



White Paper:

Web Design + Digital Marketing

for the Manufacturing Industry

Contents

Executive Summary	3
What's Changed?	4
Keeping Your Products Top of Mind	5
Leverage Your Website	6
Optimize Your Online Presence	9
Manufacturing The Right Information	10
Generate Qualified Leads	12
Social Media Advertising	15
Encourage Engagement with Email Marketing	17
Expand Your Reach with Online Advertising	18
Drive Measurable Results	19
Final Words	21
About emagine	22

Executive Summary

Successfully marketing a product or service to the right audience at the right time is no easy task for any business. This fact paired with the unique complexities of the manufacturing industry can make keeping your sales pipeline healthy and full a real challenge.

In this guide, you'll find ways to elevate your marketing presence and boost new business with refreshed website, digital marketing and content strategies.

45%

of industrial or manufacturing marketers feel neutral about their company's online marketing efforts. Another 30% feel dissatisfied.

IHS Engineering 360

What's Changed? Moving Past Old-School Deliverables



Historically, B2B marketers blasted their audience with campaigns solely focused on the products they offer. This product-centric marketing approach proved to be successful when buyers followed a more traditional purchasing path. The marketing efforts of a business directly influenced a buyer to either purchase the product or service, or not. Simply put, this linear buying process is extinct.

Today, consumers aren't waiting to hear from you for new information, updates and offers. They've already done their homework. They already know who you are and what you do because they actively search for information about you online - through search engines, social media, blogs and more.

Manufacturers strive for innovation, accuracy, efficiency and optimal performance every day in their products and processes. Why not strive for the same goals in your integrated marketing efforts?

Marketing is evolving every day. Manufacturing needs to keep up.

To meet the new needs of consumers wherever they are in the buyer's journey, marketers can seek inspiration from the operators and engineers on the manufacturing floor. These individuals continually refine current processes and adopt new ones to eliminate waste and streamline their efforts to achieve optimal results.

Marketers in the manufacturing industry can mirror these tactics. This begins with finding and testing different avenues for communication, building strong client relationships and putting the prospect top of mind in both digital and traditional marketing efforts.

84%

of people searching for services in the manufacturing industry say they use the Internet as a starting point in finding a company.

***State of Inbound 2017,
HubSpot***

Keep Your Products Top of *Their* Mind

Today's modern marketing requires educating clients and prospective customers and fostering a thoughtful dialogue during every stage of the sales cycle.

Research shows online buyers are looking for deeper, more detailed content

As the traditional, linear path to purchase continues to disintegrate it's increasingly important for organizations to pursue a robust multi-channel strategy. An online presence

that provides insight and answers at every stage in the buying journey can be hugely impactful. Knowing where and how leads find your business should inform your strategy.

Once a user lands on your website, visitors and leads need to be nurtured with care and content. With 75% of B2B buyers relying more on content to research and make purchasing decision than they did a year ago, it's imperative that the content on your website does far more than entertain (Demand Gen Report).

Content needs to inform and educate, ultimately delivering the knowledge modern buyers expect, and can be delivered in the form of:

- Product specs
- Case studies
- White papers
- Ebooks
- Third party/analyst reports
- Video



Leverage Your Website

Corporate websites are at the heart of the conversion process. The goal of the digital experience you provide is to drive these decision-makers to your website to begin and nurture their relationship with your brand. Because your website is the first impression buyers have of your company, creating a unique, personalized experience is critical to moving them into the next stage of the sales cycle.

Continually observing how web visitors interact with your site and content should inform your site's architecture and navigation to make the answers they need easy to find. When updating your website to deliver the best experience possible, remember to include the following features.

Attractive, responsive design

The most successful websites are designed with the perfect balance of creativity and functionality. They push the creative limit with eye-candy to attract, while still maintaining seamless navigation throughout your site.

This approach to design leaves an impactful first impression, as users are more likely to remember who you are and what you do. A responsive website also allows your organization to achieve a strong, consistent web presence that will increase visibility, overall SEO performance, reach and conversions.

It's important to note that true responsive web design means that visitors are able to easily navigate it on any screen size.

Compelling brand message

Yes, the messaging presented on your website should speak to your brand values.

But more importantly, it should speak to your audience and immediately convey who you are, what you do, and how you can solve the problems they face.

In other words: *Why should they choose your company instead of any other company?* Your messaging should be appealing and memorable, so be sure to avoid generic differentiators that competitors are also claiming.

Premium content

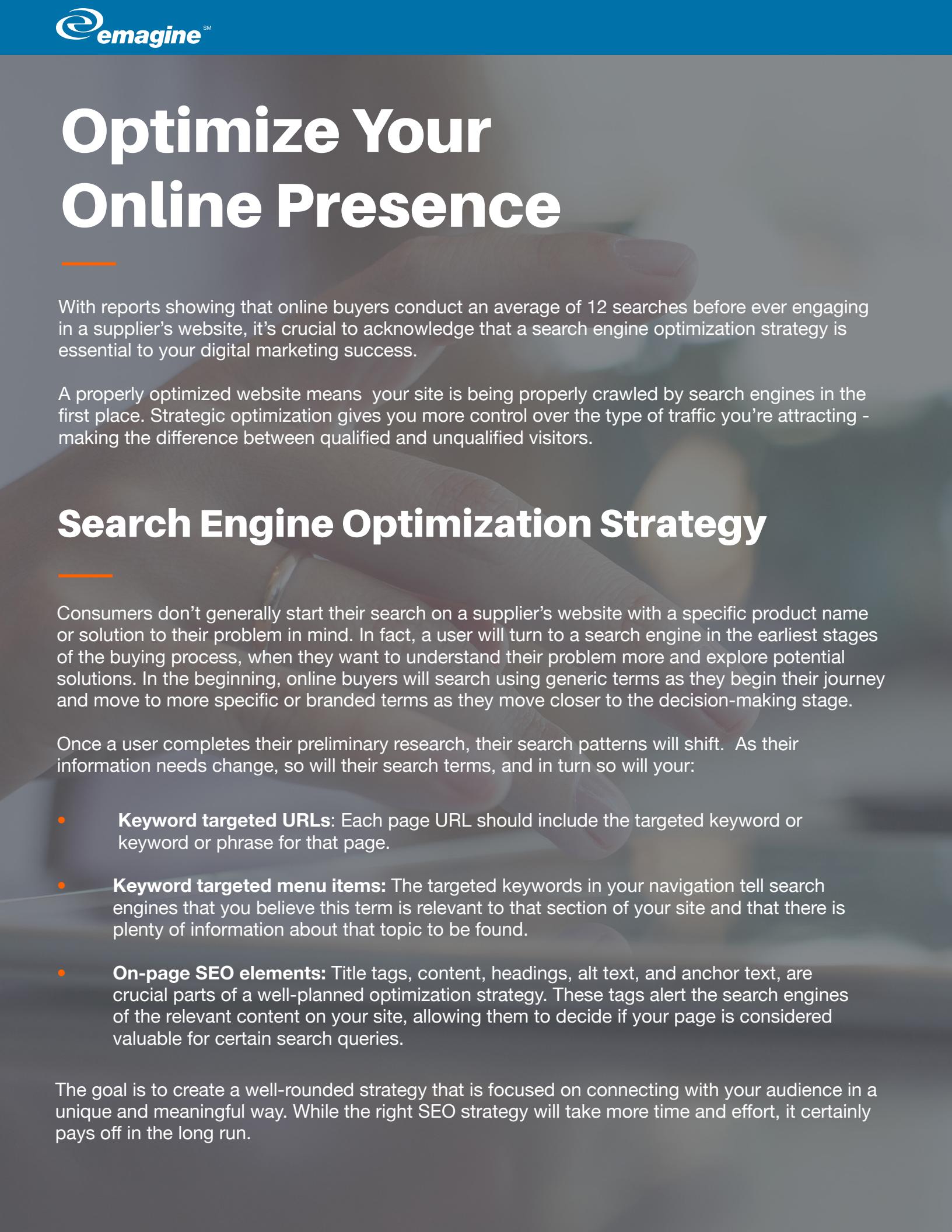
High-quality content for each specialized service your organization offers, written in a consumer-centric voice. As opposed to traditional brochures and dense reports filled with complex technical terminology, today's best content focuses on engaging the reader's emotions with simple, practical information and solutions that directly addresses their problem.

Encourage conversions

A means of capturing contact information on the users you want to track and communicate with over time. This means producing interesting and informative gated content in the form of white papers, infographics, case studies, podcasts, etc. They should be presented as an offer. An interested user will fill out a simple online form with their name and email address and will receive your highly valuable content in return.

With a high-quality, responsive website that's serving as a lead generation tool, you're now in a position to move on to the next stop on your digital journey – Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Optimize Your Online Presence



With reports showing that online buyers conduct an average of 12 searches before ever engaging in a supplier's website, it's crucial to acknowledge that a search engine optimization strategy is essential to your digital marketing success.

A properly optimized website means your site is being properly crawled by search engines in the first place. Strategic optimization gives you more control over the type of traffic you're attracting - making the difference between qualified and unqualified visitors.

Search Engine Optimization Strategy

Consumers don't generally start their search on a supplier's website with a specific product name or solution to their problem in mind. In fact, a user will turn to a search engine in the earliest stages of the buying process, when they want to understand their problem more and explore potential solutions. In the beginning, online buyers will search using generic terms as they begin their journey and move to more specific or branded terms as they move closer to the decision-making stage.

Once a user completes their preliminary research, their search patterns will shift. As their information needs change, so will their search terms, and in turn so will your:

- **Keyword targeted URLs:** Each page URL should include the targeted keyword or keyword or phrase for that page.
- **Keyword targeted menu items:** The targeted keywords in your navigation tell search engines that you believe this term is relevant to that section of your site and that there is plenty of information about that topic to be found.
- **On-page SEO elements:** Title tags, content, headings, alt text, and anchor text, are crucial parts of a well-planned optimization strategy. These tags alert the search engines of the relevant content on your site, allowing them to decide if your page is considered valuable for certain search queries.

The goal is to create a well-rounded strategy that is focused on connecting with your audience in a unique and meaningful way. While the right SEO strategy will take more time and effort, it certainly pays off in the long run.

Manufacturing The Right Information

With new websites launching and new content being published daily, the amount of information on the web continues to grow, making a marketer's job that much harder to stay relevant. This digital revolution has transformed the way marketers view content and the importance of providing it to prospects at the right time.

Fortunately, 82% of manufacturing marketers are already using content marketing in their marketing strategy. The downside to this is that only 26% feel that it is effective. Some argue this is understandable as in-person events still rank as the most effective marketing tactic for the manufacturing industry.

However, that's just not the case. Content marketing can benefit your manufacturing business in more ways than one.

Generate new business

Content marketing generates approximately three times more leads than traditional marketing (Demand Metric). Gating content behind a form has proven to be an invaluable lead generation tactic for many businesses. Your leads are constantly trying to research and troubleshoot their own problems. Entice them with a piece of content that is valuable to them.

Educate prospects

Not every lead is ready to convert into a closed deal with your sales team. Content is critical to the lead nurturing process and can help educate leads to a sales-ready state.

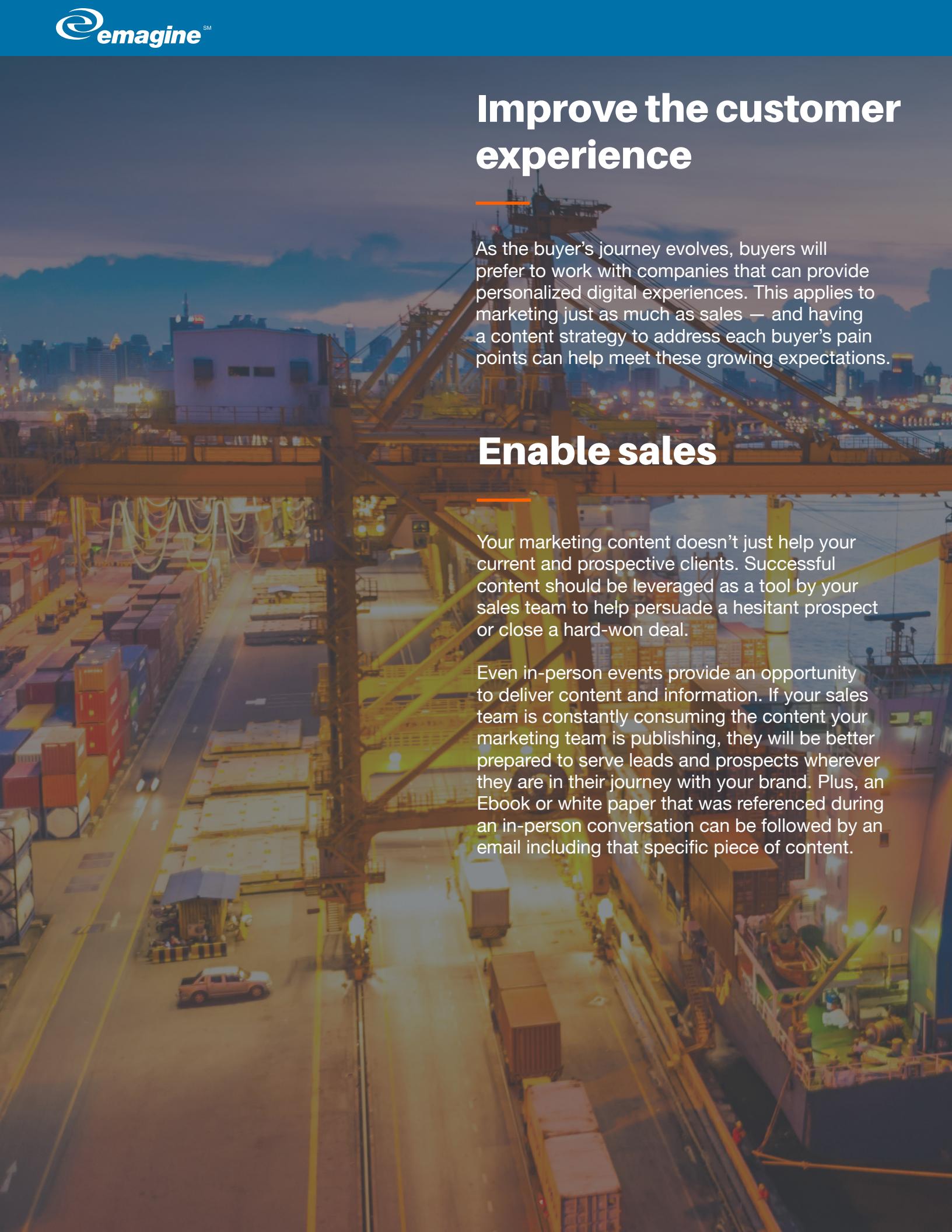
So, make sure your content is informational and educating those taking the time to read it.

82%

of manufacturing marketers are already using content marketing in their marketing strategy.

CMI & MarketingProfs 2015 Benchmark Study

Improve the customer experience



As the buyer's journey evolves, buyers will prefer to work with companies that can provide personalized digital experiences. This applies to marketing just as much as sales — and having a content strategy to address each buyer's pain points can help meet these growing expectations.

Enable sales

Your marketing content doesn't just help your current and prospective clients. Successful content should be leveraged as a tool by your sales team to help persuade a hesitant prospect or close a hard-won deal.

Even in-person events provide an opportunity to deliver content and information. If your sales team is constantly consuming the content your marketing team is publishing, they will be better prepared to serve leads and prospects wherever they are in their journey with your brand. Plus, an Ebook or white paper that was referenced during an in-person conversation can be followed by an email including that specific piece of content.

Generate Qualified Leads

With the many ways to produce and distribute content, it's no longer a matter of creating it - it's a matter of how you create it and how often you publish it. With the rise of digital communications come new digital marketing opportunities to reach your targeted audience.

Content marketing

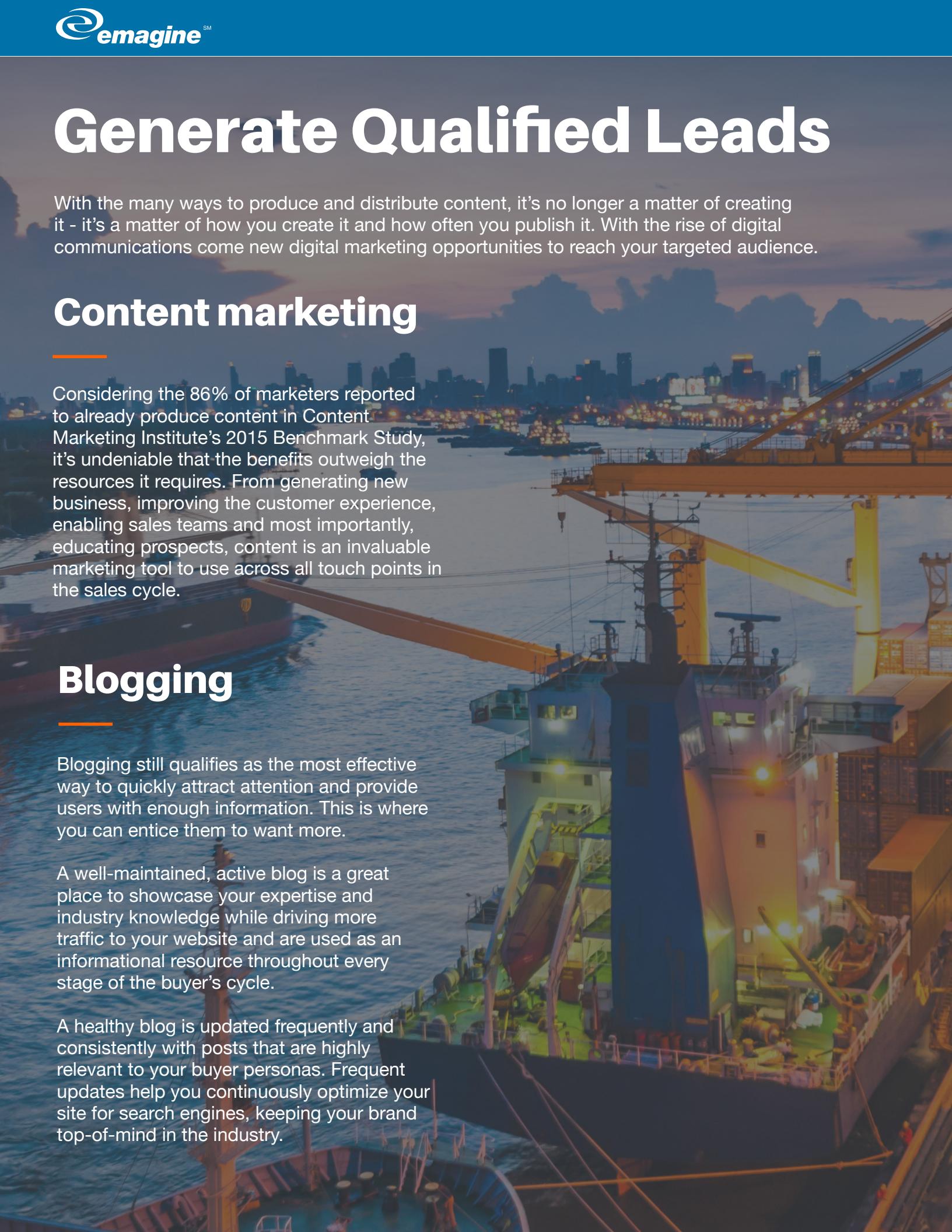
Considering the 86% of marketers reported to already produce content in Content Marketing Institute's 2015 Benchmark Study, it's undeniable that the benefits outweigh the resources it requires. From generating new business, improving the customer experience, enabling sales teams and most importantly, educating prospects, content is an invaluable marketing tool to use across all touch points in the sales cycle.

Blogging

Blogging still qualifies as the most effective way to quickly attract attention and provide users with enough information. This is where you can entice them to want more.

A well-maintained, active blog is a great place to showcase your expertise and industry knowledge while driving more traffic to your website and are used as an informational resource throughout every stage of the buyer's cycle.

A healthy blog is updated frequently and consistently with posts that are highly relevant to your buyer personas. Frequent updates help you continuously optimize your site for search engines, keeping your brand top-of-mind in the industry.



White papers + eBooks

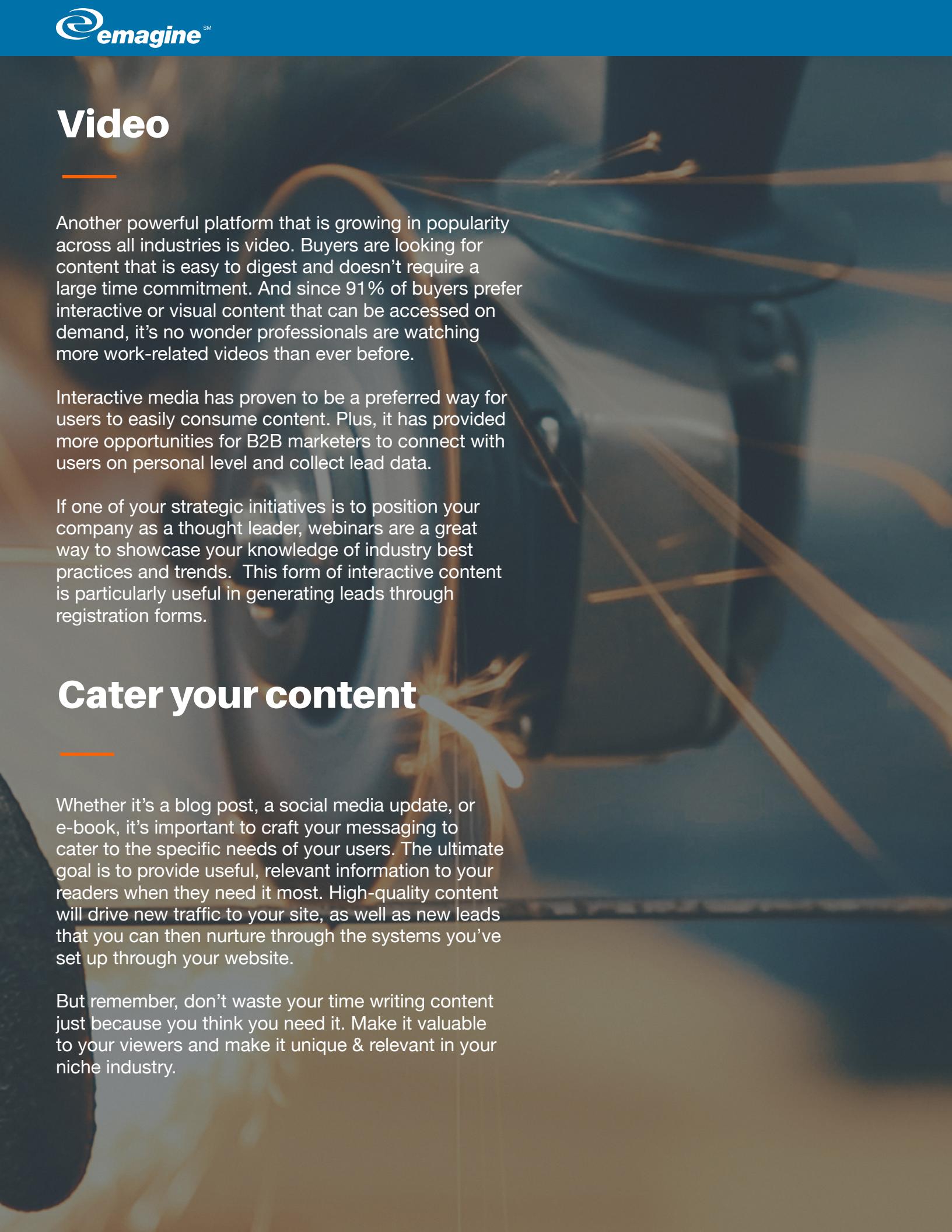
Long form content pieces are effective tools to capture new leads, further establish thought leadership, or to educate and influence potential clients, investors and more.

These content pieces can be gated behind a form and offered through a landing page – allowing you to provide a valuable resource in return for user's contact information.

Case studies

Case studies show potential buyers exactly how your manufacturing solution solved a specific customer's problem. Due to the exclusivity of showcasing a client's success story, case studies carry more weight than a generic content piece and are a powerful tool for your sales team to supplement during the consideration stage of the sales cycle.

Video

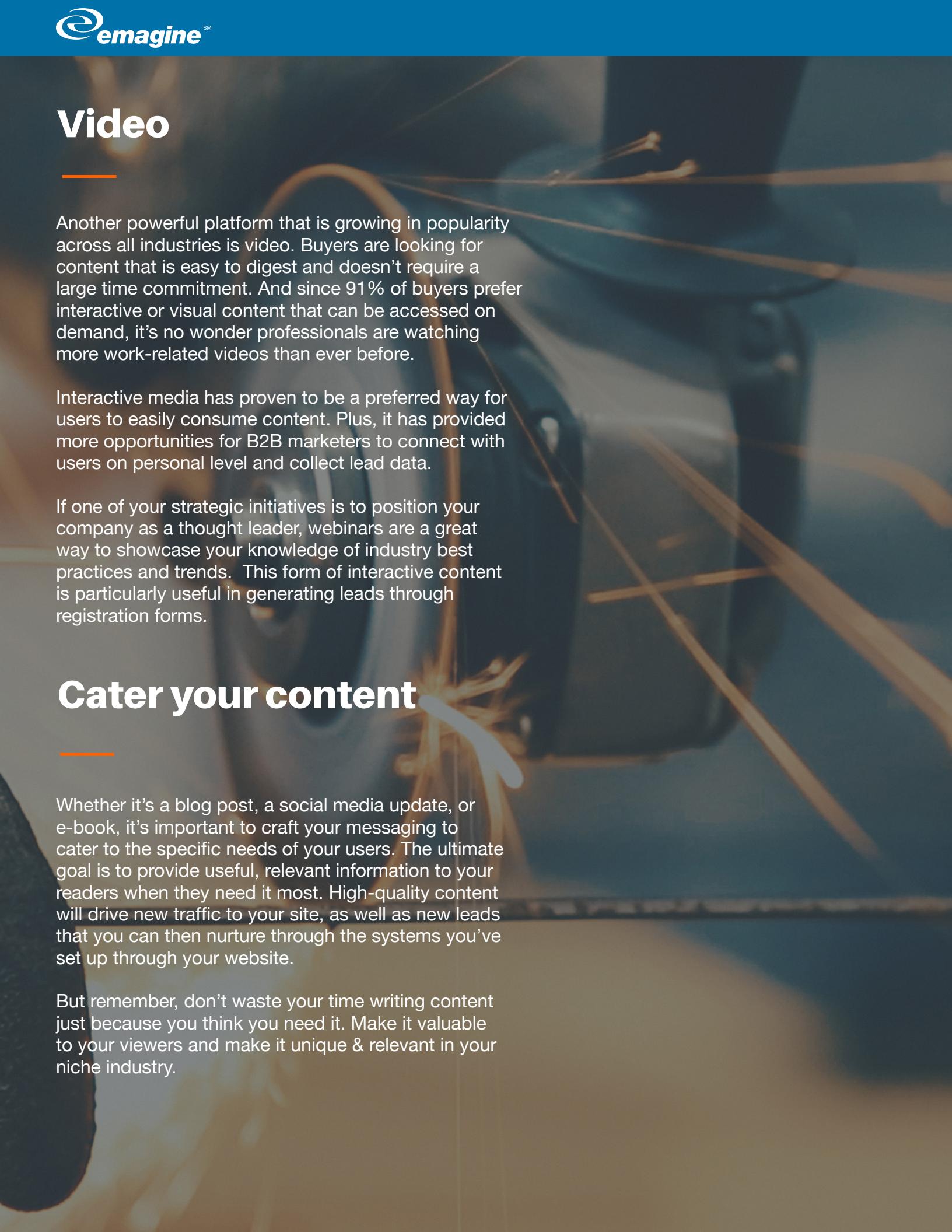


Another powerful platform that is growing in popularity across all industries is video. Buyers are looking for content that is easy to digest and doesn't require a large time commitment. And since 91% of buyers prefer interactive or visual content that can be accessed on demand, it's no wonder professionals are watching more work-related videos than ever before.

Interactive media has proven to be a preferred way for users to easily consume content. Plus, it has provided more opportunities for B2B marketers to connect with users on personal level and collect lead data.

If one of your strategic initiatives is to position your company as a thought leader, webinars are a great way to showcase your knowledge of industry best practices and trends. This form of interactive content is particularly useful in generating leads through registration forms.

Cater your content



Whether it's a blog post, a social media update, or e-book, it's important to craft your messaging to cater to the specific needs of your users. The ultimate goal is to provide useful, relevant information to your readers when they need it most. High-quality content will drive new traffic to your site, as well as new leads that you can then nurture through the systems you've set up through your website.

But remember, don't waste your time writing content just because you think you need it. Make it valuable to your viewers and make it unique & relevant in your niche industry.

Social Media Advertising

Social media marketing, like content marketing, has tremendous value when done right. It provides an avenue where you can gain feedback from your customers, source new content ideas, and quickly respond to customer concerns. More than many other marketing channels, social media allows you to foster a genuine dialog with your customers.

Similar to your SEO and website strategies, your social media needs to have just that – a strategy.

Pick your platform

It's important to understand not only who you're trying to reach on social media but also where those targeted users are active.

On average, Content Marketing Institute found that marketers use an average of 6 different social media accounts. The most highly used platforms in B2B are:

- LinkedIn – 66%
- Twitter – 55%
- YouTube – 51%
- SlideShare - 41%
- Facebook - 30%

(Source: 2016 B2B Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs)

In their 2015 Content Preference Study, Demand Gen Report showed that although B2B buyers reported only using half the platforms as marketers, they still actively share content. 76% of buyers share content on LinkedIn, making it the most popular channel to share content with peers. Meanwhile, 58% share content on Twitter and 27% share content on Facebook.

Successful social media managers understand that they can't be everywhere at once. That's why it's recommended to start small and grow a multi-channel social strategy slowly. Master one, maybe two, social media networks at a time. The most important aspect of social media is providing value to your audience, so if you don't have the time or resources to commit to posting consistently, don't.

Consider your capabilities

It's important to consider the time and resources your company is able to dedicate to social media.

Who will be responsible for managing your social media accounts? How often will they be able to post and interact with your audience? Do you have enough unique content to leverage?

Do what you can with what you have so you don't risk spreading yourself too thin. If you see consistent success on a certain platform, consider allocating additional resources to help maximize your results. Freelancers are a great resource to help manage a growing workload without incurring a large cost for your business.

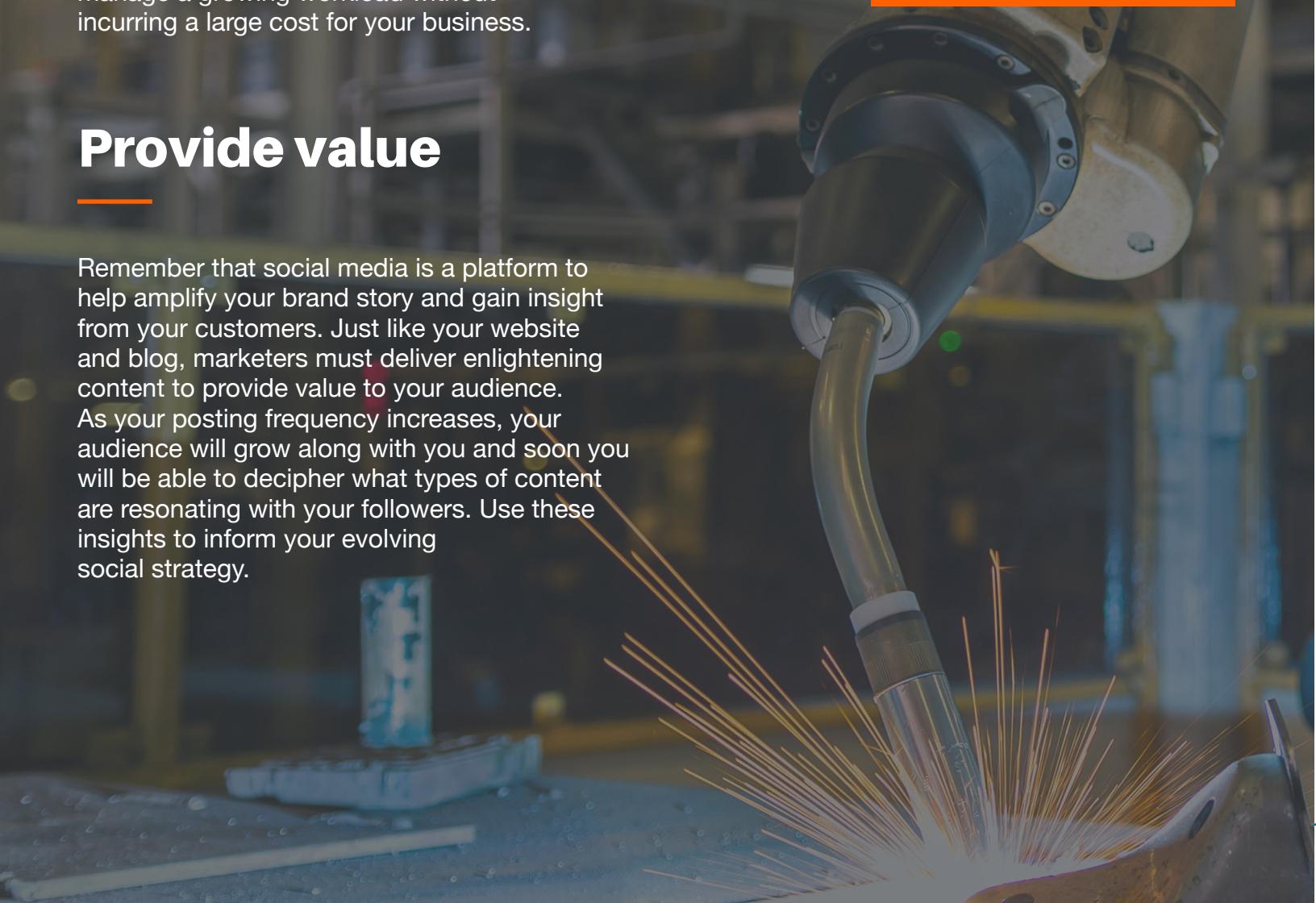
56%

of engineers are in the second or third stage of the buying cycle before they make contact with a vendor, so they rely on digital resources.

GlobalSpec, Digital Media Use in the Industrial Sector

Provide value

Remember that social media is a platform to help amplify your brand story and gain insight from your customers. Just like your website and blog, marketers must deliver enlightening content to provide value to your audience. As your posting frequency increases, your audience will grow along with you and soon you will be able to decipher what types of content are resonating with your followers. Use these insights to inform your evolving social strategy.



Encourage Engagement with Email Marketing



The foundation of successful email marketing campaigns relies on two factors: the quality of content and the design. And with today's overcrowded inboxes, this task is more challenging than ever.

61%

of B2B marketers say generating high-quality leads is a top challenge.

IDG Enterprises

MAKE IT EASY.

While some online buyers are wary of giving out their contact information, many are willing if they are provided with a valuable offer in return. Giving users the opportunity to sign up or subscribe on their own terms makes them feel in control and more willing to give you their email address. Make an email sign-up field prevalent on your website to steadily grow your email list. Consider incentivizing them with a free download to further your growth.

KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Less is more. Keeping a simple and straightforward design will eliminate any distractions and make your emails more compelling to read. When developing an email, consider the different devices your message will be viewed on. If a large portion of your web traffic is from mobile, pay careful attention to how your design and formatting appears on a smaller screen. Don't clutter the email with excessive copy or imagery.

INFORM + EDUCATE

In order to receive the best results from email marketing, the messaging in your emails must differ from the typical, generic sales pitch. In fact, all elements of your email campaign, from the subject line to the call-to-action, should be crafted with the same quality, tone and purpose that the rest of your content pieces have. Instead of blasting one message about all of your products to your entire email file, segment your audience based on their interests. This helps to ensure they get the information and updates that are most relevant to them.

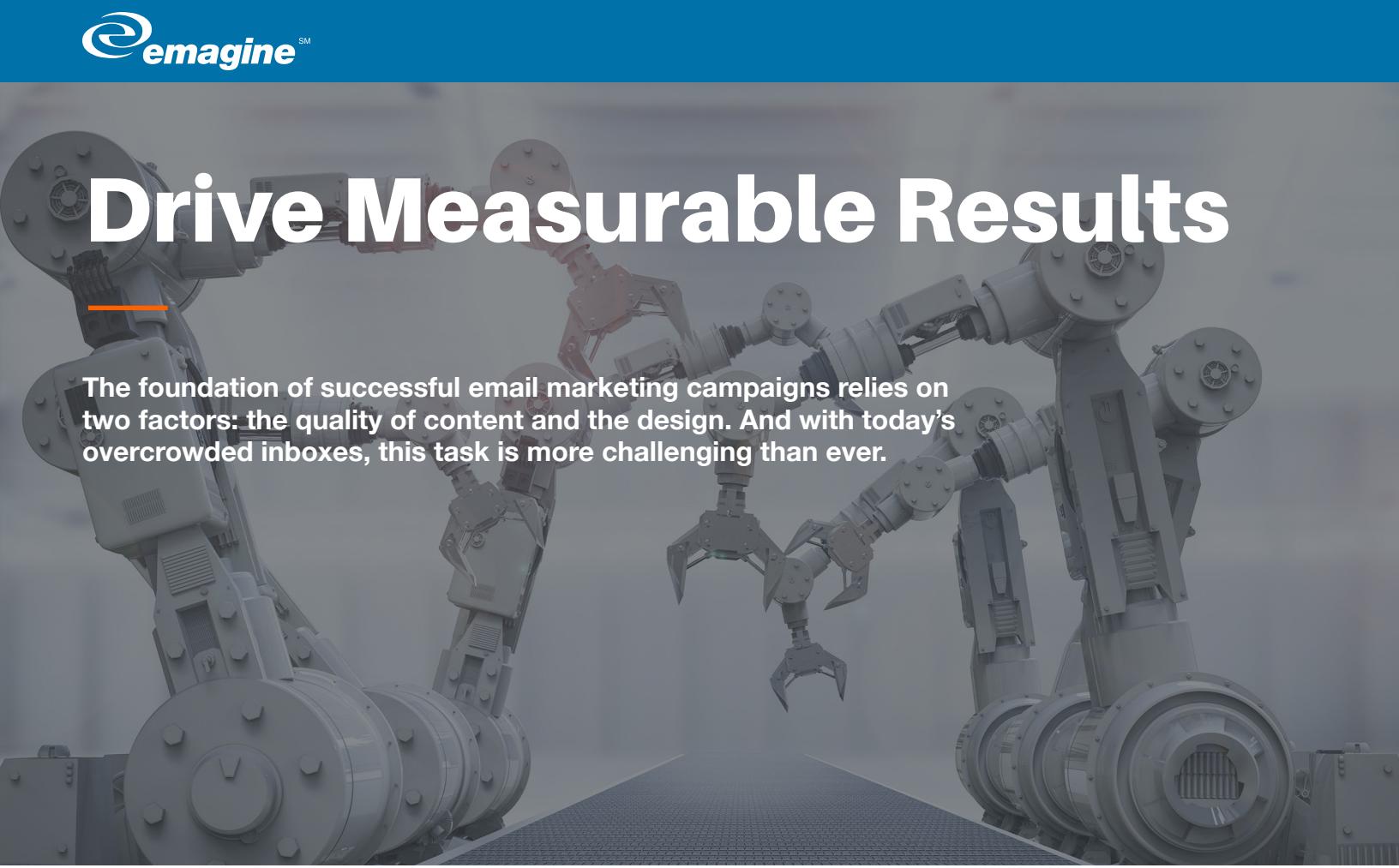
Expand Your Reach with Online Advertising

Once you have all the marketing materials you need to provide users with a personalized online experience, find an avenue that will boost qualified traffic to your site.

Today's consumer isn't going to reach for a phone book to find your company, they are going to open a new browser and ask the search engine. If you're not showing up in organic search results when potential new prospects search for your services, you are missing out on a huge opportunity. Pay per click advertising (PPC) can help ensure your business stays on top, while you continue to build your organic strategy.

Showing up organically in search engines takes time, sometimes years to make progress. In order to complement your SEO efforts, you should also invest in search ads and other Pay Per Click (PPC) online advertising mediums. Even with a small budget you can reach potential new clients that would have never otherwise been exposed to your company. Most businesses are willing to pay for relevant website traffic because it's so valuable and can impact your bottom line within a matter of weeks.

Drive Measurable Results



The foundation of successful email marketing campaigns relies on two factors: the quality of content and the design. And with today's overcrowded inboxes, this task is more challenging than ever.

Content Management System (CMS)

A website is only as powerful as the platform supporting it. A Content Management System (CMS) is software that enables web administrators to easily manage, maintain, and monitor a website once it has been created. All site content and media files are securely in a database, allowing administrators to quickly make changes, required updates, or add content without the help of an IT department. Using an open-source platform such as WordPress not only makes your life easier in regards to managing a site, but is also preferred by Google, which will improve your visibility in search engines.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

With a high-performing website that's generating and capturing leads, you will need a system to keep all this information organized and easy to access at any time. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software will keep track of your prospects, website visitors, and current clients, along with information on where they're located in the sales cycle and what type of content they're interested in.

Analytics & Tracking Tools

Proving ROI on your digital marketing efforts isn't always easy. In such a dynamic industry, one algorithm update can change your entire SEO strategy. That's why it's crucial to have proper analytics and tracking tools in place to stay on top of what's happening on your website, regarding overall traffic, pageviews, bounce rate, clicks, and conversions. The same is true of your email marketing and social media campaigns, so that you can better serve your audience with the content they want, at the time they're most likely to see it.

Mobile matters

The world has gone mobile. From cellphones, tablets and even wearable tech, it's been reported by Google that more searches take place on mobile devices than desktop computers. Your target audience is accessing the Internet from a growing number of devices; mobile is one that you can't afford to ignore.

As stated in the report, *The Changing Face of B2B Marketing*, 42% of researchers used a mobile device during the B2B purchasing process.

With these new viewing standards, marketers are now tasked with creating marketing campaigns that respond to any device or browser size. This means more than just your corporate website. Emails, blog posts, videos and even social media updates need to be designed with mobile in mind.



Final Words

The world of marketing has changed. Consumer behaviors are evolving and so is the world of digital marketing. Manufacturing marketers must adapt to this changing landscape by leveraging refreshed content strategies and an integrated digital marketing roadmap. With thousands of valuable online tools and resources, B2B marketers have more ways than ever to strategically reach their customers at the right time, right place, with the right information.

About emagine

With a team of nearly 50 talented individuals — web designers, web developers, project managers, digital marketing strategists, website support and maintenance specialists, and web hosting specialists — emagine has unmatched experience in the Manufacturing sector.

We help leading Manufacturing companies transform their web presence to present complex and highly technical product data and attract qualified leads to their sales team by developing state-of-the-art web presences and digital marketing strategies that deliver measurable ROI.

Backed by 20 years of experience, our research-driven approach to custom web design and development means real, pragmatic solutions that produce results for our clients.

Transform Your Digital Presence

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