroll in business environments



Chase emphasizes:

- **Growth moments:** 49.0%
- **Contextual in-use scenes:** 52.9% - business banking in professional environments



Ramp targets:

- **Operational friction:** 22.7%
- **Time recovery:** 34.1% - demonstrating expense management workflows and efficiency gains

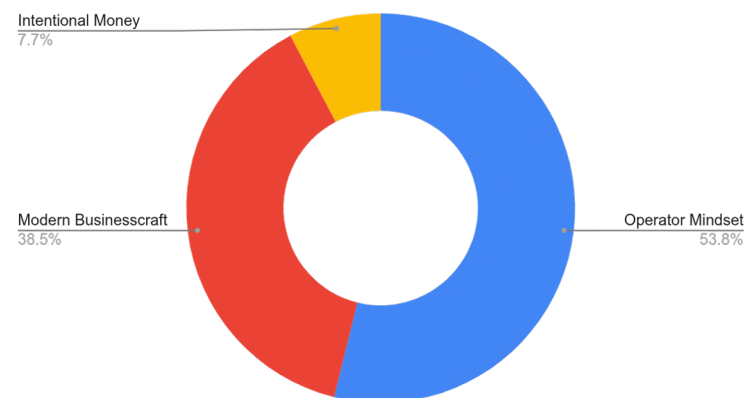


Relay's Strategic Position on YouTube

Relay demonstrates **strong platform positioning** with:

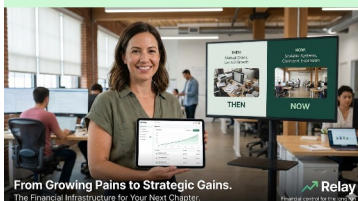
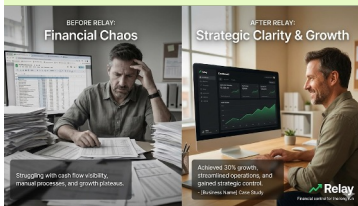
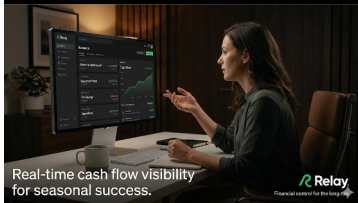
- **Growth moments messaging prominence:** 76.9%
- **Exceptional text-forward design:** 92.3%
- **Story opening approach:** 53.8% with direct provocation (30.8%)
- **Compelling video narrative structures**
- **Strong growth enablement messaging:** 38.5% - positions Relay for scaling business content

Relay Communication Pillar (YouTube)



Source: Youtube

	Relay	Mercury	Bluevine	Square	Ramp	Quickbooks	Gusto	Chase
Founder Confessional	92.3%	63.6%	0.0%	6.1%	15.9%	3.6%	17.6%	23.5%
Other	7.7%	18.2%	100.0%	6.1%	9.1%	3.6%	0.0%	21.6%
Workflow Walkthrough	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.8%	20.5%	45.5%	23.5%	7.8%
Problem Made Literal	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	3.0%	27.3%	9.1%	29.4%	7.8%
Stat-Led Framing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	12.7%	17.6%	2.0%
Before vs After Shift	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	9.1%	7.3%	5.9%	7.8%
Interface as Hero	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	6.8%	7.3%	5.9%	2.0%
Tool-as-Upgrade	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	9.1%	0.0%	9.8%
Outcome First Reveal	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	17.6%



Strategic Whitespace Opportunities for Relay:

Contextual In-Use Scenes Opportunity (0% vs competitors' 35% average):

- Detailed business environment showcases - following successful customers through daily financial workflows
- Demonstrate how Relay's account structure supports seasonal businesses
- Real-time decision making enabled by cash flow visibility
- Longer-format demonstrations proving operational value in ways shorter platforms cannot

Educational Content Expansion beyond founder interviews (15.4% vs competitors' 47% average):

- Comprehensive tutorials on financial organization principles
- Business accounting fundamentals and cash flow management strategies
- Position as financial operations experts rather than just banking providers
- Capture business owners researching financial management solutions
- Establish Relay's expertise in business operations

Credibility Signal Gap (0% vs competitors' 18% average):

- Customer case study series - detailed before-and-after transformations
- Businesses that implemented Relay's approach to financial organization
- Specific operational improvements, growth trajectories, strategic advantages
- Social proof while maintaining authentic storytelling
- Longer-format stories showcasing banking infrastructure benefits

Workflow Demonstration Opportunity:

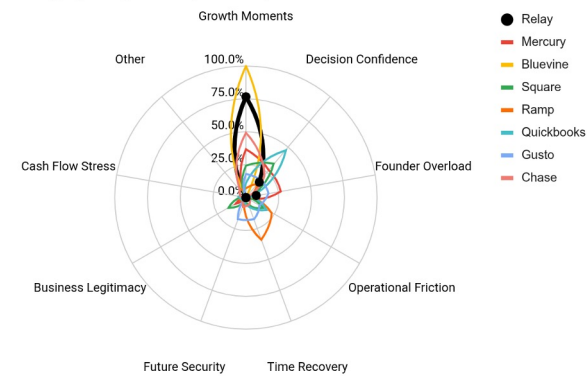
- Complete platform capabilities through screen-recorded tutorials
- Customer success implementations and comparative analysis with traditional banking
- Leverage YouTube's format advantages for comprehensive education
- Demonstrate product superiority through detailed functional comparisons

Business Transformation Narrative Space:

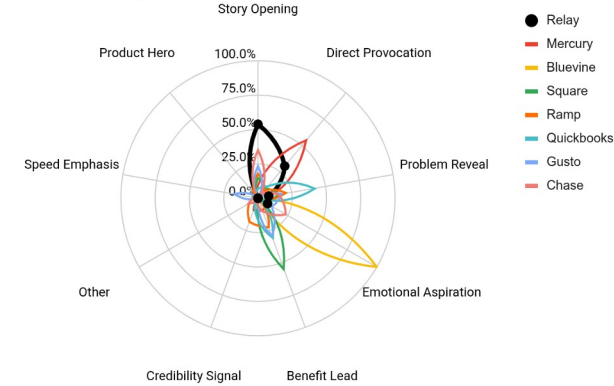
- Documentary-style content following customers through significant business transitions
- Scaling operations, geographic expansion, team growth, operational restructuring
- Show how proper financial infrastructure enables rather than constrains business evolution
- Combine identity upgrade and emotional relief messaging



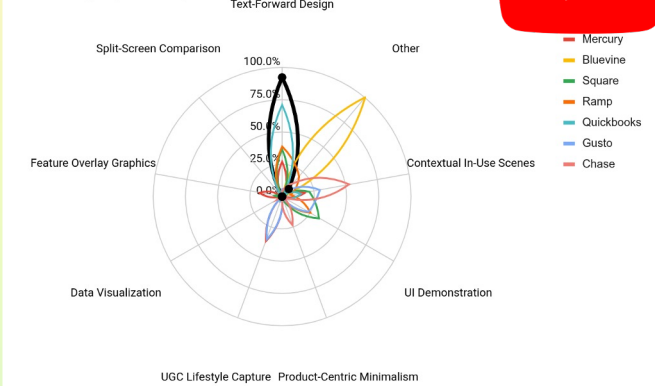
Category Entry Points (YouTube)



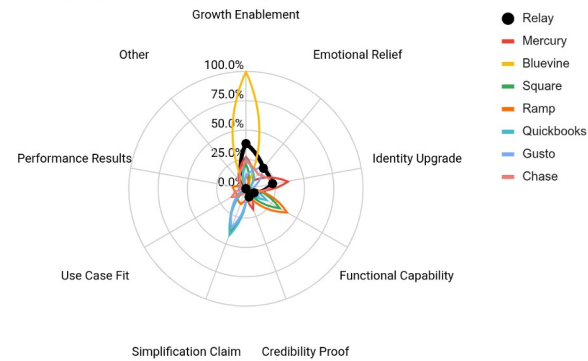
Hook (YouTube)



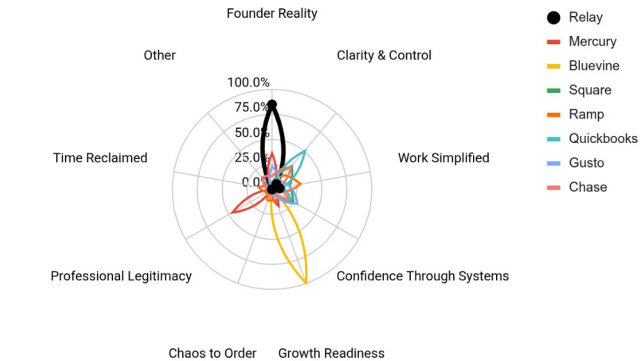
Visual Style (YouTube)



Primary Key Message (YouTube)



Content Theme (YouTube)





TikTok

TIKTOK

Direct Competitors Content Prominence

Data shows **extremely limited direct competitor presence** on TikTok, with most major competitors having minimal or no measurable activity.

Indirect Competitors Content Prominence

Square shows:

- **Strong growth moments focus:** 100%
- **UGC lifestyle content:** 66.7% - leveraging TikTok's authentic creator-driven format

Ramp targets:

- **Operational friction:** 57.1%
- **Problem-made-literal concepts:** 78.6% - using TikTok's creative format to visualize expense management challenges

Quickbooks maintains:

- **Simplification claims:** 45.8%
- **Educational content approaches**

Gusto emphasizes:

- **Emotional relief:** 40.0%
- **UGC lifestyle capture:** 40.0% - targeting small business owners through relatable creator content



Relay's Strategic Position on TikTok

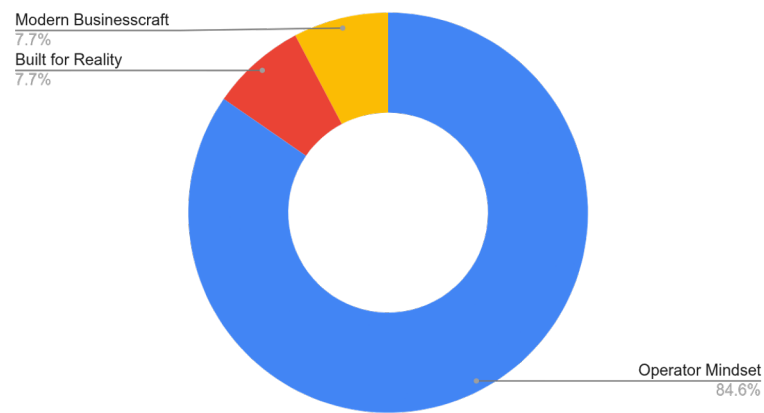
Relay demonstrates **exceptional platform fit** with:

- **Founder confessional approach prominence:** 100% - **perfectly aligned** with TikTok's authentic storytelling preferences
- **Business education content** - 6.05% engagement rate (highest across all platforms)
- **Founder reality messaging** resonating with entrepreneurial TikTok communities

Performance Data:

- **6.05% engagement rate** - strongest performance across all measured platforms
- **Founder-focused content** generates sharing behavior
- **Educational business content** shows consistent engagement and discovery potential

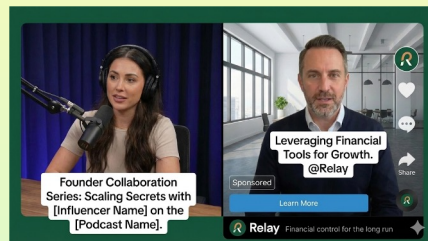
Relay Communication Pillar (TikTok)



	Relay	Square	Ramp	Quickbooks	Gusto
Founder Confessional	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	16.7%	13.3%
Problem Made Literal	0.0%	0.0%	78.6%	8.3%	13.3%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	12.5%	26.7%
Workflow Walkthrough	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Before vs After Shift	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	16.7%	13.3%
Interface as Hero	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	13.3%
Outcome First Reveal	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	6.7%
Stat-Led Framing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	6.7%
Tool-as-Upgrade	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%

Source: Tiktok





Strategic Whitespace Opportunities for Relay:

Business Education Leadership on platform with limited competitor presence:

- **Financial literacy content** for entrepreneurs - "Business Banking 101," "Cash Flow Management Tips"
- **Founder journey storytelling** - behind-the-scenes business financial decision-making
- **Myth-busting content** addressing common business banking misconceptions and fears
- **Educational approach** capturing business owners while establishing expertise

Collaboration Opportunities with business influencers and founder communities:

- **Guest appearances** on founder podcasts adapted for TikTok
- **Collaborative content** with business education creators
- **Entrepreneur meetup participation** - leveraging TikTok's discoverability
- **Amplify message** through authentic partnerships beyond current audience

Quick Tip Format providing immediate value:

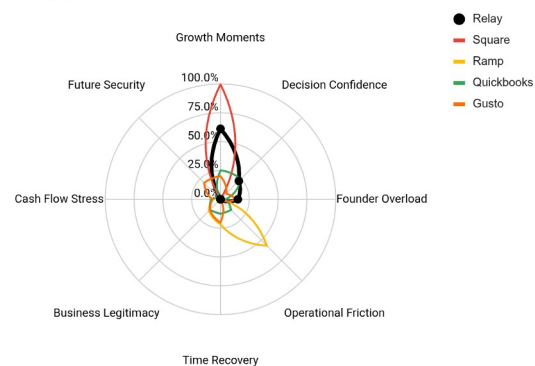
- "3 ways to organize business income"
- "How to automate tax savings"
- "Why separate accounts matter for small business"
- **Educational content** naturally leading to Relay platform demonstrations
- **Bite-sized financial advice** subtly showcasing platform capabilities

Problem Visualization Content addressing founder pain points:

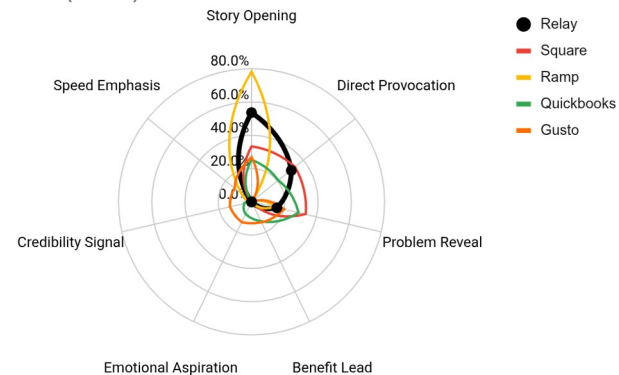
- **Creative storytelling** - emotional weight of financial disorganization
- **Relief of automated systems** and confidence from financial clarity
- **Resonate with TikTok's emotional storytelling preferences**
- **Highlight Relay's solution benefits** through authentic narrative



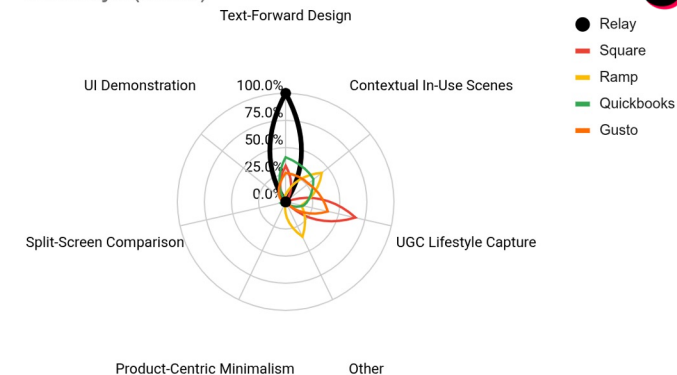
Category Entry Points (TikTok)



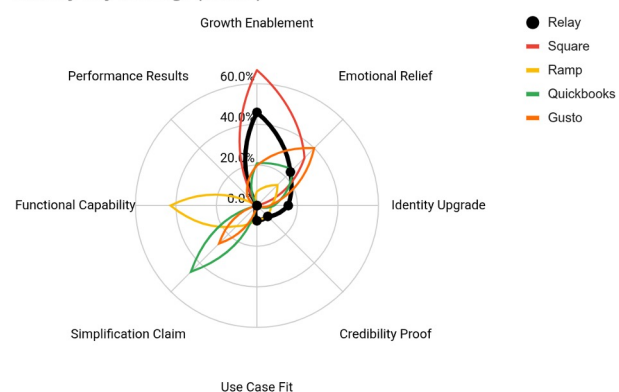
Hook (TikTok)



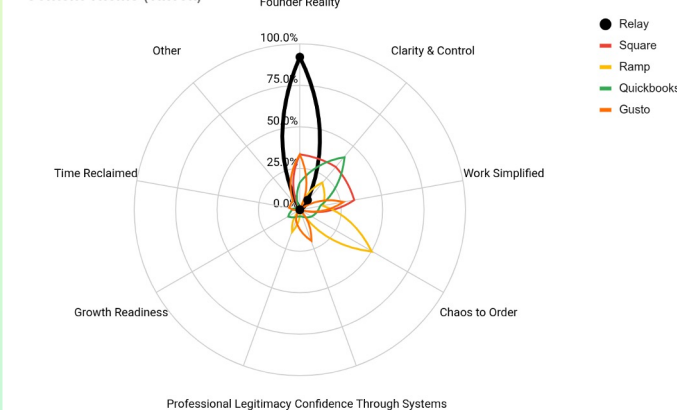
Visual Style (TikTok)



Primary Key Message (TikTok)



Content Theme (TikTok)



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



01 Address the "One Number" Visibility Problem

Directly solving the scattered data challenge

Reddit Insight: Founders overwhelmed by information spread across emails, bank apps, and spreadsheets.

Recommendation: Creative should focus on how Relay provides the "one clear view" of income, expenses, and burn dates that users actively seek.

Implementation:

- Dashboard demos showing unified financial view
- Before/after scenarios of data consolidation
- Testimonials about decision-making clarity

02 Bridge Policy and Reality Gap

Moving from "Simplification" to "Advocacy" messaging

Current Problem: While competitors market simplification, users face compliance friction and chargeback disputes.

Strategic Opportunity: Position as merchant advocate providing:

- Merchant-locked virtual cards for chargeback protection
- Clear dispute resolution support
- Business-friendly compliance approaches

Execution: Address emotional frustration of "Chargeback Fraud" through proactive merchant-side security tools.

THE OLD WAY

A woman is shown looking overwhelmed, surrounded by a chaotic mess of overlapping spreadsheets, emails, and various financial data sources, representing a fragmented view of her business's finances.

THE RELAY WAY

A man is shown smiling and relaxed, sitting at a desk with a laptop. The laptop screen displays the Relay dashboard, which provides a clear, unified view of financial data. Key metrics visible on the screen include: **Relay**, **\$287,550.93** TOTAL CASH, **BURN RUNWAY: 18 MONTHS**, and sections for **INCOME** and **EXPENSES**.

Testimonial from Maria T, Tech Startup CEO:

"Before Relay, I felt lost in a sea in numbers. I numbers. I worried I waried as missing something big."

— Maria T, Tech Startup CEO

Experience Clarity

Saturday, January 31 2026 12:51:37 AM WIB

CHARGEBACK FRAUD: STOPPED.

FIGHT BACK. WIN DISPUTES.

The advertisement features a large, glowing shield with a checkmark inside, symbolizing protection and success. To the right of the shield is a padlock icon, and further right is a document icon with a red 'X' and a green checkmark, representing the resolution of disputes. The Relay logo is prominently displayed in the bottom center.

Relay

SECURITY-FIRST COMPLIANCE

03 Harness Whitespace of Authentic "Grit"

Moving beyond sanitized workshop aesthetics

Current Limitation: Sanitized workshops and curated environments don't reflect reality.

Recommended Approach:

- Show founders "holding the emergency brake" in relationships or business
- Represent "Manual Labor" and "Personal Sacrifice" realities
- Kitchen table scenarios with real family context

Message: Financial tools that understand the unglamorous reality of business building.



04 Establish Agentic Authority Over "AI Washing"

Focusing on predictive capabilities rather than generic AI claims

Market Problem: Founders increasingly reject superficial AI implementations.

Strategic Focus: "Automated Intent" showing how systems predict cash flow crunches before they happen.

Differentiation: Position as "predictive vs reactive" banking solution.

Evidence Base: Reddit discussions actively seeking vendors who "help predict cash flow crunch before it happens."



05

Expand the Identity Line Strategy

Reinforcing CEO identity through sophisticated tools

Current Positioning: "A business checking account is the line between hobby and CEO"

Expansion Opportunity: Develop "CEO Habits" positioning:

- Automated Profit First allocations
- Strategic cash flow management
- Professional-grade financial infrastructure

Brand Positioning: Partner in sophisticated business operations rather than just banking service.

Implementation Framework

Content Strategy by Platform

Platform	Primary Focus	Content Type	Key Message
Meta Ads	Direct Problem Solving	Split-screen comparisons	One clear financial view
TikTok	Identity Building	Founder confessionals	Operator mindset validation
YouTube	Authority Establishment	Long-form expertise	Predictive financial management
Instagram	Aesthetic Credibility	Educational carousels	Professional growth enablement



Messaging Hierarchy

Primary Message: Financial clarity enabling better business decisions

Secondary Message: Merchant advocacy and dispute protection

Supporting Message: Tools built for the reality of business ownership

Differentiation Vectors

Against Direct Competitors:

- Predictive capability vs reactive features
- Merchant advocacy vs generic dispute resolution
- Authentic grit vs sanitized success stories

Against Indirect Competitors:

- Specialized focus vs broad business software
- Banking expertise vs adjacent service expansion
- Financial strategy partnership vs transactional relationship



THE GRIND IS REAL.
CHAOS ISN'T THE STRATEGY.

Relay



CLARITY & CONTROL.
YOUR STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PARTNER

Market Positioning Conclusions

Key insights driving competitive advantage

Category Evolution Insight

The small business fintech space is transitioning from simple fee-saving messaging to identity-led and strategy-aligned positioning. Relay's focus on "Founder Reality" and "Operator Mindset" provides strong foundation for building long-term loyalty with established businesses.

Competitive Differentiation Opportunity

While large incumbents and indirect competitors rely on celebrity endorsements and production volume, brands achieving significant resonance validate the founder's identity as hands-on operator.

Winning Formula:

- Granular control capabilities
- Strategic clarity tools
- Unpolished reality acknowledgment
- Hands-on operator validation

Authority Building Strategy

By focusing on sophisticated business operations rather than basic banking, Relay can maintain position as high-authority leader in the fintech ecosystem.

Core Elements:

- Technical sophistication in financial management
- Strategic partnership rather than vendor relationship
- Recognition of business ownership realities
- Professional growth enablement tools

FOUNDER REALITY



RELAY: OPERATOR MINDSET



THE GRIND IS REAL. CONTROL IT.

Relay

YOUR STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PARTNER



ADOLOGY.AI

THE SMARTER WAY TO CREATE
AND OPTIMIZE WINNING CAMPAIGNS