



10 WAYS

MANUFACTURERS
CAN EFFECTIVELY SPEND
THEIR MARKETING BUDGET

Introduction

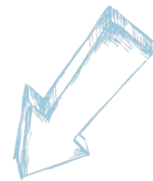
Even with the manufacturing industry's decades-long dominance in the U.S. economy, it's still a relative newcomer when it comes to all things B2B marketing.

With the digital transformation of the industry, processes and channels have evolved from print to online, and tactics to reach customers are changing. Instead of word-of-mouth referrals and newspaper advertisements, digital platforms have become the most effective way to drive new business with a more expansive reach and more effective ways to highlight a company's value proposition.

Marketers and business owners are utilizing pay-per-click, content creation, email blasts, and many other tactics to their advantage, but to some, these methods can feel overwhelming. With so much opportunity comes tough decisions on how to direct your time, energy, and money.

In this eBook, we take a look at 10 common ways manufacturers spend their marketing dollars, give you insight on how it solves your company's problems and — most importantly — what they will cost to execute.

1. Marketing Automation
2. Customer Relationship Management
3. PPC
4. Website Tools & Services
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6. Sponsored Online Content
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YOU MIGHT ALSO BE INTERESTED IN: [Emerging Digital Manufacturing Trends That Will Shake Up Industry In 2019](#)

1

Marketing Automation

COMMON PROBLEM: Not enough time to be in multiple places at once.

THE SOLUTION: How are you actually implementing marketing? Not the theory or the general idea behind your campaigns — but what do you do to press a “send” or “tweet” button? Maybe you have your social media running through HootSuite and your emails are going through MailChimp. You could be posting directly on LinkedIn or trying to engage your prospects one-on-one through Outlook.

With the movement towards the digital space, it is critical to include some sort of form to collect RFQs instead of simply having a phone number and email address somewhere on your website. But above all else, you should have some tools in place to make your life easier — and set your company up for success.

Marketing automation allows you to serve your customers with very specific information about your company based on the actions they take on your website or the information they provide you. This allows you to decide what to say and when in order to help guide your customer further along through their buying process.

Marketing Automation (Cont.)



Additionally, the use of automated outreach can take some of the burden off of your sales team. For example, let's say a customer submits a form asking for a salesperson to get in contact with them. Marketing automation allows your team to save time by automatically sending that customer a message from the salesperson that would be assigned to them along with an internal memo to the salesperson to confirm that the outreach has occurred. This way the salesperson knows they can expect a reply and can plan a follow-up.

While there are plenty of tools out there for specific buckets of marketing, nothing quite does the trick like marketing automation. When you have your website pages, blog posts, email marketing, social media, analytics, and paid efforts all in one place, your lead generation efforts are trackable and scalable. There are many big names in marketing automation, but we've seen more and more manufacturers choose [Hubspot](#).

Marketing Automation (Cont.)

You'll need someone to help you with the set up/integration into your current website, contacts list, and social media channels, but once that's complete, it's fairly intuitive.

COST: Hubspot offers a free [14-day trial](#) and a [30-day trial](#). Pricing starts at \$50 a month for 1000 contacts and can go up to \$3200 per month for 10,000 contacts. The number of contacts will vary depending on how many leads you're capturing and customers you're nurturing.

2

Customer Relationship Management

COMMON PROBLEM: Your sales and marketing teams are not aligned.

THE SOLUTION: Many manufacturers and industrial companies use Post-It notes, Excel spreadsheets, and emails to keep track of what's in their sales pipeline. Although this can work when you're a small family-owned business, there's a better way — especially when you have growth on the horizon. Your internal communications should be as efficient as possible to ensure you're nurturing leads and delighting customers without losing anything in translation.

Closed-loop reporting is what enables the transparency you need between sales and marketing. As its name implies, it “closes the loop” of data collected by the marketing team and data collected by the sales team. This can be done through a variety of customer relationship management (CRM) software solutions.

Customer Relationship Management (Cont.)

When all of your customer data is shared on a central platform, everyone on your team will be on the same page about where a lead's interests lie, how they've engaged with your content in the past, when the last point of contact was, and how ready they might be to make a purchase. This functionality gives your sales team much more background on a client and their potential needs before they ever reach out which can help make initial communications that much more likely to turn into real business.

And, what's even better? Almost every type of CRM software available can easily integrate with the marketing automation tool of your choice, opening up a new level of transparency between your two teams.

Customer Relationship Management (Cont.)

HubSpot's inbound CRM system is already built into the platform's contact and company profiles while programs like Salesforce offer fully customizable editions to match your business needs. You may need help with the initial upload to import your contacts but once you've done that, all of your data will be in one place and new leads will automatically be added to the database.

COST: Prices range anywhere from \$0-300 a month.

RELATED RESOURCE: [How To Convert Website Traffic To Leads](#)

3

PPC

COMMON PROBLEM: There's not enough traffic to your website.

THE SOLUTION: Let's face it — mastering search engine optimization (SEO) is hard. There are some keywords (like “metal stamping,” for example) that will be super challenging to rank for organically on Page 1 of Google results — no matter how hard you try. Luckily, there are things we can do as marketers to continue getting in front of customers despite these challenges. PPC, or pay-per-click, advertising is a great way to jumpstart your search engine presence — essentially allowing you to cut the line and show up at the top of Google results.

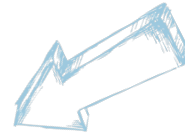
Through Google Ads you can access other Google products and platforms, like Google Analytics. Google Search acts as an interface between a site owner and the Google search engine and offers invaluable data, tools and monitoring capability not available elsewhere.

PPC (Cont.)

We recommend starting out by registering a valid Google account and adding your website in the Search Console. From there, you can go into Google Ads and set up your campaigns to get your website found online. To ensure you're getting the best bang for your buck with PPC, it's important to be specific. As we mentioned before, you might not have the best luck with "metal stamping," but if you bid on a long-tail version of the desired keyword, such as "deep-drawn metal stamping," and then further refine the selection based on location (by country, state, a specific radius within a zip code, etc.) you can increase the relevance of the people clicking on your ad.

In addition to search engines, nearly every social media platform offers paid advertisements to help manufacturers extend their reach. Plus, all of these boosts come with plenty of targeting options to make sure you're getting to the right people and maximizing ROI.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE STEPS TO AN EFFECTIVE PPC CAMPAIGN](#)



PPC (Cont.)



Google offers a quick setup guide to help first-time users to get started on their ad campaign, but it can get a bit complicated updating your campaign or even understanding the results. For example, a “conversion” on Google’s end, may not be an actual sale on your end. We recommend partnering with a paid marketing specialist or SEO expert who has experience in the manufacturing industry to help get your business found online.

COST: If you try to tackle PPC in-house, Google’s average cost per click is \$1-\$2 on the search network, with the most expensive keywords costing upwards of \$50, but you can run a highly targeted PPC campaign at a fraction of the price. It’s important to remember that cost is always unique to the keyword and business.

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Website Tools & Services

COMMON PROBLEM: You're getting leads but they're not a good fit for your business.

THE SOLUTION: Unsure whether your website is working for you? Poor user experience (UX) and customer experience (CX) can really hurt the number of leads coming in from this channel; if people can't easily navigate your site, they'll just give up and move on to one of your competitor's sites

You don't need to have an e-commerce module or even a full product catalog on your website to generate revenue from your website (although we definitely recommend both of those things if applicable). Simply enhancing the UX will compel visitors to view more pages on your website, stay on them for a longer period of time, and interact more with your content offers.

Tools like Hotjar and FullStory all track and analyze how users are interacting with your site to help you better understand what they want and care about. You can watch real recordings of user interactions to see where visitors move their cursors, how they navigate pages and fill out forms, and at what point they decide to drop off a page.

Website Tools & Services (Cont.)

Through continuous testing on any one of these platforms, marketers can identify opportunities to optimize their websites for the best possible customer experience.

COST: It's free to get started with a [basic plan on Hotjar](#) and \$29 a month to upgrade once you get more traffic to your website. [FullStory also offers a free trial](#) with an \$849 a month upgrade to a business plan. If you're ready for a full website redesign or migration, that's a different ball game and can be around \$2000 depending on the [website pros](#) you partner with and the current state of your website. A website redesign is not a one-and-done approach to getting more qualified leads. You still need an ongoing content marketing strategy to support your website.

LEARN MORE: [Website Basics For Manufacturers & Industrial Companies](#)

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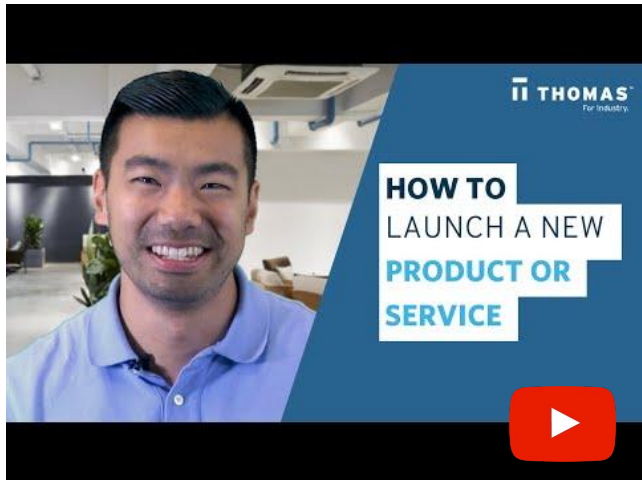
Content Marketing & Press Releases

COMMON PROBLEM: Your getting traffic to your website but they're not converting.

THE SOLUTION: To support a well-designed website, you need great content. Content Marketing seeks to engage your audience and create a dialogue, but effective content marketing is as much about them as it is about you. When done right, it puts you in front of buyers across numerous channels, like social media, a blog, [Thomasnet listing](#), and news page, all designed to engage with them on their terms — and convert to a sale.

Most growing manufacturing and industrial companies have a blog and news page as their basic content marketing channels. If your website already has a “News” page, great! When was the last time it was updated though? Think of the last time you launched a new product, received a certification, or bought a new piece of equipment. All of these events are perfect opportunities to announce the news with a press release and a supporting blog.

Content Marketing & Press Releases



Press release distribution sites such as BusinessWire and PRWeb have a global reach, helping businesses spread their messages to every major search engine and news site on the internet. These networks also enable advertisers to select regional, media, trade-specific preferences, ensuring their release is optimized and distributed to the right audience.

This marketing tactic isn't just a one-and-done shot, either. By sending out press releases to highly targeted publications and sites, you can begin forming relationships with journalists, bloggers, or content evangelists looking for the latest news. Sites with email lists or regular newsletters, especially, are always on the lookout for new material. It's a win-win!

Content Marketing & Press Releases

One thing to keep in mind about press releases, however, is to be careful about including links for SEO purposes. Google's algorithm is smart enough to recognize duplicate content and, if your release is picked up by multiple sites, Google will recognize that a repetitive link in the anchor text and flag it for a penalty. To stay safe, only link to branded terms, like Google, for example.

Your press releases and blogs will help build your webpages up on Google's search rankings. When you get found by relevant audiences, you have a higher chance of converting that traffic to leads.

COST: About \$99 per release for basic services, though prices can vary by newsroom and length. Content marketing is free to create and post on your own, but the strategy behind ideation and execution can get time-consuming. If you freelance your content marketing by projects — like a package just for blogs — the cost varies depending on the expertise level of the freelancer and the length/depth of the post and can range from \$75-100. [Thomas Marketing Services](#) help hundreds of manufacturers create great content and strategize promotion that connects with the right buyers, in the right places.

RELATED RESOURCE: [7 Ways To Get Blog Post Ideas For Manufacturing](#)

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Sponsored Online Content

COMMON PROBLEM: You want to reach more targeted decision-makers.

THE SOLUTION: Oftentimes, people are simply overwhelmed by the amount of content out there and it can be hard to find exactly what they're looking for. To stay in front of the right audience despite the chaos of the content surplus, marketers are now embedding their content directly into the publications their customers read regularly.

This sponsored content is becoming so sophisticated that sometimes it's hard to even recognize it's an advertisement. The material resembles the rest of the stories in the publication — mirroring them in style and tone — but it's paid for to promote an advertiser's product in some capacity.

The same is true of advertorials, or advertisements written in such a way that they look like editorial content or articles. The difference lies in the Buyer's Journey; sponsored content tends to be top-of-funnel, to provide information or entertainment, while advertorials (also known as “native content”) are more product-centric and targeted towards bottom-of-the-funnel leads that are closer to making a purchase decision.

Sponsored Online Content

From trade publications to blogs and social networking sites, you'll find that this type of content is everywhere if you start to look. An opportunity may even be in your inbox right now — like with the [Thomas Industry Update email newsletter](#).

Right now you may be thinking, “What about print ads?” Although print advertising has changed drastically in response to the buying habits and the digital transformation of sales and marketing, research shows that print advertising can still be a viable marketing strategy for the manufacturing industry specifically — depending on your target audience.

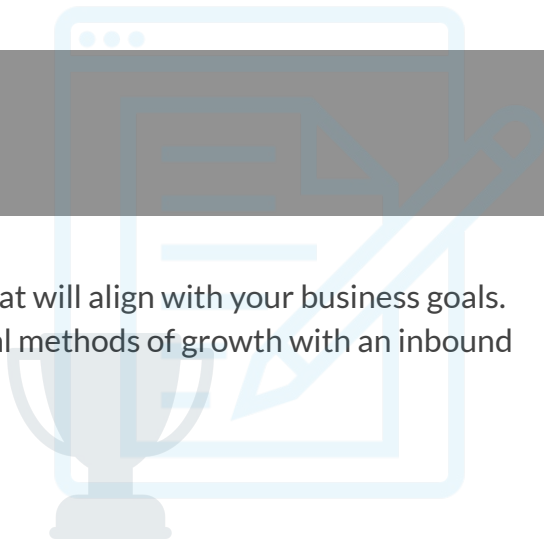
A 2016 market research study from ENGINEERING.com found that every generation of engineers prefers digital media to print. However, as age ranges went up, so did the interest in trade publications. What does this mean for your marketing efforts? If you're looking to target older professionals — likely the high-ranking decision-makers — then there is still a case for print ads. However, keep in mind that it is exponentially more difficult to track the ROI from print advertisements as they lack the tracking abilities associated with digital efforts.

Sponsored Online Content

When it comes to these more traditional forms of advertising, it really all depends on what will align with your business goals. Most smart manufacturing and industrial companies have supplemented their traditional methods of growth with an inbound marketing strategy.

Additional Information: [How To Supplement Word-Of-Mouth Referrals With Inbound Marketing](#)

COST: Print advertising can range from \$50 to \$500,000+ depending upon publication and ad size. Thomas' TIU Newsletter reaches more than 300,000 buyers every day and a sponsored post starts at \$1000 a week or up to \$15,000 a week, depending on your audience segment. Learn more about the [TIU sponsorship here](#).



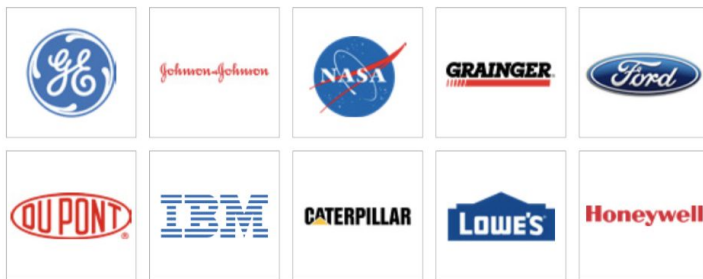
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The Thomas Network

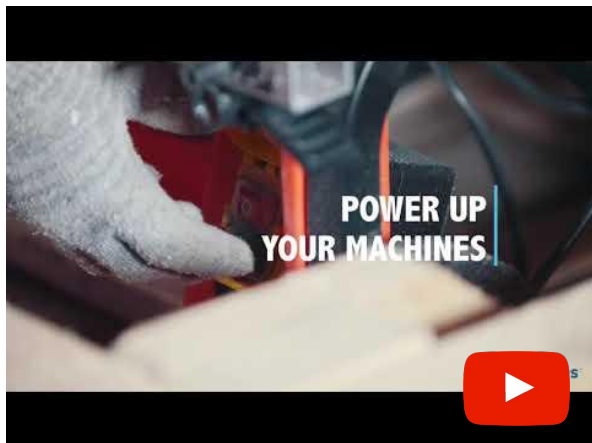
COMMON PROBLEM: You want to penetrate key industries.

THE SOLUTION: Whether you're looking to expand into a new industry or just need more customers from the industries you serve today, the Thomas Network at Thomasnet.com is where you can reach your targets.

- 75% of our active registered users represent SMBs (small-to-medium businesses)
- 93% of Fortune 1000 source suppliers in the Thomas Network



The Thomas Network (Cont.)



More than 900,000 buyers are on the Thomas Network right now sourcing new products and services. Here's just a handful of the industries they have identified themselves from:

- Aerospace & defense
- Biotech
- Consumer Goods & Services
- Energy & Utilities
- Manufacturing
- Medical & Healthcare
- Mining
- Textiles

And they're searching for new suppliers every 2 seconds.

The Thomas Network (Cont.)

COST: This one actually isn't something that costs money to initially get started — it's free to set up your profile. There are additional add-ons you can amplify your company profile — with a Supplier Discovery Program, Premium Positioning or Targeted Display Ads. Learn how you can [be seen by more buyers on the Thomas Network here](#).

“I’ve been in manufacturing my whole life. When it comes time to look for raw materials or a particular supplier for something, Thomasnet.com® is far superior to Google. There’s no comparison at all.”

– Automotive Aftermarket Parts Distributor

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Trade Shows & Conferences

COMMON PROBLEM: You want to expand your network and learn how other companies are doing in the industry.

THE SOLUTION: For those companies that are experts in their industry with decades of experience, it's natural to stay in the habit of how things have always been done. Does "If it isn't broken, don't fix it" sound familiar? But as new generations fill the workforce, buying habits change, and companies need to adapt in order to meet the demands. So how do you keep up with what's changing?

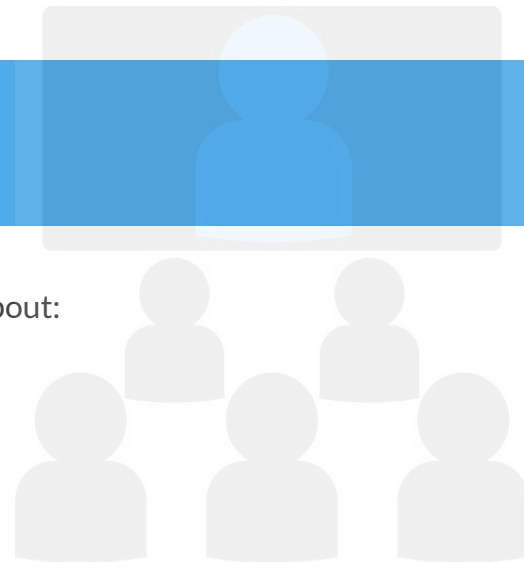
Invest in attending a couple of trade shows and conferences a year and set a networking plan for the people you will be meeting. Take some time to browse online and research popular industry shows in your area and across the country, if your budget allows.

Trade Shows & Conferences (Cont.)

Every trade show is different, so think about what you're most interested in learning about:

- New technologies to demo
- Industry 4.0
- How to diversify your customer base
- How to optimize floor operations
- Sustainability

Thomas hosts free industry events all over North America and webinars specific to what's going on in manufacturing, sourcing, and buying trends. Check them out the [Thomas Together For Industry events here](#).



Trade Shows & Conferences (Cont.)

Thomas Tip: Trade show follow-up can be a time-intensive task for your sales team with a rush of new leads coming into their pipelines. Marketing automation can help you quickly compile these leads into email lists and send them all targeted messages with one click of the “send” button.

COST: Entry fees vary by trade show, travel and accommodations are also extra if applicable. Thomas' events are free to attend. These events are more intimate with a limited amount of seating than the traditional huge trade shows. This allows for more meaningful 1-1 conversations with manufacturing experts.

9

Training

COMMON PROBLEM: You want to build and maintain your current workforce.

THE SOLUTION: Although some managers may balk at the initial overhead costs of outside trainings, investing in your employees' skillsets can yield long-term qualitative results for your business. Studies show that employees revealed training, engagement, and professional development as important aspects to their job over salaries and benefits.

In the digital age, there are many ways to acquire new skills and it seems you can learn just about anything from a YouTube video. Outside trainings give your employees the freedom to choose their preferred learning style — from in-person workshops and bootcamps to online classes and webinars — as well as let them explore new topics that interest them.

Training (Cont.)

Sites such as Udemy and CourseHorse aggregate thousands of in-person and online classes from top educators and can be great resources for your employees to learn tips and tricks from other industry professionals. They'll likely return to work with not only more confidence in themselves, but also a fresh perspective to share with the rest of the team.

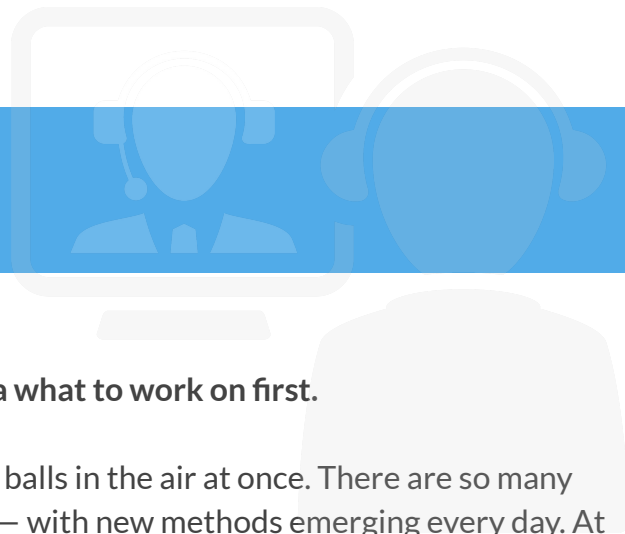
Explore what types of business and manufacturing courses are currently being offered on these sites so you can assess where there might be an opportunity for your employees to learn something new.

COST: Prices usually vary depending on subject and intensity.

READ MORE: [How To Run More Effective Employee Training](#)

10

Outside Help



COMMON PROBLEM: You're busy, you can't do it all, and you have no idea what to work on first.

THE SOLUTION: Marketing in the digital age requires that you keep a lot of balls in the air at once. There are so many different channels to test and track to see what's working for your business — with new methods emerging every day. At times, managing your marketing efforts can feel like a full-time job in itself.

Luckily, there are a variety of services available to soothe this pain point. From a la carte blog writing and pay-per-click management to full-scale marketing plans and sales coaching, outsourced marketing services can remove this extra stress and let you focus on running your business.

Outside Help (Cont.)

[Thomas Marketing Services](#) specializes in comprehensive digital marketing plans for industrial manufacturing companies. Comprised of engineers and marketing experts alike, the team targets your ideal customers to generate high-quality leads and help you achieve your business goals — like a 198% increase in website traffic or a 60% increase in sales.

COST: Quotes available for all budget sizes.

“Our only ‘salesperson’ is Thomasnet.com, and that’s where I spend 100% of my marketing dollars. Other than referrals, it’s proven to be the best way for new customers to find us.”

– Fiberbasin, Custom Fiberglass Fabricators

Conclusion

We hope this eBook has helped spark your flare for the possibilities of digital marketing and provided some insight on how to go about it.

Feel free to browse our [resources library](#) for additional information on the best ways to spend your marketing dollars and [get in touch with us today](#) to put it all in action.

You have sales to close. Let us drive the leads.



Over 12 million buyers and engineers per year access the Thomas Network at Thomasnet.com for in-depth information on more than 500,000 North American suppliers. This activity generates terabytes of buyer behavior data, which we draw upon to fuel our Thomas Insights and the Thomas Marketing solutions we provide to OEMs, custom manufacturers, service companies, and industrial distributors.

Thomas. For Industry.

Contact us: **800.879.6757**

Or

[Click Here to Contact Us Now](#)