



# Super Briefs

A guide to writing a super design brief

# One brief... one mission...

Design is a very emotive subject. Everyone has an opinion about what we see, and one single design can prompt very different reactions in different people. So how do you ensure that your design agency is able to translate your vision into reality?

The answer is simple – produce an effective design brief.

A design brief is vital to every project whether it's a brochure, direct mail piece, advertising, corporate identity or website. The brief will provide the design team with all the information they need to exceed your expectations (provided you've found the right agency of course!). It also focuses you, the client, on what exactly you want to achieve from the project before any work starts.

A good brief will result in high quality, creative design that meets the client's needs. A poor brief, or even worse no brief at all, results in time-wasting, and unworkable or inappropriate solutions that lose the creative's enthusiasm and the client's faith.

We have produced this guide to creating a design brief to breakdown the various chunks of information us designers need to do a good job.





# Writing a super design brief...

## Background

Start by writing a short, honest overview of your organisation or company. Don't take this information for granted, and don't assume the designer will necessarily know the ins and outs of your industry. Remember to be clear and precise and avoid marketing-speak and jargon!

## Aims & objectives

What is the overall aim of the device for the business? Design can have a huge influence on the success of a project however, clear goals must be set. Do you want to completely reinvent yourself, support the launch of a new service or product, or simply update your existing promotional material? Also does the final device need to communicate particular information, gain responses of some kind, or be used to fulfil enquiries?

## Who are you designing for?

It may seem obvious – but who are you trying to reach? Are you reaching them now? If not, what do you feel is missing? Your designer will need to know who they are designing for, their tastes, attitudes and views in order to engage them with your company. For multiple audiences try to rank them in terms of importance.

## Content vs. copy

You may have some basic content or information that must be included and getting this right is as important as the graphic design. You need to be clear who is providing the basic content, and who is doing the copywriting. Good designers will be able to point you in the direction of expert copywriters who can sharpen up your content into sparkling copy.

## Related design work

Providing examples of what you consider to be effective or relevant design can be a great help in writing a design brief. It may help to provide samples of current marketing materials – if only to explain what you don't want from your new ones! You may also want to provide examples of what your main competitors are up to as a benchmark.

## Consult with colleagues

Consult with as many people as possible within the organisation. Showing the brief to different people may reveal remarkable discrepancies in the way they see the organisations aims and objectives. This is a good chance to iron out any differences in opinion that could delay the process later down the line, when changes are harder to make.

## Budget

Whilst you may feel uncomfortable about divulging this information at the outset, the budget determines the design direction. What you can achieve for £5,000 is very different from £25,000. Prior knowledge of budgets can prevent designers wasting valuable time and resources in order to maximise your precious budget.

## Timescale

Try to set realistic deadlines for completion of the work, taking into account the various stages of the design process. Rushing design jobs helps no-one and mistakes can be made if a complex job is pushed through without time to review and check things carefully.

Occasionally there are times when you do need things in a hurry. If you are honest and upfront, then your creative team will advise and work out what they can deliver. Be warned though – this will mean pressure on you to make decisions, produce copy and sign-off proofs to deadline.

# What to avoid...

## Although informative, don't make the brief too specific

If the brief is too specific, there's a chance you could be ruling out any creative genius that ticks all the boxes perfectly. The creative team needs information to focus their attention on the problem, not suggestions on how the problem should be solved.

## Don't forget other creative work

Although the design team should have creative freedom, it's important that the device integrates with other material. Consistency is key to reinforcing your messages.

## Don't concentrate too hard on creativity, and not enough on results

Creative work should be accountable. The creatives may have a fantastic, award-winning idea but if it fails to meet your aims and objectives it might be a waste of money.



# Top Tips:

- Be clear & concise
- Know what you want to achieve
- Provide background to your company
- Who is the audience & provide examples of main competitors
- Do you have any specific requirements for format e.g. changing information on a frequent basis?
- How will the new material be used?
- Is there a particular style you want it in?
- What copy is there – length & who will provide it?
- Images – any existing photography or library images?
- Budget – you need to set a realistic one
- What are your timelines for the project?
- Appoint one person to be the main contact

## About us...

Armstrong Design is a dynamic, fresh and innovative design house based in Hertfordshire. We are committed to all things creative and will always provide your business with an honest, individual and outstanding design solution, on time, every time.

With our out-of-London set-up, our reliable and creative team offers a pricing structure to complement any budget. All fees are fixed and approved up-front, so there are no hidden costs to be concerned about. We also offer a free, no obligation design consultation. So give us a go.

### Our services...

Corporate Identities

Stationery Sets

Branding

Brochures & Literature

Website Design & Construction

Newsletters

Corporate Publications

Direct Mail Material

Advertising

Merchandising

E-Marketing

Exhibition Design & Build

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