

Best Practices for Managing and Increasing Engagement Opportunities

GETTING THE MOST VALUE FROM YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS

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INTRODUCTION

As a marketer, you know that engagement opportunities are only as good as your company's ability to respond appropriately and track them through the sales process. If you are experiencing any challenges in managing your engagement opportunities or are looking to increase your number of contacts and inquiries, this paper will be of particular interest to you. It reviews a number of best practices for responding to inquiries and managing contacts through the sales cycle. You'll also learn how to make the most of your marketing program. This information can help you increase the inquiries you receive, the number of opportunities you convert to sales and the value you gain from marketing in general and with GlobalSpec Media Solutions in particular.

5 STEPS TO MANAGE & INCREASE CONTACTS & INQUIRIES

Companies achieving a high rate of conversion of opportunities to sales have certain characteristics in common. Invariably, their sales and marketing organizations work closely together and communicate well with each other. Marketing knows what types of contacts best support sales efforts, how to respond to inquiries, and how to hand off opportunities to sales. Sales knows the importance of following up on the inquiries generated by marketing and tracking these opportunities through the sales cycle. In short, marketing and sales are on the same page. GlobalSpec has identified five steps to help your sales and marketing organizations work more closely together, improve lead management processes, and increase the number of engagement opportunities you receive:

1. Assign a person, or team of people, responsible for managing and tracking engagement opportunities.
2. Access, evaluate and respond to contacts and inquiries in a timely manner.
3. Distribute contacts and inquiries appropriately to salespeople, resellers, distributors, etc.
4. Ensure that you track engagement opportunities through the sales cycle.
5. Get a greater return by expanding your GlobalSpec Media Solutions program with additional marketing solutions.



STEP 1: ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE SUCCESS

If a person or team of people are not responsible for managing engagement opportunities, many may “fall through the cracks,” resulting in lost sales and wasted resources. Managing and tracking contacts and inquiries can be the responsibility of either the marketing or sales department, depending on your organizational structure, or it may reside in an integrated marketing and sales position.

Responsibilities of lead management may include:

- **Ensuring inquiries are responded to in a timely manner.** Inquiries are like fresh produce: they spoil quickly. Engagement opportunities left to wither will cost you revenue. Clearly, you cannot achieve sales unless you respond to inquiries efficiently.
- **Ensuring contacts and inquiries are responded to appropriately.** There are two aspects to this point: knowing how a contact prefers to engage with you and evaluating the type of opportunity and its importance. For example, you need to be able to recognize a hot engagement opportunity that is ready to buy versus a contact that needs to be nurtured over time and does not want to be pressured. Otherwise, you might be too aggressive and scare off the latter, while the former, feeling ignored, buys from a competitor. You'll likely lose both as potential customers! With Engineering360's contacts and inquiries you know how to respond as you get contact information and intelligence on what your prospects were viewing.
- **Being familiar with and using Engineering360's Client Services site for accessing and downloading your contacts and inquiries (See Figure 1, on p.4).** Your Client Services area allows you to instantly download and forward your contacts and inquiries, track your brand exposure activity and review your account quickly and easily.
- **Knowing how to get contacts and inquiries into your contact management (i.e. Marketo, Eloqua, Goldmine, Access, Salesforce) customer relationship management (CRM) system or spreadsheet such as Excel.** If you don't do this, your ability to distribute and track these engagement opportunities is severely impacted. All processes become manual, contacts get lost, no one knows the status of an inquiry and finger-pointing can occur. Getting contacts and inquiries into a spreadsheet and tracking them doesn't have to be complicated if you plan ahead and gain agreement from your salesforce to report engagement opportunities that turn into sales. This can be done on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis using a simple report.
- **Knowing who is responsible for qualifying and distributing contacts and inquiries.** In some organizations all contacts and inquiries go directly to salespeople or distributors; in others, marketers qualify engagement opportunities first. You should also have a back-up plan to prevent contacts and inquiries from getting stale when the primary individual responsible for qualifying and distributing them is not available.
- **Knowing who should get any given contact or inquiry** an individual salesperson, territory manager, reseller, distributor, etc.; and how to pass a contact to that person. You need to look at your Engineering360 engagement opportunities carefully and develop a plan with your sales team for distributing contacts and inquiries. For instance, long-term prospects might be handled internally, hot engagement opportunities might go to larger distributors and smaller distributors may receive inquiries on a geographic basis.
- **Assigning accountability for tracking contacts and inquiries through the sales cycle and knowing the status of any contact or inquiry at any given time.** This is critical as it is the only way you accurately measure the quality of your engagement opportunities, effectiveness of marketing programs and the return you achieve.



Figure 1. Begin your lead management processes by logging into your Client Services area of Engineering360. Here you can view and download contacts and inquiries and track the results of your marketing programs.

STEP 2: ACCESS, EVALUATE AND RESPOND TO INQUIRIES

Checking new contacts and inquiries on a daily basis is an important habit to cultivate. A hot engagement opportunity can turn into a sale that same day—or can be lost to a competitor. Studies have shown that speed of response is the single most important element in converting an inquiry to a sale when the prospect is actively engaged in the buying process. Speed also reflects positively on your organization. Clearly, you have your act together.

However, not all contacts and inquiries are ready to buy at that moment and responding quickly does not mean you should respond aggressively. Understanding the type of engagement opportunity and how you got it can help you craft an appropriate response.

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO ENGINEERING360 INQUIRIES

Engineering360's engagement opportunities are highly filtered and contactable. These people have gone through a search, discovery, and thought process to find you. Your Engineering360 contacts and inquiries can be accessed 24/7, downloaded into a text (tab-delimited) file, and easily imported into most contact management programs (e.g. ACT, Goldmine, Access, Salesforce) or a simple Excel spreadsheet.

It is important to understand that your prospects are on Internet time and expect a quick response to their inquiries. However, it doesn't mean you should always pick up the phone immediately and call them to ask for an order. Sometimes the appropriate response is more subtle.

For instance, a buyer-initiated request for quotation (RFQ) requires an immediate and specific response including pricing and terms to help you close a sale. On the other hand, an inquiry from someone who has printed your technical specifications may still be in the information-gathering phase. This person, although very much a qualified lead, may require a period of nurturing to determine their needs, budget, and time frame for making a purchase decision.

An advantage Engineering360 offers is that for all unique contacts and inquiries you receive, you know the path they have taken to initiate contact with you. This information can help you determine the appropriate response—one that will more likely lead to a sale.

Engineering360's unique engagement opportunities are categorized by how the user initiates contact, according to the following ways:

- **RFQ (Request for Quotation)** — This is the most comprehensive sales opportunity and you receive it in real-time. It shows exactly what product(s) and service(s) a user is interested in as well as the quantity needed, their buying time frame and how they prefer to be contacted. This should be considered a highly-qualified engagement opportunity—someone that is narrowing down their decision. You get detailed information—even the competitors the prospect has looked at—to help you better respond to this contact and turn it into a sale. Respond within 48 hours with a written quotation that addresses the details of the inquiry. Also be sure to respond using their preferred method of contact as indicated on the RFQ.
- **Email** — The Engineering360 email link allows a prospect to contact you directly, in real-time, using a link appearing on your Supplier Info and Products pages. To reach this point, they have taken a number of steps and proactively reached out to you for additional information. They should be considered a serious engagement opportunity. Also, your prospect is showing you their preferred way to communicate: email. The best way to respond is through a prompt return email in which you reference

the interest they expressed on Engineering360. Additionally, you may want to provide relevant company or product information such as quality standards, design expertise, ISO certifications and customer service capabilities. Take the time to write a well-crafted response that includes your company address, phone, fax, website address and contact information for the person responding. If responding with an email, use the same level of attention as you would when writing a letter on company letterhead.

- CAD — Indicates a prospect linked directly to CAD information on your website following a search on Engineering360. If they download your CAD files, you have a very qualified engagement opportunity that is often using the CAD file in their actual design. Research indicates as much as 80–85 percent of downloaded CAD files result in actual sales.² You may want to respond by sending application notes and asking if pricing and availability are required at this time. You may also want to find out the project time frame so you can contact them when the product design cycle is nearing production phase. Someone using your CAD file may need a sample product for an initial prototype.
- Web — Shows who clicked to your website or PDF after conducting a search and finding you on Engineering360. A prospect drilling down to this level is probably on the path to making a decision. As they have not specifically asked to be contacted or inquired about a particular product or service, at this point it may be more appropriate to send an email asking if you can help them, rather than making a phone call looking to close a sale. Your email could include references, links, additional PDF files or other relevant information.
- PrintSpecs — Indicates an Engineering360 user has printed your product specification for review. This information is often gathered for purchasing agents' review or to compare a number of product specifications from different companies. This type of contact may turn into a sale if you are able to answer any questions they have about specifications and show them exactly how your product fits their needs. Be prepared to discuss or present applications for the product or other details about the product's specifications.
- Product Contacts — Product contacts are from those users who have viewed your specifications, images or product data. The contact you receive specifies which product they are interested in. An appropriate response would be to initiate marketing contact to see if they would like additional product information such as applications or availability.
- Supplier Contacts — Supplier contacts are from those users who have discovered more information about your company by visiting your Supplier Info page or catalog or have viewed one of your articles in the Technical Library. This contact is attempting to learn more about your company. An appropriate response would be to initiate marketing contact to see if they would like additional information about your products, services or company's capabilities.

FOLLOWING UP WITH CONTACTS AND INQUIRIES: BEST PRACTICES

Depending on the nature of the contact, there are a number of best practices you can follow to increase the likelihood that you will realize a sale from an Engineering360 contact or inquiry. Particularly in the case of CAD, RFQ and email requests, you can further qualify the prospect by asking questions such as:

- What is the time frame of the project?
- What stage of the project are you in (early design phase, nearing production, etc.)?
- What is the application for this product? How will it be used?
- Where will the product be shipped?

Here are some recommendations for using email when responding to contacts in cases where the prospect hasn't proactively reached out to you regarding a specific product:

Don't think of email as a quick and informal note. An email represents your company's brand and image and it may be the first impression a prospect has of you.

- Make sure your response is tailored to the inquiry. You might develop several preformatted email templates to respond to different types of inquiries.
- Treat an email like a typed letter on company letterhead: use correct spelling, write professionally, be brief, be sure to proofread.
- The subject line of your email is important. Make sure it identifies who you are and is relevant. Keep the subject line to 5–7 words.
- Include all of your company contact information as well as the name and contact information of the individual responding.
- Provide links in the email allowing the prospect to find additional information on your website or in your online product catalog.

FILTERING CONTACTS AND INQUIRIES BY COUNTRY

International engagement opportunities can be an excellent source of revenue for you. The worldwide reach and broad exposure for your company's products in international markets is one of the many advantages of marketing on Engineering360. However, in some cases you may want to filter contacts by geography. Engineering360 provides you with a mechanism to filter by country and allows you to reduce the number coming from geographic regions that are not currently priority areas for your business.

STEP 3: DISTRIBUTE CONTACTS & INQUIRIES TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR PROPER FOLLOW-UP

The distribution of contacts and inquiries is an internal process requiring close communication and integration between sales and marketing people and systems. You need to access, review, prioritize and determine where an inquiry should go—to a particular salesperson, territory manager, reseller or other person—and then get it there, often via a networked contact management system or emailed spreadsheet.

When distributing contacts and inquiries, it's important to engage the sales reps/distributors by sharing everything you know about a contact such as when and where it came from, how qualified it is and buying time frame. You should also set expectations for follow up. Does this contact need to be contacted today? What is the optimal way to initiate contact? The answer often depends on the source of the opportunity and its quality.

In addition, you need back-up processes in place in case the sales rep assigned to the opportunity is unavailable and the inquiry requires immediate action to help close a sale. The better you can audit your lead distribution processes, the better you can manage engagement opportunities through the sales cycle and achieve a greater return on demand-generation programs.

In the case of your contacts and inquiries, the Engineering360 email forwarding feature is a fast and convenient way to distribute a contact to anyone in your organization no matter where they are located (see Figure 2). Email forwarding allows you to send a lead report and add comments of your own, based on your knowledge of the prospect's needs. If it's a hot engagement opportunity, you'll want the sales rep, manufacturing rep or distributor to know immediately.

Send this report to the following e-mail address:
(Use commas for multiple e-mail addresses.)
 [Address Book](#)

Your e-mail:

Your Name:

Add Comments:
(You can also add comments to each of the contacts below.)

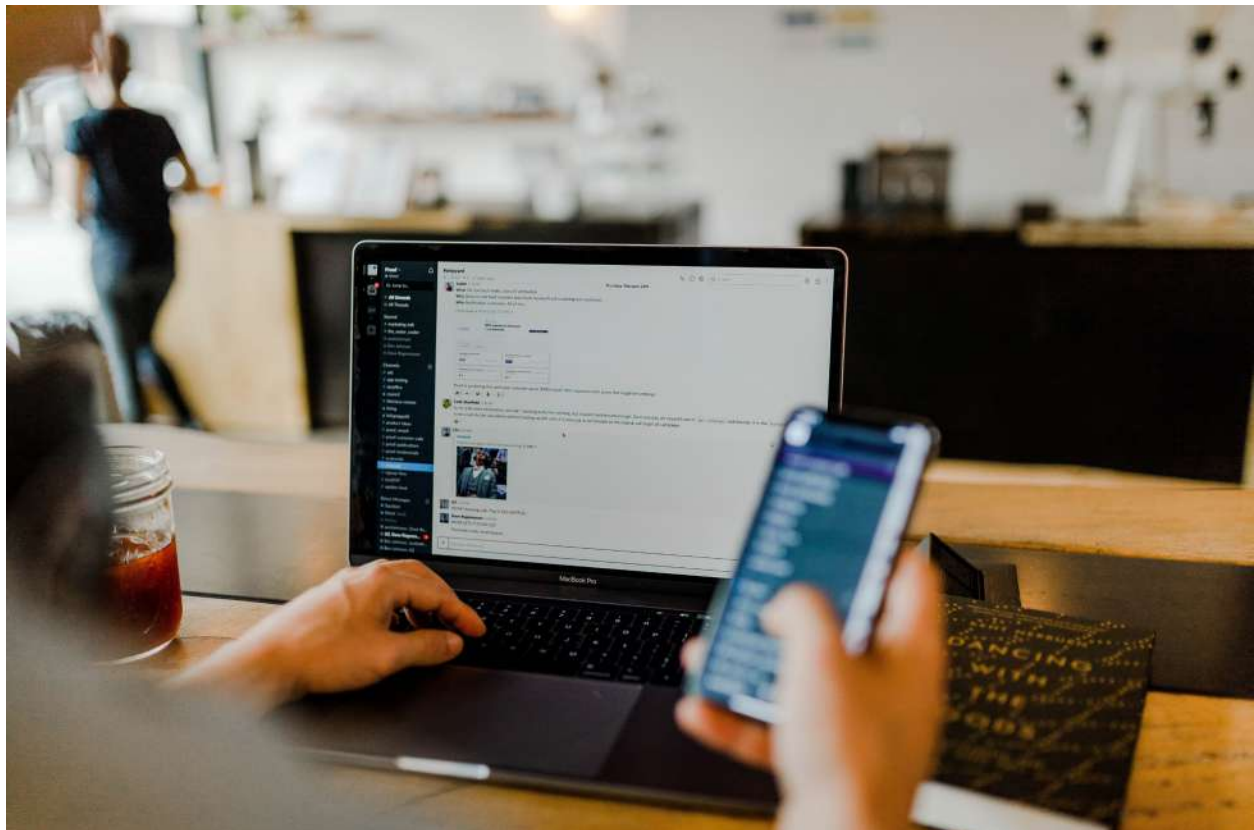
Figure 2. Engineering360's email forwarding feature lets you quickly and easily add comments and pass a contact to anyone in your organization.

STEP 4: TRACK OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE SALES CYCLE

In some organizations, contacts and inquiries get handed off to someone in the sales arm and marketing never hears about them again. How do you know if the engagement opportunities you generated turned into sales? Or consider this: what if you decide a marketing program isn't working because the contacts and inquiries do not turn into sales after three months—while the typical sales cycle for your organization is six months? Lack of understanding and tracking opportunities through your sales cycle may lead you to mistakenly abandon your best marketing programs!

The most comprehensive way to track engagement opportunities is to have a central database or spreadsheet of contacts and inquiries where anyone who has contact with a prospect—a marketer, salesperson, technical support, customer service, telemarketer—can update the lead record with new information, enabling those with access the ability to see it, understand the status of the inquiry and take appropriate action whether it be contacting the lead, sending additional information or setting an appointment to close the sale. Tracking does not have to be complicated. You can list the contacts in an Excel spreadsheet and show who received them and when. You can add a few columns to track status, sales orders and other pertinent information.

Tracking contacts and inquiries through the sales cycle helps you catch engagement opportunities that might fall through the cracks and enables you to calculate return for your marketing programs. You'll know how many contacts and inquiries are converted to sales and, if your tracking is thorough, you'll know the reason why an inquiry didn't convert: whether it was a competitive product, a change in prospect's needs or even an internal breakdown managing the engagement opportunity.



STEP 5: UNDERSTAND & USE ENGINEERING360 MARKETING PROGRAM FEATURES

Your Engineering360 marketing program includes many ways to increase your brand exposure, number of engagement opportunities and overall value of your marketing program.

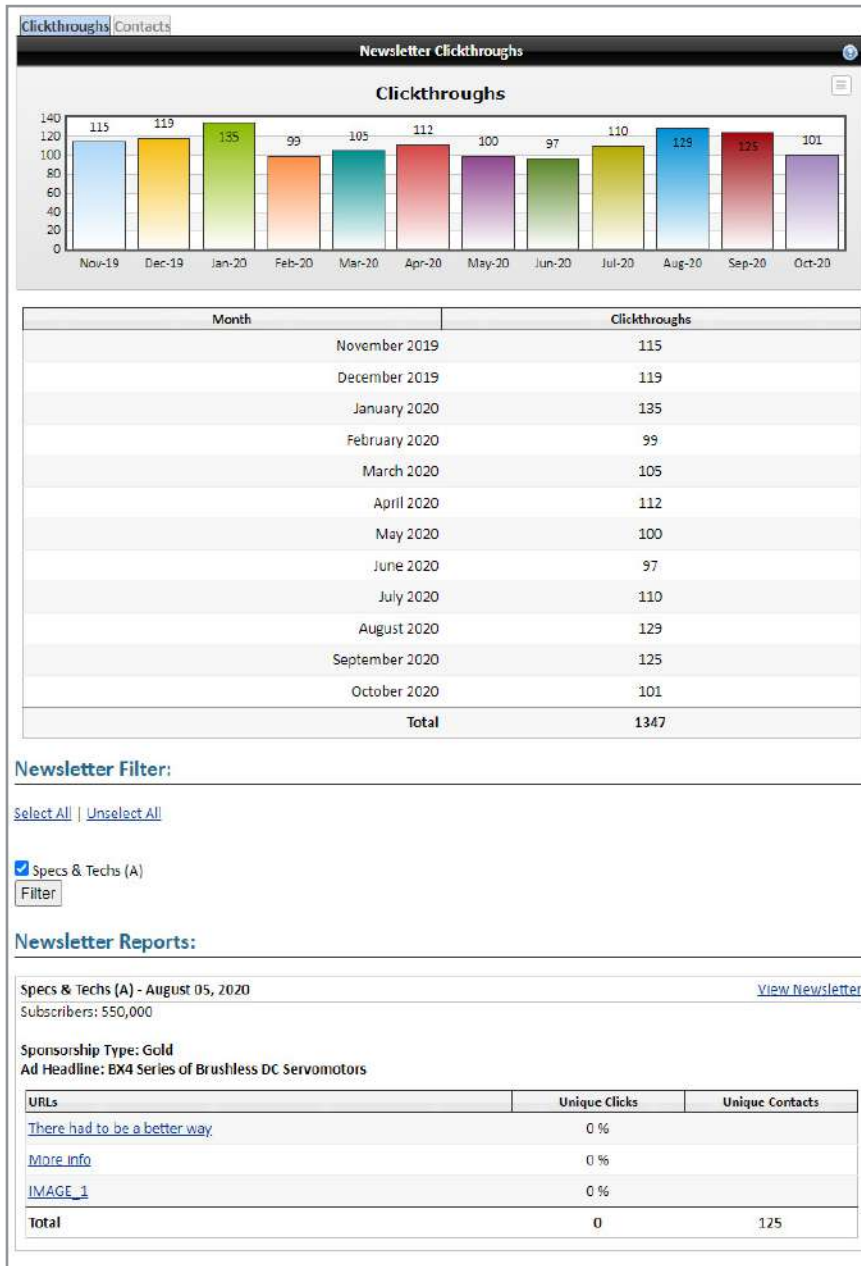
A good place to begin analyzing the effectiveness of your message and program is by looking at your “Audience Exposure Within Engineering360” report (see Figure 3, on p.11). This report can be accessed by the “Contacts Detail” link underneath “Reporting” in the left hand navigation menu. It shows your unique contacts and inquiries activity and also the exposure your brand receives, much like the number of impressions you get when you place a print ad in a magazine. But unlike print media which has a short shelf life, Engineering360 offers ongoing exposure for your products and brand. Plus, on Engineering360 there are multiple places where prospects are exposed to information about your company and products: your Company Profile page, Product pages, Product Announcements, Banner Advertisements, Technical Library and more.

The key information on the “Audience Exposure Within Engineering360” report includes:

- Impressions — This column lists the number of times your product or company information pages were presented to users on Engineering360. Impressions represent the total number of pages viewed by engineering, industrial and technical professionals connecting with your products, services, brand and/or company name.
- Prospects — Identifies the number of individuals who saw your products and/or company information during a search.
- All Contacts & Inquiries — Indicates all activities taken by Engineering360 registered users to gain more information on your company, brand, products and/ or services. This includes RFQ, Email, PrintSpecs, Web, Product and Supplier contacts.
- Unique Contacts and Inquiries — This column identifies the unique individuals who have conducted a specification-based search in your product area and/ or actively clicked on links for your company, brand, products and/or services to gain more information. These contacts and inquiries identify what the activity was and provide a description of the specific product and/or service searched, when applicable.



Figure 3. You can easily access comprehensive information on your engagement opportunities and brand activity.



E-NEWSLETTER REPORTING

You can also access reporting for your Engineering360 e-newsletter advertisements in Client Services. Reporting data includes number of ad click-throughs, broken out by each ad placed and the total number. Viewing all of your ad reporting allows you to see which ads performed best, letting you optimize your newsletter

Banners



Access your Banner Ad report and view both your display and click-through statistics.

Banner Campaign Statistics

Review your current banner campaign statistics from either your Engineering360 Site Banner or your Ad Network program.
(data is available from July 2019 to yesterday)

From
 To
 Filter By

History of Product Announcement Billboard Activity

Product Announcement Billboard	Start Date	End Date	Type	Product Category	Impressions	Clicks	Click Rate
RLT Running Line Tensiometer  <p>The RLT is designed to monitor tension loads on wire, rope or cable. One of the popular uses is in the stringing of underground cable. It continually monitors cable tension, allowing even sensitive fiber optic cable to be drawn for miles through underground conduit without being damaged or broken. The RLT design employs three precision-engineered roller bearing sheaves mount in a rigid frame.</p>	08/01/2020	01/31/2021	CAB	Calibration Standards & Reference Sources	1854	45	2.43%
LGP 382 Ultra Precision  <p>The LGP 382 is a compression only, low profile, shear web designed load cell, which has brought new benefits and broader applications for the user. The resistance to extraneous forces, bending, torsion, and side loads; produces high fatigue life and permits less stringent mounting alignment and reduces the possibility of reading errors.</p>	06/01/2020	11/30/2020	CAB	Calibration Standards & Reference Sources	2456	52	3.75%
Grand Totals					4310	137	3.18%

BANNER AD REPORTING

You can view both your display and click-through statistics, by date range, from either your Engineering360 site banner, Electronics360 or DataSheets360 sponsorship or your ad network program.

MAXIMIZE YOUR PRODUCT DISCOVERY PROGRAM

GlobalSpec's Product Discovery programs are comprehensive and effective for suppliers needing to reach the engineering and technical audience. Check to see you are using the following features to their fullest advantage:

- **Company Profile Page** — This page is as important as any advertisement you might place as it's widely viewed by prospects. Engineering360 creates a Company Profile page to get you started. You can tailor it to highlight your most important points of differentiation. Treat this page like an advertisement with a headline, high-quality images and copy promoting your company's current messaging, unique capabilities, certifications and/or the products you want to emphasize. Think of your Company Profile page as an ongoing selling vehicle that puts the best face of your business in front of your most interested prospects.
- **Announcements** — This is a great way to showcase your products and/or capabilities. Depending on your Engineering360 program, you can publish up to 50 Product Announcements for your company on Engineering360. We suggest you use them all and keep them up-to-date using the self-publishing tools provided with your Engineering360 program ensuring that any links that return to your website are updated. Product Announcements are a great way to draw attention to new or hot products and you can provide links to datasheets, PDFs and other information important to your audience.
- **Technical Library** — By including electronic versions of your technical articles, application notes, tutorials and design guidelines within your Engineering360 representation, you can further promote your capabilities, sell your expertise and position your company as a knowledgeable resource in your industry. We encourage you to contribute, as this resource is widely used by engineering and technical professionals seeking highly technical information. Links to your articles appear on your Technical Articles page, offering you yet another opportunity to reach prospects and make your brand more visible.
- **Distributor List** — Publish the names and contact information of distributors that offer your products.
- **Line Card** — This tool allows distributors to publish their line card.
- **Location List** — Additional company locations other than your main address can be listed.
- **News** — Publicize company news items and press releases.

GLOBALSPEC MARKETING SOLUTIONS

GlobalSpec Media Solutions offers many other marketing programs designed to help you increase your brand exposure, target more prospects and increase awareness, demand and engagement. Many GlobalSpec clients have achieved significant benefits in terms of increased engagement opportunities and sales by taking full advantage of these programs:

[Engineering360.com](#) — This “one-stop” resource is the world’s largest—and most valuable—online destination for the engineering community, reaching half the world’s engineers with cutting-edge research, data and insight not available anywhere else. Take advantage of unique opportunities to build brand awareness and drive unparalleled engagement opportunities.

[Searchable Catalog Programs](#) — Our catalog programs are specifically designed to help you get maximum exposure to the audience you want to reach, providing a cross-channel solution to promote your company, products and services, and to generate demand. Each program includes a robust company profile; product announcements to promote product releases and other news; links to your company’s website, technical articles, press releases, videos, and social media channels. You’ll receive real-time, downloadable reports that include full contact information on potential customers. In addition, the searchable catalog program allows for full representation of your products and services in the form of an online catalog. This allows potential customers to search by specification and find your products and services easily. The resulting contact reports include contact information and details on what exactly was being searched.

[E-Newsletter Advertising](#) — Advertising in any one of GlobalSpec’s 70+ product- or industry specific E-newsletters puts your company, products and services in front of a targeted audience of engineering and technical professionals—the people you are looking to reach. Because most GlobalSpec e-newsletter readers are power users, an advertisement can have a powerful impact. It’s a great way to promote a new product, draw attention to a specific product line or promote your appearance at an industry trade show or conference.

[Webinar Packages](#) — Webinars provide strong demand generation and the ability to build brand awareness, engage with your target audience and establish thought leadership in your industry. With GlobalSpec Media Solution, you get a one-stop solution from content development to marketing and from production to hosting. Your target audience also finds great value in viewing webinars. They are convenient to attend and the events themselves are more robust, interactive and compelling than ever before.

[Banner Ad Network](#) — Reach a large audience, while targeting engineering and technical professionals with Engineering360’s Banner Ad Network. Your banner ads can appear on hundreds of relevant sites, which can deliver millions of targeted impressions a month. This ensures your message achieves the greatest reach while still staying focused.

[Electronics](#) — GlobalSpec Media Solutions delivers your message and product information to your target audience online and in their inbox during all phases of the product design lifecycle—research, design, consideration and comparison, procurement and parts inventory management. Our experience in electronics and the interactive educational resources we provide, allows us to capture the attention of decision makers in engineering, procurement, supply chain management, operations and manufacturing— the exact professionals you must reach. Our electronics-specific industry sites include Electronics360.com, a digital publication offering the latest news and insights on the end-to-end value chain, and Datasheets360.com, a searchable database of over 200 million part numbers, featuring datasheets, pricing and availability information.

Product Announcement Billboards — If you're seeking the right audience for a particular product or service, Product Announcement Billboards are an effective way to get a prospect's attention while they are searching, giving you qualified results. Product Announcement Billboards allow you to reach your target audience with a relevant message while they are in design mode and looking for technical specifications. Product Announcement Billboards appear on the right hand side of targeted pages throughout the site in the product or service category of your choice. They include a linked image and headline, helping you significantly increase your exposure to engineering, technical and industrial professionals on Engineering360.

Content Marketing Services — GlobalSpec offers a suite of content marketing services that help you connect to your audience in a way they can relate to—through valuable industry intelligence. We offer a full-service solution, from content development, to promotion of your white papers, research reports, industry perspectives and other content.

Custom Email — Share promotions, offers, brand and product messaging with a targeted audience of engineering, manufacturing, industrial, technical and scientific professionals. Custom email products from GlobalSpec Media Solutions allow you to reach the right audience... right in their inboxes.

CAD Link — If you have CAD drawings on your website, you can link to them from your online catalog on Engineering360. CAD links generate highly qualified contacts and inquiries since it's likely the user is downloading the CAD drawing into a product prototype.



GlobalSpec has a knowledgeable and responsive Customer Care team. We can help answer questions you might have about your program and the self-management tools in the Client Services area. For assistance, please contact GlobalSpec Media Solutions Customer Care. Call toll-free 800.261.2052 or 518.880.0200.

CONCLUSION

GlobalSpec Media Solutions is committed to helping you achieve the greatest possible return from your marketing efforts. Our comprehensive marketing programs are designed to help you maximize your company's brand exposure and the number of contacts and inquiries you receive. Sound lead management practices combined with a strong portfolio of GlobalSpec marketing options can help you increase the success of your marketing program. With Engineering360, you reach the right audience at the right time: engineering and technical buyers actively searching for products, services and companies online that meet their specific needs.

For more information on how GlobalSpec Media Solutions can help you reach your target audience, please call 800.261.2052 or visit www.engineering360.com/advertising.

ABOUT GLOBALSPEC MEDIA SOLUTIONS

GlobalSpec Media Solutions delivers the single source for trusted, expert engineering content, information, insight, tools and community for engineers and technical professionals across multiple industries and disciplines. An engaged community of industry professionals rely on GlobalSpec Media Solutions' properties as a trusted resource at every stage of the research, product design and purchasing process. For industrial marketers, our mission is to provide comprehensive digital media solutions that connect companies with their target audience and generate unparalleled results — delivering measurable and actionable awareness, demand and engagement opportunities at all stages of the buy cycle.

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