

Professional Client Briefing

What is the Point of a Brief?

Creative brief definition “a type of educational or business document including desires and requirements” i.e. what you want and what you need.

Despite the name, it’s usually better to write more than less.

What is the Point of a Brief?

Here are some reasons why it is important to write a project brief:

It's helpful for you: A brief is a blueprint for your project and should be as helpful for you as it is for your client.

Going through the process of writing the project details down can often highlight areas of risk or things that need thinking about further.

What is the Point of a Brief?

Gives peace of mind: A brief provides confidence that you and your client are on the same page when it comes to the project scope and that you're not going to end up with any costly surprises.

You can be sure that you know exactly what your client expects and when.

What is the Point of a Brief?

A good investment of time:

All commissioning involves a bit of back and forth with questions and clarifications but taking the time to write a good brief reduces this a lot.

The more you can pre-empt a client's questions the less you'll have to fire off additional emails.

University Brief versus Industry Brief

Is there any Difference?

A university illustration brief can be nothing like the real thing...

**...as they are purely designed for...
Educational assessment**

...and written by lecturers, not clients.

University brief

Fully written brief.

**Staff verbally expand on the problem
...are available for constant re-checking.**

**Has to be consistent for all - no real changes
occur in the initial brief.**

Professional Design Brief

Formulated by client.

Who may have consulted an art director.

Or may have little knowledge of the processes involved.

Working primarily to a budget.

Professional Design Brief

Client may request your guidance.

You may need to impress / help them.

Communication goes both ways.

Details are often not clear.

A carefully written illustration brief is the foundation for a successful illustration project.

Its job is to provide structure, guidance and direction to your work.

When gathering information from a client, you should start by documenting the most important objectives.

Preparation for the Briefing

What should you take?

Samples of work?

Notebook and pen.

Checklist of questions.

The Checklist – Ideas for Questions

Are there any size restrictions?

What about resolution?

Colour mode required (RGB, CMYK)?

The Checklist – Ideas for Questions

Will copy be displayed alongside the illustration?

Is the copy available/when can it be supplied?

What references are available?

The Checklist – Ideas for Questions

**When are the deadlines –
ideas/development/final artwork?**

Is there a set budget to work to?

Or are quotes/estimates required?

When are these needed?

How will payment be made?

Payment Options

Lump sum on completion of work?

Weekly?

At production stages?

Advance on royalties?

Royalty only?

The Checklist – Ideas for Questions

Terms of copyright etc?

Printing or ISP arrangements?

Ask for written response to these questions if possible.

These questions will be the foundation of the contract/illustrator's agreement.

How to write a Professional Brief

Your 'questions checklist' will provide the detail but it is a good idea to write a full brief following the client briefing session.

What's in a Bad Brief?

Let's start with what is not a good brief.

All too often it's three hastily written lines that contain almost no information, take the following example from a client:

“Hi, I'm looking for an illustrator to create some images for my website. How much would it cost and when can you have them done by”

What's in a Bad Brief?

That leaves us illustrators with more questions than answers.

**How many illustrations? What are they of?
When do you need them by?.... the list goes on and on as we have just discussed with our questions checklist.**

What's in a Good Brief?

Project Name

This helps with communication and paperwork, whatever you call it is what will appear on your contracts, estimates and invoices so it's best to be clear and descriptive so you can all easily keep track of it.

What's in a Good Brief?

About the Client

If this is a new client to you then find out some background.

What does your client do and why?

Do your research beforehand and also ask the client at the briefing if you need to.

What's in a Good Brief?

What is the Project?

Find out what your client needs and how it fits into their organisation.

Writing “[Client] needs an illustration for a poster” is good but “[Client] needs an illustration for a poster that will help them sell their new widget that is going to change the face of washing up forever” is much better.

What's in a Good Brief?

What is the Project – book illustration?

If you are illustrating a book the blurb is extremely helpful.

Sometimes you will get a full manuscript of the story, or even a script.

If neither of the above are available ask for a short summary and example of writing style.

What's in a Good Brief?

What is the Target Audience?

It may seem obvious but ask who are we aiming the illustration at?

If you are illustrating for a children's book it will be obvious, but if it is an advertising brief it may not be so clear.

What's in a Good Brief?

Deliverables

Now you can go into details about specifically what the client needs.

Do they need 40 small spot illustration for a website or 12 double-page spreads for a children's book?

Do they need one illustration that can work across multiple formats or channels?

What's in a Good Brief?

Artwork Specifications

What size do the illustrations need to be and what file formats do you need to provide?

If the client needs everything as low-resolution jpgs for the web and high resolution for print then you need to consider this in the scope of work.

What's in a Good Brief?

Distribution, Uses and IP Rights

What is the proposed usage of the illustration?

Remember you are selling a license to use the illustration so knowing whether it's going to be part of a long-running advertising campaign or a one off leaflet print run will make a difference to the cost.

What's in a Good Brief?

Deadlines

Obviously the final deadline is the most important (and must NOT be missed) but create interim deadlines and stay in touch with the client.

Get each stage approved (signed off), and keep that correspondence (whether written or by email) safe in case there are problems later.

Your Task

Include a personal sample checklist in your business of illustration folio.

Professionally presented in your house style.

Brand and include the Illustration Brief Template (on Moodle).