

# WHITE PAPERS



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## Convert Your Expertise Into Cash

This article discusses the power of white papers you can tap into to convert your expertise into cash. They've been a staple of B2B marketing but few marketers realize their full power. They're versatile, effective and efficient. Compared to other Marcom communications, well-written white papers can't be

beat. White papers are a powerful tool in your marketing communications toolkit. They are extremely popular by decision makers and benefit even more from growing trends in content marketing and social media. White Papers are a must-have tool.

# White Papers

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White paper marketing works. It generates sales leads, build trust and even close sales. And executives and decision makers find them important.

- In a survey by Eccolo Media, 84% of B2B executives rated white papers as moderately to extremely influential in making purchase decisions.
- In a Content Marketing Institute survey, 61% of B2B marketers said they use white papers.

According to Gordon Graham, "... no other piece of content can generate so many business benefits for so long – when it's done right."

Bottom line – white papers, also known as special or technical reports, get the job done.

### What Makes White Paper Marketing Powerful

- **All-in-One** – As a marketing tool, special reports cover the bases. They help carry prospects down the sales funnel from lead to conversion. They do that because they appeal to a diverse group of prospects. Executives, technical analysts, and engineers prefer special reports to other Marcom collateral. Since white papers reach their target audience, effectiveness is high. Finally, inbound marketing is about 62% less expensive than outbound marketing. They are the Swiss Army knife of marketing collateral.
- **Versatility** – Special reports provide both technical and marketing information. Because they are more in depth, they're viewed as educational and "soft-sell" documents. This makes them "stealthy", as they penetrate gatekeepers to reach executives and decision makers. Special reports focus on a target market, making them more tailored and more relevant. Finally, special reports have a long and durable lifespan, and you can re-purpose them. Think presentations, web content, and articles.

- **Distribution** – Many companies use printed copies. But, in today’s digital world, large-, medium-, and small-sized businesses post their documents online. They’re found on websites, blogs, social media, and as email attachments. Given social media’s potent distribution capabilities, well-written technical reports can go viral, boosting sales leads. In the Eccolo Media survey mentioned above, 89% of respondents shared their special reports. Their reach and use will also grow, as online marketing mushrooms.
- **Thought Leadership** – Special reports help businesses establish industry thought leadership. Writing thought pieces on future industry trends helps promote your company and your solution. This helps build credibility through perceived expertise. In turn, this builds trust. Becoming a thought leader further helps establish your brand, benefiting your overall lead generation. You’ll gain industry dominance over time. In a nutshell, thought leadership helps you gain recognition with prospects. You’ll stand out from the industry competition.
- **Google<sup>2</sup>** – Content marketing with technical reports helps you gain competitive advantage. But when you combine that with SEO, the results multiply. When you write a technical report, SEO included, and post it online that makes it easier for Google to find your homepage, landing page, etc. This juices your website’s search engine rankings. As your Google rankings rise, as you attract more prospects to your website, increasing your leads and sales even more.
- **Trending** – With content marketing’s increasing popularity, the trend for white paper marketing is also rising – quickly. Initially, IT technology companies used this form of marketing. Today, many other industries have adopted this form as well. Companies selling complex, expensive products with a long buying cycle make ideal candidates for selling with technical reports. As products complexity increases, more and more buyers independently research a product before buying. These emergent trends suggest a robust future for this form of marketing.

As you can see, many influential benefits accrue when you write special reports. However, Gordon Graham cites three reasons many special reports fail to engage and persuade: “...too much selling, too much hype and too much focus on the vendor”.

To write a successful, lead generating special report, your content must engage and persuade prospects. Writing white papers places a premium on expertise not seen in any other marketing collateral.

Special reports must clearly explain complex concepts and details. Conveying expertise only comes with in-depth knowledge of the product or service. And as with other Marcom collateral, you must also know your customer intimately.

Address these two criteria and you'll unleash the dynamic, pent up power white papers command in generating leads, building trust, and closing sales.



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