WHITE PAPER ERROR AVOIDANCE

CHECKLIST

1. ☐ Have we given our white paper a compelling title?
   - ☐ Does the title give the target reader a good reason to download and read the white paper?
     - Does the title indicate a problem or development that is likely to affect the target reader?
     - Does the title tap a dominant resident emotion in the target reader?
     - Does the title promise a practical or educational benefit for reading the white paper?
   - ☐ Does the title make the topic seem interesting, not boring?
   - ☐ Have the names of our company and product / service been avoided in the title?
   - ☐ Have we avoided misleading the reader with our title?
     - In other words, does the white paper deliver on the promise of its title?
2. ☐ Do we **avoid the appearance of a sales pitch** in our white paper?
   - ☐ Have we avoided frequent use of product/service and company names?
   - ☐ Does our white paper fully lay out the problem, before offering a solution?
   - ☐ Have we made the case for our "generic" solution before introducing our specific product/service?
   - ☐ Have we avoided detailed descriptions of product features?
   - ☐ Have we avoided making unsubstantiated claims (hype) for our solution?
   - ☐ Do we provide sufficient proof to support the claims we have made?
     - Have we supplied statistics, benchmarks, test results and/or verifiable historical facts?
     - Have we quoted expert third party opinions or endorsements?
     - Have we quoted survey or study findings from credible sources?
   - ☐ Have we provided solid, practical information (educational value) in our white paper?
3. ☐ Has our white paper been **professionally written**?
   - ☐ Are paragraphs short and conversational?
   - ☐ Are sentences varied in length and construction?
   - ☐ Does the writing flow briskly and easily?
   - ☐ Is the logic consistent and without gaps?
   - ☐ Have all technical terms and acronyms *unfamiliar to the target reader* been defined?
   - ☐ Have we cited credible sources for the facts provided?
   - ☐ Does the white paper have a discernable and effective structure?
   - ☐ Is the flow if ideas logical and uninterrupted (without random skipping between topics)?
   - ☐ Has the writer avoided putting too much or too little emphasis on particular points?
4. ☐ Is our white paper the **right length for the audience**?
   - If targeting executives, is our white paper 3 to 12 (ideally 6 to 10) pages long?
   - If targeting technical staff, is our white paper 3 to 15 (ideally 6 to 12) pages long?

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5. ☐ Does our white paper have a **user-friendly design**?
   - ☐ Does it have **wide margins**, especially on one side of the page (for pull quotes)?
   - ☐ Does each page feature a single, **narrow column of text** for easy reading?
   - ☐ Does the design feature **plenty of white space**, breaking text into manageable sections?
   - ☐ Are there plenty of **emphasized text elements** to aid scanners, including:
     - Subheadings?
     - Bullets?
     - Pull quotes?
     - Sidebars?
   - ☐ Have we included a number of **informative illustrations** (NOT stock photos)?

6. ☐ Do we give our prospects a **clear call to action** at the end white paper?
   - ☐ Do we tell **"sales ready" prospects** how to get in touch with our sales team for a presentation or demonstration?
   - ☐ Do we give **prospects with no immediate need** specific instructions for finding related information, without human contact?
   - ☐ Is each call to action very specific about what we want our prospect to do next?
   - ☐ Does each call to action follow logically from our white paper?
   - ☐ Is each call to action appropriate to where the prospect is in they buying process?

7. ☐ Have we made sure we will receive **valid contact information** for our white paper?
   - ☐ Have we required registration for our white paper?
   - ☐ Do we provide the white paper (or a link) by email, so we're sure to get a valid email address?
   - ☐ (Optional) Do we exclude personal email domains like gmail, hotmail and yahoo?

8. ☐ Have we requested **only the registration information we truly need**?

9. ☐ Have we **provided enough information** about our white paper **prior to registration**?
   - Do we provide at least a paragraph of abstract, prior to the registration decision?

10. ☐ Are we **leading prospects to our white paper** with other marketing efforts?
    - ☐ Do we feature our white paper offer on our home page?
    - ☐ Do we offer our white paper on topically related pages of our website?
    - ☐ Are we promoting our offer beyond our website?
      - Through our company newsletter?
      - Through online and/or offline advertising?
      - Through direct mail or email marketing to a targeted list?
      - Through white paper syndication services, like Bitpipe or Tech Republic?
    - ☐ Do we provide a dedicated landing page for ordering the white paper?

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