

# Manufacturing and Industrial

Many of the examples cited above are perfect for manufacturers: Uploadable and downloadable (especially engineering) files, technical articles, Material Safety Data Sheets, and more.

Manufacturers should go out of their way to provide information that helps the buyer be a better-educated buyer, from technical articles to applications bulletins to materials analyses. Free offers for any of these items can be a real draw.

Use your resources section to illustrate the salient points in the decision process. For example, a printer with a field, "Number of colors," would make "Number of Colors" a link to pop up a small resources window that illustrates exactly what is meant by one color, two colors, four-color process, six colors, etc.

Wherever possible, give buyers real-time inventory.

For large, custom projects, manufacturers are starting to allow customers to view the construction of their order via the manufacturer's web presence. A large houseboat manufacturer, for example, allows customers to operate web cameras on the factory floor via the website.

The extranet is also a critical component of many manufacturing sites, allowing customers, reps, distributors, and dealers to access the latest information anytime, from anywhere. While the extranet will likely be in its own area, make good mention of it in the Resources section so everyone can see this additional benefit of working with you.

Finally, most manufacturers should consider online sales. If they perceive a conflict with distribution channels - the most common objection I hear - they can remedy that problem by giving a commission to the dealer or rep that would have earned it in the traditional, geographic or vertical-industry channel. If geographic territories are not the norm, dealers and reps might participate (i.e., get commissions) in web sales by the same percentage of direct sales they generate, reinforcing their direct sales efforts. It's been said that the best thing a manufacturer can have is dealers' goodwill. It used to be that the best way to get dealer goodwill was to provide good products and good sales lead to the dealer for those products. Now the manufacturer can provide a good product, plenty of leads from well-educated buyers - and actual sales orders to boot, turning the problem of in-house sales against the channel into an incredible opportunity for the manufacturer and the channel.

## **Manufacturing Products & Services**

I was an independent contractor representing the Thomas Register of American Manufacturers for ten years. Much of what I learned there is extremely applicable to the web.

Ninety-seven percent of industrial purchases start on the buying side. The average buyer considers four potential suppliers, two known sources (a referral, someone dealt with in the past, a vendor met at a trade show, etc.) and two new sources (to get competitive bids, twists on the latest technology, etc.). The web presence provider's job is to do their best to ensure you're among the first four companies considered (preferably first), and that, when someone gets to your site, that you truly look like the kind of company they'd like to deal with. (Please note, the term "buyer" in this context refers to owners, engineers, facilities managers, purchasing agents and more; everyone on the 'buying side' of the transaction.)

The 97% buyer-initiated sales rule is the converse of direct marketing, in which a 3% response to seller-initiated sales is great. In other words, the best way to sell is to make it easy for buyers to buy from you.

The Internet is perfect for manufacturers because these vendors can make information available to buyers 24/7/365, at precisely the time their checkbook is open and they're looking for a supplier. When buyers search out a supplier, detailed information is immediately available.

It is impossible to underplay the importance of proper Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Registration in the industrial buying process. When buyers, on average, seek out four potential suppliers, and two of them are already known, it is critical that you have a shot at being one of the two "unknowns".

See [IndustryQuote.com](http://IndustryQuote.com) for more details on the industrial buying process.

Manufacturers can use all of the Products and Services suggestions above, as well as those below to make it easy for buyers to buy from them.