



WHAT **ARCHITECTS** WANT FROM YOUR WEBSITE



**CONTENT
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INTRODUCTION

Recently, we interviewed a group of architects in Manchester to understand their common experiences with building product websites.

The architects we interviewed ranged from directors to newly qualified practitioners.

As you may expect from a group of professional designers, they had a lot to say about website design. They rely on websites to do their jobs and are often frustrated by the user experience, product names, and way information is presented.

We have used these insights to deliver performance websites for building product companies. Now we are making them available to you.

Here are 10 tips to help you create a website to increase specifications and architect engagement.



1 UP-TO-DATE OR SECOND-RATE

Architectural practices no longer have product libraries to refer to. They rely on websites for the most up-to-date product information.

Manufacturers websites were referred to as “the first port of call.”

Specifiers are highly visual and form an opinion of how up-to-date the website is based on the design. Not just the publication date of the website or technical content. Making a fresh first impression with the look and feel of your website is also critical.





WEBSITES ARE THE BEGINNING OF LONG-TERM BRAND LOYALTY

Selling a commodity product?

It may seem unlikely that someone is going to do deep-dive research on a product that isn't particularly technical or complex. You may not bother to create content relating to the finer points of it's useage and application. However, junior architects generally do product research, and they need this information.

One junior architect revealed to us that they had recently been searching Google for "access roof ladders".

These ladders aren't going to help them win any design awards. But they are important to provide means of egress for buildings, and the junior architect needed to know how they function, and any important specification considerations.

Architects specify out of habit. If you want to become a trusted supplier, the best opportunity is to connect with junior architects during this early stage in their career, when they are learning the basics.

If you do this, you are likely to win their brand-loyalty for life.

3 FONTS & PIXELS MATTER



“What I want to see is websites being better curated – more thought about graphically. Because there is nothing worse than having a really good technical resource that is awful to look at.”

Ged Couser, Architect Director, BDP

Mr. Couser was clear about his preference for well-designed websites and product information. This makes a case for professional photography and design support (no pixelated images or dated branding).

Ged also suggested trying to work on attractive buildings and projects, because seeing a product installed in a well-designed setting elevates the product. If you are unable to do this, you might consider a 3D render, which can position your product in a beautiful setting that looks realistic. Here’s an example of a digital render on a recently designed client website.



Take it further:

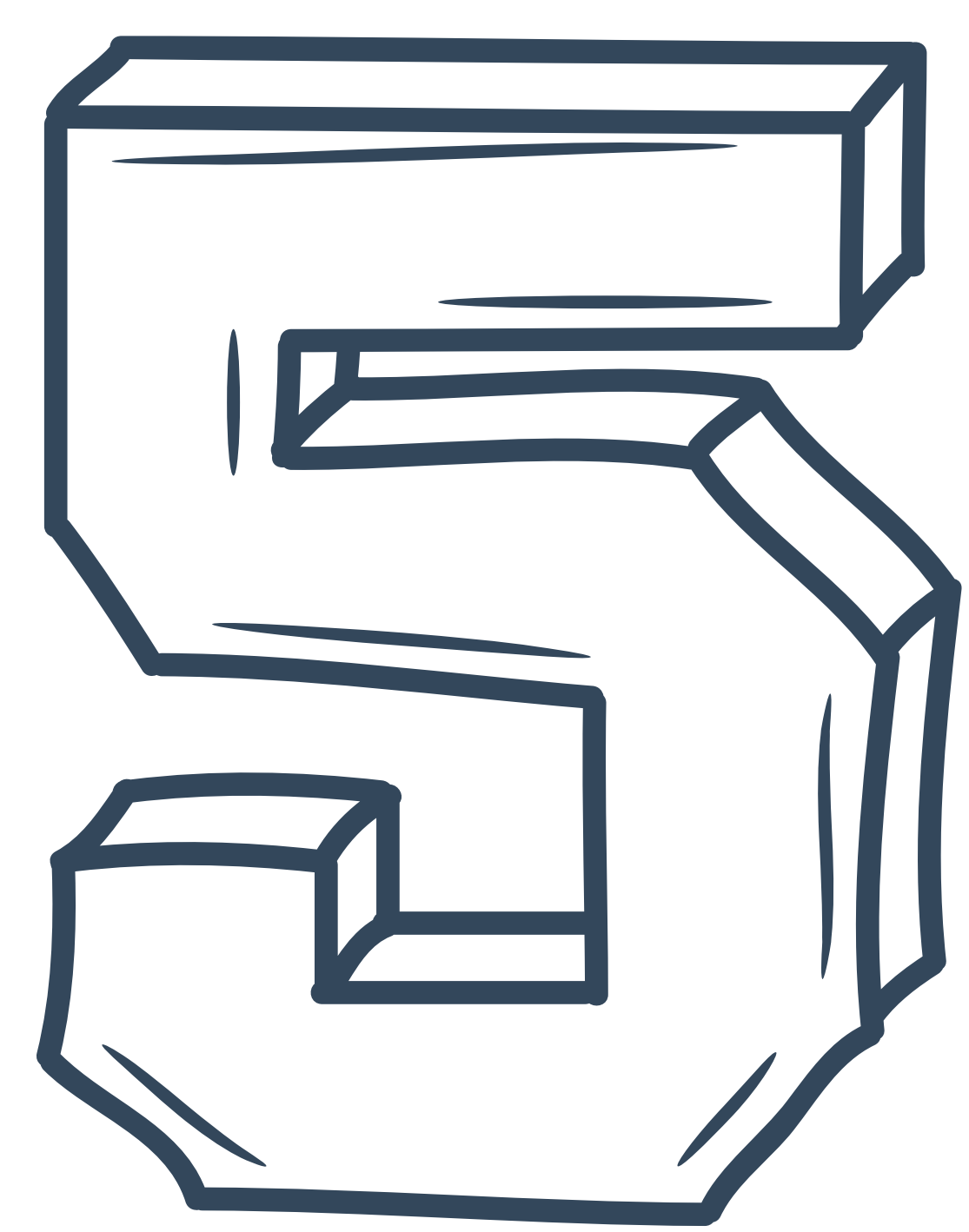
According to our workshop participants, architects will often browse Google with a quick image search to get inspiration. If you have formatted the images on your website properly, with accurate names and alt tags, then your product will show up in this search. You should also put them on Pinterest (another popular source of design inspiration).



LEVEL UP YOUR CASE STUDIES

Samples can only communicate so much. Architects prefer to see the product installed, on-site. If you can provide them with addresses of your recent projects they may have the opportunity to visit them. Your competition probably isn't doing this so this is an easy way to make your case studies stand out.

Also, case studies will often show the outside of a building. But our workshop participants wanted to see the product in situ. Make sure your photographs highlight the product installed.



PRODUCT NAMES VS PRODUCT CODES

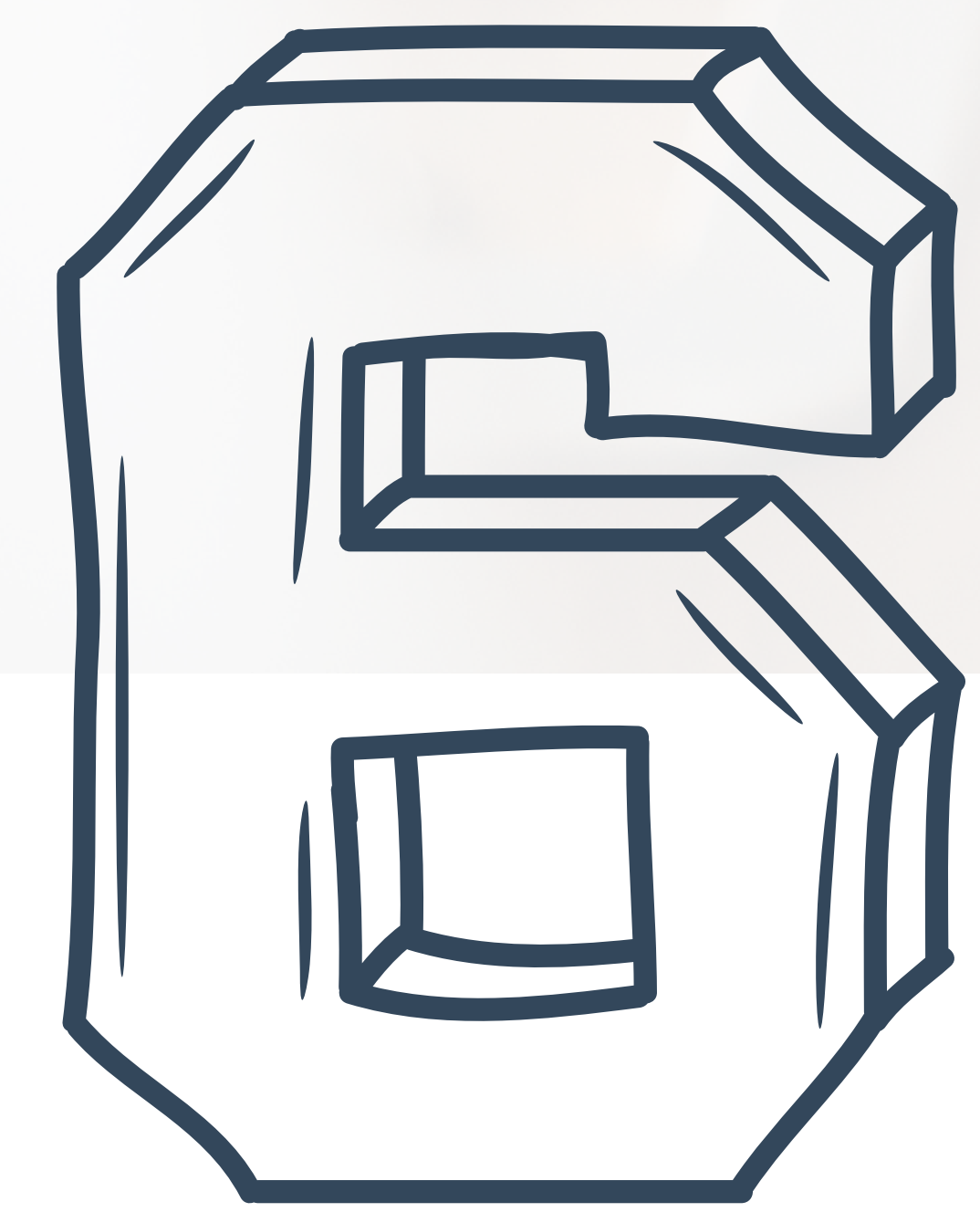
Our workshop participants expressed their frustration with the way companies name their products.

“I don’t know what the difference is between the RS100 and the RS102”.

Instead of codes, architects prefer names. Ideally descriptive names that indicate the differences between products.

This may take work to update your product library, but giving your products descriptive names is important for user experience, and enhances memorability.





ACCURATE VISUAL REPRESENTATION

“The way information is being presented is a little frustrating.” (Senior Architect)

We all want to present our products in the best possible light. But accuracy is more important. For instance, architects prefer windows with slimmer sight lines. However, they get the impression that photographs of windows are angled to make the sight lines of windows look slimmer than they actually are. They would prefer photography that represents the products accurately and enables them to compare them to other options from the same manufacturer, or a different manufacturer.

We even heard the phrase...

**“I get the feeling
that they’re trying
to con you.”**

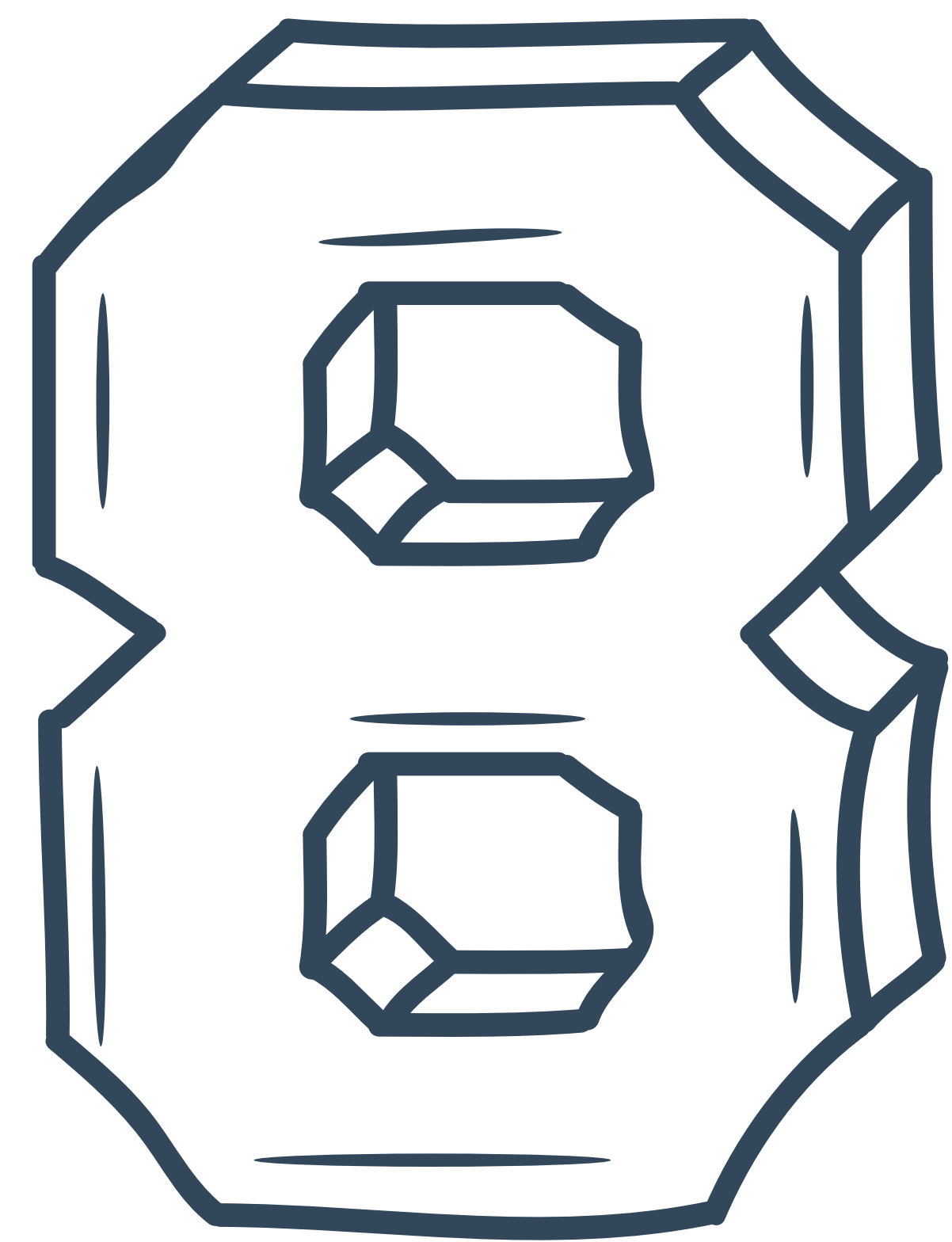
Besides making sure your photos present the product objectively, you could also provide a cross-section alongside the photo, that details precise dimensions.

7 HOST TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THE PRODUCT PAGE

Many websites host products and technical information in separate sections of the website. This means that if an architect is looking at a particular product and wants to take a look at its technical specs, they have to navigate to the area of the website where the technical content is hosted.

Architects find this frustrating, and it can be fixed easily.

Host the technical information on the same page as the product. Then they can view the product and click through to the technical information without having to navigate to a different section.



DON'T MAKE ME SIGN IN!

The life of an architect is stressful enough without having to remember a million passwords. Requiring specifiers to sign in to a technical portal is sometimes enough to put them off your website altogether.

You shouldn't be gating your technical material anyway. What's more valuable - an email or a specification? You lose more specs than you gain by gating technical content.

Before creating a customer portal ask yourself - is this for us or for them? If you are just making a customer portal to gather email addresses, then skip it. If it unlocks genuinely valuable resources they can't get anywhere else - go for it.



TALK ABOUT PRICE

“We dare not give you a steer on the square metre rate”

said one of the architects, imitating the point of view of building product companies.

Of course, the price does depend on many different factors. But this doesn't mean that you can't give any indication of the price.

If you really can't give a number or even a range of figures, you could use pound signs relative to the costs of your own product lines - £ (low cost) to £££ (expensive).

There is a need for some idea of cost, even if the frame of reference is your own products. The more information on price you can give the better.

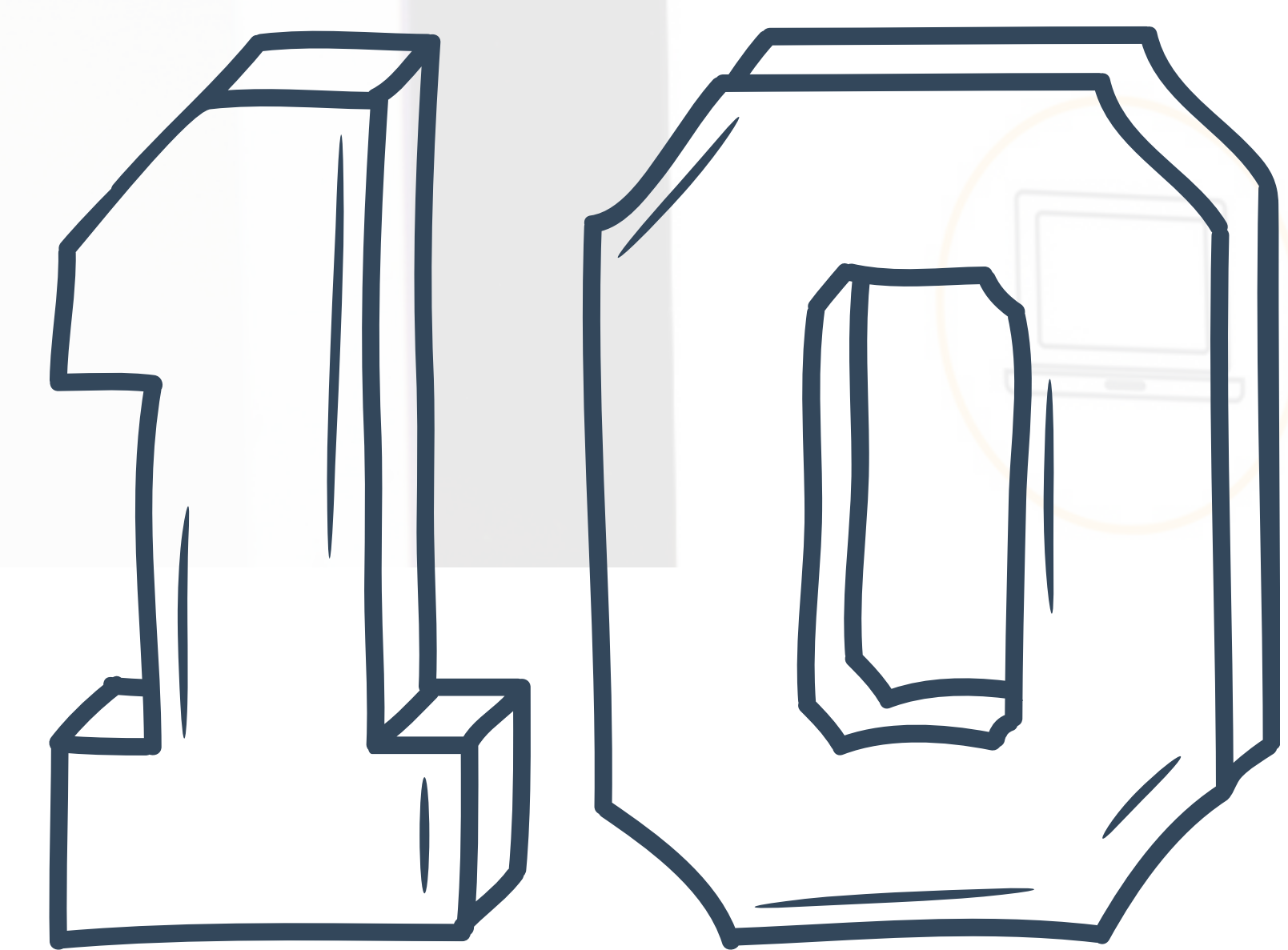
Many marketers refrain from addressing price. If you find a way to do this well you will build trust with specifiers.



CONTACT US

Have a discussion with us

START



NAIL THE WEBSITE-TO-SALES- CONVERSION

Architects want a lot from the website, but they also want to be able to get in touch with a member of your team quickly. If they can't easily find contact information they are likely to go elsewhere.

And they don't want a receptionist. They want an experienced technical sales rep who can answer their questions.



Contact Support

The architects suggested having a contact page that featured reps by region so they could get in touch with the right person. Another idea is to provide bios of your sales team to reassure them that they know what they're talking about, even before they ring up.

It was expressed that architects will choose a company for responsiveness. They value the service they get from building product manufacturers, and will even repay this service with loyalty and recommendations to their colleagues.



CONCLUSION



10 tips from architects. How does your website measure up?

Don't be overwhelmed. One way to start implementing these suggestions is to create an iterative development roadmap.

This is how we go about website updates at Insynth. We start with a minimum viable product and make updates in sprints - adding features and functionality while gathering live feedback and data over time. This enables you to make improvements based on real-life insights and shape the website to your customer's preferences.

So start with one change, and monitor the improvement in dwell time, bounce rate, traffic, and enquiries. Then make another one.

Then, a year from now, you'll have made significant data-informed improvements.

Don't want to wait that long? Our team of construction marketing specialists, designers, and developers can help.

Get in touch if you'd like to discuss how to generate more specifications and enquiries.

[Contact Us](#)

ABOUT INSYNTH

We are Europe's first inbound marketing agency to specialise in construction, driven to Deliver a predictable flow of leads, specifications and customers for your Building Product brand with a data-driven inbound marketing approach.

With 30 years of experience in the construction industry, from specification, tendering through to delivery or even installation, we understand the challenges which hinder building product businesses when growing. However, we have developed the right tools to deliver growth for building brands in this era of digital transformation.

Think of us as your outsourced in-house marketing team, working seamlessly with you to take control of strategy, implementation and delivery. From website design, search engine optimisation (SEO) and CRM implementation to Sales & Marketing strategy, Insynth is ready to help you achieve your ultimate aim: Growing your business and getting new specifiers and customers.

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