



C WORTHY | White Papers

Planning Your White Paper

By Tedd Campbell

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Introduction

If you've determined that white papers should play a role in your B2B content marketing strategy, you now face the challenge of developing your first winning paper.

As you'll soon discover, producing a high-quality white paper takes careful planning.

This mite paper looks at two key planning tasks: identifying a target audience and defining a clear marketing objective.



Inform and Persuade

Since white papers often explain difficult concepts and describe complex technologies, people tend to confuse them with academic papers, or think of them as “crib notes” for user manuals. They often fail to understand that white papers are *marketing collateral*—informative and *persuasive*.

When it comes to white papers, explaining technical concepts in plain language is just another means of facilitating the sales process, albeit with a lighter touch.



A truly effective paper is a thoughtful blend of fact and argument, serving up valuable information in a way that reinforces the overall marketing message.

Before you can develop an informative yet persuasive white paper, you first need to determine:

1. Who you're talking to, so you can build affinity.
2. What you want them to do, so you can design the paper around this objective.



Producing a white paper that neither builds affinity with a target audience nor carries out a specific objective is like pouring an unknown liquid into your car's gas tank: the engine might still run, but it's unlikely to perform very well or take you very far.

Target Audience

Is your white paper intended for businesspeople or technical specialists? Before you start developing a white paper, you need to identify your audience so you can choose appropriate topics



and then explain them in a way that's meaningful to those readers.

Business owners, executives, and senior managers—the decision makers—are typically interested in the big picture: how they can improve their bottom line with your products or services. When they read your white paper, they'll look for compelling business arguments that justify a more thorough investigation of your company. Keep in mind that these are businesspeople, so they appreciate high-level technical



descriptions that explain difficult concepts in language they can understand.

Engineers, IT managers, and other knowledge workers, on the other hand, usually want detailed, no-nonsense information about how your technology or service works so they can determine if it's a feasible solution to the problem they're experiencing.

Their recommendations can strongly influence the final decisions made by their boss, who relies on their technical expertise.



If you want to reach businesspeople and technical specialists, you'll need to produce at least two white papers, one for each type of reader.

Marketing Objective

After you identify who will be reading your white paper, you need to define what you're hoping to accomplish with it.

Here are some possible goals that you might want to achieve with a white paper:



- Communicate the business benefits of using your technology.
- Educate prospective customers and pre-sell your expertise.
- Knock down common objections during the sales process, perhaps with technical explanations, descriptions, and examples that address known pain points.
- Expose unrealistic claims made by your competitors and



redefine the market in terms that favour your company.

- Dispel common misconceptions about your product, service, process, underlying technology, or industry.

When you understand your objective, you can start developing a tightly focused white paper that has the best chance of achieving the desired outcome.



The Best Laid Plans

Although careful planning is a prerequisite for producing high-quality white papers that connect with skeptical buyers, take care not to become mired in strategy.

Prospective buyers will come to your paper with unique perspectives and their reactions will not be uniform or entirely predictable. The important thing is to deliver a coherent narrative that demonstrates your expertise.

The rest is up to the buyer.



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Visit www.cworthy.biz and download our **Special Report** on white paper marketing, entitled:

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This special report is intended for technology marketers who want to learn about planning, developing, distributing, and promoting a high-quality white paper.

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