

77% of buyers report obtaining pricing or lead time via self-serve digital tools.

What does this mean for manufacturer websites?



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Industrial Buyer Pulse

A quarterly research initiative capturing the evolving perspectives of industrial buyers across North America.

In our latest Industrial Buyer Pulse survey, we asked 263 North American industrial buyers about how they research and engage with suppliers. One data point stood out: 77% said they had obtained a price or lead-time quote directly through a supplier's digital tool, without even talking to sales.

That's not a glimpse of the future. That's happening right now. And if your website doesn't make quoting fast, intuitive, and transparent, you're already falling behind.

The Shift in Buyer Behavior

In the past, industrial purchases were relationship-driven. A prospect would reach out, have an initial conversation, and then work with a salesperson to define requirements, timelines, and budgets. Instead, buyers increasingly expect supplier websites to function like digital self-service portals. A well-designed quoting tool is no longer a "nice to have." It's part of the decision-making process.

Why Many Manufacturer Quote Tools Fail

Unfortunately, most industrial websites still treat quoting as a manual handoff rather than a seamless digital experience. Here are some common UX pitfalls we see:

- 1. Overly long forms** – Asking for every possible detail upfront can overwhelm buyers. Most just want a baseline number or lead time to evaluate suppliers.
- 2. Mobile-unfriendly workflows** – Increasingly, research happens on phones. Clunky forms, PDFs, or calculators that don't adapt to smaller screens frustrate users. We are increasingly seeing industrial sites where more than 75% of traffic comes from mobile devices, yet many sites are still barely designed responsively.
- 3. Opaque communication and processes** – Buyers don't know what happens after they click "submit." Will they hear back in an hour? A week? Or never? Marketers often forget to include copy on the thank you page that explains next steps, and there isn't always appropriate follow up or checks and balances for sales teams to manage leads.
- 4. Inaccessible design** – Don't forget accessibility basics like proper color contrast, form labels, and screen reader support. Accessibility and usability often go hand in hand, and both improve the buyer experience (and your search and generative rankings).

When quote tools fail in these ways, they send the wrong message. Instead of speed and reliability, your site signals delay and uncertainty — the exact opposite of what today's buyers need.





What This Means for Manufacturers

For manufacturers, quoting UX is no longer just an operational detail. It's a strategic differentiator. The companies that get it right position themselves to win business before competitors even enter the conversation.

Remember, 82% of buyers said they shortlisted suppliers before ever speaking to them. If your quoting tool creates friction or uncertainty, you may never even make the shortlist.

Getting Started

If your current quoting process involves email forms, PDF downloads, or manual callbacks, it's time to rethink. Start small if needed:

- Simplify your existing form fields.
- Add clear confirmation messages.
- Test your process on mobile devices.
- Write supportive copy that tells buyers exactly what to expect.

Then, consider investing in more advanced quoting systems that can provide real-time pricing and lead times. These tools not only improve UX but can also integrate with your ERP or CRM for operational efficiency.

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Industrial buyers have spoken. They want speed, clarity, and reliability. And they're getting it from suppliers who prioritize digital quoting tools. If you don't meet that expectation, your competitors will.

So ask yourself: What does your quoting experience say about working with you?

