



CD+M

Image and perception help drive value: will you have an

Good Design Is Good Business

# WEB DESIGN BRIEF

Below are a list of questions that, when answered, will form the foundation for an informed website design brief.

## Why Provide a Design Brief?

The purpose of a design brief is to get everyone started with a common understanding of what's to be accomplished. It gives direction and serves as a benchmark against which to test concepts and execution as you move through a project.

The ultimate responsibility for defining goals, objectives and identifying audience and context lies with the client. Another benefit of the design brief is the clarity it provides you as the client about why you're embarking on a project.

A brief can be as valuable internally as it is externally. Presented to the people within the company most directly affected by whatever is being produced, will elicit valuable input and pave the way for their buy-in. Your project shouldn't be a test of the design firm's skills. In order to help the design firm do the best work it can for you, you need to give it a well produced design brief.

## WHAT IS A DESIGN BRIEF?

A design brief is a written document outlining, in complete detail, the business objectives and corresponding design strategies for a design project. Some prefer the term creative brief. The most critical elements of a design brief are: a complete description of the project—what is it that is trying to be done; why is this needed now; what business outcomes are expected; who is this being done for (the target audience); and who are the key stakeholders in this project. The design brief must also address current industry trends, the competition, scope, time-line, budget and measurement of success metrics.

A complete design brief must take the marketing plan or RFP several steps further. The design brief matches a strategic design approach to each of the business objectives described in the marketing plan or RFP. The design brief also includes the detailed process that will be followed to develop and test concepts, as well as the process which will be employed to determine the best possible final design solution.

## A. Project Goals

1. Will your Web site be an information reference providing access to information in depth – such as materials you use, contractors you use, current events etc? Or will it be more like an online brochure?
2. Are you trying to create a community of users? If so, is interaction among them important?
3. Will the site exist to create an experience for visitors?
4. How will your site create value for your organization? Will the site exist for marketing, public relations or customer support purposes? Will you be selling ads? Merchandising products?



## **Most Web sites serve several audiences.**

For example, You may wish to appeal to business people, large groups, multinational corporations, It is hard to appeal to everybody so it is imperative to really know your customer.

## **B. Audience Goals**

1. Who is the expected audience? (i.e define your customers are they individuals) Most important, what are their goals?
2. What are their demographic characteristics? (are they young, old, wealthy, lawyers, biologists? Remember you are not building the site for you but rather your current and potential customers).
3. What kind of equipment will they use: high-end computers? low bandwidth network connections?
4. Why would they come to your site? Why would they come back?

**Once you've articulated what you want to do, examine how you'll do it.** What materials will be required? Of those, what do you have?

## **C. Content Inventory**

1. Do you have a logo, tag-line and value statement and if so do these need re-thinking or design?
2. Do you have photography of suitable quality/standards or will you need additional imagery? Are your images digital or will they need to be scanned? How many photographs, at a minimum, are needed to support your content?
3. Is the content of your site saying what you want it to say? Will you need to edit the content to ensure that it is 'web-friendly' and that your audience comprehends it? Will this be handled inhouse or will you need help?
4. Do you want to add video, 360° still photography and/or audio to your site?
5. Pick 2-3 websites that have made an impression on you and tell us why. What would you change about them?
6. In addition to content considerations above, what additional business applications do you need?  
*Please check all that apply.*

Customer registration form

Customer survey form



CRM integration (are you currently using a CRM package? Do you need CRM integration with your website?)

Downloadable PDFs (Specification sheets, white papers etc.)

Is there anything in your day-to-day office routine that costs you time and money that you wish could be handled by someone else or automatically?

**Maintenance packages take the worry out of updating and maintaining your site.** Alternatively, you can incorporate a database driven content management system (CMS).

This is important to consider at the outset, as it will guide the technology needed for the site development. A CMS will cost more initially and will require resources within your company to maintain. If you see yourself updating more than once a month it may be wise to consider a CMS.

#### **D. Maintenance**

1. Do you foresee many monthly updates or would a yearly or quarterly update be more appropriate?
2. Do you want the ability to maintain the site yourself, updating HTML / XML or do you prefer a CMS option?

#### **E. Web**

3. Are you interested in a targeted search engine optimization (SEO) campaign? On-line advertising?

**There are numerous hosting options available and they range in cost /month.** The rate depends on the specific host and on how much web space and traffic you'll need and the technology you're using.

#### **E. Hosting**

1. Do you require a hosting quote?