



# **THE COST OF “SAVING MONEY” ON A WEBSITE REDESIGN: A LESSON FOR MANUFACTURERS**

# Introduction

A manufacturer asked for a new website quote. Since my company specializes in building custom websites, I had several calls with the sales team and the CEO. Everything looked and sounded good. I sent the proposal; a few weeks later, the CFO emailed to say, “We don’t pay for ‘Discovery.’”

What he meant was, they didn’t want to pay for my team and me to do the upfront work of getting to know the company, its people, sales process, industry, etc.

Our Discovery process is quite thorough. We take the time to get to know the client, including the company’s sales process: what works, what doesn’t; their audiences’ challenges; and the objections and feedback the sales team hears.

What we learn during Discovery becomes the foundation for the website strategy and messaging – and future ongoing marketing that drives lead generation.

I wrote back to explain this to the CFO, but . . . crickets. Several weeks later, the company had a new website. When reviewing the new website, my designer Rachel Cunliffe and I were aghast at the number of errors we saw – especially since this project had been overseen by a large agency with lots of glowing reviews.

Surely the company CEO hadn’t given this website the green light? I gave the team the benefit of the doubt — maybe they needed to make the website live super fast and would go back and fix everything.

Ah, nope. After two months, the errors were still there. Going through them again, I realized the agency didn’t spend a lot of time learning about the company, its products, or the industries it served. Even worse, it was apparent no one on the team did a thorough proof before go-live. What follows are some of the errors we found.

## Industries We Serve: Blank pages

The home page had a huge callout to the various industry pages where the company's products are used. When you clicked the links, however, many of the resulting pages were blank. Several of the industry sections had no copy whatsoever — as in ALL the pages were blank (and still are!).

## Case Studies: Wrong copy

The agency used this copy to promote the case studies: "Read how we've helped create tailored solutions . . . ." When I clicked through to the page, I started laughing.

The header read, "Case Study #1." The two sentences of page copy talked about the company's distributors.

## Careers: Total fail

The common manufacturing narrative is how hard it is to find and hire skilled people. The current workforce is aging out; younger people don't want to do "dirty" jobs. This is one reason why I recommend to manufacturers, when we create a new website, they bring in a good industrial photographer to take photos of the people

at work. The photos show potential new hires that the facility is very clean, often high tech, and an interesting place to work. They also see the people who work there — their potential co-workers. I recommend manufacturers create a Careers section listing job training and benefits, employee testimonials, and Open Positions that allow people to apply online.

For this manufacturer, however, the agency created a huge callout to Careers on the home page. When you clicked, however, you saw the image and copy shown below. Gah! So bad.

My Gen Z son gives me a lots of great feedback about how he views business and industrial websites. He's very impatient with things that don't work properly or look fake. He'd take one look at this page and leave — because he could see in an instant this company wasn't serious.

Seeing this image also made me despair. Whoever made this decision had NO CLUE about manufacturing or how to attract prospective new hires.

Come Join our team. Click the "Contact Us" link at the bottom of the page to tell us a little bit about yourself. Our Human Resources Department will contact you shortly after to begin the application process.

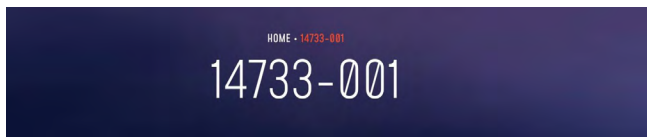


## Lots of little errors

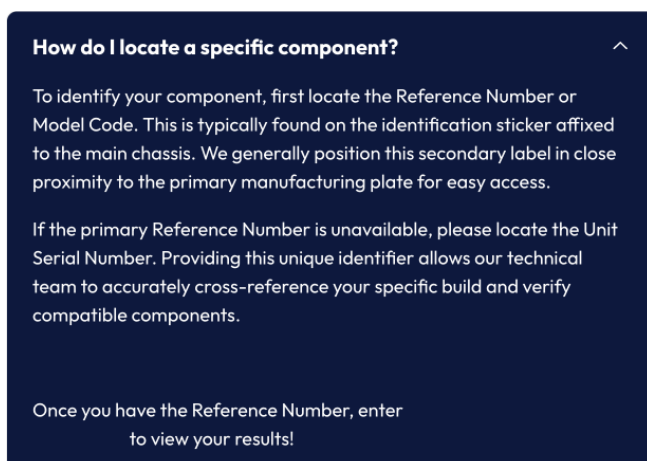
Creating a new website from scratch involves a ton of small details — of which business owners aren't aware. I don't even bother telling owners my team and I take care of all this “small” stuff — we just do it. It's our job.

For this manufacturer's website, all the little details, that we normally take care of in the course of the build, jumped right out at me, such as the home page title tag (tied to SEO), which read, “Homepage.” That's it. Not even the company name was included.

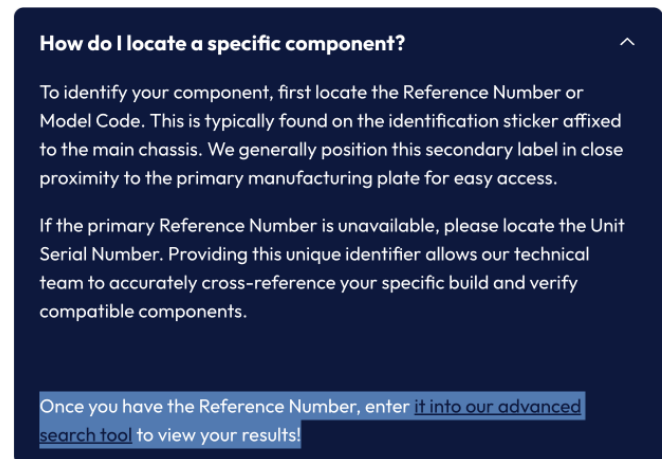
Or, the Search page which had this funny number in the header (and still does).



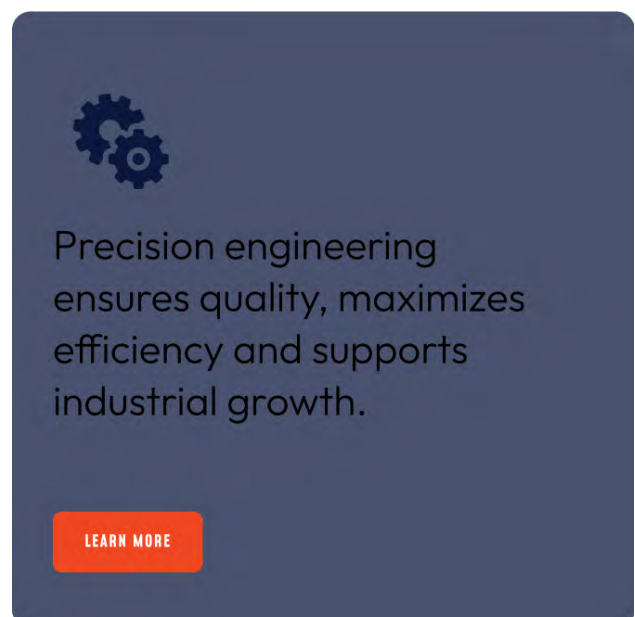
And, the hidden link text because the text links were the same color as the background (we changed the copy on these to protect the agency).



Here's the hidden text highlighted:



These images show why reversed-out text fails. Low contrast makes it incredibly hard to read, which is why we avoid “dark mode” websites. Comprehension surveys prove that poor contrast drops comprehension to zero. This means no one is reading your copy, and if they do manage it, they don't understand it or remember it. Even worse is dark text on a dark background. We also changed the words of this copy but basically, this is what it said — or didn't say. It's pretty bland and yucky.





This site is a cautionary example of what happens when an agency lacks manufacturing and lead generation experience, paired with writers who don't know the industry. Disappointingly, the agency didn't fix the multitude of errors after launch. Because many errors remain live, I assume the sales team isn't using the site to help sell products — which is one of the main jobs of a website. The company will never know the number of

people who didn't contact them because of the errors.

## Bottom line

What this website really says, is, "Despite what we say, we don't pay attention to detail and the products we sell you might be pretty shoddy, too." But hey, at least they didn't have to pay for Discovery!

## The Huff Industrial Marketing Difference: 100% Attention to Detail

*"Dianna and her team have provided ongoing marketing for us since 2017, including the complete redesign of our website in 2023. Due to their recommendations, we see a steady stream of RFQs for our high-end, custom blast rooms. Hiring Huff Industrial Marketing is one of the best business decisions I've ever made."* — Brandon Acker, President, Titan Abrasive Systems

We oversee your custom website start-to-finish, including strategy, messaging, copy, design, images, coding — everything! — to ensure it tells your wonderful story, delivers high quality leads (we have the receipts), *and* attracts potential new hires. Without this foundation, all subsequent marketing is simply throwing good dollars after bad. It's for this reason we put considerable time and energy into the website we build for you — because we want to see you succeed.

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