

White Paper/Short Paper

General Tips & Guidelines

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WHITE PAPER / SHORT PAPER

The Vision Catalyst has been published with vision: To provide an intellectual platform for expressing and sharing of knowledge capital in field of Management, IT & Communication and to act as a catalyst to vision by adding new dimensions for achieving academic & business excellence.

Since its founding, Vision Catalyst has made a proud tradition in the world of Management, IT & Communication by publishing cutting-edge, authoritative thinking on the key issues facing executives and academicians. Vision Catalyst articles cover a wide range of topics that are relevant to different industries, management functions, and geographic locations. While the topics may vary, all articles share certain characteristics. They are written for managers by experts whose authority comes from careful analysis, study, and experience. The ideas presented in these articles can be translated into action and have been tested in the real world of business.

"Inform and educate which in turn, leads the reader to your product."

What is a White Paper?

The term *white paper* is an offshoot of the term *white book*, which

is an official publication of a national government. A famous white paper example is the *Winston Churchill White Paper of 1922*, which addressed political conflict in Palestine.

A white paper typically argues a specific position or solution to a problem. Although white papers take their roots in governmental policy, they have become a common tool used to introduce technology innovations and products. A typical search engine query on "white paper" will return millions of results, with many focused on technology-related issues.

White papers are powerful marketing tools used to help key decision-makers and influencers justify implementing solutions.

Points to ponder, when submitting a White Paper:

1. White Paper should cover some challenge or opportunity (not news).
2. The primary focus of the White Paper needs to be unbiased.
3. The White Paper can highlight the benefits of a technology or service.
4. Articles should not point out limitations of competing products or services.

5. We do not accept white papers that are previously published by other magazines.
6. Changes are likely to be suggested by us to remove bias and to add interesting industry facts.
7. If we make changes, we will submit the proposed version for approval prior to publishing.
8. Diagrams and photos should be at least 300 dpi.
9. Product photos should not be included unless they explain the article.
10. White Papers typically include the authors photograph, bio and a one line company description
11. Preferred Length of White Papers is 1-15 pages.

Know Your Audience:

Perhaps the biggest mistake white paper writers make involves not properly understanding the disposition of their readers. Instant affinity is key. A white paper must quickly identify problems or concerns faced by its readers and lead them down the path to a solution provided by your product or service. Different types of readers look at the same problems from different perspectives. For example, an engineer might care about technical nuances, whereas a CIO is more interested in business benefits. In the case of high-level executives or managers, their busy lifestyle means they have extremely short attention spans, an important consideration when writing to this type of audience. If you do not grab the reader's attention in the first paragraph, you will never achieve your objectives.

Decide on an Approach:

There are really only two ways to write white papers: (1) by focusing on your self-interests or (2) by concentrating on the interests of your readers. The self-interest or "chest-beating" approach focuses exclusively on a product, service or solution by expounding on its benefits, features and implications. While effective in some circumstances, this approach is best left for something other than a white paper, such as a data sheet or product brief.

The self-serving approach is often focused on the mistaken belief that people like to read boring details about why your product is the best thing since the invention of the Internet. This method is an ineffective approach to writing that turns most readers off immediately. If you

want your customers to actually read the paper, you should try to gain affinity with them right away. It should be noted that it is perfectly appropriate to touch on product features and benefits if they are carefully crafted into the white paper.

The alternative approach, and the one I strongly recommend, is to focus on the needs of your readers. This can be effectively accomplished by leading with the problems your solution overcomes, rather than the actual solution itself. To many people, this seems counterintuitive, but it really is just the opposite. By focusing on the pain points experienced by the reader and talking about the problems caused by those pains, you are establishing credibility with the reader and simultaneously filtering out unqualified customers.

Consider the two examples in the sidebars. Example A does mention the problem, but it is tainted by self-serving mentions of the company and the product. Contrast that with Example B, which focuses exclusively on the problem and hints at the solution in a broad sense. Readers will feel more inclined to read Example B because it seems more educational to them. They have the chance to learn about a new technology that could solve their problem. With Example A, they learn more about the company and the product and less about the solution. Readers of Example A may never get to the point where they understand what the solution is. By describing problems, you are really developing an important affinity with the reader.

You can take it a step further by looking at issues such as historical precedents, describing new classes of solutions that address the problems and even identifying what to look for in a solution, while never once mentioning your product name or company (at least not yet). This altruistic approach will score major points with the reader and greatly increase the likelihood he or she will actually read the entire paper.

Guidelines for Writing an Effective Short Paper

Communicating your research clearly and effectively is a skill that you will draw on throughout your research career. You are expected to submit a well polished and professional final version of your paper which will be circulated to referees

Referees will provide you with general feedback on the effectiveness with which you have communicated your research and we encourage you to consider the following aspects in terms of your writing and presentation.

Statement of Research Question	Is your research question or research problem clearly stated at the outset of the paper?
Well Structured Argument	Have you presented your argument in a clear and logical manner? Are key elements of your central argument well organised?
Clear Conclusion	Is the conclusion clearly linked to the research question?
Relevance to Conference Theme or Sub Themes	Is there a clear link to the main conference theme of sustainability of cities or other relevant sub themes?
Ability to Communicate to a Wide Range of Audiences	Have you used any acronyms, abbreviations or jargon that may be specific to your own discipline or not widely understood outside your area of expertise?
Style	Is the language clear and concise? Are there any grammatical errors or other areas of concern which should be addressed prior to publication? Are sources well integrated and used appropriately?

A word on attributions:

Vision Catalyst has its roots in the world of academic journals, where detailed citations are de rigeur. Articles should be similarly punctilious about giving credit to all direct quotations, paraphrased statements, and borrowed ideas. To improve the flow of the prose, we prefer to incorporate attributions into the text whenever we can. In the meantime, please be sure we understand exactly which ideas, and what language, are yours and which ones are drawn from someone

else. We would rather see source notes than not, for example. Then, if your submission is accepted for publication, we will work with you to determine which sources need to be cited and in what way.

In addition, you need to tell us about any financial relationship you may have with companies cited in the proposed article. We need to know if you have a consulting relationship, for example, or if you serve on a board of directors.

Nearly all articles undergo extensive editing and rewriting, and TBS Press will hold copyright on the finished product. Authors continue to own the underlying ideas in the article.

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We deeply appreciate the time and energy required to prepare a proposal for our publication, and we are grateful to you for that investment. We are always looking for new sources of solid, useful ideas that can improve the practice of management.

Because of the volume of submissions we receive, we are not able to respond substantively to every one, but we do read them all closely, and we will do our best to respond fast. We thank you again for your interest.

**Vision Catalyst
Editorial Team**



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