



*Tips and tools*  
FOR CONTENT & DESIGN

# How To Write a White Paper

A white paper is a persuasive piece that shares a complex issue while subtly positioning your organization as a thought leader. It combines researched facts with expert analysis to highlight industry challenges and inform business decisions.

## IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Are you writing for C-suite executives who need high-level strategic insights? Technical professionals seeking detailed implementation guidance? Your audience will determine the depth of technical detail, which business benefits to emphasize, and the overall tone.

## START WITH A TITLE PAGE

Your title page sets the tone for the entire document. Create a clear, compelling title that communicates the paper's value while remaining professional and authoritative — avoid overly clever wordplay. Include a subtitle if needed to provide additional context.

The title page should also feature your organization's branding, publication date, and any relevant disclaimers or copyright information.

## THE INTRODUCTION

In the introduction, you hook your readers and establish the paper's relevance. Start with a concise problem statement that resonates with your audience's pain points. Example problem statement:

*Enterprise organizations are losing an estimated \$37 million annually per company due to siloed communication systems and fragmented collaboration tools.*

Explain why this issue matters now and what's at stake for your industry. Your introduction should also include a brief overview of what readers will learn from the paper.

Keep your introduction focused and compelling. While a [case study might open with a specific client story](#), your white paper's introduction should address broader industry challenges that affect multiple stakeholders.

## THE BACKGROUND

The background section provides the foundation for your argument. Present relevant research, market data, and historical context that help readers understand the problem's complexity. This section should:

- Examine industry trends and market conditions.
- Analyze previous attempts to solve the problem.
- Present relevant statistics and research findings.
- Discuss regulatory or compliance considerations.
- Explore the costs and consequences of inaction.

## THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

Maintain an objective tone while presenting your solution. Instead of making promotional claims, let your thorough analysis and supporting evidence make the case for your approach. This section should:

- Explain your approach or methodology.
- Describe how your solution addresses root causes.
- Discuss implementation requirements and considerations.
- Address potential obstacles and how to overcome them.
- Include brief examples of successful applications.



## THE CONCLUSION

Your conclusion should do more than summarize the paper. Provide clear, actionable recommendations that help readers move forward. Include specific next steps, resources an organization will need to implement a solution, and a process for implementing the solution. End with a strong call to action encouraging readers to engage with your organization.

## CITATIONS AND REFERENCES

White papers require thorough documentation of sources. Include a reference section that lists all cited research, studies, and expert opinions.

## TIPS FOR WHITE PAPER SUCCESS

A comprehensive and well-researched white paper is longer than a case study, anywhere from 1,500 words to 4,000 words. When writing your first draft, focus on building a logical argument. Start with your core message and supporting evidence, then refine your language and style in subsequent drafts.

**Design matters in white papers.** Use clear headings, ample white space, and professional formatting. Include relevant charts, graphs, or diagrams to illustrate complex concepts, but ensure each visual element serves a clear purpose.

**Remember:** A white paper succeeds when it helps readers understand and solve real industry challenges while establishing your organization as a trusted authority. Focus on delivering genuine value through insight and analysis — the benefits will follow naturally.

*University of Massachusetts Lowell Library, [White Paper Style Guide](#), May 11, 2023*

*Mailchimp, [What Is a Whitepaper? When & How to Use One](#)*

