

FREE MODULE

How to Write Better Creative Briefs

From brief disasters to strategic success



Welcome to Writing Better Creative Briefs

Let's get to it. In this module we are going to focus on transforming how you approach creative briefing.

What we will cover:

Section 1: The Brief Reality Check

- The shocking statistics
- Why most briefs fail
- The real cost of poor briefing

Section 2: Strategic Foundation First

- Building your positioning
- Internal alignment process
- Getting your house in order

Section 3: The Ultimate Brief Template

- Section-by-section breakdown
- AI enhancement opportunities
- Making it stick



SECTION 1

The Brief Reality Check

The uncomfortable truth about creative briefing

"90% of marketers fail to brief agencies effectively, and their failures begin with a total lack of strategy."

PROFESSOR MARK RITSON

The Shocking Statistics

The Numbers Don't Lie

The BetterBriefs Project surveyed over 1,700 marketers and agency staff from 70+ countries:

To do

Reflect:

Where do you think your briefs sit on this spectrum?

Marketer vs Agency Perceptions:

80%

of marketers believe they write good briefs

10%

of creative agencies agree

78%

of marketers think their briefs provide clear strategic direction

5%

of agencies concur

83%

of marketers believe their briefs are clear and concise

7%

of agencies see it that way

What Poor Briefs Actually Cost

The Financial Impact:

33% of marketing budgets go to waste due to poor briefs and misdirected work.

That's not just money down the drain—it's:

REMEMBER

A decent creative brief isn't just important, it's absolutely critical to success.



Time

Endless revision cycles



Momentum

Delayed launches and missed opportunities



Relationships

Damaged client-agency partnerships



Sanity

Frustration for everyone involved

Why a Decent Creative Brief Really Matters



For Clients

Answering brief questions in detail helps clarify the required output in your own mind. This process forces you to consider:

- Core proposition
- Key deliverables
- Timings and constraints
- Success criteria

Think of it as strategic thinking disguised as project planning.

For Agencies:

A good brief means starting on the same page as the client. Less time scrabbling around for information = more time creating great work.

REMEMBER

If you don't know what you want, the agency won't either.

SECTION 2

Strategic Foundation First

Where great briefs really begin

Before we dive into briefing tactics, let's address the elephant in the room:
a brief will be better if it can link back to your strategy and messaging.

Why Strategy Matters More Than Tactics

Many businesses jump straight into briefing individual projects without establishing their strategic foundation.

To do

Audit your last 3 marketing projects:

Do they feel like they're from the same brand?

Join the club to do our full marketing strategy module



The Problem:

- You know you need a website, brochure, or campaign
- But you haven't defined core positioning, key messages, strategic objectives
- Each project becomes isolated rather than part of a cohesive whole



The Result:

Your website says one thing, your brochures say another, and your social media sounds like it's from a completely different company.

Getting Internal Buy-In First

Before you even think about briefing an external agency, you need to sort your internal house first.

REMEMBER

Nothing derails a project faster than discovering three people think they're the ultimate decision-maker when concepts arrive.



The Pre-Brief Process:

1. **Gather stakeholders** around the table (literally or virtually)
2. **Work through key elements together** - not design by committee, but directional alignment
3. **Create a "pre-brief" document** capturing initial thoughts
4. **Share with stakeholders** a few days before planning session



Critical Questions to Align On:

- What problem are we actually trying to solve?
- Who has final sign-off authority?
- What does success look like?
- What are our non-negotiables vs nice-to-haves?

SECTION 3

The Ultimate Brief Template

Your framework for briefing success

With strategic foundations in place, let's build the perfect brief using our proven template.

Background: Keep It Human



What to Include:

Describe, in plain English, what your company does. **Explain who you are first, then what you do.**

Examples:

- "We are a factory... we manufacture phone handsets"
- "We are a shop... we sell bicycles"
- "We are a software development team... we develop apps for Android"



What to Avoid:

- Buzzwords or business-speak at all costs
- "Provide solutions" or "enable companies to leverage ROI"
- Anything your grandmother wouldn't understand



Include if Meaningful:

Brand values and mission statement (only if genuinely meaningful to operations)

To do

Write your background section in one clear paragraph using this approach.

Core Proposition & Know Your Competition

In plain English: what do you do, what makes you better than the competition, and can you detail unique selling points?

Most importantly—can you prove it?

Common Mistake: Confusing what you think makes you special with what actually matters to customers. If your "unique" selling point is "excellent customer service," you need to dig deeper.

Competition Analysis:

- Who are your competitors?
- What do they do that you like?
- What don't you like?
- Include examples of their communications



REMEMBER

Sometimes showing what you don't want is as valuable as showing what you do want.

Your Brand: The Person Test

Personality: The Person Test

If your business was a person, who would it be?

- **David Attenborough** (authoritative but approachable)?
- **Gordon Ramsay** (passionate but demanding)?

To do

This question often makes clients squirm, but it's incredibly revealing for tone and visual style.



Be Brutally Specific & Objectives: Make Them SMART



REMEMBER

The more specific you are with deliverables, the fewer surprises you'll encounter later.

Deliverables:

What do you need, in detail?



Vague: "Some marketing materials"



Specific: "A5 double-sided flyer, printed sales brochure, and all images (text supplied)"

Objectives:

Make it SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)



Hope: "Increase brand awareness"



Objective: "Increase website traffic by 25% within three months"

Risk Assessment, Timings & Budget Reality



Risk Assessment:

"It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him." - Tolkien

Consider potential pitfalls:

- Regulatory requirements
- Seasonal considerations
- Internal politics
- Competitive responses



Timings: Reality Check Required

- When do you need delivery?
- Any key contacts away during project timings?

Be realistic - great creative work takes time



Budget: The Elephant in the Room

Be realistic about budget. A clear budget helps agencies propose the right solution.

REMEMBER

There's no shame in budget constraints—there is shame in wasting everyone's time by not being upfront.

How AI Can Enhance Your Briefing Process

AI tools can be valuable allies in creating better briefs, but they're not magic solutions.



Research & Analysis Support:

- Analyse competitor communications
- Identify industry trends
- Audit existing brand voice for consistency
- Review draft briefs for clarity and completeness



Audience Insight Development:

- Develop detailed audience personas
- Analyse customer data and social engagement
- Suggest audience motivation questions



What AI Can't Do:

- Replace human insight and strategic thinking
- Understand company politics or customer relationships
- Capture subtle brand nuances

Try prompting: "Review this creative brief and identify any ambiguous language or missing information that might confuse an external agency."

**AI
HACK**

Making Your Brief Stick

The Brief as Measuring Stick:

Once signed off by all parties, your brief becomes the measuring stick for the entire project.

Every subsequent decision, creative review, and project milestone should refer back to this document.

To do

Commit to using this framework for your next brief - measure the difference.



Best Practice Implementation:

- **Use as living document** - guide immediate project and future communications
- **Capture the 'why'** - not just what to say, but why you want to say it
- **Reference consistently** - in all project communications and reviews
- **Update strategically** - when core strategy evolves, update brief template



Success Measurement:

- Fewer revision cycles
- Stronger creative outputs aligned to strategy
- Improved client-agency relationships
- Better project outcomes and ROI

Brief Mastery Completed

Strategic briefing is the foundation of all great creative work. With clear positioning, internal alignment, and a comprehensive brief template, you're equipped to transform your creative partnerships.

The road from brief to brilliant creative may be long and winding, but as long as you have your strategic anchor in place and a clear destination in view, you'll get there.

REMEMBER

Unless you're Mick Jagger briefing Andy Warhol —then just leave him to it.

Ready to transform your next project?

Start with strategy, align internally, brief comprehensively, and watch your creative partnerships flourish.

NEXT STEPS

Download the Ultimate Brief Template and Pre-Brief Checklist to start implementing immediately.

FREE
download