

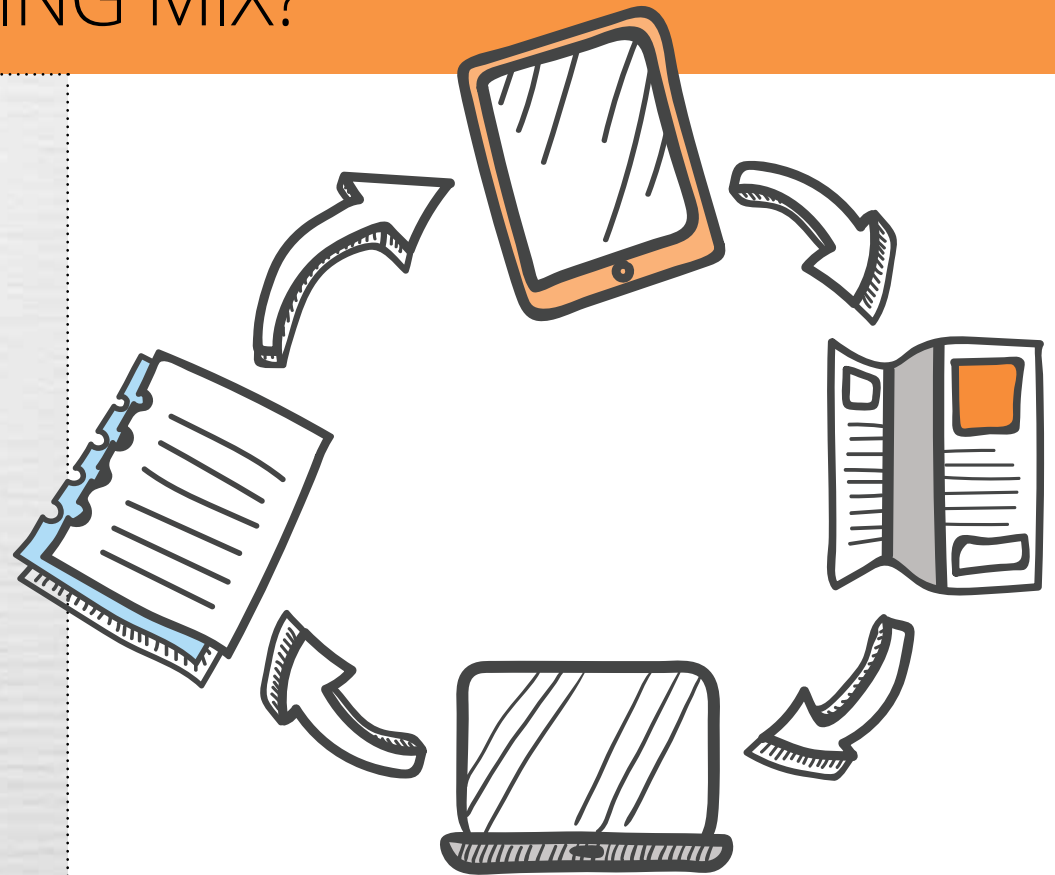
# e-books

HOW THEY WORK,  
WHAT THEY DO BEST  
AND WHERE THEY  
FIT INTO YOUR  
MARKETING MIX

# WHERE DO E-BOOKS FIT IN YOUR STRATEGIC STORYTELLING MIX?

Marketers have more tools, channels and materials for telling their strategic stories than ever before. Knowing which of those tools to use when, where and for what audience is key to building an effective content marketing program.

So what role can **e-books** play in your content universe — and how can they help you achieve your B2B marcom goals?



# E-BOOKS ARE A WAY TO SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE.

Before a prospect is ready to go deep and read a white paper or take the pitch of a brochure, an e-book provides the opportunity to start a conversation. To show you understand customers' needs and how to meet them. To offer the value of your perspective.



e-books are a relatively low-cost and quick format for demonstrating thought leadership, differentiating your organization from competitors, raising awareness and generating leads. Because they're highly visual and copy-light, they're easy for readers to digest. And because they put the customer first — by exploring a challenge prospects likely need to overcome rather than overtly promoting you — they have strong potential to engage.





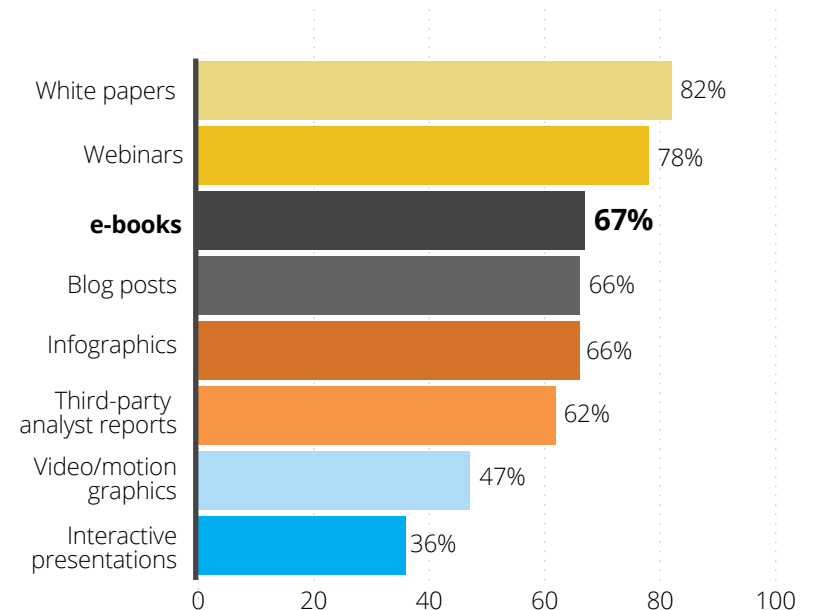
# E-BOOKS CAN START A CONVERSATION — OR CONTINUE ONE.

An e-book can draw in a new prospect — someone you've never communicated with before — or continue the conversation with someone you've already dealt with, either as a lead or a potential repeat customer.

The Content Marketing Forum's "Ultimate List" blog cited DemandGen Report's finding that e-books are one of the top three ways B2B buyers make purchasing decisions.

<sup>1</sup> Content Marketing Forum, 2015  
(<http://www.curata.com/blog/content-marketing-statistics-the-ultimate-list/>)

How do B2B customers research buying decisions?



# E-BOOKS TELL STORIES IN WORDS AND PICTURES.

## ANATOMY OF AN E-BOOK

**Highly visual** —  
50/50 images  
and text

Sidebars that  
**call out key  
concepts**  
or facts

Light copy  
focused on **one  
point per page**

**Meaningful  
headings** that tell  
your story and are  
easy to scan

**Strong, simple  
graphics** that  
support your  
message





# THEY TELL STORIES THAT BUILD...

While there's no fixed format for an e-book, here are some best practices for keeping readers hooked:

1

## **Write what you know**

Choose topics that are inherently linked to your area of expertise — that reflect your subject-matter knowledge and reinforce your credibility.

2

## **Focus on one thing**

An effective e-book tells a single story on one topic: Five tips for pricing professional services; when to migrate your database to the cloud; three things to know about owning a hamster. If you find you have more than one topic to cover, make another e-book.

3

## **Use plain English**

Even technically informed readers are still just readers first. They don't want to have to decipher your text. The more clearly you reveal your thinking, the more persuasive it will be.



**By repurposing e-book content into other formats like blogs and social media posts, you can get more mileage out of your messaging and reinforce your thought leadership.**



## ...AND DELIVER VALUE TO READERS.

Most people read about 250 words a minute.<sup>2</sup> This e-book is 923 words long, which means it will take about 4 minutes to read it cover to cover. How much time do you want to ask your prospects to take reading your content? Base the length of your e-book on that.

The content of an e-book may be visionary or practical, but always it's about giving readers information that they can use — to overcome a challenge or understand a choice they face.

On that note, here are some additional best practices for writing effective e-books:

4

### **Keep it moving**

Make sure each page of your e-book advances your argument and delivers a fresh insight. If someone can scan only your headlines and take away valuable information, you know you're on the right track. Avoid repetition.

5

### **Keep it short**

Some e-books are text-heavy and run upwards of 20 pages. But remember, the more you write, the more you're asking your audience to read. And if they're just getting acquainted with your organization, they may not be ready to take a long journey with you. Six to 12 pages is an ideal length.

<sup>2</sup> <http://marketingland.com/estimated-reading-times-increase-engagement-79830>



# SO HOW DO YOU MAKE AN E-BOOK?

Like any good piece of marketing content, an effective e-book needs clear direction.

Strategically, it's important to make sure the story you're telling ties back to your marketing and sales goals. Authentically, you want to be confident it truly reflects your best thinking. "Thought leadership" isn't a commodity — and it can't be faked. Dig down to discover what your organization uniquely knows and own that as your message.

## CONTENT MARKETING IS BECOMING AN ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCY

According to IDC, the Chief Marketing Officers of the biggest tech companies said making content marketing an organizational competency is second in importance only to measuring ROI.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Content Marketing Forum, 2015 (<http://www.curata.com/blog/content-marketing-statistics-the-ultimate-list/>)







## LET'S MAKE AN E-BOOK.

Connect with us if you need a content partner to help you conceptualize and write e-books that engage your audience, elevate your brand and put your best thinking forward.

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