

Top 10 Lessons Learned About White Papers

Avoid the errors that reduce credibility and diminish the value of your investments in thought leadership

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Executive summary

Top Ten

1. Keep it short
2. Focus the topic and the discussions
3. Avoid the hard sell
4. Lead with customer insights
5. Include third-party experts
6. Include the author's name if he or she has credible background
7. Use charts, schematics and data points extensively
8. Be sure the tone is credible
9. What does well written really mean?
10. Include a clear call to action



1. Keep it short

The goal is awareness and to encourage a conversation, not give the target audience everything it needs to know

- 12 pages for business decision-makers, such as the CIO, the CFO, the CEO, the COO and other senior officials
- 16 pages for technology decision-makers





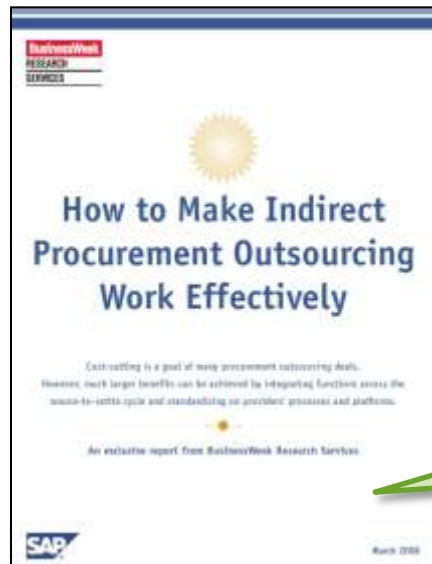
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2. Focus the topic and the discussions

Don't try to boil the ocean—two short white papers are more effective than one long one

-  Pick a topic that can be described in one sentence for a specific audience and stick to it
-  Don't wander off into tangents and try to include too many angles





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3. Avoid the hard sell

Refrain from product promotions before you've established topic knowledge and credibility

-  The first half of the white paper should prove domain knowledge, especially valuable data and insights.
-  Second half explains how your products deliver the solution/benefits described earlier

Stats

BUILD CONTENT *AROUND* THE BRAND/PRODUCT/SERVICE, NOT *ABOUT* IT

Content that is too product-or brand-focused is ill-equipped to travel digitally; it's seldom shared or passed along, whereas content that stands on its own merits as entertainment, storytelling, educational value, or utility will be shared and passed along.

Source: Altimeter Group Research Report: Content: The New Marketing Equation



Stats



75% of survey respondents encourage solution providers creating content to ***“curb the sales messaging”***

Source: DemandGen Report, Content Preferences Survey May 2012



4. Lead with customer insights

Customer comments about the value of your technologies are the most valuable and credible content

-  **The bigger or more influential the customer company, the better**
-  **Depending on your target audience, the quoted customer's title could be extremely important. If target is BDMs, CFO and other C-level accolades are **crucial****

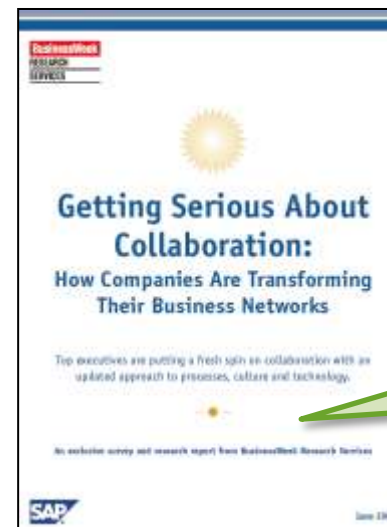
Stats

What Turns Prospects Off

According to survey respondents, the top three mistakes tech vendors make when producing information are:

- 77% cited too much marketing “fluff” as the number one mistake tech vendors make
- 44% decried the lack of real world examples in vendor material
- 36% listed the lack of technical depth

Source: UBM TechWeb Buyers Research Study, 2012





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5. Include third-party experts

*Well known and highly regarded analysts are almost as credible as users**

-  Quotes and data from subject-matter experts at reputable consulting firms, especially if they align with your target audience
-  Academia-based experts also provide credibility, especially if they are connected with a prestigious institution or have been published in business school journals





Stats

**See Edelman Trust Barometer 2013 Annual Global Study*
<http://www.edelman.com/insights/intellectual-property/trust-2013/>



6. Include the author's name

If he or she has a credible background

-  Summarize experience and education, either technology or business credentials, depending on your target market.
-  Frequent speaker at industry events? Published in business journals? Published author? Popular blogger?






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7. Use charts, schematics and data points extensively

BDMs seek data points they can use as bullet points for internal presentations

-  Data builds credibility—proof points for your assertions of value
-  Implies widespread acceptance of solutions
-  Reports are more compelling with charts—avoid gray space





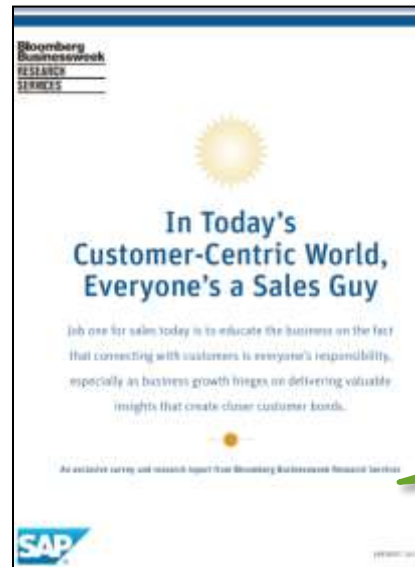
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8. Credible tone

A conversational, non-promotional style encourages readership

-  Assume the reader knows something about the topic
-  Infuse the text with insights based on author experience





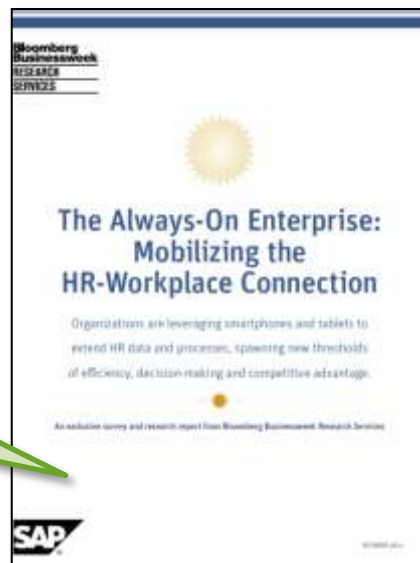
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9. Make the text easy to scan, read and absorb

Some basic writing rules apply, but this is not journalism

-  Short sentences, short paragraphs and multiple subheads to break up and organize the content
-  Follow standard storytelling structure after providing a short executive summary



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Stats

Research reports jumped in usage more than any other B2B content marketing tactic this year. In 2012, 44% of B2B companies used research reports, compared with 25% in 2011.

Source:




According to the B2B Content Marketing: 2013 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends – North America report....

Source: <http://copywritertoronto.com/how-to-take-the-boring-out-of-your-b2b-research-reports/>



10. Include a clear call to action

How should readers respond? What do you want them to do?

-  Links to more info such as infographics, case studies, ebook or blog
-  Link to product information
-  Telephone number to request a product demonstration or proposal



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Who We Are

Triangle Publishing Services Co. Inc. (TPSC) is a leading provider of content development services for corporations seeking purposeful, credible and expert level technology-related B2B marketing content for business and technology decision makers.

Our writers have worked for:

- *Bloomberg Businessweek*
- *Forbes*
- *Fortune*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
- *CIO*
- *Informationweek*
- *CFO*
- *PC Week*
- *Computerworld*

Our content areas of expertise:

- business intelligence
- Big Data
- analytics
- cloud
- CRM
- ERP
- supply chain management
- manufacturing
- financial services
- applications development
- middleware
- mobile devices



What We Do

Content solutions include:

- Research reports/white papers
- Case studies
- Books/ebooks
- Article series
- Blog posts
- Podcasts
- Webcasts
- Content repurposing
- Social media content
- Slideshare presentations

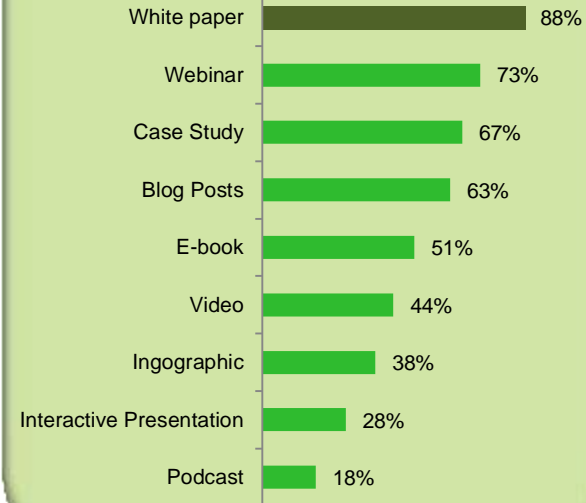
Stats

"A study released in September by Optify found B2B marketers rated case studies - **78%**, white papers - **73%** ... as their most effective content marketing tactics."

[Source: http://www.marketingcharts.com/wp/print/in-person-events-rated-most-effective-for-b2b-content-marketers-24276/](http://www.marketingcharts.com/wp/print/in-person-events-rated-most-effective-for-b2b-content-marketers-24276/)

Stats

Which of the following types of online content have you utilized to research a business topic or potential solutions over the past year? (check all that apply)



Source: DemandGen Report, Content Preferences Survey, May 2012



Top Corporations benefiting from Triangle's services

**Bloomberg
Businessweek**

 **Harvard
Business
Review**



Microsoft

pwc



 **sas**

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Larry Marion is the CEO and editorial director of Triangle Publishing Services. Mr. Marion has more than 20 years of experience writing and editing publications about technology, healthcare and financial services.

In addition to having his articles appear in InformationWeek, PC Week, CFO and Computerworld, Mr. Marion has also held editorial positions in the areas of finance and business. He was a senior editor for Institutional Investor magazine and a staff writer for Forbes and BusinessWeek.