

Guidelines to write a market research brief

Why write a market research brief?

- Writing and agreeing a market research brief clarifies your research needs. It also makes sure your colleagues are on-board with your ideas. In turn this helps an agency write a better research proposal, conduct more useful research *and* thus better achieve your desired business outcomes! Here are some questions to consider and headings to structure your brief.

Background to brief

- First, describe the problem you wish to solve i.e. what makes this brief necessary. Include any relevant context, for example, work to date, what information you have, why you wish to conduct research now, and how the issue or challenge fits with any other initiatives within your organisation.

Business objectives

- Next, explain your business objectives such as to increase sales, attract lapsed customers. Be as specific as you can.

Project objectives

- Then, describe the purpose of, or expected outcomes from conducting this piece of work. Specifically, what decisions do you wish to make? Perhaps to create or improve a product or create a new ad campaign?

Market research objectives

- Market research objectives should follow from business and project objectives. So summarise your research aims and information needs. It helps to list the questions you require answering. Be clear whether you require understanding (more [qualitative](#) objectives), or to measure something (more [quantitative](#) objectives), or [both](#).

Stakeholders

- Now consider who needs to sign-off and act on the research outcomes. Clarifying the audience helps an agency anticipate your needs, and in turn helps them to help you get everyone on-board with your plan.

Research method, scope of work, sample and guidelines

- Next, explain what you require. This helps focus effort on what's really important and get more for your research investment. Though do not be too prescriptive so as to avoid stifling a creative response to your brief.
- So what are any 'must-dos', 'nice-to-dos', don'ts or priorities?
- What customer groups, markets, areas or counties to include? Also which merit most attention?
- For quantitative research, include the sample size, and length of survey. This is because these are key cost determinants.
- Also describe any stimuli or inputs. Stimuli is useful to probe and develop ideas.
- Clarify any timing or budget constraints? It helps to be realistic on timing. Providing a budget also makes sure the scale of work proposed is affordable. In turn this helps researchers provide the best affordable solution.
- Lastly mention any other decision-making criteria.

Research outcomes

- Finally, define what should the project deliver, and if possible, what will success feel like?
- Also if you prefer a particular reporting format say what and why? For example, a face-to-face debrief, report, short film or an infographic)?

Writing style

- Always use plain language so your needs are clear. And also explain any unusual or in-company terms or acronyms.

Request an inspiring proposal

- For an inspiring response to your market research brief email hello@themarketingdirectors.co.uk or call Guy Tomlinson on +44(0)1628 473 699.