



# how to write an effective design brief

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**What is a design brief? It is an outline of your creative project, listing all the requirements and business objectives for your design project.**

The brief also allows you – the client – to focus on exactly what you want to achieve, before any work starts on the project. A good design brief will ensure that you get a high-quality design that meets your company’s marketing needs.

## **Writing the brief**

The good news is that a brief doesn’t have to be long – an email with some bullet points may be a good starting point, as the brief can always be revised and amended after discussions with your design agency. Remember, the brief is the basis of the contract between you and the agency, so it’s important to be relevant and precise.

The brief should engage the agency’s creative team in the marketing goals, and clearly lay out the design requirements, so that the job can be costed correctly. As with any communication, you want your audience to understand and connect with the issues, so there’s an element of storytelling in any good brief.

There are three parts to a good design brief: the context, the problems & objectives, and finally the deliverables:

## **Context**

The context for your brief is immensely helpful to the creative process, providing the ‘background’ to the design process; useful context can include: a full history of your company, an outline of your competitors, and examples of customer research. The important thing is to make sure that the information relevant to your project is included, and work towards a summary of your business and it’s background:

- Story: products, background and strategy
- Competitors: what is your competition?
- Experience: past successes in marketing
- People: the decision-maker, the managers



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## **Problems & objectives**

The most important part of the brief is defining your problems & objectives – what are you expecting the design to achieve, and how will you measure it's success? Without this, you may end up with a nice design, but may not achieve anything of value for your company's marketing.

Try to list where you feel your company's marketing could be better, and which of your competitors are achieving this at the moment:

- What is the project trying to change: customer awareness, customer perception, and/or customer behaviour?
- Is there a marketing direction that you would like to achieve?
- Who is the target market?
- What are your thoughts on how the design project may help the above goals?

## **Deliverables**

Finally, you'll need to be clear about what you are asking the design agency to deliver, and what additional resources may be needed to achieve this. With the deliverables defined, your design agency will then be able to provide you with an accurate price:

- What is the design item – an advert for publication, a printed brochure, an online advert, etc.
- The specifications – size, number of colours, and so on
- The delivery timescale

## **You get out what you put in!**

A clear brief is the same as strong leadership: inspiring and precise. False starts will be avoided, and you will be in a strong position to receive design solutions that work for your business!