

How to Use White Papers to Market Your Business

A Special Report From Gianfagna Strategic Marketing, Inc.

White papers are one of the best ways to market a business or professional services company. This report explains why white papers are so effective in business-to-business marketing and how to create a high-impact white paper for your marketing strategy.



- ▶ Why B2B Marketers Create White Papers
- ▶ How to Write a White Paper
- ▶ How to Think Strategically about White Papers
- ▶ 11 Ideas for Using White Papers in a B2B Marketing Plan

▶ What is a White Paper?

A white paper is an examination of a topic, business challenge, or issue by an authority on the subject.

If you sell products and services to business decision-makers, a white paper is a powerful marketing tool that can help you establish your credentials as an expert, showcase your knowledge, illuminate or influence the dialogue around a subject, and stand out from competitors.

▶ How to Write a White Paper

A white paper's content should be presented objectively with conclusions drawn from research and facts.

Once you've chosen your topic, here are the steps of writing a white paper:

1. Introduce the subject.

Summarize briefly what the white paper will cover.

2. Frame the discussion.

Help the reader understand why this subject is important and why they should know about it and understand it.

3. Educate the reader.

Share your knowledge about this subject and make the key points you believe people should know.

4. Provide examples.

Help readers see how the information you are sharing applies to their business.

5. Cite facts.

Use facts from trusted third parties or research from independent sources to support your statements and conclusions.

6. Share your insights.

Offer your perceptions or conclusions based on your experience and expertise.

7. Look ahead.

Discuss potential trends or developments that could emerge in this subject area and what the future may hold.

8. State your credentials.

Conclude with a brief profile of your company and credentials and your contact information.

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► How to Think Strategically About White Papers

There's more to developing an effective white paper than writing about what you know. To create a white paper that establishes your credibility as an expert, you need to plan carefully and think strategically.

- **Select a topic that concerns or confuses your market.**

Write about an issue or situation your clients or prospects care about but don't fully understand. The marketplace will value your ability to shed light on an important or complex subject.

- **Focus on what you know best.**

A white paper gives you a chance to demonstrate your in-depth knowledge and position yourself as an authority. Choose a topic about which you can legitimately claim to be an industry or subject-matter expert and for which your company offers potential solutions.

- **Use facts to support your points.**

One of your main goals is credibility. Back up your conclusions with research and statistics from third parties. Always cite your sources in footnotes.

- **Add your perspective.**

While it's critical to present content in a straightforward, objective manner, you also can use a white paper to help your market view an issue or challenge the way you see it. Add your point of view on the subject based on your experience.

- **Use visuals.**

Increase comprehension and user-friendliness by using charts, diagrams, and pictures to explain or illustrate content.

- **Add sidebars.**

If there's a specific point you need to explain in more depth to ensure the reader's understanding of the bigger picture, use a sidebar for additional content.

- **Include FAQs.**

Put yourself in the reader's place: What questions would your client or prospect have about this subject? Include these FAQs and provide easy-to-understand answers.

- **Invest in professional design.**

Increase the impact and perceived value of your white paper by presenting it in an attractive, business-like format. Have a professional graphic designer develop the layout. Be sure to integrate the design with your brand identity.

- **Showcase your credentials.**

Provide details on your experience and education to affirm your position as a resource that readers can trust.

- **Position your company as the solution.**

A white paper is not an overt sales tool, but one of your goals in publishing a white paper is to encourage prospects to consider your business as a solution provider on this subject. At the end of the white paper, include a section of content describing your company and your expertise as it relates to the white paper's topic, with an offer for a complimentary consultation or evaluation.

► Ideas for Using White Papers in a Marketing Plan

Once you have published a white paper, your goal is to get the widest possible distribution to clients, referral sources, and prospects. Here are 11 ways to do it:

1. **Advertising or direct mail lead generation**

Use the white paper as your offer in a direct mail campaign or ad.

2. **Sales presentations**

Include white papers in your leave-behind sales kit when meeting with a new prospect.

3. **Trade show handouts**

Distribute white papers at your booth at industry trade shows. If you send pre-show direct mail, note the availability of white papers in the mailing.

4. **Web marketing**

Announce new white papers on your site's home page and post them in a resources section. You can let visitors access the full text right away or capture prospect information for future marketing by requiring prospects to provide their email address before downloading.

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5. Social media marketing

Publicize every new white paper on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+. Link to the white paper on your website.

6. Client marketing

Always share white papers with your clients to help them understand industry issues and view your company as a knowledgeable resource.

7. Influencer marketing

Mail or email your white papers with a personal note to influencers in your market to position yourself as an industry thought leader.

8. Referral marketing

Mail or email each white paper to professional colleagues who recommend you to prospects. Offer additional copies for referral sources to distribute to their network.

9. Lead nurturing

Email your prospects a link to each new white paper posted on your website or send hard copy by mail. You can also use the white paper to give sales reps a reason to call: "I'd like to stop by to bring you a copy of our latest white paper."

10. Direct mail marketing

Mail white papers with a personalized letter to companies you'd like to do business with. Offer to provide additional information or a complimentary consultation.

11. Public relations

Send your white paper to your media list and offer to be a source for future articles on the white paper's topic.

Where's the Marketing Pitch?

Your primary goal in using white papers in your marketing strategy is to establish your expertise and authority. It's critical to produce an objective presentation that readers can trust. But it's also permissible – and indeed, expected – for you to help the audience consider an issue or subject from your point of view.

In a separate section at the end of your content, describe your company's ability to help readers successfully address the issues or challenges your white paper has brought to light.

▶ Sharing Your Expertise is Smart Marketing

White papers are powerful marketing tools that can help you differentiate your company in a competitive marketplace by showcasing your knowledge and expertise.

By creating insightful content that helps your clients and prospects understand an important issue, you and your business will earn credibility and respect. And in business-to-business marketing, that helps make the phones ring.

About Gianfagna

Gianfagna Strategic Marketing, Inc. provides marketing strategy, marketing consulting, and marketing campaigns to FORTUNE® 500 companies and other market leaders.

We specialize in business-to-business marketing and have helped many businesses achieve a better return on their marketing investment. Find out how we can help you.

Visit our website at gianfagnamarketing.com or contact Jean Gianfagna at (440) 808-4700, ext. 11.



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