

# design to sell

Resources for making design  
your strategic marketing partner

## White paper marketing tips Part 1: sidebars

### Use sidebars—short text and graphic elements—to build and maintain your prospect's interest

Sidebars add  
visual interest  
and valuable  
content

Sidebars placed in the white space to the left of your text columns can greatly increase your white paper's marketing power—plus, they're easy to create.

Sidebars make it easy for you to reinforce your main points and add details.

Readers like sidebars because they're short and to the point. Here are some content ideas that can enhance your white papers.

### Lists

Bulleted or numbered lists make great additions to your sidebars. You can communicate lots of information in a short space.

- **Resources.** Add short lists of recommended books or websites. To reinforce your “expert” status, add a line or two explaining each book or site's relevance and what you like most about it.

- **Glossary.** White papers are often read by prospects unfamiliar with the terms and acronyms they encounter. They'll appreciate short definitions of important terms.

- **Questions.** White paper readers appreciate lists of questions to ask, or things to look for, when making buying decisions. Or, help your prospects qualify themselves by including self-assessment questions.

- **Cautions, hints, and steps.** Lists make it easy to communicate actionable information in a logical sequence.

### Longer text elements

You can also use sidebars for 2 to 4 paragraph “mini-features.” For example:

- **Case studies and profiles** Use sidebars for short “mini-stories” that provide examples and reinforce your white paper's recommendations. Case studies and profiles gain impact to the extent your prospects can identify with them and the problems they faced.

- **Interviews.** Ask the leading experts in your field for their opinions on topics like the challenges and trends prospects should know about. Their comments will enhance your white paper's credibility.



Lists of resources or questions create great sidebars. [Download report with examples](#)

*Make sure  
sidebars relate  
to the main  
topics covered  
on each page*



Cycles communicate sequence far better than words, as shown by this example from *White Paper Design that Sells*



[Download](#) my full *White Paper Design that Sells* report

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## Visuals

Visuals communicate at a glance, and are more noticeable and easier to remember than words. Options include:

- *Photographs.* Whenever possible, add photos of the individuals you're quoting or profiling. Photos add specificity to your white papers.
- *Charts and graphs.* Translate *comparisons* and *trends* into charts and graphs, which communicate far more effectively.
- *Illustrations.* Illustrations, like cycles, make it easy to communicate sequence.

## Pull quotes

Pull-quotes make it easy to add visual interest and reinforce important points.

To create a pull-quote, locate the sentence, or a quotation, that summarizes the most important point covered on the page.

Use pull-quotes for sidebars on pages where lists or visuals are not appropriate.

## Design and placement tips

Here are some ways to set your sidebars apart from the main text of each page:

- *Headlines.* Use headlines to introduce each sidebar. Headlines should be bold and—possibly—set in a color that contrasts with adjacent text.
- *Fills.* Consider setting sidebar text against a lightly-colored backgrounds.
- *Borders.* Use borders to emphasize photographs and illustrations.

- *Pull-quotes.* To make your pull-quotes stand out, set them in a large, contrasting typeface, type size, and color. You can also add style options like italics or bold.

- *Consistency.* Use the same text styles and colors for the headlines and text of your sidebars. Don't use borders around some graphics, for example, but not others.

- *Placement.* Sidebar content should relate to the topics covered on each page. Re-view your sidebars after editing the text. Readers shouldn't have to refer to sidebar text or graphics located on different pages.

## Getting started

Before you begin to write your white paper, prepare a list of possible sidebars based on the above ideas.

Refer to your list while writing and formatting each page. Add sidebars to each page as you write and—later—edit it.

## For more information

White paper marketing success begins with choosing the right title.

For help choosing white paper topics, refer to my [Content Catalyst](#). It contains over 400 topic ideas for white papers introducing new products and services, or new technologies.

Click [here](#) to find out how mind mapping can help you to write white papers. [Click](#) to view the map I used to write this issue.

[E-mail me](#), or call 603-742-9673, for more white paper copywriting, design, and marketing assistance.



### Benefits

- Short text elements keep your reader's involved
- Balances the text to the right
- Provides important details
- Easy for you to prepare
- Few words needed

### Examples

1. books
  - Recommended
  - Featured
2. Charts and graphs
3. Examples
  - Text
  - Visuals
  - Typefaces
4. Glossary of important terms
5. Hints and suggestions
6. Interview
  - One or more questions and answers
7. Profiles
  - Case studies
8. Pull quotes
9. Questions to ask
10. URLs
  - Recommended
  - Featured

### Tips

- Associate with adjacent text
- Formatting consistency
- Background fills
- Text formatting

### Call to action

Content catalyst