COPY BRIEF

Extracted from Copywriting – Successful Writing for Design, Advertising, and Marketing

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START WITH THE BIG PICTURE AND DRILL DOWN INTO THE FINE DETAIL.

* Client’s name, address and contact details.
* When was the brief taken and when is the copy needed for?
* Does this relate to any previous jobs?
* Will it be part of larger communications or is it stand-alone?

OVERVIEW

* What is the requirement of the brief, what is the client expecting from the project and, specifically, from you?
* What is the background and context for the communication (what was the previous marketing or advertising activity, and what are the reasons for doing this new brief)?
* What is the timeline and when do you need to respond by?

BACKGROUND AND RAW MATERIAL

* What material has the client produced before and how did it perform?
* How does this campaign fit in with other communications from the client?
* What is being provided as content to develop?
* Are there further sources of content (by researching or interviewing)?

TARGET AUDIENCE

* Who are we trying to reach, and what type of people are they?
* What do they think about the client?
* What is going on in this marketplace – how crowded is it?

THE CORE MESSAGE

* What is the single, compelling message that must be communicated?
* What supporting evidence is there to back up any claims being made?

THE UNIQUE SELLING POINT (USP)

* What benefit does the core message provide to the audience?
* What makes this different and compelling in the marketplace?
* Why should the reader bother to read all of the copy and respond?

CREATIVE DIRECTION

* How should the finish work look and feel?
* Is there a brand style that must be adhered to?
* Are there examples of similar work that can be used as a guide?
* What is the most appropriate tone of voice?

ANYTHING ELSE?

* Make sure that any directions that don’t fit into the categories listed above are noted at the end of the brief. Examples would be overall word count, or the number of pages in a brochure, or how much room there is for headlines, intro paragraphs, subheadings, and a summary in an article.