

# How to brief designer for a job advert

## Pretty pictures?

Golden Rule Number One: Use designers to do exactly that: design! Everyone thinks they can spot a good design, just as they think they can write good copy. Avoid the temptation to wag the dog!

So, how do you point the designer in the right direction?

### Chose the right designer

Is he/she a technician who will follow your ideas or a creative who's itching to either change what you know will work, or really add value? You know your style so chose a sympathetic design partner. It'll save you a lot of money, time and heartache. Get competitive quotes regularly and a visual for each piece of work.

### Write a brief

A brief can be specific or general. At the very least it should contain: who the advert's aimed at; technical details from the magazine (preferred format, colours, size etc); the key points you want to get across; the deadline. Include some background – the brand values the advert needs to project, for instance.

### Work in parallel, not in sequence

Unless you have a pre-set format, work alongside the designer. Don't write the copy first, then expect the designer to create a "container" shaped by your copy. That's a sure road to "insurance small print adverts".

### Mark up your copy

This will emphasise the most important statements. For instance, write in CAPITALS or embolden everything you must get across but...

### Highlight one message

You have seconds to grab your reader in an advert. There should be ONE message that both Copy and Design shout: whether it's "Here's a Job That Pays A Lot Of Money" to "If You Haven't Got A PhD don't bother."

### Be different

Look at the average situations vacant page. It's like an advertising version of the rush hour. How do you stand out in the crowd? It's a general rule of marketing: you can make a living being a "me too"; you get rich by being different.

### Get everyone involved at the beginning

Get their views, write the brief and then stick to it. The last thing you want is to show a visual to someone who wasn't there at the start and find he says "I hate that" or "I don't like green".

### Know some basics

People look at the top right hand corner of a page first. Yellow helps people remember things. Red draws attention. Green is a cold colour but has liberal "green" associations. People aren't used to reading type below about 10 pt (which is the way we describe type size).

## Use images for a reason

Make sure they add to your message. A picture can provide information more easily than text. If it's just there as window-dressing, cut it out **AND MAKE THE HEADLINES BIGGER.**

## Write a style guide

After a while you can write some general rules: what colour your logo should be in; what typeface you prefer. This ensures your adverts have a cumulative effect and helps with continuity if you change designers. But don't make it a straitjacket! Use it as a theme on which you play variations.

There's one final golden rule: **LIKING DOESN'T COME INTO IT.** It doesn't matter if you like or dislike a design. It matters terribly that your target audience loves it. I've hated some adverts I've produced. They were usually extremely successful!

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