

A key part of writing a good brief is to make sure that you're giving the right amount of information. Think *Goldilocks*— not too little information that someone doesn't know something critical about the context of the work, but not so much information that it's overwhelming or distracting. As a great director of mine once said, *"If you don't want it showing up in the work, it doesn't go on the brief."*

Background:

This is the section that describes the situation or related information that it would be helpful for someone developing work to know. Why are you developing this work? Example questions to consider answering here: Is competition heating up? Are you launching a new product? Is the category exploding with growth or moving toward a new trend?

This isn't a book report, *so don't recite a list of facts*. Instead, use it as a chance to inspire someone about why you need this work.

Business Objective:

What *business* outcome do you want to achieve? Examples: Share, sales, conversion?

Marketing Objective:

What *marketing* outcome— or behavior or belief change— do you want to achieve? Examples: Use your brand more often, request a meeting?

Specific Deliverables:

What assets do you expect to receive? If you want an Instagram TV campaign idea, say so. If you'll be mad without a radio script, write it down here.

Target audience:

Who is the intended audience for this work? *Be specific*. At one point both my mom and I were in the target "women 18-49." Do you think we had the same needs or interests?

Insight:

What does your target believe (about your product, your category, or your competition) that will allow you to have a chance at achieving your marketing objective?

Benefit:

What do you uniquely offer your target that would make them consider doing what you want to achieve in your marketing objective?

This needs to be something the target cares about, related to the insight, and that you can deliver.

Reason(s)-to-believe (RTB's):

What is true about your product that means your target should believe your benefit?

This is NOT a list of everything that could be said about your product or service. It must be related to the benefit AND be things that the target cares about.

Target audience through RTB's are the MOST important sections of the brief to get right because together they are the reason for the story.

Questions to ask yourself:

Are these true?

Did anyone, especially an insights partner, look at you sideways when you read it?

Are they meaningful?

Did anyone roll their eyes or snort when I read them?

Do they make sense together?

Is anyone confused after you've read it?



Mandatories:

This is exactly what it sounds like—what is required for the work to be approved? Do you need a legal disclaimer or fair balance? Is it co-branded? Those go here.

Considerations:

What are ideas that you might have about elements that could be successful in the work? This isn't a list of any crazy idea you might have, but a place for suggestions. Examples: particular keyword focus areas, needing flexibility across social site formats, etc.

This is the one section of the brief that may not be needed.

Budget:

How much do you have to spend on this? It's a waste of everyone's time if you get a proposal for a multiphase, surround sound campaign and what you have to spend is for a week of Facebook ads in your town.

Timeline:

When do you need this to be in market?

Are there key phases of creative development/ approval, e.g. 2 weeks for legal review?

Approvers:

This is where you get agreement by the key stakeholders that the brief is appropriate and agreed upon such that when work comes back in line with this brief that it is likely to be approved.

Yes, sometimes it seems overly formal and process-y to ask for approvals. On the other hand, do you want to have to be the person who explains why the creative is focused on converting someone at shelf when your boss thinks that you need to create broader awareness? Do yourself a favor and make sure you agree up front.

