



How to write a shopper marketing brief *and get better results from your agency*



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Getting an agency brief right is a challenge across all of marketing. While 78% of marketers think that their briefs provide clear strategic direction, only 5% of agencies agree. 80% of marketers think they are good at writing briefs. Only 10% of agencies agree.

**SO HOW CAN SHOPPER
MARKETERS AND THEIR AGENCIES
IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR
AGENCY BRIEFS THAT WILL
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EXECUTION AND BETTER RESULTS?**

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1. Don't make the shopper marketing brief an after-thought

All that consumer creative is worth nothing unless someone buys the product. And that someone is the shopper. Shopper marketing and the briefing thereof shouldn't be an afterthought. It needs to be integrated into the entire campaign at a strategic level. If not, it is extremely unlikely that it will be tactically connected either.

2. Identify the target shopper in your shopper marketing brief

A shopper brief that declares the target shopper to be 'the consumer' hasn't been thought through.

Ditto something that says 'housewives' or, 'the shopper'. Great shopper marketing will come from a deep understanding of who the target shopper is, what they do now, and what we want them to do. Which brings me on to

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3. Have a clear behavioral objective

Who do you want to behave differently? What do they do now? What do you want them to do in the future?

That's what we call a [Shopper Behavioral Objective](#).

If your brief doesn't call this out in specific detail, you'll more than likely get a generic or wildly off-brief response.

4. Ask the Most Powerful Question in Marketing

Many of you will know about the 5Ws of marketing (Who, When, Where, Why, What) – well that misses the most powerful W. [The 6W. Why not?](#) We've got a great brand, a great product. It meets the consumer's needs.

It's perfect. So why are shoppers not buying it?

The 6th W unlocks the power of your creative team,

believe me. [Learn how to create powerful shopper communication that really works – Now](#)

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5. Don't do tactics

Most marketers think that they are quite good at creative. The same is true for shopper marketers. Leave it to the pros. That's why you have an agency. Let the agency plan how to make it work. As the marketer, focus on the strategy.

6. Have a strategy first

If you don't have a clear shopper strategy that integrates with the consumer strategy, please don't blame the agency for not being 'strategic enough' in their response. Strategic is the client's job. If you need help creating an integrated consumer and shopper strategy – [get in touch](#) and we can show you how (or help you do it, or both!)

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7. Include brand mandatories, but only things that are REALLY mandatory

Things that are important in consumer communication aren't always important when it comes to the shopper. Yes, you might have splurged a squillion dollars on the sexy tagline for the TV ad – but that might not mean anything to the shopper. Don't include mandatories that don't add value.

8. Include retail mandatories in your shopper marketing brief

Many shopper agencies don't really understand retail. Explaining what the retail rules are is key. Helping your agency understand why the retailer insists on certain things can both reduce frustration, and lead to creative executions that might still work for the retailer. Want to know how to get retailers to say yes more often? [Check this out!](#)

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9. More is actually sometimes more

Take time. Build relationships (with the good ones). Tell them more that you think they need. Make sure you tell the agency everything you know about the target consumer AND the target shopper. Go deep on [shopper missions](#) (they are [way more complicated](#) than most shopper marketing briefs suggest)

10. Don't just write a brief

Make sure you write a brief. It also forces you to check that you really have all of the information and requirements for a quality brief. If you attend [our shopper communication training](#), we give you a brilliant briefing template for free!

You will get better feedback, more questions, more challenge, more collaboration and therefore much better results if you brief face to face than if you send an email.

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11. Make it clear that the agency can and should push back

Allow them to complain if the brief isn't adequate. Reward them when they ask questions, even if those questions seem stupid. Tell them what they can expect from you in a brief and ask them to hold you to account when you don't brief properly.

12. Evaluate agency responses objectively and consistently

"I don't like it" isn't feedback. Evaluate creative work and proposals based on objective criteria. And explain these criteria in advance. Make sure your shopper agency team understand how to effectively communicate with shoppers. We sometimes run joint [training sessions](#) with clients and agencies to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Improve the shopper marketing briefing process to improve the results you get from shopper marketing

The consumer goods industry spends a fortune on shopper marketing activation, and so much of it could be better. If you are interested in improving your shopper marketing and shopper communication, check out our training programs now to access all of the knowledge, tools and templates to improve the shopper marketing agency briefing process immediately.

Get in touch if you need help developing your shopper strategy, or just want us to facilitate a briefing session between you and your agency.

Whatever you do, don't keep on doing the same thing as before. It's time to step up and deliver better results from your shopper marketing. And that requires better shopper marketing briefs!

