

Ten Tips for B2B White Paper Success



Sherlock Ink

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Tip #1: Provide Answers and Solutions

Don't turn your reader off by focusing on your company's product or service. A white paper is an educational document – not a sales pitch. People who read white papers are looking for answers and solutions to the challenges and opportunities they are facing. Deliver that information in a respectful and helpful way.

Tip #2: Use Clear Language

Use language that is conversational, clear and results focused. More and more frequently, decision-makers are not technical people. Many people may be involved in the buying decision – from 3-7 people at smaller companies of 100-500 employees to over a dozen at larger companies. Your communications have to be understandable to all of them.

Tip #3: Match Content and Buying Stage

White papers are generally most useful for people in the awareness stage of buying. The internet has changed the buying process. Buyers are more actively involved in purchase decisions: they reach out for information, they research and investigate. In the early stage of the buying process, buyers want relevant, high quality content – generally, they are not yet to engage with sales reps. White papers play an important role in building your brand through lead nurturing and thought leadership.

Tip #4: Be Honest

Don't be a Pollyanna and just talk about all the good stuff. Be honest. Discuss the warts. Even the solution your company provides has limitations. What are they? What is your company doing to address them?

Tip #5: Recognize Emotions

A proper discussion makes an emotional connection, not just a technical one. An emotional connection is engaging and it clearly demonstrates that you get the problems and challenges your reader is dealing with. White papers are useful for complex buying decisions because they help with problem solving, learning and discovery. The more expensive and complex a purchase, the larger the role of emotions in the purchase decision. By building credibility and trust you reduce the feelings of fear and risk naturally associated with a complex buying decision.

Tip #6: Build Relationships

Companies don't buy – people buy from people. People crave interactions with others who know them. When you develop content with that in mind, you begin to build relationships with people before you've even met them. Understand your buyer profiles before beginning to write.

Tip #7: Present a Consistent Brand Experience

Like all your communication materials, your white papers should be in alignment with your brand experience. Your business has to present a consistent face/impression to the prospect. Prospect empowerment means that companies often don't get second chances.

Tip #8: Write from an Outsider's Perspective

All companies have their own culture and lingo. You notice it when you start working at a new place but then you get used to it. When you write company communication materials, write like an outsider to the company. Don't make assumptions about what your readers know. Fully explain the benefits of your solution. Provide objective and referenced industry information.

Tip #9: Include an Executive Summary

Executive summaries are essential in attracting the attention of readers. Without a summary, your target reader is much less likely to invest their valuable reading time into the document. An executive summary briefly presents the industry and key problem or challenge, the most important points of the paper, the solution and the benefits of the solution. The shorter the better is the rule with executive summaries: they range in length from a paragraph to a maximum of one page.

Tip #10: Sum It Up and Call to Action

Your white paper needs to have a conclusion that clearly summarizes the most important points you want the reader to remember. Conclusions are particularly important for 2 reasons: 1. Readers skimming a document will often jump to the end and read before committing to read the document in greater detail; 2. Conclusions increase the likelihood of a call-to-action response.

If you have other questions about white paper writing or need some help crafting your next white paper, please contact Sherlock Ink at 250-629-6550 or by info@sherlockink.com

Thanks for reading!

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