



CUP OF COFFEE TIP SHEETS

12 TIPS FOR PUBLISHING YOUR FIRST EBOOK

eBooks have been a staple of content marketing for some time. They build awareness for your firm (when you're promoting them in the marketplace), can help establish (and solidify) your subject matter expertise and are a proven lead generation tool.

If you've been thinking about publishing one – but haven't pulled the trigger yet – here are 12 tips to help you take the leap...

#1. Remember who you're writing for (hint: your clients and prospective clients). What topics would interest them? What can you write about that will help them do their job better or solve a problem for them? As long as you're writing for *them* – and not because it interests *you* – you can't go wrong.

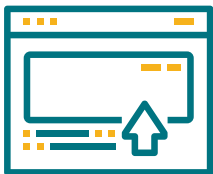


#2. Choose the right topics. eBooks are “top of funnel” tools. They are generally used to educate readers about a topic (and introduce them to your firm). So, keep the topics fairly broad to attract as wide an audience as possible. This is in contrast to White papers, for example, which are “bottom of the funnel” tools with much narrower topics.

#3. Make it easy to read... think 6th to 10th grade reading level. No one will be offended for “talking down to them.” On the contrary, they'll appreciate how easy it is for them to absorb the information you're presenting.

#4. How many pages? It doesn't really matter... we've seen them anywhere from 8 to 150+ pages. As a rule of thumb, opt for brevity – 25 pages or less. For one, there are the design costs of creating the eBook to consider. Second, a shorter eBook is more likely to be consumed cover-to-cover.

#5. Don't sell. Period! As soon as your content becomes a sales pitch for your services, you lose all credibility. That said, at the end (*not* at the beginning) of the eBook, it is certainly appropriate to include an “about us” page and your contact information.



#6. You will need a landing page (with a data collection form). eBooks should be ‘gated’... meaning they cannot be downloaded from your website until the interested person completes an online form, giving you their contact information. This is when and where sales leads are generated. The three key elements of a landing page are:

- A strong promotional headline
- Light copy, outlining the *benefits* of the eBook
- A ‘simple’ data capture form (note: the more fields you include in the form, the fewer people will actually complete it)

#7. Promote like crazy. Your eBook has no value if no one sees it... so you need to promote the heck out of it. Use social media posts and email marketing, digital ads (try LinkedIn promoted posts), press announcements (yes, a good eBook *is* newsworthy), include it in your email signature, add a banner to your website homepage and more. And don't just have a big promotional push then stop... spread your efforts out over many weeks.



#8. Design is important. Don't go to the trouble of writing a compelling eBook, only to put it inside of an ugly wrapper. Find a good graphic designer... someone who can help tell your eBook story with good layout and imagery. Remember, you only get one chance to make a great first impression.

#9. Repurposing is not cheating. Writing an eBook can be a daunting task. To help, don't write the entire thing from scratch. For example, if you've been blogging for a while, use several existing blog posts to 'start' the eBook, then add in new content to complete it.

#10. Make it yours. Don't forget to add in a copyright mark somewhere in the eBook. The proper format is '© [year] [company name].'

#11. There's only one format to consider. Once created, make your eBook available (and downloadable) as a PDF document. It's a universal format easily viewed on any type of device.

#12. What's your follow-up plan? As a proven lead gen 'magnet', you'll want to have a sales lead follow-up plan in place before you ever post the eBook. Three common follow-up strategies are:

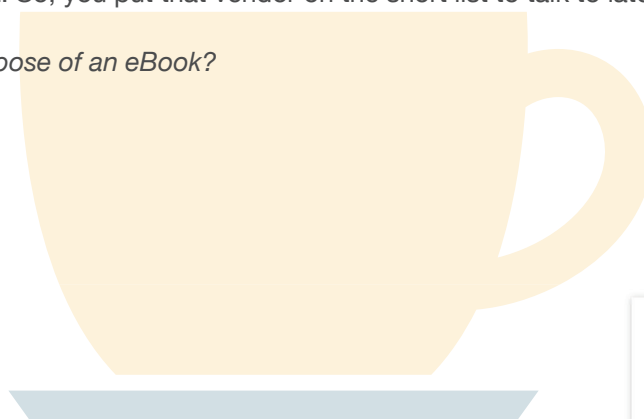
- Do it right away. Reach out to the downloaders – by email and/or phone – very shortly (1-2 days) after the download, while the eBook is still fresh in their minds.
- Implement an email drip campaign. Here, a download of the eBook automatically triggers a series of follow-up emails, each sharing additional information related to the eBook topic. Should a recipient engage with all the emails, they are showing themselves to be seriously interested in the topic.
- Someone who downloads one eBook isn't necessarily ready to buy. But what if, in addition to the eBook, they had also visited your booth at a conference and attended one of your webinars? Those prospects – with 'multiple touches' – are essentially "qualifying" themselves as potential clients.
- At the very least... reach out and invite all downloaders to connect on LinkedIn. That way, every social post you make moving forward has the chance of being seen by them, keeping you top-of-mind.



Conclusion:

Imagine you're a buyer. You're looking for an expert to partner with. But how do you know if a vendor *is* an expert? Just because they say so on their website isn't proof. But an eBook – with 20-25 pages of well-written, well-thought out content – proves that the vendor has a breadth and depth of knowledge around the topic... that they, in fact, may *be* an expert. So, you put that vendor on the short list to talk to later.

And isn't that the ultimate purpose of an eBook?



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