WHY MAKE A
DESIGN BRIEF

Designing the
right things | Designing the
things right

WHAT IS A
DESIGN BRIEF?

*A design brief is a **product** and **project description** used to frame a design project.*

*It contains all the information necessary to **plan and execute** a design project.*

*The design brief is a dynamic document, and it's frequently updated throughout the project whenever you **discover new insights** or **make a design choice.***

WHY THIS
PROJECT?

*When you, as a designer, know the **true motivation** for a project, it is easier to set up (and challenge) the framework for a project.*

Are we doing it to keep up with the competition? Are there new trends to follow? Has the market changed? Are there new technologies that can make our products even better? The motivations can be many but are essential to articulate.

WHAT
PROBLEM
ARE WE TRYING TO SOLVE?

What are the problems and challenges we are trying to solve in this project?

*Which are **most important**, and **why are they relevant?***

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WHO IS THE
USER?

Primary users *will most frequently use the product.*

Secondary users *also have to be taken into consideration. Never forget service workers, maintenance specialists, or other users that come in contact with the product.*

Use methods like **Customer Journeys** *or* **product timelines** *to identify all user groups relevant to the development of the product.*

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WHO IS THE
BUYER
OF THE PRODUCT?

Who buys / orders the product?

*Remember, the buyer and the user are **not necessarily the same**.*

*They often have **different needs, requirements, and desires** for the product, which do not always pull in the same direction.*

PRODUCT
CONTEXT

*If the product **is part of a system or service**, describe how it is a part of it.*

*Should the product be **integrated** with other products or systems? Are there any **existing standards** the solution must follow?*

DESCRIBE THE MOST RELEVANT
USE CASES & SCENARIOS

*Describe **who, when, and how** to use the solution.*

*Do it in the form of **use cases and scenarios**. Also, think of all the things that are most likely to go wrong and describe them. It will make it easier to develop **easy-to-use** solutions and, more importantly, is **not misused**.*

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DESCRIBE HOW THE USERS
INTERACT
WITH THE PRODUCT

Already at an early stage in the design phase, one can imagine interacting with the product. Should it be held in hand? Are there any buttons? What features do you use most often? Do you wear gloves? Is it used outdoors? Should it be paired with a mobile phone?

You have to consider many interactions.

NEEDS, REQUIREMENTS AND WISHES
THE PRODUCT MUST MEET

Probably the most important parameters when developing a new product. Therefore, it is essential to identify the correct needs and translate them into actual, concrete demands and wishes.

We often do this through **workshops, user involvement,** *and* **expert and specialist interviews**.

WHAT'S IN
THE BOX?

It is a simple question but a good reminder nonetheless.

What's in the box *when the **customer/user** receives the product?*

Etc. User guides, cables, wires, connectors, spare parts, bags, straps, storage box.

*Think about it in the design process and **the requirements it entails.***

WHAT
EXPRESSION
SHOULD THE PRODUCT HAVE?

*Use **style boards** and **shape boards** to facilitate the **conversation** about shape and form. It is easier to relate to examples than it is to say: I want a simple and functional form, which must express robustness and at the same time must fit into the living room.*

Building a common vocabulary about shape and style makes it easier to communicate.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
PRODUCT ARCHITECTURE

Antennas should preferably be in a place where they receive a good signal. A screen should face the user. Buttons must be operated with one hand. The heaviest components must be at the bottom. The battery must be replaceable.

These are examples of conditions affecting the **product architecture.**

WHAT ARE THE
KEY COMPONENTS
OF THE PRODUCT

*Sometimes parts of a product **already exist,** or some **key components have already been chosen.***

*If so, **determine it at an early stage**, as the choice of components in itself defines requirements for the product regarding weight, placement of components, selection of materials, and many other things.*

PRICING AND ESTIMATES

What are the **expected sales figures?**
How many units do we expect to order at which time?

What should the product **cost the customer**, *and how much must it* **cost to produce?**

This information is crucial for many reasons. But it especially concerns **material selection, production methods, and timeframes.**

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WHICH COMPETING
SOLUTIONS
MEET SIMILAR NEEDS

There are always multiple solutions to the same problem. Therefore, it is essential to research the market for other products that solve the same problems, whether it is to be inspired, to innovate, or differentiate your product.

In other words: **Know what is already on the market and use it to your benefit** *in the development process.*

WHAT
UNCERTANTIES & CHALLENGES
WILL WE FACE IN THE PROJECT?

There will always be uncertainties and challenges when developing something new. Especially if it is unique and there are no others who have done it before.

*Remember to **state the uncertainties and risks** in the project. Then they are easier to accommodate along the way.*

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WHAT ARE THE BASIC
ASSUMPTIONS
IN THE PROJECT?

*Sometimes you have to **make assumptions** before you can start a project - This is entirely normal!*

However, it would be a shame to base a project on assumptions, which later turns out not to be correct - It wouldn't be the first time in design history.

*So **pay attention to your assumptions** and **test them** on an ongoing basis.*

WHAT ARE THE
TIMEFRAMES
FOR THE PROJECT?

The timeframe is essential for planning the project.

*There is a lot to coordinate: **Idea development, design, production, prototyping, testing and approvals, marketing, sales, transportation, logistics, holidays, and more.***

*A timeframe **from idea to market in 8-18 months** is not unusual for a relatively simple product.*

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WHAT IS THE
BUDGET?

*It is an **essential question** that underlies many design decisions and priorities.*

*An early estimate is a good starting point. In total, launching a brand new product can cost anywhere **from €25,000 to several million.***

SUSTAINABILITY

*Sustainability affects all aspects of the project and the process. From **material selection and production methods to life cycle, climate impact, recycling, servicing and disposal** - and much, much more.*

*Remember, like everything else in the design process, it is about finding the right **compromises** based on the **priorities** you have chosen.*

IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES

*Naturally, there are many **derived ideas** when you are in the process of developing a new product. You can implement some ideas, while you can put other ideas to use at a later time. Maybe the great idea for the next product pops up in the development of the current project - remember to **save it for later.***

*Ensure the project has a strong foundation and that it's **not derailed by a sudden sales opportunity** requiring just a few tiny changes.*

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UNRESOLVED ISSUES

There are always things you do not know and questions that arise during the project. It can be small things but also something that can change the entire foundation of the project.

Remember to always ask questions along the way.

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