



BetterBriefs®

The BetterBriefs Project

GLOBAL REPORT

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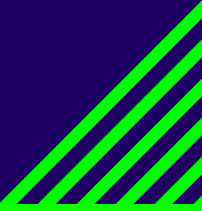
The **purpose** of this project

The aim of the BetterBriefs Project is to help marketers and agencies better understand where marketing briefs fail and where they succeed.

The findings tell a story of a concerning disconnect between marketers and agencies when it comes to briefs. Poor briefs don't just drain budgets, they also have a negative impact on talent and relationships.

We hope this report ignites conversations amongst your teams and helps you get to better briefs.

MATT DAVIES & PIETER-PAUL VON WEILER
CO-FOUNDERS, BetterBriefs



An important topic lightly researched

UK

The Briefing Process by IPA, MCCA, PRCA & ISBA (2003).
Sample size = 277 (121 marketers and 156 agencies).

NL

Reclamebriefing. Een goede brief is het halve werk by SWOCC (2007).
Literature study, including 37 interviews with marketers and agencies.

USA

Enhancing Client-Agency Relationships by the ANA (2015).
Sample size = 231 (126 marketers and 105 agencies).

Global

Briefing for Integrated Communications by the WFA (2014 & 2017).
Sample size = 78 (32 brand owners and 46 from agencies) for the '17 study.



A survey with a difference

FLOOD
RESEARCH FOR HUMANS

Created in conjunction with [Flood+Partners](#).

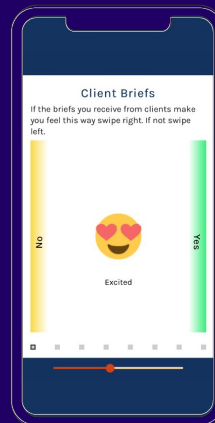
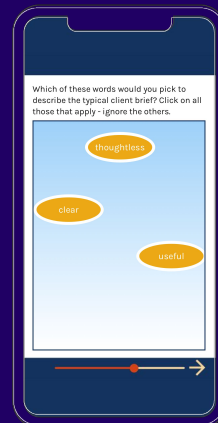
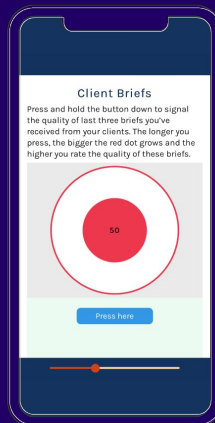
A quant. survey built to engage and draw out people's instinctive associations and hidden feelings.

With questions designed to capture Type 1 emotional responses *and* to elicit deeper thoughtful consideration.

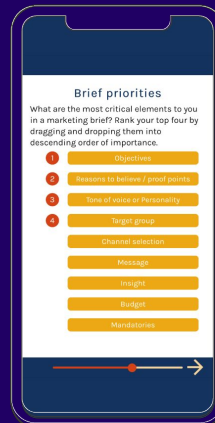
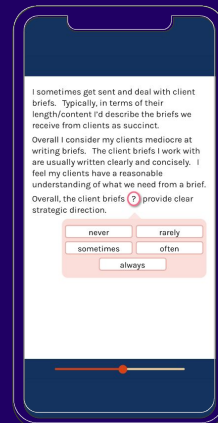
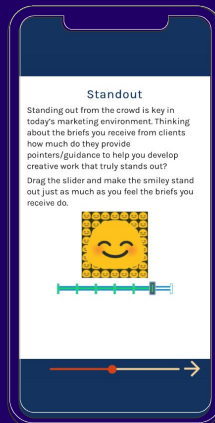


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Type 1 Questions



Type 2 Questions



Part I: The Problem

Marketers and agencies are on different planets



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1731

respondents from

70

countries

USA
172

UK
508

945

from **marketing
organisations**

786

from **creative
agencies**

AUS
383



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Singapore, New Zealand, Netherlands, Germany, India, Ireland, Canada, UAE, Malaysia, Switzerland, France, Sweden, Denmark, Hong Kong, South Africa, Nigeria, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, Norway, Belgium, Portugal, China, Vietnam, Serbia, Romania, Indonesia, Brazil, Poland, Croatia, Sri Lanka, Austria, Argentina, Colombia, Israel, Turkey, Hungary, Peru, Zambia, Pakistan, Tunisia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Philippines, Ukraine, Slovenia, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Morocco, Chile, Uganda, Georgia, Latvia, Thailand, Panama, Ghana, Iceland, Saudi Arabia, El Salvador, Luxembourg, Dubai, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Taiwan.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Marketer: brief-writers, contributors or approvers all employed by a brand (aka the client).



Agency: anyone working in account management, strategy, creative or management at an external creative agency.



Marketing brief: the brief written by the client, for the purposes of developing a creative solution (aka the client brief).

STATEMENT

The original question or statement as it appeared in our questionnaire.



Both marketers and agencies agree that briefs are important

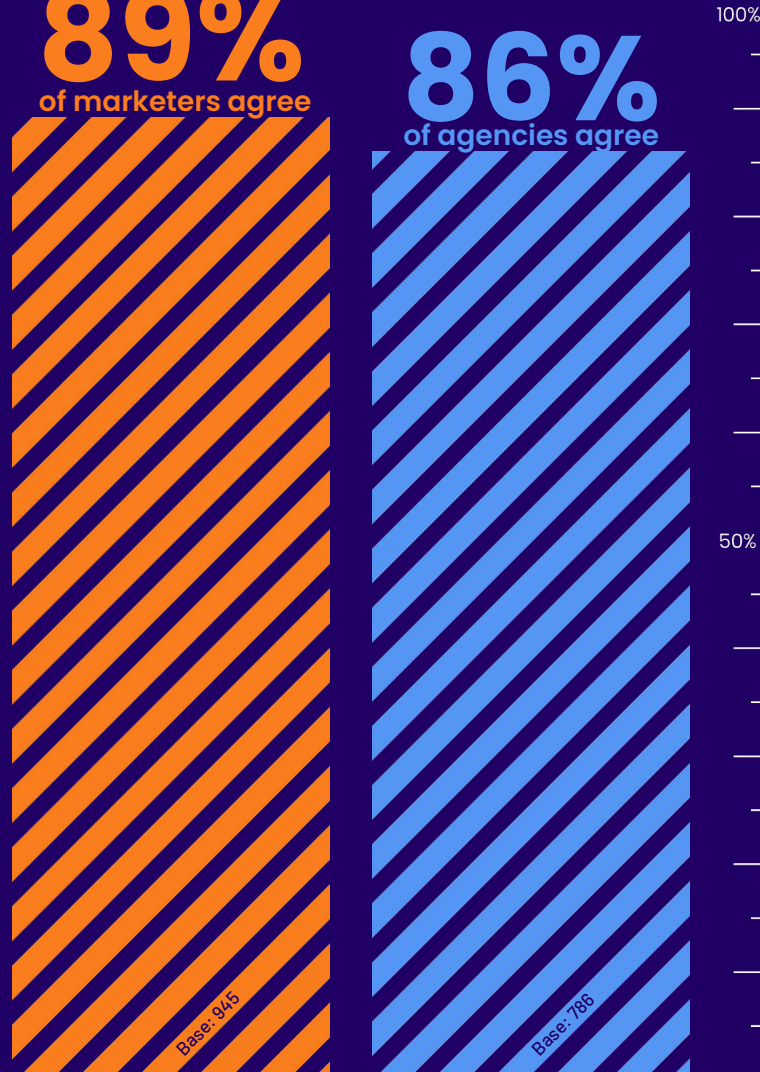
STATEMENT

'It's difficult to produce good creative work without a good marketing brief'



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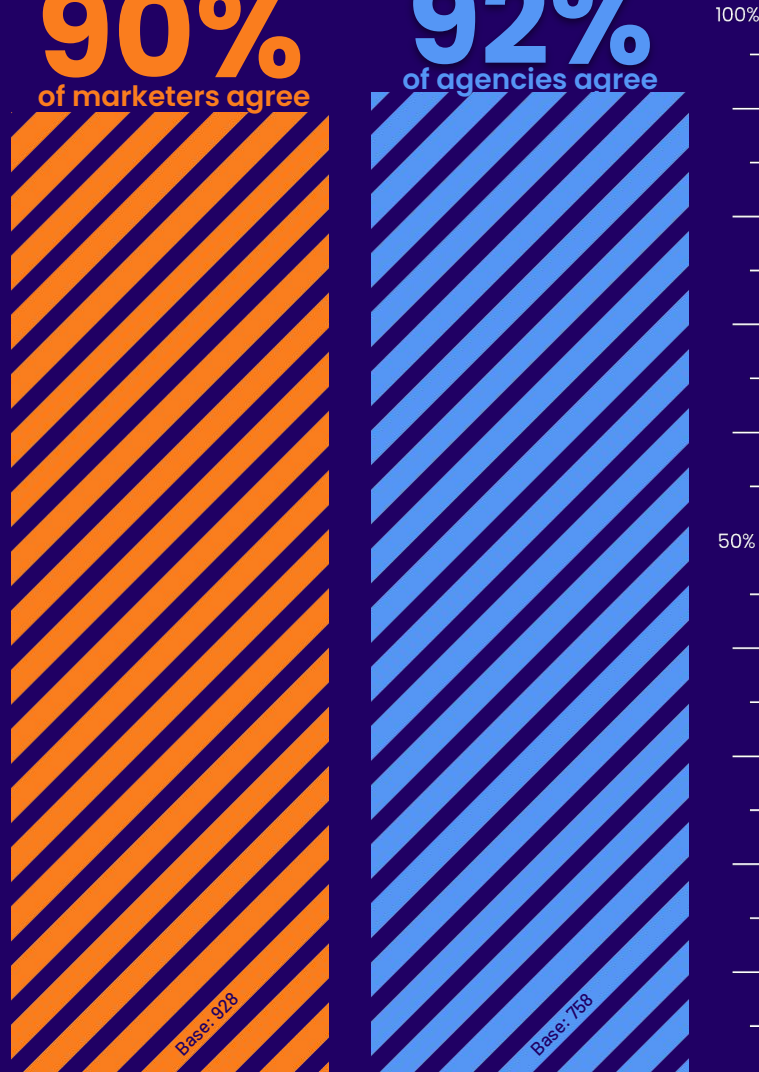
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However, despite their importance and value, most marketing briefs are neglected

STATEMENT

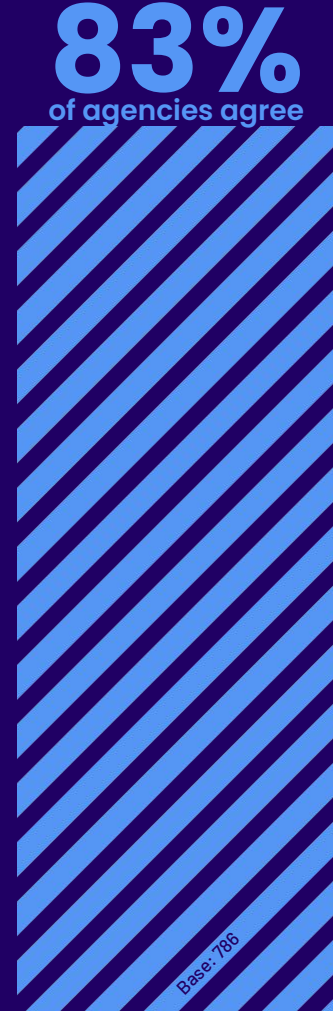
'The brief is one of the most valuable and paradoxically most neglected tools marketers have to create good work'



Both marketers and agencies acknowledge that **writing briefs isn't easy**

STATEMENT

'Writing briefs is hard'



Most marketers think they're good at writing briefs, most agencies disagree

STATEMENT

'I consider myself/my clients
good at writing briefs'

80%
of marketers agree



Base: 945

10%
of agencies agree



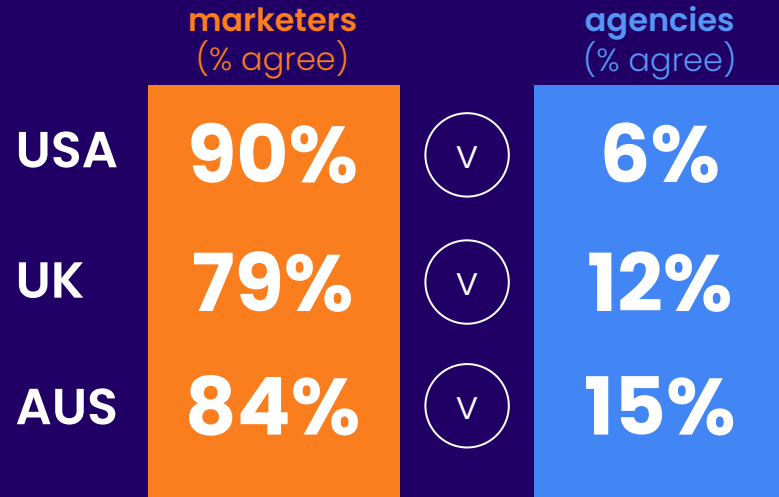
Base: 786



Most marketers think they're good at writing briefs, most agencies disagree

STATEMENT

'I consider myself/my clients
good at writing briefs'



The perceived quality of the last three briefs written/received is concerning

Base: All 1731

marketers

31%
not good enough

52%
ok

17%
good

agencies

75%
not good enough

22%
ok

3%
good



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50%

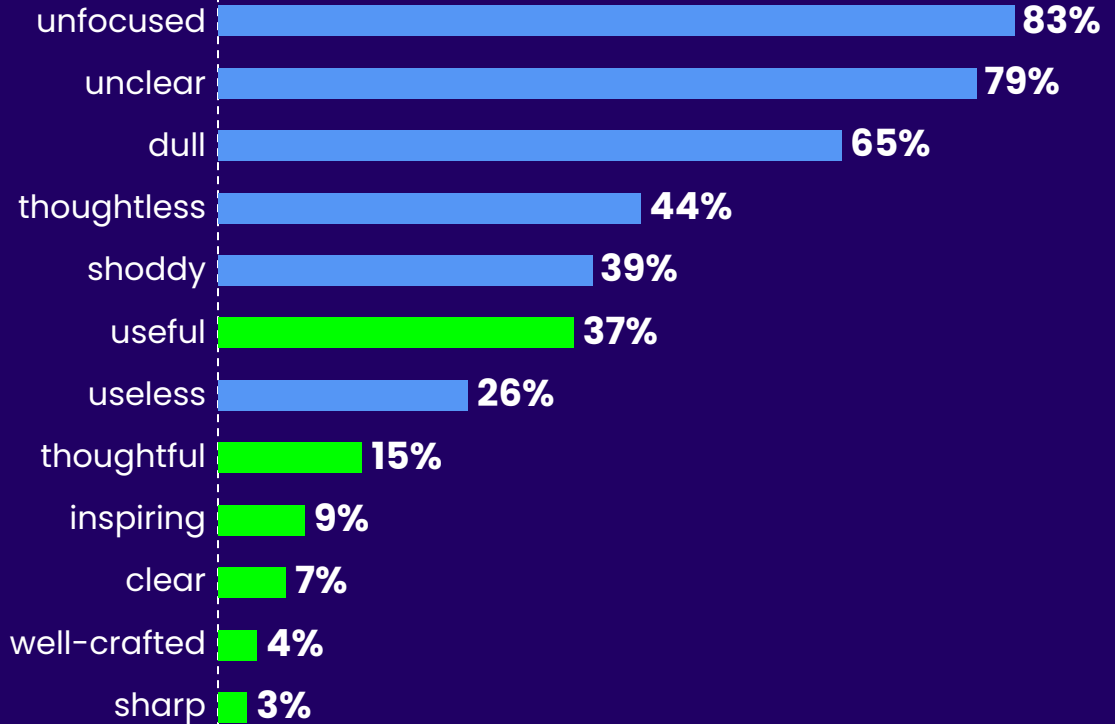
100%

Creative agencies think most marketing briefs

lack focus, clarity and inspiration

STATEMENT

'Choose from the list below the words that describe the typical client brief'



Most marketers think the briefs they write provide **clear strategic direction**; most agencies disagree

STATEMENT

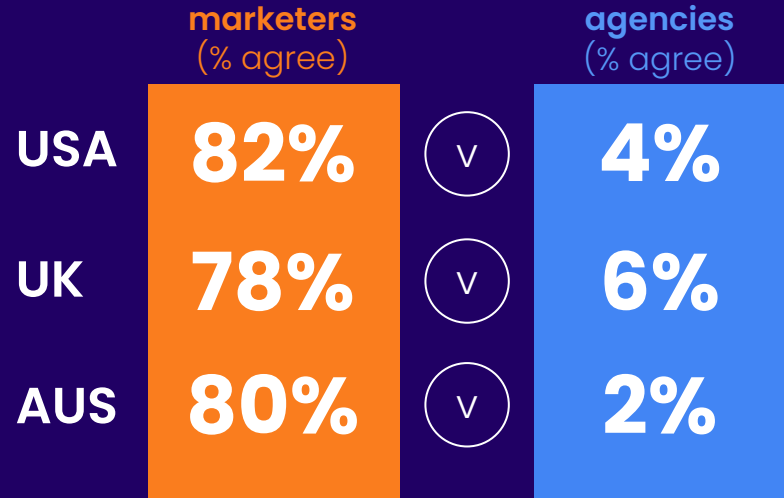
'The briefs I/my client write(s) provide clear strategic direction'



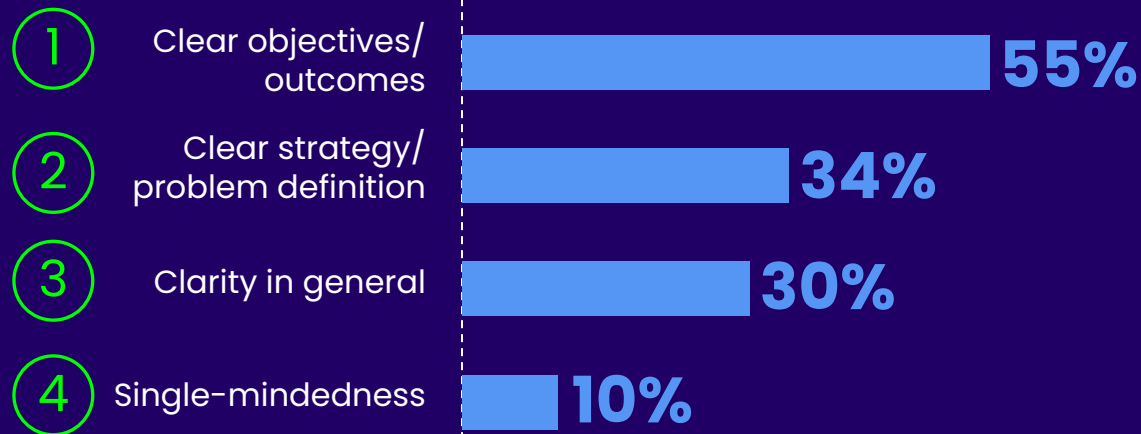
Most marketers think the briefs they write provide **clear strategic direction**; most agencies disagree

STATEMENT

'The briefs I/my client write(s) provide clear strategic direction'



The missing ingredient from most marketing briefs (according to agencies)



Clarity is key in briefs, however most marketers and creative agencies don't even speak the same language

STATEMENT

'The briefs I/my client write(s)
contain clear and concise language'



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83%
of marketers agree



7%
of agencies agree



100%

50%

But it's not just language,
80% of creative agencies feel marketers
have a poor or limited understanding
of what they need from briefs

Base: All Agency 786

23%
poor

57%
limited

19%
reasonable

1%
good

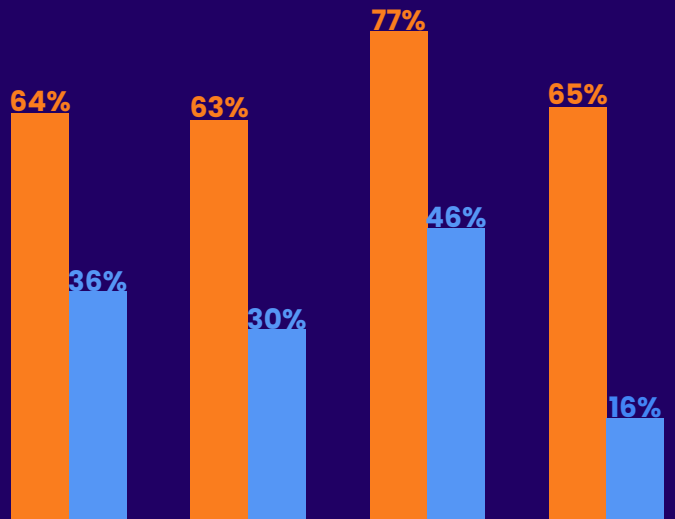


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50%

100%

Most **marketers** feel positive about briefs



excited



energised



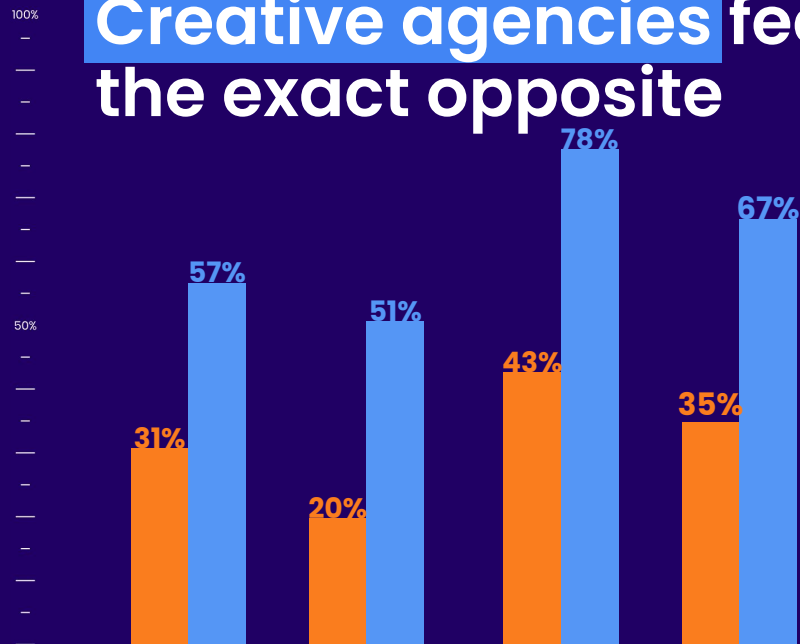
motivated



satisfied



Creative agencies feel the exact opposite



bored



disengaged



frustrated



irritated



**A lot of time,
money and energy
is wasted**



Staggeringly, briefs often change

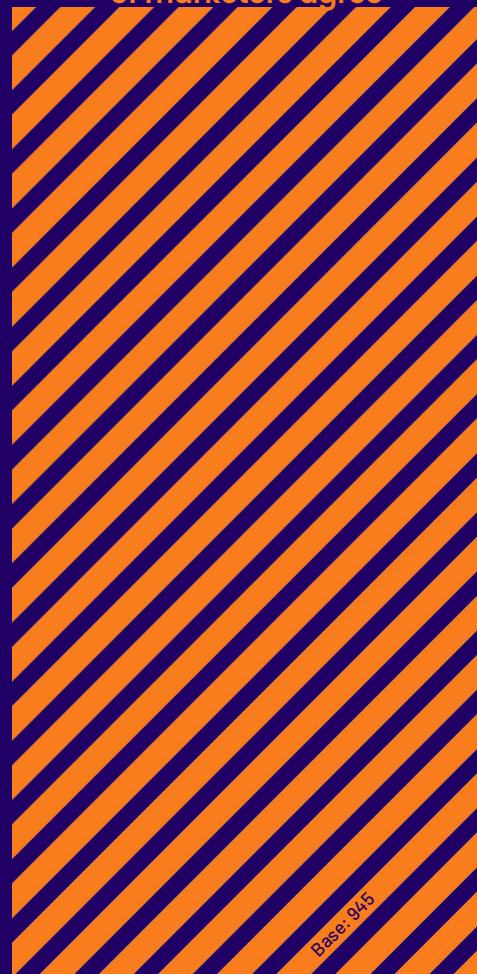
9 out of **10 marketers** admit that their briefs change once they are briefed-in.



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90%
of marketers agree



100%

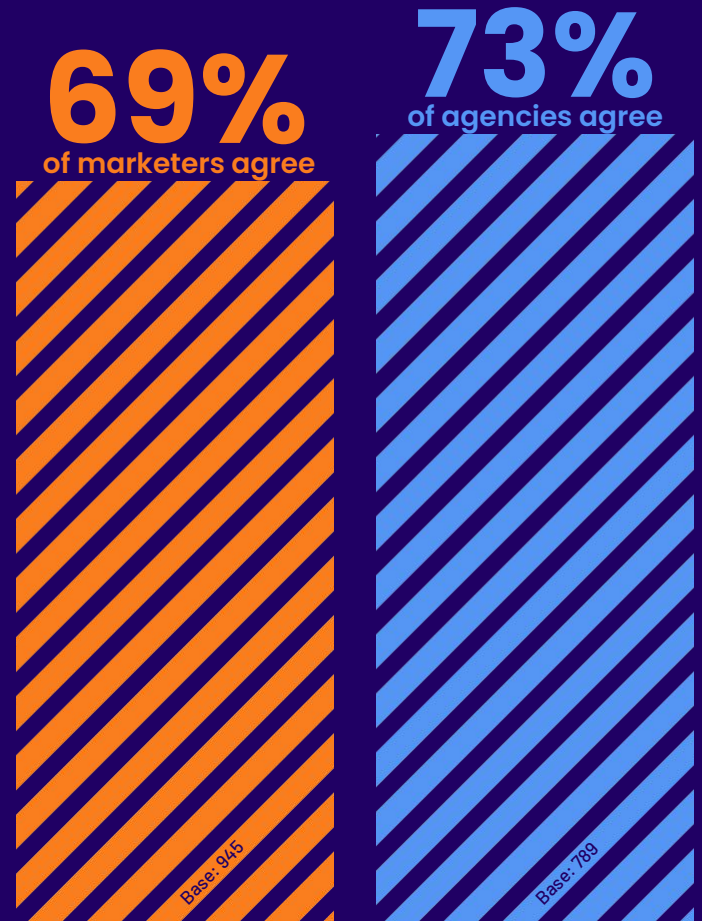
50%

Base: 945

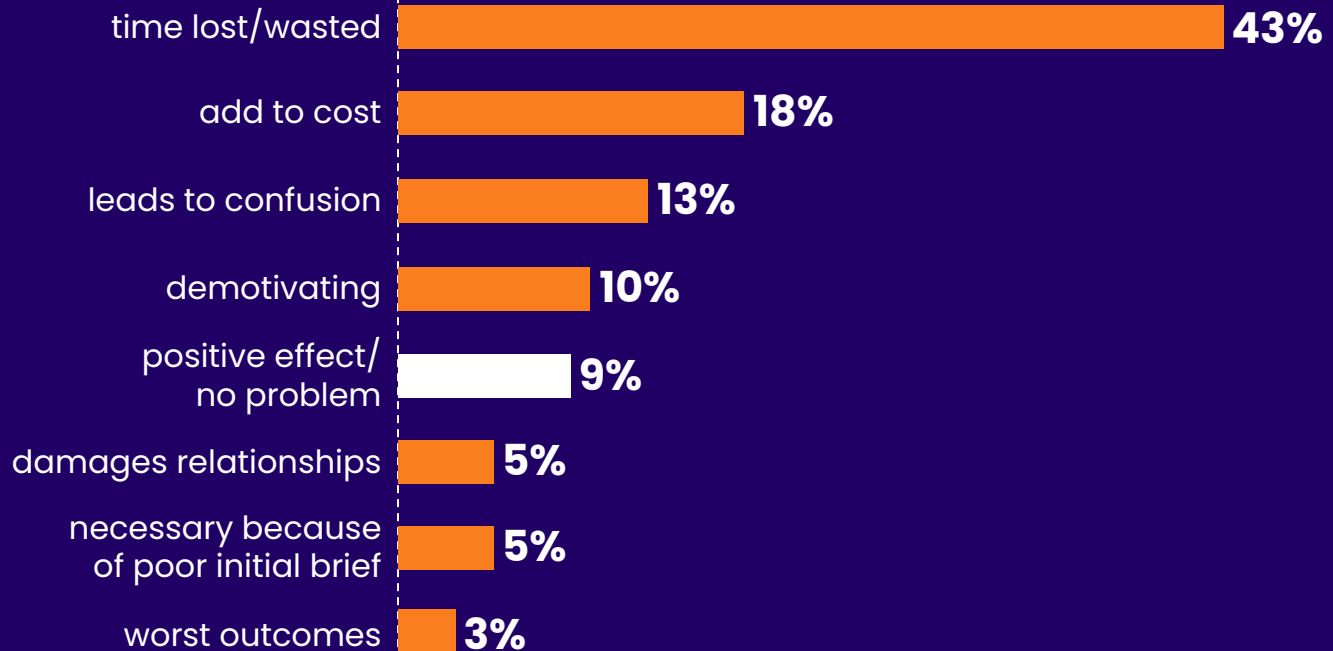
And rebriefs occur too often for anyone's liking

STATEMENT

'Rebriefs happen too often'



Most marketers understand the negative impact of a rebrief



It means that unfortunately,
the creative process is
not always used for
what it's intended

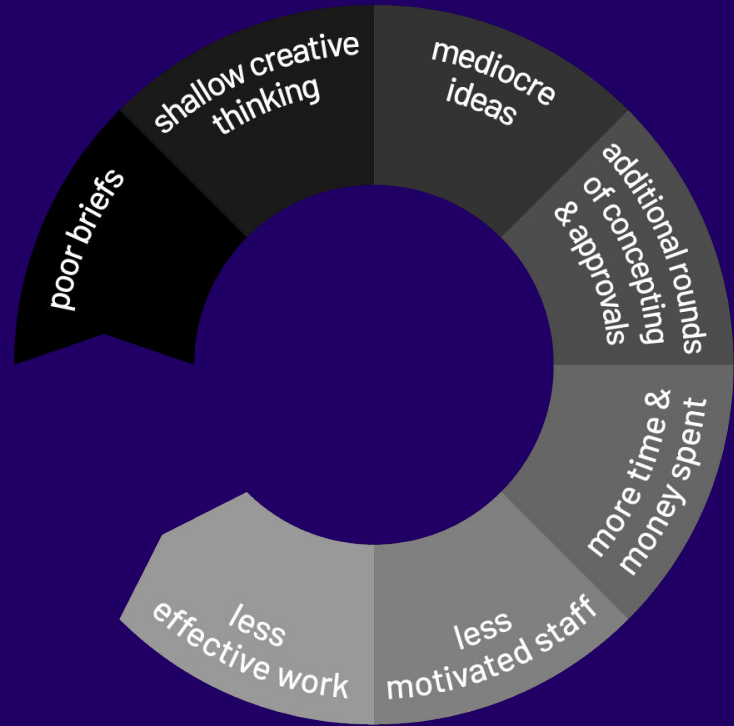
6 out of **10** marketers admit to
using the creative process to
clarify the strategy.

60%
of marketers agree



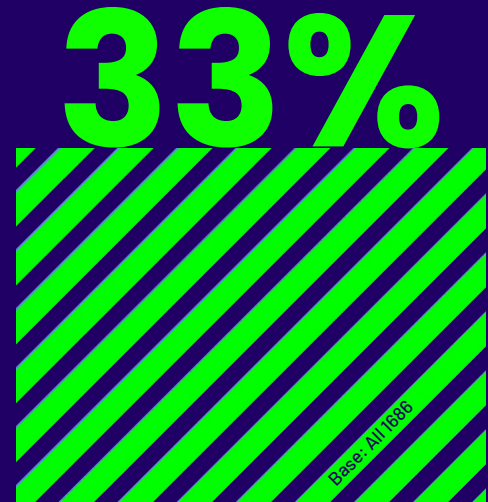
A lot of time and effort **is wasted** as a result of poor quality briefs

Developed based on the analysis
of over 1700 open comments.



Poor briefs can have a big impact on marketing budgets

It is estimated that $\frac{1}{3}$ of marketing budgets are wasted on poor briefs and misdirected work.



Part 3: A Way Forward

Suggestions for making briefs better



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Be clear on the strategy before writing the brief

2x

Creative agencies are **twice** as energised to work on briefs that provide clear strategic direction.



To help provide clear direction, ensure every marketing brief contains clear objectives

STATEMENT

'Rank in order of importance the most critical elements of the marketing brief'

1

objectives

61%

71%

2

insights

18%

9%

3

target group
definition

13%

8%



Bring more structure to the briefing process

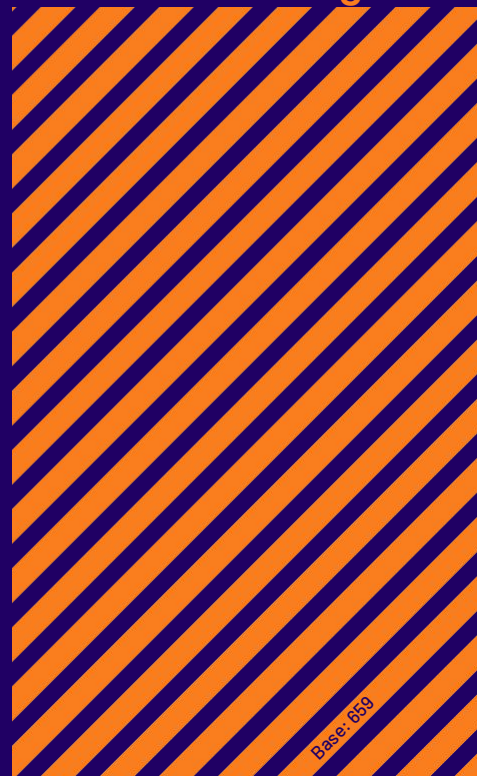
More than **7 in 10 marketers** state that agency briefings could work better if they were more structured.



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72%
of marketers agree



Base: 859

Get the right people to sign-off the brief

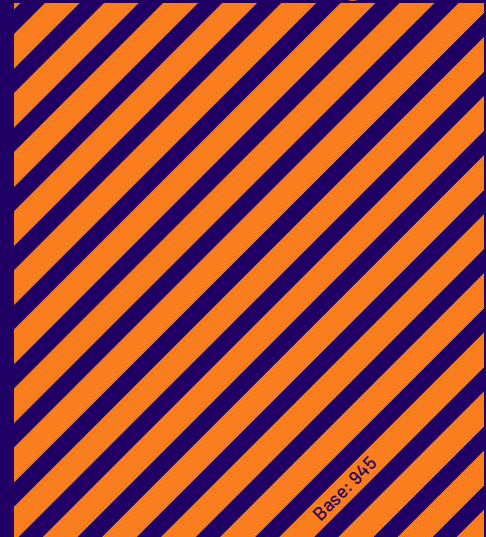
Half the time, the right people
aren't signing-off marketing
briefs internally.



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50%
of marketers agree



100%

50%

Marketers lack training in brief writing



51% agree 'I have had none or very little training in writing marketing briefs'



A quote that sums up the internal struggle from a passionate marketer



“

My briefs get re-written by committee – and those people are very senior but with no clue about marketing. My briefs get filled with jargon, nonsense and irrelevance, plus audiences, targets and topics are added in order to keep everyone feeling like their area of work is valid. I'm ashamed to send them over.



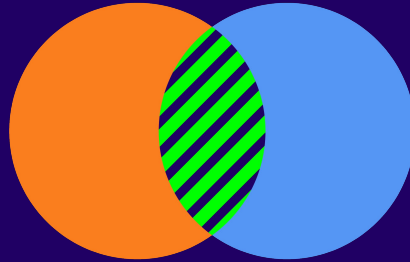
General advice

Marketers

Be clear on your strategy.

Use clear and simple language.

Don't send briefs to your agencies that you're not happy with.



Creative Agencies

Don't be silent.

Flag what's missing, clarify what's unclear with your clients.

Better briefs are your responsibility too.



With special thanks

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IPA
Incorporated
by Royal Charter

MarketingWeek

WARC
AN ASCENTIAL COMPANY

**THE MARKETING
SOCIETY**

 **thenetworkone**

 **THE SCHOOL OF
STOLEN GENIUS**


CONTAGIOUS

The Drum



BERGHS
SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATION

**the
marke+ing
meetup**

AAMS
ASSOCIATION OF ADVERTISING
& MARKETING SINGAPORE

AMI AUSTRALIAN
MARKETING
INSTITUTE

香港廣告商會
THE ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED
ADVERTISING AGENCIES OF HONG KONG




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About



BetterBriefs.

BetterBriefs is a **training and advisory business** that helps marketers write better briefs and realise more effective ideas.

We offer online courses through our Academy, create bespoke training programmes for large teams and our AI powered BriefCoach help marketers create high quality briefs.



Best practice guide
The best way for a client to brief an agency



Compendium
The issues with briefs and how to make them better





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