
Creative Brief Guide

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Summary

1. Client Background
2. Project Overview
3. Target Audience
4. Competitor Analysis
5. Project Specifics
6. Clerical

All sections should include detailed supporting research for each decision.

- This document is generally 2 pages+
- The design of this document should use clear hierarchy of information.
- You may construct the document via MSWord, InDesign, or other individually approved programs after discussion with the instructor.
- Detailed content should be provided for each section but should not be written in a narrative/paragraph/research paper form. This document is intended to be a “quick reference”—utilize bullet points and numbered lists when possible.
- *Just because bullets are preferred doesn't mean the content should be shallow. Deep, supporting research, should always be included with every design decision you suggest.*
- In our academic setting, often times you will be playing the role of the designer AND the client. Fill out all information as best you can to help define your design goals.

Background

A creative brief is a document used during the design process to help keep projects running smoothly and prevent misunderstandings/mistakes by summarizing all the factors that impact the design project.

A creative brief is created through initial meetings, interviews, readings and discussions between a client and designer before any work begins. In our academic setting, this document will be the place to organize your project details, research, and creative direction (whether or not a project includes an actual or simulated client). Throughout a project, the creative brief continues to inform and guide the work—ensuring that the design direction is informed by research and meeting all project goals.

A successful creative brief:

- Connects objectives with creative strategies
- Builds team consensus
- Aligns expectations
- Defines clear, measurable goals

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Content

All sections should include detailed supporting research for each decision.

The following guide can be used for professional work as well as in-class projects and therefore is worded based on a designer & client relationship.

Client Background

- Who is your client and what products and services do they offer?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What are their values, and what is their current mission and vision?
- What are their brand attributes?

Knowing who your client is would allow you to use the most fitting format, tone, and approach that would represent your client the best. It also helps you look at things from the point of view of the client.

Project Overview

- What is the project all about?
- What is the design for and why is it needed?
- What opportunities will the project present?
- What are the project's goals and objectives?
- How do you measure success?

A general idea of what to work on and how to attack it. Understanding why the project is needed can be just as important as finding out what the project is. This would also allow you to see a myriad of possibilities that this project could open up, giving you the chance to study different approaches and see which options would give the most value.

Explaining the end goal and objective would give the entire project a clear direction as to which options to take and what methods to use to arrive at the desired destination. The team should never leave point A without knowing whether they want to go to point B or point C. There has to be a clear end point so that the necessary routes to be used to get there could be planned more effectively.

Target Audience

- Demographic Information
 1. Socio-demographic characteristics such as sex, age, language and religion.
 2. Geographic characteristics like where the audience lives and how that might impact behavior.
 3. Psychographic characteristics such as needs, hopes, concerns and aspirations.
- Why do they need this?
- What are the audience's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge and current actions related to the project/company?
- What are effective communication channels for reaching this audience?

At the end of the day, no matter how great your design is, if it doesn't appeal to the appropriate audience, then all the work goes to waste. When you fail to understand the audience that will be viewing your work, then you fail to do your job in helping your client reach their goals.

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Competitor Analysis

- Who are the competitors? (consider at least 3 different competitors)
- What approach are they using in their own campaigns/projects?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What differentiates your client from them?

Going into a market/environment without knowing who you're going up against may end up with you bringing the game plan. Understanding the competitor's approach would allow you to decide how you can outdo what they're already doing. Do you apply the same technique to show that you can do the same things they do, but better? Or would you go for the opposite of what they're doing and emphasize the differences between you?

Project Specifics

- What visuals will I use? (colors, fonts, photography, etc...)
- Is there a specific design that the client has in mind?
- Do I need to add the content (text/information) or is it provided by the client?
- If re-designing something—are there existing aspects from previous design that need to be included in the new one?

This gets down to the smallest details of the design and is arguably the most important section of the brief. Think of this area as the research that supports your mood board and any other design themes/concepts you have in mind. This area also notes what the client has in mind so that you can ensure you meet their expectations or at least prepare to refute them with research.

Clerical

- What is the budget?
- What are the time-lines?
- Who approves the project?
- Who is assigned to each task and each section? Define the roles of your team members.