

The White Stuff: Why White Papers are Good for Business

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Abstract

If you want your business and your brand to be taken seriously, demonstrating your knowledge and expertise with a well crafted and extensively researched white paper is a good place to start. White papers have long been a highly successful form of content marketing within the manufacturing, energy, technology and finance industries but in recent years white papers have also become prevalent within other sectors including, but not restricted to, education, healthcare and agriculture.

The purpose of this white paper is to;

- **explain what a white paper is (and what it's not)**
- **present the reasons why white papers are a highly successful marketing tool**
- **answer specific questions that businesses may have about white papers**
- **set out the business case for using white papers as part of a long term marketing strategy**

When used effectively white papers can generate leads, increase sales, convert prospects into customers, improve brand awareness and even redefine a market space. The power of the white paper can not be underestimated and they play an integral role within the content marketing strategy of progressive businesses.

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The White Stuff: Why White Papers are Good for Business

What is a white paper?

A white paper is a thorough and authoritative report that aims to investigate a specific complex business issue. White papers are produced by businesses who want to help their customers, clients and any other interested parties better understand their products or services.

Originally the term 'white paper' referred to a particular type of policy document that was produced by the Government to set out proposals for future legislation. However, since the 1990's the term has proliferated and taken on a new meaning. In business a white paper is a form of heavy duty content marketing which aims to promote a product, a service or a viewpoint. White papers are instrumental within thought leadership content marketing in particular and provide content that is well researched, authoritative and focussed.

Unlike brochures, white papers do not put forward a sales pitch- instead they produce research into topics that are relevant to their sponsor. The aim of the paper is to enlighten and inform potential customers about the rationale behind choosing one product over another, or to help them better understand the vendor's position within the marketplace. The audience of a white paper are the customers, clients and partners of the business and anyone else who has an interest in the sector- for example analysts, consultants and journalists.

What is a white paper not?

A white paper is not a sales pitch and nor are they user manuals or technical documents that provide support to the user after making a purchase. The aim of a white paper is to inform, persuade and advise its readers about a product or service using hard evidence, facts and extensive industry research. If you want to tell the world why people need to buy your products then a white paper is the wrong format for doing this.

What is a white paper for?

White papers are designed to be used as a pre-sales marketing tool and their purpose is to generate leads, make a strong business case and establish the authority and expertise of the company sponsoring the paper. A white paper will '*promote a certain product, service, technology or methodology*'¹ and influence the decisions of prospective customers.

Generally white papers are used for B2B (Business to Business) marketing purposes and are effective at communicating specific details about an offering. A white paper is '*intended to provide persuasive or factual evidence that a particular offering is a superior method of approaching or solving a problem or challenge*'².

A white paper serves as an incredibly useful reference for anyone who wants to know more about your sector and/or understand specifics about a particular type of product. If you produce consistently helpful, authoritative and accurate content in the form of white papers then your prospects and channel partners will view you as a trusted adviser and will be inclined to purchase goods and services from you rather than from your competitors because they believe you are a '*helpful, detail-oriented, credible source*'.³

¹ Investopedia 'What is a White Paper?'

² *ibid*

³ Kolowich, L. (2018). *What Is a Whitepaper? [FAQs]*.

How can a white paper help my business?

A high quality, well researched and authoritative white paper can provide many, and sometimes all, of the following benefits to your business;

- generate new leads
- convert prospects into customers
- improve your SEO ranking
- increase awareness of your brand
- position you as a trusted vendor
- provide you with quality content that can be used for other marketing purposes
- position you as an authority within your sector
- support a technical evaluation
- provide additional information about your products and services
- provide information ahead of a product launch
- argue the business case for investing in your business
- undermine your competitors
- educate channel partners, journalists, salespeople, distributors, analysts and consultants
- redefine your marketplace

You can find the evidence for all of these claims within this paper.

Types of white paper

According to Investopedia⁴ there are three types of commercial white papers:

Backgrounders

These white papers explain the technical features and specific details of a particular product or service. A backgrounder white paper is used to;

- 1) argue a business case
- 2) provide information ahead of a product launch
- 3) support a technical evaluation.

A backgrounder provides specific details about a particular offering that your prospects can refer to when making the final decision about which product to purchase and which vendor to purchase from.

If you are a short listed vendor then it is a good idea to produce a backgrounder white paper to make the business case for purchasing your product or service, to provide additional guidance about your offering and to give highly detailed technical information about product specifics.

The purpose of a backgrounder is not to generate leads but to convert prospects into customers.

⁴ Investopedia is one of the best-known sources of financial information on the Internet.

1) Argue a business case

If your business is an undisputed leader in your field or if your brand is already well known to your future prospects then it makes sense for you to publish a backgrounder because your knowledge, experience and expertise holds a lot of sway within B2B (business to business) marketing. If your white paper sets out a powerful case for adopting a particular approach then it is likely to generate a lot of leads for your business from clients who recognise you as an established authority within your field.

2) Provide information ahead of a product launch

It may be that your business is about to launch a new product or service and you want to provide analysts, journalists and marketers with information about the product prior to its launch. Publishing a backgrounder will allow you to shed light on what's new, explain its benefits and highlight any improvements that have been made to the product.

3) Support a technical evaluation

If your prospects have short listed you as a possible vendor and are weighing up the pros and cons of various products then a backgrounder white paper can be a powerful resource to swing the decision in your favour. Your offering will very often be evaluated against your competitors' offerings and the prospect will need to carefully consider the strengths and weaknesses of each vendor.

A backgrounder which is packed full of technical details and which highlights the business benefits of your offering will give the prospect the information that they need at the time that they need it. You can imagine how much a vendor who explains their offering benefits over someone who doesn't and indeed, a vendor who does not explain their product and give a technical evaluation may well be removed from the short list of possible suppliers all together. It can therefore pay huge dividends to publish a backgrounder white paper.

Numbered List

These highlight the key details about the product and tips on how to get the most out of its features. These types of white paper are the quickest to produce and are useful for providing the content for blog posts, newsletters or short articles. Numbered list white papers are factual and reliable but don't go into great detail about the points on the list and they don't usually consider their relevance within a wider context.

Numbered list white papers are particularly useful for;

- 1) creating further engagement with your brand
- 2) provoking your readers
- 3) undermining your competitors

1) Create further engagement with your brand

It is easier to understand the usefulness of a numbered list white paper if we firstly consider the nature of the sales funnel and the steps that a business goes through when making a significant B2B purchase.

For a major B2B purchase there will be a selection committee who are tasked to produce a list of requirements and short list the vendors who are most likely to be able to satisfy their needs. Each vendor will provide the selection committee with a Request for Proposal (RFP) and then the selection committee will consider the details of each vendor in order to reach a decision as to which vendor they will purchase the product from.

A numbered list white paper is a lighter and more lively type of white paper and is used most effectively when prospects are already considering purchasing your product or service. It can take a long time to complete the full evaluation of the business need for a major B2B purchase, usually months but occasionally years, and publishing a numbered list white paper will help to keep your business high in your prospect's mind whilst confirming your position as a trusted vendor.

A numbered list white paper is just what you need to remind the selection committee of who you are and why you are best placed to meet their needs. A well timed numbered list white paper will keep your brand uppermost in the minds of your prospects and will demonstrate that your business is trustworthy. The lighter style of the white paper (sometimes humour is used) emphasises to your prospects that you would be good to work with.

2) Provoke your readers

Numbered list white papers are lighter and more lively than other types of white paper and often use puns, humour or put an irreverent spin on accepted industry ideas. Numbered list white papers can poke fun at unchallenged beliefs and industry stereotypes, the aim being to attract attention and provoke a response.

If your white paper says something original, entertaining or thought provoking it will get a lot of traction on social media and your brand will be seen by more people as a result. If your white paper hits a nerve and gets re-tweeted, commented on and picked up in the press then your business and your brand can come before an audience that you've never had before. A well executed and well timed numbered list white paper can gain a lot of exposure.

Take care though, this approach can be hard to get right. You don't want to offend people and getting the right tone of voice is important here. If you want to produce a provocative white paper it is always best to use a professional copywriter who has experience of working with tone of voice.

The titles of numbered list white papers might look something like this;

10 ways that school is failing your child

The nightmare before Christmas: 15 tips to clear debt fast

8 reasons to avoid estate agents

6 truths that will change the way you shop

3) Undermine your competitors

White papers aren't limited to singing the praises of your own business, brand or offering- they can also be used very effectively to undermine your competition. Writing a numbered list white paper which damages your competitors whilst simultaneously highlighting how much better your product is, can be an incredibly effective way of marketing. This approach is known as FUD- casting Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt on your competitors, and is a classic marketing technique.

Every big corporation resorts to FUD at some point. It's a useful tactic if you and a competitor are fighting over market share and you find yourself repeatedly on the same short list of B2B vendors. A numbered list white paper published at the right time could well swing the deal in your favour.

Some of the ways that you can cast FUD with numbered list white paper are listed below;

- **Highlight hidden flaws.** By producing a white paper that 'reveals the truth' about the shortcomings of your competitor's product or which uncovers the limitations of a competitor's offering, you can begin to undermine trust in your competitor's brand.
- **Fear of failure and ridicule.** You don't want to be the person that invests in a dud. If you are a B2B buyer and purchase the wrong system or product then you can wave goodbye to your bonus. A numbered list will plant a seed of doubt in the buyer's mind and raise concerns about the viability of your competitor's product.
- **Casting doubt on your competitors.** A numbered list white paper can be used to question the validity of your competitor's offering. By asking questions that expose inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the marketing content of other vendors you can establish yourself as the only vendor worthy of investment, giving you a huge advantage over your competitors.

Problem/Solution

These types of white paper introduce a solution to a prevalent or common business problem or challenge⁵ and are fast becoming the most widespread type of white paper used by businesses.

The reason why this type of white paper is growing in popularity so rapidly is because more and more marketing professionals are coming to realise how effective this format can be for attracting prospects. Any B2B company that seeks to increase its market share or build recognition should consider producing a white paper in this format. Their benefits are far reaching and their impact can be huge.

The purpose of a problem/solution white paper is to;

- 1) generate leads
- 2) redefine your market space
- 3) create awareness and build mindshare
- 4) educate salespeople and distributors
- 5) educate analysts, journalists and specialists

1) Generate leads

A problem/solution white paper is absolutely the best way to generate leads because a problem/solution white paper is aimed at prospects who are at the start of the buying process. A white paper is not a sales pitch but it does use soft sales techniques to inform, persuade and advise its readers about an issue or a problem and to position you as a trusted advisor. When prospects are in a position to invest then they will be more likely to want to do business with you because they have an awareness of your brand and you have built trust as an authority on that particular product. When it comes to making a purchase your prospects feel so positive about your company that they're inclined to do business with you.

⁵ Investopedia 'What is a White Paper?'

According to Nabeel Keblawi who is a professional B2B technology copywriter, 72% to 76% of managers in the B2B technology industry said '*a white paper was useful in their decision to purchase a product or service from another business.*'⁶

2) Redefine your market space

An effective problem/solution white paper can enable you to redefine or enlarge your market space and skew things in your favour. It may be the case that your market place or your type of business is perceived in a particular way which could be limiting. If you can show your prospects that '*every other vendor looks at the market space the wrong way*'⁷ and posit a new way of thinking or a new solution to an old problem then you will be seen as innovative, original and exciting. The problem solution white paper might be just the thing to redefine your market space permanently.

3) Create awareness and build mindshare

If you want your business to receive greater recognition then publishing a problem/solution white paper is an effective way to boost your visibility. If your white paper is thoroughly researched and well written it will lend credibility to your business and you will soon become known as an authority within your sector.

If your white paper is shared on social media and by employees within a company, or between companies then you will see awareness of your brand increase dramatically and all this positive publicity builds mindshare because you are reaching B2B executives who may not have been aware of your company prior to the publication of your white paper.

4) Educate salespeople and distributors

If you want to maximise your sales you need to ensure that your offerings are understood by the people selling your product. A problem/solution white paper will inform your salespeople about the problems that your offering is designed to solve and give information about its purpose, its potential and how it should be used. An effective problem/solution white paper will give your sales team all the background information that they need in order to discuss the product with your clients in an informed and knowledgeable way.

A problem/solution white paper also provides your salespeople with a credible and powerful document that they can use to open the pitch or close the deal. Your white paper should also reduce any concerns that your prospects may have about your offering.

Ideally you should be sending everyone in your network (consultants, wholesalers, retailers etc) a copy of your problem/solution white paper. You want to increase the reach of the paper as much as possible because a good white paper can mean the difference between your name being at the forefront of your channel partner's mind or not in their mind at all.

5) Educate analysts, journalists and specialists

Another use for your problem/solution white paper is to feed the media, influencers and opinion leaders high quality content that is helpful and well informed. By regularly contributing problem/solution white papers you are providing yourself with the means to '*influence the influencers*' and if this results in editorial coverage within sector specific, or other high profile publications, then you will see your sales increase and your visibility grow.

⁶ Keblawi, N. '*Gain Trust With a Professional White Paper Full of Valuable Information*'

⁷ Graham, G. '*When to use a problem/solution white paper*' *White Papers for Dummies* (2013)

A problem solution white paper is a powerful tool to send to analysts, bloggers, journalists and anyone else who your B2B buyers consider to be influential. It may not result in opinion leaders republishing or commenting on your paper publicly but by providing deep content and background your paper can help to inform and shape their perceptions of your sector.

Which type of white paper is best for my business?

The type of white paper that you need to produce will depend on what outcome you want for your business and which type of product or service your business provides. The table below will help you to see which paper best suits your business needs.

Business Need	Which white paper to use		
	Backgrounder	Numbered List	Problem/Solution
Generate leads	x	x	x
Argue a business case	x		
Provide information ahead of a product launch	x		x
Support a technical evaluation	x		
Create further engagement with your product or service		x	x
Provoke a reaction from your readers		x	
Undermine your competitors		x	
Redefine your market space			x
Build mindshare			x
Create awareness of your brand, product or service	x	x	x
Educate salespeople and distributors about your product or service			x
Educate analysts, journalists and specialists about your product or service			x
Build trust in your brand	x	x	x
Establish yourself as an authority	x	x	x

The content of white papers is not set in stone however, and many white papers incorporate elements of each of these styles.

What does a white paper look like?

A white paper is an academic piece of research and as such follows an academic format, complete with footnotes and referencing.

All white papers will include;

- a title page
- a contents page
- main section
- a conclusion
- reference section

Longer white papers may also include a short summary before the contents page. This is known as an abstract.

The main body of the white paper will depend on which type of paper you are producing and what your aim in producing it is. Typically, the main body of the paper includes three distinct sections and each section can run into several pages. The three sections generally follow the format below;

- Section 1: Problem- what is the problem being addressed?
- Section 2: Solution- what possible solutions are there to this problem?
- Section 3: Case study- an example of a company or an individual who has used that solution and the results that were achieved

The structure of a white paper

Title Page	Your paper should have a punchy title which attracts the attention of your target audience and looks interesting. The title should also be easy to read and use clear, non-salesy wording. When it comes to titles the shorter the better- you want it to be scanned easily by your reader.
Abstract (optional)	An abstract (short summary) is usually only included in the lengthier papers.
Contents Page	Each page of your paper should be numbered and the contents page needs to be accurate.
Problem	In a Problem/Solution white paper, the first section of your paper will set out the business problem that you are attempting to solve.
Solution	In a Problem/Solution white paper, the second section of your paper will set out the solution to the business problem that you have identified.
Case Study	Case studies are an incredibly persuasive means to demonstrate to your readers the success of your solution. These should be concise, genuine and where possible include photographs and testimonials from your satisfied customer.
Conclusion	Your conclusion should be concise, persuasive and punchy. A white paper is not a sales pitch but you can get away with being a bit pushier with your conclusion. You might want to subtly mention a particular product that you sell or embed a link to your sales pages.
References	White papers should include a reference section at the end where the research that the paper has referred to is detailed. There are various ways of referencing but the Harvard style ⁸ is most often used. The key is to be consistent so whichever referencing style you opt for make sure that all of your sources are cited in the same way.

A white paper is a heavy duty piece of content marketing and is not intended to be skim read. It is a professional document which should be serious, well written, well edited and cohesive. For this reason white papers tend to be '*written by industry experts*'.⁹ You should not see any typos, spelling errors, grammatical errors or formatting errors within a white paper. White papers will usually be read by your readers more than once, but only if reading it is easy and distraction free.

⁸ The Harvard style is the recognised format for academic referencing.

⁹ Kolowich, L. (2018) *What Is a Whitepaper? [FAQs]*.

White papers usually incorporate a design element and most copywriters and technical writers who produce them work with a graphic designer who will ensure that the page layout, images, icons, fonts and colours¹⁰ are dynamic and visually appealing. Sub headings, graphs, charts, bullet points and images are all used within white papers to enable readers to find the information that they need and to make the paper more accessible.

What format should a white paper be published in?

A white paper should look like a serious, academic document and they have historically been published as a PDF file. More recently, in some part due to the limitations with reading PDFs on mobile devices, HTML5 and JavaScript are now used. There is also a growing trend in the technology sector specifically to make white papers interactive. The style of your white paper and the format in which you choose to publish it in will depend on your business, your offering and your audience.

1) PDF File

In the past white papers have almost always been published as PDF files and there are some advantages to this. PDF is a portable document format which works on Windows, Macintosh and Unix. It can be shared across different platforms and so PDF is a good choice to use over the the Internet¹¹.

PDF also allows you to lock your document with a password which means the editing, copying and printing options can be limited meaning that your white paper can't be altered once published. The PDF viewer is also freeware so your PDF document can be read freely by anyone and on any device.

PDF is a well known format and when design elements have been added the PDF can be easily printed and shared without losing any of its visual elements. For these reasons a lot of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) prefer to print their white papers as PDF files.

However, technology has now moved on and larger businesses are now starting to move away from PDF towards more interactive formats.

2) HTML5 and JavaScript

Because PDFs are fixed layout documents they are very difficult to read on smaller screens¹². This means that over half of the visitors to your website¹³ are unlikely to read your white paper after downloading it if it is published as a PDF file. By publishing your white paper in a PDF format you are therefore limiting the ability of your prospects to engage with your paper and you considerably reduce the impact of the white paper.

By harnessing the technology that powers websites- HTML5 and JavaScript- you can easily create mobile-friendly, responsive white papers that are easier for your audience to read than the traditional PDF. Producing a white paper using HTML /JavaScript requires an understanding of code or the purchase of software

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Evinco-software.com. (2018) *Advantages of using PDF | Evinco Knowledge Sharing.*

¹² Instantmagazine.com. (2018) *Why You Will Never Again Publish a White Paper as a PDF.*

¹³ According to Statista. (2018) The current estimate of mobile traffic is 52.4%

which can convert the document for you, but it does reduce the laborious input of the design element that the PDF demands.

How many pages should a white paper have?

According to [Investopedia](#) white papers should be '*at least 2,500 words in length*'¹⁴. There are lots of differences of opinion about this however and sometimes long form content that is considerably shorter than this has been called a white paper. The general consensus in the industry seems to be that white papers should be at least 6 pages long but can stretch to '*upwards of 50*'¹⁵ if the subject demands it.

What are the SEO benefits of a white paper?

SEO (Search engine optimisation) is the '*practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results*'.¹⁶ Generally, websites that appear higher up in the results of search engines like Google will receive more traffic to their pages and this should result in more business.

White papers are a form of content or inbound marketing which means they are sponsored content which is available to read or download either with or without registration. In addition to the many other benefits that a white paper brings to your business, the white paper is also intended to result in increased web traffic to your site.

Authoritative long form content, such as a white paper, is very good at increasing organic web traffic because the paper will contain information that is of interest to your visitors. White papers are extensively researched and full of good quality content which is designed to answer the questions that your visitors had when starting their search.

According to the University Marketing and Communications department (UMC) at Michigan Technological University, the best way to increase SEO is to publish quality content on your website. There is '*no substitute for great content*'.¹⁷ Quality content that is useful, relevant and created specifically for your intended user will increase traffic to your site which in turn '*improves your site's authority and relevance*'.¹⁸

A second way that UMC recommend to increase your SEO is to update or refresh your website content regularly. Publishing white papers on your website will provide you with high quality content that can be repurposed into blog posts, articles and video, meaning that you are not only able to publish great content but can also keep your website content fresh by republishing your white paper research in different formats and for different audiences.

How does a white paper help with data capture?

The Online Encyclopedia, [reference.com](#),¹⁹ defines data capture as '*the retrieval of information from a document using methods other than data entry*'.²⁰ White papers are excellent tools for capturing data as you can easily make them 'gated'²¹ and in fact the majority of white papers *are* gated. By offering a white paper to

¹⁴ Investopedia 'What is a White Paper?'

¹⁵ Kolowich, L. (2018) *What Is a Whitepaper? [FAQs]*

¹⁶ Moz.com. (2018) *What is SEO?*

¹⁷ Michigan Technological University (2018). *Five Ways to Improve your Site's Ranking (SEO)*.

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ [reference.com](#) (2018) *Reference.com - What's Your Question*.

²⁰ [reference.com](#) (2018) *What Is Data Capture?*

²¹ Gated content is online materials that require that users fill out a form with their details before they can access them.

your audience for free in return for their personal information you are incentivising your audience to provide their details.

Nowadays '*people expect something of value in return for entering their contact details*'²² and a white paper certainly provides value. When making the paper gated you should ensure that it is as easy as possible for your visitors to provide their information and your data capture form should be simple and easy to navigate on the page. A data capture process that is broken up into small steps and which is easy to navigate will maximise your chances of visitors providing you with the information that you need. You want to maximise the number of people providing you with data.

Website based white papers are '*a brilliant way to fill your funnel with leads*'²³ because your website visitors will happily provide their contact details in return for your expert knowledge. Typically, white papers require at least an email address for download which makes them ideal for capturing leads. Gated content can be created using social login integrations like LinkedIn and Facebook and by gating your papers in this way you can avoid the use of data capture forms altogether whilst still harvesting good quality leads. Generally people who download white papers are further into the customer buying cycle which means that leads captured through white papers are good quality.

How does a white paper help with revenue generation?

White papers will generate leads for your business and will contribute to increased sales. In addition, you can also use white papers to generate immediate revenue by selling them through your website. A good tactic is to provide some white papers to your visitors free of charge to draw them to your website and demonstrate the quality of your content. You can then sell other papers which have a more specific commercial application.

Who reads white papers?

White papers tend to be read by those who have a very specific interest in the subject. White papers are lengthy academic documents which are packed full of extensive research and they are not a light read. For these reasons white papers are read by customers, partners, stakeholders, journalists, investors and analysts who want to learn everything that they can about a particular product or service.

Who writes white papers?

Due to their technical content white papers are a very specialised area of content marketing and are not usually produced in-house unless the business has its own technical writers. The majority of businesses outsource their white papers to marketing agencies and freelance technical writers or copywriters who specialise in thought leadership.

White papers are academic papers and readers expect to see a '*high degree of expertise backed by solid research that is fully documented by references*'.²⁴

²² Strategy, W. and Woodrow, J. (2018). *Why Every Business Needs a Customer Data Capture Strategy*

²³ Instantmagazine.com. (2018) *Why You Will Never Again Publish a White Paper as a PDF.*

²⁴ Kolowich, L. (2018). *What Is a Whitepaper? [FAQs]*

Your white paper should also incorporate elements of graphic design- you will want your company logo, house style and images to be visible within the paper and this is why it pays to use an agency or a freelance copywriter who works with a graphic designer. The copywriter and graphic designer will work with you to ensure that your paper is submitted to you in a publishable format and in your house style.

How long do white papers take to write?

It can take anywhere between a couple of weeks to a couple of months, and even longer in some cases, to produce a white paper. The best technical writers and copywriters are often booked up months in advance and so for businesses looking to produce a white paper, or a series of white papers, it may need to be part of your longer term marketing strategy.

The reason why white papers take so long to write is because they require extensive research and have to be carefully crafted in order to meet the requirements of the sponsor. White papers are lengthy, weighty documents and much more serious in tone than blog posts and newsletters, for these reasons they take a long time to execute and polish.

Once the paper has been drafted it will also need to have design elements added, graphs, charts and infographics for example. A lot of copywriters work closely with graphic designers who can add these to the paper for you, but it all takes time and adds to the overall cost of the paper both in terms of financial outlay and time commitment.

How much does a white paper cost?

White papers can cost anywhere between £800 to £4k and some can cost even more than this. How much you pay will depend on the expertise of the copywriter you employ, the length of the white paper, the amount of research that the paper requires and whether you want the paper professionally designed. There's no denying that white papers are an expensive commodity but when you consider the amount of social reach that they have and the benefits that they bring to your business- they turn out to be a pretty good investment. A good white paper will soon pay for itself ten times over in terms of the leads it will generate and the trust that it will create in your brand.

A 15 page white paper will provide you with a huge amount of content that can be repurposed for a range of products including key note speeches, blogs, articles, website content, presentations and e-books. This means that a white paper also reduces the time and expense of producing these additional materials from scratch.

Examples of white papers that work.

- These heavy duty white papers from Percussion Play are in plain text format so that nothing distracts the reader from the meticulous research. <https://www.percussionplay.com/white-papers/>
- The Travel Media Group have produced a series of white papers in PDF format. These white papers have a consistent design and tone and include backgrounders, numbered lists and problem/solution papers. <https://www.travelmediagroup.com/white-papers/>
- If you want to maximise the return on your white paper making them into gated content is a really good idea. Look at how much information Technology Networks retrieves every time a paper gets downloaded. <https://www.technologynetworks.com/cancer-research/white-papers>

Getting it white

Successful businesses know that one of the most effective ways to establish brand integrity is to publish well crafted, professionally executed and extensively researched white papers. Not only will a good white paper generate leads and increase website SEO, if it's done properly a white paper can also provide the content for blog posts, articles and other forms of content marketing. You get a lot of bang for your buck!

With all these proven benefits- can you afford not to invest in a white paper for your business?

About the Author

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