

# 7 Tactics to Boosting White Paper Performance

## *The Many Benefits of the White Paper Launch Method*

You've likely read many white papers. You've probably used white papers to generate leads or position your company as a thought leader. You may have even written a few white papers yourself.

Marketers view white papers as a critical part of their marketing strategy. According to a recent survey by Eccolo Media, eighty-six percent of respondents found white papers moderately to highly influential in the purchasing decision.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, many white papers fail to perform up to expectations. Companies often don't promote white papers in ways that maximize their impact—treating them as little more than brochures or sales tools. This results in fewer or poor quality leads, little influence and difficulty showing leadership among competitors. In addition, many marketers have yet to take advantage of the natural synergy between white papers and social media.

How can marketers turbo-charge their white paper marketing performance? Is there an effective way to fully utilize the influential power of white papers across traditional marketing channels?

A new method of promoting white papers called the *White Paper Launch Method* is helping marketers achieve higher white paper performance. Designed to bring the best tactics of product launches and social media marketing to white paper marketing, this method enables businesses to elevate the performance of their white paper campaigns and realize the benefits seen only in expensive marketing campaigns. This white paper will explore the challenges successfully launching white papers and teach you the tactics of the White Paper Launch Method effective.

### **Challenges Delivering White Paper Performance**

Marketers face three primary challenges in making white papers deliver on performance expectations: most white papers are never promoted, white paper are often too self-serving and most white papers never leverage the benefits of social media.

#### Never Promoted

Marketers invest significant time and money to develop white papers. Interviews with customers, marketers and salespeople take time away from other projects. A well-written white paper can illustrate trends in the industry

*Many white papers are never promoted and never reach their full marketing potential*

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<sup>1</sup> Karpinski, R. (January 19, 2009). *BtoB Magazine*. Finding the best collateral mix.

or marketplace, common problems experienced by the reader, a solution to those problems and the business or technical benefits of adopting that solution. A well-written white paper provides *exactly* the type of content that is ideal to be promoted.

According to John Siefert, senior vice president of leading white paper syndicator TechWeb/United Business Media, “The messages in well-written white papers are very powerful. Companies that put some promotional muscle behind them can deliver enormous results.”

Unfortunately, many marketers limit white paper performance by treating them like brochures instead of products. Their distribution potential is never realized and they are rendered invisible to all but the authors, the sales team and an already captive group of customers. Moreover, many marketers do not harness the educational power of white papers to take advantage of the marketing opportunities they provide, including:

- Leads generated through content syndication, speaking engagements and search engines
- Reach delivered through byline articles, news releases and social media
- Influence, endorsement and press coverage by speaking with media and industry analysts

Fortunately, new methods of promoting white papers enable them to achieve the same promotional reach as successful product launches.

#### Too Much Product or Vendor Bias

*Readers frequently disregard white papers that are too self-serving or biased*

White papers can be very effective at generating leads, creating thought leadership or influencing the purchase of products. For many readers, the first thing they do after reading a white paper is visit a search engine to collect more information.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, many white papers are too biased toward the vendor to be effective. With white papers being so common today, white paper readers are keenly aware of the difference between being educated and being sold. In fact, the two biggest turn-offs for white paper readers are the number of pages and papers that are too product-focused.<sup>3</sup> White paper writers must stay disciplined to ensure white papers do not alienate their readers.

Fortunately, new white paper promotion methods help white paper writers limit vendor bias and better influence their readers.

#### No Social Media Benefits

*Marketers miss many opportunities by not integrating social media with white paper launches*

Social media has quickly become one of the most efficient ways to share good content with colleagues. Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn have become especially useful tools in distributing educational content to a broad audience of trusted peers. In fact, more consumers trust

<sup>2</sup> (February 2009). *TechWeb/United Business Media*. How to maximize the use of white papers in your B2B marketing and sales process.

<sup>3</sup> Barsam, M. (2008). *TechTarget*. TechTarget 2008 Media Consumption Benchmark Report.

people they know (90%) than they do company websites (70%), according to a Nielsen study.<sup>4</sup>

White papers fit perfectly with the viral nature of social media. According to a recent Eccolo Media study of buyers, white papers are the most frequently shared marketing vehicle (89%) with nearly one in three respondents sharing them with at least three of their peers.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, marketers don't frequently leverage the simplicity and cost-effectiveness of social media marketing when releasing white papers. This limits distribution potential and loses the subtle endorsement of readers recommending the paper to their friends and colleagues. Fortunately, new white paper marketing methods enable marketers to take advantage of the reach and cost-efficiencies of social media marketing.

### **The Solution: The White Paper Product Launch Method**

*White paper product launches deliver the impact of a product launch with the investment of a white paper*

Designed to help marketers improve the performance of white papers, the White Paper Launch Method is transforming white paper marketing campaigns by increasing leads and lead quality, extending reach and growing market influence. The method combines the best attributes of product marketing, PR, social media and analyst relations into a powerful white paper marketing plan that leverages online and offline marketing channels.

Product launch messages utilize the same key components as white papers—problems, solutions, benefits and recommendations. However, product launches push these messages across many media channels—print, direct mail, news wires, social media and more. This provides the reach, interest and influence that make product launches successful.

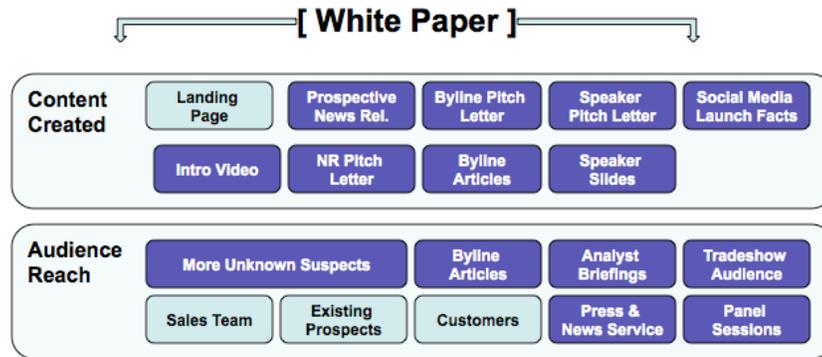
White paper product launches treat white papers like products. Like a traditional product launch, a white paper product launch repackages the white paper's core arguments into several media-friendly formats. This customized content is quickly disseminated across multiple sales and communication channels (Figure 1), including:

- Internal customers and prospects
- News wire services
- Search engines
- Traditional print publications
- Social media outlets
- Members of the press and analyst community

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<sup>4</sup> (2009). *Nielsen*. Nielsen Online Global Consumer Survey.

<sup>5</sup> (September 2009). *Eccolo Media*. Eccolo Media 2009 B2B Technology Collateral Survey Report.



**Figure 1:** The White Paper Launch Method repurposes content from a single white paper into purpose-written content designed to maximize the benefit of each marketing channel.

### Benefits of a White Paper Product Launch

*White paper product launches increasing marketing ROI by leveraging many low-cost marketing channels*

White paper product launches offer several important benefits, including:

- **Increases the ROI** of white paper marketing campaigns by increasing reach through low-cost or no-cost marketing channels
- **Increases conversion rates** of white paper landing pages by combining social proof, video and enticing copy
- **Obtains free print media exposure** by taking advantage of byline article opportunities only available to those companies with unbiased and educational content
- **Extends reach and awareness** by distributing white papers across news wires and online news sites
- **Creates public speaking opportunities** by offering educational topics easily delivered in keynotes or speaking panels
- **Enhances brand positioning** across multiple marketing channels and audiences not easily reached through traditional white paper marketing
- **Fuels word-of-mouth marketing** by delivering educational information to social media networks like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn
- **Strengthens relationships with industry analysts and editors** by educating them about new solutions to pressing market problems
- **Strengthens SEO positioning** by increasing the number of links and traffic to your website – a driver of rankings on many search engines
- **Improves the reputation and visibility of company executives** by consistently positioning them across more media outlets and public relations opportunities

## The Seven Tactics of the White Paper Launch Method

*The White Paper Launch Method is executed with a 7-step marketing plan*

Effective execution of the White Paper Launch Method incorporates the best practices of several different disciplines. Educational white papers are the cornerstone of a successful white paper product launch. White paper writers must resist the temptation and pressure to include too much information about their company or product. Your white paper will likely discuss trends, problems, a generic solution, benefits and a little about your product, solution or company.

With your white paper in hand, follow these steps:

### 1. Build a landing page with video

A search-friendly landing page is critical for lead-generation and maximizing reach. Your landing page is your first (and maybe only) impression. Cut and paste your white paper's first page into your landing page; it should entice the reader to turn the page (or download the paper) anyway.

The call to action and download form should be positioned below the fold to ensure the reader has obtained some value before being asked to provide their contact information. With few exceptions, white papers should require the reader to provide their contact information in order to download the paper.

Use video to increase conversion rates. A quick summary of the paper using screen-casting software like Camtasia (PC) or ScreenFlow (Mac) can share benefits of the paper without diminishing the value of downloading it. Keep the video player size small. You want the video to compliment – not dominate – the landing page.

### 2. Put a perspective news release on the wire

Perspective news releases make an argument and are educational in nature—making them a perfect extension to white papers. Public relations professionals use perspective news releases to broadly distribute opinions as opposed to hard news announcements. Perspective news releases are automatically picked up by many news sites and wire syndication websites like Google, Reuters and Yahoo! News—exposing the core messages of your white paper to hundreds or thousands of web sites.

Wire services like PRWeb offer very affordable packages for distributing and tracking the impact of your perspective news release. PRWeb provides a *social media package* that enables marketers to post complimentary content like PDFs, audio or video—providing more content to be downloaded and distributed by potential readers.

### 3. Send out media pitch letters

Writer, editors and analysts are bombarded with new products, partnerships and other story ideas. A strong pitch letter is required to get your story in front the media.

Pitch letters are typically only 2-3 paragraphs in length. Their goal is

to provide an intriguing summary of the story (your white paper) and offer an expert who can speak to it in detail. Create separate pitch letters for editors, reporters and analysts. Editors and reporters want to know how the story fits the news cycle. Analysts want to understand how your story fits the market.

#### **4. Distribute a byline article proposal**

Traditional print and online publications like trade journals, magazines and newspapers constantly seek educational articles from third parties. Called “byline articles,” these 1,000 – 1,500 word articles are used by editors to augment existing editorial and staff content. With just a bit of editing, your white paper can be transformed into a compelling byline article and provide free access to a broad base of readers. Byline articles are a perfect extension of white papers and a great way to promote the thought-leadership of an executive or your organization.

#### **5. Pursue speaking opportunities**

Tradeshows and other events attract attendees because they provide educational sessions and learning opportunities. The more learning opportunities present at the event, the better the attendance and revenues generated for the event planner. When you obtain a speaking opportunity, you leverage the marketing buzz generated for the event. You align yourself with the largest brands at the event and further position your executives as thought leaders in your market.

Speaking opportunities are limited and coveted. Present the event planner with a pitch letter and copy of the white paper. The pitch letter should emphasize the educational value of your presentation and how it differs from other speaker topics and thinking in the market. If speaking slots are taken, encourage the vendor to create one for you—even if it is at an odd time during the convention.

#### **6. Syndicate your white paper**

White paper syndication is the fastest way to generate leads and momentum for your sales team. Magazines and magazines conglomerates are required to audit their readership. This ensures advertisers clearly understand the reach of their investment. As a result, these companies have large lists of readers they can market to.

White paper syndication allows companies to market white papers to the readers of the magazines. With white paper syndication, you are buying a fixed number of leads over a period of time. Leads that are filtered by title or company size cost more. Make sure you clearly articulate the ideal reader in your white paper summary. This will help keep readers who are not qualified from counting toward your lead guarantee.

#### **7. Optimize for social media**

Social media networks encourage content sharing—especially when the content is educational. By including retweet and sharing buttons in your white papers, you enable readers to quickly share content across their own social networks. The better the content, the more

likely your white paper will get broad distribution on social networks.

Leverage social media to promote your white paper. Use services like Social Oomph and Ping.fm to schedule status updates about your white paper. By including interesting facts from your white paper, you'll increase your reach and increase the visitors to your landing page.

One of the most successful examples of this technique was created by Michael Stelzner. In his *Social Media Marketing Industry Survey*, Michael included a Twitter icon on several pages throughout the report, encouraging readers to retweet the report. The retweet provided a link to the report along with a positive comment about the paper. Michael's report was downloaded over 40,000 times.<sup>6</sup>

### Who Should Write the White Paper

*Outside white paper writers deliver high-quality papers with little distraction*

Many companies are faced with the decision of whether to use a third-party writer to write the paper. While the inclination is to use internal resources, outsourcing to a white papers specialist makes sense for a number of reasons:

- **Time-to-market:** White paper writers are solely focused on completing the interviews, research and drafts of the white paper. In just a few weeks, a white paper writer can deliver a professionally-written paper with minimal internal distractions.
- **Expertise:** A skilled white paper writer specializes in translating complex concepts into persuasive, easy-to-understand arguments. With correctly written white papers being such powerful marketing tools, it makes sense to utilize experts just like you would for other critical projects.
- **Cost:** Companies must ask themselves "what is the opportunity cost of allocating internal resources to the writing of white papers?" More than likely, it is not cost-effective to distract internal resources or remove them from other pressing priorities.
- **Objectivity:** An outside write is skilled at interviewing and will likely bring to the surface several arguments that may not have been exposed. An outside perspective brings out the best from a company's subject-matter experts.

### Things to Consider When Executing the White Paper Launch Method

*When executing a white paper product launch, seek a consultant with a strong marketing background and excellent writing skills*

White paper product launches require a unique set of skills not found in traditional copywriters or white paper writers. When seeking outside assistance with white paper product launches, consider the following important requirements:

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<sup>6</sup> Stelzner, M. (March 2009). Social media marketing industry report.

- **Strong marketing background:** Seek a provider who has strong experience in inbound/outbound marketing, public relations and lead generation.
- **Strong interviewing skills:** Choose a writer who demonstrates strong interviewing skills as evident by the questions asked of you while discussing your project.
- **Skilled at writing white papers:** Ensure the individual writing your white paper is skilled at writing educational white papers and is recognized for their expertise.
- **Social media presence:** Make sure you seek a consultant who has blog experience and a social media presence on leading social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.
- **Experience with media and industry analysts:** Ensure your provider has experience writing for and communicating with trade media and industry analysts.
- **Published byline articles:** Seek a provider who has published byline articles in leading publications. This ensures the consultant understands how to effectively repackage white papers as byline articles.
- **Technical aptitude:** Select a provider who is comfortable with translating technical concepts into simple written arguments.

### The SmartBug Advantage

*SmartBug Media consists of veteran marketers who have delivered results to many leading brands*

SmartBug Media is a publisher and marketing consulting company. We help companies achieve better marketing results by combining traditional marketing with informational products, content marketing, social media and white papers. SmartBug Media was named in the top 1% of inbound marketers and boasting the highest ROI of any inbound marketing agency on the Hubspot website.

Our team consists exclusively of senior marketers who have owned P&L responsibility, managed budgets, launch hundreds of products and generated hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for their companies. SmartBug Media is proud to have delivered results for many small business and leading brands such as Acxiom Corporation, Atria Senior Living, Brookdale Senior Living, HireRight, FiberLight, INC Research, Liberty Mutual, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney and Valpak.

Start launching white papers like products and get the results you expect from your white paper marketing investment. Let SmartBug Media be your guide.

**For a free assessment of how the White Paper Launch Method can increase your white paper marketing performance, visit [www.smartbugmedia.com](http://www.smartbugmedia.com) or call +1-949-209-9442.**