

# How to write an ebook for a B2B audience

**eBooks have become B2B content marketing staples – but with so many out there, how do you write one that stands out and gets results? Here are some pointers to get you to a strong first draft.**

B2B marketing ebooks aren't like the ones you read on your Kindle on the tube. These modern successors to the white paper are used widely to educate potential buyers on an issue they're not currently aware of, or to show them how to tackle an issue they already know about.

They're usually around 2,000-2,500 words long, produced in landscape format, with less copy on the page than a white paper, and more artwork and graphical elements to lighten the reading experience.

The tone is usually lighter, too: accessible, fun and interesting, with conversational rather than academic language, and snappy headlines and subheaders to introduce key sections and points.

# Three hallmarks of a great ebook

With so many companies now producing ebooks, it's hard to write one that really stands out. There are three qualities that characterise a great ebook, and only one of them is down to the writing itself.

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## **Hallmark #1: Audience insight**

The first hallmark of a great ebook actually applies to all great B2B content. It's really understanding who the audience is, what matters to them, and what they need from your content. To make an impact, the ebook should pack an emotional as well as rational punch, and it's hard to make an emotional connection with your reader if you don't know who you're writing for.

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## **Hallmark #2: Genuine usefulness**

Once you're confident you understand the audience and what they care about, bring the reader useful, practical, actionable and unique information. Ideally, the insight you offer will be something your audience can't get elsewhere, which genuinely helps them to do something they want or need to do.

Ideally, this information should be so useful and hard-to-find-elsewhere that the reader will not only feel compelled to act upon it, but also to share it.

As well as research, try to interview at least one genuine expert on the subject. Without their input, you'll likely only be recycling information that's already online. Instant fail.

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## **Hallmark #3: Great writing**

And the third hallmark of a great ebook is the writing itself. Reading it should be an enjoyable, enlightening and inspiring experience, not a slog.

If you write as if you're having a great conversation with your reader, about something you both care about, you can't go far wrong.

# Before the writing starts: 4 things to get right

If you're going to create an ebook that's genuinely valuable for an expert audience, there are some stages that you need to have in your process. Like:

1. **Agree a clear brief, right from the start.** The more specific you can be about who your reader is, and what they should get from reading your ebook, the better. This will help you to stay on track – and also to explain that value from the outset.
2. **Arrange interviews with subject matter experts.** Unless you have expert insight, your ebook is likely to regurgitate information that's already available online. If you don't have a suitable expert in your own organisation, maybe involve a third party.
3. **Find facts and figures to support your argument.** To make your ebook convincing, you need to combine the expert viewpoint with careful research to prove and quantify what you're saying. If you can't find the right stats from the outset, it's possible your argument may not be as strong as you think.
4. **Create an outline before your first draft.** It need only be a sketch of your approach, and what information is covered in which sections, but an outline is invaluable. It saves writing time and – crucially – can stop you writing 3,000 words of flawed copy. If you've made a fundamental error in a long document, it's a long way to row back.



# Getting the introduction right

The introduction is a crucial part of the ebook. It's the introduction that will make people decide whether to keep reading – and in general, you want to keep them reading, because there will almost certainly be a call to action at the end that you want them to follow. So what should a great intro do?

**Create an immediate rapport with the reader.** The intro is where you show you understand your reader's world, their professional goals and their personal aspirations. So mirror the language they use, and set their expectations for the rest of the ebook. (Will this ebook be fun to read, for example, or will it be matter-of-fact but brimming with useful information?)

**Frame the problem the target audience is facing,** and clearly show how the ebook will help them overcome it. Right out of the gate, you need to make your reader aware that you have something important to tell them about something they care about, and that this ebook will help them to tackle the issue to their advantage.

**Define who will get value from the ebook.** Show you know who your audience is by defining what kind of person they are – both professionally and psychologically. “This ebook is for contact centre managers in consumer-facing organisations who want to improve customer retention rates and aren't afraid to try radical new ways of working”. This gives the reader an opportunity to decide “yes, this ebook is for me” or “no,

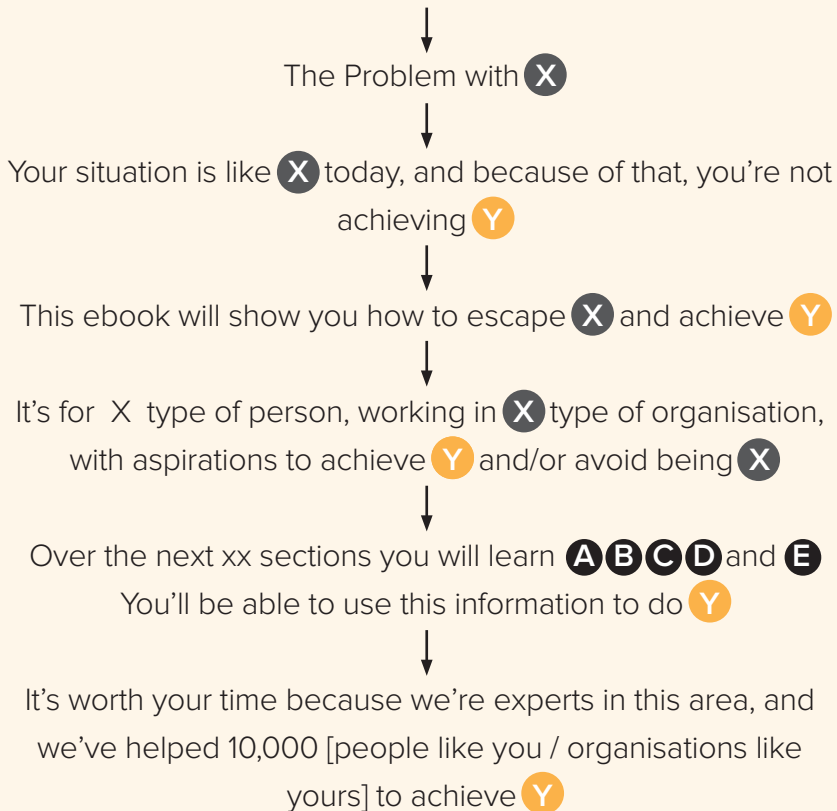
this ebook is not for me” before you've taken up too much of their time. And it shows you've put a lot of thought into who you're writing for, which again signals that you understand their world. (You could even use reverse psychology to define who won't get value from it – “this ebook is not for people who shy away from radical new ways of working” – but always do this in a respectful, rather than snarky, way.)

**Set out what they will learn from investing their time in reading.** Your reader is busy, and they need to know this ebook will be worth their while. So set out clearly in the intro what they will learn, and how they'll be able to use the information to their advantage.

**Briefly set out your credentials in the topic area.** Generally, ebooks talk to the reader about their own issues, and give expert advice on tackling them. They aren't hard-sell pieces, but at the same time you need to convince your reader that you really have something relevant and valuable to say.

# A typical ebook introduction

A good ebook introduction might go a bit like this:



Plus, it will be super fun. Let's go!

# 8 ways to bring your content to life

You'll already have structured your ebook's individual sections in your outline; now you just need to flesh them out. A few pointers:



## **Why yes, we write ebooks**

And every other kind of B2B content you could possibly want. If you'd like to discuss a project, give us call on +44 (0)1326 373592, or email [info@radix-communications.com](mailto:info@radix-communications.com).

1

**Try to give each section roughly the same structure and word count.** Giving each section equal authority makes for a satisfying read. It'll also help the designers make the layout look consistent.

2

**Don't go overboard on length.** If your ebook is 2,000-2,500 words, you probably only have about 350 words per section. Get to the point crisply and succinctly, and don't detain the reader unnecessarily.

3

**Pay attention to headlines and subheads.** Make them enticing and appealing; you want your reader to enjoy reading, like they're having a great chat with someone who's interested in them.

4

**Think how the information will look on the page.** Would some elements work better as a graphic than straight text? Pro tip: draft the copy as it might be laid out – in landscape format with box-outs and space for graphical elements.

5

**Don't be too abstract.** Keep your reader interested, with concrete examples of how the point you're making could work – or has worked – in the real world. Did your subject expert use any nice analogies or interesting turns of phrase in your interview? Work them in.

6

**Back up your points with quotes and statistics.** Prove what you're saying by referencing credible, third-party sources. Remember to attribute them to the original source.

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**Link to other content pieces.** If you have more content that's relevant to the subject, link to it from the relevant section – that way, even if the reader doesn't make it to the end, you can still keep them engaged.

8

**End each section with a recommendation or takeaway.** What's the one thing the reader should remember from this section? Spell it out so it's easy for them.



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We have eleven in-house specialists writing standout web copy, blog posts, ebooks, case studies, white papers, video scripts... in fact, pretty much any kind of written content a B2B tech marketer or agency might need.

If you work in B2B, there's a good chance you've read our work without knowing it (we write for 60 of the biggest brands in tech).

**Fancy a chat about content?**

**We're on +44 (0)1326 373592, and  
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