



EMA Buildings + Construction

Marketing to Specifiers:
Keeping your efforts on spec.

Marketing to an audience that influences the purchase of but doesn't directly buy your products or services comes with its own unique set of challenges. Our EMA Buildings + Construction specialty group specializes in overcoming these challenges. After more than three decades of experience helping our clients focus on these elusive targets—which can include architects, interior designers, as well as electrical, mechanical and specifying engineers—we've found the key is simple: stay relevant. That's where we come in.

During the last three years, we have conducted multiple rounds of research to understand what's important to your target and the best ways to get them to purchase (or influence the purchase of) your brand. While many of the observations we've uncovered may seem like table stakes at first glance, what we're hearing from specifying audiences is that many of the major players may not be doing as much as they can to convert specifiers to their brand. Here are just a few of the many important observations we've uncovered.

Observation #1—Specifiers want information, and lots of it.

Specifiers talked about the lack of readily available information. After all, information is the currency of a specifier: the more they know about a product, the more knowledgeable they are about a project's requirements. In short, good information makes for a more efficient and effective path to decisions.

In their words...

"We rely on the manufacturer for current product, services and solutions information on their website and online. We expect our suppliers to know what's going on in their industry, the trends and specifically where they stand in relation to their competition. We want them to supply us with the pro/con information about their product lines so we're more knowledgeable when we explain to the end users what they should consider to make an educated purchasing decision. We also want personal sales calls to develop relationships."

"70 to 80 percent of the information I get on a product comes directly from the manufacturer."

Observation #2—Specifiers want their orders filled. Now.

Specifiers cited long lead times and unavailability of products and materials as some common issues that make them look elsewhere for what they need. After all, in order to write a good spec and make it understandable to the project bidder, they need to easily access the product and reference it in an intelligent way.





In their words...

“In order to stay true to project deadlines, it’s all about quick response times and the ability to turn around requests quickly and accurately. In some cases, it’s difficult to get good information, not to mention good product, quickly. That’s a real deal breaker in our world.”

Observation #3—Specifiers live in a mobile world. So should you.

While it’s true that a portion of a specifier’s time may be behind a desk, chances are a mobile device is close at hand. While there’s no specific data, make no mistake—specifiers use smartphones and tablets in their day-to-day activities. While some are using them for calculations and referencing product information through manufacturer websites or apps, others use them for simple note taking and communication.

In their words...

“We want good digital tools and contacts who are easy to reach. We want our request for information—whether through phone, email or submittal forms—to go directly to someone that can help quickly. And we want quick, up-to-date access to price quotes, as well as technical and applications support.”

“It’s still about trust. It’s about honesty and integrity—that hasn’t changed. I cherish the experienced reps from manufacturers. I reach out to them, I trust them.”

Conclusion:

As these observations show, reaching the ever-elusive specifier isn’t that elusive after all. In simple terms, good information, good order turnaround, and good service go a long way in winning—and keeping—their business. So, how do you go about being a more successful marketer to specifiers? What information is considered good information? What kind of mobile tools do they really want? Are their trigger points trend- or Code-driven? Who can help you uncover all these insights? We can. Give us a call today at 315.413.4350 and let’s build something great together.

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