

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE DESIGN BRIEF COMPANY » DOWNLOAD AREA

A design brief is a written explanation - given to a designer - outlining the aims, objectives and milestones of a design project.

A thorough, articulate design brief is a critical part of the design process. It helps develop trust and understanding between the client and designer. It also serves as an essential point of reference for both parties - ensuring that important design issues are considered and questioned before the designer starts work on designs.

This article outlines some of the most important factors to consider when writing your design brief.

Company Profile

Start your design brief with a short, honest synopsis of your organisation or company. Don't take this information for granted, and don't assume that the designer will necessarily know the ins and outs of your industry sector.

Tell your designer:

- What your organisation does
- How long you have been established and how many staff you employ
- What your niche market is
- How you fit in to your industry sector

Your Aims

Design can have a huge influence on the success of a project - but in order for success to be ensured, clear goals must be set.

For example, do you want to:

- Generate sales?
- Encourage enquiries?
- Gain newsletter subscribers?
- Obtain information from your audience?
- Encourage them to tell a friend?

If you know what you want to achieve, putting these ideas down on paper will help to clarify your thoughts.

If your aims are a little less clear-cut, then start by brainstorming. This is a very healthy and rewarding part of the design brief - and is the most effective way to determine your key intentions.

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Your target audience

Detail your primary, secondary and tertiary audiences. Explain if you are looking to consolidate your existing client-base or appeal to brand new markets.

Detail any demographic figures about your audience that may be useful to the designer - including age, sex, income etc.

Your budget and timescale

Even if you can only provide a ball-park figure, a budget expectation will give the designer a good idea of the type of solution they will realistically be able to provide.

Time-scale is also an important consideration - so let your designer know if there is a specific deadline that has to be met.

Consult with colleagues

Consult with as many people within your organisation as possible before sending the brief. Showing the design brief to different people may reveal remarkable differences in the way people see the organisation's aims and objectives.

Resolving out any differences in opinion will save considerable time and expense further down the line. This will also help to ensure that you do not overlook important issues.

Copy and images

The brief should mention if and when copy and images will be supplied, and making sure both the copy and images have been approved before passing on to the designers, will invariably save both time and money. The copy and images can be a big help when setting the parameters for what can be done. If not supplied, mentioning the requirement for copywriting and commissioning photography in the brief is a must.

Language

Whilst you should write in clear, concise way - there is no reason why you cannot use emotive language to emphasise exactly what you are trying to achieve.

Design examples

Providing examples of what you consider to be effective or relevant design can be a great help in writing a design brief.

Make sure to include samples of your organisation's current marketing materials - even their only purpose is to explain what you don't want from your new marketing materials!

If there is a design style that you particularly like or dislike - then explain why in the brief. If you're not entirely sure why you like a certain design style, then good starting points include:

- Colour
- Imagery
- Quantity and quality of text
- Typography

Don't feel that you have to stick to the medium that you are designing for when giving a list of inspiration and influences. If a television advert or music video creates the atmosphere that you want your flyer to create, then that is a perfectly reasonable statement to make in a design brief.

The more clues you give about your design tastes, the more likely the designer will be able to produce something close to your aims. Remember that professional designers will not copy the ideas you send them... but use them as the start of the design process.