##

## CREATIVE BRIEF: [PROJECT NAME]

The purpose of writing a Creative Brief is to clarify your thinking upfront and to force you to make decisions at the beginning of the marketing project so that the marketing or advertising agency can start working on it with a complete picture of what you want. This process allows the design and production process to happen efficiently and therefore less expensively. People who don’t take the time to write a creative brief frequently end up making many changes to the requirements of the project during the project and this causes rework and ultimately leads to missed deadlines, higher costs and frustrated designers and agencies. A Creative Brief should be so complete that if you handed it over to the agency and disappeared for the duration of the project, the result should be pretty close to what you wanted.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Project name** |
| **Client** | Client company name |
| **Date** | May 12, 2022 |
| **Contact** | Contact name at the client |
|  | email |
|  | phone |

## Project Description

Briefly describe the project in one or two sentences.

## Background

Briefly describe any background to this project that would be helpful to the agency. Why are you doing this project? Is it part of or connected to anything else? i.e this is a new product launch for our company but there are 2 competitors in market; or we have had this product for years and have just decided to invest in marketing it better. What’s going on in the market? Mention important trends. What are competitors doing?

## Deliverables

What are the end deliverables? What will the agency provide you? i.e a printed brochure, a functioning website, a radio ad, a postear, 500 CD’s with cover artwork etc.

## Requirements

List the requirements of the end deliverables. What are the key specs and requirements? i.e. quantity, sizes, weights, technical specs, commercial length, video formats, audio formats, other file formats etc.

## Mandatory Elements

List the mandatory elements. Be careful here not to put too many items as you will tie the hands of your agency as far as the concepts or designs go. Ideally, you want to give them freedom to be as creative as possible. Potential mandatory items might include: a logo, a tagline, a website URL. By putting items on this list you are saying “Don’t show us any creative that does not have these things on it.”

## Advertising Communication Strategy

It is important to include this section below because good agencies need this information in order to produce creative material that is “on strategy” for your brand. If you don’t give them a Communication Strategy then you are expecting them to create one for you out of thin air and that’s not their job. Their job is to take your Communication Strategy and bring it to life creatively in the elements you have asked for. The inputs to the development of the Communication Strategy are generally research data and analysis using established marketing frameworks. However, in a small organization it is often just knowledge you have about your organization and stakeholders that you can’t expect the agency to know, combined with some analysis (careful thought) of the options and a sense of where you want to go in the future.

#### WHO do you want to reach?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** | **Example** |
| Strategic Target | This is the subset of the total population that you want to target. The “strategic” adjective implies that you have made a definite choice, based on good data, regarding who is most likely to respond to your offering.  | Women, 18-49 years old |
| Prime Prospects | This is the subset of your Strategic Target from whom you expect to get the greatest response in the immediate short term. They should also be people who are relatively easy to target in clusters of some kind.  | Women who go to a fitness club or class at least 2X per week |

#### WHAT will you say to them?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** | **Example** |
| Benefit or Unique Selling Proposition  | This carefully chosen sentence or phrase must define what compelling benefit you will offer to your user or consumer. It must be focused on them and what they will gain, not a descriptor of positive attributes of your product or service (which are *features*). It must be short and to the point.  | ThermaSilk helps you get the look you want and the protection your hair needs.  |
| Reason To Believe (RTB) | This carefully chosen sentence or phrase must define why your consumer or user should believe that you can deliver your benefit. It is often a backup of your claim and states credentials or deeper explanation to make your benefit promise more compelling and believable. RTBs can be rational or emotional.  | Thermasilk contains patented silk protein formulas which protect your hair against the damage that blow dryers, curling or flat irons can bring and work with heat to give you intense conditioning. |
| Brand Character | If your brand were a person what key words about their character would you want to emphasize? (Eg. Fun or serious? Inspiring or chummy?)  | Beautiful, flirty and aspirational. |
| Features | These are positive attributes of your product or service that ultimately create or deliver the benefit described above.  | Comes in 200ml, 750ml and 1L sizes.Comes in 4 versions: Normal, Dry, Oily, Permed/Color Treated. Widely available at retailers across Canada.  |

#### HOW will you communicate it?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** | **Example** |
| Other Media Plans  | If you know what media you plan to use for other elements in the campaign then outline as much as you can here. It will help your agency develop a more holistic execution for you (one that ties in with the rest of your plan and therefore has a more powerful marketing effect.)  | Direct mail to 200,000 homes in Nov 09Follow-up calls in Dec 09Web viral campaign in Dec 09 |

You should not expect the agency to use your exact language from the Benefit or RTB statements in their executions. It is their job to be creative and to come up with language, headlines etc that communicate the meaning of the Benefit and RTB even if it’s in different words. When you see their creative concepts you should compare them back to this Creative Brief and ask, does their creative version communicate the message you asked for, even if in different words? If yes, then their creative is said to be “on strategy”, which it needs to be. If no, then their creative is “off strategy” and needs to be revised.

## Insights into Target

This should ideally be based on research or focus groups, but if you know your stakeholders/end-users well you can write it yourself (Eg. They are skeptical of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, they resonate with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, they are concerned about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, they are looking for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_).

## Design Strategy

If you have an existing Design Strategy or Design Theme that must be followed, you should clarify that here. You would likely only have this if you have asked an agency to develop one for you. The Design Strategy is sometime referred to as Brand Guidelines or a Mood Board. It specifies which fonts, colors and design theme have been chosen for this brand. A Design Theme is a metaphor that defines the aesthetic direction of the Brand. It is an inspirational, not a literal execution. For example, the design theme of ING Direct is “orange citrus fresh”. The design theme of FIDO is “as trustworthy and unique as your dog”. The design theme of the Gillette Venus shaving line is “sea glass.” When a brand does not have or consistently use a Design Strategy or Theme then over time the advertising produced for the brand will look like it was made by very different agencies with different styles, and it may not even look like it was all from the same brand. This tends to weaken the brand in the marketplace.

## Priority of Communication

When a person looks at a piece of advertising, their eye often goes to certain elements first which cause them to draw conclusions about whether or not the item is relevant. It also impacts how long they continue reading before they move on. In this list you specify the order of priority for the headlines or visuals as a guide to help the designer.

## Desired Response

What do you want the viewer of this ad to do? Just know about you. Call and sign up? Refer a friend? Feel something? Have you enabled that response to the best of your ability (by setting up a 1-800 # or a website with a tell a friend engine?)

## Photography/Video

Will you be supplying existing photography and video for which you have the rights?

Will any new photography or video be required?

Do you expect the agency to source stock images or video?

## Talent Objectives

If applicable, what guidelines can you give the agency on the kind of talent (models/actors) you want in any photos or video elements? Do you want only certain ages, races or styles of people? Are you looking to show diversity and of what: age, race, style? If yes, then communicate it here.

## Budget

What is the budget for this project? Are there any Fiscal Year end deadlines that have to be factored in?

## Deadlines

Clarify any deadlines that must be met including intermediate steps like legal or regulatory approval and language translation. This is a good place to outline the key dates in the Artwork Process like Creative Brief approved, Initial Concept Presented, Final Concept Approved, Wording Approved, Final Design & Artwork Approved, Final Artwork produced, Final Artwork arrives at destination.

## Final Approval Person

Who will be approving these materials and who is the FINAL approver? (As in, if there is a disagreement on something who will make the final call?).

## Approvals

Signatures below indicate that the Creative Brief is approved, and the agency may begin work.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Manager Signature** |  | **Date** |  | **Final Approver Signature** |  | **Date** |