

How to brief a Designer

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

An articulate design brief is a critical part of the design process. It helps develop understanding between the client and designer - and serves as an essential point of reference for both parties. Above all, the design brief ensures that important design issues are considered and questioned before the designer starts work.

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

IMPORTANT! This document takes about ten minutes to read. By reading it you will significantly reduce delivery times and the cost of your design project.

What is your product or service?

Provide short, honest synopsis of your product or service. Be clear, be concise.

What are the goals of the design process, what are you trying to communicate and why?

For example, do you want to:

- Generate sales?
- Encourage enquiries?
- Gain newsletter subscribers?
- Obtain information from your audience?
- Publicise or promote your product or service?

How do you fit it to your industry sector what's your niche, why do your customers use you?

Be clear, be concise.

Who is your target market?

Outline any demographic figures about your audience that may be useful to the designer. These may include:

Age

Gender
Income
Occupation
Location
Anything else you think is important

Describe the perception of your product or service, what I do you want to convey, how do you want to present yourself in the market and why?

Be clear, be concise.

Agree a budget and deadline

A budget and deadline expectation will give the designer a good idea of the type of solution they will realistically be able to provide.

Consult colleagues and friends before completing the brief

Try to consult with as many people as possible before sending the brief. Showing the design brief to different people may reveal differences in the way people see your organisation's aims and objectives. Resolving any differences in opinion will save considerable time and expense further down the line.

I already have a corporate identity and I'd like the Designer to develop a solution based on that

Most professional Designers will be familiar with corporate identities and how to implement them. Give the Designer an up-to-date copy of the guidelines and let them develop a solution from there.

I have a creative concept in mind and I'd like to give the Designer some creative direction

If you have a creative concept in mind that you would like the Designer to execute you should explain why you want to take this particular creative route and why you think it will be successful. You should then discuss with the Designer what you expect them to produce and payment terms.

I'm paying for the Designer's creative talent and expertise, I'll leave creative and design decisions up to them

Unless you have a clear idea why you think a particular creative route will be successful, resist the temptation to direct the designer towards a particular creative concept or visual style. Concentrate instead on providing a clear brief and leave the choice of creative direction, visual style, fonts, colours, composition, scale, atmosphere, mood, etc up to the Designer, that's their area of skill and expertise. If you have seen samples of a Designer's work and you like what they have done, leave them to interpret the brief and produce the solution. The Designer will generally explain what he or she intends to do before embarking on a large amount of work.

If you don't like what they have produced, pay the Designer for what you have agreed and move on, or discuss your issues with the Designer and revisit the brief.

I don't have time to write a brief, is there a shortcut?

No.