
The Construction Product Directory Playbook

Everything you need to optimise your profile and generate quality leads.



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Our Construction Product Directory Playbook lets you in on the secrets that make our most successful customers see a return on investment, year after year.

Every product directory is different, but this playbook is packed with tips and tricks to help you perfect things at every stage of building any product directory profile – and seeing the ensuing results.

Our customers have found that the defining factors that deliver the most product views, clicks to their websites, and direct leads, come down to factors much more within the control of any sales, marketing, or product professional than one might expect.

By the end, you'll have a perfect content plan to ensure you are being specified and installed by the key targets that you've been craving.



**Hi, I'm Peter -
Head of Demand Generation
at the Barbour ABI Group.**

We constantly hear from our customers at Barbour Product Search that they are time-poor and don't have the resources in their marketing and sales teams to best utilise a product directory platform.

This lack of input is leaving money on the table and letting your competitors take work that you could be winning if your products were in front of more of the right people.

Why bother with construction product directories?

So, what is the point of hosting your products on a construction product directory?

A reputable product directory can do almost all the hard work for getting your products seen by a wide, relevant audience. If the directory is big enough, there's a good chance it can outperform even your own website, marketing comms, and SEO performance.

Getting your business on these big platforms will only ever be a benefit, and it ensures you don't miss a step if your competitors get there first.

Piggyback off their SEO legwork

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) is a constantly evolving art form that requires your website to produce huge amounts of content to build trust from search engines and therefore rank you higher on their results pages. If you are a small business, this can take years to achieve and demands constant maintenance to ensure compliance and good practice.

Good product directories already have this in-built and are constantly working to ensure they remain top of the table on SEO practices.

Even if your own website SEO is tip-top, creating links between your site and trusted third-party websites is a core component of achieving a high trust level from search engines such as Google.

Increase your website traffic

A backlink from a trusted website is like a major vote of confidence in your brand that

Google and other search engines will value highly.

TIP: When you build your profile on a product directory, make sure you have links back to your own website throughout your profile page, product entries and news pieces to increase your Backlink Profile.

Build relationships with industry professionals

A good product directory will have an audience that spreads right across the construction specification and installation chain. Utilising their audience will put your products in front of the eyes of people who may never have engaged with your brand before, with the potential to specify your products for years to come.

Generate leads and specifications, without the effort

Once your profile is set up and you are providing consistent content, you can sit back and wait for the audience to find you.

A good approach to sales and lead generation should encompass both proactive and reactive efforts.

Your sales team should be out chasing down leads and contacting new business opportunities. In the meantime, your marketing efforts should be bringing interested parties to you, and product directories help deliver those qualified leads to your door.

Increase your brand awareness

As marketers and salespeople, we'll never stop wanting more leads and to push more sales over the line. But not every future customer is going to be in a position to buy at that moment. In fact, the vast majority of them probably won't be. You need to get your brand in reputable places and in front of as many eyes as possible to ensure that when that customer does eventually need your product, it's your brand they think of and trust.

Brand awareness plays won't give you immediate ROI, but it will set you up long-term as a trusted, well-known provider that can capitalise whenever that sales opportunity does come calling.

Good product directories already have this in-built and are constantly working to ensure they remain top of the table on SEO practices.

What should I include on my directory profile?

Your main company profile page is where you'll be pulling a huge amount of traffic and where you'll have the most opportunity to expose your brand to prospects.

Make sure your profile features all the key information listed below to ensure SEO keywords are hit and that you're giving your prospects as many ways as possible to enquire about your services.

Company Information

The first things you want to get live on your profile are your company logo and description.

Be concise and really sell your brand here. Describe what you do clearly and explain what your USPs are compared to the rest of the industry. Don't make the description too long, we advise around 200 words. Keep it short and simple, telling the reader exactly what problem you can solve for them and how efficiently you can do it.

TIP: Write your description then see if you can get the same information across in half the length. People are busy and see thousands of words on the internet every day. Yours must stand out.

Keywords

Do you know what terms people are searching for when they look for your product? If so, then include those terms in your description. Make it as easy as possible for your brand to be found amongst the noise.

Contact Details

To get specified, you need a way for prospects to contact you. Make sure you are checking for enquiries regularly and that you're set up to receive notifications whenever leads come through.

Key info to include:

- Active, regularly checked email address
- Phone number (and the hours your line is operated)
- Company address
- Social media links to all your platforms

TIP: Direct enquiries to a well-monitored inbox so you ensure minimal wait time for your hot lead once their enquiry has come through.

Products

Whether you're showcasing individual products or an entire range, be sure to utilise all the product entries you get allocated within your directory subscription.

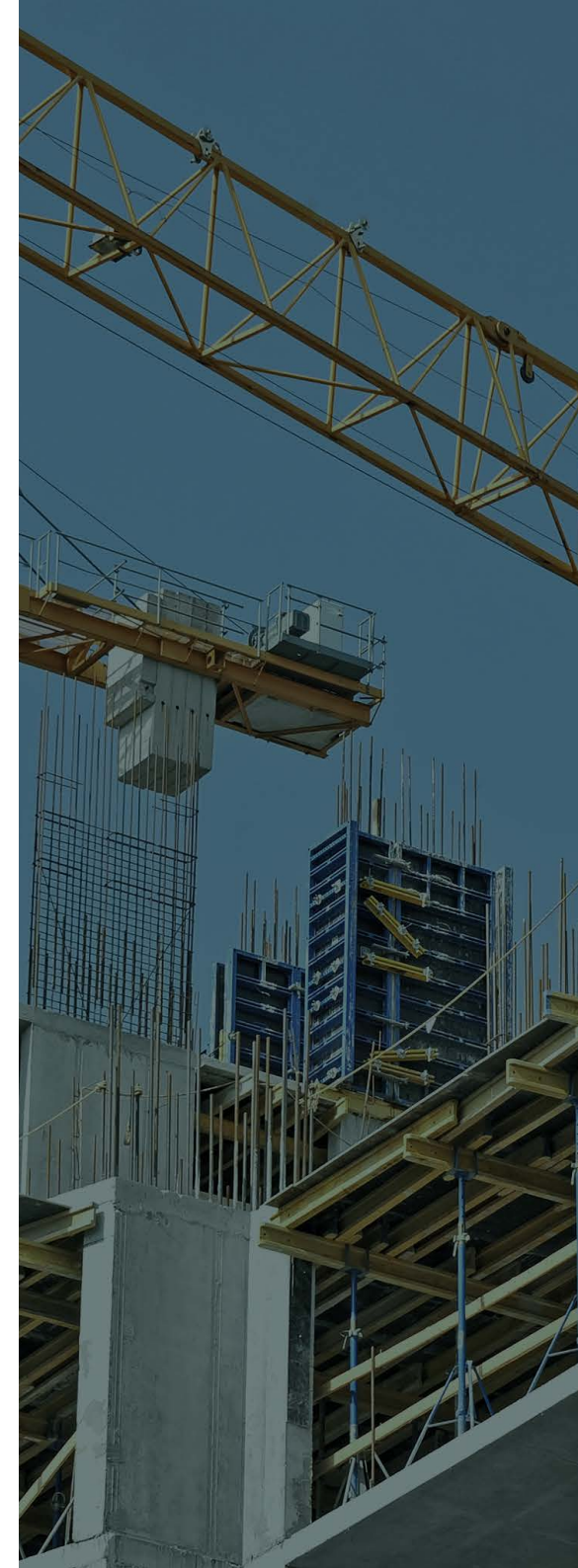
Again, it's vital that you utilise keywords and headline USPs within your product descriptions. Make sure that when people search for your type of product or the materials that you use, it's your brand they are seeing in their searches and not your competitors'.

TIP: If you only have one or two products to list, make sure you aren't overpaying for an allocation that you don't need.

Bonus Features to Include

Build trust with hot prospects by bulking out your profile with as much relevant, up-to-date information and social proof as you can.

- Accreditations
- Trade names
- Award wins
- Catalogues
- Videos
- CPDs
- BIM/CAD file





Product directory content writing 101

You want to convince the reader that your product is the best solution to solving their needs. How do you do that?

Case Studies

Case studies are the best way to showcase real-world examples of your success and provide social proof by getting key stakeholders to endorse your product for you.

A testimonial quote from a satisfied customer is gold dust for your business. We can all talk about why our own products are great, but the weight of an unbiased third party promoting you is huge. It lets somebody else do the talking for you. If a successful, trusted business trusts your product, why wouldn't anybody else?

TIP: Remember, always play the “so what?” game with content writing. After every point you write, question yourself with “so what?” If you can explain why that point matters to the reader and to users of your product, then it can stay. If it only matters to you, it's got to go.

PR

On top of uploading case studies to directories, you should include any type of PR – whether that be blogs, product news, or company bulletins. The more content you provide, the better you can educate your audience.

TIP: Do you have a PR list? If you have an account manager at your product directory, add their email address to your distribution list so that they never miss an update.

Call to Action

Always remember you need a call to action (CTA) at the end of everything you write in order to move readers through to the next step of the sale funnel.

Writing a perfect case study is useless if you don't give your reader the chance to click through and buy the product that you've just wowed them with.

TIP: Make sure you set up UTM tracking within any links that you put into third-party product directories so that you can track exactly where the traffic to your website is coming from and measure success.

We've got loads more tips on content writing that we can't fit into this quick guide. Follow our complete, comprehensive how-to guide on [how to write the perfect case study here](#) and get writing!



What should I include on my directory profile?

Product directories may offer clients newsletters and/or email campaigns as part of their package. They may simply have one general newsletter, or several different types of newsletters aimed at various audiences.

Typically, email campaigns are sent to the directory's opt-in subscribers, so this will be quite a mixed audience made up of those working throughout the entire specification chain.

Once you have decided which newsletters you would like to feature in, you next need to think about the content which will work best for your chosen campaign.

TIP: Ask the editorial staff at the directory what type of content tends to work best in their newsletter campaigns. They will have seen it all before and have a vested interest in making sure your content performs well, so use this experience to your advantage!

Think about your audience's pain points and interests. Ask yourself these questions as you write your content:

- How would they benefit from your product?
- Why should they care enough to stop and read your piece as they scroll?

When writing the content be sure to refer back to our content writing tips and don't forget the CTA! Make your content clear, succinct and eye-catching. If you know the typical job title or business type of the audience, then tailor your content towards those industries. Your headline is also vital: you might only have a few words to grab attention, so make it count.

TIP: UTM tag any content leading back to your website and ask for statistics on how the newsletter performed – all these things will help you determine ROI!

What should I include on my directory profile?

Social media marketing is something that all businesses must consider. Not every business has the luxury of a large marketing team, but having active social profiles is just as important as having an active website for finding new customers and building trust in your business.

A good product directory may have a large in-built social following. So, if social media promotion is part of your package, then you can have yet another avenue to reach their followers with your products.

And if you don't have social profiles currently, take the opportunity to start them! They're not as scary or difficult as they may seem, and helpful websites like HubSpot will have plenty of "How To" guides on posting content.

TIP: Each time you upload a PR piece to the directory, shout about this on your own socials and reshare any posts that the directory tags you in.

According to HubSpot, 77% of marketers say that social media marketing has been somewhat to very efficient over the last 12 months - so let's utilise it!



Optimise, optimise, optimise!

Optimise Your Profile Content

Ensuring your content is optimised for search engines to find it is just as vital as writing the content itself. There are actions you can take on both the front end and the back end of a webpage to make sure that your content is shouting as loudly as possible for attention as Google scans the web to find the most relevant answers to the questions that your prospects are asking.

- Load up on search terms, categories, trade names, material types, and sectors you work in across your profile.
- Accurate and relevant page titles, headlines, and meta descriptions are all vital to ensure you are being found on the product directory and across the wider web.
- Make sure you edit your content from what appears on your own website to avoid being penalised for duplication. The Barbour Product Search directory has dedicated editorial staff assigned to each customer of ours, so our team are well versed in ensuring that we vary the content compared to what appears on your website.

Generate Quality Backlinks

A backlink is simply a link from another website leading towards your website. The more trusted the other website is by Google, the better for your website. It's basically like getting a big seal of approval from a third party that your website is legitimate and trusted.

Make sure your profile on the product directory is full of good backlinks to your website. This should be a perfectly virtuous circle: your website gets more traffic from your directory profile, your website becomes more trusted because of these good backlinks and starts to rank higher on Google, leading to even more traffic coming to your website!

3 Top Tips

1. When linking to your website, make sure you link relevant words. E.g. if you're talking about your window product with the phrase "See more on our Double Glazed Sash Windows here", hyperlink the relevant product words "Double Glazed Sash Windows", not just the word "here".
2. Make sure you link to the most relevant page possible. Don't just link to your home page – if you have a specific page dedicated to the product you're discussing, link straight to that product!
3. Include UTM tags. A UTM allows you to add specific terms to the end of links that will let you analyse the traffic from the product directory and judge campaign successes more easily in your Google Analytics. Google has their own easy-touse [UTM building tool](#) that you can utilise, and [Hubspot has great articles and tools on building UTMs](#) if you need any more help or explainers on exactly what they are and how they work.



Measuring return on investment

Accurate attribution and ROI can be tricky to measure with marketing content.

Somebody may appear to have come directly to your website and purchased, but can you accurately measure the fact that they first saw your brand on a product directory 3 months earlier, then followed you on social media, then clicked a promoted ad before they bought?

And if you can do that, then how do you decide what was the most important step in that process? The step where they first found you or the step where they fell over the line into being a buyer? The answer is that there's no one simple answer.

It's never going to be a perfect process, but there are a few different metrics you can track on a product directory to give you a good feel for whether you're getting a worthy return on your spending.

Volume of Enquiries

Across your directory profile, you should be featuring enquiry CTAs, so the easiest way to

check ROI is to simply keep an eye on how many enquiries you are receiving throughout your subscription.

If you know what your lead-to-sale ratio is and your average order value, you should be able to very quickly decipher your return on investment from the platform.

But, of course, there's more to these platforms than direct sales. Not every buyer who sees your brand is going to be a direct sale. As we said earlier, attribution won't be that simple in each individual case, so you'll need to check brand awareness metrics too.

Company/Lead Tracking

Many product directories track the companies which are visiting their site and client profiles. At Barbour Product Search we call this Enhanced Insights. If you have this feature enabled within your subscription, you can extract the names of companies who have been engaging with.

your profile and pass these warm leads over to your sales team. The team will be able to

see exactly which products or PR pieces that the business has interacted with, giving them confidence that they can approach the conversation knowing what the prospect needs. Track how many of these referrals you get from the directory and how many result in a sale.

If you subscribe to both Barbour Product Search and Barbour ABI, you'll be able to search the company name within Barbour ABI and see the GDPR-compliant contact details of every individual that we have named at that company. If there are any roles missing that you need adding, make sure you utilise our enquiry button to let our research team do the work of finding that information for you!

Analytics

Businesses that don't have a huge web presence outside of their product directory entries may see huge spikes in their web traffic every time they post on the directory or are featured on their social media.

Again, make sure to use UTM tags across your content so that you can accurately search in your own analytics to see where exactly your increase in traffic has come from. You might not get direct enquiries through the platform, but if your web traffic suddenly spikes and sales on your own website go up, you'll want to know what has caused that increase and do more of the same!

If you know what your lead-to-sale ratio is and your average order value, you should be able to very quickly decipher your return on investment from the platform.



Wrapping things up

We hope you learned some valuable skills from our Construction Product Directory Playbook.

At Barbour Product Search we run one of the largest product directories in the UK Built Environment, so we like to think we know what we're talking about.

It's almost impossible to remember all these rules and tricks if you're producing content while running a busy day job. This is why each Barbour Product Search client is assigned a dedicated Editorial Account Manager who works with you throughout your entire subscription to ensure you're making the most of the platform and getting that return on investment that makes your life easier.

Get in touch with me and the team to find out how we can help you succeed in getting your brand noticed, your products installed, and your profits looking healthy.

Get in Touch