PIECING TOGETHER AN EFFECTIVE BRIEFING: CONTENT GENERATION & COPYWRITING

A briefing serves to guide our work. The more targeted the information we receive, the better we can ensure to meet your expectations. The following is a checklist to help you prepare.

○ **What type of asset is to be created? Brochure, flyer, advertisement, blog post, instructions for use, emailer, etc.**
If you have an example of the asset type, share it with us so we can ensure consistency of length, style, language, etc.

○ **Describe the audience of the asset to be created.**
Information about their job, age, and reading habits is valuable.

○ **How will the audience be exposed to the asset?**
Name the channels for distribution of the asset to be created.

○ **What is your preferred tone of voice for the asset? Consider:**
Should or may the content be written in the first person? Don't forget your CI guidelines!

Should or may the reader be addressed directly? Do you prefer a short, snappy, fresh writing style or does the audience and objective of the asset call for a more sober and formal writing style?

○ **What is the targeted length/size of the asset? Don't forget space for graphs and images!**
Number of words or characters is a helpful measure as number of pages can vary depending of font size and document spacing. For posters or infographics, name the size of the final deliverable (DINA0? DINA4?)

○ **What should be the file format of the deliverable?**
Microsoft Word, InDesign project, PDF, PowerPoint presentation, etc.

○ **Do we need to comply with Corporate Image guidelines?**
You can tell us about the relevant guidelines or you can give us access to the CI guideline document.

○ **Layout. Will layout be handled internally, or would you like us to coordinate the layout with one of our design partners?**
If we are to handle the layout, tell us about required layout elements, any ideas you have for the design, thoughts about what would be the most effective layout for the target audience. We will also need CI layout guidelines, CI colors (CMYK codes), and high-resolution files of logos, images and graphs that are to be included.

○ **Objective of the asset. What is the purpose of the asset or better yet, what outcome do you expect from the creation and distribution of the asset?**

Take-home messages. List the most important ideas, concepts or facts you wish to convey in the asset.
If this list gets very long, highlight the most important 3 messages.

Balancing text and graphical elements. What graphs, illustrations or images will be included in the asset? How much explanatory text should an infographic include?
A picture is worth a thousand words also applies to marketing and technical documentation. Graphs, illustrations, images and icons facilitate reading, draw reader attention and save space compared to text explanations.

Timelines. By when does a first draft need to be delivered?
It helps to calculate backward from the date on which the final asset will be made available. Consider time for printing, posting online or preparing a distribution channel; account for internal review with relevant stakeholders and time to implement revisions; don't forget any processing for document control systems.

Finally, are there words, topics or concepts that should not appear in the asset to be created?
For example, some CI Guidelines or regulatory requirements stipulate that certain words may not be used; you may want to omit certain topics due to the competitive landscape; or you may want to avoid a certain argument, etc.

Your content. Please share any documents, presentations, data graphs, articles or other to help us with content generation.
You may be tempted to just pile together everything you have, but it may be more effective to structure the information and explain the content. Doing such can help you refine take-home messages and align these with supporting arguments.