



CASE STUDY

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Classic American Business Grows from the Garage to the Global Electronics Market

Thomas Industrial Network teams with Specialized Coating Services to launch online strategy that drives business and reshores electronics manufacturing jobs

About Specialized Coating Services

Specialized Coating Services is a classic American success story, featuring a bright idea, hard work and ingenuity to help it prosper. Rick Ramirez and Kim Atkins started the business out of their garage in 1994 with a desire to provide the best conformal coating services and encapsulation (potting) of printed circuit boards (PCBs) in the electronics industry. They united Kim's expertise in materials management and Rick's prowess in sales and marketing to create an unbeatable team.

The company coats all types of PCBs used in medical, military, aerospace, commercial and retail applications. In addition, the company maintains ISO 9000:2008, ANSI/ESD S20.20-2007 and ITAR certifications. Rick and Kim have built a reputation for exceptional quality and consistently surpassing customer expectations. Quality is of the utmost importance when it comes to protecting sensitive electronics against harsh environments or securing the intellectual property of sophisticated circuits. The Specialized Coating Services reputation of quality has enabled growth of their workforce to 130 employees and still hiring.

Specialized Coating Services recently announced the purchase of a 21,800-square-foot facility next door to their first facility in Fremont, bringing total square footage to 38,000. Initially they were anticipating a move, but due to rapid growth they ended up needing both locations to keep pace with demand.

The Challenge: Expanding their reach to specialized buyers worldwide

The company has always relied on word of mouth to reach decision makers and buyers of a very specialized set of services. Their typical customers have been electrical and mechanical engineers based in their region. These buyers are extremely difficult to find and connect with, and Rick wanted to reach them worldwide, not just in their immediate geography.

His previous efforts generated a lot of tire kickers. “We have a niche offering, and we weren’t easily found by those with a need for our services,” said Rick. Their only realistic approach was to launch a new Internet strategy to showcase and promote their specialized offerings.

Rick and Kim knew ThomasNet.com is where engineers search, and that developing a strategic presence there, along with a re-design of their website would take their strong regionally-oriented company to the global market, where they would have an opportunity to reach bigger opportunities and accelerate growth.

Solution: A new website and a strategic presence on ThomasNet.com

Kim and Rick worked hand-in-hand with Thomas, to redesign their website for exactly the way their target buyers research and make purchasing decisions. They detailed their capabilities, industries served and quality certifications, while streamlining multiple pathways for visitors to contact them or submit an RFQ.

Additionally, they secured a strategic presence on ThomasNet.com, by establishing prominent placement in specific highly targeted categories where specifying engineers searched for a vendor with their capabilities.

This powerful combination was designed to get in front of qualified buyers wherever they were online, no matter what country or time zone they were in. And once they identified Specialized Coating Services as a prospective vendor – the website showcased all of the PCB conformal coating and encapsulating capabilities and quality details that specifying engineers would need to gain confidence and then proceed to contact the company.

Results: Growing the business, and re-shoring American jobs by bringing manufacturing work back from overseas to Specialized Coating Services in California

As a result of the new strategy, Specialized Coating Services went from being a local service provider to specialist protecting sensitive circuits manufactured in countries around the globe.

When Specialized Coating Services launched their new web strategy, they were able to attract key global accounts and even bring manufacturing work back to the U.S. that was previously shipped overseas. “The great thing about leads from Thomas is that by the time they get to us, they are qualified - no tire kickers. The new website helps us to seal the deal with new leads quicker than ever,” said Rick Ramirez.

One technology customer that came from ThomasNet.com manufactures 3,000-5,000 parts per month in China, and now ships those to Specialized Coating Services before final assembly.

Another customer that found Specialized Coating Services on ThomasNet.com is Monkeylectric, which builds LED lights for bicycles. They recently moved their manufacturing from overseas to the U.S. and Specialized Coating Services handles all of the potting/encapsulating work for the circuitry. Specialized Coating's expertise and unparalleled reputation for quality was, in fact, the impetus for the reshoring move.

Reshoring is big news these days and there is lots of interest in the associated job creation. When companies reshore their manufacturing and need new specialized domestic vendors they turn to ThomasNet.com. Today Specialized Coating Services exemplifies the reshoring trend by adding 4-5 employees per week and they plan to bring in another 30 people by the beginning of 2013.

"We have a stringent quality control process – when we bring someone onboard we invest heavily in training," said Kim "In turn, our people greatly contribute to the quality and improvement of our processes, and ultimately support our overall growth and long-term success."

Rick Ramirez concluded, "The leads we get from Thomas are of the highest quality...the hard part used to be getting our name out there and becoming visible – but we've always known, once we have a chance to prove ourselves, buyers come back repeatedly." As a result of the new website and online strategy, new opportunities abound from all corners of the globe, and the future is brighter than ever for this growing American business.