Crypterium

White Paper Template

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to assist you with the creation of an effective White Paper. Focus on what is critical for your business, and modify this template as necessary.

Scope

Before you start, consider the purpose of your White Paper. Will this be used for internal knowledge management, external product/service marketing, or both? Can you repurpose this white paper and turn it into other pieces of content?

Use this template to document your ideas and give it to a good graphic designer so that they can put the finishing touches on it. When it comes to white papers, be sure to use a consistent structure and layout in order to make them easy to read and write.

Best Practices

- **Use industry reference data**. Find statistics, quotes and other reference material you can cite in your paper. It enhances your credibility and supports the perception that the paper is unbiased.

- **Use lots of graphics**. Great white papers are almost works of art. Invest in having a graphic designer collaborate on the design, layout and supporting graphics. It will improve the readability.

- **Use an outside reviewer**. Get someone who is an industry expert but does not work for you to review the paper. The last thing you want to happen is to invest in a white paper and publish it only to have prominent industry experts bash it. Ideally, you want the opposite to happen.

- **Think about your distribution strategy.** Once your white paper is complete, what will you do with it? Create a plan to promote it.

- **Edit ruthlessly.** Once you've completed the first draft of your white paper, put it through several editing cycles. Recruit two kinds of proofreaders: those with subject matter expertise, and those with grammatical expertise. The goal of your editing is to ensure accuracy and readability. During this process, you'll discover things that you left out and should add, things that you put in but should delete, and things that are incorrect. In addition, a grammar expert will help you with style and language that makes your paper easier to read.

- **Length**. What's the right length for a white paper? Most white papers are between three and 20 pages in length. There is a view that maintains a white paper is a long document, and that a longer paper is better than a short one. This simply isn't true. The best white papers are the ones that communicate well and keep the reader's attention. Strive for clarity and don't worry about length.

- **Writing style.** Use the Active voice when writing a white paper because it is the most easily read and understood writing style. Avoid the Passive voice. Examples of each follow:

  - Passive voice (bad): "Companies that needed a solution found this one to be appropriate."
  - Active voice (good): "Companies in need are finding this solution appropriate."

Most of the time, the phrases "to be", "can be", "must be", "should be" and "will be" indicate use of the Passive voice.

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Title Page

1) Executive Summary

This should be a brilliant recap of the paper in a few short paragraphs.

This is usually written last.

2) The Problem

This section can also be positioned as "The Opportunity" instead of "The Problem". An important part of this section is to ensure that everyone has the same operational definition and understanding of the scope of the problem/opportunity.

It should help to answer the following questions:

- What is the issue that demands resolution?
- Why does it exist, how is it getting worse?
- Who is affected by it?
- What will happen if a solution isn't found?

3) The History

During this section, you tap into a type of nostalgia, getting people to associate and attach to what you're saying by recounting familiar scenes from the history of the issue. This is the section where you really gain credibility and get buy-in, because the reader is thinking "this author really understands what has happened in this market space".

It should help to answer the following questions:

- How did we get here?
- What are the milestones, events and developments that took us to this place?

4) The Solution

In this section, you create the vision, not sell the product. It is fine to make references to solutions in a generic way, but you don't usually want to start giving product specifics as you'll turn the readers off. So you talk about solutions in a general way.

The key here is to talk about what a solution does for the user, not about specific features and functions. When writing this section of a white paper, it is really helpful to have the Positioning Statement for the specific solution your white paper supports.

This section is often the longest part of a white paper, because you potentially want to cover best practices and implementation considerations, not just reference a generic solution.

5) The Benefits

This section should do more than just discuss the benefits; it provides the business case or at least the basis for it. This is where you set the virtual hook. What you want a reader to do after consuming your white paper is to feel compelled to go find a solution that does what the paper describes.

It should help to answer the following questions:

- What will the reader get if they adopt the recommendations you suggest?
- What specific benefits are available, and to what degree?
- Where should they go look?
- What considerations exist for selecting a vendor? (These last two questions might be better addressed in the previous section, but they should be covered somewhere).

6) The Call-To-Action

This is where the call to action should go.

It should help to answer the following questions:

- What do you want the reader to do?
- What is the last thing you want the reader to recall from all the things stated in this paper? Whatever that is, put it here.

7) About "Company"

This is where you make the connection between the concepts presented in the white paper and the company that can deliver them. It is probably the shortest section of the entire paper, but it does directly state that "Company" makes "Product" that essentially does what the paper describes.

About Macon Raine:

Macon Raine is a B2B marketing automation, strategy, communications and digital support agency that delivers the expert, fractional skill-sets you need to achieve your marketing goals.

- PPC/Retargeting
- Native advertising
- SEM/SEO
- Marketing automation
- CRM

- Content development
- Content promotion
- Lead generation
- Social media
- White papers

- Wordpress
- Strategy
- Sales enablement
- Application development
- UI/UX and prototypes
- Prototypes