

How to Request Free Product Literature from Manufacturers



Wanna build your own library of Manufacturer Product Literature? Read on!

Sometimes it's better to have *real* product literature in your hand.

Not a PDF.

Not a product web page.

I mean a real, honest-to-God, full-color flyer, brochure, or catalog.

Jump to a Section

- [How to Request Manufacturer Product Literature without a Rep](#)
- [How to Uncover Hidden General Inquiry Email Addresses](#)
- [Lit Request Email Template](#)

There's even science that backs this up.

In the case study "[Using Neuroscience to Understand the Role of Direct Mail](#)", Milward Brown hooked up 20 people to fMRI brain scanners. Each participant looked at a dozen advertisements. Some ads were on screen, others were on printed cards. Ads on printed cards generated more activity within areas of the brain that integrate visual and spatial information. "Physical materials," reads the study, "produced more brain responses connected with internal feelings, suggesting greater "internalization" of the ads."

Who says "Print is Dead"?

Here's a personal case study. I used to work for a commercial lighting dealer. In our office was a bookcase swelling with lighting catalogs. One day I picked up a call for 12-volt landscape lighting – a category I knew nothing about. "Can you hold one moment?" I asked the caller. I jumped to that bookcase, and *pulled any catalog that had landscape lighting pictures on the spine*. With a few of these catalogs open, I was able to walk the caller through step light options (and sound like I knew what I was talking about).

The result? I actually sold 8 step lights along with a \$100 transformer.

Call me dumb. But when I need to speed-learn a product category, catalogs beat Google any day of the week. Twice on Sunday.

Finally, look no further than a contractor's truck to see the endurance of printed media. Here, you'll often find crumpled, dog-eared pocket catalogs on the dashboard and floor mats.

Given the power of printed material, manufacturers should love mailing out their literature, right?

You'd think that, wouldn't you?

Well, if you're an engineer, contractor, or maintenance professional (what suppliers call an "end-user"), I have a secret to tell you:

Most Manufacturing Marketers *DON'T* like sending physical literature!

In fact, the dirty little secret of our industry is... we actually **hate** mailing literature.

That's why we'll *bury* our literature request forms seven pages deep in our website.

We'll *hide* our email addresses for general inquiries (or not list them at all).

Call up the company operator, and you'll probably get *bounced* from one department to another. After listening to "hold" music for a while, you finally reach someone of authority. And they tell you to "just go to the website", "download the PDF" or "call your Rep". Then CLICK.

If it sounds like I'm disparaging manufacturers, I am not. It's simply an ingrained defense mechanism we have. We're over-worked. We wear too many hats. And literature is expensive to print (not to mention the postage).

We don't have mailrooms staffed with kids working Summer jobs. Instead, requests get handled by a mid-level marketing, sales, or customer service person. Folks who have bigger things to worry about, like making sure orders get shipped on-time.

Suppliers also have to make sure their sales team is flush with literature at all times. It's their "ammunition" for making sales calls. These sales people will always get top priority over you.

Make friends with the manufacturer's representative, and they'll be your best source for literature.

Read ahead *only* if you don't plan to go through the manufacturer's rep for literature.

How to Get Free Product Literature without going through the Manufacturer's Rep

Use my **Seven Commandments of Requesting Product Literature** to amass your own library of catalogs and brochures. I based these Commandments on my "insider knowledge" as a manufacturing marketer. I've also requested literature from dozens of other suppliers, so I know these tactics work (at least 7 out of 10 times).

Expect some suppliers to be stubborn or unresponsive. Some will push-back and say you have to "call your rep" or "visit a distributor showroom."

The Seven Commandments of Requesting Product Literature

1. **Avoid Web Forms like the Plague:** trust me, you'll almost never get a reply from most suppliers by filling out a form. Completed form requests often get logged in the website back-end, and rarely see the light of day.
2. **Look for General Inquiry Emails:** most businesses have email addresses like 'sales@xyz.com' or 'info@xyz.com'. These are often distribution list emails, meaning several employees see your request at once. The manufacturer's own sales reps and customers often hit up these email addresses. So your request will have a high probability of getting seen by the right people.

Can't find any general inquiry emails. See the [side note](#) at the end of this list.

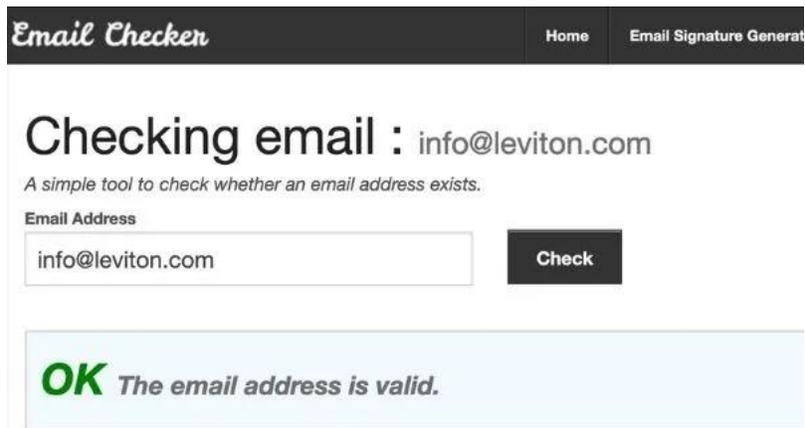
3. **Specify the Titles of the Literature** you're requesting in the body of your email. Don't just say "Can I get some literature?". Be exact. Look at the supplier's Literature web page (sometimes called "Resources"). Call out the titles of the brochure, catalog, or flyer. See my [example below](#).
4. **Give Quantities:** most sales reps know to call out the number of "pieces" when ordering samples. The same goes for literature requests (ex. "1PC—Full Line Catalog"). Put the quantity next to each title. "Act" like someone the supplier does business with.

5. **Ship-To Address in first email:** I've gotten so many vague lit requests where the person does not leave a ship-to address. Doing this may irritate the marketer on the other end, who now has to follow up. Please, don't make us work so hard to send you FREE shit. Make your email so complete that I could copy-and paste it, and send on down the line.
6. **Act "as if"... without being pushy:** when you type that email, imagine you are the supplier's ideal customer. Also, assume the person you're addressing is the right person. One easy way to convey this is to never ask a question (like "Who do I go to for literature?"). If you do get push back (such as you need to be a distributor customer) don't snap back or ask "Why Not?" It's a waste of effort and puts you on their company poop-list.
7. **What's In It For Me?:** remember how I said in commandment #6, to act as if you're the ideal customer? The best way to do that is be the ideal customer you already are. Got a construction project where you're trying out the suppliers products? Say it (even better, mention the project name). If you're a contractor, engineer, or facility manager, SAY IT, as well as which company you work for.

But what if you suspect you're not the manufacturers ideal customer? What if you're a student, a handyman, a DIY'er, a property owner? Well, do you have a friend or family member that's a contractor, or an engineer? Then say "I'm requesting these on behalf of my uncle who is an electrical contractor." It's surprising how often that works.

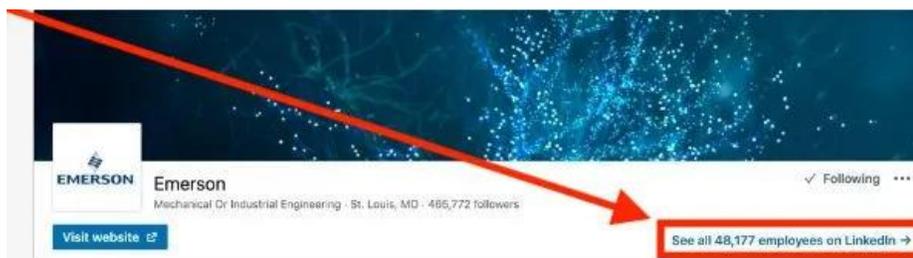
Note on Commandment #2: sometimes you won't be able to find general inquiry emails anywhere on the corporate site. This is generally true for really big companies. When you can't track down that all-important email address, here are three ways to reverse lookup:

- 1) Open a new browser tab, go to [Google.com](https://www.google.com) and type info@[company URL], (do the same with a sales@ alias). There's a 50/50 chance you'll uncover a buried webpage or old flyer in the search results confirming a valid email address.
- 2) Google search didn't yield any usable email addresses? Try running that info@ or sales@ combination through an **email verification site**. My favorite free tools are [MailTester.com](https://www.mailtester.com) and [Email-Checker.net](https://www.email-checker.net). If these sites return a VALID or UNKNOWN result, type up your email lit request, send, and see if it bounces back.



You can use a free email verification site to discover “hidden” general inquiry emails that company’s DON’T want listed on their corporate site! Courtesy of EmailChecker.net.

3) So what do you do when those emails don’t work? Log into your [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com) account, look up the company page, and click over to the hyperlink that says “See all _ employees on LinkedIn.”



Scroll through the list of employees. Pluck out names of anyone with a “Sales” or “Marketing” role. Typically, you want someone mid-level, with an “Assistant” or “Coordinator” title. However, if you can’t find anyone mid-level, take a crack at a “Manager”, “VP”, or “Director” title.



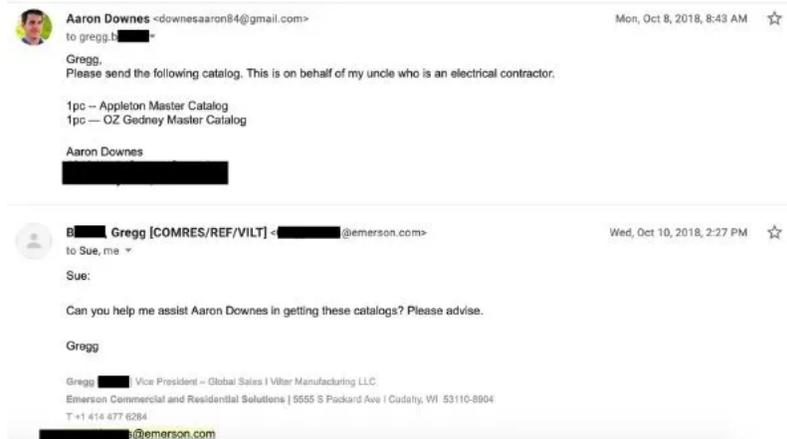
Emerson is an example of a GIANT international manufacturer with a whopping 48,177 employees listed on LinkedIn! Businesses like this will have marketing and sales departments fragmented into different product categories and continents. I had to email a dozen “candidates” before I found the right contact.

So now you have a few names. You can bet the contact’s email alias is *probably* the company’s URL (if it’s www.xyz.com, they will have an

[@xyz.com](#) address). In my experience, 95% of corporate email addresses follow one of three patterns:

1. FIRST NAME.LAST NAME@ALIAS
 - o ex. [Joe.Blow@xyz.com](#)
2. FIRST INITIAL+LAST NAME@ALIAS
 - o ex. [JBlow@xyz.com](#)
3. FIRST NAME+LAST INITIAL@ALIAS
 - o ex. [JoeB@xyz.com](#)

Draft your lit request email to each marketing employee, hit send, and see what happens. If your email bounces, try one of the other two variations just listed. One is bound to work.



Success! After several tries, I found a “candidate” at Emerson who connected me with the right person that could furnish me with literature.

In my experience, this approach works wonders with large manufacturers. It’s hard to ignore a request when its addressed directly to you!

Email Template for Product Literature Requests

Here is a generic template of the email I used to great success. Go ahead, copy & paste it, and modify to your liking.

```
SUBJ: Catalog Request
[Info/Sales] Team,
Please mail out the following literature. I work for [Company
Name], a {contracting firm/ wholesale distributor}.

1pc — Full Line Catalog
1pc — LED Lighting Brochure

Please ship to:

[Your Name]
[Street Address and Apt #]
```

Pretty simple template, am I right? You can fire off a dozen of these requests during your lunch hour. Again, if you can’t say you are a contractor or distributor, replace that second sentence (“I work for...”) with

mention of a friend or relative who is. For example, “This is on behalf of my uncle, who is an electrician.”

That’s it for now, buckaroo.

Can’t wait to start building your library of free manufacturer’s product literature?

Stay tuned for the next blog post. I will give you the full list of 50+ electrical and lighting manufacturers that I reached out to. This list will include links, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Are you a contractor, engineer, facility manager, or distributor? Do you request product literature directly from you manufacturer? Or do you go through a sales rep?

And if you’re a manufacturer marketer, what does a “good lit request” look like to you?