

Creating a design brief

The design brief is a specification clearly defining project objectives, planning, timings and outcomes. All resources along with constraints (time, cost, quality, format, etc.) need to be defined at this stage.

There are no hard rules about structuring a design brief but the following headings are a good starting point:

PROJECT TITLE: _____

DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

- **Background** (reason for the project, the broader policy context etc)
- **Issues** (the issues to be addressed, with the specific problems)
- **Objectives** (specific objectives for the project, ideally in terms of outcomes rather than outputs)
- **Who are we designing for** (this means a very precise and complete description of the target audience for the design project)?
- **What is the competitive environment like?**
- **Other key considerations** (such as regulatory, safety or ethical issues)
- **Budget** (broken down into fees, production costs etc)
- **What, precisely, are the phases of this design project?**
- **How much time must be devoted to each phase?**
- **What will each phase cost?**
- **Critical path** (the main decision points and deadlines which need to be met)

Creating a design brief (continued.)

- **Project Management (members of the project team, roles and contact details)**
- **Approvals process (who has the authority to approve what and in what turnaround time)**
- **How will the design solution be implemented? (i.e. print, Web)**
- **How will the results be measured?**
- **Is there a particular form-factor in mind?**
- **If client is supplying graphic elements, when will they be ready?**
- **Will the project require a photoshoot or stock photography?**
- **Brand values (of the organisations and/or initiatives involved)**
- **Does the client have a corporate brand to work to - if yes - we will need the guidelines themselves to work from (this could be in the form of a folder/CD/PDF). If no, greater discussion is needed to ensure the solution fits with client 'brand'**
- **Access to previous work can prove helpful (website, brochure etc)**
- **Does the client have any particular likes/dislikes?**
- **Do we have any points of reference? Any samples of work they like - this could prove invaluable as often people do have something in mind which helps to provide a solution to the brief more quickly and effectively**
- **Next Steps (what action is required from the designers and by when)**
- **Appendices (related documents, contracts etc)**

Useful website: www.designcouncil.org.uk