

# WHITE PAPERS

White Papers are very useful tools that provide an authoritative report on any given issue. They are often distributed by corporations, businesses, governments, and other bodies of people who want to advance their view on any given issue.

White papers vary widely depending on the industry or purpose. Nevertheless, there are key principles that you can utilize any time that you have to craft a white paper.

## WHY WRITE A WHITE PAPER?

1. **Build brand awareness and generate credibility** as a source in your industry.
2. **Convince an audience** that your position or product is worth their time.
3. **Influence the decision-making** of current and prospective customers.
4. **Showcase your expertise** in a specific area.

## STEPS TO CREATING A WHITE PAPER

- Conceptualize your audience. Consider who you will be writing for and aiming to persuade.
- If the audience roughly matches your own knowledge of the subject, you can safely include some jargon in the white paper. If not, then simplify your language so that a general audience can profit from it.
- Plan to strike the right balance in length.
- Begin with a cover page that informs the audience of the paper's principal purpose. Make sure that you choose an accurate title that represents your mission.

## THE INTRODUCTION

- Your introduction will need to captivate readers and get them interested in the topic that you will explore.
- Use the introduction to give readers an early impression about what the paper will accomplish. Introduce the key issues that the white paper will seek to grapple with.
- Make sure that all of the key topics of the paper are mentioned here so that the organization of your paper follows naturally from the introduction.
- Briefly explore competing ideas and explain why they are deficient to persuade the reader that you are offering a new and valuable approach to an old problem.
- At the end of the introduction, you should make it clear what you are proposing to offer consumers or readers.
  - If you are writing a white paper for a business, answer the question: why should the consumer buy your product?

- If you are writing a white paper to advance a certain position, answer the question: why is your topic important?

## THE SUMMARY

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- Detail your solution to the problem and show its advantages over other solutions.
- Specify the methodology that you will pursue in the rest of the White Paper to convince the reader that your analysis of the problem is accurate and that your solution is justified.
- Emphasize the way that your proposals will address the problem in question.
- Provide the background and history of the problem. This can persuade the reader that there is actually a problem by showing how the issue arose in the first place.

## THE PROBLEM

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- What challenges face readers that need to be addressed? Prove that this problem impacts their lives and that it needs to be resolved.
- Avoid building a case for the problem through abstract assertions. Use facts, statistics, figures, dates, and names whenever you can to build your credibility as an author.
- Be as thorough as possible in your presentation of the problem. You don't want to give readers cause to think that you have gaps in your research or else your credibility will be hindered.

## THE SOLUTION

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- At this point, you will have provided a thorough analysis of the problem. Now your task is to show that you have concrete, workable solutions and that the reader should utilize them.
- Take the reader step-by-step through the things that should be done to solve the problem.
- As with the problem section, data, facts and figures will be important ways to persuade the reader that your solution is viable.

## THE CONCLUSION

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- In the conclusion, you will want to provide a recap of the problem you have identified and the way that your solution resolves it.
- If people take heed of your advice, what results should they expect to see?
  - For example, if you are writing a white paper for a corporation and are trying to entice consumers to buy your product, you will want to show them the tangible ways that their lives will be improved if they purchase your product.
- At the end of the White Paper, you want people to know that you are trying to improve their lives in an important way.

**PRACTICE NOW**