

Survey Reveals Missed Sales Opportunities Through White Paper Distribution



Introduction

Developing reliable and measurable marketing material is challenging for most marketing managers. Using a multi-channel approach to deliver the brand message to the right audience at the right time is key to success.

This paper focuses on one element of the marketing plan: content marketing. As a B2B marketer, you have to make difficult decisions about where to invest your time and resources to achieve your objectives. It is a tough balancing act. Figuring out what type of content to produce, how to distribute the content, how often and in what format is not an easy task. That's why it is so critical for you to have a high level understanding into the kind of materials your target audience wants to receive, how often they want to receive them and just how much content they are willing to read.

In order to provide you with the information you need to develop a reliable and effective marketing strategy, Blue Valley Telemarketing recently conducted a couple of surveys

talking to IT and marketing professionals. At first we set to identify preferred formats, delivery methods, presentation style and more. When we identified white papers as the leading and most desirable format, we set-up another survey to better understand what specifically people are expecting from a white paper.

White papers represent an important component of content marketing. When well executed, they establish your organization as a trusted resource for technical information related to your product or industry. This is why it is important that white papers be crafted with your target audience's preferences in mind.

Using the findings from the Blue Valley Telemarketing survey, you will gain key data that tells you more about how your target audience likes to learn about new solutions designed to answer their business challenges.



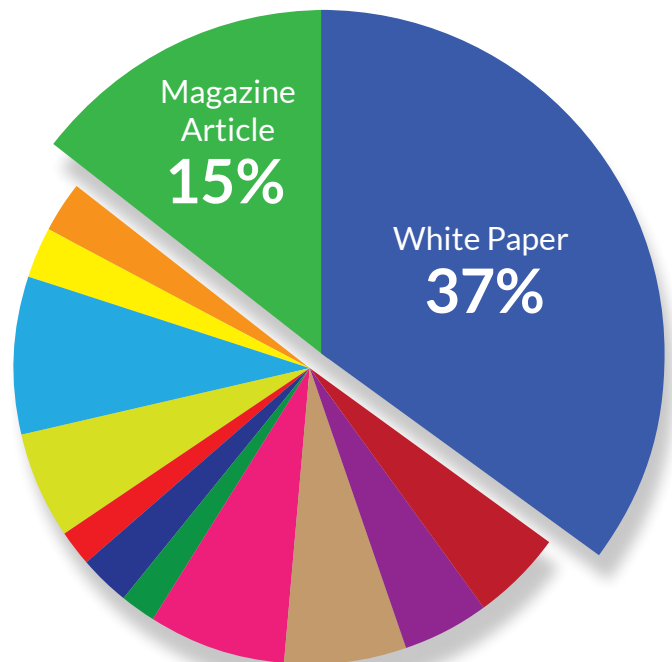
Key Findings Identify Future Opportunities for White Papers

According to Blue Valley Telemarketing's survey, white papers remain the most desirable source of information in B2B marketing channels. Over thirty five percent (35.61%) of respondents indicated that white papers are their preferred content format. The only other content format that is close in popularity to the white paper is the receipt of magazines at a little over fifteen percent (15.15%). After magazines, the next preferred format for content were Video presentations (9.09%) Webinars (7.58%) reports, analysis and original data and product reviews at a little over 6%.



What is your preferred content format (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)?

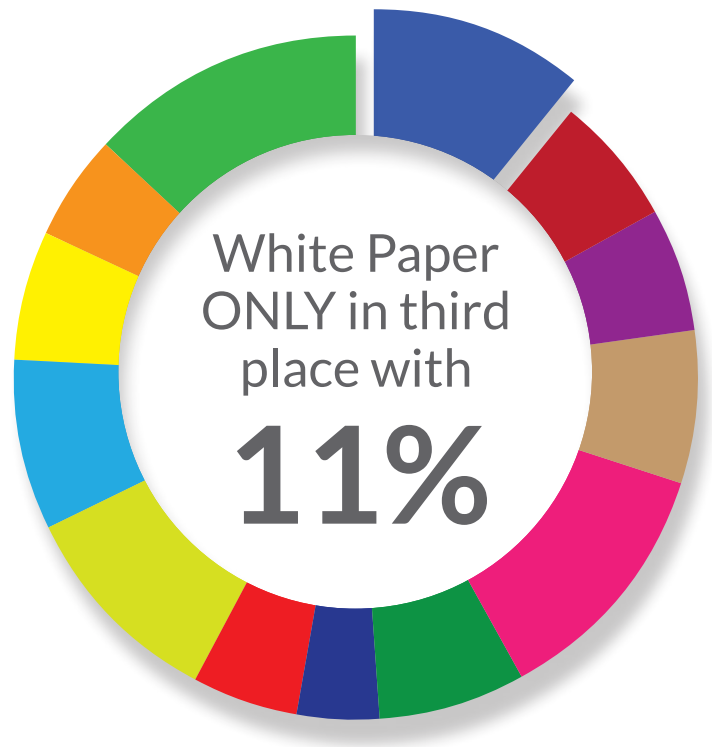
1. White Paper	37%
2. Case Study	4%
3. E-book	4%
4. Report, analysis, or Research and original data	7%
5. Webinar	7%
6. Seminars	2%
7. Infographics	3%
8. Opinion post (a.k.a. "Rant")	2%
9. Product reviews	6%
10. Video presentation	9%
11. Audio presentation (Podcast)	2%
12. Blog	2%
13. Magazine article	15%



The survey results indicate an important sales opportunity with target audience decision-makers. There is a disparity between decision-makers' content format preferences and the formats currently in distribution. Despite preferring white papers, as discussed in the paragraph above, respondents reported that white papers are not the content format they most often receive. Respondents said they receive most information via magazines (12.57%), Webinars 11.95% and in third place white papers 10.86%

These findings suggest that there are strategic opportunities for giving your target audience information they want and need through their preferred content format, the white paper.

What type of content have you received over the past 12 months?	
White Paper	11%
Case Study	6%
E-book	6%
Report, analysis, or Research and original data	7%
Webinar	12%
Seminars	7%
Infographics	4%
Opinion post (a.k.a. "Rant")	5%
Product reviews	10%
Video presentation	8%
Audio presentation (Podcast)	6%
Blog	5%
Magazine article	13%



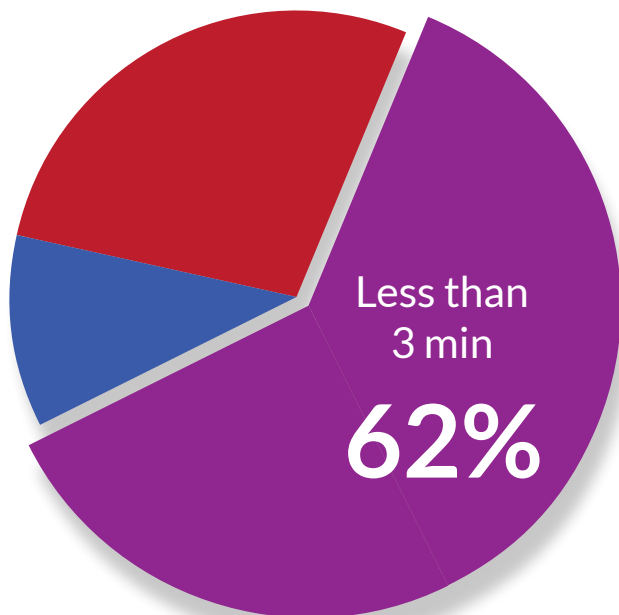
There's a Technique to Capturing the Attention of Your Target Audience

All B2B marketers know that timing and tone are two important considerations when trying to get your target audience to read your content. Several of the survey's findings highlight the importance of not only grabbing the attention of your reader in the first few sentences of a white paper, but being very clear as to the value proposition you deliver if they read the whole document. In other words people want to know, and quickly, what's in it for them.

Most people told us that you have less than five minutes to "sell" your white paper. That is how quickly they will reach a decision if they should finish reading it. More specifically, close to twenty five percent (24.75%) will give you LESS than 1 minute before they decide if they should read on or toss the white paper aside for another activity. About thirty six (36.63%) will give you one to three minutes. In fact, only about eleven percent (10.89%) will read enough of your white paper (Over five minutes) to figure out what's in it.

On average how many minutes do you believe you should need to invest with a new white paper before realizing if you should continue to read it or set it aside?

1. Over 5 min	10%
2. 3 to 5 min	28%
3. Less than 3 min	62%

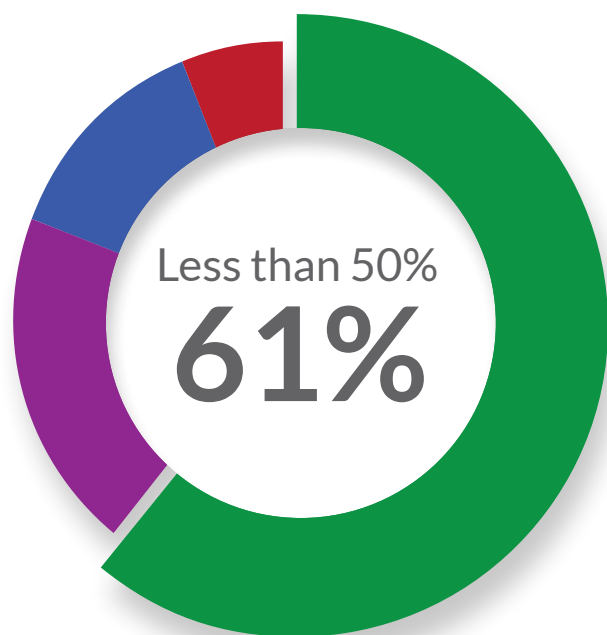




The findings suggest that it's critical to ensure you are opening your white papers with compelling content as well as graphics that make the information easy to digest. Including these elements in white papers further develops your reputation as a reliable source for industry insight.

Another finding reveals that many of the white papers distributed are not being read. Nearly one-third of respondents said they read part of the content of about ten percent of the white papers they download. This means that the bulk of white papers downloaded are being pushed aside without being consumed.

This finding further demonstrates the necessity of quality content in order for white papers to meet your target audience's specific needs or solve their problems. Otherwise, your white papers simply become more pieces tossed aside.



What percent of the white papers that you receive/download do you read 50% or more?

1. 100% (All of them)	13%
2. 75% - 99%	6%
3. 74%-50%	20%
4. Less than 50%	61%

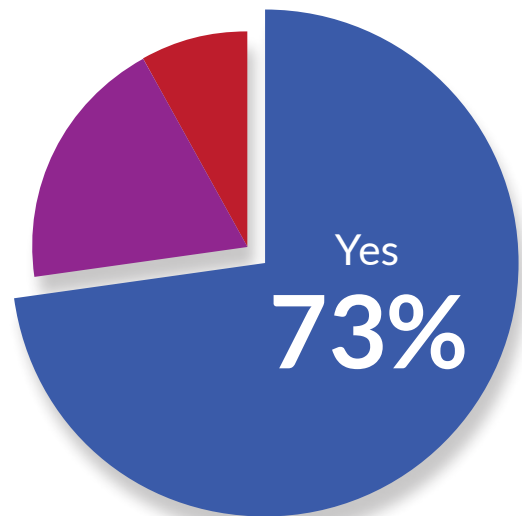
It's Important to Sell Your White Paper

Your white paper is not only a summary of a product or service; you could consider it a standalone complimentary service that you offer to your audience as a sampling of your expertise. If you think of a white paper in those terms, consider what it takes to promote and sell your white paper.

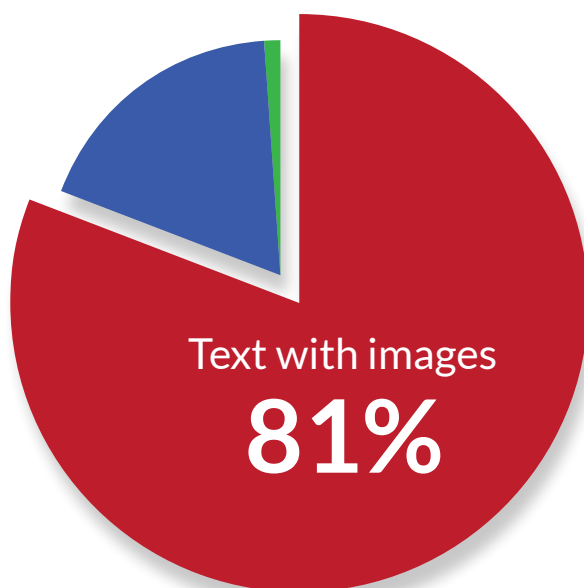
According to the survey, many B2B marketers like you would find more success distributing white papers if they employed a few simple strategies. For instance, over 70 percent of respondents said they would benefit from receiving a one- or two-page infographic with key information prior to receiving a white paper.

Some white papers are technical in nature. Would it be beneficial for you to receive a 1-2 page Infographics summary prior to reading the white paper?

Y - YES	73%
N - NO	8%
M - Maybe/Not Sure	19%
D - Does not care	0%



Likewise, respondents consider a visually stunning white paper the best way to deliver information, with over 80 percent of respondents indicating they prefer a white paper that mixes text and images.



Do you like white papers to contain?

1. Text only	18%
2. Text with images	81%
3. Mostly images (less text)	1%

References and additional supplemental content suggestions are other critical elements you should include in your white papers. The survey revealed that over 75 percent of your target audience prefers white papers that include a hyperlink or a reference to information on a website. And more than 60 percent of the survey participants said they prefer white papers that link to video presentations. B2B marketers would benefit from including links to other forms of content in their white papers.

Do you want white papers to include reference/hyperlinks to other content on websites?

Y – Yes	75%
N – No	25%
D – Don't care	0%

Do you want white papers to include links to video presentations?

Y – Yes	61%
N – No	39%
D – Don't care	0%

It's also important to note how your target audience prefers to consume the content they receive in a white paper. The study found that almost 60 percent of the respondents preferred to download a white paper and then read it on screen, versus 30 percent that prefer to receive it digitally and then print a hard copy.

How do you prefer to read white papers?

I like to receive it digitally and print it	31%
I like to receive it digitally and read it on screen (PC, Tablet or Mobile)	59%
I like to receive it by mail already printed	5%
Other	5%



Grab Your Opportunity to Distribute the Content Your Audience Wants

The survey results suggest that there are ample opportunities to distribute white papers to a target audience that values this content format. Many strategic marketing plans include white papers as a core content distribution opportunity, but they must follow some guidelines to ensure success.

According to the findings of the study, white papers need to be compelling, particularly in the introductory sections, and they should include a mix of text and graphics to encourage the reader to continue consuming the information. The best white papers will also include links to additional resources, including different formats like video or infographics.

The survey finds that white papers continue to serve as a cornerstone of content marketing. They are effective ways to build name recognition and a trusted relationship with your target audience. The right white paper composition methods will boost your reputation as a reliable source for expert insight and information.

About Blue Valley Telemarketing

Consider Blue Valley Telemarketing for your next Lead Generation campaign. We excel at developing and executing content syndication (distribution) campaigns for clients who see a robust return on their investment time and again. Blue Valley offers telemarketing as a valuable component to companies' integrated marketing plans, providing a personalized human touch to the connection with the target audience. Contact Blue Valley today for more information about content marketing distribution campaigns.

For more information [DOWNLOAD](#) our white paper *"Now That Content Marketing Reigns – What's Next in Your Marketing Investment?"*



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