INTERACTIVE CONTENT ACROSS THE FUNNEL

How to Succeed by Putting Buyers in Control



The Mx Group

It's Time to Give Up Control …but Still Get What You Want

"It's all about the buyer" has always been good marketing advice. That used to mean artfully steering them toward a sale. Now it means handing buyers the wheel.

According to SAP, over two-thirds of buyers wait longer to contact salespeople than they did even two years ago. They're researching their options and evaluating solutions online. Alone. All the time. And they're not open to too much involvement from you.

So how can we put buyers in the driver's seat for the full journey, but still control their destination?

With interactive content.

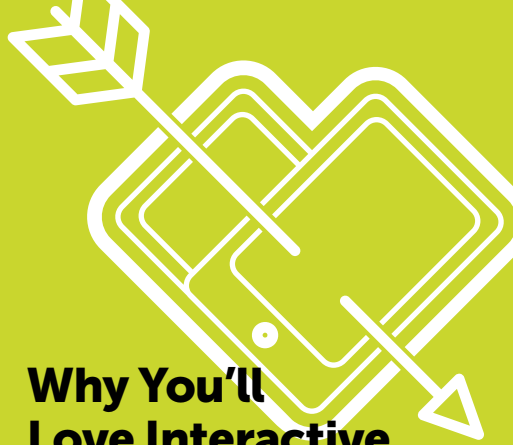


Interactive content

(n) [in(t)ər-aktive/kän-tent]

Digital media that encourages buyers to participate in an activity and delivers personalized information and insight.

Think of interactive content as your best salesperson with superpowers. It gets to the heart of buyers' needs without making them feel exposed. It evaluates fit. It educates, persuades and empowers buyers at every stage of the journey. And it does it all without introducing buyers to Sales before they're ready.



Why You'll Love Interactive Content

- **Increases conversions**
- **Builds thought leadership credibility by answering buyer questions**
- **Generates a high volume of specific buyer data**
- **Engages buyers across the funnel**

Interactive content
converts

34%

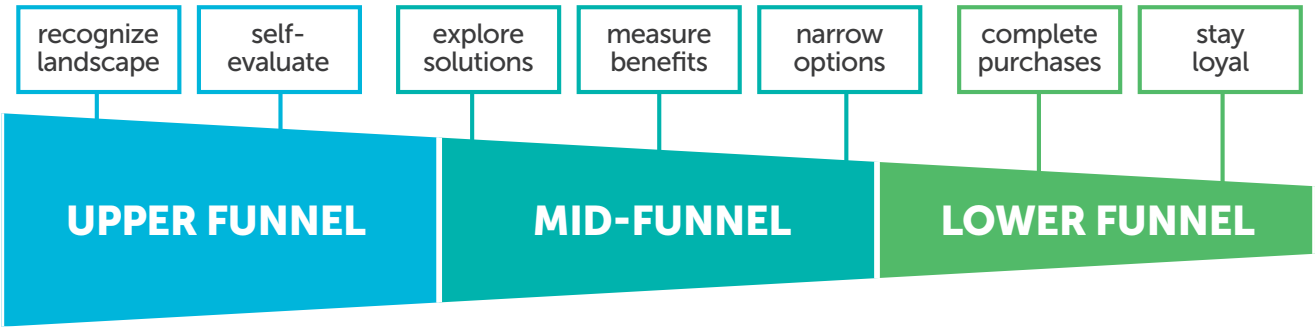
more buyers
than static content

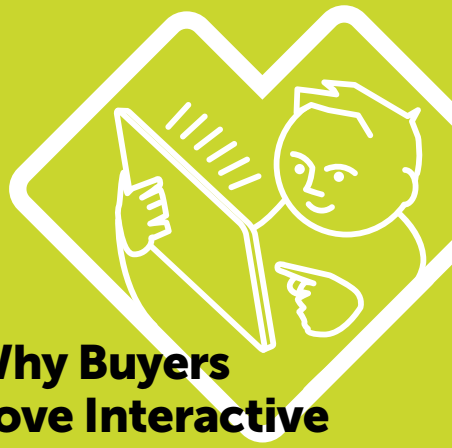
Source: Demand Metric

Benefits Across the Buyer's Journey

Interactive content can engage buyers and overcome objections at every stage of the funnel. And at every stage, different types or combinations of interactive content can serve different purposes.

Interactive content helps buyers ...





Why Buyers Love Interactive Content

- Lets them self-direct the purchase journey
- Reveals ways to improve their business
- Helps them explore product functionality
- Shows which products meet their needs
- Gives them the confidence to buy

7 Types of Interactive Content

and Their Place in the Buyer's Journey



DATA VISUALIZERS

help buyers **recognize landscapes**

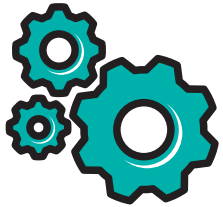
page 7



ASSESSMENTS

help buyers **self-evaluate**

page 11



DEMONSTRATIONS

help buyers **explore solutions**

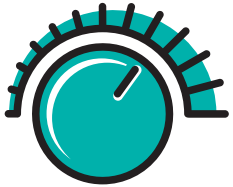
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CALCULATORS

help buyers **measure benefits**

page 20



PRODUCT SELECTORS / CONFIGURATORS

help buyers **narrow options**

page 24



E-COMMERCE

helps buyers **complete purchases**

page 28



GAMIFICATION

helps buyers **stay loyal**

page 32

UPPER FUNNEL

MID-FUNNEL

LOWER FUNNEL

Data Visualizers

Show them what the numbers add up to

Early in the funnel, before convincing buyers you have a solution, you may have to convince them they have a problem. Data visualizers are a great tool for this job. They display relevant data from all kinds of sources in ways that show meaning. Charts, graphs and maps can be filtered and searched in unique and relevant ways. When buyers can see problems or opportunities, they're more likely to ask, "Do I have them too?"

Consider a data visualizer if you …

- Generate a large volume of buyer-relevant data
- Have a data-centric service offering
- Want to raise awareness about an industry issue

WHY BUYERS LOVE THEM

They learn about issues and opportunities while staying anonymous.

- No need to self-identify
- Little investment of time or energy
- See a big-picture view of common problems

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THEM

Your customers will embrace, rather than resist, change.

- Soften buyers' resistance to change with hard data
- Buyers identify problems on their own
- Highlight industry problems to attract high-funnel prospects

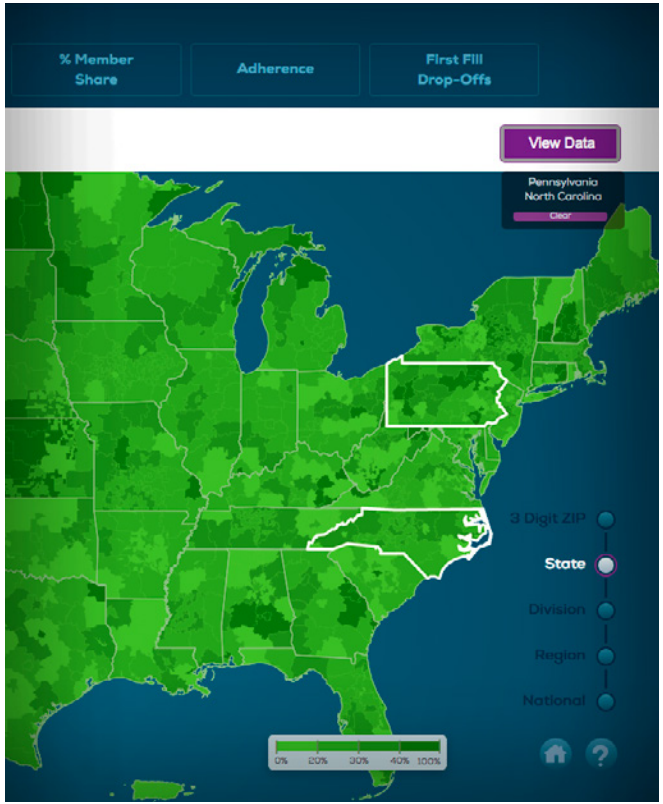
Case Study: PBM Interactive Analytics Experience

CHALLENGE

Pharmacy benefit management (PBM) companies use data in every decision. They make predictions that help insurance providers promote patient health and decrease costs. But despite the central importance of data to their services, that data is usually too dry or granular to interest prospects without context.

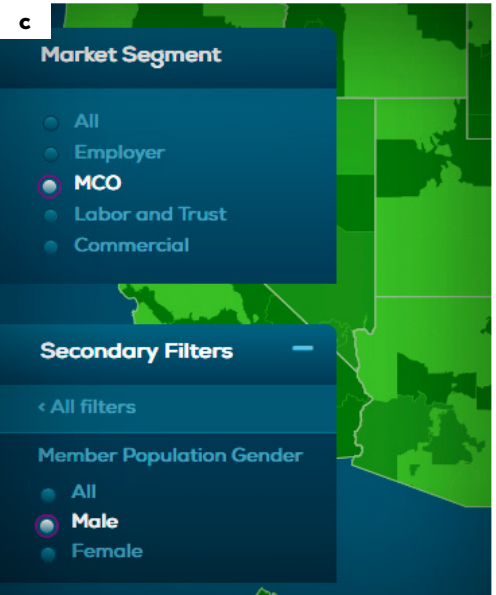
SOLUTION

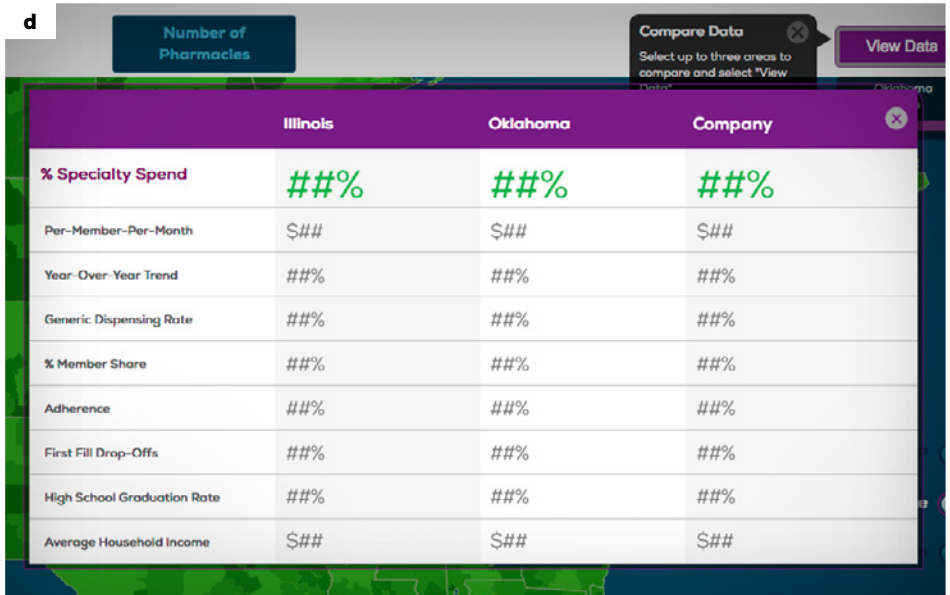
One PBM provider created an interactive analytics experience that lets prospects explore its data in ways that matter to them. Users filter and search through metrics from the provider's existing clients to estimate their own potential cost savings. Many prospects spend over 45 minutes diving into the data — without needing help from a salesperson.











(a) *The PBM provider flowed key metrics from its client base into an interactive, touch-screen map.* ***(b)*** *To use the map, users apply a variety of filters to select the most relevant data segments for their business.* ***(c)*** *They can search by geography, market segment, medication type, patient demographics and more.* ***(d)*** *Each search reveals the potential cost savings the provider could deliver.*

Assessments

Ask questions that help clarify their challenges

Even if buyers know there's a problem in their industry, they might not think it's a problem for them. Assessments can help them understand the true impact. Interactive assessments ask buyers questions to evaluate their performance and identify their challenges. But that's not all. They can also send users customized reports based on their answers. Recommend next steps to improve their scores. Or invite users to review their results with your sales team — so you can solve their newfound challenges together.

Consider an assessment if you …

- **Want buyers to make a transformative change**
- **Target multiple personas with different pain points**
- **Rely on sales conversations to determine fit**

WHY BUYERS LOVE THEM

They get a clear action plan to address specific challenges.

- Quickly identify major business challenges
- Instantly receive actionable next steps
- Increase alignment among key decision-makers

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THEM

Your buyers get a sense of urgency to make a change, and soon.

- Highlight pain points your company can solve
- Make your product appear highly relevant
- Gather insight to accelerate the sales discovery process

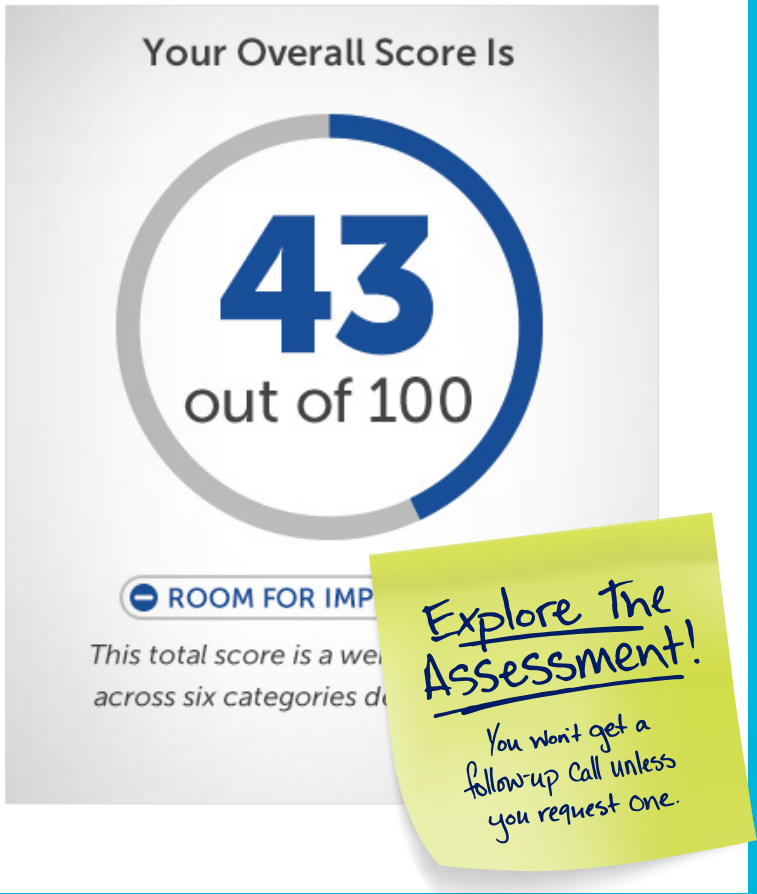
Case Study: Modern Marketing Assessment

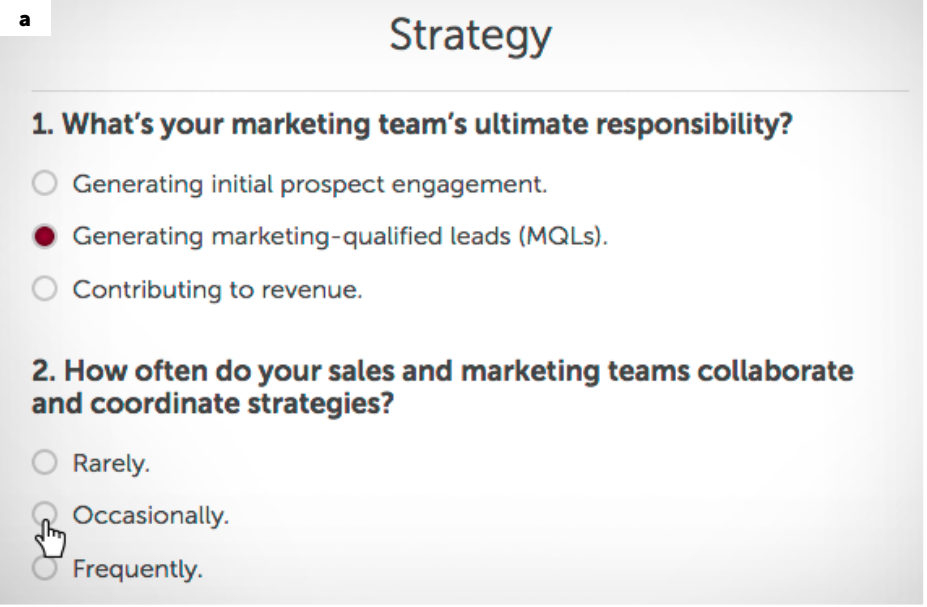
CHALLENGE

B2B marketing is evolving fast. The purchase journey is going digital. Buyers' expectations for relevant content are increasing. And most B2B marketers are feeling the pressure to modernize. But it can be tough for marketers to know what needs improvement — let alone what to do about it.

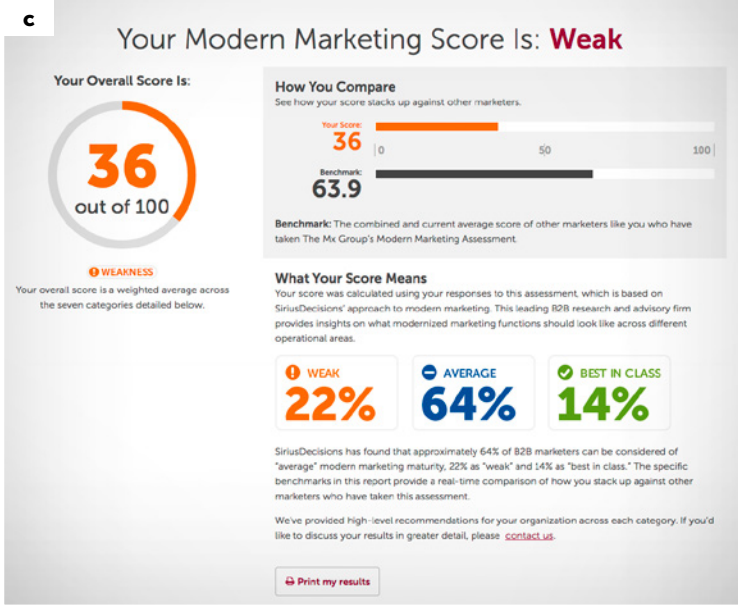
SOLUTION

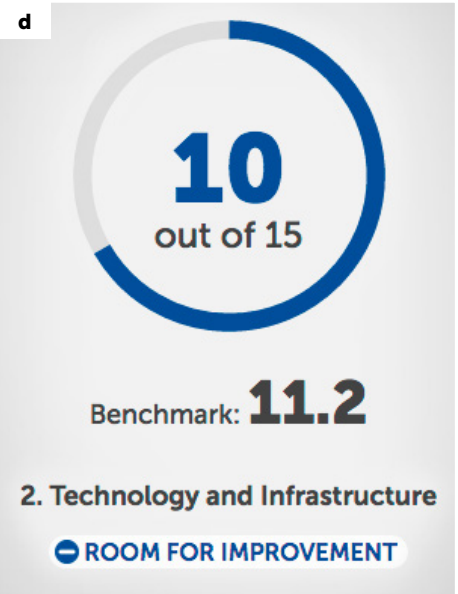
The Mx Group built a modern marketing assessment to help B2B companies create a plan to evolve their marketing. It highlights key areas of strength and weakness. Offers real-time peer benchmarking. And gives users concrete recommendations to improve their performance.













__(a)__ The assessment asks users questions about their marketing in seven categories. __(b)__ Then, users automatically receive their overall score. __(c)__ An instantly emailed report contains category-specific breakdowns and actionable recommendations. __(d)__ The report includes real-time peer benchmarking, so users can compare themselves to their fellow marketers. __(e)__ Users also receive a PowerPoint of their report to share with internal stakeholders.

Demonstrations

Let them see your value for themselves

You could tell buyers why your product is the best fit. But it's more powerful and credible to show them with an interactive demonstration — while letting them keep investigating on their own. For simpler products, a video demo might be all you need. But more complex products often benefit from simulations. Buyers can use these interactive demonstrations to control digitized versions of your product. Manipulating variables like time or human action to match the scenario to their circumstances. They'll see exactly what your product can do for them.

Consider a demonstration if you …

- **Sell a complex product or set of products**
- **Want to highlight unique differentiators**
- **Get more demo requests than your sales team can handle**

WHY BUYERS LOVE THEM

They see exactly how their problem can be solved.

- Try out the product with no risk or pressure
- Easily evaluate core benefits and determine fit
- Understand more sophisticated functionality

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THEM

You can highlight your benefits in an engaging, credible way.

- Prove the benefits you're selling are real
- Increase buyer desire for the value you offer
- Advance prospects through the funnel faster

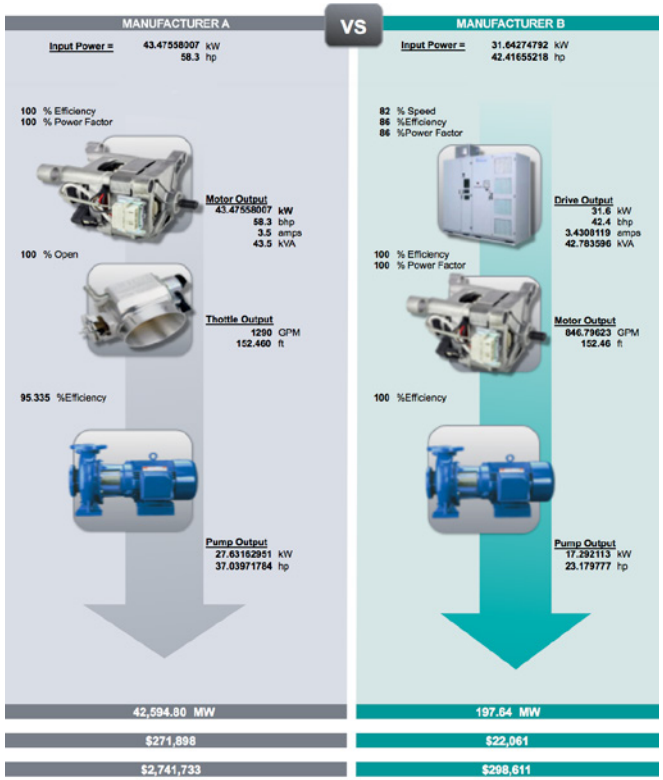
Case Study: Energy Simulation

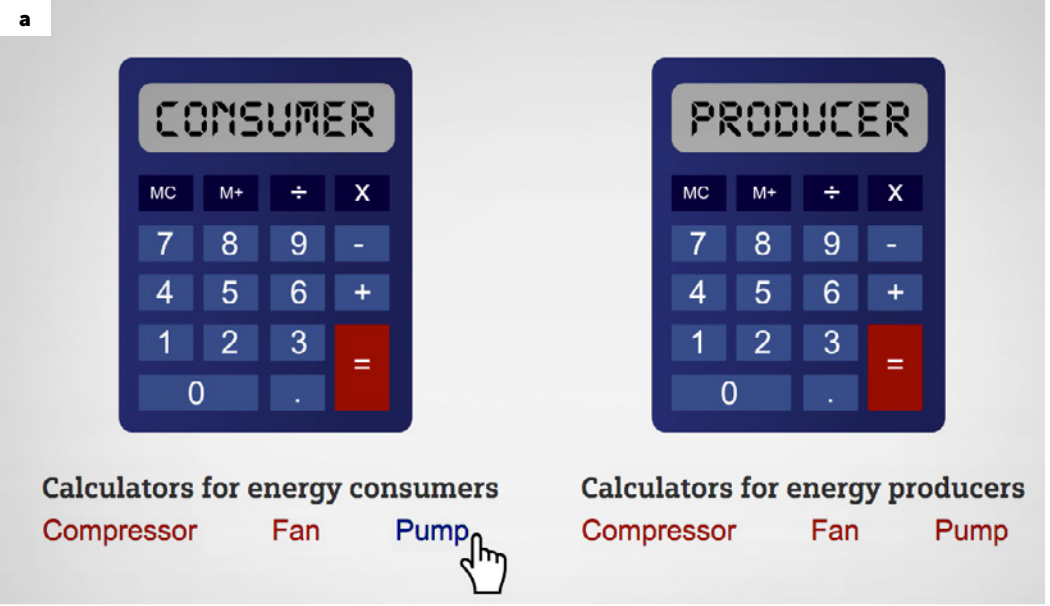
CHALLENGE

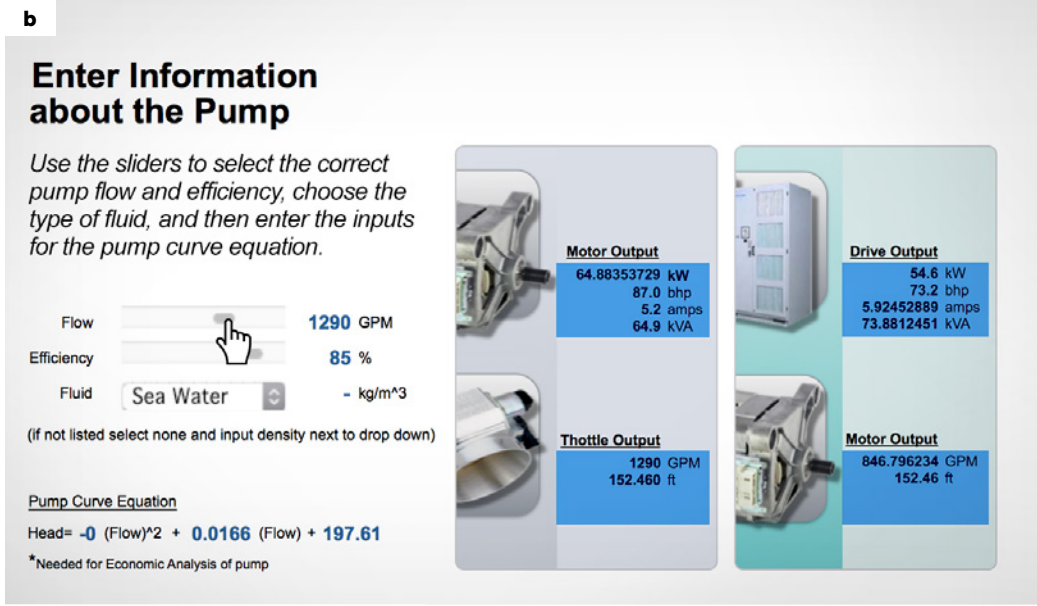
A major industrial manufacturer takes an innovative approach to voltage and frequency control. That new approach has many benefits, but it presents a big change for buyers. The manufacturer's challenge was to show how the rewards of change would outweigh the risk compared to competing solutions.

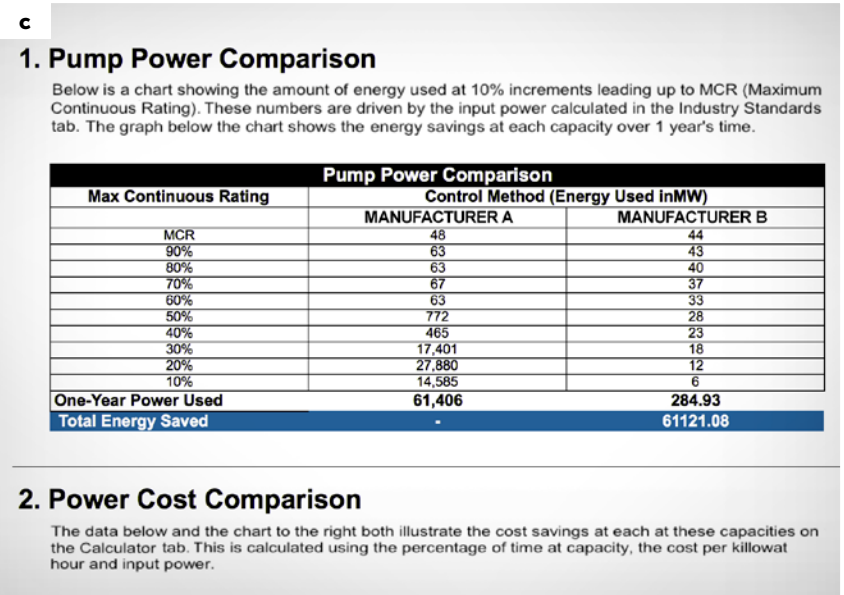
SOLUTION

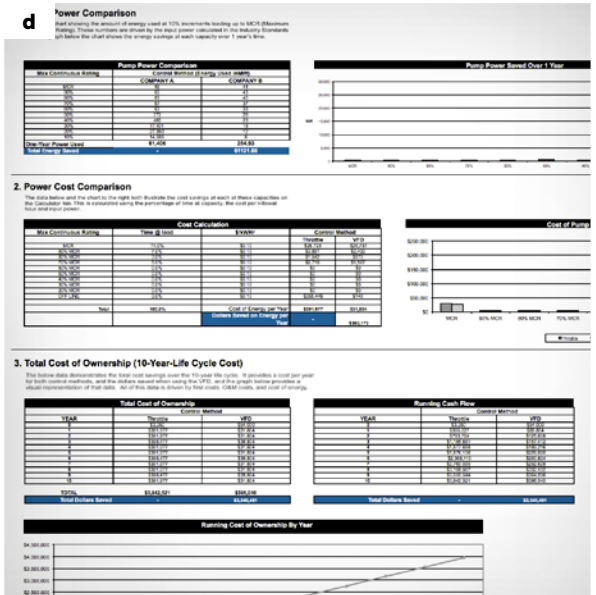
The manufacturer built a simulation to demonstrate how its products beat the competition over time. Users enter specific application data to see how much time and energy the alternative approach could save them. This helps move more receptive users through the sales funnel faster. The energy simulation is now a key part of the manufacturer's sales process.











(a) *First, users customize the energy simulation based on their job role: energy producer or consumer. They also select their application: compressor, fan or pump.* ***(b)*** *The simulation also requests other application-specific inputs.* ***(c)*** *Then, the simulation shows how much energy and money the new approach could save over a one-year or ten-year period.* ***(d)*** *Finally, users receive a custom results spreadsheet to share with internal stakeholders.*

Bonus Case Study: Z Modular

Demonstrations can have different levels of interactivity. For Zekelman Industries, immersive video was a powerful way to showcase the benefits of its modular construction products. It uses 3D modeling to show how easy it is to use Z Modular products, and the wide variety of structures they can create.



Calculators

Prove the payoff

Later in the buyer's journey, financials play a pivotal role. When buyers know investing in your product will pay off, they'll be more likely to purchase. And calculators can put your financial benefits front and center. Buyers can enter their business data into a calculator's interactive interface. Then, calculators leverage an algorithm based on your extensive industry experience to show your product's economic benefits. Calculators help prospects easily figure out useful values like ROI, cost savings or waste reduction. With the numbers right in front of them, buyers can be sure your product's benefits are worth investing in.

Consider a calculator if you ...

- **Sell a product with a high purchase price**
- **Use productivity or cost savings as primary proof points**
- **Work with buyers who have ready access to data inputs**

WHY BUYERS LOVE THEM

They have the data to prove a product will be worth the purchase price.

- Transform abstract benefits into concrete numbers
- Take business-specific proof points to management
- Predict the product's business impact

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THEM

You'll overcome one of buyers' biggest objections: cost.

- Prove your brand and products' business value
- Enable more productive sales conversations with buyers
- Potentially convert more buyers faster

Case Study: vAuto Inventory Turn Calculator

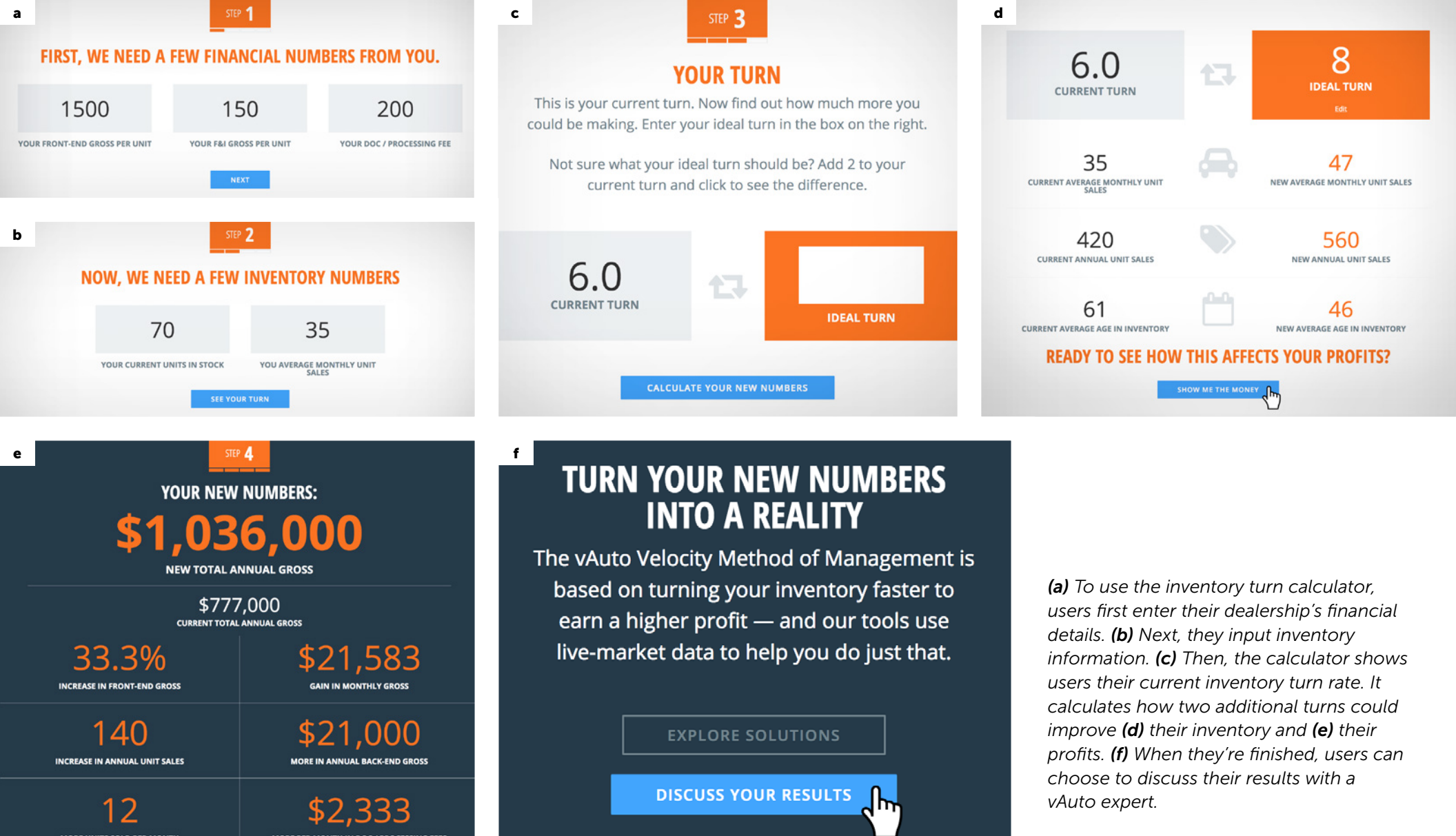
CHALLENGE

vAuto, an automotive software provider, knows dealers can increase profit by selling cars faster, even if individual margins are smaller. However, this goes against decades of conventional wisdom in automotive. vAuto's challenge was to convince buyers that using its software to speed inventory turns can drive profit.

SOLUTION

vAuto built an inventory turn calculator to show dealers the benefits of faster turns. Users enter key business metrics to calculate their turn rate, and how much more they can earn by selling faster. This helps buyers see the benefit of vAuto's inventory management approach, and guides them toward productive sales conversations.





(a) *To use the inventory turn calculator, users first enter their dealership's financial details.* ***(b)*** *Next, they input inventory information.* ***(c)*** *Then, the calculator shows users their current inventory turn rate. It calculates how two additional turns could improve* ***(d)*** *their inventory and* ***(e)*** *their profits.* ***(f)*** *When they're finished, users can choose to discuss their results with a vAuto expert.*

Product Selectors / Configurators

Dial in on the details

For many complex applications, buyers want to be sure your product can meet their detailed requirements. They want confidence that you provide exactly what they need. And product configurators can give them that. Product configurators let buyers easily evaluate options, determine relevance and create a specific configuration of your solution. Some interactive configurators even provide cost estimates for custom products. Plus, if a buyer is satisfied with what they've built, they can take it right to your sales team.

Consider a product configurator if you …

- Offer complex or customizable products
- Provide multiple offerings for different applications and environments
- Sell to buyers with specific or highly regulated use cases

WHY BUYERS LOVE THEM

Their B2B purchase process becomes clearer and simpler.

- Remove ambiguity from the purchase
- Increase efficiency by minimizing need to shop around
- Support multi-stakeholder purchase decisions

WHY YOU'LL LOVE THEM

You'll keep buyers away from your competition.

- Reduce possibility that buyers keep looking for other solutions
- Prepare buyers for efficient sales interactions
- Simplify and automate product quote and proposal creation

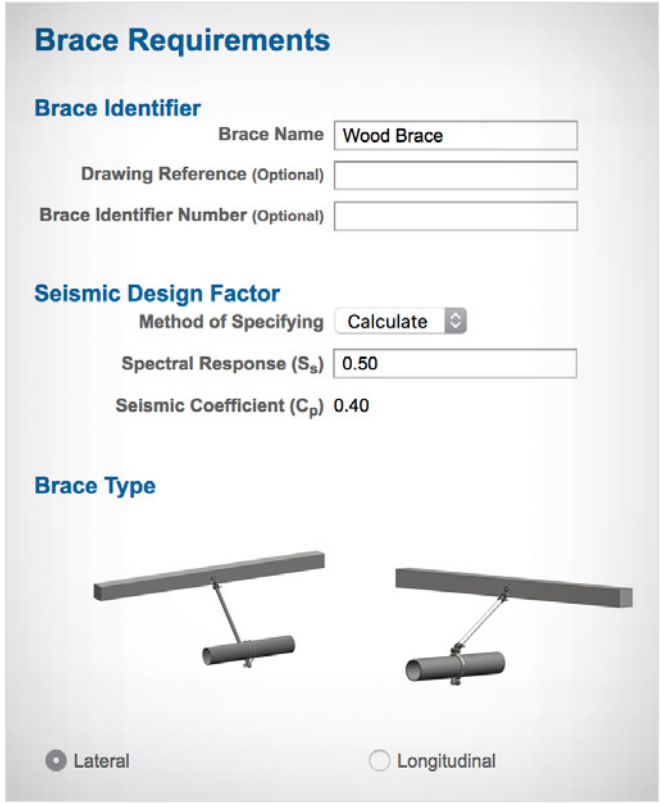
Case Study: Anvil® Seismic Calculator

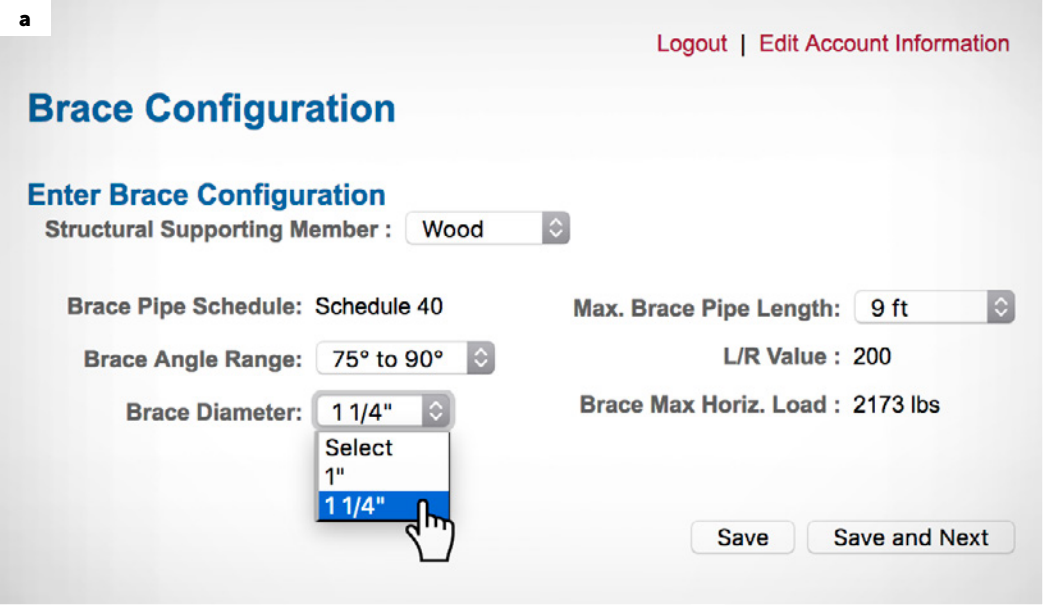
CHALLENGE

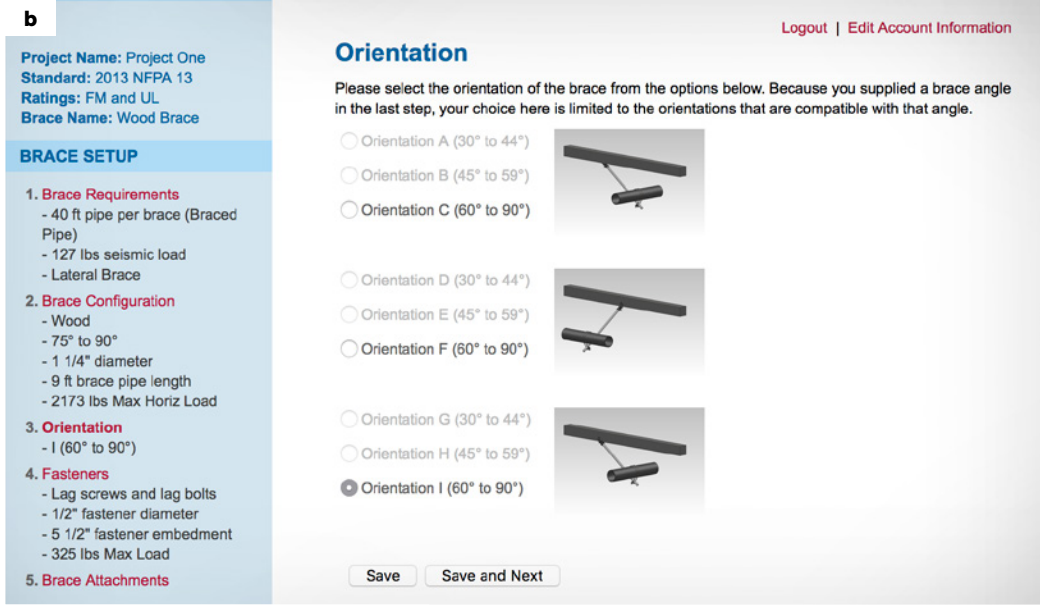
Anvil International is a leading provider of piping products and services. Many of its buyers are responsible for installing fire sprinklers that comply 100% with seismic regulatory codes. Anvil wanted to prove its products would help buyers meet building requirements, as well as all relevant codes and standards.

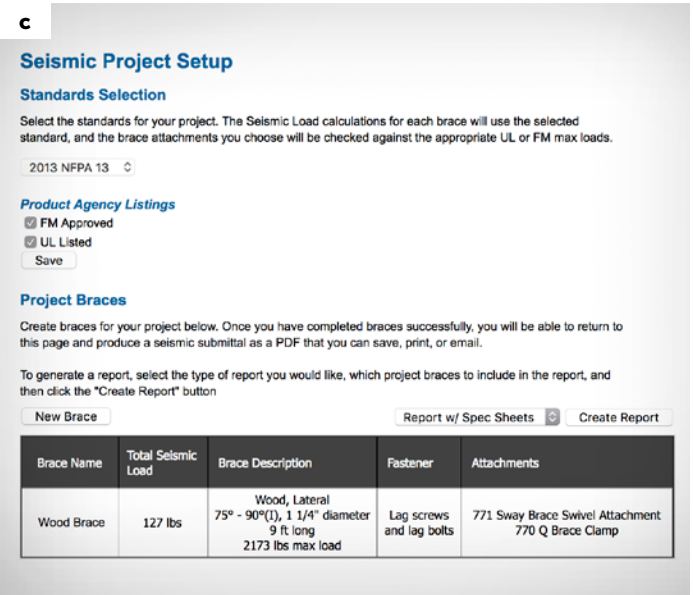
SOLUTION

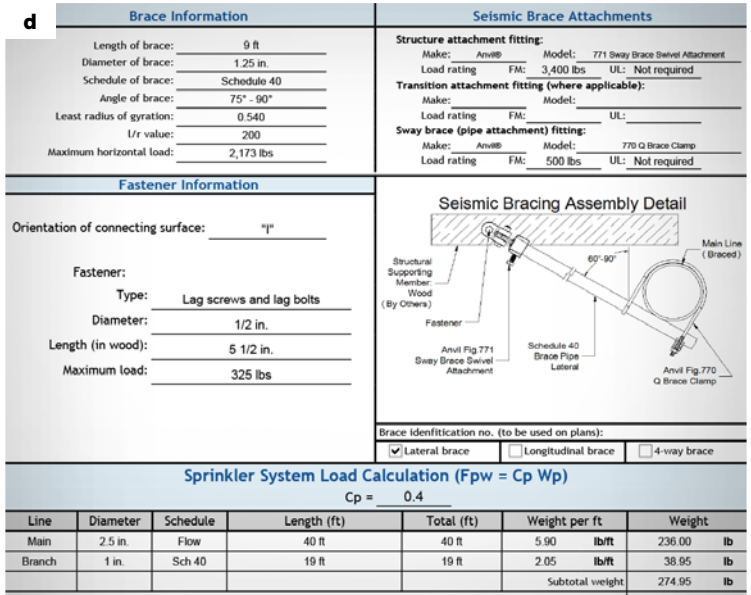
Anvil developed a seismic calculator to help architects and engineers design code-compliant sprinkler systems. Users enter their project data into the tool, which generates a list of Anvil products to keep them in line with their codes. The seismic calculator has made Anvil a one-stop shop to design safe, compliant fire sprinkler systems.











(a) The seismic calculator asks users a variety of questions about their projects. (b) It gathers details about users' applications and requirements. (c) Then, it provides a list of Anvil products that meet those requirements and comply with relevant codes and standards. (d) Users also receive a printout of their results, which they can bring right to an Anvil salesperson.

e-Commerce

Program the purchase

e-Commerce isn't new, but it's becoming more pervasive, even for complex products. As long as every part of a purchase can be programmed, your product can likely be bought online. True, first-time purchasers may need sales contact before they're ready. But for expert buyers, repeat buyers, or buyers purchasing a straightforward product, e-commerce can remove that final speed bump and improve conversion.

Consider e-commerce if you …

- **Have a structured purchase process**
- **Work with knowledgeable or repeat buyers**
- **Believe your qualified lead conversion rate should be higher**

WHY BUYERS LOVE IT

They can skip unnecessary sales contact and purchase on their own.

- Make purchases anytime and anywhere
- Purchase process becomes faster and more efficient
- Obtain business value more quickly

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

You'll simply get more sales if the sales process is simple.

- Increase pipeline revenue without growing salesforce
- Increased efficiency can improve margin on the sale
- Easier to continuously improve the purchase process

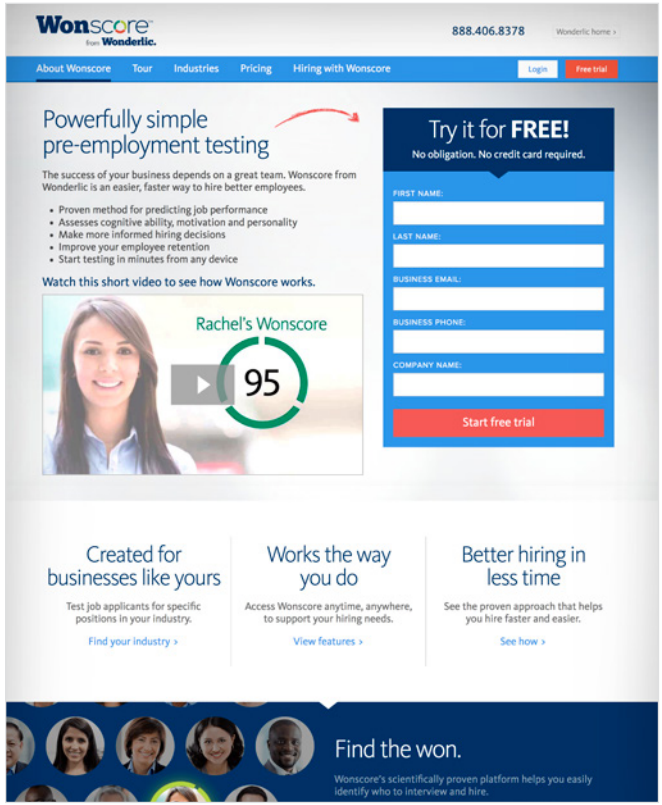
Case Study: Wonscore™ from Wonderlic

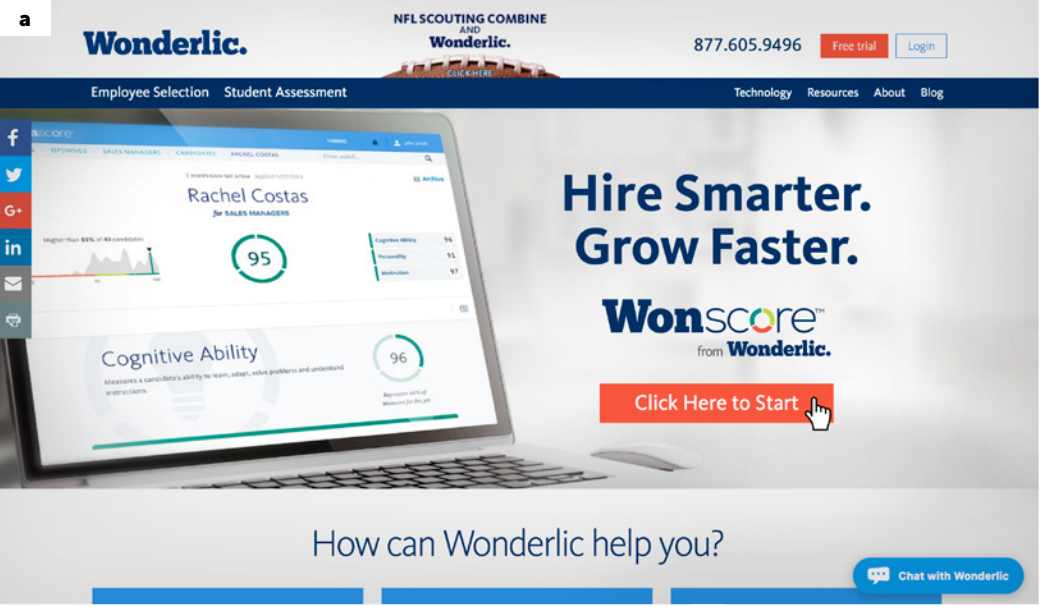
CHALLENGE

Wonderlic provides subscription-based testing services that help organizations evaluate candidates during the hiring process. It wanted to increase its market share among small and medium-sized businesses. Specifically, it wanted to smooth the path to purchase for its Wonscore testing service.

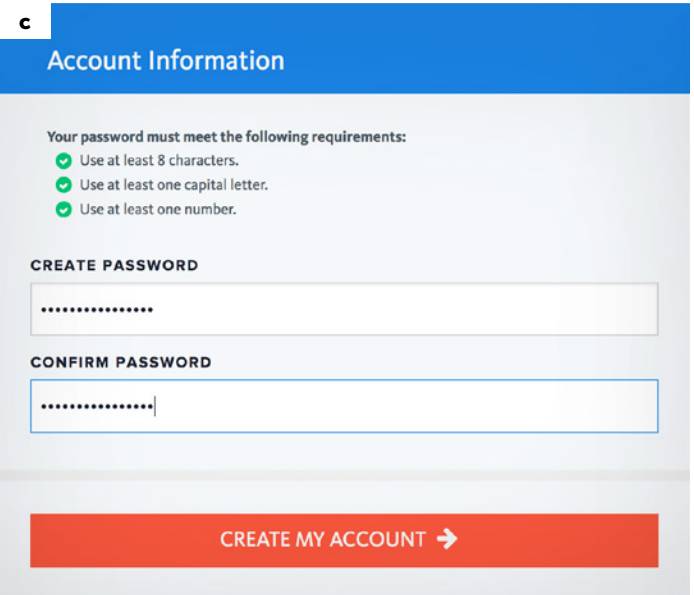
SOLUTION

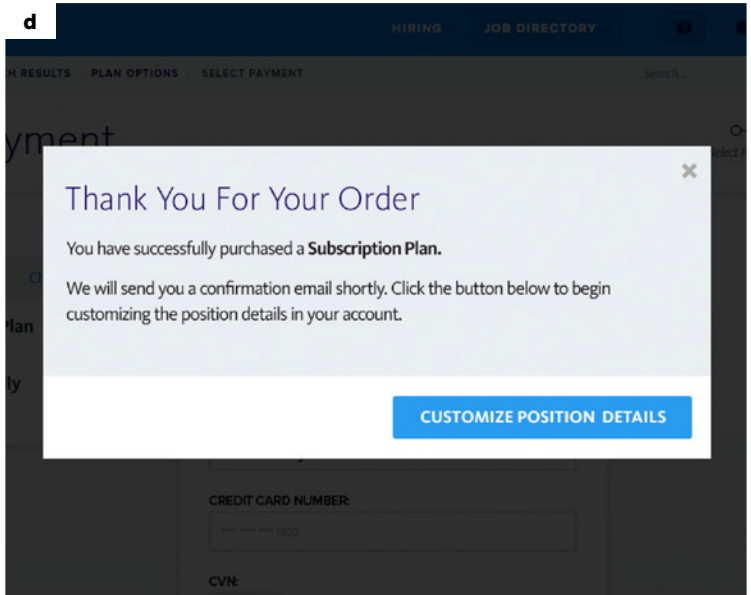
Wonderlic developed an e-commerce platform to let buyers purchase Wonscore without help. Buyers can visit Wonderlic's website, pick the right subscription plan and start using the service immediately. In the 14 months after launch, the new platform has been a hit, with Wonderlic's monthly recurring revenue growing by an average of 10%.











(a) Users can visit Wonderlic's website to learn more about Wonscore. (b) When they're ready to buy, they specify their organization size to find the right subscription plan. (c) In-system verification double-checks all provided information. (d) After buyers enter billing information, they receive a confirmation that their order has been processed and can start using Wonscore right away.

Gamification

Play your way to brand loyalty

Your job doesn't stop after the sale! Nurturing lasting relationships with current customers can keep you top-of-mind and increase retention. And gamification can help you do it. Gamified platforms give buyers psychological rewards for taking specific actions. Interactive communities, competitive rankings, rewards programs, repurchase incentives … They all use positive reinforcement to keep buyers coming back, letting you proactively manage brand loyalty.

Consider gamification if you …

- **Sell your products in a competitive industry**
- **Offer a product that can be bought more than once**
- **Have a subscription-based business that depends on renewals**

WHY BUYERS LOVE IT

They feel part of a rewarding community.

- Get rewards and earn status
- Connect with like-minded peers
- Engage with a brand without feeling “sold to”

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT

You’ll stay top-of-mind and increase long-term engagement.

- Embed your brand into buyers’ daily lives
- Increase brand differentiation and “stickiness”
- Drive customer referrals, retention and repurchase

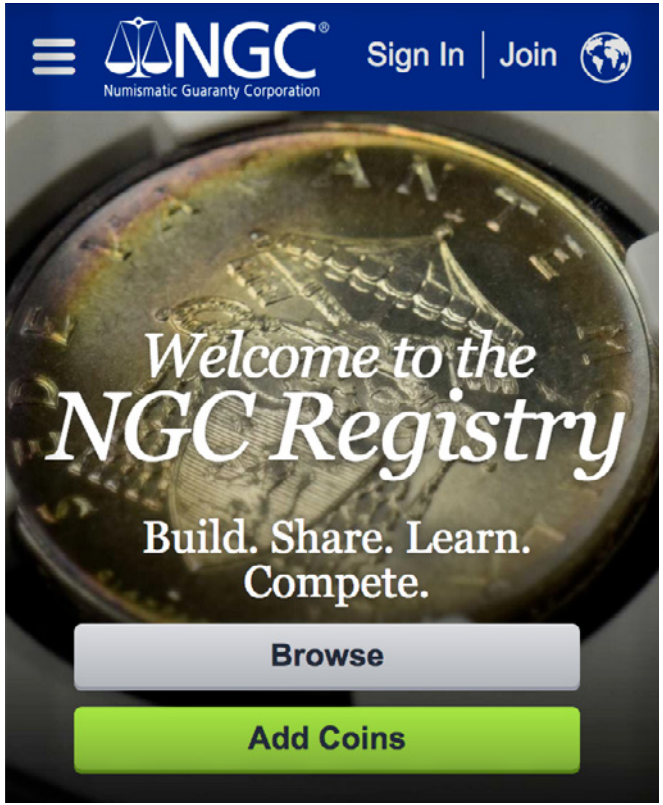
Case Study: NGC® Registry

CHALLENGE

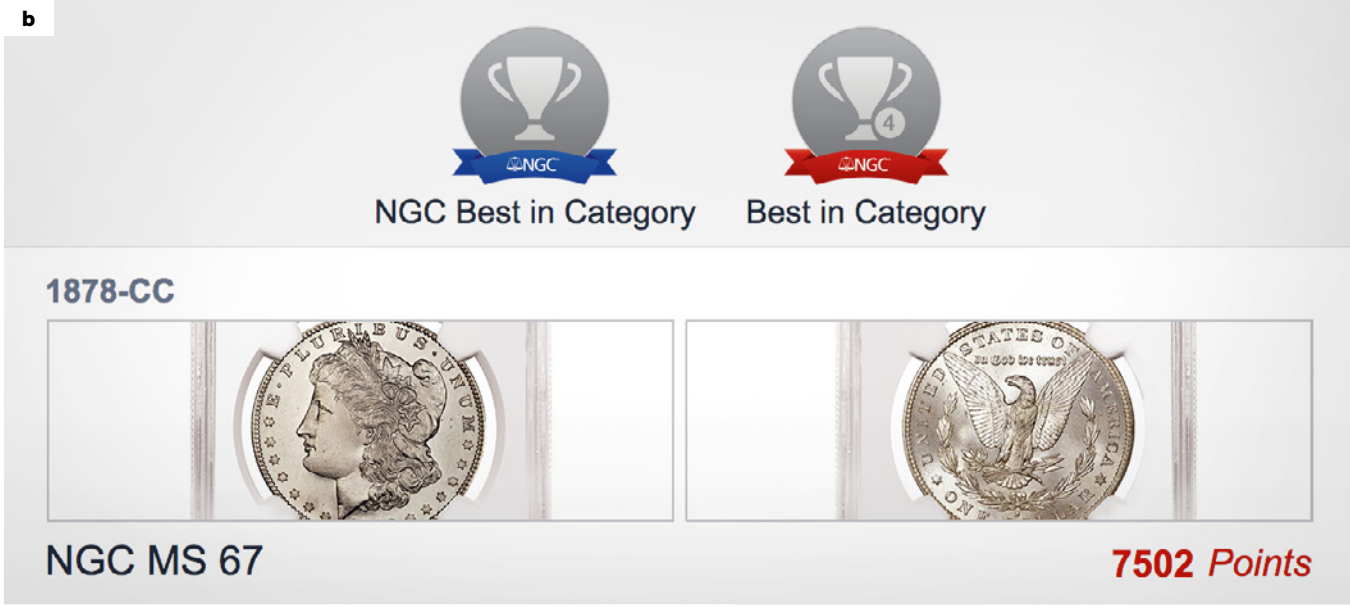
Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), a leading provider of collectible coin grading, wanted to increase demand for its services. It wanted existing customers in particular to come back to NGC for future coin grading.

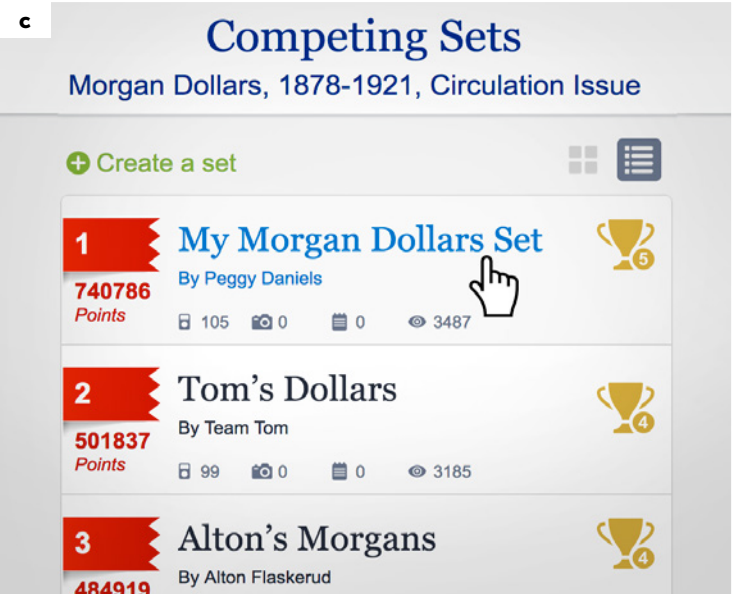
SOLUTION

The NGC Registry is a gamified solution that lets users compete to build the best sets of graded coins — and improve their scores by grading more coins with NGC. It currently has over 12,500 registered members, each with one or more graded sets. The NGC Registry builds demand for NGC grading services and helps increase the value of NGC coins.











(a) *NGC Registry users build sets of graded coins based on criteria like coin type or year.* ***(b)*** *Sets are scored by completeness and grade, and users get an overall score across all their sets. Users can also access other gamified features, including* ***(c)*** *leaderboards to compete for top sets, or* ***(d)*** *message boards to connect with peers and share a love for the hobby.*

With Interactive Content, Everyone Wins

As we've seen, interactive content reaches buyers how they want to be reached, at every stage of the purchase journey. Whether they're identifying needs, comparing options or making a purchase, interactive content lets them do it on their terms. Not yours.

That's good news for you, too. Because most of the time, empowered buyers are more engaged and more likely to convert. As a marketer, that's music to your ears — and your pipeline.

Want a piece of that success? Think about your best salesperson. What they do to engage and excite buyers across the funnel. And how you can package that into interactive content that gives buyers the control they crave.

Isn't it time your buyer's journey put your buyers first?



The Mx Group

The Mx Group is a digital and demand generation agency that empowers companies with the competitive edge of modern B2B marketing. To do this, we integrate a broad set of services: Strategy. Design and content. Web and app development. Demand gen and lead management. And we make it all work together so that companies attract, convert and retain more customers.

For more information, contact The Mx Group at 877-504-7770 or start@themxgroup.com

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