

- ✓ At the very end of the conclusions, include your **call to action** — the next step you want your ideal readers to take. It can be as short as a single sentence.
- ✓ Nearly every backgrounder features a brief section **about the company** to show the standard boilerplate from the vendor. Include company contact information here.

## Choosing an effective title

Unlike other flavors of white papers, mentioning a product, service, or company name in the title of a backgrounder is acceptable. In fact, it's hard not to. If you have a large product family, you can specify a certain model or model range in the title to avoid confusion. Beyond that, a good title clearly conveys the contents of the white paper, the audience, and the benefits of reading it.

Here are some possible formats for a backgrounder title:

- ✓ How the Acme ScanOMatic 3000 Provides Network Security
- ✓ Evaluator's Guide for the Acme ScanOMatic 3000
- ✓ Product Briefing: Acme ScanOMatic 3000
- ✓ Unattended Scanning with the ScanOMatic 3000

Another useful tactic is to use a subtitle to name the ideal reader's job title or industry that clearly indicates who the backgrounder is aimed at, such as "A White Paper for CFOs from Acme."

You don't have to finalize your title during the planning stage of your backgrounder, but having a working title is useful to bandy about the office, especially if your team routinely works on more than one white paper at a time. If nothing else, you can call this something generic, like "that backgrounder on the ScanOMatic 3000," or a tad more specific, like "that backgrounder on unattended scanning with the 3000."

## Setting a factual tone

If you had to come up with just one word to describe the tone of a backgrounder, that word would be *factual*. On every page of your backgrounder, make sure the text is clear, crisp, and accurate. You don't need a lot of flowery language or adjectives in this flavor. You're describing a product or service that exists now, designed for a certain purpose, and aimed at a certain target market. That offering has certain features, and each feature has an intended benefit. Where's the need for any hot air? Just describe what's there and what it does, using plain English and industry-standard names for various items. And when you claim a benefit, don't be outlandish.