

# Using Web 2.0 to get ahead

Web 2.0 presents an opportunity for those in the manufacturing industry to interact with buyers on a mass scale, explains Lena Zak of Industracom.

**W**eb 2.0 is not a new technology, but a shift in seeing the internet from simply being a place to receive information from a specific source, to a place where information is constantly being created and updated by the users themselves.

For those in the manufacturing business, this presents an unprecedented opportunity to interact with buyers on a mass scale. Targeted business-to-business buyers and sellers can become part of online communities, sharing their wealth of knowledge, and becoming invaluable information providers for those seeking answers to their manufacturing dilemmas.

Let's not beat around the bush: today's economic climate is challenging, and every dollar counts. When it comes to marketing, these dollars must bring visible results. While traditional marketing methods have worked for decades, focusing on advertising (and simple word-of-mouth) is not always enough.

## Bi-directional communication channels

If your target audience doesn't know you're there, your business is in danger of being forgotten. Luckily for today's businesses, Web 2.0 opens up bi-directional communication channels that make customers feel at ease to place trust in your services; while allowing you to obtain quality data and analysis, and take advantage of every conversion opportunity.

When it comes to truly engaging with customers online, finding a suitable forum may seem like a daunting task. Fortunately for Australia's manufacturing industries, such a forum exists at [IndustrySearch.com.au](http://IndustrySearch.com.au) - Australia's online resource for the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

The site delivers trusted content, up-to-date manufacturing news, and comprehensive information on suppliers of machinery, equipment, products, and services; while giving access to one of the highest concentrations of decision makers in Australia.

## 90% of purchasing decisions begin online

Forrester Research, a technology and market research company that provides advice to global leaders in business and technology, conducted extensive research of business buyers as early as 2007, and found that 90% of all business purchasing decisions begin online. This means that in most cases, before a potential buyer has made any contact with a company, they are already well aware of the services that company provides, and how that company positions itself as a business.

This provides businesses with a golden opportunity that must be embraced. By providing information online – informa-



tion about your industry, its challenges, innovations, progress and opportunities – you can create an image of your business as a powerful information source; and therefore a source to be trusted when purchasing decisions are finally made.

The important thing to keep in mind is that you don't have to be a large company to create quality information for your audience. Nor do you have to have a huge budget. By working with the talent that you already have at your disposal, and with a little outside help, even the smallest companies can do a fantastic job of providing targeted content to their current and future customers.


The goal is to look at what is already happening in your company, which is undoubtedly full of potential sources of content, which can be reworked and reproduced, to become original and valuable online articles.

## Building brand awareness

IndustrySearch specialises in building brand awareness online through media release publishing, video sharing and eNewsletter distribution – tools that the manufacturing industry can use to create engagement, and ultimately, demand for products and services. Rather than just another business directory, where listings are buried amongst thousands of others, IndustrySearch is a large online marketplace where every business can present itself the way it wants, to truly stand out.

The question is, how will you know if it's working? The answer is simple.

With the power of IndustrySearch's online measurement tools, businesses can track exactly how many people have seen their ad, read their media releases, visited their website, and how many sales leads they generated. This knowledge can then be used to tailor information and ensure sales conversions.

After all, creating great content is vital. But once it's been created, gaining editorial visibility is truly priceless. So while you work hard to write editorial that's interesting for more and more customers, IndustrySearch makes it easy for them to find you. 

*IndustrySearch.com is Australia's leading industrial website, offering access to suppliers, products, news, feature articles and events. An IndustrySearch 'Storefront' provides businesses with a measurable and cost-effective way to reach active industrial buyers.*

*The website is run by Industracom, a leading Australian B2B online media company established in 1998.*

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