

Designer Briefs



Now that image would have grabbed your attention! Sadly this article is not about Designer Briefs as in half naked women, but rather about putting together a clear and precise design or creative brief to give to your graphic designer.

So why is a design brief important? Why can't the designer simply figure out what you want with a telephone call? The answer to that is quite simple. You know your business better than anyone. You know what you like and what you don't, you know the culture, the clients and your product or service. By spending a bit of time putting together a written explanation outlining the goals and objectives of a design project, you will essentially provide the designer with all the information they need to create an effective design that will achieve it's goal.

A detailed and articulate brief is a crucial part of the design process; it helps to establish an understanding between the client and designer that ultimately serves as a reference tool throughout the project. Here are some very helpful areas to include in your brief.

Company Profile

Introduce your company with a short description of your organisation. Tell your designer what product or service you provide, mention your company mission statement or philosophy, give a concise company history and describe your company niche and industry sector.

Define Your Target Audience

Identify your primary audience. Be specific with any demographic figures about your audience that you have. These figures will be useful to the designer. Include age, gender, household income level, occupation, and geographic location. Saying that you target everyone is not specific enough. Be tough as the more targeted your collateral the better the outcome will be.

Set Your Goal

Define the project and what you would like the outcome to be. For example, do you want to increase the number of new clients, increase repeat business, get more traffic to your website or have more followers on Facebook or Twitter? Good design can influence the success of a company but clear goals must be set. Sitting down to write the design brief will help you set those goals.

Establish a Budget

Providing budget expectations will give the designer a good idea of what type of solution they can provide you to fit in with your means. Withholding this information for fear of being over-charged is a common misconception about working with designers. Start with honesty up front and most likely you will receive good service in return. There are many ways that a designer can amend the brief to fit in with your budget – printing on a different stock, changing the size of the originally intended piece or producing slightly less pieces than originally planned by looking at the target audience and streamlining the message.

Be Specific

Clearly articulate what it is that needs to be designed. For example is it a business card, a 5 page website or a 4 page brochure? The above information is not enough for a designer to design from let alone quote on. You'll need to take into account:

what size in dimensions will it be?

will it be printed in full colour, with a special Pantone colour or even silver or gold ink?

what stock do you want it printed on – bond, flyer stock or card – maybe you want plastic business cards or a special linen stock for your letterhead?

will it be printed double sided?

how many do you need printed or how many pages will the website have?

what pages/navigation will the website consist of

what special features may it require, such as rotating banners, member log in areas, shopping cart etc?

does it have a special finish such as celloglazing, embossing or foiling?

All of these things can significantly affect the budget so be mindful of wanting caviar when you only have a fish and chips budget.

Set a Deadline

Let your designer know if there is a specific deadline, such as a holiday or special event that has to be met. Keep in mind that if you leave your project to the last minute, many designers will apply a loading to their regular rate as they will have to down tools on other jobs. To avoid this from happening, always be prepared and give your designer a realistic amount of time to produce work that you will be happy with.

Decision Makers

If your project involves the approval of other people in the organisation make sure they have helped you write the brief or thoroughly reviewed it. Resolve any differences at the beginning to ensure the brief is as effective as possible.

Gather Examples

Collect collateral of any visuals you like as you prepare the brief. Design is a visual medium so a verbal description of “the cool business card with a green background” has little meaning. You can certainly use emotive words when describing the look and feel that you are after. When presenting the design examples in the brief take note of what you like about the colours, imagery or typography.

Don't forget to attach samples of your company's current marketing materials for further reference. This may be to demonstrate what you feel works or alternatively what you don't want to repeat.

Double Check

Review and refine the brief before sending it out. This is the first step of the project and the attention spent now will guide its future success. Always keep in mind that this is simply a guide for the designer. They will not copy what you have done (unless you are explicit in this instruction) but will rather take this information and problem solve through creative design solutions, to come up with a piece of collateral that you can be proud of.

white river design has a design brief template that we readily provide to our clients who struggle with putting a creative brief together. To get your copy, simply call us on 1300 722 896 or email us and we can provide that to you.