# Brand Brief: Template

# Branding Brief for [Insert Company Name]

## 

## 1. The business, your objectives and your goals

### A Short Overview

[Insert Company Name] is…

* Who are you?
* What do you do?
* A little bit of history/background?

*\*If you’re a start-up, imagine you're writing an elevator pitch; can you get the most important points across in 75 words or less\**

### Your Objectives

*An objective defines measurable actions to achieve an overall goal*

* What is your reason for the branding project?

### Your Goals

*A goal is an achievable outcome that is generally broad and long-term*

* What do you want to achieve with your new branding/re-brand?
* What outcomes do you want?

## 2. Your vision statement

*Your* [*vision statement*](https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/3882-vision-statement.html) *for your business and brand clearly sets out your plans for success - usually for the next 5-10 years. Short and succinct, roughly around 35 words or so, it motivates employees towards a shared goal.*

*Getting to the heart of your vision can be achieved by asking yourself the following questions:*

* What is your core focus?
* What is your unique ability? What is your differentiator?
* Who, What, or Where does your company want to be in five to ten years?
* What is your one year target to move the needle towards the vision?

## 3. Your mission statement

*If your vision is focused on where you’re going, the mission hones in on how you’re going to get there.*

*Asking yourself the following questions is a good place to start:*

* In what ways does your brand add value to its audience?
* What is the larger impact you want to achieve by offering this help?
* Are these goals attainable and realistic?
* Can the brand embody this mission in every aspect of the organisation?

## 4. Your target audience

*If you’re an existing brand, you may have some of this thinking in-house already. Possibly as content or user personas. Don’t worry if not, though. You can create a target audience profile in five simple steps:*

* Try and describe your ideal customer
* Go deeper into demographics, e.g. age, income, education and employment
* What are their interests and some of the brands they’re likely to follow?
* Identify their different needs and pain points
* Briefly describe where they’re likely to find you, e.g. Google, Instagram, etc.

## 5. Competitors

*Understanding your competitor landscape is crucial for building or rebranding a business. This is crucial for the agency to understand what’s already out there as you out of everyone,* ***you know your market best!***

*Follow these three steps to complete an analysis of your competitors:*

### List and describe your main competitors

These could be a mix of actual threats and more aspirational brands. What do you like/dislike about them? Be specific.

### Highlight their unique value proposition (UVP)

What makes them stand out from the crowd? Do they communicate this succinctly?

### Identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities

Some may be more competitive on price, whilst others have a broader product offering.

### Content analysis

Take a deep dive into their creative assets. What’s the tone like on their blog? What social channels are they on and do they have a consistent style across their campaigns?

## 6. Aspirational brands

*Sometimes, you may have a general idea of where you’d like to take your brand visually - this is great information for an agency to have (however, they may not agree!) but if you have no idea, this is absolutely OK. That’s the agency's job.*

*Looking at aspirational brands is not limited to competitors or even brands that operate in your specific industry. You may already have a list of brands or visuals you aspire to. Give a few examples of brands that you like and explain* ***why****, try to describe specific elements, for example:*

* Colour scheme
* Tone of voice
* Typography
* Photography
* Illustration

*Go in as much detail as you like, Agencies love detail* 😍

## 7. Your promise

*Much like pledging your allegiance to a friend, your brand promise to customers* ***can’t be empty****. It has to mean something.*

*Your promise isn’t a strap or tagline either; instead, it’s* ***what your customers should receive every time they buy from or interact with your brand****. And the more your brand can deliver on its promise, the more meaningful your connection with them becomes over time.*

## 8. Your proposition

*When it comes to brands, there’s no safety in numbers. That’s why it’s important to include the above-mentioned competitor analysis to help you* ***define a unique value proposition****. Essentially, this is what sets you apart from the rest.*

*But this isn’t just about having a distinct product offering. Get it right and it’ll help ensure your visual identity and tone of voice are unique too.*

## 9. Your premise

*It’s no secret that storytelling is crucial for brand-building. In* [*The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*](https://www.fabula.org/actualites/c-booker-the-seven-basic-plots-why-we-tell-stories_11399.php#:~:text=Why%20We%20Tell%20Stories,-Information%20publi%C3%A9e%20le&text=Underlying%20the%20stories%20he%20examines,lives%20than%20we%20have%20realised.)*, Christopher Booker argued that every story we read or watch is a variation of an age-old narrative.nAnd because these plots are so ingrained in our makeup, told and retold over generations of storytelling, they’re also a powerful way for brands to engage their customers.*

*The Seven Basic Plots to base your brand’s story on are:*

* **Overcoming the Monster** - great for challenger brands like BrewDog
* **The Quest** - think LinkedIn and its journey to create universal, economic opportunity
* **Voyage and Return** - this is a good one for brands offering a temporary escape, e.g. Expedia or Airbnb
* **Comedy** - a rare choice but Card Against Humanity is an example
* **Tragedy** - think about how Hinge positions itself: the dating app “Designed to be Deleted”
* **Rags to Riches** - this fits with the classic entrepreneurial tale, e.g. Innocent
* **Rebirth** - a perfect example is Carlsberg changing its story from “piss to pilsner”

*Aligning yourself with one of these tales - as long as it’s true to your brand - will give your comms and creative a consistent narrative thread going forward.*

## 10. Your persona

[*Carl Jung*](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/67890.The_Archetypes_and_the_Collective_Unconscious)*, one of the most well-renowned voices in psychoanalysis, suggested that there are twelve characters that are so well known, they’re now part of our collective unconscious.*

*But these characters don’t just exist within fables and popular culture; you’ll find them adopted by brands, too. They are:*

* **The Innocent** - think the joyous and lighthearted campaigns of Coca-Cola
* **The Rebel** - the chaotic, rule-breakers of the world, e.g. Oatly or Harley Davidson
* **The Lover** - intimate, relationship-builders such as Magnum and Lindt
* **The Jester** - cheeky, mischievous and irreverent brands like Paddy Power
* **The Sage** - trusted sources of truth and information - think BBC and Google
* **The Ruler** - commanding authority, rulers have products that speak for themselves, e.g. Mercedes Benz
* **The Explorer** - restless, adventurers such as Jeep, Airbnb and Red Bull
* **The Magician** - imaginative visionaries the think outside the box, e.g. Apple and Disney
* **The Hero** - brands that look to inspire others and make a positive impact, e.g. Nike
* **The Caregiver** - selfless nurturers such as Campbell’s Soup and Pampers
* **The Creator** - those that live to stimulate the imagination, e.g. Lego or Minecraft
* **The Regular Guy/Girl** - down to Earth types that have a common touch, e.g. Amazon or eBay

*Adding a character to your brand brief helps flesh out your core values, making you more human, well-rounded and relatable to your audience. So, it’s a creative exercise that’s well worth doing.*

## 11. Brand tone of voice

*The work you’ve already completed around your archetype and values will help shape the tone; just imagine how your brand character would address the room.*

But try and get more granular than that and include details around:

* formality
* sentence complexity
* whether you use contractions or not (i.e. cannot or can’t)
* and your inhouse preference over the active vs. passive voice

You could also include some sample tone of voice content within your brand brief; how this might look on the website, blog or on your social channels.

## 12. Project specifications

*By now you’ve probably figured out that branding projects involve lots of moving parts. And to deliver them on time and within budget requires a thorough understanding of the specifics.*

### Timeframe

*The get out of jail free card here is “ASAP”. But unfortunately, that’s not going to cut the mustard. Agencies will need to factor in resources and will need a realistic timeframe to deliver the quality of work your brand deserves.*

*Depending on the scope and complexity, branding projects can take* ***between 6 and 12 weeks to complete.*** *Obviously, this depends on where you are with your proposition and how many assets need to be created.*

* Think about when you want to start the project - do you have everything ready for the Agency?
* Think about a desired launch date for your brand - does this coincide with a key event in the business?

### Budget

*Addressing that elephant in the room…*

*You can save time and energy for both you and the agency if you provide your budget, the agency will instantly be able to tell you that****A) this budget is unrealistic for what you want to achieve and we can't work with you or   
B) this sounds great, we'll provide a proposal for you to review.***  *Which puts you as a client in a much better situation moving forward either way*.

### Deliverables

*OK, we know it’s a tricky one. But giving an agency an idea of what you’re working with will help save time for all parties. Can they realistically deliver within the constraints? If not, they might be able to produce a lighter package of assets without the full surrounding strategy.*

*A good way to get there is also listing out the deliverables you’re hoping to receive. For example:*

* Brand strategy (research, proposition and ideation)
* Visual brand and tone of voice guidelines
* Online assets: website, social avatars, campaign assets, etc.
* Offline assets: business cards, letterheads and promotional flyers

### Contact

*Next, add key contact details for the main stakeholders. Assigning one contact that the agency’s project manager can contact will ensure a streamlined process. Someone that realistically has the time and capacity to deal with a project of this size. Contact details should include:*

* ​​Name and role
* Phone
* Email
* Hours available

### Award criteria

*If this is an official procurement process, your tender might have specific criteria that a branding agency’s proposal needs to meet. This could include things like:*

* Cost/Value for Money
* Quality of Work
* Previous Experience
* Alignment to the Design Brief
* Suitability of the Agency

### Required response

*This is what the agency should come back to you with. Usually, it’s something like:*

* A proposal
* Examples of previous work
* Relevant client references

## …And that’s all folks

A good design brief isn’t hard to write - especially when you’ve got this handy template like this to work with 😉

There may be other details you’d like to mention that could steer a marketing team, design agency - or anybody else who’s representing your brand - in the right direction. Any Agency welcomes as much info as possible with welcome arms.

Because if you don’t skimp on the details, we’re pretty sure you’ll end up with a brand that dazzles - this year and for many more to come.

### Are you looking for a brand agency you can trust? [Get in touch](https://madebyshape.co.uk/contact/) with us at Shape to chat about your branding project today, we’d love to help! [hello@madebyshape.co.uk](mailto:hello@madebyshape.co.uk)