

National finalist in the Australian Marketing Institute's Awards for Marketing Excellence



Achieving 2500% ROI in 3 weeks with an online lead generation campaign



CommOut delivered 2500% return on investment (ROI) for a professional services company who needed sales leads in a hurry.

Using an online marketing campaign that featured a technical white paper, a search-engine-optimised press release and a website landing page optimised for conversion, CommOut delivered not only immediate sales for the client, but gave them on going marketing benefits by building their inhouse mailing list and boosting the brand of the young company.

“The speed with which the campaign delivered results was amazing.”

Trevor Schoerie
Managing Director
PharmOut Pty Ltd

The issue

PharmOut is a professional services company, offering regulatory compliance consulting and contracting to the pharmaceutical, medical device and life science industries.

They had consultants unexpectedly coming off a project early and urgently needed sales leads to generate short term projects with billable hours for these consultants before they commenced another large project.

Having consultants 'on-the-bench' where they are not generating revenue, is a major problem for professional services companies like PharmOut.

The solution

PharmOut approached sister company, online marketing consultancy CommOut, to devise a campaign to generate sales leads.

After analysis of previous sales history and discussions with PharmOut staff, it was decided that a campaign to generate leads for autoclave validation would meet the objectives. The validation (testing) of an autoclave machine is a project that pharmaceutical customers like to outsource. The validation of an autoclave is a well defined project and the consultants who needed work were ideally suited for such a job.

CommOut devised a campaign that used three communication elements:

1. A technical white paper about autoclave validation – showcasing PharmOut's expertise in the field.
2. A search engine optimised press release promoting the availability of the white paper.
3. A website landing page that offered the white paper download and captured contact information.

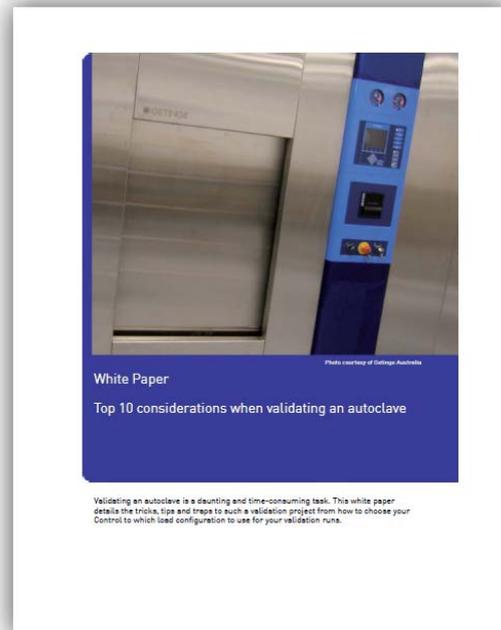


Figure 1. The front cover of the white paper.

The technical white paper

One of the PharmOut consultants was asked to write a white paper about the validation of autoclaves. His excellent technical knowledge of the topic (but not so excellent writing skills) was then massaged by CommOut into an appealing white paper that offered valuable tips and know-how for the audience.

Search engine optimised press release

The number of pharmaceutical companies in the Australia who use autoclaves is limited. It is a very niche area – perfect for search engine marketing.

Working with online tools that analyse search terms, CommOut identified niche technical terms that would increase the chances of a press release about the new white paper getting high search engine rankings.

That research targeted four primary phrases for which we wanted to achieve placement in the top 5 search results on key search engines like Google:

1. Autoclave validation
2. Loaded heat distribution for autoclave validation
3. FDA compliance gmp gcp glp
4. Vacuum assisted steam sterilization

We also identified two secondary phrases:

- Performance qualification
- Validation engineers

Online research revealed that none of PharmOut’s competitors were performing this kind of search marketing or even paying attention to results on Google.com.au. This made aiming for organic search rankings appealing, both from the low cost aspect as well as the likely ease that the objectives could be achieved.

CommOut wrote a press release (refer to Figure 2) that was optimised for the identified phrases and was written in HTML. We used some online tools to check the optimisation, making sure that the density of the keywords was enough to achieve the results, but not overdone so as to be blacklisted by Google.

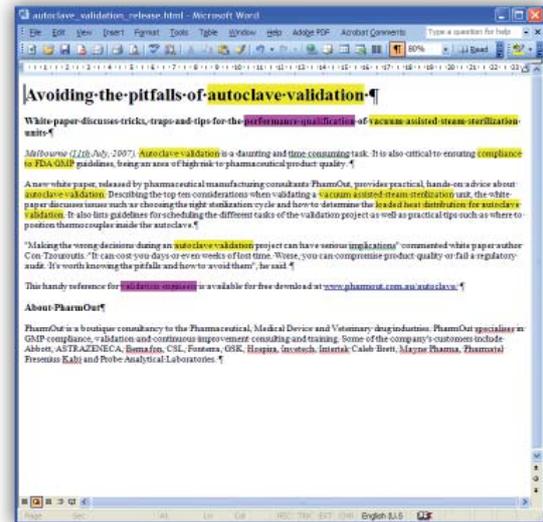


Figure 2. The search engine optimised press release, with the primary phrases highlighted in yellow and the secondary phrases in magenta.

Using the PRNewsWire Web Only distribution service offered by AAP, the press release was distributed to 3600 online news and specialist websites. A Google alert was created to track where the press release appeared.



Figure 3. A Google Alert was used to track where the press release appeared on the Web after it was sent out on the wire service.

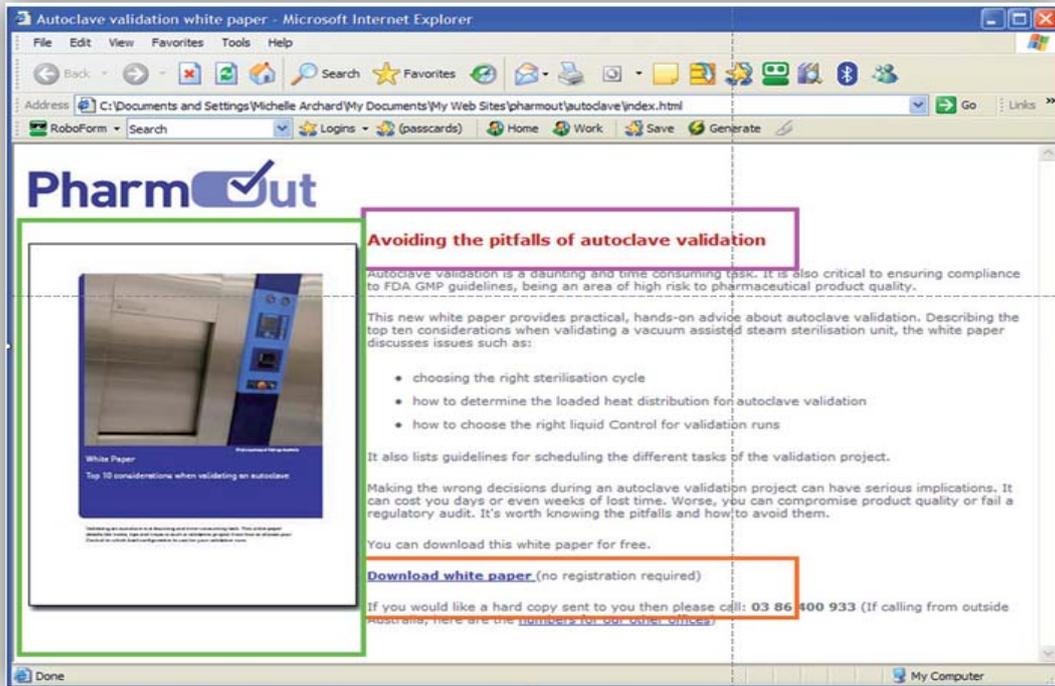


Figure 4. The three elements of the landing page that were varied during the testing process.

Landing page

CommOut crafted a landing page to receive clickthroughs from a link in the press release. We used Google Analytics functionality to conduct a multivariate test to determine which elements of the landing page achieved the best clickthrough and conversion rates. Three page elements were tested:

1. Including or not including a hero shot of the white paper cover.
2. Two different headlines:
 - “Avoiding the pitfalls of autoclave validation” – matched the headline of the press release
 - “Tips and tricks for autoclave validation” – promoted benefits using different language than the press release
3. Including or not including a note telling the visitor that registration was **not** required in order to download the white paper.

These three elements were presented to visitors to the landing page in eight combinations. The version that delivered the best conversion rate was then left in place on an ongoing basis. It’s interesting to note that including the ‘No registration required’ statement delivered the best results – with nearly 10% more visitors downloading the white paper when presented with this version of the landing page.

Not requiring registration in order to download the white paper is generally not the norm in online marketing. CommOut took the approach that it’s more valuable to get the white paper, and thus the company’s brand, into the hands of 1000 people (who might otherwise have balked at handing over their details and left without the white paper) than it is to get 50 people entering their details into a registration form in order to download the white paper. With typical B2B registration rates at well under 10%¹, not forcing registration meant that many more potential customers would download the white paper and have a positive impression of the PharmOut brand.

The result

Three hours after the release went out, it had been published by 20 news websites. Google alerts were working overtime!

Within 75 minutes there were 3 'A' class sales leads from large companies who fit the target market profile.

After 2 days, the white paper had been downloaded 42 times (remember – this a very niche market).

After 2 weeks, PharmOut had sent proposals to four potential customers.

After 3 weeks, they had two approved projects and the consultants were off the bench and back generating revenue.

With total costs being approximately \$2,500 and the revenue generated by the projects close to \$65,000, the return on investment was 2500%.

In addition to the sales generated by the campaign, PharmOut got their white paper into the hands of 200 new contacts (and their friends) in the six weeks following the release, building their brand as a trusted technical advisor and building their inhouse mailing list. Typically, 24% of white paper recipients will pass it onto their boss and 77% will pass it onto their colleagues¹. This viral benefit was potentially more valuable than the direct sales it generated.

The outcomes

Long after the campaign, PharmOut still enjoys the impact of elevated search engine rankings for the campaign keywords – with 8 top 5 rankings on search engines. This benefit is continuing to deliver sales leads without additional investment.

The white paper continues to be downloaded from the website, with visitors frequently downloading other white papers as well. Many of those visitors opt to register to be added to PharmOut's in-house mailing list. This list has become a key marketing tool when promoting events and new offerings.

The campaign also positioned the PharmOut brand as a successful one - with customers making comments like "I downloaded a white paper from your website the other day. The link came up on Google alert. It was very good. You guys must be doing well." For a young company, this credibility boost was really important and has been one of the reasons for the continuing growth they have enjoyed.

After...

75 minutes

3 'A' class sales leads

2 days

42 white paper downloads

2 weeks

4 proposal requests

3 weeks

2 approved projects