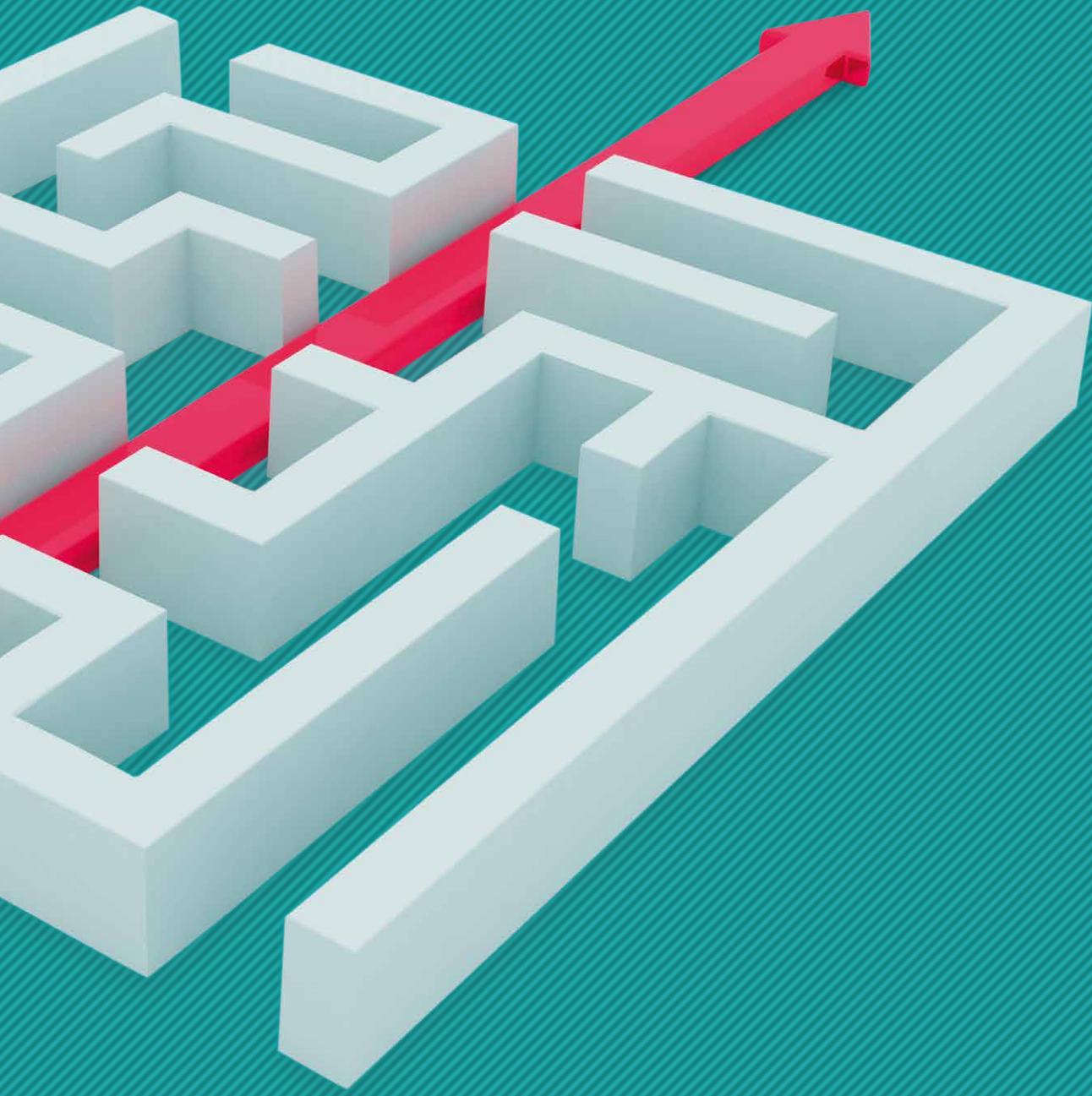


TYPODROM SPARKS

GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD BRIEF



Preface

What does the best brief look like? Every agency has an idea, usually accompanied by a template. That makes sense, since the hope that filling a form will tick all the boxes is alluring. And this is why there are so many briefing forms that insist on being complete to the point of minute and oftentimes irrelevant detail. To make it as easy as possible for the client, the questions are so compartmentalised that it's enough to simply answer 'yes' or 'no'. Or even better, just tick a box. The problem with this approach is that it doesn't often lead to answers that are well thought through. To the contrary – the answers are often as prefabricated as the brief itself.

There is no 'best' brief. But if we invest a little more time and effort to clarify the really important parameters at the start of a process or project, then it is possible to get very close to the 'best' brief. That doesn't just save time, but also money.

In this TYPODROM SPARKS, we'd like to present the parameters that are most important to us as an agency. Keeping to these will certainly form the basis for the best possible results.

Happy reading.

Kai Löhde
Managing Director



What's your problem?

Good question. Most people working in advertising don't take enough time to think about that. However, the answer to that question is one of the main requirements to determining what the advertising measures are meant to achieve. So before you sit down to write a brief, try to think about what's bugging you and your company. Is there an issue with the business model? Or the product? Or with your users or buyers? And even: is this a problem that can be solved with communication?

>> Briefly analyse the problem and use a few words to tell us about it.

Where do you want to go?

Once you've worked out the problem, then you can describe where you'd like to go. Please don't just say that you need a website or a brochure. That's not really a destination, but rather a means to an end. Your destination should be described quantitatively or qualitatively.

"We need 50 client meetings."

"We want XX% more brand awareness, XX% more brand recognition, etc."

"We want to change the behaviour of our target audience so that they recommend our company."

"We want to sell XX% more."

>> Please determine what you want to achieve with your advertising or marketing measures and clearly state, if possible, what KPIs you will use to measure success.

By the way: we're happy to help you define a problem and set a goal. Have a look here: <https://typodrom.de/sokrates-briefing>



What's your idea of the task?

You're probably wondering at this stage why we're only asking for an 'idea' from you rather than a clear project aim. Well, that's because most clients don't actually think that much about the actual problem or the aims. They usually have a solution in mind already. And then they use it as a formulation of the task. By consciously asking you just for an idea of the task, we make it possible to consider other solutions together. And to think of approaches you may not have thought of before. Because sometimes we can't see the wood for the trees and an external view is the only way forward. We can also leave this point out if you like. And instead focus on thinking about a task or mission that comes from the problem and your aims.

>> Describe your idea of the task that comes from the problem and the aims for the agency.

What are we talking about?

Now it's time for onboarding. What product(s) or service(s) is this about? We need to understand your products or services and your market in detail. And that may well take time and effort, but it pays off in the long run if we do our job properly at this stage. Missing things here will always catch up with us in the end. So please provide us with the most important background information about the product or service together with this brief. Powerpoints, brochures, press releases – don't worry, we'll get through all of them. But we need one thing up front: a description of your products or services on one sheet of A4. And this is how you do it:

>> Give us a quick description of the product (or service).

>> Use your own words to describe the value that the product provides for your customers. What can it do?

>> Now explain why the product can offer this value.

These few short statements will give us a good first impression of the product and we can use this to increase our knowledge about it off the back of the additional background information you provide us with. In most cases, that's enough. In practice, short workshops with product management and sales can also help as well. This allows us to get the specialists to answer our questions and retain more information.



Who do we do this for?

Now we get to the most important point: your clients or the companies and people you want to become your clients. Who are they and which criteria do they use to buy products like yours? Is it by price? Reliability? Trust in the brand? If you work in B2B: who are the people in the buying centres? What kind of information do your clients need and at which stages of the purchase decision process do they need it? We're happy to help you analyse touchpoints and information needs in a short workshop.

>> Give us an insight into your market and its mechanisms.

>> Describe your target audience(s) and their purchase decision process.

What do the others do?

It'd be really easy if there wasn't any competition, wouldn't it? Who are they and what challenges do they face? What do they do to overcome them? Sometimes it's helpful to look over the fence and to see how the market leader communicates, for example.

>> Please give a short description of your main competitors and tell us how they communicate.

What has happened before.

If your problem has been around for a while (which does happen, albeit seldom), then you've probably already tried to find solutions. In that case we're all ears and want to know what was done and why it didn't work or only partially did. Nobody likes to admit that they've done something wrong. And nobody likes it when they're justly or even unjustly blamed for something. But it's important to call a spade a spade. If your company has not communicated in the most optimal way in the past, then we can help as mediators in difficult cases. And that means we can prevent mistakes from happening in the future together.

>> Describe what has been done before and how it failed in your view.



The normative power of facts.

If you've got a great deal of time or a massive budget with no technical or legal constraints, then you can skip this part. You'd be the first if you did. If not, then we need to talk.

>> Please tell us your approximate budget.

>> When do the measures need to be on the market?

>> What are the legal or other restrictions?

>> Which technological avenues are blocked?

Please don't make the mistake that you lose your leverage as soon as you tell us your budget. It's quite the opposite: if we know how much you want to spend, then you save time. And save money in the process. Because then we won't suggest ideas and measures that are not affordable.

We'll make a timing based on your needs and wants. It has been helpful in the past to tell us who takes part in the decision making process for your project and when they will be involved. We can account for these points when we develop a timetable for approval and discussion rounds. That means we can make the most of our time together.

What's important to me.

Life's no picnic. But we'll do our utmost to become a good team with our clients. That makes things pleasant for both sides. So if we don't know each other yet, it'd be very kind of you to tell us a little about yourself. Only if you're ok with that, of course.

>> Which three values are particularly important to you?

>> I hate nothing more than...

>> If you were stuck on a desert island for three months, what are the three things you couldn't live without?



An overview of the questions you should ask yourself

What's your problem?

Analyse the problem and briefly describe it.

Where do you want to go?

Determine the destination and the aim that needs to be achieved with the measures. If possible, mention KPIs that will be used for measurement.

What's your idea of the task?

Describe your idea of what needs to be done and how it comes together based on the problem and the aims for the agency.

What are we talking about?

Briefly describe the product (or service).

Use your own words to describe the value the product provides for the customer.

What can it do?

Please explain why the product can offer this value.

Who do we do this for?

Give us insight into your market and its mechanisms.

Describe your target audience(s) and their purchase decision process.

What do the others do?

Briefly describe who your main competitors are and show us how they communicate.

What has happened before.

Describe what has been done before and why it didn't work in your view.

The normative power of facts.

Please tell us your approximate budget.

When do the measures need to be on the market?

Which legal or other restrictions are there? Which technical avenues are blocked?

Optional: What's important to me.

Which three values are particularly important to you?

I hate nothing more than...

If you were stuck on a desert island for three months, what are the three things you couldn't live without?

