

Interactive, Multimedia eBooks



The Missing Element in Today's B2B Content Marketing

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*The Changing World of
Content Marketing*

*“ It is not the strongest
of the species that survive,
nor the most intelligent, but the
one most responsive to change.*

—Charles Darwin ”

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The Way We Consume Information is Evolving...

Today, the way people access and consume information is being transformed.

Information overload is becoming the norm, and attention spans are growing short. Business people are accustomed to visually-engaging apps on smartphones and tablets. These content-savvy readers demand a compelling story that uses interactivity and multimedia to enhance their experience.

In this media-rich environment, business and technical decision makers are drawn to companies that provide relevant information in an accessible, engaging format.

*Roll over to
reveal the
answer*

The Way We Deliver Information Must Evolve, Too.

The million dollar question is: How can a company transform its marketing and sales documents to gain and hold potential clients' and customers' attention?



What is an Interactive, Multimedia eBook?

An interactive, multimedia eBook is more than just an electronic version of a printed book or white paper – it's an emerging form of content marketing that complements white papers, web sites, presentations, and collateral. Interactive, multimedia eBooks help businesses:

- ***Engage potential customers*** in an interactive way, thus boosting information retention



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- **Hold the reader's interest** – and hence successfully establish thought leadership – using multimedia, dynamic content, and more



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- **Engage potential customers** in an interactive way, thus boosting information retention
- **Hold the reader's interest** – and hence successfully establish thought leadership – using multimedia, dynamic content, and more
- **Early in the sales cycle**, engage potential customers with links to white papers, social media, marketing collateral, and other content for more information.



What Does an Interactive, Multimedia eBook Look Like?

Most eBooks used for marketing purposes today are typically displayed in landscape orientation, and simply consist of text and illustrations. They combine the prose of a white paper, the bulleted text of presentations, and illustrations to convey useful information in an interesting, visual way.

While these “static” eBooks are easier to absorb than lengthy, copy-heavy white papers, they fail to take advantage of elements that can grab the reader’s attention, hold it, and boost information retention.

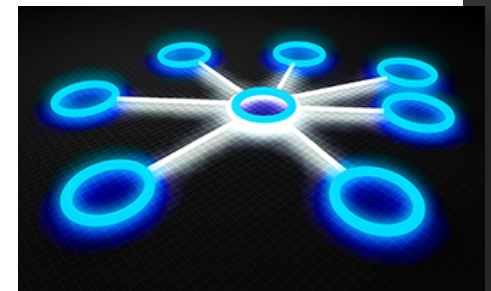
An emerging approach to eBooks for content marketing purposes incorporates custom video, links to social media, infographics, dynamic illustrations, and other dynamic and multimedia elements.

The eBook you are now viewing uses this approach.

This provides a document that:

- Welcomes the reader and invites them inside.
- Tells a story and provides a compelling message.
- Routes the reader to collateral for solution information, white papers for more in-depth information, social media for reader participation, and web pages for news, upcoming events, and other resources.

Because an interactive, multimedia eBook can act as a central hub of information on a product line, service organization, or solution set, it holds a critical role in B2B content marketing.



Unique Features of Interactive, Multimedia eBooks

With a full range of rich content and features, interactive multimedia eBooks connect with customers by sharing information, insights, and answers in compelling and engaging ways.

Features of eBooks include the following:

- **Custom videos** engage viewers with a friendly introduction, elaborate on a key concept, summarize conclusions, and more.
- **Interactivity enables customization.** For example, the eBook can pose a question to the reader, and based on the answer, tailor the remainder of the eBook to the reader's needs.



Which of the following ways do interactive, multimedia eBooks aid B2B content marketing?

- A.** Better engage and involve your prospects
- B.** Enhance lead generation and accelerate deal closure
- C.** Establish subject matter expertise and leadership
- D.** Improve brand visibility and credibility
- E.** Better inform various stakeholders
- F.** All of the above

Roll over options to see if you are correct

Benefits of Interactive, Multimedia eBooks in Content Marketing

*Click on a
benefit to
learn more.*

Interactive, Multimedia eBooks can Boost Thought Leadership



Interactive, multimedia eBooks are a persuasive way to convey thought leadership and communicate innovative ideas. Providing useful information in a compelling format engages decision makers early in the sales cycle.

However, eBooks are only effective at demonstrating a company's thought leadership if they are well organized, compelling to read, and provide useful information. A poorly written or presented eBook may even repel prospects and erode the credibility of the company.

Because interactive, multimedia eBooks themselves are a relatively new way to conduct content marketing, use of this medium positions companies as leaders. This means that enterprises can position themselves as thought leaders via the medium they use (multimedia eBooks) *and* the ideas they present.

Is your company a thought leader?

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Interactive, Multimedia eBooks: An Emerging Vehicle for Lead Generation



Traditionally, white papers have been the primary driver of successful lead generation. This remains true today and will likely continue for some time. However,

increasingly, savvy B2B marketers are turning to interactive, multimedia eBooks as an alternative online offering to business customers for lead generation purposes. The reason is that eBooks can combine the ability to provide the useful information that leads seek with a presentation that can be more visual and enticing.

As interactive, multimedia eBooks gain traction as a B2B content marketing tool, they are likely to appear more often in lead generation offerings.

Is your company a leader or a follower of this trend?

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Use Interactive, Multimedia eBooks to Inform a Broad Range of Stakeholders



Organizations typically target interactive, multimedia eBooks to a defined external audience, such as business decision makers in a specific industry, or technical

decision makers that face a particular type of problem or need. However, organizations can also use eBooks to educate and inform a broad array of secondary audiences. Even though eBooks are not primarily targeted to these additional groups, the eBooks remain an effective vehicle for conveying useful information to this extended ecosystem. These audiences may include the following:

- Employees (e.g., sales forces, executives, legal personnel, and HR personnel)
- Potential employees
- Contractors (e.g., PR firms, ad agencies)
- Regulatory personnel
- The media
- Analysts
- Partners, including resellers, recruiters, suppliers, and investors

Are you looking for a single compelling document that can inform all of these stakeholders?

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Applications of Interactive, Multimedia eBooks

*Roll
over an
application
to learn
more.*

eBook versus White Paper

Click any quote on this page to view the source.

Some industry experts believe that white papers are a dying breed, soon to be replaced by eBooks.

“No one wants to read your whitepaper... [a] worthy successor to the whitepaper is the eBook.”

– Lauren Carlson
CRM Market Analyst, Software Advice



But others maintain that white papers continue to play a key role.

“Today, whitepapers are considered an essential marketing tool in almost every business sector and industry...they remain a highly effective lead generation tool...”

– Johnathan Kantor
Principal and founder of The Appum Group

“The demand for white papers has never been higher.”

— Michael A. Stelzner
Executive editor of WhitePaperSource.com



“Are eBooks a good part of the marketing mix to generate awareness? Absolutely! Will they replace white papers? No.”

— Ryan Malone
SmartBug Media

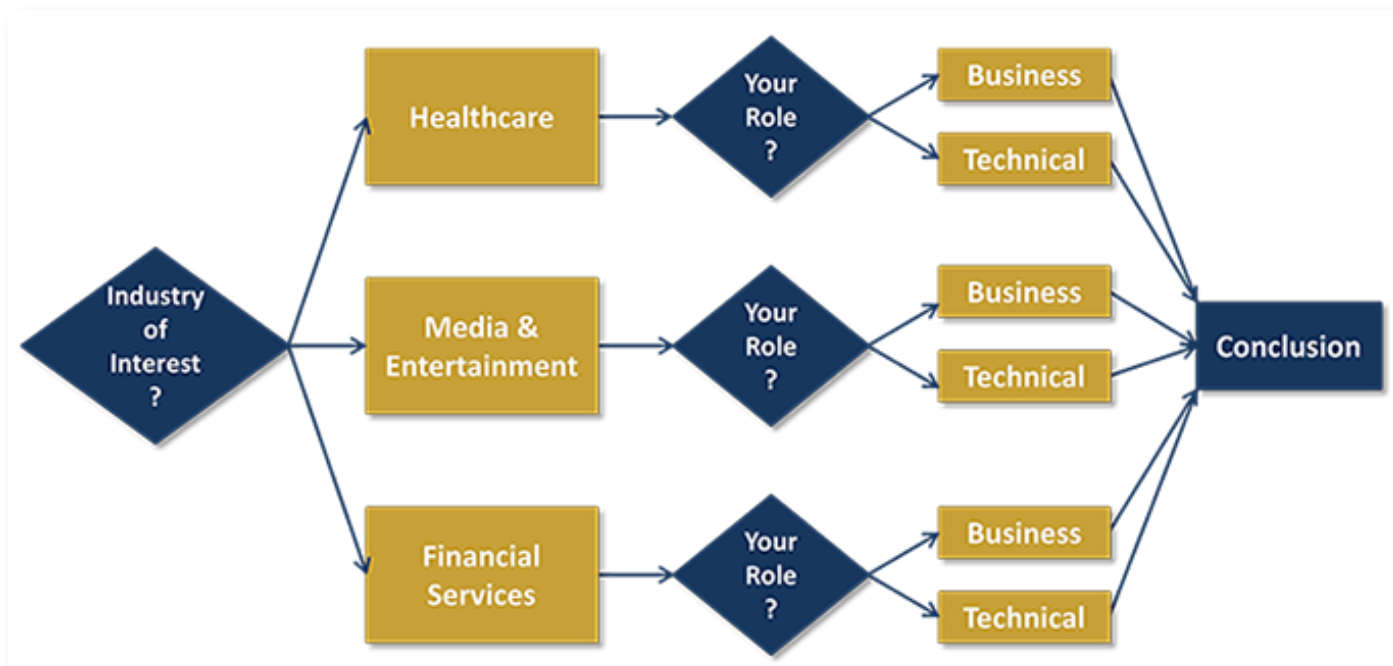
Hoffman Marketing Communications view white papers and eBooks as two complementary parts of an effective B2B content marketing strategy.

Because **white papers** are primarily text-driven, they can convey in-depth business or technical information about a business issue, product, or service to a decision maker.

By providing immediate engaging content, **eBooks** help decision makers understand critical information early in the sales cycle.

eBook Interactivity Enables Customization

Interactivity in eBooks enables them to be customizable. Users answer questions, and based on their answers, they are routed to content that is specifically tailored to their area of interest. This technique enables a single eBook to address multiple verticals, audiences, products/services, and more. Once the reader makes their selections, they see only the content that is relevant to them.



Content Remains King: Creating a Successful Interactive, Multimedia eBook



CONTENT MARKETING

Like a film that relies on special effects instead of plot and character development, an eBook that overuses multimedia elements at the expense of information clarity will fail to engage the audience.

As in any content marketing, clearly conveying relevant information remains the most important element. Most of the recommendations regarding content for white papers hold true for eBooks as well, such as:

- Organize information carefully, keeping the reader's perspective and prior knowledge in mind
- Inform, don't sell
- Use third-party information to establish credibility

(Click here to read expert recommendations for developing white papers.)

Additional recommendations apply to the eBook genre, including:

- Use established design principles to organize content into logical sections of manageable size
- Employ video, rollovers, and other features selectively – readers can tell when a feature enhances content and when it's just a gimmick
- Use a consistent look and feel that complements the existing web site and marketing collateral

Summary and Conclusions

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the video



Interactive, multimedia eBooks are quickly becoming a crucial element in a comprehensive content marketing strategy.

- By providing a central access point to information on your company, product line, service organization, or solution set, eBooks are useful early in the sales cycle.

- eBooks can also act as a focal point for product/service launch materials, or alternatively, as a visually compelling way to convey technical information.
- Engaging multimedia content holds readers' attention and helps address different learning styles.
- eBooks complement, rather than replace, white papers and other marketing communications.
- eBook interactivity enables customization to readers' interest areas.

Hoffman Marketing Communications develops engaging, informative interactive, multimedia eBook that help businesses meet their goals. [Contact us for more information about how interactive, multimedia eBooks can benefit your content marketing strategy.](#)

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Hoffman Marketing Communications, Inc., specializes in producing white papers, eBooks, sales guides, and marketing collateral for leading technology companies around the world. Since 1985, Hoffman has developed persuasive sales and marketing materials for more than 100 clients, including Symantec, SAP, HP, Adobe, Research in Motion, NetApp, and Sprint.

