



CANRIGHT MARKETING REPORTS

White Paper Basics:

The Dos, Don'ts, Whys, Whats, and Hows of White Papers

Now Includes the Basics of Ebooks



CANRIGHT

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

CANRIGHT MARKETING REPORTS

White Paper Basics: The Dos, Don'ts, Whys, Whats and Hows of White Papers

Today's business world is relentlessly focused on the customer. After all, it's easier to increase business by retaining and expanding existing customer relationships than it is to find new customers. But to grow your company's income and expand market share, you must at some point attract new customers.

Enter the "white paper," a ubiquitous and sometimes abused tool for you to establish your reputation in your market. (Or, you might consider the *ebook*, a newer format that provides a more personal and friendly way of establishing expertise—but more on that later.) Married to a content marketing plan, white papers are a major force in the sales cycle, helping companies across all industries generate quality sales

leads. White papers help close sales and therefore, grow income.

White papers have become a cornerstone of most lead-generating campaigns, and the format continues to be one of the most thriving campaign tools following the economic downturn. According to the "**Eccolo Media 2011 B2B Technology Collateral Survey Report**," white papers are still perceived as

superior to other forms or collateral. "As in 2010, white papers retained their longstanding number one ranking, when directly compared to other collateral types in terms of influence." The white paper format also continues to have strong viral impact; nearly 93% of readers pass along up to half of the white papers they read and download, according to **InformationWeek's Best Practices Research Series** on white papers.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Why White Papers are Written

White papers are written to educate and persuade. For business marketers, white papers provide a way of generating leads in a way that builds trust and enhances reputations.

A well-written white paper indicates that you and your organization are on the cutting edge, that you are a thought leader in your field, or that you know a market or technology extremely well. White papers can enhance your company's credibility, educate prospects about your services, inform potential customers about ways to improve their business and profitability, and even change the world to make it a better place for your business, friends, and family.

Extremely Influential

Indeed, white papers continue to increase in influence, especially for technology buyers. Some 65% of Eccolo survey respondents rated white papers "as "very" to "extremely" influential in 2011, as compared to 41% of respondents in the 2010

survey," the Eccolo Media study shows. In ranking collateral types on a scale of influence, 40% of respondents rated white papers as "most influential," followed by case studies (21%), and brochures (16%). (Note: The Eccolo Media study is well worth downloading for its analysis of and insight into collateral effectiveness. Visit www.eccolomedia.com.)

A recent study on purchasing decisions by CFO magazine shows that finance buyers expect their use of online white papers to increase by 59% over the next one-to-two years. Use of only three of 11 media surveyed are expected to increase more: newsletters (63%), professional publication websites (71%), and webinars (80%).

Previous studies have shown that white papers are both the most frequently read content by technology buyers and the most likely content to be passed on to other buyers. More than 70% of buyers say they read white papers, a greater percentage than that of buyers reading case studies, product literature, and articles by industry journalists. "White papers provide the only content that all respondents share with colleagues more than half (57%) of the time," report Knowledge Storm and Marketing Sherpa. As Eccolo Media concludes, "White papers are also the most frequently shared type of content, firmly cementing their place in the upper echelons of the marketer's toolkit. Our advice: invest in white papers."

To attract new customers and increase sales to existing customers, educate them about your industry and offerings. Speak to them about their concerns and using language they use. Help them sort out alternatives, including those you do not offer.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Highly Educational

The goal of a white paper is not only to present the solution you have to offer, but also to discuss a technology, methodology, or issue that will help people make their companies work better.

White papers can be used to build credibility, establish and enhance expertise, and generate leads. White papers are an excellent tool for attracting new customers and increasing sales to existing customers. White papers help convey information about how you can help customers and prospects better run their businesses.

Thomas Reilly, Chief Operating Officer at Family Office Exchange, sums up the white paper proposition from the buyer's point of view: "As a prospect, I am looking for free information to help me make a business decision. Vendors provide prospects with a valuable service by generating fact-filled white papers that can save prospects time and energy researching a market or new technology. I know the company will have its own spin on the facts provided but as long as there

are quotable facts in the white paper, I am fine with a passive vendor pitch that points to the vendor's solution. It is a give-and-take relationship."

The key factors that make the white paper successful and invaluable is that they advocate a position, report results and present an argument, and most of all educate. White papers will give the reader valuable information so they can make informed decisions. The main reason a successful white paper works is because it allows a decision maker to go to it and make a better decision as a result of what they have read.

Accurately Named

But to achieve these results, it's important to understand what a white paper is, and what it is not. Because "white paper" creates an expectation of excellence, using the term in the wrong way can turn a reader against you and make you look shallow. We often see "white papers" that are really reports, case studies, proceedings, seminar findings, presentations, or simply, articles.

"As a prospect, I am looking for free information to help me make a business decision. Vendors provide prospects a valuable service by generating fact-filled white papers that can save prospects time and energy researching a market or new technology."

—THOMAS REILLY

What's important is that you call your document what it really is. If it's really a white paper, call it a white paper. If it's a case study call it that. If it's a combination of both, with marketing information thrown in for good measure, call it a report. If it's anything else, simply call it what it is: an article. No shame in that and you'll possibly foster a lot more trust and goodwill.

The term "white paper" originated in the British government as a means to describe an extensive written state-

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

What Makes a Good White Paper

ment of government policy. According to William Safire, a White Paper (he writes that the term is usually capitalized) is “a statement of official government policy with background documentation. In the U.S. a ‘blue book’ is a directory of the social elite; in England, it is an extended explanation of government policy, bound in blue covers. ‘White Paper’ was the English terminology for a report too short to be bound as a blue book, and that phrase was adopted in the U.S.

... In current (American) use, a White Paper is an official statement with the government rationale.” (*Safire’s New Political Dictionary: The Definitive Guide to the New Language of Politics*, pp. 874-875).

Although business uses of white papers vary, we think white papers in business share many characteristics with their older cousins in government.

- **White papers are persuasive.** They provide the background to justify policy. Businesses can use white papers to advocate for or defend

“A white paper needs to be an unbiased view of the topic and include proof points/examples. It should help the reader reach their own conclusion based on their needs.”

—TOM GRUBA

against proposals to change government policy, corporate policy, or industry standards. Technology or engineering companies use white papers to introduce new advancements.

- **White papers are short.** Can you read your white paper in one sitting? If an ordinary desk stapler will hold your white paper’s pages together comfortably and securely, then you have the right size document for a white paper. Typically, white papers are six to 12 pages long, but as long as one ordinary staple can bind the pages together, you’re probably OK, especially if an executive summary of no more than five pages is presented up front.
- **White papers seek to influence the greater good.** The “white paper” label on a document implies that

you are looking out for more than your own self-interest (though, it will surprise few readers if your own self-interest is part of the greater good the paper advocates). White papers that advocate change that appears to counter your present self-interest are even more interesting because they imply you are a visionary thinking beyond today’s circumstances.

- **White papers strike a tone somewhere between the formality of an academic paper and the accessibility of a magazine article.** It is not a glib sales pitch. It is not an advertisement. But it is indeed a marketing piece, and it speaks to your reputation.
- **White papers cover a field of circumstances.** A case study is not a white paper.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Tom Gruba, Sr. Director of Wireless Product Marketing at Alcatel-Lucent, makes the case for a good white paper: “A white paper needs to be an unbiased view of the topic and include proof points/examples. It should help

the reader reach their own conclusion based on their needs.”

So, white papers explain a policy, technology, or methodology, especially something new. They have a strong

and definite point of view and are designed to persuade (even if it's gently), but they don't focus on a single company's product.

How to Write a White Paper that Works

Many writing and marketing experts have published guidelines for writing white papers that work. Keep in mind the basics of business writing, like defining your goals, knowing your audience, and selecting a great title. Following are a few good resources for writing great white papers:

Content Factor, a team of senior communications professionals, and KnowledgeStorm, a leading source of technology information, provide **“Eight Rules for Creating Great White Papers.”**

Here they are:

1. Use a linear, logical approach.
2. Your title is the key to the success of your paper.
3. Follow the 3-30-3 rule (that's three seconds to grab attention, 30 more seconds if you succeed, and three more minutes to make your points, if it's relevant).
4. Write in the language of your reader.

5. Be knowledgeable and principled.
6. Graphics are content too.
7. Have a writer write your paper.
8. Keep the branding subtle.

Michael Stelzner, writer and white paper expert, provides a wealth of writing tips in his book, ***Writing White Papers, How to Capture Readers and Keep Them Engaged***. Register to download and read a chapter from the book.

Finally, avoid the most common mistakes in white papers by reading, **“What's wrong with most white papers?”** All too often, white papers fail because they do not deliver key messages and are written by the wrong authors, according to the white paper writers at **The Appum Group**.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

How White Papers are Used

Because of a white paper's ability to convey information and enhance your company's credibility, they've become a major force in the sales cycle, helping companies across all industries generate quality sales leads. Businesses often generate leads by offering white papers on websites. When a person signs up to receive a white paper, his or her email address is immediately captured and can be added to the company's list. Even better, businesses can follow up with a phone call a few days later to ask how the prospect regarded the white paper.

We discussed this idea with one of our clients, **George Ravich**, SVP, Chief Marketing Officer of Fundtech, who chose us to write the white paper, **"Planning Your Online Wire Transfer Strategy,"** which describes options to automate a bank's wire transfer operations. Fundtech is a leading provider in global payments, settlement, and cash management solutions for financial institutions worldwide.

Fundtech used the white paper as a giveaway in an online and offline lead generation campaign. The company used direct mail offers and placed a banner ad in the *American Banker* online daily edition. Customers filled out the card sent in the mail or clicked the banner ad and used the online form to receive the white paper. The response rate exceeded the original prediction, leading to a large number of highly qualified leads.

Follow these tips to ensure your white papers generate quality sales leads:

Soft Sell

This is key. To generate quality leads, the content must avoid a hard-sell approach. This means providing your readers with useful information to solve problems they can relate to, without mentioning your company's

product or service. This creates trust and credibility for your company that result in sales leads.

Educate

Educational content is a crucial tool in generating leads. Demonstrating your expertise gives you an edge on competitors and makes you the go-to company that people and companies seek out to help solve their problems. The key factors in creating educational content are that it's accurate and unbiased. **Joseph Nash**, a product development manager at Panduit, affirms the importance of this: "I typically read white papers in a fashion whereby I closely analyze content for accuracy. Too many inconsistencies (especially involving a technology piece) and I begin to question the source's credibility."

The key factors in creating educational content are that it's accurate and unbiased.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Distribute Widely

Many companies simply post white papers on their website for download. Go beyond that. Create an email or marketing campaign around the theme of your white paper to drive traffic to your website and white paper registration form, as Fundtech did. Use it as a companion piece to add value for your potential leads.

Following are several helpful resources full of distribution ideas, guidelines,

and tips, as well as information on email marketing, press releases, and syndication services.

- Gordon Graham of [thatwhitepaperguy.com](#) has posted [a series of links](#) to cost-effective methods of distributing white papers.

It's imperative to understand which of type of buyer your offer is targeting as your call to action will be different for each.

- David Meerman Scott's book, *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*, shows how to create an online press release strategy for reaching buyers directly. In today's online search-based research environment, press releases are an excellent way to announce your white paper and its contents.

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

Providing relevant online content as a way to build a reputation as a thought leader and to generate leads—content marketing—is one of today's hottest marketing strategies. When you're thinking of content for lead generation, you may want to think of what kind of leads you want to generate.

Start with [“The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing,”](#) an ebook by Marketo, a marketing-automation provider. The book defines lead nurturing using thought leadership and shows how to plan a campaign in which marketing and sales work together.

For a good introduction to the planning that goes into generating and nurturing high-quality leads, download and read the ebook, [“Start with a Lead: Eight Critical](#)

[Success Factors for Lead Generation”](#) by Brian J. Carroll, CEO of [InTouch](#), a lead generation firm.

For a comprehensive look at lead generation and content strategies, from planning through results measurement, download the ebook, [“Making Lead Generation Work for Professional Services,”](#) by Mike Shultz, President, [Wellesley Hills Group](#), a management consulting firm and marketing and sales agency.

For a wealth of direct-marketing advice on all types of campaign, including those that use white papers, see [“The High-Tech Direct Marketing Handbook,”](#) by Howard J. Sewell, President of Spear Marketing, a full-service marketing agency.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

- MarketingSherpa, which publishes how-to and research articles on all areas of marketing, published a two-part series on syndicating white papers and other online content. The first part provides a list of white paper dos and don'ts, while the second part lists a variety of content syndication services, such as Knowledge Storm, and their costs. Register for a free one-week trial on the MarketingSherpa website to read, ***“How to Syndicate Your White Paper Successfully—12 Steps, 8 Mistakes & Creative Samples—Part I.”***

- Scott Manley of Citizens Financial Group emphasizes: “Post your papers to **SlideShare**, **Scribd**, and **docstoc** where they can be found by people that don't know you but are searching for information on certain topics.”

Don't forget the social media trinity of **Twitter**, **LinkedIn**, and **Facebook**. Post a link to your white paper in a tweet and on your status updates. Write a related blog post, include a link to your white paper in the post, and distribute it through LinkedIn groups as a news or discussion item.

As Michael Stelzner states in his **“Social Media Marketing Industry Report,”** “the only financial cost of social media marketing is the time it takes to gain success.”

If you're still cautious about jumping into the social media circle, take notes from the 2008 IBM Institute for Business Value study, **“The Changing Face of Communication”**: “Social networks are also increasingly becoming channels for digital content distribution, using their network of relationships to push information to users.”

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

According to the **Business Marketing Institute**, the best calls to action target a specific audience as well as where that audience is in the buying cycle.

In her **“Does Your White Paper Have a Call to Action? (My Guess: No)”** blog post, Michele Linn of **Linn Communications** states that, “It's imperative to understand which of these individuals your offer is targeting as your call to action will be different for each.” Linn identifies four types of buyers:

1. **Economic buyers** must be able to justify the expense. Calls to action for this group may be return on invest-

ment (ROI) calculators or case studies focusing on cost savings.

2. **Technical evaluators** must understand the technical feasibility of a solution. Product specs and technical case studies are good calls to action.
3. **User buyer** must see the solution in action. They respond best to demos and trials.
4. **Influencers/coaches** are internal champions. Because they often forward information, make your white papers easy to share, know who they need to influence, and write a call-to-action accordingly.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Using Different Types of White Papers

In *Writing White Papers: How to Capture Readers and Keep Them Engaged*, Michael Stelzner describes four types of white papers:

1. Technical White Papers
2. Business Benefit White Papers
3. Hybrid Business/Technical White Papers
4. Government White Papers and Public Policy/Advocacy White Papers

Following are Stelzner's types of white papers, with a bit of our own spin on his definitions:

Technical White Papers

Technical white papers describe how something works—and often why it works the way it does. They are commonly aimed at engineers. They increase the confidence of technical people who influence purchasing decisions because those people are the decision makers—or are advising the decision makers—in a sales cycle.

For example, read [our white paper](#)

for the Financial Services Technology Consortium completed following the organization's first phase of its Financial Agent Secure Transaction project, also known as FAST. This paper presents the research and development activities of the FAST work groups, which developed a new technology for making secure payments over the internet. The paper is highly technical and presents not only the group's final recommendation but also its reasoning on each of the alternatives studied.

Business Benefit White Papers

Business benefit white papers describe a significant problem and present a solution. While these white papers can create a soft sell for your product or service, they are most persuasive when they paint a picture of a gap between your industry's potential and its current products or services. Naturally, your new product or service will be presented as a solution to fill this gap.

For Fair Isaac (now FICO), an analytics firm best known for inventing the modern consumer credit scoring system, we wrote a white paper presenting best practices in collections. In *“Leveraging Collections: Best Practices to Control Your Level of Return,”* we made a complex business-finance subject easy to understand by focusing a how-to paper on “best practices.” Fair Isaac promoted the white paper in its newsletter, *Viewpoints*, through an article we wrote called, “Five ways to boost your collections and recovery rates,” which uses the “tips” technique ubiquitous in consumer magazines.

Hybrid Business/Technical White Papers

Hybrid business/technical white papers seek to influence both technical advisors who influence decisions as well as the decision makers themselves. Structuring the paper to strike the right balance between the two sets of readers is critical to using the paper in a sales cycle.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

In collaboration with Panduit, a manufacturer of wiring and communications products and solutions, we wrote a **white paper on best practices** for ensuring the polarity of array-based fiber optic channels. As it turns out, there are at least four methods for doing this by connecting devices through fiber optics. This paper describes all four methods, three of which are accepted by an industry standards-setting body and one of which is proprietary to a Panduit competitor. The technical workings of each method are described, as well as the pros and cons of each method, including the competitor's. This kind of discussion allows an engineer to make a more informed choice when deciding which fiber optics hardware to buy.

For Bank of America (BoFA), we wrote, **“ERP Solutions in a Working Capital World.”** This piece surveys the benefits of real-time financial information provided through enterprise resource planning systems (ERPs) and focuses on the experience of several BoFA customers. The customers spoke at a BoFA-sponsored client seminar, and BoFA distributed the report first to clients who did not attend and then

through its website. (A caveat: we could have called this document a white paper. But it's a combination of document types. We called it “seminar findings” and included a separate case study of how Nike integrated payments into its ERP through BoFA.)

Government White Papers and Public Policy/Advocacy White Papers

Government white papers are still around. They discuss the implications of policy proposals and decisions. Stelzner writes that government white papers are “frequently focused at a very narrow audience,” but we disagree. A business leader who wants a change in public policy anywhere from global concerns to local concerns could distribute a white paper widely within his or her industry or within associated industries. A public policy or advocacy white paper might draw very large readership indeed.

One example is **“Financial Reform: A Framework for Financial Stability”** by the Group of Thirty, a nonprofit collective of representatives from academia and the private and public sectors who present ideas on international economic and financial issues.

Pop Quiz: What Type of White Paper are You Reading Now?

You might ask if this document you are now reading is a white paper. We think it's not a white paper but, rather, a report.

It's a close call; this document very nearly meets the definition of a “hybrid white paper.” We presented a timely marketing method that is increasingly used in business; we sought to make it educational, especially by presenting an abundance of outside resources on the subject; and we listed the benefits of this new strategy to business decision makers, as well as technical details to satisfy people advising the decision makers.

But we have highlighted our own work most of all. It's not quite a soft sell. Nor is it presenting new knowledge, information we created on our own based on original surveys or studies. Instead, it's a summary and overview of existing information. For these reasons, this document is a report.

A true white paper, in our view, presents new and original information. Remember, a white paper is a thought leadership piece. Your paper should

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

pull from a multitude of credible sources, include a summary of that research, and provide conclusions from your company's perspective. You are building trust, so give your measured opinion.

Also, calling your marketing vehicles what they really are is critical. So when your readers register to receive your content, they'll know what they're getting. Is it a white paper, or are they signing up for an on-going newsletter? Be clear about what they will be getting. This further establishes trust

and credibility when you follow up with an email or phone call.

Follow-up is extremely important. A marketing strategy that uses content marketing tactics is not likely to result in new customers on its own. It provides an important and necessary first step in establishing a relationship. In our experience, you will need to follow up more than once—just not in the same week.

That relationship may progress with ongoing content, like a regular enews-

letter or a series of white papers and reports sent through email. Or it may jump directly to a sales appointment. In any case, the buyer is in control and will start a dialog, or not. Take your buyer's lead, always. Like any relationship, it takes time to build trust and to get used to each other's style of communicating. Lastly, enjoy showing off what you know and getting to meet new and interesting people, while you grow your business.

Dos and Don'ts of White Papers

We have discussed the whys, whats, and hows of white papers in this report. Here's a summary of the dos and don'ts to follow when crafting your white paper:

Dos

- Write about what you know
- Aim to, above all else, educate your reader
- Include real-world examples and cite other sources
- Keep it relatively brief (so it can be read in one sitting)
- Look out for more than your self-interest
- Offer alternatives to your customer
- Strike a tone between formal and accessible
- Discuss your white paper through your website
- Create a marketing campaign around your paper's theme
- Include a call to action

Don'ts

- Assume your audience knows who you are or what you're talking about
- Be too casual, too formal, or too technical
- Be wordy and long-winded
- Write with an inaccurate or blatantly biased view of the topic
- Focus on only one product
- Take a hard-sell approach
- Label it a white paper if it's really a case study or report

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

The Basics of Ebooks

Ebooks received a lot of attention since the success of the Amazon Kindle and the initial excitement of the Apple iPad. Before that, however, ebooks had proven themselves as business-to-business marketing tools with distinct advantages over the traditional white paper.

Now we are not discussing ebooks as the electronic books read using the Kindle or iPad. Instead, we are referring to ebooks used for marketing purposes to show thought leadership, explain a subject, or take a position, much like traditional white papers.

What Marketing Ebooks Are

The marketing ebook is essentially a unique twist on the white paper format, but is different, especially from a design perspective. Generally published in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, marketing ebooks feature lively, educational copy enhanced by engaging graphic design, in a format that works especially well when read online.

A white paper is like a journal article. An ebook is more like a magazine article.

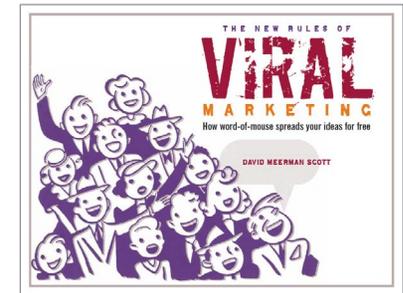
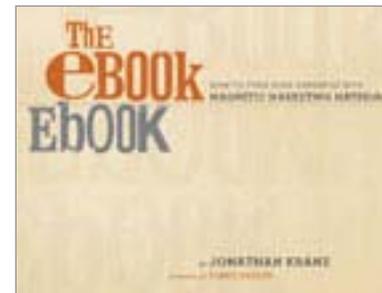
The ebook format provides a more engaging experience for the reader, builds a case, and uses a more design-intensive format. It's fun, too. You can use the best of visuals developed online and in magazines to attract readers and compel them to read the concepts you are laying out for them. This is definitely not white-paper style.

As Jonathan Kranz states in **“The ebook ebook,”** “A successful ebook is more collegial, reader-friendly and visually interesting than the traditional white paper...Rather than communicating what you need to

sell, it connects with customers by sharing what they want to hear: information, insights and answers they genuinely value.”

With their landscape orientation and use of Acrobat, ebooks are to be read online, a format that people who “consume collateral” when making business-to-business purchase decisions prefer. Only 1 in 4 people surveyed even print out an online document, the survey shows.

In his ebook **“The New Rules of Viral Marketing,”** David Meerman Scott says that “ebooks have become the stylish younger sister to the nerdy white paper.” The information in an ebook should be credible, important, and valuable.



Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Readers should “instantly see the value of a product that looks like for-purchase content but can actually be downloaded for free. In my opinion, ebooks should be material people want to read.”

Criticisms of White Papers

White papers often are not, Scott notes. Scott does not agree with how white papers are typically used and provided the following critique of white papers in a comment to the blog post we used as the starting point for this article:

- They are boring (hey, they're white)
- The portrait orientation does not work on a computer screen
- They require registration (and therefore are used as lead bait only)
- The content is usually just re-hashed product information designed as a “problem–solution” narrative
- They use too much gobbledygook — the “flexible,” “saleable,” “cutting-edge,” “mission-critical,” “world-class,” “innovative” sort of words.

We agree.

At the same time, we believe that white papers still have a place in business-to-business marketing. In their original conception as well-researched policy and technology discussion papers, the white paper works.

Indeed, white papers are still the top source of information for technology buyers. As noted earlier in this report, the vast majority of respondents (84%) rated white papers “as moderately to extremely influential when making final purchasing decisions,” the 2009 Eccolo Media study shows. “Add in the fact that white papers are also the most frequently shared collateral type, with 89% of respondents passing them along to others, and you see why they are the must-have marketing tool.”

White papers and ebooks both have a place in the marketing mix—both are valid tools. It all depends upon the specific marketing message and the audience you are trying to reach.



Ebook Distribution

One of the biggest ways ebooks contrast with white papers is in distribution. Ebooks are designed to be distributed widely and for free, without the typical email-address registration. Ultimately, an ebook is a way you attract people in order to

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

get a relationship through viral sharing—if you write and plan fantastic content and are very, very lucky.

The release of an ebook should be a web and social media catalyst. Content is as much a source of social media outreach as conversation and customer service, and an ebook can provide valuable content to distribute.

Post links in all your social media status updates, as described in an ebook we designed for Dean DeLisle, the chief social media strategist at Forward Progress. Also write a press release about your ebook to distribute to any media outlets on your list, but especially through an online distribution service like [PRWeb](#).

Finally, let everyone on your email list know about your ebook. If you

want more information on that, download our ebook, [Email Wires the Social Media Buzz](#).

For further ideas on marketing ebooks, here are links to get you thinking:

16 Must-Read B2B Marketing Strategy Ebooks

A survey of ebooks from lead generation to case study writing.

10 Must-Read eBooks for Social Media Lovers

A great list of social media and marketing related ebooks.

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

Resources

Links used in this report, in order of appearance. Click the URLs to open the item in your web browser.

“2009 Media Consumption Report” from TechTarget:
http://www.techtarget.com/html/faas_res_research.htm

TechTarget:
<http://www.techtarget.com>

InformationWeek's Best Practices Research Series on white papers:
<http://createyournextcustomer.com/2009/03/09/white-paper-research>

BtoB magazine's article, “White papers remain most influential for tech buyers”:
<http://www.btobonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090930/FREE/909309996/1078/newsletter011#seenit>

Eccolo Media's “Eccolo Media 2011 B2B Technology Collateral Survey Report”:
<http://www.eccolomedia.com>

CFO Magazine Study: The Senior Finance Team and Corporate Purchasing Decisions <http://www3.cfo.com/forms/the-senior-finance-team-and-corporate-purchasing-decisions>

“Connecting through Content,” showing white papers are both the most frequently read content by technology buyers and the most likely content to be passed on to other buyers, from KnowledgeStorm and MarketingSherpa:
http://www.knowledgestorm.com/search/viewabstract/87939?pos=1&referer=SEARCH_RESULTS&trkpg=search_results_abstract

KnowledgeStorm:
<http://www.knowledgestorm.com>

MarketingSherpa:
<http://www.marketingsherpa.com>

Thomas Reilly, Chief Operating Officer at Family Office Exchange:
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/tomreilly>

Tom Gruba, Sr. Director of Marketing at Motorola:
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/tomgruba>

George Ravich, SVP, Chief Marketing Officer of Fundtech:
<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/george-ravich/0/632/7b4>

Canright Communications' white paper for Fundtech, provider of global payments, settlement, and cash management solutions:
http://www.canrightcommunications.com/samples/Fundtech_Web_Payments_White_Paper.pdf

Joseph Nash, a product development manager at Panduit:
<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/joseph-nash/8/8a1/aab>

FYIndOut, a site to find and promote business information, applications, and services:
<http://www.fyindout.com>

SlideShare, a presentation sharing community:
<http://www.slideshare.net>

Scribd, a social publishing site:
<http://www.scribd.com>

docstoc, a document sharing community:
<http://www.docstoc.com>

Twitter, a real-time short messaging service:
<http://www.twitter.com>

LinkedIn, a professional networking community:
<http://www.linkedin.com>

Facebook, a social global networking community:
<http://www.facebook.com>

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

David Meerman Scott's ebook, "The New Rules of Marketing and PR":
www.davidmeermanscott.com/documents/New_Rules_of_PR.pdf

Marketo's ebook, "The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing":
<http://www.marketo.com/library/definitive-guide-to-lead-nurturing.pdf>

Register for the MarketingSherpa website for a one-week trial and read "How to Syndicate Your White Paper Successfully—12 Steps, 8 Mistakes & Creative Samples—Part I":
<https://www.marketingsherpa.com/article.html?ident=29791>

InTouch, a lead generation firm:
<http://www.startwithalead.com>

CEO of InTouch Brian J. Carroll's book, *Start with a Lead: Eight Critical Success Factors for Lead Generation*:
<http://www.startwithalead.com/ebooks/>

Mike Shultz, President, Wellesley Hills Group's ebook, "Making Lead Generation Work for Professional Services":
http://www.whillsgroup.com/pages/29490_white_papers_and_e_books.cfm

Wellesley Hills Group, a management consulting firm and marketing/sales management agency:
<http://www.whillsgroup.com>

Michael Stelzner's book, *Writing White Papers, How to Capture Readers and Keep Them Engaged* (we recommend registering on the site to download and read a chapter from the book):
<http://www.writingwhitepapers.com/book/index.html>

Canright Communications' white paper for Financial Services Technology Consortium on new technology for making payments over the internet:
http://www.canrightcommunications.com/samples/financial/FSTC_FAST_Phase_1_White_Paper.pdf

Canright Communications' white paper for Fair Isaac, now FICO, analytics firm best known for inventing the modern consumer credit scoring system, "Leveraging Collections: Best Practices to Control Your Level of Return":
http://www.canrightcommunications.com/samples/FairIsaac_Leveraging_Collections.pdf

Canright Communications' white paper for Bank of America, "ERP Solutions in a Working Capital World":
http://www.canrightcommunications.com/samples/BofA_ERP.pdf

Group of Thirty's white paper, "Financial Reform—A Framework for Financial Stability":
<http://www.canrightcommunications.com/downloads/G30-Financial-Reform.pdf>

Jonathan Kranz's ebook, "The ebook ebook":
<http://www.kranzcom.com/ebookebook.pdf>

David Meerman Scott's book, "The New Rules of Marketing and PR":
<http://www.amazon.com/New-Rules-Marketing-PR-Podcasting/dp/0470113456>

David Meerman Scott's ebook, "The New Rules of Viral Marketing":
http://www.davidmeermanscott.com/documents/Viral_Marketing.pdf

16 Must-Read B2B Marketing Strategy Ebooks
<http://blog.marketo.com/blog/2009/12/16-mustread-b2b-marketing-strategy-ebooks.html>

10 Must-Read eBooks for Social Media Lovers
<http://mashable.com/2009/12/21/must-read-ebooks/>

SIDEBAR—HOW TO WRITE A WHITE PAPER THAT WORKS

Content Factor:
<http://www.contentfactor.com>

KnowledgeStorm:
<http://www.knowledgestorm.com>

Content Factor and KnowledgeStorm's article, "Eight Rules for Creating Great White Papers":
<http://www.knowledgestorm.com/search/viewabstract/74728?c=hse>

The Appum Group's article, "What's wrong with most white papers?":
<http://whitepapercompany.com/docs/whatswrong.php>

The Appum Group, a professional white paper company:
<http://whitepapercompany.com>

Why White Papers are Written

What Makes a Good White Paper

How to Write a White Paper that Works

How White Papers Are Used

How to Plan a Lead Generation and Nurturing Strategy

What Makes a Good Call to Action?

Using Different Types of White Papers

Basics of Ebooks

Resources

SIDEBAR—HOW TO PLAN A LEAD GENERATION AND NURTURING STRATEGY

Gordon Graham, specialist in white papers:
<http://www.thatwhitepaperguy.com>

Gordon Graham's white paper distribution links:
http://www.thatwhitepaperguy.com/article_places_to_post.html

Michael Stelzner's report, "Social Media Marketing Industry Report":
<http://marketingwhitepapers.s3.amazonaws.com/smss09/SocialMediaMarketingIndustryReport.pdf>

SIDEBAR—WHAT MAKES A GOOD CALL TO ACTION?

Business Marketing Institute, a training and certification provider for B2B businesses:
<http://www.businessmarketinginstitute.com/tmn072809.html>

Michele Linn's blog post, "Does Your White Paper Have a Call to Action? (My Guess: No)":
<http://savvyb2bmarketing.com/blog/entry/149931/does-your-white-paper-have-a-call-to-action-my-guess-no>

OTHER USEFUL LINKS (NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE)

<http://www.whitepapersource.com>

<http://www.writingwhitepapers.com>

<http://www.raintoday.com>

<http://www.writingwhitepapers.com/blog/index.php>

Contact Canright Communications

About Canright Communications

Canright Communications is a Chicago-based firm that focuses on creating materials businesses use to communicate their message in a way that ultimately closes sales. Canright produces content that inspires engagement with your network of prospects, customers, vendors, and employees. Our content marketing and sales communications becomes the electricity that energizes the grid of initial contact, education, sale, service, and follow-up.

We're especially good at making complex technologies, ideas, and services easy to understand. So salespeople can help prospects make informed buying decisions. So marketing managers can generate leads and provide engaging ongoing contact through direct sales, email, and social media channels. So customer service representatives can educate and support customers, especially with software and technology products.

content that captivates
design that inspires

Canright Communications
200 South Wacker Drive, 15th Floor
Chicago, IL 60606

www.canrightcommunications.com
collin@canrightcommunications.com
312 924-1070

Draft 2.3 November 2011