

Creative Objectives Vs. Executional Input

by Nancy Zwiers

Packaging is your most important marketing vehicle. Unlike promotions or advertising, your packaging is at work 24/7 and is your last chance to talk to the consumer—either closing or losing the deal. To ensure that your packaging is closing the deal, it must catch the consumer’s eye, support their purchase decision-making process, and help make a compelling sale—a tall order.

So how can you ensure that your branding and packaging are working as hard for you as possible, given that you are a product marketer or designer and not a professional package designer? By creating an air-tight creative brief that thoroughly details your thoughtful packaging or branding objectives without dictating the execution. In other words, share as much about “what” you want to accomplish without telling your seasoned packaging designer “how” to get there (although it can be tempting).

Below is a template to get you thinking about the kind of information you’ll want to give to your designer in order to convey all of the information you deem important while still maximizing their experience and creativity.

Creative Brief Outline

Project Description: The working name of the brand/product you are packaging.

Project Deliverables: Include all the deliverables required. For example:

- Develop proprietary/ownable visual brand identity for XXXX product line.
- Brand identity includes package

physical structure, graphic treatments, color palette, and pack-out.

Strategic Objectives: Include all of your strategic objectives in priority order. For example:

- Develop branding that is extendable to new product categories in future years (eg: stationery, apparel).
- Develop branding that could encompass a license in future years.

Target Consumer: Who will determine the purchase of your products? If there is more than one target segment, how will you allocate your efforts? For example:

- 6–8 year old girls (70% of focus)
- 9–11 year old girls (30% of focus)

Consumer Insights: What do you know about your consumers from focus groups, online research, and/or experience? Don’t assume your designer knows what you know—err on the side of too much information.

Competitive Landscape: List the most directly competitive brands and SKUs here and include photos of packaging when available. Explain how they impact the communication or sales challenge.

Brand/Product Positioning: Statement: What is the single most important reason why someone would want this brand or product? For example:

XXX is the only girls’ activity product that... (If a working tag line exists, provide it here to provide further strategic direction).

Reasons to Believe (optional): What makes it possible to deliver on the

promise? What are the product features that support your claim? Often these become the basis for front-of-package feature call-outs.

Brand Character or Brand Tonality: If your brand or product were a person, how would you describe its personality? List no more than three adjectives. For example: “trendy, youthful, and upbeat.”

Executional Mandatories: What are the essentials that must be included or must not be included in the creative execution? Include all of your expectations up front. For example: “Must include image of child using product under adult supervision” or “Must include corporate logo in top right-hand corner.”

Project Timetable: High-level key milestone dates, for example: creative, production, ship, and ad dates.

By clearly stating your objectives and sharing all of the support and background information you have with your designer, you will give them parameters in which to work without constraining their creativity and expertise. As you react to their work, be sure to use the creative brief as a starting point for your evaluation: “Is it on strategy?” ■

Nancy Zwiers is CEO of Funosophy, Inc., a kids’ marketing and product design firm specializing in preschool and girls’ products. For more information, call (562) 436-5251 or email nancy@funosophy.com.