



GoldsteinGroup
communications

Market to Engineers:

What Works Today?

For Reaching
Millennial Engineers



WHITE PAPER

What Works Today For Reaching Millennial Engineers?

Among the most valuable data points to understand how to market today are surveys conducted by publishers to document how engineers learn about new products and where they go to buy them. In an era of growing ecommerce, Amazon and other dramatic shifts in how companies market to engineers and other technical buyers, keeping in front of these trends is rather critical.

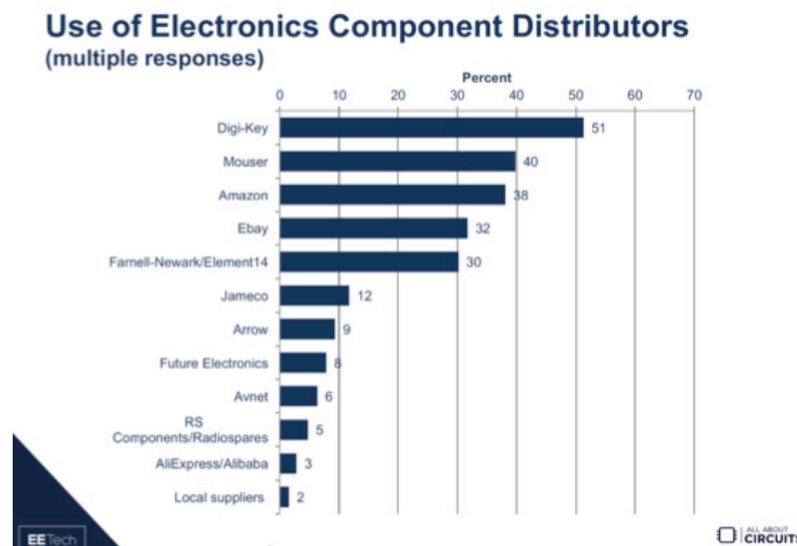
So, with gratitude to several engineer-focused publishers who share our interest in digital marketing trends, here are some highlights from a variety of studies we've seen recently. These are highlights taken from the following studies:

- ▶ Aspecore 2017 B-to-B Market Study, 1045 respondents North America
- ▶ EETech, 2558 respondents worldwide
- ▶ IEEE engineering360 "Pulse of the Engineer," 1581 respondents worldwide
- ▶ CFE Media "Marketing to Engineers," 726 respondents worldwide
- ▶ Tech Briefs Media, "The Power of B2B, Engineering Market Responses," 226 respondents worldwide

Key findings relevant to engineer-to-engineer marketing:

- 1. What They Say (EETech):** Perhaps at the top of the list is the explosive impact Amazon is having in the b-to-b market. We've talked about it coming for several years. Now Amazon has gone from no where two years ago to a whopping 38% of electronic engineers reporting they buy products on Amazon for work-related purchases. It's even more pronounced among younger engineers, as you'd expect: 55% of younger engineers report using Amazon. And it's in the #1 position ahead of all other electronics distributors in Asia. Amazon is now far ahead of even multi-billion dollar distributors who have long dominated this market sector. (Want to guess who's right behind Amazon? Ebay.)

What it Means: *If you don't have an Amazon Prime store on Amazon, get one. Before the end of the day.*



2. **What They Say (EETech):** 22%, more than one in five, of millennial engineers are the “prime” decision-maker for products and purchases.

What it Means: Make sure your database includes young engineers. If the average age of your database is in the 50s, you risk talking to a less and less important sector of the market and missing a major cohort of decision-makers for whatever you’re selling. Sales teams need to focus on transferring established relationships at companies to younger decision-makers. Marketers need to focus on account penetration in their databases, moving beyond one-two contacts to ensure they have all members of engineering teams in their databases. Account penetration needs to be a prime objective for marketers going forward. And, if you don’t know the average age of your own database, do the homework to find out and ensure it’s below 50.

Note: EETech’s average website reader is 44 years old. By comparison, the IEEEEngineering360 survey reported that almost half of engineers, 47%, have 30+ years of service and are nearing retirement, which seems a bit high. When you’re buying online media for next year, make sure you have the discussion with your sales reps about the average age of the audiences they’re bringing you. Push them to take steps to reach younger engineers, and they’ll be more valuable to you.

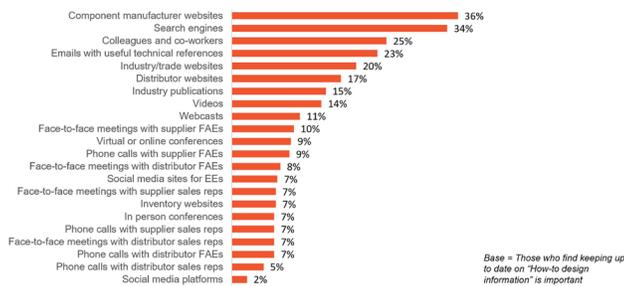
3. **What They Say (EETech):** The media market is fragmenting. While in the past engineers used to read a few leading websites such as EETimes, EDN, Electronic Design or Electronic Products, younger engineers now have found “newer” sites to get their news from such as allaboutcircuits.com, hackaday.com or electronics360.com. “The old trade-mag sites are all just full of press releases,” said one respondent.

What it Means: Your advertising schedule and PR targeting need to diversify beyond the traditional media in order to reach younger engineers.

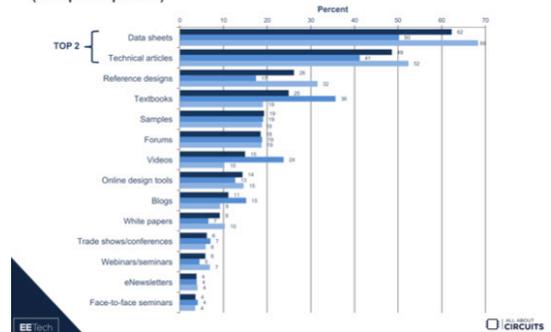
4. **What They Say (EETech, IEEEEngineering360, Aspencore):** Where do engineers turn to most frequently for new information? The research for several years points to manufacturers websites, and the newest studies confirm that. Aspencore’s 2017 B-to-B Market Study shows that engineers turn to manufacturer websites first, as they do when asked where they turn to learn about new products and new technologies. The rankings were similar in the IEEE study, with co-workers/colleagues at the top, closely followed by vendor-supplied white papers, training and webinars. Companies should take heart that their websites are seen as a reliable information source. The presence of colleagues and blogs are significant, and require investment of time there.

What it Means: Marketers should prioritize spending dollars on search, tutorial content, their websites. Even though it’s at the bottom of most surveys, marketers need to spend time building their social media channels in order to spur colleague word-of-mouth referrals. Most want articles, webcasts, white papers and data sheets. Building a content strategy around these four will improve rankings on search, improve lead/quote request flow from your website, and drive influencer word-of-mouth referrals via social media sharing.

Information Sources Used for “How-To Design Information”



Types of Information Used (multiple responses)



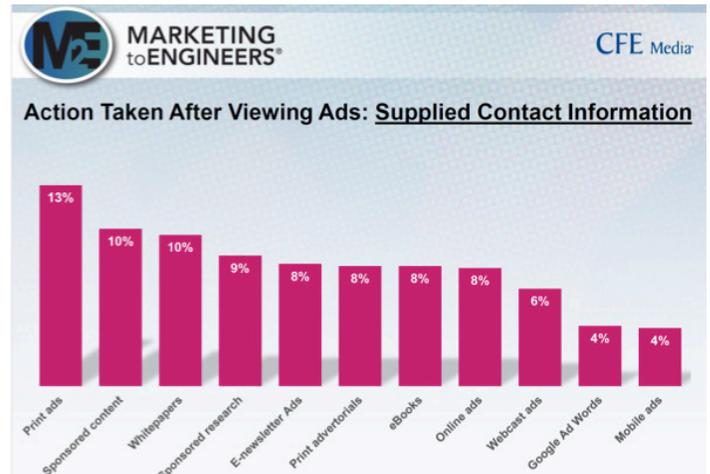
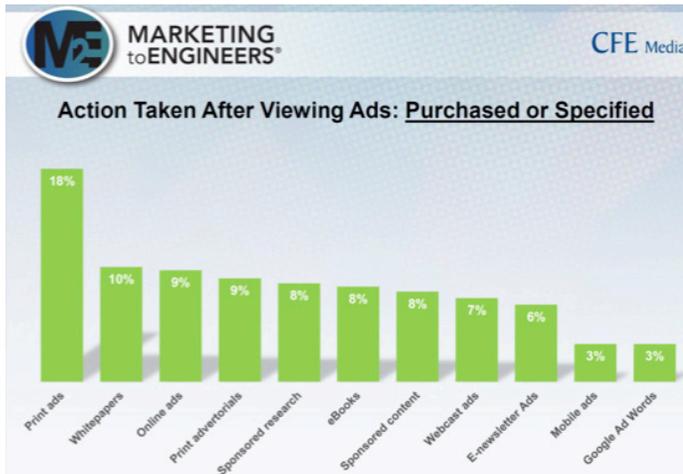
■ Total ■ Next Gen are College/Engineers up to 6 years in the field; Prime of career are 7 years+



5. **What They Say (CFE Media):** White papers and sponsored content, in particular, seem particularly persuasive – not just popular. Engineers were asked in the CFE Media study what actions they took after seeing particular content pieces. Again, tutorial white papers were at/near the top of the list when asked what moved the engineer to provide their contact information, or actually to purchase/specify the product. We pay particular attention to those two actions. Beyond just building a brand or pushing a message, generating a contact or purchase is the ultimate outcome we’re trying to create, of course.

What it Means: Articles, white papers and sponsored content are hard to produce. Yet marketers who are trying to generate opportunities, quotes and purchases, not just leads, must realize that spending time to generate technical, tutorial content is indeed time well spent.

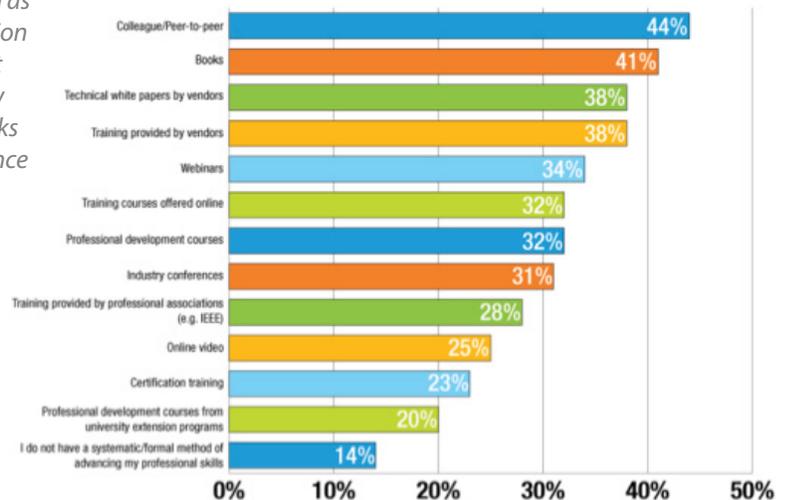
Note: You’ll see that print advertising is at the top of the CFE Media charts. Most publisher surveys show at the top of their lists their media properties or the popularity of print if they still publish a print magazine. While we don’t discount the data here, we are aware that it came from CFE magazine readers rather than from a third-party source.



6. **What They Say (CFE Media):** 45% said that knowledge and/or information loss as employees left their companies is very or extremely important. And 51% complain that they struggle against a “constantly increasing pace” of advancing technology.

What it Means: The opportunity for manufacturers to provide tutorial content would be seen as valuable and critical information by engineers. Among the most popular items published today in terms of readership and clicks are “basics” articles or “difference between” content that defines basic principles and concepts.

What are the four most effective ways that you systematically or formally maintain, educate and advance your professional skills?



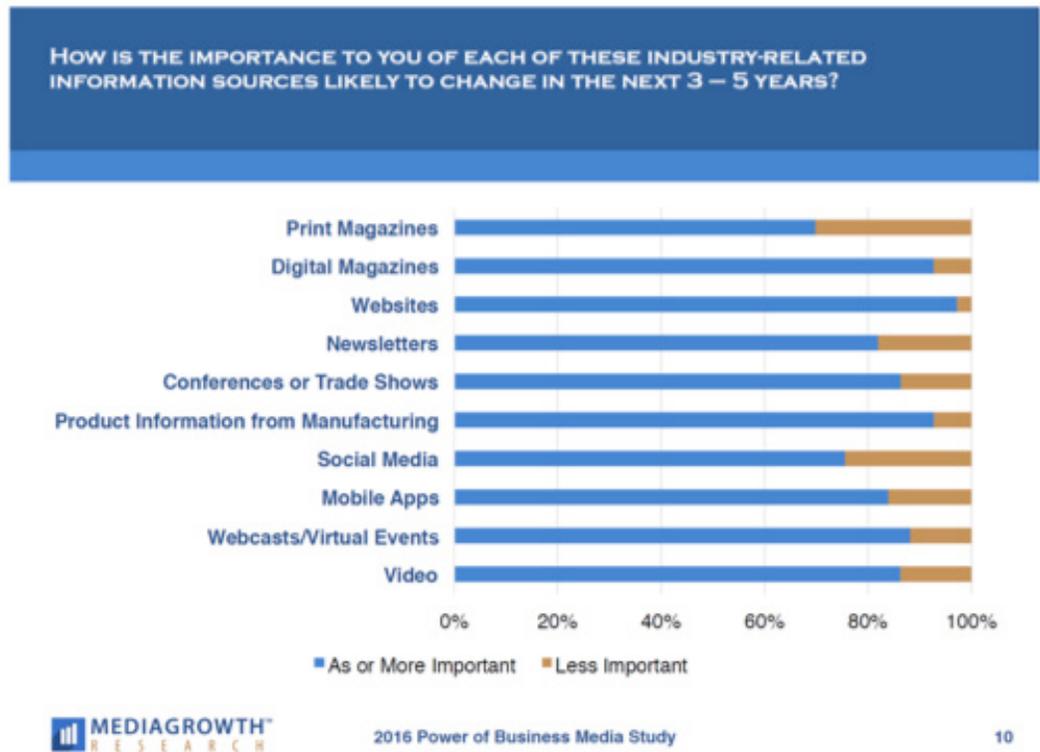
Source: CFE Media



- 7. What They Say (Tech Briefs Media):** Many wonder about the ongoing viability of print publications. It's a discussion that's gone on for many years, and it's true that most companies have moved all or the bulk of their media spend to digital only. Even many publishers have stopped publishing print magazines, as engineering audiences continue to age and younger decision-makers spend their time online rather than in print. The Tech Briefs study showed the same, that while many say they'll continue to use print, it's the tactic most likely to diminish in the future, said respondents.

It was surprising to us, though, to see in that same study that the second technique "most likely" to diminish in importance during the next few years was social media. We haven't seen that sentiment in other surveys. Perhaps it's a reflection of information overload, or the growing sophistication in the way we use social media tools for personal rather than business use.

What it Means: Our agency continues to de-emphasize spending on print media in marketing plans, and we would expect clients to continue to decrease spending here. We also see social media spending evolving to those programs that focus on lead generation, rather than merely trying to achieve more "likes" or followers.



An underlying context to all the studies is that engineers are no different than any other buying group – they're busy, they feel pressured, and they're spread thin on more projects and teams than in the past. What's also true is that they not only want and need information, but they see manufacturers as a credible source of tutorial, technical information that can help them do their jobs better.

Any content that's produced that follows that mantra, "teach me something to help me do my job better," is likely to gain their attention and reflect well on the company providing it.



About Us

Goldstein Group Communications (GGC) creates high impact branding and lead generation programs for b-to-b companies that are seeking more powerful ways to find and keep customers. The company specializes in Marketing to Engineers and has a long track record in writing engineer-to-engineer technical copy that other agencies struggle to produce. GGC was founded in 1992 as a public relations agency and today represents both entrepreneurial and billion-dollar multi-national firms throughout the country, with 50% of revenues coming from clients outside Ohio. GGC combines both left-brain analytics with right-brain creativity to provide a powerful marketing approach that leads to “Measurably Better Marketing.”

