



Phone 617-622-0350
Email info@netgainz.com
www.netgainz.com

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Why Your White Paper Should be Like Dragnet (the TV Show)

Remember the old TV program Dragnet? Dragnet was a very popular police drama based on true stories which played on the CBS network in the late 1960's. Actor/Executive Producer Jack Webb starred as the low-key, monotone detective Joe Friday. Joe was famous for his ultra-serious, almost dead-pan interviews of witnesses to crimes in Los Angeles. If his subjects started adding in their own personal opinions or irrelevant information about the case at hand, Joe would interrupt by uttering the signature line of the program "Just the facts, Ma'am." He wanted to learn only factual data so he could evaluate the situation purely on the basis of real evidence.

OK what do Sergeant Joe Friday and Dragnet have to do with your white paper? Your B2B prospects who download and read your white paper are also just beginning the evaluation of your product or service. In effect, they are playing the role of Joe Friday in trying to discover the best solution for their company. Think of your white paper consumers as detectives looking for an education on a facet of your particular vertical by collecting just factual information. Like the methodical Joe Friday, they do not want to bias their research with your opinion (your specific offering). Therefore a true white paper is a great giveaway as part of a B2B Pay-Per-Click campaign because it gives the searcher exactly what they want most at that moment; objective data.

One of the most common mistakes made by B2B technology companies, however, is to construct a white paper that really is a loosely camouflaged product pitch. Initially believing they will receive an impartial perspective, the reader now feels like the victim of a bait and switch marketing ploy. Another related error is to write a document that starts out sounding like a white paper which then also includes a section from a company product brochure. Both types of these documents are also very hard to promote in a B2B PPC campaign because they lack the real, data-supported focal point of a true white paper. Even when they are downloaded, these "mixed-message" faux white papers can serve to confuse and sometimes irritate the reader.



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Consequently white papers should never contain product or company information. In fact one of the main goals of this type of a document is to position your company or spokesperson as being the objective expert in your field. In summary, AVOID the temptation to discuss your product or service in collateral labeled as a white paper. You will have plenty of opportunity to logically present your side of the story when the prospect is at a more receptive stage of their buying cycle.

Your potential clients will appreciate your company much more if you give them the Joe Friday “*just the facts*” treatment in your next white paper. This approach should also result in more legitimate sales inquiries for your business.

If you would like help or advice with your B2B Pay-Per-Click effort, call NetGainz at 617-622-0350 or email us at info@netgainz.com.

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