

MSO:

Briefing your designer

Are you writing a brief for us? A good brief can save you the client a lot of money and us the designers a lot of wasted time and frustration, a good briefing process ensures a good relationship between designer and clients. Here are a few tips we put together to help the process along:

Good things to include in your design brief:

1. Title of item.
2. Delivery mechanism and marketing objectives.
2. Format.
3. Budget and schedule.
4. What are you providing the designer with:
Product shots, website screen shots, photographs, diagrams, etc. (Check these are high-resolution.)
5. General description of format:
Describe any formatting issues you have arranged with the printer.
6. Description of target audience:
Occupation, gender ratio, average age, nationality/location, psychological demographic, lifestyle preferences.
7. Message objectives:
Hierarchy of copy messages, treatment of headlines, body copy, visuals, product samples, call-to-action.

8. Where to look for inspiration:

Give brief examples of style / overall look you want the item to achieve. What aspects of the product or branding can be used as a starting point for the design? What feelings or metaphors reflect the spirit of your product or company?

9. What not to do:

Also give examples of what the design shouldn't include and what styles to avoid.

Tips for briefing a designer:

1. Think about the message of the design.

Offer guidance to help the designer marry the "look" of the item with the "voice" of the copy.

2. Don't prescribe solutions.

You are paying for the designer's ideas, so avoid the temptation to tell the designer what to do. Instead, be clear about what the item needs to achieve, so the designer can explore ideas. This is where you need the designer's expertise.

It's rarely a good idea to give a designer a mocked up layout – they will simply follow your instructions which are not necessarily making the best use of the space.

3. Do your scheduling before you brief a designer.

Make sure you schedule the whole project before you brief a designer, incorporating appropriate feedback and incubation stages. Ask your designer to inform you in advance if deadlines or set budgets are unrealistic.

4. Formalize design briefing.

Carefully word your brief in an email or as a front page to your copy, and use this as a reference point when you meet. Always brief designers face-to-face, or on the phone for smaller projects.

