



# White Papers: 10 Profitable Uses

By Tedd Campbell

White papers are an investment, not a cost. However, they're not a passive investment that you can simply put out to pasture and forget about. White papers are multipurpose tools that you must actively wield if you want to get the most bang for your buck.

Here are ten ways you can use white papers to boost the bottom line:

## 1. Website content

Customers should get their information from you, not your competitors, so make sure they can find what they need online. Establish an online resource library, stock it with white papers and other high-value content, and transform your website into a trusted source of information about your industry.

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Like all original website content, white papers can also help with search engine optimization (SEO), improving your company's visibility on popular search engines.

## 2. Lead generation

Your white papers contain valuable information that's in demand, so don't give them all away for free! Instead, offer select white papers in exchange for website visitors' contact information.

People who actively search for content like yours and then fill out your registration form are, by definition, excellent leads because they've already demonstrated a promising level of commitment.

## 3. E-mail marketing campaigns

Carefully targeted white papers encapsulate the exact information that you need to nurture leads through each stage of the sales cycle. In your e-mail campaigns, notify each segment of your list about new white papers they can download, and include a link to each relevant paper. You can also beef up your e-mail newsletters with recycled white paper content—just cut, paste and tweak.

## 4. Handouts

Making a big presentation to an important client? Renting a booth at a large tradeshow? Giving a talk for the local user group? Whatever the situation, a white paper makes an excellent handout. Prospects can read your white paper while they wait for your presentation to begin or while they grab a bite to eat during their lunch break at a conference. If they like your white paper, perhaps they'll pass it on to their colleagues when they return to the office.

## 5. Meeting follow-ups

Reinforce what you say to prospective clients by leaving behind an appropriate white paper after your meeting, or by attaching one to your follow-up e-mails. Supplying the right white paper at the right time can be a very effective way of answering questions, overcoming objections, and allaying fears during the sales cycle. Clients will be impressed by your openness and attention to detail.

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## 6. Investor pitches

Looking for investors? If so, you must be prepared to clearly explain your product or service and demonstrate its market potential. When an investor expresses interest, include a selection of well-written white papers in your initial information package.

Cautious investors who are forming a first impression of your company will be pleased to receive substantial information up front, without having to ask for it.

## 7. Briefs for industry analysts

The fortunes of many technology companies rise and fall with the reviews they get from influential analysts at prominent research firms. Are you making it easy for them to learn about your hot, new technology?

White papers are a cost-effective way to attract the attention of key analysts and put your company on a fast track to success.

## 8. Media resources

Reporters and writers often read white papers as part of their research for news stories, feature articles, blogs, and books about your industry, your company, or your products/services.

If your website is chockfull of insightful white papers, media people will see that your company is a leader in its field and they'll be more likely to call you for a quote or for answers to their questions.

## 9. Core story definitions

A core story comprehensively defines what your company offers its customers, making it the exception that proves the white paper rule about no sales pitches.

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For example, team members who create slide presentations, Web copy, or phone scripts would draw content directly from the core story and then

adapt it to suit the format. Using a well-defined core story, you can ensure consistent messaging across all contact points in your organization.

## 10. Records of tribal knowledge

White papers that showcase your team's expertise for customers and other external readers have the added benefit of capturing the tribal knowledge and, to some extent, the culture of your organization. If key experts decide to leave, you still retain the white papers inspired by their innovative thinking, which allows for some degree of continuity when new hires join the team.

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During the hiring process itself, you can point to the white papers and say, “If you want to learn about what we do, how we do it, and why we do it that way, read our white papers. They tell the story of where we’ve been and lay out a roadmap for where we’re going.”

Of course, this list is not meant to be definitive. Resourceful marketers and salespeople around the world have, no doubt, found many other uses for their white papers. Hopefully, you will, too.



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