INTRODUCTION

A brief is an essential document that summarises the business objectives of your project, thoroughly explains the problem that needs to be solved by a designer or design team, provides a starting point for communication and discussion and acts as a tool for finding and selecting designers. You can use this template to write your own brief. For more information, go to the "Plan" stage of the Shape resource.

NOTES

Organisation Name
Project Name

Introduction
Provide an introduction to your organisation, who you are, what you do, where you do it and how long you have been doing it for. Add a link to your website and any relevant information with regards to the project. Add any further information you feel would help the designers get a feel for your organisation and how it operates.

Project Background
Describe the project in as much detail as you can. How did you project get started, what is it designed to do, where does it fit with other initiatives within the organisation, does it have to work with any of them? Detail the project objectives, particularly with respect to business impact and what the project needs to do for the organisation. Also, don't forget to include the lifecycle of your delivery (e.g. the website will be operational for 3 years after which it is up for review/redevelopment).

Users & Market Background
Who is the target audience (customers / users)? Describe the market you are in, the current conditions, what you need to do in the market. Have you got any market research data to support the project?

What is the competition in your market, what does it look like, can you list websites that the designers can go to in order to get a better feel of the overall landscape of the market you are describing?

Work to Date
Detail any work that you have done previously that can have an impact on the project. What is available to the designer, describe the point that they are entering in to the project (if relevant). Is there anyone else that they might be working with? Is there anywhere else that they might be able to get more information on what you have done so far?

Services Required
This is where you detail what you need. It may be that you just want a brochure or alternatively it maybe where you attach a specification for something much more technical. You can be specific about what you need or leave the brief deliberately open for the designers to challenge at a meeting. If you are unclear about exactly what form the services will take – seek advice; make sure you have the right type of designer for the job (see next step for further help on selecting designers and procurement).

Measurement and Outcomes
Add this section to communicate what you want the outcomes of the project to be and on what timescale. This should correspond with what you need the project to do for the business or organisation outlined above.

Budget

There is always a debate about providing designers with the budget for the project or not, this is entirely up to you. On the one hand the budget may not be known at this point and you are looking for a response that helps you formulate it. On the other hand you may not want to communicate the budget because this may not get you a favourable price or an agency may quote just under the budget. Alternatively you may need to get started fast and will not have the time to spend weeks negotiating about the price with the selected designers.
Just make sure that you are clear about your position with regards to the budget.

Constraints

Constraints can be anything that limits the designer in his/her creative freedom. This may involve working to design or brand guidelines or being asked to work with other designers. You will need to confirm this and also let the designer know how they will get access to a copy of the relevant guides.
There may be other constraints for the project such as time or location or access to key individuals or audiences. It is best to identify this in the brief and allow the plan to be developed around the constraints instead of only including them at the contract stage - resulting in possibly having to rework the project.

Timeframe

If you have a timeframe, communicate it. This may be in the form of a project plan or just a list of dates that you need to hit.

Approval process

On longer or more complicated projects there may be an approval process that allows the project to move from the current stage to the next stage. Communicating what this process is, who is involved and how long it takes to approve each stage will allow the designers to take this into consideration. This is especially important when running a project over a big holiday period.

Response Required

You need to indicate what you require back from the designer. Do you want them to prepare for a meeting, to discuss the brief before they make a formal response or do you just expect them to call you if they have any questions? Explain what you are looking for and how you would like it sent. You may require the project plan to be in a certain format or the budget estimate to be provided in a certain way. Also confirm when you want it returned by, a deadline.

Additional information and attachments

If you have any supporting information or attachments, explain what they are, why they are attached and your expectations for use.
This paragraph may be more detailed with regards to how effective you need the project to be, using numbers or more specific targets or goals. These may be related to a cost reduction, increase in customer satisfaction, etc.

Contact details

Provide your preferred contact details for both the response and any questions the designers may have whilst developing their response.

USEFUL LINKS

www.dbadirectory.org.uk/dba/uploads/pages/section-2-writing-your-design-brief.pdf