
FROM WHITE TO READ:

8 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR WHITE PAPER MORE INTERESTING

Smart companies recognize the power of White Papers to establish leads, close sales, and reach positions of thought leadership in their industry.

But sometimes White Papers fall flat. They don't generate interest. They don't make a dent. They barely get read.

How can you make your White Paper as interesting, captivating, and effective as the solution or product your company offers?

This paper presents 8 ways to make your White Paper more interesting. These methods help you get readers to really consider your product and all the value it has to offer. They help you get readers to *read* your White Paper and to follow up on it with a call or a purchase. They help you make your White Papers work.

The Power of White - Market Drivers

White papers have gained in popularity over the past twenty years, to the point that they are considered one of the premier methods for businesses to gain leads and to close sales.

While originally used in government and politics (white papers referred to unbound material rushed to the floor of the parliament), businesses soon recognized their power.

Technology companies used them as a means to convey important details about the solutions they offered. Non-technology companies likewise recognized their value, and have used them to showcase their products and solutions. Surveys have marked White Papers as THE most popular and

White Papers need to be interesting to work – to get you more leads and more sales.

White Papers are one of the most effective means of marketing your product – But they have to be well crafted.

effective methods for achieving business purposes – leads and sales. For example, Over 90% of executives find white papers extremely useful¹, and over two thirds of IT marketers rate white papers as an extremely effective form of lead generation.²

Why the popularity? White Papers present a unique opportunity for companies to showcase their offering, in a manner that is non-threatening and often welcomed. Because of their explanatory nature, department managers and decision makers recognize them as valuable for evaluating an offering. Because of their “non-hype” nature, they slip under the “don’t try to sell me” marketing defenses and can really serve to convince in a non-threatening way.

And, when done well, White Papers get passed around and around some more – doing the marketing work for you!

And yet...

Not all White Papers have that effect. Many, too many, White Papers barely get looked at. Some barely make it past the first paragraph. Some get passed only to the circular file.

Why Do Some White Papers Cause Only Nosedives?

White papers have great potential. But several problems can slow them down, and make drowsiness their only effect.

- **Lack of focus** – Who’s the reader? What may cause goosebumps to an engineer may cause yawns to a Vice President. White Papers cannot be everything to everybody, they need to be focused and targeted.

White Papers can be boring when they aren’t focused, structured, easy to read... and especially when they don’t answer “what’s in it for me?”

¹ TechTarget, Bitpipe and Sam Whimore Media Survey (12/2004). <http://www.bitpipe.com>

² MarketingSherpa. (2004) IT Marketing Metrics Guide www.e-consultancy.com/knowledge/whitepapers/90014/it-marketing-metrics-guide-2004-data-for-software-hardware-amp-services-marketers-executive-summary.html.

- **Meandering** – Does the document “go” anywhere? Is it scattered, or does it reach a point? White Papers need to have a beginning, middle and satisfying end. They need to tell a story in some way.
- **Yawning** – Does the document really say anything beyond the technical details? Does it convey the enthusiasm you feel for the product? It doesn’t have to scream, but it does have to open eyes.
- **Hard to read** – Does the White Paper make you tired just looking at it? While you don’t want a slick brochure (you don’t want the anti-marketing defensive shields raised), they do have to look clean, inviting, accessible, and easy to digest.
- **So What** – Does the data have any relevance? Why does the user need to know this... how will this help? White Papers need to do more than present the facts, they need to present how the facts are useful.

8 Ways to Make Your White Paper More Interesting

Your white paper can go from second rate to great. Here are seven ways to make your White Paper the enthusiastic, effective interesting advocate for your solution:

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1. Imagine your reader
 2. Great Title
 3. Beginning, middle, end
 4. Active words
 5. White space
 6. Concise
 7. Benefits
 8. Action Plan

1. **Pick who you are writing to. Imagine him** – In order for your white paper to be effective, figure out who is the ideal reader. Do this before you write a word. Is it the head of IT? Is it the CEO? Someone else? What are the main issues that would concern that person? How does your solution answer her needs? What words could you use that would resonate, speak to, *interest* him?
2. **Make a Great Title** – The title of your White Paper is the most immediate, urgent, and crucial part of the document. Make it clear that this White Paper will be interesting and beneficial. “10 Ways to Make Your

Brightest Employees Never Think of Leaving your Company” is much better than “HR Best Practices.”

3. **Have a Beginning, a Middle and an End** – Every work of writing, from fairytales to doctoral theses, needs a satisfying structure. Introduce your subject – what is the problem that is faced? Expand on your subject – How does your solution help fix the problem? End the subject – How will life be better because of your solution? What does the reader need to do to make that solution a reality?
4. **Use Active Words.** The words you use can convey your enthusiasm or convey the need to read something else. Don't be afraid to use a thesaurus – choose the active, interesting, exciting word. Your product doesn't just fix a technical problem... your product Overhauls, Revamps, Revitalizes...
5. **Use White Space** – White Papers are, well, white. White space is pleasing to the eye, it makes documents more readable and easier to digest. Have shorter paragraphs. Increase space between paragraphs. Use wide margins, headers, call outs, graphics... help your reader skip through an open field rather than slog through formatting mud.
6. **Be concise** – Readers want information, but they don't want an encyclopedia. Present enough information to explain your product. Do it concisely. Show enough to help readers feel satisfied, but not stuffed. It's a white paper, not a manual, and not a six volume treatise.
7. **Show benefits, benefits and more benefits** – Your white paper needs to be meaningful to the reader. Don't just show what your product does, show how it will improve the reader's life. Your solution will increase revenue. It will lower the bottom line. It will make customers happy.

It will make managers happy. Readers will be interested in what will make them happy

8. **Tell them what to do next** – The ultimate happy ending is “I can get this for myself!” Tell readers how to contact you, how to make your solution their solution. Make the ending happy for you as well.

Gladstein Consulting – White Papers that Work

Gladstein Consulting specializes in writing White Papers that are interesting and above all, effective.

They have 10+ years of experience explaining technical solutions in concise, easy-to-read material. They combine this with the eye for writing effective copy –

- Knowing who the customer is
- Knowing how to reach the customer
- Knowing how to make the customer nod her head and say – this is what exactly what I need

To learn more about Gladstein Consulting:

- Visit www.whitepapersthatwork.com
- Email info@gladsteinconsulting.com or
- Call (718) 874-9212