

# Resources

Most sites start out as a homepage, an online catalog or capabilities brochure - however brief, a company profile and a contact page, often called "brochureware." The first step in going beyond brochure-ware isn't necessarily e-commerce; I believe you should strongly consider a resources section - an area that addresses common problems in your industry - as the phase immediately after the brochureware content for your web presence. I'll give a wide variety of examples of specific types of resources to consider offering a bit later. First, look at your web presence again from the point of view of your buyers. What would make their life easier? If you make their life easier, it will come back to you in spades.

When you go beyond simply hawking products and services online to providing resources for prospects and clients, you give them more reasons to visit repeatedly. And when it comes time to buy, whom would you rather buy from, someone who's simply hawking their products and services, or someone who's interested in solving your problems?

## **Naming the Resources Section**

Your Resources section can be called Resources or one of many other suitable names, like Info Desk, News Desk, Help Desk, Industry Info, References, Reference Desk, Starting Point, Tools, Other Resources, and more.

Resources Content by Industry

Resource pages in the mid-nineties consisted mostly of links to other sites' pages. You wouldn't want a links page to be your entire resources section today. Rather, a links page might make a good sub-page under Resources. Links offered on a links sub-page may include industry or trade associations, industry-affiliated non-profits, standards bodies, user groups and the like. If you're a community booster, offer local links on a links sub-page. You might also include links to vendors and industry white papers. Simply think about the connections that make sense to your site's viewers (they may be items you take for granted).

Suitable content for a Resources section varies widely by industry. A fasteners site, for example, might offer English to metric measurement conversions. A coin-collecting site might offer examples of how various grades of quality of coins are judged, while a jeweler's site could show the way various stones are judged for quality. I tend to view Resources sections as a repository for all of the following, per the choices of the client.