

A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing A Creative Brief

Introduction

A good creative brief is the starting point for any effective marketing campaign. Unfortunately, many businesses fail to achieve their marketing objectives because the information they provided to their creative agencies is inadequate.

This document provides a step-by-step guide on how to structure a written creative brief for a marketing campaign. It is written for business owners that don't have a background in marketing, but have a sound understanding of their business.

We hope you provide the document beneficial and it helps you to achieve your marketing objectives.

Enjoy!



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Project Management

Provide some basic information to your agency about the campaign. This will provide a structure for classification in your business as well as the agency.

The basic information required is:

Date	The date of the brief
Project Name	Name of the project
Project Type	Type of project ie print advertisement, TVC, email campaign etc
Purchase Order No	A bit the accountants will want to know
Company	Your company name
Brand	The specific brand that is the focus of the project.
Client Team	Name, titles and contact details of the individuals managing this project within your business
Agency Contacts:	Name, title and contact details of the agency representative

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What position are we in now?

This is the starting point for any campaign. You need to paint a picture in the mind of the agency of where the brand is now.

In this section you should include the following:

- A complete description of the product or service including key features and benefits.
- The brands current positioning in the market and examples of current advertising.
- Details of your distribution channels and how the product reaches the consumer.
- Background information on the market. This includes market size (volume and value) and your market share.
- A complete history of your advertising campaigns and those of your competitors. How does your product position itself against it's competition?

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What position do we want to be in?

This is your opportunity to tell the agency where you want to be. This doesn't mean saying that you want "to be the market leader". That's obvious. You need to communicate to your agency clearly what your marketing objectives are, ensuring that they follow the **SMART** principle. This is:

Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Specific

Your objectives should be the same as is stated in your business or marketing plan and ideally focussed on improvements in sales, usage, image, reputation, profitability, shareholder value or response levels.

Put simply, state to your agency what you want to achieve with this project with the proposed expenditure.

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What's our strategy to get there?

Here you need to give the agency an idea of your current marketing strategy and what you already have in place to achieve the objectives. You also need to show how your strategy fits in with your overall business plan.

In some cases your campaign will involve a variety of agencies that handle different aspects of the campaign. Examples are public relations, website and direct mail. Here you need to give all agencies a consistent message of the role each aspect plays in the overall campaign. Identify the key messages for each aspect and provide as much insight as you can on what role each of them plays in growing your brand.

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Who's the target audience?

The purpose of the campaign is to convince a specific group of people to perform a specific action. The question is who are these people? This should be clearly defined in your marketing plan but if it's not then you need to define and segment your target audience based on demographics, lifestyle and product usage.

If you already have some research on your target audience then it is critical that you share this with agency at this point. They will then determine if any further research will be required to develop the creative concepts for the project.

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What does success look like?

You need to be clear with the agency on what success will look like for this campaign. You must also ensure that key metrics are established to measure this success (or failure) as compared to the objectives you have stated in part 3 of your brief.

You need to be clear on:

1. How the campaign will be measured.
2. When it will be measured.
3. Who will measure it.

As part of this process, it's important to ensure that success (or failure) is communicated back to the agency. In some cases, minor changes to a campaign can significantly change the result so constant and open communication is a must.

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Practicalities

These are the specific items that the agency need to keep in mind for the campaign. They generally fall into the categories of budget, timing and general considerations.

Budget

This will have a big impact on the campaign so it's important to be clear on this if you have a set budget for the project.

If your budget is not set, then you might provide three figures being low, medium and high and request recommendations based on the budget.

Timing

This is where you provide answers to the questions:

- When does the campaign need to be in the market?
- What are booking deadlines for any media?
- What are the key project milestone dates.

With timing it's always good to give yourself some breathing room. Our philosophy is to provide a date at least one week prior to the actual deadline to prevent any problems due to unforeseen delays.

General Considerations

Different industries sometimes have specific considerations that need to be taken into account when developing campaigns. An example is the Pharmaceutical industry where advertising is tightly regulated. This section is your opportunity to outline these.

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Approvals

The last section of the brief that tells the agency who has the authority to sign off the work. Ideally this should be the same person or people that sign off the brief.



MarketingHQ are a Sydney based marketing consultancy that provides strategic marketing solutions to small and medium sized businesses.

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