



TAPFLARE / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Campaign Design Brief Template: Concepts, Variants, Approvals

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Executive Summary

A campaign design brief is a pre-production scoping document. Its job is not to define marketing strategy or to write messaging; its job is to let a designer or design provider tell the buyer what can be quoted, what can be adapted from an approved master, and what is blocked until someone supplies an input. Existing guides already list the standard fields: Superside's guide, dated March 9, 2021, names stakeholders, timelines and deliverables (www.superside.com), and Penji's template, last updated September 21, 2026, covers goals, audience, budget and file types (penji.co). What is rarely shown is how to count the work.

This guide proposes one brief plus a deliverables matrix and an approval and dependency map. It separates five units: **concept** (a creative idea), **approved master** (the signed-off execution of a concept), **adaptation** (the master resized or recomposed for another channel), **language version** (the same layout with different approved copy) and **export** (a delivered file). A count of exports is not a workload estimate. In a clearly fictional example, 2 concepts × 3 sizes × 2 locales yields **12** export combinations only if every combination is required, and one of them, a German vertical story layout, may need a fresh layout because translated text changes in length (www.w3.org) and the platform reserves screen areas that must stay clear of text and logos (www.facebook.com).

Channel specifications are volatile and differ by placement. Meta's Facebook Feed image page lists 1440 x 1800 pixels (www.facebook.com) while its Instagram Reels image page lists 1440 x 2560 pixels (www.facebook.com). Google's responsive display guide carries a notice that Display campaigns are moving to Demand Gen (support.google.com). Each row of a matrix therefore needs a specification URL and a retrieval date.

Capacity wording also differs between providers, so "unlimited requests" should never be read as unlimited simultaneous delivery. Design Pickle's help center says its creatives work on one request at a time per subscription (help.designpickle.com), Kimp lists 3, 2 or 5 requests at a time depending on plan (www.kimp.io), and Flocksy sells "daily creative hours" (flocksy.com). Approval needs one accountable person: a RACI

(Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) guide advises exactly one accountable individual per task (www.atlassian.com). Permissions for AI use, stock and fonts vary by license and contract; Adobe Fonts, for example, says its fonts are not compatible with packaging workflows that transfer font files (helpx.adobe.com).

Introduction and Background

Most search results for "campaign design brief template" return the same skeleton: business background, goals, audience, budget, timeline, deliverables, references. Those fields are necessary and competitor pages cover them well. This report starts from a narrower question that arises when a SaaS or startup marketing team, or an agency account manager, briefs an external designer for a multi-asset launch: **what exactly is being bought, what can be adapted from a master, which dependencies block production, and who can authorize a change?**

The scope boundary matters. This guide is about commissioning production, not defining marketing strategy, buying media, or asking a design subscription to write messaging. The client supplies approved claims and copy; the designer composes, adapts and exports. Tapflare, the publisher of this guide, is a flat-rate monthly subscription for graphic design and website development run by a dedicated project manager. It is not a marketing agency, a copywriting or media-buying service, or a fit for a single one-off job, so a reader whose real gap is strategy or messaging should close that gap first. Tapflare also publishes pieces on consistency and governance and on dedicated design teams; this guide concentrates on the scoping instrument itself.

What the existing guides already cover

Superside's guide lists project scope, goals, stakeholders and task owners, timelines, target audience, deliverables, and assets and style guide as brief components (www.superside.com), and tells briefers to consider file types "like the raw files" (www.superside.com). Penji's page adds that a timeline can be as simple as a deadline date or as detailed as weekly progress ranges (penji.co), and Design Pickle's request form asks for a title, sizes, file formats and a brand profile (help.designpickle.com). ManyPixels publishes a "minimum viable brief template" (manypixels.co). None of these pages, within the sections read, divides deliverables into concepts, adaptations, language versions and exports, or assigns a copy owner and approver per asset. That gap is the reason for the matrix below, and whether readers need the full matrix or only the one-page brief is untested.

Defining the Units: Concept, Master, Adaptation, Language Version and Export

The phrase "design variants vs concepts" hides a real budgeting difference. A **concept** is a distinct creative idea: a different visual premise, layout logic or message hierarchy. A **variant** is a looser word that can mean anything from a new concept to a recolor, which is why it should be avoided in a brief. Instead of "variants", the brief should use five countable units.

- **Concept:** a creative direction that needs its own exploration and approval. Two concepts means two different ideas, not one idea at two sizes.

- **Approved master:** the signed-off execution of a concept in one lead format, with approved copy. Everything downstream depends on this approval.
- **Adaptation:** the master reworked for another channel, size or aspect ratio. An adaptation may be a mechanical scale or a recomposition, and the brief should say which is expected.
- **Language version:** the same layout carrying different approved copy for another language or locale. It is a separate unit because copy length, script and reading direction can change the layout.
- **Export:** a delivered file in a specified type and size. Exports are the final output step, not the unit of design effort.

ManyPixels' help center poses a related decision at the start of a request: whether the client wants a single polished direction or a few quick exploratory options (manypixels.co). That is a concept-count decision, and the brief should state it as a number.

Why a count of exports is not a workload estimate

Exports multiply easily. If a campaign has 2 approved concepts, 3 sizes and 2 locales, and every combination is required, the arithmetic is $2 \times 3 \times 2 = 12$ export combinations. That number answers one question: how many files should exist at the end. It does not say how much design effort each file needs, because the twelve are not equal: some are masters, some straightforward adaptations, some language versions that reuse a layout, and some may need recomposition. Assigning a standard time to each, or a saving from batching, would be invention; no authoritative benchmark was found. The same layout can also be requested as PNG, SVG or PDF, and Figma describes PNG as raster with lossless compression and transparency (help.figma.com), so file types multiply exports without multiplying design work.

Capacity wording compounds the confusion. A provider's "unlimited requests" describes how many requests may be submitted, not how many are worked simultaneously. Design Pickle's help center states both that clients may submit endless design requests and revisions (help.designpickle.com) and that its creatives work on one request at a time unless more subscriptions are added (help.designpickle.com). A brief that lists twelve exports as twelve separate requests might take a different path through a queue than the same work submitted as one multi-asset request, so the buyer should ask the supplier how it will be sequenced.

When localized copy needs a fresh layout

The counterexample to "a locale is just a resize" is well documented. W3C's internationalization guidance states that the length of source and translated text is likely to differ (www.w3.org), and that the smaller the source message, the higher the likely translation length (www.w3.org). Short strings are exactly what headlines, buttons and badges contain. W3C's own example shows a 300% expansion from English to Italian for a small string (www.w3.org), and it warns against fitting text snugly into graphic designs (www.w3.org).

Character counts are not a reliable proxy: a Japanese rendering with one fewer character will typically take up much more horizontal space (www.w3.org). Fonts add another dependency, since many fonts are intended to support a single script (learn.microsoft.com), and Google defines "tofu" as the blank rectangles shown when no font is available for the text (fonts.google.com). A brand typeface licensed for Latin text may therefore need a companion font, which is a licensing and approval question as well as a design one.

Reading direction is a further trigger. W3C states that it is essential to support languages that use right-to-left scripts (www.w3.org), and a mirrored layout affects more than text. Apple's guidelines advise avoiding flipping photographs, illustrations and general artwork (developer.apple.com), suggest creating a new version of an image instead of flipping the original where its meaning depends on direction (developer.apple.com), and say not to flip logos or universal signs and marks (developer.apple.com). A brief that includes a right-to-left locale should list it as its own unit with an open question, not a free export.

Writing the Brief, Part One: Objective, Copy and Channel Specifications

Step 1: Name the objective, audience and intended action

The brief opens with three one-line statements: the business objective, the audience, and the one action the asset should prompt. These come from the client's strategy, which this guide treats as an input; if it is unsettled, the brief says so in an open-questions field rather than asking the designer to resolve it.

The same step names who supplies approved claims and copy. This is the most common ownership gap in a launch brief. A designer can set type, but cannot decide whether "cuts reporting time" is a claim the company is entitled to make, and a design subscription does not write messaging. The brief should therefore name a **copy owner** per asset or per locale, state whether copy is final or placeholder, and say who owns translation and legal or brand review. Where claims need substantiation, the client holds that file; the designer works from the approved wording.

Step 2: List concepts, channels, formats, locales and delivery formats

The second step is the countable list. For each unit, the brief records the concept it belongs to, the channel and placement, the pixel size or aspect ratio, the locale, and the delivery file type. For every channel, it also records a **current specification source**: the official URL and the date it was checked.

This is not bureaucratic caution. Specifications differ by placement and change over time. Meta's ad guide is organized around placements and describes itself as the place for the latest specifications (www.facebook.com). Google's responsive display documentation says uploaded images may appear in different sizes depending on layout (support.google.com). TikTok's page shows a "Last updated" line of June 2026 (ads.tiktok.com) and cautions that previews can differ slightly from the live ad (ads.tiktok.com). Where a channel page shows no date, the brief should record the retrieval date instead.

Text on images deserves a note of its own. Google's documentation advises against inserting text on top of an image (support.google.com). For web destinations, WCAG 2.2 (the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) defines "images of text" as text rendered in a non-text form to achieve a visual effect (www.w3.org), and treats logotypes as essential (www.w3.org). The brief should state where each asset is published and ask the designer to flag text-heavy layouts.

Step 3: Name brand and reference materials

The third step lists approved brand and reference materials: logos, colors, typefaces, previous campaigns and examples. ManyPixels advises sharing 3 to 5 examples of work the client likes, not 20 (manypixels.co), and Design Pickle suggests saying whether references are to be replicated or used only as inspiration (help.designpickle.com).

Writing the Brief, Part Two: Materials, Files, Dependencies and Dates

Step 4: Editable and source-file requirements

The brief must say which delivered files are finished exports and which are editable sources, because the two are different things. Figma documents that SVG export outputs text as glyphs by default (help.figma.com), and that a PDF export means text cannot be edited in the final PDF (help.figma.com). Canva's help states that a PDF of a design with cropped images will include the original image (www.canva.com). Exports are fixed; source files are what a later designer or localization team needs to change copy.

Source files raise their own access questions. Figma's "can view" role lets people view and comment but not edit (help.figma.com), and editing requires a seat that includes the product the file was made with (help.figma.com). Canva's template link feature is limited to paid plans (www.canva.com). Adobe says packaging an InDesign file creates a folder with the file, linked graphics, fonts and a report (helpx.adobe.com), but fonts activated from Adobe Fonts are excluded (helpx.adobe.com). ManyPixels lists native source file types including PSD, AI, INDD, FIG or a Canva share link (manypixels.co), and Design Pickle makes source files an opt-in checkbox (help.designpickle.com), so a brief that says only "source files please" may not get what it expects. Whether a source file stays editable in the recipient's software is a question to test, not assume.

Step 5: Dependencies, priority and required versus preferred dates

A dependency is something that blocks production until it arrives. In project management terms, the most common type is finish-to-start, where a dependent task cannot start before another task is complete (www.atlassian.com) (asana.com). In a launch brief, the usual blockers are:

- **Approved copy:** layouts for each locale wait for approved text.
- **Product screenshots or UI captures:** a concept that centers a screenshot waits for a stable build.
- **Master approval:** adaptations wait for the approved master, not for the first draft.
- **Font and stock clearance:** a layout cannot be finalized until the typeface and imagery are cleared for the intended use.
- **Channel specification confirmation:** sizes are confirmed on the date the brief is issued.

Each unit gets a priority (for example must-have for launch day, should-have, or later) and two dates: the **required** date, after which the asset has no value, and the **preferred** date, which leaves room for review. Superside's brief form defines its final deadline as the date by which all assets should be ready to use (help.superside.com) and returns a plan with estimated cost and timeline (help.superside.com). The brief should ask the supplier for an estimate rather than promise a timetable.

Approvals, Change Types and Permissions

Step 6: One final approver, consolidated feedback, defined change types

Only the brief-specific approval points follow. A brief needs **one person with final approval**, named in the document. Atlassian's RACI guidance advises ensuring there is always one accountable individual per task (www.atlassian.com), and defines the four RACI roles as Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed (www.atlassian.com). It also cautions that too many Consulted people can result in conflicting opinions (www.atlassian.com). A practical rule: reviewers send comments to one consolidator, who resolves conflicts before the designer sees them.

Feedback quality matters as much as the approver. Nielsen Norman Group observes that when stakeholders do not know where to focus, they will give any and all feedback (www.nngroup.com), and recommends setting expectations about the kind of feedback needed (www.nngroup.com). A brief can do this by stating what stage each round covers: concept choice, layout, copy fit, final polish.

Project management has a name for this. A change request is a formal proposal to modify a document, deliverable or baseline (www.pmi.org), and change control means a request is captured, evaluated and then approved, rejected or deferred (www.apm.org.uk). UK government project guidance says decisions should be made by those with the authority to make them (projectdelivery.gov.uk), and PMI defines scope creep as uncontrolled expansion of scope without adjustments to time, cost and resources (www.pmi.org). A lightweight design version is a table that classifies every incoming request.

Table 1 below separates six kinds of change that are often called "revisions". The distinction supports who can authorize each, which is the point of the brief's approval map. It does not assign cost, time or savings, because none were verified.

Change type	Example (fictional)	Treat as	Who can authorize	Record in brief
New concept	Stakeholder asks for a third creative idea after masters are approved	New unit; needs estimate and approval	Final approver, plus budget holder	Add concept ID, update matrix
Fixing an agreed defect	Approved logo placement is off the agreed grid, or text deviates from approved copy	Correction to an approved unit; no scope change	Consolidator confirms against approved brief	Log defect and reference to agreed requirement
Size adaptation	Add a 4:5 version of the approved landscape master	New adaptation of an approved master	Final approver; supplier confirms whether mechanical or recomposed	Add asset ID and channel spec URL with date
Changing approved copy	Legal edits the headline after layouts exist	Change request; may affect every language version	Copy owner, then final approver	Mark affected asset IDs; reopen dependent rows
Language version or locale added	German added after English approval	New language version; may need a fresh layout	Final approver; copy owner supplies approved text	Add locale rows; flag open layout questions

Change type	Example (fictional)	Treat as	Who can authorize	Record in brief
Producing a source export	Request editable Figma or Adobe files after final delivery	Export of existing work; check license and access	Final approver; font and stock owner for clearance	Record source format and access method

Several rows show why the word "revision" is unreliable. A defect fix reasserts the agreement, while a copy change alters it. Neither is the same as adding a concept. Where a provider's pages say there are no revision caps, as ManyPixels' help pages do (manypixels.co), the buyer should still classify requests, because what counts as a revision is defined in the provider's own scope terms.

Step 7: AI-use permissions, stock and font clearance

The brief should record who may use generative AI and in what part of the work, and who clears stock and fonts. No universal rule applies, and the sources show why.

AI use. Superside's form lets the client choose whether AI may be used in asset creation (help.superside.com). Adobe states that outputs of Firefly features without the beta label can be used in commercial projects (helpx.adobe.com), and Canva's AI terms make ownership of output that incorporates library content subject to the license on that content (www.canva.com). On copyright, the US Copyright Office's January 2025 release says generative AI outputs can be protected only where a human author has determined sufficient expressive elements (www.copyright.gov), and its report says whether human contributions suffice is decided case by case (www.copyright.gov). This is general context, not legal advice; the brief records the client's policy, and licensing questions go to counsel.

Stock. Adobe Stock says most photos, vectors and illustrations come with a Standard license (stock.adobe.com), which includes a reproduction cap of 500,000 copies (stock.adobe.com). Content labeled editorial use only may not be used for advertisements or promotions (stock.adobe.com), and Getty Images explains that editorial images lack model and property releases (www.gettyimages.com).

Fonts. Adobe Fonts says fonts added through an account are licensed for personal and commercial use (helpx.adobe.com), that a client does not need a separate license for graphics with rasterized or properly embedded font data (helpx.adobe.com), and that embedding in mobile or desktop applications is not allowed (helpx.adobe.com). Google Fonts states that usage and redistribution conditions are specified in each font's license (developers.google.com). Fontspring says a client who wants to use the font on their own computers must purchase their own license (www.fontspring.com).

The brief therefore needs a **clearance owner** per category: who confirms the stock license covers the channels and print runs, who confirms the font license covers editing by the client and any later designer, and who decides on AI use. Naming the person is the useful act; the brief should not state a universal rule.

Data Analysis and Evidence

The evidence is documentary: official channel specifications, provider help pages and standards text. No benchmark of production time per unit, revision savings or approval cycle length from an authoritative originator was found for design briefs, and none is asserted. One adjacent figure exists: an Adobe Workfront

survey of 407 UK-based creative professionals reported that creatives spend just 29% of their time on creative work (adobe.com). It does not measure briefs, so it is context only.

Channel specification snapshot

Table 2 below shows the kind of per-channel specification record the brief should carry. All pages were read on November 1, 2026. The point is not that these numbers will stay current; it is that they differ by channel, by placement and by page date, and that each carries different file and tolerance rules.

Channel and placement	Stated specification	Date shown by the page	Brief implication
Google responsive display, landscape image	Recommended 1200 x 628 (support.google.com)	None shown; notice that Display is moving to Demand Gen (support.google.com)	Confirm which campaign type is used before sizing
Meta, Facebook Feed image	1440 x 1800 pixels (www.facebook.com); 30MB maximum (www.facebook.com); 3% ratio tolerance (www.facebook.com)	None shown on the guide page	Feed and Reels are different rows
Meta, Instagram Reels image	1440 x 2560 pixels (www.facebook.com); 1% ratio tolerance (www.facebook.com); leave roughly 14% top, 35% bottom, 6% each side (www.facebook.com)	None shown	Safe zones constrain headline placement
TikTok in-feed	Safe zone depends on dimension (ads.tiktok.com)	Last updated: June 2026 (ads.tiktok.com)	Preview may differ from live ad (ads.tiktok.com)

The table shows three recurring facts. Aspect ratio tolerances differ between two placements of the same company (3% versus 1%), so a "close enough" crop can pass in one and fail in another. Only one of the four channel pages displays a date, so the briefer must record the retrieval date. Safe zones remove roughly half of a vertical canvas's height from use for key elements, so a vertical adaptation is rarely a pure scale.

Provider capacity wording

Capacity units are the second quantity that is easy to misread. Table 3 below quotes how each provider describes capacity on its own pages, as of November 1, 2026. It compares wording only, not price, quality or speed.

Provider	What its own pages say about capacity or concurrency	Brief implication
Design Pickle	Endless requests and revisions (help.designpickle.com); creatives work on one request at a time unless more subscriptions are added (help.designpickle.com); capacity tied to daily design hours on the plan (designpickle.com)	Sequence matters; group related assets deliberately
ManyPixels	No per-project pricing, revision caps or request limits (manypixels.co); a paused request does not count against the designer's daily capacity (manypixels.co)	"Daily capacity" is not defined numerically on the pages read; ask

Provider	What its own pages say about capacity or concurrency	Brief implication
Kimp	Requests fulfilled 3 at a time on Graphics, 2 on Video, and 5 on the combined plan (www.kimp.io); a project manager reviews requests for required details (www.kimp.io)	Queue depth is a stated plan feature
Flocksy	Plans are sold by daily creative hours (flocksy.com); unused hours roll over for 30 days while the plan is active (flocksy.com)	Hours, not requests, are the unit
Tapflare (publisher of this guide)	Per its own description: a dedicated project manager assigns each request to senior graphic designers and developers, working from a daily allotment of hours set by the plan; the client keeps ownership of export and source files	Hours-based; per its site, requests are queued on a ticketing system and produced one at a time, with the next started once the current one is finalized, so agree the sequencing of a multi-asset launch up front

Four of the five providers describe capacity through something other than "number of files": hours, active requests, or a queue. That supports the claim that an export count is not a workload estimate, and that "unlimited requests" is a statement about submission, not about parallel delivery. None of the pages read defines how many hours a given resize or localization takes, so the brief should ask the supplier for an estimate.

Case Study: A Fictional Launch Brief (Hypothetical Example)

This marketing campaign creative brief example is invented for illustration: the company, product, people and dates are fictional and refer to no real business. Northwind Metrics (fictional) plans to launch Beacon Insights (fictional), a reporting dashboard feature, in two locales: US English (en-US) and German in Germany (de-DE).

The brief, as first written

- **Objective:** announce Beacon Insights to existing trial users and lookalike audiences.
- **Audience:** operations managers at small software companies.
- **Intended action:** start a free trial.
- **Concepts:** Concept A, a product-interface hero; Concept B, a type-led customer outcome message.
- **Channels and sizes:** three image placements: landscape 1200 x 628 for responsive display, 1440 x 1800 for a social feed, and 1440 x 2560 for a vertical story or Reels placement.
- **Locales:** en-US and de-DE.
- **Delivery:** PNG exports plus an editable source file.
- **Copy:** supplied by the Northwind product marketing lead; translation by a Northwind localization vendor.
- **Approver:** "marketing leadership".

The arithmetic gives $2 \times 3 \times 2 = 12$ export combinations, if every combination is required. A quote based only on that number would be unsafe, and the matrix exposes why.

What the matrix exposes

Table 4 shows a subset of the brief as a deliverables matrix. Concept B repeats the same six-row pattern and is omitted here for length. "Open question" entries mark what cannot yet be quoted. All specification dates below are the retrieval date, November 1, 2026.

Asset ID	Unit type	Channel, spec source and date	Local e	Copy owner	Dependency	Priority	Approver	File type	Open question
A-01	Master (concept A)	Google responsive display; support.google.com/google-ads/answer/9823397, 2026-11-01	en - US	Product marketing lead	Stable product screenshots	Must - have	Unnam ed	PNG + source	Which campaign type is used, given the Demand Gen notice?
A-02	Adaptation	Meta Feed; facebook.com/business/ads-guide/image, 2026-11-01	en - US	Product marketing lead	A-01 approved	Must - have	Unnam ed	PNG	Mechanical resize or recomposition?
A-03	Adaptation	Meta Reels; facebook.com/business/ads-guide/update/image/instagram-reels, 2026-11-01	en - US	Product marketing lead	A-01 approved	Must - have	Unnam ed	PNG	Headline fits outside the 14% top and 35% bottom zones?
A-04	Language version	Google responsive display	de - DE	Localization vendor	German copy approved	Must - have	Unnam ed	PNG + source	Is the German copy final, and who approves it?
A-05	Language version	Meta Feed	de - DE	Localization vendor	A-02 and German copy	Should - have	Unnam ed	PNG	Does German headline fit the same layout?
A-06	Language version, likely fresh layout	Meta Reels	de - DE	Localization vendor	A-03 and German copy	Should - have	Unnam ed	PNG	Headline length and safe zones may require recomposition

The matrix reveals five things the first draft did not show:

1. **No named approver.** "Marketing leadership" is a group, which conflicts with the one-accountable-person rule. The brief cannot proceed to quote until one person is named.
2. **Unapproved German copy.** Rows A-04 to A-06 depend on text that does not yet exist, and the length of the copy decides the layout (www.w3.org).
3. **A likely fresh layout.** A-06 is the counterexample to a trivial resize. A German headline on a narrow vertical canvas, with roughly 14% reserved at the top and 35% at the bottom, may need new line breaks or a new hierarchy. It should be quoted as recomposition or flagged as unquotable until copy arrives.
4. **A screenshot dependency.** Concept A waits for a stable product build. If the interface changes after master approval, every dependent adaptation reopens.

5. **Unresolved clearance.** The brief says nothing about AI use, the typeface license for German characters, or stock. Each needs an owner.

Once the approver is named and the German copy is final, the supplier can estimate the English rows with some confidence, and the German rows as a second step. The brief should state that sequence and should not state a delivery date for the whole set. If the supplier cannot estimate A-06 until copy is final, that is accurate information.

Copyable Templates

These four templates (a one-page brief, a minimum single-asset version, a deliverables matrix header and a change request record) work as a design brief template and checklist for a multi-asset campaign, and are light enough to use in practice.

Template 1: One-page campaign design brief

CAMPAIGN DESIGN BRIEF (production scoping; strategy and copy supplied by client)
(Fields group the numbered steps; they do not map one-to-one.)
Date issued: ____ Version: ____ Spec sources checked on: ____

1. OBJECTIVE / AUDIENCE / ACTION: ____ Approved-claims document and owner: ____
2. UNITS: concepts (number; single direction or options): ____
Channels, placements, sizes (each with official spec URL + date): ____
Locales (codes) and languages: ____ Delivery formats: ____ Matrix attached: Y/N
3. MATERIALS: brand guide, logos, colors, fonts (license owner): ____
References (3 to 5, each "replicate" or "inspiration"): ____
Source files (format, sharing method, who needs edit access): ____
4. DEPENDENCIES AND DATES: blocking inputs and owners: ____
Required / preferred date per priority group: ____ Supplier estimate before start: Y/N
5. APPROVAL: final approver (one person): ____ Feedback consolidator: ____
Copy owner / translation owner / legal or brand review: ____
6. PERMISSIONS: AI use (none / assist only / generative in deliverables): ____
Stock license owner: ____ Font license owner and scope: ____
7. OPEN QUESTIONS (what cannot yet be quoted): ____

Template 2: Minimum version for a single asset

For one banner, one social tile or one slide, the whole brief is a few lines. ManyPixels' published minimum template shows the same restraint (manypixels.co). Use this and stop:

ASSET: what it is, where it runs, exact size (with the channel spec link)
GOAL AND ACTION: one sentence each
COPY: final text pasted here, and who approved it
BRAND: logo/guide link, fonts (license owner)
REFERENCE: 1 to 3 examples with a note on each
FILES: export type; source file needed? (Y/N, which software)

APPROVER AND DATE: one name; required date
 OPEN QUESTION: anything not yet decided

Template 3: Deliverables matrix header

Copy this row into a spreadsheet and add one line per asset:

Asset ID | Concept or adaptation | Unit type | Channel and placement | Official spec URL + date checked |
 Locale | Approved copy owner | Design owner | Dependency | Priority | Approver | Required file type | Open
 question

Unit type takes one of five values: concept, master, adaptation, language version, export. Mark a language version that needs a fresh layout as "recomposition" so the supplier can estimate it separately, and total the rows per unit type, not as one count of files.

Template 4: Change request record

CR #: ____ Date: ____ Raised by: ____
 Affected asset IDs: ____
 Change type: new concept / agreed-defect fix / size adaptation / approved-copy change / language version or
 locale / source export
 Reference to approved brief or copy (version): ____
 Description: ____
 Dependencies reopened: ____
 Supplier estimate requested (Y/N) and received: ____
 Authorized by (name): ____ Decision: approved / rejected / deferred Date: ____
 Matrix updated (Y/N): ____

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the difference between a creative brief and a design brief?

Usage varies. A creative brief for designers often carries the strategic message; a design brief for production usually assumes the strategy is set and records the deliverables. This report treats them as one document at different levels of detail, with the strategic fields supplied by the client.

How to write a design brief for a multi-asset campaign?

Follow the numbered steps: state the objective, audience and action; list every unit with channel specification sources; name brand materials; specify editable and source-file needs; record dependencies and dates; name one approver and the change types; record AI, stock and font permissions. Then ask the supplier for an estimate and let it flag what it cannot yet quote.

What is the difference between design variants and concepts?

A concept is a distinct creative idea requiring its own approval. "Variant" is ambiguous, so the brief should say adaptation (same idea in another size), language version (same layout, new approved copy) or export (a delivered file). A resize is not always a mechanical adaptation: translation length (www.w3.org) is a common reason it is not.

What belongs in a design approval process template?

A named final approver, the stage each review round covers, a feedback consolidator, change types with their authorizers, and a record of decisions. Template 4 is a minimal version of that record.

Does "unlimited requests" mean everything is delivered at once?

No. Providers describe capacity differently: one request at a time per subscription in one case, daily creative hours in another (flocksy.com). Ask how a multi-asset launch will be sequenced.

Do I need the full matrix for a single asset?

No. Use Template 2. The matrix pays off when assets share a master or when locales are involved.

Implications and Future Directions

For buyers. The practical shift is from asking "how many files?" to asking "how many concepts, how many adaptations, how many language versions, and what blocks each?" That produces estimates that can be compared between suppliers, because they rest on the same units. It does not remove uncertainty; it locates it.

For providers and agencies. A supplier that receives unit types can estimate per type and state what it needs before it can estimate the rest. For white-label agencies, the approver column shows whether sign-off sits inside the agency or at the end client.

Open questions. Two remain untested: whether readers prefer the full matrix or the one-page version, and whether classifying changes reduces disputes. Channel volatility is the other constant: Google's Display-to-Demand-Gen notice is one example of why the matrix carries a dated specification column.

Conclusion

A campaign design brief earns its place when it lets a supplier estimate honestly. The fields every guide lists are necessary but not sufficient for a multi-asset launch. What adds value is a shared vocabulary of concept, approved master, adaptation, language version and export, a deliverables matrix that assigns each row a copy owner, dependency, approver and specification source, and a change vocabulary that separates a new concept from a defect fix, a size adaptation and a copy change.

Three principles follow from the evidence reviewed. First, an export count is an inventory, not a workload estimate: the same 12 combinations can hide mechanical resizes and recompositions, and sources on text length, safe zones and reading direction show why. Second, capacity wording differs by provider, and

"unlimited requests" does not promise unlimited simultaneous delivery. Third, approval and permissions are decisions that need named owners, because AI use, stock licenses and font licenses vary by contract and product.

For a single asset, the minimum version is enough. For a launch with several concepts and locales, the one-page brief and matrix expose what cannot yet be quoted, which is often the most useful result of writing the brief at all. Teams that need strategy, messaging or media planning should settle those first, then brief production with the structure above.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

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What it covers

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