

how to write a good design brief

When planning your new website you will need to tell the designer what sort of website you want, what you'd like it to achieve for you and who your target market is. A poorly thought out or vague brief could result in the wrong solutions being offered to you, wasting your time and money. Below are tips on what kind of information a design brief should include.

company profile

Start your design brief with a short, honest synopsis of your organisation or company. Don't assume that the designer will necessarily know anything about 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
- Realistic evaluation of your organization, service, or brand relative to your competitors
- Explain the situation that instigated the need for this project
- Explain your geographical location and whether your markets are local, regional, national or international

corporate personality

How do you want to be perceived? Cutting edge? Relaxed and friendly? Stylish? Elegant? Inexpensive and approachable? Any subliminal messages you would like to convey? Create a list of objectives you want to achieve and ones which you wish to avoid.

your objectives

Good design can have a huge influence on the success of a company's marketing strategy - but in order for success to be ensured, clear goals must be set.

For example, do you want to:

- Generate revenue and sales?
- Encourage enquiries from your viewers?
- Gain newsletter subscribers or improve customer retention?
- Gather information from your audience?
- Generate new, better quality leads?

Make sure that your aims and objectives are as clear as possible. Writing a design brief will help to clarify your thoughts and can indirectly help to find flaws in what you initially thought was a solid idea.

additional requirements

It's important to state any other requirements that you might have about how it might function. These include:

- Do you require website monitoring and statistics to measure your success?
- Would you like an indication of a search engine optimisation (SEO) strategy?
- Will your site need to work in multiple languages?
- Do you need your website to include any specific colours or fonts to match existing corporate branding?
- Do you have an existing website host or do you need to arrange a new host?

target audience

Detail your primary, secondary and tertiary audiences. Explain if you are looking to consolidate your existing client-base or appeal to new markets. Detail any demographic figures about your audience that may be useful to the designer. These may include age, sex, income, occupation, location.

budget/timescale

Do you have a budget that you are working to? A budget expectation will give the designer a good idea of the type of solution they will realistically be able to provide. Also give your designer a detailed and realistic schedule of how you would like the project to advance and the deadline for delivery of the finished website.

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 that you also include samples of your company's current marketing materials - even their only purpose is to explain what you don't want from your new marketing materials. If you have an existing website, tell the designer what you do and don't like about it., what you like to change and what you'd like to keep.

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
- The atmosphere that particular designs create

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.

Give as many clues about your design tastes as you can – it will help the designer to produce something close to your aims. Expecting your designer to second-guess what you require rarely produces the best results.