

A practical guide for manufacturers who want more inbound orders

THE
**CUSTOMER
ACQUISITION
PLAYBOOK**

A step-by-step system to get more orders from the buyers who are already searching for what you make — without hiring sales reps or paying for ads.

ATTRACTIO.CO

INTRODUCTION: THE DIRECTORY TRAP

Every manufacturing business lives or dies by new orders.

For decades, the playbook was simple: do good work, build relationships, rely on word of mouth. When you needed more reach, you listed your company on directories like ThomasNet or MacRAE's.

Here's the problem: **directories turn you into a commodity.**

When a procurement manager opens a directory, they see 15 manufacturers offering the same thing. They blast the same drawing to all of them and pick the cheapest price. They aren't looking for a manufacturing partner — they're running a reverse auction.

You spend hours putting together a quote. You never hear back. The job went to someone \$0.02/unit cheaper. Meanwhile, your real value — your engineering expertise, your 20 years of domain knowledge, your production quality — is invisible.

The uncomfortable truth: 84% of industrial buyers now research online *before* they ever reach a directory. If you aren't the one they find during that research phase, you're not even in the conversation — you're just a fallback for price comparison.

This playbook is for manufacturers who are tired of competing on price. It outlines a system to intercept buyers earlier — when they're searching for solutions, not just shopping for the cheapest quote.

Everything in here is based on what's working right now. No theory. No fluff. Just the exact steps we've used to drive qualified inbound RFQs for real manufacturers.

SECTION 1: IS YOUR BUYER JOURNEY WORKING?

Every order follows the same path. A buyer discovers you, decides whether to trust you, requests a quote, and then either orders or goes silent. If any stage is broken, you're losing orders without knowing it.



Every "No" below is a point where buyers drop off and go to your competitor.

1 CAN BUYERS FIND YOU?

Before a buyer can request a quote, they have to know you exist.

- ☐ Search "[your product] manufacturer in [your state]" on Google. Are you on page 1?
Try it now. If you're not there, buyers are finding your competitor first.
- ☐ Do you show up on Google Maps when buyers search locally?
Many industrial buyers search on Maps for urgent or nearby jobs.
- ☐ Ask ChatGPT "who manufactures [your product] near [your city]." Does your name come up?
AI search is how the next generation of procurement teams finds suppliers.
- ☐ Do you have articles or videos a buyer would find when researching your type of product?

2 WHEN THEY FIND YOU, DO THEY TRUST YOU?

A buyer found you. They're deciding in 30 seconds: "Is this a real operation I'd trust with my order?"

- ☐ Does your website show real photos of your facility, machines, and team?
Buyers want to see your shop floor. Real photos build trust instantly.
- ☐ Can a buyer quickly find your capabilities, specs, and certifications?
- ☐ Do you have customer testimonials or named clients visible?
- ☐ Does your Google Business Profile have 10+ reviews with a 4-star+ rating?

3

CAN THEY CONTACT YOU WITHOUT FRICTION?

They trust you. Now they want a quote. Any friction here and they call someone else.

- ☐ Is there a clear "Request a Quote" form that asks for the right details — not a generic "Contact Us"?
- ☐ Can someone call you with one tap from their phone?
Many buyers browse from the shop floor on mobile.
- ☐ When an inquiry comes in, does someone respond within 4 hours?
The first manufacturer to respond wins the job 50%+ of the time.

4

DO YOU STAY ON THEIR RADAR?

Not every buyer orders immediately. The manufacturer who stays top-of-mind gets the call.

- ☐ After sending a quote, do you follow up systematically?
Most manufacturers quote and hope. A follow-up system closes 20–30% more quotes.
- ☐ Do you stay in touch with past customers — sharing updates or new capabilities?
- ☐ Do you have a way to re-engage leads who inquired but never ordered?

COUNT YOUR CHECKMARKS

0 – 5

Buyers are finding your competitors first

6 – 10

Some pieces, but orders are slipping through

11 – 15

Strong pipeline — capturing most demand

SECTION 2: THE WEBSITE PROBLEM NOBODY TALKS ABOUT

Let's be direct about something.

Most manufacturers we talk to fall into one of three categories:

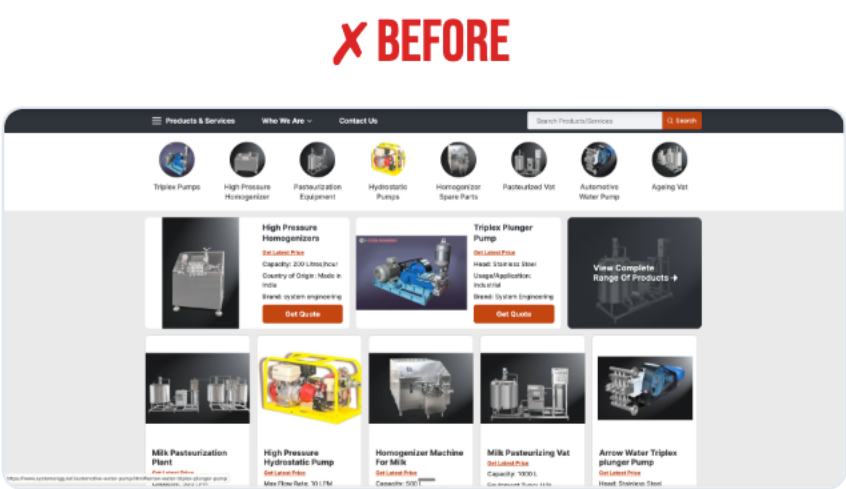
Category A: You have no website at all. You rely 100% on directories, word of mouth, and maybe WhatsApp forwards. Buyers literally cannot find you unless someone gives them your phone number.

Category B: You have a website, but it was built 8–10 years ago by a local IT person or your nephew. It has stock photos, a generic "Contact Us" form, and hasn't been updated since 2018. Buyers land on it, see nothing that builds confidence, and leave in under 30 seconds.

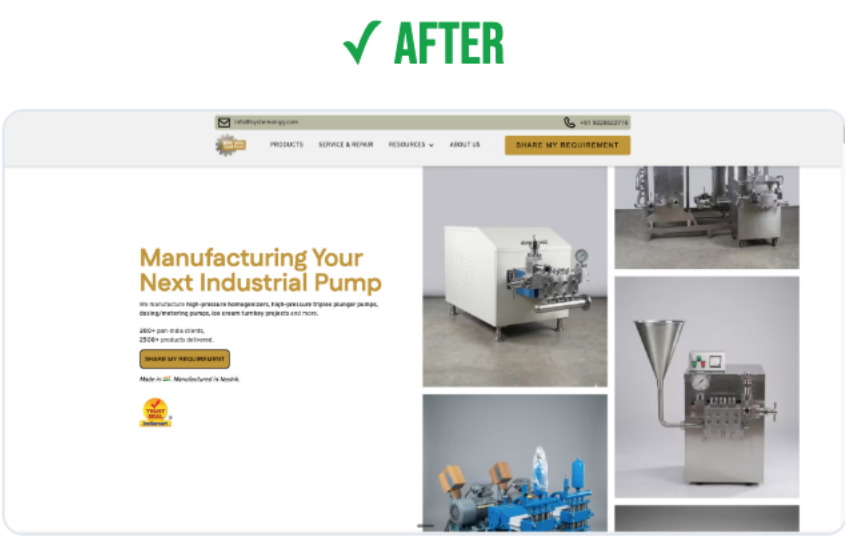
Category C: You're listed on a directory like ThomasNet. Your "presence" is a product catalog page that looks identical to every other manufacturer on the platform. There's no story, no trust, no differentiation. Just a price and a "Get Quote" button sitting next to 14 other "Get Quote" buttons.

Here's the thing — **none of these are a website. They're a business card at best.**

A website that actually generates orders needs to do three things: **rank on Google so buyers find you, build trust so they don't leave, and capture the inquiry properly so you can quote fast.**



A directory listing. One of 15 identical "Get Quote" buttons. No trust, no story, no differentiation.



A branded site with real product photos, clear CTA, credibility signals. Buyers trust this instantly.

This is System Engineering Works — a pump manufacturer who operated on referrals and directories for 20 years. On the left is what buyers used to see. On the right is what they see now. The difference in first impressions is night and day.

SECTION 3:

GET FOUND ON GOOGLE MAPS

The 15-minute fix. If buyers can't find you when they search "manufacturer near me," you're invisible. These 3 settings on your Google Business Profile are the fastest way to start showing up.

1

UPLOAD REAL PHOTOS OF YOUR FACILITY & MACHINES

Industrial buyers want to see that you actually have the capability to handle their job. Stock photos destroy trust. Real photos of your shop floor, equipment, and building prove you're a real operation.

Do this today: Snap 5 well-lit photos — shop floor, your main equipment (CNCs, lathes, presses, etc.), and the outside of your building. Upload them to your Google Business Profile.

2

SET YOUR EXACT "SERVICE CATEGORIES"

Google doesn't know you make centrifugal pumps or CNC parts unless you explicitly tell it. Most manufacturers select one vague category and leave the rest blank — so Google shows their competitor instead.

Do this today: Go to your Google Business Profile → Edit Profile → Business Category. Set your primary category (e.g., "Manufacturer") and add specific secondary categories like "Machine Shop" or "Metal Fabricator."

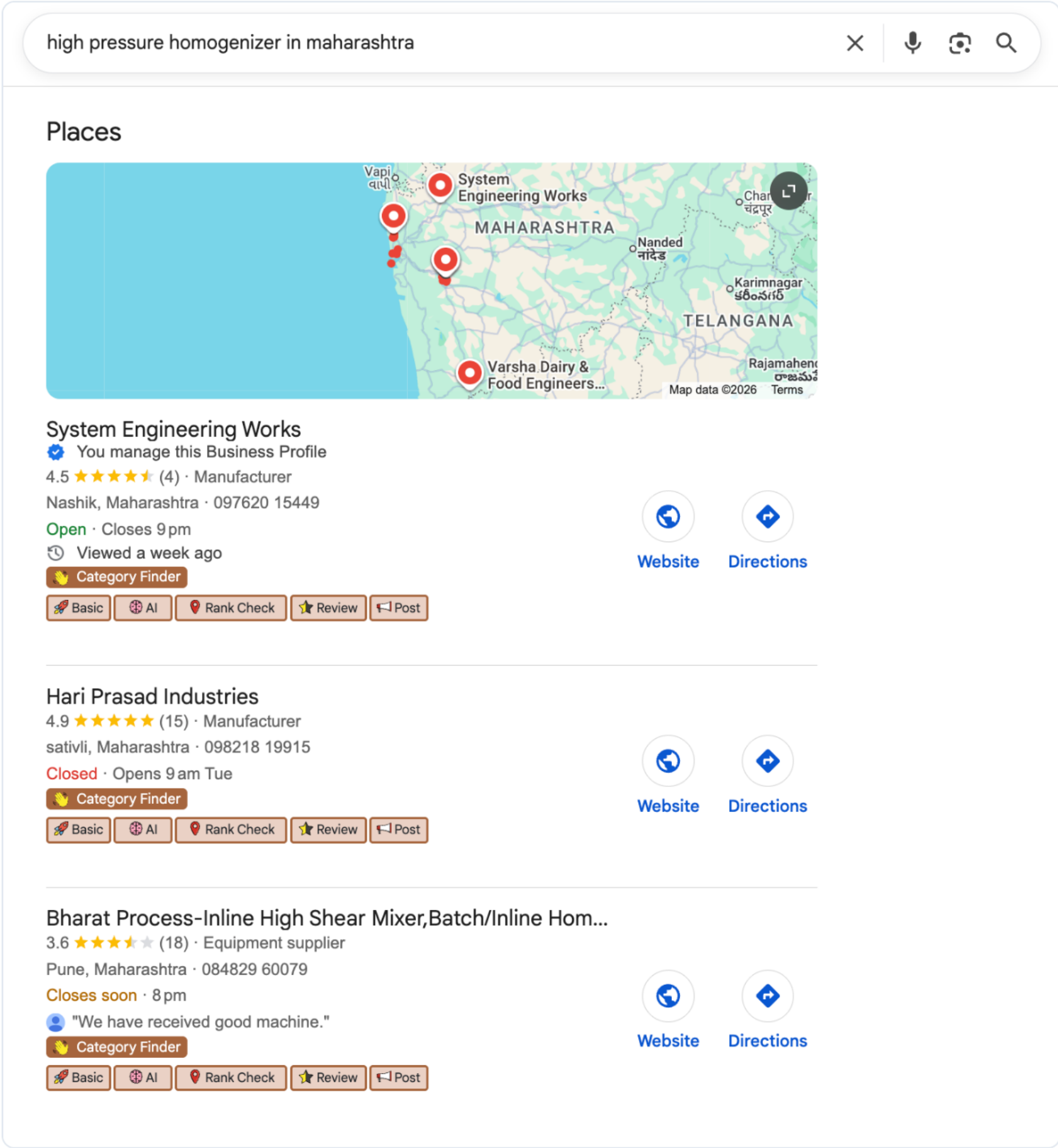
3

GET YOUR FIRST 10 REVIEWS

In local manufacturing, 10 good reviews is often enough to beat 90% of competitors. But customers won't leave a review if they have to search for your profile.

Do this today: Grab your short review link from your Google Business Profile dashboard. Text or email it to your 5 best customers right now.

REAL RESULT



System Engineering Works now ranks #1 on Google Maps for "high pressure homogenizer in Maharashtra" — above competitors with more reviews.

SECTION 4:

CAPTURE THE INQUIRY PROPERLY

Stop losing RFQs to a bad form. A buyer is ready to request a quote. If your form is a generic "Contact Us" with a single text box, two things happen:

- 1. You get incomplete inquiries that waste your engineers' time with back-and-forth emails asking for basic specs.
- 2. Serious buyers see the form, think "this company isn't professional enough," and call your competitor instead.

Here's what a proper RFQ form looks like:

RFQ FORM BLUEPRINT

First & Last Name *

Company Name *

Email Address *

Phone Number

Part / Project Description *

Estimated Quantity / Volume *

Required Delivery Date

Upload Drawings, Specs, or CAD Files (Secure)

Click to browse or drag & drop (.pdf, .step, .dxf)

Submit Request for Quote

Why this works: Requiring company name and quantity filters out casual browsers. The file upload means you can quote without a back-and-forth. And a dedicated RFQ form tells the buyer "this is a real operation that takes orders seriously."

THE PART NOBODY TALKS ABOUT: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THEY SUBMIT

Getting the form filled out is only half the battle. What happens in the next 60 seconds is where most manufacturers lose the deal.

Here's what should happen automatically:

Within 1 minute: The buyer receives an email confirming their RFQ was received and that they'll hear back within 4 business hours. This is automated — no human needed.

Within 1 minute: You (or your sales person) receive an SMS and email with the full inquiry details — name, company, what they need, files attached. Not buried in a shared inbox. Pushed directly to your phone.

If nobody follows up within 24 hours: An internal alert fires reminding you that a lead is going cold. Because once 48 hours pass, that buyer has already moved on to a competitor.

SECTION 5:

NEVER MISS AN INQUIRY AGAIN

Here's a question: How many phone calls does your team miss every week because everyone is on the shop floor?

For most manufacturers, the answer is "we don't know" — which means the real answer is "a lot."

Every missed call is a potential order that walks straight to your competitor. The buyer isn't going to call back. They're going to call the next name on their list. But what if you never missed a call?

The fix is simple: **when a call comes in, our AI handles it instantly, qualifying the lead by asking for their name, company name, and requirements.** Then, it automatically sends the lead a text confirming their inquiry was received and that they will get a quotation shortly (e.g. within 4 business hours). Simultaneously, it sends the business owner all the lead's details directly.

AUTOMATED SMS — SENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER AI QUALIFICATION

"Hi, this is [Your Company]. We have received your inquiry. Our team is currently reviewing your requirements and you will receive a quotation shortly (within the next 4 business hours)."

This AI-driven automation alone recovers inquiries that would otherwise vanish. And it makes your company look incredibly responsive — handling lead qualification seamlessly.

"We really operated our business out of referrals and word of mouth and the directory didn't bring any qualified RFQs. Alen helped us get in-front of our customers on Google and AI, automated the RFQ flow so that we never miss one, and now it's bringing us inbound inquiries."

— Baby Thomas, CEO, System Engineering Works

REAL RESULT — INBOUND RFQS FLOWING IN

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☐	☆	➤	Webflow, me 3	Inbox	New form submission on Webflow for System Engineering Works - From: Webflow forms Date: Sat, Apr 4, 2026 at 7:04 PM Subject: New form submission on Webflow for Syste...	Apr 4	
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System Engineering Works inbox after implementing the system — consistent form submissions from buyers who found them through Google, not directories.

SECTION 6:

CLOSE MORE QUOTES

You already send quotes. This is the system that turns more of them into orders. Print this page, tape it next to your desk, and use it on every quote starting today.

The data: The first manufacturer to respond wins the job 50%+ of the time. Yet most shops take 3–5 days to quote, and almost none follow up after. That's money walking out the door.

RULE #1

SEND THE QUOTE WITHIN 4 HOURS

Not tomorrow. Not "when things slow down." The same day. Buyers are comparing 3–5 shops. The first quote that lands sets the anchor. Even a rough estimate with "formal quote to follow" beats silence.

AFTER THE QUOTE IS SENT — FOLLOW THIS SCHEDULE:

Day 1

SAME DAY

Confirm it landed

Make sure they got it and open the door for questions.

✉ EMAIL OR QUICK CALL

"Hi [Name], just sent over the quote for [job]. Wanted to make sure it came through. Happy to walk through anything — lead time, specs, whatever helps."

Day 3

CHECK-IN

Ask where they are in the decision

Find out if they're comparing. Be helpful, not pushy.

📞 PHONE PREFERRED

"Hey [Name], checking in on the [job] quote. Comparing a few shops? Happy to clarify anything on our end — lead time, material, whatever helps you decide."

Day 7

ADD VALUE

Give them a reason to re-engage

Mention something useful — an alternative material, a faster option, a spec note.

✉ EMAIL

"Hi [Name], one thing on the [job] — [flag an alternative: different material to save cost, faster lead time, spec clarification]. Wanted to make sure you had the full picture."

Day 14

CLOSE LOOP

Respectful last touch

Give them an easy out. Paradoxically, this often revives dead quotes.

✉ EMAIL

"Hi [Name], last check on the [job] quote. If timing changed, totally understand — we'll keep your specs on file. If it's still active, happy to re-quote. Either way, appreciate you considering us."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

You've now seen the entire Customer Acquisition system for manufacturers:

1. **Make your shop findable** — so buyers discover you before they hit a directory.
2. **Build trust in 30 seconds** — with a real website that shows your capabilities, not a product catalog.
3. **Capture the inquiry properly** — with a form that gets you quoting, not chasing specs.
4. **Never miss an RFQ** — with AI handling incoming calls, qualifying leads, and sending automated notifications.
5. **Follow up systematically** — so no quote ever dies from neglect.

Individually, each step helps. Together, they create a machine that brings in inbound orders without you having to chase, cold-call, or compete on price.

Signing new manufacturing contracts is inherently hard. For someone to hand over a massive PO, they need to deeply trust you, clearly understand your capabilities, and feel confident you won't disrupt their supply chain.

That's hard. But your *system* for capturing them can be simple.

So my only ask at this stage is this: **stop relying solely on word of mouth and hoping directories will save you**. Implement this system. Start with the checklist on page 3. Do the 15-minute Google Maps fix on page 6. Print the follow-up schedule on page 9 and tape it next to your desk.

Stop chasing customers in a race to the bottom on price, and start engineering demand.

NEED HELP IMPLEMENTING THIS?

I understand there will be a percentage of people who read this entire playbook, see the value in it, but simply don't have the time to build and implement the system themselves.

If that's you — if you'd rather have someone build the website, set up the automations, and get the whole machine running so you can focus on manufacturing — I'm happy to walk through what that looks like.

No pitch. Just a look at where you stand and what's possible.

[Book A Strategy Session](#)

Alen

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