



RIVERBEND COACHING

the art of contribution: coaching for big-picture thinkers

Anatomy of a White Paper

or how to communicate your big-picture idea in a way that enrolls your ideal clients

A **White Paper** is an in-depth way to communicate the value of a sophisticated process to your ideal clients. White Papers can be effective as a pre- or post-meeting handout for a prospective client, and often generate language and visuals that can be used on your website, for client meetings and workshops, or for conference presentations. Because White Papers have a format that is similar to a journal article, a well-written White Paper can create a level of credibility and gravitas that sets it apart from more traditional marketing materials. Here are some reasons to consider writing a White Paper for your business:

- Your work relies on intellectual distinctions or complicated processes that are not easily grasped by prospective clients.
- You realize that although you know the methodology and underlying distinctions of your work inside and out, you struggle to articulate it or visualize it for clients in a way that they can process.
- Your work is counterintuitive, requires a “whole-system” orientation that is foreign to many people, or is on the cutting-edge of what is currently being done in your industry.
- You want to be seen as a thought-leader or innovator in your field.

The outline on the following page provides an overview of the sections and considerations for a typical White Paper.



White Paper Sections, Content, & Considerations

Section	Possible content and considerations
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encapsulates your insight and how it makes a difference in a way that intrigues your ideal clients. Start with a working title, knowing that it will probably evolve as you gain more clarity.
Executive Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written last, once you know exactly what key points and ideas you want to emphasize. • Encapsulates your beliefs about the area of concern, your key insight, and the opportunity that you see for making a difference.
What's So & Why That Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad overview of your area of concern – state of the union, trends, opportunities, threats (e.g. national, global, economic, or societal implications). • How your ideal clients are currently experiencing the topics in the area of concern; what they've accomplished so far, where they're stuck or in pain.
The Possibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the key insight that you have about the area of concern that would make a difference to your ideal client? • How would you distinguish your key insight from other approaches that are commonly used? • Did you have a personal "aha" that made you realize the importance of the insight? • How has this insight had powerful results with clients (case study or anecdotes to support your points)? • Are there other thought leaders or examples of this type of work that support your insight? Examples can be current to your industry, can pull from timeless sources that show how the underlying core principles of your insight have been valued for centuries or millennia, or might demonstrate how your insight has been successfully applied in other contexts, and how it can be adapted to the type of concerns you are discussing.
The Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your methodology. • Elucidate key principles and highlight specific considerations about the overall methodology, or in particular steps of the process.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize your beliefs about the relevance and importance of your key insight, and how you see a future in which this insight makes a contribution.

