

Give us the low-down

When you're outsourcing a project it's always a good idea to put together a brief so both parties have a good understanding of priorities and objectives.

The brief doesn't have to be detailed or formal, but the more we know the better able we are to allocate the right resources and provide accurate schedules and costs.

Main points to bear in mind:

- **Tell us about your organisation.** Or direct us to appropriate sources of information. What similar projects have you developed in the past that have worked? Tell us about the failures. What have been the responses inside and outside your company? In our case familiarity breeds empathy and this kind of detail will help us operate within the culture and bounds of your company.
- **What is your top line objective?** Goals can include retention of customers, attraction of new ones, rewarding loyalty, increasing staff awareness, launch of a new product or service, educating the public, improving visual identity, and so on.
- **How does the project fit in with company strategy?** Is it a new campaign or part of an ongoing campaign? How much do you need to involve other departments in your organisation? What's the competition doing? What reaction do you want?
- **Consider delivery mechanisms or vehicles.** You may need several or just one.
Printed material: customer magazine, brochure, newsletter, flyer, press advert, exhibition collateral.
Online and electronic media: website (do you need e-commerce; do you want to update it in-house?), interactive DVD/CD ROM, corporate video, PowerPoint template. How will it be distributed or publicised?
Or you may want raw material such as editorial copy for a magazine, or a new logo, or services such as magazine layout or consultancy.

...And the three golden issues:

- **Budget.** Consider how much you have and how you want to divide it up according to your priorities. It may be necessary to stage invoices or make regular payments – for example, for monthly updates to a website.
- **Timing.** What are the deadlines? Rush jobs can often be accommodated but it's much less stressful if each stage of the project can be scheduled and even better if some contingency can be built in.
- **Resources.** Words. Images. Audience. You may have in-house resources, such as photography or a mailing database. You may want us to handle everything. Resources will need to be discussed and will have budget and schedule implications.

Of course, matters evolve over time and with further considerations but thinking about all the above will help us meet then exceed your expectations!

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