

Marketing Industrial Automation Products



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Table of Contents



Abstract.....	4
The Product.....	5
The Customer	6
The Purchase	7
The Purchasing Process	8
Attracting New Prospects.....	9
Converting Prospects to Leads.....	10
Marketing Automation	12
Marketing Don'ts and Things to Avoid	13
Summary	14
About the Author	15



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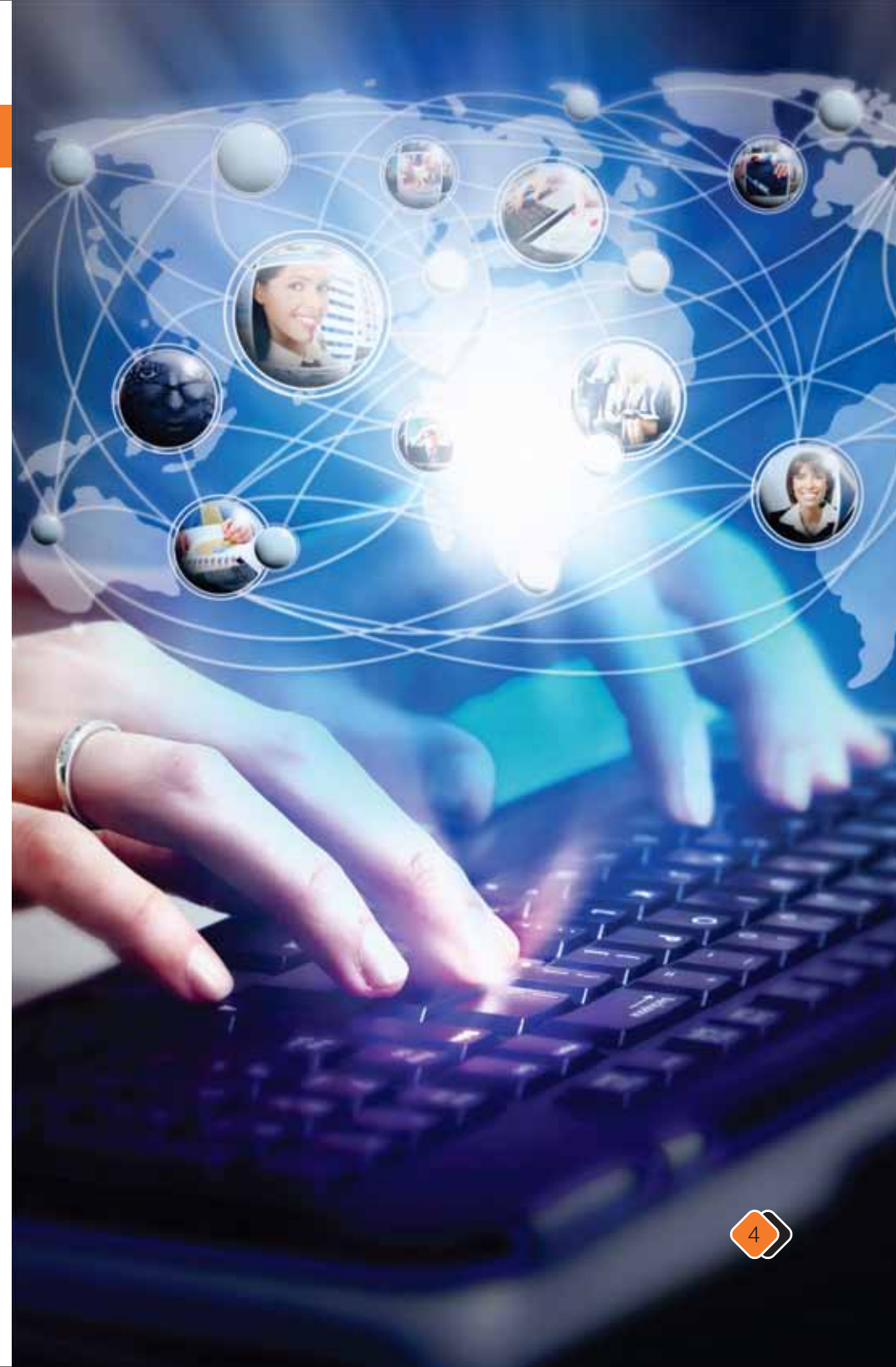
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Abstract

As not all products, customers, and industries are the same, it makes sense to create marketing approaches that are tailored to fit the unique blend of product, customer, and industry needs.

Industrial automation products solve unique problems for a very specific market segment. If you are a marketer, product manager, or sales manager tasked with the job of increasing revenue for your industrial automation product, understanding how to market your products is a critical first step.

This ebook discusses the product, the customer, and the purchasing process, and it provides some guidance for industrial automation marketers. It also makes the argument that marketing automation is an essential tool for success in industrial automation product marketing.



Chapter 1: The Product

Industrial automation products have two things in common. First, the products are designed to play a part in automating some facet of a manufacturing process. Although each vendor would like to provide a complete automation system for the client, the reality is the installed system is typically made up of many products from many vendors.

The second commonality is the utility the products provide. The industrial automation system combines multiple products to reduce manual labor, increase productivity, improve safety, improve uptime, and provide other benefits. As such, any product implemented is typically used for a relatively long time and is usually very expensive to displace.

People have been trained to use the existing products, failure modes have been documented, procedures have been created to mitigate risk during failure, and someone's career may have been advanced as a result of the initial purchase.

If the total system is running, it is providing significant benefit. Replacing any component with a new product from a new vendor typically involves significant effort combined with significant cost due to lost production, retraining, and increased risk due to unfamiliarity, etc.



Chapter 2: The Customer

Often there is not a single person who is tasked with purchasing the industrial automation product. The product can be purchased as a piece of a subsystem, or as part of an optimization initiative. What frequently happens is that the group who purchases the product differs from the people who will be using the product.

The product may be purchased by an integration company, or recommended by the entity who will ultimately own the asset. Regardless, the purchasing process will involve multiple constituents and could take a substantial amount of research before the purchase. As an industrial automation product plays a role in production, there is always a technical influencer who knows a great deal about the process and how the system will be used.



Chapter 3: The Purchase

As the industrial automation product plays a key role in some manufacturing process, the purchase is important and very visible. Unlike many product purchases, the industrial automation product impacts many people. Thus, if the product does not work as designed or the wrong product is purchased many people are impacted by the purchase.

The product price is not the only calculation in the purchase decision, the realized value of the product can be many times the purchase price. If the wrong product is purchased the financial impact is greater than the purchase price. The cost of failure could be:

- lost lives;
- damaged equipment;
- lost jobs;
- impacted production output; and
- costly replacement (downtime, man hours).

Alternatively, the benefits of the product are also much greater than the purchase price. These include:

- increased safety;
- reduced manual effort costs;
- increased per unit prices due to decreased production variability; and
- internal promotion due to spearheading a project that provides measureable value.

Again, the point being made here is the purchase of an industrial automation product has impact and should not be taken lightly. As well, the purchase is not typically done in haste or without significant research. One or more people will be impacted positively or negatively based on the purchase success/failure. This implies a long buying process.

Chapter 4: The Purchasing Process

When considering marketing strategies it is important to understand the purchasing process. For an industrial automation product purchase the process typically involves a project. Projects require approval and involve internal competition.

Like every business, every manufacturing company has more things that need to be done than budgets or time will allow. There are several things to consider, including:

- the chosen projects involve many stakeholders;
- the project success will be monitored and measured;
- the pre-project funding, post project funding/pre project awarding will be investigated;
- a larger project that has won internally over several other similar projects in cost and scope may be involved;
- the project champion is under a great deal of pressure to make the right product decisions; and
- value realization occurs after the product has been installed (sometimes over a year after product purchased).

Bottom line: multi-step approach to purchasing implies multi-step process of marketing and selling.



Chapter 5: Attracting New Prospects

It is important to understand the concept of a marketing funnel. The purchase is one of impact and importance, thus, there are multiple stages to the marketing and sales processes. These include segmenting the funnel, creating unique strategies to move people into each segment, and measuring the segment entrances and exits for each step in the marketing funnel.

The first step in the marketing funnel is the attract segment. Bringing people to your product and company typically is done via the web.

Customer Segmentation

Understanding who buys and who influences purchasing decisions is extremely important. Creating customer profiles that include compelling reasons to buy, motivations, job titles, etc., will greatly improve your ability to communicate your value.

Content Creation

Content is king. There will be a significant amount of research done before the purchase. Ensure the content is on your website.

Engage Socially

Investigation often occurs through social media. A recent survey states that 60 per cent of all engineers use social media to find new products. LinkedIn groups and Google Plus are replacing the technical forums of yesterday. The social discussion is extremely important for building trust and authority. If you are absent from the conversation then so is your company and products.

Engage your Partner Network

If you are selling through channel partners (partner networks similar to franchise models) it is critical to be driving business to them, rather than waiting for them to sell your product. Your role is to attract people to your product and send them to your network. If your channel partners are not exceptional marketers, become their marketing department.

Chapter 6: Converting Prospects to Leads

Product Positioning

As the purchase of an industrial automation product has been demonstrated to be one of impact and risk, it is extremely important to have clarity in your product positioning statement. The statements must:

Be very clear in what value the product will provide.

The technical details are important, but the value being delivered is much more important.

- Answer “Why others trust this product”.
- The product purchase is one of trust. Being first to have a new gadget may make sense in other industries, but in industrial manufacturing no one wants to be the first to risk breaking in new technology. Third-party credibility indicators are critical. Awards, testimonials, certifications are all very important. Collect: post-purchase testimonials (“Why I bought”);
- post-value realization testimonials; and
- post-value realization case studies.

Focus on Ease of Integration

The total cost of deployment is typically many times the product price. Your product messaging must address the integration cost. If the current system is working, how easy will it be to get your product integrated and providing value quickly? Few industrial consumers

are comfortable with the “rip and replace” message; your product must demonstrate its integration capabilities.

Define the compelling reasons to purchase

Explain how your product solves the problem for each constituent in the buying process. Define the implications of this problem, that is, how much it will cost NOT to buy your product. This should be described without using a lot of industry jargon or an abundance of technical detail. Understand there is a buying process. The need comes before the technical solution. Address the need first.

Provide unique value

If your product is unique, state clearly what the unique differentiator is. Too many diamonds are buried in a sea of mud. Clear the technical jargon and communicate the unique value offer.

Corporate Positioning

The company should be the foundation that will live well beyond the life of the product. The product may solve unique problems for your prospects but no one will buy from a company that appears to be unstable, shoddy, or lacking in credibility. Assume that your prospects do not know or trust your company. The corporate positioning statements must:

State clearly what the company does. The company is not a collection of fun-loving people; it is a rock-solid performer that has been trusted by many people for many years. State clearly what the company does.

Answer why people trust your company.

Third-party credibility indicators are extremely important for corporate positioning. Again, awards, certifications, testimonials, and case studies are all good ways to communicate that your company can be trusted.

Chapter 7: Marketing Automation

Marketing automation will help you maximize your marketing budget. Marketing automation, similar to industrial automation, is designed to reduce manual labor and variability, and improve quality of delivery while increasing your output. The benefits of marketing automation are similar to those of any automation system. Use marketing automation to:

- reduce the time-to-value received from your product;
- automatically deliver value to the prospect after you receive the contact information;
- segment your email campaigns and send the right message to the right person;
- track every initiative's call-to-action performance;
- track other steps in the process;
- score the prospects thus reducing the time sales spends with unqualified leads; and
- nurture prospects that are not ready to buy.

These tasks, just like manufacturing in the early 1900s, can be done manually. The reality is you cannot afford to NOT use marketing automation. If you are trying to win your prospect over with trust, then timely delivery of high-quality, high-value communications is critical. Another key benefit to using automation is optimization through detailed metrics analysis. If your marketing is not working, you will know quickly with a marketing automation platform.



Chapter 8: Marketing Don'ts and Things to Avoid

Although improving your revenue pace is important to you, it is not important to your prospect. It is critical to never lose sight of the fact that the purchase is one of importance and impact. Respecting your prospect will gain you respect in the long run. Following are some things NOT to do.

Spam

Never spam your contact list with useless junk about discounts and “buy now” messages. This not only cheapens your product and erodes your product value, it annoys your prospects. Provide value at all stages of the buying process. If thinking about using the “avoid a loss” close in your marketing sales efforts, think carefully about the prospect’s loss when the wrong product purchase decision is made.

Lead with Technical Details

Do not focus all of your effort on technical details of your product. This is not a feature race, it is a time-to-value race. Demonstrate how quickly your product will deliver value; if required, back it up with technical details.

Wasting Money

Do not spend money on marketing and sales efforts unless you can track the return on investment (ROI). If you are not using marketing automation, you are wasting money.

Stop Providing Value

Do not stop your marketing effort once an opportunity is created and your sales team is engaged. If you are using marketing automation, it is very easy to assist sales people.



Summary

Industrial automation has and will continue to revolutionize manufacturing. Getting the right product into an industrial automation system not only benefits the vendors of the product, it clearly benefits the manufacturer who is automating a process.

As mistakes are visible and costly, the industrial automation purchase is one of impact and importance. Marketing your product into this environment requires an understanding of the customer's domain, the product you sell, and the marketing process. The purchase is never made hastily or without trust.

Traditional marketing approaches are rapidly falling by the wayside. Print advertising and tradeshow are giving way to socially driven, online conversations. The use of marketing automation technology to drive industrial automation product marketing is becoming the norm.

As an industrial automation product purchase is one of trust, every step of the buying process is an opportunity for the marketer to increase trust. Without marketing automation it is difficult to maintain the level of quality, consistency, and timelines that build that trust.

For those who are selling industrial automation products, the advice being given to clients and prospects is to look to a professional services company if there is no in-house expertise. The same is true for marketing automation. The case for marketing automation products is the same as that of industrial automation products. The sooner you automate, the sooner you realize the benefits of the technology.



About the Author

Sean Leonard, B.Sc Eng. CompE, Msc (CompE), MBA
(Technology Commercialization)

Sean Leonard is the CEO and co-founder of JumpDEMAND Inc. where he is dedicated to helping businesses with advanced e-marketing strategies, marketing automation technology, sales and marketing expertise that is simple effective, and affordable.

As an entrepreneur, Sean has more than twenty-five years of successful experience launching, owning, operating and growing businesses. This includes more than 10 years of successful global sales and marketing experience in the industrial automation industry.

Prior to founding JumpDEMAND, Sean's corporate business career included engineering and executive management positions with MatrikonOPC: a Division of Honeywell, SUBNET Solutions, and the University of Alberta.

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Our passion is helping businesses grow...

JumpDEMAND is a marketing company that helps businesses of all sizes grow. Using our ActiveDEMAND automation platform, we can execute powerful online marketing strategies that typically are only executed by big budget global brands, at a fraction of the cost.

Using JumpDEMAND's automation technology, businesses can now be marketed like big companies but without the overhead. Whether you're a one person company or have thousands of employees, JumpDEMAND has a solution for you.

Unlike other marketing firms in this space that focus their efforts on traditional marketing techniques that are hard if not impossible to demonstrate returns, or alternatively provide tools instead of expertise, JumpDEMAND combines the use of revenue funnel automation technology and sales expertise to deliver measurable results. JumpDEMAND closes the sales and marketing gap by working closely with our customers to increase their ROI on marketing and sales expenditures through automation and measurement of the marketing and sales funnels.

Our Platform

A unique JumpDEMAND advantage is the ActiveDEMAND technology platform. ActiveDEMAND is a JumpDEMAND cloud based solution that automates many aspects of the marketing process. With ActiveDEMAND automating the online marketing workflows, JumpDEMAND is able to deliver what matters most to your business: sales conversion velocity.

Sales Expertise

JumpDEMAND understands Sales. With many years of running global sales organizations under our belt, JumpDEMAND is in the unique position of truly understanding the importance of integrating into a sales process. Unlike many marketing organizations that feel their job is done once the lead is produced, JumpDEMAND is focused on conversion velocity.

Inbound Marketing Expertise

Online Marketing has been a JumpDEMAND focus for many years. Companies trust JumpDEMAND to be their Inbound Marketing partner because JumpDEMAND is a leader in SEO, online advertising, website authority building, and marketing automation.



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