

B2B Website Usability:

Design Guidelines for Converting Business Users into Leads and Customers

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Executive Summary

Many business-to-business (B2B) sites are stuck in the 1990s in their attitude toward the user experience. Most B2B sites emphasize internally focused design, fail to answer customers' main questions or concerns, and block prospects' paths as they search for companies to place on their shortlists. These sites haven't realized that the Web has reversed the company–customer relationship. Most online interactions are demand-driven: you either give people what they want or watch as they abandon your site for the competition's.

The result of poor design on B2B sites? In our user testing, B2B sites earned a mere 58% success rate (measured as the percentage of time users accomplished their tasks on a site). In contrast, mainstream websites have a substantially higher success rate of 66%.

Considering that there's immensely more money at stake for B2B than for business-to-consumer (B2C), it's astounding that B2B sites offer a much worse user experience.

USER RESEARCH

To discover the usability guidelines for good B2B design, we conducted several rounds of qualitative user research. We collected empirical evidence about the behavior, needs, and preferences of actual users from a broad spectrum of businesses. Our participants' job titles varied widely, from VPs, business owners, and engineers, to marketing directors, buyers, and administrative assistants.

We conducted most sessions in the U.S. (in California, Washington, and Arizona), and a smaller number of sessions in the U.K. to insure the international applicability of the findings.

We combined three different research methods to gain a deeper understanding of the complex issues in B2B usability:

- **Focus groups.** We moderated twelve focus groups. Our goal was two-fold: to understand the range of participants' research and purchasing processes, and to prioritize B2B site features that help facilitate those processes. Focus groups are a lousy method for evaluating actual websites or specific design ideas, so we didn't use them for this purpose.
- **User testing.** In this section, fifty-five business users tested live websites in one-on-one usability sessions. Individual users performed tasks related to their actual jobs on sites that targeted their circumstances. We asked users to verbalize their thinking and observed and recorded their behavior. Because this method looks at what people do, it's superior to focus groups for assessing the designs that *actually* work, versus the designs that people *think* will work.

- **Field studies.** We visited seven companies to observe users working in their natural environments. (Some people use the term “ethnography” to describe site visits, but you can do field observation without giving it a fancy name.)

In all, our study group included seventy-nine participants (thirty-nine males and forty females), with an even distribution of age groups. Most users were between 30 and 59 years of age, with a smaller number of users in their 20s or 60s. Participants were also evenly distributed in terms of the size of the companies they worked for, which ranged from small (1–35 employees) to large (more than 3,500 employees).

Study participants tested 179 B2B websites—far more than we typically test in our studies. In this case, however, the large number was necessary because of the B2B sector’s extreme diversity.

B2B VS. B2C

B2B site goals are substantially more complex than those on the typical B2C site. This is the one excuse B2B sites have for their bad usability. In reality, however, the more complex the scenario, the higher the need for supportive user interfaces. Thus, B2B sites ought to emphasize usability more, not less, because they must help users accomplish more advanced tasks and research more specialized products.

B2B purchases are often big-ticket items or service contracts. The sites’ products and services are often extremely specialized, with complex specifications. Finally, decisions made on B2B sites can have long-term implications: customers aren’t just making a one-time purchase, they’re often buying into a long-term vendor relationship that includes support, follow-up, and future enhancements and add-ons.

For all these reasons, research and multi-criteria decision-making dominate the B2B user experience. B2B sites must provide a much wider range of information than what’s common in B2C. A B2B site has to offer simple facts that are easily and quickly understood by an early prospect who’s just looking around to see what’s available. It must also offer in-depth white papers and information to help prospects understand concepts like total cost of ownership, ROI, and whether and how the product or service will integrate with the customer’s existing environment.

Another major difference is that B2C users are typically buying for themselves. They therefore use a one-person decision process: a single user provides the budget and approval, researches the options, makes the decision, completes the purchase, receives the shipment, and uses the product. In contrast, in B2B, each of these steps might involve different people and different departments.

A B2B site must address many different types of users with quite different needs. On the basis of our user research, we defined five personas to represent the main classes of B2B users:

- Sam the Small Business Saver
- Ashley the Office Admin
- Erin the Enterprise Employee
- Barbara the Boss

- Pat the Professional Purchaser

Again, this added complexity only strengthens the argument for B2B sites to emphasize usability in their design.

“ADD TO CART” VS. SUPPORTING THE FULL BUYING PROCESS

One of the biggest differences between B2B and B2C might be that most B2B companies don't seem to see themselves as engaged in e-commerce. Perhaps this is because most B2B sites don't have shopping carts. The typical B2B product can't be purchased through a simple *Add to cart* button: it might be custom-made, for example, or require other forms of handholding. Also, prices might not be fixed, but rather adjusted to each customer.

However, the lack of an *Add to cart* button doesn't mean that B2B vendors should ignore their websites. The site should still support the many other stages of the buying process—including the post-sales stages, which are crucial to customers' long-term brand loyalty. In fact, many complex products require supplies, spare parts, or other consumables that are perfectly suited to traditional e-commerce.

Most important, B2B sites can be great lead generators. Prospects use websites during their initial research and stick with the helpful sites during subsequent research.

The website represents the company to prospects. In today's world, people don't always save brochures and advertisements, because they assume they can find equivalent information on the Web when the need strikes. Most of our users also said that when they were thinking of doing business with a company, one of their first actions was to check out its website. Thus, a site that inadequately communicates the credibility of a vendor and its products can seriously deter incoming leads—long before your official sales efforts begin.

One reason so many B2B sites have poor usability might be because they're less directly accountable for sales. On a classic B2C e-commerce site, every single design decision directly and measurably affects the site's conversion rate and other metrics, such as the average shopping cart size. Many B2C sites are religious in their observance of e-commerce usability guidelines because they know from their own statistics how much money they lose every time they get usability wrong.

In contrast, because B2B sites don't close sales online, they can turn away the vast majority of users and never know how many sales they've lost. A company can determine how its site helps or hinders users only by conducting user research with representative customers—something most companies don't do. Given our experiences in testing 179 B2B sites, we can safely predict that most companies would be shocked if they ever tested their own sites.

USER-HOSTILE DESIGN

B2B sites often prevent users from getting the information they need to research solutions. Sometimes this is deliberate, as when sites hide the good stuff behind registration barriers. Other times it's inadvertent, as when confusing navigation prevents users from finding information, or when the information they do find is so voluminous and convoluted that they can't understand it.

A simple example: Many sites use segmentation, in which users must click through to the appropriate site segment. Unfortunately, these segments often don't match the way customers think of themselves, and thus require them to peek through multiple site areas to find the right one. Even a simple segmentation such as company size isn't obvious. What counts as small? Better sites will annotate their choices with a definition (stating, for example, that their small business segment targets companies with less than 100 employees).

Another common B2B tactic is to require users to register or complete lead-generation forms. Users are very reluctant to do this, however. If your site wants to pursue this approach, you should at least follow registration form guidelines to make your forms easier to complete. In most cases, however, we recommend moving more information outside the barrier so it's available to users during their initial research. You must establish a certain level of credibility before people are willing to give out their contact information. Business people are too busy these days to have time for sales calls—unless they think the vendor is likely to offer something they want.

The product information that you make available without registration must be complete enough for users to judge whether your solution applies to their circumstances. In our study, incomplete product descriptions were the cause of much skepticism. At the same time, you can't just dump everything on a first-time visitor. Even if you sell highly technical products to a highly specialized audience, you can't assume that all users understand industry jargon or the key considerations that distinguish your product from the competition. Provide helpful summaries and guides to educate new users. If you can frame how people think about their problems, you're half way to selling them.

The most user-hostile element of most B2B sites is a complete lack of pricing information. And yet, when we asked users to prioritize which of twenty-eight types of B2B site information mattered most to them, prices scored the highest by far (29% higher than product availability, which ranked second).

Sites have many excuses for not wanting to display prices, but they are just that: excuses. Users expect to get a basic understanding of products and services during their initial research, and they can't do that without some idea of what it's going to cost. Even if your company can't list exact prices, there are several ways to indicate price level, which is really all people need initially.

We tested many B2B sites with good design elements: navigation that worked, useful product descriptions, informative comparison charts, enticing up-sells, helpful

support, instructive white papers, and so on. We know these sites can be done well. Unfortunately, the good designs were few and far between.

The average B2B user experience is not very supportive of customers. As a result, the websites fail to provide business value because they ultimately turn prospects away rather than turning them into leads. The only good news in this assessment is that most sites can dramatically enhance their business value by simply following a few more usability guidelines, and thereby offer a more customer-centered environment. It's time to upgrade B2B to the level of user experience that mainstream websites have long offered.

Research Overview

The main purpose of our research was to gain insight into business customers' needs when researching products and services for their organizations. We were interested in learning what factors foster business relationships and influence purchase decisions. Specifically, we wanted to discern how companies can leverage their B2B websites to attract prospects, increase conversions, and support existing customers.

The result is this report, which offers guidelines that can help you design your B2B site to balance your company's business needs with the needs of your target audience. Our usability guidelines are based on methodical observation, interviews, and user feedback. This report summarizes our research results, and explains and discusses each of our recommendations.

In this section, we offer a brief overview of the research methodology; for complete details about our testing procedures, please see the report's "Methodology" section.

PROCEDURE

A total of seventy-nine people participated in the study. Participants varied in their job responsibilities, industries, and company sizes. They ranged in age from 18 to 65 years. All participants either researched or made decisions on products or services for their company.

Participants were all Internet users with at least one year's experience on the Web, though most had significantly more. We conducted our research in two countries: the U.S. and the U.K. We tested in four different locations within these countries: San Diego, California; Seattle, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; and London, England.

Our study had three main components:

- **Focus Groups:** Business customers discussed their processes, pain points, needs, and concerns in a group environment. Some focus group participants also participated in one of the other study components.
- **One-On-One User Testing:** We met with participants one at a time and gave them tasks to do on the Web—mainly, to research a product, service, or company that might fit their organization's needs. To keep the scenarios as authentic as possible, we matched the task with the participant's actual business situation. We observed users as they worked and encouraged them to think out loud and give feedback as they tried to accomplish the tasks.
- **Site Visits:** We visited people at their place of employment to gather contextual data and observe their work processes.

WEBSITES STUDIED

We studied over 170 different B2B websites, ranging in industry, company size, and design. Below is a sample list of the websites studied:¹

Large Companies

ADP	Service provider for employer-related functions
Armstrong	Manufacturer of floor, ceilings, and cabinets
DHL	Global transportation and delivery services
Grainger	Industrial supply distributor
Gateway	Personal computing products
InFocus	Manufacturer of projectors
Sprint Nextel	Telecommunications products and services
United Healthcare	Medical insurance provider

Medium Companies

Champion	Tradeshaw services
Elegant Gourmet	Fine specialty food products
Interstate Pallet Company	Supplier of pallets and wood products
Jani-King	Commercial cleaning franchiser
MECC Inc.	Event and meeting management service
Delta Machinery	Manufacturer of woodworking machinery
Sterling Medical Products	Medical supplies distributor
Arandell Corporation	Catalog printers

Small Companies

Cedar Financial	Collections services
Mokrynski <i>direct</i>	Marketing services, specializing in customer acquisition and retention strategies
Apple Appraisals	Real estate appraisal services
Brummers	Maker of chocolates and candies
Millard Group	Direct marketing services

¹ See the "Methodology" section for a full list of websites.

The Limbach Company
Impact Displays

Commercial real estate appraisal services
Print and sign services

Resources/Informational/Lists

PriceGrabber

Comparison shopping search engine

Cnet

Technology product review

Process Cooling & Equipment

Cooling and heating equipment resource

WorldatWork

Human resources association

WSA

Resources and information for technology innovators

Patch Management

Patch management discussion/resources

BuyerZone

Connects buyers and suppliers

Introduction

WHAT IS B2B E-COMMERCE?

For the purposes of this report, we define B2B e-commerce as an internet-initiated business-to-business transaction that facilitates the receiving organization's operations. This might be something as simple as buying a new photocopier, or as complex as establishing a relationship with a new debt collection service.

B2B e-commerce is an \$8.5 trillion/year business. It covers everything from paperclips to dredging machines, janitorial services to trade show displays, and one-off credit-card purchases to multi-year contracts.

Unlike B2C e-commerce, price is not always the driving factor. Proximity, quality, availability, and relationship are often as important as cost in driving a purchasing decision.

Also, the B2B sales infrastructure differs significantly from B2C sales. Often, B2B websites are little more than a funnel to encourage prospective customers to call. The complexity and variability of some B2B products sometimes requires this verbal communication with a supplier; other times, however, B2B customers just want to do their research online. Business purchasers have a love-hate relationship with sales reps. Some sales reps turn up uninvited every weekday with little to offer; others, are actually sought out by purchasers to help facilitate cost structure negotiations.

Some B2B e-commerce still occurs through B2C sites. Often, consumer-facing sites are still the cheapest source of goods, especially for small companies who can't command bulk discounts. For services such as travel, for example, consumer sites often offer small and mid-sized companies the best deal. We don't cover these B2C sites in this report, however. The type of B2B tasks carried out on consumer sites are fairly basic, and we cover them in detail in our B2C e-commerce publication.²

Some sites offer B2C as well as a separate B2B interface. This is particularly true of office supply companies. Although we focus on the B2B interfaces here, many business customers told us that they still use the B2C avenue for their purchases. This is not surprising; our investigations found that the B2B sites were often hidden and hard to find.

GETTING B2B E-COMMERCE RIGHT

Our research indicates that many businesses appear to view their online presence as more of an electronic advertisement for their services rather than a purchasing mechanism.

² <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce>

For some businesses, this might be the right approach. If a company's product is complex and fully custom-built for each purchaser, or if its high-pressure sales model demands that prospects be connected with a live sales person as soon as possible, then a simple site that advertises the products or services and contact details might suffice.

However, for most companies, the website should be much more than a billboard. Even if the order or payment ultimately occurs through another channel, the website should support customers through several purchasing process stages.

Users don't simply go online to buy something. They go through several phases of research, justification, and decision making before making a purchase. Following the purchase, they expect websites to offer support, as well as accessories, consumables, or replacement parts.

A company that understands and supports these purchase phases on their website stands to attract more customers than one that does not. Also, the cost of providing such services online is minimal compared to customer support budgets.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN B2B AND B2C

B2B and B2C customers have unique needs and expectations because they have unique purchasing processes. Unlike most B2C customers, B2B customers often research a purchase for several weeks and involve multiple people from both the vendor's company and their own. Consequently, B2B websites must anticipate customer needs at different stages of the process.

Personas: Putting Faces to Your Users

Unlike most B2C websites, B2B is not about the shopping cart and making an immediate sale. **The B2B site's goal is to sell relationships.** The B2B sales cycle can go on for months or even years, and different audiences and user types might need different information. A site's professional audience can be broad, including everyone from engineers and distributors to buyers, executives, and end users. Members of a specific community might share a broad knowledge base, but their specific expertise areas and job functions might be very different. Often, the person authorizing purchases is not the end user.

To foster communication, you must know your specific audience and address its needs on your website at the appropriate level and in the appropriate time. Clear communication is an important component in any healthy relationship, business or otherwise.

In our user research, we found distinct behavior patterns in different segments of the purchasing population. Small business owners have different considerations than enterprise employees. People whose job it is to negotiate contracts make purchases in a different fashion than those who only occasionally specify a product. While the user types share many characteristics, each group has its own defining behaviors, which can lead to different recommendations depending on a B2B site's audience. Putting a face to their targeted demographic and defining its attributes helps Web designers consistently understand their users' needs and design for them.

WHAT ARE PERSONAS?

User types, or *personas*, are fictitious characters that embody the characteristics and attributes of real targeted user groups, based on user research.

Personas are a Web design tool that helps design team members "put a face to their users" and stay focused on designing for their needs. Personas are typically assigned attributes, including names, faces, strengths, limitations, and pain points. These fictional representations of actual users give designers context and serve as a guide to how well solutions meet each user type's needs.

If you're interested in learning more about creating personas and using them as a design tool, we recommend the book, *The Persona Lifecycle: Keeping People in Mind Throughout Product Design* by John Pruitt and Tamara Adlin.

If you want a more hands-on experience, check out our learning-by-doing workshop (www.nngroup.com/services/workshops/personas).

PERSONAS: USER TYPES

Following are the user types indicated by the behavior patterns we observed in our research. You can use these thumbnail personas as the basis for creating more fully fledged personas of your target audiences.

Sam the Small-Biz Saver

Sam created the business from scratch. Although he has two other people on staff, Sam maintains buying control over everything needed to keep things running, from office supplies to equipment to sourcing the product components that the company assembles and sells.

For Sam, the business provides income and retirement investment rolled into one. Anything that costs money means less income, but time spent bargain hunting is also time taken away from growing the business.

Sam is a member of the local Better Business Bureau and a national trade organization. He uses contacts from both to get recommendations for products and services, like the time the taxman came knocking and Sam needed a good local accountant.

Sam is very sensitive to the difference that a couple of cents per item makes to overall product profit. Sam also knows that middlemen make a mark-up, so wherever possible, he follows the distributor chain “back to the source” to find the manufacturer for items that he’ll resell as part of his product line.

For more mundane purchases like office supplies, Sam is likely to simply find something that will work at a good price, buy it, and move on. Sam doesn’t feel much loyalty to vendors of such products, and he’ll chop and change to get good deals.

In our study, Sam-like users said:

“Sometimes I wonder whether it’s worth the time to do all this chasing just to get a cheaper price, but it’s partly the principle of the thing, and it’s partly that I know each penny saved is an extra penny profit—I mean, I’m not paying myself by the hour.”

“[store name] has a special offer on batteries at the moment, so I bought twenty boxes. That way I got free shipping, too. You should have seen the UPS guy delivering them—man, they were heavy, but now I have all the batteries I need for [my product] for a year.”

Ashley the Office Admin

Ashley gets purchasing requests from everyone in her thirty-person office. She handles most requests easily using a small list of regular suppliers. Occasionally, however, there are harder items that require more work, like when the company

needed a new long-distance phone service provider or the time the sales team wanted a bouncy castle for a morale-boosting event.

Because everyone else is busy doing their own jobs, Ashley is unlikely to get much pushback for choosing the wrong thing unless it's highly technical or specialized, in which case the requester will probably have specified the item fairly well. Sometimes, though, Ashley finds a few alternatives and runs them past the requester, just to make sure.

In some respects, Ashley is a proxy for management—a gatekeeper who prevents frivolous expenditure. However, the cost of items is not Ashley's primary concern. When the department needed a new photocopier, for example, it had to fit in the same space as the old one, so size was almost more important than cost. In any case, Ashley has so much to do that it's impossible to spend too much extra time getting the best deal on everything. Sometimes, she just has to make a guess and get what looks right, within a reasonable budget.

For Ashley, finding time to do even a little research is difficult because she faces constant interruptions from email and the telephone. Sometimes, Ashley will stop in a retail store on the way home to check out products and talk quickly to a sales person, which can be faster than searching for things online. Also, this lets Ashley make a purchase and have the item available immediately. This helps because everyone in the office always seems to be in a rush to get stuff.

(The above applies to office-manager-type roles, too, in businesses of all sizes)

In our study, Ashley-like users said:

"This one looks like it has everything they wanted. I'll order it now and get it shipped next day."

"I'll order stuff in bulk when I see a deal and it's something I know we use often."

"Cell phones are hard to buy for people because they all do the same things, and basically it's down to: What does the person want it to look like?"

Erin the Enterprise Employee

Erin has a relatively specialized technical role in a very large company. Most purchases that Erin can make are controlled by the organization—there is a list of company approved computers and peripherals, the copy room is stocked with pretty much everything that employees would need in terms of office supplies, there is a company-approved travel booking site, and specific departments are in charge of providing or procuring services such as janitorial, HR, or legal resources.

The company has very specific purchasing rules. Erin has dollar limits for what she can buy with petty cash or a company credit card. She also has a limit on total

spend, and often must justify higher ticket items to management and go through the purchasing department.

Erin differs slightly from the average office worker because she must occasionally buy or maintain specialized, job-specific equipment. This can be a real hassle. Although Erin can typically find out exactly what's required, she has to go through bureaucratic red tape to actually get it purchased. It's not the time spent finding the right product that's infuriating, it's the time spent justifying the spend to people who don't really understand why it's required, then waiting for the product to arrive. Erin sometimes wants to just complete the whole transaction without interference from managers and purchasing, but she understands the downside here: more time spent away from her real work and potentially higher costs to the company.

(Our Erin works for a very large company, but her situation applies to medium and large businesses, too. Some Erins do buy expensive services, such as market research or facilities management elements, but most purchase tangible items such as R&D test equipment, networking products, and so on.)

In our study, Erin-like users said:

"No, I know a QB157P is a lot cheaper than a QB157D, but it won't fit and won't do what we need—we really do have to have the D."

"We primarily order from two or three companies because we have corporate contracts with them. I like that they drop-ship supplies to the nurses' houses. Gulf South is now offering that and a wound-care program [educational program]—the price is not a big issue because I have other needs."

Barbara the Boss

Barbara's job is to make the final purchasing decision (that is, to authorize purchases), especially on big-ticket items. Her responsibilities are at the executive level, and she has high-level knowledge of the target products or services. Although Barbara works in the industry, she might not be as technically savvy as her employees because she's typically not the end user.

Barbara is very busy, so her subordinates tackle the tedious job of researching alternatives. Once they suggest a few options, Barbara might do high-level research on her own and have the options be formally presented.

Barbara doesn't want to know about the nitty-gritty details. She prefers summaries with key points and pros and cons for alternatives. One of Barbara's key concerns is cost management, so options that solve the business problems while being reasonably priced attract her attention.

Pat the Professional Purchaser

Pat's job is to save the company money, and protect them from legal issues. Often, the items that he's responsible for must meet certain health and safety, quality, or specific manufacturing standards, as well as typical constraints such as cost. Pat typically purchases in bulk, using catalogs (online or paper) from a small set of preferred or pre-qualified suppliers. Even if one of these suppliers prices an item marginally higher than one on the general market, this process reduces paperwork and thus associated cost.

For services or larger cost items, Pat writes a tender document and puts the work out to bid. While this often takes longer than simply choosing a supplier, he's learned that due diligence is important to shareholders and that bids often come back with radically different interpretations of the initial request, as well as radically different prices.

The bid process is often long and drawn out. Pat must first find sufficient information to write a detailed request, and then find suitable companies to send the bid request to. Pat's trade association and network are useful here, but he still does due diligence in researching each company. Once bids are received and he creates a shortlist in conjunction with the requester, Pat might go as far as to arrange site visits to potential suppliers or their customers.

Occasionally, a one-off request comes up that requires extensive research or can only be bought from non-qualified suppliers. These purchase requests never seem to contain enough information, so Pat must do initial research, and then go back and forth between the requester and potential suppliers. This is often frustrating, because Pat feels caught in the middle—not knowing enough to make the decisions, but instead simply acting as a messenger.

If Pat works in local government, he must take the lowest bid on orders over a certain dollar amount. Thus, if he knows that the requester needs a specific item from a specific company, the specification process must be extremely clear and specific so he can discard the other bids.

(Note: sometimes there are two or more Pats in a department; they often split work along lines such as products and services.)

In our study, Pat-like users said:

"I have to answer to the shareholders as well as the staff. Ultimately, it's their money I'm spending."

"It's frustrating—I have to go for the lowest price on paper towels even if they are so thin and small that people take two rather than one. It costs us more in the longer term."

"I've found a couple of items that may work, but now I have to put the options in an email and go back to the requester to check with them which one they want."

*"Do you have any idea what a three-spool carbon fiber filament winder is?
Neither did I until I was asked to get one for the engineering department."*

BIG BUSINESS VERSUS SMALL BUSINESS DIFFERENCES

Common variables among these user types include: whether the items they purchase are coming from what they consider to be their own money (or time), whether their job description includes the task of purchasing, and whether they'll be the ultimate product or service user. Each of the user types has a different permutation of these three variables:

	Their \$/time	Paid to buy stuff	Will use product
Sam the Small-Biz Saver	Y	N	Y
Ashley the Office Admin	N	Y	Not usually
Erin the Enterprise Employee	N	N	Y
Barbara the Boss	N	N	N
Pat the Professional Purchaser	Y	Y	N

Taken in combination, these variables lead to different attitudes toward the purchasing process. Although overly simplistic, typically: Sam wants the best cost, Ashley wants convenience, Erin wants accuracy (the right item), and Pat wants the best overall value to the company.

The other big difference between these personas is the time required to make a purchase. Smaller businesses typically have a shorter purchasing time because the purchaser and decision-maker are often in closer proximity—it's either the same person, or the two people are in the same office.

Although larger businesses might have local office administrators, our participants typically described the purchasing process as more formal—and thus more drawn out—in these companies. Having preferred-supplier lists, purchasing procedures, and dedicated purchasing staff might save money, but it does seem to add time. While small and medium-sized business participants often stressed getting things shipped the next day, larger business participants did not seem to see this as an option because they knew their processes would be more drawn out. Even rounding up the people required to make a decision seemed to take longer in larger companies.

These different perspectives on what is important in the B2B relationship and transaction lead to different requirements for B2B websites. While some variables—such as accuracy—should be universal, it's important to know which of these user types comprise the bulk of your user base to best meet their purchasing and support needs.

Success & Satisfaction Ratings of B2B Sites

SUCCESS RATINGS

We asked participants to use the Web to research business-related solutions, finding companies, products, or services to meet specific needs. We then measured each website's design success based on the level of information participants obtained to complete their assigned tasks. We measured success on a scale ranging from 0% to 100%; the scores were based on the percentage of the task that was reasonably completed online.

Overall, **the average success rate across the websites tested was only 58% percent.**

This is a fairly low success rate, given the state of Web usability today. In contrast, when we tested twenty-five mainstream websites,³ their average success rate was 66%.

Why the low success rates?

B2B websites don't do a good job of selling, and business users are much more demanding than B2C users. For complex, high-priced items, business customers rely heavily on personal attention and contact during the sales process. However, customers still expect B2B websites to provide sufficient information about the company and its offerings before they initiate contact. Many of the websites we studied didn't match their website design with their customers' comfort level—they gave too little and required too much. B2B sites often pushed *Contact* while offering only superficial information or concealing critical information (often seemingly on purpose). Such tactics don't work.

In addition, business prospects are smart and busy. They often have some idea of what they want and how much they'll pay for it—they don't appreciate websites with flimsy information and forceful sales tactics that distract them from accomplishing their mission. The top design factors that either caused users to leave a website or form a bad impression were:

Incomplete product description → Created skepticism

Overwhelming and convoluted content → Created confusion

Convoluted navigational structure → Created impatience

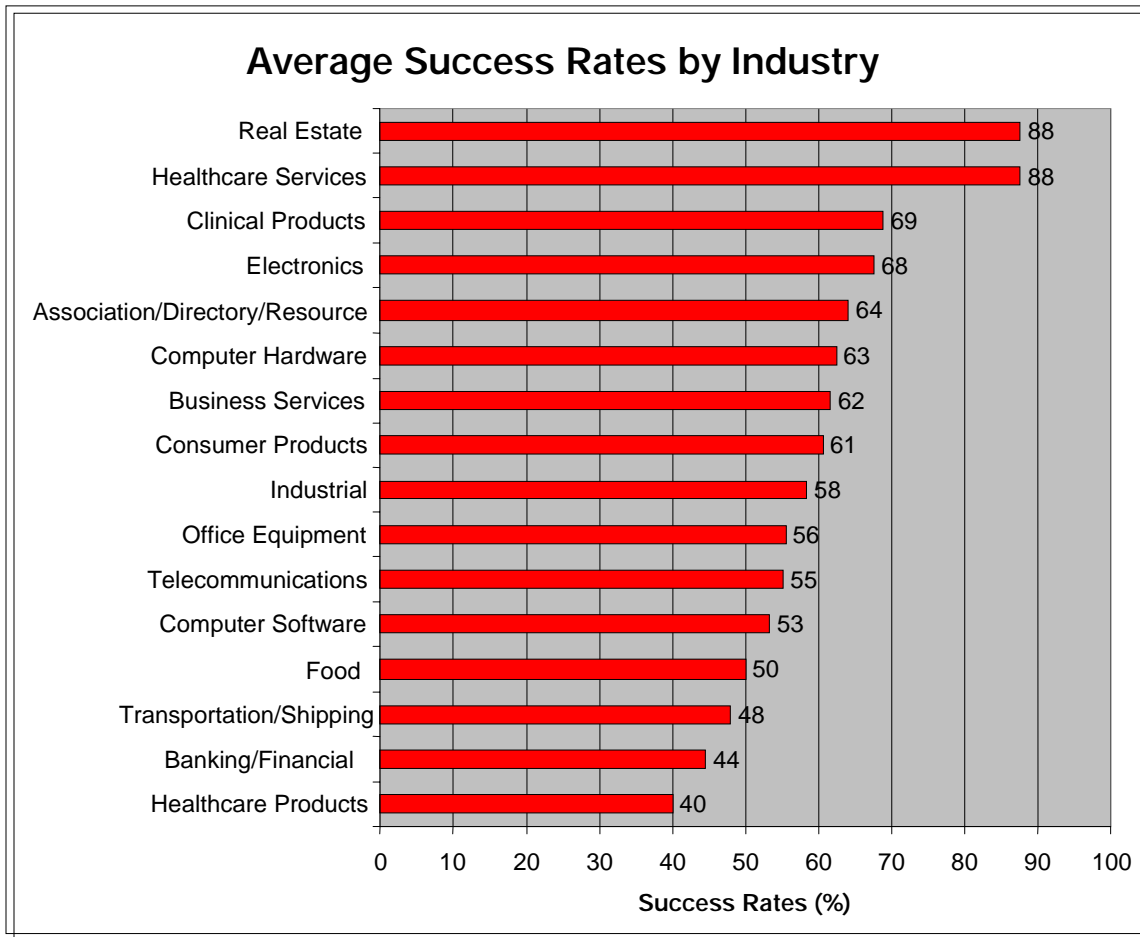
³ This study is documented in greater detail in our book *Prioritizing Web Usability* (see www.useit.com/prioritizing).

Pushy marketing tactics → Created annoyance and distrust

Contact too difficult, registration or contact forms → Created barriers and distrust

Note: These topics are covered in detail in their respective sections of this report.

The graph below shows the average success rates across various industries.



SATISFACTION RATINGS

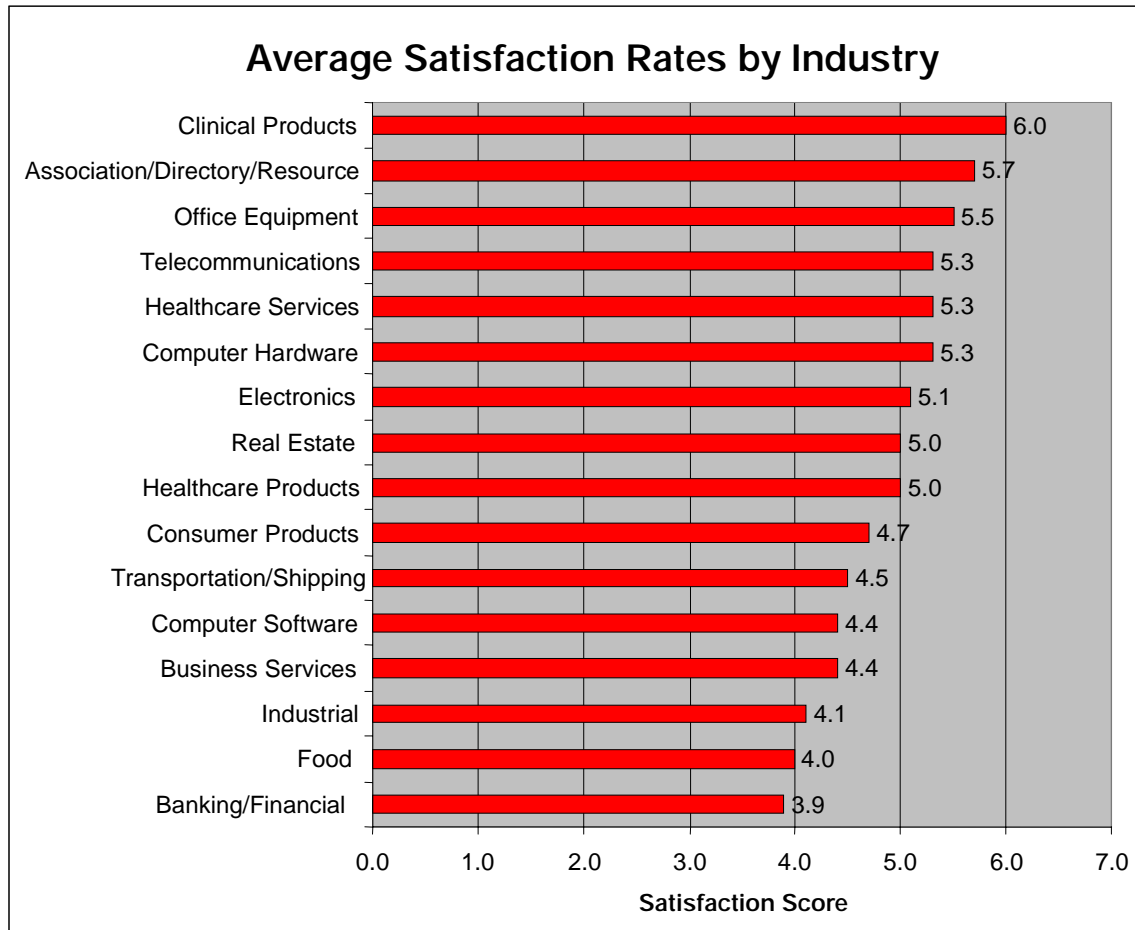
After using the websites, users rated their satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being very satisfied and 1 being very dissatisfied. The graph below shows the average satisfaction rate across the websites tested. Overall, the **average satisfaction score across all websites was 4.6 out of 7.0**.

Even though 4.0 is the rating scale's mathematical midpoint, users tend to be polite in their ratings. Across numerous user satisfaction surveys we've analyzed, the average rating for user interfaces was one unit better than the mathematical midpoint. Thus, **the true neutral point is 5** on a 1 to 7 scale (where 7 is best).

Bearing this in mind, this study's average user satisfaction rating is slightly below neutral (or average).

What we learned from this study is that being average isn't good enough. Businesses that put forth the effort to make their websites more usable have the advantage over businesses that don't. Designs that are easy to use and address people's needs get noticed and are better able to convert prospects into paying customers.

The graph below shows the average satisfaction rates across various industries.

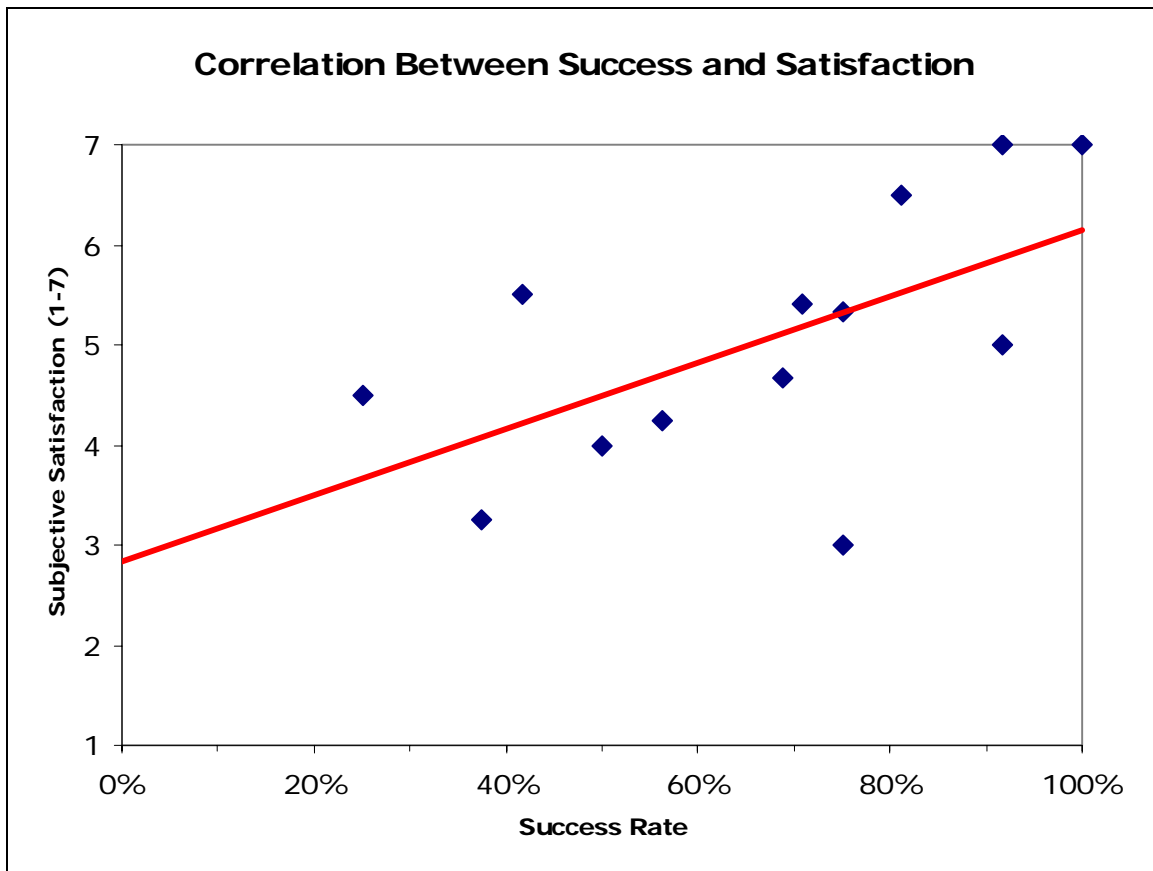


Out of sixteen industries, only seven scored higher than the neutral point in user satisfaction (with the realistic midpoint being 5.0). Most of the industries scored at or below average. Having accessible contact information saved some websites from having lower satisfaction scores.

CORRELATION BETWEEN SUCCESS AND SATISFACTION

There is a positive correlation between success score and satisfaction ratings ($r=.62$). This finding is consistent with previous usability studies. It's not surprising that there's a strong connection between people's success on websites and their level of contentment in using them. People who accomplish their tasks tend to have a more satisfying experience than those who don't.

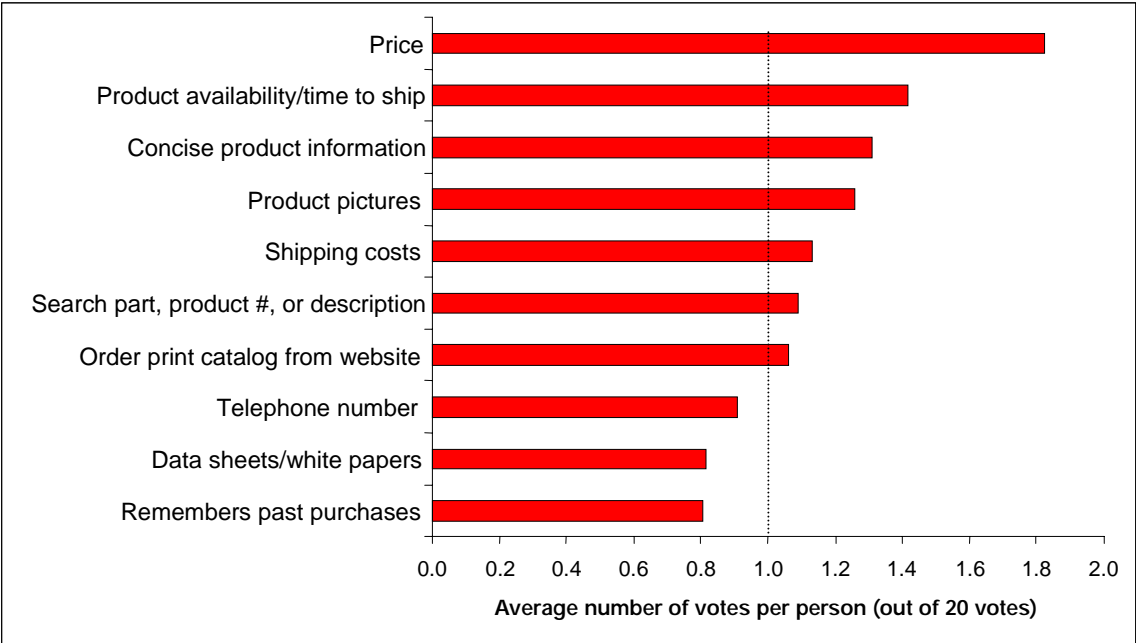
The scatterplot below depicts the relationship between user success on websites and their satisfaction levels. The red regression line is fitted through the scatterplot points to summarize the relationship between these two variables.



CUSTOMER PRIORITIES: INFORMATION RANKINGS

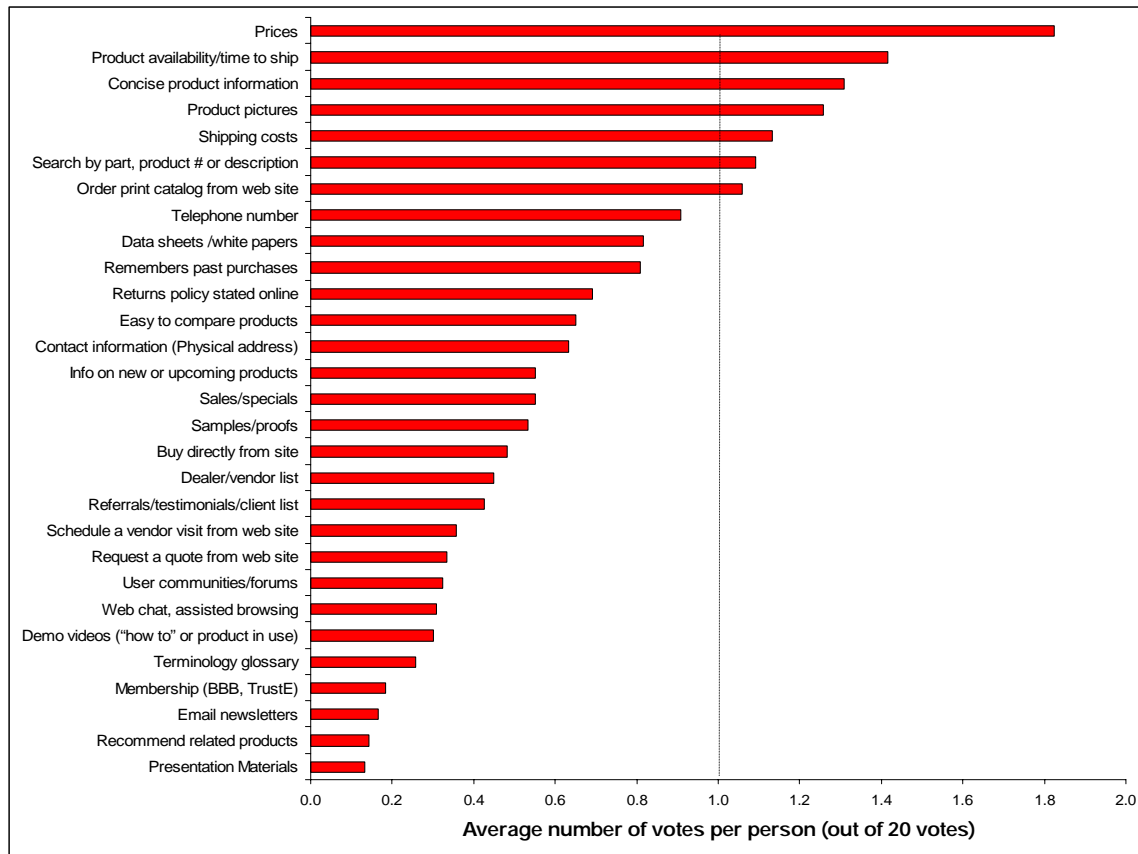
We gave focus-group participants a pre-determined list containing different types of B2B website information, then asked them to identify which items they deemed most important. Participants had a total of twenty votes to spend, and could spend as many or as few votes on an item as they pleased, depending on its relative importance. For example, a participant could use all twenty votes on only a few items, or spread them across a range of items. We also encouraged people to add items to the list as necessary.

The table below shows the ten highest-ranking items on B2B sites, in order of relative importance. **Pricing information received the highest number of votes** (on average, each participants assigned it two votes, or 10% of their votes). Product availability came in second, followed by concise product information. Bear this in mind when you’re making design decisions. This list can serve as a guide to help you prioritize your design or redesign project.



Focus group participants ranked different types of information from a pre-determined list. This chart shows the ten highest-ranking items. Pricing came out on top, averaging 10% of the votes. Almost half of the top ten items related to product information.

Below is the complete list of information types, ranked in order of importance:



HOW COMPANY REPUTATION AFFECTS RATINGS AND WEB BEHAVIOR

Advantages of fame

During our research, people gave more weight to companies that they'd heard of and that had good reputations. Often, prospects are clobbered with endless search engine results listings. Weeding out the good from the bad can be a grueling task. Therefore, people employed the strategy of scanning search results lists for familiar company names. Because they have an established reputation, well-known companies have an advantage over lesser-known companies.

On well-known company sites, people spent less time researching the company's background and were more forgiving of poor conditions on the site. Users were confident that such a company was solid, even without doing any extensive research

on its website. Given this, small and medium-sized companies must work even harder to build their reputation and gain a prospective customer's confidence.

Here's what some of our participants said while working with familiar companies:

"I'm trying to find a company that I am familiar with. I'm bouncing around between brand-name companies. I look at brand names because I'm familiar with it. It sets down some of my defense mechanisms."

"My past experience has shown me that the cost of working with a company that you've not heard of is not worth the risk of changing over."

"I stick to things familiar or well-known. I'm introduced to companies by marketers. I get to know the personalities. If they stay around for a long time, you know they'll be there when you're ready to call them. Because of time, I usually go with someone familiar. They're usually willing to help out."

"If I had good feeling for a website and it seems professional, I would scan, but then call and talk to someone. I would at least narrow down the companies I would be interested in pursuing. I chose Jani-King because I've heard of them."

"I picked this company because I'm familiar with them."

Disadvantages of fame

Relying on popularity alone isn't enough. Familiarity is only one of many criteria that people use to make their final decisions. So, while your company might be large and famous, you can't rely on that to cinch the deal. There could be tens and thousands of competitors hungry for business. If your competitors have a better, more user-centric B2B site than you, you can bet that customers can be swayed in their favor.

For many business customers, a major drawback of working with large companies is the fear of being lost in the shuffle. In this regard, smaller companies are perceived as more adept at handling customized situations and providing personalized support. Here's how people perceived their potential experiences with larger companies:

"These guys seem like they're big players. I'm impressed by these guys because they seem to know what they're doing. They manage a lot of shows and they're obviously a big player. The drawback, however, is that am I going to get lost in shuffle? If I don't have a large enough budget, I'm not going to get good service."

"I would be concerned with working with large companies. It's a catch-22. The bigger ones are good and have resources, but sometimes you get lost in cracks. That is why I want more personal service."

"This company is huge, but I would be worried about getting lost in the shuffle. I know they are huge because they are national. I feel I would get better service on AW because they are smaller and they would want to please me more. I would get better tailored service."

Location matters

Another decision factor is location. Businesses typically want to work with companies that have representatives in their local area because they can:

- easily go to the site and inspect the merchandise,
- save on shipping and delivery costs,
- have more face-to-face interaction with sales agents, and
- avoid time-zone differences.

If you have multiple locations and your business targets local markets, make sure to show this information clearly on your site. This helps site visitors and search engines find you.

"There is an outlet two blocks away, so I'm going to be more tolerant [in using] their website."

"I've seen enough that I would give these guys a call. Because they're local, I can meet with them face-to-face and check their operations. The site talks about aluminum and design. I want to take it for a test drive and see it; show me hardware so I can tell if I can put it together, or whether I need to hire people to put it together. They also sell you installation and dismantle. I need to be able to do it."

Keep in mind that business customers are savvy buyers. They often know what they want and how much they want to pay, even before they approach you online or offline. Prospects are narrowly -focused in solving business problems and are sensitive to sales tactics that appear pushy or self-serving. Business customers are looking for companies that genuinely show interest in solving their problems and putting the customer's needs in the forefront. Our study shows that to stand out above the competition, B2B sites need to:

- Present information from the customer's viewpoint
- Clearly state what the company does, and what it can do for its customers
- Address any doubt people might have about doing business with the company
- Be informational and straightforward
- Present the company as sincere, trustworthy, and an expert in the business

DESIGNING FOR THE PURCHASE PROCESS

It doesn't matter whether you close the sale online or offline, supporting your target users' purchase process is essential in converting prospects into paying customers. The key component in effective B2B marketing and sales is establishing credibility among prospective clients.

The nature of B2B products and services often demands long sales cycles that can take months or even years. Customers have different needs, depending on the purchase phase. Therefore, B2B sites must adapt to these changes and support the purchase process to establish and maintain relationships with customers.

Purchasing Phases

Throughout our research, users subconsciously divided their purchasing task into certain phases. Sometimes, one phase would be skipped (for instance, research, if the user knew enough about the product) or downplayed (for instance, relationship, if the item were low priced and low risk). At other times during the process, users relied on the contribution of other people within their organization. They might, for instance, defer to managers for a final decision, or send product details to a purchasing department to create a purchase order or contract.

Websites that failed to support each process phase made the user's task harder than necessary, resulting in dissatisfaction; websites that supported the entire sales process were viewed more favorably, and thus created more possibilities for exchange.

The purchase phases are listed below. Each phase has implications for your website design strategies, which are discussed in detail in the *Guidelines* sections of this report.

- **Phase 1: Research**—investigate alternatives, price ranges, and the feature sets/services offered.
- **Phase 2: Relationship**—learn more about short-listed companies, get a feel for them, call if necessary, and refine research by getting answers to specific questions.
- **Phase 3: Decide**—narrow the list of companies and products, and make a final decision. Create materials that explain that decision to ensure purchase authorization.
- **Phase 4: Buy**—negotiate price, make purchase.
- **Phase 5: Support/maintain**—buy parts, accessories, or consumables; change service contracts to accommodate company growth.
- **Phase 6: Replace**—begin the process again when a service contract ends or equipment reaches the end of its life.

B2B Usability Guidelines Summary

The following list summarizes our usability guidelines for designing B2B websites based on findings from our user research. These guidelines are recommendations for improving your website's usability. Detailed discussions and examples for each guideline are included in the next section of this report. The page numbers following each guideline indicate where the discussion about that guideline appears.

1. Establish a website.	38
2. Make sure directory listings link to your website.	38
3. Optimize your website for popular search engines.	41
4. Google is the search engine of choice; get your company on the first page of its search results.	42
5. Be wary of using dodgy search engine optimization strategies; it can hurt you and your customers.	43
6. If your organization serves a regional market, include regional identifiers on the homepage and in metatags to increase search engine traffic.	44
7. Create a title and description tags that are concise and meaningful.	45
8. Consider advertising on popular search engines.	45
9. Include explicit B2B terminology in the text of your search ads.	46
10. Balance visual design with simple interaction design.	47
11. Clearly communicate what your company does on the homepage and in corporate areas.	52
12. Keep taglines brief, simple, and to the point. Vague or jargonistic taglines only confuse users.	54
13. Present the breadth of merchandise on the homepage to give users a true impression of what the site offers.	58
14. Use pictures and graphics to augment the text describing your company's offerings.	61
15. Use keywords that differentiate B2B from consumer sites.	66
16. Show your range of offerings by indicating the scale of usage.	68
17. Don't force prospects into arbitrary segmentation categories.	71
18. Clearly define/label market segmentation categories.	72
19. Focus your message on the context of the buyer's problem, not on the product.	77

20.	Offer full solutions, not just individual products and services.	83
21.	Keep high-priority options and information visible above the fold.	85
22.	Provide subtle cues that more information exists below the fold.	85
23.	Place page elements in their expected locations; don't be different just for the sake of it.	85
24.	Use category labels that reflect the user's language to minimize ambiguity.	90
25.	Use classification schemes that communicate attributes your end-users can decipher.	94
26.	Have multiple classification schemes if necessary, but avoid unnecessary redundancy.	99
27.	Create a clear and consistent navigational structure; your Web presence should integrate, rather than separate, internal organizations.	103
28.	Place the search box in a clearly visible area on top of each page.	104
29.	Ensure that your site's internal search engine returns what people ask for, in order of relevance.	107
30.	If necessary, optimize your search engine by hand to designate pages that should receive prominence, such as product and category pages.	110
31.	Have a dedicated product page for each product and make it exceptionally easy to find.	110
32.	Offer complete product details (in layers if necessary).	113
33.	Use a short descriptive name <i>and</i> unique identifier for each product... ..	118
34.	Provide a user-centric product overview on each product page.	119
35.	Ensure that product pages contain identifiable links to related information.	123
36.	Organize product page links, grouping closely related items and giving prominence to the most-requested information.	124
37.	Show the price; make no excuses.	126
38.	If you can't show actual prices, show sample prices.	130
39.	Choose typical case scenarios over complex pricing calculators.	131
40.	If your audience includes distributors, offer easy access to wholesale prices.	134
41.	Emphasize your business approach (your selling point).	134
42.	Provide information on delivery times and costs.	137
43.	Provide product images that are large enough to show the details customers need to make a purchase decision.	138
44.	Offer enlarged images when visual details are important.	139
45.	Offer alternative product views where appropriate.	140

46. For software products, provide full-sized screenshots.....	141
47. Make sure pictures and diagrams are large enough to be re-used in printed documents and presentations.	144
48. Choose 2D over 3D.....	146
49. Use multimedia to augment still pictures and textual descriptions, not replace them.....	149
50. Use videos if products need to be seen in action to be understood.	150
51. Keep demonstration videos short; stay on topic.	153
52. Make sure your site loads quickly.....	153
53. Format supporting documentation in a suitable way.....	156
54. Format your website design to support copying and pasting.....	160
55. Ensure that your online formats print well.	162
56. Offer a table of contents at the beginning of long PDFs.	163
57. For PDF documents, have a gateway page that gives a summary description of the content and file size.	163
58. Set the default for PDF documents to open at a legible size.	163
59. For large PDF files, let people download the document in smaller sections.....	163
60. Don't give plug-in icons more prominence than the related document or application links.....	163
61. Provide sufficient information online for users to make a decision before calling.	166
62. Analyze the content of the pre-sales support calls you receive, and put the requested information online.....	167
63. Provide contact information or a noticeable link to it on the homepage and throughout your website.....	168
64. Have a dedicated contact page that contains complete details, grouped by company functions and locations.	171
65. Provide multiple ways for people to engage with your organization. ...	172
66. Make it foolproof to select the correct contact number.	174
67. For email and voicemail contacts, tell people when they can expect a response.	177
68. Have full contact information on confirmation emails, correspondences, and printed materials.	178
69. Try to capture form submittals before users leave your site.	178

70. Keep contact forms short: ask only for information relevant to users' tasks.	178
71. If segmentation and job title/position information are vital, ensure clear and distinct category choices; better yet, let users type them in.	181
72. Offer a contact form only in addition to email and telephone numbers, not as a replacement.	183
73. Provide "Live Chat" as a middle ground for reluctant customers.	184
74. Make chat worthwhile.	185
75. Carefully select the algorithm that determines when and where the chat box should appear.	186
76. Don't require users to register or take surveys to contact your company or request information.	187
77. Offer registration if it lets users save preferences and personalize their experience, but make sure to clearly convey such benefits.	188
78. If registration is used for lead generation, pique user interest by providing an overview of the benefits.	189
79. Maintain information entered during the user's session across the entire site.	194
80. Ensure that your company's sales and support procedures mesh with the website.	194
81. Offer external links to third-party reviews.	196
82. List your awards (modestly).	196
83. If you include testimonials, be specific about the sources.	197
84. Use customer lists to show what types of companies do business with you.	199
85. Keep case studies short and true-to-life.	200
86. For case studies, include the three main components: challenge, solution, and result.	200
87. Support case studies with statistics.	201
88. On the page listing the case studies, include the three main components: business name, title, summary, and a link to the full article.	202
89. Make sure the titles of your white papers provide insight into the content and capture readers' attention.	205
90. Have problem-oriented titles for technical documents.	206
91. For white papers, focus on the problem your solution overcomes, not on product features.	207
92. For long documents (such as white papers), provide an executive summary.	207

93.	Keep technical content updated.	207
94.	Offer an <i>About Us</i> section, regardless of your company's size.	209
95.	Provide a noticeable link to corporate information on the homepage and all internal pages called <i>About <your company name></i> or <i>About Us</i>	209
96.	Offer a brief company overview that highlights a few significant facts, along with a link to more detailed corporate information.	210
97.	Provide information about the company's high-level managers, including each person's name and job title, a recent picture, and a link to a full biography.	213
98.	Use a reasoned, neutral voice on your website.	213
99.	Avoid arbitrarily repeating keywords.	216
100.	Write and present content in a way that optimizes scanning.	217
101.	Provide tables that compare your products with your competitors'.	221
102.	On comparison charts, identify your competitors by name.	221
103.	Select competitors that have matching products for comparison.	222
104.	Compare competitive products on meaningful features.	223
105.	Provide easy access to explanations of the features shown on comparison charts.	224
106.	Make sure table headers remain clearly visible when the page is scrolled.	225
107.	Offer printable versions of comparison tables.	225
108.	Provide comparison calculators only if they're simple.	225
109.	Allow users to save and forward configurator results.	227
110.	Consider whether a third party can use the materials on your site to make a case for your products.	229
111.	Create educational presentations around the product and its cost/benefit analysis.	229
112.	Provide sales rep contact details and availability.	230
113.	Provide contact details for the sales department, local sales reps, or local distributors (depending on your business model).	231
114.	Initiate the transaction online, even if it must be completed offline.	231
115.	Embed call-to-action cues on all relevant pages.	231
116.	Suggest related products on the product page, shopping cart page, and/or order summary page.	238
117.	Save the contents of a user's shopping cart for at least a month, preferably longer.	241

118.	Let users transfer their shopping cart's contents to other users.	241
119.	Display a printable receipt that's suitable for expense reporting.	241
120.	Make it clear that your company will accept and respond to request for proposals (RFPs) and government bids.	242
121.	Help public sector customers buy from you by providing the information they need to complete contracts.....	242
122.	Provide links from the main product page to accessories, parts, and product literature.....	246
123.	Provide supporting documentation alongside each product as well as in its own indexed area	246
124.	Enable search by part number, including part numbers for third-party products that form part of your product.	246
125.	If possible, include a mention of the website on the product itself. ..	247
126.	If you have partner-specific sites, make sure to mention this on your retail site.....	248
127.	Design partner-specific sites with speed in mind.....	248
128.	Personalize: Use what you know about your customers to ease their purchase process.	248
129.	Allow partners to determine which inventory items are available to their users as standard purchase items.	248
130.	Understand that different departments within an organization might need different products.....	249
131.	Provide an escalation path for requesting non-standard equipment.	249
132.	Build in access, monitoring, and reporting tools.....	249
133.	Make it easy to search for items with only partial identifying information.	254
134.	Ensure your physical parts and products contain sufficient identifying information.	254
135.	Retain product information for discontinued items.	255
136.	Mark discontinued products accordingly.	255
137.	Provide a link to replacement products from discontinued items.....	255
138.	Provide a link to both more and less expensive items in the same product family.	256
139.	Use stable URLs for discontinued product pages	256
140.	Use trade association or BBB memberships to post company descriptions.	256
141.	Become a resource so that people will return.	257

142. Invest time in free customer seminars. Ensure that the seminars provide value to your audience rather than just touting your product.268
143. Ensure that your online presence is advertised in offline literature, and that your website's domain name is easy to guess.268
144. Have a sales force that is low pressure but visits frequently enough to seem concerned with customer needs.268

Guidelines: Phase 1, Research

The research phase of B2B e-commerce is arguably the most important; if you're to be considered on customers' shortlists, they must be able to find your products and determine their pros and cons.

COMPANY PRESENCE ON THE WEB

Business customers rely heavily on the Web to find companies that have products and services they need. Participants in our study said they don't do business with companies that don't have websites. A Web presence is important to them because they want to pursue companies and offerings on their own time, without the pressure of sales people. When prospects have a company in mind, they check out the company's website before initiating contact.

1. Establish a website.

The Web is a popular tool that people employ to vet businesses. Some people use the Web as a directory or phone book, skimming through listings and collecting contact information. If your company doesn't have a website, people don't know you exist.

When confronted with a list of potential companies in online directories, people in our study followed companies that had links to their websites. Companies without websites were considered outmoded and out of touch.

Even if you have a very small company, such as a four-person law practice, having a Web presence is a way to connect with potential clients. All things being equal, when people must choose between a vendor with a website and one without, people lean toward the one with the website.

2. Make sure directory listings link to your website.

Anytime your company's website is entered into a legitimate online directory or company listing, make sure your listing includes a link to your website. Every extra link from a respected source can increase your ranking in the search engines. Also, prospects are more likely to research companies with directory listing links than those without because it's more convenient to click on links than to find websites on their own.

LOCAL ADVERTISER
<p>AZ Air Conditioning & Heating Phone:(800) 400-0227 ▪ View Website Contact Us for More Information View Ad</p>
LOCAL ADVERTISER
<p>Avalanche Mechanical 5575 Magnatron Bl San Diego, CA 92111 Phone:(866) 442-8252 Contact Us for More Information Since 1982 Free Service Call With Repairs 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed*Sales*Service*Installation*Repairs & Maintenance More Info Map Driving Directions What's Nearby? View Ad</p>
LOCAL ADVERTISER
<p>Johnson Air 9265 Dowdy Dr San Diego, CA 92126 Phone:(858) 549-2665 ▪ View Website Contact Us for More Information Heating and Air Conditioning Specialists More Info Map Driving Directions What's Nearby? View Ad</p>
LOCAL ADVERTISER
<p>Johnson Air 9265 Dowdy Dr San Diego, CA 92126 Phone:(858) 549-2665 ▪ View Website Contact Us for More Information More Info Map Driving Directions What's Nearby? View Ad</p>

Avalanche Mechanical misses out on conversions because it doesn't have a website link on the Switchboard.com directory listing. What's worse, it makes it seem as though the company doesn't even have a website.

MAKING IT EASY FOR PROSPECTS TO FIND YOU

Users turn to the Web most frequently to do research. Those users who've been purchasing since the pre-Internet days express disbelief that they ever got their jobs done without it.

However, search is still hard for most users. Knowing which terms to search for and sifting through murky search results was a common pain point for participants in our study. Prospects often didn't know what something was called, even if that item was related to their business. Some participants were uncertain about what to enter; others confused the target brand with a competitor's or didn't know the model or product number. Some people attempted to learn the topic area's vocabulary by visiting multiple sites and refining their search queries using the sites' keywords.

Business customers are not as Web savvy as you might think. Their penchant for impatience coupled with Web unfamiliarity caused them to fail on many B2B sites. Surprisingly, even participants whose main job was to research and buy products—that is, those who were purchasing managers, small business owners, and administrative assistants—seldom had economical or methodological online search tactics.

Some prospects found it difficult to refine searches, instead typing the same query into several different search engines. Others were easily misled into spending time on a holding page or aggregate sites, which exist purely to improve search engine placement. Often, participants would miss the major market players and end up on relatively minor or inappropriate sites because the search results and individual websites were misleading or convoluted.

Here's an example of one participant's keyword search experience. Even with highly relevant search queries, search engines don't always return useful results.

Example: An engineer was searching for specific environmental test equipment. He knew there were two main manufacturers, but only vaguely remembered what they were called. He found the first company, Temptronics, on the first try, because he correctly guessed the product line's name and it was the first search result. The second company, Thermonics, took several guesses and more than eight minutes. As the following list of his attempts shows, he was more persistent than most users:

1. Search: thermostream [**Gets Temptronics**]
2. Search: t2500
3. Search: t2500e
4. Search: temperature sourcing
5. Search: thermalstream

6. Search: Thermal Inducing System
7. Search: te2500
8. Search: thermonics [[Gets Thermonics](#)]

Because the two manufacturers have very similar sounding company and product names, it's difficult for people to remember their exact names.

3. Optimize your website for popular search engines.

The amount of difficulty people encountered when using search engines to find websites was astonishing. Even with reasonably well-formed search queries, participants couldn't find the right companies. We repeatedly witnessed companies miss opportunities because their company website didn't appear in the search results, even when people typed in keywords closely related to their business.

Most businesses have websites, but only 10% are optimized for search engine traffic. Implementing a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy means you'll get more hits from users who don't know your company name or who use terminology that differs from what's standard in your organization or industry.

If you haven't already done this, go to a popular search engine and type in some terms that you think should lead people to your site. Notice your site's visibility compared to competitors. Use exact phrases from your site, and then try some phrases that go beyond your typical in-house terminology.

When using search engines to find products and services, prospects usually entered search queries that contained one of the following elements. Make sure your SEO strategy accounts for these likely queries:

- **Company name.** If people know the company name, they'll guess the company URL and then type it into the browser address field. If their guess is incorrect, they'll try different variations of the company name in a search engine.
- **Product name or model number.** If they know them, people will enter product names or model/part numbers. They often use search engines to conjure up and compare companies that carry the desired object or service.
- **Problem description.** If people don't know an item's specific name or model, they'll enter keywords that describe their problem or functions of the desired product or service.
- **Any of the above, plus a geography parameter.** Having a local business or vendor nearby is preferable in many instances. To refine

the scope of search results, users often include geographic parameters—such as their city's name—in the search query.

4. Google is the search engine of choice; get your company on the first page of its search results.

The vast majority of our study's participants used Google.com as a primary method of finding business solutions. When people don't know where to begin or want to see a breadth of options, they typically start at Google or (to a lesser degree) at Yahoo! or MSN.

Get noticed: position matters

This study confirms that the first and second hits are most popular, and most people don't go beyond the first page of the SERP.⁴ Our research results emphasized the importance of top-ten or sponsored search placement. People focused their attention heavily on the SERP's first few search results and ignored the rest.

Business customers have limited time and therefore employ fierce scanning strategies on the Web to select likely candidates. Very few people went beyond two pages on their search before entering a new query. They don't expect to see relevant results past this point unless they have expectations that the search will return superfluous or ambiguous results.

Participants tended to click on the first few listings that had the appropriate keywords in the title and description. They also tended to limit their research to two or three companies; finding more would have only clouded the issue. Once customers established their shortlist of potential companies (or products), they compared each one in more detail by either delving further into each website or initiating contact.

People had more confidence in companies with top SERP listings because they were perceived to be more relevant and competent. If companies are adept enough to get placement, then they're doing something right and are probably decent enough to do business with.

User comments:

"It pays to be in the top three on Google. I like to know that the company is being aggressive at the right level, and thinks that the Web is a way to advertise their company."

⁴ SERP = search engine results page.

"After the first couple of pages [of search results], I'd stop and go to another search engine. Usually after the first few pages, the companies are small and won't be able to meet my needs."

"Generally, I find that search engines have what you need in the first couple of pages. When continuing to page through, the law of diminishing returns takes over."

Search engine companies keep a tight lip on the algorithms they use to rank organic search listings, and we can't cover the entire topic here. There are entire books and companies devoted to SEO strategies. Among those strategies, some of the most important are:

- Write clear and concise page headers and titles, structured around your audience's search phrases.
- Include popular search keywords in your descriptions.
- Don't repeat keywords mindlessly—search engines penalize excessive redundancy. Relevant text is essential, so if you stay on topic, repetition is unnecessary.
- Get your site listed on (and linked to) other complementary sites, such as association websites, legitimate directories, and news and review sites. Having other credible organizations mention and link to your site can improve your site's ranking.

5. Be wary of using dodgy search engine optimization strategies; it can hurt you and your customers.

Link farms, link exchanges, and Web rings—which primarily consist of sites linking to other sites, with the goal of improving search rankings—hurt both you and your potential customers. Such practices are considered poor Web etiquette because they decrease the value of hyperlinks, which are fundamental to both the Internet's structure and the Web's value.

Major search engines view link farming as spam and have procedures in place to penalize such practices. Some even refuse to index companies affiliated with link farms.

In our study, naïve Web users who encountered link farms initially assumed they'd found good reference sites. However, after using the sites briefly, they quickly became frustrated with the lack of reference materials, rankings, and depth. This frustration typically transferred to the linked sites.

Web savvy participants who knew about link farms found them annoying, and considered companies that employed such practices to be self-promotional, untrustworthy, and manipulative.

TOPSEARCH10.COM booth design

Only Relevant Results

Top Web Results: **Related Searches**

1. [BOOTH DESIGN: Find More Information here](#)
Get best results for booth design. Get 10 most relevant booth design results.
URL: <http://www.megasearch1.com/> (Sponsored Link)
2. [booth design in the Free Online Encyclopedia](#)
Read about booth design in the free online encyclopedia and dictionary. Over 1,000,000 articles on any topic and completely free access to the entire content.
URL: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/> (Sponsored Link)
3. [Top 10 Web Sites for information about "booth+design"](#)
For your convenience, we've gathered hundreds of Web Sites with information about "booth+design" and ranked them according to relevancy.
URL: <http://65.38.191.149> (Sponsored Link)
4. [Looking For booth+design?](#)
Find booth+design and more at Lycos Search. No clutter, just answers. Lycos -- Go Get It!
URL: <http://search.lycos.com> (Sponsored Link)
5. [Look for booth design](#)
Find booth design at one of the best sites the Internet has to offer!
URL: <http://www.redzip.com/> (Sponsored Link)
6. [Looking For booth design](#)
Find booth design and more at Lycos Search. No clutter, just answers. Lycos - Go Get It!
URL: search.lycos.com (Sponsored Link)
7. [Look for booth design on eBay](#)
Search eBay for booth design. Bid on auctions or use Buy it Now to purchase items from customer-rated sellers.
URL: <http://search.ebay.com/> (Sponsored Link)

TopSearch10.com masquerades as a search engine site, but the search results lack relevancy and lead to seemingly random websites. There isn't an *About Us* link, so the people and motive behind the site is unknown. Having your company associated with sites that exist mainly to increase SEO can hurt your company's credibility, especially if users think they're purposely being inconvenienced.

6. If your organization serves a regional market, include regional identifiers on the homepage and in metatags to increase search engine traffic.

If your company primarily serves a local market, be sure your homepage includes your city's name (and your state/province/ZIP code or other regional identifiers, depending on your country's conventions). This is important because it increases the probability that potential customers will find you if they use search engines and enter a combined query that includes both location and product or service keywords.

Someone looking for corporate lawyers in Miami, Florida, for example, is likely to use a query like: "corporate lawyer Miami" or "corporate lawyer Miami Florida." Even if you have a law firm in that city, your site might not be found unless all of these words appear on the same page.

7. Create a title and description tags that are concise and meaningful.

Search engines use title and description tags on SERPs, so craft your titles and descriptions with care. Titles and description tags must be concise, because people skim rather than read result pages word-for-word, especially professionals who don't have time to waste. Business customers demand instantaneous answers.

Being descriptive yet concise pulls readers in by giving them the gist quickly. Long-winded descriptions require more effort to decipher and are thus more likely to be bypassed than reader-friendly writing styles.

SERPs can be voluminous and packed with useless results. Make your listing stand out among the masses by using strong, meaningful titles. People skimming the SERP pay attention to keywords that are strong indicators of targeted information. Those containing the right phrases get click-throughs.

Below are examples of titles and description tags, before and after:

Example A

Bad: Moss Method: Streamline Business Strategies

Better: Moss Method: Five Tips to Reduce Production Costs

Here, the second version is better because it contains more keywords that prospects might actually search on. It also has specific, actionable words. Such words are more appealing, and make customers more likely to click the link to read further.

Example B:

Bad: Packaging solutions. View our products, check out our prices. Boxes, bags, and more!

Better: Packaging Supplies: distributor of shipping, industrial, and packing materials for businesses. Free shipping. Ship today.

As this example shows, effective descriptions concisely state what you offer and for whom. It's also a plus to include a few enticing attributes that set you apart from your competitors—in this case, showing B2B, free shipping, and product availability.

8. Consider advertising on popular search engines.

Even if you have perfect page titles and descriptions, your site still might not rank as high as you'd like. To control what people see and lead them to your

site precisely when they're searching for your offerings, consider pay-per-click advertising campaigns such as Google AdWords.

Text-only ads work. Sponsored ads attract viewers because they're contextually relevant to what people are actively seeking. Advertising that appears right when people need that product or service is considered helpful, rather than intrusive.

People are motivated to explore ads that are relevant to the search. With thousands of search hits that have nothing to do with their request, seeing a relevant ad is a reprieve. Also, text-based low-media ad formats are more credible than graphical banner ads that people tend to associate with pushy marketing and useless information.

Search ads can be expensive, however, and shouldn't replace sound SEO strategies. Organic links get most of the clicks, so your long-term goal should be to make your website visible on its own. That said, augmenting a good SEO strategy with well-positioned search ads might give your organization the extra visibility it needs.

During our study's research phase, participants knowingly and willingly clicked on sponsored ads.

"I know that these guys pay to be there. If I don't find anything here [organic listings] then I may go to the outer area [sponsored ads]...So this is definitely a favorite, so them paying for that link on Google is definitely worthwhile." [Referring to a sponsored ad]

9. Include explicit B2B terminology in the text of your search ads.

Search engine users are often shown a long list of ads, with consumer-oriented sites and business-oriented sites intermingled. Often, the consumer ads dominate in terms of sheer numbers. To entice business users to click on your ad, make sure it explicitly signals that you serve businesses rather than consumers.

You also want to deter consumer-style users, because you pay for their clicks without gaining any advantage from their visits. Use terminology that clearly shows that your products are advanced and complicated, and unsuited to the average household. To avoid paying for clicks from college students and other freeloaders looking for free services, you might even emphasize your products' high cost in your ads. Saying that something costs, say, \$1,000, is not going to intimidate someone with a sufficient budget, but you'll surely deter people looking to spend twenty dollars or less on the consumer product advertised in the box next to yours.

CREATING GOOD FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions can make or break potential transactions. Our other studies show that on average, people spend less than thirty seconds on homepages before deciding to stay or go. People judge the company's competence by the way the website looks. An organized and coherent website can exude trustworthiness and competence. Having a useful website shows respect for customers. Conversely, customers are apt to leave websites that they perceive as haphazard and self-serving.

People use visual design as the initial filter to separate the good from the bad hits. Only after it passes the visual inspection do people continue further on the site. Having the visual design match the tone of your business reinforces your corporate image. As a user, would you trust an organization that has a sloppy, chaotic website? What does it say about the company?

People have different expectations for what websites should look like depending on the industry. Imagine looking for copiers and coming across a website that has background music, blinking icons, and cartoon characters that move across the screen. You probably wouldn't take this site seriously because the design attributes are more inline with an entertainment site than an electronic equipment store.

People expect websites in creative industries to reflect a company's philosophies. If a company's site looks bland, people assume the company is equally uninspiring. However, technology companies aren't held up to the same aesthetic standards as design agencies. More emphasis is placed on clean designs that express professionalism and expertise.

Website quality is equated to company quality in many customers' minds.

During our study's research phase, users' first contact with a company was typically via their website. Participants expected sites to be professionally designed, up-to-date, error free, and informative. In such situations, the Web presence acts as a proxy for the company's physical presence.

10. Balance visual design with simple interaction design.

Your site's visual design impacts the audience's perception of your organization. One of the first criteria people use to judge an organization's competency is the visual design of its website. In a split second, people decide whether the website is worth their effort.

When there's a mismatch between a site's visual design and the company's business image, audiences assume that the organization doesn't have what they want and go elsewhere. Visual design also serves another important purpose: it lets people know whether they're on the right site.

No matter where your organization falls on the creativity spectrum, it's important to have a simple interaction design. Simple interactions match

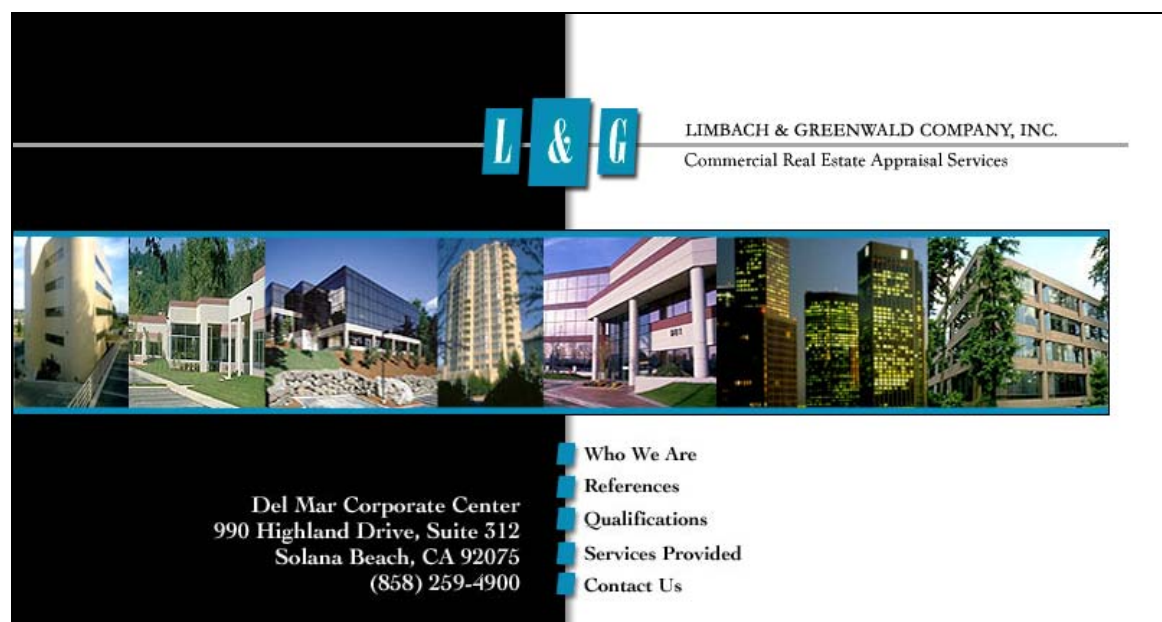
people's mental models by behaving in expected ways. Don't invent a new interaction style—for business professionals, time is a commodity and they don't have enough of it to waste. Business customers need websites to streamline their processes, answering their questions quickly and easily. They don't have the time or patience to fiddle with unconventional designs.

Although creative designs can be delightful, simplicity must come first, especially for business audiences. A website that appears confusing or is actually difficult to use creates a hostile environment that undermines conversions and reflects poorly on the company. There's no use in having an attractive-looking website if customers can't use it.

"When you're doing research on the Internet, I have very little patience with websites that don't work. I have 1,700 different vendors I need to see. I don't want to hear your drama about why you didn't get pictures up that day, there's just too much to do."

"If I can't find something right away, it's not worth spending time on it."

"I'm trying to find somewhere where I might find that information, but I don't see it, so the deal's up on this thing."



The L&G website might seem basic, but it serves its purpose well. The bare design makes it easy for prospects to find essential information. The pictures of buildings are useful in communicating the business type and scale of services (commercial real estate). However, such graphical prominence might unnecessarily impact the site's performance. Reducing the illustration's size would both retain the site's message and improve its load time.



On iteminfo.com, the overuse of fonts and graphical elements creates a visual cacophony. With so many different components screaming for attention, nothing is emphasized. Such an unwelcoming viewing experience caused one participant to say, *"This is too overwhelming for me. I will get out of this website. I don't have time to scroll through and look for the headings I want."*

Best Brokerage Consultants List Management

Welcome to Fasano and Associates...


DIRECT RESPONSE MARKETING AGENCY.....We are a full service direct response marketing agency, with emphasis on List Brokerage, List Management, Response Analysis, Forecasting, Predictive Modeling, Development of Circulation Plans, Merge-Purge/Product Management, Marketing Plan Creation, Execution and General Creative Consulting.

STRENGTH AND VISION OF OUR TEAM.....The key to the success of our organization lies in the strength and vision of our team. Our tenure in the industry, our reputation and the level of our activities reinforces our competitive position in the direct response world and gives us access to marketers, list owners, brokers, managers and all providers of data and product services.

CONSUMER MARKETS.....Fasano and Associates' focus is consumer markets. Our ability to research and learn new markets is a strength relied upon by the many clients who have partnered with us since Fasano's inception in 1982.

WE "DO" SOMETHING THAT FEW OTHERS DO.....All our senior personnel take an active interest in every client of the company.

Fasano-assoc.com has a large wide strip at the top of the homepage that had words floating in and out, left and right. Gratuitous motion and design elements such as these diminish the site's credibility, leading to comments like this: *"I don't like the stuff that's moving. The site's supposed to be professional; this movement cheapens it."*



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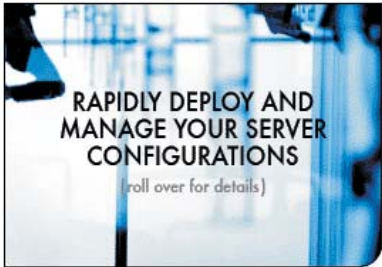
REDUCE YOUR COST OF COMPLIANCE
(roll over for details)



MAXIMIZE YOUR IT SYSTEM AVAILABILITY
(roll over for details)



MITIGATE YOUR IT SYSTEM SECURITY RISKS
(roll over for details)



RAPIDLY DEPLOY AND MANAGE YOUR SERVER CONFIGURATIONS
(roll over for details)

The Ecora homepage's rollover areas revealed more details about the company's offerings. Business customers are especially irritated by such conceal-and-reveal tactics because they create obstacles, preventing people from getting to the content quickly. A user commented, *"The bells and whistles for getting additional info are gimmicky. I am somewhat impatient with graphical bells and whistles designed to be eye-pleasing instead of marketing the product. I like dropdown menus and textual information instead of doing rollovers to find what I'm looking for."*

11. Clearly communicate what your company does on the homepage and in corporate areas.

This guideline might seem obvious, but it's often violated. In a separate project evaluating corporate homepage usability,⁵ the average website scored only 36% on the usability guideline that recommends explicitly summarizing the company's purpose on the homepage.

Don't assume that people know who you are and what you do when they arrive at your site. Always provide a straightforward description of your company's purpose throughout your site.

Avoid jargon-laden descriptions—at best, they tend to confuse users; at worst, they make users mistrust the site, especially if they perceive descriptions as marketing hype.

It's important to have a clear message on the homepage, but remember: customers don't always enter your site from there. You must ensure that information about your company's purpose is easily accessible, regardless of where people are on the website.

⁵ For our full list of guidelines to improve homepages, please see our book *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed* (more information at www.useit.com/homepageusability).


Welcome to QG.com

CLIENT SMARTTOOLS
INSIDE QUAD

SEARCH
CONTACT US



QUAD NEWS

THE MORNING LINE INDUSTRY NEWS

ABOUT QUAD
PRODUCTS & SERVICES
NEWS & EVENTS
PLANTS & INFO
WORK WITH US

More Than Ink on Paper





21 Years and Counting!
 Quad/Graphics has been named Newsweek's Printer of the Year for 2005, extending our company's 21-year winning streak. [Read More](#)

Introducing QuadSystems
 Quad/Graphics has merged several client-facing tool sets into a new business unit called QuadSystems. [Read More](#)

Quad/Graphics Joins the EPA's SmartWaySM Transport Partnership
 Quad/Graphics is the first printer to partner with the Environmental Protection Agency to voluntarily advance environmentally friendly freight operations. [Read More](#)

Quad/Graphics Employees Donated More Than \$2.6 Million to Charities in 2005
 Quad/Graphics employees demonstrated their generosity throughout 2005, raising more than \$2.6 million for worthwhile causes around the world. [Read More](#)

USPS Headed for \$1.8 Billion Loss
 The U.S. Postal Service expects to lose \$1.8 billion by the end of its fourth quarter, in part because of surprisingly weak Standard mail volume, Richard Strasser, USPS Chief Financial Officer & Executive Vice President, said at the quarterly Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) meeting held Wednesday. [Read more from DM News](#)

Reform May Be Decided by Summer
 At the same MTAC meeting, Tom Day, USPS Senior Vice President for Government Relations, said the fate of postal reform will most likely be settled by summer. [Read more from DM News](#)

Newsstand Sales: A Few Winners, Many Losers in Second Half
 Estimated newsstand sales of audited publications took a slight nose dive in the second half of 2005 with unit sales down 0.9 percent to \$479 million and retail revenue down 0.7 percent to \$1.64 billion. [Read more from Circulation Management](#)

All Weyerhaeuser Mills Certified
 Weyerhaeuser on Wednesday announced that all of its 68 paper and wood products mills in the United States meet the provisions set by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard, an independent board that promotes responsible forest management practices. [Read more from PaperAge](#)

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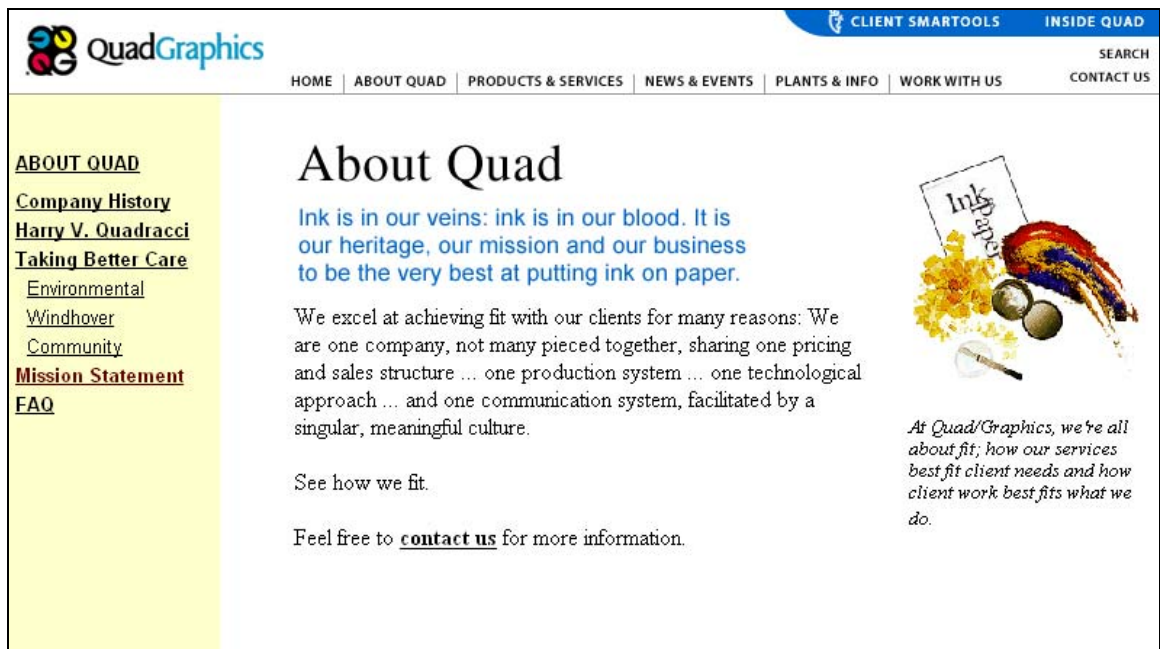
www.the-dma.org
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www.postcom.org

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www.the-imaq.org
www.publishers.org

www.gain.org
www.magazine.org
www.usps.com

www.podi.org
www.mailandjobs.com
www.DISC-info.org

www.qg.com: Even with all the text on this page, it doesn't tell you what the company does. A simple tagline or description at the top of the page would help. The strong emphasis on headlines and news overpowers the homepage, leaving little room to showcase the company's products and services. Also, notice the list of links at the bottom of the page; cross-linking users to different websites without proper context (or warning) is problematic because people end up on different websites without realizing it. (Also, if you do link to other websites, do so by showing their names or other human-readable descriptions, not their URLs.)



The *About Us* homepage for QuadGraphics is undesirable because it doesn't address anything useful from the customer's viewpoint. The verbose paragraph is uninteresting and rambles needlessly without even answering the basic question: What does the company do? Cute sayings, such as "ink is in our veins," don't communicate the site's purpose. Do they sell ink? It's better to shed the marketing speak and be straightforward. For example: *"We do commercial printing and distribution. Services include: printing, binding, design, photography, scanning, photo retouching, color correction, ink jetting, mailing, list management, integrated circulation services, direct mailing, laser imaging, and distribution."*

12. Keep taglines brief, simple, and to the point. Vague or jargonistic taglines only confuse users.

While this guideline applies to most types of websites, B2B sites tend to be the worst offender here, often forgetting to properly introduce themselves.

Taglines need to succinctly describe the website's purpose. Having a clear company description is essential for usability because it offers immediate context to help users interpret the site's information. This is especially important if your company's name doesn't describe your business, or other visual cues are missing.

Examples of *good* taglines:

"Display and Exhibit Solutions Worldwide"

Nimlok's tagline clearly indicates what they do; they make displays and exhibits.

"Change and Configuration Management"

You wouldn't know what Ecora does simply by its name, but the descriptive tagline helps you quickly figure it out.

Examples of *bad* taglines:

"Enabling Success from the Center of Technology"

Avnet Inc.'s tagline is too broad and describes just about any technology business; fortunately, its description in *About Us* is more straightforward: "Avnet, Inc. (NYSE: [AVT](#)), is one of the world's largest B2B distributors of semiconductors, interconnect, passive and electromechanical components, enterprise network and computer equipment, and embedded subsystems from leading manufacturers."

"For the Ones Who Get it Done"

Grainger is a large supplier of facilities maintenance products, but you wouldn't know it by the tagline. Thankfully, the homepage shows a list of product categories that give clues about what the company does.

FOR THE ONES WHO GET IT DONE

[Home](#) | [Order Form](#) | [Compare Items](#) | [Register](#) | [Your Account](#) | [Help](#)

[Repair Parts](#) | [Services](#) | [Resources](#) | [Company Info](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Find A Branch](#) | [Worldwide](#)

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Password

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[Forgot your user ID?](#)
[Forgot your password?](#)
[Not registered?](#)

FIND A BRANCH

Zip Code

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SEARCH PRODUCTS

Keyword(s)

[Categories](#) | [Product Index](#) | [Mfg. / Brand](#)

- Adhesives, Sealants & Tape
- Cleaning & Painting
- Electrical
- Fasteners
- HVAC
- Hardware
- Lighting
- Material Handling
- Metalworking, Welding & Shop Supplies
- Motors & Power Transmission
- Office Equipment
- Pneumatics & Hydraulics
- Pumps & Plumbing
- Safety & Security
- Test Instruments
- Tools, Outdoor Equipment & Auto Shop

ORDER NOW

Type It In

Copy & Paste

Qty.	Grainger Item
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

[Bulk Order Pad](#)

TODAY'S FEATURES

And Now, Fasteners.

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MatchMakers®

- Lamps
- Motors

Featured Manufacturers

Dayton, Brady, 3M
Condor, Westward

Why Register?

- New Products
- Hot Buys Online
- Rebate Center
- Custom Air Filters

Grainger.com: The tagline, "For the Ones Who Get It Done" is undescriptive, provides little to no customer value, and could apply to almost any business.

56

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CATALOG QUICK ORDER

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Anti-Static	Free Offers	Scales
Bags, Poly / Plastic	Janitorial Supplies	Shrink Wrap
Bar Code Labels	Labels	Strapping
Boxes - Corrugated	Markers / Stencils	Stretch Wrap
Bubble Wrap	Material Handling & Storage	Tags
CD's, Video & Media	Moving Supplies	Tape
Cushioning & Foam	Overstock Sale	3M Specialty Tape
Custom Products	Packing List Envelopes	Tubes
Edge Protectors	Retail Packaging - Bags / Boxes	Warehouse Equipment
Envelopes / Mailers	Safety Supplies	

Uline.com: The tagline, "*Shipping Supply Specialist*" adequately describes what the company does. The design is also good: it's clean and functional, and shows the telephone number, locations, and time to ship.



Nimlok.com: The company tagline, "*Display and Exhibit Solutions Worldwide*" provides context. Conversely, the welcome statement, "*Understand Create Deliver*" is trite. There's no need to literally welcome people to the site. Removing unnecessary website chatter simplifies your interface, creating a more pleasing experience. It also lets customers focus on core information, because fewer elements compete for their attention.

13. Present the breadth of merchandise on the homepage to give users a true impression of what the site offers.

The homepage should clearly answer two questions: What does this site have? Who is this site for? Prospective customers should easily understand the breadth of the products and services you offer. By immediately giving customers a good impression of your offerings, you can hold their attention.

Showing carefully chosen merchandise samples can more easily convey your offerings than simply listing product names. For example, only having products link on product listing pages is not as interesting as having the top five products showcased, along with a link to the broader catalog.

Generally, savvy buyers won't click down too many layers; they expect information to be presented quickly. If they can't find the information in the first several clicks, or if your homepage doesn't give a strong indication that you have what they need, people rarely explore the site—especially if they can find the same products or services elsewhere. Rather than waste time, many of our participants turned to search engines to lead them to the next site.

Don't hide your catalog. It's often appropriate that your homepage be the first page of your catalog. On it, show main categories clearly and provide examples of the site's content so people can shop directly from the homepage.



The left navigation panel and featured categories (with photos) on the B&H homepage clearly reveal what the site carries. In fact, the company's homepage also serves as the top catalog page. It's clear that the site's purpose is to sell, and it does this well. Participants liked this site because it's easy to navigate and find products.

McMASTER-CARR®
Need help finding a product?
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Find Products Build Order

Qty	Item

Add ? Show 1 line

Current Order - 2 lines

Over 435,000 Products To Choose From
98% of the items ordered are shipped from stock.

Pipe, Tubing, Hose and Fittings
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Pumping and Filtering
Dewatering and Sewage Pumps • Condensate and Submersible Pumps • Drum Pumps • Transfer Pumps • Circulating Pumps • Flexible Impeller and Gear Pumps • Piston, Plunger, and Rotary Pumps • Metering Pumps • Vacuum and Jet Pumps • Exhaust Muffler/Filters • Air Intake Filters • Separators and Steam Traps • Strainers • Water Filters • Filter Cartridges and Bags • Oil Skimmers and Filters • Woven Wire Cloth • Sieves and Filter Paper

Process Control and Instrumentation
Metal Ball Valves • Plastic Ball Valves • Butterfly Valves • Gate Valves • Globe Valves • Needle Valves • Check Valves and Orifices • Solenoid Valves • Pop-Safety and Relief Valves • Regulating Valves • Control Valves • Float Valves and Floats • Mixing and Plumbing Valves • Plug Valves and Control Cocks • Mixers and Vibrators • Water Heaters • Immersion Heaters • Heat Cable • Drum Heaters • Cartridge, Strip, and Band

Plumbing and Janitorial
Water Coolers • Lavatory Partitions • Toilets and Urinals • Toilet Tissue and Dispensers • Personal Care Products • Showers • Sinks • Faucets • Paper Towel Dispensers and Hand Dryers • Soap and Soap Dispensers • Test Plugs • Plungers and Drain Cleaners • Test Pumps • Cleaners • Sponges and Brushes • Wipes • Brooms • Mops and Squeegees • Sorbents • Vacuums • Pressure Washers • Garden Hose • Spray Nozzles • Mats • Stair Treads • Grating • Shovels and Scoops • Landscaping Equipment • Bird and Pest Control • Concrete, Asphalt and Roof Repair • Tarps • Paint and Coatings • Paint Brushes, Sprayers and Rollers • Step Stands • Step Ladders • Ladders • Rolling Platform Ladders • Scaffolds • Wall-Mount Ladders • Work Platforms

Machinery Maintenance
Lubricants • Grease • Oil • Grease Guns • Grease Fittings • Oilers • Coolant Systems • Knobs • Handles • Hand Wheels • Leak Detectors • Vibration Meters • Tachometers • Stroboscopes • Inspection Mirrors • Vehicle Maintenance

Measuring, Leveling and Inspecting
Rules • Tape Rules • Distance Measuring Tools • Squares and Protractors • Layout Tools • Screw Checkers and Gauges • Calipers • Micrometers • Bore Gauges • Depth Micrometers and Gauges • Gauge Blocks • Electronic and Dial Indicators • Feeler Gauges • Plug and Thread Gauges • Levels • Surface Plates • V-Blocks • Magnifiers • Microscopes • Ultraviolet Lights • Flaw Detectors • Thickness Gauges • Hardness Testers

There's no doubt what McMaster-Carr offers because it's listed in detail on the homepage. The pros: You know what they sell. The cons: It can be overwhelming, especially if you're new to this site or don't know what the item you want is called. The latter is complicated by the fact that the site's *Search* box is hidden behind the *Find Products* tab. This design had mixed reviews, leading to comments like these:

"It's obvious that they are serious industrial suppliers, but this might be a little overwhelming to me."

"Oh! My eyes are burning for looking at this. Obviously, they have a lot."

"It looks like they are a major hardware supplier of everything. I have a military background and this is where I could look. I assume they are serious. They say they have 400,000 products. To have this depth logistic-wise gets complicated. So these guys are huge and have multiple warehouses."

We recommend something in between. Show representation of your merchandise without being daunting.

14. Use pictures and graphics to augment the text describing your company's offerings.

Prospects relied on graphics to interpret business propositions, sometimes ignoring everything else. These findings are consistent with other website studies: generally, people don't like reading online because it's fatiguing.

Carefully chosen pictures that augment the sites content create a more pleasurable user experience than a heavy wall of text. Supplementing text with meaningful pictures or illustrations is another way to increase your site's appeal. Doing this makes your site look interesting, but, more importantly, it helps people better understand your offerings.

Having prudently selected pictures of your company's offerings reinforces the message of what your organization is about. Rather than use graphics solely for decoration, use them to convey your services. Also, choose your graphics carefully—selecting the wrong one can convey unintended meaning.

When done properly, visuals help illustrate points that text alone can't clearly communicate. Use them wisely.



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Gateway's got hot gaming systems and sweet gaming accessories.



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[Customer Service](#)

[Drivers & Downloads](#)

[PC Security](#)

[Contact Support](#)

[Upgrade Your Gateway](#)

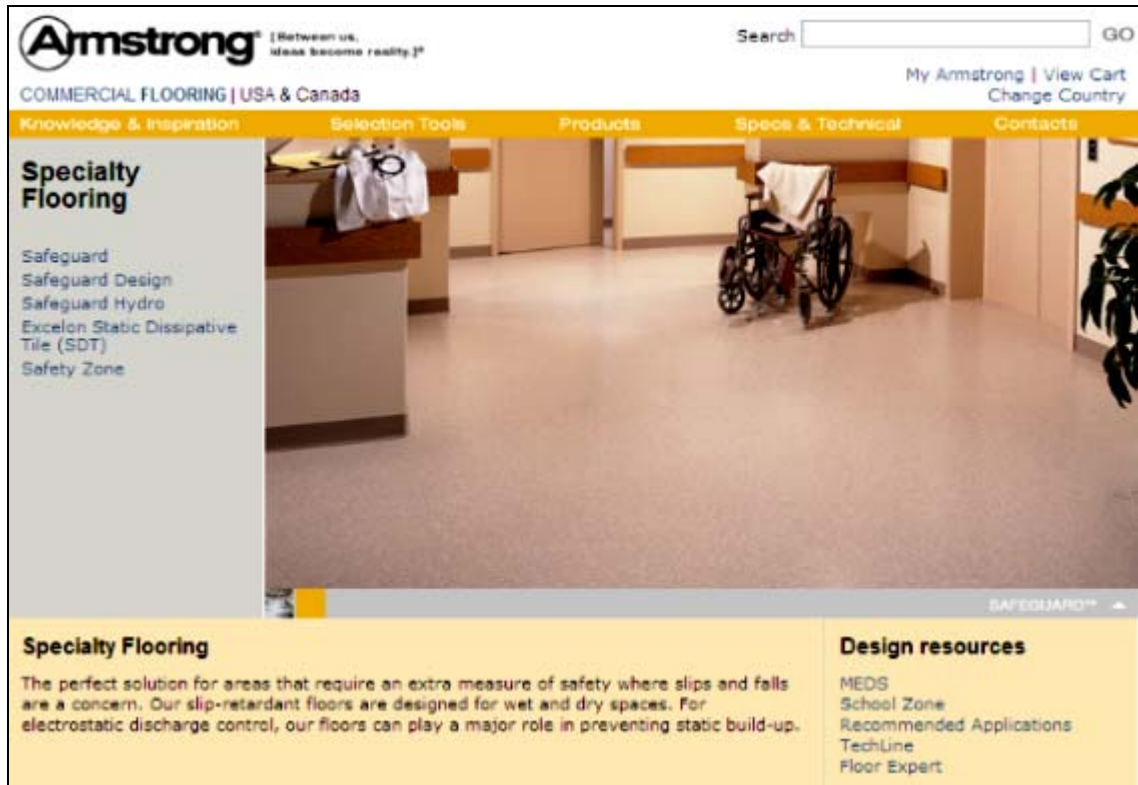
Helpful Links

[Retail Products & Store Locator](#)

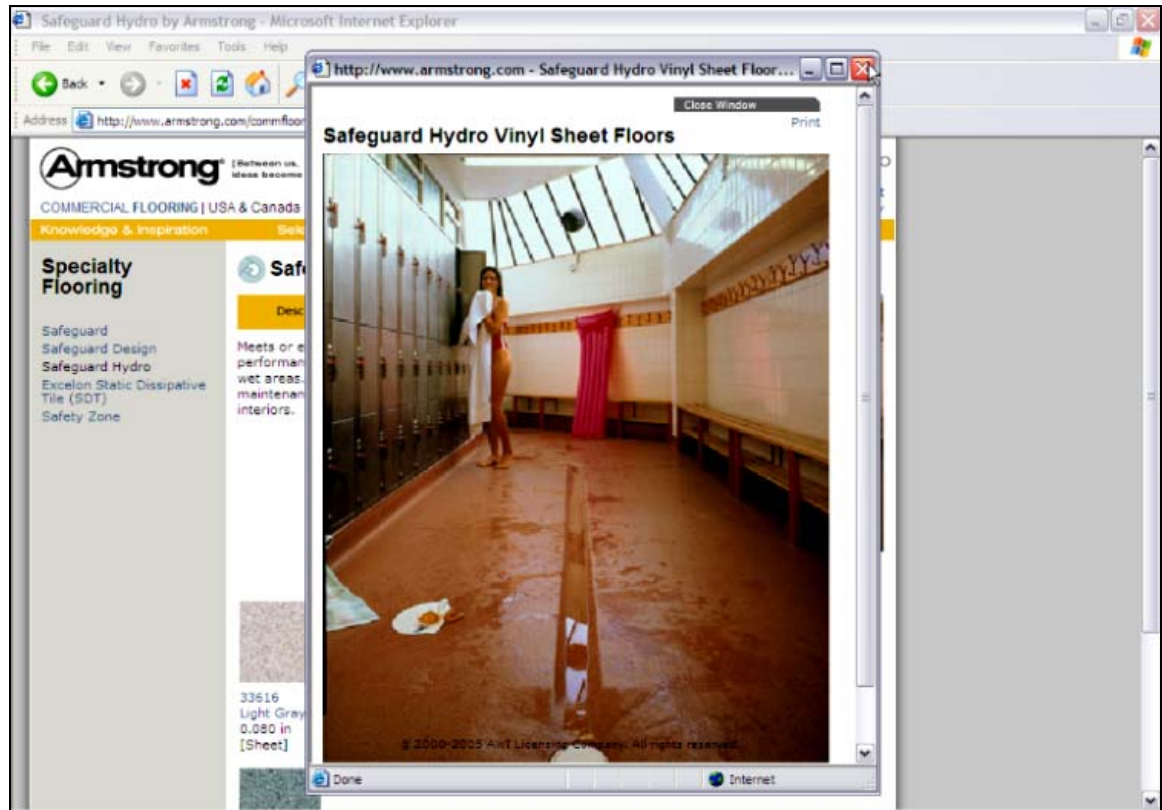
Find our products in a store near you.

[The Knowledge Center](#)

Gateway.com's homepage does a good job of revealing the company's products through useful pictures. Without reading anything at all, there's no doubt that they sell personal computers and laptops. In addition, the bold, clearly defined segmentation areas (e.g., small businesses, medium and large businesses, etc.) let B2B customers know that the company caters to them. Also, the descriptions under each segmentation category make it easier for customers to choose the right ones.



Armstrong.com: Showing the wrong picture can evoke unintended reactions. This photo inspired strong negative reactions from one user, who said: *"I have this gigantic picture. I know what flooring looks like. I don't need a giant picture with a wheelchair. This is a depressing photo. I want to see what the products are, but it's below the page."*



Armstrong.com: This illustration misses the mark by including extraneous elements, distracting viewers from the actual product it's trying to sell. A user reacted, *"There is a picture of a locker room with a girl—this is not the most appropriate picture. What's this on the floor? It looks like eggs. This is just bad! And this is a huge company. The pixels are off. And you can't tell she's wearing a swimsuit."*

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---	--	---

TransworldSystems.com: After seeing this picture, users erroneously assumed that the company only dealt with healthcare-related industries. People made this assessment because they looked at the picture and ignored the text.

Medical

Medicare

Individuals

Groups

2-50 Employees

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Interactive plan guide | For groups with 51-5000 lives

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GoodLawn, Inc. has grown to more than 200 weed-hating employees, and with a profit margin as thin as a single blade of grass; they're looking for a way to contain health care costs. They're interested in a consumer driven plan that transfers more

Putting it all together

Drag and Drop the pieces of the puzzle and find out more of what these plans have to offer.

Reset Puzzle?

UnitedHealthcare.com: A highly graphical and interactive representation is typically not the best way to introduce your products and services. Business professionals want simple interactions with little fuss. A director of human resources scoffed at this interactive interface because it was cumbersome to use. Dragging and dropping puzzle pieces to get information on medical plans disrupted her research, causing her to give up and say: *"I don't have time for this. This is fine for someone who has all day. I don't have time for puzzles, so what do I do? These scroll bars bother me because I have to scroll for little information. I'd rather see it laid out all there. This is really bothersome."*

15. Use keywords that differentiate B2B from consumer sites.

Customers need to know immediately whether your organization has the capability to solve their problems. Businesses have unique requirements that B2C companies can't support, such as professional grade products, bulk purchasing incentives, and customized attention from sales agents.

Prospects must be certain that you provide the scale of service that meets their needs. Do you sell to business? If so, how large a business? Provide signals on your site to let people know you cater to them. Common terms associated with B2B services are:

- Bulk
- Business
- Commercial
- Distributor
- Enterprise
- Industrial
- Professional
- Trade
- Wholesale
- Company size: Small, Medium, Large

At StockroomSupply.com, the homepage's pictures and categories clearly show what the company does. Also, buzzwords, such as wholesale and bulk, indicate that it offers services to businesses. Note: "bulk" isn't shown on this screenshot because the text flashes on and off. We don't recommend using dynamic text because it's difficult to read, especially for people with impaired vision. Also, most people think it's unprofessional and annoying.

16. Show your range of offerings by indicating the scale of usage.

One complaint participants had when researching businesses was that it was hard to figure out the magnitude of solutions offered. So, it's a B2B site, but what quality/grade equipment does a company have? A large Hollywood production company might want a higher-end movie camera than, say, a company shooting commercials for local businesses. Different businesses and companies require varying levels of products/services. Websites need to be immediately clear about their offerings. When it's not explained, people often erroneously assume that the company is too small and won't meet their needs, especially if the company name is unfamiliar.

Indicate the depth of your coverage with explicit descriptions. Rather than simply saying you offer products to professionals, indicate the size of businesses or the degree of offerings. If a prospect is looking for a service—say, printing—they need to know what your company can handle. For smaller print runs, using a small printing service might do, but massive productions demand a company that can handle a large project's quantity and inherent intricacies.

For such services, key indicators of scale might be production capacity, type of equipment used to provide the service, or specialized procedures. A catalog printing company, for example, might use volume or size of printing presses to indicate scale. Similarly, a cleaning service could show its capacity by indicating their customers' building sizes.

Using a client list to show range has pros and cons, depending on your business goals. A client list of large, well-known companies enhances your site's credibility. It shows that you can handle large operations. However, prospects that work in small or medium-size companies might be intimidated by it. If you want to appeal to a broad range of customers, include a range of small and large companies in your client list if possible.

For products, you can indicate scale by showing usage scenarios, output levels, and user roles. For example, a company selling time-tracking software for small business should simply say so. If you're selling physical equipment, such as drill presses, give the durability and output capacity level.

Manufacturing Facilities

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**The equipment is here. The people are here.
The end result is here.**

Experience the difference!

Perry Judd is a large printing company that can handle large accounts, but the company's website doesn't clearly indicate this fact. It tells the number of presses the company has, but not the size of the presses. Without this critical piece of information, prospects can't easily determine whether the company has scalable services that can meet their business needs. A user said, "*I'm finding that it's not telling me about their equipment, times, and number of runs—so their website is not very helpful. I'm not going to get anything useful from this website.*"

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About VistaPrint
Who we are

VistaPrint is making high-quality graphic design and custom printing convenient and affordable for everyone.

With more than 6,000,000 customers worldwide, VistaPrint is the source for high-quality graphic design, Internet printing and premium service. We offer small businesses and consumers a convenient, high-quality solution for graphic design services and full-color printing in small quantities, without the premium price.

How does VistaPrint design and print such high quality products at such a low price?

Customer Quotes

"Just a brief note to let you know how satisfied I am with the business cards and postcards that I recently purchased. There are not many things these days that exceed a person's expectations, but the quality of your printing certainly exceeded mine. I am impressed by the ease of the online design capability. The product looked exactly as it did on the screen. Also, the speed of delivery was really amazing. I have already started a mailing of the postcards and I am receiving a good response."

VistaPrint.com: This website also reveals who its customers are. The first paragraph in the *About Us* section says the company provides services to small businesses.

17. Don't force prospects into arbitrary segmentation categories.

When business customers arrive at your website, they need to know whether you offer services to match their needs. Market segmentation works when individuals clearly fall under determined categories—such as Medical Doctors and Account Managers—that obviously entail different needs. The downside, however, is that such answers are not always clear-cut. People often have difficulty defining their particular roles using the available options.

A common mistake companies make is to organize their websites around strict market segmentation, such as home, home office, or business. Such segmentation is confusing to users because it often forces them to choose between overlapping categories. They're forced to figure out what type of user they are and what type of category their product or service fits in.

For example, if I own a business, but work at home, which category should I choose: home, home office, or business? Similarly, choosing between company sizes—small, medium, and large—is agonizing not only because people might fall on the cusp of the cut-off point, but also because they don't necessarily know where the cut-off point is.

Customers also wonder what they're missing when they choose one category over the other. Categorizing customers by company size, for example, is often arbitrary. The product you need isn't necessarily dependent on your company's size if only a few people will use it. In that case, the item's capacity is more important. I'm looking for a cleaning service, it doesn't matter how many employees I have—what matters is the surface area that needs cleaning.

When people are forced to choose among seemingly arbitrary categories, their confidence plummets. They often wonder whether they made the right choice, and whether their choice will limit their options.

It's fine to offer market segmentation categories, especially when the categories are clear-cut. But you should also offer alternative ways to find products.

To account for different scenarios, organize your B2B site according to usage scale rather than just customer type or demographics. Professionals seeking compatible items for their businesses don't necessarily approach tasks from a market segmentation approach. Rather, people tend to approach research from a problem perspective—that is, they focus on their needs, not their roles.

18. Clearly define/label market segmentation categories.

If you're going to use segmentation by company size, show explicit definitions of each category. For example: Small Business (less than 10 employees), Mid-Sized Business (10-1,000 employees), Enterprise (more than 1,000 employees). Although company size is a common segmentation parameter on B2B sites, each category's definition varies from company to company. Don't assume viewers know your segmentation cut-offs. Define them.

Gateway recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional.

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Find our products in a store near you.

[The Knowledge Center](#)

Gateway.com defines market segmentation categories. This is good for alleviating ambiguity. People in government and education sectors know who they are, so these two categories are clear. The main downside to this design is that there isn't an easy way to shop by features or need; clicking through to the product area shows only three other product options.



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Verizon.com's categories are confusing because the choices are unparallel and improperly organized—product-centric options are mixed with market segmentation categories (e.g., *DSL & Internet*, *Information Technologies*, and *Wireless Service* vs. *Small Business*, *Medium Business*, and *Large Business & Government*). It's often proper to offer different classification schemes, but the main categories need to be organized and labeled in a way that clearly differentiates them.

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UPS.com: Role-based categories such as these are confusing when choices are insufficient or overlap. For example, a small business owner might be all of these. In addition, each category's description doesn't accurately reflect the differences between categories. Organizing services by the prospect's problem is a more useful approach.


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Solution Finder

Provide Information About Your Needs

Please answer this short series of questions. It will only take a few minutes to find the UPS solution that meets your needs.

1. Tell Us About Yourself

My role is: My industry is:

2. Tell Us About Your Business Need

What problem are you trying to solve?

- Finance and Insurance
- Finding Automated Shipping Systems from UPS
- Third Party Solutions Integrated with UPS Technology (UPS Ready)**
- Assistance Integrating UPS Technologies
- Integrating UPS into a Web Site or Back-end System
- International Shipping
- Managing Returns
- Tracking and Visibility
- Cost-effective Mailing Solution
- Viewing and Receiving My UPS Bill
- Increase Understanding of UPS Shipping Services

[Help](#) | [Advanced Search](#) |

UPS.com's *Solution Finder* isn't helpful because it requires customers to identify themselves in granular categories that are ever so difficult to decipher. As stated previously, customers might use category schemes that are different than yours. Forcing people to select one item from each menu is problematic because several items might apply. In addition, having multiple filters increases the complexity exponentially, making the interaction extremely error-prone. Complex interactions like these turn off users and reduce your chances of getting leads.

HELPING PEOPLE CHOOSE THE RIGHT PRODUCT

19. Focus your message on the context of the buyer's problem, not on the product.

Prospects care about how products solve their problems. Therefore, when it comes to finding technical support or product solutions, people commonly take the problem approach, identifying the problem or symptom first, not the product.

That is, they prefer to describe their problem according to symptoms rather than by naming a solution. For example, people search “my printer is producing fuzzy text” not “give me printer XYZ.” Also, users with some knowledge of general problems expect to access support topics that apply to product types—like computers or drivers—rather than any one specific model number.

Contrary to human behavior, many B2B websites require users to identify the product first. Such an approach assumes that people know the answers to their problems, which is usually not the case.

It's often better to show solutions in the context of people's problems because it reflects the customer's approach to problem solving. This advice applies to supporting people in finding technical support information and finding the right products to buy. It's better to list the product benefits in a problem context than to simply offer bloated feature lists that people can't relate to.

Finally, having dedicated pages that address typical customer problems is good for SEO. To use a medical analogy, users often express their queries in terms of their symptoms, not the diagnosis or cure. If your pages' vocabulary is typical of the pain points you endeavor to solve, you're more likely to be found than if you only talk about yourself.

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-Janet Stotler

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ProSeries.com: The high-level descriptions for the three different versions of the tax preparation products are helpful because they identify the scale and typical usage scenarios unique to each product. The simple, jargon-free language makes it easy to understand.

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What type of tax practice do you have?

To select the perfect ProSeries solution for your needs, choose which column best describes your business:

I prepare primarily 1040 and state individual returns. I'm looking for:

- Software designed for preparing multiple returns
- Built-in step-by-step guidance from the experts at Intuit
- Category-specific checklists that simplify tax prep and help me ask my clients the right questions
- A step up from TurboTax
- Easy-to-use 1040 tax prep software
- Starts at just \$250 - includes electronic filing also!

If this sounds like your business then we recommend:

ProSeries Basic

[LEARN MORE](#)

[TRY IT](#)

I prepare a range of returns including individual and business returns - some of them very complex. I'm looking for:

- A comprehensive series of forms and schedules for individual and business clients
- Unsurpassed reliability and support
- Tax software that can handle complex and difficult returns and provides solid error-checking and diagnostics
- Starts at just \$999

If this sounds like your business then we recommend:

ProSeries Professional

[LEARN MORE](#)

[TRY IT](#)

I prepare a high volume of returns and I need access to lots of fast refund options - it's critical for my clients. I'm looking for:

- Easy access to bank products (I file more than 50 bank product returns annually)
- Refund options including RALs, RTCs, RTDDs, State RTs, Cash Cards, and RALs/RT Advances (IRALs)
- Unlimited electronic-filing
- Tax software that is built for speed and easy staff training
- Starts at just \$795

If this sounds like your business then we recommend:

ProSeries Express

[LEARN MORE](#)

[TRY IT](#)

ProSeries.com: The description quality in these bulleted items varies. Showing the price differences, differentiating factors such as unlimited electronic filing, or access to features is fine. However, many of the bulleted items—such as “Unsurpassed reliability and support” and “Software designed for preparing multiple returns”—are focused on sales and could apply to any of the products.

[CUSTOMER SERVICE](#)
[MANAGE MY ACCOUNT](#)

[Home](#) > [Data and IP Services](#) > [VoIP](#)

Data and IP Services

- VoIP
- VPN
- Frame Relay
- Secure Gateway
- ATM
- Private Line
- Ethernet Services
- Digital Media
- Connectivity
- Business Continuity Solutions

Security

IT Solutions

Managed Network Solutions

Contact Center Solutions

Conferencing

Voice

Wholesale

Partner

Government

Education

Customer Service

VoIP

[Overview](#)
[Features](#)
[Compare Products](#)
[Tech Diagram](#)
[FAQ](#)

Compare Products

IP Flexible T1

A VoIP solution that allows you to maintain your key system equipment on premise while enabling the efficiency benefits of VoIP.

- Supports familiar line based features enabling a seamless migration to VoIP.
- Avoid equipment changeover, retraining on features, or service disruption.
- Increase data performance with voice compression and dynamic bandwidth allocation.
- Flexible growth choices are available since the product is scalable and interchangeable with other VoIP services.

CONSIDER THIS IF:

You would like to keep your existing key system with 24 lines or less but would also like to leverage the network efficiency benefits of VoIP.

IP Integrated Access

Enables VoIP technology using existing Key or PBX system and allows you to migrate to a total VoIP environment at your own pace.

- Typically does not require additional investment in costly infrastructure or desktop equipment.
- Choose from a Long Distance Only or a Local and Long Distance package.
- Flexible growth choices are available since the product is scalable and interchangeable with our VoIP products.

CONSIDER THIS IF:

You are looking for a cost-effective way to carry voice and data over the same connection using your existing Key or PBX system and phones.

Verizon.com: The *Consider This If:* sections of the page are helpful because they focus on the user's situation. The bulleted lists are less helpful because they focus on features.

InFocus
The Big Picture

BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION STORE ALL PRODUCTS SUPPORT COMPANY

Shop Order Status Cart Search Store GO Find Accessories

[Home](#) >> Store

InFocus Store

Welcome to the InFocus Store - your source for business and home entertainment projectors and accessories from the industry leader in DLP and LCD digital projection.

→ Products

- Business Projectors
- Home Projectors
- Accessories
- Lamps
- Extended Warranties
- Thin TV
- Clearance Center

→ Resources

- 15-day Return Policy
- Shipping Policy
- Find The Right Projector
- Find The Right Screen
- Projection Calculator
- Glossary

800.660.0024

[Online Help](#)

XGA PERFORMANCE
NOW ONLY **\$949**
NEW LOW PRICE
INFocus WORK BIG X3

FREE SCREEN with purchase
Bring the movie theater experience home.
ONLY \$999
INFocus PLAY BIG

Deals
Today's Rebates and Special Offers
[Learn More](#)

All screens 20% off!
Shop now for best selection
[Learn More](#)

InFocus Specialty Stores

- Education →
- Federal/GSA →
- Local/State Government →
- Non-Profit →

Clearance
Refurbished and overstock deals
[Shop Clearance](#) →

Get credit for your old projector.
[Find Out How](#) →

InFocus Newsletter
Get information and news to help you get the most out of your presentations.

The InFocus website segments projectors by business and home. This delineation is appropriate when the type of usage is clear. However, the answer isn't always clear-cut. Often, people resent having to categorize themselves as business or home, preferring to purchase products on the basis of needs. Who cares if the projector is for home or business, so long as it does what I want it to? For example, if I need a projector for small, infrequent business meetings, would a home projector still work? If so, I'd be saving money. However, to accommodate customers who take the needs approach to finding products, InFocus smartly offers a useful *Find the Right Projector* tool. The downside is that the tool is buried too far down the page; it would be more noticeable if placed closer to the conflicting choices.

Find the Right Projector

Select the features that are important to you and a list of recommended projectors will be provided.

Portability

How portable does your projector need to be?

Travel - I will travel with the projector frequently

Shared - It may be shared, will generally be in one location

Mounted - It will be permanently mounted

Environment

Which of the following best describes the typical environment in which this projector will be used?

Small Room - the amount of ambient light can be controlled

Moderate Sized Room - some ambient light

Large Room - ambient, well-lit room

Price

How much would you like to spend?

Small Budget - I need to spend little as possible

Moderate Budget - I'm willing to spend a bit more for features

Flexible Budget - features are more important than price

Resolution

What type of information will the projector primarily be used for?

Standard - Powerpoint presentations and slide shows (svga)

High Detail - complex documents such as spreadsheets and engineering diagrams (xga)

Wireless

Would you like the ability to present data wirelessly from your PC?

Yes - I would like the ability to add an InFocus LiteShow wireless adapter

No - I will not need wireless capabilities

→ VIEW PROJECTORS

InFocus.com's *Find the Right Projector* tool is a good example of helping people solve their problems. The tool emphasizes factors that people care about in plain English and reveals all of the options at once, making it easy for users to compare the magnitude of choices.

20. Offer full solutions, not just individual products and services.

B2B customers often need highly complex products and services, along with clear guidance and recommendations on full solutions. In our study, participants often struggled to figure out which components to buy to solve their problems. Some systems required several parts, including hardware, software, license, warrantee, and maintenance plans, but websites didn't provide recommendations. People commonly stopped shopping because they couldn't figure out what combination of components to buy. Participants looking for teleconference systems, for example, thought they had to get the equipment, service, and support from different companies because websites didn't package solutions well. Like a knowledgeable salesperson, websites need to suggest complete packages that best meet customer needs.

Companies don't sell their solutions enough, even though they offer them. If your site integrates product and solutions content, people can easily access information without having to visit different sections. It's common for people to only look in one area, expecting all related information to be fully integrated and cross-referenced. At a minimum, offer a cross-reference from the product page to the area that describes the full-service solutions encompassing the product.

Some websites have *Solutions* areas, but they don't answer people's questions, offering vague, general information that's poorly integrated with product information.

Well-presented solutions are considered helpful, even if they cost more than buying single components. A helpful salesperson provides facts, clearly indicating the benefit of purchasing add-ons and packages without sounding salesy. When customers buy a copier, they want to know what other items are required to get it going (a power cable, toner, extended warrantee, and so on). Websites that appear genuinely concerned about solving people's problems seem more knowledgeable and trustworthy than sites that simply push products and leave customers with unanswered questions. Conversions are more likely to occur when customers feel informed. Also, be wary of offering both a *Solutions* area and a *Support* area. People often confuse the two and assume that *Solutions* will solve their problems.

OUR SOLUTION

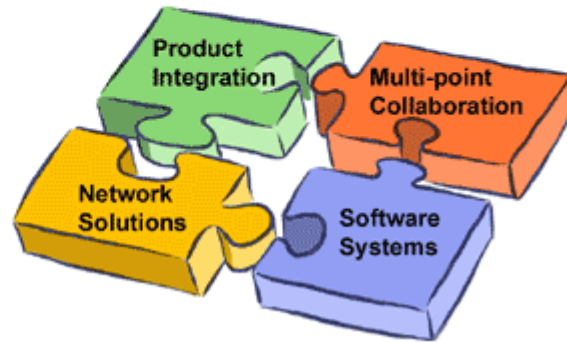
VSGi offers a unified portfolio of best-of-breed products and services. We provide a single source for:

Product Integration — quality product portfolio paired with a full suite of complimentary services

Multi-point Collaboration
— bridging and gateway integration products and services

Network Solutions — traditional ISDN and a video-ready IP network

Software Solutions — scheduling, monitoring and management tools



It appears from this webpage that VSGi provides full solutions to teleconference needs. However, website visitors might not realize this because the information is inappropriately buried in *About Us*, rather than integrated with the product information in the other parts of the website.

PAGE LAYOUT

21. Keep high-priority options and information visible above the fold.

B2B sites should have direct paths to business customers' high-priority tasks, such as account management and support tools, order history/tracking, and customized catalogs.

Keep important information and links to high-priority tasks at the top of the page. While more people are starting to scroll, many people are still resistant. Even among users willing to scroll, the vast majority still make their selections from options they can see without scrolling. Such users will never see a better—but invisible—choice below the fold. Just because you have something on the page doesn't mean people will notice it, even if it's bold and flashing and meant to be seen.

22. Provide subtle cues that more information exists below the fold.

Even when users think a page has what they want, scrolling takes effort, and they typically do it only if they see the proper visual cues. How you place critical elements on the page can dictate whether people scroll or not. Placing indicators such as headers or content that peeks out into the screen's viewable area suggests that there's more content below.

23. Place page elements in their expected locations; don't be different just for the sake of it.

Over time, several Web page elements—such as search entry fields and shopping cart links—have developed “default” locations. Placing items in areas where people expect to find them increases their chances of being noticed.


Structure your page in prioritized order, showing high-priority tasks and features that help people accomplish these tasks first. Having direct access to common tasks streamlines the research and buying process so that people spend time pursuing your goods, not being tangled up in the navigation.

MILLIPORE

SEARCH

[HOME](#) | [ABOUT MILLIPORE](#) | [BIOSCIENCE](#) | [BIOPROCESS](#) | [APPLIED MARKETS](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [ONLINE STORE](#)

CUSTOMER SUPPORT


- Order Service
- Technical Service
- Local Millipore Office
- Local Application Specialists
- Retrieve or Change Password
- RSS Feeds 

LOGIN

Username


Password

|

 Items: 2

ONLINE STORE

Product Catalogue



- [Ordering Information](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Technical Literature](#)
- [Material Safety Data Sheets \(MSDS\)](#)
- [User Guides](#)
- [Bibliographies](#)
- [Media Information Center](#)

Culture Media

Ready-to-use Millipore media solve numerous problems in microbiology laboratories where time, equipment and trained personnel are often in short supply. Most Millipore media are available in convenient, single test 2 mL plastic ampoules, eliminating the manipulation of glass ampoules and avoiding the waste and spoilage associated with bulk packaged media. Manufacturing and testing of ampouled media is conducted in strict accordance with precise quality control procedures to ensure optimal growth and maximum shelf life. Reagent grade water is used to clean glassware and make-up media. And other factors that affect media stability and performance, such as finished product pH, entrained gases, light exposure and temperature are carefully analyzed and controlled during the manufacturing process.

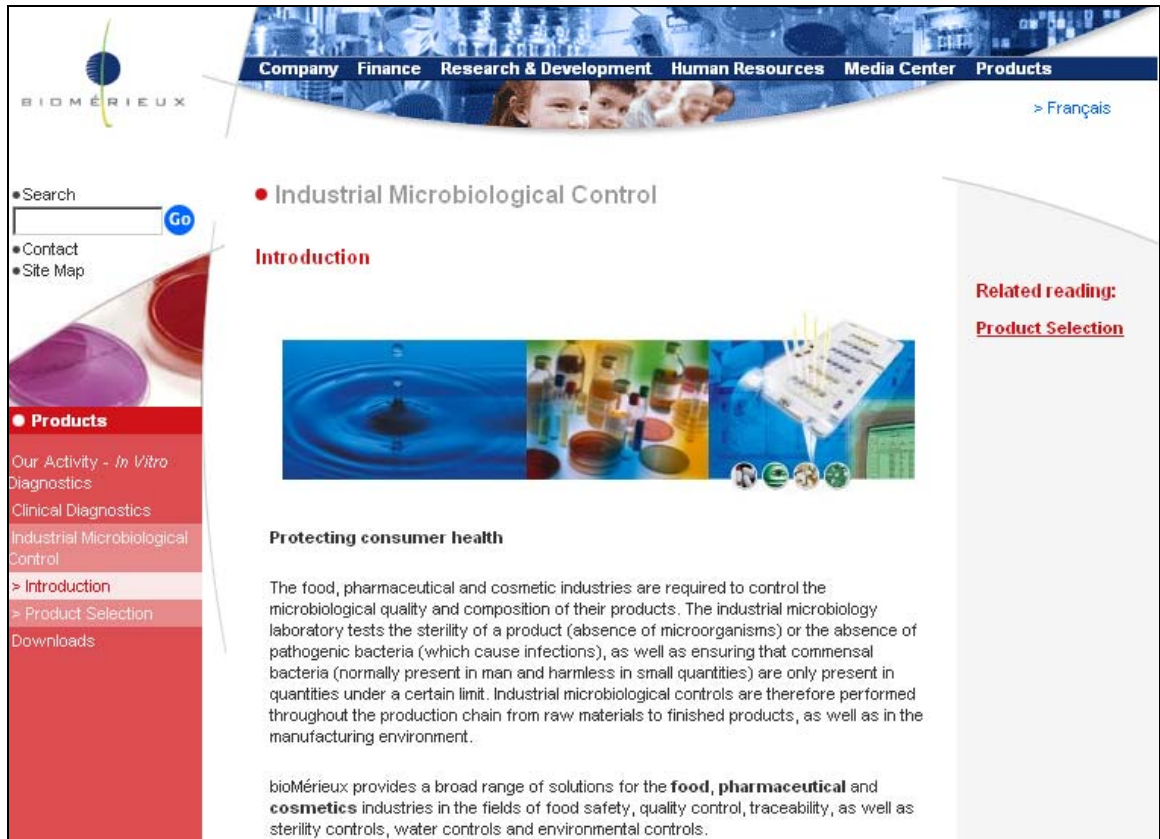
Millipore media: standards for reliability and simplicity

- Nutrient media developed specifically for culturing microorganisms on membrane filters
- Selective media forms to match organism type and analytical test needs
- Precise quality control procedures during ampouled media manufacture and testing ensure optimal growth and maximum shelf life


A customer on the Millipore site had difficulty finding the shopping cart because it's at the bottom of the page, far from where people expect it to be. The standard position for shopping carts is at the top of the page. Lesson: Don't move items just to be different. Place them where people expect to find them.



On the bioMérieux website, the product listings page lacks visual cues that invite customers to click and explore the company's product line. It's not clear where users go to see the offerings, because different types of content are inadequately separated and labeled. Even the page title is confusing because it says *Our Activity* rather than *Our Products*. Also, the bold underlined text areas in the page's main part look clickable, but they're not.



The bioMérieux website makes finding products difficult by placing common navigational elements in areas people don't expect. For example, the link to product information (vaguely labeled *Product Selection*) is set to the far right, in the page periphery, where people often expect to see low-ranking information and advertising. In addition, the search box has a non-standard placement and design, making it highly likely that it will be overlooked.



[Home](#)
[Applications](#)
[Products](#)
[Where To Buy](#)
[What's New](#)
[Support](#)
[About Us](#)

[Product Search](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Employment](#)

Fluke Companies

Fluke Networks

Fluke Biomedical

**Hart Scientific,
a Fluke Company**

**Raytek,
a Fluke Company**

**Fluke. Keeping your world
up and running.**

Contact Us

To contact Fluke on the WEB:

- [Service \(Repair, Calibration or Parts\)](#)
- [Request Calibrators and Standards Literature](#)
- [Request Process Tools Literature](#)
- [For technical assistance with our website](#)
- [All other products, applications, information and requests](#)

To contact Fluke Biomedical on the WEB:

- [Service \(Repair, Calibration, or Parts\)](#)
- [Request Literature](#)
- [Technical Assistance and Product Information or Application](#)
- [Request a Biomedical Quote](#)

Local sales offices:

Visit our Where to Buy section, which is organized by country and lists all of our local sales offices, including addresses, phone and fax numbers, e-mail and web site addresses. Fluke subsidiary operations will be labeled as "Fluke" offices. Manufacturer's representative offices will be labeled as "representative" offices. Many Fluke subsidiary offices' web sites list local authorized Fluke distributor locations, too.

Local service offices:

Visit to our [Services](#) section, which is organized by country and lists all of our local service centers' addresses, phone and fax numbers, e-mail and web addresses. Fluke subsidiary service centers will be labeled as "Fluke" offices. Manufacturer's representative service operations will be labeled as "representative" offices.

For questions regarding service and support for Thermography Products contact Fluke Thermography by email: Ti30support@fluke.com or phone: 1-888-286-1578.

To contact Fluke corporate offices by mail, phone, or fax:
Note: For service related inquiries please see our [Customer Service Section](#).

- Fluke Corporation

Street address:	6920 Seaway Blvd., Everett, WA USA 98203
Mail address:	PO Box 9090, Everett, WA USA 98206
Main switchboard:	(425) 347-6100
Sales and Technical Support:	1-800-44-FLUKE
Fax:	(425) 446-5116
- European Sales and Service Headquarters: Fluke Europe B.V.

Street address:	5602 BD, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Mail address:	PO Box 1186, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Main switchboard:	(31 40) 2 678 200
Fax:	(31 40) 2 678 222
- Fluke Biomedical

Street address:	6920 Seaway Blvd., Everett, WA 98203
Mail address:	Mail Stop 216A, PO Box 9090, Everett, WA USA 98206-9090
Main switchboard:	(425) 446-6945
Toll free (US):	1-800-648-7952
Fax:	(425) 446-5629

Viewable area
at 1024x768

The *Contact Us* page on Fluke.com. Because of the page's poor layout, people erroneously assumed that the only way to contact Fluke was to fill out a form. Unfortunately, people didn't realize that the company's full contact information was below the fold.

CATEGORY NAMES AND NAVIGATIONAL STRUCTURE

B2B websites face greater navigational challenges than B2C sites because of the complexities of business. Although B2B sites targeting large technology businesses with Web savvy users might seem to have an advantage over other sites, that's not necessarily true. Just because users are technically adept, doesn't mean they want a challenging site. In fact, during our study, many technophiles struggled to overcome difficult navigation and poorly written content.

Our previous studies show that expert users spend less time on websites and assess them much quicker than more naïve users. If a site passes the first-impression test, the average user spends less than two minutes total on a website before deciding whether or not to move on. This translates to: Keep it simple, or you'll lose business.

24. Use category labels that reflect the user's language to minimize ambiguity.

This guideline is broken more often on B2B sites than you'd expect. While business clients are sophisticated, they have varying levels of interest in and knowledge about your line of business. People's responsibilities within their organizations have a significant influence here. An end user might know the lingo, but a high-level executive or a purchase manager might not. Whenever possible, use category names that are understandable to a broad range of users, from novice to veteran customers.

Because website designers are usually domain experts, they're familiar with internal jargon and sometimes forget that their audiences are not. It's easy to accidentally assume that internal vernacular is known to everyone in the outside world.

Categories and hypertext act as signs, and should give people a strong indication of what will happen even before they click on the link. People tend to resist clicking on unknown items or, even worse, to ignore them all together because of the high error risk.

Cleaning up unhelpful link labels helps create a better user experience and can positively impact how users perceive your company. Good link names help people quickly and accurately predict what they'll get when they click a link. When labels are nondescript, people are more likely to click the wrong link and miss the information they need.

Businesses that use vague categories and labels are setting themselves up for failure, particularly if they provide many different products or services. Busy customers might be forgiving at first, but after a few missed clicks, you can kiss your sales goodbye.

Four tips for category names:

- **Keep link names as brief and specific** as possible. Don't include obvious or redundant information, such as using your company name in each link. If you do, users see a column of identical words and must carefully read each link to glean the differences between them. It's a misconception that sprinkling keywords profusely on your site increases search engine traffic. Such strategies are outdated; search engines apply a much more sophisticated algorithm these days.
- **Don't use generic instructions** such as *Click Here* as a link name. Instead, help people quickly differentiate links by giving them informative names. Rather than just linking to *More*, for example, tell users specifically what they'll get *More of*.
- **Avoid using made-up words** or nonsensical terms. Stick to commonly used terms. For example, use *About Us* rather than *Company Experience*, and *Submit Logo* rather than *Logo Mill*.
- **Avoid having multiple overlapping categories** such as: *Information Center*, *Service Information*, and *Customer Support*.

The following confusing categories are commonly found on B2B websites; use them with caution:

Support vs. Solutions

People sometimes confuse *Solutions* with *Support* because they think *Solutions* contains solutions to their technical problems.⁶


Distributor Location/Reseller Locator/Locator

When customers scan the page, the word *Locator* stands out. Customers think these different categories mean the same thing: company's actual locations. This is a classic example of how narrowly focused Web users can be, swooping in on keywords while ignoring the rest.

Solutions/Solution Providers/Solution Services

The term "solutions" has various meanings, depending on the website. It might, for example, indicate a list of products, or integration and process management. In general, it's an ambiguous term, and when possible, you should instead use a word or phrase that's more precise.

⁶ For more discussion on support vs. solutions, see guideline #20.



Mid & Large Business

Call 800-779-2000

View Cart | eSource | Order Status | My Account | Support

SEARCH

Products

Electronics

PC Accessories

Software

Services

eProcurement

Solutions

Mobile Solutions | Networking | Success Stories | Account Executive | Value Added Resellers | Affiliates

Products

Accessories

Services

Solutions

· Mobile Solutions

· Networking

· Account Executive

· Value Added Resellers

· Affiliates

· Success Stories

· Become a Network Solution Provider

eProcurement

Tools

Call Me

eSource

Product Locators

· Accessory Locator

· Memory Locator

· Ink Locator

Trade In & Recycling

Connect Your Business

Building a reliable network begins with Gateway

Gateway recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional.

The Performance You Need

Get the personalized support and products your business demands. Are you looking for the latest high-performance PCs, building a high-speed client/server network or equipping a mobile workforce? We have the powerful price and performance solution for your business. For more information, contact a [Gateway Account Executive](#).

Productivity and Training¹

Invest in your human resources.

· Higher productivity and less downtime

· Faster return on technology investment

· Increased employee confidence and retention

· Improved customer service

> [More Details](#)

Mobile and Wireless

For anytime, anywhere productivity.

· Notebooks for the mobile professional

· 24/7 phone and online technical support²

· Notebook extended service plan, repair and loaner services³

· Wireless networking options

> [More Details](#)

Networking

Exceed your productivity and flexibility goals.

· Servers, storage and networking hardware

· Site survey, needs assessment, network planning, installation, cabling and training

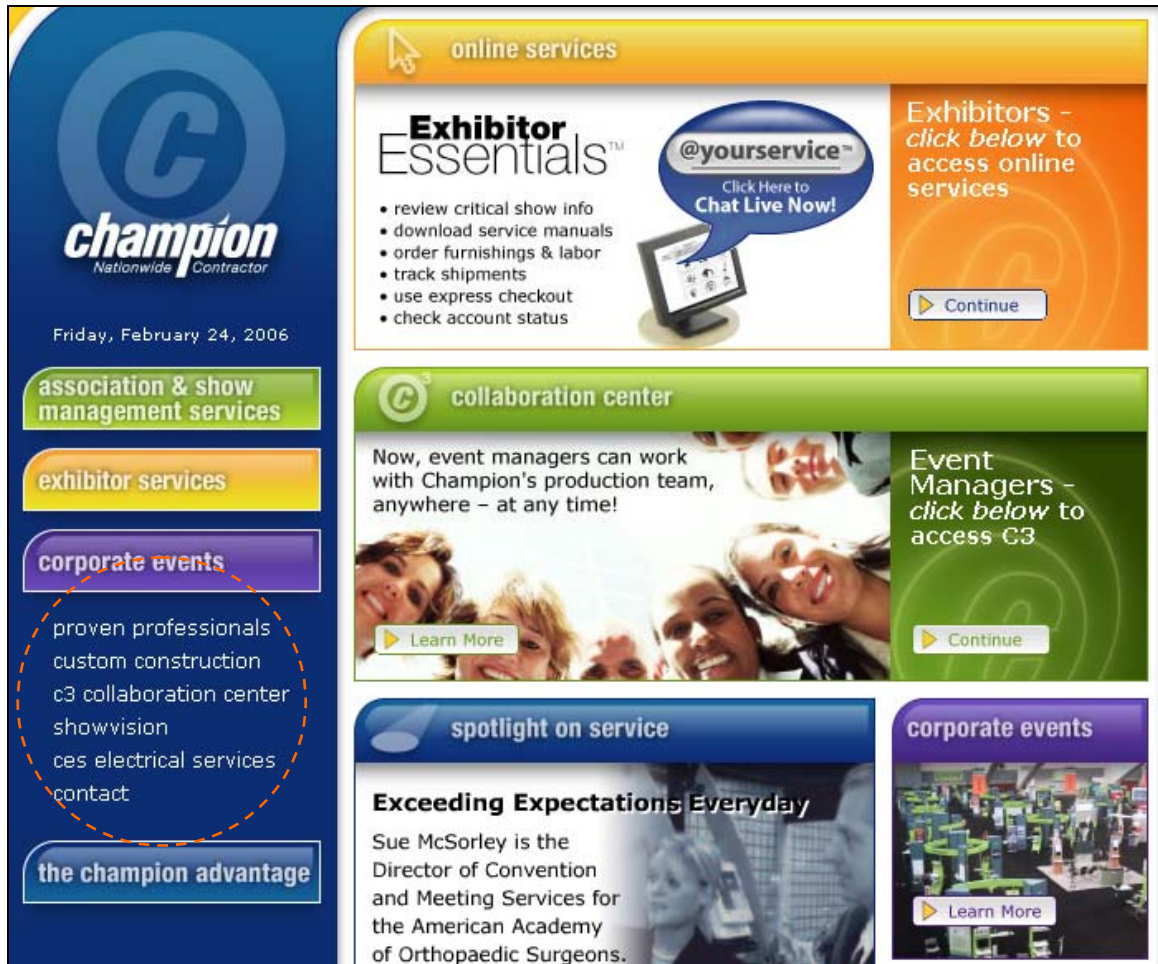
· Advanced network support

At Gateway.com, the *Solutions* tab wasn't enticing and people rarely clicked on it. When one participant finally did, he was baffled by the content he found, leading to this comment: *"What do they mean by 'solutions'? I wouldn't call this stuff solutions. This is more like infrastructure rather than solutions. I don't understand the Solutions tab."*

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INFO@NNGROUP.COM

48105 WARM SPRINGS BLVD., FREMONT CA 94539-7498 USA



People on the ChampionExpo.com site had difficulty retracing their previous steps because of poorly named links (e.g., c3 collaboration center, showvision) organized under vague categories (e.g., exhibitor services, corporate events). As one participant put it, *"I'm having a weird vibe that I can't find what I'm looking for. I'm starting to panic little. What was I looking at before? If I need them to build me a booth, where do I go? Now I'm taking stabs at stuff. I must not have looked carefully that first time. Huh, I can't find what I'm looking for now. I'm looking for custom booths. Where is the Web page that talks about that? Now I'm clicking on every single page. I can't find it anywhere."*


25. Use classification schemes that communicate attributes your end-users can decipher.

One of the biggest mistakes organizations make when categorizing components is to use schemes that are familiar to them, such as arranging products by model number or product line, or to mirror their organizational charts. As a result, it's common for sites to make perfect sense to the creators but not to their end users.

Internal schemes are often counterintuitive to users' way of thinking. When researching printers, for example, people usually look for one that satisfies certain conditions, such as the output levels and footprint dimensions. Most users won't click on each model number to determine the differences, especially when there are many to choose from. Also, model names and numbers are usually incomprehensible to customers. Who knows the difference between a TCE-3445 and TCE-3574 machine? Probably only the people who built it.

When product numbers lack sufficient meaning, people make up their own theories about the classification. For example, for some people, larger model numbers mean bigger, better, or costlier products. Others assume product positions on the listing page indicate a product's scale: some people assume products are listed in ascending order (cheapest first), while others guess that products are listed in order from left to right, instead of top to bottom.

Such differences in user interpretation underscore the need for websites to provide a direct and simple method for comparing products.



[Between us, ideas become reality.]*

COMMERCIAL FLOORING | USA & Canada
My Armstrong | View Cart
Change Country

Knowledge & Inspiration
Selection Tools
Products
Specs & Technical
Contacts


SPECIALTY FLOORING

[SAFEGUARD](#)
[SAFEGUARD Design](#)
[SAFEGUARD Hydro](#)
[SAFETY ZONE](#)
[STATIC DISSIPATIVE SDT](#)




SAFEGUARD Design


Description	Typical Applications	Toolbox
<p>Featuring six colors specifically designed to integrate with Armstrong's other slip-resistant sheet flooring, SAFEGUARD and SAFEGUARD Hydro, SAFEGUARD Design is perfect for dry spaces where trips and falls want to be avoided. A slip-resistant grit is dispersed throughout the wear layer for long-term performance. It meets or exceeds recommended ADA requirements and its low profile surface is also easier to maintain. Coordinating weld rods are also available. SAFEGUARD Design is</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Samples Guide Specification Product Spec Sheet (PDF) Installation (PDF) Maintenance (PDF) MSDS (PDF) Warranty (PDF) Literature Calculate Life Cycle Cost




+ Enlarge Room Scene




31110
pewter
0.080 in
[Sheet]



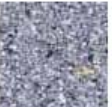
31109
silver
0.080 in
[Sheet]



31101
gold
0.080 in
[Sheet]



31103
garnet
0.080 in
[Sheet]



31107
sapphire
0.080 in
[Sheet]

The Armstrong website over-hypes their brand, and doesn't give people an easy way to compare products. For example, people couldn't tell by the names how products differed, leading to comments like, *"They are using terms that I'm not familiar with. I'm not in the flooring business, they are. There should be some wording that says SAFEGUARD is low-end, medium range, or high range. They have an industrial-looking PDF, but no way to compare their products and figure out what is better for me."*



Exponents.com organizes products by product line (i.e., Luminents, Exponents, and Interiors) and not by function. While such structure might make sense from the company's perspective, it doesn't make sense from a customer's perspective, leading to this comment: *"It's not intuitive on this website where I should go first. I'm looking around to see where I would find info on what they can do for me. 'Luminents' means nothing to me. Is it lighting? I glazed over that because it says nothing to me."* Another problem: There isn't sufficient contrast between the white background and yellow text. The legibility is so minimal that even people with perfect vision will have difficulty reading the text.

PERSONAL

BUSINESS

MY ACCOUNT

PRODUCTS & SERVICES | INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS | SUPPORT

Products & Services

Products & Services

→ Home

[VZVoice](#)

[VZEmail](#)

[VZAccess](#)


[VZGlobal](#)

[VZCustom](#)

Industry Solutions

[Home](#)

Special Offers



Save \$100 on a Treo 700w Smartphone

Stay connected on the Verizon Wireless broadband network and with Windows Mobile®.

[→ Buy Now](#)

You need to check email, download files, access the Internet and return calls. All while on-the-go. Now you can be more productive and efficient with Verizon Wireless' comprehensive suite of wireless services that offer simple solutions for your most complex business communication needs.

YOUR BUSINESS SOLUTIONS FROM VERIZON WIRELESS

Select a solution

GO

Select a solution

VZVoice

VZEmail

VZAccess

VZCustom

VZGlobal

Industry Solutions

See how Verizon Wireless can change the way you do business with wireless solutions that work for your industry.

VZEmail

Innovation wireless services that allow you to conduct business away from the office and increase productivity.

The Verizon Wireless Products & Services page doesn't help people find what they need. Users can't select products by company code names. This page doesn't sell. Instead of using a dropdown menu (with its associated accessibility problems for people who have difficulties using a mouse precisely), it would be better to utilize the available space for a permanently visible listing of these five offerings. The company could then supplement each headline with a one-line summary of what that service does (using customer-centric language).

Need help selecting a product that best fits your business imaging needs? Use our [Product Selector](#) →

1-800-60-TOSHIBA

PRODUCTS & SERVICES →

PRODUCT SELECTOR →

TOSHIBA QUALITY COMMITMENT →

DEALER LOCATOR →

SUPPORT & DRIVERS →

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS PROGRAM →

COMPANY →

PRESS ROOM →

COPIERS

FAXES

PRINTERS

ENCOMPASS

PRODUCTS & SERVICES • COPIERS

Color Copiers

- e-STUDIO2100C
- e-STUDIO211C
- e-STUDIO281c
- e-STUDIO3100C
- e-STUDIO351c
- e-STUDIO451c

Compare Models →

Small Workgroup (up to 20 ppm)

- e-STUDIO120
- e-STUDIO150
- e-STUDIO161
- e-STUDIO162
- e-STUDIO162D
- e-STUDIO163

Compare Models →

Medium Workgroup (up to 45 ppm)

- e-STUDIO202L
- e-STUDIO232
- e-STUDIO281c
- e-STUDIO282
- e-STUDIO351c
- e-STUDIO352
- e-STUDIO451c
- e-STUDIO452

Compare Models →

Large Workgroup (up to 105 ppm)

- e-STUDIO1050
- e-STUDIO520
- e-STUDIO600
- e-STUDIO720
- e-STUDIO850
- e-STUDIO900

Compare Models →

Toshiba.com lists the company's products by model numbers. Showing only model numbers would be disastrous. However, the site alleviates confusion by appropriately organizing major model categories by product output (ppm, or page per minute) and offering users a comparison table that shows the differences between each model.

26. Have multiple classification schemes if necessary, but avoid unnecessary redundancy.

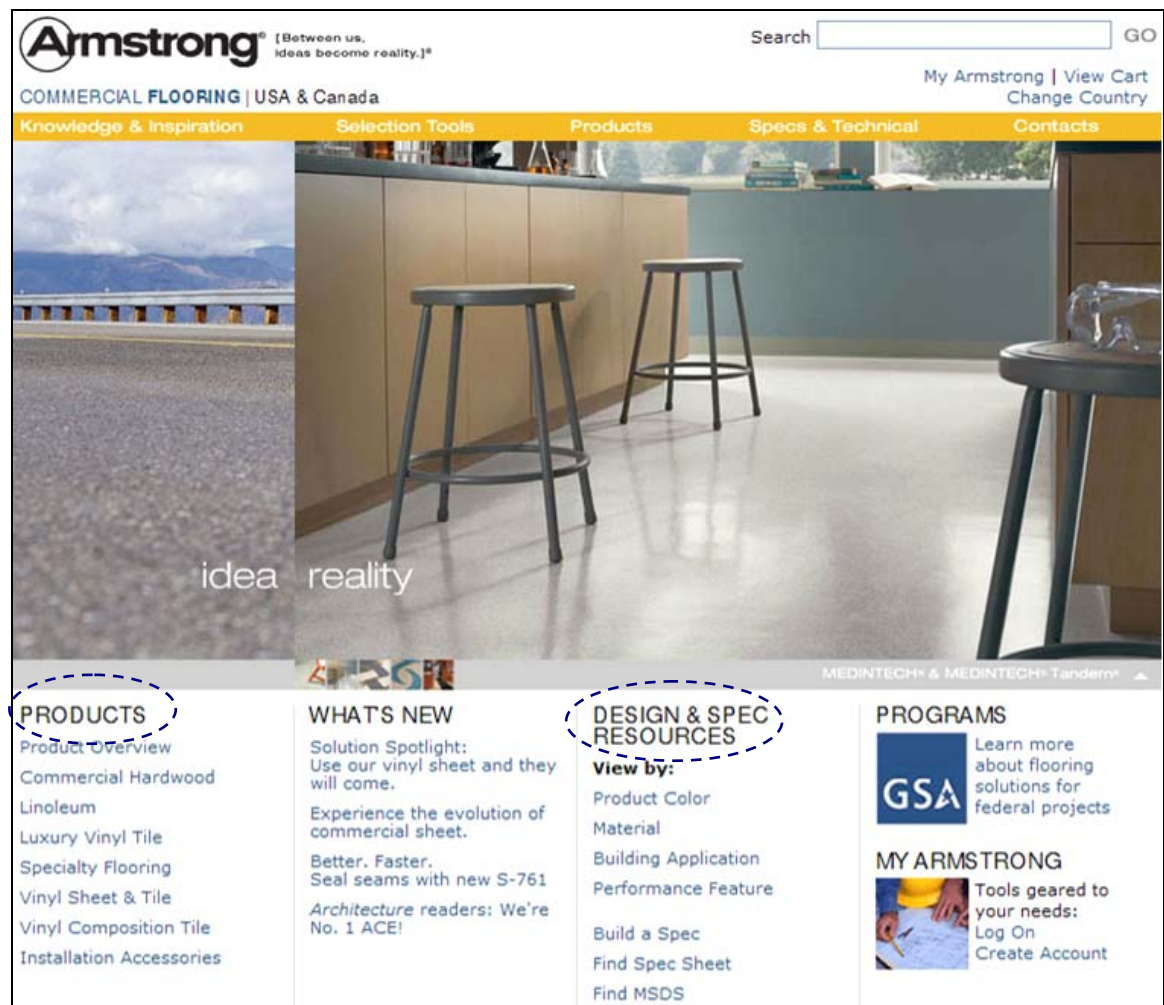
People approach tasks in different ways, and having multiple categorization schemes can benefit broader audiences.

While it's important to offer prospects a way to find products by product name and number (usually with *Search*), it's critical for customers in the early research phase to find products by attributes that they care about (e.g., function, output, size).

Cross-referencing is good, as not every prospect classifies components in the same way. If items belong to distinct categories, then it's probably best to classify them differently and offer multiple ways to access them.

That said, you shouldn't provide multiple navigation areas for the same types of links. Categories that are too similar or have overlapping meaning complicate the interface, making users work hard to create order.

Overemphasizing links reduces their impact and clutters the page. And with so many competing elements, all items lose their impact. It's better to clearly feature something in one place.



Armstrong.com lets users find product information in various ways, including through a product-centric or problem-centric approach.

COMMERCIAL FLOORING | USA & Canada

Search GO

My Armstrong | View Cart
Change Country

[Knowledge & Inspiration](#)
[Selection Tools](#)
[Products](#)
[Specs & Technical](#)
[Contacts](#)

Selection Tools

View by Product Color
View by Material
View by Building Application
View by Performance

MEDS
Healthcare Solutions

SCHOOL ZONE
Education Solutions

FLOORSCORE
Emission Standards

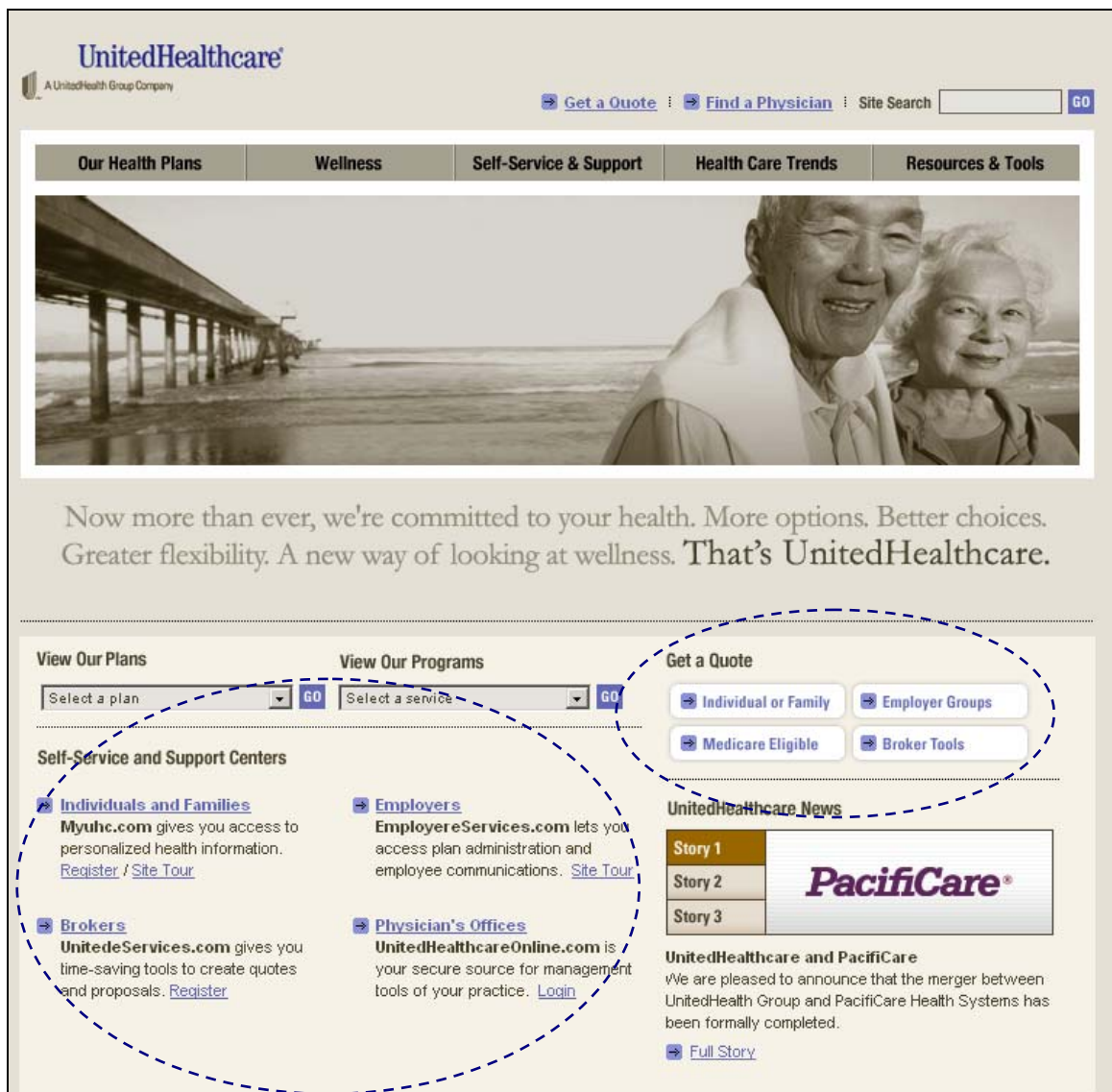
RECOMMENDED APPLICATIONS
What Goes Where

View by Performance Feature

[Printer Friendly Version](#)

<p>Heavy Rolling Loads show products</p> <p>Heavy objects that roll and/or move across the floor surface, such as wheeled carts, furniture with casters and equipment dollies.</p>	<p>Resistance to Gouging show products</p> <p>The ability for the floor's surface or wear layer to resist damage from objects that can forcibly cut, groove, or displace material.</p>	<p>Slip Retardant Flooring show products</p> <p>Floors that provide an extra measure of safety for areas where slips and falls are a concern, such as building entryways and grocery isles.</p>
<p>Heavy Stationary Objects show products</p> <p>Heavy objects that remain on the floor in a fixed position for a long time, such as furniture and fixtures.</p>	<p>High Count Traffic / Traffic Area show products</p> <p>An area exposed to a great number of people, and/or loads. Floors in high traffic areas need to be durable.</p>	<p>Static Dissipative Flooring show products</p> <p>Floors that prevent, control and/or dissipate static in sensitive working environments, such as electronics manufacturing.</p>
<p>Recovery From Indentations show products</p> <p>The ability for the flooring to regain its original shape after being indented by rolling or stationary loads.</p>	<p>Overall Stain Resistance show products</p> <p>The ability of the floor to resist permanent staining or discoloration from liquids and other substances.</p>	<p>Maintainability show products</p> <p>A subjective term referring to a floor's ability to be kept clean.</p>

Another good example of how Armstrong.com lets users find products in different ways: The descriptions help customers quickly identify products with their target attributes. Also, note how much more helpful it is to have a distinction between relevant features (such as “heavy stationary objects” vs. “high count traffic”) than it is to opt for the customer segmentation found on most B2B sites. In the latter case, categories such as “big vs. medium-sized business” might both have heavy objects or highly trafficked areas (emphasizing the point made in guideline 17.)



The United Healthcare site has different links and labels with similar meanings dispersed throughout the page, making it difficult for customers to differentiate between them and hone in on applicable areas. As one user commented, *"The information on this website is too scattered. I have options up on top and bottom, then I have View Plans and View Programs, I don't know what the differences are. Here they have Employers and here they have Employers. The layout could use some improvement."*

It's often better to feature a component in one apparent place than to sprinkle the same thing throughout the page. Fewer options to wade through mean fewer opportunities for confusion.

27. Create a clear and consistent navigational structure; your Web presence should integrate, rather than separate, internal organizations.

This guideline is the standard and applies to almost any type of website. People are people, and B2B customers by day are B2C customers by night. While technology changes rapidly, human behavior remains relatively constant and evolves slowly.

Users prefer consistent navigational structures, especially in business situations where time is scarce. When navigation changes drastically from one page to the next, users must shift their attention from using the site to figuring out how to use it. This makes them feel uncertain and hesitant. A consistent navigational structure helps users visualize their current location and alternative options, making it easier to find information and keep track of where they are.

Large websites comprised of subsites or affiliated sites are notorious for violating this guideline. Each subsite is usually created by a different group and has its own organization and look. When the subsites are linked together haphazardly, user experience is deplorable. People must often request the same thing multiple times (because each subsite acts independently) or figure out different navigation systems.

Integrate and unify your company's sites. Bouncing customers between seemingly random places creates a jarring experience—one that requires people to learn a new set of navigational rules. Even worse is when subsites offer inconsistent information and different messages, leading to comments like this (referring to Armstrong.com):

"It looks like the same information is in different places. It's just confusing. You find info in one area and you see something similar in another area. It makes me think twice—what else I am missing?"

SEARCH

After navigation, search is the second most popular website feature because it's perceived as a quick way to bypass navigational systems. People search when they know what they want, know what it's called, and don't need visual cues to help them find it.

With search being so popular, it's worth investing resources in making it right. People judge companies according to the quality of search results and their experience on the site. Having a responsive search engine that returns valid results is refreshing,

as most search engines on individual websites are atrocious. Although people don't usually have high expectations for search, they continue to use it because it often takes less cognitive effort to enter a search term than figure out a site's information architecture. The most upsetting scenario is when people know exactly what they want, know the site has it, enter the most obvious keyword searches, and the search engine doesn't return it.

In our study, almost every participant used search engines—often multiple times on the same website. Unfortunately, results are usually plentiful in numbers, but not in quality. In this study, results were often gibberish and were not prioritized by relevance. Search results' titles and descriptions were often vague or nonspecific, making it impossible for participants to select the most appropriate hit. They often chose inappropriate results for the task they were doing, such as going into white papers when they were looking for the product page. Users wasted a great deal of time dredging through a flood of useless search results.

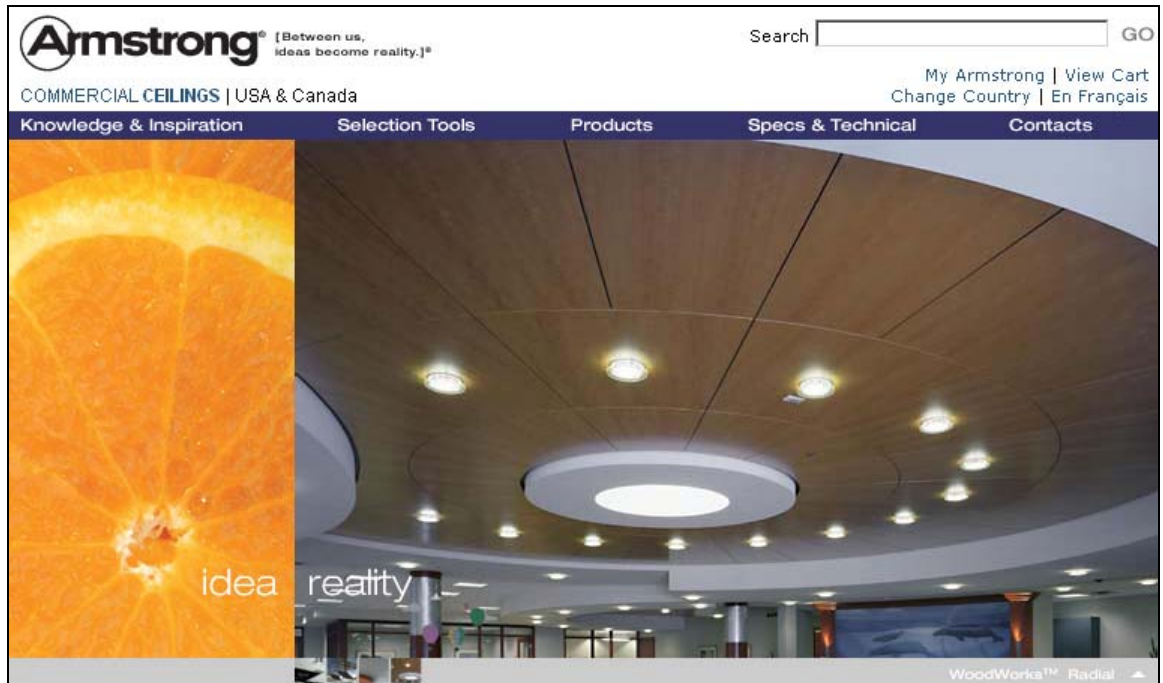
B2B customers are not as Web savvy as we initially hypothesized. The online proficiency of B2B customers is more akin to general consumer audiences—that is, they have widely varying skill levels. Unlike technical experts, who often abandon meaningless hits quickly, general audiences and B2B customers are typically more bewildered because they haven't learned the scanning and search strategies that technical users have established. We saw a range of business audiences (e.g., office managers, owners, buyers, and executives) fall victim to bad search engines, randomly selecting hits that sent them off on tangents that had nothing to do with what they were seeking. Sometimes participants were lost and didn't know it.

28. Place the search box in a clearly visible area on top of each page.


Search is an important tool, especially on big websites, and people want it—preferably on the homepage and every interior page. People depend on search when they know exactly what they want and can formulate a query, or when they give up on the site's navigation. It's unpredictable when this will happen; having search available everywhere creates a failsafe mechanism.

We recommend placing the search box on top of the page, preferably on the right, since that's where people usually expect to find it.

Keep the visual treatment of search simple. This is an area where a plain design works best. A wide-open text box with a *Search* button next to it sends a strong signal for search. Don't hide search behind a link, or masquerade it in graphical treatments. People look for a type-in field, and when they don't see it, they often assume that the site doesn't have a search feature. Also, don't include text boxes at the top of pages, as users might mistake them for search.




Armstrong.com has a noticeable search box on the interior pages of their website. The wide, white text box is placed in the upper right hand corner, where people expect, and provides the appropriate cues for search. The search mechanism could be simplified even more by renaming the action button: by labeling the button *Search* instead of *Go*, they could remove the initial *Search* label.


Your ideas become reality™

Welcome to Armstrong USA & Canada
Africa & Middle East
Asia
Australia
Europe
Latin America

Flooring
Ceilings
Cabinets
Shop by Room
Commercial Flooring
Commercial Ceilings



RESIDENTIAL
For the Home

En Español



FOR
Commercial Applications

About Us

Armstrong is a global leader in the design and manufacture of floors, ceilings and cabinets.

- Company Information
- Careers
- For Investors
- Press Room

What's New

- Experience the evolution of commercial sheet
- Interactive Reverberation Tool for education spaces – calculate and hear the difference

- Armstrong Vinyl Flooring: Introducing Natural Fusion, the next generation of luxury resilient flooring.

- Envision your new interior room design using Design my Room.
- Armstrong launches new cabinets web site

The Armstrong.com homepage doesn't have a search box. There could be many internal reasons for this (e.g., different subsites have different search engines), but in reality, customers don't care. When websites don't provide customers with what they expect, they assume the company is ignoring or brushing aside their needs. This reflects poorly on the company.



The Process-cooling.com's search box design lacks elements that people commonly associate with search, and it was therefore easily missed.

29. Ensure that your site's internal search engine returns what people ask for, in order of relevance.

When users search a product name or number, the first search hit should be the corresponding product page, not a seemingly random press release or white paper.

Account for reasonable search strings and misspellings when indexing. It's common for people to make typos or have errors in capitalization and spacing in their queries, so it's best to be forgiving. Make sure that the search engine recognizes common entries such as product/service name, model number, and catalog numbers.

Invest in a good search engine. It's worth the investment, given that people rely on search to find information on your site. Take the time to modify the software's settings to optimize retrieval quality for your site's characteristics. If you haven't done so already, learn what your customers actually search for. Analyze the search logs for several weeks and rank people's queries by frequency and occurrence. Improve the writing on your pages so they work better with search engines. Write clear, succinct titles and page summaries that are scannable and that help users quickly decide which hit to choose.

Take a look at the next three screens from the Caterpillar website. Although it has a good product page for the C7 Engine, getting to it using the site's search engine isn't as easy as it should be, even with highly relevant queries.

Ohe.cat.com: This is the main product page for the C7 engine. Users can get here by navigating through the product categories.

SEARCH

[Advanced Search](#)
[Help](#)
[Preferences](#)

Narrow your results

Document Type
Any

File Format
Any

Search by Industries

[Industries >](#)
[Engine >](#)
[Machine >](#)
[Other](#)

Search results for: c7

Displaying 1 - 10 of 25 matching documents

Page: 1 2 3 next

[C7 Competitive Comparison](#)
C7 On-Highway Engine Competitive Comparison Media Number LEDT3892-01

PDF
213 KB

[C7 School Bus Diesel Engine with ACERT® Technology \(Spec Sheet\)](#)
190-230 hp @ 2500 rpm 230-300 hp @ 2400 rpm

PDF
572 KB

[C7 RV Diesel Engine with ACERT® Technology \(Spec Sheet\)](#)
300-350 hp @ 2400 rpm

PDF
143 KB

[C7 On-Highway Engine Warranty Statement](#)
Effective with sales to the first user on or after January 1, 2005

PDF
38 KB

[C7 7.2L Mid-Range Engine: Pure Value](#)
Maximum Mid-Range Versatility

HTML
2 KB

[C7 7.2L Mid-Range Engine: Pure Value](#)
Maximum Mid-Range Versatility

HTML
2 KB

Ohe.cat.com: Searching with the term “C7” returns PDFs first, before the product page. Busy users might not even notice that this product has a product page and assume the information is only in PDFs.

CATERPILLAR®


C7 7.2L MID-RANGE ENGINE: PURE VALUE

Maximum Mid-Range Versatility

- Superior durability based on proven 3126E components
- A new Caterpillar® built HEUI oil pump, along with Cat exclusive "leak-free" technology, provide unsurpassed reliability
- Lower emissions and decreased engine noise from Caterpillar patented HEUI™ fuel system
- Enhanced performance from electronic wastegate-controlled turbocharger

The C7 on-highway engine continues the tradition of bottom-line value. A wide range of horsepower ratings—all the way up to 350 hp for fire trucks -- ensures a perfect fit for a variety of fire applications. This engine features the Caterpillar HEUI fuel system for unsurpassed performance and reliability. Full electronic controls include features typically found only on heavy duty engines. Both front and rear power take-off (PTO) options are available to fit your specific application. The C7 is a sophisticated mid-range engine used in commercial chassis emergency vehicles as well as some custom chassis trucks.

Specifications	
Cylinders	In-Line 6
Bore/Stroke	4.33 x 5.00 (110mm x 127mm)
Displacement	7.2 L (441 cu in)
Weight	1295 lb (588 kg)
Horsepower	190 to 350 @ 2400 rpm
Torque	520-860 lb-ft @ 1440 rpm



Ohe.cat.com: Clicking on the HTML listing on the SERP returns this page, which looks like a product page, but doesn't have all of the information contained in the main product page (shown in the first example). People who end up here might not know that a better product page exists.

30. If necessary, optimize your search engine by hand to designate pages that should receive prominence, such as product and category pages.

It's common for people to try and locate products and services by entering search queries that contain the following:

- Product name
- Category name
- Product number
- Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) number
- Catalog number
- Part number
- Model number
- Product description
- Description of problem, need, and functionality

Search queries that contain any of these components or keywords should present the product's core informational page as a top listing.

PRODUCT PAGES

We were astonished by the number of times websites lost business opportunities due to incomplete or shallow product information. In our study, we painfully watched people get to the correct product information page, only to abandon their research because they couldn't find answers to their questions. What does it look like? Does it work with what I already have? Will it solve my problem? Prospects want an easy way to have their questions answered and to access comprehensive product information in one place.

Even though we use the term "product" pages in this section, the advice applies to companies that sell services as well. For example, a consulting company might have a product page for each of its main consulting services.

31. Have a dedicated product page for each product and make it exceptionally easy to find.

Product pages are the homepages for each item you're selling. It's the springboard from which customers can start their research and get additional information about individual products.

The product page is usually the first thing people want to find. Make it simple to get there.

McMASTER-CARR®

Need help finding a product?
E-mail or call (562) 463-4277.

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[Orders](#)
[Bookmarks](#)
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[2155](#)
[Bookmark this page](#)
[Print](#)
[Forward this page](#)
[Page options](#)
[How can we improve?](#)

[Find Products](#)
[Build Order](#)

Qty	Item

[Add](#)
[?](#)
[Show 1 line](#)

Current Order - 2 lines

Adjustable-Arm Stereo Microscopes

An infinitely adjustable boom arm provides maximum comfort and flexibility, while the extra-heavy base adds stability. Both of these microscopes have individually adjustable eyepieces and a fluorescent ring light for extra-bright illumination.

Viewing angle is 45°. Head rotates 360°. Lights operate on 120 VAC, 60 Hz and include a 8-ft. cord with two-prong plug.

Dual-Setting Microscope— Has a 10X and 20X setting. Viewing field is 0.4" dia. at 10X; 0.8" dia. at 20X.

Variable-Setting Microscope— Has adjustable magnification from 6.5X to 45X. Viewing field is 1.2" dia. at 6.5X; 0.2" dia. at 45X.



Variable Setting

	Each
Dual-Setting Microscope	10705T63 \$1187.10
Variable-Setting Microscope	10705T64 1551.00

Machinists' Pocket Microscopes

Small enough to carry in your pocket, these scopes are perfect for on-the-job "spec" checks. The beveled opening gathers and focuses light, providing an undistorted inverted image.

Scopes without Scale— Have an adjustable focus base and are 5 1/2" long with a 29/64" eyepiece OD. Case is aluminum. *Note:* Viewing field is not rated.

Scope with Scale— Has an internal scale pattern for measurement and a precision ground five-lens system. Furnished in a vinyl sleeve. Scope is 4 13/16" long with a 7/16" eyepiece OD. Case is aluminum.

Scope with Scale and Light— Similar to *scope with scale*, but with a light that is illuminated once stand is pulled open. Scope is 5 3/8" long with a 7/8" eyepiece OD. Case is gray plastic. Requires AA battery (not included).



Magnification	Viewing Field	Scale	Each
Scopes without Scale			

McMaster-Carr doesn't have product pages for each of their products. Customers resist buying when information is lacking, especially for complex, high-priced items, such as this microscope.

Hart Scientific®

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European Lab

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International

Links

Fun Stuff

Site Contents

Thermometer Readouts

Readouts	Model	Probe Types	Accuracy	Features
	1521	PRTs, Thermistors	±0.025°C	Battery-powered, handheld thermometer; INFO-CON connector reads coefficients without programming.
	1522	PRTs, Thermistors	±0.025°C	Stores up to 10,000 readings, plus 100 more on demand; reads PRTs and thermistors (calibrated or uncalibrated) interchangeably.
	1502A	PRTs	±0.006°C	Resolution of 0.001°C and accuracy to match; uses ITS-90, IPTS-68, CVD, or DIN (IEC 751) conversions.
	1503	HTPRTs	±0.020°C	Compact, accurate readout for high-temp PRTs; reads 0.25-, 2.5-, 3-, and 5-ohm PRTs.
	1504	Thermistors	±0.003°C	Reads thermistors from 0 to 1 MW; uses Steinhart-Hart and CVD.
	1529	PRTs, Thermistors, Thermocouples	±0.006°C	Four channels can all be measured simultaneously; battery-powered; logs up to 8,000 readings; flexible display.
	1560			Accepts any combination of the eight modules below; all are easily added to and removed from the 1560 base.
	2560	PRTs	±0.005°C	2 channels of 25W or 100W PRTs.
	2561	HTPRTs	±0.013°C	2 channels to 1200°C.
	2562	PRTs	±0.01°C	8 channels of 2-, 3-, or 4-wire RTDs.
	2563	Thermistors	±0.0013°C	2 channels of resolution to 0.0001°C.
	2564	Thermistors	±0.0025°C	8 channels for data acquisition.
	2565	Thermocouples	±0.05°C	Reads all TC types with 0.0001 mV resolution.
	2566	Thermocouples	±0.1°C	Reads any combination up to 12 channels of virtually any type of TC.
	2567	1000Ω PRTs	±0.006	2 channels of high-resistance PRTs.
	1575	SPRTs, Thermistors	±0.001°C	4 ppm accuracy; resolution to 0.0001°C for SPRTs and 0.00001°C for thermistors; 2 channels; add 10 more channels with a mux.
	1590	SPRTs, Thermistors	±0.00025°C	1 ppm accuracy; patented DWF connectors; color display; add up to 50 channels with muxes.

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Fluke.com's product listings page doesn't offer users access to additional information. The summary information here isn't enough to answer most users' questions. Also, the images are too small to show relevant details.

IBM

Country/region [select] | Terms of use

Search

Home | Products | Services & solutions | Support & downloads | My account

Global Retail

Point-of-sale and self-service offerings

Markets

Products

- POS systems
- Self-service
- Peripherals
- Software
- Small-medium business

Services

Support

Literature

News

Partners

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Related links

- Global Financing
- Global Services


Self-service

Self Checkout


Overview | Models | Specs | Features

Self Checkout models

Model 171



[View larger image](#)



[View larger image](#)

Most versatile of the product line

- Any-size order, belted solution
- Works well in virtually any retail environment

Delivers exceptional utilization and throughput

- Sophisticated weight and dimensional security verification by individual item helps speed checkout and lower store assistance rates, which can lead to increased throughput
- Separate bagging area allows for two orders to be processed at one time
- Superior conveyor belt with reversible belt feature makes it easier to learn how to use

Enhanced bagging design helps make it easier and faster for consumers to use

- New roller design and larger bagging areas allow shoppers to sort and bag any size order efficiently

Unmatched security to help maintain effective loss prevention

- Exclusively designed item-level, dimensional security
- Belted design separates scanning and bagging for added security to help reduce shrinkage

Accommodates wide range of store formats

- Four different bagging options available, total lane lengths can range from 125 to 177 inches (318 to 450 cm)

We're here to help

Easy ways to get the answers you need.

[Contact us](#)

[E-mail us](#)

or call a Sales Representative at
1-866-348-3454
North America

IBM.com doesn't offer a core product page for each of its models. The product line shares tabs, making it difficult to get information about a specific model. The layout of this page isn't conducive to comparison shopping because it's long and users can't easily decipher the differentiating factors.

32. Offer complete product details (in layers if necessary).

Product descriptions need to contain enough detail to give people a good sense of the product or service, and help them differentiate among the choices. Properly written descriptions help people feel confident in making purchase decisions. Such descriptions clearly answer people's questions, leaving little or no ambiguity.

Being specific shouldn't overwhelm; don't bombard people with exhaustive details all at once. Let people control the amount of detail they see by

layering the information. Reveal key points first, and offer ways for users to access more details if they want them.

Customers need varying levels of detail, depending on product or service complexity and the stage of commitment. For instance, people in early research phases might want only to determine whether the company carries the product they need. Once they've narrowed their choices to a few competing products, they might return to the site to peruse the product's specifications and compare it with others.

Manufacturers should always offer detailed information on all of their products. It's common for people to visit the manufacturer's site when product information is unavailable elsewhere.

B2B sites commonly neglected to show:

- What the offering contains (e.g., features, compatibility, dimensions, color, quality, add-ons)
- What the product looks like (e.g., screenshots and product views from multiple angles and magnification levels)
- Pricing information (estimated or actual)
- Product description (text description and product number)

User comments:

"What I want is more in-depth information without having to contact them and wait for email or a phone call. The big thing for me is giving me what I'm looking for without directing me to a sales rep."

"They have a link for a quote at top. I won't get a quote unless I have more details about the plan." [Referring to uhc.com]

Prospects praise sites that provided useful content:

"This site is easy to understand. They have steps broken down; it walks me through whole procedure. I don't specialize in this area, but I can feel comfortable presenting the information to my boss because the site gives me easy to follow scenarios." [Referring to cedarfinancial.com]

"I like them because they are educating as they discuss what they offer. They are being realistic. It tells you how they get their leads. So far, they sound more credible than anyone else. They are explaining the process. They are giving you real numbers, so you know what to expect going in. I get the feeling that they are professional because they answer the questions I have—they allow you to choose the criteria you want, and talk about the benefits of working with them." [Referring to eleadz.com]

Prospects resentful of superficial content:

"This site started out nice. It looked like it had product info, but then it directs you to their office—call or email them questions. I would rather get the information upfront and then contact them if I have other questions. This site only has basic surface information. It doesn't go into why you would use bulk versus single deliveries." [Referring to Indiamart.com]

"The site says you can buy the freshest leads and get discounts—they repeat this phrase over and over again, but it's not giving me the meat. How many leads? What's the cost? Every paragraph says to fill out the form without giving more information. It's starting to piss me off. It needs less selling." [Referring to markcarey.com/mortgage-leads]

"The thumbnail says Detailed Inventory View, but when I click it, it takes me to a screen that requires personal information. At this point, I'm not willing to give this out because I don't know anything about them. To me, that is just an intrusion. I can see them asking for that information when I'm ready to have someone come out to my store or send me something, but not to download something and view. They want this information upfront. I'm not going any further. At this point, I'm just looking up basic information." [Referring to wws5.com]

"This gives basic information about the software, but not enough for me. I am not going to give my information until I can learn something about them. I would like to see more information on their software—how it looks and feels, and its capabilities. They have the tagline: 'inventory uploaded,' but every software does that. It doesn't give me information on what type of information is available regarding inventory. Based on the information here, I would move on and find something else." [Referring to everestsoftwareinc.com]

Gateway recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional. View Cart | eSource | Order Status | My Account | Support

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Call 800-779-2000

Products | Electronics | PC Accessories | Software | Services | eProcurement | Solutions

Products
Notebooks
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M250 Series
M255-E
M260 Series
M265-E
M460 Series
M465-E
M655-E
Desktops
Servers
Storage
Networking
Digital Displays
Digital Cameras
Remanufactured

Accessories
Services
Solutions
eProcurement

Tools
Call Me
eSource
Product Locators
Accessory Locator
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Get Special Offers!

Enlarge View **Product Tour**

GET THE EDGE.
Take our new convertible notebook for a spin!
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GatewayShield™
A Comprehensive Security Solution
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Gateway® M280E
Part #1008547

Base Price: \$1,299.00

Gateway Recommends:
(To remove an item, uncheck the appropriate box below and select Customize & Buy to proceed.)

- ☒ Notebook Value Service Plan — 4 year parts/labor on-site + 4 year technical support* +\$60.00
- ☒ Zero to 100% Computing +\$29.99
- ☒ Targus® Mobile Professional Case (fits 15.4" screens) +\$49.99

Your Price: \$1,438.98

Customize & Buy (+)
Add to Cart (+)
Save Quote

☐ E-mail this page ☐ Shipping Information
☐ Print page ☐ Warranty Info.

Product Information

Get the edge with our new 14" widescreen convertible notebook. Count on all the power and mobility you demand from a notebook with the convertible's full-size keyboard and over 8 hours of battery life using the optional 12-cell and modular bay batteries*. Or transform the display and switch to tablet form in seconds. With the accuracy of the Continuous Sensing Technology™ chips, you can easily take notes with precision, annotate documents and even sign and close deals—right on screen. Plus, you have the ability to capture images from the web and paste them directly into emails or presentations. Speed the growth of your business by combining the power and mobility of a notebook with the flexibility and innovation of a tablet. [Learn More.](#)

Specifications:

- Intel® Celeron® M Processor 370 (1.50GHz, 400MHz FSB, 1MB L2 Cache)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Tablet PC Edition¹
- Microsoft® Windows 9.0
- 512MB 533MHz DDR2 SDRAM (2-256MB modules)
- 40GB 5400rpm Serial ATA hard drive³
- 7-in-1 media card reader (Memory Stick®, Memory Stick Pro®, MultiMediaCard™, Secure Digital™, iD Picture Card, Mini Secure Digital™, RS-MultiMediaCard™)
- Modular 24x CD-ROM Drive
- Notebook Value Service Plan — 3 year parts/labor on-site/3 year technical support*
- (1) Type II PC card slot
- (3) USB 2.0, IEEE 1394 (FireWire)
- 14.0" WXGA TFT Active Matrix (1280 x 768 max. resolution) with Rotating Hinge for Tablet Functionality
- Integrated Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 900
- Full-Size Keyboard and EZ Pad® Pointing Device
- Gateway Executive Stylus Pen w/ Continuous Sensing Technology
- Integrated sound and stereo speakers, headphones/speaker jack, and mic jacks
- Primary 6-cell Lithium ion battery with AC pack and 1 yr. limited battery warranty⁴
- Integrated V.92 56K modem⁵
- Integrated Broadcom® 10/100/1000 Ethernet Adapter
- Integrated 802.11b/g wireless networking card
- Adobe® Acrobat Reader® 3.0
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Tablet (SP2) Backup CD
- Gateway M280 Drivers and Applications CD
- TPM - Embedded security chip for user authentication and data protection (version 1.2 ready)
- Norton AntiVirus 90 day introductory offer²
- Microsoft® One Note, Microsoft® Experience Pack and Microsoft® Education Pack
- Complete Specifications

Product Benefits:

Write directly to the screen.
Jot down an appointment, task or phone number—anytime the PC is turned on—without running a special program.

Circle critical documents and Web sites.
Capture a portion of an important document or web page, and instantly paste it into other applications.

Increase productivity while standing!
Ever tried to hold a notebook in one hand and type with the other? With the M280 Series, there's no need to find a table and chain—the PC can be used on the go, without falling behind.

Organize daily task lists.
Microsoft® One Note 2003 is included free on every M280 Series notebook, and enables the user to create free form documents that can be accessed anytime. That means that hand-written notes can be managed or searched easily.

Annotate documents with ease.
The M280 Series enables the user to write notes directly on a co-worker's presentation—so important points can be circled for later review.

Professional On-site Installation
From a single PC to a suite of servers and wireless networks, we've got affordable installation plans to save you the time and hassle. [Learn More](#)

GatewayShield™
This system features GatewayShield™ options for increased security.

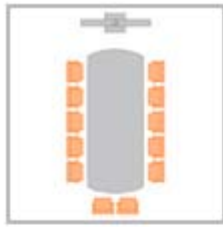
Compare Dimensions:

Series	Dimensions (H x W x D)
M250 Series	1.1" H, 5.01 lbs.
M680 Series	1.2" H, 7.7 lbs.
M685-E Series	1.2" H, 7.7 lbs.
M280 Series	1.26" H, 6.84 lbs.
M460 Series	1.2" H, 5.55 lbs.
M465-E Series	1.31" H, 6.22 lbs.

* Thickness varies across product. Gateway quotes measurements at thinnest point. Weight varies with options.

Save Quote **Shipping Information**
E-mail this page **Warranty Info.**
Print page

Gateway.com provides thorough product information, but the main product page shows too much detail, making it four screens long. Users didn't find the *Compare Dimensions* listings because it was pushed too far down the page. It's better to provide an overview first, then offer a link to detailed features.



[learn more ►](#)

LifeSize Room



[Product Data Sheet](#)

Experience 10X the resolution quality of today's video conferencing systems and conferencing that surpasses television quality. LifeSize Room is designed using the latest advances in processing power, display, audio and camera technology and the result is true-to-life conferencing and better productivity.



Polycom VSX 8000 Series



[Executive Collection](#)



[Product Data Sheet \(VSX 8400/8800\)](#)

For the best in all-around performance of a group video system, the VSX 8800 is the product! Included are tools that enable the addition of multiple participants in a single video conference, People+Content™ collaboration, voice tracking, PowerOn, BlueScreen

VSGi.com misses the opportunity to educate prospects about their products. The website's lack of product description leaves customers hanging, wondering: "That's it?!?" *Learn More* only tricks people into filling out a form. Requiring people to print out a datasheet and dig for information is unreasonable, especially if the site hasn't provided enough information to make each product distinct. Providing relevant product information (in HTML format) shows that you care about and understand your clients' needs.

STERLING MEDICAL PRODUCTS

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PRODUCT CATALOG VIEW CART

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[Continuing Care](#)

[Dental Supplies](#)

[Diagnostic Equipment/Tests](#)

[Emergency Medical Supplies](#)

[Exam Room Furniture](#)

[Exam Room Supplies](#)

[Gloves](#)

[Infectious Control](#)

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[Miscellaneous](#)

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[Surgical Instruments](#)

[Surgical Supplies](#)

[Tattoo & Piercing Supplies](#)

[Wound Closure/Laceration](#)

[X-ray Supplies](#)

Bandages, Dressings & Tapes

Choose the Sub-Category:

Choose the Sub-Sub-Category:

Page 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

More...	Product	Product #	List Price	Unit	Purchase
Info	3M(TM) Coban(TM) LF Latex Free Self-Adherent Wrap, 1"	28255	\$47.28	Case	Buy Now!
Info	3M(TM) Coban(TM) LF Latex Free Self-Adherent Wrap, 3" Sterile	60009	\$122.40	Box	Buy Now!
Info	3M(TM) Coban(TM) LF Latex Free Self-Adherent Wrap, 4" Sterile	60007	\$114.98	Box	Buy Now!
Info	3M(TM) Coban(TM) LF Latex Free Self-Adherent Wrap, 6" Sterile	60008	\$122.40	Box	Buy Now!
Info	3M(TM) Coban(TM) Self-Adherent Wrap, Assorted Pack 3"	60003 A	\$35.80	Case	Buy Now!
Info	3M(TM) Coban(TM) Self-Adherent Wrap, Blue 2"	60002 B	\$85.55	Case	Buy Now!

The Sterling Medical Products site makes buying difficult. Clicking *Info* shows basically the same description (with an additional picture). The lack of detailed product information and the tedious page-navigation style proved too much for one user: *"Just to find a basic dressing, I have to go through a lot of pages. This is time-consuming. The way products are set up doesn't give me an idea of what I'm looking for; more detail would be better. I need to see the strength of the gauze; there are certain wicking or absorption capabilities. I want more description. I would go to another company. It didn't give a description or link to learn more about the product."*

33. Use a short descriptive name *and* unique identifier for each product.

During our site visits with procurement personnel and managers, we discovered that a major pain point in the purchasing process is receiving incomplete purchase requisition forms from employees. Requestors often leave out vital information such as product number, description, and price because it's not readily available on websites. Incomplete product information causes many adverse issues, the most problematic of which is that users

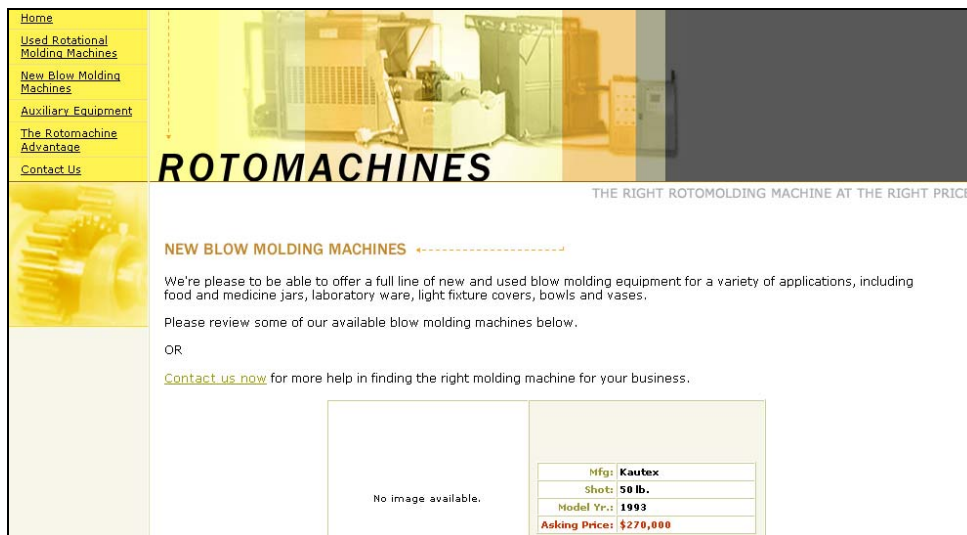
might order the wrong item. When all three elements are available, the purchaser can validate whether the item being purchased is the right one, circumventing potential purchasing catastrophes.

34. Provide a user-centric product overview on each product page.

Each product page should contain a product overview with key details about the product. Offering this helps customers make initial assessments about an item's appropriateness for their situation.


At very least, the product overview should contain the following key elements:

- **Product description:** Summary of the key product attributes
- **Product photo:** A product photo with adequate identifying details
- **Price:** The actual price is best. However, if pricing information is sensitive, show an estimate, price range, or example of cost.⁷
- **Availability:** in stock or lead time



This RotoMachines.com product page barely provides an overview. An item that's over \$200,000 needs more detailed specifications and photos to pique people's interest.

⁷ For detailed guidelines on how to show cost, see the *Pricing Information* section.




Petroleum & Convenience Retail

[Home](#) > [Industries](#) > [Petroleum & Convenience](#) > [Grocery & High-Volume Retailers](#) > [Self-Service Kiosk](#)

Petroleum & C-Store Solution

- Point-of-Sale
- Self-Service Kiosk
- Back Office & Pricebook Management
- Foodservice Management
- Grocery & High-Volume Retailers
 - Point-of-Sale
 - Self-Service Kiosks



Self-Service Kiosk

Today's grocery consumers have high demands for choice, convenience, and value. As a result, grocers are constantly seeking new ways to improve their product offering and shopping experience while increasing revenue and efficiency. With the rapid customer adoption of self-checkout lanes, self-service capabilities have proved their value as a key differentiator in the grocery industry.

Now, grocers are extending self-service capabilities to other areas of the store, including deli, freshly prepared foods, and the fuel island. Self-service kiosks from Radiant Systems can help grocers get the most out of their deli and freshly prepared food departments - higher revenue, better customer service, increased efficiency, and improved bottom-line performance.

Key features:

- Graphical touch screen interface
- Step-by-step order entry
- Automated up-selling on every order
- Integrated credit/debit processing
- Centralized management and configuration
- Integration to mission-critical site technology, including the POS, kitchen production system, inventory management, and reporting
- Multiple hardware and installation options - inside the store (free standing, counter, wall mount) or at the fuel island

Radiant Self-Service Kiosks enables grocers to:

Drive store traffic and increase revenue

- Drive traffic to the store by offering a fast, accurate, and enjoyable experience
- Simplify order entry and increase customer throughput via graphical touch screens
- Automatically offer high margin add-on items on every customer order and dramatically increase upsells
- Graphically highlight new product promotions and marketing programs at the point-of-purchase; rollout marketing programs across all sites in record time
- Allow customers to place orders for deli items, freshly prepared foods, and select merchandise at the fuel island using outdoor kiosks

Reduce operating costs

- Increase order accuracy and reduced waste due to customer self-auditing
- Integrate with recipe / food cost system
- Lead-through ordering allows increased menu complexity without increasing errors

Improve customer service



- Consistent, positive service interaction with customers
- Reduce wait times that lead to walk-aways
- Offer customers a choice of service interaction

Optimize labor

- No training, no recruiting, no scheduling, or interviewing
- Free order-taking employees to work on more value-added tasks, including food preparation

Resource Center

- Industry Associations
- Industry Publications
- Events
- Media Coverage
- Product Brochures

This RadiantSystems.com product page doesn't adequately sell. There isn't enough detail here to give readers a clear impression of the product. Essential information is missing, including detailed specifications and product photos.

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My world. My solution.

What's important to you?

[Click here for a rating sheet to help you decide](#)

The next generation of WinTOTAL

Current vendor keeping you from being as efficient as you'd like?

There's software out there that's so stripped down its salespeople tout it as "simple". But simple doesn't help you get all the pieces of your report pulled together quickly. And then there's software out there that's so out dated and archaic they call it "stable". That means you're working with tools that haven't been updated since the 90's.

Aurora is the first appraisal software designed in this millennium, using new technology and fresh ideas to help you get more done with your time. It's simple, but not simplistic, and complete without being complicated. It's the best of both worlds that you've never had available until now.

Get WinTOTAL Enterprise and a Silver Membership for only \$799

Save 50% through April 30th

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Top 10 things appraisers love about the new WinTOTAL

[Learn more](#)

What's new?

- The fastest formfilling tools to speed up and simplify monotonous data entry
- The most complete file management tools to more effectively manage reports
- A combination of powerful comps management tools found only in WinTOTAL
- Download all your Internet data and maps into reports automatically
- The only appraisal software to keep your entire Workfile digitally in reports
- Seamless integration with other tools vital to completing reports
- More features important to your business

WinTOTAL Professional version	\$999	Add to cart
WinTOTAL Enterprise version	\$1199	Add to cart
See the difference		
WinTOTAL Upgrade Professional to Enterprise	\$299	Add to cart
WinTOTAL Canadian Professional version	\$549	Add to cart

Get a FREE Trial!

Product Links

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- [Buy WinTOTAL](#)
- [Support and Memberships](#)
- [Professional vs. Enterprise](#)
- [Questions](#)
- [Online help resources](#)
- [Real stories](#)

Core Features

- [Formfilling](#)
- [File Management](#)
- [Comps Management](#)
- [Digital Workfile](#)
- [Seamless integration](#)

Related Products

- [Elite Bundle](#)
- [Support Memberships](#)
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Hot Topic:
New Fannie Mae forms
Get WinTOTAL and get the new Fannie Mae forms. WinTOTAL users

AlaMode.com: What are the differences between products? People won't respond to the call to action (*Add to cart*) without knowing what they're getting. Although there is a *See the difference* link, it's not clear what products the link is associated with. It's best to help people choose by including helpful descriptions next to the product names.

United States

Products | Ink | **Paper** | Drivers & Support | Learn & Create | Epson Store | About | Home

My Account | Reorder List | Product Registration | Help | Shopping Cart

AcuLaser CX11NF

C11C588141
Our Price: \$799.99*
Product In Stock

Product Information

- Overview
- Features & Benefits
- Specifications
- Awards & Reviews
- Promotions
- Accessories
- Warranty
- Technical Support

Shop Online
EpsonStore.com

Epson Stylus Photo RX620

Only **\$149.99**
after mail-in rebates plus
Free Shipping

Save up to **\$150**

Overview

- Speed through color pages, copies and scans
- Fax important documents in seconds
- Use with your existing network
- Enjoy flexible paper handling capabilities
- Create impressive brochures in-house
- Make the most of every task

The Epson.com overview doesn't bring customers closer to understanding the product. "Speed through color pages" and "Make the most of every task" are not features that people care about.



Read SalesBoom.com's product descriptions. The first one says it's for thirty users or less, but the second and third products don't mention company size. There isn't enough information here to help customers choose the right product.

35. Ensure that product pages contain identifiable links to related information.

Customers shouldn't be forced to find related information in separate parts of the website. They expect to get support materials from the product's main information page, which is where they look first.

For example, don't put white papers, videos, and seminars only in their own separate section on your website. Crosslinking to them on product pages increases the likelihood that people will view them because they're shown, in context, at the precise point people might be interested.

Making users look in different parts of your site for related information is frustrating because it requires them to reselect the product. Worse still, prospects might not know you have supporting materials available.

The word "portal" has been horribly abused in the Internet industry, but it applies well to the main product page's role relative to all other product information. The physical product is in customers' offices, and that's what

they think about—and often what they search for—when they need supplies, service, training, or other follow-up purchases.

When applicable, each product page should have corresponding links to the following types of information:

- Additional product photos/illustrations
- Brochures
- Demos
- Case studies
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Product/work examples
- Comparison (with other models and competitors' models)
- Technical specifications
- White papers
- Technical/maintenance
- Accessories and parts (with part numbers, linked to each part's page)
- Customer/expert reviews
- Add-ons, packages, and suite information
- Warranties/service/support
- Coupons/rebates/discounts
- Where to buy (if not from site)
- Manufacturer/distributor
- Request for additional information
- Contact

36. Organize product page links, grouping closely related items and giving prominence to the most-requested information.

Users can handle large numbers of links when they're organized in meaningful ways. Even if you feature all the types of information mentioned above, your product page can still be usable as long as you:

- Organize items so that related elements are close to each other
- Separate categories using meaningful headers
- Highlight the most important information (from the user's point of view)

PRICING INFORMATION

Customer surveys show that pricing is one of the main factors in purchase decisions. Although business customers are often willing to pay more for quality or extra features, they still need to know *how much* they'll pay—or at least get a ballpark number for budgeting purposes if they're still in the research phase. While business customers rarely expect to pay list price, they need pricing information to make purchase decisions. B2B websites are notorious for ignoring this fact and making excuses for concealing prices.

One way to increase sales and beat your competition is to have pricing information on your site. At a time when Internet scams and corporate greed are prevalent, people need extra assurance that firms are trustworthy.

Revealing price at the beginning is one way to earn people's trust. Prospects view companies that show this key piece of information as being genuine and forthright. Transactions are more likely to occur when people feel educated about your offerings and trust your organization. Sales slip away when customers perceive your competitors as being more helpful.

Here's a sample of people's reactions to sites that show prices:

"I like this—they have the price right here. At least I know what to expect right off the website." [Referring to awcleaning.com]

"They have the fee schedule right here. I would go to a small company if everything I need is right here. I'm not going to fool around. This is a website that I definitely like." [Referring to goapple.com]

"This website is nice because it has a demo and shows the cost. I really like seeing the cost. Evaluating the product while being anonymous is nice—so I don't have to get called. Often times, [sites] have sales person calling you for something you might not be interested in." [Referring to shopclock.com]

Sites that don't show price interfere with people's research process, leading to comments like these:

"This is the unit I'm looking for, and now I want the price. The problem is I won't get that here on the website. I would like to know the price so I can go to the gentleman who orders and just boom, tell him that, so he can plan that in the budget." [Referring to temptronic.com]

"I need to fill out a purchase requisition so I need pricing. In order for me to get the price on this website, I have to add it to my order and check out [later discovers that this isn't true]. In my company, you can't place an order on online yourself. It has to go to through the purchasing department. It still doesn't give me a price. I can't continue." [Referring to biomerieux.com]

"Where is the price? I'm not going to enter all this personal information without knowing how much this is going to be. I've already dropped them." [Referring to onlinecreditinfo.com]

37. Show the price; make no excuses.

Relieve any tension people might have about doing business with your organization by offering thorough details about products and services in a meaningful manner. This means being candid about the price. People view companies that hide costs as being evasive and untrustworthy. Don't turn potential buyers away thinking that "If I have to ask, I can't afford it." One of our participants said it best: "They might charge me a lot for services, maybe not. I won't know."

Give people pricing information as soon as possible, preferably at the first mention of the item. Even if you have pricing information on your site, showing the price at the wrong place or time can cost you sales. People don't want to work hard to get this basic information. Knowing the cost at the beginning helps people quickly decide whether an item warrants further investigation.

Prices should appear clearly on product lists and product pages. Don't make people click on the product link or picture to get pricing information. Requiring people to click back and forth between the product listings and the product page to get pricing information is inconvenient and cumbersome. Having a price list page separate from the product page might be necessary in wholesale or distributor-based markets, but it's typically not required in other situations.

For online transactions, showing the final cost at the right time in the shopping process is also critical to closing the sale. Present any additional fees, such as taxes and shipping, as soon as possible. At the least, show shipping costs on the shopping cart's first page. Don't expect people to wait patiently until the end of the checkout process to get the bottom-line. Most people won't waste their time filling out forms unless they know it's worth it.

Participants were confident in their ability to negotiate better prices than were shown online on many sites, with the exception of wholesalers, who have a fixed volume discount. Nonetheless, seeing a price gave participants a starting point for understanding whether the item was likely to fall within their budgets.

Companies make many excuses as to why they don't reveal prices online: we don't want our competitors to know, price varies for different customers, price constantly fluctuates, and customized services have unique prices, and so on.

These reasons are legitimate in almost all cases, but they're still just excuses. Not showing pricing works against customer needs and thus creates a hostile shopping experience. If you have a unique situation preventing you from

Price is important. Address it.

The company behind eLeadz.com understands that users need for pricing information, and clearly provides it on the website. Prospects appreciate genuine selling approaches, leading to comments like this: *"They are very informative—they're not asking me to fill out this, and then we'll send you something. That is the telemarketing game. [Here] they inform you before you waste your time and theirs."*


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Thursday, April 27, 2006

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Username

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SurveyMonkey is both a **powerful solution** and a **tremendous value**. Compare our prices to any of our competitors...you'll find that SurveyMonkey is tough to match!

Professional Subscription

A professional subscription is only **\$19.95 USD/month** (or only \$200.00 USD/year), and includes up to **1000 responses per month**. If you exceed 1000 survey responses in any given month, there is an additional charge of \$0.05 USD per survey response. There are no long-term contracts, and you can cancel at any time. As a professional subscriber, you have access to all of the **advanced features** of SurveyMonkey. You can create an **unlimited** number of surveys, with an unlimited number of pages and questions. In addition, all of your surveys are **completely unbranded**.

Basic Subscription

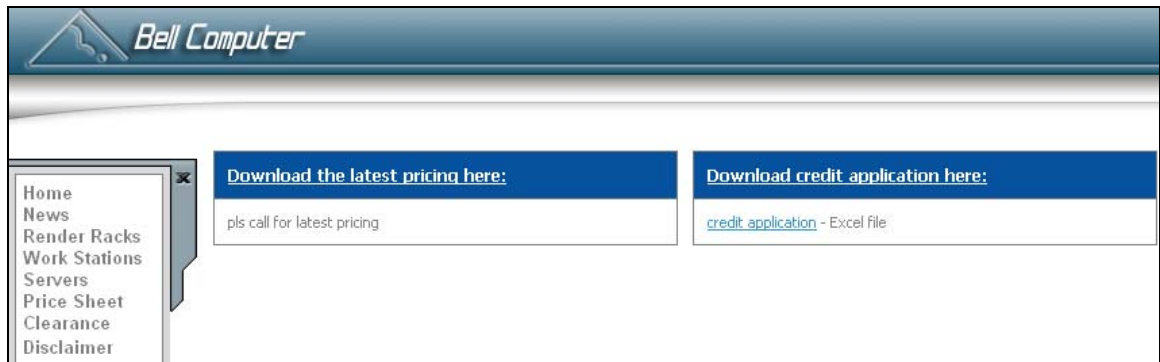
A basic subscription is **totally free** and includes all of the basic features of SurveyMonkey. It's a great option for individuals, students, and anyone who doesn't need the advanced features of SurveyMonkey. Unlike other services, there are no annoying banner ads on your surveys. In addition, all of your survey responses remain absolutely private. *Please note that basic subscribers are limited to a total of 10 questions and 100 responses per survey.*

Compare Us

The vast majority of our competitors charge **much more** (sometimes thousands of \$\$) for fewer features than SurveyMonkey. In addition, SurveyMonkey was designed from the ground up to be both inviting and intuitive. There are no hidden fees, and no gotchas. Our goal is simple: to create the easiest and most powerful survey tool on the web. We hope you agree. (If you don't agree, feel free to [tell us why](#).)

Zoomerang™	SuperSurvey	Greenfield Online
Infopoll	Perseus	PollCat
Inquisite	Cool Surveys	Survey System
Apian Software	Hosted Survey	SurveyView
StatPac	SurveyGold	Survey Select
InstantSurvey	EZSurvey	Mercator
SurveyCrafter	PollPro	SurveyHeaven
Surveywire	ObjectPlanet	SurveySaid
mantaINSIGHT	Active Websurvey	SumQuest
CustomerSat	StatSurvey	SurveySite
QuickSense	SurveyTrends	LiveSurveys
InSite		

SurveyMonkey.com not only reveals the company's pricing structure, it links to competitors' sites—quite a bold strategy for building credibility. It shows that the company has nothing to hide.



Similar to many other B2B sites, Bell Computer teases people with pricing information. Users click on links only to find out they have to call or fill out a form to get more information. Such antagonistic experiences tarnish relationships. Customers feel tricked by bait and switch tactics.



Clicking *Pricing & Service Details* on VSAmerica.com brings you to a page that requires an access code. This is an unexpected and jarring experience (not to mention the typo in the instructions). If you have a link that says *Pricing*, show pricing.

38. If you can't show actual prices, show sample prices.

There are many reasons why firms don't show prices. Mainly, it's because B2B products and services are complex: the pricing structure varies for each client based on countless situations. Still, this is no excuse not to show pricing information. Prospects need immediate access to basic information during initial research.

When showing exact costs is unrealistic, help prospects by showing prices for typical scenarios. Estimates can often appease prospects during the research phase.

Sometimes, prospects will accept approximate prices or manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP). It's common in the B2B sector to have negotiated prices that are not available to the general public. B2B shoppers know that they don't have to pay list price.

In other cases, prices vary for customized services, such as cleaning services. Having a fixed pricing structure for such services might be too complex. However, having a set of sample quotes—say, for office buildings of various sizes—will give customers an indication of your pricing structure and your range of work.

In any case, people need to know the cost (even if it's rough) during initial browsing for several reasons:

- **Price determines product category.** Showing the price at the first mention of the product helps alleviate any doubt people have about being in the right product category. Businesses expect different pricing for consumer and professional-grade products. For example, users looking for professional-grade projectors could weed out anything with a relatively low price tag because it probably wouldn't have the features they need. However, if users are buying a projector for small meetings, they might expect the price tag to be significantly lower than ones designed for large commercial use. Knowing the price at the beginning helps users quickly target items relevant to their situation and weed out the rest.
- **Price is a key component in product comparison.** Once people select potential candidates, pricing is critical in making trade-off decisions. Is it worth paying more to get this extra feature? Why do these two products look the same, but have different prices? Without the price, people can't make effective comparative analyses.
- **Price is needed for planning.** Large purchases often require months and sometimes years of planning. Prices are required to make budget allocation decisions and for companies and contractors to submit bids to clients. In both cases, the exact cost isn't critical; having ballpark figures helps in the planning phase and ensures that the items are accounted for.

39. Choose typical case scenarios over complex pricing calculators.

For complex pricing structures, it's often better to provide cost information for a few representative scenarios than to offer a configurator that requires precise user input. In our study, most pricing tools proved complex, time-consuming, and error prone. Only a few, highly engaged customers are likely to make the effort to enter data. A better approach is to offer sample prices, which typically placates prospects doing initial research.

The screenshot displays the AWCleaning.com website's cost estimator tool. The header features the company logo and navigation links: Home, Services, Company Info, Online Store, and Contact Us. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Services:** A list of services including Maid Service, Standard Service, Deep Clean Service, Annual Cleaning, Move Out/In, Subscription Based, Kitchen/Bath Combo, Property Managers, Vacation Rentals, Construction Service, and Carpets. An "Instant Quote (Beta)" button is also present.
- Size & Configuration:** Fields for "Type of Home" (set to "Apartment 1 Bed 1 Bath"), "Area (sq ft)" (set to "Under 1000"), and "Condition" (set to "Normal").
- Cleaning Services:** Radio button options for "Standard Cleaning" (selected), "Deep Cleaning", "Move In/Move Out", and "Annual Cleaning".
- Frequency:** Four boxes for pricing: "Weekly" (70), "Bi-Monthly" (75), "Monthly" (80), and "1 Time Only" (80).
- Additional Services / Add Ons:** A section with checkboxes for "Window washing" (0), "Vertical Blinds" (0), "Horizontal Blinds" (0), "Inside/Behind Oven", "Inside/Behind Refrigerator", and "Home Office". A note states: "(If needed **Window washing** must be added below to all cleanings.)"
- Cost of this cleaning:** A final box showing a total cost of 80.
- Standard Residential Cleaning:** A detailed description of the service, including "Kitchen" (spot cleaning outside of cabinets, cleaning microwave, stove, counter tops, sink, and floors) and "Bathrooms" (cleaning shower, tub, toilet, sink, counter tops, vanity areas, mirrors, baseboards, and floors).
- Bedrooms:** A description of bedroom cleaning, including dusting, vacuuming, and making beds.
- Common Areas:** A description of cleaning common areas like the living room, dining room, and family room, including dusting, vacuuming, and mopping.

People on AWCleaning.com were pleased to find a useful cost estimator tool that's quick and easy to use. One participant commented, *"I love that! I can filter out all the other stuff by telling it specifically what I want. This is really cool! I can plug in a unit and come up with a price. That's great. I would print it out to use it to compare the pricing with other companies. This company would probably want to beat competitor prices. This is great!"*

As an example, let's compare rate information at two different shipping companies: FedEx and TNT. FedEx had a rate table, while TNT had a rate estimator tool. In our study, a participant tried to get rates on both sites, but was more successful on FedEx.com than TNT.com. Why? Because the table showed prices at a glance, while the tool required too much effort to complete, even though it might be more precise.

GETTING RATES ON FEDEX.COM

Step 1: Select ship-to location

The screenshot shows the FedEx Express website's 'Get Rates' page. The navigation bar includes links for Ship, Track, Rates, Transit Time, Locations, Pickup, Supplies, and Customs Tools. The 'Rates' section is highlighted. On the left, there are links for 'Get Rates', 'FedEx International First Rates', 'Request Customized Rates', and 'Useful Rate And Surcharges Information'. The main content area is titled 'Get Rates' and 'International Express Tariff'. It includes a section for 'View the FedEx List Rates:' with a dropdown menu showing 'Venezuela' and a 'View Rates' button. There are also sections for 'FedEx International Priority® Rates' and 'FedEx International First® Rates'. A welcome message on the right explains the tariff guide and provides additional information about FedEx services.

Step 2: Get rate table. Done!

Get Rates

FedEx International Priority® Rates
For Shipments From United Kingdom to Venezuela (Zone D)

FedEx Envelope	
Weight (kg)	UKL
0.5	40.40

FedEx Pak	
Weight (kg)	UKL
0.5	44.50
1.0	48.30
1.5	54.20
2.0	59.90
2.5	65.80

Package Shipments (FedEx Box, FedEx Tube, Other Packaging)	
Weight (kg)	UKL
0.5	51.70
1.0	58.50
1.5	64.80
2.0	71.00

Find out more about [FedEx International Priority® Service](#).

- For items up to 68 kg.
- Unlimited shipment weight.
- On-time delivery or your money back*.

* Money-back-guarantee: full details available in our Conditions of Carriage

Please note:

- These quotations do not include the Value Added Tax (V.A.T.); V.A.T. will only be applied when shipping goods within the European countries.
- Please check if any taxes, duties or other surcharges may apply to those quoted rates in [Useful rate and surcharges information](#).
- These tariffs are only applicable to UK account holders.

These tariffs are published rates and effective from April 1, 2006

If you have personalized rates or you are a new customer that would like to get customized rates, please, request them via [Request Customized Rates](#)

GETTING RATES ON TNT.COM

Step 1: Answer many detailed questions.

Price Checker

Stage 1

Price Checker is our online price estimation tool for non TNT account holders. To make it easy for you to send your packages with us, tell us about your consignment, and Price Checker will work out the delivery options and prices for you.

NOTE : TNT account holders should obtain prices by contacting our callcentre on freephone 0800 100 600

from:	postcode	to:	postcode
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
delivered on:	18/11/2005		
total no. items:	<input type="text"/>	total weight:	<input type="text"/> kg
overall dimensions:	length	width	height
	<input type="text"/> cm	<input type="text"/> cm	<input type="text"/> cm
transit liability:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Free Cover <input type="radio"/> £9.00 for up to £15,000 cover		
continue			

Step 2: Select more options. [User stopped here.]

Stage 2

Please confirm the consignment details and select a delivery option from the list provided below.

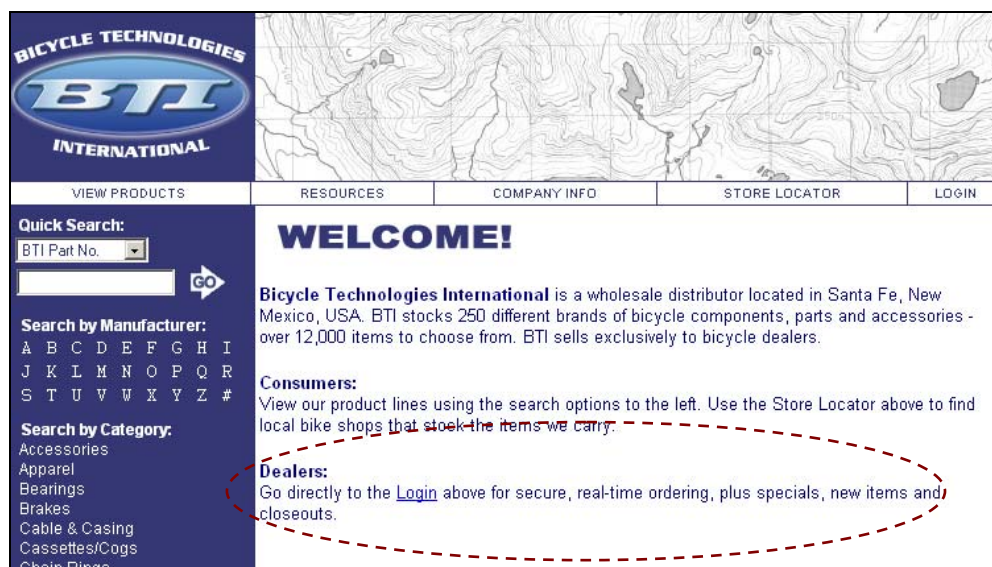
from:	postcode	to:	postcode
	W106 (Park Royal Depot)		NR14 (Thetford Depot)
delivered on:	18/11/2005		
total no. items:	1	total weight:	6 kg
overall dimensions:	length	width	height
	8 cm	6 cm	2 cm
transit liability:	Free Cover		
Select a delivery option:			
<input type="radio"/> Before 0900 - £87.70			
<input type="radio"/> Before 1030 - £72.10			
<input type="radio"/> Before 1200 - £52.30			
<input type="radio"/> Next working day - £33.00			
back	terms and conditions	continue	
Please contact us on 0800 100 600 for information on our regular user rates.			

40. If your audience includes distributors, offer easy access to wholesale prices.

Quoting only the distributor-approved MSRP might hurt your capacity to compete. In particular, distributors were frustrated when manufacturers only listed MSRPs on their website and not volume discounts or “street” prices.

Distributors need more than MSRP to make purchase decisions; in our study, they perceived sites that quoted only MSRP as being too consumer-facing, ignoring their needs.

Resellers wanted more detailed information on wholesale price structures, volume discounts, and typical mark-ups. When there was no way to access that information—either online or via a “wholesale” area of the site—they were more likely to seek out other companies’ options.



BTI-USA.com: An exception to the guideline of openly revealing pricing information is when your customers are dealers or wholesalers—they expect to login to a secure site for pricing information.

41. Emphasize your business approach (your selling point).

If your business approach is a key differentiator, show it on the homepage and other relevant site areas. The participants in our study said that word-of-mouth and company reputation are both factors in their initial research process. But, during the test, we discovered that sites that offered customer incentives—such as free shipping/delivery, low prices, and quality products

and services—piqued people's interest and got them to check out their merchandise.

Maybe you're the only provider in a specific region. Maybe you have a support network that covers certain geographic locations. Perhaps your inventory management system means that you can guarantee next day delivery for a broader range of items than anyone else in the industry.

Consider what is unique about your company, product, or service. Make that your selling point. As long as the differentiating factor is not too esoteric or niche, there's a group of users for whom your value proposition is a key business requirement. Simple phrases, such as *Free Shipping* or *We specialize in X*, can pull people in and set you apart from the competition.

While almost all users said that price was a key factor, their purchase decision wasn't always based on price, nor did they always go with the lowest priced vendor (unless they're forced to by government purchasing regulations or the like). Even in those situations, participants hinted at ways they could specify other requirements that would exclude the obviously sub-standard, low-priced products. Price provides a clear upper boundary, but participants also differentiate on the basis of other factors such as:

- Feature set
- Perceived quality
- Compatibility with existing products or services
- Location of the company or goods
- Shipping rates and delivery time
- Service contracts and warranty information
- Availability
- Information and tools available on the company's website

Websites can have multiple purposes: e-commerce, lead generation, providing information, and so on. With thousands of websites vying for people's attention, what makes your organization stand out above the rest? Is it quick turnaround time, customization and specialized products and services, or customer service? Whatever your edge might be, make sure prospective customers know it. Grab their attention immediately by revealing how your services benefit them.

Here's what customers say hooks them in:

"When looking for companies to do business with, I look for websites that appear simple. I'm not very patient, so I don't want to scroll through a bunch of screens. I look and see if you can set up an account, click, and

see past orders. For me, cost isn't that big of a deal if I can get the products quickly."

"Saying that it's fine to change the designs after the first show means the company is flexible and open to doing different things. Saying that their designs are minimalist is good; you don't want beams getting in the way. They're really pushing the message that the displays are easy to pack, buy, and ship. This approach tells me that the displays are different—maybe it will catch the eye of attendees."

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- Prices
- Contact
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- Client Login

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- ✓DOUBLE-verified

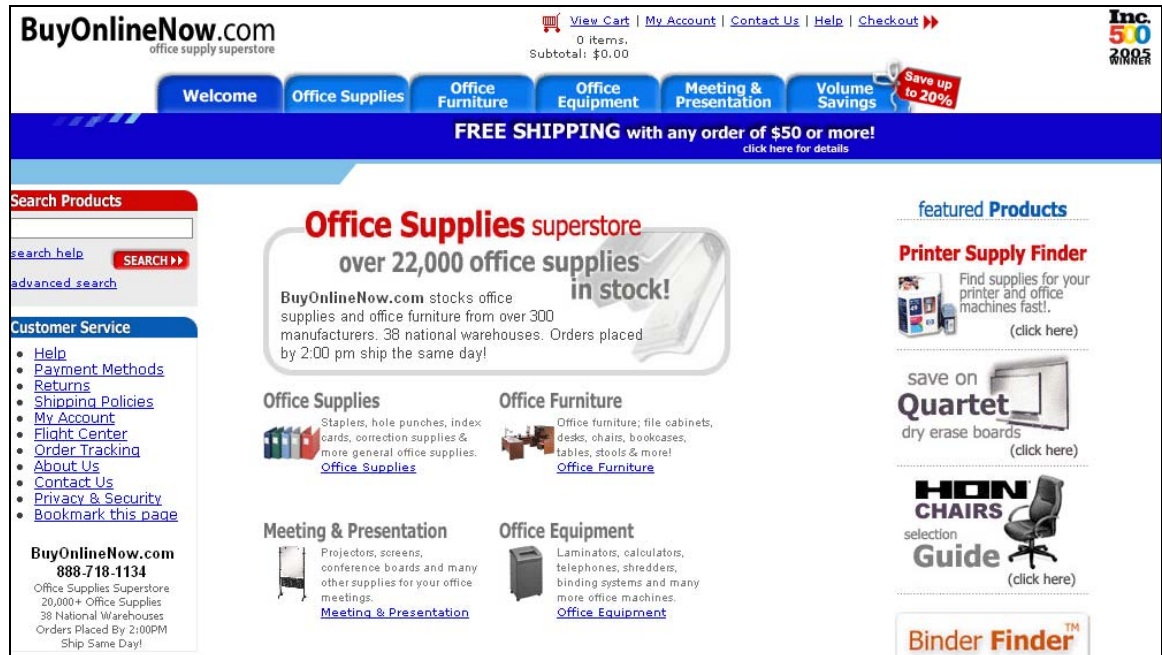
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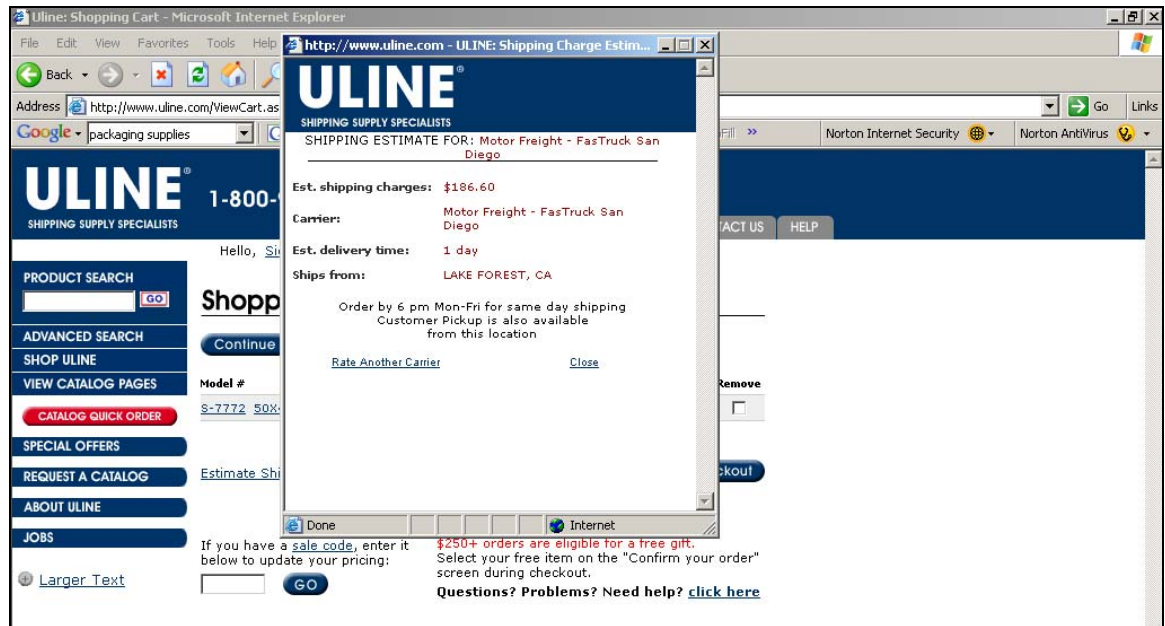
DoublePositive.com has many good selling points—especially price, which the company isn't afraid to show on the homepage. This works by clearly addressing the customer's questions and dispelling any reservations upfront. Clutter-free design keeps people focused on the important messages.



The FREE SHIPPING message and photos of a few choice products on buyonlinenow.com caught people's attention, leading to this comment, *"They have free shipping! It always catches my eye. This site also has photos of each product. I like that. You get things at a glance instead of having to sit there and read every heading. The pictures are great."*

42. Provide information on delivery times and costs.

Companies in the same time zone typically keep the same business hours. Additionally, early-opening companies liked doing business with East Coast companies in the U.S., whereas West Coast companies were better for late-in-the-day rush orders. Participants showed a propensity to buy from local businesses. Doing business with local companies typically means lower shipping costs, faster delivery, and the ability to do will-call pick-ups. Some participants even mentioned that they have previously driven by a company's location just for the trust aspect of knowing the company really exists.



Uline tells customers where products ship from and delivery times, so they can decide whether to pick it up themselves or have it shipped to them. This information is valuable because shipping costs and time are important factors in the purchase process.

PRODUCT IMAGES

43. Provide product images that are large enough to show the details customers need to make a purchase decision.

When done properly, visual aids help describe your product in ways that words alone can't clearly communicate. Meaningful illustrations and images can complement textual descriptions to show, rather than tell, what items look like.

Web page space is usually limited, so make your images count. Illustrations must show relevant details to support product selection. Don't waste screen real estate on images or graphics solely for decoration. Instead, support your customer's browsing behavior by choosing images wisely; make sure they show details that customers care about.

The most common illustrations problems are:

- Wrong size or resolution, resulting in inadequate detail
- Wrong magnification level, resulting in inadequate context or detail
- Insufficient context, making it difficult to conceptualize the object size
- Wrong vantage points, making it impossible to see what the object looks like from different angles
- Inadequate display of colors, making it difficult to visualize item colors

Here's what users said about product images:

"I like pictures because a picture is worth a thousand words. For example, on EBay, there could be twenty or a hundred items, but I pick the one with the picture first."

"The pictures are nice because it's easier to sort products this way."

"I like pictures when I'm ordering supplies because I know for sure what I'm getting. Because I don't measure it very well, a picture gives me an idea of the size."

"They have images of booths and floor plans with a grid. It shows what they are doing. I know that they can do custom work. These guys look pro." [Referring to nomadicdisplay.com]

"When you get down to specified categories, you get pictures. And you can narrow your results by brand name, price, and feature. That's nice." [Referring to officedepot.com]

44. Offer enlarged images when visual details are important.

For the initial photo on the product page, we recommend using the lowest size and resolution that still includes sufficient detail on important elements.

Provide links to larger images if seeing additional detail is necessary for purchasing decisions. For simple or familiar items, such as medical gauze, having a single large picture of the box might be sufficient. Seeing the box (to verify brand) and reading the overview specifications is probably enough. However, when product details are important, such as in textiles, electronics, and software, close-ups are necessary.

The downside of shopping online is that the item and shopper are in two different locations. Customers rely on product photos to visualize offerings and understand your products. Seeing specific details such as texture can

give people the confidence they need to make online transactions. If they like what they see, they might then follow up with a call or fill out a survey. If the information is insufficient, they might go to a competitor's site.

Good product photos are essential in the sales process; putting resources into them is worth the cost and effort.

Note: Initial pages should use small photos to avoid hogging bandwidth and real estate. Yes, you want to be aware of download times and watch your page weight quota. Even in this broadband age, slow response times are still common. Be sensitive to people who have slow bandwidth connections, as large files can take too long to load, or even worse, lock up their computer. Customers don't like waiting for graphics and images that take forever to load, especially when the payoff isn't worth the effort.



In this MedexSupply.com example, the enlarged picture is not much different than the initial product photo. Remember, when people ask for an enlarged photo, give them a truly enlarged photo, not the same photo or one that's only slightly bigger. Such good-for-nothing options reduce the site's credibility.

45. Offer alternative product views where appropriate.

Similar in concept with showing close-ups, having product illustrations in alternative angles (e.g., back and side) can be just as critical in educating

customers about your products. The angles you offer should mirror the physical aspects of the product that customers find important. For example, having back and side close-up views of an electronics product is important so customers can tell whether it's compatible with their existing hardware.



These Planar.com photos show that the monitor can pivot, but they don't show other important features. There are no close-ups that show what the integrated speakers look like, or how thin the monitor really is. On features like these, don't just tell—show.

46. For software products, provide full-sized screenshots.

If you're selling software, offer full, large-sized photos—go big! Prospects looking for software products want full-sized views of your interface to see how it looks and whether it appears to do what they need. An initial

thumbnail photo is fine, but make sure to offer a way to get a truly enlarged view so customers can see what the real product will look like on their systems.

Software researchers are more apt to follow a call to action (e.g., register, fill out contact forms, pick up the phone) when screenshots show enough detail to pique their interest. Give customers the screenshots first, and they'll be more likely to give you their personal information.

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WinTOTAL

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Aurora's Auto Adjuster makes it easier to create, save and apply automatic adjustments across all your comps based on assumptions you've told it to make. You supply the expertise and Aurora does the leg work.



Hotkeys save time entering when adjusting comps
Entering data in the comps grid can be tedious and any keystrokes that can save you time are a plus. In WinTOTAL, you can push text from one field across all the comps you're adjusting, copy entire columns with two keystrokes, and add data from other columns with hotkeys so you never have to touch your mouse.

Import comps from your MLS
How many times have you wished for this? Aurora can import comps you've exported to a file from your MLS. It's super fast and easy, keeps you from

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- [Questions](#)
- [Video library](#)
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- [Buy WinTOTAL](#)

Features and Benefits

View another feature:

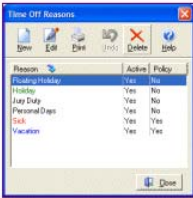
The screenshot on this AlaMode.com product page is too small to be readable. Even worse, there's no way to enlarge it. Clicking on thumbnails should show an enlarged view.




Sample Screens

Click on the images to see a bigger view


- Introduction
- How To Use
- Downloads
- Purchasing
- Sample Screens
- Frequently Asked Questions



Time Off Reasons
Define your own reasons why an employee took time off, and how they will be applied.

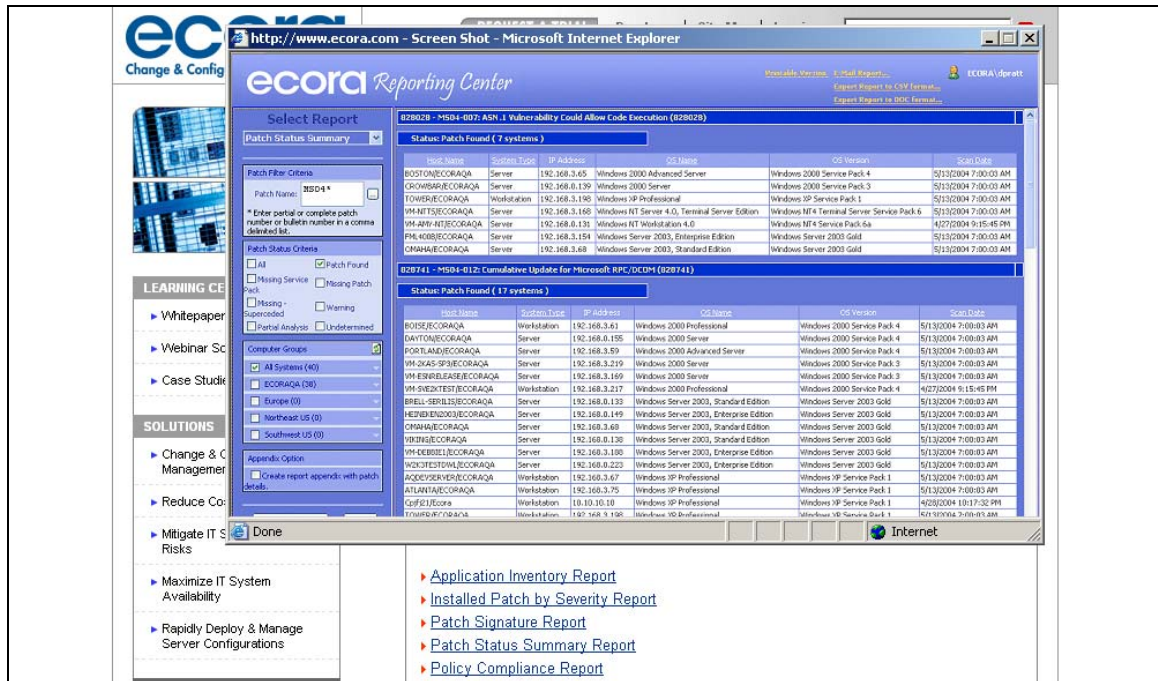


Global Time Off
Add a time off entry once and it will automatically be applied to all active employees (great for company holidays).



Employee Time Off (the main screen)
Use drag and drop to add a time off entry for an employee. TimeOff will automatically update the Reason Balances.

MycroftComputing.com does a good job of providing product examples. It offers an obvious link to *Sample Screens*, its screens are well organized, the thumbnails show enlarged views, and the free trial requires no registration. This company knows how to sell the right way.



Ecora.com provides screenshots of its software, but the enlarged version of the screen is too small and doesn't show enough detail for customers to assess the product.

47. Make sure pictures and diagrams are large enough to be re-used in printed documents and presentations.

Participants described copying images of various product options and emailing them to requesters so the requesters could verify and choose the product. They also sometimes copy images and important charts or diagrams into documents and presentations that they give to decision-makers.

Thumbnail images don't expand well to show detail or to use in a presentation. Instead, provide links to large, high-resolution images suitable for printing.

"This gives you a screenshot, and a really nice screenshot at that—it gives you a feel almost on the computer how it would be on the [product's] touch screen. And this is something you could print off and show to other people."



ActionSystems.com provides full-size images of its Point Of Sale terminal screens. Seeing these images helped one participant really understand how the application would work in his environment.

48. Choose 2D over 3D.

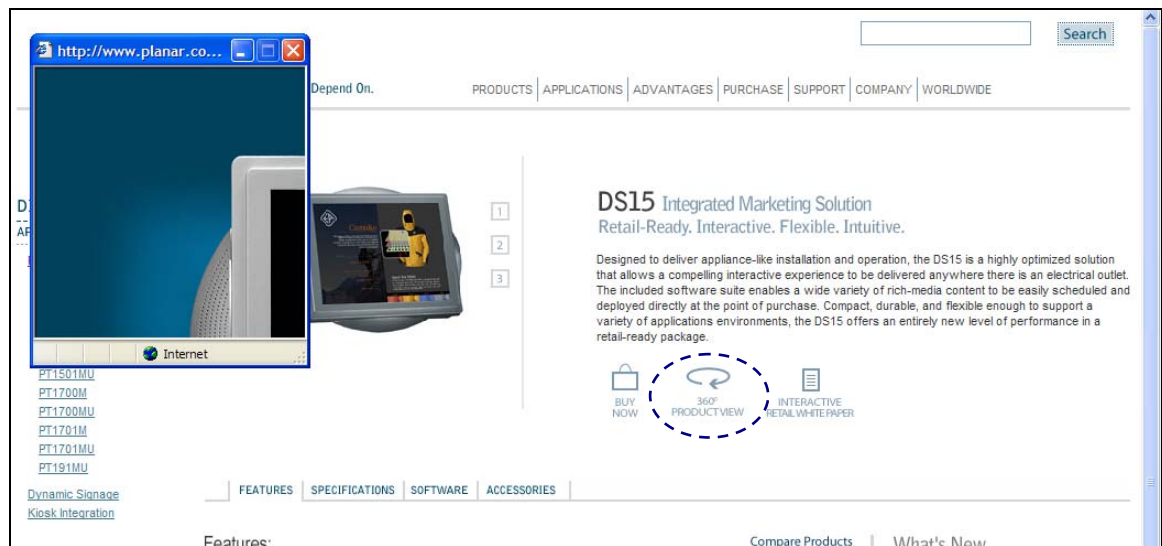
Refrain from using complicated or spinning 3D models when photos can illustrate the same points.

Don't be tempted to develop fancy 3D models of your products. Most attempts to show 3D mannequins and representations of objects backfire because 3D manipulations are too complicated and cumbersome for general Web audiences to operate. Many viewers can't benefit from displays such as virtual tours because they require a high level of manual dexterity and experience that they simply don't have. Also, most business clients don't have the patience to fuss with complicated controls and interfaces.

In addition, the payoff for interactive demos is often not worth the effort because it's expensive to develop and sometimes unstable or incompatible with end users' systems.

In almost every instance—except in critical applications that require 3D, such as medical diagnostic applications—it's better to provide a range of close-ups at different angles to offer needed details than to require users to mess with complicated or spinning objects.

Unless your audience is technology savvy (e.g., software engineers and Web designers) who tend to own high-end systems, have expert computer knowledge, and love figuring things out, it's safer to stick with 2D illustrations.



A participant thought it would be interesting to check out the 360° product view on Planar.com. The view opened in a tiny, non-resizable window. Things were obviously happening in the window, but the participant just couldn't see them. All he really wanted was to see what the back of the unit looked like, as this would be the side that faced his customers. *"Now if you're going to have something like that on there, give instructions on how to use it or... okay, that's nice, but it—I don't know, am I doing something wrong? That's nice, but that's a turn off. If you're going to have something, at least have it work."*



Dell Rack-Dense Servers

▶ PowerEdge 1855

- Blade Front View
- Hard Disk
- Blade
- Fan
- Power Supply
- Rear View



Turn



Move



Measure

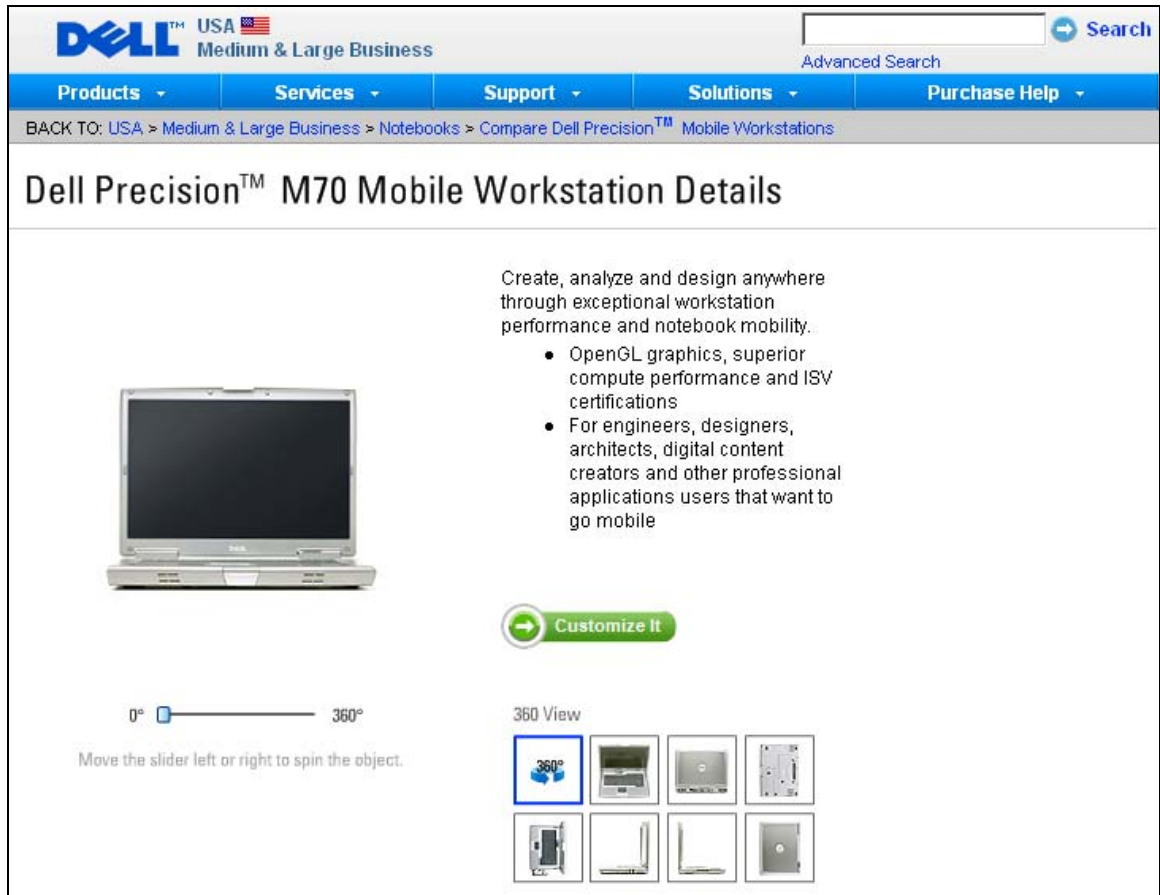


Zoom



Reset

On Dell.com, this 3D interactive model of an advanced computer system might be fine for the site's technical customers, who often enjoy these types of manipulations. However, general audiences have greater difficulty controlling 3D models like this. Most people's manual dexterity and ability to visualize in 3D are not advanced enough to control this comfortably.



Dell.com also offers a better solution to showing different product views. Clicking on the thumbnails shows an enlargement. No fuss. For something a bit fancier, people can move the slider back and forth to watch the object spin. While this feature might be overkill, moving the slider left and right is relatively easy.

MULTIMEDIA AND DEMONSTRATION VIDEOS

49. Use multimedia to augment still pictures and textual descriptions, not replace them.

Even though videos were available on many of the sites we studied, prospects rarely clicked on them. Instead, they opted for still illustrations and text,

which typically offer quicker information than watching videos. The few people who watched demonstrations appreciated the ones that explained the product and served a user-centered purpose. Demos that were long and company-centric were off-putting, causing users to avoid other multimedia on the site for fear of encountering similar negative experiences.

Always rely on good still images and well-written text to provide the key message, with video or animation as an extra selling point.

Static information has another big advantage: It's easier to save and print for offline use, such as reports or presentations for decision-makers or purchase-approvers.

50. Use videos if products need to be seen in action to be understood.

For complex products and services, words and pictures alone don't always adequately communicate what they are or how they work. In such cases, videos are a good alternative. They shouldn't replace product descriptions and still illustrations, but you can certainly use them successfully to augment explanations.

The topics to cover on video depend on your offerings' complexity, and what users need to see "in action" to access its value. Videos are valuable if they can easily educate customers and offer them additional insights.

Rather than simply claiming a product is easy to use, a well-done demonstration video can show it. In software, for example, simple how-to videos showing a few key usage scenarios can help customers see how a process works.

Equipment, such as hi-tech medical devices and elaborate machinery, can also benefit from demonstration videos. To emphasize the unique benefits of, say, a medical camera in the form of a pill, a video showing its path through the human body and the images it can capture is useful to help customers visualize the product in action. In this case, telling doesn't do it justice; showing the product in action facilitates communication and elicits emotional responses.

Products
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ISBM
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View our videos to learn more about our blow moulding machines.

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Products ...

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Jomar Continuous Extrusion Blow Moulding



In the simplest form of continuous extrusion blow moulding (EBM), parisons are extruded from the core and die of the **extrusion** head. When the parisons reach the correct, predetermined length, in **Station 1**, the moulds are closed around them and simultaneously a cutting unit cuts the parisons.

The moulds have the external shape of the finished container and immediately move still closed from **Station 1** to **Station 2**. Here the blow pins are inserted into the centre of the hot parison calibrating the container necks through the pinch-off bushings. Air at 4 -10 bar then enters through the blow pin to **blow** the parison to form the shape of the container inside the moulds.

The moulds are made usually of an Aluminum alloy or Stainless Steel and cooled to 5-10°C, which will cool the bottle. Excess material at the top and bottom (flash) is also compacted and cooled at **Station 2**. Now the moulds open and return to **Station 1** to collect new parisons.

JomarCorp.com: The Extrusion Blow Moulding process is complex and involves different parts and machinery. It's difficult to imagine what the procedure looks like by reading the text alone. Fortunately, the site provides demonstration videos so viewers can see it rather than read about it.

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[Overview](#)
[SilverHawk™ - U.S.](#)
[→ Plaque Excision Procedure](#)
[The SilverHawk Technology](#)
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[SilverHawk™ - Europe](#)
[SilverHawk™ - Patients](#)
[Plaque Analysis](#)


Plaque Excision Procedure

The SilverHawk™ Plaque Excision System is an FDA-cleared device for the treatment of de novo and restenotic lesions in the peripheral arteries.

Plaque excision is a minimally invasive procedure performed through a tiny puncture site in the leg or arm. The SilverHawk System uses a tiny rotating blade to shave away plaque from inside the artery. As it is excised, the plaque collects in the tip of the device and then is removed from the patient.

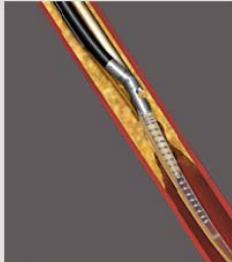
In hospitals across the U.S., plaque excision has helped alleviate severe leg pain for thousands of patients. In many cases, it has successfully saved the legs of patients who were scheduled for limb amputation after other peripheral interventions failed. To find a trained physician in your area, please call toll-free 1-877-4-LEG-INFO.

How Plaque Excision Works: [\[Watch Video\]](#)




Step 1:

The SilverHawk catheter is inserted into the body through a small puncture site and is advanced through the artery to the site of the blockage.



Step 2:

Once the SilverHawk catheter is at the site of the blockage, a tiny rotating blade is activated. The physician advances the catheter through the lesion, shaving plaque off of the artery walls.



Step 3:

The plaque collects in the tip of the catheter and then is completely removed from the body. The physician may need to repeat these steps until enough plaque is removed to restore normal blood flow to the legs.

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FoxHollowTech.com uses words and still images to describe the company's innovative tool for removing arterial plaque. The information is useful to both medical professionals and to patients who will be undergoing this procedure. The site also offers a simple and informative demonstration video showing how the equipment works inside the human body. The video added a welcomed extra dimension for one participant, who was thinking of carrying this line of equipment in his operating room.

View the video at: <http://www.foxhollowtech.com/movie/Animation.mpg>

51. Keep demonstration videos short; stay on topic.

The Web is an interactive media and people want to be in control and move around. It's not a television; users don't enjoy sitting passively through long videos. Most audio and video clips should be less than a minute long. You shouldn't typically expect people to sit still and watch something on the Web for longer than five minutes, unless it's a lecture or webcast.

If you have long videos, break them up into smaller compelling segments. The goal is to hold people's interest, not drive them away. Remember, if people have a good experience with one of your videos, they're more likely to try others on the site. Conversely, if they don't like what they see in the first one, they are unlikely to try others.

Four tips for making compelling videos:

1. **Stay on topic.** Show the main points quickly and stop. Remove any superfluous effects and messages, such as slow graphical transitions and long corporate introductions. Don't make it into a commercial.
2. **Balance video size and quality.** Ensure reasonable download time, while retaining enough quality to show your product's important aspects. Jerky, low-res video that breaks up several times per minute simply does not constitute "compelling content." Videos are useless if people can't see what's on the screen. However, if it takes too long to load, people lose patience and give up.
3. **Refrain from using unnecessary sound effects and music.** People find background music on most demonstration videos to be tacky and unprofessional. Generally, the purpose of demonstration videos isn't to create ambiance or be entertaining. The main purpose is to educate. Let your demonstration speak for itself. Sound effects get in the way, especially when people want to learn something.
4. **Make sure it works.** At some point, almost every Web user has been burned by multimedia that didn't work, stalled, took too long to load, or even worse, crashed their systems. Make sure to create videos in formats that work on your users' systems.

52. Make sure your site loads quickly.

Keep people's interest with fast-loading pages. Users agonize over site performance, but B2B customers are probably the most demanding and unforgiving. Business customers mean business and are unforgiving of websites that waste their time. They're using websites as a tool to gather serious information, and flashy sites with long download times get squashed.

Participants in our study said that they get interrupted at work constantly, and they don't have time for clunky websites.

Businesses might technically have broadband connections, but servers, networks, and wireless connections can cause significant delays in download time. Even though our study's participants had broadband connections, they often complained about site delays and—regardless of the true cause—they usually blamed websites for causing long page loads.

Avoid any superfluous effects or graphics that impact speed. On business sites, gratuitous motion and sound elements (such as sound rollovers and background music) are considered unprofessional and annoying. People in work environments especially don't want to be bombarded by sound, which is disruptive both to users and those around them.

Before you add anything to the site, make sure it supports a user purpose. If it doesn't add value to customers by communicating how your offerings can meet their needs, leave it out.

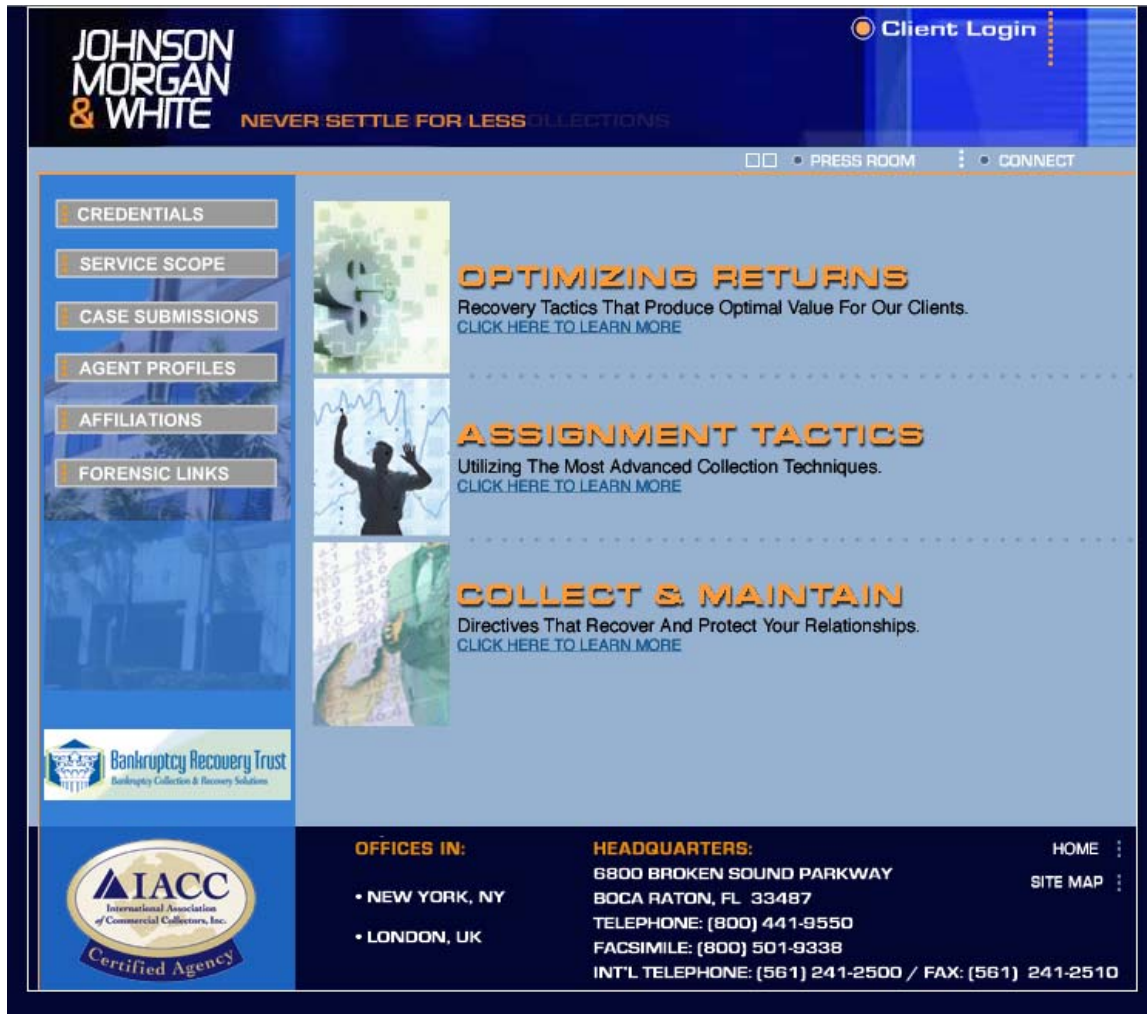
Slim down your site by removing unnecessary clutter such as logos, graphics, multimedia, and noise. Elements that take too long to load, are unstable, or are buggy reduce the user experience and prospects' impression of your organization. Optimize file sizes and minimize loading time, especially when designing for business audiences; they will thank you. Here's what users said about gratuitous sound effects and slow-loading websites:

"If a site loads slowly, I won't wait."

"I would skip the intro. It's not professional. I don't know how this music makes me feel that they're professionals. Don't like the music at all. It's irritating. Let's turn it off. [Referring to turboappraisals.com]"

"They are into noise. Feel like I'm playing a video game. They don't tell me that they specialize in various areas. I would move on."

"It's playing music; I don't need to hear that." [Referring to sharp.com]"



Johnson, Morgan and White (jmandw.com) obviously wanted a “dynamic” site, even at the expense of download time. Images change in and out, buttons flash, and there are even little squares that appear and disappear for no apparent reason in the top menu area. Worst of all is the mouse-over noise when users select menu items. The noise is shocking and inappropriate in a business environment.

DESIGNING ONLINE INFORMATION FOR OFFLINE USE

On B2B sites, printing functionality is a must for record keeping and to facilitate information sharing.

In smaller companies, the researcher is probably also the decision-maker and purchaser, especially for low-ticket items. Even when only one person is involved in the decision-making process, they often want to keep tabs on their options, either by printing actual Web pages or by copying and pasting information into a document.

"I'll find information and print it, and keep it pretty much like a lab notebook and keep it for reference later."

In larger companies, where the purchase process often involves multiple people, having email and printing capabilities facilitates communication. People use email, Web pages, and Word documents or spreadsheets to convey the necessary data among team members. How well that data is transmitted is in part up to the website designer.

"So now I'm getting a comparison—I would print off the specs on several of them and get together with the end user to make sure. I would have, at the beginning, asked them what they were using it for, but then I'd get back with them and ask them about some of these features to make sure we're on the right path. Then I'd narrow it down to two or three."

"Usually when I find something I want, I print it off and email it to my end user."

"I wouldn't just buy them—I'd make sure the appropriate people were involved."

53. Format supporting documentation in a suitable way.

Present information intended for online viewing in HTML. Users often get lost inside PDF files, which are typically big, linear text blobs that are unpleasant to read and navigate online. PDF layouts are often optimized for a sheet of paper, which rarely matches the size of the user's browser window.

In previous studies, we've found that PDF files are problematic because they're typically converted from documents that were intended for print, so the guidelines for Web writing are not followed. The result is lengthy text that takes up many screens and is unpleasant and boring to read.

Besides the potential for long downloading times and crashing computers, PDFs are difficult to use. They live in their own environment with different commands and menus. Even simple things like printing or saving documents are difficult because standard browser commands don't work.

Most of all, most PDF files are enormous content chunks with no internal navigation. They also lack a decent search, aside from the extremely primitive ability to jump to a text string's next literal match. If a user's question is answered on page 49, there's close to zero probability of finding it. Burying information in PDFs means that most people won't read it.

Brochures are a specific example of this dual-use consideration. A brochure's design and layout lend themselves to PDF format, and the PDF document is useful to print as a justification source. However, brochures are typically also useful sources of product specifications, comparison charts, prices, and review

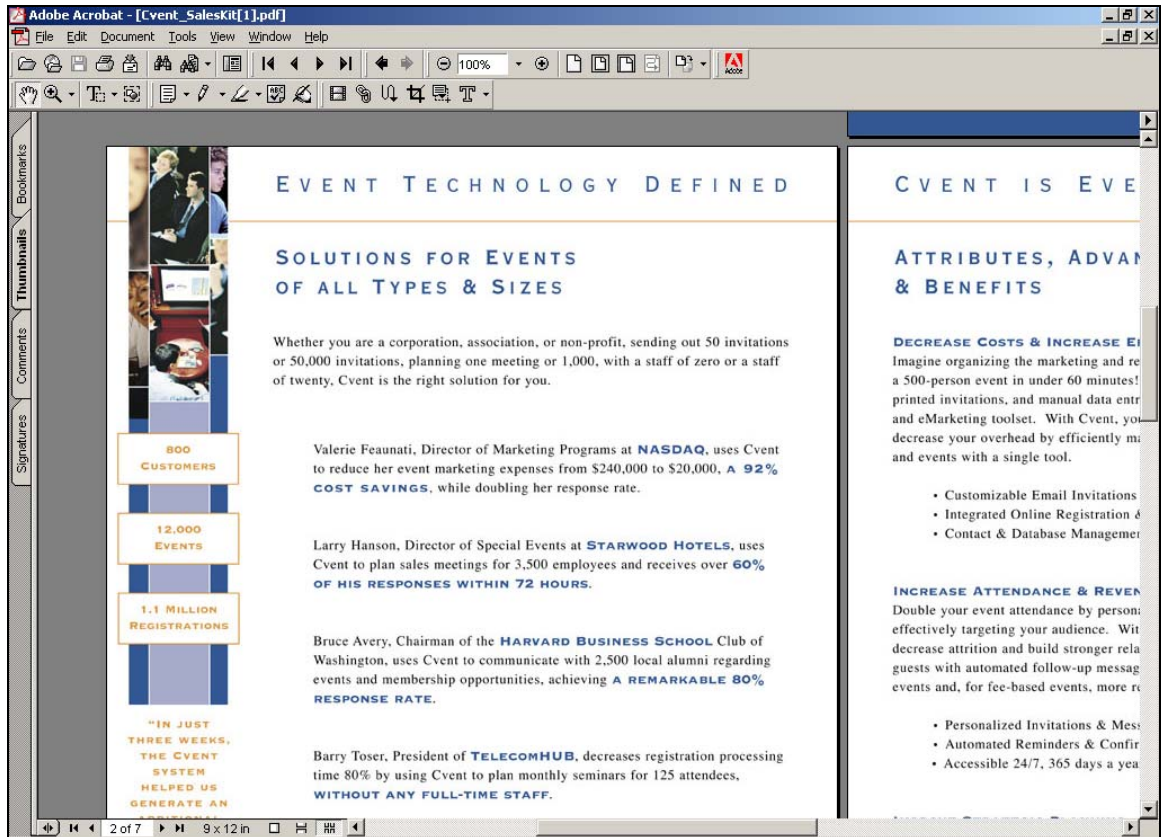
snippets. Ensure that all of the information contained in the brochure is also provided on the product page, and that this information is reformatted to be appealing in HTML format.

Prospects doing product research and comparison shopping often print online content for offline use, mainly to review the information later or to show it to requesters. PDF and print-friendly options make sense for information that will be printed, filed, and used offline.

Examples of printable types of documentation include:

- White papers
- Case studies
- Specifications
- Brochures
- Technical/solutions guidelines

While it's important to link to the print versions of these documents from product pages, remember to also include the pertinent data in HTML format so that it's easily viewable online.



Cvent.com's *Corporate Fact Sheet* offers good examples of clients who have benefited from the company's services. The examples are supported by numbers, which boosts their credibility. The downside: This juicy information is hidden inside a PDF, which reduces the likelihood of its being seen.

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This page offers a variety of collateral for our customers. Scan the different literature documents by product to find the right selection. Then view or send the literature collateral to colleagues.

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- To **mail a hardcopy selection**, use the "Request hardcopy file" check boxes on the right to select the documents and click the "Send/mail selected literature" at the top or bottom of the page. (Up to eight files can be sent and they can be different selections from those to be sent electronically.)

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Brochure

View files **E-mail files**

IBM Self Checkout: Introducing the next generation of IBM Self Checkout solutions

Meet the next generation of IBM Self Checkout, an expanded portfolio designed to make Self Checkout faster, easier, more reliable and more flexible. Based on market research conducted in the US and Europe with key retailers and consumers, this new portfolio offers significant hardware enhancements including many innovative features as well as additional model options. This 8-page brochure provides an overview of the new portfolio and specifics on each model, highlighting key features and benefits.

English (US) Show/Hide other languages

Retail Solutions from IBM. On demand. Now.

Last updated: 01 Jan 2005

This brochure describes IBM's vision of On Demand Business for the retail industry and explains the new paradigm of retailers changing their focus from what is on the shelf, to a more customer-centric strategy that focuses on who is in the store. IBM is poised to set the retail agenda for the future by helping retailers make the journey to On Demand Business.

English (US) Show/Hide other languages

Case Studies

View files **E-mail files**

Stop & Shop grocery drives sales and boosts customer loyalty with IBM Personal Shopping Assistant

Stop & Shop, the largest supermarket chain in New England, is installing intelligent cart-mounted marketing devices to enhance their customers' shopping experience and boost grocery sales.

English (US)

Learning about Point-of-Sale products is not easy on IBM.com because the information is in PDFs. While PDFs are good for printing, they're not good for online reading. Simply repurposing print material for online use backfires because customers simply don't like to read it.

54. Format your website design to support copying and pasting.

Participants often cut and paste specifications and pictures from product sites into a document or email, either for their reference or to create portfolios or justification documents.

Flash-based sites, PDF documents, and graphic-based text make this process harder. Even nested tables can leave users copying page elements that they don't want.

Luckily, simple, elegant, and accessible website designs are typically also easy to parse, highlight, and copy from. Try this with your site and see how few actions users need to take to gather pertinent information. Better still, provide a link to the information in a downloadable, printable format.

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[View Cart](#)

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monitors
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pole displays

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FINANCING
system leasing
credit application

POS Systems > Complete Restaurant > Dine-In Restaurant Systems



Additional Images:



POS-X Budget Restaurant
Budget Table Service System. Entry level system with all hardware and software needed to run a dine-in restaurant. All systems are pre-configured and tested before being shipped.

This system comes with:

- Central Processing Unit (Celeron 1.8Ghz Computer w/ Windows XP Home, 256 MB RAM & 80GB SATA Hard Drive, CD-ROM / FDD, 1 Serial Port / 1 Parallel Port / 6 USB 2.0 Ports)
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- Integrated Credit Card Processing*
- Magnetic Stripe Reader
- Impact Receipt Printer
- Impact Kitchen Printer
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- Heavy Duty Cash Drawer
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- All Required Cables
- 1 Year of Technical Support
- 1 Year Manufacturers Warranty

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For warranty and return information, please click [here](#)

*Credit Card Processing provided by PPI upon approval. Additional credit card processing options available, call for details.

Please allow up to 5-10 days for delivery of POS-X systems.

POSGuys Rating: ★★★★★

Standard Models	Advanced Models	Accessories	Downloads
Model #	Description	Price	Cart
XLD30	Budget System 1st Register (Ready to Go out of Box!!!)	\$2,999.00	Add to Cart
XLD30-OS	Budget System Additional Order Station (Ready to Go out of	\$2,299.00	Add to Cart

POSGuys.com does well in providing prices, relatively large images, and a bullet-point parts list. However, to copy the information into an email or Word document, users must select the text separately from the image to avoid grabbing advertisement images. They might also have to select information on several different tabs.



Planar.com uses Flash to provide a roll-over effect that switches product images. Right-clicking to copy the image doesn't work; it brings up the Flash menu shown here, which doesn't contain a *Copy* command. Neither does selecting the area and choosing edit/copy. Users would have to be pretty sophisticated to get an image of the product into their document or presentation.

55. Ensure that your online formats print well.

Comparing products on a computer screen is difficult: Users often lack the sophistication needed to work with multiple browser windows, and screen real estate is insufficient for good side-by-side comparisons.

Instead, users tend to print Web pages or other documentation, copy images and text to email or word-processing documents, or bookmark sites for later review.

Even if you offer offline or print-friendly materials, some users might simply print various Web pages for reference. Background graphics and table colors don't print, and the right margin is often cut off on wide pages. Be sure that you either specify a .CSS file for printing or design your pages with printing in mind; at very least, ensure that no important information is cut off when a page is printed.

If you have international customers, ensure that your printed output will fit on both the North American 8.5x11-sized paper and the European A4 format. A4 is slightly narrower than 8.5x11, and thus might cut off the rightmost characters. 8.5x11 is slightly shorter than A4, and thus might cut off the bottommost lines.

56. Offer a table of contents at the beginning of long PDFs.

For reports in *HTML*, include a table of contents at the beginning that links to important document sections. It's also helpful to have a link to the table of contents from within the report.

For reports in *PDF*, include a table of contents at the start and an alphabetical index at the end.

57. For PDF documents, have a gateway page that gives a summary description of the content and file size.

Offer a short description of the document and give the page count and file size so people can decide whether it's worth downloading. Also, clearly state that the PDF file is for printing. From any other part of the website, link only to the gateway page, not to the PDF document.

58. Set the default for PDF documents to open at a legible size.

Many people don't know how to magnify the document using the Adobe Acrobat controls. Some people are unaware that it's possible. Even at 100% magnification, some documents are too small to read online.


59. For large PDF files, let people download the document in smaller sections.

If a PDF file is very large, break it up into smaller files. Offering smaller files helps improve download time, especially for people with slow Internet connections. Each section should have a title (and a description, if the title is not self-explanatory), file size, and page count so users can decide whether downloading it is worth their time.

60. Don't give plug-in icons more prominence than the related document or application links.

Be wary of showing icons for plug-in software such as Adobe Acrobat on your site, especially if the icons are more prominent than the associated links. It's common for users to mistake the icon for the document link because it looks like a button. When clicking it brings them to a completely different site, they become completely discombobulated.


Contact Us	Products	Services	Resources
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PRODUCTS

[Home](#) > [Products](#) > [Industrial Tank Cover](#)

LemTec™ Tank Cover utilizes a patented floating LemTec™ Modular Insulated Cover consisting of individual casings of closed-cell extruded polystyrene insulation encapsulated by two sheets of durable, 10 year UV-resistant, high density polyethylene (HDPE) geomembrane. Individual casings are laced together during installation to form a complete cover over the liquid in the basin. The cover offers insulation R-factors ranging from 10 to 30 and a geomembrane capable of withstanding even the most severe environmental conditions. Each cover is custom built, therefore fabricated to conform to any tank size or shape. LemTec™ Tank Cover offers a cost-effective alternative to aluminum and fiberglass domes that typically require venting, recirculation systems and explosion-proof motors. Typical applications include equalization, aeration, contact stabilization and sludge digestion tanks.



<p>CASE STUDY:</p> <p>Chemical Plant, ON</p>	<p>SYSTEM ADVANTAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Custom designed to fit specific tank dimensions ■ Adapts to any water level variation ■ Available in broad range of insulating values ■ Easily integrates with stationary surface equipment ■ Custom built hatches allow for easy access to submerged equipment for sampling or maintenance ■ Eliminates the need for a water collection system, pumps, etc. 	<p>To find out more about LemTec™ Tank Cover Download the Brochure</p> <p>  Download Acrobat Reader </p>
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The Acrobat Reader download button on LemnaTechnologies.com has more prominence than the link to the brochure. As a result, many people are likely to mistake the Acrobat Reader icon for the document link.

The table below summarizes recommendations for presenting documents in HTML and PDF formats:

	<i>HTML format (online viewing)</i>	<i>PDF format (offline viewing)</i>
<i>Gateway page to documents</i>	<p>Offer a summary description of the report.</p> <p>List the HTML format choice first (people are more likely to click on the first link).</p> <p>In general, make the title be the link.</p>	<p>State clearly that the PDF file is for printing.</p> <p>Have a summary description of the PDF.</p> <p>Indicate page count and file size so people can decide whether it's worth downloading. If the file is very large, consider breaking it up into smaller files.</p> <p>From any other part of the website, link only to the gateway page, not to the PDF document.</p>
<i>Other software</i>	Don't require people to install additional software, such as Flash or PowerPoint to look at your presentations and reports.	Ensure that your PDF document format is at least one version behind the latest offering to maximize the probability that users will already have a valid viewer installed.
<i>Printing</i>	Have a print-friendly feature that formats the documents for different paper sizes. Some countries use 8.5x11, while others use A4. Make sure your documents will fit both.	Format your printable documents for different paper sizes (that is, 8.5x11 and A4). Make sure that the printed content is legible.
<i>Typeface</i>	Use common sans-serif fonts that are easy to read online, such as Verdana.	Use easily readable typefaces for printing, such as Helvetica, Times, and Bodoni.
<i>Graphics and motion</i>	Avoid any superfluous graphics or movement, particularly those that impact speed. Avoid splash pages.	Avoid backgrounds, especially ones that print out dark or bleed into the content.
<i>Navigation</i>	<p>Avoid complex or fancy navigation. Keep it simple so people can move around different sections without difficulty.</p> <p>Follow standard usability guidelines for navigation. For example, have consistent navigation and limit the use of dropdowns (which, when long, can be difficult to control). Always use clear, understandable category names.</p>	Have a table of contents at the start of the report and an alphabetical index at the end.
<i>Page numbers</i>	Number each page of the report. If using <i>Next</i> buttons, include the total number of pages.	Number each page of the report.
<i>Online viewing</i>	Avoid horizontal scrolling.	Default the zoom to a level that's easily readable on screen and doesn't require people to scroll horizontally.

Guidelines: Phase 2, Relationship

If a site passes the initial inspection, prospects often return to it for follow-up information. The second round typically helps users make further eliminations and prompts them to proceed further with promising sites.

If the site seems credible, prospects might respond to a call to action, such as setting up a meeting with a sales agent, requesting a bid, or filling out a survey. For services and large purchases, the relationship phase is critical. While it's possible to provide large quantities of information on the company website, most service-related work requires some form of customization. This requires one-on-one consultation, and being able to contact the right person in the company is key.

MAKE YOUR CONTENT SHINE

At some companies, as soon as a prospect calls, they're as good as a paying customer; letting the sales agent loose for five minutes will result in a sale. Although this is true for a few select businesses, participants in our study were typically very wary of sites set up primarily to funnel people to sales agents. If all you have is "call for details," you miss opportunities to get prospects early in the sales cycle and provide good customer service.

User comments:

"I'm not ready to send them contact information without a plan of what they do."

"I'm not sure I want to speak directly with the sales people per se. I understand that the idea is to make the purchase, but I wouldn't want to go there first."

"I don't want to call anyone because it's about an hour per call. It's good that they have an email, but I'd prefer more information—it's a sales tactic and I get it, but I'd prefer more information."

"Look at this. It's a phone number. I can call and talk to someone. I'm very tempted to do this right now. No prices, no specifications, what are they hoping to do with this? Is it a lead [generator]?"

In terms of the purchasing decision phases, users typically conduct at least initial research into the products and the company itself before making contact. If this information is not available online, it might prevent the company from making it on to the user's shortlist of companies to contact.

61. Provide sufficient information online for users to make a decision before calling.

While your telephone sales people might be very good at converting prospects, let the website have a chance, too. Or, even better, let it do most of the work for you. Customers who would have called anyway will still call,

plus you gain a new group of prospects—those who need a little more time and information before they're prepared to pick up the phone.

A common complaint from users is:

"Because we get so many phone calls [from reps], we want to gather information—samples, data sheets—before we get stuck talking to someone. Once they have our number, they'll start calling."

Some answers should just be self-service, such as product dimensions, part numbers, and specifications. In most cases, users were motivated to find the information online, but it either wasn't offered or wasn't available in a format they could use.

Having such information online saves time for both you and your customers. Allowing prospects to gather more information from the website will turn them into much more motivated and educated leads when they do call. This lets your sales force work at a higher level than when they must spend time explaining simple things that a relatively cheap Web page can easily handle. You further benefit because prospects not in your target market will discover this and won't waste your sales people's time. Sales people prefer qualified leads, rather than simply getting a mass of undifferentiated prospects dumped into their laps.

62. Analyze the content of the pre-sales support calls you receive, and put the requested information online.

Stop wasting your time and your potential customers' time. Put the information prospects need in the place that they're looking for it. If you receive several questions about information that is already on the site, consider whether the site structure is working for your user base. If they can't find the information, it might as well not exist.

Remember, too, that not everyone makes support calls when they can't find the answer on a website. Many people simply move on to a competitor's site.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact information is an essential component on B2B websites; it's the customer's lifeline to your company.

The goal of most firms is to have customers refer to the website for answers to their questions, and that's fine if your website has perfect usability. However, perfect usability is difficult or even impossible to achieve, and contacting the company offers a fallback method for customers.

It's unrealistic to assume that all products and services can be ordered online. Human contact is necessary and can't be removed altogether. Even if the site answers people's questions, clients sometimes need the reassurance of a live company representative, especially for complex transactions with high price tags. Also, it's impossible to cover every nuance and unique situation on websites; at times, customers need guidance from understanding and knowledgeable company representatives.

Establishing a relationship with a live person has other benefits, mainly in terms of accountability. Having someone from the company vouch for the quality of products and services is extremely important in relieving apprehensions people might have about the company's responsiveness. Customers don't want to be blamed for making poor purchase decisions and need the assurance that the company will make efforts to remedy any unforeseen problems.

63. Provide contact information or a noticeable link to it on the homepage and throughout your website.

It's common for B2B customers to rely heavily on sales agents. Some customers use the Web during the initial research phase to vet potential candidates, then follow up with a telephone call. They make quick website visits for high-level information such as to see if the company might offer what they need and to get general impressions, but ultimately, they rely on sales reps to present them with viable solutions to their problems. Rather than do in-depth research themselves, some prospects prefer to place the burden on the agents. For these user types, it's easier to get verbal explanations of the problem than to have to figure it out for themselves.

Another instance that requires voice communication is when people need quick answers and are unable to wait for responses, via email or otherwise.

Companies that hide or don't provide contact information are sabotaging potential conversions because people can't get their questions answered. Not having contact information implies that the company is evasive and doesn't want to be bothered. By giving people a way to directly reach your company, you help ease any misgivings that people might have and, more importantly, you help establish trust.

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Highlights

- ▶ VIDAS D-Dimer Exclusion Demo
- ▶ STELLARA Intelligent Patient Therapy System
- ▶ *bioMérieux Connection* Newsletter
- ▶ VIDAS D-Dimer Exclusion FDA cleared for exclusion of DVT and PE

Highlights

- ▶ FDA Clearance for BacT/ALERT BPA and BPN Bottles
- ▶ VIDAS LSX receives AOAC-RI certification
- ▶ XTRA BioSwabs Test Kits designed to aid in the environmental monitoring of critical areas
- ▶ New VITEK 2 Compact offers advanced identification technology

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Biomerieux-usa.com: Prospects needing contact information might not be able to contact this company because there isn't a contact link on the homepage. It's a shame that companies turn away prospects by not making themselves accessible.

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Although Biomerieux-usa.com actually has contact information, the *Contact* link is only available on the internal pages, not the homepage. Also, it can be daunting for customers to figure out their customer type.


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- Ask a **general/other** type of question

The fields marked with * symbol are mandatory fields and must be filled in. The information you provide is confidential and will only be used to provide better service for you.

First Name*

Last Name*

Job Title*



Our Norway headquarters

Tandberg has a noticeable link to *Contact Us*, but when you get to the page, the most prominent element is the form. A user was disappointed when he thought the only way to reach the company was through this form. He didn't notice the *Office Locations* to the left because it was too inconspicuous (and people expect to get contact information on the contact page, not elsewhere). For something as expensive and complex as teleconferencing systems, he needed to speak to an agent. This site could lose many leads with this design.

64. Have a dedicated contact page that contains complete details, grouped by company functions and locations.

Provide an area that contains complete contact information. Link to this page from every page on your site. Place the *Contact* link at the top or footer area of the page. Almost all users look for four main types of contact details. At minimum, have the following information on the contact page:

- Telephone number

- Fax number
- Physical address⁸
- Email address

If you want to be particularly helpful and engender more trust, you can augment the contact information as follows:

- Provide the phone number and email address for the primary contact first, then list number and email by department (sales, accounts, shipping, support, etc.). Some people prefer to pick up the phone, while others prefer to email.
- Show a photograph of the office/store/facility. If you have multiple locations, show the head office.
- Add maps and driving directions to company locations (if you have multiple locations, you can link to them from the contact page).
- Provide hours of operation (and time zone)

65. Provide multiple ways for people to engage with your organization.

Although phone contact is a must have, don't limit your contact information to telephone numbers. If the situation doesn't need an immediate response, having other communication options is sometimes better than facing oppressive telephone menus. Organizations that offer multiple contact methods are seen as being legitimate and responsive.

⁸ For information about how to help people find your building if they need to visit (including guidelines for online maps and directions), please see our report *Making it Easy for Users to Find Physical Locations: 21 Design Guidelines for Store Finders and Locators on Corporate Websites*, <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/locators>.

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+31 (0)20 579 2151

Asia Pacific

InFocus Asia Pacific Regional Office
Novena Square
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#18-01/04
Singapore 307684
Phone: 65 6334 9005
Fax: 65 6333 4525
Fax: 65 6565 1080
E-Mail: asia.pacific@infocus.com

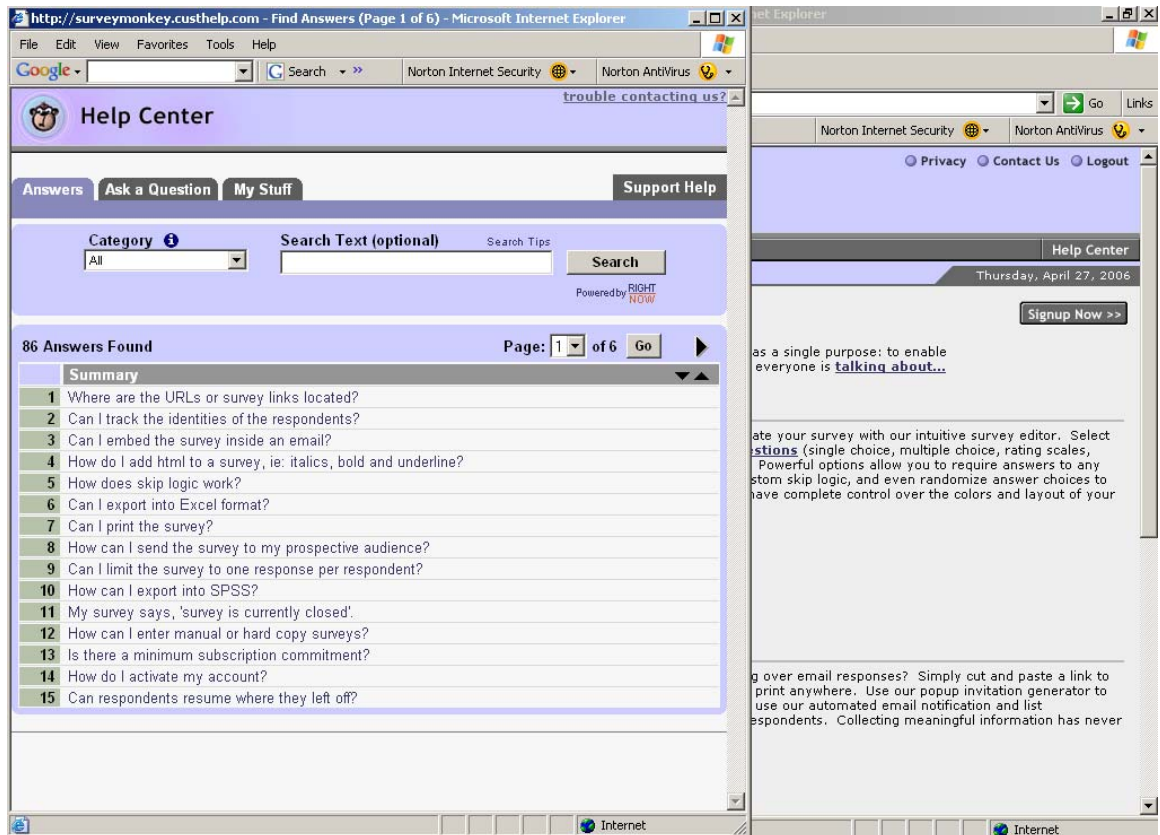
Regional Contact Information:

Singapore
238A Thomson Road
#18-01/04, Novena Square
Singapore 307684
Phone: +(65) 6334-9005
Fax: +(65) 6333-4524

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InFocus.com has a good contact page. The main contact options are available: address, telephone, email, and fax. Showing the response time on emails would make this page even better.



At SurveyMonkey.com, when users click on *Contact Us*, they land at the *Help Center*, which doesn't make contact information readily available. While offering people a way to find answers to their own questions is fine, it's inappropriate to take users looking for contact information to such a page. When people click on *Contact Us*, they expect to get telephone numbers, not another way to navigate the site.

66. Make it foolproof to select the correct contact number.

Large organizations tend to have hundreds and thousands of contact telephone numbers, resulting in complex contact schemes that are completely meaningless to outsiders. Sites with a complex contact page, such as those with vague and numerous dropdowns and department categories, tend to overwhelm users. If you're one of these companies, provide a direct sales number to alleviate any misgivings prospects have about reaching you.

The Cabot contact page has multiple dropdown menus that people must use to find contact information. The problem: Most visitors won't know which options to select. The filters appear to be based on the company's internal organizational structure, which is completely incomprehensible to an outsider. Imagine how error-prone this system is given all of the possible combinations and paths people can take.

About Armstrong

- > Corporate Fact Sheet
- > Corporate Governance
- > Diversity
- > History
- > Management Team
- > Media Contacts
- > Press Releases
- > Chapter 11 Information
- > Armstrong Foundation
- > Awards & Recognition

Press Room

- > Corporate
- > Commercial Ceilings
- > Commercial Flooring

Global Locations

Select a country from the lists below to find the address, phone number and other important information for the local Armstrong office.

Floors

North America	Europe	Latin America
----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----
Australia	Africa & Middle East	Asia
----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----

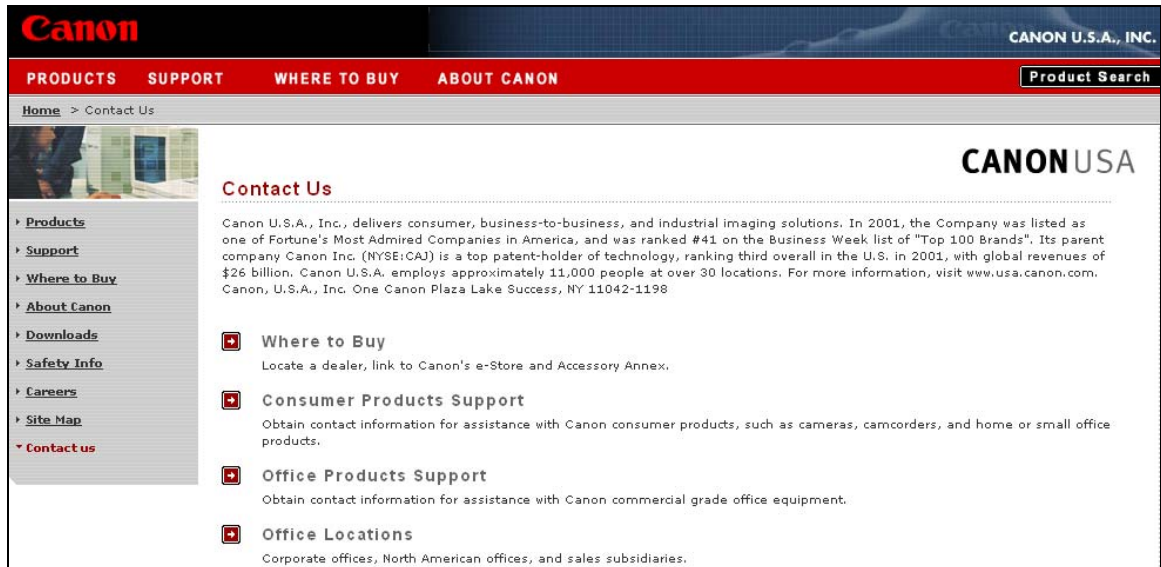
Ceilings

North America	Europe	Asia
----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----
Australia	Africa & Middle East	
----- Select A Country -----	----- Select A Country -----	

Ceramic

North America
----- Select A Country -----

Armstrong is indeed a large company with many divisions. However, filtering mechanisms such as this intimidate users, often causing them to back out. Having a central sales number can help alleviate any misgivings people might have about contacting an organization.



The categories on Canon's contact page aren't clear because the choices aren't parallel. *Consumer Products Support* and *Office Products Support* aren't complementary phrases. *Consumer* describes a customer segment, but *Office* does not. Also, this categorization scheme requires customers to identify their product as consumer or office, which isn't an obvious distinction.

67. For email and voicemail contacts, tell people when they can expect a response.

One reason some people shy away from email contact forms is that they don't believe they'll get a quick response—if they get a response at all. You can show people that your company is proactive in answering email by telling them when to expect a response. Most users expect a response within 24 hours. If you give people a timeframe, make sure you live up to your promise.

These days, as we get increasingly conditioned to real-time communication, people typically expect a very quick response. They definitely expect to hear back within 24 hours. If they don't, they'll have a very negative impression of the company, wondering: *If they aren't even responsive when I'm still in the buying process, how badly will they treat me after they have my money?*

68. Have full contact information on confirmation emails, correspondences, and printed materials.

When you respond to emails, save users the hassle of going back to the website to find contact information. Also, customers might print the email so they can contact you when they're away from their computers. The more available your details are, the easier you make it for users to reach you.

See our separate study of confirmation email usability for additional, detailed guidelines.⁹

69. Try to capture form submittals before users leave your site.

If possible, respond to form submittals right away, before users even leave the website. If people go through the trouble of filling out forms, then you've got a good prospect. Don't let them get away.

Forms are useful when people are at a deeper level of the sales process. Your site has passed the initial impressions test, and now people are ready to initiate contact. This is good, so don't mess it up by using long, complex forms that force people to pigeonhole themselves into market segments.

70. Keep contact forms short: ask only for information relevant to users' tasks.

Don't confuse users by offering too many options and choices. Seriously, forms with meaningless questions extinguish any excitement people have about contacting you. During test sessions, we've seen people abandoning forms that appeared too complicated and time-consuming to complete. Having to figure out the multiple pull-down options and provide sensitive information makes people uneasy.

Online contact forms that successfully generate leads ask for information that's relevant to the user's task and require minimal effort. The shorter and more straightforward a form is, the more likely prospects will fill it out. Only include fields for information you require to fulfill the request.

The best forms have only three main text fields:

- Customer name
- Email address or telephone number (let users decide the contact method)
- A large, open text box for messages

⁹ <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/confirmation>

It might be acceptable to include a couple more questions, if they're easy. But anything beyond that will have prospects running away.

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24007 Ventura Boulevard #260
P.O. Box 8986
Calabasas, CA 91372-8986
phone: 818-224-3800
fax: 818-224-3939

We respond to all inquiries within 24 hours. Your questions and comments are important to us.

Name :

Email :

Message :

SEND

Thank you for your input!

Cedar Financial offers a good contact page: Complete information, clear layout, and multiple ways to contact the company. The form is short (asking only what's necessary) and indicates a response time, thereby increasing the likelihood that people will fill it out.

Temptronic's contact page form is three screens long, but if you look closely, it only requires five pieces of information. Often, however, people don't notice what's required and think they have to fill out the entire form, leading to comments like, *"I prefer not to [fill this out] if I can get the info quickly another way. I would be more likely to do this if it says, 'Fill this out and you will get response in 15 minutes.' Amazingly, I am on Contact Us and there is no phone number on this page. I'll go to technical support, but that is rather silly that I have to dig deeper to get a hold of them."*

71. If segmentation and job title/position information are vital, ensure clear and distinct category choices; better yet, let users type them in.

When people were asked to identify their type of business, product category, or position, they spent a long time agonizing over it, because many were faced with overlapping categories. Websites request this information to help route leads through the proper channels. Sadly, users typically select the wrong options and submit erroneous data anyway. When possible, eliminate the need for prospects to define themselves. They're bad at it, especially if your categories don't pertain to them.

Remove obstacles that get in the way of people initiating contact. Get the lead first, and build the client profile later. From a customer service perspective, the onus is on you to direct clients to the right place and answer their questions in a timely manner.

Now, that said, if you're still going to ask for segmentation and position categories, we recommend the following:

1. Rather than forcing users to choose categories from a dropdown list, offer an open text box so people can type in their own descriptions. Because the description is in their own words, this is probably your best bet at getting accurate data. Show some sample answers to give users an idea of what to enter.
2. If you still insist on using dropdowns, make sure to:
 - a. Keep the list short, preferably under ten items. Don't make people choose from a long list of granular options. The risk of user error and drop-off is high.
 - b. Have categories that are broad, yet descriptive and distinct. The choices you offer depend on your product or service and how information differs for various segments and industries. However, the concept is same in most cases.

If you have similar or overlapping items, it's better to collapse them into a single category to reduce confusion. For example, people in the *President*, *CEO*, *CTO*, and *Executive* categories might have similar needs, so collapsing them into a broader category, say, *Executive Management*, might do the trick.

The same is true for industry segments. Rather than have overlapping choices such as *State & Local Government*, *Higher Education*, and *Federal Government*, the broader *Government* category would cover all three.

- c. Have an *Other* option to cover exceptions.

CONTACT INFORMATION	
Salutation:	<input type="text"/>
First:	<input type="text"/>
Last:	<input type="text"/>
Company:	<input type="text"/>
Title/Position:	Select One...
Address:	Select One...
City:	<input type="text"/> <div> CIO CTO Consultant Executive IT Administrator IT Director IT Manager Other Student VP </div>
State/Province:	<input type="text"/>
Country:	<input type="text"/>
Zip/Postal Code:	<input type="text"/>
Phone:	<input type="text"/>
Industry:	Select One...
# of Servers:	<input type="radio"/> 1-40 <input type="radio"/> 41-100 <input type="radio"/> 101-200 <input type="radio"/> 201-300 <input type="radio"/> 300+
What IT issues are you planning to address with Ecora solutions? (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory Compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Patch Management <input type="checkbox"/> DR Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Change Management <input type="checkbox"/> Security <input type="checkbox"/> IT Audits <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="text"/>
What's your timeframe for implementing a solution?	<input type="radio"/> 0-30 days <input type="radio"/> 1-3 months <input type="radio"/> 3-6 months <input type="radio"/> 6-12 months <input type="radio"/> No set timeframe <input type="checkbox"/> I have an active or planned project and would like implementation support.

Ecora.com: In our study, many people hated answering questions in detailed registration forms because the options didn't match their situations. For example, a government employee agonized over the *title or position* options because governmental agencies have different title structures. Notice, too, that several high-level positions here could be collapsed since their roles are similar with regard to the product. Having such specific categories makes it difficult for users to choose the one that best matches their situation. Also, our user didn't know how to answer the *# of Servers* question, because the answer varies depending on whether it's asking about the enterprise or a single branch.

72. Offer a contact form only in addition to email and telephone numbers, not as a replacement.

Participants were concerned about committing to a contact form. Contact forms have two main benefits from a company perspective: they provide automatic routing to the correct department, and they ensure that users submit at least the minimum information needed to provide them with an informative answer.

However, from a user perspective, filling in the form equates to relinquishing control of the interaction to the company rather than retaining it themselves.


User comments:

"My concern with these forms is the response time. If I get a response within 24 hours, then that's a plus. It's important to get a quick response on the Internet."

"I usually don't like that because it asks for too much information. I don't have time to fill it out. Plus, I'm not the one placing the order, so they don't need to have my information."

"I'm thinking that if I want more information, I'd I have to call them. Whenever I fill out these forms, I don't get something back pronto. The reality is they don't have someone watching email."

"They have a form. I would never do that—I would call them. If I have to fill out an online form, they would call me and I'd be on the defensive. I'm the buyer. I want to be the guy in charge."


[Between us, ideas become reality.]®

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Contact Armstrong

You may send us an email or call Customer Service at 1-877-ARMSTRONG

First Name:

Last Name:

Daytime Phone:

E-mail:

Country:

Product Area:

Subject:

My role:

Comments/Questions:

☐ Please occasionally e-mail me information about new products and special offers. Armstrong respects your [privacy](#) and you may unsubscribe at any time.

On Armstrong.com, the contact telephone number was overshadowed by the prominent form and went undetected. There is no reason to limit users to stating their problem within 244 characters. The only time it seems reasonable to state a character limit is if you offer SMS text messaging that goes directly to the mobile phone of the target sales person or support technician.

LIVE CHAT

73. Provide “Live Chat” as a middle ground for reluctant customers.

Even if customers are worried about the implications of calling, they might commit to an online chat session. Participants in our study were much more prepared to ask their questions in this manner than to commit to a phone call.

User Initiated Chat

Participants in our study reported successful experiences in using Live Chat, especially for technical support or basic questions. Their questions are answered quicker than with email and the convenience of being able to work on other tasks while waiting for a response makes chatting worthwhile.

Chat is good for business, too. Companies have reported notable cost savings and conversion rates by implementing chat. Chat allows sales agents to handle multiple calls at once, thus increasing consultant productivity and reducing service costs.

74. Make chat worthwhile.

One of our participants had a specific question about a company's services and decided to try Live Chat. To her dismay, the chat wasn't helpful because the agent didn't answer her questions, but rather asked her to provide contact information so a live sales agent could assist her. The participant declined.

Another participant was looking for a printer that would print a certain size image on a site that he used regularly. While he wouldn't normally use Live Chat, this situation was different because he was using unfamiliar data as his starting point. He clicked the *Live Chat* button and, within two minutes, the customer service rep had pointed him in the right direction. After asking if she could help him any further (he declined), she left him alone to browse the product details.

Uninitiated Chat

Some websites have proactive forms of chat that are analogous to having a live sales person at a brick-and-mortar store approach you to ask if you need assistance. With this type of chat, a message automatically appears on top of the screen you're looking at, offering assistance. When you click to chat, the sales associate can answer your questions, up-sell/cross-sell products and services, provide promotions, and even close the deal. Such chatting mechanisms have been used successfully for generating leads and driving people to specific parts of websites.

Uninitiated chatting mechanisms are helpful when they appear at the exact moment people need assistance. The problem is in knowing when that is. If a person stays on a page for a long time, does it mean they are stuck—or are they simply being thorough?

75. Carefully select the algorithm that determines when and where the chat box should appear.

A box that pops up at the wrong time is annoying. Once people say, “no thanks,” chat should go away. Having it reappear again on the same visit is an intrusion, and nobody likes a pesky sales person.

Such unscrupulous approaches to lead generation backfire because they reflect poorly on the company and build contempt, not alliance.

“As a consumer, I don't like that they try to sell and close me. I want to be informed. This site tried to educate me, so it got my interest. Customers don't want to be bullied by the sales techniques out there... Live help is really not that helpful. They should be able to come on and answer questions. If they offer it, they should be able to converse and answer questions. Customer service should be part of sales team. They could lose me as a lead by not answering questions.”

REGISTRATION AND ONLINE ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

For most users, registration is a major barrier to further use of a site. Often, people are visiting a site during their research phase and aren't ready to be contacted by companies until they've understood their options. At this point, users are unwilling to enter into relationships and still need to be convinced that the company offers what they need.

Withholding data behind registration might seem like a good way to generate leads, but this tactic backfires because it violates social norms. Similar to offline relationships, online relationships develop when there is trust. Customers are more likely to engage with you if you appear to have what they need and seem credible. Prospects need to have an acceptable level of knowledge about you and your products before they'll form a relationship with you.

Asking for personal information too soon—in this case, before you provide people with useful information—is rude and violates social etiquette.

Here's how people felt about registering for demos:

“This site gives people the option to look at their software, but then requires user login. I am not going to give up my email address because I don't want sales stuff coming to my email account. [Referring to peachtree.com]

“I wouldn't register in order to get demo software. They want all of my personal information. I don't have a business relationship with them so I wouldn't give them my personal information. So let's scratch this company off the list.” [Referring to pointofsaleplus.com]

This site doesn't go straight to what I'm looking for. This site makes you request [register] for a demo. [Referring to hourdoc.com]

A huge benefit of B2B websites is account management and personalization capabilities. However, such sites often neglect to explain (or they over explain) the benefits of signup in a meaningful way. Sometimes, the *Sign Up* link dangles at the top of the page, without explanation. Other times, the benefits to signup are so overhyped with corporate speak that prospects can't extract the relevant nuggets from the muddy content.

76. Don't require users to register or take surveys to contact your company or request information.

A primary goal of B2B sites is to build relationships that can ultimately lead to larger market shares, sales, profits, and so on. Antagonistic exchanges, such as requiring people to register in order to get a demo, are obstacles that diminish user engagement and are counterproductive in building relationships.

In our study, registration and lead generation forms were the leading cause of site abandonment. People won't give you anything unless you give them something first; prove yourself worthwhile.

When possible, avoid registration forms. People don't want to spend time registering to use your site when they're unsure of the payoff. And some people are very worried about being inundated with spam and email. Too much prying undermines trust and ruins sales opportunities.

Companies use lengthy surveys for lead generation and users know it. Never request more information than you need to fulfill the user's goal. If you do, they'll fill in fake data to avoid disclosing sensitive information and calls from sales agents.

You should definitely NOT place contact information behind registration. Don't put obstacles in the way of prospects who want to contact you. If you do, you'll blow potential leads.

An exception in this situation is wholesale distributors, who expect price-sensitive or competitor-sensitive information after log-in. This user segment understands that login protects both the wholesaler and the businesses that will be reselling the goods they purchase.

In rare instances, such as intellectual property, it does make sense to pre-qualify people by asking a few questions. However, in most cases, it doesn't help your cause to withhold information until prospects prove their worthiness.

It's a shame that prospects have to fill out a form to get a demo on HourDoc.com. However, this site is better than others: it doesn't lure people in with false hope. The phrase *Request Demo* implies that further action is required. Also, the form is short, straightforward, and doesn't appear overwhelming.

77. Offer registration if it lets users save preferences and personalize their experience, but make sure to clearly convey such benefits.

Registration does have benefits for a certain group of users: those who have an existing relationship with the company and are in the decide, buy, or support/maintain phases.

- In the *decide* phase, registration is still a hurdle, but a lower one if it gives access to more detailed information or additional sales tools that will help users make their case within their companies.
- In the *buy* phase, registration is required to set up an account if there's an online component to the purchasing or ordering process.
- In the *support/maintain* phase, being able to register might be seen as a benefit if it gives customers quick access to relevant material for specific products they chose in their preferences.

78. If registration is used for lead generation, pique user interest by providing an overview of the benefits.

Marketing is not a bad word. When done wrong, however, it repels prospects from disclosing information. When marketing is done right, people are more apt to lower their guard. When it comes to registration, timing and delivery are essential.

Make registration compelling. People don't come to websites to signup, but they might do it if the marketing is convincing enough. Explain the customer benefits of having an account. Don't use plain links to registration. People won't do it until they feel it's worthwhile.

Four ways to build trust and persuade people to sign up:

- **Explain the benefits of signing up.** Explain why people should signup for an account. What will customers get in return—will the site save customer information, for example, or offer personalization & customization features? When pitching the benefits, avoid phrasing it as a list of features. Instead, frame your language around the customer's needs. For example, rather than *Analytics*, it's more helpful to say something like, *Get cost saving recommendations*.
- **Provide free useful tools.** One way to hook people in is to give them registration-free access to a few representative tools and articles. If prospects like what they see, they'll be more likely to register to get more.
- **Have a well-written summary** of what's available after registration. For example, for articles, it's good to have a landing page or a section on a page that gives people a detailed summary first; they can then decide whether to go forward with registration. The key component in this method's success is having a well-written and well-presented summary that draws people in. If people really want it, they'll register to get it.
- **Keep the sign-up process short.** Ask for a few items at first, such as email, and build the customer profile over time.


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BuyerZone.com offers several features that encourage people to use the company's service. Using logos associates the company with big, well-known companies, for example, and the short bulleted lists explain the benefits of the process and how it works.



Marketing Your Business on a Shoestring Budget: A Practical Guide to Success



Whether you are a real estate agent, a consultant, running the family business or operating an eBay business from your home, you are an independent powerhouse. Marketing is most likely the last thing on your mind because you also handle sales, accounting, shipping and every other aspect of your business. **You know that marketing is important, but finding the time and spending the money necessary to do effective marketing are just beyond your reach—or so you think!**

Fortunately, you can have attractive marketing materials that rival those of much larger companies at a surprisingly affordable price and with minimal effort. This marketing guide will examine some of the marketing challenges faced by small businesses, provide powerful tips to help you improve your marketing and introduce economical and professional solutions to producing physical marketing collateral, such as business cards, fliers and brochures.

Common Marketing Objections

Marketing, at its core, is the process of promoting and selling into a commercial market. You're already involved in marketing in some way, such as simply providing customer testimonials. However, marketing can also entail grassroots methods of advertising, such as passing out your business card to everyone you meet. Regardless of its form, marketing is something most people think is beyond their reach. Consider these common objections:

If you like what you have read thus far and are interested in reading this paper in its entirety, all we ask is that you simply complete the form below and you will be provided access to the entire paper.

Name*	<input type="text"/>
E-mail*	<input type="text"/>
Type of Business	<input type="text" value="Please make a selection"/>
Privacy and Security	<input type="button" value="Register for Marketing Guide"/> <input type="button" value="Reset"/>

* = required field



What others think about this guide:

"I had no idea that I could spend so little to get so many new customers" Francis G., Take-Out Restaurant Owner - San Jose, CA

"I learned I can inexpensively deliver direct marketing offers that provide real results" Greg W., Gym Owner - Buffalo NY

"I can't believe how I was operating my business before! Thanks for putting this together!" Jake M., General Contractor - Tampa, FL


"One of the best tips I learned was that for only a few dollars a month, I can leave all my customers with a magnetic business card - a lasting impression!" Lorie L., Massage & Day Spa - Los Angeles, CA

"If you have your own small business, it is essential you read this today!" Michael C., Dog Walker - NY, NY

"Building a constant pipeline of new business isn't as hard or as costly as I thought. Thanks!" Julie G., Consultant - San Francisco, CA

"I've always been afraid of marketing --

On VistaPrintSmallBusiness.com, users must provide a few pieces of information to see the full article. However, this summary page has enough information about the article to pique people's interest. Notice that the title of this paper is carefully crafted to attract businesses owners.



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February 24, 2006 4:58 PM PST
Close More Loans

Help


BROKER LOG ON

Username:


Password:

☐ I have read and agree to the [terms of service](#).

LOG ON


[Forgot your password?](#)


[PRIVACY STATEMENT](#)


MORTGAGE LEADS

Just closed my first mortgage lead and earned \$6000 gross in commissions! The leads are working wonderfully. The best \$35 investment on leads anyone can make!
-Jay Marts


LIVE HELP
Currently UNAVAILABLE


CALL US


Welcome to

Close More Loans

- ✓ Thousands of Leads Daily
- ✓ "Cherry Pick" your own leads
- ✓ No broker Sign-up Fee
- ✓ Leads Delivered in Minutes
- ✓ Our Leads are Guaranteed
- ✓ Highest Closing Ratios

Sign-Up for Free

After filling out a short profile, we will send you a username and password via email so you can browse through thousands of available leads.

CONTINUE



eLeadz does a good job of telling people about sign-up benefits. Rather than hide the information behind *Sign-Up* or *Register*, it's featured on the homepage, piquing people's interest immediately rather than relying on them to actively seek the information on their own.

→ **WEBINAR: COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES FOR AVIAN FLU**

Date: Thursday, May 18, 2006

Time: 10:00 am PT / 1:00 pm ET

Speaker: Dr. Robert C. Chandler, a recognized expert on organizational behavior and communication and co-author of "Crisis Communication Planning: Sustaining Effective Corporate Communication During Disasters, Emergencies, and Critical Events"

"Organizations must include the possibility of an avian flu pandemic in their business continuity planning and crisis management preparations to ensure they can react quickly and effectively. But this is not business continuity planning as usual. It requires a re-think of some of the most basic business processes."

- Roberta J. Witty, research vice president, Gartner

Contingency planning for a future possibility is often difficult to justify, particularly with limited resources and more urgent problems and competing priorities. The recent avian flu outbreak and threat of a global pandemic, however, have many businesses and governments worldwide struggling to put together a plan to respond to a possible pandemic and ensure continuity.

The World Economic Forum and Booz Allen Hamilton conducted an influenza pandemic simulation in January that suggests a widespread outbreak of avian flu would present serious challenges to governments and the private sector in managing essential services, communicating critical information, and limiting the spread of the pandemic.

Ensuring an adequate system for alert, response, and disaster management should be the cornerstone of every pandemic preparedness plan. Join 3n (National Notification Network) and distinguished author and recognized organizational communication expert, Dr. Robert Chandler, to learn more about what you can do now to put together a pandemic preparedness plan that will minimize the impact of a pandemic to your organization.

What you will learn

Attend "Communication Priorities for Avian Flu" to learn more about:

- Potential impacts of a pandemic to your business
- Steps for communication preparedness for pandemic outbreaks
- What private sector companies can do *now* to enhance readiness

[Register now!](#)

3nOnline.com: People don't mind registering when there's a compelling reason to do so. In this example, the Webinar appears to be educational and poignant, which might be enough to compel viewers to respond.

79. Maintain information entered during the user's session across the entire site.

Once people enter any information, including login, search queries or problem descriptions, and selected products, the system should carry this information anywhere within the site to reduce the amount of information users must re-enter or re-select. Once logged in, the system should recognize users and never ask them to log in again.

This problem often occurs when companies have subsites (or subsidiary sites) that are poorly integrated and act independently. Another salient example is checkout. Sometimes product and shopping areas don't transfer people's previous selections, and instead ask for the same information again.

Customers don't particularly care how the site is put together technically; they just want it to work seamlessly. If they enter information in one part of a site, they expect the other areas to remember their entries. There could be internal reasons why different site sections work independently, but people don't know or care.

"And they have a logon site where you can log on and look at activity, and you can talk to dedicated staff. That's important, where you have one person you talk to about your account rather than getting the next available CSR [customer service rep]."

80. Ensure that your company's sales and support procedures mesh with the website.

When users register, they assume the information they've stored online will be available to your organization's sales and support staff. Business purchasers get especially frustrated with having to enter data twice or tell customer service reps information they expect them to know already. When users call or initiate Web Chat, ensure that your customer support reps can see what the customer's been doing online, as well as their past call and order history.

Business purchasers expect to get through to someone who can help, who can look at the same information as they're seeing, and who can augment the information with additional product knowledge. If the user has completed most of their research, but just has a few questions, they won't want to explain their process from the beginning again just for the customer service rep's benefit.

While it seems like a simple matter of customer relationship management, participants often found a gulf between online and offline information. Calling a company was then painful because the rep would have little knowledge of their account beyond past order information. This meant that users had to repeat any information stored in their online accounts to continue.

The customer service interfaces for Web Chat applications vary in their complexity. The best let the rep see where the user is on the site, where they've been (in this and previous sessions), and even the search queries they typed in that led them to the site.

ENHANCING CREDIBILITY

Credibility is a major issue on the Web, where virtually anyone can put up a storefront. Even the most deceitful company can have an attractive website. Having the right graphical design and content can influence B2B customers' perception of a firm's credibility and keep them on your site. Sites that appear credible can ease prospects' tension over doing business with the organization. The main Web components that affect B2B Web credibility are listed below; make sure to address each of these components in your B2B site's design.

Indicators of the organization's trustworthiness and expertise:

1. Design appearance: Make a good first impression
2. Ease of use: Provide a clear information design/structure
3. Company information: Tell users who you are
4. Company motive, tone: Opt for customer-centric over company-centric
5. Information quality: Make it relevant and accurate
6. Contact: Be committed, sincere, and approachable
7. Price: Be clear and forthright
8. Name: Strive for recognition, good reputation

Improving site design and layout is the easiest way to enhance your company's credibility. If the site looks professional and the information is easy to find, complete, and accurate, then visitors might not even question your capabilities.

On the other hand, anything that leads them to think that you're dishonest, forceful, or unresponsive will set off alarms.

User comments:

"The Web can't be garage stuff anymore. It's not a yellow pages ad. It's storefront, it's advertising, it's your company."


"You are shopping across the nation. Ten years ago, you wouldn't do the same thing. I may never meet you. It might not be worth the trip to fly. But the website is all I know and it needs to be sparkling."

81. Offer external links to third-party reviews.

Reviews conducted by external, reputable sources are viewed as more reliable than testimonials. While it's a good idea to cite sections of the review on your site, it's best to link out to the full article rather than bringing it into your site whenever possible, so visitors can see that it hasn't been doctored.

82. List your awards (modestly).

Recent awards from recognized and legitimate sources increase credibility. While participants found it acceptable to mention a current major award on the homepage, most expected the award graphic and accompanying information to be on the corresponding product pages and in the *About Us* area.



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1
2
3

PT1500M 15" Touchscreen Monitor


Dependable. Fast. Worthy of your Project.

Ideal for today's new POS, kiosk, financial, and process control systems, the PT1500M features a bright and fast panel combined with a solid, durable stand. The PT1500M uses a special 5-wire resistive touchscreen for a superior product life versus typical touchscreens. The PT1500M comes standard with RS-232 serial drivers.


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Awards:




Planar Ships Touch-Screen Displays
New 15- to 19-inch LCDs will support both Mac, Windows systems. [Learn more here.](#)



100 Fastest-Growing Tech Companies
Planar ranks 18 on Business 2.0 Top 100 list of fastest-growing tech companies. [Learn more here \(pdf\)](#)



Thin Is In-Way In, PC World, August 14, 2003
Flat-panel LCDs are the hottest things going. Your next computer monitor just may be flat. At these prices, why not? [Learn more here.](#)



Planar Plays With Flat-Panel Design
At the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles, ZDNet's Patrick Houston examines a new, adjustable 19-inch flat-panel monitor that pivots horizontally and vertically. [Learn more here.](#)

What's New

April 10-12, 2006, Kiosk.com.com 2006. Visit the Planar booth at Mandalay Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, NV, USA.
[For more information, visit the Kiosk.com.com website](#)

November 2005 - USA Today, Retailers lack hot item to ignite toy sales
[Read the complete article here](#)

November 2005 - Kiosk.com.com, At Toy Store, the Retail Experience Counts
[Read the complete article here](#)

[Product Manual \(pdf\)](#)

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Planar.com has an *Awards* section for each of the company's products. However, the "awards" were actually product reviews and news articles. This reduced trust for one participant, who felt the company had misrepresented itself. If the section had been labeled *News*, he might have been happy to see that the company's products were sufficiently well-known to be reviewed.

83. If you include testimonials, be specific about the sources.

Participants expressed distrust for customer testimonials when the identity of the customer was shrouded. If you include testimonials, ensure that you also

include as much information as possible about the source. Providing the person's first and last names, company name and logo, company location, and the date of the quote all add to the testimonial's believability.

"Testimonials don't make any difference. Somebody in a marketing department putting the name of their cat or two-year-old niece up there, especially when it's something like this [with little identifying information]. If it's a site where I can go in and post feedback, I do read feedback there. I have a little more confidence that this is a person using this product and I know I can go put a comment out there, too, so I have a sense it's more likely to be real people rather than somebody sitting behind the desk in a cube farm in some marketing department somewhere."

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CUSTOMERTOOLS

- TRACKING
- SHIPPING
- DOCUMENTS
- Proof of Delivery

CUSTOMER SERVICE
find your local service center

- E-MAIL TRACKING
- RATING
- ROUTING
origin zip: dest zip [GO](#)
- CLAIMS
- PICKUP REQUEST
- FORMS LIBRARY
- E-COMMERCE
- REMOTE CONTROL
- FIRST-TIME SHIPPER

WHAT'S YOUR FREIGHT CLASS?

IN THIS SECTION

- [Awards](#)
- [Company](#)
- [Customer](#)

What People Say About Our Company

[Read what people say about our Web site](#)


"Your employees have been so wonderful to deal with and it is such a change from the carrier's we have dealt with over the past four years. We must commend you on the way your staff treats their customers. It has been such a great experience for all concerned. When we have been in a bind over the past few months, your team has gone above and beyond the call of duty."
- Customer, Operations Manager, York, PA

"Roadway in my opinion is the industry leader when it comes to transportation. Always offering solutions to our obstacles both international and domestic. Keep up the excellent performance, all others are attempting to follow your lead but are years behind."
- Customer, Traffic/Shipping Manager, Covington, KY


"I would just like to THANK Roadway for the job they do in getting our freight out and delivered on time. I would also like to THANK your Houston, Texas facility (Driver Barry Pardue) for arriving on time and being professional and courteous every time he arrives. THANKS again!"
- Customer

"THANK YOU Roadway for years of great service and satisfaction"

Roadway.com's testimonial page was criticized for providing very little identifying information about the praise-givers. "Customer" is not sufficient background information.



[PAST-DUE ACCOUNT RECOVERY](#)
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PAST-DUE ACCOUNT SUCCESS STORIES

Collection Agency Success Stories


Please take a moment to read about some of Transworld Systems' [collection agency success stories](#). These clients have candidly shared their thoughts about our collection agency services.

"With approximately 50,000 girl scouts and 14,000 volunteers, Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council is the second largest council in the United States. Our major fundraiser is selling cookies. We use these funds for scout programs such as day camps and troop activities. We also use the funds to maintain our camps. Occasionally we do not receive all the cookie money. For over 12 years Transworld Systems has provided diplomatic assistance, gently reminding people to send in their payments. Thank you, Transworld, for helping us keep our programs up and running."




Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
Amy Thibodeaux
Vice President Finance
Houston, TX

"Transworld has performed an outstanding job collecting student accounts and other charges since 1994. This process has allowed us to drastically reduce the number of students sent to collection agencies. By processing accounts through Transworld first, we allow students to clear up problems before they receive additional collection fees and negative credit reports."




Northeastern State University
Arlan Hanson
Director of Business Affairs
Tahlequah, OK

"As a national direct marketer, we faced some very unique challenges in the area of collections. TSI not only helped us meet these challenges, but helped us exceed our goals in a very cost-effective manner."



American Mint
Tom Miglino,
Vice President



HAVE AN URGENT RECOVERY NEED?

Transworld Systems (transworldsystems.com) provides logos, names, positions, and locations next to each testimonial. The testimonials are brief and data rich, and the companies highlighted are large and well known.

84. Use customer lists to show what types of companies do business with you.

Listing current and past customers helps visitors understand the company's target market. Although the site shouldn't provide customer contact details, listing customers and their companies invites questions about past work, so

you should have reference customers who are prepared to be contacted for follow-up. Providing company logos alongside their names is a plus because it augments the content, providing visuals that help visitors quickly identify familiar companies.

CASE STUDIES

Success stories are effective lead generators because they offer real-world solutions and insider tips. Case studies are a way for you to educate viewers and enhance credibility. All companies have stories to tell, regardless of their size. Having compelling case studies about your clients and competitors on your website and in email newsletters can get prospects thinking about your solutions, which can ultimately lead to sales.

85. Keep case studies short and true-to-life.

Fairy tale case studies—where products fit like glass slippers and everyone lives happily ever after—were seen as weak and non-tactical. The most credible case studies are ones that sound like real-life problems. Readers are most interested in solutions that can benefit them, so pick generalizable topics.

Case studies also need to be easily digestible, so be factual and concise; we recommend keeping the word count under 1,000. Remove words that can be construed as fluff and marketing speak, because they undercut a case study's usefulness.

86. For case studies, include the three main components: challenge, solution, and result.

Effective case studies contain all three of these components. They outline both the customer's pain point and how the challenge was solved. But it's not enough to stop there. Showing results is what propels readers to think about your services in relation to their business needs.

While it's important to keep case studies short enough that they'll be read, it's also important to include enough hands-on details that the story feels true-to-life. Your customers will often tend to be nerds in the positive sense of that word: people who are deeply engrossed in a particular problem space. These readers need enough nitty-gritty information to convince them that it's a real case and not something you made up. At the same time, not everybody is a nerd, so make sure that the description doesn't require readers to understand too many highly technical terms.


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Marketfirst
20' x 20'
Custom Modular



case study - Marketfirst 20' x 20' custom modular

CLIENT'S COMMENTS

"The goal was to creatively blend many different elements into one cool exhibit without looking like we forced it. Tyler succeeded - it looks great!"
Deb Venable, Exsel Exhibits

DESIGN CHALLENGE


Design a showroom exhibit that introduces an array of exciting new products from Nimlok including lightweight fabric architecture, truss, structural extrusion, panel infill materials and dye-sublimated fabric graphics. The exhibit design needs to "push the envelope" to demonstrate both Nimlok's capabilities and Exsel's design prowess.

DESIGN SOLUTION

Position a large 14' high extrusion wall diagonally across the booth to divide the space into two semi-private conference areas. Use fabric canopies over these areas to enhance ambience. A serpentine truss provides stability for the wall and visually connects the design. Laminate, fabric and Plexi-glas panels in the wall demonstrate the wide variety of materials available for use as infill.

[Home > Company > Case Studies > Marketfirst](#)

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FREE Exhibitor Tips & News
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There isn't enough information here to make this case study on Nimlok.com effective. First, *Design Challenge* is generic, and doesn't specifically describe the challenge. Second, the *Design Solution* is difficult to imagine without proper visuals. The picture at the top of the page is cropped and doesn't provide sufficient context.

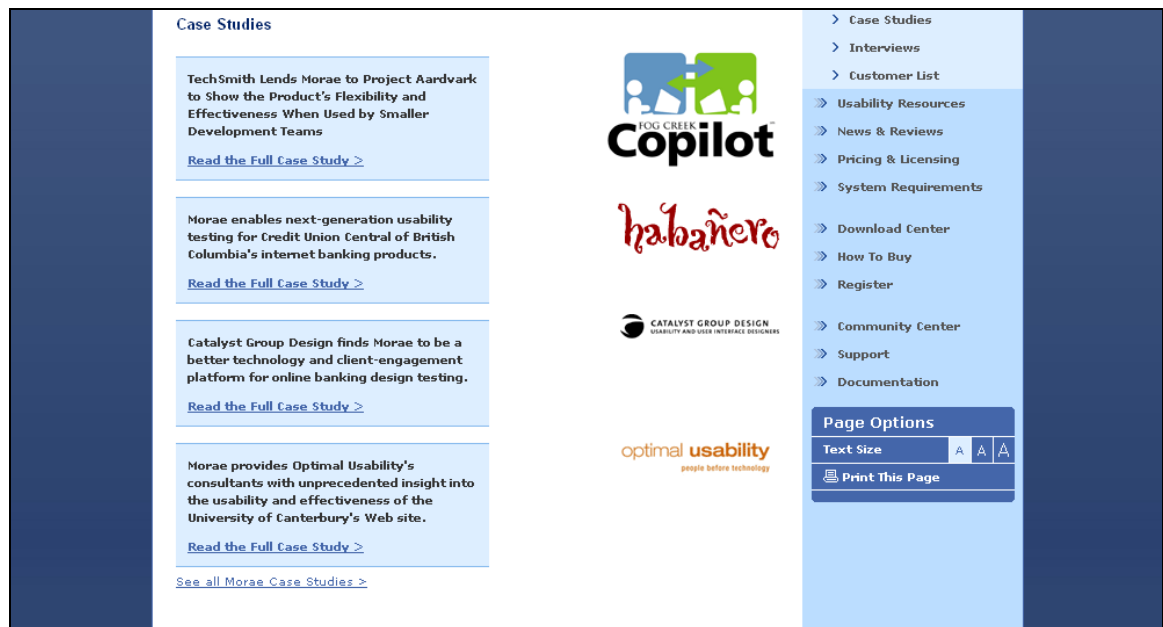
87. Support case studies with statistics.

Compelling case studies build suspense by revealing business problems backed by quantifiable results. It's not enough to say you solved a business problem, say by how much. For example, if your system cut your client's processing time, state the quantity and the client's overall business savings.


Showing prospects the money made and saved is a powerful marketing strategy; it's something they can relate to.

88. On the page listing the case studies, include the three main components: business name, title, summary, and a link to the full article.

The listing page should contain enough information to let viewers skim the page and pick out relevant stories. Showing the business/company name tells readers who the clients are, while the summary provides a synopsis of what the case study is about. Use well-crafted titles whenever possible. Having a company logo next to each listing is acceptable to augment the information.



TechSmith.com offers an example of a good case studies listing page. It contains all the essential elements: company name, summary, and a link to the full story. One criticism: The company logos are placed too far away from the listings, making them appear unassociated.



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Nimlok's Case Studies

Our Client's Experiences



case studies

Alcan	hinton + grusich	Pine Valley Foods
Amadeus UK	HotJobs.com	Sanchez Computer Associates
B. Manischewitz/Rokeach	Ingersoll Cutting Tools	Schunk
Baker Publishing	Komet	Smart Signal
Bekaert	L. L. Bean	Smarthome
Bic	Line-X	SmartPly
Big Dutchman	Lonza, Inc.	Srixon
Builder's Best	Lupine® Collar & Leads	Thermal Care
Caliman	Marketfirst	Thermatrix
Centrix Financial	Mechanix Wear	Transor
Chicago Metallic	Negri Bossi	Watanmal
Covalent	Novalis	WIFAG
Entity Nail Couture	OptiLED	Workhorse
H J Weir	Orex	Xacct Technologies
Harmon Homes	Panasonic	


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Nimlok.com's page looks more like a client list than a case studies page. The page doesn't contain enough information to help viewers quickly pick the case studies that pertain to them. And nobody has time to read forty-four case studies. Help users differentiate stories according to the type of problem or solution described, as well as the industry.


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PRESS RELEASES
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
PHOTO LIBRARY
CORPORATE LOGO
CASE STUDIES
ARTICLES
WHITE PAPERS
CODE OF BUSINESS
CONDUCT AND ETHICS
eNEWSLETTER SIGN-UP


Case Studies



"Because the FDM prototypes held up under these conditions, I'm confident that we can begin rapid manufacturing of ATM components with FDM."


Rich Lute
Diebold


[Read Case Study](#) 




"Had we relied on formulas and CAD models rather than functional models, we might never have found the optimal design."


Dominic Amae
Logitech

[Read Case Study](#) 



"The efficient [FDM] process allows us to do more iterations than we could with other processes. That results in better designed components."

[Read Case Study](#) 





"You cannot beat the feeling of holding a physical design in your hand. It gives us and our customers ultimate confidence in the

CASE STUDY

"FDM has enabled us to achieve faster production-tool delivery. And it has allowed us to get better products to market faster."

Eric Bartkus
Project Engineer
Access Business Group

[Read Case Study](#) 

[More Case Studies](#) 

Stratasys.com has a nicely organized case studies page. Each case study is summarized in a one-sentence quote that sets the tone and mentions the name and affiliation of the person being interviewed. The downside: The graphics next to the listings are too small to be helpful. Also, the case studies can only be viewed in PDFs. While it's appropriate to offer a PDF alternative, online viewers need an HTML version for easy online viewing. PDFs are for printing and shouldn't be used to show content intended for online viewing.

WHITE PAPERS & TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

To present the company's perspective on an issue or technology, technical writers often produce white papers. In many business sectors (e.g., technology, manufacturing, and biotech), white papers are expected; when researching products and services, prospects rely on white papers for solution-oriented content to help them make purchase decisions or compel them to move forward to the next level of engagement. When done well, white papers can convey thought leadership, which is essential in today's competitive market. One of the most important aspects of white papers is their power to build credibility.

89. Make sure the titles of your white papers provide insight into the content and capture readers' attention.

The number one guideline for white papers (and Web pages) is to have powerful titles. A title must capture the readers' attention in a split second. Eyetracking studies show that people in general read only the first few words of titles; make those first words count.

Good titles contain keywords that describe the document in the users' language. Having titles match the reader's vocabulary has two main benefits: readers will understand it, and it's more likely to appear on search engine listings.



Some of these Cabot-corp.com white paper titles don't start with the information-carrying words. Remember: people tend to scan lists and read only the first few words. In this example, multiple titles begin with the same phrase—"Measurement of the..." Having the same keywords stacked on top of each other makes scanning difficult.

90. Have problem-oriented titles for technical documents.

We recommend having problem-oriented titles for technical documents, such as white papers and support pages, because people typically focus on their problems in their search for solutions. Problem-oriented keywords are also more likely to be recognized by search engines.

Rather than title something, "Updating Driver XYZ," for example, use "Images Don't Show (or Pictures Don't Appear)." The latter is more effective because it conforms to people's problem-solving behavior. In most instances, people look for solutions in terms of the problem, not what will solve it.

91. For white papers, focus on the problem your solution overcomes, not on product features.

The common mistake of white papers is that they're written from the company's perspective, not the readers'. Customers view companies that focus heavily on product features as self-serving, boring, and unhelpful. While it's appropriate to talk about product features in white papers, it shouldn't be the focus. Prospects are more likely to read white papers that are written from their point of view (explaining problems and solutions). Papers that address the reader's interests help companies establish credibility with prospective clients. Also, if you want to be taken seriously, don't fabricate terms or use vague adjectives or marketing-speak.

92. For long documents (such as white papers), provide an executive summary.

White papers are typically long and detailed. Having an executive summary that highlights the document's main points offers a shortcut for busy executives who don't have time to read the entire document. Paper length is generally dictated by the subject matter's complexity, but a shorter paper is usually better. Technical documents over ten pages are probably on the long side.

93. Keep technical content updated.

Devote attention and resources to keeping technical content fresh. White papers and technical documents need to be current with the latest available technology and solutions. Having outdated ideas can undermine your credibility. However, having fresh and current content brings prospects back to your site and keeps your company in their minds.

CORPORATE INFORMATION

Unlike B2C, which is focused on e-commerce, a leading goal of B2B websites is lead generation for offline sales. B2B website goals are analogous to those of a sales office. The websites exist to welcome prospects, answer questions, and create a relationship that could potentially lead to sales. The relationship starts online, but the intricacies of B2B services often require sales to be arranged offline. Such a model has implications for how B2B websites should position themselves—as a vehicle for selling relationships.

Building customer relationships means being informative about your merchandise as well as revealing who you are. Having a well-designed *About Us* section can facilitate both. The details of presenting corporate information are vast, and we won't go into all of them here. However, the topic is important enough that it deserves some mention. The following section discusses the top guidelines for designing *About Us*. For detailed guidelines on optimizing your *About Us* section, refer to our *Finding Company Information on Corporate Websites* report.¹⁰

Potential buyers often wonder who's behind a website and whether it's credible, especially if the company is unknown. Should I do business with this company? Can I trust them to solve my problems and be accountable for any unexpected mishaps now and in the future? If you register on a site, are they going to expose you to endless sales calls and spam?

Explaining who you are and where you come from does matter. Having proper introductions and background information facilitates communication and eases any tension customers might have about who you are. Clearly stating what you do helps customers understand the site as a whole. Of course, the overall site is what ultimately represents your company to users. People look at product pages and read the site's content when they're evaluating an organization as a possible vendor, business partner, employer, or investments. Communication isn't restricted to *About Us*. But dedicating an area to providing facts about your organization helps pull the site's content together.

Here's what some people had to say about B2B sites with a credible *About Us* area:

"First, I do quick research to get a list of companies, then go back and see how they describe themselves in About Us and the mission statement. I want to read this stuff before I call them. If the person is just chirping at me in the mission statement, I think: I don't want you to be pitching me. I would click Careers to see if they have a bunch of openings and how they're selling themselves to employees—it shows whether they have real people working and not a sweatshop."

"This is a dedicated website. There's more information about the company—not just what they sell. It's nice to have company info here." [Referring to armstrong.com]

"I want to have an idea of how the company started and what they're about. I like them. The information is very clear. You don't have to hunt for stuff. The site is very simple to use and understand." [Referring to awcleaning.com]

"This gives me their background, who they are, and how long they've been in business. If I see they've been in business for a while, I generally proceed. I like looking at stable organizations. I'll go to About Us and then to Services." [Referring to benefitlogic.net]

¹⁰ <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/about>

"They've been around since 1974, so I would give them a call. The phone number is prominent on the site. They have a listing of what they do to clean, which is everything we need, and they've been around for so long. This tells me they probably do a good job because they've been around. They are committed to community, which is good. I like that because I'm involved in community. It's not requirement, but it helps." [Referring to cbnclean.com]

"They've been around since '86. That's important. It also says where they're based and other offices." [Referring to championexpo.com]

94. Offer an About Us section, regardless of your company's size.

Sometimes small and medium-sized businesses neglect to have an About Us section on their website, thinking it's not important. It is. In fact, it's imperative that lesser-known companies explain themselves. In our study, people spent more time in the *About Us* section of companies they weren't familiar with to find answers to questions about the company's size, how long it had been in business, and where it was located. They wanted to know who they were dealing with, and were less forgiving of sites that didn't address their questions.

People tended to spend less time during the initial research phase in the *About Us* section of well-known companies with good reputations. However, for large, long-term contracts, buyers said they combed through corporate information, especially the financials (e.g., SEC filings and quarterly/annual reports) to verify facts and evaluate the company's stability before making business transactions.

95. Provide a noticeable link to corporate information on the homepage and all internal pages called *About <your company name>* or *About Us*.

The hyperlink to corporate information should be:

- Visibly noticeable and easy to find, not hidden in dropdown menus or overshadowed by other page elements
- Described in clear terms—"About <your company name>," and "About Us" work well
- Placed on the homepage and all internal pages

People need corporate information at unpredictable times, so it's best to have links to it from the homepage as well as all other product and content pages. If giving people corporate information is a high priority for your company, we

recommend placing the link at the top of the page. Doing so will minimize scrolling and thus capture a broader audience. However, if your homepage real estate is limited and providing company information is not your top priority, then it's acceptable to offer the link at the bottom of the page, next to the other corporate-related links.

Minimize confusion by calling the corporate area by the standard name, not something unique like *Group* or *Info Center*; people won't get it.

96. Offer a brief company overview that highlights a few significant facts, along with a link to more detailed corporate information.

Provide short descriptions of your company in any section dedicated to corporate information—including *About Us*, investor relations (IR), and press relations (PR)—especially if your organization is new or not well known.

Don't force customers, investors, and journalists to visit *About Us* if all they want is a basic idea of the company's purpose. You can provide this in one to two lines on the homepage, supplemented by a link to an *About Us* area for full details.

In our other studies, we've found that when companies establish this basic context, it significantly helps people interpret product information, as well as IR and PR content. During the research phase, prospects need a quick way to vet companies. They rely on specific company details to determine who makes the initial cut.

When users are initially researching your company, they want a quick overview. Immediately show basic facts about the company on the company overview page, including the following:

- The company's offerings/specialty
- Whether you offer products/services to the public or businesses
- Your scale and range of offerings
- When the company started
- The number of employees and customers
- Company location/number of locations
- The company's revenue
- Major awards and recognitions
- Information on key executives, including bios and photographs

In addition, it's good to link to additional information for people who want it. People are leery of companies that are skimpy on details such as

accomplishments, historical background, and management. Having well-documented successes on corporate websites is an indication that a company is thorough and methodical in its work and has the history and specifics to back up its claims.

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Based in San Diego, California, AW Cleaning Services offers residential maid service and commercial cleaning services in San Diego county for Property Managers, Apartment Managers, Vacation Rental Companies, Commercial Businesses and Individual Owners.

At AW Cleaning, Inc. we are dedicated to changing the image of the cleaning industry by offering cleaning services, unrivaled in quality and professionalism. We focus on getting to know the individual needs of each customer, be it a property management company, a commercial business, an apartment complex or a private residence in San Diego county. A customized profile is created for each customer and our professional house cleaners are carefully chosen according to your individual checklist.

We believe it is our meticulous attention to detail combined with our uncompromising focus on quality that separates us from our competition. You will find our professional cleaners, courteous and prompt. At the conclusion of each engagement our professional cleaners inspect the final result according to a thorough checklist.

We are striving to change the image of cleaning service industry and we are making progress. Our uncompromising quality and professionalism is the reason why our revenue growth and customer base has surpassed 95% of the cleaning services in San Diego County in just over three years. You will feel the difference in our approach from the

This Week's Specials

BBB ONLINE RELIABILITY PROGRAM

Subscription Based Special. Save 20%! Save 20% for being a member!

[Click Here](#) to learn about our four subscription based services that are designed to maintain the cleanliness of your home by offering standard and deep cleanings with every package not to mention [laundry services each visit](#). Subscription Based members save on average 20% off our regular prices, so sign up today and save.

3-Day Sale!

Schedule a MOVE OUT Cleaning with our instant estimate calculator or [by phone](#) and receive 5% off our regular prices. Five percent will be deducted after the instant estimate has been submitted (please write [3-Day Sale](#) in the notes area of the calculator). Offer ends 02-24-06.

Introducing a new type of service called the Kitchen & Bathroom Combo.

We now offer a complete kitchen and bathroom combo to assist customers with maintaining the toughest areas of the home. [Click Here](#) to learn more about this service.

AW Cleaning Services' homepage describes the business in the first few sentences. It's clear that it caters to businesses. After researching this site, a user said, *"This website looks good. This would be perfect. I would definitely call this company. They have the buzz words I'm looking for: property managers, commercial, residential properties."*

[Home](#)
[Company](#)
[Product](#)
[Customers](#)
[Partners](#)
[Contact](#)

[RSVP FOR AN EVENT](#)
[LOGIN](#)

company

[Online Demonstration](#)
[National Seminar Tour](#)
[Product Tour](#)

Featured Clients

Cvent's team of 125 Full-Time Employees

Corporate Fact Sheet

- Established in 1999
- Largest online event registration company in the US
- Over 125 employees worldwide
- Profitable for over three years
- Used by 5,000+ Event/Marketing Professionals
- Used to plan over 50,000 events per year
- Over 125 million email invitations sent
- Over 3 million registrations

Cvent, HQ, 8180 Greensboro Dr, McLean VA 22102

Our world class data center and team of certified engineers ensure your mission critical event information is available, secure, and stable on a 24x7 basis 365 days per year.

Corporate Fact Sheet

- Over \$20 million invested in R&D
- Dedicated account managers
- Customizable for organizations of all sizes
- Quarterly product enhancements
- Most advanced eMarketing toolset
- Largest customer care team in the industry
- Full service event development
- Support for international currencies
- Average attendance increase 21%
- Average decrease in cost 47%

[Corporate Presentation](#)
[Sales Kit](#)

This Cvent.com page does a good job of listing company information in a scannable format and revealing facts that make the company stand out from its competitors. Featuring large, well-known clients, for example, adds legitimacy. While this page is mainly good, a vital piece of information is missing: *Where are they located?* Additional details might be available in the PDF documents, but people tend to avoid those when they're in browsing mode.

97. Provide information about the company's high-level managers, including each person's name and job title, a recent picture, and a link to a full biography.

The Web is an impersonal medium. One way to remove doubts is to candidly reveal who's behind the company. Prospects typically want to scan through information about a company's key players, including their ages, positions, and backgrounds. They also like to see photographs. Scanning management information is part of the research process, and people form impressions of a company based on the background, age, and gender of its executives. In our study, people appreciated seeing photographs and information about executives because it made companies appear more real and personable. Also, in our press relations¹¹ and IR studies,¹² journalists noted that they often go to company websites to get photographs of high-level managers for their articles.

TONE & WRITING STYLE

98. Use a reasoned, neutral voice on your website.

Compared to B2C websites, B2B sites are dismal at selling. If the primary purpose of your website is to generate sales leads, then do it! The poor condition of B2B websites makes us think that companies don't want to sell. Their websites are often fraught with page bloat, corporate speak, and excessiveness.

All too often, websites that participants visited were so drenched in marketing hype that they forgot to communicate to prospects what they sell and to encourage customer engagement.

Participants appreciated a straightforward tone that described the company's business without hyperbole. Easy access to information and even-handed comparison of products or services made participants feel like the company had nothing to hide.

¹¹ For guidelines on optimizing usability for journalists, see our *Designing Websites to Maximize Press Relations* report, <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/pr>.

¹² For guidelines on optimizing IR, see our *Usability of the Investor Relations Area of Corporate Websites* report, <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ir>.

Conversely, trying to encourage users to “Call for more information” or mounting “Web specials—today only!” created a high-pressure environment that was not conducive to research.

Get to the point. Minimize jargon and corporate hype. Business customers don’t want cute. They want informative. Participants were impressed with companies that presented straightforward content. They despised convoluted messages buried in rhetoric.

Fancy words caused confusion and reduced users’ self-confidence; in turn, they downgraded the firm’s credibility. If you want to impress your potential clients, dispose of anything that might be construed as smoke and mirrors in favor of a clear and simple presentation.

The purpose of content is to communicate and convey information. When people can’t understand it, it’s worthless. Even worse, it can leave people feeling frustrated and talked down to.

Also, users detest anything that seems like sales fluff or overly hyped language; they prefer factual information. Removing unnecessary jargon and being straightforward lets your content shine and fosters trust.

Here are some criticisms people had about verbose language and marketing “fluff” on websites:

“They have a lot of copy and marketing fluff, like Solutions, which is a generic term these days. I don’t know where I want to go to first. I’m not impressed. It seems difficult to navigate this site. Now I’m annoyed. It looks like they do custom exhibits, but I can’t tell for sure.” [Referring to nimlok.us]

“There is a lot of text here [in Group Health]. My preference is to see the options in tables or matrixes. It’s easier to follow than all this text.” [Referring to humana.com]

“Some of the stuff they’re writing is over the top, like, “pushing the envelope” and “rigorous.” It’s a little much. It’s just way too much! When I see “immersive environment,” I automatically think: when I talk to these guys, I’m going to get a sales pitch. I want to cut through that. [Referring to championexpo.com]

“I’m not getting into dirt. It’s all fluff. I want to see servers—I just want to see products. I’m looking for products and there aren’t any.” [Referring to avnet.com]

SEGMENTS

SERVICES

TOOLS

NEWS

INVESTORS

CAREERS

ABOUT US

FAQ

RR DONNELLEY

Prepare

Produce

Deliver

DESKTOP LOGIN

GO

WHAT DOES IT TAKE

to turn a printer into your partner?

INTEGRATED

print solutions

WE PREPARE

Creative, Photography & Premedia

WE PRODUCE

Print Solutions & Strategies

WE DELIVER

Distribution, Delivery & Fulfillment

2/28/06 4:15PM ET

Merill Lynch Investor Conference Webcast

RR Donnelley Reports Fourth Quarter 2005 Results

RR Donnelley announces its fourth quarter 2005 results. PDF

The ability to help you get to

MARKET FASTER.

Learn more

Recent Company News:

RR Donnelley to Present at Investor Conferences

RR Donnelley Reports Fourth Quarter and Full-Year 2005 Results and Issues 2006 Guidance

RR Donnelley Awarded \$70 Million Multi-Year Johnson Publishing Company, Inc. Contract Extension

RR Donnelley Awarded \$250 Million AARP

Select:

North America

Integrated Solutions for:

Book Publishing

Direct Mail

Financial

Healthcare

Magazine Publishing

Manufacturing

The redundancy and prolific use of jargon on the RR Donnelley homepage is over the top. People scoff at trite phrases such as *"Integrated print solutions,"* *"The ability to help you get to market faster,"* and *"What does it take to turn a printer into your partner?"* Buzzword navigation schemes (i.e. *Prepare*, *Produce*, and *Deliver*) and repetitive use of *RR Donnelley* makes it difficult for people to quickly scan the page and decipher the options. A participant said, *"This site bored me. All of the listings are tedious. They're giving a lot of fluff."*

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WWW.NNGROUP.COM

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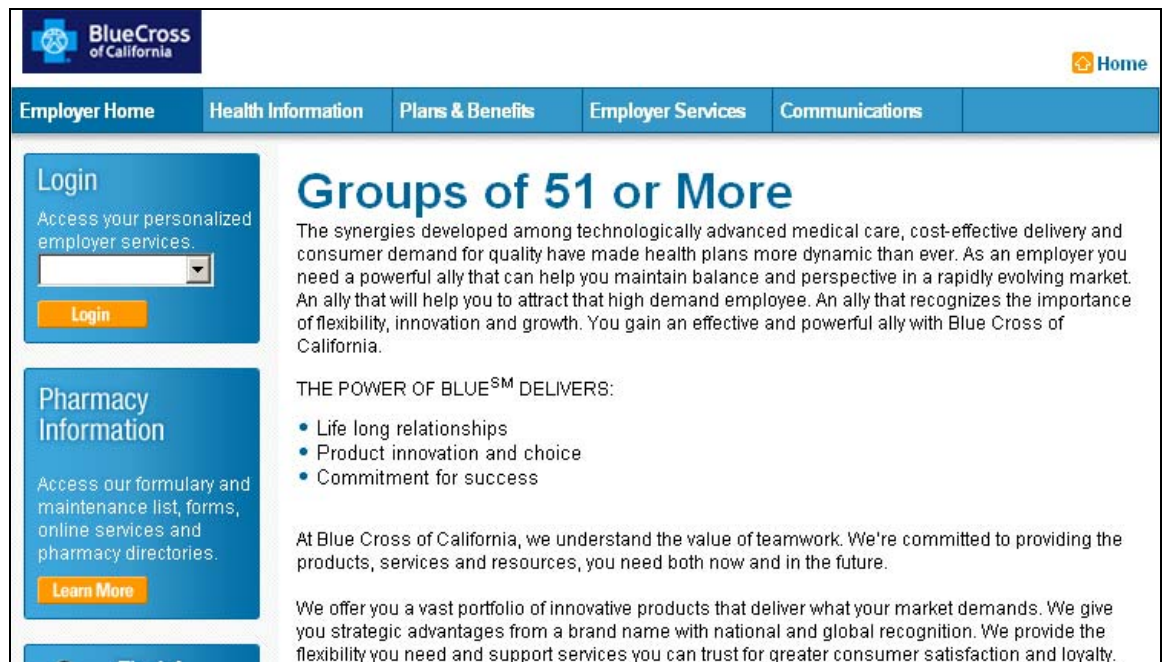
De-Mystifying Lifetime Value

Lifetime Value Analysis simply determines the long-term value of each of your customers by source, which is often different from what initial sales might seem to indicate. We look at the cost of acquisition by source and we calculate the subsequent purchase activity by customer.

Looking at lifetime value provides three very specific benefits:

- It identifies the most profitable sources of new customers over the long-term
- It provides the basis for developing individual strategies to build and harvest long-term value from each acquisition source
- It guides strategic marketing decisions regarding prospecting and customer contact strategies, programs and expenditures.

The Mokrynski site tries to explain what the made-up term *Lifetime Value* means, but the description is clouded with so much marketing verbiage that the true definition and benefits are lost.



The screenshot shows the BlueCross of California website. The header includes the BlueCross of California logo and a 'Home' link. The navigation bar contains links for 'Employer Home', 'Health Information', 'Plans & Benefits', 'Employer Services', and 'Communications'. The main content area features a 'Login' section on the left with a text input field and a 'Login' button. Below this is a 'Pharmacy Information' section with a 'Learn More' button. On the right, there is a large section titled 'Groups of 51 or More' with a detailed paragraph about synergies and a list of benefits: 'Life long relationships', 'Product innovation and choice', and 'Commitment for success'. Below this list is another paragraph about teamwork and a final paragraph about the company's portfolio and commitment to customer satisfaction.

BlueCrossCA.com: Read the first few paragraphs of this page. It's so full of hype that prospects can't tell what they're getting with this plan.

99. Avoid arbitrarily repeating keywords.

Some website designers purposely repeat keywords on their websites to increase their site's ranking on search engine results listings. This tactic is highly flawed, as arbitrary use of terms degrades the user experience by

adding clutter and reducing comprehensibility and scanning. It shows that firms don't have users' best interests in mind. Besides, major search engines can detect this practice and sometimes penalize sites for excessive repetition.

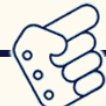
**FINDERBINDER®
HOME PAGE**

 **MEDIA
COMPARISON
OVERVIEW**

 **PUBLIC
RELATIONS
INSIGHTS**

 **FINDERBINDER®
NEWS MEDIA
DIRECTORIES**



**FINDERBINDER**
THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF
UPDATED NEWS MEDIA
DIRECTORIES

**Spreading the word about your organization—
USING NEWS MEDIA DIRECTORIES**

The best news media information comes from people who specialize in placing articles and advertising with publications and stations. All of our affiliate publishers are companies that know the business of working with the news media. Each is a special expert in the marketplace where we produce their directories. If you need public relations assistance specific to key markets, talk to us. If you want the most detailed, current and accurate news media information, buy **FINDERBINDER®** News Media Directories.

The **FINDERBINDER®** National Network Internet site specializes in news media from selected metropolitan and state areas. Each affiliate is the most knowledgeable company on the media in that area.

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Who is helping you with journalistic expertise?

We strongly advise that you do nothing with the news media without the assistance of someone with a journalism degree and/or extensive experience as a reporter, editor or public relations practitioner.

Ask the **FINDERBINDER®** affiliate you call for regional media information about the services that public relations agency provides. A bit of professional support can save time and achieve better, more appropriately focused results in the news media. You would not go to court without a lawyer, don't attempt media relationships without skilled public relations practitioners.

FINDERBINDER® AFFILIATES

On FinderBinder.com, it's obvious from the bolded text that **FINDERBINDER** is the most important word on this page—perhaps for the company, but not for customers. They already know what site they're on, so there's not need to harp.

100. Write and present content in a way that optimizes scanning.

Ease of use is another important factor in establishing credibility. Research has shown that people don't read on the Web, but rather skim pages trying to pick out a few sentences or even parts of sentences that hold the information they want.

People prefer text that is short and to the point. Don't overload people with too much text. Offering vast amounts of text is overwhelming and intimidating. Enhance scanning by using elements such as headings, subheadings, large type, bold text, highlighted text, bulleted lists, graphics, captions, and topic sentences.

Use concise and simple language, and break up large blocks of information into short paragraphs. Having content that is properly formatted for the Web encourages people to peruse your site and learn more about your organization.

In a separate study we conducted for a large client, we compared the usability of two technical documents—one served as the control and the other version was rewritten, with effective text and formatting, to make it scannable and understandable. It wasn't surprising that the latter version had greater success. Content that is formatted for Web use improves comprehension and the likelihood that people will read it.

What worked:

- Writing concisely, removing any unnecessary words, and using simpler language
- Addressing one technical issue per solution document, which results in fewer pages and is thus less daunting
- Using clear titles and headings, which make it easier for users to determine when they're on the right page and to skip to relevant sections
- Information chunking, grouping, and bolding for ease of scanning

What our participants reported as their online reading habits matched what we actually saw during our study:

"I don't look at fluff. I can tell if someone is trying to sell themselves—it's all the canned phrases. What speaks louder is knowing who their clients are, what services they offer, and pricing."

"I read the first line of paragraphs. I don't bother to read the whole thing."

"When I'm on Web, I don't want to do a lot of reading, especially at the beginning of research."

"I read what's underlined and clickable. I don't have time to read everything. I don't want to read all the fluff."

Easy Online Administration for Employers

Manage your health benefits program online with employereservices.com. You can manage virtually every aspect of your benefits administration online and in real-time, increasing efficiency and saving money. And our online enrollment administration for your employees makes things easier than ever.

Your suite of administrative services

A UnitedHealthcare representative will work with you to complete your registration. Your online services may include:

Online Benefit Solutions

- Enroll new employees
- Verify or change eligibility
- Check claims status (self-funded)
- Select or change primary physician (as required by plan)
- Request employee ID cards

Customer Reporting Solutions

- Make informed choices about your medical benefits programs
- Access benefit plan cost and utilization
- Get free standard reports
- Evaluate your company's health care experience

Online Billing Solutions

- Reduce administrative time and expense
- View easy-to-read invoices online
- Download and request subscriber terminations
- Remit payments and self-billed adjustments electronically

The benefits list on UnitedHealthcare.com is both comprehensive and understandable. The copy is stripped of flowery language, leaving only the most important nuggets. The list is also worded to address problems from a prospect's point of view.



Residents frustrated they can't pay rent online?

[Online Demo](#)

[More Info](#)

Resident pay™

Property Solutions.

[Products](#) - [Company](#) - [Contact](#) - [Support](#)

[Email Newsletter](#)

[Submit](#)

[News & Events](#)

AMSI (a Geac Company) Announces Strategic Alliance with Property Solutions
PR Newswire | 11/30/05

2005 Technology Choice Award Winners
Multi-Housing News | 10/01/05

The Next Big Thing: Resident Portals
Multi-Housing News | 06/01/05

Pencil and Paper or Point

Resident pay™

ResidentPay™ provides your residents a convenient online rent payment alternative. Worried about cost? ResidentPay™ allows you to charge convenience fees for Credit Card or eCheck transactions.

[More Info ▶](#)

Resident portal™

With ResidentPortal™, collect rent, receive applications, process work orders—all through your community web site. ResidentPortal™ includes powerful leasing tools that integrate with property management software.

[More Info ▶](#)

Prospect portal™

With ProspectPortal™, management companies can quickly create and maintain individual websites for their apartment communities. Features include online applications, virtual tours, floorplans, photos, interactive maps, and real-time availability pulled from property management software.

[More Info ▶](#)

People thought PropertySolutions.com was too verbose and difficult to scan. The wall of tiny text and prolific use of buzzwords was unappealing, causing users to quickly leave the site.

Guidelines: Phase 3, Decide

Prospects must wade through vast amounts of information on the Web to decipher their best options.

Supporting users during the comparison process with well-designed tools makes their jobs easier, while giving sellers the opportunity to structure information in a way that helps prospects better understand their services.

COMPARISON TABLES

101. Provide tables that compare your products with your competitors'.

Users appreciate comparison tables because they're an easy way to get comparative data at a glance. When done well, people can quickly scan a table and pick out the important pieces of information without having to wade through solid blocks of boring text. Showing how your product stacks up against the competition builds trust.

102. On comparison charts, identify your competitors by name.

A comparison chart is useless if you don't identify whom you're comparing yourself to. A credible chart appropriately identifies competitors by name, not by something generic, such as Company 1, Company 2, and Company 3.

CLIENT LOGIN:
 login password

[HOME](#)
[INTERACTIVE WEBSITE](#)
[ONLINE MARKETING](#)
[UPGRADE YOUR WEBSITE](#)
[COMPARE](#)
[SAMPLES](#)
[REQUEST INFORMATION](#)

Comparison chart

[Request Information](#)

	DealerOn	Competitor #1	Competitor #2	Competitor #3	Competitor #4	Competitor #5
Human Element	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
"No-Click" Inventory	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Interior & Exterior Vehicle Photos	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Automated Mfg. Incentives	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
VIN or Model Specific Specials	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Bandwidth-specific Content	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Real-Time Site Customization	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Inventory Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Integration with all DMS vendors	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
360° spinning views	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Payment Calculator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Secure Finance Form	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trade-In Appraisal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Search Engine Optimized	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Multiple Incentive-based Lead Capture Tools	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
99.99% Uptime Guarantee	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
User-friendly Forms	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Daily Inventory Downloads	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Integration w/3rd-party Data Providers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

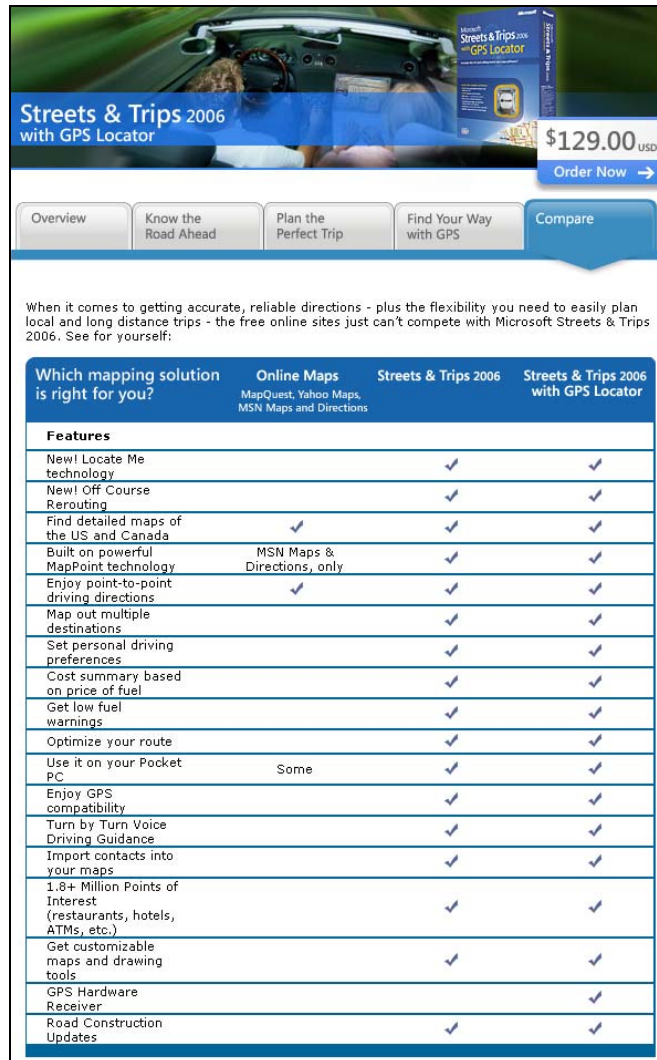
Prospects are smart. They can look at this chart on DealerOn.com and spot a glaring problem: Comparing yourself to unknown entities is dubious and reflects poorly on the offending company.

103. Select competitors that have matching products for comparison.

Choose your competition fairly. Compare truly related products that are marketed to similar niche industries. Comparing your "deluxe" version with your competitors' "basic" version, comparing your recently released version with your competitors' outdated version, or limiting the comparison only to features that exist in your product (while ignoring what you don't have) is shady and undermines your credibility.

104. Compare competitive products on meaningful features.


Avoid including meaningless features in comparison charts. It's fine to say you have something that the competitor doesn't have, but make sure you can discuss its significance. Just saying that your product uses a different technology than your competitors isn't sufficient. You need to explain the difference. Prospects are intelligent and can sense deception. Comparison charts are useless if they don't answer fundamental questions.



The screenshot shows a Microsoft.com comparison chart for 'Streets & Trips 2006 with GPS Locator'. The chart compares the product against 'Online Maps' (MapQuest, Yahoo Maps, MSN Maps and Directions) and 'Streets & Trips 2006 with GPS Locator'. The product is priced at \$129.00 USD. The chart lists 20 features, with checkmarks indicating which products support each feature.

Which mapping solution is right for you?	Online Maps MapQuest, Yahoo Maps, MSN Maps and Directions	Streets & Trips 2006	Streets & Trips 2006 with GPS Locator
Features			
New! Locate Me technology		✓	✓
New! Off Course Rerouting		✓	✓
Find detailed maps of the US and Canada	✓	✓	✓
Built on powerful MapPoint technology	MSN Maps & Directions, only	✓	✓
Enjoy point-to-point driving directions	✓	✓	✓
Map out multiple destinations		✓	✓
Set personal driving preferences		✓	✓
Cost summary based on price of fuel		✓	✓
Get low fuel warnings		✓	✓
Optimize your route		✓	✓
Use it on your Pocket PC	Some	✓	✓
Enjoy GPS compatibility		✓	✓
Turn by Turn Voice Driving Guidance		✓	✓
Import contacts into your maps		✓	✓
1.8+ Million Points of Interest (restaurants, hotels, ATMs, etc.)		✓	✓
Get customizable maps and drawing tools		✓	✓
GPS Hardware Receiver			✓
Road Construction Updates		✓	✓

This Microsoft.com chart compares the features of mismatched products. The same company makes two of the products, and the remaining ones are online map programs that don't have the same functionality as the product being marketed. Further, the listed features' significance is unknown, and there's no way to get clarification. For example, it appears as though both Street & Tips products have 1.8+million Points of Interest, but the others don't. Does this mean that the other products don't show points of interest at all, or that they don't have 1.8+ million of them? Also, names such as "Locate Me technology" are meaningless.

<div>  <div> ISOTHERMAL PROTECTIVE COATINGS, INC. COMPETITOR COMPARISON LAB TEST RESULTS </div> </div>												
	IPC Acrylink G™		Advanced Coatings Acu-Shield™		Aldo Aldocoat 374™		Conklin® Benchmark®		Conklin® Roof® III		Rapid	
	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec
Viscosity	2300cps	3000cps	6750cps	115-120KU @ 25C	3600cps	N/P	6250cps	N/P	5500cps	N/P	4500cps	N/P
Weight/Gallon	11.46	11.43	11.96	N/P	11.27	N/P	11.17	10.9	11.26	11.3	12.17	12.0
Weight % Solids	73.11%	73.0%	64.06%	63% ± 2%	63.74%	N/P	66.66%	65.5%	65.04%	63.9%	67.52%	N/P
Volume % Solids	63.01%	63.0%	48.34%	48% ± 2%	50.88%	N/P	55.24%	55.0%	52.68%	51.3%	53.29%	52%
Cycles @ 80% Elongation	20,607+*	N/P	25	N/P	6	N/P	2497	N/P	223	N/P	24	N/P
% Water Abs. @ 24 Hrs.	4.22%	4.34%**	18.93%	N/P	32.28%	N/P	10.24%	N/P	26.69%	N/P	20.47%	N/P
Acid Resistance Test	Passed	N/P	Failed	N/P	Failed	N/P	Passed	N/P	Passed	N/P	Failed	N/P

	IPC Acrylink G™		Everest Evercoat™ 500		Everest Evercoat™ 5400		Gaco Western GacoFlex™ A-3200		GAF® Topcoat®		Henry HE275 Metalshield®	
	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec
Viscosity	2300cps	3000cps	2600cps	N/P	3300cps	N/P	2000cps	N/P	4200cps	N/P	2650cps	12K @ 20RPM
Weight/Gallon	11.46	11.43	12.11	12	11	11.2	12.14%	N/P	11.49	12.3 ± .5	11.53	11.7
Weight % Solids	73.11%	73.0%	68.70%	70% ± 2%	64.39%	65% ± 2%	69.84%	73%	66.86%	71% ± 3%	59.30%	61%-64%
Volume % Solids	63.01%	63.0%	54.30%	60% ± 2%	52.91%	55% ± 2%	55.99%	59.3%	54.24%	58% ± 2%	43.50%	44.7%
Cycles @ 80% Elongation	20,607+*	N/P	80	N/P	3223	N/P	114	N/P	741	N/P	260	N/P
% Water Abs. @ 24 Hrs.	4.22%	4.34%**	14.30%	N/P	14.30%	N/P	31.42%	N/P	14.11%	N/P	27.90%	1.1
Acid Resistance Test	Passed	N/P	Passed	N/P	Passed	N/P	Failed	N/P	Passed	N/P	Failed	N/P

	IPC Acrylink G™		Hydro-Stop Premium Coat™ Finish Coat		Lapolla THERMO-FLEX® TF 1000		National Coatings Acryshield® A400		United Coatings Diathon®	
	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec	Tested	Spec
Viscosity	2300cps	3000cps	4500	N/P	2650cps	110 KU ± 8 KU	2150cps	110 KU ± 10 KU	2100cps	N/P
Weight/Gallon	11.46	11.43	11.88	12.1	12.07	11.65 ± 2lb	11.84	N/P	11.76	N/P
Weight % Solids	73.11%	73.0%	65.31%	66.9%	68.75%	66% ± 3%	66.72%	66% ± 1%	67.28%	70% ± 2%
Volume % Solids	63.01%	63.0%	50.47%	N/P	54.66%	55% ± 3%	52.64%	52% ± 1%	53.76%	60% ± 2%
Cycles @ 80% Elongation	20,607+*	N/P	88	N/P	199	N/P	382	N/P	44	N/P
% Water Abs. @ 24 Hrs.	4.22%	4.34%**	5.32%	N/P	9.03%	N/P	24.28%	25% (ASTM D1535)	24.68%	N/P
Acid Resistance Test	Passed	N/P	Failed	N/P	Failed	N/P	Failed	N/P	Failed	N/P

* Acrylink G™ test discontinued after 20,607 cycles without sample failure.

** 22 Hour Water Absorption Published.

N/P = Not Published

Acrylink.com compared the company's product performance to that of its competitors, and compiled the results in comparison tables such as this one. The charts give the company credibility because they appear methodical and detailed. In addition, this chart shows the spec values versus the tested values, thus revealing inconsistencies in the competitors' claims.

105. Provide easy access to explanations of the features shown on comparison charts.

Having *New!* next to the feature name isn't enough. Make sure to provide descriptions for any feature that might need further clarification, particularly if its labeled with made-up words or branded terms. Don't assume that your customers share the same vocabulary as you. Providing proper explanations helps customers understand your offerings and make confident purchase decisions.

106. Make sure table headers remain clearly visible when the page is scrolled.

If your tables are long, make sure the table headings are visible at all times so viewers can easily identify each column's meaning.

107. Offer printable versions of comparison tables.

Prospects often want to print comparison tables for their records and reference them later offline.

108. Provide comparison calculators only if they're simple.

Providing online calculators can really help users understand benefits and decide on the right product and course of action based on price. For example, the Transworld Systems site provides a useful calculator to determine costs compared to other companies. Participants used this tool to determine which situations warrant outsourcing vs. handling in-house.

Calculators and configurators are only useful when they're reliable, valid, and easy to use. Each question must be straightforward so users can answer it confidently. If the process is too arduous, users lose confidence and the tool becomes useless.



Success Stories

Recovery Calculator

HIPAA Readiness

Get Started



HAVE AN URGENT
RECOVERY NEED?

RECOVERY CALCULATOR

Collection Agency Recovery Calculator

An apples-to-apples comparison between Transworld Systems and your existing collection agencies. Using this collection agency recovery calculator, discover how much you can save with Transworld Systems, then find out about the powerful advantages we offer over traditional collection agencies; most importantly a higher percentage of money back in your pocket. Use this quick [collection agency recovery calculator](#) to see how we compare:

	30 to 60 days	60 to 90 days	90 to 120 days	> 120 days
What is the total \$ amount for your open accounts?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
How many open accounts does this represent at:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
When do you become concerned about a past-due account?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When do you typically refer accounts to an outside agency?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What are your normal terms of sale? <input type="radio"/> COD <input type="radio"/> Net 15 <input type="radio"/> Net 30 <input type="radio"/> Net 45 <input type="radio"/> Other				
What is your current collection agency recovery rate (percentage)?* <input type="text"/> %				
What is your current collection agency commission (percentage)?* <input type="text"/> %				
Calculate				

*Where no value is supplied for recovery rate or cost of collections, collection agency industry averages will be applied.

Green Flag (www.transworldsystems.com) lets users calculate savings over existing debt-collection solutions. One participant used the calculator to work out which debts were worth sending to this agency versus handling in-house.

InFocus
The Big Picture

BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION STORE ALL PRODUCTS SUPPORT COMPANY

Corporate Small and Medium Pro Video Government Search: GO

Projection Calculator

Step 1: Select a Model

C100

Step 2: Choose Calculation Type

☒ Calculate Image Size
☐ Calculate Projector Distance

Step 3: Adjust the Parameters

Image Size

DRAG THE PROJECTOR TO THE DESIRED DISTANCE FROM THE SCREEN OR TYPE IN A DISTANCE BELOW:

FEET ENTER

32.8' 3.6'

PROJECTOR DISTANCE 32.8'

UNITS: ☒ STANDARD ☐ METRIC

ASPECT RATIO: ☒ 4:3 16:9 5:4

AT THIS DISTANCE YOUR IMAGE SIZE WILL BE BETWEEN:

	H/W	H/WX
DIAGONAL:	196.8 "	258.946 "
HEIGHT:	118.08 "	155.367 "
WIDTH:	157.44 "	207.157 "

HOME CONTACT US SITE MAP GLOBAL SITES Terms of Use Privacy Policy

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InFocus (www.infocus.com) shows the interaction between distance and image size in an interactive tool. Drag the projector closer to the screen, and the screen size changes. Alternatively, users can enter their screen size to see how far away the projector must be placed. This view helped one participant understand the concept of aspect ratio and determine which projectors would be suitable given his conference room's screen size. Also, because the projector image was similar to a slide control, it was familiar to the user.

109. Allow users to save and forward configurator results.

If people put in the effort to use a configurator, they'll most likely want a way to save the outcome of their selections. Provide email and Save features so users can forward results to their colleagues or return to them at a later time. Such features could be a benefit of registering, for example.



Projectors, Lamps & Screens and Everything Inbetween



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[Flat Screens](#)
[Forums](#)

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[Get Bids](#)
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[Home > Top 10 Education Projectors](#)

Top Projectors for:

[Home Theater](#)
[Portable](#)
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[ConferenceRoom](#)

[DVD STORE](#)

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[Buyers Guide](#)
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Top 10 Education Projectors

Rankings based on popularity.

Last updated: Feb 26, 2006

SVGA under \$1500

at least 1200 lumens

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. BenQ MP610	See Dealers	Request Quote	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. InFocus X2	See Dealers	Request Quote	Review
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Optoma EP716	See Dealers	Request Quote	
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. BenQ PB6110	See Dealers	Request Quote	
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. NEC VT47	See Dealers	Request Quote	

[Compare](#)

XGA under \$2500

at least 1200 lumens

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Sharp XR-10X	See Dealers	Request Quote	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. InFocus X3	See Dealers	Request Quote	Review
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Optoma EP719	See Dealers	Request Quote	Review
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Dell 2300MP			
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. BenQ PB6240	See Dealers	Request Quote	

[Compare](#)

[Portable Projectors](#)
[Conference Room Projectors](#)
[Home Theater Projectors](#)

[Send this Page to a Friend](#)

Projectors, Lamps & Screens and Everything Inbetween



CLICK HERE!! FOR THE LOWEST PRICES

[Printer-Friendly Version](#)



SANYO

PLV-Z4

FREE

SCREEN

FREE

LAMP

AND A

FREE

MOUNT!

Prestige

Camera

800-745-3985

ONLY

\$2249

[Click for more info!](#)

FREE

PROJECTOR!

WIN A

FREE

Panasonic

PT-LB20U

PROJECTOR!



REGISTER TODAY!

CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS

FULL COMPASS

WHERE THE PROS ARE.

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[Lost & Found](#)
[Site Guide](#)

(03/03/06 - 02:18 PM PST)

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Projector Central (www.projectorcentral.com) combines user-centric filtering (*Top 10 Education Projectors*) and price grouping (*under \$1500, under \$2500*) with a comparison tool, email capability, and printer format output option. None of these features are flashy or incredibly difficult to implement, but all were useful to participants.

PRESENTATION MATERIALS

Often, the users researching a purchase are not the sole decision-makers in the process. Managers, review boards, and user groups all must be convinced that the right product is being chosen.

Once prospects have done their research and made an individual decision about which company to use, they become an extension of that company and a champion for its product within their organization.

Participants listed several degrees of justification that they had to provide, ranging from an informal discussion with their immediate manager to full-blown presentations to their institution's board of trustees. Sometimes their word was good enough. Other times, however, they needed resources to use in the persuasion process and to create presentations for upper management.

110. Consider whether a third party can use the materials on your site to make a case for your products.

It's important to ensure that the materials on your site are provided in a format that people can use to justify their choices.

There might not be much difference in your mind between a particular product's marketing materials and its justification materials. However, presentations often use much higher-level summary information than that found in marketing spec sheets.

Write your product page descriptions in an inverted pyramid style (see guideline #32, page 113). This should make it easy for users to extract justification material at the level they need for both presentations and more detailed comparison tables in business cases.

111. Create educational presentations around the product and its cost/benefit analysis.

Participants complained that creating justification materials with details in a summarized format took too much time.

If you provide a template presentation with key points, users can edit them for their own purposes and you'll gain their gratitude by saving them time. You'll also gain in two other ways: the presentation will contain the sales message you wish to convey, and the quality of the materials will likely be superior to those users could produce on their own.

112. Provide sales rep contact details and availability.

Your website's resource section should contain the email addresses and phone numbers of product representatives. Each downloadable document should also include this information.

Given the love/hate relationship most participants said they have with product reps, phrasing here is important. "Contact us" probably isn't sufficient in this situation. Considering the user's task at this point, a call to action—such as "Let us help you with your decision"—is more likely to work, as it gives users a reason to make contact.

Guidelines: Phase 4, Buy

Many companies have order procedures that require paper invoices and checks to flow from one location to another, thus making it difficult to complete the purchase process entirely online. However, this should not prevent companies from initiating and tracking many B2B transactions online.

CALL TO ACTION

113. Provide contact details for the sales department, local sales reps, or local distributors (depending on your business model).

While prospects like to see prices online, they don't expect these to be the prices they'll pay. This means that they almost always need human contact to negotiate reductions, additional services, etc.

That contact information should be easy to find so that when users have done their research, they can move straight on to negotiation.

114. Initiate the transaction online, even if it must be completed offline.

Participants complained when the order process was not outlined on the website. While they didn't necessarily expect or want to complete the whole process online, they did expect to be guided through the necessary steps.

If people come to a company via its website, it makes sense to ease their transition to the offline world. Drawing them in via the website starts a sales process that might otherwise go to a competitor.

Even if your entire order process is paper-based, it should be possible to provide an online or downloadable version of your order form, even if customers must subsequently fax in the form. Providing your order form lets you request all the information you need for the transaction, thus saving time later in the process.

115. Embed call-to-action cues on all relevant pages.

Although they might effectively communicate the value proposition, B2B sites sometimes neglect signaling calls to action, leaving prospects wondering what to do next. Don't leave people stranded, not knowing how to proceed to the

next level of engagement (such as getting a sample, signing up for an account, placing an order, or buying).

Engage prospects by offering clear paths to the next action. Simply describing the process on a separate screen or a video demo isn't enough; the interface design itself should handhold and guide customers through a streamlined workflow.

On the flipside, being too pushy and forcing people to commit too soon is a turnoff. Examples here include requiring registration at every turn, or making people call for details because you haven't provided useful information.

[Sign-up for FREE!](#) | [Testimonials](#) | [What We Do](#) | [About eLeadz](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[HOME](#) | [MORTGAGE](#) | [TRAINING](#) | [NEW! CUSTOM WEBSITES](#)

[About Our Leads](#) | [Getting Started](#) | [Pricing](#) | [Q & A](#) | [Sign-up for FREE!](#)

March 1, 2006 10:37 AM PST

Help

BROKER LOG ON

Username:

Password:

☐ I have read and agree to the [terms of service](#).

LOG ON

[Forgot your password?](#)

[PRIVACY STATEMENT](#)

MORTGAGE LEADS

Just closed my first mortgage lead and earned \$6000 gross in commissions! The leads are working wonderfully. The best \$35 investment on leads anyone can make!
 -Jay Marts

LIVE HELP

All Live Help Agents are Currently BUSY

CALL US

888-4eLeadZ (435-3239)

Download printer-friendly information about eLeadz and GoApply. [Click here.](#)

GETTING STARTED:

Follow our simple step-by-step process below, and
you will soon be on your way to obtaining "real" high closing-ratio leads.

Follow the prompts on the screen and fill-in all applicable or required fields.

Buying new leads...

Step 1: Sign-up for free and create an account.

- You will be emailed a username and password.
- Once you receive your new ID and password, log on to your new account at eLeadz.com where you will be able to manage the leads you purchase with our extraordinary Lead Management System.
- You can get started immediately without having to wait to receive your username and password, just click on continue at the bottom of the free sign-up page and you can begin selecting the criteria you desire for your leads.

Step 2: Choose the criteria for your leads.

- Select the standard criteria of Credit Rating, Purpose of Loan, Property Type, and State(s) and click continue at the bottom of the page to move onto any additional criteria you may want. (Please note, the base prices of leads without additional criteria are: **NON-EXCLUSIVE LEADS = \$25 per lead**)
- Select your additional criteria based on what leads you are looking for. (i.e. LTV, current interest, etc.) (Please note, each additional criteria **with custom filters has an additional fee of \$5**).

Step 3: Complete your purchase and start receiving fresh leads.

- Select the number of leads you would like to purchase.
- Select how many leads you would like to receive each day. (This is the number of leads that you want to receive automatically every day)
- Select the method of payment you prefer to fund your account, either by credit card, PayPal or mail.
- Click continue and receive your leads the next business morning.
- Close loans and make more money. It's that simple!

Lead Management System:

- After you have purchased your leads, you can manage and track them with our exclusive lead management system, an added benefit for you!
- When you receive your username and password via email, you will login at eLeadz.com and automatically be directed to your own lead management system. This system allows you to track and manage your leads as well as having the record available to review if needed at a moment's notice.
- Simply click on one of your leads to open the file and you will have the information at your fingertips.
- Within the Lead Management System you will also be able to change your lead criteria at your convenience or keep it the same when you order more leads.
- If no funds exist in your account you will be able to add funds to your account and begin receiving leads again the next business morning.

eLeadZ is clear about the required process, telling users to first create an account. People appreciate companies that are straightforward.

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[home](#)
[the company](#)
[contact](#)
[industry tools](#)
[catalog Q&A](#)

customer connect

CUSTOMER-CONNECT.NET Here you can submit secure requests for quotes, including what-if quotes for multiple quantities and multiple versions. You can view your proposal online and make a press schedule request. Once your job is scheduled, you can track progress, submit change orders and consult a personalized job calendar. Then you can track your job through printing, binding and shipping! We even support your mailings to Europe by meeting stringent European Union standards for protecting the privacy of personal data. In fact, we are the first in our field to obtain "Safe Harbor" status from the US Department of Commerce.

Arandell Corporation
the art and science of **catalogs**

Arandell.com talks about *Customer Connect*, a workflow management system, but doesn't provide a link to it. The light gray oval looks like a button, but it's just a static graphic. Clicking on the screenshot graphic does nothing.

• **W Men's Short Sleeve Super-T with Pocket**



Our Short Sleeve Super-T™ is now even more impressive! A special treatment allows the plush 100% ringspun cotton to hold on to its bold colors while fighting stains, pills and shrinkage. Yes, it actually stays the size you buy! With finished seams for ultra comfort and durability. And a handy chest pocket, too. Straight hem. Available in regular sizes only. Imported.

[What are performance products?](#)

Item Number: 061081

Price (with no logo): \$12.00

View [Product Colors](#)

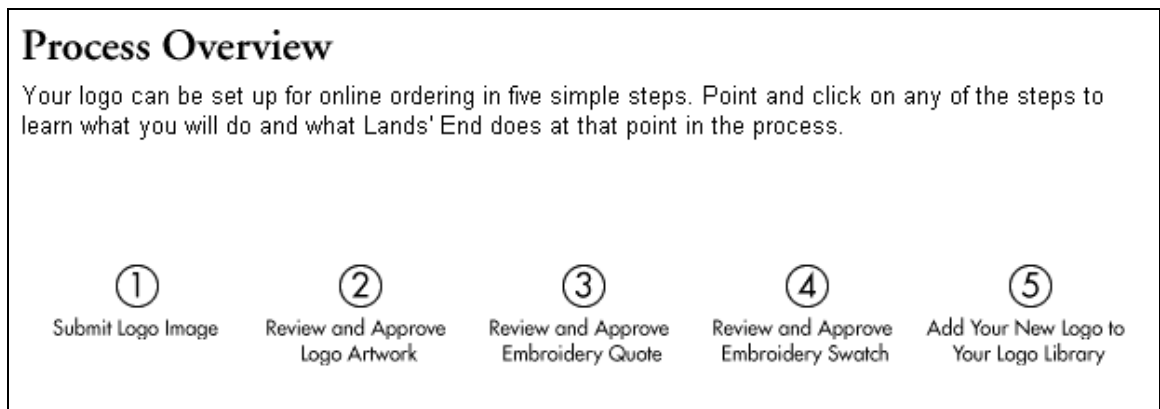
Size/Availability: Enter quantity below in boxes.

		S	M	L	XL	XXL	LOGO & PLACEMENT options
Black		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please Select Logo & Location
Chambray Heather		N/A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please Select Logo & Location No Logo - None
Classic Red		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please Select Logo & Location
Dark Cobalt Blue		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please Select Logo & Location
Gray Heather		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please Select Logo & Location
True Navy		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Please Select Logo & Location

The ordering process on the Land's End Business Outfitters website is perplexing. The order page slaps customers with a logo placement option, but doesn't clearly explain how or when logos fit in the overall ordering process. It assumes that customers already know to submit their logos before arriving at this page.



Selecting the [LOGO & PLACEMENT](#) link above the logo placement selector wasn't helpful. It didn't offer any additional guidance regarding the process, but instead flashed people with a registration screen.




This page on the Land's End website explains the logo submission steps. The question users have is: *How do I order uniforms?* The missing critical message on this site is: *Submit logos first, then return to the order page to buy uniforms.* It would be even better to integrate these two steps into a single workflow and guide people through the process rather than have them jump between different pages to figure out how ordering works.

116. Suggest related products on the product page, shopping cart page, and/or order summary page.

Making recommendations to related products, and providing a direct path to them, is good customer service. Cross-selling and up-selling tactics work when they're appropriately applied. People don't like being on the receiving end of a hard sell, but they do appreciate being informed of well-matched solutions or reminded of complementary items that they currently need or will need in the future.

Having a few, highly relevant add-on recommendations on shopping pages piques people's interest because the products are conducive to their goals. In our study, several participants actually changed their minds and decided on bigger, higher-priced items after learning more about the product's benefits.

However, you must ensure that your suggestions are truly related to the product people are seeking. Recommending seemingly random items degrades your site's credibility, and people don't transact with companies they don't trust, especially for high-ticket items.



advanced ergonomic pipettes


[LOGIN](#)
[EXPRESS ORDER](#)
[CART](#)
 TOTAL: \$0.00

[HOME](#)
 PRODUCT SEARCH [GO](#)
[LITERATURE](#)
[SUPPORT](#)
[ABOUT RAININ](#)

[PIPETTES](#) | [TIPS](#) | [SERVICE](#) | [ACCESSORIES](#) | [PERISTALTIC PUMPS](#)
[SINGLE-CHANNEL MANUAL](#) | [SINGLE-CHANNEL ELECTRONIC](#) | [MULTICHANNEL](#) | [SPECIALTY PIPETTES](#)

Pipet-Lite™ SL for Conical Tips

Discover hand-friendly pipetting with conical tips
 Reduced plunger forces, less risk of RSIs. Magnetic assist helps locate and hold zero position for improved results.



[BROCHURE](#)

Cat. No.	Description	1 to 4	5 or more	Qty.	Tips
SL-2	PIPET-LITE 0.1 TO 2UL STANDARD	\$289.50	\$260.55	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-10	PIPET-LITE 0.5 TO 10UL STANDARD	\$289.50	\$260.55	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-20	PIPET-LITE 2 TO 20UL STANDARD	\$254.50	\$229.05	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-100	PIPET-LITE 10 TO 100UL STANDARD	\$254.50	\$229.05	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-200	PIPET-LITE 20 TO 200UL STANDARD	\$254.50	\$229.05	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-300	PIPET-LITE 20 TO 300UL STANDARD	\$254.50	\$229.05	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-1000	PIPET-LITE 100 TO 1000UL STANDARD	\$254.50	\$229.05	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-2000	PIPET-LITE 200 TO 2000UL STANDARD	\$254.50	\$229.05	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-5000	PIPET-LITE 500 TO 5000UL STANDARD	\$289.50	\$260.55	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
SL-10ML	PIPET-LITE 1 TO 10ML STANDARD	\$289.50	\$260.55	<input type="text"/>	TIPS
Cat. No.	Description	Price		Qty.	Tips
SL-START	PIPET-LITE START KIT SL-20,200,1000 &ACC	\$600.00		<input type="text"/>	--

Example of effective cross-selling and up-selling: A user on rainin.com ended up buying a more expensive model than she originally planned because this product listing made it easy for her to compare important features—such as volume size (UL) and price—and determine the cost-benefit of each. The site also provides a direct link to matching products for each item.

PRODUCT SEARCH

[GO](#)

ADVANCED SEARCH

SHOP ULINE

VIEW CATALOG PAGES

CATALOG QUICK ORDER

SPECIAL OFFERS

REQUEST A CATALOG

ABOUT ULINE

JOBS

[Larger Text](#)

[Home](#) > [Shrink Wrap](#) > [Shrink Pallet Bags](#) > Shrink Pallet Bags



Shrink Pallet Bags

Recommended for large machinery, heavy irregular loads, and outdoor protection.

- Slip gusseted bag over pallet and shrink with H-950 Shrinkfast Heat Gun.
- Heavy duty moisture and dirt protection.
- Perforated rolls for easy tear-off.

SHRINK PALLET BAGS

MODEL NO.	FITS PALLET L x W	BAG SIZE W x L x H	MIL	BAGS/ROLL	LBS./ROLL	PRICE PER ROLL			ADD TO CART
						1	2	5+	
S-7772	48 x 40"	50 x 42 x 66"	4	30	50	\$91	\$86	\$80	<input type="text"/> ADD
S-7773		50 x 42 x 78"			60	107	101	93	<input type="text"/> ADD
S-7774		50 x 48 x 84"			68	123	116	107	<input type="text"/> ADD
S-11509	48 x 40"	50 x 42 x 66"	6	20	45	91	86	80	<input type="text"/> ADD
S-7775		50 x 48 x 84"			68	123	116	107	<input type="text"/> ADD
S-11510		50 x 48 x 110"			87	161	151	140	<input type="text"/> ADD

Uline.com provides a link to the matching product, which is the right way to make shopping convenient and increase sales. The link would be more noticeable, however, if it were labeled *Shrinkfast Heat Gun* rather than *H-950*.

SHOPPING CART AND CHECKOUT

If you take orders directly on your site, our main recommendation is to follow established guidelines for the shopping cart on mainstream B2C e-commerce sites. Business users shop for themselves on these sites and are familiar with the conventions for shopping cart functionality. They expect B2B sites to work the same whenever possible.¹³

Here are a few special considerations for B2B site shopping carts:

117. Save the contents of a user's shopping cart for at least a month, preferably longer.

Many B2B purchases have a very long sales cycle, and users often place items into their shopping cart to ensure they can find that specific item again. This is particularly true if items require substantial customization—if so, users are very likely to want to save their work, even if they're not yet ready to buy. If you delete the contents of a user's shopping cart, the user might never find the correct product again and you'd thus lose the order. The cost of storing some extra shopping carts on your server for a few months is minuscule in comparison.

118. Let users transfer their shopping cart's contents to other users.

Often, the person doing the shopping is not the person doing the purchasing. You can make it easier for customers to buy from you by making it possible for users who've found what they want to transfer the selected items directly to the person who will complete the purchase.

119. Display a printable receipt that's suitable for expense reporting.

Sometimes users will buy on the spot and submit the expense for reimbursement on their expense reports. After users have placed an order, the first screen they see should be a receipt for that order. Make sure that they can print this page on standard-sized paper (both 8.5x11 in North America and the narrower A4 paper in Europe). Too often, websites have a

¹³ For detailed guidelines, please see our report on *E-Commerce User Experience*, <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce>.

fixed-width page layout that's too wide for a sheet of paper, causing parts of the receipt to be cut off during printing.

SPECIAL SECTORS

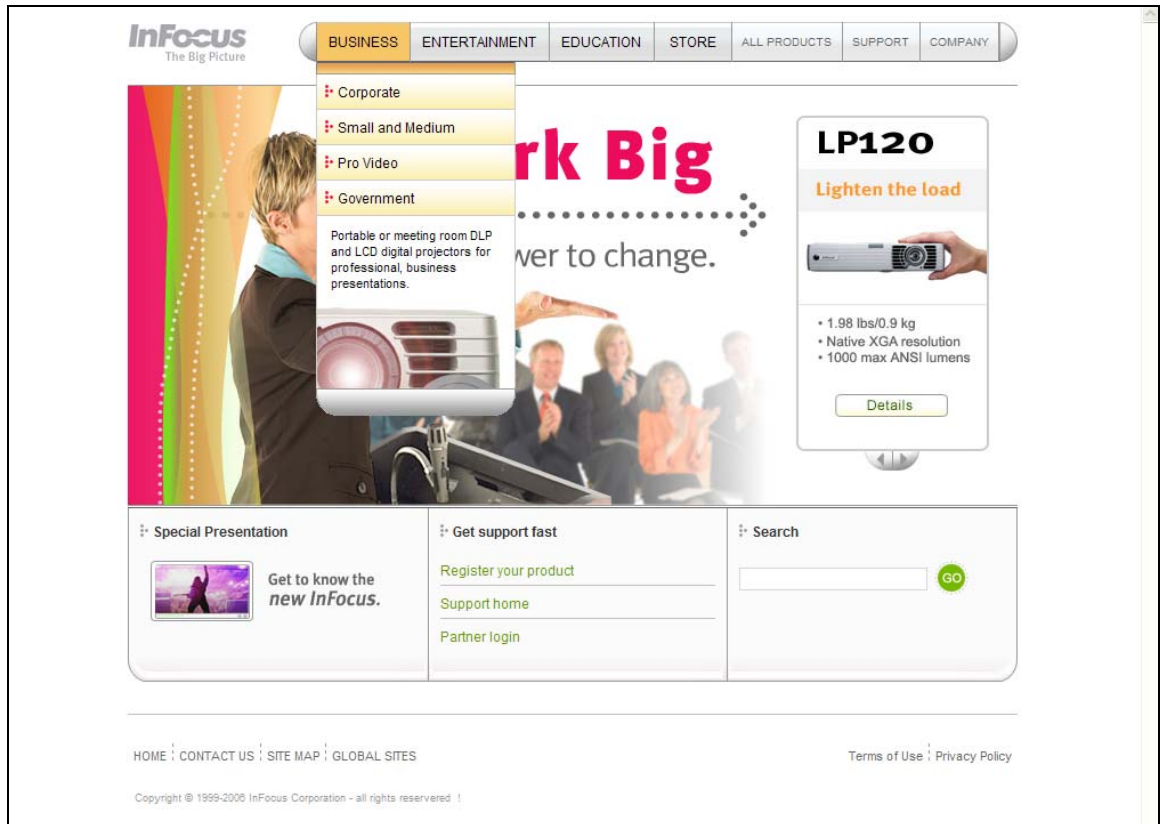
If you do business with the public sector—such as schools; local, county, or state departments; or other government institutions—your customers face very stringent purchasing guidelines. They will welcome anything you can do to help them jump through the necessary purchasing hoops.

120. Make it clear that your company will accept and respond to request for proposals (RFPs) and government bids.



Provide a clearly labeled website section devoted to these specific markets. In that area, use the terminology that these visitors will be accustomed to, and provide contact details for a person who can answer contract-related questions and respond to bid requests.

121. Help public sector customers buy from you by providing the information they need to complete contracts.

Anything that reduces the workload on government employees is likely to make them very grateful and thus more predisposed to your company. If you make it clear that you have prior experience with government contracts, and provide assistance in terms of providing contract numbers, government pricing, and preferred vendor status, you'll inspire confidence.



InFocus (www.infocus.com) devotes specific site areas to government and education visitors. The government section includes PDF documents on Section 508 compliance, GSA contract numbers and pricing, and reseller information on selling to government agencies.

[Products](#) · [Who's Who](#) · [What's Hot](#) · [Education](#) · [Request Literature](#) · [Home Theater](#) · [Dealers](#) · [Links](#) · [Contact](#)

[Live Chat](#) | [Da-Lite](#) » [Products](#) » [GSA Contracts](#).

Products

GSA Contracts

- [Preschool & Classroom Furniture; Auditorium & Theatre Seating](#)**
 FSC Group 71, Part III, Section A
 FSC classes: 7110 and 7195
 Contract Number GS-28F-7021G
 SIN 485-12 Lecterns
 Contract Period: October 1, 1995 through September 30, 2005
- [Display & Communication Boards](#)**
 FSC Group 71, Part III, Section T
 FSC classes: 7195
 Contract Number GS-28F-8037H
 SIN 586-3 Marker Boards
 SIN 586-6 Communication Centers
 SIN 586-7 Accessories
 Contract Period: October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2005
- [Photographic Equipment & Supplies](#)**
 FSC Group 67, Part II & III Section B
 FSC class: 6730 and 6740
 Contract Number GS-25F-0119M SBSA
 SIN 20-220 Front & Rear Projection Screens
 SIN 20-278 Projection Stands
 Contract Period: December 17, 2001 through December 16, 2006
- [Audio & Video Equipment: Televisions, TV/VCR Combinations, VCR/VCP, Stereo Components and Hand-held](#)**
 FSC Group 58, Part I
 FSC classes: 7730
 Contract Number GS-03F-0004P
 SIN 219-12 Television Accessories
 Contract Period: October 20, 2003 through October 19, 2008

Other Product Categories





- [Electric Screens](#)
- [Manual Wall and Ceiling Screens](#)
- [Fixed Frame Screens](#)
- [Portable and Tripod Screens](#)
- [Rear Projection Screens](#)
- [Fast-Fold® Portable Screens](#)
- [Carts and Stands](#)
- [Monitor Mounts](#)
- [Oravision Easels](#)
- [Multi-Media Support Furniture](#)
- [Lecterns](#)
- [Specification and Installation Instructions Download](#)
- [Projection Calculator](#)

[Projection Screens](#) · [Presentation Products](#)

Search Keyword or Part Number

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Da-Lite's site (www.dalite.com) lists the specific areas of GSA contracts that its products fall under—and then offers links to the products as well. This is a simple but very effective use of hyperlinks and a clever re-categorization of products that shows good understanding of users.

	For medical professionals		SEARCH <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/>	CONTACT US SITE MAP  Print this page  E-mail to a friend
	PATIENTS AND FAMILIES MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ABOUT US HOME			
MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS Cardiac Surgery Carotid and Biliary Stenting and Peripheral Intervention Electrophysiology Heart Failure Interventional Cardiology Education and Training Products Reimbursement PowerPoint Resource Center Clinical Trials CRM Trials	<h2>Reimbursement</h2> <p>As part of Guidant Corporation's commitment to advancing patient access to lifesaving technology, we work directly with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), public and private health insurers, and industry stakeholders to ensure appropriate reimbursement for services involving our products.</p> <p>Guidant provides information about reimbursement for its products and therapies here. You can find additional reimbursement information on the CMS website.</p> <div> <div> Coverage CMS Coverage Guidelines (NCDs) Coverage Announcements and Resources </div> <div> Coding Inpatient Outpatient Physician Coding Announcements and Resources </div> <div> Payment Medicare Payment Systems Inpatient Outpatient Payment Announcements and Resources </div> <div> Webcasts Schedule and Registration </div> <div> Related Links and Information FDA Approval Letters Reimbursement-Related Websites </div> </div> <div> Find It Fast  Reimbursement Site Map Popular Pages C-Codes Contact a Reimbursement Specialist Carotid Artery Stenting Resources Cost-Effectiveness of CRT </div>			Updates Electronic data capture for clinical trials. More Learn Guidant's position on HIPAA. Partner Sites Heart Rhythm Society ACC TCTMD TheHeart.org
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Guidant's site (www.guidant.com) lists the coding and payment schedules for Medicare procedures that use its technology. This resource helps hospital administrators ensure that they're billing at the correct rate. Recent rule changes to require C-codes made this information incredibly useful for two of our participants. By providing this information, Guidant made it easier for these participants to use its products because they knew they'd be covered on Medicare bills.

Guidelines: Phase 5, Support/Maintain

Users are likely to return to your website during a product's lifetime to find replacement parts or consumables. For service companies, the site can be a repository for additional information that customers use while doing business with you. These return visits are an excellent opportunity to keep users' business and improve your chances of receiving their next big orders.

SUPPORTING AND MAINTAINING CUSTOMERS

122. Provide links from the main product page to accessories, parts, and product literature

Participants looking for accessories typically started their search on the product page. This habit crossed disciplines, from office equipment to projectors to medical supplies.

Each product page should provide accessory part numbers and descriptions, and link to that accessory's page on the site. Literature about the product—especially maintenance literature—should include part numbers so that users can easily locate the correct replacements.

123. Provide supporting documentation alongside each product as well as in its own indexed area

In our study, participants tended to go to product pages to find supporting information—such as specification sheets—but you should also keep more technical maintenance information in dedicated support areas.

124. Enable search by part number, including part numbers for third-party products that form part of your product.

One participant knew the manufacturer name and part number for a part he wanted to source, but typing the part number into the site's search engine returned no results.

"Well, let's do this for fun. I'll type 'US001' in their search. And there are zero matches for their own part number!"

The participant immediately moved on to other manufacturers' sites. Had he been able to quickly get to the product specifications page at the first site, he might have placed a large order with that manufacturer.

Remember that when users search by part numbers, they might type partial numbers or format them differently by adding or removing spaces and hyphens.

Remember also that users might not differentiate between parts you manufacture and parts you source from third parties. The user bought the product from you, so they expect to find the parts on your site.

125. If possible, include a mention of the website on the product itself.

This might not be feasible given the size and nature of your product, but whenever possible, mark your products with the website's URL. This helps people find you when they need supplies, parts, or replacement products.

PARTNER-SPECIFIC CUSTOM WEBSITES

Companies sometimes offer different pricing scales and product lines to specific partners. In this situation, offer a custom storefront that requires specific access credentials and contains either a predetermined set of products or a pre-negotiated cost.

Sometimes these custom sites follow the layout and format of the regular B2B e-commerce site, but with different pricing and potentially some co-branding elements. Other times, the site is created as an extranet.

An extranet is an extension of a company's private (intranet) network that lets suppliers, vendors, partners, customers, or other businesses share information that the company uses to conduct its business. Extranets open up parts of the company's process data to trusted partners. This data might be information on production runs, stock levels, order processes, or support materials, for example.

From a user interface perspective, the difference between extranet sites and well-maintained custom Internet sites is minimal. However, well-crafted extranet sites still have the potential to better enable co-operative work because all parties in the transaction are working from the same data set. As a result, there's no lag in updating Web stock availability from the warehouse inventory system, and support costs typically decrease because customers and employees share the same library of technical information.

The best partner-specific sites become an extension of the company they support—office supplies become the company's "copy room"; IT supplies become the "IT department."

126. If you have partner-specific sites, make sure to mention this on your retail site.

When they can't find your partner site, business customers often end up using retail sites when they could be forming a more lasting, long-term relationship with your company. For instance, the OfficeMax partner site is not well advertised from the officemax.com retail site. While the advertisement doesn't have to be prominent on the homepage, the site's existence should at least be noted on the *About Us* page.

127. Design partner-specific sites with speed in mind.

While end users of a partner-specific site might not be domain experts, their company (your partner) expects the site to provide purchasing efficiencies beyond lower prices.

This means that the site can dispense with marketing fluff and instead provide higher information density. It also means providing timesaving tools, such as letting customers re-order from a set list of products or by product code.

128. Personalize: Use what you know about your customers to ease their purchase process.

Knowing the activity history of users who log in to a partner-specific site lets you provide several helpful tools. You can, for example, let users re-order according to a previous invoice or offer them lists of their frequent replenishment items and consumables (such as toner, ink, labels, etc.).

One of a purchaser's great fears is acquiring supplies that are incompatible with company equipment. If the customer got this equipment from you, you can soothe such fears by providing a list of compatible supplies.

129. Allow partners to determine which inventory items are available to their users as standard purchase items.

A major benefit of partner-specific sites is that they can specify the items that users are allowed to order. This lets the IT or purchasing departments define a contained list of products, simplifying support and maintenance by requiring fewer parts and consumables to be stocked. It also makes the ordering process faster for end users, as they only have allowed items to choose from.

130. Understand that different departments within an organization might need different products.

Within larger organizations, it's unlikely that one size will fit all users. As such, it might be necessary to define purchasing groups and assign those groups different product choices.

One participant in our study expressed frustration that the available options on Dell Computers' site for Washington State government didn't provide powerful enough computers for the IT department developers, instead concentrating on desktop machines suitable for administrative roles.

131. Provide an escalation path for requesting non-standard equipment.

While it's important to provide guidance on standard purchase items, don't prevent users from seeing the preferred pricing of products on other site areas. Users might occasionally need one-off items for special purposes that aren't covered under the standard equipment list.

One local government employee was looking for LCD projectors on Dell's site for Washington State government. The list of approved items didn't include projectors, and the participant couldn't find a way to view non-approved items without returning to the public-facing site—and thus losing government-specific pricing information.











132. Build in access, monitoring, and reporting tools.

Partner-specific sites bring a website's tools and information in-house, as if the site were an extension of the partner company.

Responsibility for ensuring that the system is being used properly rests with both the site owner and the partner. Giving partners reporting and analysis tools lets them take on this responsibility. Examples of these tools include a breakdown of orders by departmental cost center and even individual, and analysis of areas for possible cost savings. Going further, site owners could provide partners with asset-tracking information for larger items.

DreamCycle™ Kit :

Build Worksheet

	Mountain Frame This is an optional category.	
	Suspension Fork This is an optional category.	
	Rigid Mountain Fork This is an optional category.	
	Crank/Bottom Bracket Set RaceFace Deus Please choose a product from this category.	?
	Rear Derailleur SRAM X.0 Please choose a product from this category.	?
	Front Derailleur SRAM X.Gen Please choose a product from this category.	?
	Cassette SRAM 2006 PG990 9spd cassette 11-34 Cassette Cogs: 11,13,15,17,20,23,26,30,34	FW6145 \$149.95
	Chain SRAM PC991 9spd chain Silver/Silver Speeds: 9	CH1082 \$19.95
	Disc Brake Caliper and Lever Set Avid Juicy 7 Please choose a product from this category.	?
	Disc Brake Caliper and Lever Set Avid Juicy 7 Please choose a product from this category.	?

Status **Product**

Items to be chosen:

- ➔ Brake Lever, Flat Bar/BMX- Individual
- ➔ Disc Brake Caliper
- ➔ Bottom Bracket
- ➔ Crankset
- ➔ Rear Derailleur
- ➔ Front Derailleur
- ➔ Brake Lever, Flat Bar/BMX- Individual
- ➔ Disc Brake Caliper

Missing Weights:

- ➔ Cassette
- ➔ Chain

Dealer Cost	Weight Estimate
\$1,149.95	0.57lbs (partial)

Options

[Show Details](#)
[Save](#)
[New Kit](#)

DreamCycle™ Version 1.3b © 2005-2006, Quality Bicycle Products, Inc.

Quality Bicycle Products (QBP.com) developed a full Web-based application for bicycle shops that takes the guesswork out of specifying bike components. The application provides good defaults that are easy to change. It lists both optional and required components, along with images, cost, and weight. Alternative components are listed, along with their compatibility. If an incompatible component is chosen, other elements of the component are flagged until the whole system is compatible again. The application lets users save and return to partial and completed orders. While it assumes some domain knowledge, it reminds users of everything needed and gives assistance, notes, and specifications for each component. The application easily brings many hours of information gathering and expertise into each bike shop.

Dell recommends Windows® XP Professional Buy Online or Call 1-888-375-9857

DELL™ USA Washington State Store - NASPO | WSCA Contract A63307 Advanced Search

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Premier Login My Cart My Order Status Select Another State Store

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Environmental Fee
[Attention: Customers shipping to California](#)
Read about a State Environmental Fee starting on January 1, 2005 for orders shipped to California.

State Messaging

Welcome to the Washington - NASPO/WSCA State Store
For necessary contract information please click [More Details](#).

Washington - NASPO/WSCA Links

- [State Procurement Site](#)
- [Dept. of Information Services TechMall](#)
- [Dell Retail Price Report](#)
- [Dell NASPO | WSCA Contract Information](#)
- [Washington NASPO | WSCA Participating Addendum](#)

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- [Customer Care](#)
Change of Address, Request Invoice / Packing Slip, Returns
- [Government Sales Contacts](#)

BACK TO: USA > Washington State Store - NASPO | WSCA Contract A63307 [Printable Version](#)

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[Large Text](#)

The Dell extranet site for the State of Washington contained only specific (pre-negotiated and specified) items. While this made it easy for employees to choose compliant items, and easy for the IT department to maintain a set number of system types, it made it harder for state employees to create special orders.

Shopping Cart

Number of Items 0
Subtotal \$0.00

[View Cart](#)
[Checkout](#)

OfficeMax®

[Order By Product Code](#)
[Refill Finder](#)

Search

[Advanced Search](#)

Catalog

Full Line

Basic Office Supplies
Binders & Filing
Calendars & Organizers
Computer Accessories & Supplies
Computer Hardware & Peripherals
Computer Software
Custom Printing
Electronics
Food, Beverage, & Breakroom
Furniture & Office Accessories
Health & Safety
Janitorial & Maintenance Supplies
Labeling, Mailing, & Packaging
Office Machines & Equipment
Paper & Paper Products
Presentation & Audio/Visual
Printers & Supplies
Writing Instruments & Supplies

Advanced Search

Enter Keyword or Product Code:

And/Or

Category
<All>

Brand
<All>

And/Or

☐ Contract Items
C
☐ Promotional Items
SALE
☐ Diverse Supplier
MWBE
☐ Small Business
SB
☐ Recycled Goods

[Clear](#)
[Search](#)

The OfficeMaxCommercial.com website homepage. No adverts, no frills, just a quick way to order products. While this would not work for a customer-facing site, the fact that OfficeMax has built the customer relationship beforehand allows them to provide just the necessary tools.

Shopping Cart

Number of Items 0
Subtotal \$0.00

View Cart Checkout

Search

Keyword/Product #

Advanced Search

Catalog

Full Line

Basic Office Supplies
Binders & Filing
Calendars & Organizers
Computer Accessories & Supplies
Computer Hardware & Peripherals
Computer Software
Custom Printing
Electronics
Food, Beverage, & Breakroom
Furniture & Office Accessories
Health & Safety
Janitorial & Maintenance Supplies
Labeling, Mailing, & Packaging
Office Machines & Equipment
Paper & Paper Products
Presentation & Audio/Visual
Printers & Supplies
Writing Instruments & Supplies

Customer Service | officemaxcommercial.com

OfficeMax®

Order By Product Code Refill Finder

Help


Binders & Filing > File Folders and Supplies > Folder Dividers

Hide Images


Compare Items


Items 1-8 of 8

EZ Place Self-Adhesive Fasteners by Oxford by Esselte

	Product Code	UOM	Delivery*	List Price	Your Price	Compare
	H499372	PK	Next Day	\$13.50	\$12.96	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oxford by Esselte - EZ Place Self-Adhesive Fasteners - Manila, Letter, 2", 48/Pack FASTENER.EZPLACE,2",48PK						
QTY <input type="text"/>		<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>				

Self-Adhesive Vinyl Pockets by Oxford by Esselte

	Product Code	UOM	Delivery*	List Price	Your Price	Compare
	F199375	BX	Next Day	\$31.15	\$23.36	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oxford by Esselte - Self-Adhesive Vinyl Pockets - Manila, 3" W x 5" H, 100/Box POCKET.VINYL,AD,3X5,100						
QTY <input type="text"/>		<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>				

	Product Code	UOM	Delivery*	List Price	Your Price	Compare
	F199376	BX		\$36.19	\$27.14	<input type="checkbox"/>

Product pages on OfficeMaxCommercial.com are equally economical. Items are presented in long lists, and only essential tools such as comparison features are provided. Price savings over list price are readily apparent.

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WWW.NNGROUP.COM

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Guidelines: Phase 6, Replace

While replacing an item at the end of its life basically follows the same process as purchasing a new item, there is one important difference. Participants often talked about visiting the manufacturer's site for the existing product as the starting point of their search.

Sometimes, this was because the replacement part had to fit—physically, mechanically, or aesthetically—with other items. Other times, the product had simply given good service, so the brand was salient in the customer's mind.

This product loyalty provides an opportunity to retain the customer, so long as the website is designed appropriately.

REPAIR AND REPLACE

133. Make it easy to search for items with only partial identifying information.

Several participants described being asked to find replacements for items that had very few distinguishing marks—electrical fittings that had burned out, for example, or solar panels with a serial number but no manufacturer information.

In these instances, their strategy was to type whatever identifying number or name they could find into either a general search engine or a manufacturer's or supplier's site-specific search.

Users in this situation are typically desperate for the replacement part. If your site allows them to locate it easily, chances are they'll order it from you.

134. Ensure your physical parts and products contain sufficient identifying information.

While the recommendations in this document are mainly around website design, even the best site in the world won't help if users don't know who produced the broken part they're holding.

Judging from participant stories of product damage, the identifying information needs to be very firmly attached to, etched or stamped into, or molded onto the product itself. Show the part number on the product in a readable size and easily accessible spot (too often, it's printed in tiny font and hidden on the product's back or another place that's difficult to view after installation).

135. Retain product information for discontinued items.

Make sure that product specs, details, images, white papers, etc. for discontinued items are indexed in search, but with a lower priority than current product pages. This helps users search on something they already have to find what's new, helps them find the right product line, and ensures they can find maintenance and parts instructions for products they possess even beyond that product's support lifecycle.

Even after you stop selling a product, customers will need to find information about it on your website. As long as customers keep a product in operation, they'll need supplies and spare parts. As we noted above, they'll often go to the main product page to find out what parts are compatible with their product. Therefore, you should keep a live page on your site with product information for discontinued products.

When customers sell their used products on the aftermarket, they'll also need access to your old product pages to retrieve specifications and photos to include with their listings. Of course, you don't make any money when customers sell used products, but supporting people in this situation is a great way to build customer loyalty and enhance your products' value—meaning that people will pay more to buy from you next time.

136. Mark discontinued products accordingly.

A discontinued product's product page should clearly state, at the top of the page, that the product is no longer being manufactured. Include a clear link to the main product page(s) for the replacement product(s).

Also, make sure that the discontinued product pages don't rank very highly in your search engine when users search for generic terms, such as the product type. (The page should still get top ranking when users search for the exact model name or the product's old SKU numbers.)

137. Provide a link to replacement products from discontinued items.

Since users often search for their existing items, you should ensure that if it's discontinued, there's a link to the current version on the discontinued item's product page. If you offer customer loyalty discounts, this would be a good place to mention them.

138. Provide a link to both more and less expensive items in the same product family.

When a customer is looking to replace an item you still produce, they might consider an upgrade. Once users have found their existing item on the site, give them links to other options.

Adding links to less-expensive options offers a comparison point between feature sets. It can also help you retain customers who might otherwise downsize to a competitor's product.

139. Use stable URLs for discontinued product pages

When a product is discontinued, it's sometimes best to maintain the same product page URL that it had when it was an active product. That way, existing product owners who have bookmarked the product page will still be able to find it. Also, external search engines will continue to lead users to the correct page if they search for the discontinued product's model number. As long as you follow the previous guideline to include a clear link to the replacement product, new customers will have no problems if they search for the old model number, because they'll be clearly told that there's a new model that has replaced the one they searched for.

In some cases, it's better to recycle the old URL and make it the product page for the replacement product. This approach will gradually increase the search engine ranking for the current product because links from other sites—originally established as pointers to a previous model—will take users to the new model. Putting the new model at the old URL only works if your URLs use model-neutral language. It's confusing to see, say, model 650 at a page that's called 640.html.

If the old URL is used for the new product page, you obviously need to assign a new URL to the old product page. It's preferable to do this only once and not move it again, even as you introduce additional new models.

RETAINING SALIENCE

140. Use trade association or BBB memberships to post company descriptions.

Seeing reference to your site or company on other sites reinforces your company's legitimacy in users' minds.

Some of these reference sources will be out of your control, such as product or company reviews. Other references can be encouraged by careful use of existing resources.

For example, many trade associations have approved vendor lists. In our study, participants from all company types and sizes said that they refer to their trade associations either formally or informally when trying to find vendors.

Local trade association chapters are more proactive: they often post online the materials from their meeting presentations. Presenting at such meetings thus gives a company both instant and longer-term publicity.

141. Become a resource so that people will return.

Prospects will return to your website if it provides the information they need during their initial research and decision-making process. Providing useful resources differentiates you from your competitors by establishing your organization as having expertise and credibility—qualities every organization seeks.

In addition to white papers, your site can provide several other resources:


Buyer's guides: Put “beginner” level information on the site. Many visitors won't know what the defining factors are in your market. The more specialized your product or service, the more necessary this information is. Often, the person responsible for buying a high-priced, complex piece of machinery won't have a clue about what it is.


When researching products and services, prospects benefit from unbiased background information, especially if they don't specialize in the area.

When designing buyer's guides, provide the following information, where applicable:

- **Introduction to the product or service:** What is it, and what are its uses?
- **Main options:** What are the main variations or categories?
- **Key differentiating features:** What are the main differentiating features among different product levels? What are the pros of cons of each? Highlight the important factors that users should consider (comparison charts sometimes do this well, sometimes not). These factors are especially important for novice researchers, who don't know exactly what to look for.
- **List of questions/answers:** What should the customer know about the product and vendor?
- **Scenarios:** Offer a few representative scenarios that indicate the best uses of various levels of product or services.

- **Pricing information:** What can people expect to pay?
- **Insider shopping tips:** What should customers look for? How can they save money?
- **List of resellers:** This is especially valuable if your site is a directory or resource site.
- **Links to other resources.**


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ATM Buyer's Guide Introduction

Automated Teller Machines | Buyer's Guide

While credit, debit, and smart card use is exploding, cash is still king. Cash remains the fastest and most effective way to make purchases at retail locations like food courts, convenience stores, and nightclubs. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) ensure that cash is easily accessible, whenever and wherever someone needs cash.

ATM


- ATM introduction
- [Do you need an ATM cash machine?](#)
- [ATM money machine features](#)
- [ATM money machines security](#)
- [Sources of ATM sales](#)
- [ATM pricing](#)
- [Best ATM buying tips](#)

You have probably noticed ATMs popping up all over – they are no longer found only in banks. In fact , about 62 percent of ATMs are now located at non-bank locations, according to ATM Marketplace. Is your business ready to join this trend?

Installing an ATM can be good for your business. An ATM can reduce credit-card processing fees, increase visitors, and eliminate bad checks. And, if your business has enough traffic, you can even make money with an ATM.

This BuyerZone Buyer's Guide will get you up to speed on your ATM options, provide tips on how to select an ATM supplier, and tell you how much you can expect to pay for one.

Mentioned In...



"BuyerZone is the sort of site that the Internet seems designed for... an amazing service."

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- [Gift Cards](#)
- [Golf Carts](#)
- [Group Health Insurance](#)
- [Home Security Systems](#)
- [List Brokers](#)
- [Restaurant POS](#)
- [Used Copiers](#)
- [...all categories](#)

Buyerzone.com provides a buyer guide that's easy to understand and covers the topics that will help beginners know what to look for.

Projector Buying Guide

Brightness

Brightness or Lumens

Light output can vary greatly from one model of projector to another. **ANSI lumens** are a standard for measuring this light output.

When there's light in the room, or when you're trying to project onto a wall or other atypical surface, you need a strong light source.

In general, the higher the lumens rating, the more light you've got—and the better the projected image.

Less than 1000 Lumens

The lowest output projectors are typically the least expensive—but under non-ideal conditions the image may not be satisfactory.

Low light output means that presentations will need to be made in a dark or dimly lit room so that the image on the screen is not washed out by ambient light.



1000 - 2000 Lumens



Most standard-use projectors, suitable for normal business conference room and small classroom use, fall into this category.

Although a totally dark or dimly lit room is usually not necessary, presenters should still expect to reduce room lighting somewhat for best screen viewing.

2000 - 3000 Lumens

These projectors are typically found in the high-performance range of the portable and semi-portable projectors, and are suitable for large conference rooms and classrooms.

They offer more flexibility in terms of ambient lighting, since the image is bright and less likely to wash out.

They also offer more flexibility in terms of audience size, since they can illuminate a larger screen without much loss of image quality.



More than 3000 Lumens



Ultra-bright projectors produce more than 3000 lumens and are typically expensive.

They are used in a variety of large venue applications, including very large board rooms, conference rooms, training rooms, auditoriums, churches, concerts, and nightclubs.


Topics:

- ▶ [Projectors](#)
- ▶ [Resolution](#)
- ▶ [Weight](#)
- ▶ [Brightness](#)
- ▶ [Contrast Ratio](#)
- ▶ [Other things to consider](#)
- ▶ [Glossary](#)


Other Links:

- ▶ [Dell Projector Line-Up](#)
- ▶ [Shop for All Projectors](#)

US.Dell.com's *Buying Guide* illustrations do a good job of showing the importance of lumens in selecting projectors.


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Pallets: How to choose the right pallet for the job


Selecting the best pallet for the task

Material handling and logistics may not be the most glamorous side of business but it's one area where hard-won margins can be easily lost through negligence and mismanagement.

If you are treating pallets as just another line item expense, you could be eroding your company's margins. Here's why...

Packaging, wood pallets and material handling equipment (MHE) must work together in order to keep product moving down the pipeline.

While the marketing and R&D department will work closely with engineers to design the packaging, and MHE designers create detailed requirements, the pallet rarely receives more than a couple of lines in the spec. That's a big mistake when you consider how **important the wooden pallet** is to the mission.



Among the 450 million pallets manufactured in North America annually, the 48x40" GMA or grocery pallet is the workhorse of the logistics industry. Other sizes and designs exist for other uses such as shipping 55 gal drums, paint cans, electronics and telecommunications equipment.

The two major pallet designs used in North America are the "block" and the "stringer". The stringer style costs less to build than the block style does, but it is weaker as well.

Despite the cost, the block pallet is more suitable for a wide variety of handling environments because it provides fork and jack access on all 4 sides, while stringer pallets only allow partial 4-way access if the stringers are notched. Otherwise they can only be accessed at either end and are called "2-way". Additionally, how the pallets is transported in-house can play into the selection process. For example, if the pallet is to travel along a [conveyor system](#), or some other specialized delivery system, this may need to be taken into consideration.

Wooden Pallet Selection: how to choose the right design and size

There are 4 essential properties to consider when purchasing pallets. These properties all join together to create the 5th property, the price.

Important Pallet Characteristics:

- Strength
- Stiffness
- Durability
- Functionality
- Price

Pallet Strength

The term strength is applied to the load bearing capacity of the pallet. It is essential that the selected pallet be capable of supporting the weight of the materials that will be shipped.

Stiffness

Stiffness is an often overlooked property that impacts safety, easy of handling, and shipping-related damage claims. The term refers to the pallet's ability to resist bending, collapsing, concaving, or otherwise changing shape while under load or movement. Stiffness is an essential partner to strength. While a particular pallet may be strong enough to support the required load, if it is not stiff enough then it could affect material handling efforts or the safety and security of the materials being shipped including cracking or internal damage.

Pallet Durability

Durability applies to the ability to withstand the shipping and handling process. If the pallet is for one-time use then this property is not as important.

Functionality

Functionality is a property which requires close scrutiny. It refers to the pallets compatibility with the packaging and MHE that it will come in contact with.

The term "compatibility" is a complex one that changes along with the material being shipped, its destination and a host of other environmental and market-related conditions. For example, pallets destined for overseas locations will need to be ISPM 15 compliant as far as resistance to pests are concerned.

Price

All of the above properties ultimately affect the price. Price is at the bottom of the list of properties because, although it is not usually the least of the factors controlling the buying decision, it's the one factor that should not be used as the starting point. If you set a pallet price, and then try to back into the specifications from there, you will most likely end up with a materials handling failure that will cost you a lot more money than you had planned on saving.

Call or email us today for more information on how to capitalize on our packaging experience. [Click here to request more information](#)

BuckeyeDiamond.com's informational page covers key aspects of pallet shopping. While the page is long, it's easy to follow because the headings provide good signposts for scanning.

Solar Turbines
A Caterpillar Company

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[Home](#)
[About Solar](#)
[Oil & Gas Industry](#)
[Power Generation Industry](#)
[Customer Support](#)

[Site Registration](#)
[Home > Gas Turbine Overview](#)

English

Gas Turbine Overview

[Industry Definitions](#)
[Worldwide Locations](#)

Gas Turbine Overview

A gas turbine engine is a type of internal combustion engine. Essentially, the engine can be viewed as an energy conversion device that converts energy stored in the fuel to useful mechanical energy in the form of rotational power. The term "gas" refers to the ambient air that is taken into the engine and used as the working medium in the energy conversion process.

This air is first drawn into the engine where it is compressed, mixed with fuel and ignited. The resulting hot gas expands at high velocity through a series of airfoil-shaped blades transferring energy created from combustion to turn an output shaft. The residual thermal energy in the hot exhaust gas can be harnessed for a variety of industrial processes.

Basic Components

Compressor

The compressor takes in outside air and then compacts and pressurizes the air molecules through a series of rotating and stationary compressor blades.

Combustor

In the combustor, fuel is added to the pressurized air molecules and ignited. The heated molecules expand and move at high velocity into the turbine section.

Turbine

The turbine converts the energy from the high velocity gas into useful rotational power through expansion of the heated compressed gas over a series of turbine rotor blades.

Output Shaft & Gearbox

Rotational power from the turbine section is delivered to driven equipment through the output shaft via a speed reduction gearbox.

Exhaust

The engine's exhaust section directs the spent gas out of the turbine section and into the atmosphere.

Titan 130
Single Shaft Gas Turbine for
Power Generation Applications

Related Links

- [How a Turbine Works - Video \(4.5mb\)](#)

The company behind MySolar.cat.com manufactures complex products. Providing educational information glossaries, demonstration videos, and illustrations help make its products much more approachable to potential buyers.

How-to guides and demonstration videos: Demonstrate your leadership by providing educational guides and instruction videos. These can help widen the knowledge base of both prospects and customers by providing beneficial insider tips. How-to guides are great for showing ideas and step-by-step instructions on how to use or apply your products or services.

Glossary of industry terms: In general, we recommend matching your website's language with the language used by your target audience. People working within specialized industries use industry terms that outsiders don't understand. Use both non-technical and technical terminology to help educate users. Users will start with a non-technical search, but will quickly refine their

search terms according to what they read on the first few relevant sites they visit. Adding the technical terms alongside the non-technical terms on your site will help users learn the business better. Having a glossary of terms provides clarification for people new to the industry.

The screenshot displays the Cabot website's navigation and content structure. At the top, there is a header with the Cabot logo and links for HOME, LOGIN/REGISTER, CONTACT US, and FEEDBACK. A search bar is located in the top right. Below the header is a main navigation bar with links to About Cabot, Products & Markets, Research & Development, SH&E, Investor Info, and News. The breadcrumb trail indicates the current location: Products & Markets > Conductive Compounds > Glossary Terms. The main content area is titled "Conductive Compounds" and features a sidebar with a list of links: Overview, Application Info, Data Sheets & MSDS, Events, FAQs, Glossary Terms (highlighted), Presentations, Product Literature, Technical Papers, and Contacts. The main content area includes a filter section with dropdown menus for Market and Application, and a "CLEAR FILTERS" button. Below the filters is the "Glossary Terms" section, which lists several technical terms with their definitions: Antistatic compound, Ash Content, ASTM, CABELEEC®, Compound, Conductive compound, and Conductivity. Each term is followed by a brief description of its properties and uses.

The Cabot site provides a glossary of technical terms, which is useful for people both inside and outside the industry.

Links to industry news and information: Linking customers to other industry websites makes it convenient for customers to gather additional information and shows that you're customer-focused. Dedicating an area to links for industry resources encourages prospects to return to your site.


Lively community or chat areas: Offer a community feature such as discussion groups on your site where users can post questions and get answers from their colleagues. This brings people within your industry together on your site. We suggest sponsoring an existing community, rather

than starting one from scratch. You must be “The” location in order for the community to be vibrant.

Training material: Make educational material available online so that new prospects can learn your products and existing customers can brush up their skills. Depending on your industry, it might make sense to add online training or seminars. Some participants said website training counted toward their Continuing Professional Education (CPE) requirements. Others forwarded links or printed presentation slides or PDF documents to give to other people in their organization.

If your product is specialized enough to require training, provide access to that training online. Not only is this an excellent resource during the research phase (educational materials can educate potential purchasers about your product line), but it also gives users a reason to return to the site post-purchase.

In particular, give users easy access to downloadable product manuals. Assume that your customers will lose theirs or not pass them on to new employees who use your product. Allowing people to download the manual is an easy way to endear your company to the users who will be buying your products in the future. It's also an extremely cheap way to bolster your reputation for standing by your products and providing excellent post-sales service.



[Products](#)
[Purchase](#)
[Support](#)
[Resellers](#)
[Road Trips](#)
[Company](#)

[View Cart](#)
[Checkout](#)

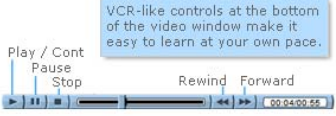
WinTOTAL

WinTOTAL Aurora Video Library

Manuals are helpful. But sometimes things are easier to pick up when you can actually see them happen. We've built this video library to assist those users who prefer a more visual approach to learning how to use WinTOTAL.


Using the Video Library

Click any of the video links and you'll view a streaming presentation. At the bottom of each video is a control bar that allows you to watch the videos at your own pace. If you miss something, just click the double-arrow icon on the right side of the tool bar to jump backward a few seconds... it's like instant replay at your fingertips.



VCR-like controls at the bottom of the video window make it easy to learn at your own pace.

Our video library is built using Macromedia Flash technology. This allows us to provide top-notch images, while limiting the bandwidth used. If you're having trouble viewing any of the videos, make sure you have the latest Flash Player installed.



Starting a new report

- [Starting a report using the Order PowerView](#)
- [New Files PowerView **New!**](#)
- [Jump starting a form](#)
- [Cloning old reports or templates](#)
- [Merging data from old reports with SmartMerge](#)
- [Selecting Forms for your appraisal report](#)

Working with Comps

- [Making automatic adjustments](#)
- [Importing comps from your MLS](#)
- [Importing comps from old reports](#)
- [Finding and placing comps](#)
- [Working in the side-by-side comps grid](#)

Signing and Delivering Reports

- [Signing your reports](#)
- [Configuring your electronic signature](#)
- [Sending PDF reports via e-mail](#)
- [E-mailing WinTOTAL files](#)
- [Uploading completed reports to your XSite](#)
- [Sending reports using Plugins](#)

Billing and Business Management

- [XSite Business Management Overview](#)
- [Integrating WinTOTAL with your XSite](#)
- [Configuring your fee table](#)
- [Creating an invoice for an order](#)
- [Creating an invoice for other charges](#)
- [Recording payments for an order](#)
- [Designing custom business reports](#)

Mobile tools

- [Find your way with mobile mapping tools](#)
- [Mobile credit card processing is literally money in the bank for you](#)
- [Send order status and schedule inspections while in the field](#)

Sketching

- [Apex IV Training Videos](#)

Miscellaneous Videos

- [Educate your Clients about the new FNMA Forms **New!**](#)

Get a **FREE** Trial!


Product Links

- [Home](#)
- [Support memberships](#)
- [Professional vs. Enterprise](#)
- [Questions](#)
- [Video library](#)
- [Real stories](#)
- [Online help resources](#)
- [Buy WinTOTAL](#)

Features and Benefits

View another feature:

The video library on aLaMode.com is particularly helpful for customers who already own the product and want to learn how to use it.



Supplier Management and Procurement Automation

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Webinars

Please call 1-877-710-0413 (USA) or 1-919-659-2100 (Outside of US) for more information.

Supplier Information Forum (SQSN members)
 Tuesday, May 2, 2006
 2:00 pm- 3:00 pm ET
[Additional Information & Registration](#)

Product Showcase: Materials Management - Supplies
 Tuesday, May 2, 2006
 2:00 pm- 3:00 pm ET
[Additional Information & Registration](#)

Product Showcase: Express - Procurement Automation for Mid-sized Organizations
 Tuesday, May 2, 2006
 2:00 pm- 3:00 pm ET
[Additional Information & Registration](#)


Product Showcase: Express - Procurement Automation for Mid-sized Organizations
 Tuesday, May 16, 2006
 2:00 pm- 3:00 pm ET
[Additional Information & Registration](#)

Supplier Content Strategy Webinar

» Free Online Seminar:
 Learn how supplier management is the key to sustainable spend management savings

» Click Here to Learn More

Webinars, like the ones on SciQuest.com, keep prospects and customers coming back for more because they're educational and pertinent to their jobs.



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SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW


BY PROCESS

BY INDUSTRY

RESOURCE CENTER

White Papers
Mass Notification
3n Literature
3n Presentations

LIVE DEMO




3n System Demo

See the 3n mass notification system in action.


Sign Up Today!

3n CASE STUDIES



Kenyon International


3n (National Notification Network) / Solutions / Resource Center / Mass Notification



MASS NOTIFICATION


Click on a title to view/download the product information:

NOTIFICATION WORKSHEET




[Interactive Notification Selection Worksheet](#)
[\[XLS 52KB\]](#)

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS




[Emergency & Disaster Preparedness Links](#)

NOTIFICATION SELECTION




[Notification Selection Checklist](#)
[\[PDF 69KB\]](#)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS




[Pictorial Glossary of Terms](#)
[\[PDF 47KB\]](#)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT




[Complete Emergency Management Guide](#)
[\[PDF 281KB\]](#)








[Mass Notification Strategy Action Plan](#)
[\[PDF 122KB\]](#)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



[Sample Request for Proposal](#)
[\[DOC 117KB\]](#)

3nOnline.com provides resources such as white papers, checklists, literature, and worksheets to assist customers at all phases of the sales process.

GUIDANT For medical professionals SEARCH <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/>	CONTACT US SITE MAP Print this page E-mail to a friend	
	PATIENTS AND FAMILIES MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ABOUT US HOME	
MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS Cardiac Surgery Carotid and Biliary Stenting and Peripheral Intervention Electrophysiology Heart Failure Interventional Cardiology Education and Training Products Reimbursement PowerPoint Resource Center Clinical Trials CRM Trials	<h2>Interventional Cardiology</h2> <p>On this page, you'll find our most relevant resources for the specialty of interventional cardiology.</p>  <h3>Reimbursement</h3> <p>Find reimbursement information related to Guidant products. More</p>  <h3>Education and Training</h3> <p>Find programs for physicians and allied health professionals: Continuing Education All Programs</p>  <h3>PowerPoint Resource Center</h3> <p>Preview and download PowerPoint presentations on a variety of topics: FX miniRAIL® RX PTCA Catheter MULTI-LINK VISION® Coronary Stent System VOYAGER™ OTW Coronary Dilatation Catheter All Presentations</p> <h3>Interventional Cardiology Products</h3> <p>Products and accessories used to treat coronary artery disease intravascularly: Coronary Dilatation Catheters Coronary Guide Wires Coronary Guiding Catheters Coronary Stent Systems Directional Coronary Atherectomy Devices Coronary Accessories All Guidant Products</p>  <h3>For Your Patients</h3> <p>View our comprehensive online resources for patients and their families: Heart and Blood Vessel Basics Conditions and Treatments Women's Heart Health LifeBeat Online e-Newsletter All Patient Resources</p> 	
Updates Electronic data capture for clinical trials. More Learn Guidant's position on HIPAA.		
Partner Sites Heart Rhythm Society ACC TCTMD TheHeart.org		
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Guidant's site (www.guidant.com) contains several maintenance-phase information sources. Reimbursement information, patient-handout information, and continuing education resources are all useful after the sale. The PowerPoint resource center is more useful during the justification phase, but one participant said he also used this information as educational material.

THE ONLINE IMPACT OF OFFLINE MARKETING DOLLARS

In our study, participants searched for names they had already heard of. Often, these were larger brands with good general awareness, but participants also typed in the names of companies whose free seminars they had attended, who had advertised repeatedly in trade journals, or whose reps had recently visited. While

this type of marketing effect is difficult to track, we saw evidence that it crossed channels from print, events, and sales contacts to the online world.

142. Invest time in free customer seminars. Ensure that the seminars provide value to your audience rather than just touting your product.

Participants said they searched for companies whose seminars they'd attended if the presenters seemed to know what they were talking about (i.e., they were trustworthy), rather than because of any particular product attributes.

143. Ensure that your online presence is advertised in offline literature, and that your website's domain name is easy to guess.

Remember that users' memories are not perfect—they will most likely type your company name into the browser address bar or a search engine rather than remember the exact URL. If available, register domain names for alternative spellings, abbreviations, or common misspellings of your company's name. This is especially important if you have any punctuation in the name (such as Wal-Mart) or the name is made from several words (such as Johnson & Johnson).

144. Have a sales force that is low pressure but visits frequently enough to seem concerned with customer needs.

Being attentive will pay off when users come to decision time—even if the sale doesn't ultimately come through the rep.

Sales reps typically leave a bad impression on users. The reps whose company they'll remember—and research in more detail when looking for products—are the reps that were consistent, that understood and remembered the user's particular business, and that provided information without being pushy. In our study, these reps seem to have established sufficient rapport that users remembered their products when they needed to buy in that market.

"Consistency—if I see the same person year after year, I keep their card and when I'm ready to make decision, I will call them. People I see over time, I give them more credibility."

"When the old sales person introduces the new person, that's a good step."

Methodology

OVERVIEW

Our study consisted of three different methodologies:

1. Focus Groups
2. User Testing
3. Site Visits

Part 1—Focus Groups

A total of fifty-four people participated in the focus group activity, which included twelve sessions. Each session consisted of four to six participants with similar corporate responsibilities. We sorted participants on the basis of:

- The size of their companies
- How much the participants spend on company purchases
- User type (researcher vs. decision-maker)
- Whether they typically research products or services

The focus group's purpose was to identify the trends that emerged as participants discussed their research and purchase processes. The group setting allowed people to share their experiences. Often, comments from one participant triggered memories and responses from the others, thereby providing rich insight into the research experience.

During the sessions, we also asked participants to take part in a prioritization exercise. We gave them a list of items that might appear on B2B sites, such as prices, data sheets, order samples, chat, and membership logos. We then gave them twenty tokens to “spend” on the Web elements they felt were most important. Participants could weigh items as they wished. If, for example, they felt vendor lists were the most important, they might give that item seven tokens, spread the remaining thirteen tokens among a few less important items, and give some items no tokens at all.

Note: Some focus group participants also participated in other parts of our study as well.

MATRIX FOR THE FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Group 1 Company size: Large Item amount: High User type: Researcher Item type: Service	Group 2 Company size: Very large Item amount: Low User type: Decision-maker Item type: Product	Group 3 Company size: Extremely large Item amount: Medium User type: Decision-maker Item type: Service
Group 4 Company size: Very small Item amount: Low to medium User type: Any Item type: Product	Group 5 Company size: Small Item amount: Low User type: Any Item type: Product	Group 6 Company size: Medium Item amount: Medium User type: Researcher Item type: Service
Group 7 Company size: Large Item amount: Medium User type: Decision-maker Item type: Product	Group 8 Company size: Very large Item amount: High User type: Researcher Item type: Service	Group 9 Company size: Extremely large Item amount: High User type: Researcher Item type: Product
Group 10 Company size: Very small Item amount: Low to medium User type: Any Item type: Service	Group 11 Company size: Small Item amount: High User type: Any Item type: Service	Group 12 Company size: Medium Item amount: Low User type: Decision-maker Item type: Product

Key:

Average Amount Spent Per Year

Low = Under \$1,000
Medium = \$1,001–\$100,000
High = Over \$100,000

Company Size

(Number of employees, including self)

Very small = 1–3
Small = 4–35
Medium = 36–350
Large = 351–3,500
Very large = 3,501–35,000
Extremely large = Over 35,000

Part 2—User Testing

A total of fifty-five individuals participated in our one-on-one user testing. For this part of the study, we gave participants tasks to perform on the Web (mainly, to research companies for the business-related products or services of their choice). The facilitator sat next to the user, observed his or her behavior, listened, and took notes as the participant attempted tasks on the websites. The facilitator asked users to think aloud as they worked on the tasks. At the end of the sessions, some users answered a satisfaction questionnaire, and a discussion followed. Each session was

scheduled for 90 minutes. Participants used a PC (with the screen set at 1024x768) with a high-speed Internet connection.

Part 3—Site Visits

We conducted seven site visits. Observing people at work in their natural environment provides additional insight into people's processes. The advantages of site visits are that we can identify areas in people's workflow that create obstacles and develop Web strategies that address these challenges. We asked participants not to alter their environment or tidy up in any way, as we wanted to learn how they routinely used their computer or other offline resources in their own natural settings.

THE PARTICIPANTS

A total of seventy-nine people participated in our study. There were thirty-nine male and forty female participants. All participants had at least one year of online experience; most had been using the Internet for many years.

Participants by Age Group

Age Group	18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	Over 60
Number of Participants	4	23	27	21	4

Participants by Company Size

Company Size (number of employees)	1–3	4–35	36–350	351–3,500	3,501–35,000	Over 35,000
Number of Participants	14	13	11	18	17	6

Job Titles

Following is a partial list of participants' occupations/job titles:

Accounting manager	Finance manager
Administrative assistant	Financial planner
Biologist	General manager
Business owner	Healthcare services director
Buyer	Human resource director
CEO	IT manager
CFO	Marketing director
Company director	Marketing manager
Construction supervisor	Office manager
Controller	PC engineer
Customer relations manager	President
Desktop publisher	Purchasing manager
Engineer	Real estate agent
Facilities coordinator	Scientist
Facilities manager	Vice president

TASKS

We asked participants to use the Web to research companies they might do business with, particularly for a service or product they currently need. Although we gave some people the option to work with pre-written tasks, most people made up their own tasks that were applicable to their current business situation. We designed these exploratory tasks to gain insight into how users research information on the Web without any prompting as to which site(s) to visit. We asked the participants to attempt tasks as if they were going to do it on their own, using any website or Web strategy they desired. The following list shows some example tasks.

Example 1

Your company is unhappy with its current cleaning service. Use the Web to research the top two companies that you'd recommend to your boss. She wants to know the following:

Option 1

Company Name: _____

Pros:

Cons:

Option 2

Company Name: _____

Pros:

Cons:

Example 2

You need to source ten projectors that will display laptop screen images in conference rooms that seat 20–50 people. Your upper limit per projector is \$2,000.

Use the Web to research some alternatives. Work toward a recommendation for a product and supplier you'd use, taking into account all the factors that are important to you in your work.

Example 3

Your sales team is preparing for a tradeshow that's happening in three months. They want to display the latest technology. This is a big event and you want to impress. Use the Web and see if you can find two potential companies that can design and create large exhibits. Gather as much information as necessary to support your decision.

Example 4

You're unhappy with the current service your company receives from [*Fill in the blank*]. Use the Web to research some alternatives. Work toward a recommendation for a supplier you'd use, taking into account all the factors that are important to you in your work.

Example 5

Go to [*Fill in the blank*] website and see if they company offers any specific products or services that might be helpful to your company. If so, see if this company is one that you'd do business with. Why or why not?

Example 6 (for buyers and retail business owners)

You need to find a new product line for your business. Use the Web to research some alternatives. Work toward a recommendation for a product and supplier you'd use, taking into account all the factors that are important to you in your work.

WEBSITES TESTED

We studied 179 websites in this research project. This section lists the websites that people used in their research. We didn't include instances in which people entered a website and quickly moved on because it was unrelated to their task. We organized the websites according to industry. While some companies satisfy multiple categories, we've sorted them by the most relevant for simplicity's sake.

Note: Some of the following websites have changed or disappeared since we tested them. However, our purpose here is not to criticize or review individual sites. Rather, we use the specific sites and screenshots purely as examples to illustrate general problems and issues that apply across many websites. Thus, a site's redesign or closure doesn't change our recommendations, nor does it make a screenshot irrelevant. In fact, our hope is that many of the websites we feature here will take advantage of this free usability testing and correct the usability problems we found.

Associations/Directories

fht.org.uk	Trade organization
homeopathy-soh.org	Trade organization
shrm.com	Society for human resources management
watechcenter.org	Statewide economic development agency focused on technology and innovation
wsa.org	Statewide technology trade association

Distributor/Suppliers

technologyexpress.com	Computer technologies
campbellsci.com	Dataloggers, data acquisition systems, and measurement and control products
k12connected.com	Education section of Micro Computer Systems
grainger.com	Industrial products
sterlingmedicalproducts.com	Medical equipment and supplies
vwr.com	Scientific equipment
avnet.com	Semiconductors and electronics
globalsource.com	Semiconductors and electronic components
uline.com	Shipping supplies
aesolar.com	Solar equipment and solutions
solarelectricsupply.com	Solar equipment and solutions
store.sundancesolar.com	Solar equipment and solutions
cmbags.com	Specialty and custom bags
sturgessportswear.com/	Wholesaler of sporting goods and duffle bags
wholesalerscatalog.com	Wholesaler and manufacturer directory

Informational

beginnersguide.com	Answers to "I wonder" type questions
patchmanagement.org	Discussion list for patch management topics
process-cooling.com	Information on heating and cooling equipment
cc.utah.edu/~asn8200/rapid.html	Information on rapid prototyping systems
voip-news.com	Information on the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)
theofficeguide.com	Office supplies portal
cnet.com	Technology portal
microsoft.com	Technology products and solutions
about.com	"How-to" advice
dmoz.org	User-edited directory

Lists

distributorcentral.com	Resource for distributors needing product searching and ordering tools
ga.tradeshowspecialist.com	Resources on tradeshow promotional products and marketing
bizrate.com	Shopping search and comparison
nextag.com	Shopping search and comparison
pricegrabber.com	Shopping search and comparison
alibaba.com	Shopping search for businesses
buyerzone.com	Shopping search for businesses

Retailers

dell.com	Computers and technology solutions
gateway	Computers and technology solutions
kendon.co.uk	Office supplies
protonsupplies.com	Office supplies
sony.com	Electronics
bhphotovideo.com	Electronics
brummers.com	Food products
burdickchocolate.com	Food products
carouselcandies.com	Food products
elegantgourmet.com	Food products
godiva.com	Food products
handmadetruffles.com	Food products
iwantchocolate.com	Food products
olivercandies.com	Food products
tomandsallys.com	Food products
turtlealley.com	Food products

furnitureatwork.co.uk	Furniture
spaceofficefurniture.co.uk	Furniture
hp.com	Technology manufacturer
displays4less.com	Tradeshow products
tradeshowshop.com	Tradeshow products

Manufacturers

airproducts.com	Atmospheric gases and specialty gases
peachtree.com	Business management software
fluke.com	Calibration equipment
edisonmudcats.com	Calibration software
cabot.com	Chemical manufacture
harvestvictoryusa.com	Custom bags
bellcomputer.com	Digital content creation tools
toshiba.com	Electronics
panasonic.com	Electronics
canon.com	Electronics
nimlok.com	Exhibit solutions
planar.com	Flat panel displays
armstrong.com	Floors, ceilings, and cabinets
ati.com	Graphics, video, and multimedia products
3dsystems.com	Imaging solutions
mercuryluggage.com	Luggage
corrugatedpallets.com	Manufacturer of pallets
biomerieux.com	Medical and industrial products
abbottvasculardevices.com	Medical devices and pharmaceuticals
foxxhollowtech.com	Medical devices and pharmaceuticals
guidant.com	Medical devices and pharmaceuticals
rainin.com	Medical devices and pharmaceuticals
pb.com	Office technologies and services
buckeyediament.com	Packaging solutions
sixthsensepos.com	Point-of-sale software
www5.com	Point-of-sale software
epson.com	Printer and imaging products
impact-displays.com	Printing and sign services
askproxima.com	Projectors
infocus.com	Projectors
mitsubishi-presentation.com	Projectors
necvisualsystems.com	Projectors
stratasys.com	Rapid prototyping and manufacturing systems
ecora.com	Software technologies
sanyo.com	Technology manufacturer

thermonics.com	Temperature testing system
temptronic.com	Thermal systems
mycroftcomputing.com	Time tracking software
shopclock.com	Time tracking software
interstatepallet.com	Wood pallets
marklevillelumber.com	Wood pallets
premier-pallets.com	Wood pallets
summitpallet.com	Wood pallets
deltamachinery.com	Woodworking machinery

Services

arandell.com	Catalog printers
awcleaning.com	Cleaning services
cbnclean.com	Cleaning services
janiking.com	Cleaning services
pro-serv.biz	Cleaning services
alaskacascadefnclsvs.uswestdex.com	Collection agency
andc.com	Collection agency
bilateral.com	Collection agency
bluediamondcollections.com	Collection agency
cedarfinancial.com	Collection agency
creditman.biz	Collection agency
directrecovery.com	Collection agency
getitpaid.com	Collection agency
jmandw.com	Collection agency
rand-assoc.com	Collection agency
site96.com (IDCC)	Collection agency
suitcosts.com	Collection agency
transworldsystems.com	Collection agency
whywaitfinancial.com	Collection agency
att.com	Communications provider
centurytel.com	Communications provider
www.eschelon.com	Communications provider
kmts.ca	Communications provider
mci.com	Communications provider
nwtel.ca	Communications provider
qwest.com	Communications provider
sbc.com and att.com	Communications provider
sprint.com	Communications provider
verizon.com	Communications provider
vonage.com	Communications provider

leadershipdirectories.com	Marketing solutions
dnb.com	Credit services
adp.com	Employer services/HR/payroll
ework.com	Employer services/HR/payroll
hewitt.com	Employer services/HR/payroll
towersperrin.com	Employer services/HR/payroll
worldatwork.org	Employer services/HR/payroll
meccinc.com	Event planner
bankofamerica.com	Financial services
bcbs.com	Healthcare
benefitlogic.net	Healthcare
convatec.com	Healthcare
humana.com	Healthcare
uhc.com	Healthcare
nelsoninformation.com	Market data provider
eleadz.com	Marketing agency
fasanoandassociates.com	Marketing agency
gerstmanmarketing.com	Marketing agency
millard.com	Marketing agency
mokrynski.com	Marketing agency
countrywide.com	Mortgage lender
lendingtree.com	Mortgage lender
intelius.com	People search/background checks
finderbinder.com	Public relations
goapple.com	Real estate appraisal
limbachandgreenwald.com	Real estate appraisal
cadogantate.com	Removal company
pickfords.co.uk	Removal company
promoverelocations.co.uk	Removal company
smartremovals.com	Removal company
uk-removal.co.uk	Removal
dhl.co.uk	Shipping
dhl-usa.com	Shipping
fedex.com	Shipping
roadway.com	Shipping
tnt.com	Shipping
applerock.com	Trade show displays
beautifuldisplays.com	Trade show displays
bmadisplay.com	Trade show displays
championexpo.com	Trade show displays
customtradeshows.com	Trade show displays
exponents.com	Trade show displays
godfreygroup.com	Trade show displays

nomadicdisplay.com	Trade show displays
pointconcepts.com	Trade show displays
tandberg.net	Video technology provider
vsgj.com	Video technology provider

About the Authors

Hoa Loranger is a User Experience Specialist at Nielsen Norman Group, and heads its San Diego office. She consults with many large, well-known companies in various industries such as entertainment, finance, technology, e-commerce, and intranets. She conducts usability research worldwide and gives keynotes and tutorials on a wide range of topics, including usability principles and guidelines, user-centered design concepts, and applied research methodologies. She has worked with clients to successfully implement user-centered design strategies leading to improved sales and ROI. Her usability work has spanned the globe, including work in Asia, Europe, and Australia. She is the co-author of the book *Prioritizing Web Usability* (2006).

Before joining NN/g, Loranger served as Human Factors Lead at Intuit, where her group was responsible for the user interaction and visual design for the TurboTax product line. At TRW (currently Northrop Grumman), she specialized in both hardware and software systems, including navigational and logistical applications, and computer configurations for military vehicles.

Loranger has a master's degree in human factors and applied experimental psychology from California State University, Northridge, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from University of California, Irvine.

Chris Nodder is a User Experience Specialist with Nielsen Norman Group. He works with companies of all sizes in industries as diverse as pharmaceuticals, options trading, and governmental agencies to introduce user-centered design methods.

Before joining NN/g, Nodder worked as a senior user researcher at Microsoft Corporation. During his seven years at Microsoft, Nodder worked on a range of products, including videoconferencing, home-networking, and online-community technologies; programming tools for Web developers; and applications that deliver Internet content over cell phones. In 2004, he was responsible for the user experience for XP Service Pack 2, a major upgrade to Windows XP. To get developers to walk in customers' shoes, Nodder has created personas, reality TV episodes, and even whole rooms ("usertoriums").

Prior to working at Microsoft, Nodder held positions as a systems analyst, programmer, and usability consultant at NatWest Bank in the UK, where he was involved in the world's first TV banking trial and the first real-life application of smartcards for micropayments. His experiences managing the usability group at NatWest are captured in the book *The Politics of Usability*.

Nodder has a master's degree in human-computer interaction from Guildhall University, London, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the Polytechnic of East London. He has been a presenter and panelist at many conferences, including UPA, CHI, Group, CSCW, and British HCI.

Dr. Jakob Nielsen is principal of Nielsen Norman Group. He is the founder of the "discount usability engineering" movement, which emphasizes fast and efficient methods for improving the quality of user interfaces. Nielsen, noted as "the world's leading expert on Web usability" by *U.S. News and World Report* and "the next best thing to a true time machine" by *USA Today*, is the author of the best-selling book *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity* (2000), which has sold more than a quarter of a million copies in twenty-two languages. His other books include *Prioritizing Web Usability* (2006), *Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed* (2001), *International User Interfaces* (1996), *Usability Inspection Methods* (1994), and *Usability Engineering* (1993). Nielsen's Alertbox column on Web usability has been published on the Internet since 1995 and currently has about 200,000 readers. From 1994 to 1998, Nielsen was a Sun Microsystems Distinguished Engineer. His previous affiliations include Bell Communications Research, the Technical University of Denmark, and the IBM User Interface Institute. See his biography page at www.useit.com/jakob for additional information.

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- Wish lists and gift certificates
- Location finder usability: 21 design guidelines
- Flash usability (with supplementary highlights video from user testing)
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