

Creating a Content Briefing in 3 Steps

We know preparing content can be hard, but with a little bit of preparation and planning it's hassle-free. The best part: It's the perfect moment to gather and create new outstanding stories about your brand and your company.

The Holy Grail of Putting Content First

Content is key for every website. The reason why: Content is everything that shapes your website - text, images, videos, forms, infographics and many more. Without content your page cannot fulfill its purpose. Without content your page cannot fulfill its purpose.

Said that, providing real text and images early in the project qualifies everyone to make the best decisions - be it designers, developers and yourself. And that's why we have a significant interest in helping you with the process.

1. Start with a Content Inventory

Let's say you will relaunch your website. How do you feel about your current texts and images? Are you happy with them or do you have the feeling they're outdated and old-fashioned? Talking about opportunities; now is your time to refresh the look and feel and the tone of voice of your corporate page. You think: Yeah, right, but where and how to start?

Just do it like a retail store - seriously. Can you remember when shops were closed for doing inventory? Right. What was happening is, that the store managers counted all of their products to find out what is in stock. Now, do you know how many pages, texts, images, videos or pdfs you've got to consider? You better should. A so-called content inventory will help you gain an overview of your future website content. Conducting the inventory will raise awareness for the amount of content you have, no matter if it's a printed brochure or on a website at the moment. It will tell you about the formats and elements used and it will help you design the information architecture and site navigation.

For all of you who are not satisfied, yet, you can go one step further. That means, take all the information collected and check it by asking the following questions: What kind of content categories do we have and do we really like them? Will we keep this text? Will we replace that image and have a shooting? Should we consolidate two or more texts into one? Does the tonality match our goals?

When you analysed all your content pieces (or maybe just a sample of it) and answered all the questions, you have conducted a content audit.

Are you hooked? Check out some [examples for content inventories](#).

Further reading: [A Guide to Creating Focused Content](#).



2. Plan single page types and content blocks

Now you understand your content and you have a plan to produce new or to replace existing content. Next, the crucial question is: What do I tell my content creators to receive the full set of what I need? By full set we are talking about a headline in the right length, a teaser text, a link label, thumbnail preview and so forth.

Guess what - it's easier than expected. Let's say you want to build an article page. Look at the elements and formats it has. Assuming, it has a headline, an image, an introduction text, a long text with subheadings, links to further reading and teasers to related topics.

Now take this information and add some more details:

- Do I need a headline? How long can it be to fit into the design?
- Do I need an introduction text? Is there a maximum length for it?
- Do I need an image? What size and ratio should the image have? Is there a difference between desktop and mobile images?
- Do I show captions for images? Is there a maximum length to it?
- Do I have <alt-tags> for images? Do they follow a keyword strategy?
- Do I need subheadings between paragraphs? How long should they be?
- Do I need links to other internal or external information? What's the link or button-title and URLs?

That is it. Oh wait ... your website has more than one page type? No problem. Apply the same pattern again. What is your homepage build out of? What is your project page build out of? What is your... ?

Little hint, never forget about your project management and tell people a deadline.

3. Create a content briefing template

Finally, create a briefing template for all the information and details. It may seem a bit petty, but be sure content creators will ask particular questions like "How many characters can the headline for teasers have?". Therefore, you should prepare one template per page type. Each template has to cover all content elements with its additional information. This guide will empower everyone working on the content to prepare the right and fitting pieces. Even better, all content you will receive, will suit your website perfectly. How does that sound?



This is how your template may look like:



- Article Headline max. 30 characters
- Introtext max. 250 Characters
- Image 1280 x 960 px
- Sub-Headline max. 30 characters
- Text Paragraph max. 5000 characters, if longer introduce a second section
- Links Label for link and URL
- Teaser 1 Headline - max. 15 characters
 Text - max. 100 Characters
 read more (Link) - URL
- Teaser 2 Headline - max. 15 characters
 Text - max. 100 Characters
 read more (Link) - URL

Lessons learnt

A content briefing and preparing and producing content needs a plan. Why? Chaotic content and a messy website will scare your users; worst they may leave your website without even considering to take a look. Remember: A website is content. So, think about your content first and create rules for you and your team. It will help everyone to work hand-in-hand to deliver a brilliant website on time.

Now be brave and start.

