

The background is a dark blue abstract composition. It features a large, faint silhouette of a human head in profile on the right side. Inside and around the head are various technical and industrial motifs: interlocking gears, circuit board traces, arrows indicating flow or direction, and a grid of small, faint letters in the upper left quadrant. A prominent yellow gear with black teeth is visible in the upper right, partially overlapping the head silhouette. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and industrial.

The Ultimate Guide To Marketing For Manufacturers

One of the most significant changes in the digital space is that people are becoming so conditioned by the digital experience in their personal lives, they are beginning to expect the same level of ease and satisfaction when dealing in a professional capacity.

Industrial buyers choose their suppliers much differently than they did twenty, ten, or even five years ago. Luckily, there are ways to understand the complexities of their purchasing process, the things they care about most, and how to hold their attention while respecting their time.

In this eBook, we'll break down everything manufacturers need to know about increasing your market presence online.

We will explore the steps in your journey to create an online brand experience designed to grow your audience, fill your sales funnel with warm leads, and improve your bottom line:



EXIST ONLINE



INCREASE VISIBILITY



START THE CONVERSATION



GET MORE FROM YOUR INVESTMENT

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Set Clear Goals



Before beginning any new marketing activity, you first need to set goals to ensure you're maximizing your effectiveness. Be really clear about your marketing and business goals so you can tie them to measurable results. Then communicate your goals with your team, designer or agency. Consider the following:

- ✓ What markets do you want to break into?
- ✓ What key clients are you going after?
- ✓ What do you want to promote?
- ✓ Are you launching a new product or service?

Once you determine your key goals, tie those objectives to a specific success metric e.g., "to increase site traffic by 50% in the next six months."

The clearer your goals are, the more powerful your website will be at accomplishing them.

Learn about the difference between marketing goals and marketing strategy [here](#).

How To Get Found By New Buyers Online



In today's marketplace, procurement professionals, MROs, and engineers expect the companies they do business with to offer a digital experience that is as smooth and simple as the websites they visit to shop for personal items, check the news, or share information with friends and family. A potential customers' evaluation of your business is rooted in their experience interacting with you online.

Does it seem like you have expertise in the field? Strong success stories from working with real customers? Enough interest in your customer's experience to revenue coming in to put together a high-performing website?

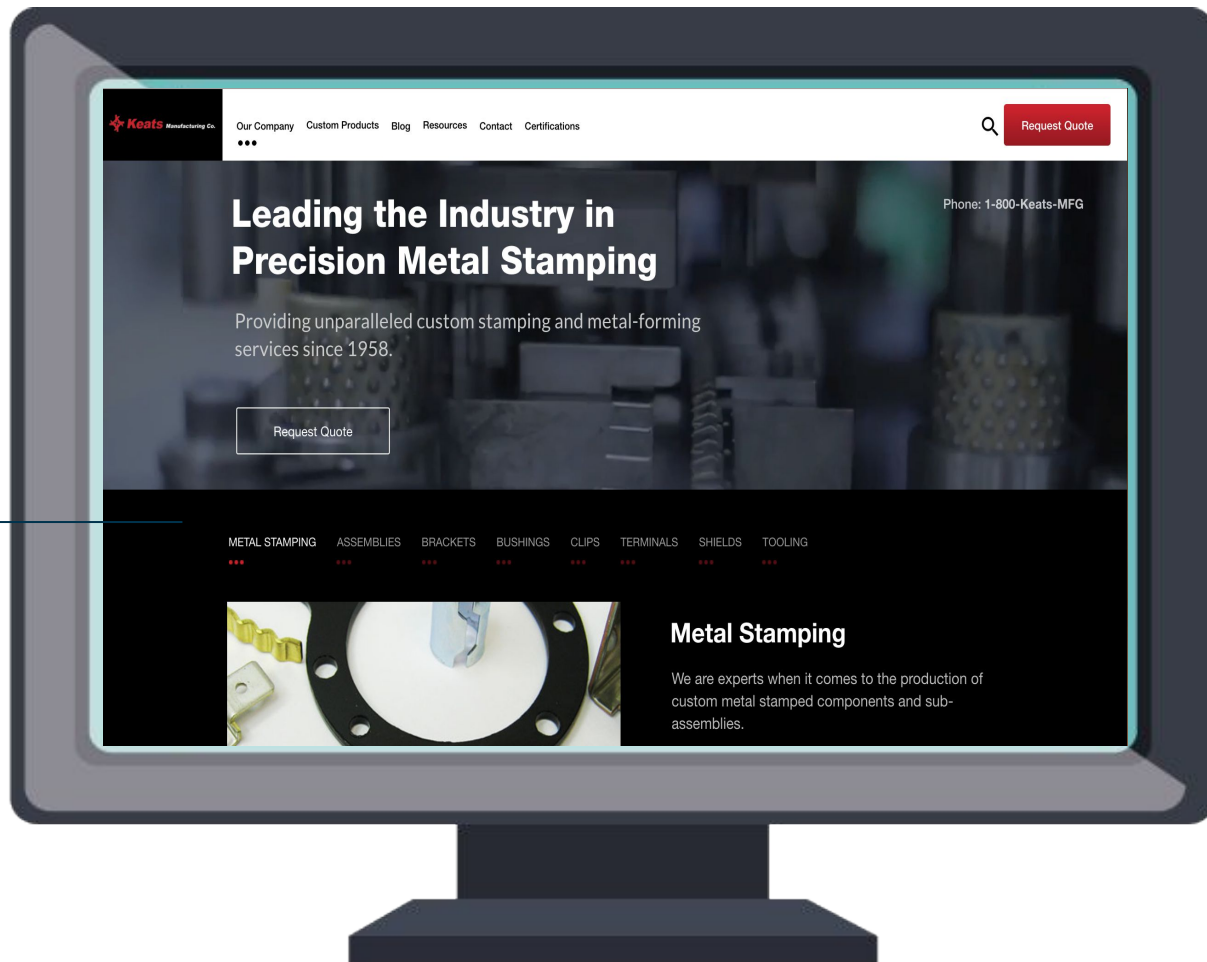
This shift has increasingly made it a requirement for companies to develop a robust digital presence if they intend to be viewed as a professional and reliable operation. One-page websites with limited information and a limited way for customers to engage with your brand have seriously hindered companies' abilities to attract new prospects and retain their existing customers.



If you have website that still looks like this, you're overdue for an upgrade.



Check out Keats' new website now — built for lead generation.



How To Build A Website With A Strong Digital Presence

As an industrial company or distributor in the space, you should approach your [manufacturing website design](#) with **three major purposes**:

- Attract in-market prospects who are searching for your product and services
- Clearly explain your expertise and value proposition to differentiate your business
- Convince visitors to reach out with questions or requests for quote

Companies that build websites with these goals in mind will have a website that acts like a salesperson guiding customers through the ins and outs of doing business together while effectively highlighting the areas that set you apart from your competition.



How To Build A Website With A Strong Digital Presence

When it comes to marketing, your website is the center of your universe. It's where all of your marketing channels should drive to — and it should be loaded with great content for your prospective buyers. After all, that's how you're going to start raking in quality leads.

But before we get to building (or redesigning) your website, you'll need to do a basic audit to make sure your site is up to to par and meets today's consumers' expectations. An audit of your current pages and how each one is performing will help you plan out what to improve or remove altogether.

For example, if you remove a page with a higher number of inbound links, you could lose a lot of SEO credit and traffic, which could decrease keyword rankings. Keep in mind that many web designers don't consider this step because they are not marketers.

How Do I Know How Well My Website Is Performing?

Website analytics tools are essential for seeing how well your website is performing and where the opportunities for improvement exist. There are different analytics tools available for different needs, but for now, we will focus on the two critical tools for manufacturers and distributors — Google Analytics and Thomas WebTrax.

Google Analytics is the most popular website analytics tool in the market. This tool lets business leaders and marketers review key metrics like the number of visits, the pages that get the most traffic, and the pages that are causing visitors to leave. Reviewing these metrics allows users to create a complete picture of the site's current usage, develop benchmarks, and strategize ways to improve overall performance.

When managing a website, it is important to have real-time information about performance at your fingertips so that you don't miss any issues or opportunities.

Benchmark Your Current Metrics

Analyze your existing site over its history, including:

- ✓ Number of visits/visitors/unique visitors
- ✓ Bounce rate
- ✓ Time on site
- ✓ Current SEO rankings for important keywords
- ✓ Domain authority
- ✓ Number of new leads/form submissions
- ✓ Total amount of sales generated from your website



If you don't have access to this information, we recommend working with tools like Hubspot, Google Analytics, and Thomas WebTrax for better tracking and visibility into site performance.



Thomas Tip: Use Thomas WebTrax and Google Analytics Together

- ✓ **Thomas WebTrax** is a lead generation tool that highlights firmographic and demographic data on your anonymous users, as opposed to just website metrics — so using Thomas WebTrax and Google Analytics together will optimize your website *and* continually replenish your sales pipeline with leads.
- ✓ It goes beyond the analytics, by tracking the buyer throughout the journey from the Thomas Network to your website to when they pick up the phone to call you. Learn more about [Thomas WebTrax here](#).



What Your Website Should Have



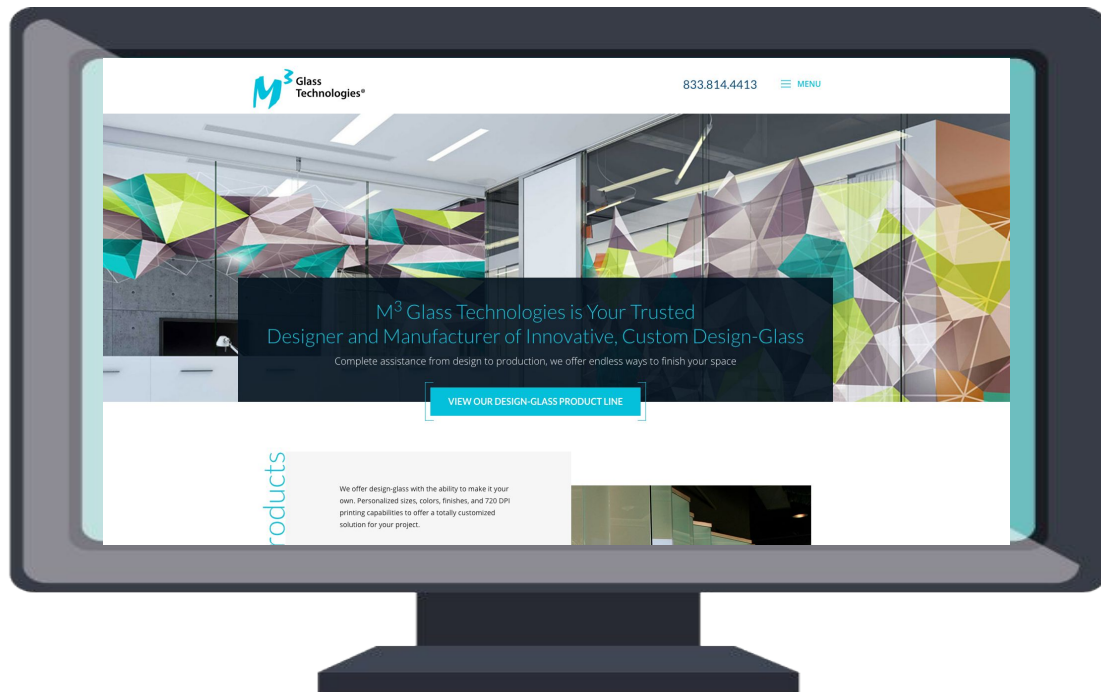
The best websites are the ones built with a clear purpose in mind. Here are a few critical basic web design features you should have:

- **A clean look:** Keep it simple and embrace white space. Too many colors, visuals, and other bells and whistles will make it hard for customers to find the information they're searching for — or, worse, your contact info.
- **Mobile responsive design:** Cell phones and tablets have officially overtaken desktop computers. Creating a mobile responsive design will ensure your site looks great on any screen size so that you're meeting your customers on their preferred device.
- **HTTPS encryption:** With massive data breaches becoming somewhat commonplace, your buyers will be more concerned with security and privacy than ever. Moving your site from HTTP to HTTPS will safeguard their information — and keep you from getting dinged in Google search rankings.

Design Example: M3 Glass Technologies

[M3 Glass Technologies](#) is a global leader in producing and shipping custom fabricated glass products. This family-owned company is now on its third generation of owners and has evolved each decade since the 1950s up-to-the digital age of today.

Starting from the top of the site, you'll notice that M3 Glass Technologies doesn't use a traditional navigation menu. Instead, they use a hamburger menu that we frequently see on mobile versions of sites.



However, it works great even on desktop, and it adds to the simple design while allowing for more white space. There are a few key features to note on the M3 homepage, starting with the CTA that is placed above the fold.

What Your Website Should Have

A Homepage That Tells A Story

Your homepage should immediately tell a user what your company does and what they can expect before they begin exploring your site. It should include navigation features that surface the most important pages as well as calls-to-actions that encourage a user to take the next step.

The homepage is usually the first page a user sees when they go online to research you, and if they don't have a good experience, they will likely move on to a competitor. Similar to current associations, buyers want to know what industry quality certifications you have earned. Beyond just seeing a list of ISO numbers and others on your website, can buyers view your actual certificates online? If a customer came into your office or shop, they'd probably want to see some certifications hanging on the walls, right? Your website should be no different.

An About Page That Sets You Apart

Think about the information that may be important to a potential customer. How long have you been in business? What kinds of certifications and accreditations do you have? What customers and industries do you have strong experience in?



What Your Website Should Have



A Contact Page Designed To Convert Visitors To Leads

Nearly every page on your website should remind visitors that they can reach out to you immediately using a contact page. This page should include where you are located and how you can be reached at a minimum.

For companies that are serious about generating new business with their website, the contact page should also include a form that allows a visitor to enter all of the necessary information you might need for one of your salespeople or technical engineers to reach out. Capturing this information on the site will allow you to segment your contact list and leverage marketing automation to send your customers the most relevant info based on different interests and needs. We'll get into more details about turning your traffic into leads later.

For more website design examples for manufacturers and industrial companies, [click here](#).

What Your Website Should Have

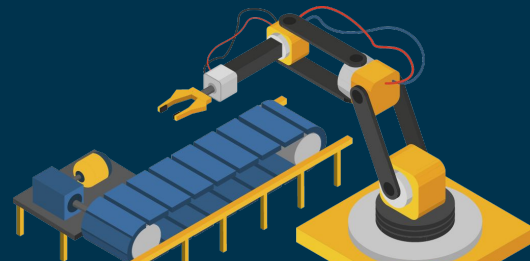


Services And Products Pages Your Buyers Want

As a general rule, your website should include a page for each service or product you would want someone searching Thomasnet.com to find you for. For example, if you are a metal stamper, you should have a specific page that discusses your capabilities in metal stamping, your machine list, common components you create, and any recommendations from customers you've performed these services for. If you distribute bearings from a range of different suppliers, you should have a page for each common bearing type that discusses their uses, specs, and a list of the brands you represent.

If you are interested in learning how Thomas can help you create a site designed to attract new industrial buyers, [click here](#) to learn more.

If You're An OEM, Add Product Data



Today's B2B buyers are independent. They don't need to be handheld throughout the entire process — they want to discover, research, and spec products on their own before committing to a project.

That's why it's crucial to present them with easy-to-find, up-to-date product information — or risk getting crossed off their list. Procurement professionals and engineers fully expect original equipment manufacturers and distributors to display their [products in an online catalog](#) that allows them to search, compare and contrast, and configure products for their applications.

Building out a robust and optimized e-commerce experience can feel like a daunting task. That's where we can help. Thomas Connect is our powerful proprietary product information syndication service that delivers current, accurate product data to your distributors, your website, and your Thomasnet profile — helping you compete and win against top legacy players.

Learn how [Thomas Connect](#) delivers an omni-channel experience and helps get your specified.

Your catalog should include product specs, 3D files when applicable, configuration functionality, and whitepapers for download.

Oriental Motor's [product catalog](#) lists all the product details engineers are looking for.

The screenshot shows the Oriental Motor website's product page for the AZM14AK stepper motor. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links like 'About Oriental Motor', 'Sales Network', and 'Global Support'. Below this is the Oriental Motor logo and a secondary navigation menu with categories such as 'Products', 'Motor Sizing', 'Downloads', 'Applications', 'Technology', 'Engineering', and 'Contact Us'. A search bar is positioned on the left, and a phone number '1-800-GO-VEXTA (468-3982)' is on the right. A horizontal menu lists various motor types, and a banner advertises 'FREE SHIPPING FOR ONLINE ORDERS'. The breadcrumb trail indicates the path from 'All Categories' to the specific product. The product title is 'Item # AZM14AK, 0.79 in. (20mm) Stepper Motor with Absolute Mechanical Encoder'. A 'Request Information' button is present. The product description highlights the 'Absolute Mechanical Encoder' and notes that it requires an AlphaStep AZ Series Driver. A CE mark and a note about connection cables are also visible. On the right, a pricing box shows a quantity of 1, a web price of \$283.00, and buttons for 'Add To Cart' and 'Request Quote'.

About Oriental Motor | Sales Network | Global Support

Orientalmotor

Products | Motor Sizing | Downloads | Applications | Technology | Engineering | Contact Us

Search by Item Number Exact Match 1-800-GO-VEXTA (468-3982)

Stepper Motors | Servo Motors | AC Motors & Gear Motors | Brushless DC Motors | Linear Actuators | Rotary Actuators | Network Products | Cooling Fans

FREE SHIPPING FOR ONLINE ORDERS. Terms and conditions apply.

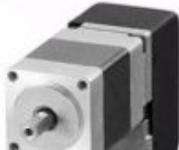
Express Ordering | Quote Requests (0) | Shopping Cart (0) | Sign In

All Categories - Shop Online > Stepper Motors > Stepper Motor Only > Closed Loop Stepper Motors > AZ Series Stepper Motors with Mechanical Absolute Encoder > 0.79 in. (20 mm) AZ Series Stepper Motors with Absolute Encoders > DC Input AZ Series 0.79 in. (20 mm) NEMA 8 Stepper Motors with Absolute Encoders > Item # AZM14AK

Item # AZM14AK, 0.79 in. (20mm) Stepper Motor with Absolute Mechanical Encoder

[Request Information](#)


Printable Page | Download PDF | Email This Page



The AlphaStep AZ Series stepper motor offers closed loop control, substantially reduces heat generation from the motor and by incorporating the newly developed Absolute Mechanical Encoder, absolute-type positioning is available, without battery back up or external sensors to buy.


- Requires AlphaStep AZ Series Driver


*Connection Cables required (sold separately)



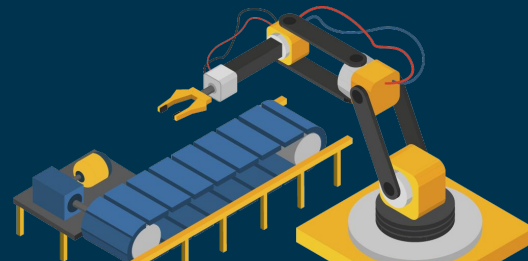
Web Price

Qty: 1 **\$283.00**

 [Add To Cart](#)

 [Request Quote](#)

If You're An OEM, Add Product Data



To bring your product data and your website together:

- **Centralize your data:** Consolidate all the spreadsheets, CAD drawings, and loose papers you have lying about into one dynamic online catalog, using a platform like [this one](#). Implement a product data syndication system to make your product information available for easy distribution across all sales channels in real-time.
- **Enrich your data:** Once you have all the information in one place, make sure your products are filled out with as much detail as possible.
- **Optimize your website:** Your site should not only look good, but also be intuitive and easy to navigate so customers have no problem finding and buying your products.

The [Thomas TraceParts Network](#) allows users to distribute CAD files across Thomasnet.com, TraceParts and 44 more marketplaces to put your enhanced CAD assets in front of over 27 million in-market buyers and engineers.

Where Else Should I List My Business To Exist Online?



By implementing the previous tips, you will expect to see an increase in the number of visitors finding your website on search engines like Google and Bing.



But this isn't the only way to help new customers find your business online. Another great step you can take to reach your prospective customers is to establish a web presence in the places they're searching for new suppliers — specifically, Thomasnet.com. In fact, Thomas only allows groups from the manufacturing sector to list their businesses, so it has become the most concentrated audience of engineers, MROs, and procurement professionals on the web.



You can submit a free request to the Supplier Content Team at Thomas in under one minute to create a profile [here](#).

Drive Qualified Buyers And Engineers To Your Website

Now that you have a [website built to educate and drive leads](#), it's time to find ways to best drive qualified, relevant buyers that will be more likely to engage with your content and, more importantly, engage with your sales team.

By taking a strategic approach to what your site says and how it says it, you can make efforts to force Google to rank you ahead of your competition for keywords that relate most closely to your business offering. Higher ranking leads to increased traffic of users who are in-market, researching and evaluating potential suppliers to your site. Many companies use a combination of content marketing, SEO, and paid advertising to maximize your website efforts

Drive Qualified Buyers And Engineers To Your Website

The work doesn't stop after you've created your first piece of content. Instead, promote your content across channels as much as possible to drive more buyers to your website. Here are some of the most popular ways to promote content:

- ✓ **Email marketing:** Email is the single most important channel for industrial marketers in terms of ROI — but you can't just start firing off messages. Your email strategy should be measured and targeted. We'll dive more into how automated email campaigns can turn your traffic into leads later in this guide.
- ✓ **Social media:** Publishing content on platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram not only lets you share it with your followers, but also allows them to share with *their* followers through the network effect.
- ✓ **SEO:** Search engine optimization, or SEO, is adhering to best practices set out by Google and Bing to appear towards the top of search results, thereby earning your website more organic traffic. There are many easy steps you can take to start optimizing your content to rank in search. For example, for every page, pick one to two keywords that the page will focus on. Once you determine the keyword(s), use on-page SEO tactics, such as internal link building and optimizing your header tags (H1, H2, H3, etc.). We'll discuss more SEO best practices in a bit.

Drive Qualified Buyers And Engineers To Your Website

- ✓ **PPC:** Pay-per-click or PPC advertising is a different form of search optimization that allows you to show ads in keyword search results to earn paid traffic to your site.
- ✓ **Video:** Buyers consume millions of hours of video every day, and this type of content is proven to increase engagement, clicks, and organic reach. Try including it in email, blogs, or social posts —and your [Thomasnet.com](https://www.thomasnet.com) [company profile](#) too. Manufacturers have been using videos to tour their factories and they've proven to sell more products and services.

Most importantly, when promoting content, don't think of each channel as acting independently. Think of them all working together as an ecosystem — with the ultimate goal of driving as many qualified people as possible to your website.

For additional resources on these topics, check out the below links:

- [Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a Winning Email Campaign](#)
- [The Complete Guide to Social Media Marketing](#)
- [SEO vs PPC: What's The Difference?](#)
- [Video Marketing For Manufacturers \(With Examples\)](#)

Paid Advertising Options For Manufacturers

It can be helpful to build a paid advertising strategy that targets the keywords that are most important to your business. With proper paid advertising steps, a little extra money can go a long way. Use keywords that include your highest margin products or services, those you are looking to grow your business around, and are critical to keeping your business going.

Native Advertising And Promoted Content

This type of media looks like another informative article or video on a publication but is actually paid for by a third party. The reason for native advertising success: the content is compelling and relevant to the publication's audience. Native advertisements don't disrupt the consumer's experience — they blend in with their surrounding content and contain helpful, informative, or interesting information.

To launch a native ad or promoted content campaign, find a publication that fits your industry of focus, as well as your targeted persona. Many manufacturers have found success is an email newsletter like Thomas Industry Update (TIU) that gets read by more than 300,000 engineers and procurement professionals.

Take a look at examples of [promoted content in TIU](#) and see which ones help meet your goals.

Display Ads On Google

Display ads and search ads on Google can be targeted to reach as broad or as niche of an audience as the manufacturer wishes. But the main difference between display and search ads is intent. The display ad network creates demand while search ads answer to the demand — both aim to drive traffic to your website.

That's why it's important to understand who your target market is, which platforms they do their jobs, and what information they're seeking. This is called persona targeting and will help you place the right ads at the right time with the right content your prospective customers are looking for.

Curious to see who's searching for your products and services right now?

[Click here to request a free In-Market Buyer Report.](#)

Display Ads On Thomasnet.com



A display advertisement on Thomasnet.com that points visitors to a company's new metal stamping services page is likely to get an increase of high-quality traffic faster than a new services page with no advertising campaign to support it.

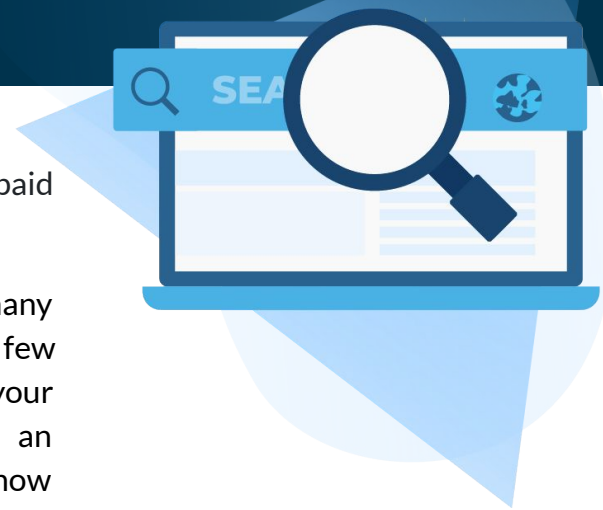
That's because a [display ad on Thomasnet.com](#) is put in front of buyers, suppliers, and procurement managers who are actively searching for manufacturing products and services.

Getting Started With PPC

There's a lot of valuable traffic and new customers you can gain from paid campaigns, but it's not an easy or cheap process.

Using [Google's quick setup guide](#) can help set up your first campaign, but many manufacturers are new to the online advertising world and there are a few additional tips we wanted to share with you so you don't burn through your budget. Remember, before you start any campaigns, you should have an [optimized website](#) with clear goals of what you'd like to accomplish, and know exactly who you are trying to reach.

After creating your Google Ads account and set up the basic settings, we recommend the following tips for effective campaigns.



Getting Started With PPC



- ✓ Segment your campaigns, ad groups, and keywords to target different factors like keyword variations, device type, time of day, locations, and even budgets. Make sure you are also breaking up your keywords into very specific ad groups based on modifying elements in your keywords like material, process, equipment, capacity, etc. This will provide a lot of ease and clarity in reporting in the future.
- ✓ Match your ad copy to the landing page copy so your messaging is clear.
- ✓ Use highly relevant keywords where the intent of the searcher is a lot clearer and more relevant to the products you sell. Include as many long tail keywords as you reasonably can with as many modifiers as you can conjure. That does not mean you should be including lots of short, general keywords that are only somewhat related to your business, products and services. It means you should come up with as many keywords as possible that are extremely specific and targeted toward your business.
- ✓ Choose where you want to advertise — country, state, region, zip code, etc. If you only have a limited budget, try targeting a broader audience first.

Getting Started With PPC



- ✓ Choose when you want to advertise. Online advertising success strives for the right content at the right time. Most sourcing is done during the weekdays, so schedule your ads accordingly.
- ✓ Add negative keywords to prevent your ads from showing up in unwanted queries and eating up your budget.
- ✓ Utilize ad extensions to promote locations, phone numbers, and various landing pages to drive traffic further.
- ✓ Optimize based on performance. Don't set your campaigns and forget them! Track them often to see how many page visits you're getting and the engagement that's happening on your website page. If you're not getting the results you expect, change your content or filters accordingly.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to test. There are a lot of factors that can change your ad results and your website traffic.

For more PPC tips, check out [12 Tips To Begin PPC On The Right Foot](#)

Traffic Sources And Backlink Opportunities

If you head over to Google and type in some keywords related to your business, you may find some of your competitors ranking above you in this search engine. How are they doing this? There are many ways companies boost their rankings. Having high quality, long-form content is one way (a regularly updated blog). And link-building is another. The two often go hand in hand since Google favors websites that are considered authorities in their industries and have high-quality links going back to their web pages.

Once you know which companies are ranking highly for the search terms you'd like to target, you're on track to start your own out-ranking strategy. Explore other backlink opportunities using digital marketing tools. Keep a record of the URLs for each competitor you find in your search, and then head over to Ahrefs.com ([a must-have digital marketing tool](#)) to analyze backlinks.

A [listing on Thomasnet.com](#) helps increase traffic to your website too. More than a million buyers, engineers, and procurement managers search for suppliers on Thomasnet.com, which means there's a high amount of traffic on there — a company listing backlink with your website on a high-traffic platform like Thomasnet.com will add value to your website.

SEO Basics For Manufacturers

SEO stands for search engine optimization. It's the process of optimizing your website to achieve maximum visibility in search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.)

Optimizing your website for search engines can be difficult, especially with all the changing algorithms that search engines use to rank web pages ("algorithms" are the formulas used by search engines to determine the search results). Since the industry is constantly changing, it's more and more important to keep your website's content fresh and neatly optimized.

SEO isn't about "quick fixes" or "tricks" to get a handful of your pages to rank. Good SEO is about fundamental, sustainable and proven best practices, implemented and refined over time.



SEO Basics For Manufacturers

SEO and reporting tools like [SEMrush](#) and [Ahrefs](#) offer free versions, but consider the paid version to unlock more key data and solutions. If you'd like to understand the “why” behind your traffic drops, consider seeking advice from an [SEO expert](#).

Keyword research helps you identify keywords that appeal to a target audience and expand the reach of your content. Using keyword research tools, enables you to determine what kinds of content users are looking for on any given topic. Always make sure to prioritize time for keyword research. When selecting keywords, you should also keep the purpose of your website in mind. Opt for transactional keywords if the main intention is sales, or informational keywords if your website aims to provide readers with valuable information.

SEO Basics For Manufacturers

We recommend conducting an SEO report to shed light on how organic traffic increases over a certain period of time and how much your traffic has grown through your efforts. An SEO report will also show important stats like:

- Sessions
- Page views
- Number of users
- Engagement rates

Here's a summary of industry benchmark key performance indicators (KPIs):

KPI	Benchmark
Bounce rate	30% to 60%
Pages per session	2
Average session duration	2-3 minutes
Click through rate (CTR)	1.5% to 2%

For more technical SEO tips, check out [How To Increase Your SEO Traffic in 30 Days](#)

Social Media Posts Increase Traffic To Your Website



Facebook

Your network is based on how many users like your company page and share or like your content.



LinkedIn

Professional contacts can follow your company page and updates, like, and share your content, and you can create, join, and participate in groups.



Twitter

You have followers, and follow other accounts. Your content ("tweets") can be favorited and retweeted.



YouTube

Users can subscribe to your page. Views (the number of times someone pressed play to watch your video) also contribute to your social community's success.



Instagram

Like Twitter, you have followers and you are able to follow other accounts. Your posts are mainly visual (photos, images, 1-minute videos, etc.) and can be liked and shared with others.

How To Convert Anonymous Traffic Into Leads

After you've worked to build your online presence, increase your brand, and drive traffic to your website, the next step to growing your manufacturing business is converting that traffic into leads. You'll notice there are different groups of leads that may come through.

There's a [difference](#) between marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) and sales-qualified leads (SQLs) and you need more of the former to get more of the latter. Let's break down the basic steps. MQLs are potential prospects who may become customers down the line — but they haven't yet shown any signs of initiating a purchase.

According to studies,

only 5% to 15% of leads are sales-ready at the outset



while 60% of those who browse your product pages and read blogs will be marketing-qualified leads



The rest will be idlers who never do business with you.

For MQLs to transition to SQLs, they must get the right messages and offers at the right time. Your online communications must speak directly to their needs, challenges, and goals.

Determine What Makes An MQL An SQL

Go through your existing funnel and, with the help of tools like [Google Analytics](#), dive deep into data to identify actions that leads take when the emotional and practical needle moves in your favor and a purchase is in the cards.

- What content do MQLs consume before turning into SQLs?
- How does their browsing pattern change when on your site?
- Do they take any special social actions, like sharing your posts?
- Do they fill out forms or request product demos?

Once you have a list of potential tipping points, document them, sort them by impact, assign points, and create lead-scoring rules within your marketing automation solution or your customer relationship management (CRM) tool.

This will allow SQLs to be quantified. You no longer have to rely on the intuition of your sales reps and your marketers. Plus, with the ambiguity gone, sales won't complain about receiving unqualified leads. And marketing is less likely to complain about poor close rates since the team knows precisely how many MQLs have converted to SQLs.

Offer Content On Your Website That's Easy To Find

Manufacturers should find a balance with the right mix of assets and educational information. In today's fast-paced world, an industrial buyer is more likely to submit an RFQ to those suppliers who answer the greatest number of questions upfront and provide the greatest amount of relevant information. To convert website traffic to leads, you'll need to make content available to them.

All the information on your website should be logically organized and easy to find. If you have a complete product catalog on your site (and you should, if you have standard products), it should be easily accessible from the homepage. Even something as simple as a [product e-catalog can generate 30% more conversions](#). The minute a buyer is unable to find something, you risk losing that potential sale.

According to a Thomas survey,

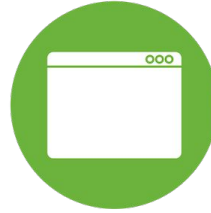
76% of industrial buyers list difficult navigation as the most important reason for leaving a website without considering buying.



Similarly, 61% prefer suppliers with search capabilities on their websites.

Content Marketing

Your Website



Thomas Network



Email Marketing



Social Media



Content is the backbone of all your inbound marketing efforts. It's how you're going to attract visitors to your business and convert them into leads, by educating buyers across numerous channels to engage with them on their terms.

Types Of Content Marketing

Content itself is the execution and demonstration of your expertise and value. It comes in many forms:



Microposts (Twitter, LinkedIn, “What’s New” on your own site)

These are short but insightful commentaries or ‘newsy’ pieces of content. They are original thoughts and/or opinions on topics relevant to you and your industry. For example, a custom manufacturer might share a new trend in DIY metal stamping, or discuss innovations in an end market (such as aerospace, automotive, or high-end appliances).



Articles (your blog, guest posts, journal articles)

The best way to get more in-depth about your knowledge, while keeping a digestible format. If you manufacture heat reclamation systems or components, you might write about their role in new energy management programs. “Evergreen” content like “Top 5 Uses of Waterjet Cutting” establishes thought leadership and remains relevant for months, even years.



Customer testimonials

Buyers want to trust the suppliers they deal with. Success stories from previous clients can build that peace of mind while providing insight into your capabilities. These can be full case studies, videos, or short quotes.

Types Of Content Marketing



News releases

Expanding your plant? Installing new equipment? Contributing to a charity or other community benefit event? These make prime content for news releases. This information reaches buyers through syndication outlets like ThomasNet News, and may also be picked up by trade journals and content aggregators.



CAD assets

CAD and BIM files are critical lead generation pieces for manufacturers of standard components and convert leads 2x more sales opportunities because Up to 88% of businesses ultimately buy a part after downloading a CAD file. To learn to get your CAD files in front of 27 million design engineers today, [click here to learn about the Thomas TraceParts Network.](#)



Videos

Virtual plant tours, product demonstrations, and technical tips make great video topics. You can also do Q&As with CEOs and owners about pressing issues like the skills gap or the re-shoring of American manufacturing. Many manufacturers are using videos to showcase their factory to prospective customers because of travel restrictions — and frankly, these videos have helped them close sales. [Click here to learn about our free video production solution.](#)

Creating Landing Pages And Forms For Your Content

There's a catch to [creating valuable content](#) on your website — you also want to learn more about who's visiting your site, right? That's where creating gated offers come in. An offer is a downloadable piece of content that users can access after submitting a form on your site. You control how much information they'll need to enter, so you can quickly gather their names, job titles, email addresses, companies, and more. In exchange, they'll get whichever piece of content they're interested in.

If you had this content available to everyone on your homepage, you would have no idea who was visiting or what they were interested in. By “gating” this information as an offer, you'll have valuable insight to use in nurturing campaigns that move individuals through the [buying cycle](#).

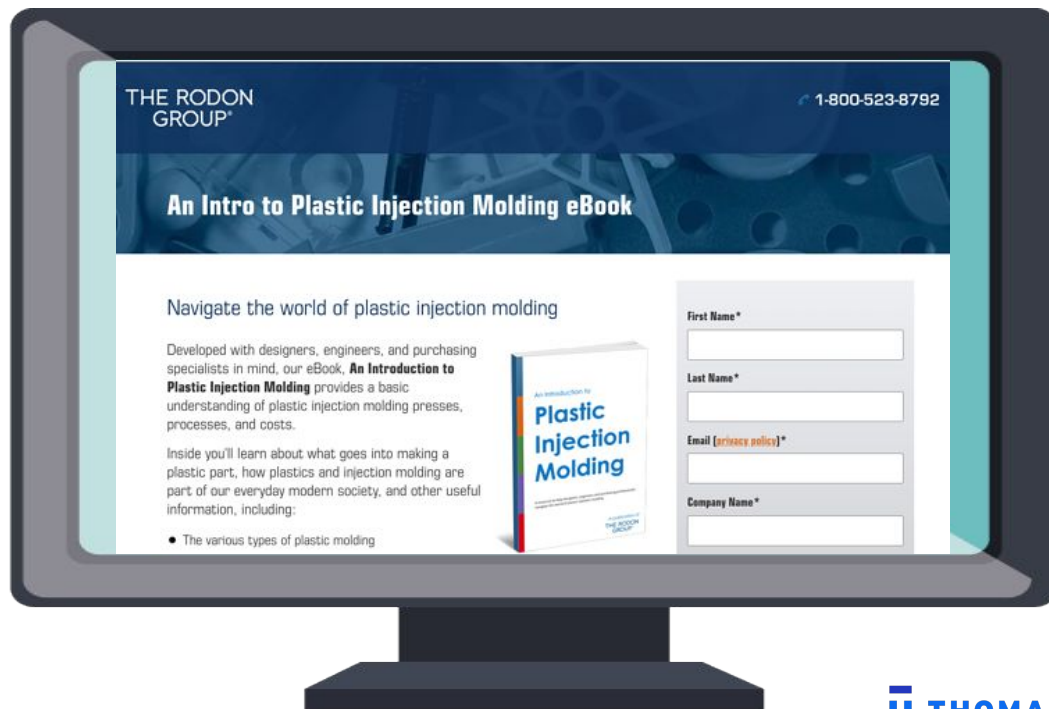
The content that you display to site visitors should be different depending on where they are in the marketing funnel.

Designing Your Landing Page

In addition to creating a compelling content offer, design your landing page with your target persona(s) in mind. They are key to capturing leads — and quality ones.

Hands-on tips:

1. Remove the main navigation. You don't want people to be tempted to click away from your landing page. Note how The Rodon Group only has their company name in their landing page navigation.
2. Keep it simple with the layout and include at least once supporting image. Again, you don't want to distract them.
3. Include benefits of the offer with short paragraphs and bullet points.



Upgrade Your Email Campaigns

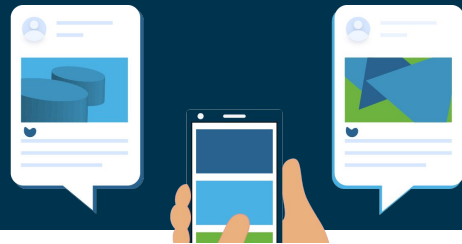
By now, you've learned that strong content your buyers are looking for will keep them engaged online and convert them to leads. The next step to converting those leads is by reaching out to them with emails, which serve as another personalized platform to share the content you've already created.

Give yourself the best possible odds of having your message read in the first place. Good subject lines are unique, specific, and urgent while implying that there is value inside the email. When writing your email, keep in mind the two main barometers of email marketing success— open rates and click-through rates. You want to write a subject line and copy that moves the needle on these metrics in the right direction.

You are competing with hundreds — if not thousands — of other senders for the attention of your readers. Just getting them to open your emails is a challenge.

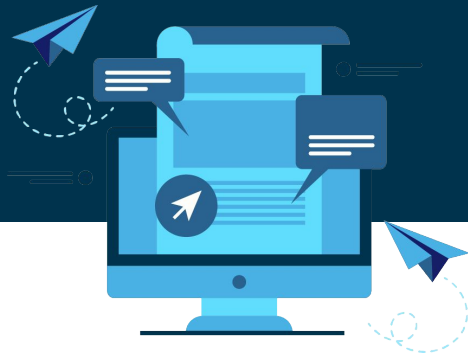


Increasing Your Open Rates



- ✓ **Use numbers:** Readers love numbers, so try something like “The Top 5 Reasons Why ...” or “7 Ways To Improve Your ...”
- ✓ **Personalize your message:** Including your contacts name or location could help spark a connection. If you segment your contact lists, you may want to create different content offers for different segments, or tweak the copy to align with the different people in your audience better.
- ✓ **Create a sense of urgency:** Play on the fear of missing out. Emails with subject lines that include the word “tomorrow” are opened 10 percent more frequently than those without; and adding the word “alert” to a subject line was found to increase open rates 61.8 percent.
- ✓ **Keep it short:** Your recipient doesn’t have a lot of time or patience, so keeping your subject line short and to-the-point is imperative. Keep in mind that about half of your email audience will be opening your message on a mobile device, which means that only about 7 words will be displayed.
- ✓ **Send from a human:** Instead of sending from an anonymous email address, like “sales@yourcompany.com” or “info@yourcompany.com,” send from an actual person, i.e., “jeff@yourcompany.com.”

Increasing Click-Through Rates



Getting the reader to open your email is just the first step; enticing them to click on something and visit your site is the main objective.



Make them scannable: Very few people read every word in an email. People look for cues — headlines, subject lines, bullets — to focus on what's important and to decide whether or not to take action. Avoid big blocks of text. If you have images in your email, make sure they are clickable and bring readers to your landing page.



Focus on one offer at a time: The more you promote, the more diluted your message becomes, and the more confused you make your readers. Should they download the eBook or contact you for more information? Keep it simple and offer one thing at a time.



Add alt text to all images: Many email clients block images by default. Adding alt text prevents your images from showing up as random, garbled gobbledygook that looks like “imager34234123213de.jpg.”

Align Your Sales And Marketing Teams

As you break down your current nurturing process, you may uncover gaps between your marketing and sales teams. The digital transformation of sales and marketing has been a challenge in the manufacturing industry — we discuss more on those [manufacturing challenges here](#).

Ensure sales reps and marketers are on the same page through weekly meetings; allowing for a shared celebration of wins; and implementing cross-training, in which marketing discusses buyer personas and sales talks about the actual bottlenecks reps face when closing a lead. This paves the way for the creation of content that both parties find valuable and can share unreservedly across all platforms to help convert traffic to warm leads.

What's clear is that buying habits will continue to shift, and if manufacturers and industrial companies want to stay top-of-mind in new generation workforces, they need to adopt new digital strategies and keep their teams aligned.

The Next Step To Building Your Market Presence

By now you've learned you need a mix of content marketing, SEO, and advertising campaigns to help improve your website. More specifically,

- ✓ Build a strong digital presence
- ✓ Drive traffic to your website
- ✓ Convert traffic to leads and reach out to your contacts

The next important pieces of growing your business' market presence involve marketing automation and website testing.



The Basics Of A/B Testing

You have a lot of big goals — boosting traffic, enhancing awareness, generating leads, and producing revenue, to name a few. How can you make sure that you accomplish everything? By running a bunch of small tests.

A/B testing, also called multivariate testing, iterative testing, or split testing, is a process of creating two versions of digital marketing assets — emails, web pages, ads, etc. — to identify which version performs better. Using that knowledge, you can optimize your efforts and drive continuous improvement.

There are endless types and amounts of tests you can conduct. What's going to separate your website from the next one that your buyers visit? A lot of it is in how your website looks, functions, and managed. Instead of taking a traditional approach to website design and development — where you build it once and let it sit for awhile — you need to think of your website like you would a machine on your shop floor. It needs to be constantly fine-tuned, calibrated, and optimized for peak performance.

That's the essence of A/B testing and data analytics — to continuously optimize a website's performance. If your website isn't getting better every day and giving you increased conversions, it's not aging gracefully. Let's go through some website components you can test.

A/B Testing Best Practices

If you're new to A/B testing, there are some best practices that you should keep in mind:



Only test one thing at a time.

If you test multiple elements, you won't be able to determine which one had a positive impact.



Test frequently.

Become a serial tester to improve your results continuously.

You need the right tools.

To properly execute, measure, and analyze A/B tests, you need the right set of tools. While that set will vary depending upon the channels you are testing, there are some core tools that you will need in your toolkit:

- An email client with reporting capabilities (like HubSpot)
- Google Analytics to measure on-page results



Gather enough data.

You need to let your tests run long enough to collect the information necessary to make an informed decision. It may take some time, and that's okay.



Sometimes, the results will be inconclusive.

Don't be discouraged; just test again.

Website Design A/B Test Examples



By now you've learned that your website is the digital lifeblood of your business. Make sure it is as healthy as possible with routine A/B checkups.

- ✓ **Navigation:** Try swapping the order of your menu options or eliminating sections altogether. Test drop-down versus drop-line functionality, or move some items into a utility nav to clear away clutter.
- ✓ **Fonts & Typography:** You may think that Comic Sans looks awesome, but your prospects probably don't. Try testing different fonts, sizes, and colors.
- ✓ **CTAs:** When a visitor lands on a website page, make it abundantly clear what they can do next by driving them to landing pages via CTAs. Just like on your emails, test text-based CTAs versus buttons, or try putting the CTAs in different places on the page (after the headline, at the end of the body copy, etc.).
- ✓ **Form Length:** If you are asking for too much information, you may be scaring away potential customers. Keep experimenting to find the optimal number of form fields for your site.
- ✓ **Form Location:** Where your form is located on the page can have as much of an impact as what you are asking within the form itself. Try putting the form at the top of the page (above the fold), on the left, the right, etc.

More A/B Test Examples



- ✓ **Long Copy vs. Short Copy:** There are different schools of thought when it comes to the ideal length of a landing page. Some marketers argue that landing pages should be short and to the point, while quite a few studies have shown that longer landing pages actually rank and convert better. See for yourself which one works best for you.
- ✓ **Image vs. No Image:** Sometimes, less is more when it comes to a landing page. See if removing the image from the landing page improves your results.
- ✓ **Videos:** Videos are amongst the most powerful, persuasive marketing tools. 89% of consumers who watch a video about a product purchase it over those who don't watch a product video. Try adding one to your landing page.

Based on the results of your tests, begin incorporating what you learned across your campaigns.

For example, if a yellow button CTA received higher clicks than a red button CTA on your landing page, you should consider using the yellow CTA throughout your website.

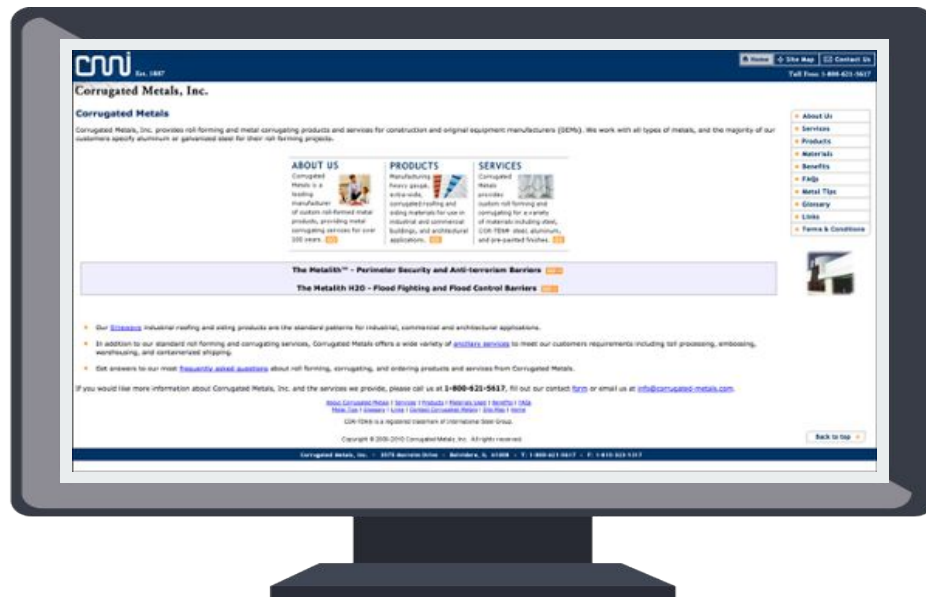
Corrugated Metals And Thomas

Let's walk through a case study of how roll-forming manufacturers saw an increase of 321% in quote value to quality customers.

Corrugated Metals, Inc. is a roll forming manufacturer serving the Construction, Original Equipment and Defense Industries since 1887. Corrugated Metals provides both stock shapes and custom roll formed profiles in a variety of material thicknesses and pre-painted finishes.

Corrugated Metals was in search of a business partner to help increase the quality of leads and strengthen their relationship in specific industries.

The first step was to improve their online presence.





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Est. 1887

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Industries

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METAL PRODUCTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT, MANUFACTURING, & DEFENSE INDUSTRIES

Manufacturing heavy gauge, extra-wide, corrugated roofing and siding materials for use in industrial and commercial buildings, and architectural applications. Corrugated Metals provides custom roll forming and corrugating for a variety of materials including steel, weathering steel, aluminum, and pre-painted finishes.



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Thomas worked with Corrugated Metals to develop target personas and a content marketing plan to support their website redesign. In the example above, the simplicity is what makes Corrugated Metals' landing pages one of the best options for converting visitors to leads.

Results And ROI

Corrugated Metals' new website was developed to be responsive, meaning it was designed to be viewed optimally on all devices (like your cell phone and iPad). Coupled with the new website, their inbound marketing strategy facilitates their buyers throughout their buying journey — Corrugated Metals is at the top-of-mind through all the stages.

This customized strategy created a stronger user experience and helped drive:

- An increase of 321% in quote value to quality customers
- A million-dollar-per-year opportunity in a targeted industry



Close The Loop With Reporting

At the end of the day, the reason you're spending all this time, effort, and resources on marketing is to grow your business. So it's important to regularly check back and see if it's working.

Here are a few keys to remember about a metrics-driven marketing program:

- **An ROI measuring toolkit:** Similar to how you made quantifiable SMART goals, you'll want to select KPIs to measure ROI. Some common ones include cost per lead, cost per sale, cost of overall marketing program, overall length of customer relationship. You can also set baselines for channel performance with campaign-specific KPIs such as email open rate or social media impressions.
- **Google Analytics:** This is a free tool that helps you monitor your website's health by tracking site metrics such as unique pageviews, session duration, and bounce rates. With GA you can easily set up customized reports to monitor specific metrics of interest for your campaigns.
- **Thomas WebTrax:** All the website traffic in the world means nothing if your site visitors aren't qualified buyers. Thomas WebTrax is a lead generation tool that tracks exactly who is in-market for your services, how they're interacting with your online presence, and where they are in their buying journey. Learn more about how [Thomas WebTrax](#) provides actionable data to engage in-market buyers.

And Now You're Ready To Dive In!

We hope this eBook has provided you the framework to start increasing your visibility online and generating more high-quality leads. Planning, executing, and analyzing just one marketing campaign can take hours and lots of specialized expertise. For sustained success, you have to do it all year long.

If you need help getting more out of your website, content marketing, emails, or improving your marketing strategy overall, ask us about our [free digital health check](#). We'll let you know exactly where you can improve and how your company's online presence compares with competitors.

At Thomas Marketing Services, we provide strategic, tactical, and tailored marketing services driven by over 120 years of industry expertise. Our team includes engineers, manufacturing experts, and procurement/supply chain professionals. We understand your industry, your business, your customers, and what's important to you.

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