



12 Powerful Ways To Maximise The Lead Magnetism Of A White Paper



A GUIDE FOR CMOS, MARKETING
MANAGERS AND MARKETING DIRECTORS



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In this guide, you'll discover how to:

- plan your next high-performing white paper
- increase its lead-generation potential



But first, why should you even consider producing a white paper?

For these reasons ...

The white paper is justly seen by B2B marketers as the 'king of content'.

They may not be the newest content platform in the marketing arsenal.

But the value of the white paper remains rock solid. What underpins this? It's the white paper's

- ✓ **Trust factor**
- ✓ **Strategic performance**
- ✓ **Re-purposing potential**

Trust factor

Executed well, a white paper is a brilliant sales tool – but it is never a sales pitch.



It uses facts and logic and it provides useful, evidence-backed and educational content.

The objectivity a white paper promises is what makes it such an effective promotional tool.

Typically, white papers require at least an email address for download. Often company info is required too. This makes them highly effective for capturing and qualifying leads.

No-one likes sharing details. Despite this, the trust factor of white papers means they trump almost every other type of content for collecting information about leads.

"75% of buyers are willing to enter personal information into a form in exchange for white papers."

– DEMAND GENERATION CONTENT PREFERENCES SURVEY REPORT



Strategic performance

When it comes to lead-generation, a white paper is hard to beat.



They give companies a credible way to build mindshare, generate leads, engage prospects and undercut competitors.

Smart marketers recognise the strategic power of the white paper to do all this:

- Boost SEO
- Qualify leads
- Educate without selling
- Generate targeted leads
- Develop thought leadership
- Advance prospects in the buyer's journey
- Build trust by presenting a solution to a problem
- Establish a company's reputation as an authority

When the whitepaper is part of a wider integrated thought leadership campaign the lead-generation benefits can be multiplied tenfold.



Re-purposing potential

A single white paper can serve as far more than a powerful stand-alone tool.



Done well, a white paper can serve as launch pad for the development of an array of content types.

That's because a white paper can be adapted into material to suit a packed Rolodex of prospects at all stages of the sales cycle.

A white paper can be re-shaped to create short videos, online articles, webinars, slide decks, social media posts and more.

The possibilities are limited only by the creativity and budget of the marketing team.

The investment of deep research that goes into its writing is the foundation for an entire lead generation campaign.





How to plan your white paper and increase its lead-generation potential

01

ROADMAP YOUR WHITE PAPER

Planning is crucial and should start at ground zero with an assessment of your business strategy and positioning. Begin with your rough idea and the end in mind.

Figure out:

- **who you'll be writing for**
- **what problems you'll be solving for them**

Get clear with your team on the white paper's purpose, audience, scope, anticipated length (2,500 – 3,000 words is a good guide), call to action, and working title.

Consider involving the writer in this brainstorming meeting. Then he or she will understand the strategy underpinning the work.



Tip: Now is a good time to begin thinking about the promotional campaign for the white paper.

66% of B2B buyers want vendors to use more data and research to support content

– 2019 Demand Gen Report

02 USE THE WHITE PAPER'S STRATEGIC GOAL TO DECIDE ITS MOST EFFECTIVE FORMAT

Determine the stage of the sales funnel you are targeting.

Is it to generate leads? Build mindshare?
Nurture prospects? Illustrate your UVP?

This will lead you to the most compelling white paper format for your goals.

Typically, you have three formats to choose from:



BACKGROUNDER

What is it?

- A detailed educational look at the features and benefits of a certain product or service. Example: *Current and new approaches to making drugs more affordable*

Who is it for?

- B2B buyers in consideration or decision mode near the bottom of the sales funnel.

When to choose it?

- You want to showcase your product or position your firm as a leader. The backgrounder is useful in helping an audience evaluate and compare competing solutions.

NUMBERED LIST

What is it?

- A numbered set of tips, questions, answers, or points about an issue. This is a versatile format choice. Example: *5 steps to rid your business of payroll stress*

Who is it for?

- Anyone interested in the issue when you don't need to go into great detail.

When to choose it?

- You want to win attention, nurture leads and boost awareness. Lists often take a stand on an issue, and work well in the middle of the sales cycle to nurture leads.

PROBLEM/SOLUTION

What is it?

- A persuasive essay that uses facts and logic to present a new solution to a problem. Example: *How banks can win new small business customers*

Who is it for?

- B2B buyers near the top of the sales funnel, industry experts and journalists.

When to choose it?

- You want to generate leads, educate your market or build recognition for your company. This format targets readers early in their purchasing process.

03

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT WRITER

The power of the white paper is its perceived objectivity. But the truth is every well-written white paper has a hidden agenda.

Yes, it will rely upon logical argument, evidence-backed fact and authoritative references. But it may also borrow suspense techniques from fiction and lean on psychology, direct response and emotional triggers in a similar way to a sales page.

That means you need a writer who can deliver factual accuracy and compelling copy. The ideal candidate combines the logic, creative flair and persuasive skills of a technical writer, journalist and copywriter.

You'll also need designated subject matter experts and reviewers. You may also need a designer (and perhaps an illustrator).



04 TAKE A STAND ON HOW PROMOTIONAL TO BE



Tip: You might also consider interviewing influential journalists for comment. Once the whitepaper is published, they are likely to be more inclined to provide coverage.

This could be minimal and limited to a logo and a short company positioning statement at the paper's end. Especially if you are targeting the awareness stage of the funnel.

Is your focus the consideration or decision phase? You can be more promotional by including your solution in the white paper. More so again if you are presenting your solution as the ultimate choice in its category.

When weighing up all this, decide which expert voices the white paper should cite. How might they impact the reader's response? Should you use your own experts or stick to outside analysts?

05

ASK THE WRITER TO PREPARE AN OUTLINE

Only when you have your planning pinned down should you do this. Ask your writer to prepare a one-page bulleted summary of the white paper's direction. This should include proposed sections and sub-sections.

Expect the writer to either charge for this or for you to pay a deposit towards his or her total fee. This work requires the writer to do enough research to gain a holistic understanding of the white paper's scope.

This bulleted outline is not a nice-to-have. It is a must-have. It will mean you have a solid roadmap for the project.

The outline provides a shared understanding of the scope of work to come.



The timeline should look something like this:

STEP	ACTION	OWNER	DUE DATE
1.0	Submit project plan to CD	EG	Jul 18
1.1	Feedback on project plan due to EG	CD	Jul 25
1.2	Submit revised plan to CD (if needed)	EG	Jul 30
2.0	Submit white paper outline for review + approval	EG	Aug 7
2.1	Feedback on outline due to EG	CD	Aug 12
2.2	Submit revised outline to CD (if needed)	EG	Aug 13
3.0	Submit initial white paper draft	EG	Aug 22
3.1	First round of revisions due to EG	CD	Aug 29
3.2	Submit revised draft	EG	Sep 3
3.3	Second round of revisions due to EG (if needed)	CD	Sep 6
3.4	Submit final draft	EG	Sep 10



Tip: An online citation generator can be used to quickly produce correctly formatted citations.

06

AGREE THE PROJECT TIMELINE WITH YOUR WRITER

Doing this will ensure everyone involved will be on track in terms of their roles and timings.

At this stage, also agree on how references should be presented. You can choose from footnotes for a more academic look, endnotes which distract readers less, or in-text citations.

For the first two, decide on your formatting system. APA and MLA are the main ones and either is fine providing it's consistent.

07 MAKE THE WHITE PAPER A PAGE TURNER

Little is more offputting than a wall of words. An experienced white paper writer will make the paper enticing and scannable with text enhancements that offer visual breaks.

You can boost readability by using at least one of these text techniques on every page:

Bullets

- keep the text short and
- the lists not long

Headings

Two types of different size headings helps sustain interest

Make them lively and use them to summarise the content.

Pull quotes

Use a larger distinct typeface and highlight a key point

Infographics

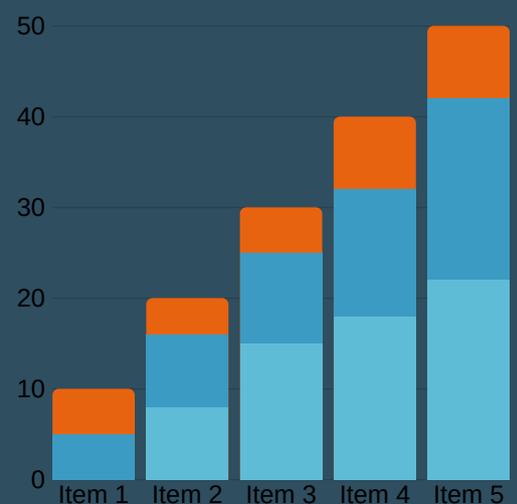
A well-designed illustration, chart, table or pictogram can help keep attention. They allow reader to visualise concepts and trends faster than the written word.

White space

This is not wasted space. It gives the eye a place to rest and focus on the more important elements.

Sidebars

Good for when you want to highlight information that's illustrative but not essential.



Writing

- *Limited use of the passive tense: active tense is shorter and more engaging*
- *Shorter words, shorter sentences, shorter paragraphs*
- *However academic the white paper, the lower the Flesch reading score the better*

08

INCLUDE A COMPELLING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Readers are always rushed. The executive summary or introduction gives them an opportunity to understand fast what the value of the white paper will be to them.

So in one page or less, set out what you are going to tell the target audience.

They'll see at a glance if it's relevant to them to understand an issue, solve a problem, or make a decision.

An executive summary can be a synopsis of the white paper in condensed form. Or it can be a trailer-style summary that is written to intrigue.

Tip: A tinted box highlighting key takeaways to excite interest is a good idea too.



09

MAKE THE COVER DESIGN ATTRACTIVE

We all judge a book by a captivating cover. With lacklustre design, a white paper can fall at the first hurdle.

Make the cover eye-catching. Don't be afraid to use dramatic colours, icons and layout on the cover (and throughout the paper).

Readers will use what they see to judge what the white paper contains. The design cost of investing in this will easily pay for itself in downloads.



10 CRAFT A CLICK-WORTHY TITLE

Nothing, nothing, matters more than the title.

The title of your white paper is make or break. Align it to your audience needs. Make them think 'I want that now'.

The title is a two-second opportunity to secure the click of interest.

There's an art and a science to title and headline writing that your writer is best positioned to deal with.

Ask him or her to come up with suggestions you can test out to see which convert best with sample readers.

Which white paper would you rather read?

- The 6 critical success factors for legal firms today*
or
- Organisational development theory for operational success for the high-performing legal practice*
- Disruption has hit pharma – are you ready?*
or
- Key evolutions in the market landscape of pharma through the eyes of strategic intelligence*

Consider identifying the target reader with a sub-title:

A Special Report for Pharma Executives

Or

A White Paper for Legal Professionals



Tips:

- Keep the title short
- Use active verbs
- Don't use a company or product name
- Make it clear what the reader will learn
- Use language that creates emotion

11

PUBLISH AND PROMOTE

Ready to publish? Before you do, have your promotional plan ready.

It helps with mindset to treat a white paper as you would a product launch.

Consider drumming up anticipation with teasers through your email opt-in list and other marketing communications.

Other publishing options include all the below – some paid for, some free:

- Consider offering the white paper in responsive web-based interactive format (either instead of a pdf or as both – your target audience will dictate this)
- Organise event launch and panel discussion to a targeted audience of prospects and influencers
- Add pop-ups on relevant pages. Use the word 'free'
- Coverage on your website and gated download
- Announce publication in company newsletters
- Hand out hard copies at industry events
- Post about it on your social media channels
- Write blogs about topics covered in white paper and inline link to landing page
- Promote via LinkedIn ads or relevant LinkedIn groups
- Publish a press release to a news release service such as PRWeb
- Send to relevant industry journalists and bloggers
- Add it your company email signature line
- Submit to industry publications/trade magazines
- Run Google Adwords/PPC campaign
- Republish portions on LinkedIn Publisher and Medium
- Tag quoted influencers in your white paper
- Leverage relationships with content marketers in your network



Make a high-converting attractive landing page your first priority. This must clearly explain why your audience should hand over their details. It must set out the value the white paper holds for them.



Tip: Keep the download form required details to the minimum for better conversion. Consider using social login to gate your white paper instead of a traditional form. This allows visitors to access your white paper with just one click.

12

RE-PURPOSE AND RE-PUBLISH

Smart marketers don't publish and be damned.

They make full use of whitepapers as the backbone of extended lead-gen campaigns.

The possibilities of leveraging all the hard work that has gone into the production of a brilliant white paper are huge. Consider the following options:



Tip: It's what you do with the white paper that supports a high-impact lead-generating mission



- Typically a white paper will be broken into 3 - 5 sections, sometimes more. Think of each section as its own blog.
- By breaking up the white paper content into a series of SEO-rich blog posts, you can invite the reader to explore the topic more by downloading the white paper
- Not everyone likes to read (or has the time) an 8-10-page document. Consider summarising the white paper into a shareable slide deck.
- Webinars tend to have their own unique audiences. Run a webinar, based on the slide deck, with invited experts
- Turn bite-size facts into engaging social media posts
- Use the white paper infographics as social media shares
- Film a video interview or pitch a podcast with one of the company experts featured in the white paper

Content creation that helps B2B, professional services firms and healthcare and pharma companies differentiate their value

Discuss a white paper project

Are you:

- An overstretched marketing manager needing campaign ideas and content for multiple platforms?
- A growing company wanting to grow your lead generation and marketing results?
- A consultancy looking to build your firm's expertise-driven online visibility and reputation?



Sarah Monaghan is a journalist, marketing strategist and copywriter with over 15 years' experience working in the B2B space.

She helps clients (predominantly in healthcare/pharma and professional services) attract and convert more ideal customers by creating intelligent content that resonates with their target personas at each stage in the funnel.



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