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How To Use White Papers To Promote & Sell Your Industrial Products On & Off The Internet

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Summary:
Increase sales and improve marketing ROI by writing and distributing white papers to promote your products and corporate capabilities

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Article Body:
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For quite some time now White Papers have been sort of the in-thing in the world of industrial and technical marketing - and for good reason. Thousands of businesses use them around the world to educate their customers and prospects about their products. Which is why businesses in just about every industry can get great results with a properly written white paper.

Think about it. What other promotional item or marketing tool cost so little? For just pennies each, you can produce simple documents right from your computer - instantly. Documents that can increase your sales and revenues in a matter of days. That's the power of a white paper.

Client-Centered White Papers

Generally speaking, white papers are suppose to be technical documents, at least originally. But today, smart marketers utilize them as an effective 'medium' to promote their products by integrating the 'technical' aspect of what they're selling with a client-centered approach.

The key of writing an effective white paper is focusing on how the content benefits your customer. In other words, it must provide information your customer or prospect can actually put to use, preferably right away. For example:

·   Technical information the prospect can put into action and benefit from;
·   Information that makes the prospect understand the value of your products and reliability of your company;
·   Information that gets the prospect to pick up the phone and call to request a quote - or at least to learn more about the advantages of doing business with you.

Writing Effective White Papers

Anybody that is skilled in a certain industry can write a white paper. Sure, you can hire someone to write the white paper for you. But in most cases, you are much better off writing the it yourself. That's because you probably know more about the benefits and features of your products than most people. So obviously you can provide much more valuable information.

If you're not much of the writing type, you can always hire a copywriter or editor to go over your drafted work. What's most important is providing him or her with the information that you know would benefit potential buyers of your products.

Your existing customers can also be an excellent source to gather a lot of information that you can use in your white paper. Ask them what they liked most about your products? What improvements would they like to see, if any? How do they compare your products to similar goods in your industry? Answers to questions like these will provide you with some valuable information for your white paper.

What Does A White Paper Look Like?

A white paper does not have to be colorful and fancy. It can be a simple, black-and-white, single page document that's printed right from your laser printer. That way you can make instant changes as needed. There is no need to produce white papers in multiple colors or high gloss paper. Remember, the key is the information your white paper delivers because it does nothing for you to have an expensive looking white paper if it doesn't generate business.

I'm not suggesting your white paper should be cheap looking. By all means, you want it to be produced on nice white paper, typeset correctly and printed with laser sharpness. A good example would be a government or legal letter. Ever noticed how such documents are always in the standard black on white design, free of graphics, and has that traditional look of coming from a typewriter. Lawyers and officials want their documents to show the importance of the

content, not its design, so they always use the standard format to ensure the reader takes notice right away. The same approach works very well with white papers.

You can also Google or Yahoo the term 'White Papers' to find all kinds of samples. Or better yet, why not look for white papers your competitors are using. With a little searching you'll find a number of white papers you can use as examples to design your own template. But again, make sure to keep it simple, you'll be glad you did when you want to edit the paper's content.

Distributing Your White Paper

Getting your White Paper into the hands of your prospects is the easy part. You can offer the papers on your website, or via fax-on-demand, autoresponder, or even through traditional direct mail. You can also bring your white papers to trade shows and pass them out as a brochure. I even know of several companies that offer free copies of their white paper through pay-per-click advertising. They found it a very effective means of generating sales leads.

When you write a really good white paper, you'll notice the distribution will spread on its own. That's because people who receive your white paper will often pass them out to their friends and colleagues they feel will benefit from the information. This chain effect can result in significant business opportunities that no other marketing document can even come close of doing. Brochures and catalogs unquestionably lack the informational value of a client-centered white paper so they rarely get passed around as often, if at all.

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