

[Skip to the content of this page](#)



The Resource for Growing Companies

- [SUBSCRIBE NOW! >](#)
 - [current issue](#)
 - [customer service](#)
-

Marketing: Double Exposure

An overview of how a plastics manufacturer is using the World Wide Web to boost regional and international sales.

From: [Inc. Magazine, Jun 1996](#) | **By:** Sarah Schafer

Problem

Generating business on the World Wide Web

Solution

Strategic partnering

Payoff

New customers, increased sales, and foreign expansion

* * *

If I build it, will they come? That's the question many small-business owners ask before they construct a site on the World Wide Web. Sure, there are some companies -- makers of hang gliders, for example -- that find luring Web travelers easy. But what if your product isn't sexy? What if you do something like, well, make things out of plastic?

Elliott Rabin, president of Ridout Plastics Inc., a \$7-million company in San Diego that manufactures custom-designed brochure holders, point-of-sale displays, and plastic components, decided about a year ago to build a Web site, but he wanted to make sure it would generate traffic -- and business.

From the beginning Rabin wanted to partner with an existing site, one that had an established traffic pattern. He chose the *San Diego Source*, an electronic financial newspaper. Rabin pays the *Source* \$500 a month to maintain Ridout's site (he also paid a \$2,500 start-up fee), which runs off the *Source*'s server.

He uses DigitalStyle's WebSuite, a collection of Web-authoring tools (800-541-1175, prices start at \$199), to help design and ship the pages himself. That gives him total control over the content and appearance of his pages without the hassle or cost of maintaining a server. Moreover, the newspaper's site is a hot spot for locals, who are often led straight to Ridout's site through the *Source*'s technology page, which Ridout sponsors.

Sources of national exposure take more work. Rabin spends about five hours a week searching the Web for sites to link up with. When he finds a good fit, he E-mails the organization to ask it to check out Ridout's site and consider linking to it. So far he's established a link with several universities, including Cornell, which has a plastics department. Tying into educational institutions puts Ridout directly in the line of vision of people doing research on plastics. Rabin plans on scanning Ridout's entire corporate research library into its site to help researchers. Two businessmen recently stopped at the site to get pricing information for components they needed to manufacture a product they had developed. To make sure that people are led to Ridout when they're looking for anything plastic, Rabin has listed the company with all the major search engines, including Yahoo!, Alta Vista, and Lycos.

The result: Rabin has made Ridout's site *the* plastics site. Even if people don't buy right away, he says, "they might come back to buy, or they might tell other people to come to our site because we're known as plastics experts." In fact, 15% of Ridout's new business in the past eight months has come from people whose first encounter with the company was on the Web. Ridout now gets 12,000 hits a month. Its overseas business has expanded into six new countries, and sales have grown considerably, increasing 50% in the area of brochure holders alone.

-- Sarah Schafer



« [For the latest small business news, advice and guides, click here](#)

↑ BACK TO TOP

🖨️ PRINT THIS PAGE

✉️ SEND TO A FRIEND

ARTICLE TOOLS SPONSORED BY



Copyright © 2004 Gruner + Jahr USA Publishing. All rights reserved.

Inc.com, 375 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

[Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Legal Disclaimers](#) | [Labeled With ICRA](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)