

How SupplyFrame Media Harnessed the Demands of Online Engineers to Build a New Marketing Channel

by SupplyFrame Media

Synopsis:

This paper discusses how the shift to online research by engineers in the electronics industry has altered the way marketers can reach and engage their target audience. The shift in the behavior of the engineering audience is exemplified in SupplyFrame Media's fast growing audience that responds well to appropriate advertising. To help you understand the shift in the marketing landscape, SupplyFrame Media addresses the following questions within this document:

- *How has the demand for online technical content created a new channel to reach engineers?*
- *Does the technical content published by SupplyFrame Media attract the right engineers for my campaigns?*
- *What kinds of advertising around technical content work best?*
- *Does an engineer looking for a datasheet already know what they want?*
- *If we don't provide datasheets, can we still get results from ads on SupplyFrame Media?*

Frequently we are asked why SupplyFrame Media is focused on technical engineering content. The answer to the question stems from the fact that SupplyFrame Media is a company built from the ground up for the online age.

We started our mission in 2007 to build the next generation media and advertising company for the electronics industry with a nearly blank sheet of paper. On that paper was a single question that would frame the key to our fast market growth:

“What piece of information do electronics engineers and buyers need the most?”

The answer to this question was pivotal to the strategy for audience growth at SupplyFrame Media. (The answer is datasheets!) In 2007, SupplyFrame Media established a site that specialized in delivering datasheets and other important documents with no hassle. As we expanded, we partnered with a several other like-minded sites successfully catering to the technical needs of the electronics engineer. As a result of this approach, SupplyFrame Media quickly has earned one of the largest online audiences of electronics professionals.

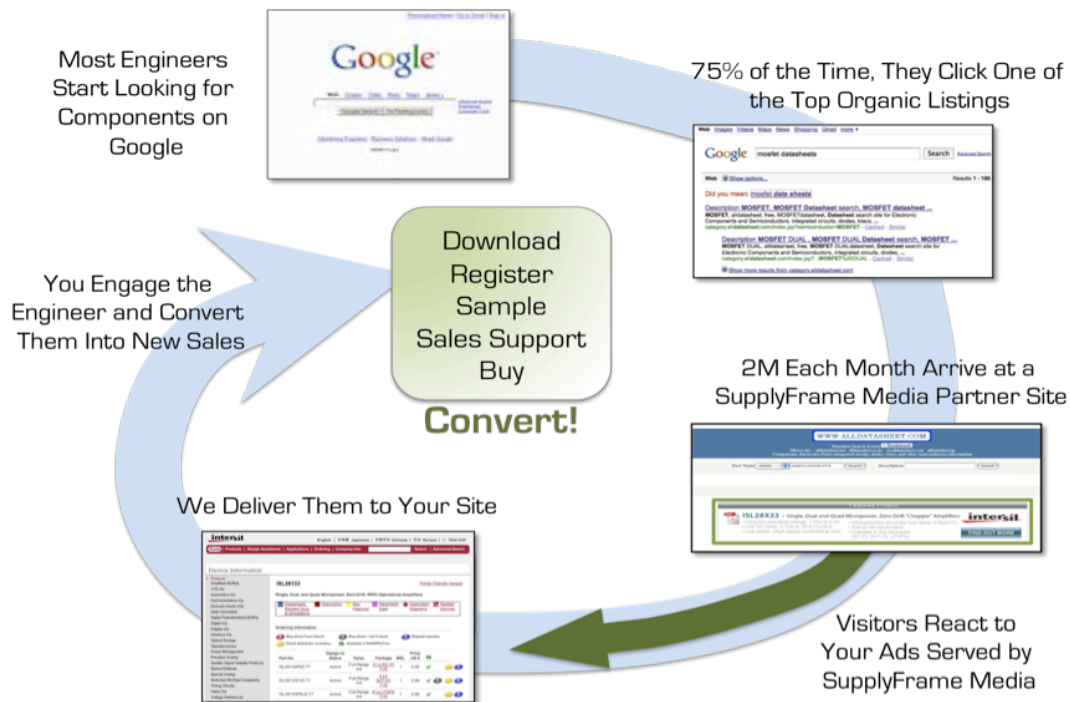
How has the demand for online technical content created a new channel to reach engineers?

To put a perspective on this behavioral shift, it helps to look briefly at how the world has changed since editors started writing the original engineering trade publications. Trade publications utilize a “push” model to deliver content to the engineers. In the push model, editors anticipate the interest of engineers (and advertisers) and create articles they feel will help grow their circulation (and, consequently, advertising sales). Once a month, magazines containing a few dozen articles are crafted and ‘pushed’ onto the desktop of the engineer. Only rarely does an article arrive on an engineer’s desktop at the moment they actually need the information to do their job. Most magazines accumulate on shelves to create small personal unorganized libraries of information the engineer might possibly use in the future.

The Internet changed this situation dramatically. The friction of content distribution fell to zero. Today, to borrow an analogy from the real estate industry, “It’s an engineer’s market.” Any information an engineer needs to research their design is now available instantly online. Overnight, the personal libraries of engineers became infinite, instantly accessible, free, and conveniently searchable with engines, such as Google. Marketing opportunities subsequently changed as advertising systems were developed to serve ads based on the content displayed to the user. Instant access meant instant potential to reach target audiences at the exact moment information was being sought.

Recognizing this sea change, the publishing model chosen by SupplyFrame Media is a “pull” model. In a “pull” model, the publisher goes wherever the engineer goes and provides whatever the engineer needs at that moment. By using a pull model and focusing on the technical documents that engineers need constantly, SupplyFrame Media sites quickly earned large volumes of visits from all around the globe. Today, we touch over two million unique people with more than nine million page views. In the process, we deliver over five million datasheets and technical documents every month.

The basic pull model for SupplyFrame Media and our advertisers is illustrated below. Engineers use a general-purpose search engine to find a location of the information they need. SupplyFrame Media sites are frequently selected. Once on a site, the engineer receives their information along with relevant advertisements. Selecting an advertisement directs the engineer to the advertiser’s website where they can be converted into leads or receive additional information.



This does not imply editorial content is dead. It is as alive as ever. But now, engineers seek it when they want, where they want, and from whom they want it - not when publishers decide to produce it. The success of each article is largely measured by its popularity among searchers in Google.

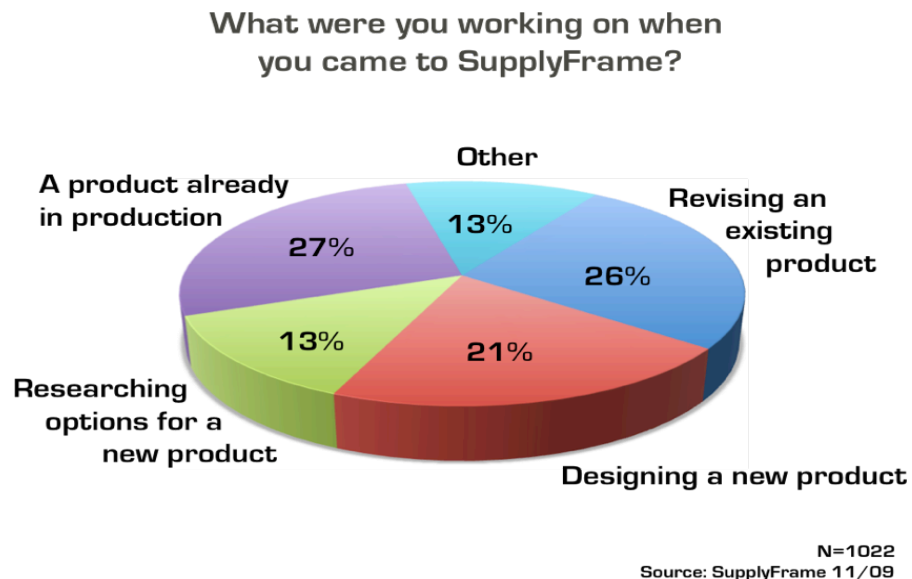
Does SupplyFrame Media have the right engineers for my campaigns?

If you sell and market products used in the design of electronics, then yes.

Besides the long list of successful electronics manufacturers and distributors that advertise through SupplyFrame Media today, independent research supports why our approach is effective. SupplyFrame Media reaches engineers at the moment they should consider your product. In both 2007 and 2008, according to the annual research by Hearst Business Media, datasheets topped the list as the single most important kind of information that engineers need during most phases of the design lifecycle. It is the number one piece of information in each of these development stages as well as between design projects:

- Concept Development
- Creating Overall System Requirements
- System Simulation and Evaluation
- Detailed Design
- Debugging and Testing

SupplyFrame Media’s own research illuminates another important dimension. When we surveyed our audience to ask what they were working on when they came to SupplyFrame Media sites, their answers indicate that they are in a phase of the design cycle where they are making key decisions:



Reaching engineers at crucial points of the design cycle while they are considering products for their designs is key to growing the market footprint of your products.

What kinds of advertising around technical content works best?

The subject matter covered by SupplyFrame Media is very broad, and the audience is exclusively technical. By focusing on the piece of information engineers need most often, a reliable and very large segment of the world's engineers can be reached, engaged and converted into leads and potential customers each month. The approach is similar to damming a river by building a hydro-electric power plant that harnesses potential energy from the flow of water. The potential energy of the river is continuously converted into electricity that can be used for many purposes. Likewise, SupplyFrame Media has built an 'audience engine' that harnesses the river of needs of over two million engineers to power ad campaigns and convert results to value for marketers.

Our technical audience is best served with factual, informative ads covering technical information. Our customers frequently inform us we score top marks for their campaigns that:

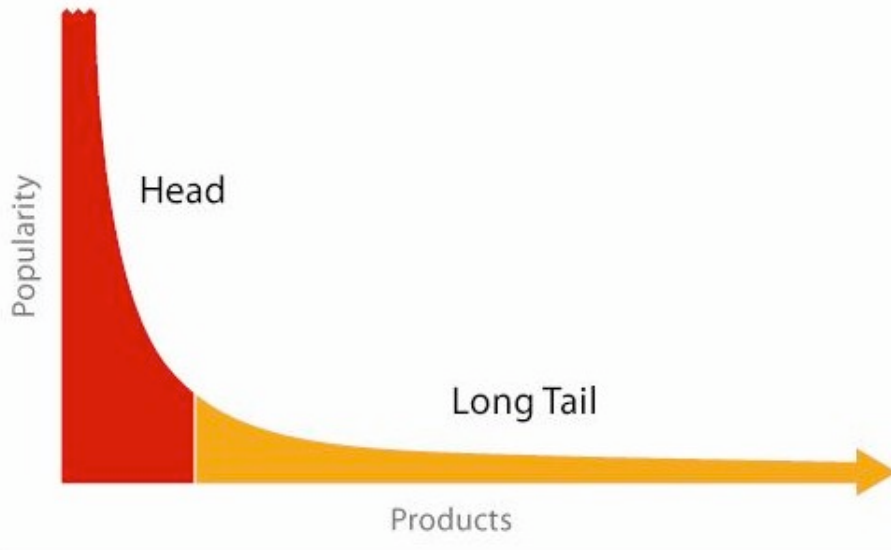
- Launch new products for engineers
- Create awareness and demand for product lines and broad ranges of products
- Create demand for associated products or up-sells to other products
- Drive sample programs, evaluation kits and software downloads
- Promote educational webinars and conferences for engineers

Does an engineer looking for a datasheet already know what they want?

Sometimes they do know what they want but mostly they are seeking options or multiple items.

Engineers that do not know which part they need often arrive on our sites after searching with general queries on search engines, such as Google. Their queries frequently include the name of a product category or technical characteristics of a part they seek. The ways in which engineers search for product information is extremely varied, as evidenced by the nearly one million unique queries SupplyFrame Media receives each month.

Across the system, the kinds of products researched are very broad. Engineer searches fall into a pattern commonly referred to as the "long tail". In the long tail, a small number of search phrases happen with great frequency, but a large number of keyword phrases happen with a small frequency.



The Long Tail of Search in the Electronics Industry

However, the most important fact is that advertising on SupplyFrame Media delivers higher results than most alternatives available in the industry. Engineers searching for technical content on SupplyFrame Media sites respond to advertisements for other products with high click-through rates. From analog to programmable logic to test equipment, a wide variety of products have been campaigned as part of new product launches and demand generation programs. Besides products, webinars, sample programs and evaluation kits have also been promoted through the system. Customers report that conversions on their sites from SupplyFrame Media often lead the market among their advertising options. The rates vary depending on the product or service included in the ad, but most customers report very high response rates to their ad campaigns.

We don't have datasheets loaded into SupplyFrame Media. Does advertising still work for us?

Yes. There are two pieces to SupplyFrame Media's success – the audience engine and the advertising system. The audience engine running today consists of two million unique people a month and is continually growing. By advertising with SupplyFrame Media, you can reach this audience with a variety of advertising campaigns.

However, if you do have technical content available, it is recommended that you provide it to SupplyFrame Media. By doing so we will deliver your content to the popular sites where engineers are likely to search. The content can be loaded into our system at no charge in just a couple of days. Once loaded, our global audience can easily and quickly locate the information they need about your products.

Conclusion

SupplyFrame Media has created a large and influential audience by tapping into the constant information demands of engineers to perform their day-to-day design activities. The interests of our audience are vast and diverse, researching products used in electronics design from a wide variety of product categories. Because the interests of our audience are so broad, SupplyFrame Media provides a powerful tool to launch new products and create demand for existing lines to a global engineering audience that has demonstrated strong response rates to promotions of technical products and related services.

We have created unique advertising formats, which cater to the preferences of the electronics professional audience and perform better compared to most alternative advertising options. We invite you to measure our advertising system for yourself and compare us side-by-side with any other ad option available to you. And as we always say at SupplyFrame Media, when it come to marketing...if you can't measure it, don't do it.