



# **Eight Reasons White Papers are Critical to Your Business**

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*Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. – Francis Bacon, Of Studies 1597*

# Does the World Need another White Paper?

Defined as an “authoritative report or guide informing readers in a concise manner about a complex issue and presenting the issuing body's philosophy on the matter,”<sup>1</sup> White Papers have become a standard feature in the marketer’s toolbox. However, more often than not, these documents are filled with regurgitated, superficial content that is neither informative nor authoritative and does not say much about the issuing body’s view on the matter.

White Papers are often considered a necessity, rather than a benefit. This approach has negative implications to both prospective customers and partners. A scrabbled white paper does not define the benefit of the offering nor its technical innovation. Such a lack of focus fails to convey the uniqueness and impact of the product or service.

Yet, for all the poor examples, White Papers can play an important role and are well worth the time and effort used to produce them. Writing is a proven tool for crystalizing thoughts and ideas, and the material generated in a White Paper can inform and streamline parallel marketing efforts. White Papers are also a critical component in the customer engagement cycle. The document also provides the company with an excellent opportunity to move beyond the hype and buzz in order to explain key features and detail unique benefits of their products and services. Moreover, unrelated to a particular product or service, White Papers give the company an opportunity to establish thought leadership.

In summary, the world *does* need another White Paper, with the proviso that it is solid, instructive and decisive.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White\\_paper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_paper)

## Writing Crystallizes Thoughts and Ideas

Writing is possibly the most effective way of developing an idea. You can – and should – discuss your ideas with colleagues, but until you have committed the words to paper and read it back to yourself, it will not be fully cultivated. When you put an idea in writing, something quite remarkable occurs. You are forced to make choices in the way you describe your idea; those choices are implicit but never totally understood, until they are depicted in black and white. Furthermore, once written, the idea can be clearly evaluated. Upon examination, any weakness, logical flaw, or shortcoming will leap out. As you cycle through consecutive iterations, the thought will gradually take on form. Only then can the concept be properly explained to investors, customers and potential partners. Only with a fully-refined idea, can you begin to build, sell and forge alliances.

## Differentiation

Today's crowded market place is highly competitive and characterized by comparable offerings from a variety of vendors. Any marketer knows that in such an environment, one must be able to differentiate their product or service. No one has exclusivity on buzz words and hype. With full buzz-word compliance, vendors often use identical words, terms and concepts to describe their offerings (e.g., end-to-end, state-of-the-art, revolutionary, next-generation and one-stop-shop). White Papers should contain substantial detail, explanations, claims and counter-claims that are a vital part of any offering. This information is critical when trying to distill the unique selling points and goes a long way in streamlining your marketing efforts.

*In today's Twittering and elevator-pitch world, real product value and innovation vanish under the radar.*

## Content Reuse

The tendency today is for quick wins. All too often, companies start with a slide deck, followed by the web, brochures and eventually – if they get around to it – a White Paper. However, the order should be reversed. If the White Paper material is in place, it can be easily adapted to other forms of media. If you have labored over 2,500 words to describe your offering, you can quite easily cull a list of key benefits and features. The slide deck – which is such an important part of corporate communications – will benefit tremendously from a well thought-out and carefully prepared White Paper.

*White Papers are an excellent platform for all marketing channels and deliverables.*

## Customer Life-Cycle

White Papers are a key component in the customer engagement cycle and can be used to qualify or disqualify prospective clients, gauge customer interest and generate leads. A first meeting with a prospect serves to illicit interest and peak curiosity. In each successive encounter, the prospect will request additional information. As customers typically expect a White Paper to contain valuable information, they are willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement to gain access to material, or at the very least, they will supply valid and valuable contact information.

## Content Marketing

There is a strong feeling amongst marketers that over-exposure to adverts and banners have rendered customers immune to traditional marketing. The Content Marketing Institute (CMI) defines content marketing as an “approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.” The White Paper is probably

one of the most effective vehicles for communicating with your ecosystem without selling, and delivering valuable information that creates a more informed customer.

## The Devil is in the Detail

In a 90-second video or with 140 characters on Twitter, it is impossible to go into specifics. Yet, details do matter! These details make the difference and define the benefits. The functionality of the product, scope of the offering, interface, architecture, standards, compliance etc., all matter a great deal. A comprehensive White Paper is an excellent platform to expand, cultivate, and develop the details that are essential to the sale.

*The key benefits of the White Paper are the real Call-to-Action.*

## Thought Leadership

Creativity and innovation cannot be outsourced to a content farm. Customers and partners appreciate when someone in an organization sits down and puts into writing their vision for the future of a particular market, or their thoughts about a trend in the industry. These thoughts and ideas are often the basis for an extremely fruitful dialogue that generally benefits all concerned.

*Words motivate leadership and generate rich interaction.*

## A Platform to Help you Grow

Whether developed by R&D or operations, targeted at distributors or customers, or written for the purposes of differentiation or thought leadership, White Papers are a unique and low-cost platform to develop ideas and communicate them without interruption. It is clear that the market thirsts for this kind of thought leadership, which can be easily and instantly distributed to a massive audience thanks to today's technology. In a crowded and very noisy market, a carefully considered and well-formulated White Paper will help you rise above the

*White Papers – Clarity and comprehensiveness that empower leadership.*

noise and present your competitive advantage. The efforts expended in preparing a White Paper will be well-rewarded, as the content can be reused for movie scripts, brochures, the web and social media. This valuable document can be used as an operational tool in the customer life-cycle and will remain a cornerstone of the company's content marketing efforts.

## About Grow Corporation

Grow Corporation partners with its customer to develop strategies and marketing content across the entire value chain. From multi-nationals to start-ups, Grow Corporation initiates every customer engagement with a thorough analysis of their current environment. Our team of highly skilled and experienced marketing professionals will work in tandem with you to develop the high-level policies, messages, and objectives for long-term success, with the ultimate goal of building your brand, raising awareness and engaging with key audiences. See [grow-corp.com](http://grow-corp.com) for more information and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).