



Best Practices Series: White Paper Writing



Need Help with Your White Paper Program?

You've heard of the 3-30-3 Rule, right? It's just one of the elements you should think about when crafting a compelling white paper.

How it works: You must grab your reader's interest in the first three seconds; that's how long you have to show them that you have something meaningful to say.

If they stay for the initial glance, you have another 30 seconds to make your overarching point. If they're still with you, you then have three minutes to convince the reader that your paper is worth their time investment.

Want to learn more? The following seven tips will help you capture your reader's attention and influence them to take the next step: contact you.

1. Hook Them with the Title

A lively title attracts more readers than a description of the content. For example, "Five Things Computer Hackers Don't Want You to Know" is far more intriguing than "PC Security Measures." Plus, a great title tips the reader off about how the material is presented.

2. Tell Them a Story

You've heard the term for a great story: a "page-turner." One of the biggest challenges in writing a successful paper is weaving a colorful, persuasive thread through your paper to keep the reader engaged and interested. Look for fresh perspectives to your theme and communicate them with compelling language.

3. Give Them Some Sizzle

Every day your prospects are bombarded with so many marketing messages they simply tune out the majority of papers. That's why it's important to present your content in such a way that makes for a lively read. You can achieve this goal by adding bold statements backed up by credible sources. Still another way to differentiate your message is to express your vision on where you believe a particular technology is headed, and paint that vision in the most descriptive terms you can muster.

We bring the art of storytelling to technology.

4. But Cut the Hype

While it's essential to hook your reader from the first phrase of the paper, it's even more important to make the hook pay off. Readers today look to white papers for insights and education, not sales pitches. When papers ignore these expectations and drone on about the glories of a product, they lose credibility and opportunity to build a relationship that pays off today or in the future.

5. Capture Readers Who Skim

Most readers will skim a paper before making the commitment to read it, so it's vital to develop a style that's easy to scan. Make the paper more enticing to peruse, concentrate on strong headlines, compelling subheads, well-crafted benefit bullets, and captions that provide readers with valuable information at a glance.

6. Inspire Them to Contact You

When it comes to a well-written white paper, the last thing you write is just as important as the first. Make sure you've put as much thought into your 'call to action' as you have your theme. Make readers want to pick up the phone and call your sales team.

7. Leave Them Wanting More

One of the biggest mistakes marketing teams make is thinking of a white paper as an individual deliverable rather than part of a cohesive marketing plan. Carefully craft your white paper topics over next six months or year and create a series of themes that work together and build on each other. Tease your customers about what's coming up and create reader anticipation.

The Value of White Paper Programs

The creation of a robust white paper program adds long-term value to your organization's white paper development and distribution efforts. Creating a roadmap for a yearlong program provides content specialists, authors and marketing managers with a unified approach that enhances the collective intelligence of your organization's marketing plan and offers promotional capabilities that increase readership and response from prospects and clients.

Ultimately, the success of a white paper program depends on selecting the right team of writers to complement your internal team, support your marketing efforts, and help manage the process from beginning to end.

Are you ready to create winning white papers?

The McLellan Creative Writing Team creates exceptional white papers for many of the world's most innovative technology companies. Our team of writers, project managers, copy editors and researchers can help you simplify the process of developing a white paper program that gets you noticed by prospects, customers and the media.

Contact McLellan Creative today to start planning your white paper program today.

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