

WHY A WHITE PAPER? (Because They Work!)

A Special Report



Rick Telberg
Principal
13 Atilda Ave.--Suite 200
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 10522

(914) 674-4531
rtelberg@baystreetgroup.com

How much time can your sales reps spend to explain everything?

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

White papers are fast gaining ground as a dominant advertising vehicle on the internet.

Why? The answer is that white papers are simply one of the best, most natural uses of the internet to generate qualified leads.

Think about it: In advertising, television is great at setting a mood, a flavor, a style -- an *emotional* connection with a brand. Radio is great at telling *stories*. Readers of newspapers expect *news*; thus coupons and promotions are naturals.

With the internet, it's all about information. The brand with the best *educational* message wins.

CONSIDER THIS CHALLENGE:

If your bread-and-butter selling process is the kind with a committee, or a prospect that's not completely up to speed on your product category, then you need to reach them with information -- information that is: useful, practicable, and shareable.

How much time can your sales reps afford to explain everything? How much does that cost? If you're like most marketers, your budget is fairly lean and your sales reps' time is limited.

What do you?

If your white paper is good enough, it can go viral.

'Kid-tested, Mom-approved

Research shows that 69% of prospects who download and like your white paper PDF will actively pass it on to their colleagues. In fact, 36% of total downloads will be passed on to a direct supervisor.

In other words, if your white paper is good enough, it can go viral.

The more people it reaches, the more chances you have of closing the deal. In one 2004 study, 57% of information technology purchase decision-makers said a white paper influenced at least one buying decision in the past 12 months.

So smart marketers are dedicating at least a portion of their lead acquisition campaigns around offering the most enticing white papers possible.

HERE'S WHY...

AND HOW TO ASSURE SUCCESS:

“The fact is, most white papers suck. The topics are uninteresting, titles blah, and content far too salesy or just plain dull,” according to one major marketer.

Your white papers can't be average. Bay Street Group LLC can help you invent white papers that can get loads of downloads and go viral.

Instead of coming up with a title and slapping a paper together, we craft your white papers *several distinct steps*:

**Not rocket
science, just
good
marketing**

STEP #1. WE RESEARCH TOPICS.

We prefer to gather ideas from sales, business development, and customer service. We also review all the white papers and trade press on the topic as well. The goal is to find topics with "mass appeal" that haven't already been discussed to death elsewhere.

Then we call *key evangelists* on the customer-front and pitch the best ideas to them. An informal focus group is better than guessing in the dark. By working with your key customers and stakeholders, we are assured of producing a white paper that, as tagline for Kix cereal says, is "kid-tested and mom-approved."

STEP #2. WE WRITE AND REWRITE BASED ON CUSTOMER INPUT.

Generally your in-house experts can write the first draft. Then, at Bay Street Group, we bear in mind the tone and technical level of content already being written by trade press and competitors. With that insight and understanding, we edit the paper into *a distinctive and readable voice* representative of your company.

If, for instance, magazine-style articles dominate the related industry trade press, we can go in the other direction, sounding more businesslike.

In general, we try to keep the length between four to eight pages, which represents the attention span of a busy

The right strategy is like a good conversation.

executive. Whenever feasible, we would always want to float rough drafts past a few current customers to see if anything should be clarified or improved.

STEP #3. WE HANDCRAFT A CATCHY TITLE.

Just as a subject line can make or break an email campaign, cover titles profoundly affect white paper success.

This isn't rocket science, just good marketing. Think of the words that jump out at you... "secrets of," "insider's guide," "top 10," and, especially, "free."

Naturally, our very next step is to ask customers what they think of the suggested title. Often their suggestions make the difference between pretty good and really great.

STEP #4. WE WORK WITH YOU IN DESIGNING THE LEAD-GEN SYSTEM.

Next, at Bay Street we can also work with you launch to a marketing campaign aimed at garnering as many targeted downloads as possible.

For instance, we recommend:

1. The *lead gen download page* must be as streamlined as possible, asking for as little contact information as possible.
2. The *headline* on the landing page should refer as personally as possible to the prospect by addressing the prospect by his or her affiliation. For instance,

Bay Street Group LLC is a market research and consulting firm specializing in the tax, accounting and finance communities. Rick Telberg, principal, is a noted editor, publisher consultant and commentator in the field.

“Welcome WebCPA Visitors!” Or, “Welcome Accountants!”

3. There should be a *graphic* of the 'cover' of the paper on the page so people know they are at the right place for the information they want.

4. The summary description of the paper featured on the landing page should *eschew distracting sales copy* about your company. The focus must be 100% on how useful and informative the white paper is.

5. The copy should end with an explicit privacy statement to *reassure visitors* their contact info is safe.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT: FREQUENCY MATTERS.

Good white papers should have a long, but not infinite, shelf life. You should publish a new paper every three to four months. We suggest promoting the old papers until responses drop precipitously or until there is a high percentage of duplicate leads coming in from prospects that forgot they already downloaded that paper.

A winning white paper strategy creates a renewable resource, initiating an educational dialog - a conversation, if you will - with the marketplace that benefits both the buyer and the seller. Everyone wins.