

White Papers 101

A high-quality white paper, used effectively, delivers one of the highest ROIs of any marketing tool.

- **White papers are not brochures.** Think of a white paper as a well-researched, persuasive article. A good white paper provides genuinely helpful information. It identifies a common problem or pain point, then supports a recommended solution with data, research, and experience. Your brand is strengthened by showing expertise and thought leadership, not by touting a particular product. Thinly-veiled sales pitches don't work and limit the opportunities to use tools like this effectively.
- **White papers are excellent lead-generation tools.** Anyone looking for in-depth information on your topic is likely already somewhere in the decision-making process for a purchase. Readers want content that will help them better understand a technology or resolve an issue, and are usually willing to exchange their contact information for access. A new white paper is also a good reason to reach out to existing customers and prospects.
- **White papers boost SEO.** It's a fact – quality long-form content enhances search engine rankings, attracts backlinks and social shares, and increases the amount of time visitors spend on your website. Trade media are often looking to augment their resource libraries as well, adding another source of backlinks and publicity.
- **White papers need a distribution strategy.** A great white paper has a long shelf life. It can help meet content needs across multiple channels:
 - Excerpted or abridged as an article in the trade press
 - Serialized for blog posts and social media
 - Distributed at trade shows
 - Used as the basis for a webinar, video, or podcast episode
- **White papers are an investment.** Depending on your business size, a white paper may require external resources for research, writing, or graphic design. Professional photography and graphics are a must, so most companies license stock photos. The largest cost, however, is for promotion. This typically involves working with a media outlet to promote through advertising, e-newsletters, and/or purchasing lists.

Longren & Parks has extensive experience in the development and promotion of white papers for lead generation and public relations purposes.

If you'd like to learn more about white papers or other marketing initiatives for your business, please call Steve Longren at 612.961.4559 or email steve@longrenparks.com.

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