The State of Building Product Digital Marketing

2019

Contents

Introduction

Helping specifiers to discover and select great products from innovative companies is our passion.

Leigh Simpson
Founder and CEO

The State of Building Product Digital Marketing report provides an independent and objective assessment of how effectively the building product industry is taking advantage of modern technology.

The report focuses on the following areas:

- Communication
- Optimisation
- Content Marketing
- Engagement
- Resources

While talking to many building product manufacturers, we were surprised that so many fundamental digital marketing principles weren't being used.

94% of building product companies don't use live chat; a technology that has been around for over 10 years.

Manufacturers are adding friction to the specification process and effectively making specifiers' jobs harder. This is frustrating potential clients and pushing them towards competitors who provide better user experience though not necessarily better products or solutions.

Intrigued by this problem, we have conducted in-depth research to understand the state of digital marketing in the UK building products market.

The results are damning.

This creates huge opportunities for businesses that want to seize the initiative and adopt modern marketing methods and technologies to steal a march on their competitors.

Methodology

300

The sample
size of building
product companies
audited.

Sources

- Moz
- Website Grader
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google

How the companies were chosen

All the selected companies were actively marketing themselves in the UK trade press between September and December 2018.

The auditing process

A score was given based on 50 data points including:

- Domain authority
- Ranking keywords
- Search engine optimisation (SEO)
- Engagement
- Content
- Trust signals

Insynth have developed an algorithm which weights each metric based on up-to-date digital marketing research and thinking. The algorithm alone produces the ranking score.

Disclaimer

The results of this research are objective.
We have taken a scientific approach to auditing the broad spectrum of UK building product websites.

There is no opinion on the quality of the content, the product in question or the category of product.

Why should you care?
The shift of power

In recent years the balance of power has tipped away from the seller and into the buyer's hands. The decision-making process starts long before your prospect has talked to someone from your company.

The Buyer's Journey

We now live in an 'on-demand' society.

Buyers don't want to be prospected, demoed or closed. These steps add zero value to the buyer. Buyers are looking for accessible information about your building product online.

People no longer want to pick up the phone and wait for an email.

Architects, engineers and consultants want the right information at their fingertips 24/7. This will put them in control of the specification without having to consult salespeople at every step of the process.

Building trust and making specification easy

It is estimated that a typical commercial building can require over 5,000 products to construct. Think of it, 5,000 products to research and specify. When specifiers say they are too busy to see you, they really mean it.

With the tragic events of Grenfell Tower in 2017, specifiers are now more risk averse and need to know everything about your solution to ensure it complies with building regulations and is fit for purpose.
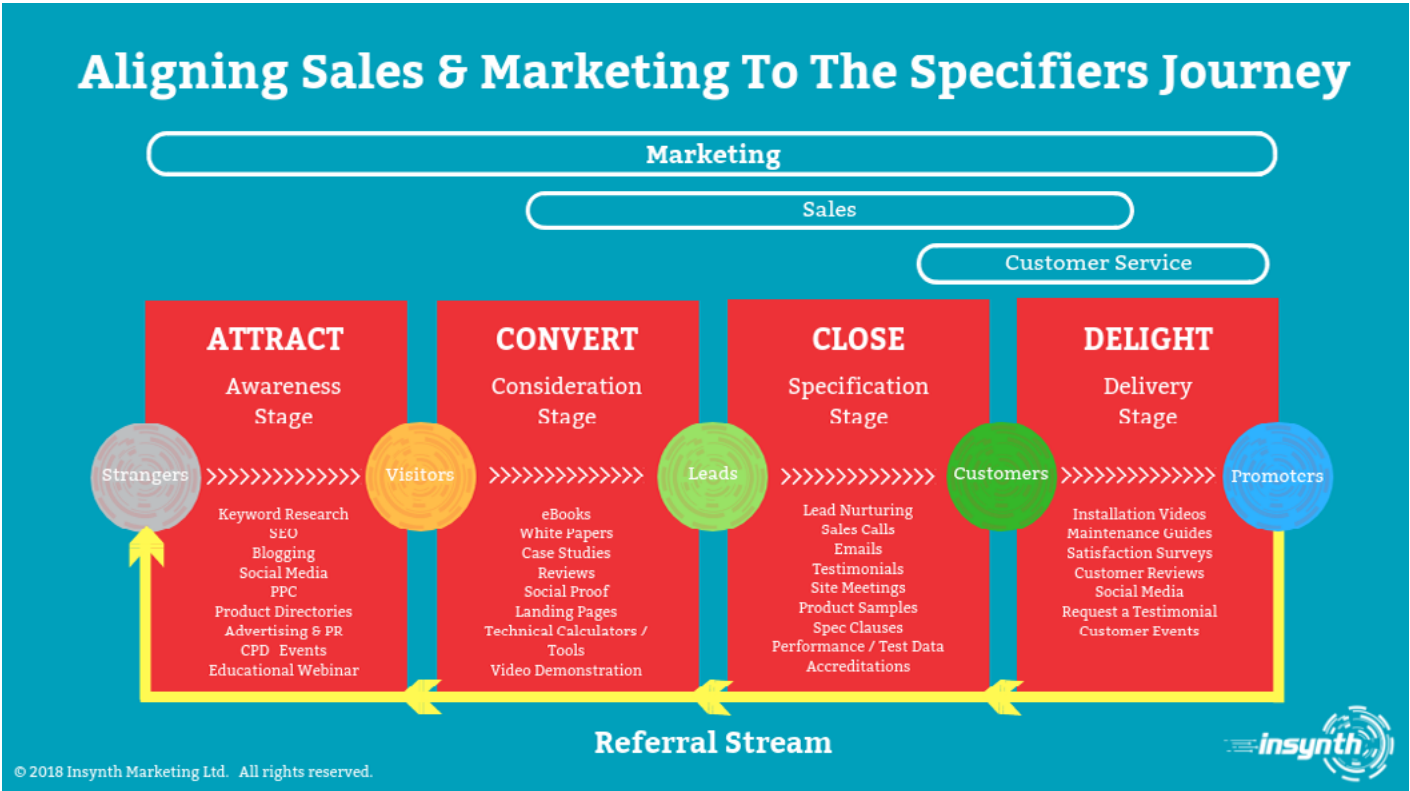
Companies who make this information easy to access on their website give themselves a significant competitive advantage. Companies who hide this are less likely to be considered for a project.

It's no wonder that specifiers stick with solutions that they have used before.

What you can do

The answer is to elevate your company and brand as experts in your sector. Produce educational and insightful content that specifiers can consume to improve their understanding of the issues and challenges that affect them.

This could be in a blog post, a webinar, a video, an ebook, a CPD presentation or a white paper – anything that can be accessed on-demand, when the consumer has either the time or the need for such knowledge.

The idea here is to produce regular content in various mediums. This will build your authority and reputation. You will be perceived as trusted advisors in your field, experts and the

go-to guys. In a methodical fashion, you will build your specification base and shift the balance of power in your sector.

Be easy to specify

Once the awareness and credibility of your brand's solutions are there, you need to ensure that your product information is easy to download.

All information needs to be available on-demand, preferably including cost information. The type of information required can include:

•Specification clauses
•2D & 3D CAD drawings – in a variety of formats
•BIM Models
•Test and performance data
•Technical literature & data sheets
•Design calculation tools
•Installation information
•Delivery info
•Pricing data

Findings

The key areas of the building product website audit.

Communication

With your prospects.

•How does your company compare to the statistics?

•Why aren't your team following up enquiries?

Optimisiation

Of your website.

•Can your company be found on Google?

•Why are your customers not visiting your website?

Content Marketing

Help prospects find you

•How can you use content marketing to generate leads?

•How do building product companies compare to other industries?

Resources

For architects and specifiers

•What do architects expect from a website?

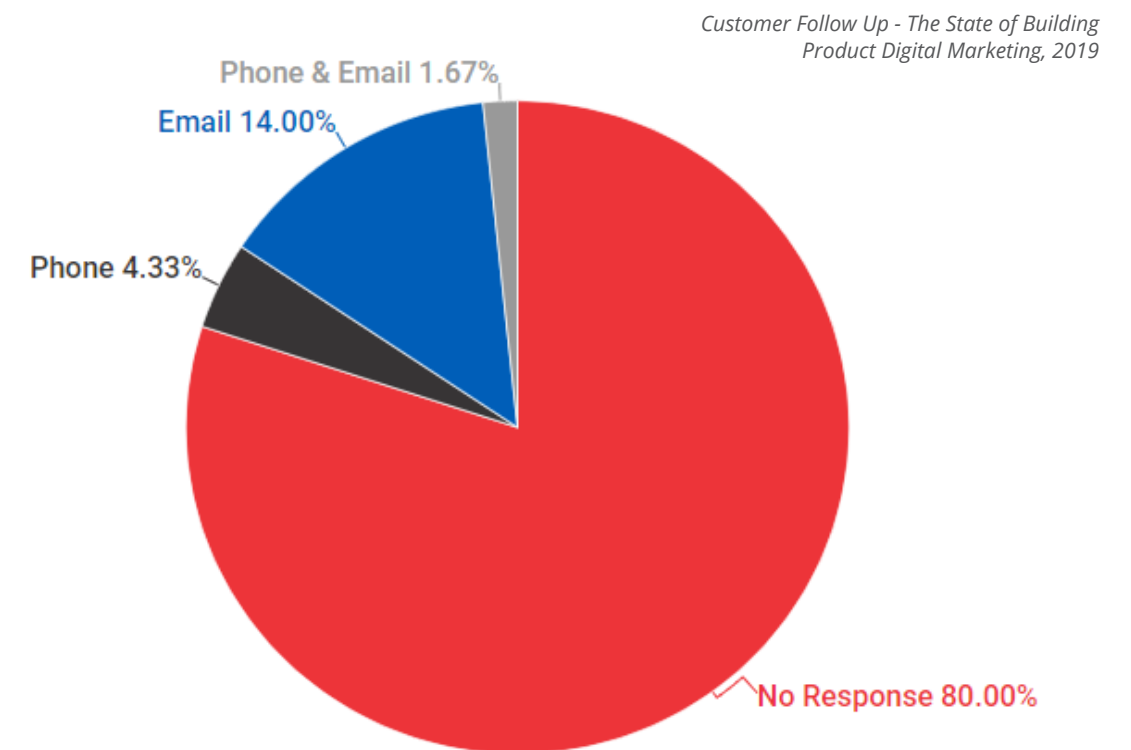•How can you reduce friction in the specification process?

Conclusion

Of the report

•What were the overall scores of from the algorithm?

•What are the key areas for improvement within the building product industry?

Communication

Customer Follow Up - The State of Building Product Digital Marketing, 2019

Phone & Email 1.67%

Email 14.00%

Phone 4.33%

No Response 80.00%

80% of building product companies didn't respond to a customer enquiry.

Communication – Enquiries

Why are companies not following up customer enquiries?

1. Too many leads

You may think the more leads the better; however if there's no time for your sales team to follow up, then you're missing out on sales. You can reduce your sales and marketing budget, automate the process or expand your headcount.

2. Not organised

Do your sales and marketing teams have a shared system for tracking opportunities? If not, they won't follow up. They'll be reactive and jump on new leads and phone calls while neglecting their follow-ups.

3. Lack of motivation

If your sales team isn't motivated to close more deals, they're not going to follow up. Make sure they have KPIs and possibly a bonus structure that keeps them focused.

We were shocked that 80% of building product companies didn't respond to a product enquiry in any way. Of the 20% that did, only 6% answered the phone to enquire about our requirements and offer additional help.

We also received random samples and brochures from suppliers without any qualification of what assistance we needed. Leads are not valued by building product manufacturers – they even appear to be treated as an inconvenience.

This problem is caused by inefficient lead management.

Modern systems exist to enable the automation of lead capture, distribution, follow-up and management.

These systems are incredibly cost-effective and likely to pay for themselves many times over through the improvement of enquiry management.

When working together, marketing automation platforms and CRM systems create a powerful sales and marketing tool.

31% of building product companies do not have a contact form on their website

A form acts as a communication bridge between your prospect and your company.

The majority of building product companies '64% or 192 out of the 300 audited' had one contact form on their website. This was usually on the contact page. Including forms on multiple webpages provides a better user experience and maximises conversion.

Number of Forms on Site - The State of Building Product Digital Marketing, 2019
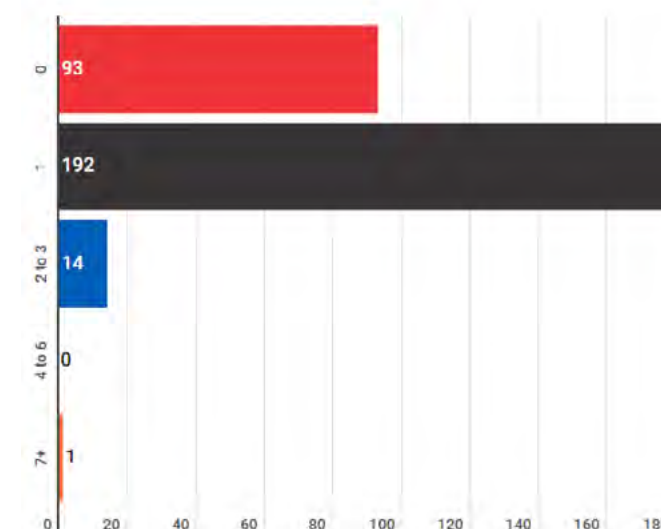
Short forms
5 or fewer fields

39%

Medium forms
6-9 fields

39%
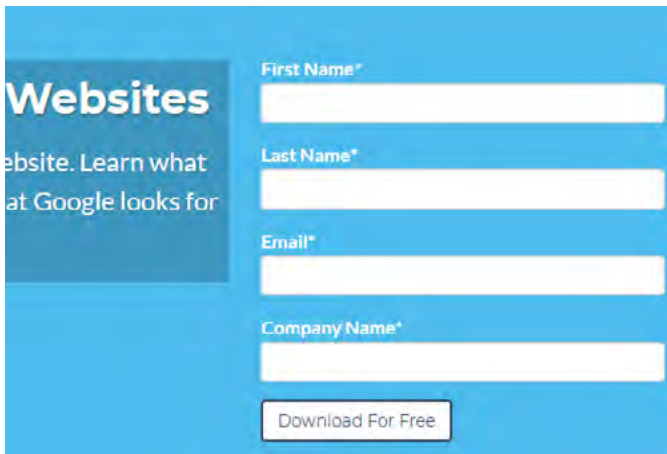
Long forms
10+ fields

22%

Communication – Forms

Fully optimised forms improve customer acquisition

How much information do you need?

Utilising technology such as a CRM system can pull company addresses and information from just an email address.

Form used in a content offer, Insynth 2019
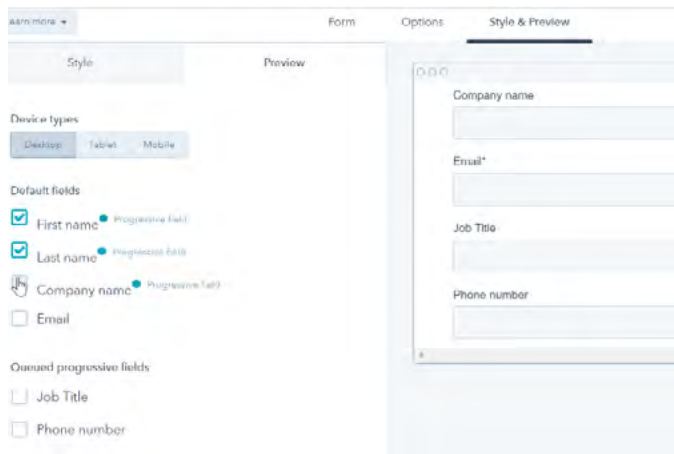
User expectations

Is the value they're getting worth the time spent filling out the forms? Do your users see value in filling out each form?

The type of conversion

If your users want more information on a product and are in the consideration stage of the buyer's journey, consider whether there is value and asking for their address.

Optimise

Using form analytics can help you determine which fields are most often left blank. You can then remove these fields to reduce friction from the conversion process.

Progressive or Smart Forms, Hubspot 2018

Smart forms

These are ideal for when a prospect or customer visits your website and you already have some of their information.

Your form will adapt to ask for relevant contact information, often social media details or other ways to contact them – enriching your CRM system with more data.

"Forms with 3-5 fields have a 20% conversion rate, while forms with 6+ fields show results of only 15% conversion."
(Unbounce, 2013)

Communication – Live Chat

Speak to your website visitors

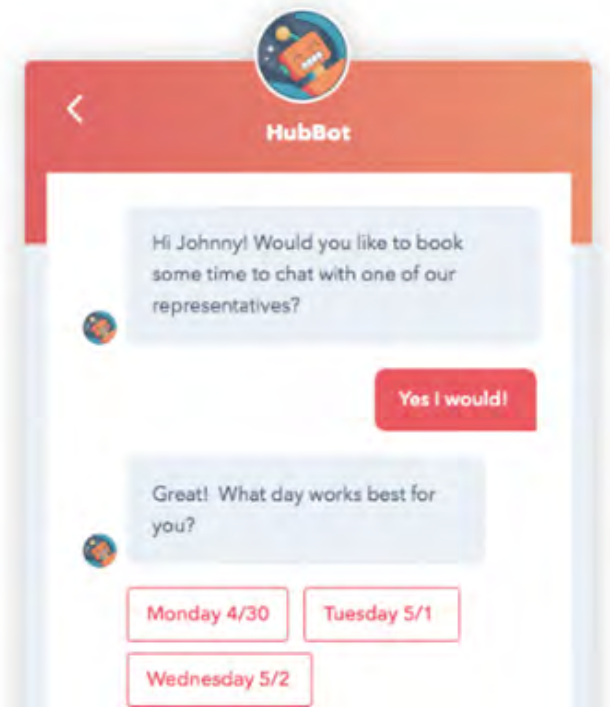**94% of building product companies don't have live chat**

Decade-old technology

Live support has been around since 2008; it allows real-time communication between businesses and website visitors.

"B2B companies who used live chat see, on average, a 20% increase in conversions". (AMA, 2019)

What we are seeing now

The newer iteration of live support is Chatbots. They are capable of conversing with a human, answering questions and providing instructions. They are available 24/7 and can outperform humans in terms of speed and accuracy.

*Chatbot Example, HubSpot 2019*

Humans and robots

Chatbots can also collaborate with humans, providing suggested responses or bringing up relevant information in a timely manner such as a video that the human can then act on.

We did not come across any chatbots while conducting our research into the building product industry.

Where they can be used

Chatbots were first made popular in 2010 with Apple's Siri. They were then more widely adopted with Facebook bots for messenger in 2016.

Three years later and chatbots are used in a variety of professions including sales and marketing.
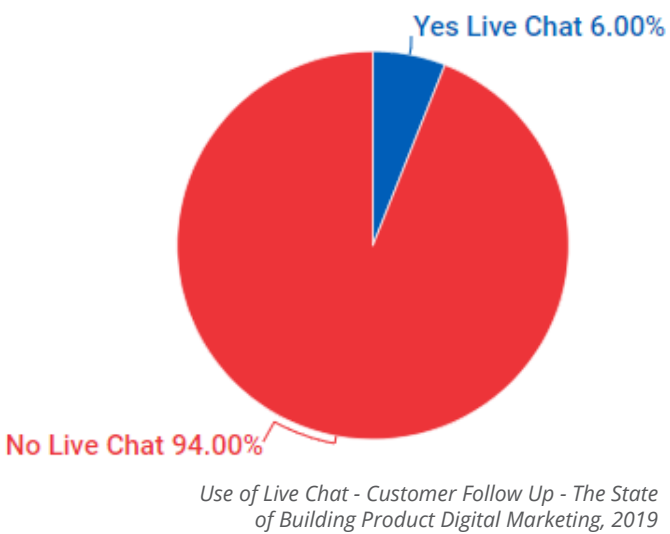
Use of Live Chat - Customer Follow Up - The State of Building Product Digital Marketing, 2019

Optimisation – Mobile

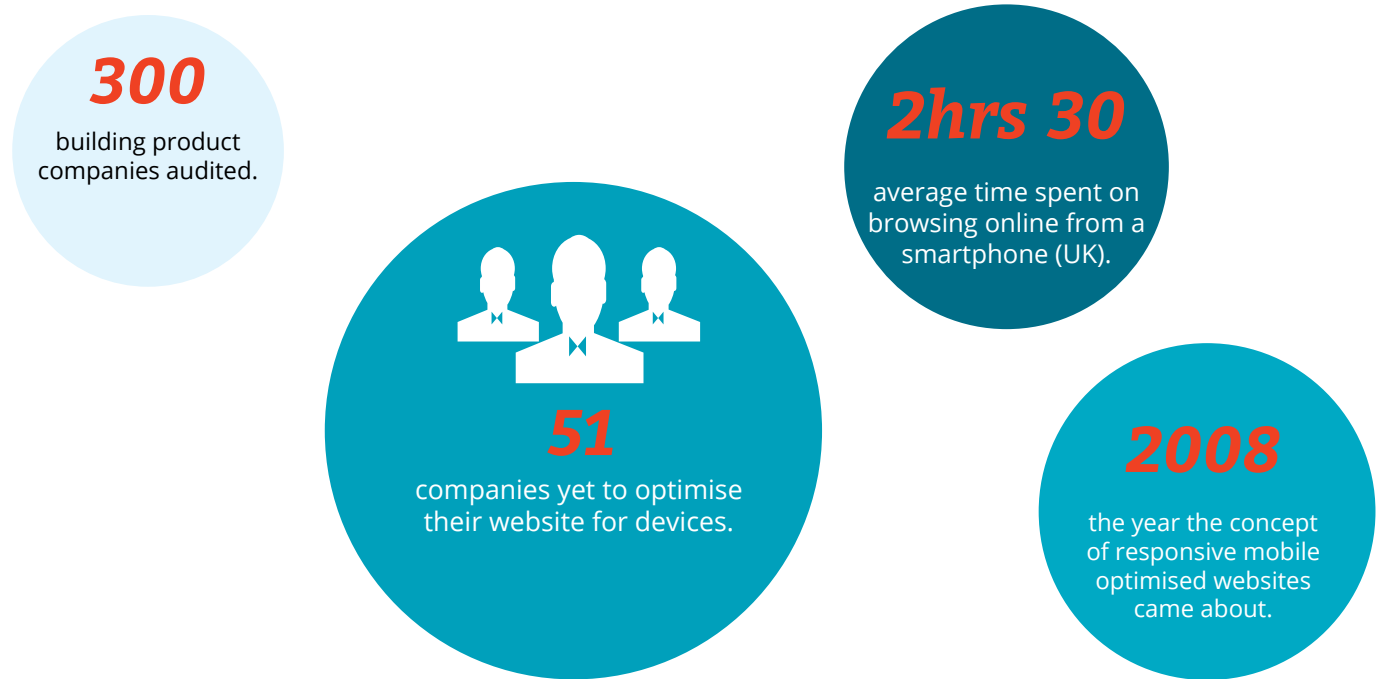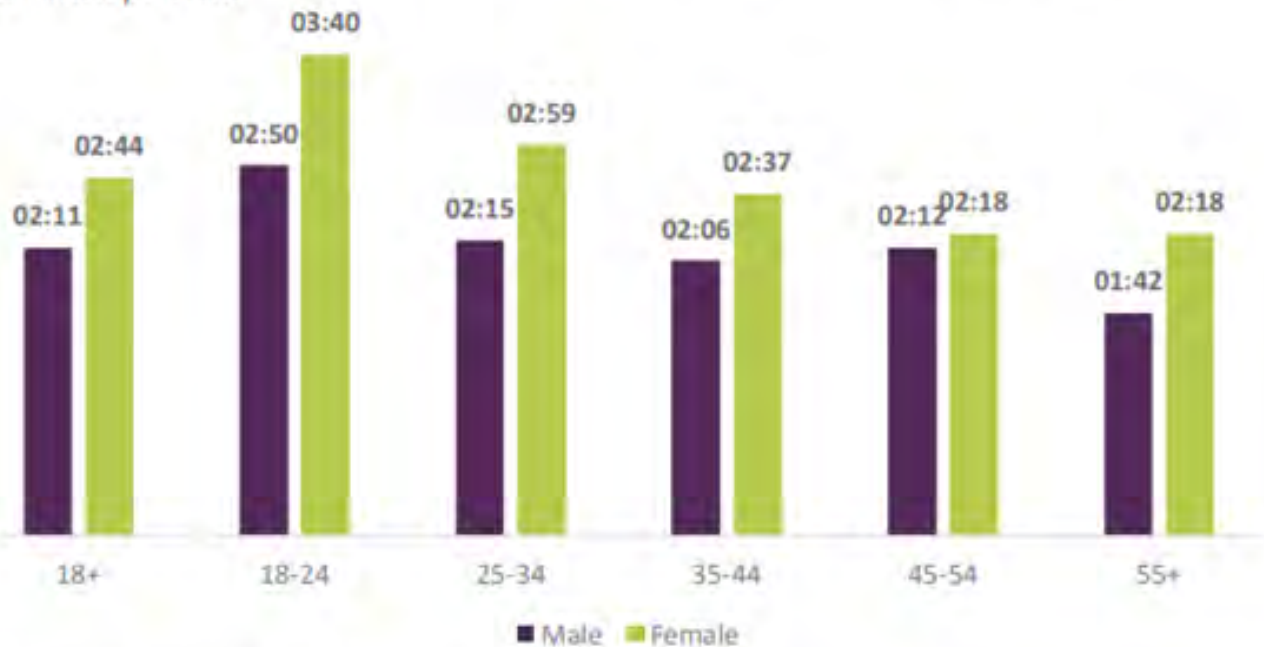52% of all website traffic was generated through mobile phones in 2018. (Statista, 2019)

300
building product companies audited.

51
companies yet to optimise their website for devices.

2hrs 30
average time spent on browsing online from a smartphone (UK).

2008
the year the concept of responsive mobile optimised websites came about.

83%
of websites audited were optimised for devices.

Figure 5.3: Average time online on a smartphone per day, by age and gender: March 2018

hours: minutes per visitor

Age group	Male	Female
18+	02:11	02:44
18-24	02:50	03:40
25-34	02:15	02:59
35-44	02:06	02:37
45-54	02:12	02:18
55+	01:42	02:18

■ Male ■ Female

Source: comScore Mobile Metrix®, March 2018, UK, Persons: 18+
Notes: Includes Android and iOS smartphones

Our Thoughts

The concept of responsive websites has been around since 2008. It ensures specifiers, site managers, quantity surveyors and contractors can use websites when on site or out of the office. To think that 17% or 51 out of 300 building product companies that are actively marketing themselves have yet to invest in a basic and critical website redesign is alarming.
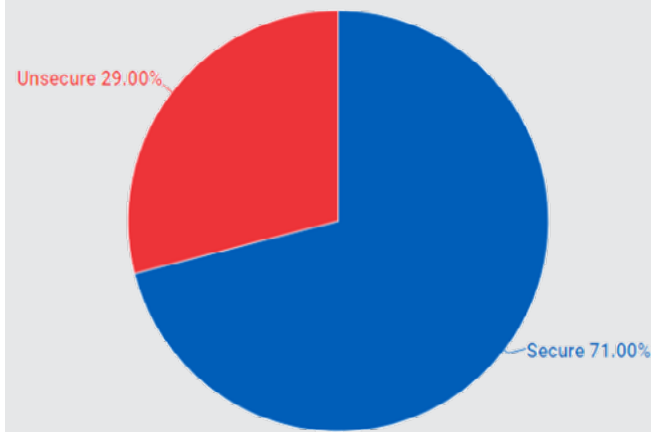
" 29% of building product companies did not have a secure website "

Optimisation – Security

A security warning can be a serious deterrent for a potential customer

Percentage of Websites Secure

Unsecure 29.00%

Secure 71.00%

Secure Websites - Building Product Website Audit, 2019

Chrome, Safari, Microsoft and Firefox will all mark sites without an SSL certificate as unsecure.
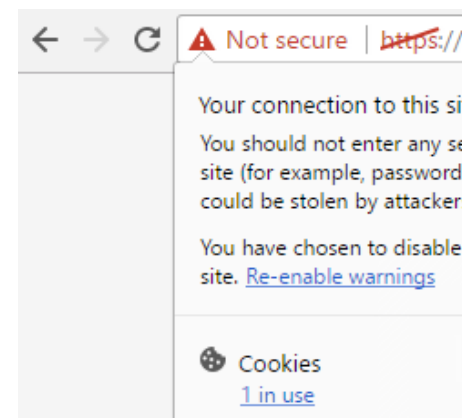
You may be familiar with these warning messages.

An SSL certificate is essential for security.

When a web browser contacts your secured website, the SSL certificate enables an encrypted connection. It's kind of like sealing a letter in an envelope before sending it through the mail.

Why else is this important?

• Increases conversion
Customers are more likely to make a connection over a secure connection than not.

• Establishes trust with your customers
When you have an SSL certificate, visitors see the padlock icon in the corner of the screen.

• Better search engine rankings
Sites that use https rank higher than those without. Simply put, Google prioritises sites that prioritise safety.

Not secure | https://

Your connection to this sit

You should not enter any se
site (for example, passwords
could be stolen by attackers

You have chosen to disable
site. Re-enable warnings

Cookies
1 in use

Unsecure Site Warning Message, Google Chrome

3 Reasons Why

You should have an SSL certificate

1. A browser warning can be a serious deterrent for a potential customer.

2. It helps your search engine rankings.

3. It protects your customers when filling in forms or exchanging information.

Our Thoughts

Fixing this will stop visitors getting warning messages before visiting your site and increase traffic. It should not cost more than a £100 and is a standard practice by most web developers.

Optimisation – SEO

Helping prospects find your business

Search engine optimisation

Ensuring your website is optimised for search engine ranking will make it easier for users to find. We used a third-party tool to analyse basic search engine optimisation principles in the building product industry.

How prospects find you

Keyword rankings measure where your site shows up on the search page for any given keyword.

For example, if somebody searches "insulated concrete formwork" and you're ranking #1 on the Google search results page – congratulations. You're getting around 33% of the traffic related to that query.

The more ranking keywords you have on your site, the more likely a potential customer can find you when searching for words relating to what you sell.
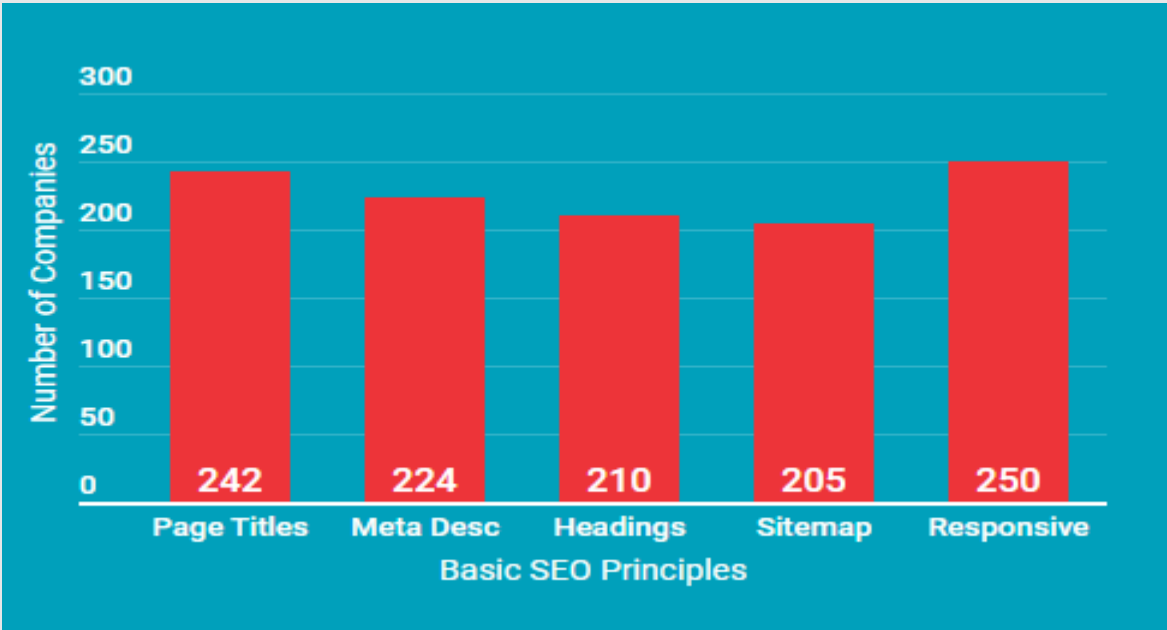
Well-written web content planned around specific keywords is essential for lead generation.

> " If your title and meta descriptions aren't persuasive, then you shouldn't expect searchers to check your website.
> - Neil Patel, 2018 "

Optimisation – SEO

Basic SEO Principles

Basic SEO - The State of Building Product Digital Marketing, 2019

Page Titles
19%
or 58 Companies
Without the clickable link that appears in search engine results.

Headings
30%
or 90 Companies
Without a crucial element of an effective SEO plan.

Meta Descriptions
25%
or 76 Companies
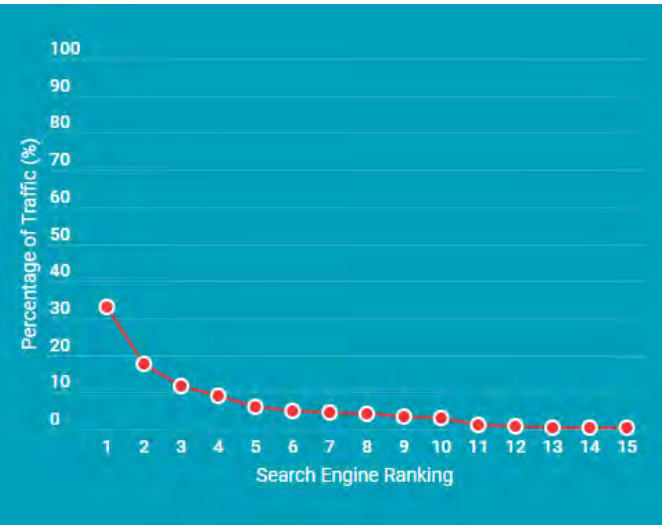Without summaries of their web pages for Google to pick up.

Optimisation – Content

Ranking keywords, how you've been Googled

Does more equal better?

Perhaps you have a few case studies on a bar in Leeds you've fitted balustrades for. When the keywords haven't been set up properly, you may get people searching for a night out in Leeds coming to your page.

These people will most likely leave your page within a few seconds; increasing your bounce rate and damaging search engine authority. Your domain rankings could be negatively affected if this happens.

Percentage of traffic flowing into each search ranking

31

The average domain authority (a score of how well your website ranks) across the building product industry.

Pogo-sticking

If someone clicks on your website but is disappointed with the content – they'll hit the back button and click on another result.

This behaviour is called pogo-sticking and it sends a negative signal to Google. Besides increasing your bounce rate, this type of signal can and probably will drop your search rankings, having a knock-on effect on your search marketing.

Keywords

Not ranking for enough keywords or ranking for words that are not relevant is a symptom of inadequate content.

Companies are unlikely to cover the multitude of ways people search for their products. This is typically the result of poor-quality content that hasn't been optimised for search.

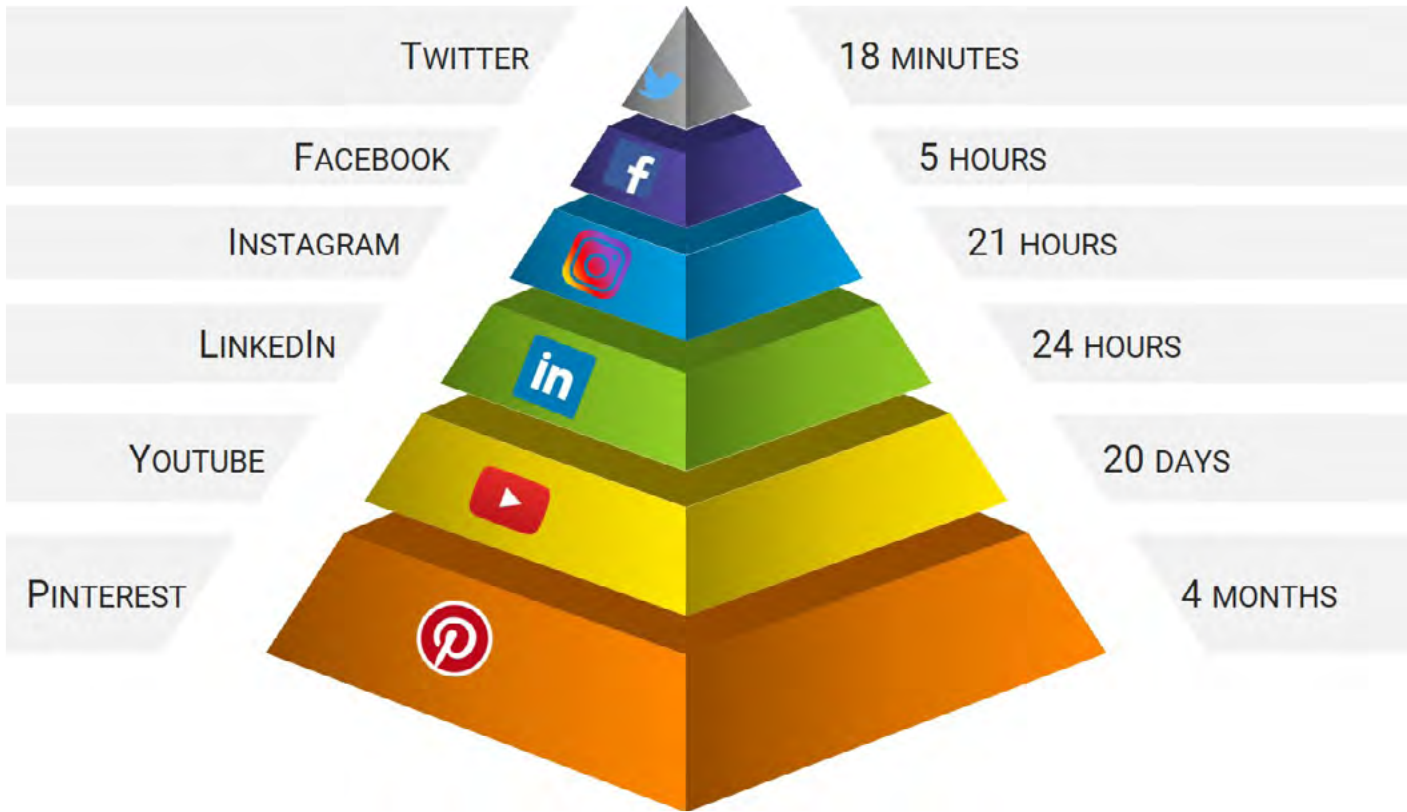### Number of Keywords Companies are Ranking for 5th - 95th Percentile
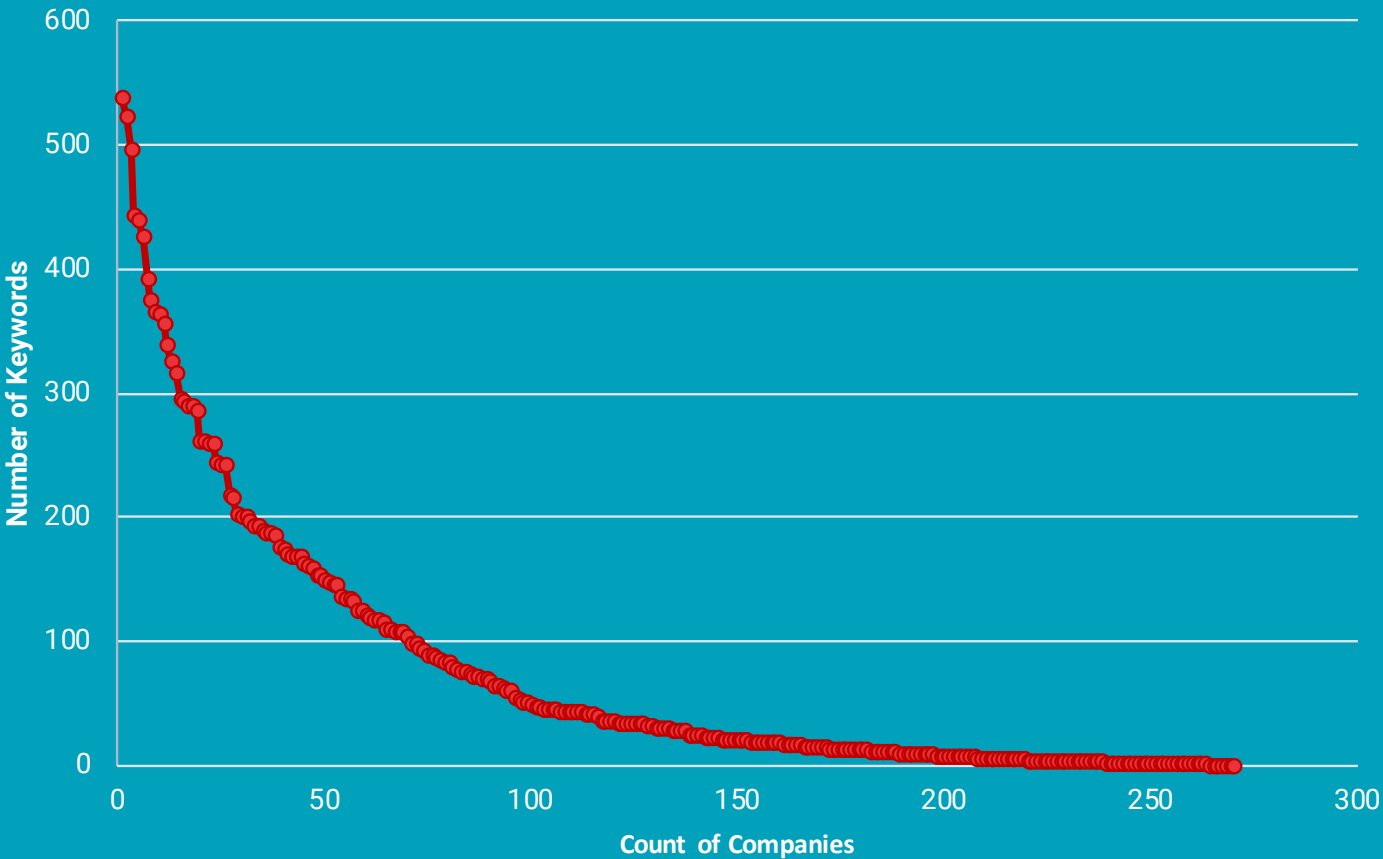
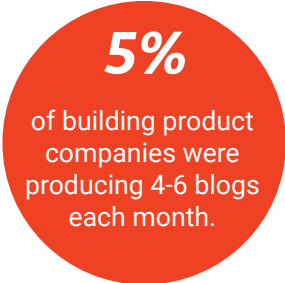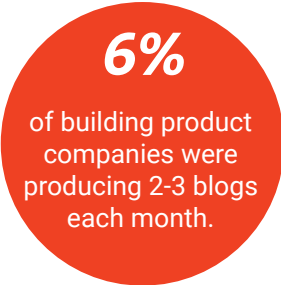*Number of Ranking Keywords per website - The State of Building Product Digital Marketing, 2019*

62% of building product companies ranked for 50 or fewer keywords

Content Marketing – Building Product Industry

Lifespan of a social media post

TWITTER	18 MINUTES
FACEBOOK	5 HOURS
INSTAGRAM	21 HOURS
LINKEDIN	24 HOURS
YOUTUBE	20 DAYS
PINTEREST	4 MONTHS

Statistics across the building products industry

6%
of building product companies were producing 2-3 blogs each month.

79%
of building product companies had not blogged in the last 12 months.

10%
of building product companies were producing 1 blog each month.

5%
of building product companies were producing 4-6 blogs each month.

Content Marketing – Best Practices

Why is content marketing important?

"76% of B2B marketers blog, and 73% publish case studies."
(CMI, 2016)

"Companies that published 16+ blog posts per month got about 4.5 times more leads than companies that published zero to four monthly posts."
(HubSpot, 2015)

"96% of B2B buyers want content with more input from industry thought leaders."
(Demand Gen Report, 2016)

"In the past two years, content consumption on LinkedIn has increased by 21%."
(HubSpot, 2016)

"You have a 434% higher chance of being organically ranked highly on search engines if you feature a blog as part of your website."
(Tech Client, 2015)
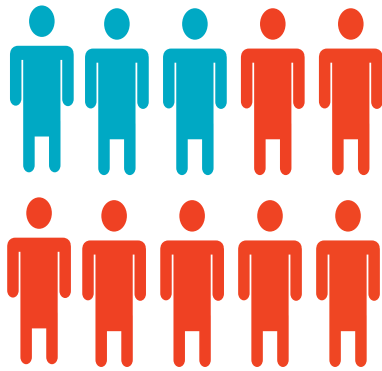
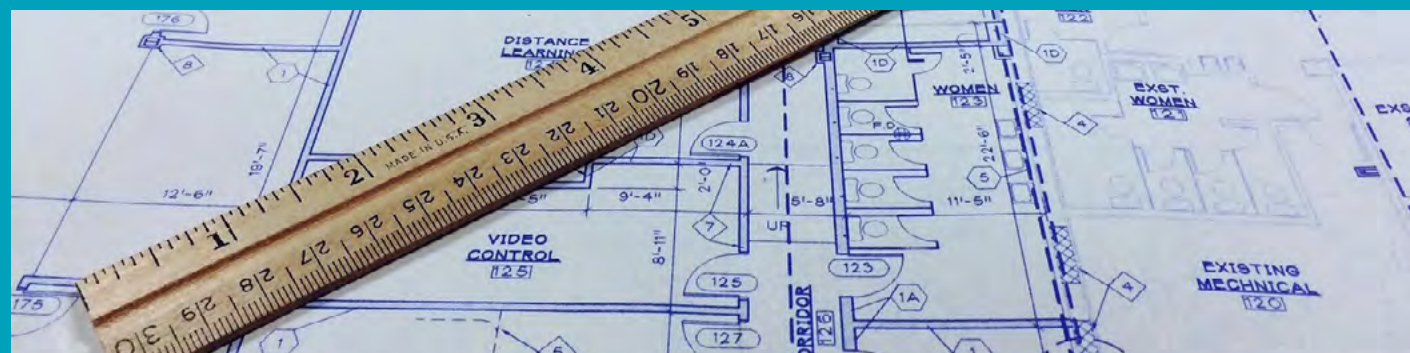Only 28% of building product companies were posting on LinkedIn on a weekly basis.

Just 21% of building product companies were posting on Twitter on a daily basis.

Resources

Helping architects to specify your product

Make specifiers' lives easier

Specifiers are widely acknowledged as being incredibly busy and time-poor.

Any resource, such as a product manufacturer's website that helps them do their job more efficiently and saves them time is going to be welcomed and used.

Your website is your opportunity to show specifiers and installers that you understand their needs and care enough to provide them with the information and resources.

If your website does not cater to the requirements of your specifiers, it will impact your ability to generate specifications and new business.

Typical resources include; BIM objects, specification clauses, CAD drawings, installation instructions, online technical calculators, cost information and case studies.

Picture this:

An architect likes the look of your building product. In fact, it has the potential to offer the ideal solution for the architect's project. They just need to check the product specifications on your website.

But, these haven't been included in the product information.

The architect has no way of knowing whether your building product is right after all.

Make information accessible
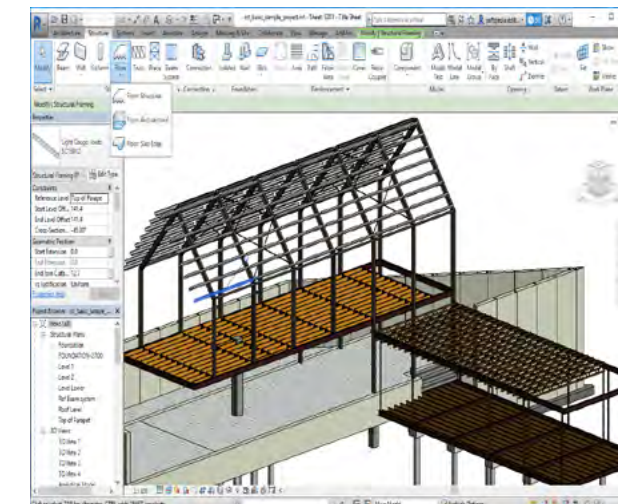
The architect could find your contact information and get in touch to clarify the details.

Or they could Google your competitor.

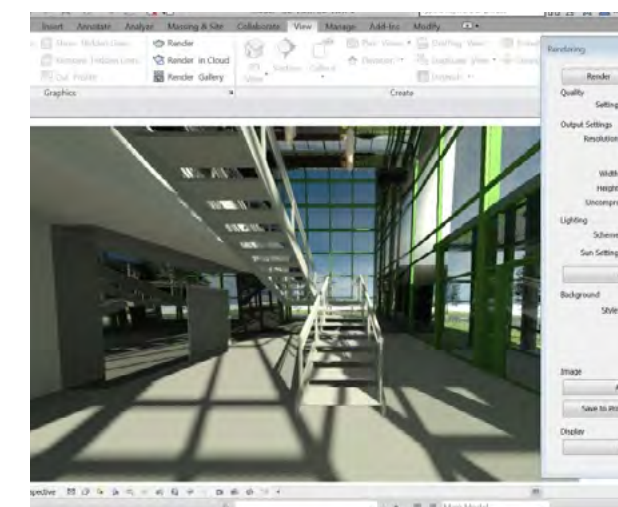The latter takes a fraction of the time.

84%

Of building product companies **did not** include CAD files on their website

22%

Of building product companies have adopted BIM on their website

Building Information Modelling, Autodesk Revit

Resources

Help and remove friction from the process

From our research, we have concluded that building product manufacturers have not generally grasped the concept that the Internet has changed the way people research and purchase products.

The vast majority of manufacturers are using technical information as a tool to leverage a salesperson's face-to-face visit with a specifier.

This leaves the door open to forward-thinking competitors who make helpful information freely available on their websites for specifiers – and other users across the world.

Worried about competitors?

Any collateral that is going to aid specification or purchase should not be hidden behind a form or login. You may worry about competitors, but they've probably got all your data already. The aim here is to help your potential customers become your online prospects.

Resources Audit

As part of our research, we looked into what key resources were missing from building product websites.

Resource	Yes (%)	No (%)
Reviews	1	99
White Papers	2	98
Price Lists	6	94
Testimonials	8	92
O&M Information	9	91
Specification Clauses	12	88
Stockist info	14	86
CAD Drawings	16	84
Videos	19	81
FAQs	20	80
BIM files	22	78
Brochure/Datasheet	38	62
Case Studies	46	54

> " Un-gating technical content lead to a 60x increase in downloads and use of those resources. "
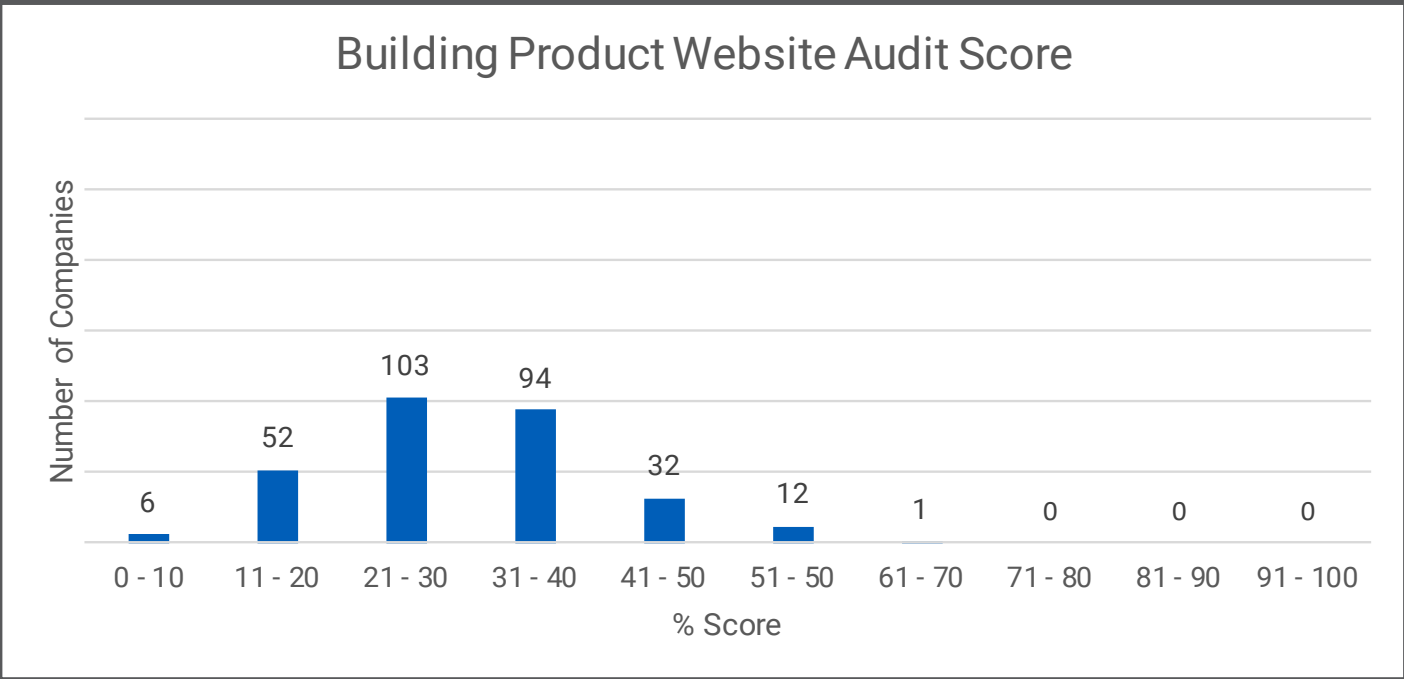>
> (Insynth Client, 2019)

88%

Of building product companies did not have specification clauses

Overall Score

The results of the 300 building product companies audited

Building Product Website Audit Score

What is the purpose of this score?

The aim of this score is to provide building product sales and marketing professionals and business leaders with an insight into the effectiveness of their website as a tool for attracting customers and generating leads.

Our thoughts

Architects are incredibly busy and any supplier that has taken steps to make their life easier and remove friction from the specification process will be viewed favourably.

Building product companies are making the lives of architects and specifiers more difficult than they need to be.

21-30

What the majority of building product companies scored out of a possible 100 points

Key Areas for Improvement

A recap of the main areas for improvement across the building product industry

Promptly follow up inbound leads

With 94% of businesses not attempting to follow up sales enquiries with a phone call, this has to be the easiest win for any business. Technology will make this process easier, but a cultural change in attitude towards the value of leads needs to take place.

Even if it is a poor fit lead, taking the time and effort to suggest a company that could help them will demonstrate professionalism and a level of customer service that is likely to lead to that person coming back to you in the future when there they have a better-fit enquiry.

Make your website a key resource for specifiers

Key technical resources are missing from 83% of building product companies' websites.

Too often, technical information is leveraged as a tool by the salesperson to initiate a meeting. In an age of on-demand content, companies who are providing information such as BIM objects and specification clauses are giving themselves a competitive edge.

Become the trusted voice in your sector

You have a 434% higher chance of being ranked if your business has a blog. It was quite surprising to find that 79% of building product companies had not blogged in the last 12 months.

Sort out your website fundamentals

29% of building product companies had unsecure websites. The 300 companies in this audit were all actively marketing themselves. Missing fundamental security measures provoke warning messages, a deterrent for a potential customer and potentially wasted marketing budgets.

Conclusion

Want to know how your building product company compares?

Take a specifier-centric approach

If you want to achieve breakthrough results with digital sales and marketing, then there's only one thing that matters – you have to become the most trusted voice in your industry.

This requires a new, transparent and specifier-centric approach to your sales and marketing. If you embrace this mindset, you will see quicker sales, improved closed rates, significant financial ROI, and a healthier company culture. However, most companies aren't willing to do what it takes, and that's why most building product companies sadly fail in digital marketing.

Find the opportunities for your website

We have anonymised the results of our website audit to protect the reputations of the companies we have audited. If you'd like to find out if your company was part of the 300 companies or would like us to audit your website, please get in touch.

We believe that with the correct changes, your building product will be easier to specify. We are offering free consultations to improve websites in the building product industry.

We're here to help

• Want to find out how your company compares?

• Looking for some free advice?

• Want to talk to us about helping you with your sales and marketing?

• Want to grow your business over the next 12 months?

We can spend half an hour together to go through your objectives and growth opportunities for your business.

What we do

We blend traditional sales and marketing techniques with the latest technology to provide insight into your ideal customers needs and behaviour.

Armed with this knowledge, we tailor your key marketing assets such as your website, literature and customer databases to drive engagement, website traffic and improve conversion tools to produce a steady stream of purchase-ready leads to take your business to the next level.

Our in-depth knowledge of the sector and construction marketing expertise gives us insights into the routes to market in the construction industry, from specification to tendering through to delivery or even installation.

What our customers say

Providing a tangible return on investment

"Insynth Really Understand Our Business"

Insynth worked hard to understand our challenges and quickly identified strategies and tactics to address them. Within 2 months we saw a 40% increase in our website traffic and an increase in our quotation levels over the prior year.

We are very excited about the effect this is likely to have at Contour Heating Products in 2019.

Robin Mansell
Contour Heating Products Ltd

"We know we're going to grow with Insynth"

Insynth have made a profound difference to my business in a matter of weeks. Their quick-win approach generated new leads for us within days of working with them.

Their knowledge and expertise has revealed how critical my website and inbound marketing is to growing my business.

Tony Kirk
Luxury Pool Sauna Spa Ltd

About Me

Helping others overcome their sales and marketing challenges

Leigh Simpson
Founder and CEO

Want to grow your business?

Insynth founder, Leigh Simpson has worked with blue chip brands, SMEs and startups in the building product sector for the last 30 years. He has helped each to overcome varying sales and marketing challenges and improve their growth.

We're here to help you

We understand specification, your route to market and the way your customers research, select and buy.

Our mission is to help 100 building product companies to double their revenue by the end of 2020.

If you want to be one of these companies, get in touch.

Join us on social for more marketing and sales tips

Notes

Providing a tangible return on investment

Notes

Scan me

> **"** Our mission is to help 100 building product companies double their revenue by the end of 2020
> (Leigh Simpson, 2018) **"**

The Mansions,
43 Broadway,
Shifnal,
United Kingdom

01952 897 097

hello@insynth.co.uk
www.insynth.co.uk

36   The State of Building Product Digital Marketing | www.insynth.co.uk