

**HOW TO**

# Save money on graphic design

**BY WRITING THE PERFECT DESIGN BRIEF**



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# How will the perfect brief save me money?

To understand how a design brief can save you money, you must first understand the difference between “**a creative**” and “**a designer**”.

It goes without saying that a graphic designer should of course BE creative. However they are not “A creative”.

In an ad agency the creatives are the ones who comes up with the campaign ideas, develop the strategy and then direct the copywriters and the designers.

The designers are then responsible for taking the creative’s ideas and putting them together with the copywriter’s words to create the final piece.

In the small business world, we don’t have access to the resources of an ad agency. And quite often, we expect our designers to fulfill creative and copywriting roles in addition to doing our design. While most designers are happy to do this, it’s not what they are trained to do.

Thus it adds considerable time to any given job if designers first have to come up with the campaign concept THEN write the copy and THEN finally pull it all together into a final piece.

Most graphic designers charge by the hour and if your designer is fulfilling the roles of creative + copywriter + designer, this can easily double the number of hours spent on a given job.

So if you want to save money on graphic design, **you** need to fill the role of “head creative” and “copywriter”.

*“But I don’t know how to do these things”*

That’s ok. This e-book is all about guiding you through the process of being your own creative director and copywriter.

# STEP 1: ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

This section tells your designer everything they need to know about your business and will ensure that the design they create is appropriate for and attractive to your target market and most importantly, your ideal client.

1. What is your company name?

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2. What are your company's contact details?

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

WEBSITE: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What services do you provide?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe your ideal client (age, industry, socioeconomic etc)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## STEP 1: ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

5. When people think of your company, what words and emotions do you want them to associate with you? (ie friendly, professional, fun, serious)

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6. What is the difference between you and your competitors? In other words, why would someone prefer to do business with you instead of your competitors?

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7. Do you have an existing look and feel that has been applied across all your artwork, stationery, website etc? Do you want this look and feel applied to this piece? If yes, you will need to provide your designer with examples and attach them to this brief.

### NOTES

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## STEP 2: ABOUT THE PIECE

In this section you will describe the piece your designer will be creating. When a designer has to seek clarification, this adds time to the job. Your goal should be to provide an airtight brief that has no ambiguity thus requiring no clarification.

1. What is being produced and what size/format is it (flyer, brochure, poster, DL, A4 folded to DL, A3 etc). If a press advertisement is being produced, tell your designer the exact dimensions of the ad (ie 100mm x 200mm rather than “20x3”)

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2. What are the deadlines for this piece?

FIRST DRAFT: \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL PIECE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who is the piece targeted at (new clients, existing clients)

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4. What kind of look and feel do you have in mind for this piece (ie use established branding, something completely different, modern, corporate)

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## STEP 2: ABOUT THE PIECE

5. You will need to provide the copy for this piece in a separate document but first you need to check that it meets the criteria of the AIDA principle:
  - a. **A – ATTENTION: Is there something in the copy that grabs the reader’s attention.**
    - i. In other words – have you written a great headline? A great headline usually asks a question ie “Do you find it hard to lose weight?” or poses an idea “It’s time to shift those unwanted kilos”
  - b. **I – INTEREST: Does your copy engage the reader’s interest?**
    - i. This is usually done by indicating you know what the reader’s problem is: “We know it’s hard to find the time to exercise/eat the right foods”
  - c. **D – DESIRE: Does your copy create a desire for the reader?**
    - i. Are you telling the reader you know how to solve their problem? “We have developed a simple eating plan that guarantees results in 2 weeks”.
    - ii. A testimonial also helps here: “I was 15kg overweight and in despair but 2 weeks after starting the xxx program I had already lost 5kg. I couldn’t believe how easy it was!”
    - iii. Creating scarcity is also a useful technique: “The first 15 people to sign up get a 50% discount”
  - d. **A – ACTION: Does your copy include a very strong call to action?**
    - i. There should be no doubt for the reader as to what they should do now. Do they call a number, visit a website, send an email? The action you want them to take should be clearly indicated and easy to do.

## STEP 2: ABOUT THE PIECE

### 6. Provide all the imagery for the piece including your logo

Once you have finalised the copy, your imagery is the second most important thing your designer needs as they will build the design around this imagery. Strong imagery is a MUST to create a highly effective design piece.

If you do not have your own professional image library, there are many image libraries on the web that allow you to purchase high-resolution, royalty-free images for anywhere from \$2.

Some of our favourites are:

- istockphoto.com
- bigstockphoto.com
- shutterstock.com

DO NOT provide poorly taken photos or low resolution photos you “found on the web”. These are hard to work with and will impact on the final presentation. Frustrating for the designer and costly for you as your piece will not fulfil its potential.

### 7. Final checklist. Have you:

- Indicated the exact size of the piece being created
- Indicated a deadline for the first draft
- Indicated a deadline for the final piece to be submitted
- Provided all the copy for the piece in a word document, fully proofed and any special formatting indicated
- Provided all the imagery for the piece including your logo in eps format or high-resolution jpeg?

Congratulations! You have written a kick ass design brief.

Your designer will be grateful because they now have everything they need from you before they start and will be able to do what they do best - bring your ideas to life - in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.

And your accountant will be grateful because you've just halved your graphic design costs. The time you have spent on this brief is time your designer would have had to spend ... at your cost!